

# Hunting and fishing license sales surge during pandemic

By TOM BANSE

Northwest News Network



Bureau of Land Management

**Fishing and hunting license sales jumped in 2020 as people took to the woods and water due to the coronavirus pandemic.**

into agency budget stability and draws in federal matching dollars.

“There’s a two pronged advantage,” Vernie said. “Number one, we’re getting revenue to support the agency and the activities we do to manage and conserve wildlife and fish. And then we also get federal dollars that come to us.”

The surge in fishing and hunting during the pandemic tracks with other observations about the lure of the great outdoors during this pandemic. Hikers and park rangers have reported packed parking lots at trailheads ever since lockdowns eased last spring. The enthusiasm for socially-distanced outdoor activities extended into the cold season this winter with crowds filling Sno-

Parks on weekends and ski and snowshoe rental shops reporting brisk business.

The jump in annual license sales is all the more remarkable considering that the 2020 sales year began with pandemic headwinds. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee’s initial coronavirus containment strategy included restrictions on recreational fishing, hunting, hiking and golfing. Those restrictions generated considerable static and were lifted in the first week of May.

Oregon and Idaho did not shut down fishing to slow the spread of the coronavirus. But those states did suspend non-resident hunting and fishing licenses for part of the spring to prevent out-of-state outdoors enthusiasts from crossing state lines.

“People were looking for something they could do socially distanced and outdoors,” said Peter Vernie, a licensing division manager for the Department of Fish and Wildlife in Washington. “We saw a very big influx in new customers coming to us and old customers wanting to get back outside.”

Idaho’s Department of Fish & Game saw an 11% increase in annual fishing and hunting license purchases in 2020 compared to the year before. The increase was most pronounced in fishing license sales, which surged 65% during the first six months of the pandemic versus the same period in 2019, according to Paul Kline, deputy director for policy and programs at Idaho Fish & Game.

“Cases of coronavirus pale in comparison to cases of cabin fever,” Kline told a legislative budget committee last week. “Idahoans have found much needed respite in Idaho’s outdoors, including hunting and fishing. Idaho’s great outdoors provided safe opportunities for individuals and families — social distancing, Idaho style.”

Kline said Idaho reduced non-resident tag availability for deer and elk hunters to reduce crowding during that hunting season.

California and Washington state provided figures for the number of first-time license holders. Both states recorded tens of thousands of newcomers and “reactivated” enthusiasts in 2020. Vernie said it was nice to see a reversal in the long-term decline in participation, especially in hunting, which translates directly

# Salmonella outbreak spreads among birds

By BRADLEY W. PARKS

Oregon Public Broadcasting

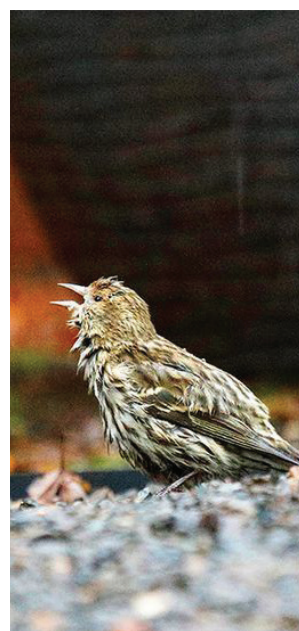
A salmonella outbreak is sickening and killing birds in Oregon and elsewhere along the West Coast.

Cases of salmonella among pine siskins and other birds in Oregon have trended upwards in recent months, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and wildlife rehabilitators. The Department of Fish and Wildlife urges Oregonians who encounter sick or dead birds to take down bird feeders at least for the next month or two to slow the spread of the disease.

California’s state wildlife agency recently recommended residents temporarily remove bird feeders and baths for the time being. Washington state suggested the same in January for people who cannot rigorously clean bird feeders daily.

Salmonella can grow in seed feeders when they get wet, and seed-eating birds like pine siskins then spread it through their poop.

When food resources dwindle in winter, birds often congregate at feeders. These large gatherings can quickly become salmo-



Tim Akimoff/Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

**A sick pine siskin bird. A salmonella outbreak has sickened and killed birds across the West Coast.**

nella superspreader events, which is why wildlife experts are urging backyard bird watchers to take down feeders for now.

“Once there’s an outbreak, it starts spreading pretty rapidly,” said Sally Compton, executive director of the ThinkWild wildlife hospital in Bend.

Cases have been reported as far south as San Francisco and as far

north as British Columbia, Canada.

Salmonella can spread to humans and pets. Compton said you should wear gloves and remove dead birds if you come across them to avoid contact with other birds or household pets. Immediately wash your hands after.

State and federal wildlife agencies also recommend regularly cleaning and moving bird feeders to prevent outbreaks. They also encourage using feeders from non-porous materials like ceramic, metal and plastic rather than wood, which can harbor bacteria and other diseases.

Bird watchers can keep nectar feeders for hummingbirds out, Compton said, but they also require regular cleaning.

If you encounter a sick bird, report it to the Department of Fish and Wildlife at 866-968-2600 or wildlife.health@state.or.us.

You can also contact your local wildlife hospital or rehab center.



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Thank you Lisa and my gratitude to The Astorian for having you on my extended team.

Personally, Renae Nelson, owner

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