

Wildlife Program

Week of November 30 – December 6, 2015

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Columbia Plateau Mule Deer Project: Biologists Atamian and Lowe joined with the District 4 & 5 Biologists to conduct post season mule deer surveys in the project area. Aerial surveys were flown in the southern area (phase 1) this year with ground surveys run in all areas. Survey data has not been entered or summarized yet.



Biologist Lowe conducting aerial surveys in R44



Flying over the Palouse River, Whitman County

Wildlife Areas/Water Access Sites

Asotin Creek Wildlife Area – Winter

Closure Gates: Wildlife Area Manager Bob Dice shut winter closure gates on the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area and USFS land late Monday evening and early Tuesday morning. Some lock problems were encountered, along with numerous fresh vehicle tracks in the snow. Logging

equipment was still on USFS land on the upper end of Smoothing Iron. Dice notified Ranger Monte Fujishin that logging operations were apparently ongoing within the winter closure area on Tuesday.

Chief Joseph WA –ATV Access Closure: Biologist Woodall rode up Green Gulch, opened the Three-Mile Gate, and came back down to close the non-motorized access gate. The ATV entry season is now closed. Entry via non-motorized means is still permissible. The bunkhouse is winterized and in good shape. These closures help protect wintering wildlife from human disturbance.

The non-motorized motorized gate is now closed, preventing ATV access

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

Wildlife Areas



Sherman Creek Wildlife Area Barn Roof Replacement Project: The contractor continued work on the barn roof replacement project at Sherman Creek Wildlife Area this week. They straightened out the sagging beam on the west side shed and made preparations for replacing the support posts.



REGION 2

No report submitted this week.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Areas

Oak Creek Wildlife Area: Manager Huffman and Forester Mackey responded to a landowner in the Nile who called several times about an injured deer in their fenced property that could not get out. They felt it needed to be put down. The landowners were very upset that they could not let their dogs outside with the deer on their property. Upon arrival, Huffman and Mackey found an alert fawn walking around with what appeared to be a minor injury to a hind leg, more than likely from getting caught in a fence. Huffman and Mackey were able to haze the deer out the driveway gate, which was the only gate on the fenced property. The landowner was not happy with the situation and was verbally abusive during the whole event, despite a good outcome for the deer. While leaving the area, the deer was last observed by Huffman and Mackey feeding under a tree across the highway.

Elk Fence Inspection/Repair: Assistant Manager Berry and Natural Resource Worker 2 Steveson inspected and repaired elk fence from West Valley to the Tieton River, finding numerous elk made holes. North of Hatton Road, an elk re-entry gate was found blocked, so elk could not get back above the fence. This is in an area where the landowner below the fence likes to let elk onto the property and sell access to Master Hunters to harvest an animal.

Elk re-entry gate blocked with fence posts that it cannot be used

Sunnyside Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Buser assisted District Biologist Fidorra with the driving portion of the district deer survey. They observed 138 deer on Thursday.



Ducks Unlimited Conference Call: Assistant Manager Buser had a conference call with Ducks Unlimited to discuss survey work done at the WB-10 Wasteway Unit, as well as the next possible steps for developing projects on that site. They also discussed previous projects at Mesa Lake and some potential projects at Windmill Ranch.

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt repaired a hole in the Bradshaw Canyon access gate that likely formed from being slammed by running elk or deer. It is very near to the Bradshaw return gate, so has not been too big of a problem with regards to elk escapement. Hunt, along with Technicians Hill and Leuck, monitored elk in the feed site areas all week, and numbers are increasing. They will evaluate next week, and may lock the gates at Watt and Robinson shortly after the late archery season ends on Tuesday, December 8.

Wenas Wildlife Area: Staff continued seeding areas of the 2014 Cottonwood fire with a native mix.



Seeding portion of 2014 Cottonwood Fire – east of Cottonwood drainage

Wildlife Management

Mule Deer Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated with other district staff members to complete mule deer sightability surveys in the “Phase 1” region along the Snake River. This was the first survey since the 2009-2011 baseline surveys were conducted. Many deer were observed and classified, especially along the units near the Snake River breaks and adjacent winter wheat fields. Synthesis of the data will occur in the coming weeks.

Ground Surveys: District Biologist Fidorra coordinated ground surveys for mule deer in the Kahlotus. Several district staff members and a volunteer assisted during the two days of ground surveys. The total number of deer observed was lower than the past five years. Ratio analysis will be conducted in the coming weeks.

Pheasant Release Feedback: District Biologist Fidorra provided feedback regarding safety concerns and public complaints related to the pheasant release program.

FEHA Survey: District Biologist Fidorra prepared for the FEHA Survey session presentation at Wildlife Program School next week.

Franklin County Deer Surveys: Private Lands Biologist Stutzman and Conflict Specialist Hand conducted deer surveys one day in Franklin County. Over 240 deer were counted, with a buck to doe ratio of about 18:100.

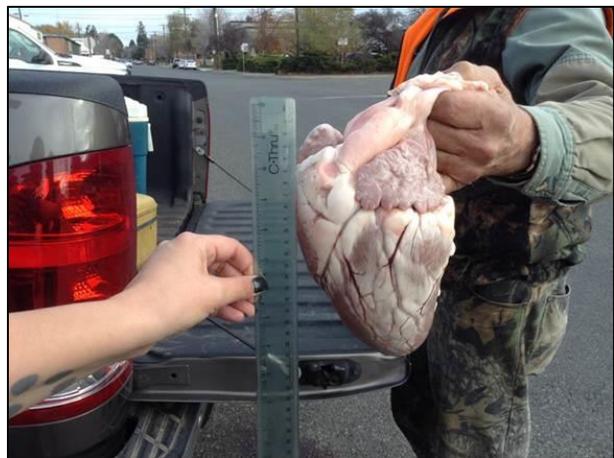
Colockum Elk Sampling: Biologists Bernatowicz and Moore, along with Conflict Specialist Wetzell, scored elk organs collected during the modern firearm season. Fifty-seven organ sets (pericardium, heart, and kidney) that had at least two of the required three samples were scored. The scores will be run with an equation that will give an estimate of total body fat.

2016 Hunting: Biologist Bernatowicz worked with Conflict Specialist Wetzel on a boundary description for a deer area near Ellensburg. Bernatowicz also spoke with Conflict Specialist Hand about a deer area along the Yakima River in the lower valley. Yakima River bottom deer populations have been growing and causing damage complaints. The idea of the deer areas is to provide additional recreational opportunity, as well as an additional tool for dealing with damage.

Colockum Elk Body Condition Sampling: Biologist Moore, Biologist Bernatowicz, and Conflict Specialist Wetzel scored the organ samples collected during the 2015 Modern Firearm Antlerless Permit Season. Overall, the effort was a success, with over 70 samples collected. Only a few samples were inadequate for analysis and we ended with 57 that will be used in the estimation of body condition. Moore thanks Steve Wetzel, John Hagan, Jon Gallie, Kyle Hill, Marcus Leuck, Pete Lopushinsky, and volunteer John Erickson for assisting with this effort. This would not have been as successful without the assistance from these individuals.



An example of an extremely high scoring pericardium...



...and the heart of this sample scored high as well

Sled Prep: Moore worked with Wildlife Area Staff Member Marcus Leuck and Ecological Interaction Team Staff Member Trenton De Boers to prep our sleds for the upcoming winter and to follow up on a wolf report. No wolf sign was found.

Golden Eagle Offal Camera Station: Biologist Moore used organs that were not damaged during harvest from the Colockum Antlerless Body Condition effort to create an offal camera station set.

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

Wildlife Management

Puget Sound Energy Wildhorse Windfarm: Stutzman and other regional staff met with staff from the Puget Sound Energy Wildhorse Windfarm about how to reduce hunter safety concerns during the modern firearm elk season. The increase in cow permits in the area has driven hunter numbers higher than PSE is comfortable with. Stutzman recommended using the online reservation system as a way to manage the number of users.

Public Call: Stutzman got a call from a disabled hunter who has a late doe tag for GMU 381. Stutzman made some calls and set him up with a landowner who agreed to allow vehicle access.

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

Wildlife Areas

LT Murray Wildlife Area: Assistant Manager Hunt and Habitat Biologist Renfrow were contacted by one of the landowners being impacted by the beaver dams in the Johnson Drain on the WDFW Upland Restoration parcel in Badger Pocket. The farmer expressed his frustration with our lack of progress, both short term and long term, as the dammed up drain takes approximately five acres out of production. We'll be working, along with our volunteers, to get the water level down more quickly somehow, continue to try and trap the critter or critters, and monitor afterward. The goal will be to have things clear enough that there will be no backup in the spring, allowing for tractor field work that would normally occur. But there needs to be a long term solution to this problem on a WDFW parcel that no one is any longer responsible for. It is several miles away from any of our Wildlife Area Units.

Wildlife Management

Monitoring Elk Activity: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand visited a large fruit tree operation near Prosser to monitor elk activity and maintain non-lethal hazing equipment. No new damage has been observed.

Elk Activity: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with several landowners near Hanford to discuss elk activity and movement outside the Hanford Reserve. The largest concentrations have been reported on central ALE.

Elk Monitoring: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand removed a trail camera that had been deployed along Hanford's southern boundary monitoring elk activity near winter wheat fields. No elk were documented recently and only a few deer images were recovered from the device.

DPP Permit Harvest: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored the harvest of DPP permits in Elk Areas 3721 and 3722. One antlerless elk was reported harvested this week. The total harvest for the current permit season is 27 antlerless and eight spike bull elk.

Elk Hazing: Conflict Specialist Wetzel and Hunt Master Kiesel hazed and used master hunters to monitor and move increasing numbers of elk in the Crinklewood/Reecer Creek area. A December 4 count revealed that new elk were entering the area, with two distinct groups totaling 388 elk. Some small groups of elk have been observed moving great distances out of the area and into Park Creek. No known harvests in the Reecer Creek area occurred this week.

Cattle Appraisal Documents: Conflict Specialist Wetzel delivered cattle appraisal documents to a Teanaway livestock producer who had questions about a wolf claim valuation.

Elk Hazing: A hay grower in Ellensburg reported eight bull elk that had begun to stay in his new seeding area. A hazing plan was developed to try to discourage elk use of the field and surrounding areas.



Eight bull elk in a new seeding

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

Wildlife Areas

Wenas Wildlife Area: Manager Confer Morris submitted a storm damage report on outbuildings damaged by wind storm to CAMP Project Manager Sanich.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Wildlife Management

Species of Greatest Conservation Need: District 13 staff members placed field cameras to continue monitoring a low-elevation pika population in the Stilliguamish Valley. Most alpine area pikas cache food and spend the winter below the surface due to snowpack. Little is known of activity patterns of pika in areas commonly devoid of snow during the winter. Pika at this lowland area have not been observed caching winter supplies and it is hoped that the cameras can document any above ground activity, as well as weather at the time of activity. It is generally

believed that above ground activity is reduced during periods of wet weather, an almost constant occurrence at this location.

Three field cameras set up at a pika site in a talus slope in the Stilliguamish Valley



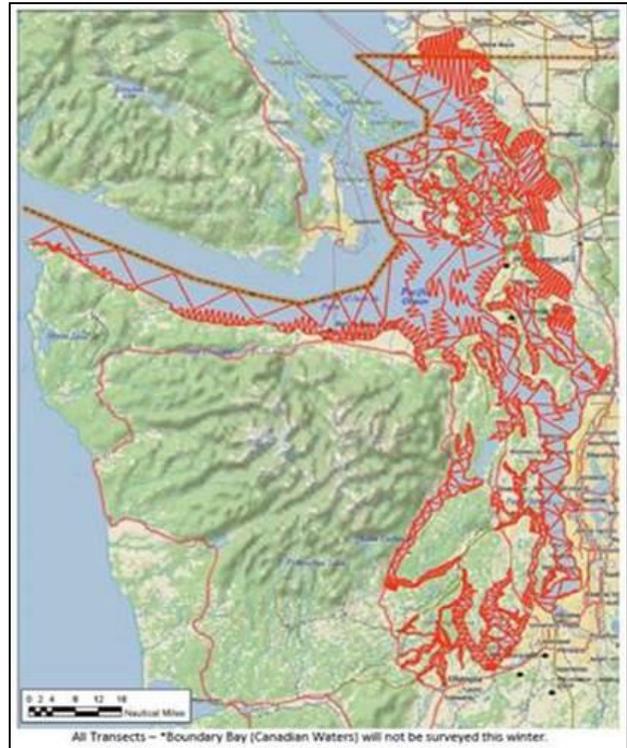
Marine Waterfowl Surveys:

District 13 staff members, along with District 15 staff members and the Marine Waterfowl Specialist, began flying the 2015-2016 marine waterfowl surveys. These marine aerial surveys cover the entire shoreline and the majority of open water in the Puget Sound and are the longest continuous dataset of their kind. Information is used to inform marine sea duck harvest guidelines, as well as providing a unique look at trends of diversity species such as Western Grebe and Harbor Porpoise.



The space between the float and the string represents the viewing window for the 50-meter survey transect

Transect lines flown during the winter marine waterfowl survey



Sharp-tailed Snake Leads: District 13 staff members worked with Olympia data managers to review and decide on the credibility of some snake sightings provided by members of the public.

Reports and Papers: District 13 staff members worked on the final report for the Jim Creek pika project and a sharp-tailed snake paper.

Bear Depredation Subcommittee: Biologist Smith reviewed and submitted edits for draft documents of the bear depredation subcommittee. The committee is drafting updates to the bear timber damage program for upper management review.

North Cascades Elk Management: Biologist Yarborough and the Washington Department of Transportation (WDOT) biologist installed proximity transmitters for elk collars along Highway 20 near Hamilton. These transmitters will make the GPS collar collect more GPS points as the collared animal approaches the highway.

Elk Trapping Season: Biologist Yarborough worked with members of the North Cascades Elk Technical Group on plans for the upcoming elk-trapping season. The group worked on trap repair, equipment organization, and establishment of bait sites. The group will begin trapping in January.

Whatcom County Wildlife Technical Advisory Committee: Biologist Yarborough attended the Whatcom County Wildlife Technical Advisory subcommittee meeting. The committee is collecting all recent wildlife reference materials that will be included in the final report to Whatcom County.

Avian Influenza Surveillance: Biologist DeBruyn and Technician Trego trapped and sampled 11 wild mallards for avian influenza. The ducks were trapped at Wiser Lake, which is where high path avian influenza was first documented in this country one year ago. A survey was done of the lake for waterfowl mortality. One sick mallard was found, euthanized, and submitted to the National Wildlife Health Center for a necropsy.

Protected Wildlife Management: Biologist Anderson provided state consultation for Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive and Protected species, including various Priority or Species of Concern needs – most often nest take authorization and/or habitat consideration recommendations. Anderson continues to work with Habitat, local governments and landowners to provide for documentation and management where appropriate.

- Current items from this past week include osprey nest destruction requests, eagle nest documentation and update of territory, providing a “WDFW statement of consultation” to King County Department of Transportation for proposed projects regarding bald eagles – per their code requirements (and referring to USFWS for management needs), providing references to wildlife statutes and management guidance (PHS) regarding proposed changes in Seattle Parks from dog-leash required to potentially not required in various options in parks and area beaches, providing consultation assistance to Habitat staff regarding heron management, reviewing and commenting/references in collaboration with working-group (WA Audubon, Seattle Audubon, Seattle Parks and Recreation, USFS, USFWS, WDFW, Heron Habitat Helpers, and others) effort regarding bird conservation efforts and needs in Seattle towards becoming an Urban Bird Treaty City by USFWS, and providing review and comments to the Mountains to Sound Snoqualmie Valley Connections trail planning group in regards to wildlife management considerations as a member of the Mountains to Sound Technical Advisory Committee.

One can assist WDFW with documenting wildlife via reporting at our Wildlife Observation Website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/viewing/observations/>

One can find department management recommendations for Priority Habitats and Species at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/phs/>

Aquatic Invasive Species Region 4 Efforts: Biologist Anderson and Milner conferenced regarding next steps in cross-program efforts to document and plan for appropriate management efforts regarding recently found exotic wildlife populations. Anderson continued the processing of specimens collected earlier in November.

Winter Meeting Workshop – Loons D12: Biologist Anderson began to compile and prepare for presentation and management planning with other districts and Olympia staff members.

Private Lands/Access Management

Swan Collection Assistance: Natural Resource Technician Otto collected a swan from a property in close proximity to a Waterfowl Quality Hunt location. Natural Resource Technician Otto notified Puget Sound Energy of the powerline strike and mortality of the juvenile trumpeter swan. Natural Resource Technician Otto verified that the fuses on the powerline had not been blown and that power to the field pump was still working. Natural Resource Technician Otto called the landowner and notified them about the incident and that power was still available to their pump.

Wildlife Areas

Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP): Projects Coordinator Brokaw participated in a conference call with PSNERP staff to coordinate ongoing and future topics related to PSNERP.

Region 4 Restoration Workshop: Region 4 and Headquarters staff members participated in a workshop focused on the direction of and WDFW's involvement in future nearshore habitat restoration efforts within Region 4. Staff members from multiple resource programs participated and it was a good opportunity to discuss ongoing and future work within the region.

Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project: Project Coordinator Brokaw, Habitat Planner Friebel, and Ducks Unlimited staff members met with the hydrodynamic modeling company and the Stillaguamish Tribe to coordinate modeling work for the project and discuss monitoring efforts in the project area. Project Coordinator Brokaw completed a first draft of a pre-proposal to a grant opportunity to fund construction of the project.

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

Wildlife Management

Island Deer Hunting: District 13 staff members reviewed this year's hunting seasons and permit levels for the islands in preparation for making recommendations for next season.

Snow Goose Aerial Survey: Biologist DeBruyn flew an aerial photo survey of snow goose flocks from the mouth of the Fraser River to Monroe in Snohomish County. Seven large flocks of snow geese were photographed. Analysis of the photos is pending.



Wildlife Areas

Island Unit/Deepwater Slough

Meeting: Staff members met to discuss future management of the Island Unit of the Skagit Wildlife Area. A portion of the area is currently farmed for waterfowl forage and another portion of the area was restored to estuary over 10 years ago. There is currently a malfunctioning tidegate that is causing the farmed area to become more difficult to manage.

Waterfowl Season: Cosgrove and Meis continued monitoring water levels and waterfowl and hunter use on the Samish, Island, and Johnson/DeBay's Slough Units. Ducks have begun to feed on corn at the Samish Unit on low hanging corn ears mainly where water covers the area. On the Island Unit, most barley and millet has been fed out and ducks are feeding in fava beans, but no evidence of feeding in corn has been observed. Staff members noticed waterfowl foraging on nutsedge, especially in areas covered by water. At the Johnson/DeBay's Slough Unit, barley and corn have yet to be utilized, but there has been increased hunting activity on the site this week. Hunter numbers have been good this week with rain and wind in the area.

Private Lands/Access Management

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Units: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo, along with Biologist Wingard, conducted use surveys of Waterfowl Quality Hunt sites in Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties, taking note and resolving any issues regarding the sites. This week there was minimal usage due to freezing conditions on sheet water and ponds. However, observations were made that hunters who took the time to locate optimal field conditions near open water had increased success. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo completed work on two Waterfowl Quality Hunt locations. One of the locations needed the blind to be repositioned to an upright position due to recent flooding. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo were able to accomplish this task in below-freezing conditions with the help of some mechanical jacks. Natural Resource Technician Otto delivered and applied wood chips to one Waterfowl Quality Hunt parking area that is receiving high use and getting quite muddy now that temperatures are rising above the freezing point.

418 Special Permit Elk Hunt: With the beginning of December, only archery hunters have continuing opportunities to hunt in the GMU 418 area. So far, early season muzzleloader and modern rifle permit holders have enjoyed high success rates. Private Lands Biologist Wingard

contacted hunters whose seasons are finished to determine success and arrange to have the Sierra Pacific gate keys returned. Natural Resource Technicians Deyo and Otto toured the private lands portions of GMU 418 hunt unit, checking gates and signs. They also removed the recently ended 418 special deer hunt signs and checked for logging activity and snow levels.

Potential New Waterfowl Quality Hunt Site: Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with a landowner who had contacted WDFW with concerns about swan and snow goose damage to the property. Biologist Wingard discussed the Private Land Access Program’s Waterfowl Quality Hunt program as a potential solution to increase disturbance to swans and potentially harvest geese. Biologist Wingard toured the property and developed site specific hunting plans. The site contains high quality hunting opportunity across two large fields, with opportunity to harvest both geese and ducks, which are abundant at the site. Biologist Wingard will continue to interact with the landowner to attempt to secure a private lands access agreement. This is a prime example of the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program being a win-win, with hunters gaining access to a quality hunting opportunities and landowners gaining relief from damage caused by migratory waterfowl.

A flock of Canada geese landing at a newly recognized damage location in Snohomish County. This site has potential to be enrolled in the Waterfowl Quality Hunt program to help mitigate future damage.



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

Wildlife Management

Region 4 Hunting: Biologists responded to several callers with questions about hunting opportunities and upcoming hunting seasons.

Wildlife Conflict Management

Wildlife Conflict Management: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman coordinated with Tribal co-managers to identify elk trapping sites in the Birdsvie area of Skagit County. Natural Resource Technician Cogdal continued to install fence posts in the Day Creek area in an ongoing effort between WDFW and Tribal co-managers. These efforts are being implemented to assist farmers with protecting their crops from elk damage in the Skagit Valley. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman met with two landowners in the Acme-Saxon area of Whatcom County to discuss ongoing elk damage that is occurring to crops and fences. Preventative measures were discussed and options are being considered by the landowners. Wildlife Conflict Specialist

Witman assisted Natural Resource Technician Cogdal with installing fence posts in the Day Creek area of Skagit County. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman also toured the landowners' properties and identified locations where new elk exclusion fence is needed and will be installed in the future. To finish out the week, Wildlife Conflict Specialist Witman finalized Damage Prevention Agreements for landowners in the Day Creek area and continued working on cooperative fencing contracts.

Natural Resource Technician Cogdal installing elk exclusionary fence posts with a tractor provided by Tribal Co-Managers. These mitigation efforts are invaluable to private property owners attempting to mitigate long-term damage caused by foraging elk.



District 12 Elk Conflict: Biologist Smith responded to calls from citizens with complaints of conflicts with several species. Deer eating ornamental plantings is a common complaint in urban areas. A good deal of information to help avoid or deal with deer problems is available at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/deer.html>. Damage to grass crops and fences by elk was also discussed with landowners. Smith also met with a homeowner to view and discuss particularly persistent northern flickers attempting to excavate roost/nest holes in home siding. Further information on preventing flicker damage to homes can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/woodpeckers.html#conflicts>. Smith also responded to a report of an owl dive bombing a runner in the black diamond area several times in past weeks. This may simply be a bird attempting to protect its territory. The runner is planning to alter running locations for a time. More information on owls can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/owls.html#diving>. Smith also monitored a remote camera documenting elk use of crops in an area.

Wildlife Areas

Snoqualmie Pheasant Release Sites: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm removed pheasant-related signage at all Snoqualmie pheasant release sites and installed waterfowl-related signage.

Ebey Island Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Everett Alexander and family to discuss the potential sale of a parcel of land that dissects the west portion of the unit.

Cherry Valley Unit: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm met with Drainage District 7 to view a recent dike breach along Cherry Creek, which borders the Cherry Valley Unit. Approximately 150' of the dike was impacted, with severe down-cutting along one end of the dike. This area was repaired during the summer of 2015 after a much larger breach had occurred in 2014.

Recent dike breach along Cherry Creek



Sky-Valley Tractor Club: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm worked with the Sky-Valley Tractor Club, which has an agricultural lease on the Crescent Lake Unit, to complete processing and payment of the Leasehold Excise Tax that was due.

Island Unit: Cosgrove and Meis assisted two hunters who were having boat motor troubles and needed a tow from the backside landing on the Island Unit to the Conway boat launch.

Skagit Headquarters: Cosgrove collected and determined the whereabouts of various items on the Wildlife Area inventory list in preparation for an upcoming inventory check.

Program School Preparation: Meis and Cosgrove gathered field photos and prepared maps for the PowerPoint presentation explaining Wildlife Area waterfowl management techniques and enhancements that will be presented at Wildlife Program School.

Pump Operations: Rotton increased operation levels and maintained pump operations during the most recent rain storms this week. The tidegate repair project is nearing completion in the next few weeks. There is a construction inspection and tour scheduled for the week of December 14.

Wiley Slough Tidegate repair project nearing completions in the next few weeks



Samish Unit: Rotton, Brokaw, Cosgrove, and Meis toured the Samish Unit with Ducks Unlimited Engineer Steve Liske to observe current water levels in relation to the recent wetland enhancement/water control project.

Recently installed water control structures do not seem to be holding as much water as anticipated. Retrofits were discussed to increase water-holding capacity on the unit.

Private Lands/Access Management

Hunting Season Preparation: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell fielded multiple inquiries about the Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program in Region 4. All the sites are currently online, with one exception, to allow for farm management.

Reservation Hunt Analysis: Private Lands Biologist Wingard began compiling and analyzing data for the Hunt by Reservation system to assess the rates of booking and use of these sites. The results of this analysis will provide a clearer picture of how often these sites are booked and used. Combined, these measures may better provide managers with improved information on the success of the system.

Whidbey Island Pheasant Release Site: With the completion of western Washington Pheasant Hunting season at the end of November, Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with landowners to discuss their experiences and obtain signatures for access and habitat enhancement project payments. Enrolled landowners had very positive experiences with the program, and are excited to continue and possibly expand hunting opportunities on their property next year.

Landowner Contacts: Natural Resource Technician Otto contacted multiple private landowners who are enrolled in the Private Land Access Program to touch base and address any hunting season concerns. Private Landowners reported that everything is going well with their properties and that they are happy with the Private Lands Access Program.

Private Lands Access Coordination Meeting: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell met with Region 4, Wildlife Program, and WDFW Law Enforcement staff members to discuss recommendations and alternatives for historic and ongoing water and private land access issues revolving around specific fishing locations within Skagit County. The group critically evaluated and discussed alternatives to mitigate future problems. After discussing the complexities involved with each issue that was presented, the group moved forward with a recommendation of action for future decisions.

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

Computer Migration: District 13 staff members continued with the work of obtaining software and hardware permissions and accessories to ensure that new computing resources meet field and survey needs.

Restoration Workshop: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm attended the Region 4 Restoration Workshop on December 1.

Professional Certifications and Maintenance: Otto completed explosive storage inspections and updated the log book. Otto also started the process for explosive license renewal along with his pesticide renewal.

Training: Private Lands Supervisory Biologist Caldwell completed WA State IT Security Awareness Training and WDFW Fire Extinguisher Training via the LMS System.

Westside Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program: Biologist Anderson and Woodland Park Zoo staff members provided letters of support regarding the continuation of Community Wildlife Habitat efforts in an ongoing joint collaboration with the National Wildlife Federation

More can be found at the BWS website at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/backyard/>

King County Animal Control – Predatory Bird Questions: Biologist Anderson conferenced with an animal control officer regarding ongoing complaints of rock pigeon feeding in downtown Seattle and state regulations regarding this bird (and other predatory birds). The officer used this to push the “overly generous” pigeon whisperer (and on the fly taking this state categorized wildlife into captivity from the streets to care for) towards just watching them and also discussed county pest code and issues with large quantities of feed in urban setting (i.e. rats). Overall, non-native pigeons and similar non-native birds have little protections, but there are still considerations based on biological management needs. More can be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/pigeons.html>.



American kestrel in flight

REGION 5

No report submitted this week.

REGION 6

No report submitted this week.