

Wildlife Program

Week of April 4 – April 10, 2016

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 1 Wolf Activities

Nonlethal Deterrent Replacements Delivered: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett brought several six volt batteries to a producer calving between the Stranger and Huckleberry packs in Stevens County. The batteries will be used for fox lights previously delivered to the producer.

2015 Annual Wolf Report: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett forwarded the WDFW Annual Wolf Report to interested parties in District 2 and the Huckleberry area. Bennett also responded to questions about collared wolf locations during the denning season blackout period.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Douglas County Sage Grouse Capture: Biologists Atamian, Lowe, and Walker joined Gallie, Schroeder, volunteers, and staff members from Region 2 in capturing 11 male sage grouse from several leks in Douglas County. Nine of the grouse were fitted with GPS transmitters and all were given metal bands and released on site.



Volunteer holding male sage grouse



Male sage grouse with GPS transmitter immediately before flying off

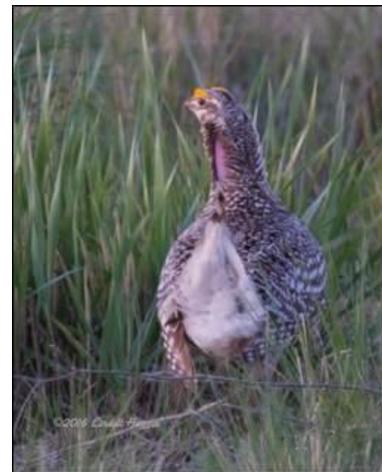


Male sage grouse were fit with a GPS transmitter (left), and primary feather and other measurements were also collected (right)

Sage Grouse Workshop: Biologist Baarstad attended the three-day Sage Grouse Workshop in Douglas County. WDFW, USFWS, DNR, BLM, NRCS, Pheasants Forever, and Foster Creek CD staff members attended to discuss the implementation of the Foster Creek

General Conservation Plan, the SGI program, and the upcoming sage grouse CCAA. Trainings included site assessment and monitoring, as well as interagency and landowner cooperation strategies.

Grouse Surveys: Two volunteer sharp-tailed grouse lek surveyors counted birds at two different leks on subsequent mornings. The Reiber Lek appears to be going gangbusters this year, while the Seven Springs Lek numbers are down a bit from last year. As these two sites are relatively close to each other, it would be a good idea to again survey both sites, on the same morning, to avoid double-counting any birds that may be traveling between leks. Also, the specially mowed area at one lek was being used by the grouse, but at a second site it was not.



Sage grouse patrolling the lek sites

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

South Hill Turkey Monitoring and Egg Hunt: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett worked with several volunteers and Department staff members in preparation for the upcoming South Hill wild turkey egg hunts. Assistant District Biologist Lowe and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with a Spokane City Park maintenance staff member to discuss the egg hunt and answer questions. Maps, a protocol, and volunteer forms were prepared for the three scheduled searches. Bennett also spent a considerable amount of time mending a net used to live trap turkeys severely damaged by squirrels.

Waterfowl Survey: Biologist Lewis completed a waterfowl survey in the Sprague Lake area. The survey area covers the areas around Sprague and Rock lakes. Due to high winds and rough waters on Sprague Lake, the ability to count birds further out was diminished, but there were still over 2,000 birds counted on Sprague Lake alone.



Puddle ducks in the Rock Lake area



Northern pintail drake in the Rock Lake area

Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP) Meeting:

Supervisor McCanna, along with Headquarters, Regional, and District staff members, attended Commissioner Dixon's meeting with private landowners who have been upset with a newer LHP in the Blue Mountains. Commissioner Dixon and landowners expressed several concerns which will be reviewed by WDFW staff members. McCanna followed up with two landowners who attended the meeting with different concerns. McCanna requested Conflict Specialist Rasley and Technician Wade meet with each of the landowners. They did so last week.

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

National Wild Pheasant Plan: Supervisor McCanna made updates to the National Wild Pheasant plan state coordinator spreadsheet and emailed it to the new plan coordinator (Scott Taylor) in South Dakota. McCanna also worked with Taylor to compile priorities from all regional coordinator representatives.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: District Wildlife Biologist Finger surveyed two ferruginous hawk territories with a job shadow from Quincy High School. Both territories appeared to be unoccupied. Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Rowan completed the first round of surveys with assistance from Biologists Comstock and Verhey, Natural Resources Technician Eddy, and volunteers Randall Bachman and Laurie Ness. Only one pair of ferruginous hawks was seen during surveys in Grant County, with numerous seen in Adams County. Red-tailed hawks and ravens were abundant, and there was one confirmed prairie falcon and one suspect seen.

Deer Surveys: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen continued spring deer surveys. Thus far, fawn:adult ratios are running significantly below average in the Methow Watershed, but about average in the Okanogan Valley. In addition, deer distribution has been unpredictable with the accelerated snow melt and strikingly warm temperatures. Surveys should be completed this coming week.



Mule deer on spring range and the remains of a very old winter-killed deer (note worn teeth and abscesses on both sides of the lower jaw) – Photos by Scott Fitkin

Tunk Valley Sharp-tailed Grouse: Biologist Heinlen continued spring surveys for sharp-tailed grouse, focusing in the Tunk Valley, which burned in last year's Tunk Block wildfire. Biologist Heinlen found leks that burned heavily had no sign of active sharp-tailed grouse breeding, while leks that did not burn or were in very close proximity to unburned habitat continue to have breeding activity.



Tunk Valley sharp-tail habitat before and after the Tunk Block fire – Photos by Jeff Heinlen

Okanogan Complex/Twisp River Wildfire: Manager Furnari spoke with CAMP’s Anthony Sanich about specifics of planned FEMA site visits. She and Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin went out for an afternoon field visit with two FEMA representatives and one EMD staff member. They reviewed one watering point, three excluder fences (WP & riparian), deer fence, and Perry-

Brewster house damage. It appears that only a couple of items sent into CAMP made it over to the FEMA representatives, which made for a very awkward day. Manager Furnari called and spoke with FEMA the next day to provide a summary of the field review.



FEMA site inspection of burned deer fence – Photo by Sherry Furnari

Private Lands/Access

Sage Grouse: Biologist Comstock spent a night trapping greater sage-grouse at leks in Douglas County with Assistant District Biologist Gallie and USFWS and DNR biologists. This was the first time she had participated in sage-grouse trapping efforts. Her team went five for five with successful captures. Nine transmitters were deployed and the team rolled back into Wenatchee at 5:00 a.m.



Mike Schroeder deftly processes a captured sage-grouse – Photo by Devon Comstock



Sage-grouse close-up – Photo by Devon Comstock

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Biologist Comstock completed SAFE plans for a producer who is enrolling fallow ground in both Grant and Lincoln counties. Her attempts at reaching a conservationist in the NRCS offices who has the authority to sign off on planning documents have thus far been unsuccessful. Biologist Comstock visited a SAFE field in Douglas County that the landowner was concerned had failed. Initial inspection found a patchy stand of desirable native grasses dominated by basin wildrye. However, the forbs were virtually absent, with only three yarrow plants being located in the field. She will work with the landowner to develop a new plan to improve stand composition.

One of the more dense patches of desirable grasses in a SAFE field south of Highway 2 – Photo by Devon Comstock



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

Wildlife Management

BirdTrippers: District Wildlife Biologist Finger coordinated with the BirdTrippers (<http://birdtrippers.com/>), or “Pacific Flyway Ambassadors.” They are two young birding novices who are traveling 3,500 miles in three months from San Diego, CA to Anchorage, AK to observe spring migration at various hotspots. Finger scouted the Coulee Corridor for eagle and falcon nests and waterfowl concentrations to prepare for their arrival on Monday afternoon. Finger was able to locate an active peregrine territory and an active bald eagle nest, and found what appeared to be evidence of a golden eagle nest rebuilding at a Lake Lenore nest site.

Poorly digiscoped image of cormorants building nests on an island on Lake Lenore

– Photo by R. Finger



Wildlife Areas

Road Maintenance: Assistant Manager Bechtold got stuck again in the Gloyd Seeps, this time with a vibrating roller-packer, while performing road prep work. Bechtold called Assistant Manager Cole for assistance, and Cole informed Acting Manager Eidson of the situation. Eidson proceeded to collect extrication material and head to the incident. Assistant Manager Cole went to retrieve the tractor from Les Schwab following a tire repair for an added assist. With help from Technician Eddy, he was able to get the tractor loaded and en route to the location. Luckily Eidson and Bechtold were able to get the packer un-stuck before the tractor was needed. The situation was a good example of the challenging field conditions encountered year round on the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. Conditions are especially challenging in the spring.



Roller packer stuck in the Gloyd Seeps mud

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

Wildlife Areas

Frost/Buck/Big Buck/Shaw/Milles & Aspen Lake Dams: Manager Furnari continues to deal with anxious neighbors concerned about the high water level in the lake with many names dam. Manager Furnari spent an entire day dealing with two dams at Big Buck. She hiked and inspected both areas since most of the land was inaccessible due to snow, downed trees, and/or eroded road issues. She noted Aspen Lake's outflow pipe is failing because of damages sustained from the wildfire. She pulled out a boat & limbs from Frost Lake's spillway to keep water flowing, responded to neighbors' concerns, and spoke with a Methow Valley News reporter (on Monday). She sent an email with lots of photos to CAMP's dam section and her management. She spoke with Engineer Gilmour about what she saw and the site's condition. CAMP will come out next week to temporarily fix the outflow pipe. Both Frost and Elbow Coulee Roads are now closed because of water issues.



Removal of small boat & limbs to keep water flowing over the spillway at Frost Lake (Milles Lake Dam) – Photo by Sherry Furnari



Aspen Lake Dam's burned outflow pipe has an issue – Photo by Sherry Furnari



Frost Road now has a couple of major washout areas – Photo by Lynda Hofmann



Sharp-tailed grouse on lek, Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten



Sage Thrasher and Vesper Sparrow – Photos by Eric Braaten

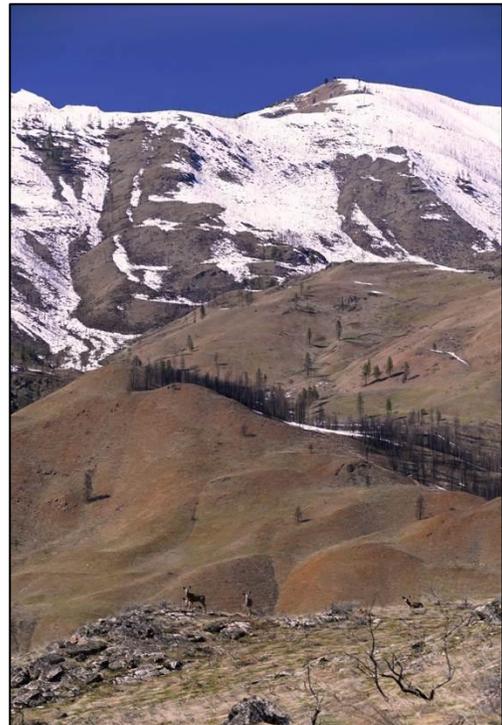


Beautiful views at Lake Lenore, with an apparently maintained golden eagle nest on cliff face in background – Photo by R. Finger

Albino red squirrel – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Displaying turkey – Photo by WDFW remote camera



Mule deer on spring range in the Lower Methow Valley – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Trumpeter Swans, Scotch Creek Wildlife Area –
Photo by Scott Fitkin



A landscape of the Charles and Mary Eder Unit of Scotch Creek Wildlife Area – Photo by Justin Haug



White-tailed deer on the Eder Unit – Photo by Justin Haug

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Acting Manager Buser and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber cleaned out a waterway that was backing up water due to a beaver dam at the Nipper Unit.

Shrub Planting: Assistant Manager Sak, Natural Resource Technician 2 Medina, Acting Manager Buser, and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber planted shrubs that were ordered for the fire restoration project for Sunnyside HQ fire.



Wildlife area staff planting shrubs as part of the fire restoration project



Shrubs planted on the Brady Unit

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt attended a pre-bid meeting for the Hutchins and Taneum forest thinning projects with Statewide Forester Rod Pfeifle. Four contractors attended the meeting and toured the Taneum Unit with Pfeifle. The Hutchins Unit was not accessible due to snow in a few places, but will likely be open by next week.

Fence Committee Meeting: Manager Winegeart and Assistant Manager Hunt attended a cross-program fence committee meeting. The group identified “wildlife friendly” fence design standards that will be used in the region and as recommendations to the public.

Yakima Arbor Festival: Forester Mackey contributed pictures, reference materials, and cut a tree cross section from a stump on the Rock Creek Unit for the Yakima Arbor Festival on July 16.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Forester Mackey performed reconnaissance in the Rock Creek Unit to assess access for upcoming thinning work. Snowpack still limits access to much of the unit.



Western larch cross section showing history of fire scarring



View of Rattlesnake Peaks and Mt. Rainier from the Rock Creek Unit

North Fork Cowiche Creek: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker 2 Farias signed newly closed roads in North Fork Cowiche Creek and locked the gate in the elk fence on the east end. While in the area, Berry and Farias observed another western gray squirrel cross the road in front of them.



New signs posted on the upper and lower ends of a hill climb road in the North Fork Cowiche Creek Area. The hill climb is now closed to vehicles to reduce erosion and soil damage.



Road closed sign posted on the North Fork Cowiche Creek Road. The road was closed to prevent resource damage in the creek bottom. Users can still use the ridge road to access the area.

Wildlife Management

Ferruginous Hawk: District Biologist Fidorra spent much of the week surveying ferruginous hawk territories and working on landowner access and volunteer, partner, and staff coordination. The first round of occupancy surveys is now complete. Only a handful of the 142 District 4 territories were not surveyed as they lacked landowner access permission. Approximately 12 occupied territories have been identified, although second surveys are required to confirm status at some of these sites where just a single bird was observed. Efforts in coming weeks will focus on the second occupancy survey, which should be completed by the May 15 deadline.

Sage Grouse: District Biologist Fidorra spent a night and morning assisting with sage grouse capture, collaring, and lek counts on the Yakima Training Center. One hen was captured and collared with a radio transmitter. Lek attendance appears to be down compared to last year thus far, although the peak of attendance may be a bit later this year. Nine males and one female were observed in total at three lek sites.



Biologist Fidorra with newly collared sage-grouse hen



Early morning scenery during lek surveys on the Yakima Training Center

Bat: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved a dead bat reported by a homeowner in Pasco. The bat was frozen and will be sent to the National Wildlife Health Center for white-nose syndrome testing.

Deer Surveys: Biologists Bernatowicz and Moore completed deer surveys in the southern half of the Naches Mule Deer Zone. The numbers have not been tabulated, but winter mortalities were obvious from the air. The northern half of the mule deer zone will be flown this week by the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. Bernatowicz contacted Deer Specialist Hansen about survey funding levels, objectives, and priorities. Other biologists have had similar questions and an eastside meeting of biologists will likely occur in June. One focus will be on trying to standardize with mule deer zones.

Tieton Bighorn Sheep: The historic range of Tieton bighorn sheep was surveyed during deer surveys. A contract hunter also spent one day out looking for sheep. No animals have been seen since winter. The salt craving by bighorn sheep is high in spring and sheep would be expected to lick salt from Highway 12. The lack of sightings suggests the bighorns that had moved into the Tieton range have returned to Cleman Mountain.

Wolverine Surveys: Biologist Bernatowicz reviewed detailed maps of survey blocks and corresponded with USFS Biologist St. Hilaire in preparation for a conference call next week.

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

Wildlife Areas

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart brought the newest version of Green Dot maps to the Wildlife Program meeting for Wildlife Area Managers' input. The maps may change significantly in the future, but the Colockum and Quilomene/Whiskey Dick maps need to be printed by early May, so will have only minor updates in this revision. Manager Winegeart contacted Jill Johnson, DNR's GIS specialist, to finalize the map updates.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris continued working with Environmental Planner Posner to finalize a notice for public meetings and a fact sheet for the Wenas Target Shooting proposal. She reviewed the draft cultural resource report and provided comments. She also finished submitting Early Assistance Meeting forms to Yakima County and got a date set with Public Services to discuss the proposal and required permits.

Field Review: Manager Confer Morris set up a meeting with the Wenas WAAC to field review the two potential shooting range sites along Sheep Company Road prior to the public meetings.

Access Program

Rowe Access: Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker 2 Barbosa repaired flood damage to the parking lot at the Rowe access. The site will still need a few loads of gravel to finish it off but it is now accessible to all vehicles.



Rowe Access Site flood damage



Rowe Public Access repairs

Juvenile Courts Work: Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker 2 Barbosa worked with the Juvenile courts crew Friday and Saturday. We had 13 juveniles and four supervisors. We had them pick up litter at all of the lower valley ponds and access sites.



Part of the crew working hard at Pond 4



Full truck load at the end of the day

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

Wildlife Management

Rattlesnake Mountain: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with landowners in the Rattlesnake Mountain area to discuss spring wheat planting schedules and vehicle access to remote areas for hazing activities and fence repairs.

Deer Activity in Paterson Area: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand inspected a wine grape operation in the Paterson area for deer activity and damage issues. Minor browsing has occurred along the outside rows in the vineyard, but nonlethal hazing activities appear to be minimizing the amount of damage that has transpired.

Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel hazed elk from Elk Heights and Reecer Creek. Large numbers of elk are in each area and are entering new hay fields, especially alfalfa, at night. Master Hunters have been asked to conduct all night elk hazing efforts at all locations. After several nights of effort, small gains have been observed, and it is hoped that over time elk will leave due to the constant pressure. Conflict Specialist Wetzel repaired a fence broken by elk entering an alfalfa field in the Reecer Creek area.

Repaired fence at elk crossing point near alfalfa field



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

Wildlife Management

Sage Grouse: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman attended the three day sage grouse workshop in Douglas County this week. Staff members from multiple agencies attended and participants heard from experts on the different sage grouse conservation program options for private landowners and received training for conducting their various monitoring requirements. The workshop concluded with an impromptu team building exercise for WDFW Private Lands Biologists, as an unnamed Private Lands Biologist from Region 3 had locked his keys in his agency vehicle. The problem was resolved thanks to cross-region collaboration and pooling of resources.



Nice day for training in Douglas County!

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Protected Wildlife Management – White-Nose

Syndrome: District 12 biologists have been involved in cross agency planning and reconnaissance in relation to the western little brown bat found near North Bend earlier this month and diagnosed positive for white-nose syndrome. Work on the ground has included WDFW, USFS, and BLM examining the known site and vicinity, as well as some initial acoustic and roost surveys.

Planning has involved all major wildlife and land managers, both federal and state, with goals of surveillance, outreach, and adaptive management as knowledge of white-nose occurrence and ecology in our Pacific Northwest ecosystem increases. District 12 submitted a dead bat for testing of white-nose.

District 12 has worked with Headquarters to coordinate acoustic surveys throughout the Snoqualmie Valley. Work will continue in this area to provide an index of species activity throughout the watershed. Qualitative monitoring will help drive management consideration and justification of any need for more quantitative and intrusive survey efforts. Other passive methods are also being investigated.

Decontamination, outlined in the below links, is essential to assist in the management of this pathogen, particularly in the research, management, and recreationist communities where caving, climbing, and canyoneering regularly occur.

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/> More information can be found here at
<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>

A sick or injured silver-haired bat found in a backyard – bats out during the day, on the ground, acting odd should be reported to WDFW and a state wildlife rehabilitator immediately – Photo by N. Upchurch



Injured Eagle: Biologist Smith coordinated with a landowner who had an injured bald eagle in a pasture near Enumclaw. The bird had an apparent wing injury, was collected by the landowner, and transferred to South Sound Critter Care for evaluation. Status of the adult bird is still pending.

Prohibited Wildlife Management – Invasive Species: District 12 and 13 conferenced with the Fish Program Aquatic Invasive Species Unit, Headquarters Wildlife, and Habitat Biologists regarding ongoing work in the management of localized invasive species of concern. Field reconnaissance will start next month.

Protected Wildlife Management – Priority Habitat and Species Growth Management Act Assistance to Habitat Program: District 12 biologists collaborated with Habitat Biologists to provide for two requests regarding the management of local occurrences of wildlife and habitat within local jurisdictional codes for projects requiring such consideration and deferments to WDFW for assistance.

Urban young heron perching on a light post – herons are a Priority Species recommended by WDFW for local jurisdiction wildlife management consideration – Photo C. Anderson



Protected Wildlife Management – Duwamish Purple Martin Colony: District 12 biologists collaborated with volunteers to maintain the large martin colony in the Duwamish Waterway. Twenty-seven nest sites (24 gourds and three boxes) were assessed for past use, cleaned, or replaced. Scout martins keyed in on the site right away, with birds checking the gourds almost immediately at half of the sites being readied for this season. Thanks to Region 4 Inland Fish biologists for letting Wildlife Program borrow their boat in order to accomplish this work!

Purple martins checking out fresh gourds in the Duwamish Waterway, Seattle – Photo by Kimberle Stark



Protected Wildlife Management – Take Authorization: District 12 discussed state take needs, per state take authorization permit, of red-tailed hawk chicks that pose a safety and hazard situation on a bridge. WDFW has requested a statement of USFWS management considerations in order to move forward with state requests, if any, in order to ensure agreement with any federal requests. District 12 initiated conversation with a state wildlife rehabilitation center if placement of birds into care and then wild release is found to be the preferred management option.

Loon Survey: Biologist DeBruyn surveyed local lakes in Whatcom County for loon breeding activity. One loon was observed. It was in the company of migrant waterfowl so a follow-up visit with a boat will be required to look for signs of nesting.

Oregon Spotted Frog Survey: Biologist DeBruyn looked for egg masses in Skagit County. The egg season for frogs is winding down, with many eggs at known sites hatching and dispersing.

Trumpeter Swan Management: Biologist DeBruyn participated in a conference call with USFWS representative Joe Sands, Waterfowl Section Manager Don Kraege, Biologist Mike Smith, CWS representative Laurie Wilson, Northwest Swan Conservation Association (NWSCA) representative Martha Jordan, and Trumpeter Swan Society representative Margaret Smith.

Swan Management: Biologist Smith collected a truckload of swan management materials from the University of Washington campus and transferred the load to the La Conner office for storage. The materials (bamboo poles, plastic fencing, etc.) were stored in a building scheduled for demolition and needed to be salvaged relatively quickly. The items will be used for ongoing swan management work in District 14. Smith also participated in a conference call to plan for future swan management activities in Region 4.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Signage: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm posted additional “Leash Required” signage at the Stillwater and Crescent Lake units.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw visited the site with staff members from Ducks Unlimited to survey recent damage to the dikes. On the site, the group discussed project construction activities that could be initiated sooner in the project timeline to reduce the consequences if the dikes fail again prior to the implementation of the restoration project. Additionally, staff members from the WDFW CAMP program visited the site to develop a plan and cost estimate to repair the damaged dikes.

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw and PSNERP staff members had a check-in conference call to discuss recent project-related activities, including a briefing on the meeting with the Lummi Tribe Cultural Resources Committee from the previous week.

Citizen Science Bird Survey Training: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Biologist Milner, and Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton participated in a training on Sunday for citizen science volunteers to monitor bird use of the Leque Island Unit. The training was well attended, with 24 volunteers. Ecostudies Institute staff members led the training with assistance from WDFW. Data from this study will be used to compare bird use at the site before and after the estuary restoration project.



Twenty-four volunteers participated in a bird monitoring training at Leque Island, which involved a classroom portion and on-the-ground exercise

Snohomish County Site Tour: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with Will Hall, who is the new Surface Water Management Director for Snohomish County, and City of Stanwood staff members to discuss large projects in the area. Brokaw gave a presentation on the Leque Island project and gave a brief tour of the site.

Ovenell Park Technical Advisory Committee: Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a meeting to advise the City of Stanwood on their development of a waterfront park, which is directly across the river from Leque Island. Recreation and access features installed on the city property have potential to benefit users of the Leque Island Unit, including a boat launch and viewing tower. The city is currently in the design concept phase and expects to develop the park over the course of the next 10 years.

North Leque Island and Island Unit Chinook Salmon Report: Projects Coordinator Brokaw drafted a report that summarizes juvenile Chinook salmon use surveyed near the North Leque Island Unit and the Island Unit. Data were provided by the Stillaguamish Tribe and Skagit River Systems Cooperative. This report is necessary to evaluate the suitability of a restoration project at the North Leque site. It could serve as compensatory mitigation needed for replacing a tidegate on the Island Unit site.

Waterfowl Trapping and Banding: Natural Resource Technician Deyo set up three floating traps at the Lake Terrell Unit to trap and band waterfowl. In the first two days, he had trapped several wood ducks, green winged teal, mallards, and coots.



Natural Resource Technician Deyo Waterfowl Trapping at the Lake Terrell Unit

Noxious Weed Control: Natural Resource Technician Deyo sprayed herbicides to control noxious weeds on the Lake Terrell and Intalco units. He also checked the weeds at the Nooksack Unit, and will take care of those weeds this week.

Lake Terrell Unit Agricultural Field Prep: Natural Resource Technician Deyo started prepping the agricultural fields at Lake Terrell for this year's barley and fava bean plantings for winter waterfowl feeding. He also rototilled several strips in the fields, which will be planted with black oil sunflower seeds. These seeds were made available by Ducks Unlimited, and will feed waterfowl and song birds.

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

Wildlife Management

Biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn participated in the second round of aerial surveys of the North Cascades (Nooksack) Elk Herd. Preliminary numbers suggest a growing population.



Private Lands/Access Management

North Skagit and Monroe Spring Bear Hunt Meetings: Private Lands

Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Private Lands Biologist Wingard hosted meetings for the North Skagit and Monroe Spring Bear Hunt units. These meetings were very well attended by hunters and partners from the Department of Natural Resources and private timber companies. Assistance and perspective during these meetings was provided by staff members from WDFW Enforcement, including Sgt. Maurstad and Officer Lee. All permittees were provided a packet of materials that included a hunter survey, tooth/tissue sample envelopes/vials w/ instructions for biological sample collections, timber company information, a WDFW contact list, vehicle access pass, a how to identify bear related tree damage sheet, an area map of the hunt unit, and a road map for Sierra Pacific Industries property.

Wildlife Viewing: Private Lands Biologist Wingard coordinated with Olympia staff members to complete contracts for private lands wildlife viewing.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunting Clinics: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey continues to plan and prepare for an upcoming turkey hunting clinic at the Black Diamond Gun Club. The clinics are part of a new initiative by the Hunter Education Division to partner with NGOs in putting on specific hunting clinics for the public. This initiative will give the students information that will assist them to

feel more confident in their hunting pursuits. This increased confidence and knowledge will help in hunter retention.

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Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Monitoring & Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received an elk damage complaint from a landowner in the Sedro Woolley area who reported his cattle fences had been knocked down several times from elk grazing activity. The landowner was concerned about future grazing activity after applying commercial fertilizer to the field/grass. Witman met with the landowner and discussed future fencing options for the property to deter elk. Witman monitored snow goose activity in the Stanwood area and found the geese were avoiding a previous depredation area. Master Hunter volunteers have been providing hazing on the property by running dogs and chasing geese away. The effort seems to be working and the landowner is very happy with the Master Hunter response.



Snow goose activity on a site in the Stanwood area appears to be lessening, with Master Hunter volunteers providing hazing on the property by running dogs and chasing geese away

Landowner Meetings and Public Relations: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with several parties in the

Hamilton area to discuss efforts to eliminate elk presence at the Hamilton Cemetery. After surveying the area landscape, the cemetery is bordered by agricultural property on three sides and the existing fences could easily be retrofitted to keep elk out. Further discussion is necessary with the tribal co-management technical committee to discuss the feasibility of this project moving forward. Witman met with a cattle producer in the Acme area to discuss elk related damage to grazing crops. The herd of elk has been utilizing the property since 2006 and has increased from six animals to more than 80. The landowner has previously installed elk exclusionary fencing on approximately five to seven acres. With the increased elk abundance, the current fencing can no longer meet the landowner's needs due to grazing loss from elk. Additional fencing and additional management strategies will need to be considered by the tribal co-management technical group to address the elk related damage.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with a landowner in the Acme area of Whatcom County that has seen an increase in elk herd numbers on the property

Urban Wildlife – Bird Conflict: District 12 provided information on legality and control of birds damaging structures. It is the time of year when these calls come in. One can seek general guidance at the WDFW Living with Wildlife website at

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/woodpeckers.html>



Wildlife Areas

User Outreach: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm visited the Snoqualmie Unit to educate, inform, and monitor users about the requirement for leashing pets while on the wildlife areas. Manager Boehm also informed them of the April 11 public/stakeholder meeting that will be held at the Mill Creek Headquarters.

Volunteer Opportunities: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm provided two Master Hunter volunteers with community service projects involving trail clearing and windfall removal at the Crescent Lake Unit. Manager Boehm continues to work with Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator Steve Dazey to connect Master Hunter volunteers with projects on the Snoqualmie Units.

Lake Terrell Headquarters Well House Safety Repairs: Manager Kessler met onsite with the WDFW Department Engineer to assess the needed safety repairs to the well house at the wildlife area headquarters. Upgrades to the electrical wiring, water softener and filter, and well house itself will be made in the next two months. This will improve the function and safety of the well.

Fir Island Farm: Manager Rotton attended the Fir Island Farm Restoration planning meeting for the Dike Breach this summer with Project Manager Jenna Friebe and Public Affairs staff members from Olympia to prepare for the event.

Skagit Headquarters: Manager Rotton continued to monitor pump and tidegate operation and gage levels. Cosgrove applied herbicides to broadleaf weeds at Headquarters and the Moberg Road property. Cosgrove continued vegetation management at Headquarters. Meis and Cosgrove cut and removed limbs from problem trees at the moorage facility. Meis assisted Derek Hacker with the placement of a road counter for the boat launch at the Headquarters Unit. Rotton checked the dike at the Headquarters Unit during low tide and photographed the site monitoring photo points.

Leque Island: Meis filled and placed 25 sand bags in a small breach in the dike on the south end of Eide Road on the Leque Unit in preparation for the high tides coming this week and next.

Samish Unit: Meis mowed noxious weeds at the Samish Unit throughout the site in preparation for spray treatments.

Island Unit: Meis and Cosgrove, with the assistance of volunteers, ferried the equipment to the Island Unit to prepare the fields for next season's waterfowl enhancements. Cosgrove began disking fields on the Island Unit. Fields disked include portions of Lorenzen, #2, Broadlin, and the Sand fields.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Analysis: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Supervisory Biologist Caldwell completed analysis and a summary of the 2015-2016 Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program (WQHP) and forwarded on the document for management review. In summary, the 2015-2016 waterfowl season was another excellent season for hunters and landowners who participated in the WQHP. The implementation of this program in 2015-2016 was effective and the involved partners were very pleased with hunt operations, management strategies, private land conditions, and success. Notably, hunters expressed gratitude towards cooperating private landowners who allow access to select areas.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Site Breakdown: Natural Resource Technician Otto continued removing blinds from Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites as conditions allow.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education instructor support: Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey continues to encourage instructors to return their Policy Agreement Forms. For those who have been certified five years, Dazey reminded them to return their five year background authorization forms. Coordinator Dazey answered instructor questions in regards to several issues that included helping a new chief instructor set up a class and another new chief instructor close a class. Coordinator Dazey activated 20 new hunter education classes this week. Dazey also answered an instructor's questions on years of service as an instructor.

Chinese Language Hunter Education Class: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey assisted an instructor in planning for a hunter education class for students whose first language is Chinese. The two instructors are bilingual and have received requests from the local Chinese community for this class. Planning is moving forward and the class will be scheduled at the Region 4 office conference room April 23 and 24.

Teaching Team Evaluations: Coordinator Dazey conducted two teaching team evaluations, including one at Black Diamond Gun Club and one at the Region 4 office. The BDGC team teaches a traditional hunter education class and did a good job. The Region 4 team teaches an Online Field Skills Evaluation and is doing a good job also.



Hunter Ed activity in Region 4 remains very strong.

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

Elk Exclusionary Fence Meeting with Tribal Co-Managers:

Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman, and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal met with tribal co-manager representatives and discussed

fencing strategies and planning for upcoming spring and summer projects. Numerous projects are being planned with current fencing projects beginning construction in the Birdview area of Skagit County this week.

Wildlife Conflict Program Staff Meeting: Wildlife Conflict Program staff members from Region 4 met in La Conner to discuss work plans, conflict management topics, ideas for the coming season, direction of the program, and any concerns staff members may have. The meeting was very positive and many good ideas were discussed.

Training: Private Lands Biologist Wingard completed reasonable suspicion training. Biologist Wingard completed Sexual Harassment Training for supervisors.

Range Safety Officer (RSO) Training: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey assisted Bob Palmer, an NRA certified training counselor, to post a RSO course for hunter education instructors. The instructor policy manual states that if live fire is offered at a hunter education course, then one instructor must be assigned to be responsible for the safety of students and instructors. The department does not require a RSO certification, but this course does give the instructor the tools necessary to meet the policy guideline. An email was sent to hunter education instructors in the several counties near where the class is being offered and already it is filling fast.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Ferruginous Hawk Surveys: Biologists Anderson and Bergh, along with volunteer Flick, completed the first round of occupancy surveys for ferruginous hawk territories in Klickitat County. A total of eight historic territories were searched from the ground over the past two

weeks. Only one ferruginous hawk was seen, but several stick nests were found in juniper trees and on rock outcroppings. Other species seen were prairie falcons, red-tailed hawks, harriers, kestrels, ravens, shrikes, meadowlarks, horned larks, and mule deer. A second round of occupancy surveys will be conducted in two weeks. These surveys are part of a statewide effort to determine if the listing of this species as threatened is warranted. Ferruginous hawks were state listed in 1983 and are considered to be declining in several areas of their breeding range.



Historic ferruginous hawk stick nest with a fallen rock in it



Volunteer Flick surveying

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area April Elk Survey: Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Sample conducted the final monthly winter elk count on the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area. No elk were observed on the valley floor and no mortalities were observed. Winter conditions are nonexistent in western Washington, with recent temperatures over 80 degrees and snowlines receding quickly above 3500 feet. The high winter elk count for 2015/16 was obtained on December 31 when Biologist Stephens recorded 353 elk on the Wildlife Area.

Priority Habitat and Species Mapping Update: Habitat Biologist Fornes led a Regional effort to update Priority Habitat and Species (PHS) maps. Biologists Anderson, Stephens, and Holman participated in the effort. Occurrences of species and habitats spanning trumpeter swans west of Chehalis to inland dunes in eastern Klickitat County were identified by the group. Additionally, different avenues were identified as a means to populate the PHS maps, including borrowing from mapping efforts conducted by DNR, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and species specific reports for some PHS wildlife. For more information on WDFW's Priority Habitat and Species program, see the website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>.

Willapa Hills Elk Herd Population Estimate: Biologists Holman, George, and Stephens managed data to generate a population estimate of the southern portion of the Willapa Elk herd

area, which consists of GMUs 681 (Bear River), 673 (Williams Creek), 506 (Willapa Hills), and 530 (Ryderwood). The total population estimate of this area is 4,412 elk. The estimate is generated from data collected during an aerial survey effort and uses a Sightability model. The overall calf to cow ratio was 45:100 and the bull to cow ratio was 18:100. The northern portion of the Willapa Hills elk herd area will be surveyed in 2017.

Fisher Mortality Recovery: Biologists Lewis and Stephens, Mt. Rainier National Park Ecologist Chestnut, and NPS technicians followed up on a mortality signal detected on a male fisher west of the Cispus Center. The animal was found to be in a small cavity at the base of a tree. He was found fully intact, so predation was ruled out. He did, however, have a couple of broken teeth and a mouth injury. The carcass was sent to the National Park Service Health Lab at Colorado State University to undergo a necropsy and hopefully determine the cause of death.

Western Pond Turtle Trapping: Biologists Bergh and Butler traveled to the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area to assist and observe Biologist Schmidt with western pond turtle trapping efforts. Western pond turtle populations are found within the South Puget Sound area and the Columbia River Gorge, with both populations affected by shell disease. This trip provided an opportunity to examine turtles with shell disease from the South Puget Sound population to compare with those from the Columbia River Gorge.



Western pond turtle at the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area

Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Grist Mill Storm Damage Cleanup and Timber Salvage: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald worked with a contractor this week to clean up and salvage several trees that came down this past winter during a wind storm. The trees will be hauled to the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area, where they will be used to help stabilize the riverbank and channel of the North Fork Toutle River while providing and protecting habitat for fish and wildlife. Several of the trees that came down were approximately 110 to 115 years old and ranged in diameter from

15 to about 40 inches. About three or four loads of logs were salvaged to be hauled to the Mudflow at a later date.



Storm Damage Cleanup and Timber Salvage

Canary Grass Control: Assistant Manager Sample treated several small patches of reed canary grass growing on the Mudflow Unit of Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area in an effort to prevent it from further establishing itself. Sample used an herbicide to treat no more than ¼ acre of canary grass spread across about ½ mile on the west end of the Mudflow. By controlling this species



now while it is at a relatively low distribution, more substantial efforts can be avoided if it were left to establish on a larger scale.

Reed Canary Grass establishing in a seasonal wetland on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Lewis & Clark College Volunteer Project: For the fourth consecutive spring, student volunteers from Lewis & Clark College

came to the Klickitat Wildlife Area to camp and perform a service project. They have exhibited great enthusiasm and efficiency in removing derelict fencing from within the Wildlife Area boundaries, which is a long-standing priority identified in the management plan. Removal of old, unmaintained fences that serve no purpose eliminates wires that can entangle wildlife and pose a safety hazard to people. This year, the group was large enough to break into two squads, and two projects were done in one day. Technician Davis led a group that removed a segment of mesh and barbed wire fencing, and Manager Van Leuven led a group that focused on a very old barbed wire fence. Both groups joined forces to finish up the barbed wire fence, and altogether approximately one half mile of old fence wire was removed with the help of student volunteers.

Many thanks go to out to this group for their able help in ridding the Wildlife Area of unneeded fencing!

Lewis & Clark College volunteers at Canyon Creek

Fuels Reduction Project Phase I - Western Gray Squirrel Survey: Technician Davis finished a survey of the Fuels Reduction Project Phase I area one year after the contract work was completed. The purpose of this survey was to determine whether the number of squirrel nests was greater, same, or less than before the work was done, and thereby gauge whether the work impacted this species within the project area. A preliminary review of the data indicates that two nests marked before the project commenced seem to have been lost. However, three nests have been added.



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

Private Lands

Hunt by Registration: Biologist Meyer worked with Biologists Stephens and Hand to construct two kiosks for a new Hunt by Registration site in Wahkiakum County.

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Eagle Nest: The Bald Eagle nest on the South Unit of the Shillapoo Wildlife Area was monitored this week for hatch success by Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald. It appears that there are at least 2 eagle chicks that hatched this year. This is the third year this pair of eagles has nested on the Wildlife Area, and in each of the two previous years the eagles have successfully raised and fledged two young. The area around the nest is closed to all public access until the young eagles have left the nest in order to minimize disturbances, but the nest can be seen from the roadway adjacent to Vancouver Lake Park.



Bald eagle nest on the South Unit of the Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Wildflower Viewing: There has been very fine weather on the Klickitat Wildlife Area this week, with temperatures well up into the 70s. The warm, sunny weather is bringing wildflowers into bloom. Wildflowers observed in bloom include cutleaf violet, sagebrush desert violet, upland larkspur, prairie stars, gold stars, pungent desert parsley, Columbia desert parsley, shooting stars, northwest saxifrage, and low pussytoes. It is also bringing people out to enjoy the greening hillsides and explore the roads and trails.



South Breaks Shooting Stars on the Klickitat Wildlife Area

Access

Mineral Lake: Access staff members Spangler and Rhodes replaced over 40 feet of railing on the dock because of theft of the railing earlier in the year. Newer torque head style screws were used to try to prevent future theft of the lumber.



Dock repair

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

Wildlife Conflict

Bear damage: Conflict Specialist Conklin took Conflict Specialist Peterson and Biologist Meyer out to visit a site where old bear damage has occurred and discussed the timber damage reporting process in preparation for the upcoming damage season.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE BY SUPPORTING OUR WORKFORCE, IMPROVING BUSINESS PROCESSES, AND INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

Firearms Certification: Biologist Meyer and Conflict Specialist Peterson attended firearms safety training provided by WDFW Law Enforcement and both passed their certification exams for both rifle and shotgun.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Snowy Plover Survey: Happy returns to Technician Raby, who started her first full week on the job! She and Refuge Biologist Ritchie conducted nest searching this week at Leadbetter. No new nests were discovered, but several pairs were observed and their location was noted. Raby will return to these areas next week to determine if the pairs have selected a nest site. Technician Raby also assisted Refuge Biologist Ritchie with an informational tour of the habitat restoration areas at Leadbetter Point for visiting Pacific Flyway Ambassadors Rodriguez-Ramos and McWilliams on April 6.

Biologists Michaelis conducted a snowy plover survey at Midway Beach on Friday. Sand was blowing from high winds, so nest searches were not conducted. He did observe several marked plovers, and many of them appeared to be paired for the breeding season.

While first arriving on the beach, he saw a family that he thought was digging ghost shrimp. After a while he was able to get a closer look through the spotting scope and discovered they were digging razor clams. The Twin Harbors Beach was closed that day due to high levels of toxins. He contacted Officer Dielman, who was able to contact the party after Biologist Michaelis had been instructed by the WDFW razor clam program to not let them leave the beach with the clams. They had dug a total of six limits, all with no valid license.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologist Tirhi and staff members began the annual trapping season for turtles at the Pierce County recovery site. Each April, basking and hoop traps are deployed for two weeks in an attempt to capture all turtles at the recovery site, and all adult breeding females in particular. The processing of turtles involved weighing, measuring, performing a health check, and taking photographs. A radio transmitter is attached to a percent of the breeding females in order to track them to their nest location during the nesting season from mid-May to mid-July. When nests are located, their eggs are taken to the Woodland Park Zoo to be hatched and head-started for one year. This enables the hatchlings to grow to a size in security, which increases their survival rate. These turtles are released the following year as one year olds. To date for the 2016 season, a total of 186 turtles were trapped and processed at the site, 184 turtles have yet to be captured, 17 females have been outfitted with a radio transmitter, and seven more females remain to be outfitted (three more to capture and four returning from treatment for

Ulcerative Shell Disease). Two students, staff members from Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium, and staff members from WDFW Region 5 assisted with processing this week. Of particular mention is the capture of one wild hatchling from the 2015 season and one three year old wild turtle (e.g. hatched in the wild at the Pierce County site and never taken into captivity for head-starting). Trapping will continue through the end of this week.



Wild hatchling located at the Pierce County recovery site during 2016 trapping



Wild 3-year old turtle trapped at the Pierce County recovery site in 2016



WDFW biologist Tirhi supervising a job-shadow student that assisted with Western Pond Turtle processing, 2016

Common Loon: Biologist Tirhi spent four hours surveying for common loons at Alder Lake, Pierce County. Due to the size of the lake, Tirhi was only able to survey the central section. Tirhi did not observe or hear loons on this visit, but did on every visit in spring 2015 (one adult). Tirhi spent time kayaking the shoreline of several secluded inlets in the south central portion of the lake, where an adult loon was seen in spring (breeding season) 2015 and which had significant potential nesting platforms.

Black-tailed Deer Study: Biologist Ament spent time on April 8, 2016

conducting doe collar downloads. Before heading to the field she reviewed the Vectronic's website to get the most current location for all five collared does and printed a map for each doe. Ryan Ollerman from the Fish Program joined Biologist Ament for the day. He and other

Fish Program staff members may be assisting with fawn collaring later in the spring, so this was a good opportunity to get him familiar with the doe locations. They were successful in completing downloads for four of the collared does. They did not get any visuals of any of the does, but did observe a few deer when travelling from one doe location. One of the deer had areas of obvious hair loss. Significant flagging was observed along clear cut areas en route to one deer location.

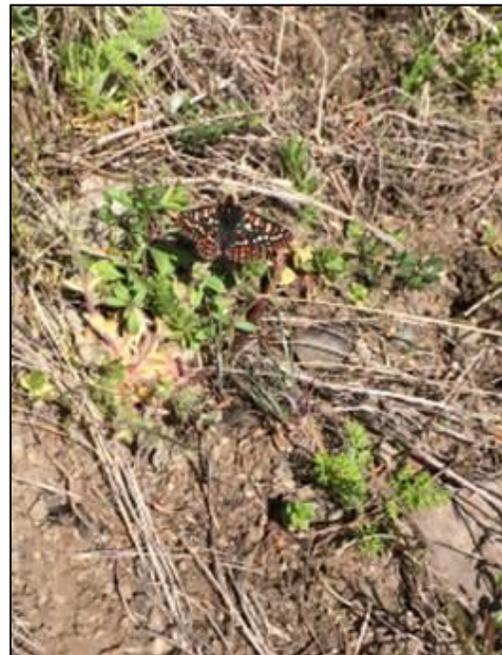


Fish Program Biologist Ryan Ollerman assists with completing a doe collar download



Deer with obvious hair loss on neck & side

Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly surveys: Biologist McMillan conducted Taylor's checkerspot butterfly surveys Wednesday through Friday, completing four transects within the southern extant site west of the Elwha River. Biologist Ament conducted surveys at the fifth transect within the same site. Three of the five transects had counts of one, four, and three adult checkerspots, while two of the transects had counts of zero. April 6-8 is the earliest that adult Taylor's checkerspots have been observed at this site. In 2015, the earliest documentation of adult checkerspots at this site was April 15. Lack of records this early for adults is partially due to the lack of completing surveys with suitable weather conditions during this timeframe.





One adult Taylor’s Checkerspot butterfly documented on April 6, 2016 at this location, west of the Elwha River. This is a record for earliest observation of adult checkerspots documented at sites west of the Elwha River.

The route Biologist Ament surveyed was located along an existing road that is maintained by DNR. The route was established with flagging stakes at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions were very good for the survey. There was full sunshine and shadows present for the entire survey. The temperature was a little cool, with an average around 53 degrees. No Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly adults or larvae were observed during the survey. Only a few other butterflies and moths were observed. Unfortunately, Biologist Ament observed two signs of vandalism. Log barricades that were established by the WCC crew to protect sensitive habitat were removed at one landing site. Biologist Ament re-established the barriers. At another landing site there were fresh motorcycle tire ruts in a sensitive Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly habitat area.



Barricade for Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly habitat removed



Barricade re-established to protect habitat



Motorcycle tire ruts located in sensitive Taylor's checkerspot butterfly habitat area along survey route

April 7, 2016: Biologist Ament conducted another Taylor's checkerspot butterfly survey at the northern extant site located west of the Elwha on April 7, 2016. The upper and lower survey routes were established and flagged at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions

were excellent. There was full sunshine and shadows present for the entire survey. The temperature for the survey ranged from 56.3 to 62.8 and there was basically no wind. A total of three Taylor's checkerspot butterfly adults were observed during the survey. This is a record for earliest adults being observed at this site, with 2015's first records being April 8. These were the first Taylor's checkerspot butterflies observed by Biologist Ament for the 2016 season. She did spend some time looking over host plants for larvae, but none were observed. She also did not observe any gray jays feeding on larvae. This effort at the site was basically to help determine if any adults had emerged yet. Biologist Ament walked nearly all of the defined Upper Route at the site. She would stop and spend time at bald areas that usually contained high concentrations of Taylor's checkerspot butterflies. She surveyed past the usual survey end time of 1600 and observed one of the adults at 1631.

Tick Collection and Transfer: Biologist Ament continued to collect ticks from the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly sites for DOH during the past few weeks. The ticks were usually removed from her clothing during a survey. However, one of the ticks was removed from her left lower arm. It crawled down her arm as she was driving home. She was successful in getting it into a vial with other ticks collected that day. Biologist Ament delivered a total of nine live ticks and five ticks in solution to the Health Department Office in Port Angeles on April 8, 2016.

Biologist McMillan has also collected many ticks during the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly surveys. The DOH was pleased to report that they had 25 live ticks packaged and heading north to Canada for some more intensive studies of the pathogens they are carrying. They wanted to thank Ament and McMillan for their participation in collecting ticks since most of their specimens are coming from the butterfly survey duo.

Satsop/Mason Deer Project: In 2009, WDFW initiated a study of the effects of forest management practices on black-tailed deer reproduction. Two of eight study sites are represented in District 15, including Mason and Satsop. An objective of this study involves determining sources of mortality among all radio-collared deer. The radio-collars in the Mason cluster have remote monitoring capabilities and text messages are sent when certain events occur, although periodic field checks are recommended. The Satsop collars require field monitoring to determine status. Two does and four fawns are being monitored in the Satsop cluster, while the Mason cluster has fourteen does and two fawns.

Biologist Murphie reports that two does in the Mason cluster died this week. One died due to cougar predation and the other died due to coyote predation based on the preponderance of

evidence found. A trail camera captured images of a coyote and turkey vultures at one of the kill sites.



Trail camera images of two turkey vultures and a coyote, taken at the scene of mortality of one collared Mason doe on April 4, 2016

Black Tailed Deer Study: Biologist Michaelis acquired the terminal from Scientist Rice, who had installed another new program. He was able to download all deer activity and GPS data from six of the seven remaining does in Capitol Forest that communicate with the terminal.

Harbor Seal Tagging: As part of a study on harbor seal diets in south Puget Sound, Biologist Murphie assisted the WDFW Marine Mammal Investigations Unit staff members in the capture and tagging of two adult male harbor seals last week. Both seals were caught by hand and landing net using a beach rush capture technique at Eagle Island. Additional capture attempts were made at the mouth of the Nisqually River, Gertrude Island, Port Orchard Rocks, and Blakely Rocks, but only one other young seal was captured. Additional efforts will continue next week.

WDFW and Nisqually Tribal employees, along with other volunteers, capture two male harbor seals at Eagle Island



Wildlife Areas

Agricultural Lease: Manager Belson, with assistance from Manager Gerchak, completed the bid solicitation and contract award process for an agricultural lease at the Davis Creek Wildlife Area Unit in Grays Harbor County. The 280-acre leased cropland will be managed through hay production to benefit wildlife by maintaining high-quality open fields, reducing invasive weeds, promoting food

resources for elk, and providing resting and foraging habitat for migratory waterfowl. Other components of the lease include designated management areas for dog training events and waterfowl hunting, covered storage for hay bales, and options for the lessee to provide in-kind services such as mowing the public use parking lot and spreading manure piles that remain onsite from previous agricultural operations. The lease was issued to Jesse Ratcliff of Lacey for a term of up to five years.

Private Lands /Conflict

Goose with arrow in Spanaway:

Despite efforts made by Conflict Specialist Blankenship, District Biologists, and Enforcement personnel, the goose with an arrow through its chest in Spanaway is still at large. The goose is in good condition, despite the arrow, and is able to fly very well. KIRO TV recently ran a story on this goose asking that the public contact WDFW if they have seen it. Needless to say, calls have been flooding in from Puyallup, Spanaway, and Lakewood. WDFW staff members and rehab centers have been able to locate the goose multiple times, but attempts to catch it have been unsuccessful. WDFW staff members will respond as reports come in to attempt to capture the goose safely and transport it to a wildlife rehabilitation center for veterinary care.



Photo provided by a member of the public who reported the location of the goose to Enforcement staff members

Goose in Lacey: Conflict Specialist Blankenship has received reports of a goose in Lacey that has fishing line wrapped around one of its feet. The goose is still mobile enough to fly and swim, but the fishing line is causing awkward mobility on land and in the water. Blankenship has responded twice to calls on this goose and on both occasions the goose has been in the middle of the lake. Blankenship will attempt to capture this goose in the upcoming week to remove the fishing line and assess any injuries it may have.



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

Private Lands /Conflict

Operation Clean Sweep: Seven Master Hunters showed up to assist an industrial forest landowner with an annual volunteer clean up. Landowner staff members reported they were very happy with the volunteer turn out and were able to achieve their goal of getting a set number of dump sites cleaned up. However, there are still lots of dump sites to cleanup. A total of 28 volunteers attended.

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

Wildlife Areas

Sale of Mobile at Bell Creek

Wildlife Area: Manager Belson, with the assistance of J. Franklin at the Department of Enterprise Services, successfully sold a 1975 Barr 70-ft mobile home through the DES online auction. The home was located at the Bell Creek Wildlife Area Unit near Sequim, Clallam County. The mobile home had been vacant since acquisition of the two acre lot more than 15 years ago and was a liability to the agency and an eyesore to the neighbor. After two rounds of advertisement through DES, the mobile home finally sold for \$100 to a buyer from Forks. Following the sale, the project was nearly abandoned when the buyer indicated he would be unable to complete some of the necessary site preparation work. This problem was solved when Manager Belson found help from two local WDFW volunteers and coordinated with Master Hunter Tucker to oversee the work. The removal of the trailer was delayed for a month due to saturated soils, but finally occurred during the first week of April. The project timeline was just over one year from initial agency approval to dispose of the mobile home to the actual removal from the wildlife area. The alternative approach of hiring a contractor to remove the mobile home would have been cost prohibitive at around \$10,000.



Private Lands /Conflict

Elk Damage in Littlerock: Conflict Specialist Blankenship, with the assistance of Master Hunter volunteers, has been working to keep elk out of a hay field in Littlerock. Blankenship and Master Hunter volunteers have been using nonlethal techniques to haze the 12 elk that have been

frequenting the area out of the field during the dawn and dusk hours. The hazing efforts have been successful and elk damage to the hay is currently being minimized.

Bear Conflicts: Conflict Specialist Blankenship has received multiple calls regarding a sow black bear with two cubs getting into garbage cans and bird feeders in Seabeck. Blankenship met with homeowners in the area where the bears have been frequenting and advised them to be bear aware by putting garbage cans indoors and removing all other attractants. The homeowners have been very cooperative by addressing all attractants that have been in the neighborhood. Although one bear was sighted recently in the area, there have been no reported incidents of these bears causing further damage. Blankenship will remain in contact with homeowners in the area regarding the three bears and will work on providing information for preventing further conflicts with bears when living in bear habitat.

Conflict Specialist Blankenship was contacted by Enforcement officers in the Port Orchard area regarding a yearling bear that has been sighted running across busy roadways in the area. Reports indicate that the yearling bear may be orphaned. Blankenship will assist Enforcement officers fielding reports of this bear.

Fladry Removal: Conflict staff members (Sundstrom and Leite) removed the fladry fencing and posts that were installed in the fall of 2015 to prevent elk damage to a landowner's valuable tulip crop. The elk were not a problem this season.

South Elma: This is a new elk conflict area. A Master Hunter was deployed to haze elk from a pasture/ hayfield. The Master Hunter reported that the elk were acting strange and kept trying to go in a direction we do not want them to go. The goal is to prevent them from crossing the river and to reduce use on the pasture. If they cross the Chehalis River they will find hundreds of acres of high quality grass crops and corn fields. This is a unique property. Biologist Harris spent some time looking for elk also. He was thinking that this one time a quad would be handy.

Bear Timber Damage: Biologist Harris and Technician Leite visited a small forest landowner property in Pacific County. This was a familiarization/ training trip. While on site they looked at previous year's damage and looked for signs of recent bear activity. No recent bear activity or sign was found. When leaving, they ended up speaking to an adjacent small forest landowner who had lots of opinions on WDFW. They spent the next couple of hours discussing misconceptions and misinformation that the landowner had. All in all it was a good discussion that may start a working relationship.

Black Bear Conflict

Grass Creek Bear: Early in the week Biologist Harris received a call from one of the landowners whom he had spoken to the week prior. The landowner reported that he had bungee corded his garbage can to the side of his house and the bear still got into it. Biologist Harris explained there was a misunderstanding and that the garbage can should be placed in a locked area. There have been no further reports of bear conflict from this area. He hopes that this solves the problem.

Grayland Bear: Biologist Harris spent some time in the late evening and early mornings on garbage day looking for tipped over garbage cans. In the area of the last report he noticed that cans were not out until the morning. No recent complaints were filed and he did not see any tipped over garbage cans in the area of concern. With a little luck, the sow and cub may have moved on.

Long Beach Cranberries: It was quiet this past week with the exception that some of the growers have given hunting access permission to some of the spring bear permit holders.

Grayland Cranberries: Biologist Harris spent some time in the early morning and late evening looking for deer and bear. Several deer were seen, but use is still not high, indicating the buds are not quite to their liking. Each bud is a potential berry, so the deer do more damage than many think. No bear were observed in the bogs.