

Wildlife Program

Week of July 27 – August 2, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Depredation Investigation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd led a depredation investigation in Ferry County. The investigation was ruled unknown.

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: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd sent daily emails to four producers in the Dirty Shirt pack territory with the last known collared wolf locations. The collared wolf moved over 20 (air) miles in two days this week.

Collar Data Website: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd met with one producer and family to explain and show how to use the collar data website. The producer's password is working and now able to view the last fourteen days of collar information in the Dirty Shirt pack territory. Shepherd also relayed password information to a producer in the Profanity Peak pack territory. This producer's password is also working.

Air Force Staff: Shepherd discussed the last known wolf locations with an Air Force representative in regard to their training operation. The Air Force continues training in the Dirty Shirt pack territory.

Cattle Found: Natural Resource Worker Weatherman spent most of one day following up on a report from campers that several head of cattle were in the higher elevation of the allotment. Weatherman found five cows and four calves located at a much higher elevation than the other cattle. Shepherd notified the producer of the location of the cattle.

Night Patrols in Stevens County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and other WDFW staff performed the last patrol of the Colville National Forest to deter wolves from depredating on livestock Sunday evening and early morning. The collar frequency, recent collar downloads, and canid sign have been explored. Howl surveys were also performed, yielding return vocalizations from the pack.

Monthly Updates to Lincoln, Spokane, and Whitman counties and the Huckleberry Range: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett sent a monthly update to producers with recent sightings, camera work, and reported depredations.

Tucannon Pack: Biologist Earl received several pictures from range riders in the Tucannon Wilderness of elk kills amongst the grazing allotments. Collar data showed there was a trip made to the grazing allotment this week. Earl also spent time this week addressing rancher concerns with the data sharing site, which was down.



Elk calf carcass located near a grazing allotment in the forest

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Teanaway Wolf Update: Conflict Specialist Wetzel discussed sheep movements with the Teanaway sheep range rider. Several lambs were missing and later found consumed by birds and scavenged by coyotes and dogs. No wolf sign or indications of wolf activity were located in the area.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Selkirk Grizzly Bear Survey: District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base and Wildlife Biologist Justin Dellinger checked three hair-snagging corrals and deployed one new corral in the Selkirk Mountains. Black bear “hits” were photo-documented at all three corrals checked, along with one unidentified bear (photo below). Hair corrals are barbed wire stretched around four or more trees, forming a corral with a lure (typically fish and cow’s blood) placed in the center. The objective is for the bear to cross the barbed wire and leave a hair sample that can be sent to a laboratory for genetic (DNA) analysis. There is a self-activated (trail) camera placed at the corral for initial bear species identification.



Unidentified bear at hair-snare corral deployed in the Selkirk Mountains

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Range Fire Nearby: On Friday, while Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Finch was on the tractor coil-packing, he noticed a range fire starting up to the southwest, toward Odessa. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff met Finch at the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Headquarters to review the lay of the land before they attacked the fire. Fire staff from DNR, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and four county fire districts responded. The fire burned to within four miles of BLM's Marlin Hollow property before it was controlled. No Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area land was affected.



Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Halsey Water System: Wildlife Area staff spent some time this week trying to repair the water system at the Halsey Unit. Staff discovered water wasn't flowing into the storage cistern about two weeks ago. Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice looked at the spring source, which is a little over a mile away from the cistern, and found the spring running strong with an excellent flow of cold water. Debby Flynn checked an area where the pipeline crosses Kelly Creek and discovered a blockage in the pipe. Debby later pumped what water was left in the cistern, which had turned putrid from dead rats and other debris in the water. Staff returned the next day and pumped water into the line from the cistern using a gas-powered pump and water hauled in on the back of our diesel powered Dodge truck. The flush removed a lot of debris from the pipe. The pipe joint was re-assembled and hopefully we'll find a cistern full of water on Monday. This water system is unique and was modified in 2007 to provide water to several troughs for pilot grazing. The spring water is running as it always has and will provide water throughout the unit for all forms of wildlife once we have the cistern full again.

The Halsey water system pipeline at its lowest point where it crosses Kelly Creek. Notice the pipe is suspended by a cable across the creek. Debby had quite a time finding the pipe in the jungle growing around it.



Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

CRP SAFE: Biologist Lewis learned about newly allocated acres in the Palouse State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) CRP program from Ecologist Merg. The Palouse SAFE program received 2,500 acres for 2015.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Frogs and Butterflies: Biologists E. Duvuvuei and R. Finger met with Ann Potter and David James, Associate Professor of Entomology at Washington State University, to tour an important breeding area for monarch butterflies in Lower Crab Creek. Coincidentally, we were in need of eDNA samples from Lower Crab Creek and took the opportunity afterwards to collect samples. This area had a historic northern leopard frog observation and eDNA samples will be used to help determine whether leopard frogs may be using the area currently. Biologist O. Duvuvuei and Technician Annanie assisted with processing eDNA samples after collection.

E. Duvuvuei paddles lower crab creek in search of northern leopard frog DNA and monarch butterflies – Photo by R. Finger



North Cascades Wolverine Research: Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer investigated a potential den area in the remote back country of the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area with the help of a Cascade Canines scat-sniffing dog and handler. We identified the possible site last winter through repeated telemetry points and track activity spotted during aerial surveys. As it turns out, our study animal Special K was not visiting a natal den, but was instead returning repeatedly to feed on a bear carcass, the remains of which (skull and a few bone fragments) were discovered by Winnie the wonder dog. The remains appeared to be from a middle-aged, medium sized adult bear and showed some bone consumption typical of wolverine foraging. In addition, the dog located many potential wolverine scats that will be sent to the lab for DNA analysis. It will be interesting to see if the scats identify wolverines other than Special K. The site lies within an area that is likely part of past study animal Sasha's home range. Much thanks to Cascade Canines (Jennifer and Winnie) for the help. Finding the skull without them would have been a longshot and the scats likely would have gone undetected. On the way out from Stehekin, we got a good look at the wolverine creek fire just as it was really starting to take off. It is currently sending a lot of smoke into the lower half of the Methow Valley.



Bear skull – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Winnie the wonder dog and discovered treasure – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Wildlife Areas

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project: For most of the week, Forester Bass worked on marking leave trees in the North Bear Creek unit of the commercial thinning sale. Due to aspen stands in need of release, meadow encroachment by conifers, camping areas, and a mix of pre-thinned and dense stands, this area requires unique micro-site prescription considerations. Bass also continued to record stumps that indicate fire scar data for sampling.

North Bear Creek, pre-thinned in 1947 area in foreground, unthinned area in back. Both areas are in need of thinning to open up the canopy and reduce stand density – Photo by Jamie Bass



Breed Ranch Hound’s Tongue Control: Assistant Manager Sample did a follow up check on hounds tongue plants that were sprayed over two weeks ago on the Breed Ranch property of the Methow Wildlife Area. She did not see any new plants, or regrowth from plants that had already been sprayed. However, she was disappointed to see that many plants had already gone to seed, and will drop hundreds of seeds that will germinate in the coming seasons. She was also disappointed to see that the previously sprayed burdock showed little sign of herbicide treatment. The vast majority of hounds tongue was controlled though, and Assistant Manager Sample will continue the effort.



Hounds tongue plants that have gone to seed on the Breed Ranch property of Methow Wildlife Area. All new plants had been controlled 2 weeks prior – Photo by Anna Sample on 7/31



Burdock plants at the Breed Ranch on Methow Wildlife Area, showing little sign of stress from herbicide application 2 weeks prior – Photo by Anna Sample on 7/31

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Comstock and Biologist Dougherty met with a cooperator in Wilson Creek, who has 480 acres they wish to enroll in SAFE. Currently the field is enrolled in CRP, which will be expiring this year. The current cover is dominated by Sherman’s big bluegrass, intermediate wheatgrass, and big sagebrush. Biologist Comstock and Dougherty discussed take out and reseeding methods with the cooperator, who

was very amenable to working with the program to improve habitat for wildlife. Biologist Comstock began preparing all the various required NRCS job sheets.

Expiring general CRP which will be converted to SAFE-CRP – Photo by Devon Comstock

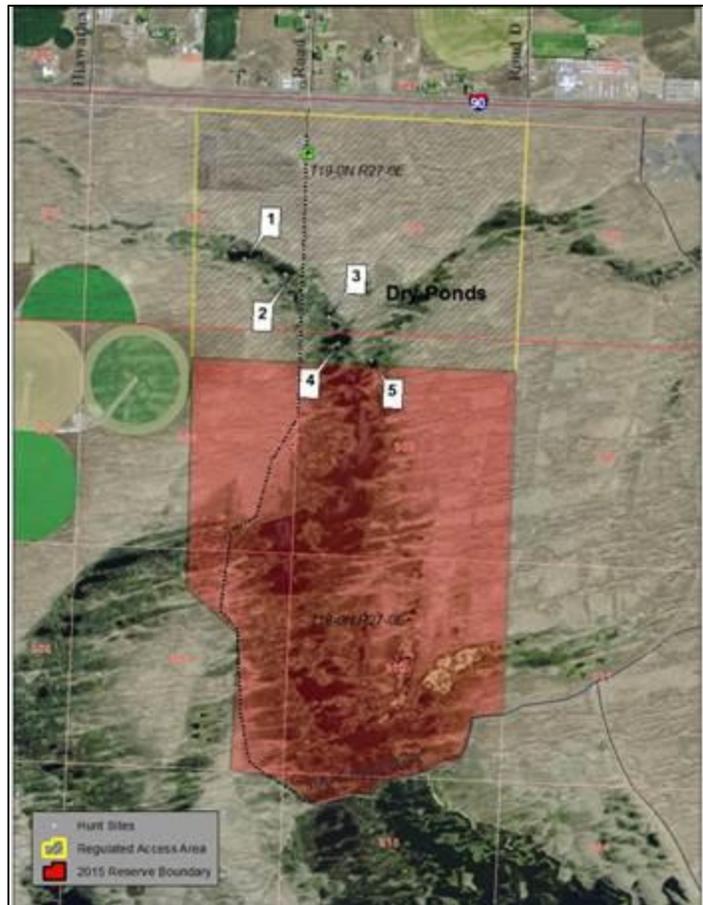


GOAL 2: PROVIDE SUSTAINABLE FISHING, HUNTING AND OTHER WILDLIFE-RELATED RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL EXPERIENCES

Wildlife Management

Hunting Season Prospects: Biologist Finger drafted hunting season prospects for the 2015 season and provided detailed information on new ADA hunting blinds and changes in Regulated Access Areas, including the establishment of the new area at North Potholes. The North Potholes Regulated Access Area sits strategically under a major mallard flight path which takes them to Hiawatha Valley to feed. Though quality and use of these ponds is typically low, hunting opportunity is expected to be good to excellent, particularly during foggy conditions or with strong winds out of the southwest.

North Potholes Regulated Access Area layout for the 2015-16 hunting season. Waterfowl hunting will be allowed within a specified distance of designated hunt sites (as determined by parking spot) on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Management Area 4 goose days during the youth and general waterfowl season. Hunting sites will be secured through a reservation system with drop-ins allowed after 9 a.m. – Image by R. Finger



Frenchmen Ponds Regulated Access Area with newly established disabled hunter (ADA) blinds, vehicle turn-around, and disabled parking spots – Image by R. Finger



Private Lands/Access

Hunter Access: Biologist Dougherty has continued working on a youth pheasant hunt during the youth hunting weekend in September. This event is being sponsored by the Grant County Chapter of Pheasants Forever (<https://www.facebook.com/ColumbiaBasinPF>). A location has been secured with other details to be worked out this coming week at a chapter meeting. This is shaping up to be a tremendous opportunity for youth hunters.



Food plot growing on a hunter access cooperator's property, also the site of the upcoming youth hunt – Photo by Sean Dougherty

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

Wildlife Areas

Big Valley Damaged Facilities: Manager Furnari corresponded with several Lands Management staff concerning the damaged facilities that were hit by a vehicle along Hwy 20 late Friday evening. She spoke with emergency grazer, Boesel, who made repairs to the fence on Sunday, after relocating his bulls to another part of the pasture. She spoke with representatives with the power company (OCEC) to ensure the power had been disconnected (yes, at the transformer). She attempted to coordinate with Risk Management staff (now a vacant position) and then spoke with Safety office's Jim Fry as a backup. She filled out WDFW 699 form and forwarded emails with relevant photos to him for processing.



Damaged facilities at Big Valley from vehicle accident – Photo by Sherry Furnari



Private Lands/Access

Douglas County Fire: Biologist Comstock provided some brief input to BLM for rehab methods for the Monument Hill fire. Biologist Comstock was invited by BLM to participate in a post-fire tour of the Douglas Creek area of the south Douglas Complex fire. The tour focused on assessing burn severity, vegetation effects, restoration, and management needs.

Great basin wildrye already resprouting from a burned root crown in the south Douglas Complex – Photo by Devon Comstock



BLM staff assess burn severity in an enclosure – Photo by Devon Comstock



Mule deer with summer velvet – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Rattlesnake – Photo by J. Heinlen



Rainbow Lake – Photo by Scott Fitkin

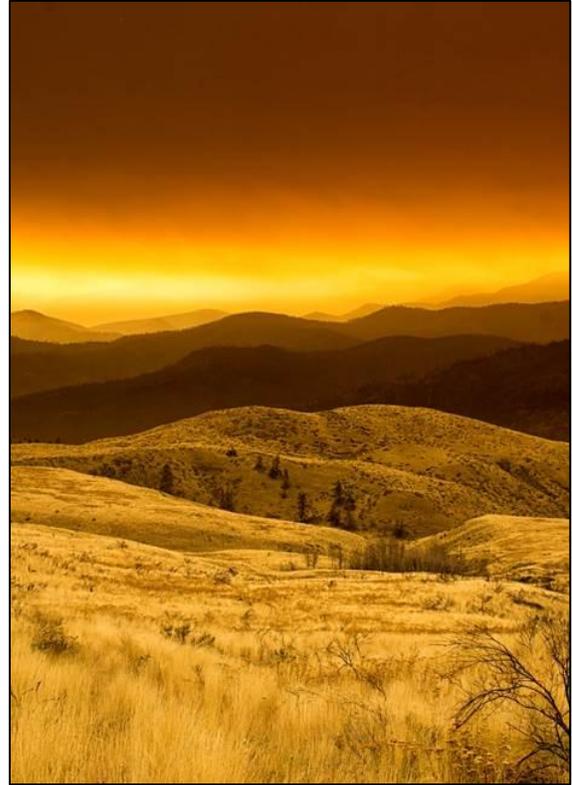


Smoke from the Wolverine Creek Fire enveloping Lake Chelan – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Friendly hoary marmot – Photo by Scott Fitkin





From Top to Bottom: A variety of shorebirds, including greater yellowlegs, in a small wetland within the Hegdahl area south of Eyhott Island, a magpie resting over the Okanogan River, a monarch butterfly on milkweed on Driscoll Island, a view to the east of the smoky landscape from the Texas Creek Unit of the Methow Wildlife Area, and a view to the west

towards the Wolverine Fire near Lucerne on Lake Chelan – Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman reviewed and provided edits to the SEPA checklist for the SF Cowiche Creek Flood Plain Restoration Project. The checklist and maps were prepared by Yakama Nation. Huffman confirmed with SEPA Specialist Wood that additional information on the timber harvest location needed to be included in the checklist. Huffman sent the checklist with edits back to Yakama Nation for review and additional updates.

Wildlife Management

Daughters of Hanford Exhibit: District Biologist Fidorra attended the ribbon cutting for the Daughters of Hanford multimedia exhibit at the Reach Museum in Kennewick, where he presented educational material to ~150 visitors as part of the Reactor Factor Kids Day celebration. Popularity for the WDFW table, which included touchable skulls, horns, and furs, was high (possibly only surpassed by the make-your-own root beer float table). Notably missing from the display materials were species samples and information relevant to the shrub-steppe ecosystem of District 4. Fidorra collected contact information from a few families interested in volunteering on WDFW projects.

Duck Trapping: District Biologist Fidorra and Waterfowl Biologist Wilson visited Barker Ranch and identified duck trapping opportunities along the part of the private tract bordering the Yakima River. Ranch Manager Crowder met Fidorra and Wilson and provided access and guidance for the project, which will begin in August.

Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area: District Biologist Fidorra baited duck trapping sites on the Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area. Ducks have located the bait and trapping will commence on the Bailey Youth Ranch and Windmill Ranch sites from August to early September.

Mule Deer Sightability Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra met with Deer Specialist Hansen and Biologists from Districts 7, 5, 2, and 3 to discuss the 2015 mule deer sightability surveys. The 2015 survey will return to Phase 1 (Franklin, Adams, and Whitman counties) for the three year follow-up. No pre-survey fixed-wing flight will be attempted, as clear flight days are already a challenging limitation and information from the previous surveys can be used to predict distribution. A follow-up meeting will be conducted in September in Spokane to discuss survey logistics and population management goals.

Dove Banding: District Biologist Fidorra conducted mourning dove banding at the Ringold Fish Hatchery one morning this week. Hatchery Specialist Roberts assisted with baiting efforts. Trapping success remains reduced due to harvest of wheat and corn in the area as doves have ample food available and fewer are seen on site. Just two new bands were deployed. The total doves banded this year in District 4 currently stand at 134: 23 AHY (5F,17M,1U); 110 HY; one unknown age. Dove banding will continue through August 15.

Shrub-Steppe Workshop: District Biologist Fidorra attended the two day WDFW shrub-steppe workshop in Ellensburg. It was a great opportunity to network with other staff. The group worked together on formulating objectives for a two-year action plan to confront loss and degradation of the shrub-steppe ecosystems in Washington.

Franklin County Duck Baiting: Stutzman baited the four duck trap locations in Franklin County in preparation for banding. Numbers were still low but climbing since staff began baiting the ponds last week.

Dove Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz spent one day trapping doves. Only five new bands were put out, probably due to hawk activity at the trap site. The annual total is now 151, with 60 adults and 91 hatch-year birds banded. Yakama Nation biologists have not done any banding this week.

Western Gray Squirrel: Biologist Bernatowicz checked tubes on two transects. No western gray squirrel hair was found. Biologist Bernatowicz also reviewed the western gray squirrel status update.

Shrub-Steppe Workshop: Biologist Bernatowicz spent two days at the workshop in Ellensburg.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz corresponded with Dr. Besser (WSU) and Cassier (Idaho F&G) regarding “clean” domestic herds. Dr. Besser has ideas on producing MOVI free herds and is looking to try experimenting on a few herds.

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

Wildlife Management

Author Questions: Biologist Stutzman responded to a novelist doing research for an upcoming book. The author had questions about hunting on private land and the potential trespassing and safety concerns. No word on if Stutzman will appear in the story as a minor character.

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. Three fields were examined and elk damage was documented during the week. Most of the damage occurred in fields bordering Hanford, and included trampling, consumption, and bedding in the wheat crop.

Horn Rapids Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received several reports of a group of bull elk near Horn Rapids within the Richland City Limits. The group of five to seven large bull elk has not caused any reported damage to crops, but a few citizens have expressed concerns about possible poaching and potential traffic hazards along a busy stretch of HWY 240. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with Department of Transportation officials to discuss signage to warn travelers of potential elk crossings.



Bull elk in Richland

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

Elk Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to assist a large tree fruit operation near Prosser that has been having increased elk activity within their orchard. LP gas cannons and hunting on damage permits have aided in reducing the amount of damage being observed.

Park Creek Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with landowners in Park Creek to coordinate elk hazing and elk harvests that will begin August 1. Pyrotechnic materials were issued to landowners to use in moist areas and for later use. Landowners stated that if elk continue to nocturnally enter the area, night hazing patrols may need to be reinstated. The landowners also requested that night shooting be considered to change elk behavior. The area will be closely monitored to determine the proper response in the next few weeks.

Thorp Deer Damage: Conflict Specialist Wetzel discussed deer damage with a Thorp landowner and arranged for a master hunter to haze and harvest at that location if needed.

Elk Presence: Conflict Specialist Wetzel located several groups of elk in the 3911 damage area. Elk were present mostly in areas that are private lands with poor hunter access.

Large group of elk inside the 3911 damage area

Cougar Activity: Conflict Specialist Wetzel received a call about a cougar chasing a dog near Tampico. The owner was concerned about cougar activity near his home and also reported dog food being eaten by the cougar. The owner was given information on living with cougars and will also remove the dog food.



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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Wenas staff picked up the spray truck from Ag Spray Equipment after the company corrected issues with the new GPS and boom spray unit. Natural Resource Technician 2 Kass and Natural Resource Worker 2 Sanchez then spent a day testing the system before putting it into actual use. Natural Resource Worker 2 Sanchez’s computer knowledge was vital to working through the bugs and mechanics of new system.

Sign Replacements: Staff replaced the ‘No Target Shooting’ signs at Sheep Company and Cottonwood shooting areas. The next morning they heard shooting coming from the Sheep Company site and contacted the gentleman who was shooting. Enforcement responded to address the violation.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Technicians Hill and Leuck installed a cattle guard on the Beacon Ridge Road to enclose the Upper Parke pasture for grazing. The cattleguard was seated in a pit lined with rock and top dressed with gravel. The first test came via a Nissan Versa that had started their day on the Wenatchee side of the Colockum and were looking to get to Ellensburg.



New Beacon Ridge cattle guard



Successful public test drive over the new cattleguard

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman attended the RMT staff meeting to review and prioritize the encroachment issues on the wildlife areas. Funding approved for the surveys is limited and CAMP is indicating that only two to three of the six issues may be completed with the funding. The RMT prioritized the list and Huffman provided Lead Surveyor Dabrowski with a priority list. Later in the week, Huffman worked with Dabrowski on whether the work will be completed by CAMP or contracted out.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE



Wildlife Management

Guemes Island Reconnaissance: Milner toured Guemes Island and confirmed that voles exist on the island by looking for and finding runways in grassy habitats. Trapping for specimens of the Shaw Island vole are planned.

Young vole

Bald Eagle, Heron Colony, Osprey Nest, and Other Species of Concern and Protected Wildlife Management: Biologist Anderson provided state consultation for Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive, and Protected species, including various Priority

or Species of Concern needs – most often nest take authorization and/or habitat consideration recommendations. Anderson worked with USFWS on a potential federal violation – keeping in contact and requesting information from the reporting party regarding nest location and status. It was a great collaboration and things went smooth.

One can assist WDFW with documenting wildlife via reporting at our Wildlife Observation Website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/>

Bald Eagle and Osprey Management: Biologist Milner worked on two permits to remove osprey nests outside of the breeding season. 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.

Wildlife Areas

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with WDFW Enforcement to monitor a recently discovered homeless encampment on the unit along the Snohomish River. Sergeant Maurstad visited the site on Wednesday to collect photos. A boat was discovered tied to the bank, which is used to ferry people and materials across the river from the City of Everett side. On Thursday morning, Officer Jaros responded to a call from Manager Boehm, ticketed one individual for trespass violations, and issued a 24-hour notice to remove their items. Manager Boehm will coordinate a cleanup of the area next week.



Boat associated with the above newly discovered homeless encampment located on a unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area

Fir Island Farms Project Monitoring: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Planner Jenna Friebel uploaded water level and salinity data from the 11 groundwater and surface water monitoring stations on the project site. While completing this monitoring work, they were able to view construction work that is underway.



Large storage pond that is being excavated landward of the new dike as part of the Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project



Construction of the new setback dike is well underway at the Fir Island Farms Estuary Restoration Project

Lake Terrell Noxious Weeds: Manager Kessler coordinated with a volunteer with the Native Plant Society who will be performing noxious weed monitoring at Lake Terrell. The main weed that is annually monitored is poisonous Water Hemlock, which is located on the north end of Lake Terrell. The volunteer will also try to estimate the population of Eurasian milfoil in the lake.

Stillwater Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued coordinating 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. While they have provided a staff person to map and treat some of the noxious weeds, they need WDFW to continue efforts, despite limited resources.

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

Wildlife Management

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. Biologist Cyra completed repairs, maintenance, and updates to vessels that are used in the molting surveys.

Hunting Prospects: Biologists updated the Hunting Prospects for the coming hunting season.

Wildlife Conflict: Biologist Anderson assisted with coordination and collaboration needs with Biologist Smith, tribal co-management, and landowners. Anderson provided comments on suburban and rural audience coyote management outreach fliers as the WDFW representative of the Vashon Island Coyote Working Group, a collaboration with Vashon Island Nature Center, WDFW, USDA Wildlife Services, and local livestock owners, with involvement from Vashon-Maury Land Trust and King County DNR.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that mechanical problems with equipment have been resolved and everything should be back in action next week. Manager Boehm also continues to coordinate the dike breach repair project with the Drainage District. The project is planned to begin construction in August.



COEXISTING WITH COYOTES

TIPS FOR FARMERS

FACTS

- Coyotes generally do not prey on domestic farm animals. Animals are most vulnerable with very young offspring and when coyotes have pups to feed or are teaching their young to hunt. This is typically early spring through late summer. Most hunting activity takes place at night.
- Sheep are the domestic animals on farms most often taken by coyotes due to their helpless nature, relatively small size, and tendency to be left in pastures without tending or refuge.
- Coyotes eat mostly rodents and also eat fruit, insects and raccoons. Other foods observed in coyote scat on Vashon include: olive pits, gray squirrel, seeds and deer fawn. Domestic animal hair has not been found, but there have been a few confirmed cases of coyotes taking sheep on Vashon and Maury.
- Coyotes have been on Vashon since at least 2005.
- Where coyotes are hunted and trapped, females produce more pups per litter than in areas where they are protected. (WDFW 2015)

SAFETY TIPS

- **Build coyote-resistant 6' high fences.** Most important is to provide a dig barrier at the bottom & provide rollers or outriggers at the top with no openings greater than 4"x4" in fence.
- **Watch animals closely** with full-time shepherd or regular checks and avoid pasturing next to ravines, dense cover, waterways or in remote areas.
- **Bring animals into protective spaces at night** like a barn, shed, coop or corral near human habitation.
- **Clean up.** Pick up fallen fruit, animal carcasses, feed and other potential coyote attractants.
- **Remove coyote and rodent cover.** Remove brush piles, stumps and debris piles that may harbor coyote prey.
- **Select breeds with strong flocking and protective instincts.** Some domestic animals have not had protective instincts bred out of them.
- **Get a guard animal.** Select an appropriate guard animal such as a dog, donkey, or llama. Be sure to consult with those experienced.
- **Utilize deterrents** such as lights, shiny flagging on fences or sprayers.

Citations:
WDFW 2015. wdfw.wa.gov/king/coyotes.html



To learn more about farming tips or to report sightings visit: vashonnaturecenter.org/coyotes/ and vashonnaturecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Coyotes-on-Vashon-livestock-recs.pdf

COYOTE
Vashon Nature Center, LLC

Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with staff in the Fiscal office to set up new charge codes for each of the tasks associated with the construction of the project. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) approved the budget amendment to the contract and Project Coordinator Brokaw relayed this amendment to the WDFW contracts manager for signature approval.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed final versions of the Adaptive Management Plan and Performance Measures for the project. These two documents are necessary to complete the Right of Entry permit that will allow Ducks Unlimited and their contractors to install the project this summer.

Nooksack Unit Reed Canary Grass Trail Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed trails through the reed canary grass on the Nooksack Unit. The trail mowing improves the recreational access on the units by clearing trails to wildlife blinds, around wetlands, and along the dike top trail.

Nooksack Unit Dike Repairs: Manager Kessler coordinated with the Whatcom County River & Flood Division on the Nooksack Unit flood caused dike repairs. The repair work is now scheduled to be performed in September and October. The plan is now to do the repairs in two stages, this fall and in the spring. The worst scours will be repaired this fall in anticipation of winter floods.

Lake Terrell Trail Life USA Scout Trail Building Project: Manager Kessler bushwhacked another 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.

Pine and Cedar Lakes: Manager Kessler met with the new Whatcom County Parks manager, who manages the trail system that leads to and surrounds Pine & Cedar Lakes. They hiked up to the lakes and checked out the boardwalks, fire pits, and outhouses. The trails are all posted with signs banning all fires or fireworks. It appeared that recent compliance has been good. Manager Kessler will work on improving the boardwalks, while the Parks manager will work to remove two of the old outhouses that are not being used. More signs banning horses from the trails to the lakes will also be installed.

Pine Lake in Whatcom County



Intalco Unit Archery Biathlon Event: Now in its second year, the NW Run-Archery Classic was once again held on the Intalco unit's archery range. Run-Archery is a sport that combines target archery and running, similar to the Olympic Biathlon – popular in Europe but new to the US. Manager Kessler coordinated with the folks at Hamster Endurance Running to set up and mow the course. The event was very well attended with all ages of participants.



Archery Biathlon Event at the Intalco Unit of the Whatcom Wildlife Area

Private Lands/Access Management

Hunt Season Preparation: Natural Resource Technician Otto completed mowing on several of the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program units in Whatcom and Skagit counties. This practice helps to reduce less desirable vegetation such as cattails, reed canary grass, and thistle species – ultimately creating a habitat that allows for more standing water for the waterfowl come fall and winter.



A recently mowed hunt unit that will ultimately create habitat that allows for more standing water for the waterfowl in fall and winter

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell was contacted by two landowners regarding possible cougar depredation issues. Supervisor Caldwell informed each landowner on measures they could take to mitigate encounters with their children, dogs, cats, and other domestic livestock. Supervisor Caldwell informed each landowner that he would pass on their contact information to WDFW Law Enforcement for follow up meetings. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal installed posts and a gate on private property and continued monitoring elk activity on various locations in Skagit County. Cogdal also installed audible deterrent at multiple

locations and took calls from Special Elk Area 4941 disabled and youth tag holders wanting information on hunting opportunities this fall.

Technician Cogdal coordinated with Private Lands Biologist Hans on contacting an Acme area landowner about elk hunting access in GMU 407. Conflict Specialist Witman met with a Skagit County landowner and discussed approximately 35 elk utilizing private property. The landowner has agreed to allow elk to use the area and wants to focus on keeping people out from harassing elk, which has caused more problems for neighboring landowners in the past. Witman and Technician Cogdal monitored elk activity of a bean field in Skagit County. Audible deterrents have been installed and appear to have reduced the elk utilization of the area. Witman and Cogdal worked with co-managers installing an elk exclusion fence in the Day Creek area of Skagit County. Witman responded to Guemes Island to consult with a landowner who is experiencing crop depredation from deer. The landowner has deployed preventative measures with limited success. Witman made a few additional suggestions which the landowner agreed to try. An audible deterrent device was installed and electric fence was installed the following day. The landowner was very pleased with the response and agreed to maintain the fence. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Cogdal, and Witman worked in the Birdsvie and Concrete area of Skagit County installing fence on apple orchards. Woven wire fence should be completed in the next two weeks and temporary electric fence was completed on the second orchard.



Newly installed posts in Skagit County. After construction, this fence will result in long-term elk damage prevention.



While monitoring elk conflict activity Natural Resource Technician Cogdal captured multiple images of elk use and entrance point location to a private landowner's field.

Newly installed electric fence with fladery in Skagit County. This fence will help mitigate damage to an apple orchard receiving routine damage from elk.

Master Hunter Coordination: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman discussed with the Master Hunt Coordinator for Region 4 North the upcoming damage hunt opportunities. The Hunt Coordinator will be contacting all prospective hunters and informing them about the process for participating in damage hunts.

Special Elk Area 4941 Meeting:

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, Natural Resource Technician Cogdal, and District Biologist Yarborough met with permit holders for the youth, senior, and disabled hunt that is scheduled to take place in Elk Area 4941 in Skagit County. The hunters were provided maps, access information, and WDFW contacts for the upcoming hunt.



Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Partnerships – Data Examination and Fiscal Needs: Biologist Anderson QA/QC'd 1000+ data points for an inquiry from Woodland Park Zoo, a partner under the NW Zoo and Aquarium Alliance – WDFW – NWF Joint Certification Program. Anderson initiated contract updates, data requests, and fiscal needs with the National Wildlife Federation D.C. staff.

Exotic Invasive Management: Biologist Anderson dialoged with Biologist Tirhi and staff in the Aquatic Invasive Species unit regarding ongoing exotic species management needs. Please help in reporting and assisting with management efforts of exotic invasive wildlife: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/ais/> <http://wdfw.wa.gov/ais/reporting/>

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island: Coordinated with HPA Biologist Doug Thompson and WSDOT Permit Biologist Bobby Edwards regarding the damaged culvert located within the construction zone of the Highway 532 project.

North Leque Island: Manager Rotton, Environmental Planner, Jenna Friebel and Environmental Engineer, Bob Barnard toured the North Leque Island site to examine the potential for improve tidal channels and marsh function on the site. A draft design is being prepared for consideration.

Skagit Headquarters: Meis created drafts of Wildlife Area base maps of each unit and access for public information purposes, such as updated sign boards. Manager Rotton consulted with

Engineer Ray Berg from CAMP regarding the timelines for the completion of the Wiley Slough pump station and for the initiation of the Wiley Slough tidegate repair projects. The projects are scheduled to be completed this fall and early winter. Manager Rotton has been in contact with CAMP Permit Biologist Marty Peoples regarding the boat launch permits needed to maintain the site. Permits are expected to arrive any day now. A local contractor has been contacted regarding the project.

Samish Unit: Manager Rotton continues to coordinate with Ducks Unlimited on details regarding construction preparations for the Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement Project. Work is scheduled to begin the second week in August.

Private Lands/Access Management

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.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated one new hunter education class in Region 4. Dazey ordered supplies from the warehouse for several instructor teams. Dazey picked up firearms and supplies for instructors in Region 4 when he was at a staff meeting in Olympia. Coordinator Dazey previewed changes to the new instructor policy manual and made suggestions to Kris, the new support person in Olympia. Some instructors have had questions about the orange gun training sets and how they are classified, especially a couple of teams who are needing to reassure the venue owners that these are not firearms under RCW, as they have been rendered inoperable. Dazey forwarded technical information from Mossberg on exactly how the orange guns are made so as to be incapable of firing a projectile by an explosive force. Coordinator Dazey continued to gather data from chief instructors on their need for department issue firearms. Coordinator Dazey recruited instructors for a new team teaching Monday during the day at the Region 4 office in Mill Creek. This now makes three teaching teams using the Region 4 facility with a variety of evening and daytime classes. Dazey assisted the lone instructor on Lopez Island to order firearms from WDFW along with one set of orange guns. The instructor was planning on traveling to the mainland and will be able to pick up the equipment for her fall classes.

Volunteer Coordination: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted Biologist Hans in recruiting volunteers to help with gate opening and closing in the special permit hunt in 1047 in the Sedro Wooley area. Dazey continues to receive volunteer inquires to assist in projects in the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. Dazey is assisting Brian Boehm, Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager, with the upcoming pheasant release, watering the nursery plants, brush cutting, and other needs. Dazey followed up with Greg Meis on the painting project at the Headquarters Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area. Dazey assisted a mobility challenged master hunter with suggestions for service projects. Dazey also recruited volunteers for the Carlton fire rehab project. He also recruited volunteers to man a booth for the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group at the North Bend community fair.

Customer Service: Dazey assisted the Bellevue Police Department (BPD) to order the “Law and You” pamphlet for them to hand out when they issue conceal carry permits. The pamphlet they had been issuing was years out of date. Dazey ordered a new supply to be shipped from our Tumwater warehouse to the BPD. Dazey also assisted a Snohomish Sheriff’s Deputy to find a hunter education class for his foster children.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Goat Rocks Mountain Goat Survey: Biologist Holman, Bergh, and Stephens conducted a survey of mountain goats in the Goat Rocks Wilderness Area. Goats were observed, counted, and classified as adults or kids from a helicopter. Data will be summarized in future reports. However, the raw count from the effort was 310 goats. This is above the five year average for this area. A big thanks to our pilot, Jess Hagerman, for his skillful flying and goat spotting.



Goat Rocks Mountain Goat Survey

Shrub-Steppe Workshop: Biologist Anderson and District Habitat Biologist Johnson attended the two day shrub-steppe workshop in Ellensburg. WDFW Biologists and land managers from eastern Washington gathered to develop a two year action plan for the conservation of shrub steppe

habitat. The intent of the workshop was to review mapped products, identify gaps in agency information, and determine the best strategy for managing and protecting what remaining shrub steppe habitat there is in Washington. A variety of topics and strategies were identified, including restoration, acquisitions, private land agreements, mitigation, species surveys, and fire

management. This was a unique opportunity for Region 5 to emphasize that although we are considered a west-side region, we do have shrub steppe habitat in eastern Klickitat County that is important for a variety of species, including ferruginous hawks, golden eagles, badgers, and mule deer.



Shrub Steppe Habitat – Klickitat County

Band-Tailed Pigeon Survey:

Biologist Anderson completed the annual band-tailed pigeon mineral springs survey for the St. Martin’s site in Skamania County. This year’s survey documented one of the highest numbers of band-tailed pigeons recorded at the site (435).

Annual Region PR Reports: Region 5 biologists continued work on the annual Pittman-Robertson (PR) report for mountain goats, elk, and deer management in Region 5. The reports summarize activities related to each species, including hunter harvest, season structure, survey efforts, research projects, habitat enhancements, population estimates, etc. The report will be compiled with similar documents on all hunted species in Washington and finalized this fall. Interested parties can read the annual reports from past years by visiting the hunting page of WDFW's website and selecting Game Status and Trend Reports.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Water Availability: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis visited several ponds and springs to monitor water resources available to wildlife. They found two springs had a good flow (keeping one trough filled), and three reliable ponds have low water levels but



appear to be good for another few weeks at least. Technician Davis observed a juvenile golden eagle fly up from the edge of one pond. Additionally, we checked one guzzler, finding it mostly full. Many passerine birds were present around the ponds and guzzler.

Low Water



Soda Springs Unit Agricultural Lease: Wheat was harvested from one field recently and hay was harvested from seven fields. Two fields are fallow this year.

Wheat stubble in field

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Bat Acoustic Survey Project: Biologist McMillan set out one detector on Cell 4177 for the Bat Acoustic Survey project. The study instructions and associated references can be found at <S:\Reg6\WP\Anita McMillan\BatAcousticRecords\2015BatSurveyProject>

Sampling Unit – Cell number - Location - Work Accomplished

- 4 Cell 4177 – Deep Creek Site – Set up detector in cell on July 30. Forester Joe Murray, from Merrill & Ring (M&R), assisted in setting up the detector within a DNR ownership surrounded by M&R ownership. The bat detector equipment was set up along a beaver pond located within the DNR ownership.



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

Access Areas

The Region 6 Access Team tackled a difficult ramp repair project at the Chehalis River- Fuller Bridge Access Site.



This is the Fuller Bridge-Chehalis River Ramp before repairs. Notice the “curve” to the ramp. This is due to connector tabs on the ramp planks that have rusted away over time allowing the ramp to shift due to strong flows.



Stage one of the ramp repair is to access and cut off seized bolts to separate the broken and damaged ramp planks. As the picture below illustrates, fishermen have attempted to save the ramp by cabling several planks together on the right side.



Each individual ramp plank weighs 800lbs. Here we are utilizing a truck and tractor to straighten and align ramps in groups of 4 at one time. This is how we mitigated the large curvature to the ramp.



Here is the finished project. The ramp is straight, damaged planks have been replaced with new ramp planks, and the ramp is reinforced with edge protection.