



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, October 10, 2008

NORTHEAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Grande Ronde District Manager

Northeastern Oregon Moose

ODFW, Umatilla National Forest and Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation biologists with financial support from the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) and Blue Mountain Habitat Restoration Council have initiated a project to monitor moose in northeastern Oregon. Approximately 40 moose currently reside in the Wenaha and Sled Springs Wildlife Management Units. The purpose of this project is to better estimate the number of moose here as well as monitor their seasonal movement and habitat use.



Work began in January 2008 with the radio collaring of six moose; one bull and five cows. Three moose received GPS collars that document animal location eight times per day while the remainder received standard VHF type collars. The GPS collars are downloaded remotely one or two times per month while animals with standard VHS collars are located during monitoring flights three times per month.

Monitoring suggests that during winter months Oregon moose used older clear cuts or forest burns with thick stands of willow, alder, cottonwood, service berry, slick-leaf ceanothus and to a lesser extent, white fir stands. Areas with two to four feet of snow, typical of

winter conditions in this area, posed no problem for these animals.

As snow receded in spring, moose moved to higher elevations in the Wenaha unit. They seemed to prefer areas with snow as long as they could find it. Cow moose calved in old clear cut habitats characterized by dense deciduous and conifer second growth. The collared bull moose moved nearly 40 air miles to the southwest into the Mt. Emily Wildlife Management Unit this summer to take advantage of high elevation riparian habitats.

Northeast Region Hunting Update

Rainy and cool conditions followed by warm fall days complicated archery hunting this season. While conditions are generally better than last year, at this point it appears that archer success was again below average. As in the past, archers with access to irrigated land seemed to have done better than average.

Cooler and wetter weather is forecast for the rifle deer hunts beginning October 4. This should improve hunting conditions and we expect average or better rifle hunter success.

Northeast Region upland bird hunting is expected to be better than last year but still below that experienced in 2000 to 2006. Pheasant numbers are average in the Grande Ronde valley and we expect good hunting at Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area again this year. Quail and chukar numbers along the Snake River and in the John Day basin are average this year as well and we expect slightly better hunting in these areas as compared to last year. Grouse numbers appear improved over last year in some locations. Grouse hunters willing to take a quiet forest stroll should be rewarded.

Participation in Northeast Region upland bird and waterfowl youth hunts last month was up over last year. Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area alone saw a 50 per cent increase in participation over last year. Nearly 300 youth participated in

Northeast Region hunts with a success rate of at least one bird per hunter.



Review of Northeast Region Hatchery Programs

The Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) recently completed their evaluation of Northeast Region hatchery programs. The HSRG was created by Congress to draft a set of scientifically based best management practices (BMP) for Pacific Northwest hatcheries. These BMPs are used to evaluate practices at individual hatcheries considering their conservation and harvest goals and potential impacts to natural populations.

HSRG concluded that hatchery programs in Northeast Region are well designed and managed, and generally met their BMP standards for harvest mitigation and conservation. HSRG recommended that managers consider a number of ways to improve current programs, including:

- Ensure that hatchery releases are compatible with basin productivity. Consider reducing hatchery smolt production or access of hatchery origin adults to natural spawning areas if necessary to meet this goal.
- Replace the Imnaha River and Lostine adult collection weirs to allow better natural and hatchery spring Chinook broodstock management.
- Continue to monitor wild Wallowa steelhead populations to ensure the impact of Wallowa Hatchery steelhead remains low. They encouraged increasing harvest of Wallowa Hatchery steelhead to take advantage of surplus production.

These recommendations came as no surprise as Northeast Region staff and our tribal and federal co-managers have been working on these issues for some time already.

HIGH DESERT REGION

Chip Dale, Region Manager

McDermitt Creek Cutthroat Trout Restoration

Staff from a variety of agencies implemented the second year of a multi-year Lahontan cutthroat trout restoration effort in the McDermitt Creek Watershed. On August 27 and 28, approximately 55 people from ODFW, the Nevada Department of Wildlife, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Forest Service applied rotenone to approximately 13.5 miles of upper McDermitt Creek and tributaries. Rotenone was neutralized with potassium permanganate at the downstream end of the treatment area. Only licensed pesticide applicators handled either chemical. In addition, three volunteers provided meals for all staff.

This restoration effort is directed by both the Federal Lahontan cutthroat trout recovery plan and ODFW Lahontan sub-basins fish management plan. To implement the project, temporary barriers were placed in the basin to prevent reinvasion of non-native trout after removal. Once barriers were in place, areas upstream from those barriers were treated to remove rainbow trout, rainbow/cutthroat hybrids, brook trout, and brown trout.

Observations during treatment indicate that non-native trout removal was successful. Staff observed numerous dead rainbow and brook trout during the first two hours of treatment on August 27. After that point, no live fish were observed on either August 27 or during repeat treatment on August 28.

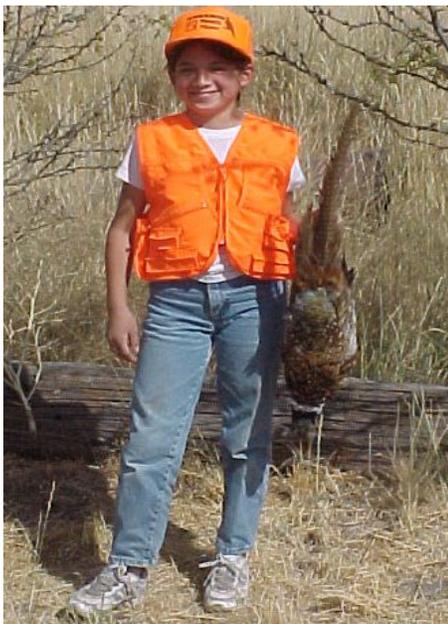
The final rotenone treatment is scheduled for summer 2009. This treatment will remove non-native trout from the lower end of the basin. Native Lahontan cutthroat trout will be stocked in treated reaches once treatments are deemed successful.

High Desert Youth Hunts

Klamath Falls Area: The 2008 Youth Upland Game Bird hunt was held on September 6 and 7 with a total of 125 youth participating in the hunt,

harvesting a total of 139 pheasants, 11 valley quail, and three dove. Attendance was down slightly from 2007 where 135 hunters participated. Four hundred pheasants were released for youth hunting. Pheasants were supplied by the ODFW Upland Game Bird Program, Klamath Chapter of Oregon Hunters Association (OHA), and Unlimited Pheasants. Forty youth participated in the shotgun skills clinic which was staffed by agency employees and volunteers.

The Statewide Youth Waterfowl hunt was held on September 27 and 28, with 49 youth participating on the Miller Island Unit of the Klamath Wildlife Area. This is an 88 per cent increase in participants from 2007, with an 11.5 per cent increase in total harvested waterfowl. Hunters in 2008 spent 20 per cent less time in the field resulting in a decrease of 40 per cent in birds per hunter harvested compared to 2007. Nine geese were harvested in 2008 compared to four in the 2007 hunt. Weather was sunny and warm which would result in lower harvest rates as well.



Malheur County, Paul Parker Memorial Youth Upland Bird Hunt: The 2008 Youth Upland Game Bird was held on September 13 and 14 on private lands between Ontario and Vale. The total number of youth participating in the hunt totaled 41 for the two days compared to 60 in 2007. Out of the 150 pheasants released, 48 were checked in at the check station, resulting in a harvest rate of 1.17 pheasants per hunter. There were 26 Valley Quail and 8 Mourning

Doves harvested compared to 17 Valley Quail and 15 Mourning Doves in 2007.



Mid-Columbia Youth Hunt: The annual youth pheasant hunt was held at the Tygh Valley White River Hunt Club on September 13 and 14. Fifteen youths and 13 youths participated on each day respectively. All of the youths were able to at least shoot at a pheasant with some youths getting their limit of two birds. With the warm temperatures, the youths and their dogs were worn out by lunchtime, where the Mid-Columbia Chapter of OHA provided lunch for the participants.



Willow Creek Annual Youth Hunt: As in past years, this hunt was in great demand with all reservations filled within 4 days, a waiting list and over 15 youth turned away. This hunt is not

promoted outside of the Game Bird Hunting synopsis and there is much demand to expand this hunting opportunity in central Oregon with a second hunt, perhaps in October or November.

Hunter attendance and success was similar to previous years with 85 hunters harvesting 134 birds for 1.6 birds per hunter. Harvest included 90 pheasants and 44 chukars. It is a popular and successful cooperative program involving two local OHA chapters, 20+ volunteers, and the Sportsman's Warehouse. It was held at the same location offered by Jim Crafton's hunting preserve for the last eleven years. Volunteers include Hunter Education Instructors, bird planters, sporting clay operators, food preparers, and dog handlers that donate long days of 10 to 15 hours to make this program successful. In addition, the Sportsman's Warehouse donated a box of shotgun shells for every hunter.

Wizard Fire

On September 25, the Deschutes National Forest conducted a 30 acre controlled burn on Green Ridge in the Metolius River Basin near Wizard Falls Hatchery. On September 26 the burn re-kindled and expanded substantially on Green Ridge and into areas near Wizard Falls Fish Hatchery. The Hatchery staff remained on notice through September 29 for a potential evacuation. As of this writing, the fire is approximately 1200 acres in size. Five hundred thirty-three firefighters have been fighting the fire with the aid of five helicopters. The fire has resulted in the closure of an area of Green Ridge bounded by Forest Road (FR) 1490 on the north, FR 1140 on the east, and FR 14 on the west. Rain during the first week of October is expected to quell the fire but the closure remains in effect until the Forest Service rescinds the order.

NORTHWEST REGION

Steve Marx, South Willamette Watershed District Manager

Coho Fisheries

Coho fisheries in the Portland metro area have been providing some good opportunities in the last month. An Emergency rule was enacted to allow retention of up to 3 adult fin-clipped coho. Reports from anglers indicate a large number of jacks this year, which could indicate good returns in 2009. Fishing has generally been slower in the Clackamas than in the Sandy,

despite lower than average water temperature for this time of year.

Many anglers have been taking a daily limit of three clipped coho from the Sandy near Cedar Creek on the best days. River conditions have been ideal. Flow in the Sandy is higher this year in the hatchery reach, due to removal of Marmot dam and the end of water diversions out of the mainstem and into the Bull Run. It appears coho are now able to migrate farther upstream without the onset of fall rains, which may be leading to good numbers of fresh, bright coho available to anglers around the hatchery.

Unfortunately there have been some issues at the Sandy Hatchery with the intense angling pressure. There are not enough parking spots for the vehicles trying to enter the facility, which has been near 200 during the peak of angling. There has been an increase in trash and angler conflicts as well. In one incident the County Sheriff was called out because a rock throwing incident escalated into the brandishing of weapons. Thankfully, no one was hurt.

Sandy Spring Chinook Broodstock Collection

The changing environment on the Sandy after the removal of Marmot Dam has also led to modifications in our Spring Chinook broodstock collection activities. In the past adults were collected in the fish ladder at the dam, but biologists and hatchery staff have had to learn where and how to physically collect adults in the river this year, as flows were too low to attract them into Cedar Creek. Staff collected 132 fish (68 Males and 64 Females) using nets this season. The total broodstock goal is 140 fish. An adequate number of wild fish have been collected to meet the 30 per cent wild brood component as outlined in the Sandy Spring Chinook Hatchery Genetic Management Plan.

Bear and Cougar Attack Training

Department Wildlife Biologists, in coordination with Oregon State Police and USDA- Wildlife Services staff, presented a training session regarding how to deal with any possible future attack on a human by a bear or cougar. Although Oregon has not had a documented attack involving serious human injury or death by either of these species in modern history, the responsible agencies want to be prepared in case this situation changes. Since 1986 there have been at least 12 confirmed fatal human

attacks by cougars in North America, including incidents in California and British Columbia. There have also been recent fatal black bear attacks in British Columbia, Utah, and Tennessee.

The meeting agenda included presentations on the Incident Command System, evidence collection, animal capture, and dealing with the media. In addition to ODFW, OSP, and Wildlife Services staff, personnel attended from five different County Sheriff Departments, as well as the city of Florence. Special thanks to Doug Cottam, Chair of the organizing committee, and to members Dr. Colin Gillin, Rick Hargrave, Don VandeBergh, Rick Boatner, Sr. Trooper Marshall Maher and Trooper Marc Boyd of OSP and Michael Foster and Michael Burrell of Wildlife Services for helping to put on a successful training event.

SOUTHWEST REGION

Steve Denney, Region Manager

Denman Wildlife Management Area Pheasant Hunts

Denman WMA hosted two special pheasant hunts for women and youth during the month of September.

A Becoming An Outdoors Woman hunt clinic was held September 20-21 with 14 women participating. One hundred rooster pheasants were provided by the Rogue Valley Chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA), with 31 pheasants taken during the hunt. This event included classroom instruction, firearms safety, sporting clays practice, and hunting in the field. Bird dogs were provided by volunteers.

The annual youth pheasant hunt was held September 27-28 with 192 youth hunters participating, an increase of approximately 15 per cent over last year. Five hundred rooster pheasants were provided by ODFW, Rogue Valley Chapter OHA and Rogue Valley Retriever Club. United Hunters and Sportsmen provided and cooked breakfast and lunch for the youth participants and family members. Many other volunteers helped with the shooting range and brought dogs to hunt with the youth.

Both events resulted in many positive comments, no safety issues occurred.

Black Tailed Deer Migration Cameras

Video and trail-cam cameras have been in use in the Rogue Wildlife District since 1996 to observe migrating black-tailed deer. Deer herd composition and migration timing is the primary data gathered, although information on deer behavior and other species has also been obtained.

Data and video information is compiled into presentations for various meetings and groups including OHA and civic groups. This information is also used in hunting season recommendations to staff and the public.

A second video camera was added in 2006 to capture more information from different locations. Data indicates that approximately 88 per cent of buck deer and approximately 60 per cent of doe deer and fawns are moving at night.

The ratio of fawns per 100 doe deer is about the same as observed with traditional methods such as foot and spotlight routes. However, buck ratios are approximately 30 per cent higher using the cameras than observation with traditional methods.

Migration timing is the same each year regardless of the weather. Much of the migration occurs in late September and October during the rifle season.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Administrator

Hunter Safety

Hunters are being reminded to play it safe when they take to the field this fall. News releases, internet banners, and letters to the editor are being used to deliver the safety message. A statewide news release encourages hunters and non-hunters to wear blaze orange while in the woods. Hunters are also being reminded to positively identify their target and to review hunter safety information before heading out. Hunter Education area coordinators are also being provided a draft letter to the editor to personalize and send to their local newspapers in an attempt to reach non-hunters.

Hunter Recruitment and Retention

Oregon is one of sixteen states that will participate in a National Shooting Sports Foundation hunter recruitment and retention

project. NSSF contractors will analyze state license databases to develop profiles of hunters based on their lifestyles and other factors including age, marital status, preferred type of recreation, neighborhoods, employment, etc. The profiles will help states identify which types of hunters are most active; which hunters are most likely to drop out; the preferred type of hunting; and why individuals take a hunter education course, but do not continue hunting. The NSSF information could be used to develop future national and statewide marketing campaigns aimed at recruiting and retaining hunters.

OREGON CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Holly Michael, Conservation Strategy Leader

There are two upcoming conferences on Conservation Strategy related issues.

ODFW is co-hosting the Pacific Northwest Wildlife Connections Conference on transportation conflicts and wildlife in mid-October. The four day conference offers focused workshops for planners, engineers, biologists and the public regarding minimizing habitat fragmentation in the Pacific Northwest, and identifying existing and new designs to remove or reduce barriers created by our transportation system. This will become even more critical as Oregon expands its current highway and county road systems, and we balance human safety and transportation needs with the need for permanent wildlife corridors for migration and response to climate change.

The conference is a joint effort between ODFW, the Oregon Zoo, Metro, Oregon Department of Transportation, Washington State Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service, Federal Highway Administration and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

In November, ODFW and the Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society are co-sponsoring a workshop on wind energy impacts to wildlife. ODFW worked closely with wind energy experts, researchers and biologists to develop this workshop. The primary goal is providing wildlife managers and biologists with an understanding of wildlife/wind energy interactions, current assessment protocols for pre- and post-construction of wind energy installations, and mitigation and restoration opportunities. Future

technology developments, challenges and state and federal guidelines will also be discussed. Two companies, Portland General Electric and Iberdrola Renewables, are hosting a field tour of the Bigelow Canyon and Klondike Wind Projects.

MARINE RESOURCES PROGRAM

Bill Herber, Interim Program Manager



Bill Miller, ROV specialist for the MRP, rigs the "Sea Cow" for a dive.

ROV survey of Siletz Reef Ends Successful Season

In September, the Marine Habitat Project conducted five days of remotely operated vehicle (ROV) surveys of seafloor habitat and biological communities at the Siletz Reef complex offshore of Lincoln City finishing a successful season.

During the Siletz Reef survey, the team logged 40 dives ranging from five minutes to two hours.

Earlier this season the team spent two days surveying Otter Rock reef, off of Cape Foulweather, logging 13 dives; five days at sea surveying Redfish Rocks, near Port Orford, logging 14 dives, and three days working with PISCO at Cape Perpetua and Stonewall Bank logging eight dives.

For the Siletz Reef surveys, sea and weather conditions were optimal for much of the week, but underwater visibility deteriorated toward the end of the survey.

The survey obtained a substantial amount of high-quality video footage of the reef system, much of which was characterized by dramatic relief and high invertebrate cover. Upon initial inspection, fish diversity and abundance was moderate.

This survey was funded by the State Wildlife Grant program and was designed to assess the correlation between fish distribution and abundance with parameters derived from GIS landscape analysis of high-resolution, multi-beam bathymetry data collected by ODFW's Marine Habitat Project earlier this decade. MRP researchers will conduct a quantitative review of the ROV video footage, data analysis, and the study write up later this fall and winter.

Some interesting highlights observed this season include:

- Dramatic high relief reefs covered with invertebrates at Redfish Rocks and Siletz Reef
- Mostly very shallow rocky reef between Otter Rock and Government Point
- No acute hypoxia at Cape Perpetua this year; fish were diverse and relatively abundant, but invertebrate community has not recovered from severe 2006 hypoxia event
- Massive recruitment of young-of-the-year rockfish observed at Stonewall Bank (species unknown)
- Common murre observed swimming at 47 meters depth at Siletz Reef.

Sport crabbing Success Results Online for Five Oregon Bays

In 2008, Marine Resource Program staff involved with the Recreational Bay Crab Survey conducted interviews of bay crabbers in Tillamook Bay, Netarts Bay, Yaquina Bay, Alsea Bay and Coos Bay. Interviews take place at boat launches and public piers and provide information on the amount and type of crabbing gear they used, how long the gear was deployed, and how successful each crabber was on their crabbing trip.

In addition, the shellfish samplers record the hometown ZIP code of each bay crabber to

identify the many different places that people travel from to try their luck at catching fresh Dungeness crab. Periodic counts of buoys on the estuary are expanded to estimate overall total effort.

Since the beginning of 2008, shellfish samplers have conducted more than 1900 interviews. This work will continue through the fall and into winter.

Crabbers ask ODFW Shellfish Program representatives about the crab fishery, crab biology and many other shellfish questions. The most common question is, "How is the crabbing in _____ Bay?" To answer this the Recreational Bay Crab Survey data on catch statistics are updated about every two weeks on the ODFW Web site at the recently-launched "Crabbing Reports" page (<http://www.dfw.state.or.us/MRP/shellfish/crab/ports.asp>) This provides prospective crabbers some information on the recent success of other crabbers in the five bays that are sampled.

Recreational crabbing occurs in every major estuary in Oregon and is a popular activity for locals and tourists alike. Management of the recreational Dungeness crab fishery involves a bag limit (12 per day), a sex restriction (males only), a gear restriction (3 rings, pots, or lines per person), and a size limit (>5 ¾ in). Bay crabbing is open year round.

OREGON STATE POLICE FISH AND WILDLIFE DIVISION

Captain Walt Markee, Division Director

Commercial Skipper Charged with Theft, Criminal Mischief, and Waste of Crab

On August 14, 2008, Sr. Trooper Carla Urbigkeit, Newport office, received a telephone call from the skipper of a fishing vessel. He told Officer Urbigkeit that several of his commercial crab pots had been stolen and were on-board another vessel, which the skipper was able to describe.

When Officer Urbigkeit contacted the skipper of the suspect vessel, he initially denied any allegations that he took the complainant's crab pots, but then later admitted that he had taken 30 pots approximately year and half ago. After investigating the allegations and executing a search warrant on the suspect's vessel,

residence, and shop, evidence revealed the suspect had stolen multiple commercial crab pots from several fishing vessels in the Newport area.

Troopers have recovered 184 stolen commercial crab pots, some of which have been identified and returned to their owners. A \$2,500 line coiler that was stolen from another fishing vessel three months ago was also recovered. The suspect was initially charged with Theft 1, Aggravated Theft, and Criminal Mischief. The suspect was later issued a citation for Waste of Commercially Caught Dungeness Crab, as a result of 610 pounds of dead crab discovered on his vessel during the search warrant process.

The investigation continues with identifying crab pots, interviewing victims, and locating additional commercial crab pots in the Pacific Ocean. All Newport officers have been involved in the follow-up investigation.



**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
October 10, 2008**