



ODFW Field Reports

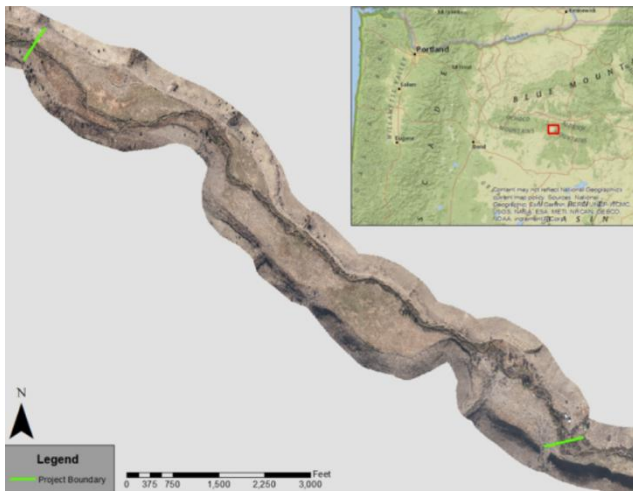
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
August 14, 2026

East Region

Nick Myatt, Region Manager

John Day FIP grant supports ongoing restoration in Murderer's Creek

A series of Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grants from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board are helping restore Murderers Creek on the Philip Schneider Wildlife Area (PSWA). The John Day fish habitat, district and research teams are involved in the effort as part of the John Day Partnership, an organization formed in 2014 to coordinate watershed restoration activities throughout the John Day Basin.



Location of the Murderers Creek habitat improvement project in north-central Oregon.

The initial work on restoration in Murderer's Creek began in 2020 and was completed in 2023. Phase one targeted 2.5 miles of stream within the PSWA with a focus on creation of large wood structures, reconnection of the larger floodplain in the area with removal of artificial constraints and enhancement of the riparian vegetation.

Work also included the addition of approximately 250 logs in multiple structure formats, removal of nearly ¼ mile of berms and riprap to increase floodplain connectivity,

construction of side channel inlets to encourage water movement into historically flooded areas, nearly three acres of riparian plantings and installation of fencing to protect the riparian plantings.



Aerial photo showing floodplain and channel before restoration.



Aerial photo showing floodplain after restoration.

In the three years post-construction, the Partnership and the local ODFW team have documented approximately 45 acres of newly activated floodplain with increased pool frequency throughout the restored reach of the stream. With this increased habitat complexity there has been a positive trend in stream temperatures and increased riparian shading.

In-stream work on Phase two of the project began in July this year, targeting another 2.5 miles of Murderer's Creek, .8 miles of Todd Creek and .3 miles of Duncan Creek on PSWA just upstream from the successful Phase one project. Planned work for this phase will include installing 67 beaver dam analogs, 91

post-assisted log structures, 69 log jams and 147 unanchored wood structures. All of the juniper logs used for this work were harvested on an approved site on the wildlife area, reducing juniper encroachment in a key area as well.

The John Day Partnership recently submitted an application for another FIP grant. If funds were awarded, they would go to Phase 3 of the project which is already in the early planning phase and would continue restoration further upstream on the wildlife area. While the original scoping for this project was done to primarily benefit anadromous fish in the basin, it will also have positive habitat outcomes for a myriad of amphibian species in the system, as well as passerines and ungulates reliant upon healthy riparian areas in the arid John Day Basin.

Restoring Lahontan cutthroat trout in the McDermitt Basin

The McDermitt Basin rotenone treatment project is a multi-year, multi-partner effort aimed at removing non-native salmonids (rainbow and brook trout) and restoring habitat for the federally listed Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT). Located in far southeastern Oregon near the Nevada border, McDermitt Creek offers one of the most resilient stream systems within the Quinn River Recovery Unit, with multiple tributaries capable of supporting LCT even during drought conditions.



Aerial photo of upper McDermitt Creek with Disaster Peak in background.

The 2026 treatment represents the first of two operational years planned to fully eradicate non-native rainbow and brook trout, both of which threaten LCT through hybridization, competition, and displacement.

Planning for this project has been underway for more than a decade, informed by lessons learned from earlier unsuccessful attempts from 2007 to 2009. ODFW staff, Nevada Department of Wildlife, conservation landowners, Western Rivers Conservancy, Oregon Desert Land Trust, Trout Unlimited, volunteers, and additional partners contributed to barrier verification, habitat surveys, discharge measurements, dye travel time studies, field bioassays, and transport of sentinel fish to establish an effective rotenone treatment rate. During the treatment, approximately 65 personnel deployed drip cans, backpack sprayers, dough-ball rotenone carriers, and sentinel fish throughout more than 76 miles of stream to ensure full coverage across variable habitats and flow conditions.



Rotenone application at McDermitt Creek near the Turner Ranch, July 2026.

Following 2026 and 2027 treatments, ODFW will conduct intensive monitoring in 2028 using eDNA, electrofishing, and genetic sampling to confirm successful eradication of non-native trout. Once the basin is verified clean, LCT will be reintroduced from pure-source populations in nearby Nevada streams such as Washburn Creek, with translocations planned over multiple years.



LCT McDermitt 2026 group photo by Philip Milburn, ODFW.

Successful completion of this project will establish a drought-resilient stronghold for Lahontan cutthroat trout and create a long-term recovery anchor point across the Quinn River system.

West Region

Mike Gauvin, West Region Manager

Town hall meeting on wolf issues in Jackson County

Representative Emily McIntire (District 56) hosted a community town hall in Central Point that drew ranchers and local residents seeking information as wolves continue to move into new areas of Jackson County. The meeting aimed to help the public understand what to expect as wolf activity expands and to highlight the resources available to support communities and landowners.

ODFW's Southwest Area Assistant Wolf Biologist, District Wildlife Biologist, and Rogue Watershed Manager joined representatives from USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Oregon State Police, Western Landowner's Alliance, and the Oregon Cattleman's Association. Each provided updates on their roles in wolf monitoring, management, and conflict-response efforts.

Attendees—primarily from the ranching community—were largely receptive, engaging in a constructive question-and-answer session focused on coexistence strategies and agency assistance.

John Williams, Co-Chair of the Oregon Cattleman's Association Wolf Committee, opened the meeting with an overview of wolf expansion and lessons learned from Eastern Oregon. Agency speakers followed with details on monitoring efforts, wolf numbers, management zones, depredation investigations, federal listing status, and available conflict-management services. Contact information and resources were shared to help landowners better navigate wolf activity in the region.

Mass mortality event of western pearlshell mussels a mystery

ODFW staff, in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Xerces Society of Invertebrate Conservation, are monitoring an ongoing mass mortality event (MME) of western pearlshell mussels. Large numbers of these native freshwater bivalves were discovered dead or dying in September 2025.

ODFW staff with Xerces Society and the Partnership for Umpqua Rivers (PUR) conducted a survey in September 2025 to confirm the mortality event. Samples were taken and sent to a lab for pathogen testing at that time. Staff, Xerces, and DEQ collected water, sediment and tissue samples soon after the first survey. Another survey was conducted in October 2025 to document the continued decline.

Since the discovery of the MME, multiple surveys have been conducted to quantify the decline of density in this freshwater mussel bed. When compared to a survey in July 2024 that was done in the same location prior to the MME, a decline of 50 to 76 percent of live mussels was documented.

As of June 2026, the MME continues with recent mortalities still present. ODFW staff, the Xerces Society and Portland State University will take more water samples at the end of July.

Beyond being a food source for local fauna such as river otters and muskrats, these native mussels provide many ecosystem benefits including their role as a long-lived natural water filter. According to the Xerces Society, a single freshwater mussel can filter between 10 to 20 gallons of water per day.



Western pearlshell mussels. Photo by Roger Tabor/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

ODFW and USFS Cooperation benefits SWAP and other species

In 2008, ODFW began a Cooperative with the United States Forest Service to implement collaborative habitat projects on the Umpqua National Forest (UNF). Completed projects included restored meadows, opened forage, wildlife guzzler development, forage study enclosures, snag creation, and upland game bird habitat improvement.

These projects were carried out through a cooperative position employed by ODFW, with accommodation arranged by the UNF at Toketee Ranger Station. Eighteen years later, this Cooperative and the position still exists.

In 2019, the Cooperative was transitioned into a Good Neighbor Agreement (GNA) with the UNF. The GNA allowed for a more efficient transfer of funds and services between ODFW and Forest Service. The GNA remains effective until 2032, and new projects are added through updated supplemental project agreements every three to four years.

A long list of accomplishments under the GNA includes: establishing control lines for prescribed burns, maintenance of meadows and forage openings, fertilization and seeding after prescribed fire, fuels reduction, elk collaring for winter survey study, wildlife crossing monitoring for the North Umpqua Hydro Electric Project, big game winter range closure administration, winter range gate fabrication/ installation/ maintenance and assisting with surveys for other

species including bumble bees. All this work falls within the North Umpqua Conservation Opportunity Area listed in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP).

This habitat work has been a benefit to many species of wildlife on the forest. The initial projects targeted ungulate habitat, specifically for elk which are declining in the West Cascade Eco-region. But these projects have provided improved habitat availability to a variety of species including several from the Oregon's SWAP list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need. So far within the project area, we have detected: myotis, cuckoo and fuzzy horn bumble bees, common nighthawk, ringtails, Sierra Nevada red fox, great grey owls, spotted owls, Western grey squirrel and grey wolf.



A herd of elk foraging in a restored meadow on the Umpqua National Forest.



For 18 years now, ODFW has worked with the Umpqua National Forest to restore meadows, open forage and other habitat restoration projects that benefit SWAP and other species.

Fish salvage for a culvert replacement project leads to surprise discovery

During fish salvage for a culvert replacement project on Pheasant Creek near Drain, biologists and foresters made a surprising discovery:

[Western brook lamprey](#) were occupying the creek.

This is the first time these lamprey were documented here and about 40 were salvaged. With this sighting, the known distribution of Western brook lamprey is now extended into a previously unmapped basin. This is very good news for this unique lamprey species.

The Roseburg Private Forest Accord (PFA) biologist, Umpqua Fish District staff, and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) stewardship foresters completed fish salvage in the creek for a Small Forestland Investment in Stream Habit (SFISH) program project. The landowner wanted to replace an old culvert and maintain a beaver living on the property.

An old double barrel culvert was a barrier to native fish at various times of year, especially in summer and lower flows when adult steelhead and coho salmon could not pass the culvert. A new bridge was installed, removing all fish barriers and allowing the beaver to continue living along Pheasant Creek.



This culvert was impeding passage for adult steelhead and coho, particularly during low flows. Photo credit: Josh Hanson, ODF.



A new bridge replaced the old culvert, allowing all native fish species to move freely in Pheasant Creek. Photo credit: John Hanson, ODF.



A beaver dam analog placed along Pheasant Creek. ODFW photo.

Annual Trapping and Marketing Effort at Muddy Valley Habitat Reserve

Another successful trapping and marking effort for Northwestern Pond Turtle (NWPT) was held at Muddy Valley Habitat Reserve (MVHR) in June.

MVHR is a 540-acre conservation property located southwest of McMinnville. The site is owned and managed by Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District, having been acquired through ODFW's Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program about 10 years ago. The property is home to one of the largest known remnant populations of NWPT in the Willamette Valley Ecoregion. Annual trapping is part of ODFW's long-term monitoring effort to support conservation of NWPT, a Species of Greatest Conservation Need in Oregon's State Wildlife Action Plan.

53 different people helped during the 3-day event in June, representing multiple organizations and with various backgrounds and levels of experience. There were 278 turtle capture events

over the course of the session, and 16 new (previously unmarked) NWPT were captured. Multiple gravid turtles (adult females with eggs) and several juvenile turtles were also captured during the effort.

Participants contributed both on land and in the water. Some volunteers placed traps in the ponds and checked them throughout the day. Others carried turtles to the processing area where volunteers helped identify, weigh, and measure each turtle, and recorded the data for the project. Additional tasks included fetching pond water to keep turtles cool, repairing traps when needed, shuttling turtles from other ponds to the main processing area, and returning turtles to the same ponds where they were captured.

The annual monitoring at this key conservation property continues to strengthen conservation efforts for one of Oregon's Species of Greatest Conservation Need. MVHR is a site where ODFW and partners are working to fill data gaps for NWPT. In addition to the annual trapping and marking effort, ODFW works with the Institute for Applied Ecology to learn more about turtle nesting characteristics and Western Oregon University to study NWPT physiology. ODFW is also gearing up for work with partners to implement a bullfrog removal and effectiveness monitoring project



Participants process turtles at the annual trapping and marking effort at Muddy Valley Habitat Reserve.

Siuslaw restoration

For the first time in 130+ years, tidal flow is returning to Siuslaw River wetlands. Led by the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians and the McKenzie River Trust, partners removed a legacy levee, excavated tidal wetland channels, and placed large wood for habitat. The project is allowing former wetlands long cut off from the tides to revert back to important habitat for salmon, steelhead, shorebirds and other fish and wildlife. ODFW supported the project with a grant for a new tidegate and technical assistance.

The 15-year endeavor is complete, restoring a 200+ acre historic wetland. [Watch the water return](#) and [learn more about the project](#) from the McKenzie River Trust.



Excavators break through the levee, restoring a wetland after 130+ years.

A look into ODFW's bat monitoring work

Oregon is home to 15 bat species, with eight found west of the Cascades. Like many places around the world, Oregon's bats are experiencing significant declines driven by habitat loss, climate change, reduced insect availability, White-Nose Syndrome, and other pressures. Bats play a vital role in controlling insect pests, supporting agriculture, and contributing to healthy ecosystems.

Recent detections of rabies in bats in several Oregon counties have resulted in more calls to ODFW from concerned residents. It's important to remember that rabies is extremely rare in bats; fewer than one in a thousand are believed to carry the disease. Infected batstypically aren't aggressive and often die soon after becoming ill. If bats are roosting in an attic or another part of a home, a licensed wildlife control operator can help. ODFW provides information about if a bat ends up inside sa home.

Oregonians can support local bat populations by installing bat houses, reducing pesticide use, keeping cats indoors, and creating wildlife-friendly spaces. Scientific monitoring is essential for understanding how bats are doing on the landscape, the threats they face, and where conservation actions can make the greatest impact. ODFW leads several ongoing bat monitoring and research efforts which fill vital information gaps for these at-risk species.

Each summer, ODFW biologists partner with the North American Bat Monitoring Program (NABat) to conduct acoustic monitoring at sites across Oregon. NABat is a multi-national, multi-agency program which uses large-scale, standardized datasets to track bat population status and trends over time. While the high-pitched vocalizations of bats usually can't be heard by humans, they can be picked up using specialized acoustic recorders that are placed overnight at randomly selected sites from June to September. Because each bat species emits a unique, specific frequency range, it's possible to tell which bat species were recorded by analyzing the data using specialized software. This passive sampling technique is considered a safer and more cost-effective method for detecting species rather than physical captures. In addition to providing information about the distribution and range of bats in Oregon, ODFW's participation in the NABat program feeds into a continental effort which informs bat conservation and management.

Oregon recently received a Competitive State Wildlife Action Grant along with California, Washington, and Idaho to monitor movement and migration patterns of Silver-haired and Hoary bats, two Species of Greatest Conservation Need. These bat species are among the most vulnerable to wind energy development due to their annual migrations and compose up to 50% each of all bat mortalities at wind turbines in the Pacific and Pacific Southwestern regions. Efforts to capture and track bats began in spring of 2026 with almost 30 individuals tagged using transmitters compatible with the Motus Wildlife Tracking System and the cellular infrastructure network. Documenting movement and migration routes for these species will inform energy siting and operation with the goal of reducing negative effects for these and other bat species. This project will continue through the end of 2027.

ODFW conducts long-term monitoring for several bat populations throughout the state, sometimes in conjunction with federal

partners. These monitoring sites represent the diverse habitats bats use for maternity and overwintering roosts, including caves and manmade structures. Some of these sites have been revisited for over 30 years, which helps ODFW biologists gain insight into population metrics such as health (e.g., testing for white-nose syndrome) and serves as an early detection system for declines and emerging threats.

ODFW is working with state, federal, and local partners to better understand how white-nose syndrome (WNS) affects Oregon's bats. Since 2011, ODFW and partners have surveyed for bats affected by this disease focusing on winter sites, maternity colonies, and other roosts. After WNS was confirmed in bats from Columbia County and Benton County in spring of 2026, biologists and the ODFW Wildlife Health and Population Lab expanded monitoring near detection sites and increased statewide surveillance efforts.

ODFW advises the public on bat issues in buildings, supports statewide bat conservation through OSU's Audible Bats Program, provides free bat houses, supports Motus network expansion, and offers educational programs for all Oregonians. The agency also consults with ODOT about bat roosting sites on bridges and provides energy developers with recommendations on survey timing, project design considerations, and construction or activity modifications to reduce impacts on bats.



ODFW staff inspect the wings of a bat for damage during monitoring work in SW Oregon. Photo: Doug Fitzpatrick, ODFW.



Mist nets are strategically set over water bodies to catch bats swooping in for a drink or to grab an insect. Photo: Emily Buck, ODFW.



Wildlife Diversity Program biologist Kaly Adkins processes a bat captured duugursing mist netting in Central Oregon.

Oregon State Police

Captain Doug Shugart, Fish & Wildlife Division

Fish and Wildlife Division Members Catch Same Sturgeon Poacher Two Days In A Row – Charge as Felony

Fish and Wildlife Troopers working the Gilbert River, which is closed to sturgeon angling, observed a subject catch and retain a sturgeon and place it in their pickup. The Troopers contacted the subject and found the 59-inch sturgeon still alive inside the pickup. The subject was cited for Taking/Possession of Oversized White Sturgeon (C-Felony), and Angling in a Closed Area/Stream. All associated fishing gear was seized as evidence and the Troopers released the sturgeon back to the river. The following day Troopers located the same subject, who had retained the oversized sturgeon the previous day,

retain another unlawfully taken sturgeon from the Gilbert River. The subject was taken into custody and lodged in the Columbia County Jail for Unlawful Take/Possession of White Sturgeon. The subject's fishing pole was seized as evidence and the 28-inch sturgeon was released back to the river by Troopers.



Fish and Wildlife Division member releases sturgeon unlawfully taken from Gilbert River.

Fish and Wildlife Division Member Works Clatsop Beach Razor Clammers

A Fish and Wildlife Trooper worked a series of minus tides on Clatsop Beaches checking razor clammers. Citations and warnings included exceeding the daily limit, fail to retain first 15 dug, digging for another, and fail to possess shellfish license. Two subjects, with very large clam bags, appeared to be well over their daily limits. One subject had 31 clams, and the other subject had 40 clams. Both subjects said they could not help themselves due to the great digging conditions. In two days, 50 clams were seized and donated to the local food bank.



Fish and Wildlife Division member seizes razor clams and donates them to local food bank.

Fish and Wildlife Division Member Rescues Injured Bald Eagle

A Fish and Wildlife Sergeant responded with ODOT to a report of a road-struck eagle on Highway 138W near Yellow Creek. The eagle was located alive and unable to fly. The Sergeant was able to capture the eagle and transported it to Umpqua Wildlife Rescue for further evaluation and treatment.



Fish and Wildlife Division member rescues injured bald eagle.

Fish and Wildlife Division Member Attends Wizard Falls Fish Hatchery Youth Angling Event

A Fish and Wildlife Trooper attended the Wizard Falls Fish Hatchery Kids Fishing Event. Over 200 kids fished the pond with great success. The always vigilant Trooper had to remind several parents to assist their kids and not fish for them.

One parent was observed attempting to chum by tossing a hand full of corn into the pond. The subject was given a dissertation on starting kids off in the right direction regarding fish & wildlife laws and was given a warning.



Fish and Wildlife Division member attends Wizard Falls Fish Hatchery Youth Angling Event.

Fish and Wildlife Division Members Work Salmon Anglers on Columbia River

Fish and Wildlife Troopers and a Sergeant worked the Willamette River deadline at the Columbia River. A vessel was observed landing a Chinook salmon in the Columbia River and was contacted. The subject was cited for unlawful take and the fish seized. A second subject on that boat was cited for barbed hooks and more than one rod in the Columbia River. Another vessel was observed operating multiple rods in the Columbia River and was contacted. It was learned the subject had had been retaining salmon in the Willamette River without Oregon licenses or tags. The subject was interviewed and admitted to catching multiple fish in the Willamette River and had validated multiple fish with the lower Willamette River code on his Washington Harvest card. The subject said he asked the licensing agent for a combo license and was told it was good for both Washington and Oregon. The subject was cited for no non-resident angling license and unlawful take of Chinook. Another vessel was observed angling in the Columbia River and was checked. The subjects said they caught a Chinook salmon but claimed it was a jack. Upon inspection, the Chinook was found to be an adult, well over the jack size limit. The subject was cited for unlawful take Chinook and the fish was seized.



Fish and Wildlife Division members seize unlawfully taken Chinook salmon.

Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program

Tucker Jones, Ocean Salmon and Columbia River Program Manager

White sturgeon spawning monitoring below Bonneville Dam.

The population of white sturgeon in the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam has declined over the past decade. The 2025 population estimate was the third lowest since monitoring began in 2010. One of the main reasons for this decline is a reduction in young-of-year sturgeon recruiting to the population. These 8–12-inch fish are less than 6 months old and indicate spawning success the preceding spring. Currently, most of the lower Columbia River white sturgeon population is made up of older, larger fish with fewer juveniles. The number of young-of-year sturgeon seen in annual surveys has also declined. In 2025, for the first time in 21-years of sampling, no young-of-year sturgeon were captured. However, ODFW biologists are confident that, based on the number of adult sturgeon in the population, spawning and reproduction is possible. There must be something limiting the number of sturgeon that survive to the end of their first year of life.

To better understand the factors influencing spawning success of white sturgeon, ODFW biologists, in coordination with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, began investigating limiting factors in the spawning area below Bonneville Dam. This multi-year study aims to examine several aspects related to spawning such as movement, diet analysis, and spawning events. White sturgeon spawn directly in the water column (as opposed to building a redd like salmon) and rely on heavy and turbulent spring flows for fertilization after which the eggs are carried downstream to settle out on a rocky river bottom. Female white sturgeon can release hundreds of thousands of eggs in a single spawning year, though they only spawn every 3-5 years. Sturgeon eggs are small (approximately 3 mm or an eighth of an inch; Figure 1). In addition, these eggs are sensitive, needing specific substrate to land on and good water quality for the eggs to hatch.



Figure 1. White sturgeon egg captured below Bonneville Dam on filter material of egg mat, with finger for scale.

As part of this research, ODFW used specialized metal-framed mats or “egg mats” to capture eggs as they settle out from the flowing water during the spawning season. These mats consist of a single piece of nylon filter material sandwiched between a 30” x 36” metal frame (Figure 2). Data collected from this study will also allow researchers to estimate when spawning occurred the timing of the spawning events and determine how many spawning events took place.

Egg mats were deployed throughout a nine-mile stretch of river downstream of Bonneville Dam. Egg mats with sturgeon eggs were mainly found in eddies along the Oregon shoreline near Beacon Rock. In 2026, a total of 274 egg mat sets were deployed between April 27 and July 10 during which time a total of 158 eggs were collected.

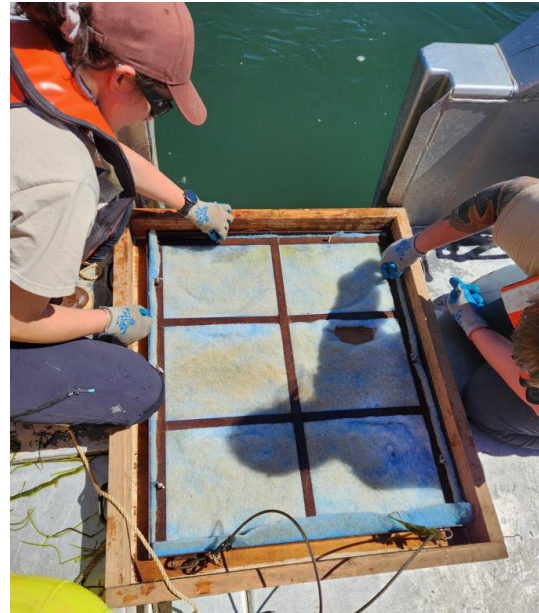


Figure 2. ODFW staff examine egg mat for white sturgeon eggs.

Water velocity and temperature both play a significant role in spawning timing. High flows and water temperatures ranging from 50-64° F are considered viable spawning conditions, with peak spawning usually occurring at 54-61° F. Peak egg collection in 2026 occurred with water temperatures ranging from 55-61° F and no eggs were collected after water temperature reached 64° F.

Laboratory analysis will be conducted this summer and fall to determine how long after fertilization the eggs were collected. This will be used to determine how many individual spawning events were captured during this sampling period.

**End of field reports for
August 14, 2026**