

Wildlife Program

Week of September 29 – October 5, 2014

SCIENCE DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Agency Strategic Objectives

- A. The ecological integrity of critical habitat and ecological systems is protected and restored.
- B. Washington's fish and wildlife diversity is protected at levels consistent with ecosystem management principles established in the Conservation Initiative.

Landscape Conservation: John Pierce attended a Western Governors Association workshop "Sustainable Strategies in Support of Transportation Planning for Wildlife Conservation Priorities Across the West". The workshop focused on how best to integrate wildlife values and information, like the WGA Crucial Habitat map, into Transportation planning. The workshop included a field trip along Hwy 93 through the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Lands to view several wildlife crossings they have developed in partnership with the Montana Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration.

Marine Spatial Planning: Science Division staff finalized ArcGIS geodatabase data associated with phase 1 of the Marine Spatial Planning Project funded by WADNR. These datasets will ultimately contribute to the second phase of the project by providing baseline species data that will be used to develop maps that identify Important Marine Areas. These maps can be used to guide conservation efforts and the siting of energy development activities. The key products produced during Phase 1 include:

- 1) Winter 2011 seabird and marine mammal aerial survey encounter rates for the Pacific Coast of Oregon and Washington
- 2) Seabird and marine mammal encounter rates for the Pacific Coast of Washington derived from boat surveys conducted from 2009-2013
- 3) Seal and sea lion haul out locations and associated aerial survey count data collected from 1998-2013
- 4) The 2014 update to the Washington Seabird Catalog which contains locations surveyed for breeding seabirds along the outer coast of Washington and in Puget Sound
- 5) Sea otter point observations captured during aerial surveys during 2012 and 2013 as well as polygonal sea otter concentration areas

Seabird Ecology: Scott Pearson is one of several coauthors of a recently published manuscript in *Marine Pollution Bulletin*.

Thomas P. Good, Scott F. Pearson, Peter Hodumc, Daryle Boyd, Bernadita F. Anulacion, Gina M. Ylitalo, 2014. Persistent organic pollutants in forage fish prey of rhinoceros auklets breeding in Puget Sound and the northern California Current. *Marine Pollution Bulletin* (86) 367-378.

This paper was recently picked up in the local media (KUOW) and their summary is available at the following link: <http://kuow.org/topic/environment>

Scott also gave a talk recently at the West Coast Regional meeting of NCASI. The title of his talk in the Forest Wildlife Session: *Breeding Bird Responses to Experimental Manipulation of Riparian Buffer Width: Ten Years Post-Harvest*.

White-tailed Ptarmigan: Michael Schroeder (WDFW Research Scientist) attended the American Ornithologists Union Conference in Estes Park, Colorado. Mike was a co-author on a paper titled “Examining range-wide connectivity in white-tailed ptarmigan using genetic techniques.” The paper was presented at a symposium titled “Alpine Ornithology in 2014: ecological adaptations and challenges for birds breeding in mountain ecosystems.”

Grouse Species Status: Mike also was the senior author on a paper titled “Long term changes in distribution, abundance and elevation of grouse in western North America: Is climate change a factor?” The abstract follows.

Ten of the 12 grouse species in North America are found in montane regions, from the basins to the alpine. These grouse offer a unique opportunity to examine long-term anthropogenic impacts, including climate change, because they occupy a broad range of native ecosystems across many elevational gradients. Grouse are also non-migratory on a regional scale, thus making them dependent on connections between areas of potential occupancy. We focus on the distribution and abundance of 3 species including greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus*), and Franklin’s spruce grouse (*Falcapennis canadensis franklinii*). The greater sage-grouse, first described in print by Meriwether Lewis as the cock of the mountains, has encountered a dramatic reduction in both distribution and abundance with populations being lost disproportionately in the south and/or in relatively low elevation ecosystems. Similar trends/losses have been noted for the sharp-tailed grouse, despite the fact that it was historically adapted to higher elevational habitats than sage-grouse. For example, in the state of Washington, both species are increasingly found in isolated pockets of relatively high elevation habitat, often separated from each other by further distances than their usual dispersal movements. Franklin’s spruce grouse is found in high elevation conifer forests in portions of S British Columbia, SW Alberta, and NW USA. Populations have been dramatically impacted by the combined effects of pine beetles,

intensive forestry practices, and wildfire. Although it is difficult to be certain that any of these effects is directly related to climate change, habitat degradation at low elevations has resulted in an upshifting in the remaining habitat for all 3 species.

- C. Threatened and endangered fish and wildlife populations are recovered to healthy, self-sustaining levels.

Sage Grouse Recovery - On 3 October Michael Schroeder (WDFW Research Scientist) participated in a webex dealing with greater sage-grouse genetics. The meeting was hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and was also attended by Craig Hansen (USFWS), Bob Zink (University of Minnesota), Dave Smith (USGS), Holly Freifeld (USFWS), Jesus Maldonado (Smithsonian Center for Conservation and Evolutionary Genetics), Kate Norman (USFWS), Lief Wiechman (USFWS), Robert Gibson (University of Nebraska), Mevin Hooten (USGS), Steve Morey (USGS), Jonathan Cummings (USGS), and Sara Oyler-McCance (USGS). The group is being convened to discuss some controversial issues related to distinct population segments and the potential federal listing of greater sage-grouse. They are planning an in-person meeting in Fort Collins, Colorado later in October.

Michael Schroeder (WDFW Research Scientist) is a co-author on a manuscript titled “Age and sex identification from wings of sage-grouse”. The manuscript was accepted for publication in the Wildlife Society Bulletin.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Fishers: Biologist Jeff Lewis gave presentations at three public meetings in western Washington (29 Sep. in Sedro-Woolley, 30 Sep. in Seattle, and 1 Oct. in Packwood). These meetings were part of public outreach and input associated with the 30-day comment period for the environmental assessment for fisher reintroductions in North Cascades and Mt Rainier National Parks. While attendance for each meeting was low (a total of 10 people showed up for the meetings), there was substantial support and no opposition to the proposed reintroductions. The environmental assessment will be completed this fall once the comment period is complete (on 15 Oct.) and comments are incorporated into the final draft (by December). A finding of no significant impact (FONSI) by the regional NPS director is expected at that time as a result of the findings from the assessment.

Listing and Recovery Section Manager Penny Becker spoke with Kate Craig, Senior Wildlife Policy Analyst for the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations on 1 October to inquire about the availability of fishers for release in the southern Cascades this fall. We had expected to start reintroductions in the south Cascades this fall but assistance from the Ministry became uncertain in June following a Supreme Court decision that mandated more-comprehensive consultations between ministries and first nations groups on natural resource

projects. Penny was told that the Ministry will need more time to get in-house approvals (including the regional offices), to complete first nation consultations, and to resolve conflicts with the BC Trappers Association regarding the association's concerns for excessive logging of beetle-killed forests (and associated non-beetle killed forest) that support fishers in central BC. They will not be able to get this done in time for us to have a meaningful capture effort this fall and winter. Ms. Craig provided some fairly strong assurances that these hurdles will be addressed in plenty of time for us to start the south Cascades reintroduction next year (November 2015).

Note: On Tuesday, 7 October, the USFWS published the findings of the 1-year status review for the fisher in its west coast range (western Washington, western Oregon, and California). This will explain how the Service can propose the fisher to be listed in all or part of its west coast range.

Red Knot Migration Presentation: Natural Resource Scientist Joe Buchanan gave a presentation entitled "Red Knot migration along the Pacific Coast of the Americas" to the Grays Harbor monthly meeting. About 20 people were in attendance.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Black Butte Bighorn Sheep: District 3 Biologist Wik and Asst. District Biologist Vekasy participated in a conference call concerning new disease outbreak in Black Butte bighorn sheep (Blue Mountains). Washington State University has identified a new strain of Mycoplasma ovipneumonia within a group of eight remaining ewes along the Grande Ronde River. In order to prevent the spread of this new strain to other sheep in Hells Canyon during the rut, a capture is planned to take the remaining ewes in the herd to a research facility in South Dakota. If we are unsuccessful in capturing all eight of the ewes, the remaining animals will be euthanized. Wik spent the last half of the week trying to plan this capture on short notice and bring the logistical planning portion to fruition in 3-4 days. Vekasy is planning on taking the trailer with sheep to South Dakota State University.

Wildlife Areas

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Smoothing Iron Ridge winter canola field: Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice checked a 20 acre winter canola field twice this week and found it full of elk and mule deer both times. On Thursday, there were over 100 head of elk in the field plus 20 mule deer hanging with the elk. The canola is serving as a major attractant for elk and deer keeping them from wandering off the wildlife area in search of green food on private lands. The canola was seeded in early August without fertilizer. We may look into applying fertilizer in future plantings. A 7X7 bull was observed chasing smaller bulls away from his harem group.

Elk in winter canola at Smoothing Iron Ridge

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

Wildlife Management

Bighorn Sheep Harvests: Biologist Lowe pinned and collected samples from a ram harvested near Whitestone Rock in GMU 133. The ram was the second of two permitted harvests for the Lincoln Cliffs herd. Lowe also discussed the upcoming winter sheep capture with some locals present during the horn pinning.



Ram harvested from Lincoln Cliffs herd

Biologists Atamian and Lowe also inspected and pinned a ram harvested by the single permit holder for the Asotin herd in District 3. The ram was a radio-collared animal being monitored as part of the Hells Canyon Initiative. Especially noted was the size difference between the California subspecies (Lincoln Cliffs herd) and the Rocky Mountain subspecies (Asotin herd).



Ram harvested from Asotin herd

Private Lands/Access

Successful Private Lands Hunt: Biologist Earl received a call from a successful muzzleloader hunter on private property south of Pomeroy. The hunter, retired Officer Nelson, was very thankful for WDFW's access program and the help that he received from the landowners as well as WDFW staff. He had a great hunt and harvested a nice bull.

Bull harvested outside of the elk fence near Peola



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

Wildlife Management

Blue Mountains Deer and Elk Hazing Efforts: Conflict Specialist Rasley received a phone call thanking him for all his hazing efforts to keep the deer and elk out of the farmer's crops. They were able to cut a record 2700 lbs. to the acre of garbanzo beans and said "this is solely due to WDFW's hard work".

Wildlife Areas

Visit with Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area (WLA) neighboring rancher: WLA Manager Anderson and Region One Lands Agent Brian Trickel met at SLWA HQ with family members from a neighboring ranch. This ranching family has claimed an easement on a trail through WDFW property in the Tracy Rock area, between two pastures they use. WDFW contends there is no evidence found that there is an easement. During the meeting, the family expressed interest in trading a half section of land they own, which is not close to their main ranch and is an inholding between WDFW and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land. In return, WDFW would trade to them an equivalent dollar-value amount of land in the Tracy Rock area, including the parcel where the disputed trail exists. Trickel and the family will be pursuing this route for conflict solution. In the event this route doesn't pan out, an alternate option might be fencing off a very narrow (approximately 20 meter width) strip along the 1/2 mile long outer edge of WDFW land, through a very rocky area with no grouse habitat value, for the cattle to pass between their two pastures. In return, the operator would not run cattle on the disputed trail, and use it only for vehicles to haul supplies between pastures.

Private Lands/Access

WSU Lab: Supervisor McCanna taught two labs at Washington State University this week on trapping and hazing techniques for a wildlife ecology techniques class. McCanna has taught these two labs at WSU for seventeen years.

REGION 2

WOLVES

Chelan County Wolf: Specialist Bridges followed up on reports of wolves in the Mission unit. Found nothing to report.

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Northern Leopard Frog Reintroduction Feasibility: Biologist E. Duvuvuei finished a summary of this year's Northern Leopard Frog metamorph survey, DNA collection, and disease surveillance effort and distributed the summary to volunteers who helped with the project. Duvuvuei finished re-labeling samples after it was discovered that the ink was still not drying on the cryo-vials. Duvuvuei also reviewed and typed up meeting notes from the August conference call with WSU.

Burrowing Owl: Biologist O. Duvuvuei coordinated with Biologist Gallie from District 7 to release a burrowing owl that was recently rehabbed. The owl was found injured alongside the road and it was determined that the owl had a broken leg. After a couple months of rehab, the owl was ready for release into the wild. Biologists Duvuvuei and Finger, with assistance from retired Private Lands Biologist Fitzgerald, released the owl into an artificial burrow on Wednesday. The owl has been seen on multiple occasions since release leading us to believe it is



at ease with its new burrow. After releasing the owl, Duvuvuei and Fitzgerald drove the East Low Canal to identify potential areas in which to place approximately 30 additional artificial burrows this fall.



Top Left: Entrance to an artificial burrow with meal worms to provide a temporary food source; Top Right: Duvuvuei retrieving the burrowing owl from the transport box and preparing to release; Left: A burrowing owl that is eager to be released into its new burrow – Photos by Gretchen Fitzgerald

Wildlife Areas

Wolverine Research: After an epic off-trail hike into primeval forest in a remote part of the North Cascades, Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologist Rohrer recovered the carcass of our study animal Hobbes and his still functioning radio collar. We found the remains of the unfortunate young male about 450 feet from a large avalanche slide path. Trauma to the skull and transmitter box suggest Hobbes likely died as the result of a fall and/or avalanche in the middle of the winter when his satellite collar locations stopped moving. His resting location and the fact that his hind legs and pelvic girdle were missing suggests the body was moved post-mortem by some other carnivore. Along the way we found a tailed frog and discovered what we think may have been an Ent. On the lighter side with respect to wolverines...



Hobbes' damaged skull – Photo by John Rohrer (USFS)



Carcass of Hobbes the wolverine –Photo by Scott Fitkin

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

Wildlife Management

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Gallie recovered two GPS collar mortalities (both ewes) from the Manson herd. They have been on mortality signal for a while, and retrieval was delayed until weather cooled, due to the difficulty of access. While the collars were only a combined 1.2 miles off the road, they were also a combined 2400 vertical feet from the road. Few remains at the first site prevented any conclusion as to the source of mortality, but the second was typical of a cougar kill. It was located at the bottom of a very steep draw, partially cached in debris and mostly consumed on site.

The collar was “just down in this draw”. No problem. – Photo by J Gallie





Biologist Gallie was reminded that western rattlesnakes and bighorn sheep occupy the same steep rocky habitat – Photo by J Gallie

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

Private Lands/Access

Hunter Access: Biologist Dougherty spent the vast majority of time setting up and arranging a meeting for all Adams County hunter access cooperators. The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for the cooperators to meet and exchange contact information with WDFW Law Enforcement Officer Varyvoda as well as provide assistance with identifying areas that may have hunter issues (trespassing, poaching, etc). These extra steps are being taken to ensure that all WDFW hunting access cooperators are receiving additional enforcement as per their Hunter Access contracts. Plus it will help Officer Varyvoda get the chance to meet many of the Adams County residents at one time.

Deer depredation: Specialist Heilhecker worked on a deer damage complaint and DPCA for the Tonasket area. The orchardist stated he would be planting 150 fruit trees next year and expects to incur additional damage. Specialist Heilhecker told him he needed to build a fence to protect those trees. Specialist Bridges spoke/met with six landowners that are experiencing damage due to deer depredation.

Fencing: Specialist Heilhecker called the fencing supply company to inquire about the status of the wood post delivery. He is looking at filling a partial order but stated we may have to purchase the remaining posts from another vendor. Specialist Heilhecker talked to several wildlife fencing cost share agreement holders regarding materials and deer damage. She will schedule a site visit with one of the orchardists as soon as she gets her truck back from being repaired. Specialist Bridges has continued to work with CAMPS regarding the installation of three cattle guards in the Stemilt basin.



Sandhill Cranes in field near Frenchmen Reserve
– Photo by O. Duvuvuei

Elk depredation: Specialist Bridges continues to work with a land manager that received severe damage to his apple orchard. Licensed hunters for the current hunt # have been called and directed to the landowner and hunter success is high.



Cedar Ent? – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Tailed Frog – Photo by Scott Fitkin



Just another day in the office on Lake Chelan – Photo by J Gallie



Sprouting shrub in the Carlton Complex Fire area – Photo by Scott Fitkin

Observed Environment (weather, fire, etc.): Cooler temperatures have rolled into the valley, high 70's to low 80's. Fall hunting is in the air.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Buser used the ASV to touch up the edges of the 7-acre Pond as follow-up from the Marsh Master demo. The wetland is now being flooded up in preparation for the upcoming waterfowl seasons. Hopes are that inundating the crushed vegetation with water will help control undesirable vegetation that has established in the wetland due to a breach in the diking structure and an inability to properly manage water levels. The wetland will receive a chemical treatment next year to help reduce several noxious weed species.



The Marsh Master in action at the 7-acre Pond



The 7-acre pond before and after a visit from the Marsh Master

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart, Assistant Manager Hunt, and Tech Schnebly spent much of the week working on the cooperative WDFW/ Mule Deer Foundation bitterbrush restoration project. Many thanks go to Biologist Will Moore, who helped with GIS mapping of the planting sites. On Saturday, nearly 30 volunteers worked to clear dead grass and weeds on 20 acres, and plant 140

bitterbrush seedlings. The project area will be disked soon and seeded in November. The work sites were located on the properties of three homeowners in the Ellensburg Ranches area that were burned over during the Taylor Bridge fire of 2012.



Top Left: Restoration volunteer group; Top Right: Volunteers plant bitterbrush seedlings then install protective cages to minimize depredation; Right: Father and son volunteers wetting down burned grass piles



Wildlife Management

Ferruginous Hawks: Biologist Gregory met with Volunteer Baird to collect her observation forms from the past year and discuss the status of Ferruginous Hawks and future survey plans.

Burrowing Owls: Biologist Gregory received updated information on two burrowing owls that are wearing GPS transmitters. One was captured in Pasco in 2013 and the other on the Yakima Training Center (YTC) in 2014. The map below depicts their movements over the last 2 weeks. The owl from the YTC (in red below) has started shifting her movements to the south which could indicate the start of migration. Last year the owl from Pasco (in yellow below) traveled to the Channel Islands in California for the winter. This year she has moved a bit east from her nest location but has not yet started migrating.

Recent movements of two burrowing owls marked with GPS transmitters near the Tri-Cities

Biologist Gregory assisted members of the Global Owl Project in their effort to “gopher proof” artificial burrows on the Umatilla Depot. Each burrow was checked before excavation and fortunately an unbanded owl was captured at one site. After close inspection it was decided that it was a juvenile and a male.





A young male burrowing owl

Diversity: Biologist Gregory completed and submitted an interim State Wildlife Grant report for survey/management activities for burrowing owls and white pelicans.

Colockum Bull Elk Study: Two collared bulls were harvested recently and Biologist Moore worked to collect those collars from the hunters. This brings the total number of known mortalities to 4 for 2014. We still have multiple collars failing to update their GPS data to the website

and their status will need to be determined, if possible, by a fixed-wing flight.

Teanaway Wolves: Biologist Moore checked in one day with the Martinez Sheep Operation. The herd is slowly moving to the south out of the forest towards more agricultural areas, and all is going well so far. The VHF beacon of the collared wolves was not located in the vicinity of the sheep operation during Moore's visit.

Cooperative WDFW and Mule Deer Foundation Restoration: Biologist Moore worked with LT Murray Wildlife Area Manager Winegeart to develop and install restoration sites in the burned area of the Taylor Bridge Fire. The restoration effort should have a positive effect on the 22 acres within the burn.

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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Manager Lopushinsky attended the evening Naneum Ridge to Columbia River Recreation Plan public meeting in Wenatchee. About 30 members of the public attended to look at the draft plan.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart attended one of two Naneum Rec Plan public meetings. The Ellensburg meeting was attended by roughly 25 people. Most attendees were familiar with the plan and had only general questions.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: During the week, Manager Huffman talked with numerous hunters and coordinated with ADA hunters who drew tags for the ADA hunter access roads on the Oak Creek WA.

Manager Huffman prepared the visitor's center to be open over the weekend for hunter information. Wildlife Education Corps volunteers staffed the Visitor's Center Friday through Sunday to answer questions and provide maps of the wildlife area.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to assist LHP cooperators with coordinating and scheduling elk hunts near Hanford. One very happy youth state hunter harvested a nice 6x6 bull elk.



Youth hunter with his harvest



Happy youth hunter conducting landowner relations

Biologist Stutzman spoke to an absentee landowner about her expired Franklin County FFTH agreement. After discussing it, she agreed to re-enroll her nearly 3000 acres in the program. The property, in north east Franklin County, provides some of the highest quality mule deer hunting access in the county.

Biologist Moore was part of a team of WDFW and DNR staff who worked two public meetings to discuss the draft plan in Ellensburg and Wenatchee. Meeting attendance was good at both locations.

Numerous general hunters and Master Hunters called Specialist Wetzel to inquire about hunting options in the 3911 and 3912. Several hunters called and were confused about tag requirements.

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 Specialist Hand received and responded to a deer damage report near Patterson along the Columbia River. Over 30 young cherry trees have been damaged either by browsing or rubbing by buck deer. Non-lethal strategies (gas cannons and hazing) will be implemented as

well as hunting during general seasons and special permit hunts. Follow up this week will include setting up a trail camera to determine how many deer are utilizing the area and the timing of their presence on the property.



Rubbed cherry tree

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored harvest of DPP permits in Elk Area 3721. Two antlerless and one spike bull elk were taken this past week on DPP permits. Harvest since the August 1 opener is 42 antlerless and 6 spike bull elk.

Wolf Activities

Biologist Moore, Specialist Wetzels, and Range Rider McBride again spent several days this week trying to establish wolf and sheep locations and determine how close the Teanaway pups are to sheep grazing areas. One lamb mortality was reported Monday, which had occurred on Thursday or Friday night. The sheep herder insists a cougar killed the lamb but it will be investigated to verify what may have occurred. The sheep are again changing locations this week to an area east of the pup loafing area, which will hopefully decrease the probability of interaction.

Range Rider McBride called to report a technical problem with the RAG box. A new battery and fuses were provided Monday to try to fix the issue.

Range Rider Johnson patrolled areas of the Teanaway Cattle lease. Cattle are starting to move down into the riparian areas in anticipation of the roundups that will begin soon.

Specialist Wetzels spent a day following up on new wolf sightings and reports in the Naneum.

Pre-Thanksgiving Activities

A landowner near Ellensburg called again to report problem turkeys in her yard. The turkeys were hazed but returned and “fouled” the landowners deck.



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

Wildlife Areas

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Sak was one of three WDFW staff recognized this past week with a letter of commendation from WSU's Integrated Weed Control Project for repeatedly going above and beyond in partnering with WSU to implement bio-control on WDFW Wildlife Areas. Congratulations Robby!

NRT Medina spent one day on the rented excavator cleaning the inlet for the Johnson wetland. Medina maintained infrastructure by greasing bearings on both wetland pumps, continued to maintain flow through Giffin Lake, and set beaver traps around two water control structures.

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman worked with the owners of Horseshoe Bend quarry on accessing the wildlife area through their gate. They gave permission for access for wildlife area staff and enforcement. Huffman provided copies of the key to the Mud Lake gate to enforcement.

Manager Huffman coordinated with Wildlife Education Corps volunteers to clean the displays in the visitor's center following a professional cleaning and spider control from an exterminating company.

Manager Huffman began reviewing draft contract specifications for the Oak Creek timber sale. The plan is to get the bid package out this month so that potential contractors have time to complete field review before winter.

Manager Huffman coordinated with DNR and TNC Forester Dahlgreen on issues with the Oak Creek FPA. DNR was reviewing the FPA and discovered that 2 sections were in areas modeled with geologic instability. It is likely that on the ground, review will show that the area is stable. A site visit is set up with the DNR geologist this coming week.

Manager Huffman met with Research Analyst Rebecca Connolly from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC). Connolly is working on a study on the economic impact of public lands, and Oak Creek was selected as a study site. Huffman provided Connolly with history of the wildlife area and types of uses, etc. This information will be given to economists at Washington State University who will be modeling the project.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Manager Winegeart and Real Estate Manager Hendrix met with members of the Campbell family to discuss the potential for WDFW to purchase their property. The Campbells signed a Letter of Intent, and WDFW will now work on scheduling a property appraisal.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Colockum staff had several reports this week of livestock down on West Bar. Grant County PUD was especially concerned about their possible impact to cultural

sites exposed by the Wanapum Reservoir drawdown. Potential owners of the animals were advised but this will be a difficult and time consuming effort to remove them.

Manager Lopushinsky participated in a conference call on the Tarpiscan Road washouts and the access issues related to the Carr/Harden property.

Colockum staff worked on clean up around the game reserve cabin. We hauled several loads of old fence materials and wire off the hill for disposal. Colockum staff also removed the emergency restriction signs on the wildlife area related to summer fire danger.

Wildlife Management

Private lands Biologist Stutzman finished his whole-farm conservation plan and sent it off to NRCS staff in Spokane to be certified. Stutzman met with NRCS agronomist Kevin Davis on Tuesday to go through the plan and make sure all of the required elements were in place. Pending certification, Stutzman will be a ‘basic planner’ in the eyes of NRCS.

Stutzman also attended the NRCS south-central team’s monthly team meeting. District Conservationist Amanda Ettestad invited Stutzman to the meeting, which was attended by NRCS staff from Benton, Yakima, and Klickitat counties, to give an update on how WDFW can assist with Farm Bill programs that have a wildlife objective, including CRP, EQIP, and SGI.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Lowland Pika Project Report: Assistant District Biologist Cyra and District Biologist Milner performed a late season food cache/latrine search at the locations of this year’s pika sightings. Only one cache was located though it is becoming clear that due to the low elevation that food caching may not be necessary at this location. Several pika detections were also obtained. Visits will continue to finish the search and to begin to document habitat structure.

Biologist Tom Cyra surveying pika habitat.





Grazed salal leaves in a Pika talus slope are shown.

San Juan Island Species of Greatest Conservation Need: Bio Milner provided GIS support for a citizen science project with Sharp-tailed snakes on San Juan Island. Biologist Milner met with staff from the San Juan Island Land Bank and San Juan Islands National Park to re-group on plans for a citizen science based snake survey. The

group also checked cover boards placed at Youngs Hill within the National Park.

As part of the sharp-tailed snake survey effort in Region 4, a volunteer checks a shingle placed near large woody debris.

Mountain Goat Data Support: Bio Cyra provided data analysis of the recently completed mountain goat aerial surveys for use in upcoming meetings with stakeholders.

Winter Aerial Surveys Detection

Study: Bio Cyra continued discussions with Marine Waterfowl Specialist Evenson and Asst. District Biologist Murphie concerning timing and scheduling of USFWS funded detectability surveys this winter. These surveys would be an extension of our earlier detectability surveys, this time utilizing the USFWS Kodiak aircraft.



Species of Greatest Need Fact Sheets: Biologist Milner completed the Shaw Island vole fact sheet and began American pika.

Wildlife Management Consultation/Permitting Requests; Municipal, Private Utilities, other: Biologist Anderson continued work and review for requests of assistance regarding species or habitat management consultation for urban wildlife given construction or land-use alteration work, per local municipal code requirements to work with WDFW. Most involve eagle nest location/activity status, osprey nest removal, heron management, biodiversity areas and corridors, and big game use areas adjacent to the rural/exurban fringe of King County. More on WDFW Priority Habitat and Species Recommendations and how WDFW provides assistance at the local and broader planning levels can be found here: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Werkhoven Dairy to complete the corn harvest for the Crescent Unit. A series of staggered corn rows will be retained in each of the fields for wildlife forage and cover.



Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Sno-Valley Farms to discuss harvest plans for the east lobe of the Unit. Due to wet weather and a shortage of haul-trucks, a portion of the corn still needs to be harvested. Sno-Valley reduced the impact to hunters by slicing through the largest portions of the fields creating openings.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that Frohning Dairy completed the corn harvest this past week. Manager Boehm met with Wild Fish Conservancy (WFC) to investigate high water levels on a neighboring property. The investigation revealed a blocked channel below the pump house is the likely cause. WFC will return next week to remove the obstruction.

Stillwater Unit: : Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that Frohning Dairy has completed corn harvest at the Stillwater Unit. Staggered corn rows and barley plots were retained for wildlife forage and cover.

Nooksack Unit Corn Harvest: The agricultural lessee harvested the silage corn from the Nooksack unit cornfield. Of the 100 acres of corn planted, he left at least ten acres standing for winter waterfowl feeding. Manager Kessler will use a GPS and measure the exact amount left this week.

Samish Unit: Resource Specialist Meis and Resource Tech Cosgrove posted ten Property Boundary signs along the north boundary of the Samish Unit. In addition, they closed water control structures and blocked ditches on north drainage areas to hold water on the site for waterfowl season.

Hunt Season Prep: Resource Specialist Meis and Resource Tech Cosgrove posted Safety Zone buoys in the intertidal areas at the Headquarters Unit, updated posted maps and added an additional location at the car-top boat launch showing Headquarters Safety Zone, and replaced maps and other informational materials (hunting hours, waterfowl season dates, etc.) at Headquarters and Fir Island Farms Reserve Units. Meis designed and built the kiosk for the Samish hunter survey cards. The kiosk is to be installed next week. Cosgrove mowed and weeded parking areas, driveways, and fence lines at the Headquarters, Fir Island Farms Reserve, and Jensen Units.

The number and diversity of waterfowl are on the increase. Early flocks are starting to arrive; snow geese and white-fronted geese have been observed in the area and waterfowl are beginning to form larger flocks.

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Wildlife Area Manager Rotton had a conference call meeting with Ducks Unlimited to discuss the upcoming activity schedule for the project. The project timeline was slightly adjusted to accommodate a time extension for the hydrodynamic model report. WDFW and the Stakeholder Advisory Committee had originally planned on meeting to discuss the modeling report in November, but now that meeting will take place in January. There are several project activities that will still advance between now and January that are not dependent upon modeling results, including advancement of baseline monitoring plans.



Leque Island

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project

(PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Regional Director Bob Everitt met to finalize plans to inform County and City Commissions and Councils of upcoming PSNERP activities. Brokaw then mailed letters and an information sheet to each County

Commission and City Council contact. The letters provide an overview of PSNERP and outline the next steps in the project, including review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and advancement to the next design phase.

Fir Island Farm Monitoring and Adaptive Management: Projects Coordinator Brokaw visited the site to replace two malfunctioning water quality monitoring devices and coordinated return of three devices to the manufacturer for repair or replacement. Additionally, Brokaw worked on a grant application to the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program (ESRP) to fund post project monitoring and adaptive management at the Fir Island Farm Restoration site. WDFW is seeking funding to monitor surface and groundwater quality and drainage, invasive plants, native marsh vegetation, sediment accretion and erosion, channel establishment, and dike settlement and erosion.

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

Wildlife Management

Pheasant Hunting Season: The Pheasant Hunting season continued with a good turnout on all of the three release sites, including Lake Terrell, Intalco, and BP. Manager Kessler and volunteers released a total of 400 pheasants throughout the week. Manager Kessler coordinated

with the Intalco land managers on a hunter firing a shotgun close to one of the unit boundaries. Resource Specialist Meis assisted with pheasant delivery on Friday at Headquarters

Disabled Hunter Hunting Access: Manager Kessler coordinated with our ADA Program Manager on access for a disabled hunter on the Lake Terrell Unit. The hunter will be allowed to use an ATV to pheasant hunt on the unit. Manager Kessler worked on the map of what areas he will be allowed to hunt in.

Possible Wildlife Area Property Addition: Manager Kessler met onsite with Lands Agent Kye Iris and a local property owner to assess a possible property purchase for the wildlife area. The five acre property is river front property on the west side of the Nooksack River.

Wildlife Cameras: Biologist Anderson coordinated internally and with property owners and City of Seattle Parks staff regarding the WDFW desire to remove camera equipment from Seattle property. This is the Kiwanis Ravine heron cam. Herons abandoned this site in 2013 and continue just downhill from the historic nesting area.

Wildlife Areas

Family Pheasant Hunt – Lake Terrell

Skagit Headquarters: Resource Tech Cosgrove completed routine maintenance on the John Deere 5300 tractor and mower in preparation for use by Private Lands, Access Area, and Wildlife Area staff in the coming weeks leading up to the waterfowl season opener. Manager Rotton coordinated the dredge spoil removal project, dike mowing on the Island Unit, pheasant release volunteers, and final hunting season preparations.



Manager Rotton hosted a pre-construction meeting with CAMP project engineer Ray Berg, Project Managers from Interwest Construction, and representatives from Dike District #22. The group walked the site and discussed the timing of the new pump station project and public access items. The final construction timeline has not been completed but site prep work could begin early to mid- November.

Fir Island Farms: Manager Rotton began reviewing proposed pump station and drainage infrastructure agreements for the Fir Island Farms restoration project. Staff coordinated with Hayton Farms staff on the final cutting of the grass and monitored planting of cover crop on the site. Rotton has photos of the planting completed to date.

Johnson DeBay's Slough Reserve: Staff completed mowing and clearing work completed on the Hunt Unit. Washington Waterfowl Association volunteers completed blind clearing and

installation on site the previous weekend. Manager Rotton contacted the share crop farmer regarding the harvest schedule. The corn has been completed on the Reserve portion of the property and another cutting is scheduled on the alfalfa on the site.

Samish Unit Enhancement Project Permitting Status: WA Dept. of Ecology determined that no permit is needed from their agency because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is not requiring a federal permit for the project. Additionally, the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination of Non-Significance was finalized and no comments were received. The next step for permitting this project is to submit applications to Skagit County for local permits.

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

Wildlife Management

Respond to public: Assistant District Biologist Cyra performed a field visit to a bald eagle nest location on Whidbey Island. A landowner who is seeking permits for a remodeling project claims the nest blew out in 2006. Since the delisting of the eagle the USFWS has assumed responsibility for management, but WDFW maintains the database used by the USFWS and counties. With the last comprehensive aerial survey of nesting eagles performed in 2005, nearly a decade ago, the database is very out of date and results in issues of this type occurring. The nest was confirmed as no longer present and information was relayed to Olympia.

Wildlife Program Wildlife Damage support: Assistant District Biologist Cyra assisted District Biologist Smith and Technician Cogdal with the temporary fencing of a potato field in Skagit County to deter damage pre-harvest due to elk presence.



Electrified fencing with fladry on a potato field in Skagit County.

Region 4 Ungulate

Damage: Biologist Smith responded to calls regarding deer and elk damage from residents of King, Island, and Skagit counties. Non-lethal measures to

deter deer and elk from entering properties were discussed, including fencing options. Smith, Biologist Cyra, and Tech Cogdal installed a temporary electric fladry elk exclusion fence on a ~30 acre property in Skagit County to protect a potato crop from damage. Smith also monitored other temporary fences protecting crops from elk damage in areas of Skagit and King Counties.

Region 4 2014 Hunts: District staff responded to multiple members of the hunting community inquiring about upcoming hunting seasons. Answers to most common hunt questions are clearly

outlined in the WDFW Big Game Hunting Season Pamphlet. <http://wdfw.wa.gov/hunting/regulations/>

Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary: Biologist Anderson is working with Customer Service Specialist Wilson to approach the National Wildlife Federation regarding data needs and discrepancies. Anderson is compiling and organizing current science and informational materials to initiate updates to this program here in the fall and winter.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

Hunter Education Coordinator Conducts Teaching Team Evaluations: Hunter education coordinator Steven Dazey conducted teaching team evaluations for three of the teams in Region 4 this week. Teaching team evaluations insure that we are able to maintain a high standard in the delivery of the hunter education program by the certified volunteer hunter education instructors. Hunter education division policies ask that each team be evaluated at least once every two years. This also is a good opportunity to meet with the teams and bring them up to speed on new department policies and initiatives. Monday, HE Coordinator Dazey evaluated the team that is led by David Vanderhoek and taught at Lynden Middle School.



Instructor David Vanderhoek explains the parts of a rifle. Students studying their student manuals during instruction



Instructor Paul Farmer takes students through a field course that presents the students with different scenarios

Live fire is an optional part of the hunter education class. Students at Custer Fire Dept. issue .223 rifles on the range





Instructors Anderson and Wilson explain the actions and parts of different firearms to the students

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

Wildlife Management

Radio Communications: Assistant District Biologist Cyra continued to provide radio support to Program staff.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Wildlife Areas: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm continues to coordinate with WDFW Master Hunters and citizen volunteers to provide a pheasant release team. Each of the Units received two releases in preparation for the season opener. Manager Boehm states that coordinating efforts with Steve Dazey, the Region 4 Hunter Education and Volunteer Coordinator has been a huge success. Manager Boehm reports that electrical power has been restored to the barn and net pen this past week. A blown transformer fuse was the likely cause and Puget Sound Energy responded to the request for repair.

Data QA/QC and training: Biologist Anderson continues work to QA/QC amphibian citizen science survey data as it comes in and in comparison to the pilot “WDFW Citizen Observation Reporting website and phone application” that launched in January of this year on the WDFW website. There are some discrepancies both with user reporting and software/phone compatibility issues. Anderson will be removing erroneous data and examining remaining data to correct or confirm proper entry while compiling all of this. Anderson is conducting initial data scrubbing on acoustic bat data to remove bunk files and initiate first-round analysis of remaining files.

Hunter Education/Volunteer Coordination

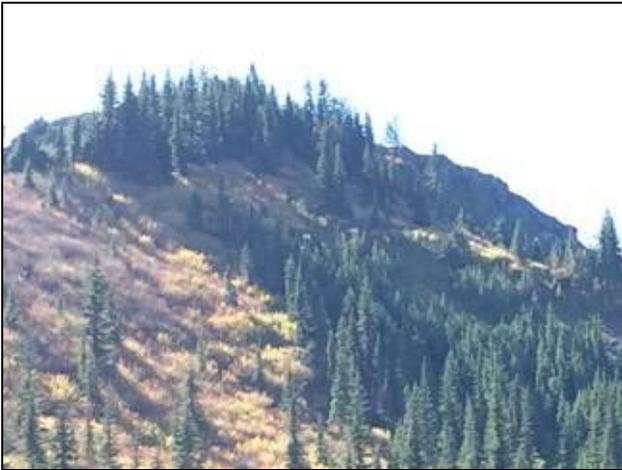
Master Hunters Advisory Group. Volunteer coordinator Steven Dazey attended the Master Hunter Advisory Group meeting in Ellensburg on Friday. Topics covered included CERVIS reporting for master hunters volunteer hours, volunteer opportunities, as well as other presentations of concern to the master hunters of Washington.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management:

Jumbo Peak Mountain Goat Survey: Biologist Bergh joined Gifford Pinchot National Forest staff for the annual Jumbo Peak mountain goat survey. A total of 20 goats were seen, with 14 of those on Jumbo Peak. Weather was sunny and warm during the survey and vegetation in the area was dry.



Jumbo Peak – Gifford Pinchot National Forest and Mountain Goat – Photo by Tom Kogut

Western Pond Turtle Habitat Enhancement Project: Biologist Anderson conducted a site visit to the Beacon Rock pond turtle wetland restoration site. This fall's shoreline hydro seeding completes the last of the major activity of the three year wetland mitigation project conducted in cooperation with Washington State Parks, Dept of Transportation, and Fish and Wildlife. Primary habitat enhancements included construction of five acres of seasonal wetland, shrub plantings, placement of basking logs, invasive plant removal, and native grass plantings.



Beacon Rock Western Pond Turtle Habitat Mitigation Project



Wetland Development, Hydro Seeding and Shrub Plantings

Cascade Carnivore Scat Transects: Biologist Stephens and Conflict Specialist McDonald each completed a scat transect survey for the Cascades Carnivore Project. The project collects data to assess long-term trends of target carnivore species, including the Cascade red fox, Wolverine, and Gray Wolf. The transects were in Indian Heaven Wilderness, and several scat specimens were collected for genetic and diet analysis. The Cascade Carnivore project has been awarded ALEA grant funds to purchase equipment and reimburse volunteers for mileage costs associated with travel for monitoring camera stations, snow-tracking, and conducting trail surveys.

Mt St Helens Wildlife Area

Cedar Creek Unit: Technician Sample began forage enhancement work on the Cedar Creek Unit of Mt St Helens Wildlife Area, including disking, harrowing, and broadcast seeding a ‘test strip’ of ground located in the north field of the unit. This area has not been previously worked up for several years, so it was unknown how long it would take and how much effort was needed to seed even a small area. A total area of 40’x 100’ was seeded with wheat and a



pasture grass seed mix. Further enhancement is planned for the spring.

Cedar Creek Forage Enhancement

Mt. St. Helens Scotch Broom

Control: Approximately 70 acres of scotch broom was aerial sprayed this past week on the Mudflow Unit of the Mt St Helens Wildlife Area. Wildlife Area staff assisted the flight crew with reconnaissance, mixing of herbicides,

and transferring water to the batch truck. This application hopefully controlled the last of the large dense stands on the area that cannot be accessed by ground equipment. Some of the areas that were sprayed will be seeded with a grass and clover mix and planted with trees next spring to reduce the chances of scotch broom repopulating the sites. A special thank you goes to Kyle of Essential Flight Ops for safely conducting the aerial application.



Mt St Helens Wildlife Area Habitat Enhancement Project

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

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Duck Blind Construction at Shillapoo: Members of the Lower Columbia Chapter of the Washington Waterfowl Association (WWA) along with Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hand completed the installation of three new duck blinds on Saturday. This was the fourth and final work party by WWA members to construct and install five new blinds on the Shillapoo Wildlife Area this year. The materials were purchased through funding by the state duck stamp and all labor was volunteered by WWA members, totaling more than 250 hours. A special thank you to the Lower Columbia Chapter for their help as construction of these hunting blinds would not have been possible without them.



Washington Waterfowl Association Members

Register to Hunt Kiosk: The “Register to Hunt” kiosk located on Columbia Land Trust Devil’s Elbow property, used primarily by hunters during waterfowl seasons, was recently updated by WDFW Private Lands staff. A property boundary map was installed and new “Recreational User Registration” cards were designed to include all public use, not limited to just hunters, and added to the kiosk box. The registration cards are filled out by any person recreating on the property with name and address as well as harvest information from those who are hunting and then added to the box to be collected by the Columbia Land Trust.



Birdfest: The annual event Birdfest took place this weekend in Ridgefield. Events included bus tours around the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge, guided nature walks, bluegrass music, and educational activities centered on Native American culture at the Cathlapotle Plankhouse. Biologist Stephens assisted with a tour on the Ridgefield wildlife refuge where visitors observed around 700 sandhill cranes coming in to roost in a wetland for the evening. Stephens also worked at a table shared by WDFW and USFWS answering a variety of questions about wildlife and handing out informational brochures and posters.



Birdfest participants at Sandhill Crane Roost Watch

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

Wildlife Conflict:

Conflict Specialist Conklin responded to three cougar sightings this week. One was in West Cowlitz County, and she installed a trail cam to possibly capture the cougar activity. The other two were in Kalama and the Silver Lake area. Conklin gave advice about basic safety precautions and getting rid of attractants. In one case she had to advise the land owners to lock up their goats, sheep, and chickens, which were all free roaming.

Conflict Specialist Conklin worked with three land owners in the South Rainier Unit in Randle. The land owners' properties connect and they have agreed to allow a damage pool master hunter to hunt all three properties. Conklin will rotate three master hunters through the properties during the winter months to deter elk damage on the fields.

Conflict Specialist McDonald visited a Goldendale farm and nursery with deer damage. The deer are jumping a 6-foot-tall woven wire fence and breaking down gates to get into green houses and to get to young fruit trees. Deer are even pushing cracked windows open and jumping into sheds. Deer broke into a greenhouse one night which turned into



Klickitat deer associated with damage

chaos when the owner's dog chased the deer around inside. The nursery will add height to their fences with barbed wire. A master hunter and general season hunters will be scheduled to hunt the property. Critter gitters and scarecrow sprinklers will be used in the spring when the most damage occurs.

Access

Lacamas Ramp Repairs: Access staff Spangler and Rhodes conducted repairs on the Lacamas Lake Ramp. One load of gravel was placed on the south ramp with an additional 4 more loads needed.

Lacamas Lake Boat Ramp Repairs

Shillapoo and Mt St Helens Wildlife

Area New Assistant Manager: Tyler Hand joined the agency this past week as the new Assistant Manager for the Shillapoo and Mt St Helens Wildlife Area Complex. Tyler spent three years in the US marine Corps gaining valuable knowledge and leadership skills before earning his bachelor degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Tennessee Technological University. After that he worked in Alaska and North Dakota for the USFWS conducting waterfowl surveys and managing wetland systems. Please welcome Tyler to the Region 5 Wildlife Program Team.



Tyler Hand

REGION 6

NO REPORT SUBMITTED