



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
June 7 & 8, 2012

NORTHEAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area Bird-a-thon

Department of Fish and Wildlife hosted the 7th annual Bird-a-thon Friday May 18 through Sunday May 20 at Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area. The three day event has grown from 70 registered participants in 2007 to more than 350 this year. The event offers a once-a-year opportunity to view birds at places on the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area generally closed to public access in the spring to protect nesting and rearing birds. The local community joins the effort by sponsoring a concurrent art show and other events.

The weekend started off Friday night with registration and live music provided by local birders. This was followed by a presentation by Noah Stryker, Eugene author and world birder. Mr. Stryker is a graduate of Oregon State University and has birded all over the world. His presentation was about his experiences in Antarctica and portrayed in his recently published book "*Among Penguins: A Birdman in Antarctica*".

Saturday activities included staffed birding stations, guided bird walks, local artists painting "open air", and numerous children's activities all on the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area. The children's activities received a lot of participation and included stations for kids to build bird houses, make bird masks, paint canvas totes, become a Junior Birder, earning a patch and field guide, and view interpretative displays. The day culminated with a live birds of prey presentation from the Blue Mountain Wildlife Rehabilitation Center.

On Sunday, participants could choose from five guided field trips at the Ladd Marsh and surrounding locations. Participants at stations and on guided walks and field trips collectively observed well over 100 species of birds, including some uncommon and secretive species not often seen.

The event is attended by a diverse audience, ranging from experienced birdwatchers to complete novices. Each year numerous youth have the opportunity to learn about birds, become birdwatchers, and meet the biologists that manage birds and their habitats.



The key to the success of this event has been the dedicated volunteers that return year after year and ODFW Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area staff. The event was originally developed by the Eastern Oregon University Biology Club. The club still takes a leadership role in putting on the Bird-a-thon supported this year by more than 40 other volunteers. Other supporters include: the Friends of Ladd Marsh, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Union County Tourism, Oregon Wildlife and Wallowa Whitman National Forest.

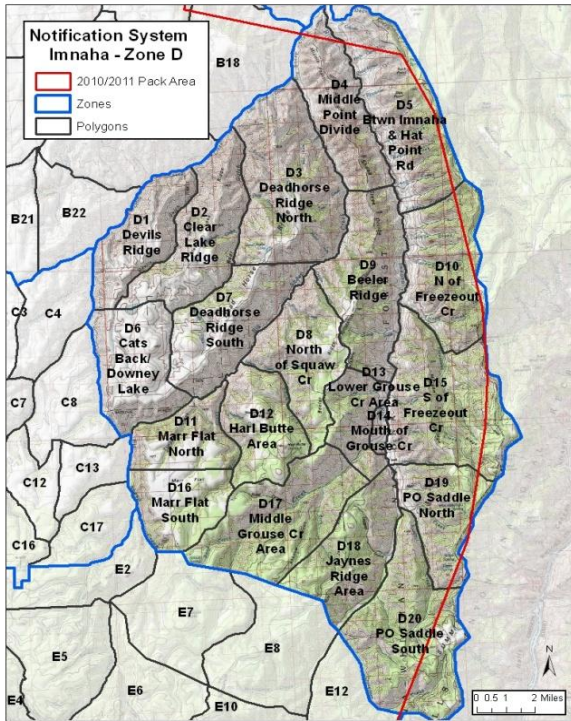
Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Implementation Update

Over the last month Department staff confirmed wolf depredation of nine sheep in two events in the Weston Mountain area of Umatilla County. These are the first depredations in Umatilla County and were in the vicinity of wolf activity documented last fall. While a pack has not been identified here yet, circumstances suggest a pair of wolves exist in this area.

Department staff is working with landowners to protect their stock and monitor wolf activity in this new depredation area. Assistance has included placement of fladry on two properties as well as advice on other non-lethal efforts that can be implemented to limit the potential for wolf depredation. District staff is currently working with three additional producers to install fladry. Department monitoring has included placement of remote cameras and trapping in an effort to radio collar the wolves in this area.

Other trapping/radio collaring efforts are ongoing in the area of the Snake River Pack and Walla Walla Pack.

On May 22 the Department launched the Livestock Producer Wolf Location Notification System. The system provides wolf location information to livestock producers daily. Producers use this information to manage the risk of wolf depredation of their livestock.



The data from GPS collared wolves is uploaded via satellites on a set schedule, generally two to four times a day. In the past, Department staff manually downloaded this data and used it to send text messages to producers in the area wolves were using actively. Last year the Department sent almost 4,900 texts to Wallowa County stockowners in the vicinity of the Imnaha Pack to help them manage the risk to their property.

With the new system, data from a GPS collar is sent from the satellite directly to a computer program which locates the collar location into pre-designated polygons. The computer then sends an email and/or text message to livestock producers that have signed up for the service. Only livestock producers in the area being used by a wolf pack can access the system. Polygon boundaries are set up so that they provide livestock producers useful information while protecting a pack's den and rendezvous.

The department doesn't generally release information on the location of animals it radio collars because of the risk associated with the general public inappropriately using this information. The Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan specifically calls for providing monitoring information to public on an as needed basis so they can better manage the risk to

a landowners property and livestock. As a result, access to this system is strictly controlled to those landowners and stockowners with livestock at risk of wolf depredation.

HIGH DESERT REGION

Chip Dale, Region Manager

Sage Grouse Population Trend

Sage-grouse lek counts were completed in late April, 2012. Data indicates decreased populations across the sage grouse range in Oregon. Compared to 2011 data, male lek attendance was down 19% in the Klamath, 15% in the Malheur, 19% in the Deschutes, and 32% in the Grand Ronde Watershed Districts. The decreased population trend is most likely due to the below average production from the two previous years. Observed ratios of chicks/hen were 1.4 and 1.3 in 2010 and 2011, respectively. Both these ratios are below the 19 year average of 1.6 chicks/hen. Annual variations such as these are usually weather related. The cool wet springs of the past few years may have been detrimental to sage-grouse production.



First Fish Release Celebration in the Upper Deschutes River Basin

Portland General Electric, ODFW, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs are planning a "First Fish Release Celebration" at the Pelton Round Butte (PRB) hydroelectric project on Friday, June 8, 2012 with a formal ceremony. The plan is to release some of the first returning spring chinook adults of upper Deschutes basin origin to their natal waters.

It has been more than 40 years since adult salmon swam in the upper reaches of the Deschutes River. Following completion of the three dams of the Pelton Round Butte complex in 1964 it was discovered within a few years that juvenile fish were unable to find the outlet structure. Since then, a hatchery programs at Round Butte (ODFW) and Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery's (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) has supported the majority of the non tribal and tribal harvest in the lower Deschutes River basin. The

strategy for 2012 includes trap and haul of spring Chinook salmon, summer steelhead and sockeye salmon around the three dams in the Pelton Round Butte complex. Once above the dams, the fish will swim into the Upper Deschutes, Metolius and Crooked Rivers, as well as Whychus Creek.

Fish captured at the PRB Trap will be held for a short period of time during early in the week of June 4, 2012 and released into Lake Billy Chinook on Friday, June 8 at the adult facility. As of May 31, 2012, 13 adult spring chinook of upper basin origin have returned to the trap.

One of the Warm Springs tribal chiefs will conduct a ceremony with a blessing of the first fish and numerous participants including members of the PRB Fish Committee and other basin stakeholders, organizations and media will participate.



footage. Tagging studies conducted between 2000 and 2007 estimated that the spawning population of green sturgeon in the Rogue River is approximately 1,500. Beginning in 2011 the Rogue River (and all other NW and SW zone waters) were closed to the harvest of green sturgeon.



National Geographic Monster Fish host, Zeb Hogan.



SOUTHWEST REGION

Larry Cooper, Region Manager

Rogue River Green Sturgeon

ODFW Gold Beach staff hosted a National Geographic TV crew on 5-29-12. The TV crew is producing a television show on green sturgeon to be shown on *National Geographic Wild* in the spring 2013. The producers were particularly interested in the green sturgeon of the Northern DPS (Distinct Population Segment) and in comparing and contrasting the two primary Northern DPS populations in the Rogue and Klamath rivers.

One green sturgeon was sampled for the purposes of providing a filming opportunity. The film crew donned SCUBA gear and dove on the capture sturgeon in order to obtain underwater footage for the show. The green sturgeon was released unharmed.

The TV crew also worked with Columbia River Management and the Yurok Tribal Fisheries Program on the Klamath River to collect green sturgeon

Tetracycline Black Bear Marking:

ODFW has been marking black bears annually since 1999 to provide a reliable population estimate. The initial study protocol was established in the Southwest Region, and marking extended statewide in 2006.

Bears are marked using tetracycline, a powdered antibiotic. In order to attract the bears and disguise the bitter taste, approximately nine 500 mg tetracycline capsules are wrapped with a pound of bacon and placed in a mesh bag, then coated with grease. Bears eat the bacon and in doing so, consume the tetracycline. The tetracycline binds to calcium in bones and teeth, making a permanent mark, detectable only in the laboratory. Marks can be distinguished on teeth from multiple years if a bear consumes the bait more than one year.

Baits are distributed five miles apart in order to minimize the chance of a single bear taking multiple baits within the same year. Baits are hung approximately 8 to 10 feet high in trees, and after two to three weeks biologists return to examine the baits. If

the bait is taken and bear claw marks are evident on the tree, the bait is designated as a successful mark.

Tetracycline baits are distributed in early June after the spring bear harvest season, thus avoiding tetracycline in the meat of bears taken by hunters. Hunters are required to present their bear skull at an ODFW office within 10 days of harvest. ODFW staff then extract a premolar tooth from the skull, which is examined for age determination and tetracycline marks. The ratio of marked to unmarked bears is then used to develop a population estimate for each region and statewide. In 2010 the statewide black bear population was estimated at approximately 36,833 bears with a standard error of 3,015. In 2010, the population in the SW Oregon hunt zone (Wildlife Management Units 20-30) was estimated at 19,309 bears with a standard error of 6,919.



NORTHWEST REGION

Chris Wheaton, Region Manager

Double -crested Cormorants (DCCO)

Activities to address avian predation by this species on the coast including hazing, a Tillamook Bay diet study, and a depredation permit application have all been ongoing in the last few months. Hazing projects using trained volunteers are occurring in the Nehalem, Tillamook, Nestucca, Alsea, and Coquille estuaries.

In order to use lethal take as a method to address predation, ODFW is pursuing two types of depredation authorization. ODFW has sent a letter to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) asking to be included in the federal depredation order that is set to be renewed in 2014 and does not currently include Oregon. Inclusion in this depredation order would provide Oregon with DCCO management authority.

In the meantime, ODFW is pursuing a separate depredation permit to take some DCCO in Tillamook Bay and the Umpqua and Rogue River estuaries. This depredation permit application requesting to lethally take double-crested cormorants was submitted to the USFWS in mid-May.

We currently have a Scientific Take Permit for up to 50 DCCOs in Tillamook Bay in 2012 for the purpose of a diet study. We needed 40 stomach samples for the diet study and ended up lethally collecting a total of 45 birds (5 stomachs were empty) between April 12 – May 17. Our second to last collection day provided the most impressive single fish stomach sample. This fish was about 16” long and we believe it to be a rock prickleback. We are currently working with several organizations to raise funds for a complete analysis of all the stomach contents by OSU staff, which would take several months.



DCCO muscle and liver samples collected as part of the study were delivered to OSU and will be used by OSU and a University in Japan for contaminants studies.

Columbian White-tailed Deer

The USFWS Julia Butler Hanson Refuge appears to be in danger of flooding due to a compromised dike along the Columbia River. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) determined failure is imminent, and there is no funding available through the local diking district or other sources to repair the dike at this time. If the dike breaches, most of the mainland refuge near Cathlamet, Washington, will be under water, threatening a significant portion of the endangered lower Columbia population of this deer species. The Service is seeking emergency locations in Washington and Oregon to relocate these deer. Any animals relocated into new areas would still be fully listed as Endangered, which is cause for some concern. We are working with the Service and the state of Washington to attempt to assist with recovery while preventing a situation where issues such as damage and impact to

current hunting seasons cannot be addressed due to the federally listed status of this species.

Willamette Project Biological Opinion Implementation

Significant changes to hatchery operations, fisheries, and habitat management have been ongoing since the Endangered Species Act Biological Opinion on the Willamette Project was adopted in 2008. In the McKenzie these include changes to reduce hatchery Chinook straying in the McKenzie River to less than 10%. Changes there, either ongoing or under discussion, include re-programming some production to the Coast Fork and improvements to the McKenzie Hatchery ladder.



In the North Santiam a substantial project is underway to improve the Minto fish collection facility. This will require the temporary use of the Upper Bennett trap downstream to collect adults during construction. We are trapping a minimum of 3 days a week and collecting and hauling brood fish to McKenzie Hatchery on two of those days. The third day will be devoted to processing and hauling fish to the North Santiam above Detroit Reservoir. This year we plan to collect and transport 700 fish for hatchery broodstock to McKenzie Hatchery and 600 fish for out planting above Detroit. We expect this to occur almost entirely during the month of June.

Willamette Falls Sea Lions

Portland State University (PSU) students monitoring sea lions at Willamette Falls report that sea lions foraging throughout daylight hours near the Falls. Spring Chinook and steelhead are most commonly taken, and lamprey are observed intermittently. Very few sturgeon are being taken, based on observations. Only a few anglers are fishing in preferred areas near the Falls as sea lions readily take fish off the lines in these locations. PSU monitors counted 21 sea lions hauled out at a local marina one morning last month.

We are also receiving numerous reports of escalating interactions between sea lions and anglers on the Willamette River below the Falls. It appears sea lions

are becoming increasingly bold and may be specifically targeting angler-hooked fish. At least two boats have reportedly lost four spring Chinook in one day to sea lions.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Program Administrator

Let's Go Camping

Oregon State Park rangers and volunteers will be teaching basic fishing skills as part of Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation's (ODPR) "Let's Go Camping" program. The ODPR program is for beginning campers of all ages and teaches camping techniques, outdoor cooking and safety skills. The "Let's Go Camping" sessions will be offered at nearly 20 state parks throughout the summer. Depending upon the location, sessions may also include nature hikes, kayaking, fishing and other outdoor activities. In April, ODFW angler education staff trained park rangers and volunteers on how to effectively teach beginning fishing skills. The training included tips for teaching knot tying, casting and ways to get children and families interested in fishing.

This is one of several collaborative efforts between ODFW and ODPR. In May, more than 50 people participated in two single day clamming workshops at Fort Stevens State Park. Nearly everyone took home a limit of clams during the workshops. Volunteer instructors demonstrated how to find and dig razor clams, conducted a safety briefing, and talked about clam biology before turning participants loose on the beaches near Fort Stevens State Park. Afterwards, instructors demonstrated how to clean and cook razor clams and passed along some of their favorite recipes. In September, ODFW and ODPR will sponsor a crabbing workshop at South Beach State Park.

The clamming and crabbing workshops are part of the ODFW Outdoors program. These hands on workshops give participants the basic skills they need to get started fishing, hunting or to participate in other outdoor activities. The schedule includes workshops on hunting with muzzleloaders, basic archery, warm water fishing, and two multi-day events with instruction on fly fishing, trap shooting, and hunting turkeys, pheasants and waterfowl.

Other upcoming events include nearly 40 Free Fishing Weekend events throughout the state. This year, several events will be held at local ponds and reservoirs to highlight fishing opportunities that are available year round. In the past, many of the events have been held

at ODFW hatcheries and other locations that are not usually open to fishing.

Lapsed Angler Campaigns

Over the next few weeks, more than 80,000 lapsed anglers will receive postcards encouraging them to buy a license and go fishing. The mass mailing is part of an ongoing effort by ODFW, the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) and other partners to increase the effectiveness of direct mail marketing campaigns. This year, lapsed anglers will receive different postcards depending upon where they live and their license buying history. Anglers living in Central Oregon, Lane County and the Portland metro area will receive postcards highlighting fishing opportunities close to home. Anglers living outside those areas will receive postcards promoting fishing in general. Over the past several years, RBFF has funded several department efforts to test the effectiveness of direct mail in increasing license sales.

OCEAN SALMON AND COLUMBIA RIVER PROGRAM

Tony, Program Manager

Columbia River Spring Chinook Fisheries Update Commercial Fisheries

Mainstem: Commercial fishers landed one spring Chinook that weighed 19.8 pounds in the winter white sturgeon fishery.

Test fishing for the spring salmon fishery began on February 14, 2012 using tangle-net (4.25-inch mesh) and large mesh (8-inch) gill nets. Catches of Chinook were low (≤ 2 Chinook/drift) throughout February and March, and were often less than catches of steelhead. In addition, over 40% of the catch was upriver stocks. Given the poor catch rates of Chinook and the relatively high handle of steelhead in test fisheries, fishery managers delayed the first commercial opener until conditions improved. This course of action was supported by the majority of commercial fishers who testified at Columbia River Compact hearings.

Chinook catch increased in the April 1 test fishery (3.4 Chinook/drift), although upriver stocks comprised half the catch. In contrast, steelhead catch decreased substantially (< 1.0 steelhead/drift). In response, fishery managers set a 12-hour day-time tangle-net fishery for April 3 in Zones 1-5.

During the April 3 fishery commercial fishers made 155 deliveries and landed 2,551 spring Chinook, of which over 60% were upriver stocks. The catch per drift of Chinook was about two-thirds of that in the test fishery (2.2 Chinook/drift), while the catch of steelhead

remained low (0.4 steelhead/drift). Average weight of Chinook was 12.9 pounds. The price paid to commercial fishers in Oregon was about \$8.00 per pound.

Because commercial fishers only caught about 25% of their upriver spring Chinook allocation during the April 3 fishery and demand for the fish remained strong, fishery managers scheduled a 6-hour daytime tangle-net fishery in Zones 1-5 for April 10. During this fishery, commercial fishers made 179 deliveries and landed 3,628 spring Chinook, of which over 70% were upriver stocks. The catch per drift of Chinook was over 1.5 times that in the April 3 fishery (3.8 Chinook/drift), while the catch of steelhead remained low (0.8 steelhead/drift). Average weight of Chinook was 12.8 pounds. The prices paid to commercial fishers in Oregon was about \$6.00 per pound.

The total harvest of spring Chinook in mainstem commercial fisheries during the two fishing periods was almost 6,200 (all stocks). Take of upriver Chinook in these fisheries totaled 4,318 or 94% of the management guideline.

Select Areas: Select Area commercial fisheries have occurred in Youngs Bay, Blind Slough, Tongue Point and Deep River. Winter commercial fishing seasons ranged from February 12 through April 5, depending on area. The total harvest during the winter period was 368 spring Chinook, of which 85% came from Youngs Bay. Average weight of Chinook was 13.4 pounds. The price paid per pound in Oregon was about \$7.00 per pound. Spring commercial fisheries in the Select Areas began on April 19 and seasons are scheduled through June 15. Total harvest from April 19 through May 29 was 5,161 spring Chinook, of which 78% came from Youngs Bay. Average weight of Chinook was 11.6 pounds. The price paid per pound in Oregon was about \$6.00 per pound. The total take of upriver spring Chinook in Select Area fisheries through May 18 was 179.

Recreational Fisheries

Downstream from Bonneville Dam: The recreational fishery for spring Chinook downstream from Bonneville Dam opened on January 1 under permanent rules from Buoy 10 upstream to the I-5 Bridge. Fishery managers modified the rules effective March 1 to extend the upstream boundary from the I-5 Bridge to Beacon Rock and to allow bank-only fishing from Beacon Rock upstream to Bonneville Dam. The fishing season was initially set to continue through April 6, although fishing was closed on Tuesday March 20 and 27 and April 3 to allow day-time commercial fishing.

Because the total catch of spring Chinook in March and early April was much lower than expected, fishery managers twice extended the recreational fishing season, initially through April 13 and finally through April 22. Recreational fishing for Chinook during these extensions was closed on Tuesday April 10 and April 17 to allow day-time commercial fishing.

Fishery managers updated the run-size forecast for spring Chinook on May 21 and determined that the recreational fishery through April 22 had used just over 80% of their upriver spring Chinook allocation. As a result, a two-day fishing season was set for May 26 and 27.

Through May 27, recreational fishers downstream from Bonneville Dam harvested about 13,400 spring Chinook. Total take of upriver stocks was just over 10,200, or about 88% of the management guideline. During this time recreational anglers made about 116,000 trips.

Bonneville Dam to the Oregon/Washington Border: Fishery managers initially opened recreational spring Chinook fisheries from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border from March 16 through May 2. Fishery managers twice extended the season, first through May 6 and then for the May 19-20 weekend. During this time recreational fishers from Bonneville Dam to the Oregon/Washington border took 886 upriver spring Chinook, or about 64% of the management guideline.

OREGON STATE POLICE FISH AND WILDLIFE DIVISION

Captain Jeff Samuels, Division Director

OSP Fish and Wildlife Team of the Year (2011)



The OSP Fish and Wildlife Division recognized the impressive work of troopers from the Southeast Oregon Team May 1, 2012 ; they received the Division's Team of the Year award for 2011 during a presentation at the OSP Baker City office. This is the sixth presentation of the award since the Division

implemented the new program that celebrates and recognizes the outstanding teamwork of troopers in protecting Oregon's natural resources.

Supervised by Sergeant Isaac Cyr, the seven-member Southeast Oregon Team is comprised of one sergeant and six troopers assigned to OSP offices in Baker City, Ontario, and Burns. The Southeast Oregon Team is challenged by diverse natural resource enforcement issues, as well as general law issues, in an extremely remote area of the state. This team patrols an area consisting of over 23,000 square miles, nearly a quarter of the state of Oregon. Harney County, the largest county in Oregon at 10,133 square miles, is patrolled solely by one fish & wildlife trooper.

In 2011, Southeast Oregon Team members distinguished themselves by their exceptional performance conducting complex criminal fish and wildlife cases. Dedicated to their public service through outstanding teamwork, the team's members possess a great depth of knowledge and specialized skills for working in the backcountry, from accomplished whitewater raft and jet boat operators to experienced horsemen.

Ranging from 2 to 16 years of OSP service, the OSP Fish and Wildlife Southeast Oregon Team has a total of 70 years of OSP law enforcement experience. Team members include:

- Sergeant Isaac Cyr, Supervisor, Baker City
- Sr. Trooper Brad Duncan, Baker City
- Sr. Trooper Jason McNeil, Baker City
- Patrol Sergeant Bob Wilson, Ontario (formerly Fish and Wildlife Sr. Trooper in Ontario)
- Trooper Anthony Spencer, Ontario
- Sr. Trooper Randy Caldwell, Burns
- Trooper Andrew McClay, John Day (formerly Burns, team member for much of 2011)

The Southeast Oregon Team faces critical issues in their patrol area, including anadromous and sensitive fish species in the Snake River (ESA-listed Chinook salmon and steelhead and ESA-listed native bull trout), Lahontan cutthroat trout protection in Malheur and Harney County streams, compliance concerns dealing with limited entry big game seasons, border issues with Idaho and Nevada residents hunting in Oregon, protection of Bighorn Sheep, Antelope and Rocky Mountain Goat populations, Native American off-reservation hunting and fishing issues, and a multitude of rural law enforcement challenges. The Steens Mountain Unit has been identified as a Mule Deer Initiative area that receives additional enforcement protection through an action plan authored by Sr. Trooper Randy Caldwell.

This team also addresses Marine Board issues in local lakes and rivers and provides enforcement of scenic waterway laws and regulations on the Owyhee and Snake Rivers. The Snake River has the largest navigable rapids in the state requiring troopers to consistently operate jet boats, rafts, and kayaks through these treacherous waters. The Owyhee River is also extremely remote and challenging, and, in 2011, Sr. Trooper Duncan authored an action plan to address non-motorized vessel use and river permit compliance, angling regulation enforcement, and archeological resource protection.

**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
June 7 & 8, 2012**