

Wildlife Program

Week of November 17-23, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Selkirk Grizzly Bear Recovery Meeting: Division Manager Gardner, Section Manager Becker, and Regional Program Manager Robinette attended a Selkirk grizzly bear recovery meeting in Sandpoint, ID. Representatives from the wildlife and land management agencies that work in the Selkirk ecosystem reviewed conservation activity information and began budget discussions for the program's needs next fiscal year.

Fisher Proposed Listing: Biologist Jeff Lewis assisted US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) representatives in the Service's public meeting to explain and answer questions about the proposed rule to list the fisher in all or part of its west coast range. Diversity Division Manager Eric Gardner and Listing and Recovery Section Manager Penny Becker also attended and provided WDFW's perspective on the proposed listing and fisher recovery in Washington. There were a number of questions asked about the nature and issues associated with anticoagulant rodenticide poisoning of fishers as a result of their use at marijuana growing sites, which has been reported on numerous occasions in California but not in Washington. Pesticide industry representatives attended the meeting and asked questions about law enforcement as it related to grow sites, the clean-up of these sites, and the legal use of pesticides.

Habitat Connectivity Work: Environmental Planner Teske and Section Manager Wilkerson attended a meeting focused on habitat connectivity information needs for southwest Washington hosted by the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group. Biologist Ament and Habitat Section Manager Jackson also participated. The meeting was attended by about 25 people from different land management agencies, tribes, and private industries. It was clear that all involved were working to maintain habitat connectivity on their own lands and interested in how they fit into the bigger landscape. An initial look at the existing coarse scale analyses indicates that the major connectivity challenge in the region falls along a corridor surrounding portions of Highway 12. The next steps involve a conversation within the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group about priorities and resources.

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

eBird Northwest (eBird NW): WDFW, Klamath Bird Observatory, and USFWS Region 1 officially launched [eBird NW](#) on 11/17! ebird NW is an online resource and data tool for birders and the public interested in bird conservation. WDFW teams are excited to collaborate with conservation partners and regional experts to provide eBird NW content development, including news, articles, and notes related to Pacific Northwest birding activity and bird conservation. This engagement enhances our connection to Watchable Wildlife constituencies.

eBird NW is one avenue to engage skilled Citizen Science volunteers to fill gaps in our landscape coverage and species understanding. **WDFW Diversity will be promoting at least two types of Citizen Science projects on this site:**

- “Data calls” for certain species, areas, habitats, or behaviors which would be open for all observers wanting to participate; and,
- Specific projects tailored with protocols by our biologists, recruiting and training for vetted WDFW volunteers, and *specific data entry protocols and tags*.

Citizen Science participants can use eBird NW to “Submit Observations.” The tags we can require on data entries *for our specific projects* will help us sort data downloads from eBird, separating our Citizen Science project-related data from other daily entries. WDFW teams in Diversity and Science are exploring how eBird data could be useful to Department business and how it could be managed to support range mapping, distribution modeling, and status/trend assessments. If WDFW’s Citizen Science project leads want the data to integrate with other long-term statewide datasets, then the WSDM team needs to be engaged during early project-development stages.

Note: a separate email will be distributed to staff describing the differences between WDFW’s Wildlife Survey Data Management (WSDM) system, the WSDM Incidental Observation Reporting Phone App, and the eBird NW Portal.

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

State Wildlife Action Plan Revision: Climate Change Coordinator/SWAP Revision Lead Helbrecht and Division Manager Gardner provided briefing to the Executive Management Team (EMT) regarding the ongoing review and proposed revisions to Washington’s State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). EMT expressed an interest in the role the SWAP and associated Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) list plays in comparison to the Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) list, as well as the criteria used to place a species on the SGCN list. Diversity Division will provide additional information to EMT for their review.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Selkirk Grizzly Bear Investigations: District Wildlife Biologist (DWB) Dana Base and Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB) Annemarie Prince participated in the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Technical Team meeting, evaluating results of the 2014 field season and project planning for 2015. The meeting was held at Sandpoint, Idaho and included numerous staff from state and federal agencies, along with tribal project cooperators. The Selkirk Ecosystem has a significant reproducing population of grizzly bears, including bears

within the Washington State portion of that ecosystem. The efforts & results from this project should provide information that is foundational to assessing the status, relative abundance, population dynamics, home range and movements, coarse-scale habitat usage, and population trend of this threatened species.

A radio-collared grizzly bear monitored within the Washington Selkirk Ecosystem in 2014

Lincoln Cliffs Bighorn Sheep

Herd: Biologists Atamian and Lowe conducted the annual November aerial survey of the Lincoln Cliffs bighorn sheep herd on the south side of Roosevelt Lake in GMU 133. A total of 94 sheep were observed, including 49 ewes, 38 rams, and 7 lambs. As usual, the sheep were found in two main groups, one in the cliffs and canyons around the town of



Lincoln, and one several miles downriver in the Whitestone Rock area. The count was down from last fall's high of 118, driven mostly by the very low lamb count. There were no lambs seen in the Lincoln group, confirming what locals and department personnel have observed on the ground this year. Plans continue for a February 2015 capture to deploy radio collars in both groups of this herd.

Sheep in the Whitestone group seen during the helicopter survey of the Lincoln Cliffs herd

Wildlife Areas

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area –

Winter Closure gates: Dave Meisner and Bob Dice repaired the winter closure gate in the South Fork of Asotin Creek on Friday morning. Someone rammed the gate with a vehicle last year and damaged one of the hinges. Using a rented welder, Dave strengthened the hinge after it was straightened by pulling on it with our mini-excavator and a chain. The gates will be closed at 12:00 AM, December 1st. These closures are important to minimize disturbance to wintering wildlife.



Dave Meisner making welding repairs to the hinge on the South Fork Winter closure gate on Friday

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

Wildlife Areas

Access site maintenance 4th of July Lake, Spokane County: Access

Manager Scott Young picked up supplies for 4th of July Lake access site maintenance this week. He had coordinated with Josh Harmon, from the Access program in Region 2, and District 2 Fish Biologist Randy Osborne, for assistance. Randy helped to replace signs and make fence repairs. Josh used his tractor to dig out vehicle deterrent swells. Young estimates it will take two more days, in spring, to complete the fence repairs.



Osborne on sign duty



Harmon and Young on tractor duty

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

Wildlife Management

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock: Specialist Shepherd was in contact with multiple livestock producers in Northeast Washington concerning a variety of

matters, including Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock, data sharing, and range riding.

Bird of Prey Conflicts in Spokane County: Conflict Specialist Bennett and Falconer Dinger responded to two different conflicts with birds of prey near Spokane. The first call was received regarding a great horned owl that had been predated on chickens in south Spokane. The landowner had closed the owl up in the chicken coup after it was found attacking more chickens. The landowner had contacted another WDFW employee from District Three and was given Bennett's contact information. When Bennett and Dinger arrived, advice on fortifying the chicken coup was provided and the owl was captured, examined, and released. The owl did have some right eye damage, but overall looked healthy. The second call involved a report of a small falcon not able to fly near Otis Orchards. Bennett and Dinger arrived to find a merlin having difficulties flying. The falcon was captured and hobbled for transport. After further examination, the female falcon seemed to have an injury from flying into a fence and should be released soon.



Falconer and Wildlife Control Operator Dinger handling a great horned owl shortly before release south of Spokane

Bennett handling a hobbled merlin found near Otis Orchards. The falcon was safely placed in pantyhose and talons taped so the bird would not harm itself during transport.



Wildlife Areas

Asotin Creek WA –Signs: Bio Woodall and Tech Steveson removed old signs and hung new Wildlife Area and No Unauthorized Vehicle signs along Meyers Ridge. There is some more work that has to be completed with a new map and plexi-glass in the kiosk and some more signage work over on Cloverland Road this coming week.



This sign has seen better days

Map stolen off sign at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area: Finch and Bauer found that someone had removed the Plexiglas cover and taken an 8.5 x 11 inch map of SLWA off a signpost at the corner of Whittaker Lake and Telford Roads. Someone must have wanted the map pretty badly: the covers are held by odd-headed screws and caulked all around the outer edges. The maps are also caulked to the plywood backing. Finch and Bauer replaced the map and reinstalled the cover.

Thieves took the map but reinstalled the cover – go figure!

REGION 2



GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Supplemental Feed Route: Assistant Manager Bechtold spent roughly half the week coordinating the seeding portion of the dense nesting cover project. This involved the calibration and transport of a grassland seed drill, coordination with agency personnel assisting with the project, and planning/coordinating tractor operation and transport through next Wednesday. Assistant Manager Cole moved the JD2755 and JD4240 to the Gloyd Farm Unit for the dense nesting cover seeding project. Access Manager Harmon spent a day with Natural Resource Worker Steele picking rocks at the Loan Springs dense nesting cover plot where the seed drill will be used to plant native grass seed. Removing the rocks will allow the drill to be more effective, cause less wear and tear and prevent fire danger for future mowing. With the use of the backhoe, NRW Steele said we were able to get more done in that one day than the previous three days he spent out there hand picking. Assistant Manager Bechtold spent several

days this week working and coordinating with Partney Construction Inc. on the Road 19 bank stabilization project. The project is to install coconut fiber logs along roughly 1,200 linear feet of the banks of Crab Creek to reduce the threat of erosion from the release of water via the supplemental feed route. Thus far the work is progressing without issue and Partney Construction expects to complete the task by next Wednesday.

A nearly completed portion of the bank stabilization project (foreground), with an area in the early stages of construction in the background – Photo by Nick Bechtold



Methow Post-fire Forest Management Project

Project Forester Jamie Bass finalized bid packages for the sale on the Methow Wildlife Area for interested applicants. This includes contracts, permits for hauling on alternate roads, and continued outreach to mills and contractors.

Bass worked with the members of the Prescription Fire Team to keep marking units in the Bear Creek drainage that were not damaged by the fire. Despite these stands not being treated until next winter, since the fire team is trained and familiar with the complicated spatially heterogeneous marking system, it is valuable to have them mark as much as possible while they are available. As part of the marking, the crew takes measurements on leave trees, and Bass is then able to calculate whether density targets, spatial irregularities, and sufficient openings are being created, and immediately can adjust the prescription. This allows for a kind of adaptive management before the sale occurs.

The Methow Wildlife Area Manager, Sherry Furnari, and Jamie Bass also conducted a field briefing of active management areas, laying out possible treatments for the coming year, and discussing possible difficulties with treatments. Bass has been laying out plans for treatments over the next year, including looking at non-commercial damage mitigation for the burned forested areas. This week Bass will continue to work on the upcoming sale treatment, assess the prescriptions for the unburned areas, and work with the fuels management team to discuss possible treatments.

Private Lands/Access

Adams County Pollinator Habitat plots: Biologist Comstock, Biologist Dougherty, and Technician Steele completed installation of a pollinator plot in Adams County. This involved hand planting around 200 rocky mountain junipers and seeding two acres of native grasses. Temperatures were slightly improved from last week.



Biologist Dougherty creates holes for our little junipers



Aforementioned little junipers

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE):

Biologist Comstock updated CPA6 forms for a landowner who needed a change in forb mix approved. She also sent maps of the forb areas to be seeded. Biologist Comstock and Supervisor Cotton also met with a SAFE cooperator in Grant County to review multiple SAFE sign-ups and discuss plans for upcoming site preparation and seeding.

Private Lands Biologist Braaten dealt with a forb mix substitution issue and checked on progress of certain fields that had issues. One field was being reseeded after wildfire (it hasn't been completed as planned), another field was being inter-seeded within a field whose initial seeding was not adequate (this field was on task), and SAFE fields that were asked to be mowed this fall all have been. Compliance is above average. Private Lands Biologist Braaten is waiting on SAFE seed tags from a landowner for the CPA6 update.



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

Wildlife Management

“The Desert –GMU 290” Mule Deer Survey: Biologists Finger and O. Duvuvuei double-checked GMU 290 survey data for accuracy and produced ratio estimates using program R, resulting in 44B:100D:46F (44 Buck:100 Doe:46 Fawn), which is a typical herd composition for this unit. The 10-year average for the unit is 45B:100:46F. One-third of the unit was surveyed during this effort, with an emphasis on areas believed to support high and medium densities of deer. A total of 284 deer were observed. 58% of the bucks classified were mature (long-term average is 57%). Fawn recruitment in this unit has been low (i.e. under 50F:100D in most years) since the late-1990’s. Reasons for low fawn survival in this unit are unclear.

Douglas County Mule Deer: Biologist Gallie began post-hunt surveys for mule deer in Douglas County (PMU23), with its open landscape of fragmented green wheat/canola fields and shrubsteppe/CRP. Six standard routes are surveyed annually, each of them roughly 50-55 miles long. Routes are designed to collect trends for buck escapement and fawn productivity in Douglas County. Four of the six routes have been completed, with nearly 1000 deer observed; buck ratio is 24 and fawn ratio is 59. High numbers of bucks are being observed, mostly yearlings, which were anticipated from the high fawn recruitment and survival last year. Numbers of legal bucks were also higher at over 6:100 does. These observed metrics of the buck population are above long term averages. Fawn ratios are lower than normal, and that may be due to a dry summer and fall in the district this year. Numbers may change with two routes remaining to be surveyed.

Carlton Complex Deer Management: In the wake of the Carlton Complex Fire, Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen continue to prepare for the possibility of winter feeding should the conditions eventually warrant it. We have begun to locate feeders in areas of anticipated deer concentration and we should have a small order of feed pellets on hand by the end of next week to respond to any damage-related feeding needs that may arise in the short-term. Currently, deer are in good shape and well distributed on the landscape. We will continue to monitor deer numbers and distribution, and proactively locate feeders over the next couple of weeks.

Carlton Complex Habitat Conservation: Biologist Fitkin assisted the Mule Deer Foundation with the organizational hosting of a fund raising event in Winthrop to raise money for mule deer habitat restoration in the wake of the Carlton Complex Fire. This event was unique in that all of the net proceeds will be used locally in Okanogan County for habitat projects associated with the fire affected areas. Despite the short time frame for pulling this off, the event went well, hosting over 100 participants and raising close to \$10,000 for local projects. Additional donations for this effort are still being accepted on the organization’s website. Many thanks to local donors and volunteers for making this happen and a special thanks to Jackson Konrad and Hank’s Foods in Twisp for providing the food and doing the cooking!

Bighorn Sheep Management: A very nice ram was harvested from the Mount Hull Bighorn Sheep Herd this period by the auction tag winner. This is the third ram harvested in this herd

above the normal WDFW permits due to raffle and auction tags this year. Biologist Heinlen had asked the auction tag hunter and guide to keep watch for any sign of coughing or sickness in the herd as reported by the last hunter, and fortunately no signs of illness were observed by the auction tag hunter or his guide.

Mount Hull Bighorn Sheep –

Photo by J. Barker

Swakane Bighorn Sheep:

Biologist Gallie conducted a survey of the Swakane herd during the rut period to focus on ram numbers and age structure. A total of 116 sheep were observed, 47 ewes, 24 lambs, and 45 rams. With totals from the spring surveys which focus ewe and lambs, the population in the Swakane herd is at a minimum of 135 sheep. Most of the sheep were foraging on the green up within the Mills Canyon Complex wildfire.



Recreational Opportunities (Weekender): Deer are at their most visible this time of year and bucks are still close to the does for another couple of weeks, so in addition to the remaining late season hunting opportunities, this is a good time of year to see deer in the more open lower elevation area throughout the District.



Mule deer – Photos by J. Heinlen



Douglas County buck in the rut



*Mule deer on the Desert Wildlife Area –
Photo by Chad Eidson*

Access

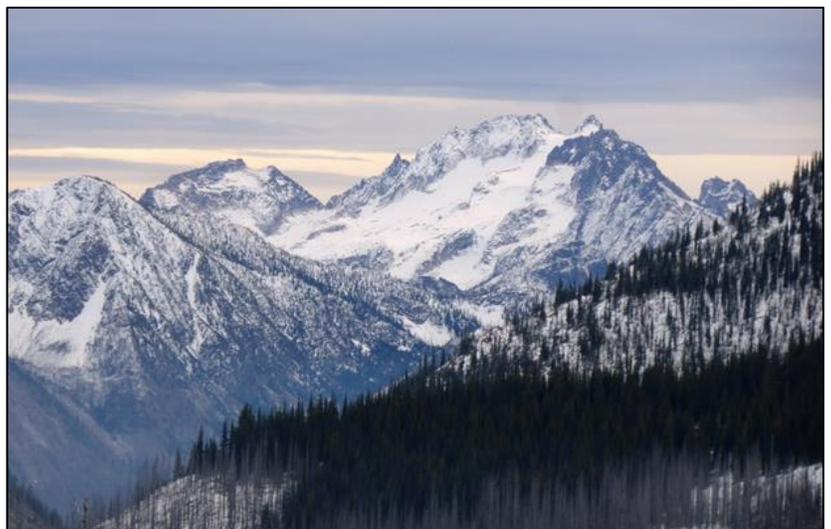


New Pearrygin Lake boat launch

Winter on the way at Silver Star Mtn

– Photo by Scott Fitkin

While conducting deer survey routes, I ran into several other photogenic critters.





Douglas County Badger; maybe I'm a bit too close on this one – Photo by Justin Haug



Douglas County bobcat – Photo by Justin Haug



Golden Eagle north of Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin – Photo by Justin Haug



Group of Trumpeter Swans on Blue Lake – Photo by Justin Haug



Pair of muskrats on Fish Lake – Photo by Justin Haug



Large group of mallard ducks and Canada geese adjacent to the Dagnon CE on the Similkameen River
– Photo by Justin Haug



Group of Mule Deer on the post-fire green up on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area – Photo by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Staff spent the week drill seeding areas burned in the Cottonwood #2 fire. The majority of the 330 acres being drill seeded are within fields that were previously restored in 1998, 1999, and 2004. The new seed mix is locally-adapted native grasses, forbs, and sagebrush.

NRT Kass drill seeding the Cottonwood #2 fire

Manager Confer Morris provided a shapefile to Cline Air outlining the 300 acres to be arially seeded.

Areas were seeded Thursday and Friday with a native grass/forb/sagebrush mix.



Cline Air with aerial seeder

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met with the Yakama Nation and the WCC crew who are getting ready to start on the Oak Creek Large Wood Replenishment Project. The WCC crew is spike camping at the Quonset hut to cut down on travel time and will be working 8 days on, 6 off through the winter. On Thursday, the crew set up camp and began thinning and staging trees for placement in the creek. Huffman met with Habitat Biologist Bartrand, who was on site when the tractor crossed the creek. Later in the week, Huffman did a site visit and found out the crew had discovered a marijuana grow along the creek. Information was passed on to enforcement and the WCC crew will clean the area up.

WCC crew using the tractor to winch trees to the staging area. Once the area is thinned the crew will begin placing the full length trees in Oak Creek.

Wildlife Management

Biologist Moore investigated a mortality report for a GPS collared deer (part of a Muckleshoot Tribe research project) on Cleman's Mountain. The report came in on Saturday, November 15th, and Moore investigated on the 17th. The carcass

was completely consumed except for a portion of the neck. The remaining portions of the hide and head were checked for signs of cause of death, but very little trauma were observed. One partial femur was collected that will be used to determine body condition and two incisors were collected to determine age. It will be difficult to determine exact cause of death on this animal.



Remains of 148.700

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Moore lined out a project for Colockum Scientific Technician Foust. Foust will prepare NDVI data within Region 3 bighorn sheep ranges.

Colockum Bulls: Biologist Moore and CWU Graduate Student Meyers flew the Colockum collars that are failing to upload their GPS data. We searched for VHF signals of seven collars and found the signal of one that was sending a double ping at 60 bpm. A missing collar

from the 2008-2012 Colockum Cow Study was also found. Graduate student Meyers picked this collar up and it appears that the remote drop off mechanism released the collar.

Bird Die-Off: Biologist Moore prepared and sent off samples to Washington State University for testing. Samples were collected by Control Specialist Wetzel and local veterinarian Dr. Michael Fuller.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt was contacted by Dave Chambers of the Sky Riders Snowmobile Club regarding their pre-grooming season brushing out of the Shadow Creek route, and inspection of the closed portion of Shadow Creek Road. The club will be out doing that this weekend, and will report back on conditions, include some photos, etc.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met with the Naches Lion's Club who are partnering with the Chinook Pass Lion's Club to restart the ATV Poker Ride for a fundraising event. The ride occurred for five years on the wildlife area, but has not occurred for several years. Huffman provided info on the process to get a permit, and the group discussed ideas for education, entertainment, and routes.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris developed a power point presentation for a WAAC meeting to discuss shooting range locations and next steps. She and Assistant Manager Taylor attended the Tuesday evening WAAC meeting and led a good discussion with the WAAC regarding the four alternative locations for a 'micro-range' in the Sheep Company area.

Regional Access Program

Access Manager Garcia serviced the following access areas: Hyde, Whitstran, Snively, Duportail, Ringold, Woodhouse, Mattoon, Fio Rito, Thrall, MP8-10, Rowe, Tim's Pond, Oak Cr, Mellis Rd, Fitzsimmons, pond 4 & 5, Buena, Zillah Bridge.

Wildlife Management

Hunting Seasons Recommendations: Biologist Bernatowicz updated the WAC's for the 2015 hunting seasons. This included new antlerless elk permits of youth, disabled, and senior, as well as the "loyalty" permit category. There was a fair amount of discussion on Waterfowl/Game Reserves. Data were obtained on previous waterfowl numbers in the Sec. 7 Reserve from Yakama Nation.

Customer Service: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to 15-20 calls/emails from late Archery, Upland bird, and Master elk hunters, as well as hunters wanting changes in big game seasons. Two cougars were sealed that were harvested in NE Region 1.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hagan corresponded with the Wenatchee Sportsman's Association this week. Hagan and the club are planning a project to remove old wire fencing from the Wildlife Area that is no longer needed and creates a hazard to wildlife.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak and NRT2 Medina hosted Sunnyside Christian School. The kids came over to the wildlife area for their bird box maintenance project.

Sunnyside Christian School - Biologists for a day!

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand traveled to the Kahlotus area and met with a landowner concerning deer damage. Damage Prevention Permits were issued and the landowner is allowing substantial public hunting access during the late muzzleloader and late antlerless seasons.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a call from a landowner in eastern Franklin County that witnessed what he thought was a wolf crossing the Pasco-Kahlotus Hwy near its intersection with Snake River Road. Advice on how to report this observation on WDFW website was given.

Landowner Contacts

Ellensburg Area: Conflict Specialist Wetzel worked on fencing and deer and elk hazing every day this week. Specialist Wetzel and the landowner worked together on the project. The fencing is nearly complete, with some gate welding and placement remaining. Hopefully these gates will be in place next week and the deer hazing can be curtailed.



Cost share deer fencing near completion in Thorp. The center wire is electrified.

Mid-week, 205 elk were counted on the Springwood Ranch. Master Hunters and landowners with permits harvested four elk. The elk moved across the Yakima River to the north, as was hoped from this effort. Two days later one elk was harvested from the Hayward Hill area by a Master Hunter. The elk moved north and west away from this potential jump off area back into Thorp. Continued pressure and hazing on these elk will be needed to keep them on the north side of the Yakima River and out of the Thorp damage area.



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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Assistant manager Hagan worked on developing a restoration plan for converting the agricultural fields in the North Fork Tarpiscan to permanent native vegetation.

Natural Resource Worker Foust spent time working on a forest inventory project for the Colockum. We have acquired a loaner laptop for him to use, and arranged for access to the agency GIS program through a remote desktop arrangement. Foust will gather GIS files as a first step in planning forest health projects for the future.

Town and Country Fence Company have continued to rebuild the north boundary fence after it was damaged by the Colockum-Tarps Fire. Manager Lopushinsky continues to work with Ray Berg from Engineering on one issue that has come up related to an adjoining landowner that is requesting a survey to verify the location of the fence along his property line.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, and Tech Schnebly covered as much of the outside haystack as we had tarps for at Watt. They also checked the elk fence across Taneum Creek, which has been hit by elk a few times, but is still holding up.

Assistant Manager Hunt continued work on the transfer of RMAP data acquired from Plum Creek Timber into WDFW's data format (Form A's and mapping). This is for the nearly 5,000 acres acquired earlier this year in the Frost Meadows/ Gnat Flat/Willow Gulch areas (high road density). He is consulting with Richard Tveten on budget needs for resource issues, and Kristen Kuykendall regarding a bridge inspection and culvert sizing for fish passage.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom coordinated a meeting with staff from the Attorney General's Office, Mutual of Enumclaw, and WDFW to discuss losses incurred from spring wildfires that took place on the Sunnyside HQ Unit. The meeting will be held at the Sunnyside HQ facilities on December 18, 2014.

Manager Bjornstrom requested information and support from Mike Ritter, Richard Tveten, and Jeff Burnham regarding the Sunnyside HQ fire and the ensuing meeting taking place in December. Mike Ritter will be providing a restoration estimate of the riparian losses, Jeff Burnham will be providing additional range expertise, and Richard Tveten provided aerial photos of the burned area back to 2006. The information will be submitted to the Attorney General's office in support of the insurance claim.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman spent significant time continuing to work on the Oak Creek Timber Sale Contract. Huffman worked with TNC Forester Dahlgreen to update the contract, road maintenance plan, and maps. The contract should be pretty close to ready. All documents were sent to Contracts Specialist Nelson who is planning to work on it this coming week. The plan is to try and get it released right after Thanksgiving. Huffman also worked on notifying potential contractors about the online bid notification process that will be used for this project. Huffman compiled a list of loggers after getting info from TNC, the Forest Service, and DNR. Most contractors seemed interested in at least taking a look at the project.

Manager Huffman checked a section of elk fence from the Junction feed site up the Naches River to the end of the fence. Surprisingly, the fence was in pretty good shape, with only one hole where a boulder had come down the hill and punched a hole in the fence. Assistant Manager Berry checked and repaired elk fence in the Hatton Road Area after receiving a report from enforcement about the fence being down. The area is a chronic problem with the neighboring private landowner putting holes in the fence to allow elk onto his property so he can sell hunts to Master Hunters on Craig's List.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Staff worked with a WCC crew to replace individual posts in the Cabin Lane and Buffalo area that burned in the Cottonwood #2 fire. The crew also moved over to Pyser's corner and replaced a section of rotten posts. The crew was from the west-side, with no fence experience, but did a really good job for us.

WCC repairing elk fence



REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Juvenile Golden Eagle that is hanging around Sikes Lake in the lower Snoqualmie Valley, King County. This is the second year we have had observations of a Golden Eagle at this same location. Many local wildlife enthusiasts got fine pictures and looks.



North Puget Sound Waterfowl Surveys:

Biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn met with Waterfowl Section Head Kraege and Biologist Evenson to discuss

upcoming waterfowl surveys and projects in the region. DeBruyn also finished the dabbling duck survey that was interrupted by weather the week before. Dabbling duck numbers appear strong, confirming projections based on good breeding success in areas that contribute to our wintering population.

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
Padilla 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
Nooksack Delta	1,200	800	300	300	0	2,600
Lummi Bay	3,330	4,520	1,930	1,480	0	11,260
Birch Bay	1,500	2,500	1,000	1,500	0	6,500
Total Dabblers	117,130	53,750	91,530	19,420	0	281,830

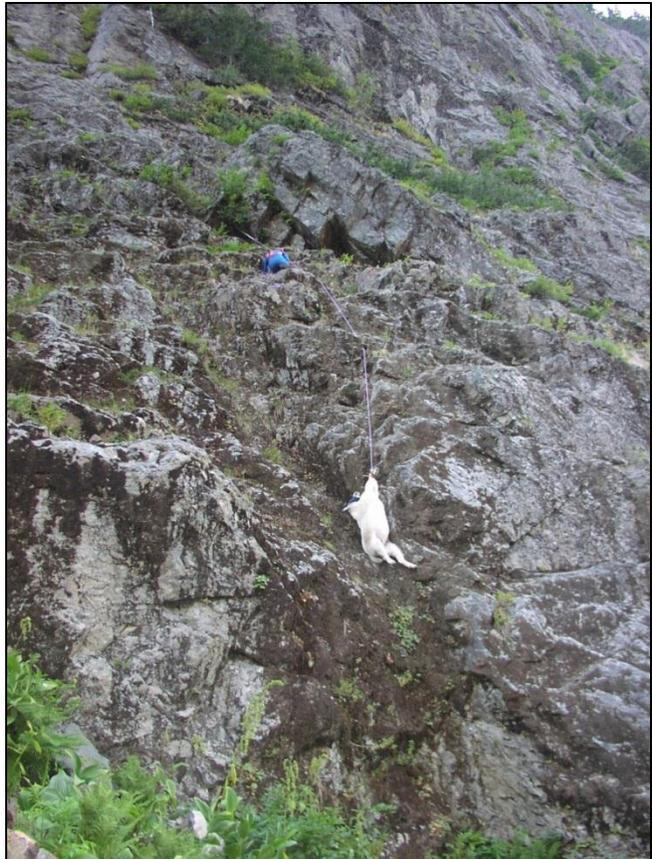
Swan Mortality Project: Biologists DeBruyn and Smith participated in a conference call with cooperators from The Canadian Wildlife Service and The University of Washington to discuss the upcoming season and challenges related to the occurrence of remnant lead shot in the region and the availability of it to swans. Action items regarding data collection and monitoring areas of known lead concentration were discussed. DeBruyn also organized the collection of dead swans, as the seasonal technician won't be coming on until December.

Mountain Goat Meeting: Biologist Yarborough and Milner attended the Olympic National Park Mountain Goat Management Plan/EIS meeting to discuss current, past, and future mountain goat management on the Peninsula.

Historic photo of Cliff Rice lowering goat to be worked up, collared and released

State Wildlife Action Plan Revisions for Common Loon, 2015: Biologist Anderson finalized State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) species updates, status, threats, and current/proposed actions per Olympia Diversity assignment to handle state Sensitive listed Common Loon.

District 12 Common Loon data summary/QA-QC/provide data and revisions to Olympia Productivity Summary: Biologist Anderson worked on examining District 12 loon data from 2008-2014 to provide for the Endangered Species Section of Diversity for Common Loon productivity summary 2009-2014. Anderson noted some changes needed and also some reports from elsewhere that may be of interest for this effort.



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 – direct work with the city of Seattle Department of Planning, Port of Seattle, private citizens, and developers regarding herons and osprey. 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/>

Citizen Science Watchable Wildlife Eagle Camera: Biologist Anderson coordinated with Watchable Wildlife Coordinator Connelly and staff Greg Falxa regarding planning and technical

needs for the state Bald Eagle camera. Anderson made contact with the property owner and discussed current plans and potential next steps based on what Olympia has troubleshot for the camera. Discussions regarding current status of cameras and needs will come next regarding internal work.

Wildlife Areas

Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that new volunteers are continuing the trail clearing work at Spencer Island. A local Boy Scout troop cleared blackberry along the trail on Saturday. Manager Boehm reports that hunters are already using the bench that was constructed near the duck blind that was removed last week.



Spencer Island Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw fielded questions from the public and stakeholder groups during the week regarding the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project. A public comment period associated with National Environmental Policy Act requirements is currently open. The comment period end date has been extended until January 8th, 2015. More information on this process, the documents under review, and how to comment is available at: <http://pugetsoundnearshore.org/outreach.html>.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: The project management team met to plan next steps in the project, and to discuss preliminary information presented by the modeling company. The team began organizing a document whereby each design alternative will be analyzed with the design selection criteria. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will provide input to the document in a meeting that will be scheduled for January. This will be followed by a public meeting, and WDFW intends to select the preferred conceptual design alternative in February.

Nooksack Delta Restoration and Flood Reduction Planning: Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a planning meeting organized by Whatcom County to discuss design alternatives in the lower Nooksack River that can reduce flooding while also improving floodplain habitat for salmon and other fish and wildlife species. One of the projects associated with the Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP) is proposed for that area, and appears to be mostly compatible with the projects currently being considered by the County.

Shorebird Restoration Tour: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Wildlife Area Manager Rotton participated in a field tour with a Shorebird Conservation Biologist from Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and Ducks Unlimited. The group toured past and future WDFW restoration sites, discussed habitat needs, and brainstormed simple features that can be added to restoration projects to further benefit shorebirds.

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.



The new ADA blind at the Whatcom Wildlife Area (back)



The new ADA blind at the Whatcom Wildlife Area (front)

Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association School Tour: The Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association brought students from local schools to perform water quality and stream flow tests on Terrell Creek at the Lake Terrell dam.

Private Lands/Access Management

Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management Strategy Edits: Biologist Caldwell provided feedback and editorial comments on a recent draft of the Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management Strategy plan.

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

Wildlife Management

Mountain Goat Management: Biologist Milner met with Manager Harris and staff from the Mt. Baker Snoqualmie National Forest to update them on the results of three years of mountain goat surveys. Milner then attended a meeting with Olympic National Forest and interested parties to consider progress and updates on the Park's EIS development regarding goats in the park.

Specialist Witman was able to contact a GMU 418 spike permit holder for the Nooksack Unit who had requested assistance from us on 11/7 to locate properties with spikes. The hunter and his family were very grateful for WDFW assistance. The property owner was also happy with the outcome and assisted the hunter with removal of the Elk.



Nooksack Elk Herd Technical Meeting: Biologist Yarborough attended a meeting to discuss past and present survey data and upcoming plans for 2015.

Pelt Sealing Needs: Biologist Anderson sealed a young female cougar taken from King County.

3- Year Package: Staff all worked on proposals and revisions regarding changes to special permit allocations, as well as hunt additions or subtractions in Region 4.

Wildlife Areas

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted the Special Use Permit application to Skagit County for review. This permit involves a public review process, and usually takes 4-6 months to be issued from the time of submittal.

Pheasant Hunting Season: 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. 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. Tech Otto and Deyo made

pothole repairs to the entrance and parking area at Bow Hill. This temporary parking lot has received heavy use during this pheasant season with minimal repairs.

Nooksack Unit Homeless Camp: Manager Kessler responded to reports of a homeless camp set up along the dike top trail on the Nooksack Unit. Trail users were very uncomfortable with the encampment and its occupants. Kessler hiked in on the trail and found the camp, which consisted of one large tent set up along the riverbank with clothes and blankets hanging in the trees. Manager Kessler coordinated with Enforcement to get the camp removed.

Happy Skagit Waterfowl Hunter

Skagit Waterfowl Program: Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove monitored waterfowl and hunter use at the Johnson/Debay's Slough Reserve Unit. Hundreds of swans and ducks were observed in both the slough and reserve field. Ducks have yet to begin feeding on corn and barley in the hunt field. Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis installed the stop-logs on the



Barn Field tidegate on the Island unit. Recent cold, dry weather allowed water levels to drop in many of the fields on the Island, but also allowed access to the water control structure. Cosgrove monitored field conditions on the Samish unit. There is still barley in some areas. Cosgrove monitored waterfowl and public use on the Fir Island Farms Reserve and Jensen units. Cosgrove cleaned up litter at both sites. Meis and Cosgrove checked the Skagit Estuary Game Reserve buoys at the mouth of Deepwater Slough and adjusted as needed.

Swans on the Johnson DeBay's Slough Swan Reserve. This is an active night roost site.

Meis toured the Leque Island property on a release morning to better understand field conditions and hunter use of the site. Manager Rotton has received comments recently regarding crowding conditions and how the



cover has been decreasing following the dike breach in 2009. Meis surveyed the site and spoke with hunters and other area users about their observations on the site.

Johnson-DeBay's Slough: Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove mowed blackberries at the Johnson/Debay's Slough Reserve unit to enhance upland and riparian areas in advance of an upcoming planting project.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Surveys & Management: Techs Otto and Deyo conducted hunter success and use surveys on Waterfowl Quality Hunt Access sites. They also picked up garbage and cleaned various hunting units across Skagit, Whatcom, and Snohomish Counties. All private lands staff performed quality assurance checks for online hunt site information. Errors were found and forwarded on for repair.

Foot Bridge Construction: Deyo and Otto built a temporary foot bridge on one of the Skagit WQH units that will help hunters with easier access to the unit.

Illegal Dumping/Trash Issues:
NRT Otto and Deyo managed a dump site at one of the WQH units in Snohomish County.

Litter found at one of our Snohomish Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites

418 Special Permit Deer Hunt Management: Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Volunteers on how, when, and where they will open access gates for special permit holders on Sierra Pacific Industries lands for the five day hunt. Tech Otto toured the 418 unit, checking signage, gate compliance, and other issues. Otto closed gates and removed signage for the late deer season.



Whidbey Island Private Lands: Tech Otto checked on multiple private land sites on Whidbey Island. The Diversity site once again received much use over the last month. Otto checked with the Whidbey Land Trust about the upcoming deer hunt on their land and found everything to be ready for the opener. Otto also checked on the Arnold Farm pheasant release site with everything being in order.

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

Wildlife Management

Swinomish Brant Reserve Cleanup: Biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn worked with the WA State Department of Ecology's Northwest Straits Commission and a WCC crew to remove years of accumulated marine debris from the Swinomish Spit Brant Reserve. The effort was timed to fall between legal hunting on the spit and the arrival of the Western High Arctic Brant that use the reserve beginning in early December. The fish program graciously provided an ATV to use to haul the refuse off the reserve. Several truckloads of garbage were removed.

One of several loads of debris removed from the Swinomish Brant Reserve



Region 4 2014 Hunts: Biologists continue 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. Many questions this week revolved around the late buck modern hunt. Answers to many common hunt questions can be found at the WDFW Hunting website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith assisted Conflict Specialist Witman and Technician Cogdal in removing several temporary electric elk exclusion fences in Skagit County. The fences were successful in excluding elk from potato crops. However, earlier deployment of the fences should result in added benefits in coming years. Smith also consulted with landowners in King County regarding permanent fencing options.

Wildlife Areas

Friends of Tennant Lake & Hovander Park Annual Meeting: Manager Kessler attended the annual Board Meeting of the non-profit group Friends of Tennant Lake & Hovander Park. Events to be held throughout the year were scheduled, including the Swan Watch, Wildlife Skins & Skulls, and the Hovander House Bat Watch.

Skagit Headquarters: Construction has begun on the Wiley Slough pump station. Interwest Construction has mobilized clearing the site and begun setting the pilings. Installation of the

culvert thru the dike is expected to occur the first week of December resulting in a partial close of the dike top trail for public access to the site.

Manager Rotton contacted the SEPA coordinator to discuss the permitting needs for the hazard tree removal project along the Wiley Slough dike top trail. NRS Meis prepared the draft JARPA application. Manager Rotton met with an outside contractor to get cost and time estimates for the project.

Cosgrove performed routine maintenance on the John Deere tractor, repaired a small leak in the oil cooler, requested a price quote for a new oil cooler, and ordered replacement parts for a broken headlamp. Cosgrove also prepped the 5300 for use by the access program next week. Cosgrove filled potholes on the Headquarters unit entrance road and graded the boat launch parking lot. Cosgrove continued rust control projects on the grain drill and rotary mower. Meis winterized spraying equipment for the year. Cosgrove picked up the green Hewescraft from a repair shop. Cosgrove checked property boundary signs at the Headquarters unit. Damaged signs were replaced. Meis created draft agricultural costs and acreage for the Samish unit and Leque unit.

Site of Wiley Slough Pump Station Construction

Private Lands/Access

Landowner Contacts: Tech Otto met with multiple landowners checking to see if there have been any issues with this season's hunting events. All have no issues to report. Otto met with one new landowner about the potential for enrolling their property into the program. It was learned that the property had recently sold to a local Tribe.



Administration: Otto and Deyo completed survey data entry, updated a waterfowl unit spreadsheet, completed order payment forms, organized shop, and ordered supplies. Biologist Caldwell prepared 2014 landowner payment forms for several landowners in Region 4.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Deer Conflict on Whidbey Island: Biologist Caldwell contacted a landowner to discuss wildlife conflict preventative strategies and public access options on their land. The landowners were not interested in allowing public access. Biologist Caldwell and Conflict Specialist Witman have decided to meet to discuss landowner options. Afterwards, a meeting will be established to discuss options with the landowner.

Wildlife Conflict Field Monitoring & Management: Tech Cogdal aided 418 bull tag holders with access to private lands to help fill tags, monitored problem elk on private lands, and started removing temporary fence from recently harvested potato fields in Day Creek. He also inventoried items needed for the Garcia fence project. Tech Cogdal also deployed cameras to track elk for master hunter hunting opportunities. He also took down flagger fence on three Day Creek potato fields and collected fence posts from the Carsten project and brought them to the wildlife area for storage.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Hunter Education support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey supported the teams that are teaching in San Juan County. Dazey delivered a set of orange guns and supplies to the team that teaches in Friday Harbor and then traveled to Lopez Island to assist the instructor on Lopez to teach a traditional class. During the class a possible new instructor was recruited. With the addition of a new instructor the Lopez Island team will be able to hold classes again.

Reengagement of Hunter education instructors: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey worked to reengage instructors who were in danger of being decertified. We were able to reengage three instructors who otherwise would have been dropped. One instructor had moved to a new area and had not yet been able to find a teaching team. Two instructors had members of their team retire and are having difficulty locating new team members to add to their teaching team.

Volunteer information to Region 4 staff member: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey researched and answered an inquiry from Region 4 staff as to the suggested rate to calculate for volunteer hours.

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

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.

Cross-program Equipment Use Coordination: Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Private Lands Access staff, District Biologists, and Wildlife Conflict staff to use and exchange field equipment.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Use/Success Data Entry: Biologist Caldwell entered and performed quality assurance measures on Waterfowl Quality Hunt use and success data. This data will be analyzed at the end of the waterfowl hunting season.

Volunteer Training: Tech Otto trained Volunteer Jim Green on the Waterfowl Quality Hunt survey route in Whatcom County. Otto showed him the units that Green will survey on the weekend and the proper way to complete data sheets.

Explosives Records and License Renewal: Tech Otto maintained the inspection log for explosives storage and submitted his paperwork for license renewal.

Wildlife Conflict Materials and Areas: Biologist Caldwell familiarized himself with the Wildlife Conflict SharePoint site. Afterwards, he created and organized folders for use. Furthermore, he studied forms, conflict research and familiarized himself with different sub-sections of the Wildlife Conflict Program. Biologist Caldwell coordinated field time with Conflict Specialist Witman, Biologist Anderson, and Conflict Specialist Smith to familiarize himself with conflict areas, landowners, and other details related to Wildlife Conflict in Region 4.

Wildlife Conflict Meetings: Region 4 Wildlife Conflict staff attended a meeting at the La Conner field office to go over equipment needs, Elk conflict management, budget information, master hunter involvement, conference call dates, technician staff time, duty station assignments, and other conflict related items.

Instructor Questions on Effects of Recent Legislation on Hunter Education: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey continued to field questions on the effects that recent legislation may have on 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.

Instructor Newsletter: HE Coordinator Dazey wrote an article to be included in the upcoming instructor newsletter highlighting Region 4 instructor accomplishments.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

General Goose Surveys: Biologists Doorly and Holman, as well as technicians Fox, Johnson, and French-Lescalleet, continued and finished the 2014-2015 General Goose Surveys for November this week. 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 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. Both duskies and collared cacklers were observed during November's surveys.

Wildlife Areas

Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area

A Rare Visitor to the Mudflow Unit: During a site visit with engineering staff from Olympia to discuss an upcoming riverbank stabilization project on the Mudflow Unit of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area, Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Technician Sample noticed a snow bunting along the riverbank of the North Fork Toutle River. Snow buntings, which summer in the arctic tundra, migrate south in the winter but are very rarely seen in southwest Washington. This was the first snow bunting that anyone in the group had ever seen.



Snow Bunting on Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fuels Reduction Project: Project layout work continued, with the boundary marking of Phase III being finished up this week. Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis worked together to survey the Phase II area for western gray squirrel nest trees. They have marked 15 nest trees within this area so far. Pine trees that support nests built by western gray squirrels often bear extensive scratch marks on the bark left by these large and powerful squirrels as they move up and down the trees.



Pine tree with scratch marks from western gray squirrels

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

Wildlife Management

2015-17 Hunting Seasons: Regional Wildlife Biologists continued work 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 23rd, 176 hunters have checked a total of 413 geese at three check stations at a ratio of approximately 2.35 geese per hunter. 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>.

Private Lands

Timber Property Hunter Index Survey: Natural Resource Technician Sample conducted two days of surveys on several privately owned timber properties during the beginning of general elk season. The purpose of this survey was to record the number of hunters/vehicles using timber properties that offer free public access. The survey will occur each year and the data collected will be used to determine which properties may be candidates for future cooperative partnerships.

Access to Hunt: Conflict Specialist McDonald assisted hunters seeking more information on areas to hunt in East Klickitat/GMU 382. She provided specific property owner contact information for the hunters.

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

Wildlife Management

Information Session for Conservation District: Biologists Bergh, Stephens, and Conflict Specialist McDonald presented information to the Underwood Conservation District located in White Salmon. Topics included non-game species recovery projects; ecological information for deer, elk, bears, cougars, and wolves; and suggestions for minimizing wildlife conflicts. The

Conservation District staff appreciated the presentation and will use this information when working with landowners to make land management suggestions that may benefit native wildlife.

Hoof Disease: Wildlife Program Manager Jonker and Hoof Disease Coordinator George presented an update to the Yacolt Burn Sportsman Club on results to date of the WDFW hoof disease diagnostic investigation and proposed management approach. There was a lot of interest in this complex issue and a good Q&A and discussion followed.

Wildlife Conflict

Wildlife Conflict – D-10: Conflict Specialist Conklin signed a DPCA with another land owner in Randle who sells hay commercially. This land owner will also use Master Hunters to assist him with controlling damage from elk. Conklin also met with land owners in Randle to coordinate a Master Hunter damage hunt on multiple properties at the same time.

Wildlife Conflict – D-9: Conflict Specialist McDonald met with a Klickitat County orchard that receives elk and deer damage annually. Elk have been pushing down the deer fences for the last three weeks. The orchard manager has arranged for hunters to hunt his property during late muzzleloader elk season. He has also put up a scarecrow at a weak spot in the fence and it appears to be working for the time being. A Critter Gitter has been installed at another weak spot. One kill permit for elk was issued.

Scarecrow at a weak spot in fence

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

WA State Weed Association Annual Conference: Natural Resource Technician Sample attended the three day WSWA conference in Wenatchee, WA to learn the latest information in pesticide application. Topics covered

included herbicide updates, container recycling, prairie habitat restoration, knotweed control, sprayer calibration and nozzle selection, recovering stuck equipment safely, and assessing risks herbicides pose on fish and wildlife. This conference provided both general and in depth information that will be used for future reference.



REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Trumpeter Swan Monitoring: The trumpeter swans began arriving in the Dungeness Valley earlier this month. Local Audubon volunteers will be monitoring the swans each week. The observer for last week reported seeing a total of 35 swans on November 19, 2014. Six swans with four juveniles off Lamar Lane and 29 swans (with three juveniles) south of Port Williams Road. Biologist Ament also saw these two groups of swans the same day. The count at Lamar was the same but when she observed the swans off Port Williams at 1056 there were only 12 swans with nine adults and three juveniles. She did receive a report that a group of 14 swans were recently seen in a carrot field on the Willits property. Biologist Ament will seek permission from the landowner for access to the swan observers so they can include this remote field in their swan survey route.

Coastal Connectivity Meeting: Biologist Ament participated in the meeting for the WA Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group on November 20, 2014. She was able to join in the Lync Meeting and conference line remotely from her home office. Biologist Ament was not familiar with the group and spent some time reading about the group on their website prior to the meeting. She was impressed with the diverse science-based groups represented at the meeting and learned much about the mission and various accomplishments for the group. She will provide District Biologist McMillan with all notes that were taken during the meeting.

Skokomish/Satsop Elk: Biologists Murphie and Skriletz provided elk capture assistance to Skokomish Tribal biologists in a cooperative monitoring effort in GMUs 636 and 651. With Skokomish Biologist Tropp darting and Murphie in mugger/trainer roles, six cows representing four sub-herds were radio-collared and released on-site before weather conditions deteriorated and prompted an early end to this capture effort. Skriletz headed up the handling team, which consisted of Skokomish Tribe staff and WDFW volunteers Dan S. and T. Dobbs. Pilot Jess H. did an outstanding job moving the elk and maneuvering into position for “easy” darting opportunities. John of Northwest Helicopters, as always, was there in support of the operation, providing fuel and monitoring of our operational status.

Skokomish elk herd just prior to capture



Moving in for the shot on a McDonald area cow

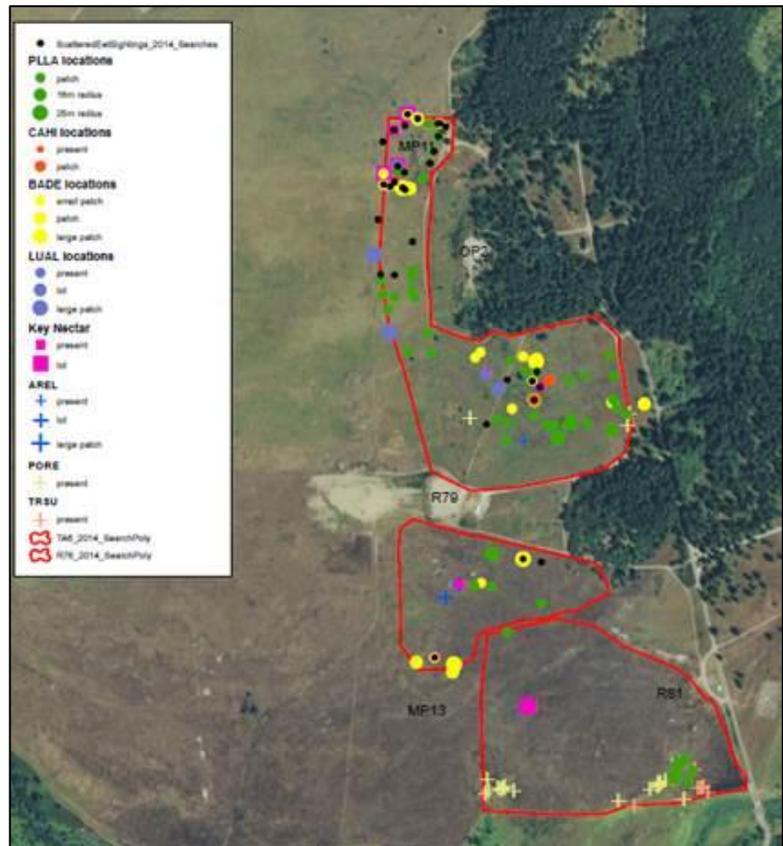
Taylor’s checkerspot reintroduction:

Biologist Randolph is compiling postdiapause larval location data and plot counts by date for mapping. Randolph also produced maps (see below) showing where resources and scattered checkerspot sightings overlap on the east edge of the Artillery Impact Area on JBLM, suggesting where additional restoration could contribute to new/expanded population centers. A more standardized approach is being developed to identify and map resources and occupancy in 2015.



Taylor’s checkerspot Rapid Habitat Assessment: Biologists Linders is using existing documents, RHA data, and expert opinion to develop reintroduction readiness criteria for application at three scales [release plot (about 200 sq m), release area (2 ha area surrounding release plots), and release site (20 ha mgmt. area)]. This new quantitative model will replace the existing word model: “Semi-native prairie with multiple patches of dense and diverse host and nectar plants within a low, open vegetation structure across a variety of microsites.” This is proving to be a tall order, as we have set the bar high! Linders is finding ways to phase in some expectations by making them management objectives and making others optional (e.g., annual hosts) to acknowledge the differences between sites in terms of their management history (especially fire) and their inherent constraints (e.g., not all sites will support the native annual hosts *Collinsia* and *Plectritis*).

Biologist Linders is also working with JBLM and CNLM staff to implement some of the treatments and planting prescriptions on JBLM sites that make use of the RHA data (see maps below).

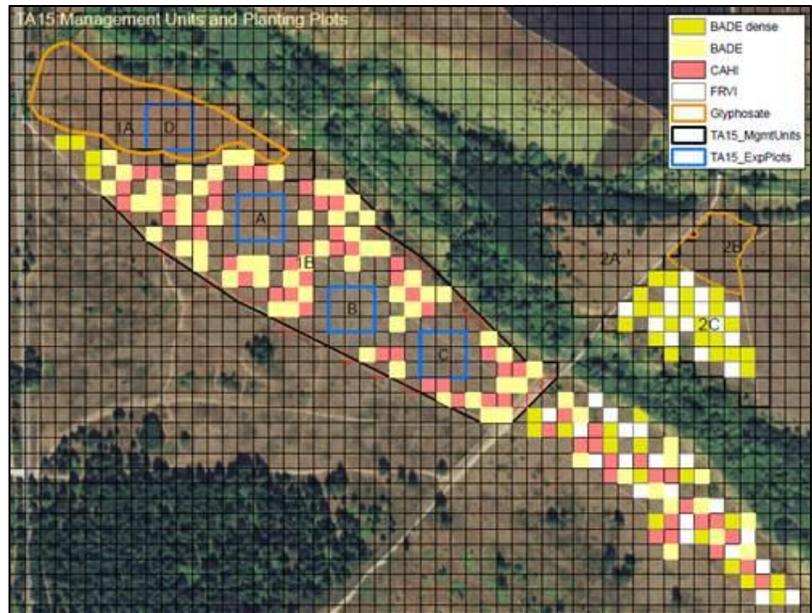


GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Private Lands

Master Hunters and

volunteers: Two Master Hunters and one volunteer took on a huge task this week. As mentioned in last week's report, they contacted Biologist Harris looking for something to do. A local forest landowner was contacted and we informed him that they had a squatter shack that needed to be cleaned up. The shack was located on timberlands where there was no access fee for 2014. They met with the landowner's security and proceeded to clean up the mess. Biologist Harris checked on them later in the morning and was astounded at what he saw. After the approximately 100 yard hike to the shack his first comments to the volunteers was to apologize. This was not a one day project. The mess was huge. By the time he arrived they had already hauled off two trailers and two pick up loads of trash and there was still a lot more. While they did not complete the project by the end of the day, they did get about 75% of it removed. The landowner's staff had nothing but praise for their efforts. The plan is to finish this effort after the first of the year. One of the volunteers wore a pedometer while working. He managed to hike 7.2 miles for the day packing trash.



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

Wildlife Management

USFWS Roundtable: Biologists Linders and Hays attended a Roundtable meeting with USFWS and many other partners representing a multitude of organizations, as well as private landowners, aimed at developing a communications strategy to promote conservation of south Puget Sound prairies and associated agricultural working lands. The group obtained a grant from the National Park Service that provides assistance with project planning and coordination to bring cooperative community-based initiatives to fruition. This first post-grant meeting was aimed at developing a common vision, project goals, and objectives.

Wildlife Conflict

Long Beach Bears: Biologist Harris assisted Long Beach Detachment enforcement officers with three bears, a sow and two cubs, treed in a Trailer Park by a small dog. Because of the location and the impossibility of removing disturbances in hopes that the bears would come down and move on, it was determined that immobilizing and relocating was the best alternative. Officer Richards from Region 4 was called in to help immobilize as he was the only WDFW staff available with the equipment and immobilizing agents. It was a difficult situation and releasing the bears was a little interesting. The sow was intent on watching Biologist Harris at the front of the trap pulling a rope opening the door at the rear of the trap. After the three hour ride it took a little coaxing to get her to leave. It took a little more to get the cubs out. They were snuggled up in the hay and sound asleep. Two cracker shells under the trap convinced them to leave. The first shell only made them lift their heads and after the second they slowly got up and went to where their mom was waiting in the brush. The end result was the three bears were safely relocated to the Olympic National Forest. A local reporter was also on scene. Questions were answered regarding why we were relocating these bears instead of euthanizing. It was explained that while the sow would likely reoffend there was a good possibility the cubs would learn to be wild bears. This is not something the WDFW does often because of the amount of cost and effort it takes to relocate.

