

Wildlife Program

Week of June 27 – July 3, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Discussions with Ranchers and Range Riders: Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman had discussions with ranchers concerning damage prevention contracts, data sharing, range riding, wolf issues, and other preventative methods within the Stranger pack area. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman showed key areas to a range rider along the north fork of Chewelah Creek, where cattle are present on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) property. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman contacted the range rider on a dairy farm to collect an invoice. Weatherman also delivered cameras to the range rider in the Smackout area.

Data Sharing: Biologist Shepherd assisted ranchers with issues concerning data sharing of wolf locations.

Contracts and Invoices: Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman assisted several ranchers with contracts and payment invoices.

Stranger Pack: Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman spent time in the Stranger pack home range monitoring wolf activity near residences. Shepherd and Weatherman contacted a producer in the Stranger pack area of central Stevens County. The producer runs 70 cow/calf pairs on state and private lands.

Huckleberry/Stranger Deterrence Plan: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett completed edits provided by Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd for the Huckleberry/Stranger Deterrence Plan. The final draft was sent to Carnivore Section Manager Aoude for maps and review.

Livestock Review Board Conference Call: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett participated in a call to review a claim for indirect losses from wolves. A recommendation from the Livestock Review Board was made to WDFW for payment.

Predator Livestock Interactions Training: Biologist Earl traveled to Gardener, Montana for a three day training session to discuss ranching techniques to mitigate predation and improve overall herd health. Biologist Earl was accompanied by a Garfield County cattleman as well.

Group of trainees at a training session in Gardener, Montana



Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement for Livestock (DPCA_L): Natural Resource Technician Wade met with a Garfield County cattleman to go over a DPCA_L agreement. The landowner signed a DPCA_L and Wade will be entering the agreement for approval next week.

Garfield County Wolf Meeting: Natural Resource Technician Wade spoke with the Garfield County cattleman who is organizing the wolf meeting to finalize a time and location. The meeting will be held at the Garfield County Court House on July 5 at 7:00 p.m.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Grizzly Bear Study: U.S. Fish & Wildlife (USFWS) staff members, working in consultation with WDFW, captured a male grizzly bear in the Washington Selkirk Mountain Ecosystem on June 29. The bear was a 5-6 year-old male weighing 366 pounds, and was in good health and released on site. It was fitted with a GPS radio-collar and was tagged with a white ear tag in each ear with the number 1002.



Grizzly bear captured this week by USFWS capture team in cooperation with WDFW within the Washington Selkirk Mountain Ecosystem. This is the first grizzly bear ever radio-collared in Washington State.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): Biologist Baarstad contacted all Lincoln County landowners with new CRP contracts enrolled in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program to determine field locations and begin field evaluations. Most are re-enrolled CRP contracts that will begin any required management practices this fall.

SCWA Rx Burning: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer and Natural Resource Technician Jerry “Chris” Christensen worked with the WDFW Prescribed Burn Team on treatments of the Bridge Unit at Sherman Creek Wildlife Area this week. Four sub-units were treated, totaling 42 acres. Burns were conducted early in the mornings and late one evening due to weather parameters driving us out of prescription during the heat of the day. The photos below show a location in the Bridge Unit, before and after treatment, where fire fuels have been reduced. Large woody debris is not consumed due to managed fire intensity, maintaining that habitat structure 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

Moose and “Selfies” in Spokane: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett, AIS Technician Claeys, Wildlife Veterinarian Mansfield, Wildlife Veterinarian Technician Just, Moose Biologist Oyster, and the Spokane Police Department worked to secure the scene in Spokane for an injured moose. Reports of people taking selfies, harassing, and coming too close to the animal had been reported. Several media outlets were on scene as well. The moose was darted and, after examination, the moose’s injury was determined to be too severe. The moose was humanely euthanized at a different location.

WDFW staff waiting for an injured moose to succumb to immobilization drugs in Spokane



REGION 2

No report submitted this week.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Hill spent some time spraying Canada thistle in Sections 9 and 15 of the Gnat Flat area. He sprayed along old roads and hit an area in Section 9 that will no longer be accessible in a month due to RMAP work. Hill sprayed many of the patches last year, and they were much diminished in size this year.



View Technician Hill had of the Stuart Mountain Range as he was spraying

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Buser released *Galerucella spp.* beetles on the wildlife area for control of purple loosestrife. Beetles were released at two sites on the Mesa Lake Unit, two sites at the Bailie Youth Ranch, and two sites at Ringold Springs Hatchery.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Mule deer on the Colockum are in the process of another year of fast antler growth. These two young bucks are in velvet and were seen along the Brewton Road.

Young mule deer bucks on the Colockum Wildlife Area



Canada thistle on a closed road in Section 9 in the Gnat Flat area



Wildlife Management

Bat Survey: District Biologist Fidorra continued the WDFW bat survey and placed acoustic bat detectors at sites in Districts 4 and 5, coordinating 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.

Volunteer Reimbursement: District Biologist Fidorra continued working with volunteers to submit reimbursement requests in time for the close of the fiscal year. Volunteers on the ferruginous hawk project were eligible for reimbursement for a portion of their mileage.

Ferruginous Hawk SAFE Program: District Biologist Fidorra submitted comments on the application for changes to the Ferruginous Hawk FSA SAFE program. WDFW is recommending changes to the eligible area boundaries that will allow more landowner fields to qualify for the program in areas where habitat improvements will benefit ferruginous hawk pairs and expand the program to include Walla Walla County.

Mourning Doves: District Biologist Fidorra trapped mourning doves at the Ringold Hatchery site. Only 13 doves were trapped in the morning of banding, but all were adults except one. Juveniles make the main component of trapped birds at this site each year, and hopefully capture numbers will increase once more nests fledge. Fidorra and hatchery staff members will continue to bait and trap doves into mid-August.

First young mourning dove banded of the District 4 season at Ringold Hatchery this week



CRP Plans: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman spent most of the week writing CRP plans. After checking out two more fields that have been enrolled, Stutzman wrote nine SAFE plans and one field border plan. Stutzman also received three more SAFE applications from Benton County FSA. Stutzman has already spoken with all three landowners and done field visits, so writing the plans should go quickly.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Plan: Biologist Bernatowicz met with Manager Huffman and Biologist Teske to review the Species of Greatest Conservation Need and Priority Species lists as they relate to the Oak Creek Wildlife Area. It is not possible or reasonable to try to manage for all species listed. A draft, more practical list of key species was decided upon. The key species list, as well as management challenges, was later discussed with the larger working group.

Western Gray Squirrels: Two hair snare transects were checked during the week and neither had a positive hit from a western gray squirrel.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff members used the Colockum boat to patrol the Columbia River shoreline and remove garbage on the numerous sandy beaches from Colockum Creek to Quilomene Bay. This left the river in good shape in anticipation of the Fourth of July holiday weekend.



The Colockum boat heading downriver on garbage patrol in the Colockum Wildlife Area (the cross on the shoreline is a monument to the Navy A-6 jet that crashed into the Cape Horn cliffs in 1991)

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey posted fire restriction signs across the wildlife area before the weekend. Huffman covered the Oak Creek and Cowiche units, while Mackey covered the Rock Creek Unit. While in the NF Cowiche area again, Huffman observed that the kiosk map which had been there on Monday had been stolen during the week. While in the Rock Creek Unit, Mackey posted directional signs to identify the locations of non-commercial thinning units for potential bidders. As of Friday morning, the Rock Creek Unit was filling up with recreationists out to enjoy the Fourth of July holiday weekend. Many vehicles towing off-highway vehicles were encountered on the USFS 1701.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris, Regional Program Manager McCorquodale, and Regional Director Livingston provided Legislative Representative Dent and Senator Warnick’s assistant with a tour of the Wenas Wildlife Area’s target shooting issues. They also discussed the agency’s plan for doing further stakeholder outreach, which would culminate in a meeting(s) of this group and the WAAC to develop a stakeholder proposal.

Manastash Ridge Trails Project: Manager Confer Morris and Biologist Longoria met with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to initiate the planning process for the Manastash Ridge Trails project. This meeting functioned to orient both parties to the project and allowed for the discussion of initial concerns for the project. Following the meeting, Manager Confer Morris and Biologist Longoria finalized milestones for the project and submitted them to RCO for approval.

Board Repair: Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker Barbosa repaired a vandalized reader board at Vernita Bridge.



Vernita reader board (before)



Vernita reader board (after)

Wildlife Management

Hunt by Reservation: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman worked with Small Game Section Manager Curtis to get contact information for special permit holders in GMU 329. The PSE Wild Horse wind farm requested the information to help with outreach about their transition to Hunt by Reservation. Stutzman also updated one of the PSE hunts in the reservation system.

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 Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued with coordinating and conducting hazing of elk in several winter wheat fields in the Rattlesnake Mountain area. Strong numbers (hundreds) of elk continue to leave Hanford and forage in wheat fields during the nighttime hours.

Damage Prevention Permits: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared and delivered damage prevention permits for landowners in Elk Area 3721. All current cooperators have permits to assist with removing problem elk while conducting hazing efforts.

Damage Permit Harvest: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored harvest on damage permits and recorded harvest in the damage permit issuance and harvest reporting database.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky accompanied CAMP Engineer Erin Muldoon to Brushy Creek to do more pre-construction work on the problem culvert and stream crossing there. The stream continues to change and has now braided into four separate channels, three of which are bypassing the existing culvert. Muldoon and Lopushinsky surveyed the stream, did a pebble count, and looked at alternate routes for construction equipment to access the site.



CAMP Engineer Erin Muldoon inspects the stream crossing at Brushy Creek on the Colockum Wildlife Area

Wenas Wildlife Area: The contractor for AT&T and Verizon completed Durr Road maintenance on a section of road from the Cottonwood parking area to the top of Umtanum Ridge. They installed rolling dips and added gravel to problem areas. At Manager Confer Morris' request, they replaced a narrow cattle guard located over a drainage crossing with a used culvert provided by Wenas Wildlife Area.

Oak Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman had a conference call with District Biologist Bernatowicz and Diversity Biologist Teske to discuss the species list put together for the Oak Creek Management Plan.

Oak Creek Management Plan: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey attended the planning team meeting for the Oak Creek Management Plan. The productive meeting set the priorities for the plan, fixed matrix issues, and drafted plan objectives.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Grizzly Bear: Biologist Yarborough attended the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Interagency meeting. The group comprised of members from USFS, National Park Service, USFWS, and WDFW. The group discussed the draft environmental impact statement.

Common Loon Survey: Biologist DeBruyn searched for breeding loons on lakes in the upper Skagit Valley. He also opportunistically checked peregrine occupancy at sites on two lakes. One adult loon and one pair of peregrines were observed. Biologist Smith surveyed District 12 for loon activity. Adult loons were documented (singly and in pairs) on area lakes. Nesting loons



were monitored at two local lakes. A single chick was confirmed at one lake (hopefully the second egg will hatch), while the second pair continues to tend two eggs.

A common loon chick is hitching a ride on the back of the adult at an area lake this week

East/West Bear Project: During recent weeks, staff members have been systematically trapping bears in the Snoqualmie and Lake Wenatchee areas in

alternating sessions (two sessions in each area). Biologist Smith assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Biologist Maletzke with bear captures and collaring during the second west side session. A total of nine bears were collared during this session.

Invasive Species Surveys: District 13 contacted landowners to obtain access permission for upcoming survey/trapping efforts for prohibited invasive species in south Snohomish and north King County waters.

Mountain Goat Surveys: District 13 reviewed past data and flight routes, mapped reconnaissance areas, and conferenced with USFS in preparation for upcoming aerial surveys. District 12 attended a local jurisdictional, tribal, and WDFW joint meeting regarding WDFW efforts to examine goats in King County.

Wild Boar in Snohomish County: District 13 received a call regarding a dead wild boar found on a local tree farm. The animal was a female with no obvious signs of shooting or trauma, so the cause of death is unknown. The exact location, along with photographs, was reported to the landowner and the Invasive Species Council. The sighting is a first for Snohomish County and its unknown whether this was a free roaming animal or whether it was collected somehow out of state and dumped for unknown reasons.

Wildlife Areas

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with volunteers to continue internal access road and trail improvements at the 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.

Leque Island Grant Applications: Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with a grant manager from the Recreation and Conservation Office to make final edits to the Salmon Recovery

Funding Board application. After the final edits, RCO packaged the application for scoring by the reviewers.

Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project: Project Coordinator Brokaw and a consultant built a new station for a water level data logger. The new station is needed to relocate a data logger installed on the old perimeter dike that will be removed in August. The logger is now installed on the face of a new tidegate that is part of the new setback dike.

Snohomish Delta Estuary Restoration Outreach: Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a meeting with Habitat Program and other organizations working on estuary restoration in the Snohomish delta. At the meeting, the group started to plan an outreach strategy to better communicate restoration needs in the Snohomish delta to a wide audience.

Estuary Restoration Effects on Birds: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Wildlife Biologist Milner listened to two presentations at a Pacific Coast Joint Venture meeting via webinar. The presentations outlined bird monitoring results at the Nisqually Estuary Restoration Project and at locations in North Puget Sound, including Leque Island, Fir Island Farm, and Wiley Slough.

Tansey Ragwort Bio-Control Insects: Natural Resource Technician Deyo checked on the patch of Tansey ragwort, a noxious weed on the Intalco Unit. He found that the plants were covered with a very good population of Cinnabar moth caterpillars, which are a bio-control insect for Tansey ragwort. Since the population of caterpillars is so high, we will not do any additional Tansey weed control, either mechanical or chemical, this year.



Cinnabar moth caterpillars feeding on noxious Tansey ragwort weed on the Intalco Unit

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

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that the Cherry Valley designated dog training area has been mowed this past week, along with some interior access roads. During the week, dog trainers responded by utilizing the area for their dog training efforts.

Barn Field Tidegate Replacement MOU: Projects Coordinator Brokaw drafted an MOU between WDFW and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community that addresses WDFW's

mitigation commitments for replacing the tidegate. After internal review, the MOU will be distributed to the Tribe for their comments.

BP Unit Land Use Access Agreement: Manager Kessler met onsite with the new head of security for BP and discussed updating our land use agreement. A new map will be made up to better detail the boundaries of the hunting area. The signs posted on the reader boards will also be reviewed and updated.

Nooksack Unit Flood Damaged Dike Repairs: Manager Kessler coordinated with Paula Harris from the Whatcom County River & Flood division on the upcoming repairs to the Nooksack Unit dike. This dike was damaged by flood waters over the last two years. Approximately 1,200 feet of scoured dike will be repaired later this summer.

Private Lands/Access Management

Spring Bear Hunt: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Private Land Biologist Wingard on contacting spring bear hunters and prepared the spring bear season harvest summary for district biologists and partner landowners. Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto toured new private industrial timber areas in Whatcom County to assess bear related tree damage.

Migratory Bird Forage: Private Land Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto met with cooperating landowners to check on planting progress and field conditions.

Whidbey Diversity Site: Otto conducted trail maintenance and vegetation control on the heavily used beach access trail on private lands. Otto exchanged the log in sheets with new ones.

Barley seed was spread on a new Snohomish County waterfowl quality hunt unit and coordinated with grower/landowner for final planting

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



Wildlife Management

Turkey Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell and WDFW Law Enforcement Sergeant Maurstad coordinated with a private landowner near Stanwood who has been having a conflict with turkeys at his residence. The turkeys have been attacking his dog,

roosting on his roof, and pecking through his window screens. The turkeys agitate his dog routinely around 4:00 a.m. This consistent pattern is preventing the homeowners from sleeping through the night. Supervisor Caldwell and Sergeant Maurstad worked with the landowners on several ideas to mitigate the problems and will be following up with the landowner in the following weeks.

Elk Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal worked with surrounding landowners and completed an Elk Exclusionary Fence project in Hamilton. The project was funded completely, with materials supplied from the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians fencing grant.

Recently constructed Elk Exclusionary Fence Project at the Hamilton Cemetery in Hamilton, Washington



Elk Hazing: WDFW Wildlife Program, Enforcement, and Tribal co-managers responded at Birdsvew to herd several elk out of a newly constructed elk exclusionary fence project area. Approximately 15 members fanned out to chase the elk out of a wooded area and were successful getting seven bull elk to exit the fenced area. The fence sustained some damage during the event, but Witman and Cogdale were able to make the necessary repairs in a couple hours to get the fence back up and operational.

Game camera photos of fenced in elk nearly exiting on their own through an open gate



Elk Stuck by Vehicle: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a report of an elk that was struck by a vehicle on State Route 20 east of Hamilton in Skagit County.

Deceased elk that was stuck by a motor vehicle along Highway 20. The elk was one of four young bulls that have been observed crossing State Route 20 daily near Carey's Lake.



Camera Monitoring: Technician Cogdal reviewed recently deployed camera monitoring stations from Whatcom County. The private landowner reported that he is experiencing blueberry damage from animals. Upon reviewing the camera stations data, it was discovered that both elk and raccoons are feeding on the berries. Specialist Witman will follow up with the landowner to discuss mitigation options.



Both elk and raccoons are feeding on the blueberries

Wild Canid Concerns and Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to two separate reports of wild canids within Skagit County. Both reports stated that wolves were observed. One report stated that wolves were observed in a field bounding and jumping around. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal responded to the reported sighting area and found no evidence of wolves in the area. Witman concluded that the observations were likely coyotes and that the animals were likely visible due to a group with elk calves in the area. The second report stated that a group of horseback riders came across a wolf while riding horses. After follow-up phone calls with the reporting parties, lack of physical evidence, and walking the surrounding area, Wildlife Conflict staff members concluded the sighting was likely a coyote. Each reporting party was guided to the WDFW website and asked to submit a detailed observation account for the animals they witnessed. Wildlife Conflict will continue to monitor the reported areas for any signs that may dispute the determination that coyotes were the animals observed.

Bobcat Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman responded to a report of two bobcats frequenting a residence in which a family member was becoming concerned for the safety of the residents. Witman met with the homeowners and observed feeding birds and squirrels on the property. The homeowner was not concerned for his safety from the bobcats and proudly displayed a photo of a bobcat resting on a nearby stump. Witman advised the homeowner that if the bobcats become a nuisance, the best alternative is to quit feeding the birds and squirrels.



Witman met with the homeowners and observed feeding birds and squirrels on the property. The homeowner was not concerned for his safety from the bobcats and proudly displayed a photo of a bobcat resting on a nearby stump. Witman advised the homeowner that if the bobcats become a nuisance, the best alternative is to quit feeding the birds and squirrels.

Bobcat lurking around a residence where birds and squirrels are being fed

Wildlife Areas

Wildlife Area Planning Process: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm participated in a Core Team conference call to discuss the June 30 public meeting. Manager Boehm and the Core Team also attended and facilitated the public meeting conducted on June 30 in Fall City. Ten members of the dog training community attended.

Cherry Valley Net Pen: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with the CAMP electrical crew to install electrical upgrades to the pheasant net pen and barn. The upgrade was required to provide safety upgrades to the aging and failing electrical system.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Lands Access Program Signage: Private Land Biologist Wingard coordinated with Private Lands Access Program staff members statewide to deliver new access program signs made by the Department of Corrections in Monroe.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey assisted several instructors with ordering supplies for their classes. Dazey answered questions from an instructor in regards to a student who did not want to handle firearms during the hunter education class. Dazey also assisted a chief instructor to use the Kalkomey email system to communicate with the instructors on his team. Coordinator Dazey activated two hunter education classes, and sent out two applicant packets and 15 invitations to instructor applicants to attend a pre-service training so they could complete their certification. Coordinator Dazey visited the Twin City range and spoke about holding hunter education classes at their facility. They were very receptive and Dazey will be following up.

Stillaguamish Hunter Education Class: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted instructors from the Stillaguamish Tribe to put on a hunter education class for tribal members. The Stillaguamish tribe made their facility available for the class and offered use of the venue to other instructors in the future who may need a place to teach. The venue worked very well and the instructors did an excellent job presenting the material to the students. A big thanks to Bill Hebner, Jeff Tatro, Jeff Graves, and Gary Tatro from the Stillaguamish, and Rick Webber and Larry Downs, both certified instructors from other teams who traveled to assist with the field course, and Bill Vincent, who attend all four sessions and assisted.







Public Outreach: Coordinator Dazey answered questions in regards to the Washington State requirements for bow hunting. Dazey also reached out to 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> .

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

Annual Review and Evaluation: Staff members completed annual expectations, evaluations, and position description reviews.

Western Washington Pheasant Release Program: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Private Land Biologist Wingard on contacting private landowners on Whidbey Island and elsewhere. Biologist Caldwell also coordinated with regional headquarters about potential new pheasant release sites and the possibility of accessing these sites in 2016.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Resident Dark Goose Capture Effort: WDFW Region 5 staff members Holman, Stephens, George, Bergh, Butler, and Sample, along with Waterfowl section staff members Kraege, Wilson, Hamer, and Annanie, Officer Dielman, and Biologist Novack from Region 6, cooperated with partners from ODFW and USFWS and Volunteer Miller to conduct an annual capture of resident dark geese in the Lower Columbia River. The geese are molting this time of year, so the flightless birds were slowly driven into a net catch pot by a helicopter. A total of 105 resident dark geese and western Canada geese were captured and banded this year. Adult dark geese were collared with white neck bands, each containing a unique alphanumeric code. A total of 67 birds were collared during the effort. The collars serve two purposes. One is to allow managers

to generate a population estimate of the local dark geese by using a mark-resight method. The second is to assist hunters in distinguishing these large dark geese, which are not a conservation concern, from the dusky Canada geese, which are now closed to harvest due to population level concerns. Many thanks to helicopter pilot Comstock from JL Aviation, our partners at ODFW and USFWS, and the volunteers who made this day a success.



Squirrel Survey Checks:

Technician Petrie, Volunteer Flick, and Biologist Bergh started on the first checks of the western gray squirrel hair tube transects this week. Bait and hair tubes were replaced as needed and all tubes were checked for the presence of squirrel hair. If the hair is identified as western gray squirrel, additional hair tubes are laid out around that tube. A total of 25 transects were placed around Klickitat County this year and each transect will be checked once per month through September.

Sandhill Crane Management: Biologists Anderson and Bergh assisted Conboy National Wildlife Refuge biologists and staff members with the first attempt of the season to band sandhill crane colts (juveniles). Crews assembled on the refuge early in the morning and a pair of cranes with one colt was located for a successful banding. Banding is done when the colts are flightless, but large enough to have identification bands placed on their legs. At this age, it makes capture a bit easier once their location is identified. Banding is done to help estimate survival, monitor geographic expansion of the local population, and determine migratory patterns in this small breeding population in Washington State. The colt was released following a short handling time and was quickly rejoined with the adults, who were in the immediate area.



Sandhill crane colt



Leg band attachment

Release of colt back to adults

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

Private Lands

Access Contracts: Biologist Meyer reached out to two landowners in Wahkiakum County to renew private land access contracts.



Access: Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes picked and hauled over 900 pounds of trash this week at several sites, including a heap of beer and food trash, household trash, building materials, a couple tires, two moldy mattresses, and a recliner couch. They also repainted the restroom at Barbers access on the Washougal River after it was tagged with graffiti.



Average day at Barber access site

Kress Lake: We would like to thank Volunteer Davern for all his work in repairing the sinkholes that developed after the winter events along the trail that encircles Kress Lake. We would also like to extend a big thank you to the Scarsella Brothers, who very kindly donated the rock and gravel materials that were used in this effort.



Repairing sinkholes along the trail that encircles Kress Lake

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

District 9 Wildlife Conflict

Range Rider Contracts: Biologist Meyer and Conflict Specialist Peterson visited two landowners in Klickitat County to have them sign /renew their contracts for the coming year and collect range rider log books from last year.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Snowy Plover: Technician Raby conducted nest and brood searching, nest checks, and egg floatation this week at Leadbetter.

2016 Leadbetter and Island Season Totals				
# Nests Discovered	# Nests Active	# Nests Hatched	# Nests Failed	# Nests w/ Unknown Fate
45	13	12	16	4

Cormorant Survey - Grays Harbor: Biologist Michaelis surveyed an additional double-crested cormorant nesting location near Westport. Nests on channel markers nearly covered all available space. New nesting locations were discovered near Tokeland and will be surveyed later this week. The region has received reports from citizens who are concerned about an apparent increase in cormorant numbers in both Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Tirhi, Biologist Holcomb, and three volunteers are concluding the 2016 western pond turtle nesting season monitoring at the Pierce County recovery site. Final season statistics for the Pierce County site are as follows:

Number of females of breeding age (8+) and anticipated to nest	52
Number with transmitters in 2016	26
Number of transmitted females to lay nests in 2016	13
Number of known non-transmitted females to lay nests in 2016	3
Number of nests laid in total (includes first and second clutches)	18
Number of clutches delivered to Woodland Park Zoo for head starting	12

We have seen a significant increase in pond turtle depredation this season. Six adult female turtles have been killed by predators since April. It is assumed that an additional unknown number of turtles have also been killed. Raccoon density appears to be increasing and raccoons were recently seen swimming in the ponds used by turtles. Staff members are negotiating with USDA Animal Damage Control to remove a set number of raccoons and otters.

Black-tailed Deer Study Doe Mortality: Biologist Murphie assisted with investigating a collared doe mortality event on June 29, 2016, since District 16 biologists were conducting sea otter surveys for the week. He reported that the doe was killed by a cougar. Scat and tracks were found in the vicinity. The doe was entirely consumed. The femur bone marrow appeared normal. The doe was located on some private land north of DNR land. It proved challenging to track down a contact for the property. Researcher Rice was able to secure permission to enter the property. Biologist Murphie had to sign a disclosure statement and was actually escorted to the doe carcass by three men associated with property management. The dead doe was found in a second growth 30 year old Douglas fir, vine maple, and alder stand. She was located in a sword fern patch near the edge of a seasonal wetland dominated by spirea and wood's rose. This doe has a fawn that was collared in mid-May. The chance of survival for this fawn is now rather low. To assist with monitoring this fawn, Biologist Ament deployed the collar from the dead doe in a tree close to the proximity of the fawn on July 1. She detected a live signal for the fawn in fairly close vicinity but did not get a visual of the fawn.

Biologist Ament also spent some time on July 1 checking for live signals and downloading data from collared does. There are presently four collared does remaining in the Pysht Cluster. A total of four fawns were collared this spring. Two of these fawns and one collared fawn from 2015 are still alive.

Common Loon Breeding Survey: Biologists Michaelis, Murphie, and Ament teamed up on June 27 to conduct a loon survey at Lake Ozette. This lake is located within the northern boundary of Olympic National Park and is the largest unaltered natural lake in Washington at 2,954 hectares. It is eight miles long and three miles wide. Adult loons have been observed and heard vocalizing on the lake, but breeding has never been confirmed. DNR Biologist Scott Horton has reported that he observed "two good-sized fledglings" on the lake in June last year. Two motor boats were used by the inter-regional team to conduct the survey of the entire lake. The team had suitable weather, mostly clouds with a few sun breaks and light winds. At least three different adult loons and two younger loons were observed. Photos from a distance were taken of one lone loon observed by Biologist Michaelis and Ament. Good notes were taken on the description of this young loon. They will be provided to other biologists who can assist with aging this loon. The other young loon observed was with an adult loon. The pair flushed and flew out of view before any photos could be taken. It is likely this was a second year loon. District 16 biologists certainly appreciated the provided boats and participation from Biologists Michaelis and Murphie. The group discussed the need for possibly three survey teams in boats for suitable coverage for future surveys of this large lake.



Captain Michaelis assisting with loon survey of Lake Ozette



Captain Murphie looking for loons near Tivoli Island



Lone young loon observed on Lake Ozette



Zoomed in view of young loon



Bat Acoustic Project: Biologist Ament and District Biologist McMillan had deployed the equipment for acoustic monitoring of bats on June 24. The gear was set-up at a remote slough area adjacent to the Hoh Rover. Biologist Ament retrieved the equipment on July 2. It took a total of 4.5 hours of drive time to complete this project. Two sets of gear will be deployed again in the upcoming weeks.

Biologist McMillan stands near bat acoustic gear



Pole with microphone and slough in the background

Sea Otter Surveys: District Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament participated in the annual sea otter count along the Washington coast June 28 – July 1. Biologists from USFWS and WDFW, staff members from the Seattle Aquarium and Point Defiance Zoo, and a few volunteers assisted with the survey effort. District Biologist McMillan was stationed at Duk Point to conduct ground counts. Her highest count for the four day survey effort was 51 otters. Biologist Ament was recruited to participate in the plane with Biologist Jeffries for the survey flights this year. She was responsible for recording data for all sea otters observed. A pre-survey flight was conducted on June 27, but was discontinued when poor weather was encountered in the La Push area. Unfortunately, there was low ground fog and cloud conditions for June 29 and 30, so the plane was unable to conduct any surveys. Ground counters attempted to make

counts when weather was suitable and otters were in view. Weather conditions improved along the coast later in the week and flights of the entire Washington coast were conducted on June 30 and July 1. The flight crew took a gamble for the July 1 survey, but was quite pleased to have clearing fog when they arrived to start at the south end of the survey. They did encounter some dense clouds past Duk Point, but only a few otters had been seen in this area the previous day. Ground counters were present at five of the usual observation locations for the first three days of the survey. Three stations were monitored on July 1. A combination of the ground counts and two good aerial survey counts will be used for producing an estimate of the sea otter population along the Washington coast. The estimated population for the 2015 survey was 1,394 sea otters. The results from that survey were slightly lower than a count of 1,573 in 2014, but this may be due in part to a new method used to interpret imagery. The growth of the population remains positive, but is slowing. The average population rate of growth for the Washington sea otter population is 8.6%. Biologist Jeffries has done some preliminary review of the numbers of otters counted during the two 2016 aerial surveys with suitable conditions. Estimates are showing high numbers, with 1659 otters estimated on June 30 and 1714 otters on July 1. One colossal raft of otters was located south of Hoh Head. Biologist Jeffries color coded each otter in the photo to help provide a total count. The record number for this group in open water was 687 sea otters! Humpback whales, gray whales, sea lions, harbor seals, and harbor porpoises were other marine mammals observed during aerial survey flights.



Group of estimated 687 sea otters in one group located south of Hoh Head – color coding to assist with counting – Photo and “rainbow” of otters provided by Steve Jeffries



A group of sea otters resting together near rocks



Stellar sea lions on known haul-out island off Washington coast

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

Wildlife Management

Resident Dark Goose Capture Effort in Region 5: Biologist Novack assisted Region 5, the Waterfowl Section, and partners from ODFW and USFWS to conduct the annual capture of resident dark geese in the Lower Columbia River.

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

Wildlife Management

Seabird Hazard: Biologist Novack answered various customer service calls. He also forwarded information to Enforcement regarding a wildlife hazard atop a hotel rooftop in Ocean Shores. The facility has apparently placed some type of barbed wire atop the roof, which is

killing or injuring local seabirds. A prior phone request to remove the hazard was apparently ignored.

Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance (PCBA): Biologist Tirhi and the members of the PCBA hosted the second meeting for jurisdictions managing property within the Lower White River Biodiversity Management Area (LWR BMA). Eighteen city and county representatives attended. CDs containing a copy of the final LWR BMA Stewardship Plan were distributed. Presentations were given by various jurisdictions working on facets of their section of the plan. The group had created a list of projects focused on biodiversity preservation in the LWR they believed they could work together on in the future (as interjurisdictional). This second meeting concluded with the group prioritizing those activities to begin with. The top two were 1) targeted land acquisition and 2) promoting the Citizens for a Healthy Bay educational/habitat restoration program.

Private Lands /Conflict

Enumclaw/Buckley Elk Conflict Meeting: Program Managers Calkins and Link, Conflict Specialist Blankenship, Captain Chadwick, and other Enforcement staff members attended a meeting in Enumclaw to discuss elk damage issues in the area. The meeting, which was a follow up to one held two years ago, was sponsored by Senator Pam Roach. Overall it was clear that the landowners present were generally satisfied or pleased with the level of service they receive from Blankenship and Conflict Specialist Smith in Pierce and King counties respectively. A number of ways we can improve service and our effectiveness in mitigating elk damage on cropland became evident from input from landowners. Despite making some progress with landowners, there were several points of contention, particularly with regard to elk population numbers and survey methods.

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

Wildlife Areas

Promotion: Wildlife Area Manager Belson recently announced that he will be leaving his current position on the North Olympic/South Puget Sound Wildlife Areas to accept the position of Statewide Water Access Coordinator. We wish Shane the best in his new position, but his skills and abilities will be missed in Region 6. Congratulations, Shane!