

# Wildlife Program

Week of April 21-27, 2014

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

### *GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE*

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Improving Communication Regarding White-nose Syndrome in Bats:** Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan and Section Manager Bruce Thompson as well as Biologist Ella Rowan (Science Division) participated in a NW Bat Coordination Conference call. Focus of the discussion was examining interagency processes to apply regarding prospects for white-nose syndrome being detected in bats in the Northwest, especially Washington and Oregon. An interagency effort involving state and federal wildlife and forestry agencies will consider a revision of a previous draft interagency plan to focus on communication, coordination and diagnostic factors.

**Golden Eagle Territory Surveys:** Territory occupancy surveys are well underway east of the Cascades. All surveys are expected to be completed by end of April. After that, surveys will shift to productivity detection in June. Surveys in 2014 involve a sample of 108 territories that will be examined for occupancy and productivity to support estimation of demographic parameters within targeted levels of precision. Efforts also are underway to examine any territories that were not sufficiently evaluated in 2013 for occupancy. These surveys in total are intended to provide at least one examination of all breeding territories during 2013-2014 to aid in updating Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) golden eagle territory records.

**Pygmy Rabbit Recovery – April 14-18:** Rabbit kit captures in the enclosures began this week. On Tuesday we captured 26 kits and 2 adult males at the Dormaier enclosure and on Thursday we captured 34 kits at one of the enclosures at Sagebrush Flat (SBF). The males were released back into the enclosure and the kits were transported to a nursery on SBF where they will be held while we wait for genetic results, and they are at least 150 grams. We were assisted by Kevin Kane a regular volunteer on the project (thank you Kevin for all your help!). In addition, a grant funded project called Building Blocks for Career Readiness, whose partners include Chelan County Extension, Skillsource, and Westside High School (Wenatchee School District), sent us 12 hardworking students (and 2 mentors). In addition to capturing and processing kits, the students were able to help with cleaning up old alfalfa piles in the enclosures, putting in new artificial burrows in a nursery, feeding the rabbits in two enclosures, and various other housekeeping tasks. Next week after genetic results are received, 20 kits will be kept in the enclosures for breeding and the remainder will be released to wild on SBF. The partnership between WDFW and this program is something that WDFW Biologist Jon Gallie and Hana Butler, the experiential program coordinator from Washington State University (WSU) Chelan County Extension, have been building for several years, and they deserve a great deal of credit for creating something that is a win for both the students and WDFW.

**Pygmy Rabbit Recovery – April 21–25:** We released our first batch of kits onto Sagebrush Flat (SBF) on Tuesday with the assistance of Wildlife Biologists Dougherty, Comstock and Duvuvuei; and Fish Biologists Petersen and Schmuck. Eight kits with Columbia Basin genes captured at Dormaier were given Avid ID's and released into an enclosure at SBF for breeding stock, additionally 10 kits captured at SBF were given Avid ID's and released into the breeding enclosure at Dormaier. Fourteen kits had not reached a weight of 150 grams and were retained in nursery. The remainder of the kits was released to wild on SBF. Kit captures also continued this week. On Thursday we were at one of the enclosures at SBF where we captured 33 kits and 1 adult female. We were assisted by volunteers Dan Jackson and James Schroeder; Wells Wildlife Area staff Angel Hastings, Virgilio Ruiz, and Noel Winegeart, and Gretchen Blatz from Olympia. The female appeared to be a new capture (i.e. one of last year's kits that eluded capture). She was given an Avid ID and released back into the breeding enclosure. The kits were released into a nursery on SBF where they will be held while we wait for genetic results, and they are at least 150 grams. In addition to capturing and processing kits we completed the overhead netting on the second enclosure at SBF. We installed framework to raise the netting higher so we no longer have to crawl to capture kits, a great improvement and one that all who have experienced this nursery in the past will greatly appreciate (We began this work on Wednesday with the assistance of Natural Resource Worker McAlavy. Without his help we would never have had the nursery ready for Thursday's capture. Thank you access!).

**Sage Grouse:** Section Managers Wilkerson and Becker and Lands Division staff Gorrell met with US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Department of Natural Resources staff to explore the concept of a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for Sage Grouse.

## **REGION 1**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wolf Conservation and Management**

**Smackout wolf:** Conflict Specialist Shepherd, Biologists Roussin and Prince, Sergeant Taylor, and Extension Agent Niemeyer observed the carcass of the radio-collared male wolf in the Smackout pack that was killed and consumed by a cougar. The remains were cached, the carcass was heavily consumed, and large piles of mountain lion scat were present.



***Left: Sergeant Taylor and Biologists Roussin and Prince observe the site where a cougar consumed a wolf. Right: The radio-collared wolf killed and consumed by a cougar.***

## Wildlife Management

**Golden Eagle Surveys:** Biologist Atamian completed the district's occupancy surveys with a second helicopter survey of the Whitestone Territory. Whitestone remained unoccupied with all three historic nests showing no activity. Sterling Cliffs Territory also remained unoccupied. Hell Gate and Fergie-Welsh Creek Territories were both active.



**Left:** *Hell Gate Territory nest with two eggs, adults not seen in area. Right: Whitestone Territory had one of three nests in disrepair.*



**Left:** *Sterling Cliffs Territory nest in disrepair. Right: Fergie-Welsh Creek Territory Golden Eagle on nest.*

## Wildlife Areas

**Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Med Sage Survey and Treatment:** Biologist Woodall spent a day surveying and treating the noxious weed Med Sage that occurred outside the burned treatment area. He visited known locations where it had been found in the past, sprayed those sites and expanded the search to look for new occurrences. The herbicide we use on this weed is Tordon, along with a good surfactant break through the pubescent leaves. The Tordon provides a good residual to any germinating seedlings that may pop out later as the ground warms up.

*A very small Med sage plant from last year that was missed, set seed, and plans to start a new generation.*



## Other

**Cross Program Assistance – Opening Day Fishing Season:** District Wildlife Biologist (DWB) Dana Base assisted the Fish Management Program with conducting angler and creel surveys at area lakes for the season opener on Saturday, April 26. DWB Base sampled Rocky Lake this year. Fishing there was very good with most anglers taking limits on rainbow trout.



**Above:** *Shore anglers fishing at Rocky Lake in Stevens County during the fishing season opener on April 26, 2014.*  
**Right:** *A stringer of rainbow trout freshly caught at Rocky Lake during the fishing season opener.*



## Wildlife Areas

**Deep Lake Access Site repairs:** Access Manager Scott Young hauled rock to Williams Lake for erosion repair and restriping at the boat launch. On Thursday, he worked with a volunteer at Deep Lake to repair the boat launch that had shifted. He replaced missing bolts and two broken rungs, and straightened the ramp. His comments on the project: “We could have used more rock and two rungs for the ramp after removing two broken ones. There is one before picture and the rest during and after straightening and replacing missing bolts. Jim Bilbruck volunteered to help with the project.”



**Deep Lake ramp before (left), during (center) and after (right) repair.**

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

**Wildlife Areas**



*Shop presentation provided to the Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV), April 22, 2014.*

**Intermountain West Joint Venture tour:** Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch put together a shop discussion and field tour stop for this year's Intermountain West Joint Venture (IWJV) conference based in Spokane. Tuesday was rainy, but events went well. Finch worked closely with U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Wildlife Biologist Jason Lowe on his PowerPoint program for the shop portion. Participants were soggy, but appreciative of the tour.



*Field tour (Bureau of Land Management wetlands, after WFDW field site) with IWJV, April 22, 2014.*

## **REGION 2**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Northern Leopard Frog (NLF)** – Biologist Finger wrote up a summary report for the northern leopard frog egg mass survey. With several volunteers assisting we were able to survey for 71 observer-hours to complete 63 ponds within 3 subunits of the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area and encountered 0 NLF egg mass detection/pond and 0.13 adult NLF detections/pond.

**Piscivorous Waterbirds** – Biologists Duvuvuei and Finger continued video monitoring Caspian tern use at Frenchmen Regulated Access Area. The videos from last week proved effective at capturing diving attempts by Caspian Terns but we were unable to determine whether the dives were successful. Duvuvuei and Finger will continue video monitoring throughout the spring and summer while gradually drawing down water levels to focus tern foraging activity. So far, 34 individually banded terns have been documented loafing on the project. Of those, 28 were able to be positively identified. Nearly all were banded at Goose Island (from 2009-2014) about five miles to the east but one was banded at Crescent Island in 2007 and one was banded at Sheepy Lake in 2012.



**Pygmy Rabbit** – Biologists Duvuvuei and Comstock assisted the Pygmy Rabbit team with capturing and releasing kits into the wild. Approximately 57 kits were captured in the nursery and approximately 30 were released into the wild. Those that were not released either remained in the nursery to gain more weight before release or were moved to another pen to be used for future breeding stock.

***Assistant District Biologist Jon Gallie holds an endangered Columbia Basin pygmy rabbit kit.***

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**North Central Washington Prescribed Burn Team** – On Monday, April 21 the burn team completed the Mill 2 Prescribed Fire Project on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. The team lit a test fire shortly after 11:00 a.m. and due to predicted rain they continued working until the unit was completed at 10:30 p.m. Light rain began to fall before the team collected their gear and packed

it down to the road. The next day they worked to extinguish anything smoking within 10 feet of the control line. On Wednesday, heavier rain settled in and the team began dismantling the hoselay around the unit and moved it to the Blue 3 Burn Unit which encompasses much of the Sinlahekin Creek alluvial fan. By Friday nearly 0.74 inches of rain was recorded at the Sinlahekin base weather station which has postponed burning for a number of days, and there is another good chance of rain on Sunday, April 27. The team has everything in place to begin burning Blue 3 once we have several days of drying weather. The interior of the Mill 2 Unit continues to produce smoke as heavy fuels consume thereby better meeting objectives. All units that have been burned this spring continue to be patrolled and monitored for containment.



*Members of the Prescribed Burn Team observing a test fire in the Mill 2 Burn Unit on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photo by Ray Guse.*



*Left: Dusk arrives while burning the Mill 2 Unit on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Right: The prescribed burning of the Mill 2 Burn Unit at approximately 9:00 p.m. on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area due west of headquarters. Photos by Ray Guse*

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Similkameen-Chopaka Trail:** Crews from the Lacy construction shop completed the Similkameen-Chopaka parking area this week. This main access point for the Similkameen-

Chopaka Wildlife Area is much improved including an ADA trail with a wildlife viewing blind, and a small boat launch to the pond and Similkameen River.



*View of the new parking area, wildlife viewing blind and small boat launch.*

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Blue Lake Boat Launch:** After obtaining a Hydraulics Project Approval Permit, Access Managers Harmon and Graves repaired the Blue Lake Water Access Site boat ramp in time for the very busy fishing opener this weekend. The Blue Lake Access is the only public boat launch on Blue Lake, making it a high priority to be fixed before the April 26 fishing opener. Access staff replaced one concrete plank that was broken on one end, and three other planks that were failing. Ballast rock was added to both sides and in between the planks to provide support and erosion protection.



*Blue Lake Boat Ramp before (left) and after (right) repairs – Photos by Josh Harmon.*

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Salmon Habitat Restoration and Riparian Project Review:** Operations Manager Swedberg, in conjunction with Methow Assistant Manager Lindsey, Regional Habitat Program Manager Andonaegui, Area Habitat Biologist Hofmann, Salmon Projects Coordinator Fortier, and Yakama Tribal representatives, participated in field tours of three proposed projects on the Chewuck River. WDFW representatives participated in a tour of proposed Fender Mill project. Additionally, he and other WDFW representatives participated in a Technical Team Meeting with Yakama Tribe representatives.

Methow Wildlife Area staff met with WDFW habitat biologists, representatives of the Yakima Tribe, and Aquatic Habitat Restoration engineers to review and discuss three major fish habitat restoration projects on the wildlife area. These projects will create back-water areas and in-stream woody structure to support young salmon. These types of micro-habitats are limited due to human activities such as flood plain restriction, rip-rap and other man-made structures, which have caused the Methow River and major tributaries to down cut their channels and thereby isolate formerly accessible backwater habitats.



***A rain-soaked group discusses the finer details of aquatic habitat restoration on the Methow Wildlife Area.***

## Private Lands/Access

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** Biologists Dougherty and Comstock attended the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) local working group (LWG) meeting for Grant and Kittitas counties. The meeting was to allow stakeholders the opportunity to provide direction to the NRCS for EQIP. Topics of discussion were the new farm bill, priority resources concerns for the Big Bend LWG, and new budget information. Through the course of the meeting we were able to retain 3% of the total funding for wildlife projects. Typically these funds are used for circles corner enhancement and habitat restoration



**Left:** *An approaching cold front sweeping into McLoughlin Canyon taken from the wildlife area. Right:* *Sunset on Sinlahekin Creek near the headquarters bridge.*

## **REGION 3**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Bernatowicz received word from Washington State University (WSU) that five of six ewes sent from Clemans last winter had lambs by April 21, one with twins. The timing is consistent with field observations, although we would have expected approximately 50-60% to have lambs on that date, not 80%. Twinning is not very common in bighorn sheep and was a first at WSU.

**Golden Eagles:** Biologist Moore finished the second round of occupancy surveys for one of the last two remaining territories. The Selah Creek territory was checked and again no eagles were

present and the nest was not rebuilt. The only territory that remains is Parke Creek and it should be completed next week.



### **Kittitas Valley Daily Record**

**Interview:** Biologist Moore responded to Daily Records Senior Writer Mike Johnston's request for an interview on elk surveys. The article came out on Thursday, April 24.

*Photo used in the article showing Biologist Moore and Central Valley Helicopter Pilot Anthony Root doing elk surveys.*

### **Wildlife Areas**

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** On Wednesday, Wayne spent a long day in the field with Yakama Nation Fish Program Biologist Scott Nicolai and Reese Lolley (The Nature Conservancy) evaluating areas of the North Fork Manastash for Scott's part in our Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Restoration work. It was a very productive visit with several outstanding work areas defined as a good fit for riparian restoration.



**Left:** *Tapash members Reese Lolley (left), The Nature Conservancy, and Scott Nicolai (right), Yakama Nation, assessing North Fork Manastash Creek for the LT Murray Forest Enhancement project. Right:* *Beaver-chewed tree along North Fork Manastash Creek.*

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Colockum Wildlife Area:** Manager Lopushinsky participated in a Monday conference call with WDFW and DNR staff on the Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation Plan. Pete also

attended the Wednesday night citizen's recreation plan committee meeting in Wenatchee. A draft version of the plan's objectives and strategies were presented to the group, and group members provided feedback and suggestions.

**Wenas Wildlife Area:**

Staff spent two days installing reader boards and Kiosks at Buffalo and Sheep Company entrances (see photo).



**Oak Creek Wildlife**

**Area:** Manager

Huffman provided information to Shelly

Snyder in GIS to create maps for the Rock Creek and Cowiche units of the wildlife area. We will be installing kiosks on both units to help people learn the wildlife area, and maps are being designed that will be part of that information to the public.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Landowner Contacts – Wildlife Conflict:** Wildlife Program Manger McCorquodale and Conflict Specialist Wetzal met with Cindy McMeans on Wednesday, April 23 regarding elk activity on the McMeans' property.

A meeting with US Forest Service (USFS) sheep grazer Martinez, cattle grazer Burke, and USFWS occurred on April 23 at Naches. During this meeting, a new need for another range rider contract was identified.

Funding for four range riders was confirmed this week; the Teanaway will have two (one cattle and one sheep) and the Naneum will have two (one cattle and one sheep). One additional ranger rider may be needed for the Virden grazing lease (DNR/USFS).

**Wildlife Conflict:** Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with Bud Hamilton and Neil Ice on planning for the landowner meeting set for later this month. Contacted and invited all landowners with elk damage related issues, damage permit hunt coordinators, and the crop adjuster used on several claims in the area.

**Wildlife Areas**

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Manager Winegeart attended a Kittitas County Commissioner's Lands Advisory Committee meeting with Regional Director Livingston. The committee was

interested in future management plans for the newly acquired Plum Creek lands in the Gnat Flat area.

Shana and Wayne met with Doug Kuehn (WDFW forester), and Reese Lolley (TNC) on Tuesday to discuss logistics and budgeting items related to the WWRP Forest Enhancement proposal. Later in the meeting other TNC staff joined to discuss some of the line items going into the budget, which will be prepared by TNC.

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

**Wildlife Management**



**Mourning Doves:** Biologists Gregory and Michaelis from Region 6 joined biologists from Arizona, South Dakota, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota and California to participate in a USFWS sponsored mourning dove workshop held in Sacramento. The workshop was led by accomplished dove researcher Dr. Frank Rivera-Milán who introduced the group to the field protocol used to collect data for distance sampling analysis. This methodology will allow for a more rigorous assessment of dove density and abundance than previous methods. The training included several sessions in the field which reinforced information presented in the classroom. In the coming weeks Biologist Gregory will be applying these new techniques to survey for doves in Region 3.

***Biologist Gregory practices her distance sampling skills –***  
Photo by W. Michaelis.



***Dr. Rivera-Milán shares his insights on distance sampling –*** Photo by S. Gregory.

## Wildlife Areas

**Sunnyside/Snake River Wildlife Area:** Manager Bjornstrom spoke with Laurie Vigue about the wildlife area mapping project that is currently being completed at the Sunnyside/Snake River Wildlife Area. Greg and Laurie spoke about a statewide plan for better mapping of wildlife areas, benefits of mapping lands and infrastructure, and that there needs to be consistency, statewide, for this type of project to benefit both WDFW and its constituents.

## **REGION 4**

### *GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE*

#### Wolf Conservation and Management

**Hozomeen Wolf Camera Project:** Biologist DeBruyn cleaned, organized and stored cameras and equipment from the project. Images from the cameras were examined and catalogued. Although no wolf images were recorded some wolf tracks were observed in the study area. DeBruyn also experimented with a trail camera that uses cell phone technology to transmit images to a website. Three cameras remain in the back country and will be retrieved when snow conditions allow.

#### Wildlife Management



**Region 4 Elk:** Biologist Smith spent time meeting and phone conferencing with landowners from Enumclaw, Ravensdale and Snoqualmie Valley to discuss deer and elk damage to agricultural crops and residential property. Hazing ideas, fencing techniques and hunting strategies were discussed.

*Nocturnal elk pass through agricultural fields in the Enumclaw area.*

Conflict Specialist Griffith oversaw the delivery of fencing materials to a property in Rockport this week. The landowner plans to install the materials themselves and declined the use of volunteers. Griffith received four or five calls this week regarding elk damages to backyards and upcoming vegetable gardens. Griffith provided them with technical guidance on methods to haze, deter, and exclude elk.

**North Cascades Elk Survey:** Biologists Danilson and DeBruyn completed photo counts from the second of two rounds of aerial surveys for elk in Skagit and Whatcom counties from April 1-2. Similar to the first round of surveys conducted in mid-March, calf:cow and bull:cow estimates were above 30:100 indicating a healthy and growing population. Although total observed number of elk was lower than in mid-March (544 vs. 631), the proportion of collars was much lower, resulting in an estimate of roughly 1,450 elk. To compare the 2014 survey estimates with previous years, a final analysis of data pooled from both surveys will be performed.

**North Cascades Elk Herd Management Plan:** Biologist Danilson prepared the initial draft of a letter to the Point Elliott Tribal policy leads to accompany the herd plan recommendations provided by the North Cascades Elk Herd Management Plan.

**Swan Hotline:** Biologist DeBruyn responded to numerous reports of a single late Trumpeter swan lingering in the Skagit Flats. The swan appears healthy and is able to fly. It is being monitored.

**Bald Eagle Management:** Biologist DeBruyn monitored eagles nesting at the snow goose reserve on Fir Island as it may affect implementation of a restoration project planned for the area. DeBruyn has discussed creating a management plan for the site with Habitat Biologist Williams. DeBruyn also observed other nearby nesting eagles to ascertain nesting chronology. Numerous eagles appeared to be feeding young and a tennis ball sized chick was observed being fed in a nest near the LaConner office. DeBruyn also responded to questions from the public regarding development plans near occupied eagle nests.

Biologist Milner worked with a landowner who was informed that the Stillaguamish Tribe had mapped a bald eagle nest on his property in 2009, but felt there was no nest on his property. A field visit by Milner confirmed that the nest was mismapped and actually located  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile from his property. Corrections have been sent to Wildlife Survey Data Management (WSDM).

**Highway 20 Public Safety Project:** Biologist DeBruyn distributed posters along the Highway 20 corridor warning unfamiliar drivers about the high risk of elk vehicle collisions. Local support for the project was evident as the volume of traffic on the highway has increased as a result of the detour around the Oso slide.

**Species of Greatest Conservation Needs (SGSN) surveys:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra assembled additional cover boards for deployment on the Sharp-tailed Snake project in the San Juan Archipelago this summer. These cover boards create habitat in areas of potential snake habitat and help to reduce the impact of searches to the natural habitat of these dry, open oak savannah areas.

**Low Elevation Pika Surveys:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra met with the new base CIO and base security to explain the survey, describe Pikas and this unique population, and to meet everyone involved with granting access to this restricted area. With the forecast for favorable weather next week, we hope to begin surveys soon.

**Everett Caspian Terns:** Biologist Milner consulted with the USFWS about potential feasibility of luring breeding terns away from urban areas. No plans to deter terns from nesting on a large flat roofed building are planned for this year.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Lake Terrell & Intalco Noxious Weed Control:** Natural Resource Tech Deyo sprayed blackberry bushes and scotch broom on the Lake Terrell and Intalco units.

**Tennant Lake Boardwalk:** Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo hiked in and cleared beaver dams on the south side of Tennant Lake, to adjust the lake water level and allow the boardwalk to be reopened to the public. High water levels flood the boardwalk and require it to be closed to the public for safety.

**Lake Terrell Water Control:** Natural Resource Tech Deyo cleared grass, mud and sticks from one of the water controls at Lake Terrell. Beavers have been working to plug up the control.

**Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project:** The WDFW project team and Ducks Unlimited met to plan and prepare for the upcoming April 30 Stakeholder Committee meeting. The Stakeholder Committee consists of hunters, wildlife viewers, neighbors, jurisdictions, tribal co-manager staff, and other individuals interested in the Leque Island project.



*Volunteers spread mulch on the access roads on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. Mulch was donated by Kemp West and a tractor and loader was donated by one of the volunteers for the task. Approximately 150 truckloads of free mulch has been placed on the access roads so far.*

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Sno-Valley Farms to discuss the planting plan for the new Ebey Island agricultural lease. Approximately 90 acres will be planted with grain and grass this season.

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

## **Wildlife Management**

**Waterfowl Aerial Surveys:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra worked with Waterfowl Specialist Evenson in preparation for this year's breeding waterfowl aerial surveys, reviewed the survey Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and provided supplemental PPE for survey participants.

**Urban Wildlife Ecology – Shoreline Parks Council:** Biologist Anderson provided a presentation on general wildlife ecology in urban environment and value of managing natural spaces to support ecosystem processes (regeneration, horizontal and vertical complexity, various habitat densities, gaps, snags, and down wood). The council requested WDFW provide information on urban wildlife management and habitat management to assist wildlife and reduce conflict animals.

**Citizen Science Amphibian Survey:** Biologist Anderson worked with Risk Manager Heyen to provide final needs for a contract with City of Shoreline. This is to allow trained volunteers to survey for amphibian breeding at Shoreline Parks in a non-invasive manner.

**WDFW Wildlife Observation web and phone application:** Biologist Anderson provided identification assistance to volunteers as well as assist them in use of the new WDFW Wildlife Observation web and phone application. Users are having issue with data entry and compiling of multiple observations into one site. Anderson has generated two tutorials on how to use the app and how to filter data and compile. Anderson will continue to assist volunteers as it is critical that this data interface work for such efforts and be user-friendly for the success of Citizen Science monitoring efforts and data capture.

**New Peregrine Nesting Site:** Biologist Anderson was informed by local falcon monitors and researchers of a new nest site in Seattle.

**Request to Area Commercial Float Planes – Loon Disturbance:** Biologist Anderson issued letters to the four major Puget Sound commercial tourist and training seaplane outfits regarding put down and take off on lakes occupied by known breeding loons, a state Sensitive and Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

## **Wildlife Areas**

**Intalco Unit Archery Range:** Manager Kessler coordinated with the Custer Sportsmen's Club on the Intalco Archery Range. Plans call for future improvements that will make more targets handicapped accessible. Natural Resource Tech Deyo mowed blackberry bushes to clear an area for a kid's multi-target shooting site.

**Skagit Acquisition Team:** Biologist Caldwell along with other WDFW staff attended a meeting regarding waterfowl forage needs and concerns within Skagit County. Particular questions were not fully addressed due to the complexities of current agricultural practices and the dynamics of different migratory bird needs that utilize the Skagit area. It was concluded that waterfowl foraging ecology along with carrying capacity measures will be organized, evaluated and presented at a later time.

### **Skagit Wildlife Area Island**

**Unit:** Staff continued to coordinate with permitting agencies about the Island Unit ditch cleaning project. Complete spill response plan as required by the 401 water quality certification for the Department of Ecology (DOE) permitting for the ditch maintenance project. Worked with volunteer Reb Broker (Washington Waterfowl Association) to stage duck blind materials at six locations. The local chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association is holding a blind building party on Saturday.



*Skagit Wildlife Area staff and Projects Coordinator Brokaw reviewed draft design plans completed by Ducks Unlimited and visited the site to ground-truth design features. Design features include water control structures, cleaning of drainage ditches, and swales to connect ponds.*

Negotiated a share crop agreement to plant corn on the Island and Samish units. Rotton drafted the agreement to be sent for approval this week. Prepare chisel plow, boat motor, and identify repairs needed for the barge ramp pulley system.

**Other Staff and Opening Day:** Staff from all programs in Region 4 assisted with collected creel data during opening day of lowland lake trout fishing season. Staff counted the number of people fishing, how many trout were kept or released, and measured lengths of trout kept. Generally, the lakes were heavily used and people had a good fishing experience.



*The WA Pond Jumpers fishing club held a weekend bass fishing tournament at Lake Terrell. Along with heavy crowds due to the opening day weekend, Lake Terrell was extremely busy both Saturday and Sunday.*

**Training for the volunteer Hunter Education instructors:** Field Coordinator Dazey conducted on Saturday the Region 4 In Service Training for the volunteer Hunter Education instructors at Camp Pigott. The event was well attended by the volunteers who heard from Enforcement officer Michael McQuoid on enforcement issues. Officer McQuoid facilitated a short quiz on the more obscure rules and regulations and then presented of some of the more common things he encounters in the field. Also presenting was Private Lands Biologist Cole Caldwell who gave a well-received presentation on the GoHunt webpage and also private lands access.



*Field Coordinator Dazey conducted on Saturday the Region 4 In Service Training for the volunteer Hunter Education instructors at Camp Pigott.*

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### **Wildlife Management**

**Duck Stamp Wood Duck Project:** Biologist DeBruyn arranged with Manager Kessler and Technician Deyo to place some wood duck boxes with a private landowner in Whatcom County for deployment this spring.

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt (WQH) Site and Equipment Management:** Technician Otto applied site management duties (mowing and spraying canary reed grass) on approximately eight acres at the Harksell WQH unit in Whatcom County.

**WQH Program:** Biologist Caldwell and Technician Otto coordinated efforts to utilize Migratory Bird Enhancement funding in Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties. As of April 25, 2014 we have confirmed five landowners (49 acres) that are willing to apply migratory bird enhancement applications to their lands in order to provide forage for migratory birds. These enhancements will increase WQH site characteristics. Also, this week Biologist Caldwell and Technician Otto identified a new potential WQH site in Snohomish County. The landowner was contacted and they have stated that they are willing to allow hunting access for 2014.

**Spring Bear Hunter Notification (Monroe Hunt):** Biologist Caldwell contacted all hunters that drew a permit for the Monroe Spring Bear Hunt. Hunters were contacted regarding an access gate closure within the unit (access gate #14). This access gate was closed due to safety concerns by DNR and WDFW staff. This location is and will no longer be considered as a huntable area.

**Spring Bear Hunter Management:** Biologist Caldwell and Technician Otto responded to hunter concerns regarding locked, damaged and unlocked gates in the Monroe Hunt Unit. Technician Otto resolved gate maintenance issues, while Biologist Caldwell relayed information to hunters, DNR staff and private timber company staff about the issues.

**Western Washington Pheasant Release Program Meeting:** Biologist Caldwell attended a meeting with local and internal stakeholders regarding the Western Washington Pheasant Release Program. Upland resources pertinent to pheasant habitat and hunting were discussed for Skagit County. Variables were identified to increase public/hunter satisfaction in correspondence with WDFW missions and goals.

**Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant application scoring:** Biologist Milner finalized all scores and completed budget modification requests for the 57 ALEA grants applications she reviewed this year. Participation in this large project is now at an end.

**Osprey and Powerline conflicts:** Biologist Anderson was notified by Biologist Rowan that an osprey had been reported dead in the Duvall area. Biologist Anderson worked with Puget Sound Energy biologists to retrieve the bird and examine the situation. It appears there was a territorial squabble, with the deceased bird directly below an active nest with two adults. The deceased bird appeared to have clipped a power line and broke its wing en route to hitting the ground. The line is Bonneville Power Association owned. Anderson is seeking an appropriate contact there to follow-up on the wildlife take and nesting situation.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Port of Bellingham Coordination:** Manager Kessler coordinated with managers from the Port of Bellingham on the wetland enhancement project on the south end of the Tennant Lake Unit. This project has controlled reed canary grass, created open water swales and planted trees and shrubs to create and enhance wetlands as mitigation for expansion at the Bellingham Airport. This year, maintenance will be performed on the planted areas, and reed canary grass in the adjacent areas will be mowed to prevent it from going to seed.

**Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management:** Hunter Education & Volunteer Coordinator Steven Dazey attended the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Groups monthly meeting and gave a presentation on WDFW support for the volunteers and spoke with the volunteers about using the CERVIS system on the WDFW website. Volunteer coordinator Dazey also met with Master Hunter applicants and renewals completing a volunteer project for the WDFW to verify harvest records designated by the hunter in the old Game Management Unit (GMU) 410 that had been updated with new numbers to better enable the department to accurately track harvests on each San Juan Island.

**Fir Island Farms:** Tech Cosgrove mowed public access areas on Fir Island Farms Reserve and bay front dikes. Cosgrove also treated weeds near the eagle nest field.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Area:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed the 2014 Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan update and submitted it to Olympia.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Radio Communications:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to be involved with discussions concerning the future of radio communications within the Program, as well as providing radio support to Program staff.

**New Staff Recruitment:** Biologist Danilson worked with Manager Link, Wildlife Program administrative staff and Human Resources personnel to prepare for the departure of Conflict Specialist Griffith and initiate the recruitment process for his replacement.

**Internal GoHunt & Private Lands Access Presentation:** Biologist Caldwell gave a presentation on the interactive capabilities of the GoHunt and Private Lands Hunt Access websites to WDFW Hunter Safety instructors.

**Heat Related Illness Training:** Biologist Caldwell, Technician Otto and Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed the Heat Related Illness Training seminar.

**Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with three WDFW Master Hunters to discuss volunteer opportunities with them. With support from Steve Dazey, the WDFW Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator, six Master Hunters are interested in volunteer projects.

**Meetings:** Biologist Milner attended the Region 4 District Biologist meeting, the planning meeting for the Leque Island working group, and the Skagit Acquisition Team meeting. All are internal staff meetings designed to identify challenges and find solutions to various issues in Region 4.

**Pat Miller Retirement:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra, Milner, and many other Department staff, dedicated volunteers, family and friends celebrated the retirement of Pat Miller after 37 years with the Department, the last 34 as the District Wildlife Biologist for southwest Washington. Pat brought and shared a considerable biological and management skill set to the Wildlife Program ranks, and in addition was instrumental in establishing many safety programs to help protect fellow department employees in their work. Pat was also one of the initial motivators behind establishing a professional association for wildlife biologists with the department and served as president for two terms and many years as a program representative. His perspective and guidance will be missed and we wish him the best in his retirement.

**Region 4 District Staff meeting:** Districts 12, 13 and 14 met with Regional Wildlife Program Manager Link to discuss work needs, collaborations and planning.

**Hunter Education:** Field coordinator Steven Dazey attended the quarterly Master Hunters Advisory Group meeting in Ellensburg. Topics discussed included master hunter service hours and projects coordinated by Dazey. Also discussed was a letter to the counties prosecuting attorneys to encourage them to not take lightly wildlife enforcement prosecutions.



*Deception Pass Bridge* – Photo by Kim Chandler.

## **REGION 5**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Elk Mortality Survey:** Region 5 Wildlife Program staff along with 20 volunteers (mainly from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation) conducted the annual survey of winter elk mortalities on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area Mudflow Unit. This survey has been conducted in some form since 1999 and is used to provide an index to winter elk mortality. The preliminary raw count from this year's survey was 41 mortalities, which is exactly average. Big thanks to all of the volunteers who spent their day in the rain to help us cover the 400 hectare survey area.



**Left: Pre-survey instructions. Right: Cutting femur to check bone marrow to assess condition.**

**Western Pond Turtle Management:** Biologists George, Holman and Stephens participated in this week's continuation of the 2014 study of western pond turtles at the Sondino site. Priorities for this year include continuing to evaluate the shell disease condition among the population, collecting specific individuals for veterinary biopsies related to the shell disease condition, capturing sufficient individuals to generate a population estimate for the Sondino site, collecting young for the head-starting program and conducting bull-frog control. The capture effort currently involves 28 traps set in three of Sondino's primary water bodies. Through 14 days of trap checks, 78 total captures have occurred comprised of 55 individual turtles. Additionally, two hatchling pond turtles have been captured by hand. Also, seven bull frogs were captured in hoop traps and removed. Finally, four of the animals targeted for biopsy has been captured and transferred to the Oregon Zoo.

**Black-tailed Deer Research Project:** Black-tail does and fawns associated with the Western Washington Black-tail Research Project continue to be monitored. Within Region 5, two study clusters are located in GMUs 550 (Coweeman) and 568 (Washougal). Adult does and their associated young are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and traditional (VHF) equipment. To date, three fawns (out of six captured in 2013) remain alive in the Washougal GMU. Additionally, five adult does captured in early 2014 remain alive.

### Wildlife Areas

**Klickitat Wildlife Area – Fence Repair:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis Rich continued work on the fence line along Hill Road on the Hatchery Unit. They set more posts for a new gate, built rock jacks for a new brace at the south end of the fence, and cleared brush from the north end of the fence. The project is still in progress and has attracted the attention of several area residents, all of whom are pleased to see the fence being repaired.



*Hill Road fence line repair*

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

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Public Access:** Conflict Specialist McDonald performed turkey hunter outreach on Western Pacific Timberlands (WPT) in Klickitat County. Handouts with rules for recreating on Hancock land and a Feel Free to Hunt agreement area map were given to hunters and placed on

windshields of parked vehicles. All hunters contacted appreciated being given a map. McDonald also picked up trash at several WPT land access points.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Mt. St. Helens Volcanic Monument Presentation:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Biologist Bergh presented information on elk ecology, the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area, the Mt. St. Helens Elk Herd Population Study, and elk hoof disease to a group of seasonal Monument employees and volunteers. The group had lots of good questions and should be ready to answer lots of visitor questions this summer!

**District 9:**

**Bear Depredation Program Training for hunters:** Biologist Stephens attended training for hound hunters highlighting changes to reporting requirements for the bear depredation program on timberlands. Overall, the changes were well received and seem to be an overall improvement for all parties. The changes are being implemented to improve the collection of harvest data and streamline the process of issuing permits while also focusing on an increased effort in WDFW staff verification of bear timber damage. Conflict Specialist Conklin called several of the Industrial Forest Companies to explain the changes to the bear depredation verification process and to begin getting keys to access gates.

**Deterrents – Wildlife Conflict:** Conflict Specialist McDonald maintained the turbo-fladry fencing installed around a Trout Lake dairy's hay field. A neighbor observed an elk jumping over the six-foot-tall turbo-fladry. Trail cameras were installed to see how the wildlife reacts to the turbo-fladry. As part of the signed Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement, the dairy owner herded over 100 elk off of a different hay field and into the forest. McDonald lent him a bird banger to help with hazing.



***Elk react to turbo fladry.***

Conflict Specialist McDonald dropped off 300 feet of used woven wire fencing at a non-profit Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Trout Lake. The used fencing will allow CSA

participants to extend the existing four-foot woven wire fence to eight-feet and keep deer from damaging crops.

**Deer and Elk Damage – District 9:** Conflict Specialist McDonald spoke with a Ridgefield farmer experiencing deer damage to clover and grass hay fields, raspberries, apple trees, and a home garden. The landowner has tried bird bangers, motion detector sprinklers, and he hangs electric fence wires in apple trees. Additional deterrent ideas were discussed, as were Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA), kill permits, and the Region 5 deer hunt Master Hunter pool. McDonald stressed low cost fencing available for the garden. The farmer will call back after talking it over with family members.



*Sign in Packwood.*

Conflict Specialist McDonald installed propane cannon on an Appleton area wheat field. The farmer/rancher has a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement with WDFW and is in the process of trying several preventative measures. The mylar strips installed last week deterred the elk for only a few days.

#### **District 10:**

**Commercial Orchard:** Conflict Specialist Conklin contacted landowners interested in planting a commercial orchard. The landowners currently live in California but eventually plan on relocating to the family property in Mossyrock. Conklin gave advice such as using welded hog-wire fencing and building the fence at least eight feet high. Conklin also spoke with them about the potential for cooperative fencing funds. Conklin explained the use of Master Hunters if needed for lethal deterrent before the fence is constructed.



**Elk Damage:** Conflict Specialist Conklin measured the grass inside an exclusion fence on the Sprague farm in Morton and compared it to the unprotected grass in the field that had been grazed by elk. There was little difference in growth between the two areas.

*Exclusion fence to compare growth of protected grass vs. grass grazed by elk.*

**Master Hunters:** Conflict Specialist Conklin has coordinated with several Master Hunters to volunteer for hazing of elk and repairing fence. One master hunter has already assisted with fence repair in the Morton area.

**Deterrents:** Conflict Specialist Conklin checked trail cameras on the Curtis property. There is no sign of bear in the area yet. She did capture 140 pictures of deer activity. There is one area in particular that appears to be a high traffic area. This area also has a motioned sensor noise device and the video camera will be mounted in the high traffic deer area next week to record reactions of deer to the noise device.

## **REGION 6**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Bald Eagle and Osprey:** Biologist Tirhi met with landowners to document a new Bald Eagle territory at Deer Park, Fox Island and a new location for a territory at Saratoga, Gig Harbor.

Tirhi also checked activity at the new osprey pole and platform location at Chambers Bay Park, University Place. Tirhi had worked previously with Pierce County staff to install a new platform and pole for osprey and nest boxes for purple martin when former sites had to be removed as part of an environmental cleanup project. Unfortunately, the ospreys chose a higher location to nest – a concrete structure on site. The new site is near high human foot traffic at the park which provides lots of opportunity for public viewing; the downside is the nest may present a safety issue to public underneath. Tirhi has advised the county to take precautions for ensuring public safety with falling sticks/nest. Tirhi will document the site and has offered any assistance needed to county staff.



***New osprey nest location at Chambers Bay, University Place*** – Photo courtesy of Tacoma News Tribune.

**Western Snowy Plovers:** Biologists Hahn and Doorly began monitoring snowy plovers (SNPL) at Leadbetter this week. Work was done in conjunction with Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Biologist Ritchie and included driving and walking SNPL surveys, preparation for this nesting season, as well as maintenance and replacement of nesting signs.

Several pairs of SNPL were sighted this week at Leadbetter, as well as larger feeding groups. It appears as though some SNPL are paired, while others were observed in larger groups. On Thursday, a larger number of SNPL were observed with a total of 24 individuals. Both banded and unbanded individuals were observed. SNPL tracks were observed on a few days this week, but none indicated nesting activity.

Total SNPL individuals observed at Leadbetter: 37 (10 males, 10 females and 17 unknown). No nests or scrapes were found this week.

**Fishers:** Biologist Michaelis mapped and sought permission from City of Hoquiam to conduct fisher monitoring in a hexagonal area that encompasses five square miles just north of Hoquiam. Cameras will be installed on May 23 and will be active for six weeks in order to detect fisher and collect hair samples for DNA analysis.

**North Bay Osprey Relocation:** Biologist Skriletz worked with Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU) over the past year to create an alternate location for a pair of ospreys that would lose their nest site when the high tension towers were removed from North Bay in Mason County. A site for a new pole and platform was identified that would appeal to the osprey and still be visible to the local citizens that enjoyed watching the nesting birds. When the osprey left after last nesting season, TPU removed the old nest, installed bird deterrents and erected the new pole. When the birds returned earlier this month, they attempted to re-nest on the tower but were unable to negotiate the deterrent structures. Within a few days the pair adopted the new platform. It was refreshing to work with an organization that planned, well in advance, to address the inevitable osprey conflict instead of waiting until the birds were nesting before contacting WDFW.



**Left:** *Osprey pair perched on near tower as old nesting tower across the bay is removed.*

**Right:** *View of the new platform with nest on 110 foot pole within view of the WDFW access on North Bay.*

**Sequim Site** – Biologist Ament conducted her fourth survey of the season at the site near Sequim on April 22, 2014. There was sunshine and shadows at the start of the survey. The temperature ranged from 53 to 54 degrees. There was a very strong cool wind that ranged from 5.3 – 11.3 mph. Similar to the previous week, the weather conditions deteriorated mid-way during the survey. It became cloudy and there was minimal to no shadows present. There were not official protocol weather conditions for the entire survey. However, a total of 549 TCBs were counted during the survey. Adult



*Color variant of Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly*

butterflies were observed on each of the 23 sections on the route. A few larvae were actually still observed along the survey area. There are very few plants in bloom at the site. Many TCBs were observed nectaring on dandelions in bloom (see photos). Biologist Ament observed an unusual butterfly on the site (see photo). She took a few photos and sought identification from others. Biologists Linders and McMillan reported that the specimen was a color variant of Taylor's. Biologist Ament also observed a TCB being predated upon by ants (see photo). Private Land Biologist Ivan Stocker reported a count of "close to 300" during his count on April 23, 2014 at the site. Weather conditions for his survey were not reported. Surveys will continue this week.



*Taylor's Checkerspot butterflies dine on dandelions.*

**Bald Eagle Management – New Nest Documentation:** Biologist Ament continues to dedicate time to documenting new bald eagle nests within the district. Sandy Fletcher (past part-time assistant) is assisting with this project. Last week Biologist Ament spent time gathering landowner information for all the new nest trees. She provided this information, along with Township, Section, and Range information to Sandy. GPS coordinates for each nest were determined from locations shown as accurate as possible from maps. Some GPS locations were collected in the field. Biologist Ament will be reviewing draft forms for four new territories in Clallam County this week. After these are finalized, data forms/maps will be produced for some new nests in existing territories.

**Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly (TCB) – Reintroduction:** Biologists Linders, Randolph, Walker and Johnson have initiated distance sampling surveys for adult Taylor's checkerspots on all six occupied sites in the Puget lowlands. The flight season has been off to a very gradual start, but all that is likely to end with the current forecast for a week of sun and warm temperatures. The first adult was observed at GHP on April 14 and was the only individual observed during that round of surveys. During a second round of surveys, three adults were observed at GHP with no adults observed at the other reintroduction sites. Five adults were observed at R76 (extant site) during non-protocol conditions by JBLM/CNLM staff on April 17, and a protocol survey on April 21 counted 28 adults; no adults were observed at T7S (new reintroduction site) that day. Surveys on April 25 counted 11 adults at SCS, 13 at T7S, and 0 at PCM. GHP was surveyed April 26, where 11 adults were observed. No protocol survey has been conducted at R50 since adult flight began; the last valid survey occurred on April 13. While access to R76 has generally been good, one day/week access to R50 has hindered survey efforts and continues to be an issue.

**Harbor Seal Tagging:** Biologist Murphie assisted the Marine Mammal Investigations Unit of WDFW with attempts to catch and tag 12 harbor seals in the Bremerton area this week. Six adult seals were captured by hand off of their rocky haul-out sites at Colvos Rocks this week. The capture technique essentially involves a controlled landing by boat onto the rocks followed by either a sneak and grab or a more robust scramble over the rocks in an attempt to capture a seal using a modified salmon landing net. Seals were temporarily held in individual nets for processing, which included measuring weight and length, collecting a blood sample, and tagging with a small computer that records location and dive behavior data (depth and duration of dives), before being released on-site. These computers are temporarily affixed to the seal and will drop-off during the next molting period. The capture crew also saw a small pod of killer whales.



**Left:** Harbor seal with brightly colored TDR pack. **Right:** Tagged seal headed back to the water.

**Survival and host plant study:** Biologist Linders has been working with Nate Haan from UW-Seattle to scope a new research project looking at host plant suitability relative to performance of prediapause Taylor's checkerspot larvae. The study will focus on host plant phenology relative to larval development to track potential effects of host plant desiccation on survival. A series of

biotic and abiotic factors will also be examined, including chemical analyses of plant nutrient content and iridoid glycoside content. Iridoid glycosides are compounds that are toxic to many species, but act as a feeding stimulant for Taylor's checkerspot larvae and are sequestered by them to increase their toxicity to potential predators. The three main host species of interest are *Plantago lanceolata*, *Castilleja hispida*, and the federally-threatened *Castilleja levisecta*.

**Matheny Habitat Project:** Eyes in the Woods held another work party on USFS land in the Matheny GMU. The project lead is Jack Smith. Jack reported that there were at least 10 volunteers each day with most of the volunteers associated with the Master Hunter program. Trained volunteer sawyers cut down trees into smaller pieces for other volunteers to pile. Weather ranged from mild overcast to rain, hail and wind. Reportedly the volunteers had a good time and got a lot of work down.

The volunteers are going to areas established by the USFS that were pre-commercially thinned. They are creating openings and paths through the jungle of debris for wildlife use. This project is partially funded through an ALEA grant.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Mourning Dove Surveys:** Biologist Michaelis attended a two and a half day training session in Sacramento, CA that was presented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Representatives from nearly all western states were present. A distance sampling approach will be used to replace the traditional call-count indices that have been employed since the 1960s. Related to the change in survey methodology, biologists will now conduct three replicate surveys that will consist of at least five off-point locations. The data collected will be used to estimate dove density and to assess biases that are associated with conducting call-count surveys from point locations that occur along roads. The survey route where Biologist Michaelis will apply this new methodology is located in the southeast portion of Grays Harbor County.

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Cleanups:** Biologist Harris continued to work on planning spring cleanups. The annual cleanup for Grays Harbor in cooperation with Eyes in the Woods is scheduled for Saturday, June 7. Locations for the cleanup are still being considered. A cleanup in Forks is in the planning process. This cleanup is intended to assist a large timber land owner with trash dumping problems associated with allowing motorized access to a popular fishing hole during the winter fishery. Efforts are being made to reach out to the local fishing community for assistance.

**Access Areas Prep:** Preparing seasonal lakes for the opener and touching up some year round lakes. Steve Sherlock came out to lend a hand on April 22. We were able to dress up five access sites that day. Tasks included weedeating, polesaw work, chainsaw work, hedge trimming fence lines, pulling scotch broom and blowing black top.



The first stage of the redevelopment was completed prior to the opener. Removed and replaced restrooms with CXT double vault. Black-topped the ADA parking area, black-topped the entrance and exit transitions to the county road, and additional parking was added to the lake side of the access. The crew also graded the five acre over-flow parking area.

*Entrance*



*Before*



*After*



*Clear Lake, Thurston County*



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

## **Wildlife Management**

**West Sound Wildlife Shelter Benefit:** Biologist Ament attended the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual West Sound Wildlife Shelter benefit on April 26, 2014 near Poulsbo. As a silent auction item they had a “Day in the Field with Biologist Ament.” She helped raised \$450 for the shelter. A dentist from Port Townsend was the highest bidder (and had actually “won” her at a previous benefit). He would like Biologist Ament to inspect a new 80 acre parcel of property he has purchased and provide him with ideas on how to improve wildlife habitat on the land.

## **Private Lands/Access**

**Landowner Contacts – Mason County:** Conflict Specialist Novack contacted Kamilche area farm leasee regarding negotiations for DPCA in 2014.

**Landowner Contacts – Thurston County:** Conflict Specialist Novack was contacted by a landowner with a DPCA regarding permit questions and other questions relating to our hunting regulations.

**Landowner Contacts – Pierce County:** Conflict Specialist Novack was contacted by a Graham resident regarding elk damage to ornamental trees. Novack also transported additional posts from Region 3 surplus for a Cranberry farm near Eatonville. He also contacted with a Buckley area dairy to resolve questions following the community meeting. Novack made contact with a pumpkin farmer to draft a cooperative fencing agreement sent for his review.

**Master Hunter Advisory Group (MHAG) Meeting:** Conflict Specialist Novack and Biologist Harris attended the MHAG meeting. They presented stats and trends of permit hunts for Master Hunters in Region 6 and a summary of the trial run on rank order flexibility when deploying master hunters with designated permit. They also provided a list of problems encountered this year with Master Hunters. The intention of the presentation was to start a discussion and encourage the MHAG members to look at the problems from WDFW staff and the landowner’s point of view.

**Grayland Cranberries:** Biologist Harris was contacted by the Grayland Cranberry Growers Association. They requested a meeting to discuss the wildlife conflict issues. A special meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 1 at 6:00 p.m. Harris has already started working with some landowners. The association is made up of 67 growers. Previous contact from growers indicates that elk and bear are a problem, but deer are becoming an increasing problem. Plant damage and fruit consumption hurt production while industry standards for animal feces in product continue to get stricter. Many of the growers have indicated this is their primary concern as an entire bog can be denied, costing many thousands of dollars. Estimated value of crops ranges from \$4,000 to \$12,000 per acre depending on variety, weather and market conditions.

Conflict Specialist Novack also attended a meeting between WDFW, timber industry, and hound hunters regarding the upcoming bear depredation hunts and changes to the permitting process.