



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
October 7, 2016

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Smallmouth Bass in Deschutes River

Department creel surveyors and anglers report smallmouth bass being caught in the lower Deschutes steelhead fishery. Until this year, catching one here has been unusual.



Some anglers have speculated that recent operational changes at the Pelton Round Butte Hydro Complex to meet new water quality requirements has allowed smallmouth bass to colonize the lower Deschutes River. They are concerned that smallmouth may affect the popular trout and steelhead fisheries there.

As part of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) relicensing of the project, installation and operation of a Selective Water Withdrawal (SWW) structure was required. One of the purposes of SWW's is to comply with federal Clean Water Act requirements by mimicking pre-project Deschutes River water temperatures in the lower river. The practical result of this requirement is earlier warming of the river below the project in spring and summer than had occurred under the original FERC license, and earlier cooling of the river in the fall.

To monitor potential effects of this change, department staff are conducting snorkel and electrofishing surveys of the lower Deschutes.

The presence of smallmouth bass in the lower river is monitored as part of these surveys.

Lower Deschutes River surveys conducted from 2010 (when SWW operation began) through 2015 did not encounter bass. Surveys conducted this August found adult smallmouth bass in the lower Deschutes with the highest densities in the lower 12 miles of river. No young-of-the-year, or juvenile bass were encountered in these surveys. This suggests successful spawning had not occurred yet. Crayfish were the primary food item of the adult bass captured. There is no indication bass were preying on salmonids this year.

It seems reasonable that bass migrated into the lower Deschutes from the Columbia River where they have occurred since the early 1900's. Lower Deschutes River water temperatures were warmer earlier this spring than in previous years, possibly making the river more habitable for smallmouth bass. It's unclear if bass will over winter in the Deschutes and successfully spawn next spring. We expect future monitoring will help us better understand what's going on in the lower Deschutes River.

Juniper Removal

Juniper encroachment on rangeland is a major problem for wildlife managers throughout eastern Oregon. Juniper outcompete the perennial grasses and shrubs wildlife depend on throughout the year, and especially important during winter. Reversing juniper encroachment and restoring native habitats is the focus of many eastern Oregon agencies, landowners and hunter groups.

One example of the work being done to rehabilitate rangeland is the effort being made in the Murderers Creek Wildlife Management Unit. This area, including the Department's Philip W. Schneider Wildlife Area, is important mule deer habitat. Juniper encroachment and the resulting loss of native grass and shrub habitat is a factor limiting mule deer here.



Department biologists working with Natural Resource Conservation Service, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, US Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Foundation for Wild American Sheep, Oregon Hunters Association and dozens of landowners are working to stop juniper encroachment and restore native habitats in the Murderers Creek area. One of the Murderers Creek Mule Deer Initiative goals is to remove juniper and restore shrubs and native grass on 20,000 acres by 2025. Since 2010 juniper has been removed from nearly 15,000 acres of private and public land. Agencies, hunter groups and landowners have contributed \$1,500,000 towards the effort. The Department's Access and Habitat Program has contributed more than \$450,000.

Other benefits of this effort include range improvement for cattle, reduced erosion, and improved spring flow. This effort has been effective at improving habitat for mule deer and a variety of other wildlife species while demonstrating effective collaboration between agencies and private landowners.

WEST REGION

Steve Marx, Region Manager

Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program

In 2010, the Department and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) entered into a 15-year settlement agreement to permanently resolve BPA's wildlife mitigation obligation from impacts caused by Willamette Project dams. BPA committed over \$140 million in funding for permanent protection of wildlife habitat in the Willamette Basin with a goal of protecting at least 16,880 by 2025. To date, the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP) has protected 6,178 acres of habitat through fee title acquisition or conservation easement.

Staff recently submitted the list of FY 2017 recommended projects to BPA that total 1,468 acres at a cost of \$10,243,926. Recommended projects are all within Oregon Conservation Strategy Conservation Opportunity Areas and include:

- Finn Rock Reach, acquisition proposed by McKenzie River Trust – 269 acres of riparian, wetland, side channel, and conifer habitat along the McKenzie River that support spring Chinook, bull trout, Western pond turtles and Western painted turtles (all Oregon Conservation Strategy Species).
- Cerro Gordo, conservation easement proposed by McKenzie River Trust – 536 acres of grasslands, oak woodlands, and conifer forest.
- Smithfield Oaks, acquisition proposed by Polk Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) – 179 acres of oak woodland and grassland habitat under high risk of vineyard development.
- Courtney Creek, acquisition proposed by Greenbelt Land Trust – 200 acres of wet prairie, wetland forest, grassland, agriculture, and conifer forest. There is a unique plant community including 20,000 to 30,000 Bradshaw's lomatium plants that, if protected, would help reach ESA recovery goals.
- Little Sweden Conservation Area, acquisition proposed by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs – 181.6 acres of conifer forest, riparian and rock outcrop habitat along the North Santiam River.
- Molalla River Forest Habitat Corridor Project, acquisition proposed by Clackamas SWCD – 81 acres of riparian habitat, late successional conifer forest, and conifer forest habitat along the Molalla River.
- Harkens Lake South Access, conservation easement proposed by Greenbelt Land Trust – 21 acres of agricultural field and riparian habitat that builds on previous phases of protection and restoration at Harkens Lake on the mainstem Willamette River.

ODFW solicits project proposal applications each year, and a Technical Review Team (TRT) of scientific experts reviews the applications. Proponents are encouraged to work with the three Tribes to review projects for cultural significance. In addition to the technical review, ODFW chairs the Willamette Wildlife Advisory Group (WAG) that provides policy-level review of the project list as well as strategic guidance for the program.

The WAG produces a prioritized list of proposals to the Department Director who makes final determination of recommended projects, priority order, and funding amount to BPA.

As of September 14, funding approval from BPA for FY17 project recommendations is still pending.

Rise to the Future Award for Collaborative Aquatic Stewardship

North Willamette Watershed District Fish staff received a national award from the US Forest Service this month for agency contributions as part of the Sandy River Basin Partners (SRBP). SRBA was nominated and received the 2015 USFS National “*Rise to the Future Award*” in the Collaborative Aquatic Stewardship category. This award is given by the Forest Service to only one organization in the entire United States each year for outstanding habitat restoration accomplishments. In addition to ODFW, SRBA members include The Freshwater Trust, Salem District BLM–Cascades Field Office, Sandy River Basin Watershed Council, Portland Water Bureau, and USDA Forest Service.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Rick Hargrave, Deputy Administrator

New Archery Education Coordinator

The Information and Education Division has hired Miranda Huerta to be ODFW’s Archery Education Coordinator. Miranda started on Aug. 25th. She’s from Des Moines, Iowa, and was introduced to archery by her father at age 5. Miranda and her dad spent a lot of time with their compound bows at local, regional, and eventually, national events. At age 12, Miranda was introduced to the Olympic-style recurve bow

and began training for national USA Archery events. This journey took her to become a member of the Jr. Dream Team, where she trained under the National Head Archery Coach at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California. Later, she proceeded to become a member of the 2009 Youth World Team, 2010 Inaugural Youth Olympic Team, 2011 Senior World Team, 2012 London Olympic Team, and 2013 Senior World Team. During this time, Miranda was fortunate to travel to many places, meet new people and cultures. Miranda graduated from Iowa State University in 2016 with a B.S. in Environmental Science. She will lead Oregon’s National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) as well as implement other archery and bow hunting outreach programs, such as the Archery Trade Association’s (ATA) Explore Bow hunting Program. We are excited to begin implementing these programs in Oregon because we see this as an opportunity to introduce school-aged children to the sport of archery and connect them and their families to Oregon’s fish and wildlife resources and increase consideration of hunting as a family activity.

Construction begins at new Junction City Ponds Archery Park

Construction began the week of September 12th on the new Junction City Archery Park, located directly adjacent to ODFW’s popular public fishing pond. The range will be a family friendly place where recreational archers and bow hunters can develop and practice their shooting skills. Modeled after ODFW’s highly popular EE Wilson Wildlife Area Archery Park, the range will feature an eight target beginners range and a 16 target general target range. All shooting lines will be covered, and a large covered instructional area will accommodate group instruction or provide families a place to gather while visiting the range. A bow hunting specific practice range, with elevated shooting platform, may be included in future expansion plans. Use of the range will be free, and should be open to the public by mid-October.

Targeted Email Marketing

ODFW continues to expand its use of its customer relation management system, Salesforce. In addition to using the Salesforce to thank customers for their purchases, the Information and Education Division is also using

the system to remind customers of upcoming application deadlines. For example, sage-grouse hunts, changes to the Sauvie Island Eastside check-in process, upcoming opportunities for individuals who recently completed hunter education and Mentored Youth Hunting Program participants. I&E Division will continue to broaden outreach capabilities using Salesforce to create a value-added relationship with its customers.

OCEAN SALMON AND COLUMBIA RIVER PROGRAM

Tucker Jones, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager

Pacific Salmon Treaty

The Pacific Salmon Treaty, signed in 1985, is implemented by the Pacific Salmon Commission (PSC), an organization formed by the governments of Canada and the United States. The PSC is a 16-person body with four Commissioners and four alternates each from the United States and Canada. The PSC does not actively manage salmon fishing seasons, but sets out long-term agreements for fishing regimes, which are then managed by the responsible domestic entities.

Revised agreements under the original 1985 Pacific Salmon Treaty were adopted in 1999 and 2009, and the PSC is presently preparing to negotiate a new agreement, which will replace the 2009 agreement expiring at the end of 2018.

Oregon representatives to the PSC include Alternate Commissioner Rick Klumph, and numerous policy advisors, PSC Panel, and Technical Committee members. Bilateral meetings are held in October, January and February of each year.

In order to reach a new agreement by 2019, both countries have started to independently formulate their respective goals and objectives. As outlined in the February presentation to the Commission, the U.S. members are tasked with developing a consensus U.S. position to bring to the bilateral process. The Oregon delegation is currently working towards this goal with other U.S. members representing federal and Tribal interests in the Pacific NW and the states of Washington, Idaho, and Alaska, through a series

of several additional U.S. meetings during 2016 and 2017.

The projected timeline for completion of a new agreement is:

- October 2016: Begin bilateral negotiations.
- February 2017: Complete the formulation of a U.S. position.
- December 2017: Complete bilateral negotiations.
- December 2018: Joint Federal ratification of bilateral agreement.

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

There are numerous ways to gauge success. But by any measure, the 2016 hunting season has already provided a glimpse of OSP Fish and Wildlife (F&W) Division enforcement efforts while protecting Oregon's natural resources. Below are a few stories that highlight those efforts:

F&W Troopers from the Salem and McMinnville offices conducted a nighttime Wildlife Enforcement Decoy (WED) operation in rural Yamhill County. At approximately 9:40 pm, nearly 1.5 hours after legal light, a vehicle with dual LED light bars stopped on the roadway and illuminated the WED. The driver exited the vehicle after approximately one minute with bow in hand, stepping into the light to draw and fired three arrows; finally hitting the WED on the third attempt. The subject was cited and released for **Unlawful Take of Buck Deer (WED)** and his bow was seized as evidence.

While patrolling the Lookout Mountain Unit on opening day of archery season, a F&W Trooper from the Baker City office contacted a hunter who was heading home with his freshly harvested buck in the back of his pickup. The Trooper inspected the deer tag that was attached to the deer's antler. Upon inspection of the tag, it was determined the tag had not been validated. The subject was cited for **Fail to Validate Big Game Tag**.

A F&W Trooper from the Astoria office responded to an angling complaint at the Warrenton Marina. Subsequent investigation revealed that two subjects had each unlawfully retained a non-fin clipped Coho salmon. Both

subjects said they misidentified the fish and thought they were Chinook, which were legal to possess in the area which they were angling. Both subjects were cited for **Take Non-Adipose Fin-Clipped Coho Salmon**. The fish were seized and donated to a local food bank.

F&W Troopers from the Baker City and Burns offices conducted a Wildlife Enforcement Decoy in the Malheur River Unit using an antelope buck. One of the vehicles that stopped at the antelope decoy had a passenger fire multiple rounds at the decoy while he was still seated in the vehicle. The passenger was cited for **Unlawful Take to Wit: Shooting from a Motor Vehicle and Shoot Antelope within 50 yards of a Motor Vehicle**.

F&W Troopers from the Bend and Prineville offices were working unlawful bear bait sites in the Ochoco Unit when they heard a single rifle shot. Troopers responded and hiked in, discovering a fresh bear dead inside the bait site. No hunter or vehicle was located and the suspects trail camera and bait buckets were gone. The Troopers hid and waited. Just after darkness fell, a vehicle approached through the meadow. At the kill site, where the bear still lay in the bait, five adults got out of the vehicle and the shooter suspect could be heard describing his shot. Troopers contacted the suspects who cooperated and took the Troopers to five additional bear bait sites. Two rifles, one bow, five game cameras, three cell phones, one tag and one bear were seized. Criminal charges pending include: **Aiding in a Wildlife Offense (3 counts), one count Unlawful Take Bear, Unlawful Hunting/Baiting Bear (3 counts)**.



Seized Bear. Photo Credit: OSP File

CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

The foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana Boylei*) is a small frog with rough, brownish-gray skin, and a pale yellow wash under the hind limbs. Unlike most native frogs in Oregon, it breeds in flowing water on valley bottoms rather than in lakes and ponds, making it a good surrogate species to evaluate the health of low gradient streams. The species once ranged from the Willamette Valley south to southern California, and from the Sierra Nevada and Cascade Range west to the coast. Unfortunately, recent research indicates that the foothill yellow-legged frog only occurs at half of its historic sites and has undergone a significant range contraction. Threats include changes to hydrology and water temperature of river systems, invasive species such as bullfrogs, and habitat loss.

Environmental DNA (eDNA) is a new technology that allows researchers to confirm the presence of a species simply by analyzing samples from the environment for fragments of its DNA. Prior research has demonstrated that eDNA has a higher detection probability than traditional visual surveys, and is safer for staff, less intrusive for the study animal, minimizes the risk of introducing pathogens or aquatic invasive species, and may be more cost effective, due to its passive nature.

This summer, ODFW staff received a grant from Oregon Wildlife to compare traditional survey techniques with eDNA analysis. Staff randomly selected twenty historic foothill yellow-legged frog sites in the Applegate and the upper portion of the Illinois Watersheds to survey. Traditional visual survey techniques were used to search for frogs at each site, in addition to collecting water samples for genetic analysis.

Overall, 65% of the historic sites were occupied by frogs according to visual surveys, which was higher than the range-wide average. This result was expected since southwest Oregon is in the core of the foothill yellow-legged frog range and most of the loss in occupancy has occurred along the periphery. Filtered water samples will be submitted to laboratories for genetic analysis. The results will be compared to visual surveys to

help validate the technique for future use as a monitoring tool by ODFW.



**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
October 7, 2016**