

# Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

May 1 to May 15, 2020

## **DIVERSITY DIVISION**

Nothing for this installment.

## **GAME DIVISION**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### **1) Managing Wildlife Populations**

Ungulate Specialist Garrison worked on several tasks associated with managing elk populations. Garrison revised an at-risk assessment of the Blue Mountains elk herd, coordinated research efforts between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Washington State University (WSU), worked on data management and analysis for the Mount Saint Helens survival and productivity project and continued to develop and refine an elk hoof disease incentive program that is being proposed for the upcoming three-year season setting process.

#### **2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Nothing for this installment.

#### **3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this installment.

#### **4) Conserving Natural Landscapes**

Ungulate Specialist Garrison provided suggestions for forb species to plant on WDFW's Scotch Creek Wildlife Area (WLA) with the primary purpose of providing enhanced summer forage for elk. This habitat enhancement project is funded in part by Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

#### **5) Providing Education and Outreach**

Ungulate Specialist Garrison met virtually with biologists and veterinarians from Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and California to share information about Treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD). Garrison gave a half an hour presentation on research, management, and outreach efforts WDFW has undertaken regarding TAHD. Garrison was joined by State Wildlife Veterinarian Mansfield and District Biologist Holman, and among the three of them, they fielded many questions from the attendees. Hopefully, other states can use the lessons learned in Washington to help formulate their response plans and outreach. Garrison also fielded multiple

media inquiries about elk hoof disease and a recent detection of the disease in the Yakima elk herd. Unfortunately, TAHD was detected in the Yakima herd in February while capturing elk for WSU's captive elk facility.

**6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this installment.

**7) Other**

Nothing for this installment.

**HUNTER EDUCATION**

Nothing for this installment.

**LANDS DIVISION**

*HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

**1) Managing Wildlife Populations**

Nothing for this installment.

**2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

The Lands Division successfully re-opened our wildlife areas and water access sites to the public for local recreation, with immediate family members only and day use only on May 5. This was the result of an enormous effort by front-line staff members to visit and ready over 850 locations for public use. Lands Division Manager Wilkerson coordinated this work through the Executive Management Team (EMT), the regions, as well as with Washington State Parks, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Governor's Office. Messaging coordination was led out of the Public Affairs Office and partnership collaboration was led by Section Manager Sisolak.

The Recreation Planning Module developed the draft Recreation Planning Approach which summarizes widely used planning frameworks including the Teanaway Community Forest and a customized framework developed by Justin Haug. The approach document provides the advantages and disadvantages of each of the frameworks and discusses capacity needs. The document concludes with a synthesis of all the frameworks into a basic planning structure for WDFW consideration. The next step is to refine the approach further and ultimately it will be integrated into the wildlife area planning process.

### 3) **Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this installment.

### 4) **Conserving Natural Landscapes**

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) 30-day public review for the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area Draft Management Plan began on May 8. The plan provides an overview of management on six units of the wildlife area including a summary of focal species (e.g. Taylor's checkerspot butterfly, Oregon spotted frog, Mazama pocket gopher), and includes measures for recreation, habitat restoration, and fish and wildlife conservation. Due to Covid-19, a public meeting will not be held. Lauri Vigue developed a high-level summary of the plan in audio located on the agency's website.

### 5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

**WDFW Resources for Homeschooling:** Program Specialist Trenda worked with the Public Affairs Office to help develop materials for the [May 13 \(invasive species\) homeschooling resources unit](#). Noxious and invasive weeds can negatively impact local economies, environments, and public health. Noxious weeds like Scotch broom can even be detrimental to fish and wildlife species in Washington. You can review the linked resources to learn more about invasive species in Washington and what you can do to help.

### 6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Division Manager Wilkerson worked with Budget Analyst Nelson to craft the overview elements and associated fiscal worksheet and cost estimates of a Decision Package for Stewardship of WDFW Lands for the fiscal year 2021-23 biennium. The package would fill 25% of the existing gap in capacity for management of WDFW wildlife area and water access areas by 25%, provide support for recreation planning in two to three specific locations, meet 10% of our signage needs and provide support for developing and communicating our lands facility and asset information. Overall, this will enhance the value of these lands for fish, wildlife, local communities, and the Washington public at large.

Lands staff members received several trainings on new Standard Operating Procedures related to Covid-19 safety measures.

### 7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.

## **SCIENCE DIVISION**

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 1**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### **1) Managing Wildlife Populations**

**Bighorn Sheep:** District Biologist Wik continued assisting with the cooperative bighorn sheep lamb research project. Lamb captures began last week, and five lambs have been captured to date. Assistance mainly comprised of landowner contacts, access recommendations, and review of capture events because staff members were not allowed into the field on this project at the time.

**Wolf Monitoring:** Wik also checked remote cameras south of Asotin, locating wolf activity in a historic use area. The activity was not from the expected pack and further monitoring will be necessary to determine which animals are being detected. Additional cameras were placed in the area to try and gather more information. Biologist Vekasy placed trail cameras in the Touchet Pack territory. The adult female had recent telemetry locations in the area, but very little fresh sign was found on the roads and trails compared to the same time last year, suggesting most of the pack is spending time elsewhere.

**Hunting Prospects and Harvest Data:** Vekasy updated harvest spreadsheets for deer, bear, cougar, and turkey. Small game harvest data is not available yet. Wik started updating the 2020 Hunting Prospects.

**Washington Ground Squirrel Monitoring:** Biologists Wik and Vekasy reviewed grid maps for Washington ground squirrel surveys in preparation for initiating surveys before the end of May.

**Channeled Scablands Spring Waterfowl Project:** Biologists Atamian, Lowe, and Wilson, along with Blewett and Rule worked on cleaning up the data and writing the final report for the project.

#### **2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

**Special Permit Contacts:** Biologists Wik and Vekasy responded to numerous hunters with questions regarding special permits in the Blue Mountains. Most calls relate to elk hunting and the current status of the herd.

**Reopening Wildlife Areas and Access Sites:** Northeast Washington Wildlife Area (WLA) and Access staff members, assisted by Region 1 fish and habitat biologists, prepared recreation sites and opened them to the public. Access manager Daniel Dziekan's work was highlighted in a [great video](#). Sherman Creek WLA Assistant Manager Daro Palmer coordinated with the local chapter of Backcountry Horsemen of Washington and WDFW Lands Agent Jerrod Ploof, to ensure seasonal placement of portable toilets at Rustlers Gulch.

**Wildlife Sighting:** Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch spotted a mother badger with two kits while spraying weeds on a hiking trail at Swanson Lakes. He stopped, the kits ran for cover, and mama badger growled at Finch.



*Protective mother badger was much closer and more fearsome than she appears*

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Grizzly Bear Conflict Prevention:** Wildlife Biologist Prince purchased four electric fence kits that can be loaned out to landowners to prevent human and bear interactions. The electric fencing can be used to secure attractants (garbage, livestock feed, chickens, etc.) short-term and give staff members time to work with the landowner on a long-term solution.

### 4) Conserving Natural Areas

**Pool-emptying concerns:** Access Manager Daniel Dziekan has been working with habitat, enforcement, and real estate services staff members concerning a homeowner's pool, located directly uphill from the trail on Waikiki Springs Access Area. Pool water is regularly emptied through a pipe just in front of a tree on the access area, causing root exposure and general erosion of the slope. Staff members are working to educate the property owner on dechlorinating the water, then draining the water into the city sewer or his lawn.

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Hiring:** Sherman Creek Wildlife Area saw the return of long-time seasonal Natural Resource Technician Jerry Christensen on May 1. Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area is preparing for the arrival of new Natural Resource Technician Donovan Colvin on May 18. Colvin is transferring from the Beaver Creek Hatchery. A native of Wilbur, Washington, he is excited to return to his old stomping grounds.

**Gravel Use:** Legal approval has been obtained for an agreement between WDFW and Pend Oreille County, for the county's highway department to use gravel from a small pit at LeClerc Creek Wildlife Area. The gravel will improve a county road that runs through the wildlife area. The road is used by residents and visitors to LeClerc Creek WLA.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 2**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Pygmy Rabbit Kit Release Effort:** Reintroduction efforts are in full swing this spring with 32 kits released into the two primary recovery areas in Beezley Hills (23 kits) and Burton Draw (nine kits). We are seeing instant dividends from our recent translocation effort, bringing in 26 wild pygmy rabbits from Idaho and Nevada for the semi-wild breeding program. While we are only a couple of weeks into the three-month-long breeding season, we already nearly surpassed enclosure production totals for the previous two years, 17 kits during 2018, and 35 kits for all of 2019. Most of the production is only coming from two of the four breeding enclosures. However, we are not certain as to why there is a lack of production in some of them.



*Not entirely certain of the survival strategy in play here as a pygmy rabbit kit seeks shelter behind Coordinator Gallie's boot within a breeding enclosure*

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** Biologist Grabowsky is in the process of developing an updated northern leopard frog (NLF) status report to provide the public with current information about our recovery program and remaining frog population. This report should appear on the WDFW website within a few weeks. An expanded edition of this report will contain a compilation of standard operating procedures that will allow WDFW to follow proven methodology between field seasons. All biologists working on the NLF reintroduction project are preparing to continue fieldwork as soon as wildlife field surveys are reinstated. Though pausing fieldwork has caused significant setbacks for this project, we are hopeful that we will still be able to raise frogs to release this fall.

## **2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

**WDFW Okanogan Lands Re-Opening Report:** Wildlife area staff members and water access site manager Dehart have been working diligently to get WDFW lands back open and keep sites maintained for the first weeks of state lands reopening. Access manager Dehart has been making the rounds throughout the valley seeing good compliance and surprising conditions of many

access sites during the closure. Lands Operations Manager Haug has viewed normal to above normal use of many sites in Okanogan County. Camping closures however continue to be an issue. The Methow Wildlife Area has numerous users challenging the camping restriction and a recent trip through the Sinlahekin WLA on Saturday, Haug observed at least six camps mostly along Fish Lake and Forde Lake. Staff members will continue to communicate with individuals on the camping closures and reach out to advisory committee members and partnering agencies to spread the word as well.



*Fishing on the banks of Schalow Pond on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area* - Photo by Justin Haug

**2020 Opener:** Access staff members along with Complex Manager Finger put some long days in to make sure things were ready for the May 5 state lands opener. For the most part, areas were as we left them, making things a lot easier for the opener. Restrooms were cleaned and so was the garbage from the masses that came out for the opener. Things were busy all over Grant County, with the higher concentrations gathering at Potholes Reservoir. Staff members observed many happy people out recreating throughout the week and received a few “thank you” comments from the public.





*Blythe access 70 trucks and trailers* – Photo by JH

**Blue Lake Recreation and Conservation Office Project:** The public and the Blue Lake community were happy to find a brand-new float installed at the Blue Lake access site. Contractors finished the install on May 4 just in time for the opener, and work will resume this fall to complete the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) project.



*New float Blue Lake* – Photo by JH

**Quincy Lakes Trails Meeting:** Lands Operations Manager Finger kicked off Phase 2 of the Quincy Trails Planning Process, by hosting a Teams meeting with a partner agency, Recreation Planners and Compliance. On the call were four planners, five archaeologists, three natural resource supervisors, and Region 2 Lands Agent Ramirez and Columbia Basin WLA manager

Eidson. Phase 1 was focused on public engagement to determine what the user's value from the area and how they would like to see things change, specifically, which trails they would like to keep in a 'designate and decommission' approach. This is something akin to a 25% construction design. It is what we want to do, but we have not got all the details figured out. Phase 2 involves the environmental and cultural review of this design. An RCO proposal in Trails Planning will be prepared in hopes of acquiring funding to support and provide capacity for partnering agencies such as Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and DNR to work through National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated cultural resource compliance.

**Lands Re-Opening:** Lands Operations Manager Finger assisted with the land re-opening by donning personal protection equipment (PPE) and spraying down vault toilets with a partial bleach solution to speed up the process for our Water Access team to take care of the sites. All in all, sites looked good, and when Water Access was done with them, they looked great. With the team chomping at the bite to get back in the field, it has been quite a relief to learn that we can get back to vegetation management needs on May 18. This has been an incredibly stressful time for all Lands staff members and their dedication and commitment has been on full display lately. They want to be out there making things better for the public, habitat, and greater good, and that's finally become a reality again. Much credit is due to Lands Division field staff members and Enforcement officers for their efforts and the challenges they have been facing.

**Hunter Access Program:** Biologist Hughes organized hunter access data for contracts in Northern Grant and Southern Douglas counties. Hughes created maps for each landowner in the Hunter Access Program (HAP) that are interested in providing maps of their property to the public when they give out permission. Hughes also obtained a signature on a Hunt by Written Permission contract in Douglas County. The landowner's family has participated in the Hunter Access Program for over 30 years but due to several changes (some property sold and a new point of contact), a new contract was created to reflect the updates. Hughes will be updating signs within the next couple of weeks.

**Recreation Planning Working Group:** Lands Operations Manager Finger reviewed the Draft Recreation Planning Approach and provided comments. Much of the discussion has been about evaluating and selecting from four different planning frameworks, which describe the process we go through to develop plans for recreation. These processes rely heavily on information and capacity, which are often extremely limited. The challenge of the group is to figure out how to roll recreation planning into the Wildlife Area Planning process and then piloting that idea on a Wildlife Area Plan development to test the approach. Finger offered up the Columbia Basin area and requested some additional time on the deadline to counter the extra work this project will bring.

**Recreation Rules Working Group:** Finger also participated in discussions about the prioritization of recreation rules and provided some data management support. There were some questions from the group about why things ranked the way they did and whether we had an adequate sample. To help understand that, Finger looked at how different regions, and west versus east, ranked certain topics, which gave some interesting insight and discussion about camping, travel management, and drone discrepancy.

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Abandoned Wildlife Calls:** Specialist Bridges has responded to calls from the public about “abandoned” wildlife. In both cases, the responding party (RP) was educated about wildlife, and what to do if they encounter this again in the future.

**Nuisance Bear Damage:** Specialist Heilhecker responded to a homeowner’s call of a bear getting into fish food and garbage cans continuously over a few days. Heilhecker discussed with the homeowner proper ways to remove and/or store attractants at the property.

**Deer Damage to Alfalfa:** Specialist Heilhecker received a call from a landowner expressing frustration with damage to his alfalfa crop being caused by whitetail deer. Heilhecker explained the crop damage documentation and reimbursement request process, deer management, and encouraged the landowner to continue hazing efforts.

**Wolf Advisory Group Meeting:** Specialist Bridges and Specialist Heilhecker participated in a Teams meeting for the Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) as a debrief to the previous WAG meeting. and helped office staff members prepare for re-opening when instructed to do so.

### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Silver Side Channel Beaver Activity:** Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug and Methow Wildlife Area Manager Troyer have been working with District Habitat Biologist Hofmann and District Fish Biologist Fortier regarding the requested removal of a beaver dam at the head of Silver Side channel (a recently completed salmon habitat restoration project). The group discussed the request of removing or ‘notching’ the dam to allow for better fishing passage and responded to Cascade Fisheries in addition to a meeting with local Fish Program staff members in Twisp. Haug called into a conference call with their staff members and responded with several emails regarding the urgency of the action needed. Meetings and conversations with stakeholders continue, with various options on the table that address the fish passage issue. It is the district’s position that continued beaver activity will continue indefinitely and that a solution that allows for fish passage while allowing beavers to reside on-site is the best option. More discussions to come this week.

### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

### 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Lands Information Network Knowledgebase (LINK) Working Group:** Lands Operations Manager Finger participated in a working group to develop LINK. Like the Lands information system and data management system for Real Estate, LINK will be a digital tool used to store and manage data which is important to agency business needs. LINK will essentially be the “one-stop-shop” for data and the LIS system will live within LINK. The first steps in this process are the identification of data sources and the business need associated with those data. The next

steps will be prioritization of each data set to determine which are brought into the LINK domain first.

**Columbia Basin WLA Planning:** Due to the challenges of COVID-19 with regards to holding lengthy meetings, the Planning Team has pivoted to having bi-monthly Teams meetings to work through the Goals and Objectives section of their plan. Lands Operations Manager Finger participated and tried to offer suggestions that result in functional goals and objectives that staff members will value and refer to regularly.

**Potholes Supplemental Feed Route License:** Lands Operations Manager Finger assisted with the development of a license for the Potholes Supplemental Feed Route (PSFR) to allow reclamation to deliver water across WDFW lands to support irrigation and water needs in the southern portion of the Columbia Basin Project. Finger assisted Real Estate and Habitat programs with some of the historic background, NEPA requirements for water delivery, and the value of PSFR to our lands and the enhancement projects that were developed with the expectation of this water.

**BOR Quarterly:** Lands Operations Manager Finger hosted a BOR quarterly meeting through Teams to discuss topics such as the Royal Slope Solar LLC NEPA process, Columbia Basin prescribed fire, post-fire restoration funds for Sunnyside, Exhibit A final steps, and a general update on how the agencies are coping with COVID-19.

**Title 28 Application:** Upon getting a notice that BOR moved forward a deadline by two weeks, which only gave one week to complete documents, Lands Operations Manager Finger worked with the budget and contracts office to fast-track and finalize documents for signature by contracts office for submittal. This application will bring in an extra \$250,000 to the Columbia Basin WLA budget over the next five years and will be used to extend the duration for which we can support a full-time Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crew out of Moses Lake to cover an extensive Operations and Maintenance (O&M) backlog on federally owned lands that we manage.

## 7) Other

**Birding:** There were some great birding opportunities in the Okanogan area in early May. On a short hike to Schalow Pond and the Sinlahekin WLA on Saturday, Haug observed at least two dozen species of birds, see the pictures below.



*Canada Geese and goslings on Schalow Pond* – Photo by Haug



*Yellow-breasted chat in elderberry near Fish Lake* – Photo by Haug



*Yellow warbler near Schalow Pond* – Photo by Haug



*Spotted Towhee near Fish Lake on the Sinlahekin WLA* – Photo by Haug



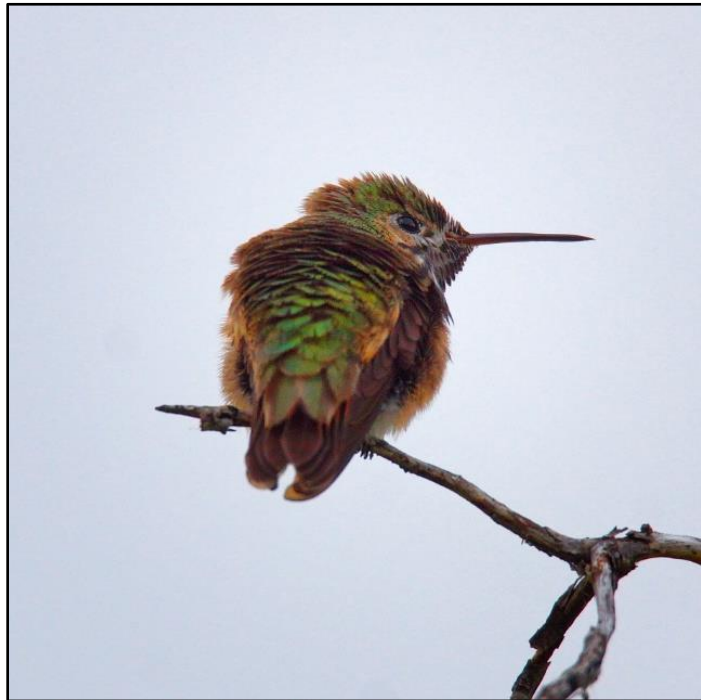
*Sapsucker near Fish Lake at Sinlahekin WLA* – Photo by Haug



*Lewis' Woodpecker near the honor camp at Sinlahekin WLA* – Photo by Haug



*Western Bluebird near Fish Lake at Sinlahekin WLA* – Photo by Haug



*Calliope Hummingbird near Fish Lake at Sinlahekin WLA* – Photo by Haug





*Wilson's Snipe in the Aeneas Valley, east of Tonasket* – Photo by Haug



*Spring sunset in the shrub-steppe east of Tonasket* – Photo by Haug

## **REGION 3**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### **1) Managing Wildlife Populations**

Conflict Technician Leuck and Conflict Specialist Wetzel removed a deer from a field in Cle Elum and conducted a necropsy. The deer was observed by the landowner exhibiting signs of possible rumenitis or tetany, but the necropsy showed it had extensive trauma on its right side, probably from a vehicle strike.



#### **2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Even with the 2020 spring turkey season being delayed until May 5, quite a few hunters still got out on the Colockum for turkey hunting. The photos below show one eight-year-old hunter that completed his hunter education course this spring using the online course due to COVID-19 restrictions. It is always nice to see a youngster study the safety material, practice with his firearm, and then have a successful hunt.



*Father with 8-year old son practicing with his new turkey gun*



*Practice makes perfect! Eight-year-old bags his first turkey on Colockum*



*Father and son after a successful hunt*

Wenas Wildlife Area staff members posted signs and unlocked gates on May 4 in anticipation of the May 5 reopening of state lands.



*Main Buffalo road entrance gate unlocked, and signs posted*



*Lower Buffalo Gate Signs*



*No Vehicle Signs posted just above Skyline Trailhead*

Region 3 Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resource Worker Barbosa started preparing for the May 5 opener by removing barriers from any site that was blocked. They opened gates and cleaned outhouses on May 5 with no issues, although most access sites had large numbers of users. During the reopening, a large dumpsite was found at the Donald access point, and dumping had also occurred at some locations near the Pond access points.



*Pond 4 and 5 on May 5 Reopening*



*Snively Access on May 5 Reopening*

### **3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Assistant Manager of the Oak Creek WLA Bruce Berry fabricated some excellent elk and deer return gates. These gates will be used on the Zirkle Orchard on the south side of the Badger Pocket near Kittitas and other areas where cost-share elk fencing is under construction. Due to the amount of elk fencing under construction in this area, many more return gates will be installed by several large orchard operations.



*Return gates made by Bruce Berry*

#### **4) Conserving Natural Landscapes**

Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Confer Morris and Biologist Daling met via Teams with Range Ecologist Burnham and Vegetation Ecologist Merg to discuss the analysis of Wenas Nested Frequency data. Daling created an ArcGIS map document displaying nested frequency plot locations overlaid with past herbicide use and fires for use in the analysis discussion.

Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Confer Morris met with Forester Pfeifle via Teams to finalize and submit the Hydraulic Project Approval (HPA) request for the Hardy Canyon bridge replacement and Mellotte bridge removal and stream restoration. This work is part of the Wenas Watershed Enhancement project funded through an RCO grant.

Colockum WLA staff members spent some time during this period doing legally required weed control work. Assistant Manager Hagan sprayed whitetop (also known as hoary cress) in the Tekison and Tarpiscan Creek areas. Whitetop is an aggressive weed that can spread by roots and develop large weed patches that push out more desirable vegetation. Spring is a good time to treat this weed as it is easy to find with its obvious white flowers and it is most susceptible to the herbicide at this time as well.



*A patch of whitetop treated in the North Fork of Tarpiscan Creek (The white-flowering plant in the middle of the photo) as LT Murray Wildlife Area staff members continue to treat priority weeds across the WLA*

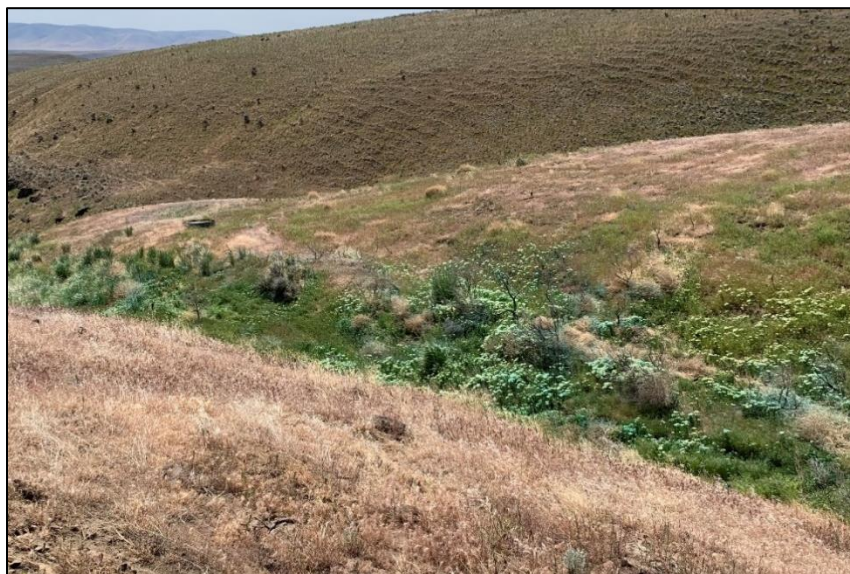


*Corrals restoration site with Basin wildrye in a carpet of Russian thistle*





*Corrals restoration site three days after chemical treatment of Russian thistle*



*Recently treated whitetop at Lone Star spring on the Whiskey Dick WLA*

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Confer Morris submitted a request for early implementation of the Wenas target shooting timing restriction. The restriction was approved to begin on May 6 to reduce the risk of wildfires and the need for firefighters to respond during the COVID-19 pandemic.

WDFW Enforcement personnel located a vehicle that had been left on the wildlife area near the junction of the Ridge road and McCade road. The responsible party was contacted by enforcement and informed that they needed to remove the disabled car as soon as possible. Assistant Manager Taylor then assisted with the removal, providing them access through the gated McCade road to get the vehicle out to North Wenas road.



*A disabled car being towed along McCade road*

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

## 7) Other

LT Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart participated in the development of the 2020 Region 3 photo contest.



*Hedgehog cactus at Green Gate*

## **REGION 4**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### **1) Managing Wildlife Populations**

**Island Marble Butterfly:** On May 5, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) published its final [rule in the Federal Register](#) to list the Island Marble Butterfly as an endangered species and designate critical habitat for the species under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). The rule is effective on June 4. WDFW and USFWS are still inviting landowners on San Juan and Lopez island (especially those with open, grassy landscapes) to help conserve Island Marble Butterflies by enrolling in a [Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurance \(CCA\)](#).

The CCA is a conservation tool under the Endangered Species Act. Conservation measures outlined in the Island Marble Butterfly CCA's include creating patches of habitat, limiting disturbance to habitat patches, potentially protecting patches through fencing, and [maybe allowing deer hunting](#) to limit deer consumption of the mustard plants that butterflies depend upon. Enrollment in the CCA will continue through May 19 for San Juan and Lopez islands landowners who would like to participate in the voluntary CCA program to help restore Island Marble Butterflies, a species found nowhere else in the world. Thought to be extinct since 1908, the butterfly was re-discovered by biologists during a prairie survey in San Juan Island National Historical Park in 1998, and a few years later on Lopez Island. However, it has not been seen on Lopez Island since 2006.

The CCAA agreements provide regulatory surety for landowners who could be affected by ESA regulations after the butterfly is officially listed as endangered under the Act. Landowners enrolled in a CCAA would experience no risk of violating the ESA by inadvertently killing or injuring the butterflies so long as they participate in the agreed conservation measures. The Island Marble Butterfly does not migrate and is only found on San Juan Island. They are most visible in the spring when they are winged adults. For the rest of the year, they are present as either eggs, caterpillars, or chrysalises.

After an Island Marble Butterfly emerges from its chrysalis where it has resided for more than 300 days of the year, it immediately mates and lays eggs on mustard plant flower buds, flying only a short time before dying. This long growth period and distinctive lifestyle have made this contributor to the islands' ecosystem vulnerable.



Photo by S. Vernon

**Bear Cub:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Seitz and Biologist Smith rescued a bear in King County.



*Bear rescued in King County*

**Oregon Spotted Frog Outreach Materials:** District Wildlife Biologists Waddell and Moore are working with WDFW staff members in Olympia to assemble outreach materials on Oregon spotted frogs (OSF) to present to interested landowners in Skagit and Whatcom counties. These frogs are federally threatened and state endangered and only exist in a small percentage of their former range in Washington. WDFW, USFWS, and other private entities have documented OSF populations in certain areas of Skagit and Whatcom counties. Our goal with the outreach materials is to inform landowners about these frogs and their conservation needs, secure permission to survey new properties, and help landowners understand methods for conserving frog habitat. These outreach efforts are ongoing and will continue into 2021.

**Osprey:** District 12 staff members assisted multiple entities with wildlife management needs regarding conflict osprey on a crane boom (lower it when not in use), powerlines, and a water tower which are all in active construction zones. Permits were issued to destroy all nest starts with advice on exclusion and consideration of platforms where appropriate. In one of these cases within a major mega-project construction zone (Bellevue 124<sup>th</sup> Ave NE Corridor projects and East Link Light Rail) the birds are jumping between many different structures that are all owned and managed by multiple entities. Coordination, networking owners/managers, and nest start removals are continuing in that case with platform siting being examined by Bellevue and Puget Sound Energy. The current difficulty for those parties is finding a suitable site nearby. District 12 has provided some suggestions and hopes to hear agreement for siting as both parties have

voiced interest in platform however land is hard to come by in downtown Bellevue. Hopefully, a platform can be erected on a topped tree, or similar, in an adjacent undeveloped pocket of land to get these birds away from the immediate traffic corridor, construction equipment, and eventual traffic once the road opens back up.



*A nest start on a PSE transmission line in Bellevue*

**Peregrine Falcons:** Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) had to access a peregrine falcon nest that is right at an access ladder to conduct emergency structural tests on the same bridge pier the falcon's nest on at the West Seattle Bridge. District 12 is working with SDOT regarding their emergency bridge work and any needs involving state-protected wildlife using the bridge. Mama falcon was defensive and aggressive for a brief period at first access by workers. She then settled back on her three two-week-old chicks and played the watchful eye as sensors, drilling, and other emergency safety test efforts continued for about 90 minutes. SDOT

voiced they may be interested in a wildlife camera for these falcons. Future discussions will examine if there may be a collaborative opportunity there for SDOT and any interested parties such as local raptor non-profits, Audubon, and perhaps WDFW.



*West Seattle Bridge falcon with three eyasses. Workers reported it was not “hello neighbor” at first, which was expected.* - Photo by the Seattle Department of Transportation

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Region 4 Private Lands Access Program Waterfowl Hunting Sites:** The Waterfowl season is nearly over in Region 4, with the late Snow Goose season ending on Feb. 18. Private Lands Access Program staff members have begun removing field signage and blinds in Whatcom County. The exceedingly wet field conditions following river flooding have made work difficult and muddy.



*Whatcom County Private Land waterfowl hunting site showing the flood water height. Staff members anchored signposts in flood-prone areas to prevent the signs from being lost.*



*Natural Resource Technician Deyo enjoying a muddy ride to remove a waterfowl blind and field signage from a partner landowner property in Whatcom County*





*Private Lands Access Program Waterfowl Hunting Site signage and blinds getting cleaned for off-season storage*

**Ebey Island Acquisition:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw began preparing materials with Real Estate Division and WLA Manager Boehm for a grant that proposes acquiring two properties adjacent to the Ebey Island Unit of the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area. The acquisition would conserve wetland habitat and could also provide an access point that would allow walk-in access of over 300 acres of WDFW that is currently only accessible by boat.



*Aerial view of Ebey Island property proposed for acquisition*

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Depredation Investigation:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Seitz conducted several depredation investigations in King County. Prevention measures were discussed with the producers to help avoid further conflicts.



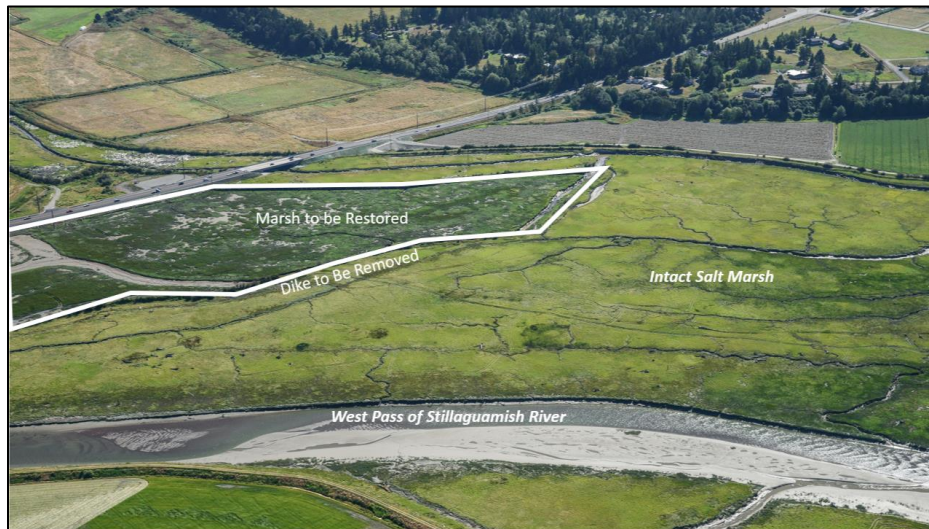
*Goat carcass in King County investigation*

**Bear Issues:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Seitz spoke to several residents in King and Snohomish counties regarding recent bear issues. Most of the issues pertained to bears getting into the trash. Seitz provided advice to these residents.

**Canada Goose Nest:** District Wildlife Biologist Waddell received a call from the Port of Bellingham regarding a Canada goose nest located about 50-60 feet above the ground at the top of an old warehouse set for completed demolition by the end of May. The Port confirmed the nest contained two eggs, but they had no idea how long the nest had been active. Biologist Waddell worked with WDFW staff members in Olympia to provide the Port with a permit that would allow the Whatcom County Humane Society Wildlife Rehabilitation Center to remove the eggs for incubation at their facility. Once they had the permit, Port staff members checked the nest and found the eggs had hatched and all birds were gone. The timing was perfect, allowing the geese to move off the roof on their own and the Port to proceed with their demolition of the old structure.

#### **4) Conserving Natural Landscapes**

**Grant Presentations:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw presented two projects to the Estuary and Salmon Restoration Program for grant funding consideration. One is the North Leque Island Dike Removal Project, which involves removing a dike to more fully connect 26 acres to tidal processes and fish access. The other is a feasibility study that will assess restoration potential on 250 acres along Livingston Bay on Camano Island and is a partnership project with Whidbey Camano Land Trust and Snohomish Conservation District. Both projects were invited to move to the next round of the competition, which is the development of a completed written grant proposal.



***Overview of the North Leque project: The marsh to be restored is already connected to the tides through a single opening in the dike, though removal of the remainder of the dike will better connect the site to sediment and other processes that are important in maintaining salt marsh habitat***

**Leque Island Grant Closeout:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw submitted a final report and all materials needed to close out a grant from the Recreation and Conservation Office, which allowed RCO to reimburse WDFW for the final construction costs of the project.

**Ebey Island Planning:** Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Biologist Desmul worked on contract documents to hire Triangle Associates to be the stakeholder outreach facilitator for the project. The project intends to gather input from stakeholders and collect technical information regarding the Ebey Island Unit to develop a plan for the future of the site.

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

Whatcom Wildlife Area Manager Kessler visited the Lummi Island Unit and replaced old signs, installed new “No Dogs Allowed” signs, and re-installed the refurbished information box mounted on the fence at the trail destination overlook. He met with the adjacent landowner, Charlie Baker who sold the conservation easement to the Lummi Island Heritage Trust that made the Trusts’ Baker Preserve. They discussed access issues and his concerns about fire danger on the adjacent properties.



*View from the overlook on Lummi Island*

District 12 staff members worked with several citizens and reporting parties to take down craigslist ads either asking for native frogs or relaying they “have too many in their pond please come get them”. District 12 staff members reached out to the multiple craigslist posting entities to educate and provide legal options for their needs.

District 12 personnel worked with concerned parties regarding wandering invasive red-eared slider turtles (likely looking for nesting site). How to legally manage these exotic turtles that have wild populations due to illegal release from pet trade was discussed.

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Private Lands Access Program Abandoned Vehicle Removal:** Private Lands Biologist Wingard worked with staff members from Sierra Pacific Industries to remove an abandoned vehicle from their property. The funding for this work was provided by a Department of Ecology grant to the Private Lands Access Program.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 5**

*HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Banding Band-tailed Pigeons:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald has been conducting some backyard trapping and banding of band-tailed pigeons at his residence during the “Stay at Home” order. He has modified a couple of mourning dove traps to trap the pigeons. Instead of using the funnels on the side of the traps to allow access, Hauswald leaves the top door on the traps open and then has a fishing line attached to it that he then pulls closed once pigeons jump inside. The pigeons arrive at his feeder in late March and will stay around until late May, before returning once again as they migrate south in early September. The banding effort will help in tracking migration patterns and harvest rates from the recovery of the marked birds by hunters and other bird banders. So far, he has banded 43 pigeons and one mourning dove, with hopes of banding at least 50 pigeons before they move on for the summer.



*Modified dove traps for trapping pigeons*



*Hauswald releasing a banded pigeon*

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Cowlitz Wildlife Area Kosmos Dogpatch Gate Installation:** Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff members installed a 24-foot gate at the Dogpatch Recreation Area on the Kosmos Unit. The purpose of the gate is to facilitate administrative and emergency access to that area known as the Kosmos Flats. The area is closed to vehicular access by the public to protect sensitive resources. The area outside of the closed area is used by the public for all sorts of recreational activities such as camping, hunting, fishing, birdwatching, windsurfing, and hang gliding. The gate will permit WDFW to continue allowing vehicle access for these activities from May 15 through November 30. The area remains open to walk-in access during the seasonal vehicular closure.



*New gate located at the Dogpatch Recreation Area on the Kosmos Unit*

**Cowlitz Wildlife Area Kosmos Dogpatch Gate Opening:** The gate that seasonally blocks vehicular access to the popular camping area known as Dogpatch on the Cowlitz Wildlife Area is as of May 15 open to the public. The area is open for day use and camping is not allowed following the Governor’s “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order. Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff members mowed the reed canarygrass that obscures the trail, cleared the hazard trees, and removed debris blocking the trail in several locations. The trail is now open and ready for use.

## 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Scared Steers:** Officer Myers and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen were contacted by a landowner who was concerned that a cougar had chased his two bovine steers around town in Skamania County. During the middle of the night, something had possibly scared the 800-lb steers, which proceeded to blow out of their pasture and through three different barbed-wire fences and one cyclone fence during their escapades around town. One of the steers was later euthanized due to the injuries incurred from the fences. After speaking with the landowner, it was determined that there was no evidence that a cougar or other wild animal was involved in the incident. It is unknown why the large steers went on a rampage through town.

**Trout Lake Bear in Human Garbage and Compost:** Jacobsen received another complaint this week about a bear in an area of Trout Lake getting into a compost bin at a residence and destroying the bin. The landowner also mentioned that a bear had gotten into her neighbors' trash as well. Jacobsen asked if all landowners had received the bear brochure mail that he sent out last month. The landowner replied that she had received the mail but didn't offer any reason why the attractants were still present at her residence and the neighboring residences for the bear to find. Jacobsen advised the landowner to place her compost bin in her garage or to secure it with electric fencing. The landowner complained of the inconvenience, but Jacobsen reminded her that living in bear country comes with the responsibility of preventing conflicts with bears by securing attractants.

**Another Trout Lake Bear in Human Garbage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen sent out "Living in Bear Country" brochures to all residents of Trout Lake in Klickitat County last month. One of the key points highlighted by the brochure was garbage removal and storage to prevent attracting bears. This week, Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner in Trout Lake who suspected a bear had gotten into her garbage. The landowner did not have garbage service and had been storing her garbage in cans outside her garage. Three nights in a row, an animal had gotten into the trash and hauled bags of garbage across the road and onto public property. The landowner wanted to pick up the garbage but was afraid of running into the bear during the process. Jacobsen responded to the residence to assist in making sure the bear was not around while the landowner cleaned up her garbage. Due to the extent that the garbage was distributed throughout the woods, Jacobsen assisted in picking up the garbage. Three extra-large contractor bags-worth of garbage were collected from a 100-yard radius throughout the woods. No bear was observed, but bear scat was found that was full of plastic that the bear had consumed from the residence. When asked if the landowner had received the mailer that Jacobsen sent out, she replied that she had, but didn't think she would have any bear issues since she hasn't had any issues in the last ten years. Jacobsen instructed the landowner to haul her remaining garbage to the dump that afternoon and to secure her empty garbage cans in her garage. Jacobsen also reminded the landowner of RCW 77.15.790 that prohibits attracting large carnivores to residences. The landowner reported that other neighbors had complained of bears getting into their trash as well, so Jacobsen asked the landowner to share his contact information with the neighbors and to post his business card on the local Facebook page.



*A small sampling of the garbage-strewn throughout the woods by a bear from one residence*

**Fox Den Concerns:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen fielded a report from a concerned landowner who has a family of foxes (two adults and five pups) denning outside her house. The landowner observed the foxes bring what she thought was a dead chicken back to the pups and was worried that a neighboring landowner might harm them. Jacobsen has dealt with these foxes in previous years on adjacent properties, and in the past has made recommendations to landowners in the neighborhood about protecting their chickens. Jacobsen requested that the landowner share his contact information with anyone in the area experiencing chicken losses.

**Coyote Den Complaint:** Last week, a Klickitat County resident contacted WDFW regarding a family of coyotes that had denned outside her fenced yard. Originally, the landowner was concerned about the frenzy the coyotes were causing with her dogs in the fenced yard, but when Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen checked in with the landowner this week, she reported that all parties involved were appearing to learn to live in harmony. The coyote pups were wandering about in the adjacent field and looking cute as could be, and her pet domestic dogs had simmered down slightly. After discussing the coyotes with Jacobsen, the landowner agreed that it would be interesting to purchase a trail camera and place it in the vicinity to observe the development of the coyote family.





*Coyote pup exploring around the den site* - Photo by RP

**Black Bear Timber Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey continued to verify damage to multiple stands of timber from black bears. Fresh, current year damage was verified in the stands.

#### 4) Conserving Natural Areas

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Reopening State Lands for Recreation:** Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven worked with District 9 Wildlife Biologists Bergh and Wickhem to update signs at the most popular access points to the wildlife area and make other preparations for public recreation. A few large logs were found blocking roads in two campgrounds, so arrangements were made to clear those from the roads. Vault toilets were checked to make sure they were ready for use (and they were, thanks to attention from water access maintenance personnel from the previous week). Road gates on the Sheep Canyon Road, Anderson Road, Old Headquarters Road, and South Breaks Road were opened for the season. Most of the public contacted were following the rules and enjoying the spring wildflowers while turkey hunting, hiking, bird watching, and cycling. However, two different camps were found along Anderson Road on May 4, the day before state lands opened, and Manager Van Leuven explained to the folks that they needed to pack up and leave since they weren't supposed to even be on the property. Van Leuven found that someone has been cutting trees along Box Spring Road on the Simcoe Mountains Unit (probably for firewood) so she contacted a neighboring landowner to discuss a strategy for catching the individual. Van Leuven fielded several phone calls and emails from the public regarding the reopening of lands and turkey hunting, as well as a call from a neighbor of the wildlife area reporting trespassing across his property.



*Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven Re-opening the Klickitat Wildlife Area*

**Reopening Shillapoo and Mount Saint Helens Wildlife Areas:** Wildlife area staff members visited all of the closed units on the Shillapoo and Mount Saint Helens wildlife areas this past week to take down the “State Lands Closed” signs, pick up trash, and post the “Responsible Recreation” signs before the lands opened back up on May 5. Staff members came across several vehicles and individuals who thought that the WDFW lands were already open while conducting these tasks.

**Controlling Invasive Weeds at Shillapoo and Mount Saint Helens Wildlife Areas:** Wildlife area staff members have been busy the past couple of weeks controlling weeds on several of the Mount Saint Helens and Shillapoo Wildlife area units. Due to the Stay at Home order staff members have only been able to control Class A and some Class B weeds that the local county jurisdictions require to be controlled. Staff members have concentrated their efforts in treating poison hemlock, milk thistle, and Italian thistle at Shillapoo, while on the Mount Saint Helens units hawkweed, garlic mustard, and Japanese knotweed have been the focus.

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Concerned Hunter:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by an experienced hunter regarding his concern about WDFW carnivore population surveys. The hunter believed that WDFW was purposefully under-represented carnivore population numbers. Jacobsen reviewed WDFW's mission as well as various carnivore surveys and sampling techniques that biologists use to estimate populations. Carnivore populations, ungulate populations, and hunting were all discussed. Other issues with the COVID-19 restrictions and sea lions on the lower Columbia River were also brought up. In the end, the hunter was thankful for the information and some trust was restored.

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 6**

### *HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:*

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Dead Bat Collection:** Biologist Ament had received a call back on March 22, 2020, about a dead bat that had been collected by some friends that live northwest of Sequim. Following the "Stay Home" directives she told the couple to freeze the bat and that she would collect it in the future. It just so happens that a black bear that had been relocated the week before ended up wandering on the property where the bat was found. Since Biologist Ament was assisting WDFW Enforcement with re-capturing the bear, she was able to collect the dead bat. She reviewed the bat for signs of White-Nose Syndrome using a UV light but saw no evidence of the disease. She took this opportunity to key out a bat for the very first time. She used an identification key that Bat Specialist Tobin had provided along with a very helpful bat book that she had recently received. Biologist Ament is fairly confident that the bat is a California Myotis (*Myotis californicus*). The property where the bat was found has an old historic barn. When allowed to return to the field, she plans to conduct a reconnaissance visit to the property. See the photos below.



*Bat wing checked with UV light*



*Old barn to be explored for bats another day*

**Purple Martin Boxes Deployed:** Biologist Ament spent time during these past few weeks assisting to help coordinate the deployment of purple martin nest boxes at three locations in District 16 and one location in District 15. The local Olympic Peninsula Audubon Chapter (OPAS) volunteers have been instrumental in constructing, installing, and monitoring martin boxes at two locations for many years. The Three Crabs is one site where artificial nesting boxes have been in use for many years. District 16 Biologist McMillan has had a few boxes on her property for years. She has observed some martins there this spring and is hoping for some breeding success at her site. Biologist Ament has been working with OPAS to expand colonies into new locations. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with the Port of Port Angeles and four new martin boxes were installed at the Port Angeles Marina on March 21, 2020.

Before last season, the North Olympic Salmon Coalition installed three steel posts to replace outdated pilings where boxes had previously been mounted on old pilings at the Three Crabs historic breeding location. A total of 18 boxes were installed on the new steel posts and four boxes were installed further inshore near the parking area at the popular wildlife area. The dedicated volunteers wore PPE and observed social distancing to the maximum extent possible. They were rewarded with the sight and sounds of several martins (two male, one female) that were on-site and were in and out of several of the boxes. Biologist Ament finally secured approval from the Dungeness Farms Hunt Club to allow some martin boxes on their private property. OPAS volunteers installed two new posts on a small island located directly west of the mouth of the Dungeness River. Two new martin boxes were installed on hanging boards on each post on April 27, 2020. On the same day, USFWS staff members were able to re-install seven martin nest boxes on Protection Island. Some members of this established martin colony were anxiously awaiting the boxes and landed on them directly after they were secured. It will be exciting to see if martins will expand to the two new nest box locations this season. See the photos below.



***Box installation at Three Crabs***  
- Photo by Laura Davis



***New martin box location on Dungeness Farms***



***Purple martins were quite pleased their homes were re-installed at Protection Island***  
- Photo by Lorenz Sollmann

**Juvenile Bald Eagle with Toxic Lead:** On April 21, 2020, Biologist Ament got a call from some landowners in Port Angeles that she knows from the local Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) Chapter. The couple called to report that they had observed a juvenile eagle on their property that may have been sick or injured. After some time it flew off but they were advised to call again if they observed the eagle in distress. Biologist McMillan called Biologist Ament three days later to report that she had just heard from a local neighbor that a sick young eagle was on her property. The location was less than a half-mile from the eagle report from earlier in the week. Biologist McMillan was easily able to capture the sick eagle. She transported the eagle

and met with volunteers from Discovery Bay Raptor Rehabilitation. Cindy Daily, the Director at the rehab center reported the following,

*“This bird is very high with lead toxicosis and so it is always a great idea to get them here as soon as possible so we can do the testing and start chelation immediately. This guy has already been receiving what he needs. For your interest, this is the second lead eagle from Sequim/PA and the sixth eagle out of eleven with lead since January. The State veterinarian has been made aware.”*

Unfortunately, despite immediate treatment, the young eagle died from lead contamination the next day. A photo was seen by the RP from earlier in the week and they were confident it was the same eagle they observed. See the photo below.



*The juvenile bald eagle that later died from lead toxicity* - Photo by Cindy Daily

**Turtle Report:** On April 24, 2020, the Region 6 Customer Service staff members got an email from a staff member at the Clallam County Planning Department. A resident of the county recently found a turtle on a parcel of property near Sequim. The resident was concerned that the turtle may be a protected species, and if the parcel were to be developed it could harm its habitat. They sent a few photos (see below) and hoped WDFW staff members could identify it. One photo showed that the turtle had been collected from the field. Biologist Ament reached out to other more knowledgeable turtle folks and promptly heard from Biologist Hallock that it was a western box turtle. This is one of the many invasive (non-native) species of turtles in Washington state. The biologists wrote a detailed message back to the planner and encouraged him to have the RP keep the turtle or take it to a local pet store.



*Western box turtle collected from a location near Sequim*

**District Surveys and Field Work Preparation:** Biologist Tirhi spent considerable time preparing schedules, equipment needs, logistical arrangements, COVID-19 preparation, and staffing for the upcoming field season as the agency prepares for return to work under the second phase of Governor Inslee’s Shelter-In-Place Order. Given the delay in some field projects, fieldwork is now overlapping, and long days are expected to complete work according to protocols. Other planned surveys were and maybe canceled for 2020 due to the inability to meet COVID-19 distancing requirements (e.g. elk survey flights) or danger to wildlife (e.g. trapping bats for White Nose Syndrome testing). The data collected for many of these projects directly affect listed species management and recovery and thus District 11 staff members are determined to get as much quality data in 2020 as possible while simultaneously meeting state and federal COVID-19 safety requirements.

**Taylor’s Checkerspot Captive Rearing and Reintroduction:** Biologists Linders and Cook conducted distance sampling surveys at extant and reintroduction sites for the federally endangered Taylor’s checkerspot in the Puget Lowlands. The checkerspot flight season started on 13 April 2020, but no complete surveys were conducted until late April due to a complex mix of permissions, weather, access, lack of time to prep sites for the survey, and lack of boots-on-the-ground to verify predictions about when approved surveys might take place. Like everything else since early March, there has been no normalcy in the checkerspot flight season. Warm and clear weather at the start of the flight season was followed by an endless mix of clouds, rain, and the small sun breaks. Many of the surveys that were conducted occurred with only marginal weather conditions and limited duration that such that full surveys could rarely be completed within the protocol. Also, with only two surveyors, large survey grids with many butterflies required a whole day to complete rather than the two to four hours that is typical. No surveys were conducted during peak flight based on observed sex ratio, behavior, and wing wear. The earliest surveys shown below were likely conducted at least sixty percent of the way through the flight season.

*Taylor's checkerspot surveys at extant (R76) and reintroduction sites (all others).*

	<b>R76</b>	<b>R50</b>	<b>SCS1</b>	<b>SCS2</b>	<b>TA15</b>	<b>TNQ</b>
29-Apr						16
1-May					1061	
4-May		1877*				
5-May			899*	356		
7-May					409	12
8-May			836	287		
9-May	979					
10-May		1984				
11-May						3
13-May					29*	

\*Partial surveys

Twenty-eight females were collected from Range 76 for use in captive rearing at the Mission Creek Corrections facility. Due to complications from coronavirus, the Oregon Zoo program is on hold for at least a year, and the Mission Creek program has been scaled back to accommodate physical distancing of technicians, and as a precaution against loss of staff members due to quarantine. All post diapause larvae were released, and the captive mating portion of the program was also eliminated. As of May 11, about 3,890 eggs had been laid by wild females, with a target of 4,500-5,000 eggs. Additional releases are expected to occur in June before caterpillars enter diapause, their winter sleep.

**Taylor's Checkerspot Habitat:** Surveys by Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM), and WDFW staff members on JBLM provide increasing evidence that Taylor's checkerspots are expanding widely on prairies there. The rapid and widespread expansion strongly suggests that small population size and habitat were the primary limiting factors. As a result, it is unlikely that further releases will be required there. Off base, Tenalquot Prairie was added as a new reintroduction site in 2020, and while general habitat condition is good, several more years of host and nectar plant input and growth will be required for the site to reach full potential. The only strong population off JBLM occurs at SCS, where a significant effort has been put into prairie restoration over the past two decades. Unfortunately, a combination of factors including the 2017 wildfire, poor seed germination, lack of crew and equipment availability and lack of access to conduct essential restoration activities in 2019 and 2020 have left that site in a condition that has not been seen in over six years. The scotch broom that had been reduced to small and scattered stands is now flowering across wide swaths of the prairie, and tall oat grass is once again gaining ground. Loss of even one year of weed treatments can have devastating effects on habitat condition that can take many years to offset. Under the



current circumstances, we are not only failing to add habitat to the only off-base site where Taylor’s checkerspot reintroduction has flourished, but we are also losing ground. While it is too soon to conclude for certain, the fact that numbers at SCS are half of those at another site is disconcerting, as the two sites were equal in size in 2019.

**Snowy Plover:** Biologist Sundstrom worked on planning for possible Snowy Plover coast-wide surveys. Due to restrictions and multiple entities involved some of the surveys may not be conducted this year. She also worked on the 2019 Snowy Plover report.

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Monitoring Closed Wildlife Areas:** The Olympic Wildlife Crew concentrated on re-visiting sites and re-posting area closed signs, of which many had been torn down. During these site visits, ATV usage was very evident and very destructive. Help is needed to slow the ATV use. At the Chehalis Wildlife Area ADA trail access, Manager Gerchak approached a parked vehicle with a woman inside, she was educated on the closure of state lands due to COVID-19. In the previous days, the Olympic Wildlife Crew has been tending to access areas as well as trails. There seems to be much excitement from the public for the re-opening of state lands. People seem very happy to be allowed outdoors again.

**State Land Re-Opening:** With state land and most freshwater fishing opportunities opening at the same time, the Water Access Team was very fortunate to have received additional help in getting access sites ready for the public. We would like to commend the Fish Program, Enforcement, Wildlife, CAMP, and other agency staff members who shared in this critical process. The many hours that these volunteers put in, allowed the Water Access Team to remove logs on-ramps, brush out roads, clean and clear ADA parking stalls, pathways, boarding floats, and loading platforms. Additionally, all restrooms were sanitized, and the team had time to mow, weed eat, and blow off asphalt parking areas. Thank you!



*Summit Lake Before Opening*



*Mcintosh Lake Before Opening*

*Spencer Lake Open*



*Saint Clair Lake Open*



**Other Work Performed:** During routine maintenance of the newly opened lands and fishing season, coupled with an amazing weather window, the team noted that the large crowds at the sites were mostly abiding by the social distance guidelines.

*Traffic counts: Friday, May 8, 2020 – Sunday, May 10, 2020*

Water Access Site Name	Vehicle Count
Point No Point (Kitsap County)	1,017
Black Lake (Thurston County)	1,002
St. Claire Lake W. (Thurston County)	878
Luhr’s Landing (Thurston County)	860
Long Lake (Thurston County)	647
Hicks Lake (Thurston County)	550
Spencer Lake (Mason County)	516

*(That’s 5,470 cars at seven sites in three days!)*

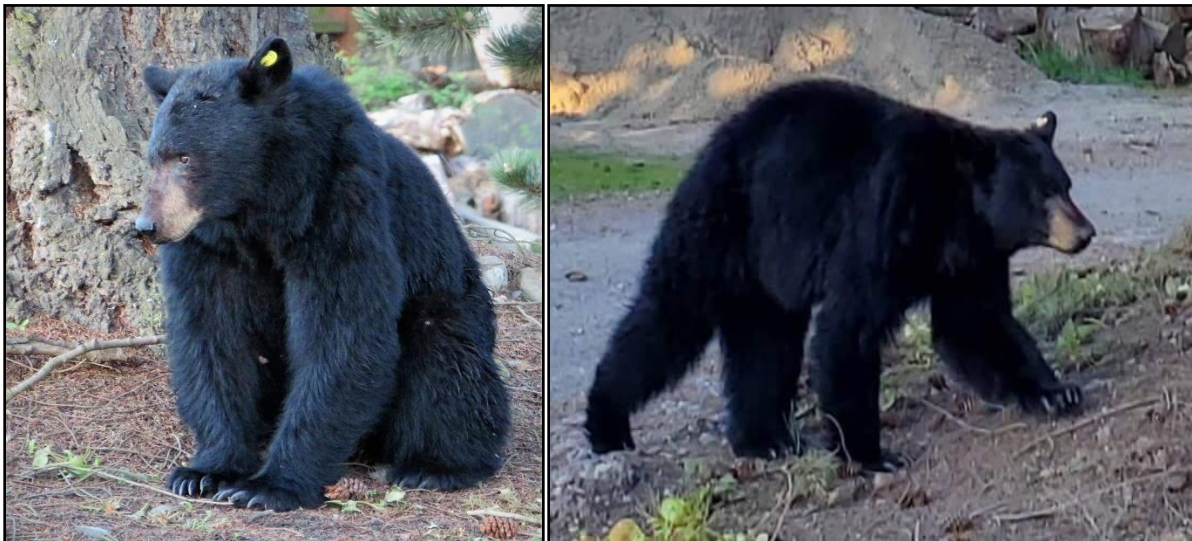
**3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

**Dungeness Bear (Part 2):** On April 10, 2020, Biologist Ament assisted local WDFW Enforcement Officers with immobilizing and relocating a bear that was roaming in the Dungeness area (see previous bi-weekly report). There was no history of this older female bear being known to have gotten into the garbage or showing any aggressive behavior towards humans. The bear was loaded in a culvert trap and relocated to a remote location in the Upper Dungeness watershed. A yellow ear tag was placed in the left ear of the bear. On the evening of April 16, 2020, our officers started getting calls about a bear with a yellow ear tag being reported near Sequim. The bear was first reported being observed around Happy Valley and then at the

Parkwood Community along Highway 101. The great photos below were taken by Dale Metzger who is the manager at Parkwood. The next morning the bear was along Hooker Road. The bear was briefly observed but then moved west into a wooded area. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Blankenship and Biologist Murphie arrived to help. The officer and biologist team were all hoping they would not have to take any serious action. They wanted to keep the bear away from people and were anticipating she would make her way to densely forested habitat on nearby DNR land.

The team finally had a report of the bear close to their location in the late morning. They were prepared for darting if needed. Fortunately, and as hoped, the bear moved into upper Matriotti Creek and was heading northwest into DNR land. The team was hopeful that the bear was likely moving back to normal turf and more suitable bear habitat. They were just about to disperse when there was a 911 call that the bear was along Parrish Road and was moving north towards the highway. The Enforcement Captain made the order to dart and relocate the bear again. There was certainly more potential for conflicts with humans if the bear continued to be in the vicinity of the highway or moved over to the north side.

The bear was darted again and after a short carry-out from a wooded parcel, all went smooth with getting the bear loaded. The team confirmed that the bear was an older female bear. As previously noted, her teeth were very yellow and worn. She weighed between 110 to 120 pounds. Conflict Specialist Blankenship suggested that a tooth be pulled for aging, so Biologist Ament carefully removed the small upper premolar tooth. She shared some communications with Cougar/Bear Specialist Beausoleil and sent the tooth envelope off to him. He saw photos of the teeth and guessed that the bear may be between 17 to 22 years old. The bear was not lactating, and no cubs were ever observed. Enforcement staff members conducted the transport of the bear to the far west side of the Olympics. They reported that she was mobile and alert when released late that evening.



***Tagged bear visits a Parkwood Retirement Community after being relocated - Photos by Parkwood Manager Dale Metzger***



*Worn yellow teeth of the older bear “Covi” the bear is transported by Officer Wessel*

**Dungeness Bear (Part 3):** Biologist Ament was notified by Sergeant Rosenberger on May 13, 2020, that the Dungeness Bear was euthanized by Officer Mooney on the evening of May 12, 2020. He was able to get within a few feet of the bear. This old sow had traveled over 20 miles from the release site to Forks. The bear was observed by landowners who reported that it was possibly sick or injured. They did report that the bear had a yellow tag in the left ear. Conflict Specialist Harris was consulted, and the decision was made to dispatch the bear. A sad end to the story but this bear was likely in some pain and had underlying health issues.

**Quinalt Bear:** Natural Resource Technician Tupen removed a bear trap that had been deployed for about a week in Quinalt. This trap had been targeting a nuisance bear in the area that seemed to be a little too comfortable around people. After a week of having the trap out, many residents in the area had stopped seeing the bear. Tupen gave his contact information to residents in the area and offered advice about avoiding conflict.

**Bear Timber Damage Permits:** Tupen tagged along with Biologist Harris to check a bear timber damage permit in Grays Harbor County. Several new peels were discovered at the reported damage site.

**Bear Complaints:** In the last few weeks, Tupen has responded to multiple complaints regarding nuisance bears from homeowners in Pacific County. Advice on securing attractants was given.

**Crop Damage:** Tupen spoke with a landowner who is concerned about crop damage caused by elk on his property. He is planning a site visit and will provide information on WDFW’s Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) program if applicable.

**Deer Hazing Gone Wrong:** Biologist Harris responded to a report of an injured deer in distress in Tokeland. After speaking with the RP, he drove to the address. While in the area he was flagged down by a person walking their dog. They asked if he was looking for the injured deer and he was told that it just went down to the tide flats. He proceeded to the RP’s residence and

the original deer reported was still in the yard. While the deer was mobile, she had issues using her hind end. She was gravid with no obvious injuries. He decided to ask the RP to monitor it and see if her condition worsened. She may have been having a difficult birth. Remembering the report from the person walking their dog, he walked to the edge of the property and looked out to the tide flats and saw a deer lying there. The position indicated that it was dead. Thinking it could be a deer that washed up with the tide he did not give it much thought until it lifted its head. Even from a distance, he could tell this deer was suffering.

After putting on boots to wade the channel he approached the deer and quickly determined that it should be euthanized. After euthanizing it he looked over the deer for obvious trauma. He located what appeared to be a small-caliber bullet wound in its rear end. When he turned around to look back at the shore, he saw another deer laying on the bank. He checked that deer and it was dead. Unfortunately, he noticed a small-caliber bullet wound in the hind end of that deer also.

WDFW Police were called. Officer Bolt arrived and they began performing necropsies on the deer to look for proof of a bullet. Sergeant John arrived later and assisted in the necropsy. After some discussion, Biologist Harris located the original doe and euthanized it. As suspected, there was a small-caliber bullet wound in her hind end also. She had a fully developed fawn in her. All the wounds were serious enough that the deer suffered greatly. The two that were euthanized would have lived a little longer but suffering until the end.

After performing the necropsies and collecting an intact bullet and fragments, WDFW Police began canvassing the neighborhood looking for information. One individual contacted by Officer Bolt confessed to shooting the deer because they were damaging the exotic plants in his yard. He claimed it was legal. Multiple recommended charges are being forwarded to the prosecutor's office. Sadly, four deer died, including the fawn, all because someone moved into an area with deer and did not make any reasonable attempts to prevent damage.

#### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Bush Prairie Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP):** Biologist Tirhi represented District 11 in an internal meeting to discuss and prepare for WDFW input towards this very important HCP that has implications for several state and [federally listed South Puget Sound Prairie species](#). WDFW staff members strategized processes going forward and roles. Other HCPs were also discussed including the City of Yelm, Puget Sound Energy, and Pierce County.



**Centralia Mine Acquisition Technical Team (CMATT):** Biologist Tirhi organized bi-weekly meetings of the Centralia Mine Acquisition Technical Team, a partnership of TransAlta's Centralia Mine and WDFW on a potential phased acquisition of reclaimed mine land for use as a WDFW Wildlife Area. Planning over this timeframe included grant opportunities and application, changes to reclamation plans, relationship with other land ownership blocks within the mine footprint and furthering a Phase 1 acquisition area.

**5) Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing for this installment.

**6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

**Covid-19:** This week the Olympic Wildlife Crew was in the process of learning about Phase 1 of the return to work plan and have started sanitizing the vehicles that have been or will be used. The crew is also in the works of locating and ordering PPE and other items needed to work safely regarding COVID-19.

On a positive note, Manager Gerchak (who lives on site) has been holding down the fort and taking delivery of items such as a new truck that will replace a truck with nearly 250,000 miles and many mechanical issues. They cannot wait to use it when things get back to normal and it has license plates.

The Olympic Wildlife Area Crew has continued sharpening their skills while quarantining and staying safe to stay healthy as per Governor Inslee's order. Not all of the employees of the Olympic Wildlife Area have the online technology to check-in but have been keeping in contact by telephone.

**7) Other**

Nothing for this installment.