

# Wildlife Program

Week of June 16-22, 2014

## **WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION**

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

**Pygmy Rabbit Recovery:** Biologists JoAnn Wisniewski and Jon Gallie, Technician Erin Duvuvuei, and Interns Jones, Jacobs, and Baker with the much appreciated assistance of the Environmental Exploration Class from Wenatchee (a cooperative program through the Chelan Co. Extension and the Wenatchee Valley Tech Center) completed a capture and release at 1 enclosure at Sagebrush Flats (SBF). We deployed 130 traps and were able to capture 37 rabbits (31 new kits, 1 recap kit, and 5 adults). All the kits met the weight requirement and were released to the wild, AVID tags were placed in the 5 adult female rabbits, and all the adults and recaptured kits were released back into the breeding enclosure. Despite 130 traps and a great deal of effort, the team was only able to cover a bit more than 50% of the existing burrows in the large breeding enclosure and a large number of kits still need to be captured. We also attempted to empty the 2 nurseries at SBF this week. We released 10 kits from the nurseries to the wild; this emptied one and leaves about 5 kits in the other. The additional nursery kits will be released this week. Technician Erin Duvuvuei and Interns Jones, Jacobs, and Baker installed the fourth and final new release site at SBF. This included identifying 25 sites and installing 2 artificial burrows at each site. In addition they continued to clean up old alfalfa piles at the breeding enclosure feeding stations.

**Shrub-Steppe Resource Monitoring Approach:** Section Manager Bruce Thompson and Biologist Gerry Hayes met with Science Division staff to discuss options for developing refined land cover/land use data coverage to define a sampling framework for shrub-steppe resource monitoring. Efforts are underway to use existing vegetation modeling and mapping to identify vegetation communities that may serve as resource monitoring targets as well as to define overall spatial units for sampling of wildlife species of interest.

**Western Gray Squirrel Presence and Habitat Detection:** Section Managers Penny Becker and Bruce Thompson, Biologist Gary Wiles and Science Division research scientists and biometrician met to discuss options for establishing a sampling framework to detect western gray squirrel presence and prospective habitat presence within species range in Washington. Discussion focused on abilities to maintain inferential capability, understand functional sampling units, incorporate citizen science assistance, rely on tested hair-tube as preferred detection method, and begin field work in 2014 with adaptive options in later years. Discussion also focused on ensuring effective representation of private and public land within the sampling design to ensure that representative detection is achieved among all habitat classes.

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

**WildWatch Cameras:** Conservation Assessment Section staff continued efforts to ensure sustainable operation of WildWatch Cameras for which still images are accessible via the WDFW website. Currently, there are cameras operating to provide public viewing of nesting bald eagle, osprey, tree swallow, barn owl, and burrowing owl. There are also operational cameras to view a harbor seal haul-out site and salmon at a hatchery facility. These systems are a highlight viewing opportunity for many in Washington and beyond.

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

**Listing and Recovery Section Reports:** Biologist Gary Wiles reorganized the section's supply of printed copies of status reviews, recovery plans, and other reports dating back to the 1980s. Up to four copies of each report were retained for future reference and requests; these were consolidated onto a single shelf in the Listing and Recovery Section. Excess copies of reports were recycled. This change follows the recent elimination of the publications cubicle in the Wildlife Program's administrative area and reflects the availability of most reports on the Department's webpage. Reports not yet online will soon be made available there.

**REGION 1**

**Golden Eagle Survey:** A helicopter survey to document juvenile productivity at all occupied nest territories was accomplished on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Of 24 golden eagle nesting territories that were surveyed for occupancy within District One, nine were identified as occupied by an adult pair. Of these, only five territories produced juvenile eagles that were observed in this week's survey. A total of seven juveniles were observed and photographed from the helicopter. Two nest territories had two juveniles each in a nest, and three territories had only one juvenile each.



***Above: A juvenile golden eagle in a nest at China Bend on 6/19/2014.***



***Right: Two juvenile golden eagles in a nest near Lake Ellen on 6/19/2014.***

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

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Golden Eagle Banding:** Biologist Thorne Hadley assisted Biologist Wik, Biologist Vekasy and State Raptor Biologist Watson on capturing, banding and fitting transmitters on juvenile golden eagles.



***Biologist Thorne Hadley holds an 8 week old golden eagle.***

**Calf Carcass in Tiger Hill Allotment:** Specialist Shepherd investigated a dead calf in the Tiger Hill Allotment and determined there was no wolf sign or large carnivore evidence on the bones and carcass, and near the site.

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

### **Private Lands/Access**

**CRP Habitat Restoration Demo Plots:** Biologist Lewis completed mowing on the demo plots; the purpose of the mowing was to reduce competition to newly seeded wildflowers. Lewis also spent time with the land manager looking at other areas of the property that have undergone herbicide applications to reduce undesirable vegetation and release desirable vegetation from suppression by the undesirables. The native plants in the area have responded well and the area is heavily dominated by natives.

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

### **Other**

**New Vehicle for Rasley:** Conflict Specialist Rasley received his new state vehicle. Lots of horse power and dang nice.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**RCO Grants** – WAAM Palmer submitted his request for scheduling the final presentation of the Kettle River Access Project to the RCO's Water Access Committee. Palmer also worked on recommended changes to the presentation that were provided by the committee at the technical review.

## **REGION 2**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Okanogan Wolves:** Specialist Heilhecker spent time with the range rider looking in an area where he believes there is wolf activity. No fresh wolf sign has been found, yet. She suggested the ranger rider hang the trail camera she loaned him. Specialist Heilhecker spent several days in the field driving the district and hiking trails looking for wolf sign.

**Mosquito Control Survey and Monitoring:** Biologist Finger, Regional Wildlife Program manager Monda, and Wildlife Area Manager and Assistant Manager, Fitzgerald and Cole, attended a meeting with Grant County Mosquito Control to discuss ways to reduce impacts of ATVs used by GCMCD to monitor mosquito larvae on WDFW lands. These activities have the potential to start wildfires, spread weeds, and disturb wildlife during breeding season. The discussion was very productive and both sides are working to identify where ATV access is necessary, and how to minimize impacts by establishing a trail system. Biologists Finger and Duvuvuei began designing a monitoring project to detect potential impacts of adulticides on frogs, fish, and macroinvertebrates in the North Potholes unit of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. This area supports the northern leopard frog, a state endangered wildlife species. Because diversity is an important component to a healthy ecosystem, conserving and protecting endangered species is one of the main points of emphasis in the WDFW mission statement. Throughout the upcoming summer, the biologists will monitor mortality of tadpoles and fish in floating cages randomly placed in selected ponds. Additionally, the biologists will monitor impacts to macro-invertebrates. Knowing the impacts of adulticides on frogs, fish, and macro-invertebrates will help biologists as they manage the sensitive species' population.

**Pygmy Rabbit Kit Capture and Release:** This week Biologists Wisniewski and Gallie, Technician Duvuvuei, and Interns Jones, Jacobs, and Baker with the much appreciated assistance of the Environmental Exploration Class from Wenatchee (a cooperative program through the Chelan Co. Extension and the Wenatchee Valley Tech Center) completed a capture and release at one of the enclosures at Sagebrush Flats (SBF). We deployed 130 traps and were able to capture 37 rabbits (31 new kits, 1 recap kit, and 5 adults). All the kits met the weigh requirement and were released to the wild, AVID tags were placed in the 5 adult female rabbits, and all the adults and recap kit were released back into the breeding enclosure. Despite 130 traps and a great deal of effort we were only able to cover just over half of the existing burrows in the large breeding enclosure and a large number of kits still need to be captured. We also attempted to empty the 2 nurseries at SBF this week. We released 10 kits from the nurseries to the wild; this emptied one and leaves about 5 kits in the other. The additional nursery kits will be released this week.



## **Wildlife Areas**

**North Central Washington Prescribed Burn Team:** Wet weather dominated the weekend and early work week which precluded any burning until fuels dry. However, Monday, the prescribed fire team traveled to the Sherman Creek Wildlife and by Tuesday they completed constructing and testing a hose-lay around critical holding areas on the Rail Burn Unit (170 acres). They also patrolled the Canal Unit that was burned the previous week and mopped-up a few hotspots, and repaired a neighbor's fence damaged by a tree that fell from a unit burned in the spring of 2013. They returned to the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area where they removed a hose-lay from the Spike 4 Unit that is now well secured. The team then cleaned and rolled hose, and organized and stored their equipment.

Next week the weather forecasts are favorable for burning and the team anticipates completing the Canal and Rail Units on the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area. If they are able to do so all of the existing prescribed fire burn plans will have been implemented except one on the Sinlahekin that is not funded.

Initial progress began on prescribed fire burn plans for an 824 acre project consisting of 7 burn units on the Chesaw Wildlife Unit – Scotch Creek Wildlife Area. This project is being funded by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

## **Private Lands/Access**

**State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE):** Biologist Dougherty assisted a producer with questions regarding his upcoming SAFE signup and what expectations there are for him to enroll in the program. Biologist Dougherty addressed all questions and the producer plans to enroll in the Program. Biologist Dougherty and Supervisor Cotton met with a member of the Adams County Farm Service Agency (FSA) to discuss upcoming SAFE signups. The main reason for this meeting was to coordinate efforts so that implementation goes smoothly. Additionally, Biologist Dougherty will be writing the NRCS Conservation Plans for the bulk of the contracts. Biologist Comstock further checked SAFE fields in Douglas County, which are scheduled to be seeded with forbs in the fall. In preparation for forb seeding Biologist Comstock began creating forb polygons in accordance with the requirement that 15% of enrolled acres be seeded with forbs. Private Lands Biologist Braaten met with Douglas Co. Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) staff and two landowners about SAFE contracts for fields that had failed or had issues. These fields will be redone with new timeline on field prep to deal with cheat grass and weed issues.

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

## **Wildlife Management**

**Recreational Opportunities:** Biologist Finger observed a pair of northern mockingbirds in the Gloyd Unit of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. These mockingbirds have been seen very predictably off of Road 16 between the towns of Moses Lake and Stratford. Take Road 16 west

from Stratford Road for 3 miles until the road turns south and heads downhill. When Road 16 turns back to the west and a spur road continues to the south, you're in the right spot. Look to the tops of fence posts and farm equipment to the east to see them perched. They've been there since June 10<sup>th</sup> but seem to be staying put.

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Gallie conducted a survey on the Chelan Butte herd, focusing on bands of ewes and lamb production. This year was of particular interest given that a group of 4 ewes wandered into the Entiat Valley last year and came in close proximity to domestic grazing allotments. These 4 ewes may have possibly originated from and/or dispersed back into this herd. If contact had been made, signs of pneumonia outbreak might possibly be seen in lambs at this time of year. Gallie observed a total of 132 bighorn sheep, with 97 ewes, 25 lambs and 10 yearling rams. Excluding the 40+ other rams he did not search for. This count puts the heard minimum estimate at 170. For now, there are no signs of pneumonia outbreak in the Chelan herd. Monitoring will need to continue throughout the summer and fall before we can confidently say there was no impact.



*A group of ewes and lambs licking and eating mineral deposits from an expose bank on Chelan Butte WLA. (JGallie)*

**Mountain Goat Surveys:** The Wenatchee and Yakima districts are working together on coordination of Mt. Goat surveys in Kittitas and Chelan Counties in the Alpine lakes area. Historically, both sides of the county line were open to goat harvest, and have since been closed for many years. In an effort to redefine a hunt unit for the area, Biologists Bernatowicz, Volsen, Gallie and Moore have been working to organize a volunteer survey effort. Volunteers will be sent specific areas to tally numbers. Biologists Gallie and Moore digitized current and historical records of mountain goat observations in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area. This will

be used to assist members of the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance who volunteer on a large scale effort to document current distribution and numbers of goats in the Wilderness area. This will also help refine target areas for future helicopter based sight-ability surveys to determine population size and possibilities of permits.

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

**Private Lands/Access**

**Deer depredation:** Specialist Heilhecker talked to a man in Riverside whose dog was injured by a doe. The doe had been spending time in and around his yard. When the wiener dog approached the doe, it stomped the dog crushing its thorax and causing additional injuries. The RP took the dog to the vet for surgery, which cost approximately \$1000. The RP requested information on how to encourage the deer to leave the area. He was concerned for the safety of his children, ages 2 and 4, but did not want the doe harmed. He understood the doe was probably protecting a fawn. Specialist Heilhecker talked to an orchardist in Tonasket regarding deer that keep compromising the fence after he repairs it. Eventually, she was able to discern that several fawns were inside the orchard. He was told to pick up the fawns and move them to the outside of the fence. Specialist Heilhecker reminded the RP party to also keep gates closed. The RP called back later and stated moving the fawns worked. The does found their fawns immediately. The orchardist seemed impressed.

**REGION 3**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Burrowing Owls:** Biologist Gregory and Volunteer Ross captured another couple of burrowing owl broods in Pasco. They managed to band 4 more owlets. Another 6 owlets were too small to mark.

**Waterfowl:** The 8<sup>th</sup> annual Canada goose round-up took place in the Tri-Cities this week. A total of 249 birds were captured by a crew that included volunteers from the Washington Waterfowl Association and Biologist Stutzman. Of these, 81 (33%) were recaptures. Newly banded birds were 56% female (94/168). Birds hatched this year made up 13% (21/168) of the geese captured for the first time. The information collected from returned bands is used to track goose movements and survival and helps biologists set hunting seasons.



*Goose capture in the Tri-Cities. Photo: S. Gregory*

**Immobilization training:** Biologist Gregory attended the WDFW wildlife immobilization training led by Dr. Mansfield. Many topics were covered including physical restraint, chemical immobilization and species specific concerns. Practical skills covered included chemical immobilization of two domestic goats and range practice with dart guns.



*Dr. Mansfield providing instruction on the use of hobbles during immobilization training. Photo: S.Gregory*

**Public Comments:** Biologist Stutzman attended the Game Management Plan public comment meeting in Kennewick. A number of Region 3 staff were in attendance along with Game Division staff from Olympia

**Mt Goats:** Biologist Bernatowicz continued to coordinate Mt. Goat surveys with WDFW staff and the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance. RMGA has 10-12 volunteers and has set the survey for August 16-17<sup>th</sup>.

**Bighorn Sheep Surveys:** Biologist Bernatowicz checked Umtanum sheep/habitat near the Cottonwoods 2 fire. The fire had minimal impact to summer sheep range. The south end and upper ridge burned, but the primary range was good. All the sheep were well north toward Roza Dam, probably due to helicopters, etc. There were a few hotspots still burning well within the perimeter of the fire and crews were seen climbing the ridge.

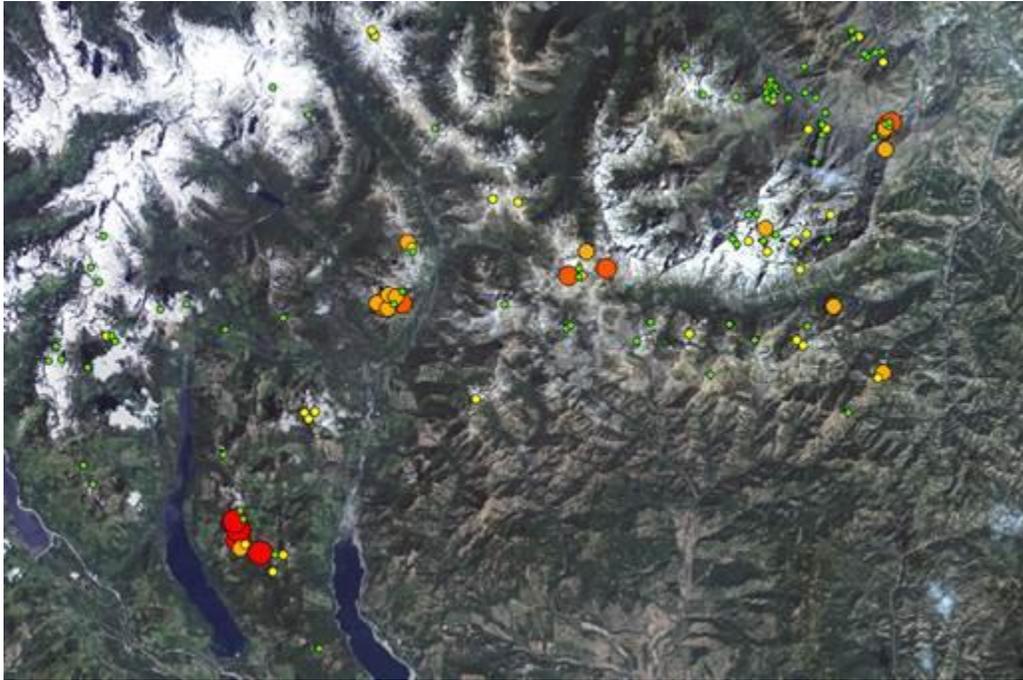


*Cottonwoods 2 fire impact to the south end of Umtanum bighorn sheep range.*

**Golden Eagles:** Biologist Bernatowicz coordinated with the USFS to have staff help Researcher Watson with radioing an Oak Creek Golden Eagle chick.

**Trumpter Swan:** Biologist Bernatowicz and Waterfowl Section Manager Kraege viewed some Trumpter Swans in a memorial park in Yakima. The Swans were legally purchased a few years ago and now have seven cygnets. The Swans are fenced. The Trumpter Swans Society has been communicating with the park about options for the cygnets.

**Mt. Goats:** Biologist Moore finished organizing data to better inform a ground survey effort that will be taking place in Northern Kittitas County. This effort included reviewing historic survey and harvest records as well as interviewing Cle Elum Ranger District Backcountry Rangers.



*Map illustrating all historic and current Mt. Goat sighting in the area of interest. Symbols are graduated in size and color based on total goats observed.*

**Colockum Elk:** Biologist Moore continued the preparations for an upcoming bull elk capture. The capture will take place towards the end of July. Moore continues to monitor incoming GPS data.

**Golden Eagles:** Biologist Moore updated the online tracking sheet with the most recent productivity data and began filling out the standard and supplemental data forms for the season. Moore also checked the Robinson territory prior to an event on the LT Murray and to provide Jim Watson with an update.



*The Robinson eaglet seems to be doing well with an adult watching over.*

**Bighorn Sheep:** Moore updated the bighorn sheep tracking file with the CWU Interns observations. Moore once again continued working with the interns to help them focus on specific animals that still need visuals.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Manager Confer Morris attended a conference call with Olympia Lands staff and DNR Land Manager Phil Wolfe to discuss the shooting range in the Capital Forest and what has worked and not worked for them. Manager Confer Morris then met Melinda Posner, WDFW, at Capital Forest to review the shooting range. Site is a gravel pit with high backstop and well contained. It was pretty clean the day we were there. DNR has quite a few people that go in to pick up brass and also clean up garbage. Manager Confer Morris lands staff also had discussions about whether she had sufficient plans developed to move forward with a FARR grant. Confer Morris sent an e-mail to RCO asking whether FARR grants included funding for planning and design.



### ***Capital Forest Triangle Shooting Area***

**Access Cleanup:** Access staff serviced (pick up trash, clean out houses, replace signs if needed) the following access area's: Hyde, Whitstran, Snively, Duportail, Ringold, Vernita, Woodhouse, Lavender Lake, Bell, Teanaway junction, King horn Slough, Mattoon, Fio Rito, Thrall, MP8-10, Tim's Pond, Oak Cr, Mellis Rd, Fitzsimmons, pond 4 & 5, Zillah Bridge.

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman met with staff from the USFS Naches Ranger Station to inspect the Milk Creek Motorcycle Trail that crosses both our ownerships. Huffman is applying for and RCO NOVA grant to improve the trail which has been closed since 2011. The trail has 3 creek crossings that need bridges and several other sections in need of repairs. The trails staff from the Forest Service provided good input on the needs and is willing to complete the work on their ownership as match.

**Rock Creek Grant:** Manager Huffman entered project information into PRISM for the Rock Creek NOVA grant and coordinated with Engineer Hansen to enter cost information. In addition Huffman worked with Cartographer Talmadge to update the maps for the grant.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Elk Conflicts:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored harvest of DPP permits in Elk Area 3721. Six bull elk (1-2pt., 1-4pt., 3-5pt., and 1-7pt.) were reported harvested this week. Total harvest for the summer bull season is 26 bull elk.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with landowners and hunt managers on elk locations to pressure them away from valuable crops. He also updated the damage permit issuance and harvest reporting spreadsheet on SharePoint. During two late night spotlight patrols on Rattlesnake Mountain several groups of elk were encouraged to flee back to Hanford.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with crop adjuster Steve VanTassel to plan and coordinate for this summer's wheat damage appraisals and to discuss the potential for multi-peril claims resulting from poor wheat yields. Work with Ste. Michelle Wine Estates continues to develop an agreement for cost-share fencing at their Cold Creek vineyard.

**CRP Safe Program:** Stutzman met with three landowners about the CRP Safe program in Benton County. Interest in the program is much higher this year since there will not be a general CRP signup. Stutzman also met with both Benton and Franklin FSA about the Safe project and delivered them updated factsheets to distribute to interested landowners.

**Elk Depredation:** A landowner in Tampico (near Yakima) called Specialist Wetzel to report elk problems with her garden. Options were discussed with the landowner and a visit to look at the feasibility of an owner-constructed fence was planned. Specialist Wetzel also hazed elk from an irrigated pasture in the Caribou Creek area near Ellensburg.



**Wolf Activities:** Specialist Wetzel contacted range rider Johnson each day this week with wolf location data. Specialist Wetzel also contacted range riders Brunson, Ward, and Holcomb to discuss any recent wolf or wolf sign contacts. Future activities and logistics, access, and coordination issues were also discussed.

*Specialist Wetzel continued dismantling fladry in the Teanaway primary turnout area.*

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

##### **Wildlife Areas**

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area Weed Control:** Manager Huffman drove the Mud Lake road checking on the weed spraying contractor and taking some pictures. Weeds in the area are very heavy this year and it is taking the contractor longer than expected to complete. The areas treated are seeing good control of diffuse knapweed. The contractor also found a small patch of hounds tongue near Mud Lake which will be added to the list of weeds.

**Cowiche Fire:** Manager Huffman started to respond to the Cowiche Area after a fire was called by DNR crews on the Cottonwood 2 fire. Some was spotted in the Cowiche Area and the original description was near the Cowiche Unit. A helicopter was dispatched and located the fire on DNR in the Ahtanum. Huffman returned to the office. The last word received was the fire was kept at about 4 acres and a fire inspector was being called in to determine the cause.

**Cottonwood Shooting Area Fire:** Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor responded to a fire that started at the Cottonwood shooting area at ~10:45 am. The fire grew

quickly due to gusty winds and was threatening homes in the Cabin Lane and Buffalo Road areas by mid-afternoon. DNR upgraded the fire to a Type 3, which brought in a team to manage the fire and many more resources, including 2 dozers, 4 helicopters, and 2 retardant planes. Yakima County Fire went State MOB, also significantly increasing the resources available to fight the fire, particularly for structure protection. The fire grew to 8,942 acres by Tuesday evening, and although it wasn't officially contained until Thursday, it didn't grow any larger. Five outbuildings burned, along with half a dozen older vehicles, an older boat, and camper, near Cabin Lane. We do have a fire break along the elk fence/urban interface, (including the Cabin Lane area) that is maintained by WLA staff, but with the winds it just wasn't enough to contain the fire.



*Cottonwood drainage during and after fire went through.*

The fire burned through approximately 3.1 miles of elk fence in the Cabin Lane and Buffalo Road areas, although the majority of that was just a light scorching of the poles. Approximately ½ mile of fence in the Cabin Lane area was severely impacted (>5 posts burned through in a 10 post section) by the fire, with another ~0.85 miles lightly burned. In the Buffalo Road area, ~1/2 mile of fence was moderately impacted (2-4 posts in a 10-post section), with another ~1.25 miles lightly burned. In addition, 1-2 BPA and 2 BOR power poles were burned severely enough to need replacement, but no lines were disrupted.



*Cabin Lane ~0.5 miles of burned elk fence.*

Assistant Manager Taylor along with Tony Gilmer of DNR, are the fire investigators for the Cottonwood #2 fire.

Manager Confer Morris submitted a PAM form to RD Livingston and AD Pamplin to close the Wenas WLA to target shooting for the rest of the summer (until October 1). She contacted Katie Witke, Wenas Valley Muzzleloaders, to inform them of the impending closure. Katie was

supportive and said she would get an e-mail notification out to the club members. Confer Morris also worked with Public Affairs on a news release that went out end of day Thursday and forwarded the news release to Yakima Herald Republic and Kittitas Daily Record contacts. She spoke to Scott Sandsberry Friday morning and he got an article on the closure into Saturday's paper.



***Fire moving towards houses on Cabin Lane. Several outbuildings and vehicles burned.***



***Buffalo Road Burned Elk Fence.***

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt met Tuesday with our two CWU interns who will be assisting in the inventory of our recent Gnat Flats acquisition. They are set to begin work next Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. Hunt did some maintenance work on the truck that we're borrowing from Steve Wetzel for them to drive.

## **REGION 4**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Lower Snoqualmie Acoustic Bat Monitoring – Citizen Science:** Biologist Anderson worked with members of Bats Northwest and a student intern to kick-off the third and final year of acoustic bat use surveys of the three Lower Snoqualmie Valley WDFW wildlife management units; Stillwater, Cherry Valley, and Crescent Lake. Stillwater and Cherry Valley were surveyed this week. Both resulted in some good bat use documented and data collected for future species analysis.

**Common Loons Monitoring:** Biologist Anderson visited five area lakes that have loon use, some of which are breeding lakes. Currently there are two known breeding lakes have birds on

eggs. One lake was a new site for reconnaissance. No birds were present and the habitat likely would only promote a migratory staging lake.

**Species of Greatest Conservation Needs (SGSN):** Assistant District Biologist Cyra performed vegetation management at a long-term marbled murrelet survey station. This location has been used for surveys, refresher training, and species monitoring activities of this threatened species for over 20 years. ADB Cyra will be monitoring a mid-season refresher training in the coming week for DNR permanent staff and seasonal murrelet surveyors.

**Low Elevation Pika Surveys:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued with Pika presence surveys at this low elevation site. Visual confirmation of pika's was obtained at a third location within the survey boundary. The three confirmed locations are distant enough from one another to indicate that this Pika population has likely existed in this unusual location for some time.



*Photo confirmation of third location of Pika at a low elevation site in the Stillaguamish Valley.*

**Raptor Handling Workshop:** Biologist DeBruyn gave a presentation on raptor handling to biologists and enforcement officers as part of the Wildlife Chemical Immobilization and Handling course given in Everett.

### Wildlife Areas

**Fir Island Farm Pre-Project Monitoring:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and the project consultant repaired water quality loggers that were unable to be calibrated in the field the week before, and re-launched them at the site. The water quality monitoring network is now fully intact on the site, and is taking measurements of water temperature, depth, and salinity at 13 groundwater and surface water locations.

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Department of Ecology Staff on a Technical Assistance visit. The grazing areas were toured while Manager Boehm pointed out exclusion fencing and off-channel watering areas. Ecology was pleased that these actions were taking place and looks forward to continued involvement concerning wetland enhancement strategies.

**Stillwater Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager met with Frohning Dairy to discuss field layout for planting. Approximately 55 acres of corn and barley were planted last week.

**Stillwater Unit – Planting corn & barley**



**Cherry Valley Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with staff from Sound Salmon Solutions (SSS), Wild Fish Conservancy, and Arbor-Metrics to discuss continued restoration planting and maintenance at the Waterwheel Creek Restoration Project. All members agreed that with multiple groups involved, a coordinated effort is desirable. Additionally, Manager Boehm reports that field prep has begun at Cherry Valley. Frohning Dairy hopes to expand crop acreage to 55 acres this season. Plans are set to finish soil prep and planting this week. Manager Boehm also reports that maintenance mowing was initiated last week. Focus areas included the designated dog training area and the field nearest the parking lot and watch tower.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Skagit Wildlife Area Agricultural Enhancement Program - Island Unit:** Skagit Wildlife Area staff coordinated with volunteers for field preparations and plantings, organized and scheduled ferry operations, repaired and maintained jet sled and barge ramps necessary for farming and ferry operation. NRT Cosgrove completed the planting of 13 acres of barley and 10 acres of fava beans this week.

**Skagit Wildlife Area Agricultural Enhancement Program - Samish Unit:** Staff completed draft of new Samish sharecrop lease that has been forwarded for approval.

**Samish River Unit (Welts) Access Improvement Grant:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw received comments from the Technical Review Team on the grant application to construct a parking area and pad for a portable restroom on the site. The application will be edited based on the comments and resubmitted by the July 18 final deadline.

**Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw provided an update to all regional program managers on project status prior to submitting permit applications for the project. The project design is ready for permit submittal and WDFW and Ducks Unlimited held a public open house for the project on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Frequent communication with all WDFW programs on restoration project development is consistent with Region 4 Restoration Pathway, which outlines the process for restoration projects on WDFW lands.

**Skagit Wildlife Area Agricultural Enhancement Program - Skagit ESA Restoration and Waterfowl Management Strategy:** After receiving comments on the last draft of the document from the WDFW project team, Projects Coordinator Brokaw updated the document and resent it to the group. The team will meet in the next few weeks to further develop the strategy proposal to provide beneficial waterfowl hunting opportunity and winter waterfowl forage in the Skagit and Samish deltas in light of ongoing estuary restoration projects.

**Frog Removal:** Manager Kessler coordinated with a fisherman who performed bullfrog control at Lake Terrell. In one night he had gigged 20 invasive bullfrogs (Photo by Kim Chandler).



**Field Mowing:** Natural Resource Tech Deyo mowed 10 acres of reed canary grass in the fields at the Lake Terrell and Intalco units. By mowing the fields now, the grass will grow back to a level that is perfect for pheasant hunting.

**Tennant Lake beaver Dams:** Natural Resource Tech Deyo removed beaver dams and cleared beaver deceiver pipes on the Tennant Lake unit.

**Nooksack Unit Noxious Weed Control:** Natural Resource Tech Deyo sprayed herbicides for noxious weed control on the Lake Terrell, Intalco and the Nooksack Units.

### **Private Lands/Access Management:**

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program:** Biologist Caldwell submitted new Waterfowl Quality Hunt contract requests via Novatus. Also, Biologist Caldwell began creating new waterfowl hunting sites via the Private Lands Access website. Biologist Caldwell confirmed an agreement by a new Skagit County landowner that will be providing 241 acres of land and five WQH sites in 2014.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Bald Eagle Management:** Biologist Anderson worked with King County DOT to examine a known territory and activity in regards to emergency work. Anderson conversed with KDOT, relayed requests for any territory updates, and passed along USFWS contacts and consideration website.

**Wildlife Conflicts:** Biologist Danilson coordinated with other department staff regarding a property boundary issues on a private property where a wildlife exclusion fence is being constructed. A cooperative fencing agreement partner in Skagit Valley near Concrete has a property boundary in common with WDFW. To address future fence maintenance issues, the landowner would like to prune and cut dead, dying and leaning trees near the boundary line. Establishing the property boundary line is required to determine whose property the trees are on before any work can be conducted. Danilson is working with Wildlife Area and Access Program staff (among others) to determine whether the property boundary can be established without conducting a survey.

### **Private Lands/Access Management**

**Spring Bear Hunt Season Closure:** Technician Otto finished securing all Spring Bear Hunt access gates in the Monroe and North Skagit area. Biologist Caldwell began drafting a summary report of the 2014 Spring Bear Hunt Season.

**Migratory Bird Enhancement Proposal:** Biologist Caldwell continued drafting a new Migratory Bird Enhancement Proposal for submission at the end of 2014. Technician Otto delivered an amended contract to a Whatcom County landowner for the 2014 season. All habitat enhancement projects in Whatcom County are now complete for the 2014 waterfowl season.

### Wildlife Areas

**DeBay's Slough Reserve:** Manager Rotton consulted with Wildlife Area Advisory Committee member, Martha Jordon to discuss the effort to map the game reserves. Ms. Jordon has been involved with the DeBay's property for many years and has some knowledge of the boundary issues. Good progress was made to identify the information needed for the mapping effort.

### Private Lands/Access

**Hunter Education Coordinator:** Steven Dazey presented a five year service award to volunteer instructor Jim Hickey who teaches at the West Coast Armory North in Everett on 6/16/14. Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey also presented a five year service award to volunteer



instructor Larry Walkden who teaches with the Camp Volasuca team in Sultan on 6/22/2014. Recognition of volunteers is a key to retention and the Hunter Education Department issues service certificates and pins for each five year anniversary. Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey also used the presentation of these awards in front of the hunter education class as an opportunity to talk to the adult students and the parents about the opportunity they have to become an instructor and help to pass on the hunting tradition to the next generation.

*Coordinator Dazey presenting a five year service certificate and pin to volunteer instructor Jim Hickey*

Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey visited two teaching teams and evaluated the quality of the program being delivered to the students. The Hunter Education Department guidelines call for observation and evaluation of each team at least once every two years. These visits allow for the coordinator to ensure that department policy and guidelines are being followed. It also allows the coordinator to pass on tips and techniques from other teams observed that could help to deliver the hunter education program. The teams visited in Langley and also La Connor are both doing a good job. Coordinator Dazey while visiting the team in La Connor was able to help by reading the exam to a student whose reading ability was limited.



*La Connor instructor Mike Kerley reviewing class content before the class takes their exam*

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

##### **Wildlife Management**

**Volunteer Management:** Biologist Anderson has been in coordination and contact with Woodland Park Zoo Citizen Breeding Amphibian Monitoring Project volunteers as well as Bats Northwest volunteers and a couple interns for ongoing amphibian volunteer management, data documentation assistance, and preparation for upcoming acoustic bat surveys on area WDFW Wildlife Units.

**Radio Communications:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra provided radio support to Program staff.

**Hearing evaluation:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra completed the annually required hearing evaluation.

**Performance Evaluation and Planning:** Assistant District Biologist Cyra met with District Biologist Milner to discuss this year's Performance Evaluation, Expectations, and to plan activities during the summer season.

**District 14 Wildlife Conflict Technician Recruitment:** Biologist Danilson reviewed applications, arranged an interview panel, and scheduled interviews with candidates for the non-permanent Wildlife Conflict Technician position. Initial interviews will be conducted the week of June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Chemical Immobilization Training:** Biologist Danilson participated in a two-day department sponsored chemical immobilization training in Everett.

**Marine Shoreline Design Guidelines Training:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a training regarding coastal and beach processes and how they relate to design of structures in the

nearshore environment. This opportunity was organized by WDFW and the lead author of the Washington Marine Shoreline Design Guidelines led the training exercises.

## **REGION 5**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Ferruginous Hawk Occupancy Surveys:** Biologist Stephens conducted surveys at two historic Ferruginous Hawk nest territories in East Klickitat County. Both sites were found to have active Swainson's Hawk nests.

**Streaked Horned Lark Surveys:** Biologists Bergh and Stephens assisted the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) with surveys for the federally threatened streaked horned lark on sites in the Lower Columbia River. Only one male lark was observed at the four sites visited. These prairie birds prefer sparsely vegetated, wide-open grasslands with no trees and few shrubs for nesting. Due to the loss of prairie habitat they are now substituting areas such as grass seed farms, open land around airports, undeveloped industrial sites, and dredge spoil areas. CNLM has been working hard the past month to survey all dredge spoil deposit sites in the Lower Columbia River to determine lark occupancy and abundance.



***Panoramic Photo of Streaked Horned Lark Habitat – Lower Columbia River***

**Golden Eagle/Prairie Falcon Survey:** Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager VanLeuven and Assistant Davis hiked up to the golden eagle nest site on the Fisher Hill Unit to check on nesting success. They found that the nest had collapsed, leaving a trail of debris on several lower branches as well as on the ground below the tree. One dead eaglet was located in the debris on the ground. There were two eaglets at the time of the last check. They were unable to determine the fate of the second eaglet at this time. In addition, they also followed-up on a reported prairie falcon site. They were able to locate the site easily, as the birds made alarm calls almost as soon as we arrived. The light was good enough to make a positive species identification and take pictures. The coordinates of the site were noted and forwarded to District Biologist Anderson.



***Juvenile Prairie Falcon – Klickitat Wildlife Area***

**Black-tailed Deer Research Project:** Does and fawns associated with the Black-tail Research Project continue to be monitored through a combination of remote (satellite) and traditional (VHF) equipment. The peak birthing period of late May/early June has resulted in the capture of numerous fawns. Please see the below-listed details for the Washougal (GMU 568) Study cluster and Coweeman (GMU 550) Study cluster.

**Washougal Study Cluster:** All four does in the Washougal cluster have given birth. Seven fawns (out of 8 biologically possible) have been captured from the four Washougal does. Fawns are being monitored for survival three times a week through July.

**Coweeman Study Cluster:** Six does (out of 7) in the Coweeman cluster have given birth. Nine fawns (out of 12 biologically possible) have been captured from the six Coweeman does. Monitoring of the one remaining pregnant doe continues in Coweeman study cluster and fawns are being monitored for survival. Here is a video of Biologists Bergh and George conducting fawn captures for doe 431 in the Coweeman study cluster:

<http://youtu.be/BGTB27BGjcY>

**Elk Capture/Release:** Biologist Anderson assisted Enforcement Officers Wickersham, Bolton, Moats, Hughes and Skamania County Enforcement with the capture and release of a four point bull elk that had its antlers caught in a rope attached to a tree in Skamania County. A special thanks goes to Region 5 Enforcement for their great work with the immobilization of the elk in a very difficult location on a steep slope on the water's edge of a small lake. The elk recovered from the sedation and the reporting party was very thankful to WDFW staff for their efforts.

**Western Pond Turtle Project:** Biologist George, with help from Frank and Kate Slavens, notched the carapaces of seventeen western pond turtles this week. The turtles are part of the head start program, and have grown to a size where they will no longer be vulnerable to predation in the wild from nonnative bullfrogs. They have been in the care of the Oregon Zoo since they were captured as hatchlings last May. The notches, which translate to a unique number for each individual, give biologists the ability to consistently monitor western pond turtle populations, and enable a rich set of records for individual turtles over time. Eleven of the seventeen head start turtles are scheduled to be released at three of the Columbia River Gorge sites in the coming week; while the remaining six will be released at Pierce National Wildlife Refuge during an outreach event scheduled for July 29, 2014.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Wildlife Immobilization Training:** Biologist Holman attended Wildlife Immobilization Recertification Training in Region 4. The class was taught by WDFW Veterinarian Dr. Kristin Mansfield with assistance from Region 3 Wildlife Program Manager McCorquodale, Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil, Marine Mammal Specialist Lambourn, and raptor specialist Debruyne. The two-day course featured the methods, tools, rules and policies regarding capturing and handling wildlife in a manner that is safe for people, safe for the animals involved and

results in successful immobilization and recovery. The class also featured practice with dart guns and the immobilization of two domestic goats.

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Landowner Contacts:** Biologist Anderson and Stephens met with family members of the McBride Ranch in eastern Klickitat County to discuss a variety of issues from hunting seasons, poaching, habitat management and wildlife surveys. The McBride Ranch encompasses several thousand acres of important wildlife habitat in shrub steppe and grassland habitat, unique to



District 9. Recent reports by the landowners indicate that a small herd of pronghorn antelope have been frequently seen on their property over the past two years. While attempting to locate the pronghorn, Biologist Anderson and Stephens located a burrowing owl breeding territory on adjacent private ownership. Burrowing owls are rare in Klickitat County and this was an unknown location for this species.

*Burrowing Owl Site in Eastern Klickitat County*

### **Wildlife Conflict**

**Damage Deterrents:** Conflict Specialist McDonald and Biologist Stephens received a positive report from a Klickitat County rancher/farmer. WDFW lent the rancher materials to install one strand of polytape around his alfalfa-barley field. The rancher came up with the idea after seeing deer avoid one strand of polytape on other parts of the ranch. Currently, the deer are creating trails on the outside of the polytape, and the rancher observed young deer avoid contact with the fence. He will leave the fence up and electrified for the rest of the summer to try to “train” the deer.



*Polytape around Alfalfa-Barley Field*

**Elk Damage:** Conflict Specialist Conklin fielded several calls from master hunters who have drawn permits for the new Grays River hunt. She will meet with some of the larger land owners next week to further discuss access for hunters. In addition, Conflict Specialist Conklin met with two farms in the Randle/Packwood area experiencing damage from elk. One farmer has lost his oat crop to elk damage. Various deterrents were discussed such as using propane cannons, other noise devices, Fladry fencing and master hunters. All were refused at this time except the master hunters. Unfortunately this particular field is leased from another land owner who does not want master hunters. Conklin spent a significant amount of time with the land owner who is leasing to the farmer. She explained in depth how the master hunter damage hunt is operated. She believes this land owner may change his mind in time.

The second farm visited was a land owner near Packwood that grows Christmas trees and hay for sale. He has reported approximately 70 head in his fields almost daily. The property is situated along the Cowlitz River and is perfect habitat for elk. The hay field that typically produces 60 to 70 ton of hay is almost a total loss this year. The hay should be 3 to 4 foot high is only about 1 foot. This land owner allows public hunting and has worked with the WDFW for a very long time. Although he would not use master hunters in the past the land owner agreed to begin using them after the general season. Other tools that were offered by Conklin was using Fladry fencing after seeing the great success that Conflict Specialist McDonald had with it in Trout Lake. We may also try Plant Skydd on his new Christmas Trees he will be planting in the fall

**Wildlife Access**

**Sportsman’s Access – Loop West:** Access Area Specialists Spangler and Rhodes were busy this past week with several projects throughout the region including weed management, sign replacement, tree trimming and removing a large cottonwood branch that broke free and landed on the entrance road of the fisherman’s loop



*Tree Removal at Sportsman’s Access*

**REGION 6**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Pysht Deer Monitoring:** Six does, three sets of twin fawns (2014), one 2013 fawn and one yearling from 2012 continue to be monitored in the Pysht cluster. No mortalities this past week.

PYSHT CLUSTER Fawn data	12473 McDonald North		10698 Deer Park		10709 Little River	
Fawns collared	Twins Collared May 31: ~19:00		Twins Collared June 5: ~08:00		Twins Collared June 7: ~10:30	
	Twin 1	Twin 2	Twin 1	Twin 2	Twin 1	Twin 2
Fawn Collar	5047-507PY	5049-509PY	5046-501PY	5042-499PY	5048-503PY	5045-505PY
Sex	Female	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female
Total Length	61.5	54.3	57.8	61.2	58.5	61.6

Girth	34.5	29.6	31.4	34.0	34.7	32.3
Femur	20* *likely incorrect measurement	16.3* *likely incorrect measurement	12.8	Not recorded due to heat	13.0	13.4
Left Hind Foot	24.0	22.5	24.0	Not recorded due to heat	24.0	24.3
Incisor	6.8	5.2	4.6	3.5	3.1	5.9
Hoof Growth	3.9	4.7	3.5	3.7	5.1	2.6 & 4.7
Weight	4.1 with bag and collar	3.3 with bag & NO collar	3.8 with bag & NO collar	4.0 with bag & NO collar	3.7 with bag & NO collar	3.8 with bag & NO collar
Parasites	No	No	Lice – 2-3 total	Lice – 2 lower belly	No	Lice- 2 at elbow where 4cm of bare skin

**Eagle Electrocution:** On the evening of June 16, 2014, Biologist Ament received an e-mail from State Patrol regarding a bald eagle that was electrocuted near the Olympic Game Farm in Sequim. She contacted the reporting party and obtained more information. They had met a Pest Control man on site who observed the eagle hit the line and fall into the ditch. Apparently, power was out for a period of time but had been restored to the area. She was able to confirm that an employee from PUD had picked up the eagle and taken it to the NW Raptor Center. Biologist Ament contacted PUD staff the next morning to discuss the incident. She provided them with photos taken by the RP and requested that they make modifications to the lines. Another eagle was electrocuted in the same vicinity a few years ago. The PUD Engineer was planning to inspect the power lines last week.



***Bald eagle in ditch after being electrocuted.***

**Western Snowy Plovers:** Biologists Sundstrom, Michaelis, Hahn, and Doorly continued to monitor snowy plovers at Midway Beach, Leadbetter, and Graveyard Spit. Western snowy plovers are a federally threatened and state endangered shorebird that nests along Washington's coastal beaches. The three locations where snowy plovers actively nest are Leadbetter Point, Midway Beach, and Graveyard Spit. A summary of monitoring efforts at each location is provided below.

Leadbetter: Biologists Hahn and Doorly focused their monitoring efforts on monitoring broods and nests, searching for new nests, and surveying the two islands NE of Leadbetter Point. There are currently only two islands that have possible nesting habitat above the high tide line (Sand and Gunpowder islands). While no SNPL or nests were sighted on either island, a few SNPL tracks were seen on both islands. Of the 6 active broods at Leadbetter, 2 of these broods are consistently sighted on the outer beach.



Snowy Plover nest discovered at Leadbetter. Photo Credit: Jennifer Hahn

Of the 6 active nests reported last week, 1 hatched, 1 failed to hatch (3 unhatched eggs were removed), and 4 are still active. Biologists discovered 1 new nest this week which brings the total number of active nests being monitored to five. There are also six broods that are being monitored.

Leadbetter											
# Nests Found	# Nests Currently Active	# Nests Hatched	# Broods Found	# Chicks hatched	# Chicks currently Alive	# Fledglings	# Nests Failed				
							Pred	Sand Burial	Abandoned	Human Caused	Unknown Cause
17	5	9	9	32?	16	6			2		1

Midway Beach: Biologist Sundstrom discovered four (4) new nests at Midway Beach this week. Two of the 4 are 3 egg nests and the other 2 had 2 eggs. A follow-up of a nest that was believed to have been either depredated or failed to unknown causes was relocated; one

**Snowy Plover Chicks observed by Biologist Michaelis on Midway Beach. Can you see them?**



unhatched egg remained in the nest while a portion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> egg was found ~10' SE of the cup. The shell portion indicates that one egg successfully hatched although no chick has been detected. It is speculated, however, that as many as 2 broods from undiscovered nests are present based on adult behaviors and the observation of Biologist Michaelis last week of 2 newly hatched chicks with an unbanded male. Further brood searching and observation will continue next week to sort out the unknowns and speculation.

Midway Beach											
# Nests Found	# Nests Currently Active	# Nests Hatched	# Active Broods	# Chicks Hatched	# Chicks Currently Alive	# Fledglings	# Nests Failed				
							Pred.	Sand Burial	Abandoned	Human Caused	Unknown / Other Cause
9	6	1	1	1	UK	0	1	0	0	0	1

Graveyard Spit: Biologist Sundstrom and Steve Spencer from Shoalwater Bay Tribe made a quick trip to Graveyard Spit to check on the remaining active nest. Egg floating indicated that

the nest should hatch early next week. Due to poor weather conditions (heat waves and high winds with blowing sand and debris) limited the visit to merely checking on the last nest and confirming successful hatching of nest #3. Three (3) young chicks were observed being brooded by an unidentified adult. Further surveys will be conducted next week to follow up on the 3 known broods.

Graveyard Spit												
# Nests Found	# Nests Currently Active	# Nests Hatched	# Active Broods	# Chicks Hatched	# Chicks Currently Alive	# Fledglings	# Nests Failed					
							Pred.	Sand Burial	Abandoned	Human Caused	Unknown Cause	
5	1	3	3	8	8	0	0	1	0	0	0	

**Killdeer vs. Snowy Plover:** While conducting snowy plover monitoring activities, Biologist Sundstrom and Michaelis came upon a newly hatched killdeer nest in the vicinity of a snowy plover nest. The pictures below show why Killdeer chicks can be commonly mistaken for snowy plover chicks.



**Killdeer chicks <1 day old.**



**Snowy plover chicks <1 day old.**

**Streaked Horned Larks:** Biologist Sundstrom and Michaelis conducted the second of three lark surveys at Midway this week. No streaked horned larks were detected during the survey but Sundstrom flushed a male/female pair while conducting snowy plover work that same morning. Sundstrom and Michaelis also conducted the first lark survey at Damon Point and Oyhut Spit. Sundstrom did not detect any larks at Damon Point nor snowy plovers. Sundstrom and Michaelis also conducted a preliminary survey for larks, plovers, and habitat assessment of the John's River Island location. No larks or plovers were detected but a Savannah Sparrow nest with 1 newly hatched chick and 4 unhatched eggs was discovered by Sundstrom. Roughly 1/2 of the area of the island is suitable for larks and only a small pocket area on the west end could be considered plover nesting habitat at this time.



**Photos of habitat observed on John's River Island.**

District 15 staff conducted the second of three Streaked Horned Lark surveys at Sanderson Field in Shelton. Only 9 males were observed. It is believed all females were on nests and should be observed during the final survey in early July. Two coyotes, a Northern Harrier and several crows were seen hunting in the lark nesting area.

**White Pelicans Observation:** While conducting dark goose monitoring near Deep river, Biologist observed large numbers of Pelagic Cormorants and American White Pelicans feeding on a small fish congregation. This was the first time Biologist Michaelis has observed White Pelicans in Pacific County.



**Concentration of white pelicans observed by Biologist Michaelis.**