



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
March 7, 2014

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Mirror Pond

The future of Mirror Pond is the subject of considerable conversation in central Oregon these days. Mirror Pond is an impoundment on the Deschutes River in downtown Bend. It was created in 1910 by a log crib dam associated with the Bend Hydroelectric Project. Many consider it a landmark and part of the area's identity. The log crib dam is 12 foot high and impounds the Deschutes River for approximately half a mile upstream. Mirror Pond provides water to a small hydroelectric plant on the east side of the dam. Unfortunately it's one of three fish passage barriers in this section of the Deschutes blocking the migration of native fishes.

A recent inspection of the dam revealed it is in disrepair and significant modifications are necessary to maintain its structural integrity and meet safety standards. In addition to the condition of the dam, the accumulation of sediment and growth of aquatic vegetation in Mirror Pond are also issues of concerns.



While the project owner, PacifiCorp, initially expressed interest in abandoning the facility, they recently proposed fixing the dam using interlocking steel sheets driven into the riverbed on the upstream side of the dam to stop leakage. While PacifiCorp will continue to operate the facility near term, they are discussing turning the dam over to local control with community leaders. In response City officials created several

advisory groups to recommend the best course of action. Bend residents are divided on the issue: some favor retention of Mirror Pond while others believe the river should be restored to a more natural condition.

In evaluating the future of Mirror Pond and its associated dam, fish passage is a consideration for ODFW. We are working collaboratively with the local interests to provide passage at all three barriers in this area. Fish passage here is an important part of a complete solution to meeting our conservation and recreational fishery goals in the upper Deschutes.

Klamath Basin Goose Damage

With spring fast approaching, farmers in the Klamath Basin are gearing up for potential crop damage as large numbers of spring migrant geese return from wintering areas in California. The Klamath Basin is a critical spring staging area for greater white-fronted geese, Ross's geese, and lesser snow geese prior to continued migration north to arctic breeding areas. Geese find abundant food provided by the area's hay, pastures, and winter wheat fields.



Goose populations have rebounded from historic low population levels in the late 1970's. The 2013 Pacific Flyway population estimate for greater white-fronted geese was over 800,000 which is almost three times the flyway management objective of 300,000.

In response to increasing private land damage from geese, a late goose season was started in 2007 that allowed a daily bag limit of 2 white-fronted geese.

Hunting was authorized on private land only until this year when public lands and water bodies will also be open for goose hunting. Bag limits for this year's late season are 6 white-fronted geese and 6 white geese.

Landowners have expressed concern that the late season ends on March 10, yet crop damage occurs after that date. March 10 is the latest that sport hunting is allowed under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. For several years landowners have requested depredation kill permits which would provide another tool to help alleviate goose damage. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is now issuing depredation permits to area growers to help address landowner concerns. The permits allow limited take of geese after March 10. Geese harvested under these kill permits are offered to local food banks.

2014 Chinook Salmon Run Projection and Proposed Fisheries

Catherine and Lookingglass creek and the Imnaha, Lostine and upper Grande Ronde river Chinook salmon populations in northeast Oregon are supplemented with hatchery production as part of the Lower Snake River Compensation Program. In addition to conservation and recovery of federal ESA listed salmon and steelhead, an important purpose of this program is mitigating for fisheries lost due to the construction of the four lower Snake River dams.

These fisheries are very popular with local residents as well as draw anglers from throughout Oregon and the Pacific Northwest to this remote area of Oregon.



The decision to open a fishery in 2014 depends upon run projections developed by ODFW biologists last November. Many sources of data are used to calculate these estimates, including the numbers of smolts released, salmon that returned the previous year, as well as ocean conditions. Based on these estimates, ODFW and tribal biologists decide whether to have a fishery.

Once the decision to hold a fishery is approved the spring Chinook run is monitored very closely as it migrates up the Columbia and projections are updated several times. Research and management biologists from ODFW, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Nez Perce Tribe, and the National Marine Fisheries Service work together in making these estimates and the decisions necessary to hold a fishery.

2014 run projections for northeast Oregon spring Chinook suggest this year's runs will be high enough to support recreational fisheries. While the specifics for potential fisheries have not been worked out, if our projections hold up, we are confident in holding these popular spring Chinook fisheries in northeast Oregon again this year.

WEST REGION

Larry Cooper, Region Manager

Black Bear Cubs

North Willamette wildlife staff, in coordination with ODFW veterinarians, Oregon State Police (OSP) and wildlife biologists from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde (CTGR), responded to a report of orphaned black bear cubs in late February. A timber harvest operation in Yamhill County accidentally caused disturbance to a hollow log that was a bear den containing a sow and three very young cubs. The timber company moved their logging operations away from the den site and promptly contacted ODFW who enlisted the assistance of CTGR biologists and OSP to establish trail cameras to monitor the den. Once it was determined the sow had abandoned the den, the cubs (approximately a month old and each weighing only 2-3 pounds) were removed and transported by OSP to Corvallis for care by ODFW veterinary staff. ODFW veterinary staff was able to locate an AZA accredited facility to accept the animals. The cubs were transferred to the Oregon Zoo for interim care and holding prior to transport to the Austin Zoo & Animal Sanctuary in Austin, Texas.



Eckman Lake Fishing Dock

Eckman Lake, located 2 miles East of Waldport has a new fishing dock. This project was funded by Restoration and Enhancement funds (\$68,800) and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (\$10,000). The grant was awarded to the Central Coast Fly Fishers (CCFF) and work was completed by Ken's Floatation Services whose home base is Oregon City. The dock was in such disrepair it was condemned for being a safety hazard. Thanks to the hard work of CCFF volunteers who accomplished most of the demolition, and who worked with the contractor during the rejuvenation the lake now has a functional dock.

Eckman Lake is stocked with trout during the spring and summer and provides an excellent opportunity for family recreation.



INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Administrator

Outdoor Skills – Pheasant Hunting Workshops

The Outdoor Skills program held three successful pheasant hunting workshops this month. These workshops include hunter safety, shooting practice and an afternoon hunt with dogs and a handler. The first took place outside of Maupin. 34 people from both sides of the Cascades participated, which was the largest number of participants at a pheasant hunting workshop. Everybody shot birds, many got multiple birds and there were no accidents

The following two pheasant hunting workshops took place south of Dallas, also on a private hunting preserve. The first was a family friendly workshop, meaning kids were welcome. The second was a women-only workshop. Each workshop was full at 16 hunters. Many participants shot birds.

Reasons for attending the events were similar across all three. Many had hunting experience, but they hadn't hunted in years or they hunted different species. A few were encouraged by of a loved one. And some had never hunted before and wanted to learn. The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive.



Hunter Education Gearing Up for 2014

Since the New Year nearly 50 new hunter education instructors are ready to teach classes and field days. The new instructors are from throughout the state. Most importantly, many will instruct in counties that need additional instructors – Lane, Linn and Jackson counties. Many of the new instructors join the hunter education program to give back to a past time they enjoy. They hear about the opportunity from fellow hunters, hunter education classes and advertising.

Hunter education instructors have also voiced interest in additional training. To meet their needs, the Agency recently implemented a standardized range officer safety program. This training standardizes range safety and firearm instruction. The first 30 instructors have taken the new instruction. Although not mandatory, the goal is to have all instructors take the course in the next couple of years.

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

Wildlife

Sergeant Thomas (Salem) responded to a report of an individual who had his girlfriend check in his geese in the NW Goose Permit Zone. Investigation revealed that the hunter had harvested three geese the day prior and did not make it to the check station on time. The hunter admitted that he was late for several reasons and to hunting until one half hour after legal shoot time. The goose the hunter harvested after hours was seized as evidence, and he was subsequently cited for Hunting Prohibited Hours and warned for Fail to Check in Geese.

Sr. Trooper Turnbo (McMinnville) assisted the Grand Ronde Tribe and ODFW with three bear cubs that were abandoned by their mother when a logging crew operating on private timber company property inadvertently logged near the bears' den. After monitoring the den for three days it was determine the mother bear was not going to return and the cubs would need to be rescued. The three bear cubs were removed from the den by the Grand Ronde Tribe Fish and Wildlife Biologist with assistance from the loggers and Sr. Trooper Turnbo. Sr. Trooper Turnbo transported the bear cubs to ODFW, where they were evaluated and transferred to the Oregon Zoo.



Logging crew assisting with three black bear cubs

**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
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