



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Office of the Director

4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE

Salem, OR 97302

(503) 947-6044

FAX (503) 947-6042

odfw.com

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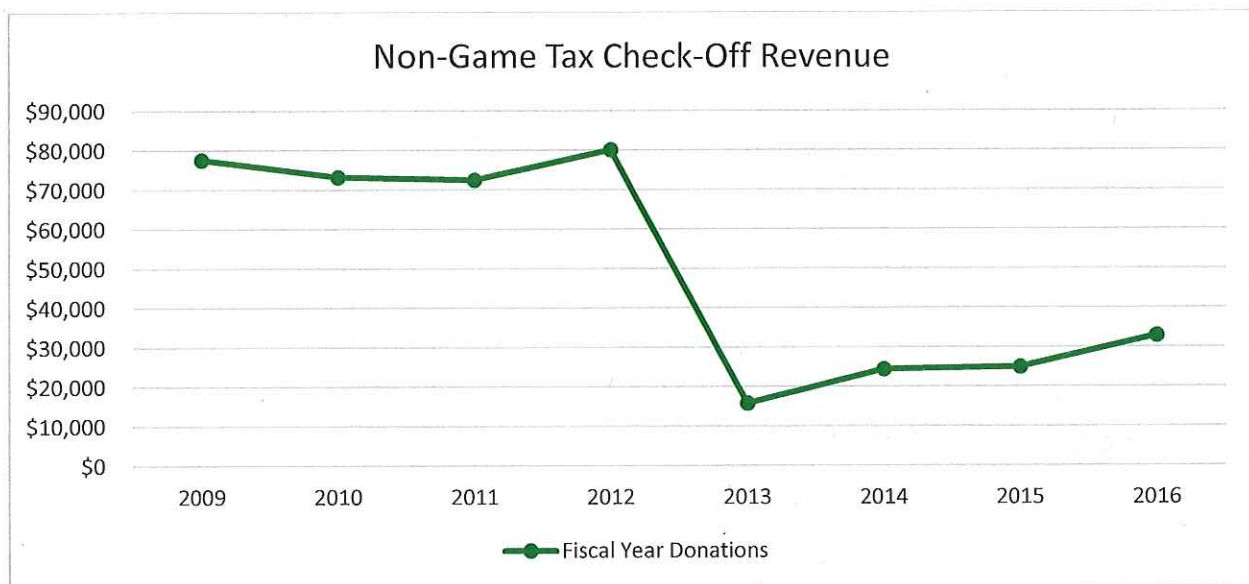
Senator Frederick, Co-chair
Representative Witt, Co-chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
900 Court Street NE, Room H 178
Salem, Oregon 97301



Subject: Question Regarding Nongame Tax Check-Off Revenue

Dear Co-Chair Frederick and Co-Chair Witt,

The Nongame Tax Checkoff was established in 1979 and for many years, it was the only donation option that appeared on the Oregon income tax form. Revenue from the program helps support the needs of the state's 600 or more nongame species—native freshwater fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals—that are not hunted, fished, or trapped. Over the years, many other donation options h added to the Oregon income tax form and due to legislative action; the participating charities were put on a rotation schedule. The Nongame Tax Check Off option was taken off the Oregon tax form in the 2012 tax year. A drastic decline in donations is shown in Fiscal Year 2013 (see graph below). However, starting with the 2015 tax year, all charities are listed on the form again. This could result in donations increasing in the future, although it is unlikely they will return to levels seen before the legislative action.



Nongame Tax Checkoff donations have been used to fund a variety of projects to keep Oregon's wildlife and its habitats healthy and viable. Since 2006, funds have assisted with the implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, which is a voluntary blueprint for wildlife and habitat conservation in Oregon. Donations have also helped to: Restore wildlife habitats on private land; recover the American peregrine falcon and bald eagle; and bring back the western snowy plover from the brink of extinction. Staff has also worked in partnership with landowners and conservation groups to eliminate or manage harmful invasive species, which threaten wildlife habitats and species and adversely affect the economy.

Over the past decades, many of Oregon's conservation actions were dependent on checkoff donations including:

- Conducting surveys and implementing conservation efforts for various at-risk species including Oregon spotted frog, red-legged frog, painted and western pond turtles, western meadowlark, streaked-horned lark, upland sandpiper, purple martin, osprey, and great blue heron.
- Working with planning agencies to assess how development plans and projects affect nongame species and their habitats and provide recommendations for minimizing, avoiding, or mitigating impacts.
- Working with landowners in developing wildlife management plans for enrollment in tax incentive programs.
- Providing wildlife related educational presentations to schools, higher education, watershed councils, local jurisdictions, and statewide nongovernmental organizations.
- Wolf Conservation and Management – previous checkoff dollars were used to match a federal grant, which funded a Wolf Coordinator position and related services and supplies as part of implementing Oregon's Wolf Plan.
- Marine Mammal Management – donations partially funded a biologist working on the Oregon coast and estuaries tracking movements and feeding behavior of seals and sea lions to assess impacts of these marine mammals to listed fish stocks and consequent impacts to sport and commercial fisheries.

Please let us know if you would like further details.

Respectfully,



Curtis E. Melcher
ODFW Director