

Wildlife Program

Week of June 4-10, 2012

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Southern Resident Killer Whale Management: Biologist Gary Wiles drafted a letter to the Department of Fisheries and Ocean Canada regarding a proposal to strengthen Canada's Marine Mammal Regulations. WDFW recommended that a vessel approach distance of 200m be adopted for southern resident killer whales in British Columbia and that vessels be prohibited from intercepting or parking in the path of the whales. These changes would make Canada's regulations consistent with those recently adopted under U.S. federal and Washington State law (RCW 77.15.740).

Mazama Pocket Gopher Survey: Section Manager Bruce Thompson, working cooperatively with Science Division staff, facilitated initial efforts for opportunistic and directed surveys to begin this week in Region 6. Exploration is underway to provide some staff assistance to perform trapping at early-detected mound sites to confirm pocket gopher presence. These initial sites represent various stages of open forest and clear-cuts, staff will hone skills with surveys of types for which there is less past survey information.

Habitat Connectivity Project:

- 1) This week the WHCWG held a major meeting in Ellensburg to "roll out" the Columbia Plateau connectivity analysis. The following took place:
 - a) Introductions by Molly Ingraham (TNC, Acting WA Science Director), and Greg Schirato (WP Deputy AD);
 - b) A series of scientific presentations regarding the analysis (by WDFW's Chris Sato, Mike Schroeder, Mark Teske, John Pierce, as well as presenters from TNC, UW, WDNR, Oriante Society, and independent);
 - c) An overview of the climate connectivity work underway (UW, TNC);
 - d) A WGA Wildlife Corridors Initiative briefing by Lisa Veneroso (HP AD), Audrey Hatch (WGA/WDFW), and John Pierce (WDFW);
 - e) A "connectivity use roundtable" (moderated by Sean Finn of the GNLCC, with Elizabeth Rodrick representing WDFW, and presenters from the USFWS, WSDOT, BLM, WCSI-WA Conservation Science Institute);
 - f) Model validation (Mike Schroeder – WDFW, and presenter from Western Transportation Institute);
 - g) Next steps (moderated by Audrey Hatch, WGA/WDFW, and presenter Laurie Vigue, WDFW, and presenters from Conservation NW, WCSI).

Joanne Schuett-Hames, WDFW, led the effort to put on this meeting.

- 2) Formal notification from GNLCC for this year's funding allocation. The WHCWG's two proposals rated #2, and #8 out of 60 proposals, with both receiving partial funding based on the requested amounts. From the GNLCC: "The funding decisions entailed a rigorous review by a team of 8 from 7 federal, state and provincial organizations for which we considered

more than 60 proposals and final tweaking by the GNLCC Steering Committee, a group of more than 25 regional executives and directors of conservation organizations and agencies.”

- 3) Use of the connectivity products continues to grow. This week the USFWS requested information regarding White-tailed Jackrabbit connectivity for use in HCP development by a conservation district, and an initial look at one of the WWRP Critical Habitat proposals when compared with connectivity maps indicates huge importance for key linkage and habitat areas.

WILDLIFE OUTREACH DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Scientific Collections Permits: Simplification of the SCP application process has made significant progress. Comments from all interested reviewers of the new Application and Instructions were due last Friday, June 3; remarks were received back from only a few. These suggestions will be reviewed and incorporated into the final SCP Application and Instructions. Interested Fish Program Biologists have been invited to comment on these documents; their due date is June 27. Any Wildlife Program Biologists who wish to submit comments but have not yet, may do so until that date.

In keeping with the desire to moderate cumulative impacts on populations of species proposed for lethal collection, SCP permits are being more stringently conditioned to be in alignment with the protection mandate of the agency and WDFW policy. These stricter conditions have not been favorably received by museums. Tricia Thompson has spoken with three collections managers of these museums and meetings will be set for discussions to take place between the museums and WDFW biologists.

Tricia Thompson reviewed and compiled the comments for four SCP applications and sent in the approval for permitting, and reviewed nine more scientific collection permits applications and sent out to the appropriate Biologists for evaluation.

Falconry: Tricia Thompson mailed letters to Animal Control facilities and Humane Societies across the state informing them of the WDFW MOU with the Washington Falconers Association to rescue and release raptors trapped in buildings and/or causing other undue mischief. It seems that the public often thinks of Animal Control and the Humane Society first when needing assistance with these raptors and there is frustration on the part of the reporting party and a large time-lapse when rescuing the raptor. Unfortunately, this time lapse resulted in the death of a Cooper's hawk that was trapped in a building last week.

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

Get Out West Activity Day: Governor Gregoire greeted the participants at the Get Out West Day at Suncadia Lodge near Roslyn, Washington. The day was unseasonably cold and wet weather met the participants of the Western Governors Association (WGA) meeting in the pre-conference Get Out West activity day on June 9 at Suncadia Lodge near Roslyn. WDFW supplied four extremely popular activities: an archery range, a pellet gun trailer, casting lessons and fishing, and a birds, butterfly and damselfly hike lead by noted naturalists Idie Ulsh and Dave Nunallee. Mike O'Malley, Chuck Gibilisco, Margaret Tudor and James Chandler facilitated the activities; and Hunter Education staff and volunteers provided the key attractions.



Figure 1: Governor Gregoire greets the participants at the Get Out West Day at Suncadia Lodge near Roslyn, WA.



Figure 3: Idie Ulsh, noted bird lecturer, explains how to use binoculars to guests of the WGA Get Out West Day.

Tricia Thompson participated in the Birds, Butterflies, and Dragonflies Team in the “Taste of Vendors” event. The weather was cold and wet but the people who were there had fun. The participants were mostly school children, including teenagers, who were lead on a trip around the grounds looking for birds, butterflies, and dragonflies. Actually just birds, as no normal butterfly or dragonfly would be out in that weather. The teenagers particularly enjoyed looking through the binoculars, which many had never done before. Tricia also participated in the demonstration “Bio-blitz” for the WGA meeting, which unveiled the WDFW smart phone app. allowing immediate data entry on site.



Figure 4: Casting and fishing were highlights of the Get Out West day.



Figure 5: Pellet gun target shooting often brought repeat visits from the participants.



Figure 6: Archery was one of the most popular activities.

On Sunday, June 10, one of the two breakout sessions was hosted by the WDFW and ESRI on “Using the Outdoors as a Classroom.” Students from Cle Elum Middle School and Waterville Elementary School demonstrated how they study the outdoors as a way to improve their science, math and reading skills.



Figure 7: WDFW's Dr. Margaret Tudor introduced the half-day activity that allowed the students to demonstrate their prowess as naturalists.



Figure 8: Cle Elum Middle School students conducted a bio-blitz on a 20 square meter site, determining percent cover, vegetation and slope.



Figure 9: Waterville 3rd and 4th graders give lessons on great horned owls. “Students” included two members of Governor Gregoire’s staff, and a former Governor of Wyoming.

Culminating the event was the implementation of a new smart phone application to record observations of wildlife and to upload this data and pictures to a server. Developed by the Science Division and ESRI, it mapped the Suncadia property and showed all observations by species on the map. Versions of the smart phone app were developed for iPhone, Android and Windows 7 operating systems.



Figure 10: New citizen scientists record a species of butterfly, and enter the data and pictures into a smart phone.

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

Wildlife Outreach Volunteers: Volunteer Management coordinator, James Chandler, submitted the final draft of the revised Volunteer Management policy manual. Mike O'Malley will work with WDFW leadership to adopt the new Volunteer Management policy. James is also campaigning to have all WDFW employees submit their volunteer registrations and time sheets through CERVIS. Many DFW employees are still using paper forms requiring data entry by hand – which takes an inordinate amount of staff time.

Citizen Science: Citizen Science coordinator Margaret Tudor began recruiting Citizen Science volunteers for July training at the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area to pilot the Ecological Integrity Assessment (EIA) project.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Grizzly Bear Conservation: District Wildlife Biologist Dana Base and Technician Tiffany Baker checked bear hair-snares deployed in the Wedge (GMU 105) and collected 10 hair (DNA) samples from 5 of 6 stations along with photographs from a motion activated camera also deployed. Photos of both a black bear and a grizzly bear were down-loaded from the camera. All hair samples will be routed to Wayne Kasworm, Grizzly Bear Biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Montana at the end of the sampling effort next month.



Photograph of grizzly bear taken in the Wedge by motion sensitive camera deployed at a bear hair-snare sampling station. The long, straight claws are diagnostic.

Grouse tracking at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA): Both sage grouse and sharp-tailed grouse have been tracked this week on and around Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (SLWA). This week we had 2 successful sharptail nests. The first nest hatched 12 of 12 eggs and the second nest hatched 8 of 8 eggs. We had one Sage Grouse nest that was predated with 8 eggs. A female Sage Grouse without any collar was seen with at least 3 young chicks just by chance. So not to disturb the already nervous bird with young chicks no further searching for any other chicks were done near that particular bird. We also had a female Sage Grouse that was released in 2009, that is remarkably still on the air with a working radio that can be heard up to 500 meters away. She was seen with at least 3 young chicks.



Sharptail nest 12 of 12 (photo taken by Kourtney Stonehouse)

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

Feel Free to Fish: Private Lands Biologist Dawn Davis responded to calls from landowners interested in participating in the Feel Free to Fish (FFTF) program. Davis met with a producer south of Prescott in Walla Walla County interested in enrolling over 1.5 mi of the Touchet River in the FFTF program. Davis began developing a FFTF cooperative agreement with the



landowner and entered the project into CAPs for approval. Davis will continue to work with landowners to develop additional cooperative agreements that will ensure fishing access along the Walla Walla and Touchet rivers.

Portion of the Touchet River south of Prescott to be enrolled in WDFW's FFTF program.

REGION 2

Region 2 – Okanogan, Douglas, Chelan, Grant and Adams Counties

Regional Wildlife Program Manager: Matt Monda

DISTRICT BIOLOGISTS

District 5: Grant / Adams District - Rich Finger / Vacant

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Northern Leopard Frog: Finger met with Washington State University professor Saylor, Ph.D. student Gomez, and Columbia National Wildlife Refuge Biologist Warrick to discuss future northern leopard frog research work and reintroduction. Unfortunately, WSU will likely withdraw from their captive rearing program due to disease issues and lack of staff to adequately operate the facility. Gomez received a large fellowship to conduct research on Columbia Plateau amphibians and will be focusing a considerable effort on methods to estimate population size within the subunits of the Northern Leopard Frog Management Area using mark recapture via photography (individuals have unique spot patterns). This will be attempted during July/August and Finger will be assisting the effort as available.

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

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA): Biologist Finger began avian point count monitoring at the TD2 project (aka Harris ponds). Point count surveys are required biennially as part of the BPA agreement for long-term Operations and Maintenance. Surveys are intended to track bird use at the project site to show that management objectives (primarily waterfowl related) are being reached.

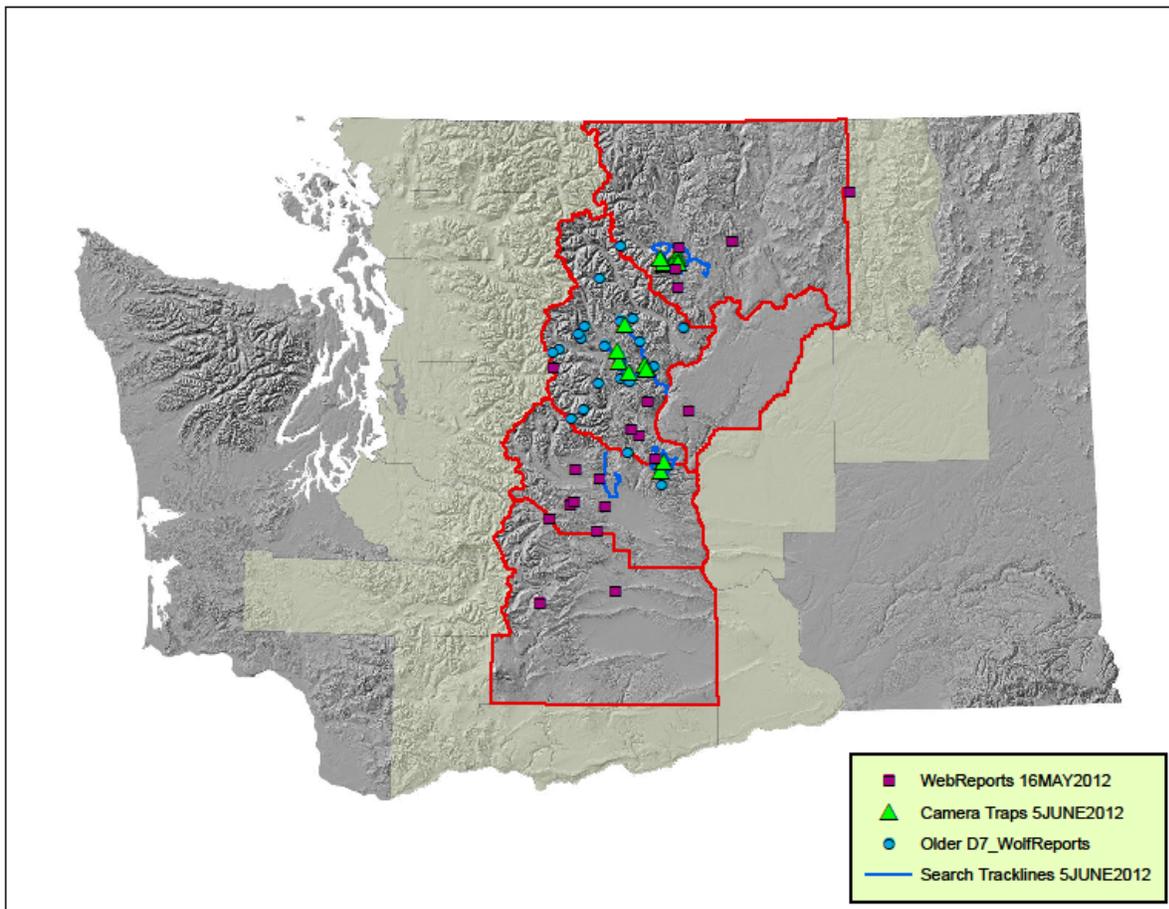
Winchester Regulated Access Area (WRAA): Biologist Finger identified a 12.5 acre portion of the WRAA to be planted to winter wheat in August of this year. This area will be clearly identified by mowing of weedy vegetation so that it can be disked by a volunteer and then seeded and fertilized by the volunteer or wildlife area staff.

District 7: Chelan / Douglas District – David Volsen / Jon Gallie

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wolves: Biologist Volsen worked on coordination of wolf surveys in Regions 2 and 3, directing Sci Tech Spence's time toward areas of highest need. Sci Tech Spence has been working in Okanogan County for the past few weeks, focusing efforts on the Lookout Pack's location and activities. Few tracks have been seen and no camera images were recovered, however, recent activity by the pack has yielded some positive results. Sci Tech Spence will be relocating to Chelan and Kittitas Counties in the upcoming weeks to follow up leads in these areas. Wolf reports from internet submissions were examined and those of interest were cataloged. They will be incorporated into plans for additional field surveys.

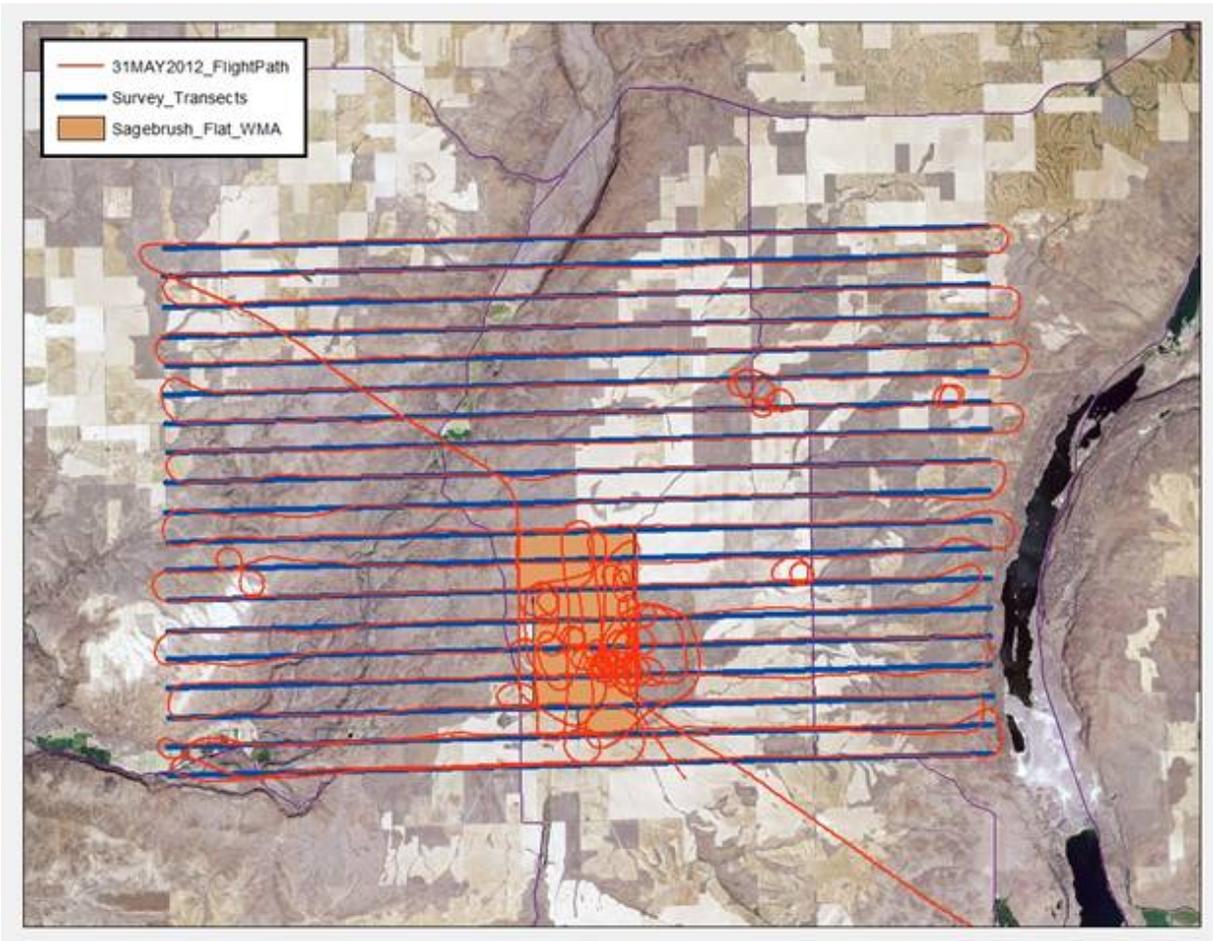
Map of wolf monitoring activity for Regions 2 and 3, including internet reports, old sighting reports, camera trap locations and survey routes to date.



Pygmy Rabbits: Following the release of kits on Sagebrush Flat, biologist Volsen conducted a fixed wing survey of the area to locate rabbits that were being problematic. We developed a survey grid that corresponds to documented dispersal distances of kits in the wild. Our transect legs extended 11km east, west and north of the release sites. The lack of habitat and direction of dispersal movements indicated that surveys to the south were of reduced value. Surveys transects were spaced at ½ mile intervals, anticipating the ability to detect transmitters at ¼ mile. A test transmitter was used to determine at what distance and elevation transmitters could be received from the Cessna 182 at safe flight speeds.

It was determined that an elevation of 1000 ft was the ceiling for effective detections and that a transmitter on a rabbit above ground could be received at ¾ mile under good conditions. We set out to find 20 transmitters, but only could locate 9. Only one (1) rabbit was located off Sagebrush Flat WMA, with all others being located on the WMA. Based on our flight paths and locations of detections, we determined that the likelihood of missing rabbits was primarily dependant on the rabbit's location, above or below ground, when the plane was near. We had high confidence that if the transmitter was above ground that we would be able to detect and locate the rabbit.

Image Below: Survey transects and flight path for fixed-wing flight to locate pygmy rabbits on the Sagebrush Flat WMA on 31 May 2012.



Flammulated Owl: Biologists Gallie and Volsen conducted the first round of call routes in Chelan County. The mixed Conifer route was productive, detecting flammulated owls at 5 of 10 sites. The Mesic Forest was more problematic as blocks of snow/ice were still present on roads, thus only 6 of 10 sites were completed, with no responses on them. The Ponderosa Pine route resulted in zero detection.



View of the Cascades, Chelan County before Flammulated Owl survey.

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

Mourning Dove: Biologists Gallie and Volsen completed mourning dove call routes in Douglas and Chelan Counties. The number of doves recorded on the Chelan route was the lowest in years. Conditions on the Stemilt route were windy, but within acceptable conditions and could have played a role in low detections. Conditions on the Badger Mtn. route were favorable for the survey, yet that route yielded its characteristic low numbers.

WILDLIFE AREAS

Wells Wildlife Area Complex –Dan Peterson / Ann Winters / Fidel Rios

Weather Conditions: June began cold and wet. Highs were in the upper 50's to mid-60's most of the week, although Thursday it barely got above 50° F. We recorded the total rainfall for the week at the office was 0.62in, while on Dyer Hill the total was 1.15 inches.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Washington Connected Landscape Project: Tuesday Dan traveled to Ellensburg with Research Biologist Mike Schroeder and Independent Researcher Leslie Robb to attend the 'roll out' of this multi-year, multi-agency project. The day was filled with excellent presentations on the project's focal species and how agencies can use the work to improve populations across the Columbia Basin.

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

Food Plot Fields: This week's weather did not make our field spraying plans particularly easy. Wednesday gave us a break in the rain and Maintenance Mechanic Fidel Rios was able to treat the wheat fields on Bridgeport Bar for emerging broadleaf weeds and warm season grasses. A number of these fields are infested with longspine sandbur which the treatment is intended to address. Thursday brought more rain and so Fidel was not able to spray are the fields at Washburn Island.

Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Complex – Greg Fitzgerald / Brian Cole / Roger Nelson

Weather Conditions: Windy, rainy and cool week in the Columbia Basin, with temperatures from high 30s to mid 60s, winds in the teens and gusts to 30 mph.

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

Lenice Lake Fire: Wildlife Area Manager Fitzgerald received a report of a wild land fire near Lenice Lake in the Lower Crab Creek Unit late Sunday, June 3, night. Grant County Fire Protection District 10 reported a fire had spread to the Russian olive/Phragmites infested wetlands along the feeder creek at the northeast corner of the lake and was spreading west toward a 350 kilovolt power line beyond. Access for equipment was impossible in the channeled scablands where the fire was actively burning (50' flames) and the Incident Commander was requesting permission to call in hand crews to assist. Despite falling winds and rising relative humidity the fire stubbornly held on in the leaf litter under the Russian olives. A 20-man US Forest Service hand crew showed up on Tuesday morning and had the fire out mid-day on Wednesday, having burned 226 acres.



Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Complex - Dale Swedberg / Justin Haug

Sherman Creek Prescribed Burn: Dry Forest Restoration Specialist Guse and Prescribed Burn Specialist Leuschen spent a wet week in the field at Sherman Creek WA working to lay-out burn units. A major part of the burn plan writing process is learning about the piece of ground we intend to burn by identifying fire break opportunities and holding strategies, any sensitive features in need of protection and overall thinking through the process of burning a piece of ground. Most of the GIS data has now been collected and the plan writing process will continue however there will likely be some short visits to confirm various features as we move forward with the goal of beginning implementation this fall.



Tom Leuschen inspecting and recording location of irrigation pipeline with wooden supports traversing a burn unit that will be protected during a prescribed burn



Tom Leuschen inspecting and recording location of a spring box supplying water to the Sherman Creek Summer Homes that will be excluded from a prescribed burn unit by burning a large buffer area around it

Tom Leuschen inspecting and recording location of a spring box during an earlier site visit that will be burned around and protected during prescribed burn operations.



It was discovered the box holds more than 1,500 gallons of water and can serve as a back-up water supply. Since this picture was taken the Sinlahekin prescribed burn module crew has cleared the dead woody material away from the box. A hose-lay providing water from a trunk-line, and a crewmember will be assigned to protect this historic structure

PRIVATE LANDS - John Cotton / Eric Braaten / JoAnn Wisniewski

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE): Private Lands Biologist Braaten and PL Biologist Baarstad began SAFE vegetation surveys. They also met with a few landowners about contracts and provided suggestions and answered many questions regarding SAFE cost share, SAFE conservation plans and SAFE requirements. Private Lands Biologists Cotton and

Wisniewski conducted SAFE vegetation surveys (picture below), met with landowners to discuss plans for seeding their SAFE acres and wrote SAFE plans.



REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Manager Huffman, WDFW Engineer Kuykendall, WDFW Habitat Biologist Scott, Matt Dahlgreen and Reese Lolley from the Nature Conservancy, Emily Johnson, Richard Vacirca, Jodi Leingang, Jim Bailey and Michelle King from the Naches Ranger District, Jim Matthews and John Marvin from Yakama Nation fisheries, toured problem roads in the Oak Creek Restoration Project area with Jeff Krupka from US Fish and Wildlife Service and Justin Yeager from National Marine Fisheries Service. Section 7 consultation is required because of the Nature Conservancy's National Fire Plan grant that is currently providing funding for the project. The Services are concerned about sediment delivery into Oak Creek from existing roads and problem culverts on primarily US Forest Service roads on WDFW ownership in the project area, as well as the potential for sediment delivery from the overall project. Oak Creek contains steelhead, west slope cutthroat and is listed as a recovery area for bull trout. The group discussed problems, potential solutions and how to move forward with the project.



REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

San Juan Archipelago Survey of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN): District Biologist Milner and Assistant District Biologist Cyra initiated surveys aimed at improving our knowledge of presence and distribution of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians listed as SGCN species that occur in the San Juan archipelago. Small mammal and herp surveys have been lacking for this geographical area. This survey concentrated on Orcas Island and surveyed a number of different habitat types including Oak Savannah, meadow, forests, and wetlands using a variety of survey techniques. Five separate geographic locations were surveyed with a total of 98 trap nights, 6 live trap nights, 12 trail camera nights, two nights of bat detections, and a day of herp searches. Essential assistance was provided by staff of the SeaDoc Society for housing, volunteers, and especially with landowner contact and access. Greg Green of IFC generously provided his time, knowledge, cameras and bat detectors. Continued cold, wet weather continues to hamper field surveys this spring. Additional visits are planned for later in the summer.

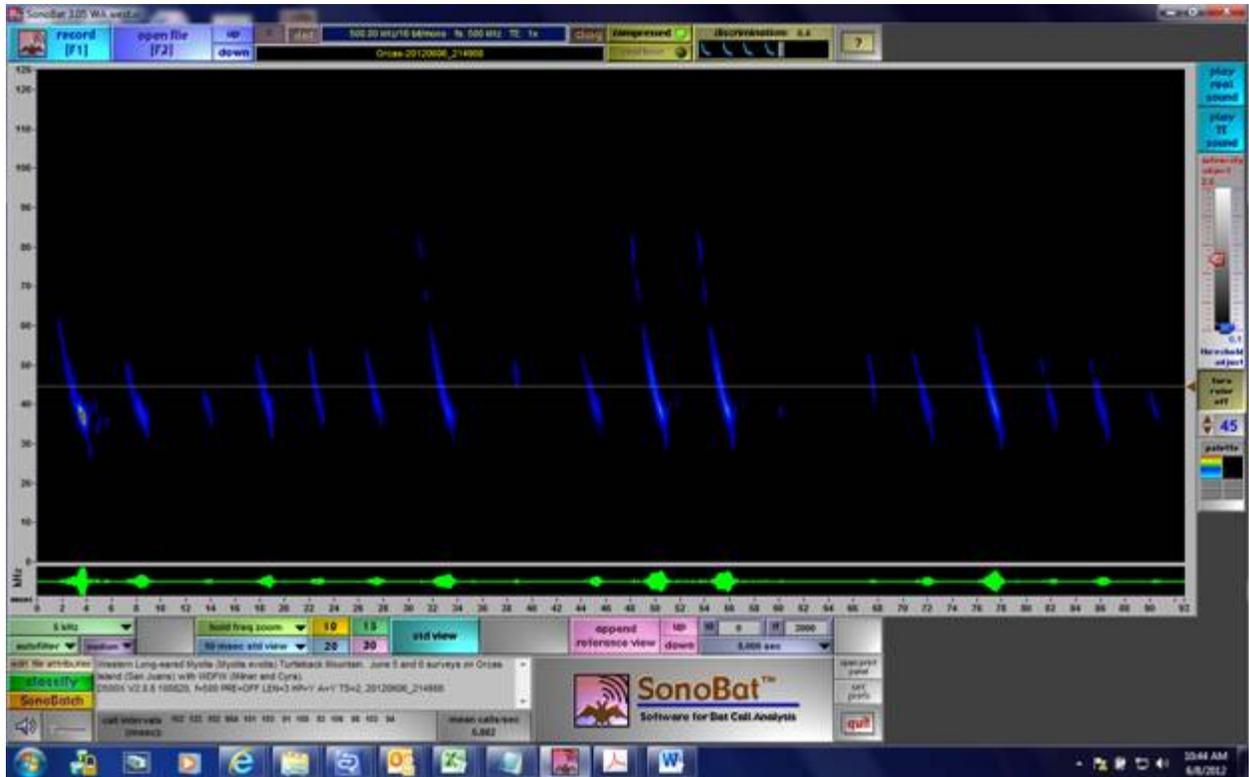
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/cwcs/cwcs.html>



Old Farmstead survey location - bat colony in shed on left



Establishing forest trap transect.



*Sample sonogram for *Myotis evotis* collected on Orcas Island, June 5, 2012. Seattle Biological Consultant Greg Green generously donated his time and bat detecting equipment to help WDFW biologists identify 6 species of bats on the island, in spite of cold and rainy weather, which made bat activity very low.*

Pelagic Cormorant Breeding Location Surveys: District Biologist Milner and Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued surveys of breeding locations for Pelagic Cormorants in poor weather conditions. These cliff nesting cormorants have not been regularly noted at traditional breeding locations while performing other surveys. This survey is a start at updating known breeding locations, documenting abandonment of historical sites, and locating new colonies. Cormorants continue to be found using navigational buoys and all appropriate markers on the route, areas were checked while two former documented colonies were found to be without birds. A survey of very northern locations will be performed in the near future.



District Biologist Milner surveying for Pelagic Cormorants.

Band-tailed Pigeon Proposal: Biologist Danilson initiated proposal development for a band-tailed pigeon project. The primary objective of the project is to identify new mineral sites in Skagit and Whatcom Counties. WDFW biologists conduct annual band-tailed pigeon surveys at mineral sites to monitor population trends. The sites District 14 personnel currently have access to are on private property, and access to these sites must be negotiated every year. At least one landowner has indicated that they may not be willing to grant access in the future, so it is important to identify new sites.

Golden Eagle Territory Research: Biologist DeBruyn made several phone calls and began drafting a letter to local agencies and non-profits to get information on potential golden eagle nesting territories in District 14. Information gathered through this process will be combined with internal historic records to aid WDFW planning efforts to conduct future golden eagle nest searches throughout the state.

Peregrine Falcon Federal Delisting Surveys: District Biologist Milner and Assistant District Biologist Cyra visited one of the three federal survey sites in the district. An incubation exchange was observed and the ledge location was pinpointed – a difficult task on this heavily forested cliff from the water. This site will be checked on later in the season to confirm productivity.

Tennant Lake: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo removed a beaver dam and posted an Undeveloped Boat Launch sign at the Tennant Lake unit. Manager Kessler coordinated with the managers at the Port of Bellingham on the wetland enhancement project on the Tennant Lake unit.



Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo visited the Lummi Island unit of the Whatcom Wildlife Area. The fence protecting the bald area was in good shape and the difference between the two sides was very evident. It seems to be doing the job of protecting the site.

Farming update for the Whatcom Wildlife Area: Manager Kessler and Natural Resource Tech Deyo met onsite with the Wilbur Ellis rep to check the status of the barley fields for planting. The fields are just about ready, with planting to be done next week. We will be planting 55 acres of barley and 3 acres of peas. The Agricultural lease holder for the Nooksack Unit successfully planted the 100 acre corn field on the unit this week.

Waterwheel Creek Project: Manager Paulson mowed the western part of the Waterwheel Creek project on the Cherry Valley Unit. The reed canary grass was standing at an average height of six feet.

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

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Elk Harvest Management Coordination: Biologists Danilson and Roozen and Sergeant Phillips met with representatives from Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) to revisit the annual agreement between WDFW and SPI, which allows for (permit only) hunter access on SPI lands in Skagit and Whatcom Counties. This meeting was by request of SPI. SPI expressed their satisfaction with the current level of coordination, communication, hunter compliance, and WDFW presence/support over the past year. They are excited to see things continue in this capacity and indicated that this may open up additional opportunity on their ownership in the future. Danilson and Roozen updated the landowner agreement and presented it at the meeting for review by SPI management.

2012 Mountain Goat Surveys: Biologist Danilson worked with partnering entities to schedule the 2012 mountain goat surveys for the Mount Baker and Darrington areas. Mountain goat surveys are conducted annually in the Mount Baker area to inform harvest management decision making. The Darrington area has not been surveyed since 2009 and is a high priority area for potential future mountain goat translocation/reintroduction. Funding (made available through the Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe) is making the 2012 surveys possible and will aid upcoming planning efforts.

Skye Valley Recreation Committee: Biologist Milner attended the June meeting of the Skye Valley Recreation committee. This group meets every two months to discuss recreation opportunities in the area and track progress on various initiatives such as trail plans on US Forest Service lands and progress on the Reiter Trails project, which will provide both motorized and non-motorized access on Department of Natural Resources land.

Wildlife Areas

DeBay's Slough: Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Habitat Technician (HT) Curran Cosgrove continue removal of blackberry removal on the DeBay's Slough in preparation for plantings this fall and winter. Approximately 3 acres have been removed which uncovered various flood debris and some old fence lines. Additional blackberry removal is planned for another site along the Skagit River.



Skagit Agriculture Program: HT Cosgrove continued to monitor drainage on the Island Unit farming activities has halted temporarily due to rain and higher river conditions which increase flooding in the fields. Later in the week, conditions improved allowing preparation to continue on the Samish Unit and efforts to plant are scheduled to occur midweek.

Intalco Unit: The Custer Sportsmen's Club held a 3-D Target Shooting event at the Intalco Archery Range that was very well attended.

Private Lands/Access

Quality Hunt Sites Reservation System Planning Committee: Biologist Roozen continued his role in developing a new online system dedicated to private lands access online reservation system, and various methods to manage that access and make it available to the public.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: Biologist Roozen arranged for Bay View Department property food plot planting. Twenty acres of barley were planted on Thursday, while the remaining five acres of available property remain unplanted. Roozen expects those five acres to be planted in corn by next week.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Identification – Rehabilitators and National Wildlife Federation: Biologist Anderson identified questionable specimens that an area wildlife rehabilitator had, as well as a specimen that local National Wildlife Federation was being questioned about. The animals ended up being the locally common and non-native melanistic phase of the red-eared slider (turtle) and an eastern gray squirrel.

Wildlife Areas



Manager Rotton took additional photos of the Wiley slough Restoration Project to document vegetation changes over time.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Program Staff Radio Training: Biologist Cyra provided the required state radio training and assigned call numbers to several new staff. Radio training and a call number is required for all users per our contract with the Department of Natural Resources.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer Research Project:

Multiple fawn captures associated with the Region 5 black-tailed deer research project occurred during the first week of June. Thirteen does are being monitored by a combination of remote (satellite) and field (VHF) methods. The does are located in two study clusters concentrated within the Washougal and Coweeman Game Management Units. To date, ten of the does are known to have given birth and 16 fawns associated with these does have been captured.



Peregrine Falcon Survey: Biologist Anderson conducted a follow-up peregrine falcon nest site survey at Beacon Rock State Park as per the federal post listing population assessment. The site is still active and adults are currently feeding young.

Western Pond Turtle Management: Biologist Holman released 20 western pond turtles into the wild at Beacon Rock State Park. This initial “early release” took place earlier in the summer than typical releases as the animals are of suitable size and no longer need to be in captivity. To

date 1,304 western pond turtle juveniles have been released into the Columbia River Gorge populations over a span of 22 years. Additional releases are scheduled for later this summer.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area:

Bluebird Nest Box Survey: Manager Van Leuven completed the annual nest box survey this week. The timing was good, as Van Leuven was able to document use by one family of bluebirds just as the young were fledging.



Bluebird about to fledge

Of the 18 serviceable nest boxes, 7 were occupied by western bluebirds, 4 were occupied by tree swallows, 1 was occupied by white-breasted nuthatches, and 1 was occupied by mountain chickadees. The status of 1 box was unknown. Its construction made it difficult to check, and no birds were near it during the survey. Unfortunately, 1 box occupied by tree swallows was found shot full of holes, leaving the female bird dead. Four eggs were in the nest. Manager Van Leuven was nearby when this incident occurred, and vehicle information has been forwarded to Enforcement for follow-up.



Nest box found shot full of holes

During the nest box survey, Van Leuven incidentally discovered a nighthawk nest, which she would not have seen if the bird had not flown out of her path.



Nighthawk nest

Goldendale Hatchery Unit Agricultural Lease: Manager Van Leuven placed an advertisement in the Legal Notices section of the Goldendale Sentinel requesting bids for the Hatchery Unit agricultural lease. The lease is to be in effect October 1, 2012 through October 31, 2018, and is designed to provide grain for pheasants as well as control of weeds in the fields. Opening of bids will be at the Goldendale Trout Hatchery on July 6, at 10:00 a.m.

Cowlitz Wildlife Area:

Maintenance: The DNR correctional crew from the Cedar Creek correctional facility assisted with several projects on the Cowlitz Wildlife Area, including brushing the remaining roads on Peterman, clearing off the dike at Mossyrock for possible repairs, and working on roads on the Spears Unit.

Tacoma Open House: Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff provided an educational booth at the Tacoma Power grand opening to the Cowlitz salmon hatchery. Unfortunately, the rain kept most of the visitors away with only the very end of the open house seeing a break in the weather and only about 30 visitors.

GOAL 4: MAINTAIN A HIGHLY SKILLED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE.

Wildlife Management

Motorboat Operator Certification Course: Biologists Stephens and Bergh attended the MOCC training for 3 days this week. Topics covered included trailering, emergency procedures, boat maintenance, aquatic invasive species, fire suppression, and marlinspike (knot tying). Participants had the opportunity to drive several different types of boats as well as use many types of emergency and personal protective equipment. Biologist Miller served as one of the course instructors.

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mazama Pocket Gophers: Biologist Hoenes, Michaelis, Tirhi, Schmidt, McMillan, Ament, Murphie, Anthony, Harris, Skriletz and RPM Cope participated in the WDFW sponsored Mazama Pocket Gopher identification and survey training workshop. The workshop was intended to give participants a basic understanding of gopher mound identification and an overview of Mazama Pocket Gopher survey protocols. Gail Olson and Bruce Thompson did an outstanding job on educating the group of potential survey participants. It was also helpful to see differences in habitat and mounding between the prairie soils sites in Thurston County (Olympia Airport) and timbered sites in Mason County (Green Diamond). Everyone gained very valuable information.



Photos of training session – photos by Janet Anthony

Biologist Hoenes spent two days conducting “opportunistic/directed” gopher surveys in Capitol Forest. Hoenes located 6 sites where mounds were present, but he could not be certain whether they were from gophers or moles. Biologists plan to revisit these sites and set traps to help determine the species of origin.



Oblong shaped mound found in a Capitol Forest clearcut.

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

Wildlife Management

Black-tailed Deer: Biologist Michaelis continued to monitor radio-collared black-tail deer in Capitol Forest that are part of an ongoing research project that is determining habitat use patterns and cause-specific mortality rates for female and juvenile black-tailed deer that occupy commercial forests. Biologists heading up this research effort are hoping results will help better understand the causes of recent declines in local black-tailed populations. Currently, Michaelis has been searching for newly born fawns in hopes of capturing and fitting them with radio-collars. Biologists Michaelis and Murphy captured and radio-equipped five fawns (three in the Capitol Forest and two in Mason County, photos attached).



The fawn collars are designed to expand as the fawn grows and will typically fall off after a year or so. Assistance in fawn searches was provided by DFW Sgt. Nixon, Skokomish Tribe Biologists Bethany T. and Emily W., Linnea N., and Dan S.



Collared fawn in the Mason Unit. Photo taken by B. Murphie



Fawns will be tracked remotely using radio receivers

Pysht Cluster: Bio Ament assisted Bio Loafman and Elwha Bio Dave Manson in the field on May 30th to determine if the West Siebert Creek collared doe may have had her fawns. The team was successful at locating and collaring two fawns. They were unable to get a visual of the doe during the effort. Bio Ament assisted Bio Loafman again on June 1st to determine if the McDonald Creek doe may have fawns. They were unsuccessful at getting a visual of the doe and no fawns were located. Bio Ament assisted Bio Loafman on June 2nd to determine if the West Twin doe may have fawns. They were unable to get any GPS locations data for the previous 2 days. They were successful at getting two visuals of the doe during the day but no fawns were observed with the doe. Some areas were searched for fawns but none were located. The collared yearling was still in close proximity to the doe.



Bio Ament with collared fawn near WestvSiebert Creek - Clallam County

Bio Ament assisted Bio Loafman again on June 1st to determine if the McDonald Creek doe may have fawns. They were unsuccessful at getting a visual of the doe and no fawns were located. Bio Ament assisted Bio Loafman on June 2nd to determine if the West Twin doe may have fawns. They were unable to get any GPS locations data for the previous 2 days. They were successful at getting two visuals of the doe during the day but no fawns were observed with the doe. Some areas were searched for fawns but none were located. The collared yearling was still in close proximity to the doe.

Private Lands Access

Sports People Cleanup: Bio Harris teamed with volunteers from Eye's in the Woods, Elma Game Club, and Master Hunters, and some concerned hunters on the annual clean up this last weekend. Overall considering that almost every outdoors related club in the area was notified, and internet postings we had a somewhat poor showing. However, the 9 volunteers that did show up made a difference. This year we concentrated on lands owned by Weyerhaeuser that are open to motorized access.

The first area cleaned up was an area called the goat ranch located off of HWY 107 on the Little North River A line. This area has become a popular target shooting area resulting in a large amount of target trash as well as some dumping. In addition to the trash all the volunteers agreed

that this is not a safe area for target shooting as the area is level resulting in bullets traveling towards the river in to the trees. Shooters simply have no idea what is behind their targets. Additionally many of the trees have been used as targets. This area is important for deer and elk hunting access in GMU 660.



Goat Ranch Before.



Volunteers at work.



Goat Ranch After.

We also cleaned up the Upper Donovan A line. This road is popular for access to some great hunting areas as well as access to some otherwise difficult to access runs on the Wynoochee River. For the past several years access to this area has been restricted to nonmotorized because of active logging and public abuse. The land owner first tried to yellow dot the road for weekend motorized access only, but people were not following the rules so they had to red dot it. The 2011 hunting season was the first time in many years the public had reasonable motorized access to the area. Two years ago this area was cleaned up by volunteers during the annual clean up. In the eight months that this road has been opened it still managed to receive over a **Ton** of trash! Most of the trash was found on spur roads that are red dotted. Once again the area is now clean!



After the Upper Donovan, volunteers headed for the Lower Donovan. Another area cleaned up in the past by volunteers. We didn't even make a dent in the trash! Areas that were cleaned just a few years ago had several tons of trash dumped! All of the volunteers felt that this was a good example of a road system that should be walk in only. One of the biggest problems was tires. Because of the expense we did not haul tires away. We centrally located them for future pick up. We hope to work with a local tire dealer for disposal.



Upper Donovan A Line - Sad!

Overall the volunteers had a great time. Perhaps the best benefit from this, besides landowner relations, is that the clubs and individuals involved all agreed we all need to work together to help landowners with these problems if we want to maintain reasonable public access for hunting and fishing. It was agreed to keep having more cleanups throughout the year to assist landowners.



Hauling it away!

