

## **Wildlife Program**

Week of October 20-26, 2014

### **REGION 1**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Colville District Deer Hunter Check Stations:** Along with Hunter Education Instructor Volunteers, district biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince carried out the second & third of five check station days for this season on Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. Check stations were run at both Chattaroy and Deer Park alongside Highways 2 and 395 respectively. Deer Park had 56 hunters with 15 deer on Saturday, October 18<sup>th</sup> and 99 hunters with 26 deer on Sunday, October 19<sup>th</sup>. Our numbers were higher than last year for Sunday, but not for Saturday. Meanwhile, Chattaroy got 39 and 85 hunters with 6 and 12 deer for Saturday and Sunday respectively. Other game checked included one moose and some waterfowl (Canada geese). Hunters were friendly & upbeat, and our seasoned crew of volunteers performed admirably.

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**WT Wooten Wildlife Area – Elk Fence:** Asst. Wildlife Area Manager Dingman and Natural Resources Worker Christian checked the elk fence from the Headquarters to Baker's Pond. A few small holes were found in the fence and repaired, but overall the fence was in good shape this year.



*Someone had propped open the one-way gate in the elk fence on the ridge before the fence drops into Tumulum Creek*



*NRW2 Christian headed down the elk fence into Tumulum Creek*

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Southeast Washington Pheasant Release:** Biologist Lewis worked with volunteers to complete the Whitman County pheasant releases. Volunteers from WSU assisted with the releases. Lewis also met with hunters at release sites and answered questions. Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Worker Wade conducted a pheasant release on five sites throughout Garfield and Asotin Counties.



*WSU Wildlife students assisting with pheasant releases*

***Pheasants released in Asotin County***

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Northeast Washington Livestock Depredation:**

Conflict Specialist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman investigated a live adult cow at a ranch where the cow had been brought to recover from a suspected wolf attack.



**Spokane Neighborhood Moose:** Biologists Atamian, Lowe, Oyster, Merg, Conflict Specialist Bennett, Veterinarian Mansfield, Officer Beauchene, and Sergeant Sprecher teamed up to capture and move a cow moose and her two calves that had taken up residence in a Spokane

Valley neighborhood. The moose were released north of Spokane. It was evident that more education is needed in this area regarding feeding and appropriate behavior around moose.



*Cow and two calf moose in front yard*



*Oyster, Atamian, Mansfield, and Beauchene removing a dart from the cow moose*

## **Wildlife Areas**

**KFES Nature Walk:** Classes from the Kettle Falls Elementary School are visiting the Sherman Creek WLA this fall for nature walks along the lowland trail system. Last week the 4<sup>th</sup> graders made the six mile trek from the SCWA headquarters to the National Park Service's Haag Cove Campground. This week the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders made the same trek in the pouring rain.

***KFES 4<sup>th</sup> graders walking the trail near Lake Roosevelt*** – Photo by 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Sally James



## **REGION 2**

**Okanogan Wolves:** Specialist Heilhecker, along with Officer Treser and Biologist Heinlen, investigated a wolf sighting southeast of Tonasket. The reporting party (RP) stated he had a trail camera photo of a wolf. Last month his family reported seeing a large black animal, twice the size of their German shepherd with “huge, black pointy ears” and was advised by Specialist Heilhecker to put up their trail cameras. By the time Specialist Heilhecker, Biologist Heinlen,

and Officer Treser arrived on scene, the reporting party had determined that the black “wolf” in this particular photograph was their neighbor’s dog.

Specialist Heilhecker, along with Officer Treser and Biologist Heinlen, investigated a dead calf near Conconully. The livestock owner stated the cows were moved into the pasture on Saturday (10-18) at 1:00pm. The landowner found the calf skeleton on Sunday (10-19) at 11:00am while riding horses on her property. When the remains were examined for this investigation on Monday morning (10-20), the RP stated it was in the same condition as when it was found on Sunday morning. The livestock owner insists the calf could only have been dead for 12 hours; however, there were not enough remains to determine cause of death. No kill site was found. Fresh deer and coyote tracks and scat were found.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Rabbit Trapping:** This month we have been continuing our efforts to reduce the numbers of rabbits in the breeding enclosures.

**Oct. 15:** We trapped at the Dormaier enclosure. Despite rainy cool weather we were able to capture 22 rabbits. Only ten of these rabbits contained pit tags. The other twelve were new rabbits. All but two rabbits were released to the wild on Sagebrush Flats (SBF). There were 38 tagged rabbits in the enclosure before the release, leaving 26 known rabbits. Given the history of a large portion of rabbits eluding capture, this number is still higher than we would like so we will be going back out one more time to try to reduce the population in the enclosure to a manageable number.

**Oct. 23-24:** We trapped at the larger of the two enclosures at SBF. Over the two day period we trapped 52 rabbits. Of the rabbits captured, 21 were new and 32 were recaptures. Of the 32 recaps, 21 of them were previously tagged. All but one rabbit, which escaped back into the enclosure, were released back into the wild on SBF. There were 55 known rabbits in the enclosure prior to trapping, thus we still have 34 known rabbits. This number is still higher than we would like to have going into winter, but time and weather may not allow for further trapping efforts.

We continue to trap opportunistically at the smaller enclosure at SBF. We are attempting to remove all rabbits and rehab the vegetation in this enclosure. We believe we are down to five or six rabbits.

We were assisted in trapping efforts by a great group of people: Katie Remine (Woodland Park Zoo); Sarah Wilkinson (Army Corps Natural Resource Specialist); Bill Green (Volunteer of the Year); Ashlee Mikkelsen; Hana Butler and the staff, students, and Interns participating in the Building Blocks for Career Readiness program out of Wenatchee; and, finally, WDFW staff Biologists Gallie, Comstock, Cotton, and O. Duvuvuei. We could not do it without all the help! I apologize for anyone I may have missed.

**Burrowing Owl:** Biologist O. Duvuvuei and Finger began preparing materials for construction of the burrowing owl artificial burrows. Additionally, Duvuvuei and Jim Wiersma of the Bureau of Reclamation toured potential sites to place the artificial burrows along the East Low Canal. Duvuvuei and Wiersma discussed the logistics of getting the installation equipment to the selected sites along the canal. Biologist O. Duvuvuei worked with Master Hunter Paul Logman to construct artificial nesting burrows for burrowing owls. These artificial burrows will be placed in Grant and Adams counties to supplement natural burrows in the area.

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** Biologist E. Duvuvuei continued to make progress with determining the scope and direction of NLF sample processing and the population viability analysis. The toe clips collected in 2004 (and possibly 2005) are in Olympia, and may be used as part of the population analysis; however, the data sheets associated with the toe tips were not found with the samples. E. Duvuvuei located the original data sheets from the 2004 and 2005 NLF surveys and entered the data. It is often entertaining to look over past records. Biologist Wisniewski had this to say about a NLF: “didn’t catch - well, I did then it jumped out of the net and banked off my forehead!” Biologist E. Duvuvuei finished a draft of the NLF species fact sheet, and threats and recovery actions for the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) revision. Biologists Finger, Wisniewski, and O. Duvuvuei assisted with identifying the five greatest threats to NLF for the SWAP revision. WSU is finalizing a pricing proposal for the NLF genetic sample processing and population viability analysis. It appears that this proposal will work within our budget and time constraints.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Supplemental Feed Route:** Assistant Manager Bechtold coordinated with project partners to schedule the seeding of 212 acres to a native grass community. The seeding is a part of the dense nesting cover project, in which former agricultural and CRP fields are to be restored to an early successional state.

Assistant Manager Bechtold coordinated with Partney Construction Inc. and the WDFW fiscal office regarding a contract for wetland enhancements in the Gloyd Seeps unit. Site conditions on the Spud Field were investigated and proved to be insurmountable at the present time, thus delaying the project until next spring. The contract is to be amended, allowing additional time for the delay, as well as adding the additional task of installing bank stabilization materials in the Road 19 area of the Gloyd Seeps unit.

**Chelan Butte Fields Restoration:** Natural Resource Technicians Brad Zabreznik and Kevin Vallance sprayed morning glory in fields being prepared for native seeding this fall and next year. Brad and Kevin were able to spray nine fields on Chelan Butte, totaling over 200 acres. Morning glory is a very tough deep rooted perennial that requires multiple years of control with specialized and very expensive herbicides. However, if done correctly the results are well worth the effort.



*Healthy morning glory (left) and herbicide treated morning glory (right) on Chelan Butte*

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Game Check Station:** Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen ran the Winthrop Deer Check Station during both weekends of the general modern firearm season. Despite the slow start opening weekend, the final check station numbers indicate hunters enjoyed a pretty good general season in District 6. All told we checked 249 Okanogan County hunters with 63 deer. This suggests participation was very similar to last year and the 25% success rate is above the five year average. In addition, over 1/3 of the harvested bucks were  $\geq 4 \frac{1}{2}$  years old.

*Does the wife know?* – Photo by Scott Fitkin



**Artesian/Black Lakes:** Biologists Finger, Duvuvuei, and Waterfowl Specialist Wilson toured the Artesian/Black Lake project site to get Wilson and Duvuvuei up to speed on the current status and future plans for this project site. If feasible, this project site would create approximately 150 acres of production habitat for waterfowl and quality shorebird habitat, and likely fair to good quality waterfowl hunting opportunity within the historic vernal pool wetlands. It is currently being evaluated whether it's feasible to pipe water to this site from East Low Canal.



**Artesian (foreground) and Black Lakes (background) wetland project. Currently in feasibility and design stages** – Photo by R. Finger

### **Private Lands/Access**

**Hunter Access:** Biologist Dougherty spent a great deal of time working on the Columbia Basin Cropland Hunting Initiative access areas. These areas will be ready for hunters soon, by Thanksgiving week! The areas will provide quality opportunities for waterfowl hunting in harvest crop fields, primarily corn,

and allow for hunting in areas that are typically reserved for commercially guided hunting.

Biologist Dougherty worked with Private landowners enrolled in the “*Hunt by Written Permission*” Hunter Access Program. In order to continue providing the increased enforcement aspect of the hunter access agreement, Biologists Dougherty and Comstock worked with WDFW Law Enforcement Officers during the opening weekend of Modern Firearms General Deer Season. The primary role was to observe and report instances of trespassing, poaching, and other hunting violations in order to provide peace of mind to hunter access cooperators. Although there wasn’t an opportunity for Biologist Dougherty to “make a bust,” he was able to discuss many different topics with several landowners regarding many of the world’s problems, including, but not limited to: bears, wolves, wheat, lack of rain, rude hunters, too much traffic, the “Westside,” etc.

Biologist Comstock spent opening weekend of deer season for modern firearm monitoring private lands in high-use areas and ensuring hunters were complying with the posted hunting access signs. On opening day, Biologist Comstock assisted a landowner who reported two vehicles that were trespass hunting on their property. Biologist Comstock made contact with a member of the trespassing party who informed her that they had killed two deer on the property. Law enforcement was contacted and Officer Smith came to the scene.



**Private Lands Signage** – Photos by Eric Braaten, WDFW

Biologist Comstock continues to answer many hunter questions by phone and email. Private Lands Biologist Braaten spent the last few weeks posting Hunter Access in north Grant County and meeting with private landowners. Private Lands Biologist Braaten spent time on contracts and ArcGIS mapping for new or renewal hunting access contracts with acreage changes.

**Glenn Williams Access:** Access staff completed repairs on the heavily used Glenn Williams boat launch on Potholes Reservoir. Ballast rock was placed to fill in the voids below, in between, and alongside the plank, and concrete was poured to patch together broken plank. The work that was done is only a band aid and will keep the launch operable, but it's in serious need of replacement.



*Ramp before and after*

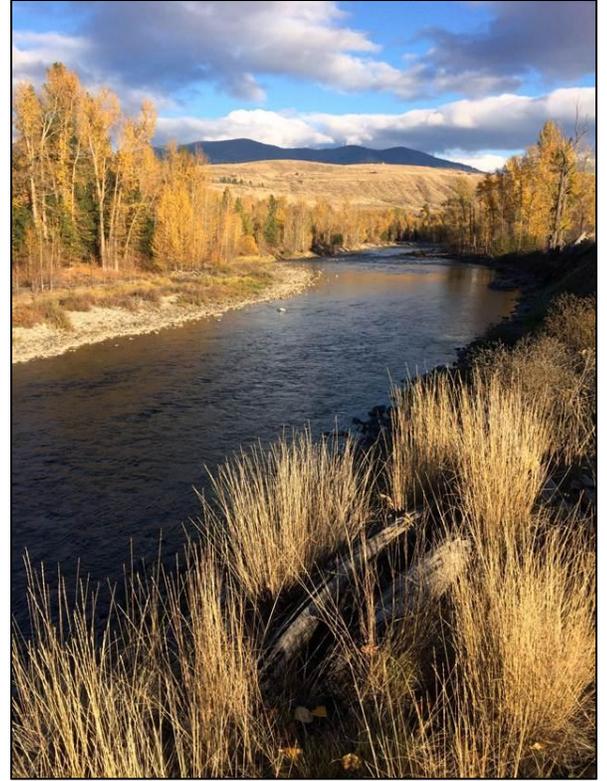
***GOAL 3: PROMOTE A HEALTHY ECONOMY, PROTECT COMMUNITY CHARACTER, MAINTAIN AN OVERALL HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE, AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CUSTOMER SERVICE***

### **Wildlife Areas**

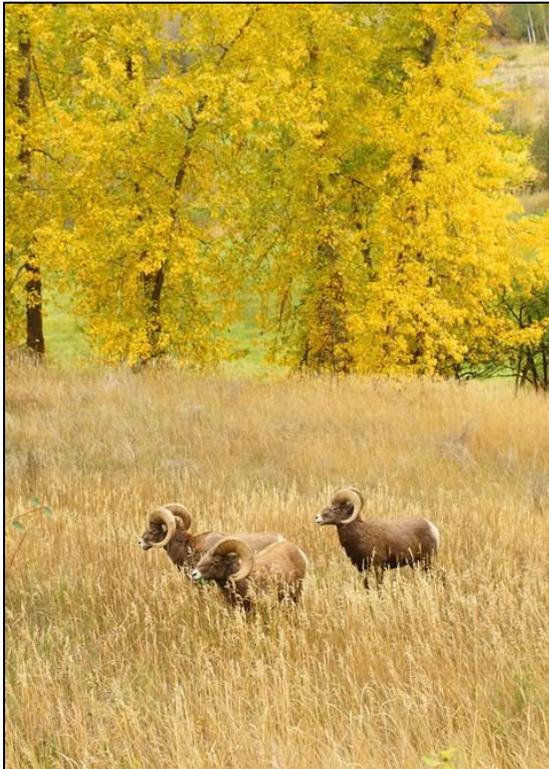
**Ecology of the Okanogan – Okanogan High School:** Manager Haug met with Okanogan High School's advanced biology teacher Kathleen Ferguson and the Conservation District's Kristen Cook at Driscoll Island as part of their Ecology of the Okanogan class (see picture below). Manager Haug discussed the history of the island and current management of the island. The group later collected invertebrates from the Similkameen River and took a variety of measurements to determine water quality. Manager Haug later spoke to the students regarding careers in the natural resource sciences and fielded questions related to being manager of the wildlife area.



*Above – Students from Okanogan High School’s ‘Ecology of the Okanogan’ class on the shores of the Similkameen River, Driscoll Island Wildlife Area – Photo by Justin Haug*



*Methow River – Photo by Scott Fitkin*



*Bighorn rams near the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photo by Justin Haug*

### **REGION 3**

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

##### **Wildlife Areas**

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Manager Bjornstrom met with RPM McCorquodale to discuss Duck Stamp funding strategies for the upcoming application period, then met with Tina Blewett – DU, RPM McCorquodale, District Biologist Gregory, State Waterfowl Biologist Wilson, and AM’s Sak and Buser to discuss habitat projects,

NAWCA updates, and other waterfowl related topics.

## **Wildlife Management**

**Pronghorn:** Biologist Gregory attended a Pronghorn coordination meeting with several members of Safari Club International, biologists from the Yakama Nation, WDFW Section Manager Harris, and RWPM McCorquodale. The group discussed the current status and location of the 99 pronghorn released in 2011 as well as future releases planned by the Yakama Nation.

**NAWCA:** Ducks Unlimited Biologist Blewett paid a visit to the Pasco District Office to meet with RPM McCorquodale, Waterfowl Specialist Wilson, and Biologists Gregory, Bjornstrom, Buser, and Sak. Blewett gave the group an update on the NAWCA grant preparation that has stalled due to a lack of dollars that can be used as matching funds. There was also discussion of potential projects for Migratory Bird Stamp proposals that will be due in January.

**Deer:** Biologist Gregory spoke with a hunter who harvested a sick deer near Kahlotus. She reported that the 3x2 buck was very malnourished and had diarrhea. The butcher who processed the meat had deemed it to be inedible. This deer matched the description of a deer reported by another individual in the Kahlotus area several weeks ago. It is not known if these reports reference the same animal.

Private lands Biologist Stutzman met with a landowner in Yakima County to talk about a potential Sage Grouse Initiative project. Stutzman and the owner toured ground that borders the south side of the Yakima Training Center and has had grouse fairly recently. Along with large tracks of sage brush hillsides and canyons, the property has some dormant wheat fields that are good candidates for restoration, and most importantly, a willing landowner.

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Moore contacted and sent disease sampling supplies to all the Selah Butte permit holders. All permit holders seemed very cooperative to assist in our testing.

Biologist Moore attended an internal meeting for bighorn sheep managers led by Rich Harris. The meeting focused on delineating each population's home range, short term, and long term population objectives, as well as overall population density.

## **Wolf Activities**

Wolf locations were monitored this week. Data indicates that the wolves have ventured north into or adjacent to Wilderness Areas, similar to the pattern from last year. However, no data has been seen for the past three days.

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.

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman completed prep work for a volunteer project with rock climbers who are going to complete repairs to the access trail on the Royal Columns. Huffman used old posts and sections of rebar to secure along the lower edge of the trail where erosion occurred. Over the weekend, volunteers filled in and stabilized the eroded section. This will improve the habitat and safety for climbers accessing the area.

### ***Volunteers working on Royal Columns climbing trail.***

Assistant Manager Berry, with a great deal of assistance from NRT Kass, signed the safety zone for the modern firearm elk season around the Oak Creek Headquarters.

Assistant Manager Berry had many hunter contacts as the general season opener approached. Assistant Manager Berry coordinated with WEC volunteers who were operating the hunter info station.



### **Wildlife Management**

Biologist Stutzman continues to work on the corn stubble retention project for public waterfowl hunting and contacted two more producers with corn fields this week. Both are interested in the program and hopefully will commit soon.

## ***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 spent two days delivering DPP permits in the Kahlotus area for deer damage. Considerable time was spent meeting with landowners to educate them on the new damage tag requirement and permit form. Half of the landowners contacted were supportive of the new changes to the damage permit program, while the other half do not like the additional fee associated with the new damage tag.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to assist a landowner in the Plymouth area with reducing the damage to a young block of fruit trees from deer. One escorted hunt occurred with

a disabled hunter who had a special antlerless permit for the area. Unfortunately the hunter's shot missed and the deer left the area. One nighttime hazing effort was also conducted.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with several landowners in the Black Rock and Corral Canyon elk areas on elk activity for planning and scheduling elk hunting opportunities.

The director of the Washington State Horse Park, a private facility near Easton, called to inquire about wildlife fencing. Conflict Specialist Wetzel provided her with examples and purchasing information for fladry to use in a special application.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Colockum Wildlife Area:** Colockum staff spent much of the week evaluating and falling hazard trees lining green dot roads after the Colockum-Tarps Fire. A contractor from Roslyn was hired to do the work, which was made more difficult due to wet weather and muddy roads. Trees were cut along the North Fork and South Fork Tarpiscan Roads.

Manager Lopushinsky toured Tekison and Brushy Creek Roads with Engineer Kuykendall, Habitat Bio Nelson, and Jim Matthews from the Yakima Tribe to look at the leaking irrigation diversion on Tekison and the problem culvert on Brushy Creek.

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman continued to work on issues with Oak Creek Timber Sale. The focus continues to be on identifying road maintenance needs associated with the timber sale. TNC Forester Dahlgreen drove the roads with an Engineer from the Forest Service who provided great input and cost estimates. Based on that input, we will be able to develop a scope of work and maps for the bid process. We are also contacting mills about interest in purchasing and developing log sorts and volume estimates.

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Wenas Wildlife Area staff completed five nested frequency monitoring plots, collecting data on the Wright Place (NW polygon), which was last done in 2006.



*Wenas staff laying out transects and reading nested frequency plots at Wright Place Rehab*

Manager Confer Morris and Assistant Manager Taylor did a site inspection on the new elk fence. They are coming along very well and hope to be done with priority one section in the coming week.

*Upper wire being rolled out and connected to new fence in Priority 1 section*



*New fence with wire stretched*



*New fence dropping over rock face at Kelley*

**LT Murray Wildlife Area:** All Murray staff worked to install a section of elk fence across Taneum Creek where elk were moving off the wildlife area and adjacent to I-90. This is a temporary fix as the property belongs to the Bureau of Reclamation. However, elk season opens soon and hunters have been calling about wanting to pursue a group of 25 elk, including one bull, that are using this crossing. Assistant Manager Hunt and Natural Resource Technician Schnebly cut aspen poles for use on the crossing, and staff installed the fence Thursday in time to plug the elk leak prior to General Elk season opening Saturday.

***New fence installed across Taneum Creek to keep elk off I-90***

Assistant Manager Hunt worked on locating a vinyl siding product that works well for sage grouse fence markers. Some vendors are not stocking it anymore, but he actually found the product out of Spokane, and cheaper than previously paid. We'll need to make some up for our Skookumchuck/Whiskey Dick stock fence, which will hopefully be ready for markers soon.

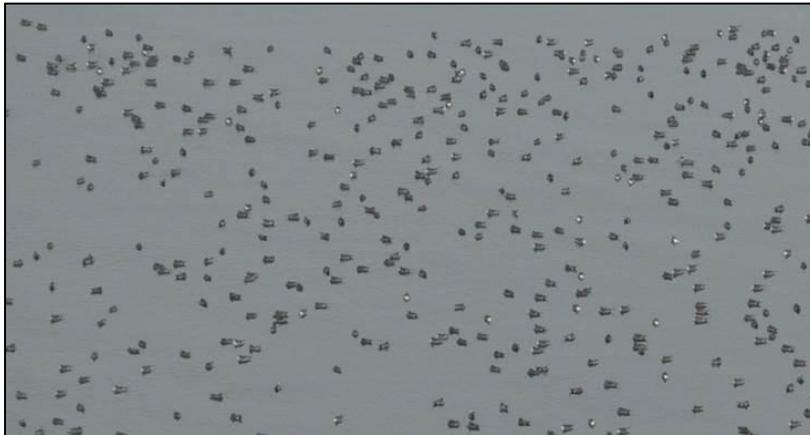


**REGION 4**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Dabbling Duck Aerial Survey:** Biologist DeBruyn flew the marine environs from Snohomish County (Port Susan) north to the Canadian border counting dabbling ducks. The weather was barely acceptable, but the ducks were lined up nicely for counting. Just under 100,000 birds were counted which is fairly normal for this time of year. Not all northern ducks have arrived but those that were here seemed to be mostly available for counting. Northern Pintails seem to be doing well in our area after some down years.



***Dabbling Ducks on Padilla Bay from the Air***

District 14 Aerial Waterfowl Survey - Port Susan to Drayton Harbor						
10/20/2014	Plane/Pilot: QQ/Jeff		Observer(s): Paul DeBruyn			
Weather: Partly Cldy 10-15 SW		Tide @ Beginning: 3.3		Tide @ End: 4.4		
Location	Mallard	Northern Pintail	American Wigeon	Green-Winged Teal	other	Area Totals(dabblers)
Port Susan Bay	3,225	550	0	0	Surf Scoter 75	3,775
Livingston Bay	2,925	1,175	0	0	0	4,100
Skagit Bay	24,080	5,875	3,425	7,550	LSNO 15500	40,930
Fidalgo Bay	100	175	0	2,500	0	2,775
Swinomish Reserve	250	1,975	650	0	CAGO 125	2,875
Padilla Bay	2,990	1,610	11,650	660	0	16,910
Samish Bay	2,540	10,700	4,020	1,340	0	18,600
Nooksack Delta/Portage	1,050	875	0	0	0	1,925
Lummi Bay	790	3,250	1,060	0	Scaup 1500	5,100
Birch Bay	500	1,250	750	0	0	2,500
Blaine Area	0	0	0	0	Scaup 500/RUDU200	0
<b>Species Totals(Dabblers)</b>	<b>38,450</b>	<b>27,435</b>	<b>21,555</b>	<b>12,050</b>		<b>Grand Total 99490</b>

**Swan Mortality and Morbidity Study:** Biologist DeBruyn met with a representative of Puget Sound Energy to discuss the upcoming swan project. PSE is a major cooperator and contributor to the project as they are concerned with power line strikes as a source of swan mortality. DeBruyn also ordered supplies and worked on hiring a technician by November 15 to gather swan carcasses. The first swans of the year arrived from the north over the weekend.

**Highway 20 Elk Crossing Project:** Biologist DeBruyn brought in a camera that was monitoring an area where many of the elk/vehicle collisions occur. The camera was having some technical difficulties, but recorded numerous elk passing through and crossing the highway. DeBruyn also discussed the project with a biologist from the Washington Department of Transportation and plans were made to replace the camera and do some more work with monitoring devices and GPS collars this winter.



*Cow Elk with GPS Collar crossing Highway 20. This elk was later killed in a collision with a vehicle.*



*Biologist Milner completed State Wildlife Action Plan fact sheets for the American pika and hoary bat*

## Wildlife Areas

**Fir Island Farm Water Quality Monitoring:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw compiled information to request price quotes and warranty information from manufacturers of water quality monitoring equipment. WDFW is considering replacing the equipment that is currently on the site, depending on cost, warranty, and ability of grant funds to cover the additional expense.

**Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw sent an update to the project Stakeholder Advisory Committee, notifying members that the next committee meeting will take place in January. The final report from the modeling company is due to WDFW in mid-December, and this report will be an important item for the committee to discuss at the January meeting. A public open house will follow the committee meeting, and WDFW is planning to select the preferred alternative design for Leque Island in February.

**Lower Stillaguamish Project Coordination:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a meeting with City of Stanwood staff and consultants, Stillaguamish Flood Control District, and the Stillaguamish Tribe regarding a flood conveyance design project the City is launching. The City project is in close proximity to Leque Island and a Stillaguamish Tribe project, so the groups at the meeting are coordinating their projects to understand how each has potential to affect the others.

**Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP):** Projects Coordinator Brokaw attended a quarterly PSNERP Steering Committee Meeting. At this meeting, the Committee provided ideas and feedback on presentation materials planned for a Public Open House that is scheduled for November 5<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-8:00 pm at the City of Burlington City Hall. A public comment period associated with National Environmental Policy Act requirements is currently open and will close on November 24<sup>th</sup>. More information on this process, the documents under review, and how to comment is available at: <http://pugetsoundnearshore.org/outreach.html>.

*The SEPA process 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.*

**Ebey Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed an additional access road and gate on the west



lobe to be used as a pheasant release road after the fields get too wet to drive in. A volunteer assisted with the project which involved clearing blackberry and installing a gate and signage. Manager Boehm also coordinated and conducted the release of pheasants on the unit. Manager Boehm toured the unit with Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link and discussed site challenges, habitat improvements, and the pheasant program.

**Cherry Valley Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm provided a tour and project overview for the “2014 Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Coordinator’s Workshop” which was conducted on Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>. Approximately fifty people were in the group, representing various federal, state, and WDFW professionals. Manager Boehm discussed the WDFW Fish Passage Project and the Waterwheel Creek Project, as well as the revived agricultural activities on the unit. The group also toured the Edmonds Pier, the Qwuloolt Estuary Project, and the Issaquah Fish Hatchery.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Mountain Goat Sampling:** Biologist DeBruyn measured and took samples from the last goat to be taken at Mount Baker for the season. He managed to sample five of the seven goats taken off the mountain this year by special permit holders.

**Hoof Rot Study:** Biologist DeBruyn got some deformed hooves taken off a black-tailed deer by a hunter and sent them to a lab in Colorado for further analysis.

**Cougar Management Meeting:** Biologist Milner and Anderson attended the statewide cougar management meeting through video conference in Mill Creek.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Samish Unit:** Natural Resource Specialist Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis placed boards in the riser structure in the NE ditch. They checked the survey box for filled out surveys and checked NW culverts.

**Pheasant Release Program:** Natural Resource Specialist Meis and Manager Rotton assisted with pheasant delivery on Friday at Headquarters. Whatcom Wildlife Area 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. 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 ten 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.

**Waterfowl Program:** Natural Resource Specialist Cosgrove monitored water levels, waterfowl, and hunter use on the Fir Leque Island, Headquarters, Island, Samish and Johnson/Debay's Slough units.

**Samish Unit Enhancement Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed a draft Special Use Permit application and sent it to Ducks Unlimited for review prior to turning it in to Skagit County. The Special Use permit process in Skagit County involves a public comment period and public testimony before a Hearing Examiner. When the comment period and Hearing Examiner meeting dates are set, they will be advertised in the Skagit County Herald and Projects Coordinator Brokaw will notify everyone who attended the public meeting for the project.

**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. No problems were reported.

### **Access Program**

**Ramp Repair:** John Evans and Derek Hacker repaired the boat ramp at Lake Roesiger, Lake Serene, and Martha Lake. The work included removing three broken concrete planks at Roesiger, along with replacing several missing and broken bolts on other planks. Lake Martha in Lynnwood only had one damaged plank. The damaged plank was cut out from the launch and replaced with an older plank from our surplus pile. Lake Serene had several broken planks and missing bolts on the launch. The bolts were replaced and gravel was put down where the two broken planks had been removed. The Serene launch is narrower than most of our other launches and staff didn't have any concrete planks to fit this launch. Serene is a seasonal lake which closes in a week so it will give me time to find or possibly make two new planks for that launch before next year's opener.



*Boat Ramp before – Martha Lake*



*Boat Ramp after – Martha Lake*



*Boat Ramp before – Lake Serene*



*Boat Ramp after – Lake Serene*

**Private Lands/Access Management**

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Preparation and Establishment:** Technicians Otto 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/survey boxes and surveyed all enrolled sites in Whatcom, Snohomish, and Skagit Counties for access/harvest conditions.

*A hunter in in Whatcom County sent in this picture of Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site conditions use. The hunter using this blind successfully harvested three Mallards and was very grateful for the opportunity to hunt on private lands via the Private Lands Access Program.*



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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Whidbey Island Naval Station Integrated Management Meeting:** Biologist Milner participated in the annual review for natural resources planning and management at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station. Staff from federal and state fish and wildlife agencies meet once a year with Naval natural resource staff to review and discuss actions that have occurred on the installation over the last year.

**Region 4 Ungulate Damage:** Biologist Smith and Conflict Specialist Witman responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage in Whatcom and Skagit counties. Non-lethal measures to deter deer and elk from entering properties were discussed, including fencing options. In addition, Smith and Witman spent time reviewing documents, procedures, and protocols relating to conflict issues. Smith also monitored temporary fences protecting crops from elk damage in areas of Skagit and King Counties. Tech Cogdal continued monitoring flattery fence in day creek, talked with land owners in the valley about damage concerns and got an inventory of Carsten's fence to see what can be used on the next project. Cogdal also assessed damage on other crop fields on Minkler Road and continued to monitor those fields to discourage elk activity.

*Temporary electric fence excluding elk from pumpkin and corn crops in King County*



## **Wildlife Areas**

**Island Unit:** Natural Resource Specialist Cosgrove and Natural Resource Specialist Meis installed boards on the Lorenzen structure to improve field flooding conditions. Meis cut up downed trees, cleaned the area, worked the weed-eater, and reposted signs at the backside landing on the Island unit. Manager Rotton coordinated with HPA Biologist Wendy Cole on the permitting for the Island Ditch maintenance project. Cosgrove assisted the North Sound Weed Crew with moving a marshmaster across Deepwater Slough to Goat Island Field on the Island unit.

**Skagit Headquarters:** Manager Rotton performed administrative duties, including completion of reports, coordinating equipment and facilities repair, surplus equipment forms, vendor payment and administrative reports, webpage updates, and map updates for safety zones. Natural Resource Specialist Meis loaded and released pheasants at the Bow Hill site. Meis also moved gravel in the catching house to prevent birds from escaping out of the structure. Meis and Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove worked on edits to the Skagit Wildlife Area Waterfowl Hunt Guide and Wildlife Area webpage. Cosgrove provided photos to be used for the updates. Cosgrove brushed out the trail at the end of the spur dike at the Headquarters Unit to improve access to the estuary and bayfront for area walk-in users.

**Leque Island Unit:** Natural Resource Tech Cosgrove adjusted Safety Zone signs at the Leque Island unit after a sharecropper finished harvesting corn. Manager Rotton and Habitat Engineer Bob Barnard met with WSDOT representatives regarding the work area for the Highway 532 construction project. A culvert crossing was compromised and the group discussed temporary repair options.

## **Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination**

**Volunteer outreach to the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group:** Hunter Education/Volunteer coordinator Steven Dazey, with Volunteer Program Manager Christine Redmond, attended the Upper Snoqualmie Elk Management Groups meeting and presented CERVIS and how to use CERVIS in tracking their service projects in the North Bend area. The USVEMG had many questions about CERVIS, making it a very productive evening. It also highlighted concerns they had and allowed Manager Redmond and Volunteer Coordinator Dazey to address those concerns.

**Hunter Education In-Service Training:** Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey communicated with the Region 4 Chief instructors the importance of registering for the 2015 In-Service Training coming up in Wenatchee in March. The Chief Instructors were also encouraged to contact their teaching teams and to encourage them to register. The Hunter Education Department expects up to 400 instructors to attend. Early registration will assist the HE group to plan and deliver a quality training experience.

**Master Hunter Permit Program Service Hours:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey continued to assist Master Hunters to find Department of Fish and Wildlife projects to complete their service hours for the Master Hunter program. With the assistance of Snoqualmie Wildlife

Area Manager Brian Boehm, many Master Hunters have been able to complete their service hour requirements. Coordinator Dazey also assisted Biologist Cole Caldwell to answer documentation questions on volunteer travel reimbursement.

**Hunter Education Coordination:** A Hunter Education Coordinator assisted Chief Instructor Chaar in doubling the number of students that would be able to sign up in two of his upcoming classes. The demand for classes is still high and the doubling of Instructor Chaar's class size helped to reduce the wait list for his area.

### **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.

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Questions:** Biologist Caldwell received several questions from hunters about quality hunting opportunities on private lands in Region 4. Biologist Caldwell referred these hunters to internet resources and answered their questions.

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Leadership Training:** Several staff attended the second module of the Leadership Training course, Hiring Right.

**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.

## **REGION 5**

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Townsend's big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*):** Biologist Anderson and three volunteers conducted repairs to one of the gates on a Trout Lake area lava cave critical to wintering and breeding Townsend's big-eared bats. Two gates were installed on this cave system approximately 20 years ago to prevent disturbance and vandalism to one of SW Washington's most important bat caves. In the past year, vandals have broken a lock on one entrance and dug under the gate on the other entrance. Volunteer J. Nieland (retired USFS

recreation specialist responsible for the original design and construction of these gates in the early 1990's), returned this week to oversee repairs to the locking gate. A portable generator, welder, and cutting torch were transported to the site and a new locking system was installed that hopefully will deter vandals in the future. J. Nieland is known for his design and construction of gating systems for caves and mine shafts throughout the west. WDFW appreciates his dedication to bat conservation in Washington.



*J. Nieland Conducting Repairs On Gate day's work*



*J. Nieland and L. Nieland after a hard*



*Townsend's Big-Eared Bat (photo by Tom Kogut)*

### Wildlife Areas

#### Shillapoo Wildlife Area

#### **Shillapoo Wetland Vegetation**

**Surveys:** Wildlife Area staff conducted wetland vegetation surveys this past week to determine the percent cover of beneficial

plants for waterfowl going into the winter season. Six wetlands were surveyed this year with four meeting management goals and two below management standards, as they were being dominated by non-native reed canary grass. The two substandard wetlands will have additional treatments next year to get the reed canary grass under control. These treatments could include herbicide spraying, disking, planting of cover crops, and mowing. All of these tactics have showed success in controlling canary grass in the past.



*North Basin Wetland meeting goals*



*Pencil Lake Wetland not meeting goals*

### **Klickitat Wildlife Area**

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Management Plan:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven attended a one-day meeting with WDFW District Team planning staff from Region 5 and Olympia Headquarters to further develop the scope of the new Management Plan. Van Leuven also worked with GIS staff to refine the KWA Unit maps as well as a new weed plan with weed specialist Dave Heimer. These documents are to be integrated into the KWA Management Plan.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**2014 Hunting Seasons:** Regional Wildlife Biologists, Hunting Access Staff, and Customer Service Staff fielded dozens of contacts from the hunting public this week regarding access questions, management questions, directions, etc. Changes in access policy by Industrial Forest Landowners have significantly changed the availability of areas suitable for hunting. Please see the hunting prospects located at: <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/prospects/> for detailed information about hunting access, populations, etc. Additionally, hunters are encouraged to use the WDFW Go Hunt feature located at: <http://apps.wdfw.wa.gov/gohunt/> to learn about prospective areas, find public lands, find private lands accessible to the public, etc.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Pheasant Release:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven, Technician Davis, and Conflict Specialist MacDonald, along with volunteers D. and R. Wheelhouse and D. Morrison, released pheasants at the three Klickitat County sites on Friday. 55 birds went to the Hatchery unit, 35 to the Gun Club property, and 19 to the Finn Ridge Road site.

## *Klickitat Wildlife Area Pheasant Release*

### Access

**Langsdorf Landing:** Work continues moving forward on the new ramp installation with most of the new ramp set in place.



*Langsdorf Landing construction*

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

### Wildlife Conflict

**Injured Deer:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to an injured deer call. The deer was badly injured; Conklin dispatched the deer and donated the deer to a local charity.

**Grays River Hunt:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin provided information about the Grays River Hunt to approximately seven hunters this week and met with four land owners in Wahkiakum County. Conklin also picked up calendars that the land owners had been keeping to record the number of elk on their property. All the land owners are very upset with the new fee associated with the damage tag. However, the land owners that allowed access to their property for the Grays River hunt report they are very happy with the hunters so far. The land owners have even loaded elk in the back of vehicles with their tractors, provided directions including driving hunters to certain areas, and called the hunters when they see the elk. Some of the hunters have reciprocated by taking land owners fishing and also offering to work on their farms!

## **REGION 6**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Lyre River Acquisition Project:** Biologist Ament reports that the North Olympic Land Trust (NOLT) purchase of the 280 acre Gettysburg Estate property at the mouth of the Lyre River was completed last week. Biologist Ament initiated efforts to protect this property in 2002 when Norman Brooks (now deceased) contacted her to see if WDFW could purchase the special land. She had worked with the landowner to ensure protection of the bald eagle territory on his property. The “Brooks” property includes riparian habitat, estuarine habitat, forested uplands, and 2400 feet of marine shoreline along the Straits at the terminus of the river. She went to WWRP with the project in 2002 and assisted Scott Harris with going into another round of WWRP. She has been assertive about keeping the property in the agency 20/20 process and informed many land conservation groups about the need to secure protection of the property. She introduced NOLT staff to the property representative (one of Mr. Brook’s sons) and wrote them a letter of support for acquisition in 2012. After 12 years....it appears that Mr. Brook’s wish will finally be coming true and Biologist Ament has learned the value of never giving up on something important. Unfortunately, some logging of the property has occurred in recent years but the property still has tremendous values for fish and wildlife. NOLT plans to allow public access to the property. A photo below taken years ago by Biologist Ament shows much of the Brooks property.



***Brooks Property at the mouth of the Lyre River***

#### **Wildlife Areas**

Olympic Wildlife Area staff completed fertilizing 200 acres of winter elk forage in the Wynoochee Mitigation and 120 acres on the Olympic Wildlife Area during the month.

Manager Gerchak and Asst. manager Gallegos met with Pam Hefley of Tacoma Power for their annual onsite visit to review the Wynoochee mitigation elk forage areas this past week. Unit 2 reseeded this past summer was most impressive with the high elk usage it has received since the last visit three weeks ago. The fall gray oats cover crop has been grazed to within four inches.



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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Citizen Science Projects:** Biologist Tirhi met with Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma staff to discuss current and potential citizen science projects for 2015. There was overwhelming support to continue and expand the two current projects: amphibian monitoring and purple martin monitoring. Amphibian monitoring takes place across wetlands in Pierce and Thurston counties. Two purple martin colonies were monitored in 2014; up to eight locations around Commencement Bay are proposed for monitoring in 2015 with fewer visits per site.

Biologist Tirhi attended a volunteer recognition luncheon for the 2014 Purple Martin Monitoring Project hosted by the Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium on Sunday. The project lead presented summary data for the two colonies that had been monitored. Biologist Tirhi presented data on the regional Purple Martin recovery effort, including population monitoring and colony location data for WA, BC, OR, and CA, as well as population recovery benchmarks. Tirhi then presented each volunteer with recognition certificates and a volunteer lapel pin.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**West Rocky Prairie Phase II:** Biologist Tirhi held a meeting with partners engaged in acquisition of the Port of Tacoma's West Rocky Prairie property in Maytown, Thurston County. Tirhi's proposal ranked number one in the Urban Habitat Category of the recent WWRP Acquisition Program. The 3M allotment is intended to be used as a match for additional funding to purchase all 745 acres. The partners enthusiastically agreed that support for the project exists and that efforts would continue to seek remaining funding to entice the Port to consider conservation acquisition. A 3M request thru JBLM using 2014 end-of-year funds was unfortunately denied. However, a lesser request thru the DOD REPI program using 2015 funds is still in consideration. Finally, Tirhi will be working with USFWS staff to submit a Section 6 recovery grant for 2015 in the range of 2M.

*West Rocky Prairie, Maytown, Thurston County*

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

**Private Lands /Conflict**

**Long Beach Cranberries:** Biologist Harris received an email for a landowner that put a damage prevention permit to good use. This young girl got her first elk! Note the picture is dark, but the elk was harvested during legal hunting hours. This antlerless elk came from a small group, four cows, one calf, and one branch, which has been reluctant to leave the bogs and has been making evening raids. The bigger group has moved to more elk friendly areas for the time being.

