



# ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission  
April 22, 2016

## EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

### Phillips Reservoir Tiger Muskies: Year Three

Following approval by the Commission in December 2012, tiger muskie were introduced into Phillips Reservoir to control an introduced population of yellow perch which has decimated a once very productive and popular fishery for rainbow trout. The fishery experienced a 90% decline in angler participation after yellow perch introduction. Tiger muskie have been utilized in reservoirs across the west to control over abundant prey species, and restore trout fisheries.

Tiger muskie, a sterile hybrid produced by crossing muskellunge and northern pike, have been released



into Phillips Reservoir for three consecutive years, 2013 – 2015. From 10,000 to 25,000, five inch tiger muskie juveniles have been released annually in late June or early July. A fourth release of 2,500, 10-12 inch tiger muskie is planned for October 2016. While some of the tiger muskie have survived and done quite well, as evidenced by the 30.5 inch three year old fish shown in the adjoining photograph, sampling by Grand Ronde Watershed District biologists suggests that survival of the released juveniles has been low. We suspect that a high percentage of the juveniles released are becoming prey to both avian and fish predators. We are adapting our approach based on current results from a five year monitoring and evaluation

effort underway since 2013. Larger 10-12 inch tiger muskie are commonly released to overcome this predation issue, and will be our target for future releases.

### Imnaha River Weir

The Imnaha River Weir is a satellite facility operated by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) staff at Lookingglass Hatchery in Elgin as part of the USFWS's funded Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP). The program is in place to provide spring Chinook salmon to the Imnaha River basin for mitigation and supplementation of natural populations. It is co-managed in cooperation with ODFW, Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

In the early 1990s, the weir on the Imnaha River was identified as a key component in need of upgrading to better manage the spring Chinook hatchery program. The old weir design was problematic due to safety concerns for staff working in the water during high flows. Often the weir wasn't installed until mid-summer after many of the adult salmon had already migrated past the site. The weir needed to be installed earlier in the year (during high water) in order catch the entire run of returning hatchery adults. Capturing the entire run is necessary for fishery managers implementing the sliding scale of hatchery/natural fish passed upstream for supplementation while staying within the limits of the NOAA permit governing the operation of the facility. Additionally, the new weir allows for more accurate estimates of spawning adults since nearly 100% of returning adult fish can now be collected.



**Old Imnaha River Weir**

After nearly three decades of permitting, planning and collaboration, the new Imnaha Weir was completed in March 2016. The new weir is a bridge design which was installed as a low profile three piece bridge that was rolled across the existing cement pad in the river, bolted together and then lowered onto concrete abutments. This design allows hatchery staff to safely install the panels during high flows.



**New Imnaha River Weir**

## **WEST REGION**

Steve Marx, Region Manager

### **2015 Volunteer Activities and Contributions**

Volunteers are an important part of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) through the contribution of many hours of service to assist staff in meeting the mission of the agency. They represent a core component of several ODFW programs and donate many thousands of hours of time each year. Volunteers also bring an added level of enthusiasm, energy, and new ideas to programs and the agency.

In 2015, a total of 13,885 volunteers, representing six program categories, contributed 218,985 hours of time with an estimated value totaling \$6,325,857. Most contributions came from organized volunteer programs including the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP), Volunteer Host Program, and Hunter Education Program with hour contributions of 128,178, 43,764, and 28,776 hours respectively. Other program areas represented include the Region Volunteer Program, Aquatic and Angler Education Program, and Outdoor Skills Education Program.

Volunteer contributions are an essential element of STEP and program efforts to achieve sustainability of Oregon's native salmon and trout populations as well as providing other fisheries program support. Most activities under the program are led by eleven STEP Biologist located around the state that develop and oversee projects with the assistance of a network of volunteers. Activities include monitoring of fish populations, assisting with habitat restoration projects, help with hatchery programs or acclimation facilities, and work on education and outreach activities.

The Volunteer Host Program is primarily comprised of RV owners who live and work for a month or more at ODFW wildlife areas, hatcheries, or local offices. ODFW provides host sites and volunteers donate approximately 20 hours per week per person. There are currently 46 host site locations across the state. Hosts participate in a broad range of duties that vary by location including but not limited to grounds maintenance, data entry, feeding fish or farming for wildlife, and assisting with outreach events.

The Region Volunteer Program is diverse and typically involves volunteers from the local community or representatives from fishing, hunting, or sporting organizations or conservation groups. Region volunteers are essential to completing many field activities undertaken by biologists and other staff. Assisting with fish and wildlife census work, collecting biological samples, staffing check stations, helping with fish out-planting or spawning at hatcheries, youth events, and many other duties. Volunteers also provide a safety net for department staff by providing a second set of hands when staff are working in remote locations or at night when conducting field work.

The remaining education programs are managed from the Information and Education Section of ODFW. These include the Aquatic and Angler Education Program, Hunter Education Program, and Outdoor Skills Education Program. All three programs are critical to the recruitment, reactivation, and retention of hunters, anglers, and other wildlife enthusiasts.

Another important aspect of volunteer use is the ability to utilize the dollar equivalent value of their hourly contribution as a source of match funding. Volunteer hours have an average match value of \$27.69 per hour; however Hunter Education volunteers, due to skill requirements, have an equivalent value of \$35.42 per hour.

We extend our thanks to the many volunteers who have contributed to ODFW this year and in the past.

## INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Rick Hargrave, Deputy Administrator

### Property acquired for new archery range near Junction City Pond

A special use request was approved and the process is in place to finalize the purchase of the ODOT property this week. The parcel of land is just under 40 acres (highlighted in red) and cost the agency \$60,000. The land purchase and the range construction will be using hunter education Section 4 funding.



It sits directly adjacent to an ODFW-owned fishing pond that sees heavy use throughout the year so there is a good potential for cross-promotion of fishing, archery, and hunting. This is an important acquisition because the only public archery range in the Eugene area was recently closed. That range was extremely popular and attracted significant volunteer involvement in its upkeep. The new property is approximately two

and a half miles from Junction City, four miles from Bowtech Archery and six miles from Eugene. It is relatively flat and a parking lot and vault toilet facility is already present.

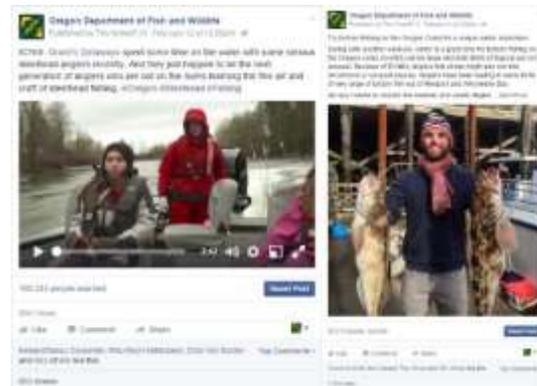
It is also large enough to accommodate a full range similar to what was built at EE Wilson, with more than enough room for expansion in the future.

### Hunter Outreach and Awareness Campaign

ODFW contracted with PacWest Communications to develop, implement and measure a hunter outreach and awareness campaign. The goals of the campaign are to inform the public about the environment, social and economic benefits of hunting; and encourage those inclined to continue or start hunting. The campaign runs through 2017.

### ODFW Social Media

ODFW social media continues to grow, especially with the addition of Grant's Getaways videos related to hunting and angling getting uploaded directly to Facebook. The steelheading with kids video reached more than 160,000 people, had 50,000 views, 883 likes and 603 shares as well as many encouraging comments. We have also broken the recreation report out into several individual opportunity posts through the week, expanding interest in opportunities to different interest groups. The ODFW Wildlife Viewing Page recently passed 8,000 likes.



## OCEAN SALMON AND COLUMBIA RIVER PROGRAM

Tucker Jones, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager

### 2016 Eulachon Update

In May of 2010, the Southern Distinct Population

Segment of eulachon, or Pacific smelt, was federally-listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. This genetic group encompasses all populations within the states of Washington, Oregon and California and extends from lower British Columbia to Northern California. Among 16 identified threats to eulachon, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) identified climate change impacts on ocean conditions as the most serious, by-catch in pink-shrimp fisheries was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and, commercial and recreational harvest were ranked 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> respectively.

In response to the listing, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) closed commercial fisheries in December 2010 and recreational fisheries effective January 2011.

ODFW's Marine Resources Program has worked closely with the pink-shrimp fishing industry to develop modified excluder devices that substantially reduce eulachon by-catch. The device reduces eulachon bycatch by more than 90%; while the catch of pink shrimp is reduced by less than 1%.

Sampling eulachon larva to estimate run-size enables us to characterize out-migrant densities in the mainstem Columbia River downstream of most mainstem and tributary spawning areas. This approach provides an annual index of the eulachon spawning stock biomass in the Columbia River. Larval tows begin in January and typically occur weekly through May. Catch results from tows in 2016 have not been processed at the time of this report.

In 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 the respective returns to the Columbia River were about 37-, 36-, 108-, 186-, and 127-million eulachon. The 2016 estimate is not yet complete, but it appears that it was a modest-sized run similar to those in 2011 and 2012. Deteriorating marine conditions during 2014 and 2015 and weak ocean upwelling likely contributed to reduced survival during ocean life phases.

Since 2014, Oregon and Washington have worked closely with NMFS to provide limited fishing opportunities in the Columbia River and its tributaries. State and federal staffs concluded that limited fisheries, monitored for effort and catch, would provide additional information on the

current status of eulachon. Combined landings in commercial, tribal and sport fisheries in 2014 and 2015 totaled about 240,000 and 317,000 pounds, or 1.4% and 2.8% of the total runs.

In 2016, preliminary estimates of fishery landings show commercial landings were about 4,800 pounds (compared to 18,600 in 2014 and 16,500 in 2015). On the Cowlitz River, in Washington, 16,700 dippers landed about 141,050 pounds during a six hour recreational fishery. Oregon fishery managers chose not to open a recreational fishery on the Sandy River because mainstem run indicators were weak over most of the season and no eulachon were observed in the tributary.

These fishery data, along with complimentary larval sampling data collected under contract with NMFS, will be used to estimate the 2016 run size and will help to shape future fisheries opportunities. The data collected as part of recent fisheries have provided a better understanding of the structure of the Columbia River subpopulation including data on run distribution, run strength, weight distribution, age composition, sex ratio, stage of maturity, and fecundity.

## **OREGON STATE POLICE**

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

Below are press releases of OSP Fish & Wildlife Division case dispositions released in March:

### **CHARTER COMPANY OWNERS SENTENCED FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION/CONVICTION- LINCOLN COUNTY**

On February 18th, 2016, owners and employees of Tradewinds of Depoe Bay, Inc. plead guilty to Felony Racketeering charges stemming from an Oregon State Police investigation that began in 2012 and resulted in the execution of search warrants at the Depoe Bay fishing charter business in March 2015.

The investigation determined Tradewinds of Depoe Bay charged customers for daily angling licenses and instead of issuing a handwritten 1-day angling license, would provide the customer with a register receipt. This enabled Tradewinds of

Depoe Bay retain the angling license revenue for the licenses that weren't issued.

In addition to the Racketeering charges, the company owners/employees Tim Harmon, Julie Harmon, and Eva Harmon each pled guilty to Assisting Another in Violation of Wildlife Laws which is a Class A Misdemeanor. Charges against the remaining employees of Tradewinds of Depoe Bay and the charter boat captains charged in the case were dismissed.

The penalties from these convictions issued by the Lincoln County Circuit Court are as follows:

- Tradewinds of Depoe Bay to pay restitution in the amount of \$45,000 to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Tradewinds of Depoe Bay to pay restitution in the amount of \$48,172.88 to the Oregon State Police for investigation and prosecution.
- Tradewinds of Depoe Bay to pay restitution in the amount of \$16.75 to those Tradewinds customers who purchased licenses that were not issued from April 2012 through March 2015.
- Tim Harmon to pay court fines of \$3,500
- Julie Harmon to pay court fines of \$3,500
- Eva Harmon to pay court fines of \$3,000
- Each of the Harmons will be sentenced to bench probation of five years with the following conditions:
  - Tim Harmon will sell Tradewinds of Depoe Bay and associated property located at 118 US 101, Depoe Bay, Oregon to an independent third party for a reasonable and fair market value
  - After the sale of the company, Tim Harmon, Julie Harmon or Eva Harmon will have no involvement with Tradewinds or any successor company and will have no ownership interest in any Oregon charter fishing industry business.

Customers of Tradewinds of Depoe Bay who purchased a daily Oregon angling license between the dates of April 2012 through March 2015 who

did not receive an actual ODFW license who wish to receive restitution should contact the Lincoln County District Attorney Victim's Assistance Department at (541)563-3462 to make a restitution claim by May 1, 2016.

### **ST HELENS MAN SENTENCED FOLLOWING ELK POACHING CASE – UNION COUNTY**

On October 31, 2015 the Oregon State Police (OSP) Fish and Wildlife Division (La Grande) received a report of suspicious activity involving two bull elk killed in the Starkey Wildlife Management Unit near the town of Starkey. A reporting party observed the elk being shot and killed in the early morning hours by hunters. Several hours after the elk had been killed, it did not appear the hunters were attempting to salvage the meat from the elk.

Additional personnel from OSP and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife responded to assist in the investigation. The hunters, Darren Naillon, age 43, and a 15 year old juvenile (both of St Helens) were contacted at approximately 11:00 pm that night walking back to their camp. It was determined that the hunters had been waiting, in the rain, since approximately 2:30 pm that afternoon for Troopers to leave the area. The hunters had killed two branch antler bulls and only one of the hunters had a tag that would allow them to take a branch antler bull. The hunters did not have any meat from the elk with them at the time of the contact and advised Troopers that both elk had been boned out and the meat was with their packs (left behind in the forest).

Early the next morning, Troopers located both bulls and the hunter's packs loaded with what seemed to be a small amount of meat for two bull elk. Troopers found that both bulls (one five point and one six point) had only the prime cuts of meat removed (back-strap and hindquarters). The animals had not been field dressed and the hides had only been partially removed. Troopers estimated that half the meat on both animals had

been wasted. It was also noted that the hunters took the largest of the two elk's antlers.

The hunter's rifles, packs, salvaged meat, and both sets of antlers were seized.

In March of 2016, Darren Naillon plead guilty to Aiding in a Game Violation and Waste of a Game Animal. He was sentenced the following:

- 3 years hunting suspension.
- 3 years bench probation.
- 30 hours community service.
- \$16,588 fines and restitution.

All evidence was forfeited, to include: two custom rifles, a backpack and both sets of antlers.

## CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

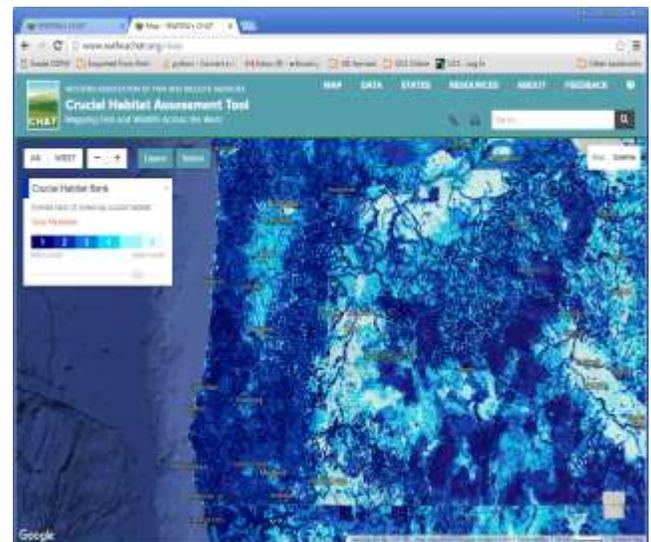
The Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT), originally developed within the Western Governors' Association (WGA), has undergone many changes over the past year. In 2015, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) took over management of CHAT. The WAFWA CHAT (<http://www.wafwachat.org/>) is now maintained by WAFWA staff, including the project leader Holly Michael (who is a former ODFW employee and was Oregon's representative on the WGA Wildlife Council) and WAFWA workgroups made up of Fish and Wildlife staff across the Western United States.

The CHAT website tracks the number of users visiting the site, which receives over 400 visits a month. Oregon continues to be one of the states that receives the most frequent visits to the CHAT website. Most of these visits are related to a user viewing the ODFW Compass, which received about 300 views during the month of February 2016. CHAT has also continued to generate interested from federal agencies and partners.

In March, CHAT was included in the 2016 National Earth Observation Assessment, which is a federal report generated by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to document data sets used in observing and analyzing land cover over large scale projects. CHAT has served a unique purpose in providing

new and increased focus on including State Agency produced datasets and tools, compiled over larger areas, to serve more regional and national needs.

WAFWA is encouraging all states to submit a crucial habitat data update for the July 2016 CHAT data submission. ODFW will be providing a comprehensive update for this submission. Crucial habitat layer updates will incorporate the many new data on species and habitats that was generated and collected during the Oregon Conservation Strategy revision process. A project within the Fish Division Conservation and Recovery Program has focused on working with ODFW district fish biologists to make more localized updates and improvements to the regional data used to map stream habitat quality.



**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR  
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