

Wildlife Program

Week of September 7 – September 13, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Dirty Shirt Pack Area and Range Rider Direction: Biologist Shepherd, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, and contract range riders discussed strategies in an area with wolf depredations on the Colville National Forest. Range Riders are present in the N.F. Chewelah Creek allotments. Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, Technician Bendixen, and Biologist Shepherd worked multiple days and nights in the Dirty Shirt pack area. The collared wolf revisited the cattle remains from earlier kills.

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Lookout Pack Den Documentation: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen helped the WSU research crew investigate and document this year's den site for the Lookout Pack in the Methow Watershed. This is only the second occupied den site we have verified since the pack was first identified in 2008. Unlike the original breeding pair, this group of animals located the den in an area with thick vegetative cover, which would have been very difficult to find without the aid of telemetry data. The pack moved from the den in mid-August and is currently more mobile and moving toward more traditional summer habitat at higher elevations.



Lookout wolf pack natal den – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Biologist Vanbianchi practicing full immersion biology – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Teanaway Timeline: Conflict Specialist Wetzel logged entries into the timeline and chronology for the Teanaway Pack area.

Range Rider Direction: Conflict Specialist Wetzel coordinated several days this week with Range Riders Johnson and McBride in the Teanaway area. McBride will begin patrols in the cattle zone and also check an area that may hold a small band of separated sheep.

Livestock Producer Contacts: Conflict Specialist Wetzel talked with the Teanaway cattle producer this week regarding an adult cow killed by a wolf and discussed damage claim processes.

Wolf Activity: Conflict Specialist Wetzel and ranger riders Johnson and McBride monitored wolf activity near cattle this week. Two investigations were completed. One involved five sheep killed by an unknown predator and one involved an adult cow killed by wolves.



Other Wolf Activities: Hydrated lime was placed on a cow carcass that could not be removed from a range area due to its remote location and slope gradient. Fladry will be left around the carcass until it is sufficiently decomposed and is no longer an attractant to predators.

Fladry and lime used to deter scavenging by predators

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Short-tailed Albatross: On August 15, 2015, a live hatch-year juvenile short-tailed albatross was sent to a wildlife rehabilitation center in western Washington after being found about one mile north of Tatoosh Island. This pelagic seabird species is listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and is being considered as a candidate for listing in Washington. This species is rare in nearshore waters of Washington. Interestingly, because the bird had been banded, we subsequently learned it had hatched on March 2, 2015 at one of the colonies in the western Pacific Ocean off the coasts of Japan and Taiwan. The population of this species was once estimated at 1-2 million in the late 19th century, but the birds were harvested for feathers and oil and the population declined to only a few pairs by the 1930s. The current population estimate is less than 5,000 individuals worldwide. Unfortunately, the main breeding colony is tenuously situated on an active volcanic island. Early 20th century museum specimens and accounts indicate that short-tailed albatrosses were once regular in the Strait of Juan de Fuca and nearshore waters. Wildlife Biologist Steve Desimone, who wrote the fact sheet on short-tailed albatross for the State Wildlife Action Plan, contacted the rehabilitation center and obtained information on the bird's condition and details of its banding. Unfortunately, the albatross died in captivity.

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting: Farm Bill Coordinator Mike Kuttel, Jr. attended the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies annual meeting in Tucson, Arizona. Mike participated in farm bill related meetings, including the Agricultural

Conservation Committee, Environmental Quality Incentives/Conservation Stewardship Program Working Group, and Conservation Reserve Program Working Group. Mike also attended the Sage Grouse Executive Oversight Committee meeting. Mike coordinated with private lands biologists to estimate how much time staff will charge in September to our fiscal year 2016 contribution agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. This grant pays for the majority of time staff spend working on State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement projects.

Butterfly Conservation: Biologist Ann Potter completed annual reporting summaries of in-kind WDFW expenditures for the butterfly monitoring component of the SWG Prairie-Oak grant, and her Taylor's Checkerspot conservation and land management efforts for the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program. Ann also downloaded photos taken to document the condition of oak savannah prior to and after restoration on the San Juan County Land Bank's Turtleback Mountain site (see photos for an example) and distributed those photos to project partners. This oak savannah restoration effort was completed under the SWG Prairie-Oak grant, and has succeeded in transforming a forest and shrub covered hillside into an oak savannah, and in the process created habitat for the Species of Greatest Conservation Need oak obligate butterfly, the Propertius Duskywing. The results of monitoring before and after restoration found no duskywings in 2013 prior to restoration actions, in contrast to detecting the butterfly and egg-laying in treated oaks after restoration (2014 & 2015).



Human Dimensions Meeting: Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan joined Don Kraege in representing the Pacific Flyway at a meeting of the Human Dimensions Working Group held near St. Louis. The meeting, which included the Public Engagement Team, was devoted to refining and finalizing questions that will be included in three questionnaires (for hunters, bird-watchers, and the general public) that are designed to understand current perspectives on aspects of hunting (including recruitment and retention) and wetland conservation in the United States and Canada.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Spokane District Pre-Season Deer Surveys: Biologists Atamian and Lowe and volunteers began another round of road-based deer surveys to count and classify white-tailed and mule deer does, fawns, and bucks pre-hunt with a focus on fawn to doe ratios.



A pair of mule deer bucks near St. John in Whitman County



Group of white-tailed deer in cow pasture (4 fawn, 4 doe, 1 spike)

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

Private Lands/Wildlife Conflict

Sportsmen Calls: Biologist Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade responded to an increase in sportsmen inquiries for the Blue mountain foothills area, due to archery deer season, general bear, cougar, dove, and grouse seasons opening September 1. The archery elk season opened Saturday, September 12.



White-tail buck harvested by an archery hunter in GMU 145

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

Wildlife Management

Grizzly Bear Complex: District Biologist Wik talked with multiple USFS personnel and hunters

regarding the fire and WDFW's response this week. Multiple hunters continue to call.

As of today, most area closures have been lifted outside of the wilderness. The wilderness remains closed to human entry, as do the border roads on the northwest section of the fire. No significant fire activity occurred during the past week of dry weather and winds over the weekend. Cool, moist weather is in the forecast for the next week. It is still unknown when the final closures will be lifted, although the USFS is doing everything it can to accommodate the sportsmen wishing to use the public lands.

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Donations to SCWA: A very generous donation of wildlife mounts was made to the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area this week. An acquaintance of Natural Resource Technician Christensen provided great additions to the educational collection, with mounts of white-tailed deer, mule deer, pronghorn, and a pheasant, as well as cougar and bear rugs. All will be displayed at the SCWA headquarters and used at various educational outreaches that SCWA staff are involved in each year.



Natural Resource Technician Christensen with some of the mounts donated to SCWA

WT Wooten WA – Columbia County Fair: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman picked up the posters that had been printed by the Salmon Recovery Board. She and Jeremy Trump put the booth together on Wednesday. Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman worked in the fair booth on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, answering the public's questions. She also gave a presentation on both Friday and Saturday about the Floodplain Management Plan.



Booth at the Columbia County Fair in Dayton, WA

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

White-tailed Ptarmigan: Biologist Gallie and a volunteer conducted surveys and genetic sample collection of the white-tailed ptarmigan population in the Enchantment Lakes section of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness in Chelan County. Suitable habitat was surveyed with playback callers to locate birds, but we found that at this time of year, they were not responding back, making finding them very difficult. Despite this, we still located and captured (with noose poles) three adult hens and their broods (seven total young), collecting measurements along with blood and feather samples for genetic analyses. This was the third year of sample collection from this population. We have documented a total of 27 birds over three years (two males, six females, and 19 chicks) and collected genetic samples from 19 of them.

This effort is part of a larger collaboration to assess the connectivity and health of the Washington population of this species, as this species and its alpine habitat are especially vulnerable to climate change. Comparing the genetics of this population to samples collected from populations on Mt. Rainier and the Pasayten Wilderness will reveal the degree to which there is genetic connectivity among these populations or the possibility that they are isolated and more vulnerable. The project will also provide information for the range-wide effort to determine the status of this species in response to the 2012 petition to the USFWS to list this species as threatened.



Jon Gallie finishing sample collection from a white-tailed ptarmigan chick



Gallie about to capture another ptarmigan chick in typical habitat-steep and rocky



View from the top of the Cascades, Enchantments, Alpine Lakes Wilderness, 8400 feet

Sage Grouse: Biologist Gallie met with USFWS Biologists McPherron and Kurz to discuss some of the preliminary movement and habitat use results (these are not formal analyses, but evident patterns exist without them) from the GPS transmitters on males in

Douglas County. With eight grouse still wearing them, we looked at examples of extensive use of CRP/SAFE fields over available native habitat, use of habitat burned in the 2012 Leahy-Barker fire, avoidance of transmission line corridors, occupying areas we had not previously considered occupied habitat, and evidence of temporary/satellite leks. USFWS was very excited to see these patterns, which will help inform their assessment of this population and help focus their future funding of recovery activities in the area. Biologist Gallie is currently drafting a report on the infrared lek survey completed this past spring.

Mountain Goat/Recreation Interaction: The Enchantments are one of the hotspots for mountain goat and recreationist conflict. With a local herd size of about 35, these goats are habituated to human presence and show little response to hiking/camping/rock climbing in this popular area of the wilderness. Goats follow a circuit of camp sites where they key in on spots of frequent human urination for the salts. Close encounters with hikers/campers occur daily and always have the potential for conflict. We did not observe any aggressive behaviors toward people, but with goats regularly coming within 5-10 feet of people, the potential is there. The majority of the goats were adult nannies with their young, showing how these behaviors are passed on in the herd. Of the 16 goats that frequented our area, we saw seven adult female, two young adult males, one two-year old male, and six kids. Outreach with hikers has helped raise awareness and better preventative behavior, but the issue remains that eliminating the attractant is the best opportunity for a lasting solution, possibly in the form of more camp latrines to avoid wide dispersal of human waste.



Goat walking into our camp site

Pygmy Rabbit Capture/Release

Activities: There was one trapping event at the Beezley Hills enclosure this week. Using traditional box traps, 28 rabbits were captured, including 20 new kits and eight recap adults. All kits were released to the wild in the Beezley Hills Recovery Emphasis Area (BHREA) and the adults were returned to the breeding enclosure. To date we have handled 578 rabbits, including 457 new kits, eight recap

kits, 31 new adults, and 82 recap adults. We have released 422 of these rabbits to the wild, including 172 into the Sagebrush Flat Wildlife Area (SBFWA).

Intern Zoe releasing a rabbit



Wildlife Areas

Fire Effects Evaluation: Fire Management Specialist Leuschen and Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Swedberg conducted an on-the-ground inspection and review of fire effects on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Effects varied significantly due to terrain, weather, past fuels, and prescribed burn treatments.



Fire effects – note unburned area on left of photo was prescribed burned in spring 2014. The area on the right was not and was burned in the Limebelt Fire.



Fire effects – note unburned area on right of photo was prescribed burned in spring 2014. The area on the left was not and was burned in the Limebelt Fire.

Okanogan Complex Fires: Bass worked on assessing burned areas for post-fire forest treatment needs. This includes concerns about future forest health, habitat integrity, and safety. Bass attended the district team meeting in Omak to discuss some ideas and issues, and get feedback from the team on priorities and known areas of concern. Scotch Creek Wildlife Area Manager Jim Olsen took Forester Bass around the wildlife area to get a field assessment of areas of concern, and discuss options to address management issues in the post-fire landscape. Due to a large amount of timber coming on the market from other agency's post-fire efforts, WDFW is carefully considering the best management options for these areas.



Pogue Mountain Unit on Scotch Creek Wildlife Area. Picture depicts how wildfires often leave a mix of dead and live trees on the landscape, and often live trees are at heightened risk of mortality from post-fire stress, beetle infestation, and resource competition – Photo by Jamie Bass

Methow River. The pool hasn't been this low in 30+ years. As a result, the four irrigation systems that draw from the pool are not able to operate. Since their intake screens are now only two to four feet under water and easily accessible, Fidel and Virgilio took advantage of the situation and, using our 14-foot flat bottom boat and a steel brush duct taped to an eight foot long pipe, they motored around the pool and cleaned off a year's worth of accumulated aquatic vegetation, algae, and silt from each intake. Under ordinary circumstances, we'd have to pay about \$2,300 for a diver from Irrigation Technology and Control to clean these screens.

For the next two days Fidel and Virgilio continued their river travels and repaired 10 goose nesting structures. They installed several new galvanized tubs, plus repaired structures that have, in the 30+ years since installation, been damaged by ice and debris.



Virgilio Ruiz repairing goose nesting structures. The water level is currently 8-feet below normal – Photo by Fidel Rios

Private Lands/Access

State Acres for Wildlife (SAFE): Private Lands Biologist Braaten spent time this week creating new



contracts for the new SAFE signup in Douglas County. Almost all 10,000 acres were signed up within the first two weeks of the new signup. Private Lands Biologist Braaten began the task of creating contracts and contacting landowners about this fall's field work.



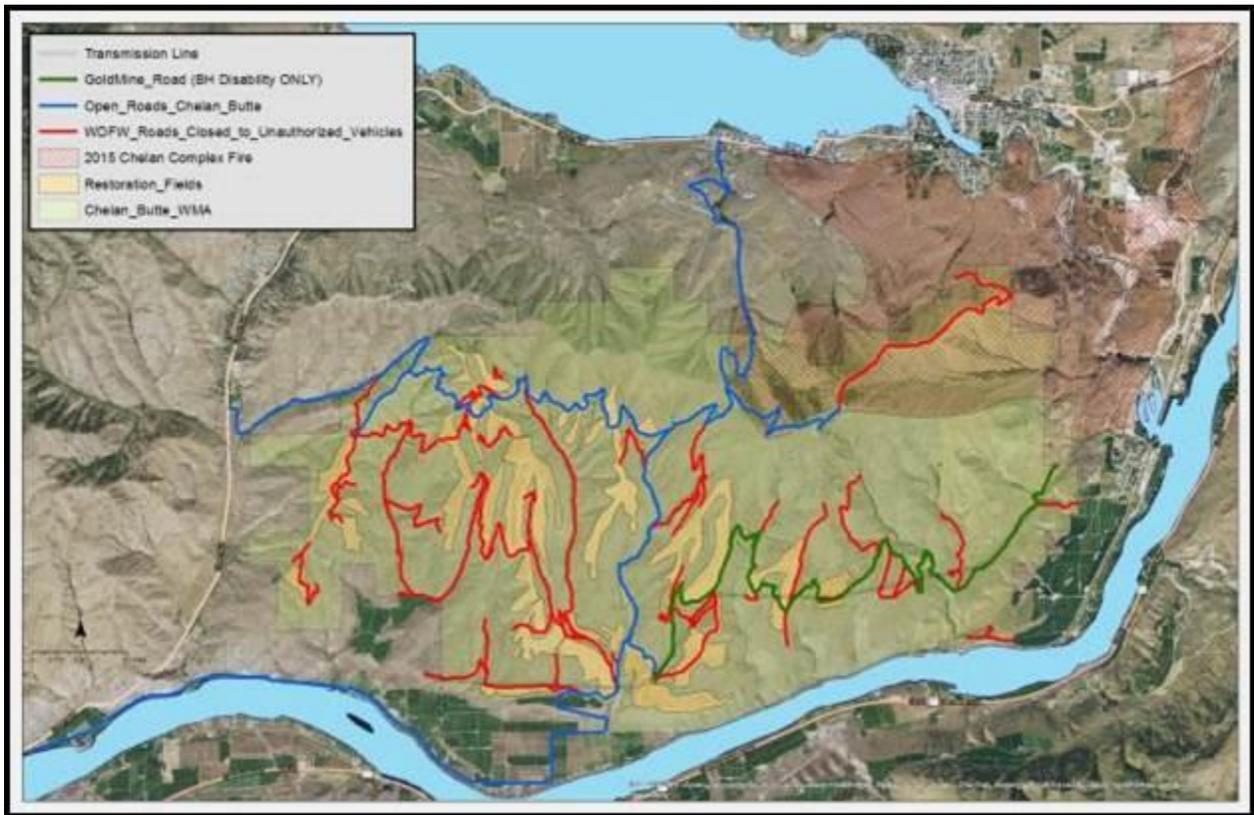
Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

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

Wildlife Areas

Hunters with Disability, Bighorn Sheep:

Biologist Volsen worked with Wildlife Area Manager Fox to develop an access plan for hunters for upcoming bighorn sheep permit hunts. Permit holders are allowed access to the Chelan Butte Wildlife Management Area along an established route that will put them into closer contact with the sheep herd. Only marked (ear-tagged or telemetry collared) sheep are legal for these permit hunts.



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

Wildlife Management

Carlton Complex Fire Habitat Recovery: Habitat recovery in the Carlton Complex area has been robust in many locations despite this summer’s hot, dry conditions. In addition to grasses and forbs, shrubs are responding positively as well, including bitterbrush in some locations.

Re-sprouting service berry in the Carlton Complex Fire area –
Photo by Scott Fitkin



Okanogan County Environmental Education – Snake Day: Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer conducted our annual snake survey transect as a citizen science course for the North Cascades Institute. Despite the unseasonably hot temperatures we managed to find several snakes from three different species and augmented the experience with some captive specimens gathered earlier in the week. This has become a popular event for certain individuals, with some students attending for the third time.

Class participant with scaled beauty (common garter snake) –
Photo by Scott Fitkin



The following day we toured rattlesnake den areas located in the Carlton Complex Fire area with Dr. Dan Beck from Central Washington University and his newest grad student. They hope to begin a project next spring looking at the effects of the fire on rattlesnake ecology, with the Methow Watershed as one of two primary study sites. Fortunately it looks as though some snakes survived at all burned den areas visited.



Northern Pacific rattlesnake in the Carlton Fire area –
Photo by Scott Fitkin



Douglas County Mule Deer bucks – Photo
by Eric Braaten, WDFW

Albino Red Squirrel Update: White squirrel lives! If he can make it a couple of more months he'll have superb camouflage.



Albino red squirrel



Family of river otters

Recent visitors to the Bridgeport Bar Unit. The Wells Pool drawdown has exposed numerous sandbars attracting a variety of waterfowl, seagulls, shorebirds, many pelicans, and, one day, turkey vultures – Photo by Dan Peterson



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart participated in a Tapash tour of the upper Taneum-Manastash project area to discuss future cooperative forest management projects.

Tapash tour participants overlooking the Cle Elum Valley

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey checked for a dead big horn sheep along SR 410 after receiving a report from the Yakima Regional Office. Huffman and Mackey were unable to locate the sheep and were on their way back to the office before receiving word from DOT that they had picked it up and had the carcass at the Cottonwood Facility further up SR 410. Huffman turned around and drove to the facility, finding a dead ewe. Huffman exchanged contact info with DOT to make for easier contact in future events and directed them to dispose of the carcass.



Cowiche Unit Elk Fence: Assistant Manager Berry checked the elk fence from the Cowiche Unit north to French's Canyon after a report from the previous week of elk below the fence in French's Canyon. Berry located about seven holes to patch. All appeared to be from elk/deer and not man made. Berry also talked to a landowner in the area who stated seeing about 25 elk on private property below the fence.

Wildlife Management

Duck Banding: District Biologist Fidorra, Private Lands Biologist Stutzman, and Lands Technician Kaelber banded ducks this week on Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area. It was a productive day, with 62 mallards banded. Eight dead ducks (mallards and one pintail) were found inside one of the traps, plus a few additional lethargic and weak ducks. Carcasses were collected to test for disease, poisoning, or capture myopathy and will be sent to the National Wildlife Health Center next week. A search around the wetland found no additional dead ducks outside the trap. This was the last round of pre-season banding, with 360 mallards banded in District 4, which is slightly less than the past two years. We did see higher numbers of non-mallards banded this season. Forty-five wood ducks were marked, compared with 10 in past years, and 15 green winged teal were marked, compared with just one in the past two years. Fifteen pintail were also banded, plus one shoveler which was a first for District 4.

Avian Influenza: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with the Barker Ranch Manager and WDFW staff to coordinate swabbing of live ducks for Avian Influenza. Ten swab samples were collected and Fidorra will send these on Monday.

Data Submission: District Biologist Fidorra entered duck banding data and submitted data to Waterfowl Specialist Wilson.

Diversity Species Status Assessments: District Biologist Fidorra discussed Diversity Species Status Assessments with Conservation Assessment Section Manager Kalasz. Fidorra plans to complete assessments for two jackrabbit species and two songbirds by the end of October.

Burrowing Owl Camera: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with Biologist Falxa to correct signal issues with the burrowing owl camera. The web image was frozen but is back up, and two owls are still using the site.

Meeting Minutes Distribution: District Biologist Fidorra prepared and distributed meeting minutes from last week's meeting to plan the 2015 Columbian Plateau mule deer sightability survey.

Guest Speaker: District Biologist Fidorra accepted a request from the Richland Rod and Gun Club to appear as a guest speaker at their October chapter meeting and present game trend data and hunting prospects to the club.

Duck Trapping: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman, District Biologist Fidorra, and Access Technician Kaelber trapped ducks at the Windmill Ranch and Baillie Youth Ranch again on Thursday. Although 62 new mallards were banded, numerous mortalities put a damper on the day. Stutzman also baited the duck traps one afternoon.

Waterfowl Banding: Biologist Bernatowicz worked with Sunnyside Wildlife Area staff and Waterfowl Specialist Wilson to band ducks on the Sunnyside most of the week. Approximately 120 new ducks were banded. The total for the year is 389, with 318 mallards, 44 pintails, 21 wood ducks, five green-wing teal, and one gadwall. The mallard capture rate has been below average this year. Typically 500 mallards are banded in about two weeks of trapping. Banding will continue after the youth hunt.

Waterfowl Seasons: Biologist Bernatowicz spoke with Yakama Nation (YN) Biologist Blodgett regarding the posted 2015-2016 regulations on YN. Biologist Blodgett was unaware of the USFWS process or need to follow the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Biologist Blodgett promptly called the USFWS and was sent materials outlining the process for setting migratory bird seasons. It appears there may be better communication in the future. It is still unknown how the USFWS and WDFW will handle the 2015-2016 seasons.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz organized the fall surveys in the Yakima River Canyon for next week. The main objective is to document lamb recruitment for both the population and radio-collared animals. Bernatowicz did a survey one afternoon this week to check on radioed animals. One mortality signal was heard, but the location may be difficult to access.

Approximately 120 bighorn sheep were seen. The early indication is that lamb recruitment to September will be much better than the last two years, but not across all sub-groups.

Biologist Bernatowicz also worked with Biologists Oyster and Volsen on materials for a bighorn sheep trap in Region 2. A tarp from the Region 3 trap was taken to a local vendor for an estimate on making similar tarps for Region 2.



A group of Yakima Canyon bighorn sheep

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Natural Resource Workers Jeremy Adams and Zach Johnson spent some time sprucing up the green dot system in preparation for hunting season, adding new green dot road markers.

Safety Signage: Manager Lopushinsky met with Grant PUD recreation staff at the Yoyo Rock Boat Launch to discuss locations for safety signage they will be installed.

Elk Archery Season: Archery elk season started on Saturday this week (Sept 12). Manager Lopushinsky spent some time on Saturday talking with hunters and assessing their success. Most were seeing elk but were hoping for cooler weather.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman checked on the new Department of Natural Resources (DNR) road that was constructed to allow access into the Grouse Haven area replacing the Little Rattlesnake Road. The road is open and green dot markers are posted. While in the area, Huffman checked on some ponds created 10-15 years ago. The ponds were full and had around 20 elk nearby. Huffman was able to get within 30 feet of a bull feeding in the brush before being spotted.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Access Manager Garcia met with the Juvenile Courts Coordinator to go over upcoming volunteer projects in the lower valley. Access Manager Garcia also requested 12 portable toilets for Vernita and four for Ringold Springs. Most likely the number of portable toilets will go up to 20 within a week at Vernita.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak worked through the weekend on getting the more popular wetlands ready for the youth hunt next weekend.

Youth Hunt Field Day: Assistant Manager Sak met with Pheasants Forever and Hunter Ed / Volunteer Coordinator Aaron Garcia about putting on a field day at the HQ during the youth hunt. Garcia and Pheasants Forever will be hosting about 50 kids and anybody else that shows up to a day of clay pigeon shooting and pheasant hunting along with a BBQ here at the HQ office.

Windmill Ranch Repair: Assistant Manager Buser repaired the barbed wire fence and realigned the parking posts and numbers at the Windmill Ranch south access site.



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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: An Ellensburg rancher and WA Cattlemen’s Association President Jack Field met with WDFW staff to inquire about grazing opportunities on the LT Murray and Wenas Wildlife Areas. Assistant Manager Hunt received a separate call regarding another request for grazing opportunities on the LT Murray.

Wildlife Management

Elk and Deer Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand traveled to the Blackrock area to monitor elk and deer damage to a large planting of new apple trees. Very little damage was observed in the orchard, most likely due to heavy human presence during harvest and active hunting in the area.

Elk Fence Placement: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand surveyed for elk fence placement on a large wine grape operation in the Cold Creek area. Over a mile of fence is scheduled to be erected in the next few months near Hanford's western border.

Damage Prevention: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared additional Damage Prevention Permits for a landowner in the Rattlesnake Hills area where elk damage has occurred in their tree fruit, wheat, and pumpkin fields. Along with active hunting during daylight hours, hazing and LP gas cannons are in use at night.

Trespassing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with local Enforcement staff on elk hunters driving off road in CRP fields and trespassing near the Silver Dollar area. Hunter contact information was passed on, although the landowner decided not to pursue charges at this time. One antlerless elk was harvested.

Problem Elk and Deer: Conflict Specialist Wetzel was contacted by two landowners in Thorp that reported elk in alfalfa fields, in addition to over 70 deer. The area is close to town and schools. Hazing methods were discussed and permits were issued for elk in an area that was safe for shooting.

Thorp Harvest: One master hunter with a Region 3 permit harvested a deer from a Thorp commercial vegetable garden. General season archery buck hunting is underway at this location.

Elk Damage: Conflict Specialist Wetzel talked with two landowners near Nile about elk damaging alfalfa crops. Each have current DPCA's and were issued permits for their specific parcels.

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 spent time during the week tracking down info and planning to get the furnace replaced at the HQ residence. A quote with multiple options was sent to Olympia staff for review and budget development. Huffman contacted PP&L about checking the electrical service at Oak Creek, scheduled an appointment, and contacted the state contract propane vendor about costs to install propane. Late in the week Huffman was advised to contact CAMP to verify if they needed to be involved. Engineer Gerth advised that the project

was a Public Works project and that CAMP would oversee the replacement at a cost of about \$10,000 above vendor estimates for goods and services.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Waterfowl Banding: Biologist DeBruyn continued banding waterfowl as part of a flyway population modeling study. He began taking down traps that are in areas subject to hunting so as to not run afoul of anti-bating regulations. He also designed and built a trap specifically to catch wood ducks that are frequenting a bird feeder on private property. Sampling for high-path Avian influenza was put on hold to allow for others to process paperwork associated with earlier samples.



Wood Duck Trap in pre-baiting configuration, when activated it will have a wire top and gathering cage attached

Judson Lake Restoration and Lead Abatement Project: Biologist DeBruyn applied for an HPA for lead abatement work in dewatered portions of Judson Lake this fall. If the weather stays relatively dry, some trials will be done in October.

Judson Lake (note low water level and invasive pond lilies)

Common Loons: Biologist Smith monitored local lakes for loon activity. One adult and one chick (about nine weeks old) were located on Calligan, although thick fog precluded photos or locating the second adult. The chick (~12 weeks old) was also present on Lynch but no adults were seen.





Loon chick on Lynch Lake

Species of Concern and 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. One

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



WDFW-Woodland Park Zoo Citizen Amphibian Monitoring Season Close

Event: Biologist Anderson initiated work in data QA/QC, summary, and spatial mapping/analysis with internal and external staff.

Developing Northern red-legged frog embryos – Photo by volunteer; WDFW-WPZ Monitoring

Aquatic Invasive Species management:

Biologist Anderson met with the WDFW AIS group and a property owner representative regarding a possible

Prohibited Species occurrence and desire for follow-up survey.

North Cascades Elk Technical Group: Biologist Yarborough attended the monthly meeting. The group discussed a variety of topics including fencing, the elk herd plan, and results from the mountain goat survey flights.

North Cascades Elk Herd Plan: Biologist Yarborough received internal revisions to the plan. The comments will be incorporated over the next two weeks and then sent out for sister agency review.

Private Lands/Access Management

Lands 20/20 Application Review: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and a team of staff members worked on a new lands 20/20 application. The new package will include a geographic envelope

that consists of several high valued locations. Each identified location contains highly valued land attributes that are essential for fish and wildlife conservation.

Wildlife Areas

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed seasonal mowing at the unit this past week. Also, new gravel was placed to improve access to the ADA duck blind that is on the unit.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm completed seasonal mowing at the unit this past week. Manager Boehm also treated the knotweed that is growing along the lake with herbicide.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Region 4 Wildlife and Habitat Program staff participated in a video conference led by Olympia staff working on the PSNERP project. Olympia staff provided updates on the PSNERP, focusing on the ecosystem restoration projects within Region 4 that are on the PSNERP list to request funding for further feasibility and design work. Following the video conference, PSNERP Manager Theresa Mitchell met with Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Planner Friebel to discuss details on future public outreach needs.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw provided information to Camano Island Beachwaters on the project and signed up to give a presentation at their September 23 meeting.

Rainbow Pond and Intalco Ponds Water Control Replacement: Manager Kessler coordinated with the Ducks Unlimited project manager and the construction contractor on logistics for the project to replace two water control structures, one on the Intalco Unit and one on the Lake Terrell Unit. The replacement structures are now being delivered to the wildlife area. A preconstruction meeting is scheduled for this week. Construction will begin shortly after that.

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

Wildlife Management

Puget Sound Bird Festival – 2015: Biologist Anderson provided an outreach booth at this festival. The booth was well attended.

Quality Elk Hunt: Biologist Yarborough



met with hunters to distribute Sierra Pacific keys, discuss access and area logistics, and provide insight into local areas that could help hunters be successful.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Pheasant Release Sites: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued placing informational and educational signage related to the upcoming pheasant season opener later this month. Manager Boehm also delivered 150 pheasant to the Corson net pens for Ebey Island deliveries.

Skagit Pheasant Release: Manager Rotton contacted pheasant release volunteers in preparation for the season. Youth and senior hunts will begin next weekend.

Whatcom County Pheasant Release Volunteer Coordination: Manager Kessler held a volunteer coordination meeting at the Wildlife Area headquarters for the upcoming pheasant hunting season. There was a good turnout with both new and veteran releasers attending. Kessler went over the information for this year's releases, and got everyone down on the schedule for release dates through the end of the season. Manager Kessler monitored the pheasants in the pens at Lake Terrell. He fed and watered the birds and made sure there were no problems in the pens. A few fatalities were found in the pens.



Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with two volunteers at the net pen to install a rail system along the edge of the net pen. The rail system will be used to carry loaded crates up the slippery slope to the adjoining pens so volunteers won't have to manually carry them. Once the sloped walkway gets wet and muddy, it causes unsafe conditions for pheasant program volunteers.

Samish River Unit Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw worked with contracts staff to post a solicitation for bids to haul excavation spoils from the project area to a local levee for use by the Diking and Drainage District. The project engineer from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reports that the WDFW Lacey Shop is doing a good job constructing the project, which involves building channels and planting mounds, installing habitat logs, and removing drain tile to improve

freshwater wetland habitat on the property. So far, approximately half of the channels are built and work will continue for the next several weeks.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted monitoring reports needed to comply with the Construction Stormwater General Permit issued by Washington Department of Ecology.

DeBay's Slough: Meis and Cosgrove sprayed the parking lot at the hunt side of the DeBay's Unit and sprayed under fence lines at the reserve on the DeBay's Unit. Weeds targeted include blackberry and poplar species saplings.

Samish Unit: Meis and Cosgrove toured the Samish Unit to review project progress, discuss future management options, and discuss concerns in preparation for the final walk through with the project engineer and contractor. Manager Rotton met with a local contractor and Ducks Unlimited Engineer Steve Liske to discuss and review project progress and develop a punch list of the remainder of work to be completed on the Samish Wetland Enhancement project. Meis cleaned and weed-wacked around the parking lot at the Samish Unit in preparation for this hunting season. Cosgrove reviewed a map of previous footbridge locations at the Samish Unit to determine which will need to be replaced post-project.

Leque Island: Meis posted Safety Zone Signs at the Leque Unit and mowed trails, field edges, and around the parking lots on Eide Road. Meis contacted a Leque Island Sharecrop farmer to discuss the anticipated date of corn harvest. Harvest is expected to occur in the next two weeks.

Early Goose Hunting Season Preparations: Manager Kessler opened up gates at the Lake Terrell Unit and posted informational signs for the early goose hunting season. He also prepared the Shady Lane entrance to the Nooksack Unit for a disabled hunter to use.

Updating Wildlife Area Unit Reader Boards Maps: Manager Kessler created a new aerial map for the Nooksack Unit. This new map will be installed on the reader boards.

Private Lands/Access Management

Private Land Access Management: Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Biologist Wingard toured several sites in Snohomish County near Monroe to determine site suitability for hunting. Additionally, Biologists Caldwell and Wingard met with a landowner in the Snoqualmie Valley to gauge their interest in participating in the Private Lands Hunting Access program. The landowner and the biologists agreed to monitor the areas of interest this season to determine the suitability as the landowner is preparing to alter drainage on the possible sites. Biologist Caldwell fielded many questions this week regarding goose hunting, pheasant hunting, deer hunting, and elk hunting in Region 4. Each person was given information on where, when, and how to hunt specific species, and which access type was permissible in areas of interest. Hunters were appreciative of the effort that WDFW staff put towards finding and managing hunting access across the region.

Private Lands Access Hunt in GMU 407: Supervisory Biologists Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard discussed hunting opportunities with interested hunters and hand-delivered hunting reservation permission slips to two disabled archery hunters who will be hunting the site the first six days of the season.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units: Natural Resource Technician Otto and Private Lands Biologist Wingard toured Snohomish County waterfowl hunt units inventorying field and harvest conditions for access availability. This inventory helps staff with scheduling blind construction and unit set-up. Otto partially completed the Whatcom and Skagit County inventories. Biologist Wingard and Otto were able to build a blind and set-up a unit in Whatcom County for the early goose season. The unit was well used by hunters with reports of good hunter success. Supervisory Biologists Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard toured several sites in the Skagit Valley and near Acme to check their condition.



Duck blind/Viewing blind at Swan Road Waterfowl Quality Hunt and Wildlife Viewing site



Duck blind at Maleng Road Waterfowl Quality Hunt site

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

Wildlife Management

Skagit Salmon Festival: Biologist Yarborough helped out at the WDFW booth at the festival in Anacortes. The festival was well attended and participants walked around and answered questions at each booth to receive stamps to enter a drawing. The WDFW question was, “How many native salmonid species are found in the Skagit River?”

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: The Wildlife Conflict Specialist met with a landowner to finalize a contract to address potential elk damage in Skagit Valley. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell responded to a conflict call regarding deer damage to a Christmas tree farm on Whidbey Island. Information was provided to the landowner on harvest methods and several mitigation strategies to protect his trees. The landowner stated that they will contact Caldwell in a few days to schedule a site visit. Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell developed a plan for fence projects across the Skagit Valley. The plan and coordination effort will be implemented as soon as funding allocations are solidified and agreed upon with tribal co-managers and private property owners.

Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding elk and deer damage. Damage occurred to a variety of crops, gardens, and infrastructure (fences). Non-lethal measures to deter elk from entering properties were discussed. Smith removed a portion of one electrified fladry fence (an effort to exclude elk from damaging south King County crops) in preparation for corn harvesting and monitored/maintained two other fences. Several landowners entered into Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements to facilitate ongoing damage reduction efforts.

Exclusionary Fence Construction: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal completed two fencing projects in the Birdsvew area of Skagit County. They were assisted by a Master Hunter that was working on his volunteer service hours.

Wildlife Areas

Skagit Watershed Council Annual Lunch: Region 4 staff attended the Skagit Watershed Council Annual Lunch to discuss issues related to salmon recovery in the Skagit



Watershed. Regional Director Everitt gave a presentation about restoration projects on WDFW lands and other staff helped cook salmon for the lunch.



Wildlife Conflict staff finished constructing a new elk exclusionary fence for the Wagner property in Skagit Valley



Electrified fladry fence excluding elk from crops in King County



Wildlife Biologist Anderson is excited about the platter of salmon



Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Fish Biologist Garrett working with Stillaguamish Tribe staff

DeBay's Slough: Wildlife Area staff have marked WDFW share of the corn crop on the Reserve side in preparation for harvest. The sharecrop farmer has been contacted.

Fir Island Farms Restoration project: Manager Rotton is coordinating with Restoration Project Manager Jenna Friebel to provide lessee farmer access for crop harvest and cover crop planting on the restoration site.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton contacted CAMP electricians working on the pumps station installation to discuss final steps of the installation process to include a meeting with CAMP, Wildlife Area staff, and Dike District representatives. The meeting would discuss the basics of operation and maintenance of the pump station.

Private Lands/Access Management

Hunting Season Preparation: Natural Resource Technician Otto met with multiple landowners for signatures on their access hunting agreements for the 2015/16 season. Biologist Wingard edited and updated details for hunting sites on the GoHunt website.

418 Elk Hunt: Natural Resource Technician Otto met with a 418 elk hunter and issued their key to access private timberlands within the unit. Otto helped coordinate key dispersals for other muzzleloader hunters. Biologist Wingard met with a quality muzzleloader permit holder to hand out a Sierra Pacific gate key 10 days before the season begins to allow scouting.

407 Elk Hunt: Made final field preparations for the 407 Private Lands elk unit with the archery opener happening on September 12.

418 Deer Hunt: Biologist Wingard spoke with a late modern deer permit holder who was interested in accessing Sierra Pacific lands for the hunt. Biologist Wingard explained the access that was provided to the permit holder.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated seven new hunter education classes in Region 4. Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Lance Chaar to hold an online field skills evaluation at the Region 4 office. Chief Instructor Chaar will be conducting evaluations at the Region 4 office each Monday during August and September except Labor Day. Coordinator Dazey answered questions from instructors on staffing, how to find a teaching team in their area so as to qualify for incentive permits, felons, and orange guns used in classes, and forwarded templates for check-in that assist in recording online attendance. Do to the many issues coming up about lost or not received cards Dazey sent a reminder to all chief instructors on what information is needed by WDFW to answer the student concern. Often we find that the student has moved or has registered with an incorrect address.

Co-Managers Support: Coordinator Dazey assisted a Muckleshoot wildlife officer to register for a pre-service training coming up in Black Diamond. Following the Black Diamond PST we will have two instructors certified from the Muckleshoot. This will allow us to continue to offer classes to Muckleshoot hunters.

Pre Service Training: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey followed up on the pre-service training recently held at Camp Pigott and entered six new instructors into the Kalkomey system. Chief instructor contacts were sent to each new instructor for the area that they reside in so that they can get hooked up with a teaching team. Several of the instructors have already committed to assist the new team with upcoming classes. This is especially appreciated as many teams find

that some of their instructors are hunting this time of year and it becomes increasingly difficult to field a full team.

Volunteer Coordination: Coordinator Dazey continues to assist WDFW personnel to find volunteers for their projects. A few of the projects that volunteers were recruited for include the upcoming pheasant release program at WDFW sites, as well as others. Dazey also worked on a Power Point presentation to be used for a presentation coming up for volunteer recruitment.

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

North Sound Elk Committee Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, Natural Resource Technician Cogdal, and other WDFW staff attended the North Sound Elk Meeting with tribal co-managers. Several agenda items were reviewed by the committee regarding human/elk conflict updates, fencing project prioritization and funding, and elk herd management. A follow up meeting will take place soon to discuss fencing project matters in detail.

Immobilization Workshop: Biologist DeBruyn presented the raptor handling section of the class to biologists and enforcement staff in Vancouver, Wash.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

South Rainier Elk Herd Survey: Biologists Holman, Stephens, and Bergh, along with pilot Jess Hagerman of Northwest Helicopters, conducted the annual aerial survey of elk in the portion of the South Rainier elk herd that lies within Mt. Rainier National Park. Another helicopter and survey crew from the National Park Service surveyed at the same time, so all survey units were covered in the short time allowed (evening hours when elk are active). The WDFW crew counted 155 elk. Survey conditions were good with moderate temperatures and calm winds. A site-specific model that accounts for detection bias will be applied to the raw counts of elk and used to estimate abundance within the survey area. Data is sent to the National Park Service for analysis and results are forthcoming.



Mt. Rainier elk survey



Pronghorn Antelope: Biologist Anderson received a report of nine pronghorn antelope (one male and eight females) located in the Bickleton area of eastern Klickitat County. This group is thought to be a portion of the same herd that was located from an aerial survey conducted in late February of 2015.

Pronghorn Antelope in Klickitat County

Deer Survey: Biologists Bergh and Peterson, along with a group of volunteers from the Yacolt Burn Sportsman's Club, conducted an evening of

deer spotlighting surveys in the Washougal GMU. In total, 51 black-tailed deer were seen and 38 were classified as buck, doe, or fawn. This survey, along with incidental observations from other staff and volunteers, will be used to provide GMU-specific fawn to doe ratios for the summer productivity portion of the SAK model, which provides a population estimate for the region's deer.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Deer Survey: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis conducted an early season deer population composition survey during one evening and one morning during the week. Incidental observations suggest that many deer are present in GMU 388 but numbers were low at the time of the surveys. Parts of the routes may be re-surveyed if time permits.

Weed Control: Technician Davis took advantage of the low water levels in two ponds to treat reed canarygrass growing around the perimeter. This species of nonnative grass is an aggressive

colonizer and, if left unchecked, can out-compete native desirable wetland plants. Patches of canarygrass are on dry ground now, making it easier to treat only the target species.

Land Acquisition Proposal: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven drafted a land acquisition proposal that would augment the Soda Springs Unit. The present owner approached WDFW about a possible transaction, and after a site visit, it was agreed that this acquisition would be well worth pursuing.

Soda Springs Unit: Technician Davis and Manager Van Leuven picked up a user-built outhouse that has been standing on the Soda Springs Unit for several years. Under WAC 232-13-120, no permanent structures are to be left on Department lands, and the Klickitat Wildlife Area staff occasionally receives complaints from campers about the outhouse not being maintained. Since the owners have not been maintaining the facility and the structure was drawing negative attention from the public, it was removed and the site was returned to a natural appearance.

Water Source Maintenance: The concrete enclosure around a spring water source was damaged in April or May. Technician Davis made a form for a new concrete lid, and he worked with Manager Van Leuven to make the replacement. The new lid will be placed over the enclosure after the concrete cures.



Making new water source lid

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

District 10 Wildlife Conflict

Cougar: Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a reported depredation on a sheep in West Cowlitz County. A cougar was observed on the property the day before the sheep went missing and the farmer has lost multiple sheep in the past months. Conklin found cougar tracks on the property. She could not find remnants of the sheep. Two days later the landowner called Conklin and stated he found the sheep cached in heavy black berry brush. Conklin will install trail cameras on the property and will continue to monitor.

Conflict Specialist Conklin, Biologist Beausoleil, Officers Martin, Bahrenburg, Schroeder, and Sergeant Weaver responded to a farm in Kelso that reported a missing goat. The land owner found pieces of the goat on the property still. This land owner has had multiple goats taken by what may be a predator. Biologist Beausoleil deployed his dogs who found additional remnants of the goat. The dogs did not strike on a cougar. Officers and Conklin have been working with

this land owner and had only recently pulled the baited cougar trap and cameras from his farm. Further monitoring will occur.

Conflict Specialist Conklin and Officer Martin responded to a report of a possible cougar attack on a cow in Lewis County. After interviewing the land owner it could not be determined for sure what may have injured the cow. The injured cow was butchered so there was no way of verifying any injuries. Conklin deployed a trail camera for the land owner to continue to monitor the situation.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Chemical Immobilization and Handling Course: Several Wildlife and Enforcement Program staff attended a course on immobilization and handling put on by state Veterinarian Mansfield. The course also featured instruction from several other staff experts on raptors, deer, elk, bear, and cougar. During the field portion of the course a goat and a sheep were chemically immobilized for practice and staff practiced using and sighting in their dart guns. Both Wildlife and Enforcement Program staff are called when citizens find injured or trapped wildlife that need to be released, sent to a rehab facility, or dispatched. This course is required every five years so that staff can carry out this task safely.

New Wildlife Conflict Specialist in Klickitat, Skamania, and Clark Counties: We are very pleased to welcome Matthew Peterson as the new Wildlife Conflict Specialist in Region 5. Matthew will be working in District 9 and has a diverse background and a wealth of knowledge he brings to his position. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Western Washington University in Environmental Science with a focus in Terrestrial Ecology and had the opportunity to study abroad at the American University in Cairo. Prior to coming to WDFW, Matthew served as a Wildlife Conservation Officer with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish engaged in law enforcement, depredation conflict and mitigation, biological surveys, landscape restoration projects, and public outreach. He has worked in a variety of states in addition to New Mexico, including Wyoming, Michigan, and Colorado with the University of Missouri, Mississippi State University's Carnivore Ecology Laboratory, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, conducting trapping/captures, immobilization, and survey/monitoring on a range of species including sage grouse, Sandhill cranes, deer, elk, big horn sheep, pronghorn, black bear, cougar, and bobcat. In addition, he has worked on land management projects in his native state of Washington.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Snowy Plover: Technician Raby and Biologist Sundstrom continued data verification and analysis of summer brood observations at Leadbetter.

Biologist Sundstrom removed rope along the nesting area fences at Midway. A work party scheduled to assist in removing signs failed to appear. Consequently, the signs are still in place although the area no longer requires restricted access. State Parks is expected to remove the signs at a later date.

Acquisition Proposals: Biologist Novack put together a Lands 20/20 proposal for replacement properties to the Kindred Island purchase. WDFW was previously granted an \$800 thousand North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant to purchase the Kindred Island site. However, the Kindred Island site was purchased by the Shoalwater tribe. New targets were identified for a reallocation of the NAWCA funds and a finalized list of targets was submitted in the 20/20 proposal.

Biologist Tirhi submitted two projects for agency review. One of these is to request authority to seek additional funds for an ongoing project that would add 745 acres to WDFW's West Rocky Prairie Wildlife Area. The other is a new proposal that would seek funding to conserve sites specifically targeting recovery of Mazama pocket gopher. Protection of prairie habitat is the focus of both proposals, which is critical to the recovery of several listed species.

Both Novack and Tirhi deserve to be commended for their extra efforts. Completion of the 20/20 "checklists" requires a great deal of research, time, and detail to be successful and is only the first step in the process that WDFW goes through to acquire conservation lands.

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys: District Biologist McMillan initiated the compilation of Taylor's checkerspot butterfly 2015 survey records for the two sites west of the Elwha. She requested the data records for 2015 surveys from Biologist Ament and Biologist Bell. Biologist Ament e-mailed copies of completed data forms, field notes, and GPS records. District Biologist McMillan met with Biologist Ament and obtained the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly survey notebooks and GPS unit that contained tracks of conducted surveys. Biologist McMillan has copied this information to have it available for data entry into the spreadsheets. She has focused efforts on these two sites. Records for all other surveys will also be compiled. Biologist Ament will be retrieving her survey notebooks this week and will continue with completing data forms and downloading GPS tracks.

Purple Martins at Three Crabs Property: The Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society (OPAS) has been working with District 16 biologists to help recover the purple martin population in Clallam County. A total of 16 nest boxes have been established on creosote pilings that are remnants of the Dungeness Dock near Three Crabs. The nest boxes are actually located on

property owned by the Port of Port Angeles, just north of the WDFW owned Three Crabs property. The OPAS reported that the purple martins arrived to the Three Crabs site seven to 10 days earlier than normal this year. A total of 37 adults were documented to return and 65 fledged birds were counted at the site this season. This is the highest count since OPAS members began monitoring the site nearly 20 years ago. Only three to five martins were using the site in 1999 and the years prior. The pilings are eventually going to be removed, so alternative nesting sites will need to be established. OPAS and WDFW staff is working to find nearby areas to install environmentally friendly pilings to transfer the nest boxes onto. There are also five nesting boxes presently installed at Protection Island. District Biologist McMillan has a nest box on her property at the mouth of Morse Creek. She has reported observing some martins in the area but no purple martins are nesting there yet.

Purple martin nest boxes located on pilings off WDFW's Three Crabs property



Wildlife Areas

Three Crabs—Clallam County

Commission Meeting: Manager Belson represented WDFW at a weekly meeting of the Clallam County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). The agenda item of interest was a petition by WDFW to abandon a public road right-of-way as part of the Three Crabs estuary restoration project. The project sponsor, the North Olympic Salmon Coalition, also attended and updated the BOCC on the status of the project. Notice of this meeting was posted by Manager Belson on the WDFW Facebook page so that agency constituents are provided an opportunity to become better informed of potential changes to public access at the site. The Commissioners requested additional information from county staff and deferred action on the proposal until September 15 when they approved the road vacation subject to several conditions which appear to be reasonable. The BOCC action will allow the Three Crabs restoration project to continue to move forward.

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

Wildlife Areas

Lower Dungeness Hunting Changes: Manager Belson and Master Hunter Volunteer Tucker completed the installation of signs, markers, and other items to support the new first come, first served hunting points at the Lower Dungeness Unit of the North Olympic Wildlife Area. The area now provides five designated locations for what is expected to be high-quality waterfowl hunting opportunities. Complete information regarding this new arrangement has been posted on the unit's webpage and in the online *Region 6 – Waterfowl Hunting on Wildlife Areas* guide.

Master Hunter Tucker installing numbered parking sign at the Lower Dungeness Unit.

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



Wildlife Management

Injured Wildlife: Conflict Specialist Blankenship responded to a call regarding an injured Cooper's hawk in a business development in Sumner. Upon Blankenship's arrival, an employee from a nearby business was able to successfully remove the hawk from a busy road and put it into a box. Blankenship was able to assess the hawk's injuries, which included a broken wing and talon. Blankenship arranged transport of the injured hawk to Raindancer Wild Bird Rescue. The hawk was immediately transported to a local veterinarian for an injury assessment.

Private Lands /Conflict

Bears and Birdseed: Conflict Specialist Blankenship received a call about a bear in Graham that was getting into bird feeders near a rural housing development. Blankenship advised the homeowner to remove all attractants in the area and stay in contact with WDFW if the bear did not leave the area after seven to 10 days.

Deer and Elk Conflicts: Calls regarding elk and deer damage in Buckley and Shelton were received by Conflict Specialist Blankenship. Blankenship was able to discuss the extent of the damage, nonlethal measures that were being taken to prevent damage, and set up meetings with each of the landowners for the following week.

Pierce County Shooting Ordinance: The Pierce County Commission is considering an amendment to their Firearm Restriction Areas Ordinance that would provide an exception whereby WDFW-supervised hunts to mitigate agricultural damage would be allowed. Program Manager Calkins and Conflict Specialist Blankenship attended a hearing on the proposal before the Commission's Public Safety and Human Services Committee. Calkins provided testimony supporting the measure. The committee voted to send the proposal to the full Commission for action which will occur on September 29.