



**JUNE 2021  
DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**CALENDAR ITEMS:**

June 5            Third *Vamos a Pescar* fishing clinic, South Lakes Park, OKC

**AGENCY UPDATE**

- **LEGISLATURE:**
  - The 58th Legislature has adjourned Sine Die!
  - Only a couple of wildlife request bills were signed by the Governor. We thank Senators Allen and Stephens and Representatives Talley and E. Roberts for carrying these bills to the finish line:
    - § HB 1112 (Allen/Talley): Removes trapping, furbearer and squirrel language from statute and allows ODWC to regulate by administrative rule. Effective November 1, 2021.
    - § SB 770 (Stephens/E. Roberts): Reauthorizes the Wildlife Diversity Tax Check-off for another 4 years.
  - Two additional bills relating to wildlife were approved by the Legislature:
    - § HB 2214 was signed by the Governor and would allow year round use of predator control devices in high fence hunting and breeding facilities. The changes take effect November 1, 2021.
    - § HJR 1046 was also sent to the Governor and would disapprove several sections of proposed rules under Title 800. Proposed changes in these disapproved sections were primarily housekeeping updates and clarifications.
- **HUMAN DIMENSIONS:**
  - A public comment form was created for the proposed turkey hunting resolution. Over 5,000 people submitted their comments. A broad summary was created and shared, along with all raw comments.
  - The Private Lands survey was sent out to almost 10,000 private landowners in Oklahoma. We closed the survey on May 31st and results will be compiled in June.
  - Work began on the Game Harvest Survey species and participation estimates. Final report will be available in August.
  - The Controlled Hunts Report was completed and the first draft was circulated for review.
  - A survey aimed at better understanding bowfishing was developed with Fisheries Division. This will be deployed in July.
  - Attended the virtual R3 symposium and learned what other states are doing to better understand the new "covid cohort".

**ADMINISTRATION**

- Accounting
  - Number of Claims Audited and Paid - 288
  - Total Dollar Amount of Claims Paid - \$2,272,870.24
  - Number of P/Card Transactions Processed -735

- Number of In-depth Audited Transactions - 65
- Total Dollar Amount of P/Card Purchases - \$186,899.10
- New and Refresher PCard-holder and Approver Training Completed 47 Sent, 36 Completed
- Number of Purchase Orders/CO issued - 50
- IT Acquisitions Processed - 13
- Risk Management Cases Reported - 5 new ODWC vehicle accident/incident reports: Hail, Fire, Equipment, Dent/Ding, etc.
- 1 pending 3rd party vehicle claim: Law Enforcement Officer hit by 3rd Party
- 6 pending property claims: DSFH Tornado, OKC HQ Sewer Back-up/Flood, Keystone WMA Gates/Fence, OKC HQ Freeze/Pipes, PRC Freeze/Pipes, Jenks Burglary
- Construction Site Visits - Arbuckle Springs - Prebid meeting for hardwood removal and - Ponca City - Prebid meeting - Office remodel
- Human Resources
  - Open Full-time Positions, 16
  - Positions Interviewed 2, Candidates interviewed 9
  - Positions Announced, 3
  - Temporary Employees Processed (Interns & Aids), 19
  - Administration employees completed the Conservation and Hunting in America Course: Amanda Storck, Vicky Scaggs, Mary Streber, Mike Chrisman
  - 4 Office 365 training sessions for all staff
  - 4 Cristo Rey students finishing up their intern year
- IT
  - Handled 94 inbound help-desk tickets
  - Answered 500+ inbound calls for assistance
  - Fixed over 50 requests for backend maintenance projects related to BTG and other database issues
  - Reimaged 18 PC's and 7 Chromebooks
  - Deployed 10 new iPhones
- License
  - Processed over 1,100 licenses and 670 hard card orders (mail and walk-in) - \$86,000 in revenue
  - Assisted 486 walk-in visitors
  - Processed and fulfilled almost \$4,000 in merchandise sales
  - Processed \$170,000 in miscellaneous revenue, such lease payments, fines restitution, etc.
- Property
  - Set up the 5 new wardens with trucks, programmed radios, uniforms, etc.
  - 2022 Tag renewals and registrations for 316 ODWC vehicles and distributed out
  - Made repairs on the Stilwell tower shed
  - Programmed and installed new repeater at the tower site
  - Finalized all FY21 annual inventory corrections, transfers, and deletions
  - Worked with contractors on storm damage repairs
  - Had building sprinkler and fire alarm annual test and inspection
  - Plumbing repairs on 1st and 2nd floor restrooms
  - Electricians replaced lighting fixture in sidewalk light on north side of warehouse
  - Serviced three pool vehicles with oil changes, transmission service and radiator flush
  - Ordered 10 new radios for law enforcement

## FISHERIES DIVISION

April

### Statewide Fish Stockings

Species	Number Fish	Size	Number Locations
Channel catfish	24,378	7"	6
Channel catfish	12,593	9"	18
Channel catfish	2,604	12"	1
Channel catfish	643	15"	6
Florida largemouth bass	1,505	6-10"	2
Hybrid sunfish	1,110	5-6"	7
Rainbow trout	9,316	11"	1
Rainbow trout	5,328	9-14"	2
Rainbow trout	136	14-24"	2
Saugeye	1,164,060	fry	6
Walleye	3,031,130	fry	2

### Meetings attended

- Southern Division American Fisheries annual conference (virtual), April 6-9, 2021. Staff attended presentations and workshops, participated in committee meetings, and assisted in judging student presentations and posters.
- USACE Denison Dam and Lake Texoma 5-year anniversary celebration, April 9, 2021, Denison, TX.

### Activities

- The Paddlefish Research Center remained in full operation through April. Staff continued to collect biological data, and processed fillets and caviar. Caviar sales for 2021 were initiated.
- Walleye and saugeye production continued. Walleye and saugeye fry were stocked into hatchery culture ponds for fingerling production.
- Northern largemouth bass brooders were collected and stocked into spawning ponds for production of fish for the farm pond program.
- Striped bass females were collected below Eufaula dam and checked eggs for brood stock availability.
- Over 600 certified Florida largemouth bass brooders were harvested from holding ponds and placed into spawning ponds in preparation for production of Florida largemouth bass fingerlings.
- Florida largemouth bass sub-adults were collected from holding ponds, and DNA samples were collected and sent to Auburn University to be certified.
- Koi and goldfish held in holding ponds were harvested and brooders were stocked out into spawning ponds for forage.
- Green sunfish and bluegill sunfish brooders were stocked out into spawning ponds for production of hybrid sunfish.
- Annual fish disease testing was conducted at all hatcheries statewide.
- Assisted USFWS staff with collection of paddlefish brooder collection on Grand Lake for future paddlefish propagation.
- Spring electrofishing surveys were conducted on 36 reservoirs statewide. Genetics samples and otoliths were collected, and analysis is ongoing.
- Survey boxes at Thunderbird and Arcadia reservoirs have been installed to collect information on saugeye anglers and better understand their angling practices.
- Creel surveys at Griffin and Buck Thomas lakes, two close-to-home fishing locations, are underway to better understand angling practices at these urban fisheries.

- A bowfishing mortality study was initiated to better understand survival of fish shot using bowfishing gear.
- A controlled burn was conducted around Lake Nanih Waiya to control cattails and improve habitat.
- Roadways on Doc Hollis Lake were shaped and graveled, and 1.5 miles of road was rocked at Lake Chambers to provide angler access to the east side of the lake.
- Construction has begun on the Watonga dam renovation project. Fish were rescued from the lake before it was drained.
- A spotted sucker caught from Lake Lawtonka was certified as a new State record.
- Technical assistance was provided to the Chickasaw Nation at their Chickasaw Retreat and Conference Center ponds.
- Staff assisted the Kaw Nation in collecting fish for their contaminant testing.
- Staff manned the Aquatic Education booth at Pawnee Conservation Day.

## **C&E DIVISION**

- Smokey Solis continued to edit and update the 2021-22 Fishing and Hunting Regulations. Regulation books are expected to arrive sometime the second week of July.
- For the first time, an email was sent to anyone who held a conservation passport in the last three years. The email highlighted opportunities for people to connect with nature and support ODWC. This email is part of a larger effort to retain license holders.
- Promotions for Close to Home Fishing have begun. Skylar St. Yves and Sarah Southerland reported live on social media from NE Lions Pond in Norman to kick start Close to Home Fishing promotions. The popular video showcased the CTHF program and provided tips on how to fish these waters. Additionally, Michael Bergin worked with Brandt to create a special registry for people to voluntarily sign up to receive CTHF updates. When CTHF waters are stocked, anyone who signed up to receive updates will be notified.
- Lead by Sarah Southerland, several employees helped create a series of social media videos promoting free fishing days. The videos are short clips, shot creatively to mimic the popular television series, The Office. Each video encourages viewers to take someone new to support C&E's communication priority, mentorship.
- The Outdoor Oklahoma video crew continued to work on updating the show with new graphics and "magazine" style formatting. Several episodes are premiering this summer, including a full length show following the process of producing hybrid striped bass.
- During the last quarter, several new videos were uploaded to the Outdoor Oklahoma YouTube channel. The most popular is Blake Podhajsky's production, World Record Paddlefish, with nearly 3,000 views since it was uploaded in February.
- Whitney Jenkins and Michael Bergin are working to secure an off-site location for C&E's 2021 division meeting, tentatively scheduled in August at Lake Texoma.
- Kelly Adams met with Corey Jager and Betsey York to discuss survey options for two upcoming projects. The first project is aimed at getting a better understanding of our female constituency. Through focus groups, the second project will evaluate thoughts and feelings from Outdoor Oklahoma TV viewers.
- Skylar St. Yves, Colin Berg, Damon Springer, Lance Meek and Jennifer Bengé conducted the first Family Fishing clinic with OG&E and the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation at the OG&E Horseshoe Lake facility near Harrah. 68 people participated in the clinic. 35 were kids who received rods and reels compliments of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation. Lots of catfish were caught and 40 were cleaned by Skylar St. Yves and sent

home with the participants. OG&E staff have been trained as Aquatic Education Volunteers and several were on hand to assist with the clinic. Additional clinics will be held at the OG&E power plants at Konowa and Sooner. OG&E will be provided with fishing kits so they can conduct clinics throughout the year for community members, schools and other organizations. The first event was huge success and included lunch compliments of OG&E.



- Kelly Boyer finished up the Virtual Archery shoot for our Varsity Archery Program. Eighteen schools submitted scores as part of the event. Teams/students were required to submit scores from three shoot dates and the average of those scores was used to determine the winning individuals and teams.

# 2021 Oklahoma Varsity Archery

## Virtual State

1st	El Reno	2321.00
2nd	Locust Grove	2231.33
3rd	McLoud	2182.67
4th	Stewart	2101.00
5th	Noble	2069.00
6th	Blanchard	2037.33
7th	Roland	1827.00
8th	Achille	1777.33
9th	Howe	1627.33
10th	Lawton Macarthur	1468.50
11th	Paden	1448.67
12th	Paoli	1424.33
13th	Madill	1388.67
14th	Chouteau-Mazie	1055.67
15th	Jenks	815.67
16th	Salina	488.67
17th	Morris	360.00
18th	Community Christian	336.67

# Individuals

## Male

### 1<sup>st</sup> High Individual

Michael Bolte, Stewart - 228.66

### 2<sup>nd</sup> High Individual

Jaden Rose, Locust Grove – 223.66

### 3<sup>rd</sup> High Individual

Caden Gardner, Salina – 210.0

## Female

### 1<sup>st</sup> High Individual

Emma Patswald, El Reno – 203.33

### 2<sup>nd</sup> High Individual

Corie Barns, McCloud – 186.66

### 3<sup>rd</sup> High Individual

Aleysha Smith, Noble – 183.66

## **WILDLIFE DIVISION**

- Annual goose banding activities will begin at the end of June and continue through early July. Dates and locations TBD as geese settle into molting locations. Commission is invited to participate or observe. Contact Jerry Shaw, Programs Supervisor if interested.
- On June 12, 2021 from 9 a.m. to noon, the ODWC will be providing the public with instruction and demonstrations on wildlife habitat improvement methods at the Lexington Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Cleveland County. White-tailed deer and wild turkey habitat will be emphasized. The event will be set in the field. The day's events will begin at the WMA headquarters.
- WMA Activities summary: Maintenance was completed on 1 mile of roads and 3.5 miles of fireguards, prescribed burns were completed on 148 acres, and mowing / strip disking / herbicide application / mastication/cedar cutting were completed on 200 acres of habitat. Personnel installed/repaired/replaced 42 area signs, and monitored Agricultural, Hay, and Grazing leases. Central Region management staff burned a total of 15,700 acres during the 2021 dormant season burns. Much time on WMAs in May was centered on spring plantings

and wetland unit management. Staff began preparations for growing season prescribed burns.

- Through mid-May staff had handled 6 nuisance bear calls, including one bear entering a barn at Wright City, one in the City Park Heavener, and one in Norman. There were no captures for the month of May. Nuisance bear protocols are being evaluated and updated, including safe capture training for additional staff.
- Technical assistance requests and site visits have sharply increased with contact restrictions being lifted. 92 applications for the WHIP program were received this enrollment period, and are being worked by private lands biologists.
- The elk relocation project in the Arbuckles continues to move forward with Director/landowner meetings, discussions and formulation of research project with Oklahoma State, and work on P/R grant funding. Assuming everything continues to fall into place, the planned release date is late winter / early spring 2022.

#### **LAW ENFORCEMENT DIVISION**

- The 5 new wardens had their badge pinning ceremony at ODWC Headquarters on May 25<sup>th</sup>. We had approximately 45 – 50 people in attendance. The new wardens are now going to their assigned counties to begin the FTO process.
- Wardens in D4 and D5 have made a good case on some bow fishermen killing over a 1000 gar and then dumping the dead fish back into Texoma lake. Citations have been issued and court dates are pending.
- The first truck of the 2021 truck order was delivered to the Dept on May 25<sup>th</sup>. This is the first of 12 new vehicles for Law Enforcement this year.
- Numerous upcoming trainings are going on over the next month. We have precision driving and weapon retention classes both happening on June 11<sup>th</sup>. We also have Defensive tactics happening in D7 on June 12<sup>th</sup>. Then starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, we have a night driving class scheduled to get the last two groups of wardens trained in night driving.
- We have also issued 8 Mustang float coats to wardens in D1 for working the water in winter temperatures. 5 new side imaging sonars were issued to various districts and a new thermal unit was issued to D6.
- We have 4 wardens testing out some new Dell laptop computers and tablets to see what type of device would work best for the wardens across the state. While on the tech side of things, we are also planning to roll out the new body cameras on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Every Game Warden and Game Warden Supervisor will be issued a body camera system and be required to wear it and utilize it on any interactions with the public.