



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
December 5, 2014

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Kit Fox Update

The northern limit of the kit fox range extends to southeast Oregon. Because of their limited distribution in Oregon, kit fox are classified as State Threatened and are identified as an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species for the Northern Great Basin Ecoregion. Despite this classification very little is known about kit fox in Oregon.



In 2012, Department staff in Lake, Harney, and Malheur Counties began a systematic kit fox survey using game cameras baited with scent stations in potential habitat. Kit fox were detected at 11 of these stations in southern Malheur County. In 2014, the study was expanded to utilize GPS collars to learn more about kit fox habitat use. In addition, DNA samples are collected to compare Oregon populations with those in Nevada.

To date four kit fox have been captured and collared. Location data from the collars is now starting to come in. Staff will continue trapping though the winter as time allows and begin analyzing data as it becomes available. In addition the systematic camera surveys will continue in an attempt to better define kit fox distribution.

Lava Island Fish Salvage

On October 24, 26 and 27, East Region staff and volunteers conducted a fish rescue and relocation operation on the Upper Deschutes River above Bend at Lava Island Falls. Fishery biologists from the

Department, along with staff and volunteers from several governmental, conservation and fishing organizations, rescued nearly 7,000 stranded trout, whitefish, kokanee and sculpin by moving them from shallow, isolated pools near the falls to the main channel of the Deschutes River. Department staff and volunteers spent over 400 staff hours rescuing fish during the three day effort.

Some fish needed to be moved more than a half mile from where they were stranded to a release site on the Deschutes River channel. Captured fish were placed in five-gallon buckets of water equipped with small battery operated aerators to provide oxygen



until fish were released. Depending on rescue site, buckets were hand carried up or down the Deschutes River trail to the point of release by the cadre of volunteers and agency staff.

Fish stranding occurs as the Lava Falls side channel releases from Wickiup Reservoir to the Deschutes are restricted to fill the reservoir for the next irrigation season. Historically, the Lava Island reach would have had very stable stream flows of approximately 1,000 cubic feet per second (CFS) year round. Prior to irrigation development, the upper Deschutes River was noted by hydrologists as one of the most stable rivers in the world. Currently, flows at Lava Island range from approximately 2,000 CFS in summer to 300 CFS in winter.

Annual flow manipulations for irrigation on the upper Deschutes River below Wickiup Dam have been ongoing since 1946, and fish stranding at Lava Island has been documented at least since the mid '90's.

Stranding/loss of trout at Lava Island doesn't happen every year; in years of abundant precipitation Deschutes River flow is held higher because there is more than enough water for irrigation storage.

The silver lining in all this is that through the salvage effort we have a unique glimpse of what the historic upper Deschutes produced for native trout abundance. With improvements in water management this section of river could once again be a renowned trout fishery and contribute to Central Oregon's economy. The Department is working with area stakeholders in an attempt to achieve this goal.

WEST REGION

Steven Marx, Acting Region Manager

Town Lake Restoration Project

North Coast district fish staff, with the aid of local angling groups and a grant through ODFW's Restoration and Enhancement Program, replaced the dam and water control structure at Town Lake near Pacific City to help maintain water levels in this popular fishing lake. The project compliments work completed last year that replaced an old dock structure with a new dock that serves as an angling platform.

Town Lake provides a very popular year round fishery that is well suited for families, youth anglers, and often tourists or other non-local anglers. The lake is heavily stocked with hatchery rainbow trout through the late winter and spring, and receives some trophy trout each fall. Warmwater fish, particularly largemouth bass, provide opportunity during the summer months. Although a relatively small population, bass can reach 5 pounds or more. In recent years, it was discovered that water was leaking around the dam structure and reducing water levels in the lake. The leaking water was also passing through the fill of the adjacent county road, possibly compromising the stability of the road bed. The deterioration of the old dam was quickly becoming more evident as the existing concrete structure developed large cracks and the west wall began to lean. The design concept was completed last spring. Construction began in August, and was essentially finished by mid-October, 2014. A headgate was built and installed in mid-November. This completed the structure and allows for raising the water level in the lake.

There are a number of participants that made this project possible including the Tualatin Valley Chapter of the NW Steelheaders, North Coast Salmon and Steelhead Enhancement Fund (including administering the grant funds), Tillamook Anglers, and ODFW's North Coast Watershed District. The Tillamook

County Road Department also partnered in the project.



Chum Salmon Reintroduction Efforts

The chum reintroduction project is in full swing now with returns of age-3 and age-4 broodstock chum to Big Creek Hatchery, the first broodstock spawning at the hatchery, and results from research on the efficacy of reintroduction strategies and movement of chum salmon fry through the estuary.

This fall marks the first chum salmon spawning at Big Creek Hatchery since the initial release of 107,000 Grays River stock fry in 2011 to create a locally produced broodstock in support of reintroduction efforts. Up to 100,000 eggs from age-3 and age-4 broodstock returns will be released as fed-fry to support the broodstock program. During the week of November 10th, a total of 11 females and 16 males were spawned, producing approximately 30,000 eggs. Heavy rains in mid-November brought over 150 more chum salmon into the hatchery, which should contain enough eggs to meet remaining broodstock collection goals. Big Creek will receive an additional 100,000 eggs from the Grays River Hatchery bringing total releases up to 200,000 fry. Once broodstock collection goals are met, up to 50,000 additional eggs will be collected and experimentally outplanted in remote site incubators at the eyed-egg stage.

ODFW is also evaluating outplanting of adults in other streams as a reintroduction strategy. The first age-3 chum salmon returns to Big Creek Hatchery in 2013 were outplanted into Graham (11 M and 11 F) and Stewart Creeks (11 M and 10 F) in the Clatskanie River. Trapping in Stewart Creek, resulted in an estimate of over 4300 fry produced. In Graham Creek, only 15 chum fry were captured which suggests that a small amount of fry production is currently possible and corroborates our conclusion that most of the outplanted females in Graham Creek did not spawn.

Other reintroduction efforts are focused on habitat restoration with several restoration projects in the design or implementation phase for the Clatskanie Population. In the Clatskanie River, a large floodplain reconnection project is underway that will add over a quarter mile of spawning habitat for chum salmon and rearing habitat for coho salmon. Additional projects are planned to replace undersized culverts in Graham Creek and increase stream complexity in Graham, Stewart, and Beaver Creeks. Partners have been identified for these projects and they will be implemented once funding becomes available.



Beach seining to capture chum salmon *Oncorhynchus keta* fry in the Columbia River Estuary, April 2013.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Administrator

Oregon Hunting Access and Shooting Map

The Oregon Hunting Access Map is going mobile. The online map has been visited more than 270,000 times since it was launched in May of 2010. The interactive map features state wildlife areas, national wildlife refuges, private lands open to hunting through ODFW's Access & Habitat (A&H) and Open Fields programs, Travel Management Areas on private timberlands open to hunting, and Willamette River Greenway properties that allow hunting. The map also includes the location of public shooting ranges, range hours and the type of shooting allowed.

Users can view terrain and search for hunting locations by Wildlife Management Unit, land ownership, or species, making it a great tool for planning a hunting trip. However, since the Oregon Hunting Access Map was originally designed to be used on a desktop computer it was difficult to view on a smaller screen. The new, responsive design automatically formats the display based on the type of the device so it can be easily viewed on smartphones, tablets, laptops and full-size computer screens.

Hunters will also be able to find their exact location by turning on the GPS unit and connecting to a network. The geolocation feature will be useful for navigating and locating unit boundaries. Users can also mark a location and share it with others via email.

Development of the mobile version of the Oregon Hunting Access Map was paid for with federal Pittman-Robertson funds from the excise tax on firearms, ammunition, bows, arrows, and other hunting equipment. The map can be found at OregonHuntingMap.com.

MARINE RESOURCES PROGRAM

Caren Braby, Marine Resources Program Manager

Dungeness Crab Derelict Gear Program

As reported to the Commission in August 2014, the 2013-14 Oregon commercial Dungeness crab season was one of slightly below average landings (14.4 million pounds; ten-year average is 19.3 million pounds), but exceptional value. Ex-vessel value this season totaled \$49.9 million dollars, the highest valued crab year on the books for Oregon. Pots used in the fishery this season totaled an estimated 114,900 pots, which is close to the average 112,500 pots utilized each season since pot limits were implemented. Due to weather and other unpredictable events, many of the pots used in the fishery are lost each year and become derelict gear. In August 2014, the Commission approved a new post-season derelict gear retrieval permit program (pursuant to state legislation granting authority to do so) to address this issue for implementation in fall 2014. The program incentivized gear retrieval by allowing permittees to retain the found gear.

During this inaugural year, the permit program was very successful at bringing in derelict gear. The program was in place for 4 weeks (Sept.4-Oct.2) and the Department issued 38 permits coastwide. For enforcement and tracking purposes, requirements of the permits issued included pre and post recovery trip notifications, logbooks, and registration and tagging of recovered gear by state officials. Of the 38 permits issued, 35 were active (notified the Department that they were using the permit) but only 15 actually recovered gear. These 15 brought in a total of 646 commercial crab pots, making landings in six Oregon ports. Astoria and Garibaldi were particularly productive, and Newport and Brookings also made significant effort. The recovered pots originated from 149 unique vessels and 85% were from the most recent crab season. Thanks go out to the Oregon State Police for assisting with registrations, the skippers who participated in the program, and the Oregon Dungeness Crab Commission for collaborating on the program development in many ways.



Derelict pots retrieved by a Garibaldi vessel during the 2014 program.

ShoreZone Mapping

Marine Resources Program staff, working collaboratively with the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), completed work on a project to map Oregon's ocean and estuary shoreline habitats using the ShoreZone mapping protocol. Used extensively in Washington, Alaska, and British Columbia, ShoreZone is a coastal habitat mapping and classification system in which aerial imagery is collected specifically for the interpretation of geomorphic and biological features of the shoreline and adjacent intertidal zone. The project included all of Oregon's ocean coast (total 507 miles of shoreline) and all estuaries except the Columbia (total 1,129 total miles of shoreline). The results of the work include full low altitude video coverage of the shoreline, approximately 16,000 oblique aerial photos, and a database that houses the habitat data derived from the photos and video. The imagery and data are useful for reviewing shoreline development permits, oil spill response and other emergency response activities along the shore, documenting habitat types too small to map in previous surveys such as narrow fringing marshes along estuary shorelines, as well as for scientific inquiries regarding coastal habitat.

Marine Resources Program staff is now participating in a partnership with NOAA, Alaska ShoreZone, and other collaborators in Washington and British Columbia to develop an integrated, consistent ShoreZone dataset that will include all of the western North America ShoreZone surveys completed to date. This will result in an unprecedented continent-scale marine habitat dataset that will cover nearly 70,000 miles of shoreline. NOAA plans create a website over the coming year that serves and displays the habitat data, photography, and videography from these

surveys. The result will be an interactive website that would allow the user to examine habitat on a regional scale, as well as drill down to any specific area of interest.



OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

Wildlife

On October 31, Oregon State Police (OSP) Pilot Sergeant Chris Culp conducted a five hour night enforcement flight with the Salem and Albany area fish and wildlife troopers. At approximately 11pm, a spotlight was seen from the air as it was cast from a vehicle on a ridge north of the Calapooya River drainage. The vehicle extinguished all lights after a few minutes with only the occasional flash of what appeared to be a spotlight. Trooper Jim Andrews arrived in the area within five to ten minutes to find an empty pickup truck, parked next to a clear cut, which Sergeant Culp had observed the spotlight being cast from. After nearly an hour, with the assistance of Senior Trooper Kirk Burkholder, they were able to locate the subject and his 12 year old son. Upon further investigation, they located a rifle and spotlight which the subject and his son attempted to hide. The subject was cited for **Hunting with the Aid of a Light and Felon in Possession of a Firearm**. He has a prior arrest record which contains wildlife crimes and currently has a suspended hunting license.



Fisheries

Sergeant Hoodenpyl (Tillamook) was working anglers on the Trask River when he was contacted by four anglers who were concerned about a subject who was hooking fish that were spawning nearby. The anglers stated they believed the subject had just caught a salmon and the fish was hooked on its side. Sergeant Hoodenpyl observed the subject and watched as he tried to snag (floss) spawning fish with a fly pole. The subject was then observed hooking a fish which he fought to the bank where he eventually saw Sergeant Hoodenpyl. The subject grabbed the fish, looked at Sergeant Hoodenpyl, and asked whether the fish was legal to keep and was advised it needed to be released. The subject told Sergeant Hoodenpyl he had caught a Chinook earlier and had placed it in his van which was in the parking lot. A consent search of the van resulted in the fish being identified as a wild Coho salmon, which was unlawful to possess. The subject was cited for **Unlawful Possession Non-Adipose Fin Clipped Coho Salmon** and warned for **Snagging (Flossing)**.

Commercial Fish

Trooper Van Meter (Newport) contacted a commercial sablefish fisherman in Newport regarding overages in daily landing limits. Open access sablefish fishermen are allowed 350 lbs. per day or one landing a week of up to 1,600 pounds. Trooper Van Meter determined, through looking up ODFW fish tickets in August and September of 2014 that the fisherman made three landings over the 350 pound daily limit after he had already made a landing earlier in the same period (week). The overages were 99.7%, 69.1% and 25.7% sablefish over limit. The fisherman claimed he was unaware that he was over his limit and claimed he thought as long as he didn't go over 1,600 pounds in one week, he was fine. He was cited for **Exceeding Daily Landing Limit of Sablefish** for two of the highest overages and warned for the lesser overage. The dealer who had purchased the fish was contacted regarding the overage so that a new fish ticket and overage check to ODFW could be processed.

End of Field Reports for December 5, 2014