

Wildlife Program

Week of June 15 – June 21, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Headquarters Wolf Activities

Captures and Collars: On June 14, USDA Wildlife Services staff captured and collared an adult female wolf in the middle of the Dirty Shirt pack territory. On June 16, Washington State University researchers captured and collared an adult female wolf from the Lookout Pack. Currently, there are 14 active collars (ten currently sending daily GPS data, others transmitting VHF as of last verification) in ten WDFW collared packs (does not include packs managed by the Colville Confederated Tribes). Packs managed by WDFW with collars include Salmo, Goodman, Diamond, Smackout, Dirtyshirt, Huckleberry, Profanity, Lookout, Teanaway, and Tucannon.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Grizzly Bear Survey: District Biologists Annemarie Prince and Dana Base took down one camera and hair-snagging corral and installed another within the Selkirk Ecosystem. No grizzly bears were detected. However, multiple black bears, mule deer, and moose were detected. Hair-snare corrals consist of barbed wire stretched around four or more trees, forming a corral with lure (typically fish and cow's blood) placed in the center. The objective is for the bear to cross the barbed wire and leave a hair sample for DNA analysis. There is also a self-activated "trail" camera placed at the corral site for initial bear species identification.



Black bear crossing the barbed wire and leaving a hair sample



Mule deer buck checking out barbed wire corral

Columbia Basin Bat Surveys: Biologists Atamian and Lowe set up and retrieved acoustic detectors in southern and western Whitman County to wrap up the first round of bat surveys. Data cards were forwarded to Olympia for analysis. Detectors will be deployed twice more in six selected locations in Lincoln and Whitman counties in July and August.

Acoustic bat detector set up near a pond in Whitman County



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

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – BCH Kids

Camp: Twin Rivers Back Country Horsemen put on their annual Kid’s Camp at the Smoothing Iron buildings this week. The camp teaches young people horse riding skills, land stewardship, and other valuable skills related to spending time in the outdoors. The camp was not without problems this year related to the water system and electrical problems in the house. Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice had an electrician check and repair faulty light switches and wiring in the house on Tuesday. One of the wiring problems in the upstairs bathroom was arching and could have caused a fire. Dice also had a plumber respond to repair a water supply problem on Thursday. Water from the full storage tank on the hill wasn’t getting into the system causing the small well near the house to dry up. There wasn’t enough water to fill stock tanks to water the horses. To get the group by until repairs could be made, Dice hauled 2,000 gallons of water to the building using one of our five ton trucks and a water tank on Thursday.



BCH Kids Camp trail ride



Horse trailers and campers at Smoothing Iron for BCH Kids Camp

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Safe Harbor and Columbia Basin Pygmy Rabbits: Biologist Comstock was contacted by two landholders who are interested in enrolling their property in the safe harbor agreement for pygmy rabbits, one of which is a power company with a transmission line right-of-way. She began the process of preparing maps and parcel information for the properties. On June 18, the notice for nine applications for safe harbor agreements was published in the Federal Register with a 30-day comment period. Biologist Comstock spent one day with the pygmy rabbit team and a group of enthusiastic volunteers trapping rabbits at the Beezley Hills enclosure. The proximity of the new release sites to the road is quite refreshing. Private Lands Biologist Braaten set up a meeting in a few weeks with landowners interested in signing safe harbor agreements for pygmy rabbits.

Inland Avian Predation Working Group (IAPWG): Biologist Finger attended a conference call with the IAPWG to learn about the current status of the project. The action agencies reported success at Crescent Island, but at Goose Island two Caspian terns had initiated nests (one of them successful) within a double rope and flagging area, causing considerable concern that terns would acclimate to the passive dissuasion materials. It was hinted that rows of silt fencing may be needed in the future, which would further add to the giant eyesore at Potholes Reservoir. Further, a large percentage of the birds that nested at Goose Island showed up at Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge on Blalock Islands and were nesting there.

Northern Leopard Frog: Biologists Finger, E. Duvuvuei, and O. Duvuvuei met with USFWS Wildlife Biologist Warrick and Columbia National Wildlife Refuge to discuss the Northern Leopard Frog Reintroduction Feasibility project. The primary topic of discussion was habitat modification at Marsh Unit 1 for the benefit of northern leopard frogs and the detriment of bullfrogs. Warrick is trying to build support for installing a levee on the north side of the system that would allow for better water management of the north side of the Marsh Unit. All were in agreement that this relatively simple modification would likely give adequate water level control to allow for significant gains in control of tall emergent vegetation, which currently dominates the passively managed portion of the unit. This would also allow for installation of a drift fence to hinder bullfrog movements, a tool that is proving to be quite effective on the south side of this unit, where one has been set up experimentally. This fence is functioning to remove small numbers of bullfrogs (typically a few per day but close to 100 per day during humid conditions) and is providing data on bullfrog attempts to migrate into the area. Also discussed was the possibility of aerial herbicide treatment on a pond that is completely closed in with tall emergent.

Common Loon: Biologist Heinlen monitored Crawfish Lake for common loon nesting success this period, finding one pair of loons with two chicks (2-3 weeks old) on the lake.

Crawfish Lake Common Loons with chicks – Photo by J. Heinlen



Wildlife Areas

Columbia Basing Weed Management:

Assistant Managers Cole, Eidson, and Bechtold spent three days working with Central Valley Helicopters to complete the annual June weed control treatments. A total of 485 acres that included the Gloyd Seeps Dense Nesting Cover plots, Warden Upland Wildlife Restoration Acquisition Sites, Winchester Reserve and Winchester Regulated Access Area, and the Lower Crab Creek Unit were treated. Targeted weeds include perennial pepperweed, Canada thistle, Russian olive, catchweed bedstraw, kochia, and Russian thistle.



Aerial application – Photo by Chad Eidson

Lower Crab Creek from the air –
Photo by Chad Eidson

Columbia Basin Post-Fire Monitoring: Assistant Manager Bechtold spent two days this week monitoring sites of recent fires, including the 2012 fires at Barker Canyon, and 2014 fires at Barker Canyon, Castle Lake, Junction Lake, and the Million Dollar Mile North access site. Recovery from the 2012 Barker Canyon Fire is about as good as one could hope for. There are relatively few weeds and an abundance of needle-and-thread grass, basin wildrye, and lupine. Recovery from the 2014 Castle Lake fire is not going quite as well, as there is little soil stability and few desirable plant species.



Site of the 2012 Barker Canyon Fire – Photo by Nick Bechtold



Picture of Deep Lake taken from the “road” out to Castle Lake – Photo by Nick Bechtold

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project: Okanogan Lands Forester Jamie Bass worked with Department Forester Rod Pfeifle to conduct a survey of needed road work in thinning units. Bass and Pfeifle took photos, performed basic field assessments, and documented the need for road use for the timber treatments. Bass contacted CAMP Environmental Engineer Kristen Kuykendall to request help in creating a road plan to attach to the timber sale harvester contract. All road work is intended to use existing road beds to temporarily reopen access to acreage in need of thinning using mechanical equipment, and provide firefighter access for prescribed burns.

Sinlahekin and Chiliwist Noxious Weed Control: Sinlahekin staff spent a considerable amount of time treating noxious weeds within the Sinlahekin Complex. Scotch thistle, baby’s breath and Rush skeletonweed were targeted at the Chiliwist and various weeds were treated on the Sinlahekin. A total of nearly 120 acres of weeds were sprayed throughout the complex. Efforts will continue this week, especially in the Chiliwist where more plants have emerged and are ready to seed since the last treatments in March and April.

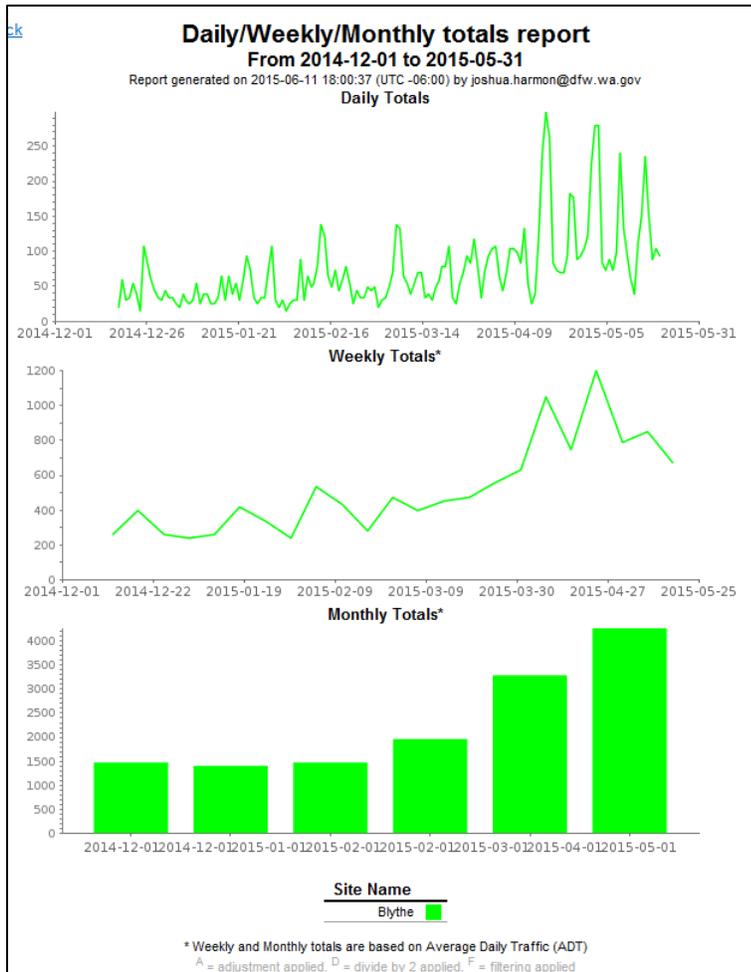


Above – Emergence of 6-foot high Scotch Thistle on the Chiliwist – Photo by J. Haug

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

Access

Dryden DOT access site vehicle counter install – Photo by Joe Graves



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

Wildlife Areas

FEMA/Carlton Complex: Manager Furnari printed out “EPM & Seeding” documentation and location maps provided by Scott Allen for planned WCC work project. Two WCC crews showed up Monday to work on “Project Wattle.” These wattles are part of the emergency protective measures (EPM) to help alleviate mudflow/erosion issues in areas that experienced mudflows last August. Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin spent the afternoon showing them most of the sites. Crews spent over two days installing materials and not quite half a day working on repairing

a watering point along Lester Road. Manager Furnari asked for photos, provided them with her camera, and documented work locations.



One of several wattle enhanced areas on the Methow WLA – Photo by WCC Ernie Farmer



Douglas County Mule Deer Fawns – Photo by Eric Braaten



Lester Road-Inner Spring's repaired watering point – Photo by WCC Ernie Farmer



Rattlesnake keeping cool or waiting for a mouse in the restroom at Corral Lake – Photo by Nick McAlavy



Leaf-eating beetle Chrysolina quadrigemina blanketing St. John's wort on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area and a wildflower-laden scene above Blue Lake looking north on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Elk calving season is in full swing on the Colockum, with many calves being seen in riparian areas and near water sources.

Cow and calf elk, Colockum Wildlife Area

Knapweed Bio-Control Insects:

Manger Lopushinsky received and released knapweed bio-control insects (*Larinus minutus*) this week. The insects were released in the Brewton Gulch area where diffuse knapweed has been increasing after the 2013 Colockum-Tarps Fire.



Diffuse knapweed bio-control insects released on Colockum Wildlife Area

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom participated in a conference call with staff from Ducks Unlimited to discuss funding and construction options for a water diversion at the Mesa Lake Unit. The diversion is designed to take advantage of an annual flow that is currently being underutilized. The diversion will take 1/3 of the water and re-route it toward the Pigeon Pond complex, a system that typically dries up in the fall. The amount of water available to feed the system should allow for annual flow, which opens up the area for further wetland development.



Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Logging contractors began harvest operations on the Oak Creek Timber Sale. Forester Mackey coordinated with the contractor and completed compliance checks. Mackey coordinated with the subcontractor doing road work on a start date and water source for road watering and grading. Mackey flagged road work areas for ditch clean out and grading. Road work will start on Monday, with logs headed to the mill by midweek.



The harvesting contractor using the processor to cut and sort logs on the landing in Unit 3-1 of the Oak Creek Timber Sale

Wildlife Management

WDFW Bat Monitoring Project: District Biologist Fidorra met with Biologists Finger and Duvuvuei in Ephrata to identify sites in District 5 for the WDFW Bat Monitoring project and deployed two detectors. Fidorra retrieved the two detectors and found that one in the Snake River Canyon appears to have collected ~10,000 bat recordings (not necessarily 10,000 bats), while the other at a Franklin County agriculture site collected six bat recordings.

Canada Goose Location: District Biologist Fidorra conducted scouting trips for Canada goose locations in the Tri-Cities. A small group of 35 geese remains at the Fishing Pond in Columbia Park, and a larger group of 300 was moved between Columbia Park and Wade Park. Fidorra continued to organize volunteers and staff to assist in the Tri-cities' Canada goose banding on Friday, June 26 and contacted park staff at banding sites.

Tagged Burrowing Owl: District Biologist Fidorra reviewed tracking data from a satellite tagged burrowing owl in Benton County. Fidorra reviewed the possibilities for capturing the owl to remove the transmitter after two successful years of data collection and will coordinate with Global Owl Project partners to attempt to do so in the coming weeks.

SAFE Breeding Bird Point-Count Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra assisted Private Lands Biologist Stutzman with SAFE breeding bird point-count surveys and attempted to meet with land owners to discuss program details but both landowners were unavailable. Also discussed were land access and NRCS programs in Franklin County.

Dove Banding: District Biologist Fidorra prepared supplies for upcoming dove banding for the Ringold fish hatchery trapping site.

Mule Deer Management Plan: District Biologist Fidorra reviewed and submitted comments regarding the Draft Mule Deer Management Plan.

Public Calls: District Biologist Fidorra received and resolved many calls from the public related to wildlife and regulatory inquiries.

Point-Count Monitoring: After some grassland bird ID studying, Private Lands Biologist Stutzman completed the final round of point-count monitoring at SAFE/CP33 sites in Benton and Franklin counties. The fields are all currently in fallow and remain entirely uninteresting in terms of species.

Franklin County Access Points: District Biologist Fidorra accompanied Stutzman on Franklin County point-counts and afterwards toured some access sites. Stutzman provided background on both CRP and the access program in Franklin County as Fidorra continues to get familiar with these programs.

Mule Deer Plan: Biologist Bernatowicz finished reviewing and commenting on the Mule Deer Plan.

Deer Study: Biologist Bernatowicz investigated a radio-collared deer mortality. It was another obvious cougar kill. Five radio-collared deer have died due to predation in the last three weeks. Mortality is expected to drop off as more fawns/calves become available.

Remains of radioed deer, partially buried by a cougar



Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz participated in an internal conference call and a formal meeting with the USFS regarding bighorn sheep and the risk of disease due to domestic sheep/goats. The risk analysis will be re-run with the most current model, but the USFS isn't likely to make any substantial changes to current practices until 2019 at the earliest. If the USFS chooses to do an EIS, it will take at least three years to complete.

Western Gray Squirrel (WGS): Biologist Bernatowicz checked two transects set out last month. No western gray squirrel hair was found. Minimal small mammal hair was found. Black bears have hit more tubes than squirrels.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Moore continued work on updating the bighorn sheep habitat use model and provided final products to Special Species Section Lead Rich Harris. Moore attended a meeting between WDFW and USFS to discuss bighorn sheep and domestic sheep interactions.

LT Murray Sheep Grazing Permit: Moore was also assigned to perform a bighorn sheep/domestic sheep risk of contact analysis for the LT Murray Sheep Grazing Permit. Research and data gathering has begun on that project.

Goose Trapping: Moore checked out the situation at Fri Rito Lakes for potential goose trapping next week. Approximately 30 geese were observed, but it is estimated 75 should be in the area. Attempts were made to contact private landowners to gain permission for access, but none were successfully contacted.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman posted "no fires or fireworks" signs around the wildlife area after DNR issued their burn ban.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky coordinated with Central Washington University archaeology professors in preparation for their field school starting next week on the Colockum.

Wildlife Area Access Permit: Lopushinsky worked with Dr. McCutcheon and Lean Hendrix on finalizing their access permit to work on the wildlife area.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Assistant Manager Berry held a Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) meeting Tuesday night at the Oak Creek Visitor's

Center. The meeting had good representation from the WAAC and they provided good input on the NF Cowiche Creek Road Proposal and the SF Cowiche Creek Floodplain Restoration Project.

Wildlife Management

Rattlesnake Mountain Elk Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued with coordinating and conducting hazing of elk in several winter wheat fields in the Rattlesnake Mountain area. Strong numbers (hundreds) of elk continue to leave Hanford and forage in wheat fields during the nighttime hours.

Wheat Damage Appraisals: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with crop adjuster Steve VanTassel to plan and coordinate for this summer's wheat damage appraisals and to discuss the potential for multi-peril claims resulting from poor wheat yields.

Cost Share Fencing in Cold Creek: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to work on a cost share fencing project in the Cold Creek area. After completing the cost share fence agreement and development of maps, fence design, and a material list, the first shipment of wood posts were delivered to the site. The remainder of the wood posts and all the wire and other hardware will be delivered later this week.

Problem Skunks: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a call from a homeowner in the Pasco area of problem skunks. Several self-help strategies were discussed, as well as reference to our "Living with Wildlife" materials and Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator contact information.

Cougar Attack: Conflict Specialist Wetzel met with a landowner in lower Naneum Creek to investigate a cougar attack in a goat pen. The cougar was seen jumping into the goat pen and stalking the goats. The landowner shot at the cougar several times, and reported hitting it once. Conflict Specialist Wetzel searched the adjacent heavy brush and located only cougar tracks, a dead deer fawn, and a dead emu that had been reported missing. The carcasses were from recent predation by an unknown predator. No wounded cougar was located.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: CAMP crews continued working this week on the Colockum, replacing culverts and making good progress on the North Fork Tarpiscan Bridge installation. The work in the Brewton Gulch and Tekison is complete, including the installation of an eight foot diameter culvert and the drainage work needed below the irrigation diversion.



Large culvert installed on the Brewton Gulch Road, Colockum Wildlife Area



Road drainage work completed on Tekison Creek Road, Colockum Wildlife Area

Hazard Tree Felling: Assistant Manager Hagan continued his work felling hazard trees along green dot roads. Also this week, Manager Lopushinsky met with WDFW Forester Pfeifle and a forestry contractor to tour Colockum roads and look at hazard trees as part of a tree removal contract.

Hazard trees dropped by Assistant Manager Hagan along the Brewton Road, Colockum Wildlife Area



LT Murray Wildlife Area: Sunday, June 14, a fire was reported on the LT Murray. It was later found to be on a DNR section just north of Taneum Creek. Luckily the fire was called in early and DNR was able to put two helicopters on it quickly. The fire was contained at approximately two acres.

Upper Parke Forage Utilization: Manager Winegeart completed two-week livestock forage utilization in the Upper Parke pasture. Winegeart met the permittee Sunday as he moved his stock out of the Little Parke Creek drainage. This drainage encompasses nearly half of the pasture, but all water sources had dried up. The cows were pushed over into the main Parke Creek drainage for the remaining seven days on the rotation. Six pairs of Kayser trespass cows were observed in Parke Creek. Sam was called several times and asked to remove them.

Wild Horse Coordinated Resource Management Meeting: Manager Winegeart and Range Biologist Burnham attended a Wild Horse Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) meeting. The group reviewed outcomes of the five year grazing permit and discussed updates/changes to incorporate into the next five year permit.

Hay Stacking: Assistant Manager Hunt completed plans for stacking incoming hay at Joe Watt, and used some construction marking paint to mark the stack location on the ground. We have bales to move within the compound, and hay coming in from both Sprague and Addy in the near future.

Skookumchuck/Whiskey Dick Stock Fence: Tech Hill walked the new Skookumchuck/Whiskey Dick stock fence before cattle are turned out on the adjacent PSE pasture. He put up two sections of lay-down fence while he was hiking. The fence is in great shape since the crew from NW Fence did major repairs this spring.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak hired a commercial applicator to spray 165 acres of native grass fields, continued sending submittal sheets to CAMP, and continued working on electrical problems with two pivots by contacting the power company. They remedied the problem by replacing two inline fuses and working on a transformer.

Commercial applicator applying herbicide to fields on the Sunnyside Headquarters Unit



REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Staff attended the Region 4 carnivore meeting to discuss various projects and issues relating to bears, wolves, and cougars

Avian Influenza: Biologist DeBruyn attended WSDA's 2015 avian field training for HPAI response. He and Section Manager Don Kraege presented material on waterfowl migration and contingency plans for surveillance and sampling in the coming waterfowl season. WSDA and USDA biologists and epidemiologists were in attendance. DeBruyn also inventoried bald eagle carcasses on hand in anticipation of sending them to The National Wildlife Health Center for HPAI testing.



Invasive Plants: Biologist Yarborough worked with volunteers from DNR to remove spurge laurel (*Daphne laureola*) from Campbell Lake. The Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Council is interested in determining if there is any connection between this plant and egg production deformities in wild waterfowl.

Citizen Science/Forest Carnivores: Biologist DeBruyn worked with a volunteer, training him to set up and maintain trail cameras in the Mount Baker Area. DeBruyn and Yarborough also visited a cougar kill site that Research Biologist Kertson had ascertained from satellite collar data. The remains of an ungulate were found and a VHF signal from the cougar indicated he had moved on.

Northern Puget Sound Surveys:

Assistant District Biologist Cyra updated and shared data with the USFWS of breeding bird surveys in the San Juan archipelago done recently in conjunction with USFWS San Juan Refuge staff. Assistant District Biologist Cyra compiled survey data from the Stillaguamish valley lowland pika study.



Whidbey Island Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw prepared materials related to Leque Island for Pilchuck Audubon to display at their annual meeting in North Snohomish County. Pilchuck Audubon was represented in the Leque Island Stakeholder Advisory Committee, and due to the popularity of wildlife viewing and importance of bird habitat in the area, the group has interest in the project.

North Leque Island: Projects Coordinator Brokaw briefed Habitat Program Manager Brokes on issues at Leque Island north of SR532, including the possibility of WDFW undertaking a future restoration and/or bank protection project in the area. He also talked with Area Habitat Biologist Thompson regarding the mitigation needs of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in the area.

Fir Island Farm Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw converted conductivity and temperature data collected by the water quality loggers on the site into salinity units and completed graphs of the information. This information is processed and saved according to the project monitoring and adaptive management plan, and will be used to track changes in and around the site over time.

Lake Terrell Dam Tour: Manager Kessler hosted a public tour of the Lake Terrell dam area as part of the Friends of Terrell Creek Clean Terrell Campaign event. The Lake Terrell dam was

recently remodeled to allow salmon passage for the first time since the 1940s. WDFW worked with the Whatcom Conservation District on the project, which was funded by a fish and wildlife grant and funds from the British Petroleum refinery. Coho salmon now regularly make it past the dam, and into Lake Terrell and Butler Creek.

Private Lands/Access Management

Local Stakeholder Collaboration: Biologist Hans met with a Washington Audubon staff member to further discuss Region 4’s Private Lands Program and to continue the discussion of the conservation goals of hunter and birdwatching groups, which was the topic of a Washington Audubon event Biologist Hans attended a couple of weeks ago.

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Management: Biologist Yarborough met with biologists from the Point Elliot Treaty tribes to work on survey data from the North Cascades Elk Herd.

Dog and bull elk in North Bend



Wildlife Areas

Skagit ESA Restoration and

Waterfowl Management: Projects Coordinator Brokaw sent an updated

version of the “Replacement Lands Initiative” that the region is drafting for review by the regional team. This initiative will clarify WDFW’s expectations regarding replacement of recreation access when impacted by estuary restoration projects on WDFW land.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Ducks Unlimited (DU) submitted the Grading Permit required for the project to Skagit County for review and processing. Additionally, a pre-bid meeting was scheduled with the engineer from DU in preparation for the bid process and construction this summer.

Stillwater Unit Wetland and Vegetation Maintenance: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm toured the Stillwater Unit to outline areas on the property that could benefit from invasive plant removal and native planting in wetland areas. Following the site visit, Brokaw coordinated with Ducks Unlimited staff to include the project in an upcoming grant application and took the first steps to enter the project into the Region 4 Restoration Pathway for approval.

Intalco Unit Coordination Meeting: Manager Kessler met onsite with land managers with the Alcoa aluminum plant about the Intalco Unit. The Alcoa Intalco Works is 1,000 acres of industrial property, one mile south of the Lake Terrell headquarters, leased by WDFW for public hunting, fishing and other wildlife recreation. Past, current, and future wildlife projects, as well as land use and recreation, were discussed.

Nooksack River Bridge Repainting Project: The farmer who has the agricultural lease on the Nooksack Unit and grows 100 acres of silage corn applied herbicides to the crop this week. The new detour trail that leads from the parking area to the dike top trail leads through the edge of the corn field. To prevent problems with the public due to the herbicide spraying, Manager Kessler closed the parking area until such time as the herbicide re-entry period had passed. He then reopened the parking area. Work continues on the Slater Road Bridge over the Nooksack River. The bridge is being repainted, and the contractor is using the WDFW Parking Area to stage the project.

Lake Terrell Unit Field and Trail Mowing: Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed blackberry patches and reed canary grass in fields and trails at the Lake Terrell Unit. Cleared blackberry patches will be reseeded with native grasses and will provide more area for pheasant hunting. Repeated mowing of reed canary grass also helps to keep it from going to seed and makes it less productive.

Lake Terrell Boater Rescue: Fresh from his Motorboat Operator training, Natural Resource Technician Deyo got to use his new boating skills to help rescue a boater on Lake Terrell who had flipped his boat. The man clung to the side of his small boat, while his two sons tried pulling him into shore with a small paddle boat. It was apparent that this was unsafe, and would take a long time for them to get to shore. Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Technician Deyo took a boat out and helped the family get safely to shore.

Island Unit: Cosgrove spent two days on the Island Unit disking low areas dominated by reed canary grass and cattails that have not been mowed or disked in years.

Samish Unit: Meis sprayed noxious weeds on the Samish Unit field and pond edges. Cosgrove spent two days with the tractor and brush-hog at the Samish Unit, mowing dike tops, trails, roads, and field edges to knock back weeds (Canada and bull thistle and mustard) and promote grass growth.

Leque Island Unit: Meis surveyed and treated poison hemlock patches throughout the Leque Unit. Meis checked the growth on agricultural crops and scheduled field weed treatments for Leque Island.

DeBay's Slough Unit: Meis mowed the parking lot area, grass planting areas, and walking path at DeBay's Slough Reserve and Hunt Unit. Cosgrove used the tractor and brush-hog to mow blackberry and other weeds at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit.

Samish River Unit: Manager Rotton met with Kathy Smith from the Natural Resources Conservation Service to discuss the planting plan for the Samish River Unit wetland

enhancement project. Manager Rotton met with a local vendor to discuss the removal of a portion of channel spoils from the site. These disturbed soils have proved to be some of the weedy areas on other wetland enhancements project. Manager Rotton met with Wildlife Program Manager Russell Link on the Samish River site to discuss site access issues and concerns of neighboring land owner regarding the upcoming fish season.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program (WQHP): Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto checked the status of two WQHP sites in Skagit County. They are working with the landowners to coordinate barley planting. Natural Resource Technician Otto and Deyo prepped the field and planted barley on an eight acre site in Skagit County. Natural Resource Technician Otto planted 30 acres of barley on a site in Whatcom County. Both planting projects are a part of the migratory bird winter forage enhancement project. The two technicians trained Biologist Hans on the field equipment. More training will occur in the upcoming weeks to ensure Biologist Hans is comfortable on all Private Lands Access Program's field equipment. Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto purchased the necessary materials to build a new permanent blind at one of the WQHP sites.



Closure of access site at Flowing Lake

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 Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with an agricultural landowner in the Marblemount area of Skagit County that currently has a small group of elk utilizing his property. The landowner is interested in planning for the prevention of future elk conflict as elk from the North Cascades Elk Herd migrate and establish eastward. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell met with a landowner in the Renton area to evaluate deer and cougar related conflict matters. Supervisor Caldwell informed the landowner on what measures he could take to prevent ornamental and garden loss by deer. Supervisor Caldwell also informed the landowner on how to communicate cougar encounters and what methods he should employ if an encounter occurs. Fencing schematics, chemical deterrents, and other materials were provided to the landowner to assist him on future projects. All landowner preventative measures, correspondences, and actions were logged for future use and reference.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farms Unit: Manager Rotton attended the weekly construction meeting for the Fir Island Farms restoration project. Items discussed include temporary farming access, dewatering plan, construction and permitting submittals, and schedule of construction events. Manager Rotton attended the weekly construction meeting to coordinate farming access and timing. Manager Rotton is coordinating with the farmer regarding field access and timing of activities.

Private Lands/Access

Spring Bear Hunt: Biologist Hans contacted all 55 spring bear hunt participants to remind them to submit their end of the season hunter survey. She has received some of the surveys and will follow-up with the participants in the next couple of weeks. She also contacted the hunt stakeholders to thank them for their help this season and to request additional feedback on the hunt. Overall the stakeholders, the private timber industry, and Department of Natural Resources were very pleased with how smoothly the hunt went this year. Biologist Hans began compiling and organizing the hunter data she has received thus far. She will continue collecting the data, which will eventually be a report for the agency and involved stakeholders.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Hans continued creating contracts for this upcoming season. Biologist Hans contacted landowners who are new to our program this fall and provided them with the necessary paperwork to register them with the state and ensure payment once their contract duties have been fulfilled. Private Lands Supervisor Caldwell was contacted by several landowners regarding enrollment and status of the 2015-2016 waterfowl quality hunt season. Supervisor Caldwell told each landowner that they would be considered for the upcoming waterfowl season and that enrollment would be determined based on funding

availability for the upcoming fiscal year. Supervisor Caldwell informed each landowner that they would be contacted as soon as fiscal year funds are allotted.

Hunter Contacts: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman fielded several calls from successful permit draw applicants who will be participating in the youth, senior, and disabled hunt in Elk Area 4941. Specialist Witman plans to contact all the hunters and provide them with an overview on the hunt area and assist the hunters with gaining access to damage areas.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted Instructor Green to conduct a field skills evaluation at the Region 4 office in Mill Creek. Dazey assisted brand new Chief Instructor Karl Bosman to conduct a field skills evaluation at the Lynden Shotgun Club. This class restarts at the Lynden Shotgun Club, which is a venue that after losing their Chief Instructor had not hosted hunter education classes since August of 2013. The new team and new Chief Instructor did a good job and are planning on holding several more classes this year and having a full 2016 schedule. This new team will help to better serve the Whatcom County area where previously we only had two teams teaching. Coordinator Dazey represented WDFW at the memorial service for 12 year hunter education volunteer instructor George Wells. George had been very active as a chief instructor teaching at two different venues in Snohomish County. George taught a class as recently as mid-March of this year. George's contribution to teaching hunter education will be greatly missed.

Terry Hoffer Award: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey presented a certificate to instructor Mike Hilden to recognize his having been nominated for the Terry Hoffer Award. Mike teaches at the Muckleshoot Natural Resources Building. Mike teaches hunter safety to tribal youth and adults and is a vital link to the tribal hunting community. Congratulations to Mike for his commitment to training safe ethical hunters in this community.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey worked to secure Master Hunter volunteers to assist WDFW's Scott Witman in elk fencing in the Day Creek area

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

Mentoring: Biologists Milner and Caldwell met with a recent graduate from the University of Washington's wildlife program and provided ideas and advice on how to advance to permanent employment in the wildlife profession.

Staff Hiring: Private Lands Supervisor Caldwell submitted paperwork to hire a seasonal temporary employee. The new employee will assist the program during a staff shortage this coming fall. Interviews will begin for the position as soon as possible.

Meetings: Biologists Milner and Anderson met with members of the Puget Sound Bird Observatory who are planning a wetland bird survey to start in 2016. Staff reviewed maps and project plans and talked about ways to work together to ensure the project succeeds.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

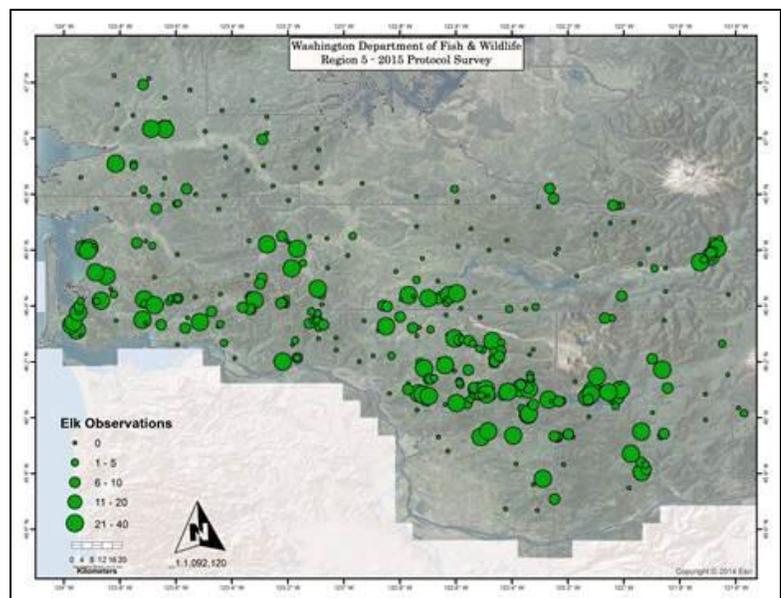
Wildlife Management

Western Pond Turtle Project: Biologist Anderson was contacted by the ODFW Diversity Program and told that they had captured three sub-adult wild western pond turtles that could be used for analysis to better understand Washington's turtle shell disease issue. WDFW is currently working in cooperation with WSU and the OSU Vet Schools to get radiographs, CT, and bone density scans of a select number of western pond turtles with and without shell disease. This effort is being conducted to better understand morphological variations between shell disease and healthy turtles. The opportunity this week to have access to wild Oregon turtles for sampling will greatly assist our efforts in understanding this disease. We have been fortunate to have ODFW biologists and veterinarians, as well as personnel from the OSU Vet School, take an interest in our project and provide their assistance this spring and summer.

Peregrine Falcons: Biologist Anderson and Bergh conducted a productivity survey of nesting peregrine falcons at Beacon Rock State Park. This annual nesting season evaluation is being done as part of a cooperative agreement between the Park and WDFW for the protection of peregrine falcon nesting and management of their technical rock climbing program. This week's survey verified a minimum of three and potentially four juvenile peregrines on the nest. Additional monitoring will take place over the next couple weeks to determine fledging dates for the opening of the technical rock climbing season.

Hoof Disease Volunteer Prevalence Survey: Biologist George completed the majority of the data entry this week for the volunteer hoof disease prevalence survey that took place throughout the months of March and April. Many volunteers and WDFW staff participated in this effort across ten counties. Approximately 250 groups of elk were observed, ranging from one individual elk to over forty. A quality check of previously entered records continues over the next week and further analysis will begin when all records have been reviewed. Results will be made available once the analyses have been completed. Please see the map for all recorded limping and non-limping elk observations seen during the March-April prevalence survey.

Total recorded limping and non-limping elk observations seen during the March-April prevalence survey



Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Regional Wildlife Biologists continued with this year's work on the black-tailed deer research project. Currently in the Coweeman cluster, three adult does that were captured in 2014 remain alive with functional satellite and VHF collars. Currently in the Washougal cluster, two adult does are alive and have functional equipment. During the May-June birth period all adult females associated with each study cluster were monitored frequently and multiple attempts were made to capture their fawns. Six fawns have been captured in a combination of the Coweeman and Washougal study clusters. Five of this year's young currently remain alive. The reproductive status of one of the Coweeman does remains unknown. Trail cameras have been set in this doe's range. If either the satellite shows a decline in movements (indicating fawn birth) or the cameras reveal a fawn(s), additional attempts will be made to capture the young from this animal.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Wetland Restorations: Assistant Manager Hand has continued to stay busy with wetland restoration efforts this past week. The lack of rainfall has allowed some wetlands to dry out more quickly than normal, thus allowing heavy equipment on site earlier than anticipated. So far the following wetlands have been completed: south McBride planted in sorghum, southeast corner of Lakebed planted in sorghum, barley and wheat, V-2 planted in white proso millet, and the North Basin north section planted in white proso millet and buckwheat. Assistant Manager Hand hopes to have the remaining wetlands worked up and planted over the next few weeks.

Interesting Sightings: While working at Shillapoo Wildlife Area this past week, Assistant Manager Hand observed a few “not so normal” wildlife sightings. In the South Cell, the largest inundated wetland remaining, a lone bull canvasback was spotted. Canvasbacks are typically only a fall migration and wintering visitor to the Wildlife Area and this has been the first sighting of one this far into summer in quite a few years. Also a drake ruddy duck in his breeding plumage was spotted on the South Cell as well. Although ruddy ducks are not unusual for the Wildlife Area and are often seen in late winter months, their plumages are distinctively different. When most drakes begin their transition from breeding plumage to their less attractive eclipse plumage, the ruddy duck is just beginning to show his colors. A drake ruddy duck will only have his breeding plumage from around May-August. Assistant Manager Hand also observed a pair of Columbia White-tailed deer (CWTD) bucks this past week. One buck is a tagged deer, in fact the very first CWTD to be captured and tagged back in 2012, and the other is an unmarked offspring most likely from 2013. This time of year is a great time to get out to the Wildlife Area and enjoy the “usual” encounters and maybe get lucky with a “not so normal” sighting as well!



Canvasback



Ruddy duck



Columbia White-tailed deer

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fuels Reduction Project: The deadline for accomplishing the work outlined in the interagency agreement between WDFW and DNR is fast approaching, and staff spent almost all of their time on this project this week. Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis finished laying out the route for Phase IV of the project. The contract for Phase III was awarded this week and the contractor moved in on June 19. Judging from the orderly and efficient operations observed so far, Van Leuven anticipates the project will be well done and completed on time.

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

Access

Kalama River: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes hauled the tractor and brush hog to the Kalama River to work on both the Hand and Beginner's Hole access sites. Staff cleaned off and removed silt from the Hand boat ramp and cleaned off the Beginner's Hole ADA walkway and fishing platform. In addition, they used the brush hog to go around the parking lot.



Maintaining the Hand and Beginner's Holes access sites

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

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Conflict Specialist Conklin verified eight bear damage permit areas in Cowlitz and Lewis counties. In addition, Conflict Specialist Conklin and Officer Schroeder responded to a report of a bear coming into a residence in the Winlock area. A trail camera and critter gitter were installed on the property to further monitor the situation.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Rat Island Might Need a New Name: Manager Belson was informed by the OSU/Oregon Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit that initial survey data indicate the island, located just south of Port Townsend, supports the largest breeding colony of Caspian terns in the entire Puget Sound/Salish Sea region. Recent aerial flight photography captured 1,200+ terns and roughly 500 nests densely concentrated on a small portion of the island. Because the WDFW - managed island is open to public use and terns are sensitive to disturbance, and following consultation with District, Diversity, Shellfish, Enforcement, and Marine Mammal staff, it was determined that signs should be posted on the island to inform the public of the risk of disturbance-related colony abandonment. Following a smooth round of coordination, Officer Hillman transported Manager Belson by boat from Port Townsend to the island for the installation of a total of six signs on the shoreline at all approaches to the colony. Additional planning will be needed to develop a comprehensive, long-term management approach to this important site. No rats were observed during the expedition.

Informational sign with Caspian tern nesting colony in the background

