

Wildlife Program

Week of September 8-14, 2014

LANDS DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Methow Postfire Forest Management Project: Kat Kelly and local land management staff performed a cultural resource survey of the proposed project area. Staff is also marking leave trees and identifying hazard trees for removal.

Conservation Agreement: Jeff Burnham and other Lands staff met to work on portions of the sage-grouse CCAA. Jeff reviewed literature and protocols in connections with the CCAA.

***Spartina* Technical Advisory Group Meeting:** Russ Nunez attended the meeting in South Bend. Partners are making progress on second control passes through the bay. Some crews are getting smaller because temporary staff is returning to college.

***Spartina* Crews:** Weed crews treated small amounts of *Spartina anglica* at North Leque, Mystery Island, Emrich's/Davis Slough, and Triangle Cove in Puget Sound. Crews also treated 13 individual *Spartina alterniflora* plants in Willapa Bay. Crews cut and bagged purple loosestrife seed heads at Teal and Deepwater Sloughs on the Skagit Wildlife Area and moved two Marshmasters by barge to the Island Unit for the cattail project. Two and a half acres of cattail were crushed. Les Holcomb and Russ Nunez took Mike Sharpf (Fish Program Biologist) to the Nemah River via airboat to gather salmon information. Russ and John Ennor transported the Thurston County Weed Board crew to different sites on the Chehalis River to do Brazilian elodea removal. The County Crew travels by kayak, and our pick-up and delivery greatly increases their efficiency for certain reaches of the river.



Marshmaster crushing invasive cattail at the Skagit Wildlife Area.

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

Water Access Areas

Dingell Johnson (DJ) Final Performance Report: Statewide Access Program

Coordinator Sherlock completed the annual performance report for the FY 2104 DJ Boating Access Area Maintenance Contract with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Region One office in Portland.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

PDPs: Staff continues to complete and turn in PDPs.

SCIENCE DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Agency Strategic Objectives

- A. The ecological integrity of critical habitat and ecological systems is protected and restored.
- B. Washington's fish and wildlife diversity is protected at levels consistent with ecosystem management principles, established in the Conservation Initiative.

Joe Evenson and Scott Pearson are co-authors on an article just published in Conservation Biology:

VILCHIS, L. I., JOHNSON, C. K., EVENSON, J. R., PEARSON, S. F., BARRY, K. L., DAVIDSON, P., RAPHAEL, M. G. and GAYDOS, J. K. (2014), Assessing Ecological Correlates of Marine Bird Declines to Inform Marine Conservation. Conservation Biology. doi: 10.1111/cobi.12378

It is a free access article available here:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cobi.12378/abstract?campaign=wolearlyview>

Highlights:

- The authors analyze long-term WDFW monitoring data, along with data from Bird Studies Canada and volunteers, to examine potential mechanisms underlying recent seabird declines in the Salish Sea
- We found that seabird species that rely on a diet of forage fish and non-local breeders were most likely to exhibit declines
- We propose that changes in the availability of low-trophic prey may be forcing wintering range shifts of diving seabirds in the Salish Sea

Research Scientists Matt Vander Haegen and Mike Schroeder, along with former WDFW Biometricians Wan-Ying Chang and Shannon Knapp, are coauthors on a paper titled "Avian Abundance and Reproductive Success in the Intermountain West: Local Scale Response to the Conservation Reserve Program" accepted recently for publication in the Wildlife Society Bulletin.

Vander Haegen, W. M., Schroeder, M. A, Chang, W. Y., and Knapp, S. Avian Abundance and Reproductive Success in the Intermountain West: Local Scale Response to the Conservation Reserve Program. Wildlife Society Bulletin. In Press

ABSTRACT: Conversion of extensive shrubsteppe communities to cropland has greatly reduced the habitat available to grassland and sagebrush-obligate birds in the Intermountain West. In Washington State, approximately 600,000 ha of converted farmland have been planted to perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs under the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), currently the largest-scale effort creating perennial grassland habitat in this region. From 2003-2005 we sampled breeding birds and vegetation characteristics on 48 study sites in CRP and in native shrubsteppe. We used generalized linear models to examine characteristics associated with avian abundance and reproductive success. Abundance of shrubland and grassland birds was more closely associated with site vegetation than either management (planting of native vs. exotic grasses) or landscape factors with cover of shrubs the dominant parameter both for shrubland (positive effect) and for grassland (negative effect) birds. Daily survival rate of 1377 nests was equal to or greater in CRP compared to shrubsteppe and was similar for CRP planted with native vs. exotic grasses. Seasonal reproductive success (young/breeding pair) of 2 focal species, Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*; n = 81 pairs) and Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*; n = 58), also was similar between CRP and native shrubsteppe. CRP has the potential to significantly increase habitat available to shrubland and grassland birds in the Intermountain West and to increase local populations. Because shrubs take significantly longer than herbaceous plants to achieve a size beneficial to birds, CRP grasslands with a well-developed sagebrush (*Artemisia* spp.) component should be viewed as a long-term investment.

We recently published the following paper from cooperative work with Portland General Electric:

Watson, J. W., R. Marheine, and T. Fitzhenry. 2014. Focal Activity of Nesting Golden Eagles near Unused Nests. *Journal of Raptor Research* 48:284-288.

ABSTRACT: Protection of nests used by Golden Eagles and application of spatial buffers that minimize the effects of associated human activities are accepted conservation practices. The need to protect and buffer unused eagle nests is less clear. We analyzed intensity of use by 14 telemetered, adult Golden Eagles at used and unused nests relative to their entire home ranges in eastern Washington and Oregon between 2005 and 2013. Intensity of eagle use in areas with unused nests was variable, and typically less than that of used nests, but nearly all unused nests were within core areas of eagle home ranges. Unused nests were in high-use areas of home ranges even when they are separated (e.g., >1 km) from used nests and appeared to have been in disuse for several years. At some unused nests it was unclear if eagles were attracted by preferred perches or flight conditions, or if their presence served a territorial function. Because eagles switched to nests up to 2.5 km from the used nest we were unable to identify nests that would not benefit from protective buffering, and conclude that all unused nests merit protective buffers.

For those who weren't at the TWS meeting in Pasco last year, abstracts for the following two oral papers were also recently published:

Watson, J. W. 2014. Ferruginous hawk recovery in Washington: implication of potential limiting factors. *Northwestern Naturalist* 95:151.

Albrecht, G., S. Burchardt, F. Koontz, and J. Watson. 2014. Taking raptor ecology of the shrub steppe from the field to the zoo. *Northwestern Naturalist* 95:152.

C. Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

Earlier this month Michael Schroeder (WDFW Research Scientist) attended a sage-grouse modelling meeting in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Mike was invited to participate with numerous scientists from the western states, universities, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Attendees included Sarah Converse (USGS), Amy Nicholas (USFWS), Dave Budeau (Oregon), Dave Smith (USGS), David Pyke (USGS), Jeremy Maestras (NRCS), Mevin Hooten (Colorado State University), Lara Juliusson (USFWS), Lief Wiechman (USFWS), Peter Coates (USGS), Sharon Baruch-Mordo (TNC), Steve Knick (USGS), Steve Morey (USFWS), Kevin Doherty (USFWS), Tom Remington (WAFWA), Brad Fedy (University of Waterloo), Tom Christiansen (Wyoming), John Bradford (USGS), Dave Dahlgren (Utah State University), Dawn Davis (USFWS), Pat Deibert (USFWS), Shawn Espinosa (Nevada), Jeffrey Evans (TNC), Douglas Johnson (USGS), Cameron Aldridge (USGS), Dave Naugle (University of Montana), Catherine Wightman (Montana), Jon Runge (Colorado), and San Stiver (WAFWA). Some of the modelling topics included hierarchical occupancy, spatially-explicit relative abundance, ecological minimums, population viability, life stage simulation, lek trends, integrated populations, energy development, conifer mapping, cropland risk, agricultural conversion scenarios, climate change, connectivity, and landscape genetics. This effort has a great deal of importance because of the effort by the USFWS to decide on the federal conservation status of sage-grouse by September 2015.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Status Reviews for Tufted Puffins and Steller Sea Lions: Biologist Wiles completed final revisions for these reports, and worked with Public Affairs staff to post the reports online and prepare a press release announcing the start of their 90-day public review period. The deadline for comments from the public is December 11, 2014.

Wetland Habitat Restoration: Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan organized a site visit with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Environmental Engineers and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff to assess recent erosion at the Kennedy Creek Estuary Natural Area Preserve. Participants agreed that erosion was modifying portions of the salt marsh and that corrective actions likely were possible. Subsequent actions will involve WDFW Environmental Engineers, DNR managers, and stakeholders.

Spotted Bat Information: Biologist Wiles worked with Research Biologist Salzer to provide data on spotted bat locations in Washington to Dr. Justina Ray with Wildlife Conservation Society Canada, who is preparing an updated account of the species for COSEWIC. Dr. Ray was seeking information on the status of spotted bats in the Washington counties bordering British Columbia to help assess how much, if any, transboundary movement and genetic exchange might still be occurring in the BC population.

Butterfly Conservation Action Planning: The final draft of Taylor's checkerspot 2-yr Action Plan was completed. Taylor's checkerspot is the focus of ongoing conservation efforts by multiple WDFW Programs and Divisions within the Wildlife Program. The document incorporated meeting and written comments from managers, implementing district biologists, division biologists, research scientists, and Habitat Program staff. All actions in the plan are prioritized and several outstanding funding needs were identified.

Lynx: Biologist Jeff Lewis and Listing and Recovery Section Manager Penny Becker led a meeting of WDFW Wildlife Program biologists/staff in discussing recent and current lynx monitoring, research and recovery tasks, the outcomes of those efforts, and opportunities to move lynx recovery forward. We identified 5 take-home messages/action items that will be useful in improving and refining our efforts to support lynx recovery in Washington. These 5 items include: 1) a population viability assessment of the Okanogan and Kettle LMZs, 2) an assessment of lynx monitoring approaches, strategies, and schedules, 3) reviewing habitat management and forest plans to determine if new information can be incorporated to make them more lynx-friendly, 4) determine how the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Okanogan to Kettle Habitat Connectivity Project could contribute to lynx recovery, and 5) share these ideas with partners and collaborators and explore how we can implement these actions effectively.

South Puget Sound Prairies: Biologist Hays and Section Manager Wilkerson attended an ACUB Partnership meeting with Army leadership for the nationwide Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program to update them on the status of the conservation work in South Puget Sound Prairies. The Army leadership was impressed with the breadth of the partnership and commitment from the partners in the program. In attendance were WDFW, WDNR, Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Wolf Haven, and the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM). There are 20 other ACUB programs nationwide and this one is uniquely delivering on specific wildlife landscape restoration and recovery goals in addition to the acquisition component that is present in all cases. Over the course of 8 years, the partnership has secured 2100 acres of prairie lands and the ACUB program has contributed \$16 million total, including significant funds for an integrated restoration program that combines invasive plant control, prescribed fires, and species reintroductions. We visited two sites – Glacier Heritage and Violet Prairie – as well as the CNLM seed farm that is used as a source for restoration plantings. The team was also briefed on the status of Thurston County's commitment to prairie conservation and their work to develop a Habitat Conservation Plan for multiple species tied to prairies by Scott Clark, head of their Planning Department. Related to this work, the ACUB partnership received an exemption to the current burn ban which is necessary to do restorative prescribed burning during a critical time.

Priority Landscapes: Section Manager Wilkerson attended the quarterly meeting of the Legislative Habitat and Recreational Lands Coordinating Forum and gave a presentation on our emerging Priority Landscapes Initiative. Feedback was positive, including interest on the part of the Office of Farmland Preservation in having the concept presented at an upcoming meeting of the State Conservation Commission.

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

Wildlife Diversity Advisory Council (WDAC): Division Manager Eric Gardner and Section Managers Penny Becker and Cynthia Wilkerson attended a WDAC meeting in Ellensburg. Once again the meeting was well attended by Council members. A significant portion of the meeting was spent receiving Subcommittee updates from members and reviewing and revising the Council's Charter and a developing Work Plan.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pre-hunt Deer Surveys: Biologist Lowe conducted deer composition surveys in the Bluestem drainage of GMU 136, the Palouse River and Union Flat Creek in GMU 139, and the Hay area of GMU 142. Biologist Atamian conducted deer composition surveys in the Mica Peak area of GMU 127. A total of 162 white-tailed deer were observed, including 80 does, 53 fawns, 22 yearling bucks, and 7 mature bucks.



Mule deer group in GMU 142



Little 4pt white-tailed deer in GMU 127



Field of white-tailed deer in GMU 127 in foothills of Mica Peak.

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

Wildlife Management

Colville Public Meeting: Region 1 Wildlife Program Staff held an additional public meeting on development of the new three-year package of hunting seasons. This meeting was held in Colville at the Ag/Trade Center on Wednesday evening, September 10th. This was the seventh of seven such meetings held around the state since August 19th. Public comments received at the meetings and through a public survey will play an important role in shaping hunting seasons and associated hunting regulations for 2015-17.

Wildlife Areas

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Charley Creek Road: Natural Resources Technician David Meisner tore down the old gate at the entrance to Charley Creek Road and began the process to install a new one. The new gate will also have a horse friendly gate for horseback riders. Dave also hauled off a lot of old debris and other junk accumulated near the old gate.

Private Lands/Access

Public Hunting Season Meeting: Supervisor McCanna attended the Colville public hunting season meeting and represented three different posters. Good attendance was noted with good comments.

Damage Complaints: Conflict Specialist Rasley continues to respond to several different cougar, coyote, deer, and elk damage complaints in District 3.

Pheasants Forever habitat planning: Biologist Lewis met with the manager of the Whitman Conservation District to discuss a project in the Lacrosse area. The project will focus on developing watering areas to try to discourage deer from crossing HWY 26 to get to a water source. The Department of Transportation provided information to show over 100+ deer have been hit in that area this year. An accident also occurred due to a driver swerving to miss a deer. There is also discussion of installing a flashing deer sign on the highway to alert drivers. Lewis will be meeting DOT soon to discuss the project further.

Wildlife Conflict: Natural Resource Worker Wade and Biologist Earl worked with Conflict Specialist Rasley to address resident deer issues in the town of Pomeroy. Several deer have taken up residence in the town and are beginning to cause extensive damage to gardens and orchards. Wade and Rasley met with Garfield County Officials and have devised a plan to help haze deer and move them towards Feel Free to Hunt properties just outside the town. As hunting season begins, this will help to lower numbers as animals are harvested. Conflict Rasley will also be administering landowner permits.



Deer staying in the town of Pomeroy

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Northern Leopard Frog Reintroduction Feasibility: Biologists E. Duvuvuei, O. Duvuvuei, and Finger wrapped up Northern Leopard Frog DNA sampling, Chytrids swabbing, and metamorph surveying. Biologist Finger entered data for 825 Northern Leopard Frog observations, 325 DNA samples (138 in unit A, 118 in unit B, 11 in unit C, 12 in unit D, 0 in unit E, 35 in unit F, 11 in unit G), and 88 chytrids swabs. All samples collected occurred within the designated Northern Leopard Frog Management Area (NLFMA) despite survey efforts by Finger, Dougherty, and E. Duvuvuei to cover additional areas on Potholes Reservoir such as the West Arm and North Potholes Reserve. These data will be reviewed by E. Duvuvuei later next week for finalization. Finger began working with Contract Specialist Bosman-Clark to evaluate the budget situation before selecting samples to ship off for processing at the WSU genetics lab. Finger and Duvuvuei produced GIS shapefiles indicating locations of noxious weeds for the fall aerial herbicide application in the NLFMA. Note: During the recon effort in the West Arm, Finger observed what appears to be mosquitofish in a new area of the Potholes. Finger



coordinated with District Fish Biologist Jackson to recon the area in early-October for confirmation and to check on distribution of the species through the area.

Suspect mosquitofish collected in the West Arm of Potholes Reservoir

– Photo by R. Finger

Typical wetland habitat in the West Arm during early fall, providing what appears to be quality Leopard Frog metamorph habitat for this time of year – Photo by R. Finger



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

Wildlife Management

Winchester Regulated Access Area

(WRAA): Assistant Managers Cole and Eidson moved equipment to the Winchester Regulated Access Area to begin preparing for the upcoming waterfowl season. Access roads, O&M roads, delivery ditch roads, a new east side parking area, and the south half water conveyance channels were mowed. Fire concerns have delayed the start of normal fall preparatory field work for both District Biologists and Wildlife Area staff. Efforts will be coordinated to complete a substantial amount of work in a relatively short time period. The WRAA is undergoing some changes in addition to the normal prep work that include moving public access from the west side to the east side, and instituting a reservation requirement for a select period to alleviate the early a.m. competition for parking slots. Assistant Manager Eidson disassembled the old Winchester RAA parking area and moved the materials to the site of the new parking area.

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

Wildlife Management

Environmental Education: Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer led a North Cascades Institute Course to conduct a snake count transect as part of National Snake Week. An enthusiastic group enjoyed a beautiful day in the Methow and we managed to scare up a half dozen snakes from three species on the hike. In addition, we showed them some additional captive specimens and demonstrated rattlesnake pit tagging. This is the fourth year of the class/survey and participants are already looking forward to next year.



Western Racer – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wildlife Areas

Carlton Complex Fire – Indian Dan Canyon Unit: Area Manager Dan Peterson provided updated assessment of infrastructure losses to Construction Project Manager Anthony Sanich. This coming week Anthony will be touring affected wildlife area's with FEMA staff. Dan also provided wage reimbursement information to Budget Analyst Lisa Nelson. Late in the week, Maintenance Mechanic Fidel Rios met Adam Corum, the shop teacher from Bridgeport High School, to discuss Mr. Corum's interest in having his class construct bird feeders to replace those lost in the fire.

Oh Great, Another Fire: To remind us that fire season is not yet over, Friday at 4:50am a fire was reported on the Bridgeport unit immediately adjacent to Bridgeport Hill Road. Douglas County Fire District 3 responded, kept it contained to about 5 acres and pretty well had it out by the time DNR truck# 127 from Wenatchee arrived at 7:30am to take over. They in turn handed it off to the Entiat Hotshots who arrived at 10:30am. Habitat losses due to the fire itself were fairly minor. A short section of fence was damaged, as the firefighters had to cut it in three places to gain access, plus three wood braces were burned and will need replacement. Given the location right next to the road, the likely cause, not surprisingly, is human.



Bridgeport Hill Road Fire, September 12, 2014. The 2012 Foster Creek Fire can be seen in the background.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman checked on the thinning contractors working in Oak Creek in Section 17. They are currently thinning in an overgrown clearcut. Most of the trees are too large for pre-commercial thinning so crews are only able to knock small openings

into the stand (picture below). The plan will be to come back with a commercial harvest next year. Huffman also worked with TNC Forester Dahlgreen on progress and plans for the coming weeks.

An example of the thinning for the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project currently being done in Section 17. Crews have created a small opening in the foreground but in the background you can see the tree density and size that is limiting the amount of work that can be done.



Wildlife Management

Ducks: Banding has concluded for the year in Franklin County with a record number of birds captured. 473 mallards were marked this year. This is a 23% increase over last year's total of 385. Adult birds comprised 14% (66/473) of the total. Among the adults, 79% were female and 21% were male. Among the 407 juvenile ("hatch year") birds, 52% were female and 48% were male. The large number of hatch year birds caught indicates strong local production of mallards. In addition to mallards, 1 green-winged teal, 10 wood ducks, and 20 northern pintail were marked. This is the first time that northern pintail have been captured in this area.



Private lands Bio Stutzman and Access Technician Kaelber, with assistance from Larry Martin, a volunteer, banded ducks in Franklin County for the last time this season. A total of 110 Mallards were banded along with 12 more Pintails, which brings the total for the year to a new-record 470 Mallards. The traps continued to catch Pintails and district wildlife staff banded around 20 for the year.

After banding on Monday, Stutzman, Kaelber, and Martin removed the duck traps from Baillie and Mesa Lake WMA's and got them ready for storage at the Windmill Ranch WMA headquarters.

Colockum Bull Study: Biologist Moore performed ground searches for the VHF beacon of another GPS collar that has failed to update. The VHF beacon was not found at its last known location. This GPS collar has not updated for 20+ days. While out in this area, Moore also worked with Control Specialist Wetzel to search for wolf sign, since multiple reports have been coming in.

Cooperative WDFW / Mule Deer Foundation Restoration Project: Biologist Moore met with Statewide Range Ecologist Burnham to go over ecological site data tied for the soil survey map

units in the area of interest. The ecological site data was not present for this area, but Moore learned how to access and use these data for future projects. Restoration site selection will be based on review of pre-fire aerial photos.

Umtanum/Selah Butte Bighorn Sheep Project: Biologist Moore worked with Idaho Bighorn Sheep Specialist Frances Cassirer, Safari Club International volunteers, and our CWU interns to perform a census of the collared ewes in Umtanum/Selah Butte. The objective of this effort was focused on determining the lamb status for each collared ewe. Most of the animals were observed, but a few will have to be completed next week.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman spent a large part of the week trying to resolve issues with the new ADA hunter access road at Windy Point. A closed road on Clemans Mountain in unit 342 was identified. Assistant Manager Berry locked the gate Monday afternoon and posted the AD hunter access signs. Calls started to come in from people who were hunting the area. All were supportive of the program, but upset the road had been closed during archery season. One person using the road was an ADA hunter, so Huffman got him in contact with Noyes, who issued a ADA road entry permit for the road during archery elk season. Huffman then coordinated getting him a key to the gate. Huffman and Berry worked with enforcement and the Yakima Construction Shop after it was discovered people were driving around the gate. The Yakima Construction Shop came out the next day and placed barrier rock to keep people from driving around the gate and the following day they reinforced the berms at the end of the road. Enforcement also contacted and cited an individual for driving around the gate onto the closed road. Hopefully things will go a little smoother from here on out.

Manager Huffman completed updates to the Rock Creek Motorized trails NOVA proposal based on RCO staff comments and comments from the technical review submitted into PRISM before the deadline.

Manager Huffman participated in a conference call on shooting ranges on wildlife areas. Huffman missed the original conference call because of a bad PIN code for the conference call, but followed up the next day with Melinda Posner and Dave Whipple. They developed a good plan to fully evaluate the Bear Canyon site to see if it is a good option to move forward.

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 spent most of a day checking out damage from ORV use at a site on the North Fork Wenas Creek on the Rock Creek Unit. Huffman toured the area with Ron Rutherford who is organizing jeep users for a volunteer project on the 20th. Huffman and Rutherford came up with a good project to try and restrict access to the mud holes and divert the spring water back into its natural channel. While in the area they contacted an archery hunter's camp. The hunters reported seeing more deer and wild turkeys than they have seen in a long time, which is good news for both species.

Assistant Manager Berry cleaned out the 5-ton truck and prepared it for use in the Naches Sportsman's Days Parade. On Saturday, Berry drove the truck in the parade with volunteers from the Wildlife Education Corp in the back (picture below).



Volunteers from the Oak Creek Wildlife Education Corps preparing to ride in the Naches Sportsman's Days Parade over the weekend

LT Murray Wildlife Area: The entire Murray staff worked with Kittitas Field and Stream Club members to improve the Manastash Creek cabin. The crew cut, split, and stacked wood from a large tree that had fallen next to the cabin, thinned encroaching small pines, dug a French drain for the kitchen sink, and pulled woody debris away from the cabin to reduce fire danger. Manager Winegeart wrote firewood permits for the volunteers to take any wood left after the cabin's wood shed was filled.

Tech Hill assists volunteers installing a French drain at the Manastash cabin.

Manager Winegeart also met with Mule Deer Foundation members to finalize plans for their bitterbrush planting project on October 4th.

Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt worked with WDFW Real Estate's Hendrix to expedite a permit for a film crew that will shoot a WA State Lottery Commercial on the Whiskey Dick this month. Early next week Hunt will assess how to accommodate the film crew's parking needs at the Corrals and Pumphouse access points.



Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a call from a fisherman on the Columbia River north of Richland who was watching an injured 5x5 mule deer buck on an island of the river. The deer had been shot by an archery hunter and found refuge on the closed island. The information was passed on to local Enforcement personnel.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand spent time in elk area 3722 to monitor hunter participation in the early antlerless season. Three hunters were contacted in the field with one elk harvest and two other groups were observed hunting in the vicinity.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored the harvest of DPP permits in Elk Area 3721. Two antlerless elk were harvested this past week on DPP permits. Harvest since the August 1 opener is 39 antlerless and 5 spike bull elk.

Wolf Activities: Night monitoring of the Teanaway pack occurred this week from Sept. 8-12. The pack continues to remain in the same location in general, with new locations, all away from a band of domestic sheep. The Swauk sheep lease band moved to Liberty on Thursday, September 11. The band plans to move to the Red Bridge area on September 12.

Range Rider McBride monitored wolves and moved the ragbox to a new location near Cle Elum. Preparations for fladry and biofence are underway in anticipation for a large band of sheep moving into an area in Cle Elum.

Range Rider Johnson patrolled areas of the Teanaway Cattle lease. Roundup is scheduled for October 15.

Biologist Moore, Specialist Wetzel, and Range Rider Ward continue to look for wolf sign in areas where public reports, mostly from bowhunters, have placed wolves. Night detection efforts for wolves in areas with multiple reports are underway.

Other Activities: On September 8, Specialist Wetzel and Officer Shawn Myers investigated a reported cattle depredation in the Wenas valley. The evidence indicated that the steer was killed by a cougar.



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 guided a tour of potential bidders for construction of the north boundary fence. Hagan provided maps, answered questions and showed the contractors entry points to this 9.5 mile fence project.

Colockum staff continued to work on the new storage shed, preparing it for storage of herbicides and signs.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman worked with Michael Sanchez in HR to get the Oak Creek Forester recruitment out. Huffman also updated position descriptions and completed HR action forms to start the process for hiring for winter feeding.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Buser met with Dave Miller from CAMP for the final inspection of the utilities upgrade at the Windmill Ranch Unit.

Assistant Manager Buser met with habitat biologist Ritter to discuss HPA requirements for upcoming wildlife area projects. Buser also continued to add water to wildlife area wetlands, and worked with a local agricultural lessee to trim encroaching trees on a field border that has begun to interfere with pivot irrigation operations.

Assistant Manager Buser spent a day working with a group of Kamiakin High School volunteers to fix/clean 6 hunting blinds at Mesa Lake.



Maintenance of hunting blinds completed with the help of High School Volunteers

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Hunt and Tech Hill visited Section 15 of the new Gnat Flat parcels, and located some sites on a spur road that Hunt had earlier identified as needing some erosion

control prior to fall rains and winter snows. The road (originally put in by Plum Creek Timber) is in a highly erodible soil site. Hill shoveled out and improved several existing water bars, as well as digging some additional ones.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Swan Mortality and Morbidity Project: Biologist DeBruyn reviewed and edited a report on results of last winter's sampling. Higher numbers of swans were found to have perished from lead poisoning last winter than has been the case recently. DeBruyn also checked on water levels at Judson Lake to see if it was feasible to try to remove invasive pond lily's that are thought to harbor lead from historic shooting. DeBruyn discussed the upcoming winter swan project with cooperators and began to put an action plan together.

Bald Eagle Management: Biologist DeBruyn responded to several questions about historic eagle use areas that are in the process of being developed. He made a site visit on Samish Island to insure a territory housing a nest that had blown down has not been reoccupied.

Highway 20 Elk crossing project: Biologist DeBruyn installed a motion activated camera to monitor the area where most elk/vehicle collisions occur on Highway 20 between Sedro-Woolley and Concrete. The camera uses cell phone technology to transmit images via the internet. DeBruyn also discussed deer road crossing issues with the City of Bellingham in response to reports from citizens of multiple road kills near a greenbelt park in the city.

Lowland Pika Project Report: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued assembling, analyzing, and presenting data for the completion report of the two-year lowland survey for Pikas in the lower Stillaguamish Valley. Field visits still need to be performed to quantify habitat and vegetation characteristics.

Wildlife Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other: Biologist Anderson continued work with entities that are providing recommended management consideration for urban wildlife given construction or land-use alteration work. Most involve eagle nest location/activity status, osprey nest removal, heron management, biodiversity areas and corridors, and big game use areas adjacent to the rural/exurban fringe of King County. Many of these animals and habitat areas are, at times, incorporated into various area municipal codes. 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/>

Spring Bird Poisoning Event: Biologist Anderson received final assessment from the USGS National Wildlife Health Center and WDFW Health staff regarding some American robins and Dark-eyed juncos found dead all within the same area. This happened this spring, in March. At that time, many facilities and property owners were applying various products that have “weed and feed” weed killers and fertilizers. Many of these contain various compounds that can have toxicity to certain wildlife, e.g. birds, if an acute exposure occurs. It was determined that a carbamate-based compound likely resulted in a localized lethal event in a handful of birds. If you put this on a lawn, for example, and insect eating birds forage heavily directly after, they could be impacted. One can only speculate. See the following for more information on concerns of these compounds and their use around wildlife:

http://www.nwhc.usgs.gov/publications/field_manual/chapter_39.pdf

<http://www.nationalatlas.gov/mld/wlopcat.html>

Learn how to reduce pesticide, insecticide, and fertilizer use – use the ecosystem to provide for habitat and biological pest control – via integrated pest management practices:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard/>

<http://watoxics.org/chemicals-of-concern/pesticides-1/salmon-lawsuit/salmon-lawsuit-alt>

Wildlife Areas

Puget Sound Near shore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Planner Theresa Mitchell met with Skagit River Systems Cooperative (SRSC) staff to discuss next steps in the PSNERP process and projects on the PSNERP list with involvement from SRSC. The Feasibility Study Phase of PSNERP is coming to a close and it will culminate with a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review, which will likely begin with a public comment period in October.

Fir Island Farm Water Quality Monitoring: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and the project consultant downloaded data from each of the 14 water quality monitoring devices on the site. The devices capture water level, temperature, and salinity readings every 15 minutes year-round in drainage sloughs and groundwater wells near the future restoration area. These readings will be used as baseline data, so that after the restoration project is built, WDFW will be able to monitor whether or not any of these parameters change over time.

Fir Island Farm Monitoring Grant Writing: The Projects Coordinator received feedback on a pre-proposal and an invitation to submit a full proposal to the Estuary Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) for a grant to continue monitoring the Fir Island Farm site after the restoration project. The full proposal for this grant is due in mid-October.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Werkhoven Dairy to discuss the harvest plan for this season. Volunteers continued to finish installing signboards and graded the parking areas in preparation for the hunting season.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with grazing lessee Alexander to oversee the end of the cattle grazing on the Unit. Manager Boehm reports that the cattle were removed by the 14th with the exception of a few strays. Additionally, Manager Boehm met with Sno-Valley Farms to discuss harvest plans for the east lobe of the Unit. Manager Boehm has also assembled an “Ebey Island Team” for the pheasant release program that will coordinate release efforts at Ebey Island.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss harvest plans for the Unit. Corn is planned to be harvested between the 24th and 26th. Additionally, Manager Boehm worked with volunteers to install a new service road gate and traffic barrier posts in an effort to control vehicles from damaging ditches and service roads.

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Frohning Dairy to discuss harvest plans for the Unit. Corn is planned to be harvested between the 22nd and 24th. Plans are set to keep hunters away from the harvesting equipment to ensure a safe, quick harvest.

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

Wildlife Management

Bobcat sightings in local suburbia – interview: Biologist Anderson provided an interview to the Woodinville Weekly regarding suburban bobcats, bobcat ecology, coexisting with bobcats – and just the fact of the matter that they are often around in the suburban/rural areas but due to their secretive biology we don’t see them. Folks reported seeing a bobcat in the early evening and it created a local discussion. The piece referring folks to WDFW Living with Bobcats – how to coexist with these creatures and understand their habits – is yet to come out. However, a great picture of said bobcat can be found here:

<http://www.nwnews.com/index.php/local/news/6908-another-bobcat-sighting-in-woodinville>

Mountain Goat Sampling: Biologist DeBruyn measured and took samples from a male mountain goat that was taken by the raffle winner near Mt. Baker

Mountain Goat Skull, Note the annuli (growth rings) clearly visible in the frost of the right horn

Samish Unit Enhancement

Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted final State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) materials to the

WDFW SEPA Coordinator for a draft determination. Upon review, a draft Determination of



Non-Significance (DNS) was issued. The materials are on the internet for review and comments from the public at: http://wdfw.wa.gov/licensing/sepa/sepa_comment_docs.html. The comment period closes September 26th.

Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management: Skagit WDFW staff in the Wildlife and Habitat Programs and Regional Director Everitt met to continue discussions regarding upland waterfowl hunting opportunities and farmed forage management in the Skagit delta. The team is developing a plan to continue providing these upland opportunities while also continuing to support estuary restoration projects on WDFW lands. When a draft of the plan is completed, the team will present and discuss it with local delta stakeholders.

Island Unit: Skagit Wildlife Area staff disked fields (Fireman's 1 & 2, Lorenzen, Broadlin, and west end of the Barn field) on the Island Unit to disturb the vegetation to set back plant succession and improve habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds.

Fishing access: Fishing access on the Samish River Unit has been very busy. Chinook fishery is in full swing and this site is one of the few public access points for fishing along the lower river.

British Petroleum & Intalco Hunting Access: Manager Kessler coordinated with the land manager at British Petroleum on current field conditions. One of the farmers who manage the fields at BP has plowed up a large area for reseeded. This has had a big impact on the available hunting area. Manager Kessler worked to minimize the impact.

Students from Lynden Christian High School spent a day performing community service work on the wildlife area. Three parking areas, two on the Nooksack Unit, and one on the Tennant Lake Unit were worked on. Garbage was collected, brush was cleared and grass weed whacked on the sites. The students did an excellent job.



ADA Wheelchair Accessible Hunting Blind: Manager Kessler worked with a

Master Hunter volunteer to finish the ADA wheelchair accessible hunting blind at Lake Terrell. Gravel was laid down and packed, a new door installed, and the path to the blind was widened.

Early Goose Hunting Season: Manager Kessler posted signs at Lake Terrell to prevent recreational boating during the early goose season. Due to the sunny weather, many people arrived hoping to fish from boats, kayak, and paddle board. Kessler had to contact many of them who ignored the signs and headed out close to the hunting blinds being used. Despite the disturbances, several goose hunters were successful in their hunts.

Private Lands/Access Management

Pheasant Release Program: Technicians Otto and Deyo constructed the parking lot at the Bow Hill pheasant release site. Technicians Otto and Deyo increased the size of the parking area and spread more wood chips than previous years. A split rail fence was also installed bordering the parking area. Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech Curran Cosgrove posted signs at Bow Hill pheasant release site, installed parking lot signs, and mowed trails. Natural Resource Specialist Meis met with forestry company personnel about the logging operation on the site during the hunting season. WLA staff will modify site safety zone and closed area signs where logging activity is to occur.



Technicians Otto and Deyo spreading wood chips at a pheasant release site in Skagit County



Finished parking lot with split rail fencing and enlarged parking space

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Coordination and Management: Technicians Otto and Deyo cut and bundled Reed Canary grass which will be used to conceal hunting blinds this up-coming hunting season. They also surveyed all enrolled sites in Whatcom, Snohomish, and Skagit Counties for access/harvest conditions.

Migratory Bird Enhancement Project Research: Biologist Caldwell researched, updated, and incorporated maps, potential sites, and logistic costs into the 2014 Migratory Bird Enhancement Project Proposal.

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

Wildlife Management

Tech Cogdal continued monitoring and maintaining temporary fencing in the Day Creek area of the Skagit Valley, as well as building a fence at a 130 acre property up the valley. Cogdal also aided in the installation of a camera box on Hwy 20 to monitor elk crossings.



Carsten fence



Camera footage from behind County Park near Hansen creek

Wildlife Conflict – suburban raccoons: Biologist Anderson worked with Ralf Schreiner (Wildlife Conflict Section) to get the most up-to-date procedures on Wildlife Control Operator permitting, training, etc.; in relation to what is required in the Wildlife Interaction Rules.

Anderson then provided information regarding a neighborhood situation where a property owner had raccoons trapped out and there was great confusion over what the Wildlife Control Operators could/could not do legally. The WCO's were in the right. Anderson explained long-term conflict reduction techniques and urban raccoon ecology – scientific findings. He asked that the community refer to our outreach page on coexisting with raccoons and other wildlife that occasionally pose issues largely due to people's direct or indirect actions without wildlife repercussions in mind. This can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/species/>

Anderson worked on general administrative needs and monthly reports. Anderson also continued working with WDFW data management to examine what data has been entered thus far for the WDFW-WPZ Citizen Science Amphibian Monitoring Project in hopes of providing a rough summary at the upcoming season end celebration for volunteers. Anderson is working with zoo staff to submit for a presentation at an upcoming professional meeting regarding citizen science, collaborative community efforts, and a summary of how such work has come to fruition with the local amphibian project. More to come. . .

Respond to public wolf report: Assistant District Biologist Cyra investigated a report of dead wolf on the shoulder of SR9 in the Clearview area. No sign of any dead or injured wildlife was observed in the area. As this is a highly unlikely location for a wolf, the sighting was likely that of a domestic canine that was retrieved by its owner.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Headquarters: Staff posted Safety Zone and Hunting Area signs at Headquarters, Samish, and Leque in preparation for dove and the early goose season.

Samish River Unit: A gate was installed at the property boundary to restrict access to the neighbor's property. The neighbor has experienced trespass issues during the fishing season on the Samish River.

Island Unit: The North Sound Weed Crew ferried an additional Marsh Masters to the site. The cattail control project has been started.

Johnson DeBay's Slough Reserve: Brush cutting work began to rehab old ponded areas created by Ducks Unlimited in the hunt unit.

Fir Island Farms: Manager Rotton attended the Skagit Watershed Council annual luncheon and hosted the field trip to the Fir Island Farms site to discuss the proposed restoration project.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Manager Brian Boehm worked with ten Master Hunter and citizen volunteers to continue sign building, parking lot improvements, trail improvements, and pheasant pen maintenance this past week. Neighboring farmer Wayne Gulstad provided a tractor and auger to handle road grading and post hole digging at the Cherry Valley parking lot. Volunteers installed a new gate at the service road entrance and graded a pedestrian walkway from the parking lot to the north service road entrance. With support from WDFW Enforcement, Wildlife Program Managers, and Manager Boehm, this effort should improve user safety and reduce damage of the service road due to off-road activities from the public. Targeted signage will be installed to inform and educate users of the changes. Additional volunteers continued to make access trails along the Spencer Island dike trail to enable waterfowl hunters to hunt more of the area. Blackberry thickets block many of the paths, but this dedicated team of volunteers continues to whack away the brush for the benefit of fellow hunters.

Private Lands/Access

GMU 418 and Elk Area 4941 Nooksack Special Permit Hunt Coordination and Patrol: Biologist Caldwell spoke with and established several meetings with special permit hunters to exchange access keys and information. Biologist DeBruyn surveyed the 418 and 4941 units for use and sign needs.

Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management Team Meeting: Biologist Caldwell attended the Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management Team meeting. Progress was made on many agenda items. Biologist Caldwell also created a list of percent waterfowl forage/crop types that is provided by the Private Lands Access Program on private hunting sites in Skagit County for team review.

Lake Terrell Managers Residence Energy Upgrade: Manager Kessler coordinated with the local company that was awarded the contract to perform an energy upgrade on the Managers

residence at Lake Terrell. The work to replace insulation, windows, and doors should begin in a couple weeks.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Steven Dazey assisted volunteer instructor Rich Klinnert to conduct a Field Skills Evaluation at the North Whidbey Sportsman Association. This venue had not been used since 2012. This class went so successfully that volunteer instructor Klinnert will continue to hold classes at this venue.

Dazey conducted an evaluation of the instructor team lead by volunteer instructor Gary Moseley held in West Seattle. This was the first of 4 sessions of a Traditional course. The team did an excellent job of instruction. This team has been teaching for many years and is an asset to the hunter education program.

Dazey continued to assist Hunter Education volunteer instructor Liz Scranton to schedule and staff a traditional hunter ed. class on Lopez Island for the students on the island to have access to a convenient class to certify. In addition to Lopez Island, coordinator Dazey has contacted the volunteer team leader on San Juan Island and assisted him in scheduling two On-Line Field Skills evaluations and one traditional class in Friday Harbor.

Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey scheduled a meeting with the Nooksack tribal enforcement officer to preview the venue and arrange for classes on the Nooksack reservation. The classes will be open to all students in the Deming area and will help to increase hunter education availability in the Whatcom county area. Whatcom County is current underserved and this class will help to meet the demand for hunter education classes in that area. Students currently have to travel a long distance to be able to take a class. Coordinator Dazey previewed the Nooksack teaching venue with Nooksack Fish and Wildlife enforcement officer Derrick Charlton and found it to be an excellent site to offer classes.

Volunteer Coordinator Steven Dazey represented the Department and Snoqualmie Wildlife Area manager Brian Boehm at the Tillicum district Life to Eagle Scout presentation. This meeting was specifically targeted at youth who are starting to plan their Eagle Scout service projects and their parents. Coordinator Dazey spoke with the youth about the many projects already completed on the Wildlife area by Eagle Scouts and presented ideas on future volunteer projects from a list provided by manager Boehm. Resulting from the evening, Coordinator Dazey has so far been able to refer at least one Eagle Scout to manager Brian Boehm for an Eagle Scout service project and is looking for more. Also as a result of this presentation in Everett, Coordinator Dazey has been invited to make a presentation in North Seattle at the scout district there on volunteer opportunities for DFW.

As we approach the busy time of year when more demand falls on our hunter education volunteers to offer classes, the volume of students has increased. With this increase we have also seen the volume of students who have not received their hunter education cards increase due to mailing address issues and closing of class report issues. Coordinator Dazey assisted numerous instructors and students to track down and mail cards that were not received due to address and other problems.

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

Wildlife Management

Washington Laws and Pesticide Use Training: Biologist Caldwell continued studying the Washington Laws and Pesticide Use training manual and Rights of Way training manual.

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

Safety Training Planning: Assistant District Biologist Cyra began initial discussions with Marine Waterfowl Specialist Evenson concerning structure and format of emergency egress training for staff surveying over water.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Watershed Council Annual Lunch: Skagit Habitat and Wildlife Program staff attended an annual luncheon organized by the Skagit Watershed Council to review progress made over the past year in implementing the Skagit Chinook Recovery Plan, and to discuss upcoming issues foreseen for next year.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters and citizen volunteers to provide net pen repairs, plumbing repairs, and the construction of six signboards for the Snoqualmie Units. Manager Boehm reports that the temporary net pen near Lake Stevens is nearly ready to receive Ebey Island birds. Manager Boehm has assembled a pheasant release team and is finalizing plans for receiving and releasing pheasants to the four Snoqualmie Units. Manager Boehm states that coordinating efforts with Steve Dazey, the Region 4 Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator, has been a huge success, by having him direct people who want to volunteer to Manager Boehm, who has many tasks and projects lined up.

Hunter Education: Coordinator Dazey conducted the first session of the Pre-Service Training (PST) required of all volunteer hunter education instructor applicants to certify as instructors. The first session covers teaching tips and techniques along with DFW policies and procedures. The final session for this group of applicants will be an opportunity to teach an actual class of students at the Boy Scout Camp Pigott September 28th. The applicants from the first session will be joined at this final session by applicants from the session taught by coordinator's Dazey and Boes at the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission July 24. Following this final session we should be adding nine new instructors to our Region 4 volunteer hunter education instructor team.

Coordinator Dazey attend a hunter education staff meeting at the Natural Resources Building in Olympia. This provided the opportunity to stop at the warehouse and pick up supplies for teaching teams in Region 4, including the transfer of two department firearms for the new teaching team in Burlington.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Lyle Trail Project: Biologists Anderson, Kolb, and Bergh met with representatives from the National Parks Service and Friends of the Gorge to discuss a hiker/mountain bike trail proposal in the Columbia River Gorge near the town of Lyle. The Friends of the Gorge received a National Parks grant to assist with project planning. The proposal includes lands owned by the Friends of the Gorge and WA DNR. At issue is the development of a high use trail system associated with several wildlife resources, including nesting peregrine and prairie falcons, bald eagles, and high quality western gray squirrel habitat. Further evaluation of the wildlife issues



will take place over the next few months, including a comprehensive western gray squirrel survey to document high use areas of the site.

National Park and Friends of the Gorge Staff Discussing Proposed Lyle Trail

Wildlife Surveys: Conflict Specialist McDonald and Biologist Stephens assisted the Cascades Carnivore Project this week. The mission of the Cascades Carnivore Project is to preserve biodiversity in the Cascade Mountain Range by studying

the conservation and ecology of rare Cascade carnivores. Non-invasive survey methods are employed to assess long-term trends of mid to high-elevation carnivores, in particular the wolverine, mountain red fox, and gray wolf. McDonald and Stephens performed trail transects in the Indian Heaven Wilderness and collected red fox scat for DNA sampling. The trails were also busy with backpackers and bow hunters.

Fox scat with Mt. Adams

Hoof Disease Prevalence

Protocol Study: Biologists Holman, Bergh, and George, along with Regional Program Manager Jonker and Natural Resources

Technician Sample, met with volunteers regarding a protocol survey conducted to test proposed study designs that will ultimately be used to sample the prevalence of hoof disease in southwest



Washington. Seventeen volunteers assisted WDFW from August 20th through September 2nd, testing the feasibility of differing methodologies and materials utilized to determine prevalence. Volunteers drove over 1,000 miles and observed 136 Elk, 30 of which were limping. The debriefing enabled volunteers to give their impressions of the methods and to suggest improvements to the design and available materials. The meeting was well attended and volunteers offered many opinions into the study design. Observations of elk and evaluations of the protocol survey will be compiled and analyzed. The results will influence the development of an expanded volunteer survey effort scheduled to take place in the late winter and early spring of next year. WDFW would like to thank these volunteers for their diligent efforts and valuable input while the agency attempts to gather more information on this complex disease.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area Fuels Reduction Project: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis met with a forester from the Department of Natural Resources to plan a fuels reduction project on the Soda Springs Unit. This project will follow a fire management plan that was developed by WDFW staff in collaboration with DNR in 2012. The project was broken into four phases, with the highest priority areas being treated in Phase 1. At least the first three phases are planned for completion by May 31, 2015. Both WDFW and DNR have gained experience in conducting similar projects locally in recent years, so this work should benefit from well-informed planning.

Soda Springs Unit Fire: Rural Fire District 7 and the Department of Natural Resources put out a fire on the Soda Springs Unit on September 9th. The fire grew to only about 20 feet in diameter before being controlled. The fire started under suspicious circumstances and is under investigation.

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

Wildlife Management

New Hoof Disease Coordinator: We are pleased to announce that Brooke George has accepted the Hoof Disease Coordinator position for Southwest Washington. Brooke will be based out of the Region 5 Vancouver office and will work on coordinating WDFW's hoof disease effort mainly in Regions 5 and 6, and if needed, in Region 4 as well. Brooke has a breadth of experience in both veterinary and wildlife related work, as well as experience coordinating volunteer efforts. Brooke has a B.S. Degree in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University and she has worked in the natural resources field with a variety of Federal and State agencies in several different places, including Belize, North Carolina, Colorado, Florida, Oregon, and Washington.

New District 9 Assistant District Wildlife Biologist: We are pleased to announce that Stefanie Bergh has accepted the District 9 (Klickitat, Skamania and Clark Counties) Assistant District Wildlife Biologist position here in Region 5. Stefanie has been working as the Assistant District Biologist in District 10 for the past two years and we are pleased that she will continue to be a

part of the Regional wildlife team. Stefanie has a B.A. from Whitman College and a M.S. from the University of Minnesota. Prior to coming to WDFW, Stefanie worked on a variety of wildlife projects in California, Minnesota, Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming. Her wealth of experience with a variety of wildlife species including deer, elk, waterfowl, fisher, and wolves will be of tremendous value as she continues to work in the South Cascades of Washington.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Snowy Plover Monitoring: Biologists Hahn and Doorly continued to monitor and survey for active broods, as well as resight banded adults and juveniles at Leadbetter this week. This was their last week of field work at Leadbetter. The week also consisted of doing data overview, checking, entering, and clean-up.

The last active brood (LBN027) fledged 1 juvenile this week. Of the adult SNPL sighted this week, most have very faded markings and sexes are indistinguishable. Thus in the numbers below the birds are not separated out by sex.

This week, the greatest numbers of SNPLs were observed on Tuesday, September 9th, with 48 adult individuals, 2 juveniles, and 1 chick. The lowest numbers of SNPLs were observed on Wednesday, September 10th, with 16 adult individuals, 1 juvenile, and 1 chick.

There are currently no active nests.
New nests found this week: 0

The 1 active brood reported last week has fledged.

Total Active SNPL Nests at
Leadbetter: 0
Total Active SNPL Broods at
Leadbetter: 0

***LB:BY Female originally banded
at Midway Beach has returned to
Washington.***



Table 1. Summary of total SNPL nests and broods at Leadbetter.

Leadbetter											
# Nests Found	# Nests Currently Active	# Nests Hatched	# Broods Found	# Chicks hatched	# Chicks currently Alive	# Fledglings	# Nests Failed				
							Pred	Sand Burial	Abandoned	Human Caused	Unknown Cause
28	0	19	22	57	0*	24	1		5		3

**This number represents pre-fledged chicks currently alive.*

Streaked Horned Lark Update:

Streaked Horned Larks are no longer being observed by the biologists during their surveys.

Total Found Active STHL Nests at Leadbetter: 0

Total Found Hatched STHL Nests at Leadbetter: 3

Predator Update:

Corvid sightings at Leadbetter:

Total Crows sighted: 11 (average of ~ 2 per day)

Total Ravens sighted: 11 (average of ~2 per day)

One Peregrine Falcon was also sighted on Thursday, September 11th, but there was no indication it was hunting Snowy Plovers.

Oregon spotted frogs: District 11 staff, along with headquarters staff, removed radio transmitters from 5 frogs in the post-breeding season movement study. All five were healthy with no deleterious effects from carrying a transmitter. The field data collection for this study is now complete.

Western pond turtles: District 11 staff excavated 3 western pond turtle nests laid at a recovery site in Pierce County in order to “head-start”, or captive rear, hatchlings at Woodland Park Zoo. All three nests contained eggs, not hatchlings. The zoo will incubate all 11 eggs if they are determined to be fertile.

District 11 staff visited Cedar Creek Correctional Center to check the health of a wild western pond turtle female recovering from Ulcerative Shell Disease. Inmates at the facility provide supportive care for the turtles while their shells heal which can take from 3 months to over a year. The turtle was later transferred to PAWS Wildlife Center in Lynnwood for additional treatment.

Population monitoring, investigational research, and treatment of Ulcerative Shell Disease in endangered western pond turtles is a joint effort between WDFW, ZooVet consulting, PAWS Wildlife Center, Cedar Creek Corrections, Woodland Park Zoo, Oregon Zoo, and WSU.

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

WA Outdoor Women’s Workshop: Biologist Ament participated in the WOW Workshop at Camp Waskowitz near North Bend last weekend. This was the 17th year for the workshop, but this year was significantly different. The WOW staff decided to designate this workshop to younger participants. Girls age 9 – 13 attended with their mothers, aunts, or other related family. There were fewer participants at the successful event this year with around 80 students at the camp. Numbers were lower than past years but the WOW staff was making their first attempt at reaching out to the next generation of outdoor women. This is the 14th year that Biologist Ament has taught Wildlife Identification at the camp. The weather for the workshop was simply beautiful. The wildlife trail she set-up (w/ some very fresh samples – scat, hair, tracks, etc.) had 22 stations where participants had to identify what wildlife species had been present. The trail was thoroughly enjoyed by the students in her class. Numerous other participants and the WOW staff expressed their appreciation for the wonderful display that she brings to the workshop. They also conveyed how much they enjoyed the presentation Biologist Ament gave to the entire camp Saturday afternoon on bear/cougar – human interactions. She dedicated her talk in memory of Rocky Spencer. She used the cougar mount and had another WOW instructor adorn the bear hide to describe various scenarios of how to react when one encounters these animals. Biologist Ament was able to include some stories related to first-hand experiences with bears in the wild. She spent a few days last week gathering display items and preparing for her class. Biologist Ament appreciated the efforts by Regional staff and Laura Till to get the mounted cougar from Montesano to North Bend. She will be returning the local items kindly provided by the Dungeness River Center and Olympic Game Farm.



Display set-up at the WA Outdoor Women (and Girls) Workshop at Camp Waskowitz

Biologist Ament during presentation on cougar/bear human encounters

