

Wildlife Program – Bi-weekly Report

August 1 to 15, 2021

DIVERSITY DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

GAME DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

HUNTER EDUCATION

Nothing for this installment.

LANDS DIVISION

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) **Managing Wildlife Populations**

Nothing for this installment.

2) **Providing Recreation Opportunities**

Nothing for this installment.

3) **Providing Conflict Prevention and Education**

Nothing for this installment.

4) **Conserving Natural Landscapes**

Wildfire Readiness Planning: Lands Division Manager Wilkerson and Lands Operations and Stewardship Section Manager Dahmer were designated as Branch Chiefs for the Department's Incident Command System structure related to 2021 wildfire readiness. Prescribed Fire Team Lead Eberlein was designated agency Safety Officer for this effort. We all attended multiple meetings, including pulling together an initial plan related to Lands Closures, Reopening, and Activity restrictions on WDFW Lands.

Partnership Meeting: Lands Division Manager Wilkerson and Real Estate Service Manager Edwards participated in a meeting on August 4, along with regional WDFW leadership and representatives from the Governor’s office. The meeting was centered around the Mount Saint Helens/Toutle River Sediment Retention Structure and Fish Collection Facilities partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Trust Land Transfer Process Meeting: Lands Division Manager Wilkerson participated in the third meeting of the DNR Trust Land Transfer (TLT) Work Group on August 6. Work group members, including Wilkerson, gave presentations on their perspectives on the TLT process and potential revisions or improvements. All materials can be found here: [Tools to Address Underperforming Land Assets | WA - DNR](#).

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Wild Grief Teen Backpack Orientation: Program Specialist Trendera attended Wild Grief’s summer backpack orientation event. Wild Grief is a nonprofit organization that facilitates peer groups for children and adults who are grieving a death while also embracing the healing power of nature. The event included hiking gear checks, a WDFW wildlife table, and other activities for the participants to prepare for their upcoming backpacking trip.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Lease Renewals and Grazing Meetings: Division Manger Wilkerson met with Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff members on August 4 regarding upcoming lease renewals and associated rate increases that DNR will be charging on 13 leases that WDFW hold on DNR lands in eastern Washington. This included a brief orientation to a draft “Grazing of WDFW Lands” story map that will be finalized and added to WDFW’s website after an opportunity to comment from the Commission members.

Division Manager Wilkerson, Range Ecologist Burnham, Lands Stewardship and Operations Section Manager Dahmer, and Regional Directors Pozzanghera and Livingston also presented to the Wildlife Committee of the Fish and Wildlife Commission. The presentation was in response to a Commission bluesheet request regarding issues related to our decision-making about utilizing livestock grazing as a management tool on WDFW lands, including information on the fiscal and ecological impacts and benefits.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

SCIENCE DIVISION

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 1

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Elk Calf Monitoring: District 3 staff members investigated seven elk calf mortality reports during the first two weeks of August. Mortalities ranged from cougar, bear, and an intact carcass that was delivered to the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) for further diagnostics. A majority of these collared calves have died in close proximity or within the perimeters of the two large fires currently in the Blue Mountains. These require additional coordination with the Fire Management Team in place to coordinate entry. Collars that have been collected since May were downloaded for the locations that were stored onboard.

District 3 Technicians: Elk calf mortality investigations have slowed down, allowing the temporary technicians time to conduct pre-season deer surveys and assist Conflict staff members with problem elk concentrations near the Stateline in Walla Walla County.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Fire Impacts: District 3 Management staff members have been coordinating with Headquarters on special permit hunts that have, or will be, impacted by the Lick Creek and Green Gulch fires. Numerous hunters have been contacting staff members on what to expect in the coming weeks.

Access Contracts and Properties: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley worked with Contracts Specialist Lontonuu in forwarding a signed access contract for review and approval. Thorne Hadley also coordinated with a new contracted landowner to meet and post their property next week.

Hunt By Reservation: Private Lands Biologist Thorne Hadley scheduled and entered available hunt dates to be reserved for Hunt By Reservation properties in Walla Walla County. Thorne Hadley also followed up with hunters looking for general access for upcoming rifle deer season, providing several recommendations.

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Range Rider Coordination: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett worked with WDFW range riders on deployment, fire, and smoke issues.

Non-Lethal Deterrent Adjustments: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Kolb worked with Columbia County producers who have proactive non-lethal deterrents deployed and assisted in adjusting the placement of deterrents based on cattle movement or wolf activity.

Black Bear Concerns in Pend Oreille County: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett fielded three complaints about black bears. Information on securing trash, chicken feed, and bird feeders were also covered during site visits.

Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett worked with four landowner having issues with deer and elk to agricultural crops in Stevens and Pend Oreille counties. Information on the drought, deterrents, general season hunting, and a damage contract were covered.

Stuck Osprey: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman talked with a fisherman out at Coffeepot Lake that saw an osprey hanging upside down from the nest. The bird was caught in twine and when Westerman called the fisherman to get more information, the fisherman resolved the issue.

Bank Swallows Preventing Excavation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman responded to a call about nesting bank swallows on a piece of land that is in the process of being constructed upon. Westerman explained the laws regarding birds and advised that they should be leaving the nest within a week or two.

Great Horned Owl Conflict: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman responded to a call about an owl that was hanging around and “attacked a kid.” The kid was carrying the kitten that the owl was trying to attack previously. The 10-year-old was able to shoo away the owl as it landed in close proximity. The owl has not been seen since, and advice was provided.

Problem Moose: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman and Fish and Wildlife Officer Silver went to some residences north of Pullman who have been dealing with a bull moose for several weeks. The intention was to find and harass the moose to more suitable habitat. However, the moose was not located.

Trapped Skunk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman responded to an inquiry about what to do about a trapped skunk when it was not the target species. Westerman provided advice on how to safely release the skunk.

Master Hunter Damage Hunt: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Westerman and Private Lands Biologist Gaston met with a farmer near Deer Park who has been dealing with elk damage. The farmer will likely be moving forward with a Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreement. In the meantime, to help address damage a master hunter elk damage hunt was coordinated to help put pressure on the elk now.

Crop Damage Question: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Kolb spoke with a producer about options available to address white-tailed deer damage in a Columbia County pea field. When the subject of kill and damage permits was discussed, the provision of public hunting access was an issue. While the producer would like to give hunters to opportunity to help address some of the damage issues, the landowner (separate from the producer) does not allow hunting on the property. Kolb will continue to work with the producer on other non-lethal options that may help mitigate some of the damage.

Coyote Sightings: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Kolb spoke with City of Waitsburg staff personnel on reports of coyote sightings by concerned citizens/pet owners. Kolb shared *Living with Wildlife* resources to the staff members, reminded them to discourage homeowners from intentionally feeding adult coyotes or their pups, and advised that pet owners keep pets on a leash when wildlife are present to reduce the likelihood of a negative interaction.

Nuisance Turkeys: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade met with an Anatone area producer who had a large flock of turkeys damage one of his wheat fields. The producer had already harvested the crop and was looking to prevent future damage. Wade discussed possible solutions to the problem and will be working with this producer this fall.

Clarkston Injured Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade responded to a call regarding a fawn that had been stuck between two fences in Clarkston. The homeowner reported that the fawn was in rough shape. Before Wade was able to get to the area a Sheriff's Officer euthanized the fawn after responding to a large canine being seen trying to get the injured fawn. The reporting party believed that the canine was a wolf. Wade discussed the issue with the reporting party and determined that the possible wolf was likely a coyote or domestic dog.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade responded to another report of a fawn with a broken leg. With the assistance of Private Lands Supervisor Earl, the fawn was located feeding with its mother and sibling in the area. Wade and Biologist Earl left contact information with homeowners in the area and instructed them to call if the fawn's condition appeared to be worsening.

Injured Turtle: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade responded to a report of an injured turtle being found walking down a street in Clarkston. The turtle had burns on its feet from walking on the hot pavement. A concerned homeowner in the area collected the turtle and was unsure if it was wild or a pet. Wade collected the turtle and with the help of Assistant District Biologist Vekasy identified it as a red-eared slider. Red-eared sliders are an introduced species and cannot be released. Wade transported the turtle to Washington State University Veterinary Hospital for treatment.



Injured Turtle

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Nothing for this installment.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Resource Sharing: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Wade assisted Kolb by offering up an unused Zon gun to assist with elk and deer damage issues in corn crops in Walla Walla County.

Post Fire Meeting: Private Lands Supervisor Earl attended a meeting with local staff members to discuss operations and hunting concerns on the Asotin Wildlife Area due to the extreme loss of habitat resulting from the Lick Creek Fire.

7) Other

District Weekly Wolf Coordination Conference Calls: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Bennett facilitated three calls with the area Sheriff's Office, Forest Service, range riders, and internal staff members associated with wolves. Information on population and monitoring, conflict, Special Focus Area Togo Plan, Leadpoint next steps, and similar topics were covered.

REGION 2

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Northern Leopard Frogs: Over the last three weeks, over 460 northern leopard frog metamorphs (froglets) were released as part of WDFW's reintroduction program. These releases were the culmination of months of work completing field surveys, preparing the release site (vegetation control and soft release enclosure construction), and rearing the frogs at husbandry facilities to ensure they have the best chance of survival at the reintroduction site. Most recently, Biologist Grabowsky along with Washington State University partners and a few media outlets traveled to Northwest Trek Wildlife Park to tag the northern leopard frog (NLF) being reared at that facility with visual implant elastomers (VIE). VIE are tiny plastic tags injected subcutaneously to track individuals in the field. After tagging the individuals with VIEs, they were transported to the reintroduction site at Columbia National Wildlife Refuge (CNWR) and released. In addition to releasing NLF, effort was devoted to removing large, breeding bullfrogs from the release site so as to reduce predator activity at the reintroduction site. This effort resulted in moderate success (~20 bullfrogs removed by CNWR staff members) and will continue for a few more nights.



Northern leopard frog metamorph being released at CNWR – Photo by Katie Cotterill, Northwest Trek Wildlife Park

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Regulated Access Areas Waterfowl Forage Production:

Desirable waterfowl forage production is coming along well both at the Frenchman and Winchester Regulated Access Areas. Most of the Frenchman millet, smartweed, and beggars-tick in areas that were tilled are still early in development since Specialist McPherson conducted tillage and planting later than usual to see if waiting for hot weather would increase germination. Areas that just received harrowing and have self-established vegetation are already starting to flower or head out. In the Winchester Regulated Access Area, smartweed and millet production is looking good and production in the southern part of the project is establishing. This should add more waterfowl forage spreading birds out and offering more opportunity for hunters during season. This year Specialist McPherson has noticed an increase in cocklebur presence and has been working on treatments in basins. Specialist McPherson has been doing research on cocklebur control methods for the future and looks for to experimenting to find best control method.



Millet and Smartweed growing in southern portion of Winchester Regulated Access Area – Photo by C. McPherson

Columbia Basin Winchester Excavations: Specialist McPherson coordinated with a Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) crew for backpack spraying Russian olives in the Winchester excavations area. Last winter a contractor was hired to remove Russian olives mechanically with use of an excavator. In areas of disturbance, Russian olives saplings have emerged. Having the crew go out and treat areas that are difficult to get with equipment will help control saplings.



New Russian olive growth in disturbed area – Photo by C. McPherson

Frenchman Regulated Access Waterfowl Blinds: Specialist McPherson coordinated the WCC crew to paint, repair, and re-brush cell 5 blind and remove the blind in cell 2. The blind located in cell 2 will be replaced with new blind that will be constructed by the Washington Waterfowl Association.



Cell 5 blind re-brushed and ready for hunting season – Photo by C. McPherson

Waterfowl Management: Biologist Rowan spent time baiting, trapping, and gaining access permission for waterfowl banding efforts. WDFW attempts to trap and band 500 mallards every year, which provides limited information about production, age and sex composition of the local population, migration, dispersal, and eventual harvest. Biologists Rowan and Dougherty, technicians Pavelchek and Mullen, and Specialist Wilson also built and set up duck traps, built additional gear, and discussed trapping for the season.



Technician Mullen next to a duck trap with a cattle-deterrent fence (cattle can destroy traps); and a trap full of ducks – Photos by Ella Rowan

Hunter Access Program: Biologist Cook completed paperwork for renewing an expiring hunter access agreement, but it still needs signatures. This is a large property (just over 10,000 acres) and is a good thing considering cancellations and non-renewals of several Hunter Access agreements. Biologist Cook has also been reposting Hunter Access properties. Cook spoke with two Hunt by Written Permission landowners that are not currently giving permission for hunting on their property due to high wildfire danger. Cook posted paperwork explaining the situation on these properties to alert hunters out scouting. The landowner contact information remains available for hunters and Cook hopes the properties open later in season – if there is sufficient moisture – can reduce risks. Biologist Cook has responded to hunter requests related to Hunt Access properties and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) land closures. Biologist Braaten continues reposting private land hunter access properties within Pearl Hill wildfire boundary. Hundreds of signs need to be replaced, so work is ongoing.



Before and After - New Hunter Access signs replaced after being destroyed by wildfire – Photo by Eric Braaten

Mourning Dove Management: Biologist Rowan and Technicians Pavelchek and Mullen spent time attempting to capture and band mourning doves for population management. The numbers being seen and captured have declined in recent weeks, and banding is about to cease. All bait must be removed at least 10 days prior to the first hunt, since hunting over bait is illegal. WDFW bands mourning doves every year to gain an understanding of harvest, distribution, age and sex composition, and population abundance locally to some extent.

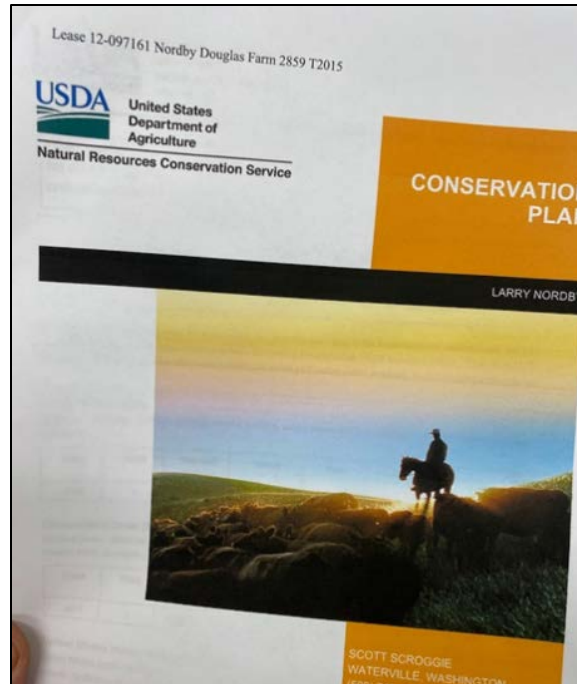
3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Deer Damage Prevention Associated with Fires: Specialist Heilhecker visited with an orchardist concerned about deer damage to his young fruit trees. Although the orchard is mostly fenced, a recent fire has damaged fences shared with neighbors. The landowner has made several attempts to push multiple deer from the orchard without success. She issued the orchardist two landowner permits to remove the deer.

Wenatchee Highway 97 Deer and Sheep Fence: Specialist Bridges provided coordination between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to provide the yearly maintenance of the Highway 97 deer/sheep fence. The Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association, Washington Wild Sheep foundation, Washington Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, WSDOT, and WDFW provided funding and a contract has been awarded to a local fencing company for the project. The project is anticipated to begin in September, but the contractor is having difficulty finding employees to do the work.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

2021 SAFE CRP – Douglas County: Private Lands Biologist Braaten was informed by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that due to Douglas County Conservation Reserve Program Cap issue there was only 2,600 acres available for CRP this year. FSA needed Stock Assessment and Fishery Evaluation (SAFE) CRP contracts completed as soon as possible before the 20,000 acres of general CRP contracts could be ranked nationally. CRP acres would be awarded to those if SAFE contract planning was not completed and signed by landowners. Private Lands Biologist Braaten worked through the night to provide NRCS staff members new forms to begin the planning process. Braaten was able to develop and complete 11 job sheets, meeting with all landowners to sign them and get them to NRCS and FSA in a timely fashion. Many landowners were appreciative of our efforts as well as FSA. Private Lands Biologist Braaten is assisting Region One Private Lands staff members in Lincoln County with planning 30 SAFE CRP plans signed up this year that are due by early September.



Douglas County – Private Lands Biologist Braaten completed eleven SAFE CRP plans for NRCS in 48 hours – Photo by Eric Braaten

Pygmy Rabbit Safe Harbor Agreements: Cook and Supervisor Rickel evaluated several fields in the general Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that expire in the next few years and are enrolled in Safe Harbor Agreements. This review was to provide recommendations to NRCS for habitat improvements that would reduce impacts to pygmy rabbits when these properties might be re-enrolled in CRP programs.

Fence Marker to Prevent Grouse Collison: Private Lands Biologist Braaten provided two Douglas County landowners with new vinyl fence markers for several new fence projects in Douglas County where wildfire had destroyed previously marked fences. Landowners were very appreciative.



Truck load of fence markers out for delivery to Douglas County Landowners – Photo by Eric Braaten

Columbia Basin Wildlife Area Habitat Damage: While assessing Russian olive treatment needs in the Winchester wasteway area, Specialist McPherson found an area where someone had created road to access powerlines near the wasteway. McPherson made Manager Eidson and Enforcement aware of the situation, and further actions will be taken.



Unauthorized vehicle access into the Wildlife Area – Photo by C. McPherson

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Nothing for this installment.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 3

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Duck Trapping Season Off to Slow but Steady Start: Wildlife Biologist Fidorra and Scientific Technicians Merluccio and Martenson baited and trapped waterfowl at wetland sites in District 4. Two sites are up and running, but across eastern Washington it appears productivity was poor with few young birds at trap sites. More sites will be added for trapping to try and increase captures despite the small number of ducks available locally this season.



Scientific Technicians Merluccio and Martenson bring mallards from the trap for banding

Dove Banding in District 4 Complete: Scientific Technicians Merluccio and Martenson baited and trapped mourning doves in Franklin County in July and August. Banding efforts resulted in 237 doves being banded this season, which was a great increase from past years! Most of this was due to increased effort by technician positions which have not been funded in the past.

Injured Bull Elk on Highway 240: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to an injured bull elk along Highway 240 just north of Richland. The elk appeared to be involved in a vehicle collision and had a severe compound fracture to a hind leg as well as other injuries. The elk was euthanized and was claimed on a salvage permit.



Euthanized injured bull elk

Sick Deer in Horse Heavens Hills: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand responded to a call concerning a sick deer off Highway 221 in the Horse Heaven Hills. This was after being advised from Regional Wildlife Program Manager McCorquodale and Statewide Veterinarian Mansfield that samples should be collected and sent to Washington State University (WSU) for diagnostics. The deer was euthanized, and samples were taken.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Two Access Opportunities Re-enrolled in Time for Hunting Season: Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett worked with Agri-Northwest's Land Management Specialist to complete two access contracts in southern Benton County. These two sites will be enrolled into WDFW's Register to Hunt program and will open to the public September 2021. Each access site will have specific rules posted at the registration area on the property.

Popular Hunting Access Site Switching to Hunt by Reservation: Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett worked with a landowner in Franklin County who was having issues with their access signs being tampered with. Hulett and the landowner discussed the issue and options available before deciding to move this property to the Hunt by Reservation program. A new access contract was submitted for the property. This property will begin reservations in October 2021.

Cattle Guard Removal: L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart removed a cattle guard from the Whiskey Dick Unit’s Pump House parking area. The cattle guard was not necessary for the location and was hard on tires as visitors turned into the parking area. Volunteers from the Ruffed Grouse Society removed the cattle guard and backfilled the pit, greatly improving recreational access to the popular hiking destination.



Old cattle guard loaded on a flatbed at Pump House parking area

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Paterson Bear: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand received and responded to a bear in the Paterson area near Highway 221 and the Columbia River. The bear was located in a large tree fruit, blueberry, and wine grape operation and concerns of crop damage and worker safety were discussed. With a current hunting season open for bear, the landowner will attempt to remove the bear by licensed hunters.



Paterson Bear

Horse Heaven Hills Vineyards: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand monitored deer movements and activity near several wine grape operations near the Columbia River. Although we continue with very hot and dry weather conditions, which usually increase deer activity in these crops, only minimal damage areas were observed.

Rattlesnake Hills Wheat Harvest: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand assisted with elk damage assessments with landowners and a crop adjuster during the final days of wheat harvest. Overall, elk damage appears to be above average, and wheat yields, and quality are below typical harvest conditions. Wheat harvest began early this year, as warm dry conditions matured plants earlier than normal. Overall, most fields are typically seeing reduced yields from the drought conditions. Both kernel counts and quality are below normal as well. Severe damage from elk was observed and documented in multiple fields adjacent to the Hanford National Monument.



Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand conducting a kernel count on wheat



Severe browsing elk damage near Hanford National Monument



Trailing from elk leaving Hanford



Elk Damage on Rattlesnake Mountain

Corral Canyon Elk Damage Hunts: District 4 Wildlife Conflict Specialist Hand coordinated with Master Hunters, landowners, and permit hunters on elk activity and movements. Two elk were reported harvested by Master Hunters.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Busy Fall for Federal Conservation Programs: Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett began working with The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) on the 2021 State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement contracts for Benton and Franklin counties. The current sign up has eleven applications that were sent to the National Farm Service Agency Office for ranking. It is expected that these contracts will need to be completed by September 7, but the local timeline may be more variable depending on the workload of NRCS.

L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart and Natural Resource Technician Blore performed “end of growing season” vegetation monitoring in the Upper Parke cattle pasture. The lack of water sites this year has led to higher cattle concentration in areas with water. This altered cattle distribution has resulted in some areas showing an increase in vegetation utilization and others a decrease, but the overall average is likely to be unchanged from previous years.



Upper Parke pasture monitor site in area with dry water holes



Upper Parke pasture in canyon with water nearby

Ragheart Project: L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart attended a Ragheart project Teams meeting. The Ragheart project will improve habitat and floodplain function in a 1.4-mile section of Taneum Creek.

Improving Ecological Functions: Natural Resource Technician Blore spot sprayed the well site at the bottom of Little Parke canyon for noxious weeds. Blore also sprayed the Corrals and Hell’s Kitchen restoration sites in a diligent effort to stay on track for improving the areas’ ecological function.

Natural Resource Technician Blore also collected old wire and post left from a fencing project on Quilomene Ridge. Blore continued to maintain enclosure fences and monitor gates where WDFW property borders the Wild Horse Wind Farm grazing pastures.

Floodplain Enhancement: Logs were placed into Wenas Creek with oversight from the Yakama Nation. Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Hughes and Statewide Forester Pfeifle coordinated with the contractor and the Yakima Nations to get the logs in place. The logs came from the forest thinning that previously took place on Cleman's Mountain. The log placements will help reestablish the floodplain throughout this area, which was the historic condition of the site. The log placements will provide habitat for fish and other species within the creek. Log structures can reduce stream velocities, trap sediment, and correct channel incision.



One of the log structures placed in Wenas Creek – Photo by Hughes

Hoover Property Acquisition: Wenas Wildlife Area Manager Hughes and Assistant Manager Taylor participated in several meetings regarding the Hoover property acquisition. Property boundaries, conservation easements on sections, timelines, and additional items on the workplan were discussed. Property Acquisition Woodruff, Regional Lands Agent Carbary, Hughes, and Taylor met with the landowner to review the property boundary along Wenas Creek and cattle crossings the landowner uses. The on-site visit went extremely well and boundaries along the creek were mapped out. The sale of the property should be complete by the beginning of 2022. The property WDFW is looking to obtain contains a substantial amount of shrub-steppe habitat and some riparian areas.

Wetland Management: Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin have begun mowing out overgrown grasses, cattails, and willow shoots in the Sunnyside Unit’s wetlands in preparation for waterfowl season. The pair have mowed about half of the Johnson wetland and will be moving on to the rice paddies next. Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Rodgers and Natural Resource Technician Byers mowed wetland areas in the Windmill Ranch and Mesa Lake units in preparation for reflooding this fall. The freshly mowed wetlands will provide more open water for migrating waterfowl, as well as create more opportunity for waterfowl hunters. The Phase 1 and Phase 3 wetlands in the Windmill Ranch unit have also been seeded with millet and buckwheat to provide additional forage for waterfowl over the fall and winter months.



Freshly mowed “Serpent” wetland in the Mesa Lake Unit (left) and Natural Resource Technician Byers seeding the “Phase 3” wetland in the Windmill Ranch Unit (right)



Newly seeded buckwheat will provide forage for fall and winter waterfowl

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Kiosk Improvements: L.T. Murray Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Winegeart and Natural Resource Technician Blore installed new interpretive panels and banners on kiosks on the Quilomene and Whiskey Dick units.



New interpretive panel installed at Pump House parking area

Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Ferguson and Natural Resource Technician Wascisin replaced a vandalized and burned kiosk at the Case Road parking lot at the Thornton Unit. Sunnyside Snake River Wildlife Area Assistant Manager Rodgers and Manager Kaelber also mowed the access roads in the Thornton Unit to reduce the risk of fire.



New kiosk with signage at the Thornton Unit off Case Road

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Shed Organization: Region 3 Private Lands Biologist Hulett and Private Lands Natural Resource Technician Byers cleaned and organized signs and materials in the Pasco Wildlife Shed. This included a new storage rack for the shed.



Newly organized Wildlife Program shed in Pasco (thankfully no “before” photos were obtained)

7) Other

Additional Happenings: An L.T. Murray Wildlife Area visitor chose to express themselves by defacing the backside of a green-dot rules board. The Schneider Springs forest fire on the Naches Ranger District continued to generate smoke throughout much of the region.



Graffiti on green-dot rule board at the Whiskey Dick Unit’s Pump House parking area



Schneider Springs fire as seen from the L.T. Murray Quilomene Unit

REGION 4

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 5

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Deer Mortality Investigations: Biologist Bergh investigated two radio-collared deer mortalities with Biologist Wickhem joining for one. Both deer were radio-collared as part of a project to learn more about mule deer migration, corridors, and wintering areas which is funded by [Secretarial Order 3362](#). Another goal of this project specific to the deer collared in GMUs 388 and 382 is to attempt to determine cause of mortality when we are able to reach the carcass soon enough. For both deer we received a mortality notification at 5:00 pm and were able to get out to the carcass the following morning. With one deer, the carcass was mostly intact and partially cached (covered up with vegetation) and Biologist Bergh was able to skin the deer to look for pre-mortem wounds. With the other deer, the carcass was mostly consumed and partially cached, and was not able to be skinned because the hide was dried out and leathery. Interesting how, despite both deer being under tree cover, one was significantly more dried out due to warmer temperatures. Both deer were killed by predators; one was a cougar kill and the other was killed by a cougar or bear.



Mortality scene of a radio-collared deer that was killed by a cougar

Mountain Goat Population Surveys: Biologists Bergh, Wickhem, and Holman conducted an aerial mountain goat survey of the Goat Rocks population. Sightability-corrected estimates have not yet been calculated, but a raw count of 156 goats is the lowest on record since the inception of the current method of population estimation was implemented in the mid-2000s. This most recent decline continues a downward trend in the population of goats in the Goat Rocks Wilderness. Reasons for the decline are currently unknown. Region 5 Wildlife staff members are grateful for the early morning flight following of Customer Service Specialists Rainwaters and Koppi.

South Cascades Fisher Monitoring: Biologist Holman, with assistance from Region 5 Customer Service staff members Rainwaters and London as well as Office Manager Mulhern, deployed eight fisher monitoring stations within District 10. Biologists Wickhem and Bergh deployed an additional eight stations within District 9. The U.S Forest Service, Mount Rainier National Park, Conservation Northwest, and the Woodland Park Zoo are participants in the project as well. The 2021 effort involves placing a scent dispenser and a camera at a total of 40 stations throughout the South Cascades. The cameras will be checked in November and again in April to determine if reintroduced fishers are occupying the South Cascades. For more information on the fisher project click here: [Fisher | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#)



Biologist Bergh installs a scent dispenser at a fisher monitoring station



WDFW Fisher Project Lead Lewis, United States Forest Service Biologists Jakubowski and Mulanax, and Customer Service Specialist Rainwaters setting fisher stations in the South Cascades



Region 5 Officer Manager Mulhern with a fisher scent dispenser/bait station (left) and Fisher camera set with a roof to protect against winter snow in the south Cascades (right)

Bat Survey: Private Lands Biologist Ferris assisted WDFW white-nose syndrome coordinator and local United States Geological Survey and Fish and Wildlife Service staff members to survey and collect data on bats on private land. These efforts will help determine if bats are healthy or if white-nose syndrome is spreading to new areas of the state.



Biologist swabs bat wing membrane to test for parasites and disease such as white-nose syndrome

Bumble Bee Surveys: Biologist Holman joined Wildlife Diversity Division Lead Invertebrate Biologist Combs to survey for bumble bees per the protocol associated with the Bumble Bee Atlas. Surveys were completed per the requirements in both forested and sunny habitats south of Mayfield Lake. Four species of bumble bee were captured and documented during the effort, including the western bumble bee which is of conservation concern. Additionally, Biologist Holman and Habitat Biologist Smith completed a bumble bee survey near Cathlamet. Three species were captured and documented during this survey. For more information about bee conservation and to learn how to participate, check out the Bumble Bee Watch website [here](#).



*Western Bumble Bee *Bombus Occidentalis* captured in Lewis County*



Biologist Combs in the field in a bee captured in Lewis County, Biologist Holman capturing bees in Lewis County, and Biologist Smith a bee captured in Wahkiakum County

Skamania County Bat Survey: Biologist Wickhem, Volunteers Flick and Downing, and staff members from the United States Forest Service (USFS) Scenic Area and Friends of the Columbia Gorge conducted a bat emergence count in Skamania County. The site has numerous dilapidated barns and out-buildings and has been known to house bats for some time. WDFW was interested in doing a survey at the site to continue our efforts of documenting the locations of maternity colonies (where females gather in large groups to have their pups). These buildings are scheduled to be torn down this winter as part of a habitat restoration project, and the landowners would like to install bat boxes once the structures are removed. The large survey crew counted 46 bats, which was the bare minimum number of bats using this roost – the buildings had many holes and potential exit points that it was impossible to monitor all of them. Wickhem also used an acoustic detector to record the echolocation calls of the emerging bats. These recordings will be entered into a computer program that will identify which bat species were present at the site.



A lone bat roosting on the exterior of an out-building. The bat counting army (and two pigs) strategically places around each building, ready to count bats

District 9 Bumblebee Surveys: Biologists Wickhem and Bergh completed bumblebee surveys within their two assigned survey grids. One grid was in Klickitat County and the other in Skamania. The pair caught two bumblebees within their Klickitat County grid cell, and a whopping 24 bumblebees within their Skamania County grid. They recorded the flowering plant species that the bees were captured on and took careful photos of all the bees so the bee experts (not us!) can accurately identify which species were captured. Putting the bees on ice “chills them out,” making it possible to take photos. The bees were all safely released after the photo shoot. These surveys are part of a citizen science effort organized by the Pacific Northwest Bumblebee Atlas to document bee species across the Pacific Northwest.

WDFW has been assigned grid cells that would be difficult for the average volunteer to access. You can learn more about the Pacific Northwest Bumblebee Atlas and find citizen science opportunities [here](#).



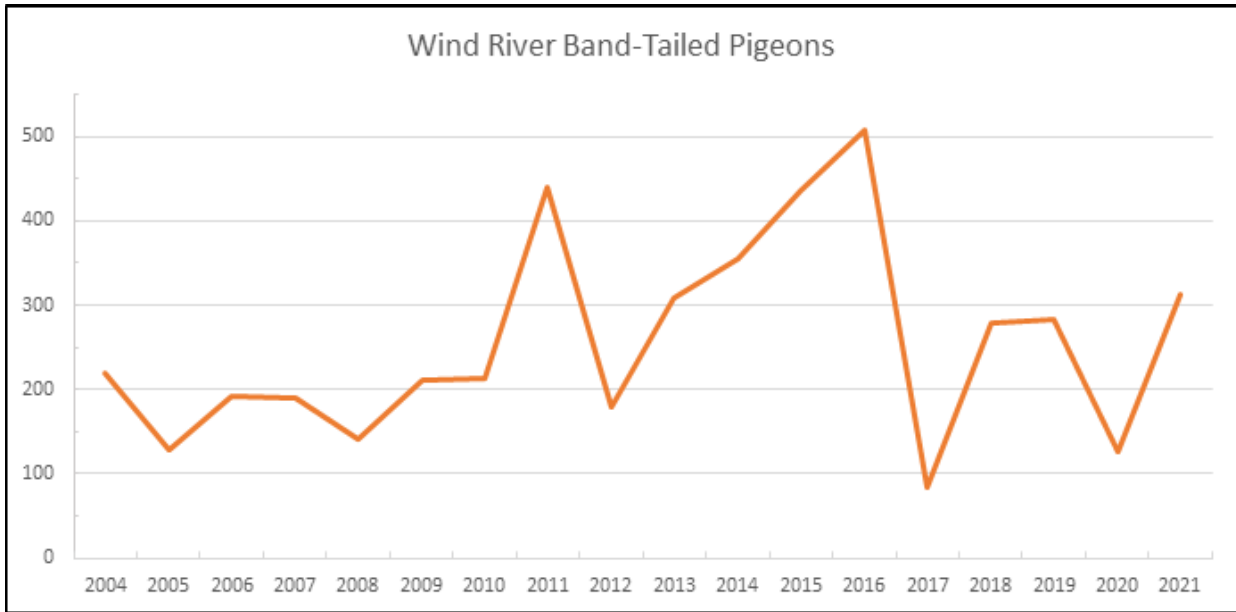
(From left to right) A cooler full of bees, Biologist Bergh catching bees in a patch of fireweed, and a frozen bee photo shoot

Western Pond Turtle Reproduction Study: Biologists Wickhem and Bergh and Scientific Technicians Leipold and Schiltz completed the final field season of the Western pond turtle reproduction study. The aim of the three-year study was to investigate if the novel disease Unknown Shell Disease (USD) has an effect on the reproductive rates of wild Western pond turtles. To accomplish this, WDFW has been trapping and attaching transmitters to reproductive females and then tracking them to their nests. After hundreds of man and woman hours tracking turtles this season, the crew documented eight nests. For each found nest, the number of eggs were counted then reburied into the nest cavity and a wire nest enclosure placed over each nest to prevent predation. The nests will be excavated again in October to see how many of the eggs successfully hatched. A huge thanks to everyone who has helped us with this time-intensive project over three seasons!



A Western pond turtle digging a nest (left) and counting the eggs within a nest after laying with an egg visible! (right)

Skamania County Band-Tailed Pigeon Survey: Biologist Wickhem conducted the annual survey of a band-tailed pigeon mineral site in Skamania County, recording 313 pigeons during the survey. Mineral sites throughout the range of the Pacific Coast population of band-tailed pigeons in western Washington, Oregon, California, and British Columbia are surveyed this time of year to index abundance and allow wildlife managers to monitor the population trends of this game species. Other species observed included kingfisher, dippers, swallows, robins, osprey, bald eagles (adult and juvenile), and humans.



View of the survey site (left) and several pigeons perched about the mineral site (right)

Klickitat Mule Deer Study – Mortality Investigation: District 9 Wildlife staff members received an email notification from a mule deer satellite GPS collar indicating that the collar had switched to “mortality mode.” Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen investigated the deer mortality east of Roosevelt. Unfortunately, the cause of death could not be determined for the collared female deer due to extensive scavenging on the carcass. This collared mule deer was part of a multi-year study examining deer migration patterns and movement corridors in Klickitat County.



Deceased mule deer doe with GPS collar

While hiking in to locate the dead deer, Jacobsen walked under a lone juniper tree where a Swainson’s hawk had apparently nested. A lone fledgling made an attempt at flying away from the nest but didn’t make it very far. The inexperienced flier landed a short distance away while its parent soared watchfully overhead. Jacobsen left the hawk alone. On the way back from the deer carcass, Jacobsen observed that the fledgling hawk had flown up into the limbs of a large sagebrush plant, safely out of the reach of coyotes.



Fledgling Swainson’s hawk

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Camping Misadventure: A concerned camper got Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen's contact information from the local grocery store and called about some camping trouble he was having. The camper came from out of state to camp on WDFW property, not knowing that WDFW had only recently closed their lands to camping as a fire danger precaution earlier. Jacobsen recommended several camping spots in the general area that were open and decent spots to park an RV for a few days. The camper was very appreciative.

Landowner Site Visit – Lewis County: Private Lands Biologist Ferris met with staff members from Nisqually Land Trust to evaluate the property for enrollment into the Private Lands Access Program. This property would provide public hunting for deer and elk in an area where they are currently no program offerings.



Pictured above is an obscured view of Mount Rainier behind the wildflower Fireweed, while visiting the Nisqually Land Trust property

Landowner Site Visit – Skamania County: Private Lands Biologist Ferris along with District Biologist Holman and Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen met with staff members from Columbia Land Trust to evaluate a property for enrollment into the Private Lands Access Program. This property would provide public hunting for most game species on a hunt by reservation basis, in an area where they are currently no program offerings.



Entrance to a potential new property enrollment on Columbia Land Trust property in Skamania County

Vancouver Lake and Shilappoo Access Sites: Vancouver Lake Access restroom is being tagged with more graffiti on a weekly basis and has now sadly become routine maintenance repainting restrooms. This time, both the Vancouver Lake and Shilappoo Access sites were vandalized. Wildlife area staff members and access staff members worked together repairing and setting the entrance sign to Vancouver Lake back into place. One of the “Do Not Enter” signs at the Shilappoo Access Site was also knocked over. A large hole was dug, and the sign was set back in with a bag and a half of concrete.



Vandalism at Vancouver Lake and Shilappoo Access Sites

Barbers and Fisherman’s Loop Access Sites: The Barbers Access site was once again covered in trash as well. Both the restroom and surrounding grounds were full of trash. This site is repeatedly targeted for trash dumping and vandalism. On a positive note, Access staff members, with the help of the Department of Corrections (DOC) crew, were able to trim and prune brush, briars, and grass at multiple access sites including Fisherman's Loop West.



Fisherman’s Loop West

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Injured Owl: Biologist Wickhem responded to a call about an injured great horned owl in Western Klickitat County. A couple found the owl walking around in the highway in the middle of the night. They couldn’t see any obvious injuries, but when they approached the owl was unable to fly away. They easily captured the bird and put it in a cardboard box with air holes for the night. Biologist Wickhem was able to retrieve the owl the following morning and transport it to the Rowena Wildlife Clinic where it will be assessed by veterinary staff members.



Injured great horned owl on its way to the wildlife rehabilitation clinic

Bear Damage to Beehives: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to a residence where a bear was reported to have damaged beehives three nights in a row. The landowner was housing approximately 50 beehives for a beekeeper out of Oregon and had not yet reported the damage to the owner of the bees. Jacobsen documented the damage and discussed possible electric fencing options with the landowner. Jacobsen also contacted the owner of the bees to discuss cleaning up the hives and subsequent protection measures. The bee owner declined the offer of fencing due to how difficult it would be to consolidate the bees. Instead, he decided he would remove the hives from the premises. Jacobsen deployed a hunter with a valid bear tag to the residence to hunt the bear until the beekeeper could remove the hives. The owner estimated that the bear caused approximately \$3,000 in damage over the three nights.



Bear damage to bee boxes

Animal Scat: A concerned landowner in suburban Clark County contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen about some animal scat that she found in her yard. A construction worker who was doing a job on her property, and who also claimed to be a hunter, told her that the scat belonged to a bear. The landowner sent pictures of the scat to Jacobsen, who confirmed that the scat was from a raccoon latrine site. Raccoons commonly defecate at the base of trees and will repeatedly use the same latrine site over and over. This often gives the appearance of “very large animal scats,” which landowners frequently mistake for bear scat.



Raccoon latrine site near the base of a tree

Three-Legged Cougar Report: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner in Clark County who had captured trail camera videos of a female cougar with three legs and her three adolescent kittens with her. Jacobsen received a report of this cougar and her kittens from a couple of miles away in mid-April but hadn't had any reports of them over the past three and a half months. Jacobsen provided advice to the landowner on living in cougar country. The landowner was excited to have caught the family group on camera.



Three-legged female cougar



Three-legged female cougar with her three adolescent kittens (two on the right and one on the left edge of the photo)

Trail Camera Installation: A landowner in suburban Clark County reported that she came outside of her house to check on her chickens and found all 17 huddled up under the chicken coop, which was extremely unusual. Immediately after she noticed the chickens, she reported that she heard an extremely loud, low growling sound like a lion coming from the tree above her. Thinking it was some sort of speaker, she looked around but couldn't see up in the tree. She heard additional chirping noises and, thinking a cougar was in the tree, ran inside the house and called WDFW. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen provided advice to the landowner and officer VanVladriken stopped by the residence to make sure a cougar was not still up in the tree. Jacobsen installed a trail camera for the landowner the following day and provided additional advice on keeping her chickens safe.

Cougar Depredation on Duck: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen spoke with a landowner in Skamania County who watched a cougar kill one of her ducks over the weekend. The cougar returned the following day around the same time, but the landowner scared the cougar off. Jacobsen provided advice on securing her livestock and carrying bear spray when out on her property. The landowner will contact WDFW if the cougar is observed again.

Depredation on Sheep: Wildlife Conflict Specialist followed up with a Klickitat County landowner after the landowner's sheep was killed by a cougar the previous morning. The local Sheriff's department was originally contacted by the landowner regarding the depredation and used hounds to euthanize a cougar on the property. Jacobsen was provided information regarding the cougar removal and arrived at the residence to pull a tooth sample (for aging) and a tissue sample (for DNA analysis) from the dead juvenile cougar. Unfortunately, the landowner had lost multiple sheep over the last several months to wildlife. Jacobsen discussed ways the landowner could protect his livestock from predation and offered hazing tools to help keep the remaining sheep safe. The landowner plans to construct a night shelter for the animals once building material costs decrease.



Sheep killed by a cougar

Trail Camera Retrieval: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen pulled a trail camera and a Fox Light from a residence that had been losing chickens in Klickitat County. No wildlife species were detected on the camera. The landowner is now fairly certain that her neighbor's dogs were responsible for the killed chickens.

Injured Beaver: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen received a report of an injured beaver along a popular Columbia River beach where crowds of people were recreating to escape the hot weather. Neither Jacobsen nor any WDFW officers were in the area, so Jacobsen coordinated with Washougal Animal Control to investigate and assess any potential public safety or animal safety concerns. Despite a quick response, the beaver ended up expiring before the officer arrived at the scene.

Potential Cougar Sighting: A landowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen about an animal that his wife observed in the middle of the night. The wife believed that she saw a cougar and the husband wanted to know if he could legally shoot the cougar if it was observed again. Jacobsen provided advice on living with cougars and on laws pertaining to protecting people, pets, and livestock from wildlife.

Cougars in Yards: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen spoke with a landowner whose children observed a cougar in their yard. The family dog chased the cougar onto a neighboring property. The neighbor reported to the other landowner that he then observed three cougars around his shop. Jacobsen provided advice and requested that the landowners call back if the cougars were observed again.

Another landowner contacted Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen to report that she observed two cougars enter her yard the day prior and kill an adult deer in her yard. She then observed one of the cougars drag the deer into the brush. Jacobsen was able to determine that the landowner had been placing water buckets out for deer due to the hot weather. Jacobsen advised the landowner to remove all her water buckets, as the deer would be able to survive the heat. Jacobsen noted that the deer likely had a higher risk of dying in that situation from repeated cougar depredations than a lack of water, as deer that are habituated to humans and residences, as well as human-placed attractants, are often less vigilant and wary and are more susceptible to depredations. Jacobsen also advised that the cougars would likely be feeding on the nearby carcass for a few days. The landowner was comfortable with this and agreed to avoid the area as well as to be careful and vigilant when out on her property. The landowner also planned to purchase bear spray and carry it with her.

Bear Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by an orchard manager regarding bear damage to commercial cherry trees. Last year, the orchard lost 200-300 cherry trees to black bear damage. Jacobsen met with the manager to discuss deterrent methods and public hunting access.

Snake Concerns: A landowner in Klickitat County contacted Washington State Patrol regarding a potential rattlesnake in her back yard. The landowner was unsure about what to do with the snake that she had trapped under a basket. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen called the reporting party and provided advice, but the snake had already vacated the area by that point. Based on the description of the snake, Jacobsen was fairly certain that the snake was a gopher snake, rather than a rattlesnake.

Ospreys: A concerned citizen contacted WDFW regarding an osprey nest along the Columbia River that appeared damaged. The citizen was worried that the chicks were out of the nest and needed to be rescued. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded to the area to assess the situation. While the osprey nest did appear to be in disarray, both the adult osprey and the two chicks were still occupying the nest site. No intervention was needed, thankfully, given the location of the nest.



Osprey nest on a piling in the Columbia River (left) and osprey and chicks in the nest (right)

Depredation on Geese: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a Klickitat County resident regarding six of his juvenile geese that were killed by something the previous night. Jacobsen met the landowner and examined the dead geese, which had been secured in a chicken-wire pen within a barn. After examining the pen, Jacobsen found a small hole in the chicken wire where raccoons likely entered the pen and killed the geese. Jacobsen helped the elderly landowner secure the hole in the pen with some hardware laying around the barn. The landowner was extremely appreciative of the assistance.



Dead goslings inside (almost) secure pen

Beaver Issues: A concerned citizen contacted WDFW requesting information on how to deal with a beaver issue on their property in Washougal. Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen contacted the resident and determined that the landowner was concerned about potential (and past) beaver damage to the trees on their property. Jacobsen provided advice on how to protect trees by wrapping their trunks with chicken wire.

Raccoons Under House: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen was contacted by a landowner who had been hearing some sort of animal bumping around under her house. The landowner had tried contacting several Wildlife Control Operators to try to trap the unknown animal but had not had success reaching anyone. Jacobsen stopped by the residence and confirmed that the animals in question were raccoons. Jacobsen provided advice on how to get the raccoons to vacate the crawl space under the house and deck and suggested ways of enclosing the areas to prevent future problems.

Cougar Concerns: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Jacobsen responded by phone to a second-hand report of a cougar walking around on someone's porch in Skamania County. Advice was provided, and Jacobsen requested that the reporting party contact him if the cougar was seen again in close proximity to houses.

Elk Damage: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey continued to renew Damage Prevention Cooperative Agreements with landowners around the district. With the dry summer weather, some landowners were already experiencing significant elk damage. Master Hunters have been deployed to address damage concerns, and landowners have been issued permits.

Bear Concerns: A concerned citizen found scat and an area of grass matted down near a berry patch. They were concerned a bear may have been spending too much time close to their property. After looking at photos of the scat, it was determined to be from a deer or elk, and that was also likely what was bedded down near the berries.

Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey also followed up on a report of a bear seen eating apples left out for deer. Aubrey advised to remove attractants to encourage the bear to move along. The Reporting Party agreed and let Aubrey know the bear has been in the area for a while and hasn't caused any issues, and just wanted to let WDFW know it was in the area in case we get anymore reports.

Injured Deer: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to a call for an injured deer. The reporting party believed the deer had been hit by a car the previous night and a person had moved the deer into a confined area to monitor it. Unfortunately, the deer was immobile with a number of injuries from the collision and had to be euthanized.

Injured Elk: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to a call for an injured elk calf. The calf was located on an island in the Cowlitz River, but was visible from a home along a highway. Unfortunately, Aubrey was not able to reach the elk calf and advised that nature would need to take its course. While on site talking to the reporting party, a coyote came to investigate the elk calf, but was chased off by a cow elk.

Cougar Sighting: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey contacted a group of neighbors concerned about a cougar sighting. The sighting was a few days old, but a trail camera was placed to monitor the situation. As of the end of the week, only raccoons and deer have been sighted in the area.

Owl Depredations: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey contacted an individual who had about a dozen chickens taken by an owl over the last month. The individual recently put bird netting over the chicken coop to provide better protection for his poultry. Additional advice was provided, and a site visit may be conducted if the netting fails to provide relief.

Depredation Investigation: Wildlife Conflict Specialist Aubrey responded to a report of a dead horse that the owners thought may have been killed by a large carnivore. However, upon arrival to the area, the owners had come to their own conclusion that the horse was not likely killed by another animal. Aubrey still conducted an investigation and came to the same conclusion that the animal likely died of an internal health issue.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Wildlife Habitat Site Visit: Wildlife Conflict Specialist/Private Lands Supervisor Jacobsen toured a “wildlife sanctuary” property with the landowner. The landowner owns an extensive vineyard and had reserved 60 acres of land to serve as wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitat enhancements were discussed. Jacobsen will work with Private Lands Biologist Ferris to explore avenues for assisting the landowner in their habitat enhancement endeavors.

Mount Saint Helens Wildlife Area – Eagle Island Habitat Enhancements: During the first two week of August Wildlife Area Manager Hauswald, Assistant Manager Breitenstein, and Wildlife Habitat Management spent a considerable amount of time controlling noxious weeds on the Eagle Island Unit. The majority of the work this year focused on controlling scotch broom in the upland areas and knotweed along the riparian zone of the North Fork Lewis River. Weed control work over the past several years has helped to significantly decrease the scotch broom stands in the open meadow areas of the island. Scotch broom was controlled on over 100 acres, and knotweed was treated along 1.2 miles of riverbank. The hiring of the contractor and partial purchase of the Wildlife Area’s new excavator to mow brush, was made possible by two grants from PacifiCorps for the enhancement of wildlife habitat in the Lewis River Basin.



Assistant Manager Breitenstein mowing scotch broom along the riverbank (top) and meadow area where scotch broom was treated (bottom)



Smokey sunrise, as equipment is made ready of the day's work

Klickitat Wildlife Area – Soda Springs Unit Agricultural Lease: Wildlife Area Manager VanLeuven checked the farmed fields on the Soda Springs Unit and found that production was poor, as expected in such a dry year. Forage production was so light on most of the fields that only whiskers of stems were left on the ground from mowing, not even worth the effort to bale. Two of the better fields, which total 20 acres together, produced only 20 large bales of hay. Another field produced only five bales of hay, and the rest were left uncut. Two fields were seeded to alfalfa in the spring and none of the seed germinated. Fall moisture may cause the alfalfa to sprout, so the success of seeding isn't yet known.

Klickitat Wildlife Area – More Drought Woes: Hot and dry conditions seem to have impacted fruit production in serviceberry, cascara, and hawthorn shrubs on the Klickitat Wildlife Area. A location that hosts all of these berry-producing plants was checked this week and only the hawthorns had any fruit. Also, the crabapple trees and snowberry shrubs at the Wildlife Area headquarters produced no fruit this year despite plenty of flowers in spring. Reasons for this could be more complex than just environmental conditions, but the result is migrating birds that depend on these berries will find little to sustain them here.

Klickitat Wildlife Area – Wheat for Pheasants: Wildlife Area Manager VanLeuven inspected wheat fields on the Hatchery Unit to confirm that the amount of wheat left standing after harvest met objectives for pheasant food and cover. The farmer leasing the fields harvested the wheat according to the plan and patches of wheat remaining on the fields should help hold pheasants on the property during the upcoming hunting season. Harvest was at least three weeks early this year due to drought and hot weather, and the wheat yield was lower than normal.

5) Providing Education and Outreach

Middle School Presentation: Biologist Bergh gave a virtual presentation to summer school students at Vancouver’s iTech Academy on her science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) career as a wildlife biologist. She presented information on her job duties at WDFW as well as her educational and career path. She also talked about other STEM careers at WDFW and the type of work the Department does as a whole.

Landowner Presentation: Private Lands Biologist Ferris presented program information and answered questions at the Mount Adams Resource Stewards board meeting to encourage enrollment into the Private Lands Access Program. Since many people do not know about this program, outreach and program promotion is important to not only increase acres available for public access on private lands, but also raise general program awareness for hunters.

6) Conducting Business Operations and Policy

Nothing for this installment.

7) Other

Nothing for this installment.

REGION 6

HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO:

1) Managing Wildlife Populations

Olympic Mountain Goat: Biologist Murphie assisted Olympic National Park during their efforts to remove mountain goats from the park in July. He reports a preliminary tally of 63 goats removed during the first of two efforts to be conducted this year. From these, some carcasses were removed from the field, cleaned, and deboned. Initial animal care was conducted by Biologist Murphie and Tribal volunteers coordinated by Chris Madsen with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission. Sunrise Meats did the processing, and the deboned meat was ground and wrapped for donation to local area food banks and Tribal communities. Biologist Murphie reports that he donated about 200 lbs. of ground meat to the Port Angeles and Sequim Food Banks.

Orphaned Fawns: Biologist Murphie assisted Sergeant Rosenberger with capture of two orphaned fawns in Port Angeles. The fawns were taken to Center Valley Animal Rescue.

Bat Surveys: Biologists Michaelis and Novack conducted an evening reconnaissance bat survey at one homeowner's residence in Ocean Shores. They observed and counted 86 emerging bats. The purpose of this survey was to follow up from a public report, assess colony presence, and species composition. Biologist Michaelis and DFW White-nose Syndrome Coordinator Abigail Tobin conducted a second reconnaissance survey at the Chehalis Wildlife Area. They counted around 200 bats emerging from two structures on the property. During each survey an acoustic detector was deployed to identify species type.

Mourning Dove: Biologist Michaelis started capturing and banding mourning doves in three locations. To date, a total of 68 doves have been successfully captured, banded, and released.

Table 1. Age and number of mourning doves captured and banded to date.

Date	HY	AHY	Unknown	Total
July 26 - 31	28	4	1	33
August 1- 15	28	5	2	35
Totals	56	9	3	68

Hatch year birds (HY) are doves which were hatched this year and after hatch year birds (AHY) are birds at least one year of age and older. Three birds captured were of an unknown sex and age. Plumage characteristics and plumage color are factors to determine age and sex of doves. Four males and five females after hatch year doves were banded. Banded doves are used to monitor harvest rates, movement information, and population demographics for the U.S Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) Pacific Flyway.

2) Providing Recreation Opportunities

Vegetation Management: Recently, with the major brushing of lake sites mostly completed, the water access team has been concentrating on river sites. Sites that received major brushing include the Bogachiel River Leyendecker and Wilson sites, the Sol Duc River Maxfield site, the Chehalis River Porter and South Montesano sites, and the Humptulips River, Thorberg, and Morley sites. Teaming up, the crew used the tractor with mower, pole saws, chainsaws, weed eaters, and blowers to accomplish this needed task.

Before:



After:



White Bridge Wynoochee River Access

Before:



After:



Satsop River Tornow Access



John's River Access

Black River Littlerock Trash: The remains of an illegal camp were discovered and cleaned up. Along with this major load of trash, many needles were removed from the site.



Other Work Performed: An abandoned trailer was cleared by Enforcement and removed from the site using a tractor and dump trailer. The trailer was taken in to be recycled, and the Department was notified of a torched vehicle. After fire crews put out the blaze and Enforcement cleared the vehicle to be removed from the site, the water access team contracted a hulk company for removal.



Wildcat Lake Abandoned Boat Trailer



Elwha River Sisson Vehicle Fire

Ivy Removal: In coordination with the Olympic-Willapa Hills Wildlife Area, the Grays Harbor Stream Team recently held a volunteer event to remove English ivy growing on the trees at the John’s River boat launch. In total, four generous individuals spent a Saturday afternoon cutting out chunks of ivy stems, loading them into a truck and hauling them to the dump, 360 pounds of material all together. English ivy is an extremely aggressive ground cover and is also capable of “climbing” posts, trees, buildings, etc. When growing up a tree, as was the case at John’s River, the weight of the plant can cause premature limb breakage and even blow-downs due to a sort of “sail effect” caused by the vines in the canopy.



Volunteer moving one of the cut stems to the truck

Wynoochee Mitigation Sites: The Olympic Wildlife Area crew started seeding at the Wynoochee Mitigation fields. Approximately 50 acres will be seeded this year.



Assistant Manager Gallegos preparing the field



Technician VanBlaricom seeding orchard grass and red clover

3) Providing Conflict Prevention and Education

Nothing for this installment.

4) Conserving Natural Landscapes

Lands 20/20: Biologist Novack met with Ducks Unlimited representative Greg Green at a wetland property near Raymond. One of the property owners has recently passed away and the family is interested in divesting. Given that nearly the entire property is potential estuarine wetlands, there is a long-term interest in conserving the property for fish and wildlife. WDFW is working on a Lands 20/20 application for some adjacent ownerships.

Biologist Novack also contacted property owners near Oakville to assess their ongoing interest in working with WDFW on future acquisitions. The properties have completed the 20/20 process and we recently learned that a Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) grant was fully funded to pursue those properties.

Elk River Unit: Biologists met with Wildlife Area Manager Bechtold and former state representative Blake to assess ongoing noxious weed control and forest restoration activities. Blake is especially interested in future conservation and wetland restoration of the area.

Biologist Novack ordered some conifer seedlings for winter planting in areas cleared of scotch broom. Funding is available through a State Lands Restoration grant.



5) **Providing Education and Outreach**

Hunting Prospects: Biologist Murphie submitted this year's edition of the District 15 hunting prospects for review. When complete, these can be found [here](#) on the WDFW website.

General Wildlife Inquiries: Biologist Murphie responded to inquiries received by phone or email related to wildlife. In addition to correspondences about deer, elk, the Olympic goat hunt, an osprey nest, and a weasel, Murphie was also contacted to identify a mystery bug, mystery critter, and even mystery scat.

6) **Conducting Business Operations and Policy**

Nothing for this installment.

7) **Other**

Nothing for this installment.