

# Wildlife Program

Week of May 30 – June 5, 2016

## WOLF ACTIVITIES

### Region 1 Wolf Activities

**Stevens County Depredation:** Biologist Shepherd and a Stevens County Sheriff's Deputy investigated a domestic animal death which was categorized as a confirmed wolf depredation. Biologist Shepherd discussed wolf issues and preventative measures with the owner. Biologist Shepherd, Natural Resource Worker Weatherman, and contract range riders provided surveillance while the owner was on a planned work absence for several days.

**Brown Master Thesis Defense:** Supervisor McCanna and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Shepherd attended Brown's master thesis defense titled "Mortality of Range Livestock in Wolf-Occupied Areas of Washington" at Washington State University.

**Conflict Staff Meeting:** Biologist Shepherd and Natural Resource Worker Weatherman met in Spokane with Conflict Supervisor McCanna and Conflict Biologist Bennett to discuss issues such as communication, coverage of areas, lethal protocol, and more.

**Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock:** Biologist Shepherd worked with area ranchers to submit invoices, sign agreements, and enter contracts in the contract system.

**Spokane County Cattlemen Meeting:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett attended a monthly meeting for the Spokane County Cattlemen and shared information about the newly developed lethal removal protocol.

**Data Sharing Password Updates:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett informed producers about new passwords for the GPS collar data sharing web maps.

**Trail Cameras:** Biologist Earl gathered cameras from the Grande Ronde River area. Over 1,000 images have been collected, with none of them being wolf-related. Earl contacted the cooperator who had the cow carcass to inform him of the findings.

**Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for Livestock:** Biologist Earl processed invoices, A-19s, and checklists for agreements this week. Earl also mapped all of the cattle grazing allotments near the Tucannon territory. Earl, Conflict Specialist Rasley, and Biologist McCanna are going to be meeting next week to discuss existing and possible new agreements.

**Producer Contacts:** Biologist Earl continued to make contacts with producers in known wolf areas as they begin to move their cattle into summer pasture areas.

## **Region 2 Wolf Activities**

**Lookout Pack:** Specialist Heilhecker spent time showing a contracted range rider the Lookout pack territory. Specialist Heilhecker talked with forest service personnel regarding wolf locations and grazing pasture rotations. Specialist Heilhecker wrote a livestock damage prevention cooperative agreement and a cost-share fencing contract. Specialist Heilhecker reviewed a draft protocol for lethal removal of wolves. She supplied comments to the wolf policy lead.

**Upper Methow Wolf Monitoring:** Biologist Fitkin checked remote cameras deployed in the Upper Methow Watershed in areas of recent wolf sightings. No wolves have been detected to date. However, a radio-collared member of the Teanaway pack has recently dispersed to the headwaters of the Methow River.

## **Region 3 Wolf Activities**

**Wolf Activity:** A wolf signal was detected near a location where cattle were being turned out for the summer grazing season. The detection was in a normal area frequented by wolves and no conflict is anticipated. A full time range rider and two part time range riders are in the area monitoring the situation.

## **REGION 1**

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

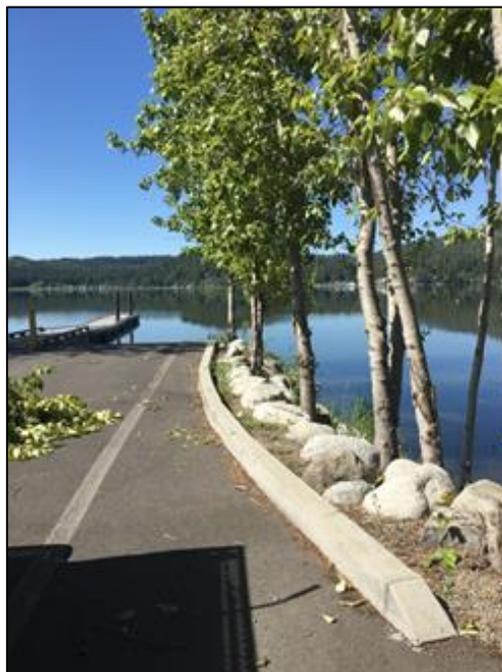
**Farm Bill:** Biologist Baarstad worked with FSA on CRP-SAFE program contract administration. Baarstad met with a landowner in the Odessa area to evaluate the possibility of enrolling a CRP field on DNR land into SAFE.

**Sherman Creak Wildlife Area Rx Burning:** The WDFW prescribed burn team and a contract crew spent the week at Sherman Creak Wildlife Area preparing units and implementing prescribed burn treatment. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Daro Palmer and Natural Resource Technician Jerry “Chris” Christensen worked with crews. The Trail Unit, shown below, was completed this week. It was a slow process to complete this 28-acre unit due to variable weather conditions and fuel loads, but implementation went very well. Preparations were also made to enable prescribed burning of the adjacent Bridge Unit next week, with hose lays and utility protection. The photo shows a WDFW prescribed burn team member making a lighting pass on a portion of the Trail Unit.



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

**Routine Site Maintenance:** Manager Dziekan performed routine site maintenance duties. He noticed his sites received more traffic than usual over the holiday weekend. Dziekan worked to remove dead limbs and encroaching brush at Cedar and Deep Lake while the pumper was working. He also limbed a row of trees next to the boat ramp at Newman Lake because the trees were growing out into the drive for the launch.



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

**CRP-Palouse SAFE:** Lewis completed four site visits to plan and layout forb/wildflower and shrub plots within Palouse SAFE fields. The four fields equal 390 acres of good quality grassland and will include approximately 50 acres of native wildflowers and shrubs to complete the SAFE projects.



***Juvenile and adult great horned owls at a Palouse SAFE site***

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):** Lewis continued to field calls from landowners who did not get accepted in the General CRP sign up and are looking to figure out a way to get their lands back into a set aside program. All SAFE acres have been spoken for, but a request for more acres has been submitted. At this point, with the amount of CRP acres (thousands in Whitman County) not accepted for re-enrollment, we stand to lose a significant amount of quality grassland habitat.

**Conservation Practice (CP) 33:** Lewis also meet with NRCS staff members to discuss the usage of the CP33 practice “Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds” to help capture some of the CRP habitat acres that are set to expire. However, with the practice only eligible for field borders, there will still likely be hundreds of acres that go back into agricultural production.

**Clarkston Foxes:** Biologist Earl contacted a rancher whose chickens were being killed by foxes. The fox lights have been working so far and no more chickens have been lost.

**VPA Contract:** Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley met with a landowner to attain a signature on an A-19 form for a VPA access payment. During the conversation, the landowner brought out a picture of her husband and a WDFW employee (Ted Johnson, retired, and Scott Rasley, who took the picture) from 1990 showing the release of the first turkeys in the Prescott area on the landowner’s property. She said her husband loved those turkeys and enjoyed working with WDFW, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Rasley.

*A picture of landowner Bill Grant, deceased, with WDFW Ted Johnson, retired, with the first turkeys released in the Prescott area in 1990 – Photo by Conflict Specialist Scott Rasley*



**WT Wooten WA – Volunteers:** Natural Resource Worker 2 Christian picked up the dump trailer that the volunteers filled over the weekend with old barbed wire and posts removed from Abels Ridge. Access Technician Heimgartner hauled the trailer to Clarkston to recycle the wire and the total weight was 1960 pounds. Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Dingman worked the weekend with the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council volunteers for their annual work weekend. They removed more old internal barbed wire fence along the Hartsock Grade.



*INWC Volunteers along the Harstock Grade on the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area, with Kari Dingman in orange*

## **REGION 2**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Pygmy Rabbit Breeding Enclosure and Release Update:** Our semi-wild breeding enclosures have now had newborn kits on the ground for approximately six weeks. One of the main components of the recovery program is catching the young kits and, after collecting biological data and a DNA sample for future comparison, releasing them into the wild when they would naturally be dispersing onto the landscape to establish their own burrow system. So far, our breeding season has unfolded in stark contrast to the previous two years, where we had more kits than we could handle. We have captured a total of only 51 kits on the year from our two active breeding enclosures over seven capture days, which represents a large decrease in production compared to previous years. In addition to the kits, we have also captured 15 adults that were born the previous year, evaded our capture attempts as kits in 2015, and are now actively

breeding. We sampled them, implanted AVID chips for future ID, and returned them into the breeding enclosures.

Of the 51 kits, we have released 42 of them on the Sagebrush Flats recovery area, with the other nine being too small for release (we'll catch them again). We are catching adult females that are either pregnant or nursing, so the kit production is still ongoing and capture/release will continue into summer.

**Breeding Enclosure Weed Infestations:** The less than appealing but necessary removal of weed infestation from the breeding enclosures has begun. Biologist Gibbs and Technicians Shank and Quayle (plus a token hour contributed by Coordinator Gallie) spent two days manually cutting, bagging, and hauling out the biomass. Approximately 70% of one enclosure (of four) has been completed. We will be looking to enroll interested volunteers from The Nature Conservancy to assist in this effort in the near future.



*Last week* – Photo by J. Gallie



*This week* – Photo by S. Gibbs

**Monarch Butterfly Project:** Technicians Erlenbach and Quayle completed milkweed surveys in two Grant County townships. Afterwards they worked with Biologist Finger to refine survey methods which they will test next week.

*Possible monarch eggs* – Photo by Kim Quayle

**Douglas County Pronghorn Antelope Update:**

Private Lands Biologist Braaten ran into some pronghorn antelope while checking SAFE fields. Private Lands Biologist Braaten revisited the area the next day and was able to confirm a fawn antelope with a doe. One buck, two adult doe antelope, and one fawn have taken residence in a CRP field. The other doe looks very pregnant.





*Pronghorn antelope in Douglas County* – Photos by Eric Braaten, WDFW

**Reptile Monitoring:** Biologist Fitkin opportunistically visited one of the isolated buttes known to harbor pygmy short-horned lizards in the Methow Valley to confirm presence again this year. A male-female pair (hopefully with amorous intentions) was located in traditional habitat. Little is known about these apparently isolated lizard populations, including to what extent they may represent unique genetics for this species.



*Pygmy short-horned lizards, ventral and dorsal views respectively. Male is on the left in the left photo and on the right in the right photo* – Photo by Scott Fitkin

## Wildlife Areas

**Wetland Projects:** Biologist Finger, Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Eidson, Technician Eddy, and Ducks Unlimited Biologist Blewett participated in a field tour with wetland regulators from Ecology, Army Corps of Engineers, and Grant County Planning to determine wetland delineation needs for Frenchmen Ponds enhancements and excavations being planned for north of Winchester Reserve. The meeting went very well, with all regulators seeing a net benefit and considering the project a “no-brainer”. The next steps will be to finalize locations and estimates of fill, enhancement fill (contouring), and wetland creation for permitting applications. Also, the process to begin the CR compliance steps must start. Ducks Unlimited will now be able to organize the wetland delineation efforts which should begin within the next month or two.

## Private Lands/Access

**Access Management:** Access Manager Graves monitored previous spot spraying and residual herbicide treatment efforts. Graves noticed considerable growth this year on basin wild rye planted just two years ago around the Winchester Lake parking area.

*Two year old wild rye plantings* – Photo by Joe Graves



### **State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE):**

Biologist Comstock completed five SAFE plans for an operator in Grant County who is enrolling approximately 640 acres of expiring general CRP into Shrubsteppe SAFE. Biologist Comstock received enrollment documents for another operator who is enrolling 184 acres of expiring CRP into SAFE in the Beezley Hills area. After a month of back and forth, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) finally signed off on a SAFE plan for a producer in Lincoln County. Biologist Comstock worked with the NRCS Ephrata field office to develop template SAFE plan maps that would meet the NRCS standard, per the National Planning Procedures Handbook. Given that this field office has a huge backlog of contracts, Biologist Comstock hopes that by taking this load off, it will expedite getting signatures on final SAFE plans. Biologist Comstock briefly met with an operator, for whom she is re-writing SAFE plans, to get input on how to adjust the 25% leave area boundaries. Biologist Comstock met with Supervisor Cotton to assess the SAFE workload and subdivide tasks.

Private Lands Biologist Braaten checked all of the Douglas County SAFE fields seeded in fall 2015. Private Lands Biologist Braaten checked for new grass growth and made recommendations to operators on spraying broadleaf weeds.



***SAFE/CRP new grass in Douglas County*** – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

**Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA):** Biologist Comstock attended a focused meeting in Ellensburg with the Washington Cattlemen’s Association, Washington Farm Bureau and staff members from USFWS to discuss whether or not a greater sage grouse CCAA has a future in Washington. There have been some internal changes at USFWS that are encouraging reflection on this tool and how it can be improved and implemented. While the role of WDFW and private lands staff members still remains uncertain, the cattlemen signaled, for the most part, that they are willing to resuscitate the process and move forward with sample plan(s). Biologist Comstock attended a follow up internal call with WDFW staff members to discuss the CCAA.

**Biocontrol – Dalmation Toadflax:** Private Lands Biologist Braaten collected 400 *Mecinus janthinus* from established nursery sites in Douglas County this week to be given out to a few landowners who needed insects. Private Lands Biologist Braaten continues to find presence of *Rhinusa antirrhini* toadflax seed eating weevil.



***Dalmatian toadflax weevils in Douglas County*** – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

### **Wildlife Management**

**WDFW and CCT Coordination Meeting:** Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen, along with additional WDFW staff members from Regions 1 & 2, attended a wildlife coordination meeting with the

Colville Confederated Tribes. This was a productive meeting focused on species of mutual interest and co-management. A follow-up meeting to plan for coordinated winter ungulate surveys will be scheduled for this fall.

**Second Annual Dave Brittell Memorial Trail Hike/Fundraiser:** Manager Haug and the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area hosted the first annual Dave Brittell Memorial Trail Hike on Saturday to raise scholarship funds for local students seeking a degree in the Natural Resource Sciences. The hike (on National Trails Day) was well attended, with 48 hikers (compared to 38 last year) traversing the nearly eight mile trail from Sinlahekin Headquarters to Hunters Camp north of Fish Lake. Region 1 Regional Director Steve Pozzanghera organized and directed the event, which brought together family, friends, and WDFW staff members from around the state. The hike raised over \$2700 for the scholarship fund – \$700 more than last year. This year’s scholarship was awarded to two individuals: one from Cut Bank, MT and the other from Omak. We look forward to many more successful hikes in memory of Dave and his lasting legacy.



*Hikers on the Dave Brittell Memorial Trail south of Forde Lake and Steve Pozzanghera presenting the check to the Dave Brittell family for the scholarship fund*

**Wenner Lakes/Chalfa Dam:** Manager Furnari continues correspondence with CAMP’s dam repair crew at Wenner Lakes/Chalfa Dam to check their progress.



*New ford crossing south of Chalfa Dam –  
Photo by Craig Matson*



*New pipes/valve/gate installed for Chalfa Dam – Photo by Joe Molano*

**North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative:** Lands Operations Manager Swedberg attended the quarterly meeting of the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative. One of the primary topics was the Forest Resiliency Burning Pilot (ESHB 2928) requiring DNR to coordinate with the three Forest Health Collaboratives to conduct prescribed burns in south central, north central, and northeast Washington with the intent of comparing actual smoke impacts with the predicted smoke impacts. The results would be used to inform an update of the Smoke Management Plan. Other significant items covered included management of snowpack and stream flows through forest management, and Okanogan Wenatchee National Forest strategic planning and prioritization.

**Chelan Butte:** Manager Fox spent a day with Archaeologist Kat Kelly on Chelan Butte looking at sites where gate installations and spring developments will require cultural resource review. They also looked at the Lucas Homestead, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.



*Lucas Homestead, 1978* – Photo by J.H. Vandermeer



*Lucas Homestead, 2016* – Photo by R. Fox



*2016 sage grouse chick in Douglas County* – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



*Flowering prickly pear cactus in Douglas County* – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



***The view from pygmy short-horned lizard habitat*** – Photo by Scott Fitkin



***Blue dasher (immature female)*** – Photo by J. Heinlen



***Jordon Hagan, burn team member, lights a pass in timber litter on the Trail Unit while shielding his face from the heat*** – Photo by Tom Leuschen



***Smoke drifting downslope in the evening. This ignition was timed to take advantage of evening downslope winds to reduce smoke impacts on Highway 20 at the top of the unit*** – Photo by Tom Leuschen



*Sign posted by prescribed burn team to warn motorists on Highway 20 of burn activity adjacent to highway*



*A group of male wood ducks with western painted turtles and a blue-winged teal at Forde Lake, a female wood duck with chicks at Forde Lake, an evening grosbeak near headquarters, a rubber boa near Sarsapkin Creek, and a western gray squirrel running down the road north of Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area – Photos by Justin Haug*

## **REGION 3**

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

#### **Wildlife Areas**

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Manager Buser, Assistant Manager Sak, Natural Resource Worker Becker, Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber, and Natural Resource Technician 2 Medina attended a wildlife area staff meeting. Staff members developed a wetland management plan for management activities on each wetland throughout the Sunnyside / Snake River Wildlife Area.

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Bat Surveys:** District Biologist Fidorra began the second month of the WDFW bat surveys. Fidorra placed acoustic bat detectors at sites in District 4 and 5 and coordinated with Biologist Rowan to relocate detectors near the Ephrata office. Fidorra is placing detectors at eight sites and will repeat recording protocols at each site monthly through August.

**Burrowing Owls:** District Biologist Fidorra began occupancy and productivity checks for burrowing owls at artificial burrow sites and coordinated with the Global Owl project on upcoming trapping and banding efforts. Some young were fledging while other pairs were still incubating.

*A burrowing owl nestling looks up during a nest check of an artificial burrow*

**Sage Grouse:** District Biologist Fidorra visited a sage-grouse lek in Yakima County to assess surrounding habitat and checked the lek for any feathers for DNA samples, of which none were obtained.



**Canada Goose Banding:** District Biologist Fidorra reached out to staff members and volunteers to conduct the annual Canada Goose Banding at urban parks. The Tri-Cities event will take place on June 16.

**Bighorn Sheep:** Biologist Bernatowicz contacted a local photographer that closely watches bighorn sheep in the Yakima River Canyon. Lamb deaths have been early and frequent in the southwest portion of the canyon this year. About 75 percent of the lambs had died prior to June 1. Early mortality is an indication of an individual associated with the lambs actively shedding the bacteria *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, and likely means low recruitment in those sub-groups this year. The entire canyon will be surveyed for total lamb recruitment in late August or early September.

**Ferruginous Hawks:** Biologist Bernatowicz surveyed the one active nest in the district for 2016 and found it had failed to produce young.

**Badger Damage:** A vineyard owner from the lower valley came in the office to inquire about what to do with multiple badgers in his vineyard. The badgers were reported to be digging up ground squirrels and creating large burrows. Bernatowicz consulted with Enforcement and Section Managers Simek and Curtis. Various options were discussed with the landowner, who decided live-trapping and moving was a preferred option. Section Manager Simek coordinated with USDA Wildlife Services and a trapper was put in contact with the landowner. Regional personnel will likely be involved if trapping does take place.

**Pheasant Banding:** Sunnyside Wildlife Area has been raising pheasants in “Surrogators” in cooperation with the local Pheasants Forever chapter for a number of years. Research has found survival to be very low for the chicks produced. The wildlife area recently went to “Hunt by Registration”, which gives an opportunity estimate survival and harvest returns via banding. Wildlife Area Manager Buser and Section Manager Curtis were contacted with the idea of banding the chicks and measuring returns. One question has been band retention on chicks. Bernatowicz found a recent thesis that tested various methods and reported gluing cotton to the inside of the standard band worked well at retaining the band while not damaging the birds’ legs. Section Manager Curtis arranged to try the technique on WDFW Game Farm pheasant.

**Western Gray Squirrels:** Biologist Moore installed two western gray squirrel hair snare transects during the week. Both transects were on the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area in stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas fir with moderate slopes. These stands have better western gray squirrel habitat characteristics than last year’s stands did.

*Locations of a hair snare tube in a mixed ponderosa and Douglas fir stand*



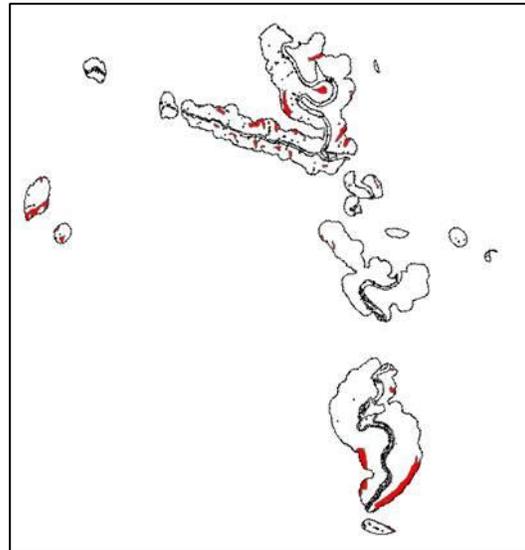
**Bighorn Sheep Home Range Analysis:**

Biologist Moore continued to work with ecological site data to create a sampling frame to collect Normalized Difference Vegetative Index (NDVI) values. One ecological site was selected to collect NDVI samples across the Tieton, Umtanum, and Quilomene home ranges. This ecological site will allow for samples to be taken from 11, 13, and 36 sites respectively, which should be enough to make a reasonable comparison across District 8 herds. Cleman Mountain was not well represented with this ecological site. Since finding one site across all herds has been difficult, Moore has decided to also make herd to herd comparisons using other ecological site classifications. For example, when selecting a different ecological site class to compare the Quilomene and Umtanum, nearly 20 sample sites were located in each herd’s home range.

Additional work still needs to be done to identify other potential ecological site classes for similar herd to herd comparisons.

*An example of polygons that contain >50 percent composition of ecological site R008XY301WA in the Umtanum / Selah Butte herd's home range*

**Muckleshoot Indian Tribe (MIT) Deer Survey:** Biologist Moore began running MIT data for PMU 33 using R-Sight. A few details still need to be sorted prior to making the final analysis, but overall the population estimate will be lower than in previous years. The survey and survival data collected on deer in PMU 33 indicate the winter of 2015-2016 was tough on deer populations.



**Colockum Bull Elk Study:** Biologist Moore continues to monitor the collared bulls and all have been doing well over the spring.

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Wenas Wildlife Area:** Manager Confer Morris participated in several meetings with regional and wildlife program staff members to discuss Wenas target shooting issues, including additional public outreach, a bird dog training site, and the acoustic's study contract. Confer Morris set up a Wildlife Area Advisory Council meeting for June 13 to update the group on status and next steps. She also submitted a pre-application conference request form to Kittitas County Planning for permits at the Durr Road site.

**Target Shooting:** Manager Confer Morris submitted a PAM form to Regional Program Manager McCorquodale to implement the 'Sunrise to 10:00 a.m.' fire season timing restriction on target shooting on the wildlife area. She also worked with Public Affairs to get a news release out about the restriction going into effect on June 1. Assistant Manager Taylor and Natural Resource Worker 2 Nnanabu worked on updating target shooting signs and spent a day installing them.

**Reader Boards:** Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker Barbosa built two reader boards that will be going up in the next couple of weeks.

**Parking Lot Maintenance:** Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker Barbosa reduced the size of the parking lot at Rowe by half. The site gets very little use by fishermen or genuine site users. By decreasing the size of the parking lot, we hope to see a drop in the dumping of furniture, dead animals, and household trash.



*Rowe access (before)*



*Rowe access (after)*

**Maintenance:** Access staff members completed maintenance and repairs on the dock at Pond 4. Natural Resource Worker Barbosa removed two full garbage bags of trash that had been stuffed under the boards over the years. Barbosa and Access Manager Garcia replaced five boards on the dock.



*Pond 4 boat dock repairs*



**Vernita Bridge:** Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker Barbosa went out to Vernita Bridge to retrieve the car counter data and discovered one of the reader boards had been stolen. They will be replacing it.

*Vernita Bridge missing reader board*

**Wildlife Management**

**Sign Replacement:** Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and Natural Resource Technician 2 Kaelber traveled to the Wildhorse Wind farm and spent a long day replacing the Hunt by Written Permission signs with Hunt by Reservation signs. Additional trips will be needed to complete the job.

*New Hunt by Reservation signs went up at the Wildhorse Wind Farm this week*

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Colockum Wildlife Area:** Volunteers from the Colockum Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation spent a day on Memorial Day weekend volunteering to do fence repair on the Colockum.

*Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation volunteers repair the game reserve fence, Colockum Wildlife Area*

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman was subpoenaed by the Yakima County Prosecutor to testify in a trial related to the trespass horses on the wildlife area. The county is pursuing livestock at large charges against the defendant. The trial is scheduled to start on June 22.

**Shed Antler Auction:** Manager Huffman began coordination for the upcoming shed antler auction at Oak Creek.

### **Wildlife Management**

**Damage Prevention:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared and delivered additional Damage Prevention Permits to a landowner on Rattlesnake Mountain to aid in his hazing efforts.

**Rattlesnake Mountain Hazing:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted late evening /early morning hazing patrols on Rattlesnake Mountain. Multiple groups of elk and a few deer were hazed from winter wheat fields. Hot and dry weather conditions this week have caused elk movement off Hanford to be more nocturnal.

**Trail Cameras:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand visited a tree fruit operation near Prosser to survey for potential locations to set up trail cameras to capture deer and elk activity near a new planting of apple trees.



**Elk Hazing:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with landowners and hunt managers on elk locations to pressure them away from valuable crops.

**Injured Red-tailed Hawk:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand handled a call from a landowner in the Grandview area with an injured juvenile red tailed hawk. Advice was given on handling techniques and contact information was provided for our local volunteer wildlife rehab center.

**Elk Conflict:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel found elk below the elk fence in the Taneum Creek area. As is often the case in that area, elk walk down the creek at night and back during the day. This issue will most likely be addressed with the proposed electric chain fence cost-share project with USBOR.

**Fence Construction:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel checked on cost share fence construction in several locations this week.

**Fladry Delivery:** Conflict Specialist Wetzel delivered fladry for use in the Indian Creek area for temporary cattle deterrence in the riparian area.

**Curlew Conflict:** Some long-billed curlews were observed in a hay field often frequented by elk. The curlews were not hazed out of this field and hopefully did no damage to the crop.



*Curlews in a hay field*

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Sunnyside Wildlife Area:** Natural Resource Worker Becker and Natural Resource Technician 2 Medina finished the fabrication of a spray boom for the marsh master. They hooked up the back hoe attachment back on the marsh master and loaded it on the trailer.

**Oak Creek Wildlife Area:** Manager Huffman spent extensive time switching the Oak Creek Irrigation System from the diversion in Oak Creek to the Tieton River diversion. Changes in the channel in Oak Creek cause most of the flow to go through a channel too far away from the siphon hose. Huffman installed the hose in the Tieton River and attempted to prime the pump without success. After trouble shooting all other options, Huffman pulled the pump apart and discovered multiple small rocks jammed in the impellor. After repairs and reinstallation, the system was primed and is working normally.

**Windy Point Cabin:** Manager Huffman showed the Windy Point Cabin to the Yakima Sheriff's Department Mountain Pass Deputy, who is interested in renting the cabin until funding can be secured for removal.

**Iron Ranger:** Manager Huffman drove to the Sammamish State Park in Issaquah to pick up an Iron Ranger that State Parks provided to the wildlife area. The locking box will be installed at Oak Creek to allow for Discover Pass sales in the winter. Parks also provided envelopes for one day pass sales that will be used as a template for creating a WDFW envelope.

## **REGION 4**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Invasive Species Surveys:** Staff members from District 12 and 13 continued with survey/trapping efforts began last fall for prohibited invasive species in south Snohomish County waters. Activities this week included the removal of the large trap and fyke net, cleaning and decontamination of all equipment, and management and cataloging of samples. Discussions took place to determine the future direction of actions.

**San Juan Species of Greatest Conservation Need Surveys:** District 13 staff members prepared data reviews and submitted data to Olympia from surveys on the islands for Species of Greatest Conservation Need.

**Peregrine Falcons:** Biologist DeBruyn monitored a falcon nest on the Whatcom Wildlife Area while road maintenance was done near the site. The two adult falcons paid no attention to the work being done. Three large downy falcon chicks were observed on a ledge on the cliff. Biologist DeBruyn also had conversations with Hayes and Buchanan regarding the impending down-listing of peregrines and aspects of the recovery of the population.

#### ***Young peregrine falcons on the Whatcom Wildlife Area***

#### **White Nose Syndrome and Invasive Species Conference Calls:**

District 13 staff members participated in calls to continue to address the challenges of these two topics.



**Whidbey Camano Land Trust 2016 Conservation Partner Land Protection Celebration:** District Biologist Milner was an invited speaker at this annual event, which celebrates the

extraordinary accomplishments of the trust. In the last decade, the trust has raised \$42 million in grant monies to protect land in Island County. This year's gala event celebrated many dedicated landowners who have worked with the trust to assure that the properties they have cared for over many years will be protected for future generations. More information can be found at: <http://www.wclt.org/>



## **Wildlife Areas**

**Agricultural Lease Policy:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Skagit Wildlife Area staff members to review and discuss the draft Agricultural Lease Policy that is under development. Comments and concerns will be provided to the core team responsible for finalizing the policy.

**Agricultural Leases in Action:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that corn, barley, and grass were planted at the Ebey Island, Stillwater, and Crescent Lake units this past week. Farmers took advantage of the great weather to get crops in for harvest, wildlife forage, and cover.

**Tennant Lake Wetland Enhancement Mowing and Intalco Unit Field Mowing:** Manager Kessler completed mowing reed canary grass in the Phase 2 area of the Port of Bellingham's wetland enhancement project. This enhancement project on the south end of Tennant Lake is mitigation for construction activities at the Bellingham Airport. Twenty acres of grass were mowed to prevent it from going to seed. Phase 2 is scheduled to be constructed in 2019.

Natural Resource Technician Deyo mowed fields and walking paths at the Lake Terrell and Intalco units for dog walkers, hikers and runners. By mowing reed canary grass at this time, it will regrow and be at a good height for pheasant hunting season.

**Grant Pre-Proposal Development:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Planner Friebel submitted two pre-proposals to the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) learning project category. One proposal asks for resources to answer questions related to long-term stewardship of restoration sites and the other proposal requests funds to continue the Fir Island Farm estuary restoration monitoring program.

**Leque Island Design Development:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw had a conference call with Ducks Unlimited to review progress made on the preliminary design for the project. Ducks Unlimited completed a topography survey on the site and calculated excavation and grading quantities, which is important to be able to accurately estimate construction costs. A draft preliminary design report is forthcoming and will be posted on the project webpage when available. Additionally, Brokaw set a date with the Recreation and Access Committee for its first meeting on July 21 to collect input on features that should be added to the design.

## Private Lands/Access Management

**Lake Terrell Canada Goose Trapping:** Statewide Waterfowl Specialist Matthew Wilson trapped and banded Canada geese at the Lake Terrell Unit along with Private Lands Biologist Cole Caldwell, Wildlife Biologist Paul DeBruyn, Private Lands Biologist Brad Otto, Natural Resource Technician Chad Deyo, and Wildlife Area Manager Richard Kessler. A total of 30 geese were trapped and banded, including 17 hatch year males, 11 hatch year females, and two after hatch year males.

*Wildlife Program staff members coordinated with Waterfowl Specialist Wilson on capturing Canada geese at the Lake Terrell Wildlife Area. A total of 30 geese were captured and banded.*



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

### Wildlife Areas

**Master Hunter Volunteer Trail Clearing:** A Master Hunter volunteer worked for several hours clearing the path to the handicapped hunting blind at Lake Terrell.

**Lummi Island Overlook View Improvement:** Manager Kessler worked with an arborist to remove a couple trees from the Lummi Island overlook to improve the view of the San Juan Islands. This overlook is a destination spot at the end of the hiking trail through the Lummi Island Heritage Trust property. It is a natural bald area that is protected for the native plant life, including wildflowers that occur there. An installed fence protects the bald from trampling by the public, but allows access for people to enjoy the view of the San Juan Islands.

### *Lummi Island overlook view*

**Island Unit Barnfield Tidegate Replacement Project:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw discussed

mitigation requirements with Skagit River Systems Cooperative, including the possibility of



entering into an agreement with the Swinomish Tribe that would allow the tidegate project to move forward. WDFW would have to agree to a timeline to do a feasibility/alternatives analysis study for more estuary restoration in the area.

**Waterfowl Replacement Lands:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw collected information on Skagit County farmland preservation easement projects to assess if there's a possibility for WDFW to partner with the county to add language to easements that would commit landowners to provide winter forage cover crops.

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

**Spring Bear Hunt:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto completed gate 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. Otto cleared vegetation at many gate locations allowing for better access without becoming entangled in blackberry foliage.

**Migratory Bird Forage Enhancement Projects:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto met with a Snohomish County landowner who agreed to planting 25 acres of barley and a new waterfowl quality hunt unit on their property. Otto made arrangements for barley seed and the field was planted Saturday. Otto worked with three growers in Whatcom and Skagit counties who are planting forage sites this year. A Whatcom County grower planted 14 acres of barley in the last week, and 10 acres of faba beans were planted in Skagit County. Another 150 acres of barley is under contract to be planted in the next several weeks.

**Wildlife Viewing and Diversity:** Supervisory Biologist Caldwell and Biologist Wingard met with the Skagit Land Trust to discuss opportunities for partnership for private lands wildlife viewing. The meeting went very well and several opportunities for partnership were identified.

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

### **Wildlife Areas**

**Crescent Lake Unit:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with a local excavating company and volunteers to receive truckloads of donated wood chips. The wood chips are used to build up the road and trail network at the unit. The arrangement saves the excavating company the cost of disposing of the chips, and provides the unit with a suitable material for interior access roads at no cost.

*Earlier photo of the Crescent Lake Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area*

**Corson Wildlife Preserve:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with neighboring landowners to provide an update on the construction project scheduled for later this summer. The service road will be brought up to DNR road specifications and address fish passage issues within the unit.



**Wildlife Area Planning Team:**

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Core Team members to discuss plans for the next phase of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Management Plan Update process. Outcomes of this meeting will provide the basis for the upcoming Planning Team meeting.

**Drainage Districts:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Drainage District 1 representatives to discuss permit requirements for a tide gate repair project. Manager Boehm also met with Drainage District 7 (Cherry Valley) representatives to discuss ditch maintenance and levee breach repair projects planned for this summer.

**Zis a ba Estuary Restoration Project Meeting:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw attended a meeting with the Stillaguamish Tribe and stakeholders to review the 60% design of the project, which is located on Tribe land across the river from Leque Island.

**Island Unit:** Natural Resources Technician Cosgrove made final field preparations for 30 acres of barley on the Island Unit. Cosgrove coordinated with volunteers for ferry operations to transport barley seed and fertilizer bins to and from the Island Unit, planted 30 acres of barley, and monitored growth and problem weeds in other crops (corn, fava beans, and millet) on the Island Unit.

**Milltown Access:** Manager Rotton is coordinating with Officer Lucci and Skagit County to develop a volunteer group to monitor and pick up trash on the site.

**Samish Unit:** Meis continued to mow at the Samish Unit targeting areas with noxious weeds. Meis monitored crop growth and discussed a schedule for weed treatment with Wilbur Ellis.

**Private Lands/Access Management**

**Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program:** Natural Resource Technician Otto checked multiple hunt units in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties to see what crop rotations are being used this season. Otto checked the efficacy of recent herbicide applications to see if another spray is necessary. Otto walked a potential new hunt unit owned by a partner landowner in Snohomish County. Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Otto met with a landowner in Snohomish County

and secured hunting access for the upcoming waterfowl season. Biologist Wingard met with a Skagit County partner landowner and secured hunting access for the upcoming year. This site is one of the most popular and productive Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites.

### **Wildlife Conflict Program**

**Co-Management Elk Exclusionary Fence Project Assistance:** District 14 Wildlife Conflict staff members, other regional Wildlife Program staff members, tribal co-managers, and one volunteer participated in the completion of 80 acres of elk exclusionary fencing in the Birdsvew area of Skagit County. The project finished ahead of schedule with landowner participation and assistance from tribal co-managers. An extensive hazing effort was made prior to the final enclosure taking place to avoid fencing in elk and other wildlife. Additional monitoring throughout the week has shown no indication of elk or deer being inside the enclosure. Two additional fencing projects in the nearby area will now be the focus of additional mitigation efforts. Those projects should be completed by mid-July.

*Wildlife Program staff members, tribal co-managers, and one volunteer participated in the completion of 80 acres of elk exclusionary fencing in the Birdsvew area of Skagit County*



**Elk Conflict Management:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman received a call regarding four cattle loose in the Hamilton Cemetery area of Skagit County. It was reported that the cattle entered the cemetery due to an elk damaged fence(s). Witman responded to the area and it was undetermined how the cattle got out. Witman provided fladry fence for the landowners to deploy along the damaged fence lines. The cattle have temporarily been contained on a neighboring property and the landowners plan to move the cattle early next week. Landowners were appreciative of the response and the temporary use of the fladry fence.

**Elk Fence:** Biologist Smith met with landowners and coordinated with volunteers involved in temporary elk exclusion fence installation, maintenance, and improvement work. Two temporary electrified fladry fences were installed (by volunteers) to exclude elk from entering vegetable crops. Smith also coordinated with landowners who are installing electrified fladry fences on their own to exclude elk from portions of their property.

**Skagit County Cattleman's Association Meeting:** District Biologist Yarborough, Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Hoof Disease Coordinator George attended the Skagit County Cattleman's Association monthly meeting and presented updated information on current elk herd population and current damage mitigation

efforts taking place. Hoof Disease Coordinator George presented information on what has been learned about the disease in southwest Washington and current diagnostic testing taking place.



*A portion of an electrified fladry fence installed by Master Hunter volunteers to exclude elk from vegetable crops*



*An electrified fladry fence installed by a landowner to exclude elk from entering a garden*

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

**Hunter Education Instructor Support:** Hunter Education Coordinator Steven Dazey answered questions on becoming a hunter education instructor. Coordinator Dazey delivered supplies to the new Stilliguamish instructors for their upcoming first class. This class will be offered to tribal members. However, future use of the venue has been offered to open classes. Dazey answered an instructor's questions in regards to a student who had a hearing deficit and offered suggestions to the instructor on how to effectively accommodate the student's needs. Dazey assisted the team from the Black Diamond Gun Club to order supplies.

**Hunter Education Support:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey answered questions on deferrals and also bow hunting education requirements for hunters who only plan on archery hunting. Washington State requires basic hunter education for all who are born after January 1, 1972. At this time Washington does not have a bow hunter education requirement, but Dazey strongly encourages all hunters to take the class, as it teaches many actual hunting skills that would be valuable for all hunters.

**Range Safety Officer Training:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey continues to work on providing RSO training to hunter education instructors for when they offer live fire in their classes. The RSO training has been very successful so far, as each session fills and there has been a waiting list. Dazey is currently looking at securing another venue to expand the offering.

**Community Outreach:** Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey attended the Sky Valley Recreation users meeting and talked about hunter education. Dazey also presented the hunter education bookmark contest and encouraged the organizations present to get the word out to their youth members. The bookmark contest is designed to teach and show our commitment to safety.

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

**Training Opportunities:** Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended the two-day Leadership training held at the Mill Creek office. Manager Boehm also participated in the Risk Management session. Manager Rotton attended Crucial Conversations Training for two days in the Lacey Construction Shop.

**Chemical Immobilization Equipment Inventory and Organization:** Wildlife Conflict Supervisor Caldwell inventoried and organized chemical immobilization equipment. Notes were taken on needed items, rifle cleaning, storage, and other miscellaneous items.

**REGION 5**

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

**Wildlife Management**

**Black-tailed Deer Research Project:** Regional wildlife biologists continued with fawn searches and captures for this year's work on the black-tailed deer research project. Currently in the Coweeman cluster, seven out of 10 adult does captured in 2016 remain alive, while in the Washougal cluster, all four captured adult does remain alive. During the May-June birth period, all adult females associated with each study cluster will be monitored frequently by a combination of satellite, VHF, and Vaginal Implant Transmitter (VIT) technology, and multiple attempts will be made to capture their fawns. To date, a total of 11 fawns have been captured during the 2016 effort.

***Regional Wildlife Biologists Stephens, Butler, and Bergh along with several of the 2016 fawns***

**Treponeme-Associated Hoof Disease:** Biologist George accompanied Biologist Yarborough and Conflict Specialist Whitman in Region 4 for a Cattleman's Association meeting. Members of the group were given an update on the

recent findings of the disease affecting elk in the Skagit valley. There were many questions covering the etiology of the disease, transmission risks between elk and cattle, and the effects on



elk survival and reproduction. WDFW will continue to engage with these groups in the future to develop a collaborative environment when managing hoof disease in elk.

**Sea Lion Task Force:** Wildlife Program Manager Jonker attended the Sea Lion Task Force meeting. The purpose of convening the task force is to provide NMFS with a recommendation to either approve or deny the Oregon, Washington, and Idaho application for a five year extension of the existing letter of authorization allowing the removal of individually identifiable predatory California sea lions. In addition, the task force will prepare to evaluate the effectiveness of the 2012-2106 program and recommend whether it has or has not been effective in eliminating the problem interaction of sea lions having a significant negative impact on the recovery of threatened and endangered Pacific salmon and steelhead.

### **Klickitat Wildlife Area**

**Nest Box Survey:** Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven checked nest boxes on the Soda Springs Unit to see if they are being used and by what species. Of 23 functional boxes checked, eight housed western bluebirds, one was used by tree swallows, one was used by violet-green



swallows, one was occupied by tiny nestlings that were too young to identify by species, and 12 boxes were unoccupied. The nesting season began earlier than normal this year, and some of the unoccupied boxes had empty nests in them, suggesting that the young birds had already fledged.

#### ***Western bluebirds***

**Grazing Monitoring:** Due to a below normal forage production season, Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven is checking on grazing activity frequently to evaluate utilization of range plants and verify that water is available. The permittee was contacted regarding the maximum allowable use being attained on the north end of the Grayback pasture, and the cattle that were hanging out in that area were moved to summer pasture farther up in the mountains. Some of the animals remain on the WDFW range, and next week a determination will be made how much longer they will stay. Van Leuven noticed that a stock pond used as a water source by cattle was being drawn down substantially, causing tadpoles to be concentrated in the pool. At least three garter snakes were actively hunting tadpoles in the pool. Given the uncertainty of how many tadpoles could attain metamorphosis in this environment, Van Leuven moved some of the tadpoles to a nearby pond that is fenced away from livestock. A large number of tadpoles (at least 1,500 estimated) were captured by net and moved by bucket to the other pond. Most of the tadpoles appeared to be Pacific treefrogs, but about 5% were long-toed salamander tadpoles. A couple of the salamanders seemed to be fully developed but were still aquatic. The stock pond still has many tadpoles, but they should have a better chance of survival in less crowded quarters.



### *Tadpoles*

**Road Maintenance:** The WDFW Road Maintenance Crew arrived at the Klickitat Wildlife Area at the end of this week. The road to the Stinson Flat Campground was graded on Thursday



### *Road to Stinson Flats Campground*

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

### Private Lands

**Hunting Access:** Biologist Meyer began the process of renewing a few private lands access contracts in Region 5. Meyer is also looking to sign up new landowners who are interested and will be reaching out to folks in the coming months.

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

### District 10 Wildlife Conflict

**Bear:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin verified two damage permit areas on industrial timberland in south Lewis County with Biologist Meyer. Conklin verified an additional two permit areas in east Lewis County.

**Coyote:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to a report of bobcat killing chickens in the Kalama area. Conklin determined it was most likely coyotes that had killed the chickens.

### District 9 Wildlife Conflict

**Bear:** Requests to lethally remove bears due to tree damage was submitted by Weyerhaeuser for timberland in Clark County. The requests were approved and two permits were issued. Conflict Specialist Peterson was then sent to confirm the damage. Peterson found the damaged tree at the sight and confirmed the damage.

**Range Rider Program:** Conflict Specialist Peterson met with a Klickitat County rancher who is part of our range rider program. During the meeting, the upcoming range rider contract was discussed, as well as changes to the wolf management plan.

## **REGION 6**

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

#### **Wildlife Management**

**Western Pond Turtle:** Biologist Tirhi, Biologist Holcomb, and three volunteers continue to monitor the western pond turtle nesting season at the Pierce County recovery site. A total of ten nests have been laid, seven by females with radio transmitters attached (see last week report) and three without (with two nests delivered to Woodland Park Zoo for captive rearing). The pond turtle nesting season runs May 16 – July 1.

**Black-tailed deer Mortality and Habitat Use Study:** Biologist Tirhi spent considerable time monitoring radio-collared does at the Vail Tree Farm study site. Of the seven does collared in winter 2015 (see last week report), one live fawn has been located and radio-collared for five does, one dead fawn was found for a sixth, and no fawns were located for the seventh.



*Volunteers with radio collared fawn for survival and habitat use study, Vail Tree Farm, Rainier, WA*



*Radio collared fawn, vail tree farm, 2016*

**Black-tailed Deer Study:** Biologist Michaelis and Novack continue to search for fawns in the Capitol Forest. Three fawns have been captured so far. Biologist Novack, together with Officer Becker and three volunteers, captured two fawns near Fall Creek Campground. Many areas are very thick with vegetation, making detection of fawns very difficult. Excessive hot weather may result in the adult does giving birth in continued shaded areas. Biologist Michaelis updated deer activity and GPS datasets.

**Pierce County Biodiversity Alliance (PCBA):** The Alliance held its monthly meeting, at which Jordan Rash of Forterra was invited to discuss a possible DNR grant application co-sponsored by the Alliance and the Forestry COI of the Russell Family Foundation Puyallup Watershed Initiative. The Alliance also discussed ongoing coordination with Pierce County Planning and Land Services to have a representative of the county be assigned permanently to the PCBA and granted a means to update the county website biodiversity page to include the newly completed Lower White River Biodiversity Management Plan. Finally, the group finalized the agenda for the late June Lower White River interjurisdictional meeting and sent a meeting Doodle.

**Snowy Plover:** Biologist Michaelis, Biologist Sundstrom, Technician Raby, and USFWS Biologist Ritchie completed adult breeding bird surveys at Leadbetter and Midway beach. On Wednesday he again assisted same staff members at Leadbetter. The week of surveys was completed on Thursday with assistance provided for tribal staff members from the Shoalwater Tribe.

Technician Raby assisted with two protocol adult breeding window surveys this week at Leadbetter and Midway Beach. Raby also assisted Refuge Biologist Ritchie with conducting nest checks and brood searching at Leadbetter and a driving survey of Long Beach.

<b>2016 Leadbetter and Island Season Totals</b>				
<i># Nests Discovered</i>	<i># Nests Active</i>	<i># Nests Hatched</i>	<i># Nests Failed</i>	<i># Nests w/ Unknown Fate</i>
<b>22</b>	2	11	9	0

**Fisher Camera Installation:** Biologist Michaelis installed three camera stations along the upper Wishkah River drainage. WDFW reported seeing an adult a few miles downstream. Monitoring efforts are coordinated with Olympic National Park in order to better understand the extent fishers occur on the Olympic Peninsula.

**Private Lands /Conflict**

**Black-tailed Deer Fawn:** Biologist Harris picked up a deer fawn from a citizen who stated that “someone dropped off the injured fawn with us.” The secondhand or firsthand story reports the fawn was crossing the road with a doe and another fawn. This fawn fell in the ditch and stayed there. So, thinking it was in need of rescue, they picked it up. Likely the fawn just went into hiding and would have waited for the doe to come back for it. He could not get a clear location on where the fawn was found. Unfortunately, the estimated 3-4 day old fawn had what appeared to be a deformed lower leg and was using its knee as a hoof. This explains why it could not keep up with the doe. Because this fawn would most likely not have survived in the wild, it was euthanized.

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

**Private Lands /Conflict**

**Eyes in the Woods Annual Clean Up the Woods Day:** Saturday, June 4, Eyes in the Woods volunteers held their annual cleanup effort. Unfortunately, we had a low turnout. The seven volunteers consisted of five Master Hunters and two concerned citizens, one of whom was a vegan non-hunter who wanted to help out. Even with a small group, they managed to clean up several dump sites on approximately 4.5 miles of private forestland roads that are open to public access. As usual, everyone got along and had a great time.



***Group photo!***

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

**Private Lands /Conflict**

**Willapa Elk:** Natural Resource Technician Leite checked various producers' haylage/ silage fields for recent elk use. Many of these fields, or portions of them, are not visible from paved roads. In most he found very little evidence of elk use, which is not that unusual for this time of year. Still, use is lower than in the past. While checking one field, he came upon four cow elk happily munching on a newer planting. The elk responded as we have trained them. Without hesitating, they bolted for the timber. Leite was able to get picture of two of the four.



***Two elk moving for cover at the sight of a vehicle***

**Long Beach Cranberries:** Biologist Harris spoke with several growers regarding recent increases in elk and deer use. He mailed permits to one producer and will hand deliver more next week.

**Grayland Cranberries:** Deer and what appears to be one cow elk have been visiting one bog more often. The cow elk could have her calf stashed nearby. She has shown up on the cameras a few times over the last week. We will give her a few more days and then try to gently encourage her to move herself and her suspected calf out of the area.



*Deer placing head down to feed as it enters the bog*

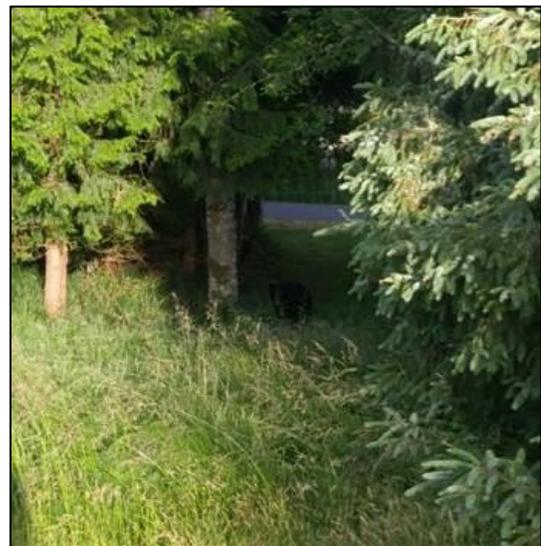


*Lone cow elk in bog*

**Black Bear Conflict:** The Ocean Shores Houdini bear(s) are still occasionally showing themselves. Early last week, multiple reports came in. One was of two larger bears with two cubs and another was of a bear walking down the road and then discovering a bird feeder a half mile away. One reporting party provided a picture of the bird food muncher. Biologist Harris advised reporting parties, and in one case explained why he removed the trap and has not reset it.

*Not quite the large bear reported*

**Master Hunter Project:** Conflict Specialist Blankenship sent out an email to Master Hunter volunteers asking for assistance with a temporary electric fencing project in Buckley. The fencing project will be completed Saturday, June 11 to help minimize elk damage to commercial pumpkin crops.



**Coyote Depredation:** Conflict Specialist Blankenship received a report of a possible depredation of a calf in Thurston County. Blankenship, with the assistance of Officer Flowers, conducted a necropsy of the calf and determined that the source of the depredation was coyote. Five coyotes were seen on the ranch for the short amount of time Fish and Wildlife staff members were at the property. Blankenship and Officer Flowers advised the ranch hand that depredating coyotes could be lethally removed from the property.

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

**Other**

**Wildlife Program Senior Staff Quarterly Meeting:** Region 6 hosted the Wildlife Program Senior Staff Quarterly meeting in Long Beach. When these meetings are held in the regions, it gives us a chance to highlight staff work in the regions. This location provided the opportunity to inform the senior staff on two issues unique to this corner of the state:

Biologist Novack arranged and co-led a trip with USFWS Biologist Ritchie to Leadbetter point to discuss snowy plover management activities and challenges. Highlights included visits to habitat restoration sites, a discussion of human use impacts and predator control programs, and a sighting of two of the birds while the group was in the process of exiting the beach. Snowy plovers are listed at both the state and federal levels and the recent actions above seem to be putting the population on an improved trajectory.

Biologist Harris introduced Wildlife Senior Management to the world of cranberries. The tour started at the Washington State University extension office where research is conducted on cranberries. The lead researcher and two producers spoke. The tour then went and looked at two different producers' bogs. While it was clear the managers benefited from the experience, this tour really impressed the producers and likely will greatly improve relations. To have a large group of management staff express an interest and listen to the producer's problems is priceless.