

Wildlife Program

Week of Jan. 14 – Jan. 20, 2019

REGION 1

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Moose flight: Wildlife Biologist Ben Turnock and Special Species Section Manager Rich Harris flew in a helicopter to locate the last 10 moose with working collars in Game Management Unit (GMU) 117. The crew located all 10 moose and determined that only two cows had calves with them.



Photos from the helicopter flight to locate collared cow moose. Left: Two adult moose can be seen in the bottom right quarter of the photo. Right: a look out the window of the helicopter.

Forest Grouse: Biologists Atamian and Lowe participated in the annual forest grouse wing bee in Ellensburg. Staff members and volunteers from WDFW, ODFW, Kalispel Tribe, and the Washington Ruffed Grouse Society identified species, age class and sex (when possible) from nearly 800 samples submitted by grouse hunters across the state during the 2018 season.



Outreach/Partnerships: Biologist Baarstad delivered materials to the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council for nesting boxes. The waterfowl committee will be constructing approximately 45 wood duck and goldeneye nest boxes, which will be placed in areas of suitable habitat in northeast Washington this spring.

Food Plot: Private Lands Biologist Gaston reached out to a landowner who was interested in food plots this spring. The landowner has about 10 acres of farmland which they do not wish to farm anymore near a stream. Gaston also will mention options for hunting access and potential work with non-profit partners who may be able to provide seed for permanent wildlife habitat when he meets with the landowner in a few weeks.

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

Partner Meeting: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley attended the Columbia County Conservation District's annual meeting. Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley visited with many landowners that had WDFW access contracts and made appointments to meet with some of them next week.

Waikiki Springs Hazardous Trees: In working and talking with landowners at Waikiki Springs, Dziekan learned about an arborist report that the homeowners paid for to monitor the health of the cottonwoods. Specifically, the homeowners had the report for two years before Dziekan became aware of it. After reading through the report and seeing that many trees were listed as “high hazard, requires immediate attention,” Dziekan contacted WDFW Forester Ashiglar for a second opinion, and to look at some other trees around the property. Twelve trees were identified, in close proximity to private property, which required attention.

Dziekan met with the arborist crew from Washington State Parks this week to fall the hazardous trees. The crew started with smaller firs and pines along the upper property boundary, saving the remainder of their time for the trickier cottonwoods. In one day, they felled nine trees. The next day they came equipped with a bucket truck for the remainder of the cottonwoods. The trees were in extremely poor health, almost completely hollow, so the crew had to work very cautiously to fall them. They removed limbs to get the tree weighted on one side, hooked up rope and blocks, and had the trees tensioned with the winch on their truck when they were making their back cuts. Once the identified trees were taken down, they still had time left over. Dziekan had the crew remove two additional cottonwoods that were in poor health, along with a handful of snags along the switchback trail. In total, approximately 20 hazardous trees were taken down around Waikiki Springs.



Dead, twin-topped fir sitting along the property boundary behind a home



One of the work sites. This cluster of pines was in poor health, leaning uphill towards a homeowner's house, in an area with constant winds and no windbreak.



State Parks had to get the bucket truck for some of the trees that had an unfavorable lean.



One of the cottonwoods. This tree was still growing at the top, but had almost no wood supporting its weight. The other five trees were in similar condition.

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

Wolf 101 Presentation: Supervisor McCanna did a wolf presentation in Dayton at the Columbia County Conservation District’s annual meeting. There were 41 people in attendance. McCanna presented on wolf identification, statewide and local wolf numbers (2017 annual report numbers), statewide wolf management recovery objectives, translocation and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) process, nonlethal deterrent measures, and what to do if you have a suspected depredation. McCanna has two more wolf presentations later this month. It was a great overall meeting.

REGION 2

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDIFE

Pygmy Rabbit Safe Harbor: Private Lands Biologist Hughes drafted a letter for a landowner making them aware of the Safe Harbor program. The property has the habitat and is in the known pygmy rabbit area of distribution. Hughes gathered additional materials (FAQ sheet, example plan, and a list of activities covered) that will be included for the landowner. Hughes looked through the Safe Harbor database to find out what contact has been done in the past for two landowners who WDFW is hoping will enroll in Safe Harbor.

Sinlahekin Fuels Management Pile Burning: Maintenance Mechanic Boulger and Manager Wehmeyer were able to burn hand piles once the burn ban was lifted. Most of the piles had complete consumption. The piles were a product of thinning that was done as part of the Sinlahekin ecosystem restoration project. Most of the material was small ponderosa pine.

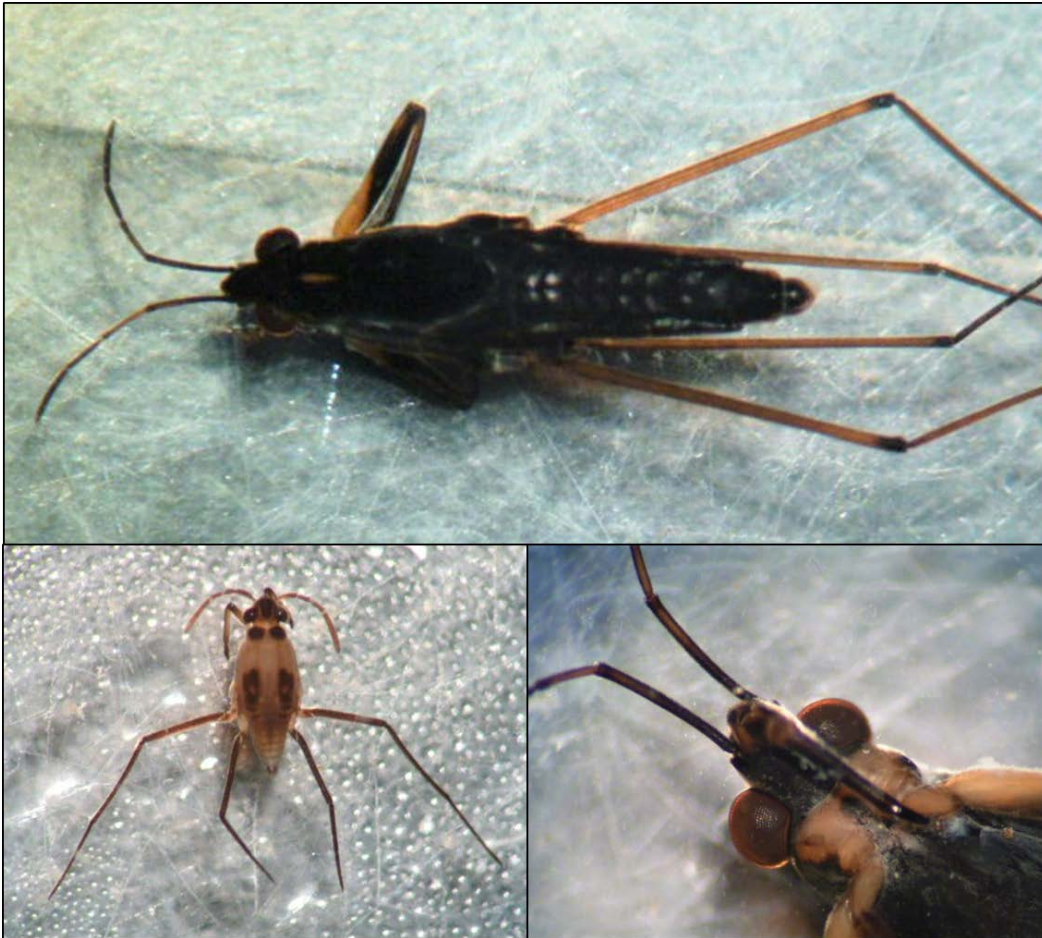


Maintenance Mechanic Boulger burning thinning piles - Photos by Wehmeyer

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

Invertebrates: Scientific Technician Bell worked on the North Potholes invertebrate project report, continued to analyze data, and processed Ephrata Lake invert samples in the lab.

Bug Blog (Alex Bell):



There are many species of “true bugs” (insects from the order Hemiptera) that live in and around aquatic habitats. Some occupy the moist marginal habitats of streams and ponds (e.g. Saldidae, Gelastocoridae), others live a truly submersed aquatic life (e.g. Belostomatidae, Nepidae), while others still have adapted to life on the surface of water. Water striders (family: Gerridae, pictured) are widely distributed throughout North America and tend to live in the still waters of lakes and ponds, but they also inhabit mountain streams and rivers. A few species even live in the open ocean (see *Halobates*) making them the only insects to successfully colonize this habitat.

The most notable feature of gerrids is their ability to glide on the surface of water. To do this, water striders harness the physics of surface tension by widely distributing their weight using their long slender legs (see the top photo of an adult and bottom left photo of a young nymph). On top of that, their bodies and legs are covered in thousands of tiny hair-like structures, making them strongly hydrophobic. As a result, gerrids are able to remain comfortably atop the surface of the water even when motionless. In contrast, other animals that are capable of walking on water (i.e., basilisk lizards) must be in constant motion or they will eventually sink.

Water striders are highly attuned to the vibrations on the water's surface. Gerrids can detect prey, mostly insects and spiders, from the minute vibrations resulting from struggling or falling into the water. This is similar to the way spiders sense the movement of captured prey in a sticky webs. Water vibrations are also integral to the social lives of water striders. Using their forelegs and midlegs, gerrids can create small ripples of varying frequencies. High frequency waves are used to threaten or repel other individuals, while low frequency ripples are used for courtship. Essentially, ripples are the social media for water bugs. Impressively, gerrids are able to discriminate these particular signals from the background noise caused by wind, or the movement of other animals.

Lands 20/20 Meeting with Okanogan County Commissioners: Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug, Region 2 Manager Brown, and District Biologist Fitkin met with Okanogan County Commissioners to discuss three potential land transactions in Okanogan County, two in the Okanogan Valley and one in the Methow. The group discussed WDFW's efforts to secure our full Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) obligations, the need for additional operations and maintenance, and the conservation, recreation and administrative values of each project. The proposals were well received and local staff look forward to working with the county on these projects.

REGION 3

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Oak Creek Wildlife Area - Manager Greg Mackey

Oak Creek staff members continued feeding operations at the Nile, Cowiche, and sheep feed sites, seeing steady numbers of animals, although not all Clemans sheep are coming to the feed site. Elk continue to remain scarce during the weekends at the Nile when there is peak recreational traffic, but continue to clean up hay presumably at night.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area - Manager Melissa Babik

Manager Babik sent a second round of revisions to the graphic designers for the Robinson, Watt, and Green Gate interpretive panels. Babik is thrilled how the illustrations are turning out.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area

WELCOME—Whether you enjoy wildflowers in the spring, the serenity of summer forests, vibrant fall colors, or hitting the snowy trails of winter, the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area has it all. Camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, and wildlife watching are all welcome and popular here.

WHO LIVES HERE?

Large mammals: Mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, black bear, cougar, wolves and coyotes.

Small mammals: Three-toed hares, pine marten, beaver, water vole and ground squirrels.

Birds: Raptors (birds of prey) such as golden eagles and spotted owls, and a diversity of neo-tropical migrant songbirds like warblers.

Fish: Local streams host resident trout, anadromous salmon, and steelhead.

Reptiles and amphibians: sharp-tail snakes, pygmy short-horned lizards, and rough-skinned newts. Rattlesnakes are abundant. While they are potentially dangerous, they are not aggressive if avoided and treated with respect.



⚠️ WHAT ARE THE RULES?

This is a Green Dot Road Management Area, meaning you can **ONLY** drive on roads marked with green dots (see map and watch for signs). Regulations for camping, campfires, motor vehicle travel, and other uses are meant to help make your visit safe and enjoyable. Please report illegal use, pack out all trash, and ENJOY.

WHO MANAGES THIS LAND?

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) manage this diverse landscape to:

- 1) preserve, protect and perpetuate fish and wildlife while providing sustainable recreational opportunities.
- 2) ensure environmental protection, public safety and perpetual funding for schools and communities.

L.T. MURRAY WILDLIFE AREA

The L.T. Murray Wildlife Area's 50,861 acres lie about 15 miles west of Ellensburg at the headwaters of the Yakima Basin. WDFW owns 42,232 acres and leases 8,629 acres from DNR. Most was purchased from rancher August Lowell T. Murray in 1968 to protect critical winter range for deer and elk. About 2,000 elk are fed here each winter to minimize damage on adjacent private agricultural lands.






Draft interpretive panel to be placed at Joe Watt feeding site



Draft interpretive panel to be installed at the Robinson Canyon entrance

Manager Babik met with Biologist Kindschuh to set up the L.T. Murray shop for the annual grouse wing bee. A special thanks to Natural Resource Technicians Daling and Nass for getting the shop tidy, tables organized, and the lot plowed for the event.

Elk feeding update: The weather brought colder temperatures of 22 to 31 degrees Fahrenheit and four inches of fresh snow this week, bringing more elk to both feed sites. Numbers at Joe Watt went from 450 to more than 700 by the end of the week. An actual mid-week count indicated 608, with more unaccounted for on top of the ridge. Of that 608, there were 45 branched adult bulls and 13 spikes. A count at Robinson Canyon showed 450 elk, with 23 branched adult bulls and six spikes. Conflict Technician Leuck discovered over 100 hanging around outside the fence at the top of Robinson Canyon. They were able to get some into the fence after baiting the return gates, which brought the feedlot numbers at Robinson up to about 600 elk by the weekend.

Colockum Wildlife Area - Manager Pete Lopushinsky

Manager Lopushinsky worked with Assistant District Biologist Moore on possible quaking aspen restoration projects. During the last Colockum Wildlife Area Advisory Committee meeting, there was interest in doing restoration work on degraded aspen stands on the Colockum, and Moore had interest in this as well. Lopushinsky started work this week on ways to identify aspen stands across the wildlife area, possibly by remote aerial imagery.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area - Manager Phillip Buser

Assistant Manager Kaelber contacted waterfowl hunters in the field to gather information for future wetlands management. Hunters have been very appreciative of the work being done and like sharing ideas.

District 4 Wildlife Biologist - Jason Fidorra

District Wildlife Biologist Fidorra worked with partners and aircraft vendors in coordinating the upcoming pronghorn survey. The survey will occur over two days when fog and weather permit, hopefully in early February.

District Wildlife Biologist Fidorra spent considerable time submitting edits and comments for the Sunnyside Wildlife Area, 10-year planning document.

District Wildlife Biologist Fidorra reviewed an Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA) grant proposal and GIS materials related to fire protection in the Blackrock Landscape, which is a conservation priority given its connectivity value between the shrub steppe landscapes of the Yakima Training Center and Hanford Reach National Monument.

District Wildlife Biologist Fidorra wrote a letter of support for Blue Mountain Wildlife in regards to a grant request they were completing. The rehabilitation center is the only one serving the Tri-Cities area and provides critical services for Washington's wildlife and residents.

District Wildlife Biologist Fidorra assisted in preparing for the second year of short-eared owl survey across western states by reaching out to potential volunteers and responding to volunteer inquiries. Almost all of the surveys are conducted by citizen science volunteers, and most of the available survey slots have been taken.

Yakima Canyon Bighorn Sheep Project: Biologist Bernatowicz checked one bait pile from a nearby highway and noticed all the apples and pulp were gone. A check of the site/camera only left a mystery. The camera only recorded one deer at the site, then a few quail and no bait. There were numerous ungulate tracks and bighorn sheep within 50 meters of the bait on the check. There did not appear to be human tampering and the camera did not take pictures of Bernatowicz arriving. The site was re-baited, new batteries were put in the camera, and programming was double-checked.



One deer at a large bait pile



A few quail and only salt left

L.T. Murray Forest Treatments: Biologist Moore continued to work on data and literature review to inform forestry treatments on the L.T. Murray for mule deer, elk, and forest grouse.

Public Wolf Reports: Biologist Moore retrieved a camera set he placed last week after observing tracks of two wolves in fresh snow. When traveling to the set he again observed tracks of two wolves together, and the camera captured pictures of the animals as well.



The two wolves traveling together





The two photos above are a sequence of one animal passing by the camera set, then another passing nine seconds later

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

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area - Manager Melissa Babik

Manager Babik met with personnel from DNR to review restoration work in Green Gate and future collaboration in signage and restoration. Babik is collaborating with Mountains to Sound Greenway on an ALEA grant and offered to support signage in Morrison and Moonlight canyons (outside of the wildlife area) under this grant.

Region 3 Private Lands Biologist - Seth Hulett

Private Lands Biologist Hulett assisted five hunters interested in gaining hunting access on areas enrolled in the Hunt by Reservation or Hunt by Written Permission program.

Private Lands Biologist Hulett met with a landowner in Eltopia to get their signature for a hunting access contract.

Private Lands Biologist Hulett completed one hunting access contract for reenrollment. The site will move from Feel Free to Hunt to Hunt by Written Permission. The landowner was also contacted about their parent's farm and will ask his mother what she would like to do about her reenrollment.

Region 3 Private Lands Technician - Ashley Rodgers

Private Lands Technician Rodgers continued to visit Hunting Access sites in Franklin and Benton counties. All registration sites were maintained.

Private Lands Technician Rodgers continued organizing and entering hunter data from the Army Corp pheasant release sites, as well as sites enrolled into Hunt by Reservation.

Private Lands Technician Rodgers changed signs at the Finley Register to Hunt site to help direct hunters into the new entry point.

Private Lands Technician Rodgers went through all the signs recently collected from expired hunting access contracts. All signs were organized and placed at the Windmill site.

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

Oak Creek Wildlife Area - Manager Greg Mackey

There continues to be significant public visitation at headquarters even though feeding still has not commenced at headquarters. The help of the Washington Education Corps volunteers is greatly appreciated as they continue to staff the Oak Creek Visitor's Center on weekends to inform visitors about the status of the winter feeding program.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area - Manager Melissa Babik

Manager Babik gave a presentation to the Ellensburg High School's Environmental AP class about wildlife management. The students continue to ask high-level questions and impress Babik with their critical thinking.

Natural Resource Technician Nass and Daling took a high school senior out to feed elk for his job shadow requirement.



High school student, volunteer, and job shadow

District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist - Don Hand

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducted deer hazing patrols at wine grape vineyards and orchards in the Paterson area. Historically, these areas receive increased damage from deer in the late winter and early spring. Nonlethal techniques and available damage permits are working well at addressing damage impacts.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with landowners regarding elk damage in winter wheat fields along Hanford's southern border. Cold and foggy conditions have decreased elk activity near the top of Rattlesnake Mountain.



Foggy and frosty conditions on Rattlesnake Mountain

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to monitor elk activity near Horn Rapids where reports of possible movements of elk leaving the Hanford National Monument were received.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted a landowner who was receiving elk damage to his haystacks. It was recommended that panels be used to protect his hay and that a nonlethal acoustic and visual hazing devise, Critter Getter, could be loaned to address the problem.

District 8 Wildlife Conflict Specialist - Steven Wetzel

Conflict Technician Leuck and Conflict Specialist Wetzel monitored for elk in the Thorp area several days this week. No elk were detected this week.

Conflict Specialist Wetzel contacted a landowner in Cle Elum who called to report a limping bull elk. A check of the area found no limping elk. The landowner will contact again if the bull is observed.



Bull group with reported limping elk

Conflict Technician Leuck herded several hundred elk through return and open gates this week. Elk are getting through holes in the elk fence that are deliberately cut. Conflict Specialist Wetzel and Technician Leuck herded elk on Friday with some success but close to 100 elk are still on the wrong side of the L.T. Murray elk fence.

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

Colockum Wildlife Area - Manager Pete Lopushinsky

Assistant Manager Hagan worked on plans and researching cutting tools for cutting oilfield pipe into seven-foot lengths for fence posts. We have received a truckload shipment of pipe intended for completion of two miles of boundary fencing at the head of Stray and Tekison creeks.

REGION 4

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

East/West Bear Project: District 12 assisted Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil and Assistant Bear and Cougar Specialist Welfelt with ongoing bear den work. This portion of the project entails locating dens, placing cameras to document emergence and cub numbers, and recollar/adjust collars on adult females and potentially collar yearling cubs. Work where newborn cubs are known to be present will be limited (camera placement only) to avoid den abandonment.



Yearling bears in a den during recent east/west bear project work

Breeding Common Loon Habitat: Biologist Anderson conferenced with the University of Washington, Washington Fish and Wildlife Coop, Dr. Sara Converse, and student regarding ongoing efforts to model likely summer resident and breeding common loon habitat. The aim is

to develop a predictive model of likely use for driving surveys in future, estimates of time needed for surveys (minimum), examination of population trend data over time to provide for Washington population estimates.

Bear Den Check: Biologist Anderson went on a bear den check with the carnivore section. A number of dens were visited but nobody was home. One den had an individual (no yearlings) – that individual appeared to have ran out of the den and away from us humans as we tried to reach it.

Whidbey Conservation District Tour: Private Lands Biologist Wingard participated in a Whidbey Island conservation district tour that was part of the Washington Conservation Commission meeting. Several new contacts were made and the tour displayed the variety of conservation work happening on the island.

Swan Collection: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo assisted District 14 Wildlife Program personnel with collecting multiple dead swans throughout Whatcom, Skagit, and Snohomish counties.



Dead swan collection

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

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program: All Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program sites are open for hunting. Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo along with Private Lands Biologist Wingard toured Waterfowl Quality Hunt program sites to assess site use and identify issues.



Late season waterfowl use at a Waterfowl Quality Hunt program site in Whatcom County

Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program Site Maintenance: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo delivered and spread wood chips and gravel at various Waterfowl Quality Hunt Program parking sites that required maintenance.

418/4941 Elk Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Wingard spoke with multiple hunters to inquire about their hunt and success.

Spring Bear Hunt Preparation: Private Lands Biologist Wingard contacted partner landowners for the spring bear hunt to arrange a date for the pre-hunt meeting with hunters and partner landowners.

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

Landowner Payment Forms: Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo, and Private Lands Biologist Wingard met with partner landowners to discuss any issues that arose during the season and to sign A19s.

Public Questions: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technicians Otto and Deyo were contacted by many hunters regarding hunting opportunities for waterfowl and wildlife viewing.

Hunt by Reservation Double Bookings: Private Lands Biologist Wingard and Natural Resource Technician Deyo worked extensively on addressing double bookings in the Hunt by Reservation system for Waterfowl Quality Hunt program sites.

Instructor Support: Hunter Education Coordinator Dazey activated 14 classes. Dazey also sent out one applicant packet and one instructor application. Dazey also assisted numerous instructors to fill out their Hunter Education instructor incentive permit applications. Dazey delivered training supplies to the team that teaches at the Nile golf course building. Dazey attended and evaluated the Hunter Education team that teaches at the Snohomish fire department training room. The team is doing a very good job of delivering the WDFW content. Coordinator Dazey scheduled pre-service training sessions at Mill Creek office and at Camp Pigott and sent out invites to the applicants to attend. So far, nine applicants have registered for the PST. Pre-Service Training (PST) requires two sessions that also includes the applicants chance to assist in teaching a class. Coordinator Dazey graded instructor exams.

Hunter Education Student Support: Coordinator Dazey worked with Dolores Noyes to start the process of scheduling a class in Spanish. Dazey assisted several students to find a hunter education class in their area. Dazey also answered parent questions about the best type of class for their child. Dazey also worked with Kalkomey to identify the problem of regulation worksheets from previous years going back to 2014 being linked to students' completed certifications for the on-line class.

Volunteer Support: Volunteer Coordinator Dazey answered and helped two volunteers to find projects in their area.

REGION 5

No report submitted this week

REGION 6

GOAL 1: CONSERVE AND PROTECT NATIVE FISH AND WILDLIFE

Swan Mortalities Lake Tapps/Snag Island: WDFW has been working with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and The Northwest Swan Conservation Association to address ongoing swan mortalities from lead poisoning on Lake Tapps over the past year. The poisoning is being caused by the ingestion of lead shot and lead fishing gear used at this popular fishing lake or possibly in the surrounding area. Both dead and live swans are being captured as reported. Dead swans undergo necropsy and live swans are taken to rehabilitators.

Two dead swans and one sick swan were captured over the past two weeks. Tirhi plans to work with partners, the local jurisdiction, and lake owners to resolve the issue.



Sick swan captured on Lake Tapps being taken to rehabilitation

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

Goose hunter checks: Biologist Michaelis continued field checking and goose hunter contacts in primarily the southern portion of Pacific County. During the second reporting period (Jan. 13 through Jan. 19), hunters again reported greater numbers of geese in the local area.

Date	Location /County	# of Hunters	✓ or phoned in	January 13 - January 19 Goose Hunter Checks Goose Species Reported or Recorded										
				Cackler	Aleutian	Taverner	Lesser	Dusky	Western	GWF	Snow	UK/Other		
1-13	SWPA	2	✓	7		3								
1-13	SWPA	3	PI						1					1
1-16	SWPA	4	PI	1		2	1		2					
1-19	SWPA	3	PI	Hunters phoned in reporting no geese harvested										
1-19	SWPA	9	✓	7			4		2					
Totals		21		15		5	5		5					1

SWPA = Riekkola Willapa NWR, Sandridge Rd., and near the town of Chinook. ✓ = field checked, PI = Birds phoned in and classed as to what the hunter(s) believed them to be.

One group of goose hunters, hunting the Riekkola Unit of the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge had an upcoming youth hunter in the group.

Dusky Goose Survey # 7: Biologists Michaelis, Sundstrom, and Novack surveyed the district for marked dusky Canada geese and other geese.

1/15/2019	Cackler	#banded	Aleutian	#banded	Tav/Lesser	#banded	Dusky	#banded	Western	#banded	Wusky	#banded	GWF	Snow	Unknown	Totals
Grays Harbor County	121	0	0	0	304	0	350	3	384	0	0	0	1	14	453	1,627
North Pacific County	414		0		412		1,387	10	131		0		0	0	200	2,544
South Pacific County	1,483	0	0	0	481	0	800	23	129	0	0	0	0	0	980	3,873
Total	2,018	0	0	0	1,197	0	2,537	36	644	0	0	0	1	14	1,633	8,044



Six collared dusky Canada geese along the Naselle River west of the town of Naselle

North Rainier Elk Herd Planning: Biologists Tirhi and Smith, Section Manager Hoenes, Regional Wildlife Manger Calkins, Lead Dobler, and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe Biologist Vales met to review and respond to internal WDFW comments received on the draft elk herd plan. The draft is being updated now and will be sent shortly for external and tribal review before the public review begins.

Grouse Wing Bee: Biologist Michaelis transported the Region 6 grouse wing samples to Ellensburg and attended the annual grouse wing bee. Biologists Tirhi and Butler also assisted. WDFW distributes collection barrels throughout the state at various locations where grouse hunters are known to frequent. A sign instructs the hunters to clip one or more wings from grouse, place in a bag located at the barrel and fill out some information on the bag, and deposit. WDFW staff members then take these wings and determine species, age, and sex. Its takes a team of biologists a full day to process considering the number of wings collected. WDFW hopes to distribute more barrels in the future and increase hunter participation considering this is one of the main sources of data on grouse harvest and production.



Region 6 Biologists Butler and Michaelis and volunteer processing grouse wings

Forks Elk: With the second antlerless permit season ongoing, Biologist Harris reports that it has been pretty quiet. Elk are being harvested with very few complaints. One proud father shared several pictures along with a detailed story of his son's hunt. Two of his sons drew permits for the January hunt. Each boy had to approach landowners on his own and asked permission to hunt. Several long days in the field, youthful charm, and Forks hospitality paid off for these two youth hunters with two nice cow elk. The third youth, who was reportedly along for the company but not interested in hunting or taking hunters education, reportedly changed his mind and wants to take hunters education so he can go hunting. Below is a copy and paste of the last paragraph from an email Biologist Harris received from the youth's father:

“This was a great hunt for these young men. They gained a lot of confidence talking to property owners, using maps, taking clean shots on large animals, and knowing the exact rules on where and what they could hunt. This trip fostered a new hunter who very much is looking forward to the next fall for a reason other than school starting. This great opportunity would not have been possible without the support of you and Officer Stolp. I very much hope that this special hunt will be available again next year and will make it the number one hunt option.”



Youth hunter looking for sign.



*Youth hunters being youth hunters.
This picture taken at the Anderson Homestead
WDFW wildlife area.*



Long days and early mornings often lead to naps. All hunters have done this and know the recuperative power of a brief nap taken on a moss mattress.



Successful youth hunter (middle) with his first elk



Another successful youth hunter with his first elk

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

Pocket Gopher Management: Biologist Tirhi met with the homeowner association president of a subdivision in McKenna to review their need to remove danger conifer trees in a Mazama pocket gopher reserve area. Considering this is a timbered tract in which no gophers reside, Tirhi granted permission. Additionally Tirhi was able to take a look at a gopher tunnel that had been placed as part of the mitigation under the road for gopher's to use for dispersal. Although the tunnel is used by other wildlife (per the HOA president), it is unlikely any gophers would use it considering it leads to a heavily forested/shrubby area not preferred by gophers.

Theler Wetlands Public Meeting: Program Manager Calkins and Wildlife Area Manager Lowery participated in a public meeting sponsored by the North Mason School District to hear public testimony regarding the proposed transfer of the property from school district to WDFW ownership. The site, including adjacent WDFW lands is an extremely popular birding, hiking, and educational site. The meeting was well attended by local residents and a few waterfowl hunters who use the designated blinds in the Union River Delta. Many of the individuals who spoke supported the transfer, but a variety of concerns were voiced as well. These included suggestions that the state should reimburse the district for the value of the land and concerns related to future management and maintenance of existing public trails and habitats and enforcement needs. WDFW thanks the school district for allowing us to take part in this forum and their past and future partnership.

Satsop Elk: Natural Resource Technician Tupen continued to monitor the elk herd frequenting the field near Satsop and Highway 12. This group has been a huge drain of staff member's time, as usual.

Wynoochee Elk: Natural Resource Technician Tupen is also monitoring several groups of elk in the Wynoochee Valley. Currently there are kill and damage prevention permits issued in the valley and one Master Hunter deployed. Some of the producers are trying to harvest for a tribal nutrition program.



A herd of elk looking very comfortable along Wynoochee Valley Road

Natural Resource Technician Tupen also delivered kill permits and damage prevention permits to landowners near Satsop and Humptulips and got the chance to explore a few of these properties on foot so, he can advise permit holders on where to set up and the safest areas to shoot on these properties.