



ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
March 20, 2026

East Region

Nick Myatt, Region Manager

Golden eagle research continues in Northeast

Following up on a successful pilot project that began in [2024/2025](#), district staff are continuing research on the movement, survival, and reproductive success of golden eagles in northeast Oregon. In January 2025, East Region Wildlife Research, district biologists, Fish & Wildlife Service and Forest Service staff collaborated with master banders to capture and telemeter 12 eagles in Baker and Umatilla counties. Staff plan to continue eagle capture efforts throughout next winter (2026/2027).



District Wildlife Biologist, Andrew Rosenberg, pictured with a golden eagle captured and fitted with GPS device, Jan. 2026.

Golden eagles were listed as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the 2026 State Wildlife Action Plan. Past surveys conducted by FWS (2006-2009) have provided a rough estimate of the golden eagle population across

the U.S., however, range wide and local demographic trends are still generally unknown. ODFW staff will survey historic nest sites to assess nest site occupancy and breeding success of golden eagles across four counties in northeast Oregon: Baker, Union, Wallowa, and Umatilla counties.



Golden eagle capture site.

ODFW will use GPS data to identify movement patterns, home range sizes and habitat preferences. Additionally, ODFW will monitor cause-specific mortality of telemetered eagles to evaluate the prevalence of chemical toxins and other mortality factors in the region. The research will provide area-specific population trends to guide ODFW conservation efforts to ensure the continued existence of golden eagles in this ecologically diverse region.

Klamath Hatchery: Rising From the Ashes

It has been a long road since wildfire destroyed the Klamath Hatchery building in [September 2020](#). Rebuilding involves a number of steps, including insurance settlement negotiations, an archeological survey of the entire property, engineering design, consultation with FEMA, etc. These processes take a significant amount of time—for example, the insurance claims were not settled until mid-2024 and archeological surveys took over 2 years. This site has a rich history of

tribal use so these surveys are critical to understanding where building can occur on the site.



The Klamath Hatchery post-fire, 2021.



The new Klamath Hatchery 2025.

Once the archeological survey was completed, the report determined the building could remain in its original location. ODFW’s Engineering Section finished the design of a concrete, non-combustible, building to replace the wood-framed structure. Although more expensive, this design improves resiliency of the infrastructure by reducing risk associated with future wildfire.



Klamath Hatchery site before construction.

During the initial pre-bid meeting on site, excessive moisture was noted in the old building footprint. A geotechnical consultant was hired to assess the situation. They discovered that the underlying soil was not suitable to support the heavier concrete building. Staff had to completely redesign the foundation to be supported on driven steel piles as recommended by the consultant. There are 81 piles under the building and another 50 under the tall retaining wall behind the building.



Klamath Hatchery site with steel piles during construction.

Staff had to separate the construction project into two phases. Phase 1 included demolition, site work, installing steel piles and constructing a portion of the foundation as well as the retaining wall and Phase 2 included constructing the remainder of the foundation, civil site work and the building. Final completion date was February 11, 2026.



Klamath Hatchery, rearing area, 2025.

Klamath Hatchery is one of ODFW's primary trout producing facilities, producing trout for stocking around the state but particularly in southwest, southeast, and south-central parts of the state. Additionally, the facility is home to a small spring chinook salmon program that is used to assess the feasibility of spring Chinook reintroduction into the Klamath Basin. The new building is slightly larger than the original building and rearing room was redesigned to provide additional capacity to accommodate an increase of salmon production in the future if needed.

Sagebrush recovery in Lower Deschutes and BLM sites

Deschutes District staff led a collaborative effort last December to restore sagebrush habitat in central Oregon, working alongside PlantWorks LLC in Cove, the Prineville District BLM, and ODFW personnel from the Bend, Prineville and The Dalles offices.



Juniper removal and burn by BLM to restore sagebrush habitat.

The project focused on planting big sagebrush plugs throughout a recently burned landscape to jumpstart recovery in critical habitat. In Prineville, the effort tied directly into BLM's High Desert Shrub Steppe Restoration project, which removes encroaching juniper to benefit sage-grouse. Within a 4,000-acre treatment area, juniper had been cut, piled, and burned—leaving behind bare burn-pile scars. Those scars proved to be perfect microsites, offering ideal conditions to establish big sagebrush and kick natural succession back into motion.



Staff planting sagebrush plugs in burn scar, Dec. 2025.

The team also expanded ongoing Mule Deer Initiative work by incorporating part of the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area, creating a seamless extension of existing shrub restoration efforts. An unusually mild, moist early winter opened up a longer-than-expected planting window—perfect timing for getting young sagebrush off to a strong start. The Prineville planting area sits in the Maury WMU, Crooked River Hunt Area (CR-01), near Hampton Butte north of Highway 20.

Altogether, staff secured 1,538 sagebrush plugs at a discounted rate thanks to a surplus identified by PlantWorks. Roughly 810 plugs were planted within the Prineville BLM unit, while 728 were installed across LDWA. The project came together swiftly due to the discounted plant availability, shovel-ready BLM sites with NEPA clearance already in place, and LDWA's readiness to expand an actively managed restoration effort—all aligning to make the most of a unique opportunity

West Region

Mike Gauvin, Region Manager

Inside the Forest: How GPS Technology Is Revealing the Secret Lives of Fisher and their interactions with other predators

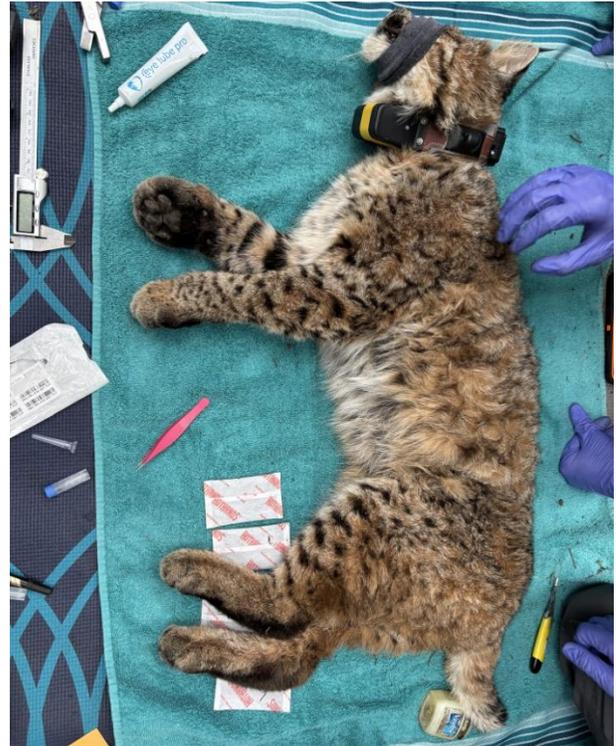
West Region research staff first began studying southern Oregon fisher in 2018 using hair snares, and the work accelerated in late 2022 with the

shift to live-trapping and GPS-collaring. Since then, the team has outfitted 40 fisher with GPS collars—providing the most detailed look yet at how these elusive carnivores move across the landscape, choose habitats, and carve out their territories.

Historically, fisher roamed forests throughout the Cascade and Klamath-Siskiyou regions. Today, this SWAP species remains only as a small, isolated population in the Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains, making every piece of new information essential for its long-term conservation.

A key focus of the study is understanding how fisher use the habitat that’s still available to them—and how they share that landscape with other carnivores. By learning where they travel, when they’re active, and which habitat features they rely on most, researchers can help guide more effective land-management decisions. In 2023, the research expanded to include gray fox to test whether competition might be placing pressure on fisher. Early results were encouraging: instead of competing directly, the two species largely avoid each other, using different areas and being active at different times of day.

Late last year, the team broadened the project once again—this time adding GPS-collared bobcats, a known predator of fisher in other parts of their range. Tracking bobcats alongside fisher and gray fox will help determine whether predation risk or overlapping habitat use is affecting fisher survival and limiting population recovery. These insights will help shape future conservation strategies and guide management actions to support fisher persistence in southwest Oregon.



Biologists trapped and GPS collared this bobcat in a research study of fisher in southern Oregon.



Fisher are a SWAP species that persists as a small, isolated population in the Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains.

Restoring Shade and Stability: Umpqua Team Accelerates Post-Fire Recovery

In 2020, the Archie Creek Fire scorched more than 131,000 acres in Douglas County, leaving behind vast stretches of damaged forest and streamside habitat. To help ongoing recovery, Umpqua hydro mitigation staff partnered with Santos Reforestation Inc. this year to plant 20,000 two-year-old Douglas-fir seedlings along Rock Creek, along with 750 cottonwoods strategically placed near wetlands and streambanks. The Douglas-fir were planted across roughly six-and-a-half miles of Riparian Management Area (RMA) on private lands within the fire footprint—areas where

re-establishing shade and stabilizing soils are critical.

Hydro mitigation funding, supplemented by a \$5,000 grant from the Umpqua Fisheries Enhancement Derby, supported the purchase of seed and the propagation of this year's Douglas-fir crop. Additional mitigation funding is already committed to future plantings: 40,000 evergreen seedlings (a mix of Douglas-fir and western red cedar) scheduled for 2027, and another 20,000 Douglas-fir seedlings planned for 2028.

Looking ahead to next year, mitigation staff will begin preparing the next round of RMA sites. Using an excavator outfitted with a masticating head, crews will clear out dense non-native vegetation along the most vulnerable stretches of lower Rock Creek—areas most in need of canopy recovery and stream shading. These steps are laying the groundwork for long-term forest and watershed resilience in one of the regions hit hardest by the Archie Creek Fire.

34th annual Umpqua Fisheries Enhancement Derby

Umpqua fish, hydropower mitigation, and wildlife research staff participated in several events at the 34th annual Umpqua Fisheries Enhancement Derby in late January. About \$100,000 is raised annually to help fund fishery enhancement, watershed restoration, and education projects in the Umpqua Basin.

The derby events occur over four days with the first day focused on high school students from Roseburg, Glide, Winston and Sutherlin. Umpqua fish and West Region research staff discussed current research, monitoring and fisheries projects and provided career advice to about 50 students.

On the second day, staff delivered 2,000 rainbow trout including, about 400 trophy trout for the annual fishing event for fifth graders from Eastwood Elementary School. Fishing guides volunteer their time and boats to take the kids fishing at Cooper Creek Reservoir. Eastwood Elementary has an on-site hatchery where fifth graders help raise and release hatchery steelhead.

By taking the kids fishing, they experience both raising fish and catching them.

For the remainder of the derby events, staff support anglers participating in the steelhead fishing derby and help with setup of the derby dinner and auction.



Fishing guides volunteered their time and boats to help kids from Eastwood Elementary fish for trout.



Eastwood Elementary 5th graders enjoyed a day of fishing and boat rides at Cooper Creek Reservoir.

Tuffy Creek Hatchery dam repair completed

The Tuffy Creek Fish Hatchery, tucked into the Coast Range and operated through a three-way partnership between ODFW, Oregon Department of Forestry, and the Oregon Department of Corrections, plays an essential role in Trask Hatchery operations. Much of the day-to-day work is carried out by the dedicated Adults in Custody (AIC) crew at the South Fork Forest Camp (SFFC).

In early January, SFFC staff alerted ODFW to a sudden drop in water levels in the rearing pond—water that was now slipping beneath the intake dam instead of flowing over it. Recognizing the risk to the fish on hand, the SFFC crew jumped into action. With approval from the Tillamook Fish District, they safely released an estimated 41,584 fin-clipped winter steelhead months ahead of schedule, preventing what could have been a major loss.

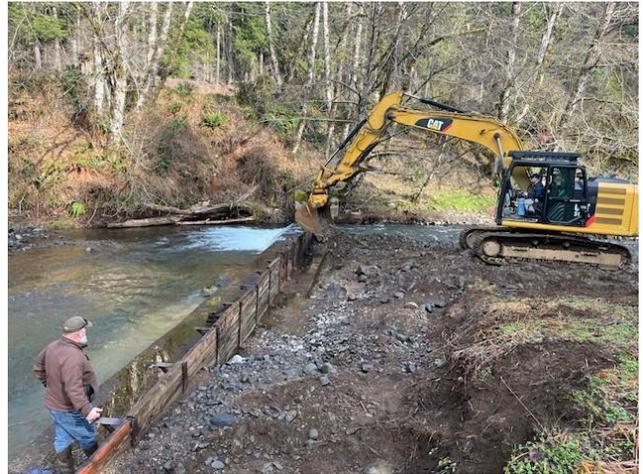
Shortly after, hatchery and district staff met with SFFC leadership and the AIC fish-rearing crew to map out a repair strategy. The plan called for stabilizing the dam by filling the void beneath it with large rocks SFFC already had available. The issue carried added urgency: the intake system also feeds the camp’s fire hydrants, meaning low water wasn’t just a hatchery issue—it was a camp safety issue.

After coordinating with ODF, the Department of State Lands, and ODFW fish passage staff, the team moved quickly. In early February, during a low-water window, the repair began. Crews placed four massive rocks—each weighing 800 to 1,200 pounds—below the dam, followed by smaller 300–600-pound rocks above it, directly in front of the problem area. River rock was packed over the top to seal the gaps. To further protect the structure, the intake channel was deepened to redirect flow and reduce pressure on the dam.

The work went smoothly and wrapped up within a few hours. By early afternoon, wooden dam boards were back in place, water levels were rising, and both the intake system and adult trap were fully operational. A potential crisis became a textbook example of rapid coordination, practical problem-solving, and the strong partnership that keeps Tuffy Creek running.



A void occurred underneath the dam at Tuffy Creek Hatchery, causing water levels to drop in the rearing pond that held over 41,000 hatchery winter steelhead.



An excavator placing gravel on top of the berm.



Water flowing over the dam a few hours after repairs were made.

Oregon State Police

Captain Doug Shugart, Fish & Wildlife Division

Fish and Wildlife Division Members Work Booth at the NW Sportsmen's Show

Fish and Wildlife Division members worked the OSP Fish and Wildlife booth at the Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show at the Portland Expo Center. This multi-day event is the largest sportsmen's show in the northwest. Numerous people stopped by the booth to learn about the Fish & Wildlife Division, ask questions about fish and wildlife laws, and thank Troopers for their continued efforts out in the field to curb poaching. During the show, a hunter education class stopped by to talk with the Troopers.



Fish and Wildlife Division members at NW Sportsmen's Show.

Fish and Wildlife Division Sergeant Investigates Unlawfully Possessed Sea Lion

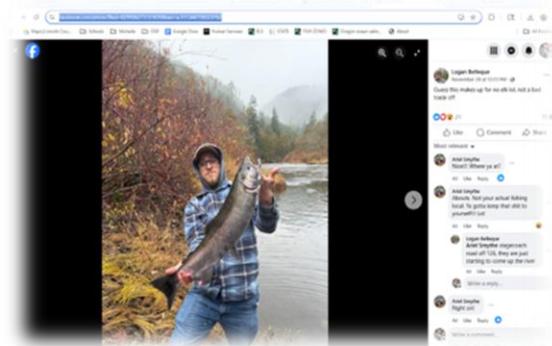
A Fish and Wildlife Division member responded to a report of a subject who had a seal in the back of his Jeep in Pacific City. A phone number was provided for the subject who said that he had picked up the injured seal on the beach north of Pacific City and agreed to meet with the Fish and Wildlife Sergeant at the location where he picked up the seal. Upon arrival the subject was nowhere to be found and did not answer his phone on callback. Approximately a half hour later the Jeep was contacted by a Forest Service officer in Neskowin and held until the Sergeant arrived. The seal turned out to be a half-grown

California Sea Lion with a large wound to its side and had died after being picked up. The driver of the Jeep, who had a suspended driver's license and a lengthy criminal history, could not provide a logical answer for why he failed to meet at the location on the beach, as agreed. The subject was cited for Possession of Protected Species and the sea lion was seized. Upon further inspection a shotgun wad was found protruding from the sea lion's wound, so it was turned over to NOAA for further investigation.



Fish and Wildlife Division members investigate unlawful possession of sea lion.

Social Media Post Leads to Citations for Coho Angling Violations



Fish and Wildlife Division members investigate coho taken closed area.

Fish and Wildlife Division members investigated the illegal take of a coho salmon in a closed area of the Siuslaw River near Stagecoach Road. A subject had posted about the catch on social media in November of 2025. The subject was located and cited for angling in a closed area and angling without a combined angling tag and warned for failing to immediately release a fish unharmed.

Fish and Wildlife Troopers Attend Charity Fishing Event



Fish and Wildlife Division members attend charity event.

Fish and Wildlife Division members proudly supported the 2026 Annual Umpqua Fisheries Enhancement Derby from January 28th – 31st. The week began on Wednesday with a career event where Troopers assisted as students from four local high schools were introduced to careers in natural resources. On Thursday's "Kids Day," Troopers assisted as fifth graders from local elementary schools watched the release of 1,200 trout into Cooper Creek Reservoir before enjoying guided fishing and jet boat rides. Throughout the weekend, the Troopers provided safety checks, rules briefings for 40 guides, and support for the sold-out fundraising auction. All proceeds benefit critical steelhead habitat projects in the Umpqua Basin.

Marine Resources Program

Justin Ainsworth, Marine Resources Program Manager

Oregon's pink shrimp fishery

Pink shrimp is Oregon's second most valuable commercial fishery. Oregon leads the nation in pink shrimp landings, research, and management, and the fishery holds the distinction of being the first shrimp fishery in the world certified as "sustainable" by the Marine Stewardship Council.

In 2025, the fleet landed 56.8 million pounds of pink shrimp, worth 29.4 million dollars (ex-vessel). It was a record-setting year not only for total landings but also for catch rates, driven by continued improvements in fishing efficiency and onboard technology.

The fishery is managed without a quota, relying instead on real-time information from fishery monitoring, department research, and oceanographic analysis. This system works because of strong partnerships between ODFW, the fleet, and outside collaborators who help ensure the fishery remains both productive and sustainable.

This past year, two peer-reviewed manuscripts highlighted important advances in sustainability. The first documented staff-led research on habitat associations of eulachon smelt—a key bycatch species—with results that can guide best management practices to reduce bycatch. The second introduced new methods for assessing population levels in real time, helping managers respond more quickly to signs of overfishing and reducing reliance on oceanographic models alone.

Together, these publications represent successful collaborations between staff and industry—and reinforce Oregon's leadership in stewarding one of the world's most sustainably managed shrimp fisheries.



Oregon's pink shrimp fishery was the first shrimp fishery worldwide to be certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council.



Pink shrimp is Oregon’s second most valuable commercial fishery. In 2025, 56.8 million pounds were landed with an ex-vessel value of \$29.4 million.

First annual meeting of MRP’s Nearshore Ecology Program

The Nearshore Ecology Program will hold its first [Annual Meeting on March 16 from 1-5 pm](#) at the Gladys Valley Marine Studies Building in Newport. The meeting aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the newly unified program, share 2025 research highlights, and provide space for connection and knowledge sharing between the Marine Reserves and Marine Habitat teams and their partners. It will include technical presentations, community participation, and an interactive equipment demonstration. The program’s first [annual report will be here](#) in advance of the March 16 meeting.

The Nearshore Ecology Program has worked hard to collaborate, investigate, and communicate conservation science, leading the way to understanding ecological changes in Oregon’s nearshore. Recent examples include the Marine Reserves’ longstanding [Fish On! Hook-and-Line newsletter](#) which highlights volunteerism and provides accountability for scientific goals and the Marine Habitat team’s latest Science Bulletin temporal changes to nearshore kelp beds.



GREETINGS VOLUNTEERS!

We had a very fun and exciting year on the water at the Cape Falcon and Redfish Rocks Marine Reserves. Thank you to all our volunteers for making the 2025 surveys possible!

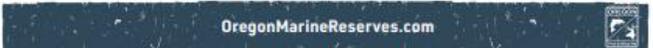
We are grateful to our captains and crews. Lance Fletcher, captain of the F/V Norwester, and sons led our surveys at Cape Falcon for the 5th time. Captain Aaron McKenzie and deckhands Richard and Sean of the F/V Lynoma led surveys at Redfish Rocks for the 1st time and adapted quickly to our methods. We were impressed by their expertise and workflow, and enthusiasm for learning more about our surveys. The hard work and expert knowledge of both captains made our surveys a success!

Many thanks to all our volunteer anglers and biological assistants who caught and recorded data during our surveys. We couldn’t gather this valuable long-term data without everyone involved.

During our 6th year of hook-and-line surveys at Cape Falcon, we caught our very first Puget Sound Rockfish (featured on final page)! In our 10th year at Redfish Rocks, we were excited to see many Gopher Rockfish and Wolf Eels.

Please enjoy this summary of the data you all helped collect in the past year. We hope to see you again in 2026 for surveys at Cape Perpetua or Cascade Head. We are grateful to have such dedicated volunteers.

Sincerely,
Moritz, Stephanie, and Ryan



The Marine Reserves Team’s 11th annual “Fish On! Hook-and-Line Volunteer Newsletter” provides a summary of ODFW survey data to volunteers about trends in fish communities and ocean conditions.

Surveys show major bull kelp declines on the southern coast

Aerial photographic surveys conducted in 2022 and 2024 have revealed dramatic declines in bull kelp along Oregon’s southern coast—an alarming 70 percent loss of floating kelp canopy south of Cape Arago since the last comparable survey in 2010. These recent surveys, published in a new [ODFW Science Bulletin](#) by Marine Habitat staff in the Nearshore Ecology Program, provide the first detailed look at how Oregon’s bull kelp has fared after the series of intense marine heatwaves that struck the West Coast in 2014–2016 and again in 2019.

The 2014–2016 heatwave reshaped marine ecosystems from Oregon to northern California. In California, bull kelp collapsed following shifts in ocean upwelling, a surge in purple sea urchins, and the disappearance of their primary predator, the sunflower sea star. In Oregon, survey results show a more complex picture: while kelp expansion near Depoe Bay drove a 26 percent increase in coast-wide kelp abundance between

2022 and 2024, the south coast continues to decline—and total kelp abundance remains far below historical levels.

Concerns about low kelp biomass are not new. ODFW surveys in the 1990s identified insufficient bull kelp for commercial harvest, prompting the Department of State Lands to ban industrial kelp harvest to protect the resource. Today, rapid changes in nearshore ecosystems underscore the importance of continuing to track bull kelp abundance and distribution. Bull kelp is not only a keystone habitat but also a State Wildlife Action Plan algal species and an Essential Fish Habitat Area of Particular Concern for groundfish and salmon. Monitoring its status helps ODFW anticipate how vital nursery habitats may respond to shifting ocean conditions, including changes in grazing pressure from sea urchins and fluctuations in the predators that keep them in check.

The two recent aerial surveys provide near-complete inventories of bull kelp beds

along Oregon’s coastline, made possible through competitive U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant funding.



A 1999 photo shows plentiful amounts of kelp at Orford Reef.

**End of field reports for
March 20, 2026**