

Wildlife Program

Week of May 18 – May 24, 2015

WOLF ACTIVITIES

Region 2 Wolf Activities

Okanogan Wolf Monitoring: Biologist Heinlen checked two remote cameras deployed after a reported sighting of large canine tracks two weeks ago in GMU 239. One camera was placed over the tracks while the other was in the vicinity. The cameras captured photos of mule and white-tailed deer, moose, bobcat, black bear, ravens, and coyotes, but no wolves. Both cameras were left in the same locations (plus a third camera was deployed in the vicinity) to continue monitoring this area.



Coyote and Black Bear – Photos by WDFW Remote Camera

Region 3 Wolf Activities

Wolves: Biologist Bernatowicz received a call from a person near Mabton reporting an unusual canid. The reporting party wasn't sure on ID, but didn't think it was a coyote and wondered if it was possible it was a wolf. No pictures are available. Enforcement was contacted to see if there had been other reports in the area.

WILDLIFE DIVERSITY DIVISION

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Western Gray Squirrel: Citizen Science Coordinator Wendy Connally worked with Research Scientist Matt Vander Haegen to deliver a western gray squirrel rangewide survey workshop to Wildlife District Biologists and Assistant District Biologists Scott Fitkin and Jeff Heinlen (Region 2, District 6), and Dave Volsen and Jon Gallie (Region 2 District 7). The workshop included our conservation partners at Pacific Biodiversity Institute who are coordinating a citizen science effort to conduct surveys in the Methow Valley.

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Areas

WT Wooten WA – Food Plot: NRW2 Christian tilled and planted the two food plots on the Hartsock Unit. One was planted with red clover and the other was planted with a seed mix donated by Pheasants Forever.

NRW2 Christian planting red clover in the food plot on the Hartsock Unit



REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Wildlife Management

Common Loon: Biologist Heinlen surveyed Crawfish Lake, finding a nesting pair of common loons on the lake. One adult was on the artificial platform incubating eggs while the other adult was on the lake foraging. This is the third time common loons have been documented nesting on Crawfish Lake since 2012. This is also the second common loon nest documented in District 6 so far this year. Monitoring of common loon nests will continue throughout the season to determine nest success and productivity.

Sharp-tailed grouse: Lek counts and searches have been completed for the season. The total high count from all the leks was 136 males. This is a large increase over last year's total count of 108. Similar to sage grouse, much of the increase was due to finding two new leks, and relocating two other known leks that were not detected last year. When looking at leks counted

in consecutive years to gauge the change in the breeding population, there is was no change in lek attendance this year (108 birds in both this and last year). We have now relocated three of the four leks vacated by the 2012 Leahy-Barker fire (one was nearly a mile from the previous spot). Birds were likely redistributed on the land scape by the fire, but now as habitat recovers, two of these leks contain more birds then they did pre-fire.

Pygmy Rabbit Capture/Release Activities: The team conducted three capture/release events this week. On Saturday we had an event with The Nature Conservancy at Beezley Hills. There was an excellent turnout and we were also able to install artificial burrows at the new release sites. Later in the week we trapped at Sagebrush Flat (SBF) and again at Beezley Hills. We had the assistance of Private Lands Biologist Comstock, volunteers Freeman and Sherrill Keller, and students and staff from the Wenatchee Tech Center. Capture and release numbers will come next week. The big news for this trap week is that we began to release rabbits into the wild at Beezley Hills. Biologist Gallie assisted Biologist Wisniewski and the team in conducting pygmy rabbit kit captures from the Beezely and Large breeding enclosures. They then released the kits into the wild release area. There continues to be minimal production at the Large breeding enclosure, even with an additional “flush” of younger kits this week. The Beezley breeding enclosure continues to be very productive with new numerous new kits each time we capture.

Mountain Goat: Biologist Gallie has been working with biologists from District 8 on a collaborative volunteer mountain goat survey to be conducted in June. The main participant will be the Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance, with support from other local sportsman’s groups. Gallie has been establishing hiking routes (and other logistics) in portions of the Alpine Lakes Wilderness in District 7 where we do not have good information on goat numbers or distribution. While certain portions of this wilderness have been consistently surveyed during winter (totaling 120 goats in those areas), this effort will fill in the gaps of more difficult to reach areas and provide more guidance for future aerial surveys and consideration for permit hunting.

Wildlife Areas

Methow Forest Rehabilitation Project: Forester Jamie Bass began working with Department Archaeologist Katherine Kelly to design the contract and begin the process for the cultural resource survey needed for this year’s timber thinning operation. Bass did background research on existing cultural resource surveys and sites existing in the sale area to aid the contract process. In addition, Kelly and Bass discussed how to best award or bid the contract. Bass worked with Department Forester Rod Pfeifle to also begin the process for road work and maintenance that would be required for the sale. This work will need to be done in September/October before the snows and frozen ground make road work difficult to impossible. They also need to be done in conjunction with possible pre-commercial thinning operations. Bass contacted USFS road engineers who issue permits for USFS haul roads to discuss possible permitting needs and recreational limitations for winter hauling. Forester Bass responded to comments on the project proposal draft from DFW biologists who were in favor of existing proposed fish and wildlife disturbance mitigations measures. USFS wildlife biologist Kent Woodruff also gave recommendations for limiting disturbance to beaver relocation points where a seasonal crew is relocating problem beavers onto the wildlife area. Bass will be scheduling field trips for interested parties in the coming months. Finally, Bass contacted fire history and ecology

specialists from the USFS PNW research station to schedule a trip or inquire about existing fire history studies in the valley. It is hoped that insight from these specialists will aid the effort to create both resilient and fire-adapted forests with this project.

Supplemental Feed Route Project: Assistant Manager Bechtold has been spending the majority of the past several weeks preparing for and working with a WCC crew on various projects throughout the Gloyd Seeps Unit. Over an eight-day stretch, the crew was able to remove 1.5 miles of interior fence, treat roughly 50 acres for perennial pepperweed, and treat Russian olive in roughly 3.5 acres of mature tree/shrub rows, as well as on a ten-acre site in the Willow Lake area.



WCC crew treating pepperweed along the heavily-used road corridor out to Mansfield Pond



Shrub row prior to Russian olive treatment and removal

Shrub row following Russian olive treatment and removal

Private Lands/Access

Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitat Restoration:

Private Lands Biologist Braaten visited a habitat restoration site funded by the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) in 2009 in Douglas County. Private Lands Biologist Braaten is looking at expanding and planning additional projects with available NRCS funds.





2010



2015

Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI): During drought years, water is more important to livestock and wildlife. Private Lands Biologist Braaten sees opportunities for landowners to enroll in federal programs that could assist them with watering facilities that would be more efficient and less damaging to the environment. This week, another opportunity came along and Private Lands Biologist Braaten will be recommending to the landowner and SGI staff that these opportunities still exist. Perfect example below:



Cattle watering in wetland vs. solar powered pump and well provided by grant money

Biocontrol Insect Collection: Private Lands Biologist Braaten continues to collect more *Mecinus janthinus* and place it in SAFE fields needing introductions that have Dalmatian toadflax. Private Lands Biologist Braaten was also contacted by a landowner wanting to start a commercial outlet for Dalmatian toadflax. Private Lands Biologist Braaten provided the landowner with Gary Piper's (WSU entomologist) contact info for further information.



Insect Collection – Photos by Eric Braaten, WDFW

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

Wildlife Management

Duncan Fire Closure: Biologist Volsen met with USFS District Ranger Flanagan to discuss the area closure resulting from the Duncan Fire in the upper Entiat drainage. The Closure Area boundary has been modified slightly, and those interested in how the closure might affect plans should contact the Entiat Ranger District for more information. The Entiat Ranger District will be having an open house meeting to answer questions related to the fire and the closure on June 1, 2015, at the Entiat Grange. Biologist Volsen will be attending the meeting to answer questions about hunting and access in the surrounding GMUs.

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

Wildlife Areas

Tonasket Elementary 4th Grade Field Trip: The Sinlahekin Wildlife Area hosted the Tonasket Elementary School’s 4th grade class to discuss wildlife and management of the area. Manager Haug was assisted by WADNR Forester Andrew Townsend and WDFW Enforcement Officer Troy McCormick. The students learned a great deal regarding local wildlife and fire history during their visit. The trip was funded by a grant awarded to the school’s STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program.



WDFW Officer Troy McCormick discusses local wildlife with students (left). Manager Haug and DNR Forester Townsend discuss local resource management with elementary school students (right) – Photos by Parker Haug

Brewster Middle School 6th Grade Hike: Manager Haug led a hike for the Brewster 6th Grade class on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area as part of their annual campout in Conconully. Groups hiked from Conners Lake to Forde Lake and back again while discussing flora and fauna on the wildlife area and various management activities.

Brewster 6th Grade students running up the trail from Conners Lake – Photo by Justin Haug





Mule Deer in Douglas County – Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW



Carlton Complex Fire within the Chiliwist Wildlife Area – Photo by Heinlen

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

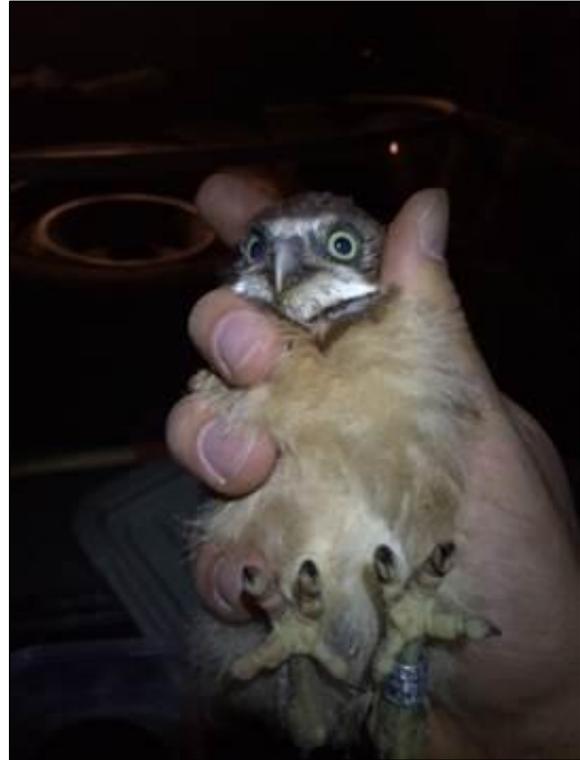
Wildlife Management

Grandville High School FFA: District Biologist Fidorra was contacted by the Grandville High School chapter of the FFA. They are interested in conducting a wildlife conservation program. Fidorra provided them with some project ideas and will continue to work with the group that now hopes to pursue a grant to install barn owl nest boxes at local farms in Yakima and Benton counties. Each spring over 150 barn owl nestlings are taken to rehabilitation centers when farmers uncover stacked hay that the owls are nesting on, countless more likely die unnoticed. The project would provide alternate nesting for the owls and benefit farmers by allowing owls to control rodent populations. Blue Mountain Wildlife Rehabilitation Center is also interested in assisting on the project.

Burrowing Owl Banding: District Biologist Fidorra met with researchers from the Global Owl project to band burrowing owls at WDFW artificial burrow sites. Global Owl researchers have found that juvenile owl survival from last year was high, as were rodent populations. This has resulted in 2015 being a good year for owl breeding. Most of the artificial burrows in Franklin County are currently occupied and a very successful evening of trapping resulted in capture of 15 adults and 31 nestlings.



Fidorra measures an adult owl



A young owl with new leg band

Wildlife Management Activity: District Biologist Fidorra spoke with Yakima Training Center biologists to coordinate on future wildlife management activity, including sage-grouse translocations and raptor surveys.

Bat Monitoring: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with USFWS biologists on bat monitoring projects to avoid duplicating monitoring efforts by both agencies. USFWS is interested in expanding their monitoring effort onto WDFW lands adjacent to USFWS managed property, which would provide us new information regarding these sites.

Western Screech Owl: District Biologist Fidorra retrieved a dead, banded western screech owl from a homeowner in Benton County. The owl will be sent to the National Wildlife Health Center for disease testing.

Benton Conservation District: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman finished the wildlife habitat/pollinator designs for the Benton Conservation District. The projects include a mix of shrub, forb and grass plantings in both dryland and irrigated areas.

Western Gray Squirrels: Biologist Bernatowicz contacted the USFS biologist regarding placing transects near where western gray squirrels were photographed this spring. The area has a high density of California ground squirrels, so tubes with multiple glued walnuts will be used, as well as cameras to document activity. Transect locations were selected and tubes assembled.

Bighorn Sheep: Biologist Bernatowicz retrieved samples from a road-kill radioed bighorn sheep. The animal was sampled in February, but researchers were interested in current status.

Mountain Goats: Biologist Bernatowicz continued trying to organize The Rocky Mountain Goat Alliance (RMGA) survey. Thanks to Biologists Moore, Gallie, Volsen, Anderson, and Smith, routes and directions for signing-up/surveying were completed. Volunteer Coordinator Garcia has been provided the final review, was able to post it on-line, and has been managing the sign-up.

Trail Passes: The USFS was contacted regarding trail passes for volunteers. Saturday, June 6th is a free day, which should make things a little easier. Locally, only eight passes are available.

Historic Surveys: Bernatowicz read some of the old reports to get a better idea of historic surveys/harvests between I-90 and Highway 2. Surveys were rare and annual harvest often exceeded 60 goats.

Western Gray Squirrel: Biologist Moore continued installing western gray squirrel transects and currently has four completed. A fifth site was investigated but access was limited, therefore this area will need to be reevaluated in GIS for an alternative site.

Deer observed while leaving a WGS area

Colockum Elk: District 17 Wildlife Biologist Novack requested assistance from Biologist Moore concerning seasonal range and migration examples for the south end of the Colockum Elk Herd. The request stems from an on-going issue Novack was involved in while he was a conflict specialist in District 8. Moore provided the information that was requested.



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

Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Public use has increased at the Colockum's Yoyo Rock Boat Launch this spring, with quite a few fishermen and pleasure boaters using the launch. Recently, fishermen have been attracted by good catch and release sturgeon fishing, including a twelve-foot sturgeon that was reportedly caught and released several weeks ago by WDFW Game Commissioner Dave Graybill.

The Yoyo Rock Boat Launch during the Memorial Day Weekend, Colockum Wildlife Area

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



Wildlife Areas

Colockum Wildlife Area: Eight volunteers from the Colockum Chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation spent two days during the Memorial Day Weekend repairing fence lines and spring developments on the Colockum. Working along the Arthur Coffin Game Reserve fence on a hot day was made much more enjoyable by the cooler temperatures at 5000 ft. elevation and the occasional elk passing by.



Members of the Colockum Chapter of RMEF make repairs to the game reserve boundary fence, Colockum Wildlife Area

Hazard Trees: Manager Lopushinsky and Assistant Manager Hagan spent a day with WDFW Forester Rod Pfeifle looking at hazard trees along green dot roads left from the 2013 Colockum-Tarps Fire. The staff is working with Pfeifle to write a contract for removal of these trees.

Wildlife Management

Deer Damage Complaint: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a deer damage complaint from a large wine grape vineyard near Paterson, along the Columbia River. Severe browsing by deer was observed on the periphery of the vineyard. Multiple hazing strategies, including LP gas cannons, pyrotechnics, and active hazing, had become less effective, so two kill permits were issued. By the end of the week one animal was taken on a permit and the carcass was donated to the Union Gospel Mission.



Deer damage to wine grapes



LP gas cannon in use

Rattlesnake Hills Elk Activity: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continues to monitor elk activity in the Rattlesnake Hills area. Two supervised hunts were conducted near the ALE border. Unfortunately, due to poor weather conditions and nocturnal movement of elk, no harvest occurred.

Coyote Depredation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and handled a complaint of coyotes killing chickens and domesticated waterfowl at a residence in Burbank. Several protection measures were discussed and will be implemented.

Injured Banded Bald Eagle: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand handled a call from a resident in the Connell area of an injured banded bald eagle. Coordination with Blue Mountain Rehab to receive the bird was accomplished.

Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist (CS) Wetzel and hazer Leuck made a field visit to a landowner in the Teanaway to haze elk from his new seeding.

Deer and Elk Hazing: CS Wetzel and Herder Leuck again made several trips to haze elk and deer from the Taneum Creek, Hanson Road, Weaver Road, and Thorp areas. A large group of elk has been staying on the wrong side of the south valley elk fence. Even after being herded through re-entry areas the elk move back to crop areas.

New electric fladry placed over the Taneum crossing area to deter elk from entering hay fields



Deer Damage: A landowner in the Yakima Canyon called to report deer problems in a grape vineyard. Seadust will be tried at this location.

Deer Problems: An orchard owner in Sunnyside called to report deer problems in an apple orchard. A follow up will be conducted this week.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Hunt met with a CAMP crew from Olympia on Wednesday morning and assisted with the loading of pallets of hardware for the Big R bridge we've been storing at Joe Watt since around 2010. The rental crane got the bridge loaded, and the old Ford 7700 managed the pallets/bins and guardrail. Said bridge is bound for the Tarpiscan.

Watt Compound Work: The Yakima Construction Shop Crew finished up the Watt compound work on Wednesday that filled in our moat and created some additional storage. It looks great.

Watt moat - filled and ready to stack hay

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Oak Creek staff completed annual hearing tests at the Yakima Construction Shop.

Training: Oak Creek staff attended the annual red card refresher training at the DNR office in Ellensburg.



Temporary Hire Interviews: Manager Huffman, Assistant Manager Berry, and Wenas Assistant Manager Taylor completed interviews with candidates for the Oak Creek NRW2 temporary position. Huffman began reference checks on the top candidates.

French's Canyon Stock Fence Gate: Assistant Manager Berry made a weekend trip out to French's Canyon to install a temporary stock fence gate in the elk fence. Users had damaged the existing gate and a new gate is being constructed, but has not been installed yet. Manager Huffman was informed that livestock are trespassing on private property below the elk fence and to avoid them accessing state land a temporary gate was needed. Fortunately to date people are keeping this gate closed and not driving through it. The livestock come from a local person who is known for cutting fences and letting his cows roam.



Assistant Manager Berry made a trip out to Cowiche over the weekend to install a temporary gate in the elk fence to keep livestock off the wildlife area

RMAP Work: Forester Mackey met with Engineer Kuykendall and Archeologist Kelly to review proposed RMAP work in Sec. 11, 15, 21 of the Rock Creek Unit.

Rock Creek Unit: Forester Mackey consulted with the maintenance crew on site for RMAP work being conducted in Sec. 31 of the Rock Creek Unit.

Non-Commercial Thinning: Project Forester Dahlgreen spent two days with the non-commercial thinning crew in unit 19-1. Dahlgreen completed contract compliance and reviewed upcoming work for next week with the crew foreman.

Colockum Wildlife Area: Two Olympia Engineering crews (CAMP) arrived on the Colockum this week to begin RMAP work. They will be removing a culvert and installing a bridge, pulling culverts and creating a ford, installing culverts for drainage, and installing gates.

One half of a 60 foot bridge destined for installation in the North Fork Tarpiscan Creek, Colockum Wildlife Area



Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Manager Bjornstrom administered the monthly wildlife area staff meeting at the Pasco District Office. Topics discussed included construction of the Sunnyside HQ shop, current and future habitat projects, funding resources, and personnel issues. In attendance were Assistant Manager Buser, NRT 2 Medina, NRT2 Kaelber, NRW2 Nnanabu, and donuts.

Yakima Clean Air Agency: Manager Bjornstrom met with the Yakima Clean Air Agency to discuss burn restrictions and requirements related to burn operations on the wildlife area.

Tractor Sprayer Assembly: Assistant Manager Sak and NRT2 Medina completed the assembly of the tractor sprayer.

New sprayer on the John Deere Tractor

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Lowland Pika Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra surveyed sites at a known lowland pika area and repositioned trail cameras.

A lowland pika captured on a trail cam

Northern Puget Sound Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Cyra joined District Biologist Milner in conducting breeding bird surveys in the San Juan archipelago in conjunction with USFWS San Juan Refuge staff. These annual surveys by USFWS are limited to their widespread holdings throughout the islands, and by participating in these surveys to cover non-USFWS properties at the same time, they provide us a better overall picture of breeding bird activity in the islands. Heavy fog hampered surveys on all days, and remaining sites will be surveyed this week.

A Black Oystercatcher in incubating position on a foggy morning in the San Juan Islands



Pigeon Guillemot survey assessment: Assistant District Biologist Cyra completed a survey of breeding pigeon guillemots in the Port Gardiner/Port Susan area. In the early 2000s, WDFW organized a major statewide survey of breeding pigeon guillemot colonies in the inner marine waters. Pigeon Guillemots are a widespread and easily surveyed species and are considered a good indicator species of Puget Sound and corresponding shoreline habitat health. These surveys were intended to be repeated at intervals but have not been repeated due to other priorities. This survey was an assessment of the ability to repeat at least sub-unit surveys and to provide an anecdotal comparison to past numbers.



Pigeon Guillemots below a breeding colony bluff in Port Gardiner bay

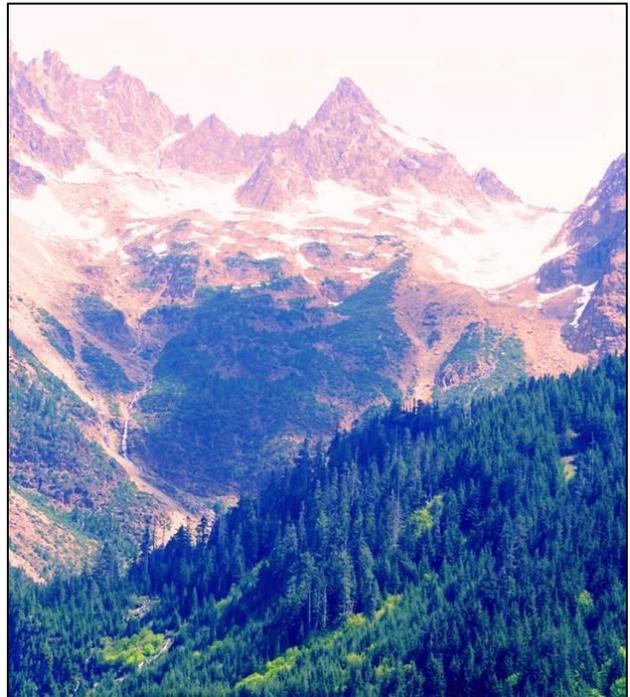


Biologist Yarborough and DeBruyn surveyed new areas for Oregon Spotted Frogs. These were areas that had reports of Oregon Spotted Frog occurrence by Skagit and Whatcom Land Trust. One confirmation was made.

Golden Eagles: Biologist DeBruyn confirmed an active breeding attempt in a territory at the foot of the Twin Sisters. It is one of only two known occupied sites in the district.

Golden eagle habitat in District 14. The eagle nest is in the largest Douglas fir tree front and center.

Common Loon Monitoring: Biologists Anderson and Smith surveyed area common loon nest lakes. Pairs were observed at two known lakes showing territorial behavior, patrolling, and seemingly investigating nest sites areas. Smith revisited one site a few days later and discovered a new nest site.



Wildlife Areas

Leque Island Alternatives Analysis and Design Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Regional Director Everitt briefed management in Olympia on the progress of the project to date and presented the regional recommendation of the preferred design alternative to advance to the next project phase. After the briefing, Brokaw completed a media release with Public Affairs staff and sent it to Ducks Unlimited for comments.

Skagit Wildlife Area activities: Curran Cosgrove continued field preparations on the Island Unit for agricultural and moist-soil enhancements. Cosgrove sprayed weeds at the Johnson/DeBay's Slough, Jensen, Moberg Road, and Fir Island Farms units. Weeds targeted included Canada thistle, blackberry, and mustard. Cosgrove mowed areas at the Headquarters Unit with the riding mower. Cosgrove assisted with planting ten acres of fava beans at the Samish Unit. Manager Rotton completed the grass planting contract project on Fir Island Farms.

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

Wildlife Management

Mountain Goat Survey – Volunteer Effort: Biologists Anderson and Smith worked on King County needs to coordinate Alpine Lake Wilderness Area and vicinity volunteer goat surveys in collaboration with Biologists Bernatowicz, Volsen, and Gallie, as well as Volunteer Coordinator Garcia on the east side.

Biologist Smith baiting a bear capture site as part of the bear population study

Spring Bear Hunt Management: Biologist Hans scouted the Monroe hunt site to check on gate conditions and address specific concerns from hunters. She replaced a lock that was no longer working at one of the gates. Natural Resource Technician Otto scouted the North Skagit hunt area. He noted areas of recent bear damage, information which he passed along to hunters he saw in the field or who phoned him seeking this information.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Coordination: Biologist Hans and Supervisor Caldwell met with a second landowner in the Acme area to tour a property that may be added to the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4. Contract details, hunter access points, parking logistics, and blind locations were discussed between the landowner and Washington Department of Fish and



Wildlife Staff. Biologist Hans completed the contract and will enter the details into the online contract system at the start of the new fiscal year. Natural Resource Technician began prepping equipment that will be used for summer spraying of grasses and broadleaf plants on Region 4 waterfowl hunt units. He sprayed the Barrett and Swan Road sites. Natural Resource Technician Otto began speaking with farmers in the Whatcom area to discuss logistics for upcoming barley planting.

Wildlife Areas

Samish Unit Enhancement Project: Projects Coordinator Brokaw completed and submitted a permit application to secure a Construction Stormwater permit from the Department of Ecology and worked with the Skagit Valley Herald to post required notices in the newspaper. Skagit County has set the date of the special use hearing examiner meeting for May 27th at 9:00 am in the Board of County Commissioners Hearing Room at 1800 Continental Place in Mount Vernon. For more information on this upcoming hearing examiner meeting, contact Loren Brokaw at Loren.Brokaw@dfw.wa.gov.



Crescent Lake field prep

Hunter Education / Volunteer

Coordination: Volunteer Coordinator

Dazey assisted a volunteer from the Duvall area to contact Brian Boehm, Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager, about any needed projects. Coordinator Dazey also referred three young men working on their Eagle Scout award to WLA Manager Boehm. These contacts have come from presentations Dazey has done at Boy Scout district roundtables and at individual troops. Coordinator Dazey forwarded information about the Upper Snoqualmie Valley Elk Management Group to master hunters who had assisted the elk management group in several of their service projects. Volunteer Coordinator Dazey conferenced with COEES 4 Janet Anthony on issues involving volunteers in remote locations.

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 Management

Spring Bear Management: Biologist Hans met with the newly hired City of Everett representative to discuss the background and objectives of the spring bear hunt. During this meeting the representative gave Biologist Hans a brief tour of the watershed, discussed current spring bear hunt issues, and showed her gates he will be removing or adding in the next year. Biologist Hans followed up with the private timber industry representatives to inquire about their

interest in adding parcels to the 2016 spring bear hunt. This information will be used by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife staff at the end of the season to determine boundaries and permit numbers for the 2016 spring bear hunt.

Elk Hunt Coordination: Biologist Hans continued to work with an Acme landowner to finalize contract details for an elk hunt this fall. Through this landowner, Biologist Hans received contact information for another interested landowner in the Acme area. She will contact this landowner and determine the feasibility of a hunt on their property over the next few weeks.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with several landowners in Day Creek and will begin establishing fencing contracts for landowners to receive fencing materials to mitigate elk damage. Specialist Witman began gathering fencing materials to mitigate agricultural damage in the Day Creek area and will begin installing electric fencing during the first week of June. Master Hunter Volunteers will be asked to assist with installation and maintenance throughout the summer and early fall.

Hunter Questions and Concerns: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman continues to field calls from youth, senior, and disabled hunters interested in the upcoming hunt in damage unit 4941. Prospective hunters are being provided information on how the hunts will be coordinated and what assistance will be provided for private land access.

Hunter Educaion / Volunteer Coordinator

Hunter Education Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated nine hunter education classes in Region 4. Dazey also assisted Chief Instructor Ray Franke to correct the input on his class in the Kalkomey system. Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Bill Vincent to put on a HE class at the Region 4 Mill Creek office where 13 students passed their hunter safety test. Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Ira Gross to find assistance for his upcoming class. Dazey assisted Chief Instructor Gus Dorati to add two walk-in students into the Kalkomey system. Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey evaluated two teaching teams, one in Issaquah and one in Lynden. Both teams are doing a good job of presenting the material. At the Issaquah team a 25 years of service plaque was presented to volunteer instructor David Garrison. At the Lynden class, Dazey presented a 35 years of service plaque to instructor David Vanderhoek. At the Lynden class, it was also pointed out that one other instructor there had been instructing students in safe and ethical hunting as a hunter education instructor for the state for 43 years. Way to go Lynden. Dazey, while en route to Lynden, delivered DFW .22 rifles to an instructor in Burlington and exchanged them for two ea .223's. The .22's will be better suited to the range where the classes are being taught.

Instructor Directory: Coordinator Dazey worked with Hunter Education Coordinator Garcia to proof and correct a new directory to be posted on the instructor website. The directory updates certified instructors and provides a resource for Chief Instructors to find assistance in their area. The old directory was out of date. The new directory lists instructors not only by county like the old directory but also then lists the instructors by city making it easier to find local instructor

help for classes. Dazey also provided input on new wording for the website for the “Becoming an Instructor” page. The new wording more accurately details the process.

REGION 5

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Western Gray Squirrel Surveys: District Biologist Anderson and Assistant District Biologist Bergh met with Biologists Stephens, Doorly, and Johnson to coordinate the state-wide western gray squirrel survey effort in District 9. Final plans are being made to start random survey transects by providing maps and hair collection tubes to those that are participating in the project. Biologists also started to set out hair tube transects this week. This three-year project is designed to assist WDFW with an updated review of the western gray squirrel population status. Biologists Kolb and Van Leuven are also providing assistance with this year’s effort. We appreciate their help.



Hair collection tubes

Western Pond Turtle Project: Biologist Anderson coordinated a western pond turtle nesting habitat improvement project with the USFS Scenic Area staff in Skamania County. This site is owned by the USFS and is managed in cooperation with WDFW for western pond turtle recovery. Members of the USFS fire crew spent most of a day hand mowing a steep hillside important as western pond turtle nesting habitat. Their efforts each year help maintain the short grass habitat preferred by nesting turtles.



USFS Western Pond Turtle Nesting Habitat Project – Skamania County

Black-tailed Deer Research Project: Regional Wildlife Biologists made the initial fawn searches for this year's work on the black-tailed deer research project. The multi-year project continues in the Coweeman and Washougal study clusters, as well as six study areas in WDFW

Region 6, under the direction of Research Scientist Dr. Cliff Rice. The study was initiated in 2009 and is designed for completion of field work in 2018. The effort is intended to shed insight on black-tailed deer ecology, suitability / quality of State-owned forestlands when compared to industrial forestlands, deer habitat selection, movements, survival, etc.

Currently in the Coweeman cluster, three adult does that were captured in 2014 remain alive with functional satellite and VHF collars. Currently in the Washougal cluster, two adult does are alive and have functional equipment. During the May-June birth period all adult females associated with each study cluster will be monitored frequently and multiple attempts will be made to capture their fawns. The first black-tailed deer fawns of the year have been born.

Newborn black-tail deer. Unfortunately this individual was not associated with any of the study does and is not part of the study.



Hydropower Mitigation - Pacificorps Forestlands Field Visit:

Biologists Holman and Stephens, along with Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Habitat Program Biologist Miller, visited forestlands managed as wildlife habitat by Pacificorps. The visit featured locations where forest canopy removal is used to improve forage conditions for species favoring early successional habitats. Forest openings from 5-20 acres in size as well as thinnings, pruning, and the creation of permanent openings are all used to allow light to reach ground level and benefit preferred forage plants. Pacificorps manages approximately 13,000 acres of high-quality wildlife habitat as a portion of the mitigation requirements for the operation of hydropower facilities on the North Fork Lewis River.



Feeding elk – Photos provided by Nathan Reynold of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe



Stand ready for thinning and grassy forest opening – Photos provided by Ray Crosswell of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Fuels Reduction Project: Phase II of the project is progressing well, with work continuing through the Memorial Day weekend. The contractor has brought in additional machinery to improve the efficiency of slash disposal. On-the-ground preparations for Phase III were completed this week, and the project has been put out for solicitation of bids. Manager Van Leuven met with DNR Project Coordinator Lennon to inspect work on Phase II and determine the best route for Phase IV, which still needs to be laid out. Phase IV is the last stage of the work that is planned under the interagency agreement between WDFW and DNR.



Fuels Reduction Project Equipment

Grazing Activity: Technician Davis and Manager Van Leuven inspected two WDFW parcels in the lower Klickitat Canyon, finding that utilization of forage has been very light. Davis also visited a third parcel to confirm that the pasture there is being rested (no grazing) this year. Water supply is a concern on the Soda Springs Unit this season and WDFW staff, as well as the permittee, are checking the troughs and ponds frequently. Some of the ponds and one trough have run dry only three weeks into the grazing period. Grass is still plentiful relative to the number of animals present, so Van Leuven is working with the permittee to ensure that there is adequate water for another week or two.

Weed Control: Technician Davis applied herbicide to infestations of sulphur cinquefoil in camping areas and Manager Van Leuven and Davis hand-pulled common houndstongue plants from dry streambeds on the Fisher Hill Unit.

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

Shillapoo Wildlife Area

Birding Opportunities: It is a great time to go birding on the Shillapoo Wildlife Area and Vancouver Lowlands, as the summer residents have arrived and others are still migrating through the region. On a recent visit to Shillapoo, Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald observed the following bird species: White pelican, sandhill crane, bald eagle, northern harrier, American kestrel, vaux's swift, black swift, purple martin, violet-green swallow, black-headed grosbeak, blue heron, cinnamon teal, and mallard. The eagle nest in the South Unit appears to have two eagle chicks in it this year. Last year the eagle pair was successful in raising two chicks.

Klickitat Wildlife Area

Turkey Hunting: Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven met three groups of hunters on the Wildlife Area during Memorial Day weekend. The season ends soon and people are taking advantage of the long weekend in hopes of filling their tags. Earlier in the week, Van Leuven discovered a turkey hen and her brood while working in a remote area. The hen feigned injury to draw attention to herself, while the tiny chicks hid in the short grass. The chicks were nearly impossible to see due to their excellent camouflage, and although eight chicks were counted, there were probably several others that were not observed.



Turkey Chick



Turkey Hen

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

D-10 Wildlife Conflict

Bear: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Conklin spent most of her week verifying bear damage to industrial timber lands including this area where bear are climbing larger mature trees and girdling them. In addition, Conflict Specialist Conklin worked with a timber company to spread out their hunt area after discovering the coordinates for proposed hunt permit areas were too close together. Conflict Specialist Conklin also requested a permit be revoked after finding a

feed station inside the hunt zone and approximately thirty feet away from the damaged tree that was reported.



Tree damage



Close up of bear damage to tree



Feed station

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Snowy plover: The week of May 17th – 23rd was the prescribed Adult Breeding Window Survey week as assigned by USFWS. WDFW Biologists Sundstrom, Michaelis, and Novack surveyed two locations, Midway Beach and Leadbetter, with the help of Shoalwater Bay Environmental Specialist Pfleeger at Midway and WDFW Scientific Technician Raby at Midway, and Leadbetter along with Refuge Biologist Ritchie. Sundstrom, Pfleeger, and Spencer surveyed Graveyard Spit and Biologist Sundstrom surveyed Copalis Spit, Connor Creek, Ocean City to Ocean Shores, Oyhut Spit, and Damon Point.

The final totals are not yet in from Leadbetter, but the approximate total of breeding adults observed was 37. There was also one chick. Twenty breeding adults were observed at Midway and three at Graveyard Spit. A survey of several islands in Willapa Bay the week before resulted in the observation of five adult plovers. No plovers were observed at any other surveyed location.

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

Wildlife Rescue: Reports of a yearling black-tailed deer buck trapped in a DOT enclosure near downtown Tacoma have been coming into enforcement and animal control for the past month. The reports have stated that the deer has been in the enclosure for over a period of three months and was beginning to look malnourished. Conflict Specialist Blankenship assessed the situation and the condition of the deer. Due to the condition of the deer and the proximity of heavy traffic areas, Blankenship advised that the deer be relocated to a more suitable habitat.

With the assistance of Biologists Harris and Murphie, Tacoma Animal Control, and Master Hunter volunteers, the deer was successfully removed from the enclosure and relocated to the nearby Tahuya State Forest.



Deer relocation team consisting of DFW staff, Tacoma Animal Control personnel, and Master Hunter volunteers