



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
March 17, 2017

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

North Canal Dam Fish Passage

Fish passage at the North Canal Dam located on the Deschutes River within the City of Bend is nearing completion. The project represents a unique partnership between the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), local irrigation districts and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). North Canal Dam is a 32-foot high concrete structure which has impeded fish passage since construction in 1914.



The opportunity to provide passage developed when Central Oregon and Swalley Irrigation Districts proposed installing in-conduit hydroelectric facilities on their canals. The dam also serves to deliver water to North Unit Irrigation District which also has in-conduit hydro facilities. As part of the deliberations for these new facilities, we entered into an agreement with the three irrigation districts. As part of this agreement ODFW contributed \$600,000, the irrigation districts \$400,000, and OWEB \$700,000 through an Upper Deschutes Watershed Council Grant to construct new fish passage facilities.

Completion of this project leaves only one remaining artificial barrier on the Deschutes River between Lake Billy Chinook and Wickiup

Reservoir; PacifiCorp's Bend Hydro Dam (Mirror Pond). We will be working collaboratively with area stakeholders to secure passage at this aging wooden structure within a few years. This will provide 115 miles of unobstructed habitat for native migratory fish.

Passage at barriers on the Deschutes River in proximity to Bend is particularly important for redband trout. Extreme seasonal variability in river flows to meet irrigation demands results in dynamic fish habitat and water quality conditions. Passage facilitates migration to preferred habitats throughout the year and enables genetic connectivity between fragmented populations.

The North Canal Dam fish ladder is unique in that it is constructed entirely of stainless steel. The vertical slot fishway is 373 feet long and consists of 49 cells. Final inspection is scheduled for March and operation will commence with the irrigation season in April. The Deschutes Fish District will monitor fish passage efficacy for several years after operation begins to ensure it operates as intended.

Wildlife Capture Operations

Every year, ODFW biologists capture wildlife for a number of reasons. Most commonly, capture occurs to place radio tracking or GPS collars to help us understand migration movements, seasonal home ranges, and survival rates of the animals we manage.

Biologists typically capture deer, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, and wolves during the winter months. Cool winter temperatures reduce the likelihood of animals overheating and females are early in their pregnancies, reducing the risk to their fetus. Snow also increases capture efficiency by slowing the animals, while providing them with a softer fall. Finally, winter captures are easier and more efficient because animals are often concentrated on winter ranges, reducing search time and helicopter costs.



Many techniques can be employed for big game capture. It is most efficient is to contract a helicopter capture crew to net-gun animals from the air. Depending on the project, either contractors can process the animals at the capture site, or they can transport ODFW biologists to the site to place collars and collect biological samples (age, sex, blood, fecal, and disease samples). Depending on the project objectives, animals can be transported to a base camp for processing and either released on site, transported to the original capture location, or released in a new location (translocations).

Ground capture is also effective during the winter months when forage is scarce and bait sites are appealing. Baited animals can be captured with a trap and livestock squeeze or chemically immobilized with a dart gun. ODFW wildlife biologists are proficient with all of these methods and are regularly trained to stay current on the most up-to-date immobilization techniques and legal requirements.

Organizationally, capture operations are generally directed by a “capture boss”. The capture boss is responsible for the safety of staff, contractors, animals, and the efficient operation of the capture. The capture boss for each species or project has option to delay or cancel any portion of the capture plan in interest of crew or wildlife safety. Typical delays are caused by weather or overall herd health issues.

This year we captured and collared close to 60 California bighorn sheep for an ongoing disease monitoring effort in southeastern Oregon and 25 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep as part of the Hells Canyon Initiative. We captured and collared

over 125 mule deer to add to the previous collaring efforts in the Blue Mountains studying survival and herd range delineation. Wildlife biologists were also able to capture and collar three moose and 11 wolves to track their movements through northeast Oregon.

WEST REGION

Steve Marx, Region Manager

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Hatchery Funding

For the past 65 years, ODFW has operated seven mitigation hatcheries in the Columbia, Willamette, and Rogue basins under a Cooperative Agreement with the (Corps). The hatcheries mitigate for lost production and/or lost habitat associated with construction of federal flood control and hydroelectric dams in these basins. The current Agreement expires June 30, 2017 for five Willamette basin hatcheries, Cole Rivers Hatchery on the Rogue River, and Bonneville Hatchery on the Columbia River.

In 2015, the Corps advised ODFW they would no longer implement these mitigation hatcheries and support services (fish marking and fish health) under a Cooperative Agreement (implementation document since program inception). They also notified ODFW of their plan to put all or some of the program elements out for competitive bid. In summer 2016, Corps told ODFW they would be able to sole source operations and maintenance of the four Willamette hatcheries (Leaburg excluded), but had not found a way to sole source operations and maintenance of Bonneville and Cole Rivers hatcheries.

In late January 2017, the Corps informed ODFW staff:

- They propose letting a sole source contract to ODFW for up to three years with an annual renewal process for operation of Marion Forks, South Santiam, McKenzie, and Willamette Hatcheries. Each hatchery would be limited to their mitigation poundage with a priority to spring Chinook, except for McKenzie Hatchery where Corps reduced funding by 55% and now funds only 360,000 smolts based on a court settlement not supported by NOAA Fisheries and ODFW, until NOAA

Fisheries approves the HGMP. The Corps have chosen not to make up the production balance elsewhere as the Cooperative Agreement allows.

- Leaburg Hatchery would be defunded and closed. Trout production would be contracted to small business for up to 100,000 pounds with an option for an additional 50,000 pounds. There is no intent to meet full mitigation responsibility of 277,000 pounds, reducing their trout mitigation by 64 percent.
- Bonneville and Cole Rivers Hatchery operations and maintenance, Fish Health Services, and Fish Marking and Recovery Programs for the entire mitigation program would be put out for competitive bid. ODFW is bidding.
- The Corps intends to implement these changes by July 1, 2017. Bid solicitations are proposed for release on February 28 with a March 15 proposal deadline. Contracts will be awarded April 10.

Potential effects of the changes are:

- Up to 70 ODFW employees could be affected, including hatchery, Fish ID, and Fish Health Services staff.
- Reduce trout stocking 64 percent (almost 540,000 trout) in Upper Willamette waterbodies. Stocking for some of the most economically important fisheries in the state would be reduced; Detroit Reservoir, Foster Reservoir, and the mainstem McKenzie River are among the affected waterbodies.
- Loss of stocking capabilities specifically adapted to individual waters and users in the upper Willamette Basin from Leaburg Hatchery.
- The changes could also impact ODFW funded production at the facilities supporting fisheries programs in the Rogue River basin, South Coast and Coos-Coquille districts, and Mitchel Act Chinook and Coho production at Bonneville Hatchery.

As of February 24th, there is ongoing uncertainty regarding direction taken by the Corps in spite of ODFW efforts to discuss and resolve these issues.

We continue to hear significant concerns from stakeholders, legislators, and congressional staff regarding the impacts of the proposed changes.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Rick Hargrave, Deputy Administrator

New Adult Self-learning Course

The Information and Education (I&E) Division in partnership with Oregon State University's Professional and Continuing Education (PACE), recently completed a new adult self-learning course entitled "[How to Hunt Deer and Elk in Oregon.](#)" This comprehensive, easy to understand course provides new and novice hunters with the basic knowledge and skills required to hunt deer and elk (What do I need? How do I do it? Where do I go?). This course will be accessible through the ODFW website and be integrated into the division's recruitment and retention strategies.



Bi-Mart Corporate Product Knowledge Show

The Statewide Marketing Coordinator and Recruiting, Retention, and Reactivation Coordinator will attend the Bi-Mart Corporate Product Knowledge Show next month in Eugene. This will be the fourth year I&E staff have participated in this event that brings together Bi-Mart managers who oversee the Sporting Goods departments with I&E staff to learn about upcoming fishing and hunting marketing campaigns or programs, new license types and other outreach efforts.

OCEAN SALMON AND COLUMBIA RIVER PROGRAM

Tucker Jones, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager

Northern Pikeminnow Management Program – managing a native predator to benefit juvenile salmonids

The Northern Pikeminnow Management Program (NPMP), first implemented in 1991, is a collaborative effort between the Oregon Department of fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), with funding from the Bonneville Power Administration. The primary goal of the program is to reduce predation on juvenile salmon and steelhead migrating through the Columbia and Snake rivers while maintaining a viable population of the native Northern Pikeminnow

Based on studies conducted in the 1980's, the concept behind the NPMP is that an annual 10 to 20% exploitation rate of Northern Pikeminnow (≥ 11 inches) will shift the population structure toward smaller fish that tend to consume fewer juvenile salmon; over time reducing predation by up to 50 percent. Success of the program therefore depends on maintaining harvest rates within the 10 to 20% range annually; a target that has been hit in 22 of the 26 years. The early studies also determined that this harvest rate would not jeopardize the viability of native Northern Pikeminnow population.

Program Implementation

Because Northern Pikeminnow are not considered game fish, fisheries managers provide an incentive to harvest them in the form of a sport-reward. Each year, from May-September, anglers are recruited to fish for Northern Pikeminnow. Registered anglers are paid a sum of money based on the number of large, older pikeminnow they harvest. The reward for the first 25 fish harvested by an angler is \$5 per fish. An angler who harvests between 26 and 200 fish will be paid at a rate of \$6 and all northern pikeminnow harvested beyond 200 are worth \$8 per fish. Also, because pikeminnow seasonally congregate near dams in the Columbia and Snake rivers, teams of personnel

administered by WDFW are paid to fish for them from select dams.

Highlights from the 2016 Field Season

During 2016, ODFW field teams tagged (Figure 1) and released 2,465 Northern Pikeminnow. Of these, 155 were recaptured, resulting in an estimated 12.1% exploitation rate and a predicted 29% reduction in predation by northern pikeminnow on juvenile salmon relative to preprogram levels. Further, data collected during 2016 do not indicate an obvious response to removals of northern pikeminnow from populations of other predatory fishes, e.g., Smallmouth Bass and Walleye, or the remaining Northern Pikeminnow population.

During 2016 angler participation increased to its highest cumulative effort since 2009 and a record number 223,249 Northern Pikeminnow were harvested. As a result, the program was projected to over-spend its PSMFC administered sport-reward budget of \$1,500,000. On September 13, PSMFC approached the Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Budget Oversight Group (BOG) to request an additional \$350,000; the money was awarded. Because of the cost overrun, the 2017 NPMP sport-reward season will end in August with the possibility of extending the fishery through September based on the availability of funds.



Figure 1. Tagging Northern Pikeminnow in the Columbia River.

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

In addition to the enforcement of the Fish and Wildlife laws, the Oregon State Police Fish & Wildlife Division (F&W) Troopers also enforce laws related to the environment and habitat protection. The following are a few examples of their work.

A F&W trooper from the Roseburg office responded to a commercial motor vehicle (CMV) crash on Interstate 5 near Rice Hill. One of the CMV's trailers overturned spilling approximately 500-1000 gallons of Melamine Urea Formaldehyde Resin. The CMV crashed in close proximity to a drainage ditch that flows into Yoncalla Creek. Yoncalla Creek is listed as an essential salmonid habitat (ESH) stream. Crews from Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and First Strike worked diligently on limiting the amount of resin that entered the drainage ditch.



Troopers responded to a hazardous material spill in the South Umpqua River in Dillard. A wood mill in Dillard had a drier fire that caused the sprinkler system to activate. The excess water caused a holding tank to overflow. The holding tank contained 2500/5000 gallons of water and approximately 300 gallons of hydraulic oil. The overflow went into the storm drain that flows into the South Umpqua River. A visible sheen could be seen on the surface of the water and along the river bank. The mill worked to contain the spill and contacted Oregon Emergency's Response System (OERS).

A F&W trooper from the Central Point office received a complaint of tires being dumped near the Rogue River close to Savage Creek. An ODFW biologist had observed a truck loaded with tires the day before and took a picture of the truck with tires thinking they may be dumped. The trooper was able to locate the vehicle and stopped it. The suspect admitted to dumping the tires and was cited for littering within 100 yards of a waterway.

A F&W trooper from the Tillamook office received information about a subject that had cut down riparian trees along the Tillamook River and

disturbed the banks of the river. The Tillamook River is essential salmonid habitat and this type of work requires a permit. Investigation revealed that a subject cut multiple trees down on the property without the owner's permission and then sold the trees to a tree buyer. The trooper was assisted in the investigation by ODFW and the Tillamook County Sheriff's Office. The Tillamook County Sheriff's Office lodged the subject in jail on charges of Theft I, and the trooper cited the subject for Unlawful Fill and Removal.

A Trooper from Roseburg responded to a report of a piece of construction equipment in the South Umpqua River in Roseburg. A backhoe was discovered along the river bank with the tracks halfway under water. The backhoe was eventually moved to higher ground. It was discovered with the help of the Roseburg Police Department that the backhoe was privately owned. Follow up was conducted to assess if any DEQ/DSL violations were taking place.

CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

ODFW collaborated on four multi-state State Wildlife Grants Competitive Grant Program (C-SWG) proposals submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in February, 2017. The intent of the C-SWG Program is to provide a competitive funding opportunity for implementing State Wildlife Actions Plans (i.e., Oregon Conservation Strategy) nation-wide, and supporting conservation actions on Species of Greatest Conservation Need (i.e., Strategy Species). Congress may appropriate approximately \$5.5 million for the 2017 C-SWG Program, which typically funds 12 to 18 grants per year.

Project proposals were developed in close collaboration with the Conservation Program, Operations Program, Habitat Resources Program, Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program, district field biologists, and other state partners. Below is a summary of the four project proposals submitted:

Project #1: *Conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need and Pollinators in Washington and Oregon Prairie-Oak Habitat*

This grant proposal is a continuation of a successful collaboration with ODFW, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other conservation partners to restore prairie-oak habitat and associated species in Washington and Oregon. Grasslands and Oak Woodlands are identified as habitats of conservation concern (i.e., Strategy Habitats) in the Oregon Conservation Strategy (Strategy). There are also many Strategy Species that rely on these habitats for their continued survival. The total grant request is for ~\$500,000, with agencies and partners providing ~\$370,000 in non-federal match. Our partners will be conducting the habitat restoration and species monitoring in Oregon. The Conservation Program will provide \$20,000 in cash match to complete an Oregon Vesper Sparrow study to examine the limiting factors on populations in the Willamette Valley. The Oregon Vesper Sparrow is a priority Strategy Species in the Willamette Valley, and the project will address a limiting factor identified in the Strategy.

Project #2: Advancing Western Pond Turtle Conservation in Washington, Oregon, and California

This grant proposal would create a new cooperative effort to implement a range-wide Western Pond Turtle conservation project between Oregon, California, and Washington. Out of the \$500,000 total grant request, ODFW is seeking \$120,000 with match being provided by a multitude of external partners. The funds will be used to: 1) compile and evaluate data and conduct turtle surveys in Oregon, and 2) conduct habitat restoration work at three Western Pond Turtle breeding sites in the Willamette Valley Ecoregion. Much of the field work will be conducted by contractors through ODFW; however, some District Biologist staff time will also be used for monitoring, trapping, and restoration activities. The Western Pond Turtle is a Strategy Species in five ecoregions. This project will address the recommended conservation actions identified in the Strategy. . . .

Project #3: Western Bats: Implementing North American Bat Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Impacts

This grant proposal is a cooperative project between Arizona Game and Fish Department, Bat Conservation International, and California, Colorado, Idaho, and Oregon. The project will

implement a bat monitoring program to document impacts and provide a baseline from which to measure the effectiveness of conservation and management actions, especially in light of the many threats to bat populations such as white-nose syndrome, climate change, energy development, and habitat loss. This project will help fill in data gaps addressed in the Strategy for the eight bats identified as Strategy Species. The total grant request is for ~\$460,000. ODFW would receive \$82,000 for a contractor to help lead the bat surveys in Oregon, matched with ~\$35,000 from District Biologist staff time.

Project #4: Predicting Responses of Short-eared Owl Population Size, Distribution, and Habitat Use in a Changing Climate

This proposal is a collaboration between agencies and NGOs from eight states, including California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The project aims to determine Short-eared Owl abundance, distribution, and habitat associations across the West, aligning results with predicted changes in climate. Short-eared Owls are a Strategy Species, and this project will address data gaps identified in the Strategy. Although ODFW provided a letter of support for the proposal, the department will not be an active participant in implementation of the project. The Klamath Bird Observatory will conduct the owl surveys in Oregon.



**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
March 17, 2017**