

Wildlife Program

Week of January 27 – February 2, 2014

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management



Three bighorn sheep rams observed at Hall Mountain on January 31, 2014.

Bighorn Sheep Survey: District Wildlife Biologists Dana Base and Annemarie Prince accomplished a helicopter survey at the Hall Mountain/Sullivan Lake area for bighorn sheep on January 31. Only five bighorn sheep were observed including a group of three rams (see photo) and a group of two ewes. Last year on January 11, a total of eight bighorn sheep were observed including three rams and five ewes. Other large mammals observed in the vicinity on January 31 included elk, moose and mule deer.

Northeast Moose Project:

Biologists Ferguson, Hansen and Atamian conducted aerial surveys for moose using the new survey protocol. The flight covered an area missed in earlier survey attempts in District 2 and also resurveyed parts of the Mica Peak, Tower Mountain, and the Blanchard areas in Spokane County.



A group of three moose spotted during the moose aerial survey.



It was a beautiful day for a moose survey with snow in Spokane County.

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

Wildlife Management



Akbash sheep dogs and sheep observed in Pend Oreille County.

Ruby Creek Wolf Activity: Conflict Specialist Shepherd and a contract range rider spent time near Tiger Junction along the Pend Oreille River hazing a radio-collared wolf which has been hanging around domestic dogs. Shepherd also helped a rancher with electrifying a fence and discussed the issue with dog owners and other residents. Specialist Shepherd, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Officer Erickson, and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Officer Marquardt used snowmobiles to track two wolves, attempt to recover a sheep dog, and haze the wolves.



Bull Moose Immobilization on South Hill Spokane, Washington: Conflict Specialist Bennett, Sergeant Sprecher, Officer Spurbeck, Officer Beauchene, Wildlife Veterinarian Mansfield, and a Fisheries biologist assisted in the removal of a yearling Bull Moose located in a residential neighborhood in Spokane. The immobilization went smoothly and the moose was relocated to southern Pend Oreille County.

A yearling bull moose was awake and ready for transport after being immobilized in Spokane.

Wildlife Areas

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Humvee Sprayer Boom:

Cuevas Winegeart and Debby Flynn completed fabrication and installation of a fold-up 30' spray boom attached to our military Humvee truck. The "Weed Warrior" is now capable of spray applications in fields using the boom or patch applications using hose and spray gun. Turning the boom on and off is controlled by electrical solenoids remotely operated in the truck cab. The control panel can also increase or decrease pressure to the spray nozzles. A GPS guidance system will



The Weed Warrior with fold up boom installed and bullet proof windshield!

guide the truck through fields for proper spray overlap and maximum efficiency. By setting speed using the Humvee hand throttle, all the operator has to do is follow steering directions indicated by the GPS to properly cover a field. Instead of hauling a tractor all around the complex to spray fields, we can now quickly accomplish the same task by driving the Humvee to sites. Parts and materials for the boom and control system were paid for by one of our sharecroppers.



Cuevas Winegeart and Debby Flynn next to the spray boom they fabricated and installed on our military Humvee truck.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

North Cascades Wolverine Research Project: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen along with U.S. Forest Service (USFS) staff recaptured adult male wolverine Logan. We had intended to sedate him to check his collar and assess the injuries we found when we caught him earlier in the season. However, he was determined not to be darted and successfully resisted our efforts to do so. Since his collar looked fine and his wounds looked to be completely healed, we were happy to cede him the victory and let him on his way. It is looking more and more like he's the dominant male in the center of our study area. We've had no evidence of Rocky at our traps or cameras yet this year.



Releasing Logan the wolverine – Photo by Scott Fitkin.

Burrowing owl: Biologist Finger began a desk review of likely locations for the construction of artificial burrowing owl burrows along the East Low Canal. As part of the Odessa Subarea Special Study, the Irrigation District is expanding the capacity of the East Low Canal through a 50-mile stretch, mostly south of Interstate 90. This expansion work has begun and will likely take many years to complete. This area, around the town of Warden, has historically supported a relatively high density of burrowing owls and in this intensively farmed area, suitable burrow sites are likely to be a limiting factor. The spoil bank, created by this expansion, will offer an opportunity to work within a large reach of disturbed soils in a readily accessible area. We plan to install approximately 150 artificial burrows, starting during fall of 2015, within the spoil banks. Coordination with the irrigation districts and Bureau of Reclamation is underway. Desk review of locations for artificial burrows is being determined by landscape composition (must have some adjacent uncultivated ground) and proximity to historic/current occupied sites. An additional assessment will be made on the ground prior to final installation.



A recent Eagle Scout project in the spoils was created by initial construction of the East Low Canal. Photo by Orrin Duvuvuei



East Low Canal expansion is underway. Photo by Orrin Duvuvuei

Wildlife Areas



Sharp-tailed Grouse:

Following Tuesday's snowfall, sharp-tailed grouse began foraging in the water birch trees on the West Foster Creek Unit. Volunteer Rick Hendrick observed 10 Wednesday afternoon and Natural Resource Specialist Noel Winegart observed 12 Thursday morning.

Sharp-tailed Grouse –

Photo by Noel Winegart.

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

Private Lands/Access

Quincy Lakes Unit/Frenchman Coulee: To address continuing illegal off-road vehicle activity in the area, cut fences were repaired and additional ecology blocks were hauled and placed at one of the WDFW access points. This coordinated effort included Jim Wiersma from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Access Managers Graves and Harmon, and Assistant Manager Eidson.



Assistant Manager Eidson helps coordinate the Quincy Lakes Unit repairs.

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

Wildlife Areas

Chesaw Wildlife Area Timber Thinning: Pioneer Harvesting completed cutting this week on the 70 acre project. To date 70 loads of timber has been removed. Three truck drivers are working 18 hour days to get two round trips to the mill in Colville.

Five inches of new snow are slowing things down a bit, as they have to chain up all four on the truck and trailer. It's a tough haul from the County road to the landing at the project site. They are hoping to have everything out by the end of next week.



Chopaka Mountain from the Chopaka/Similkameen Wildlife Area – Photo by Jeff Heinlen.



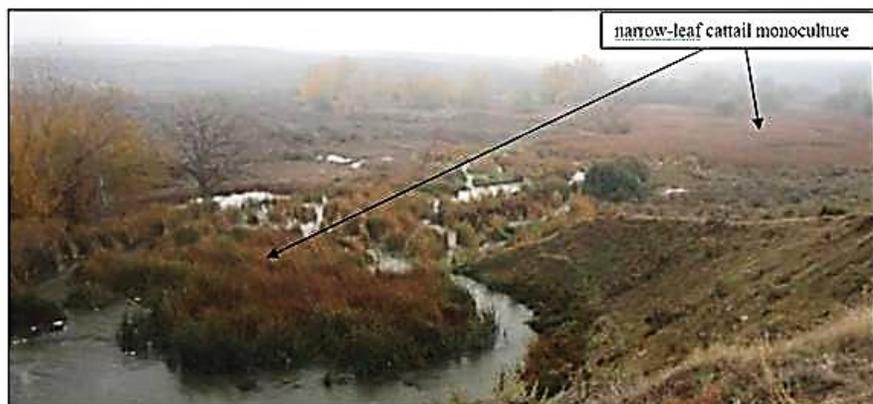
Above: Mule Deer on the Chiliwist Wildlife Area. Top right: A Northern Harrier Hawk near headquarters on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Right: An American Kestrel near the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Photos by Justin Haug

REGION 3

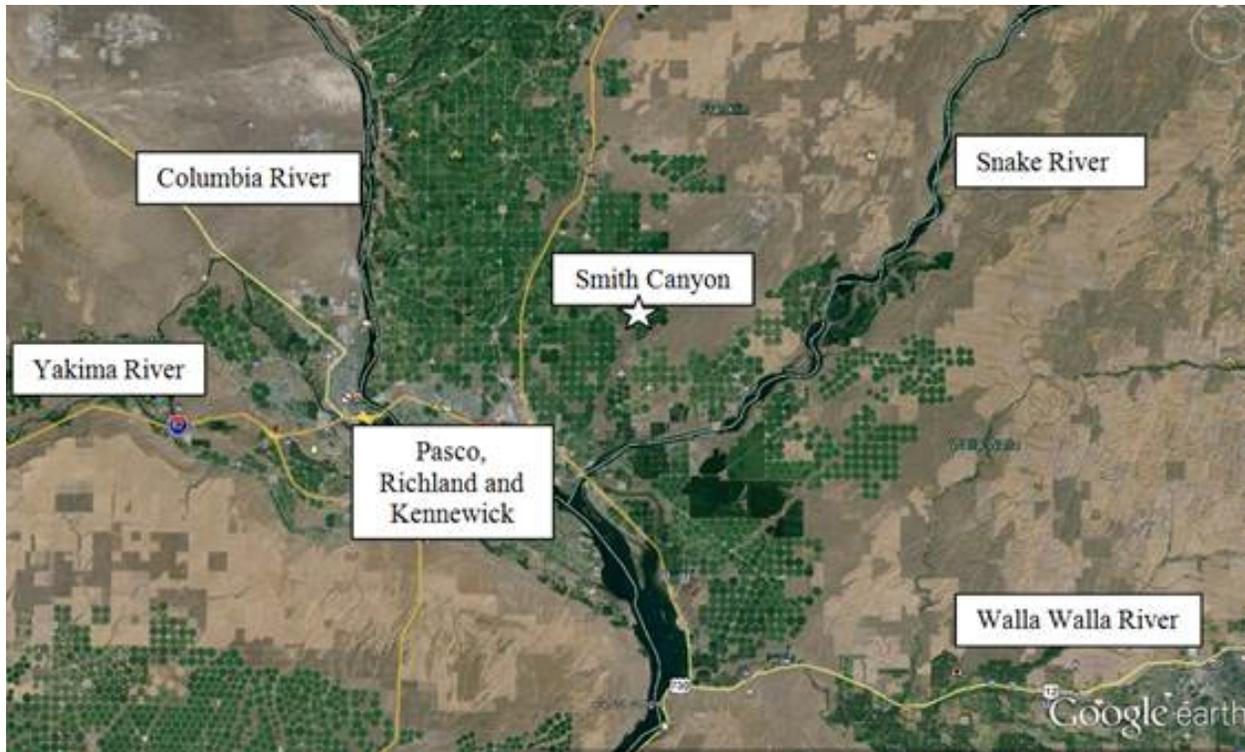
GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

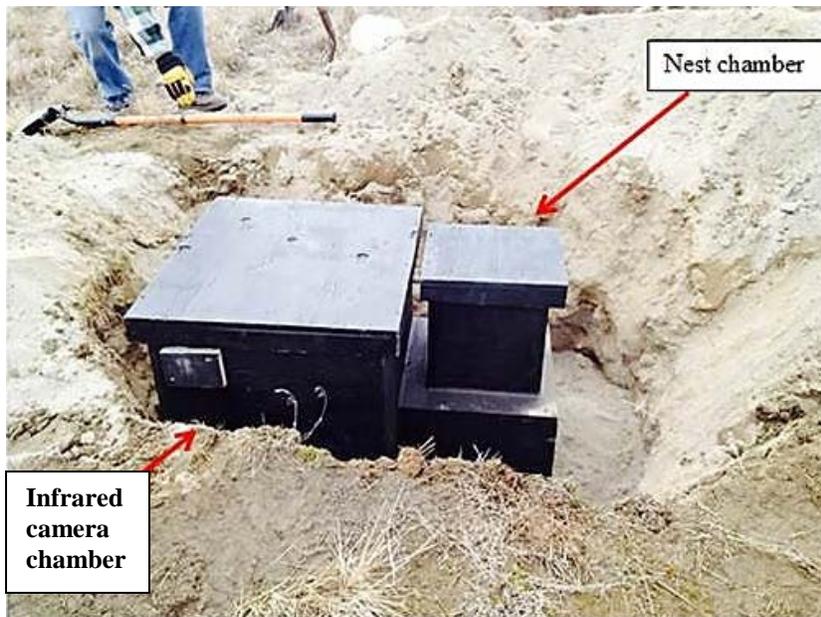
Waterfowl: Biologist Gregory coordinated with Tina Blewett from Ducks Unlimited to complete and submit a Migratory Bird Stamp (MBS) proposal for habitat enhancement at U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Smith Canyon property, located northeast of Pasco.



Overlook into Smith Canyon from the waterfall at the Eltopia Branch Canal entrance into the site. Photo by T. Blewett



Location of Smith Canyon in SE Washington.



Burrowing Owls: Biologist Gregory met with a technician from the internet service provider for the web camera to troubleshoot recent problems. The technician discovered that the transmitting radio on site was malfunctioning. After the radio was replaced the camera was up and running again. Gregory also teamed with biologists from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Global Owl project to install a new nest box at the web camera site. This box has a secondary chamber that can accommodate an infrared camera to capture owl activity inside the box.

The new burrowing owl nest box at the WDFW web camera site – Photo by S. Gregory.

Golden Eagles: Biologist Gregory toured a golden eagle site in preparation for the start of surveys in February. While onsite the biologists observed one golden eagle but there are no signs of nesting yet.



Biologists toured this golden eagle territory in Franklin County.

Wildlife Areas



Wenas Wildlife Area: Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Taylor, with the help of a volunteer, installed two of the newly constructed kiosks along Umtanum Creek.

Left: New kiosk installed at Umtanum Creek Trail. Below: New kiosk installed at Umtanum Falls Trailhead.



Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum Wildlife Area Manager Lopushinsky and Assistant Manager Hagen met with Kittitas County Field and Stream Club (KCFSC) members in Stray Gulch and Tekison Creek to mark the road building proposals in these two drainages. KCFSC flagged the proposed routes last fall, and we remarked and GPS the routes, totaling 3.2 miles.



The crew flagged the route for proposed road construction in Tekison Creek, Colockum Wildlife Area. Assistant Manager Hagan (WDFW) marked the route with GPS.



Group of 18 elk (16 bulls) within the Colockum Tarps burn area are approximately one mile up Stray Gulch, Colockum Wildlife Area.



Ducks use the Rice Paddy wetlands on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area.



Heavy frost blanketed the Ponderosa pine and sagebrush on Cleman Mountain.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Swan Morbidity/Mortality Project: Biologist Anderson collected 25 swans which consisted of 2 tundra swans and 23 trumpeter swans. Of the swans collected this week, 22 whole carcasses were collected and sampled along with three feather piles. The 22 carcasses collected came from the following counties: 1 Snohomish, 3 Skagit, and 18 Whatcom. As has been the trend for several weeks now, central Whatcom County is still the largest producer of sick and dead swans.



Swan Technician Anderson on a dead swan retrieval mission at Judson Lake.

Mid-Winter Waterfowl Survey: Biologist Smith completed District 12 waterfowl surveys and data entry for some of the lower priority areas. Numbers were generally low for most areas, presumably due to birds remaining farther north during mild weather conditions. Data entry was also completed for the entirety of the annual survey. Biologist DeBruyn compiled data from various sources to complete mid-winter survey reporting for waterfowl including swans in north Puget Sound.

Trumpeter Swan Surveys: Biologist Milner completed maps and data sheets for the mid-winter swan surveys on Whidbey Island and north Snohomish counties and provided them to Biologist DeBruyn.

Winter Sea Duck and Marine Bird Aerial Surveys: Waterfowl Survey and Sea Duck Specialist Evenson and Assistant District Biologists Murphie and Cyra continued their survey efforts of the winter sea duck and marine bird aerial surveys of the inner marine waters of Washington State.

This is the 22nd winter that these surveys have been conducted. These surveys are the longest data set documenting trends of winter marine bird distribution and population indices in the Puget Sound, and have documented the declining trends in many of the species that inhabit the Puget Sound during winter. In addition, these surveys are used to document population index levels of sea ducks that will determine next year's harvest limits.

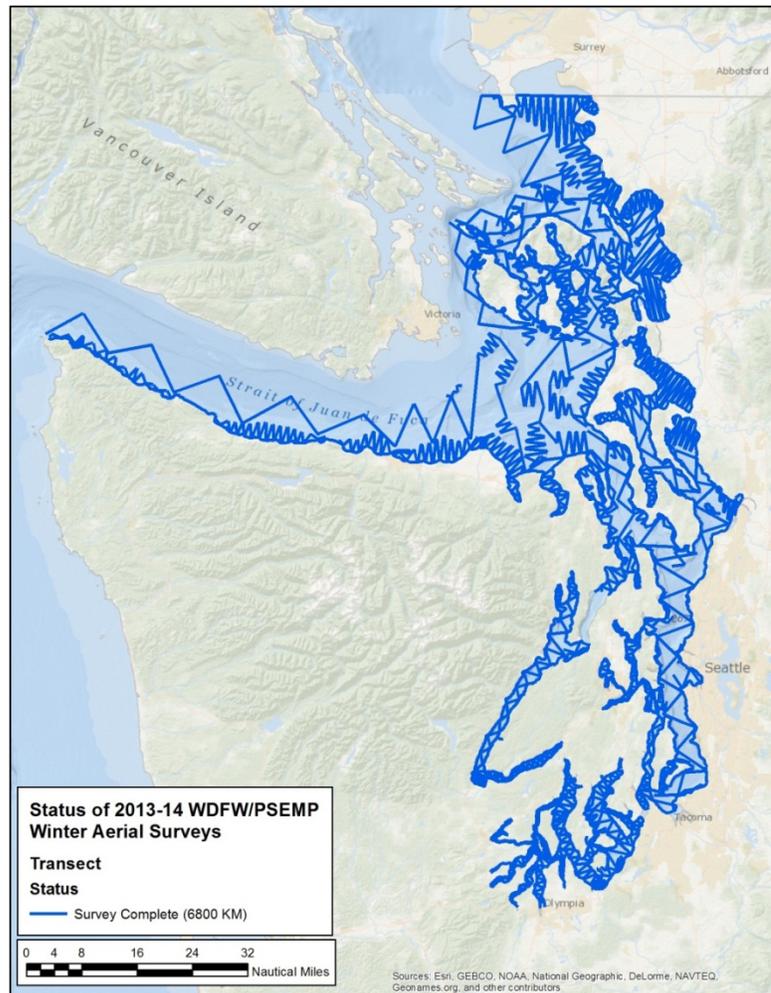
The 2013-14 survey was completed with one final day flown this week along central and western Strait of Juan de Fuca.

We would like to thank Customer Service Specialist Powers for her efforts and enthusiasm in flight following most of the flights over the season.

WDFW – Woodland Park Zoo Annual Citizen Science Amphibian Monitoring Training:

Biologist Anderson, along with zoo education staff, have been working with new participants and municipalities to square away any local management requests with various park management entities and their constituents as well as meeting any city risk management requests and needs legally. Three teams are in new areas. Anderson has been in quite a bit of phone and email consultation with local municipal staff, Olympia staff, zoo staff and volunteers wishing to survey areas for WDFW to keep all on the same page, keep things rolling along, and meet final need requests of these local municipal management entities.

WDFW Web General Wildlife Observation Site: Biologist Anderson requested changes to the new public “General Wildlife Observation” page to Wildlife Survey Data Management (WSDM) Section Leader Duff, catered towards the Woodland Park Zoo Citizen Amphibian Monitoring Program, so that participants can meet data entry requests by WDFW. Section Leader Duff responded quickly and the interface is providing a nice pilot launch for efforts like this with a



large amount of volunteers and data to be captured. This website can be found under our “Wildlife Viewing” section of the WDFW website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/>.

Black Oystercatcher Conservation: Biologist Milner reviewed and provided comments to authors on a draft global assessment of the conservation status of the Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus bachmani*. This document will update an earlier conservation plan for Black Oystercatchers, incorporating work in Alaska, Washington and Oregon that has occurred since the original plan.

Fir Island Bald Eagle Management: Biologist DeBruyn consulted with Habitat Biologist Brian Williams about the pair of eagles nesting adjacent to the proposed Fir Island Farms Restoration Project. It was agreed that they would work collaboratively to develop an eagle management plan to address concerns related to dike construction effects on the eagle pair. DeBruyn made a quick site visit to establish the exact location of the nest and to verify that the site was occupied. Construction activity is not expected until 2015.

Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Regional cross-program staff met with Ducks Unlimited and began drafting design alternatives for Leque Island. Design alternatives include varying degrees of tidal restoration on the property – from restoring the entire property to tidal influence to building new dikes at strategic locations on the property. Once the drafts are complete, they will be modeled to predict how each design scenario will change the landscape of the property area and surrounding properties. WDFW will present the alternatives at a public meeting and will post on the project webpage to collect input this spring. To be added to an email list to receive project updates and meeting notifications, send a request to Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov or visit http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/wildlife_areas/skagit/leque_island_project.php.



Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Ducks Unlimited engineers visited the Leque Unit to become more familiar with current site conditions prior to drafting design alternatives for the area. Pictured above is a dike repair and erosion area in the SW corner of the property.

Tennant Lake Water Level: Manager Kessler monitored the water levels at Tennant Lake. He met with the Whatcom County Parks manager to discuss current conditions, future projects and activities at Hovander Park and Tennant Lake.

Intalco Ponds & Lake Terrell Water Controls: Manager Kessler submitted Duck Stamp project proposals to address replacement of the leaking water controls at the Intalco and Lake Terrell units. Manager Kessler monitored beaver activity on the Intalco Unit. He cleared the water controls and the overflow on one of the ponds at Intalco to drop the water level. Kessler coordinated the recent activities with the Intalco Land Manager, discussing the current conditions and the future projects planned for the area.

Crescent Lake Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with the Sky Valley Tractor Club to submit rental and excise tax paperwork for the 2013 season. Additionally, Manager Boehm discussed a plan for the 2014 growing season. Aside from paying a rental fee for the 10.5 acre field, the Tractor Club also provides repeat mowing of the dog training area and weed control on a previously untilled acre of the unit.

Stillwater Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm coordinated a site visit with a local farmer who is interested in cropping the fields at the unit. Manager Boehm has met with the farmer on a previous meeting to discuss WDFW lease requirements. A follow-up meeting to determine if both party's interests can be met and work towards a formal contract agreement.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with the grazing lessee to continue developing the grazing plan for the 2014 season. Negotiations for access, grazing areas, and cropping continue to delay progress. Manager Boehm also met with a Snohomish Conservation District Farm Planner to discuss grazing and cropping scenarios.

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

Wildlife Management



Snoqualmie Valley Elk

Damage: Biologist Smith used a trail camera to monitor intermittent nocturnal elk activity on agricultural properties. Elk returned to one of these properties and Smith worked with the Master Hunter coordinator to get a master hunter assigned.

Elk exit a Snoqualmie Valley agricultural area to seek cover in forested lands prior to sunrise.

North Cascades Elk Management: Manager Link and Biologist Danilson attended the WDFW-Point Elliott Tribes co-management policy meeting at Muckleshoot. In addition to reviewing and discussing the annual co-management plan between WDFW and the Tribes, the primary focus of this meeting was centered on elk related agricultural damage issues in the Skagit River Valley. In particular, Tribes expressed their dissatisfaction with WDFW's approach to addressing these issues, potential population level effects of the lethal removal of elk, and the perspective that the elk lethally removed in 2013 resulted in inequity in the total harvest for the Tribes.

Biologist Danilson continued to prepare for an upcoming trial effort to use forward looking infrared video technology for surveying elk in the Skagit River Valley. This involved working with GIS support and engineering staff within WDFW and officers at Washington State Patrol. The proposed date for the flight is February 6.

Biologist DeBruyn worked with tribal representatives to work out some details regarding ongoing clover trapping of elk.

Wildlife Areas

Whatcom Wildlife Area: Tens of thousands of waterfowl are now using the barley fields at Lake Terrell. Forty-seven acres of barley were planted in the Lake Terrell fields last spring and are getting good use this winter. Last year we were also successful in securing Duck Stamp funds to increase the cereal grain plantings to 62 acres in 2014.



Tennant Lake Boardwalk Renovation Project: Manager Kessler coordinated with the department engineer on the Tennant Lake Boardwalk Renovation project. This year we were successful in securing Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) funding to renovate the wood boardwalk, making part of it handicap accessible and raising sections that are underwater several months of the year. Design and permitting will occur this year, with construction proceeding next year.

Skagit Delta Waterfowl Replacement Lands Proposal: Projects Coordinator Brokaw began drafting responses to comments received during the public comment period of the WDFW Lands 20/20 process. Information is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/lands/acquisitions/>. The comment period closed on January 31.

Island Unit: Natural Resource Specialist (NRS) Greg Meis and Natural Resource Tech (NRT) Curran Cosgrove began slow drawdown of water on the Island Unit. Ducks continue to feed and loaf on the unit both night and day after waterfowl season ended.

Samish Unit: NRS Meis and NRT Cosgrove opened all water control structures on the Samish Unit to begin lowering water level in the fields and ponds. Observed bird numbers are high in the harvested potato fields. The corn on site is scheduled to be rolled to make more accessible to waterfowl following the close of the season.

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

Wildlife Management

Whidbey Island Elk: Biologists Milner and Smith met with a landowner on Whidbey Island who has experienced some damage from the Island's lone elk. "Bruiser" is lonely and bored so occasionally throws his weight around. The landowner was advised not to feed him apples and that his misdeeds will probably abate once his antlers are shed this spring.



Bruiser, Whidbey Island's lone elk, is lonely and bored so occasionally throws his weight around.

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Management: Biologist Anderson and Customer Service Wilson worked with staff at national headquarters of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) to square up outstanding payment to WDFW for joint requests and also QA/QC 2013 requests. NWF is providing payment per agreement with WDFW and DFW is sending out requests caught in QA/QC of data. Thank you Customer Service Wilson for assisting in this quarterly to annual need so that we provide the best customer service to the public requesting these products.

Skagit County Elk Conflict: Conflict Specialist Griffith negotiated a third fencing contract this week. After many weeks of indecisiveness, the landowner signed the contract.

Conflict Technician Pinjuv monitored scare devices that he deployed last week. The devices are operational, have not been stolen or shot, and appear to be working. Pinjuv identified an additional location near Pinelli Rd/SR 20 to place a couple of these devices to help deter backyard fence damages.

Pinjuv obtained final fencing material price quotes from a local vendor for the third fencing project in the Skagit River valley. Pinjuv submitted these to Griffith for further purchasing approval from leadership.

Maple Valley Elk Damage: Biologist Smith responded to questions from several landowners concerned with elk frequenting residential properties. Some properties have experienced damage to fences and landscaping, while others have only had elk passing through. Potential fencing options, scare techniques and repellent efficacy were discussed.

Wildlife Areas

Fir Island Farm Final Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw calibrated water quality monitoring equipment that is used to monitor groundwater and surface water levels, conductivity, and temperature in and around the Fir Island Farm property. These parameters are currently being monitored to serve as baseline conditions; so that any changes can be documented after implementation of a future estuary restoration project.

Private Lands/Access

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site Breakdown: Technicians Deyo and Otto performed quality hunt site breakdowns in Snohomish, Skagit and Whatcom counties. All trash, parking lots, signs, and blinds are being removed.

Invoice Payment Vouchers for Private Landowners: Biologist Caldwell delivered A-19 payment forms to all private landowners enrolled in the Snow Goose and Waterfowl Quality Hunt Programs in Skagit, Whatcom and Snohomish counties.

Landowner Surveys: Biologist Caldwell surveyed all available landowners enrolled in the Waterfowl and Snow Goose Quality Hunt Programs in Skagit, Whatcom and Snohomish counties. Landowners were asked the following questions: How many years they have utilized the program, did the WDFW meet or address any of their needs in 2013, and if not, why, are

there any improvements that could be made to the programs, do they have any other properties that they would like the WDFW to consider enrolling next year, would they recommend this program to a neighbor/friend, and lastly if they had any other comments they wished the WDFW to address. Preliminary results from the survey indicated that survey participation results were low (5/13 or 38%) across all three counties. By county, Snohomish County had 50% (2/4) participation, Skagit County had 60% (3/5) participation and Whatcom County had 0% (0/4) participation. It should be noted that many of the landowners preferred to discuss these issues orally, rather than fill out the survey, and several people stated they would mail the form when they had time. Therefore, these results likely do not reflect the true value of landowner opinions and simply serve as a guide for future management strategies. So far, as a result of these surveys, several new high quality properties were recommended and may be considered for 2014 enrollment. Also, via this survey, new areas were identified and will be negotiated to apply Migratory Bird Habitat Project (Duck Stamp) funding to private lands throughout Region 4.

Acme Elk Conflict Stakeholders Meeting: Biologist Caldwell and Specialist Griffith coordinated to meet with stakeholders in the Acme area regarding Elk conflict and the potential for utilizing the Private Lands Access Program to help reduce Elk related conflict on their lands. Program options that will be introduced include Feel Free to Hunt, Register to Hunt, Hunt by Written Permission and Hunt by Reservation. Special attention will be made on management opportunities that allow the landowner and WDFW to manage the desired species, access times and dates, scouting, blind/tree stand use, access modes, weapon types, maps that indicates where the property is located, access points, parking lot locations, and the consequences to people who disobeys site and landowner rules (access denial and loss of hunting privileges on the site, and law enforcement actions).

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

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.

Quality Hunt Site Breakdown Protocol Review: Biologist Caldwell met with Technicians Otto and Deyo to discuss protocol revisions for Waterfowl and Snow Goose Quality Hunt site breakdowns. Site records and inventory management procedures were revised. Major revisions included safety and proper PPE for site breakdowns, taking a higher quantity of pictures before and after site breakdowns, standardizing records by site name, blind type(s) used, number and type of signs removed, and habitat management notes (e.g., number of sand bags used, where mowing was applied and its effectiveness, water information, blind placement information, parking lot notes, etc.) and data storage options.

Samish Unit: Manager Rotton attended a meeting with Ducks Unlimited and the Commissioner from Dike District #5 to present the latest conceptual designs to the Dike District. The Commissioner will discuss the conceptual to other Commission members and provide feedback regarding any design and drainage concerns.

Duck Stamp Proposals: Wildlife Area staff submitted four duck stamp proposals for consideration during this mid-cycle funding opportunity.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A and 2B Goose Hunt: The 2013-2014 Management Area 2A regular season goose hunt concluded on January 26, 2014. A total of 796 hunters harvested 1,599 geese at 2.0 geese per hunter. Most hunters checked in from areas in Clark and Cowlitz counties. However, more hunters checked in at Ridgefield and Cathlamet than have in the past. Overall, hunter participation and harvest numbers appear to have increased over the previous year. All zones remained open for the entire season and most zones did not approach the quota limit. WDFW is aware of the difficulties associated with this season and is grateful to hunters for their continued cooperation while we attempt to recover a declining subspecies. Thank you for your participation and congratulations on a successful season.

Southwest Washington Management Area 2A Special Late Season Goose Hunt: The 2014 Management Area 2A Special Late Goose Season began on February 1, 2014. As of this week, four farms in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties are actively experiencing damage from geese and are requesting assistance from master hunters. Hunters will be assisting landowners on participating properties from February 1 through March 5. Hunt days are Wednesdays and Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Landowners experiencing damage from geese on agricultural properties within area 2A can sign up for assistance through this program at any time throughout the season. Landowners interested in participating should contact the WDFW Region 5 office at 360-696-6211 for more information on how to be included.

Master hunters who are selected to participate in these hunts will need to abide by the same regulations and possess all of the same authorizations required to hunt geese during the regular season in Area 2A. Hunters will be required to check in harvested geese at either the Vancouver or Woodland check stations. Check station hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the Vancouver Station and 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Woodland Station. Check station locations, regulations, and requirements for participation can be found on pages 16, 19, and 20 of the Migratory Waterfowl and Upland Game Season Pamphlet or check online at <http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01535/wdfw01535.pdf>.

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Research Scientist and Chief Investigator Rice, private contractors Northwest Helicopters, and Biologists Bergh and Holman attempted adult doe captures associated with the black-tail research project in both the Coweeman (550) Game Management Unit (GMU) and Washougal (568) GMU. The adult females are captured by helicopter net-gunning. Conditions were excellent in the Coweeman GMU and eight adult does

were captured. Unfortunately, poor flying conditions and the more complex forest structure in the Washougal GMU made capturing deer much more challenging as the week progressed. Three does were captured in GMU 568 and additional captures may be scheduled later in the winter.

Once captured, the does are outfitted with collars that record the deer's location every 5 hours and convey this information to a satellite. The collars also generate a traditional VHF signal for field location. The does are additionally outfitted with a vaginal implant transmitter (VIT) which communicates with the doe's satellite collar. Upon birth, the VIT lets the collar know that fawns have been born and WDFW staff is notified by e-mail and text message. Following notification, fawn searches are initiated. Thanks to Northwest Helicopters, primarily pilot Jess Hagerman and net-gunner Brian Greenhaw, for their skill in this challenging capture effort.



Dr. Cliff Rice and Biologists Holman and Bergh conducting the 2014 black-tailed deer captures.

Pronghorn Antelope: District Biologist Anderson followed up on a report from Section Manager Harris in Olympia about recent sightings of pronghorn antelope in eastern Klickitat County. Contact was made with the landowner and it appears that a small herd of approximately 20 antelope have been on their ranch over the past year. The herd has been seen moving on two different land ownerships in the area. On January 15-16, 2011, ninety-nine pronghorn antelope were released by the Yakama Nation on the Yakama Reservation. Since that time many of the

antelope have been seen in various locations outside the Yakama Reservation, including a small group near the Klickitat Wildlife Area in 2011.

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

Private Lands/Access



Vancouver Lake and Shillapoo South Access Sites: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes picked up and hauled six large bags of trash with the help of the Larch Mountain corrections crew from the Vancouver Lake site. The new double restroom was installed and work has continued on the parking area extension at Shillapoo South.

New double restroom installed at Shillapoo South.

Oneida Access Site: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes received a complaint of wood cutting on the Oneida boat launch. It appears someone had hauled logs up the new boat ramp and cut the logs on the upper part of the ramp. The persons responsible for this left fairly large piles of sawdust and evidence of oil dripping from the chainsaw onto the boat launch. The tide was high during Spangler and Rhodes visit, but they were able to use the blower to remove the sawdust above the waterline. History of this type of use has resulted in damage to WDFW's ramps, docks, and parking areas. Signs were made and will be posted stating wood cutting and log salvage is not allowed on WDFW property without a permit.



Wood cutting on the Oneida boat launch left a mess.

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

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict: Conflict Specialist McDonald met with a Clark County landowner experiencing deer damage to one acre of newly planted fruit trees and conifers. The landowner

did a great job of installing eight-foot tall deer netting secured by t-posts and telephone poles and running two strands of wire above the netting. Deer are slipping through holes where the two rows of netting overlap. The landowner will work to close the gaps, and he was given a roll of mylar tape to try to discourage the deer from approaching the netting. McDonald discussed additional options that the landowner can try later, if necessary: electric fencing, spray repellents, and noisemakers.

Range Rider Contracts: Conflict Specialist McDonald met with the rest of the cattlemen that WDFW has range rider contracts within Klickitat County. The cattlemen will be moving their cow-calf pairs out to grazing allotments this spring on private and public forestland. The range rider contracts are a proactive measure to try and reduce potential conflicts between wolves and the cattle ranching community. McDonald emphasized the importance of monitoring cattle behavior while on grazing allotments, maintaining a human presence when possible, and alerting WDFW immediately to potential wolf sign or depredations.

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, and the Cascade snowpack being around 50% of average.

Short-Term Forecast: Freezing levels will be low for the upcoming week, but there is to be very little precipitation associated with the cooler temperatures. The 6-10 day and the 8-14 day forecasts are for below normal temperatures and above normal precipitation.

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

Habitat: Forage is available at all mid to lower elevations, with the landscape being snow free below 2,800 feet.

Snow Depths: Areas of mid to low elevations are snow free, with there being below average snowpack in higher elevations. Snowpack is about 50% of average for the time of year.

Animal Concentrations: No unusual concentrations noted to date. The second monthly winter elk survey was conducted on January 10. A total of 111 elk were observed on the Mt. St. Helens Wildlife Area.

Animal Condition: No reports of animals in poor condition that can be attributed to winter conditions. Animals observed to date appear to be in good to fair condition.

Mortality: None reported.

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: Precipitation in the South Cascades remains below average this week although new snow was reported over 3,400 ft. elevation in the South Cascades. Snowpack is still below normal, approximately 60% of normal in the South Cascades. Areas in eastern Klickitat County remain very dry and have received less precipitation than areas in western Klickitat and Skamania counties.

Winter Severity: Elevations below 3,500 ft. continue to be open throughout District 9 for both the west and east side of the Cascades. There is no concern for the current severity of the winter conditions on big game populations in Skamania County and the western portion of Klickitat County in the White Salmon River drainage. Those portions of Klickitat County east of Rock Creek continue to have no snow accumulation and deer are reported in good condition.

Habitat: Habitat is open and forage habitat continues to be available throughout District 9.

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

Animal Condition: Deer and elk appear to be in good condition and no winter stress/mortality has been reported.

Mortality: None reported this week.

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

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Oregon Spotted Frog: Biologist Tirhi met volunteer Bonney Blessing and an Evergreen College student at the Salmon Creek oviposition site to discuss volunteer-driven habitat enhancement projects scheduled for 2014 and an Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) application. The project will entail controlling Reed canary grass over a series of plots and deep water connections and replanting native vegetation. Tirhi will provide plot details when available.

Western Pond Turtles: District 11 staff radio tracked 17 juvenile turtles remaining in an on-going survival study. All turtles remain in torpor – 4 on land and 11 in the water. Two radios are off the air. Turtles begin to emerge from torpor in February at which time the radios will be

removed. The staff also participated in the Turtle Health Team conference call to discuss the next steps to continuing assessing affected populations, reviewing treatment regimens and test results, and determining the underlying cause.

Deer Monitoring – Separation Event: On Tuesday, January 28, Biologist Loafman conducted a field visit to the Little River site in response to a Separation Event Notice received for one of the fawns. Upon arrival at the east end of the site, Loafman was able to download the doe's collar data quite easily from the main Little River Road. The second fawn signal was from same general direction as the doe. A faint mortality signal could be heard for the separated fawn from this same location. Loafman proceeded to investigate and drove up the road to the gate to enter the site. The signal was loudest near where the fawns were born and it was determined the mortality was a just short distance across the road. Loafman searched and found the remains halfway between the main logging road and a side-spur in a fairly open clear-cut, perhaps a 100 feet from either road. Remains included all four legs, the tail, one ear, the jawbones and a cached gut pile. It was likely a cougar predation.



Remains found of Little River female fawn.

The fawn was 7-8 months old. Bio Loafman attempted to download collar data for all other does but was unable to visit all the sites that day.

Deer Monitoring – Pysht Unit: Six does, two fawns (one at Little River, one at Deer Park) and one yearling (West Siebert) will continue to be monitored in the Pysht cluster.

Deer Monitoring – Mason Unit: Biologist Murphie checked deer in the Mason Unit and followed up a mortality signal from an adult doe collared near Belfair. Only the collar was found with no evidence in vicinity as to disposition of doe. Three does and two fawns remain collared and active in this cluster. All doe collars are anticipated to drop off in March. A new sample of does will be added in February.

Biologist Loafman also corresponded with Research Scientist Rice regarding replacing the broken terminal antenna and determination of possible funding to secure a state vehicle for Loafman to use on the deer project due to scheduling conflicts with borrowing Ament/McMillan's trucks. Biologist Loafman also corresponded with potential volunteers and sent the prerequisite volunteer forms to the Volunteer Program Coordinator in Olympia.

Eagle Management: Biologist Ament responded to several calls and e-mail inquiries from the general public related to eagle management. She referred numerous landowners on to the USFWS website or to USFWS Lacey Office.

Eagle Management – New Nest: Biologist Ament received a call from a park ranger from Dosewallips State Park. They had a lengthy conversation about a new bald eagle nest that is visible from the bridge over Highway 101. The ranger had some concerns about some projects proposed for fish enhancement. Bio Ament noticed the nest this past fall, but is not sure if it has been



View of the new bald eagle nest at Dosewallips State Park.

documented in the agency Data Systems. She took some photos of the nest on January 29 while travelling to meet with Program Manager Cope. Ament will be contacting District Biologist Skriletz about the nest and will provide him contact information for the park ranger.



Eagle Management – Landowner Meeting: Biologist Ament was contacted by a landowner at the Freshwater Bay Territory who has reported that a tree that previously contained a nest has been destroyed (possibly from a landslide). She will be meeting with the landowner this week to check on the tree and review trees proposed for removal to improve water views.

Bald Eagle Carcass: Biologist Tirhi responded to a call of a dead eagle found in a private yard in Gig Harbor. Tirhi arranged for the carcass to be dropped off at Tacoma Nature Center where Tirhi picked it up and transported it to USFWS, Lacey. Tirhi observed what appeared to be a small bullet hole under the left eye on an otherwise healthy mature bald eagle. Confirmation of cause of death and any follow up is with USFWS.

Taylor's checkerspot butterfly (TCB) meeting: On January 30, Bio Ament joined Biologists McMillan, Potter and Hays along with two biologists who work for the landowners of the property containing one of the populations of TCB's on the north Olympic Peninsula. The current Biologist Robin Berry will be leaving her position at the end of February. The newly hired biologist, Ivan Stocker, has resumed his duties. Several topics were discussed during the meeting including TCB biology, management, and monitoring surveys. Specific items discussed were monitoring method training and the time commitment for surveys. Ivan may be reducing his participation for surveys to an average of one survey per week. If this is the case, Bio Ament will need to increase survey participation, especially during the peak flight period (typically April 20-May 10). The group also discussed the topic of how to best record results when one has "too many butterflies" during a survey. The group conducted a field visit to the survey area to try and locate TCB larvae. Numerous active larvae (1 -2 cm) were located along the survey transect route. There were concerns about potential impacts from our walking the site, so the group left the area. During the hike out methods to possibly control exotic grasses were discussed.



Biologists at the Taylor's checkerspot butterfly field meeting.

The group conducted a field visit to the survey area to try and locate TCB larvae. Numerous active larvae (1 -2 cm) were located along the survey transect route. There were concerns about potential impacts from our walking the site, so the group left the area. During the hike out methods to possibly control exotic grasses were discussed.



Taylor's checkerspot butterfly larvae observed at documented population site on the north Olympic Peninsula.

Taylor's checkerspot butterfly recovery: Together with biologists, ecologists and land managers from throughout the Taylor's checkerspot range (Oregon to British Columbia) Biologist Linders spent the week in San Jose, California sharing knowledge and recovery strategies with their counterparts working on Bay and Quino checkerspot. These three federally endangered subspecies make up the West Coast distribution of Edith's checkerspot butterfly, which ranges inland to the Rocky Mountains. Several days were spent comparing and contrasting life history, habitat requirements, restoration strategies, monitoring techniques and recovery strategies, which highlight Edith's opportunistic approach to survival. Linders presented an overview of reintroduction strategies and results to date that was well-received.

Wintering Marine Waterfowl and Marine Bird Aerial Surveys: Surveys were completed this week. Biologists Murphie, Evenson, and Cyra report surveying the remaining sections to complete coverage of the Greater Puget Sound basin. These annual surveys provide trend data on select waterfowl and marine bird populations wintering on the Salish Sea, and are also used in the annual harvest setting negotiations in the Pacific Flyway for waterfowl.

Mid-Winter Waterfowl Surveys: Biologist Ament spent time January 30-31 reviewing and tallying counts for the annual mid-winter waterfowl surveys conducted earlier in the month. She also made copies of her field notes and completed hard copy data sheets of surveys. She spent time transcribing all survey results onto electronic data forms. Biologist Ament finalized survey forms and submitted all survey results for two data sets to District Biologist McMillan on January 31. Biologist Ament submitted data for sites she surveyed between Sequim and Port Angeles and for a site east of Sequim. On February 1, Bio Ament worked on compiling data for surveys in the Dungeness area. She had to discontinue this effort and focus the remainder of the day on the project to remove an arrow from a deer. She will be finalizing all remaining data today and will provide that to District Biologist McMillan. Bio Loafman had a few hours of time remaining that could be dedicated to mid-winter waterfowl surveys. She completed a summarization sheet of potential waterfowl survey sites for next year as requested by Bio Ament. She had previously submitted maps for these search areas.

Trumpeter Swan Monitoring: No report from volunteers from the past week, but Bio Ament did observe a group of 17 swans west of Smuck Rd. on January 30.

Marking of Power Lines: Bio Ament noticed that as of January 30, no power lines have had flap markers installed. She consulted with Public Utility District (PUD) staff this morning. They are planning to mark lines someday this week.

Snowy Plovers: Biologist Hoenes spent time reviewing and providing comments on a project that Pacific County submitted for State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) review. Pacific County is proposing to re-open the Midway Beach Access Road which has been decommissioned for several years now. WDFW has concerns about re-opening this access point because doing so would bisect the core snowy plover nesting area at Midway Beach. In addition, this project has the potential to disturb streaked horn lark nesting habitat (recently added to the Endangered Species List). Biologist Hoenes worked with Biologist Sundstrom and Research Scientist Pearson to present their concerns to Habitat Biologist Spoon so she could incorporate them into her response to Pacific County's SEPA application.

Brown Pelicans: Biologist Hoenes spent time this week reviewing the draft Brown Pelican Status Report. Currently, Brown Pelicans are listed as endangered in Washington, but populations have recovered so this status is no longer needed to ensure the conservation of this species. The updated Status Report is recommending that Brown Pelicans be removed from the list of endangered species in Washington State. Biologist Hoenes provided editorial comments to Biologist Stinson.

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

Wildlife Management

Mid-Winter Waterfowl Surveys: Biologist Hoenes spent time this week entering and submitting all the data that was collected during mid-winter waterfowl surveys in District 17. The total number of waterfowl observed in the three areas surveyed (Willapa Bay, Chehalis Valley, Duck Lake Canals) was well above normal. The apparent increase was likely due to the “blue-bird” weather the area experienced during the week when surveys were completed, especially in Willapa Bay where biologists observed close to 13,000 dabblers.

Mount Saint Helens Elk: Biologist Hoenes attended a meeting in Vancouver to discuss results from the Mount Saint Helens Elk Study. The information presented was relevant to District 17 staff because the monitoring design that was developed will also be implemented to monitor population trends in the Willapa Hills elk herd area. Other WDFW staff that were in attendance included Deer and Elk Program Manager Nelson, Deer and Elk Specialist McCorquodale, and several other Region 5 District and Private Lands biologists.

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

Wildlife Management



Raccoon Report: On January 27, Biologist Ament got a phone call from a landowner who lives between Sequim and Port Angeles. She was calling to report having two “white” raccoons in her yard. Apparently, she had a camera set deployed near her house and got photos. At least one of the young raccoons has some color on its tail. Bio Ament thanked the woman for the report and photos before discussing the negative impacts of feeding wildlife in her backyard.

Elk Hoof Disease: Biologist Hoenes fielded reports of elk with hoof disease north and west of Oakville. Officer Alexander responded to all three reports. Hoenes submitted those reports to

WDFW's online hoof disease reporting tool and encourages all landowners who observed elk with hoof disease to do the same.

Sequim Deer Relocation:

The Sequim deer with the arrow mentioned in last week's report was relocated by Officer Bryan Davidson. Biologist Ament was able to mobilize Dr. Tyler (a local veterinarian) and Biologist Brian Murphie to arrange the capture while Officer Davidson kept a tight eye on the buck. Biologist Murphie did some minimal ground stalking and had a successful hit to the right hip at approximately 20 yards. The deer was down in six minutes. It took a little effort to get the arrow out, but after removal they flushed the dart and arrow wounds and applied wound dressing as needed. They monitored the buck's temperature and respirations – both in good range. The buck was up 10 minutes after giving the reversal. He was last seen wandering slowly down the hillside to find the does he was hanging out with earlier. The project could not have gone any smoother. One of those efforts where everything just fell into place thanks to a highly professional staff. A special thanks to Dr. Tyler as well as WDFW Veterinarian Mansfield and Vet Assistant Rowan for their assistance.



Above: Removing the arrow. Below: Applying the ear tag.





The Bell Hill Arrow Extraction Team (left) successfully removed an arrow from this deer (right). This deer image was captured minutes after the reversal drug was administered. The buck was last seen wandering the hillsides to find the does he was hanging out with earlier.

Satsop Elk: Biologist Hoenes responded to a landowner who was concerned about the elk-vehicle collision that occurred on Highway 12 a couple weeks ago. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, there are several rumors circulating through the community that WDFW pushed the group back into the timber and then “slaughtered” 40 elk. Biologist Hoenes provided the facts associated with this incident and by the end of the conversation, the concerned landowner was very appreciative of how WDFW has handled this elk herd.