

Wildlife Program

Week of February 24 – March 2, 2014

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Prospective Funding for Enhanced Bat Monitoring: Section Managers Penny Becker and Bruce Thompson worked with Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan and Biologists Gerry Hayes, Gary Wiles and Bruce Thompson to prepare an initial statement of work and budget for potential collaborative bat monitoring. This information was submitted to colleagues in Arizona and Texas to be incorporated in a proposal as part of a multi-state initiative under the Competitive State Wildlife Grants process. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) segment of the proposal will emphasize acoustic monitoring, particularly for bats that are currently Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) or being considered for such status in the ongoing revision of the State Wildlife Action Plan for Washington.

Assisting Lands Division Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Development: Fish and Wildlife Biologist Ann Potter completed assessments of ecological systems and cover types for the four invertebrate species that will be covered in the WDFW HCP. She evaluated approximately 125 ecological systems and cover types for potential habitat for four butterflies and compiled the selected ecological systems data. This information will be used in development and implementation of WDFW's HCP.

Climate Change Coordination: Climate Change Coordinator Helbretch and Section Manager Wilkerson discussed the status, coordination and engagement opportunities regarding the President's Climate Preparedness and Resilience TaskForce (which Governor Inslee sits on) with Department of Ecology's Climate Policy lead, Hedia Adelsman. Wilkerson also met with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff Pene Speaks and John Gamon to discuss the related Joint Implementation Working Group for the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy. From both conversations, we are working towards a workshop the week of May 19 to discuss statewide climate adaptation efforts and inform a multi-agency strategy and input into the President's Task Force through the Governor.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Bighorn Sheep in the Town of Republic: Assistant District Wildlife Biologist (ADWB) Annemarie Prince investigated reports of "stray" bighorn sheep inhabiting the Town of Republic.

Photographs of two bighorn sheep, a young ram and a ewe, were received from a town resident. However, no stronger confirmation was obtained at this time.

Asotin Bighorn Sheep Capture Operation:

District 3 biologists and wildlife health staff planned and participated in a two-day bighorn sheep capture in Asotin Creek and at Heller Bar. Wildlife Area and Private Lands staff also participated in this operation. A total of 40 ewes and lambs were captured with a helicopter during the two-day project. Numerous volunteers from within the agency, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Washington State University, Department of Agriculture, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provided vital assistance to the operation. The goal of the capture operation was to test as many ewes and lambs as feasible to identify the individuals that are shedding *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia* bacteria, the hypothesized individuals that are causing lamb mortalities during the spring/early-summer.



A ewe processed near the Grande Ronde River on Thursday.



A ewe “flew in” to the processing site near the Grande Ronde River. A herd of elk is on the hillside in the background.

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

Wildlife Areas

Access site repairs and maintenance – Access Manager Scott Young conducted routine maintenance at the access areas on Deer, Liberty, Silver, Hog, Newman and Eloika lakes.



Deer Lake Access Site, February 26, 2014 – ready for March 1 opener.

Private Lands/Access

Potential new Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP) in southeast Washington: District Biologist Wik and Private Lands Biologists Thorne-Hadley and Earl met with the owner of Bennett Timber to discuss a possible future Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP) Program on their lands. The landowner was willing to enter almost all of Bennett Timber lands into Feel Free to Hunt if they are successful in getting into the LHP program. Some further negotiation will be necessary to see if the program meets the landowner's wants.

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

Wildlife Management

Northeast Moose Project: Biologist Atamian worked on and gave a presentation of the moose survey and demographic projects in northeast Washington to the Spokane Chapter of the Washington Farm Forestry Association meeting.

Wildlife Areas

Kettle Falls Elementary School Forest Health Education: Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Palmer hosted the Kettle Falls 4th graders for one day this week. As part of their education about healthy forest ecosystems, their teachers wanted the students to learn about how to accommodate multiple uses on public land. Palmer toured the group around Sherman Creek Wildlife Area (SCWA), discussing agricultural and recreational uses. We also deployed game cameras belonging to the school. The group located cougar tracks along the SCWA trail. The kids were exposed to identifying several different wildlife tracks in the snow including deer, coyote, squirrel, turkey and cougar.



Robby, a Kettle Falls 4th grader, points to a cougar track on the downed pine log.

Palmer also met with DNR Forest Health Specialist Mike Johnson this week to do some recon on SCWA in preparation for next week's field trip dealing with forest health issues.

Private Lands/Access

Walla Walla Problem Turkey's: Conflict Specialist Rasley received four phone calls this week regarding the 40 turkeys that refuse to leave Walla Walla. One call came in at 2:30 a.m. The caller said, "If these turkeys are going to keep my family up, then your family is going to be woken up too." As of Friday, the turkeys finally found the bait site and hopefully we can trap and relocate the turkeys next week. Supervisor McCanna explained the relocation plan with Regional Wildlife Program Manager Robinette and Section Manager Calkins who are both in support after all other options in the tool box have been exhausted. The turkeys will be banded and released on a Feel Free to Hunt property located within the Rio Grande Priority Management Area of the Blue Mountains.



A portion of the problem turkeys located in Walla Walla.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wolf Conservation and Management

Lookout Pack: WDFW and USFS staff conducted wolf tracking surveys to locate Lookout Pack members ahead of a possible aerial darting effort in an attempt to deploy radio collars in this pack. USFS Biologist Rohrer located very fresh tracks (less than 45 minutes old) of animals at low elevation in traditional winter territory.

Unfortunately, the area was not open enough for aerial work, so the collaring attempt was called off. Additional efforts to deploy collars in this pack will be made in late spring or early summer.

Lookout Pack wolf tracks. Photo by John Rohrer (U.S. Forest Service)



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

Wildlife Areas

Eastern Okanogan County Wildlife Area Advisory Committee Meeting: Manager Haug and Scotch Creek Manager Olson teamed up to put on this winter's Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) meeting held at the Washington Department of Transportation's conference room at their facility in Okanogan. The committee had a total of 17 people attending, including 5 staff from WDFW and members representing 12 user groups. They include Okanogan Wildlife Council, Audubon Society, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), Okanogan Valley Chapter of the Backcountry Horseman, Trout Unlimited, Okanogan Fly Fishing Club, Okanogan County Weed Control Board, the Mule Deer Foundation and one private landowner/wildlife area neighbor. Both managers presented their presentation concerning their accomplishments from last year and plans for this coming year. WDFW Biologist Mike Schroeder also gave a presentation to the group concerning sharp-tailed grouse on the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area and within the state as a whole. This discussion spawned many questions and it was great to have Mike participate and lead the conversation on this subject. Thanks Mike! Overall, the meeting was a success with lots of great questions and comments from this very diverse group which will be inserted into both managers' management plan updates.

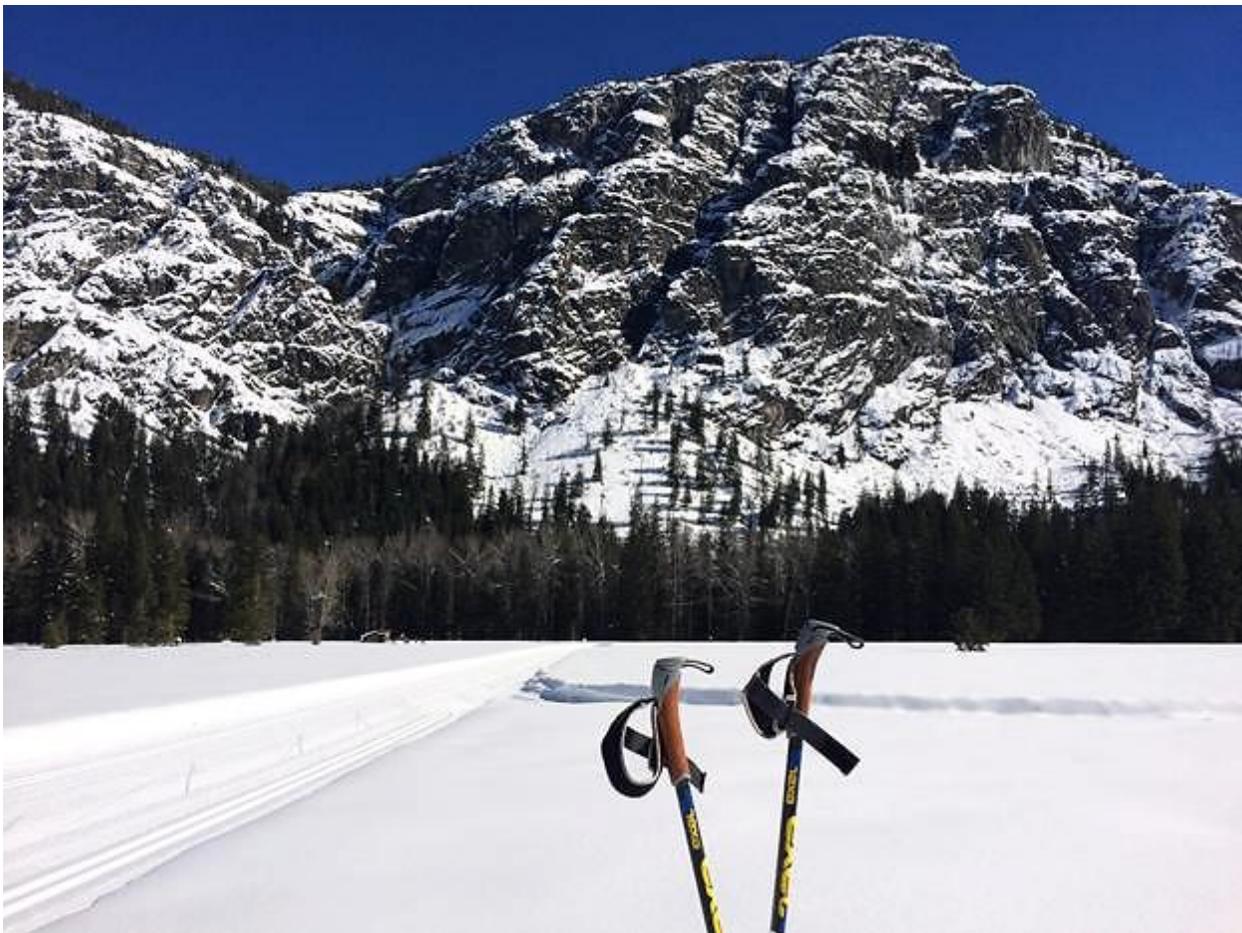
Wildlife Scenes:



A drake Barrow's Goldeneye courts a hen on Lake Lenore while biologists conduct eagle surveys nearby. Photo by Orrin Duvuvuei



Left: Swans leave Lake Lenore. Photo by Orrin Duvuvuei. ***Right: Methow mule deer buck in native habitat.*** Photo by Scott Fitkin



Biologists surveyed the Goat Wall golden eagle territory by whatever means necessary. Photo by Scott Fitkin



Left: Sunset over Fish Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Top Right: American Goldfinches on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Right: A porcupine chewing on some hawthorn branches adjacent to S. Pine Creek Rd. Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

None.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Snoqualmie Valley Elk Damage: Biologist Smith used a trail camera to monitor intermittent nocturnal elk/deer activity on agricultural properties. Damage has occurred to various crops in

the area including vegetables, flowers and Christmas trees. Smith worked with the Master Hunter coordinator to get a master hunter assigned and the second cow elk was harvested from the property. Smith also relayed elk activity information to the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group (USVEMG) to assist with efforts to trap and fit a cow elk with a GPS collar in this area. The USVEMG successfully marked a cow this past week, allowing for tracking of this sub-herds movements going forward.



A trail camera captured recent elk activity in agricultural fields in the Snoqualmie Valley.

Elk Clover Trapping: Biologist DeBruyn continued trapping elk with a consortium of biologists representing the Sauk-Suiattle, The Upper Skagit and the Swinomish tribes. Trapping of North Cascades (Nooksack) elk is being done as part of a long term capture-mark-resight study designed to monitor animal numbers in this herd. Trapping at mid-elevations became problematic with the lowering snow levels. Traps were relocated to low elevation sites to minimize the risk of not being able to reach trapped animals. One elk was captured and collared making this our best year for trapping with a month still to go. Some new bait sites were established on the valley floor.

Mountains to Sound (M2S) Greenway Consultation: Biologist Anderson continues to work with M2S Greenway in developing landscape scale metrics to measure wildlife function of a given area. Anderson periodically meets with staff at the Greenway and provides literature, examples, and suggestions for their collaborative efforts with many area government and non-profit entities. Anderson is on the elected Technical Advisory Board as a wildlife management rep. We are currently focusing on the Snoqualmie Valley, conservation efforts and collaborative opportunities to continue and spur on such activities.

Citizen Science Efforts: Biologist Anderson continues to work with volunteers, Woodland Park Zoo, local municipalities and WDFW Data Management staff to provide for District 12 citizen wildlife documentation efforts. The hope is that this and other staff ongoing collaboration with Data Management to add or revise fields in the Public Observation website will provide for other similar projects as well. It is very exciting to have this tool to encourage collaboration with constituents and the public. Anderson continues to provide for contract agreements with local park and planning departments to provide for volunteer access for state survey on public and private lands in this season and future.

Washington's East-West Bear Research Project: Biologist Smith assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Carnivore Specialist Maletzke with ongoing bear den work. This portion of the project entails locating dens, placing cameras to document emergence and cub numbers, re-collar/adjust collars on sub-adult males, and potentially collar yearling cubs. Work where newborn cubs are known to be present is limited (camera placement only) to avoid den abandonment. This week's activities occurred on the eastside of the state (in several feet of snow). A total of 29 collared bears are currently denning within the study area (both sides of the state).



View from a ridge near one of the dens used by a bear collared as part of the East-West Bear Research Project.

Swan Mortality and Morbidity Study: This week Swan Tech Anderson recorded five trumpeter swan mortalities in Skagit and Whatcom counties. These trumpeter swan mortalities consisted of four carcasses and one feather pile. Surveys for swans in roosting and feeding areas were conducted this week in addition to responding to reports of sick, dead and injured swans on the swan and nutria hotline. Recent snow and cold temperatures did not produce the typical “spike” in mortalities following such periods of harsh winter conditions. This is the lowest number of swans collected since the collection season began in November. This decline in mortalities coincides with the seasonal migration of swans for the upcoming breeding season.

The mortality breakdown by County was:

- Skagit County – (3 total) 1 unknown cause of death, 1 power line strike and 1 feather pile
- Whatcom County – 2 unknown cause of death



Sick swan just before capture.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw sent a project status update email to the project email list and disseminated notes from the January 8 Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting. To receive status updates on this project, send a request to be added to the email list to Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.

Tennant Lake Water Level: Manager Kessler monitored the water levels at Tennant Lake. He coordinated with the Whatcom County Parks managers on the Boardwalk Renovation project. We are currently working on acquiring the permits needed to complete the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) funded project.

Intalco Unit Archery Course: The Custer Sportsmen's Club held a weekend work party to start preparing the Archery Course on the Intalco Unit for opening at the end of the month. They cleared downed trees along the course and started installing the targets to the frames.

Fir Island Farm Final Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and the project consultant downloaded data from the surface and groundwater monitoring devices that are installed on the site. The devices measure water level, salinity and temperature in 15-minute intervals. There are 13 devices on the site, and the data collected will be used as a baseline to document any changes in these parameters after implementation of an estuary restoration project.



Two groundwater wells in a farm field adjacent to the Fir Island Farm Reserve. Groundwater levels, salinity and temperature are measured in these wells. As you can see, the fields are very wet from the recent rains and snowfall.

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

Wildlife Management

Annual WDFW, Muckleshoot Tribe, Tacoma Water Game Management 485, Green River Wildlife Management Meeting: Wildlife Manager Link and Biologists Anderson and Smith attended this annual meeting to provide for management discussions, set annual season dates for limited hunts in the watershed, and discuss future collaborative efforts and needs.

Annual Hunting Season Setting and Review: Biologist Anderson reviewed and provided updates to Deer and Elk Section Leader Nelson regarding 2014 hunt changes in District 12. Assistant District Biologist Smith and a number of public and private entities approached District 12 staff with suggestions, concerns or confusion over the recently released draft proposals for

public review. They asked that District 12 staff ensure clarification occurs; and we are moving forward with that.

Game Reserve Updates – Carnation Farms (Camp Korey) in King County: Biologists Anderson and Smith worked on compiling landowner, wildlife conflict, conservation, and enforcement factors to finalize proposals to retain this reserve. Anderson worked with IT Specialist Talmadge to update the map of this reserve and propose changes to the WAC language that will alleviate confusion of boundaries and incorporate potential land changes due to the natural ebb and flow of the Snoqualmie River, which is part of the boundary of this reserve. The reserve functions largely as a Watchable Wildlife opportunity in the valley currently, but holds potential for supporting other wildlife recreational opportunities in the immediate area as the landscape matrix changes due to current and future habitat improvement efforts on adjacent lands such as WDFW's Stillwater Wildlife Management Unit.

WDFW WildWatchcams Program: Biologist Anderson provided comments to Olympia staff per request regarding the Biological Utility and Educational Opportunity these cameras provide the state. Anderson discussed District 12 cameras specifically, their history and collaborative efforts with constituents.

Wildlife Areas

Samish River Unit (Welts) Wetland Restoration Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw, Skagit Wildlife Area Manager Rotton, and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) met to discuss project progress and next steps. WDFW and NRCS are working together to modify design elements in the project to expedite the permit process.

Ebey Island Working Group: Regional Habitat and Wildlife Program staff met to discuss management updates and future planning efforts on the Ebey Island Unit adjacent to Snohomish River. WDFW is applying for an acquisition grant to acquire property that allows public access to a large portion of the unit that is currently inaccessible. WDFW is also investigating options to design wetland habitat improvements in areas that are not compatible with agricultural activities.

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continued to work with Sno-Valley Farms on developing an agricultural lease on a portion of the Ebey Island Unit. Manager Boehm also began installing t-posts and wood braces for a livestock exclusion fence on the west lobe of the unit. Fencing is required to keep livestock off of Homeacres Road and neighboring private property.

Lake Terrell Snow: Lake Terrell received over 12" of snow that also ended up in deeper snow drifts on Lake Terrell Rd. Manager Kessler worked to clear downed trees blocking the road, and plowed the snow drifts with the John Deere Tractor. The pheasant pens also received damage from the snow, with parts of the runs collapsing under the weight of the snow and freezing rain. Kessler coordinated with Chris White, the Chehalis Game Farm Manager on repair materials.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated with two volunteers to continue spreading mulch on the access roads within the unit. The mulch was

donated by Snohomish County and a tractor and loader was donated by one of the volunteers for the task.

Island Unit: Wildlife Area staff checked food availability and invertebrates in the ponded areas on the Island Unit. Natural Resource Specialist Greg Meis and Natural Resources Tech Curran Cosgrove monitored drainage and field conditions on the Island.

Samish Unit: Wildlife Area staff worked with volunteers from Washington Waterfowl Association to remove shell receptacles from this site.

Private Lands/Access



Technicians Deyo and Otto documented post-season waterfowl use at the Old Guide 1 Site in Whatcom County. Birds were foraging through the snow for barley.

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

Wildlife Management

Skagit County Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Griffith and Conflict Technician Pinjuv coordinated and oversaw fence material delivery on two of three projects in the Skagit River valley. Griffith and Pinjuv met with the third project landowner and consulted with them on volunteer labor needs and specific tasks.

Wildlife Conflict Reduction: Biologist Anderson backed-up and followed through on a request from a citizen for management guidance regarding deer, coyote and other common suburban wildlife. These animals tend to have individuals that may overly habituate to human presence and then create issues. Property owners that live in landscapes that have such common species need to take appropriate steps to legal remedy their conflict utilizing knowledge of the biology of the given species paired with their specific situation. General information on many scenarios can be found at the WDFW Living with Wildlife website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/>.

Take Authorization – Osprey: Biologist Anderson provided authorization with the assistance of Wildlife Manager Link for a handful of private and public applicants requesting nest removals.

Growth Management Wildlife Planning Assistance: Biologist Anderson has been working with city of Seattle, University of Washington (UW) and Sound Transit regarding the Husky Stadium light-link project, among other projects ongoing or slated for the immediate future. Concerns have been brought up regarding the nearby UW Rainier Vista heron colony. Anderson has provided guidance and assistance to all entities and has consulted with Seattle Planning to meet their code requirement regarding involvement of WDFW.

Wildlife Areas

DeBay's Slough: Skagit Wildlife Area set rocks at the entry circle to exclude public from driving in the fields. Wood and debris were cleared and removed from the viewing area.

Wiley Slough Restoration: Manager Rotton and Habitat Biologist Brian Williams reviewed the pump station agreement and scheduled a meeting with Dike District #22 Representatives to discuss wording changes for early next week.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Breakdown Update: Technicians Deyo and Otto continued performing quality hunt site breakdowns in Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom counties.

2013 Skagit Delta Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Distribution Map: Biologist Caldwell finished developing a 2013 Skagit Delta Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Distribution Map for the Wildlife Program.

Western Washington Agricultural Association Meeting Coordination: Biologist Caldwell coordinated with Executive Director Roozen about agricultural crop and land information across the region. Developments were established in conducting research on agricultural metrics related to the Private Lands Access Program (PLAP). These data and results will help establish management guidelines for 2014.

2013 Private Lands Access Program Contract Agreement QA/QC: Biologist Caldwell and Science Manager Calkins performed quality assurance and control on particular contract

agreements within Region 4. Funding coding was clarified on specific contracts for payment allotments.

Hunter Success Monitoring: Biologist Caldwell, Biologist Kraege and Manager Rotton coordinated to discuss pertinent variables and the values associated with them regarding hunter success surveys in Region 4. Networking is currently underway to standardize survey methodologies and measurements for applications in the future.

The Nature Conservancy Meeting: Biologist Caldwell met with the Nature Conservancy staff regarding the enrollment status of the Fisher Slough property. Problems and solutions were discussed regarding blind size, location and hunting options in the future. Potential hunting, youth hunting, ADA access and wildlife viewing opportunities were also discussed and viewed. Follow up on some of these locations will be handled by PLAP staff.

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Use Survey Analysis and Summary Report: Biologist Caldwell continued conducting the 2013 site use analysis.

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

Natural Resource Tech 2: Manager Kessler prepared for the Natural Resource Tech 2 position which will start up again on the Whatcom Wildlife Area this week.

Private Lands Access Program Management: Biologist Caldwell coordinated agendas with technician staff pertinent to program goals and objectives for the Waterfowl and Snow goose Quality Hunt site breakdowns for the end of the 2013 season. We also are coordinating spring Bear hunt duties and waterfowl habitat assessments for 2014.

Template Responses for general wildlife questions: Biologist Anderson worked with Customer Service Specialist Wilson and Administrative Assistant Host to develop some templates to respond for common questions coming in from the public. One example is teachers wanting to collect wildlife for classroom purposes. It is great to work on this as a team and continue to try to streamline our efforts for these common, understandable, but basic requests.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Golden Eagles: Biologist Anderson continued early season golden eagle surveys in Klickitat County. This week's surveys were focused on the Klickitat River in an area with historic golden eagle use, but with little specific knowledge on locations of nest sites. Local landowners have been very cooperative with access to private lands for conducting surveys. Klickitat Wildlife

Area Manager Van Leuven and Technician Davis observed golden eagle activity on two territories this week. Both territories include portions of the Klickitat Wildlife Area.

Columbia White-tailed Deer Translocation: Biologist Bergh and Natural Resource Technician Sample assisted U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff with the translocation of Columbia white-tailed deer from Puget Island to Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge in order to augment the refuge's population. One adult doe was captured under a drop net, tranquilized, radio-collared, and placed into a crate for transport to the refuge. Several other deer were in the vicinity of the drop net and anxious to get into the pear and apple bait even while the captured doe was being processed! A total of eight deer have been moved so far this year and trapping will continue through March.

Western Pond Turtle Project: Biologists Holman and Anderson completed the 2013 annual western pond turtle project report for Region 5. The report summarized work activities conducted including disease monitoring, Head-Starting, bull frog control, habitat maintenance, environmental education, etc. The report has been submitted to Olympia Wildlife Diversity Division Staff.

Wildlife Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area – Grazing Permit: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven reviewed a draft grazing plan for one of the Wildlife Area's grazing permit renewals. This permit has some complex issues and Van Leuven is working closely with Rangeland Specialist Burnham to develop a permit that meets current WDFW standards as well as being possible for the permit holder to implement including efforts to work out details of the grazing plan, incorporate input from the Region 5 District Team and the permittee, and ensure that the grazing plan is consistent with the Habitat Conservation Plan first.

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

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A Special Late Season Goose Hunt: The Southwest Washington late season goose hunt will conclude March 5. Throughout the season, 57 master hunters have assisted up to eight farms in mitigating damage related to geese in Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties. Master Hunters have subsequently harvested 217 geese from these properties.



Four participating Master Hunters with their harvests from the March 1 hunt. Permission to include this photo online was given by everyone pictured (from left to right: William Herold, Jay Brightbill, Brian Chrisler and Bryce Glaser).

Due to the higher number of farms and the lower number of participating Master Hunters, most hunters were called to hunt several times throughout the season. The harvest quota for duskies during the late season is set at five. However, a dusky has not been harvested in any zone as of March 1.

Wildlife Areas

Shillapoo Wildlife Area – Watchable Wildlife: High water and no hunting pressure have created excellent waterfowl viewing at Shillapoo Wildlife Area. Many wetland basins are filled with water and attracting several species of waterfowl in easy viewing distance from the road along the North Unit at Shillapoo. The South Cell lake bed located in the north section of the South Unit has consistently had thousands of ducks and geese utilizing that area. Some of the waterfowl seen at the Wildlife Area over the last couple of weeks include Dusky Canada goose, Snow goose, Ross goose, coot, pintail, mallard, wigeon, canvasback, gadwall, ring-necked duck, scaup, shoveler, bufflehead, ruddy duck, and wood duck. In addition to large numbers of ducks and geese, hundreds of trumpeter swans congregated in the north most basin of the North Unit this week. Birdwatchers, dog walkers, and dog trainers should be aware that Shillapoo serves as a winter refuge for Canada geese. Always minimize disturbance and do not approach flocks of waterfowl. All dogs should be leashed in the North and South Units until April 16. Dog training is only permitted in the Vancouver Lake Unit at this time.



Canada and snow geese spotted with great blue heron.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Habitat – Landowner Contacts: Biologist Anderson spent some time with a resident that owns 80 acres along the Klickitat River near Pitt. The landowner was interested in enhancements for 1,200 ft. of riparian habitat along the Klickitat River. Biologist Anderson provided the landowner with ideas for vegetation plantings that would work and put them in contact with the Eastern Klickitat Conservation District for further assistance.

District 9 Wildlife Conflict: Biologist Stephens and Conflict Specialist McDonald attended the annual Coordinated Resource Management Planning (CRMP) meetings hosted by the Underwood Conservation District. These meetings were attended by private timberland companies, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and cattlemen who lease grazing land in west Klickitat County. All but one of the cattlemen who attended the meetings has Range Rider contracts with the WDFW. Initial contact was made with the other cattlemen. Wildlife-livestock conflict concerns, mostly cougar issues, were discussed.

District 10 Wildlife Conflict: Conflict Specialist Conklin met with several landowners in Lewis County who have Elk damage to crops. In addition, Conflict Specialist Conklin is coordinating with Master Hunters to provide aggressive hazing techniques to a private airstrip in Curtis. The deer are very attracted to the green lush airstrip this time of year.

District 10 and Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Winter Conditions

Past Weather: December and January temperatures and precipitation were below normal, with little snowfall below 2,000 feet. February started off cold with snow accumulating to the valley floor. The lower elevations in the region received 5-10 inches of snow February 6-9, with light freezing rain. Rainfall for the month of February has been above average.

Short-Term Forecast: Snow levels will fluctuate between 3,000 to 6,000 feet for the upcoming week. The 6-10 and 8-14 day forecast are for normal temperatures and above normal precipitation.

Long-Term Forecast: The March forecast is for an equal chance for either above average, below average, or normal temperatures and precipitation. The three month forecast predicts above normal temperatures and an equal chance for above average, below average, or normal precipitation.

Habitat: Forage is available in lower and mid elevations.

Snow Depths: Lower elevations are snow-free. Snowpack has increased significantly in the past two weeks, but is still slightly below average.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date. The monthly winter elk survey was conducted on February 5. Only 43 elk were observed due to the cold and windy conditions on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area. A second survey was conducted February 11, with 133 elk observed on the wildlife area.

Animal Condition: Most animals observed to date appear to be in good to fair condition, with a few observed this past week in poor condition and with rough pelage.

Mortality: Wildlife Area Staff observed four mortalities this past week on the Mudflow Unit while conducting a site visit.

Public Contacts: None to report regarding winter conditions.

The Public is reminded the portion of the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area lying east of a line defined by Hoffstadt Creek, The North Fork Toutle, and Deer Creek is closed to public access through April 30, 2014, to minimize disturbance and associated energy demands on elk wintering there.

District 9 Winter Conditions

Past Weather: Conditions this week remained the same with winter snowpack for the South Cascades. Water conditions for the basin are still at 80% of normal and have improved the earlier drought prediction of the Northwest. Conditions in eastern Klickitat County are good.

Winter Severity: Winter conditions overall are now moderate and more typical of a normal year. Snowpack is primarily above 2,500 ft. and there is currently no concern for big game populations in Skamania County and the western portion of Klickitat County. Those portions of Klickitat County east of Rock Creek have little snow accumulation and deer are reported in good condition.

Habitat: Habitat is still available below 2,500 ft. as warmer weather continues to keep lower elevations open.

Animal Concentrations: Deer are bunched in normal concentrations in good habitat at mid and lower elevations east of Highway 97.

Animal Condition: Deer and elk appear to be in good condition and little winter stress/mortality has been reported.

Mortality: Two deer mortalities were reported at a residence in east Clark County. No others have been reported this week.

Public Contacts: No concerns have been raised by the public this week.

MOUNT SAINT HELENS ELK HERD
 2013/2014 WINTER CONDITIONS - SNO-PARK SNOW DEPTH,
 NRCS SNOTEL DATA, AND SNOWPACK

From web page <http://www.fs.usda.gov/activity/giffordpinchot/recreation/wintersports/?recid=31178&actid=91>
http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/sno_narr3_pl
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/snotel/Washington/washington.html>

SNOWPARKS:									
Name	Elevation		12/6/2013	12/13/2013	12/20/2013	12/27/2013	1/3/2014	1/10/2014	1/17/2014
MARBLE MT	2,700'		No report	4" new snow	No new report	No new report	No new report	No new snow, 2" base	Slush. No new snow.
WAKEPISH	2,800'		No report		1-2" snow	1-2" snow	2" snow	2" base	No new report

SNOWTEL STATIONS:

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
		Avg Snow							
JUNE LAKE	3,340'	Depth (inches)	0.66	5	5.3	7	6.7	7.9	22
		Min Temp (F)	14	19	23	29	31	26	31
		Max Temp (F)	45	27	50	54	51	47	55
		Avg Temp (F)	30	22	36.2	38.3	39.5	36.7	39.8
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	27	27	27.7	30.9	31.3	36.6	43.5

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
		Avg Snow							
SPIRIT LAKE	3,520'	Depth (inches)	2.43	3	0.86	0.86	0	1.3	3.5
		Min Temp (F)	11	18	21	29	30	20	31
		Max Temp (F)	46	27	52	51	52	46	54
		Avg Temp (F)	29	25	36.8	36.8	39.2	36.8	38.5
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	17.5	17.9	18.3	22.1	22.7	25.5	30.5

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
		Avg Snow							
PEPPER CREEK	2,140'	Depth (inches)	0.31	2	0.3	0.42	0	0	0
		Min Temp (F)	14	16	24	28	29	25	29
		Max Temp (F)	48	26	46	46	51	46	51

Avg Temp (F)	31.5	22	34.5	34.8	36	35.2	37.3
Year to date precipitation (inches)	13.1	13.5	13.6	15.3	15.6	17.9	21

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
SHEEP CANYON	3,990'	Avg Snow							
		Depth (inches)	4		7	8.6	7.9	11.7	25.5
		Min Temp (F)	12		20	28	29	23	30
		Max Temp (F)	43		50	51	50	50	59
		Avg Temp (F)	26		35.3	36.8	38.8	35.8	39.3
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	23.1		24.4	27.8	28.4	32.5	38.5

Name	Elevation	Stats	11/30-12/6	12/7-12/13	12/14-12/20	12/21-12/27	12/28-1/3	1/4-1/10	1/11-1/17
CALAMITY	2500'	Avg Snow							
		Depth (inches)	1	5.5	0.1	0	0	0	0
		Min Temp (F)	16	18	27	32	33	30	34
		Max Temp (F)	47	27	55	52	53	48	56
		Avg Temp (F)	31	23	39.2	41.2	42.3	39.8	43.3
		Year to date precipitation (inches)	18.8	22	20.3	23.2	23.6	27.4	32.7

Snowpack % of Avg Snow Water Equivalent	12/6/2013	12/13/2013	12/20/2013	12/27/2013	1/3/2014	1/10/2014	1/17/2014
JUNE LAKE	5%		13%	21%	14%	23%	33%
SPIRIT LAKE	122%		100%	48%	33%	73%	77%
SHEEP CANYON	20%		20%	27%	22%	38%	55%

1/24/2014	1/31/2014	2/7/2014	2/14/2014	2/21/2014	2/28/2014
No new report	No new report	6" new snow	14" new snow	No new report	No new report
No new report	No new report	5" new snow	No new report	12" snow	No new report

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28
19.7	18.7	30.3	37.3	52.3	65.3
32	31	5	16	28	27
57	60	37	41	42	41
43	40.2	21.2	32.2	33	33.7

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28
43.6	48.6	51.4	58.1	71.4	72.8

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28
0.1	2.5	7.6	3.8	12.2	15.9
34	31	7	18	28	24
54	60	45	48	48	42
42.3	39.7	21.5	34.3	33.5	35.2

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28
30.6	33	33.4	36.8	44.6	45.4

1/18-1/24	1/25-1/31	2/1-2/7	2/8-2/14	2/15-2/21	2/22-2/28
0	0	2.1	7.7	2.8	12
30	28	11	17	32	30
56	55	38	45	44	47

35.8 35.5 25.5 33 34.8 36

21 22.9 23.2 27.8 35 35.4

1/18-1/24 1/25-1/31 2/1-2/7 2/8-2/14 2/15-2/21 2/22-2/28

24.1 22.8 32.2 37.6 53.4 67.4

33 30 3 18 26 21

54 56 37 40 41 45

43 40.2 20 32.8 31.5 34.5

38.6 42.3 43.4 49.4 60.7 62.3

1/18-1/24 1/25-1/31 2/1-2/7 2/8-2/14 2/15-2/21 2/22-2/28

0 0 1.1 1.7 2.1 2.7

32 34 9 17 32 28

54 54 37 39 46 46

43.3 42.2 24.2 26.5 35.8 35.5

32.7 36.2 36.7 37.3 51.2 52.1

1/24/2014 1/31/2014 2/7/2014 2/14/2014 2/21/2014 2/28/2014

27% 29% 30% 34% 57% 55%

42% 29% 44% 6% 107% 79%

47% 44% 48% 56% 87% 78%

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Oregon Spotted Frogs: State endangered spotted frog egg-laying season officially began this week. Biologist Tirhi confirmed 42 egg masses contained within 7 egg clusters at the Salmon Creek oviposition site. Egg-laying has not yet begun at the Fish Pond Creek oviposition site. Egg-laying was also confirmed at the USFWS Black River property and at Port Blakely Tree Farms Dempsey Creek property by other staff.



Oregon Spotted Frog Egg Deposition at Salmon Creek (one egg mass cluster).

Western Pond Turtle: District 11 staff continued to radio track over-wintering western pond turtles. Tracking effort increased to two days per week due to turtles becoming more active with the warmer weather. Five remaining turtles that are buried in upland refugia are just beginning to stir from their winter slumber. As they become more active and begin making their way towards water, their transmitters will be removed. A sixth turtle had its transmitter removed – successfully completing the survival study. The warm, sunny weather brought out many adult turtles to bask. District 11 staff also placed solarizing fabric cover on a section of the turtle nesting hill to reduce invasive grass cover. The fabric will be removed prior to nesting season.

Matheny Elk Habitat: Seven Eyes in the Woods (EITW) volunteers completed the USFS saw training. This was an intensive two-day course required by the USFS to operate chain saws on volunteer projects. Next will be a first aid course and then WDFW ORV training. Then they will be scheduling work parties. The Matheny elk habitat project involves going into areas that have

been pre-commercial thinned and creating openings and pathways for elk to use. This should create lots of volunteer opportunities in the future.

Black-tailed Deer Study – Pysht Deer Monitoring: Six does, two fawns and one yearling continue to be monitored in the Pysht cluster. No mortalities last week.

Black-tailed Deer Study – Satsop/Mason Deer Monitoring: Biologist Murphie detected one mortality this week; a female fawn. The cause of mortality could not be determined based on a lack of evidence on scene. However, the condition of the bone marrow suggests malnutrition may have played a role. The Mason cluster now has 10 does and 1 fawn on air, while the Satsop cluster has 6 does and 2 fawns still transmitting.

Taylor’s checkerspot reintroduction: Biologists Linders and Randolph spent several days delineating release areas and flagging release sites at three sites for the upcoming Taylor’s checkerspot release. While only two sites will be needed, we are still awaiting approval to release on Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). Verbal approval has been given, but signature approval is still in process. We are hoping to have that completed in the next few days. Larvae at both the Oregon Zoo and Mission Creek have been removed from diapause; they are fully awake and eating well. Survival at Mission Creek is looking very good, while the Oregon Zoo continues to experience increased mortality related to a desiccation issue that occurred last summer, which interfered with proper molting in some animals.

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

Wildlife Management

Elk Hazing: Biologist Hoenes spent several mornings and evenings assisting Biologists Harris and Sundstrom with addressing elk damage concerns on a property near Elma. There is a group of more than 60 elk that continue to damage fences that the landowner relies on to confine his steers. Despite being hazed repeatedly, this group of elk continues to return to the pasture each evening.