



# ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission  
January 15, 2016

## EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

### Fishery Enhancement Projects

East Region Fishery Biologists treated twelve waterbodies with rotenone this fall and winter to eradicate illegally introduced fishes that affect trout fisheries and native fish populations. Fish removed as part of this effort include brook trout, black crappie, goldfish, brown bullhead, and pumpkinseed sunfish in areas where they lowered the quality of managed fisheries and/or impacted native species.

The Klamath District treated 4.5 miles of Rock Creek, a tributary in the Upper Klamath Lake Basin, to remove brook trout and improve conditions for native redband trout. Prior to treatment, 113 redband trout were captured and held at Klamath hatchery and then reintroduced after treatment.



Treatment of North Twin Lake was the largest of the projects done this year and was funded by a grant from the Restoration and Enhancement Board (R&E). The project targeted brown bullhead catfish first discovered in the lake in 1995. This illegal introduction reduced overall condition of rainbow trout in North Twin Lake. The treatment required a dozen ODFW staff from around the state, along with two staff from the Burns Paiute Tribe.

Northeast Oregon staff treated ten small lakes and ponds during October and November. These projects were also funded by an R&E grant. They occurred in ponds and lakes across four counties and three fish districts and targeted illegally introduced fish as well. By removing the target fish from these waterbodies we expect to restore popular trout fisheries and help support recovery of native populations.

### Phillip W Schneider Wildlife Area: Rangeland Seeding Project

Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area was established to maintain high quality winter range for mule deer. In 2014 a lightning strike ignited a 66,000 acre fire that burned much of the Wildlife Area and adjacent Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and US Forest Service land. Before the fire was declared contained, Wildlife Area staff began working with their federal partners to plan a landscape scale restoration project for the burned area.

Phase 1 of the project was initiated immediately after the fire to prevent the spread of invasive annual grasses like Medusahead Rye, Cheat grass, and North African grass. These annual grasses out-compete native perennial grasses and provide poor mule deer nutrition. In total, 7,000 acres of the Wildlife Area and 14,000 acres of adjacent BLM lands were aerially treated with herbicide to control these invasive grasses. Funding for this phase came from the Mule Deer Initiative, Phillip W. Schneider timber receipts, and Mule Deer Foundation and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation grants.

Phase 2 was implemented this fall and included reseeded of the area with both native and non-native grass mixes. Non-native grasses were used for initial erosion control and to control invasive species while native grasses got a foothold. The department partnered with the Grant County Soil and Water Conservation District to secure a grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to cover Phase 2 costs.



Beginning last October, twelve staff using five department owned tractors and seven rangeland drills seeded 2,200 acres of the Wildlife Areas over a three week period. An additional 3,100 acres were aerially reseeded in December.

Staff is working with sportsman's groups and other volunteers to implement several large-scale shrub plantings aimed at augmenting the recovery of sage and bitterbrush on the burn area

## WEST REGION

Steve Marx, Region Manager

**Pacific Fisher Status and Activities** – Fishers are medium-sized forest carnivores that once occurred throughout the coniferous and mixed forests of Oregon's Coast Range and Cascade Mountains. Fishers are listed as a Strategy Species in the Oregon Conservation Strategy. There is a native population in the Siskiyou Mountains and an introduced population in the southern Cascades that remains from ODFW's earlier reintroduction efforts releasing fishers from British Columbia (1960s) and Minnesota (1980s).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is currently reviewing the status of fisher throughout its range within the west coast distinct population segment. A decision is expected April 7, 2016 on whether or not to list this fisher population under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Several fisher studies are being conducted in western Oregon by scientists at Oregon State University and by federal biologists. The studies use cameras, radio collars, telemetry and hair traps to collect DNA samples. Study areas include Crater Lake National Park, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service lands in southern Oregon, as well as Mount Hood and Willamette National Forests. In 2012, Medford District BLM staff, using genetic markers from hair samples, found evidence suggesting fishers from the Siskiyou population can cross Interstate 5 and reach the Cascade population. Current collaring work east of Interstate 5 is an attempt to find more cross-over between the native Siskiyou and introduced Cascades populations.

Researchers captured images of fishers on a trail cameras in the southern Cascades and as of mid-November, three have been GPS-collared near the Jackson-Klamath County line. The Rogue Wildlife District hired an Oregon State University intern for the summer of 2015 to help detect forest carnivores with the use of remote trail cameras. Using established protocols, 8 fisher and 4 ringtail were captured on camera within 21 sampling grids (42 camera sites).

ODFW staff continue to work with the USFWS, U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Region Research Station, BLM, Institute of Natural Resources, and Oregon State University to close gaps in our knowledge of fisher locations and population numbers. Work completed through these efforts will further our

understanding of the ecology and habitat use by fishers and assist with making informed decisions on status, protection needs, and suitability of the Siskiyou group as a donor population for reintroduction purposes.



**December Storms** – Storm systems and associated high water events resulted in many rivers at or above flood stage; impacting ODFW hatchery operations and other infrastructure. In several locations near the ocean, conditions were exacerbated by high tides and the storm surge. District staff responded to a variety of calls from multiple jurisdictions requesting assistance with culvert and road failures, and staff worked diligently maintaining Department operated fish ladders and traps.

Hatchery staff did an extraordinary job keeping intakes open to maintain clean water flowing to incubators and ponds. District and seasonal staff also provided needed support at several hatcheries to keep operations working around the clock. At one location the rotating drum screen failed but was temporarily repaired with a fixed position screen which prevented debris from entering the hatch house and raceways. High water also overtopped the banks at the Salmon River Hatchery, flooding the generator room, raceways and rearing ponds; the latter raising the possibility of fish loss from juvenile Coho escaping. Actual losses won't be known until staff can inventory affected ponds. During a similar overtopping event in 2007, losses were minimal as most fish sought refuge in the bottom of the pond.

District staff continue to provide critical assistance to local and state road departments by consulting on emergency road repairs, culvert failures, and other issues to repair storm damage while minimizing impacts to fish and wildlife and their habitat. Staff are working to evaluate damage to fish traps on Drift Creek, Alsea River and the Siletz River that require maintenance or repair before being reopened. Heavy rain, wind and high surf conditions resulted in calls

from the public about birds (like western grebes) being stranded on Coos and Douglas County beaches. Most of these birds are weak from dealing with the weather conditions.

On positive note, waterfowl hunters were able to take advantage of favorable conditions for hunting. Staff received several reports from hunters expressing their appreciation for increased access and opportunity provided by the Beaver Slough Tract of the Coquille Valley Wildlife Area. We are also receiving good reports of steelhead anglers catching fish as flood waters recede.



Culvert washout on Miami Foley Road in north Tillamook County. No road fill was left under the suspended asphalt.

**Toys for Tots/No Child Left inside Fishing Rod Giveaway** – In mid-December, the South Coast Anglers STEP Association and other STEP groups partnered with the U.S. Marines to give away 1,000 fishing rods and reels to Coos County children. The partnership was a blend of the Marines’ Toys for Tots and STEP’s No Child Left Inside program. These rods were funded by generous donations from members of the South Coast STEP Association along with other STEP groups. Throughout the year, another 500 rods and reels were given away to local children at family fishing events.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Rick Hargrave, Administrator

The Information and Education Division is nearing contract execution with Pac/West Communications (PT3) for a public relations campaign to increase awareness of the benefits of hunting, the availability of resources geared towards hunting including information for beginner, intermediate and seasoned hunters. Pac/West will also develop strategies to reinforce ODFW as the leading agency in protecting and enhancing Oregon’s wildlife.

The division is also in the process of finalizing a contract with Oregon State University to produce several, “Learn-to-Hunt” and “Learn-to-Fish” videos. These videos will follow the format of the popular

“Learn-to-Fish for Trout” videos produced last year by Dick’s Sporting Goods-sponsored, hunting and fishing guide, Cody Herman.

To better highlight where hunting and fishing dollars are spent, two new information graphics (below) have been developed and will be used in various outreach efforts/products, including placement on the web and in social media.



## MARINE RESOURCES PROGRAM

Caren Braby, Marine Resources Program Manager

### Harmful algal bloom persists late into the fall – impact on Shellfish Fisheries

Harmful algal blooms (“HABs” - dense growth of toxic single-celled algae) plagued the West Coast this year, starting early in the summer and spreading from Mexico to British Columbia. Usually, summer blooms will breakup once the fall weather changes and the toxin they produce quickly dissipates. This year’s bloom was larger, more concentrated and more persistent than ever before documented on this coast, and the primary toxin (domoic acid) has lingered in high-profile shellfish species including razor clams, mussels, and Dungeness crab.

As of December 21, domoic acid levels had fallen enough to re-open razor clam (from Tillamook Head north), mussel and sport crab harvest, as well as

schedule the opening of the Oregon ocean commercial Dungeness crab season. The commercial crab fishery typically opens on December 1 from Northern California to Southern Washington, but the opener was delayed coastwide. While Oregon and southern Washington open simultaneously on January 4, California will remain closed until domoic acid levels in crab viscera drop to acceptable levels.

This season's delay has received broad support across the West Coast, despite harvesters being anxious to get both the sport and commercial seasons underway. During the pre-season testing for meat quality and domoic acid levels, the Oregon commercial Dungeness crab fleet (and counterparts in Washington and California) was highly supportive of the management agencies making precautionary season decisions in the interest of public safety.

This is not the first time that the crab season opener has been delayed from HABS. Two events, one in the 1990's and another in the early 2000's, also caused delays in Oregon. However, with changing ocean conditions and predictions that these global changes may favor HABS in the future, this year's bloom may be a preview of what to expect more frequently in years to come.

### **New Scholarship to honor Marine Resources Program (MRP) staff:**

#### **Bob Hannah and Steve Jones**

As announced in their Winter 2015-2016 "From the Wheelhouse" newsletter, the Oregon Trawl Commission (OTC) has decided to fund an annual scholarship to honor the careers of Bob Hannah and Steve Jones, long-time MRP research and fisheries management staff. Bob and "Jonesy" have worked with pink shrimp and groundfish fleets to improve bycatch reduction in multiple types of fishing gear and to better understand how to manage key nearshore rockfish species. The OTC chose to honor their careers because they demonstrate how effective manager-industry partnerships can be in supporting sustainable and profitable ocean fisheries. The scholarship will be awarded to graduate students in Oregon whose research focuses on commercial fisheries.

#### **Introducing: Oregon Ocean Science Trust**

Pursuant to legislative action in 2015, Oregon has convened the Oregon Ocean Science Trust (OR-OST) – a Board of five appointed members and two legislative members. The Board will be finding strategic and new ways to fund nearshore research in Oregon. MRP staff will be helping support the work of the Board along with staff from Department of State Lands, who is the point agency for the OR-OST.

## **OREGON STATE POLICE**

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

As the holidays approached, Oregon State Police Fish & Wildlife Troopers compiled information as a result of the big game seasons, and transitioned into the enforcement of other priorities. The following are examples of case dispositions and activities:

Troopers from the McMinnville, Portland, and St Helens OSP offices collaborated to run multiple Wildlife Enforcement Decoys (WED) throughout Yamhill County during the 2015 Western Oregon Deer and Coast Elk seasons. Over the course of the big game seasons there were 7 separate instances of poachers shooting the WED resulting in over a dozen criminal citations being issued with charges including **Unlawful Take/Possession of Buck Deer, Unlawful Take/Possession of Bull Elk, Aiding in a Wildlife Offense, and Hunting with Artificial Light.** Seven firearms were seized and placed into evidence and multiple violation citations and warnings were also issued as a result of contacts made during the WED operations.



Enforcement seized bull elk.

In Lane County Circuit Court, a male subject pled guilty to **the Unlawful Take of a Bull Elk Prohibited Method:** rifle during archery season. This stemmed from an investigation which revealed the subject shot an 8x7 bull elk during archery season with a rifle in the Indigo Unit. A witness observed the offense and was able to provide photographs and a detailed description of the event. The subject was ordered to pay \$15,000 in restitution - \$500 going to the OHA tip fund, five years bench probation, three year hunting license suspension, forfeiture of the rifle and elk. The witness was presented with a \$500 check from the OHA TIP fund.

During the Mid-water Trawl Pacific Whiting Fishery an Astoria Trooper was called to respond at an Astoria wholesale fish dealer's location regarding a commercial fishing vessel that was in the process of delivering well in excess of the vessel's cap for canary rock fish. The vessel captain and crew were contacted and interviewed. An inspection of the dealer was also conducted to ensure compliance with catch monitoring

requirements, to ensure the by-catch species were being sorted properly and to ensure all fish were unloaded from the vessel.

The vessel's remaining limit for canary rock fish was approximately 8,000 pounds, and it was determined the vessel had landed approximately 44,000 pounds of canary rock fish. No violations were observed for the dealer and follow-up will be conducted with NOAA to determine the proper course of action for the vessel's excess of canary rock fish.

While patrolling the Crooked River, Bend Area F&W Troopers observed an angler fly-fishing just below Stillwater Camp and eventually contacted and cited the individual for **No Angling License**. While issuing the citation, Troopers noticed that the individual closely resembled a person of interest related to the armed robbery of a Prineville gas station three weeks prior. Although the individual had attempted to change his appearance, Troopers obtained identification and further information which was immediately forwarded to the Prineville Police Department (PD). Based upon the Trooper's information, a search warrant was served by Prineville PD, who located evidence of the armed robbery within the individual's possessions leading to arrest of the individual for robbery.

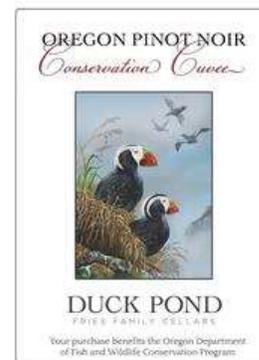
## CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

In November, the Wildlife Division held the ODFW Art Contest and Show at the Duck Pond Cellars winery in Dundee, Oregon. We received a total of 56 art entries competing to be featured on the 2016 Habitat Conservation, Upland Game Bird, and Waterfowl Stamps. A panel of five judges, including Commissioner Buckmaster, selected the: 1) Pallid Bat by Timothy Turenne from Richfield, Minnesota for the Habitat Conservation Stamp, 2) California Quail by Kip Richmond of North Carolina for the Upland Game Bird Stamp, and 3) Common Mergansers by Robert Andrea of Wisconsin for the Waterfowl Stamp. Each winner received a \$2,000 prize.



At the event, Duck Pond unveiled the third wine (Lot #3) in their Conservation Cuvée series, which featured the 2015 Habitat Conservation Stamp winning artwork of the Tufted Puffin. Duck Pond donates \$5 to the ODFW Conservation Program for every bottle sold. To date, Duck Pond has donated approximately \$15,000.



One of the objectives of the art show and wine partnership is to reach a larger, more diverse audience regarding ODFW's conservation efforts. Not only is the Conservation Program featured on the back of the wine label, but ODFW has an informational booth at the art event where staff distribute information on our programs and available resources. Staff also sold approximately \$500 worth of stamp and print merchandise, which was about \$450 more than in previous years. Contact information is collected from the roughly 200-300 attendees in an effort to expand our constituency group. The art show and wine partnership continues to be a great success.

**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR  
January 15, 2016**