

Wildlife Program

Week of October 13-19, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

South Puget Sound Prairies: The South Puget Sound Partnership has received a grant from the NPS National Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program to develop a strategic communications plan for South Puget Sound Prairie conservation. The project is coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and will have both regional and headquarters WDFW involvement.

State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP): Biologist Gerry Hayes completed draft species fact sheets and an accompanying threats spreadsheet for nine species for inclusion in the next SWAP. Single-page fact sheets summarize the conservation status, biology and life history, distribution and abundance, and habitat for species of greatest conservation need (SGCN).

Landscape Conservation: Section Manager Wilkerson attended the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative Steering Committee meeting in Salmon, ID on October 15th and 16th. The meeting highlighted collaborative landscape conservation in the High Divide of Idaho and Montana, existing GNLCC initiatives, the GNLCC Science Plan, and funding guidance. WDFW's work through the Arid Lands Initiative and the GNLCC wide landscape connectivity project (led by Wildlife Science Division Manager Pierce) were presented. The Science Plan was provisionally approved, with direction to ensure incorporation of relevant social values and science.

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

Diversity Division Strategic Vision: Diversity Division Manager Gardner finalized a document entitled "Wildlife Diversity Division Reorganization Products" which captures the bulk of Wildlife Diversity Division's reorganization work conducted by the entire division over the course of the past two years.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Road Management and Abandonment Plan (RMAP) Work and Reporting:

Wildlife Area (WLA) Assistant Manager Daro Palmer checked on RMAP work completed thus far this fall at West Branch Little Spokane WLA. Major work was completed last week on problem water crossings. The Lacey crew will return next week to complete the remaining work scheduled for this fall. RMAP annual report drafts for Sherman Creek and West Branch Little Spokane WLAs were completed this week.



Two undersized culverts were replaced at this location with one large arch pipe.

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

Wildlife Management

Falconry: Biologist Lowe banded a male goshawk for a young falconer who captured the bird in Otis Orchards, near Spokane.

Wildlife Areas

WT Wooten Wildlife Area – Campground

Relocation: The construction crew is making excellent progress on the campground relocation process. The new vault toilets were installed in Campgrounds 9 and 10. The power line was laid down in Campground 6 and trees were knocked over to clear the areas for the camping sites. The crew continued working on Campground 6 and plan to install the new vault toilet there next week. Staff used the tractor to move the concrete picnic tables in the Old Campgrounds 6 & 9 so they are out of the way of the construction crew. The picnic tables will be relocated to the new campgrounds once construction is complete.





New Campground 6 under construction



New outhouse and New Campground 9

Private Lands/Access

Deer Modern Firearm General Season: Private Lands Biologist Lewis met with and checked hunters throughout Whitman County.



REGION 2

NO REPORT SUBMITTED

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak took Jennifer Andreas - WSU Extension - to the oxbow area of Bottom Rupley adjacent to the Yakima River for a follow-up on purple loosestrife bio-control released earlier this year.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt joined Regional Director Livingston, Lands Program Manager Hendrix, Biologist William Meyer, Habitat Program Manager Harvester, Habitat Biologist Brent Renfrow, and Charlie Raines and assistant Susan of Forterra on a tour of I-90 crossing projects, properties identified as potential acquisitions or conservation easement targets, and parcels already owned by DFW. It was a very interesting and enlightening trip, particularly with regard to the I-90 wildlife crossing structures and looming commercial development projects adjacent to them.

Tour attendees under an I-90 wildlife crossing structure



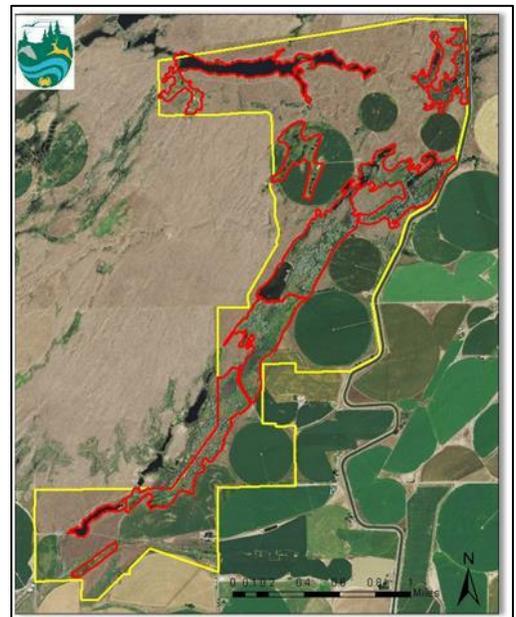
Wildlife Management

Deer: Biologist Gregory received a report of possible hair loss and associated poor body condition in some bucks harvested near Juniper Dunes. Any possible infection at this point is spotty with many other deer appearing to be in great shape however the situation will be monitored.

Waterfowl/Water birds: In anticipation of upcoming meetings with Ducks Unlimited to discuss NAWCA opportunities, as well as needs for Duck Stamp applications, Biologist Gregory began digitizing wetland acres on WDFW managed lands in Region 3.

Digitized wetland areas (in red) on the Windmill Ranch Unit (in yellow) of the Sunnyside/Snake River Wildlife Area

Private Lands Biologist Stutzman spent some time working on the Sage Grouse Initiative in anticipation of the fall sign up. Michael Brown, Washington's SGI coordinator, was contacted and a practice list and



payment scenario list was requested. Stutzman also reached out to a Moxee Valley landowner to set up a meeting to discuss the program.

Colockum Cow Elk Body Condition Sampling: Biologist Moore finished all items needed for the mailer and with the help of Customer Service Unit Supervisor, Margie Creekpaum, the mailer was sent out to all 425 Colockum Antlerless tag holders. Thanks Margie! This will give insight on herd health under the current population and environmental conditions.

Colockum Bull Elk Study: Another two collars came up on mortality this week in the Colockum. Biologist Moore investigated and found both with the magnetic expander section broken. At this point it is very difficult to determine if this section failed under normal wear and tear or if it was broken by humans. Moore will investigate the mechanism further to attempt to determine what happened.



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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart assisted Bio Moore with pheasant release. 145 birds were released at the Green Gate pheasant hunting area, and 'No Target Shooting' signs were installed at the Green Gate entrance for the duration of pheasant season.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom reviewed and edited an article written by Ducks Unlimited Biologist Tina Blewett on habitat projects at the Mesa Lake Unit funded in part by DU. The article will be submitted for print in the Pacific Flyway Section of DU magazine.

Assistant Manager Buser worked on unplugging a road culvert and repairing the road, continued to collect hunter registration data from the wildlife area, removed emergency fire restriction signs from wildlife area parking lots and access sites, continued monitoring water levels at area wetlands, and continued brush and weed control efforts at Mesa Lake and Windmill Ranch Units.

Wildlife Management

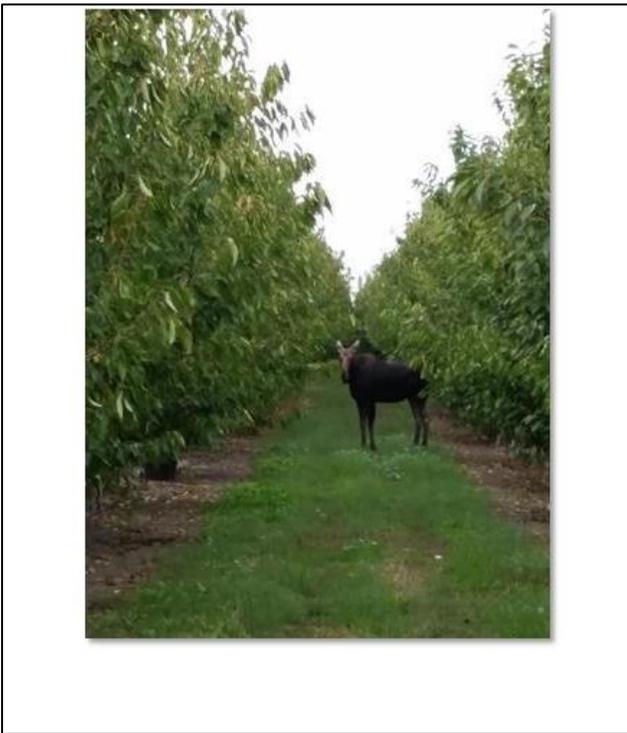
Access Technician Kaelber was in field for most of the week monitoring private lands access sites for use and hunter success. Kaelber observed that hunter numbers and success were down throughout GMU 382, echoing the pattern noted by other District 4 staff.

Biologist Moore coordinated and released pheasant at two sites in District 8 with the help of LT Murray Manager Shana Winegeart.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a call from a landowner of a cow moose in a cherry orchard a few miles north of Pasco along the Columbia River. No observable crop damage has occurred and the moose has not become a safety concern at this time. The landowner does not mind the moose residing on his property as long as no damage is occurring. Continued monitoring will be conducted for the next few weeks.



A moose observed in a Pasco orchard.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued working with a landowner near Patterson along the Columbia River who is experiencing deer damage to a young planting of cherry trees. Trail camera pictures were recovered from the site and identified deer entering the orchard in the early morning hours. General season hunters hunted the area without any deer being harvested. One youth hunter from the special permit season was escorted on the property and harvested an antlerless deer. Hunting effort will continue this next week in an effort to reduce the number of deer causing damage and haze them from the crops.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a report of a deer that appeared to be shot and left on Rattlesnake Mountain. The 2 point mule deer buck was located in a stubble wheat field and appeared to have been shot and left within the past 24 hrs. Enforcement personnel were informed.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a deer damage report from a vineyard near Crow Butte. Hogue Ranches reports up to 40 deer have been observed within their

wine grape operation and increased damage has occurred within a few blocks of their wine grapes. Several non-lethal strategies were discussed and will be implemented as well as hunting during the general and special permit seasons.

Wolf Activities

Cattle roundup has commenced in the Teanaway.

Sheep are still located near Cle Elum Ridge, the RAG box is in place, and fladry has been located between potential wolf access areas to the sheep grazing and bedding areas.



Fladry placed north of sheep use area near Cle Elum Ridge.

Specialist Wetzell attended the statewide Wolf Advisory Group meeting in the Teanaway on October 16.

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: Monday morning Manager Huffman noticed that a department truck was missing from its parking space. Huffman contacted the Yakima County Sheriff's Department (YCS) to report it as a stolen vehicle and file a report. Huffman contacted RPM McCorquodale and Olympia and started the process to remove the vehicle from inventory. Unexpectedly, on Tuesday Huffman received a phone call from the YCS that the vehicle had been found in Centralia and was still operational. Huffman had the vehicle towed to the Bob Oke Game Farm and arranged a ride with Captain Mann the following day to go pick it up. The truck still had half a tank of gas and drove fine all the way back to Oak Creek.

Manager Huffman worked on the contract for the Oak Creek Timber Sale. The focus right now is the road work requirements. Huffman talked to DNR and The Forest Service about how they handle road work in contracts and received an example from DNR.

On Friday, Manager Huffman, Forester Kuehn, TNC Forester Dahlgreen and Ecologist Tveten interviewed five candidates for the Oak Creek Forester Position. Huffman will conduct reference checks on the top two candidates and may schedule follow up interviews if needed.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor responded to a report of a brush fire along North Wenas road, near junction with Ridge Road. Selah Fire also responded and had the ~0.5-acre fire out by the time DNR staff arrived. The fire appears to have been started by a pickup that went into the ditch and dug some deep holes with the tires while trying to get out. They eventually did get out, but left their maroon canopy behind. A local DNR fire crew took over the fire, checking to make sure there weren't any hot spots. This was the



crew's last day and water tanks on the brush trucks had already been winterized. Let's hope we don't have any hunter campfires or warming fires get out of control in the next couple of weeks.

Fire that started in North Wenas Road ditch and burned up through shrub steppe

Assistant Manager Taylor met with Casey Davidson, Engineering Program, and looked at the Wenas elk fence rebuild project. Things are going very

well and the contractor is making good progress. All posts have been installed on the Priority 1 section and new wire will go up in the coming week. The contractor is hoping to be ready to move to the Priority 2 section during the week of October 27, if they don't get rained out this week.

NRW Farias delivered a gate to the contractor for installation in the Priority 1 section of the elk fence.

Access Program: Access Manager Garcia and NRW Barbosa serviced the following access areas: Hyde, Whitstran, Snively, Duportail, Ringold, Vernita, Woodhouse, Lavender Lake, Bell, Teanaway Junction, King Horn Slough, Mattoon, Fio Rito, Thrall, MP8-10, Rowe, Tim's Pond, Oak Cr, Mellis Rd, Fitzsimmons, Pond 4 & 5, Buena, and Zillah Bridge. NRW Barbosa restocked both trucks with supplies for the upcoming week. Staff replaced the door on one of the old outhouses at the Fio Rito access site with a donor door.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt and Tech Hill made emergency repairs to an elk fence that someone had cut a full post to post section out of, causing the mostly rock jacked 10-post long stretch to collapse. It is now functional, but needs additional work when we can get to it, as well as complete replacement at some point (it is part of a high priority for replacement stretch of old elk fence identified numerous times but not yet funded). It was constructed in the mid-to-late 1960's.



Tech Hill with downed elk fence



Repaired elk fence

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Snow Goose Monitoring: Biologist DeBruyn did an age ratio survey of lesser snow geese feeding in the reserve on Fir Island. Three flocks totaling 1909 individuals contained 351 juveniles for a ratio of about 18%. The cover crop in the reserve has done very well as it was planted early and got a couple of early shots of rain.



Snow geese above Fir Island – Photo by Alen Bauer

Whidbey Camano Land Trust: Biologist Milner met with the Whidbey Camano Land Trust to catch up on their projects and explore areas where WDFW can offer support.

Whidbey Island Beaver: Biologist Milner joined Area Habitat Biologist Bails on a property on Whidbey that has experienced

a high level of beaver activity. Given the condition of the habitat and landowner observations, we concluded that beavers are likely moving out of the immediate area. However, since the original property was a peat bog that was drained from the turn of the century until the 1960's, the likelihood of returning the property to dry pasture is remote.

Lowland Pika Project Report: Assistant District Biologist Cyra processed waypoint and track data and photos from a late season food cache/latrine search of pika sighting locations from this summer's surveys.

San Juan Island Species of Greatest Conservation Need: Assistant District Biologist Cyra processed waypoint and track data and photos from a site visit to Sharp-tailed Snake coverboards that were placed last year on Orcas Island.

Judson Lake Swan Exclusion: Biologist DeBruyn and a team from the noxious weed crew completed installing mylar bird scare ribbon on thousands of bamboo poles in Judson Lake on the Canadian border to dissuade swans from using areas of the lake with high concentrations of old lead shot.

The Westside Wolf Meeting included 150 to 175 attendees.

Wildlife Areas

Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program Grant: Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed and submitted a grant application to the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) to fund post project monitoring and adaptive management at the Fir Island Farm Restoration site. WDFW is



seeking funding to monitor surface and groundwater quality and drainage, invasive plants, native marsh vegetation, sediment accretion and erosion, channel establishment, and dike settlement and erosion. Projects Coordinator Brokaw reviewed two grant applications proposed by the United States Geologic Services (USGS) and Western Washington University (WWU) to monitor biological and physical parameters in Port Susan Bay, including Leque Island.

Fir Island Farm Water Quality Monitoring: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Staff Brian Williams and Bob Barnard, and the project consultant had a call to discuss ongoing problems with the water quality monitoring devices on the site. WDFW will research cost and reliability of alternative devices to decide whether or not to use grant funds to invest in other equipment. The group also discussed analysis of data collected so far, and how they will be compared statistically with post project data.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): A public comment period on PNSERP associated with the National Environmental Policy Act requirements opened

is currently open and will close on November 24th. More information on this process, the documents under review, and how to comment is available at: <http://pugetsoundnearshore.org/outreach.html>. Additionally, a Public Open House is scheduled for November 5th from 5:00-8:00 pm at the City of Burlington City Hall, where attendees will be able learn more about PSNERP and provide comments.

Rainbow Pond Water Control Replacement: The SEPA has now been completed for the Rainbow Pond water control replacement project. Earlier this year the water control collapsed in on itself and half of Rainbow Pond emptied out. This pond is an important part of the Lake Terrell and Terrell Creek system. We are working with Ducks Unlimited on the replacement. Permitting continues, with the replacement now planned for next year.

WDFW is working with Ducks Unlimited on the replacing the Rainbow Pond Water Control valve

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Enforcement Officer Anthony Jaros to discuss recent illegal activities at the Ebey Unit. These include a WDFW padlock cut, an access gate chain cut, hardware removed from a different gate, and reported hunters on the unit after hours. Manager Boehm reports that despite these accounts, there are many hunters using the Unit and they are very pleased with the hunting conditions.



Cherry Valley Unit: The Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager took delivery of three loads of rock in preparation for continuing the steel bridge to the pump house access road. An additional load of gravel was delivered to the barn to replace a mud-soaked path in the pheasant pen. The muddy lane was a slip and trip hazard and would continue to get worse as the rainy season commences.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other: Biologist Anderson continued work and review for requests of assistance regarding species or habitat management consultation for urban wildlife given construction or land-use alteration work, per local municipal code requirements to work with WDFW. Most involve eagle nest location/activity status, osprey nest removal, heron management, biodiversity areas and corridors, and big game use areas adjacent to the rural/exurban fringe of King County. More on WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Recommendations and how WDFW provides assistance at the local and broader planning levels can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Interviews/Outreach: Vashon-Maury Beachcomber; Scouts in Covington: Biologist Anderson discussed a sighting of a bear on Vashon with a reporter at Vashon-Maury Beachcomber. Bear have been noted on Vashon-Maury before. The reporter ended up interviewing Anderson on wildlife of the islands in general, conflict reduction techniques regarding a host of species on the islands (deer, coyote, raccoon), as well as discussing human-wildlife interactions and the role we play as we increasingly pose a presence not only in human-dominated urban, suburban, and rural spaces – but also wild lands where wildlife were once not so used to humans. Now we see habituated animals even in those places at times. Techniques for coexistence in our own backyard are found at the WDFW Living with Wildlife website: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/species/>

Anderson also phone conferenced with a group of scouts working on a badge involving wildlife stewardship and employment in natural resources. He answered questions on fish (oh geez where are those fish bios when you need them!!!) and bald eagles. Anderson discussed the role fish play as one food source for bald eagles, general biology of bald eagles, and general efforts that WDFW and other management and conservation entities have collaborated in over the years to recover this national bird.

http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/bald_eagle/ <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/>

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

Wildlife Management

Customer Service: Staff responded all week to phone calls asking where to hunt for large and small game.

North Rainier Elk Herd: Biologist Smith participated in a meeting in Olympia to discuss and delineate the boundary of the North Rainier Elk Herd as part of the ongoing update to the North Rainier Elk Herd Management Plan.

Biologist Smith participated in a meeting in Lacey to discuss bear timber damage as part of the ongoing update to the Wildlife Program.

Elk at Meadowbrook Farm Wildlife Reserve - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hp6n6tNnpE0>



Wildlife Areas

Skagit Wildlife Area: Staff checked water levels at the Samish Unit. Staff checked existing reserve boundary signs and placed new post and signs where needed on the Skagit Bay Reserve. Additional floats will be added for the major channel crossings. Staff posted safety zone buoys, property boundary, and closed area signs on the Headquarters Unit. Staff posted additional

"Closed Area" signs on the property boundary between the Headquarters Unit and a neighboring farm. Staff posted needed "No Entry Beyond This Point" signs at Johnson/Debay's Slough Reserve Unit.

Waterfowl Program: Staff checked waterfowl and hunter use on the Fir Island Farms Reserve, Johnson/Debay's Slough Reserve, and the Samish Unit. A two day waterfowl hunting closure occurred this week. The second opening weekend had a decreased turn-out from the first opener. The reports are that there are a good number of birds in the area, but they are not moving much off the bays.

Pheasant Hunting Season: Manager Kessler and volunteers released a total of 410 pheasants throughout the week. Manager Kessler replaced Safety Zone signs that were missing on the Intalco unit. It is unknown who took the signs down. Due to the missing signs, a hunter came too close to the Intalco plant and caused concerns from the Intalco managers. Manager Kessler will monitor the property boundary signs very closely throughout the rest of the hunting season.



Whatcom Wildlife Area Manager Kessler and volunteers released a total of 410 pheasants throughout the week

British Petroleum Unit Partial Hunting Closure: Manager Kessler managed a partial hunting closure on the British Petroleum Unit. British Petroleum workers were performing environmental monitoring on the unit. One half of the unit was closed one day, and the next day the other half of the unit was closed. Kessler posted signs on each unit half, and then monitored the closures. No

problems were reported, and the environmental monitoring was completed ahead of schedule.

Disabled Hunter Hunting Access: Manager Kessler monitored a disabled pheasant hunter's ADA access on the Lake Terrell unit. The hunter acquired our ADA Hunting Access permit which allows him to pheasant hunt from an ATV in certain areas of the unit, 3 days a week. The hunter used the permit to pheasant hunt twice over the weekend.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Manager Brian Boehm responded to a number of phone calls and email messages from local hunters. Most of the calls were messages from hunters expressing the great hunting conditions at each of the pheasant release sites. An abundance of mowed grass, grain, and corn for forage and cover, as well as well-maintained access roads, provide the ability for hunters to reach most portions of the units. Other callers expressed their frustration with the continued low number of pheasant that are released each week. Manager Boehm explained to them that we are actually receiving about 10 more birds per week compared to last year, but it will take time and funding to return the pheasant numbers to the levels of the past.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Preparation and Establishment: Technicians Otto, Deyo and Biologist Caldwell built, staged and set up hunting blinds at sites across Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties. They also posted parking lot posts, signs, and survey boxes and surveyed all enrolled sites in Whatcom, Snohomish, and Skagit Counties for access and harvest conditions.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) pelt sealing service: Biologist Anderson sealed bobcat and cougar pelts, per WA state game harvest requirements and per international agreements: <http://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>

Watchable Wildlife – Heron Camera: Biologist Anderson and contract arborists removed two pan-tilt-zoom cameras, a microphone, and related equipment from the current Kiwanis Ravine heronry. The heronry has been inactive for 2014 and half of the 2013



season due to increasing eagle incursions and depredation events. However, the herons continue to nest in the area. <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildwatch/>

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

Wildlife Management

WSDM Data Support: Assistant District Biologist Cyra communicated with a member of the public concerning a potential second eagle nest in the vicinity of a project proposal that they had just received notice of. At this time the project only consists of a rezone, but will likely result in a 178 home development in the future. Additional attempts will be made to contact the landowner and try to confirm the existence of this nest.



Region 4 Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage from residents of King and Skagit counties. Non-lethal measures to deter deer and elk from

entering properties were discussed, including fencing options. Smith and Tech Cogdal installed a temporary electric fladry elk exclusion fence on a ~30 acre property in Skagit County to protect a potato crop from damage. Smith also monitored other temporary fences protecting crops from elk damage in areas of Skagit and King Counties.

Temporary electric fence excluding elk from pumpkins and corn in King County



Wildlife Areas

Skagit Wildlife Area: Staff placed boards in the Seattle Pond tide gate, closed the structure between Ollie Thompson and Lorenzen fields, and installed silt fences in preparation for ditch cleaning on the Island Unit. Manager Rotton performed turbidity monitoring for ditch maintenance work on the Island Unit. Staff assisted with ditch maintenance project overseeing excavator work on site. Project has been delayed due to equipment mechanical issues. Additional work will be completed as weather and equipment operation allow.

Staff installed and secured two new foot bridges on the Island Unit. Manager Rotton completed a new agricultural lease for the Cottonwood Island Unit. Manager Rotton attended the local Washington Waterfowl Association meeting to provide them a brief update of work completed on various units for hunting season and to let them know about the hunter survey cards for the Samish Unit.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Manager Brian Boehm responded to a number of phone calls and email messages from local hunters. Most of the calls were messages from hunters expressing the great hunting conditions at each of the pheasant release sites. An abundance of mowed grass, grain, and corn for forage and cover, as well as well-maintained access roads, provide the ability for hunters to reach most portions of the units. Other callers expressed their frustration with the continued low number of pheasant that are released each week. Manager Boehm explained to them that we are actually receiving about 10 more birds per week compared to last year, but it will take time and funding to return the pheasant numbers to the levels of the past.

Private Lands/Access

GMU 418 Special Permit Hunter Meetings: Biologist Caldwell met with several GMU 418 special permit hunters to exchange biological samples and key information. Biologist Caldwell contacted Forester Sand to inform him on GMU 418 hunting success and access status.

Washington Waterfowl Association Meeting: Biologist Caldwell and Technician Otto met with the Washington Waterfowl Association in Skagit County to discuss the upcoming 2014 season.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Public Outreach and Volunteer Recruitment: Hunter Education/Volunteer coordinator Steven Dazey attended the Nile Sportsman club and spoke with them about increasing the number of classes that they offer in 2015. Emphasis was also put on the need for On-line Field Skills Evaluations. HE Coordinator Dazey also had an opportunity to tour the newly completed remodel of the clubs Air Rifle range at the Sportsman's Clubhouse.

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

Wildlife Management

Supervisor Training: Staff attended Module 2 of this training.

Aerial Survey Safety Module: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued discussions and discussed strategy with Marine Waterfowl Specialist Evenson concerning development of a rigorous overwater safety module for staff.

Radio Communications: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to provide radio support to Program staff.

Managers Residence Energy Upgrade: The Energy Upgrade project on the wildlife area manager's residence continued. All but one of the windows has now been replaced. The last window will be replaced this week, along with removal and replacement of the attic insulation. The work is moving along smoothly.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters and citizen volunteers to provide a pheasant release team. Manager Boehm states that coordinating efforts with Steve Dazey, the Region 4 Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator, has been a huge success. Manager Boehm also reports that the new John Deere tractor has arrived at Washington Tractor in Snohomish. Final paperwork and delivery is scheduled for next week.

Leader Ship Development Class: Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator Steven Dazey attended a leadership development course. This is the second of three classes that Dazey is attending. Each course is a two day 16 hour class that then includes a practical exercise. HE/Volunteer coordinator Dazey hopes to use the information gained from these classes to improve his ability to provide leadership to the over 225 volunteer instructors in Region 4, thereby improving our ability to deliver high quality hunter education in the region.



The new Snoqualmie Wildlife Area tractor with staff and volunteer

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed deer population modeling: Biologist Bergh attended a presentation by Research Scientist Cliff Rice on statistical population reconstruction for black-tailed deer. These models use age at harvest and catch effort information along with other potential inputs such as winter weather, survival rates, etc., to estimate population size and trend. It was found that including natural survival and hunting season survival in the model lead to more realistic population estimates. The geographic scale of the current analysis is GMU, but a more coarse scale might still be appropriate and applicable to managers while allowing for more data to input and more confidence with the output.

Western Pond Turtle Health Team Meeting: Biologists Anderson, Holman, and Bergh attended a meeting of the Western Pond Turtle Health Team in Olympia. This team is comprised of veterinarians and biologists from the Oregon Zoo, Woodland Park Zoo, PAWS Rehabilitation Center, private practice, Washington State University, and WDFW. The purpose of the team is to investigate and address the problem of shell disease that occurs in the Puget Sound and Gorge populations of this endangered species. The team took several steps to investigate the disease this past field season, including shell biopsies, bloodwork, and cultures of both healthy and sick turtles at both sites. Results from this work were discussed, along with potential factors in the head starting program that could contribute to the disease process. Plans for disease investigation for next year's field season were also made.

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

Klickitat Wildlife Area

General Deer Season: The 2014 season has been slow during the first week, although there have been numerous reports of deer taken on the Soda Springs Unit. Showery weather offered better conditions for hunting during mid-week and Technician Davis observed a couple of deer in camps. Hunters vary considerably in their opinions of the prospects for this year; some are satisfied that the deer population is strong enough while others feel that the deer population is very weak. Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis conducted hunter success surveys the weekend of October 18 - 19 and as of noon Sunday no deer carcasses were seen hanging in camps. Warm weather may be prompting successful hunters to take the carcasses to a cooler location as soon as possible. Sunny days are highlighting the bright colors among the aspen groves. Van Leuven and Davis responded to numerous calls, e-mails, and office visits from hunters.

Aspen groves on the Klickitat Wildlife Area

Private Lands/Access

Public Access: Wildlife Conflict Specialist McDonald patrolled Hancock

Timberlands (GMU 578) and Western Pacific Timberlands (GMU 388) for the opening of modern firearm deer season. Both timber companies have Feel Free to Hunt agreements with WDFW. Over 200 vehicles were observed on the properties. Handouts with maps and rules for hunting on the private property were passed out to hunters and left on vehicle windshields. McDonald also extinguished several smoldering campfires that were left unattended.

Access

Vancouver Lake: The Larch Mountain inmate crew spent a day on site and around the lake picking up litter and weed-eating around the parking lot. Access staff Spangler and Rhodes hauled 200 pounds of trash including a broken kitchen table, dresser, drawers, and wood debris.

Langsdorf Landing: The access site was closed for a few days as the construction crew moved in equipment, began demolition of the boat ramp, and made preparations for the new ramp.





Langsdorf Landing construction

Modrow Bridge: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes spent several hours cutting and disposing of Japanese knotweed along the bank. There were a lot of fishermen with lots of fish caught. Spangler and Rhodes replaced the Discover Pass sign as well as the No Overnight Parking or Camping sign that was damaged.

Turkey Hole: There were well over 15 trailers, campers and motorhomes, and camps still using the site. Many are fisherman and some were deer hunters. A heavy body deer was hanging at one camp site.

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

Wildlife Management

Mountain Goat Reporting: Biologist Bergh checked in a mountain goat from a successful hunter with a Goat Rocks-Tieton River permit. Last year a voluntary reporting system for goat hunters was established to obtain biological sampling information from harvested goats. Hunters are asked to collect blood samples in the field for disease testing and then bring in the goat for measurement of the horns and pulling of two teeth for aging and sexing. Since so few goats are harvested each year, the data received from these hunters is very valuable, and WDFW greatly appreciates the time and effort that hunters take to participate in this sampling effort.

Wildlife Conflict (D9): Conflict Specialist McDonald signed a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement with a Glenwood farmer experiencing elk damage to a clover field. The landowner allows public hunting access and hazes the elk with loud country music and a spot light. Other hazing techniques and temporary fencing options were discussed. One kill permit was issued.

Wildlife Conflict (D10): Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin sent out information to two more hunters who were drawn for the Grays River Hunt. The hunters called Conklin after receiving a letter about the Grays River Hunt. Conklin has been working with a Randle land owner regarding finding disabled youth hunters to hunt his property.

Injured Fawn: Conflict Specialist Conklin called a Reporting Party (RP) who had reported an injured fawn alongside the road near Columbia Heights in Longview. The RP stated that “two angels” stopped and assisted her with the deer. The deer was transported to Animal Health Services for treatment.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Tirhi and staff excavated the last of the pond turtle nests from the Pierce County recovery site and delivered them to the Woodland Park Zoo. The remainder of the nests will remain at the recovery site and be allowed to hatch naturally as the first test of natural recruitment in this 23 year recovery program. 13 nests were excavated producing 63 eggs, four live hatchlings, and one dead hatchling.



Western Pond Turtle hatchlings from the Pierce County Recovery site



Western Pond Turtle hatchling emerging from shell, Pierce County Recovery site

Red Knots: Joe Buchanan reports that several red knots recently banded in Region 6 by Biologist Michaelis and other biologists have been spotted in Mexico.



Red knot "29" standing behind a marbled godwit



Red knot “NX”



Red knot “92” with sanderling. Note federal aluminum band on the other foot.

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

Wildlife Management

Hunting Access GMU 667. Per last week’s report, Biologist Tirhi has assisted several permit hunters with finding access in GMU 667 after Vail sold out of access permits. District 11 staff was sent to scout access and conditions in GMU 667 outside Vail in order to aid calls the district receives. It was determined that the southeastern portion of the GMU had the best access and those areas are depicted on this map.

