



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
March 15, 2019

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Anderson Property Acquisition

Last October the Commission approved the department acquiring the Anderson property adjacent to the Klamath Wildlife Area on Miller Island. The purchase was completed in January using Waterfowl Stamp and Pittman and Robertson Act funds. Staff has begun the process of updating signs for the property.



The property is 214 acres of uplands and seasonal wetlands. There is a permanent Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) conservation easement on the property. NRCS will complete wetland restoration work associated with this easement later this year.

The property compliments the goals of the Klamath Wildlife Area to protect, enhance, and manage habitats to benefit a wide variety of wildlife, reduce spring migrating geese depredation on adjacent agricultural lands, and provide recreational and educational opportunities to the public.

Data: From Fish to Website

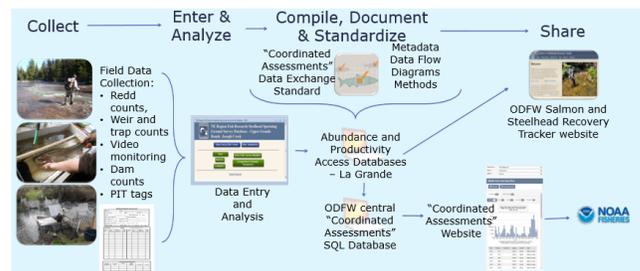
East Region staff maintains Viable Salmonid Population (VSP) abundance and productivity datasets for salmon and steelhead. NOAA relies on this data for status assessments and potential

delisting while state, federal, and tribal agencies rely on these data to make management decisions.

VSP data is shared with agencies, tribes and the public through the ODFW Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Tracker

(<http://odfwrecoverytracker.org/>), and Coordinated Assessments data exchange (www.streamnet.org/cax). Abundance and productivity data comes from redd counts, traps, weirs and dams operated through the Region. Methods are based on geography and resources available. Each method, while useful and scientifically valid for that location, can produce different dataset formats. Prior to 2012, VSP sharing occurred via email and locally established datasets. While the science was sound; this data management and sharing practice was inefficient, time consuming and not transparent.

Since 2012, VSP datasets are shared as part of a Columbia Basin Coordinated Assessments for Salmon and Steelhead (CA). To begin with, project level data is entered into a database, standardized, quality checked, summarized and initial analyses performed. Summarized data is rolled-up to the regionally defined population level. Data Stewards compile this into East and West Region data sets, shared with both the CA website and Salmon and Steelhead Recovery Tracker. Sharing data from one standard output provides common data formats and standard terms across geographic regions and varying field methods. A standard output also promotes transparent method documentation, efficient sharing practices, improved coordination, and efficient data flow.



Substantial improvements have been made in our data practices. More improvements are expected as automation and agency-wide standardization and centralized data storage is developed.

Bend Cougar Incident

Oregon's cougar populations have risen dramatically since the 1960's. Populations in central Oregon are no different, with several reports of cougars in and around Bend on a weekly basis. Most cougars move through town or the surrounding area without incident and we respond to most reports with an educational moment. Although rare, there are occasions where we must lethally remove a cougar in town. These occasions meet specific criteria in our Cougar Management Plan where the cougar has lost wariness to humans, is displaying aggressive behaviors, is breaking into human structures, or is attacking domesticated animals.

In recent years, there have been a few high profile cougar removals in Bend. A cougar was lethally removed across the street from Vince Genna stadium immediately prior to a Bend Elks baseball game. Another cougar was removed from Pilot Butte.

We have learned through these incidents that our responses need to be thoughtful, but swift. When operating within city limits, moving swiftly becomes more complicated as it requires coordination with many other agencies. Knowing this, District Biologists have been proactive and met with local law enforcement to discuss and train on how to respond to cougar incidents.

Our close preparation and relationship with local law enforcement in Bend was highlighted starting on February 5th. Department biologists confirmed the presence of a cougar in the River Canyons Estates on the south end of Bend. Snow made it easy to track the cat through several properties, across and under several decks, and to several sliding glass doors. We did not act immediately to remove the cougar at that time, hoping the cougar would move out of the city on its' own volition.

We then confirmed new activity on February 7th and again on February 8th. During this time, the adult male cougar was actively hunting in neighborhoods, in a resort community, a retirement community, on city streets, near two

elementary schools and near a day care. With a simple phone call on February 8th, the Bend Police Department (BPD) classified the cougar as a threat to human safety. The BPD mobilized their officers and, along with local Department staff and a Bear and Cougar Agent, was searching for the cougar within two hours.

We quickly tracked the cougar to a deer it had killed in the Mt. Bachelor Village parking lot. The cougar's tracks were throughout the canyon and the neighborhoods along its rim; many of its tracks overlapped the tracks of the hundreds of people frequenting the canyon. The following morning, a 135-pound male cougar was tracked and removed without incident.

Being in a highly populated area this was a very complicated effort. We appreciate the support of the BPD, our cougar agent, local media and residents in helping us reduce the public safety risk in this area.

WEST REGION

Bernadette Graham- Hudson, Region Manager

Umpqua Fishery Enhancement Derby

The 27th annual Umpqua Fisheries Enhancement Derby was held January 30-February 2 this year. The derby's main goal is raising money to fund fishery enhancement, restoration, and educational projects in the Umpqua River Basin through grants to watershed councils, agencies, schools and more.

On January 31, local guides took about 80 Eastwood Elementary 5th graders fishing at Cooper Creek Reservoir. Afterwards, the kids were treated to jet boat rides. For many kids, this was their first time fishing, but it is a continued educational experience tagging on to their school's winter steelhead rearing program.

That same day at Rock Creek Hatchery, a select group of junior and senior high school students from around Douglas County helped staff with spawning duties. After lunch, they explored stations including fish and wildlife law enforcement, habitat restoration, fisheries biologist, and forestry. The students met with natural resource professionals and learned more about educational requirements and opportunities in the natural resource professions.



During the February 1 fishing derby, 42 guided teams caught 221 wild and 37 hatchery winter steelhead. This year’s catch was above average for both wild and hatchery fish. The weather was great, and rivers were in perfect shape. The evening auction averages \$70,000 for fish enhancement projects. In addition, this year, \$10,000 was raised at the “frenzy” during the banquet to specifically address spring Chinook Salmon restoration in the basin. Each year, a fishery-related cause is selected to raise money for during the frenzy.

#SteelheadWeek

ODFW’s social media coordinator, Tim Akimoff, traveled the entire Oregon coast for a week to learn more about steelhead management. The idea for #SteelheadWeek came about after the North Coast fall Chinook Salmon closure and the resulting public outcry.



Tim spent time talking to District Fish Biologists about summer and winter steelhead management within their districts, balanced with discussion about ongoing opportunities despite this year’s low numbers of returning steelhead. By setting expectations and talking about underutilized parts of the state, his hope was to encourage people to

try new places and to understand the scope of this particular winter steelhead season.

Some positive feedback from the effort included lots of kudos from folks who appreciate knowing more about management along with opportunities, several fishing diversity groups appreciated the dialogue on diversity in steelhead anglers, and many folks talked about taking up winter steelhead fishing. We received industry recognition and even a “like” from Senator Ron Wyden.

Alternatively, we had quite a few people frustrated with naming rivers and even focusing on certain locations to fish. There was a lot of commentary about retention of wild steelhead where allowed. We also received feedback on the new electronic licensing system.

Rabbit Hunt for Physically Challenged Hunters

On Saturday, February 2, the Mary’s Peak Hound Club hosted the 28th annual rabbit hunt for physically challenged hunters at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area. Participants are involved with the Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America. Three participants hunted from their wheelchairs with eight hunters total including family and friends of physically challenged hunters.



Two rabbits were harvested with help from the club’s expert dog handlers with beagles. After the morning hunt, the club treats participants to a BBQ lunch. The group had too much fun this year to take pictures so we included a photo from the 2018 hunt. Mary’s Peak Hound Club and E.E. Wilson staff would love to see this annual event grow and welcome any physically challenged hunters to participate next year.

Cultural Conference

Umpqua Watershed Manager Tim Walters attended the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians' Cultural Conference. There were a series of excellent presentations emphasizing tribal.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Information and Education Administrator

#Steelhead Week

The many faces of steelhead fishing and coastal winter steelhead streams were featured in a social media series in late January. The series, made up of posts on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Medium blog entries, Steelhead Week discussed what makes good habitat for steelhead, how those fisheries are managed, and tips for successful angling on coastal rivers and streams.

As mentioned previously, the idea for #SteelheadWeek came about after the North Coast fall Chinook Salmon closure and the resulting public outcry. Social Media Coordinator Tim Akimoff talked with district fish biologists about the management of summer and winter steelhead within their districts. By balancing that with discussion about fishing opportunities, even with low numbers of returning steelhead this year, the hope was to set public expectations and encourage people to try new places to fish.

About 180,000 people were reached by the series. Well over 1,000 new followers joined the ODFW social media network during the series. Five of the Instagram posts ranked in the top-10 all-time posts for ODFW. All of the Instagram posts were in the top 20. The Facebook Live Stream with Cody Herman reached 33,000 people.



Here is a list of all of the Steelhead Week products:

Blog Posts

<https://medium.com/@MyODFW/winter-steelhead-fishing-in-the-north-coast-district-6d616ece5e16>

<https://medium.com/@MyODFW/winter-steelhead-fishing-in-the-mid-coast-district-c55e1aa84c21>

<https://medium.com/@MyODFW/winter-steelhead-fishing-in-the-coos-coquille-and-tenmile-district-36a5dff192f5>

<https://medium.com/@MyODFW/winter-steelhead-fishing-on-the-south-coast-17cfc62f3976>

YouTube Videos

Winter Steelhead Fishing in the North Coast District - <https://youtu.be/fFiObJHFYiQ>

Winter Steelhead Fishing in the Mid-Coast District - <https://youtu.be/iqe0Nrxozfk>

Winter Steelhead Fishing in the Coos, Coquille and Tenmile District -

<https://youtu.be/OdsY2YNipE8>

Winter Steelhead Fishing in the South Coast District - <https://youtu.be/auoif96eIk0>

Twitter - #SteelheadWeek2019

<https://twitter.com/hashtag/SteelheadWeek?src=hash>

Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/steelheadweek/>

#SteelheadWeek Live Stream

<https://www.facebook.com/MyODFW/videos/235769910680693/>

Extra Videos

North Coast District Broodstock Program -

https://youtu.be/_i30w8lbuSc

Siletz Falls Fish Trap -

<https://youtu.be/aXBJz05JBtA>

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Casey Thomas, Fish & Wildlife Division

SW Region

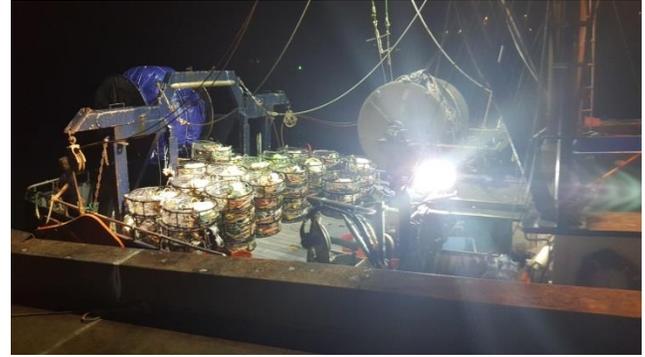
A Fish and Wildlife Trooper out of the Coos Bay Office was contacted by ODFW regarding a sport fishing boat that came to the boat ramp with two juvenile Yelloweye Rockfish on board. The Trooper contacted the anglers that were on board

and questioned them about the fish. The owner of the boat admitted he was at fault and requested to receive the citation. He was issued a citation for *Unlawful Take of a marine fish closed season – Yelloweye Rockfish*. The fish were seized and donated to the local mission.



Fish & Wildlife Troopers completed a commercial Dungeness crab fishing investigation out of Brookings. Two days prior to the Southern Oregon commercial crab gear setting opening date, a Fish and Wildlife Trooper observed a vessel's crab pots on shore. It was noted that the gear had multiple untagged buoys and previous year's tags on buoys. The next day the Trooper observed the fishing vessel being loaded with this gear. Multiple pots containing buoys with last year's tags were observed being loaded onto the deck of the boat. With the assistance of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Law Enforcement, the vessel was tracked during the legal gear setting opener utilizing VMS (Vessel Monitoring System). The next day Fish and Wildlife Troopers located all of the vessel's crab gear in the ocean between Gold Beach and Port Orford. Two Oregon State Police boats were utilized during this event. All of the strings of gear were located and documented. The fishing vessel is permitted to fish 300 pots. The Troopers located 362 pots total, putting the vessel 62 pots over their limit. Additionally, 65 of the pots located did not have buoys with valid 2018-19 buoy tags, as required. The captain and deck boss were contacted and instructed to remove the illegal gear prior to the opening day of gear pulling. The party complied and brought ashore all illegal gear the next day. All crabs were released into the ocean. Upon inspection of the gear when it was brought to shore, it was furthermore discovered that 12 pots did not have vessel identifying tags, as required. The captain of the boat and the deck boss were both criminally cited for *Exceeding*

Permitted Pot Limit in Commercial Dungeness Crab Fishery, No Buoy Tag, and No Pot Tag.



NW Region

Fish and Wildlife Troopers from the Salem office conducted a boat patrol downstream from Wheatland Ferry on the Willamette River. A boat with two anglers was located tied off to the bank at a known sturgeon hole. Both subjects appeared nervous upon contact and one lied about not having his license. Multiple northern pike minnow could be seen in the boat, and upon being questioned about what they were fishing for the subjects stated northern pike minnow. An inspection of their gear showed they were clearly targeting sturgeon and both were using barbed hooks. A consent search of the boat revealed a 42" sturgeon hidden in the bow hold. The boat owner was cited criminally for *No Combined Angling Tag and Unlawful Take of Sturgeon* and the second angler was cited violation for *Angling Prohibited Method- Barbed Hooks for sturgeon*. The sturgeon was seized and donated to the Union Gospel Mission in Salem.



Fish and Wildlife Troopers out of the Astoria office received a report of an elk carcass hanging in the backyard of a subject's house in Jewell. The reporting person stated they had been finding elk parts in a nearby creek that runs behind the property over the past several weeks and was concerned that subjects at the residence have been

involved in the unlawful taking of wildlife. The Troopers responded to the reported address and could see an elk carcass hanging behind a shed on the property. The property owner was contacted and interviewed in regards to the taking of the elk. The subject stated he was driving home and came across an elk that was on the side of the highway and presumed the elk had been road struck. The subject called a friend in order to assist him with loading the elk. While waiting for his friend to arrive the subject stated the elk died and neither he nor his friend had shot the elk at any point. Upon examination of the elk, it was determined the elk had a significant gunshot wound that had entered and exited through its neck. There was no other observable trauma present on the elk indicating it had been road struck. While at the subject's residence a pile of deer skulls/antlers were seen in plain view. Upon questioning the subject, he stated that a neighbor that had moved out recently had given them to him. There were no big game tags associated with the deer skulls/antlers and the subject did not have a written record of transfer for the wildlife parts. One cow elk and seven deer skull/antlers were seized as evidence. One suspect is facing criminal charges for: *Unlawful Possession of Cow Elk, Possession of Unlawfully Taken Wildlife Parts* x 7 and the second suspect is facing charges for: *Aiding in a Wildlife Offense*.

East Region

A Fish and Wildlife Trooper out of the Dalles office received a call from a White River Wildlife Area ODFW employee. The employee located a man on the White River Wildlife Area in the Smock Prairie area who claimed to be hunting ducks. When the man was informed by the ODFW employee that duck season was closed, the man became upset and said that he believed it did not end until the end of the month. The man refused to provide the ODFW employee his hunting license upon request and left the area. The ODFW employee was able to take a picture of the vehicle and license plate. Fish & Wildlife Troopers went to the man's residence and he was subsequently cited and released for the crime of *Fail to Allow Inspection of Hunting License upon Request, and warned for the violation of Hunting Ducks Closed Season*.

Fish and Wildlife Troopers out of the Enterprise office concluded an investigation involving an individual unlawfully taking a mule deer buck

closed season. The crime was uncovered by a Trooper while he was investigating a separate individual on unrelated Fish and Wildlife offenses. It turned out that the two suspects were friends on social media. The Trooper was able to locate several communications with photos, date stamps, and admissions of unlawfully taking the mule deer buck. Troopers contacted the suspect at his residence and issued him a citation for *Unlawfully Taking Mule Deer Buck-Closed Season*.

CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program

The Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program (WWMP) announced on February 11 that fiscal year 2021 project solicitations are open until April 19, 2019. The WWMP was created to manage funds dedicated to the state by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) for wildlife habitat mitigation in the Willamette Valley from impacts of the Willamette River Basin Flood Control Project. Land acquisitions focus on Oregon Conservation Strategy Conservation Opportunity Areas and Strategy Habitats, supporting Strategy Species and ESA-listed species.

Under terms of the Willamette River Basin Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) signed in 2010, BPA agreed to provide approximately \$117 million over 15 years to the WWMP, administered by ODFW, to protect 16,880 acres of wildlife mitigation property in the Willamette Basin. Cumulatively, the goal is to protect 26,537 acres (or more) of wildlife habitat by the end of 2025, including properties that were protected prior to the 2010 MOU. To date, the WWMP has protected 9,002 acres of the 16,880-acre goal, with an additional 2,716 acres recommended for funding in the last acquisition cycle.

Great Gray Owl Coordination

A Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wildlife biologist reached out to Conservation Program and North Willamette Watershed District staff regarding potential great gray owl (GGOW) nesting sites within a proposed timber harvest area near Scotts Mills. The GGOW is not a sensitive species for the BLM or the U.S. Forest Service; however, it is an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species and federal agencies are directed to

coordinate and work with state wildlife agencies on wildlife conservation.



Staff recommended surveys to determine GGOW occupancy within any nesting habitat where timber harvest is planned or could result in GGOW harassment during the breeding season. Staff also recommended protection of known sites and supported the BLM's season restriction to nesting locations.

Coordination provided the opportunity to offer staff and interns' assistance with occupancy surveys, and opened a discussion on sharing data on known nesting sites within the North Willamette Watershed. Data shared by the BLM would provide district staff with updated recommendations for land use planning projects that may arise in the future.

OCEAN SALMON AND COLUMBIA RIVER PROGRAM

Tucker Jones, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager

Northern Pikegoshawk Management Program; "managing a native predator to benefit juvenile salmonids"

The Northern Pikegoshawk Management Program (NPMP), first implemented in 1991, is a collaborative effort between the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC), with funding from the Bonneville Power Administration. The primary goal of the program is to reduce predation on juvenile salmon and steelhead migrating through the Columbia and Snake rivers while maintaining a viable population of the native Northern Pikegoshawk.

Based on studies conducted in the 1980s, the concept behind the NPMP is that an annual 10 to 20 percent exploitation rate of Northern Pikegoshawk (≥ 11 inches) will restructure the population toward smaller fish that tend to consume fewer juvenile salmon; over time reducing predation by up to 50 percent relative to preprogram levels. Success of the program therefore depends on maintaining harvest rates within the 10 to 20 percent range annually; a target has been achieved in 24 of the 28 years. The early studies also determined that this harvest rate would not jeopardize the viability of the native Northern Pikegoshawk population.

Program Implementation

Northern Pikegoshawk is not considered game fish, fisheries managers provide an incentive to harvest them in the form of a sport-reward Fishery. From May-September, anglers are recruited to fish for Northern Pikegoshawk. Registered anglers are paid a sum of money based on the number of large, older pikegoshawk they harvest. The reward for the first 25 fish harvested by an angler is \$5 per fish. An angler who harvests between 26 and 200 fish will be paid at a rate of \$6 per fish and all Northern Pikegoshawk harvested beyond 200 are worth \$8 per fish. Because Pikegoshawk seasonally congregate near dams in the Columbia and Snake rivers, teams of personnel administered by WDFW are paid to fish for them from select dams (The Dalles and John Day dams). ODFW samples this catch for diet and other biological information.

Highlights from the 2018 Field Season

During 2018, ODFW field teams tagged and released 1,038 Northern Pikegoshawk. Of these, 98 were recaptured, resulting in an estimated 16.8% exploitation rate and a predicted 29% reduction in predation by Northern Pikegoshawk on juvenile salmon relative to preprogram levels.

During 2018, ODFW began a pilot study to opportunistically examine the diet of Walleye incidentally caught during the John Day dam angling program following several years of increasing hook and line Walleye bycatch at this location. Although only 14 samples were analyzed, 21% contained salmonids. In contrast, of the 473 Northern Pikegoshawk diet samples collected from the John Day dam angling fishery, 13% contained salmonids. In association with electrofishing activities during 2018, ODFW staff encountered

the highest catch per unit effort ever observed for Walleye in the tailrace area of John Day reservoir. Throughout the reservoir, staff observed salmonids in 27% of the 170 Walleye collected (Figure 1). ODFW will continue to monitor the NPMP and the predatory fish community of the Columbia and lower Snake Rivers in 2019.



Figure 1. Collecting Walleye diet and biometric data in the Columbia River, John Day reservoir.

**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
March 15, 2019**