



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
March 18, 2016

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Deschutes River Trout Sampling

Department staff started a month long effort to monitor lower Deschutes River redband trout. This is the third year of monitoring to examine the effect of new water quality requirements associated with the relicensing of the Pelton Round Butte Hydroelectric Project (Project) on redband trout. Under the new requirements, the flow released by the Project is expected to reflect historic lower Deschutes water temperature regime.



As part of this effort redband trout are captured from four representative reaches of the lower Deschutes River using boat-based electrofishing. The sampling replicates extensive lower Deschutes redband trout research performed by the department in the 1980's. Sampling focuses on monitoring growth, age distribution, condition factor, and food habits. Abundance will not be evaluated due to the difficulty of accurately estimating trout abundance in large productive rivers like the Deschutes.

Preliminary findings indicate that lower Deschutes redband growth rates are very high from age one to three. Age distribution of the population has remained relatively consistent condition factor is high. These findings all appear to be consistent with historical data. Immature aquatic insects are

consistently a large part of redband diet, both historically, and presently.

Bottom line, our current monitoring suggests the lower Deschutes redband population is healthy, stable and remarkably similar to that seen in the 1980's.

2016 Sage-Grouse Wing-Bee

Each February biologists meet in Hines for a sage-grouse "wing-bee". The purpose of the wing-bee is to analyze sage-grouse wings collected from birds harvested by Oregon hunters the previous year. Through analysis of wing size, molt pattern, and feather morphology, the sex, age, and nesting chronology of harvested birds can be assessed. This data provides an estimate of the sage-grouse population age ratio, the number of chicks/female,



and the sex ratio prior to winter. These parameters are used to estimate Oregon's sage-grouse population for the allocation of sage-grouse tags and provides data about the health of Oregon's sage-grouse population.

This was the 24th annual sage-grouse wing-bee and biologists from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon State University, and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife participated. Wings were analyzed from 290 sage-grouse harvested by Oregon hunters from 10 wildlife management units in 2015. This was an 11% increase over reported harvest in 2014. 2015 chick production

appears higher than previous years higher as well. Analysis of wings submitted by hunters suggest just over two chicks per hen were produced this year; a 189% increase over last year. Higher 2015 chick production suggests there will be an increase in the sage-grouse breeding population this spring.

WEST REGION

Steve Marx, Region Manager

Habitat Renovation Program – The ODFW Habitat Renovation Crew partners with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore wildlife habitat across the Willamette Valley. The crew works with about 40 landowners a year to help restore and maintain native habitat on E.E. Wilson and Tami Wagner Wildlife Areas; Finley, Ankeny and Basket Slough National Wildlife Refuges; multiple non-government organizations' properties; and private lands.

The team focuses on Strategy Habitats in Conservation Opportunity Areas as defined in the Oregon Conservation Strategy. In the Willamette Valley, this means restoring and helping to maintain grasslands, oak woodlands and savannas, riparian habitats, wetlands, and wet prairie habitat.

Recent examples of more highly specialized restoration activities include Herbert Farms Natural Area and Basket Slough National Refuge. At Herbert Farms, the crew converted annual rye grass fields to native grasslands to benefit a variety of native wildlife species including Streaked Horned Lark, a Strategy Species. At Basket Slough, crews expanded existing upland habitat that supports populations of Kincade's Lupine. Fender's blue butterfly, another Strategy Species, is solely dependent upon the plant for its existence.

Crews also partnered with two private landowners directly adjacent to Basket Slough National Wildlife Refuge who are enrolled in the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). These properties are the Smith Living Trust WRP and Westbrook WRP and add up to 545 acres of oak habitat, upland prairie and wetland habitat.

Crews also restored habitat on the adjacent VanDuzer Vineyard site to promote oak habitat

for the Fender's blue butterfly. After several years of invasive weed control and planting of native nectar species, the butterfly was documented on the vineyard for the first time in 2014 with one individual. In 2015 many more butterflies were observed showing just how quickly rare species can respond to the types of habitat restoration work ODFW completes through the Partners Program.



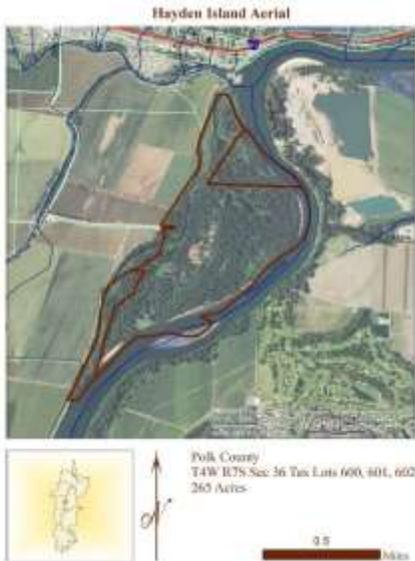
Hayden Island Land Acquisition Update – In December 2014, the Commission approved the acquisition of Hayden Island on the Willamette River south of Salem. The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) completed a fee title acquisition of the property from Oldcastle Building Materials late last fall and staff are now working with TPL to transfer the property to ODFW with an anticipated closing date of March 31, 2016.

The Hayden Island property is a 270 acre property located in the Willamette River Floodplain Conservation Opportunity Area. The property holds one of the largest and most intact riparian forests along the mainstem Willamette River. It consists entirely of priority habitats identified by the Oregon Conservation Strategy: riparian habitat; wetlands including deciduous swamps, shrublands, and off-channel habitat; and freshwater aquatic habitats that include Willamette River shoreline, backwater sloughs, and overflow channels.

Partners in the project include Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Trust for Public Lands (TPL), and the Achterman family. ODFW manages the property through the

Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program with funding provided by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA).

The property will be named the Gail Achterman Natural Area to honor the late Gail Achterman who was a Salem native. Ms. Achterman’s vision of a future Willamette Valley, balancing habitat protection and restoration, smart growth, and access to nature, resonated with many over the years.



Western Oregon Wing-Bee – The annual Western Oregon wing-bee recently was held at the Roseburg office. Staff from Western Oregon districts and Salem headquarters, the Forest Service, and Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) volunteers checked wings from harvested blue and ruffed grouse and mountain quail.

A total of 686 wings were examined, an increase of 257(37 percent) from last year. Of the samples, 444 (65 percent) came from Douglas County, largely due to an OSU summer hire who built 17 wing barrels to increase collection efforts.

Biologists use the wings to determine age and sex of the game birds and track their population trend over time.

MARINE RESOURCES PROGRAM

Caren Braby, Marine Resources Program Manager

Since the Cape Falcon Marine Reserve regulations went into place on January 1, 2016, the department has been in full implementation phase of the five reserve sites that comprise Oregon’s Marine Reserves program. For all five sites, the implementation phase has been focused on learning what we can from each of these unique locations, and using the sites for scientific research for both ecological and socioeconomic (or “human dimensions”) work. The five staff members who run the Marine Reserves program, wear multiple hats and switch off from day-to-day, including work on ecology, human dimensions, policy, outreach, and program function. This small but effective team has built strong partnerships to augment the core agency program and is leading the way for the agency to make its research activities understandable and accessible to all.

Central on Oregon’s coast and central in Oregon’s history as a place important for scientific research, Cape Perpetua is a rich cultural and ecological gem just south of Yachats. Here, a U.S. Forest Service visitor’s center, an Oregon marine garden, and now an Oregon Marine Reserve (with adjacent marine protected areas) overlook one of the best studied parts of Oregon’s marine ecosystem and a

marine biodiversity hotspot. From this part of the coast that researchers from the department and from OSU first documented Oregon's hypoxic zones. Some of the first oceanographic signals of ocean acidification are also being documented at this location.

The Marine Reserves ecology team is using Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) surveys, video lander surveys, hook-and-line surveys, and other tools to better understand the ecological wealth of the various habitats within the Reserve and MPAs. The Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve is home to a deep isolated reef, relative to its shallower rock reef neighbors. The trends in populations and oceanography will tell a unique story at this site, which together with the stories from the other four sites will describe the rich marine ecosystem that is Oregon's ocean legacy. For specific information on the Cape Perpetua Marine Reserve site or the Marine Reserves program, visit the Marine Reserves tab on the website www.oregonocean.info (this website includes a periodic e-newsletter called "A Deeper Dive", study results, monitoring plans, Reserve coordinates in latitude and longitude, the infographic shown above and much more).

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

The members of the Oregon State Police (OSP) Fish and Wildlife Division have been very active with outreach and education to the public. Below are some highlights of outreach during the month of February.

Two Fish and Wildlife (F&W) Troopers from The Dalles instructed a Hunters Safety class at the Columbia Gorge Community College; 27 students were in attendance.

OSP F&W Division members from around the NW Region and The Dalles staffed a booth during the five days of the 2016 Pacific Northwest Sportsman's Show in Portland. The OSP booth was adjacent to ODFW's booth. They answered a multitude of questions from the public.

Two F&W Troopers from Ontario provided a presentation at the annual Oregon Bow Hunters

(OBH) Convention. The convention was held at the Riverhouse Convention Center in Bend. The presentation provided information related to enforcement issues occurring in Southeast Oregon. F&W Troopers from the Ontario, Burns, Baker City and Bend also provided information involving poaching activities. The audience participated in a question and answering session; the presentation was well received.

Two Troopers from the Central Oregon F&W Team attended the Bend OHA monthly meeting, there were approximately 50 attendees. The troopers gave a presentation on how to remove a dog from a trap.

An F&W Trooper spoke to a 3rd grade class at an elementary school in The Dalles. The topic was "doing well in school and the importance of a good education".

Members of the Marine Fisheries Team participated in the Saltwater Sportsman Show at the Oregon State Fairgrounds. The Marine Fisheries Team created a display which provided statistics related to notorious violations and ways to avoid them the future. Also on display was the Guardian boarding craft, ("Mini G"), which garnered many comments and recognition for its work on previous off-shore activities. Troopers even had the opportunity to have their photo taken with Marvel Superheroes who wandered in from a neighboring trade show.



CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature created an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Program and established a new user fee to boaters called the "AIS Prevention Permit." The AIS Prevention Program is co-managed by the ODFW and Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB). The primary objective is to keep Oregon's waters free of new aquatic invasive species, by conducting watercraft inspections, surveying and treating for invasive species, and educating the public. During 2015, ODFW stationed five Watercraft Inspection Teams in Ashland, Brookings, Lakeview, Midland and Ontario. Staff conducted 12,672 watercraft inspections and 281 watercraft decontaminations; 12 for the highly destructive quagga or zebra mussels. Staff inspected boats originating from nearly every U.S. state, five Canadian provinces, Mexico and New Zealand. The statewide watercraft inspection compliance rate was 72%, which is a 3% increase from 2014; Brookings had the lowest compliance rate at 59% and Lakeview had the highest 76%.

Conservation Program staff also conducted AIS surveys in many of Oregon's waters. Summer sampling for juvenile quagga and zebra mussels occurred at Applegate, Billy Chinook, East, Emigrant, Howard Prairie, Paulina, Prineville and Upper Klamath lakes. Staff performed fall shoreline surveys for all aquatic invasive species at Applegate, Billy Chinook, Crane Prairie, Davis, Detroit, Elk, East, Emigrant, Foster, Green Peter, Hills Creek, Howard Prairie, Hyatt, Lava, Ochoco, Odell, Paulina, Prineville, Upper Klamath and Wickiup lakes. Staff also assisted the Deschutes Watershed District with the rotenone treatment at North Twin Lake.

Education and outreach continues to be an important part of the AIS Prevention Program. Staff worked at a number of public events and provided training to various groups. Public events included Portland and Central Oregon Sportsman's shows; Portland Boat Show; Oregon State and Malheur County fairs; Fall Fishing Expo; and Portland Seaport Celebration. Staff provided a variety of training to other groups including: government agencies (e.g., ODFW, USFS, OSP, BLM), schools (e.g., Chapman Hill, Hendrick, Mapleton, Reedsport, Ruch, Thurston High

School, Silverton Outdoor School, Canyonville Fish Release and Education Days), and others (e.g., Emerald Point Senior Center, Longview Fishing Club).

**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
March 18, 2016**