

Wildlife Program

Week of Jan. 28 – Feb. 3, 2019

GAME DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Beaver Relocation: Small Game and Furbearer Specialist Kindschuh continued development of a statewide beaver relocation program, working with the Attorney General's office to review options for implementation.

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

Turkey, Pheasant, and Forest Grouse Management: Small Game and Furbearer Specialist Kindschuh reviewed and updated the 2019 spring wild turkey pamphlet and attended the Washington State Chapter board meeting of the National Wild Turkey Federation to deliver a presentation on turkey management. She also met with Lands Division, Science Division, and other staff members to discuss improving data management for pheasant release sites and nontoxic shot areas. Along with Upland Bird Research Scientist Schroeder and several district biologists, Kindschuh held the annual forest grouse wing bee in Ellensburg. The Ruffed Grouse Society and Kittitas County Field and Stream Club assisted with processing. Thanks to all the hunters who submitted wing and tail samples to collection barrels throughout the season, and thanks to all the personnel who maintained and checked the barrels. Samples from 725 ruffed, spruce, and blue (dusky and sooty) grouse were assessed for species, sex, and age. These data are being used to build a long-term monitoring framework for forest grouse harvest.

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

Game Farm Licenses: Small Game and Furbearer Specialist Kindschuh issued game farm licenses and renewals for 2019. Thanks to the Wildlife Program customer service team for processing the applications.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Moose Composition Surveys: Biologists Atamian and Lowe completed aerial surveys to collect calf:cow and bull:cow data for District 2. The last intensive survey was conducted in 2012. This year the surveys were limited to areas with good visibility and those of high moose densities in previous years. Eighty-three moose were seen in 58 different groups in the Mount Spokane area. The majority were in the Lake of the Woods area of Mount

Spokane North, and in the Five Sisters area/Mount Spokane West unit, which was not included in previous years. The Mica Peak area was flown last week.



Bull moose observed during aerial survey in the Mount Spokane area



Cow and twin calves spotted in the Mount Spokane area during moose composition survey

Chief Joseph Wildlife Area – Trespass Livestock: Problems with trespass livestock continue at the wildlife area along upper Joseph Creek. What little boundary fences we have in that particular area are up. The problem is they are old and we simply do not have enough fence in the right locations to keep livestock off the wildlife area. Livestock are walking through and grazing the riparian zone along upper Joseph Creek and near Horse Creek. Upland benches and rim areas are also being utilized. Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice spoke to the livestock owner on Thursday and he is making an effort to keep his animals off the wildlife area. He is using horses and dogs to move them back onto adjacent private property. However, his situation is akin to chasing butterflies on a breezy day. They end up just coming back. As of last week, there were approximately 100 head using the wildlife area and making a mess out of one of the department’s campgrounds.



Livestock on the wildlife area against a boundary stock fence



Livestock at the upper Joseph Creek campground



Livestock in between rims at upper Joseph Creek

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

Lincoln County Wolf 101 Presentation: Lincoln County Conservation District sponsored a WDFW wolf 101 public meeting. One hundred thirty people signed into the meeting. Supervisor McCanna presented on wolf identification, statewide and local wolf numbers (2017 annual report numbers), statewide wolf management recovery objectives, translocation (State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process, nonlethal deterrent measures, and what to do if you have a suspected depredation. This was another great meeting, which lasted three hours due to the amount of questions from the public.



Attendance at the Davenport Wolf 101 public meeting

Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District (PRLCD) Annual Meeting: Supervisor McCanna gave another wolf 101 presentation at the PRLCD annual meeting with 28 people in attendance. Supervisor McCanna presented on wolf identification, statewide and local wolf numbers (2017 annual report numbers), statewide wolf management recovery objectives, translocation (State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process, nonlethal deterrent measures and what to do if you have a suspected depredation.

Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) Interviews: Supervisor McCanna performed five phone interviews with applicants interested in being on the WAG. McCanna scored and ranked the five applicants and will participate on a conference call next week to select top applicants for in-person interviews.

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

Inland Tree and Landscape Conference: Dziekan attended an arborist conference put on by the Spokane Conservation District at the Spokane Community College. This conference had speakers that focused on urban tree health and practices, which is more aligned with water access sites than wildlife areas that have forests.

REGION 2

No report submitted this week.

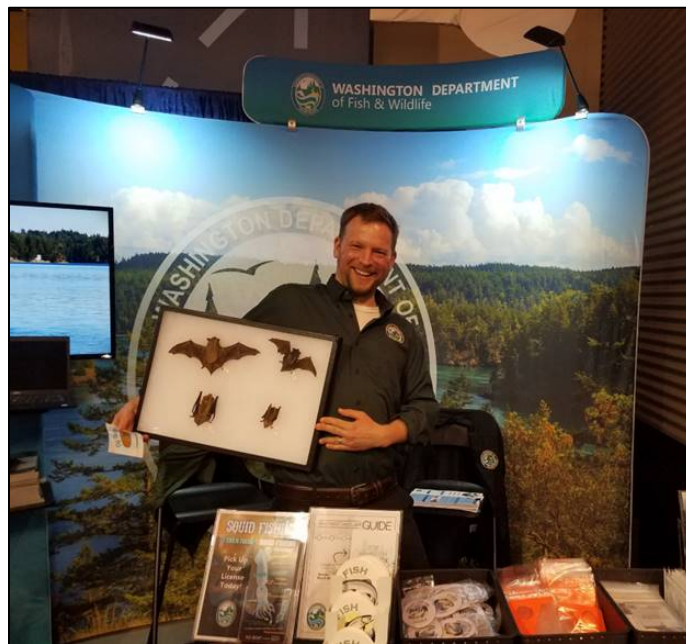
REGION 3

No report submitted this week.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Seattle Boat Show: Biologist Anderson worked a shift at the Seattle Boat Show.



Biologist Anderson with bats at the Seattle Boat Show – Photo by Sharon Pavicic, WDFW

Hamilton Boat Launch: Projects Coordinator Brokaw met with Habitat Biologist Marczin and CAMP personnel on the site to discuss the layout of the boat launch, permitting, and compensatory mitigation options.

Leque Island Signage: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Skagit Wildlife Area Biologist Meis, and Habitat Biologist Desmul met on the site to discuss a plan for interpretive signage and benches on the site to be installed with the restoration project. Following that meeting, Brokaw and Desmul met with Stanwood Historical Society to look at materials for a sign that would memorialize the history of the area.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Presentation: Projects Coordinator Brokaw presented upcoming restoration and planning projects on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area to the WDFW Snohomish District team. Projects include Stillwater and Cherry Valley vegetation and water control projects, Ebey Island and Snohomish Delta planning, and Ebey Island recreation access project.

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

Hunter Contacts: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman worked with the Region 4 north hunt coordinator to deploy master hunters throughout the week. Currently 17 of 18 hunters have been deployed to address elk-related damage to private property in Skagit and Whatcom counties.

Waterfowl Planning: Regional Wildlife and Habitat program staff members participated in a conference call with Region 5 and Headquarters to discuss the relationship between waterfowl habitat and hunting access with estuary restoration projects.

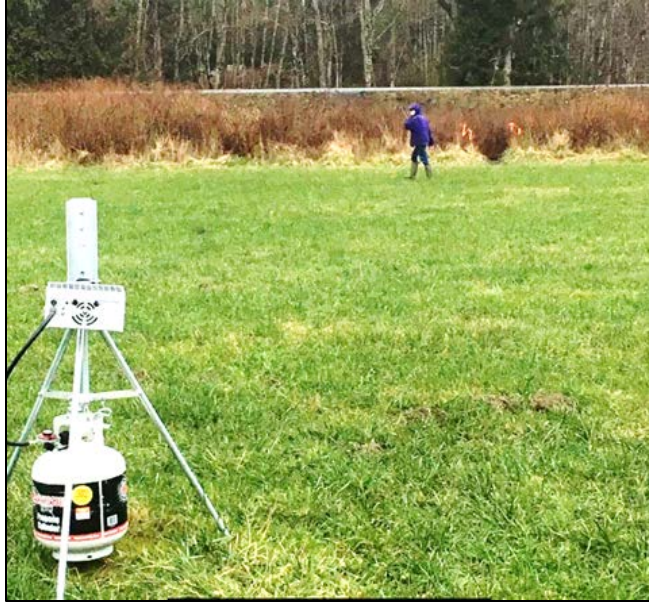
Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo began the process of removing blinds and signage from Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites.

Late Snow Goose Season: Private Lands Biologist Wingard worked with Region 4 and Olympia to coordinate a message for the upcoming late snow goose season. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo identified 25 Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites that will be available for public use during the late snow goose season.

418/4941 Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Otto spoke with multiple hunters to inquire about their hunt and success.

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

Ungulate Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal responded to elk-related complaints throughout the week. One producer requested a propane cannon to deter elk that have recently started crossing Highway 20 in Skagit County. The propane cannon was placed in the field near a recent elk trail.



Propane cannon with marked elk trail in the background

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman and Natural Resource Technician Cogdal responded to a report of elk on the football field at Concrete High School. Upon arriving, approximately 20 elk were located inside the fenced area of the field. School workers responded to open additional gates and the elk were herded out of the field and chased away. Workers on site were going to secure access points and make fence repairs to assist with keeping elk out.



Elk at Concrete High School

Public Questions: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo were contacted by many hunters regarding hunting opportunities for waterfowl and wildlife viewing.

Hunt by Reservation Double Bookings: Private Lands Biologist Wingard worked on identifying double booking occurrences in the Hunt by Reservation system.

Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated 25 hunter education classes. Dazey assisted numerous instructors to fill out their Hunter Education Instructor Incentive Permit applications to conduct live fire at their classes. Dazey approved an ammunition request for one of his teams.

Terry Hoffer Memorial Firearm Safety Award: Coordinator Dazey assisted several instructors in filling out their nomination forms for the Terry Hoffer Award. The award is designed to recognize the instructor who during the previous year has gone beyond what is normally expected of a volunteer hunter education instructor. It is especially motivating this time of year to see and recap all of the outstanding efforts of our volunteer instructors. With 11,954 students registering for classes in 2018, we rely on the many dedicated volunteer instructors to meet the demand. All of our instructors dedicate their time and energy to insuring we are able to put safe, legal, and ethical hunters in the field. The Terry Hoffer Award is a peer nominated avenue to say thanks to those who their peers recognize as having gone far beyond in their efforts to insure the continuation of our hunting heritage into the next generation.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE

Wildlife Staff Firearm Training Policy 7011: Coordinator Dazey traveled to Ephrata to conduct discipline specific firearm training and qualification for WDFW Wildlife Program staff members who still needed the training to comply with Policy 7011. Basic rifle, basic shotgun, and basic pistol training and WDFW qualification in each discipline was completed for those in attendance.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Elk Hoof Disease Survival Study: Hoof Disease Coordinator Garrison and Biologist Holman followed up on one elk mortality this week. The elk was located in the Toutle game management unit. The elk was captured in February 2015. The elk was first located by a local citizen who then contacted WDFW about his find. In order to get WDFW personnel to the elk mortality site, the citizen took the day off work to escort staff members to the location. The elk had been extensively scavenged by other wildlife. In spite of the elk's state of decomposition, biologists were able to determine the elk was in extremely poor condition, had very little fat in the bone marrow and suffered from hoof disease. Cause of death for this elk is unknown. The elk is part of a four-year study implemented to estimate the survival of adult female cow elk affected by trypsin-associated hoof disease.

The study also focuses on the effects of the disease on elk reproduction and movement patterns. Satellite-equipped collars have provided email notifications when an elk has died throughout the study. However, the collars are now nearing the end of their battery life and other methods, including aerial telemetry, ground-based telemetry, and citizen reports are now needed to follow-up on mortalities. Thanks to the dedicated wildlife advocate who took the time to contact WDFW and volunteered to miss work to re-visit the location. Currently, there are approximately 76 elk of the Mount St. Helens Herd that are monitored continuously for this study. For more information on treponeme-associated hoof disease in elk, please visit the hoof disease webpage http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/health/hoof_disease/



Hoof disease survival study elk mortality

Elk Hoof Disease Survival Study: Hoof Disease Coordinator Garrison and Biologist Holman conducted a fixed-wing aircraft telemetry survey of elk associated with the hoof disease survival study. The collars used for this study are now nearing the end of their battery life and other methods including aerial telemetry, ground-based telemetry, and citizen reports are now needed to determine the status of study animals. Agency pilot Kimbrel piloted the aircraft while Garrison and Holman navigated and listened for VHF signals from elk whose GPS collar function has failed. Nine elk out of approximately 40 with problematic collars were located during the effort and all nine delivered live signals via telemetry. Thanks to pilot Kimbrel for his skillful flying and knowledge of telemetry.

Dusky Canada Geese: Biologist Burlingame surveyed areas in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties for dusky geese. Several small flocks of duskies were observed, including 10 duskies with red neck collars. Collar re-sights aid in determining survival and distribution of duskies that overwinter in southwest Washington. In addition, two resident dark geese with white neck

collars were also observed. Resident dark geese (wusky geese) are hybrids between dusky and western Canada geese, and remain in the region throughout the year. More information on these geese can be found here: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01488/>

Planning and Coordination Meeting with Klickitat Conservation Districts: Manager Van Leuven joined Region 5 Wildlife Program Manager Jonker and representatives from the central and east Klickitat Conservation Districts to discuss refinements to strategies for working together in the partnership and updates on current activities on the Simcoe Mountains Unit. The meeting was productive and the partners look forward to resuming work on the property management plan, updating the Memorandum of Understanding, and developing a partnership agreement.

Reader Board Construction: Assistant Manager Steveson built two reader boards using a template commonly used on other wildlife areas. The reader boards will be installed at major access points on the Soda Springs Unit, displaying all the pertinent information the public needs to know when recreating on the property.



Reader board construction

Patrol of the Soda Springs Unit: Assistant Manager Steveson checked campgrounds along the Klickitat River as well as upland areas that are popular with visitors. Minimal trash was collected and several fire rings outside of designated campgrounds were dismantled. One large pine tree was removed from across a wildlife area access road.



Pine tree removal

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

Southwest Washington Goose Management Area 2-Inland: The goose season in GMA 2-Inland is currently closed. The season will re-open Feb.9, although WDFW wildlife areas and national wildlife refuges will be closed to goose hunting. Please review the goose section of the [Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Seasons](#) pamphlet for details.

Bobcat Seal: This week, Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Biologist Wickhem sealed a bobcat that was harvested near Trout Lake. Bobcat hunting season ends March 15 and all successful hunters must submit their harvest report and contact the department for a pelt sealing by April 20, 2019.



Harvested bobcat

Checks of Trapper-Harvested Wildlife Species: With the trapping season in progress, members of the regional wildlife and customer service teams have checked a variety of species at the regional headquarters in Ridgefield. Wildlife checked during the past week included one trapper with five river otters and three bobcats. Thanks to the successful trappers for bringing their animals to WDFW for sealing.



Harvested river otters and bobcats

Grouse Wing Bee: Biologist Holman traveled to Ellensburg where representatives from five of the six WDFW regions, along with Olympia staff members, assembled to gather data from grouse wings collected during the 2018 hunting season. Biologists identified the grouse wings to species (ruffed, spruce or sooty/dusky (formerly Blue). The samples were also identified to sex in the case of sooty/dusky and spruce grouse. Finally, the birds were aged using the molt stage to group them into juvenile, yearling and adult age classes. The overall goal of this effort is to build estimated population trend datasets for each species to evaluate harvest management strategies. Data will be summarized by Game Division personnel and aspects of these biological metrics are likely to be included in the next Game Management Plan. Stations set up in Cowlitz and Lewis counties contributed approximately 110 samples to the pool of many hundreds collected statewide. Thanks to the grouse hunters in Region 5 who took the time to submit grouse wings and contribute to their management.

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

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner regarding elk damage to a couple of smaller, irrigated pastures in Klickitat County. Advice was given and deterrent measures were discussed.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin deployed a master hunter in response to elk damage in Lewis County. She also deployed a youth hunter in response to elk damage in Wahkiakum County. Conklin also responded to a landowner in west Cowlitz County experiencing damage to his hay fields and his fences from elk.

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

Statewide Cougar Management Meeting: Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Biologist Holman travelled to Ellensburg to participate in a meeting on cougar management across the state. Carnivore section personnel held the meeting in preparation for the upcoming update to the Game Management Plan, which is reviewed every six years. Input from district wildlife biologists, conflict specialists, and enforcement captains was heard on topics including harvest management, human-cougar conflict, and overall cougar population management. It was very valuable to hear opinions and experience from across the state and across programs regarding all topics. Further meetings may be planned and smaller groups formed to tackle specific issues.

Firearms Certification Training: Biologists Holman attended a single day Firearms Certification Training put on by WDFW's Hunter Education staff members. The course focused on the safe operation of agency issued handguns per the 2018 Firearms Policy. Wildlife Program staff members in various roles have need of firearms for a variety of purposes including, euthanizing injured wildlife, hazing wildlife, collecting biological specimens for veterinary or diagnostic purposes, etc.

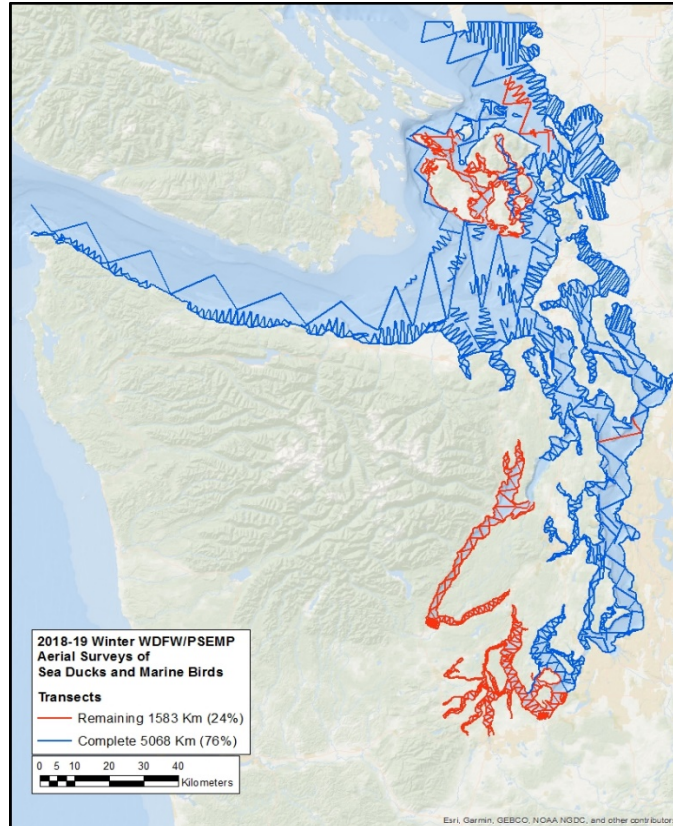
Pesticide Recertification Training: Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven and Assistant Manager Steveson attended two days of pesticide recertification training in Yakima. There were several presentations on relevant subjects and details were noted on ways to improve the efficiency of weed control efforts on the wildlife area.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Sea Duck Surveys: Biologist Murphie, along with Biologists Hamer and Moore participated in a waterfowl, marine bird, and mammal survey effort led by Biologist Evenson that began last week. This survey has been conducted since 1992 with intent to collect count and distribution indices of a broad suite of species throughout the inland marine waters each winter and now provides valuable data for sea duck management. Biologist Murphie has been a primary observer for this effort since 1995, Biologist Hamer joined the team last year, and this year is Biologist Moore's first. Biologist Evenson joined the team in 1994, serving first as an observer, now as navigator and project lead.

When finished, this survey will sample more than 640 square kilometers of near shore and open water habitat within the Salish Sea, recording location, count and identification of waterfowl, marine birds and mammals seen within a 50 meter transect strip. These surveys are flown at an altitude of 200 feet above the water and roughly 100 mph. As of the beginning of last week, the team was about 75 percent finished with this season's effort (see map) and conducted surveys in the San Juans, all of Hood Canal, and a small portion of south Puget Sound. Weather permitting, they should complete the survey this week. The map below shows the actual track line from this season's survey; the red line indicates areas left to survey except that the team completed most of the San Juan Island and Hood Canal areas last week.



District 16 Taylor’s Checkerspot Survey Strategizing: Biologist McMillan worked on providing the point site measurements (i.e. obstruction estimates) collected during the field season in 2018. Some measurements were not entered into the spreadsheets. Several persons were assisting on these site measurements in 2018 and the inconsistency in gathering measurements had been brought to the group, but due to several complications the decision on how best to measure was postponed. To be able to analyze the data the decision was made by Research Scientist Olson to proceed with the gathered records with the goal of improving on these measurements in 2019.

On January 29, Biologist McMillan, Biologist Ament, and Biologist Murphie participated in the Taylor’s checkerspot conference call with Biologist Potter, Biologist Jenkerson, Diversity Division Manager Cotten, and Research Scientist Olson. Data analysis from 2018 distance point count Taylor’s checkerspot surveys was shared and discussed to aid in improving survey efforts in 2019. The group will reconvene mid-March on site to work at finalizing point location and specific measurements regarding slope and obstruction.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Northern Site West of Elwha River: January 25, Biologist McMillan met with Habitat Biologist Gary Bell, DNR Biologist McPherson and DNR Biologist Huggins to review the forest harvest boundary markers and determine if any of the zone inside of the harvest boundary needed adjusting to assure current checkerspot habitat is not destroyed. No zones within the harvest boundary encroached on currently occupied habitat or suitable bald habitat. Biologist Bell proceeded with writing up a summary of the site visit and the consensus of the group field visit.

Olympic Peninsula Elk Monitoring Strategy: The Region 6 Wildlife Program sponsored a meeting with biologists representing several treaty tribes on the Olympic Peninsula to review ongoing elk monitoring efforts and identify where additional investment by WDFW would be of greatest value. We have had a longstanding cooperative relationship with the tribes on many of these efforts and sharing of data and results is the norm between all involved. Biologist Murphie led most of the discussion using a map to make notes of current efforts and identifying gaps in information. Somewhat not surprisingly, the western side of the peninsula rose to the top as the area to pursue with a rough outline of a strategy to follow.

In addition to the discussion above, we also presented some of the concepts related to objectives for the Olympic elk herd plan revision, which is now in the early stages of development. At the end of the meeting, all agreed to pursue a similar meeting next winter, and potentially a summer meeting to discuss further details of the herd plan if developed enough to warrant it by that time.

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

Upper Chehalis Elk: Biologist Harris received a harvest report from a very proud father. His 12-year-old son harvested his first elk using a damage prevention permit. The producer also called to report the harvest. Biologist Harris is not sure who was more excited, the producer or the father.



Youth hunter with his first elk

Waterfowl Hunting Sites: Natural Resource Technician Tupen removed signage and blinds from sites in Jefferson and Mason counties. He consulted with landowners in the Chehalis valley on late goose season access.

Beaver Deterrents: Natural Resource Technician Tupen checked locations on industrial forest lands that allow free public access where bear hide has been placed to discourage beavers from building dams in culverts and under bridges. No recent beaver activity was observed.

Panther Lake Tree Removal: The Access team worked with a local tree company to fall and remove six dead, standing fir trees leaning over a neighboring landowner's property. Concerns about the trees falling on his new shop warranted the removal.



Long Lake (Thurston County) Parking Lot Maintenance: The last parking lots hammered from the most recent storms are now clean. Heavy debris and rock washed onto the asphalt, it took the team nearly four hours to remove the debris.



Boat Ramp Silt Removal: With storms subsiding, water levels have dropped, allowing the crew to start the process of removing silt and debris from the launch ramps.



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

DPCA/Permits: Natural Resource Technician Tupen met with three landowners to get Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DCPA) contracts signed. He also delivered damage prevention permits and kill permits to landowners that have been struggling with elk damage.

Satsop Elk: Natural Resource Technician Tupen continued to work with landowners and a master hunter to keep the elk away from Highway 12. A fox light was placed at their preferred crossing spot. The elk have not crossed over to the highway since. Coincidence or not, we are happy to get a break. A hunter using a damage prevention permit was able to harvest one of the elk this past weekend. The elk were last seen heading north onto industrial timberlands.

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

Olympic Peninsula Wildlife Technical Group Meeting: Multiple Wildlife Program staff members attended the annual event that was hosted by the Skokomish Tribe this year at their new community center on Highway 101. The forum is an opportunity for tribes, state and federal agencies, and others to share information about their work and network in an informal setting. Thanks to all the presenters who included Kyle Garrison and Julia Smith from headquarters. Also, congratulations to Tim Cullinan with the Point No Point Treaty Council, who announced his retirement to the group this year, and a special thank you for his work organizing these meetings over the past several years.