

# **Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report**

June 1 to June 15, 2020

## **DIVERSITY DIVISION**

Nothing for this installment.

## **SCIENCE DIVISION**

Nothing for this installment.

## **HUNTER EDUCATION**

Nothing for this installment.

## **LANDS DIVISION**

Nothing for this installment.

## **GAME DIVISION**

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

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

Nothing for this installment.

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

Nothing for this installment.

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

Nothing for this installment.

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

Nothing for this installment.

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Beaver Relocation:** The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) hosted the second annual beaver relocation training on June 11 and 12. This training prepares applicants for participation in the [pilot beaver relocation permitting program](#). In this program, permittees remove beavers from conflict situations where they would otherwise be lethally removed, then relocate them to unoccupied areas where they can contribute to population and habitat restoration. Around 40 people participated in the training this year, which was held online to accommodate social distancing requirements. A huge thank you to all our collaborators who helped make this training a success, including the Methow Beaver Project, Beavers Northwest, and many others!

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

# **REGION 1**

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

### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**North American Bat Monitoring Program:** Private Lands Supervisor Earl discussed surveillance requirements and needs with Private Lands Biologists Thorne Hadley, Wingard, and the crew conducting the surveys in Garfield, Asotin, and Walla Walla counties.

**Bat Monitoring:** Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley was contacted by a gentleman (Northwestern Bat Hub Assistant) from Oregon State University that was seeking assistance on contacting landowners in identified grids for a bat monitoring study. Thorne Hadley contacted identified landowners first to obtain permission to share contact information and then shared the information with the research assistant. Thorne Hadley also walked the research assistant through using the WDFW web map to identify contracted private landowners and properties in which he was very grateful and excited about.

**Cougar Mortality Concerns:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett and WDFW Enforcement Officer King collected a cougar reported mortality in Ferry County. The cougar was emaciated with no signs of obvious injury.

**Trapline Assistance:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill ran a trapline with Wolf Specialist Maletzke in the Kettle pack territory and scouted for wolf sign after the traps were checked.

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Private Lands and Hunting Access:** Natural Resource Technician Fish and Biologist Baarstad posted signs on Feel Free to Hunt properties in Lincoln County. Fish mapped District 1 properties enrolled in hunting access programs. Private Lands Biologist Gaston checked on properties enrolled in the Private Lands Access Programs. Gaston replaced signs and checked on a multitude of areas.

**Public Contacts:** Biologist Baarstad was contacted by three people seeking information about hunting opportunities related to successful special permit drawings. Additionally, Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley assisted hunters with answering questions about hunting access in Walla Walla County. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade also spoke with multiple sportsmen inquiring about when draw results would be released.

With the recent drawing of special permit hunts, Private Lands Biologist Gaston received quite a few new emails and phone calls from hunters interested in hunting Spokane and Whitman counties this year for big game. Gaston provided resources for each hunter and recommendations for focused hunting pressures.

**Target Shooting:** Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley received a call that an individual was target shooting at a Feel Free to Hunt site next to a Pheasants Forever Habitat Project. Thorne Hadley visited the area and put up an additional sign as there was already a “No Target Shooting” sign at the location, which was used as a target, that sign was replaced as well.

## 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Range Rider Contacts:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill contacted several WDFW contracted range riders (CRR) during the week via phone calls, emails, and site visits. Samsill spoke to CRRs Wright, Shockey, Singer, Lang, and Grumbach. Samsill also spoke with NEWWCC and CPOW coordinators about range rider deployments and scheduling.

**Conflict Prevention:** Samsill also responded to a total of three nuisance bear calls this week and handled all but one with advice and guidance. All reporting parties (RP) were instructed to remove attractants and to contact Samsill if further issues arise. No RPs have called back or responded since the original conversation. The one report that was not handled with just guidance was a situation where the RP had already removed all attractants and yet they continued to see the bear repeatedly. Samsill responded by providing the RP with non-lethal ammunition to haze the bear away from their property.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill responded to a report of a cougar depredation up on Aladdin road. The cougar killed a sheep out of a small pasture. Samsill contacted the producer and made plans with Special Deputy Flood to chase and remove the offending cougar the next morning. Flood had another cougar call come in later that night and decided to remove both depredating cougars while the hound men were in the area. Samsill met Flood and obtained the cougar that was removed. Samsill sampled and surveyed the cougar and mailed off the samples for analysis.

Samsill prepared content for the District 1 Togo Wolf Pack Recommendation meeting. Samsill followed up with Special Deputy Flood and Officer Erickson after they performed a depredation investigation. The report concerned one deceased goat and one injured pig. The pig was eventually euthanized due to the severe injuries sustained during the attack. After reviewing the evidence and the pictures that were taken, WDFW staff members were in consensus that a black bear depredated the goat and pig. A culvert trap and trail camera were deployed that same day, and nothing came back in. The trap and camera were eventually pulled.

Samsill performed three depredation investigations over the week with Special Deputy Flood. Two of the investigations were performed in the Kettles and one was performed in the Wedge. Samsill and Flood determined that all three mortalities were non-depredation related. Samsill removed the deceased calf for sanitation purposes. The other two mortalities were large cows and could not be removed.

**City Moose:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman assisted Sergeant Sprecher and Spurbeck with a moose relocation. The moose was caught in a cement mixing quarry and had broken off its antlers and was very agitated. It crossed many major roads throughout Spokane City heading in the wrong direction. The moose was darted and relocated to a more suitable habitat.

**Deer with Tumor:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman talked to an urban resident that was concerned about a doe with a large growth or tumor on her face and it also had a fawn. It was explained that the deer was still in good condition and highly mobile and was able to provide for the fawn.

**Lands Check-Ins:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade spent one day checking the Grouse Flats area. Wade checked private, WDFW, and United States Forest Service (USFS) allotments and pastures this week. Wade also spent part of a day checking the lower Tucannon/Lick Creek USFS allotment as cattle have started coming on late last week. All the cattle observed appeared to be happy and healthy.

Wade spent part of a day checking an area where he received several reports of wolf activity recently. Wade observed several herds of cattle and one herd of bison grazing in the area. There were no fresh signs of wolf activity observed. One producer reported that three cows that had been pregnancy checked as open gave birth to calves unexpectedly, on the west 4-O allotment. The producer removed the three cows and calves from the allotment and returned them to his private pasture out of the area.



*Part of the herd of Bison in the area where wolf activity was reported*

**Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade touched base with a Grouse Flats producer regarding the status of his Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement contract. Wade also started working with producers who are working on submitting their range rider logs and contract invoices.

Wade was contacted by a Columbia County producer regarding his Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA). The producer's DPCA has expired and he would like a new one. The producer reported that he hasn't had much of an issue with the elk so far but expects it to pick up in the next few weeks.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade met with one producer in the Anatone area regarding 20-30 head of cow elk damaging his hay fields. Both the producer and Wade agreed that the best plan of action was to hold off on heavy hazing until the calves were old enough to travel with the herd.

Wade also spent time checking the Peola area for deer and elk in commercial crops. Wade checked several canola fields where large herds of mule deer have been reported, for the time being, it appears that the deer have moved from the area. Wade also observed a herd of 20 elk on the "good" side of the elk fence.

**Crop Damage:** Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley received two messages from landowners seeking information about crop damage and depredation tags as they were both experiencing large numbers of elk in their pea fields. Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley gave them the

contact information of the Conflict Specialist currently covering Columbia and Walla Walla Counties.

**Wolf Sightings:** Wade received a report from Biologist Wik that a friend of a United States Forest Service employee had seen two wolves traveling the road near Wikiup campground over the weekend. Wade relayed the information to the producer in the area. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman talked to two different reporting parties about separate reported wolf sightings. One report had pictures attached and was clearly coyotes. The other report did not have pictures and after talking with the reporting party it was determined to likely be coyote as well.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade was contacted by a Columbia County producer regarding wolf activity near his pasture. The producer reported that the same wolf had been seen in the area multiple times. Wade discussed nonlethal preventive measures and what the producer could do to protect his livestock if the need arises.



*The reported wolf*

**Suspected Wolf Depredations:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman and Spurbeck investigated a cow-calf that was reported as a wolf depredation. It was determined as an

unknown cause of death. There was no sign predation present. There was severe hemorrhaging in the muscle tissue but not on the hide. The possibility of disease would explain the hemorrhaging.

Westerman investigated a depredation with Sergeant Sprecher on three goats. One of which was missing the other two were injured but still alive. One goat had injuries to the rear left leg and the other goat had injuries to the head. No evidence of severe hemorrhaging was noted. The incident took place five days prior and therefore not enough evidence was present to decide as to the cause of the injuries.

**Conflict Prevention:** Samsill and Wolf Specialist Maletzke responded to a report of an injured calf, owned by Producer Nelson, up Lone Ranch Creek. WDFW staff members, the producer, and several range riders were at the scene. A thorough depredation investigation was performed, and the determination was confirmed wolf depredation. The calf was turned back out on the range and was reunited with the respective mother cow.

**Dayton Raccoon:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade responded to a call about a very large raccoon in Dayton. The reporting party was concerned that the raccoon may attack her pets. Wade explained that raccoons generally pose little threat to pets but will fight if cornered. Wade also explained that attractants such as pet food, left for outdoor pets are probably why the raccoon is frequenting that area.

**Walla Walla Foxes:** Wade responded to a call of a family of foxes living under a home in Walla Walla and killing the neighboring property owner's chickens. Wade discussed with the homeowner options for addressing the issue. The homeowner opted to investigate commercially available deterrents before attempting to live trap.

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

**Farm Bill and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):** Biologist Baarstad worked on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract files and created a spreadsheet to organize and track contract data. Biologists Braaten and Baarstad conducted several CRP field evaluations in Lincoln County. Baarstad met with landowners to discuss their CRP contracts. Biologists Braaten, Gaston, and Baarstad conducted several CRP field evaluations in Lincoln County. Baarstad contacted landowners to discuss their CRP contracts.

Gaston assisted Baarstad by looking at some State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) CRP re-enrollments in Lincoln County. Private Lands Biologist Gaston provided his input and recommendations to Private Lands Biologist Baarstad so that he could make his determinations.

**Habitat Incentive and Enhancement:** Private Lands Supervisor Earl continued processing A-19 forms for habitat incentive payments to private landowners in Asotin and Garfield counties. Earl discussed future habitat projects on private property over the phone with landowners in Garfield County.

**Shrub Planting:** Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley put on over 100 deer guards on previously planted shrubs that were receiving heavy browse damage from deer. Hadley also spot sprayed noxious weeds around the shrub planting area.

#### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Bear Aware Radio Spot and Presentation:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett worked with a local radio station for the question of the week on bear awareness. Topics include biology and conflict issues. Bennett worked with a Colorado State University graduate student with questions regarding depredation investigation reporting and surveys.

**Hunter Education:** Biologist Baarstad presented information about WDFW private lands hunting access and wildlife conservation to a group of five adults at a private hunter education clinic near Kettle Falls. Appropriate social distancing and health safety guidelines were followed.

#### 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Cattle Producers of Washington Meeting:** Wildlife Conflict Supervisor McCanna traveled to Colville and participated as a board member for the Cattle Producers of Washington (CPOW) Department of Agriculture grant. The meeting went well, discussing the needs of WDFW regarding paperwork.

**Stevens County Cattleman's Meeting:** Wildlife Conflict Supervisor McCanna, Northeast Washington Wolf Coordinator Pozzanghera, Wolf Biologist Roussin, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill attended the Stevens County Cattleman's (SCC) meeting in Colville. The meeting went as expected with a follow-up meeting with the president of SCC next week.

**Wolf Calls and Correspondence:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade participated in the District 3 bi-weekly wolf call. Wade gave a conflict updated and discussed current issues. Wade also participated in the monthly statewide wolf call.

**Equipment Maintenance and Signage:** Private Lands Biologist Gaston performed maintenance on his ATV in preparation for use by his newly hired natural resource worker. Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley discussed with WDFW Private Lands Biologist Wingard's current inventory of specific signs at the Walla Walla shop.

**Hunting Prospects:** Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley reviewed, and updated access totals of private land enrolled in WDFW Lands Access Programs in Columbia and Walla Walla counties and sent the information to District Biologist Wik to include in the current District 3 hunting prospects. Access acres between the two counties have increased from last year by 1,262 acres.

#### 7) Other

Nothing for this installment.



## **REGION 2**

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

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Reptile Biodiversity Monitoring:** Biologist Fitkin documented pygmy short-horned lizards at a traditional location on the Rendezvous Unit of the Methow Wildlife Area. This species is near the northern limit of its range in the Methow Valley and tends to occur in presumably isolated groups on the tops of a handful of treeless knobs in the foothill region of the watershed, making them vulnerable to local extirpation. Potential effects of climate change and increasing recreational pressure are unknown so sites are opportunistically monitored for presence.



*Pygmy short-horned lizard on the Methow Wildlife Area* – Photo by Fitkin

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** Biologists Grabowsky and Rowan continued surveys for tadpoles and old egg masses in the Potholes Northern Leopard Frog Management Area. The few ponds where egg masses were found last year have not shown any signs of reproducing northern leopard frogs (NLF) this year. Only a few ponds in other areas have had tadpoles captured. Grabowsky and Rowan also found two old temperature dataloggers that were set in ponds in the

year 2018, but broke free from their attachments and were lost until now. Rowan mailed the loggers to Olympia staff members in hopes there's a remote chance the data is still accessible. Several survey methods to detect and capture NLF tadpoles have been implemented this year including dip netting, minnow trapping, visual encounter surveys, and seine netting. Unfortunately, due to the late start to field season from COVID-19 restrictions, success has been very limited. However, a few breeding sites have been identified and tadpoles will be observed throughout the summer to aid our understanding of NLF reproduction, activity, and habitat selection in the Columbia Basin.



*A large NLF tadpole detected via dip-net survey*



*Non-native bullhead catfish look similar to small frog tadpoles from above, but their barbels/whiskers and fishtails are visible with close inspection*

**Predator-Prey Research Project:** Biologist Fitkin followed up on a radio-collared mule deer mortality. It appeared that this animal succumbed to nutritional stress brought on by old age and the energetic demands of trying to raise a new fawn. In other words, she died of natural causes.



*Mule deer bone marrow suggesting poor body condition* – Photo by Fitkin

**Chelan County Bat morbidity:** Biologist Comstock responded to a report of a dead bat on a popular walking trail near the Wenatchee River. Upon inspection, the bat was not dead, but extremely lethargic and unable to fly. The bat was subsequently euthanized, and, after consulting with Abigail Tobin (WDFW White-Nose Syndrome and Bat Coordinator), the bat was submitted for testing for the presence of *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, the fungus which causes white-nose syndrome (WNS) in bats. To further efforts to respond to the spread of WNS across the state, WDFW encourages members of the public to report observations of sick or injured bats to their local district wildlife biologist. Additionally, people who have a bat colony on their property or know the location of a bat colony are encouraged to reach out to WDFW, as these tips aid staff members in monitoring bat populations and testing colonies for the presence of *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*.



*Sick bat retrieved from a popular walking path in Cashmere* - Photo by Aaron Rosenblum

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Coulee Creek Trail Maintenance:** Sinlahekin WLA staff members were able to clear the Coulee Creek Trail of downed logs and brush into Doheny Basin. Access was limited by the number of downed trees across the trail making the trail almost unusable to horseback riding. Since being cleared, Manager Wehmeyer has received phone calls thanking staff members for clearing the trail, making it a much better horseback riding experience.

## 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Aggressive Deer:** Specialist Heilhecker received two calls about aggressive deer. One call referenced a deer attacking dogs in a condominium complex. The other call described a deer ramming a fence multiple times of the day. Three dogs were on the other side of the fence. In both cases, it was likely the deer were protecting fawns bedded down nearby. Specialist Heilhecker gave hazing advice but emphasized the behavior would likely subside once the fawns were old enough to leave the area.



*Mule Deer Doe and fawn* – Photo by Fitkin

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

**Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Noxious Weed Control:** Sinlahekin WLA staff members have continued controlling noxious weeds on different wildlife area units. They went back to the Chiliwist Unit to go over areas that were previously treated to check on any missed Scotch Thistle Plants along with treating some Rush Skeleton weed on the unit. Staff members were able to put out bio-controls for Diffuse Knapweed on some of the units. These bio-controls have been very successful in the past on the Diffuse Knapweed. WLA personnel started treatment on the Multiflora Rose that is found in the Sinlahekin Valley along with Bladder Senna. They will be continuing to control these species throughout the upcoming weeks. While treating some Bladder Senna plants Manager Wehmeyer found a few patches of Bitterroot on the Sinlahekin WLA. Staff members were also able to treat and check on known sites of Spurge Flax, Russian Knapweed, and Whitetop on some of the other units.

**Pygmy Rabbit Recovery Efforts:** A landowner had a potential pygmy rabbit sighting on his property near the Burton Draw Recovery Area. The landowner is currently working on enrolling his property into the Multiple Species General Conservation Plan (MSGCP). Biologist Hughes and Gallie met with the landowner and surveyed the property for any sign of pygmy rabbits. No sign of pygmy rabbits was detected during the survey. Hughes provided an update to the landowner on survey results and thanked him for providing information on the potential pygmy

rabbit sighting. Although no pygmy sign was found in the area right now, within the next two to three years the area has strong potential for pygmy rabbits to distribute onto it.



*Photo of possible pygmy rabbit* - Photo by Landowner

**Moist Soil Management at Regulated Access Areas:** Specialist McPherson treated seven acres of Phragmites throughout wetland basins at the Frenchman Regulated Access Area. Phragmites located in wetlands basins were significantly less dense than previous years of treatment showing that we are controlling phragmites establishment. Specialist McPherson began harrowing in the project and was able to complete five of the seven wetland basins. McPherson investigated needs for Phragmites control at the Winchester Regulated Access Area. Under inspection Phragmites spraying will not be as extensive as previous years, Specialist McPherson was very excited to see how much Smartweed is establishing in wetland cells A and E. These cells will be left to establish naturally since desirable vegetation is doing so well, allowing McPherson to focus moist soil management activities in the southern part of the project. Harrowing, tilling, and mowing southern wetland basins will increase the attractiveness to waterfowl and allow for more recreational opportunities.



*FRAA cell 2 before harrowing*



*FRAA cell 2 after harrowing*



*Smartweed doing well in cell A at WRAA - Photos by McPherson*

**State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement - Conservation Reserve Program:** Biologist Hughes reviewed paperwork that Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided to her on two State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signups in Grant County. Hughes has a relationship with both landowners who are enrolling their property in Grant County. Hughes conducted site visits to each field to prepare for writing the plans. The two signups are being enrolled in Shrub steppe SAFE-CRP. One signup will be a re-enrollment for a landowner who was previously enrolled in SAFE and another will be a conversion from general CRP into SAFE-CRP. Hughes is working closely with the local NRCS and offices in Grant County to write the plans. Biologists Hughes and Biologist Cook assessed all SAFE fields in Adams County that need forbs planted this fall. Hughes provided additional background information on the SAFE program to Cook and shared her perspective on each field. Cook is beginning to manage each of these contracts. Hughes reviewed plans, notes, and additional information on each contract with Cook in Adams County. Biologist Cook has a background in habitat restoration and is gaining an understanding of Farm Bill programs. Supervisor Rickel spent a day with Biologist Cook to evaluate a SAFE field in Grant County to confirm management recommendations made this spring we completed. Biologist Braaten completed compliance checks of several SAFE CRP contracts regarding broadleaf herbicide application.



*New CRP Field sprayed by the landowner to control Broadleaf weeds, Kochia and Thistle -*

Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

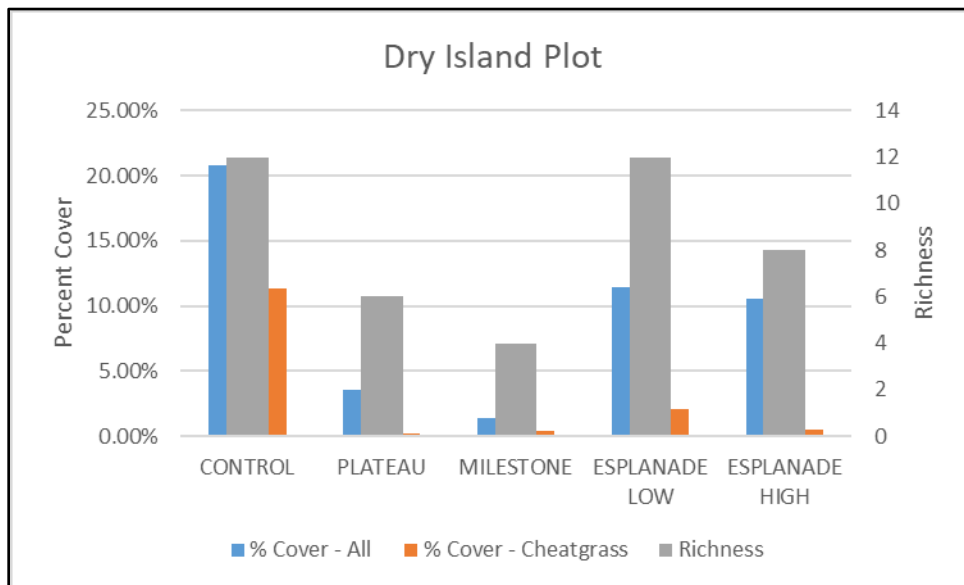
**Washington Conservation Corps Crew:** Lands Operations Manager Finger participated in discussions with Contracts Specialist Rennie, Budget Management Analyst Nelson, and Wildlife Area Manager Eidson to develop a three-year contract with the Washington State Department of Ecology to establish a full-time Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crew for Columbia Basin Wildlife Area. The WCC crew will be stationed out of Moses Lake and will be tasked with



addressing an operations and maintenance backlog to include fencing (remove, replace, repair), signage and kiosks, vegetation management, and litter control. Finger and Eidson reviewed the contract and made some minor adjustments.

**Wildfire Restoration Monitoring:** The invasive annual grass, *Bromus tectorum* (cheatgrass), has altered the fire ecology of infested arid lands in western states and to devastating consequences in terms of both habitat loss and an increased fire frequency. The challenges of managing this species are both ecological and administrative. Ecologically, the most effective means of eliminating this species is with herbicides, but this is an option that can also negatively affect native species. Regarding the restoration of native species, seeding is generally the most cost-effective method but even that is a very costly endeavor, and the results of which can be very inconsistent. Administratively, local land management budgets typically do not account for this activity at scale and in the event of a wildfire, restoration funding must be requested. This type of funding is often distributed on a one-time basis and these funds must typically be spent in a relatively short time frame. This all results in land managers often having one good chance to influence the recovery of lands following a wildfire.

To help address these challenges, Assistant Manager Bechtold is conducting a fire restoration trial in the Lower Crab Creek Unit that simulates various one-time restoration efforts. He hopes that this effort will help determine when and where seeding may be warranted and show the long-term effectiveness of various herbicides. Ultimately, the goal is to increase the effectiveness and consistency of fire restoration efforts, thereby increasing the likelihood of receiving funding in the event of a fire. Bechtold has now completed the second round of monitoring and while it is very early, some positive results have been observed with one of the herbicides. He is testing two rates of Esplanade against two of the more common herbicides used following a fire, Plateau, and Milestone. All herbicides controlled cheatgrass reasonably well, but Esplanade seems to be much less effective on broadleaf species resulting in higher species richness and overall plant cover.



## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Waterfowl:** Biologist Rowan flushed a blue-wing or cinnamon teal hen off her nest on accident while hiking through the shrub-steppe. These nests are often well-hidden under shrubs or in thick vegetation. WDFW prohibits dogs from running loose on our lands before August because these nests, hens, and eventually ducklings/chicks of many birds species are vulnerable to disturbance and mortality by dogs.



*Blue-wing or cinnamon teal nest under buckwheat in Moses Lake Potholes area* - Photo by Ella Rowan

**Trapped, Sick and Injured Wildlife:** Biologist Rowan returned a couple of calls from the public about a deer with a broken or deformed jaw, an osprey that may have a broken wing, and a couple of hawks down in fields that were likely just fledglings. This is the time of year when juvenile animals are reported by the public, but in most instances, they just need to be left alone for a day until their parent retrieves them.

**Providing Education and Outreach:** Biologist Rowan returned a call from a nine-year-old looking for information on wild horses for a school project on native wildlife. Rowan explained that horses went extinct in the Americas about 10,000 years ago and those seen today are descendants of horses brought from Europe and Asia after 1492. Rowan also provided her with many links to native species she may instead consider. Rowan also arranged for Washington

State Parks to borrow a couple of WDFW education totes so they can better gauge what they should purchase for their education totes and resources.

#### 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

#### 7) Other

**Decontamination Station:** Biologist Rowan inquired about establishing a small decontamination station next to the Ephrata warehouse where staff members can properly decontaminate wetland equipment. We need to do what we can to halt the spread of chytrid fungus, ranavirus and other pathogens from one wetland to another, which requires scrubbing and rinsing waders, nets, and other gear with brushes, followed by soaking gear in 10% bleach solution or 1% virkon solution, followed by thorough rinsing to remove chemicals. This is a laborious process, and being able to perform this work at a table with a built-in sink where we are not standing in deep puddles of water is necessary. Having a stainless steel fish cleaning table with a sink would be optimal, along with a connection to a drain system and numerous wader racks to hang waders and other gear to dry. This station could be used by other staff members for cleaning their gear too. A request will be made to hatcheries for an old table, and surplus items will be reviewed for any possible free or cheap equipment.





*From top: House wren with tasty morsel for nestlings, Methow Wildlife Area, Rendezvous Unit of the Methow Wildlife Area - Photo by S. Fitkin*



*Manson, Washington on the shores of Lake Chelan* – Photo by J. Bridges



*Cinnamon Teal in cell 4 during harrowing* - Photo by McPherson



*Bitterroot amongst bunchgrasses on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area - Photo by Wehmeyer*



*A restoration unit north of Fish Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. Current conditions as a result of timber harvest in 2012, prescribed burn in 2014, and the Okanogan Complex Fire in 2015. - Photo by Haug*



*Pair of juvenile bald eagles preparing to fly at Connors Lake on the Sinlahkein Wildlife Area –  
Photo by Haug*



*Parsnipflower buckwheat and Silky lupine near Blue Lake on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area -  
Photo by Haug*





*Purple sage over the Okanogan River valley between Tonasket and Riverside* – Photo by Haug

## **REGION 3**

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

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

**Burrowing Owl Nest Checks and Banding:** District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra worked with Private Lands Biologist Hulett, and Sunnyside Wildlife Area staff members Rogers and Byers each for a day to check artificial burrows for burrowing owls. Normally volunteers would be a major component of the project, but this is not allowed with Covid-19 restrictions. The effort is part of a larger project monitoring success and movements of owls in the interior Pacific Northwest through the Global Owl Project. Productivity was low to average at Fidorra's sites this year, possibly related to the dry spring.



***This tiny dinosaur (aka burrowing owl) was too small for banding during the nest check***



*A California Ground Squirrel in an artificial burrow which was a first for the project*

**BatHUB Project Underway:** District Wildlife Biologist Fidorra worked with partners on the Hanford Site and private landowners to place acoustic bat detectors at four sites on Hanford land and four on private lands as part of the BatHUB study. Fidorra shipped the monitors to District 9 for deployment elsewhere as part of the multi-state project on long-term bat population monitoring.



*Bat recording setup at field site targeting canyon and canal water feature*

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Oak Creek WLA staff members continue maintaining signage throughout the WLA and picking up trash at the Cowiche Mill dispersed shooting sites. Use and abuse at these sites continue to increase. Unfortunately, several oaks have seen negative impacts from all the shooting activities. The light at the end of the tunnel is for WDFW's new shooting rule to be implemented, which will prohibit shooting at these sites.



*A time-lapse of one of many dispersed shooting locations along Cowiche Mill Road from May 18, 2020, to June 2, 2020. The damage continues to increase as we wait for the finalization of the new WDFW target shooting rule that will prohibit shooting at these locations.*

Region 3 Access Manager Garcia and Natural Resources Worker Barbosa have been busy with sanitizing toilets and removing large amounts of trash being left at most of the access sites.



*Typical condition of toilets - one week between cleanings*



*Barbosa cleaning outhouse at Mattoon Lake*



*Five bags of trashed picked up within 100 feet of the parking lot at Pond 4*

After replacing the map at Corrals, six times this spring, Manager Babik tried to discourage map thievery. Unfortunately, even with this cheeky notice, the map didn't last four days.



*Educational notice that it is unnecessary to steal maps as they are free!*

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

While Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Confer Morris was out reviewing the Pipeline fire Friday afternoon, she contacted five different groups, in a socially distant way, that were target shooting at the Cottonwood parking area and pull-outs near the intersection of Durr and Roza roads. All stated that they were unaware of the fire season timing restriction. With temperatures in the 90's, it provided a good opportunity to educate them on the risk of fire during hot, dry conditions.

**Kahlotus Deer Damage Claim Dispute:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand participated in a judication hearing concerning a deer damage claim from the Kahlotus area. At odds in the claim was the methodology on determining crop loss when compared to similar fields with varying harvest yields. The final ruling has not yet been announced.

**Rattlesnake Hills Elk Hazing:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to spend time this past week hazing elk near the top of Rattlesnake Mountain including late evening and early morning patrols. Increasing numbers of animals are leaving the Hanford site to forage in winter wheat crops on the southern exposure of Rattlesnake Mountain. Along with the traditional hazing with pyrotechnics and spotlights, Critter Getters were deployed on a few highly traveled historic elk trails leaving the Hanford site. These motion-activated acoustic alarms with bright LED lights are being tested for effectiveness.



*Deployed Critter Getter on Elk Trail*

**Walla Walla County Deer Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received a complaint from a large tree fruit orchard in the Walla Walla area concerning a large number of deer that are foraging on new tree growth. Research showed that a valid Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) is still in effect for the landowner who has been implementing non-lethal hazing with diminishing results. Damage permits will be prepared and delivered when the new Region 1 Wildlife Conflict Specialist starts next week.

**Corral Canyon Damage Elk Permits:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand prepared and delivered additional permits for landowners who filled earlier issued permits. Harvest continues to be good with favorable cooler weather conditions. These permits are a very useful tool in pressuring elk away from valuable crops and back to the Hanford Monument lands.

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

Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett continued working on the fire restoration proposal for the Esquatzal Unit. Hulett created a seed mix with six native grass and ten native forbs, a shrub planting based on local upland species, and scheduled for site preparation and stand maintenance. Hulett also spoke with a landowner about re-enrolling their land into the Hunt by Written Permission program. This land was in the Hunting Access program many years ago. Hulett began working on the contract request.

Private Lands Biologist Hulett inspected grass and forbs stands for SAFE contracts in Franklin County. All fields checked had lush grass stands and the minimum number of forbs required by Farm Service Agency. Weed pressure was high for most of the stands checked. Hulett will give landowners recommendation based upon site inspections

Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Confer Morris field reviewed the Pipeline fire to identify additional restoration needs. In areas away from roads and disturbed areas, grasses and forbs seem to be recovering well, especially given the dry winter and spring we've had.



*2019 Pipeline fire - A rocky area that didn't burn very hot*





*2019 Pipeline fire - Area that burned hot*



*2019 Pipeline fire (roughly 200 feet away from the road there are perennial grasses/forbs with light cheatgrass)*



***2019 Pipeline fire (disturbed area) wildrye with a heavy component of cheatgrass and mustard***

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Berry and Natura Resource Worker Charlet continue to battle noxious weeds in the Cowiche Unit and the new Van Wyk acquisition. The current grazing permittee gave directions to large, hard to get to Scotch thistle patches in McDaniel Canyon. Berry and Charlet were able to successfully find locations but had to return to the area the next day with the Polaris Ranger and enough chemical to control the patches. Staff members have also been seeing and treating extensive diffuse knapweed infestations.



***Assistant Manager Berry using his superpowers to control this large patch of Scotch thistle located on the new Van Wyk acquisition of the Cowiche Unit***



**Natural Resource Worker Charlet spraying Scotch thistle on the Cowiche Unit**

Forester Hartmann finalized and submitted his Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant for thinning and prescribed firework in the Tieton watershed. Forester Hartmann also continued oversight of a pre-commercial thinning contract in the Oak Creek Unit, and the WDFW South Central Burn Team pre-commercial thinning work in the Rock Creek Unit.



*Contract thinning crew gears up for the day's work*



“CAP1” for Unit 3, a photo point set up during contract administration to track compliance. This location had thinning and slash piling and a prescribed “skip”, where no trees are thinned to provide a variety of habitat conditions.



*Pre and Post thin conditions in Unit 4 as observed from a survey plot used in gather prescription data*



*Pre and Post thin conditions of the project at Rock Creek completed by WDFW South-Central Prescribed Fire Team*

Sunnyside Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin have disked approximately 40 acres in the habitat restoration portions in irrigated agricultural fields A, B, and H, and well as approx. Three acres for pollinator plantings in an irrigation overspray area adjacent to field D in the Sunnyside Unit in preparation for disking and planting native grasses and pollinator strips. Planting is planned to happen this week.

Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin have continued removal of trash from parking lots and roadsides around the Sunnyside Unit. An additional 1,400 pounds have been hauled to the transfer station with another load ready to go in the dump trailer.



*Trash dumpsite being picked up near South Emerald Road*



Sunnyside Assistant Manager Rodgers applied herbicide on two upland sites that are a part of a Ducks Unlimited restoration project. These sites will be planted in the fall with a native mix that will provide nesting cover for waterfowl and upland birds. The project sites are located on the Mesa Lake and Windmill Ranch Units.

**Mesa Lake Upland Restoration Site:** Sunnyside WLA Natural Resource Technician Byers continued to spray roadsides and parking lots throughout the wildlife area, as well as isolated patches of noxious weeds such as Yellow Starthistle on the Windmill Ranch, Mesa Lake, Hope Valley, and Bailie Units. Sunnyside Assistant Manager Rodgers began mowing roadways within the Mesa Lake and Windmill Ranch Unit. Sunnyside Manager Kaelber and Byers spot sprayed broadleaf weeds in a newly seeded habitat/food plot on the Windmill Ranch Unit. The plot contains mammoth red clover, sunflowers, and a native pollinator flower mix.



*Windmill Ranch food plot*



*Galerucella beetles*

While visiting wetlands within the Windmill Unit, staff members observed *Galerucella* beetles foraging on purple loosestrife. These beetles have been released in past years to biologically control a noxious weed. The beetles are doing quite well and save staff time and the use of additional herbicide applications in the riparian areas of the wetlands.

Assistant Manager Rodgers began wetland maintenance by mowing a wetland at the Mesa Unit. Staff members will mow wetlands to prevent them from being overgrown with plants such as cattail, rushes, and cockle burr. They will treat unwanted broadleaf weeds with herbicide, and lightly disk the soil to stimulate native plants like smartweed to grow. Some of the wetlands will be seeded with millet or buckwheat for a forage source for migratory waterfowl.





*Assistant Manager Rodgers mowing wetlands at the Mesa Unit*

Assistant Manager Winegeart located a lightning strike fire on the L.T. Murray WLA off Hutchins Road (T18, R16, S5). The fire started the previous Saturday and had been smoldering/burning for two days.



*Lightning strike fire off Hutchins Road*



*Two Department of Natural Resource fire engines extinguishing lightning strike fire off Hutchins Road*

WLA staff members continue with weed treatments. The purchase of a larger boom and spray tank has aided in the spraying of the elk feeding sites for Kochia, Russian thistle, catchweed, and fiddleneck.



*65-gallon spray tank with foam marker at Watt elk feed site*

WLA staff members continue to aggressively fight the spread of Medusahead in Parke Creek. This is the only known site for the weed in Kittitas County so extra care was taken to grid the area on foot and treat via backpack. Approximately 300 plants were found and treated.



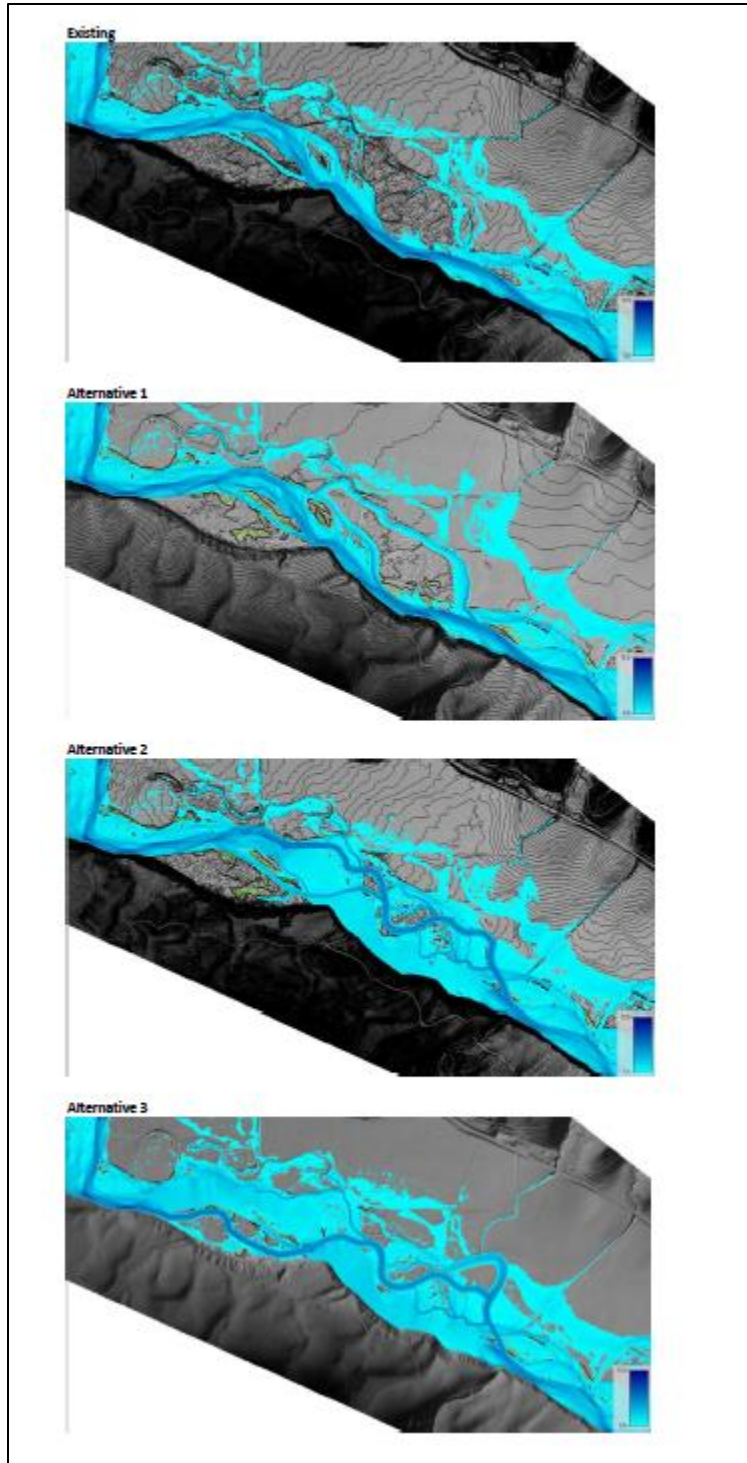
*Natural Resource Technician Blore treating Medusahead in a cattle enclosure on Parke Creek*

Assistant Manager Winegeart directed a WCC crew in treating weeds on the Hutchins 2017 commercial thinning project area. The crew treated the portion of the thinning area that was prescription burned in 2019. Over two weeks, the crew applied 226 gallons of herbicide mix via backpack to 4.5 acres of weeds across an approximately 400-acre polygon.



*WCC crew member treating weeds in the 2019 Hutchins prescribed fire area*

Manager Babik continued to work with consultants to further develop Alternative Designs to improve floodplain hydrologic function, spawning and in-channel habitat, and off-channel habitat for salmonids on the Teanaway Valley Unit. Various actions could be used to increase floodplain wetting through the 10-year flow while decreasing after the 25-year flow.



*Alternative actions at 8050 CFS (10-year flow)*

**5) Providing Education and Outreach**

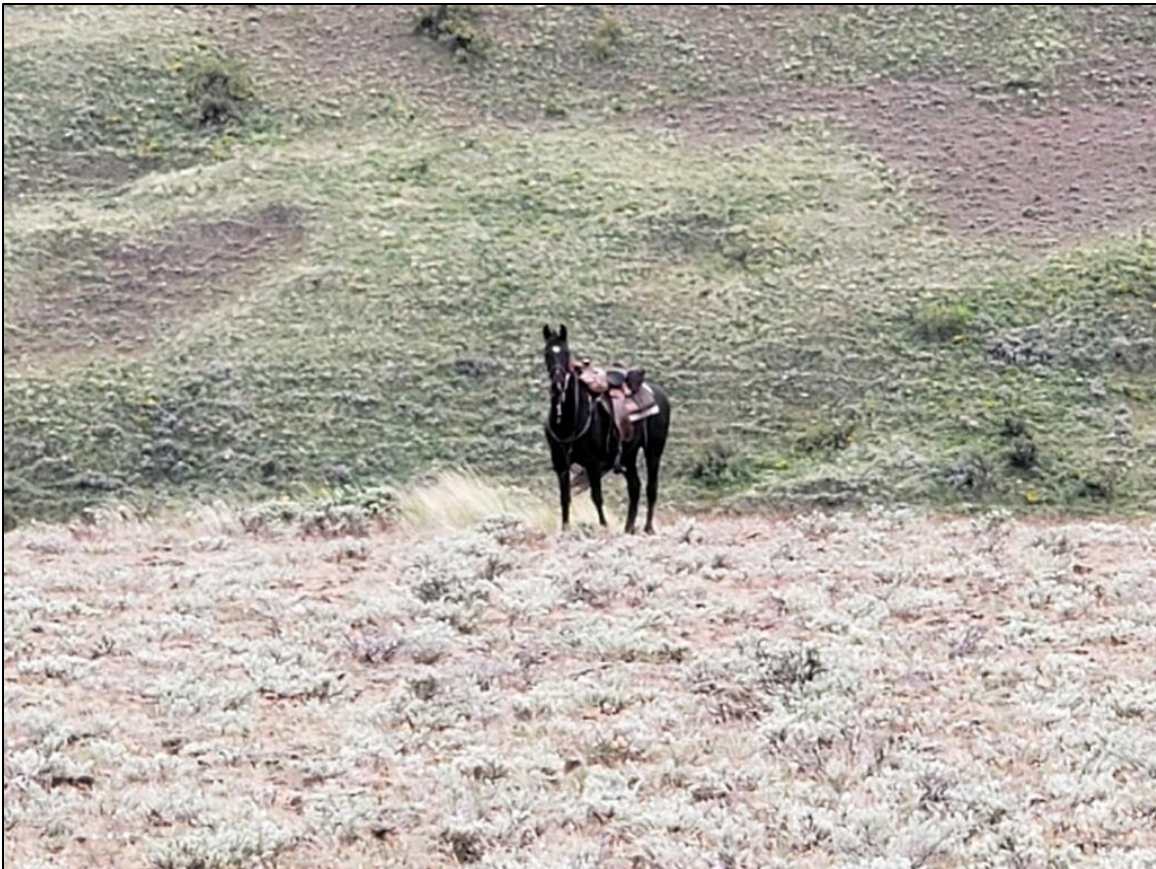
Nothing this installment.

**6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Manager Mackey attended a pre-bid meeting with Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) Project Manager Mosberger on the upcoming fence replacement scheduled for this year in the southern Oak Creek Unit in the vicinity of North Fork Cowiche Creek. The turnout for the meeting was good with a healthy pool of qualified contractors. Mackey and Mosberger also utilized this time to stake control points for small elk fence re-routes.

**7) Other**

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Berry found a saddled horse with no rider in North Fork Cowiche Creek. He was able to capture the animal, remove its saddle, and begin leading it behind his pick-up as Manager Mackey began looking for its possible origin. Manager Mackey quickly located the owner who was avidly searching for the lost animal atop another horse. The found horse had spooked while the rider attempted to mount it earlier in the day. Only minor bumps and bruises were suffered by the owner.



*Horse found in the North Fork Cowiche drainage*

## **REGION 4**

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 5**

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

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

**Black Bear Population Monitoring:** Biologists Holman and Stephens along with the bear and cougar team, Welfelt and Beausoleil, set-up 36 barbed wire corrals in GMUs 550 and 556.



***Bear and Cougar Specialist Beausoleil Setting up a Bear Hair Snare Corral***

The corrals are designed to collect hair from curious bears who are drawn into the corrals by a potent smelling lure placed at the center. The hair samples are being collected and analyzed for DNA to identify individual bears. The DNA samples will allow managers to generate abundance and density estimates within the survey area. Biologists Holman and Stephens were joined last week by Region 5 Office Manager Varley, Access Program Mechanic McKinlay, Grays Harbor and Pacific County District Wildlife Biologist Novack, and Region 5 Customer Service Specialist Smith. Together the team made the initial check of the 36 baited stations and collected

hair from these sites that had been visited by bears. Three additional checks will be conducted throughout June and July.



*Biologist Novack collecting bear hair*



*Bear hair captured on barbed wire*



*R5 Access Mechanic McKinlay adding lure to a bear station*



*Customer Service Specialist Smith collecting bear hair*



*R5 Office Manager Varley adding lure to a bear station*

### *Black Bear Population Monitoring*

**Painted Turtle Trapping Effort:** Biologists Wickhem and Bergh with help from Biologist Hallock trapped Western painted turtles at two sites in the central Columbia River Gorge. As part of a competitive state wildlife grant, WDFW was tasked with CT scanning 40 painted turtles to look for signs of shell disease. Shell disease afflicts the state endangered Western pond turtle in Washington and results in shell lesions that can penetrate the body cavity and disrupt mobility and organ function. Sometimes lesions are visible from the surface, but often CT scans are required to identify and locate all the lesions in an individual. So far, shell disease has not been documented in painted turtles, even in locations where diseased pond turtles live with painted turtles. The 19 painted turtles scanned last year did not appear to have shell disease, and we are hoping the remaining 21 painted turtles captured this week will also be free of lesions.



***Painted Turtle Trapping Effort***

**Western Painted Turtle CT Scans:** Biologists Wickhem and Bergh brought 21 Western painted turtles to a veterinary hospital in Clackamas, Oregon so they could be CT scanned to look for evidence of shell disease. Before the scan, the turtles must be wrapped in vet wrap to secure their legs and tail which prevents them from walking around (or off!) the CT table during the scan. None of the turtles appeared to have the shell lesions that are a symptom of shell disease, and several of the large females were full of eggs. The turtles were returned to their respective ponds in Skamania County after the scans to go about their regular turtle-business.



***Western Painted Turtle CT Scans***



**Western Gray Squirrel Surveys:** Biologist Wickhem checked three Western gray squirrel transects for activity. Each transect is made up of twelve PVC tubes with a walnut glued inside and double-sided tape mounted at each entrance. When a squirrel enters the tube to get the walnut, they leave hair behind on the tape, and the hair is used to identify the species of the squirrel. On this check, a hand full of tubes had been disturbed by bears and California ground squirrels, but a few tubes had hairs that were consistent with Western gray squirrels. The samples will be sent to Olympia for final identification. The recent heavy rain in Klickitat County resulted in excellent mud for wildlife tracks, and Wickhem found that both a black bear and cougar had recently used the trails she uses to access the survey sites!



*Black bear tracks on the trail*



*Cougar track on the trail*

**Bat White-Nose Syndrome Surveillance:** Biologist Stephens and White-nose Syndrome (WNS) Coordinator Tobin collected guano at a long-legged myotis colony to have it tested for the presence of the fungus that causes WNS. They also conducted an emergence count as the bats exited the structure at dusk. A total of 176 bats were counted which is a low count for this site.

**NABat Survey Grids:** Biologists Bergh and Wickhem conducted bat acoustic surveys at two grid cells as part of a larger national effort to document bat populations known as [NABat](#). Acoustic detectors are set out in areas within the grid cells that are likely to have high bat usage (near water, in forest openings, etc.) and record the calls of bats during their active flying period between dusk and dawn. The calls can be identified by species and, along with other survey data, help to track bat populations at both the local and national scale.



*Acoustic bat detector set-up with a microphone on a pole attached to a recording device*

**Klickitat County Western Gray Squirrel Surveys:** Biologist Wickhem checked three Western gray squirrel transects in Klickitat County. Each transect is made up of twelve PVC tubes with a walnut glued inside and double-sided tape affixed to both entrances of the tube. When a squirrel enters the tube to investigate the walnut, they leave behind hairs on the tape that allows biologists to identify which species of squirrel was inside the tube. After the first transect check two weeks ago, one site was confirmed to have collected Western gray squirrel hair. Once a site is confirmed positive, that area is considered occupied and the transect is complete, so all the survey equipment can be retrieved from the field. On this round of checks, an additional transect had collected some suspected Western gray squirrel hair, but the hair will need to be confirmed by Olympia staff before the site can be considered occupied. The remaining transects will be checked and pulled at the end of July. For more information on the [State Threatened Western gray squirrel](#), please visit our website here.



*The cattle grazing on this parcel were kind enough to stamp down a trail that leads directly from the parking spot to the squirrel transect. Thank you, cows!*

**Sandhill crane survey:** Biologists Bergh and Wickhem, along with the Department of Natural Resources Natural Areas Technician Plemmons, visited the Deer Creek sandhill crane territory site to look for any crane activity. Plemmons was able to do fieldwork at the site in April and had observed cranes several times. During this week's survey, no cranes were seen or heard, which likely means that if the pair had nested that nest failed or the colt(s) did not survive. Due to Covid-19, no field visits were made in May to look for a nest.



*Wet meadow area in the Deer Creek sandhill crane territory*

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**2021-23 Three-Year Hunting Season Package Development:** Regional Wildlife Program Manager Jonker joined regional biologists and wildlife conflict specialists to develop proposals for the upcoming three-year season setting cycle. Input from Regional Enforcement Program staff members was included as well. Regional topics for the process include efforts to simplify regulations and boundaries, adjust antlerless hunting opportunities where needed for population management, and find ways to recruit new hunters into the outdoors. The public will have the opportunity to view statewide proposals later in the summer.

**Icehouse:** The historical icehouse building has been subjected to vandalism as the structure ages. Access staff members Rhodes and McKinlay, in coordination with Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven, rebuilt and fixed the entryway to the icehouse to restrict entry while still providing visitors the opportunity to see inside the old house from a safe distance and learn about the history.



*Rebuilding Icehouse Entry Way*

**Swofford Pond Footbridge and Kiosk Installation:** Cowlitz Wildlife Area staff members and a Lewis County Juvenile Probation Court Work Crew constructed a 24-foot extension to the footbridge near the trailhead. The new extension provides an elevated walkway over the otherwise very wet section of trail. Cowlitz WLA staff members also replaced the worn-out and vandalized kiosk with a new more aesthetically attractive kiosk.



*Swifford Pond Trail footbridge extension and a new kiosk*

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Depredation on Dog:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received a request to contact a homeowner in an urban area of Vancouver whose dog was recently killed by another animal. Based on the description of the injuries, another canine was likely responsible. The dog was roaming the small property at night when it was killed. Jacobsen discussed issues with urban coyotes with the homeowner and recommended that the easiest way to keep her remaining dog safe was to keep the dog inside at night, rather than letting it roam around. Other recommendations on discouraging coyotes from visiting her yard, such as keeping the deer out of her yard, were provided. The homeowner installed a trail camera and later contacted Jacobsen to confirm that a coyote had been visiting her yard. The homeowner was not satisfied with the recommendations provided and decided to pursue the option of contacting the United States Department Agriculture Wildlife Services for assistance with lethal removal.

**Cougar Sighting:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted regarding a cougar sighting in rural Clark County that occurred a few days prior. The landowner heard her dogs barking at night and went out to observe a large cougar on top of a compost pile. The cougar was

looking into a large pen where several goats were kept. Jacobsen strongly recommended that the goats be locked up in a secure building at night, rather than be allowed to roam loose at night. The landowner also reported that a duck went missing that morning, but after further discussion, it was determined that the duck was a feral domestic duck that had been allowed to roam the property and in the heavily wooded creek bottom adjacent to the property. It is unknown what happened to the duck. Jacobsen recommended that the landowner keep her great Pyrenees with the goats for protection and offered to drop off a Fox Light to help deter predators as well. The landowner declined the offer.

**Missing Fowl:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received a report that a landowner was missing some chickens, ducks, and a young Guinea fowl, and the landowner believed that owls were getting them. Jacobsen provided advice on securing his fowl in a better enclosure and provided advice on how to protect the fowl from various potential predators. The landowner recently acquired a new, “aggressive and mean” rooster to protect his remaining fowl and believed that it would do the trick.

**Dead House Cat:** An officer with a local police department contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen regarding a dead and partially consumed house cat. The officer was concerned that the cat may have been killed by a cougar. The cat had only been partially consumed and was fed on in the middle of an opened, mowed yard, indicating that it was most likely killed by a coyote. Some advice was given.

**Bear Advice:** A landowner in rural Clark County contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen to report that he had recently acquired several beehives and boxes and wanted to know if he could shoot a bear if it came around his boxes. Jacobsen referred the landowner to several Washington State Administrative Codes (WACs) to clarify what the landowner was, and was not, allowed to do. Jacobsen strongly recommended that if the landowner was concerned about bears, the responsible thing to do would be to install electric fencing to protect the bees in the first place.

**Injured Deer:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted regarding a female deer that appeared to have a foreign object lodged in its foot. After examining several photos and videos of the deer and discussing the situation with the reporting party, it was decided that the deer was highly mobile and should be left alone to see if it would remove the foreign object on its own. The deer was observed by the reporting party later in the week, moving much better and with the object missing from the deer’s foot.

**Depredation on Llama:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Captain Wickersham responded to a report of a cougar depredation on a 25-year-old llama in Skamania County. After conducting a necropsy of the carcass, it was determined that the llama was killed and consumed by coyotes. The landowner did not own any additional large livestock but did have several chickens and ducks on the property. Advice and recommendations were provided to the landowner on how to better secure the landowner’s chicken coop and protect the chickens from coyotes and other carnivores.



*Bite marks to the right hindquarter and groin area of the llama from coyotes*



*Chicken coop in need of reinforcement work to better protect the chickens and ducks from carnivores*

**Bats in Residence:** Jacobsen was contacted by a concerned landowner who had a large colony of bats roosting in her attic. The bat guano was falling into the living quarters and creating a potentially hazardous situation for her immunocompromised son. Jacobsen worked with Biologist Bergh to discuss options for the landowner.

**Ground Squirrel Complaint:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen fielded a complaint of California ground squirrels getting into a chicken house in Klickitat County and eating the eggs. Advice on fencing and deterrents was given to keep the squirrels out.

**Mysterious Animal Scat:** A concerned citizen contacted Region 5 Customer Service staff members regarding some animal scat piles that appeared in their yard, believing they were deposited by a bear. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was able to determine that the scat belonged to raccoons.

**Felines:** A resident contacted Region 5 Customer Service staff members due to concerns of “big cats in the area” that they caught on their security camera. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was able to confirm all three felines in the security videos were domestic house cats.



*Feline 1*

*Feline 2*



*Feline 3*

**Missing Goats:** A concerned landowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen regarding two of his young goats that went missing the previous afternoon. Jacobsen responded to the residence to investigate and to see if a depredation had occurred. The family couldn't recall where on their property the goats were turned out at the time they went missing. After looking the property over, Jacobsen determined that the goats had been allowed to range and



graze between the landowner's property and an adjacent parcel of heavily wooded DNR land and had also been grazing on adjacent landowner's property that was covered in dense regrowth after a clearcutting operation. Fences were in disrepair or were nonexistent between the parcels. No signs of a depredation were found at the residence. The landowner also indicated that this was not the first time some of his goats had disappeared, several other times, their goats had been known to leave the residence and wander several miles away. Advice was given on animal husbandry, fencing, and removal of the abundant animal attractants on the property.



*Grazing "pasture" of dense underbrush in an old structure*



*Remaining goats in an unsecured structure, advice was given on reinforcing the goat pen to protect them from wildlife*

**“Stuck Black Bear”:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a report of a baby black bear that was stuck on a landowner’s property. The landowner had heard a bawling noise coming from the ravine near their house and it had continued for over 24 hours before the landowner called it in. Jacobsen waited for Officer Bolton to arrive at the scene, and they both went to investigate. When the pair got to the bottom of the ravine, they found a deceased black-tailed deer that had been attacked by a coyote and while fleeing, got stuck in a muddy pool in a creek bottom. The deer could not get out of the mud and had died before WDFW’s arrival. The landowner had been hearing the deer as it attempted to get out of the mud, and mistakenly thought it was a bear cub making the noise.

**Bear Concerns:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen followed up with a landowner that reported a bear repeatedly coming onto their property. Jacobsen responded to the residence and observed several trash cans (though empty) on the property, as well as multiple bags of dirty and empty beer and soda cans, canned food, and a jar of peanut butter – all of which were readily accessible to a bear. The landowner had been keeping all their trash in the back of a pickup with a canopy for periodic runs to the transfer station. The landowner reported that two bears had been prowling around during the last few nights, and the smaller bear (potentially a cub or yearling bear) had attempted to get into their temporary chicken structure. Six juvenile chickens were housed in a 4’ x 4’, a plywood-sided box with construction fencing over the top. The landowner had started a permanent chicken coop but wouldn’t have the funds to finish it until the

end of the month. Jacobsen addressed the attractant issue and installed a temporary electric fence around the chicken structure to protect the chickens from the bears until the landowner could get his permanent coop constructed.



*Electric fencing and solar-powered fence energizer protecting the temporary chicken structure until the landowner can construct a larger coop*

**Fawn Rescue:** Wildlife Conflict Specialists Jacobsen and Aubrey responded to a report of an orphaned fawn in downtown Washougal. The fawn's mother was deceased and had likely been killed by a vehicle several days prior. With the help of some neighbors, Jacobsen and Aubrey were able to catch the fawn. Jacobsen transported the up the I-5 corridor and handed the fawn off to Blankenship, who was able to take the fawn to a wildlife rehabilitation center in Pierce County. Thanks to Blankenship for assistance in transporting the fawn!



*Jacobsen holding on tight to orphaned fawn, who kept wanting to jump out of his arms*

**Dead Chicken:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was in the vicinity when a call came in regarding a dead chicken that was possibly killed by a cougar earlier in the week. Jacobsen responded to the residence and examined the dead chicken. It was not possible to tell what animal had killed the chicken, though the chicken had been killed during daylight hours. The chicken had been let out to free-range adjacent to thick brushy cover, and was killed adjacent to, but outside of, its coop. Jacobsen installed a trail camera in the area to monitor for wildlife that might be visiting the chicken coop.



*Dead chicken killed and partially consumed by an unknown animal*

**Bear Timber Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen inspected a tree on an industrial timber farm near Swift Reservoir. Jacobsen verified that the damage was caused by a black bear feeding on the tree bark. No other damaged trees were located.



*Black bear damage to a tree on an industrial tree farm*

**Elk Damage to Oats:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with a landowner to discuss recent elk damage to his ten-acre oat hay crop. The landowner reported that originally, only an elk or two were browsing in the field, but recently, he noticed a large herd in the vicinity. The oats had been heavily browsed and were a fraction of the height that they should be at this time. A small section of oats next to a barn was undamaged and served as a comparison to highlight the elk damage. A damage permit agreement was discussed, and Jacobsen deployed a portable wildlife hazing device as well as issued cracker shells to the landowner to help haze the elk away.



*Extensive elk damage to oat crop in Klickitat County*

**Injured Eagle:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to a report of an injured eagle near Randle. With the help of United States Forest Service employees who spotted the eagle, Aubrey was able to capture the eagle and transport it to a rehabilitation facility.

**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.

**Orphaned Fawn:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey took possession of an orphaned fawn that was originally picked up by Officer Van Vladricken in Clark County. Aubrey was able to transport the fawn to a rehabilitator.

**Tree Farm Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey met with the owner of a Christmas tree farm who experiences damage from deer and elk in the fall and winter. Options to reduce damage were discussed, and a follow up will occur later in the year closer to when damage will be occurring to determine the next steps, including signing a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement.

**Injured Hawk:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to a report of a hawk that had been hit by a car. Aubrey was able to locate the injured bird and capture it. The hawk was transported to a rehabilitator.



*Injured hawk being taken by rehabilitator for care*

#### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

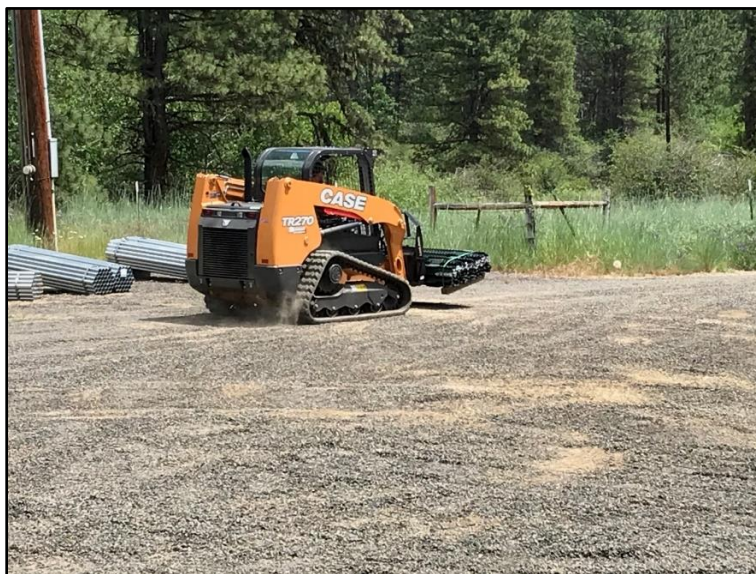
**Klickitat Wildlife Area Bluebird Nest Box Survey:** The annual bluebird nest box survey on the Klickitat Wildlife Area was completed this week. Of the 24 serviceable nest boxes, 16 were occupied by western bluebirds, one box was occupied by mountain chickadees, and seven were unoccupied. Bluebirds appear to be doing very well on the Soda Springs Unit.

**Klickitat Wildflowers:** The late-season bloomers are on show with heartleaf buckwheat and several species of lupines being the most commonly seen. Tiger lilies, red columbines, mule ears, and sticky geraniums are also in blossom.



*Prairie Lupine*

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Simcoe Fence Materials Delivery:** Fence construction materials were delivered to the Klickitat Wildlife Area Headquarters. Given the quantity for this big project, Manager Van Leuven rented a compact loader for taking the bundles of posts and pallets of wire off the truck and putting them in a temporary storage area. This was a team effort with Managers Hauswald and Wildermuth and Access Mechanic McKinlay assisting with inventorying the order and moving everything to storage. The work went smoothly with the team and everything was put away and the loader hauled back to the rental company in The Dalles by 5:00 p.m. Many thanks to the team for the quality help in getting this job done!



*Moving Posts to Storage*



5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

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

**Double-Crested Cormorants:** Biologist Michaelis conducted the annual double-crested cormorant survey in Grays Harbor. Few nests and few birds were observed in the eastern portion of the harbor. Some channel markers had been removed since last year which results in less nesting habitat. This is part of a Pacific Coast wide survey to estimate breeding cormorant numbers. Many young Coho smolts were observed jumping out of the water and that was quite interesting to see!

**Band-Tailed Pigeon Capture and Banding:** Biologists Michaelis, Novack, and Sundstrom began capturing and banding band-tailed pigeons (BTP). A total of 16 birds have been banded with a standard federal band and an additional colored and numbered band. This is the beginning of a project designed to track pigeon movements and identify mineral springs that appear to be a critical resource for breeding birds. Later this season, a second effort to capture birds will occur in September, to attach GPS transmitters to track BTP movements.



*Photo of an adult male band-tailed pigeon before banding*

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Weed Control and Maintenance:** The Olympic Crew has been working to get caught up after the Covid-19 shutdown. Roads, trails, and parking areas have been brushed and cleaned. Wynoochee Unit 2 has been mowed early as a form of weed control. By mowing this unit early in the season, weeds were cut before there was a chance to mature therefore helping to control the weed source. Unit 2 will be mowed again in the summertime as usual, which will provide high quality, bloom free winter elk forage.



With the Covid-19 shutdown affecting every aspect of life in Washington State, as well as many others, the Olympic Crew has had to adjust operations slightly. The crew will not be doing any re-seeding this year due to time constraints. The forage maintenance will continue as usual on these areas to ensure high-quality elk winter forage, thus continuing optimal hunting activities as well as other recreational opportunities.

The Olympic Crew has not had much luck curtailing ATV use on state lands. The Lynn Fields (which was re-seeded in 2019) has been turned into a thoroughfare for the locals to get from one valley to the next, causing much ground disturbance as well as pushing elk to private lands.



### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this installment.

### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Grant Awarded for Expansion of WDFW – Davis Creek Unit near Oakville:** Using [Washington Department of Ecology](#) funding, a [steering committee](#) working to restore aquatic ecosystems in the Chehalis Basin is directing \$4.7 million in state grants to support local job capacity and fund [20 aquatic habitat restoration projects](#). District Wildlife Biologist Novack was one of the 20 successful applicants. The award is for the acquisition of approximately 85 acres to protect native riparian, floodplain, off-channel, and wetland habitat adjacent to existing WDFW owned lands at the Davis Creek unit in Grays Harbor County near Oakville. The riparian sloughs, floodplain, and off-channel habitats inside the proposed area both border and connect with those habitats found on existing WDFW lands and will benefit native fish and wildlife while providing recreational opportunities.

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing for this installment.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this installment.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.