



# ODFW Field Reports

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission  
June 26, 2026

## East Region

Nick Myatt, Region Manager

### Porcupine research update

Deschutes and Ochoco District staff launched porcupine capture efforts for the ongoing research project on February 5, 2026. The project aims to close critical information gaps about porcupine life history; habitat use and causes of mortality—knowledge that will help guide conservation decisions for both public and private land managers.

Capture work paused in April, when porcupines typically have the lowest body condition and most females are in late pregnancy. To date, staff have captured nine porcupines and deployed seven GPS collars. One animal died from capture-related complications, and another removed its collar. Of the collared individuals, six are females and one is male.

Deschutes District staff, including Mikayla Bivona and Jamie Bowles, have used multiple techniques to safely capture porcupines and fit GPS collars. Methods include the “tail grab,” “corral,” and traditional box traps—each accounting for three captures so far.



Deschutes district staff Mikayla Bivona and Jamie Bowles work to place a GPS collar on a captured porcupine.

In addition to live captures, the team has recorded porcupine presence at more than 67 trail-camera locations within the study area, with many sites detecting multiple individuals. Staff have also identified over 53 den sites in habitats ranging from rocky outcrops to earthen dens. Public participation has played an important role as well: more than 275 reports of live and dead porcupines have been submitted through ODFW’s online reporting form, with an increasing trend in roadkill reports. To retrieve GPS data, staff conduct telemetry surveys, approaching each animal closely enough to download collar data via Bluetooth. This system has worked well, and early findings are already revealing new insights. Previous studies documented porcupine home ranges between 24 and 684 acres. In comparison, the four collared females in this study are using an average of 367 acres, while the collared male has used 2,723 acres.

Capture efforts will continue through the summer as staff work to deploy the remaining 13 GPS collars.



Porcupine in a box trap captured by Deschutes district staff.

### Mosier-area northwestern pond turtle analysis completed

Mid-Columbia district wildlife staff finished up their analysis of northwestern pond turtle (NWPT) monitoring that occurred in 2025. Since 2018, district staff have conducted annual monitoring of 8 to 10 ponds near Mosier. This

population is unique in that it is on the fringe of the species known range in Oregon, and it is currently free of many factors that negatively affect pond turtles in other parts of their range such as bull frogs, shell rot disease, and other invasive species.

Annual monitoring efforts have historically included 6 to 10 trapping sessions at each pond site to estimate population size and survival. NWPTs are uniquely marked with PIT tags. Each individual is measured once per season to determine growth rates. These repeated captures allow staff to estimate population size, survival rates, turtle movements, and the number of young turtles being born.



Northwestern pond turtles basking in a small pond on private property in Mosier area.

In 2025 staff estimated the monitored population at 165 turtles spread across nine ponds. Annual survival estimates ranged from 0.78 to 0.93. The number of young turtles in the population has decreased over time, with 2025 showing the lowest proportion of juveniles captured since monitoring began. Growth rates for Mosier turtles were similar to those found in other regions.

In 2023 and 2024, staff deployed a remote PIT array at one of the most productive pond sites with the help of fish research staff. This array allowed staff to monitor the times at which turtles exited and re-entered the pond. The PIT tag array provided new insight into turtle behavior, particularly when turtles leave ponds possibly to nest. Most turtle movements occurred from late spring through mid-summer. Female turtles were especially active in the mornings and evenings, consistent with typical nesting behavior.



Northwestern pond turtle poses for a photo during annual study.

Future work in the Mosier area will involve the use of GPS transmitters to monitor turtle movements out of the pond. This should allow staff to further document nesting behavior and habitat. Based on the decreasing number of juvenile turtles observed, staff suspect nesting habitat and success may be a limiting factor in this population.

View a short video (2022) about NWPT research in the Mosier area:

<https://youtu.be/mzQRcOffjCw>

### **Sisters High School bioblitz for wildlife crossings**

Between April 14 and April 27, ODFW, OSU-Cascades and Sisters High School worked closely together to conduct a bioblitz at four proposed wildlife crossing locations along Highway 20. These locations are part of the Bend to Suttle Lake Wildlife Passage Initiative, fondly referred to as “B2S.”



B2S bioblitz students arrive for field work.

A bioblitz is a communal effort to record as many species within a designated location and time period as possible. They are a fun way to

involve the community while providing a snapshot of species presence to help us to gain a better understanding of the biodiversity in a given area at a given time. The project was an opportunity to bolster pre-construction surveys that OSU-Cascades is already collecting from trail cameras and to increase community awareness about the proposed structures.

ODFW and OSU started the program in the classroom by teaching students about the importance of habitat connectivity for biodiversity and the role that wildlife crossings can play in offsetting the impacts of road networks on wildlife. Then the 16 participating junior high school students conducted surveys of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles, insects, plants and fungi at each side of the highway at the four proposed crossing locations.



Students conduct wildlife surveys during the B2S bioblitz.

They learned how to use apps like iNaturalist, Merlin, eBird and Avenza to conduct surveys along with a wildlife professional. Students then broke into four groups to summarize biodiversity information, design and construct a diorama representing a crossing structure for each of the proposed locations. They presented survey results and dioramas to the USFS Sisters Ranger District, classmates and members of the B2S coalition.



Dioramas created by Sisters High School students.

The project has received great feedback and positive support from the community, and there is talk of potentially continuing the project next year.

## West Region

Mike Gauvin, West Region Manager

### Common carp found in Cooper Creek Reservoir

On April 16, Umpqua Fish District staff verified an angler's report of carp in Cooper Creek by electrofishing, removing 14 adult carp. Most were pregnant females ranging in age from approximately two to eight years old. Located near Sutherlin, Cooper Creek Reservoir is a popular fishing and recreational water body.

Staff are concerned this non-native species could make its way into calm areas of the North and mainstem Umpqua rivers where they could thrive. Adult females can lay 300,000 eggs in a single spawn – warmer waters can induce more spawning events. Carp can also have ecological impacts on water bodies by degrading habitat for native fish, increasing water turbidity by uprooting plants, and altering aquatic vegetation and food webs.

As of June 1, 79 carp were removed from the reservoir, and staff will continue monitoring by electrofishing and disposing the carp.

Anglers that catch a carp are encouraged to report the location where caught, size, and a photo if possible to

[evan.leonetti@odfw.oregon.gov](mailto:evan.leonetti@odfw.oregon.gov) or call 541-440-3353. Anglers should not put live carp back in the water. Because carp are non-game fish in Oregon, there is no harvest limit, and it is legal to dispose of the fish.



Umpqua Fish District staff discovered common carp in Cooper Creek Reservoir in April.

### **Low water levels and warmer temperatures concern Rogue Basin biologists**

Snow and rainfall in winter and spring this year were some of the lowest on record in Southern Oregon. While the Rogue Valley is significantly drier and hotter than the rest of Western Oregon, that weather has come early this year along with a dismal snowpack.

Trout were stocked early in many lakes and reservoirs due to low water levels and earlier than normal warm temperatures in the Rogue Basin; multiple small lakes were at mid-summer water temperatures in early May, and some small streams were already at mid-summer water levels or had dried up. Major rivers are expected to be running lower than normal due to the virtually non-existent snowpack coupled with a lack of rain.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers say water levels at Lost Creek and Applegate reservoirs are far below average, and they are preparing for a challenging water year. One of the Rogue River

Basin Project's primary goal is providing water for fish populations. ODFW works closely with the Corps to strategize water releases to primarily benefit spring Chinook salmon which lost the most habitat due to construction of William Jess Dam (Lost Creek). The releases also benefit other species including steelhead and coho salmon which tend to spawn in tributaries more than Chinook.

Both agencies are concerned about potential salmon die-offs due to low water, warm temperatures, and *Columnaris*, a bacterial disease that typically attacks the gills and respiratory system of fish. Outbreaks are often associated with warm water temperatures due to low stream flows and high air temperatures.

ODFW staff is continuing to monitor water levels and temperatures throughout the summer and fall. Anglers and river users should call ODFW (541-826-8774) if they see dead adult salmon in the Rogue River, especially in the Wild and Scenic section below Grave Creek.

### **Exclusive turkey hunting opportunity in Southern Oregon**

The [Rogue River Preserve](#), owned by the Southern Oregon Land Conservancy (SOLC) is the newest Access and Habitat (A&H) Program cooperator in the Southwest Region.

Rogue River Preserve boasts over 350 acres of prime Rogue River frontage, with the largest example of a contiguous riparian floodplain forest in the upper Rogue and many seasonal sloughs and creeks used by Chinook salmon and steelhead. The property has oak woodlands and buckbrush thickets used by overwintering Roosevelt elk and blacktail deer, and wood ducks can even use the property for nesting.

The A&H Program is helping fund ongoing restoration work at the preserve and in exchange, SOLC is offering a limited amount of exclusive spring turkey hunting opportunities each year.

This year's turkey hunts are completed, and four hunters each filled their spring turkey tag on this unique property. A mentored youth hunt was made possible by long time Oregon Hunters

Association Rogue Valley Chapter Member, Jeff Hyle who put a young lady onto a nice Tom over the youth hunting weekend in April. The mentored youth had recently gone through ODFW's Youth Turkey Hunting Clinic offered each spring at the Denman Wildlife Area.

SOLC also hosts a number of educational outreach activities every year to local schools and the public. SOLC has an excellent group of volunteer land stewards that help with ongoing habitat restoration projects monthly. The Fish and Wildlife Commission visited this unique preserve during their April visit to Medford.



Drew Ehlers said the Rogue River Preserve is truly a gem and appreciated the opportunity to access such a special place to hunt.



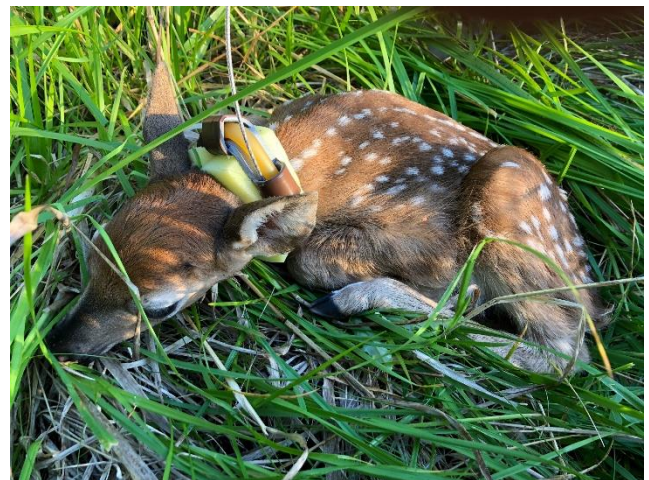
One of four lucky hunters, Eithan Pace was grateful for the opportunity to harvest a spring turkey on the Rogue River Preserve.

## Temporary protection measure in place for Columbian white-tailed deer near Roseburg

To protect Columbian white-tailed deer during peak fawning season, the Bureau of Land Management put a temporary motorized vehicle restriction in place June 1 – July 15 at the North Bank Habitat Management Area (NBHMA). The BLM coordinated the restriction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Umpqua Wildlife District.

The entrance gate to the Comstock Day-Use Area is temporarily closed to motorized vehicle access to reduce disturbance to the deer, particularly within the critical Jackson Creek drainage fawning habitat. Recent monitoring identified declines in their population, prompting these temporary measures.

The NBHMA played a key role in the federal delisting of the Douglas County population of Columbian white-tailed deer in 2003. The collaborative efforts of the three agencies, Douglas County and others focused on protecting and restoring habitat for the deer, which includes the 6, 581-acre NBHMA near Roseburg.



A Columbian white-tailed deer was collared in a past research project at North Bank Habitat Management Area.

## ODFW hosts Wildlife-Human Attack Response Training in Redmond

ODFW hosted the third Oregon Wildlife-Human Attack Response Training in Redmond last month. The training was two days, including 5 classroom and field components with the intent of preparing staff to respond to wildlife attacks

and work effectively as part of a large-scale response as needed.

Wildlife attacks on humans are among the highest profile incidents that Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division (OSP FWD) staff will respond to. A major incident, such as a fatal attack with the responsible animal at large, will require staff to restore public safety using unique skills and techniques from specialized training while also coordinating and managing a large multi-agency response.

In 2024, ODFW and OSP FWD formed a joint Oregon Wildlife Human Attack Response Training Team (OR WHART) after nearly 30 staff attended the British Columbia Conservation Officer Service's 5-day Wildlife Human Attack Response Training in 2023.

Around 30 students representing ODFW, OSP, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services attended this year's training. Feedback from student evaluations showed that the training was a highly positive experience and provided impactful hands-on training, increasing staff preparedness to respond to wildlife-humans attacks.



Attendees of the May 2026 OR WHART in Redmond.

## Oregon State Police

Captain Doug Shugart, Fish & Wildlife Division

### Fish and Wildlife Division Member Investigates Unlawful Thermal Use

A Fish and Wildlife Division member received information that two individuals were using

thermal imaging devices to hunt spring bears in the Tillamook area. The Trooper constructed a search warrant, which was executed by members of the East Valley Fish and Wildlife Team, North Coast Fish and Wildlife Team, and the Marine Fisheries Team. Two thermal imaging devices and one pair of Sig Sauer stabilizing binoculars were seized. One of the individuals involved admitted to helping his friend hunt for bears using the equipment. Charges were referred to the Tillamook County District Attorney's Office.



Fish and Wildlife Division members seized thermal imaging devices related to unlawful bear hunting.

### Fish and Wildlife Division Members Present at Elementary School Career Fair

Fish and Wildlife Division members participated at the Sisters Elementary School Career Fair. Troopers showed the students the Trailer of Shame and discussed the impacts of poaching. Troopers also took questions from students regarding what it is like to work as an Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Trooper.



Fish and Wildlife Division members take students' questions at Career Fair in Sisters.

## **Fish and Wildlife Division Members Serve Multiple Search Warrants**

Fish and Wildlife Division members executed a search warrant on a residence in East Multnomah County related to several wildlife crimes. During that search warrant drugs, guns, and evidence of wildlife crimes were seized, along with two of the suspect's cellphones. Additional information from cellphone data revealed several other wildlife crimes. These crimes involved the poaching of salmon/steelhead, unlawful sale of recreationally caught spring salmon, baiting and killing bears, additional deer poached with archery equipment at night, and an elk that was killed unlawfully. As a result, three additional search warrants were executed at residences in Multnomah and Klamath Counties. During the search an additional bear that had been killed over bait was discovered. Several pieces of evidence were seized including salmon angling gear, guns, archery equipment, 3 bear skulls, 2 deer skulls, elk meat, and additional hunting gear.



Fish and Wildlife Division members execute multiple search warrants related to poaching investigation.

## **Fish and Wildlife Division Members Execute Search Warrant with OSP SWAT Assistance**

Fish and Wildlife Division members, in conjunction with Oregon State Police SWAT members, served a search warrant in rural southern Lane County. The search warrant stemmed from a lengthy investigation involving a convicted felon and another individual violating weapons restrictions while unlawfully hunting and trespassing on private timber company property. Subsequently, one suspect was lodged at the Lane County Jail on the

following charges: Felon in Possession of a Weapon, Criminal Trespass with a Firearm, No Annual Hunting License, No Big Game Tag, Unlawful Possession of Machine Gun, Unlawful Possession of Firearm Silencers (X6), Supplying Contraband, and Unlawful Possession of Schedule II Substance. The second suspect was lodged at the Lane County Jail on the following Charges: Violation of Stalking Order, Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, No Annual Hunting License, No Big Game Tag, Unlawful Possession of Buck Deer (X9), Unlawful Possession of Bobcat, and Unlawful Possession of Grouse.



Fish and Wildlife Division members execute search warrant with assistance from OSP SWAT.

## **Fish and Wildlife Division Member Seizes 123 Razor Clams**

A Fish and Wildlife Division member observed two adults and one juvenile actively digging clams with only one container while a subject associated with the group was sitting in a nearby vehicle. The Trooper made contact with the group as they returned to their vehicle and found they had 23 razor clams inside of the bag. The group admitted to having another bucket of clams inside the trunk of the vehicle. They opened the trunk revealing a bucket containing 38 razor clams. The Trooper observed a large black garbage bag tucked away inside the trunk and asked the subjects if there were any other clams inside the vehicle. The subjects stated no, but a subsequent search revealed another larger bucket hidden underneath the garbage bag containing an additional 92 razor clams. The subjects were found to be in possession of a total of 153 razor clams and only two subjects had

valid shellfish licenses. Two subjects were criminally cited and released for Exceeding the Daily Bag Limit of Clams, Possession of More than One Limit of Clams While in Clam Digging Area and Aiding/Counseling in a Wildlife Offense. 123 razor clams were seized and donated to the local food bank.

## **Marine Resources Program**

Justin Ainsworth, Marine Resources Program Manager

### **Yelloweye Rockfish Expected to Be Declared Rebuilt After Two Decades of Recovery Efforts**

Over 20 years after the federal bottomfish fishery off the U.S. West Coast was declared a disaster due to several overfished species, the Pacific Fishery Management Council and National Marine Fisheries Service are now in the process of declaring the last species to be rebuilt.

Based on the 2025 update federal stock assessment, yelloweye rockfish – an Oregon State Wildlife Action Plan species – have met the threshold for a rebuilt declaration. Estimates made in the early 2000s didn't predict the stock rebuilding until 2084. The faster rebuilding is due to a combination of updated science and years of fishery restrictions.



Yelloweye rockfish have striking coloration and can live up to 150 years.

Yelloweye rockfish are a long-lived (up to 150 years) species that is bright orange-yellow in color with eyes often golden in color. Juveniles

are darker red-orange with two horizontal white stripes along their sides. The striking coloration, sometimes large size (up to 40 lbs.), and taste and texture of the meat make them popular with anglers and commercial fishery participants. They are generally solitary fish that are on or just above rocky reefs and outcroppings, similar habitat to lingcod which is another highly prized species.

In the two decades, there have been advancements in the overall knowledge of the life history of many species, especially rockfish species. New information on growth, reproductive age and output, habitat, and advancements in survey methods led to more accurate data to inform assessments. Much of this work has been collaborations between state and federal agencies, academia, Tribes, and conservation organizations.

The commercial, recreational, and Tribal fisheries have also influenced the earlier timeline. Restrictions were put in place to limit encounters with, and mortality of, yelloweye rockfish, often at the expense of being able to target healthy fish stocks such as other rockfish, Pacific halibut, and lingcod. Measures included: closed areas, gear restrictions, seasonal depth restrictions, lower limits on co-occurring species, no retention, and requiring the use of descending devices.

Although the species is expected to be declared rebuilt soon, federal managers anticipate moving forward cautiously. Any future retention allowances are likely to be limited at first. Because retention has been prohibited since 2004, reopening even small harvest opportunities will also help provide much-needed biological samples (such as size, sex, and age structures) to support future assessments.

This milestone marks an important recovery success for the U.S. West Coast, reflecting decades of coordinated science, stewardship, and sacrifices across all sectors of the fishery.



Since 2004, retaining yelloweye rockfish retention has been prohibited. Federal fishery managers are moving cautiously to declaring the species rebuilt.

### MRP highlights SWAP species, habitats at Marine Science Day

The Marine Resources Program (MRP) have a large presence at Hatfield Marine Science Day each year in April. Marine Science Day is hosted by Oregon State University and is an opportunity for agencies and other groups located on the Hatfield Marine Science Center campus to communicate with the public about exciting marine-focused science in Oregon. This year was another major success, with the one-day event attracting close to 1900 visitors.

MRP continued the tradition of bringing engaging displays, creative activities, and enthusiastic one-on-one discussions that describe the program’s fishery management and research, including shellfish resource and estuary assessment, marine mammals, marine habitat, and phytoplankton monitoring programs.

This year, staff emphasized the “Oregon is Worth Protecting” campaign by highlighting State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) species and habitats. Working with Communications staff, MRP developed tables that connected the program’s work to priority nearshore habitats, conservation challenges, and species of greatest conservation need identified in the SWAP.

Projects related to Southern resident orcas, tufted puffins, eelgrass, estuaries, kelp beds, harmful algal blooms, marine life entanglement, invasive species and more were highlighted.



Phytoplankton monitoring specialists Sarah Elden (left) and Becca Crawford explained interesting facts about marine microalgae to an attentive group of Girl Scouts.



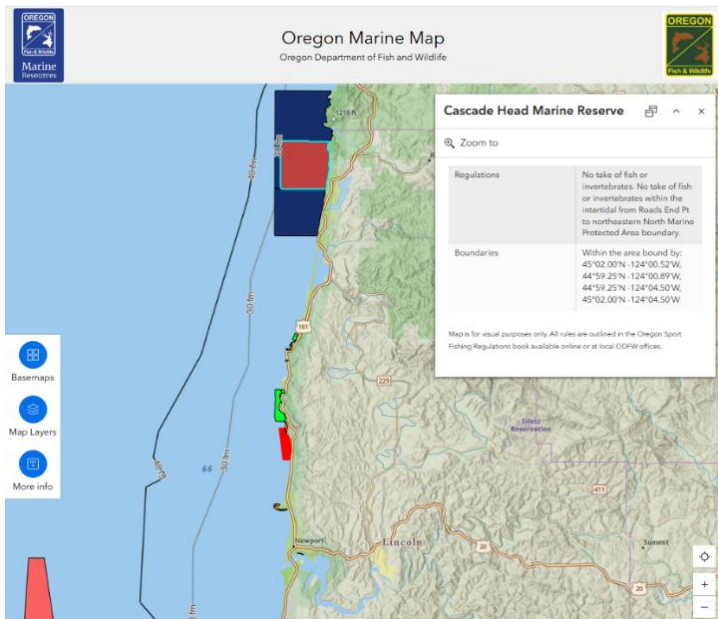
The Marine Mammal Program highlighted the Southern resident orca, a SWAP species.

### Marine Map interactive tool lets users explore Oregon’s marine conservation areas

With 46 marine conservation areas, the Marine Resources Program developed a new interactive web tool called Marine Map to inform harvesters and educate the public on what makes these areas special

In 2023, part three of The [Oregon Territorial Sea Plan](#) (TSP) was amended to include six new conservation sites: Ecola Point, Chapman Point, Cape Lookout, Fogarty Creek, Cape Foulweather, and Blacklock Point. These areas are primarily rocky intertidal sites where prioritizing education and conservation is valuable. These additions required Commission approval in 2023 and integration into fishing

regulations. MRP took this opportunity to create a spatially aware, user-friendly map of Oregon's marine conservation areas.



The interactive “Marine Map” is a spatially aware, user-friendly map of Oregon’s marine conservation areas.

Visit [www.ODFW.com/MarineMap](http://www.ODFW.com/MarineMap) from any of your digital devices to learn more about these interesting and diverse protected areas.

The initial goal of the project was to have a digital map so people could use their phone’s GPS to inform them of harvest restrictions in their location. Currently, staff are working to add more information regarding details about each of the area's designations, natural history, and species found in them.

The Marine Map has already been adapted for internal use in multiple projects including assistance in reporting Scientific Take Permits and evaluation of potential sea urchin culling locations. These initial uses have sparked ideas for potential paths in the future that would further allow anyone to interact with ODFW research and regulations.

**End of field reports for  
June 26, 2026**