



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
August 3, 2018

EAST REGION

Bruce Eddy, Region Manager

Southeastern Oregon Bighorn Sheep Research

Once widely distributed throughout eastern Oregon, California bighorn sheep (CABHS) were extirpated by 1915. Unregulated hunting, competition, and disease from domestic sheep caused their extirpation. In 1954, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) began to re-establish CABHS on Hart Mountain with 20 sheep from Williams Lake, British Columbia. As the population grew, CABHS were transplanted to the Steens in 1964, Leslie Gulch in 1965 and subsequently to suitable habitat across eastern Oregon. At present, there are 32 CABHS populations containing approximately 3,700 sheep.



Big horn reintroduction has been a great success in Oregon and many western states. Unfortunately, pneumonia can be a serious problem for the species. The main causal agent of big horn pneumonia is *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*M.ovi*). *M.ovi* is commonly found in domestic sheep and goats and spread by nose-to-nose contact with domestics and between big horns.

In 2003, *M.ovi* was detected in the Santa Rosa Mountains of northern Nevada. Over time, the disease spread into the Rattlesnake/Ten Mile CABHS populations in southeastern Oregon. These populations suffered an all-age die-off (i.e. a

significant level of mortality of adults and young) from the disease.

ODFW teamed up with Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW), and Oregon State University (OSU) to investigate the impact of *M.ovi* on patterns of habitat use, movement, survival, and immunology in southeastern Oregon and northern Nevada CABHS. Since study work began in 2016 we've captured, collared, and sampled more than 120 individual CABHS as part of this effort.

To date, no confirmed cases of adult bighorn mortality from *M.ovi* have been observed. However, an effect of *M.ovi* on CABHS lamb survival has been significant in the Rattlesnake population. Nearly all monitored lambs died within a few months of birth. In both 2016 and 2017, all lamb carcasses recovered and necropsied in the Rattlesnake population have tested positive for *M.ovi*. Unfortunately, the same pattern of mortality has been observed in 2018, although testing for *M.ovi* isn't completed yet.

The field component of the study will end this August, with all analysis and write-up on effects of *M.ovi* completed in the next two years.

Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area Small Mammal Study

Small mammal trapping started in Murderer's Creek Basin of the Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area in 2014 to better understand how habitat recovery occurs, evaluate interactions between animal and plant communities, and understand future recovery needs. It has been continued in 2016 and 2017.

The North American deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) has been the most abundant species of small mammals captured followed by least chipmunks (*Tamias minimus*). On one study, site deer mouse accounted for 87% of the individuals captured before the 2014 South Fork Complex fire while after the fire they made up 97% of the individuals captured. Least chipmunks on the

other hand have decreased from 8% of the individuals captured before the fire to less than 1% of the individuals capture after. Small numbers of pocket mouse (*Paragnathus parvus*), jumping mouse (*Zapus princeps*), and montane vole (*Microtus montanus*) are also caught from time to time.

These results suggest rodent diversity is severely lacking within the sampling area. We would expect to see higher small mammal diversity in healthy sagebrush steppe communities including multiple species of voles, shrews, deer mice, jumping mice, grasshopper mice, pocket mice, and chipmunks. Instead, we have found primarily deer mouse.



Most of the species we would expect to catch in the study area feed on seeds of native grasses and shrubs. It is likely the almost complete loss of bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentate*) and low prevalence of healthy bunch grass communities in the study area due to fire and historic livestock management has led to the relatively low level of diversity observed. The low number of other small mammal species caught suggest there is at least nearby source populations of these species and as conditions continue to improve within the PWSWA they may be able to re-establish.

However, it is also possible that the lack of rodent diversity may inhibit or slow habitat restoration. For example, the presence of least chipmunks correlates with bitterbrush. They may be an effective vehicle for seed dispersal and aid in reestablishment of many native plants. Lower rodent diversity and lack of least chipmunks on the

landscape may actually limit the rate of bitterbrush recovery.

WEST REGION

Bernadette Graham- Hudson, Region Manager

North Bank Habitat Management Area Fawn Study

This is the pilot year of a study to determine fawn mortality in the North Bank Habitat Management Area (NBHMA), a Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-owned property near Roseburg. ODFW's Umpqua District staff and wildlife researchers radio-collared and monitored eight fawns.



Of those collared fawns, three were likely killed by bobcats, one by pneumonia likely caused by migrating parasites, one by dehydration and bacterial infection, and one with cause undetermined at necropsy.

As of July 6, just two of the eight collared fawns were still alive. Researchers generally expect 60 percent mortality rate in fawns; however, the NBHMA is at 75 percent.

The study is the result of August spotlighting surveys with decreased fawn sightings the last few years and no fawns spotted in 2017. Lead researcher DeWaine Jackson is preparing a proposal for two more years of funding to continue collecting fawn mortality data at NBHMA.

Youth Outdoor Day

The 16th annual Youth Outdoor Day at EE Wilson Wildlife Area was celebrated June 9 with another rainy day challenge. Thankfully, 12 newly constructed bays gave space and shelter from the elements.

Registration was capped at 700 kids with 550 parents, however, 546 kids and 376 parents actually attended the event. Weather and graduations contributed to reduced attendance, but participants were enthusiastic. Volunteers and staff numbered 180.



The event shows kids a variety of outdoor activities they can get involved in such as rock climbing, fly casting and tying, sporting clays, fishing, and archery. There are also many educational stations including fish anatomy identification, GPS, recycling, bird box building, wildlife calling, and more.



Major event sponsors are Reser's, Oregon Hunters Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Oregon Wildlife Foundation, Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division and many other sponsors also help make this annual event a huge success.

West Region meetings held

For the first time in several years, the West Region held regional meetings in Corvallis and Roseburg in June.

About 200 staff, including some from Headquarters attended the meetings. Staff heard updates on the Electronic Licensing System, Information Services Division's Service Desk Plus, the Volunteer Program, along with Director's Office updates and service awards.

Staff in Roseburg learned about wildlife research projects on elk, deer, and Pacific fisher, Chronic Wasting Disease, and drone usage. Staff in Corvallis were given an update on the Willamette

Wildlife Mitigation Program, wolves, marine mammal management, and heard from Oregon State Police.



Gold Beach crews monitoring Chetco Bar Fire impacts to steelhead

Gold Beach field office crews are funded for three months to monitor impacts to steelhead from the 2017 190,000-acre Chetco Bar Fire. Crews are working mid-June through September.

The project funded by ODFW's Restoration and Enhancement Program and came out of the Governor's Chetco Bar Fire Recovery Council formed after the fire in November 2017. The project was designed to fit in with the Western Oregon Rearing Program (WORP) from the Corvallis Research Lab. WORP and the U.S. Forest Service has provided a tremendous amount of support for this important project.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Roger Fuhrman, Information and Education Administrator

June 2-3 was free fishing weekend and the department had events across the state. Angler Education instructors were on hand with equipment and bait to help families and folks new to fishing. Angler Education Coordinator Jenny Ammon attended the Henry Hagg Event sponsored by I'M Hooked and US Fish and Wildlife Service along with several other sponsors. During that weekend, the department had contact with over 700 people.

The quote below is from Angler Education Instructor Robert Krausert:

“For me, today was Pay It Forward. My reward was in the smiles, absoluteness, and desire in those we helped. Catching fish is only a small measure.”



June 9 was Youth Outdoor Day at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area. With great volunteers from the Angler Education Program and the Salem Steelhead Chapter, we were able to teach rigging, casting, and hands-on fishing to families as well as youth. 546 youth attended and 376 adults. That kind of exposure to outdoors is a great recruitment tool.

June 16th Association of Northwest Steelheaders used resources from ODFW to present a Women’s Fly Fishing and Wild Foraging program in Troutdale. This program was a success- multi-pronged, diverse, and different. Just what we want to provide the public.

June 23 & 24 was the Governors Campout at Willamette Mission State Park. Angler Education instructors presented aquatic insect education and backyard bass casting instruction for 100 plus participants. We connected the people to resources and the ecosystem. The families had fun learning how to identify the aquatic insects. Governor Kate Brown enjoyed Sunday morning breakfast as well

as archery instruction provided by ODFW’s Archery Education Coordinator Miranda Leek. First Gentleman Dan Little stayed all day Saturday and overnight. The event served 18 families, all first-time campers. Just over 39 percent of participants were in the event’s target age range of 7-13. No injuries were reported--first aid was provided for bug bites, bee stings, and sunburns only.

June 30 was the Running Wild Fun Run at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area. Over 95 participants raised \$1,500 towards the Governors Toy Drive. Partners included Oregon Marine Board, BLM, Audubon Society, Angler Education, Archery Education, Hunter Education, and Outdoor Skills. Angler Education instructors taught fly-casting, bait casting, and handed out program flyers and fish ID cards for families to use in future fishing adventures.

I&E sent email reminders in June to more than 28,000 “lapsed” anglers who have purchased fishing licenses in past years but not yet in 2018. The open and click-through rates were very good and we hope it will inspire some additional license sales. I&E tested two subject lines to determine which was more effective at getting people to open the email and read it. The numbers were very close and both versions received open rates above industry standards. This seems to indicate that the message is well crafted for the intended audience. Our next A/B test will look for ways to improve click-through rate by testing variations in body content or button style.

With the launch of MyODFW.com, we needed a new home for high-lakes stocking information. We also wanted to better promote this fishery not just among dedicated anglers looking for a different experience, but also among hikers, backpackers and others visiting the high country. So I&E created two companion articles on MyODFW.com--Fishing Oregon’s High Lakes – tips and techniques for how to fish these lakes; and Stocking Oregon’s High Lakes – lists species stocked, locations (GPS coordinates), size, depth and links to trailheads (where available) for each lake. Both new features have been popular, with thousands of users reading them.



I&E staff produced a short video in June documenting the capture of oversize sturgeon below McNary Dam and tagging them with acoustical transmitters that will tell us more about when and where sturgeon spawn. This was a unique way to explain some of our sturgeon research on the Columbia to the public in an engaging and eye-opening way. This video was well received by the sturgeon research staff and received 20,000 views and more than 100 shares on Facebook. It has also been posted on YouTube at this URL: <https://youtu.be/oUVkwBFcVLI>



This picture (above) was taken at a National Archery in the Schools Program certification class on 6/27 at Camp Taloali, which is a camp for deaf and hard of hearing youth. Archery Education Coordinator Miranda Leek says it was the MOST fun she has ever had teaching one of these classes. Thanks to I&E staff Brandon Harper and Jered Goodwin for helping.

I&E produced a live-stream fishing trip with Director Curt Melcher, outdoor TV host/writer Scott Haugen and fishing guide Jody Smith on the Umpqua River near Elkton in early July. It did very well overall. We reached more than 41,000

Facebook accounts, received more than 18,000 views, 198 comments, 61 shares, and more than 300 good reactions from viewers.

It has also been posted to YouTube at this URL: <https://www.facebook.com/MyODFW/videos/like:umpqua-river-smallmouth-fishing/10156401845530890/>

OREGON STATE POLICE

Captain Jeff Samuels, Fish & Wildlife Division

Madras area Fish & Wildlife Troopers (F&W) received information regarding an individual who reported that a male subject had unlawfully shot a deer sometime in February. Interviews were conducted, indicating that the male had killed a deer with the use of bow/arrow back in September. After observing packages of meat and a bow deer tag that was not validated, the male was cited and released for Failing to Validate a Big Game Tag.

F&W Troopers conducted a boat patrol from Coos Bay to Bandon. Multiple ground fish anglers, as well as Halibut anglers were contacted. During the patrol, the Troopers located a group of anglers that retained two yellow eye rockfish. The captain of the boat stated he was at fault. He was issued a citation for possession of protected marine fish. The fish were seized (photo) and later donated to the mission.



While checking clam diggers along Cape Arago Highway, a Coos Bay F&W Trooper stopped to contact two subjects that were loading something in to their pickup. Upon contact, the subjects stated they were loading up a road struck deer, and thought it was legal to do so. The subjects were advised of the regulations prohibiting the activity and the deer was seized. The subjects were warned for Unlawful Possession of Spike Deer.

The Dalles area Troopers conducted a four day float trip on the John Day River from Butte Creek to Cottonwood Park (57 river miles). They assisted ODFW with the annual Big Horn sheep count, during which 315 sheep were counted in both the East John Day and West John Day Units. The river was very high and muddy due to heavy rains at the head waters resulting in a low number of anglers.

While on routine shore patrol in the Sand Lake Recreational Area, a Tillamook area F&W Trooper contacted a group of people that appeared to be crabbing from shore. The trooper contacted part of the group and asked them if they had caught any Dungeness crab. Two males stated that they didn't have any. The trooper then asked another individual who had walked across the parking area and that subject stated that they had caught some crab and took the trooper to a vehicle. The vehicle had 12 crab in a plastic bag in the back of the vehicle of which five of the crab were found to be undersized and one was a female. One subject took responsibility for the crab and was warned for Possession of Female Dungeness Crab and cited for Possession of Undersize Dungeness Crab. The subjects admitted they were using a dollar bill to measure the crab.

Three local men were sentenced in Lane County Circuit Court for their respective roles in the unlawful taking and possession of deer and elk. All three men (see photo) were sentenced to three to five years court probation, and each had his hunting privileges suspended for the next three years. The men were required to pay a combined \$7000 restitution to the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, and an additional \$500 to the Oregon Hunter's Association Turn-in-Poacher (T.I.P.) Program.



A F&W Trooper assisted the Wheeler Sheriff's Office with a crash near Fossil involving a large Black Bear and pickup. Many people driving by, to include the driver, asked if they could keep the bear. They were advised this was not lawful and the bear was removed from the scene (see photo).



CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Meghan Dugan, West Region and Conservation Communications

South Fork McKenzie River restoration work

The Willamette National Forest and McKenzie River Watershed Council began the first of a three-phase project to restore a three and a half mile section of the South Fork McKenzie River to its original channels and floodplains to benefit native fish. The river was channelized and straightened with levees and riprap during dam building operations in 1963, causing loss of rearing habitat and overall complexity for juvenile spring chinook, Pacific lamprey, cutthroat trout and rainbow trout, Western pond turtle, harlequin duck, American beaver and many other native species.

There is currently little quality habitat for fish in the stream, and pre-project snorkel counts were low. The existing channel filled primarily with large rocks and cobble as the smaller substrate were swept downstream and smaller sediment was not replenished as transport was blocked by the dam. Restoration in the 125-acre project area will include re-connecting floodplains, providing wood, smaller substrate, wetlands, and slow-moving water to benefit native species.



When the straightened channel was dewatered, ODFW Springfield District staff helped salvage fish with more than 50 partners and volunteers over five days. The fish were placed in the new channel near the confluence of the mainstem while heavy equipment operators and project staff worked on rehabilitating the existing channel. Efforts included adding substrates of all sizes to the channel to bring it back up to historic elevation and placing more than 300 pieces of large wood in the area to help slow stream flow and retain smaller substrate to create spawning habitat for fish.



Springfield District Fish Biologists helped advise some of the planning of the project and continue to be project partners. This phase of the restoration project is expected to be completed by August 15, within the allotted in-water work period.

Bsal proposal

ODFW is supporting a Competitive State Wildlife Grant project submitted by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency. The project, “Threat of

Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans (Bsal) to Species of Greatest Conservation Need and Proactive Development of Disease Management Strategies” would involve testing the susceptibility of 20 salamander species from New England to the west coast to estimate risk of this disease. Ten of these species are in Oregon, Washington, and California.

Currently, our understanding of Bsal risk in the western United States is very limited. However, Bsal is a large conservation concern for Oregon because our state has favorable environmental conditions for the disease. Bsal is responsible for massive crashes of salamander populations in Europe and is highly pathogenic.

If the proposal is funded, staff with the University of Washington will collect the salamander species Oregon is providing for testing. These include four that are Oregon Conservation Strategy Species: clouded, Columbia torrent, Southern torrent, and Cope’s giant salamanders, Dunn’s salamanders and Ensatinas.

Oregon Vesper sparrow project continues

The second of a three-year project documenting potentially limiting factors on Oregon Vesper sparrow in the Willamette Valley was completed. This grassland-savanna bird is an Oregon Conservation Strategy Species and is listed as State Sensitive-Critical.

This year, 70 adults and 50 nestlings were color-banded and 22 nests (16 successful, six failed) were monitored across 12 sites. Study sites are made up of three habitat types: pastures, Christmas tree farms, and restoration prairies and are dominated by private, working lands.

This study is part of a larger, range-wide effort to address conservation of this imperiled grassland bird, with the exact same study design and methods being implemented in the Klamath Mountains and Puget Lowlands by other cooperators. This unique approach should result in both range-wide and local conservation recommendations across multiple scales, habitat types, conditions, and ownerships.

OCEAN SALMON AND COLUMBIA RIVER PROGRAM

Tucker Jones, Ocean Salmon, and Columbia River Program Manager

2018 non-treaty spring Chinook fisheries review.

Recreational and commercial spring Chinook fisheries in the Columbia River officially concluded on June 15th at the end of the management period. Although many details still need to be finalized, some preliminary results are available.

The 2018 preseason forecast called for 248,500 spring Chinook returning to the Columbia River, including 166,700 upriver spring Chinook. It appears, pending finalization, that the actual upriver Chinook return was approximately 115,000, or about 69% of the forecast.

Following Commission guidance and the catch balancing provisions of the new *U.S. vs Oregon* management agreement, the pre-update allocation of upriver Chinook mortalities for non-treaty fisheries was 9,685 adult fish; including 7,157 and 633 salmon for the recreational and Select Area commercial fisheries respectively, downstream of Bonneville Dam. Preseason modeling indicated that the lower river recreational fishery could run through April 7th (38 days in March and April). The scheduled fishery occurred as planned, but due to lower than expected catch rates, an additional retention day (April 14) was added in-season. Although the fishery was within its allocation of upriver spring Chinook (~60% used), no additional extensions occurred prior to the in-season run update due to regional concerns about the upriver run size.

The recreational fishery from Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border was open through May 7th as planned preseason. No extensions occurred prior to the run update. Select Area winter-spring commercial fisheries concluded in mid-June with Chinook landings of nearly 8,800 fish. Ex-vessel prices were high throughout the winter and spring seasons. Summer seasons were extended through July for all fishing sites. Summer season landings through mid-July total 1,900 Chinook. The cumulative harvest to date of 10,700 is the 6th highest and approaching

harvest reform modelling expectations. The fishery remained within the commercial upriver allocation.

Due to delayed passage, the upriver spring Chinook run size could not be updated until May 21st, the latest run update to date, when the *U.S. vs Oregon* Technical Advisory Committee estimated the run size would be 116,500. Although significantly less than predicted preseason; this run size still allowed for additional recreational opportunity. Recreational fisheries reopened May 25th through June 15th both above and below Bonneville Dam. For the second straight year, no mainstem commercial fisheries occurred.

Overall, the preliminary kept catch for the recreational fishery downstream of Bonneville Dam was about 7,600 adult spring Chinook from 89,200 angler trips. From Bonneville Dam upstream to the Oregon/Washington border, recreational anglers kept approximately 610 adult Chinook from 6,900 angler trips. Mortalities of upriver spring Chinook totaled approximately 6,200 adult fish for these two fisheries, and were within post-season catch balancing limits (~76%) and ESA constraints (~54%).



Combined, it appears that recreational and commercial non-treaty fisheries used about 75% of the upriver spring Chinook and 66% of the ESA impacts allocated to them during 2018 fisheries.

END OF FIELD REPORTS FOR August 3, 2018