

# Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

Oct. 1 to Oct. 15, 2019

## **DIVERSITY DIVISION**

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

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

**Bat White-nose Syndrome Surveillance:** WDFW Biologist Tobin surveyed bridges in eastern Washington for bat use and suitability for sampling for the bat disease, white-nose syndrome (WNS). Over 45 bridges were surveyed, with 90 percent of the bridges being used by bats. Samples will be collected from a select few of the bridges in the spring to test for the fungus that causes WNS. This project provides a different approach to WNS surveillance for those areas where little is known about bat colony locations.



*Bat guano found under bridges in eastern Washington. These bridges will be sampled in the spring to test for the fungus that causes the deadly bat disease, white-nose syndrome.*

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

Nothing for this installment.

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

Nothing for this installment.

#### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Southwest Washington Forestland Collaborative Conservation Speaker Series:** Farm Bill Coordinator Mike Kuttel, Jr. and Environmental Planner Jeff Azerrad worked with partners through the Cascades to Coast Landscape Collaborative (CCLC) to organize a speaker series to promote collaborative conservation of forestlands. The CCLC plans on holding additional workshops focused on other topics. The events Oct. 17-19 will highlight the Southwest Washington Small Forest Lands Conservation Partnership WDFW is leading. The partnership is working to improve forest health, fish and wildlife habitat, and water quality on private forestlands. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, State Conservation Commission, eight conservation districts, DNR, WSU Extension Forestry, and WDFW are all contributing funding and staff time to the partnership.

The flyer features the Cascades to Coast Landscape Collaborative logo at the top left, with the tagline 'designing for resilience'. To the right, the text 'Save the Date' is written in a large, green, sans-serif font. Below this, the title 'Meaningful Incentives to Sustain Small Forest Lands' is centered in a bold, green font. A sub-header reads 'Join us for a hearty country breakfast with coffee and juice'. The main event information is highlighted in a grey box: 'All events are FREE and run from 7:30 am to 11:30 am'. Below the box, the dates and locations are listed: 'Longview (Lower Columbia College): October 17', 'Shelton (Mason County PUD): October 18', and 'South Bend (Willapa Harbor Community Center): October 19'. A 'Learn about:' section lists two bullet points regarding conservation efforts and the partnership. A 'Participate in:' section lists two bullet points about group discussions and development opportunities. A QR code and a 'click here' link are provided for registration. Logos for 'DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE' and 'FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE' are shown. A paragraph at the bottom explains the event is part of a series sponsored by CCLC, with a vision of a network of healthy ecosystems. A large box at the bottom contains the 'Southwest Washington Small Forest Lands Conservation Partnership' logo and a grid of partner logos including USDA, National System of Public Lands, Forestly, Washington State Conservation Commission, Mason Conservation District, Pacific Conservation District, Clark Conservation District, Lewis Conservation District, Gray Harbor Conservation District, and Gowitz and Wahkiakum Conservation Districts. A final disclaimer at the bottom states the material is based on work supported by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

*Flyer promoting the speaker series*

#### 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.

## **GAME DIVISION**

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

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Elk Specialist Garrison worked on summarizing data from hunter hoof collections. Since 2015, WDFW has worked with hunters to collect elk hooves in southwest Washington in an effort to assess hunter ability to identify infected and uninfected elk hooves. This information is important for informing our hoof disease prevalence index, which is calculated using hunter reports. This project also provided a great opportunity for WDFW collaborators to collect samples used in other research on the disease. Here is a basic summary of results:

- Of 180 samples collected, 91 were uninfected and 89 were infected
- Hunters incorrectly assessed hooves as infected when actually uninfected in 4% of samples (i.e., false-positive rate)
- Hunters correctly assessed infected hooves as infected in 60% of all samples, for a corresponding overall false-negative rate of 40%
- Hunters are better at identifying later stages than early stages of the disease
  - Hunters correctly assessed early-stage infections in 11% of samples, for a corresponding early-stage false negative rate of 89%
  - Hunters correctly assessed late-stage infections in 92% of samples, for a corresponding late-stage false negative rate of 8%

This project was successful in determining false positive and false negative rates of hunters in identifying the disease status of hooves, which is important for informing WDFW's hunter-derived prevalence estimates. WDFW thanks all the hunters that participated in this project!

Elk Specialist Garrison worked with field staff to coordinate and prepare for elk hoof collections throughout Washington for disease surveillance and to facilitate research at Washington State University.

Elk Specialist Garrison met with WDFW Habitat Program biologists to discuss an upcoming workgroup on herbicides use and its impacts to wildlife in Washington. Although unsubstantiated, some people believe herbicides cause elk hoof disease. Garrison spent time reviewing relevant literature and will present an overview of elk habitat and hoof disease to the workgroup sometime in November.

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**

Elk Specialist Garrison worked with WDFW marketing to issue an elk hoof disease outreach email to muzzleloader elk hunters. This email notifies both west and east side hunters to keep an eye out for hoof disease and to report their observations during their annual game report.

Deer Specialist Hansen attended The Wildlife Society's annual conference hosted in conjunction with the American Fisheries Society in Reno, NV. Hansen participated in many highly productive trainings and discussions with fellow wildlife scientists and helped staff the WDFW information booth to highlight WDFW as a quality conservation organization in the field and increase recruitment of diverse new talent to WDFW.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

District wildlife biologists and other staff members participated in statewide management meetings for wild turkey, forest grouse, small game, furbearers, and upland game birds in Cle Elum. Partners from the U.S. Forest Service, the National Wild Turkey Federation, and the National Pheasant Plan cooperative also participated. The meetings included a review of current status and management as well as discussion of upcoming needs and priorities. Small Game, Furbearer, and Resident Game Bird Specialist Garrison will follow up with action items.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.

**HUNTER EDUCATION**

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

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Nothing for this installment.

## **2) Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Regional Coordinators Elliott and Montgomery toured the Cowlitz Wildlife Area with Manager Richard Vanderlip. In addition to seeing the area and learning what it has to offer, Elliott and Montgomery explored locations that could be used for future youth pheasant clinics. The new Region 5 Wildlife Conflict Specialist, Thayne Aubrey, also joined the tour.

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

Region 6 Coordinator Montgomery met with Conflict Specialist Blankenship on elk problems in Orting. As the pumpkin season is nearly over they were making plans for next year's hazing.

## **4) Conserving Natural Landscapes**

Region 5 Coordinator Elliott was contacted by a manager at Weyerhaeuser about the potential for master hunters to do cleanup projects on local properties. The logistics of these future projects is being discussed. Elliott recently sent out a clean-up project to master hunters on a Feel Free to Hunt property in Wahkiakum County on behalf of Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Private Lands Biologist Jacobsen.

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

Region 1 hunter education instructors have increased the number of hunter education classes offered in late September and early October to satisfy last minute public demand for hunter education classes. Great job by our volunteer instructors.

Region 5 Coordinator Elliott held a pre-service training for eight instructors. Four of those participants assisted with an online Field Skills Evaluation two days later and are in the process of formal certification by Olympia, three had already mentored with a chief instructor and will be certified as soon as mentorship paperwork is received, and the last has a team in his area to mentor and then join when fully certified.

Regional Coordinators Garcia, Dazey, Elliott, and Montgomery, as well as Program Specialist Thorson, had a phone conference with Jen Syrowitz of Washington Outdoor Women to work on a joint offering for next spring. They will offer their women's shotgun clinic but also work in the online Field Skills Evaluation so that participants can be hunter education certified as well at the end of the day. The hope is that the workshop will be valuable to women who may want to spring turkey hunt.

Coordinator Elliott is working with several chief instructors who are giving late-season online classes. There have not been many phone calls about people not being able to find classes but those that are posted seem to fill up within a day or two. There are currently 105 registrations for classes in Region 5 within the next month.

Region 6 Coordinator Montgomery was invited by Orting firefighters to participate in their annual Safety Fair at the Red Hat Day Festival. Montgomery taught Safe Storage of Firearms, demonstrating two different styles of gun locks and a mini safe for handguns, giving out 127 gun locks to firearm owners.

Region 6 Coordinator Montgomery recruited 51 master hunters for the fishpond at the Puyallup Fair. They volunteered 491 hours to helping kids catch fish. A total of 4,841 kids participated.

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey visited teaching teams in LaConnor, Ravensdale, Burlington, Mill Creek, and Birch Bay. The Birch Bay classes were in a brand-new venue and featured both an open class and a women's-oriented class. The women's-oriented classes have been very popular as they are taught by an all-female team and participants report that they feel more comfortable asking questions of the teaching team in this environment. We usually also try and have a female enforcement officer present the enforcement section to show that the department practices inclusion and diversity in hiring practices. While this is a subliminal message it is an important point to express to the new to hunting hunters.

**6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this installment.

**7) Other**

Coordinator Elliott spoke with a local master hunter regarding a federal judge's decision to award an area of land (known as Tract D) to the Yakama Nation. The land makes up a large portion of GMU 578 (West Klickitat) and the master hunter was trying to determine if that would affect his ability to hunt there this year. Elliott spoke with Enforcement Captain Wickersham and was able to get a map of Tract D so at minimum the master hunter would know the exact boundaries of the land in question.

Coordinator Elliott was contacted by a master hunter who had concerns about people posting public and private land that was not theirs with "No Trespassing" or "Private Property" signs in order to gain an advantage over others. He was advised to notify the property owner if possible and have them contact local law enforcement if they had concerns.

**LANDS DIVISION**

**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**

A public meeting was held on Oct. 10 in Prosser for the review of the Draft Sunnyside-Snake River Wildlife Area Management Plan. Eight people attended, including two people who worked for the Yakama Nation and a reporter from the Prosser paper. One of the people from the Yakama Nation was very interested in our goals to protect wetlands and provide wetland education. A representative from the Audubon Society delivered a comment letter showing support of the plan and suggesting a land acquisition of DNR land that borders important shrubsteppe habitat at Thornton and disposing of Vance-Ferry. Additional effort was put in to get more public participation. A targeted Facebook ad was purchased, and results showed 58 people interested and three indicated they were attending. It appeared that at least three people were there because of the Facebook ad. Additionally, a guidance document on how to review the plan and make comments was developed and posted along with the SEPA documents and on our publications page.

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

Nothing for this installment.

### 7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.

## **SCIENCE DIVISION**

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

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

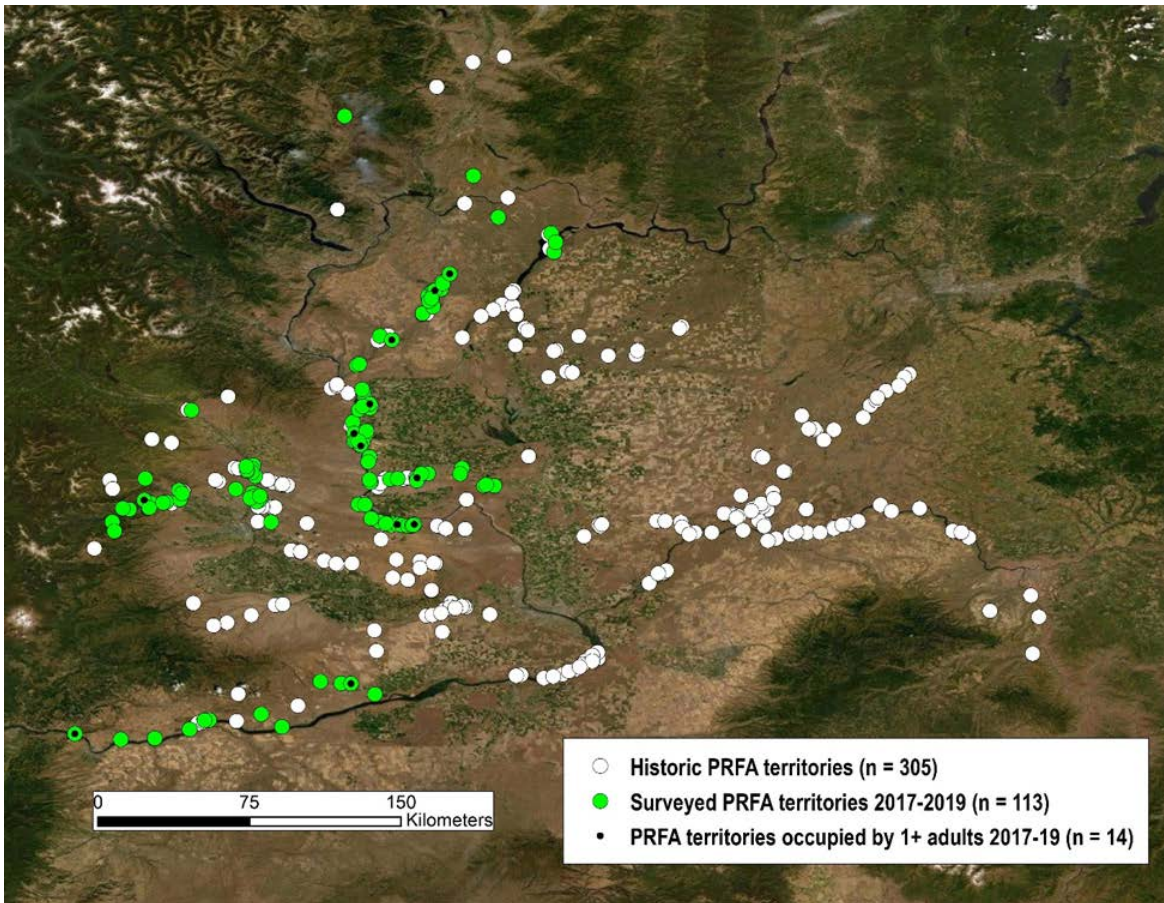
Research Scientist Watson and Forest Service biologists trapped and radioed six adult goshawks on breeding territories on and near the Colville National Forest as part of our cooperative project. Peter Singleton of the Pacific Northwest Research Lab is heading up the study, which is designed to update forest management guidelines, to refine survey methods to identify territories, and to understand impacts of fire and logging on territory occupancy. This is the final field season for the project in which we've monitored 26 radioed hawks including those on state land.



WDFW Research Scientist Michael Schroeder and Wildlife Biologist Derek Stinson attended a status assessment meeting at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) office in Lacey for the Mount Rainier subspecies of white-tailed ptarmigan, *Lagopus leucura rainierensis*. The USFWS was petitioned to list the ptarmigan as either threatened or endangered, largely as a consequence of climate change. Michael gave two presentations; one on the natural history of white-tailed ptarmigan and the other on recent work on genetics. The USFWS will likely reach a listing decision in early 2020.

Research Scientist Watson summarized results of prairie falcon surveys conducted by six volunteers at historic falcon territories in eastern Washington. This was the third year for surveys. Territory occupancy continued to be very low, with one or two adult falcons present around one year at only 12 percent of 113 territories. We hope to expand the surveys next year to more inaccessible sites along the Snake River where there were comparatively high historic nest densities.





**Puget Sound Ecosystem Monitoring Program (PSEMP) Winter Seabird Aerial Survey**

**Data Preparation:** As part of the final efforts to process and distribute data from 18 years of the winter seabird aerial surveys in Puget Sound, IT Specialist Simper worked on converting analytic survey results into raster GIS format (around 1200 raster layers) for display in a public-facing webmap. Simper coordinated with IT Specialist Kreuziger to develop an enterprise spatial database to store this data as well as the geo-processed vector data (survey routes and observation points). After creating and applying metadata, web services were published from this data so that they could be used by the custom webmap as well as being made available to the public or external organizations as a downloadable file-geodatabase on WDFW’s ESRI-based, GIS Open Data portal (<http://data-wdfw.opendata.arcgis.com/>).

**PSEMP Winter Seabird Aerial Survey Webmap:** IT Specialist Whelan completed development of a custom webmap to display 18 years of seabird population estimates generated from winter seabird aerial surveys in Puget Sound Puget sound aerial surveys. This webmap allows users to explore the abundance estimates (grouped by 36 basin-depth spatial units) for approximately 60 seabird species or species groups. A WDFW website “landing” page is being created to describe this project in further details and provide links to this webmap (<https://gispublic.dfw.wa.gov/WinterSeabird/>).

**Ferruginous Hawk Periodic Status Review:** Wildlife Science Division Biologist Blatz concluded work on a long-term project to analyze ferruginous hawk breeding and distribution data from around 40 years of available survey information. Analyses requested by Wildlife Diversity Program included: summary statistics for territory occupancy and productivity, county-based territory activity per year, and distribution objective outcomes in each of three Washington recovery zones defined within the 1996 Recovery Plan. Recent ferruginous hawk breeding activity between 2006 and 2016 showed an average of 21.8 active territories per year over five non-consecutive years. The Recovery Plan set the threshold for downlisting the ferruginous hawk as an average of 60 active breeding pairs per year over five consecutive years.

## 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

Research Scientist Watson presented highlights of our ferruginous hawk migration studies at the National Grassland Manager's Conference in Bismarck, North Dakota. The Forest Service was a primary cooperator in the 15-year project and provided support for the presentation. A focus of the presentation was the importance of prairie dog populations in the grasslands to wintering hawks that originate from most breeding populations, including Washington. Prairie dog management is a highly controversial topic in the northern, central, and southern plains. The presentation generated productive discussion among the 60 or so managers in attendance. Research Scientist Watson coauthored a paper that was recently published in *Animal Behaviour* "*Heterospecific information supports a foraging mutualism between corvids and raptors*". The paper is the first of two papers to be published from our study of eagle foraging rates and behavior as assessed by camera traps. We pooled data collected in Washington with that collected by Dr. Matt Orr, Oregon State University for the papers. This first paper that evaluated the importance of ravens and magpies in attracting scavengers to carcasses.

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.

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.

WDFW Research Scientist Michael Schroeder co-authored a paper titled “*Sickle-shaped primaries and tail feathers involved in sound production in Siberian Grouse *Falcipennis falcipennis* Hartlaub 1855*” in the German journal Ornithologischer Anzeiger (volume 58:48–52). The Siberian Grouse is a close relative of the spruce grouse in Washington State and Mike provided important information on comparative behavior. The senior author was Siegfried Klaus.

Research Scientist Watson and several coauthors recently published two papers with important management implications for ferruginous hawks and golden eagles. The first paper, in the Wilson Journal of Ornithology, provides evidence against breeding nomadism in ferruginous hawks, a behavior that has long-been believed to limit our ability to assess population status: “*Repeatability in Migration of Ferruginous Hawks (*Buteo regalis*) and Implications for Nomadism*” - James W. Watson and Ilai N. Keren

The second paper, in the Journal of Wildlife Management, is the first to monitor visitation of individual eagles to carrion using camera traps in order to better understand their potential exposure to lead contamination:

“*Eagle Visitation Rates to Carrion in a Winter Scavenging Guild*” - James. W. Watson, Mark S. Vekasy, Jon D. Nelson, and Matthew R. Orr

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

Nothing for this installment.

## **7) Other**

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 1**

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

**District 1 Deer Check Stations:** Wildlife Biologists Annemarie Prince and Ben Turnock along with multiple volunteers, operated two check stations over the modern firearm opening weekend for deer. Overall, the check station was slow. Weather was good, but we did see very few vehicles with youth hunters. Not sure if that is related to the regulation change that removed youth and disabled hunters' ability to harvest antlerless white-tailed deer, but that probably played a role. Most hunters saw deer, but most were does and fawns.

2019: (All buck harvest because no antlerless harvest allowed.)

Chewelah – 30 hunters with five deer (four white-tailed deer, 1 mule deer)

Deer Park – 92 hunters with 12 deer (eight white-tailed deer, four mule deer)



2018: (White-tailed deer buck and antlerless harvest)

Chewelah – 49 hunters with 10 deer (eight white-tailed deer (two bucks), two mule deer)

Deer Park – 127 hunters with 38 deer (35 white-tailed deer (23 bucks), three mule deer)

**Blue Mountains Deer Composition Surveys:** District Biologist Wik and Assistant District Biologist Vekasy completed September deer surveys and were just informed that the GIS department has made the data available to download. Despite covering the usual routes, where we are usually able to count close to 1,000 mule deer, we only counted 565 mule deer in August, and 574 in September, with a ratio of 39.5 bucks/100 does in August and a ratio of 54.3 fawns/100 does in September. Buck ratios were down slightly from last year but within the long-term average, and fawn ratios were significantly up over last year but also within long-term averages. We also counted 514 white-tailed deer in August and 522 in September, for a buck ratio of 36.7/100 does and a fawn ratio of 50.5/100 does, both ratios essentially the same as last year.

**Highway 12 Realignment Mitigation:** Assistant District Biologist Vekasy continued working on landowner contacts for installation of ferruginous hawk nest platforms. Some final determinations are on hold until after seeding and hunting seasons, but we are close to having all locations finalized. Vekasy also had a volunteer collect dead sagebrush to load into the platforms, giving potential nesting birds a head-start on nest construction.



*Nest platform with added sagebrush*

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Target Shooting:** Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley received an email from a sportsman inquiring about a recently posted “No Target Shooting” sign on a private property. Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley shared information regarding WDFW access programs and hunting seasons as well as private landowner rights.

**Hunting Season:** With the opening of general modern firearm season, private lands and conflict section staff members had several calls, emails, and in person meeting with sportsman regarding hunting opportunities in Region 1. Region 1 private lands staff members also worked the opening weekend meeting with hunters, talking with landowners in an access program, and assisting wildlife enforcement officers.

## 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Non-lethal Deterrence Measures:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman and a WDFW contract range rider inspected Foxlights placed within the Togo home range. All lights are functional. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman pulled Foxlights from one location and re-deployed to another within the Stranger home range. Wildlife Conflict Weatherman inspected fladry placed around a dairy farm calving area within the Stranger home range. The fladry is still operational and effective. Wildlife Conflict Specialists Weatherman and West placed Foxlights in three locations on a private grazing pasture within the Stranger home range. The cattle had spent most of the summer on a private grazing allotment that experienced high wolf activity. Once the cattle had been moved off the allotment and closer to the ranch a wolf from the Stranger pack was observed a half-mile from the ranch.

**Conflict Prevention:** Conflict Specialist Samsill delivered fencing materials for a cost-share fencing program that is currently pending. Conflict Specialist Samsill and West removed a depredated ram from a farm along the Deep Lake Boundary Road for sanitation purposes. Conflict Specialist Samsill responded to a bear damage call in Arden. After assessing the damage and determining where the bear was traveling, Samsill helped the landowner fix the perimeter fence around the property and deployed a trail camera to monitor bear activity and movements.

**Grizzly Bear Patrol:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist West engaged with 20 hunters in Pend Oreille County to discuss bear identification, the Selkirk grizzly bear population, how to use bear spray, and recent sightings. West handed out canisters of bear spray to interested groups as well as bear identification cards.

**Depredation Investigation:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist West and Officer Konkle responded to a depredation report for a cougar that had killed four sheep. West and Konkle confirmed the incident was a cougar depredation. It was determined to be a public safety issue and hounds were used to pursue and take the cougar.

**Cougars in Peoples Yards:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley received several reports of cougars being captured on security cameras in and around people's yards in Dayton, Waitsburg, Dixie, and Walla Walla.

**Producer Contacts (Livestock):** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade was in contact with all the producers in the Grouse Flats and Tucannon pack territories this week as well as the Forest Service Range Manger, to check on grazing status. Most of the producer reported that they are in the process of gather cattle to move them to their winter grazing pastures and feed lots. Wade also followed up with a producer who had a cow get stuck in a cattle guard two weeks ago. The producer reported that the cow was doing fine and did not sustain any injures from being stuck. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade also followed up with a producer who had a confirmed wolf injure to an adult cow on Sept. 12, despite multiple attempts by a veterinarian to treat the injuries, the cow had to be euthanized.



*Cow stuck in cattle guard*

#### 4) Conserving Natural Areas

**Waikiki Springs Volunteer Trail Work Party:** Access Manager Dziekan supervised a volunteer work project at the Waikiki Springs trail, on the Little Spokane River in Spokane. The goal of the work party was to close unauthorized social trails (“shortcut” switchbacks) that the public has been cutting into natural habitat. These shortcuts are causing substantial damage to the vegetation, causing erosion problems. The Inland Northwest Land Conservancy joined forces with Gonzaga Outdoors, the Fairwood Homeowners’ Association, and Fairwood Farmers Market to recruit volunteers. Facebook and other social media platforms were used in recruiting, as well.

This is the third year of volunteer work parties at Waikiki Springs, with a trash clean-up in the spring and planting in the fall. For the recent event, 40 volunteers came out for two hours, to help restore the hillside to its natural state. Work was performed on four areas of concern. Volunteers spread wood chips, planted 40 native plants, and secured woody debris to act as a barrier to foot traffic on the shortcuts.



*Shortcut closed off* – Photo by Inland Northwest Land Conservancy



*Working hard*

**Farm Bill:** Biologist Baarstad worked with Lincoln County Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff members and landowners on fall seeding preparations for Conservation Reserve Program State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (CRP-SAFE) contracts.

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP):** Private Lands Biologist Gaston assisted the Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation District (PRLCD) with drilling grass seed into a new CREP site. The property is along a stream in Whitman County and included about 18 acres of new grass seeding.



## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Eagle Scout Project, Waikiki Springs:** Access Manager Dziekan has been working with Boy Scout, Mac Edmondson, on his Eagle Scout project to build and install a kiosk, for WDFW and the public to post regulations and notifications, and a pet waste station at the Waikiki Springs Trail in Spokane. Dziekan provided the materials and blueprints for the kiosk and Mac and his troop built and installed it. Mac has also been fundraising to install a pet waste station next to the kiosk, providing dog walkers extra bags and a place to throw their pet's waste. The pet waste station will be installed at a later date. The Fairwood Homeowner's Association will handle waste station monitoring, including refilling and emptying.



*Boy Scout Mac Edmondson (in gray) digging a hole for the kiosk*



*Pouring concrete for a secure footing*



*The final product*

**Bat Program:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman along with District Biologist Lowe gave a program about bats in Washington to a group of kids and adults at a local library.

#### 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Port of Wilma-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Land Exchange Evaluation:** Private Lands Biologist Gaston joined other WDFW staff members to determine evaluation criteria for a future exchange of lands between the U.S. Army Corps and the Port of Wilma. The land exchange will need to be evaluated for habitat, recreational, and other important values.

#### 7) Other

Nothing to report this period.

### **REGION 2**

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

##### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Safe Harbor:** Biologist Hughes met with a landowner in northern Grant County to describe the Safe Harbor Program and Hunter Access Program. The property was previously enrolled in both programs under the former owner. The new landowner was interested in keeping the property in safe harbor and enrolling it in a new hunting by written permission contract. Hughes created a new hunter access contract for the landowner's ground that is in general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and initiated the transfer of the Safe Harbor permit from the previous landowner. The landowner is interested in the SAFE-Shrub steppe program when his CRP expires if news signs ups are allowed in the future.

**Buck Run Raffle:** Rickel coordinated with members of the Steven’s family to conduct the raffle for the Landowner Hunting Permit they have, and ten people were drawn for the hunt.

**Winthrop Deer Check Station:** Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen ran the Winthrop deer check station for the opening weekend of the modern firearm deer season with help from Wells Wildlife Area staff members. We checked 67 hunters with eight deer (plus two bears and a cougar). These numbers suggest both participation and success are down somewhat from last year (82 hunters with 13 deer). The forecast is for colder and wetter weather with significant high country snow for the second half of the season, so prospects may improve if conditions get deer moving toward winter range.



*WDFW staff members examining a harvested cougar at the Winthrop check station* – Photo by J. Heinlen



*Mule deer buck harvested opening weekend* – Photo by S. Fitkin

**Lynx Surveys:** During an early winter backcountry adventure, Biologist Fitkin finished pulling cameras deployed as part of an ongoing lynx monitoring effort. All told, we detected lynx in five of six survey polygons including a lynx with a kitten in the Pasayten Wilderness. Many additional species were documenting as well. This Washington State University-led effort will help refine the lynx occupancy model for the Okanogan Lynx Management Zone and assist in developing a long-term monitoring strategy for this species.



*Heading into lynx country in the Pasayten after an early September snowstorm* – Photo by S. Fitkin



*From top: Lynx with kitten, cougar, and a coyote* – Photos by WSU/WDFW remote camera

**Deer Management:** Biologist Rowan incorporated year 2017 Desert Unit aerial survey data into an assessment exercise evaluating group size, updated sampling units to new strata based upon results; updated GIS layers, and performed random selection of sampling units for upcoming aerial surveys. Rowan also coordinated with the helicopter vendor, investigated Garmin InReach for tracking flights, and completed a flight plan for upcoming surveys. These steps are necessary for acquiring information about mule deer abundance and sex/age composition within GMU 290 (Desert Unit).

**Pygmy Rabbit Recovery:** Biologists Rowan, Grabowsky, and Dougherty assisted the pygmy rabbit team with trapping efforts.

**Northern Leopard Frogs:** Over the past few weeks Biologist Grabowsky has participated in a amphibian reintroduction seminar series highlighting amphibian programs worldwide. These talks discussed successful breeding, survey, monitoring, and collaboration techniques for several species. The Northern Leopard Frog (NLF) Recovery Project is new compared to many reintroduction programs that have been established for 10 or more years, so techniques from successful programs could provide valuable insight into managing NLF in Washington. Biologist Grabowsky is currently evaluating the success of the 2019 effort in order to make recommendations and adjustments for the NLF recovery program in 2020.

Three surveys were completed at Columbia National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR) in the past two weeks to monitor the metamorph NLFs released this summer. It has been approximately two months post-release, and two NLF were observed during the latest surveys. Both individuals were observed at the pond directly adjacent to the release site, indicating that the frogs are dispersing to some extent and exploring their new environment. Although this number of observations seems low initially, there are several factors that might reduce detectability including the dense vegetation at the sight, cryptic nature of the frogs, and cooler weather that may be causing the frogs to be less active.



*Northern leopard frog released at CNWR* - Photo by Heidi Newsome (USFWS)

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Hunter Access Program:** Private Lands Biologist Walker spent a majority of the past two weeks posting hunter access signage on properties in south-central Grant County and northern Adams County. While posting signs (and driving over 1200 miles) Walker scouted several Hunt by Reservation properties in Grant County that offer corn stubble waterfowl hunting opportunities. Just because the Corn Stubble Hunting Program is on hold for this biennium, doesn't mean there aren't opportunities for waterfowl hunting on private lands. [Here](#) is a link to Private Lands Hunter Access sites. Use the list of sites to select one of the following properties for corn stubble hunting opportunities: 401, 404, 405, and 406. Keep in mind, these corn stubble fields have been tilled which may affect the amount and duration of waterfowl use. But, rest assured, Private Lands Biologist Walker noted several Canada geese and even sandhill cranes using these fields in mid-October. Site 515 is Feel Free to Hunt and offers upland bird and waterfowl hunting opportunities to hunters as the site consists of two parcels planted in alfalfa and corn this year as well as shrub rows and native bunchgrasses scattered around the parcels. Other Hunt by Reservation sites in the area may offer further waterfowl opportunities as many fields were planted in alfalfa, grass-hay, corn, and field beans this year. Be sure to scout sites for waterfowl use prior to reserving and, as always, know and follow site rules (posted online) and any posted signage. Happy hunting!



*View looking west from the top of the Royal Hills on Hunter Access Property 404*

**Hunter Access Program:** Biologist Hughes posted Hunting Access Program signs and communicated with landowners regarding the hunting seasons. Hughes signed up a new Hunting by Written Permission contract for 823 acres and a Feel Free to Hunt contract for 1260 acres in in

northern Grant County. The landowner will be giving permission to youth only for his Hunting by Written Permission. Hughes posted the two properties prior to the general mule deer season opener. As a result of receiving complaints from landowners about their signs being stolen and vandalized, Hughes has been monitoring specific areas and re-posting signs.



*Walk in hunting only* - Photo by Hughes



*New Hunting by Written Permission contract* - Photo by: Hughes



**Hunting Season:** With the opening of general modern firearm season, Private Lands had several calls, emails, and in person meetings with sportsman regarding hunting opportunities in Region 2. Region 2 Private Lands Program staff members worked the opening weekend meeting with hunters, talking with landowners in an access program, and assisting WDFW enforcement officers.

**Sinlahekin Campfire Ring Installation:** The Sinlahekin installed 29 DNR-approved designated campfire rings though out the valley at some of the most popular campsites. This Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) funded project included pouring and setting concrete anchors, hauling and spreading gravel to create a 10-foot radius free of combustibile materials, and then placing and welding the steel fire rings to the anchors. With the start of the modern firearm season underway, the valley is filling up with hunters and campers who can already be seen utilizing and enjoying the new rings. Additionally, the rings have site numbers welded into their sides to provide improved ways of communicating campsite locations to friends, family, and enforcement. After the DNR provides the final approval next spring, these rings will extend the campfire season so that visitors to the valley will be able to enjoy a warm fire even during low and moderate fire danger when “RULE” burns have been shut down by the DNR.



*Newly installed fire ring and camping area in use at Sinlahekin Creek campground* - Photo by Wehmeyer

**Modern Firearm Deer Season:** With the changing day length and after the first hard frost earlier this month, western larch, quaking aspen, and snowberry are all starting to change color and show signs of fall. Hunter turnouts have been above average, and many campgrounds are occupied. Many campers have complemented staff members and WDFW on the campground improvements. By far the most commented on and appreciated improvements are the newly established, level, gravel camp pads for camp trailers, RVs, and tents.



*Hunting camps on the Sinlahekin* - Photos by Wehmeyer

**Bridge One Water Access Site – Memorial Stone Placement:** In coordination with Region 1 and Region 2 management, Region 2 North Water Access Manager Dehart, Water Access Technician Haney-Williamson, and Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug, a memorial stone was placed at the Bridge One water access site as a memorial to a local salmon and fishing advocate and WDFW partner. The 6600-pound etched boulder was delivered by Region 1 Water Access Manager Dziekan who helped place the stone with the help of a boom truck rented for the operation (thanks to Rob Wottlin from the Methow Wildlife Area for finding it!). The area was prepped with stone and gravel and placed in a protected spot within the access site. A dedication was held that Saturday to honor the man who help advocate for salmon and related recreation in the area.



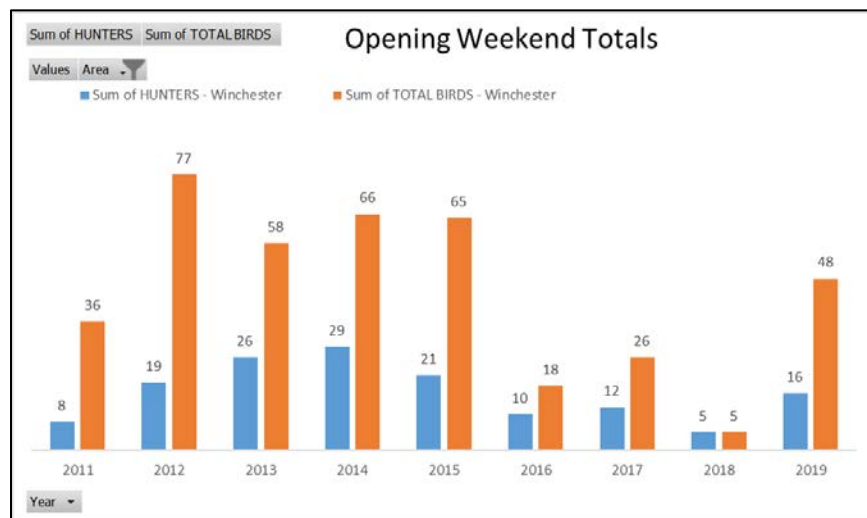
*Images of the memorial stone and its placement* - Photos by Haug

**Methow ADA Hunting Opportunities:** The Methow Wildlife Area staff members administer one of several Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) permit hunts throughout the state. The Methow hunt occurs on Bear Mountain via a cooperative agreement with the USFS. Per usual, before the start of the general rifle season, wildlife area personnel spent time cruising, thinning, and logging out several miles worth of roads in the ADA hunt unit to give the disabled permit hunters better access and higher odds for success. Although, due to the natural revegetation

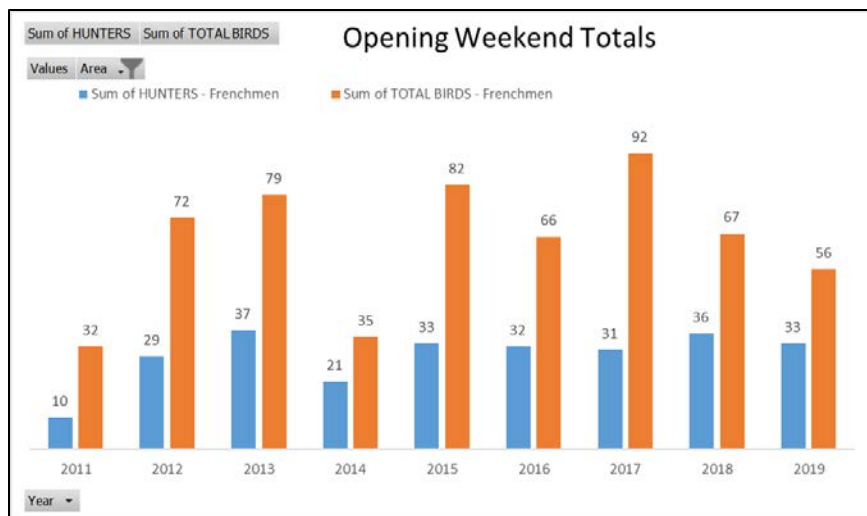
process, the forest on Bear Mountain seems to be getting brushier by the year, which greatly reduces line of site and overall accessibility. To remedy this, wildlife area personnel started scoping out the Ramsey Creek area as an alternative. Ramsey Creek was commercially thinned this spring and is slated for a prescribed burn next spring, which equates to better deer habitat and a longer line of sight. Additionally, several miles of roads were rehabbed, which could make this unit a prime candidate for future ADA hunts. Also, having several sets of extra eyes in the area in the form of permitted ADA hunters would be beneficial in monitoring the area for unauthorized motorized use, which has been a reoccurring problem this year.

**Waterfowl:** Biologist Dougherty has spent the bulk of the last few weeks working on a North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) small grant application. If awarded, the funds would be used to expand the footprint of the wetland enhancement project that was initiated in 2017, Winchester Ponds Restoration and Enhancement. WDFW, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Washington Waterfowl Association, and the Bureau of Reclamation, is seeking to leverage existing funds, \$274,665 as match for an additional \$100,000 of federal NAWCA funds. This would expand the current project area from about 63 acres to approximately 160 acres, all consisting of degraded wetlands. If these funds are awarded, the project would improve hunting opportunities, increase wildlife viewing opportunity, and greatly improve seasonal habitats for wetland dependant wildlife species.

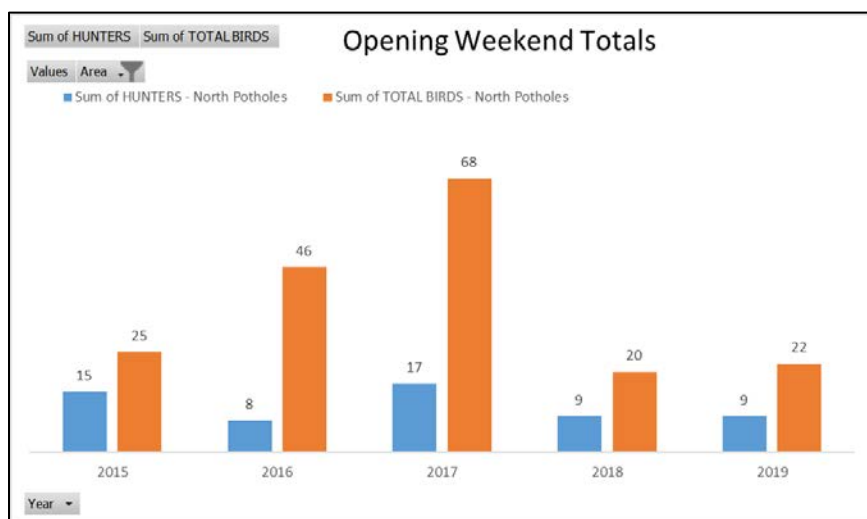
**Regulated Access Areas:** Wetland Specialist McPherson collected and entered data for Regulated Access Areas and summarized the opening weekend harvests. The Winchester Regulated Access Area was modified late last year to create a more reliable connection to the Winchester Wasteway which is the projects water source. We are hopeful that the ditching infrastructure will provide reliable water for many years to come and expect to be back to harvest levels similar to the period of 2011-15.



*Winchester Ponds Regulated Access Area 2011-19*



*Frenchmen Ponds Regulated Access Area 2011-19*



*North Potholes Regulated Access Area 2015-19*

**White River Unit:** Lands Operations Manager Finger and Wildlife Area Manager Fox toured the lesser known White River Unit of the Chelan Wildlife Area to get a better understanding of the relevance of those lands to the wildlife area and identify management needs. Though not well suited for hand launching due to steep banks and rip-rap materials, the area appeared to be utilized as such and discussions about whether to promote those sites as hand launch facilities ensued with water access personnel. At a minimum, the parking areas, albeit small, will be identified as a facility and boundary signs are needed where we have legal access to these parcels.

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

**Fencing Material Application:** Specialist Heilhecker worked with Olympia Conflict Section staff members and Supervisor Rickel to develop a fencing material application for commercial crop producers in Okanogan County. Due to continued requests from landowners seeking

assistance for fencing material, Heilhecker created an application process that will prioritize applications in order to fund those with the greatest need/damage. Commercial crop producers who signed a WDFW Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) within the past five years may apply. It is anticipated that the ranking process will take place this winter and contracts awarded next spring.

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

**Shrub Steppe SAFE:** Biologist Hughes met with several landowners to discuss where to plant forbs. Hughes provided maps of where to seed forbs to each landowner. All operators will be finished mowing their fields this week. Hughes will go out and flag the areas in the next couple weeks as a reference for landowners as they are seeding forbs. While meeting with landowners, Hughes went over the identification of the native grasses they seeded last fall with them.

**Methow Forest Health Progress:** As of late, forest health has been a big initiative on WDFW lands, including the Methow Wildlife Area. In fact, this year, the Methow Wildlife Area introduced prescribed fire to 250 acres in Bear Creek and commercially thinned another 250 acres in Ramsey Creek, which is also planned for prescribed fire next year. To continue the trend to healthier and more resilient forests, the Methow Wildlife Area has recruited further assistance from the WDFW Burn Team. Currently, the Burn Team is performing pre-commercial thinning treatments on another 75-acre parcel in the Ramsey Creek drainage. This pre-commercial thinning treatment calls for the removal of pine and fir trees that are 6 inches or less in diameter. By removing these thick pockets of small trees, we will make the forest more resilient to fire, reduce the likelihood of crowning fires, recruit more diverse understory growth, and allow more nutrients to feed the desirable legacy pines.



*The WDFW Burn Team reducing fuels in a recently thinned forest unit on the Methow Wildlife Area at Bear Creek. This treatment took place in the spring of 2019 and is very similar to the upcoming treatment slated for Ramsey Creek in the spring of 2020 - Photo by*

Troyer

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Community Outreach:** Biologist Fitkin attended a gathering of Methow Conservancy conservation easement holders in the upper Methow for a question and answer session on wildlife issues, and to talk about the upcoming effort to implement bear-resistant garbage cans and dumpsters in the upper valley.

**Addressing Landowner Concerns:** Private Lands Biologist Walker met with a neighbor of a Hunting By Written Permission contract holder in Douglas County to provide safety signs to be posed around the residence, shared information regarding the Hunting Access Program and addressed specific questions.

**Connecting with the Public:** Dan and Sidra spent the first day of the deer season at Big Bend Wildlife Area to meet and greet hunters and gauge use of the area. Along the 27 miles of county roads that are adjacent to, or go through the area, they encountered 66 vehicles, and five camps ranging from a truck cab to two RV's. In addition to those, they heard reports of hunters who had hiked into the area and camped. Dan and Sidra chatted with numerous hunting parties during the day most of whom reported seeing lots of does, some large two-points but few legal animals. Two parties had members who met with success. One was boy about 12 years old who took his first deer and had the pleasure of quartering the animal and packing it out, the other was a 22-year-old woman and this was her first deer in several years of attempts. Adding to these firsts, was a report of young teenage boy who took his first animal. Finally, Dan and Sidra had a long conversation with a talkative 72-year-old man from Enumclaw who had spent the week camped out there. Among the many topics he touched on was the love he has for his wife whom he met when they were both seven years old and they just celebrated 50 years of marriage. One of things he credits for the longevity of their relationship is his daily habit of preparing breakfast in bed for his wife. That may have been the most useful piece of information Dan and Sidra heard all week.



*Walla Walla resident, age 23, at Big Bend Wildlife Area with her first deer*



*A waterfowl hunter had a productive hunt*

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

**Methow Road Maintenance:** On the heels of several intense fire seasons, several roads throughout the Methow Wildlife Area were in disrepair. Some of these roads are the primary access routes to very popular camping locations, especially during hunting season. To address this problem and to provide better access to our hunting and outdoor community, Maintenance Mechanic Wottlin spent time late this summer making extensive repairs to an old military surplus road grader. With the heavy equipment repairs complete, Wottlin was able to grade and rake nearly two miles of spur roads adjacent to the Lester Range just in front of hunting season. These repairs have been highly appreciated by many hunters camping in the area. A road that was once difficult for a 4x4 truck to access can now be used by cars, trucks, and is even conducive to those pulling campers. Additionally, Wottlin constructed appropriate drainage devices to ensure these roads self-maintain for years to come.

**Lands 20/20 Projects:** Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug presented two acquisition projects in the Methow Valley to regional management and Okanogan County Commissioners with Regional Director Brown. One project would acquire approximate 200 acres of inholdings near the Rendezvous and Big Valley Units of the Methow Wildlife Area and the other would protect nearly 400 acres of sagebrush steppe near the town of Methow by purchasing the property from Okanogan County. The projects will be reviewed by the technical team in Olympia later this month with funding potentially being sought this coming spring. Lands Operations Manager Finger presented two applications to the regional management team. The first application was for the 1- or 2-acre Peshastin Mill parking area and second was to acquire a few small inholdings, totaling around 30 acres, within the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area from an interested seller.



**Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) Brown Bag:** Lands Operations Manager Finger participated in an informative brown bag seminar on DNR’s Washington State LIDAR Plan. Given recent interest in pursuing duck stamp and print funding to acquire LIDAR imagery for project scoping, it was great to learn that the western Columbia Basin is second on the priority list for DNR. Finger reached out, asked to be on the stakeholder list, and offered to help seek partners for the future grant request.

7) **Other**



*Winter is on the way in the Okanogan Valley* - Photo by Justin Haug



*Fall colors on Bureau of Land Management lands overlooking Washburn Lake and Horse Spring Coulee on Palmer Mountain - Photo by Justin Haug*



*Moon peaking over Barker Mountain east of Tonasket - Photo by Justin Haug*

## **REGION 3**

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

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

**Elk vs Car Collisions:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted with coordination of meat salvage on two occasions along Highway 240 near Hanford. In both cases, significant damage was done to the vehicles and one person was taken to the hospital for injuries sustained in the collision. The meat was collected by individuals under the salvage permit program.



***Roadkill elk along Highway 240***

**Pronghorn Antelope Call:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand and Wildlife Officer Horn responded to a call from a landowner concerning a pronghorn antelope that was dead near the Horse Heaven Hills Grange Hall. Initially it was thought to have been involved with a vehicle collision, but after reviewing the scene and completing a necropsy of the animal, it appears it may have been shot with a small caliber firearm. No ear tag or collar were on the buck pronghorn.



*Possibly poached pronghorn antelope*

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Moore continued collecting and reading literature to develop covariates for the elk habitat use model.

District 8 Wildlife Biologists Moore and Bernatowicz continued to pin horns and collect samples from hunter harvested sheep in the Yakima River Canyon. Complete samples were retrieved from most of the sheep, and all hunters harvested juvenile rams. Results from samples collected opening week were mixed. Six of seven animals in the Selah Butte South sub-herd were negative for exposure to bacteria *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*. This might mean that the sub-herd does not have a shedder, which would save significant capture time and expense. One shedder was harvested from the Mount Baldy area. Interestingly, lamb survival in the area has been very good the last two years. More samples need to be run and will hopefully help clarify status of each sub-herd.

District 8 Wildlife Biologists Moore and Bernatowicz continued to check grouse wing-barrels. Only 10 wings collected in October. For the year, 75 wings, with only 15 in Kittitas County. It is unlikely meaningful data can be obtained with such small sample sizes. Wings will be collected through elk season, but historically low numbers collected in October and early November.

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP) Program:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand met with hunt coordinators of both Silver Dollar and Blackrock Ranches to schedule youth permit, landowner allocation and general season hunting opportunities.



*Happy Silver Dollar youth hunter*

**Cougar Sealing:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand sealed and collected biological samples from two cougar that were harvested by Tri-Cities hunters, one in the Blue Mountains and one near Colville. In addition, one hunter brought in a bear skull looking for assistance removing the pre-molar tooth.



*District 4 staff members process a harvested cougar*

**Opening Deer Season:** District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored hunter activity on Rattlesnake Mountain on opening day of modern firearm deer season. Hunting pressure appeared to be greater than in the past few years. Over 25 contacts were made, and one harvested deer checked.



*First buck deer for a youth hunter*

**Heavily Used Hunting Access Program Status Unknown:** Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett contacted landowners who took part in the Corn Stubble Hunting Access Program during the past few years to explain the current status of the program and to see if they would be interested in allowing hunting even though funding was not available. This will be the first year since 2011 that Region 3 has not had funding for this program.

**Landowners Prepare for Fall Habitat Plantings:** Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett worked with five landowners on their upcoming SAFE forb seeding that will take place this winter. One landowner was sent their updated forb seed mix and plans to meet with Hulett in early November to discuss the location of the planting. Another landowner met with Hulett and discussed the placement of the forb seeding for two of their contracts, as well as their neighbor's contract that they are assisting with. The final landowners set a date to meet with Hulett to their SAFE contracts and the placement of the forb seeding.

Volunteers from the Washington Waterfowl Association completed the construction/remodeling of two duck blinds on the Sunnyside Wildlife Area headquarters unit, one at the Haystack Pond and one at the Johnson Wetland.



*Haystack Pond newly remodeled blind*



*Back of new duck blind at the Johnson Wetland*

Volunteers from WDFW's Master Hunter Program constructed a pheasant catch chute in the headquarters pheasant pen to streamline catching and crating pheasants for fall releases. The pheasants were formally caught by hand in a small pen and the activity was rough and dangerous for the pheasants and catchers. The catch chute funnels the birds into small chambers where they can be easily removed and placed into crates.



*Front of pheasant catch chute. Small door on bottom right lets pheasants in. (Still needs a roof)*



### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

District 8 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wetzel was contacted by many landowners on the north end of the lower Kittitas Valley about elk in crops. Elk have been down in the valley in slightly higher numbers than past years and have persisted despite hazing and hunting pressure from general season, master, and permit hunters. By mid-October, most irrigation will end, and crop damage potential will diminish.

Several master hunters with permits were called to assist a landowner in the Umptanum Road area. Large numbers of elk and deer were using a new seeding alfalfa field and pressure by hunters was applied until the irrigation water was turned off.

A neighboring landowner called to report several holes in the elk fence in the West Valley area. Conflict Specialist Wetzel repaired two holes and located a length of fence that will need more work in the Hideaway area. Trespass horses were observed on the state ownership in that area.



*Hole in a breakaway area repaired*

### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

On the evening of Monday, Oct. 7 there was a fire that burned most of the land starting at the city of Mesa and reaching the south side of Connell. A majority of the Esquatzel Unit of the Sunnyside Wildlife Area was burned including a popular upland bird hunting area used for pheasant hunting and youth mentored hunts. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.



*Fire damage at Esquatzel Unit*



*Forage crop for wildlife still standing*



*Fire damage at the Esquatzel Unit*

### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik hosted a table during Kittitas County Learning Coalition’s STREAM event. Babik encouraged children to “build a beast” using pelts, skulls, feces, and feet/tracks of local animals. Children were then asked to match their animal with the appropriate habitats. It was such a fun experience that Babik was asked to do the same lesson for a local outdoor preschool. A note of gratitude goes out to Customer Service Specialist Burge for obtaining new outreach materials and maintaining a checkout system for supplies!



*Outreach at STREAM event*

### 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area personnel found trespass cattle along Beacon Ridge Road and several places in Parke Creek. Manager Babik has called the owner several times asking for them to be removed.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area staff members met with Capital Asset Management Program (CAMP) Project Manager Alston to begin planning for the Quilomene restoration work funded by Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP). Non green-dot roads will receive water bars, native seed, and barricades indicating they are not open to motorized use.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area personnel assessed conditions of the 75-acre Riggs Canyon Fire in anticipation of fall restoration. The dozer lines have been pulled in but will need seeded after a bit more moisture has fallen.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart led a volunteer party in removing old barbed wire from the Whiskey Dick Wildlife Area. Nearly a half mile of fence was rolled up and another mile was prepped and ready to be rolled during the next volunteer opportunity. Volunteer labor is being used as match for the Western Migration Corridor Project funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 4**

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

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Fisher Transport and Translocation:** District Wildlife Biologist Waddell traveled to Calgary, Alberta with Wildlife Biologist Lewis to pick up six wild fishers that had been temporarily at the Calgary Zoo. Fisher are live trapped in Alberta by recreational trappers and then checked for health and fitted with a radio transmitter by Calgary Zoo veterinarians prior to their transport to Washington for release in the North and South Cascades. Due to extensive over-trapping in the early part of the twentieth century, fisher have been largely absent in Washington prior to translocation efforts that began several years ago. To date, fishers have been successfully released in Olympic National Park and the North and South Cascades. The six fishers recently transported from Calgary were released in Whatcom County.



*A fisher runs from the transport crate into its new home in the North Cascades* - Photo credit: Jason Ransom, National Park Service

**Larch Mountain Salamander:** District 12 documented Larch Mountain salamander during a recent survey of an historic location in King County. The Larch Mountain salamander (*Plethodon larselli*) is a relatively rare species and the smallest of the western Plethodontidae, which are lungless salamanders. Endemic to the Pacific Northwest, it is found only in the southern Cascades in Washington and the Columbia River Gorge of Washington and Oregon. Due to its rarity and apparent vulnerability to disturbances, the Larch Mountain salamander was listed as a state sensitive species in 1993. Washington hosts most of the known populations.



*Larch Mountain salamander documented during a recent survey in District 12*

**Carnivore cameras:** District Biologists Moore and Waddell worked with WDFW Biologist Spence to place trail cameras to survey for carnivores in Skagit and Whatcom counties.

**Fisher Ground Telemetry:** District Wildlife Biologist C. Moore assisted North Cascades National Park Biological Technician Rine with a ground-based radio telemetry survey for fishers in areas of the North Fork Nooksack River. Unfortunately, the pair were unable to locate any fishers, but got to see some beautiful areas, a few black tailed deer, and a chicken (no joke). Their efforts were not in vain, as absence data (when no fishers are located) is still very important for biologists! The National Park Service is also using aerial telemetry to locate fishers, but the ruggedness of the North Cascades has made this job more difficult compared to the South Cascades.



*A shy fisher, all the way from Alberta, reluctantly peers out of its travel crate during a release in the North Cascades* - Photo credit: Jason Ransom, National Park Service

## 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**

Nothing for this installment.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this installment.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.

**REGION 5**

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Nothing for this installment.

2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

**Deer Season Opener:** The general modern firearm season for deer opened on Saturday, October 12. This is traditionally a major event on the Klickitat Wildlife Area, and with the recent addition of more acreage to the Simcoe Mountains Unit, this weekend was anticipated to be busy. WDFW personnel coordinated on work locations over the weekend to provide optimum coverage. Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven conducted hunter success surveys on the Soda Springs Unit on Saturday, while Assistant Manager Steveson worked at the south entrance to the Simcoe Mountains Unit on the Box Canyon Road to offer information and maps to visitors there, and if needed, support Officer Nelson who worked near the east entrance of the unit. Sergeant McQuary, Officer Myers, and District Assistant Biologist Wickhem provided enforcement coverage on the Dillacort Canyon, Mineral Springs, and Soda Springs Units of the wildlife area. Hunter participation was observed to be relatively low on the Soda Springs Unit despite recent favorable weather. On Saturday, Van Leuven contacted 39 hunters and checked one three-point buck in camp. She heard of another buck harvested early in the day from a hunter who had helped field dress the animal. On Sunday Van Leuven and Steveson worked together and contacted 41 hunters. One buck taken in the Grayback Game Management Unit, and one buck taken in East Klickitat were checked at the same camp. Another harvested four-point buck was reported during a roadside visit with a hunter. Additionally, one camp reported observing a lot of bears, and their group has taken three bears so far this season.



*Opening weekend deer*

**Deer Opener Ride-Along:** Biologist Wickhem joined Enforcement Officer Myers on his patrol on the opening day of modern firearm deer season. The pair checked several hunters, checked on two groups of people who were illegally camping, and found one vehicle parked in a closed area. Biologist Wickhem fielded questions from hunters on local deer populations, elk hoof disease, places to go hunting, and cougar management. Wildlife Program Manager Jonker joined Captain Wickersham on his patrol on opening day as well. Hunting pressure appeared low with very few contacts and several other recreational activities such as mountain biking were observed that day.

**Simcoe Mountains Unit Box Canyon Road Entrance:** Klickitat Wildlife Area personnel designed, constructed, and installed a new reader board for the south entrance to the Simcoe Mountains Unit. In an effort to have the reader board in place for the opening of deer hunting season, Manager Van Leuven and Assistant Manager Steveson hurried to take the project from design concept to installation in two days. Lumber and most of the hardware were purchased on Tuesday, and Steveson cut the wood pieces while Van Leuven cut Plexiglas to size and finished the rough edges, and made a box to put maps in. The face of the board and side pieces were assembled the first day. The second day the remainder of the assembly was done, and then partially disassembled for transportation from the Klickitat Wildlife Area shop to the parking area along Box Canyon Road. On the way to the site, two volunteers joined the team to help with construction. On Wednesday the reader board was erected and outfitted with a map, an informational sign, and several other signs to help visitors understand rules for use of the area.





*Box Canyon Road reader board*

**Simcoe Property Boundary Marking:** Assistant Wildlife Biologist Wickhem marked approximately two more miles of the boundary between WDFW and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands this week. The purpose of this effort was to define the boundary of Deer Management Area 5382, which may be hunted for deer by special permit only, as distinct from adjacent BLM lands which are hunted under general rules for Game Management Unit 382. This brings the boundary marking work to a total of approximately 10 miles in the past few weeks. About three miles of boundary has not been marked at this point, although there may be fencing on some of the lines.

**Simcoe Mountains Unit Boundary Marking:** Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Steveson, District Wildlife Biologist Bergh, and Wildlife Area Manager Van Leuven marked a total of three and a half miles of property boundaries delineating Deer Management Area 5382 in east Klickitat County. Signs were also posted along Box Canyon Road to indicate where the new Simcoe Mountains Unit property lies. The new boundaries reflect changes resulting from the most recent land purchase. The boundaries were marked with fluorescent flagging and signs to assist the public in avoiding trespassing on adjacent private property, and to identify where the deer permit hunting area boundaries are.

**Simcoe Mountains Unit Recreation Map:** Assistant Wildlife Biologist Wickhem put the finishing touches on an updated map of the Simcoe Mountains Unit for distribution to the public. Copies of the map were ordered from the Region 5 office for posting on reader boards at the entrance points to the unit and handing out to visitors upon request. The wildlife area office has received several inquiries about a map already, and interest is expected to increase significantly as news of the most recent land acquisition becomes better known.

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

**Depredation on Domestic Dog:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a report of a domestic dog that was allegedly killed by a cougar. The report rapidly spread throughout social media of the alleged cougar attack. A necropsy of the dog carcass revealed that the dog was killed and partially consumed by a coyote.



*Puncture and tear wounds left on the dog's neck by the coyote*

**Elk Damage to Fences:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner experiencing damage to his fences by elk. Advice was given regarding fencing options and fladry to minimize elk damage to particular areas of the fence.

**Bobcat Concerns:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen spoke with two different landowners who were concerned about bobcat sightings near their homes. Advice was given, and Jacobsen will be working with one of the landowners to better secure her yard where her small dogs play. Some of her dogs are handicapped and in wheelchairs, making them more vulnerable to encounters with wild carnivores.

**Cougar Concerns:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen performed a site-visit at a residence where a cougar had recently killed a goat. The landowner was concerned that the cougar was still residing on her property. No evidence of the cougar was seen on the property, and several of the cougar signs found by the landowner turned out to be left by other animals such as deer and raccoons. Advice was given on livestock husbandry to keep the goats safe from future encounters with a cougar.

**Bobcat Concerns:** A landowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen because she has several small Chihuahuas (many of them disabled and unable to fend for themselves), and was concerned that the bobcats on her property would attack her dogs. The landowner recently caught one of the bobcats climbing her fence into the small yard used by the Chihuahuas. Advice was given on how to best keep the bobcats from scaling her fences and getting into the fenced portion of her yard.

**Dead Deer:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen assisted an elderly lady who had a dead deer up against her house. The fawn was likely struck by a car and died in the yard shortly thereafter.

**Cryptozoologist:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a local cryptozoologist who was tracking down rumors of an overly large wolf. This creature was reported to have been standing on its back legs and looking into house windows. Jacobsen had heard no such reports and directed the cryptozoologist to the public wolf observation page to examine if any of the reports sounded familiar or of interest.

**City Council Wildlife Committee:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen attended a committee meeting of a segment of the local city council to provide information and serve as a resource for the committee as they discuss urban deer, carnivore, and small mammal issues in the city.

**High School Livestock:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with a local agriculture teacher to survey the school's livestock facilities. Several of the agricultural students raise livestock animals on school grounds as school projects, and a cougar recently killed some of the goats at the school. Advice was given on making changes to the livestock facilities to better protect livestock, and Jacobsen will continue to work with the teacher on wildlife and livestock-related educational opportunities for her students.

**Wahkiakum Landowner Contacts:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey met with landowners in Wahkiakum County who are under current Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for elk damage. Discussions were had about the possibility for damage hunts in the future when the elk are consistently visiting the landowner's fields. One landowner also had a concern about two calves that went missing. No carcasses were ever found, but Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey discussed the landowner's right to protect his livestock, livestock husbandry practices, and what to do in the future should any other calves go missing. Aubrey was given a tour of many of the properties to become familiar with the issues and go over prevention measures that the landowners are using.

**Cowlitz Landowner Contact:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey met with a landowner experiencing elk damage in Cowlitz County. The landowner is under an existing Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement and wanted to make sure that nothing was changing. In previous years, the landowner has provided access to youth hunters, and wanted to discuss continuing this program with Aubrey this fall.

**Lewis County Landowner Contacts:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey met with landowners in Lewis County who are under current Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for elk and deer damage. Some of the landowners discussed the possibilities of having master hunter's deployed to their property when the elk begin to visit the landowner's fields.

**Bear Encounter in Woodland:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey contacted a homeowner who called to report an encounter with a bear in their driveway. After speaking with the reporting party, it was determined that this was a strange occurrence where the homeowner and bear crossed paths and startled each other. Advice was given on securing and removing any attractants from the area, as well as what to do in the future if the bear was encountered again.

The caller was also referred to the species fact sheet about living and preventing conflicts with bears on our website.

**Wildlife Damage to Trees:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey followed up on a contact made by WDFW Enforcement regarding damage to trees in a homeowner's yard. The homeowner's neighbors were concerned the damage may have been caused by a bear in the area. However, Aubrey determined that the damage was caused by a deer rubbing its antlers on the trees in the yard. Advice was given on ways to deter the deer from returning and causing more damage to other trees.

#### 4) Conserving Natural Areas

**Merrill Lake Boulder Barrier Installation:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Wildermuth placed boulders along the boundary of the Merrill Lake Unit this week to keep vehicles from trespassing onto the property. About 60 large boulders were placed along the Forest Service road in areas where vehicles had been off-roading in the past to gain access to the wildlife area unit. Assistant Manager Wildermuth operated the track hoe moving the boulders into place along the road, while Manager Hauswald used the front-end loader to transport the rocks from the staging area.



*Merrill Lake boulder barrier installation*

**Controlled Burning at Shillapoo:** Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald and Assistant Manager Hawk assisted Department of Natural Resource burn crews this week in burning blackberry thickets on the South Unit of Shillapoo. Unfortunately, most of the brush was too wet to ignite and in most of the proposed burn areas the fire quickly went out. This is the first year that any brush burning has taken place at Shillapoo. The goal of conducting the controlled burns is to get rid of the dead blackberries that were sprayed earlier this year, and to help sterilize the blackberry and other weed seeds that are present in the burn areas to hopefully reduce the need for additional herbicide applications in the future. Additional attempts will be made to burn the remaining brush later this year or next spring, when conditions are more favorable.



*DNR burn crews igniting blackberry thicket*

**Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area:** Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Wildermuth spent the week spraying scotch broom on the Mudflow Unit with a skid sprayer. Wildlife area managers have used multiple methods to remove and/or kill scotch broom on the Mudflow Unit this year with good effect. Scotch broom is an invasive shrub that will take over open fields and outcompete grasses, forbs, and other wildlife forage. The plant is difficult to kill, and the seeds can remain dormant in the soil for decades.



*Treating large patches of scotch broom with a skid sprayer on the Mudflow Unit*

**Klickitat Wildlife Area Sondino Unit Turtle Habitat Maintenance:** Water levels in most of the ponds are receding on the Sondino Unit. Klickitat Wildlife Area staff members have removed five basking rafts and their anchors from three of the ponds and stored them above the high-water mark for the winter. This measure was taken to prolong the useful life of the rafts and hopefully prevent them from getting lost. The two rafts in Balch Lake were left in place since water levels are stable in that body of water. The staff members gauges were cleaned and waxed to make them easier to read, and the boundaries of the unit were inspected, and several missing signs were replaced.

**Garbage Clean-up:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen coordinated with Master Hunter Douglas to remove garbage from a Private Lands Hunting Access Site. The access site is owned by Weyerhaeuser Company and includes over 6,000 acres of Feel Free to Hunt access in Wahkiakum, Pacific, and Cowlitz Counties. Thank you to Master Hunter Douglas for cleaning up the garbage!

## 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**Klickitat School District Presentations:** Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen gave multiple presentations on living with Washington's large carnivores to different age classes of students in the Klickitat School District. The students were excited to learn about the variety of species in Washington and how to respond when encountering some of these animals in the woods.

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Small Game Management Meetings:** Biologists Wickhem, Bergh, and Stephens joined biologists from across the state to discuss the management of small game species in Washington. The discussions included current and future goals for monitoring and providing recreational opportunity for turkeys, forest grouse, furbearers (beaver, bobcat, river otter and many other mammal species) and upland game birds (pheasant, quail, partridge and chukar). The group was eager to talk about these often-overlooked game species and looks forward to future productive discussions and progress thanks to Small Game and Furbearer Specialist Garrison.

## 7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

## **REGION 6**

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

#### 1) Managing Wildlife Populations

**Taylor's Checkerspot Distance Sampling Data Processing:** Biologist Randolph calculated summary statistics and developed tables from this year's distance sampling surveys which will be incorporated into year-end reports. Meta data were applied to all distance sampling GIS layers as well as to caterpillar and adult release polygons. Under contract with Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), tabular and GIS data are being collated and prepared for installation land managers.

**Modern Firearm Deer Season Opener:** Biologist Murphie conducted a roving hunter contact activity during the latter half of the opening day of the modern firearm deer season in GMUs 621 and 624. He reports contacting 11 hunters but did not check any deer.

**New Bat Colony (Update):** Biologist Ament conducted several site visits to a property near Forks last month to document and monitor a new bat colony. The landowner was planning to finish siding and roof removal of a greenhouse structure that was confirmed as a maternity colony for bats. He delayed his project for various reasons (health issues, weather, etc.) and the hope was that the bats would move on to their winter hibernacula site. Biologists Ament and Ollerman conducted an exit count on Sept. 26 and counted 118 bats at the greenhouse. They also counted 129 bats exit from the siding and roof of the residence that evening. They were on standby all day on Oct. 11 when the landowner said he was planning the demolition work at the greenhouse. He reported no bat casualties that night but did not convey that he had not removed the boards where the bats were roosting. On Oct. 12, he sent urgent text and phone messages to Biologist Ament conveying that he removed siding and there were “hundreds” of bats injured and on the ground. Biologist Ament followed up and was pleased to hear that most bats were just stunned. Apparently, after 15 minutes or so most bats flew off and only three bats were found dead. There was also one older dead bat found in the siding. All bats were collected by Biologist Ament and were transferred to White-nose Syndrome (WNS) Specialist Tobin. While on site, other structures on the property were checked and bats were found roosting. Under siding below one window at the residence a total of 82 bats were counted. No bats were found in the bat box recently installed. Future monitoring of this new bat colony will continue.



*Siding boards where bats roosted*



*Siding and roosting bats now gone*

**Dead Bat Collected (WNS Suspect):** Regional customer service staff members were contacted on Oct. 3, by a landowner from Hansville who reported that he grabbed a dead bat from his cat that morning in his yard. He was concerned since he noticed that the bat had white on the nose. Biologist Murphie was on vacation so both Biologist Butler and Ament contacted the reporting party. WNS Specialist Tobin was consulted. The risk of WNS was apparently low and it was likely just frost since the white nose was not observed later in the day. Biologist Ament did collect the bat on Oct. 16 and transferred it to WNS Specialist Tobin.

## 2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

**Carney Lake Fence Repair:** The access team spent six hours replacing 110 feet of fencing. This property was purchased in 1954 and still has the original property line fence. During this time, the fabric and several posts have rotted away due to the extreme fluctuation of lake levels. All fence material used for this project was repurposed from the current RCO redevelopments of Long Lake and Lawrence Lake in Thurston County. Staff members also repaired a major section of damaged fencing at the Misery Point water access site using the same repurposed fencing.



*South side before*

*South side after*

**Point No Point Beach User Issues:** Program Manager Calkins, Regional Director Phillips and Sergeant Balaz, visited with one of the neighbors of our access site to discuss issues that beach users originating from our site and a nearby county park have on residents along the beach. The tidelands are privately owned but there is a recognition of the public's right to traverse the tidelands as long as they do not stop along the way. Where issues emerge is where users picnic, etc. on the beach or even enter into backyards well above the tidal zone. Our access team has used car counters to document vehicles entering our site. Peak numbers on warm summer weekends approach 500 or more cars per day. Many of these users intend to park at our site and walk to the county park which has insufficient parking. The issue brought to us by the homeowner was conflicting messages on signs placed by WDFW, the homeowners, and the County Parks Department. The discussion was productive and as a result, we will be working with the homeowners and Kitsap County on clear and consistent messages that reflect the current legal interpretations. The wording on the Kitsap County sign pictured below is what we will be working with for wording.





**Grouse Wing Barrels:** Grouse wing barrels were installed at two locations in the district back on August. One barrel is located in Clallam County (5.5 miles southwest of Sequim) at the junction of Slab Camp Road and Lost Mountain Road. The other barrel is located on U.S. Forest Service land west of Lake Crescent at the junction of the Cooper Ranch Road and USFS Road 29. A new barrel was installed on Oct. 10 on DNR land east of Sequim. This barrel is at the Junction of Salmon Creek Road (NF 2850) with NF Road 2906. Biologist Ament just found out the DNR is limiting access above this gate due to an active timber harvest so she may consider moving this barrel. All barrels were checked for wings in the past few weeks.

District 16 Grouse Wing Barrel Collections	Date	Slab Camp Road	Cooper Ranch Road	Salmon Creek	District 16 Total
	Set-up August 31	-	-		-
	Sept 1 to Sept 9	0	7 w		7w
	To Sept 19	0	0		0
	To Sept 26	No check	0		0
	To Oct 15	2w, 2t	7w, 5t	0	7w, 5t
	Total Collected	2w, 2t	14w, 5t		16w, 7t

**Forest Grouse and Small Game Meetings:** Biologist McMillan and Biologist Ament participated in the Forest Grouse and Small Game Meetings held in Cle Elum on Oct. 2.

**Signage for Lower Dungeness and Three Crabs and Helen’s Pond Closure:** Biologist Ament assisted Wildlife Area Manager Lowery with getting updated signage at the Lower Dungeness hunting area before waterfowl hunting started on Oct. 12. A lease with an adjacent hunt club was

not renewed this season so it was important that hunters were properly notified of the changes. Biologist Ament produced some temporary maps and was provided updated rules and conditions signs. She posted these signs and hiked out to an existing blind on WDFW land to modify the sign that designates the hunt site number. On Oct. 15, she was notified to post special “No Hunting” signs at the Helen’s Pond property along Three Crabs Road. These signs were all in place prior to the next designated hunting day. Biologist Ament produced a few signs on metal posts to install near the parking area along Three Crabs Road. Lowery conveyed that no hunting would be allowed at Helen’s Pond this season, but possible limited hunting may be allowed there in future seasons.



*Signage at Lower Dungeness modified prior to waterfowl season start*



*A total of six “No Hunting” signs installed at Helen’s Pond WDFW property*

### 3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this installment.

### 4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

**Restoration Planning at Scatter Creek Wildlife Area:** Biologists Cook, Randolph, Gill, and Cox along with Wildlife Area Manager Lowery met with former Wildlife Biologist Hays in the field to assess the effectiveness of recent prescribed fires and to discuss restoration strategies. With the onset of recent rains, we observed many grass and forb species regenerating, some of which are non-native invasive species that need to be controlled using herbicides. However, we also observed beneficial native grasses interspersed that should be protected. Using over 1000 paper plates and landscape pins, we covered individual California oat grass (*Danthonia californica*) plants to shield them from herbicide. This low-cost option should allow native grasses to flourish to benefit the ecosystem.



*Paper plates anchored with pins to protect native grass plants*

### 5) Providing Education and Outreach

**General Wildlife Inquiries:** Biologist Murphie responded to inquiries received by phone or email related to:

- Waterfowl hunting
- Mountain quail
- Dead birds
- Possible sick deer
- Stranded seal pup
- Deer hunting
- Elk hunting
- Bear hunting
- Deer with foreign object (two cases)

## 6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

**Aircraft Safety Training:** Biologist Murphie participated as co-instructor with Hoenes, Wik, and Evenson, at an Aircraft Safety Training course in Ephrata. Murphie is one of WDFW's new instructors of this important safety program.

**Mazama Pocket Gopher Training:** Biologist Murphie attended a Mazama pocket gopher training activity in Olympia. Training included half-day in class learning about pocket gopher biology, legal status, and identification. The second half of the day in the field learning how to identify and distinguish pocket gopher mounds.



## 7) Other

Nothing for this installment.