

Wildlife Program

Week of June 18-24, 2012

SCIENCE DIVISION

Mazama Pocket Gopher Translocation Study: Last week we wrapped up trapping at West Rocky prairie to assess the spring breeding population of Mazama pocket gophers that were translocated there from the Olympia airport. Four people spent two months trapping an area of approximately 20 ha and captured 247 individual gophers in 303 capture events. Of these individuals, 8 had been released in 2009, 23 in 2010, and 71 in 2011. An additional 10 animals had been tagged during the 2011 breeding census and 135 were new captures. The latter represent both 2012 juveniles and older animals that were likely born in 2011 on the site. All of these numbers exceed expectations as only 59 pocket gophers were captured on the area in spring 2011. It appears that after 3 years and over 560 animals released, we are well on our way to having a thriving population of pocket gophers at West Rocky Wildlife Area.

Publication: WDFW marine mammal scientists were coauthors on a recently published manuscripts reporting on PCBs in Steller Sea Lions.

Juan José Alava, Dyanna Lambourn, Peter Olesiuk, Monique Lance, Steven J. Jeffries, Frank A.P.C. Gobas, Peter S. Ross. 2012. *PBDE flame retardants and PCBs in migrating Steller sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*) in the Strait of Georgia, British Columbia, Canada*. Chemosphere 88 (2012) 855–864.

On 9 June Mike Schroeder (Research Scientist) gave the banquet talk at the annual Washington Ornithological Society conference in Spokane. Mike focused most of his talk on the natural history, distribution, and taxonomy of blue grouse. The American Ornithologists Union officially split the blue grouse into sooty grouse and dusky grouse, both of which are found in Washington.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Biologists and researchers from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife participated in the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Sage- and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Workshop in Colorado during 18-22 June. The attendees from Washington State included Mike Schroeder (WDFW Research Scientist), Ken Warheit (WDFW Geneticist), Mike Atamian (WDFW Biologist), and Derek Stinson (WDFW Biologist), as well as biologists with the Bureau of Land Management, Yakima Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Washington State University. Ken Warheit gave a plenary talk on sharp-tailed grouse genetics and Mike Schroeder gave a talk on greater sage-grouse connectivity within the Columbia Plateau. Mike also received the Robert L. Patterson Award which was established in honor of Patterson's commitment to the conservation of sage-grouse, and his 1952 book, *The Sage Grouse in Wyoming*. The meeting offered an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas about the conservation of prairie grouse including: (1) concerns about federal listing; (2) recent advances in genetics; and (3) opportunities for translocations.

Matt Vander Haegen received the Award for Professional Excellence from the University of Maine, an honor presented annually to alumni who have distinguished themselves in their careers. Recipients are selected by faculty from the Department of Wildlife Ecology from among a group nominated by a committee of alumni. Matt earned his Doctoral degree from the University of Maine in 1992.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Sage-grouse and Sharp-tailed Grouse: Biologist Stinson, Asst. Distr. Bio Atamian, Region 1, Research Sci. Schroeder, and Genetics Lab Director Warheit attended the Western Agencies Sage-grouse and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Workshop in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, June 19-22. We met with grouse managers from Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon to discuss our needs for translocation of birds. We also talked with USFWS personnel that will be reviewing our recovery grant proposal, and we talked with BLM staff about priority sage-grouse areas. There were several excellent papers, including a couple testing cutting edge technology that we may be using in the future. WDFW's Mike Schroeder was presented with the Patterson Award, which is awarded at these biennial meetings for outstanding contributions to the science and conservation of sage-grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse.

REGION 1

Western Agencies Sage & Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Workshop: Biologist Mike Atamian attended the 28th workshop in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. There were many good presentations including one by K. Stonehouse (WSU Graduate Student) on the habitat use of sage and sharptail grouse in Lincoln County. Stonehouse was one of three graduate students to win a monetary award for their presentations to help offset travel costs to the workshop. Presentations covered a diverse range of topics covering all three species (Gunnison Sage, Greater Sage, and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse). However, much of the focus was on Greater Sage-grouse habitat selection and demographic parameters, specifically in association with energy development, due to the recent finding of "warranted but precluded" by the USFWS across the range. Many of the findings confirmed known or suspected habitat preferences, impacts of development, and key demographic components. All drove home the simple fact that sage grouse are a landscape level bird and that in order to secure the population and avoid the need to list it will require concerted effort by all (state, federal, NGO, energy development, ranchers, etc).

Gray Wolf Management Activities in Northeast Washington: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Jay Shepherd, Regional Director Steve Pozzanghera, ranchers John and Jeff Dawson, Range Rider Leisa Hill, and Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Jay Kehne discussed the Smackout Pack Wolf Monitoring and Range Rider Project and general wolf-cattle issues in Smackout Meadows, Colville National Forest, Stevens County.

Shepherd, Wolf Technician Tiffany Baker, and retired U.S. Forest Service employee Karen Soenke set remote cameras in LeClerc Creek to scout for the upcoming trapping effort of the Diamond Pack in Pend Oreille County. Shepherd, Baker, and Wolf Biologist Paul Frame discussed wolf monitoring strategies.



Rancher John Dawson's cattle in Smackout Meadows, Colville National Forest, Stevens County.



Regional Director Steve Pozzanghera and rancher Jeff Dawson discussing the range rider program, wolves, and depredation issues in Smackout Meadows, Colville National Forest, Stevens County.



Cougars photographed from a self-activated camera recently set for wolf detections in the Wedge by Scientific Technician Tiffany Baker.

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

Private Lands Access Provided: Private Lands Technician Scott Bendixen worked on the Stimson Lumber parcel known as the Loop Creek Road Closure Area (approx. 3840 acres) in Pend Oreille County. Bendixen found three perimeter locations that have been compromised by trespassers on ATV's. He will be working with enforcement and Stimson Lumber to address this issue. Stimson Lumber is currently removing 1 million board feet off the northern half.

Bendixen noted that the southern half was logged several years ago. Since then Stimson has replanted that area, and it is re-foresting well.

Bendixen made arrangements with a new cooperator to begin posting Hunt Only by Written Permission signs in Pend Oreille County (770 acres).

Habitat Biologist Sandy Dotts presented NEW-HAB information to approximately 100 landowners at the WSU Forest Field Day held in Newport on Saturday, June 16. Several landowners showed interested in signing up for the program.

Habitat Biologist Dotts also spent two days this week with landowners flagging unmarked/unfenced property boundaries and corners on the Pestana and Arden Butte Ranch NEW-HAB parcels in preparation for installation of Hunting by Reservation Only signs. Officer Pam Taylor assisted with the Pestana property.

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

Resolving Conflict with Wildlife: Private Lands Specialist Scott Rasley met with Officers Johnson, McQuary and John regarding all of the DP deer and elk permits for Walla Walla

County. We were also able to meet with most of the Walla Walla county farmers and issue them their DP permits to assist them with their crop damage. We issued 10 farmers DP permits.

Rasley met with Walla Walla County farmer Mark James regarding 40 head of elk that are causing him damage to his pea crops. Mark agreed to assist us with hazing the elk as well as Officer Johnson and I issue him a DP elk permit to assist him with his damage.

Rasley received 11 phone calls this week from hunters regarding special hunts that they drew.

Rasley assisted local winery with hazing a dozen deer out of their grapes. I also located another wildlife species that was taking advantage of the lush vineyard. **See photo.** The owner said “she could stay”.



Wildlife Areas

Blue Mountains Wildlife Area Complex – Access program: Dave Meisner spent one full day cleaning campgrounds and access areas on the Wooten. Debby Flynn and Cuevas Winegeart spent 5 hours trimming trees and weed eating tall grass at the Couse Creek boat ramp. Cuevas Winegeart spent another full day servicing toilets and access sites along the Grande Ronde river, Joseph Creek, and at Heller Bar. Dice ordered another 8 cases of toilet paper for our access areas. For perspective, we ordered 8 cases in late February and we’re just about out of TP. We’ve gone through over 700 rolls of toilet paper in a little over 3 months time at our access sites.

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Maintenance: Bob Dice spent the majority of 2 days this week mowing weeds and high grass near the headquarters buildings at the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. Dice also cleaned up the bunkhouse in preparation for use by the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS).

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Shooting Range: Bob Dice mowed down tall vegetation around the Asotin Creek shooting range and picked up 3 bags of trash. If the garbage situation and abuse does not improve, we will have to close the range by bulldozing the backstops and removing the shooting bench.

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – 4-O Management Plan: Bob Dice and Kevin Robinette spent a full day traveling to the 4-O ranch and meeting with Mike Odom to kick off the effort to write some sort of management plan. This isn't going to be an easy plan to write and it will be very time consuming. Hiring someone to work with Mike to write the plan would be wise. Funding for the temporary position could come from left over RCO funds from the purchase of the property.

WT Wooten Wildlife Area – Quonset Hut building: Wildlife Area staff began moving materials out of the Hartsock Quonset hut building this week. Some of the material is going to Asotin Creek and Bob Dice hauled a load over on Thursday. To date, we have not received any requests from the public for bid information to dismantle the Quonset hut. Deadline for bids is July 26th.

REGION 2

Region 2 – Okanogan, Douglas, Chelan, Grant and Adams Counties

Regional Wildlife Program Manager: Matt Monda

DISTRICT BIOLOGISTS

District 5: Grant / Adams District - Rich Finger / Vacant

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Western Grebe: Biologist Finger surveyed nesting activity for Western grebes at the Job Corps Dike colony. Though some earlier nesting attempts are evidenced by several nests perched in the willows well above the water line, peak nesting has recently begun and most nests were in good condition. The site will be revisited at weekly intervals for about a month and the fate of individually marked nests and eggs will be documented. In addition, water levels will be tracked weekly, which are likely a large contributor to egg loss and ultimately, nest failure as anchored nests tend to tip as a result of receding water levels.

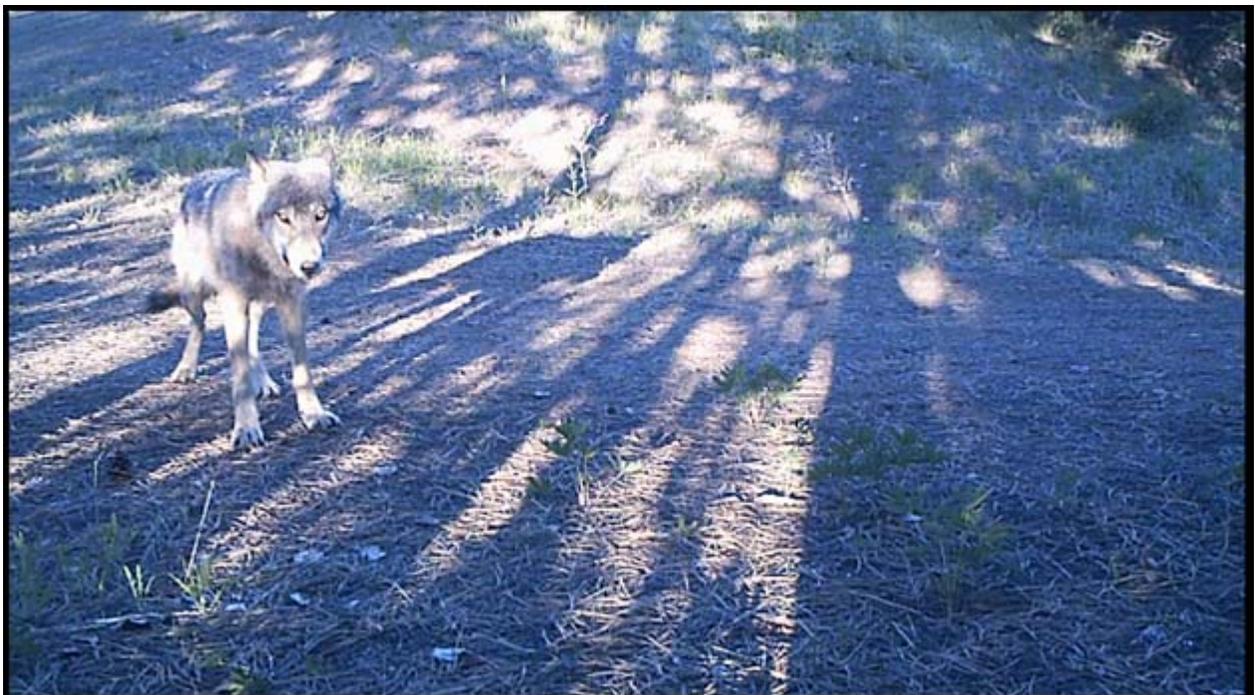
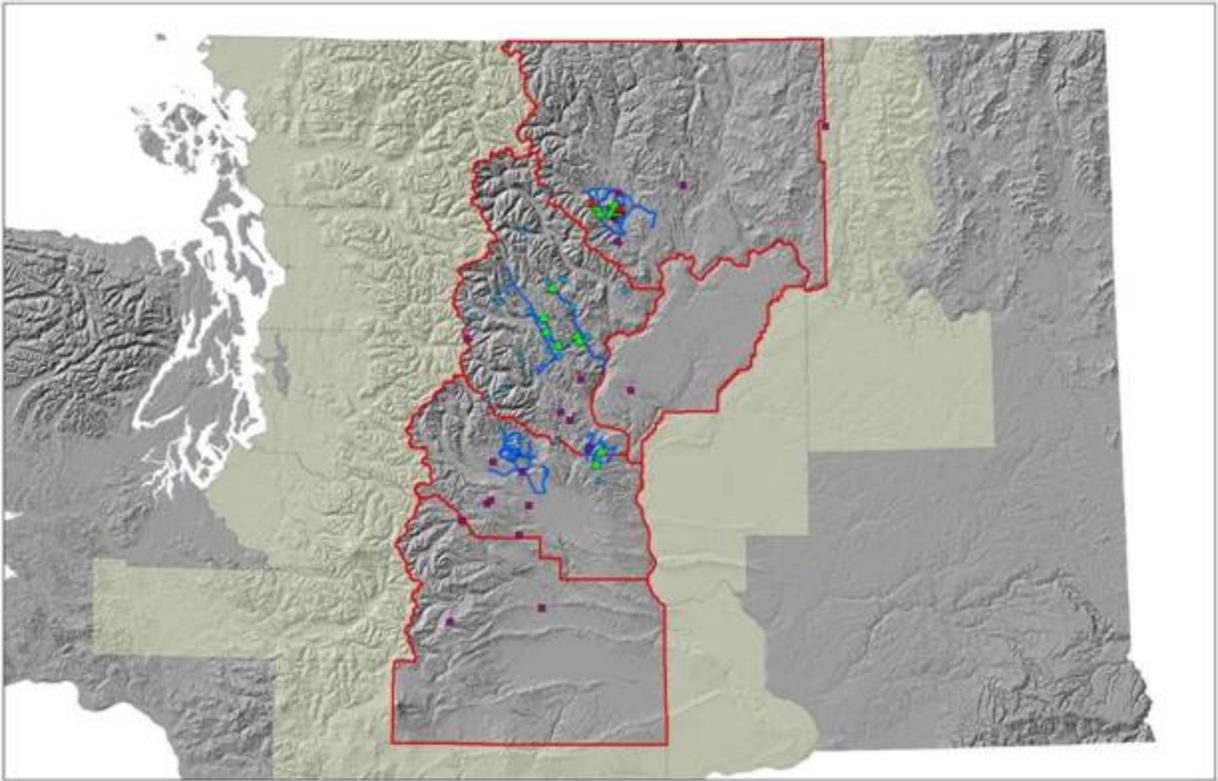
District 7: Chelan / Douglas District – David Volsen / Jon Gallie

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wolf Surveys and Monitoring: Wolf searches and monitoring efforts by technician Spence transitioned from the Okanogan to Region 3 over the past few weeks. In preparation for trapping in the Teanaway, technician Spence worked with Region 3 biologist Will Moore to locate the current den site of the Teanaway pack. Wolves were detected on camera traps (see below) and

pups were confirmed from howling sessions. Cameras have been successful in capturing images of multiple carnivore species as well as mule deer, squirrels, hares, skunks and domestic dogs.

Updated map of wolf search and monitoring activities in Regions 2 and 3 through 22 June 2012. Blue lines represent activity and searches along roadways, triangular symbols mark the location of camera traps, round symbols indicated older reports from District 7 in Region 2 and square symbols represent web-based reports from 16 May 2012.









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

Canada Goose Banding: Biologist Volsen, Gallie, Technician Becker, and Section Manager Kraege conducted Canada goose banding at two Wenatchee sites; the Rock Island Golf Course and Walla Walla Park. This is the fourth year of banding at these sites as part of the Eastern Washington study to look at harvest rates and migration patterns of geese. Roughly 280 geese were captured, minus goslings. About 1/3 of the birds were recaptures, banded in previous years. Many volunteers from the Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association, Chelan PUD, and the Wenatchee Row and Paddle Club helped to make this a successful operation.



Banding geese at Rock Island Golf Course.



Another group ready for banding at WallaWalla Park in Wenatchee.

WILDLIFE AREAS

Methow Wildlife Area Complex - Tom McCoy / Rob Wottlin / John Haegan

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Riparian Property Goals Tour: Tom McCoy, Ken Bevis, Lynda Hofman and Gina McCoy toured the Lewisia property to develop a basic management and restoration outline. The higher water levels allowed us to start seeing flood paths and potential fish habitat that would be difficult to detect at base flows. This is a site with a lot of potential to provide additional fish and wildlife habitat.

Herbicide Test Plots: Tom McCoy met with Kurt Spingath, market development representative from the herbicide division of DuPont, on the 19th to discuss putting in a new set of test/demonstration plots. We found an ideal rangeland site with White Top and Russian Knapweed that should be a perfect opportunity to try some of their newer products.

PRIVATE LANDS - John Cotton / Eric Braaten / JoAnn Wisniewski

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Private Lands Biologist Braaten and PL Biologist Baarstad continue to meet with landowners about weed spraying in newly seeded SAFE fields. Private Lands Biologist Braaten and PL Biologist Baarstad continue to complete SAFE grass surveys. Private Lands Biologists Cotton and Wisniewski conducted vegetation

surveys on fields enrolled in SAFE and met with landowners to discuss methods for removing existing grass and seeding native grasses prior to writing plans.



REGION 3

Cottonwood #1 Target Shooting Fire: The Wenas Wildlife Area had another fire on June 23rd, near Sheep Company Road, at the Cottonwood shooting area. The Selah Fire District responded and was able to contain the fire at 6.4 acres. Without their quick response, a helpful wind shift, and the still green vegetation in the riparian area, it would have gotten much larger. The individuals who started the fire were target shooting with .270 rifles, standard bullets and paper/cardboard targets. They saw smoke just beyond their target and after trying unsuccessfully to put it out, they called 911.



Cottonwood #1 Shooting Area Fire

Cindi Confer-Morris provided RD Tayer with information for a meeting with DNR Region Manager Welker to finalize a one year seasonal timing restriction on target shooting during fire season. After they reached agreement, she pursued finalizing and ordering signs, as well as contacting Madonna Luers to help issue a news release in time for the restriction to be implemented on July 1.

REGION 4

Wildlife Management

Proposed Hydropower Projects on Snoqualmie Tree Farm; Site Visit with Habitat and Fish programs: Biologist Anderson represented Wildlife Program in a collaborative meeting with Habitat and Fish representatives regarding proposed hydropower projects on Hancock and Calligan creeks. Both of these creeks drain lakes used by Common Loons, a state Sensitive species. Loons are currently nesting on Calligan Lake. Anderson discussed need for wildlife consideration in project monitoring and mitigation, if moved forward, regarding any long-term effects to loon prey availability, lake level alterations; and any potential construction activity effects in the short-term.

Loon Management: Anderson sent letters to the three seaplane outfits in the Puget Sound area (NW Seaplane, Kenmore Air, Seattle Seaplanes) requesting now touchdown or plane activity on the above loon lakes due to loon nesting activity and presence. At times, these plane outfits use the mid-elevation lakes as practice for touchdown and takeoff. They are all very cooperative and mindful of the loon status and work with WDFW annually regarding this.

18 Ducks Fall From Sky All at Once in Seattle: Biologist Anderson followed-up with the determined airplane strike of 18 ducks by submitting required paperwork and documentation to the USGS Wildlife Health Lab. These ducks were less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the King Co. Airport (Boeing Field). With 18 ducks falling all at once, there is very few other biological explanations (e.g. malicious shooting, toxic dose-response situation – would not happen in this manner) that would result in such an occurrence of large numbers falling to death all at once. The only other agreed upon explanation would be some sort of weather event. Given distance to airport and field inspection by Anderson, it was felt airstrike was most likely.

Snohomish County Bridge Surveys: Biologist Milner conducted surveys for bats on bridges owned by Snohomish County as part of an agreement with County Public Works staff. Occupancy of a colony on a bridge over Ebey slough was confirmed again this year. The site was first identified in 2010. Species is unknown, but likely either little brown bats or Yuma bats, or both. Two bridges over the Stillaguamish River were identified as likely used as temporary night roosts by individual bats. Snohomish County staff are interested in knowing which bridges they need to consider as they work their way through a list of repairs that have been identified for future work.

Hozomeen Wolf Study: Biologist DeBruyn submitted an Investigator Annual Report to The National Park Service to satisfy a requirement of the permit to work in the North Cascades National Park.

Waterwheel Creek Project: In preparation for work to begin on this project during the first week of July, Manager Paulson walked the Waterwheel Creek project at the Cherry Valley Unit

with a Wild Fish Conservancy representative and WDFW Habitat Biologist Dykstra. The group wanted to inspect the water level on the site as well as the flow from the pond at the southeast corner of the project. The tall dense reed canary grass and large pockets of standing water made walking difficult.

Stillwater Mowing Project: Manager Paulson and Access Manager Hacker mowed open spaces and trails on the Stillwater Unit. The open areas had reed canary grass that was 9 feet tall as well as large pockets of Canada thistle. The oxbow lake and trails were overgrown with blackberry. Mowing is just the starting point of Manager Paulson's war on blackberry and reed canary grass.

Tennant Lake: Natural Resource Tech Deyo monitored beaver activity at the Tennant Lake and Nooksack units. The beavers have built another dam at the unimproved boat launch at Tennant Lake. Manager Kessler coordinated with the managers at the Port of Bellingham on the wetland enhancement project on the Tennant Lake unit. Mowing reed canary grass on the site will occur this week.

Whatcom Wildlife Area Farming: Natural Resource Tech Deyo planted peas in a 3 acre field at Lake Terrell and treated scotch broom with herbicides on the Lake Terrell & Intalco units.

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



Wildlife Program Manager Link and Officer Lee staffed a booth at the Whidbey Island Wildlife Fair. Marginal weather turned quite favorable which resulted in great attendance.

Region 4 Master Hunter Program: Program Manager Link and Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn attended a meeting with Regional and Olympia staff and Master Hunter volunteers to provide input and ideas about the future of the Master Hunter program. It was a productive meeting and assignments were made for the five Master Hunter Hunts in Region 4.

Skagit County Pheasant Release Site: Biologist Danilson helped resolve roadblocks and get the information necessary to evaluate the feasibility of DNR property in Skagit County for use as a potential pheasant release site. Biologist Roozen subsequently made contact with the rancher holding a grazing lease on the parcel and it appears this can be worked around. Local DNR personnel are supportive of our needs and think this parcel is compatible with pheasant release. Roozen will address additional issues and work on an inter-agency agreement in the coming weeks.

Band-tailed Pigeon Proposal Development: Biologist Danilson revised and finalized a draft proposal for future band-tailed pigeon research for the WDFW non-waterfowl duck stamp funding request for proposals. If funded, this project would help District 14 personnel expand the current knowledge of mineral sites used by band-tailed pigeons in Whatcom and Skagit Counties. Danilson also worked with a former WDFW employee who will volunteer in June and July to conduct preliminary work associated with this project. Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn visited some known mineral sites and discussed upcoming activities with landowners.

Mountain Goat Data Analysis: Biologist Danilson worked with Wildlife Data Manager Duff and Service Desk personnel to resolve issues with the mountain goat aerial survey database. Transfer of the database between computers and/or software updates have resulted in bugs in the database. This currently remains unresolved. Danilson also entered 2011 Mount Baker area survey data so that more accurate estimates can be generated once the database functions are restored.

Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Review Kick-Off: Urban Wildlife Habitat Grant Evaluation Team: Biologist Anderson is representing WDFW as the wildlife biologist member of the grant evaluation team for proposals regarding the RCO's WA Wildlife and Recreation Program Grant (WWRP) – Urban Wildlife Habitat category. A kick-off meeting went through the review process. Project information followed. Projects are now under review.

Skagit Agriculture Program: Weather and river conditions continue to hamper field preparations on the **Island Unit**. Habitat Tec Cosgrove monitored drainage but near flood conditions on the Skagit River allowed limited drainage during lower tide cycles.

Manager Belinda Rotton and Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis met with contract farming Boling Farms to discuss field conditions and areas most in need of weed and grass treatments on the **Samish Unit**.

Leque Island share crop farmer, Oxborough Farms continued field preparations for the barley planting area and has requested the opportunity to cut hay on the area.

Natural Resource Specialist Meis researched barley, wheat and moist soil management information for our use on the **Island Unit** and other managed farm units.

Lake Terrell Unit Management: Natural Resource Tech Deyo mowed fields and trails on the Lake Terrell unit and dismantled the pheasant pen loading chute to replace the deteriorated wire.

Spencer Island Shotgun Shell Cleanup: Cub Scout Pack #1 out of Everett walked the trail on the Spencer Island Unit picking up spent shotgun shells and other trash. The scouts also got to see a bald eagle sitting on a branch looking over the trail. The scouts were eager to find the shotgun shells and would like to come back again to help clean up the area.

Private Lands/Access

Private Lands Access on Whidbey Island: Biologist Milner and Private Lands Access Biologist Roozen met with two large landowners on Whidbey Island to explain the program and discuss their interest in participating in providing access to deer hunters on their property. One landowner indicated he is unlikely to participate this year. The second owner is potentially interested if certain conditions can be met.

Private Lands Bear Hunting: Technician Otto completed recording locations of bear peeled trees within the North Skagit hunt unit to assist timber managers designate and map damaged areas. While in the timberlands, using radio telemetry equipment, Otto received an elk mortality signal. Technician Otto and Biologist DeBruyn returned to the area in search of the animal. Despite their efforts, no elk was found but they did see a bobcat that has been frequenting the area.



A lactating female bobcat as seen by Tec. Otto.

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

Falconry Federal Band Supply and Coordination: Biologist Anderson provided three falconers with their required federal falconry bands. This included two Northern Goshawks and one Peregrine Falcon. The falcon was a rehabbed urban bird that fledged too soon. It was discovered that this bird is essentially blind, unfortunately. The Master Falconer who has this bird is working with Rehabilitation and Falconry Coordinator Thompson is to place the bird with a rehabilitation outfit that also has required federal and state education permits so that this bird can have the care it needs, as well as provide for some public education regarding Peregrines and raptors in general.

Great Blue Heron Conflict Reduction at Seattle Aquarium: Biologist Anderson was contacted by executive staff at Seattle Aquarium regarding ongoing heron feeding damage to various fish enclosures at the aquarium. Some of these fish are highly endangered and quite expensive. Anderson discussed various exclusion methods and provided references going through various techniques. This is the second time the aquarium has had this in 30 years. They hope to provide proper exclusion to remedy the situation in the long-term.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Region 4 private lands staff facilitated planting of 5 acres of corn at Bayview Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program site. Currently 20 acres of barley are also planted and growing at the site.

Citizen Science

Breeding Bird Surveys: Biologist DeBruyn assisted a local birder with a Breeding Bird Survey for the USFWS. The route descends Glacier Creek the goes up the Mount Baker highway to the Heather meadows Ski Area. The morning highlights were large flocks of red crossbills feeding on an abundant cone crop.

Wildlife Areas

Headquarter Unit/Wiley Slough: Manager Belinda Rotton met with Shirley Solomon of the Skagit Watershed Council to discuss the new Puget Sound Partnership effort to create a web based information system called Salmon Trails and Tales. The Wiley Slough restoration project will be one of the Skagit County projects highlighted on this new website.

Samish Unit: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Habitat Tech Curran Cosgrove flagged the area to be mowed on the Samish Unit. This area has an extensive thistle problem which impacts neighboring organic farms. Timing of control efforts often conflict with other agricultural and weed control activities so a contract mower will be used to mow portions of this site.

Leque Island: Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Habitat Tec Cosgrove mowed areas on Leque Island to control weeds and improve the cover on the site. Additional mowing was done around the old house and barn sites in order to clean out debris and farm implements. Meis and Cosgrove gathered materials for new footbridge to be installed to improve fishing access for sturgeon.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Management

Mark-resight Modeling Review: Biologist Danilson reviewed literature associated with Mark-resight modeling and spent time getting familiar with statistical program MARK. This is in preparation for an upcoming meeting with Deer and Elk Specialist McCorquodale to get more

comprehensive mentoring session on conducting data analysis for the annual late winter North Cascades elk herd surveys. As part of a multi-year project to improve population modeling techniques, Danilson, McCorquodale and other worked together to develop the current survey and data analysis methods. McCorquodale has performed the final analysis each year after the survey data has been collected.

Black Oystercatcher Publication: District Biologist Milner received word that the paper “Large-scale monitoring of shorebird populations using count data and n-mixture models: Black Oystercatcher surveys by land and sea” has been accepted for publication in Auk. The lead author is James Lyons, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Migratory Bird Management. Co-authors include 3 WDFW biologists: Ruth Milner, Joe Evenson, and David Nysewander.

Dunlin Publication: District Biologist Milner provided review and comments for a paper under development with partners from Canada and Ecostudies Institute describing dunlin use of habitat in the greater Stillaguamish/Skagit Delta.

REGION 5

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Fawn mortality searches associated with the Region 5 black-tailed deer research project continued during the third week of June. Thirteen study does and their associated young are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. The does are located in two study clusters concentrated within the Washougal and Coweeman Game Management Units. To date, in the Washougal cluster of 6 does, 11 fawns have been captured and 7 remain alive. In the Coweeman cluster of 7 does, 9 fawns have been captured and 6 remain alive.

Rock Creek Acquisition: District Biologist Anderson and Program Manager Jonker continued working on the Rock Creek proposal in eastern Klickitat County. This project is part of a large landscape of mixed habitats that include important species like native steelhead, mule deer, and western gray squirrels. The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office provides oversight through the application and review process.

Peregrine Falcon Surveys: Biologist Anderson assisted the USFS with a management issue regarding a trail closure near a peregrine falcon eyrie in the Columbia River Gorge. In addition, a follow-up survey was conducted at Beacon Rock State Park as part of the federal 5 year protocol survey.

Flammulated Owl Survey: Biologist Stephens and volunteer Johnston conducted a Flammulated owl survey in Klickitat County west of Goldendale. This was the second of three survey efforts on this survey route. No owls were heard during the survey. This is part of a collaborative effort to document Flammulated owl distribution throughout its breeding range in the U.S. and to estimate occupancy rates by forest habitat type.

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area:

Wetland Enhancements and Cover Crop Plantings at Shillapoo: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hauswald took advantage of the dry weather this week and disked 8 acres in the Shillapoo lakebed to control reed canary grass. The site was previously sprayed to kill the grass

and to make it easier to work up. Disking breaks up the thick root mass of the canary grass and exposes the native seedbank on the site. The site was then planted with a cover crop of grain to help suppress any reed canary grass seed from germinating this year and to provide a food source for waterfowl this winter. Another 4 acres of grain was planted in one of the fallow agricultural fields in the lakebed as well.



Cover Crop Planting



Wilson's Phalarope nest in the Shillapoo Lakebed

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

Wildlife Areas

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Hunter Education: Wildlife Area staff Vanderlip, Morris, and Grabski along with Enforcement Officer Sympton instructed a two-day hunter education class in Morton. Fifteen students learned about hunter safety, ethics, survival, wildlife conservation, and practical field skill exercises. We

would also like to thank local merchants from Packwood, Randle, and Morton who donated items for a barbeque lunch each day.

Private Lands/Access

Hunting Access: Wildlife Program Manager Jonker, Biologist Stephens, and Biologist Harris (Region 6) met with several employees of a private industrial timber company who has holdings in Lewis and Pacific Counties to discuss the Private Lands Access Program. A very productive discussion ensued and they were very receptive to the idea of potentially partnering with WDFW to manage hunting access on a portion of their land.

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Special Permits: Biologist Bergh answered questions from hunters who had drawn permits for elk in the Mt. St. Helens herd. Concerns about access were among the usual questions about elk herd locations. Special permit holders will be receiving information about the St. Helens Land Access Program in the coming weeks. Special permit holder lists were also compiled for two private landowners, one of which will be contacting permit holders about access to their industrial forest land.

Non-Governmental Organizations: Biologist Holman attended the monthly meeting of the Yacolt Burn Sportsman's Club (YBSC). A presentation describing the field activities associated with the black-tailed deer research project was given and questions about the recently released special hunt permit draw were answered. Approximately 25 Club members were in attendance. YBSC is primarily based in north Clark County where they provide countless volunteer hours to maintain hunting access, teach hunter education courses, advocate for hunting in the community, and interface with WDFW. The Club has successfully competed for ALEA grants, which provide much-needed support for travel and basic items (signs, vests, garbage bags, maps, etc.) associated with maintaining access to private industrial forest lands. Thanks to the members of the Club for their on-going efforts in these arenas.

Master Hunter Program: Biologists Holman and Stephens as well as Shillapoo/St. Helens Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Hauswald and Technician Pyzik attended a meeting with representatives from the Master Hunter Program, Enforcement Program, and Hunter Education. The gathering allowed for a discussion of the Master Hunter program, volunteer requirements and program coordination, etc. Elk damage, special hunting permits, hunter access, the conservation initiative and several other topics were explored. One facet of WDFW's various volunteer efforts that came to light was the need for a more organized and cleaner means of coordinating the multiple volunteer related areas including, the Master Hunter Program, ALEA, "Regular" volunteers, Conservation Group associated volunteers, the Citizen Science effort, etc., at the Olympia level.

REGION 6

None