



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
August 4, 2017

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Malheur River Chinook Fishery

On June 27th, the department and the Burns Paiute Tribe (Tribe) cooperatively released 153 Chinook salmon into the upper Malheur River for an experimental Chinook fishery. The fishery is meant for tribal and non-tribal anglers and attracted nearly 60 attendees, primarily Burns Paiute Tribal members, to watch the release and fish.



(Photo courtesy of Andi Harmon, Burns Paiute Tribe)

This is the second year this fishery has been offered, last year 200 adult Chinook salmon were released in the same location. The fishery was cooperatively developed to provide a “bucket” fishery in the upper Malheur Basin for tribal and non-tribal anglers. Salmon and steelhead had been blocked from the Malheur since the early 1900’s by construction of a number of dams. The Burns Paiute Tribe had been interested in rekindling their fishing tradition in this area for some time and had worked with the Department on a number of alternatives to create a fishery. In the end, we decided that surplus early-run Willamette River hatchery spring Chinook provided the best choice for this opportunity because they posed a lower

disease risk to local redband populations than Columbia or Snake River salmon.

This year a few Chinook were tagged with radio transmitting tags to track their movements and monitor behavior.

While we are unaware of any sport harvest in 2016, Burns Paiute Tribal fishers harvested 70 spring Chinook. This is close to the 30% exploitation rate we set as a target for this fishery. The 2017 fishery is open until August 15th this year. Given the increasing experience level of tribal fishers, we expect exploitation to be at least as good this year.

Cranebow Broodstock Update

In 1997 the Department began collecting and spawning wild adfluvial redband trout from the Deschutes River upstream of Crane Prairie Reservoir. The purpose of this effort was to develop a locally adapted hatchery broodstock that would improve the quality of hatchery rainbow trout stocked in the upper Deschutes basin; particularly Crane Prairie Reservoir. Hatchery stocks used to support this fishery in the past had performed poorly. Biologists hoped that developing this new stock would improve fishing, reduce the potential genetic risk to native redband posed by out-of-basin stocks, and to bring this program in line with the department’s Native Fish Conservation Policy and Fish Hatchery Management Policies.

Monitoring and evaluation over the last 20 years indicate the Crane Prairie stock (often referred to as “Cranebow”) performs better in central Oregon waters than other domesticated stocks in terms of growth, survival, contribution to the fishery and

angler satisfaction. As a result, the Deschutes District has expanded use of Cranebows to many of central Oregon's most popular fisheries including: East, Paulina, Hosmer, Big Lava Lakes, Crane Prairie Reservoir, and the Fall River.

In the early years, the program was maintained through annual trapping and spawning of wild fish in the upper Deschutes River. Currently broodstock is maintained at Wizard Falls Hatchery.

Cranebow production has increased due to requests for both fingerling and legal sized fish. Recently, hatchery staff have successfully developed triploid Cranebows. This will enable managers to use Cranebows in waters where there is potential interaction with native redband trout. Studies indicate triploid fish often exhibit higher growth and survival due to lack of energy directed at reproduction. Ultimately, with increased efficiency in triploid Cranebow production, the Deschutes District will transition to their use exclusively and phase out other rainbow trout stocks.

WEST REGION

Chris Knutsen, Acting, Region Manager

Southern Flow Corridor Project

It was 15 years in the making, but in 2016 the first of several levees were breached in what has come to be known as the Southern Flow Corridor (SFC) project on Tillamook Bay (Bay). Nestled between the Trask and Wilson rivers, this 642-acre project is one of the largest estuarine restoration efforts ever undertaken in Oregon. However, it wasn't the habitat values alone that brought this project to fruition, but rather years of analysis and hydraulic modeling that demonstrated this project would have substantial flood reduction benefits for landowners and businesses in the Highway 101 area of the City of Tillamook.

Beginning in 2001, Tillamook County and numerous partners purchased the original 377

acres of the project area from three private landowners specifically to restore habitat. The department and several stakeholders developed a management plan with the intent to restore the properties to full-time tidal flows. However, hydraulic analyses soon concluded that full restoration of the entire site would cause unacceptable flood level increases within the City of Tillamook's Highway 101 business district.

The project stalled until a devastating flood in 2006 prompted then Governor, Ted Kulongoski (at the request of Senator Johnson and Tillamook County Commissioners) to establish the Tillamook flood mitigation effort as an "Oregon Solutions" project. The Oregon Solutions process provided the structure and process for public and private sectors to collaborate in addressing technically and politically challenging needs.



Flooding of Highway 101, City of Tillamook, 2006

The Project Design Team, chaired by ODFW staff, developed several projects focused on flood reduction and habitat restoration. Of those project alternatives, the SFC project rose to the top as providing both the largest flood reduction benefit (-1.5 feet flood elevation) and the largest benefit to fish and wildlife habitat in Tillamook Bay. The primary goal of the SFC was to remove impediments to flood flows to the maximum extent possible in the lower Wilson River floodplain.

Beginning last year, the \$10 million dollar project began by removing six miles of existing levees and

almost 500,000 yards of fill material. Over five miles of new tidal channels were constructed to simulate conditions at the site prior to European settlement.

In total, 522 acres were restored to tidal flows with the remaining project area serving as setback levees or flood easements on agricultural land. The tidal habitat that is being restored lies at the confluence of the Bay's two most productive salmon systems, the Wilson and Trask Rivers. The resulting range of habitats (including mud flats, aquatic beds, emergent marsh, scrub-shrub wetlands, forested wetlands and sloughs) will provide substantial habitat benefits to not only our threatened Oregon coast coho, but also chum and Chinook salmon, cutthroat trout, and many Oregon Conservation Strategy wildlife species.

Construction of the SFC project will be completed during the summer of 2017.



New and reconnected tidal channels along the lower Wilson River, spring 2017. Photo by Don Best

Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program

Staff led a tour for a Straub Environmental Center event at the Gail Achterman Wildlife Area on the Willamette River near Salem. There was a high level of interest and enthusiasm from participants.

Highlights included watching recently fledged juvenile ospreys vying for airspace with a Bald eagle, and viewing emerging wapato, an edible plant found in shallow wetlands, in the northern slough. Two newly opened paths into the interior of the island allowed more thorough exploration

for the group. Straub would like to coordinate similar events in the future, with a kayak outing tentatively slated for August.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Information and Education Division Administrator

Governor's Campout

ODFW participated in this year's Governor's Campout at Willamette Mission State Park. This annual nationwide event provides families an opportunity to camp and participate in outdoor activities, such as fishing and archery, with the goal of connecting participants to the outdoors. At this year's campout the weather was blazing hot, but that didn't stop campers from having a great time. ODFW was on hand and set up a fantastic archery range and provided archery gear for participants to use. Several participants were able to receive instruction from ODFW and were able to shoot "bullseyes" despite it being their first time using a bow!



Oregon's First Gentleman Dan Little with an archery bullseye

Face Lift for ODFW Space at State Fair

New interpretive signs and upgrades will be present at the ODFW exhibit area for the 2017 Oregon State Fair. I&E staff along with staff from both Fish and Wildlife Divisions have worked collaboratively to formulate plans for both short term and long term improvements to the exhibit area. For 2017, visitors can expect to see new and improved interpretive signs and minor facility upgrades while visiting the ODFW exhibit.

Further improvements are expected in 2018 and

beyond with the possibility of a major overhaul to improve state fair goer experience at the site.

New Website Launch Coming Up Fast

The agency website will be receiving an overhaul this fall. Through research and analytics, the ODFW Outreach and Web Team has found that the vast majority of visitors to the current website are seeking opportunity based content- controlled hunting, trout stocking schedules, wildlife viewing, and the recreation report- to name a few. Based on this information, a new “opportunities” based webpage is being created that will allow visitors to find the content they desire more easily and move seamlessly from page to page. The new website will also feature a new state of the art platform that will allow the department to provide updates more efficiently, and to use ODFW data to provide customers with real-time updates as they occur. The first demonstrations of the new site occurred in July. The Web Team will be hard at work transferring content and ensuring both the new and old site will function to provide user friendly content for our customers up until the launch date sometime this fall.



Screen shot of new “opportunities” website

Archery Range Development

ODFW partnered with the Tualatin Hills Parks and Recreation District on the development of a new target archery range at the district’s Portland Community College Rock Creek campus complex. The range includes ten targets from 10 yards to 60 yards and is free for public use. Special thanks to retired ODFW fish biologist Charlie Corrarino for his tireless lobbying for the project, and to the Black Rose Traditional Archers for their skilled

assistance in constructing the range. This is the fourth public archery range that ODFW has developed in as many years.



First shots at the new THPRD Archery Range. Pictured (from left to right) are Mike Treat, Miranda Huerta and Rich Thompson.

The department also partnered with Oregon’s bowhunting community and Oregon Wildlife to construct an elevated shooting platform at the EE Wilson Wildlife Area Archery Park. The new platform will provide bowhunters with the opportunity to practice simulated tree stand shots. Special thanks to Oregon Wildlife, Oregon Bowhunters, the Traditional Archers of Oregon, the Oregon Hunters Association and Archer’s Afield.



New elevated shooting platform at the EE Wilson Wildlife Area Archery Park

High Lakes Stocking Video

“Splashdown” and “It’s raining fingerling trout” were just a few of the headlines for a recent video ODFW shared on our Facebook and Twitter pages. During this year’s high lakes stocking, which is done by helicopter, staff tagged along and attached a GoPro video camera to the flying stocking container in order to capture the action. The video was shared on the agency Facebook page and viewed over 20,000 times! The video can be seen here:

<https://www.facebook.com/MyODFW/videos/10155455906745890/>

MARINE RESOURCES PROGRAM

Caren Braby, Marine Resources Program Manager

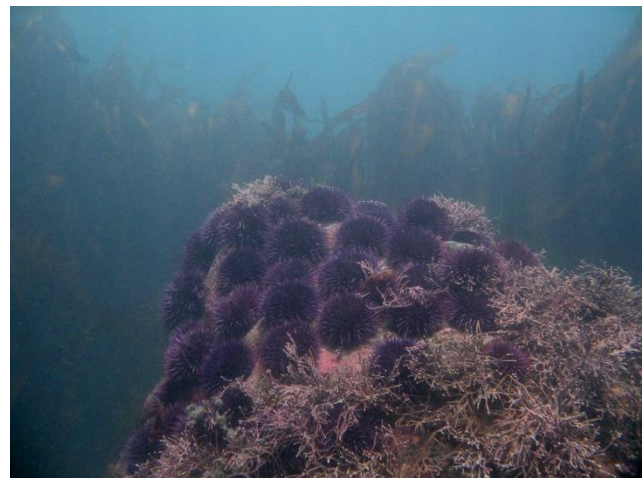
Purple sea urchin explosion

Purple sea urchins are flourishing like never before on the south coast of Oregon. Although common to intertidal areas, purple sea urchins have been historically sparse at depths greater than 30 feet, more often the domain of the primary fishery target, red sea urchins. Subtidal SCUBA surveys show a more than tenfold recent increase of purple sea urchins in areas where they have previously been rare. This boom of purple sea urchins is also evident in surveys of the California populations.

In contrast to the economically important red sea urchin, the purple sea urchin comprises less than 1% of the total urchin harvest. However, both urchins are ecologically very important to Oregon’s nearshore ecosystems. To collect population data, ODFW biologists collaborate with contracted and volunteer SCUBA divers to take counts of urchins at depth. The department has conducted these sea urchin surveys over the last three decades, starting during the booming years of the red sea urchin fishery (1990).



Purple sea urchins are abundant in Oregon right now in the intertidal (above), as usual, and atypically abundant in the subtidal (below).



It is likely that a combination of factors have led to the increased abundance of subtidal purple sea urchins. First, purple sea urchin recruitment was very high during the warm water years of 2015-2016. Second, sea urchin predators are largely absent – their primary predator, sun stars have been devastated due to sea star wasting syndrome. A more long-term change has been from the extirpation of sea otters over a century ago. The increase in urchins may have implications on kelp production, overgrazing of reefs and competition with commercial species (red sea urchins).

Ocean salmon fishermen place trust in trawlers to avoid Klamath Chinook

The lowest-ever forecast returns of spawning Klamath River fall Chinook for the 2017 season led to severe restrictions on ocean salmon fisheries from central Oregon into northern California, and heightened concerns about possible bycatch impacts to the Klamath salmon stock from other fisheries. One of those is the midwater trawl

fishery for Pacific whiting (hake), managed by the Pacific Fishery Management Council.

Bycatch of Chinook salmon and several rebuilding rockfish stocks in the whiting fishery is closely monitored and must stay under caps or the fishery is closed. The most recent ESA consultation allows an incidental take of 11,000 Chinook per year in the whiting fishery; actual numbers have ranged from roughly 3,700 to 14,000 in recent years, with a median of 6,500. The bycatch consists primarily of two (2)-year old and younger Chinook, from a mix of west coast stocks.

Many whiting vessels have organized into cooperatives which help minimize impacts to non-target species by requiring members to share information on bycatch and follow stringent rules such as ceasing fishing or moving to another location when bycatch rates exceed certain thresholds. Even so, avoiding both salmon and rockfish bycatch while harvesting whiting can be a significant challenge.

At the March and April 2017 Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) meetings, it became clear that the directed chinook fisheries in the Klamath Management Zone and surrounding areas would have to be closed this year in order to allow as many 3+ year old Klamath River fall Chinook to return to the river to spawn. Meanwhile, in the groundfish fisheries, incidental take of Chinook was still allowed. When the whiting industry learned of the Klamath situation, they committed to do everything they could to avoid salmon bycatch, including fishing farther north where impacts on Klamath chinook are lower, although rockfish bycatch is more likely.

This voluntary shift in fishing is the result of intense collaborative discussions between the fleets. The agreement avoided a potential closure

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

NW Region

A Fish and Wildlife (F&W) Trooper out of the Albany office conducted a late night saturation of local angling locations. With the aid of a thermal imaging Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) he was able to locate a small group of subjects (2 adults

and 1 juvenile) using a cast net in a closed area of the South Santiam River after legal fishing hours. The adults would alternate in casting the net into the water near a hatchery outlet pipe. Upon contact, the investigation revealed the subjects had one wild Chinook salmon and two trout in their possession. The Trooper escorted the subjects to a nearby parking lot. While interviewing the subjects an additional vehicle pulled into the parking lot. Contact of the secondary vehicle was made, and a male subject was found in possession of a fishing rod and multiple lead lures with large treble hooks. The male admitted he was planning on, “Looking at the fish ladder”. The Trooper noted multiple signs of impairment, a marijuana pipe, and multiple empty beer cans. The subject became non-compliant when he was told he was no longer free to leave and to provide the trooper with the vehicle keys. The trooper had to remove the male from his vehicle and place him into custody for Interfering with Peace Officer and Resist Arrest until a second unit could arrive. A F&W Sergeant arrived a short time later and conducted a DUII investigation and arrested the second subject for DUII. The other subject was charged with Interfering with Peace Officer and Resist Arrest. The trooper completed his angling investigation; issuing criminal citations to both subjects for Take Non-Adipose Fin Clipped Chinook, Angling Prohibited Method: Cast Net, Angling Prohibited Hours, and Angling Closed Area (see photograph below).



East Region

Enterprise Troopers responded to several bear complaints at Wallowa Lake. Complaints came in throughout the week that a bear had been coming into people's yards and rummaging through trash. Troopers helped educate homeowners on proper storage of excess food and trash. In the end it appears that the bear was simply preparing for a cameo on Pitmasters. Yes, the photo is real.



CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

In the February 2017 Commission Field Report, the Conservation Program notified the Commission of four multi-state State Wildlife Grants - Competitive Grant Program (C-SWG) proposals submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in collaboration with multiple agency and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) partners. The USFWS scored the proposals on their contributions to landscape-scale conservation and their direct benefit to Species of Greatest Conservation Need (i.e., Strategy Species). Sixteen projects were recommended for funding, for a total of ~\$6.4M. Three of the four proposals that ODFW collaborated on were successful. Below is a summary of those projects:

Project #1

Conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need and Pollinators in Washington and Oregon Prairie-Oak Habitat

This project is a continuation of a successful collaboration with ODFW, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and other conservation partners to restore prairie-oak habitat and associated Strategy Species in Washington and Oregon. The objectives of the project are to: 1) restore 469 acres of habitat on 10 high priority prairie sites on public and private lands in western Oregon and Washington, 2) conduct research on

Southwest Region

A F&W Senior Trooper from the Roseburg office responded to a call in the city limits of Sutherlin of a dead deer with an arrow in the rib cage. The 2x2 buck deer appeared to have been deceased for 2-3 days. The trooper walked the neighborhood speaking with neighbors and handing out business cards in hopes of turning up a lead. That evening the trooper received two phone calls with information. Subsequently a male subject was contacted at a residence in the same neighborhood that the deer was found. During the contact the male subject admitted to shooting the deer at approximately 10:00pm a few nights prior. The subject stated that he thought he had put a rubber blunt on the tip of the arrow before shooting at the deer. He was upset about the deer eating his daughter's garden the previous fall. The subject was criminally cited and released for Unlawful Take of Buck Deer and Waste of a Game Animal. The subject's bow was seized as evidence.

key data gaps for the Oregon Vesper Sparrow, Western Bluebird, and plant-pollinator communities (e.g., butterflies and bumble bees), and 3) evaluate the effects of restoration activities on Strategy Species. The priority sites in Oregon include: St. Johns Prairie (Multnomah County), Bezell Memorial Forest (Benton County), Herbert Farm (Benton County), Champoeg State Park (Marion County), and Bald Hill Farm (Benton County). The total cost of the project will be ~\$870K, with the USFWS providing ~\$500K and partners providing ~\$370K in non-federal match. Our partners will be conducting the habitat restoration and species monitoring in Oregon over the next three years, while the Conservation Program will provide \$20,000 in cash match.

Project #2

Advancing Western Pond Turtle Conservation in Washington, Oregon, and California

The goal of the project is to improve the population status of Western pond turtles in Washington, Oregon, and California, in collaboration with agency and NGO partners. The Western pond turtle is a state Sensitive Species and federal Species of Concern. The objectives of the project are to: 1) implement habitat restoration and management actions on five high priority sites to improve 123 acres of wetland and adjacent upland habitat, and 2) conduct a comprehensive, range-wide population assessment of the Western pond turtle. In Oregon, the restoration sites include: Minto-Brown Island Park (Salem), Talking Water Gardens (Albany), and Golden Gardens Park (Eugene). The total cost of the project will be ~\$940K, with the USFWS providing ~\$499K and partners providing \$441K in non-federal match. ODFW is seeking \$120K to conduct the work in Oregon. Although much of the field work will be conducted by contractors through ODFW, some Conservation Program and District Biologist staff time will also be used for monitoring, trapping, and restoration activities.



Project #3

Predicting Responses of Short-eared Owl Population Size, Distribution, and Habitat Use in a Changing Climate

The project will be a collaboration between agencies and NGOs from eight states, including California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The project aims to determine Short-eared Owl abundance, distribution, and habitat associations across the west, aligning results with predicted changes in climate. The total cost of the project will be ~\$1.05M, with the USFWS providing ~\$500K and partners providing \$545K in non-federal match. Although ODFW provided a letter of support for the proposal, the department will not be an active participant in implementation of the project. The Klamath Bird Observatory will conduct the owl surveys in Oregon. Short-eared Owls are a Strategy Species, and this project will address data gaps identified in the Strategy.



**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
August 4, 2017**