Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

June 1 to June 15, 2019

DIVERSITY DIVISION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

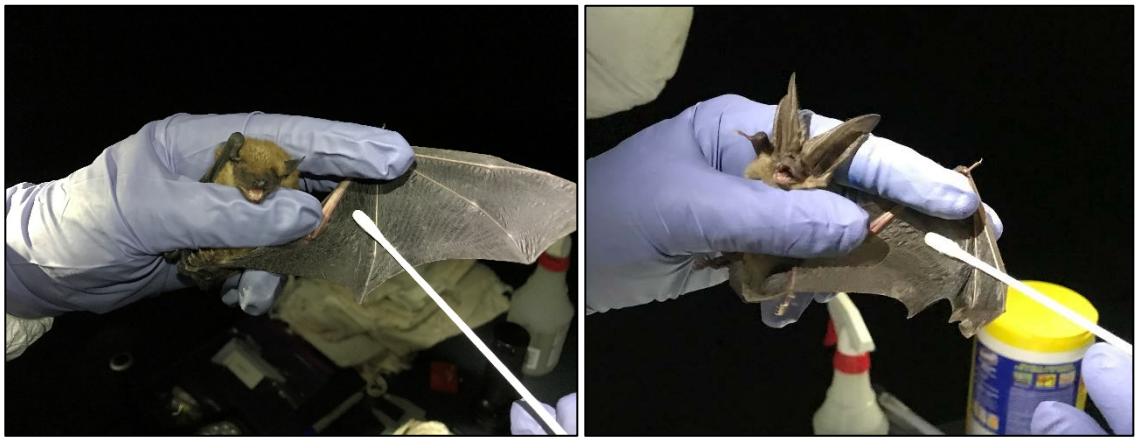
1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Red Knot Conservation: Natural Resource Scientist Buchanan worked with several partners to complete and submit a proposal to secure funds for a multi-year project on red knot genetics, population status, and migration that would begin in 2020.

Snowy Plover Surveys: Natural Resource Scientist Buchanan assisted with the survey of adult snowy plovers at Leadbetter Point. The survey was coordinated by Biologist Sundstrom out of Region 6.

Spotted Owl Conservation: Natural Resource Scientist Buchanan participated in a conference call with other members of the Barred Owl Science Team (BOST). Buchanan is a liaison to the team which is based in California and focuses on research and management issues involving the interaction of barred owl and spotted owl populations in that state.

White-nose Syndrome/Bat Surveillance: WDFW Biologists Tobin, Holman, Salzer, and Butler collected samples from bat roosts in Lewis and Thurston counties for white-nose syndrome (WNS) testing. WDFW Biologist Tobin also worked with WDFW Biologist Wickhem and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services biologists in Klickitat County to trap bats in order to assess their health and collect samples for WNS testing. This work is part of a statewide effort to monitor bat health and understand the distribution of the deadly bat disease, WNS.



A big brown bat (Eptesicus fuscus; left) and a Townsend's big-eared bat (Corynorhinus townsendii; right) being swabbed for WNS testing - Photo by Carly Wickhem (WDFW)

Triple high mist net setup at Klickitat County roost where bats were assessed and samples were collected for WNS testing - Photo by Carly Wickhem (WDFW)

Northern Leopard Frog Recovery: Too much of a good thing! That is rarely stated when working on endangered species recovery but that is the situation with the northern leopard frog head-starting effort. Oregon Zoo has had great success rearing northern leopard frog tadpoles with little or no mortality to date. This combined with WDFW delivering more eggs than expected has resulted in the need to find a second facility to help with raising the tadpoles. Dr. Crespi, a Washington State University (WSU) research partner on the northern leopard frog reintroduction project, has offered her research facilities to help with this effort. Biologists Hallock and Grabowsky, with Endangered Species Section Manager Anderson, have been working on the coordination that goes into making this type of transfer happen successfully. After metamorphosis, these head-started frogs will be released at a reintroduction site in the Columbia Basin. WDFW wishes to thank Dr. Crespi and WSU for their assistance. WDFW also thanks Oregon Zoo for taking such great care of the northern leopard frog tadpoles. This project is funded by a Competitive State Wildlife Grant (C-SWG) that was awarded for northern leopard frog conservation and recovery in Washington, Idaho, and Canada.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Private Lands Conservation Partnerships: Farm Bill Coordinator Mike Kuttel, Jr. participated in a conference call with representatives of the Pacific Northwest Coast Landscape Conservation Design (LCD) to work on collaboration with the Southwest Washington Small Forest Lands Conservation Partnership Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The LCD is working on a landscape conservation design with a focus on working agricultural and

forestlands. The group is interested in helping promote the RCPP and may offer an opportunity this summer for Kuttel to participate in a "speaker series" to outreach to stakeholders in southwest Washington. Kuttel participated in a Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) Farmland Preservation grant technical review committee meeting in Olympia. Typically, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) holds WWRP grant rounds in even numbered years, but there was funding left over from the 2018 grant round, so RCO held a supplemental grant round in 2019. The grant applicants will use feedback from the committee to refine their applications in preparation for final ranking in August.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Red Knot Education and Outreach: Natural Resource Scientist Buchanan drafted a short overview about the Pacific Flyway population of red knots that has now been posted on the eBird Northwest website (see https://ebird.org/pnw/news/meet-the-red-knot). Biologist Salzer created the maps associated with the online post.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

GAME DIVISION

Nothing for this reporting period.

HUNTER EDUCATION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Nothing for this reporting period.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Nothing for this reporting period.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Region 1 Coordinator Whorton conducted a pre-service training for applicant instructors. Pre-service training sessions provide new hunter education instructor applicants a broad overview of the department, the Hunter Education Program, types and requirements for hunter education classes, computer systems, and introduce applicants to fundamentals of teaching.

Region 2 Coordinators Garcia and Whorton finalized hunter education instructor in-service training sessions on the eastside with Wenatchee session. Approximately 39 attendees. The highlight of all our in-service trainings is recognizing our instructors for their volunteer efforts through seniority awards and special accomplishment awards as highlighted below:

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey attended the in-service training held in Wenatchee where he was able to present the Region 4 Coordinator's Award to Hunter Education Instructor Liz Crane. The Region Coordinator's Award is designed to recognize an individual hunter education instructor or teaching teams that filled a critical need for the program. This could be holding important classes in rural areas, helping their field coordinator in a tremendous way, or just making a significant difference in the way the program is delivered to students. Liz Crane was recognized in Region 4 for her invaluable assistance teaching classes oriented towards women in the region. Liz stepped up at the last minute to help make sure that the women's classes were successful.

Coordinator Dazey with Region 4 Coordinator's Award recipient Liz Crain

At the in-service training, Region 3 Coordinator Garcia was also able to recognize Region 2 recipients

A big thank you to all that made the in-service training so successful

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey, along with volunteer instructors Chuck Ray, Bob Palmer, Johanna Palmer, and John Campanella, collaborated with the Washington All Mission Academy for Civil Air Patrol (CAP) cadets and taught a group of CAP cadets hunter education as well as basic rifle certification. At the end of the class, all 19 cadets had completed basic rifle training and had hunter education cards. The outreach was so successful that the expectation is that hunter education will also be part of next year's program for cadets.

Cadets ready to demonstrate skills in the field course

The field course included real life hunting scenarios. Here in the eastern Washington sage country.

Hunter Education Instructor Johanna Palmer running a tight range as Range Safety Officer

Note the big game pamphlet on corner of table. The course includes knowledge of where and how to interpret the regulations

Region 6 Coordinator Montgomery has been conducting classroom visits at Cabela's, Upper Nisqually, Bremerton Trap and Skeet, Paul Bunyan, and Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

With National Hunting and Fishing Day coming up, Montgomery has been meeting with sponsors and other non-governmental organizations. Montgomery and Volunteer Program Manager Redmond met with and toured Tacoma Sportsmen's Club, the site of this year's event, to have discussions on where we can place partners, parking, and fish ponds.

Region 3 Coordinator Garcia visited the Zillah High School and presented information on the WDFW, hunter education, the master hunter program, and volunteer opportunities to two separate classes.

Region 3 Coordinator Garcia visited hunter education classes in Brewster, Quincy, and Okanogan.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

LANDS DIVISION

Nothing for this reporting period.

SCIENCE DIVISION

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 1

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Nothing for this reporting period.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Range Rider Contacts and Invoice: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman met the WDFW range rider who is actively working a livestock allotment within the Stranger wolf pack home range. Through trail camera placement, the range rider has noted several photographs of wolves traveling along the same road systems as the ranging livestock. No incidents have been reported. One photo shows a moose calf head in the jaws of an adult wolf. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman submitted payment paperwork for one range rider.

Kettle River Water Access Parking Areas Complete: Water access developments were completed on the Kettle River sites along Kroupa Road in northwest Ferry County. Both the north and south properties have parking areas with information kiosks and vault toilets. The north property also has a wildlife view blind overlooking a pond and boat launch for floats and small vessels usable on that portion of the river.

Stevens County Depredation Investigations: WDFW staff members conducted two depredation investigations near Northport on adult cows. The first cow was determined to be a confirmed wolf depredation and the second cow had no wildlife related injuries (unconfirmed cause of death).

An adult cow prior to a depredation investigation in Stevens County

Deterrence Patrols: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman conducted a deterrence patrol in west central Stevens County where the Stranger wolf pack members continue to cross paths with livestock on a summer grazing allotment. No incidents to date. A second patrol was in the Wedge area of Stevens County. Two of the three major livestock producers have turned out on their grazing allotments. No incidents to report. A third patrol was conducted in east central Stevens County within the southern portion of the Smackout wolf pack home range. Two of the major livestock producers have recently released cattle onto their U.S. Forest Service (USFS) grazing allotments. No incidents to date.

TV Interview: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman did an interview about how to be safe in cougar country with a local news station.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Habitat Maintenance: Biologist Baarstad completed mowing for weed control within a shrub-planting project on private lands. The planting was established this spring on a Hunt by Written Permission site in northwest Lincoln County. Baarstad assisted Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area personnel with mowing of shrubsteppe restoration fields for annual weed control. Private Lands Biologist Gaston and Natural Resource Worker Fish met with a landowner in Whitman County and visited a food plot, which was planted this spring. Private Lands Biologist Gaston and Natural Resource Worker Fish set up a trail camera to document any wildlife use of the food plot as it grows.

State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): Private Lands Biologist Gaston worked on a contract modification for a property enrolled in SAFE CRP. The original contract called for a shrub species, prairie sage, to be planted, but local nurseries did not have any or would not have any next spring. A modification allowed two other species to be planted instead.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

House AG Natural Resources Committee Tour Preparation: Supervisor McCanna participated on two conference calls to organize a tour for northeast Washington highlighting prescribed burning, forest management, predator prey study, meeting with range riders and livestock producers, depredations, nonlethal tools, and wildlife conflict. The tour is scheduled for July 8.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) Other

Soil Health Training: Private Lands Supervisor Earl and Private Lands Biologists Gaston and Thorne Hadley participated in four, two hour Natural Resources Conservation (NRCS) led soil health webinars in preparation for a field led NRCS soil training in Pullman later this month.

McGregor Field Tour: Supervisor McCanna attended one of the McGregor field crop tours to attain additional pesticide credits for his license. McGregor staff provided a very good educational tour. McCanna also met a landowner who farms north of Garfield who showed interest in a WDFW hunting access program after visiting throughout the tour. McCanna passed the contact information on to Private Lands Biologist Gaston who contacted the landowner and will meet next Monday to review a contract.

REGION 2

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 3

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 4

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Bog Beetle Surveys: After receiving reports of possible Beller's bog beetle sightings from DNR personnel, Biologist Moore conducted a survey at the site on Little Cranberry Lake, Anacortes in Skagit County. Several specimens were collected and will be sent to experts to confim identification. If confirmed, this site will become the new most northernly extent of the beetle's distribution, which is very exciting for a state listed candidate and federal species of concern!

The beautiful floating bog mat that was surveyed for the state and federally listed Beller's bog beetle

Island Marble Butterfly: Work continues in District 13 to conserve the Island Marble Butterfly. We met with some key landowners to continue efforts to inform residents of San Juan and Lopez islands about the opportunity to enroll in a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances that will likely open up soon. This agreement asks landowners to plant butterfly habitat in exchange for relief from "take" if the butterfly is listed as federally endangered. More information is available through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website link.

Biologist Milner also participated in team discussions regarding the shortage of suitable habitat plants in the right morphological condition to support newly laid butterfly eggs as adults have emerged this spring. All cooperators agree that creating new patches of butterfly habitat will be crucial to the recovery of the species.

Nighttime Bat Surveys: District staff members coordinated plans for exit surveys at bat maternity sites that begin soon. These surveys are done to a specific protocol, involving several people counting bats as they exit their maternity roosts. We also completed guano collections at three sites in the district. Guano will be sent to a lab for testing to see if it contains indications of the presence of PD fungus, the agent that causes white-nose syndrome, which has killed thousands of bats in North America.
A new maternity site was identified in Oak Harbor, and the species appear to be both big brown and little brown bats. Because of extreme heat on the night of the survey, an accurate count of how many bats are using the roost was not possible.

Big brown bats are one of our larger bats in western Washington and can eat up to three times their weight in insects every night

Exit surveys were conducted at a cabin on Camano Island where bats had been seen and heard. We did not find any evidence that the site we monitored actually supports a bat maternity roost.

Carnivore Monitoring: Biologist Moore checked trail cameras for a carnivore monitoring project. Issues with understory overgrowth are apparent at some sites. Cameras will be revisited to remove excess vegetation or to move cameras to a better locations.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Leque Island Media Coverage: Projects Coordinator Brokaw and Habitat Biologist Lindsey Desmul toured around King 5 News Environmental Reporter Alison Morrow at the Leque Island Unit. King 5 aired a story that evening, which can be viewed here.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Living with Mountain Lions Presentation: District Wildlife Biologist Waddell gave a presentation on mountain lions at the Deming Public Library. The talk was well attended and focused on mountain lion biology, management, and ways to avoid conflict with lions. Biologist Waddell has a keen interest in lions and researched them for three years from 2005-2008 while working as a research biologist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

A male mountain lion captured by District Biologist Waddell when he worked as a research biologist in Arizona

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Flooding Mitigation Site Visit: Biologist C. Moore joined partners Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and USFWS staff members at a mitigation site in Whatcom County to investigate and discuss flooding issues affecting adjacent landowners. Moore and USFWS biologist were present to ensure that any work required will not affect existing populations of Oregon spotted frogs. The site visit revealed that beavers are the likely culprit of one of the issues, while the other issue requires further exploration of the adjacent property.

Biologist C. Moore met with USFWS biologist and WSDOT biological and engineering staff members at a mitigation site to investigate a flooding issue

Eide Road Right of Way Vacation: Projects Coordinator Brokaw picked up the final recorded documents issued by Snohomish County, which officially vacates Eide Road and allows the Leque Island Estuary Restoration Project to proceed this summer as planned.

7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 5

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Treponeme-Associated Hoof Disease (TAHD) Survival Study Elk Necropsy: Statewide Elk Specialist Garrison and Biologist Holman followed-up on two elk mortality notifications from animals associated with the Hoof Disease Survival Study. The first elk had been GPS collared in December 2018 and was located dead near her capture location in GMU 520 (Winston). The second elk was captured in December 2017 and was located dead in GMU 550 (Coweeman). Both animals had hoof disease at the time of capture and the disease had progressed to a more severe state in each case. The hooves were collected and sent to Colorado State University for further examination. Additionally, the femurs were collected to determine percentage of body fat. Both elk were partially scavenged, largely decomposed, and infested with insect larvae during the investigation.

Annual Meeting with Cowlitz Tribe Regarding Beaver Relocations: Veterinarian Haman along with Biologists Bergh and Holman met with Biologist White from the Cowlitz Tribe to discuss the tribe's efforts to relocate beavers in southwest Washington. Several topics were discussed including appropriate means to addressing concerns related to aquatic invasive species, disease transmission, possible concerns related to releases near sensitive wildlife sites, husbandry of the animals, release site details, etc. The meeting was productive and gave all involved a better understanding of the many facets of relocating beavers.

Western pond turtle release: Biologist Bergh, Marisa Pushee from the Sustainability in Prisons Program, staff members, and inmate technicians from Larch Correctional Center released the 10 western pond turtles that had completed treatment for shell disease back into their home ponds. The turtles are treated by the veterinary staff at the Oregon Zoo, which consists of surgical debridement followed by anti-fungal medicine. After they have healed enough from the surgery, they are transported to Larch Correctional Center where the inmate technicians care for them over the winter. The effectiveness of the treatments is not completely known yet, but is being monitored and we are hopeful that it may help stop or slow down the progression of shell disease.

Inmate technician releases a western pond turtle back into its pond

Tracking Reproductive Western Pond Turtles: On May 15, Biologists Burlingame, Wickhem, Bergh and volunteer Rayle began the daily tracking of 18 female western pond turtles that have radio-transmitters attached their carapace. Every two hours, the direction of their radio signal is checked, and once a signal points out of the pond, the turtles are pinpointed, their location and activity noted, and they are then checked on once an hour until they either dig a nest and lay eggs or return to the pond. Turtles will often chose a location, begin digging, and then to return to the pond without laying, often because the spot they chose was too rocky to build a suitable nest cavity. Once a nest has been laid, biologists excavate that nest, count the number of eggs, then rebury the eggs and cover the nest with a wire cage to prevent predation. The nests will be re-excavated in late fall to see how many of the eggs successfully hatched. This research is being conducted to better understand the effects of shell disease on reproductive rates. Since May 15, the team has located and excavated seven nests. Tracking will continue through the first week of July.

Excavating the first nests of the 2019 nesting season

Black Bear Population Monitoring in Willapa Hills: Biologist Holman joined Region 6 Biologists Novack and Michaelis along with Game Farm Manager White for the first check of the hair snares associated with black bear population monitoring in GMU 672 (Fall River). The monitoring effort involves constructing 36 barbed wire enclosures each set into a one square kilometer area. The stations are baited with blood and fish oil. When accessing the attractant, the bears leave hair on the wire barbs. Each location will be checked four times during the spring/summer survey period. Bear hair is collected from the barbs and DNA analysis is used to determine the number of individual bears in the area as well as generate a mark re-sight estimate of bear density.

Biologist Michaelis re-baiting bear hair-snare station 13 in the Willapa Hills

Biologist Holman gathering bear hair from wire snares in the Willapa Hills

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Volunteer Work Party: Manager Hauswald, Assistant Manager Wildermuth, and volunteers worked on removing scotch broom and caging young trees on the Mudflow Unit. Despite some wet weather, a good amount of work was accomplished. Work on scotch broom focused on areas that are difficult to access with equipment or inefficient to treat with backpack sprayers. Young trees are caged to protect them from the over browsing and rubbing by elk and deer. A huge thank you to all of the volunteers who came out, especially Rodger and Ramona Wallace for the dry seats and hot food! If you are interested in volunteering, please check out the "Get Involved" link on the new WDFW website.

Manager Hauswald giving instructions to volunteers

Damage Pool Phone Calls: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and customer service staff members were contacted by several hunters who successfully drew the Master Hunter, disabled, and youth hunter damage pool hunts this year and wondering when they would be deployed. Draw results for these hunts were conducted this week. WDFW personnel are requesting that hunters wait patiently until letters are mailed out later this summer explaining the process to hunters and their position on the deployment lists.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Bear Complaint: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received a complaint of a bear walking across a rural property in Klickitat County. This is likely the same bear that found the landowner's hummingbird feeder during this time last year. Surprisingly, the landowner had decided to hang a hummingbird feeder again this year. Jacobsen advised the landowner to remove her feeder again.

Cougar Sighting 1: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a camper at a private campground in Lewis County. The camper heard rumors of a cougar sighting near the campground and wanted to report it. The camper also wanted to report scat, tracks, and bones in the woods that he believed belonged to a cougar.

Cougar Sighting 2: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received a report of an animal in a Vancouver daycare parking lot that the reporting party believed to be a cougar. Jacobsen contacted the daycare to advise them of the possible sighting and to provide information on cougars.

Cougar Sighting 3: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Nelson met with a group of landowners in rural Klickitat County who reported seeing a pair of juvenile cougars on their property over the last week. Cougar biology, behavior , and advice for living in cougar country were discussed at length. Jacobsen and Officer Nelson then met with a neighbor who had over 20 goats in an unsecured pen. The landowner was advised to secure the goats in the adjacent pen/shed at night to prevent potential depredations on the goats.

Depredation Investigation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen investigated a goat in rural Clark County that was killed by a cougar over the weekend. After the depredation, the landowner quickly modified his night pen so that the goats would be secure and protected during the night. Further advice was given on securing and protecting livestock. The landowner was advised on what he could do if the cougar was observed in the goat pen again.

Remodeled goat pen to fully protect the landowner's goats at night. Previously, the pen lacked the bottom half of the door to completely secure the structure.

Depredation Investigation 1: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Bolton responded to depredations on three sheep at a farm in Klickitat County. Examination of the carcasses indicated that the sheep were attacked and killed by canines, most likely the domestic dogs that had been observed roaming around the pasture. Coyotes later scavenged on the carcasses.

Extensive bite mark injuries to the upper neck region of sheep 1

Bite marks and subsequent hemorrhaging on the inside of the hide, located along the top of the back near the lower spine of sheep 2. Bite marks visible only after shaving the goat hair.

Depredation Investigation 2: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen investigated three small goats that had been killed in Clark County. The landowner had been penning his goats up every night for the last couple of months but had decided to leave them out on the night that the goats ended up getting killed. Both bobcat and coyote had been photographed in the vicinity of the goats on the landowner's trail camera. A necropsy of the carcasses indicated that the bobcat was the likely culprit, but coyotes had also scavenged on the carcasses during the night.

Three dead goats that were depredated on by a bobcat. The landowner brought the goat carcasses inside the pen to prevent further scavenging.

Cougars Near Residences: Officer Bolton and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a series of residences in a community where a pair of juvenile cougars had been observed. The juvenile cougars had been walking on porches, consuming housecats in front yards during the day, and encountering dogs near residences. A houndsman was used to look for the cougars but the cougars were not located.

Cougar and Bear Sightings: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received multiple cougar and bear sighting reports throughout the week. In all cases, advice was provided on living in cougar and bear country.

Bear-Vehicle Collision: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Bolton were joined by a Washington State Patrol officer, a Klickitat County Sheriff deputy, and a local fire chief in search of a bear that was struck by a car on the highway. The bear was struck while it was in the middle of crossing over a guardrail. However, no bear was located after the collision.

Bobcat-Dog Interaction: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted regarding a bobcat-domestic dog interaction. When the Chihuahua-miniature pinscher mix was let outside in the morning by the landowner, the dog located a bobcat on the rural property. The bobcat then grabbed the dog by the neck and began to run off with the dog as the landowner pursued the bobcat across the property. Eventually the bobcat dropped the dog and left the scene. After veterinary treatment, the dog survived the incident. Advice was given on how to avoid these interactions in the future. The landowner plans to acquire a much larger dog to help protect the smaller animal.

Coyote Depredation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Sergeant Anderson investigated four sheep that were killed in Ridgefield. Necropsies of the carcasses indicated that the sheep were killed by coyotes, despite the rapidly spreading rumors that cougars were to blame for the incident. Two of the sheep were killed in the barbed-wire pasture, while the other two managed to squeeze through the barbed wire but ended up being killed on the neighbor's manicured front lawn. Of the four sheep, only two were consumed.

Sheep killed by coyotes on the neighbor's front lawn

Aggressive Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner whose dog was chased by a female deer. The deer would not leave the premises and continued to patrol the area for the dog. Jacobsen advised that the deer was likely protecting her fawn that was hidden somewhere on the property. The landowner will check back in next week if the deer continues to chase the dogs.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Klickitat Wildlife Area Grazing Monitoring: Assistant Manager Steveson checked on two grazing permits this week. Cattle were well distributed throughout the grazing pasture on one of the permits. The permitee was also notified that one water source that feeds a large tire trough had dried up and was no longer usable. There are several additional sources of water that are still readily available on that particular pasture. All three pasture units of the other grazing permit in the lower Klickitat River canyon were completely vacant of cattle, despite there being several weeks left on the term of the permit.

Lone antler on a grazing permit in the lower Klickitat River; Mount Hood in the background

Klickitat Wildlife Area Weed Control: Assistant Manager Steveson spent two days applying herbicides on the Mineral Springs Unit and the Soda Springs Unit. A significant amount of time was spent in the Mineral Springs Campground spraying the very prevalent everlasting peavine. Several scotch broom plants were also cut down with herbicide being directly applied to the cut stocks. Steveson also began his crusade against rush skeletonweed on the Klickitat River breaks of the Soda Springs Unit.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Pronghorn Public Listening Session: Biologist Bergh joined other WDFW staff members in Prosser for a public listening session on pronghorn antelope. Section Manager Harris presented information on the historic distribution and reintroduction efforts, past habitat suitability modeling, recent reintroduction efforts, current abundance estimates and distribution, and future department plans. Approximately 35 people were in attendance and there were lots of great questions. Personnel from the Yakima and Colville tribes (where recent reintroductions have occurred) and members of the local Safari Club International chapters (who assisted with and helped fund reintroductions and survey efforts) were also in attendance and able to answer questions. Concern was raised about potential damage to crops and fences and there was considerable curiosity about how WDFW would manage pronghorn populations and hunting seasons in the future. The goal of the meeting was to hear from the public about all of these issues before WDFW gets started on a management plan in the next couple of years. To provide feedback online please visit our website here: https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/at-risk/species-recovery/pronghorn-antelope-management/survey.

Skamania County Commissioners: Regional Director Lee, Biologist Bergh, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with Skamania County Commissioners to provide an update on Washington's wolf population.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 6

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Streaked Horned Lark: Biologists Tirhi and Butler completed the second of three lark surveys at the Olympia Airport. One last survey is scheduled near end of June. Tirhi located one nest during the survey and provided the coordinates to the airport staff so they can avoid the location during airport maintenance activities. She also recorded two banded birds and provided sighting along with age and sex of those larks to Center for Natural Lands Management staff members who are conducting this monitoring research.

Streaked horned lark nesting habitat and nest at Olympia Airport, 2019

The streaked horned lark is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act and as endangered by the state of Washington. In order to assess streaked horned lark populations throughout Washington, WDFW coordinates site occupancy surveys at all known sites every three years and 2018 was a survey year. Due to a lower than expected count at the Olympia Airport, it is being surveyed again this year. This past survey was the second of three surveys. During this survey, 34 larks were observed and one nest was found. The final survey will be conducted later this month.

Western Pond Turtle: Biologists Butler, Tirhi, Murphie, and Michaelis as well as many volunteers continue nesting monitoring at the Pierce County recovery site. This year 25 adult female western pond turtles received transmitters and their locations have been monitored every day from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. If a turtle is found to be out of the ponds, they are closely observed for any signs of nesting. With the recent warm weather, the turtles have been on the move with as many as eight turtles out of the ponds at one time. This has led to many busy nights with 21

nests found so far this year. Of those nests, six nests, consisting of 44 eggs, have been delivered to the Woodland Park Zoo to support head-starting efforts. The remaining 15 nests have been left to incubate naturally as part of a project assessing the effect of shell disease on reproduction. Nest monitoring will continue into July as we hope to find nests for the last few females.

Surveying the pond for turtles with transmitters

A zoomed in view of the turtles basking

Another wildlife area resident who was later caught sniffing a turtle out nesting

Snowy Plover Surveys: Biologists Sundstrom, Michaelis, and Novack conducted the second set of snowy plover surveys along beaches in southwest Washington along with various cooperators from the USFWS, Shoalwater Tribe, and WDFW. Of note, an adult female was observed along the outer beach of Ocean Shores in close vicinity to where Michaelis observed a scrape and three adult plovers last year. Prior to 2018, plovers had not been observed in that area for many years. While doing one of these surveys, Michaelis observed an adult pair of peregrine falcons and behavior displayed by the male may suggest that there could be young at this location. This information was relayed to Dr. Dan Varland a local raptor researcher for follow up.

Biologist Sundstrom installed symbolic fencing to allow passage of horses through the posted area at Midway beach. The horse trail had to be modified various times as Sundstrom found multiple nests from plovers and streaked horned larks along the pathway. This is the first year this section of the beach had been posted. The neighboring property is an equestrian bed and breakfast that has been accessing the beach for many years via a much wider segment of property.

Elk Calf Collaring (GMU 603): Biologist Murphie assisted Elwha Tribal Wildlife Program in searching for elk calves for a survival study they are conducting. They did not collar any calves on this day.

Mountain Goat Relocation: Planning continues with conference calls and emails on this activity. Biologist Murphie moved several goat transport crates from Lakewood to Port Angeles and constructed a water misting system to aid in cooling crated goats. He met with our volunteer driver coordinator and Project Lead Harris to discuss operations related to the fridge trucks.

Wolf Monitoring: Biologist Tirhi met with a volunteer coordinator with Conservation Northwest (CN) to coordinate efforts to monitor wolves that may potentially be returning to the Carbon River and White River areas of Pierce County. CN has two trail cameras and District 11 has eight cameras to deploy. CN will likely have cameras up through the summer months only and will likely not circulate the cameras, whereas WDFW will have cameras up year-round and will circulate these cameras. CN will deploy cameras in the Carbon River area whereas WDFW will deploy four in the Carbon River and four in the White River. Tirhi plans to distribute the cameras in late June to begin the monitoring.

Black-tail Buck Survival Study: Biologist Murphie spent an evening with volunteer Jackson attempting to radio-collar a buck in GMU 651. They saw several deer and a few bucks, but none were in range of the dart gun.

Bats and White-nose Syndrome (WNS): Biologist Tirhi participated in the first of two webinars hosted by USFWS on updates to WNS. Information on the disease can be found on our WDFW website https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bat- white-nose. Topics included structured decision making for WNS monitoring, managing the environmental reservoirs of WNS, testing of an anti-Pd probiotic, virus-induced gene silencing and testing approaches for reducing contamination on hibernaculum substrates and more.

WDFW staffmembers, along with other volunteers, assisted Northwest Trek with their annual bat count in the park. They will use the information to study the effects of white nose syndrome. See the parks facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/NWtrek/videos/10156025774114862/.

Cougar Management: Biologist Tirhi represented District 11 at the internal cougar management working group meeting held in Ellensburg. The group has been assigned by the director to review/analyze our cougar management guidelines and improve or replace, as necessary. Following several internal meetings, the public and cooperators will be contacted to provide input on proposals brought forward. One very clear pattern that emerged from the meeting is that there are very different opinions about cougar status, cougar depredation, and liberalization of cougar hunting on the east vs west side of the state.

Double-Crested Cormorant Survey: Biologist Michaelis conducted the annual double-crested cormorant survey in Grays Harbor. Localized depredation issues of salmonids prompted the USFWS Pacific Flyway Council to implement a monitoring strategy for population assessment. The number of nests within each survey area are observed and counted within each colony. Within Grays Harbor, there are several distinct areas where cormorants nest. Some of these are on remnant pilings historically used to fasten rafts of logs while others are positioned on the platforms used for ship navigation into the harbor. Groups of transient non-breeding cormorants were also observed. It appeared there were fewer nests of cormorants compared to last year.

Bog Beetle Monitoring: Biologist Tirhi and volunteers Terry and Maynard continued with bog beetle surveys in District 11. Terry and Maynard spent considerable time reviewing maps for locations, assessing site conditions, and conducting surveys. Terry and Tirhi deployed traps at a Gig Harbor site that contained sphagnum bog but unfortunately only collected non-target beetles. Surveys continue through June.

Beller's ground beetle and Hatch's click beetle habitat (sphagnum moss) and trap

Band-tailed Pigeon Project: Biologist McMillan inventoried Yahoo Lake searching for band-tailed pigeon (BTP) concentrations for the 2020 spring/summer trapping schedule. There were no BTPs at Yahoo Lake or vicinity but there were BTPs observed about a couple miles from the Clearwater Correction Center. Biologist McMillan contacted Department of Corrections and has initiated a possible partnership project that the inmates could contribute to by assisting with the BTP capture needs. Biologist Ament reviewed the BTP project proposal and contacted Biologist Novack to ask some questions about trap site selection. She spent some time reviewing the BTP sites that have been reported by the public in District 16. Sites were prioritized and she will be contacting landowners to get more information and set-up some site visits.

Taylor's Checkerspot Release: In anticipation of another larval release Biologists Linders and Randolph prepared plots at TA15 on JBLM. Host plants are fading somewhat but were found to be plentiful adjacent to known occupied parts of the site. On June 11, with assistance from eight volunteers from WDFW, JBLM, and TESC, about 3400 prediapause larvae were released into the wild under clear skies. Temperatures reached 90 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the day, but a light wind kept conditions bearable.

Volunteers assist in the release of Taylor's checkerspot larvae at TA 15 on JBLM, where wild larvae were also observed on the native host plant, harsh paintbrush (Castilleja hispida; on flower in upper right) - Photos by L. Randolph (left, middle, bottom); K. Curry (right)

Bog Habitat Projects – Bog Beetles and Copper Butterfly Inventory: Biologist McMillan has been inventorying bog habitats in District 16 to prioritize site visits for documenting Beller's ground beetle, Hatch's click beetle, Makah Copper and June's Copper butterflies.

Nolan Creek Bogs: Two bog habitats on the Nolan Creek/Hoh River system were sampled on June 4. One unidentified beetle (not a Beller's ground beetle) was collected and sent in for identification. No butterflies were observed at these two bogs during the site visit. The Nolan Creek bogs did not have very much wet sphagnum moss habitat, with only a small puddle of standing water surrounded by Sphagnum moss. These habitats are suitable for the copper butterflies and are identified for documenting their occurrence during the flight period of July and August, with June and September possibilities.

Bog habitat at Nolan Creek/Hoh consisting of little standing moisture

Standing water puddle and sphagnum moss hummocks within the open habitat

Lower Clearwater Bog: Wildlife Biologist McMillan surveyed the lower Clearwater bog on June 12 finding many flowers blooming including many camas and wild cranberries. There were three different species of butterflies observed, but no close observations were able to be made. The larger butterfly was a fritillary, the smaller butterflies were possibly copper butterflies and skippers. If there were June's copper butterflies here, June 12 would have been the earliest they have been documented, maybe on the entire range.

Clearwater bog with no standing water, only muddy spots with lush vegetation along the edge

Dry muddy remains with mostly meadow habitats with sphagnum moss and camas

Camas, unidentified flowers and wild cranberry flowers blooming June 12 at Clearwater bog

Brush net sampling of invertebrates, searching for Hatch's click beetle

Mountain Goat Capture Planning: Biologist Ament devoted some time the past few weeks to assisting with planning for the mountain goat captures scheduled for July and August. She has been designated to serve as a safety officer for the operations on U.S. Forest Service land at Hamma Hamma and Mount Ellinor. She attended a meeting on June 10 at Olympic National Park and participated in a field tour of the Salmon Creek site after the meeting. This site will serve as the check-in location for all volunteer goat drivers and will be where all goat crates will be cleaned after goats are delivered. Biologist Ament also participated in a conference call with Biologist Murphie, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Olympic National Park staff members on June 11 to discuss specific safety related issues for the capture project. She will be devoting time to several assigned tasks prior to capture operations next month.

Patti and Rich pleased with new Billy crates

Group review of the mountain goat crates

Bryan, Cliff, and Holly explore areas for camping at Salmon Creek

Sequim Eaglet Update: The two eaglets that were returned to their nest in Sequim on May 23, 2019 are both doing well. Biologist Ament was present the day the eaglets were placed back in the nest and has checked the nest on numerous occasions. Both adult eagles have been observed at the nest or in the vicinity. The eaglets are regularly being fed by the adult pair. Many neighbors are also monitoring the nest closely. On June 4, Biologist Ament met Keith and Kathy Parizo with their Cock-a-too Sarah along the road. They have been checking the nest almost every day and have some great photos they have shared.

Adult keeping a watchful eye on eaglets

Keith, Sarah, and Kathy observing nest - Photo by Keith and Kathy Parizo

Eaglets sharing a dinner meal delivered by the adult eagle on May 31 - Photo by Keith and Kathy Parizo

ID of Dead Bird: Larry Bennett of the Fish Program contacted Biologist Ament to assist with identification of a dead bird found by one of his staff along Shi Shi Beach. The bird was banded with two bands and Larry will be submitting the band information to the USFWS. He provided a few photos of the scavenged bird. See below. Biologist Ament was perplexed and sought information from other sea/shore bird experts. Seabird Biologist Pearson changed his original ID of double-crested cormorant to black-footed albatross. He predicts - banding location: Tern Island, French Frigate Shoals, banding date: 6/12/2010, USFWS band #: 2017-04555. We will see if Larry will confirm this information when he hears back from the USFWS.

Dead banded bird found along Shi Shi beach (possible black-footed albatross)

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Access Areas: The water access team has been concentrating on river sites in Grays Harbor, Mason and Pacific counties. Four major illegal dumps were picked up and transported to the landfill. Vulgar graffiti was painted over on three restrooms. Two access service trucks were replaced. Staff member Reeves assisted CAMP in the service body swap and fitting of both new vehicles. Working with Habitat Program and Washington Conservation Corps staff members, multiple monofilament recycle bins were cleaned and contents brought in for recycling.

Chehalis River South Montesano: Staff members spent three hours mowing, weed eating, and removing silt on the double concrete ramp.

Skokomish River Hwy 101: An abandoned boat was loaded and taken to the landfill, and additional time was spent using a tractor dressing up the access entrance road.

Chehalis River Fuller Bridge: With the river level dropping below the normal low, the access team spent several hours removing a major deposit of silt to expose the launch ramp. Additional time is planned to finish this project.

Mason County Dump Site: Natural Resource Technician Tupen and Biologist Harris cleaned up a dumpsite, on land open to free public access in Mason County, for a large timberland owner. Someone removed identifying marks from a dilapidated trailer filled with trash and then left by the gates. Due to some potential hazards, it took two days to remove trash from the trailer. The trailer is still on location. In the near future, we will remove it.

Abandoned trailer loaded with trash. First load to the dump using dump trailer purchased with a grant from the Department of Ecology

Lease Agreement with Dungeness Farms: On June 6, Biologist Ament participated in a meeting between Wildlife Area Manager Lowery and the manager of the Dungeness Farms Hunting Club, Matt Heins. The club has elected to discontinue a temporary lease agreement that allowed the public to hunt waterfowl on lands owned by them. A main focus of the meeting was to discuss the reasons for discontinuing the lease, needed sign posting, and the methods for informing the public of the modifications. Other recreational uses, such as bird watching and dog walking, will also no longer be allowed on the Dungeness Farms property. However, Matt seemed open for further discussions on this topic in the future. After the conclusion of the meeting, Lowery and Ament posted a signs and reviewed the agency parcel to determine if there was any potential for public hunting at the site.

No hunting signs that were placed at the trailhead to the Dungeness Farms property

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Injured Deer Fawn Response: Biologist Tirhi was contacted by a woman in Dupont who was upset and reporting an injured deer fawn off a popular trail. Tirhi contacted a rehabber who agreed to accept the fawn if captured and the woman reporting agreed to stay with the fawn. After a 1.5-mile hike to the location, Tirhi met up with the woman, assessed the fawn and decided to carry the fawn out (which was alive but bleeding from chest wound). Roughly halfway out of the trail Tirhi checked the fawn and found it was deceased. It is likely the fawn was attacked by a predator (dog or coyote) and more likely a dog considering the fawn was found just off the trail. This is a good reminder to the public that if they find a healthy fawn, leave it alone and do not touch! It is normal for does (mothers) to leave fawn(s) hidden while they either bed down or forage at some distance away—they will return to the fawn!

Injured fawn collected by District 11 staff members, Dupont, 2019

Elk Relocation: Biologist Harris and Natural Resource Technician Tupen assisted Biologist Blankenship with relocating a bull elk that has decided life with a group of cows is better than with a group of elk. Unfortunately, his herding cows through fences and other antics has worn out his welcome.

Bull and cows - Photo curtesy of Terry Wilson

Biologist Harris, Natural Resource Technician Tupen, and Wildlife Program Records Manager Yungdahl, who happened to be on a ride along, hobbling elk - Photo curtesy of Terry Wilson.

Bull ready for transport - Photo curtesy of Terry Wilson

Biologist Blankenship instructing staff member Youngdahl on giving the reversal injections

Bull at his new home many miles from beef cows

WDFW staff members and landowners with immobilized elk

Abandoned Raccoons: Natural Resource Technician Tupen transported three young raccoons to a wildlife rehabilitator. The raccoons appeared to have been abandoned, as the mother did not come back for them after a few days of sitting in someone's driveway.

Three baby raccoons on their way to a rehabilitator

Ocean Park Bear Issues: Natural Resources Technician Tupen has been in contact with a landowner in Ocean Park, who has been having troubles with a black bear damaging his shed at night. Tupen made a site visit and determined that there were not any obvious attractants in the shed. There have been several other reports of bears damaging sheds in the nearby area as well. Tupen is continuing to work on this.

Shed that was damaged by a black bear in Ocean Park

Bear Timber Damage: Natural Resource Technician Tupen has been assisting Biologist Harris with locating tree damage caused by black bears on private land in Grays Harbor County.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Rapid Habitat Assessment at JBLM: Biologists Linders, Cook and Randolph surveyed Johnson prairie utilizing Rapid Habitat Assessment (RHA) methodology. The goal of this project is to quantify habitat characteristics known to be important to Taylor's checkerspot to increase the scientific basis of habitat enhancement planning and determination of site readiness for checkerspot reintroduction. Johnson Prairie was last assessed in 2015; since then it has received substantial habitat restoration actions, such as prescribed fire, mowing of Scot's broom and herbicide treatments to combat weeds. Additionally, a rare Taylor's checkerspot sighting at Johnson Prairie in May, seven miles from the nearest population, increased the need to evaluate the site for critical habitat resources. However, after surveying about 30 acres of the site, it became clear that host plant abundance was insufficient to sustain a release, and RHA surveys were abandoned. Biologist Linders also met with JBLM Biologist Grosboll to review ground conditions at JBLM's Marion Prairie due to numerous checkerspots observed during the flight period. Both noted plentiful host plant patches interspersed with high quality native prairie, and moderate amounts of nectar plants. As a result, they concluded the site warrants an RHA assessment to quantify and map important resources. As testament to the potential of this site to contribute to conservation, Biologist Randolph noted several oviposition sites during the first day of mapping.

Photos by L. Randolph

Violet Prairie Acquisition Site Reconnaissance: Biologists Lowery, Linders, and Cook spent a day exploring a ranch near Tenino, which was the subject of both Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and Section 6 grant proposals over the past year. Previous visits had been conducted under suboptimal conditions, either too early or too late in the year to get a good understanding of the existing prairie potential. What they found only increased excitement about the restoration potential on this site. In addition to large expanses of native prairie that can be restored for Taylor's checkerspot reintroduction quite readily, grassy uplands that were originally envisioned as areas to expand into as the climate shifts were found to be capable of supporting checkerspot resources now, with topographic and hydrologic conditions reminiscent of those

found at Bald Hill in southeast Thurston County. Furthermore, robust examples of nine-leaved lomatium and Puget balsamroot plant size suggest prairie that initially appeared to be relatively dry, may in fact be quite productive. Also observed were rare wetland associated plants such as popcorn flower and wyethia that provide important resources for other rare species such as mardon skipper and other butterflies on the wing later in the season. We believe this is only the beginning!

Matheny Habitat Project: Volunteers once again worked on improving habitat conditions on public land in the Matheny GMU. This was the final work party for the biennium. To date they have improved habitat and connectivity in excess of 1000 acres. Some volunteers stayed at the cabin during the work party as part of safety/emergency communication.

Volunteers at work

A view of one of the many completed areas

Volunteer splices eyes in rope for Biologist Harris

Most of the crew relaxing before dinner