

# Wildlife Program

Week of April 18 – April 24, 2016

## WOLF ACTIVITIES

### Region 1 Wolf Activities

**District Wolf Meeting:** Biologist Shepherd attended the District 1 weekly wolf meeting.

**Wolf Issues:** Biologist Shepherd discussed a wolf chasing a deer across a mid-county resident's field in Stevens County.

**USFS Individual Spring Grazing Meetings:** Biologist Shepherd attended U.S. Forest Service (USFS) grazing meetings with individual permit holders in Kettle Falls. The meetings included a wolf discussion and several other topics. Biologist Shepherd discussed cost share agreements and data sharing among other wolf related topics.

**Potential Wolf Depredation:** Biologist Shepherd investigated a reported potential wolf depredation in a calving enclosure in Pend Oreille County. The cause of death was most likely not a predator, but a gaping opening was suspect and eventually thought to be scavenging.

**Potential Wolf Sighting in Spokane County:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with a producer near Camden after a report of a possible wolf sighting near their cattle. The producer was told about the single canid interaction with their cows and calves by a turkey hunter at the farm. Information on legal rights, nonlethal deterrents, and next steps was discussed.



*Cattle near Camden after an early morning canid sighting near the feeding location*

**Calf Depredation:** Supervisor McCanna worked with District 3 conflict staff members on a report of a dead calf in Asotin County. Conflict staff members emailed McCanna photos from the investigation on Monday night.

McCanna arranged a conference call for Tuesday (April 19) morning to discuss the investigation. Staff members in District 3 walked eight staff members with wolf depredation experience through the investigation and photos. It was concluded the calf depredation was a confirmed wolf depredation.

**Media Contact:** Olympia staff members requested McCanna talk to the editor for Northwest Sportsman magazine. McCanna called and emailed the editor Monday night and was able to make contact Tuesday (April 19) morning with a report of the depredation.

**Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Update:** Supervisor McCanna completed a draft WAG update and current producer operations information for Olympia and regional staff members.

**Nonlethal Tools:** Supervisor McCanna worked with District 3 conflict staff members on additional tools available to the producer. The producer already utilizes a range rider who checks cattle daily and maintains sanitation by burying carcasses. McCanna delivered fox lights to District 3 conflict staff members who will also discuss fladry with the producer to make the calving area smaller.

**Producer Contact:** Supervisor McCanna also contacted the producer to discuss the cattle operation and other nonlethal tools which may work, extending the offer for the producer to contact McCanna with any questions or ideas.

**Calf Depredation in Asotin County:** Biologist Earl and WDFW Sergeant Mossman investigated a report of a dead 300 pound calf in eastern Asotin County. Based on evidence at the scene and after a field necropsy, the determination was a non-depredation with scavenging by coyotes.

#### **Region 4 Wolf Activities**

**Hozomeen Wolf Project:** Biologist DeBruyn and a biologist from the National Park Service retrieved 15 trail cameras placed on trails in the North Cascades National Park last fall. No wolves were recorded on the cameras, but they captured a lot of other wildlife species. Images of bear, cougar, bobcat, marten, deer, hare, squirrel, spotted skunk, and various birds were obtained. Human use of the trails was also documented. Images were screened and catalogued on a spread sheet.



*Forest carnivore habitat in North Cascades National Park*

#### **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

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

**Workshop on White Nose Syndrome and Conservation of Bats:** WDFW worked with USFWS and other partners, both regional and national, to hold a workshop on White Nose Syndrome and the conservation of bats on April 21 at Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge. Over 60 people participated in the workshop (some by conference call), including the following people from WDFW: Chris Anderson, Penny Becker, Rachel Blomker, Joe Buchanan, Greg Falxa, Katie Haman, Ruth Milner, Lori Salzer, Michelle Tirhi, and Ken Warheit. This workshop was prompted by the need to share and discuss information about conservation and management of bats and White Nose Syndrome after the discovery of a Little Brown Bat in early March near

North Bend that tested positive for White Nose Syndrome. White Nose Syndrome is a fungal disease that has killed millions of bats in eastern North America. Presentations included an overview of White Nose Syndrome – history and epidemiology, an overview of current national response effort, an overview of western bats, a decontamination protocol, management, containment, surveillance and monitoring, and outreach. Anne Ballmann of the U.S. Geological Survey National Wildlife Health Center also demonstrated how to swab bats.

**White Nose Syndrome in Bats:** WDFW staff members worked with local, regional, national, and international partners to coordinate an exchange of information, discuss management strategies, develop and implement outreach to the public, and facilitate the collection of data related to bats and White Nose Syndrome in Washington.

**Brown Pelican:** Biologist Derek Stinson provided a briefing on the status of brown pelicans to the Fish and Wildlife Commission at their meeting in Olympia on April 9. The periodic status review that was completed in October included a recommendation to delist the species. The Commission agreed with the conclusions and voted to remove the brown pelican from the list of state endangered species.

**Fisher Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances Program:** Biologist Jeff Azerrad completed the sign up process for a number of small forest landowners that expressed interest in enrolling in the fisher CCAA program. Landowners will still be able to enroll for the foreseeable future.

**Ferruginous Hawk Nest Surveys:** Biologist Gerry Hayes is coordinating with district biologists to conduct comprehensive surveys of nesting ferruginous hawks statewide. Wildlife Diversity Division is updating the WSDM database on the breeding status of known and new nesting territories to inform a periodic status review of the species in 2017. Occupancy surveys are conducted from March 15 to May 15 and productivity surveys will occur in June. The first occupancy surveys occurred from March 15 to April 5. These nest surveys are comprehensive (n=277 known nesting territories) and have been made possible from the participation of many partners, including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Yakima Training Center, Hanford, and citizen volunteers. WDFW staff members involved in the survey included district biologists, private land biologists, scientific technicians, and Wildlife Diversity Division biologists.

**Conservation Initiative:** Citizen Science Coordinator Wendy Connally delivered four eBird-related workshops for best practices in checklist and observation entry to improve data utility out of that source. Chelan-Douglas Land Trust and Wenatchee River Institute hosted (Wenatchee and Leavenworth). Region 2 Biologist Jon Gallie participated in the Wenatchee workshop. Great connections were made with land trust, outreach, and USFS partners for well-developed projects that deliver bird observation data through eBird Northwest/eBird. Additionally, Connally gave a presentation about citizen science survey and monitoring project design, eBird Northwest, iNaturalist, and NestWatch for the Society of Ecological Restoration Monitoring conference in Portland.

**Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Agriculture Conservation Committee:** Mike Kuttel led a discussion about options to streamline data sharing between Natural Resources Conservation Service/Farm Service Agency and State Fish and Wildlife agencies. Data are currently shared with WDFW private lands biologists in an ad-hoc fashion in a variety of formats, and multiple paper forms are required for contracting purposes. This system is inefficient and requires more work than necessary to deliver technical assistance for Farm Bill Conservation Programs. Sharing GIS data from servers, mobile GIS and electronic forms on tablet computers, electronic signatures, and form consolidation are topics for discussion. This type of system would be more user-friendly for WDFW private lands biologists and the private landowners they are helping, and make it easier to track the implementation of Farm Bill Conservation Programs for reporting to the Natural Resources Conservation Service/Farm Service Agency.

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

**State Wildlife Action Plan Revisions:** USFWS completed its review and has approved the Washington State Wildlife Action Plan. This action plan was the product of months of work and involved numerous WDFW staff members. In its review of WDFW’s draft State Wildlife Action Plan, the USFWS recommended various minor revisions to the document to enhance the information presented. Biologists Derek Stinson, Gary Wiles, and Ann Potter completed revisions to parts of Chapter 3 of the plan describing how the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need was developed and vetted for completeness.

**REGION 1**

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

**Channeled Scablands Spring Waterfowl Project:** Biologist Lowe and Waterfowl Specialist Wilson conducted the fifth and final waterfowl aerial survey for this season. Numbers continued on a downward trend relative to previous flights, as birds have continued north on their migration or settled into less visible locations for nesting. Biologist Atamian ran the Lake Creek ground route and numbers were slightly higher than last week, but lower than the highs back at the beginning of the month. The species present have shifted from predominantly divers (scaup, goldeneye, etc.) to more dabblers (gadwall, shovelers, etc).

***Aerial waterfowl survey in the Channeled Scablands***



**Ferruginous Hawk Surveys:** Biologist Lowe conducted the second occupancy survey on two ferruginous hawk nesting sites on the Snake River near Riparia. Occupancy for one of the two nests was confirmed. The hawk was observed incubating the nest while its mate was hunting nearby. The nest will be visited again in a few weeks to evaluate productivity. Biologist Atamian conducted a second occupancy survey for two ferruginous territories in central Whitman, both still not occupied. Atamian checked to confirm occupancy of the Wise territory and nest locations. The territory was occupied and the female was sitting on the nest while the male was seen perched nearby, then foraging.



*Ferruginous hawk incubating a nest in the Riparia East territory on the Snake River*



**Pheasant Survey:** Biologist Lowe conducted the first of two pheasant crowing surveys on the Parvin route east of Colfax. Counts were very similar to last year.

*Ring-necked pheasant flushed during a pheasant crowing survey in Whitman County*

**Shrub/Tree Planting:** The final activity for the recent Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area wetland restoration project along Lake Creek is planting shrubs and trees near the restored wetlands. Finch, Bauer, and Wildlife Area Manager Juli Anderson got a head start on the work by augering in some holes and planting a few dozen stems south of Z-Lake. The rest of the 400 spring-ordered stems will be planted on April 28 by a Wildlife Area Complex-wide crew, plus Private Lands staff members Todd Baarstad and Scott Bendixen. The final delivery and planting of stems will occur this coming fall.



*Finch on tractor*



*Bauer planting a willow*

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

**Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – BPA Site Visit:** Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice met with BPA COTR Tracy Hauser and Dawn Boorse. Tracy and Dawn caught a ride to Lewiston on BPA’s plane with other BPA employees and spent the day with Bob looking at the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area. Areas visited included George Creek, Meyers Ridge, and Smoothing Iron Ridge.



*George Creek pool formed by large wood installed in 2013*



*Smoothing Iron Ridge wildflowers*

**REGION 2**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** District Wildlife Biologist Finger worked on the portions of the Grant County Mosquito Control District (GCMCD) proposal for a Mosquito Adulticides Deposition Study. Finger coordinated with Research Scientist Hayes to get a better understanding of risk assessments used by EPA when evaluating pesticides and to get additional perspectives on agency concerns. Finger sent an updated zone map to GCMCD for comment. The map is based on the most recent observations of northern leopard frogs during metamorph surveys in the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area.

**Columbia Basin Waterfowl:** District Wildlife Biologist Finger, Biologist Mcpherson, and Wildlife Area Technician Eddy harrowed and seeded portions of Mansfield Pond to enhance forage availability for waterfowl and improve hunting conditions. Years of tall emergent vegetation dominance and accumulation of dead material has resulted in about a six inch duff layer in some places, making seeding conditions less than ideal, but marginal to great results are expected depending on specific location, and harrowing is expected to accelerate

decomposition. Further, this was a good opportunity to better understand what food plot style plants are most adapted to the existing conditions. Several acres were planted.

**Goldeneye Nest Boxes:** District Wildlife Biologists Rowan and Finger helped Waterfowl Specialist Wilson hang goldeneye nest boxes on Lake Lenore. If used, nest boxes would provide an opportunity to band hens attending nests, which might provide some useful migration information. If nothing else, the experience piqued Finger’s curiosity about the value of the lake to waterfowl during the breeding season, as many paired ducks and lone drakes were suggestive of considerable nesting effort in the area by several species. Zooplankton abundance appeared extremely high as well, causing the otherwise clear water to appear mucky in patches. This area would be interesting to add to existing brood routes and potentially for a night-lighting excursion in an attempt to focus on banding locally produced birds. There would also be some species diversity involved.

**Invertebrate Collection:** Biologist McPherson has started round one of invertebrate collection. Waterbodies surveyed this week include Mansfield Pond, Ephrata Lake, Flat Lake, and Winchester Ditch. Surface activity traps performed excellent at all sample sites, collecting significant abundance and species richness. District Biologist Finger and Biologist McPherson have made the decision that Winchester Ditch will be left out of future surveying efforts due to the fact that water will be treated with aquatic herbicides during the irrigation season, posing a risk to surveyors.

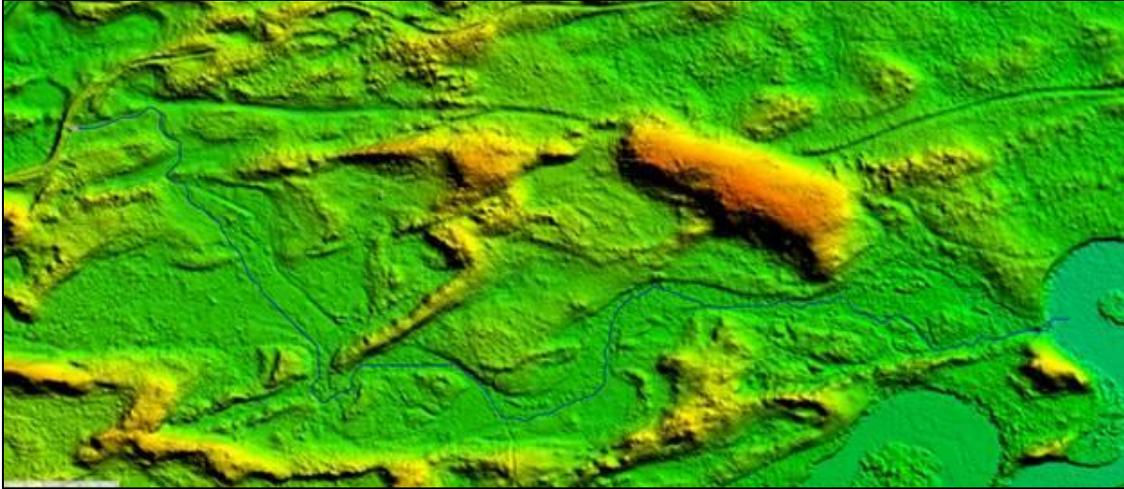


*Surface Activity Trap positioned in vegetation stand at Ephrata Lake* – Photo by Chattan McPherson



*Planting of a mixture of proso millet, sunflower, milo, and grain corn* – Photo by R. Finger

**Frenchmen Ponds:** District Wildlife Biologist Finger received a sample of the data collected by Quantum Spatial for the Frenchmen Ponds project expansion and enhancements. The LiDAR survey data appears to be very promising, particularly in the Russian olive or other highly vegetated environments that are not possible to survey by ground.



*LiDAR imagery of a portion of interest in the Frenchmen Ponds project* – Imagery by Quantum Spatial

**Rattlesnake Monitoring:** Biologist Fitkin and Science Technician Erlenbach participated in the capture and measurement of local rattlesnakes. We were assisting a grad student from Central Washington University who is studying the growth rates and movement patterns of this species in response to the recent fires.



*Science Technician Erlenbach learning to safely handle rattlers* – Photo by Scott Fitkin



*Rattle close-up from a large and likely old adult male snake* – Photo by Scott Fitkin

## Wildlife Areas

**Great grey owl:** Manager Olson surveyed the great grey owl nesting platforms on the Chesaw Unit. WDFW has 11 artificial platforms scattered in heavy timber on the unit hoping to attract nesting by the great grey owl, which was only recently discovered in this area. The habitat project to improve forest conditions at Chesaw also allows for reserves of dense timber for owl nesting and brood rearing while creating openings and thinned areas for foraging. Adjacent to one of the platforms, Olson spotted one of the owls, which are a rare site.



*Great grey owl on the Chesaw Unit* – Photo by Jim Olson

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

## Wildlife Areas

**Chesaw Wildlife Area Prescribed Burn:** Manager Haug, Assistant Manager Wehmeyer, and Maintenance Mechanic Boulger all assisted with a prescribed burn on the Chesaw Wildlife Area. The burn was funded by the Forest Health Funding provided by the Legislature via DNR and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and included WDFW’s North Central Washington Prescribed



Burn Team, the Redmond (OR) Hot Shots, and a contract engine from Twisp. The burn was successful in reducing fuels both from years of fire exclusion and recent timber sale. Crews continued to burn into the week and weekend.

*WDFW Fire Management Specialist Tom Leuschen gives the morning briefing to the team prior to ignition* – Photo by Justin Haug



***Matt Eberlein, new Fire Management Specialist and Tyler Edwards, new Prescribe Burn Team Leader watch their final ignition pass cool off as they completed ignition of the Steppe Unit on Chesaw Wildlife Area***

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

***Redmond Interagency Hotshot Crew engaged in holding the fireline during the Steppe prescribed burn***

**Wildlife Management**

**North Central Washington Envirothon:** Biologist Comstock assisted with the 2016 North Central Washington

Envirothon. Due to a shortage of specialist volunteers, Biologist Comstock assisted with the invasive species table joined by WSU extension’s Dale Whaley. Schools from Grant, Douglas, and Okanogan counties participated and the overall winner was Bridgeport. Private Lands Biologist Braaten, Biologist Comstock, and Assistant Manager Noel Winegeart took a day last week to judge and work stations at the 2016 NCW Envirothon. It was a great turnout and a great job by teachers and students. It was well put together and featured a great competition. Way to go, Bridgeport!



***Private Lands Biologist Braaten working Wildlife Station at the NCW Envirothon at BeeBe Park in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW***

**Winners of NCW Envirothon, Bridgeport**

– Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

**Wildlife Areas**

**Bear Creek Road & Campground:**

Assistant Manager Troyer received a call that Bear Creek had breached the road and was flowing through a camp site on the south side. He visited the area, photographed the condition, and emailed his findings to CAMP, Habitat, & Lands staff members since the problem is occurring around a recently installed culvert. The road has not suffered any damage yet, but the site will need to be monitored until the water levels decrease. The creek is spilling outside its streambed in several areas. Habitat Biologist Hofmann stopped by to evaluate the area.



***Water flowing over Bear Creek Road –***  
Photo by Brandon Troyer



***Why did the sage grouse cross the road? –***  
Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW





*From top to bottom: A pair of great gray owls on an dilapidated building on the Chesaw Wildlife Area, one of the owls with the moon in the background, another old building near a marsh on the Chesaw Wildlife Area, and a cinnamon teal and wood duck pair near the HQ bridge on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin Haug*

### **REGION 3**

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

##### **Wildlife Areas**

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, Forester Pfeifle, and Scott Nicolai (Yakama Nation) met to discuss plans for the 2014 WWRP L.T. Murray Habitat Enhancement Project, which entails thinning upland forests and placing wood in North Fork Manastash Creek. The project went unfunded in 2014, but recently received full funding from RCO. Yakama Nation is also requesting Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant money to apply to the project, so Winegeart wrote a letter of support for their application. Wildflowers are in full bloom on the wildlife area.

***Wildflowers just outside the Joe Watt feed site***

**Project Sites:** Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt attempted to get into the former Plum Creek ownership in T18N, R15E in order to look at some project sites. Snow in north facing areas and canyons is still a vehicle stopper whether taking the Manastash route as they did, or via Taneum. They also checked out Shadow Creek. While traveling up Taneum Creek they observed the beneficial results of previous large wood placement, with beaver dam construction and water inundating the floodplain.



***High water in Taneum Creek flowing through the floodplain***

**Broadleaf Weeds:** Natural Resource Technician 2 Hill spent the week tackling broadleaf weeds across the Wildlife Areas. He sprayed for mustards, Russian thistle, and white top. The areas he sprayed (Quilomene Bay, Green Gate springs, and Parke Creek Rehab) all had diminished weed populations from previous years and had significant growth of desirable species.



***New growth of desirable species at Quilomene Bay***

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman met up with Dave Meehan with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation in Ellensburg to transfer the antlers and cape from the large bull killed on I-90 last fall. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation will have it mounted and put



on display for the Great Elk Tour in 2017. The mount will then be returned to WDFW. The bull scored 424 5/8 and WDFW will be able to write the narrative that will go with the mount. The current plan is to focus on the wildlife overpasses currently being developed in the area to hopefully cut down on wildlife collisions and provide travel corridors on I-90.

**Cowiche Unit:** Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker 2 Farias spent most of week on the Worrell Ranch area of the Cowiche Unit surveying for weeds and controlling scotch thistle. It is either really early for scotch control or staff members have been effective in their control efforts to date. Whitetop is prevalent in most every area visited and strategies for control are being explored. While checking out a canyon, Berry and Farias spotted a badger.

***Badger located in canyon on Cowiche Unit of the Oak Creek Wildlife Area***



**Wildlife Management**

**Sage Grouse:** District Biologist Fidorra participated in the DFW conference call on sage grouse translocation planning.

The priority will be to complete the final year of translocations at the Yakama Training Center and to concurrently submit genetic samples for testing to gauge success of translocations at diversifying population genetics. Fidorra will work with Private Lands Biologist Stutzman to assess the value of habitat and private land south of the Yakama Reservation for sage grouse.

**Ferruginous Hawk:** District Biologist Fidorra worked on organizing ferruginous hawk occupancy surveys and coordinating volunteers, partners, and staff members. The second occupancy survey is underway and should be completed by the May 15 deadline. Fidorra will be conducting coordinated surveys of the Juniper Dunes with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Volunteers, and WDFW staff members in the coming week.



***Volunteer searching for ferruginous hawk nests on the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area*** – Photo courtesy of Volunteer Ivar Husa

**SAFE Fields:** Private Lands Biologist Stutzman visited and evaluated two State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) fields and one Field Borders (CP33) field. One of the SAFE fields was seeded this spring much later than suggested and, to this point, only Russian thistle has germinated. The CP33 stand, seeded in January, has had good germination, but has some cheat grass and broadleaf weed concerns. Stutzman updated the CPA6 notes for each plan.

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Bernatowicz spent much of the week preparing a presentation for the Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council Conference in early May. The presentation will cover management actions taken during the Yakima Canyon and Tieton disease outbreaks, results, and data collected on pathogens.

**Sheep Counts:** Bernatowicz also counted rams on Cleman Mountain during a recent deer survey. Population estimates on Cleman Mountain are based on feed site counts and hunter reports. The deer survey was an opportunity to double check estimates. Total ram numbers seen on the survey were very close to previous estimates.



*Radio-collared sheep seen recently on deer survey flight* – Photo from Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (MIT)



*A group of Cleman Mountain rams* – Photo from MIT

**Deer Surveys:** Biologist Bernatowicz participated in one evening of aerial surveys in the northern portion (GMUs 340 and 342) of the Naches Mule Deer Zone. The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe was lead on the surveys in 340/342 this year, but had conflicts with helicopter scheduling and a conference. The surveys were conducted later than optimal. Some radioed deer were migrating out of the survey area and leaf-out reduced visibility.



*Deer seen during aerial survey* – Photo by MIT

**Injured Wildlife:** Biologist Bernatowicz responded to a call of a great blue heron caught in fishing line at Buena Pond. Access Manager Garcia helped find the bird and remove the line, which was hindering flight and feeding. The heron was weak, but could fly short distances, so was left at the pond.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Natural Resource Technician 2 Kass checked elk fence from Hardy Canyon to Naches, making for a very long day and a lot of wear on the soles of his boots. No

major holes were found, but he did count 18 dead elk along this stretch of fence. He also confirmed that the long range shooting course on Monson Fruit extends onto our land, with some targets on our side of the elk fence and others that are in line with the fence, causing damage when shooters miss their target.



*Targets placed on state lands*



*Target placed on private land adjacent to elk fence*

*Damage to elk fence post from target shooting on private land*

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

**Wildlife Areas**



**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker 2 Farias drove a five ton truck over to Cowiche in preparation for a clean-up project set for the weekend. On Sunday, Assistant Manager Berry met with volunteers organized by the Mule Deer Foundation to clean up areas adjacent to Cowiche Mill Road and in French's Canyon. Both areas have heavy use and mostly abuse from unregulated target shooting and dumping. Volunteers ended up only cleaning up French's Canyon due to target shooting occurring at all sites on Cowiche Mill Road. Assistant Manager Berry drove by the shooters and found most using illegal targets. Berry discussed safety issues with the volunteers and had them complete registration paperwork. The group picked up a lot of trash and filled the truck to capacity.



*Volunteers from the Mule Deer Foundation after picking up trash in the French's Canyon area near state land. The private property is heavily used and abused by the public for dumping and target shooting.*

### Wildlife Management

**Deer and Elk Activity:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand inspected a tree fruit and wine grape operation in the Cold Creek area in northern Benton County for deer

and elk activity. Some evidence of deer use was noted but no damage was observed.

**Elk Movement:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored elk distribution and movements in Elk Areas 3721 & 3722. Numerous reports of elk leaving Hanford's ALE reserve for winter wheat fields on the southern flanks of Rattlesnake Mountain were received.

**DPCA-L:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to spend considerable time developing new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for landowners in the Corral Canyon Elk Area.

**Elk Hazing:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel hazed elk areas in and around Caribou Creek. Several landowners would like the large numbers of elk in the area to move west and north into available public land areas. To that end, two master hunter volunteers hazed elk out of that area several times this week and will continue to pressure elk to move north and west.

**Elk Conflict:** Master Hunter volunteers continue to operate at night in in the Elk Heights area to keep elk away from an alfalfa field. Efforts will continue through this month.

**Orchard Blooms:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel returned to an orchard in the Tampico area to photograph an orchard in full bloom at the request of the damage claims adjuster and orchard owner. The bloom in that orchard this year appears to be sporadic.

*Only one end of this golden orchard appeared to consistently bloom this year*



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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Wildlife area staff members were on hand Friday at the Pasco District Office for the arrival of the Marsh Master. The Marsh Master is an amphibious “tractor” that is designed to operate in wet, muddy, swampy areas, and even open water. The machine was delivered from Louisiana with a 100-gallon sprayer, rotary mower, tiller, and backhoe attachments. The Marsh Master will allow staff members to perform wetland management activities that would normally be precluded from conventional agriculture equipment due to the wet conditions. Natural Resource Technician Medina and Assistant Manager Sak helped transport the Marsh Master to Windmill Ranch.



*The new Marsh Master loaded onto a department trailer*



*The new Marsh Master with the assortment of attachments*

**REGION 4**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Hozomeen Bat Survey:** Biologist DeBruyn and a biologist from the National Park Service did an exit count at a maternity colony of bats in a building at the north end of Ross Lake. The bat detector indicated that the majority of the 718 bats counted leaving the site were Yuma *myotis*. Some little brown *myotis* were also detected in the area.

**White Nose Syndrome Workshop:** Staff members attended a one day workshop focused on white nose syndrome in bats. A bat infected with the fungus was recently found in western Washington.

**Sharp-tailed Snake Project:** District 13 staff members delivered a sharp-tailed snake for San Juan County to Dr. Marc Hayes for preservation and shipping to the California Academy of Sciences natural history museum. The snake is an adult female.

**Peregrine Falcon Nesting/Recreation Management:** District 13 staff members monitored the Index Town Wall for falcon nesting activity. Repeated territorial activity, several food exchanges, and repeated returns to a nesting ledge were observed. District 13 staff members will be preparing a closure map to present to Fork of the Sky State Park employees. WDFW, in cooperation with Washington State Parks, which manages the site, and the Washington Climbers Coalition, attempt to determine nesting areas so that a voluntary closure can be instituted to prevent disturbance of the falcons and protect the climbers from the very territorial pair.



*The Index Town Wall provides extensive nesting and climbing opportunities*

**Common Loon nesting surveys:** District 13 staff members followed up with monitoring for nesting loons by boat at a Snohomish County lake after observing a pair earlier in the season. The pair was seen again, but after several hours of observation it did not appear that active nesting was ongoing. The apparent lack of nesting material may be a factor. Periodic observations throughout the season may take place to determine fidelity to this site. Biologist DeBruyn and a biologist from the National Park Service surveyed Hozomeen Lake and other lakes in the area for breeding loons. A pair was detected on Hozomeen Lake and single first year birds and migrant individuals were observed on Ross Lake.



*Staff members followed up with monitoring for nesting loons by boat at a Snohomish county lake after observing a pair earlier in the season*

**Invasive Species Surveys:** Staff members from District 12 and 13 continued with survey/trapping efforts, which began last fall for prohibited invasive species in south Snohomish County waters.

### Wildlife Areas

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reported to WDFW Enforcement that someone dumped a stripped vehicle, furniture, and a pile of tree debris on the unit parking areas. Manager Boehm contacted Snohomish County's Environmental Protection Unit to haul away the vehicle.

**Fir Island Farm Data Download:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Planner Friebel uploaded and reset water level monitoring devices on the Fir Island Farm restoration site. The devices measure water depth, salinity, and temperature at 11 monitoring locations in groundwater wells, surface water ditches, and the bay front. Data from this effort will be used to evaluate whether or not there are any changes after the estuary restoration project is completed.

**Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project:** WDFW construction staff members provided cost estimates to repair dikes on the south end of the island that were damaged in March. Projects Coordinator Brokaw distributed the estimates to Region 4 staff members and more information is being collected to determine how to proceed.

**Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP):** Projects Coordinator Brokaw provided information related to estimating costs for estuary restoration projects to PSNERP staff members. Additionally, interim Regional Director Link reached out to Tulalip Tribes representatives to discuss a potential future PSNERP project at Quilceda Creek Estuary.

**Lake Terrell Unit Agricultural Field Prep:** Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued working on prepping the agricultural fields at Lake Terrell for this year's barley and fava bean plantings for winter waterfowl feeding. He has completed two rounds of ground breaking prep

work on all the fields on the Lake Terrell Unit. It is planned that 55 acres of barley and five acres of fava beans will be planted this year.

**Osprey Nest Platform at Lake Terrell:** This week, several ospreys have been seen landing in and perching on one of the osprey nesting platforms constructed last fall. This activity is being watched closely and it is hoped that the nest platform may still get used this year.

**Ferndale High School Students Earth Day Litter Pickup at Tennant Lake:**

Manager Kessler hosted a group of Ferndale High School students who took the time to pick up litter along the Nooksack River dike top trail for Earth Day. The students worked for three hours and had a great time in the outdoors.

**NSEA Earth Day Habitat Planting:**

The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association hosted an Earth Day habitat enhancement planting project on the British Petroleum Unit. The project was very well attended, with over 200 volunteers, many of them young kids, planting trees and shrubs along Terrell Creek. Manager Kessler posted informational signs to prevent any user conflicts, and monitored the project site. After the planting project was completed, an optional tour of the Lake Terrell dam remodel project was also available. Manager Kessler was onsite to explain the remodel project and explain the management of the whole Lake Terrell Unit.



**Private Lands/Access Management**

**Migratory Bird Enhancement Project Coordination and Collaboration with Private Landowners:** Natural Resource Technician Otto began coordinating and collaborating with private landowners on 2016-17 Migratory Bird Enhancement Projects across Region 4. Specifically, Otto gathered field notes and developed tentative plans with farmers for the upcoming planting season.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**North Cascades Elk Management Meetings:** Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, and District Wildlife Biologist Yarborough attended the North Cascades Elk Management Technical Committee meeting with Tribal co-Managers. Discussions took place on elk related damage, current and future elk exclusionary fence projects, elk

population management, and disease management issues. Following this meeting, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, Supervisor Caldwell, and Biologist Yarborough attended follow-up meetings with Regional and Olympia staff members to discuss developing issues and future management actions.

**Hunting Regulations:** Staff members responded to a variety of phone calls and emails related to questions regarding the newly posted Big Game Hunting Regulations.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Snoqualmie Valley Dog Training Outreach:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw attended a dog training field trial event in the Snoqualmie Valley. Over 90% of people who attended the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Public Scoping Meeting the week before were dog trainers, and



several of them encouraged WDFW staff members to attend one of their events to learn more about what they do.

*The dog training event in the Snoqualmie Valley last weekend was held at a private farmer's field*

**Samish River Unit Parking Area:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw continued drafting materials to apply for a grant to construct a

parking area at the Samish River Unit. The Samish River Unit is popular among bird watchers, waterfowl hunters, and fishermen, and the site is attracting increasing numbers of waterbirds since a wetland restoration project was installed last summer. There is currently no parking lot on the site, and if funded, the new parking area would accommodate 15 cars, two ADA spots, and a portable toilet.

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

**Spring Bear Hunt:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto toured the Skagit and Monroe Spring Bear Hunt units to check for new damage to timber stands and address any reported issues. While in the unit, staff members were able to clear multiple downed trees blocking roads, allowing for access to traditional damage areas. There were two missing locks at the Monroe Unit and one gate was slightly damaged. Otto was able to replace missing locks with new ones and secure the gates. The North Skagit Unit had a couple of dummy locked gates that Otto secured.

***Fresh bear peeling damage to a tree in the Monroe Spring Bear hunt unit***

**Wildlife Viewing:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard contacted landowners to sign wildlife viewing and diversity contracts. These sites provide opportunities for the public to view wildlife on private lands.

**Opening Day for Lowland Lakes:** Region 4 access staff members spent several days getting the low land lake sites ready for the seasonal fishing opener on Saturday, April 23. Several sites within the region are now open until October 31, 2016. Manager Rotton participated in the Creel Survey for Opening Day at Lake 16. Fishing was good and anglers were happy with the effort even with the cool, soggy conditions.



***Access staff members cleaned up some downed trees and the property boundary fence on Martha Lake prior to the opening day of fishing***



*Hatchery staff members from Arlington releasing trout into Martha Lake for the low land lake fishing season*

### Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

**Hunting Clinic Follow up:** After listening attentively to the WDFW turkey hunting clinic put on with help of the National Wild Turkey Federation and then winning a turkey box call in the door prize drawing, nine year old Tate was ready to put his new knowledge to the test. Having already passed hunter education and having been in the field for deer previously,

Tate was ready and loaded for turkey. Practice with his 20 gauge DONE. Purchase a license and tag DONE. Practice with the newly acquired box call DONE, over and over and over and over again as verified by his mother, hunter education instructor Megan Shaeffer. This last weekend, Tate took to the field in the Omak/Okanogan area. Exact location is a close held secret, as who wants to give away their prime hunting spots anyway? Needless to say, as shown in the pictures below, Tate's listening, practicing, and perseverance paid off. Tate the turkey hunter is now hooked. This shows that the WDFW turkey hunting clinic is a success and a great tool for recruiting new hunters.



*First things first, notch that tag then pose for the picture*

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Wildlife Conflict Monitoring & Management:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to the Maple Falls area of Whatcom County for a complaint of a bear getting into bee hives. The landowner was consulted on constructing electric fence around the hives and loaned two motion sensor audible alarm deterrents. The landowner deployed the alarm deterrents and the bear returned later in the evening activating the alarm eight times. The bear retreated from the areas each time the alarm was activated. Witman will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the alarms. Witman responded to a deer damage complaint in Whatcom County. The landowner is producing berry crops consisting of raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries. The deer seem to be focusing their browsing on the early blooms of strawberries. The landowner was consulted on adding electric wires to his existing fence. This effort will hopefully deter future deer activity. Witman responded to a WildComm report of injured /nuisance wildlife within Burlington in Skagit County. Given his response time, the situation was quickly resolved and the elderly neighboring landowners were pleased with the response.

*Natural Resource Technician Cogdal, a Skagit Valley College Environmental Conservation internship student, and tribal co-managers made progress on current elk exclusionary fence projects in Skagit County*



**Advisory Committee:** Biologist Yarborough attended the Skagit Valley College Advisory Committee meeting. The purpose of the committee is to serve the Skagit Valley College Environmental Program to advise, assist, and provide advocacy for profession-technical education. Biologist Yarborough met with a junior from the college to discuss possible elk related projects for a senior capstone project.

**Interview Exercise:** Biologist Yarborough participated in an interview with a local high school student. The interview was part of a class exercise to interview local professionals that worked in a profession the students are interested in.

**Priority Landscapes Initiative:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and District Biologist Milner provided comments on a draft Priority Landscapes Initiative document that was circulated by a cross-program WDFW team working in Olympia. The purpose of the document is to prioritize various sections of the state for conservation, including the Skagit and Snohomish watersheds in Region 4.

## **Wildlife Areas**

**User Outreach:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm visited the Snoqualmie Units to educate, inform, and monitor users about the requirement for leashing pets while on the wildlife areas.

**DeBay's Slough:** Cosgrove and Meis removed old, rotten wood parking bumpers from the parking area at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit. Meis and Cosgrove sprayed broadleaf herbicides on weeds at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit using a backpack sprayer. Weeds targeted include blackberry, Canada thistle, and other broad leaves. Rotton completed the DeBay Slough lease amendment and forwarded it to Olympia for approval. Rotton also coordinated with the Private Lands program regarding the three access sites included with the lease.

**Fir Island Farm:** Rotton provided a summary of a farm plan to Vasiliy Baranyuk for the snow goose monitoring project. Rotton and Friebel surveyed the field areas on Fir Island Farm to determine the reseeding needs for the project. Manager Rotton attended the construction planning meeting this week for the restoration project. Rotton met with a local farmer on Fir Island Farm to discuss the ground preparation for the native seed planting area for the restoration project. Skagit Wildlife Area staff members will be taking over the native seeding task from IMCO. Rotton worked with WDFW Site Project Inspector William Yarborough on the farm crossing installation and removal of wood debris in the native planting site.

**Island Unit:** Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove continued preparing fields on the Island Unit for agricultural and moist-soil enhancements. Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers to assist with field prep and dike mowing. Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers and assisted with ferrying operations to bring the fuel tank off the Island Unit, get it refilled, and ferry it back.

***Unusual visitor to the area, a Great Egret was spotted on the Island Unit this week***

**Agricultural Fields:** Meis toured the Island Unit, monitoring the progress of plowing and disking of the agricultural fields. Meis has set up most of the logistics for planting, which will begin the first week in May if weather and river levels allow. Corn and fava beans will be planted during that time frame on approximately 40 acres.



**Samish Unit:** Rotton and Meis, with assistance from North Sound Weed Crew Supervisor Daniel Zimmerman, transported the tractor and spray equipment to the Samish Unit. Meis sprayed roundup on approximately 10 acres, which will be planted to agricultural crops for the

first time this year. They applied pond borders and some ditch edges (five acres) around the unit to increase agricultural acreage and lessen noxious weed areas. Cosgrove sprayed broadleaf herbicides on weeds at the Samish Unit using a backpack sprayer. Weeds targeted include poison hemlock, Canada and bull thistle, blackberry, and giant hogweed. Cosgrove monitored vegetation growth on ponds at the Samish Unit as part of a multi-year project to reduce cattail and increase vegetation more beneficial to waterfowl. Good results continue to be noted in areas where cattail can be mowed in late summer and overtopped with water throughout the winter.

**Skagit Headquarters:** Rotton continued to monitor pumping station and tide gate water surface gages. Manager Rotton continued to prepare a summary of March storm damages.

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

**Spring Bear Hunts:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard answered many questions and provided guidance to several spring bear permittees. Biologist Wingard spoke with a successful bear hunter who harvested a bear that was in the act of damaging trees.

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Breakdowns:** Natural Resource Technician Otto finished breaking down Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites for the 2015-2016 season.

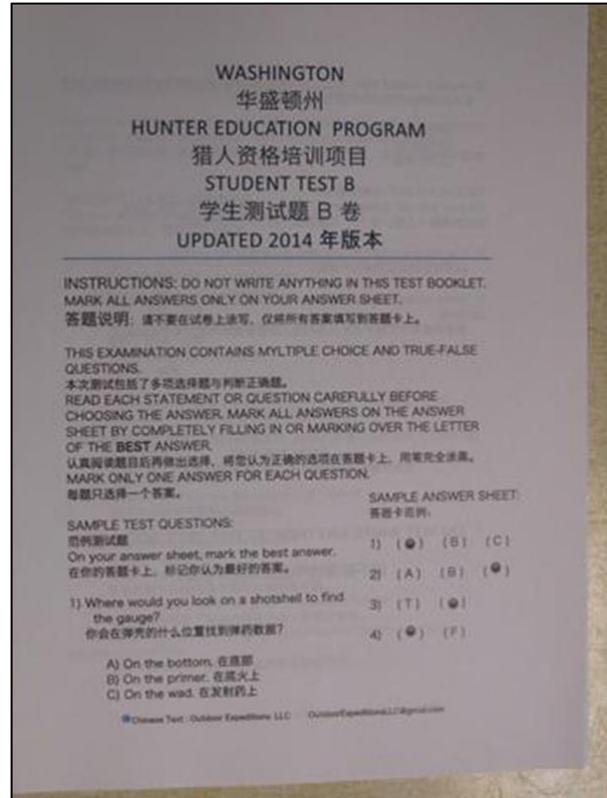
**Waterfowl Forage Planting Preparations:** Natural Resource Technician Otto met with Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell to discuss the spring season waterfowl forage planting plans and options. Otto toured potential sites in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties, checking on field conditions and vegetation growth.

### **Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator**

**Chinese Language Hunter Education Class:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey was recently approached by two instructors who pointed out the need for a class taught in Chinese for students whose first language is Chinese. The two instructors are bilingual and have received requests from the local Chinese community for this class. Seeing the need to reach out to the diverse community and meet the needs of these students, Coordinator Dazey worked with the instructors to facilitate a Chinese language class. The class filled in less than two days and has a waiting list. While Dazey speaks little mandarin, he did monitor the class. Wǒ shuō pǔtōnghuà bù dà. 我说普通话不大. OK google translate works well.

The class was taught in Mandarin and the instructors translated the test and other materials so they were in English and Chinese. One student, having learned of the class via social media within the Chinese community, actually traveled from mainland China to take the hunter safety class. He belongs to a hunt club in Inner Mongolia and had hunted game there so came with some background knowledge. Most of the students, however, did not have the firearm background that American students generally come into class with, so the instructors had quite a challenge set before them. The instructors spent a lot of volunteer time before the actual class translating and preparing materials to assist the students to be successful. The payoff for all of their efforts came when all 15 students that attended the class passed, scoring better than 80% on the 75 question test. Most only missed one or two questions. The class, having been so well

received within the Chinese community and demand exceeding capacity as shown by the wait list, the instructors and Dazey are looking at holding this type of class again. A huge thank you to the two instructors, Ren Jie “Patton” and Mikel Edwards, for all the time and effort that they put into making this class a success. Thanks also to hunter education instructors Jason Cahoon and Lance Charr, who came in and assisted the field skills portion of the class.



**Results of the Chinese Language Hunter Education Class**

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

**Wildlife Area Management Plan Update:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended a post-scoping meeting conference call with the Wildlife Area Planning Team. Discussions included a follow-up meeting for dog-related users. Additionally, Manager Boehm provided the WDFW GIS team with updated vegetation and wetland maps, which will be included in the updated management plan.

**Private Lands Access Program Section Manager Tour:** Small Game Section Manager Curtis toured portions of Region 4 with Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard. The tour included waterfowl quality hunt site visits, diversity and wildlife viewing site visits, migratory bird forage enhancement project site visits, and a tour through the Skagit Spring Bear Hunt private timberlands. The meeting was very positive and many good ideas were discussed.

## **REGION 5**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Golden Eagle Nest Site Visit:** Biologists Anderson and Watson (Science Division) conducted a site visit to a golden eagle nest territory associated with a wind power project in eastern Klickitat County. This nest site is located in close proximity to existing wind turbines located directly above the nest site. A golden eagle pair nested in the drainage this year and due to concerns about potential collision/mortality issues, the USFWS issued a permit to the wind power company to remove the active golden eagle nest. Anderson and Watson visited the area to evaluate the location of the new nest site in relation to the wind farm. This golden eagle site is one of several that have been impacted by the development of wind farms in eastern Klickitat County.



#### ***Golden eagle nesting territory and wind turbines in Klickitat County***

**Western Pond Turtle Notching:** Biologist Bergh went to the Oregon Zoo to notch the 14 hatchlings that will be released back into the wild next month. Notches are filed into specific scutes (sections) of the carapace (upper half of the shell) to correspond to certain numbers. This is one way to identify turtles in the wild. These turtles that have spent the winter growing at the zoo also received tiny microchip transponders that can be read in the field with a chip reader.



#### ***Hatchling receiving its notches***

**Western Pond Turtle Trapping:** Biologists Butler and Bergh, along with USFWS Biologist Chmielewski and other staff members, set and monitored ten turtle traps within Franz Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Since western pond turtle trapping has never occurred at Franz Lake, this was an exploratory trapping mission to aid population monitoring efforts. No western pond turtles

were caught, but one painted turtle was trapped during the week long effort. Western pond turtles can be found nearby at Beacon Rock State Park and the Pierce National Wildlife Refuge.



### *Turtle trapping within Franz Lake National Wildlife Refuge*

**Ferruginous Hawk Surveys:** Biologists Anderson conducted a second site occupancy visit to a ferruginous hawk nesting territory in eastern Klickitat County. Only one adult ferruginous has been observed in the territory this season, and based on its behavior it appears that the site is not occupied by a breeding pair. All occupancy visits to ferruginous hawk sites will be completed by the end of May and preliminary indications are that there are no known breeding pairs currently in Klickitat County.



**New Bald Eagle Territories:** Biologist Anderson documented two new bald eagle nesting territories in the Columbia River Gorge this week. Both sites are in Klickitat County.

### *One of two new bald eagle territories located in the Gorge*

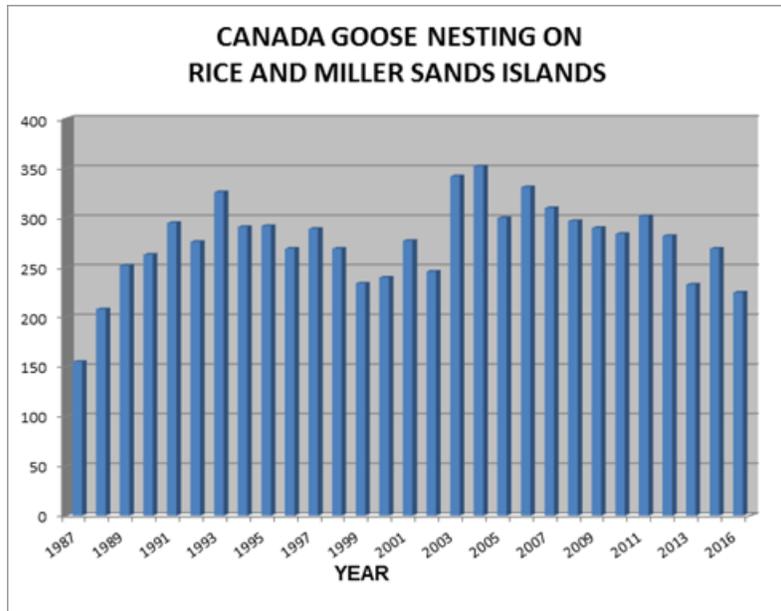
**Lower Columbia River Canada Goose Nest Survey:** Region 5 Biologists Stephens and Holman, along with Technician Fox, teamed with Region 6

Biologists Novack and Michaelis to survey Canada goose nests on two islands in the lower Columbia River. USFWS Biologists Meyers, Brenner, and Heale, as well as Volunteer Miller, participated in the survey as well. The survey is conducted every other year and is used as an index of the goose population. Data are submitted to USFWS for inclusion in the development of waterfowl hunting regulations. This year's count of 225 active goose nests on the two index islands indicates stability in the locally reproductive goose population. See the attached figure illustrating the number of active goose nests on Miller Sands Island and Rice Island in the lower Columbia from 1994 to 2016.



***Lower Columbia River Canada Goose Nest Survey***

**Treponeme-Associated Hoof Disease - Technical Advisory Group Meeting:** Biologists Holman and George, along with Elk Specialist Hoenes and Dr. Mansfield, joined veterinarians, epidemiologists, and subject matter experts from Colorado State University, Washington State University, Oregon Fish and Wildlife, US Department of Agriculture, and the Washington Department of Agriculture to discuss Treponeme-Associated



Hoof Disease in elk. The current results of recent and ongoing studies regarding the prevalence of the disease in southwest Washington, and the survival and reproduction of affected animals in the Mount St. Helens elk herd, were presented. Additional presentations covered diagnostic sampling procedures, disease progression, microbial profiling results, and the current state of the disease in Oregon. Advances in the study of digital dermatitis in livestock were also presented. Herd dynamics and the nutritional condition of the Mount St Helens and Willapa Hills elk herds, habitat conditions in Washington and Oregon, future research and future research needs, and the feasible management strategies for controlling the disease in free roaming populations were topics of discussion. Live animal testing and soil sampling were also discussed, but a beneficial and practical application of potential results for those strategies could not be determined at this meeting. Technical Advisory Group members will continue to engage in and support ongoing research efforts pertaining to learning more about this emergent disease in Pacific Northwest elk populations.

**Hoof Disease:** Wildlife Program Manager Jonker was invited as the guest speaker at the Longview Chapter of the Society of American Foresters meeting. Jonker gave a presentation on Treponeme-Associated Hoof Disease in elk. There was a lot of interest in the topic, with many good questions following the presentation.

### **Klickitat Wildlife Area**

**Weed Control:** Technician Davis inspected two campgrounds along the Klickitat River for presence of sulfur cinquefoil, an especially invasive weed in this area. He found areas that were treated in 2014 and 2015 seem to be free of this weed. However, peripheral areas still had some patches of cinquefoil. Davis applied herbicide selectively to scattered sulfur cinquefoil populations and maintained application records and equipment. The combination of herbicide products being used has given very good results in heavily infested areas during the last two years and the progress is encouraging.



**Water Structure Repair:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis repaired a damaged dike on the Soda Springs Unit by adding fill material to a sizable trench that had been dug by animals in the back of the dike. California ground squirrels and possibly coyotes have been digging in this area for a few years, threatening the integrity of the structure. Eight wheelbarrow loads of dirt and rock fill were tamped in to restore the contour of the ground surface.

#### ***Filling Excavation Damage***

**Fence Repair:** Van Leuven constructed a rock box to anchor the end of a fence line near the old barn at the Klickitat Wildlife Area Headquarters. Repair of this fence and construction of a wire gate will make it possible to confine stray cattle that sometimes enter the compound.

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**2016 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations Pamphlet:** The 2016 Big Game Regulations are available in hard copy as well as online at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/>. Prospective special permit applicants are reminded that the deadline for submitting applications for special hunting permits is May 18. 2016 is the second year within the current three year season setting cycle, so most adjustments are to special permit numbers.

## Access

**Mineral Lake:** With trout season coming up, Access staff members limbed the parking lot, replaced signs, used the blower to clean the parking lot and ADA walkway to the fishing dock, and used a Vactor truck to clean all the bottles and cans out of the vault toilet.

**Barber and Oneida:** Access staff members picked up 20 pounds of beer bottles from alongside the Barber restroom and 30 pounds of clothing and bedding was retrieved from behind the restroom and removed. Access staff members also picked up and hauled a dump site at the parking lot across from the Oneida boat launch.

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

### Wildlife Conflict

**Elk:** Conflict Specialist Peterson met with managers of a Skamania County golf course to discuss ongoing elk damage to the fairways and greens. Peterson and golf course managers are considering multiple nonlethal deterrents to protect the golf course.

**Wolves:** Conflict Specialists Peterson and Biologist Meyer discussed topics and pre-plans for an upcoming meeting with members of the Cattlemen's Association in Klickitat County about DPCA\_L contracts, range riding, and wolf ecology.

**Bear:** Conflict Specialist Conklin contacted a property owner who was experiencing bear damage to beehives. Conklin gave advice to the landowner on fencing options and followed up with an email on other bear information and deterrent techniques to assist the landowner in the future. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin also verified bear damage on industrial timber lands in Cowlitz County.



***Bear damage***



*Bear damage*

***GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY***

**Private Lands:** Biologist Meyer attended a CRP Planning field training hosted by NRCS in Prosser, WA.



*NRCS staff members teaching CRP planning and field certification skills at a workshop near Prosser*

**REGION 6**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys:** Biologist McMillan conducted Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly surveys on Monday, April 18 through Wednesday, April 20, completing three transects within the southern extant site west of the Elwha River. There was an extensive search in areas east and northeast of the occupied site. The road habitat route had moderately low numbers of Taylor’s checkerspots. The off road transects (new as of 2014) had record high counts that might be a result of few surveys being completed. The search effort on April 20 was targeting an area along a popular trail system where Department of Natural Resource (DNR) Biologist Jessica Hanawalt had noticed checkerspots in previous years. No Taylor’s checkerspots were noticed on this searching area, but there was a massive amount of the Plectritus host plant for Taylor’s checkerspots.



*Taylor's checkerspot butterfly surveys, butterflies observed in routes surveyed*

*Searching habitat adjacent to known occupied habitat, no Taylor's observed*



**Snowy Plover:** Technician Raby conducted nest searching, nest checks, and egg floatation this week at Leadbetter. WDFW Biologist Sundstrom joined Technician Raby on April 19 to conduct nest searching at the north tip of the Long Beach Peninsula where numerous scrapes were found.

# of active nests	7
# of new nests discovered this week	4
# of failed nests	0
# of hatched nests	0
# of nests with undetermined fate	0
Total # of fledglings	0

**Locations of Active Nests:** One (three eggs) in the outer north hummock and swale, two (both three eggs) in the south HRA, one (three eggs) in the north HRA, one (two eggs) on the north outer beach, and two (three eggs and one egg) in the South Swale.

Biologist Sundstrom continues to search for new nests and monitor existing snowy plover nests along the coastal areas of Pacific County. Biologist Michaelis assisted for one day. Sundstrom spent one day at Long Beach (Leadbetter) assisting Technician Raby while the refuge biologist is away for several weeks.

The improving weather conditions have given the birds an incentive to nest, as a total of twelve nests were discovered this week at Midway and Graveyard.



*One of a dozen snowy plover nests discovered this week*

2016 Midway Beach and Graveyard Spit Season Totals				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
12	11	0	1	0

**Streaked Horned Lark:** Technician Raby located a lark nest in the north HRA, which did not contain any eggs. Based on the weathered tracks around the nest, it might have hatched prior to discovery.

**Western Pond Turtles:** Biologist Murphie began vegetation removal activities at a western pond turtle recovery site in South Puget Sound last week. To maintain a meadow at this pond for nesting turtles, encroaching invasive plants, like Scot’s broom and Himalayan blackberry, are removed each year.

Biologist Tirhi and staff members finished the annual trapping season for turtles at the Pierce County recovery site. Over 200 turtles were captured and processed. Details will be in subsequent weeklies.

**Harbor Seal Tagging:** As part of a study on harbor seal diets in south Puget Sound, Biologist Murphie assisted the WDFW Marine Mammal Investigations Unit in the capture and tagging of three adult male harbor seals last week. These seals were caught by beach seine and beach rush capture techniques. Two instruments were deployed on seals at Eagle Island near Tacoma and one instrument was deployed on a seal from Orchard Rocks near Port Orchard. Additional capture attempts were made at the mouth of the Nisqually River, but were unsuccessful. Efforts will continue next week.

**Common Loon:** Biologists Tirhi and Michaelis searched the entirety of Alder Lake, Pierce County shoreline surveying for common loons. Two adult loons were located approximately one mile from each other and one loon was heard calling. No nesting platforms were located. The biologists will return in May for one final survey with the hope of locating a juvenile to confirm breeding at the lake. Tacoma Power staff members also reported to Biologist Tirhi, observing one adult male in the same vicinity.

***Adult loon observations on Alder Lake, Pierce County, April 2016***

**Purple Martins:** Biologist Tirhi, along with staff members from Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, Pierce County Parks and Recreation, and one volunteer, installed eight new martin boxes at the Chambers Bay Purple Martin colony at University Place. All six boxes previously established at the site were active in 2015 and more boxes were needed to grow the colony. County staff members provided a truck escort to the site.



***Biologist Tirhi and volunteer preparing martin boxes for installation***



***Purple martin box installation, Chambers Bay, University Place***

**Bats and White Nose Syndrome Response:** Biologist Tirhi represented District 11 in an all day workshop hosted by headquarters with presentations from WDFW, USGS National Health Lab, and USFWS. Tirhi and Region 4 staff members are the primary WDFW Regional staff members currently involved in the white nose syndrome response following confirmation of a positive occurrence on a bat collected by hikers in the North Bend area earlier this week. Following the workshop, Tirhi was asked to take USGS lab staff members to three known bat maternity roosts in Pierce County to aid in collecting samples for white nose testing. Tirhi spent one day visiting the sites and confirming access allowance with site managers and one day assisting with trapping and testing of bats.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Goose Nests Search:** Biologists Michaelis and Novack assisted Region 5 and USFWS staff members with locating and recording data on local breeding Canada geese on two islands near

Altoona. Several hundred nests were observed and a few had recently hatched young. These surveys have been conducted for several decades and are used by USFWS as a long term breeding index. Local resident dark geese, or wusky's, nest on these islands, intermixing with pure western Canada geese.

**Scatter Creek Addition and West Rocky Prairie:** Biologist Tirhi continued to develop product sections related to two acquisition grants being applied for in 2016 thru the Washington Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation. The first is a purchase of 148 acres of land connected to Scatter Creek Wildlife Area (\$1M) and the second is the purchase of 745 acres connected to the West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area (\$2M). This grant application is due in May, with presentations to the grant board to follow in late summer.

**Matheny Habitat Project:** Eyes in the Woods had another work party in the Matheny last weekend. Below is a report sent to Biologist Harris. One item of note is in the past WDFW or USFS staff members had to be in radio contact for check in and out and in case of emergency. Now a volunteer uses the WDFW Clearwater cabin as a base and maintains radio contact. Cell phone reception at the cabin is adequate for emergency information to be relayed if needed.

*April 22-24 2016 Matheny Habitat Work Party*

*Project planning was completed by Jack Smith, Kyle Winton, Scott Harris (WDFW), and Betsy Howell (USFS). Jack Smith purchased all the camp groceries and picked up all the gear from the EITW Elma storage facility, he delivered them Friday evening to Kyle Winton at the WDFW Region 6 office while Winton was conducting a CORT class.*

*Twelve EITW volunteers arrived Friday evening at the USFS Bunkhouse. A quick project briefing was held and a "Bunkhouse Sign In" sheet was completed. Saturday morning after breakfast the team arrived at 08:30 to the FS21 and US101 junction and met with the other volunteers. The 13-person team traveled to the old "Hook branch road," conducted a safety briefing, and walked approximately one mile to site 3.6, while Ira Jay Carterman traveled to the WDFW Clearwater cabin to be our communications check point. NOTE: the equipment and lunch supplies were transported 0.8 of a mile by Matt Smith using his ATV.*

*The team consisting of five Sawyers and eight Pilers called in and began activity about 9:30 am, starting where we left off last year working east toward the first creek "no cut" zone, finishing up that area, and moving further east on the other side of the creek. The weather was good with only a few sprinkles. The team finished the saw activity and call in around 4:30 pm, returning the vehicles where it began to rain hard while we loaded the gear. Twelve of us returned to the bunkhouse and two went home.*

*Sunday the 12-person team left the bunkhouse at 8:00 am and traveled to the FS21 & HWY 101, picking up an additional piler (note: one Sawyer could not make Sunday), while Carterman traveled to the cabin for communication. We met at the Hook branch road, conducted a safety briefing, and walked into the site on the other side of the creek. Communications were made and Sawyers began around 9:00 am. That work zone was extremely thick and fairly steep. Saws stopped at 2:45 pm, communication was made, and the team returned to the vehicles. A*

*debriefing was completed. The gear was loaded into Winton's van and we returned to the bunkhouse. The gear was then unloaded, inspected, and packed up for storage. Contact was made with Smith and Winton. Carterman and Smith met at the EITW Elma storage facility at 6:30 pm. After short debriefing with Smith, the gear and paperwork were transferred and the day was done.*

*Due to terrain and forest density, it is hard to estimate the amount of area cleared. It is my best guess that we completed about five football fields of area this weekend. All the volunteers commented how great this project makes them feel after looking back at the cleared areas.*

*I will post pictures and a brief report on our EITW Facebook page this evening.*

*End of Report*



*Volunteer in the background*



*A piled area*



*Volunteer group picture*

## Access Areas

### Lowland Lake Openers

**Week of April 18, 2016:** The Region 6 Access team spent the week fine tuning the lowland lakes for the Saturday opener.



*A late blow down was cleaned up at Lake Sutherland*



*Final touch up, weed whacked, fences trimmed out and mowed at Mission Lake*



*Maintenance complete: mowed, trimmed, fences brushed out, cleaning of blacktop at McIntosh Lake*

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

### Private Lands /Conflict

**Bear Timber Damage:** Natural Resource Technician Leite verified historical damage at a site in west Lewis County. While there, he found substantial fresh peeling.



*Fresh peeling. Apparently did not taste very good, as the bear did not eat much of the cambium.*

**Ocean Shores Bear Conflict:** Biologist Harris and Technician Leite visited citizens who had reported bear conflict. Most had put garbage away. However, after visiting the area it is likely that an effort to remove the bear(s) will begin next week. More research into the history of bear conflict in the area will be conducted prior to determining if this is a chronic problem or just a bear that has wandered into a residential area. The area has small pockets of habitat. It is a few miles from where conflict would usually be expected.

**Grayland Cranberries:** Biologist Harris attended a meeting of the Grayland Cranberry Growers Association. He gave a briefing of the effectiveness of the remote camera system on

improving response to elk in the bogs and the difficulties with addressing the deer problem. He was also informed by a grower that several of his bogs were downgraded to juice concentrate because of deer feces. The estimate of loss was \$12,000 based on an estimated 400 barrels reduced in value by \$30 per barrel. Unfortunately, this grower did not have a DPCA with the department. This grower was happy to hear about the recent changes to the firearm restrictions, as his bogs were affected by the past restrictions. Another grower provided the picture below. This picture was taken last fall during harvest.



*Buck testing the quality of cranberries at the cranberry road winery*

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

**Wildlife Management:**

**South Sound Prairie Vision:** Tirhi represented District 11 in the second prairie planning meeting to determine WDFW’s vision, goals, roles, and responsibilities for south sound prairie flora and fauna. Tirhi also reviewed and provided district comments on draft products.