



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
August 7, 2020

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Fall River Fishway

Like many diversion dams in Oregon, the Fall River Hatchery intake diversion did not have a fishway. Installing a new fishway was a priority for the Department and made possible as part of the Department's effort to resolve deferred hatchery maintenance using the bonding approved by the Legislature in 2017.

Retrofitting a new fishway to an existing dam is a complicated assignment. The new fishway needs to be attractive to fish while safely fitting into the design and operation of the existing structure. In considering how best to provide passage past the Fall River Hatchery diversion we considered a number of alternatives. Because Fall River is a spring-fed system, with relatively consistent annual flow, a vertical slot fish ladder was considered the best alternative. The novel part of this project was that we decided to use a modular approach to building and installing the new fishway.



The Dalles Screen Shop got the assignment to build the new fishway designed by Department engineers. The fishway was built using stainless steel plate in eight sections, each about 10 feet long and 6 feet tall; each weighing more than 4000 pounds. The Dalles Shop completed fabrication

the spring of 2018 and transported the sections to Fall River Hatchery. Once at the Hatchery a local painting company coated the sections with a patina finish in a mottled black color. The mottle black finish was selected based on local residents who did not want to live next to a "flashy stainless steel structure".

The John Day Screen Shop got the assignment to install the new fishway. Through the installation, they took precautions to protect riparian vegetation as well as isolate the construction area from Fall River flow.



The completed facility will provide brown, brook and rainbow trout access to four miles of good quality habitat. This project is another example of the wide range of biological, engineering, fabrication and construction skills of the Department's staff.

Invasive Grass Control Research

Invasive annual grasses (e.g. cheatgrass, medusahead rye, ventenata, etc.) have been invading and dominating grass communities across the west for decades. The native perennial grass communities lost because of this invasion are critical for wintering mule deer, elk, sage grouse, and sage sparrows. Stopping the spread of invasive grasses has been the focus of work by many natural resource agencies.

Oregon State University (OSU) is evaluating the efficacy of post-fire herbicide application and

annual grass and forb/shrub re-seeding as an invasive grass control strategy at Phillip W Schneider Wildlife Area (PWSWA). Wildland fire tends to increase the spread of invasive grasses. Development of a strategy to slow or stop the spread of invasive grasses after a fire would be a major step forward in addressing this problem.

OSU's work at PWSWA began as a study of the effects of grazing and juniper removal on vegetation diversity and biomass in 2012. In 2014, the South Fork Complex Fire burned through the study area and changed the focus of the project to investigating the efficacy of post-fire restoration strategies. As part of the study vegetation sampling occurred at three PWSWA sites including two that burned in 2014.



While the unburned site has showed no degradation, invasive annual grasses colonized both of the burned sites. Herbicide application has effectively reduced the spread of invasive annual grasses at the burned sites. We are now waiting to see how the native grass and shrub seeding's will fare as part of this effort. Unfortunately, it will take another 7 to 10 years before we know if the project has been a success.

Malheur River Chinook Fishery

On June 17th, the Department and the Burns Paiute Tribe (BPT) cooperatively released 200 male Chinook salmon into the upper Malheur River during the fifth annual experimental Chinook fishery. The fishery is open to tribal and non-tribal anglers; however, this year's attendance was heavily modified due to Covid-19 restrictions. BPT had family units sign up for 30-minute shifts to adhere to the social distancing guidelines.



This is the fifth year we have held this fishery at the Malheur River Ford. Dams have blocked salmon and steelhead access to the Malheur spawning and rearing grounds for decades. The Department and BPT developed this "bucket" fishery to restore a lost cultural and recreational opportunity. Surplus male Willamette River hatchery spring Chinook salmon are used because they pose a lower disease risk than Snake River fish.

The season is open from June 15th until August 15th this year. The Tribe will collect creel information and report their findings once the season concludes.

WEST REGION

Bernadette Graham Hudson, Region Manager

Group wins fishery conservation awards

The Upper Willamette Stewardship Network recently was awarded both the 2020 Conservation Achievement Award from the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) and the 2020 President's Fishery Conservation Award for a non-AFS Member/Unit. In addition, the Oregon Chapter AFS presented the Network with an award in 2019.

The Upper Willamette Stewardship Network (UWSN) is a group of non-profit, like-minded agencies in the Upper Willamette Basin that

banded together in 2018. The UWSN convinced funding groups to support this collaborative model that is ecologically and socially holistic in scope, and were awarded funding to hire a coordinator to orchestrate collaborations among the agencies.

The UWSN consists of the McKenzie, Long Tom, Middle Fork Willamette and Coast Fork Willamette watershed councils, and McKenzie River Trust. Rather than compete individually for funding and duplicate efforts, the network identifies, partitions, and plans projects and events to maximize efficiency and amplify the magnitude of aquatic resource conservation and ecological benefits in the upper Willamette Basin.

ODFW's South Willamette Fish District staff nominated the UWSN for these AFS awards for their many contributions to habitat restoration and enhancement, addressing urban runoff, conducting environmental education and various outreach activities, protecting important and diminishing Willamette Valley habitat through purchasing land and/or securing conservation easements, and supporting cultural awareness and stewardship expertise provided by indigenous community members.

Congratulations to the UWSN for being recognized as innovators and leaders in conservation partnerships and work on the ground!

Habitat restoration crew update

ODFW's Habitat Restoration Crew is located in Corvallis but works throughout the West Region, typically in three to four of the five watersheds every year. They support several of the agency's smaller, unstaffed wildlife areas, as well as E.E. Wilson and Fern Ridge wildlife areas. The crew consists of two permanent employees, and during the summer season, one staff member from E.E. Wilson and one from the Fish Liberation program join the crew.

Over the last few years, the crew has formed a Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) with the Willamette National Forest targeting some of their projects that align with ODFW's goals. These projects include habitat restoration, better quality forage on federal lands, and improved public access.

Currently, the crew is restoring two meadows in the Willamette National Forest by removing encroaching trees and creating snag trees. The extra light and water that will now reach the ground will result in improved forage, a flush of native wildflowers, and herbaceous plant growth.

In addition to the meadow work, the crew is also assisting the Willamette National Forest with installation of six heavy-duty gates to help the Forest manage public access. The gates will be strategically placed to prevent access during times of high fire danger, maintenance work, and to reduce trespassing and vandalism.

Below are pictures showing a meadow before and during restoration work, and a panoramic view of a meadow after restoration.



Aggressive deer in Ashland

After an intensive public education and outreach effort in Ashland neighborhoods affected by nuisance bears, Rogue Wildlife District staff are now dealing with aggressive deer throughout the city as well as in east Medford and Jacksonville. The district received about 20 reports of aggressive deer in Jackson County through mid-July. Two dogs were killed and two people were attacked.

District staff worked with I&E to create a flyer warning residents of aggressive deer and steps to avoid encounters. Flyers were posted in neighborhoods and a news release on the issue was picked up by media. Some aggressive behavior is due to does protecting fawns, as well as deer being fed by people and losing their natural fear of humans. With fawns becoming more mobile in July, reports have begun to slow, although education is ongoing.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Information and Education Administrator

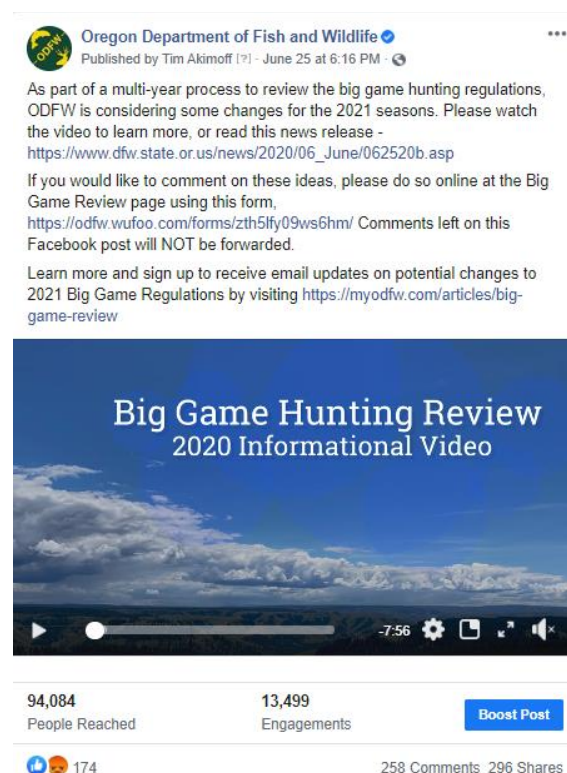


I&E will begin sending monthly fishing and hunting newsletter to customers.

July 4 email a big hit with Oregon anglers

I&E sent a "Make Fishing Part of Your 4th" email to encourage people to get back out on the water to fish as part of their holiday festivities. The email was sent to anyone that held a fishing license in 2018, and/or 2019, as well as anyone with a fishing license in 2020. The email included 328, 218 recipients. This was an unsolicited email, meaning

no one on the distribution list was expecting to receive this email. However, the messages hit the target as there was not one person who unsubscribed. The email performed well with 216,054 total opens, a 39% unique open rate, 16,153 total clicks, a unique click thru rate (CTR) of 4%. The links that were most clicked on in descending order: how to fish for trout (first video in the series), take a rod along article, easy angling Oregon article, and how to buy a fishing license. The agency plans to begin sending hunting and angling emails to customers on a monthly basis to encourage participation and talk about a variety of agency initiatives including anti-poaching campaign, habitat/conservation and ODFW staff profiles.



ODFW has used Facebook and many other channels to get feedback from hunters.

Thousands of hunters give feedback on proposed big game changes

ODFW has heard from thousands of hunters regarding proposed changes to big game regulations for the 2021 season. Through a variety of input channels, Oregon hunters have made their voices heard.

More than 4,000 randomly selected hunters responded to professional opinion surveys

conducted by Responsive Management, a human dimensions research firm.

An online forum was open for 30 days in February/March. About 10,000 people visited the site and read about 1,400 total comments. The agency websites (ODFW.com and MyODFW.com) have provided informational articles, videos and an online feedback form which has received at least 1,700 responses. See more at: <https://myodfw.com/articles/big-game-review>.

The topic has also been big on social media. After the first week the Facebook post had reached over 80,000 people and the introductory video had been viewed 38,000 times.

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Casey Thomas, Fish & Wildlife Division



The OSP Fish and Wildlife Division awarded its “Team of the Year” award on June 26, 2020 to the Mid-Valley Team. The team was presented the award in front of OSP and ODFW staff. The Mid-Valley Team was nominated for their exceptional work in 2019, which included everything from successful Wildlife Enforcement Decoy (WED) operations to investigations culminating in search warrants. The Mid-Valley Team is comprised of members from Albany and Salem and is led by Sergeant James Halsey – who also supervised the team in 2015 when they were previously honored as the Division team of the Year. The Mid-Valley team members stationed in Albany are Senior Trooper Andrews, Senior Trooper Kenyon and Trooper Cochran; and Mid-Valley team members stationed in Salem are Senior Trooper Boeholt, Senior Trooper Clement and Senior Trooper Hunter.

Baker City Fish and Wildlife Division members completed a lengthy investigation involving a subject who killed a large 4 x 4 mule deer buck closed season in November of 2019. The case would not have been made if it were not for concerned citizens providing information regarding the incident. The following charges were referred to the Baker County District Attorney’s office for consideration.

Offender #1

ORS 498.002 Taking buck mule deer closed season

ORS 166.270 Felon in possession of a firearm (4 counts)

ORS 166.435 Firearm transfer by unlicensed person (2 counts)

Offender #2

ORS 166.270 Felon in possession of a firearm

Offender #3

ORS 166.250 Felon in possession of a firearm (Misdemeanor)

ORS 166.435 Firearm transfer by unlicensed person

A Fish and Wildlife Trooper was called out to a report of a subject who had reportedly shot at a deer in his front yard just before dark near Bandon. Patrol Troopers were on scene talking to the subject and looking for the deer. The intoxicated subject admitted to shooting at something in his yard but changed his story multiple times - between it being a deer or being a cougar. No deer or blood was located while the Troopers were on scene. During the night, the subject threatened his neighbors, fired his firearm repeatedly and was arrested by a Coos County Deputy for Menacing. The F/W Trooper was notified by neighbors they had located a dead deer in the area, which was later located and noted to have been shot at least twice. The time of death and location matched with the report of the same subject. Charges for Reckless Endangering and Taking Deer Closed Season will be forwarded to the Coos County District Attorney for consideration.

CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

Western Pond Turtle Project Updates

Several activities were conducted by Conservation Program (CP) staff and the CP Intern related to the multi-state Western Pond Turtle Conservation Project:

Conducted the first turtle trapping session of the season at the project site in Albany, Talking Water Gardens/First Lake. Trapping success is notoriously very difficult based on past trapping attempts. This is probably due to the extremely high level of organics present in the water column making the bait difficult for turtles to smell/detect. Amazingly, two juvenile turtles were trapped - a northwestern pond turtle estimated to be two years old and a three to four-year-old western painted turtle.

Conducted a Visual Encounter Survey at Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge where pond turtles have historically been sighted. No turtles were observed.

Assisted in deploying wildlife cameras at the Minto-Brown Island Park project site to monitor turtle nesting and nest predation.

Landowners Get Support from Conservation Bios

A private landowner contacted ODFW this past April when she found chorus frog eggs in her outdoor rain catchments. The photos below are the tadpoles that completed metamorphosis this month; the landowner has great habitat onsite and these guys will be dispersing back onto her property.



Oregon Spotted Frog Habitat Enhanced

Staff participated in a nighttime, bullfrog survey on the Little Deschutes with Jodi Wilmoth, a bullfrog control contractor. Several adult and juvenile bullfrogs were

removed, as well as bullfrog egg masses. This survey was part of Wilmoth's Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) grant funded effort to monitor and remove bullfrogs from Oregon Spotted Frog (OSF) habitat in the Deschutes Basin. The Deschutes Basin (in central Oregon) has arguably the most robust metapopulation of OSF and is considered one of the strongholds for the species. One of the major threats to the persistence of OSF is the occurrence of exotic predators such as the American bullfrog.



AIS Teams Protect Oregon Waters

The AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) prevention program inspected 1,433 watercraft, intercepted 13 with other type of aquatic bio-fouling and hot water flushed one watercraft from Lake Havasu with standing water in its ballast tank.

ODFW DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Shannon Hurn, Deputy Director for Fish and Wildlife Programs, D&I Committee Chair

We're excited to share two recent developments that highlight the State of Oregon and ODFW's strong commitment to pushing cultural change in state government.

ODFW joins the Diversity Joint Venture for Conservation Careers

Recently the Department was accepted as a member of the Diversity Joint Venture for Conservation Careers (DJV). The DJV is made up of federal and state agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, foundations and professional societies. The DJV's mission is to strengthen the conservation workforce by

increasing diversity, equity and inclusion. The Department is very pleased to be part of this partnership and will actively leverage the resources DJV can provide to further diversify our own workforce. For more on DJV check out; <https://diversityinconservationjobs.org/>

Governor Brown appoints Cultural Change Officer

Governor Brown announced her commitment to addressing structural and institutional racism in Oregon. To further that effort, Serena Stoudamire Wesley was appointed as the first Chief Cultural Change Officer for Department of Administrative Services. ODFW has worked with Serena in the past when she worked closely with the Governor's office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The Chief Cultural Change Officer will, along with ODFW's Human Resource and D&I Committee, continue to push for cultural change in state government.

END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR August 7, 2020