

Wildlife Program

Week of July 20 – July 26, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Dirty Shirt Chronology: Supervisor McCanna updated the chronology of events and work being done to prevent further depredations. McCanna continues to update the chronology.

Cattle Producers: Supervisor McCanna and Conflict Specialist Shepherd met with cattle producers in the Dirty Shirt wolf pack territory offering data sharing agreements, explaining the departments DPCA_L agreements, showing current wolf locations (daily by phone or emailed maps), and relaying information on cattle seen and their behavior, as well as wolf howling activity during night patrols. Two additional producers were contacted this week, also sharing the above information.

Injured Cow: A range rider located a very skinny injured cow late one evening. Shepherd contacted the producer who brought his stock trailer up the next day. The cow appeared to have a stick puncture under the lower jaw, making it hard for it to eat. Range riders and McCanna assisted in rounding up the cow and got her loaded into the stock trailer. The cow was taken to the producer's home place.

Air Force Staff: Supervisor McCanna and Shepherd met with Air Force staff on different occasions. Air Force instructors and students are back in the field this week.

Investigating GPS Cluster Sites: Supervisor McCanna and various department staff members investigated multiple GPS cluster sites in the Dirty Shirt pack area. Nothing was found at the majority of the clusters investigated. A dead coyote, fawn, and moose calf were found at three different GPS cluster sites.

Damage Claim Assistance: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett continued to work with two producers on their Livestock Loss Damage Claim. Paperwork and the next steps were discussed with each producer. Paperwork will also be delivered to one producer to expedite the claim.

Meeting with Private Industrial Timber Company: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Regional Director Pozzanghera met with a local timber company about their livestock grazing contracts and additional cooperative efforts with regards to wolves in eastern Washington.

Night Patrols in Stevens County: Supervisor McCanna, Conflict Specialists Shepherd and Bennett, and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman continued night patrols in areas of the Colville National Forest to deter wolves from depredating on livestock. The collar frequency, recent collar downloads, and canid sign have been explored. Howl surveys were also performed with most nights yielding return vocalizations from the pack. Local recreationists were also contacted to provide information on the operation and receive sighting information from the campers.



Wolf track found in the Colville National Forest in Stevens County



A cow carcass in Stevens County after one day of being treated with lime to increase the decomposition rate and reduce attractant odor to the site

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolves: Specialist Heilhecker talked to an individual who saw a wolf crossing Highway 20 east of the Loup Loup Summit. Specialist Heilhecker contacted staff in Olympia regarding access to data for cooperators and purchased equipment for nonlethal hazing.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

NE Washington Common Loons: District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base surveyed Petit Lake where common loons have been observed in the past, but not documented as nesting. No loons were observed, but a group of three goldeneye ducks was seen. Although Petit Lake offers good nesting substrate (emergent aquatic plants and floating mats on half submerged logs) along with an abundant prey base for loons (small cutthroat trout), the lake is small (approx.. 10.6 acres), shallow (approx. 15 feet deep), and at fairly high elevation (approx. 3,975 feet). Hence, Petit Lake may not be suitable to support nesting common loons, but could support loons stopping there to feed before or after the breeding season. In addition, Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Annemarie Prince checked Davis Lake in Ferry County. Davis Lake had a single loon on it, similar to what has been observed in years past.

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

WT Wooten WA – Illegal Dams: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman removed two more illegal dams this week, including one at Cow Camp Bridge and one south at one of the campsites on the Howard property. Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman and Natural Resource Worker 2 Christian cut a chunk out of the log jam from last week at the request of US Forest Service Biologist Dowdy since he is tied up with the Blue Creek Fire near Walla Walla.



Before and after pictures of the illegal rock dam constructed by campers at Cow Camp Bridge



Before and after pictures of the illegal rock dam constructed by campers at one of the campsites on the Howard property south of Cow Camp Bridge

REGION 2

FIRES

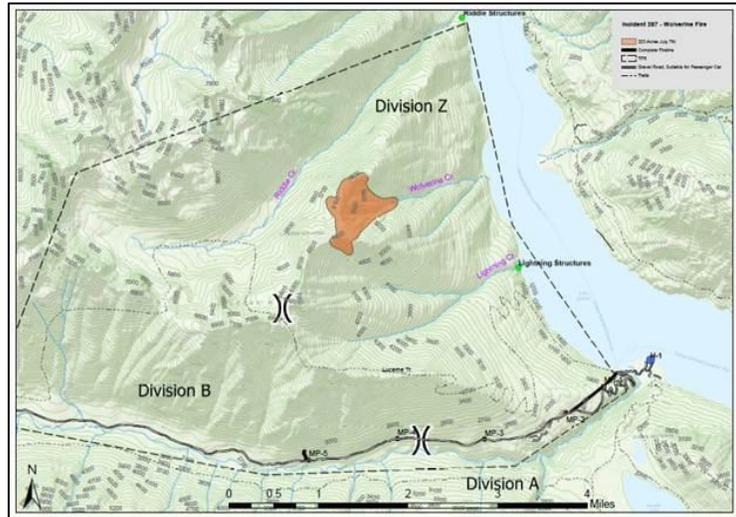
I - 90 Fire: On Sunday, July 19th a fire started on US Bureau of Reclamation (USBOR) lands managed by WDFW adjacent to I-90, near the Frenchman Coulee. Multiple local fire protection districts responded to the fire and got it under control by Sunday night. Under extreme fire conditions, the fire rekindled Monday, causing statewide mobilization being requested. Driven by 20 to 30 MPH winds, the fire grew considerably and eventually crossed I-90 near the Silica Road exit, prompting evacuations and the freeway to be shut down. The fire and issues associated with it took up a lot of Assistant Manager Eidson's week. When the fire was finally out it was estimated at 1,450 acres, including 505 acres (35%) of USBOR owned lands managed

by WDFW and 267 acres (18%) of WDFW owned lands. Incident Commanders were surprised to hear that the fire suppression contract between WDFW and WDNR does not cover WDFW lands within the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area.

I-90 fire – Photo by Chad Eidson



Chelan County Wildfires: Fire activity was minimal over that past week within the district. No new fire starts were reported and all fires are either small or under containment and in control. The Wolverine Fire along the south shore of Lake Chelan is active, yet relatively small and no longer threatening the communities of Lucerne and Holden.

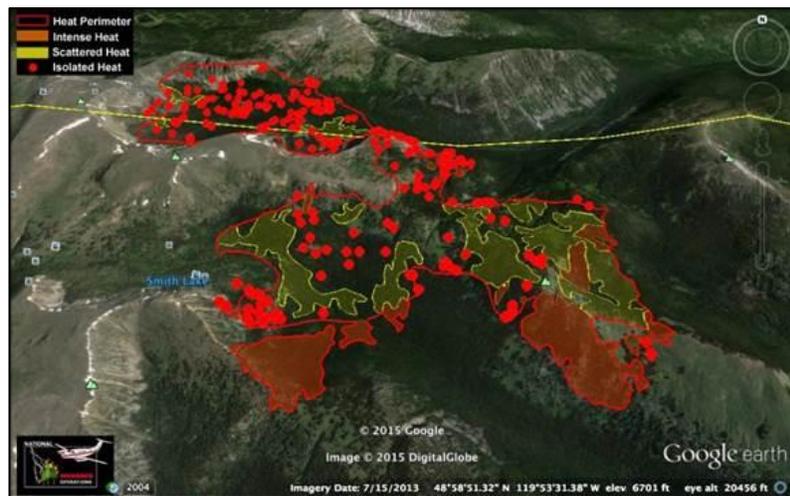


Newby Lake Fire: The Newby Lake fire burning 15 miles northwest from Loomis, Washington is 95%

contained. Firefighters continue to patrol the perimeter of the Newby Lake Fire and mop-up hot spots as necessary. However, area closures are still in effect. Information about closures can be found at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/closures/4355/>. Current information about this fire can be found at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4355/>.

Douglas County Fires:

Biologist Comstock and Biologist Dougherty took a field trip to look at fire effects on both public and private lands. They visited both the Monument Hill fire and parts of the South Douglas County Fire. The Monument Hill fire had a low-moderate burn severity and it appears that it will recover well without any significant restoration investment.





Old CRP that was planted with crested wheatgrass. This would be the perfect opportunity to restore this field to more heterogenous native cover, if only there were more SAFE acres in Douglas County.

*Low severity burn in lithosols,
Monument Hill fire*

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pygmy Rabbit Recovery: Several rabbit mortalities were identified within enclosures. Following necropsy and testing, coccidian parasites are believed to be the cause. The parasites are normally present in the rabbits at tolerable levels and they persist in the soil. Only when numbers reach excessive levels are the parasites responsible for impacts to the rabbit's health. This appears to be a density dependent relationship where the numbers of rabbits in the enclosures have reached the highest point during the breeding seasons and following kit productions, pushing coccidian levels up. We are working with several wildlife veterinarians to develop methods for short term treatment and for longer term strategies to minimize its recurrence.

Wildlife Areas

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass worked with Katherine Kelly and Kristen Kuykendall to issue a notice to proceed to Central Washington University for a cultural resource survey to cover the commercial operations area for the Methow Forest Rehab Project. Bass drafted and submitted a request to CAMP for a road plan for the sale to be used in contracting and forest practice applications. This will mainly entail having CAMP Engineer Kristen Kuykendall come do a site visit and formalize road work planned by Bass. Forester Bass discussed other consultation needs with Forest Team Lead Richard Tveten, specifically regarding commission and federal approval needed for a timber sale of this scale in

the federal lands matrix. Bass began drafting needed documents for these next steps of consultation. She also discussed doing a small field trip with shareholders and interested groups in the valley in the coming weeks to assure that all wildlife/habitat concerns are addressed. For most of the rest of the week, Bass worked on marking trees in the sale area. This work was concentrated in areas where quaking aspen is present and in need of release from resource competition.

FEMA/Carlton Complex: Manager Furnari spent a day working on fence related projects. She created two GIS maps & Excel spreadsheets for CAMP staff with the GPS points she walked for the Fraser Creek Interior & Methow SSW areas. She located three boundary surveys and provided them to CAMP, along with field GPS points to relocate the fence onto the boundary line. Manager Furnari participated in a conference call for the Pre-Construction meeting (Methow NE project) with CAMP, other WDFW staff, and the fence contractor, Wesslen Construction, to review the contract. She provided a draft Dear Neighbor letter to CAMP and fence contractor for comment. She received input, made modifications, and mailed a copy of the letter along with a map and business card to five neighbors to inform them about the imminent project. The contractors contact info was included. Manager Furnari received three calls from neighbors adjacent to the Fraser Creek Perimeter Fence project. Two of three provided authorization for contractors to access WDFW lands through their property, while another one wants coordination for her horses so they don't get out while the fence is being replaced. Manager Furnari spoke with CAMP's Anthony Sanich about the company hired to seal the well casing at Fraser Creek's old assistant manager's quarters. He said he couldn't find any water rights in the d/b associated with this well. She told him to check with her supervisor to be certain.

Columbia Basin Ag Lease GS-05: Assistant Manager Bechtold made arrangements with the lessee to verify the operation and inspect the irrigation of shrub rows related to this lease. With past lessees, compliance regarding the irrigation has been spotty at best. Also, over time the shrub rows have become significantly infested with Russian olive. With the help of a WCC crew last spring, the olives were treated and removed from roughly 40% of the area. With the olives now removed and the irrigation running, the site is looking better than ever with in-filling by rose, currant, and willow.



Day 1 of the treatment project, May 2015 –
Photo by Nick Bechtold



Irrigated shrub row, July 24, 2015 –
Photo by Nick Bechtold

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

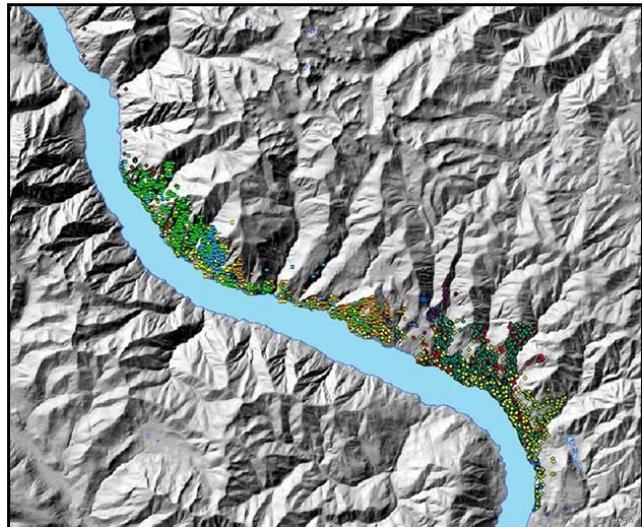
Wildlife Management

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Gallie and Officer Oswald attempted a survey and check up on GPS collars on the Manson herd on Lake Chelan. Conditions were good for most of the trip, but wind and waves picked up, ending the survey. Covering about 2/3 of their range, we documented 84 sheep (38 ewes, 24 lambs, and 22 rams). This lamb productivity is good for this herd, which typically is much lower. We detected two mortality signals from GPS telemetry collars (one ram and one ewe), but due to wind/wave chop, we were not able to get to shore to investigate. As time allows, we will complete the survey, recover the collars, and determine the cause of death.



A group of ten bighorn rams from the Manson herd in Chelan County

These GPS relocation points represent the normal yearly range of the Manson bighorn sheep population along the north shore of Lake Chelan



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

Wildlife Management

Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation

District (MLIRD): Biologist Finger met with District Fish Biologist Jackson, Habitat Biologist Pentico, and representatives of the MLIRD to discuss the Parker Horn dredging. MLIRD was seeking approval to expand the dredging area from what was previously agreed upon. The expansion had the potential to impact nesting Clark’s grebes, which nest in the area in small



numbers, and an agreement was struck that the MLIRD would install five permanent floating islands measuring 5' x 5' in size. This is believed to be a good compromise because productivity in the area is expected to be very low, and may be functioning as a sink due to wind wave and carp activity. Floating islands are likely to provide habitat which grebes can be successful using.

California quail hen with chicks – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

For the third time in four years, a juvenile albino red squirrel has successfully made it to adulthood in the same Winthrop neighborhood.



Young albino red squirrel – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Lake Ann from the Maple Pass Loop Trail – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Hoary marmot – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Beautiful Okanogan District mule deer buck – Photo by Scott Fitkin



The boys club enjoying the lazy days of summer – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Methow Sunset – Photo by Scott Fitkin



The Stuart Range in Chelan County – Photo by J. Gallie







From Top to Bottom – Assistant Manager Wehmeyer working on fencing at Buzzard Lake, mule deer pair near Fish Lake just outside Sinlahekin, a beaver keeping a close eye on me in Sinlahekin Creek, a pair of loons on Blue Lake, belted kingfisher near Blue Lake, a stormy sunset to the north of the residence, and a juvenile western tanager shrinking to hide in a serviceberry bush near headquarters – Photos taken by Justin Haug on or near the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hagan mowed the HQ fields to control weeds. He also established photo monitoring points this week off the Brewton and Crossover Roads. The photo monitoring is being done to document the post-wildfire effects from the 2013 Colockum-Tarps Wildfire. Vegetation monitoring trend plots will be added later to these sites to compliment the historical record as we move forward.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman hauled the standing black bear mount that was donated to the visitor's center into a local taxidermist for some updates. The plywood and astro turf base will be updated to a more natural scene. The Wildlife Education Corp is paying for the upgrades using their ALEA grant.

Beaver Activity Check: Manager Huffman checked for beaver activity at Tim's Pond and the Nile Springs Unit. Tim's Pond continues to have an active beaver, but the Nile Springs pond has been inundated with grass and is no longer being used.

Forester Mackey, Forester Pfeifle, Manager Huffman, The Nature Conservancy Forester Mize, and Department of Natural Resources Alpine District Manager McNamee toured the completed forest management Unit 3-1 to discuss the successes and objectives of the project.



Pre and post-harvest pictures from Unit 3-1 of the Oak Creek Timber Sale

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom met with Brian Heck of Ducks Unlimited and a contractor to discuss the upcoming water diversion project at the Mesa Lake Unit. Brian had a contract signed, details of the project were discussed, and a late August time frame for completing the project was set. When the project is complete, a year-round water supply will be available to feed the Pigeon Pond Complex when irrigation water is shut off.

Duck Trapping and Banding: Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber met with District Biologist Fidorra and Private Lands Biologist Stutzman to discuss this year's duck trapping and banding operation. Traps and supplies were inventoried. Trapping locations were toured and baited.

Wildlife Management

Mourning Dove Banding: District Biologist Fidorra conducted mourning dove banding at the Ringold Fish Hatchery two days this week. Hatchery Specialist Roberts assisted with baiting efforts. Trapping success was reduced due to harvest of wheat and corn in the area as doves have ample food available and fewer are seen onsite. Total doves banded this year in District 4 is currently 132: 21 AHY (5F,15M,1U); 110 HY; one unknown age. Dove banding will continue through August 15.

Bat Monitoring: District Biologist Fidorra moved bat detectors near Coulee City and Ritzville for the WDFW Bat Monitoring project in Grant and Adams counties. Fidorra also coordinated with Biologist Duvuvuei, who assisted with moving a detector near Ephrata. This second round of surveys will continue through July, with the third and final round conducted in August.

Duck Trapping Sites: District Biologist Fidorra, Private Lands Biologist Stutzman, and Technician Kaelber met to review duck trapping sites on Wildlife Areas and began baiting locations. Trapping will commence on the Bailey Youth Ranch and Windmill Ranch Wildlife

Areas from August to early September. Trap supplies were inventoried. Three traps are available and an additional duck trap will be made.

Barker Ranch Duck Trapping: District Biologist Fidorra discussed duck trapping opportunities on Barker Ranch with the general manager of this large private tract bordering the Yakima River. Manager Crowder was open to providing access and guidance for the project, which would begin in August as a third trapping site.

Dead Bird Carcasses: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with Biologist Rowan to receive dead bird carcasses for disease testing. Several calls related to dead/sick corvids have been received in the past weeks. Fidorra made arrangements to retrieve an American crow from a high school in Benton County where several dead crows have been found recently.

Sage Grouse Conservation: Biologist Stutzman provided Vegetation Ecologist Merg with HUC numbers and a GIS layer outlining areas with private range ground where sage grouse conservation would be most beneficial.

Injured Mule Deer Buck: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a call concerning an injured mule deer buck near McNary Dam. The 4x4 buck was located in an established wine grape vineyard, showed signs of serious injury to his head, and was extremely emaciated. It is very likely that the injuries are from a vehicle collision. The animal was euthanized and the landowner buried the carcass onsite with his backhoe.

Dove Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz trapped and banded doves over one and half days. Only four new bands were put out, probably due to hawk activity at the trap site. The annual total is now at 146, with 57 adults and 89 hatch-year birds banded. Large numbers of Eurasian collared doves continue to occupy the site 9-5.

State Wildlife Action Plan: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed and commented on the plan and corresponded with Biologist Lewis regarding badger surveys/sampling.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed and provided comment on a video produced by a local photographer. The video is intended to educate people with small farm flocks of the potential for their animals to infect bighorns and shows the potential outcome if contact occurs (sick and dying lambs). Section Manager Harris was informed of the video and the possibility of WDFW being involved. Bernatowicz also reviewed some information on domestic vs. bighorn risk modeling and corresponded with Biologist Moore.

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

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Buser and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber made modifications to the perimeter fence at the Hope Valley Unit access site, installed a new information kiosk at the site, and posted drought condition signs around the wildlife area.

NRT2 Kaelber stands next to a new kiosk on the Hope Valley Unit



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

Wildlife Management

Rattlesnake Mountain Wheat Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to evaluate wheat damage by elk on Rattlesnake Mountain. Six fields where active harvesting is occurring were surveyed and areas of elk damage documented. When possible, access through the fields was accomplished by riding the combine, where an elevated platform provided an advantage to viewing the damage.

Elk Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with landowners and hunt managers on elk locations to pressure them away from valuable crops.

LP Gas Cannon Retrieval: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand traveled to a large wine grape vineyard near Patterson to collect two LP gas cannons that had been on loan to reduce deer activity and damage in their grapes. The landowner was greatly impressed with the effectiveness of the units, so they purchased three of their own.

LP Gas Cannon Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand delivered and set up a second LP gas cannon to a tree fruit orchard near Prosser that has been receiving elk damage. Continued hazing in this area is needed and possible fencing is being considered.

Rattlesnake Mountain Elk Hazing Patrol: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted one late night/early morning elk hazing patrol on Rattlesnake Mountain. Over 25 elk and close to 20 deer were hazed from wheat fields, with most redirected back to Hanford.

Park Creek Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Wetzel received more reports from hay producers in the Park Creek area that reported elk in hay. Two elk have been removed at Park Creek by a landowner's representative and donated to the local food bank. Elk reports have increased in the Park Creek, Naneum, Weaver Road, and Reecer Creek areas.

Thorp Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with a Thorp landowner to look at elk damage and formulate plans to deter elk from irrigated cattle pasture.

Deer Damage: Conflict Specialist Wetzel received several complaints about deer damage in the Thorp area. Master hunters will be used in these areas August 1.

Coyote Depredations: Conflict Specialist Wetzel discussed coyote depredations with two separate Yakima county poultry owners. In each case, coyotes appear during the day and kill chickens and do not exhibit fear of humans during hazing attempts. Advice and lethal options were presented to the poultry owners.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: The Central Washington University Archeology class finished up their field work this week at the Colockum Wildlife Area. We were fortunate to have them survey a timber sale site that we hope to treat in the near future. The students will now head to the Central Washington University lab to study their findings this summer. A final report will be shared with our agency Archeologist.

Hazard Trees: The felling contractor will begin removing hazard trees on the Colockum Wildlife Area next week. He will start at the North Fork Tarpiscan Creek Road and work towards the Columbia River. His crew had been delayed from starting because of recent wildfire suppression activity in Douglas County.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt spent time working on requesting and processing invoices for the recent fence and hay stacking at Joe Watt, and also caught up on other office duties. He drove out to Joe Watt to check on the projects completed, and while he was there he found that the Hutchins Road gate had been recently slammed by a vehicle again and someone had driven into the south shear rail on the canal bridge, cracking the supports and moving the rail. Both are still functional. We'll look at repair on the bridge once KRD empties the canal (probably in August).

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman continued to coordinate on the encroachment issues. Huffman worked with the survey shop and regional staff to prioritize the issues.

SEPA Checklist: Manager Huffman reviewed and edited the SEPA checklist for the SF Cowiche Creek Floodplain Restoration Project that is being developed in partnership with the Yakama Nation.

Harvesting Unit 5-1: Forester Mackey coordinated with the contract harvester to begin cutting in Unit 5-1. Mackey completed compliance checks. So far the harvester has completed approximately ten acres in that unit. The harvester is planning to bring in a second complete set of equipment this coming week to speed up operations.

Gate Construction: Assistant Manager Berry finished up gate construction with hinges and a coat of yellow safety paint. Berry then installed the gate out at French's Ridge Road.

The newly installed gate in the elk fence on French's Ridge. Hopefully this one won't be driven over. Kiosks will be installed soon so that the gate posts aren't covered with signs.



Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak talked with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) about gaining access off of the I-82 Buena Exit in order to harvest surplus gravel that sits idle on WDFW property. The gravel will be used to develop an equipment yard at the Sunnyside Headquarters facility, and any remaining gravel will be stockpiled in an accessible area for future projects. Robby will be meeting with WSDOT next Tuesday onsite to develop a plan to remove the gravel.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Bald Eagle and Osprey Management: Biologist Milner provided two permits to remove osprey nests outside of the breeding season, and reviewed a third request where a consultant had determined a nest was unoccupied, but did not provide sufficient supporting information for Milner to allow the nest to be removed. Milner also worked with two callers who needed information on working under a bald eagle nest. These callers were referred to the USFWS, after Milner explained that is the agency in charge of eagle management actions as well as assessing the current status of an eagle nest.

Forest Carnivores: Biologist DeBruyn removed two trail cameras set to record carnivore activity in the Mount Baker area. Images of a bobcat, a bear, and a Cascade fox were recovered.

Cascade fox near Mount Baker

Common Loons: Biologist Smith monitored local lakes for loon activity. Both adults and one chick (~two weeks old) were located on Calligan. One adult was with the chick (~five weeks old) on Lynch and the young loon was also observed on Rattlesnake (although no adults were observed).



Adult loon resting with young chick on Calligan Lake



Adult loon and chick on Lynch Lake

Lowland Pika Surveys: District staff compiled survey data and created survey maps and other information for use in developing an end-of-project report.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues emergency nursery irrigation for the native plants growing at the Cherry Valley facility. Manager Boehm is working with Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey to locate a Master Hunter volunteer for this task. Manager Boehm also worked with a neighboring farmer to plant two acres of millet on the unit to go along with the corn and barley that are already growing. This will provide additional wildlife forage and cover.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm was patrolling the Ebey Island Unit Monday morning and observed a small brushfire in one of the barley fields along the Snohomish River. Manager Boehm contacted Sno-Valley Farms to see if they had any equipment onsite to assist. They did not, so Manager Boehm contacted WDFW Enforcement and the local sheriff. The Snohomish Fire District responded to the scene and put out the brushfire, which had burned a 10' X 30' area. The cause of the fire was likely a floating balloon candle, as burned remnants were discovered at the fire ignition point. Had the candle landed 30' to the east, it could have ignited an 80-acre grass field and been a much more serious situation.



Ebey Island Unit brushfire in one of the barley fields along the Snohomish River

Stillwater Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with staff from King County Noxious Weeds to locate, map, and remove noxious purple loose strife and tansy ragwort on the Stillwater and Cherry Valley units. Agricultural crops have helped reduce the tansy at Stillwater, but purple loose strife continues to expand at Cherry Valley. Difficult terrain hampers the ability to reach some of the pockets of vegetation, which prefer wet, soft soils, making treatment and control challenging. In the past two seasons, the Noxious Weed staff was able to donate a week of Washington Conservation Crew time to cover the units. This year, due to uncertain state budget actions, the crew is not available.

Lake Terrell Invasive Aquatic Weeds: Manager Kessler coordinated with a Rare Care Volunteer with the Washington Native Plant Society who will be looking for and documenting the *Cicuta bulbifera*, a water hemlock population on the north side of Lake Terrell. This aquatic weed is monitored every year to perform control work on it and make sure it does not spread further. Manager Kessler will accompany the volunteer and they will also try to get an updated estimate as to the Eurasian milfoil population in the lake.

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

Wildlife Management

Hunting Prospects and PR Reports: Biologist Milner updated the Hunting Prospects for the coming season for District 13. Biologist Yarborough and DeBruyn completed Status and Trend Reports and the Hunting Prospect documents for District 14.

Waterfowl Trapping/ High Path Avian Influenza Sampling: Biologist DeBruyn coordinated with the waterfowl section, the private lands program, The USDA, and private landowners to plan for the upcoming project to trap, band, and sample waterfowl in the North Puget Sound Basin.

Marine Waterfowl Molting Surveys: District staff consulted with the Marine Waterfowl Specialist and additional Region 6 staff in developing needs, schedules, and survey areas for upcoming molting surveys of marine waterfowl.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that seasonal mowing resumed briefly at the unit this week. Continued mechanical problems with equipment have impacted ground activities. Manager Boehm also continues to coordinate the dike breach repair project with the Drainage District. The project is planned to begin construction in August.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the free truckloads of wood mulch continue to roll in. Volunteer Mark Ryder is coordinating the effort. The mulch will be used to improve the interior trail system in the unit.

Spencer Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated an Eagle Scout Project for the Spencer Island Unit. Two benches were installed near the waterline to be used by bird watchers and waterfowl hunters. The benches replace the derelict ADA duck blind that was removed from the unit last year. Approximately 20 volunteers were involved with the project, which occurred July 25. The unit will have additional native vegetation planted and additional benches added in the coming months.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated an Eagle Scout project for the Spencer Island Unit



Snow Goose Forage Grant Compliance: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, Habitat Planner Friebel, and Lands Agent Iris participated in a conference call with Real Estate Services staff in Olympia to discuss a tracking system that regional WDFW staff can use to account for acreage that WDFW plants for snow goose and waterfowl forage.

Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton and Projects Coordinator Brokaw requested updates from Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) staff on the contract amendment that was submitted and needed to cover construction costs for the project. The amendment is expected to be approved or denied this week. Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with staff in the fiscal office to begin the process of entering the amended contract into the WDFW contract tracking software and setting up new charge codes and spending plans.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Skagit County issued the Fill and Grade permit for the project and Ducks Unlimited released bid documents for contractors to submit construction bids. Projects Coordinator Brokaw coordinated with Dike, Drainage, and Irrigation Improvement District #5 to draft an MOU that allows the drainage control structures to be installed in the district ditch on the site. Lands Agent Iris and Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with Ducks Unlimited to agree on terms in the Right of Entry Agreement that allows the project to be implemented on WDFW land. Projects Coordinator Brokaw drafted an Adaptive Management Plan for the project, which outlines how WDFW will respond to changing conditions on the site for three years post construction.

Reed Canary Grass Trail Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued mowing trails through the reed canary grass on the Lake Terrell and Intalco units. The trail mowing improves the recreational access on the units by clearing trails to wildlife blinds, around ponds, and through conifer forest areas.

Lummi Island Overlook: Manager Kessler refurbished and repaired the interpretive sign box from the Lummi Island Unit overlook. The box had weathered considerably over the last few years. He will reinstall the interpretive sign box with new informational flyers this week.

Nooksack Unit Slater Road Bridge Repairs: The Slater Road Bridge over the Nooksack River is in the process of being repaired and repainted with the contractors using our Nooksack Unit Parking Area to stage the work. Manager Kessler met onsite with the Whatcom County Engineers overseeing the project, as well as the Contractor Foreman to discuss the status of the project and review any problems with the continued public access to the unit. There are five parking spots reserved for the public to continue to access the river side dike top trail, and there were no reported problems between the public and the contractors.

Lake Terrell Trail Life USA Scout Trail Building Project: A Trail Life USA scout met onsite with Manager Kessler to discuss and begin a new trail building service project at the Lake Terrell Unit. This trail will be located on the east side of the lake and connect the two parking areas for the first time. After discussing the project and timelines, Manager Kessler got out and bushwhacked a possible trail course through the thick vegetation along the Lake Terrell edge.

The scout will now review this course and start planning and coordinating two Saturday work parties to complete the work.

Island Unit: Cosgrove continued mowing dikes on the Island Unit to fulfill maintenance obligations and improve access.

Samish Unit: Meis mowed ponds and field edges for the upcoming construction of the wetland enhancement project on the Samish Unit. In addition, dry weather conditions have allowed for the mowing of other ponds to begin the process of setting back the vegetation.

Private Lands/Access Management

Newly roped off swimming area on WDFW's Deer Lake access site

Western Washington Pheasant Release Program: Supervisor Caldwell coordinated with Biologist Hans on contract management for Western Washington Pheasant Release Program projects. Supervisor Caldwell also contacted several landowners about enrollment questions and concerns and discussed contractual obligations that his staff could provide. All willing participants will be established and enrolled by July 31.



418 Elk Hunt: Biologist Hans spoke with the Sierra Pacific Industries representative regarding fire precautions on their land this fall. The two discussed safety issues and protocol in the event a no access restriction occurred. Biologist Hans relayed this information to District Biologist Yarborough, who will be the point of contact if a no access situation were to occur. Natural Resource Technician Otto finalized hunter packets for the upcoming pre-hunt coordination meeting with hunters in early August.

Whidbey Island Diversity Site: Biologist Hans spoke with the Whidbey Island Land Trust staff to finalize details for the program's current diversity site in addition to a new diversity site on south Whidbey Island. Biologist Hans will begin creating contracts for these two sites.

Whidbey Deer Hunt: Biologist Hans contacted landowners on Whidbey Island to try and clarify land sale details and parcel information. The sale is not yet finalized, but once it is, contracts will be created for this hunt. Biologist Hans coordinated volunteer usage with Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey.

Unit Inventory: Natural Resource Technician Otto conducted crop inventories of the 2015/16 Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program units in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties. The

purpose of this inventory is to assist staff in planning for harvest time estimates, and ultimately access to units for preparation purposes for the upcoming hunt season.

Natural Resource Technician Otto checked a Snohomish County hunt unit where he had planted barley in early June as part of the Migratory Waterfowl Winter Forage Enhancement Project



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

Wildlife Management

Special Elk Permits in Area 4941: Biologist Yarborough met with hunters that were drawn for Elk Area 4941. The hunters were interested in learning more about the area, herd, and potential access areas. Yarborough also talked with mountain goat hunters to discuss access issues.

Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls from residents of King County regarding elk and deer damage. Damage occurred to a variety of crops, gardens, and infrastructures (fences). Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering properties were discussed. Smith constructed temporary electric fencing for loan to protect vegetables being damaged by deer in the Enumclaw area. Smith will be arranging for Master Hunter volunteers to assist the landowner with brush removal and maintenance to allow the existing electric fence to be operational again. Smith also made arrangements to install another temporary electric fence in the coming days (vegetables), also in the Enumclaw area. In addition, Smith checked an electric fence excluding elk from pumpkins in the Auburn area. The fence is working correctly and no new elk tracks have been found inside. A small amount of weeding was needed (and done) under the fence. Master Hunter volunteer help will be arranged for this upkeep over the coming weeks.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island: Manager Rotton met with Lands Agent Kye Iris to tour the Leque Island property to examine the failing culvert crossing within the work area of the road and bridge construction project.

Skagit Wildlife Area Accesses: Cosgrove sprayed noxious weeds at the Headquarters, Jensen, and Moberg units on Fir Island. Weeds targeted include Canada thistle, blackberry, and field bindweed.

Fir Island Farm Unit: Manager Rotton met with Fir Island Farms Project Manager Jenna Friebel and WDFW Weed Crew Manager Dave Heimer to discuss the control of cat-tail on the Fir Island Farms project site. Project funding is available to begin control of the work before the restoration project is fully implemented and the area is returned to intertidal habitat.

Samish River Unit: Manager Rotton and Lands Agent Kye Iris examined the field condition and water levels in the ditches on the Samish River Unit following the report from Dike District #5 that the flood gates on the Samish River have been vandalized during recent high tides. The district has blocked the flood return gates from opening to keep water from entering the site. The concern is that this water could affect construction of the wetland enhancement project scheduled to begin later this summer.

Spencer Island: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm used a brush cutter to clear worksite areas for the upcoming Eagle Scout projects. With three Eagle Scout projects scheduled for the unit, adult volunteers are needed to clear the trail and project work areas, where benches and native vegetation are planned for installation. The benches will be dispersed throughout the unit, available for bird watching, and incorporated into temporary duck blinds for waterfowl hunters.

Private Lands/Access

Hunting Season Preparation: Biologist Hans continued contacting landowners for 2015 enrollment, preparing contracts, editing the GoHunt website, and updating unit details for the private lands access program team. Natural Resource Technician Otto met in the field with several landowners in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties to discuss enrollment for the upcoming season. All landowners he spoke with talked highly of their experience with the program last year and are interested in partnering with WDFW for another season.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Chaar to order items from the hunter education warehouse. Chief Instructor Chaar will be starting day time classes at the Region 4 office along with Chief Instructor Hickey. Dazey activated three new hunter education classes in Region 4. Dazey sent out three instructor applicant packages to a new applicant, starting them on the process to becoming certified as a hunter education instructor. Dazey ordered supplies from the warehouse for several instructor teams. Department issued firearms will be required to be used for live fire starting Jan 1, 2017. To start the process, Dazey also ordered firearms and will pick them up this coming Wednesday when he is in Olympia. Coordinator Dazey previewed changes to the new instructor policy manual and made suggestions to Kris Thorson, the new support person in Olympia.

Teaching Team Evaluations: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey attended a class at the Renton Fish and Game range to evaluate the team that teaches there. The team presented to the students a very graphic display as to the effectiveness of hunter orange. One of the instructors dressed all in camouflage sat down at 110 feet from where the students were just before dusk and announced his position with a turkey call. Students were unable to locate him even though he

was just at the tree line. As soon as the instructor put on a hunter orange hat he stood out. This dramatically showed the students why hunter orange is so important.

Volunteer Coordination: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted Biologist Hans in recruiting volunteers to help gate opening and closing on the special permit hunt in 1047 in the Sedro Wooley area. Dazey continues to receive volunteer inquiries to assist in projects in the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. Dazey made contact with a possible volunteer to assist Sgt. Olson in cleaning up Pier 86.

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

Private Land Access Program Staff Coordination Meeting: All staff met to go over and provide feedback for the onboarding process of the soon-to-be-hired Private Lands Biologist. Staff also provided feedback on discussions of staff roles and responsibilities, confirmation of communication structures, evaluated monitoring needs, determined field training and timelines, distributed MI codes and discussed funding allotments, discussed cross-program coordination projects and timelines, discussed game hunting season work plan coordination and timelines, evaluated specific objectives, strategies, and expectations regarding upcoming game seasons, determined volunteer needs, went over questions and concerns, and brainstormed suggestions for improving the program.

Floodplains by Design Workshop: Projects Coordinator Brokaw attended a workshop in Shoreline hosted by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) regarding the Floodplains by Design program. TNC and DOE organize a package of projects biannually that improve floodplain habitat and reduce flood risk, then request funding from the legislature to fund the implementation of those projects. A competitive application process to be included in the 2017 list is set to begin in September and WDFW will consider taking advantage of this opportunity.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Treponeme-associated Hoof Disease: Severely Affected Elk Euthanasia SOP

Implementation: Region 5 Wildlife Program Manager Jonker, Region 6 Wildlife Program Manager Calkins, and Hoof Disease Coordinator George met with Law Enforcement Captains and Sergeants in both Regions 5 and 6 to discuss the implementation of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for removing elk severely affected by hoof disease. The SOP has gone through the SEPA review process with a Determination of Non-Significance (DNS). The discussions were interactive and informative, and agreements were reached on the roles and responsibilities of the Hoof Disease Coordinator, Enforcement Officers, Wildlife Conflict Specialists, and District Biologists while responding to reports of elk severely affected with hoof

disease. Establishing these procedures will enable an effective transition as implementation begins to take place.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Purple Loosestrife Monitoring: Assistant Manager Hand began this year's purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) eradication a few weeks ago. Purple loosestrife is a non-native invasive plant in wetlands. If left untreated, purple loosestrife will take over a wetland and out-compete other native wetland plants, which can ultimately alter a wetland's structure and function. One mature plant can produce up to two million seeds annually. The Lakebed area in the North Unit



of Shillapoo is where most of the efforts are focused. A running count of the total treated plants is being kept and has been monitored since 2007 in order to gauge the success of the treatments. The shoreline of Vancouver Lake within the Wildlife Area is also an area where staff are regularly surveying and treating all located plants.

Purple Loosestrife

Summer Pasture Mowing: July marks the beginning of the pasture mowing efforts at Shillapoo. Mowing is postponed until July 1 every year to provide ample time for any last-nesting waterfowl to be successful without human disturbance. Assistant Manager Hand plans on mowing around 500 acres over the next few months, specifically targeting pastures and areas with heavy abundance of reed canary grass. Some of these areas will be targeted for forage by the early arriving geese this fall. Other areas will be left alone to provide cover for pheasants until mowing begins later in the fall in preparations for winter inundation.

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Fish Enhancement Project at Toutle Rivers Confluence: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald attended a tour sponsored by the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group at Harry Gardner park to discuss an upcoming project on agency lands which will provide streambank protection, reducing erosion on the North Fork Toutle River and enhancing spawning and rearing habitat for salmonids at the confluence of the North and South Fork Toutle Rivers. Several representatives from county agencies and the local community attended the tour, with positive feedback for the project's implementation. The project to install large woody debris and pile dike structures should begin early this fall, with some riparian plantings next spring to vegetate the site.



Fish Enhancement Project at Toutle Rivers Confluence

Brush Fire Along Reiger Highway: Sometime between July 18 and 24, a small brush fire started along the Reiger Highway and the South Unit of the Shillapoo Wildlife Area, burning about a half-acre of brush and trees. The fire appears to have started on the highway from a possible car fire, but it is unknown what the actual cause was, as this area often has illegal campfires and the burning of dumped trash.

Brush fire along Reiger Highway

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



Shillapoo Wildlife Area

ADA Hunting Blind Construction: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand, along with several members of the Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA), constructed the deck platform this past Saturday for a new handicapped accessible hunting blind in the South Unit of the Shillapoo Wildlife Area. Despite the wet weather there was a very good turn out by the members of the Lower Columbia Chapter (WWA), and the deck was built in a couple of hours. The blind, which is being constructed by the Machinist Program at Clark College, will be placed on the deck prior to hunting season. This blind will be wheelchair accessible and can be used as both a hunting and observation blind, and will be designated for use only by those with disabilities. Everyone is very excited about the installation of the blind and that it should get a good amount of use over the years as it is located on a very productive wetland.



ADA hunting blind construction

Private Lands/Access

Landowner Agreement: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin signed a Damage Prevention Crop Agreement and a Hunt by Reservation Agreement with a landowner in Wahkiakum County. The land owner will also begin using Master Hunters and other damage pool hunters on an additional 50 acre field that gets heavy damage in late winter and early spring.

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

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Damage Hunts: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin fielded several calls from anxious permit holders who will participate in the 2015-2016 damage season. Questions and concerns were raised regarding the type of firearm they can hunt with, when they will be called, available dates, and volunteer opportunities. Conklin deployed a Master Hunter to a farm in Randle experiencing heavy damage from elk. The land owner had spent several days running the elk off using a motor cycle, but the elk keep returning.

Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin received this photo of elk in a wheat field in the Boistfort Valley. Conklin was on this farm two weeks ago documenting damage to peas from elk.

Elk on Boistfort farm



Fladry Fencing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin dismantled the turbo fladry fencing that was installed at a farm in Randle. The fencing was extremely successful in keeping elk out.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Skokomish Cougar Project: Biologist Murphie participated in a search for kittens associated with an adult female cougar collared as part of the Skokomish Tribe's study. Location data collected from the GPS collar suggested the female had denned sometime during the prior two-weeks of their search attempt and this cluster of locations, as well as the female's location at the time of the search attempt, were used to locate the den site. Biologist Murphie reports that four kittens were easily found in mixed forest habitat.



Two of four kittens at their den site in the Skokomish River valley

Bat Acoustic Survey Project: Biologist McMillan worked on the Bat Acoustic Survey project, seeking permission for access to several units and sampling one unit. The study instructions and associated references can be found at <S:\Reg6\WP\AnitaMcMillan\BatAcousticRecords\2015BatSurveyProject>

Sampling Unit – Cell number - Location - Work Accomplished

- 1- Cell 81 – Upper Hoh Site - On hold for an Olympic National Park (ONP) scientific collection permit - Biologist McMillan submitted an online application for an ONP permit (<S:\Reg6\WP\Anita McMillan\BatAcousticRecords\2015JulyHoh\Application-85608.pdf>).
- 2- Cell 513 – Hoko Site - Sampled July 20-24 - Biologist McMillan set up and retrieved the bat detector from Cell 513, the second cell in the sequence for sampling. The recording data was mailed to Biologist Buchanan and copied onto the S: drive. There were 100 recorded files during the four night sampling session, between 22 and 31 each evening. Biologist Buchanan (or designee) will determine if the recordings were bats and determine what group or species were being recorded.



Cell 513

Bat Detector set up, with microphone at end of 8 foot pole – Cell 513

- 3- Cell 1105 – Clearwater Site – Inquired with Biologist Scott Harris & DNR Biologist Scott Horton about recommended sites.
- 4- Cell 4177 – Deep Creek Site – Inquired with Merrill & Ring (M&R) to gain access through M&R to a DNR section.
- 5- Cell 4801 – Port Angeles Site – Inquired with Biologist Buchanan about complications of the site due to being in city, compromised habitats, and high risk of equipment vandalism. Plan on dropping this cell.
- 6- Cell 5201 – Salmon River Site – Inquired with Biologist Buchanan about the southern portion of the cell being dropped from the map, possibly due to cell sampling being for District 16, which excludes the portion of the cell in Grays Harbor. This small northern portion of the cell complicates the ability to find a suitable sampling site. Awaiting a reply from Biologist Buchanan to decide if the sampling location can be within Grays Harbor.



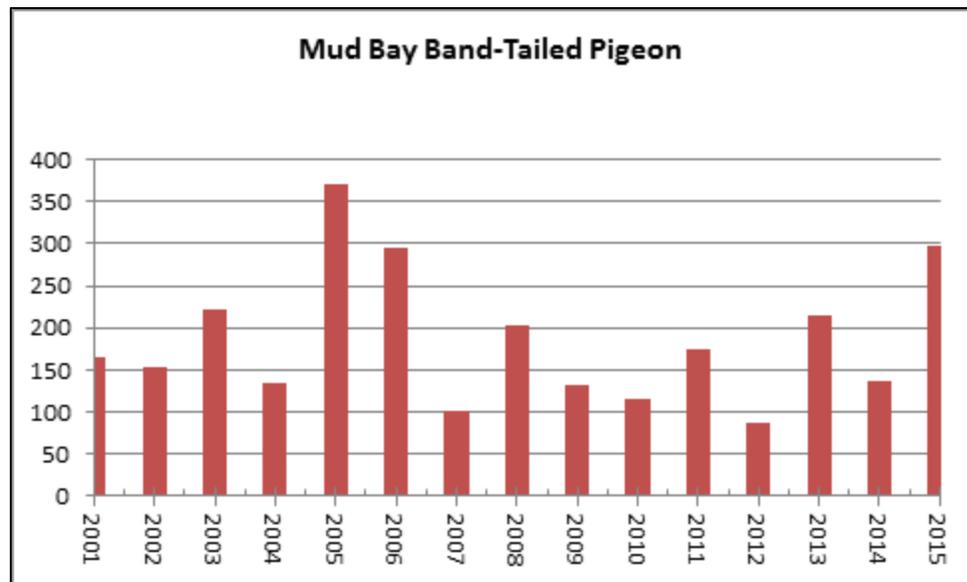
GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING, AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

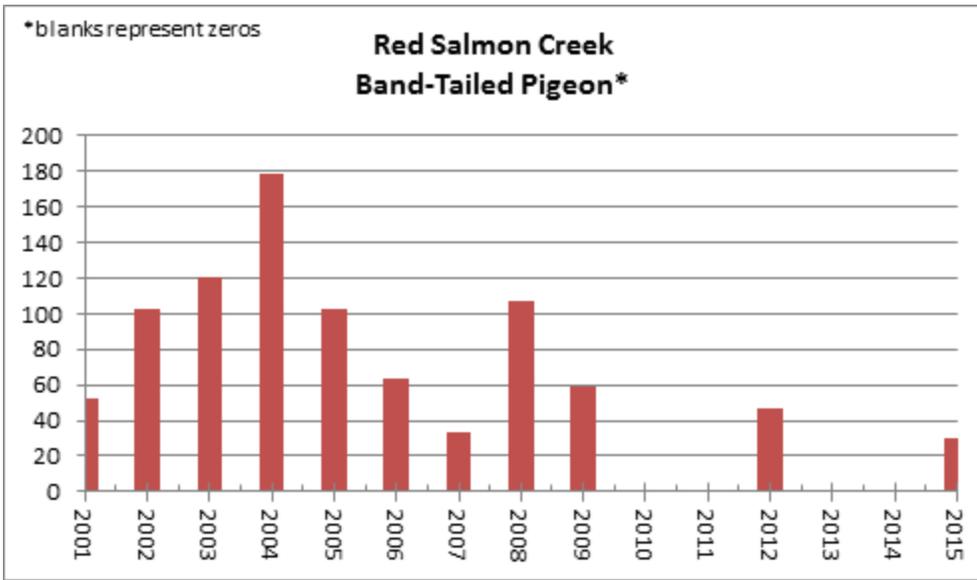
Band-tailed Pigeon: Biologist Novack conducted a literature search and reviewed historical reports on band-tailed pigeon in Washington. He obtained contact information on successful band-tailed pigeon hunters in Pacific and Grays Harbor counties and made email and phone contacts with a number of them. The effort resulted in the rediscovery of a mineral site for Pacific County along the Naselle River.

After receiving the tip from Biologist Novack, Biologist Michaelis scouted and observed several band-tailed pigeons along the Naselle River. The actual mineral spring site was not located, probably due to existing tide condition. The band-tailed pigeon survey on this site will be conducted this week. This location will replace the site near Raymond, which was previously used to survey pigeons since 2001 and which was lost to a landslide. The new location represents the only band-tailed pigeon mineral site within District 17 and is used to develop a long-term population index for band-tailed pigeon in the Pacific Flyway.

Biologist Tirhi completed band-tailed pigeon surveys at the Mud Bay and Red Salmon Creek mineral locations in Thurston County. Tirhi had to negotiate a new observation point for the Mud Bay survey when the landowners of the site that had been used since 2007 decided they no longer wanted to support the surveys. The mineral site is located in a very small inlet with limited visibility from elsewhere on the bay. Luckily, the neighbor next door was willing to allow observations from their property. Mud Bay had a high count of 297 band-tails, three of which were juveniles. This is a 46% increase over 2014 counts, but comparable to the 2013 count of 214. Tirhi also recorded band-tails active again at Red Salmon Creek in the Nisqually Estuary after being absent during the last two year’s surveys and absent two years prior to that. Band-tails are no longer focusing on the traditional mineral source at the site (a drainage culvert) but are instead

dropping down at several locations along a ¼ mile long shoreline. Tirhi was able to count the birds by following their progression along the shoreline.





Red Salmon Creek band-tailed pigeon mineral shoreline