



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
January 14, 2022

East Region

Nick Myatt, Region Manager

Minam River Wildlife Area phase one complete, podcast available online

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) along with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Manulife Investment Management's timberland business (formerly Hancock Natural Resource Group) completed phase one of the Minam River Wildlife Area project adding more than 4,600 acres of public land to the state's wildlife area system.

In this recent [Beaver State Podcast](#), ODFW's East Region Manager Nick Myatt and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation's Senior Conservation Program Manager Bill Richardson discuss how the Minam project came together and what it will mean for wildlife.

Sauvie Island west side diversion fish screen installation update

Completed in summer of 2021 by The Dalles Fish Screen Shop staff with funding from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) and Wildlife Restoration Program grant funds (PR Act), the Westside Diversion is an 8.9 cubic feet per second diversion that is located on the Gilbert River, which is a tributary to the Multnomah Channel on the Columbia River.

The diversion is owned by ODFW and is operated by staff from the Sauvie Island Wildlife Area. The Gilbert River serves as a migration corridor and rearing area for multiple listed salmonid species such as Chum, Chinook, Steelhead and Coho Salmon. Pacific Lamprey and a mix of warm water game fish also call the area home.

Water is pumped from the Gilbert River at this diversion site and is used to fill and supplement nearby lakes (Grassy Lake, Seal Lake, and Mud

Lake) for wildlife benefit and fish protection during times of the year when water levels become dangerously low. These lakes benefit numerous species that use the Wildlife Area, including wading birds, migratory waterfowl, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, as well as native (and non-native) warm water game fish species that are present in the Lower Columbia and adjoining sloughs.

In 2001, fish screens were installed at this water diversion but have since failed, leaving the pump intakes to draw water without functioning fish screens. The new screen that was installed is a self-cleaning, ISI C78-21 Cone Screen, which meets current National Marine Fisheries Service criteria for Anadromous Salmonids.



ISI C78-21 Cone Screen with 24" x 40' intake pipe



Westside Diversion site after the self-cleaning cone screen was installed



Westside Diversion site after the self-cleaning cone screen was installed

West Region

Chris Kern, Interim Region Manager

Cole Rivers Hatchery update

The main electrical power feeder from Lost Creek Dam to the Cole M. Rivers Hatchery failed at the end of April 2021. Since then, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has been working to repair the line and ODFW hatchery staff have assisted as needed.

Corps staff worked to repair the nearly mile-long underground direct buried cable that had multiple faults, but these efforts failed as the cable exceeded its life expectancy. Hatchery staff are using emergency equipment to run the facility but there are likely to be impacts to some of the hatchery fish.

The emergency equipment does not provide enough power to operate water heating equipment and this loss is disrupting the ability to warm incubation water for hatchery spring Chinook, summer and winter steelhead, and rainbow trout. This disrupts growth rates and the ability to meet size release targets, which could affect their survival rates. The Corps expect this to affect one brood year and is committed to finding a solution as quickly as possible.

The Corps owns Cole M. Rivers Hatchery and ODFW operates the facility where ODFW raises spring Chinook, coho, summer and winter steelhead and rainbow trout to meet mitigation requirements for construction and operation of Lost Creek Dam.



Spring Chinook fry hatched in early December at Cole Rivers Hatchery. More than two million spring Chinook fry are in the hatch house.



Cole Rivers Hatchery on a frosty December morning



The hatchery has a main generator inside the building that is currently running. The generators here are back-ups.

Leaburg Dam alternatives

Leaburg Dam and canal issues were discussed at a recent McKenzie Water Supply meeting sponsored by the Corps. Springfield fish staff, Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) and McKenzie Flyfishers participated.

EWEB is attempting to have a long-term strategic plan for Leaburg Dam and its problematic leaking canal in front of the EWEB Board by December 2022.

On the table are alternatives ranging from resuming power production to decommissioning the project. New ideas came to light including the possibility of moving the powerhouse and turning the dam into a water supply for the hatchery as well as an adult salmon sorting facility.

Popular boat ramp closed for safety concerns

The city of Oregon City closed the Clackamette Park boat ramp for safety concerns. The ramp is at the junction of the Clackamas and Willamette rivers and is heavily used by boat anglers.

River currents are eroding material underneath the concrete slabs of the ramp's foundation. This makes the ramp unsafe for vehicle use.

The boat ramp is permanently closed to motorized vehicles and boat trailers until potential realignment or relocation can be identified through a public process. The ramp remains open to foot traffic and small watercraft that can be carried to the ramp.

Oregon City is developing a Master Plan for Clackamette Park. Beginning in 2022, the public and community partners can help guide the park's functionality, sustainability, and improvements. The public and partners can also help identify plans for the boat ramp's potential realignment and possible relocation.

North Willamette Watershed District fish staff are staying involved in this process to represent the needs of anglers.

The boat ramp is a major access point for the lower Willamette River anglers and gives watercraft access to the area around Willamette Falls. Parking at other boat launches in the area is severely limited during periods of peak use.

South Coast Fish District salmon carcass work

Gold Beach fish staff placed post-spawn hatchery Chinook salmon carcasses in the North Fork Chetco River for nutrient enrichment. Nutrients from the fish benefit plants and animals throughout the watershed.

District staff and STEP volunteers began the first Chetco River salmon carcass drift survey for this season. Staff and volunteers collect biological data; scale samples for aging the return, and snouts to recover coded-wire tags.



A STEP volunteer takes genetic samples from a Chetco River salmon carcass

Deer surveys, North Coast Wildlife District

The North Coast Wildlife District completed annual black-tailed deer surveys in the West Trask and Wilson Wildlife Management Units.

Both units are above the benchmark of 20 bucks per 100 does. The ratio of bucks to 100 does is 31 in West Unit and 34 in the Wilson Unit.

A Columbian white-tailed deer survey is finished in the Marshland District area west of Clatskanie. Biologists counted 48 deer in Marshland, 19 of which are hybrids of

Columbian white-tailed and black-tailed deer. This is the highest number of hybrids seen in the four years of survey data.

The surveys help inform the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with recovery efforts. This Lower Columbia River population is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Wilsonville Pond rock barrier needed to prevent illegal vehicle access

Wilsonville Fishing Pond has been plagued with illegal vehicle access. The primary points where vehicles were illegally entering the pond is now fortified by large rocks. Donated rock and equipment services were provided in early December. Protecting and restoring this fishing site for angler use is a high priority for District fish staff.



Large rock barrier prevents illegal vehicle access to Wilsonville Fishing Pond

Information and Education

Roger Fuhrman, Information and Education Administrator

It's beginning to look a lot like #Fishmas

On ODFW social media, December is time to celebrate #Fishmas. Although it is not an actual holiday, it gives ODFW and other agencies a chance to highlight fish and their habitats.

ODFW has celebrated the “25 days of #Fishmas” for the past six years. Each of the first 25 days of December, ODFW Twitter and Instagram feeds feature a photo and caption of a fish. All of the fish can be found in Oregon, although some may be more abundant in other states. The captions sometimes discuss fishing opportunity, but more often they highlight the life cycle, habitat needs and any special challenges each species is facing.



The goal of #Fishmas is to engage people in a fun way. By checking each day, people learn something about each fish and its habitat. But more importantly, they are thinking about fish and their habitats 25 days in a row, which is probably uncommon for most people.

This year, #Fishmas is hosted by Laura Tessler, who is a noted underwater photographer and also works in the ODFW Wildlife Division. In past years, ODFW has chosen a theme—desert fish, marine fish, fish of the Willamette Valley, coastal fish, etc.

The concept started when a fisheries biology student (now working on her Ph.D. at Notre Dame) named Katie O'Reilly began highlighting her favorite fish. After ODFW started doing it, several organizations and agencies on the west coast joined in the fun, doing their own versions.

With 200-300 likes per post, #Fishmas is engaging lots of people. In a typical year, it will generate 9,000 likes and 150 comments. Follow myodfw on Instagram to see all 25 of Laura's photos.

ODFW podcast proves particularly popular

ODFW's Beaver State Podcast has completed Season 2, bringing the show's library to 80 episodes and 108,000 downloads. The popularity

of the program has increased exponentially as more listeners become aware of it.

In Season 1, the podcast received about 28,000 downloads/listens. In Season 2, that number is close to 80,000. Downloads have increased from about 1,000 to 2,500 for the first week after publishing of each new episode. According to host Tim Akimoff, it takes a while for the word to spread, mostly through positive online reviews.

The podcast fulfills the agency need to tackle complex issues with more context than social media allows. Unlike the world of tweets and comments back and forth, the podcast allows ODFW to explain issues in detail. An hour-long conversation with a biologist provides a human touch to wildlife management.

Tim says the second year was easier than the first, as many production bugs had been worked out. COVID presented many challenges. For instance, the need to tape outside led to occasional unwanted/humorous background noise.

The first two seasons emphasized a variety of themes including the varied experiences of people of color in the Oregon outdoors. The emphasis on diversity will continue in Season 3.

One of the surprise results of the podcast has come from students saying they appreciate what is usually Tim's first question of his guest: "What was your career path to where you are now?" Students say that it has been very helpful and encouraging.

Ideas for Season 3 include partnering with other science-based agencies, interviewing famous people who love the outdoors and talking to fish and wildlife experts from outside the agency. The Beaver State Podcast can be found by



searching for "podcast" on MyODFW.com or on any of the major podcast platforms.

Oregon State Police

Captain Casey Thomas, Fish & Wildlife Division

During the 200M Elk Muzzleloader season, an Oregon State Police Fish & Wildlife Trooper was out patrolling private property on foot near an area where a large herd of elk have been living. The Trooper heard three rifle shots within seconds of each other from approximately a mile away. The Trooper drove around the area, eventually finding the subject, who claimed he killed the elk with his muzzleloader. The subject eventually admitted to killing the elk with a rifle while trespassing.

The large 6x7 bull elk and the subject's rifle were seized as evidence. A rifle bullet was



Bull elk poached and seized by Fish and Wildlife Trooper

recovered from the carcass of the elk. Three matching shell casings were later recovered on the private property, and the elk meat was donated to a local mission. The subject was criminally cited for Take/Possession of Bull Elk, Hunting in Violation of Criminal Trespass, and Hunting Game Mammal Prohibited Method.

Oregon State Police Fish & Wildlife Troopers recently utilized a Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) to patrol on the John Day River around Cottonwood Park in Wasco, Oregon.

The John Day River, at this location, divides Sherman and Gilliam Counties. ODFW recently closed the John Day River to steelhead angling due to extremely low fish return. This is a new and temporary closure that OSP has been working with ODFW to sign the main river access points advising of the closure, educating anglers of the closure, and taking enforcement action as needed. The area along this stretch of the John Day River is also popular for upland bird hunting so the Troopers also focused on making sure hunters had the required license and endorsements for hunting upland birds and to assure hunters did not exceed bag limits.

Six bird hunters were contacted and one angler; warnings were issued for angling closed area and ODFW's Electronic Licensing System (ELS) hunting license issues.

To learn more about recreation closures, please visit myodfw.com.



OSP Fish and Wildlife Troopers patrolling the John Day River

A Fish and Wildlife Trooper received information about a social media photo, which showed a picture of a mature buck with foliage in the background that did not appear consistent with Rogue Unit (the only local unit open to



Buck deer poached outside unit boundaries and seized by Fish and Wildlife Trooper

archery deer hunting). The reporting party then noticed the photo contained a location pin that was near the Klamath River Canyon in the Keno Unit.

The Fish and Wildlife Trooper located the suspect at his residence and the suspect confessed to shooting the deer in the Keno Unit and placing his general season archery tag on it. The Trooper seized the deer and the suspect's compound bow, and the suspect was criminally cited for Unlawful Take of a Buck Deer. The meat from the deer was salvaged.

Conservation Program

Andrea Hanson, Oregon Conservation Strategy Coordinator

OCAMP update: 2nd milestone

The [Oregon Connectivity Assessment and Mapping Project](#) (OCAMP) is nearing its second major milestone – completion of draft habitat models for all 54 project species. OCAMP species were selected to represent Oregon's wide diversity of wildlife taxa, habitats, and geographies. The first step in the connectivity analysis for each species is to construct a habitat model representing how the landscape is expected to facilitate or impede species movement. Once these models are constructed, biologists with expertise in each species' habitat needs and movement patterns review the models for accuracy. Changes are made to the models based on the feedback we receive from experts, and then the draft model is considered complete, and the model moves on to statistical validation. Habitat model construction and review is expected to be finalized for all 54 species by February 2022.

The upcoming year stands to be an exciting one for OCAMP—in 2022 the project timeline not only includes completion of the draft habitat models, but also completion of model validation, as well as completion of the connectivity models. By the end of 2022, identification of priority movement corridors for wildlife in Oregon should be well underway. These priority corridors will help us link landscapes for wildlife, aiding efforts statewide to enhance, restore, and protect habitat critical to keeping Oregon's wildlife moving.

Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program

Tucker Jones, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager

Summary of 2021 fisheries and outlook for 2022 fisheries

Oregon Salmon and Columbia River Program (OSCRP) recently posted a document to the ODFW website (https://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/OSCRP/CRM/returns_and_expectations/docs/21_returns_22_expect.pdf) outlining preliminary 2021 salmon returns and fishery results, 2022 run forecasts for spring Chinook, summer Chinook, and sockeye salmon, as well as a list of currently-known key dates for 2022 fisheries planning milestones. This document is prepared jointly by the ODFW and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife fishery management staffs each year. An updated table of returns/forecasts will be posted to the website in late winter as forecasts for fall Chinook, coho, and summer steelhead are completed. Based in part on jack counts and improved ocean conditions, the 2022 upriver spring Chinook run is expected to be 122,900 adult fish which is improved over 2021 and would be the highest return since 2016 (though still below the 10-year average). Although coho forecasts won't be completed until February, Bonneville Dam jack counts were the sixth highest since 1977 indicating another possible large return to Bonneville Dam. The sockeye return to Upper Columbia River systems is also expected to be 198,700, which is modestly improved over the 2021 return. However, the Snake River sockeye return is expected to be very low and there are concerns about meeting escapement goals in the Wenatchee.

Recreational fisheries were a popular activity again in 2021, particularly because of the improved returns of fall Chinook and coho. Overall angler trips totaled approximately 450,000 in 2021, the highest since 2017.

Non-tribal commercial fisheries landed approximately 38,200 Chinook and 112,000 coho salmon in combined 2021 mainstem and Select Area fisheries. Commercial landings of Chinook and coho were 49% and 198% of the respective 10-year averages for those species and were predominately driven by fall catches.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Shannon Hurn, Deputy Director for Administration

Community outreach during 2023-2025 budget planning

Governor Brown has several [policy offices](#) that assist agencies with setting and implementing goals related to providing more diversity, equity and inclusion in state business. The Governor's [Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Affirmative Action](#) was established by executive order under a different title several biennia ago, but still serves to provide leadership and support to state agencies as they create diverse and inclusive work environments. In recent years the [Racial Justice Council](#) was created to enhance Oregon's engagement with Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and Tribal members. The Racial Justice Council is made of several committees including the Environmental Equity Committee.

In early December state agencies were asked by the Racial Justice Council to develop Community Outreach Plans. The development of plans was requested to extend beyond current community engagement models to allow clear transparency and accountability to be incorporated in decision making processes, intersect with racial justice and equity, and uplift and empower those most impacted in the community (Community Engagement Guide, 2021).

For ODFW the Racial Justice Council requested a Community Outreach Plan that focused on retaining, recruiting and reactivating (R3) hunters, anglers, trappers, shellfish harvesters and participants of wildlife viewing. ODFW finalized a draft plan by December 18, 2021, as requested and is scheduled to present the plan to the Racial Justice Council January 19, 2022.

Given that funding of wildlife management is closely tied to R3 efforts and license revenue the plan recognizes enhancing community engagement during our 2023-2025 budget process. ODFW seeks to engage underserved communities in our External Budget Advisory Committee make-up, and to seek more participation in our open public forums (town halls, Commission meetings) from underserved community members.

NW Steelheaders Association and passage of Senate Bill 320 (2021)

[Senate bill 320](#) was passed during 2021 Legislative Session to allow nonprofit organizations to request free daily fishing and shellfish licenses for veterans and active military personnel serving in warrior transition units. [The Association of Northwest Steelheaders](#) was instrumental in getting the bill passed, both by the direct lobby efforts of member Bob Oleson and by Tim Lenihan who continually supports a program within the Association that provides outdoor excursions for military members navigating some challenging circumstances following their years of military service. Often at his own cost, Tim provides valuable days on Oregon's rivers to veterans and injured military servicemen and women to reconnect them with the outdoors. In Tim's words, "Our nation's warriors have sacrificed more than any of us may be able to recognize. Opportunities we provide in conjunction with other non-profits such as the Fallen Outdoors give a chance for the veterans to relax, decompress and continue to build a network of support. Studies have shown programs such as this have shown significant results in increasing the success and wellbeing of our veterans."

End of field reports for January 14, 2022