

Wildlife Program

Week of November 10-16, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Lynx: Biologist Jeff Lewis and section managers Becker and Wilkerson organized a meeting at the Wildlinks Conference to discuss actions that can be taken to support and expand lynx populations in Washington. We met with representatives from the US Forest Service (USFS), Conservation Northwest, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washington State University (WSU), the Okanogan Tribe, the Colville Tribe, University of British Columbia Okanogan, and BC Ministry of Environment. We discussed ways to increase the movement of lynx from BC to WA, genetic research to investigate the dependency of Washington lynx populations on immigration from BC, habitat management actions that we can employ now to increase lynx density, population modeling for the Okanogan and Kettle LMZs to assess carrying capacity, the complications of climate change on lynx recovery, competing conservation priorities, and the possibility of a reintroduction in the Kettle LMZ. One take home message that resonated among the attendees was that we should not assume that populations in the Okanogan LMZ (our only existing population in WA) are stable and resilient. Fire, lack of immigration, restricted distribution, and small population size could all threaten this population, and we need to proactively protect it.

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

Regional eBird Northwest: <http://ebird.org/content/nw/> Bill Tweit, Eric Gardner, John Pierce, and Wendy Connally worked with our partners at [Klamath Bird Observatory](#) and [USFW's Region 1 \(Pacific\)](#) to hone content for **eBird Northwest**, an online data portal for bird observations and one-stop regional bird-related news, articles, and notes. **Launching on 17 November** with current updates on regional birding highlights (including Neah Bay's rarities), top County lists, and updated Citizen Science project links, the regional portal is part of the eBird international network (Cornell University Ornithology Lab and Audubon Society). WDFW is making a long term commitment to make this tool work for our targeted bird-data needs and we are contributing Watchable Wildlife funding for startup, coordination staff time (ongoing), and content development (staff, collaborators, conservation partners). eBird Northwest contributes to Avian Knowledge Northwest and helps fulfill nationwide bird conservation priorities outlined by the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI). More "WDFW value" will follow in next week's briefing. *Check out the early fall regional and Neah Bay WA highlights, plus top counties, binocular contest and more, with content refreshed weekly.* <http://ebird.org/content/nw/>.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Final 2014 Northeast Washington Deer Check Stations concluded this weekend with voluntary check stations at the Chattaroy weigh station on Saturday and at the Deer Park weigh station on Sunday. Weather was sunny and cold. WDFW Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince led the efforts with assistance from other agency staff and a cadre of volunteers. At Chattaroy (Nov 15), the crew interviewed 52 hunters and inspected 11 white-tailed deer (2013 numbers were 88 hunters with 22 white-tailed deer). At Deer Park (Nov 16), 93 hunters were interviewed, with 25 white-tailed deer (2013 – 134 hunters with 30 white-tailed deer).

Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR) Elk Hunt: Biologists Atamian and Lowe met with TNWR staff Rule, Matiatos, and Randcourt, as well as Eastern Washington University (EWU) professor O'Connell to review the status of elk on the refuge and discuss future work. Current survey and harvest data would indicate a stable to declining population. EWU & TNWR telemetry show the elk are being moved by the permit hunt on the refuge, but are using the areas not open to hunting to a greater degree than prior to the hunt. It was agreed to keep the seasons and permit numbers the same at this time and to rerun the browse surveys conducted in 2007.

Asotin Bighorn sheep: Biologists Wik and Fortin, along with a research technician from IDFG, captured two young rams from Asotin Creek to be sent to the South Dakota State University research facility. Fortunately, and unfortunately, one of the rams escaped the SDSU holding facility the day after it arrived. It was recaptured 13 miles north of the University later that day.

Rams from Asotin Creek. The young ram on the right has been darted (dart protruding from right hip) and yet to succumb to anesthesia.



Mature ram in the Asotin Herd

Wildlife Areas

West Branch Little Spokane & LeClerc Wildlife Area Habitat Improvement: Wildlife Area

Assistant Manager Daro Palmer and Wildlife Forester Doug Keuhn spent most of the week looking at treatment units and developing prescriptions for habitat improvement forest treatments on West Branch Little Spokane and LeClerc Creek WLAs. While at WBLS, we encountered a few white-tailed deer and three bull moose. The largest of the moose was missing an antler and limping hard on his front, right leg.



Bull Moose at West Branch Little Spokane

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

Wildlife Areas

WT Wooten WA – Campground

Relocation: The campground construction projects continued this week. All three campgrounds are getting close to being completed. Campground 6 just needs the fire rings installed. However, the snow and freezing temperatures are slowing progress down.





Campground 9 with the barrier rocks placed. The concrete wheel stops and fire rings still need to be installed, and the gravel needs to be packed with the roller.



Campground 10 with the barrier rock placed to keep people from driving in the center area

Private Lands/Access

Pheasant Releases: Biologist Lewis delivered empty crates and a trailer to flight pens to be loaded for the week's pheasant releases. Lewis also coordinated with volunteers to help with the releases. Lewis completed the Whitman releases and delivered birds to Natural Resource Worker Wade for the Asotin and Garfield releases.

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

Wildlife Management

Livestock producer coordination: Specialist Shepherd was in contact with multiple livestock producers in Northeast Washington concerning a variety of matters. Local working groups for each wolf territory were discussed as well as range riding and other options for next year.

REGION 2

WOLVES: Nothing to Report

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Burrowing Owls: With the help of Access Managers Harmon and Graves, Biologists Finger and Duvuvuei installed 13 artificial burrows in four clusters for burrowing owls on WDFW property (LCA Unit) near the East Low Canal.



Biologist Finger finishing installation of a burrowing owl artificial burrow – Photo by O. Duvuvuei



Access Manager Harmon digging a hole to place the artificial burrow – Photo by O. Duvuvuei

Wildlife Areas

Wetland Management Plan Meeting: Biologists Finger, E. Duvuvuei, and O. Duvuvuei met with Wildlife Area managers Fitzgerald, Cole, Bechtold, and Eidson, as well as Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, to discuss management actions at the regulated access areas. The results of the discussion will be implemented in the upcoming wetland management plan. The regulated access areas receive the greatest amount of attention from both a management and public interest standpoint, thus this segment of the plan was addressed first; it will likely be a work in progress throughout the plan development. Biologist E. Duvuvuei began working on hunter participation and harvest statistics for the background of the plan to help illustrate how hunter participation is changing, likely in response to landscape level changes that have been underway for decades (in particular, wetland succession and invasive species – see photos below).



Historic waterfowl hunting blind (photo center) with encroachment of invasive tall emergent vegetation; primarily phragmites. The encroachment of non-native and native tall emergent vegetation over the last few decades has greatly reduced wetland habitat and hunting opportunity in the Ephrata District –
Photo by R. Finger



Frenchmen Wasteway and associated floodplain with shallow open water habitats important to wintering waterfowl. These open water habitats exist because of the aggressive efforts the wildlife area staff has taken to control phragmites – Photo by R. Finger

Private Lands/Access

Habitat plots: Biologist Comstock, Supervisor Cotton, Biologist Dougherty, Technician Steele, and Gretchen Fitzgerald undertook a herculean habitat plot installation near Othello. In an amusing twist of fate the installation was scheduled on THE coldest days of the season, with temperatures in the mid-20s-low 30s. Not only did the team lay over 5,000 feet of mulch and plant hundreds of shrubs, we then hand planted 1,000 frozen little forb plugs! Special recognition goes to Biologist Dougherty and Technician Steele, who wrestled with the stubborn auger to drill 1,000 little holes. Fortunately, the cooperator was able to send some of his laborers to help us; without them, we may still be out there planting in that cold ground.

Biologist Dougherty lays mulch in the below freezing weather



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

Wildlife Management

Regulated Access Areas: Wildlife Area staff participated in a meeting with District 5 Wildlife Biologists Rich Finger, Orrin Duvuvuei, and Erin Duvuvuei to plan out management of the Regulated Access Areas (RAA) as a part of the development of the Columbia Basin Wetland Management Plan. An element of the RAA management is an analysis of cost to benefit ratio of RAA management, ie: the Columbia Basin normally experiences a freezing spell before Thanksgiving, especially early this year, eliminating all open water on the RAA's. The Winchester (five parking slots) and Frenchman Ponds (seven parking slots) RAA's, available on Goose Management Area 4, provided waterfowl hunting opportunity for 14 days before the managed ponds were iced over.

Wildlife Area staff continue to monitor water levels and adjust water control structures in an attempt to create open water.

Private Lands/Access

Okanogan Access Program: We had the quarterly Cub Scouts garbage pick-up at Big Green Lake. There were a lot more boys that joined up this fall so we had a very large turn-out of boys and adults. The boys went thru the brush and everything in between and ended up with all kinds of garbage. Afterwards we all roasted hot dogs and drank cocoa. We set a date of February 7th for the next clean-up day.





From Top – Long-tailed weasel in HQ garage, dipper in Sinlahekin Creek, squirrel near HQ residence, and American Goldfinch near HQ. Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin and Cari Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart and Tech Schnebly finished seeding and harrowing three bitterbrush planting sites burned in the Taylor Bridge fire.

Tech Schnebly harrowing the planting sites

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris worked on identifying and mapping areas to reseed on the Cottonwood #2 fire. She met with staff to review fall workload and seeding projects. Staff took the delivery of drill seed mix and prepared the equipment for seeding. The previously restored areas that burned are the priority for the drill seeding. The aerial seed mix is being delivered directly to ClineAir with aerial seeding of drainages to occur in the upcoming week.



Oak Creek Wildlife Area: At the request of District Biologist Bernatowicz, Assistant Manager Berry retrieved a radio collar from a deer mortality in the Garrett Canyon/Sanford Pasture Area. Berry located the cougar kill under a tree (picture below). Berry had to use some ingenuity as he was only provided a receiver with no cable or antenna. He was able to use a chainsaw file held in the top of the receiver as an antenna to get a good signal and walk into the kill. While there he also set up a trail camera to track golden eagle use.

Mule deer doe covered in litter on Cleman's Mountain



Wildlife Management

Private Land Biologist Stutzman sat down with a Yakima County landowner and NRCS staff to complete an EQIP application for a habitat improvement/restoration project. The design will be completed in the coming months with the idea of implementing in fall of 2015. The project should benefit mule deer, sage grouse, and upland game birds, among other species.

Private lands Biologist Stutzman attended the Sage Grouse working group meeting at the Wild Horse Wind Farm near Ellensburg. Stutzman provided a brief update on Private Lands efforts related to Sage Grouse in Region 3 and heard similar updates from various partners from around the state.

Stutzman met with a Benton County wheat farmer who wants to do some habitat improvement on his waste ground and canyons. After touring his property and identifying some potential areas for improvement, Stutzman made some planting and seed mix recommendations. Later in the week, the landowner submitted his EQIP application for a shrub and grass planting.

Hunting Seasons Recommendations: Biologist Bernatowicz calculated new permit levels which included youth, senior, and disabled hunters. Contacts were made with district staff and a few local hunters regarding permit seasons and dates.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz pinned three bighorn rams for Clemans Mountain hunters.

Goat Hunter Sampling: Biologist Bernatowicz attempted to contact Mountain Goat hunters who had permits in the district. The hope was to measure horns to confirm sex of harvest. All successful hunters contacted had their goat heads at taxidermists.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris sent out e-mails to the Wenas WAAC regarding a meeting date to discuss shooting range locations on the wildlife area. A meeting date was set for November 18 at the Selah Fire Station. She provided a decision matrix and a map of the four alternative locations for a south end shooting range, so members could review prior to the meeting.

Regional Access Program: Access Manager Garcia and NRW Barbosa serviced the following access areas: Hyde, Whitstran, Snively, Duportail, Ringold, Vernita, Woodhouse, Lavender Lake, Bell, Teanaway junction, King horn Slough, Mattoon, Fio Rito, Thrall, MP8-10, Rowe, Tim's Pond, Oak Cr, Mellis Rd, Fitzsimmons, pond 4 & 5, Buena, and Zillah Bridge.

November 6th was Joey Barbosa's last day for the season. He has been a great addition to the Access Program and will be missed during his off-time. As a career seasonal, he will start back up around May.

Wildlife Management

Access Technician Kaelber finished posting two corn stubble properties and installed the registration boxes.

Registration box at one of the corn stubble Register to Hunt properties

The USFWS has proposed an option to close the Robbins unit of the refuge and shift all hunting to the Pump House unit as well as some new wetlands east of the Pump House area. One major problem with the proposal is that filling the Pump House unit and adjacent wetlands is dependent on high water in Toppenish Creek. In 2013, the Pump House area did not fill until the November freeze and none of the new wetlands ever received water. Rainfall has been above average in 2014 and the USFWS dug new and deeper connecting channels. Biologist Bernatowicz checked the area and found it similar to 2013. The Pump House unit had not completely filled and none of the new wetlands channels had water. The lack of moving water also meant the few wetlands with water were frozen solid. If the USFWS proposal was in place, there would be a significant decrease in hunting opportunity.





Blind parking spot at Pumphouse Unit indicating lack of water



New channel at TPNWR Pumphouse with no water

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: Manager Huffman attended the monthly Wildlife Education Corp (WEC) meeting. Several potential new members attended after reading recent newspaper articles on the program. The meeting focused on talking with the potential new members about what being part of the WEC entails. At the end of the meeting, they completed registration paperwork. It was also reported at the meeting that two long time members are having serious medical issues.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand followed up with a deer damage complaint from the Paterson area near the Columbia River. Heavy damage was noted in a young block of cherry trees prior to implementing both non-lethal hazing techniques and lethal removals by licensed hunters during the general season. Although the deer continue to use the area and additional hunting pressure will occur during the late archery season, much of the damage has subsided.

Conflict Specialist Wetzel called or met with four landowners in Thorp about elk and a deer issue. Additionally, two new landowners called to inquire about damage options. Master hunters, general season hunters, and damage tags have been used to help condition elk and deer to leave crop damage areas. Active hazing and some lethal removals took place this week on elk. No deer have been removed at this time, though active hunting is taking place after several days and nights of hazing.



Commercial blueberry and raspberry operation in Thorp with deer issues

Conflict Specialist Wetzel began work on a cost share deer fence in Thorp. Salvage materials were hauled from Wenas, WA for the project.

Wolf Activities

Conflict Specialist Wetzel began retrieving several miles of fladry from the Cle Elum ridge area this week. The sheep have

moved to lower elevations in the county, into less wolf-prone areas.

Other Activities

Conflict Specialist Wetzel gave a presentation to the Kittitas County Field and Stream Club about wildlife conflict and cougar and wolf issues at the Club's monthly meeting on November 10.

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



Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met with TNC Forester Dahlgreen about the Oak Creek Timber Sale focusing on road work and the contract. Manager Huffman completed a draft cover letter, prospectus, and contract and sent to Olympia for review. By the end of the week, Dahlgreen had updated the road maps and road work specs. Hopefully this week the contract can go out for bid.

Manager Huffman coordinated with TNC Forester Dahlgreen, who was completing pile burning of slash in the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project. On Friday, Huffman checked on piles to make sure there was no spread or issues before the weekend. Most piles were out and just a few logs and old stumps were smoldering. The chance of any spread was minimal. Burning will start again when we get some moisture.

Assistant Manager Berry repaired and rehung the ridge gate in the elk fence in French's Canyon after getting multiple reports on it being down. It looked like someone had just driven through

the closed gate rather than get out and open it. The gate is a constant problem, due to 4x4 and ATV use in the area.

Elk fence gate on French's Canyon Ridge Road after being repaired.



Wenas Wildlife Area: Lucky Acres Fencing has moved onto the Mellotte elk fence rebuild section (priority 2). They have completed the eastern portion of the rebuild and the new section of fence in Hardy, including the Wenas Creek crossing break-away. They are now working on the section of rebuild west of the Mellotte barn and anticipate finishing up the Mellotte rebuild by Thanksgiving. Assistant Manager Taylor checked on fence crew several times in the last week. They brought in a new foreman and he wasn't up to speed on fence, so he needed some additional direction. Overall, they are doing a great job and the fence is looking very nice.



Post installation along N Wenas Rd, east of Mellotte Barn



3" Sucker pipe and 4.5" posts installed along N Wenas Rd, east of Mellotte Barn

Re-Entry gate; N Wenas Rd, east of Mellotte Barn

Staff finished the fall elk fence check, completing repairs on a creek crossing between Mt. Vale and Person's property where a tree took down elk fence.



REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Lowland Pika Project: Biologist Milner prepared moss samples and shipped them to an expert for species identification. Lowland pikas in the Columbia River Gorge may target and consume moss to help them survive in winter. The pika we are monitoring in Snohomish County occur in



mossy areas so we want to know if the moss species available are similar to those in the Gorge. Milner also worked on resolving some complications with the contract that funds the project. Assistant District Biologist Cyra worked on summarizing the summer and fall data collected during survey visits, and also determined the patch size of habitat utilizing GIS.

Pika

Winter Marine Waterfowl Aerial Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra

began the preparation of equipment, and held discussions concerning scheduling and staffing for the upcoming winter marine waterfowl aerial surveys. This continuing survey, the longest and most consistent of its kind in the country, provides data used for waterfowl season setting, monitoring the long-term health of Puget Sound waterfowl, and detecting trends in populations of both game and diversity wildlife.

11/14/2014	Plane/Pilot: QQ/Jeff		Observer(s): Paul DeBruyn			
Weather: Sunny 0-20 NE		Tide @ Beginning: 8.9		Tide @ End: 8.3		
Location	Mallard	Northern Pintail	American Wigeon	Green-Winged Teal	other	Area Totals(dabblers)
Port Susan Bay	28,800	5,530	7,500	0		41,830
Livingston Bay						0
Skagit Bay	54,500	13,100	16,800	8,600		93,000
Fidalgo Bay				500	0	500
Swinomish Reserve						0
Padiilla Bay	16,300	8,900	52,500	5,700	0	83,400
Samish Bay	11,500	18,400	11,500	1,340	0	42,740
Species Totals(Dabblers)	111,100	45,930	88,300	16,140		261470

Citizen Science Training – Lower Snoqualmie Valley Acoustic Bat Surveys: Biologist Anderson coordinated a training session for volunteers to go through how to process, analyze, and examine acoustic bat data. Thanks to volunteer Greg Falxa for providing tips, pointers, and how-to's regarding this process. The volunteers greatly appreciated this opportunity to learn or refresh, as well as pose specific questions regarding our current pilot project data.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that much of the unit has drained after last week's rain event. Bird release numbers are back to normal for the unit. Manager Boehm reports that an electrical problem at the net pen was repaired. A faulty multi-plug was blowing the breaker while using lights to aid in bird loading. Additionally, Manager Boehm reports that locks and gates were freezing, as well as watering pans and plumbing. Each was treated on a daily basis to continue the release program on schedule.

Bridge to Spencer Island

Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the Eagle Scout project on the unit is completed. The structure was removed along with loads of garbage and debris. Good lumber was used to build some benches for hunters and bird watchers to use. Additionally, two Master Hunter volunteers cleared blackberry and over-grown brush along approximately 200 yards of the trail. Manager Boehm plans on utilizing volunteers to clear along the entire length of the trail to improve safety, access, and user viewing opportunities.



Terrell Creek Water Flows: Manager Kessler monitored the water flows in Terrell Creek for Coho salmon. The water level in Lake Terrell is high enough that water continues to flow through the dam V notch without having to release water from the leak valve. Beavers have not yet tried to dam up the creek.

Invasive Eurasian Milfoil: Manager Kessler worked with Dave Heimer, our statewide weed coordinator, and completed and submitted a Dept. of Ecology invasive weed grant to begin work on controlling Eurasian milfoil that has become established in Lake Terrell. The grant will be used to write a vegetation management plan for Lake Terrell which will help secure further grant money for milfoil control efforts in the future.

Fir Island Farm Water Quality Monitoring: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and the project consultant uploaded data on the site from each of the twelve water quality monitoring stations. Water level, temperature, and salinity are measured at each location to capture baseline conditions prior to an estuary restoration project that is planned to begin implementation in 2015.

Two groundwater monitoring wells are inside the concrete ecology blocks at the Fir Island Farm Snow Goose Reserve. It was a beautiful day, but the area was inundated from recent rains and discarded cucumbers.



Fir Island Farm Funding Strategy: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with Environmental Planner Williams to discuss

continuing funding for monitoring the Fir Island Farm restoration area. WDFW has submitted a grant application for additional funding, and is working to determine which grants currently in-hand can also contribute to the continuing monitoring effort.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw fielded questions from the public and stakeholder groups regarding the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project. A public comment period associated with the National Environmental Policy Act requirements is currently open and will close on November 24th. More information on this process, the documents under review, and how to comment is available at: <http://pugetsoundnearshore.org/outreach.html>.

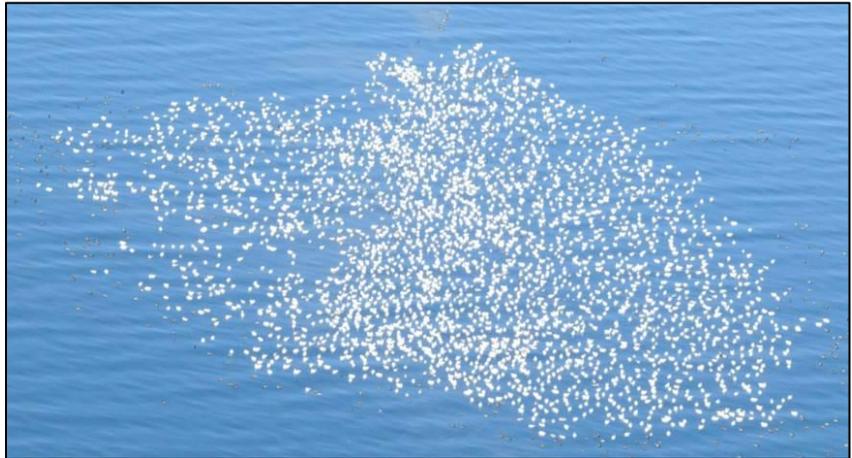
GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Cougar Management Season Recommendations: Biologist Milner developed comments on alternatives for the three year season package.

North Puget Sound Dabbling Duck Survey: Biologist DeBruyn conducted an aerial survey for Dabbling Ducks from Snohomish to Whatcom County. Conditions for the survey were perfect in Snohomish and Skagit Counties, but the survey had to be cut short due to high winds in Whatcom County. Duck numbers were up in the marine environment with 264,730 dabblers counted in the two counties.

Flock of Lesser Snow Geese in Padilla Bay



Wildlife Areas

Pheasant Hunting Season:

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate the pheasant release program at Ebey Island. The net pens

remain secure and the volunteer team consistent. Despite muddy conditions, the releases have been going as planned. Manager Boehm also regularly monitors the parking lots for hunter traffic and public relations. Despite the traffic, someone dumped three large bags of trash which were removed. Manager Kessler and volunteers released a total of 420 pheasants throughout the week. Volunteers performed the releases on the Lake Terrell and Intalco release sites, while Manager Kessler performed the releases on the British Petroleum unit using an ATV. Skagit Wildlife Area staff Meis and Cosgrove assisted with the pheasant delivery on Friday. Manager Rotton assisted with the pheasant plant on Saturday since all the volunteers were not available. Cosgrove prepared additional pens for holding birds over for anticipation of a large delivery in the next couple weeks.

Pheasant hunters in corn

Tennant Lake Boardwalk

Renovation Project: Manager Kessler picked up the last permit from Whatcom County for the Tennant Lake boardwalk renovation project. This Washington State Recreation and



Conservation Office funded project will renovate the Tennant Lake raised wood boardwalk to make one section wheelchair accessible, and raise sections of the loop trail to keep it from flooding in the winter and spring. Our Capital Asset Management Program workers want to start the project now, and will be ramping up the work in the next week or two. They feel they can get the work done before any chance of possible flood events.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Preparation and Establishment: Technicians Otto and Deyo built, staged, and set up hunting blinds at sites across Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties. They also posted parking lot posts/signs/survey boxes at all enrolled sites.

Wildlife Viewing Site Meeting and Establishment: Biologist Caldwell met with a landowner to discuss contract obligations and sign a Wildlife Viewing contract. It was decided that the site would be open for public wildlife viewing from spring until fall each year, and also be open for waterfowl hunting. This site is located on Nookachamps Creek and will provide excellent wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities in 2015-2016.

418 Special Permit Deer Hunt Management: Technicians Otto and Deyo posted signs on Sierra Pacific Lands for the 418 Special Permit Deer Hunt. Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) Forester Sand on how, when, and where special permit holders will access SPI lands for the five day hunt. Biologist Caldwell contacted two volunteers to schedule volunteer efforts for the 418 Special Permit Deer Hunt. Biologist Caldwell met with volunteers to go over established protocols and information. Each volunteer will be opening and closing the access gate during the five day hunt duration.

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 Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other: Biologist Anderson continued work and review for requests of assistance regarding species or habitat management consultation for urban wildlife given construction or land-use alteration work, per local municipal code requirements to work with WDFW. This week saw heron plan requests, osprey nest removals, and general information processes for larger entities such as King County Parks. Internal collaborations are being examined to streamline these requests. More on WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Recommendations and how WDFW provides assistance at the local and broader planning levels can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage in King and Skagit counties. Non-lethal measures to deter deer and elk from entering properties were discussed, including fencing options. In addition, Smith attended a meeting to discuss Skagit/Whatcom County elk damage issues with Co-managers (Tribes). Smith also monitored

temporary fences protecting crops from elk damage in areas of King County and began to disassemble one of these fences, constructed to exclude elk from pumpkins and corn.

Falconry Facility Inspection: Biologist DeBruyn inspected and approved a falconry mews for a prospective falconer in Point Roberts.

Region 4 Hunts: Biologist Anderson continued to respond to multiple members of the hunting community inquiring about prospective hunting areas, regulations, GoHunt interactive mapping, and prospects for the upcoming hunting seasons in District 12. Many questions this week revolved around the late buck modern hunt. Answers to many common hunt questions are found at the WDFW Hunting website:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Manager Brian Boehm responded to a number of phone calls and email messages from local hunters. Most of the calls were messages from hunters expressing the great hunting conditions at each of the pheasant release sites. An abundance of mowed grass, grain, and corn for forage and cover, as well as well-maintained access roads, provide the ability for hunters to reach most portions of the units. With the recent rain and cold weather, more duck hunters are calling and also visiting the units for waterfowl hunting opportunities.

Island Unit: Skagit Wildlife Area staff Meis and Cosgrove toured the Island unit and monitored water levels, forage conditions, and waterfowl use. Cosgrove monitored and adjusted water levels on the Island unit. Cosgrove, Meis, and Manager Rotton attended a planning meeting with stakeholders and Regional Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link to discuss the Island unit plan for next year.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton performed administrative duties, including lease renewal planning, updated budget tracking and planning, vendor payment, and monthly administrative reports. Final permitting was completed for the construction of the pump station along Wiley Slough. The construction company has begun the clearing process and construction is scheduled to begin next week. A temporary site closure may be required when the culvert and flap gate are installed thru the dike. Manager Rotton contacted WDFW Forester Doug Kuehn about permitting needs for the removal of hazard trees along the Wiley Slough dike top trail. Meis assisted with surveying and marking hazardous trees. JARPA will be completed and outside contractors will be contacted for project costs.

Fir Island Farms: Manager Rotton attended a conference with Project Manager Brian Williams and Dave Cline from Shannon and Wilson to discuss the proposed staging and construction sequence for the Fir Island Farms restoration project.

Leque Island Unit: Manager Rotton contacted Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) representative Bobby Edwards regarding the next steps for the Leque Island culvert repair.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Hunter Education support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey visited the Camp Pigott team and assisted them in presenting on-line field skills evaluation. Coordinator Dazey also assisted Region 4 instructors with questions on the registration process for the 2015 IST. Emails were sent to instructors who had not as of yet registered encouraging them to register.

Boy Scout Troop Seeks an Opportunity to Provide Service to DFW: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted a Boy Scout troop that had expressed interest in doing a service project for WDFW to find service work that will benefit WDFW. The troop expressed that they wanted to assist Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm with trail work on the Corson unit.

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

Wildlife Management

Training: Several District Bios attended Aircraft Safety Training and completed Public Disclosure Training.

Aerial Survey Safety Module: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued work along with Biologist Evenson on crafting an overwater module for the aircraft safety program. Cyra also worked with staff on issues with flight following software.

Radio Communications: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to provide radio support to Program staff.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters and citizen volunteers to provide a pheasant release team. Manager Boehm states that coordinating efforts with Steve Dazey, the Region 4 Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator, has been a huge success. Manager Boehm also reports that the new John Deere tractor was delivered this past Monday. Final papers were signed for the purchase of the new tractor and release of the old one as trade-in. Manager Boehm also attended a meeting with Wildlife Program



Manager Russell Link and Access Operations Supervisor Derek Hacker to discuss roles, responsibilities, and reporting requirements for Manager Boehm's recently appointed supervisory position.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Instructor Questions on Effects of Recent Legislation on Hunter Education: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey fielded questions on the effects that recent legislation may have on the hunter education. As the possible effects are still being researched, Coordinator Dazey advised the instructors to check the hunter education website regularly for information as it becomes available.

Inactive Instructor Notifications: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey arranged to have notices sent to instructors that have not taught a class in 2014, informing them that they were in danger of being decertified as hunter education instructors. The decertification process requires that notices are sent to inactive instructors in April and again at the end of October for the instructors who still have not been active in 2014, advising them of their possible decertification.

Lands Meeting Presentation Planning: Volunteer coordinator Dazey worked on his part of the volunteer presentation for the December Lands Division meeting.

Public Records Training: Coordinator Dazey completed the on-line public records training.

Biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn attended "Wildlinks 2014," which is an annual conference put on by Conservation Northwest to address cross border wildlife issues.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Panakanic Meadows: District Biologist Anderson met with representatives from the Underwood Conservation District (UCD), NRCS, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group to discuss potential habitat enhancement for fish and wildlife at the Markgraf property along Rattlesnake Creek in Klickitat County. The UCD recently received a grant for fish passage and wetland habitat improvement specifically targeted for Rattlesnake Creek, which is a tributary of the White Salmon River. Markgraf's portion of the Panakanic Meadow is approximately 80 acres and is important as a salmon and steelhead tributary of Rattlesnake Creek. These fish now have access for the first time since construction of the Conduit Dam in 1913 to these tributaries. Proposed habitat improvements will not only be important for fisheries enhancement, but will provide benefits for nesting sandhill cranes that utilize these critical wetlands. WDFW will work with the above partners in providing recommendations for these enhancement projects.



Field trip representatives at the Markgraf Cabin - Panakanic Meadows/Rattlesnake Creek - Klickitat County

General Goose Surveys: Biologist Doorly started the 2014-2015 General Goose Surveys this week in Wahkiakum County. These surveys are conducted once a month in various areas around Districts 9 and 10. This year the surveys will focus more exclusively on accurate counts of the Dusky Canada goose. Surveyors will also record any collars of duskies and other species seen. The purpose of these surveys is to observe Dusky Canada goose numbers, as well as any collared waterfowl, and record the information necessary for population estimation of the dusky and analysis of survival and movements of all collared geese. So far, no collars have been observed, though there have been duskies counted. Surveys will continue into next week, and then be completed for the month of November.

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

Wildlife Management

2015-17 Hunting Seasons: Regional Wildlife Biologists and Conflict Specialists, along with Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker, worked to compile and submit recommendations for the 2015-17 Big-Game Season setting cycle. Multiple changes are in store for Washington State hunters in the upcoming years, including expanded opportunities for muzzleloader hunters, later hunt dates for archery elk, and more days for rifle mule deer hunting in most of eastern Washington. Public scoping efforts, surveys, and public meetings during the summer of 2014 were used to develop the proposals. The next opportunity for public comment on the 3-year package will be in February of 2015.

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The 2014-2015 SW Washington goose hunting season continued this week. As of Sunday, November 16, 112 hunters checked a total of 250 geese at three check stations at a ratio of 2.23 geese per hunter. One dusky was harvested during this period. At the moment, all zones remain open for

Management Area 2A. A total of 80 duskies are distributed amongst five zones in Management Area 2A and 2B. Zones may close to hunting geese if dusky quotas are exceeded. For information regarding up-to-date zone closures, hunters can call the Region 5 office at (360) 696-6211 and follow the menu options for hunting and waterfowl. Hunters interested in participating in this season can refer to pages 3, 6-7, and 9-10 of the Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Season Pamphlet for further details regarding requirements for participation <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01535/wdfw01535.pdf>.

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Wildlife at Shillapoo: Assistant Manager Hand has been working mostly at the Shillapoo Wildlife Area since joining the WDFW team in October. All of the moist soil impoundments have been mowed in preparation for their inundation, and there are only a few wetlands and pastures left. A week into goose season, he reports that there are still good numbers of dark geese using the Wildlife Area and adjacent properties. There are still a few small flocks of white-fronted and snow geese around as well. Over the past two weeks, duck numbers have increased slightly and should continue to increase as we begin into the winter months, with the current primary species being northern shoveler, northern pintail, green-winged teal, and mallards. Assistant Manager Hand also reports that there is a pair of adult bald eagles using the Wildlife Area regularly. They may be the same pair from this past spring's nesting season.

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

Wildlife Conflict

Injured Wildlife: Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to call about an injured bull elk within the city limits of Longview. The elk had been shot and was severely wounded. It was reported to be walking around the neighborhood. Conklin could not locate the elk; both she and Enforcement will continue to search for the elk. In addition, Conklin responded to a call about an injured hawk in a chicken coop in Kalama. Conklin coordinated with Ocean Beach Veterinary Clinic prior to her responding. By the time Conklin was on the scene the hawk freed itself and was gone.

Wildlife Conflict: Conflict Specialist McDonald met with a Klickitat County orchard owner that experiences wintertime elk damage annually. Elk will push down the deer fences after most major snow storms or cold spells. The orchard will continue to reinforce fences and try nonlethal hazing techniques. One damage prevention permit was issued.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Management

Flight Safety Training: Regional Wildlife Biologists Holman, Bergh, Stephens, and George, along with Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand, attended WDFW flight safety training. The course is required every three years for any Staff involved in aerial work. Highlights of the training include review of types of aircraft, safety equipment, flight following requirements, items listed in the WDFW Standard Operating Procedure for WDFW flights, and the specific dangers related to work in and around helicopters.

Disabled Hunter Information Session: Dolores Noyes, head of the Disabled Hunter Program, came to the Region 5 office to present information on the program, types of disabilities, ADA regulations, and special hunting equipment for disabled hunters. The presentation was very informative and will help wildlife program staff continue to work with disabled hunters as well as disabled visitors to the Wildlife Areas.

REGION 6

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Data: Biologist McMillan submitted the District 16 summary of TC Survey Effort for the 2014 Interim Annual Taylor's Checkerspot Report. During 2014, District 16 staff put most TC work effort into annual monitoring of adult butterflies at the three lower elevation extant sites in Clallam County.

2014 SEASON Taylor's Checkerspot Summary

Lower Dungeness Extant: The site has an established distance sampling survey route that was repeated in 2014 by WDFW District staff and the recently hired Landowner Biologist/Resource Manager, completing 13 visits during suitable conditions for surveys (seven conducted by WDFW District staff). High butterfly counts of over 500 started in mid-April and continued to May 1st.

West of Elwha River - Two Extant Sites: WDFW District staff set up survey transect routes, marked them in the field, and revised as necessary. Transects are 25 meter long segments with each end marked and flagged. Transect labeling provides reference to a zone that can be utilized for other projects as well. The Southern Site has 210 transect segments in four zones, covering all suitable road habitats at the site but only about 1/3 of off road habitat.

Northern Site: 70 transect segments covering all suitable habitats at that site. Six complete surveys were conducted plus four partial surveys. Substantial counts started May 1st and continued through May 22nd.

Southern Site: 210 transect segments separated into four zones; Transects do not cover all suitable habitats at the site. The four zones are 1- Ridge Road, 2- Mid Ridge & Parallel S of Ridge Rd, 3- Lower East, and 4- Western. Each zone was surveyed twice for adults between

May 13th and June 9th. The Ridge Road was surveyed four times and spot checked another four times. Survey counts of adults were below eight for each zone during 2014. Successful surveys began on May 13th (first adults were observed April 30th), leaving some speculation that higher numbers of butterflies may have been missed earlier in May.

Historic Vacant Taylor's Checkerspot Sites: District 16 staff conducted searching surveys at five Historic sites during the season, with no TCs observed.

Vacant Historic Sites in the Dungeness Basin

Historic Dungeness Mouth Site

Conducted one searching survey for TCs during suitable weather on April 29th – no TCs observed

Historic Site at Dungeness Recreation Area (Clallam County Park – VOA site)

Conducted one searching survey for TCs during suitable weather on April 30th – no TCs observed

Historic Site at Three Crabs

Conducted 4 searching surveys for TCs during suitable weather between April 23rd and April 30th – no TCs observed

Vacant Historic Sites West of Elwha

Northernmost Historic Site

Conducted one Site visit during suitable timing and weather – no TCs observed.

Hwy 112 Historic Site

Conducted one Site visit during suitable timing and weather- no TCs observed.