



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
September 6, 2013

NORTHEAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

West Birch Creek Habitat Restoration

When Europeans discovered the Birch Creek watershed they found a meandering creek with a relatively wide fertile valley flowing through the dry



eastern Columbia plateau. There was probably plenty of wildlife as well as some spring Chinook and coho salmon and steelhead. It was easy to see why Europeans settled here; straighten Birch Creek some and they would have a great place to raise crops and livestock. Wildlife and fish were a bonus.

Fast forward to the late 1980's, Birch Creek had been largely straightened, a number of old irrigation diversions inhibited fish passage into the upper basin, Chinook and coho had been extirpated from the basin and the summer steelhead were listed under the federal Endangered Species Act as part the Mid-Columbia population.

To help recover federally listed steelhead, ODFW, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Bonneville Power Administration, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, private landowners and irrigators, and others got together to see what could be done to restore the habitat of Birch Creek. Since 1987 we have completed more than 30 projects along 25 miles of Birch Creek. The list of projects is long including; construction of riparian fencing, development of off channel water sources to allow for

better management of livestock; streambank and channel stabilization for reduced bedload movement and sedimentation; and restoring riparian areas with native plants and management of noxious weeds.

Most recently ODFW has been focused on removing fish passage barriers. In the past three years staff has been involved in the removal of five old concrete irrigation diversion dams. Many of these were significant impediments to both juvenile and adult steelhead migration through the Birch Creek system.

ODFW is currently working on a barrier removal project on West Birch Creek; this project is unique in its partnership between the Umatilla fish habitat project and the John Day fish screening and passage program. This partnership has resulted in the screening and passage program developing new constructions skills and reduced work load for the fish habitat program. The current project is on schedule to be completed by the end of August.

Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan Implementation

ODFW staff has been busy implementing provisions of the new Wolf Plan Administrative Rules (OAR) adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission on July 12. These new OARs implement provisions of the agreement between Cascadia Wildlands, Oregon, Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Oregon Wild, and settled the suit that had challenged lethal take provisions of the Wolf Plan and associated rules previously adopted by the Commission.

Accomplishments over the last month and a half include:

- Developed and posted online a nine-page document outlining appropriate use of non-lethal measures to minimize wolf-livestock conflict;
- Designated nine Areas of Known Wolf Activity (AKWA) and one Area of Depredating Wolves (ADW, Umatilla River Pack);
- Developed a Wolf-Livestock Conflict Deterrence Plan for the Umatilla River Pack ADW;

- Modified online materials to meet expectations of the new Rules (i.e. depredation reports, maps, conflict deterrence plans, etc.);
- Implement an email notification system so that constituents who subscribe can follow Wolf Plan implementation;
- Individual communications with many livestock producers, primarily in Wallowa, Union, Umatilla and Baker counties.

In addition to the above completed items, staff is developing additional “how-to” information to assist producers with wolf-livestock conflict.

In August staff held training for peace officers on the investigation of potential wolf depredation of livestock under the Oregon Wolf Depredation Tax Credit program. In September, department staff will be holding public meetings in four northeast Oregon counties on the new wolf management rules.



HIGH DESERT REGION

Chip Dale, Region Manager

Sun Creek Bull Trout Conservation Efforts

In the Department’s ongoing efforts to recover federal ESA listed bull trout, Klamath Watershed and National Park Service staff recently completed Phase 2 of a brook trout removal project on Sun Creek (Wood River Basin) using piscicides. Portions of this project are in Crater Lake National Park and Department of Forestry’s (DOF) Sun Pass State Forest.

Brook trout were introduced into Crater Lake National Park in the early 1900’s to enhance sport fishing opportunities, unintentionally displacing bull trout. Although bull trout were not listed at the time, Department and Park Service biologists recognized their conservation status and initiated recovery measures on Sun Creek in 1992. Phase 1 on Sun Creek was completed between 1992 and 2005 and successfully removed brook trout from approximately 7 miles of stream.

Phase 2 was initiated in 2010 and completed this year. During Phase 2 staff constructed a fish passage barrier, electro-fished the treatment reach to move bull trout out of harm’s way and chemically treated approximately 5 miles of stream downstream to a barrier on DOF land. Fish passage barriers are installed at the lower end of each treatment section to prevent brook trout from re-colonizing the treatment area from downstream stream reaches. As a result of these treatment projects, bull trout have increased from a low of approximately 150 adults in the early 1990’s to over 2,000 adults today.

The final Phase 3 of project will start with the removal of brook trout below the lowest barrier along with reconnecting Sun Creek to the Wood River. Currently, the lowest reaches of Sun Creek are privately owned and are completely diverted into irrigation canals. The Klamath Basin Rangeland Trust will manage the channel reconstruction project starting in 2014; native redband from Wood River will once again have access to Sun Creek for spawning and rearing and these bull trout will have the opportunity to express fluvial and adfluvial life histories in Agency and Upper Klamath lakes.

Miller Lake Lamprey Reintroduction Efforts

Klamath Watershed staff completed additional reintroduction efforts transporting Miller Lake Lamprey into its namesake lake on August 29, 2013. This is a continuation of reintroduction efforts initiated by the Department in 2005.

Miller Lake Lamprey, the world’s smallest known parasitic lamprey was believed extirpated after chemical treatment of the Lake and tributaries in 1958. Subsequently, this unique lamprey was “re-discovered” in Upper Williamson River 1992 and Miller Creek downstream of the Lake in 1994.

The Miller Lake Lamprey Native Fish Conservation Plan adopted by the Commission in 2005 directed staff to remove a man-made upstream passage barrier on Miller Creek downstream of the Lake and monitor whether natural re-colonization occurred for 5 years. The barrier was subsequently removed and no re-colonization of the Lake was observed in the intervening 5 years.

Since 2010 the Department has translocated larval lamprey above Miller Lake to ensure that multiple age classes are present as the Department “jump starts” this population. To date, the Department has moved approximately 2,500 larval lamprey into and above the lake. Adult lamprey have not been confirmed in the lake, however parasitic lamprey spend five to seven

years in the larval form before they have the potential to mature.

SOUTHWEST REGION

Larry Cooper, Region Manager

Black-tailed Deer Research Study

Staff continued extensive efforts to radio and GPS collar black-tailed deer in the Indigo and Dixon Wildlife Management Areas. These deer were collared to help implement the Black-Tailed Deer Management Plan.

Deer home range information will be estimated for various landowner types (federal, state, large private, and small/medium private), and paired with fecal DNA sampling to estimate deer densities by landowner type. Deer were collected using dart guns and clover traps. Volunteers and an OSU intern assisted staff in collection efforts. All clover traps were removed prior to the onset of deer/elk archery season. Twenty-one deer were collared in the Dixon Unit, with an original goal of 43. Eleven deer were collared in the S. Indigo Unit, with an original goal of 24.

Staff is waiting for lab results from 3,000 DNA samples. This research is critical for helping to answer important questions about black-tailed deer in western Oregon.



Elk Forage Enhancement on the Elliott State Forest

In late August, staff finished mowing pastures that we maintain for big game habitat on the Elliott State Forest. This is a cooperative project between Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Forestry, and ODFW to increase forage opportunities for elk on public land and help decrease big game damage to adjacent private property.

We currently maintain four areas comprising approximately 25 acres in Coos and Douglas Counties. The projects consist of mowing, noxious weed control,

and seeding. This area has been transformed from a patch of dense reed canary grass and seven foot high blackberries in 2008 into a very nice pasture of perennial grasses and legumes.



Beaver damage on riparian project

Oregon Stewardship began a riparian habitat restoration project in 2009 within the Medford city limits, directly underneath the Interstate 5 viaduct.

High School students were organized to remove invasive blackberries and plant hundreds of native trees and vegetation along a 200 yard section of Bear Creek to stabilize the bank and provide water-cooling shade.

Initial beaver damage occurred last year and protective wire mesh was placed on dozens of established trees. Recent beaver damage destroyed many more trees, including ones that had poorly constructed wire



protection. Proper wire mesh and installation instructions have been conveyed and should help minimize future beaver damage.

NORTHWEST REGION

Chris Wheaton, Region Manager

Black-tailed Deer Research

Two more Alsea unit black-tailed deer were captured and collared last month, bringing the total to 33 animals. Night darting and trapping has produced a total of 19 currently collared deer in the Trask unit.

District staff has been working with Wildlife Division and SW Region Wildlife Research to identify options for aerial monitoring of radio-collared BTD in these two units, now that there are over 50 deer that need to be located regularly. A combination of the Oregon State Police aircraft and some level of contracting with private aircraft will be used to complete our monitoring needs.

GPS collars are also now starting to drop off of does collared in the first year of the study, and are being retrieved and sent to research to download location information. Student interns, most from the OSU Wildlife program, have been very helpful in conducting the black-tailed deer study.

New Angling Dock



Anglers are enjoying the recently completed angling dock at Town Lake (Pacific City area). ODFW staff, with significant assistance from volunteers, constructed and installed the platform at the lake. Some trail improvements and finishing touches remain to be completed (including removing the old structure), but the dock is available for public use. Most of the funding for the project came from the R&E Board, with floats salvaged from the old Lake Lytle dock and re-used at this site.

Coastal Chinook Studies

Under the Pacific Salmon Treaty coded wire tagging programs provide the primary data source for managing fisheries. Management agencies rely on these programs as the primary tool to allocate salmon harvest quotas in commercial, sport and tribal fisheries. Oregon's Salmon River hatchery releases approximately 200,000 tagged Chinook salmon smolts annually, which serve as the Exploitation Rate Indicator stock for North Oregon Coast Chinook populations. Questions exist as to whether Chinook salmon reared and released from a hatchery accurately represent naturally produced stocks for management and conservation purposes.

Studies begun last year in the Salmon River are designed to look at differences in survival rates, exploitation rates, age at maturation, and other factors between the hatchery and naturally produced stocks.



As of this August our research crew has successfully tagged and released more than 30,000 naturally produced Chinook smolts from the Salmon River.

E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area

A Corvallis area local television station called the E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area and notified us that they had received an anonymous call from an animal rights group claiming to have released birds from the game bird show pens on the area. When staff investigated the situation they found wire cut on four of the seventeen pens. Two of the pens were empty at the time of the attempted release and the other two held pheasants and chukar. All birds were domestically raised, and no birds left the pens during the incident. Approximately 2 hours were spent repairing the damage. Law enforcement was notified.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Administrator

Hunter Education Field Days

The recent hire of nine temporary employees allowed the agency to double the amount of hunter education field days it holds throughout the state. The field days are required for students to complete a hunter education course. Historically, the department has not been able to meet the high demand for field days just prior to hunting season. As of late August, 28 field days are scheduled for this fall, with 15 of them conducted by the new temporary employees.

Customers are responding. Both of the recently held field days were full and others are filling quickly. The field days are being held in high demand areas – Portland, Salem, Eugene, Medford and Bend. Salem area field days are being held in the new headquarters building. Funding for the temporary employees and their equipment is through an increase in federal funds.

Continued Locavore Outreach

ODFW continues to reach out to individuals that consider themselves locavores. Recently, the department partnered with Wayne Endicott of the Bow Rack and the Portland Meat Collective to hold an archery, field dressing and butchering clinic in Eugene.

The Archery/Butchery clinic began at Endicott's residence where 10 students learned hunting safety and basic archery skills. Instruction and equipment was provided by Endicott and ODFW Outdoor Skill Coordinator, Mark Newell. Endicott and ODFW biologist Brian Wolfer from the Springfield Office then taught students how to field dress a deer. Students then received hands-on instruction in butchery from the Portland Meat Collective, with a lunch of game meat dishes served up by Eric Bechard of the Kingdom of Roosevelt restaurant in Portland. At the end of the clinic, each participant went home with portions of meat they butchered themselves.

The clinic required significant collaboration and coordination with several individuals and organizations interested in telling the whole story of hunting. It allowed the department to reach an audience that normally does not attend department workshops and clinics. Response to the clinic was positive. The students were engaged and interested in all parts of the class and left with a solid understanding of wildlife management and the value of hunting.

ODFW and other states have identified locavores as potential participants in hunting and fishing. However, few states have developed successful strategies to reach this audience. Because of ODFW's efforts, a panel discussion will be held on this topic at the upcoming Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies meeting in Portland. ODFW, Travel Oregon, the Portland Meat Collective, as well as other similar parties will participate in the panel discussion.

OCEAN SALMON AND COLUMBIA RIVER PROGRAM

Tony Nigro, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program

Columbia River Summer and Fall Chinook Mainstem Fisheries Update

Summer Chinook

Pre-season Plan: The summer Chinook forecast for adult returns to the mouth of the Columbia River in 2013 was 73,500. Under the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's Upper Columbia Management Agreement the management guideline for non-tribal

Columbia River fisheries (recreational and commercial) downstream from Priest Rapids Dam was 5,745. Of this total, 2,525 summer Chinook were allocated to the recreational fishery downstream from Bonneville Dam, 635 fish to the recreational fisheries between Bonneville and Priest Rapids dams, and 2,585 fish to non-tribal commercial fisheries.

Results: The preliminary estimate for adult summer Chinook returning to the mouth of the Columbia River is 67,700. As planned, the recreational fishery downstream from Bonneville Dam was open from June 16-30 and the recreational fishery between Bonneville and Priest Rapids dams from June 16-July 31. During this time, the fisheries harvested (kept catch plus release mortality) just under 2,500 adult Chinook. In addition to the planned commercial fishing period in mid-June, an additional period occurred on July 15-16. Harvest in commercial fisheries was 1,954 adult summer Chinook.

Fall Chinook

Pre-season Plan: The fall Chinook forecast for adult returns to the mouth of the Columbia River in 2013 was 678,600. For the area between Buoy 10 and Tongue Point a non mark-selective recreational fishery for Chinook was set for August 1-September 1 with a catch expectation of 21,800 adult fish. The fishery is planned to reopen for Chinook retention on October 1. For the area between Tongue Point and the Lewis River a non mark-selective recreational fishery was set for August 1-September 5, switching to mark-selective from September 6-12. As with Buoy 10, the fishery is planned to reopen for Chinook retention October 1. For the area between the Lewis River and Bonneville Dam, a non mark-selective recreational fishery was set for August 1-December 31. The catch expectation for the recreational fisheries between the Tongue Point and Bonneville Dam is 26,500 adult Chinook. A recreational fishery between Bonneville Dam and the Highway 395 Bridge was set for August 1-December 31 with an adult Chinook catch expectation of 7,300. For commercial fisheries, catch expectations for openers scheduled between August 11 and 28 was 38,800 adult Chinook.

Results: The recreational fisheries for Chinook from Buoy 10 upstream to the Highway 395 Bridge opened as planned on August 1. Because of much higher than expected catch rates in the Buoy 10 recreational fishery, it was switched from non mark-selective to mark-selective effective August 23 so that it could remain open through its planned ending date of September 1. Through August 25, estimated harvest (kept catch plus release mortality) in the Buoy 10 fishery is just over 19,000 adult Chinook. For recreational fisheries

upstream of Tongue Point, estimated catch through August 25 is just over 5,000 adult Chinook.

Non-tribal commercial fisheries conducted from August 11 through August 26 harvested over 32,000 adult fall Chinook. Estimated harvest in the final August commercial fishing period (August 28-29) is expected to be around 14,000 adult Chinook.

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Jeff Samuels, Division Director

Senior Trooper Duncan (Baker City) was on patrol in Baker County when he observed a recreational mining operation located along Silver Creek. Silver Creek is designated as critical habitat for ESA listed Bull Trout. The miner was pumping water from the creek and up the bank to a sluice box. The waste water from the sluice box was being discharged back into Silver Creek, clearly affecting the water quality of the creek. Senior Trooper Duncan was later able to locate two suspects at the mining location. Both suspects were cited and released for Unlawful Water Pollution in the Second Degree, which is a Class A Misdemeanor.

Trooper Galusha (Tillamook) was checking clambers at Netarts Bay when he contacted four subjects at their vehicle that had just returned from clamming. Trooper Galusha was able to observe hundreds of clams in a cooler within the vehicle. Investigation revealed that the subjects had made multiple trips to the clamming area and were 252 clams over their daily limit. All subjects involved were subsequently cited for Exceeding the Daily Bag Limit: Bay Clams. While Trooper Galusha was issuing citations to the subjects, the local residents were on their porches clapping and applauding Trooper Galusha for the enforcement action.

**END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR
September 6, 2013**