

Wildlife Program

Week of October 31 – November 6, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Stevens County Commissioner Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with the Stevens County Commissioners and Sheriff's Department for an introductory meeting. A variety of topics were discussed and additional follow up items were completed.

October Range Rider and Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA-L) Invoices Processed: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with the entire group of contract range riders and some DPCA-L producers to complete payment forms and checklists.

Oregon Collared Wolves: Both of the wolves with collars from Oregon (OR-35 and OR-38) have left the Blue Mountains. OR-35 went back to Oregon. OR-38 traveled north through Garfield and Whitman counties where the last point received from the collar was about one mile from the Idaho border north of Moscow.

Livestock Cooperators: Biologist Earl talked to producers with Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA-L) contracts this week to update their checklists.

Reported Sighting: Biologist Earl received a call this week from a delivery driver who said he spotted seven wolves along the Kirby-Mayview Road in Garfield County. The reporting party stated that two of them were dark and the rest lighter in color.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Northwest Lepidopterists' Workshop: Ann Potter, Conservation Biologist, participated in this two-day annual meeting in Corvallis, OR. The event brings together amateur and professional lepidopterists from a multi-state and province area to share and vet collected materials, participate in workshops on taxonomy and life history of focal species groups, report and discuss major new locality records for northwest butterflies and moths, share findings from local insect studies (large and small), and informally network with colleagues. Over 65 lepidopterists attended the meeting this year, from Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, California, Idaho, and Montana. Ann presented a summary of new county records and unique species reports from the 2016 season in Washington, including multiple detections of American lady butterflies, an episodically far-ranging species with only a handful of prior observations in Washington.

Citizen Science: Coordinator Wendy Connally presented at and participated in the Partners In Flight Western Working Group meeting, held this year in Long Beach. Bird conservation leads from British Columbia, through western states, and south to Nicaragua participated in this

workshop to discuss bird conservation planning, project development, and ongoing successes in data collection and management, including projects with a strong citizen science component. Additionally, Connally coordinated a very positive Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife discussion to form a community of citizen science practice among programs, biologists, researchers, data managers, and communications specialists. More information on this effort will be coming in future updates.

Forest Resiliency: Section Manager Cynthia Wilkerson attended a forest resiliency roundtable hosted by The Nature Conservancy, along with Lands Division Manager Clay Sprague and the forest section manager on Monday, October 24. The meeting was well-attended by agencies, conservation organizations, and industry representatives, and was aimed at exploring the concept of a statewide grant program to support large collaborative, locally driven landscape projects to improve forest resilience, reduce wildfire risk, and generate economic development opportunities that benefit both rural and urban communities. The group determined there was enough interest to further this effort and department staff members will be engaged moving forward.

Taylor's Checkerspot Habitat Management: Biologist David Hays worked with the Olympic National Forest to review sites for 2016 habitat restoration and train forest staff members on seeding and planting to enhance Taylor's checkerspot food plants.

Periodic Status Reviews: Section Manager Hannah Anderson and Biologists Joe Buchanan, Gerry Hayes, Derek Stinson, Steve Desimone, and Jeff Lewis brought several status recommendations before the Fish and Wildlife Commission on Friday, November 4. Recommendations are to delist the bald eagle and peregrine falcon, down-list the American white pelican from endangered to threatened, and up-list the marbled murrelet and lynx from threatened to endangered. The Commission's final decision on the recommendations will occur at the December 9 meeting.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

WildLinks Conference: Assistant District Biologist Annemarie Prince participated in the WildLinks conference this week. Led by the [Cascadia Partner Forum](#) and Conservation Northwest, WildLinks is an annual conference and science briefing that brings together researchers, conservationists, land managers, agency officials, tribal and First Nations leaders, and other experts from Washington and British Columbia. The goal is to share ideas and better coordinate keeping our region's wildlands and wildlife populations healthy and connected. During the conference a small group met to discuss and prioritize lynx conservation actions within Washington. The department proposed to up-list Canada lynx to endangered in the state at the November Commission meeting.

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

Routine Site Maintenance: Dziekan performed his routine site duties at the few that remain open. He picked up garbage and cleaned the restrooms. He also made sure any fallen leaves were removed from the parking lot and walkways. Dziekan has been limbing trees around the parking lots and pathways to improve access and leaving piles behind. He will follow up with the wood chipper and blow the chips into the brush.



Newman Lake after leaf clean up

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse: Biologist Heinlen attended the annual sharp-tailed grouse working group meeting. Statewide surveys were disconcerting, as all populations but one showed a decline this year. Declines in Okanogan County occurred in the wake of last summer's wildfires, which consumed a significant percentage of occupied habitats. The working group consensus is to pursue opportunities to augment Washington's struggling populations with birds from out of state.

Environmental Education (Wolverines): Biologist Fitkin joined USFS Biologist Raley at the Burke Museum's Meet the Mammals event to interpret a display highlighting the North Cascades Wolverine Research Project. Almost 1000 people passed thru the displays and the wolverines were their usual charismatic selves. While at the museum, it was learned that museum staff members collected a northern bog lemming at Washington Pass this summer. This is one of the few specimens of this species collected in Washington.



Part of the North Cascades Wolverine exhibit at the Burke Museum – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wildlife Areas

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project Phase 1: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass met with CAMP Engineer Erin Muldoon to develop a road plan for the Ramsey timber sale. While the existing road beds are being used for the sale, several stretches of road need drainage improvement structures, re-grading, and sloping. The majority of time was spent designing, mapping, and staking a new switchback turn to get haul trucks onto the main USFS road with minimal fill or changes. Road plans will be part of the harvester bid package, and are part of the Wildlife Area's RMAP. Overall road usage will improve erosion issues following completion of the sale, and roads currently closed to motorized public access will be re-closed with gates, boulders, or road structures. Bass completed the amendments for the Boise Cascade PTR contract as they related to Methow Wildlife Area projects and contacted USFS Contract Administrator Mike Borowski to discuss adjacent landowner timber sale management. Following the commercial thinning, grant funds will be utilized for prescribed fire and non-commercial thinning. Bass developed contracts, prescriptions, and maps for PCT contracts and consulted with local contractors and WDFW contract specialists. The PCT projects will be prepared and ready for implementation as soon as timing and funding are readily available. Forester Bass completed and submitted SEPA comment responses regarding this project. The SEPA has been posted as final. Staff members consulted with financial about billing submissions to RCO for the Methow project.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris attended the annual sage grouse working group meeting in Wenatchee. Confer Morris also attended the first day of the Washington Weed Association Weed Conference, also in Wenatchee.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Wildlife area staff members spent some time helping at the Ringold Springs Hatchery. A USFWS project replaced a large-diameter water delivery pipe and covered it with soil. Manager Buser and Assistant Manager Kaelber assisted with reseeding the disturbed area with native grass and winter wheat as a cover crop.



The covered pipe and reseeded area at the Ringold Hatchery

Wildlife Management

Sage Grouse: District Biologist Fidorra attended the annual Washington sage grouse working group meeting in Wenatchee.

Cougar Seals: District Biologist Fidorra sealed two cougars this week. It has been an unusually busy cougar season in the area, with at least six cougars coming into the District 4 office to be sealed.

Enterprise Middle School: District Biologist Fidorra was a guest lecturer at the 7th grade science class at Enterprise Middle School in West Richland. Fidorra presented information on threatened and endangered species of the shrubsteppe ecosystem and conservation projects WDFW is involved on in the area. The students were well behaved and attentive.

White Pelican: District Biologist Fidorra and Sgt. Fulton responded to a report of an injured white pelican in Finley. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) made the report and claimed the animal had been present for several weeks. The animal was located and captured after a short chase and transferred to a rehabilitation center. The animal was found to have been shot, and will likely not recover.

Duck: District Biologist Fidorra received many calls about a duck with an arrow through its chest in Columbia Park in Kennewick. Fidorra attempted to capture the duck, which was a domestic hybrid mallard, but it escaped into the water. Fidorra may try again next week.



Domestic mallard hybrid duck swimming with arrow through chest at Columbia Park

Bighorn Sheep Sampling: Biologist Bernatowicz distributed sampling kits to Clemans permit holders and worked out final details on both WDFW and WSU collecting samples. The majority of hunters are enthusiastic about helping with sampling.

Bighorn Sheep Paper: Biologist Bernatowicz participated in a conference call with other authors to work out final edits. Bernatowicz worked on incorporating edits into tables and the paper.

Sage Grouse: WDFW biologists attended one day of the sage grouse working group meeting. The grouse population was estimated to be down in 2015 to less than 750 adults. Predator control, restoration, and other topics were discussed with researchers and agencies. Annual lek counts indicate the sage grouse population has hit record lows and is approaching levels for up-listing from “Threatened” to “Endangered”. An up-listing will likely mean little in terms of management. Locally, the Yakima Training Center (YTC) population has also hit record lows (140 birds). The decline is somewhat expected with loss of habitat due to wildfire. YTC reported radioed birds are nesting and hatching eggs at a relatively high rate, but almost no young are surviving. The radioed birds are mostly translocated, so they may not be indicative of the entire population. In 2016, there were 276 new fire starts. Most fires were put out quickly. The big exception was the Range 12 fire that eventually burned close to 177,000 acres, mostly off YTC. There were also a few “small” 200-300 acre fires on YTC. Not much is expected to change in the near future. The Chair of the working group will rotate to Biologist Fidorra for a three year rotation next year.

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

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: With the record amount of rainfall recorded for the month of October, a section of road near the entrance to the WB-10 area in Franklin County washed out. Manager Buser and Assistant Manager Kaelber inspected the road. Since the road is also a service road for the local irrigation district, they contacted them about repairs. The irrigation district decided they will replace the culvert with a low water crossing. Wildlife area staff members will assist as needed with the repairs.

Assistant Manager Kaelber inspects the washout

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Berry answered hunter questions and assisted WEC volunteers as modern rifle elk hunters moved into the area.



Wenas Wildlife Area: Biologist Longoria organized stakeholder applications for the Manastash Ridge Trails planning process and shared those documents with our partners for the project. Manager Confer Morris and Longoria reviewed the applications and Longoria sent a follow up email to interested members of the public, setting a final deadline for submitting applications.

Work Party: Biologist Longoria helped to coordinate a work party for the Manastash Ridge Trail with DNR. The work party was held on November 5 and its goals were to collect garbage, pull weeds, and clear a tree that had fallen across the trail.

Eagle Scout Project: Assistant Manager Taylor met with a Boy Scout at Umtanum Falls to discuss trail improvements that could be done for his Eagle Scout project.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Hill put up a “no unauthorized vehicles” sign along a non-green dot road in the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area. The road was getting some serious use and no sign was present.

New “no unauthorized vehicles” sign along a non-green dot road

Signage: Natural Resource Technician Hill put up a sign at the dumpster along the Taneum. This sign described what items could be discarded in the dumpster.

Explanatory sign on dumpster along the Taneum

Green Dot Markers: Natural Resource Technician Hill posted new green dot markers with road names near Quilomene Ridge and Beacon Road.





Green dot marker along Quilomene Ridge Road

Wildlife Management

Customer Service: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman responded to 10 hunter calls or emails. Questions again mostly centered on the Wild Horse wind facility, but there were a number of questions about the late muzzleloader season and the corn stubble access sites as well.

Land Agreement: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman identified parking areas and posting requirements for some DNR ground near Pasco that will be managed by WDFW's reservation system. Stutzman also worked with contracts staff from Olympia to adjust and finalize the language for the agreement with DNR and their lessee.

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

Wildlife Management

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a deer damage complaint at an orchard in the Benton City area. During the visit, it was observed that several newly planted trees had been browsed on by deer. A few rubs by buck deer were also noted on a few mature trees in an adjacent block of trees in the orchard. The landowner has been utilizing pyrotechnics and dogs to haze the deer, as well as hunting during the general season. A new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement and associated damage permits will be implemented.

Injured Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received an injured deer report through Wildcomm in the Kennewick area. After contacting the reporting party, the deer turned out to be the same buck mule deer we have received numerous reports on since last summer. The deer has a bad case of fibroma, but is still able to navigate along the Columbia River corridor in the Tri-Cities.

Rattlesnake Mountain: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with multiple landowners on Rattlesnake Mountain to discuss general elk season hunting opportunities and coordination.

Silver Dollar LHP: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with one of the landowners in the Silver Dollar LHP to discuss elk hunting success during the general season. Although hunters have been active every day of the season, no elk have been reported on their ranch.

Thorp Area Elk: Conflict Specialist Wetzel continued to work with landowners, master hunters, and general hunters to move elk away from the Thorp area. Wet conditions hampered access to some elk locations, but elk harvest is increasing in the area.

Landowner Meeting: Conflict Specialist Wetzel attended a landowner meeting organized by Representative Dent.

Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel coordinated a nonlethal hazing effort with a landowner in Thorp.

Conflict: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was called by a landowner to report an elk shot after hours and trespassing on private land. The elk was also not a true spike and was shot in GMU 328. The matter was turned over to enforcement, but the elk was recovered and donated to the Union Gospel Mission. In the same general area, a landowner called to report a buck deer that was moribund and unable to get up. Upon checking the deer, it was indeed immobile and was euthanized. It had been shot several days prior and had a broken shoulder and a perforated stomach. Due to the length of time that had passed and the nature of injuries, the deer was not salvageable.



Salvaged animals from adjacent GMUs 335 and 328

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

Wildlife Areas

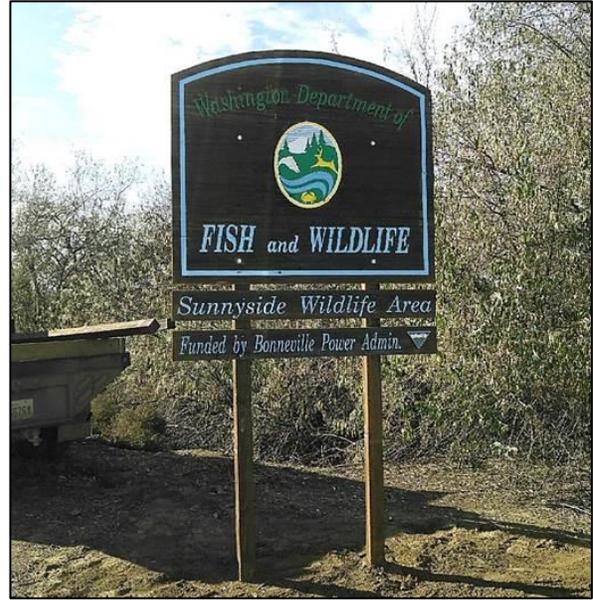
Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak, Natural Resource Technician Medina, and Natural Resource Worker Becker restored the Headquarters Unit WDFW entrance sign after it fell apart. The crew sanded it, gave the sign a fresh coat of paint, and installed it to its original place.

Sunnyside Headquarters Unit entrance sign before its facelift





Natural Resource Technician Medina and Natural Resource Worker Becker giving the sign a makeover



The newly restored Sunnyside Headquarters Unit entrance sign

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manger Babik welcomed new Assistant Manager Noel Winegeart and went through the new employee onboarding process with him.

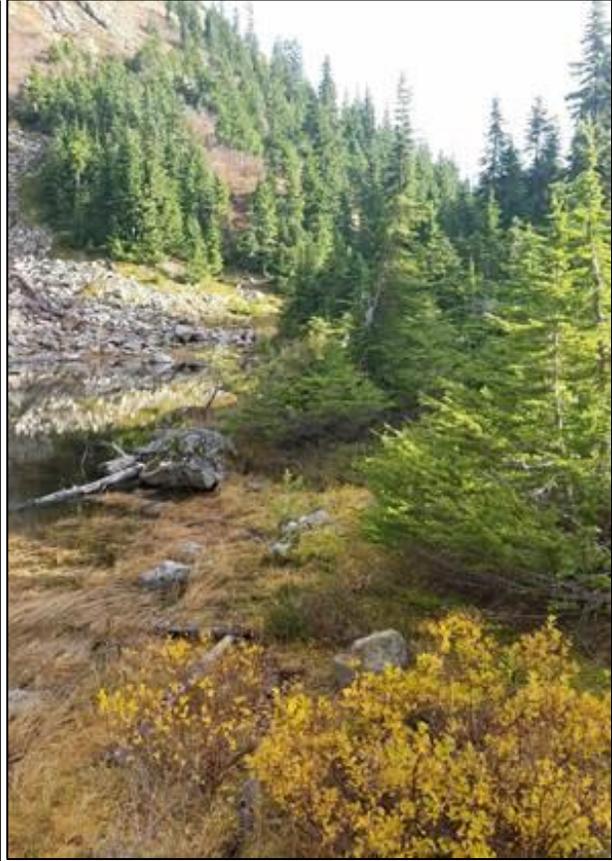
REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

White-nose Syndrome Monitoring, Bat Health, and Bat Conservation: District 12, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and a volunteer continued surveillance efforts regarding fall/winter/early spring bat activity via passive acoustic work. There are ongoing planning and management needs locally and statewide with internal peers.

Please report bat roosts, sick or dead bats here (PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD OF THIS WEBSITE AND NEED TO REPORT ROOSTS AND DEAD OR SICK BATS IN WASHINGTON): <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wn>



Suburban winter acoustic monitoring and wildland monitoring – Photo by Biologist Anderson

Permits and GMA Assistance: Biologist Anderson provided response to wildlife take permits and some land use assistance to Habitat. More work is needed to catch up with these items given field work being conducted. This includes covering osprey permits, eagle requests for clarification of data to meet federal needs (passed to federal agencies), and more.

Removal of an inactive osprey nest requires a permit/approval from WDFW due to take statutes – Photo by PSE



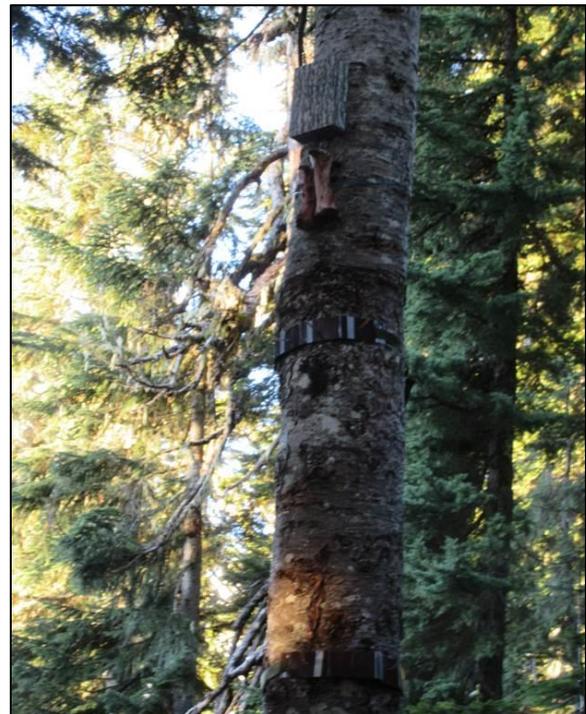
Bat Acoustics Analysis: District 13 analyzed bat calls from four sites recorded last summer at bat maternity roosts. These sites were either previously undocumented or the species occupying the sites had not been determined. Big brown bats, little brown bats, and Yuma bats were the predominant species found. Data for each site was sent to Wildlife Survey Data Management (WSDM).

Black Bear Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell coordinated with Olympia and other statewide staff members on black bear management and conservation efforts. A meeting is set for next week to discuss and review annual data results, staff comments, and critical evaluations associated with current bear management and conservation efforts.

Trumpeter Swan Lead Poisoning Project: Biologist Smith assisted a private contractor with installation of a remotely accessed (web) camera to be used to monitor swans roosting on a lake in northern Whatcom County. Current cell service in the area is proving to be a challenge and Smith and others are continuing to pursue a solution. The camera will be used again this winter to document numbers of swans roosting at the lake throughout the winter months and what portions of the lake are used.

Elk Funding: Biologist Yarborough worked with local tribes, Department of Transportation, and Western Washington University to submit a funding proposal to investigate elk/highway relationships around the North Cascades Elk Herd.

Wolverine Study: Biologist DeBruyn and a National Park Service Biologist set up a wolverine bait /camera site near Mount Shuksan. Timing was impeccable as the snow had just reached down to the site at around 4500 feet. The camera will remain active until snowmelt in spring allows retrieval. This is part of a multi-state study to assess wolverine status over a large area using standardized methodology. The time involved in setting up the site, as well as the long uphill hike in, meant coming out after dark.



Wolverine bait site. The camo box is a dispenser that expels a small amount of lure every 24 hours all winter.

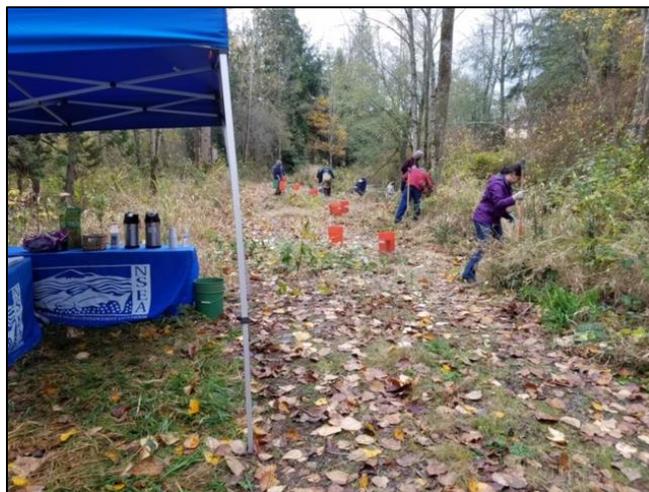
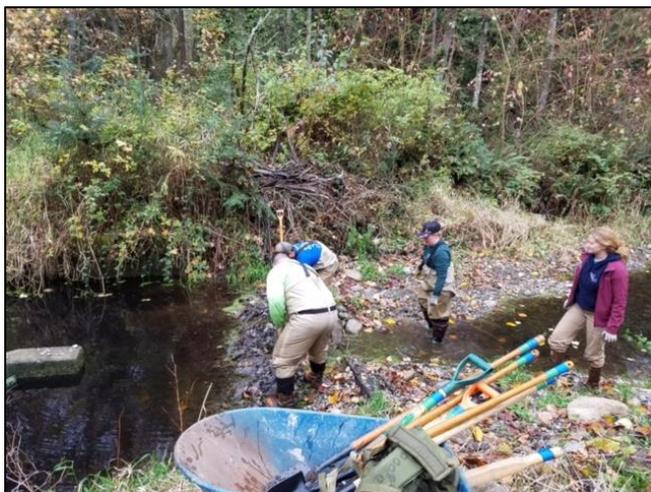
Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with agricultural lease holder Sno-Valley Farms to discuss an existing agricultural lease terminating March 31, 2017. Manager Boehm explained that the acreage will be offered for lease using the new WDFW agricultural lease process. Manager Boehm also discussed options for a late season corn harvest. Late planting produced an immature crop that is not market ready. Manager Boehm also coordinated with WDFW Enforcement and Snohomish County Sheriff's Department to remove a derelict pleasure boat that was abandoned in a Drainage District waterway near the west parking area.

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm was contacted by WDFW Enforcement over concerns that there is potential for baiting issues at the Stillwater Unit. They

are concerned that corn was driven over by equipment, and spills caused during harvest present baiting locations for hunters. Manager Boehm is coordinating a volunteer-based cleanup effort scheduled for the coming week to avoid a possible closure of the unit for hunting.

NSEA & Alcoa Lake Terrell Volunteer Work Project: The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association organized a volunteer work project on the Lake Terrell Unit at the Lake Terrell Dam. Volunteers from Alcoa's Intalco Works aluminum plant spent the afternoon clearing blackberry bushes and reed canary grass from around planted trees along Terrell Creek. Beavers had also blocked the dam outlet and the overflow valve structure, so there was no flow down the creek. The volunteers cleared the blockages and now there is flow in the creek. Manager Kessler coordinated with NSEA on the project and worked alongside the volunteers as they performed a huge amount of work.



Alcoa clearing Lake Terrell Dam

Lake Terrell Eurasian Milfoil Control Grant Application: Manager Kessler worked with Noxious Weed Coordinator David Heimer on an application for DOE grant funds to control Eurasian milfoil in Lake Terrell. Eurasian milfoil, a very aggressive aquatic noxious weed, was identified in the north end of Lake Terrell in 2013. Since that time, aquatic noxious weed control funds have been solicited from the Department of Ecology with no success. Hopefully this time we will be successful getting funds and control efforts next spring and summer.

Spencer Island Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with Snohomish County Parks and Snohomish County Surface Water Management to discuss the project. The group reviewed the design and discussed next steps, including securing funding for design work and launching a public outreach process.

A bridge crosses Union Slough to Spencer Island, which supports a popular walking trail

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

Wildlife Management



Ungulate Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with several landowners in the Acme/Saxon area of Whatcom County and updated them on current hunting activities occurring in the area.

Wildlife Areas

Pheasant Team: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with staff members and volunteers to continue managing the pheasant program for the 2016 general pheasant season. The volunteer effort continues to be a challenge as few people have responded to the call for help and those that have are unavailable due to various family requirements. Manager Kessler monitored the pheasants in the pheasant pens at the Lake Terrell headquarters. He received 375 pheasants for this week's releases. Kessler and volunteers performed the releases Tuesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings.

Lake Terrell Handicapped Hunters: Manager Kessler coordinated with disabled hunters who reserved the Lake Terrell handicapped waterfowl blind. Kessler also unlocked gates for one hunter using an electric wheelchair to hunt pheasants at Lake Terrell. Manager Kessler also coordinated with Enforcement on another handicapped hunter using an ATV to hunt pheasants who repeatedly violated his special access permit. He was witnessed violating his permit by driving his ATV through the barley fields and was cited for it.

Waterfowl Land Acquisition Funding: Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a conference call with staff members from the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) to discuss funding opportunities to secure waterfowl forage and walk-in hunting opportunities.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Planning Committee: Staff members from multiple programs participated in a meeting to continue development of the 10-year Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove monitored public use, waterfowl use, and water levels on the Island Unit. Water levels continue to be higher than normal in most areas of the Island Unit.

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove monitored public use, waterfowl use, and water levels at the Samish. Cosgrove and Meis made adjustments to water control structures at the Samish Unit to maximize sheet water.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program:

Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo built Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites by installing parking posts, signage, and blinds. A total of 69 Region 4 Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites are open and ready for public use. The only sites which remain closed are waiting for farming practices to be completed.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site opened this week. Earlier in the season, reed canary grass was mowed to improve conditions for hunters.



Trillium Woods Deer Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed working on the contract for deer hunting at the Trillium Woods forest on Whidbey Island. The Region 4 Private Lands Access Program partners with the Whidbey Camano Land Trust to provide public hunting access for late season deer hunting.

Wildlife Viewing: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and District 13 Biologist Milner researched property and public access information at a potential whale watching location. Milner will follow up with questions to neighboring landowners and provide Caldwell with further details in the coming weeks. The potential site offers premium whale watching opportunities.

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

Wildlife Management

Requests for Wildlife Management Advice: District 12 responded to various conflict requests, including common issues (habituated wildlife – e.g. raccoons, coyotes, bear), incidents such as owl attacks, concerns over perceived issues such as neck-banded geese, and what to do/report/not worry about. Other topics included exotic-invasive species concerns, urban deer questions and management options, and urban falcon management.

Ungulate Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to the Day Creek area of Skagit County to inspect potato crop that had sustained previous elk-related damage. The crop was harvested with minimal elk related loss to the crop.

Fruit Tree Damage: Witman responded to a deer damage complaint to fruit trees in Skagit County. The trees are currently sustaining damage from male deer bucks rubbing their antlers on the trees and breaking limbs. The landowner was advised to take advantage of the upcoming deer season in his area and to contact WDFW if the problem persists into the future. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Smith coordinated on a similar problem in District 12. They advised the landowner to take advantage of the upcoming deer season also, and to notify WDFW if the problem persists.

Elk Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to the Hamilton area in Skagit County to reports of numerous elk on private property that were running next to State Route 20. Upon arriving, Witman observed several individuals cutting up an elk struck by a vehicle. The individuals were instructed to remove the entire animal to a safe location for further processing and to obtain a salvage permit from WDFW. Supervisor Caldwell also happened upon an elk-related vehicle accident along State Route 20. Supervisor Caldwell ensured there were no injuries to the people involved in the accident, then instructed the party how and where to utilize a WDFW salvage permit. Two other elk collisions were also reported this week. This brings the total elk hit this week along State Route 20 to four.

Deer and Elk Conflict: Biologist Smith met with local landowners experiencing deer and elk damage to grass and fruit crops. General season hunting was discussed, as well as upgrades to fencing already in place. Master Hunter volunteer labor was offered to help with fencing repair/upgrades.

Co-Management Communications and Coordination: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman prepared and distributed the monthly elk conflict and damage update report to Tribal Co-managers. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell coordinated with Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman on Conflict Section overview materials for regional management. These overview materials were provided to management for review.

Injured Wildlife Responses: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a report of injured bird and injured raptor. Appropriate wildlife rehabilitators were notified for assistance.

Whatcom Recreation Planning: Biologist Yarborough attended a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Town Hall meeting to discuss the upcoming recreation plan. DNR is developing a plan to guide outdoor recreation on DNR-managed working forests across the Whatcom County area for the next 10 to 15 years.

B.C. Parks Volunteer Appreciation Event: Biologist DeBruyn attended a lunch to pay tribute to volunteers who helped with an international effort to monitor wildlife in the upper Skagit Valley. He had helped train many of the honorees to put up and maintain trail cameras in the study area. Below are some images from the U.S. side.



Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Agriculture Lease: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss the corn harvest practices at Stillwater in response to baiting concerns raised by WDFW Enforcement. Manager Boehm also informed Frohning Dairy that the Cherry Valley agricultural lease is terminating and the acreage will be offered for lease using the new WDFW public process for agricultural leases.

Focus on Farming Conference: Several staff members attended a conference in Monroe that brought together local farmers and conservation professionals to learn about farming practices and habitat issues. WDFW staff members hosted a booth at the conference and answered questions throughout the day.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove monitored public use, waterfowl use, and water levels on the Island Unit. Water levels continue to be higher than normal in most areas of the Island Unit.



Pheasant Volunteer Anderson captured releasing pheasants on the Leque Island Unit

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove monitored public use, waterfowl use, and water levels at the Samish. Cosgrove and Meis made adjustments to water control structures at the Samish Unit to maximize sheet water.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo coordinated with Private Lands Biologist Wingard to identify which Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites would be ready for public use by the weekend.

Snow Goose Reserve: Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed work on a contract for a private lands snow goose reserve in the Stillaguamish Delta.

Whidbey Island Diversity Site: Natural Resource Technician Deyo closed the Whidbey Island diversity site due to hazardous trail conditions during the winter months.

Public Questions: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell answered questions from seven hunters, mostly regarding the Region 4 Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey activated 10 new classes. Dazey answered questions from instructors, including how to deal with students who repeatedly displayed a bad attitude in class by being inattentive to the instructor and refusing to participate, and assisting an inactive instructor to find a new team. Coordinator Dazey assisted an instructor with ordering supplies for his 2017 classes. Dazey contacted the instructors who still owe their authorization for a new background check. Coordinator Dazey assisted with two hunter education classes held at the Region 4 office. The first class was taught by long time instructor Lance Chaar and his team. The second class was taught by one of the two teams that teach classes in Mandarin Chinese. While the class is taught in Chinese to assist the students to have a better understanding of the concepts being taught, the quiz is given in English. However, if needed, the instructors are available to interpret for the students. Only one student needed some help translating. The class was well-attended, with eight students who all were successful in completing and passing the class.

Hunter Education: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted a student to find a class and sign up. Dazey also has answered many questions from students, including when the next available class in their area takes place, how to order a replacement hunter education card, how to obtain a deferral, and how to become an instructor.

Volunteer Coordination: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted staff members to find volunteers for several projects, including securing Mylar strips for geese hazing.

New Instructor Applicants Training: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey conducted the first of two pre-service trainings for instructor applicants at the Region 4 office. Session one covers department policies and procedures, how to teach a class, and useful tips and techniques for teaching hunter education. Session two will be held at Camp Pigott where the applicants will have an opportunity to teach an actual class with the Pigott team acting as mentors.

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

Wildlife Management

Work Plan Tracking: District 13 staff members participated in a work planning tracking meeting with District 14 staff members and Regional Program Manager Link. Additionally, the meeting was used to discuss and get up to date on other issues in the two northern districts of the region.

Uniform Committee: District 13 staff members attended the latest uniform committee meeting in Olympia

Wild Links Conference: Biologist Yarborough attended the annual Wild Links meeting hosted by Conservation Northwest and the Cascadia Partner Forum. This conference helps to share information and create connections between relevant climate science and practitioners planning efforts around Cascadia species and ecosystems.

Aircraft Safety Training: Biologist DeBruyn attended an aircraft safety training course.

Wildlife Areas

Cross Program Teams: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm provided a guided tour of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area pheasant release sites and facility to Mark Moorehead from IT support. This was an opportunity for IT to see what challenges exist for wildlife area managers as they carry out their job duties. It also provided an opportunity to discuss IT enhancements that may improve implementation of those duties.

Private Lands/Access Management

Statistical Analysis Software, Multivariate Analysis Training: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell attended free half-hour online/video conference training on multivariate analysis offered by Statistical Analysis Software Institute Inc. The training covered application potentials, examples, and techniques for performing multivariate analysis, clustering, principal component analysis, factor analysis, and discriminant analysis. The training session was useful. Many of the learned statistical analysis methods will be applicable for future work.

REGION 5

No report submitted this week.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Taylor's Checkerspot: Biologist McMillan completed all edits on data forms for 2016 Taylor's checkerspot surveys at the two known extant sites west of the Elwha River, created GIS maps of survey efforts and provided records on the S: Drive so they are available to other WDFW employees. Biologist McMillan is proceeding with data form and map completion for work accomplished in years prior to 2016.

Fisher Camera Trapping Project: Biologist Ament continued efforts last week on compiling data for the fisher project. Photo files were previously established and all photos were organized for all stations for the three hexes monitored during the 2016 season. She reviewed and finalized all forms (hex summary, station set-up, and station checks) for Hex 513. She also spent time organizing all hair samples for submission. Biologist Ament submitted a total of 21 hair samples on November 2. It is highly unlikely that any of the samples will come back as fisher. Most of the hair samples were collected when camera malfunctions were noted at stations. No photos of fisher were taken at any of the nine stations monitored this season. Efforts will continue on compiling data forms and photos for Hex 514 and Hex 515.

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Working Group Meeting: Biologist Ament attended the annual Taylor's checkerspot butterfly working group meeting at the Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge November 2-3. Biologist McMillan was only able to attend on November 2. There were participants from Oregon and Washington at the meeting from various state/federal agencies, along with representatives from educational institutions, NGOs, Oregon Zoo, Mission Creek Center, and other individuals involved with Taylor's checkerspot butterfly conservation. WDFW Biologists Potter, Hays, McMillan, Linders, and Olson attended the meeting. Biologist Ament was pleased that the Olympic Region DNR Forester and the new biologist working at the Sequim checkerspot site were able to attend the workshop. The first day consisted of presentations on the recovery planning process, research updates, population modeling, captive rearing, and reintroduction, along with discussions of various categories of the action plan. Day two of the meeting was attended by a smaller group of individuals who focused on updating and modifying the Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Action Plan.

Trumpeter Swan Monitoring: Trumpeter swan monitoring in the Dungeness Valley was initiated last week by local Audubon Society volunteers. The volunteers will once again be monitoring swans once a week. A few swans had recently been reported in the area. The first official count was conducted on November 2, when a total of 13 adult trumpeter swans were counted. One swan was observed in a pond and 12 swans were observed in a field near the Sequim Airport.

Raccoon Rescue: Biologist Ament had a young girl show up at the door to her home office on October 31. She had ridden her bike over from her house in the neighborhood to report that a raccoon had been hanging in the fence at her house since the previous day. Biologist Ament responded with a blanket, leather gloves, and a pet carrier. The raccoon had both back legs securely lodged between boards of the fence. It was still quite feisty and proceeded to bite aggressively. A blanket and thick leather gloves served as protection. The raccoon was secured from the fence and injuries were examined. It did not appear that any bones were broken, but there was obvious damage from the raccoon striving to free itself from the fence. Biologist Ament found out the NW Raptor and Wildlife Center and Greywolf Vet Clinic are no longer treating raccoons due to health concerns. The young female raccoon was transported to the Center Valley Animal Rescue for treatment and possible release in the future.



Young raccoon with both back legs lodged between fence posts

Snowy Plover: Sundstrom continued to work on snowy plover data and had a short meeting with Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Biologist Ritchie to discuss the final presentation for the annual meeting.

Mazama Pocket Gopher: Biologist Butler teamed up with Biologist Olson and another Mazama pocket gopher crew member again this week to assist with trapping pocket gophers on a unit of the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area. These gophers were previously trapped and fitted with a radio collar as a part of a study examining the effects of fire on Mazama pocket gophers. The radio collars are now being removed as these

gophers are trapped again. Five collared gophers were successfully trapped and their collars were removed.

Western Pond Turtles: Biologist Butler assisted Sustainability in Prisons Project Turtle Coordinator Gilliom with transporting five western pond turtles from PAWS to the Cedar Creek Correctional facility. Ten western pond turtles with shell disease were trapped and transported to PAWs for treatment this past August. Five have now completed treatment and were moved to the Cedar Creek Correctional facility to be monitored and cared for by two turtle technicians until they can be released this spring. The five remaining turtles at PAWs will also be moved to Cedar Creek once they finish treatment.

In addition, Biologist Butler checked the five remaining western pond turtle nests at the South Puget Sound recovery site for any hatchling emergence. No hatchlings were seen on the ground within any of the nest enclosures. However, upon excavation of the nests, two nests were found with hatchlings beginning to hatch. The nests will continue to be monitored for emergence.



Western pond turtle treated at PAWS



Western pond turtle hatchling

Western Purple Martin: Biologist Butler and Tirhi attended the annual western purple martin working group meeting held in Olympia. There were representatives from California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia all in attendance. This working group discussed current monitoring efforts and discussed current and future research and recovery needs.

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

Wildlife Management

Cougar Pelt Sealing: On November 1, Biologist Ament met with two hunters to seal their cougar pelts. Both cougars were sub-adult males harvested on Burnt Hill, east of Sequim (GMU 621). They were harvested approximately two miles apart from each other. The hunters were actually deer hunting three days apart when they encountered each cougar. They were friends who had not communicated for some time. One hunter had not killed a cougar before and called the other hunter for skinning advice. This chance call led to Biologist Ament being able to seal both cougars in one session. Both cougars had been skinned out but not yet frozen. Both pelts were sealed. Samples were taken and the processing envelopes were sent off to Olympia. One hunter had misidentified his harvested cougar as a female.

Biologist Murphie sealed a sub-adult female cougar harvested opportunistically by an elk hunter in GMU 651 on November 5.

Bobcat Pelt Sealing: Biologist Ament met with a disabled hunter on October 31 to seal a bobcat pelt. The hunter harvested the female adult bobcat in GMU 510 in Lewis County. He encountered the bobcat while hunting for elk during the muzzleloader season.

Dusky Goose Survey: Biologist Sundstrom conducted the first complete ground survey in Grays Harbor County and the northern portion of Pacific County. The mid-October survey was truncated due to tornado warnings. Data has not yet been tallied but anecdotally it appeared that very few dusky geese have arrived in Grays Harbor to this point. The majority of geese observed were cacklers or cackler/Aleutian mixed flocks.

2017 Season Setting: The 2017 hunting season setting process is ongoing and district biologists are currently working to provide rule change recommendations to Olympia for next year's hunting season.