

Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

Aug. 16 to Aug. 31, 2019

DIVERSITY DIVISION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Bat Research: WDFW Biologists Tobin and Bergh, with WDFW Veterinarian Mansfield, joined U.S. Forest Service Researcher, Ted Weller, at two little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) colonies in Clark and Mason counties to capture bats for a project assessing the vulnerability of this species to the deadly bat disease, white-nose syndrome (WNS). Bats that are suitable weight will have a tiny tag attached to them that monitors the temperature and humidity of the environments it roosts which will allow scientists to determine if those environments are also suitable for WNS. This will help inform WDFW response to WNS by understanding the roosts these bats select for hibernation and whether they are vulnerable to WNS. Unfortunately, none of the bats captured during this time were a suitable weight to participate in the study.



Left: Harp trap set up to capture bats as they emerge in the evening. Right: WDFW Bergh holding an H-net set up to capture bats as they emerge from the bat house in the evening.

Nongame Technical Committee: Natural Resource Scientist Buchanan attended the autumn meeting of the Nongame Technical Committee (NTC), which culminated in a Friday meeting of the Pacific Flyway Council. The waterfowl technical group (the ‘Study Committee’) also meet during that same week. The NTC presented several products to Council: Recommendations 18, 20 and 21 (relating to Common Ravens and Double-crested Cormorants); Informational Notes one (Common Raven), two (‘Southern Wings’), three (the NTC work plan), four (Bird-Fish

Conflict Working Group), and seven (Avian Knowledge Network) and two subcommittee reports. The final packet, which also includes numerous waterfowl products, should be posted soon on the Pacific Flyway Council website. Products developed at the meeting are contained in the council packet.

2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) **Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) **Conserving Natural Landscapes**

Nothing for this reporting period.

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing for this reporting period.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.

GAME DIVISION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Fourth Annual WDFW Eastside Deer Meeting: Deer Specialist Hansen (with the assistance of Private Lands Manager Rickel as facilitator) hosted a two-day mule and white-tailed deer meeting in Cle Elum to discuss deer monitoring and management issues. The meeting was attended by 27 district biologists, regional wildlife program managers, Game Division, Science Division, and Public Affairs personnel. Staff members discussed a range of topics including: improvements to the Deer Road Survey App developed by WSDM Section, updates on the Department of the Interior SO3362 Big Game Migration and Winter Habitat Initiative, CWD Management Plan development, updates on current population monitoring efforts and anticipated future work, and initiating the process to update the White-tailed Deer Management Plan. The meeting always involves a fair amount of effort including presentation and discussion

preparation, travel, attendance, and write-up of meeting notes, but was deemed a full success by staff members in attendance so was well worth the work.

Black-tailed Deer Population Monitoring: Game Division Manager Aoude, Deer and Elk Section Manager Hoenes, Deer Specialist Hansen, Elk Specialist Garrison, Science Division Manager Nelson and Biometrician Keren attended a meeting with University of Montana researchers to discuss statistical population reconstruction (SPR) models for game species population monitoring. SPR methods use age-at-harvest data, hunter effort, and other demographic information to estimate annual animal abundance. The SPR approach offers several advantages over traditional population monitoring indices, but the modeling framework is not applicable to every situation. WDFW game and science division personnel will continue evaluating the use of SPR methods, particularly for difficult-to-monitor species like black tailed deer.

Treponeme-associated Hoof Disease (TAHD): Elk Specialist Garrison continued to work on data formatting and initial analyses for WDFW's TAHD survival and productivity study. For more information about this disease and WDFW's research, visit our [website on TAHD](#) and [field studies](#), or contact Kyle Garrison (kyle.garrison@dfw.wa.gov).

Olympic Mountain Goats: Elk specialist Garrison assisted WDFW Wildlife Program staff members and USFS and NPS partners in processing and transporting mountain goats from the Olympic Peninsula, where they are not native, to the North Cascades. For more information regarding this effort, visit <https://wdfw.wa.gov/news/agencies-begin-second-year-translocating-mountain-goats-olympics-cascades>.



Mountain goats are captured using aerial darting and net-gunning, then transported to a processing site where animals are measured, sampled, GPS radio collared, and finally transported to the Cascade range for release.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Nothing for this reporting period.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership Media Summit: Deer Specialist Hansen participated in a panel discussion with USFWS and non-governmental organizations (NGO) partners about implementation of SO3362 Big Game Migration and Winter Habitat Initiative in WA as part of the annual Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) Media Summit held in Seattle this year. The summit is an annual event hosted by TRCP to provide an opportunity for outdoor media professionals from throughout the west to engage in discussions on a range of hunting access and conservation issues with the professionals who are doing the work. Thus far, the SO3362 Initiative has provided WDFW with \$300,000 in research funding to study movements and habitat use of mule deer beginning this winter, and provided WDFW and conservation partners including Pheasants Forever with \$350,000 for habitat conservation and restoration efforts on high priority winter range in eastern WA. The 30 or so journalists in attendance were excited to hear about the work being started this year to explore mule deer habitat use and increase habitat conservation efforts here in WA. It was a very animated discussion amongst the panel members and the audience seemed to appreciate both the information and the energy.

Elk Habitat Management: Elk Specialist Garrison spent a day working with WDFW wildlife area managers Mackey and Berry, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) volunteers pulling several miles of derelict barbed-wire fence from the Cowiche Unit of the Oak Creek Wildlife Area. Elk use the [Cowiche Unit](#) year-round, and WDFW is grateful for the tremendous effort of RMEF volunteers to improve this important elk habitat.

Treponeme-associated Hoof Disease (TAHD) and Elk Management: Deer and Elk Section Manager Hoenes and Elk Specialist Garrison represented WDFW at the RMEF Washington State Chapter rendezvous at White Pass. Garrison presented an update on TAHD, and both Garrison and Hoenes discussed TAHD and elk management in Washington throughout the morning.

Elk Specialist Garrison worked with WDFW Marketing Specialist Haywood to update TAHD outreach emails. WDFW Marketing sends these emails to both east and west side hunters before their selected season to share information about TAHD, changes to regulations, and to increase hunter reporting accuracy and subsequent disease prevalence estimates. For more information

about WDFW's efforts to understand TAHD and estimate the disease's prevalence, visit our [website](#), and archery hunters keep look for our email on September 4.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

HUNTER EDUCATION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Nothing for this reporting period.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Region 6 Coordinator Montgomery assisted Conflict Specialist Blankenship with fence repair from elk and hazing of the culprits.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Region 6 Coordinator Montgomery helped recruit 10 master hunters to help Scott Harris remove two illegal bridges built over streams on private timber lands open for recreation. The bridges were built for ATV crossings and were causing water flow and silt problems.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Region 1 Coordinator Whorton held two Pre-Service Training (PST) sessions for hunter education instructor applicants. One was in Stevens County that currently has very few active hunter education instructors, so we are hopeful to get a few more viable instructors certified. The other PST was held in Spokane with seven participants.

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey Attended and evaluated a hunter education class and assisted the chief instructor in handling a potential challenge. A parent had signed up their four-year-old child and when being reminded that this class did require live fire with a 20-gauge shotgun

became very upset that this would be a requirement. The instructor policy manual does allow instructors to require live fire as long as the student is notified in advance and directed to sign up for another class that does not require live fire. At four years of age, this is the youngest student that we are aware of having signed up for hunter education recently. Wow two four year olds in one week period. Coordinator Dazey offered assistance to the second instructor who had a four year old register for his class. Checked registration and this is another youth and not the same from the week prior. The parent again became verbally abusive to the instructor about the live fire requirement. Coordinator Dazey after checking on this situation discovered that the parents of the students had been signing their child up for ghost points and in one case a crab and salmon/steelhead card since they were one year old. We would love to have seen the one year old pulling their own pots.

Coordinator Elliott did a thorough clean out and restock of the Region 5 Hunter Education trailer. It was picked up by a local instructor who used it to hold six online field skills evaluations over three days. The team is very thankful for this resource, as they do not have a location to store the items to host a class. The team certified 45 new hunters.

Region 5 Coordinator Elliott visited and evaluated eight classes, from Morton to Goldendale. Three were online classes and the other five were traditional. In September, there are another three traditional and eleven online classes scheduled around the region as well. Currently there is only one class (online) scheduled beyond October 1, so Coordinator Elliott is reaching out to groups who still need to teach this year or those who regularly give online classes to get more scheduled. We know there will be demand as we continue through the fall hunting seasons.

Region 4 Coordinator Dazey received the new laser shot system from Washington Hunter Education Instructors' Association (WHEIA). This system is on loan to hunter education to be used at sportsman shows, community outreach events, National Hunting and Fishing Day, and other community events. The system was acquired through a grant from the Friends of NRA foundation and will be very useful in outreach. This system is very compact and uses a laser that can be utilized in bright light situations. WHEIA Representative Palmer brought two youth to test out the system and from the looks on their faces, we expect this to be a big hit at public events. The young woman below had the high score and outshot several Region 4 employees who also stepped up to challenge her. Once again, WHEIA has stepped up to assist WDFW and the Hunter Education Division and their support is greatly appreciated.

Region 3 Coordinator Garcia visited and evaluated a class in Wenatchee.

Region 3 Coordinator Garcia conducted two PSTs, one in Pasco and one in Okanogan. Four instructor applicants were trained. Two of them have completed all requirements and have been sent in for certification.

Region 3 Coordinator Garcia organized and sent information to be posted for two youth upland bird mentoring events, two all ages upland bird clinics and mentored hunts, and the fall turkey season mentoring. Mentors were contacted and plans developed for connecting new hunters to mentors for turkey, waterfowl, deer, and elk mentoring.





Region 6 Coordinator Montgomery visited two classes. Unfortunately, had to deal with a complaint of instructor misconduct, and suspension. The instructor said he would write an appeal and was told it was his privilege to do so.

Montgomery has been meeting with several staff members and NGOs to tighten loose ends for National Hunt and Fish Day (NHFD). Working with Tacoma Sportsmen's Club has been a dream. They have the attitude of "it's not what we can do for WDFW, but what can't we do." They have worked very hard with us on this event. Recently we received a donation of 1500 bottles of water through their connection with Mountain Mist.

It is already our largest group of partners yet. With the amount of advertising, this could rival or exceed the 2017 event in number of attendees.

Hunter Education Deferrals: In August, the hunter education administrative assistant processed 162 deferrals. A hunter education deferral is a once in a lifetime, one year deferral from the hunter education requirement, and allows a new hunter into the field as long as they are accompanied by a qualified, experienced hunter. The idea is that after a season hunting on a deferral (try it before you buy it) the new hunter will complete hunter education and join the hunting community.

LEO and Military Exemptions: The Hunter Education Administrative Assistant processed 89 military and 15 peace officer exemptions in August. This program allows qualifying active and retired peace officers and military personnel to obtain an exemption from the field skills portion of any hunter education course is completed online.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Regional Coordinators Dazey, Garcia and Montgomery attended the Master Hunter Advisory Group meeting.

7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

LANDS DIVISION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Nothing for this reporting period.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Nothing for this reporting period.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Teaway Community Forest Grazing Monitoring: Range Ecologist Burnham conducted the third in-season riparian and upland monitoring on the forest and analyzed data. Results and interpretations were sent to the grazing technical group.

2019 Fall Burn Unit Preparation: Prescribed burn crews are preparing for fall burn units establishing fire-lines on several wildlife areas including Oak Creek, Grouse Flats, Colockum, Sherman Creek and Rustlers Gulch. Weather will determine how much burning will be achieved.

Bumblebee Habitat Monitoring: Vegetation Ecologist Merg monitored forb plug survival on the Sinlahekin Wildlife Area Bumblebee Habitat Improvement Project planted last November. Approximately 75 percent of the forb plug in his subsample are still alive, which is a much higher survival than is typical for forbs that germinate from seed. While the expense of plugs greatly exceeds seed, the survival may very well justify the additional expense.

Vegetation Survey Methodology Design Work: Vegetation Ecologist Merg began to design a survey methodology for monitoring the integrity of plant communities on wildlife areas enrolled in Bonneville Power Administration's (BPA's) mitigation program. This week Merg sought to align his effort with previous ecological integrity monitoring conducted by Upland Bird Research Scientist Schroeder.

Willapa Bay *Spartina* Technical Advisory Group Meeting: Weed Crew Manager Holcomb attended the Willapa Bay *Spartina* Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting in South Bend to talk about current work in Willapa Bay. Cooperators treated 201 plants: Pacific County (113), USFW (19), WDFW (31), DNR (30), WSDA (5), and ShoalwaterTribe (3). It is interesting to note that in the *Spartina* treatment heyday, one square meter of *Spartina alterniflora* contained a little over 200 stems, and there were about 8,000 solid acres in the bay.

Satsop Knotweed Control: Weed Coordinator Heimer did a site visit of a WDFW restoration project at Satsop Ponds with Holcomb and Nunez to determine knotweed management needs. Michelle Cramer requested that the crew come up with a treatment approach so that the site does not revert to a knotweed monoculture when they connect back-channel habitat to the river.

Grays Harbor *Spartina* Eradication: The weed crew surveyed for *Spartina* from Pearshall Street to the airport (no plants found), at Bowerman Basin (no plants found) and at North Bay where two plants were found and treated. Washington Department of Agriculture (WSDA) was very surprised by the North Bay discovery.

Research Support: Weed Crew Supervisor Nunez used the airboat to assist Lauren Kuehne (UW) while conducting her research on parrotfeather control on the Chehalis River. Nunez also helped John Winkowski (WDFW) and Julian Olden (UW) collect eDNA samples for smallmouth bass as part of a research project. Holcomb worked with Brian MacDonald (WDFW Spill Team) to set up a tour of Grays Harbor for multiple agencies.

Simcoe Mountain Acquisition: On August 30, the agency acquired Phase 5 of the Simcoe Property in Klickitat County adding around 5,088 acres of habitat and recreation land to the Simcoe Unit of the Klickitat Wildlife Area. The seller is Western Pacific Timber LLC, and the Simcoe project supports critical habitat for western gray squirrel and winter range for both mule deer and black-tailed deer in the Klickitat County area. With the Phase 5 acquisition, we have now acquired 10,295 acres of the total 18,745-acre ownership or more than half!

The approach to managing this property is through a long-term partnership between WDFW and the Eastern and Central Klickitat Conservation Districts (EKCD) (CKCD). The groups are working to develop a management plan to ensure a working lands framework of compatible grazing and forestry.

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing for this reporting period.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Hiring of Rx Fire Team Positions: The prescribed (Rx) burn team has actively been interviewing to fill positions on both the north and south teams. Positions to fill include:

Position	Location	Status
1- NRS2, Nat Resources Spec 2	N Team / Okanogan	Full time, 12 mo.
2- NRS2, Nat Resources Spec 2, On Call RXB2	S Team , State	As Needed
1- Crew Sup 2	N Team / Okanogan	10 mo. career
5 NRT2, Nat Resources Tech 2	3 -N team, 2- S team	9 mo. career

Recruitment will continue until positions are filled.

Puget Sound Weed Control Crew: Daniel Zimmerman on-boarded Matthew Stevenson as a new member of the crew.

Fire Duty Compensations: Section Manager Dahmer worked with Human Resources and Payroll to develop Total Time guidelines for staff members eligible for fire duty pay per the new collective bargaining agreement. Payroll must still establish a Fire Duty Wage Class in Total Time.

[All employees, when engaged under incident command in fire suppression or prescribed burning, are eligible and will be paid at one and a half times the sum of their regular hourly rate (plus \$2.00 if applicable per the section below) for those hours worked over 40 hours in a work week. All employees, when engaged in fire suppression (not to include prescribed fire), will be paid \$2.00 per hour in addition to their regular hourly rate (including 1.5 times their regular rate over 40 hours in a work week) in lieu of any other forms of additional compensation including shift premium pay.]

New Real Estate Staff: Real Estate Services welcomed and are orienting new Grants Manager, Sasha Medlen, as of August 16.

Permit for Access that Facilitates Cell Tower in Ferry County: Real Estate Services received federal funder’s approval and issued a 10-year commercial permit to a cellular communications company in Ferry County for \$1,000 a year. The permit allows the company to cross the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area on an existing road to reach higher ground on private property where a new cell tower will be built to provide reliable broadband service to local businesses, schools, and public agencies.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.

SCIENCE DIVISION

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 1

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Bighorn Sheep: District Biologist Wik and Wildlife Area Biologist Dingman spent part of two days capturing and collaring bighorn sheep in the Tucannon herd. The captures are part of long-term monitoring that will allow staff members to locate sheep throughout the year and determine causes of mortality and habitat use.



Cougar Management: District Biologist Wik continued to work on options for future cougar hunting seasons as part of the Cougar Working Group. A number of potential management options have been submitted by a subgroup that are being reviewed at the statewide game management level.

Deer Composition Surveys: Biologists Wik and Vekasy completed 14 survey routes over the course of the last two weeks. Most routes have been used in the past, and deer numbers in general seem similar. However, now that most district biologists do not have accounts allowing ownership of the data in ArcGIS Online, we could not download the data to summarize numbers. IT is working on a solution to easily access data, which for now is only available upon request.



Not a mule deer

Monarch Butterfly Survey: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy completed the second of two surveys for monarch butterflies in local milkweed patches. The two sites were the most promising for butterfly use, as they are on public land away from heavy traffic and consist of relatively large numbers of milkweed plants scattered throughout the area with other floral resources. Unfortunately, no monarch butterfly activity was detected.



Couple thousand stem milkweed patch

Tiger Beetle Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy consulted with Diversity Biologist Sato on Columbia River tiger beetle surveys along the Snake River above Asotin and below Lower Granite Dam. Vekasy also downloaded survey photos from last year's preliminary survey work.



Very similar to C. columbica, but probably C. hirticollis

Bumblebee Monitoring: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy submitted a bumblebee nest location to the Pacific Northwest Bumblebee Atlas. The location was at the WDFW Walla Walla office in the back pasture. This appears to be a historically used site, as we have seen bee activity in past years.



Brown-belted bumblebee exiting ground nest

Deer Status and Trend Reports: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy began revising status and trend reports for Blue Mountains mule deer and white-tailed deer zones, and Palouse white-tailed deer zone. This required updating some data sets, and entering some white-tailed deer survey data that had been overlooked.

Waterfowl Mortality Monitoring: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy checked the Simplot Feedlot settling ponds for waterfowl mortalities. Ponds are being checked twice per week, once by a USFWS technician, and once by District 3 or District 4 biologists. Mortalities have been low this year, and there were no observed mortalities by either USFWS or WDFW this week.



Scummy brown pond at Simplot Feedlot

Habitat Development: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy provided recommendations to two different contractors working on cellular tower repairs that required disturbing songbird nest sites. Both nests were from western kingbirds, and both were also inactive, having already fledged young. Contractors were advised that they could remove the nests without any permits as the current work window is outside of the typical nesting season.

Highway 12 Realignment Mitigation: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy worked on contracting issues, amending the contract for ferruginous hawk nest platform installation to reflect increase in the number of platforms being installed and increase in monitoring for new nest poles through fiscal year 2022. Vekasy also commented on proposed changes to the planned new bridge over the Touchet River that will also serve as a wildlife underpass, particularly for mule deer. The changes are favorable for the potential future river movements and the adjacent floodway, and also are adequate for mule deer passage.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Hunting by Reservation: Private Lands Biologist Gaston and Natural Resource Worker Fish met with a landowner who owns 331 acres in northwest Whitman County. The landowners recently purchased new land along Rock Creek and wish to enter the Hunting by Reservation program. Natural Resource Worker Fish entered the new contract for the Hunt by Reservation program into NOVATUS. The contract was checked over by Private Lands Biologist Gaston to ensure all fields were entered. In addition, Private Lands Biologist Gaston began working with

Spokane County Parks, Recreation, and Golf to draft a contract for enrollment of over 1,800 acres of public land into the Hunting by Reservation program on Mica Peak. The property is maintained by the Spokane County Parks, Recreation, and Golf and normally would not allow hunting, but a proposal to the board of directors is being suggested to allow a managed hunting opportunity this year in cooperation with WDFW.

Contracts: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley entered and submitted a new Feel Free to Hunt contract into WDFW's NOVATUS contracting system and submitted a contract amendment to extend a Hunt with Written Permission contract end date for an additional five years.

Access Site Maintenance: As summer winds to a close, public use of access areas is lessening. With less time needed to clean up after people, Access Manager Daniel Dziekan has turned his focus to minor site improvements and repairs, including trimming shrubs and trees encroaching on the Reardan Audubon Wildlife Area's trail to the south wildlife viewing blind.



Hunter Contacts: Biologists responded to numerous hunter calls and emails related to permit hunt opportunities across District 3.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Producer Contacts (Livestock): Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade stayed in contact with multiple producers this week regarding grazing season and preventative measures. Wade spoke with one range rider who reported that a group of hunters had seen several wolves within 100 yards of group cows on a Forest Service grazing allotment. The producer rode the area and did not see any issues but reported that they were missing at least one cow in their herd count, as they moved cows according to the grazing rotation. Wade also worked with a producer to sort out issues with logging in to WDFW's data sharing web map.

A Different Type of Wildlife Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade received a picture of a different type of wildlife damage issue from a Peola producer this week. The producers harvest operation was brought to a grinding halt when they ran over a deer shed that punctured their tractor tire in two places. Luckily they were able to plug the holes instead of replacing the very expensive tire.



Deer antler puncturing the tire

Moose in the City: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman helped sedate and relocate a moose that was in a trailer park next to the interstate. The moose was in great shape, but had been in the area for several days and could not find its way back out.



Fish and Wildlife Officer Spurbeck holding up the moose's head while we get the trailer ready for transport

Elk Damage to Garbanzo Crops: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley spent two mornings at first light trying to haze deer and elk out of several garb fields south of Walla Walla. With the Oregon bow season opening a week earlier than ours the elk have moved back into WA.

Injured Owl: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade responded to a report of a great horned owl that had been hit by a car and then picked up by a concerned passerby. Wade transported the owl to Clarkston and transferred it to Biologist Wik who transported the owl to Washington State University Veterinary School to be evaluated and rehabilitated if possible.



Injured great horned owl

Range Rider Contacts: Wildlife Conflict Specialists Weatherman and Samsill are working side by side with WDFW contact range riders in the Stranger home territory monitoring cattle and wolf sign. Cattle have been moved away from concentrated wolf activity and driven closer to home. Weatherman and Samsill contacted the WDFW contract range rider within the Togo home range. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman made contact with the WDFW contract range rider in OPT and was given information on a foul odor along a main road with high cattle activity. A carcass was discovered by a NEWCC range rider that turned out to be from a bear.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Farm Bill: Biologist Baarstad met with a landowner interested in a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract re-enrollment on a portion of a perennial stream that runs through his farm near the Spokane-Lincoln county line. Baarstad will research available programs and provide the information to the landowner next week. Biologist Gaston is assisting and will be the project lead as the land is just over the line into Spokane County.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Hunter Education: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor McCanna set up two hunter education field skills examination courses in September hosted in St. John. The first will be the Saturday before the youth upland game bird opening weekend and the second will be an evening a week and a half later.

Waikiki Springs Field Trip: Access Manager Dziekan was contacted by Todd Dunfield with the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy, who asked permission to guide a short hike to the springs at Waikiki Springs Access Site. Dunfield had been in contact with Conor Giorgi, the anadromous fish program manager for the Spokane Tribes, and suggested Giorgi visit Waikiki Springs. As Giorgi was already planning a tour along the Little Spokane River, he added the stop to his tour. Giorgi has been researching habitat for salmonid reintroduction, specifically in the Little Spokane River. This field trip show cased some of his research. Thirty biologists attended, with various backgrounds. The group included employees of tribal, state and private organizations, independent biologists, and college professors. Giorgi thought it important to discuss the constant flow of cold, clean spring water into the Little Spokane River, and its importance for salmonid habitat. Dziekan's role at the Waikiki Springs stop was minor: he authorized access and provided a basic history of the property.



6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

New Employee Orientation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill received a work phone and computer and contacted the District 1 team and department staff via email and phone calls. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill continues to learn his new duty station make contact with local community members.

WDFW Internal Landowner Hunt Permit (LHP) program meeting: Private Lands Biologist Gaston and Thorne Hadley attended an internal WDFW meeting to discuss the LHP program. Staff members who work with all the various LHP's across the state discussed potential changes and recommendations for the program. WDFW Access Program Manager Strickland will compile the results of the discussion for staff members review before sending to the commission.

Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Office Planning: Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area staff members joined WDFW Facilities Manager Michele Brady, Region 1 IT Specialist Mike Justice, and two contractor representatives, on a tour of the current office and the recently vacated manager's residence at Swanson Lakes. Brady confirmed staff opinion that the existing office should be vacated and eventually removed, and the residence converted to the new office. Brady will start the contracting process for minor remodeling of the house, along with other required activities to move operations to the newer building.



Left to right: Swanson Lakes Assistant Manager Mike Finch, two Cochran contractors, and Region 1 IT Specialist Mike Justice, inspecting residence to become the new office

Staffing: Biologist Wik continued working on the recruitment for a bighorn sheep biologist over the past month. We were not successful in having the chosen candidates accepting the position. The position is now readvertised during the month of September. To fill the gap, District Biologist Wik is working on recruiting a Scientific Technician 2 for the fall to assist with the intensive capture season rapidly approaching.

Youth Pheasant Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley worked with Wildlife Program/Pheasant Release Coordinator White regarding a donation request of 50 pheasants by the Walla Walla Blue Mountain Pheasants Forever chapter for their youth hunt in September.

7) Other

Teamwork: Biologist Baarstad met with Supervisor Earl to tour some private lands habitat development projects in District 3, discuss future projects throughout the region and pick up some seed that Earl received as a donation from the University of Idaho. The seed will be used for habitat plots in Lincoln County and other areas around Region 1.

Turkey Trapping Discussion: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman along with Olympia staff members had a conference call about doing a pilot project to allow Wildlife Control Operators (WCOs) to trap and remove turkeys within the incorporated areas of Spokane County where hunting is not allowed. After a meeting with the Attorney General’s office, the plan will continue to move forward.

REGION 2

HERE’S WHAT WE’VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Northern Leopard Frogs: Biologists Grabowsky, Hallock, Dougherty, and Rowan spent many days searching for northern leopard frogs where the last-known population currently resides. An official tally has yet to be completed, but at least 600 young frogs were captured at approximately 125 ponds. Along with leopard frogs, several pacific tree frogs, tiger salamanders, western painted turtles, western terrestrial gartersnakes, and western yellow-bellied racers were also observed during these surveys. We thank the many partners and volunteers for their assistance with these labor-intensive surveys, including Oregon Zoo, Washington State University, University of Idaho, USFWS, and fellow WDFW staff members.



A northern leopard frog metamorph being processed during a survey - Photo by Emily Grabowsky

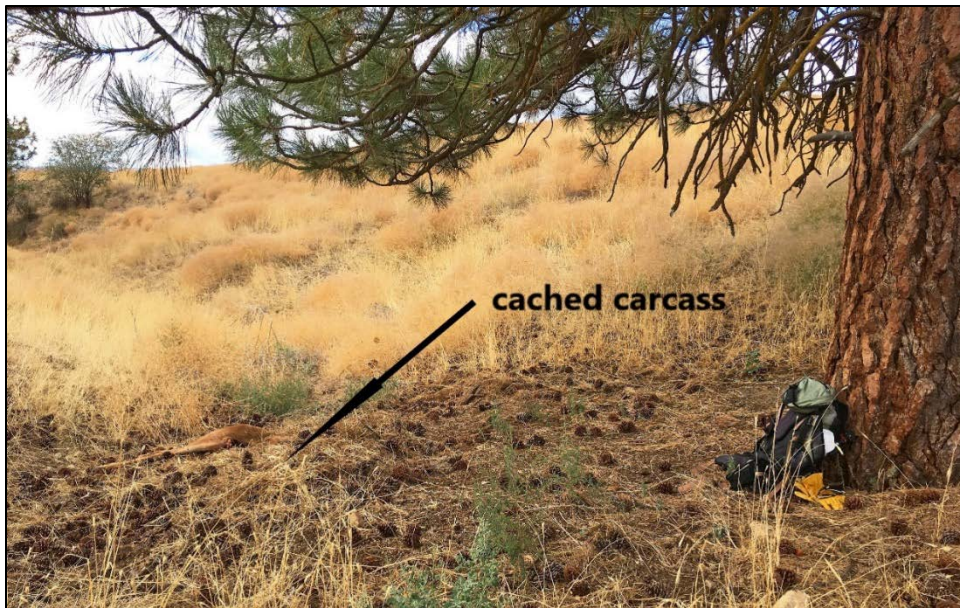
Biologist Walker assisted Biologist Grabowski with sampling northern leopard frog ponds in southern Grant County over the course of five hours, nearly 20 frogs were caught, measure, weighed, and had DNA samples collected from them. While private lands biologists’ primary focus is on habitat restoration and hunting access on private lands, they are often tasked with assisting district biologist and other specialty species biologists in population sampling and monitoring efforts as well as habitat construction and maintenance. Many state-endangered species conservation programs are tight on funding and afford an opportunity for various members of the WDFW team, including private lands, to lend assistance and learn about the natural history and management of species generally outside of their professional focus.

Wolf Monitoring: Early in the field season, the Loup Loup pack had two animals sporting satellite collars. Unfortunately, shortly after WDFW staff members collared the second animal, the younger of the two dispersed and the satellite function of the collar on the older resident animal failed, making it difficult to monitor the status of this pack. Fortunately, a local photographer captured a summer image of the resident animal on a remote camera, giving us a needed update on its status.



Collared adult wolf in the Loup Loup pack – Photo by David Moskowitz, remote camera

Washington Predator Prey Project: WDFW Biologist Fitkin followed up on two collared mule deer mortalities over the last month. The first turned out to be a roadkill, but the second was more interesting. A cougar managed to kill a deer in a small strip of scattered pine habitat embedded in a larger landscape of agriculture. The project is exploring multiple research topics including carnivore/ungulate interactions.



From top: Radio-marked mule deer mortality site and cached carcass – Photos by S. Fitkin

Western Gray Squirrel Survey: Biologists Fitkin and Heinlen have all but wrapped up western gray squirrel surveys for this season. One transect in the Upper Methow Valley yielded a positive western gray squirrel hit on all 12 survey tubes. Unfortunately, red squirrels and bears combined to render several transects inactive, requiring redeployment next year. Ideas are already being worked on how to deal with red squirrel visitation next season.



Positive western gray squirrel hit (I think this squirrel might now have a bald spot) – Photo by S. Fitkin

Lynx Surveys: Biologist Fitkin completed some mid-season checks of remote cameras deployed earlier in the season on the busier trails. Despite the heavy recreational traffic, the cameras have already produced a couple of lynx detections, as well as detections of several other species. This WSU-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.



Canada lynx – WSU/WDFW remote camera

Reptile Research/Management: Biologist Fitkin and USFS Biologists Rohrer assisted herpetologist Dr. Dan Beck from Central Washington University with the implantation of a radio-transmitter in a northern Pacific rattlesnake captured by Fitkin earlier in the season. The study animal will help us locate an undocumented rattlesnake hibernaculum on USFS land, furthering our understanding of northern Pacific rattlesnake distribution and hibernaculum characteristics.



Biologist Fitkin assisting Dr. Beck with radio-transmitter implant surgery – Photo by J. Rohrer

Monarch Butterfly Surveys: Biologist Rowan performed the second round of monarch butterfly surveys in three areas. Three large orange butterflies were seen flying at two sites (Lower Crab Creek and Martha Lake), but would not slow down or land for identification. Viceroy butterflies look nearly identical to monarchs from a distance, and it is unknown if these three butterflies were viceroys. No other life-stage of monarch butterfly was observed.



Searching for monarch eggs, pupae and larvae requires close-examination of leaves. An unidentified object was found, along with chewing suspicious of a larvae. Photos by Ella Rowan

Duck Trapping: Biologists Dougherty and Rowan continued baiting for ducks. Biologist Rowan built a trap at one prospective trapping location.



Duck trap nearly finished with construction - Photo by Ella Rowan

Duck Survey Methods: Biologist Rowan completed a proposal to assess the potential utility of unmanned aerial systems for surveying ducks in game reserves.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Corn Stubble Hunter Access Program: Biologist Walker spent several hours touring southern Grant County with Private Lands Access Program Manager Strickland while discussing both the importance and management requirements of the Columbia Basin Corn Stubble Hunting Program. The purpose of the Corn Stubble Hunting Program is to incentivize local corn producers to: 1) delay tillage of corn stubble fields generating an important overwintering food source for waterfowl in the area, and 2) provide free public hunting access for waterfowl in an area dominated by private hunt clubs and costly waterfowl guided hunting operations. Each year, the Corn Stubble Hunting Program provides anywhere from 400-2000 acres of untilled corn stubble habitat and hunting opportunities in Grant County alone. Traditionally, the program was funded through the Washington State Duck Stamp Fund and matching funds from other WDFW budget resources. However, this year, the program did not make the funding list and is on indefinite hold. Biologist Walker and Manager Strickland toured several corn stubble sites from previous years and discussed how sites are selected, ways to enhance the programs ability to provide overwintering habitat and forage for waterfowl, and possible funding solutions to revive the program.

The Columbia Basin Corn Stubble Hunting Program has existed, in some form, since 2003 in Region 2 and 2011 in Region 3. The program was standardized across both Regions in 2013 and has been well received by local landowners and waterfowl hunters ever since. Under the program, local corn producers are paid a one-time rate of \$15 per acre per year to delay grain corn stubble field tillage until after the waterfowl hunting season and to allow around eight hunters per day to hunt those fields for waterfowl and upland birds using the Hunt By Reservation and Register to Hunt hunter access programs. Since 2013, the program has enrolled 11,357 acres enabling 1,494 hunter groups to harvest approximately 2,200 birds across both

Regions 2 and 3. Many waterfowl hunters who utilize the Corn Stubble Hunting Program are both first time (including youth) users and return users indicating the importance of the program in recruitment, retention, and reactivation of hunters. Each hunter who purchases appropriate waterfowl licenses and stamps generates \$17 that goes directly toward Duck Stamp Program funding and another \$52.50 that goes to Pitman-Robertson and other federal funding sources used to conserve, restore, and acquire various wildlife habitats. In short, this program offers public waterfowl and upland bird hunting opportunities through habitat conservation in an area where such opportunities (on private lands) are limited while generating increased revenues for waterfowl funding sources – a true ‘win-win’ for hunters and conservationists.

Along with the public hunting opportunities afforded by this program, it provides critical, short-term habitat protection for waterfowl by offering an average of 10 grain corn kernels per square foot per field which translates to 4.2 million “duck use days” (number of mallard size waterfowl supported per day per acre by available forage) per season when 3,000 acres are enrolled. Field crops account for 75 percent and 90 percent of waterfowl diets during fall migration and overwinter, respectively (Grey et al., 2009). Further waterfowl species exhibit high levels of philopatry (i.e. habitual return to sites; Clausen et al., 2018) indicating the importance of securing foraging habitat on or near the same sites year after year during critical foraging periods like the migratory and overwintering seasons. One critical benefit of the Corn Stubble Hunting Program is that many of the same landowners and even the same fields are enrolled year after year in the program providing an opportunity for site-fidelitous waterfowl to find and take advantage of foraging resources.

One of the biggest problems related to placing this program on hold, aside from the loss of coveted hunting access, is the opportunity for WDFW to create and enhance relationships with local landowners who, without WDFW’s programs and financial support, may look to private hunt clubs and guiding services to generate waterfowl hunting revenue. While private hunt clubs and guiding services play a critical role hunting and conservation in the Columbia Basin, many hunters cannot afford the services offered by these industries and rely on public land and public hunting opportunities on private lands for waterfowl hunting opportunities. Once land has been leased by a hunt club or a guide, it cannot be enrolled in WDFW’s Hunter Access programs leading to fewer and fewer public waterfowl hunting opportunities on private lands over time. If you are a supporter of those program and would like to see it continue, please reach out to the Region 2 WDFW Headquarters (Bo Walker 509-754-4624 ext. 240) and let us know. This is your chance to voice your support for your public hunting programs!

Hunter Access Program: Biologist Hughes continued to contact landowners prior to the upcoming hunting season. Hughes met with several landowners to provide slips for their Hunting by Written Permission. Upcoming season dates were discussed and property boundaries continue to be posted by Hughes. Hughes met with a landowner to renew 805 acres enrolled in the Hunting by Written Permission program in northern Grant County. While meeting with another landowner in regards to hunter access Hughes took the opportunity to access old habitat plots on his ground. The landowner is continuing to control weeds and irrigate each plot. Hughes assessed each plot and went over different herbicide mixes for broadleaf control. All of the plots are doing great and are providing pockets of habitat primarily for upland birds.



Habitat plot within a Hunt by Written Permission site - Photo by Hughes

Hunter Access Program: Private Lands Biologist Braaten continues to repost signs and meet with cooperating landowners before upcoming hunting seasons. Annual sign maintenance and posting is a critical duty of the WDFW private lands biologists who post signs on thousands of private land acres in Washington every fall. Posting entire properties with legible signs for sportsman to get in touch with landowners to acquire permission is an important aspect of the private lands access program.



Pheasant Release: The Columbia Basin Chapter of Pheasants Forever approached WDFW about experimenting with a surragator for rearing pheasants, with the goal of attempting to initialize a breeding population of pheasants. The surragator was deployed in early July with 100, day-old chicks at a 1:1 ratio of hens to cocks at a site in Swakane Canyon. After five weeks the surviving 56 pheasants were banded and released in the Swakane Canyon Unit of the Chelan Butte Wildlife Area. Typically, post-release survival of pheasants reared in surrogators is expected to be low.



Pheasants awaiting release from a surragator

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Elk Issues: As the vegetation begins to dry out, elk are beginning to put pressure on agricultural fields in the Malaga Basin. Specialist Bridges has been responding to an increase in calls regarding elk damage to orchards. Bridges will be addressing those concerns, in part, by directing Malaga antlerless permit holders to willing agricultural landowners.

Elk Issues: Specialist Heilhecker met with an agricultural producer adjacent to the Chesaw Wildlife Area. Elk are generally on his property year round and up to 90 elk have used the property at any one time. The producer has been experiencing elk damage to crop fields, hay bales and fences for the last couple of years. Specialist Heilhecker issued landowner kill permits. It is likely he will be filing a crop damage claim next year.

Cougar Issues: Specialist Heilhecker and University of Washington graduate student Satterfield met with an organic dairy producer who has lost livestock to cougar depredations for several years. Graduate student Satterfield explained cougar behavior and the goals of her study. Their conversation transition to the wolf collar data-sharing program. Specialist Heilhecker explained collar locations are not in real-time; do not tell us where an animal will go or where all individuals are located. The producer utilizes only his private property; his best proactive, nonlethal deterrence measure would be to predator proof his pasture fences and holding pens. Since the property falls within an active, wolf territory, Specialist Heilhecker wrote a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement (DPCA) to cost-share 50 percent of the fencing materials, up to \$5,000, for the producer to upgrade and reinforce his property.

Deer Damage to Commercial Garden: Specialist Heilhecker met with a landowner experiencing deer damage in their commercial vegetable gardens and worked towards signing a DPCA. Specialist Heilhecker issued a landowner kill permit valid until the start of an antlerless archery season.

Releasing Elk Stuck in a Fencing: Specialist Bridges, along with Sergeant Klump responded to a report from an orchardist, regarding a bull elk's antlers that had become entangled in fencing.



Mature bull elk hopelessly entangled in wire fence



Tranquilized mature bull elk down while Sergeant Klump using bolt cutters to free the fence it found itself entangled with



Bull elk free from the fencing and just waking up from tranquilization drugs

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Swanson Mill Fire: Manger Wehmeyer was rolling up old fence that was destroyed by the fire. He thought this was a good time to get it cleaned up before any major regrowth happened and made the task difficult to complete. While rolling up the fence he noticed some regrowth of bunch grasses and Lupine after the fire. This regrowth was helped by some summer rains that took place not long after the fire. He will continue to monitor the area to see how it reestablishes. He also inventoried the area for noxious weeds to see what areas will need to be treated in the future on the site.



Bunchgrass and lupine regrowth with Swanson Mill fire – Photos by Wehmeyer

Methow Forest Health Tour with DNR and Conservation District: Lands Operations Manager Haug and Methow Wildlife Area Manager Troyer met with representatives with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Okanogan Conservation District to discuss the past, current, and future forest health work as part of the multi-phased Methow Forest Restoration Project. This project is funded by Recreation and Conservation Office under the State Lands Restoration category. The group discussed the goals of the project, difficulties in

removing fuels in the area and how the two agencies can work together to achieve shared objectives. Haug and Troyer will work with local WDFW staff members as well as DNR Forest Health personnel to develop steps forward to treat additional forest acreage within the Methow River watershed.



WDFW, DNR, and Conservation District staff members on the Methow Forest Health Tour -
Photo courtesy of Jennifer Watkins, DNR

Scotch Creek Weed Control: After 11 weeks and countless hours of musk thistle control on the Chesaw Unit, the crew at Scotch Creek is winding down the effort this week. This will be the final week for the season. Assistant Manager Dupont, and technicians Sklaney and Medina have done an excellent job with this difficult task. Completing this season will mean a combination of chemical control on rosettes and picking flower heads, which contain viable seeds. The crew made a lot of progress this year with reducing the numbers on the wildlife area.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Environmental Education: Biologist Fitkin conducted a field seminar for a Washington biomes course led by a faculty team from Central Washington University (CWU). Participants learned about wildlife-biome relationships, adaptations, and capture/survey techniques. Students also learned about the effectiveness and use of bear spray and got practice using spray with demo cans with inert ingredients.



Biologist Fitkin sharing wolverine-trapping stories with CWU class – Photo by Dr. Dan Beck

Working for Wildlife Initiative – National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Meeting:

Okanogan Lands Operations Manager Haug participated in a working group hosted by the Okanogan Land Trust where various projects intended to improve wildlife connectivity and migration were advocated for as part of a multi-year project. Groups consisted of WDFW, DNR, Okanogan Conservation District, WSDOT, Conservation Northwest and the Colville Confederated Tribe. WDFW projects focused on shrub-steppe and riparian restoration projects on the Carter Mountain and Tunk Valley units. Project ideas are compiled along with a cost estimate and presented to NFWF for funding. A decision will be made later this year regarding whether or not these projects are fully or partially funded; then made available later next year.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) Other

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 3

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Bernatowicz ran waterfowl traps as part of the annual effort to band at least 750 mallards statewide. Banding got off to a slow start as an otter with a taste for duck got into a trap and killed/injured over 12 birds the first night. To avoid a similar event, traps were run morning and evening. The otter was seen on a few evenings around the traps, but no issues occurred after the first night.

To date 279 mallards and 15 pintail have been banded. Eleven mallards have been caught that were banded in previous year(s).



Trapped mallards

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Bernatowicz surveyed for monarch butterflies along I-82 where larvae were documented in 2016. No larvae or adults were found this year. On this last survey, most of the milkweeds was dead, dry and/or seeded out. Few nectar sources were found in the vicinity.



Monarch survey area along I-82

District 8 wildlife biologists re-installed grouse wing barrels at four locations. Two locations were discontinued for this year, due to lack of wings over the last three years. It is unknown how the data will be used. At the county and district level within the region, sample sizes are too small to provide meaningful data.



Standard wing barrel set up in District 8

Waterfowl Trapping and Banding Contributes to Nation-wide Monitoring and Research: District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra with help from district staff members and volunteers worked duck traps this month and started banding waterfowl to contribute to state and national research projects. The banded birds will be returned by hunters or future trap efforts to assess harvest, migration, survival and other population questions. Age and sex are collected on each bird and released with a USFWS leg band. The public can report found or harvested bands online at www.reportband.gov. Trap success was slow but has been building. Trapping will continue into mid-September. A blue-winged teal was captured and released with a satellite tracking device as part of a partner's project on waterfowl movements.



Wing and backpack transmitter on blue-winged teal – Photo by volunteer Bill LaFramboise

WDFW Participates with Western States in Pheasant Survey and Research: Pheasant brood surveys are being conducting in three districts this year as a part of a study on detection related to dew and weather conditions. Thirteen western and central states are participating. District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra conducted surveys in Franklin County. Vegetation made detection difficult, and no historic route data is available to compare findings.

Western Monarch Population Crash Evident in WA Surveys: With the reported crash of the winter populations of monarch butterflies in California the past two years, WDFW initiated a survey to monitor sites where monarch breeding was confirmed in 2016 and 2017. District 4 Wildlife Biologist Fidorra monitored sites in Franklin County but no monarchs were confirmed during the 2019 season. Several hopeful sightings of orange butterflies all turned out to be viceroy butterflies, a monarch mimic. To personally witness such a notable loss of a breeding species over such short time is disheartening to say the least.



The viceroy butterfly is a monarch mimic detected on surveys (note black band across center of hind wing absent in monarch)

Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin completed trapping and banding mourning doves to track reproductive success, age class, and site fidelity. A total of 47 doves were banded, contributing to the overall goal of 200 banded doves for the region.



Assistant Manager Ferguson with mourning dove

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

District 8 Wildlife Biologist Bernatowicz checked the Cottonwoods Pheasant Release Site post fire to determine if the area would be useable for the 2019 season. The east portion of the site burned extensively, but the fire didn't impact the west or far north portion of the site. The decision was made to use Cottonwoods in 2019 and note birds would be released west of the Durr Road.



Cottonwoods Pheasant Release Site at the popular “Yellow Gate” parking

Countdown to Hunting Seasons: Private Lands Biologist Hulett continued to prepare for the upcoming hunting seasons. One contract was requested for an expired hunting access contract. This contract was signed by the landowner and sent back to Olympia for the final signature. Two other landowners were contacted about their contracts that still needed to be signed. Landowners in the Hunt by Written Permission program were contacted to see if any slips were required for the upcoming hunting seasons.



Protecting a historic homestead on a Feel Free to Hunt site

Private Lands Tour: Private Lands Biologist Hulett took Private Lands Access Program Manager Strickland around various hunting access sites in Benton, Franklin and Yakima counties. Crop fields previously in the Corn Stubble Hunting Program were one of the larger points of interests during the tour, as well as one Feel Free to Hunt site that has become a problem site for dumping. Strickland would like to use some ecology funding to clean up the Feel Free to Hunt site, add structures like concrete blocks to limit access and possibly move the site into a different hunting access program like Register to Hunt.

Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin have been renovating the Rice Paddies wetland cells for the upcoming duck hunting season. Wascisin has been focusing on mowing noxious weeds and cattails out of the cells, while leaving edge and island cover for ducks. Assistant Manager Ferguson has been using the recently purchased levee plow implement to re-establish levees between the cells to manage water depth.



Rice Paddies wetlands at dawn

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

District 8 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wetzel was contacted by eight crop producers regarding potential elk damage in crop areas. The master hunter general season and landowner permits are active but few elk have been harvested and no areas have reported significant damage to crops.

Elk Damage Assessments: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand continued to spend considerable time assisting the assigned crop adjuster with documenting elk damage in several wheat fields on Rattlesnake Mountain. Most of the damage was due to trailing, bedding and consumption of the wheat crop. August 26 was the last day of wheat harvest on Rattlesnake Mountain and preliminary estimates of elk damage appear about normal or a little below which is good news considering a growing elk population and a large wildfire that burned significant acreage on Hanford a month prior to wheat harvest.



Elk beds in wheat



Areas of heavy foraging by elk

Vineyard Deer Damage: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted three large wine grape operations in Benton County to address deer damage occurring several blocks of wine grapes. Most damage is browsing and consumption of grape clusters as the sugar content of the grapes increases. Both non-lethal hazing strategies and harvesting problem animals through damage permit and general season hunters are being implemented to reduce the damage impacts.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Landowners Wanting to Protect Their Critical Habitat: Private Lands Biologist Hulett conducted a site visit with Fish and Wildlife Biologist Nelson and two private landowners. These landowners own multiple properties up Naneum Creek and would like to protect and restore their lands. Biologist Nelson plans to help the landowners put their land into a conservation easement to prevent the land from becoming developed in the future. Private Lands Biologist Hulett plans to search for funding sources to restore some of the habitat that burned a few years ago.

Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin have spent two days assisting Manager Kaelber with the preparation and installation of two new water control structures at the outflow of Windmill Lake. The new structures are now in place and in the final phase of installing outlet pipes and backfilling material behind the structures. The new structures will enable staff to manipulate water levels to control unwanted vegetation and help grow desired plants for waterfowl forage.



New water control structure being lowered into place at Windmill Lake



Natural Resource Technician Wascisin admiring the new outflow structure



Water control structure almost in place

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart and Natural Resource Technician Daling coordinated with the Kittitas County Weed Board to chemically treat purple loosestrife at Quilomene and Whiskey Dick bays. The weed board treated the shoreline while Daling treated Brushy, Quilomene, and Whiskey Dick creek banks.



Purple loosestrife and wildlife at Quilomene Bay

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart worked with Ruffed Grouse Society volunteers to remove old barbed wire from Ainsley Canyon on the L.T. Murray Wildlife Area. The group completely removed .35 miles of fence and recorded another .5 miles in need of removal. Wood post void of nails and wire were left on the ground and all wire and t-posts were recycled.



Ruffed Grouse Society volunteers enjoying a late lunch after rolling up a trailer load of old barbed wire



Ruffed Grouse Society volunteers removing old barbed wire on the L.T. Murray



All fence material removed from wildlife area was recycled

Operations on the 300 acre Stemilt Forest Health Project on the Colockum Wildlife Area continue. Years of planning and prep work have culminated in the commencement of ground-based, thinning operations. The treatment is being carried out on WDFW and Chelan County lands. Following a “leave tree prescription,” the harvesting contractor is not cutting trees marked in orange. The anticipated end-result of this treatment will be a more open forest condition less likely to carry the spread of crown fire. These conditions also promote greater vigor and thus resiliency in residual trees to drought, insect and pathogen-related stresses and open up the forest floor for substantial regeneration of understory vegetation for browsing ungulates.

The logging crew has completed work on one of the two WDFW sections in the treatment area and has moved onto a small section of adjacent Chelan County property. About 100 acres of work is left to be done on WDFW property and should be completed by the end of October. Forester Ruggirello continues conducting compliance visits on the project, ensuring that work continues smoothly and meets WDFW standards. Colockum Wildlife Area Manager Lopushinsky, Assistant Manager Hagan, Forester Ruggirello, and prescribed burn team members Eberlein and Delozier met and discussed the possibility of conducting a prescribed fire after the logging project is finished. The prescribed fire team feels the project area could be burned either in the spring or fall of 2020.



Monitoring photo showing forest condition before Stemilt thinning operations



Monitoring photo showing forest conditions after Stemilt thinning operations

5) Providing Education and Outreach

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart worked in cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation to create a “Welcome to Taneum Canyon” banner. Winegeart used the L.T. Murray’s router, some white paint, and varnish to spruce up the Eagle Scout kiosk located at the mouth of the canyon.



New welcome banner in Taneum Canyon

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Landowner Hunting Permit (LHP) Program: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand participated in the internal LHP committee involved with review/revamp of the current LHP Program. The group recommended guideline improvements to strengthen the access program. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand provided a tour of Black Rock and Silver Dollar LHPs to Private Lands Access Program Manager Stickland. The visit provided an opportunity to get a better understanding of the types of high value agricultural crops grown in the area, the challenge of hunting next to a large refuge (Hanford) and the potential for exorbitant damage claims.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Manager Babik led a weed and fence coordination meeting for Region 3 wildlife area employees. Lands Operations Manager Huffman attended and led a discussion on using available capitol funds for replacing elk fence. It was agreed that problem areas, and areas that require the greatest effort to maintain due to location, would receive priority.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 4

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Bighorn Sheep: District Biologist Wik and Biologist Dingman spent part of two days capturing and collaring bighorn sheep in the Tucannon herd. The captures are part of long-term monitoring that will allow personnel to locate sheep throughout the year and determine causes of mortality and habitat use.



Cougar Management: District Biologist Wik continued to work on options for future cougar hunting seasons as part of the Cougar Working Group. A number of potential management options have been submitted by a subgroup that are being reviewed at the statewide game manager level.

Deer Composition Surveys: Biologists Wik and Vekasy completed 14 survey routes over the course of the last two weeks. Most routes have been used in the past, and deer numbers in general seem similar. However, now that most district biologists do not have accounts allowing ownership of the data in ArcGIS Online, we could not download the data to summarize numbers. IT is working on a solution to easily access data, which for now is only available upon request.



Not a mule deer

Monarch Butterfly Survey: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy completed the second of two surveys for monarch butterflies in local milkweed patches. The two sites were the most promising for butterfly use, as they are on public land away from heavy traffic and consist of relatively large numbers of milkweed plants scattered throughout the area with other floral resources. Unfortunately, no monarch butterfly activity was detected.



Couple thousand stem milkweed patch

Tiger Beetle Surveys: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy consulted with Diversity Biologist Sato on Columbia River tiger beetle surveys along the Snake River above Asotin and below Lower Granite Dam. Vekasy also downloaded survey photos from last year's preliminary survey work.



Very similar to C. columbica, but probably C. hirticollis

Bumblebee Monitoring: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy submitted a bumblebee nest location to the Pacific Northwest Bumblebee Atlas. The location was at the WDFW Walla Walla office in the back pasture. This appears to be a historically used site, as we have seen bee activity in past years.



Brown-belted bumblebee exiting ground nest

Deer Status and Trend Reports: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy began revising status and trend reports for Blue Mountains mule deer and white-tailed deer zones, and Palouse white-tailed deer zone. This required updating some data sets, and entering some white-tailed deer survey data that had been overlooked.

Waterfowl Mortality Monitoring: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy checked the Simplot Feedlot settling ponds for waterfowl mortalities. Ponds are being checked twice per week, once by a USFWS technician, and once by District 3 or District 4 biologists. Mortalities have been low this year, and there were no observed mortalities by either USFWS or WDFW this week.



Scummy brown pond at Simplot Feedlot

Habitat Development: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy provided recommendations to two different contractors working on cellular tower repairs that required disturbing songbird nest sites. Both nests were from western kingbirds, and both were inactive, having already fledged young. Contractors were advised that they could remove the nests without any permits as the current work window is outside of the typical nesting season.

Highway 12 Realignment Mitigation: Assistant District Biologist Vekasy worked on contracting issues, amending the contract for ferruginous hawk nest platform installation to reflect increase in the number of platforms being installed and increase in monitoring for new nest poles through fiscal year 2022. Vekasy also commented on proposed changes to the planned new bridge over the Touchet River that will also serve as a wildlife underpass, particularly for mule deer. The changes are favorable for the potential future river movements and the adjacent floodway, and also are adequate for mule deer passage.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Hunting by Reservation: Private Lands Biologist Gaston and Natural Resource Worker Fish met with a landowner who owns 331 acres in Whitman County. The landowners recently purchased new land along Rock Creek and wished to enter the Hunting by Reservation Program. Natural Resource Worker Fish entered the new contract for the Hunt by Reservation Program into NOVATUS. The contract was checked over by Private Lands Biologist Gaston to ensure all fields were entered. In addition, Private Lands Biologist Gaston began working with Spokane County Parks, Recreation, and Golf to draft a contract for enrollment of over 1,800 acres of public land into the Hunting by Reservation Program on Mica Peak. The property is maintained by the Spokane County Parks, Recreation, and Golf and normally would not allow hunting, but a proposal to the board of directors is being suggested to allow a managed hunting opportunity this year in cooperation with WDFW.

Contracts: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley entered and submitted a new Feel Free to Hunt contract into WDFW's NOVATUS contracting system and submitted a contract amendment to extend a Hunt with Written Permission contract end date for an additional five years.

Access Site Maintenance: As summer winds to a close, public use of access areas is lessening. With less time needed to clean up after people, Access Manager Daniel Dziekan has turned his focus to minor site improvements and repairs, including trimming shrubs and trees encroaching on the Reardan Audubon Wildlife Area's trail to the south wildlife viewing blind.



Hunter Contacts: Biologists responded to numerous hunter calls and emails related to permit hunt opportunities across District 3.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Producer Contacts (Livestock): Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade stayed in contact with multiple producers this week regarding grazing season and preventative measures. Wade spoke with one range rider who reported that a group of hunters had seen several wolves within 100 yards of group cows on a Forest Service grazing allotment. The producer rode the area and did not see any issues but reported that they were missing at least one cow in their herd count, as they moved cows according to the grazing rotation. Wade also worked with a producer to sort out issues with logging in to WDFW's data sharing web map.

A Different Type of Wildlife Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade received a picture of a different type of wildlife damage issue from a Peola producer this week. The producers harvest operation was brought to a grinding halt when they ran over a deer shed that punctured their tractor tire in two places. Luckily they were able to plug the holes instead of replacing the very expensive tire.



Deer antler puncturing the tire

Moose in the City: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman helped sedate and relocate a moose that was in a trailer park next to the interstate. The moose was in great shape, but had been in the area for several days and could not find its way back out.



Fish and Wildlife Officer Spurbeck holding up the moose's head while we get the trailer ready for transport

Elk Damage to Garbanzo Crops: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Rasley spent two mornings at first light trying to haze deer and elk out of several garb fields south of Walla Walla. With the Oregon bow season opening a week earlier than ours the elk have moved back into WA.

Injured Owl: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade responded to a report of a great horned owl that had been hit by a car and then picked up by a concerned passerby. Wade transported the owl to Clarkston and transferred it to Biologist Wik who transported the owl to Washington State University Veterinary School to be evaluated and rehabilitated if possible.



Injured great horned owl

Range Rider Contacts: Wildlife Conflict Specialists Weatherman and Samsill are working side by side with WDFW contact range riders in the Stranger home territory. Monitoring cattle and wolf sign. Cattle have been moved away from concentrated wolf activity and driven closer to home. Wildlife Specialist Weatherman and Samsill contacted the WDFW contract range rider within the Togo home range. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Weatherman made contact with the WDFW contract range rider in Old Profanity Territory (OPT) and was given information on a foul odor along a main road with high cattle activity. A carcass was discovered by a NEWCC range rider that turned out to be from a bear.

4) Conserving Natural Areas

Farm Bill: Biologist Baarstad met with a landowner interested in a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract re-enrollment on a portion of a perennial stream that runs through his farm near the Spokane-Lincoln county line. Baarstad will research available programs and provide the information to the landowner next week. Biologist Gaston is assisting and will be the project lead as the land is just over the line into Spokane County.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Hunter Education: Wildlife Conflict Supervisor McCanna set up two hunter education field course examination courses in September hosted in St. John. The first will be the Saturday before the youth upland game bird opening weekend and the second will be an evening a week and a half later.

Waikiki Springs Field Trip: Access Manager Dziekan was contacted by Todd Dunfield with the Inland Northwest Land Conservancy, who asked permission to guide a short hike to the springs at Waikiki Springs Access Site. Dunfield had been in contact with Conor Giorgi, the anadromous fish program manager for the Spokane Tribes, and suggested Giorgi visit Waikiki Springs. As Giorgi was already planning a tour along the Little Spokane River, he added the stop to his tour. Giorgi has been researching habitat for salmonid reintroduction, specifically in the Little Spokane River. This field trip show cased some of his research. Thirty biologists attended, with various backgrounds. The group included employees of tribal, state and private organizations, independent biologists, and college professors. Giorgi thought it important to discuss the constant flow of cold, clean spring water into the Little Spokane River, and its importance for salmonid habitat. Dziekan's role at the Waikiki Springs stop was minor: he authorized access and provided a basic history of the property.



6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

New Employee Orientation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill received a work phone and computer and contacted the District 1 team and department staff members via email and phone calls. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Samsill continues to learn his new duty station make contact with local community members.

WDFW Internal Landowner Hunt Permit (LHP) program meeting: Private Lands Biologist Gaston and Thorne Hadley attended an internal WDFW meeting to discuss the LHP Program. Staff members who work with all the various LHPs across the state discussed potential changes and recommendations for the program. WDFW Access Program Manager Strickland will compile the results of the discussion for review before sending to the commission.

Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area Office Planning: Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area staff members joined WDFW Facilities Manager Michele Brady, Region 1 IT Specialist Mike Justice, and two contractor representatives, on a tour of the current office and the recently vacated manager's residence at Swanson Lakes. Brady confirmed staff opinion that the existing office should be vacated and eventually removed, and the residence converted to the new office. Brady will start the contracting process for minor remodeling of the house, along with other required activities to move operations to the newer building.



Left to right: Swanson Lakes Assistant Manager Mike Finch, two Cochran contractors, and Region 1 IT Specialist Mike Justice, inspecting residence to become the new office

Staffing: Biologist Wik continued working on the recruitment for a bighorn sheep biologist over the past month. We were not successful in having the chosen candidates accepting the position. The position will now be advertised again during the month of September. To fill the gap, District Biologist Wik is working on recruiting a Scientific Technician 2 for the fall to assist with the intensive capture season rapidly approaching.

Youth Pheasant Hunt: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley worked with Wildlife Program/Pheasant Release Coordinator White regarding a donation request of 50 pheasants by the Walla Walla Blue Mountain Pheasants Forever Chapter for their youth hunt in September.

7) Other

Teamwork: Biologist Baarstad met with Supervisor Earl to tour some private lands habitat development projects in District 3, discuss future projects throughout the region and pick up some seed that Earl received as a donation from the University of Idaho. The seed will be used for habitat plots in Lincoln County and other areas around Region 1.

Turkey Trapping Discussion: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman along with Olympia staff members had a conference call about doing a pilot project to allow Wildlife Control Operators to trap and remove turkeys within the incorporated areas of Spokane County where hunting is not allowed. After a meeting with the Attorney General's office, the plan will continue to move forward.

REGION 5

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Bat and WNS Research: Biologists Bergh and Volunteer Hadley joined Biologist Tobin to help Researcher Weller of the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station with his study on little brown bats. The study helps to understand regional patterns of vulnerability to white-nose syndrome (WNS) using bats to sample environmental conditions of hibernacula. For the study, tiny data loggers that record temperature and humidity are attached to the back of bats in the fall and then the bats are recaptured in the spring to remove data loggers and download the data. The data loggers will record the climatic conditions of the roosts bats select in the winter, which then will allow us to understand the vulnerability of bats in Washington to WNS. A bat-enthusiast landowner in Clark County with a known little brown bat maternity roost in his bat houses invited the group to catch bats on his property. Unfortunately, the maternity colony had already started to disperse and only nine bats were caught, none of which were large enough for data loggers. The research team will continue their travels across the west and Midwest and hopefully have more luck catching bats for the study.



Holding the H net against the bat houses waiting for the bats to emerge



Taking morphological measurements and assessing the bat's age and sex

Monarch Surveys: Biologists Bergh and Wickhem, along with volunteers Flick and Fletcher, surveyed six milkweed sites in Klickitat County including the two sites where breeding was observed during 2016-17 surveys. The western population of monarch butterflies has declined over 99 percent since the 1980s and this past year's overwintering count indicated a sharp

decline from the previous year. The purpose of the 2019-20 surveys are to determine presence of monarchs at sites where breeding was documented in 2016-17 as well as to determine if breeding is again occurring at those sites. For more information on western monarchs please see the Xerces Society website: <https://xerces.org/save-western-monarchs/>.

Olympic National Park Goat Relocation: Biologist Stephens assisted with the effort to translocate mountain goats from the Olympic National Park (ONP) to the North Cascades. Goats are being darted or net-gunned in the park, fitted with radio collars, and then transported in crates via refrigerated trucks to the north cascades. The mountain goats are not native to the Olympic Peninsula and prior to the translocation effort that started in 2018; the mountain goat population was estimated to be around 750 animals in the ONP. The goats are causing excessive damage to the alpine vegetation and many goats have become habituated to humans.



Mountain goats being transported to staging area via helicopter



A recently captured and collared mountain goat getting blood drawn

Grouse Wing Collection Barrels: Biologist Stephens and Cowlitz Wildlife Area Manager Vanderlip put out barrels for hunters to deposit wings and tails of grouse they have harvested. The wings and tails will allow managers to understand the age, sex, and species composition of the harvest. The grouse barrel locations in Region 5 are on Peterman Hill Road on the Cowlitz Wildlife Area in Lewis County and at the junction of the 1900/1901 road in Winston GMU.

Wolf Observation Report: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received a public observation report of an adult wolf with a pup in Clark County. Based on the description and location, the sighting was most likely a coyote. Members of the public are encouraged to submit any potential wolf observation to WDFW here: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/species-habitats/at-risk/species-recovery/gray-wolf/observations>

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Mineral Lake Access: Access staff members Rhodes and Mckinlay continued with paint striping this week at Mineral Lake Access.



Paint striping at Mineral Lake access site

Beginners Hole Access: Construction was completed at Beginners Hole on the Kalama River to stabilize the bank from more erosion and to make it safer for the many users of this site



Bank stabilization at Beginners Hole Access

Weyerhaeuser Cathlamet Feel Free To Hunt: Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Private Lands Biologist Jacobsen posted Feel Free to Hunt signs on 6,600 acres of newly enrolled Weyerhaeuser land in Wahkiakum County.



Feel Free to Hunt sign on newly-enrolled Weyerhaeuser property in Wahkiakum County

Wahkiakum County Hunt By Registration Sites: Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Private Lands Biologist Jacobsen and Biologist Sundstrom met with Natural Area Manager Malone from Columbia Land Trust at two Hunt By Registration sites in Wahkiakum County. Both sites are waterfowl hunting sites owned by Columbia Land Trust along the Grays River. Registration kiosks, hunter activity and hunter issues, wildlife use of the sites, and habitat improvements were all discussed during the meeting. Information regarding these hunting access sites can be found on WDFW's Private Lands Hunting Access site here: https://privatelands.wdfw.wa.gov/private_land/search.php



Devil's Elbow Hunt by Registration waterfowl hunting site in Wahkiakum County. The purple loosestrife throughout the picture is a prime candidate for a WDFW volunteer habitat enhancement project!



Kandoll Farm Hunt by Registration waterfowl hunting site in Wahkiakum County. Nearly a dozen wood ducks were observed using the property during the site visit.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Elk Damage to Hay: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen discussed elk damage to hay fields with a landowner in Amboy. Jacobsen will continue to work with the landowner to deter the consumption and trampling damage to the field by elk.

Elk Damage to Corn: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with a landowner near Salkum to discuss elk damage to silage corn. A master hunter had been deployed earlier in the week to try to harvest an elk causing damage, but the elk shifted their patterns and began coming into the corn after dark. Jacobsen deployed a portable wildlife hazing device to attempt to haze the elk from the corn and to at least disrupt their nighttime corn feeding pattern.



A portable wildlife hazing device (in its non-inflated state) along the edge of a cornfield where elk damage is occurring

Cougar Camera Checks: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen had placed several trail cameras on properties in Camas and Washougal, during the previous week to monitor for cougar activity around livestock. Jacobsen checked the cameras this week, but no cougars were caught on camera. Coyotes, deer, domestic dogs, and turkey vultures all made appearances on the cameras.



A pair of coyotes on a trail camera. The camera was placed in a horse pasture where a cougar had been observed numerous times.

Cougar Sightings: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen fielded a handful of cougar sighting reports across Klickitat County this week. In one instance, a landowner reported seeing a cougar kill a deer on his property. Advice was given regarding living in cougar country and protecting livestock. Jacobsen offered to come out to one nearby farm to review ideas on how to better protect livestock from cougars and other predators, but the landowner refused the offer.

Clark County Coyotes: A concerned landowner contacted a Washington State Representative regarding coyotes and legal means of protecting himself and his livestock in suburban Clark County from the coyotes, after the landowner lost a chicken to a pair of coyotes. Due to county ordinances prohibiting firearm use in parts of the county, the landowner felt that his rights to protect his livestock were being restricted. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen contacted the landowner to discuss options for non-lethal conflict prevention and to also discuss the various laws and challenges pertaining to lethal control of coyotes in urban areas.

Deer With Fencing Around Neck: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner regarding a deer fawn with plastic construction fencing around its neck. Jacobsen attempted to locate and immobilize the deer, but the deer did not show up to the residence when Jacobsen was around. Staff members will continue to monitor reports of this deer and attempt to immobilize and free it if it shows up again.



Deer with construction fencing around its neck - Photo by the reporting party

Bear Depredation On Pigs: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner who lost a pig to a bear approximately one week prior. The landowner had trail camera footage of the bear consuming the 150-pound pig, which it dragged over a four-foot fence and into the woods across the driveway. This is the fifth residence in the area that has lost pigs to a bear – likely the same bear in each case. Attempts were made at a different residence to trap the bear earlier this summer, but the effort was unsuccessful. Advice was given on husbandry practices that could be implemented to help protect livestock from attacks by black bears.

Bobcat Depredation Removal: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen coordinated with Officer Hughes and Officer Whipple to respond to a report of a bobcat being shot by the landowner at a goat farm. Jacobsen had investigated three dead goats at the farm a few months prior and was able to determine that the young goats were killed by a bobcat. The landowner found the bobcat in the pasture approaching his goats again and shot it. Officers retrieved the bobcat and disposed of it.

Bobcat and Chickens: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen talked to multiple residents in the Wishram community regarding a bobcat that has been getting into chicken coops. In all, over 150 chicken deaths have been attributed to this bobcat over the past month. Some landowners had very well built chicken coops that needed some slight tweaking to become bobcat-proof. Others had free-range chicken operations and were not interested in making improvements to their structures or in penning chickens up at night to prevent additional losses.



Several different chicken coops in the Wishram community that have had issues with a bobcat over the past month. Some have incorporated modifications to make them now bobcat-proof.

Cougar Depredation on Goat: Officers Hughes, Whipple, and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a reported depredation of a goat in Washougal. Two goats and a sheep were killed by a cougar almost exactly one year prior; the depredations resulted in a cougar removal, and advice was given at the time on how to better protect livestock in cougar country. This year, the landowner contacted Jacobsen two days after the goat was killed. Agency staff members were able to locate the goat in the woods outside of the fenced pasture where the goat was originally killed. A necropsy of the carcass indicated that the goat was killed by a cougar. Due to the heat and elapsed time since the depredation, a houndsman was not deployed to the scene. Advice was given to the landowner again regarding livestock husbandry and protection measures, but he was unwilling to accept or implement any of the options provided to him.



Cougar depredation on a goat

Cougar in Goldendale: Captain Wickersham and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a report of a cougar that had preyed on a deer in the city limits of Goldendale. Sheriff Songer and a deputized hound hunter arrived on-scene and euthanized the cougar. The cougar was a sub-adult female who had spent a day or two on the outskirts of town, taking refuge and hunting small and large mammals from the cover of a large hawthorn thicket. In the thicket, the remains of a fawn, raccoon, opossum, and adult deer were all discovered.



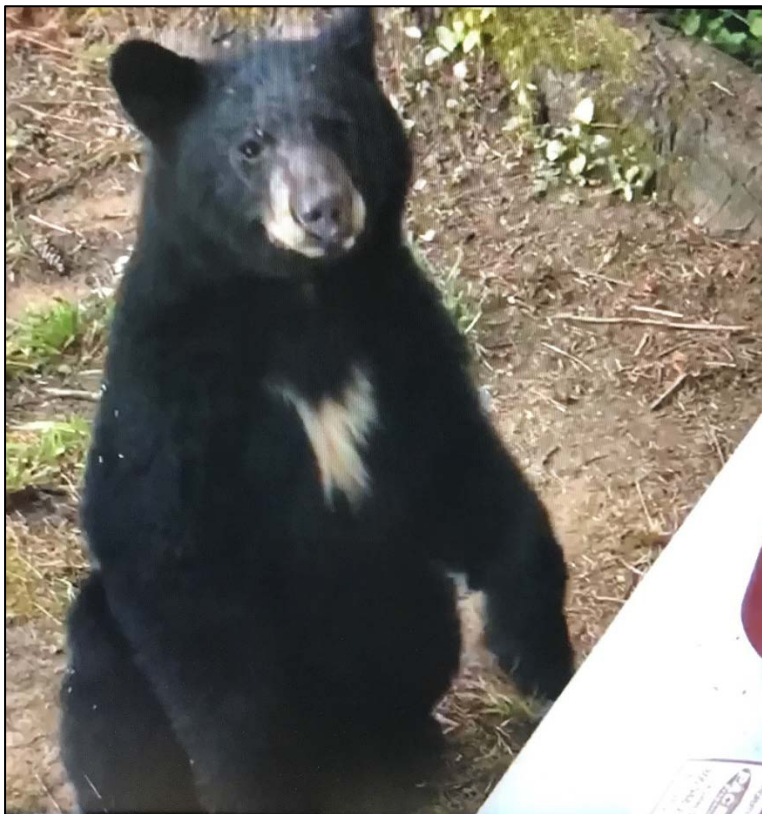
Hawthorn thicket with cool shade and water source. A prime location for a cougar and other mammals to take refuge.

Cougar Encounter On Hiking Trail: Officer Nelson and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a report of a cougar encounter near Husum. Two adults and three children were fishing along Buck Creek when they came into contact with a juvenile cougar. The cougar approached the family to within an arm's length. The small family dog was off-leash on the trail and confronted the cougar. The cougar gave chase to the dog, and the whereabouts of the dog are unknown at this point. The incident occurred on Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land. DNR was contacted and signs were posted warning the public of the incident.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen drafted several Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements (DPCA) for elk damage and delivered the agreements to the landowners for signatures.

Elk Damage to Crops: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen deployed several master hunters from the Region 5 Antlerless Elk Master Hunter Damage Pool to assist in the removal of elk causing damage to commercial crops in Randle.

Bear in Trash: A concerned rental owner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen regarding a black bear that had gotten into the trash at her vacation rental in Skamania County. After the trash was removed, the bear returned the next day in search of more goodies. The vacationing tenants were afraid to venture outside because of the bear. Jacobsen provided advice and gave the owner WDFW bear brochures that can be distributed to vacationing tenants when they arrive. Jacobsen also plans to haze the bear if it returns to the residence.



Black bear near a residence in Skamania County - Photo by the property manager

Cougar in Yard: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a Clark County landowner regarding a cougar that was observed in her yard. The cougar killed a chicken in the yard a few weeks prior, and Jacobsen had been working with the landowner to monitor the property and to make sure the chickens were secure. The house is in a residential area with a moderate housing density. Immediately after the sighting report, Jacobsen, Officers Van Vladricken and Moats, and a student officer arrived at the scene with immobilization equipment and a houndsman to search for the cougar. The cougar was not located.

Cougar in Chicken Pen: A landowner called 911 to report a cougar in her chicken pen at night in Klickitat County. Klickitat County Sheriff's Office responded with a houndsman but were unable to locate the cougar. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen contacted the landowner to discuss livestock protection measures, and scheduled a site visit for early the following week to review the livestock operation in-person and to find solutions for the landowner to better protect her livestock.

Bear in Paddock: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Bolton responded to a residence where a bear had been observed in a paddock with ducks earlier that morning. Fortunately, no ducks were injured or missing. A few weeks prior, a bear had been observed attacking pigs at the same residence. In each instance, a livestock guardian dog was present but not in the same paddock that the bear visited. A culvert trap was placed at the residence, as this bear matched the description of the bear that has been killing livestock at several residences in the area. Advice was given to the landowner regarding merging the paddocks so the guardian dog can patrol the area more effectively, as well as regarding fencing measures that can be taken with the materials already on-site to better secure the paddocks from a bear.



Livestock guardian dog patrolling a paddock with pigs

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen deployed (or attempted to deploy) several master hunters to a farm in Lewis County experiencing elk damage. No hunters were able to successfully harvest an elk there this week.

Raccoon Dilemma: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a homeowner in a residential area of Vancouver regarding nuisance raccoons. The homeowner's neighbor refuses to stop feeding the raccoons, and there are now at least 10 raccoons that traverse the homeowner's property to get to the food. The homeowner has tried talking to the neighbor about the issue, but the neighbor took offense and the issue has turned into a feud. Advice was given regarding contacting a Wildlife Control Operator (WCO), but the cost was too prohibitive for the landowner to go that route. Advice was also given on hazing measures to deter the raccoons from frequenting the homeowner's property. The homeowner was thankful and will attempt some of the hazing methods suggested.

Injured Deer: A concerned landowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen regarding an injured deer on her property. The deer appeared to have been struck by a car and broken a leg, but the leg had healed. The deer now walks with a severe limp. Jacobsen advised that the deer would likely be fine, as they are extremely resilient to injury and can manage to get by with injuries such as this.

“Chirping” Noises at Night: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a community in Klickitat County where “chirping” noises were heard at night, several nights in a row. Around the same time, a cougar or multiple cougars have been observed traversing agricultural pasture. The area is tree-less with little topography or prey, and is poor cougar habitat. Several residents described hearing the chirping at night, and claim the sound matches that made by a juvenile cougar that was recorded/displayed on a popular YouTube video. Residents also claim that when the “chirping” happens, the other “night sounds” stop and dogs get extremely anxious and upset. So far, no resident has been able to capture a recording of the sound or a photo of the animal making the sound.

Missing Goat: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen and Officer Bolton responded to a residence in Klickitat County where a goat went missing. Officer Bolton located a cougar track in the dust, but no other evidence of a depredation was found. The area was adjacent to a small river and surrounded with six-foot-tall grass, which likely hindered their ability to locate a carcass. A houndsman was called out to search for a cougar, and a pursuit ensued. Eventually, the intense heat and dry wind erased any further cougar scent, and the pursuit was called off. Officer Bolton advised the landowner to keep all livestock secured in barns at night.



Remaining goats in paddock. Paddock was securely fenced, and missing goat was likely taken over the top of the fence.

Depredation on Sheep: A landowner in Klickitat County called 911 to report that a cougar had killed one of her sheep. Klickitat County Sheriff's Office responded with a houndsman and searched the area for a cougar. During the search, a bear was seen on the property and shot at. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen arrived on the scene later in the day and conducted a necropsy on the sheep. The necropsy revealed that the sheep was killed by a black bear. Jacobsen discussed livestock security measures with the landowner, and the landowner plans to have a secure structure built and finished over the weekend. Jacobsen will check back in early next week to see if additional assistance is needed in finishing the construction of the sheep night pen.



Sheep killed and mostly consumed by a black bear



Landowner's sheep pen that needs just a bit more work to be fully secure from predators. The pen is enclosed on three sides

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with several landowners in Klickitat and Clark counties to sign Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements for elk damage.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Alder Creek Site Visit on the Mount St. Helens Wildlife Area: Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald lead a tour in the Hoffstadt Unit to show a sub-committee of the District 10 team the issue of the old water diversion structure on Alder Creek diverting too much water out of the stream to the old hatchery rearing ponds. The group walked along the old diversion channel to see the issues that the old diversion structure is causing and talked about solutions to fix the problems. Currently the structure is diverting about 90 percent of the water out of Alder Creek. Alder Creek is one of two streams located in the upper portion of the North Fork Toutle River where salmonid spawning occurs, so finding a solution to keep the water in the correct location is essential in helping coho and winter steelhead recover in this watershed.



Old water diversion structure

Klickitat Wildlife Area - Hill Road Fence Completion: Assistant Manager Steveson and Manager Van Leuven completed the installation of fencing connecting to the cattle guard just off Hill Road on the Hatchery Unit. This was the last segment of fencing along Hill Road to be finished up. Van Leuven and Steveson installed the diagonal braces and mounted the wires on the fence structure. Hill Road is regularly used for driving cattle to and from various pastures, and intact fences prevent animals from straying onto the Hatchery Unit property. The ranching community appreciates the maintenance of good fences along this route.



Fence connecting to cattle guard



Finishing end brace by Cattleguard

Klickitat Wildlife Area Water Structure Reconstruction: Assistant Manager Steveson finished constructing the roof for a guzzler on the Soda Springs Unit. He set two more posts in the ground and secured the roof framework to the posts. He cut one replacement piece of corrugated sheet roofing to length and then all four sheet metal pieces were nailed to the framework. All miscellaneous scraps from the construction were collected and hauled to the wildlife area headquarters.



Guzzler C roof finished

Klickitat Wildlife Area Grazing Monitoring: Assistant Manager Steveson made a trip to the Simcoe Mountain Unit to check on two grazing permits. While visiting a spring used by one permittee's cattle, Steveson viewed a black bear meandering through the trees and captured a quick photo. A gate was also checked in an interior fence line while visiting the unit.



Simcoe bear

Klickitat Wildlife Area Derelict Fencing Removal: Assistant Manager Steveson spent two days collecting barbed wire from an abandoned fence line on the Soda Springs Unit. The old wire strung between trees and lying on the ground posed a hazard to wildlife traveling to and from a watering source. The wire was difficult to dislodge and Steveson was able to clear all of it, totaling less than a quarter mile of fencing, and piled the coiled wire for easy removal later.



Old barbed wire picked up and coiled, ready to be hauled away for disposal

Trespass Cattle: Assistant Manager Steveson discovered that six to 10 cattle were in the old headquarters area of the Soda Springs Unit. No grazing permits are in place in that area, and Klickitat Wildlife Area staff members contacted a neighboring landowner to find out if he knew where the animals came from. The owner has tentatively been identified and the cattle are to be gathered up on Sept. 1. The cattle probably crossed the Klickitat River from private property on the west side of the river.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Traditional Hunter Education Course: The Cowlitz Wildlife Area hosted a two-day 16-hour hunter education course. Twenty-five students signed up for the course and four students failed to show. The instructors educated the students on the material within the student manual using a variety of techniques including PowerPoint presentations, videos, and role-playing. Students were introduced to the firearms and field scenarios using field exercises and hands-on activities. The students must successfully pass a 75 question test with a passing score of 80 percent, successfully pass the skills evaluation, and demonstrate their skills on the inside air rifle range. Twenty students successfully passed the course.



An instructor teaching basic gun handling safety principles



The class learning through hands-on gun handling activities

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Presentation: Biologist Bergh gave a short talk at a Backcountry Hunters and Anglers event in Camas this week. She gave a quick overview of the work we do at WDFW, specifically the work of a wildlife biologist, and the status of big game populations in southwest Washington.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this reporting period.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.

REGION 6

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Olympic Mountain Goat Relocation: The 2019 portion of the Olympic Mountain Goat Relocation Project concluded last week. Following up a successful effort in 2018, District 15 Biologist Murphie reports that the project continues to meet project objectives by relocating 275 mountain goats to the Cascades since the operation began. This year we ran two staging areas for processing goats in preparation for transport and release in the Cascades. The Olympic National Park (ONP) ran one staging area at Hurricane Ridge. WDFW and the USFS ran the other staging area, which was located in the Hamma Hamma River valley. More than 41 volunteers and staff members from WDFW, USFS, ONP, and local tribes participated in operations at the Hamma Hamma staging area. Many more volunteers participated in transporting goats to the Cascades by refrigerated truck. Without their help, we would not have been able to carry out this project. Many thanks to all who helped.

Prior to the capture efforts last September, the park estimated that there are about 725 goats in the park. The goat population was established when a hunting group released 12 mountain goats from British Columbia and Alaska to the Olympic Peninsula before the park was established in 1938. The National Park Service (NPS) released the final Mountain Goat Management Plan in May of 2018. The plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement were finalized after an extensive public review process which began in 2014. A goal of the project is to reduce or eliminate the environmental damage created by the non-native mountain goats and the public safety risks associated with their presence in the park. The WDFW and USFS have documented declining goats populations in the northern Cascades. The project is a joint effort by the NPS, WDFW, USFS, and tribes.

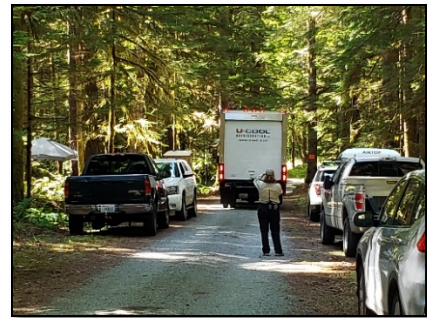
A total of 115 goats were removed from the park last September. Captured mountain goats were brought in by helicopter, dropped off and transported a short distance to a staging area where the goats were processed and put into transportation crates. WDFW volunteers (mostly master hunters) transported the graded goats in refrigerator trucks to specific sites in the north Cascades. Section Manager Harris led all logistics for the release of goats in remote areas with the use of a helicopter when weather permitted. A final two-week capture period is planned for late next summer at Hurricane Ridge. See photos below from Hamma Hamma and Hurricane Hill.

Photos from Hamma Hamma:









Photos from Hurricane Hill:



Olympic Marmot Surveys: During some of the down time at Hurricane Hill, staff members were encouraged to assist with Olympic marmot surveys, a unique opportunity in this area due to the closure to the public. It had appeared the predators had also noticed the lack of public along the popular trails, and coyotes were observed hunting hares as well as carrying a dead marmot, with marmot burrows enlarged in an area where young coyotes were observed.



Jenny Powers (NPS Vet), Liz Graham (NPS Wildlife Technician), Tory Stevens (Retired BC Minister Environment), and Scott Ratchford (NPS Vet Technician) conducting marmot surveys



Jenny Powers and Liz Graham look and smell the burrow entrance for sign of marmots. An enlarged opening and no marmot odors or sign.



NPS Veterinarian Jenny rests within a bog adjacent to occupied marmot site.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Survey Data: Biologist Randolph developed GIS polyline layers representing new distance sampling transect segments at Joint Base Lewis-McCord’s (JBLM’s) Training Area (TA) 15, to accommodate an expanded survey area. She has spent the last several weeks transcribing over 40 hours of voice recorder observations collected from six survey sites into a database, resulting in almost 23,000 records entered. From these data, population parameters will be calculated and maps will be constructed illustrating the abundance and distribution of checkerspots at all survey sites. While this information is critical for understanding population dynamics and evaluating the success of checkerspot reintroductions, it is also necessary to make informed restoration decisions. In preparation for prescribed fire season, draft maps were assembled for the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area and JBLM’s TA15, to

help land managers define burn boundaries that maximize restoration efforts while minimizing impacts to this endangered butterfly.

Taylor’s Checkerspot Reintroduction Plan: To secure an efficient, timely and realistic path to recovery of Taylor’s checkerspot in the Puget lowlands, Biologist Linders is compiling a reintroduction plan to replicate and extend current project success, and guide implementation through the next developmental phase. To this end, Linders convened meetings with the project’s scientific review committee as well as the group of land managers working to restore sites for reintroduction to discuss plan content and insure common cause. A draft plan will be circulated for review this fall.

Western Gray Squirrel Occupancy Surveys – Klickitat: Biologist Linders made two more visits to Klickitat County to assist with hair tube surveys. Western gray squirrel hair was found on two transects during the first check, in addition to several active nests. One of the two remaining transects Linders set was positive for western gray squirrel hair on the second check, with one final check remaining on the fifth transect, which will be completed by Carly Wickhem in early September. It is encouraging to be detecting squirrels at multiple locations in Klickitat!

Resident Dark Goose Surveys: Biologists Butler and Michaelis completed the two-part survey for marked resident dark geese (RDG). This has been one of many surveys coordinated with region five Biologists Holman and Stephens, as well as Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The purpose of this survey is to observe the number of marked RDG to unmarked RDG. This information will then be used to generate a population estimate for the lower Columbia River. Eighty RDG were observed from the boat and land portion of the survey. Seven marked RDG were observed and their character codes were recorded.

Mourning Dove Capturing and Banding: Biologist Michaelis completed banding mourning doves at two locations in eastern Grays Harbor County. Seventy-four doves were captured and banded.

Age	Oakville	McCleary	Total
AHY (Adult)	9	1	10
HY (young)	30	32	62
Unknown	1	1	2
Total	40	34	74

Of the AHY doves captured, six were females, two were males and two birds could not be classed into either classification. All sixty-two hatch year birds were of an unknown sex as they had not yet matured. Two birds could not be aged due to the lack of plumage characteristics.

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

The new location near the town of McCleary had a large number of birds present. We encourage hunters to actively scout and seek out areas to hunt doves in western Washington. Usually areas where there are a number of seed plants available with perching structures are most desirable for dove use.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Access Site Maintenance: Along with the usual and regular site maintenance, the water access team experienced a large volume of abandoned trailers, vessels and illegal dumps recently.

Abandoned items removed from WDFW properties include: a 28-foot vessel with a broken trailer, a busted up boat trailer, a travel trailer from the Hoquiam River, two travel trailers from the Oakland Bay shellfish site (photos not included), a 12-foot dump trailer full of debris from three different sites, and two couches with debris from the Scatter Creek Wildlife Area.



Trails End Lake



Lake Isabella



Hoquiam River, East Fork



Chehalis River Oakville site, Fuller Bridge and Wishkah River Long Swamp



Scatter Creek

Olympic Willapa Hills Wildlife Areas: The Olympic crew is in full swing for the summer months. Approximately 200 acres have been mowed in the Wynoochee Mitigation area as well as Unit 2 being re-farmed (approximately 53 acres). Annual maintenance on the Wynoochee mitigation area is right on track. They will fertilize in October.

Approximately 120 acres have been mowed in the Olympic Wildlife Area, as well as re-farming of the Lynn Place, which is approximately 35 acres.



Mowing at Olympic Wildlife Area Lynn Place



Cover crop of fall gray oats at Lynn Place



Temporary gate to keep ATVs out of new seeding

Next, the Olympic crew will be moving on to Chehalis and Johns River to mow reed canary grass and rush. This will provide sheet water areas for waterfowl during the winter months.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this reporting period.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Volunteer Work Party: With the help of the Clover Park Rotary in Lakewood, nearly 40 volunteers tackled a much needed face lift to the entrance and old interpretive area at the South Puget Sound Wildlife Area. Manager Lowery worked with the Clover Park Rotary, who recently adopted the wildlife area unit, to do grounds maintenance, pull derelict fencing, remove brush, and limb up trees. The day resulted in over 150 hours of donated time, 20 dump trailer loads of brush removed, and several tons of old material taken to the dump. The event was well organized and attracted several neighbors and folks passing by that decided to join in on the fun. More work parties are being scheduled for the coming months. The goal of the volunteer events is to get the public portions of the unit back on track to be an urban wildlife interpretive center similar to how it functioned in the 1960s.



After volunteer event



Year one project area adopted by the clover park Rotary Club. South Puget Sound Wildlife Area



Old South Tacoma Game Farm (now South Puget Sound Wildlife Area) entrance- 1960s



Old South Tacoma Game farm (now South Puget Sound Wildlife area unit) interpretive area- 1960's.



Scatter Creek Wildlife Area Restoration: In preparation for fall restoration activities at Scatter Creek Wildlife Area, Biologist Randolph conducted an inventory of all seed held in a storage cooler at Violet Prairie, which is managed by our partner, the Center for Natural Lands Management. She updated the seed inventory spreadsheet, comprised of 53 native species representing over 900 pounds. This does not include seed currently being harvested and processed by the farm. This information provides land managers with a solid foundation for restoration planning.

Oregon Spotted Frog: Biologists Tyson and Cook worked with a crew from Washington Conservation Corps to remove willow encroaching on Oregon spotted frog breeding habitat at West Rocky Wildlife Area. Willow were cut to the stump and branches dragged from the wetland edge into designated upland areas and piled to be chipped or burned later. Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium contributed to funding for this work and through this partnership requested to use removed brush as forage for various animals in captivity. Biologist Cook was happy to oblige and reduce the amount of brush on-site. Willows and other shrubs were cut down over an area of 0.8 acres, connecting two separate breeding locations. Some cleanup still remains, a scheduled DNR crew will help with this as well as reed canary grass removal at other Oregon spotted frog breeding locations at West Rocky Wildlife Area in September before the ponds refill.



Before



After



Before

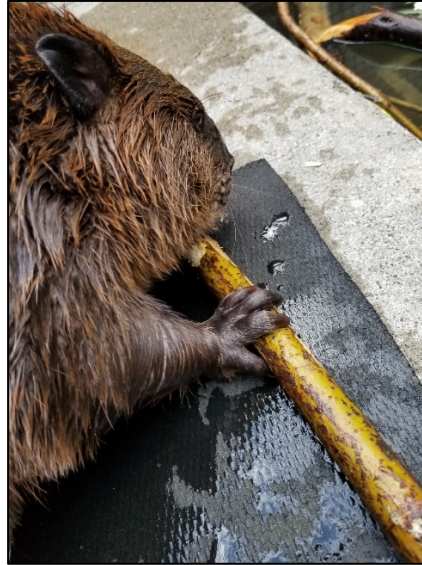


After





Elephant foraging on willow



Beaver chewing on branch

5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Nothing for this reporting period.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Contracts: Biologist Linders completed a final report for the Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) Taylor's Checkerspot Translocation and Monitoring Project. Over 6,500 postdiapause larvae, nearly 300 adults and over 3,200 prediapause larvae were released on JBLM in 2019. Linders also compiled a report covering activities conducted over the past year using SWGS funding. Finally, Biologist Linders is working with USFWS and JBLM to process new contracts that will fund the Taylor's Checkerspot Captive Rearing and Translocation Project through the 2019-2020 field season. Linders also completed allotments for all projects for the 2019-2021 biennium.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this reporting period.