

Wildlife Program

Week of November 16 – November 22, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

District 1 Wolf Meeting: Biologist Shepherd attended the District 1 Wolf Management Meeting.

Producer Contacts: Biologist Shepherd contacted a central Stevens County producer concerning a compensation claim.

Le Clerc Grazing Allotment Environmental Impact Statement meeting: Biologist Shepherd attended the U.S. Forest Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Le Clerc Grazing Allotment Environmental Impact Statement meeting in Colville.

Range Rider Contacts: Range Riders were present on a USFS allotment in the Wedge. Biologist Shepherd contacted range riders working in this allotment.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolves: USFS staff members sent Biologist Fitkin track photos of multiple animals in the South Summit area northeast of Twisp. This is in addition to similar sign discovered by WDFW staff members and other previous reports of multiple animals from the same general area. All together, this adds up to a new wolf pack being confirmed in the area surrounding Loup Loup Pass. The best estimate from the data thus far indicates the pack is comprised of at least two adults and four pups. The name of the new pack had not been finalized as of this report.

Remote camera photo of a member of the new wolf pack

– Photo by David Mozkowitz





Multiple sets of wolf tracks – Photo by USFS

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Wolf: Biologist Bernatowicz spoke with Biologist Becker about local wolf sightings, surveys, and proposed capture schedules. Biologist Becker was originally planning captures in the Teanaway for early December. The captures will likely be delayed until January due to general and permit elk seasons in the area.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Northeast Washington Hunter Check Stations: Region 1 Wildlife Program staff members, along with Hunter Education Instructor volunteers, conducted check stations this year at Washington State Patrol truck scale facilities on Highways 2 and 395. In total, staff members ran six check stations on four weekend dates and interviewed 467 hunters. The hunters harvested 111 white-tailed deer and 10 mule deer. Staff members incidentally checked one harvested black bear, one cougar, one bobcat, two moose, a few forest grouse, and assorted waterfowl. Along with age and antler data, tissue samples were collected from deer to help monitor occurrences of bluetongue and epizootic hemorrhagic disease. In addition, a training venue was provided for college students from WSU and EWU along with one State Fish & Wildlife Commission Member.

Lincoln Cliffs Bighorn Survey: Biologists Atamian and Lowe conducted the annual November aerial survey of the Lincoln Cliffs bighorn sheep herd on the south side of Roosevelt Lake in GMU 133. A total of 92 sheep were counted, including 39 ewes, 24 lambs, and 29 rams. As usual, the sheep were found in two main areas—the town of Lincoln and several miles downriver at Whitestone, a group of six rams was also seen in between the two main areas in the Sterling Cliffs.



A group of sheep in Lincoln heads for cover as the helicopter flies overhead



Ram group seen during the survey, east of Jump Canyon

Northeast Washington White-tailed Deer Survey Pilot Project: Biologists Lowe, Hansen, and Prince conducted the first two days of white-tailed deer aerial surveys in GMUs 124 & 117. Surveys will continue during the upcoming week. This is a pilot study testing the efficacy of distance sampling to obtain density estimates for white-tailed deer. Data Analyst Whelan contributed in preparing and troubleshooting the new equipment, as well as in flight following for the crew.



A pilot study for surveying white-tailed deer began this week in GMUs 117 & 124

Asotin Bighorn Sheep: District Biologist Wik spent three days in the Asotin bighorn herd range attempting to capture animals for disease testing. Assistant District Biologist Vekasy helped for two days and one yearling ram was captured.

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Grouse lek improvements at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch mowed Seven Springs, Reiber, Windmill, and Swanson Leks this week. A consensus was reached this week at the recent Lincoln County “grouse” meeting, where it was decided that this would be a good activity to help sage and sharp-tailed grouse. By reducing the grass height, surveyors will be able to count birds easier next spring. Reduced vegetation height will also allow for more predator awareness for the birds.



Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

Field to the Table Turkey Clinic: Supervisor McCanna and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with several landowners to allow access to hunters from the Table Turkey Clinic. Hunters were given the opportunity to harvest a fall turkey to complete the clinic. McCanna took two hunters out early Saturday morning and both were able to harvest turkeys.

Two successful turkey hunters from Saturday’s clinic

Hunter Access: Biologist Baarstad received a call from a western Washington hunter planning to hunt in GMU 101 for the late modern firearm buck hunt until he realized at the last minute that the unit was not open. Although the

hunter was not familiar with northeast Washington, he was interested in trying GMU 113, so Baarstad suggested some public lands there. The hunter was excited to report a successful hunt with a nice whitetail buck and his first grouse!



Successful hunter in GMU 113

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

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Kettle Falls Elementary School 4th Grade Healthy Forest Expedition: The third annual Healthy Forest Expedition with the Kettle Falls Elementary School 4th graders kicked off this week. On Monday, Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer went to the school to introduce the students to Sherman Creek Wildlife Area through a photo-filled PowerPoint presentation. It also got them primed for three field trips to Sherman Creek Wildlife Area over the next three months. The 4th graders come out to the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area headquarters, where there is a forest unit with established plots. On their field visit this week, the students learned about tree identification and forest density. Students used their thumbs to determine the basal area per acre of trees on each plot to determine if this forest stand is overstocked. On future site visits, the students will learn about forest health risks (insects and diseases) to overstocked stands, as well as forest treatment methods and the natural role of fire.



Weather event/structure damage Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area: On Tuesday afternoon, an extraordinarily strong windstorm blew through the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area. The Spokane area had winds in the 60 and 70 mile-plus range, and the wind was at “howling” level over the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area by about 6 p.m. Fortunately, the resulting power outage at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area lasted only a few hours. A lack of trees to fall on power lines is

one good thing about living in the shrub-steppe. The storm peeled up part of the metal roof on a secondary shop at headquarters. Wednesday morning, staff cut out the mangled portions of the roof, replaced a portion of wood beam that spanned the rafters, picked up the fiberglass insulation that blew out toward the office, and ordered new metal panels. Parts cost should be minimal, and repair should be completed by early December, once the roofing is fabricated and picked up from the manufacturer in Spokane.



WT Wooten WA – Campgrounds: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman checked the campgrounds after the severe wind storm. Lots of trees blew down but none in the campgrounds and only one down across the road. People moved back in for the weekend presumable for the late archery deer season and the late fall turkey season.



Tree down across the Tucannon Road after the wind storm

WT Wooten WA – Elk Fence: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman checked the elk fence along the Mountain Road and in Tumulum after the severe wind storm. Several small trees were leaning on the elk fence along the Mountain Road and were removed. One tree was found that landed on the fence and smashed the top half, and another tree was found that landed on the fence in the “Hell Hole” and flattened the fence. Those two areas will be repaired next week. Lots of trees blew down in the Tumulum but none fell on the fence.

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Elk Fence: Wildlife Area staff began checking the elk fence on Monday. Unfortunately a powerful windstorm moved through the area on Tuesday, causing even more damage. Staff members will be making repairs to the fence this upcoming week.



Small trees that blew over on the elk fence along the Mountain Road

Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

Turkey Damage in Spokane County and Field to Table Clinic: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and Supervisor McCanna worked with landowners in north Spokane County experiencing high numbers of wild turkey. Six different locations were identified and coordination with those landowners was made to allow for participants of the Field to Table Turkey Clinic to harvest turkeys.



Supervisor McCanna discussing deer and wild turkey damage to agricultural fields in north Spokane County with wild turkey in the field



Wild turkeys in a pasture experiencing hay stack damage in Spokane County

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Feral Pig Eradication: Stemmed by a recent weekly report of two feral pigs that were shot in the North Potholes and at least two more running in the area, Biologist O. Duvuvuei was contacted by USDA Wildlife Services Biologist Laurence Schafer to discuss the sighting

details. One of Schafer's main goals as a Wildlife Services biologist is to keep feral pigs out of Washington. Because Wildlife Services has the staff time, funding, and resources to intensively focus on this pig issue, they will take the lead on removing the pigs. Based on pictures of the harvested pigs, Schafer determined that they are escapees. However, Schafer noted that it does not take long for the pigs to become feral and reproduce. Duvuvuei, Schafer, and other WDFW and Wildlife Services staff will meet on December 16 to visit the area, place bait and camera stations to monitor numbers and distribution, and formulate a plan to remove pigs from the North Potholes.

Bighorn Sheep Management – Mt. Hull Herd: Biologist Heinlen contacted a private party who had domestic goats in close proximity (nose to nose contact) with the Mount Hull bighorn sheep herd. This is a management concern as pneumonia can be transmitted to bighorn sheep through this type of contact. The private party agreed to let WDFW test the domestic goats for *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (Movi), which is the infection that triggers bighorn sheep pneumonia outbreaks. With the help of the private party, Biologist Heinlen sampled all of the domestic goats with a simple nasal swab and forwarded the swabs to the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at WSU for analysis.

Wildlife Areas

Wildfire Damage Evaluation and Restoration: Manager Swedberg, Chelan Wildlife Area Manager Fox, CAMP Construction Project Coordinators Scott Allen and Pat Haley, and three FEMA representatives hiked about two miles of fire damaged fence on Chelan Butte Wildlife Area over the better part of two days. There was a great deal of discussion, but no final conclusions regarding what the metric was for determining what amount of damaged fence was a minimum or maximum for a specified distance. For example, choosing one foot or a quarter mile to trigger replacement or repair.

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

Wildlife Management

Desert Unit Deer Hunting: Biologist O. Duvuvuei extracted a tooth from a successful Desert Unit modern firearm hunter. As usual, hunter success in the Desert Unit has been high for modern firearm hunters and some nice bucks have been harvested.

This happy hunter filled his tag during the last 15 minutes of his early firearm hunt in the Desert Unit. Note: this picture was taken at his home so Desert Unit hunters should not expect habitat that even closely resembles the background of this picture – Photo by successful hunter





A group of five hunters were able to fill all their tags within the first three days of the Desert Unit's early firearm season – Photo by a happy group of hunters



A happy hunter who successfully notched his tag during the Desert Unit's second modern firearm season – Photo by O. Duvuvuei

November Waterfowl Surveys: Biologists Finger and O. Duvuvuei completed the North Basin portion of the November waterfowl surveys. A large number of waterfowl are in the basin. The bulk of the mallards were observed at Potholes Reserve, Winchester Reserve, Wanapum Closure, and Eagles Lakes. Mallards comprised the majority of the duck count but a larger than usual number of wigeon are currently in the basin, particularly on the Columbia River. Scaup numbers are also very strong on the Columbia River, particularly Wells, Wanapum, and Priest Rapids Pools. The South Basin will be surveyed at the beginning of next week.



Birds-eye view of the Spud Field wetland project – Photo by R. Finger



Birds-eye view of the Flood Flat wetland project – Photo by R. Finger

Private Lands/Access

Sprague Lake Interpretive Trail: Access Manager Harmon installed nine of the ten interpretive trail signs at Sprague Lake. One of the sign pedestal was fabricated at least a quarter inch to narrow, so the expensive Fossil sign will not fit into the welded aluminum frame, a plan will be devised in the coming weeks to remedy this situation. Staff will also get the large kiosk signs installed in the next few weeks, which will complete this project.

A couple of the Sprague Lake interpretive signs – Photo by J. Harmon



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

Wildlife Areas

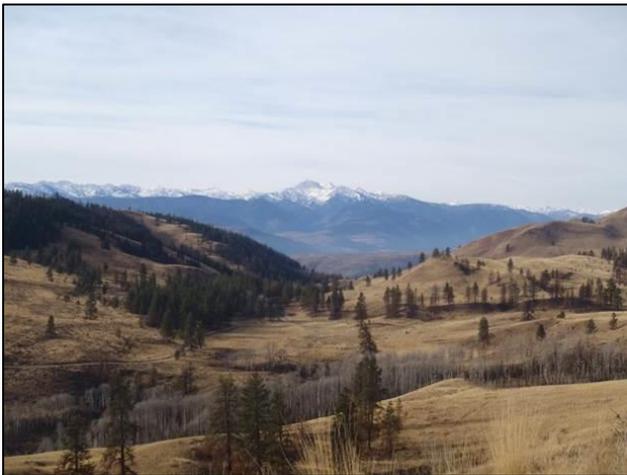
North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative Outreach Workgroup: The NCW FHC Outreach Workgroup, of which Manger Swedberg is a member, launched their webpage at <http://www.ucsr.org/newfhc/outreach-workgroup/>. This is the workgroup responsible for developing the attached brochure. The Washington Prescribed Fire Council covered the graphic design and printing costs.



November snow in Winthrop



Early ski season in Mazama



Snow in the higher hills



Remaining snow level at HQ's by Friday afternoon

– Photo by Sherry Furnari

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area:

Manager Huffman began checking and repairing elk fence along Highway 12 and the Tieton

River. Huffman also began checking fence along the Naches River near the Junction feed site. Overall the elk fence is okay. In sections adjacent to steep rocky slopes a lot of rocks have dislodged and put holes in the fence. Work on checking the fence will continue over the next couple of weeks.

A large rock lodged in the elk fence along the Tieton River. Rocks coming down the hill break wire, remove staples, and sometimes take out fence posts creating areas where elk can find their way out.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer

Morris reviewed and approved the one bid that was submitted for the four Wenas seeding projects. The contract was awarded and seed delivery is set to begin on November 17. She also took delivery of native seed purchased by RMEF to help with restoration efforts on the 2014 Cottonwood fire. Confer Morris coordinated with ClineAir, providing a map and shapefile for aerial seeding on the 2014 Cottonwood fire. These sites are expected to be seeded after Thanksgiving weekend, as conditions allow.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak and Natural Resource Technician Medina reset tree swallow nest boxes away from the bank of the Yakima River. The bank has eroded enough to make it dangerous for the school kids to clean the boxes out.



Tree Swallow Boxes: Assistant Manager Sak and the Sunnyside Christian School 4th graders along with Mr. Shoop and parents cleaned out 30 tree swallow boxes and collected data on whether the boxes were used by tree swallows or house wrens.



Natural Resource Technician Medina drilling new holes for the nest box poles



Tree Swallow nest being cleaned out of the nest box



Kids getting instructions

Wildlife Management

Mule Deer Sightability: District Biologist Fidorra made preparations and schedules for the upcoming mule deer sightability survey flights and Kahlotus Unit road surveys, which are scheduled for next week.

Ungulates and Predation: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed and provided comments on draft bighorn sheep and elk reports. The documents are part of a Wildlife Program Plan Initiative to review the impact of predators and recommend actions.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed disease sampling data collected in the Yakima River Canyon over the past three years and provided files to Dr. Cassier (Idaho F&G). A conference call is set up for early December to discuss further management/research direction.

Pneumonia Samples: Bernatowicz spoke with a person who frequently hikes Clemans Mountain and views bighorn sheep. The person was interested in signs of pneumonia. A late Selah Butte permit holder called regarding collecting samples. A kit was put together and a drop location confirmed.

Large Bear: Biologist Bernatowicz talked with former WDFW employee Pat Gavin regarding a road-killed bear. The bear was seen by numerous people and was described as very large. Pat measured the head at 22 inches across. The bear was taken by the county to a local landfill and reportedly weighed 700 pounds. The bear had been living in the river bottom surrounded by orchards.

Retired WDFW employee Pat Gavin with a very large road-killed bear



Mountain Goat Report: Biologist Bernatowicz drafted a report and map product detailing the volunteer goat survey between I-90 and Highway 2. Hot weather hampered the survey, but 63 mountain goats were observed.

Colockum Elk Body Condition Sampling:

Moore pulled in the collection barrels at the end of the youth, senior, and disabled permit season. We did not gain any new samples during this extended portion of the season. Overall, it appears antlerless elk harvest was high and our freezers are completely full of organ samples. Moore also began reading through the literature and will run the linear equations on the 2014 samples to determine ingesta-free body fat percentage and gross energy. Moore and Bernatowicz will score the 2015 samples within the coming weeks.

Quilomene Ram: Biologist Moore sent in samples from a ram found dead in the Quilomene that was collected by Colockum Assistant Manager Hagan. Test results for bluetongue came back quickly and were negative. We are still waiting on the MOVI results.

Colockum Bull Study: Biologist Moore worked with Elk Specialist Hoenes to prepare our collars for an upcoming capture that will be scheduled during late January or early February. Moore also continued working with YTC staff to gain access for the capture.

Golden Eagle Offal Monitoring: Moore attempted to place a camera station up for golden eagles on offal removed from Puget Sound Energy's Wildhorse Wind Facility and place on the Quilomene Wildlife Area. The removal of offal from PSE land is part of their FERC licensing agreement. PSE waited until the season ended before attempting to remove the offal piles and only three remained to be transported. When Moore arrived to set up a camera station, very little of these piles remained, therefore the station was not placed.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Technician Hill removed fire pits, wood, and other debris that was left in the Watt feed lot after hunting season. There are still a few large fire pits that need to come down so the feed truck doesn't hit them under snow in the winter. The Robinson feed lot was clear of debris.

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 attended the monthly Wildlife Education Corp (WEC) meeting at the Oak Creek Visitor’s Center. The WEC had Captain Mann as a guest speaker to talk about Tribal Hunting and Treaty Rights. The group really enjoyed the discussion and learned a lot that they can pass on to the public.

Wildlife Management

Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a deer damage complaint from an orchardist in Franklin County near Mesa. The majority of the damage is related to buck deer horning several young apple trees. Several nonlethal strategies were discussed, including the use of Sea Dust to deter deer activity in the area.

Deer Hazing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand completed a hazing patrol in southern Benton County near McNary Dam to assist with reducing deer damage to several blocks of orchard and wine grape operations.



Hunting Checks: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand spent opening day of the late muzzleloader deer season in GMU 381 checking hunters and monitoring hunter access. Heavy hunting pressure was observed throughout the area with limited harvest.

Disabled Hunter with his Muzzleloader Buck

Ellensburg and Cle Elum Area: Conflict Specialist Wetzel hazed several groups of deer away from a Thorp landowner’s garlic and raspberry plots. Master hunter permit holders have been used in this area, but harvest has been reduced and curtailed due to less potential for crop damage and the large numbers of migratory deer in the area starting in November. Deer rutting damage has been reported in the area, but mostly on ornamentals.



Part of a large group of deer hazed out of a row crop area in Thorp

Elk Hazing: Several landowners in Park Creek reported elk in lower fields at night. Hazing has been effective and the groups move out of the area in a day or two. Damage to dormant crops is low, but fence damage has been observed.

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

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman received a radio call from Forester Mackey about a tree down on the Oak Creek Road during the high winds and rain. The tree was blocking Mackey and Project Forester Dahlgreen as well as a loaded log truck. Huffman arrived on scene and used a chain to drag part of the rotten snag off the road and a chainsaw to cut a limb off. Mackey pulled another section off the road to open it back up. Dahlgreen kept a lookout because of the strong winds and multiple other snags adjacent to the road. The following day Huffman purchased a new chain for Mackey to have in his truck.



Oak Creek Road re-opened after a large snag had fallen across the road during the wind/rain storm

Oak Creek Commercial Thinning Project:

Forester Mackey conducted contract administration work on the Oak Creek Commercial Thinning Project. One load of sawlogs and three loads of hop poles remain on site at the end of the day Friday, November 20. The last load of sawlogs should be delivered Monday. Work began on road abandonment this week with about 2,600 feet of road abandoned. An additional 1,300 feet of road



abandonment should be finished by Tuesday, November 24. Over the following couple weeks, the final cleanup of all landings should be complete.

Snow covered road abandonment work on the Oak Creek Commercial Thinning Project

Thinning and Burning: Forester Mackey and Forester Dahlgreen continued burning hand piles from last year's non-commercial thinning work. Mackey and Dahlgreen completed approximately 70 acres in two days with the additional help of a contract crew

member. However, with nearly one inch of rain on Tuesday, November 17 and another three inches of snow the following day, burning became counterproductive. Burning the final 90 acres planned for this year will depend on weather, but another burning window is likely if the snow melts from the piles.

Wet, snow covered piles on the Oak Creek Forest Restoration Project that are not burning well



LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt met in the field with Conflict Specialist Wetzel, Habitat Biologist Jen Nelson, Jeff Graham (USBOR), Pat Monk (USFWS), and Erin Eaton (CWLRS). The group is working on a cooperative project to fence sections of Taneum Creek to reduce heavy elk browse of the riparian vegetation. In addition, the project design calls for the installation of an electrified chain structure across the creek to stop elk from getting through the fence, where they have access to I-90. USBOR is offering to purchase all fencing materials if WDFW constructs the fence. Manager Winegeart worked on a Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) grant to hire a fence crew. Assistant Manager Hunt researched fencing costs and material availability.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris met with BPA archaeologists and showed them sites requiring cultural resource review, including the Wright Place and Hessler rehab sites, forb seeding locations, the proposed parking area on the Buffalo Road River access, and the Mount Vale septic replacement.

Archaeologists digging test hole for Mt Vale septic cultural resources review



Roofing Material Damage: Staff members reviewed and photographed wind damage to roofing materials on two outbuildings.



Wind damage on two outbuildings at Mount Vale

Wildlife Management

Leadership Training: District Biologist Fidorra traveled to Olympia to complete the final module of the Leadership Training 1 course. Fidorra then headed to Bellingham to complete the Aircraft Ditching, Underwater Egress, and Sea Survival course. The course was challenging, but all participants agreed it was very valuable.



DFW staff escape crash simulator while inverted underwater and blindfolded



REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey: Biologist Milner conducted a shorebird survey in Port Susan Bay as part of the fourth annual flyway-wide winter shorebird survey.

<http://www.ecoinst.org/conservation-programs/waterbird-conservation/puget-sound-shorebird-count/>. 17,500 Dunlin were seen at our station.



Dunlin in winter plumage – Photo by P. DeBruyn

Elk Technical Group: Biologist Yarborough met with members of the North Cascades Elk Technical Group to discuss the upcoming elk-trapping season. The group discussed protocol, supplies, trap sites, and communication ideas for increasing trap success and efficiency.

Whatcom County Wildlife

Technical Advisory Committee: Biologist Yarborough attended the Whatcom County Wildlife Technical Advisory sub-Committee meeting. This committee is responsible for compiling and discussing a list of resources to be considered for the Existing Condition Report.

Judson Lake Swan Exclusion: Biologist DeBruyn, Technician Trejo, and three members of the invasive species crew used an airboat to attach mylar ribbons to thousands of bamboo poles in Judson Lake to discourage swans from using it as a night roost. Parts of the lake contain high levels of lead shot from historic hunting that has proven to be a poisoning hazard to swans.



Swan Mortality and Morbidity Project: Scientific Technician Trejo, Biologist DeBruyn, and cooperators from Puget Sound Energy and the Trumpeter Swan Society began conducting field surveys this week to monitor for sick and injured trumpeter and tundra swans. WDFW responded to public inquiries placed via the hotline throughout Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom counties. This week, five trumpeter swans and one tundra swan were collected. A total of six swan

carcasses have been collected this season (November 2015-present). Gizzard and liver samples were collected for contaminant analysis.

	Lead	Power line Strike	Trauma	Unknown	Feather Pile	Total (per county)
King						
Whatcom		2		1		3
Snohomish		1				1
Skagit		2				2
San Juan						
						6 (Grand Total)

Pelt Sealing: Biologist Smith met with hunters to seal the pelts of several bobcats. Pelts are sealed in accordance with CITES requirements.

Protected Wildlife Management: Biologist Anderson provided state consultation for Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive and Protected species, including various Priority or Species of Concern needs – most often nest take authorization and/or habitat consideration recommendations. Anderson continues to work with Habitat, local governments, and landowners to provide for documentation and management where appropriate. Current items from this past week include osprey nest destruction requests and ongoing eagle nest concerns/reports/requests for follow-up to provide for data, ensure state protection and for federal management.

One can assist WDFW with documenting wildlife via reporting at our Wildlife Observation website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/>

One can find department management recommendations for Priority Habitats and Species at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Aquatic Invasive Species Region 4 Efforts: Biologist Anderson and Cyra retrieved the aquatic invasive species “megatrap” for the purpose of invasive species investigation and pathogen testing. Specimens were processed, and traps and equipment were cleaned. More planning is needed for cross-program needs and next steps for further management actions.

A “megatrap” being used for exotic wildlife investigative occurrence and pathogen testing. Biologist Cyra, after physical removal and chemical treatment, is using high-pressured hot water over a sewage facility for removal of remaining debris.



Urban Bird Treaty- Seattle:

Biologist Anderson met with representatives of R1 USFWS, WA Audubon, Seattle Audubon, Heron Habitat Helpers and Seattle Parks and Recreation for a second planning meeting to discuss the nomination of Seattle as an “Urban Bird Treaty City” via USFWS’s program.

The Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds (Urban Bird Treaty) program was created to help municipal governments conserve birds that live and nest, overwinter, or migrate through their cities



Wildlife Conflict Management

Black Bear Management and Conservation: Wildlife

Conflict Specialist Witman and Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell attended the final Black Bear Depredation sub-Committee meeting in Issaquah. The group met to edit and finalize management proposals regarding Black Bear depredation management throughout Washington State.

Private Lands/Access Management

South Puget Sound Local Working Group Meeting: Private Land Supervisory Biologist Caldwell attended the South Puget Sound Local Working Group meeting in Olympia. This group met to discuss conservation concerns and priorities centered around water quality and quantity, fish and wildlife habitat, agricultural viability, agriculture and forest health, and healthy community engagement. The group is set to meet again in July of 2016 to make final recommendations for 2017.

Wildlife Areas

Nooksack River Flooding: With the recent heavy rains, Manager Kessler monitored the Nooksack River flooding of the Nooksack Unit. Due to the high water, Slater Road and Marine View Drive were closed to traffic. The river front dike at the southern end of the property was overtopped and the parking area was under two feet of water. The flooding receded fairly quickly, and the amount of new damage to the dike was minimal. WDFW and Whatcom County are cooperating to perform dike scour repairs from last year's flood damage. This work is scheduled to be performed next spring.



WDFW access to the Nooksack River was two feet underwater

Tennant Lake Flooding: Manager Kessler coordinated with the Whatcom County Parks Manager on flood-related issues on the Tennant Lake Unit. Due to the river flooding, Whatcom County closed Hovander Park and the road into Tennant Lake for two days until the flood waters receded. There was minimal flood damage to the park.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw contacted the Skagit Watershed Council to provide updates on PSNERP and to begin planning a presentation to the Skagit County Board of Commissioners on restoration planning efforts underway in Skagit County.

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

Wildlife Management

2015 Hunting Seasons: Biologists in Districts 12 and 14 continue to provide guidance and information to hunters and land managers calling to inquire regarding specific hunt information, guidance and how to hunt the district. Calls are concerning how to take animals, cougar and bear hunt methods given other seasons, where to bring bear specimens from D12, scheduling CITES pelt seal needs, GMU boundaries, landowner reference information, and other general questions. The current pamphlet can be found on the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a meeting with groups interested in habitat restoration, agriculture, and flood control in the Stillaguamish Valley. They worked to put together a package of projects to submit to the

Floodplains by Design funding opportunity. A variety of project types will be represented in the package, and there will be benefits for habitat, agriculture, and flood risk reduction. WDFW will request construction funding for the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project in this package.

Stillaguamish Watershed Council Presentation: Projects Coordinator Brokaw gave a presentation to the Stillaguamish Watershed Council to update the group on the status of the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project. The presentation focused on the tidal channel design report that was just drafted, the upcoming phase of hydrodynamic modeling, and the review teams that WDFW will organize to provide design comments and suggestions.

Barnfield Tidegate and North Leque Permitting: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Skagit WLA Manager Rotton met with permit biologists to discuss permitting a tidegate replacement project and an estuary restoration project that could potentially serve as compensatory mitigation for the tidegate. Additionally, Brokaw provided information requested by the Office of Fiscal Management related to securing funding for the mitigation project.



The swales and basins constructed as part of the Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project are holding water, as seen in these photos taken on 11/20/2015

Pheasant Release Units: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to release over 500 pheasants per week at the four pheasant release units. Volunteers are conducting most of the work and Manager Boehm fills in where necessary. Feedback from hunters in the field reflects a high percentage of support and appreciation for all of the improvements that have occurred over the past few years. Cosgrove watered and fed pheasants on site this week. Cosgrove and Meis assisted with pheasant delivery on Friday on the Skagit Wildlife Area.

Waterfowl Season: Rotton, Meis, and Cosgrove monitored water levels, waterfowl use, and hunters on the Island Unit. With the high river, water levels are above normal. Ducks are feeding in multiple areas during the night, providing for continued good hunting this week. Cosgrove has been conducting car-counts daily at the Headquarters boat launch.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo, along with Private Lands Biologist Wingard, conducted use surveys of waterfowl quality hunt sites in

Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties, taking note and resolving any issues regarding the sites. Some issues that were encountered included improper parking at waterfowl hunt sites, flood debris restricting access to sites, and damaged waterfowl blinds in multiple locations. Waterfowl quality hunt signage was anchored due to potential flooding in certain areas.



Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo worked together on repairing a Whatcom County waterfowl quality hunt blind that was damaged and relocated as a result of recent flooding



Repaired Whatcom County waterfowl quality hunt blind



Flooding at Swan Road Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site in Skagit County

Volunteer Training and Utilization: Natural Resource Technician Otto worked with Volunteer Jim Green, training him on the survey routes in Whatcom County. Natural Resource Technician Otto supplied Jim with data sheets and other supplies for waterfowl quality hunt surveys. Private Lands Biologist Wingard continued organizing volunteers who are very excited about the opportunity to assist with waterfowl quality hunt surveys. These surveys are a tool for managers to determine

levels of use for each site and to ensure site rules are being followed.

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

Wildlife Management

Biologist Anderson gave an informal interview to a King 5 reporter regarding living with raccoons, legalities, etc. as well as the options and purpose of the state wildlife personalized license plates and wildlife background plates – Photo by Russ Link



GMU 418 Special Permit Elk Hunt:

Biologist Yarborough met with a successful elk hunter from GMU 418 to get his access key back, receive a tooth, and discuss the elk hunt. The hunter harvested a 6x6 bull and had a great experience.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell completed Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement entries into the Novatus contract system. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received several complaints of fence damage from elk movements in Skagit County. The increased elk activity and behavior is occurring in areas that are currently flooded from the Skagit River and smaller tributaries. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with three landowners in Skagit County who are experiencing elk activity and damage on their properties. Two of the landowners are currently moving livestock from the damage area and fencing improvements were discussed with the landowners to assist in keeping elk from the property by spring. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman monitored elk activity in Skagit County and met with two landowners to discuss property access for upcoming trapping operations. The Wildlife Conflict Supervisor followed up on a meeting with a landowner to discuss deer related damage to Christmas trees. The landowner agreed to allow public access for the 2015 late season archery and muzzleloader hunting seasons and access across all seasons next year. With luck, these efforts will mitigate future damage to his young tree farm.

Biologist Smith is working with a landowner in North Bend with elk damage to grass crops and fencing. Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering the property and hunting safety were discussed. Smith and a landowner also discussed plans to install an electrified fladry fence to exclude elk from a pasture in Enumclaw. Plans involve using Master Hunter volunteer labor to install materials purchased by the landowner. Smith also monitored a remote camera documenting elk use of crops in an area.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued monitoring the Cherry Valley, Stillwater, and Crescent Lake units as flood waters hit again this past week. At one point, all three units were under water but have since drained off. Cherry Valley was underwater the entire week.

DeBay's Slough: Cosgrove visited the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit riverside CREP project to determine what maintenance needs to be done. Cosgrove will mow the blackberries and grass on the area once the access road dries out. Cosgrove attempted to access the Game Reserve area at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit to monitor swan and waterfowl use, but high river water over Francis Road blocked access.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton worked with Weed Crew Supervisor Dave Heimer to find alternative work sites for the Earth Corp crew that was schedule to work at the DeBay Slough Unit to maintain the restoration plantings. High river flows create local flooding and prohibited work at the site. Cosgrove checked the moorage facility and barge on the south fork Skagit River throughout the week during the high river flows. A number of logs have lodged themselves against the protective shear-log. They won't be able to be removed until water recedes further.

Rotton continued to monitor new pumps station operations and coordinated with the Dike District #22 and CAMP Project Engineer Ray Berg regarding drainage needs during the construction project. Cosgrove assisted with additional free standing pump operations and checked the John Deere 7230 and water pump twice daily during the week at the Headquarters Unit. The pumps are needed to draw down Wiley Slough while construction is taking place on the Wiley Slough tidegate replacement project.

Samish Unit: Meis and Cosgrove monitored water levels, waterfowl use, and hunters on the Samish Unit. Cosgrove collected hunter survey cards, conducted car counts, and emptied the rain gauge.

Private Lands/Access Management

Water Control: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo filled and deployed sand bags to a waterfowl quality hunt site prior to heavy rains in hopes to retain sheet water for better hunting conditions. The team was happy with the results.

Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo managed water conditions at waterfowl quality hunt locations in order to enhance hunting conditions and provide elevated habitat conditions for migratory birds



Swan Retrieval: Natural Resource Technicians Deyo and Otto found and recovered a juvenile Trumpeter Swan near a waterfowl hunt site in Snohomish County that hit a powerline. Notifications were made to the utility company and the bird was delivered to the La Conner field office.

Natural Resource Technician Otto recovering a deceased trumpeter swan after it struck a nearby powerline



Hunting Season Preparation: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell fielded multiple inquiries about the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4. All the sites are currently online, with one exception to allow for farm management. This week's weather closed nearly all of the Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites in Snohomish County, and several in Skagit and Whatcom.

Reservation Hunt Analysis: Biologist Wingard compiled and analyzed data for the Hunt by Reservation system to assess the rates of booking and use of these sites. The results of this analysis will provide a clearer picture of how often these sites are used and provide other data to help guide management decisions.

Clean Samish Initiative and Dog Waste Bags: The Private Lands Access Program partnered with staff members at the Coastal Volunteer Partnership at Padilla Bay to use grant money (provided by Skagit County) through the Clean Samish Initiative to purchase dog waste bags and dispensers. These materials were mounted to the established parking lot poles at private land hunting access sites in the Samish River Watershed. In total, six dog waste bag dispensers were deployed. Private Lands Access staff will monitor the dispensers to ensure there are bags available for use. Many thanks to C. Buchalski, the Clean Samish Initiative, and Skagit County for providing the resources to purchase and stock these dog waste dispensers and bags. This partnership allowed the various groups to all achieve one of their primary goals, and we hope to continue this partnership into the future in order to continue sound stewardship for both people and the environment.

New dog waste disposal bag dispensers provided by Skagit County through the Clean Samish Initiative



Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Women's Hunter Education Classes Support: Demand is extremely high for the women only class being held at the Black Diamond gun club Sunday, December 6. Coordinator Dazey assisted women who had expressed an interest in the previous class to get registered for the December 6 class.

Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted two instructors to hold classes. The first on Monday was instructor Lance Chaar who regularly schedules classes at the Region 4 office conference room. The second was instructor Liz Scranton on Lopez Island. The Lopez Island class was well attended with many students traveling from off island to attend. The Lopez Island class went very well and we are glad to have an instructor team in the San Juans to offer classes. Coordinator Dazey answered instructor questions on several topics including Kalkomey's emailed link to completion certificate and when it is generated, and many questions on the new Policy Manual after sending an email requesting that the instructors read the new manual and send in their required Policy agreement form. Dazey activated 12 new classes during the week. Dazey sent out two new instructor applicant packets. Coordinator Dazey assisted one instructor on an issue involving a walk-in student.

Terry Hoffer Award Nominations: Coordinator Dazey answered questions from instructors wanting numbers of classes and students of other instructors whom they wanted to nominate for the Terry Hoffer Memorial award. Dazey has sent emails to Region 4 instructors asking them to look around and if they know of a deserving hunter education instructor to be sure and nominate him or her for this award.

Inactive instructors: Coordinator Dazey prepared and sent out final letters to 19 inactive instructors advising them that they were being dropped from the active instructor list.

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

Swan Tech orientation: Biologist DeBruyn spent time with newly hired Sci Tech 2 Nicholas Trejo to show him the ropes and geographically orient him to Skagit and Whatcom Counties. They also spent time sampling tissue from dead swans collected this week.

HUET and EBS Training: Biologist DeBruyn attended a course on Helicopter Underwater Egress and Emergency Underwater Breathing Systems put on by Pro Aviation Services in Langley, B.C. The course is meant to orient one to procedures to use to escape an upside down submerged aircraft in the event of an at sea ditching. Seven people from WDFW took the class and were certified dunkies.

Westside Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program: Biologist Anderson continues to work on coordination and processing needs for the joint National Wildlife Federation-WDFW certification option for the Backyard Sanctuary. In this joint option, one can be certified both nationwide with NWF and locally with WDFW. Anderson also worked with Manager Link and

Fiscal staff member to initiate a plan for moving into an alternative fiscal management structure for this program. Anderson will continue to work with fiscal staff to move that initiative forward.

More can be found at the BWS website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard/>

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Review of Proposed USFWS Downlisting of Columbian White-tailed Deer: Biologists Holman and Stephens provided comments to Species Lead Azerrad on the USFWS proposal to downlist the Columbia River population segment of Columbian white-tailed deer from Endangered to Threatened. The federal documents have been produced to implement the change. However, serious threats to the deer's future remain. Issues for Columbian white-tails include habitat loss, flooding, diseases, and genetic isolation. Species Lead Azerrad will compile WDFW comments and submit them to the Wildlife Diversity Division for signatures and submission to USFWS. Those interested in reviewing the federal proposal should visit the following link: https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/10/08/2015-25260/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-reclassifying-the-columbian-white-tailed-deer-from?utm_campaign=subscription+mailing+list&utm_medium=email&utm_source=federalregister.gov

Dusky Canada Goose Survey: Biologists Stephens, Butler, and Scientific Technician Miller conducted a dusky Canada goose survey this week in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties. Areas surveyed included: Woodland Bottoms, Kalama, Willow Grove, and Puget Island. No dusky geese were observed during this effort. However, several thousand cackling geese (including two collared birds) were counted and several hundred Sandhill cranes were observed in the Woodland bottoms.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Spring Enclosure: A concrete riser made by Klickitat Wildlife Area staff members was placed on the upper edge of an old spring enclosure and the lid was put back on the enclosure. The purpose of the riser is to lift the lid off one of the pipes that enters the enclosure from one side. The riser has a small notch in the edge to allow space for the pipe.



Riser for Spring Box



Riser in Place

Wind Storm: The night of November 17 brought high winds and rain, with gusts up to 78 mph recorded at a weather station on Grayback Mountain. The Klickitat Wildlife Area fared well during this event, experiencing no damage at the headquarters and only localized road blockages due to fallen trees. Technician Davis removed branches and trees from roads and fences, and Manager Van Leuven issued two woodcutting permits to help with clearing the roads.

Fallen Pine

Eurasian Milfoil Control Project at

Rock Creek: Technician Davis participated in a planning meeting with the East Klickitat Conservation District and other partners to evaluate alternatives for control of milfoil in Rock Creek Cove. Milfoil has become a major problem there, interfering with use of the boat ramp, fishing, and other activities.



Temporary Grazing Permit on Swale Creek Unit: A grazing permit for three weeks during the dormant season was approved and the permittee will be turning cattle onto the pasture November 21.

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

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A Goose Hunt: The 2015-2016 goose season brought noteworthy management changes. These changes include the closure of the hunting

season for dusky Canada geese, the elimination of the check station requirement, and the extension of hunting hours. Hunters interested in participating in this season can refer to the Washington State Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons Pamphlet for further details.

WDFW wildlife biologists and technicians continue to monitor hunting activity in the field. The highest density of hunters was found in the Vancouver lowlands associated with private and state lands. Hunters contacted were by and large very cooperative on both private and public lands. Some confusion regarding the goose authorization requirement and other rules were encountered and staff members helped those individuals understand new regulations and rules. Since opening weekend, approximately 50 hunters were contacted in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties. A total of 67 geese, including one dusky Canada goose, were checked. Hunter checks will continue to be used to monitor the effectiveness of the 2015-2016 management strategy.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Late Modern Firearm Deer Season: Technician Davis Rich checked two 3 point bucks and received reports of two other bucks harvested. Klickitat Wildlife Area staff members have not conducted surveys of hunters during this permit-only season, but it seems to be going well for hunters.

Access

Langsdorf Landing: Clark County finished the final inspection on the site upgrade. They have requested that WDFW add a full rail on the ADA loading platform where the drop is more than 30” and need a 42” high rail with no gaps greater than 4”.

Langsdorf Landing loading platform

Silver lake: There is an abandoned car in the parking area with a Cowlitz County impound sticker attached. The vehicle has been there for almost a month, so Cowlitz County will be notified.



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

D-9 Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Conflict Specialist Peterson met with a Goldendale area landowner to sign a new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement. The landowner's property is in an area experiencing high numbers of deer and has resulted in numerous complaints from surrounding neighbors. Peterson, the landowner, and neighbors are working together to redistribute the resident population off the private lands. The landholder has also expressed interest in entering their land in the Hunt by Written Permission program.

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Deer: Conflict Specialist Conklin met with a land owner who has recently planted grapes for commercial purposes in the Toutle area. He has most of his property fenced but is still having deer come in and browse his grapes. Conklin gave him advice, issued him a bird banger, and will enter into a damage prevention agreement with him. Once the agreement is signed Conklin will assist him with volunteers and some fencing to finish off protecting his property from deer and elk.

Elk: Conflict Specialist Conklin met with several land owners in Randle regarding elk damage. One permit will be issued next week. The land owners will be using master hunters this winter to control damage. Currently the land owners have worse problems from heavy flooding due to recent storms. Conklin observed approximately 45 head of elk standing on the only dry section of one of the farms on Silverbrook Road.

Elk on Thomas Farm on Silverbrook Road in Randle





Flooding on Bolger Farm Silverbrook Road in Randle



Highway 12 closure East of Randle

In addition, the conflict specialist conducted a site visit on a farm in Cowlitz County experiencing elk damage. The land owner currently has a Cooperative Agreement with WDFW and allows public access. One permit was issued to harvest an antlerless elk.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Management

Leadership I Training: Biologist Bergh completed Leadership I Training for supervisors this week. The training was informative and included information on principles of leadership, the hiring process, employee performance management, team building, and communication styles. The training also provided an opportunity to network across programs and regions, which is always beneficial and builds agency unity.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Dusky Goose Survey: Biologist Sundstrom conducted the second ground survey for the month of November in Grays Harbor County and the northern portion of Pacific County. The data has not yet been compiled. It is of anecdotal note that Sundstrom believes a greater number of dusky geese are now present throughout Grays Harbor County – and present much earlier than in past years.



Just one portion of several groups of dusky geese observed in Grays Harbor County

Biologist Michaelis conducted another survey for collared dusky Canada geese in the majority of Pacific County. A total of 262 birds were observed and none of these were marked.

Willapa Bay Waterfowl Aerial survey:

Biologist Sundstrom and Michaelis completed the second Willapa Bay waterfowl aerial survey. Although the data has not been completely compiled, it appears as though dabbler and diver duck counts are far fewer than those from the first flight. Wet and stormy weather conditions earlier in the week may have been a factor in the lower numbers.



Mount Rainier in the distance as viewed above the cloud deck after completion of the Willapa Bay waterfowl survey flight

Data has been transcribed and totaled from the first of two flights conducted in Willapa Bay for 2015. Compared to a flight conducted on November 7, 2014. Numbers

were substantially higher.

Species	November 6, 2015	November 7, 2014
Mallard	6,593	2,429
Widgeon	28,560	8,295
Northern Pintail	14,096	5,228
Teal	5,354	1,568
Gadwall	7	5
Unknown dabbling ducks	2,117	3,792
Total	56,727	21,317

Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly Working Group Meeting: Biologist Ament attended the annual Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly working group meeting at the Oregon Zoo in Portland on November 16 and 17. There were participants from British Columbia, Oregon, and Washington at the meeting. WDFW Biologists Potter, Hays, and Linders also attended the meeting. The first day consisted of a presentation by USFWS on the Recovery Planning Process and various partner updates. Biologist Ament provided a presentation at the meeting to update participants on the Monitoring Efforts, Population Status, and Habitat Restoration Actions at the Taylor’s

checkerspot butterfly sites located in District 16. The group got a tour of the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly lab and the outdoor rearing area. They also were able to view the western pond turtle rearing facility. See photos below. Day two of the meeting was mostly focused on updating and modifying the Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Action Plan.



Items use for rearing Taylor's checkerspot butterflies



Molted cases from Taylor's checkerspot butterfly larvae



Outside area at the zoo where larvae are stored in clay pots



Zoo staff with small tent for Taylor's checkerspot butterfly breeding



View of Taylor's checkerspot butterfly rearing lab

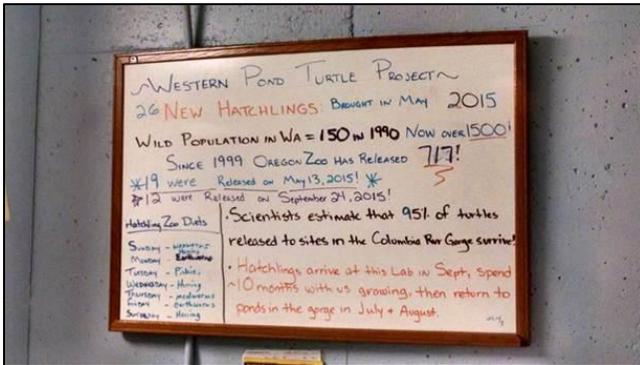
Periodic Status Review: Biologist McMillan worked on the Periodic Status Review for the western pond turtle. She completed a draft of the report and sent it out for comments last week. Photos below were taken at the Oregon Zoo by Biologist Ament while attending the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly meeting last week.



Young western pond turtles in head start program



Western pond and other turtles on display



Sign observed in the Conservation Lab used for the rearing of western pond turtles

Sheep Depredation Investigation:

Biologist Ament was contacted on November 18, 2015 by a landowner in Happy Valley (Sequim) that had a sheep killed the previous night. He was very concerned that a cougar may have killed the sheep. A domestic duck was also found dead

on the property. She talked with the landowner at length and gathered details about the incident. She has assisted Enforcement staff members the past few years with investigating other sheep kills on another property in very close proximity. Domestic dogs and coyotes were suspected for these incidents, but tracks were never found. Biologist Ament contacted Conflict Specialist Blankenship and then was preparing to investigate. She contacted Officer Davidson to report the incident. He was in the area with a new officer in training. They offered to conduct an investigation and then provided the information below. A quick response proved very helpful and Biologist Ament appreciated the assistance from Matt and Enforcement staff members.

Message sent from Officer Davidson: I have attached a couple pictures of the prints we found near the carcass kill site, and pictures of the carcass. I was also shown the carcass of the duck that had been killed and eaten on that was found only 10 yards away from the sheep. The prints were from a large dog, the R/P has no large dogs but the neighbor does and the r/p has chased them off of the property before. The feeding on the neck alone of the carcass indicated, to me, that it was not a wild animal attack. The feeder didn't try and penetrate the organ cavity, nor did it try and feed in through the anus. The prints were clearly defined with nail tracks at the tips of the toes, and the pads do no correlate to a cat. There appeared to be a single set of tracks, so it wasn't a pack (but it could have been two large dogs approximately the same size). Upon analyzing the tracks I determined there was no point leaving the carcass with a camera or trap set. I recovered the carcass and disposed of it as a courtesy to the r/p.



Dog track found near dead sheep



Dead sheep with feeding around neck

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

Wildlife Management

Thurston County Amphibian Road Mortality Study: Biologist Tirhi led a team of citizen scientists on a training event for the new road mortality study. Tirhi has helped develop this project but does not normally lead or provide training. The emphasis of the study is to train volunteers to conduct weekly standardized surveys of amphibians along two separate road stretches in Thurston County with bordering wetlands on which significantly high amphibian mortality has been reported: 1) Champion Drive and 2) Keiser Road. These walking surveys are conducted at either dawn or dusk, with volunteers recording both live and dead amphibians by species and location. The study team includes Thurston County Public Works, who have expressed interest in using the results to aid road management along these two locations. During this two hour survey, Tirhi and the team located 15 dead amphibians and no live amphibians. The dead consisted of northwest salamanders (8), rough skinned newts (4) and unknown (3). All data is entered into a WDFW online data entry portal where it can be analyzed and summated.



Examples of dead amphibians located during amphibian road mortality survey on Champion Drive in Thurston County

Goose Season Monitoring: Biologist Sundstrom worked three days this week throughout both Grays Harbor and Pacific counties. No goose hunter has been checked yet in Grays Harbor. Only six geese were checked by Sundstrom on Saturday in Pacific County. Several hunters have called, even though no geese were taken or to report they were not hunting geese.

On Saturday, Biologist Michaelis conducted goose hunter bag checks in Goose Management Zone 2B. A total of 11 hunters were contacted either by phone interviews or direct contacts. Only two lesser Canada geese were checked and three cackling Canada geese were reported as being harvested but not checked. Weather conditions for that day were not favorable for goose hunting.

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

Wildlife Management

Thurston County Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan Workshop: Biologist Tirhi represented Region 6 at this all day workshop to provide input from consulting firms into the draft HCP for Thurston County. The HCP will cover a variety of prairie species, as well as Oregon spotted frogs. Considering most of the species are state listed at one level or another, WDFW has a keen interest in this HCP and has been cooperating in its development.

Assistance with Bird ID: Biologist Sundstrom, while conducting the dusky goose survey, was approached by a curious individual from out of the area. The person had been trying to identify a bird on a wire when Sundstrom also stopped to identify and count geese in the field. The person was interested in how to identify the various species and subspecies of geese, which they knew very little about, but were more fascinated by the bird on the wire which Sundstrom identified for them. Her job is 'for the birds'.



A Peregrine falcon perched and peering down to the field below, where many geese, ducks, and shorebirds had gathered

Wildlife Areas

Lost Car: Manager Belson and Master Hunter Schultz spent the better part of a brisk Friday removing an abandoned car from the Morgan Marsh Unit of the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area. The vehicle was presumably stolen more than a year ago, driven onto the Wildlife Area through private property, and then stripped and burned. The project required several elements of prior planning, including coordination with DNR for a Land Use License and gate key, as the site is accessible only through the Green Mountain-Stavis NRCA. The car was dragged a half mile out of the woods using a tractor and was left where it could be removed the following day by a local wrecker service arranged by Enforcement. Sergeant Jackson, Officer Balazs, and Unit Forest Manager McReynolds (DNR) all provided critical logistic assistance.



Private Lands /Conflict

Deer in Steilacoom: Conflict Specialist Blankenship and Enforcement Officer Prater have remained in contact with a homeowner in Steilacoom regarding a juvenile black-tail buck with a metal wire wrapped around its abdomen. Although the deer is still mobile and in good condition, both Officer Prater and Conflict Specialist Blankenship agree that the tension in the wire around the body of the deer will cause health and an injury concern as the buck continues to grow. The buck has frequented the homeowner's property during the summer and fall, but as winter approaches we are beginning to see the movement patterns of the deer change. Blankenship and Officer Prater hope to locate the deer and remove the wire around its chest within the upcoming week.

Garbage Can Bear: Conflict Specialist Blankenship was contacted by a homeowner in Seabeck regarding a bear that has been getting into garbage cans. Although the garbage cans were contained in a fenced enclosure, the bear was able to break the latch off of the fence to get into the enclosure. Blankenship advised the homeowner that the overall strength of the enclosure was sufficient for keeping bear out, but the strength and design of the fence latch needed to be

improved. Blankenship presented multiple fence latch options that were stronger and more suitable for the garbage can enclosure.

Blankenship also advised the homeowner that because the house is located in bear habitat, the tenants of the home should be advised on how to prevent further conflicts with bear and precautions to take while living in areas where bear are common.