

# Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, 2019

## **DIVERSITY DIVISION**

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

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

**Red Knot Conservation:** Natural Resource Scientist Buchanan participated in a conference call with researchers, managers and biologists from the Netherlands and North America to discuss new genetic analyses relating to populations of red knots in the Western Hemisphere. Of greatest relevance to Washington and the Pacific Flyway as a whole, scientists recently documented a substantial genetic difference between red knots that breed on Wrangel Island, Russia and those that breed in northwestern coastal Alaska. Both of those populations migrate through Washington during spring and both likely overwinter in northwestern coastal Mexico. The *roselaari* subspecies that migrates through Washington has the smallest population of any subspecies of red knot globally.

**Bat Monitoring:** WDFW Biologists Tobin and Murphie and U.S. Forest Service biologists investigated a bat colony report in Jefferson County to determine colony size and species. The colony was determined to be a little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) colony of about 300 bats. This information is very valuable to WDFW and allows us to monitor bat health and population trends as well as track the distribution of the bat disease, white-nose syndrome.

***Female little brown bat roosting with pup at a colony in Jefferson County*** – Photo by Katie Haman, WDFW



#### **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

Nothing for this reporting period.

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

## **GAME DIVISION**

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

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Elk Status and Trend Reports:** Elk Specialist Garrison compiled and entered statewide elk survey and harvest data to generate final figures for WDFW's game species status and trend reports. WDFW produces status and trend reports every year to provide the public with comprehensive assessments of game species by district or population area. View previous reports [here](#).

**Treponeme-associated Hoof Disease (TAHD):** Deer and Elk Section Manager Hoenes and Elk Specialist Garrison met with internal and external collaborators to discuss an analysis plan for WDFW's TAHD survival and productivity project. This project was initiated in 2015 and data collection completed in May 2019. This long-running project has several unique data analysis challenges that researchers will confront in the coming year. Learn more about TAHD [here](#), and WDFW's survival and productivity research [here](#).

#### 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Beaver Relocation Training:** The small game and furbearer unit lead the first Beaver Relocation Training under the new Beaver Relocation Pilot Program. Learn more about the program [here](#). More than 30 participants took part in the training. The Methow Beaver Project generously offered their facilities to host the training, and many instructors contributed from the Washington Beaver Working Group, the Methow Beaver Project, and WDFW. Thank you to everyone who helped make this training a success!

#### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**TAHD Outreach:** Elk Specialist Garrison worked with WDFW's Marketing Program to develop hunter outreach materials related to TAHD. These outreach materials will provide information about the disease to hunters before hunting seasons, and to remind hunters to inspect the hooves of their harvest for signs of TAHD. These efforts are designed to increase the accuracy of disease prevalence estimates derived from hunter reporting.

#### 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

### **HUNTER EDUCATION**

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

##### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Master Hunter Permit Program Application Period:** Hunter Education Specialist Thorson fielded calls from prospective master hunters on the Master Hunter Permit Program and its requirements. The application period for 2019 was open Jul. 1 through Aug. 15. Applicants will have until May 15, 2020 to complete the requirements. The 2020 application period may be put on hold until the conclusion of the 2020 legislative session and WDFW's budget is finalized.

##### 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

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

**Cougar Mount:** Region 5 Coordinator Elliott was able to wrap up the cougar taxidermy project that has been ongoing since April. The master hunter in Spokane who volunteered to complete the mount, to fulfill the volunteer hours needed for renewal (and more), had the final product ready to go. Elliott worked with Enforcement Sergeant Watts in Yakima to arrange transport for the new decoy. Region 3 was very thankful for the assistance in getting this done, and the master hunter enjoyed the work and the ability to give in a meaningful way.



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

Nothing for this reporting period.

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

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey visited three hunter education teams and evaluated the teaching at the classes. All teams are doing an excellent job delivering the hunter education curriculum.

Coordinator Dazey also visited a board meeting of the Black Diamond Gun Club to help recognize Hunter Education Instructor John Malek. While at the board meeting, Dazey was able to express first of all the quality of the instructors that teach at Black Diamond Gun Club and also let the board know how much WDFW appreciates them making their facility available for hunter education classes. Currently two separate teaching teams work out of Black Diamond. One team concentrates on full traditional classes and the other team concentrates on online field skill evaluations. The two teams have been able to offer 13 separate classes between the two of them. A big thank you to the Black Diamond Gun Club.

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey is continuing to work on new venues in Whatcom County. Currently, Whatcom County is underserved and students desiring to take hunter education to get their first hunting license often find themselves needing to travel to find an available class. Dazey is also working to add an additional women's oriented hunter education class. These classes are taught by all female instructors who are able to focus on issues of importance to the female student while delivering the hunter education syllabus. As an added benefit, the enforcement component of the course is presented by female enforcement officers, which demonstrates to students that WDFW values and has opportunities for women in our diverse work force. Dazey is able this year to increase the number of women oriented classes from two to three while also presenting at a new venue in the underserved area of Whatcom County.

Region 5 Coordinator Elliott has been working closely with several teams for various reasons. One team volunteered to represent the Hunter Education Program at a local community health and safety fair. She delivered brochures to handout to a class held the day before and was able to assist the class by providing forms and input on student questions. Another local team has lost



their chief instructor. Elliott has been helping the team inventory and organize supplies, archive old records, and enlist more help for the team's traditional classes. She has also been working closely with three instructors who recently held a class and ended up with a parent who was quite unhappy and did not attend after the first day. The parent was given Coordinator Elliott's information but has not yet contacted her. From the accounts of the people involved it seems it may have been miscommunication and expectations that didn't match what the hunter education classes provide.

Regional Coordinator Elliott has been sharing information with instructors, students, and parents about an upcoming youth pheasant hunt happening Sept. 21-22 in Vancouver. The event is put on by Vancouver Wildlife League and uses pheasants raised by WDFW. Elliott is also starting to work with USFWS and the Washington Waterfowl Association to help spread the word and get volunteers for their Veterans' Waterfowl Hunt at the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge in November.

**Trapper Education In-service Training:** Hunter Education Division Specialist Thorson held a trapper education instructor in-service training at the Washington State Trappers Association's (WSTA) summer rendezvous. He talked with the instructors and other WSTA members about the current program and the program's future. He also answered questions about department regulations in conjunction with Small Game and Furbearer Specialist Garrison.

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

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### **7) Other**

Region 5 Coordinator Elliott was contacted by someone locally who is working to get a volunteer opportunity for 10-15 people from his workplace. Elliott spoke with one of the wildlife area managers and is helping facilitate a project in the next couple of months.

### **LANDS DIVISION**

#### ***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.

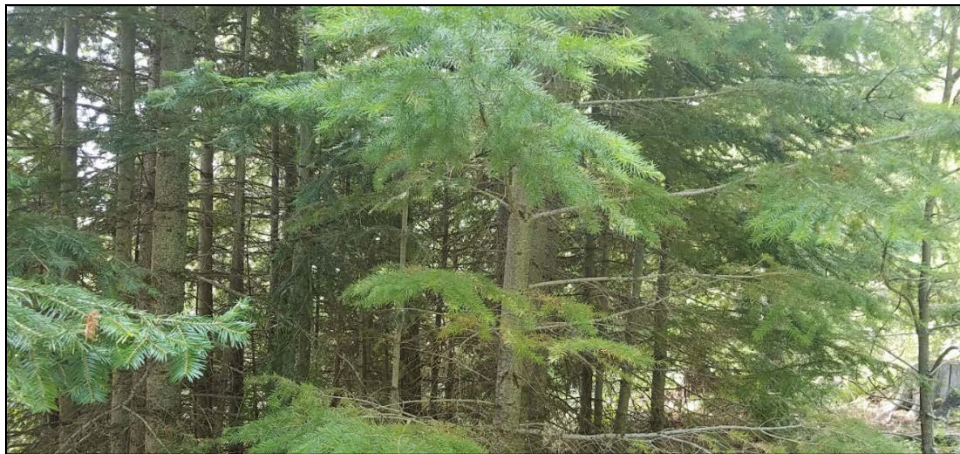
##### **3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Management Plan:** Director Susewind signed the final Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Management Plan. Highpoints of the plan include forest management, riparian restoration, and recreation management and weed control. The plan was well supported by the WDFW staff members, Wildlife Area Advisory Committee, and stakeholders.

**L.T. Murray Pre-commercial Thinning:** Statewide Forester Pfeifle is continuing to monitor and ensure compliance on the L.T. Murray 2018 Pre-commercial Thinning Project. As of August 12, 2019, 12 units, encompassing approximately 854 acres, have been thinned and approved for payment. Approximately 679 acres are yet to be thinned. The contractor has left the L.T. Murray project to complete a thinning contract in the Colville area. The contractor will come back to finish the thinning project in the middle of September.



*L.T. Murray pre-commercial thinning unit prior to thinning*



*L.T. Murray pre-commercial thinning unit post thinning*

**Blue Mountains Forest Inventory and Student Interns:** University of Idaho forestry student interns have completed the forest inventory plots on the Mountain View and Grouse Flats sides of 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area. They finished the plots on Smoothing Iron and learned how to do

skyline logging profiles. They received their Blue Card Fire Training from DNR Forester Tom Schoenfelder and attended the regional awards meeting with the entire Blue Mountains staff. Intern Brewer assisted in forest inventory, data entry, and the completion of SEPA documents for the Blue Mountains and the Chelan Wildlife Areas. Brewer also took some photo points of forested areas around the Blue Mountains Wildlife Area, covered slash piles from the Rustler's Gulch pre-commercial thinning, and assisted CAMP in documenting roadwork done on the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area. Intern Vega visited a USFS skyline logging job and assisted forester Hartmann with pre-commercial thinning layout on the Oak Creek Wildlife Area. Their last day was August 8 and the Blue Mountain Wildlife Area personnel wished them the best in their wildlife and forestry careers! They were hard working, quick learners and did a great job.



*University of Idaho intern was invited to join the logger when pulling up small material on a U.S. Forest Service timber sale*

**Archaeology, Tsunamis, and Fish:** Lands archaeologists continue to work with Habitat Program biologists to protect an ancient shell midden site at a WDFW restoration project on Sinclair Inlet. Consultation with the Suquamish Tribe identified the location as having significance in deep time to the Suquamish people and that the tribe is supportive of additional scientific research at the location. Preliminary conversations with staff members from the Burke Museum and University of Washington's Quaternary Research Center have generated several interesting collaborative project proposals. Monitoring of the bulkhead removal resulted in the identification of an additional small lens of shell. Subsequent returns to the site by Lands Program archaeologists to monitor post-removal changes have resulted in more clarity about the extent of the midden.

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

The WDFW lands landing website (<https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/wdfw-lands>) has been updated to include more content related to recreation, restoration, and working lands on WDFW lands.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.

**SCIENCE DIVISION**

*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**

WDFW Research Scientist Matt Vander Haegen published a paper along with University of Washington colleagues Aaron Johnston and Steve West. The paper appears in the Journal of Wildlife Management and is titled “Diets of Native and Introduced Tree Squirrels in Washington.” The paper is based on research conducted on Joint Base Lewis-McChord and documents dietary differences among the native western gray squirrel and Douglas’ squirrel and the introduced eastern gray squirrel. Key findings of the study include common and year-round use of hypogeous fungi by all three species and high consumption of conifer seeds by the two native squirrels contrasting with low consumption by the invading eastern gray squirrel. Knowledge of key food sources used by potentially competing species can help plan habitat management actions to support native wildlife.



Research Scientist Watson and several coauthors recently published a paper in the Journal of Raptor Research “First-year Migration and Natal Region Fidelity of Immature Ferruginous Hawks.” The 15-year study describes range-wide migration patterns of hawks in the first two years from hatching to nesting. Radio-tagged movements of adults and their young were analyzed to understand independence of migration and the development of migration patterns. Key areas of use identified from telemetry during each season of the year largely mirrored that of adult hawks. Fidelity of immature hawks to natal regions was an important finding with management implications because the species has traditionally been considered to be nomadic.

#### 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

#### 7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

### **REGION 1**

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Nothing to report this period.

#### 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Heller Bar Access Area:** Construction crews from WDFW’s Lacey shop began work on the new Heller Bar ramp last week. The project will take several weeks to complete and will double the size of the ramp.

**Feel Free to Fish:** A Columbia County property owner stopped at the Clarkston WDFW office and met with Fish Biologist Crawford and Conflict Specialist Wade about enrolling his property, which encompasses a portion of the Touchet River, into the Feel Free to Fish program. The property owner reported having issues with a neighboring landowner attempting to post his property and kicking anglers out. Wade forwarded information on to Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley and provided the property owner with Hadley’s contact information. Biologist Hadley talked with the landowner and met on site to discuss the program and the contracting process.

**Hunting by Written Permission:** Private Lands Biologist Gaston enrolled 722 acres of private land into the Hunt by Written Permission program. The property will be located in southeast Spokane County and will allow hunting for big game.

**New Private Lands Access:** Private Lands Supervisor Earl dropped off a contract for signature by the landowner of a new 314-acre Hunt by Written Permission property in Garfield County. Earl will be working with the owner to get the boundaries posted with WDFW signs.

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Depredation Investigations:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman responded to a report of a wolf/livestock depredation event in west Ferry County. A deceased adult cow was discovered by the producer while monitoring cattle. The cow was examined and determined to be a confirmed wolf attack. The event occurred within the Old Profanity Territory (OPT) home range.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman and WDFW Wolf Specialist Maletzki discovered a deceased adult cow within the OPT home range. An investigation was conducted on the cow and determined to be an unknown cause of death. The cow appeared to have fallen against a stump and suffocated. No predator involvement.

**Possible Depredation:** WDFW Wildlife Conflict Section, Enforcement, and wildlife area staff members responded, over the weekend, to a report of a possible depredation in the Grouse Flats area of Asotin County. WDFW personnel performed a full site investigation and field necropsy. The carcass was in advanced stages of decomposition and had been heavily scavenged by one or more bears. WDFW staff members did not find any evidence of depredation activity on what remained of the carcass and attributed the cow's death to unknown causes.



*Reported Carcass*

**Producer Contacts (Livestock):** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade has been in contact with several producers this week regarding data sharing, Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) payments, grazing season and preventative measures. None of the producers had any wolf/livestock conflict issues to report. Wade continued to work on updating producer checklists. Wade also assisted one producer with becoming familiar with the WDFW data sharing program.

### 4) Conserving Natural Areas

**W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area Cabin Removal:** Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Dingman visited the Donahue cabin site to take photos of the cabin removed by Rocky Mountain Elk



Foundation (RMEF) volunteers. There are still some metal footing posts that are concreted into the ground that need to be removed with the mini-excavator. She filled in the blanks on the RMEF Volunteer Project Report form for the volunteers.



*Donahue cabin site on recent acquisition from RMEF*



*Metal and concrete footings are all that is left of the Donahue cabin*

RMEF volunteers removed the A-frame cabin and footbridge on the newly acquired Donahue parcel on the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Area.

**Habitat Project:** Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley worked with a local chemical company representative pertaining to chemical recommendations to treat targeted weeds at a habitat project. Funds used to purchase the chemical will be from the remaining awarded grant by the National Wild Turkey Federation.

### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Asotin Creek Wildlife Area Spalding's Catchfly Surveys:** Biologist David Woodall, along with University of Idaho Interns Emma Charlet and Justin Bright, surveyed Silene monitoring plots. They found the number of plants slightly lower than last year's counts. The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) saw similar results on their nearby survey plots on USFS land.



*Surveying Spalding's catchfly*



*Spalding's catchfly*



**4-O Ranch Wildlife Area Fence Work:** Scott McGee and Dave Meisner worked together to build new fence on the east side of the 4-O Ranch where it adjoins private lands. The old fence was in poor condition and in need of replacement. Livestock grazing the wildlife area have been moved to the adjacent private lands and keeping them off the wildlife area means installation of a new fence.



*New corner brace built on the west side of the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area*

**4-O Ranch Wildlife Area Chem Fallow Work:** Wynn Stallcop continued spraying glyphosate herbicide on the Mace fields and lower Buchanan fields. All told, Wynn sprayed about 150 acres using our 50-foot sprayer and District 4 cat. Difficulties such as a flat tire on the sprayer, getting water to the work site, and having to re-tip the sprayer for lower tractor speed made this a much harder task than what it appears to be. The Mace fields will be seeded down to a grass mix while the lower Buchanan fields will be seeded to alfalfa in an effort to provide forage for elk. Wynn also sprayed about 20 acres of dog fennel growing in a field known as the horse pasture.

**Chief Joseph Irrigation Work:** Wildlife area staff members and interns continued irrigating fields along Joseph Creek in early August. Their efforts have greened up a five-acre alfalfa field along with two other small fields. Elk use on the irrigated alfalfa has been high and they are usually visible from the county road.

**Asotin Creek Wildlife Area Field Work:** Wynn Stallcop began chisel plowing fields at Smoothing Iron Ridge in preparation for seeding to fall wheat. Recent rain is allowing Wynn to begin prepping the fields for seeding. Planting will occur as early as the end of August which should provide some green forage for elk in early fall.

**4-O Ranch Wildlife Area Grazing Leases:** The two permittee's running cows on the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area removed their livestock from the wildlife area last week. The east side permittee reported he is missing three calves and cannot find them. The west side permittee had some issues finding all his animals but managed to get them off the wildlife area.



*Livestock near a small pond on the west side of the 4-O Ranch Wildlife Area*

**Spokane County Cattlemen's:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman gave a presentation to the Spokane County Cattlemen's group about coyote, cougar, and wolf issues in Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille counties. The presentation on coyotes and cougars talked about biology, preventing conflicts, and current/future management of the species.

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

**New Wildlife Conflict Specialists:** Supervisor McCanna completed all hiring paperwork for the permanent and career seasonal positions in District 1. Both candidates offered positions accepted. Grant Samsill (permanent wildlife conflict specialist) starts with WDFW August 16 and Kyla West (permanent career seasonal wildlife conflict specialist) will start August 26 both in District 1. Supervisor McCanna contacted candidates who were interviewed and not selected to provide feedback on their interviews.

**District 1 Wildlife Conflict Meeting:** Supervisor McCanna traveled to Colville and met with Wildlife Conflict Specialists Bennett, Weatherman, and Seitz, Wildlife Biologists Prince and Turnock, and Wolf Specialist Roussin. The team discussed wildlife conflict duties and responsibilities with one new permanent and one new permanent career seasonal wildlife conflict specialists. The new staff members will work with current staff for training purposes to start to learn programs, areas, and producers.

## 7) Other

**Private Lands Map Booklet:** Natural Resource Worker Fish began working on creating a map booklet of properties in Spokane and Whitman counties enrolled in the Private Lands Access programs. This booklet will be given to WDFW Enforcement personnel for checking properties when on patrol.

## **REGION 2**

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

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** Biologist Grabowsky, along with collaborators from Washington State University (WSU) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released a second group of metamorph northern leopard frogs at Columbia National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR). The release was covered by Columbia Basin Herald, USFWS media, and WDFW Public Affairs. These frogs will be monitored at their release site this fall.



*Metamorph Northern Leopard Frogs released at Columbia National Wildlife Refuge* - Photo by Emily Grabowsky

In addition to releasing young frogs at CNWR, Biologists Grabowsky, Hughes, Dougherty, and Hallock began frog surveys at Potholes Reservoir. This survey will span most of North Potholes and provide important information regarding population genetics for the last population in Washington.





*Biologist Hughes swabbing a northern leopard frog for a DNA sample* - Photo by Emily Grabowsky

**Pygmy Rabbit Enclosure Construction:** With much help from regional staff members, we began the process of building our two new pygmy rabbit mobile breeding enclosures, one in the Beezley Hills Recovery Area and one in the Burton Draw Recovery Area. The construction of these new enclosures continues our transition from the original permanent enclosures to the new mobile versions, allowing us to move them around on the landscape in order to reduce disease and weed buildup, provide fresh pasture for rabbits, and spread them out on the landscape to safeguard against fire risks. When completed, these will be our second and third mobile enclosures built. The first one, built in the Beezley Hills Recovery Area, produced kits this year, marking the first enclosure-born rabbits in that recovery area since we lost the original enclosure in the 2017 Sutherland Canyon fire.

**Eastern Washington Deer Meeting:** Region 2 district biologists attended the two-day annual Deer Working Group meeting in Cle Elum. Topics of discussion included zonal deer updates, plans for submitting federal funding requests for deer habitat improvements, mule deer GPS collar studies, and updates on the draft Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) management plan. Biologists covering the Columbia Plateau mule deer management zone determined that they would continue collecting annual ratio data via ground surveys, with aerial sightability corrected abundances estimates flown every five years.

**Monarch Butterflies:** Biologist Rowan performed monarch butterfly surveys in three areas. Unfortunately, it rained most of the day when Lower Crab Creek was to be surveyed, so there was only time to look for adults. While milkweed (a critical species for monarch butterflies) rebounded in several areas, post-wildfire, no adult monarch butterflies were observed. Invasive,



non-native purple loosestrife was seen blooming, which offers butterflies and bees valuable nectar. Some indian paintbrush and non-native scotch thistle were also seen blooming.



*Lower Crab Creek Wildlife Area herbaceous plants blooming post-wildfire; Indian paintbrush and non-native purple loosestrife* - Photo by Ella Rowan

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Frenchman Regulated Access Area Food Plots:** Specialist McPherson generated random sampling points for the biomass sampling that will occur in early September. This will be the third year of seed biomass sampling in this wetland project. Information from these surveys has been very valuable to the wildlife area by helping better inform us on what moist soil management techniques provide more desirable vegetation that yield greater seed biomass for forage. Specialist McPherson went to inspect sample sites and was excited to see how well the wild millet, smartweed, beggars tick, and curly dock production was this year.



*Great smartweed and wild millet production at Frenchman* - Photo by C. McPherson

**Winchester Regulated Access Area Moist Soil Management:** Specialist McPherson went and evaluated effectiveness of moist soil management treatments to basins at the Winchester regulated access area. During late spring/early summer Specialist McPherson harrowed, tilled, and planted wetland basins in the project to promote growth of desirable waterfowl forage. Since tillage, good amounts of smartweed and wild millet have begun to establish in wetland basins.



*Smartweed and wild millet in Cell A of the Winchester* - Photo by C. McPherson

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Turkey Complaints:** Specialist Bridges has responded to seven complaints regarding turkeys within residential areas. Calls are consistently received from the Leavenworth area in Chelan County, and around the Banks Lake area in Douglas County. Residents within both towns experience conflict due to some neighbors actively feeding turkeys, and other neighbors actively discouraging turkeys because they find their presence to be a nuisance.

**Information for Successful Draw Applicants:** Specialist Bridges has begun to field phone calls from hunters who successfully drew for a deer or elk permits within the district. There is a lot of anticipation for these hunts, especially the Malaga antlerless elk permits holders, ready to get out in the field! Specialist Bridges will direct successful draw applicants to willing landowners that are experiencing damage, in an effort to reduce damage and increase public access.

### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Douglas County Hemlock Investigation:** Foster Creek Conservation District (FCCD) staff members contacted Private Lands Biologist Braaten about a possible poison hemlock infestation in upper West Foster Creek in Douglas County. Braaten was informed by FCCD that a cattle rancher had lost cattle due to possible poison hemlock ingestion. Braaten visited other areas in the east and West Foster Creek areas and found a substantial presence of a hemlock spp. on private riparian pasture sites that had yet to be grazed by cattle. The plant found was not that of poison hemlock but western water hemlock, which is known to be as toxic to livestock and humans.

Braaten communicated with the local WDFW wildlife area manager and other livestock owners in the area to make them aware of hemlock populations. Foster Creek Conservation District is also looking into notifications and information via newsletter, etc. Braaten provided locations of recently located hemlock populations to FCCD.





*Western water hemlock in East Foster Creek* - Photo by Eric Braaten, WDFW

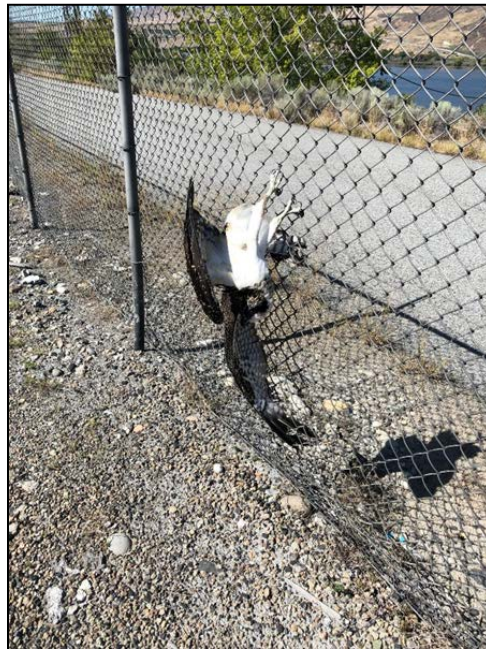
**SAFE Shrubsteppe:** Biologist Hughes checked safe shrubsteppe fields throughout northern Grant County and determined the best locations for forb plantings. Biologist Hughes mapped out forb polygons in GIS for each contract. Closer to seeding, Hughes will flag polygons in the field for landowners. Hughes reached out to landowners to make sure they had their forb seed ordered and to discuss the placement of forbs prior to seeding. Landowners will mow the forb planting areas prior to seeding. Grass establishment in each field is doing well from last year's seeding.



*Native grasses developing in a safe shrubsteppe field* - Photo by Hughes

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Osprey Rescue:** Specialist Bridges responded to a call of an osprey fledgling that had been inside of an enclosed courtyard for two and a half days, but was not leaving. Upon inspection, the fledgling was not able to generate enough lift to be able to escape the enclosed courtyard. In spite of being stuck in the courtyard, the adults continued feeding the fledgling. Specialist Bridges was able to capture the fledgling and release it outside of the courtyard. Upon releasing the osprey, it took off and glided for about 400 yards, to find the one chain link fence that was in its way, which resulted in Specialist Bridges having to go over and re-rescue the young fledgling again! No worries though, we were able to help again, and get the bird on its way!



**Great Horned Owl Rescue:** Specialist Bridges, along with Officer Boyd, assisted Chelan County Sherriff and Chelan Animal Control with recovering a great horned owl that had become entangled in fishing line that was hanging from a tree. The owl's wing had become wrapped in the fishing line, and it was hanging suspended from the fishing line while also being suspended about 15 feet above open water. The owl was in quite a precarious position. Fortunately, the owl was able to be freed and the fishing line was removed. A local veterinarian was willing to provide a quiet place for the owl to preen its feathers back together, get rehydrated, and get released back into the area from where it was rescued.



*Post rescue picture of great horned owl and Joe*

### **REGION 3**

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

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

**Avian Botulism Suspected in Waterfowl Mortalities:** For the third summer in a row, dead birds have been located in the wastewater lagoons at a large feedlot operation in Walla Walla County. District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra has been coordinating monitoring and response with Biologist Vekasy and USFWS staff members at McNary National Wildlife Refuge. Fidorra located two carcasses this month and six others were later found. Disease testing will be conducted when fresh carcasses are obtained. The implemented surveillance plan this year and cooler temperatures have kept mortalities low compared the confirmed botulism cases in 2017 and 2018 when several hundred ducks and shorebird died. The public is encouraged to contact WDFW whenever multiple dead birds are found. Removing carcasses is the best method to contain the outbreak.

**Waterfowl Trapping and Banding Contributes to Nation-wide Monitoring and Research:** District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra, Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett, and Technician Rodgers installed four duck traps this month and started banding waterfowl to contribute to state and national research projects. The banded birds will be returned by hunters or future trap efforts to assess harvest, migration, survival, and other population questions. Age and sex are



determined for each bird, and they are released with a USFWS leg band. The public can report found or harvested bands online at [www.reportband.gov](http://www.reportband.gov).



*Private Lands Biologist Hulett and Technician Rodgers installing duck trap*



*Private Lands Biologist Hulett and Technician Rodgers assisting with banding waterfowl pose with a wood duck and green-winged teal before release*

**WDFW Participates with Western States in Pheasant Survey and Research:** Pheasant brood surveys are being conducting in three districts this year as a part of a study on detection related to dew and weather conditions. Thirteen western and central states are participating. District 4

Wildlife Biologist Fidorra is conducting a survey along a route in Franklin County. A few broods and pheasants are seen each survey, but tall roadside weeds and vegetation make viewing challenging. The surveys will be completed by the end of August. Brood surveys have not been conducted in District 4 for several decades.

**Monarch Butterfly Population Crash Spurs WDFW Response:** With the reported crash of the winter populations of monarch butterflies in California the past two years, WDFW initiated a survey to monitor sites where monarch breeding was confirmed in 2016 and 2017. District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra has been monitoring five sites in Franklin County, but no monarchs were confirmed in the first round of surveys. A second survey round will occur in late August when larvae are more easily detected. At the end of the first round, no monarchs had been confirmed by any of the WDFW staff members checking sites in Washington thus far.



*Milkweed flowering on Sunnyside Wildlife Area monarch survey site*



*Gray hairstreak detected during monarch surveys. This is a common butterfly in Washington.*



Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Mackey continued mourning dove banding. Late in the period, it became evident that trapping attempts were futile, as the majority of birds seem to have vacated the area. Baiting traps and banding ceased in preparation for the Sept. 1 opener of dove season.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin are currently participating in trapping and banding of mourning doves to track reproductive success, age class, and site fidelity. Forty-six doves have been banded over the last three weeks, contributing to the overall goal of 200 banded doves for the region.

Sunnyside Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin helped District Biologist Bernatowicz assemble and prepare duck traps in the Rice Paddy wetlands for trapping and banding. Manager Kaelber mowed cattails in the cell.

**Managing Wildlife Populations:** District 8 Wildlife Biologist Bernatowicz checked two tube-transects to survey for western gray squirrels in Klickitat County. All loose nuts were gone and bears moved most tubes. No western gray squirrel hair was collected. While driving between transects, Bernatowicz saw western gray squirrels cross the road. One squirrel climbed a tree and while attempting to find/photograph the squirrel, Bernatowicz found two probable squirrel nests, along with signs of feeding on cones. The nests were not on a transect so they do not count as a western gray squirrel detection for the surveys.



*Probable western gray squirrel nest*

Biologist Bernatowicz trapped mourning doves three evenings and one morning. The first evening over 40 doves were captured, but the birds dispersed and only five were captured in subsequent attempts. It has been a difficult trapping year, but the district is closing in on the goal of 200 birds banded thanks to the help of wildlife area personnel.

Biologist Bernatowicz monitored/baited local duck traps. Similar to doves, the birds have been slow to congregate at the trap site. When it starts to look promising, the ducks leave the site for a few days. To date, the traps have not been set. It appears to be a late hatch, and it is hoped that birds will start showing up soon.

District 8 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wetzel and Wildlife Biologist Moore checked wolf reports in the Cowiche area. An odd situation for August, rain and cool weather dominated the area and especially the higher elevation locations.



*Wildlife Biologist Moore checking the Cowiche area*

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Moore and Natural Resource Technician Daling visited a residence in upper Kittitas County to perform an external and emergence survey for bats. The homeowner has lived on the property for nearly 60 years and suggested that during the majority of those years the number of bats using his home as a summer roost has been in the thousands, but that number has dropped about 90 percent in recent years. Overall, the area was extremely clean, with some indications of bat use. Moore and Daling attempted to watch three of the possible ten exits available. They observed 750 bats emerging from the three exits. Other bats were emerging from other exits, but it was impossible to count these from only two vantage points.

Biologist Moore cleaned 90 percent of the Colockum bull and cow datasets over a month ago, but a few problems remained on the bull dataset. The bulls GPS collars produced errors that added nearly an extra 1200 observations to the dataset. These extra GPS locations affected the fix success calculation by generating success rates well over 100 percent. The extra data also violated one assumption of the analysis methods requiring all elk within the study to be on the same fix schedule to insure each animal is equivalent in the analysis. Biologist Moore used R to identify collars with errors then constructed loop scripts to remove the extra fixes. Overall, the effort was successful and cleaned 1284 errors from a dataset of over 39,000 observations. This reduced the error rate from 3.5 percent to 0.07 percent. With the cow and bull elk data cleaned, Moore was able to produce the final fix success rates for each. Overall, cows did better than the bulls with means of 97 percent and 85.7 percent, respectively. The next priority is to create a winter habitat use model; both cow and bull collars performed better during that timeframe with average success of 99 percent and 94 percent.

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Countdown to Hunting Season:** Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett and private lands technicians prepared for the upcoming hunting seasons. All signs were organized and older signs were cleaned up to make them usable again. Properties in Franklin County were the first to be updated with a focus on the Hunt by Written Permissions properties. Contract info on many Hunt by Written Permission properties faded since last year constituting the higher priority. A new spreadsheet was created to track all the properties in Region 3 for the upcoming year.

Wenas Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Taylor assisted another dual-sport biker after he dumped his bike on the Umtanum Ridge road. This is the third known dual-sport motorbike accident that has occurred on the wildlife area this summer. The wildlife area is part of a Canada to Oregon route that is being promoted by dual-sport users and its popularity continues to increase.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik assessed damage from two small spot fires and a 0.75-acre wildfire in Caitlin Canyon on the L.T. Murray. The Caitlin Canyon fire was likely caused by an exploding target but DNR has no suspects under investigation at this time.



*Caitlin Canyon wildfire likely caused by an exploding target*

## 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP) Program:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with the LHP hunt coordinators to assist with scheduling and contacting youth hunters to participate in special permit hunts. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with the new owners of property enrolled in the Blackrock LHP to discuss how the program works. They are currently undecided if they will continue in the LHP.



**Elk Damage Assessments:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand spent considerable time assisting the assigned crop adjuster with documenting elk damage in several wheat fields on Rattlesnake Mountain. Most of the damage was due to trailing, bedding and consumption of the wheat crop. Overall, wheat harvest yields appear to be above average, thanks to excellent growing conditions. Wheat samples were taken to determine harvest yields in both damaged and undamaged areas.



*Bedding damage by elk*



*Trailing, trampling, and consumption of wheat by elk*

District 8 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wetzel worked with several landowners with elk issues in standing crops. Elk conflicts in the Kittitas Valley have been much lower than usual this summer. Conflict Specialist Wetzel worked with an orchard owner in Zillah regarding a deer issue in his commercial orchard. A Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) was prepared for him, as well as some damage permits for deer.



Coordination between the Teanaway and Naneum cattle and sheep producers and Conflict Specialist Wetzel occurred frequently during the first half of August. Wolves and cattle did mix in some areas but no conflicts were reported in the wolf pack territory. A range rider is working in the sheep allotment, and a producer range rider is working in the main cattle area. No significant conflicts were reported in the first half of August at those locations.

A cattle producer located in both the Naneum and Teanaway pack areas requested a DPCA livestock contract this week and one was prepared for him.

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

Sunnyside Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson has been working to prepare the Giffin Lake/Brady Wetland area for the installation of a new water control structure on the outlet of Giffin Lake through a grant from Ducks Unlimited. The Brady Wetland water flow had been severely restricted by a large beaver dam over a water control structure at the outlet causing higher water levels in Giffin Lake and localized flooding. The beaver dam had been in place for so long that six-inch diameter willows and Russian olive trees were growing over the dam covering the control structure. Once the old control structure was discovered and dam removed, the water level gradually dropped approximately six feet in the wetland and about a foot in Giffin Lake, drying out the construction location at Giffin Lake and rendering it much more favorable for the contractors to carry out their work.



***Brady Wetland outlet after removal of large mud beaver dam showing the top of a buried water control structure. Water level around six-feet lower than previously.***



*Site prepped for removal of old Giffin Lake water control structure*

Wildlife area personnel recently worked on preparing a site for a new concrete control structure at Windmill Lake. The new structure will give staff members the ability to maintain specific water levels for moist soil management, which will create better habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and other wildlife. This work is part of a grant with Ducks Unlimited.



*Site for new control structure*

**Weed Issues Continue to Plague SAFE Seedings:** Private Lands Biologist Hulett spoke with three landowners about their SAFE contracts. The first landowner and Hulett toured three SAFE contracts in order to decide the next steps before plantings could occur later this fall. The other two landowners discussed when they should mow their fields and feared that the grasses were becoming fragile with the warm weather as of late. Hulett recommended these landowners wait until late fall to mow their fields. It was also recommended to these landowners that they talk to



their chemical representatives to search for herbicides that could help combat the annuals grasses expected to come back next spring.

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

While in Glacier National Park for a week of annual leave, Regional Program Manager McCorquodale, usually skeptical of people who say they can communicate with animals, noted that he could clearly hear the moose below tell him, “*you should go stand behind those trees...yes, NOW!*” moments after taking the photo. McCorquodale shared the moose’s request with a handful of other onlookers.



L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Natural Resource Technician Daling and Assistant Manager Winegeart hung an interpretive panel on the Teanaway Community Unit kiosk.



*New interpretive panel on the Teanaway kiosk*



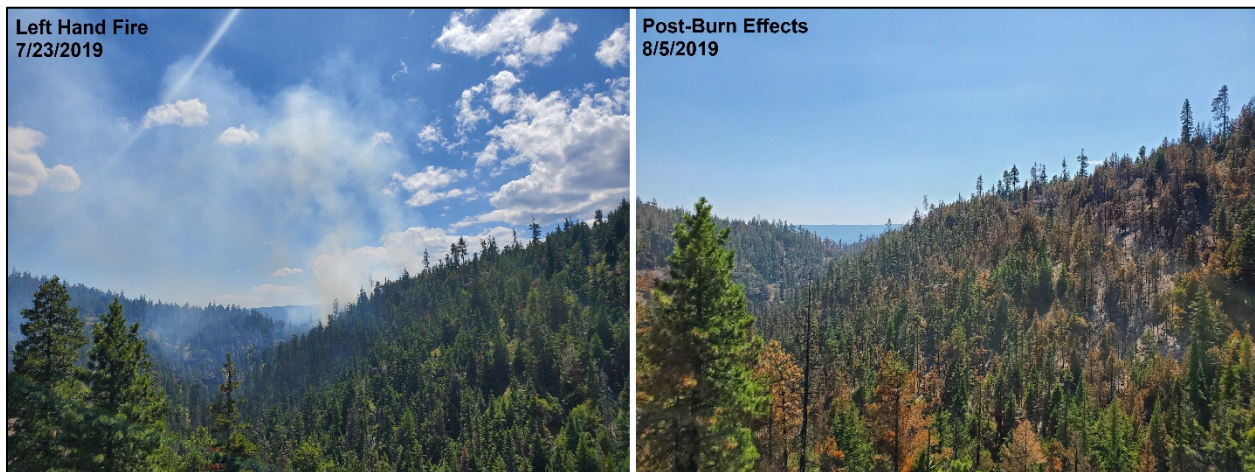
## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Oak Creek Wildlife Area Manager Mackey acted as a landowner representative for the Left Hand Fire that burned approximately 1,200 acres of WDFW managed land in the Rock Creek Unit. The fire was approximately 3,400 acres of WDFW, DNR, and USFS lands and was started by a lightning strike on USFS lands on July 23, 2019. Eventually, a Type 2 federal incident management team was ordered to manage the fire.

As part of his landowner representative responsibilities, Mackey issued an emergency closure of portions of the Rock Creek Unit affected by the fire to provide for firefighter and public safety during suppression operations.

Additionally, Manager Mackey attended a public meeting in the Nile community to discuss the closure and answer questions. There were also representatives there from USFS, DNR, and the Type 2 incident management team discussing other aspects of the fire including evacuation notices put in place along the Highway 410 corridor.

Oak Creek Forester Hartmann and Assistant Manager Berry inspected suppression rehabilitation work on the Left Hand Fire contingency lines. Additionally, Hartmann revisited photo points established throughout the fire area.



*One of several pre/post burn photo points established on Left Hand Fire. Some dense stands on steep slopes aligned with wind direction burned hot, however, these patches tended to be small (1-5 acres) and surrounded by trees that survived. Much of the 3,400-acre fire burned only understory grasses and shrubs, with many areas completely unburned. Rapid recovery is expected, and the landscape should benefit from the stimulated diversity.*



*Patchy burn distribution along the northeast flank of Left Hand Fire. Here only litter beneath tree islands burned at low enough severity to lightly prune the overstory.*



*Additional patchy burn distribution in the center of Left Hand Fire perimeter*

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik reported more trespass cattle in Parke Creek to the operator. She also reported trespass cattle along the Kittitas Reclamation District (KRD) canal to WDFW law enforcement and adjacent landowners.





*Trespass cattle in Parke Creek on the Quilomene Wildlife Area*



*Trespass cattle on the L.T. Murray*

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik has been working with a neighboring landowner since April to get in compliance with WAC 220-500-060. The neighbor failed to comply after repeated attempts to get the operation to apply for a Commercial Use Permit to train bird dogs for fee on the wildlife area. Babik alerted a neighbor to cease all commercial operations on WDFW lands and remove all dog-training materials. Dog training materials were removed.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.



**REGION 4**

**1) Managing Wildlife Populations**



*Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Moore demonstrating waterfowl banding to Wildlife Program senior staff*



*Wildlife Program staff members releasing teal after banding*

**White-nose Syndrome Monitoring/Bat Management:** District 12 and volunteers surveyed three reported bat colonies to confirm status. Colonies are starting to transition out of maternity sites at many local colonies.

District 12 has been in contact with Seattle City Light and Seattle Public Utilities regarding a potential colony site suspected that has very difficult access. Due to ongoing exclusionary attempts Seattle had the opportunity to provide a deceased adult and pup from the site; adding evidence of actual colony use vs. suspected or perceived.



*One of multiple ingress/egress sites at a reported colony*

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing to report this period.

## 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Bear Conflict Management:** District 12 biologists visited with multiple reporting parties requesting action and concern over bear in and around their properties and getting into fowl or livestock situations. In all situations, the bears were not showing any aggression – just being bears. Bear behavior was discussed to assist with their concerns. Tactics such as eliminating attractants, sealing up buildings, employing bear-specific electric fencing, domestic animal husbandry techniques to deter bear, appropriate hazing techniques and related were discussed and at times implemented while the biologists were on site with the concerned parties. References were provided with an emphasis to share with the community and keep in touch regarding bear as well as area property owners that may not be taking the appropriate steps or even creating an illegal feeding situation. More information on living in bear country can be found here: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/species/ursus-americanus>.



*Bear ripped into someone's trash and drug it onto another property*

## 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Leque Island Estuary Restoration:** Wildlife Program, Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP), and Ducks Unlimited are working with Strider Construction to manage the construction phase of the project. The contractor is excavating tidal headwater areas and is hauling material to begin constructing the wave protection berm and dike top trail. Construction is generally on schedule and going as planned.





*Equipment excavating tidal headwater areas that will be future intertidal habitat for fish and wildlife*



*The beginning of the 0.7mile long berm that connects to the bridge in the background and will support an elevated trail*



*WDFW staff members removed fish from ditches before the contractor filled them in*

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Beaver Translocation Training:** District Wildlife Biologist Waddell participated as a trainer during a two-day certification training for beaver relocators in Winthrop. This is the first training in the WDFW Pilot Beaver Relocation Program. Those who wish to be certified to capture and relocate beavers must meet strict criteria along with attending and passing the WDFW training course.

**Magnuson Park Interpretive Walk:** District 12 represented WDFW in a joint outreach with Magnuson Children's Garden, Beavers Northwest, Bats Northwest, and Seattle Audubon in a birds, bats, and beavers evening walk for families at Magnuson Park Wetlands. Attendance was great with multiple bat species, a feeding beaver being very cooperative for looks, osprey perching over the wetlands, swallows ringing in the late evening and many other sightings. WDFW handouts and references were available to the group prior to the walk.



*B<sup>3</sup> watching (birds, beaver, bats)*



*Hard to believe this was an airstrip on a naval facility at one point*

**6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing to report this period.

**7) Other**

Nothing to report this period.



## **REGION 5**

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

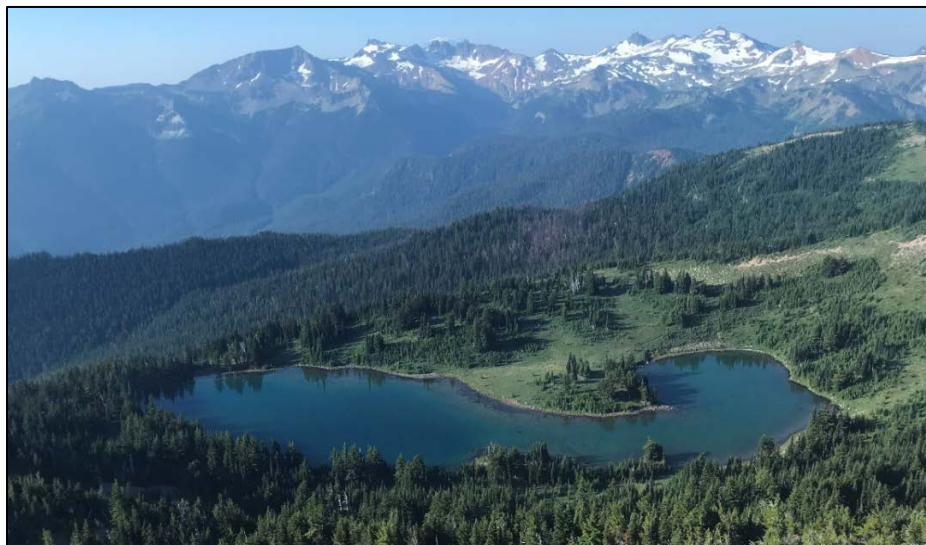
**Aerial Survey of Goat Rocks Mountain Goat Population:** Biologists Holman, Stephens, and Wickhem conducted the biennial survey of mountain goats in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. Manager Van Leuven monitored the aerial mountain goat survey via automated flight following. The raw survey results tallied 228 goats. This number will be corrected for sightability factors and used to generate the actual estimate for the population. Subsequently, the estimate will be used to establish appropriate hunting season for the species. Thanks to Northwest Helicopters Pilot Jess Hagerman for his expert flying on the Goat Rocks goats.



*Mountain goats fleeing during aerial survey*



*Goat Rocks Wilderness in the Lake Creek Basin*



*Goat Rocks Wilderness Shoe Lake*

**Resident Dark Goose (RDG) Resight Survey:** Biologists Burlingame, Holman and Stephens conducted a RDG goose survey on islands in the Lower Columbia River and Grays Bay. The survey is conducted in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and WDFW biologists in Region 6. The purpose is to count RDGs present and identify those with white neck collars, data that will be used to estimate the population. During the two day survey period 118 RDGs were observed, 17 of which were marked with white collars.



*Biologist Holman skillfully operating the skiff in shallows of Grays Bay*



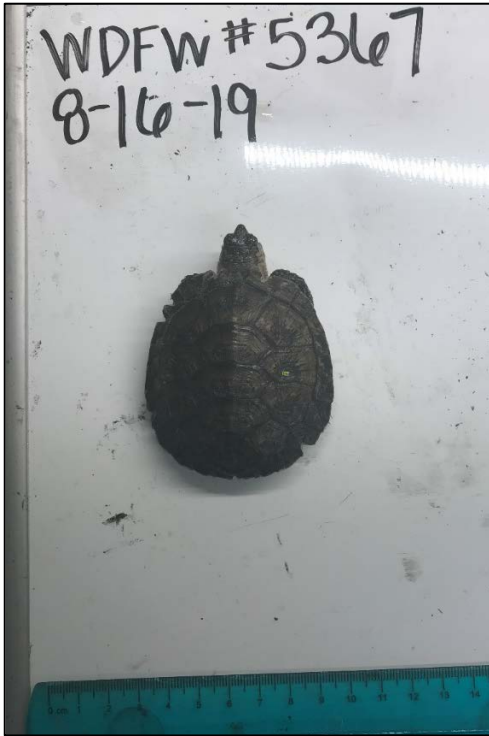
*Biologist Stephens scanning for geese*

**Western Pond Turtle Hatchlings:** Biologist Wickhem visited western pond turtle hatchlings at the Oregon Zoo who are in the head start program. These turtles hatched in the wild last fall, and were brought to zoo where they can grow and spend their most vulnerable days in the safety of their zoo enclosure. They will be released back into their native pond in a few weeks, when they will be big enough to better evade predators on their own. On this visit, Biologist Wickhem



notched the scutes of each turtles shell with a triangular file – each scute is given a number, and adding up the scutes that are notched allows us to identify each turtle individually. Also, while at the zoo, Wickhem picked up two turtles from the veterinary hospital that were ready to be released back into the ponds after a brief stint in treatment. For more information on the Oregon Zoo’s work to help restore western pond turtle populations, please visit:

<https://www.oregonzoo.org/consERVE/fighting-extinction-pacific-northwest/western-pond-turtles>.



*Western pond turtle hatchling with fresh scute notches for identification*



*Two western pond turtles happily return to their pond after receiving a clean bill of health from the Oregon Zoo veterinarian*

**Western Gray Squirrel Population Distribution Study:** Assistant Manager Steveson received confirmation of positive results at Transect 27 on the Soda Springs Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area, so hair snag traps were removed from the site since no further data is needed there. Steveson also completed the first inspection of Transect 92, which is on the Mineral Springs Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Three hair snag tubes had hair present on the sticky tape strips within the tubes. One tube was completely destroyed by a squirrel chewing its way to the walnut inside.





*Destroyed hair snag trap*

**Wolf Observation Report 1:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen followed up on a report of wolves captured on a trail camera in District 10. After reviewing the photos, Jacobsen was able to determine that the photos were of coyotes, not wolves.

**Wolf Observation Report 2:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen called an individual who reported that she had a pack of wolves living behind her house. The reporting party lives in a suburban area near the I-5 corridor, and described hearing “slicing, growling, and howling” noises which she said indicated that they were wolves. Jacobsen told the reporting party that she was most likely hearing coyotes or raccoons, but suggested that she place a trail camera on the property and report back if wolves were seen on the property.

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Access Sites:** Access staff members Rhodes and Mckinlay have started updating paint for ADA access as well as speed bumps at several access sites. This week they completed freshening up the ADA paint at the Beginners’ Hole access site.



*Access staff members Rhodes and McKinlay repainting*

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Elk Damage:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by several landowners in Districts 9 and 10 regarding elk damage to commercial crops. Jacobsen worked with these landowners to implement non-lethal as well as lethal means of deterring elk from damaging these crops. Several hunters from the Region 5 Master Hunter Damage Pool were deployed to these farms on damage hunts. One particular master hunter camped out in the middle of a cornfield to keep watch over the area in case the elk arrived. Unfortunately, the elk were visiting the cornfield in the middle of the night and the master hunter was not able to harvest a depredateing elk.



*Master hunter keeping a lookout for elk in a cornfield*

**Cougar Sighting Reports:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received numerous reports of cougar sightings around Region 5 this week, ranging from first-hand sightings, to third-hand reports, to reports of “loud cat fighting sounds” in urban areas. Some of the sighting reports were confirmed while others lacked any verifiable evidence that a cougar had actually been in the area. Advice was provided and educational material distributed to all of the reporting parties.

**Yard Cougar:** A landowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen to report that a cougar had entered her yard during the day and taken a chicken that was walking around in the yard, all while the family was working in the same yard. Jacobsen responded to the scene and made several recommendations regarding chicken husbandry and securing the animals. A Fox Light was deployed near the chicken coop, and two trail cameras were installed to monitor for cougar activity in/near the yard. Advice was given on living in cougar country. WDFW Enforcement personnel monitored the cameras over the next few days, but the cougar was not detected. The landowner now has her own trail cameras up to monitor her property.



*Chicken pen near where a loose chicken was killed and taken by a cougar*

**Cougar Depredation on Alpacas:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen, along with Enforcement Officers Hughes and Whipple, responded to a report of a cougar that had killed four alpacas in one night. The landowner had also seen a cougar next to her parked car the next day. An investigation of the carcasses indicated that the alpacas had all been killed by a cougar. Advice was given to the landowner on how to better secure and protect livestock, as the alpacas were fenced in to a heavily wooded area and creek bottom, without a night-pen enclosure. A houndsman was used to track the cougar but it could not be located.





*Alpaca killed by a cougar. The other three alpacas were completely consumed within one night of the depredation event.*

**Bold Coyote:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner who has repeatedly seen a coyote near her porch in an urban area. The coyote appeared to be in poor body condition and possibly had mange. Neighborhood cats had gone missing recently, and the reporting party was sure the coyote was responsible. The reporting party requested that the coyote be euthanized. Jacobsen explained that the coyote was likely used to eating pet food from porches, and if seen again, should be chased away and discouraged from approaching residences and people. Jacobsen indicated that the coyote would not be euthanized unless it acted aggressively towards pets or people, or if its condition deteriorated to the point where it could no longer stand. Jacobsen requested that the reporting party contact WDFW if the coyote began acting aggressively, and the reporting party contact her neighbors about removing attractants.

**Bold Bobcat:** A concerned landowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen concerning a bobcat that had been seen on the property during the day. The landowner threw rocks at the bobcat to get it to leave, as the landowner has chickens that are cooped up at night but free-ranging during the day. So far, the bobcat has not attacked any chickens and has been seen eating wild rabbits. Advice was given on how to better secure the chickens. The landowner plans to buy a license and hunt the bobcat when the season opens.

#### **4) Conserving Natural Areas**

**Eagle Island Unit of the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area - Habitat Enhancements:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Wildermuth spent the last two weeks working on the Eagle Island Unit to improve the meadow habitat areas for wildlife. The island is located on the North Fork Lewis River and is managed primarily for black-tailed deer, waterfowl, and songbirds. Travel to the island each day include fording the river on either a four-wheeler or tractor to reach the work areas. Due to the restrictions on crossing waterbodies with fish present, wildlife area staff members are only allowed to take equipment through the river and onto the unit the first two weeks of August every year. Work included mowing to provide areas with shorter vegetation heights for Canada geese to forage in this winter and to stimulate regrowth of

the grasses. Controlling scotch broom and knotweed on the island was also a priority. Approximately 100 acres of the island was covered in scotch broom, and through the past few years of efforts the areas are now open fields. Over the next several years, continued control of scotch broom will be a priority for wildlife area personnel to ensure that it does not once again dominate the area. While conducting work on the unit staff observed the following species: black-tailed deer, river otters, coyotes, northern alligator lizards, pileated woodpeckers, purple martens, ospreys, bald eagles, and cedar waxwings.



*Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald cutting down a very large scotch broom plant*

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Fence Maintenance:** Assistant Manager Steveson dismantled electric fencing on the Soda Spring Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area. The electric fencing had been installed earlier in the season to protect vegetation surrounding a spring from being over grazed while cattle were on the range. Steveson carried materials for the construction of a rock box down into Sheep Canyon to improve the section of boundary fence that spans the seasonal stream in the bottom of the canyon. The rock box assembly and boundary fence improvements will be completed at a later date. Steveson installed two horizontal brace posts in end braces at the entrance to the main access road on the Hatchery Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Diagonal brace posts are planned to be installed with assistance from Manager Van Leuven.





*Horizontal brace post install, Hatchery Unit*  
*Before* *After*

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Wildlife Guzzler Maintenance:** Assistant Manager Steveson disassembled a portion of a dilapidated rain catchment structure that feeds water into a wildlife guzzler on the Soda Springs Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area. Measurements from the old structure were used to construct two new wood frames that will be used to attach the corrugated metal roofing that directs water into the guzzler.



*New rain catchment structures to be installed over wildlife guzzler*

**Guzzler Repair:** A much-needed guzzler roof reconstruction effort was initiated this week, which involves the replacement of the entire roof framework. This type of repair work is best done in spring due to the more favorable soil conditions at that time for replacing posts. However, the spring season is invariably filled with other more urgent work, so this project was postponed until now. Assistant Manager Steveson tore out the old, decayed posts and framework and set six of the eight posts needed for the new roof. He also mounted the 2x4 frame for the tin roofing on posts.





*Guzzler Repair: Before*



*In progress*

**Klickitat Wildlife Area 2015 Fuels Reduction Project:** Manager Van Leuven revisited photo points within the 2015 fuels reduction project area to document the condition of the fuel breaks four years after treatment. In general the fuel breaks still look good, however there is quite a bit of variation. In areas having a fairly closed tree canopy, there is limited shrub growth and debris buildup. Where the canopy is open shrubs have grown vigorously and action needs to be taken to restore the effectiveness of the fuel breaks. A new series of pictures have been taken for 13 of the 14 photo points.



*Open canopy, vigorous shrub growth*



*Closed canopy, limited shrub growth*

**Cowlitz Wildlife Area Peterman Pre-commercial Thinning (PCT) Operations:** The 2019 Peterman PCT project is in full swing. Ramirez Reforestation Inc. successfully bid and was awarded the Tacoma Power contract to thin 17 units totaling 588 acres. Under the settlement agreement for the Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project, Tacoma Power retains all rights and responsibilities associated with timber and timber harvesting. The Cowlitz Wildlife Area assists Tacoma with those responsibilities, as the activities must be conducted for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and their habitats. Unlike PCT operations on industrial timber properties, the PCT activities on Peterman are conducted to encourage diversity by retaining hardwoods as well as conifer species and help push the forest towards the mid to late seral stage of development. The units are not treated chemically so a richer more diverse understory develops that meets the

foraging needs of a variety of wildlife species. The first PCT operations were conducted in 2014 and since then over 2,000 acres have been treated.



*Pre-commercial thinning unit before treatment*



*Pre-commercial thinning unit after treatment*

#### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Packwood Touch Your Truck Day:** Biologist Holman dropped into the Packwood “Touch Your Truck Day” hosted by the Packwood Library. The event allows kids to check out vehicles and equipment used in all types of work. Host vehicles included heavy equipment, a garbage truck, ambulances, police vehicles, and of course Holman’s WDFW pickup. A few Packwood residents and their kids appreciated the opportunity to learn a little about WDFW’s efforts to manage wildlife.

#### 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

**Mountain Goat Relocation:** Biologist Murphie continued planning/preparation for the August captures. There have been numerous conference calls, meetings, and emails on this activity. Site prep work was done for shifting the fridge truck hub from Salmon Creek to Snow Creek



including brush clearing and flagging areas related to safety concerns. Other assistance was given to Volunteer Driver/Coordinator Holly in setting up for managing these trucks and drivers.

**Resident Dark Goose Surveys:** Biologists Butler and Michaelis conducted two boat surveys for marked resident dark geese (RDG). This has been one of many surveys coordinated with Region 5 Biologists Holman and Stephens, as well as Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The purpose of this survey is to observe the number of marked RDG to unmarked RDG. This information is then used to generate a population estimate for the lower Columbia River. Thirty-four dark geese were observed during the first boat survey but only two were seen from the land survey portion.

**Mourning Dove Capturing and Banding:** Biologist Michaelis began capturing and banding mourning doves at two locations in eastern Grays Harbor County. To date, a total of 43 doves have been captured and banded. This year, a new site was located with private landowner permission granted near the town of McCleary. The number of doves in this area appears to have increased dramatically over prior years. A second location near the town of Oakville has seen only a sporadic number of doves.

The USFWS uses the band return information to gather population information such as harvest rates, survival rates, and to identify migration areas. Doves are hunted locally in western Washington. Trapping and banding will continue until reaching our statewide quota for this season.

**Western Pond Turtle:** Biologists Butler and Tirhi hosted the 2019 western pond turtle head-start release at the Pierce County recovery site. The Woodland Park Zoo received 49 eggs from seven nests in the summer of 2018. These eggs were then incubated at the zoo and 48 successfully hatched. The hatchlings were cared for all winter long in a warm, predator free environment, which allowed them to grow significantly more than they would in the wild increasing their chances of survival. Over the past year, these hatchlings have grown into juveniles and are now ready to be returned to the wild. Thirty-three turtles were released this August by Woodland Park Zoo staff members, volunteers, and donors. Besides getting to release a turtle into the ponds, those in attendance were provided a brief history of the western pond turtle recovery program. In addition, everyone had the opportunity to try their hands at different field techniques such as telemetry, taking visual observations using scopes, and properly identify turtles using shell notches and PIT tags. Fifteen turtles, too small for release, remain at the zoo and will be released in the beginning of September. Q13 news coverage of this year's event can be seen here: <http://my.tvey.es/t5K8F>.





*Western pond turtle head-start ready for release*



*Releasing the turtles into the ponds*

**Western Gray Squirrel:** Biologist Butler conducted the second check of the three western gray squirrel transects. These transects are comprised of two points with four hair tubes deployed at each point. These hair tubes have a walnut glued in the center and double-sided tape adhered to plates situated at the top of the tube entrances. Walnuts are also placed just outside the entrance to lure a western gray squirrel into the tube where the tape can capture a hair sample. After being deployed for four weeks, all 24 tubes were checked and ten tubes were found with identifiable hair. While each sample's identity still needs to be confirmed, an examination of the hairs in the field suggest western gray squirrel hair was found at one transect with another transect having Douglas squirrel hair. The western gray squirrel is listed as threatened in the state of Washington and this work is part of a statewide study assessing its current range in Washington.



*Hair samples captured in WGS tube*



*WSG hair tube*

**Bat Surveys:** Biologist Butler and Tirhi conducted reconnaissance bat surveys at multiple locations reported by the public. Two of the sites had less than five bats emerge and one site had zero bats emerge from the reported location. While bats were seen flying in the area at all of these sites, the location of their roost was unknown. One other site in Pierce County was surveyed and an estimated 400 bats were seen emerging from three of the buildings on site. An acoustic monitor was deployed during the survey and results are still pending. WDFW will use this information to understand the roosting ecology and distribution of species potentially vulnerable to white-nose syndrome (WNS). For more information about white-nose syndrome or to report a bat observation, please look on WDFW’s webpage: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/diseases/bat-white-nose> .

**Bat Colony Emergence Count- Satsop:** Biologist Michaelis assisted Biologist Tobin and volunteer Sabra Noyes to conduct a bat emergence count from structures at a private residence near the town of Satsop. Nearly 100 bats were observed with a small portion of them being big brown bats. Next April and May trapping and testing these bats for white-nose syndrome could be conducted. We are seeking out new sites in District 17 to establish long-term monitoring.

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Boston Harbor:** The water access team met with Thurston County Parks in a joint effort to dress up the very popular salt-water access. Work accomplished with Parks staff included cutting limbs overhanging the lot, clearing Ivy and brush off the fences, weed eating fence lines, blowing the asphalt and washing all signs. Two dump trailer loads of debris were hauled off site. The project was completed in four hours.



*Before*

*After*





*Before*



*After*



*Final*

**Sol Duc River Hatchery Access Redevelopment:** The redevelopment is now complete. This project has received many thanks from the fishing public. A new ADA restroom was added to eliminate the long walk to the hatchery and asphalt replaces the washed out gravel parking and drive accessing the launch ramp. An ADA boarding platform was installed along with ADA parking, striping, and curb stops.





**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**

**Hunting Prospects Report:** District Biologist Novack completed a draft of the District 17 Hunting Prospects and submitted it for review. Biologist Murphie completed a first draft for District 15.

**6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

**7) Other**

Nothing for this reporting period