

# Wildlife Program

Week of May 2 – May 8, 2016

## **WOLF ACTIVITIES**

### **Region 1 Wolf Activities**

**Nonlethal Deterrents and Lethal Removal Protocol Conference Call:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and other WDFW staff members discussed recent Wolf Advisory Group and staff meetings about wolf management. Recent producer contact, deterrent training, readiness plans, and deterrence plans were shared.

**Wolf Event Asotin County:** Biologist Earl continued daily check-ins with the producer who lost a calf to wolves. The producer found another calf carcass, but when he and Earl returned to the area the remains were missing. Earl and Natural Resource Technician Wade searched the area extensively but were unable to locate any tracks or evidence. Earl checked trail cameras and fox lights to make sure everything is operating properly. Images collected showed no predators.

**Wolves Sighted:** Biologist Earl checked trail cameras near a pond where wolves were spotted amongst cattle. Over 4,000 images and videos were captured with no signs of wolves.

**Cow Carcass:** Biologist Earl, Natural Resource Technician Wade, and Officer King responded to a call of a cow carcass near Cloverland. A necropsy was performed and the cause of death was determined as unknown.

## **REGION 1**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

**Lincoln Cliffs Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Lowe surveyed the Lincoln Cliffs bighorn sheep for lambing activity. At least four ewes, all unmarked, in the Lincoln group have new lambs compared to one seen two weeks ago. Ewes from the Whitestone group were not in a visible location. Staff members and locals will continue monitoring the herd for productivity over the next several weeks.

***Some of the first lambs of the year in Lincoln Cliffs***



**Ferruginous Hawk Surveys:** Biologist Lowe completed the second round of occupancy surveys for several historical ferruginous hawk territories near Crab Creek in eastern Lincoln County, and confirmed the Stromberger territory to be the only active, nesting one. Other nesting birds were also found,

including a Swainson's hawk and a great-horned owl. Several red-tailed hawk nests were found with chicks, and one was sharing a tree with a porcupine!



*Ferruginous hawk in the Stromberger territory*



*Great-horned owl and porcupine, both spotted during a ferruginous hawk survey in Lincoln County*

**Lincoln County Prairie Grouse:** Biologist Atamian checked on the locations of the two remaining GPS marked males. Both are alive and hanging around the lek still, but with a bit more roaming in the afternoon. Grouse Technician Walker tracked radio marked hens, ran a corvid/raptor survey, surveyed the sage grouse lek, and worked on the camera traps for getting band resighting. A second nest, the first hatch of the year, was predated, and a hen thought to be nesting was confirmed to be a mortality instead. Four hens remain on nest, hopefully to hatch next week. Atamian and Walker joined Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Biologist Lowe and Botanist Lorna to measure the vegetation at the two predated nests and the one hatched nest. Atamian searched the old Bachelor Prairie lek area for sharp tail activity, but did not detect any.



*Predated sage grouse nest*



*Measuring vegetation at sage grouse nest site*

**Grassland Restoration:** Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch and Natural Resource Worker Jim Bauer started mowing recently restored shrub-steppe grassland fields on BLM land and Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area. This early mowing is to cut back weeds such as tumble mustard and keep them from going to seed before the native plants get tall enough to be hit by the mower blades. A supplemental rented mower and tractor allowed Finch and Bauer to mow at the same time.



*Finch and Bauer mowed newly restored fields this week*

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

**CRP-Palouse SAFE:** Lewis met with the local FSA CRP representative to discuss new State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) projects. Since the announcement of the General CRP announcement and due low admittance, there are several landowners looking to enroll in SAFE.

Lewis also worked with FSA and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to determine SAFE forb/wildflower planting areas on a project in the Dusty area. Lewis assisted NRCS with GPS work and determining field boundaries.

Lewis also completed a site visit with NRCS to evaluate the establishment of native grasses on a 60 acre SAFE project in the Ewan area of Whitman County. The grasses are establishing nicely, but will require weed management in the near future.



**Washington (WA) State Envirothon:** Lewis began preparing the wildlife station test for the Washington State Envirothon. The Envirothon is a natural resource focused program for high schools and students with an interest in studying natural resources. The event will take place in Pullman May 18-19.

**Bear Killing Calves:** Biologist Earl worked with Biologist Dice and Officer King to address a bear killing cattle on private property near the Grande Ronde River. Earl talked to the owner, who informed him that he had contacted a Wildlife Services trapper to handle his problem.

**Producer Meeting:** Supervisor McCanna and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with two cattle producers after a conference call with two state representatives and department staff members. Nonlethal hazing efforts and lethal control was discussed to address the damage from deer to their alfalfa fields and hay stacks. Bennett will provide McCanna a plan to be reviewed and signed by the producers and the department.

**4-O Ranch Wildlife Area – Cleanup:** Wildlife Area staff members spent three days cleaning up past winter livestock feeding sites with assistance from the producer and his hired men. Old straw, manure, and other debris is being picked up and spread on a nearby agricultural field. Just getting there with tractors and equipment has been a time consuming project.

*Old manure and straw pile at 4-O Wildlife Area*





*WDFW equipment used for cleanup*



*Cleaned up site at Mace place*

## **REGION 2**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** Biologist Finger met with Grant County Mosquito Control District #1 Manager Moser to discuss sampling locations and visit field sites for the upcoming deposition rate study. This effort is intended to provide ground deposition rate estimates from ultra-low volume pesticide applications, which are a first step in performing additional experiments to evaluate potential impacts to northern leopard frogs or other non-target species. Afterwards, Finger was treated to a tour of the aircraft used in applying larvicides, which consist of bacteria impregnated materials such as corn husk or sand.

***Grant County Mosquito Control District Manager Moser and Vector Ecologist Johnson observing an adult northern leopard frog in an area being considered for sampling in the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area*** – Photo by Rich Finger



#### **Private Lands/Access**

**State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE):** Great strides were made by Biologist Comstock, ensuring that Biologist Sean Dougherty was correctly filling out important federal

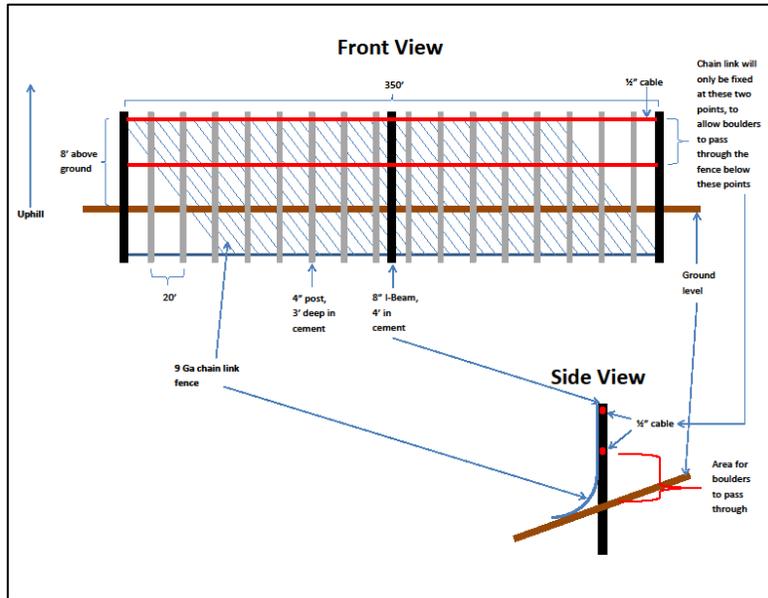
documents associated with SAFE in coordination with NRCS staff members. Additionally, Biologist Dougherty did meet with a landowner that had enrolled in CP-33 (field border program that establishes habitat around agricultural fields). The landowner was very excited about the program and its benefits both financially and also to wildlife. Biologist Dougherty went over all the program specifications and provided an overview of the work that would be required. Biologist Comstock spent a considerable amount of time working with NRCS staff members to provide them all the information they need to sign off on two SAFE plans. Biologist Comstock created maps and updated a SAFE plan for a producer in Douglas County after she assessed leave areas. Biologist Comstock received another SAFE sign up in Grant County. With the recent announcement of the general CRP sign up results, we expect to see more SAFE being enrolled. FSA is promoting SAFE to landowners whose offers were not accepted for the general sign up.

**Douglas County Wildfire Restoration:** Private Lands Biologist Braaten received free antelope bitterbrush plants from the Mule Deer Foundation this week. Six hundred seventy-five plants were planted on Alameda Flats in Douglas County in an area that had burned thousands of bitterbrush plants in 2012.



*Planting antelope bitterbrush* – Photos by Eric Braaten, WDFW

**97A Sheep Fence:** With remarkable persistence and patience, Specialist Bridges was finally able to see the construction/modification of the Highway 97A big horn sheep fence to a conclusion. For the past three years, falling rocks have completely destroyed a 175 foot section of the fence. Each time this has happened, it has resulted in repair costs between \$4,000 and \$5,000. In an effort to reduce or eliminate this recurring cost, Bridges developed a fence design that will allow the falling rocks to pass through the fence while keeping the fence operating as designed, keeping the bighorn sheep on the right side of the fence. See the diagram below that shows the design of the fence.



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

**Wildlife Management**

**Goose Nest Surveys:** Biologist Rowan worked with Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA) volunteers to perform goose nest surveys on three islands within Moses Lake. Robin and Susan Hickok provided a phenomenal gourmet BBQ afterwards, with oysters provided by WWA, and great fun was had by all. Crest Island had numerous goose and red-winged blackbird nests, along with a couple mallard nests. Geese used an interesting mix of cover types as pictured below. A boat of people approached the island as we were leaving and were asked to stay off the island due to the significant disturbance it would cause nesting waterfowl and songbirds.



***Crest Island clunker clutch*** – Photo by Rowan





***TEV nest*** – Photo by Rowan

**Waterfowl Invertebrates:** Biologist Rowan assisted Biologist McPherson with invertebrate sampling and set up a basic Access database to store the data. Biologist McPherson is creating a photo catalog of invertebrates collected. Photo catalog will be beneficial to future projects dealing with invertebrates. Biologist McPherson installed transducer and bathymetry equipment on the Excel boat for next week's depth measurements on Ephrata Lake and TD2. Biologists Rowan and McPherson toured and evaluated the Gloyd food plots recently planted with District Wildlife Biologist Finger. Plantings were just beginning to emerge, so it was a little too early to assess whether seed was planted deep enough to overcome the thickness of the duff layer from decades of accumulation of cattail and bulrush duff.



***Haliplidae (crawling water beetle)*** – Photo by Chattan McPherson



***Notonectidae (backswimmer)*** – Photo by Chattan McPherson

*Chironomidae (non-biting midge larvae)*

– Photo by Chattan McPherson

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



**Wildlife Areas**

**Tonasket Middle School Ecological Integrity Monitoring:**

Manager Haug met with students and faculty from Tonasket Middle School to perform Ecological Integrity Monitoring (EIM) as part of WDFW’s Citizen’s Science Initiative. The students navigated to and retook photos taken in 2008 at 14 different sites on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. The students were instructed the proper way to use GPS units, a compass, and cameras to retake photos in the four cardinal directions. They also gathered data from each site and learned about fire ecology, prescribed burning, and various management techniques. Students will continue their EIM project for years to come and may expand to other units of the wildlife area.



*From left to right: Manager Haug talks to the students about the wildlife area and objectives for the day (photo by Parker Haug), Mrs. Haug’s group discusses the photo point location and measures the proper distance on the Tonasket 6<sup>th</sup> grade group shot near Connors Lake – Photos by Justin Haug*

**Highlights - Environmental Education:** Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer conducted our annual Herpetology field course (with an emphasis on snake surveys) for the North Cascades Institute. Perfect weather made for a banner day, with 42 individual snakes from four different

species tallied. This event also served as a trial run for future efforts to conduct health exams on wild snakes to gather baseline data ahead of the possible arrival of Snake Fungal Disease now affecting snakes in Eastern states. All snakes handled appeared healthy and energetic, and all participants and specimens finished the day injury-free despite the frenetic handling pace. A great time was had by all, including one student about to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday who joined her son for the excursion, and all agreed it was a wonderful way to celebrate Mother's Day!



*Western racer. Who has who?*



*Northern Pacific rattlesnake*



*Long-toed Salamander*

**Oden Road Fire Study:** Manager Haug led the photo monitoring section of the annual Oden Road Fire Study put on by the Okanogan Land Trust and Okanogan High School's advanced biology and ecology of the Okanogan class. This was the sixth year of the study, which looks at the effects of a wildfire on a landscape level. Representatives from WDFW, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), NRCS, Methow Conservancy, and Okanogan Land Trust were in attendance to provide their expertise. The students gathered data on soils, vegetation, bird diversity, and insect activity, and will present their findings to a large audience later next month.



*From left to right: Soils specialist Leslie Michel, from the Conservation District, discusses various soils from within the burn, and the Okanogan High School students and volunteers pose for a group shot – Photos by Justin Haug*



*Red head and American avocet in Douglas County – Photos by Eric Braaten, WDFW*



*One of several milkweed patches observed in the North Potholes Reserve while scouting for deposition sampling sites. Milkweed is easy to detect and has been encountered frequently in recent days, suggesting that milkweed surveys can begin at any time now – Photo by R. Finger*



***Banner day for herps*** – Photo by Scott Fitkin



***Scanning the landscape for hawks*** – Photo by Cameron Eddy



***FEMA/EMD/CAMP & MWA staff members visiting Big Buck's burned fences*** – Photo by Sherry Furnari



***Rainbows in the valley*** – Photo by Brandon Troyer



*From left to right: A calliope hummingbird builds a nest near Little Loup Loup Creek, early morning fishing on Conners Lake – Photos by Justin Haug*

### **REGION 3**

#### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

##### **Wildlife Areas**

**L.T. Murray Wildlife Area:** Manager Winegeart coordinated with Department of Ecology (DOE) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the Taneum Creek elk fence construction project. DOE was not aware that the WCC contract had been finalized, but everyone is on the same page now. Assistant Manager Hunt took measurements on the support structures that will serve as the pattern for the ones to be used for the electrified fence/stream crossing to be constructed over Taneum Creek on the Heart K.

##### **Wildlife Management**

**Ferruginous Hawks:** District Biologist Fidorra continued to organize ferruginous hawk occupancy surveys and coordinated volunteers. Occupancy surveys will continue until May 15. Ferruginous hawks have thus far been detected at 18 of 142 sites, nine of which have confirmed nests.

**Bat Detector Placement:** District Biologist Fidorra reviewed locations for bat detector placement and installed detectors at two locations. Fidorra will be deploying bat recording devices at eight locations across Districts 4 & 5 from May-August.

**Field Borders:** Private Lands Biologist Stutzman wrote a conservation plan for a Field Borders program (CP33) application in Benton County. Stutzman also met with FSA staff members in

Benton County to discuss SAFE outreach for landowners whose General CRP applications were not accepted.

**SAFE:** Private Lands Biologist Stutzman discussed some specifics of SAFE with two Franklin County landowners who are interested in the program. Stutzman will do a field visit this week to evaluate their current stand condition.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Manager Confer Morris participated in a conference call with Regional Director Livingston and Environmental Planner Posner to discuss Wenas target shooting public meetings and potential noise study needs. She also participated in a conference call with Section Manager Whipple and Environmental Planner Posner to discuss the noise study and status of the project.

**Wenas Target Shooting:** Manager Confer Morris spoke with Representative Dent regarding the Wenas target shooting proposal. He has heard concerns from some of his constituents and the NRA about restricting where the public can target shoot on the wildlife area. Subsequently, a field meeting was proposed by Regional Director Livingston and legislative staff members are working on a date.

**Tree Removal:** Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker 2 Barbosa removed a large tree that had fallen over the weekend and was blocking the entrance to Teanaway Junction.



*Tree blocking Teanaway Junction entrance*



*Teanaway Junction entrance after tree removal*

**L.T. Murray Wildlife Area:** Central Washington Incident Command Center (CWICC) called Manager Winegeart Monday to report a fire on the L.T. Murray, just one day after the gates opened. Apparently a campfire was left burning near the Robinson Canyon elk feed site. The

fire occurred in fairly green fuels and had only spread to a 50 square foot area before a DNR engine was able to respond. Technician Leuck found the burned area where DNR had dug a ditch around the fire. He also searched the area for illegal wood cutting, but found none.

**Fund Raising:** Assistant Manager Hunt worked with Manager Winegeart, Lands Program Manager Hendrix, and Back Country Horsemen’s representative Jason Ridlon to finalize plans and permitting for their May 14 fund raising ride on the Murray.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Natural Resource Technician 2 Medina and Assistant Manager Sak went to the Rattlesnake Slope Unit to spray out the fire line and keep it maintained.



*Rattlesnake Slope fire line*

**L.T. Murray Wildlife Area:** Natural Resource Technician 2 Leuck traveled the green dot system in the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area looking for offroad travel or use of closed roads. Leuck put up trail cams to catch the trespassers and also put up signs where needed. He will periodically check the cameras and report findings to Enforcement.



*Horned lizard on Rattlesnake Slope*



*New signage posted on an illegal road*

**Wildlife Management**

**Student Shadowing:** District Biologist Fidorra met with a Legacy High School senior interested in a career in the wildlife field. The student will be shadowing Fidorra one day later in the month to observe and discuss working with WDFW.

**Deer Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand surveyed several fruit tree and wine grape operations in southern Benton

County above McNary Dam for deer damage issues. Five deer were hazed from a vineyard that had minor damage to several rows of grapes. No deer were observed in the tree fruit units, but moderate damage was detected in a planting of young cherry trees. Nonlethal techniques such as

LP gas cannons and hazing will be employed to hopefully alleviate the damage impacts.



*Deer damage to cherry trees in southern Benton County*

**Deer Damage Monitoring:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand traveled to the Paterson area to monitor a wine grape vineyard for deer damage. No deer or damage was observed. Nonlethal techniques are currently being used, but at this point have not been very effective.

**DPCAs:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to contact landowners in Corral Canyon elk area to acquire additional information to develop new Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements prior to the start of the summer bull elk season.

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

**Wildlife Areas**

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Manager Buser and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber finished converting the army truck to use modern style vehicle batteries and shuffled the truck from Windmill Ranch to Sunnyside.

**Water Control:** Manager Buser worked on clearing water control structures at Bailie Youth Ranch.

**Team Meeting:** Manager Buser attended the District 8 team meeting in Selah.

**GIS Webinar:** Manager Buser participated in a GIS data collection Webinar.

**Conference Call:** Manager Buser participated in a conference call with Fiscal Analyst Nelson from Olympia to review wildlife area budgets and tracking measures.

## **REGION 4**

### **GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE**

#### **Wildlife Management**

*A Washington common loon that ingested derelict fishing tackle. Besides the obvious physical detriment derelict tackle has on wildlife, use of lead tack can result in lead poisoning in wildlife. One manner of reducing this risk is voluntary derelict gear removal by user groups and others, as well as fishing line recycling programs* – Photo by G. Gumm



**State Sensitive Common Loon:** Biologist Smith surveyed District 12 for loon activity. Adult loons were documented (singly and in pairs) on area lakes. Bird behavior indicates nesting activity may be underway, although no nests have been confirmed yet. Continued monitoring will be required to document nesting success/failure. Smith also investigated damage to one of the nesting platforms deployed on an area lake. Branches attached to the platform (to deter nest predation from above) had been removed. Upon further inspection, it was determined a beaver may have removed the branches for personal use, resulting in the loss of a trail camera mounted to document platform activity. A new method of securing cameras will be engineered for future use.



*Loon nest platform after the branch “roof” was apparently removed by a beaver*



*One of the adult loons monitored this past week*



*Western Wildlife Outreach has a new graphic design on their educational trailer and a new grizzly bear mount*

**Breeding Waterfowl Aerial Surveys:** District 13 staff members flew westside transects for breeding ducks. These low level helicopter transect surveys have replaced the traditional ground-based observations to provide a more robust statistical survey as well as align better with national surveys. District 13 staff members provided flight following for other westside surveys when primary staff members were unavailable.

**Invasive Species Surveys:** Staff members from District 12 and 13 continued with survey/trapping efforts that started last fall for prohibited invasive species in south Snohomish County waters.

**Estuary Restoration Monitoring:** District 13 staff members assisted Ecostudies Institute biologists with two shorebird surveys covering Skagit and Port Susan bays at low tide and at high tide. Only about 2000 birds were seen. The surveys were conducted during the migration period when shorebirds stop in our bays to fuel up on their way to higher latitudes for the breeding season.



*Flying towards Port Susan Bay and over Leque Island*

**Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan:** Biologist Yarborough provided edits to the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan chapter on wildlife issues. Whatcom County’s Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide growth in unincorporated areas in coordination with the new plans of its cities.

**East/West Bear Project:** Biologist Smith continued to collect cameras from bear den

locations. These cameras had been placed earlier in the winter to document emergence and cub numbers.

**Prohibited Wildlife Management – Invasive Species:** District 12 and 13 continued efforts for invasive species monitoring. Individuals were trapped. Efforts will now switch gears to expand reconnaissance, gain landowner permission, and develop trapping techniques.

**Protected Wildlife Management – White-Nose Syndrome:** District 12 sent samples and equipment back to USGS National Wildlife Health Center. District 12 will now be switching to taking samples/examining potential sites, as well as engaging in outreach where possible. District 12 participated in ongoing internal conferencing and correspondence to devise short and long-term efforts and planning in order to manage white-nose syndrome and increase bat knowledge from a management standpoint, research wise, and within the general public.

A decontamination trailer will be picked-up from La Conner as soon as possible and retrofitted for field work. Decontamination “on the fly” will then progress.

WDFW and collaborators are asking the public to report dead or dying/sick bats via our hotline found at the link below. Decontamination, outlined in below links, is essential to assist in the management of this pathogen, particularly in the research, management, and recreationist communities, including caving, climbing, and canyoneering.

Please visit the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/wns/>. More information can be found at <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>

*A western redback salamander found while on bat roost feature reconnaissance with USGS and USFWS – Photo by C. Anderson*



**Protected Wildlife Management – Take**

**Authorization:** District 12 received a report and pictures regarding the take of a red-tailed nest due to safety and damage needs.

Eggs were donated to the University of Washington Burke Museum – Ornithology Collection. Although relatively rare, more and more wildlife species are adapting to use of built structures due to many factors given the situation, including lack of habitat, predator avoidance, stability/predictability of built structures over natural, as well as just keying in on the usability of these features. Unfortunately, this is often to the detriment of the animal (e.g. use of an electrified substation to nest), as well as the management and safety of these structures. More effort will be done moving forward to educate the utility, transportation, port authority, and other industries in order to provide management consideration and a game plan, as well as try to avoid the take of Washington’s wildlife overall.

Another instance this week involved two osprey nests, including one on a cell tower and another on a light standard. Calls came in regarding legality and some related concerns. District 12 relayed the permit process and background, biology of the species, human conflict management needs, safety and damage concerns, and, in one instance, the Memorandum of Agreement between WDFW and USDA APHIS Wildlife Services regarding removal of nests of wildlife in the state of Washington.



*A bridge nest of a red-tailed hawk that unfortunately, due to safety reasons of a nearby project and likelihood of unauthorized take, was removed, with eggs catalogued at Burke Museum – Photos by WSDOT*

**Protected Wildlife Management – Assistance to Habitat Regarding Priority Habitats and Species Non-jurisdictional Management Consultation in District 12:** Anderson assisted the area habitat biologist, when requested, to provide for project and local jurisdictional requests for wildlife management consideration centered around the WDFW Priority Habitats and Species Wildlife Management Program. More information can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Region 4 Habitat and Wildlife biologists met with Regional and Headquarters management to discuss continuation and the pathway forward of transitioning the Habitat Program Priority Habitat and Species Program from wildlife biologists to habitat biologists.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Crescent Lake Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Werkhoven Dairy to discuss the 2016 planting plan for the Crescent Lake Agricultural Lease.

**Spencer Island Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with a new Eagle Scout candidate to provide 20 native conifers to the planting project on the unit. The trees came from the Cherry Valley nursery which was started in 2013 by two Eagle Scout projects. The new scout will be providing 30 native trees and shrubs, which will also be donated. This portion of the long-term project is scheduled to be completed by the end of May.

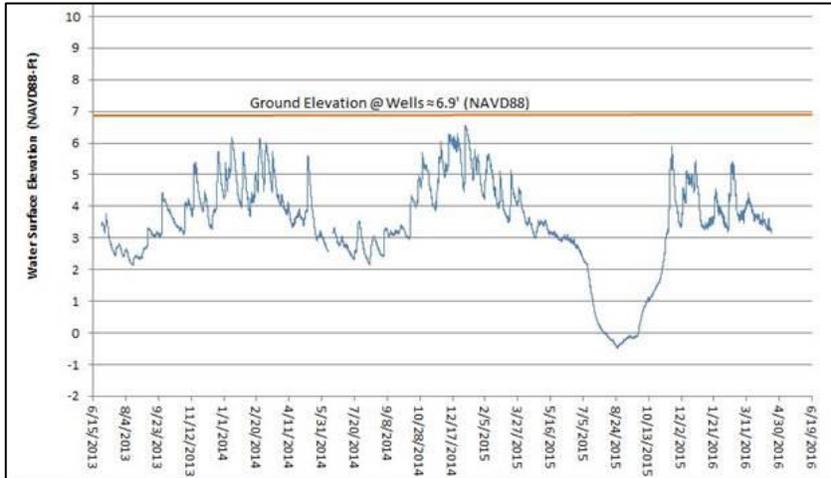
**Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project Grant Writing:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw had a conference call with Ducks Unlimited. The group addressed questions and comments provided by reviewers for the Salmon Recovery Funding Board grant. He also participated in a Webinar to learn how to answer questions about Viable Salmon Population (VSP) parameters that are asked in a Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration (PSAR) grant opportunity.

**Eide Road Vacation Request:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw drafted a summary sheet for review by Snohomish County regarding WDFW's request for the county to vacate Eide Road, which is located on Leque Island and is needed prior to construction of the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project.

**Leque Island Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Review:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Lands Agent Kye Iris provided information requested by DNR regarding the Leque Island project, which was needed for DNR to determine whether or not any project actions on DNR-controlled tidelands will trigger permitting.

**Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a weekly conference call meeting with PSNERP staff members to discuss the latest developments. Acting Regional Director Link contacted a representative with the Tulalip Tribes to discuss a PSNERP funding opportunity for design of a project on Tulalip land near the mouth of Quilceda Creek.

**Fir Island Farm Water Level Data:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw began processing data that was collected at the site between October 2015 and April 2016.



*Here is an example of water level data collected near Fir Island Farms, which shows seasonal variations of groundwater levels in an adjacent farm field*

**Lake Terrell Unit  
Agricultural Field Planting:**  
Natural Resource Technician Deyo continued working on prepping the agricultural fields at Lake Terrell for this year's barley and faba bean

plantings for winter waterfowl feeding. Technician Deyo, Private Lands Biologist Otto, and Manager Kessler planted five acres of faba beans and black oil sunflower seeds in one field. This is a new planting at Lake Terrell, as faba beans have not been planted here before. At other sites, faba beans have proven to be a very good food source for wintering waterfowl.



***Faba bean planting***

**Wood Duck Nest Boxes:**

Manager Kessler distributed wood duck nest box materials to a local volunteer who is working with another father and son to build several wood duck boxes.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Washington Breeding Waterfowl**

**Survey:** Biologist DeBruyn participated in the aerial survey to census breeding ducks and geese statewide. Areas in the North Puget Sound lowlands were surveyed from a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter.



***Canvasbacks from the air***

**Recreational Experiences – Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary:** District 12 worked with fiscal, Region 4 Administrative Assistant Host, members of HQ Wildlife Administrative, Public Affairs, Region 1 Wildlife Program Manager Robinette, and Region 4 Wildlife Program Manager and Acting Regional Manager Link to formalize and move forward with transitioning the state Backyard Wildlife from Regions 1 and 4 to Headquarters, housed in Diversity and Wildlife Admin. This will provide one contact for the program, afford more time for biologists to work with Admin and Public Affairs to review and update outreach, provide for project efforts, and widen the coverage of the program to the entire state. District 12 will continue to



work with peers to organize and provide for a streamlined transition.

*Banana slug, one of our many native mollusks* – Photo by C. Anderson

### Wildlife Areas

**Corson Preserve:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with community volunteers to discuss a project to be completed by

members of the Snohomish Sportsman’s Club. The club will be making repairs to net pens, boardwalks, and trails within the unit in an effort to instill “community service” ethics within the club members.

**City of Stanwood Support Letter:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw sent a letter of support to the City of Stanwood for a project the city is developing that could potentially provide recreation features and access to Leque Island through a boat launch across the Stillaguamish River.

**Lake Terrell Pheasant Pen Repairs:** A Master Hunter volunteer worked several days this week making repairs and improvements to the pheasant pens at the Lake Terrell Unit. He weed-whacked the tall grass, replaced boards, and installed all new hinges to the doors in between the runs.

**Mowed Hiking Paths for Weed Control:** Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed walking and hiking paths at Lake Terrell and mowed to clear fields of blackberry bushes.



**Triploid Trout Fish Plant at Lake Terrell:** The Bellingham Fish Hatchery workers released 650 triploid trout at Lake Terrell.

*Triploid trout fish plant*

**WWRP RCO Grant Application:** Manager Kessler completed and submitted an application for a RCO

Trail Development project on the Tennant Lake Unit. This trail project, if approved and funded, will create almost a mile of new ADA accessible trail that would connect three different access points. The dike top trail along the Nooksack River would connect to the Clay Pit Pond trail, and a new trail would head north along Tennant Creek to the existing raised wood boardwalk.

### **Private Lands/Access Management**

**Spring Bear Hunt:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard checked a gate in the Monroe Unit of the spring bear hunt to verify the gate was missing a lock. The lock was missing and Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto coordinated with partners to fix the gate. Biologist Wingard also received a report of another bear harvested in the North Skagit Unit. Otto completed gates checks on the Monroe and North Skagit spring bear units. Otto found minimal issues with gates and locks and was able to correct any issues onsite. While in the field, Otto made contact with multiple DNR staff members, timber company personnel, and a permit bear hunter. Natural Resource Technician Otto met up with Officer Valentine, gave him maps of the North Skagit Unit, and showed him gates on the west side of the unit.

**Wildlife Viewing:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto opened the Swan Road wildlife viewing and diversity site after completing wildlife viewing and diversity contracts. Biologist Wingard coordinated with Olympia staff members on the possibility of including wildlife viewing and diversity sites in the Reservation system. These sites provide opportunities for the public to view wildlife on private lands. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell coordinated with regional Land Trust agencies on wildlife viewing opportunities in and around their properties.

**Migratory Bird Enhancement Forage Projects:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto attended a meeting with a local farmer who will be planting a large amount of barley for migratory bird forage. During the meeting, Biologist Wingard, Otto, and the farmer discussed the planting schedule and finalized the contract. Otto continued herbicide applications on migratory bird forage sites in Skagit and Whatcom counties in preparation for barley planting. Otto was able to spray close to five acres. Additionally, Otto met with two landowners about barley planting. One landowner committed to a 10-15 acre barley plot in Whatcom County. The landowner will work closely with other Region 4 Private Lands staff members as the planting season progresses, with the possibility of getting some smaller barley plots in for this season. Biologist Wingard also toured waterfowl quality hunt units in Whatcom County to observe how the planting season was progressing.

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

### **Wildlife Management**

**Wildlife Conflict Monitoring & Management:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman monitored elk activity in the Day Creek area and found temporary fencing has been deterring elk activity on 40 acres of a grass crop. Recent elk activity in Day Creek has been focused on an unharvested

crop of Jerusalem artichoke that has begun to regrow. Motion activated sensors were installed on a recent hay harvest in Skagit County to deter elk activity while bails were awaiting organic certification. Witman responded to a report of a car versus elk collision on South Skagit Highway near Finney Creek in Skagit County. Multiple reports indicated the struck elk was a collared cow. Attempts to locate the elk were unsuccessful, but surrounding telemetry information from the collar indicated the elk was still alive and active in the area. Additional monitoring will take place next week.

Biologist Smith continued to provide callers with information on deterring and lethal control of birds damaging structures. More information can be found at the WDFW Living with Wildlife website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/woodpeckers.html>

**North Cascades Elk:** Biologists Yarborough and DeBruyn responded to numerous calls regarding special elk permits in District 14. Questions ranged from access on private property, bull to cow ratios, and general topography issues.

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Cherry Valley Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with a Drainage District 7 Commissioner to discuss ditch maintenance within the Cherry Valley Unit. Debris and vegetation is clogging many portions of the ditches, severely impacting the unit's ability to drain.

**Fir Island Farm:** Manager Rotton continued to investigate methods for native seed planting on the estuary restoration project.

**Island Unit:** Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove made final field preparations on about 50 acres of the Island Unit for corn and fava bean planting. Cosgrove and Natural Resource Scientist Meis planted about 22 acres of fava beans on the Island Unit and coordinated with a volunteer corn planter on the field locations for planting about 20 acres of corn on the Island Unit. Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers and assisted in barging corn and fava bean planting equipment, seed, and fertilizer to the Island Unit. Cosgrove assisted with barging off planting equipment the following day.

**Samish Unit:** Manager Rotton met with a contractor to discuss field preparation conditions and timeline for planting. Field preparations on the site continue and the planting is estimated to occur early next week. Meis continued to treat noxious weeds on the Samish Unit.

### **Private Lands/Access Management**

**Waterfowl Hunt Unit Breakdown:** Natural Resource Technician Otto dismantled waterfowl hunt signs at the La Conner office and stored them for the offseason.

### **Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordinator**

**Hunter Education Instructor Support:** Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey answered questions on becoming a hunter education instructor. Dazey sent out one applicant packet. Dazey

communicated with the instructor who taught the Chinese language class to determine what we can do to improve the next class. A date for the next class in Chinese is being researched.

**Hunting Clinic:** Coordinator Dazey spoke with the Ducks Unlimited chapter president to gauge interest in partnering with WDFW to conduct a waterfowl clinic.

**Master Hunter Support:** Coordinator Dazey sent out a request to Master Hunter applicants to gauge if there is interest in facilitating study groups.

**Olympia Awards Ceremony:** Coordinator Dazey edited and forwarded two write-ups for recipients at the upcoming Olympia awards ceremony.

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

##### **Wildlife Management**

**Wildlife Conflict Program Workshop:** Region 4 Wildlife Conflict Program staff members attended the annual Wildlife Conflict Program workshop in Ellensburg, WA. While at the workshop, many topics were discussed, including Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement revisions, livestock depredation investigation procedures, Master Hunter coordination, clarification on conflict staff member roles and responsibilities, and data sharing and camera procedures. Overall, the meeting was eventful and staff members were able to gain some new information.

**Priority Habitats and Species Meeting:** Districts 12, 13, and 14 staff members attended a joint meeting between the Habitat and Wildlife Programs to discuss the use of the PHS program local jurisdictions request for technical assistance.

**Private Land Access Program Meeting:** WDFW is seeking to increase private lands access in western Washington. Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell attended a meeting with Small Game Section Manager Curtis, Game Section Manager Cope, and Regional Program Managers Link, Calkins, and Jonker to discuss legislation requests for the 2017 session. During the meeting, staff members brainstormed and discussed the most efficient and effective ways these funds could be spent if they were allotted. Specific attention was discussed on providing increased Private Land Access on Private Industrial Timber Company lands.

**Staff and Advisory Meetings:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey attended the hunter education staff division meeting in Ellensburg. Dazey also attended the Instructor Advisory Committee meeting in Ellensburg. Dazey attended a Master Hunter service presentation at the wildlife conflict group meeting.

**Hearing Test:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey completed his annual hearing test.

## **REGION 5**

### ***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE***

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Western Pond Turtle Trapping:** Biologists Bergh, Anderson, Holman, Butler, Hallock, and Veterinarian Haman all helped with western pond turtle trapping at the Sondino site this week. Five hatchling turtles (just left the nest and entered the ponds this spring) were captured this week and sent to the Oregon Zoo. There they will grow to a larger size that will help them escape predation when we release them back into the ponds. Two 1-year old and two 2-year old wild turtles were also caught and marked so they can be identified in the future. The capture of these four young wild turtles is a good sign that the bullfrog eradication efforts at the site are making a difference. Non-native bullfrogs are the main predator of these small young turtles. Fifteen adult turtles trapped this week were taken to the VCA Animal Hospital for CT scans. Samples for a microbiome study and a fungal etiology study were also taken from these turtles. All these tests

and samples are part of the effort to learn more about Undefined Shell Disease (USD), which affects western pond turtles in Washington.



#### ***1 and 2 year old western pond turtles***

**Western Pond Turtle Project:** District Biologist Anderson was invited to talk about western pond turtle management and recovery with the Friends of the Gorge conservation group at their new property in the Columbia River Gorge. A group of 25 board of directors and trustees were on site to learn more about their recent acquisition and how their property contributes to the overall conservation of the western pond turtle in Washington. The site visit was an opportunity for WDFW to not only thank the Friends for their contribution to conservation via the acquisition, but to also discuss funding needs to develop a management plan for benefiting the western pond turtle.



*WDFW site visit for western pond turtles in the Columbia River Gorge*

**Fisher Reintroduction:** Biologists Lewis, Holman, Stephens, and Jocelyn Akins with the Cascade Carnivore Project attempted to locate a female fisher near Trout Lake who was released several months ago near Cispus as part of the Washington Cascades Fisher Reintroduction Project. The fisher was suspected to be denning because of her concentrated locations over the past month during monitoring flights. This female was unable to be located during the ground effort. However, several days later she was discovered to have moved approximately 40 miles to the east side of Mount St. Helens. Information about fishers in Washington, including updates on the Cascade Mountain Range Fisher Reintroduction Project, can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/fisher/>

**Treponeme Associated Hoof Disease in Elk, Survival Study:** Biologists George and Holman investigated an elk mortality in conjunction with the TAHD Survival and Reproduction Study. A cougar had predated the elk. The elk was pregnant and was in relatively good condition for this time of year.

### Wildlife Areas

**Forage Enhancements on the Mudflow:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald, Assistant Manager Sample, and Volunteer Bratten spent the week fertilizing over 130 acres on the Mudflow Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area in an effort to improve elk forage on the area. Fertilizing and adding lime (calcium carbonate) to the soil typically produces 20-50 percent more available forage for elk and other wildlife to consume. The quality of the soil on the area is very poor, and without these amendments the quality of forage would be very poor and mosses would typically take over choking out all available forage. The lime helps raise the pH of the soil and the fertilizer adds needed nutrients for plants to grow more robustly.

*Volunteer Bratten fertilizing Mikey's Meadow*



**Shillapoo Wildlife Area Pasture Restoration Update:** Last week, Assistant Manager Hand was able to get five tons of lime spread on the Lake River and Vancouver Lake pasture restoration fields. Each field got 5,000 pounds of pelletized lime fertilizer at a rate of roughly 400 pounds per acre. Both of these sites tested as acidic soils, therefore adding lime will help balance out the pH and increase growth/production in plants. Assistant Manager Hand was also



able to get the North McBride pasture in the South Unit planted. It was drilled with various grains and row crops (barley, wheat, corn, sunflowers) and broadcast seeded with grasses, clover, and alfalfa.

#### ***Lake River and Vancouver Lake restoration***

#### **Klickitat Wildlife Area**

**Hatchery Unit Fence Reconstruction:** The remainder of the treated wood posts needed for end braces, H-braces, and line posts were set in place along Hill Road this week. Also, one cross piece was fitted between posts for an H-brace. One afternoon was spent on collecting the old boards and debris from the original fence, as well as picking up three old culverts and decayed fence posts from another part of the Hatchery Unit to be hauled to the transfer station. We spent about three days on this project.

**Soda Springs Unit Grazing Permit:** Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis primed the water line to a trough, checked water levels at two key ponds and checked two other troughs to make sure they are filling properly. Two of the troughs were cleaned. Photos were taken at photo points on the grazing permit area to record range condition in a visual format. These activities accounted for one day of time.



#### ***Photo points at the Klickitat Wildlife Area grazing evaluation***

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

#### **Access**

**Stinson Flat – Klickitat Wildlife Area:** The annual Mayday festival was celebrated again this year by the same group. One hundred forty pounds of trash was collected and hauled away. A person in the group lost control of their suburban and crashed it into a tree. The damage to the vehicle was likely a total. The group was waiting for a tow truck to haul the vehicle away. They said Enforcement had already been there to deal with the issue.

**Lacamas Lake:** A stolen car was abandoned after slamming into a boulder, breaking the 6x6 posts on the reader board, and breaking the roof. The reader board was totaled and the person(s) responsible was not caught yet. We disassembled the remaining pieces and hauled it to the dump for disposal.



***Lacamas Lake damage***

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

**District 10 Wildlife Conflict**

**Bear Conflict:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin followed up on a call that initially was handled by WDFW Police about a bear breaking into chicken coops and killing chickens in the Kalama area. Conklin also responded to an additional report of a bear getting into garbage cans in the vicinity of the upper Kalama River.

**Bear Damage:** Conflict Specialist Conklin verified bear damage on industrial timberland, including pairing up with Conflict Specialist Blankenship to verify damage in North Lewis County.

**Goat:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a call regarding a 120 pound Kiko goat that was taken from an enclosure. The landowner did a good job of protecting the scene until Conklin could respond. Conklin performed a necropsy of what was left of the goat carcass. Conklin could only determine the goat was killed by an unknown predator.

**REGION 6**

***GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE***

**Wildlife Management**

**Harbor Seal Tagging:** As part of study on harbor seal diets in south Puget Sound, Biologist Murphie assisted the WDFW Marine Mammal Investigations Unit in the capture and tagging of two adult males at Orchard Rocks near Manchester. A total of sixteen instruments that will record location and diving behavior data were deployed on harbor seals for this project.

## Snowy Plover Surveys

**Leadbetter:** Technician Raby conducted nest searching, nest checks, and egg floatation this week at Leadbetter. Raby also assisted Refuge Biologist Ritchie with a survey of two islands in north Willapa Bay, where a total of five individuals were detected.

2016 Leadbetter Season Totals				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
14	12	1	0	1

**Midway Beach and Graveyard Spit:** Biologist Sundstrom continues to discover new nests and monitor existing nests. One nest was known to have hatched although the brood has not yet been located despite two consecutive days of searching. High winds and rain prevented field work one day during the week. Biologist Michaelis assisted at Midway with a nest status check and searched for new nests. One new nest was discovered and one nest was no longer present. It is uncertain as to the cause of the nest abandonment.

2016 Midway Beach and Graveyard Spit Season Totals				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
20	18	1	1	0

**Streaked Horned Lark:** Technician Raby assisted Refuge Biologist Ritchie with the first streaked horned lark protocol survey of the season in the Leadbetter HRA. The total number of individuals detected has not been tallied at this time. One nest has been discovered so far this season, and it is presumed to have hatched.

**Red Knot Surveys:** Biologist Michaelis and Biologist Novack assisted Biologist Lori Salzer and Scientist Buchanan searching and surveying red knots in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. On Monday, they viewed 17 individually marked knots in Grays Harbor and around 1,200 total birds. On Friday, they viewed less than 50 and no flags were detected. They did have a front row seat witnessing two peregrine falcons prey on shorebirds. Each day's weather was spectacular. Surveys will continue this week and many more birds are expected to be observed.

### **Taylor's Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys at Southern Extant Site West of the Elwha:**

Biologist McMillan conducted Taylor's checkerspot surveys at the southern extant site west of the Elwha. A complete survey was conducted on May 5 with a count of 144 checkerspots. A survey on May 2 was not complete due to weather conditions blocking the sunshine in the afternoon. On May 2, over 10 checkerspots were observed along the road to the northwest of the site and in small isolated forest clearing, in areas that checkerspots haven't been observed before. More monitoring of these locations along the road and small forest clearing will be conducted this season.

**May 1, 2016:** Biologist Ament conducted two Taylor's checkerspot butterfly surveys at one of the known sites west of Port Angeles on May 1, 2016. Survey 1 – The first route she surveyed

was located along an existing road with several landing areas. The route was established and flagged at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions were excellent for the survey. There was full sunshine and shadows present for the entire survey. The temperature ranged from 56 – 60.4 degrees and there were very minimal winds during the survey. A total of 50 checkerspots were observed during the survey. Survey 2 – The second route she surveyed was a parallel segment on a slope to the south of the existing road. Survey conditions remained suitable for this survey.

**May 2, 2016:** Biologist Ament conducted another Taylor’s checkerspot butterfly survey at a known site located west of Port Angeles on May 2, 2016. This route is located on the lower east ridge of the site. The route was established and flagged at 25 meter segments last season. The weather conditions started out good, with warm temperatures and full sun. Unfortunately, clouds moved into the area for the second portion of the survey. Biologist Ament decided to continue with the survey since the temperature was still greater than 70 degrees. A total of 23 checkerspots were observed.

**Taylor’s Checkerspot Butterfly Surveys at Northern Extant Site West of the Elwha:**

Biologist McMillan conducted a tandem survey with Biologist Ament On May 6. Survey conditions were excellent, with no clouds and temperatures greater than 70 degrees. Upper and lower survey routes have been established at this site for many years. Last season, 25 meter segments were established and flagged along both routes. Many checkerspots were observed nectaring on Oregon sunshine flowers. Biologist Ament surveyed the lower route and recorded a total of 120 checkerspots. Biologist McMillan recorded the following counts:

- Upper Route (U-1 to U-30) – 154 checkerspots

Eastern Routes:

- U2 Route (U2A to U2E) – five checkerspots

- E Route (E1 to E7) – two checkerspots



*New forest opening to the right, between U-22 and U-23/U-26 area*



*Taylor's checkerspot nectaring on Oregon sunshine*



*Biologist Ament surveying lower route*

**Western Pond Turtle:** Biologist Tirhi, Holcomb, and staff members installed new log booms at each of the three ponds at the Pierce County pond turtle recovery site. The logs were generously donated and split by Weyerhaeuser (Vail Tree Farm) in 2015. The logs at the ponds must be replaced periodically over the years as they become water logged and sink or decay. Additional logs also encourage turtles to bask more frequently (more opportunity), which helps the turtles deal with the effects of Ulcerative Shell Disease, which is affecting this turtle population. The disease manifests itself as ulcers of necrotic tissues within the shell, and basking (dry-docking) helps to cure.



*New log booms installed at the Pierce County western pond turtle recovery site*

**2016 Monitoring Season:** Biologist Belson and Holcomb prepared the nesting grounds for the 2016 monitoring season (May 16-July 1) by mowing all nesting areas.



*Mowed nesting hill in preparation for the 2016 western pond turtle monitoring season*

**Peregrine Falcon Volunteer Monitoring:** Several volunteers continue to monitor the newly replaced peregrine falcon box in downtown Tacoma (Heritage Bank Building). The adults have produced four eyasses this season, which is keeping them excessively busy. Tirhi has received several emails and comments from the public, who are enjoying the show.



*Downtown Tacoma peregrine falcons – Photo by Volunteer Monitor Fergus Hyke*

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Road Access:** Biologist Novack spent a long day in the field investigating road management and public access in GMUs 673 and 681.

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Shorebird Festival:** Biologist Michaelis participated and assisted Olympia staff members on the viewing boardwalk for a few hours on Saturday. High winds and a quickly rising high tide limited shorebird viewing. This event has been in existence for more than thirty years and the easily accessible boardwalk USFWS has installed greatly increased ease of access. Attendance this year seemed low.

**Wildlife Conflict**

**Master Hunters:** Conflict Specialist Blankenship utilized Master Hunter volunteers to haze elk causing damage to a commercial hay producer near Rainier. Master Hunters have been successful in keeping the elk out of the field and elk use in the field is decreasing. Blankenship

expects that the herd of 25-30 cow elk will move towards their calving grounds in the upcoming weeks.

**Bear Damage Survey:** Conflict Specialist Blankenship and Region 5 Conflict Specialist Conklin documented historical bear damage to trees owned by a private timber company in Lewis County.

**Crop Damage:** Conflict Specialist Blankenship met with a hay producer in Ashford that has been receiving crop loss by 50+ elk over the last few months. By the time of Blankenship's arrival to the farm, eight elk were seen bedded nearby. Blankenship was advised that the larger herd hasn't been seen for over a week and the producer does not mind elk use by eight elk. The producer's only concern is when the entire herd is damaging his hay crop. Blankenship advised the producer to notify him if the larger herd shows back up again and they can begin hazing off of the field to minimize further damage to the hay crop.

### Wildlife Areas

**Scatter Creek Historic Site:** Manager Belson worked with the Thurston County Historic Commission (TCHC), Region 6, and Lands to arrange for the placement of a new interpretive sign at the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area. The TCHC contacted Belson in early 2015 with a request to install a sign describing the Miller-Brewer House and pioneer history of the land that is now the wildlife area. Archaeologist Kelly helped review content for historical accuracy and



context, and Lands Supervisor Cannon assisted with the interagency agreement for installation and maintenance. Belson also brought together the TCHC and local stonecutter Keith Philips to ensure that the information presented on the soon-to-be completed stone monument and interpretive sign would be consistent and well-coordinated. Finally, the Thurston County Public Works Department installed a three man rock barrier around the structures to protect them from vehicle damage. A link to the interpretive sign has been added to the [wildlife area webpage](#).