

Arizona Game and Fish Department 2015-2016 Annual Report





Larry D. Voyles

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Note: This Annual Report includes information on AZGFD activities and achievements in calendar year 2016 and financial information from FY2015-16. We've repeated this Director's Message from Director Larry Voyles, which originally appeared in the July-August 2017 edition of *Arizona Wildlife Views* magazine, in honor of his 43-year career with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Director Voyles is retiring at the end of June 2017. Deputy Director Ty Gray has been appointed by the Game and Fish Commission as new Director, effective July 1, 2017.

To our constituents and wildlife/outdoors enthusiasts everywhere:

Forty-three years ago, my wife Donna and I spent our wedding night at Kohl's Ranch. We cut our honeymoon short because the following day, I started a field assignment as a Wildlife Manager Trainee with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. I didn't know then that my love of wildlife and wild places would eventually lead to nine years in the Director's Office.

We're all blessed with Arizona's magnificent and abundant natural resources. We share a love for her natural wonders and diversity of wildlife. I've been blessed to work in your trust to help you conserve your wildlife.

As my 43-year career with the Department draws to a close, I reflect on the foundations I shared with the Commission when I applied for the Director's job. The effectiveness and credibility of your Arizona Game and Fish Department grows out of the quality and integrity of our science, the intellectual capacity and passion of our workforce, the autonomy of our Commission, and Arizona's passion for wildlife.

The men and women of Arizona Game and Fish and I are blessed to serve a public whose passion for our wildlife future is boundless. You are blessed to have a wildlife agency with state-of-the-art wildlife science, data and information, and whose workforce has intellectual capacity, energy and a passion for wildlife just like you. We're all blessed to have a system of citizen governance in the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, unwavering in its mandate to conserve Arizona's wildlife, free from the swings of partisan politics or the emotions of the moment.

Lastly, I'm blessed with the comfort of handing our new Director Ty Gray the reins of arguably the finest conservation agency in America. Ty is an amazing leader, and he'll guide our state and the Arizona Game and Fish Department toward our shared wildlife future. He deserves and will need your support.

Thank you for the support you have given me and God bless.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry D. Voyles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Outdoor Expo draws record weekend crowd

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's 2016 Outdoor Expo, presented by Shikar-Safari Club International, drew a record crowd of 41,100 people during the April 2-3 weekend at the Ben Avery Shooting Facility in Phoenix. Combined with 4,500 students, teachers and chaperones who turned out for the Friday, April 1, Youth Day, the 45,600 total was the second-highest three-day turnout in Expo history. The Expo showcases activities such as fishing, hunting, shooting sports, archery, camping, off-highway vehicle recreation, boating recreation, and wildlife viewing. In addition to the hands-on activities, more than 150 exhibitors were on site, including sportsmen's and conservation organizations, government agencies, and commercial vendors of outdoor products and services.

AZGFD introduces new PointGuard option to protect hunters' bonus points

The Arizona Game and Fish Department introduced an innovative new program called PointGuard for the 2016 fall draw. PointGuard ensures that if a successful hunt draw applicant is unable to participate in a hunt for any reason, the accumulated bonus

points that were expended to draw that hunt permit-tag will be reinstated. A bonus point is an accumulated credit that authorizes the department to issue an applicant additional computer-generated random numbers during a draw. An applicant accumulates a bonus point each year in which he or she submits a valid application and does not draw a hunt permit-tag. PointGuard is available to applicants who apply online for a draw tag. The cost is \$5 per species, per applicant, purchased at the time of completing the online application, or prior to the application period deadline.

Governor signs HB 2324 as a boost to Arizona military families

A bill to allow spouses of active duty military personnel stationed in Arizona to qualify for Arizona resident hunting and fishing licenses was signed into law by Governor Doug Ducey. The Arizona Game and Fish Commission earlier in the year voted unanimously to support this expression of gratitude for the families whose service and sacrifice protect our liberties. Under current law, an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States stationed in Arizona either permanently or temporarily may

The 2016 Outdoor Expo drew a record weekend crowd, with more than 41,000 people attending to learn about Arizona's plethora of outdoor activities.



purchase a resident license permitting the taking of wildlife. HB2324, which was sponsored by Rep. Frank Pratt, now extends that privilege to their spouses as well. Through the years, the department has consistently implemented programs that provide hunting tags and opportunities for veterans, wounded warriors, and military personnel to hunt on military installations throughout AZ. The department also has partnered with non-profit organizations serving veterans so that unused hunting permits or tags may be donated to veterans with service-connected disabilities.

License discount campaigns show success

The Arizona Game and Fish Department this year conducted several promotional campaigns that offered discounts on fishing licenses. Legislation passed in 2013 gave the Department the ability to offer license discounts. As an agency that receives no Arizona general fund tax dollars, AZGFD has to be more entrepreneurial than most government agencies and find ways to generate more revenue. All of these digital marketing campaigns provided lifts in license sales and revenue. Two half-price short-term license campaigns for the Memorial Day and 4th of July holidays led to license sales increase of 370% and 267%, respectively compared to the comparable periods last year. A Father's Day campaign that offered \$5 off a general fishing license resulted in a 67% increase. Another promotional campaign promoting the fishing experience (but not a license discount) led to a 21% increase in fishing license sales over the same period last year.

Mexican Wolf Recovery Program finds cross-fostering success

In a critical breakthrough in Mexican wolf management, biologists with the Mexican Wolf Interagency Field Team (IFT) learned that a cross-fostered wolf pup introduced to a pack in 2014 has produced a wild offspring of her own. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reported that a genetic test of male wolf 1561 revealed that it is the offspring of male 1293 and female 1346.

Female 1346 was one of two pups successfully cross-fostered into the den of the Dark Canyon Pack in New Mexico in 2014. The Arizona Game and Fish Commission and Department support this cross-fostering technique that introduces very young pups from captivity and places them into a wild-born litter of the same age. The pups are then raised in the wild rather than captivity, which may make them less likely to get into human-wolf conflicts. Cross-fostering has been used in genetic management of other species but until recently was unproven for Mexican wolves. Organizations involved in fostering efforts include AZGFD, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Chicago Zoological Society and the Endangered Wolf Center. The Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project is a collaborative effort of USFWS, AZGFD, White Mountain Apache Tribe, USDA Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services, and several participating counties in Arizona.



Catchable-size tiger trout were stocked in four lakes, adding diversity to anglers' opportunities.

Tiger trout stocked for first time in selected Arizona lakes

AZGFD personnel stocked hybrid trout new to the state in four Rim Country and White Mountains lakes this year. Willow Springs Lake and Woods Canyon Lake were stocked



with catchable size (8-10 inch) tiger trout, a brown-brook trout hybrid. As a result of this hybridization, the tiger trout is sterile and unable to reproduce. As tiger trout grow, their worm-like pattern becomes more distinct. The department received about 18,000 tiger trout fingerlings (3-6 inches) from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources in 2015. The trout were raised at the Tonto Creek Hatchery near Payson until they grew to a catchable (at least 8 inch) size. These four lakes were chosen because they are currently managed for rainbow trout sport fishing. Adding tiger trout to the lakes will add diversity and expanded opportunities to the Arizona fishing experience.



AZGFD offers first-ever wildlife and outdoor recreation summer camp

Parents of children 8-14 years of age had a new option this summer thanks to the Arizona Game and Fish Department's first-ever wildlife and outdoor recreation summer camp. Camps were held for two consecutive weeks in June at the department's Hirsch Conservation Area

located on the Ben Avery Shooting Facility in north Phoenix. They included hands-on science experiments, fishing, kayaking, archery, air rifles, wildlife encounters and more. Both camp sessions filled their 100-person capacity well ahead of the registration deadline. The camp is sponsored by the department and the non-profit Wildlife for Tomorrow.

Ribbon-cutting at Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery celebrates successful partnership

A ribbon-cutting event at the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery celebrated the renewed collaborative efforts by the Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Mohave County that will boost economic activity and preserve trout fishing on the lower Colorado River in Mohave County for future generations. Trout stockings at the hatchery, which had ceased in 2013 due in part to a water intake system failure, support approximately 1,700 jobs and generate \$75 million in economic activity along this stretch of the river. With continuous support from Sen. John McCain, stockings from the Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery were anticipated in early 2017. AZGFD's commitment to anglers for great trout fishing opportunities on this area of the Colorado River is evidenced by great relations with local businesses and organizations. Ongoing stockings have been made possible by donations from local pest abatement districts.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's first-ever wildlife and outdoor recreation summer camp provided hands-on learning experiences for 200 children.

An annual \$25 "I Support Wildlife" membership includes the premium version of the Recreational Access Arizona online mapping feature.

"I Support Wildlife" membership program upgraded with improved online mapping feature



The Arizona Game and Fish Department enhanced its "I Support Wildlife" membership program with an upgraded "premium" online mapping feature that allows people to mark their own waypoint locations and automatically save and sync that data to all of the individual's devices (including mobile devices having cell service). The mapping feature includes various data layers, including a detailed USGS topographic base map, game management units, land ownership, wildlife waters, and more. A promotional sale from Sept. 16 to Oct. 16 offered a \$5 discount off the regular \$25 price. The promotion resulted in the sale of more than 1,000 "I Support Wildlife" memberships, more than had been cumulatively sold over the previous year. Other features of the "I Support Wildlife" membership program include a one-year subscription to the bimonthly "Arizona Wildlife Views" magazine, up-to-date fish stocking reports, and a window decal showing the member is a wildlife supporter.

Arizona Big Game Super Raffle nets record \$633,750 for wildlife

The 11th annual "Arizona Big Game Super Raffle" raised a record \$633,750, topping \$598,400 in 2015. Each year, one special big game tag for each of Arizona's 10 big game species is raffled off. This year's prizes also included a New Mexico elk hunt and a Swarovski optics package. Raffle winners were announced on July 21 at the Arizona Game and

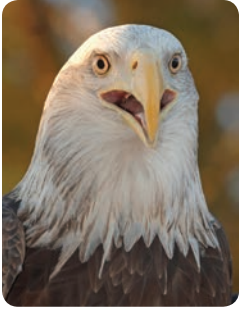
Fish Department headquarters in Phoenix. The money raised for each species through the raffle is returned to the Department and managed by the Arizona Habitat Partnership Committee for that species. The raffle is conducted by a non-profit entity and overseen by a volunteer board of directors from sponsoring organizations.

Exciting new shooting program offered monthly at Ben Avery Shooting Facility



Arizona Game and Fish introduced the new "Saturday Steel" target-shooting program in May. Held the third Saturday of each month on the Ben Avery small bore range, the program offers recreational shooters of all ages and skill levels the opportunity to shoot at steel targets in a non-competitive, no-pressure environment. For a flat fee of \$20 for adults, \$13 for youths (price includes the \$7 facility daily range pass), customers have the option to shoot from several stations, with distances varying from 15 to 85 yards. Time is allotted for each customer to shoot one full magazine and reload up to two times, if they have extra magazines loaded and ready. Those customers who are shooting revolvers are able to reload using speed loaders. Only rifles and carbines chambered in .22 Short, Long and Long Rifle or pistol caliber ammunition are allowed. A range safety officer or mentor is available to assist customers at each station.

CONSERVATION



Arizona's bald eagles break breeding-season records yet again in 2016

Arizona's bald eagles continue to impress biologists with their upward growth trends and year-after-year breeding records. Key productivity records that were broken in 2016 include number of: breeding areas, occupied breeding areas, eggs laid, active breeding areas, successful breeding attempts and young hatched. All of these measures are important indicators of the species' health. Annual productivity records indicate that bald eagles continue to flourish in the state. Bald eagles were removed from the federal Endangered Species Act in 2007. The Department's conservation efforts contributed to the species recovery. Nationally, the birds remain protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Continued support from the committee, State Wildlife Grants and the Heritage Fund (Arizona Lottery ticket sales), will help ensure that Arizona's bald eagles continue to thrive.



Happy 20th anniversary to Arizona's endangered black-footed ferrets

Arizona's endangered black-footed ferret population celebrated the 20th anniversary of its reintroduction to Arizona with the

release of more animals into a new privately-owned reintroduction area. Through a new Safe Harbor Agreement, the Double O Ranch outside of Seligman on Oct. 4 became the third reintroduction site in Arizona. The species was thought to be extinct until a small colony of ferrets was discovered in Wyoming in 1981. Disease outbreaks reduced this population to about 18 individuals, which were captured to begin a captive breeding program to save the species. The descendants of the original 18 ferrets have now been introduced into reintroduction sites across the west, including the Aubrey Valley outside of Seligman, Ariz. Today, biologists estimate there are a minimum of 800 to 1,000 individual ferrets living in the wild.



AZGFD helps pronghorn cross barriers

In between winter storms that hit north of Flagstaff near Wupatki National Monument, the Arizona Game and Fish Department and a group of volunteers captured and collared 23 pronghorn in an ongoing effort to track their movements and improve connectivity between herds. One of the biggest challenges in managing pronghorn is finding ways to minimize the impact of roads, highways and fences that act as barriers and lead to fragmentation of habitat. Wildlife biologists in that area have found genetic differences in populations of pronghorn on either side of the main highway that left to continue may adversely affect the populations. Fences, in particular, are problematic for pronghorn. While pronghorn have the ability to jump over a fence, they almost always prefer to crawl under. For the past several years, the department has worked

Arizona's bald eagle population continues to increase, as new productivity records were set in 2016.

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the reintroduction of endangered black-footed ferrets into Arizona.

with the USDA Forest Service, the Arizona Department of Transportation, the National Park Service, local ranchers, and organizations like the Arizona Antelope Foundation to modify miles of fencing, including cutting the bottom strand of barbed wire and replacing it with a smooth wire 18 inches above the ground. The idea is to let the pronghorn out without getting tangled, while keeping livestock in. The capture effort north of Flagstaff was particularly successful with the help of the Esri-produced Collector for ArcGIS, which allows biologists and volunteers to better track observation data. With the app installed on their tablets or smartphones, crew members were able to collect, update and share pronghorn sightings while in the field.

Record \$2.4 million raised for Habitat Partnership Committee to help wildlife

Once again, hunters came through to support Arizona's wildlife when a record \$2.4 million were raised during the 2015-16 funding cycle for the Habitat Partnership Committee (HPC). Most of the money was raised through the auctioning or raffling of special big game permit-tags, although the committee strives to incorporate multiple funding sources to bring the maximum benefit to wildlife. Proceeds are anticipated to fund more than 70 projects to improve habitat or management for big game species. Those same projects mutually benefit other wildlife as well. The Arizona Game and Fish Commission annually approves three special big game permit-tags, per species, that are awarded to non-profit wildlife conservation organizations to auction or raffle. Every dollar generated from these auctions and raffles comes back to the department and is used to benefit the species for which the special big game permit-tag is issued. Funds are allocated through the HPC program by collaboration between the department and the organizations.

Three narrow-headed gartersnakes, a threatened species, were released into a new wetland near the Pinetop regional office.

Joint project identifies valued hunting, angling destinations

When it comes to telling others about their "secret" spots, hunters and anglers are famous for holding their cards close to their game or fishing vests. Yet, more than 1,200 Arizona sportsmen have willingly tipped their hands, circling their favorite destinations on a map, as part of a national initiative to conserve fish and wildlife habitat while protecting and improving public access for hunting and angling. While the maps will be useful to sportsmen, they largely were developed to guide conservation efforts. The maps have been assembled in a geographic information system (GIS), where they can be overlaid with maps of critical habitat, land ownership and other data. The resulting maps will provide important and previously unavailable data to state and federal agencies for utilization and aid in important matters.

Threatened narrow-headed gartersnakes introduced into Pinetop wetland

The Arizona Game and Fish Department partnered with Northern Arizona University (NAU) to release two male and one female narrow-headed gartersnakes into a newly created wetland adjacent to the AZGFD Pinetop regional office. Narrow-headed gartersnakes are listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Before the narrow-headed gartersnakes were introduced, the wetland was stocked with speckled dace and blueheaded suckers, to provide a food source for the snakes, and northern leopard frog tadpoles. NAU provided the snakes that were raised in captivity, and provided valuable input on the wetland's role in maximizing gartersnake persistence, as well as post-release snake monitoring.





A new overpass and underpass on SR77 in Pima County showed quick success, with numerous animals using the structures to safely cross the highway.

New video shows deer and other animals using Oracle Road wildlife bridge

Just weeks after construction was finished, new camera footage documented a variety of animals using the new wildlife crossings on north Oracle Road in Pima County. The Arizona Game and Fish Department installed video and still cameras on the crossings in early April, and, within days, mule deer, coyote, and javelina were filmed using the wildlife bridge and underpass to cross Oracle Road, an oftentimes deadly 6-lane divided highway. Now that these crossings are “open for business,” this stretch of highway is not only safer for both motorists and wildlife, but also provides habitat connectivity essential for wildlife survival. This unique project is a result of many years of community collaboration among local and state jurisdictions, elected officials, conservation groups, and neighbors. The wildlife crossings were funded by a countywide excise tax of the Regional Transportation Authority, built by Arizona Department of Transportation, and connected lands managed by the Arizona State Land Department, U.S. Forest Service, and Rancho Vistoso Homeowners Association. Pima County funded additional land acquisitions adjacent to the wildlife bridge, and Arizona Game and Fish Department wildlife experts helped develop the project through all phases.

Relict leopard frogs not in need of federal protection

A frog species in Arizona and southern Nevada does not need federal protection under the Endangered Species Act, thanks to the multi-partner conservation efforts of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other federal and state agencies that make up the Relict Leopard Frog Conservation Team. The Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that relict leopard frog populations are stable or increasing. Collaborative efforts to save the species included ongoing habitat management, establishment of new sites, and restoration activities. These resulted in an overall reduction of most threats and an improvement in the species’ status. Members of the Relict Leopard Frog Conservation Team have included the Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Bureau of Reclamation, Environmental Protection Agency, Clark County (Nevada), the Southern Nevada Water Authority (including the Las Vegas Springs Preserve), the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the University of Nevada, Reno.

Under the terms of a settlement agreement in a lawsuit filed by AZGFD and the Arizona Attorney General's Office, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must update a decades-old recovery plan for the Mexican wolf by Nov. 30, 2017.

ISSUES



Court mandates new recovery plan for endangered Mexican wolf

An Arizona judge approved a settlement agreement in a lawsuit filed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Arizona Attorney General's Office against the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for failing to develop a new recovery plan for the endangered Mexican wolf. Under the terms of the settlement, approved Oct. 18, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is mandated to update a decades-old recovery plan by Nov. 30, 2017. The current recovery plan, developed in 1982, fails to provide for several key legal requirements, such as identifying criteria that are required to downlist and delist this subspecies of wolves from the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Without these criteria, it would be impossible to remove Mexican wolves from endangered status. Additionally under the terms of the settlement, the federal agency also must provide regular status updates on the planning process, and must complete an independent peer review of the draft plan, through which it will solicit and consider all available scientific information from appropriate state agencies and other entities. Arizona Game and Fish maintains that to measure success of the recovery program, an updated recovery plan must include an integrated, bi-national approach that incorporates the recovery work already being done in Mexico, where more than 90 percent of the Mexican wolf's historic range is.

Game and Fish Commission and Senators McCain and Flake say Grand Canyon bison management plan should include state's hunters

The National Park Service released a plan that calls for managing overpopulated bison herds within the Grand Canyon National Park through capture/removal, the use of sharpshooters and localized fencing around sensitive park resources. Noticeably absent from the Park Service plan was a cost-effective solution that would utilize the state's sportsmen and sportswomen as a bison management option, which is supported by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake, and U.S. Rep. Paul Gosar. The proposal comes as Congressional



It's estimated that more than 600 bison live in and near Grand Canyon National Park, but many experts say the appropriate number should be around 250.

lawmakers were considering a pair of bipartisan bills aimed at protecting the Grand Canyon's North Rim habitat, cultural and archaeological sites from further bison damage by requiring the U.S. Department of Interior and the Arizona Game and Fish Commission to coordinate on a plan that allows sportsmen with valid state-issued hunting licenses to assist in managing the bison population. Because hunting is not allowed within park boundaries, it has become a safe haven for the exploding bison population, which has led to overgrazing and damage to the Grand Canyon's natural resources.



Discovery of adult quagga mussel at Canyon Lake could impact recreational and municipal water users

In late 2015, the Arizona Game and Fish Department positively identified an adult quagga mussel attached to the hull of a boat removed from Canyon Lake, a major recreational lake on the Tonto National Forest. Due to these discoveries, the department ramped up its monitoring efforts at Canyon and Saguaro lakes. In addition, the department expedited plans to use 2016 federal AIS grant money to add personnel dedicated to the issue and to purchase several mobile watercraft decontamination units. This will aid in assisting the public to “clean, drain and dry” – and especially decontaminate – their watercraft and equipment prior to exiting this area of the Salt River chain of lakes. These increased efforts are necessary to curtail the advancement of this highly invasive species to other waters in central Arizona and the rest of the state.

Game and Fish Commission passes resolutions on burro management, land use

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission approved two resolutions in January, including one to address an “extreme overpopulation of burros” impacting the state’s wildlife, and another that bolsters the department’s efforts to ensure public access to public lands. The resolution on burro management states that “the Arizona Game and Fish Commission recognizes there is an extreme overpopulation of burros in Arizona that negatively impacts wildlife, wildlife habitat and public safety.” Under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act of 1971, there should be no more than 1,676 burros within the state. The current population is estimated at 4,860, according to the Bureau of Land Management, the federal agency legally required to maintain burros at established “appropriate management levels.” The overpopulation of burros negatively affects habitat relied upon by bighorn sheep, mule deer, Gambel’s quail, sensitive migratory songbirds and other wildlife species that have evolved to live in the desert. Burros consume native plants and grasses down to the roots, preventing them from growing back. They also muddy waterholes used by other wildlife and disturb sensitive nesting grounds.



Land management officials are grappling with how to manage the overpopulation of burros, which negatively impact the habitats that native species rely on.

Public engagement helps spur withdrawal of proposed USFWS boating restrictions at Havasu Wildlife Refuge

Thanks to engagement by the local community, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, and elected officials (including Sen. John McCain and Rep. Paul Gosar), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in June withdrew its draft Recreational Boating Compatibility Determination (CD) for the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge, citing the need for further deliberation. The Service in April had announced the draft CD, which proposed additional boating restrictions for parts of the refuge. The proposed restrictions sparked a strong reaction from the local community during the formal comment period, with numerous comments expressing concern over the restrictions, the rationale behind them, and the impact they might have on the local economy. The Service subsequently withdrew the draft CD as currently written, committing to further discussions with the community and other stakeholders before taking any further action.



MISCELLANEOUS



AZGFD's video producers took home seven regional Emmy awards in four different categories from the Rocky Mountain Southwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

“Arizona Wildlife Views” honored with 7 regional Emmy Awards

The producers of “Arizona Wildlife Views,” the Arizona Game and Fish Department’s television show, took home seven regional Emmy Awards in four different categories from the Rocky Mountain Southwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (NATAS) on Oct. 8. Award categories included Program Feature / Segment / Special, Environment – Program Special, Director (non-live), and Video Journalist. Award recipients included two Arizona Wildlife Views shows and the films “A Triumph for Pronghorn Antelope,” and “Bats and Burned Forests.” “Arizona Wildlife Views” is a half-hour original series produced by the Information Branch of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The show airs on local PBS stations, city cable channels across the state and YouTube.

New wildlife cameras give people a glimpse into nature

AZGFD made it easier for worldwide audiences to enjoy a wildlife experience with the launch of two live-stream cameras. One camera provided a view of sandhill cranes from October through April at their wintering grounds at Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area in southern Arizona. The second camera, which ran during the spring, provided a peek into the lives of a breeding pair of peregrine falcons living atop the Maricopa County Administration building in downtown Phoenix. The crane live stream was only the second one in the nation focused on the big, impressive sandhill crane, and the only one that gives viewers a glimpse into their wintering habits. The peregrine camera showcased the laying, incubation and hatching of one nestling. Unfortunately, the nestling died after falling from the nest area just before fledging, but thousands of viewers (many of whom had never previously interacted with the department) had an opportunity to see the challenges faced by wildlife in rearing young.

Public swaps 300 old life jackets for new in 2016 under

AZGFD's Life Jacket Exchange Program

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) swapped more than 300 old and tattered life jackets with new ones during life jacket exchange events at area lakes this summer. The AZGFD Boating Safety Education program helped to ensure 304 people were safer on the water by swapping old, less-effective life jackets for new ones during visits to Lake Havasu, Saguaro Lake, Lake Pleasant, Lake Powell and Canyon Lake. All boats in Arizona must have a life jacket aboard for every passenger and those 12 years old and younger must wear a life jacket at all times, under state law. The Department began the life jacket exchange program in 2008 to help save lives and to encourage watercraft users to remain safe on the water. The program is funded through U.S. Coast Guard funding to purchase new jackets in a variety of sizes.

A live-stream video feed lets the public view sandhill cranes at their wintering grounds October through March.





After receiving its first stocking of rainbow trout in March, Patterson Ponds became AZGFD's latest addition to the Community Fishing Program.

New Community Fishing Program water added in St. John's

Patterson Ponds, located in the rural community of St. Johns in the White Mountains of northeast Arizona, has become the Arizona Game and Fish Department's newest Community Fishing Program (CFP) water. The ponds received their first stocking of rainbow trout during the week of March 21-26. The site is composed of an upper and a lower pond that total approximately 8.2 acres. The plan is to stock the ponds at least two times per year with trout, three times per year with catfish, and once with sunfish. This represents an incredible opportunity for the kids and families of this community to enjoy a heritage-rich activity together—fishing and being in the outdoors.

Gilbert man catches state record for native roundtail chub

Rudolph Hoffman of Gilbert was fishing on the Verde River above Clarkdale, Ariz., in February when he found a large pool of water and began reeling in multiple roundtail chub. The first measured at about 17 inches. Then another at 18 ... then 18 ½ inches. Finally, a 19-inch chub took a ¼-ounce bronze spoon with a spinning rod and 8-pound fluorocarbon line. This *Gila robusta* set a new state catch-and-release record for roundtail chub. "There is really something special about being able to catch and release a fish that has been part of our Arizona waterways for tens of thousands of years," Hoffman said. AZGFD has initiated numerous conservation efforts since the early 2000s. Maintenance of healthy roundtail chub populations were likely influenced by all of these conservation measures in the Verde River.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal Year Revenues by Fund	2015–16
Game and Fish Fund	\$34,754,774
Watercraft Licensing Fund.....	4,544,161
Game, Nongame Fund.....	154,968
Federal Assistance (Includes Matching Funds)	48,214,917
Heritage Fund.....	10,163,039
Off-Highway Vehicle Fund	1,792,525
Capital Improvement/Conservation Dev Funds	2,496,220
Wildlife Conservation Fund	6,533,665
Indirect Cost Fund.....	4,064,945
Other Funds (See Detail Below)	3,950,741
Total Revenue All Sources	\$116,669,955

Other Funds Detail	2015–16
Federal Grants.....	\$705
Wildlife Conservation Recovery Fund.....	0
GF Land & Water Conservation/Recreation Dev.	259
Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund	171,518
Wildlife Endowment Fund	195,166
Credit Card Clearing Fund.....	(235,784)
Trust/Donation Fund.....	3,588,629
Firearms Safety and Ranges Fund	31,600
W/L Habitat and Restoration Fund	3
Game & Fish Nevada Col Stamp	24,559
Game & Fish California/Col Stamp.....	116
Game & Fish Big Game Permit.....	466
Game & Fish Kaibab Coop	930
Publications Revolving Fund	172,574
Total Other Funds	\$3,950,741

Fiscal Year Expenditures by Fund	2015–16
Game and Fish Fund	\$32,012,784
Watercraft Licensing Fund.....	3,083,556
Game, Nongame Fund.....	113,210
Federal Assistance (Includes Matching Funds)	44,945,024
Heritage Fund.....	7,992,121
Off-Highway Vehicle Fund	1,969,994
Capital Improvement/Conservation Dev Funds	2,696,715
Wildlife Conservation Fund	6,361,186
Indirect Cost Fund	4,952,902
Other Funds (See Detail Below)	4,373,297
Total Expenditures All Sources	\$108,500,789

Other Funds Detail	2015–16
Federal Grants.....	\$0
Wildlife Conservation Recovery Fund.....	749,663
Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund	159,001
Federal Economic Recovery Fund.....	891
Trust/Donation Fund.....	3,290,422
Firearms Safety and Ranges Fund	24,002
Publications Revolving Fund	149,319
Total Other Funds	\$4,373,298

Calendar Year Licenses and Stamps Sold	2015
Resident General Fish.....	148,086
Nonresident General Fish	17,924
Resident General Hunt.....	53,985
Nonresident General Hunt*	-
Resident Combo Hunt/Fish.....	102,754
Nonresident Combo Hunt/Fish	25,688
Youth High Achievement Scout	133
Youth DLR	46,440
Resident Youth Combo Hunt/Fish.....	20,450
Nonresident Youth Combo Hunt/Fish.....	3,050
Resident Migratory Bird Stamp.....	13,407
Nonresident Migratory Bird Stamp	3,789
Resident Short-term Combo	17,406
Nonresident Short-term Combo.....	28,641
Migratory Bird DLR.....	36,768
Community Fishing DLR	4,649
Resident Community Fishing	1,104
Nonresident Community Fishing	507
Totals	524,781

**Discontinued in 2014; must buy Nonresident Hunt/Fish Combo*

Calendar Year License, Tag and Stamp Sales	2015
Fishing	\$6,473,262
Hunting	2,009,377
Hunt/Fish Combo	9,968,842
Youth	350,705
Community Fishing.....	150,268
Migratory Bird Stamps	269,820
Short-terms.....	902,187
Permit Tags	7,789,255
Nonresident Permit Tags	2,037,403
Application Fee Revenue	4,363,926
Total License, Tag, Stamp & Application Fee Revenue	34,315,045
Dealer Commissions.....	(547,544)
Total less Dealer Commissions	\$33,767,501





Kurt R. Davis



Edward "Pat" Madden



James R. Ammons



James S. Zieler



Eric S. Sparks

THE GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

Under the provisions of the Arizona Revised Statutes 17-231, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission establishes policy for the management, preservation and harvest of wildlife. The Commission makes rules and regulations for managing, conserving and protecting wildlife and fisheries resources, and safe and regulated watercraft and off-highway vehicle operations for the benefit of the citizens of Arizona. In support of the Commission's obligations, the Director, as Chief Administrative Officer, provides general supervision and control of all Department functions and activities.

The Commission is composed of five members appointed by the Governor pursuant to ARS 38-211. The Governor is assisted in the selection of Commission candidates by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission Appointment Recommendation Board.

The Commission appoints the Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Director serves as Secretary to the Commission. No more than one Commissioner may be from any one county. No more than three may be from the same political party. Each Commissioner serves a five-year term, staggered. Commissioners customarily serve as Chair during their last year.

OUR MISSION

To conserve Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and manage for safe, compatible outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future generations.



The Arizona Game and Fish Department prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. If anyone believes that they have been discriminated against in any of the AZGFD's programs or activities, including employment practices, they may file a complaint with the Director's Office, 5000 W. Carefree Highway, Phoenix, AZ 85086, (602) 942-3000, or with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator for Public Access, 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS:WSFR, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803. Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation or this document in an alternative format by contacting the Director's Office as listed above.

Arizona Game and Fish Department

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TY GRAY Deputy Director
JIM PAXON Special Assistant
to the Director
KENT KOMADINA Special Assistant
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KEVIN KINSALL Natural Resources
Intergovernmental Coordinator

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

JIM DEVOS Wildlife Management
TOM FINLEY Field Operations
JOHN BULLINGTON Support Services
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