

Wildlife Program

Week of July 18 – July 24, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Conference Calls: Supervisor McCanna participated on multiple conference calls this week regarding current wolf activity in the Profanity Peak.

Wolf Coordination: Supervisor McCanna spent a considerable amount of time coordinating with Department staff members in Region 1.

Monthly Northeast Washington Legislative Conference Call: Supervisor McCanna, along with Wildlife Conflict Specialists Bennett and Shepherd, participated in the monthly wolf conference call. Profanity Peak, Stranger, and Smackout pack updates were discussed.

Pend Oreille Sheriff's Department: Supervisor McCanna contacted the Pend Oreille County Sheriff's office and discussed their involvement during depredation investigations.

Ferry County Sheriff's Department: Supervisor McCanna left a message with Ferry County Sheriff's office dispatch to have the sheriff call McCanna on Monday, as the sheriff was on leave the latter part of the week.

Profanity Pack: Biologist Shepherd, Officer Kirsch, and a Ferry County deputy investigated a confirmed wolf kill. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman also located the remains of a dead calf and probable wolf kill on an allotment in Ferry County. Wolf activity and other issues were discussed with the ranchers. Biologist Shepherd communicated with Region 1 and Olympia concerning the issue. Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted range riders in various allotments. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman conducted ORV patrols in other allotments in Ferry County.

Smackout Pack: Biologist Shepherd responded to a complaint of two distantly located dead cows in the northern and southern Smackout pack area in both Stevens and Pend Oreille counties. The issues were resolved, as the rancher found bullets in one cow and the other was not found in the area reported.

Dirty Shirt Pack: Biologist Shepherd discussed the Dirty Shirt pack activity with homeowners and ranchers.

Stranger Pack: Biologist Shepherd and interested parties drove through the area where the Stranger pack is located and discussed the issue. They also talked with a resident.

Wolf Concerns in Huckleberry: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd responded to concerns of a wolf close to a domestic dog and cattle in Deer Creek. Bennett and Shepherd scanned GPS collars in between talking with landowners in the

area. Information was provided to the reporting party, and a camera will be placed in the pasture next week.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA_L): Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley met with a livestock producer regarding a new DPCA_L contract. The producer signed the new contract and Rasley entered it in Novatus.

Wolf Activities: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley received several calls from livestock owners on Robinette Mountain regarding OR-38 and his current locations, as well as two complaints of “cattle that were ran through stock fences and appeared to be very nervous.” Both complaints were verified with current collar readings from OR-38 in the same immediate area.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA_L): Biologist Earl met with several Asotin County producers to go over nonlethal deterrents. Natural Resource Technician Wade met with Garfield County producers to have new DPCA-L agreements signed. Wade finished entering DPCA_Ls into the Novatus contracts system.

Wolf Activities: Natural Resource Technician Wade received a report of four wolves sighted in the First Creek area of the Umatilla National Forest. The reporting party stated he saw two adults and two juvenile wolves and that the wolves were gray to white in color. Wade forwarded the information to Conflict staff members and the district biologist.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Farm Bill: Biologist Baarstad spent most of the week completing preliminary field evaluations of newly enrolled CRP-SAFE contracts in Lincoln County. Baarstad will be completing a significant portion of the conservation plans for these contracts next month.

Sunflower Food Plots: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Finch and Wildlife Area Manager Anderson inspected wildlife food plots at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area. They also received photos from Mike Gruenke of the Spokane chapter of Pheasants Forever. Gruenke planted sunflowers in a food plot at Packer Creek, which is Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property near WDFW’s Revere Wildlife Area, with advice given by Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Finch. All plots looked good, although the plot at Packer Creek is further along due to sub-irrigation.

Sunflower at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area food plot





Sunflower field at BLM's Packer Creek, near WDFW's Revere Wildlife Area

W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area – Bighorn Sheep: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Dingman located the bighorn sheep. A new data collection application was created to collect bighorn sheep data in the field and upload it to a central database. Dingman downloaded the new app and gave it a trial run this week for collecting the sheep data. The app is fairly easy to use, but she ran into an issue on Friday in being able to submit the survey form to the central database. A group of sheep “escaped” the elk fence and were about a half mile north of the Headquarters.

A group of bighorn sheep north of the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area headquarters



REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

RCO_WWRP: Biologist Volsen worked to complete the RCO application for the 2016 round of WWRP Critical Habitat Grants. This application request is for funding to purchase the third phase of the Grand Coulee Ranch Project. If successful, the final grant will bring the total acres acquired to 20,500.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Volsen worked with Chelan Butte Wildlife Management Area staff members and Manager Fox to install the first piece of a bighorn sheep trap on the Chelan Butte Wildlife Management Area. Eighteen 12-foot poles were set at the trap location site in preparation for final configuration. Wildlife management area staff members rented an auger to speed up the installation, and all soil materials were screened following archeological protocols during the build. Biologist Volsen will assist Manger Fox in preparation of the report. Biologist Oyster and Environmental Specialist Bridges volunteered to assist with the construction, and their help is greatly appreciated.

American Badger: Biologist Heinlen received a report of a badger at a den from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) with nice photos. Heinlen is currently attempting to get DNA from this animal. This DNA will contribute to a graduate student project looking at fine-scale genetic structure and barriers to gene flow in the American badger (*taxidea taxus jeffersonii*) at the landscape level.

American badger (*taxidea taxus jeffersonii*) – Photo by M. Danielson (USFS)



Multi-Carnivore Survey Project: Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer retrieved the last two winter carnivore survey cameras from the wilderness. We documented one collared wolverine and a variety of interesting non-target critters at these sites.



Pasayten wilderness and collared wolverine – Photo by WDFW remote camera



Curious coyote – Photo by WDFW remote camera

Wildlife Areas

Weed Control: Assistant Manager Dupont, Technician Tissell, and Technician Sklaney sprayed for musk thistle in the Chesaw Wildlife Area on Monday. We are making some good progress in finding a lot of later blooming plants on the second grid. Manager Olson received three releases of a Russian Knapweed bio-control and released them in the Coulee Creek drainage on the Scotch Creek Unit. Adult *Jaapiella ivannikovi* lay their eggs on the surface of the buds situated on the tips of the main and side shoots. Larval feeding causes stunted growth of the shoot and a so-called “rosette gall” forms where the larvae develop. The goal is to slow the rate of spread of Russian knapweed by reducing seed production and reducing biomass in existing infestations. It is not expected to eradicate the weed. Thanks to Jennifer Andreas of WSU Extension for providing the insects.



Jaapiella ivannikovi galls placed in heavy Russian knapweed cover – Photo by Jim Olson



Lots of Russian knapweed for bio-controls – Photo by Jim Olson

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

Wildlife Areas

Carlton Complex Fences: Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin had another week heavy with FEMA-related tasks. He dedicated time to administrative type work, such as processing FEMA invoices and engaging in email and phone correspondence with a handful of contractors. Wottlin also accompanied CAMP’s Joel Molander on a fence inspection at Frazer Creek. Assistant Manager Troyer spent time corresponding with CAMP’s Anthony Sanich. Many of their talks and emails revolved around billing procedures and required documentation for FEMA fence projects.

Built Inventory Assessment: Assistant Manager Troyer spent a day taking Ann Sharley, from Aha!, on a massive tour to begin the historical building inventory assessment for the Methow Wildlife Area. They visited fourteen places around the wildlife area and Aha! began photographing and taking GPS coordinates of approximately 39 structures. Some of the structures were clearly not old enough to be historic, but the mass majority of the buildings did seem to be of historic age. Aha! seemed excited about the project and enjoyed the tour.



Aha!’s Ann Sharley at the historic built inventory assessment big buck line shack – Photo by Troyer

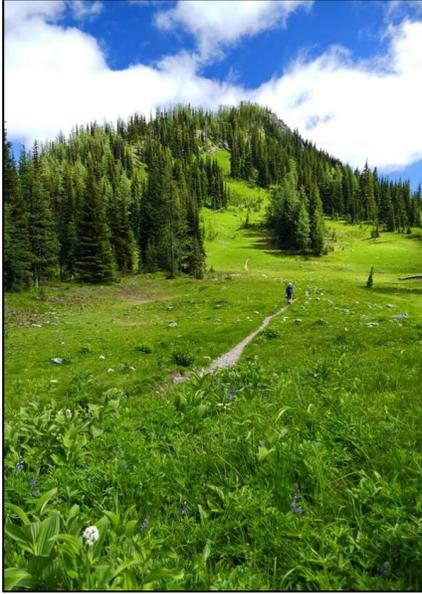
Stewardship of Agency Owned Lands: The main vehicle/equipment bridge at Scotch Creek headquarters was replaced because the original bridge had deteriorated with dry-rot and carpenter ants to an unsafe condition. The new bridge was patterned after the original’s structural design, but utilized treated lumber so as to hopefully double the bridge’s lifespan. Any of the original wood beams that had only limited signs of decay were salvaged and stockpiled to be repurposed for future, smaller projects. Technicians Tissell and Sklaney did an outstanding job.



Bridge deck “before” with rotting timbers – Photo by Greg Sklaney



Bridge with new treated stringers and deck – Photo by Greg Sklaney



Camera retrieval along the Pacific Crest Trail – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Silver Star Mountain – Photo by Scott Fitkin

A power tanning hoary marmot style – Photos by Scott Fitkin



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff members Lopushinsky and Hagan met with Chelan County Natural Resources Department Recreation and Forestry in the Stemilt Basin to tour the area and assess recreation needs and issues. Obvious areas needing attention are moist meadows that have been damaged by vehicle “mudding” and off-road traffic.

Radio-collared Colockum bull elk posing for a portrait – Photo by Pete Lopushinsky



Mike Kane and Erin McKay with Chelan County Natural Resources Department inspecting vehicle damage in Steffen's Meadow, Colockum Wildlife Area



Russian Knapweed: The Colockum received another round of Russian knapweed bio-control insects this week. Colockum Assistant Manager Hagan met with Jennifer Andreas of Washington State University Cooperative Extension and picked up another 600 *Jaapiella ivannikovi*, a Russian knapweed gall midge. Hagan released the insects in an area of Colockum Creek heavily infested with the plant.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Medina and Natural Resource Worker Becker helped District Biologist Bernatowicz by checking on possible dove trapping sites in the Glover Unit. Medina and Becker baited the possible dove trapping sites in the Glover Unit and the Sunnyside headquarters throughout the week in an attempt to keep the doves around for trapping.

Pond Maintenance: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman helped Natural Resource Technician Kaelber try to find a blockage that was keeping one of the ponds on the Windmill Ranch from filling. Using the Marsh Master, Stutzman and Kaelber explored the drainage system for a short time before the Marsh Master threw a track, despite Kaelber's excellent operation. After working on it the rest of the afternoon, Stutzman and Kaelber were able to get the machine "back on track."

Natural Resource Technician Pat Kaelber works on taking apart some of the thrown track on the Marsh Master



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Hill spent some time spraying at Quilomene Bay and the Watt feed lot. In spite of the heavy weed year, Hill says the desirable native species are doing well at our Quilomene Bay rehab site. The Russian thistle has taken off at both sites and Kochia seems to be all over the Watt feed area this year.



A trail of Russian thistle at Quilomene Bay with bighorn sheep in the background



Bighorn sheep making their way through the Quilomene Bay rehab site



More bighorn sheep at Quilomene Bay

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman met with Planner Vigue to work on Goals, Objectives and Performance Measures for the Oak Creek Management Plan. Biologist Bernatowicz attended part of the meeting to develop objectives for game and diversity species management. The following day Huffman and Vigue met with Forester Mackey and Forest Management Team Lead Tveten to begin development of objectives for Forest

Management and outline the Forest Management Plan in development for Oak Creek. Planner Vigue will be providing format suggestions and the draft outline within the next couple of weeks. It was also decided that the Forest Management Plan could be completed after the final Oak Creek Plan.

RMAP Work: Forester Mackey and CAMP Engineer Muldoon laid out RMAP work in the Rock Creek Unit. The Yakima Construction Shop began RMAP work in the Rock Creek Unit, removing fish barrier culverts.

A fish barrier culvert removed in North Fork Wenas Creek headwaters



Wildlife Management

Mourning Dove Trapping: District Biologist Fidorra trapped mourning doves at the Ringold Hatchery site. Numbers remain low, with few juveniles. Fidorra and Hatchery staff members will continue to bait and trap doves into mid-August.

Mule Deer Working Group: District Biologist Fidorra attended the Mule Deer Working Group Meeting in Ellensburg with WDFW. Population estimation and modeling was discussed, along with biologist coordination within management zones. The Columbia Plateau Mule Deer Zone will fly surveys of Douglas County this fall to estimate herd size in the third primary wintering area.

Injured Swainson's Hawk: District Biologist Fidorra responded to a call from U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) of an injured "golden eagle" on the Hanford National Monument. Fidorra captured the injured Swainson's hawk with a damaged wing and transferred it to the Blue Mountain Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.

District Biologist Fidorra inspects injured Swainson's hawk on Hanford National Monument before taking it in for diagnosis/rehabilitation



Bat Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra continued the WDFW bat survey. He placed acoustic bat detectors at sites in Districts 4 and 5 and coordinated with District 5 Assistant Biologist Rowan to relocate detectors near the Ephrata office. Fidorra is placing detector at eight sites and will repeat recording protocols at each site monthly through August.

Black-tailed Jackrabbit Test Results: District Biologist Fidorra received results from a black-tailed jackrabbit specimen found by a resident of Benton City, which he sent to the Animal Disease Diagnostics Lab for necropsy. The specimen had many organs afflicted with cancerous tumors and died from an enlarged ruptured liver. Veterinarian Mansfield is seeking more information from the lab regarding the tumors. Black-tailed jackrabbit declines in Washington are not yet fully understood.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman received a phone call from a landowner in the Hatton Road area with concerns about how roads were labeled on the new Oak Creek maps posted on parts of the wildlife area. The roads focused on wildlife area land, but did show adjacent roads on private land without any description that they may not be open to the public. Huffman worked with GIS Technician Hall to update the maps to clarify roads on private property and also address a few minor issues on other parts of the map. New maps will be posted online soon and will be printed with updates, as they need to be replaced on the ground.

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Hazing Patrols: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand completed two late evening/early morning elk hazing patrols along the southern boundary of Hanford. Very strong numbers of elk were hazed out of wheat fields and redirected back to Hanford on each patrol.

Rattlesnake Mountain Damage Prevention Hunt: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated and supervised one elk damage prevention hunt on Rattlesnake Mountain. Although many elk were observed, no harvest opportunity was offered. More than 50 elk were hazed back to Hanford.

Damage Claims: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to work with Rattlesnake Mountain area landowners and potential crop adjusters to coordinate possible damage claim assessments when harvest begins next week, depending on weather conditions.

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored wheat harvest and deer damage activity in several tree fruit and wine grape operations in southern Benton County above McNary Dam.

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Acting Manager Hunt met with Jeanne Demorest and Aaron Galayde (USBR) at the site of the planned solar powered creek crossing structure, which is part of the ongoing Heart K project. Aaron will run the USBR crew that will install the anchors and

cable/chain assembly for the structure, and he provided valuable information. Once the HPA is in place, work will be scheduled. WCC is repairing elk fence that connects to the planned structure, as well as brushing out the area footprint needed for access. Hunt walked that with Leo Arias of WCC. Leo and crew have also completed the first of the two enclosures, and it looks great.

WCC Crew on site of Heart K project

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Medina received a call at about noon on Saturday reporting a wildfire on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area. The cause of the fire was fireworks. The fire was burning in the Brady Unit. By the time Medina arrived at the scene, the local fire department was already fighting the fire. The sheriff said a concerned neighbor heard fireworks being set off at the Brady Parking lot, then saw smoke and called it in. The concerned neighbor saw a vehicle race off out of the parking lot, but could not ID the vehicle. The fire burned about 15 to 20 acres.



Firefighters responding to the fire at the Sunnyside Headquarters Unit on Saturday



Picture of the fire burning around the McGee Road parking lot



Firefighters putting out the fire on the Sunnyside Headquarters Unit



Fire crew working on containing the fire



Pictures of evidence revealing the cause of the fire

Oak Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey checked the Sanford Pasture Area for old rock pits using the Polaris Ranger. Old records in Real Estate Services were reviewed for the Horseshoe Bend lawsuit and they mention a request by the manager to survey the area to see if some rock pits were on DNR or WDFW land. No evidence of any rock removal was located in the area. Huffman and Mackey also assessed the health and need for treatment of forest stands in the area. While leaving the area, they encountered a very healthy pacific rattlesnake guarding the Cleman Mountain Ridge Road. Huffman and Mackey also looked for evidence of rock removal from state land in the Horseshoe Bend area mentioned in several 1969 records. Several areas along Highway 410 could have had rock removed. Back in the office, Huffman reviewed old aerial photos from 1970. The photos show what appears to be a rock pit along Highway 410 near Horseshoe Bend. Information was passed on to Real Estate Services and the Attorney General's Office.

Western Pacific Rattlesnake encountered along Cleman Mountain Ridge Road. The snake eventually moved off into the trees.



REGION 4

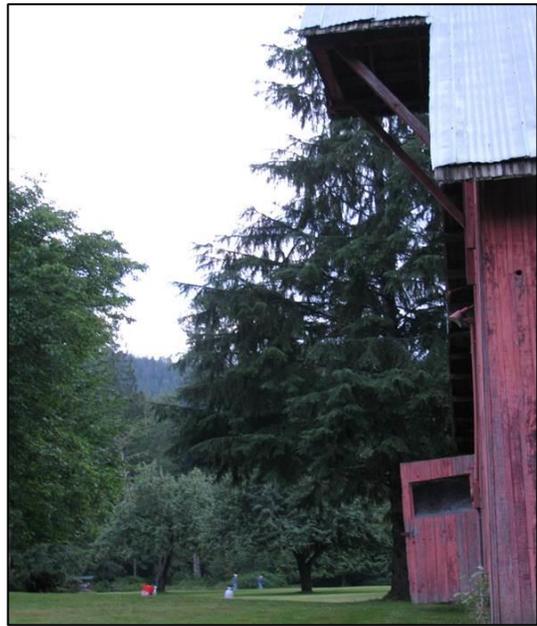
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Protected Wildlife Management – White-Nose Syndrome: District 12 continued acoustic efforts throughout the Snoqualmie Valley, and has initiated a follow-up on reported maternity colonies and other roosting sites. One site examined last week where bats have been dying in unusual numbers (adults and young) ended up being a yuma myotis maternity colony. Samples have been taken for testing and bats were netted to examine health. Examined animals appeared to show no signs of illness. Continued contact with the property owner and their observations will provide for monitoring the situation.



A yuma myotis trapped at a new colony in King County – Photo by C. Anderson



Note decontamination station in the background of this maternity roost (orange bucket, pressure sprayer, and other items)

A small portion of this Yuma bat colony prior to taking evening flight

WDFW and collaborators are asking the public to report dead or dying/sick bats via our hotline found at the link below. Decontamination, outlined in the below links, is essential to assist in management of this pathogen, particularly in the research, management, and recreationist



communities, such as caving, climbing, and canyoneering.

Report dead or dying/sick bats at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/>.

More information can be found at <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>.

Mountain Goat Translocation: Biologist Smith assisted Section Manager Harris, Research Scientist Rice, State Wildlife Veterinarian Mansfield, Wildlife Health Assistant Cole, and staff members from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, and Seattle Public Utilities with capture, transporting, and release of six mountain goats from eastern Oregon to a test release site. The purpose of this translocation was to augment the small population in the watershed and add genetic diversity.



Staff members setting up a drop-net for eastern Oregon goat capture – Photo by Biologist Smith



Wildlife Health Assistant Cindy Cole and ODFW personnel secure a mountain goat and collect biological samples prior to loading for transport to Washington State – Photo by Veterinarian Mansfield



Mountain goat successfully relocated – Photo by Biologist Smith

Mountain Goat Surveys: District 13 worked with the west side GIS specialist to prepare flight routes for a reconnaissance survey related to mountain goats, and prepared flight equipment. In anticipation of a translocation project in the next few years, locations were scouted to be used for road-based staging areas and nearby helicopter accessible release sites. District 13, along with the Special

Species Manager, completed the first of two flights, covering the southern area. The second flight was rescheduled due to weather. Staff members also prepared equipment and materials for next week's goat population surveys.

A potential mountain goat release site is explored in the central Cascades



Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Mowing of reed canary grass fields continues at the unit in preparation for the hunting season.

Corson Natural Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with the CAMP construction crew at the Corson Unit. The initial phase of the fish passage project is under way to replace fish passage barriers on the unit. A pedestrian bridge will be placed later in August to finish the project.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Design: The WDFW and Ducks Unlimited Leque Island Restoration Team met with adjacent landowners and nearby jurisdictions to review the preliminary design for the project and listen to a presentation on new hydrodynamic modeling results from Pacific Northwest National Laboratories (PNNL). Based on the new modeling information, the team is considering whether or not to make any updates to the preliminary design and the group provided input.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project Funding: WDFW received news that funding requests in two grant applications (Salmon Recovery Funding Board and NOAA Fisheries) were successful and funds should be available as soon as September. These funds will support a portion of the project, though additional funds are still needed through other sources to fund the entire project. Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted a funding request to the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) on Thursday to help fill some of the funding gap.

Invasive Species Surveys: District 13 prepared maps and located potential access points for upcoming survey/trapping efforts of prohibited invasive species in south Snohomish and north King County waters.

Private Lands/Access Management

Whidbey Diversity Site: Natural Resource Technician Otto responded to a large tree blocking access to the site near the town of Langley. Otto made sure the trail system was accessible and conducted vegetation control.



A WDFW wildlife viewing site located on south Whidbey Island



*A juvenile Audubon's yellow-rumped warbler (*setophaga coronate auduboni*)*



*Adult willow flycatcher (*empidonax traillii*)*

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

Wildlife Areas

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with

volunteers to continue internal access road and trail improvements at this unit. Truckloads of wood chips are being donated and delivered by a local land clearing business. The chips will form a base on the roads to allow vehicle traffic during the fall and winter season. Manager Boehm also cleaned up an illegal dumping of debris at the south Crescent Lake parking lot.

Leque Island Recreation and Access Committee (RAC): The RAC met for the first time and spent the majority of the meeting brainstorming and discussing elements to add to the Leque Island restoration design that would provide benefit for people who enjoy recreating in the area. Eight committee members attended the meeting and ideas discussed included a boat launch, elevated trails, parking areas, marsh islands, and others. The Leque restoration design team will use input provided by the RAC to inform the recreation plan for the project and will hold another meeting when the 60% design draft is completed.

Leque Island: Manager Rotton and Meis attended a field tour with Olympia Habitat Engineering staff members of the North Leque Island site to discuss the proposal to remove the existing dike and provide improved tidal channel development. Restoration Scientists Greg Hood from Skagit River Systems Cooperative and Roger Fuller from Western Washington

University were in attendance. The group examined vegetation characteristics, channel formations, and proposed dike breach locations regarding the project.

*Western Washington University
Professor Roger Fuller discussed plant communities on North Leque Island with WDFW Engineers and Biologists*



Samish Unit: Skagit Wildlife Area staff members met with Steve Liske (Ducks Unlimited) regarding retro-fits and additional dirt work needed to complete the waterfowl enhancement project at the Samish Unit. Meis mowed at the Samish Unit, continuing to control noxious weed areas throughout the site by spraying them along ditch edges. Cosgrove checked agricultural enhancement crops and vegetation in three ponds at the Samish Unit.

Skagit Headquarters: Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove posted hunting season information for the 2016-17 waterfowl season on the Headquarters Unit reader board. Cosgrove picked up 20 straw bales for sediment control for the upcoming dredge operation at the Headquarters Unit boat launch. Cosgrove cut branches and brush along the spur dike trail at the Headquarters Unit. Cosgrove mowed grass fields at the Headquarters Unit with the John Deere 5300 and brush hog.

Private Lands/Access Management

Westside Pheasant Release Program: Private Lands Biologist Wingard used online maps and toured areas that may provide the site requirements for a new pheasant release location. Biologist Wingard identified one location and met with the son of the landowner. It sounded like the landowner would be receptive and interested in discussing options with the Private Lands Access Program. The site is ~80 acres, with dense grass and brambles providing cover for released pheasants and opportunity for good pheasant hunting. Additionally, there is easy access to the site, as it is close to Interstate 5. Biologist Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell will follow up with the landowner to look over the property and pursue this opportunity.

Spring Bear Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued collecting data and preparing the post-hunt report. All data collection will be complete shortly. Natural Resource Technician Otto and District Biologist Yarborough toured several gated road systems checking for historic and recent damage to trees from bears. The pair located multiple freshly damaged trees, along with historic damaged areas. Biologist Wingard toured ungated DNR land in Whatcom County for bear damage to timber. Despite not identifying any damage to timber, Biologist Wingard observed two young bears.



Young black bear

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Barley Plantings and Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Otto and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell checked recent crop plantings. The plantings looked really positive, there is plenty of growth in the barley with excellent coverage in a variety of fields on or surrounding current quality hunt fields. Natural Resource Technician Otto was able to conduct mowing on six acres of a Waterfowl Quality Hunt

Program unit in Skagit County. This unit has historically been very popular and productive. Vegetation management will improve the site to maintain its productivity.

A recently mowed Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program site in Skagit County. You can see the mowed areas of the field (front), recently planted forage barley for migratory birds (left), and the blind used by hunters (center back).



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

Wildlife Management

Legislative Update: Biologists Yarborough and Milner met with Governor Inslee’s Northwest Regional Representative to discuss wildlife issues in Snohomish, Skagit, Whatcom, Island, and San Juan counties.

North Cascades Elk: Biologist Yarborough met with the Westside elk raffle winner to talk about the North Cascades elk herd, access issues, and other topics related to the upcoming hunt.

Whatcom Wildlife Advisory Committee: Biologist DeBruyn attended a meeting of the Whatcom Wildlife Advisory Committee, substituting for Yarborough.

Ungulate Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received six damage complaints related to elk throughout the week. The majority of complaints were centered on the Minkler and Burmaster road systems just east of the City of Sedro Woolley in Skagit County. A herd of approximately 60 elk has moved into the area and appears to be taking up residence along the Coal Creek drainage. One elderly landowner has had the elk visit several times over the course of the week and became very frustrated with the destruction of her garden, backyard

fruit, and ornamental trees. Witman installed motion alarms around the perimeter of the property and discussed temporary fencing with the landowner.

This photo depicts about half of an observed elk herd present in the garden/back yard of a Skagit County residence



Elk Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a dairy producer on Burmaster Road who is also being impacted by elk. A separate group of bachelor bulls is frequenting the property of his main dairy operation. After meeting with the producer, the producer agreed to enter into a cooperative damage prevention contract. Witman



and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal worked on an elk exclusionary fencing project in the Birdsvie area of Skagit County. This project should be completed in the next couple weeks. Cogdal completed temporary fencing on 40 acres of field corn in the Day Creek area that are experiencing damage from elk grazing.

This photo shows elk feces, tracks, and grazing on field corn in the Day Creek area of Skagit County

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell met with a Whidbey

Island resident who is experiencing deer related damage to his garden. Supervisor Caldwell discussed and provided documents to assist the landowner with nonlethal mitigation strategies.

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife Area Planning Process: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm participated in Core Team conference calls to discuss and plan the next steps for the planning process. Manager Boehm scheduled a Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) meeting for August 3.

Watershed Partners: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended the July 20 Snoqualmie Watershed Forum meeting held in Carnation. A 10-year update of salmon recovery efforts in the valley was presented, along with information on progress towards King County's Fish, Farm, and Flood program.

Fir Island Farm: Rotton attended the Fir Island Farm construction meeting to discuss the final details related to the dike breach scheduled to occur the first week in August. Rotton is assisting with coordination on breach day activities, final onsite cattail treatment, and investigating game reserve boundary marker alternatives. Meis cut weeds and mowed around the Fir Island Farm Unit and Jensen Access along public access areas and roadways. Meis and Cosgrove mowed and weeded the field and entrance road fence lines at the Fir Island Farms Unit in preparation for the field tour in early August.

Jensen Access: Cosgrove mowed the entrance road shoulders and parking area at the Jensen Unit access area.

Private Lands/Access Management

Cross-Program Collaboration: Natural Resource Technician Otto met with a Whatcom County partner landowner, District Biologist Yarborough, and Region 4 Habitat Program Manager Brokes to discuss a potential stream restoration project on the property. The partnership established through the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program built the trust to move forward with this potential restoration project.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey activated two new hunter education classes in Region 4. Dazey sent out three additional invites to instructor applicants to attend the upcoming pre-service training. Dazey assisted an instructor new to the area to find a team to continue teaching.

Master Hunter Advisory Group (MHAG): Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Dazey attended the MHAG meeting on Friday and presented an overview of volunteer projects completed by master hunters in Region 4 since the last MHAG meeting.

Public Outreach: Coordinator Dazey reached out to the Region 4 hunter education instructors to enlist their help in publicizing the WDFW Firearm Safety bookmark contest. More information can be found on the hunter education webpage at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/huntered/index.html>. Dazey presented at the Cub Scout day camp on conservation wildlife management and habitat improvement. Volunteer opportunities were discussed and several members of the group expressed interest in learning more about the opportunity to assist WDFW in meeting our mission through volunteer projects. The Cubs were very attentive and enjoyed the opportunity to learn about what WDFW does, and also to see the furs and skulls on display. The scouts attending asked many good questions during each rotation and the day was well spent educating both adult leaders and Cubs about the important role played by WDFW in managing the resources of our state.



Steve Dazey presented at the Cub Scout day camp on conservation wildlife management and habitat improvement

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

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Elk: Biologist Yarborough, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, Private Lands Biologist Wingard, Natural Resource Technician Cogdale, and Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell received recognition at the Executive Management Team meeting for their efforts addressing elk issues in the Skagit Valley.

Training: Biologist DeBruyn completed leadership training in Olympia. Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed mandatory safety and IT Security Awareness trainings.

Roadkill snapping turtle found near Big Lake

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

IT Security Awareness Training: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey completed IT Security Awareness training.



REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Watchable Wildlife: Biologist Anderson was provided two great photos of a native Cascade mountain red fox on the south side of Mt. Adams this past week. The small climbing party estimated they were near 11,000 feet when the fox passed by them on the snowfield. Recent studies of this native fox indicate that it most typically is found in the Cascade Mountains from Mt. Rainier south to the Mt. Adams area. This is a unique species of mountain red fox that lives in isolated high country habitats above 5,000 feet and is rarely seen by hikers and backpackers. These rare photos are a glimpse into the dynamic movement patterns this species utilizes to traverse the mountains.

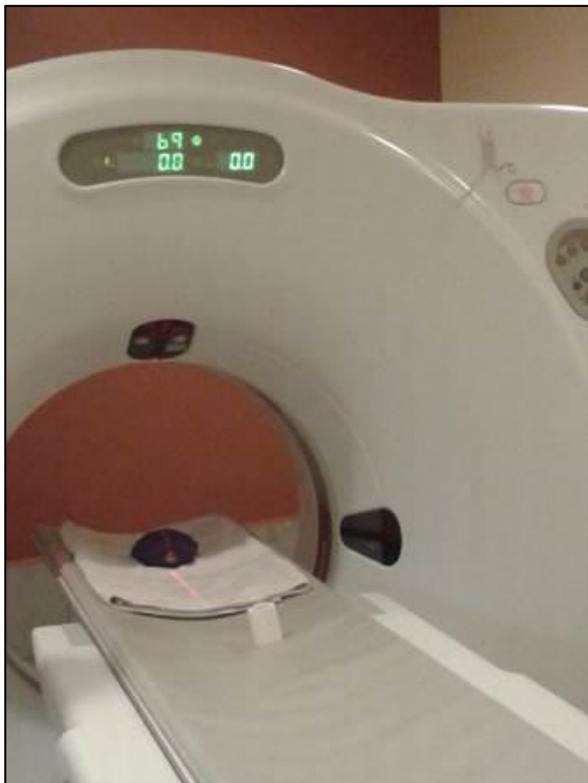


Cascade mountain red fox – Photos by Eddie Goss and Sara Schilling

Mountain Goat Surveys: Biologist Holman coordinated with members of Safari Club International and The Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance to conduct volunteer surveys of mountain goats in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. More than twenty volunteers participated in the survey. Data is yet to be compiled, but hundreds of observations were recorded and the survey

was a fine success thanks to the hard work of the dedicated volunteers. Thanks to the members of Safari Club and the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance for their participation in the survey.

Western Pond Turtle Trapping: Biologists Butler, along with WDFW Veterinarians Haman and Baker, worked with the Clackamas VCA Animal Hospital to conduct CT scans of 12 western pond turtles. A total of 16 turtles were trapped and brought to the Oregon Zoo last week as potential candidates for Undefined Shell Disease (USD) treatment. The Oregon Zoo will be treating up to 12 turtles for USD. WDFW veterinary staff members used observations gathered from both the gross examination and the CT scans to determine which turtles to send to treatment. The turtles chosen for treatment ranged from mild to severe USD. Since the treatment is still very experimental, treating a variety of cases of USD will help inform veterinarians as to the effectiveness of the treatment. Thank you again to the Oregon Zoo for their help with this project, and a big thank you to the Clackamas VCA Animal Hospital.



Western pond turtle CT scanning



Western pond turtle ready for CT scan

Mule Deer Meeting: Biologist Bergh attended a meeting with other WDFW biologists and managers in Ellensburg this week. Various topics about mule deer management were covered, including priority objectives from the agency's new mule deer management plan, habitat improvement and management strategies, population estimation models and current survey protocols, annual reports, and the new Washington Mule Deer Initiative. Many productive discussions were had and feedback from other biologists was helpful in improving surveys in the Eastern Columbia Gorge Mule Deer Management Zone.

Status and Trend Reports: Biologist Holman started work on this year’s Game Status and Trend Reports. The format of this year’s report is considerably different than those of prior years. Starting in 2016, elk and deer reports will be compiled based on herd area rather than WDFW administrative boundaries. In Region 5, this change will lead to the generation of reports for the Mount St. Helens Elk Herd, the South Rainier Elk Herd (in cooperation with Region 6), the Willapa Hills Elk Herd (in cooperation with Region 6), the Klickitat Area Mule Deer population, the South Cascades Black-tailed Deer population (in cooperation with Region 6), and the Willapa Hills Black-tailed Deer population (in cooperation with Region 6).

Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Site Survey: Biologists Butler, Sample, and George completed two surveys of band-tailed pigeon use at mineral sites near Cedar Creek and the Green River. A total of 15 mineral sites are surveyed annually within western Washington. The mineral site survey was developed to index the abundance of the Pacific Coast populations on band-tailed pigeons. Survey conditions were excellent, with pigeon use at or above average for both surveys.



Band-tailed pigeon adults at mineral spring site



Juvenile band-tailed pigeon

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Hazard Tree Removal: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Sample worked to remove 15-20 dead alder trees on the Gardner Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area that were located on the bank of the south Fork Toutle River, adjacent to Harry Gardner County Park near Toutle. The trees ranged in diameter from 4-12 inches and in height from 15-20 feet. These trees were determined to be a possible hazard to people using the park for day use or access to the river. About 10 trees farther upstream will need to be removed as well.

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald removing hazard alder trees on the Gardner Unit near Harry Gardner County Park near Toutle



Shillapoo Wildlife Area

New ADA Hunting Blind: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald, Assistant Manager Hand, and volunteers from the Vancouver Wildlife League and the Washington Waterfowl Association Lower Columbia Chapter conducted a work party to build a new ADA hunting blind. When completed, the new blind will replace the old fiberglass one on Mulligan Point in the Vancouver Lake Unit. The blind will be dedicated to the former Vancouver Wildlife League President Larry Snyder who passed away earlier this year. Larry devoted many years to improving access and helping create outdoor opportunities on the Shillapoo Wildlife Area. All of the funding for this project was donated from the Vancouver Wildlife League and the Washington Waterfowl Association.

New ADA hunting blind

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Grazing Permit: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven checked grazing permits on the Fisher Hill and Dillacort Units for compliance. No issues were observed. Oak trees at Knight Canyon, within a grazing permit on the Dillacort Unit, seem to be doing fairly well despite unusually dry conditions the last three summers.





Oaks at Knight Canyon

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

Private Lands

Land Access Program: Biologists Anderson and Meyer conducted a site visit to eastern Klickitat County to meet with the owners of one of the largest cattle ranches in the area. The ranch encompasses over

18,000 acres and supports a variety of important wildlife habitats, including some of the best remaining shrub steppe in Klickitat County. The landowners were provided the results of our regional ferruginous hawk surveys from earlier in the spring and summer, as well as discussion on other key wildlife species found on their ranch. In addition, there was a discussion about their past and current success at participating in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The landowners expressed an interest in working with WDFW over the next couple years to improve their chances at participation in the CRP program.



Biologist Meyer on eastside riparian habitat on private lands

Access

Silver Lake: Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes used a vactor truck to clean the trash out of the restroom vaults. The parking lot catch basins are not working properly so they attempted to clean them out using the vactor truck. The basin was full of root wads from surrounding trees and vegetation and the vactor truck was unable to clean out the sediment.



Silver Lake vaults and catch basin



Kress Lake: Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes painted over graffiti on the walls and door of the restroom.

Restroom graffiti

Oneida: Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes started mowing the upper area and lower field that fishermen use as a parking lot. Unfortunately, the tractor broke down

halfway through the job and will need to be hauled back to Vancouver to be fixed.

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

Wildlife Management

Hunting Prospects: Biologist Holman continued work on this year's Hunting Prospects document. The publication is extremely popular with hunters looking for information on wildlife populations, hunting access, areas to focus on, hunting tips, etc. The document is produced by each WDFW District and helps facilitate hunting throughout Washington State. The 2016 Hunting Prospects will appear on the hunting page of the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/prospects/> by Labor Day.

Hunter Contacts: Regional Wildlife Biologists continue to field many inquiries from the public about hunting opportunities for this fall. Questions typically focus on the where and how of big game hunting. Most interested parties are seeking information in regards to hunting elk or are following-up because they have drawn a Special Permit.

Wildlife Conflict

Deer in Vineyard: Biologist Meyer spoke with a landowner about ongoing deer issues in a vineyard. The landowner is concerned because damage was very high last year and currently the turbo fladry, plant spray, and critter gitter hazing methods are not working.

Beaver: Biologist Meyer spoke with a landowner who wanted a beaver trapped and relocated. Meyer directed them to a local wildlife control officer.

Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin met with a landowner experiencing severe damage from deer. Conklin will begin working with the landowner, including providing a roll of fencing to protect some of the most vulnerable trees in the orchard.

Cougar: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin followed up on a call of a cougar killing a goat in the Castle Rock area. Conklin provided advice and issued fox lights to set up by the goat pen to possibly deter the predator.

Dead Canid: Biologist Meyer responded to a call of a dead wolf on the side of the road between Woodland and Cougar. Meyer found a large canid and, with the help of District Biologist Holman, collected the carcass for further review by the USFWS.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Snowy Plover

Leadbetter: Technician Raby conducted nest and brood searching and nest checks this week at Leadbetter.

2016 Leadbetter and Island Season Totals				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
47	0	23	20	4

Midway/Graveyard: Biologist Sundstrom continues to monitor snowy plover nests and broods at Midway and Graveyard. The season appears to be winding down as only one new nest was discovered this week. Broods have been difficult to locate, but at least four broods are active at Midway Beach.

2016 Midway Beach and Graveyard Spit Season Totals				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
65	6	20	30	9

Sundstrom worked with William Ritchie and Katie Raby reviewing the forty-seven nest cards from Leadbetter. Technician Raby will be leaving soon, and it is important to have all the data entered and as accurate as possible. At least one more full day will be needed to assess chick/brood/fledging assignments to the nest cards and review the list of banded birds observed throughout the nesting season.

Streaked Horned Lark: Technician Raby assisted Refuge Biologist Ritchie with the third and final streaked horned lark protocol survey of the season in the Leadbetter HRA. The total number of individuals detected has not been tallied at this time. A total of five nests have been discovered so far this season.

Satsop/Mason Deer Project: In 2009, WDFW initiated a study of the effects of forest management practices on black-tailed deer reproduction. Two of eight study sites are represented in District 15: Mason and Satsop. The Mason cluster includes 11 GPS collared does, while the Satsop cluster has two. The collars for six of the Mason does are expected to drop off in July, and we did not attempt to collar fawns from these deer this season. Nine fawns

associated with seven does were collared or accounted for as stillborn (n=1) from the remaining does. An objective of this study involves determining sources of mortality among all radio-collared deer. The radio-collars in the Mason cluster have remote monitoring capabilities, and text messages are sent when certain events occur, although periodic field checks are recommended. The Satsop collars require field monitoring to determine status. So far this year, two fawns were likely killed by bear, two by coyote, and we attributed one fawn's death to poor condition at birth. Biologist Murphie reports that one fawn was killed by a coyote recently.

Fisher Camera Stations: In a multi-agency, collaborative effort to document fisher presence on the Olympic Peninsula, Biologist Murphie established three camera/bait stations within a survey block located near the town of McCleary, WA. Biologist Murphie conducted his third and final check of these camera stations this week and reports taking photos of bear, coyote, vulture, bobcat, deer, and a grouse. Camera sets were removed and reset in another hex near Shelton.

Rhinoceros Auklet Mortalities: Biologist McMillan responded to an email sent to the Director's Office regarding dead seabirds on the Olympic Peninsula beaches, one beach being at Morse Creek. The COASST project was referred to, and there were links to information about the recent increase in auklet carcasses along beaches.

Biologist Ament was contacted by a local wildlife rehabilitator from Port Townsend who reported taking in a sick rhinoceros auklet that later died. This bird and another dead auklet were found along North Beach near Port Townsend. She discussed the situation with the rehabber and provided contact information for USFWS and WDFW that could provide more specific details. Dead birds have been shipped to the NWHC for testing. Program Manager Calkins later sent out an e-mail that provided some helpful information in case more calls are received from the general public.

Band-tailed Pigeon Mineral Site Counts: Biologist Murphie conducted band-tailed pigeon counts at two mineral sites located in District 15. He reports highest count totals of 149 and 76 band-tails at any given time at each site.

Wildlife Areas

Duck Stamp Projects: Manager Gerchak finished up the first half of the duck stamp project at Davis Creek Wildlife Area and Chehalis Wildlife Area. Areas tilled this spring that did not produce smart weed were over seeded with barely and forage mix. The over seeding should provide some good duck and geese feed this fall when the areas flood. The main pond at Chehalis should provide some good hunting this year. Several of the floating mats are loaded with smart weed.



Wynoochee Mitigation: Wildlife area staff members completed the year's clipping of the elk forage areas on the Wynoochee Mitigation forage areas. Clipping in July removes the old growth and encourages new growth. Late in September, the areas will be fertilized and will provide lush green winter feed that will carry the elk through the better part of the winter.



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

Wildlife Management

Mourning Dove Study: Biologist Michaelis continues to capture and band mourning doves at two locations. A total of 63 birds (56 hatch year and seven adults) have been captured. Four birds have been recaptured. The minimum sample quota for western Washington has been met, but trapping will continue in an effort to band a total of 100 birds. The majority of doves were captured near Satsop.



Photo of an adult male shows the bright iridescence red coloration with the blue/gray coloring on top of the head

Band-tailed Pigeon Survey: Biologist Michaelis conducted an annual survey for band-tailed pigeons near the Naselle River. Over a hundred birds were observed using a mineral site along a tidally-influenced muddy bank. Band-tailed pigeons concentrate in certain areas to gather essential minerals, which aide in the digestion of the native

berries. These mineral sites facilitate our ability to assess the overall population. This new site will now be included as a long-term population monitoring index by the USFWS.

Access Areas

Region 6 Access: The crew spent two days with the Puget Sound Corps collecting materials from monofilament collection containers .The PSC crew traveled with the access team, visiting twenty-five sites in four counties (Pierce, Mason, Kitsap, and Thurston) . PSC workers also helped with site clean-up and maintenance at all twenty-five sites.

The WDFW/DOE monofilament recycling project is off to a great start.



Lake St. Clair in Thurston County



McIntosh Lake / Thurston County inspection and collection of the monofilament recycling tube

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

Wildlife Management

Hunting Prospects: Biologist Novack continued work on the Hunting Prospects document for the 2016-17 hunting season. Many more photos have come in for potential inclusion.