

Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

November 16 to 30, 2020

DIVERSITY DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

GAME DIVISION

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

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

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey activated 14 hunter education classes for the region. Dazey secured the Region 4 conference room for a Monday morning hunter education class. Dazey assisted and answered questions from a bow hunter who was traveling out of state to hunt.

Region 3 Coordinator Garcia and volunteer Rich Mann met with a group of people that are registered for an upcoming mentored turkey hunt. The meeting was at the Cascade Field and Stream gun range. Garcia and Mann gave a clinic on fall turkey hunting and then assisted the participants with patterning and sighting in their shotguns.

Region 3 Coordinator Garcia and volunteer Rich Mann travelled to Mead, Washington and spent four days mentoring 12 new turkey hunters. They were successful in teaching the new hunters how to identify turkey sign, plan for a hunt, and call for fall birds. The 12 hunters harvested 16 turkeys.



6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey was able to add two new instructors into our Kalkomey database. The new instructors had completed all of their pre-service training requirements, passed their background checks and were ready to join a teaching team and start to train the next generation of safe legal and ethical hunters.

Coordinator Dazey while conducting teaching team evaluations assisted the capital asset manager by also conducting the bi-annual inventory check for two chief instructors.

Coordinator Dazey worked on securing dates and venues to conduct firearm training for wildlife staff issued firearms pursuant to Policy 7011. Dazey also secured venues and dates for range safety officer training for hunter education instructors whose team uses live fire in their classes. A total of seven range safety officer classes are now scheduled and the registration forms have been distributed to the states volunteer hunter education instructors.

Region 5 Coordinator Elliott worked through instructor records to add newly certified persons to the Kalkomey program, as well as inactivate people who haven't taught and will no longer be certified.

Coordinator Elliott completed a class evaluation of a local team as well as helped a new team with their completed class records.

Region coordinators Garcia, Dazey, Elliott, and Montgomery, along with Hunter Education Division staff, attended a staff meeting in Ellensburg. The next day, Region 4,5, and 6 coordinators attended the Instructor Advisory Committee (IAC) meeting at the Ellensburg office. The IAC works as the information conduit between the Hunter Education Division and our over 1000 instructors. The IAC is composed of representatives from each region in the state and also WHEIA and HERO.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.

LANDS DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

SCIENCE DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 1

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Mountain Goat Harvest: Biologist Lowe inspected a mountain goat harvested in North Lake Chelan by a 12-year-old hunter from Spokane. The hunter and his family and friends had a great experience in preparing for and hunting this Billy, whose age of 10.5 years was reflected in his lack of teeth!



Old Billy brought in for inspection that was harvested in North Lake Chelan

Bighorn Harvest: Biologist Lowe inspected and pinned a four and a half-year-old ram harvested from the Manson herd by an Arizona hunter. She had applied for this hunt for 20 years and had a great and challenging hunt.



Ram brought in for pinning that was harvested from the Manson herd in GMU 243

Disease Surveillance/Sampling: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill completed a hoof disease sampling kit for an elk calf caught in a fence in Addy. Samsill coordinated with several successful hunters to pick up hoof disease sampling kits for submission to Washington State University (WSU) graduate students.

Deer in Retention Pond: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Kolb assisted Wildlife Biologist Vekasy in rescuing a mule deer doe from a lined retention pond at the City of Walla Walla landfill. With a little luck, ingenuity, and the expert coxswain skills of Wildlife Biologist Vekasy in his personal kayak, the deer was able to be recovered from the pond, returning unharmed to its natural habitat.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Access Site Preparation: North Region 1 Access Manager Daniel Dziekan and Natural Resource Worker Uriah Meeks cleaned up all their water access sites that are currently open and finished preparing the winter fishing-only sites for the November 27 opener. They did a thorough sweep for litter focusing on areas that were previously covered in foliage, deep-cleaned the restrooms, trimmed foliage before putting the hand tools away for the year and ensured that there is adequate signage posted.



Hog Canyon Lake Water Access Site: before (left) and after prep for winter fishing opener (right)

Season Setting for District One: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett participated in a meeting to discuss changes to the general season regarding deer, elk, and turkey. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill met with District Biologist Prince, Assistant District Biologist Turnock, and Bennett to discuss Washington Administrative Code (WAC) changes to the 2021-2022 hunting season in response to crop damage and wildlife conflict.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Blue Mountains Wildlife Areas Elk Fence: Wildlife area staff members have been working on making repairs to the elk fence which spans 22 miles from the Wooten Wildlife Area to the Asotin Creek Wildlife Area. Several trees were sawed off the fence along with post repairs and some wire issues.



Herd of elk bedded down against the elk fence in Cummings Creek



(Left) tree on elk fence and (right) repaired fence



(Left) posts broke or rotted off at the ground and (right) braces built to stand posts back up

Chewelah Airport Deer Concerns: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett met with council members and airport staff to discuss options to reduce deer usage of the city airport.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA): Wildlife Conflict Specialist O’Connor spoke with a landowner who had applied for a DPCA requesting damage prevention permits for elk. The landowner did not qualify for permits as they did not meet the RCW 82.04.213 defining an “eligible farmer.” Damage observed was 40-60 elk feeding on around 3,000 acres of pasture whereas no agriculture crop production occurred. The land was leased seasonally to a separate cattle producer.

Bear Deterrents: Wildlife conflict specialists Cook and O’Connor picked up un-needed deterrents ranging from electric fencing to bear cans and fox lights. They also contacted an elderly Northport resident who had a bear sleeping on his deck. The man fed a young bear a couple of years ago and the bear now considers the residence to be his home. Unfortunately, he’s getting into the garbage. O’Connor gave him advice and loaned him a bear can.

Fladry and Fox Lights, Leadpoint Pack Territory: Wildlife Conflict Specialist O’Connor deployed fladry at a small producer’s property in the Leadpoint Pack territory in response to the producer hearing wolves approximately a quarter mile from the pasture. The producer has around 20 head of cattle and chickens. Fladry was deployed along the southern perimeter of the winter pasture in addition to the producer’s hot wire fencing. Fox Lights were set out at three opposing locations surrounding the winter pasture. The producer’s primary residence borders the eastern edge of the small winter pasture providing substantial human presence and oversight.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Revere Wetland Restoration Project: Biologists Atamian and Lowe worked with wildlife area managers Anderson and Assistant Finch and Ducks Unlimited (DU) staff members Heck and Blewett to supervise the heavy equipment contractors this week as they removed over 15 years of decadent old rush and cattails, reopening and restoring the wetland.



Revere wetland in process of being restored, looking east from control structure. The dark brown areas all used to be covered in 5-10ft tall rush and cattails, similar to what is visible on the left side of the photo

Habitat: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley worked on habitat preparations for shrubs to be planted on a WDFW-contracted Feel Free to Hunt property in Walla Walla County. Hadley worked with two volunteers over the phone to complete requirements to be able to volunteer.

Post-Whitney Fire Activities: On three different days over the last three weeks, Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area staff members coordinated volunteers and WDFW staff members, who planted 8,000 forbs and shrubs at Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area. The stems came in plug form and were planted using narrow-gauge augers on the first two days. After skipping a week due to cold weather, an all-WDFW crew planted the last stems by pulling a shank through the soil in several rows, then speedily placing and tamping soil around each plug. Many thanks go to the Spokane Chapter of the Audubon Society, the Okanogan WDFW fire crew, all members of the northeast Washington wildlife area access crew, and Administrative Assistant Melissa MacKelvie. Public Affairs Officer Staci Lehman also came out to film the last day of planting.



Audubon volunteer

Packaged forbs

Planted stem

The Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area office repair process has finally started, with the vendor consulting with Construction Manager Chris Alston and Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch this week. Siding and trim colors were selected, and Finch’s office window dimensions and location were finalized (slightly different than before, for better view of shops from Finch’s desk). The vendor then headed to Spokane to pick up supplies for the job.



Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Headquarters: Finch’s office ready for new window

Revere Pond Restoration: Ducks Unlimited (DU) Spokane staff members, WDFW Waterfowl Biologist Matt Wilson, Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Mike Finch and Technician Donovan Colvin, and District 2 wildlife biologists Mike Atamian and Carrie Lowe have all been working on the active field work portion of this duck stamp-funded Revere Wildlife Area Project. The project consists of clearing out sediment and vegetation in a stream-fed pond so that water will flow through it better, proving more open habitat for waterfowl. Boards have been removed from the outlet’s water control structure and the pond has been mostly drained. Staff members were trained in operation of WDFW’s “Marsh Master” boat/implement for cutting down thick pond vegetation, then cut about ten acres of vegetation on the project site.

DU has been managing the subcontracting and brought in heavy equipment to push sediment up and out of the waterway. Due to limited funds, the project has been managed closely by biologists and the DU engineer, to ensure the best results for the effort. Most of the heavy equipment work is now complete. A possible final cut with the Marsh Master may be done before spring 2021 runoff. Dam boards will be reinstalled, and pond refilled in early spring, before spring waterfowl migration starts.



Before



During



Water flowing



After

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Outreach: Biologist Baarstad assisted Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff members with equipment transport for a fire line seeding project in central Lincoln County. Biologist Baarstad discussed equipment needs with a landowner near Deer Park interested in wildlife habitat improvements on his property. Baarstad worked with the Inland Northwest Wildlife Council on fundraising ideas to benefit wildlife-related recreational opportunities if the Big Horn Show cannot be held in 2021.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 2

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Mule Deer Surveys: Typically, WDFW staff members conduct aerial surveys this time of year to monitor the Methow Valley's migratory mule deer herd. Unfortunately, Covid-19 continues to throw wrenches into many of our plans. Therefore, to ensure the safety of staff, pilots, our families, and our communities, all flights have been cancelled until further notice. Not all hope is lost, though. Wildlife Biologists Heinlein and Fitkin, USFS Wildlife Biologist Rohrer, and Wildlife Area Manager Troyer will work collaboratively to survey deer, the old-fashioned way, from the ground. This week we will all be splitting up and combing different areas of the valley in hopes of capturing mule deer ratio data.



*A mature mule deer buck trailing several does in hopes of having an opportunity to breed.
This breeding activity was on the Methow Wildlife Area directly off Bear Creek Road*

– Photo by Troyer

Northern Leopard Frogs: Biologist Grabowsky continued working on the northern leopard frog recovery report that is due to USFWS at the end of the year. At this stage, Biologist Grabowsky is coordinating with partners (Washington State University, Oregon Zoo, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, to name a few) to organize accomplishments for the year. The story of northern leopard frog recovery looks different than last year due to work restrictions. However, vital data was collected and we're hopeful that reintroduction efforts can resume next year and be even more successful.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Regulated Access Areas (Nov 1-15): Frenchman and Winchester Regulated Access Areas have been seeing a good amount of use from waterfowl hunters since opening weekend. North Potholes Regulated Access Area struggled on the opener due to limited water in wetland basins. Specialist McPherson has witnessed large increases in waterfowl use with colder weather bringing birds to the basin at Frenchman and Winchester. The Winchester has been attracting lots of attention from hunters and currently is averaging 3.22 birds per hunter, which is great harvest.



Mid-November ducks swarming the Winchester Reserve – Photo by C. McPherson

Quincy Lakes Trails Planning: With assistance from Assistant Wildlife Area Manager Bechtold and Water Access Manager Harmon, Lands Operations Manager Finger held an archaeological rendezvous at the Quincy Lakes unit with archaeologists from CCT, Reclamation, and BLM to help familiarize them with this rugged landscape. Two UTVs were used to reach Ancient Lakes and Dusty Lake via old service roads, which were barely suitable for vehicles of this size due to large exposed boulders. Several trail counters were opportunistically installed during the tour.

Lands Operations Manager Finger participated in a conference call with recreation planners from Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to discuss Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) Accessibility Standards for federal lands as it relates to trails development. Any improved section of trail is subject to this standard per the Department of Justice. However, due to the rugged landscape in the Quincy Lakes, basically all planned improvements (which haven't been identified yet) would likely fall within an exemption. Section 504 of the Act will be used to essentially mitigate by seeking to create an ADA opportunity in the general area, such as an overlook with nearby road access.



Touring the Ancient Lakes and looking for artifacts – Photo by Finger



They don't call it Dusty Lake for nothin'. Mountain bike track in the fall dust – Photo by Finger

Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Later Archery Season: The late archery season brought many hunters to the Sinlahekin Valley. Most campsites were full with multiple trailers and or wall tents. The campgrounds stayed busy through the entire late Mule deer season and we still have some campers here for the late white-tailed deer hunt. We had some snow early on, but for the most part, temperatures stayed cool and the snow melted. There is currently minimal snow in the valley with clear skies and cool weather. Hopefully we will see some succesful camps throughout the week.



Camps throughout the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area during the late archery season – Photo by Finger

Target Shooting Coordination: Lands Operations Manager Finger coordinated with Captain Jewell, Sergeant Busching, and Wildlife Area Manager Eidson to discuss implementation of the target shooting rule change beginning January 1. The purpose of the meeting was to ensure we are all in sync on the actions taken at individual shooting sites based on the intent and regulatory authority of the rule.

Hunter Access Program: Biologist Cook continued posting Hunter Access Program signs and reviewing hunter access contracts for problems. Cook found two active contracts that had limited on-site signage and did not have boundaries mapped online. Cook also removed hunter access signs from expired contract where a landowner sold property. Biologist Hughes posted signs on new acres that were enrolled in Hunting and Fishing by Written Permission within Grant County.



Hunting and Fishing by Written Permission – Photo by Hughes

Patterson Lake Access Improvement and Technical Review: Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug presented the Patterson Lake Access Redevelopment Project to the Recreation and Conservation Office technical review panel. The project would improve a number of deficiencies: building a concrete launch, adding a boating float, replacing the concrete toilet with a new ADA-compliant restroom with paved parking, and improved general parking. The panel posed a single question following the presentation and will be sending additional comments on the project in the coming days.

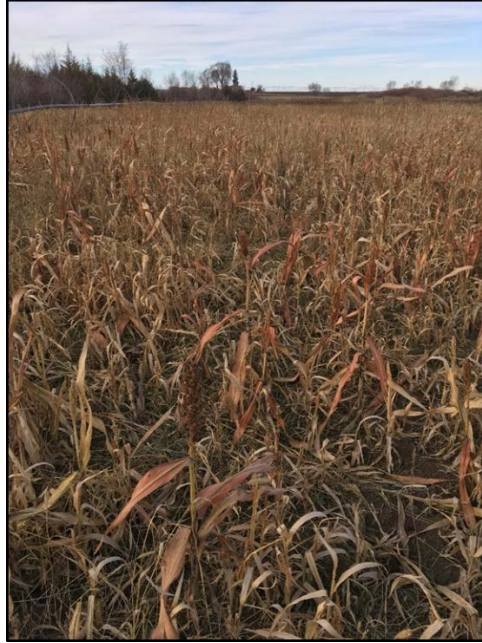
3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this installment.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Lands 20/20 Review with Okanogan County Commissioners: Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug and Regional Manager Pozzanghera presented an acquisition project to the Okanogan County Commissioners for the purchase of an inholding on the Driscoll-Eyhott Island Unit of the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area. The commissioners were receptive to the project and will not object to WDFW pursuing this acquisition. Haug also presented updates of the previously presented acquisition projects as well as state lands development and Boating Facilities Program project (Patterson Lake) throughout the county.

Habitat Enhancement Project: Biologist Hughes worked on developing a habitat management plan for enhancing and expanding an older habitat plot in Grant County. The landowner is enrolled in the Hunting by Written Permission program. The plot is irrigated currently, and the landowner is working on extending how far the irrigation will reach in order to put in additional trees, shrubs, and native bunch grasses. Two sections of the plot were seeded in spring as food plots.



Food plot seeded last spring to millet, sorghum and sunflower – Photo by Hughes

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Turkey Trouble: Specialist Heilhecker spoke to a homeowner concerned with three turkeys defecating on his porch. The turkeys were also looking in the house windows. He was concerned the turkeys would start scratching his truck and stated that if that happens, he will shoot all the turkeys. The homeowner was not willing to temporarily cover the lower half of the windows to inhibit the turkeys from seeing their reflections. He also refused to temporarily remove the bird feeders for the hundreds of songbirds visiting his property.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Methow Wildlife Area Planning: The Methow Wildlife Area is gearing up for an extensive management plan project. Over the course of the next three years, the Methow Wildlife Area will work to compile new plans, strategies, methodologies, and partners as part of writing a new Methow Wildlife Area Management Plan. Additionally, the Methow Wildlife Area will pilot the first Recreation Plan as this dovetails in nicely with future management goals. Currently, Manager Troyer is working with Wildlife Area Planner Vigue as well as Land Operations Manager Haug to select Wildlife Area Advisory Committee (WAAC) members. These WAAC members will play an intricate role in helping the Methow Wildlife Area shape its management strategies. The WAAC will be comprised of a diverse group of citizens, environmental non-profits, and government agencies.

Private Lands Habitat Restoration: Private Lands Biologist Braaten spent a day planting trees in Douglas County. This habitat restoration project was focused on planting choke cherry, water birch quaking aspen, and wild rose for Sharp-tailed grouse habitat. Approximately 250 trees were planted.



Handplanting choke cherry plugs in Douglas County – Photos by Eric Braaten (WDFW)

Habitat Projects: Private Lands Biologist Braaten revisited a few sites within Pearl Hill fire on private lands to look at possible future habitat projects. Braaten is currently looking at areas close to known grouse leks (sharp-tailed and sage). Project design primarily looks at tree shrub establishment within riparian zones and some upland shrub-steppe areas where we have good working landowner relationships.



Burned riparian area in Douglas County – Photos by Eric Braaten (WDFW)

Test Soil Samples from Burned Area: Results are coming in on soil tests to determine whether sagebrush might respond without seeding and to determine what other plant species we can expect to establish over the next growing season. Bottom photo shows a new sagebrush seedling.



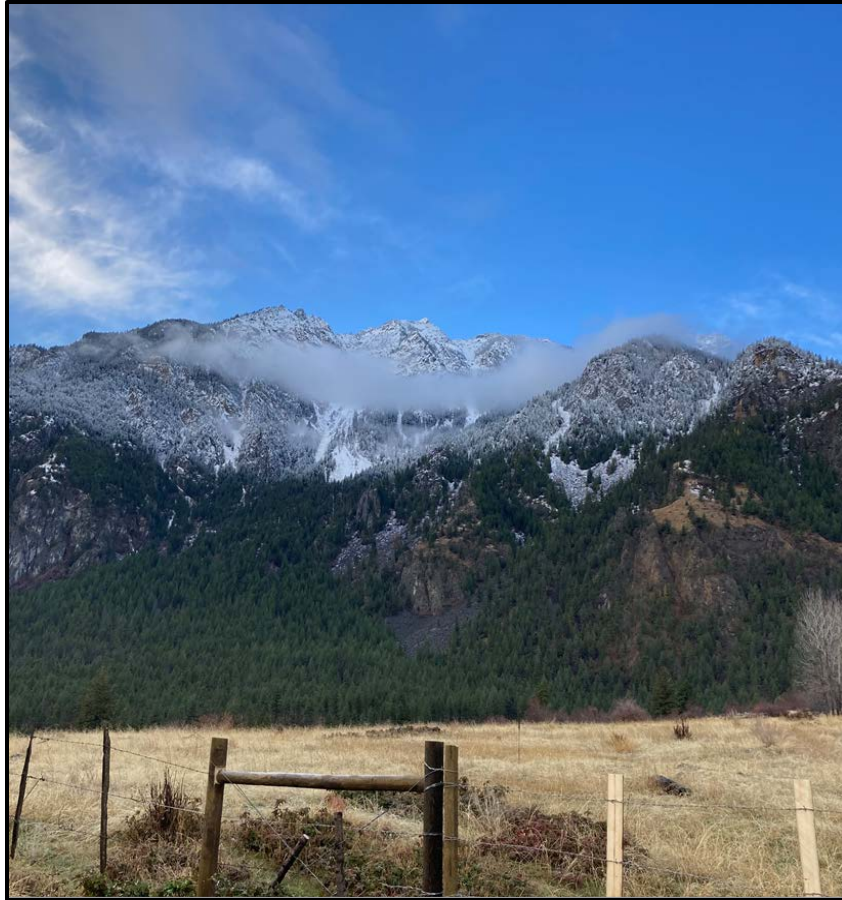
Photos by Finger

Moses Lake ORV Park Meeting: Lands Operations Manager Finger participated with Grant County Sherriff's Office and Reclamation in a discussion about the Management Agreement for the ORV park. WDFW has exited the management of these lands due to inconsistencies with our mission. However, WDFW remains a partner in the Management Agreement for several reasons. First, WDFW still manages the "Red Zone", or closed area of the identified ORV park. Second, WDFW has been administering permits for reasonable accommodation and disabled access and would like to retain that ability to provide accessibly hunting and fishing opportunities. Third, remaining a partner gives WDFW a seat at the table when discussing issues, roles, and responsibilities for the management of the park.

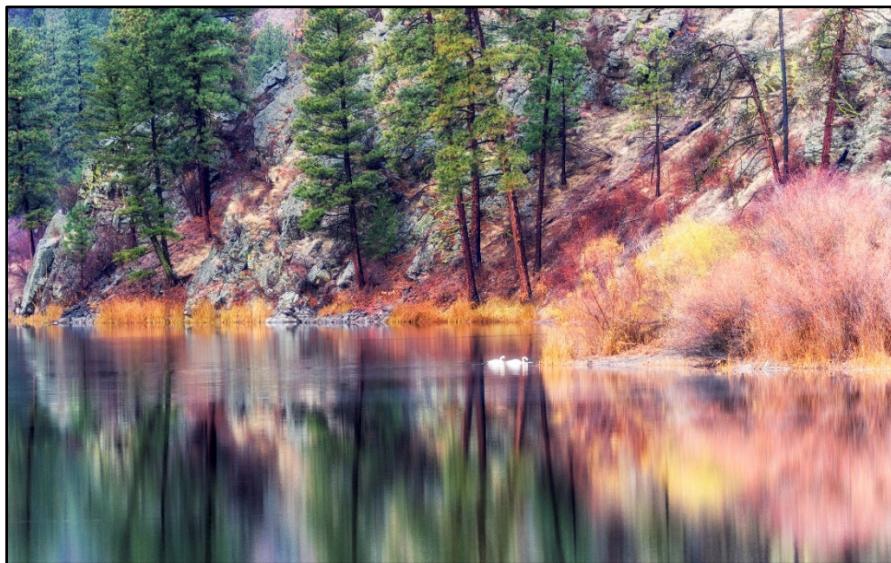
Title 28 Meeting: Lands Operations Manager Finger, Wildlife Area Manager Eidson, and Deputy Contracts Officer Galloway participated in a conference call with Reclamation to discuss the Title 28 contract and reporting requirements. This newly tapped fund source, once amended with allowable indirect, will bring an additional \$50k/annually towards management of the Columbia Basin Wildlife Area for the next five years.

Douglas County FEMA Grant: Lands Operations Manager Finger and Wildlife Area Manager Peterson participated in a conference call with the City of Bridgeport, Foster Creek Conservation District, Douglas County Sherriff's Office, and the Department of Natural Resources to discuss the development of a grant through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program under FEMA. WDFW will partner in this effort in hopes of gaining additional funding for actions such as culvert replacement and rehabilitation of destabilized soils. WDFW can assist by providing matching dollars from post-fire restoration and Mule Deer Foundation funding.

Lake Chelan and Rocky Reach Planning Meeting: Lands Operations Manager Finger participated in the Rocky Reach Planning Meeting. Wildlife Area Manager Fox is working closely with Chelan PUD Biologist Pope on developing the budget for this next five-year plan.



Looking west across the Chopaka Unit toward Hurley Peak, elevation 7,887 feet
– Photo by L. Medina



Trumpeter Swan pair on Fish Lake – Photo by Haug



Melting snow around Fish Lake in early morning – Photo by Haug



Sunset light on the Chesaw Unit of the Scotch Creek Wildlife Area – Photo by Haug



Fog in the Okanogan Valley at sunset near Havillah – Photo by Haug

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 3

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 4

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Processing a Bighorn Trophy: District Wildlife Biologist Waddell processed a once-in-a-lifetime bighorn ram trophy for a Skagit County resident who harvested the ram in north-central Washington. Biologist Waddell took horn measurements and applied a required metal identification pin to the left horn.



A legally harvested bighorn sheep trophy that has been “pinned” per department regulations

Grouse Wing Barrel Collections: Biologist C. Moore continues to check the two wing barrel locations in District 14 (Skagit and Whatcom counties) for hunter submissions. This is the second year that District 14 has participated in the program. Biologists hope to increase the number of barrels in the future and seek hunter suggestions on areas where barrels would be most successful.

Oregon Spotted Frog Outreach Materials: District Wildlife Biologist C. Moore continued to work on materials for an outreach grant awarded to the department by the federal government. These outreach materials will aid in recruiting landowners for participation in survey efforts for this endangered frog and educate local landowners in Skagit and Whatcom counties on how they can help protect the species and the habitat it uses.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Region 4 Private Lands Access Program Waterfowl Habitat and Access Program: Region 4 waterfowl habitat and access program sites are open for the waterfowl season. Private Lands Program staff members have heard reports of very good hunting conditions for early in the season, with lots of wind and rain to get birds moving and water on the agricultural fields. As more rain falls, the fields will get wetter and the hunting opportunities will improve.



Water conditions near a waterfowl access and habitat program site in Skagit County



Snow geese landing and feeding in a waterfowl habitat and access program site in Whatcom County



Happy, successful hunters at a waterfowl habitat and access program sites in Whatcom County

Private Lands Access Program Island Deer Hunting Opportunities: Private Lands Biologist Wingard setup seven Private Lands Access Program, Island deer hunting sites in San Juan County. These sites are available through the Hunt by Reservation system on the WDFW website. The sites offer a variety of landscapes to hunt, from pastoral settings, to orchards, to forested mountains. Multiple hunters have reported success at these properties already.



Private Lands Access Program, Island deer hunting site on San Juan Island, with the provided hunting blind in the background

Snoqualmie Pheasant Release: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area manager reports the West Washington Pheasant Release Program at Snoqualmie units were good to the last day. Parking lots at all units were consistently busy throughout the season. Reports from the field reflect many happy hunters enjoyed this popular hunting opportunity.



Successful pheasant hunters on the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Youth Hunters: Two damage hunts were conducted during the week of November 16 thru 21 with young hunters sponsored by Youth Outdoors Unlimited. The two young hunters both have experienced life-threatening illness and wanted to participate in a hunt with their families accompanying them. Each hunter was provided a three-day hunt opportunity with four landowners in Acme and three landowners in the Skagit Valley offering their properties for the hunts. After six days of hunting, one elk was harvested from a property near Acme. Thanks goes out to Tino and Mia Villaluz from the Swinomish Tribe for helping coordinate the hunts and volunteering numerous hours to make the hunts a memorable experience for the hunters and their families.



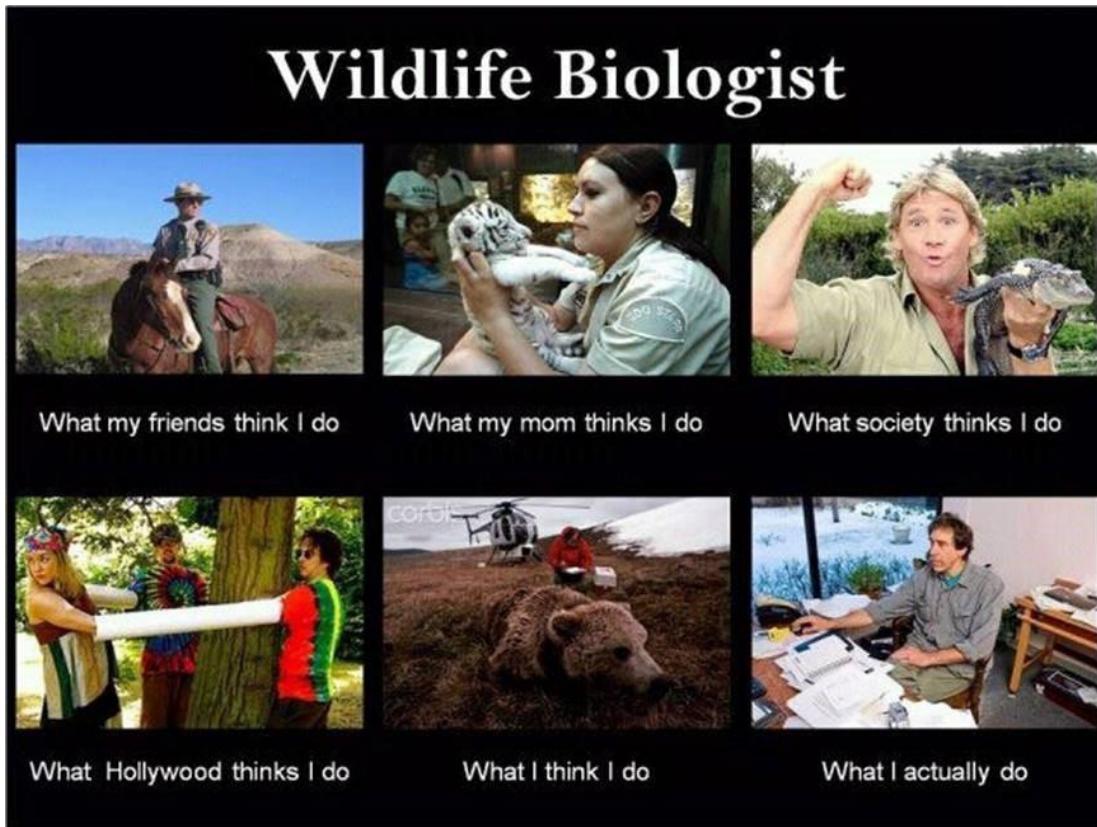
10-year-old Avery Reyes harvested her first elk on private property near Acme with her dad who serves at Joint Base Lewis-McChord and her grandfather who traveled from Texas to be part of the hunt (The landowner's dogs also posed for the photo)

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Nothing for this installment.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Career Day Presentation: District 12 provided a career day presentation to high school students with Liberty High School in Renton. This effort included multiple natural resource professionals from all areas – wildlife, fisheries, geology, sustainable agriculture, forestry, land conservation management, and marine biology. It was a great class and a really nice, coordinated collective thanks to the Greenway.



6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Snoqualmie Wildlife Area: Snoqualmie Wildlife Area Manager Brian Boehm reports that seasonal Natural Resource Technician Brooks Estes continues to support the Boater Access and Snoqualmie Wildlife Area programs. Brooks has been busy keeping five water access sites clear of litter and illegal dumps. She also assisted on the pheasant release program. While onsite, Brooks noticed suspicious activity including an abandoned (stolen) vehicle and after-hours shooting. Enforcement was contacted in each case.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 5

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Shorebird Survey: Biologists Stephens and Wickhem conducted a shorebird survey on the Lower Columbia River. This annual effort takes place in coordination with Point Blue Conservation Science, a non-profit conservation organization. This survey effort was part of the Pacific Flyway Shorebird Survey, a monitoring program designed to guide the management and conservation of wintering shorebirds in the Pacific Flyway. Data from this survey will contribute to the Migratory Shorebird Project, which is the largest coordinated survey of wintering shorebirds on the Pacific Coast of the Americas and spans from Canada to Peru. Region 5 WDFW biologists are responsible for surveying Pillar Sands Rock, Miller Sands Island, and Rice Island. A total of 168 birds were counted during this effort.



Surveying for Shorebirds in the Lower Columbia River

Dusky Canada Goose Surveys: Biologist Wickhem conducted two dusky Canada goose surveys which covered various locations around Clark County. Dusky geese are a sub-species of Canada goose that spend summers in Alaska and migrate through and/or over-winter in the lower Columbia River. Dusky geese are closed to recreational harvest due to low population levels. The purpose of the surveys is to count dusky geese observed and read alphanumeric codes on any red-collared dusky geese. Wildlife managers survey the geese multiple times across their primary wintering grounds and use the data to generate survival estimates. Approximately 35 dusky geese were observed, along with a few thousand cackling geese, and several dozen Western Canada geese. Unfortunately, no collared birds were observed during these surveys.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Landowner Site Visit in Cowlitz County: Private Lands Biologist Ferris visited the Woodland Bottoms pheasant hunting site to check habitat cover, parking areas, signage, and connect with hunters and landowners.



Woodland Bottoms pheasant hunting site (north side). Hunter and bird dog in the background

Access Sites: Access staff members Rhodes and McKinlay were faced with removing 4,000 pounds of garbage in one week on access sites in Clark and Cowlitz counties alone. The amount and types of garbage being dumped on Region 5 access sites has increased; including household garbage, freezers, toilets, etc. We ask that folks help take care of these places that are important and there for all the public to enjoy.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Bear Presentation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen presented information on preventing conflicts with bears to a small community in Skamania County. The presentation occurred outdoors and was attended by over 20 members of the community while maintaining social distancing guidelines. The community consists of about 50 houses and had been visited almost nightly by a young black bear. The bear had repeatedly discovered trash cans and bird feeders, making many residents concerned about the bear and their safety. Jacobsen reviewed information on how to secure various attractants around the residences, discussed black bear biology, and explained bear behavior to the residents. The audience was very receptive of the information and hopefully will be able to help resolve the bear conflicts before the situation escalates further.

Deer with Arrow: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a residence where a female deer was reported to have an arrow lodged in its neck. The arrow shaft appeared to be sticking out of both sides of the deer's neck. Jacobsen sat at the residence for an evening with a dart gun and immobilization equipment, but the injured deer did not show up. However, several other deer (15-20) did show up to the supplemental feed that the landowner had been putting out for the deer, including twin seven-week-old fawns with spots. This was highly unusual, as mule deer fawns should be approximately seven to eight months old at this point. Jacobsen had a long conversation with the landowner about how supplemental feeding can negatively impact a deer's health and can ultimately lead to deer dying of acidosis.



Twin spotted fawns eating supplemental feed. The fawns were born approximately 6 months later than the rest of their cohort

Bear Damage to Beehives: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with a Clark County landowner whose beehives had been recently damaged by a black bear. The bear had been observed on the property eating fallen fruit in the orchard several times over the last few weeks, and with the fruit now gone, the bear turned to other sources of calories. Jacobsen erected a temporary electric fence around the landowner's remaining beehive until the landowner can install a permanent electric fence system, which he plans to do in the upcoming weeks.



Electric fencing around beehives as a bear deterrent

Elk Damage to Agricultural Crops: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey worked with landowners throughout the district as elk conflicts start to increase heading into the winter months. Hazing supplies and landowner permits were issued, and damage pool hunters were deployed to address issues this past week.

Injured Owl: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to reports of a downed owl in a Longview neighborhood. Aubrey searched the area but was unable to locate the owl.

Injured Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to a report of an elk likely infected with treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD). The reporting party had watched the elk for two days and said it was unable to move and had been laying in the same spot. Due to the timing of the call, Aubrey responded the next morning and met with the reporting party. The elk was no longer in view from the house, but Aubrey walked to the area. The elk had moved around to the backside of a tree about 10 feet from where it had been laying the previous two days. However, upon approach, the elk was able to get up and run off with a slight limp. Aubrey was unable to locate the elk again.

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey worked with several landowners experiencing issues with elk damage to agricultural crops. Permits were issued and damage hunters may be deployed as needed to address damage issues.

Goose Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey sent a landowner information on goose damage and some potential solutions, including working with the agency's private lands program to potentially allow hunting access.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Cowlitz Wildlife Area - Spears Unit Access Changes: Wildlife Area staff members placed large rocks and moved a gate on the Spears Unit to prevent further impacts from vehicular vandalism as a result of mudding activities. The area is currently highly impacted with very little beneficial vegetation. The Cowlitz Wildlife Area is planning restoration activities in 2021 to begin restoring vegetation in the area. Plans include a defined parking area, an informational kiosk, and a walking path around the perimeter of the pond. The gated area is still open to walk-in access.



Photo on the left illustrates the impacts to the area and the photo on the right shows the gate relocation

Klickitat Wildlife Area - Forest Stand Improvement Project: A project to remove an overabundance of small, suppressed trees from an area of the Soda Springs Unit was initiated this week. Within the boundaries of a forest health enhancement project that was done in 2018, there were pockets of dense saplings that could not be thinned economically. Those were left untreated until this week. Klickitat Wildlife Area Manager VanLeuven and Natural Resource Worker Boyd developed a plan for the work including parameters on what trees to remove, how to handle the slash, avoidance of wildlife nest trees, and safety measures. Boyd worked most of two days on the project with guidance from VanLeuven.

Klickitat Wildlife Area - Collaborative Project to Improve Livestock Water Sources and Protect Springs: Wildlife Area Manager VanLeuven joined east Klickitat County Conservation District staff, an expert in fish habitat and water quality protection from the Yakama Fisheries Program, and three cattle ranchers for a field trip to the Simcoe Mountains Unit to look at two existing cattle troughs and identify ways to improve them. The objective is to upgrade the troughs to meet the ranchers' needs while improving water quality downstream by better protecting the springs. The group discussed project design, placement of the new troughs, anticipated maintenance needs, whether and where fence construction would be helpful, who would be responsible for future upkeep, and potential for damage due to vandalism. All parties contributed to the conversation and the basic specifications were decided upon. The project will be funded by the Yakama Fisheries Program through a grant from Bonneville Power Administration.



5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 6

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Goose Hunter Checks: Biologist Sundstrom began placing request cards on likely hunter vehicles asking for information if the hunter harvested geese. Until Covid-19 restrictions are eased, no in-person goose checks are being performed but hunters are asked to self-report via phone call or text message until directives change for dusky goose harvest compliance. Very few phone calls have been received.

Dusky Goose Surveys: Biologist Sundstrom conducted two goose surveys in November in portions of Grays Harbor and Pacific counties. Continued trial of Survey 123 for the data entry is ongoing with some hiccups experienced and other refinements needed. With the new system and format, numbers by species and location are not readily available and a comparison of numbers to previous years is not easily ascertained. Anecdotally, it appears overall goose numbers are less at this time than in previous years.

Taylor's Checkerspot: On November 20, Biologists McMillan and Ament met with Habitat Biologist Gary Bell, along with DNR Forester Graywolf Nattinger and DNR Biologist Noelle Nordstrom, at this known northern Taylor's checkerspot butterfly site west of the Elwha River. A timber sale is proposed for this area and it was important to continue discussions to evaluate current habitat conditions and discuss impacts from the harvest. Harvested areas proposed for seeding of Taylor's checkerspot butterfly host/nectar plants and grasses were explored by the group. Areas with diverse soil and dense understory were evaluated. Biologist Ament requested the group review some of the areas where the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crew recently worked to control scotch broom patches. Aside from finding a few small plants, the site looked much better than a few weeks ago. Large scotch broom plants were cut, and the stems were sprayed with an herbicide mixture. Some brush areas were also trimmed back by the crew. Further discussions and site visits will occur in the future. The team agreed it would be helpful to get a botanist on site to help identify grasses and other plants. Funding sources need to be identified and pursued in order to maintain and improve habitat conditions at this unique site.



Anita leads a discussion about the ground cover in the southeast portion of the harvest unit



Scotch broom patches (left) in October removed and piled in November (right)



Scotch broom stems cut and sprayed with herbicide with turquoise dye



The group looking at plants and reviewing habitat at the site

Trumpeter Swan Monitoring: The Audubon Swan Monitoring Team continues their efforts to count swans in the Sequim-Dungeness Valley. One team conducts a count on the west side of the Dungeness River and the other team surveys on the east side of the river. The weekly survey is conducted on the same day and during the same time period.

First known sightings of season 2020–21 Swans in flight 10/15 3:30pm: Seibert Creek at Old Olympic Hwy, southbound. Swans in flight 10/24–25: RR Park, Three Crabs, Dungeness Landing, Schmuck Rd. Oct 25, one TRUS in estuary at PW, one TUSW in flight over Schmuck Rd.

OPAS 2020–21: survey to date		TRUS Total	Adult	Juvenile	% Juv
10/28/2020	east*	2	2	0	
	west	0	0	0	
	* flying only total	2	2	0	0%
11/03/2020	east	14	11	3	
	west	0	0	0	
	total	14	11	3	21%
11/11/2020	east	91	85	6	
	west	16	14	2	
	total	107	99	8	7%
11/17/2020	east	0	0	0	
	west	150	138	22	
	total	150	138	22	15%

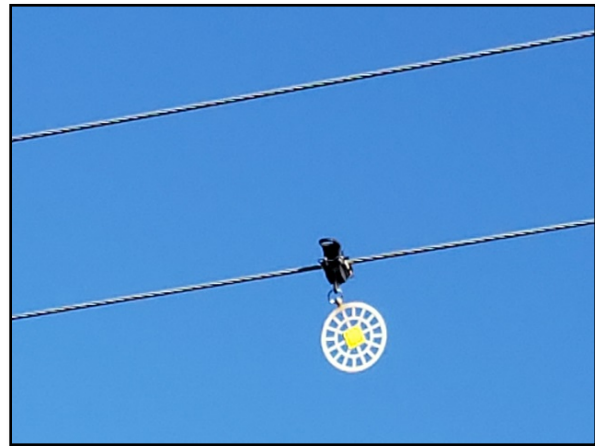
Trumpeter Swan Electrocution: On November 13, 2020, Biologist Ament was contacted by a staff person at the Olympic Game Farm who reported observing a dead swan along Woodcock Road in Sequim. She promptly responded but did not locate the swan. However, she did find a few small white feathers directly below a power line. She contacted the property owner and was advised that the neighbor had collected the swan. Biologist Ament knew this man and he had already made a call to the Audubon Center to report the dead swan. There were no obvious signs of injury to the adult swan. It was taken to the Greywolf Vet Clinic for radiographs and to help determine cause of death.

Necropsy findings: No external wounds noted, no broken bones or lead noted on radiograph. Abdomen full of blood clots, including within the air sacs. The right side of the liver had a laceration through, there was bruising at the laceration site. All other organs intact with no bruising noted. Lungs floated when placed into water. Ventricular cardiac walls subjectively thickened, sending in heart for assessment. Interpretation: probable electrocution.

Liver, gizzard, and heart samples were taken. Biologist Ament contacted the Clallam County PUD the same day and reported the electrocution. She requested that at least 24 diverters be placed on the lines to prevent any further electrocutions at the site. The power lines are just south of Kirner pond where the swans roost at night. Several other swans have been electrocuted in the past along lines at the west end of the pond. Diverters have been effective at preventing line strikes/electrocutions at this location. The PUD crew has diverters on hand and will be installing them on the lines along Woodcock Road as soon as possible.



Trumpeter swan that died from electrocution on power line along Woodcock Road



Reflective diverters previously installed at the west end of Kirner Pond

Vandalism at Bat Colony Site: Biologist Ament met with new Olympic Region DNR Biologist Noelle Nordstrom to review vandalism at a known Townsend's big-eared bat maternity colony. WDFW has been monitoring this bat colony located in a bunker near Salt Creek County Park since 1995. Gates were placed on all openings to the bunker to protect the bats. There was vandalism to a gate in 2009 and a few years ago. A repair was made to the gate but during the exit count conducted in July this season, it was observed that the repair section had been removed. Biologists Ament and Nordstrom were able to enter the bunker (wearing proper PPE) and explore the multi-room historic structure. There was graffiti on many walls and various items of trash, along with evidence of small fires in a few locations.

No live bats were observed but a dozen older, dead bats were collected from the bunker. Three of the rooms explored have an unusual fine plastic ceiling covering. Heavy concentrations of guano were observed in these rooms. Although the bunker is located on state land, DNR doesn't have the resources to repair the gate. White-nose syndrome (WNS) Specialist Tobin has been consulted for advice about funding sources for gate repair and for possible signage. Biologist Ament has a welder friend who is willing to donate his time to repair the gate. Efforts will continue to get this gate repaired before the bats return in the spring.



Striped Peak bunker – Home to known Townsend's big-eared bat colony



East bunker gate that has been vandalized twice in recent years



DNR Biologist Noelle Nordstrom exploring inside the bunker



Ceiling area where bats roost



Older dead bats found in bunker

Bat Box Project: Biologist Ament has been working with volunteer Bob Davies to produce bat boxes to distribute to other biologists throughout the state. Bob has worked for WDFW as an assistant to Raptor Researcher Jim Watson on numerous projects. He has a known bat colony at his residence near Port Angeles and has been working to exclude bats from his roof. He is a highly skilled woodworker and has a mill at his property. Bob wanted to keep bats at his property and has been perfecting a multi-chamber cedar bat box over the past several years. During a bat exit count conducted at his house on August 20, a total of 228 bats flew out of one of his boxes. Bob kindly donated a few of his boxes for Biologist Ament to distribute to landowners wanting to exclude bats. She saw a definite need to help bat populations and knew of a funding source from Outreach/Education funding. She worked closely with Biologist Biswas with Outreach for the past few months to initiate a project. Bill Montgomery, Region 6 Hunter Ed/Volunteer Coordinator, was consulted to see if Master Hunters would be interested in constructing boxes from provided materials. For the first round of production it was decided to have Bob fully construct the boxes, but Master Hunters may be used in the future. Alex assisted Biologist Ament with getting Bob enrolled as a vendor to receive payments for the boxes. The production of 24 boxes has been completed and Bill is making arrangements with Bob to pick up the boxes. Abby has been working to get an inventory of districts that have a need for bat boxes. She is

working to finalize a hand-out that will be provided to landowners with each box. She and Alex will be coordinating to get the boxes to district biologists throughout the state. Another 24 bat boxes are presently being constructed.



Bats departing from one of Bob's bat boxes during exit count August 2020
– Photo by Jay Cline



Master woodworker Bob Davies with first round of bat boxes

Black-tailed Deer Rescued from Fence: On November 12, 2020, Biologist Ament was contacted by Sergeant Rosenberger regarding a report of a black-tailed deer stuck in a fence near Sequim. She called the reporting party (RP) and gathered more information. The young buck had gotten his antlers entangled in a fish net fence around a vacant lot located within a close distance from her home office. She attempted to reach Conflict Specialist Blankenship and Biologist Murphie but was unsuccessful. She called a local volunteer and met him at the site. The RP lived next door and was also willing to assist. The buck had been struggling for several hours but still was very active. Using a blanket and hobbles, the team was able to secure the young buck. Biologist Ament was able to cut the antlers and head free from the net. It did not appear to have any serious injuries despite jumping over a split rail fence several times before it was contained. It quickly bounded off after being freed from the net. Ament has initiated an effort to get permission from the property owner to remove the netting around the property. Two other deer have sustained injuries from the fence. She plans to call local Master Hunters to assist with removal of the fence.



Young buck with head and antlers entangled in fish net fence



Deer before he jumped wooden fence



Fish net fence proposed for removal

Northern Pygmy Owl Rescue: On November 27, 2020, Biologist Ament was contacted by a good friend, Lynne Roberson, who found small owl lying face down in the road while on a bike ride west of Port Angeles. The owl was alive and had no obvious injuries. Lynne was able to pick up the owl and send a photo. The owl was a northern pygmy owl. Cyndie Daly from Discovery Bay Raptor Rehab was consulted, and she advised that the owl should be brought in for an exam. There was some concern about head trauma, so arrangements were made to get the owl to the center. Fortunately, the cute little owl had no serious injuries and was flying and eating in a few days. The owl will be released back to where it was found later this week.



Northern pygmy owl found face down on a road west of Port Angeles – Photo by Lynne Roberson

Abnormal Elk Hoof: Biologist Ament met at a taxidermy shop in Joyce to seal a bobcat on November 18. While there the taxidermist, Liz Barrett, showed her a frozen elk leg with an abnormal hoof. It came from a cow elk that was harvested legally near Joyce on November 6 during modern firearm season. Liz had also harvested a bull from the same herd of around 70 elk. She noticed the deformed hoof on the cow elk and thought WDFW might be interested. The other three hooves on this cow were normal. She mentioned that there was some mild deformity to the hooves on her bull, but she did not retain these. She did say that they did not really notice any significant limping from either elk that was harvested. They only noticed the hooves when they got to the elk on the ground after shooting. Elk Specialist Kyle Garrison and Vet Mansfield were sent an e-mail with attached photos. Treponeme-associated hoof disease (TAHD) has already been documented in the Joyce area, but Kyle requested the hoof be submitted for testing since further samples have been requested.



Abnormal elk hoof that will be sent to WSU for TAHD testing

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Private Lands: Questions and concerns, again from a landowner with a Hunt by Reservation Waterfowl agreement with WDFW, were addressed by Biologist Sundstrom and another on-site observation of hunter activity was conducted. Excessive speed down the driveway, too many hunters per unit, legal shoot time, more than 15 shot per person shell limit excess, and unit availability were the focus. When Sundstrom arrived at 0630, one unit was unoccupied and remained unoccupied until Sundstrom left the site around 1000; this unit was available to anyone after 0800 on a first come, first serve basis because the hunter/s who had reserved the unit did not show. Sundstrom did not arrive early enough to observe vehicles driving fast because all vehicles were already parked. No more than three hunters at any one unit was observed (in compliance) and the first shots were heard at 0652 with a legal shoot time beginning at 0650. By 0732, over 58 shots had been fired from the northern most unit area. After a few hours of observation, it was revealed that the greatest majority of the shooting was not coming from the reserved unit but from five or six other hunters on adjacent private land that is not associated with the Agreement. Unfortunately for the Agreement landowner, there is nothing WDFW Private Lands division can do about the ‘war zone’ gunfire that is distressing the residents; the reservation hunters were, or appeared to be, in compliance with the 15-shot limit. The issue of a Reservation Registration clearly visible on the dash of the vehicle is still an issue. Only one vehicle was displaying their registration. Biologist Sundstrom spoke with WDFW Enforcement and they will conduct a site visit in the near future.

Youth Hunts: Biologist Harris received a call from a producer looking for more youth hunters for the last week of general elk season. This is a producer who he works with on elk damage and just happens to be a great property for youth hunters who drew an antlerless elk permit for GMU 648. They already had four youth hunters harvest early in the season. A group of elk showed up unexpectedly and they needed some more hunters. This producer goes way beyond expectations with youth hunters. This request caused Biologist Harris to remember he had received a call about two sisters who drew antlerless permits. He contacted them, and neither had harvested yet.

Well, that got resolved on the last weekend of general elk season with both youths harvesting their first elk. The father reported that both girls had to work for their elk. He also expressed his appreciation for the producer, stating it was like hunting on a friend's property, not a landowner who gave permission to hunt on it.



A Saturday morning harvest by a very happy youth hunter



A Sunday evening harvest by this happy youth hunter

Dumping on Timber Lands: Biologist Harris received a call from a private timberland owner who allows free public access to their lands in Grays Harbor County. Two travel trailers and a boat were dumped at three different locations in the Humptulips area. He will work with the county to get the trailers disposed of because of the free public access. Harris also received a report of a boat dumped on USFS lands.

Biologist Harris arranged to pay for additional costs related to a private timberland owner's increased expenses from allowing motorized access on their lands. This year someone dropped a large number of nails on a main line, causing multiple flat tires. A crew spent a full day using a magnetic sweeper in an effort to get most of them. Some of the damaged vehicles were owned by

contractors logging in the area. Additional people were stealing fuel out of equipment, requiring increased security. Eco-blocks were placed in areas where people were illegally accessing and dumping.

Summit Lake Access: A tree company was hired to fall two large Maple trees that were rotten and hanging over neighboring property and their structures. The Water Access team then chipped limbs into a dump trailer and removed debris from the site.



Satsop River, Wharton Parking: Team members Reeves and Mitchell assisted the private lands team by removing and installing a destroyed farm gate and posts. This small parking area has a walking trail to the Willis easement which is used for both hunting and fishing.



Monofilament Bins: The Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crews worked with the water access team in several counties to perform routine maintenance on the bins and make repairs due to vandalism. While making the rounds for bin maintenance, the WCC crews assisted in brushing out fence lines, cleaning and blowing asphalt parking areas, litter pick up, chipping, and other brush removal.



Double Bridges: This abandoned/dumped vehicle was discovered on the Satsop River parking area, cleared by Enforcement Program and disposed of.



Other Work Performed: Jesse Reeves spent several hours working on the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and Boating Facilities Program (BFP) redevelopment project for the Chehalis River Fuller site. The technical review piece is in and looks very good.

Sign Improvements at Three Crabs Road: Biologist Ament spent time on November 12 replacing some “No Hunting” signs along Three Crabs Road. The signs were posted last season and many of them were faded or damaged. Once Ament got her computer back from virus cleaning, she was able to print out new signs that she had laminated. A total of eight new signs were posted.



“No Hunting” signs (on the left) replaced with new signs (on the right)

Access Road/Parking Lot Improvement at Lower Dungeness: Last fall, Biologist Ament reported to Land Manager Lowery that the access road and parking area at the Lower Dungeness Wildlife Area were in need of some repair. The dirt access road from paved Anderson Road was severely rutted and had prominent bumps. There were also a few pot hole areas in the parking lot. Unfortunately, due to other priorities, the repairs could not be completed. Low clearance vehicles could endure some damage when entering the parking area. Biologist Ament got approval from Lowery to take some action. She did some investigating and price comparisons to select a company to deliver a load of gravel. On November 2, she met the delivery truck on site. She evenly spread the gravel along the access road and in the pot holes. A more serious repair will be needed in the future but this effort will improve conditions for this season.



Access road into Lower Dungeness improved with gravel



Pot hole areas along access drive into parking area also improved with gravel

Sealing Bobcats: Biologist Ament sealed several bobcats during the past month. One bobcat was actually hit by a vehicle on Highway 101 south of Forks. All data has been entered into the CITES database.

Hunter Contacts: Biologists McMillan and Ament continue to talk with many hunters that have called to find out more about hunting options within District 16.

Grouse Wing Barrels: Biologist Ament had installed grouse wing/tail collection stations at three locations in the district. One barrel is located in Clallam County (5.5 miles southwest of Sequim) at the junction of Slab Camp Road and Lost Mountain Road. Another barrel is located on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) land west of Lake Crescent at the junction of the Cooper Ranch Road and USFS Road 29. A final barrel was installed on DNR land east of Sequim. This barrel is at the Junction of Salmon Creek Road (NF 2850) with NF Road 2906. Fortunately, DNR is not limiting access above a gate that was installed last year during an active timber harvest operation. All barrels have been checked for wings/tails every two to three weeks. During the last barrel check on October 23, Biologist Ament was disappointed to see that vandals had removed the plastic barrel at the Salmon Creek Road site. A thick wire cable securing the barrel stand to a tree was cut and a lock cable securing the barrel to the stand was also cut. Fortunately, the wood frame, sign, and mailbox were left on site. She spent time in late October finding a replacement barrel and re-installed the station on November 3.

District 16 Grouse Wing Barrel Collections	Date	Slab Camp Road	Cooper Ranch Road	Salmon Creek	District 16 Total
	Set-up August 31 and Sept 1	-	-	-	-
	Sept 1 to Sept 11	3w, 2 t	1w, 1t	0	4w, 3t
	To Sept 28/30	1w, 1t	11w, 1t	0	12w, 2t
	To Oct 23	1w	10w, 5t	3w, 2t	14w, 7t
	Nov 5			New barrel	
	To Nov 16	6w, 5t	3w, 1t	0	9w, 6t
	Total Collected	11w, 8t	25w, 8t	3w, 2t	39w, 18t



New “Big Red” barrel installed after other barrel was stolen

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Cougar Reports: Biologist Harris continues to receive and respond to cougar sightings in Ocean Shores.

Elk Damage: Two antlerless elk were harvested from a property receiving excessive damage and were given to a local tribe for their nutrition programs and cultural needs.

Disabled Hunt Opportunities: Biologist Harris spoke with a paraplegic hunter that was given a Damage Prevention Permit by a producer. Other producers who are currently working with the department on damage issues in the area found out and want her to hunt their property also. Arrangements were made for her to contact landowners and arrange for site visits to meet producers and plan an access strategy. A new permit will be issued extending the hunt area to other producers.

Protecting Carrots from Swans: The trumpeter swans that visit the Sequim-Dungeness Valley have shown a history of enjoying the Nash Farm's prized carrots and other produce. Nash Huber has farmed the valley for decades. Last year a valuable broccoli/cauliflower patch was nearly devoured by swans during an unusual snow event. The community donated graciously to a Go-Fund-Me to help reimburse the farm. Biologist Ament encountered Mr. Huber on November 18 at Les Schwab and they discussed his concern over swan damage to his crops.

Ament requested a site visit and they proceeded directly to the Wheeler Farm that is leased by him to grow carrots and other produce. The swans had not yet found the carrots this season, but several swan groups flew by and it was likely a matter of time. Mr. Huber has been advised about crop protection methods in the past, but he conveyed that he doesn't have the funds or staff to implement the projects.



Trumpeter swans and Nash's field crew harvesting carrots (2013) – Photo by Martha Jordan



Organic Farmer Nash Huber



Carrot field after mechanical harvest



Carrots near unharvested patch



Small swan group flying by field

Carrot Protection Project: After reviewing the carrot field with farmer Nash Huber, Biologist Ament consulted with Conflict Specialist Blankenship who luckily had 200 PVC poles on hand. She talked with Martha Jordan from the Northwest Swan Conservation Association regarding mylar tape and spacing of poles. Ament was able to recruit some volunteer help from the swan monitoring team. On November 24, the newly formed Carrot Protection Team all met at the Wheeler Farm. The crew deployed the 200 poles with special reflective mylar tape in the field to prevent the swans from landing and feeding on the carrots. Some supplemental flagging along carrot patch edges may be needed in the future if swans do land nearby and start feeding on the carrots left on the ground after harvest. There has been no report of the swans at the Wheeler Farm to date. The poles may be moved in the future to protect other crops this winter. Biologist Ament is grateful to Matt and the dedicated volunteers who assisted with this pro-active project.



Tedious job of duct taping reflective mylar to the PVC poles



Deploying poles in the field after determining spacing to alternate rows



Having fun in the mud to protect carrot crop from hungry swans

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Prairie Habitat Restoration: Biologist Cook and technicians Morgan and Gill prepared restoration units at the Scatter Creek and West Rocky Prairie units, which received prescribed fire earlier this fall, for herbicide treatment. This entailed mowing of burnt brush that would intercept herbicide and interfere with future seeding operations, as well as marking of vulnerable native plants for exclusion. Biologist Cook has been applying herbicide to these units during dry windows since preparations were completed with hopes to finish during good weather this week. Applications have mostly utilized grass-specific herbicides that target invasive grasses but don't affect most native prairie bunchgrasses. Other actions at these sites include extensive mowing of scotch broom and oak understory and planting of native forbs.



Unit prep



Restoration unit post-herbicide treatment

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

7) Other

Assisting the Public: Biologist Sundstrom returned waterfowl hunter phone calls, took self-reported harvest calls, and had two hunters contact Enforcement regarding goose hunters that were hunting in a closed area during a closed season.