SPORTS



Don Anderson/Daily Astorian File Photo

Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area Manager Bryan Swearingen talks about elk and other wildlife on a frigid December morning. Guests can sign up to feed the elk while getting a good education during the hourlong wagon ride.

Elk: 'The elk have their pros and cons out here, for sure'

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Because of strong contrasting opinions, the department tends "to deal with elk issues on an individual, case-by-case basis," Biederbeck said. "The elk have their pros and cons out here, for sure."

Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area

Inland, at the Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area in the Oregon Coast Range mountains, the department manages a different elk population.

The 1,114-acre area serves to protect and enhance wildlife habitat, reduce wildlife damage to surrounding properties and provide the public with an opportunity to observe wildlife in a natural setting. Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area Manager Bryan Swearingen helps the department manage the herd's winter habitat and provide supplemental feeding for Roosevelt elk and black-tailed deer,

The department's management plan at the wildlife area is designed to keep the elk population artificially low, about 225 out of a land capacity of about 400, Swearingen said

A portion of the wildlife area, near Fishhawk Creek, is designated for elk refuge, although some tracts are open to the public for hunting.

The department provides supplemental feed in winter to mitigate the animals' negative impact on the land uses of adjacent properties, owned by Weyerhaeuser Co.,

Stimson Lumber Co. and the Oregon Department of Forestry.

To determine population models, the department currently uses helicopters, a costly and potentially risky method. The state plans to partner with Oregon State University to conduct an elk census using unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, which could register data in the sky over the Youngs River basin, Biederbeck said.

The wildlife area will provide an outdoor laboratory to calibrate and test aerial equipment before expanding the program to nearby control sites, he added. Success depends on capturing imagery with a resolution high enough to detect and classify the individual elk.

Western snowy plover

The western snowy plovers, a federally recognized "threatened" species, were also of interest to commissioners. The small bird can be found predominantly in California, Washington and Oregon, and is making a comeback on Oregon's south coast.

Protecting habitats, mitigating human issues and taking out ground predators such as coyotes, raccoons and skunks have played roles in helping the species reemerge. For instance, Oregon State Parks will close beaches or cage nesting areas for protection.

"The success of the snowy plover program, especially on the south coast, is starting to be recognized," Biederbeck said.

New rules to fish by

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission considered the 2016 sportfishing regulations and revisions to the Oregon Conservation and Nearshore strategies during its meeting Sept. 4 at the Best Western Ocean View Resort in Seaside. The commission usually meets monthly and rotates among its Salem headquarters and the congressional districts. Seaside is part of Congressional District 1.

Many of the sportfishing regulation changes are being considered as the result of the department staff's eight-month effort to streamline and simplify rules for trout and warm-water fishing.

Some proposed changes include

• Streamlining the number of different seasons, gear restrictions and bag limits in order to have more consistent rules for similar water bodies across the state.

Removing the April trout opener and opening these water bodies to year-round fishing.

• Setting the May trout opener at May 22 each year, ensuring that trout fishing statewide would always be open Memorial Day weekend.

· Removing bag limits for warm-water fish in the Columbia, John Day and Umpqua rivers.

Additionally, the commission approved a 10-year update of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, including the Oregon Nearshore Strategy component. The documents, which are broad strategies to conserve the state's native fish, wildlife and marine resources, are to be submitted as required to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by Oct. 1.

The commission also updated the rules for commercial bay clam harvest. Based on recent landing and stock assessment data, department staff proposed adjustments to commercial landing quotas, minimum sizes, species taken and allowable harvest areas as an integrated package of shellfish management actions.

A complete list of the proposed changes for 2016 is on the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife website at http://bit.ly/1MmL0Xi.

Race: 'It's such an easy and fun way to be ready'

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evacuation route, they were treated to an Emergency Preparedness Fair, with information and maps supplied by experts.

Noelle Pollack and Olivia Berry with the Federal Emergency Management Agency stressed the need for developing a family communication plan.

Cannon Beach residents Julie Sackett and Marlene Reynolds were especially interested in preparing their pets for an emergency. Reynolds said the information they received made the possibility of a large quake and tsunami "less overwhelming."

The women took a close look at that evacuation map, also available at OregonTsunami.org, as an iPhone app, at local fire stations and on Cannon Beach's city website. "We just figured this was an opportunity to get our act together," Reynolds said.

Race the Wave was a

joint effort between Cannon Beach, Clatsop County Office of Emergency Management, Oregon Office of Emergency Management, FEMA, and others. U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici and state Rep. Deborah Boone were in attendance, along with local leaders such as Cannon Beach Mayor Sam Steidel and City Manager Brant Kucera.

The Cannon Beach Children's Center participated and will receive entry fee proceeds.

"It's really a great thing to get all these different agencies — federal, state and city — involved in running a race and educating people about emergency preparedness," Cannon Beach Children's Center's Board of Directors President Barb Knop said.

That collaborative effort will be needed when a real disaster hits, officials noted.

"It's such an easy and fun way to be ready," Ryan Hansen said.



Dani Palmer/EO Media Group

Race the Wave participants began at NeCus' Park and ended at the Elk Creek Road emergency cache site in Cannon Beach on Sunday. Wearing their city of Cannon Beach shirts, Daniel Willyard, with the Water Department, left, and City Manager Brant Kucera run along the beach, other runners not far behind them.

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Complaint form link: http://www.doj.state.or.us/ finfraud/

46 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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