

Wildlife Program

Week of May 25 – May 31, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Headquarters Wolf Activities

Conflict Specialist Training: Met with WDFW Wolf Biologists (Colville) and USDA-WS personnel to develop an outline for a course to teach conflict specialists (and others) about traps and trapping wolves in Washington. Also coordinated with USFS to secure a meeting room for course and began to outline course curriculum.

Wolf Monitoring: Coordinated with public and private landowners throughout Washington about current and future monitoring activities during 2015. Also coordinated with tribal biologists about monitoring activities on and around reservations.

WSU Wolf Project: Coordinated with WSU personnel (principal investigator, students, and Ag Extension Agent) regarding project logistics, permits, equipment purchases, and monitoring activities.

Profanity Peak Trapping: Spent three days setting traps and scouting for additional sign in Profanity Peak territory. Checked and maintained traps daily, and caught what appears to be the breeding female on Sunday, May 31.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Lookout Wolves: Specialist Heilhecker received a call from a potential range rider who was having trouble contacting the rancher over the phone. Specialist Heilhecker went to the rancher's house to coordinate communication between the two of them. She also set an appointment for next week to discuss the DPCA and allotment maps.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Butterfly Conservation: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service notified WDFW and Idaho Fish and Game their SWG Competitive SWAP Enhancement grant proposal to conduct surveys for Monarch butterflies and their habitat was selected for full funding. Conservation of Monarch and pollinator species in general has received attention recently, particularly from federal agencies, as the imperiled status of these species and their ecological and economic importance has been recognized. However, unlike eastern and mid-western states, the status, distribution, and ecology of Monarchs in the Pacific Northwest are not well known. This modest project will address those key knowledge gaps. The total project budget will be about \$231,000, and WFDW will be awarded approximately \$30,000. Monarchs breed and migrate through eastern Washington, and breeding populations are known to occur on WDFW managed lands.



Monarch butterfly at Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photo by Jeff Heinlen

Fisher: Two significant accomplishments occurred this week relative to ongoing efforts to recover populations of fishers in Washington. First, biologist Jeff Lewis worked with biologists from the British Columbia Ministry of Environment to complete a management plan involving the capture of fishers in British Columbia. The document explains: 1) the need for fishers

for the Cascades fisher reintroduction project, 2) the benefits of the reintroduction project to British Columbia trappers, and 3) how the capture of ~160 fishers over 4-6 years for translocation to Washington will be done so as not to destabilize the population in central British Columbia. The plan will be used to explain the project to representatives from First Nations and the British Columbia Trapper's Association as part of formal project consultations between these groups and the British Columbia Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations. Second, the National Environmental Policy Act process to assess environmental impacts of fisher reintroductions on Mount Rainier and North Cascades National Parks in the Washington Cascade Range was completed. The completion of the process was marked by the approval of the Environmental Assessment's Finding-of-No-Significant-Impact by the National Park Service's Regional Director. This is an important step in preparing for the Cascades fisher reintroduction project and a good example of multiple agencies collaborating to facilitate the recovery of threatened and endangered species and to prevent the need to list species.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Toroda Golden Eagle: While surveying for bighorn sheep at Vulcan, Biologist Annemarie Prince noticed a new nest on the cliffs above the Kettle River and Kroupa Road in Ferry County. Upon further investigation with a spotting scope, she observed an adult golden eagle in the nest. Occupancy at this site has not been confirmed since 2005.



Toroda Golden Eagle Nest (circled in red)

Lincoln Cliffs Bighorn Sheep:

Biologists Lowe and Oyster continued ground telemetry on bighorn sheep in the Lincoln and Whitestone areas to monitor lamb production and survival.

Unfortunately, one radio collar failed this week, but the ewe and her lamb were still located. So far all marked ewes confirmed to have lambed this spring still have surviving offspring.

A group of Lincoln ewes and lambs in the hot sun

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

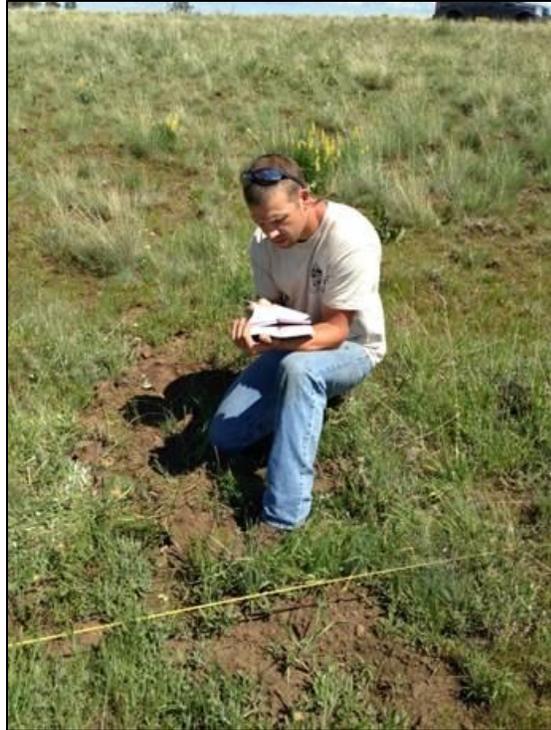
Asotin Creek WA –Pre-Grazing Monitoring and Rare Plant Survey: Biologist Woodall and Intern Price assisted Range Ecologist Burnham in some initial pre-grazing transect surveys at the Weatherly Unit. Biologist Woodall assisted on a Saturday field tour looking for any possible local rare plants.



A seasonal stock pond on the Weatherly Unit



Point Survey Transect



University of Idaho intern Jake Price studying a field guide along a transect



Native Wild Iris



Indian paintbrush on a rock outcrop

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

Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

Investigation: Biologist Shepherd and Officer Parkert and Sheriff Captain Harboldt investigated an injured calf in the Wedge area. The injuries were to the head and were of unknown origin.

Make a Splash: Biologists Earl and Thorne-Hadley worked in a booth for the annual Make-A-Splash event held at the Water & Environmental Center in Walla Walla. Several different agencies were present to discuss air, water, and land quality.



Biologist Thorne-Hadley teaching 5th grade student how to identify animals

Turnbull NWR Festival: Biologist Lewis worked a WDFW booth in the conservation tent at the annual Furs, Feathers, and Flowers outdoor event held by the US Fish and Wildlife Service at Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. The event also included kid activities, nest box building, bird and plant tours, wildfire fighter demonstrations, and other events and activities.



Conservation tent at Turnbull NWR festival

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Artificial Platforms for Western Grebes: Biologist E. Duvuvuei checked the status of the nesting platforms in North Potholes. Nine grebes were observed in the pond and two of the birds were nesting on the platforms. When one of the birds changed positions on the platform, one egg was visible. Two other grebes sat briefly on two of the floating platforms.

Wildlife Areas

Mansfield Pond: The beaver deceiver recently installed at Mansfield Pond is functioning as intended, and water is flowing well through the water control structure despite the beavers' attempts to dam.

The new beaver deceiver at Mansfield pond – an outlet pipe on the pond bottom connects the two caged areas and prevents the beaver from damming the true water outflow – Photo by E. Duvuvuei



Wenner Lakes/Chalfa Dam: Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin heard about the flash flooding issues in the Texas Creek area and spoke with Manager Furnari about it in the morning. He drove to Finley Canyon and hiked down to the area and found no issues to report. The water level was lower than expected with no danger of being breached.

Water levels are down at Wenner Lakes – Chalfa Dam – Photo by Rob Wottlin



Private Lands/Access

Habitat Plots: Biologist Dougherty continued efforts to establish wildlife food plots in the Royal City area. These efforts were mostly productive, but at times thwarted by equipment failure including but not limited to blown tires, machine break down, and too little day light hours. However, despite these few setbacks Biologist Dougherty was able to get the initial Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) paperwork started for a local orchardist. This will provide some of the funding to begin habitat restoration work on

many of their properties. Biologist Comstock visited a new EQIP wildlife habitat site just east of Othello with Gretchen Fitzgerald. They laid out flags for the the shrub rows and estimated materials needed. The site has been heavily grazed and also has high soil moisture content due to subsurface water. Biologist Comstock and Gretchen Fitzgerald also visited a future pollinator plot site at an organic orchard and made a visit to a pollinator plot site, which was installed in November 2014. The forbs appear to be doing well.



A future EQIP wildlife habitat plot. As you can see the site currently provides little benefit to wildlife.



Great horned owl in unoccupied farm house – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Common Loon: Biologist Heinlen received notification that the common loon pair on Lost Lake has started re-nesting after their first nest failed earlier this spring. This pair will continue to be monitored to determine nesting success and productivity.

Common loon on nest – Photo by J. Ashmore



From left to right: A pied-billed grebe dipping underwater due to human curiosity on Reflection Pond and a very popular blanket flower near Reflection Pond on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

FFA Collaboration: District Biologist Fidorra continued collaboration with the Grandville High School chapter of the FFA, which is interested in conducting a wildlife conservation program. Fidorra provided them with information and contacts to complete a grant application for installing barn owl nest boxes at local farms in Yakima and Benton counties. The grant application was submitted by the FAA at the end of the week.

Burrowing Owl Banding: District Biologist Fidorra met with researchers from the Global Owl project for the second time this week to band burrowing owls at WDFW artificial burrow sites. Global Owl researchers have found that juvenile owl survival from last year is high, as are rodent populations. This has resulted in 2015 being a good year for owl breeding. Most of the artificial burrows in Franklin County are occupied and trapping this week resulted in the capture of 14 adults and 22 nestlings. One more evening of trapping is planned.



A young burrowing owl strikes a pose during data collection and banding

Canada Goose Banding: District Biologist Fidorra worked with regional WDFW biologists to identify dates for the annual Canada goose banding. The date for the Tri-cities goose “round-up” will be Friday, June 26th.

Rattlesnake Elk Herd: District Biologist Fidorra provided final edits to the Rattlesnake Elk Herd 2015 Sightability Survey Summary Report prepared by the USFWS.

Waterfowl Comments: District Biologist Fidorra provided comments on the 2015-2016 Waterfowl Seasons and Related Rules WACs.

EQIP Funding: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman met with a Franklin County landowner to recommend EQIP funding as a means of improving wildlife habitat. Stutzman also provided information regarding the EQIP application process. Stutzman recommended a prescribed grazing system to improve range conditions coupled with shrub planting and Russian olive removal. The landowners have not participated in Farm Bill programs in the past, so Stutzman spoke with both NRCS and FSA about getting them into the system.

Point Count Monitoring: Stutzman conducted point-count monitoring on three CP33/SAFE fields on Friday. The fields are all fallow this year as prep for seeding so Stutzman only had to ID a handful of obvious species, primarily the ever present horned lark.

Western Gray Squirrels: Biologist Bernatowicz and USFS biologist St. Hilaire set two transects in the vicinity of the 2015 sightings in the upper Cowiche drainage. The stations included tubes and cameras at six of ten stations.

Mountain Goats: Biologist Bernatowicz continued to organize The Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance (RMGA) survey. USGFS trail passes were picked-up and survey route maps copied. There were 18 total volunteers as of Friday.

Other: Biologist Bernatowicz responded to a call regarding injured/orphaned wildlife. Eleven ducklings and a hen mallard were rescued from an in ground pool that the ducklings couldn't escape. The location was the center of town with no duck habitat in site. The ducks were taken to a local wetland and released.

Western Gray Squirrels: Biologist Moore finished installing WGS transects and currently has five out. Moore is in the initial stages of processing the data and photos collected.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Moore began investigating the possibilities of processing Landsat TM data to calculate Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) for bighorn sheep home ranges. This exercise would potentially allow bighorn sheep managers to evaluate the condition of their populations range.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris submitted the PAM form to restrict target shooting hours on the Wenas Wildlife Area for this fire season. Due to the dry conditions, the restriction went into effect on May 22nd and will run through September 30. In addition, the hours that target shooting is allowed this year is sunrise to 10:00am, rather than the 11:00am that was allowed in past years. Signs were updated and posted on all kiosks and at the user-defined target shooting sites on the wildlife area. Confer Morris also worked with Public Affairs staff to get a news release issued on the restriction.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman toured part of the NF Cowiche and adjacent US Forest Service lands with Bill Zimmer, Recreation Staff on the Naches Ranger District. Huffman and Zimmer looked at trail/road use from WDFW lands across Forest Service to the DNR green dot system in the Ahtanum. Zimmer was supportive of moving forward with the concept of a green dot system in the area to limit use to certain roads. While in the area, a hill climb site on WDFW under a power line ROW was located.



ORV/Jeep hill climb and mudding area on Oak Creek Wildlife Area under a power line ROW

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey spent two days with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) volunteers on a project removing plastic seedling tubes from a clear cut on the Rock Creek Unit. The plastic tubes had been used to protect the planted pine trees from browsing, but many of the trees had died and the tubes were scattered across the hillsides, or the trees had grown out of the tubes and they were now limiting their growth. The

group also removed two large piles of netting seedling protectors that had been put in slash piles by Plum Creek, but the piles had not been burned. The volunteers put in a lot of hard work in steep country and pulled off thousands of tubes across about 46 acres. The volunteers filled up the one ton truck by 10:30 on Friday, so Huffman brought out the five ton truck and it was full by the end of the day. A large stock pile was made on Saturday that will be hauled off when the other loads are disposed of. Staff will look into recycling options, but the tubes may have to be hauled to the land fill.



Section 31 of the Rock Creek Unit showing the project area where RMEF volunteers removing plastic seedling tubes from a clear cut stand



Close up picture of the steep country and seedling tubes on Section 31 of the Rock Creek Unit



RMEF volunteers finishing loading the 5-ton truck at the end of the day on Friday



RMEF volunteers at work on Saturday picking up seedling tubes on the Rock Creek Unit



Group picture of RMEF volunteers at the end of the day on Saturday. The two day project removed thousands of seedling tubes across 46 acres on the Rock Creek Unit.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky coordinated with Ron Poppe of the Wenatchee Sportsman's Association on maintenance of spring developments on the wildlife area. Ron and his wife Sheri visited and made repairs to six springs in the Tarpiscan Creek area this past weekend.

Wenas Wildlife Area: The week of May 17th, access staff serviced the following access areas: Tim's Pond, Oak Creek, Young's Grade, Mellis Road, Fitzsimmons, Ponds 4 & 5, Buena, Zillah Bridge, Hyde, Whitstran, Snively, Duportail, Ringold, Vernita Bridge, Woodhouse, Lavender Lake, Bell, Teanaway Junction, Kinghorn Slough, Mattoon, and Fio Rito.

Regional Staff Meeting: Access Manager Garcia and Manager Confer Morris attended the weekly regional staff meeting to discuss potential rule changes to Vernita Bridge and Ringold Springs access areas.

Volunteer Cleanup: NRW2 Barbosa had seven volunteers on Saturday from Yakima County Juvenile Court System. He had them pick up trash around the lower valley ponds, and they had a full truckload at the end of the day.

Garbage removed from lower valley ponds by Juvenile Court volunteers



Wildlife Management

Benton County Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand toured two large tree fruit and one wine grape operation in southern Benton County for deer damage issues and non-lethal strategies being utilized. Increased human presence from workers in the fields, active hazing, along with LP gas cannons have provided positive results in reducing damage impacts.

Rattlesnake Hills Elk Activity: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continues to monitor elk activity in the Rattlesnake Hills area. A trail camera was re-set on a popular elk crossing along the Hanford border in an attempt to document elk numbers and the timing of their feeding patterns in winter wheat fields.

Kill Permit Issued: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand delivered a kill permit to a landowner in the Corral Canyon elk area with winter wheat damage from elk. The landowner was hoping to use this permit during hazing activities and provide the carcass to a charity.

Injured Goose: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a call of an injured goose at Columbia Park Pond. The reporting party captured a gosling with monofilament fishing line wrapped around one of its legs. The line was successfully removed from the bird's leg and it was reunited with its family.

Teaway Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist (CS) Wetzel and hazer Leuck each made field visits to a landowner in the Teaway to haze elk from his new seeding.

Thorp Deer Hazing: CS Wetzel and hazer Leuck each made field visits to a landowner in the Thorp to haze deer from alfalfa and timothy crop areas.

Elk and Deer Hazing: CS Wetzel hazed elk and deer from the Taneum Creek, Hanson Road, Weaver Road, and Thorp areas. Some evidence of elk moving around the end of the elk fence near Manastash Creek was observed. Elk have also walked around the elk fence in the Taneum, based on trail camera images.



Elk trail with use below Manastash elk fence



Elk moving through barrier on Taneum Creek

Elk Damage: A landowner in the Riverbottom Road area called to report elk damaging his hay crops. He requested a DPCA and fused rope was issued to him to help deter damage to hay.

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: The Wildlife Area incurred its first fire of the year over Memorial Day Weekend. Assistant Manager Taylor responded as the Wildlife Area representative. Located in Section 16, T16N, R18E (west of Durr Road and south of Umtanum Creek) on DNR ownership, it was believed to be hold over from the lightning storm the previous night that smoldered for a day before coming to life. The fire burned about five acres of shrub-steppe habitat and had six to ten foot flame lengths. Two DNR engines and two helicopters were able to get it quickly contained.

Aerial Herbicide Application Biological Assessment: Manager Confer Morris coordinated with BPA Environmental Protection Specialist Wilson on a statement of work and project description for the aerial herbicide application biological assessment. Confer Morris also participated by conference call in a kick-off meeting with Wilson and the contractor hired by BPA to produce the biological assessment.

Grazing Lease: Manager Confer Morris corresponded with Lands Division staff regarding the upcoming July 31 expiration of the DNR grazing lease on the BPA-funded portion of the wildlife area (a number of DNR leases throughout the state are expiring at this same time). Confer Morris and Lands Agent Hendrix participated in a conference call with Olympia Lands staff to discuss potential changes to lease conditions and the anticipated rate increase. DM Sprague would like to put together a team to negotiate the lease renewals.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Forester Mackey visited the current RMAP roadwork job site in Section 33 of the Rock Creek Unit. The Yakima crew continues to make good progress.

RMAP road abandonment work in Section 33 of the Rock Creek Unit

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky spent a day with WDFW archaeologist Katherine Kelly, inspecting and recording archaeology sites in Tekison Creek. Over 40 rock pits and rock cairns were recorded in one day of surveying. While in Tekison Creek, Lopushinsky also inspected the progress being made by CAMP on road drainage work near the old irrigation diversion.





WDFW archaeologist Katherine Kelly records locations of rock cairns, Colockum Wildlife Area

this section of burned fence. Other work left to be done by contractors includes rolling up and removing the old barbed wire from the entire ten miles of newly rebuilt fence. A final fence inspection will be done by Engineering and will include wildlife area staff.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Construction efforts continued on the shop re-build at the Sunnyside HQ facilities.

Workers occupied with the shop re-build at the Sunnyside HQ facilities

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

East-West Black Bear Project: Over the coming months, staff will be systematically trapping bears in the Snoqualmie and Lake Wenatchee areas in alternating sessions (two sessions in each area). Biologists Anderson and Smith assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Carnivore Specialist Maletzke with bear captures and collaring during the first westside session. A total of six bears were collared over the last two weeks (including several enforcement officer captures). This represents a successful session for the project. Trapping will commence in the Lake Wenatchee area in the coming days. Following trapping sessions in each area, WSU Graduate Student Welfelt and Technician Buskirk will be operating 40+ barbed-wire hair corrals they placed throughout the area. Hair will be carefully collected and catalogued from each corral after ten days. Analysis will be



completed and results ultimately used to generate a population and density estimate. Smith may also be assisting this portion of the project during the summer months.

A male black bear fitted with a GPS collar during the first session of the East-West black bear project



Common Loon Monitoring:

Biologist Smith monitored loon nesting activity at several area lakes. Loons were present at three of the visited lakes and potential nesting activity was documented at one. A loon was documented setting on a potential nest. However, the nest site is on a free floating log and was not located on subsequent visits. Continued monitoring will be required and may include launching a canoe. Biologist Anderson confirmed nesting at an area lake. Anderson witnessed a nest exchange and a bird turning two eggs. Anderson also received word from area land managers monitoring a pair in the south part of the District. Anderson discussed management thoughts with the group, given two chicks have been documented at their site recently.



Loon pair after nest exchange – Photo by C. Anderson, WDFW

Potential loon nest on a free floating log (far left) at an area lake

Bald Eagle Management Guidance:

Biologist Anderson fielded a number of requests for information and bald eagle management referral. Anderson also provided guidance to a Northwest Indian College undergraduate student working on a Capstone project examining eagles in the city, local community values around eagles, and Native American culture regarding bald eagles. Anderson corresponded with the student regarding eagle locations, as well as how to survey for local eagles and request documentation if the project moves forward.



Osprey nest management – SR520 WSDOT Consultation: Biologist Anderson discussed management options and thoughts moving forward regarding two pairs of osprey that have been scoping construction equipment being used on the SR520 Floating Bridge Project. Anderson and WSDOT biologists discussed deterring birds and future options to potentially support birds nesting in the area – away from the SR520 (and local eagle territories!).

Northern Puget Sound Surveys:

Assistant District Biologist Cyra joined District Biologist Milner in conducting breeding bird surveys in the San Juan archipelago in conjunction with USFWS San Juan Refuge staff. Heavy fog again hampered surveys, remaining sites will be surveyed as soon as schedules allow.



A Black Oystercatcher pair in the San Juan Islands

Lowland Pika Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra surveyed sites at a known lowland pika area in the Stillaguamish valley. Trail cameras were retrieved from a site with limited past detections. No pikas were detected in this talus slope, but the cause of the knockdown of two of the cameras was captured by the third.

Mountain Goat Summer Project Planning: Biologist Milner participated in a planning session with other WDFW staff and faculty, as well as students from Western Washington University, to develop plans for two related projects in the Cascades this summer.

Wildlife Areas

Lake Terrell: Natural Resource Tech Deyo completed final prep work on four of the barley fields at Lake Terrell. The rest of the fields will be prepped this week, with barley planting occurring at the end of the week. Sixty acres of barley are being planted for winter waterfowl feeding. Natural Resource Tech Deyo cleared the leak valve on Terrell Creek that was completely blocked by beavers. The five year lake drawdown is almost complete. The lower water level will allow maintenance to be performed on island erosion prevention logs, and increased noxious weed control in and around the lake.

Port of Bellingham Wetland Mitigation Project: Manager Kessler coordinated with the managers from the Port of Bellingham on the wetland mitigation project on the Tennant Lake Unit. This project improved and enhanced wetlands on the Tennant Lake Unit to mitigate impacts to wetlands during expansion at the Bellingham Airport. The reed canary grass in the phase two area will be mowed this week to keep it from going to seed.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with staff from Sound Salmon Solutions to discuss restoration planting and maintenance plans for the Waterwheel Creek Project. Over the month of May, staff and 96 community volunteers held four events to install native trees and shrubs along the creek. Manager Boehm also continues to work collaboratively with the Drainage District on the repairs to the dike that breached in December 2014. Manager Boehm reports that 40 acres of corn were planted this past week in the unit. Frohning Dairy continues to increase the acreage in agriculture each season. An additional 10-12 acres of grain will be planted in late June to provide additional wildlife forage and cover.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that seasonal mowing and trail maintenance has resumed at the unit. A Master Hunter volunteer is clearing blow-downs from last winter's storms along the interior roads and trails.

Stillwater Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that Frohning Dairy completed planting approximately 40 acres of corn and 10 acres of barley in the unit. A portion of these crops will be retained for wildlife forage and cover.

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

Wildlife Management

Mountain Goat Survey – Volunteer Effort: Biologist Anderson worked with USFS North Bend Ranger District staff to obtain volunteer passes to use for the upcoming visual encounter surveys in coordination with Districts 7 and 8. Anderson is in correspondence with volunteers in order to send out forms, maps, and passes as soon as possible.

Western Washington University Wildlife Techniques Field Course: Biologist Milner, with assistance from Wildlife Area Manager Kessler and Biologist Caldwell, ran a small mammal trapping session for students from Western Washington University at Lake Terrell Wildlife Area.

Students set Sherman live traps and museum special snap traps in mowed and un-mowed grasslands. Although the traps were in place for only one night, students caught and keyed out four shrews, which was their first experience actually handling wildlife in the course.



WWU students getting organized prior setting out traps



Students setting out traps in a mowed field

Wildlife Areas

Island Unit: Cosgrove continued field preparations on the Island Unit for agricultural and moist-soil enhancements. Cosgrove planted two fields (about 11 acres) with millet. Meis coordinated the supplies for the barley planting for the Island Unit.

Samish Unit: Manager Rotton and Ducks Unlimited Biologist CK Eidem attended the Skagit County Hearing Examiners meeting regarding the Samish Unit Wetland Enhancement project. There were no public concerns voiced at the meeting. The next steps are for the hearing examiner to review the information available and make a ruling in the next two weeks. Meis is coordinating the supplies for the corn planting on the Samish.

Nooksack River Bridge Repainting Project and Dike Top Trail Mowing: Manager Kessler met onsite with the Whatcom County engineer and the contractor for the Nooksack River Bridge repainting project. The contractors doing the work will use our Nooksack Unit parking area to stage the work. Five parking spaces will be left open for the public to continue accessing the site during the project. Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo cleared a new path to the Nooksack River Dike Top Trail away from the bridge work. Manager Kessler created and posted new signs to detail the work and point out the trail detour. Manager Kessler also completely mowed the dike top trail.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Coordination: Supervisor Caldwell met several landowners to tour their properties, which may be added to the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4. Contract details, hunter access points, parking logistics, and blind locations were discussed between the landowner and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife staff. Biologist Hans put together individual landowner barley cost reports in preparation for

landowner meetings this week. Biologist Hans and Natural Resource Technician Otto met with several landowners in the Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish areas to discuss the logistics for barley planting this spring and early summer. Hans and Otto were able to confirm acreage from a few landowners and determine a mowing and planting schedule for the month of June. Natural Resource Technician Otto will follow-up with landowners who are still undecided about enrollment in the program. During one of the meetings a landowner expressed interest in enrolling two new, quality sites into our program this fall.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted three volunteers with contacting the appropriate staff at the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area for volunteer projects. Two of these contacts were referred to Dazey by Christine Redmond, the Volunteer Program Manager for DFW, and one came from a presentation Dazey made in the Renton area on the need for and the value of volunteers. One was a scout looking to provide service to wildlife in his working towards the prestigious William T. Hornaday award. This awards program was created to recognize those that have made significant contributions to conservation. It was begun in 1914 by Dr. William T. Hornaday, director of the New York Zoological Park and founder of the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. Dr. Hornaday was an active and outspoken champion of natural resource conservation and a leader in saving the American bison from extinction. He named the award the Wildlife Protection Medal. Its purpose was to challenge Americans to work constructively for wildlife conservation and habitat protection. After his death in 1937, the award was renamed in Dr. Hornaday's honor and became a Boy Scouts of America award. In the last 80 years only about 1100 of these awards nationally have been presented. The other referel was a young man looking to perform service for the Department and gain an idea of what we do prior to deciding if a career change was something he would want to go back to school for. Coordinator Dazey worked to recruit volunteers for a fencing project in the Buckley area and also sent out information to recruit volunteers from the Master Hunter and Master Hunter applicants for the very popular pygmy rabbit program. These volunteers satisfy their service hour requirements while helping the Department to meet its goals in regards to pygmy rabbit capture in breeding areas and reintroduction to the wild.

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 Supervisor Caldwell was contacted by several private landowners who are experiencing deer related damage. Supervisor Caldwell collected information on each situation and established follow up meetings to confirm damage and discuss damage prevention options. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman monitored agricultural fields in Skagit County that have historic elk damage with no recent elk activity present. Specialist Witman contacted a landowner in the Acme area of Whatcom County who has had elk presence throughout most of the year. Elk were hazed in April and have only been returning in small groups ranging from four to seven animals. The landowner has implemented a bio-fencing strategy by strategically placing bear urine around his property, which he believes

has been effective in deterring elk presence. Specialist Witman finalized fence materials coordination efforts which were ordered for a dairy farm in the Acme area that has had ongoing elk damage.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and a Master Hunter volunteer installed a new fence in Day Creek to assist in mitigating elk damage to private landowner crops



Region 4 (District 12) Ungulate Damage: Biologist Smith spent time meeting and phone conferencing with landowners from Enumclaw, Green Valley, and Snoqualmie Valley to discuss deer and elk damage to agricultural crops and residential property. Hazing ideas, fencing techniques and hunting strategies were discussed.

Region 4 bull elk

Point Elliot Treaty Policy Meeting: Manager Link and Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell attended the Point Elliot Treaty Policy meeting with other Regional Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife staff. This meeting was organized to discuss important policy related management decisions related to co-management related game species within Region 4. The meeting resulted in information sharing and the union of management ideas for future co-management issues.

Aquatic Invasive Species – Nutria in Renton: Biologist Anderson discussed nutria with city of Renton staff and provided management guidance. Anecdotally, given the calls Anderson is increasingly receiving, correspondence with WDFW Aquatic Invasive Species biologists, and USDA Wildlife Services biologists, this exotic, invasive and State Prohibited species is unfortunately showing more presence. It is, at minimum, known to occur in these counties: Clark, Cowlitz, King, Kitsap, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Stevens, Thurston, and Whatcom.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farms Unit: Manager Rotton continues to work with Environmental Planner Jenna Friebel regarding construction and land management details for the Fir Island Farms projects.

IMCO is the construction company that won the bid for the Fir Island Farms project. They have begun the site prep for the project and should begin construction in the next week or so.

Private Lands/Access

Spring Bear Management: Biologist Hans followed up on two separate calls regarding gate issues in the Monroe area. Hans replaced one lock and did not find an issue with the other gates reported. Afterwards, Hans called both hunters to let them know their issues have been resolved and answered questions regarding the correct location of the gates. Biologist Hans corresponded with three different hunters who had harvested a bear over the past week. She gathered what information she could and entered the data, which will be used to create an end of season report.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey answered questions from an instructor about the no show challenge he is encountering at his classes. Unfortunately at this time of year no shows are a major challenge for some instructors, with no shows sometimes equaling half of the registered students. Since most instructors do not charge a deposit many students will sign up for multiple classes and then no show for most of them without removing themselves from the roster. Several strategies were discussed with the instructor on what other instructors have done to reduce the no shows. The HE coordinators have also discussed strategies in the Department to assist the volunteer instructors in dealing with this challenge, however it still seems to be prevalent, especially in spring and summer classes.

Hunter Education Instructor Applicant: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey continues preparation for the first session of a Pre-Service Training class for hunter education instructor applicants in Skagit County. The first session, which is a class room session teaching applicants how to conduct a class, what we do to support them, and what the expectations and policies of the Department are, will be held at the La Connor office June 2, with the follow-up class to follow several weeks later.

Master Hunter Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey worked with Tracy Loveless to correct and update contacts for Region 4 Master Hunters so that we can keep them advised of service opportunities and upcoming needs of the Department. Communication is key to the success of using Master Hunters to assist the Department in volunteer services, which means keeping the contact information for Master Hunters and applicants current is an important aspect of ensuring the communication channels stay open.

Instructor Directory: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey worked with Hunter Education Coordinator Garcia to proof and correct a new directory to be posted on the instructor website. The directory updates certified instructors and provides a resource for Chief Instructors to find assistance in their area. The old directory was out of date. The new directory lists instructors not only by county like the old directory but also then lists the instructors by city making it easier to find local instructor help for classes.

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

Wildlife Management

Training: Supervisor Caldwell accomplished online training for Washington State Purchasing and Procurement Ethics Training and Washington State Small Purchasing Training.

Rubber boa picture from a request for identification assistance



Wildlife Areas

Manager Rotton attended the Salmon Recovery conference in Vancouver and was part of a joint presentation of some of the monitoring work that was completed on the South Fork of the Skagit River projects.

Private Lands/Access

Training: Supervisor Caldwell accomplished online training for Washington State Purchasing and Procurement Ethics Training and Washington State Small Purchasing Training.

Staff Performance Development Plans and Evaluations: Supervisor Caldwell conducted Performance Development Plans and Evaluations for Private Land Access Program staff and submitted these updated documents to the Regional Program Manager.

Performance and Development Plan: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Boehm completed the PDP process for his direct report, Access Supervisor Derek Hacker, and approved Derek's Comprehensive Action Plan. Manager Boehm is finalizing his Comprehensive Action Plan as the completion of the Leadership Training Program.

A turkey vulture seen during the East-West black bear project



REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Regional wildlife biologists continued with fawn searches for 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 will be monitored frequently and multiple attempts will be made to capture their fawns. The first black-tailed deer fawn of the year has been captured in the Coweeman study cluster.



First black-tailed deer fawn of the year captured in the Coweeman study cluster with Biologist Stephens

Cowlitz Wildlife Area

Kosmos Unit Woody Debris Fire: On Saturday, the Glenoma Fire Department was called to extinguish a slow moving fire on the east shore of Riffe Lake. The fire was spreading through a woody debris field of driftwood that is annually deposited due to westerly winds. Located behind a gated section of road leading to the lake's edge, the fire looks to have been started from a small day-use campfire not properly extinguished. The Department of Natural Resources arrived after the initial attack and completed the mop-up duties. The fire burnt approximately three acres. Thank you to the Glenoma Fire Department for the quick response.



Kosmos fire

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Forage Enhancements: Forage enhancements for the spring were completed last week on about 200 acres on the Mudflow Unit to increase elk forage in the area. Ten tons of limestone pellets and six tons of fertilizer were applied over the last couple of weeks by Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand. This was the highest amount of acreage that had been enhanced in a single year in more than a decade. On average, about 30% more forage is available on areas that receive fertilizer and/or lime than areas that do not. An additional 15-20 acres will be fertilized this fall on the area during the fall green up period to increase forage going into the winter months.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Wetland Plantings: Last week began the start of the 2015 wetland restoration and plantings. So far, five different wetlands have been selected for this spring/summer planting effort. These sites include the South McBride wetland, sections of the North Basin wetland, the southeastern corner of the Lakebed, the northwestern corner of the South Cell, and the V-2 impoundment at the Vancouver Lake Unit. Hart Lake and V-1 will also be targeted later this summer once the water is completely off of them. The selected wetland sites are predominately reed canary grass stands with almost no native vegetation. The management approach to these wetland plantings is a fall



herbicide application, winter inundation, spring draw-down, and then a summer planting. The crops selected for these plantings include poco barley, milo or sorghum, buckwheat, and white proso millet, along with some other cereal grains. All of these plants produce a high yield of seeds per plant, 75 or less days to maturity after germination, and are a great food source for wintering waterfowl.

Lakebed after spring draw-down

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Summer Ban on Fires: Rural Fire District 7, which covers a substantial portion of the Soda Springs Unit, is instituting its summer ban on outdoor fires effective June 1. Department of Natural Resources, which covers all of the rest of the Soda Springs Unit, will probably also prohibit outdoor burning beginning the same date or shortly thereafter.

Fuels Reduction Project: Manager Van Leuven toured the Phase III project area with a prospective bidder. Van Leuven also inspected the Phase II project area, which is nearly finished. Some final clean-up work remains to be done; but objectives are being met despite a variety of issues that have arisen during the term of this part of the project, not the least of which was the discovery of numerous rattlesnakes and absenteeism of crew.

Grazing Permit Monitoring: Wildlife Area staff checked water troughs and ponds daily on the Soda Springs Unit to ensure that water is available. Water is a limiting factor this season, and it is critical that the remaining water sources are adequate for the animals present. On Tuesday, Technician Davis found that one trough was completely empty, and after three attempts to identify and correct the problem, the issue was resolved. The troughs and ponds have been reliable since then, but need to be watched because any failure will be a problem within a few hours.



Weed Control: Technician Davis treated more sulphur cinquefoil infestations at Leidl Park, Stinson Flat, and Canyon Creek Campgrounds.

Western Gray Squirrel Hair Snag Trap

Deployment: Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis placed traps at site 38 on the Klickitat Wildlife Area, and collected habitat data at each point. This is part of a statewide effort to determine the population distribution of this species. At the location of one trap there were several phantom orchids in bloom. This parasitic plant is an unusual species on the Klickitat Wildlife Area.

Phantom Orchid

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

Wildlife Management

Klickitat County Birding Guide: The public is to be reminded that this is a great time of the year to explore Klickitat County and the variety of unique habitats for bird watching. Several years ago Biologist Anderson and a group of volunteers produced a guide called “Birding In and Around Klickitat County - Sites for Access Viewing and Birding.”

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/guides/klickitat/>.



One of the most sought after eastside birds to be found this time of year is the white-headed woodpecker. The white-headed woodpecker is primarily found in open canopy ponderosa pine and is generally not abundant in any location throughout its range. In Washington the white-headed woodpecker is a candidate species and its most limiting factor is the loss of older age ponderosa pine stands. The best place to locate this species in our area is in Klickitat County near the Yakima County Line south of Mt Adams. Thanks to Tom Kogut for this great photo.

Male white-headed woodpecker

Shillapoo and Vancouver Lake: 840 pounds of trash, including two mattresses, four tires, and building material, was pulled out of the parking areas, loaded on trucks, and hauled to the dump from Shillapoo. The Clark County jail crew was also on site at Vancouver Lake loading trucks with over 400 pounds of trash from alongside the road and ditch.



Vancouver Lake and Shillapoo trash removal

Silver Lake, I-5, Massey Bar, and Martins Access Sites: The WDFW grading crew graveled and graded several access sites this week and 4,000 gallons of sewage were pumped from the vault toilets.



Gravel and Grading



Sewage pumping

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Black-tailed Deer Study

Pysht Cluster: 2014 Fawn Mortalities – three detected May 19 & 20th

Fawns 507PY & 509PY

May 19, 2015 – District Biologist McMillan detected fast signals for both fawns during a field check.

May 20, 2015 – District Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament investigated the mortality of the 2014 collared fawns (507PY & 509PY). Upon arrival at the site they detected mortality signals for both of the fawns and located the carcasses. The cause of death for each fawn is unknown and the date they each died is uncertain. Both were known to be alive in mid-February. The only remains found for 509PY were leg bones. The entire carcass of 507PY was intact with no obvious predation. Both collars were collected.

Fawn 505PY

May 19, 2015 – Investigation of Separation Event for a 2014 collared fawn (505PY). Biologist Ament attempted to get a visual of the fawn since there was some question about the pulse rate of the collar signal. There was significant signal bounce and it was late evening. She had to abandon the search.

May 21, 2015 – After some communications with Researcher Rice, Biologist Ament returned to check on the 2014 fawn (505PY). She was more convinced that the fawn was likely dead. She was able to locate the remains of the fawn in a draw with steep slopes on both sides. The fawn was cached below some downed trees. Only a few rib, vertebrae, and scapula bones were found near the collar. Biologist Ament found cougar hair on a blackberry vine directly above the remains.



Creek draw cache site for dead 2014 fawn



Fawn bones found at the site



Hair remains from dead fawn



Collar located near the fawn remains

2015 Fawn Searching & Collaring

Doe 12477 – Single Fawn Collaring – May 24, 2015 – Biologist Ament joined with District Biologist McMillan and two of her sons to respond to a VIT alert for a collared doe (12477). They were able to locate and collar one female fawn. The fawn had “piebald” coloration and had not yet developed any obvious teeth. The team searched for a few hours but was unable to locate a second fawn at the site.



Doe 10707 – Collared single fawn – Tuesday, May 26, 2015 – District Biologist McMillan, volunteer Tina Vogel, and Biologist Ament responded to VIT Alerts for collared does 10707 and 11517. They were able to locate and collar one male fawn for doe 10707. The fawn was found a considerable distance from where the VIT was located. Extensive searching was conducted but a second fawn was not found in the area. Biologist Ament was able to download GPS, Activity, and Sensor data from the doe’s collar.



Volunteer Tina Vogel and Biologist Ament finish collaring a male fawn



10707's single male fawn returned to the shade

Doe 11517 – Found single dead fawn – May 26, 2015 – The team then moved to the site for doe 11517. After locating the VIT within a clear cut area, the team searched for fawns. A very small dead fawn was finally located upslope from the VIT location at a location of recent doe fix locations, accessed by using smartphone. A second fawn was not located. Biologist Ament was able to download GPS, Activity, and Sensor data from the doe's collar.



Dead fawn discovered in slash, with body core still slightly warm



No injuries or abnormalities noticed other than a very low weight

May 27, 2015 – District Biologist McMillan, Point No Point Biologist Tim Cullinan, and Biologist Ament spent the entire day conducting searches for twin fawns at three different sites, including 12477, 11517, & 10707. No twins were found. The pie bald fawn from 12477 was observed alive. Biologist Ament was able to download GPS, Activity, and Sensor data from the collar on doe 12477.

Doe 10691 – Twin fawns collared – Sunday May 31, 2015 – District Biologist McMillan and Point No Point Biologist Tim Cullinan responded to a Sunday 1:10pm VIT alert, successfully collaring twin fawns at a fresh birthing site.



Fresh birthing site, blood still remaining under rootwad



Biologist Cullinan collaring fawns

Biologist McMillan & fawns, ready to be placed back where found, next to rootwad

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys

West of Port Angeles, Northern Extant Site - May 21, 2015: Biologist Ament and Habitat Biologist Gary Bell conducted a TCB survey at this TCB site on May 21, 2015. The upper and lower survey routes were established and flagged at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions were variable for the survey. There were some periods of cloud cover and no distinct shadows at times during the survey. However, the temperature (67.7 degrees) and wind conditions met protocol. Biologist Ament conducted a survey of the Upper (main) Route and counted a total of 24 TCBs. Biologist Bell surveyed the Lower Route and eastern bald openings and counted a total of 7 TCBs.





Taylor's checkerspot butterflies nectaring on flowers along survey route



Taylor's checkerspot butterfly survey route marked with flagging