

Wildlife Program

Week of March 28 – April 3, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Lethal Control Discussion: Supervisor McCanna, Wildlife Conflict Specialists Shepherd, Bennett, Rasley, and Biologist Earl attending meetings to discuss different options for wolf lethal control. Options that were discussed covered depredation investigations to the process specific to removals. Options discussed and notes from the meetings will be shared with the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) on April 5th and then presented at the next WAG meeting.

Domestic Dog Incidents: Biologist Shepherd discussed issues concerning wolf locations of the Dirty Shirt wolf pack with owners of two dogs in Burnt Valley that were engaged by the pack in January.

Monthly Wolf Updates: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett compiled sightings, camera work, collaring efforts, and reported depredations for producers and other interested parties in two different areas in mostly District Two.

Table that provides information to interested parties and producers of wolf sightings, camera work, and reported depredations for Lincoln, Spokane, and Whitman counties for March 2016.

County	Sightings (webpage & contact)	Camera, WCS Bennett and District	Depredations
Lincoln	No sightings reported to WDFW for this period.	No cameras out during this period.	No depredations reported to WDFW for this period.
Spokane	No sightings reported to WDFW for this period.	No cameras out during this period.	<u>Three reported:</u> 1. 03/11/2016 – Rockford, calf Unknown Cause of Death (no carcass) 2. 03/15/2016 – Greenacres, steer Non-Depredation 3. 03/22/2016 – Cheney, alpaca No investigation due to lack of carcass.
Whitman	No sightings reported to WDFW for this period.	No cameras out during this period.	No depredations reported to WDFW for this period.

Table that provides information to interested parties and producers of wolf sightings, camera work, and reported depredations for the Huckleberry and Stranger packs during March 2016.

How reported	Location	Sightings	Camera Work	Depredations
GPS collar	<p>Huckleberry collar locations: Predominantly these two collared animals have been spending most of their time just south of Kettle Falls and north of Addy-Cedonia Rd.</p> <p>Stranger collar locations: For the most part, this collar has stayed south of Springdale-Hunters Rd. down into the Spokane Indian Reservation.</p>		No reports in this area for this period.	
WDFW Public Sightings webpage		<p><u>Three reported:</u> 1. 03/07/2016 – Hunters, one light colored animal seen 2. 03/11/2016 – TumTum, one animal seen 3. 03/12/2016 – TumTum, two animals seen</p>	No reports in this area for this period.	<p><u>One reported:</u> 1. ~03/06/2016 – Valley, dog Unknown Cause of Injury</p>
WDFW Staff		<p><u>2015 Annual Report:</u> - Will be available soon.</p> <p><u>Collaring efforts:</u> - Huckleberry Pack: one new WDFW collar placed. - Stranger Pack: two collars within this pack. One previously fit collar and one animal re-collared due to malfunctioning collar.</p>	No photos for this period.	

OR35: OR35 moved across Garfield and Columbia County this week and as of Thursday night she was several miles south of Dayton. During her trip, Biologist Earl contacted various producers as she crossed their private property containing livestock.

Wolf Activity: Biologist Earl was contacted by a landowner near Anatone. The landowner reported hearing wolf howling in Ten Mile Canyon. While checking his cattle the next day, he came across large piles of scat and a mass of hair stuck in his fence. He collected samples for Earl.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Bighorn Sheep Translocation: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Prince, Biologists Oyster, Garrison, and Wik, along with Dr. Mansfield and Moose, Goat, Sheep Section Manager Harris spent most of this week in Montana working with agency partners to capture 11 month old bighorn sheep on the National Bison Range Refuge for transplanting into Washington. Captured bighorn sheep were all “short” yearlings and each was fitted with a Global Positioning System radio collar. After being cleared from disease testing, 10 sheep, including eight ewes and two rams, were released at Hall Mountain. The project goal is to augment the existing bighorn sheep herd and to help study the animals’ habits.

A total of 21 animals were free range darted and transplanted to the Hall Mountain and Tucannon herds during the week’s efforts. The project went very smoothly with the help of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff members and a contract veterinarian.



Some of the bighorn sheep from Montana released to augment the Hall Mountain population in Washington.



Biologists Wik and Lisk (USFWS) with a bighorn sheep ready for transport to the processing crew

Golden Eagle Study: District Wildlife Biologist Base had the rare opportunity to go in the field and recover the carcass of a radio-telemetered golden eagle. This eagle was the adult female from the China Bend Nest Territory which had been monitored by the Department's Science Division for 10 years. Further analysis of the carcass will be accomplished to help give insight as to the cause of mortality.



(Left) This adult female golden outfitted with a radio transmitter on March 15, 2006 (Right) Carcass of golden eagle as discovered in situ near China Bend on March 31, 2016.



Photograph of this same golden eagle taken from a baited remote trail camera station on October 8, 2013



A juvenile golden eagle in a nest at the China Bend Territory on June 19, 2014



One of the nesting cliff faces at the China Bend golden eagle nest territory near the mouth of Flat Creek in District 1

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: Biologist Lowe conducted occupancy surveys of territories near Riparia on the Snake River and near Crab Creek in southeastern Lincoln County. Of the five territories surveyed, one was occupied by a nesting ferruginous hawk pair. Other historical nest sites were being used by red-tailed hawks and great horned owls, and no other ferruginous hawks were located. Landowners were very helpful and willing to grant access for the surveys. Biologist Atamian conducted occupancy surveys for Endicott-Sutton and the Cherry Cove Territories, neither were occupied. Endicott-Sutton use to be in snag between highway and railroad, but snag has fallen down many years ago only red-tailed hawks and ravens flying in area now. Cherry Cove trees are not occupied by any species, but several trees up and down river are occupied by red-tailed hawks. Atamian also reached a local falconer in Benge that new of a Ferruginous Hawk territory that is not in the Wildlife Survey Data Management database and new of another potential site south of the Cherry Cove territory, Atamian will work on getting access to confirm if these sites are currently occupied.



Ferruginous hawk nesting in the cliffs in the Riparia East territory near the Snake River

Lincoln County Prairie Grouse Project:

Biologist Atamian checked on the locations of the two remaining GPS marked males; both are alive. Atamian worked with Grouse Technician Walker on radio tracking, triangulation, data entry, etc. Walker tracked radio marked hens, ran a corvid/raptor survey, surveyed the sage grouse lek, and worked on the camera traps for getting band resighting (we've gotten six so far).



Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program /CP33: Biologist Earl continued to coordinate with Natural Resource Conservation Service staff members in Pomeroy to discuss new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program signups and coordinate seed mixes and installation. Earl also discussed potential CP33 sites within the Garfield County. Earl met with Farm Bill Coordinator Kuttel to clear up additional questions regarding CP33 practices.

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

Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Youth Turkey Hunter: An individual from Moses Lake brings a youth hunter to Sherman Creek Wildlife Area every year for the youth turkey season. Arriving at the wildlife area a couple of days ahead of the weekend season to scout, they reported having a tough time locating birds. Ultimately they were successful with the youth harvesting a nice gobbler on Sunday morning.



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

South Hill Turkey Monitoring, Presentation, and Egg Hunt: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett continued to work with residence in several locations on the Spokane South Hill with concerns of wild turkey. Bennett coordinated with Spokane City Parks, park maintenance, and the public on the upcoming egg hunt. A public presentation was given at a local library to answer questions and discuss the egg hunt as well.

Cloverland Elk: Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade spent time every day this week hazing elk from farm fields around Cloverland. In total, there were over 500 elk in three separate groups that refused to leave the area. On Thursday, Wade worked with the local landowners (who all brought out their ATV's) and were able to move the herd back towards the Wildlife Area on Smoothing Iron. The next morning, Earl and Wade made a final push and were able to get most of them back across the South Fork of Asotin Creek towards the Smoothing Iron.



One herd of elk in crop field near Cloverland (best attempt at getting them into a photo)

Turkey Hunting Clinic: Supervisor McCanna taught a three hour turkey hunting clinic with the assistance of Biologist Baarstad. The clinic was well attended and appreciated by all. The average age of clinic participants was 60 years of age. Many had hunted turkeys prior with little success, it was a great group of participants to work with.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Medina finish seeding I-82 unit Mellis Rd.



Mellis RD seeding project.

Taneum and Hutchins Road Logging Projects: L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Winegeart and Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hunt participated in a coordination meeting to discuss the scope and sideboards of the Taneum and Hutchins Road logging projects planned to begin this summer. Spotted owl specialist Joe Buchanan offered his expertise as two of the proposed units are adjacent to U.S. Forest Service land and fall within an owl circle.

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra spent much of the week surveying Ferruginous Hawk territories and working on landowner access and volunteer, partner, and staff coordination. Fidorra organized a Bureau of Land Management and WDFW survey of Juniper Dunes recruiting additional help from volunteers. No ferruginous hawks were seen despite ideal survey conditions and many survey hours. Last year was the first year that none were found nesting in the area which had over 15 pairs several decades ago.

Ferruginous Hawk Article: District Biologist Fidorra submitted a brief article for The Wildlife Society's Newsletter for the Washington Chapter regarding the Ferruginous Hawk survey. Fidorra accepted the role as the southeast Washington newsletter correspondent after being approached by The Wildlife Society.

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys in Yakima County: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman did three ferruginous hawk surveys in Yakima County over two days. No hawks were seen and all seven of the nests had either been destroyed or were in disrepair. A previously unrecorded Prairie Falcon nest was located.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz received numerous reports of bighorn sheep on Highway 410. Sheep annually visit the highway, especially in the spring, to lick salt. Various possible solutions have been discussed with the Washington Department of Transportation (WDOT) in the past, but WDOT doesn't view the situation as a problem as vehicle strikes are rare. This year as many as 90 sheep have been reported on the highway. Bernatowicz also retrieved a bighorn sheep ram head from the Yakima Training Center, likely a winter mortality.



U.S. Forest Service employee photo of bighorn sheep on Highway 410

Deer Surveys: Biologist Bernatowicz flew deer surveys most of week with Biologist Moore in the northern portion of District 8.

Colockum Elk Survey: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed the model outputs for the survey. The population estimate was 5087 +/- 98 with 28.5 and 15.5 calves and bulls per 100 cows. Total elk numbers were down about 1,000 (17%) from last spring. No unusual numbers of elk were seen outside surveyed elk winter range during deer surveys. Adult cow numbers were down about 700 from 2015. It is likely that high antlerless harvest and winter mortality has reduced the population to nearly the objective.

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: Biologist Bernatowicz surveyed sites on the Yakima Training Center and near the Benton county line. One site near Benton County was active.

Wolverine Surveys: Biologist Bernatowicz corresponded with Biologist Lewis and U.S. Forest Service Biologist St. Hilaire regarding wolverine surveys winter of 2016-17. More coordination is needed, but it appears little help will be needed by district staff to complete the surveys.

Colockum Elk Population Estimate: Biologist Moore entered the Colockum elk survey data and ran the R-Sight model generating the final population estimate of the surveyed winter range. The total population estimate was 5087 +/- 98. The survey yielded calf and bull ratios of 28.5 and 15.5 respectively. It was also noted that winter mortalities were observed at a higher rate than normal throughout the survey area.



Numerous dead elk were observed in each survey unit throughout the winter range



A cow elk observed on West Bar that was reluctant to move

Deer Study Mortality: Biologist Moore and Office Peterson investigated a deer mortality on the L.T. Murray. The deer died a few days earlier making it more difficult to determine the cause of death. After searching, a classic cougar burial site was found near the remains.

Ferruginous Hawk Survey: Biologist Moore surveyed the Babcock Ranch territory outside of Zillah, WA. He was unable to gain access to the best observation point at the Cheyne Transfer Station due to an ongoing construction project. Therefore this territory was surveyed at other opportunist locations and one adult ferruginous hawk was observed.

Deer Survey: Biologists Bernatowicz and Moore did an aerial deer survey throughout the Colockum. These data still need to be entered and modeled. Initial impressions suggest this population is down as compared to previous years.

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

Clean up at the Tim's Pond Access Area of Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker Farias cleared entire trail of fallen trees and branches at Tim's Pond access area.

Signs and Maps Installed at French's Canyon: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker Farias took Ranger side by side up French's Canyon to install sign and maps on upper and lower kiosk and paint lower man/horse gate installed a couple weeks ago.

Clean up at Cowiche Mill Road: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker Farias finished up week by cleaning up target debris at the shooting areas along Cowiche Mill Road. What a mess! There is still plenty of trash out there.



Truck load of target shooting trash at the pine tree shooting site along Cowiche Mill Road.

Hiker in Oak Creek Wildlife Area: On Thursday while returning to Cowiche Barn, Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Berry met with Yakima Construction Shop crew members who were wrapping up their day with flood damage repair and barn drainage work, Berry asked one crewmember if he had seen the occupants of a car parked up by gate, he said "oh ya, a guy went by with hiking sticks and backpack about 10 minutes ago." We attempted to locate man in closure with no luck. About 1000 head of elk in closure area seemed to be undisturbed. Officer Peterson was about to come down from Ellensburg when the hiker came out and Berry contacted him. The hiker was educated on closure, reason for closure, and the need for him to know where he was and obey posted notices. His commented that he never did find Box Canyon, which is in the opposite direction.

Guided Hike on the Rattlesnake Slope Unit of Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Buser was informed of a guided hike set to occur later this month on the Rattlesnake Slope Unit. He contacted the REACH Museum, who is coordinating the event. After several conversations about where the tour will take place and who manages that land, along with some assistance from Lands Agent Hendrix and Conflict Specialist Hand, a request for a Commercial Use Permit is being prepared for the event.

Shed and Turkey Hunting on Colockum Wildlife Area: Wenatchee native Michael Ballard returned home from college on his spring break this week and had some great days on the Colockum. Michael spent his time off from school hunting shed elk antlers and assisting a family friend during the youth turkey hunt.



Michael Ballard with shed elk antler found on the Colockum Wildlife Area this week



10-year-old Kadin Stennes, successful youth turkey hunter. Kadin was mentored during the youth hunt by Michael Ballard

Printing of the Green Dot Maps: Manager Lopushinsky met with Managers Winegeart and Huffman at the Department of Natural Resources in Ellensburg to iron out details with the next printing of the green dot maps. Jill Johnson at the Department of Natural Resources will provide us with final draft copies next week.

Wenas Target Shooting Proposal: Wildlife Area Manager Confer Morris continued working with Environmental Planner Posner to finalize a notice for public meetings and a fact sheet for the Wenas Target Shooting proposal. Confer Morris worked on GIS maps to display the range layouts for alternatives one and two. She also submitted forms to Yakima County requesting an Early Assistance Meeting with Public Services divisions to discuss the proposal and required permits.

Vehicle stuck on Closed Black Canyon Road: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Taylor received a call from Customer Service Specialist Anderson regarding a report of a truck stuck in the mud off the Black Canyon road. He responded and found a tan Chevrolet pickup >3/10 of a mile in on the (closed) orchard road off of Black Canyon with no one around. Looking at the truck's front grill, it appears they were mudding before they got stuck.



On his way out, Taylor ran into three kids on a two-wheel drive tractor with a small trailer coming up Black Canyon road. The driver of the tractor advised that he was going in to pull out the vehicle for a friend. Taylor advised him it was a closed road and that he was going to rut the road up even more and may face a ticket. The driver said that's the chance he will take. Photos and contact information were passed onto enforcement.



Vehicle stuck on Closed Road in Black Canyon Area

Access Site Service: Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker Barbosa serviced Tim's Pond, Oak Creek, Mellis Rd, Fitzsimmons, Donald Road, Pond 1 & 2, Pond 3, Pond 4 & 5, Buena, Zillah Bridge, Hyde, Whitstran, Snively, Duportail, Ringold, Woodhouse, Lavender Lake, Teanaway junction, Masterson, King horn Slough, Mattoon, and Fio Rito.

Due to the run off in the Yakima River, Kittitas County has closed the road into the Thrall Access Site until the water resolves.

County Road into Thrall Access Site



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

Beaver Dam Cleared at L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: All L.T. Murray Wildlife Area staff members and several volunteers from Mule Deer Foundation and the Master Hunter program worked to clear vegetation and beaver dam debris blocking the Johnson drain waterway. The beaver dam had been backing up water onto the upstream neighbors' field, making it too wet for them to farm. There has been no beaver activity for close to two weeks, so we hope to have no problems for a while now that the channel is open.



Johnson ditch before tree pruning



Johnson ditch after tree pruning



Most recent beaver dam site



Volunteers and L.T. Murray staff members working to dismantle the dam

Deer Hazed from Wine Grape Vineyards area Paterson: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with Master Hunters and damage permit holders to apply hunting pressure to haze deer from wine grape vineyards in the Paterson area along the Columbia River.

Injured Goose at Columbia Park: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and handled a report of an injured goose at Columbia Park pond from WildComm.

Injured Doe Deer along I-90: Wildlife Conflict Specialists Hand and Rasley assisted Washington State Patrol with an injured doe deer along Interstate 90 just outside of Ellensburg while they were enroute to a meeting in Olympia. The deer had sustained severe injuries from a car collision and had to be euthanized.

Elk Hazed to Prevent Crop Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wetzel and U.S. Department of Agriculture Biologist Wade Jones hazed elk on several private parcels. No elk were removed, and elk movements and behavior are markedly changed since the frequent hazing and removals started. Crop damage is possible now and hopefully continued hazing efforts will permanently alter elk use of those areas.

Elk Damage to Hay Fields: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with a landowner at Elk Heights regarding elk damage to a hay field. Hazing devices, hazing, and suggested volunteer help were provided. Landowner wants to be paid for hay using a conservation easement, but details will need to be verified, so the effort is ongoing.

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

Road Repairs on Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Manager Huffman met with Equipment Operator Haverfield from the Yakima Construction Shop at the Cowiche access road to review needed road repairs. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Berry coordinated with the crew once work began and had them dig a small trench on the west side of the hay barn to assist in water runoff from snow melt. Road repairs are almost complete.

Trench dug along the Cowiche hay barn to improve water runoff and protect hay from damage. Oak Creek Staff will line the trench and backfill.



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Livestock Fence Repairs: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hunt helped Natural Resource Technician Leuck with repair of some of our new livestock fence completed last year by contractors. This fence is between Parke and Little Parke Canyons where fire burned two years ago, and a windstorm this past winter blew some burned trees onto the fence. Leuck had sawed out the trees earlier.

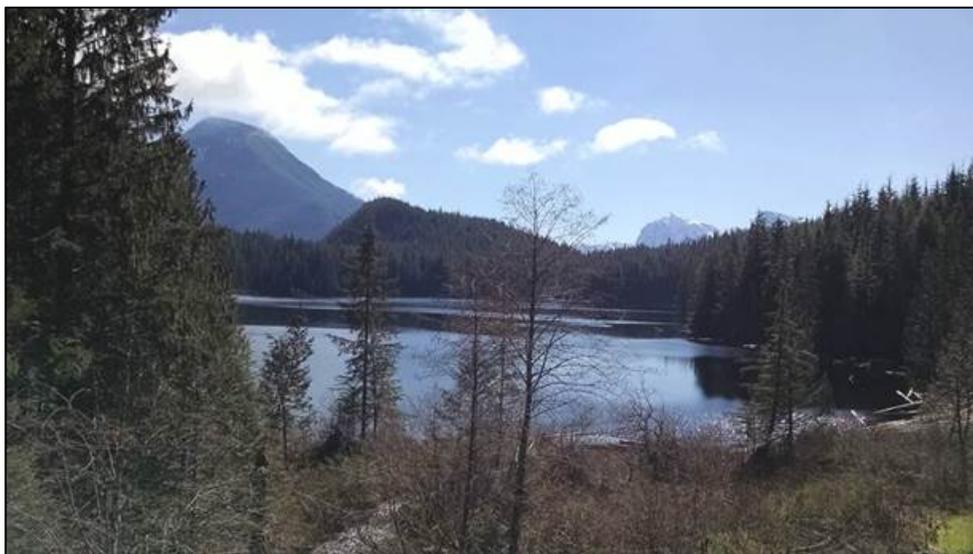
Work on L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hunt assisted Natural Resource Technician Leuck with loading a salvaged cattle guard that Leuck had moved from Joe Watt compound to the Parke Creek area for installation. Hunt and Leuck also surveyed elk on the L.T. Murray, which are well spread out between Watt and Robinson Canyons, with many dispersing westward in the warmer weather. Several have also migrated out across the Taneum/Heart K/Elk Heights.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Common Loon Breeding Lakes Survey: District 13 staff members surveyed lakes meeting various survey protocols for size and habitat in the upper Skykomish valley for breeding common loons as part of a statewide effort for upcoming status review work. No loons were observed on this survey. Additional surveys were performed in the Stillaguamish Valley.

District 12 biologists provided advice to land managers that are providing for breeding common loons and initiated a desire to collaborate and provide for the birds and all parties needs to meet wildlife management goals. D12 biologists launched a platform at an area known territory where birds have been seen already this season. Continued monitoring will continue as well as a need to finish annual nesting platform maintenance and launch work to encourage nesting on known area lakes.



Wallace Lake – one of several lakes surveyed for common loons.

Peregrine Falcon/Public use management surveys: District 13 staff members continued monitoring the Index Town Wall area of Forks of the Sky State Park for peregrine falcon nesting activity. The town wall is a popular rock climbing destination and with the cooperation of the climbing community and State Parks, portions of the wall are closed to climbing if falcons are known to be utilizing areas for nesting. No restrictions are currently in place as nesting behavior has not yet been confirmed.

D12 biologists conducted a brief examination of an area climbing wall for presence or sign of summer resident peregrine falcon(s). No sign was observed. A common raven lazily went by the site which lends interpretation of likely no falcons at the site. Biologists were on other duties so this effort was quite brief. Follow-up as time allows will occur as well as standing collaboration with Washington Climbing Coalition and landowners and management in that area.



A single territorial peregrine falcon was observed on the Index Town Wall

American Pika Winter Habitat

Use: District 13 staff members with the cooperation of the U.S. Navy have been monitoring via trail cameras habitat use by pika in a unique low elevation site in the Stillaguamish Valley. As this site is usually snow free throughout the winter in contrast to most of the researched sites in alpine areas, cameras were placed to record activity and weather to determine above ground activity throughout the winter. Images are periodically downloaded and will be analyzed when time permits.



Two pikas observed on a recent sunny day

Sharp-tailed Snake Project: District 13 staff members checked asphalt shingles places at various locations at Young Hill on San Juan Island for the presence of sharp-tailed snakes. No snakes of any kind were found. However, students at Spring Street International School, who are monitoring shingles placed at Mt. Grant as part of a local citizen science project, enjoyed a great day in the field looking for snakes.



Spring Street International School students checking shingles for snakes

Padilla Bay Reserve Meeting: District 13 and Skagit Wildlife Area staff members met with the Natural Resource Manager at the reserve to share information and discuss potential research projects that the Reserve staff members might want to pursue. Potential approaches to bringing partners together to share knowledge and exchange ideas were discussed.

North Cascades Elk Management: Biologist Yarborough met with the U.S. Forest Service, Tribal Biologists, and local landowners to discuss forage enhancement for elk on a piece of Forest Service Property. After discussing, a few members drove up to Game Management Unit 418 to look at ongoing enhancement plots being created by the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe.

Oregon Spotted Frog: Biologist DeBruyn and members of The Whatcom County Amphibian Monitoring Program surveyed the “Catalyst” property of the Whatcom County Land Trust for frogs and their eggs. Eighty egg masses were located in 20 locations. Some adult and juvenile frogs were observed basking on the warm spring day.



Oregon spotted frog egg masses in Whatcom County



Dead adult Oregon spotted frog collected from a site in Skagit County

Protected Wildlife Management – Captive Wildlife: Biologist Anderson provided information and reasoning to a local college regarding why it is illegal and of management concern to capture wild amphibians, keep them in captivity for study, and then release. Biologist Thompson also spoke with the requesting party and relayed the same information, as well as Scientific Collection Process and what activities tend to fit under that permit process.

Protected Wildlife Management – White-Nose Syndrome: District 12 Biologists have been involved in cross agency planning and reconnaissance in relation to the western little brown bat found near North Bend earlier this month and diagnosed positive for white-nose syndrome. Work on ground has included WDFW, U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Land Management examining known site and vicinity as well as some initial acoustic and roost survey. Planning has involved all major wildlife and land managers, both federal and state; with goals of surveillance, outreach, and adaptive management as knowledge of white-nose occurrence and ecology in our Pacific Northwest ecosystem increases.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/> <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/>

Protected Wildlife Management – Seattle Urban Bird Treaty City Effort: Planning discussions and needs continue amongst Washington State Audubon, Seattle Audubon, Heron Habitat Helpers, Seattle Parks, District 12 staff members and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in order to meet needs for designation of Seattle as a USFWS Urban Bird Treaty City.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm met with staff members from Sound Salmon Solutions to discuss planting and maintenance plans on the Waterwheel Creek Project.

Snoqualmie Forest Plan: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm toured the Stillwater and Crescent Lake units with WDFW Forest Management Team Lead Richard Tveten. Manager Boehm is in the process of updating the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan, which currently does not have a forest management chapter. Seeing the Unit from a forestry perspective will help guide the management plan and be sure it is in step with the statewide forest management plan.

Hovander House Bat Houses: Natural Resource Technician Deyo completed construction of the new maternity bat house which will be installed adjacent to the Hovander House at Whatcom County's Hovander Park. Wildlife Area Manager Kessler picked up the two Rocket Bat Boxes that were constructed by the Ferndale High School wood shop. As soon as the install site has been checked for location of utilities, the boxes will be installed.

Lake Terrell Dam Beaver Dam Removal: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Technician Deyo cleared logs and debris away from the dam water release valve and closed it off to hold more water in the lake. Deyo also cleared a dam beavers built in the 'V' notch of the Lake Terrell dam.

Wood Duck Nest Boxes:

Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued cleaning out the wood duck nest boxes at the Lake Terrell and Intalco units. One box held a family of flying squirrels. So far 93 boxes have been cleaned out and are now ready for occupancy.

Flying squirrels in Lake Terrell wood duck nest box



Noxious Weed Control:

Natural Resource Technician Deyo sprayed herbicides to control noxious weeds on the Lake Terrell and Intalco units. Scotch broom and poison hemlock were sprayed.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw provided materials for The Nature Conservancy to include in a grant application to the National Atmospheric and Oceanic Administration (NOAA) to fund construction of the project and he made revisions to a pre-proposal submitted to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. Additionally, he received additional information regarding the Snohomish County process needed to vacate the portion of Eide Road that is in the project area and drafted a briefing sheet regarding U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service land conversion requirements.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw attended a meeting with the Lummi Tribe Cultural Resources Committee and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to discuss the Nooksack Floodplain Restoration project that is included in the PSNERP package of projects. The Cultural Resources Committee is interested in the project plans and how cultural resources will be preserved and impacted.

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

Black Brant Movement Monitoring: District 13 staff members assisted the Marine Waterfowl Specialist in captures of black brant. Captured birds were implanted with satellite transmitters allowing for tracking locally as well as when they return to breeding sites in the arctic. Monitoring is occurring to document changes in breeding and wintering locations and movements.



Officer Stevens responded to a chicken eating bear conflict incident in Woodinville. Officer Stevens set a trap and caught the bear two nights later. Since Officer Stevens was on a day off when the bear was caught he took the opportunity to get his family involved and assisted Officer Jorg with the immobilization. Officers later had released the bear on site using WDFW bear dogs.

Seattle City Light Wildlife Research Grants: Biologist Yarborough served on the Wildlife Research Advisory Committee to finalize the grant awards for next year.

Swan Mortality and Morbidity Study: Biologists Smith and DeBruyn and Science Technician Trejo surveyed Judson Lake for the final time of the season. No sick or dead swans were found but several groups were observed migrating into British Columbia. Smith demonstrated methods for taking lead cores samples from the lake bottom. Trejo finished the season on 31 March. Most swans were leaving the area for their breeding grounds to the north. Total mortalities for the 2015-2016 swan winter season were 346. Lead poisoning accounted for 63% (n=192) of all mortality in NW Washington. Of the 346 total mortalities, Whatcom County accounted for 75% (n=258) of the mortalities (Table 1).



Trumpeter Swans Migrating into the Sunset

	Lead suspect	Powerline suspect	Other trauma	Undetermined	Feather Pile	Total
Whatcom	166	36	2	22	32	258
Skagit	18	20	2	7	6	53
Snohomish	8	22	0	3	2	35
	192	78	4	32	40	346
Percents	55.49%	23%	1%	9%	12%	100.00%

Table 1

Urban Outreach Efforts – Bird Box Interview with Everett Herald: Biologist Anderson provided an interview regarding availability, use and purpose of bird nest boxes.

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20160403/LIVING/160409866>

More information on nest box use, considerations, and construction can be found here:

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/projects/nestboxes/index.html>

Most importantly – value your dead and dying trees or “snags” – learn management considerations and techniques here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/snags/index.html>



A violet-green swallow (or chickadee, wren, nuthatch) nest box. Nest boxes help provide for secondary cavity nesting birds that cannot excavate their own nests; yet rely on cavities to nest in. It is important for land managers, public and private, to keep in mind that dead and dying trees are one of the most important wildlife features they can retain as long as no hazard is posed.

Intalco Unit Archery Range: Wildlife Area Manager Kessler met with the Custer Sportsmen's Club representative who is managing the archery course this year. Over the weekend, a work party installed the majority of the archery targets on the course. Kessler and Natural Resource Technician Deyo reinstalled the Archery Range sign that Kessler refurbished.

Tennant Lake Unit Updated Reader Board Maps: Wildlife Area Manager Kessler updated the maps for the Tennant Lake unit. He got new maps printed and laminated, and installed them on the Tennant Lake unit reader boards. Kessler also worked with Lands Agent Iris to update the maps for our Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with Whatcom County Parks for management of the Tennant Lake and Pine & Cedar Lakes units.

Leque Island Dike Damage: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton surveyed Leque Island for additional damage to the perimeter dike following the March wind storms and high tides. All breaches in the dike have been temporarily repaired, though a large portion of the dike has eroded away on a 1,000 foot long stretch on the south end of the island. Drainage of the island has been impacted by sedimentation in the ditches from sand, silt, and logs that entered the island during the breach. Staff members are currently collecting information to help make a decision on how to proceed with repairing the damage, including estimating costs and schedules.

Meis further investigated why water has not been draining on the north section of the Unit, it has been determined that at the two new breach sites debris inundated the main drainage ditch essentially clogging it, clean out will begin in the near future.

Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton stands on top of a portion of dike that was damaged on south end of Leque Island. Waves washed away protective rock and the dike face is now vertical clay.



Meis and Rotton met with Habitat Biologist Paul Marczin to discuss log debris near the Davis Slough tidegate and the dirt and debris blocking the ditch at Leque Island following the breach event on March 10th. Marczin suggested technique to use to remove small logs logged in the piling and blocking the tidegate at the Leque Unit Davis Slough area.

Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton stands on top of a portion of dike that was damaged on south end of Leque Island. In some portions, the dike top is only a few feet wide.



Spring Bear Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard prepared materials for pre-hunt coordination meetings for both the North Skagit and Monroe Spring Bear hunt permittees. Biologist Wingard also fielded several phone calls and answered questions from hunters. Natural Resource Technician Otto and Biologist Wingard installed combination locks on gates providing access in the North Skagit unit. Biologist Wingard toured portions of the Monroe Spring Bear Hunt unit with the City of Everett watershed forester to ensure consensus on the boundaries of the closed areas of the Monroe unit, and to discuss actions to reduce closed areas violations. The closed areas of the Monroe unit are largely in areas that are within the watershed supplying drinking water to the City of Everett. The meeting was very positive and strategies to ensure compliance with closed area boundaries were agreed upon.

Monofilament fishing line recycle tubes: Access staff members worked with Olympia staff members and others to install monofilament fishing line recycle tubes at 17 water access sites in King and Pierce Counties.

Monofilament recycling tube at North Lake in Federal way.

Hunting Clinics: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey continues to plan and prepare for an upcoming turkey hunting clinic to be held at the Black Diamond Gun Club. The clinics are part of a



new initiative by the Hunter Education Division to partner with NGOs in putting on specific hunting clinics for the public. This initiative will give the students information that will assist them to feel more confident in their hunting pursuits. This increased confidence and knowledge will help in hunter retention which is one of the 3R Hunter Education Programs.

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

Seattle Pacific University Mentor Program: District 13 staff members have agreed to be a mentor for a student at Seattle Pacific University who is contemplating a career in natural resources. The University has a formal mentoring program that links professionals with students. Students formally apply to the program and are then matched with a mentor. District 13 staff members critiqued the student's resume and provided a list of websites for the student to explore looking for internships and volunteer opportunities to sample the many options for a focus in natural resource management.

Bird Conflict at Local Apartment Complex: Biologists Anderson provided information to a local apartment complex having issue with bird management and conflict. The same complex discussed the same issue last season with Anderson. Anderson emphasized that issues will continue as long as there is no effort to actually exclude the offending animals. See how to reduce issues with species that may nest often in buildings such as non-native European Starlings here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/starlings.html>

Concussion from an Owl: Biologist Anderson had conversations with a reporting party that was struck by an owl, likely barred owl, and suffered a concussion. Anderson urged them to seek medical advice given the injury they reported and they did. They called Anderson back with diagnosis of concussion. Anderson provided information on owl ecology and conflict reduction techniques to the concerned and injured party. One can find general information here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/owls.html>

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

Volunteer Opportunities: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm met with two Master Hunter volunteers who are looking for community service projects. Trail clearing, windfall removal, and general maintenance projects were discussed. Manager Boehm continues to work with Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator Dazey to connect Master Hunter volunteers with projects on the Snoqualmie Units.

Agriculture Leases: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm reports that the Stillwater and Cherry Valley agriculture leases have been renewed with Frohning Dairy. The 2015 lease excise taxes were submitted to Olympia to close the previous lease contract. Boehm also met with Sno-Valley Farms and Werkhoven Dairy to discuss planting plans for the coming growing season

Fir Island Farm: Wildlife Area Manager Rotton met with a field specialist from Wilbur Ellis to discuss the grass plantings on the Fir Island Farm Restoration site and discussed the best plan of action for this next growing season.

DeBay's Slough: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove organized data from waterfowl surveys at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit and Nookachamps Creek area.

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis met with agricultural lessee at the Samish Unit, discussing this year's lease, WDFW share portion, type and location of plantings. Meis sprayed noxious weeds on the west side of property, removed some boards at water control structures to further drain areas of the Unit. Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove monitored drainage and field conditions on the Samish Unit

Island Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove toured and took photos the Island Unit, documented damage on some of the dike along Freshwater and Deepwater Sloughs on the Island Unit. This information will be forwarded to CAMP and will be included in the capital budget proposal for dike and drainage maintenance. Cosgrove coordinated volunteers who has been repairing and brushing in duck blinds on the Island Unit.

Skagit Access sites: Natural Resource Technician Cosgrove mowed and weed-eated access areas and fence lines at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough, Samish, Jensen, and Headquarters Units. Cosgrove sprayed noxious weeds (hogweed, blackberry, poison hemlock, Canada and bull thistle, mustard) at the Samish, Johnson/DeBay's Slough, Jensen, and Headquarters Units.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Analysis and Summary Report: Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed analyzing data collected this waterfowl season at Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites and began drafting a summary report for management staff members. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell provided editorial changes and comments to the first draft of the summary report and clarified questions pertaining to focal discussion points within the draft.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Site Breakdown: Natural Resource Technician Otto continued removing blinds from Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites as conditions allow. Only a few sites still need to be broken down.

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey continues to encourage instructors to return their Policy Agreement Forms and for those who have been certified five years to return their five year background authorization forms. Dazey answered instructor questions in regard to several issues that included firearm restricted students in class and how to handle the skills requirements, Kalkomey posting and editing of classes, and the instructor applicant process. Dazey sent out three new instructor applications after speaking with several interested people and explaining the requirements and processes. Dazey sent welcome letters to the newly certified hunter education instructors. These letters give them valuable information as they start their new journey as hunter education instructors and are designed to show them that their new commitment is appreciated by the department.



Officers Valentine and Jones present on the importance of enforcement presence in the Hunter Ed classroom.

Hunter Education: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted a parent to make an accommodation request for her son who was attending an upcoming hunter education class. Dazey also answered questions from a student on the bow hunter education class and how to sign up for the class. The student was planning on archery hunting in a state that requires the bow hunting class.

Hunter Education Instructor Pre –Service Training: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey held the second Pre-service training for six new instructors at Naval Air Station Whidbey. All six instructor applicants passed are in the process of being entered into the instructor data base.

Chinese Language Hunter Education Class: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted an instructor to plan for a hunter education class for students whose first language is Chinese. The two instructors are bilingual and have received requests from the local Chinese community for

this class. Planning is moving forward and the class will be scheduled at the Region 4 office conference room April 23rd and 24th.

Master Hunter Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey answered a master hunter's questions on service hours and assisted him to apply to become a hunter education instructor. Dazey assisted a master hunter applicant to sign up to take his master hunter exam. Dazey assisted master hunters and master hunter applicants in the Stanwood area and the Enumclaw area to find service hour opportunities.

Region 4 Hunter Education Instructor In-service Training: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey conducted Region 4's second In-service Training in Whatcom County to accommodate the volunteer instructors in the north of Region 4. The In-service Training was well attended by instructors from Whatcom, Skagit and Island counties.

Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey presenting service awards.

Volunteer Coordination: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted in finding volunteers for two projects. Volunteers for hazing of Snow Geese in the Stanwood area and a fencing project in the Enumclaw area.

Jerry Pfeifer and Steven Parker receiving certificates for their 10 years of volunteer service.



Terry Hoffer Memorial Firearm Safety Instructor of the Year Award: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey had the privilege of announcing the recipient of the 2015 Terry Hoffer award and presenting his recognition in front of his fellow instructors. Bill Vincent was nominated by his peers and selected by a volunteer selection committee to receive the award. In 2015 Bill taught in 19 classes covering an area of four counties in Region 4 at seven different venues with eight different teaching teams. Those classes certified 360 new students or over 10% of the students certified in Region 4. In addition Bill assisted with four Pre-Service trainings leading to the certification of 23 new hunter education instructors. Bills willingness to travel saw him assisting with the certification of students on Lopez Island, the certification of instructors for Naval Air Station Whidbey and an instructor for the Upper Skagit Tribe. Bills positive attitude and willingness to assist where ever needed or requested makes him a well deserving award recipient and exemplifies the qualities of the instructors who are recognized for this award by going well above and beyond what is expected. Of the 11 nominees this year seven were from Region 4 highlighting the quality of the instructor corporation in our region.



Bill Vincent was nominated by his peers and selected by a volunteer selection committee to receive the Terry Hoffer Memorial Firearm Safety Instructor of the Year Award.

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

Pheasant Program: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm met with West Side Pheasant Facility Manager White to tour the facility and discuss the program. Boehm also observed the layout of their operations buildings to see if improvements can be made to the Cherry Valley pheasant pens. Safety and electrical improvements are planned for the net pen later this year.

Communication Upgrades: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm met with Region 4 IT staff members to conduct software and printing upgrades on Boehm’s cell phone and laptop computer.

Training: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed WDFW Contract Management 101 training and Caldwell completed WDFW

Reasonable Suspicion training. Wingard finalized lodging for upcoming training in Olympia over the next two weeks.

Employee Performance Development Plans and Evaluations Preparation: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell reviewed and updated Employee Performance Development Plans and Evaluations for upcoming staff meetings and reviews.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Oregon Spotted Frog: Biologist Butler assisted Biologist Hallock and Department of Natural Resources staff members to conduct a second round of Oregon spotted frog egg mass surveys near Trout Lake. Due to the low number of egg masses found during the first survey, a second survey was conducted to ensure the wetlands were surveyed after the majority of the eggs were laid. However, only a few additional egg masses were found and the total number of egg masses remained lower than the previous year. While surveying, some of the previously detected egg masses were found to have hatched and one adult male Oregon spotted frog was seen.



Oregon Spotted Frog egg mass surveys near Trout Lake

Hoof Disease: Wildlife Program Manager Jonker was invited as the guest speaker at the Cowlitz/Wahkiakum chapter of Farm Forestry in Castle Rock. Jonker gave a presentation on Treponeme-Associated Hoof Disease in Elk. Representatives Blake, Orcutt, Takko, and Rosetti as well as Cowlitz County Commissioners Weber and Gardner were in attendance. There was a lot of interest in the topic with many good questions following the presentation.

Mineral Spring Weed Control at Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Assistant

Manager Sample began treating reed canary grass with an aquatic herbicide at the probable location of a mineral spring located on the southern boundary of the Jenny Creek Unit of Mt St Helens Wildlife Area. The canary grass is in its early stages of growth and ideal for an herbicide application. The goal of this effort is to reduce the vegetative cover in and around the mineral spring and allow band-tailed pigeons to once again use the site. The spring extends beyond the boundary of the Jenny Creek satellite unit, so canary grass was left untreated on the adjacent property.



Possible mineral spring located on the Jenny Creek Unit of Mt St Helens Wildlife Area

North Fork Toutle Riverbank

Seeding: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Sample completed spreading erosion control grass seed mix on about a mile of riverbank on the North Fork Toutle River on the Mudflow Unit of Mt St Helens Wildlife Area. A total of 200lbs of grass seed was spread across the bank and along the base of pile dike structures in an effort to establish a quick growing root system to prevent additional erosion to these areas. While completing this, Sample noticed a recently dead 5-6 point bull elk in the river.

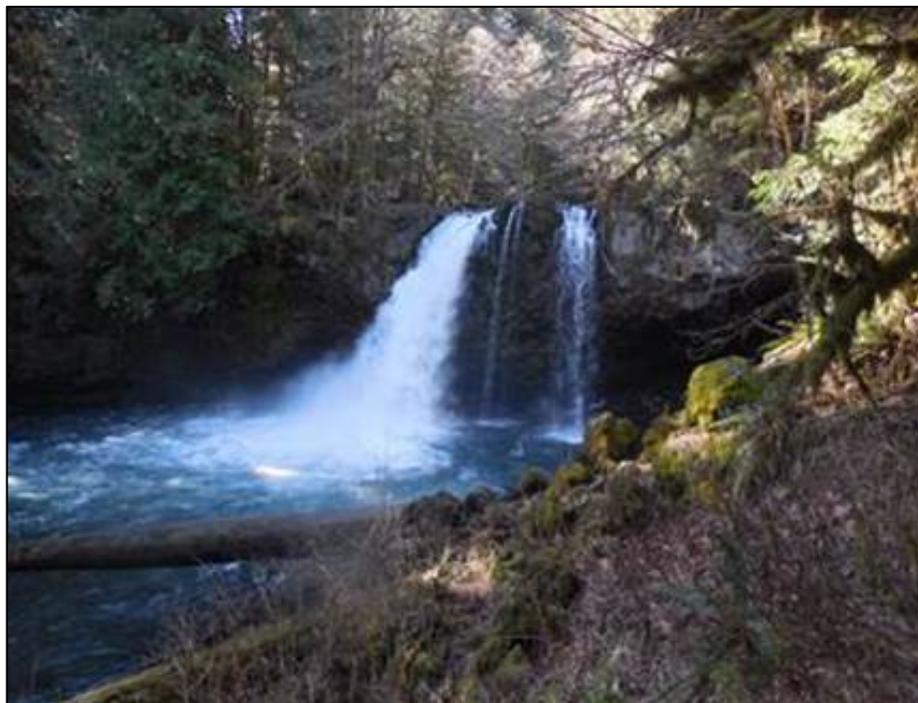


Recently dead 5-6 point bull elk in the North Fork Toutle River on Mt St Helens Wildlife Area

Merrill Lake Unit Site Visit: Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker and Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald conducted a site visit to the newly acquired Merrill Lake Unit of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area this past week. The new unit is comprised of 300 acres of riparian habitat along the northern shore of Merrill Lake. The unit has many distinct features including old lava flows, old growth trees, forested wetlands, lake frontage, and small waterfalls. Portions of the unit have recently had the timber harvested and thinned to improve forage habitat for elk, and a few

areas will still need to be considered for future timber harvest and thinning operations to improve the habitat quality in the unit. Jonker and Hauswald also toured property along the headwaters of the Kalama River, which is land the agency is pursuing to acquire as well.

(Top) Forested wetlands along Merrill Lake (Middle) Old growth tree used as a natural bridge crossing



Waterfall on the Kalama River

Chapman’s Tree Planting Fence Project: Last week Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hand and Technician Fox were able to complete the fence around the new tree planting in Chapman’s pasture in the North Unit of the Shillapoo Wildlife Area. The fence was erected with three strand barbed wire with an 18” distance from the ground to the first strand and with a maximum height of 42”. These parameters were used to allow easier passage for Columbia white-tailed deer and their fawns that use the Wildlife Area. Chapman’s Pasture, along with all other pastures on the Shillapoo Wildlife Area, are under grazing leases; which allow cattle from April 1st thru August 31st each year. The goal of this tree planting and fencing project was to restore the riparian area of Chapman’s Slough by planting trees and shrubs and keep cattle out while still allow grazing in the remaining pasture.



Chapman’s Tree Planting Fence Project

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

Sportsman Loop Access: Silt deposition into the Columbia River from the boat launch was observed this week and quickly repaired to address water quality concerns.



Before



After

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

Frenchman’s Bar Park: Biologists Anderson and Bergh, Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald, and Habitat Biologist Mckain met with staff members from Clark County to discuss a planned disc golf course at Frenchman’s Bar Regional Park. The park staff members reached out to WDFW after receiving comments from the public concerned about potential impacts to wildlife. The group toured the area and talked about various wildlife and habitat and how the course might be designed with those potential impacts in mind. Park staff members were thankful for the information and will continue to scope the project.

Pathway to Lethal Control: Biologist Meyer met with WDFW biologist and conflict staff members from across the state in Wenatchee on Monday and Spokane on Thursday to discuss options and work on a draft pathway for the agency’s lethal wolf control protocol.

Injured Great Blue Heron: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Peterson and Biologist Meyer responded to a report of an injured Great Blue Heron near Ridgefield. Peterson captured the bird and confirmed the report that it had been shot. Meyer took the bird to the Portland Audubon Society Wildlife Care Center where it was determined to be too damaged to repair and was euthanized.



Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Peterson is working with a nursery owner near Vancouver Lake who is experiencing deer damage. The nursery owner has constructed an electric fence and will work with Peterson to apply and test spray-on deer deterrent.

Nursery deer damage

Elk: A youth hunter had a successful damage hunt on a Trout Lake dairy. The youth hunter was sent to the dairy as part of the WDFW damage prevention program and was one of five that drew a tag for this special permit. The hunts have been a great success for the youth hunters and a valuable tool for the WDFW conflict staff and private landholders. All five youth hunters were sent to private properties experiencing damage and all five were successful in harvesting an elk.



WDFW damage prevention program youth hunt

District 10 & Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Conditions:

Past Weather: Overall the winter of 2015-16 has been very wet with above average rainfall, average snowpack, and above average temperatures. There were only a couple of low elevation snow events this past winter resulting in snow cover on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area.

Short-Term Forecast: Snow levels will fluctuate between 3,500 to 13,000 feet during the upcoming week with temperatures in the valleys ranging into the 50's. The 6-10 and 8-14 day forecasts are for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The April forecast is for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation, and the three month forecast is for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available at middle and lower elevations, with the Wildlife Area being heavily utilized. Green up is starting at the lower elevations on the Wildlife Area.

Snow Depths: Lower elevations are currently snow free below about 3,500 feet. Snowpack is average for the region.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date. The fourth winter elk survey was conducted on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area on March 2nd, with 94 elk being observed.

Animal Condition: The majority of animals appear to be in good condition, but a couple observed have been in poor condition.

Mortality: Four mortalities have been observed while conducting other work on the Wildlife Area so far this winter.

Public Contacts: None to report regarding winter conditions.

The Public is reminded the portion of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area lying east of a line defined by Hoffstadt Creek, The North Fork Toutle, and Deer Creek is closed to public access through April 30, 2015, to minimize disturbance and associated energy demands on elk wintering there.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

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. 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. Two does and four fawns are being monitored in the Satsop cluster, while the Mason cluster has fourteen does and three fawns.

Biologist Murphie reports that one fawn in the Mason cluster died this week due to unidentified natural mortality; a bear played a role either as principal predator or scavenger. The original separation event was checked within 48 hours, but the fawn collar was still transmitting as alive at that time. A mortality message did not get transmitted until a few days later. The delay in response time meant that there was insufficient evidence left at the scene to conclude with certainty the cause of mortality of this fawn. Although not of any real scientific value, the fawn collared the previous year at this site died at the same time of year, in almost the same location, and of similar means.

Night Darting Deer: Biologist Michaelis assisted Scientist Rice on one final ground darting effort to collar adult black-tailed does. Many deer were observed but only one was close enough to attempt to dart. Unfortunately, small branches were in the way.

Elk Collaring: As part of our long-term elk monitoring strategy in District 15, WDFW, the Skokomish Tribe, and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe maintain radio-collared cows in several herds within GMUs 621, 636, and 651. The intent is to provide an aid in locating herds during composition flights, as well as, provide information on their home range. This week, the Skokomish Tribe provided funding to conduct an aerial capture of cow elk in the Satsop GMU (651) and the Lilliwaup Swamp area of the Olympic GMU (621). Biologist Murphie was the principal darter and reports that five collars were deployed in the four herds encountered. This brings the total number of herds marked within these GMUs to fifteen and represents a substantial portion of the known herds residing in these units.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys: Biologist McMillan conducted a Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly survey at one of the sites west of the Elwha. The weather conditions were ideal, clear skies, generally calm conditions, 60-75 degrees. The early survey was conducted because a 6th instar larva had been observed at the site on Feb 26th. Zero Taylor’s checkerspot butterflies were observed, Sara’s orangetips were observed flying. The site did have some wheel rut damage at the site that appeared to be motorcycle use.



Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys West of Port Angeles: Biologist Ament conducted a Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly survey at one of the known sites west of Port Angeles on March 30, 2016. The route she surveyed was located along the lower portion of the east ridge of the site. The route was established and flagged at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions were excellent for the survey. There was full sunshine and shadows present and the temperature was certainly warm for such an early spring survey. The temperature ranged from 64 – 65 degrees and there were very minimal winds. No Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly adults or larva were observed. Only a few other butterflies and moths were observed during the survey. There were very few plants in bloom along the survey route. Some patches of the host plant *Collinsia parviflora* were observed along exposed dirt slopes along the survey route (see photo below). The Department of Natural Resources had completed some improvement work on the road to the site to help deal with erosion problems. A portion of the flag stakes in the first 150 meters of the survey was impacted by the completed work. Ament spent time after the survey was completed to re-measure and position the flag stakes.



Patch of Collinsia parviflora in bloom along the survey route.

March 31, 2016 Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly Survey: Biologist Ament conducted another Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly survey at a known site located west of Port Angeles on March 31, 2016. The upper and lower survey routes were established and flagged at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions were excellent for the survey. There was full sunshine and shadows present for the entire survey. The temperature throughout the survey was around 60 degrees and there was basically no wind. No Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly adults were observed. Ament spent some time looking over host plants for larva but none were observed. This effort at the site was basically to help determine if any adult Taylor’s checkerspot butterflies had emerged yet. Ament walked nearly all of the defined Upper Route at the site. She would stop and spend time at balds that usually contained high concentrations of Taylor’s checkerspot butterflies.



Oregon Spotted Frog Survey: Biologists Michaelis and Sundstrom surveyed the middle portion of the Black River for Oregon spotted frogs. No frogs or egg masses were observed and the weather was quite favorable. They did discover a western Canada goose nest high in a snag, pictured on the right.

Dusky Goose Surveys: Grays Harbor county and the northern portion of Pacific County were surveyed for collared dusky geese. Far fewer geese were observed in both survey areas than during the prior survey two weeks earlier and only one collared dusky goose was observed.

3/31/16	Cackler		Akutian		Tav / Lesser		Dusky		Western		Vanconver		GWF	Snowy	Unknown/Other	Totals
Location	#	Banded	#	Banded	#	Banded	#	Banded	#	Banded	#	Banded				
Grays Harbor County	46		0		226		1		76				143		0	492
North Pacific County	451		0		653		780	1	135						525	2,544
Totals:	497	0	0	0	879	0	781	1	211	0	0	0	143	0	525	3,036

Biologist Michaelis conducted another survey for collared dusky Canada geese in Pacific county. No collared dusky geese were observed. Overall total dusky Canada goose numbers appeared to be only one third of recent months.

Snowy Plover: To prepare for the upcoming snowy plover nesting season, WDFW and Washington State Parks staff members installed snowy plover nesting habitat protection signs at the Grayland Beach area this week. The private land portion will be posted later next week by WDFW staff only.

Biologist Sundstrom also joined Environmental Specialist Ritzman in conducting an early plover nest search at Tokeland; many territories have already been ‘staked out’ by the anxious breeding adults and active nests are expected by the weekend.

Spring Field Work: With the spring weather and no rain in the forecast, Olympic staff members got started on several summer projects. Wynoochee Mitigation: Elk forage areas to be reseeded were treated with herbicide to kill all existing vegetation. Davis Creek Wildlife Area: A duck stamp project to encourage smart weed production started in November. This area was mowed, mostly Reed Canary and was treated this past week with herbicide to kill newly emerging grass. The area will be cultivated later. Scatter Creek: Staff members assisted prairie specialists with the spring spraying for tall oat grass.



Davis Creek November, mowed



April herbicide application

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

Grayland Cranberries: They’re back! Last week Biologist Harris reported he suspected that deer should start causing problems in the bogs soon. Occasionally he is correct. The remote camera system started sending some late night picture of deer checking on the progress of the buds. Apparently the buds are not quite ready as deer use is still light.

Willapa Valley Elk: Two Master Hunters finished the season without harvesting. Elk use on Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements lands is very low compared to past years and while the hunters reported seeing elk, they were unable to harvest. The most common reason was the hunters were not 100% confident in the shot. Biologist Harris supports this reasoning and defends it.

North River Valley Elk: One Master Hunter tried very hard to harvest last few days of the designated permit season. The elk did not cooperate. A producer called him the day after permit season closed to report elk in his field. Elk were hazed instead.

Dead Elk in North River Valley Area: Biologist Harris spoke with a concerned citizen regarding a dead elk on their property in the North River Valley. He thought that WDFW should look at the dead elk to determine cause of death. Apparently he had made several calls to the Department and was unhappy with the results. He spoke with a timber company manager who lives in the area and the manager gave him Biologist Harris’s phone number. The landowner was contacted late in the evening. After a long conversation, Biologist Harris was able to get the landowner to understand. The landowner thanked him for his time.

Region 6 Master Hunter Designated Permits – Season closed March 31st: Unfortunately for many of the permit holders we were not able to deploy all the hunters. While staff limitations prevented some deployments, and early green up helped in some areas, the biggest reason is successful use of the permits. Many of the farms where we once used to send a continuous stream of hunters are now reporting less elk use. Now instead of a hunter every week, or two per farm, one hunter can hunt several farms and take over a month to harvest or not harvest at all with minimal observations. Ecology of Fear Works!

Master Hunter - Region 6 Designated Permits		
Deployed	6	10%
On Call	3	5%
Pass	4	7%
Waiting	20	33%
Harvested	27	45%
Permits	60	100%
Success Rate		82%

Deployed = hunters currently hunting

On Call = hunters who are on call for staff or a landowner

Pass = hunter who have chosen not to hunt or hunters who have no responded to staff.

Waiting = hunter who have not are waiting to hunt

Success Rate = Success of total hunter deployed, on call, and harvested.

Final stats for the 2015/16 Master Hunter designated permits for Region 6.

Hunters who hunted (Deployed + Harvested) = 33 (55%)

Overall success rate = 82%

Black Bear Conflict: Three reports regarding Black Bears getting into garbage cans and one report of concern for goats because of presence of bear.

Grass Creek - Two reports came from the same area of Grass Creek. Biologist Harris responded to one report and advised land owner. Two days later another residence in the same area reported problems. Biologist Harris and Natural Resource Technician Leite responded and advised.

Grayland - Biologist Harris responded to a complaint of a bear getting into garbage. Landowner was advised on how to store his garbage. While there, another resident asked Biologist Harris to stop and talk to them regarding seeing the bear. Turns out they were concerned for their goats. Biologist Harris informed that a bear attacking their goats is unlikely. One old Billy had lived on the property for six years prior without anyone taking care of him. He was quite ornery. He has a good shelter and being he survived in the area by himself this long. It is more likely the predators that need to be concerned. The newest goat is currently being kept close to the residence and they were in the process of building it a new goat shelter and installing a new fence. The shelter was quite extravagant for a goat. They intend to close the doors at night and keep her inside. Biologist Harris commented they had a good plan and should have no problems.

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

Water Ditching and Survival Training: Biologist Ament participated in a Water Ditching and Survival Module offered by the U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Aviation Services on March 29, 2016. The training was held at the Holiday Inn Express in Sequim. The participants were from several states and included employees from various state and federal agencies, along with staff members from Bureau of Indian Affairs. Marine Mammal Biologists Jeffries and Oliver were the other WDFW employees that attended the training. The class teaches the students the proper procedures to follow in the event of aircraft ditching. Biologist Ament learned the skills to safely egress and reach the surface of the water. She also became more familiar with the use of personal floatation devices, along with life raft and water survival techniques. The class was divided into an academic session and a hands-on, in water exercise in the pool. Each student experienced the water “dunker” that puts them in a simulation of a ditched aircraft a total of three times. The two instructors were excellent and Biologist Ament was very pleased that she attended this specialized training.

Marine Mammal Biologist Oliver prepares to be ditched in the “dunker”

