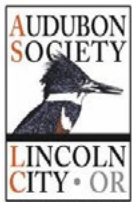
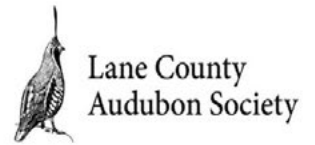


Coalition of HB 3464 Supporters:



Western Environmental Law Center





HB 3464: Enhancing Oregon's Fire Resiliency and Water Security through Common-Sense Wildlife Management

THE PROBLEM: Beavers are classified as “predatory animal” on private lands in Oregon. As a result, beavers can be killed with little to no regulation or monitoring in the Beaver State

Beavers: our allies against climate change impacts

- Beaver-modified habitat enhances fire resiliency and creates climate refugia for other species.
- Beavers improve water security, sequesters carbon, and creates healthy habitat for salmon.
- Fewer beavers mean increased wildfire risk, less salmon habitat and decreased water security.
- For the above reasons, beavers are considered keystone species. If they are gone, other species will follow.

Why are beavers classified as “predatory?”

- Beavers fall in the scientific order “rodentia” and under current Oregon law ORS 610, all rodents are classified as “predatory.” It is not a result of the animal's biology or ecology. “Predatory” status is erroneous and unscientific.
- Beavers are herbivores, that is, they do not prey on other animals.

Challenges of “Predatory” Status

- Because of their “predatory” status on private lands, Oregon allows unlimited killing of beavers. There is no tracking of this beaver removal.
- Because of their status, ODFW has no authority to manage them or regulate harvest on private lands.
- There is no state wide population monitoring of beavers by ODFW – we do not know how many beavers we have in our state!

THE SOLUTION: HB 3464. If we change this one classification, Oregon will be more fire resilient, will have healthier salmon runs, and more!

- HB 3464 is common-sense legislation that would remove the predatory animal designation from beaver in Oregon. It allows ODFW to begin to manage beaver on private land in Oregon, as it does other wildlife species.
- The bill also prompts Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to establish a system for beaver management and beaver removal on private lands.
- It will allow ODFW and the Commission to:
 - Promote the use of non-lethal beaver management tools before resorting to lethal removal,
 - Set standards on when beavers can be removed,
 - Create a reporting system on beaver removals in the state, and
 - Require landowners to report beaver killings to ODFW so the state can have a better picture of the landscape and make effective decisions to minimize harmful impacts of wildfires



Photo: Beaver habitat mitigates damage after Idaho's Sharps Fire, by Dr. Joe Wheaton, Utah State University.



HB 3464: Frequently Asked Questions

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife manages fish and wildlife on private lands and water. Doing the same for beaver opens up possibilities to improve Oregon's resilience to wildfire, water security, and overall ecological health.

What is HB 3464 trying to accomplish?

The purpose of this bill twofold:

1. Streamline beaver management into a single state agency for improved and more informed management.
2. Close data collection gaps outlined by state and federal agencies, public stakeholders and the Beaver Working Group for more informed management of beaver.

Under HB 3464 will landowners be able to remove beavers from their property in a timely fashion?

Yes. If this bill passes, beavers will move into the “furbearer” category (they are already classified as such on public lands) where, in addition to the hunting and trapping season for furbearers, **landowners can contact ODFW for a permit all year round** to lethally remove beavers in response to damage, and **the permits are issued free of any cost**. The permit request is never rejected because ORS 498.012 states “*Nothing in the wildlife laws is intended to prevent any person from taking any wildlife that is causing damage...*” The bill does not have language that stops landowners from engaging in their current practices of lethal or live removal of beavers from private property in response to potential damage.

ODFW already has a permit issuing process for other furbearers that can cause damage including foxes, bobcats and raccoons. ODFW field staff can issue a permit as quickly as in half an hour after a landowner contacts them.

Does HB 3464 mandate burdensome reporting for landowners?

No. There is no language that mandates how reporting is supposed to be conducted, only that ODFW must create a system for reporting “how many” and “where” beavers have been killed on private property. Depending on ODFW staff recommendations and the Fish and Wildlife Commission's determination, this could be as simple as a call to ODFW once a year.

Does HB 3464 require landowners to use non-lethal beaver coexistence strategies before using lethal actions?

No. It merely instructs ODFW personnel to prioritize efforts that help inform landowners of non-lethal strategies and perhaps such facts as the cost savings or ranch production benefits involved with using strategies that allow beavers to live on private lands.

How do beavers help with climate change?

Wetlands and wet meadows created by beavers are natural carbon capture-and-store areas that extract large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere via photosynthesis, a natural process that helps draw down carbon by storing it in roots and decaying matter below ground, in riparian vegetation, and in beaver ponds.

Beaver habitat improves the ability of fish and wildlife to survive climate changes. Their habitats are more stable and less sensitive to short-term climate variability because they contain reservoirs of surface and groundwater that buffer habitats from drought and they create conditions for groundwater recharge to occur during flooding.

HB 3464: Frequently Asked Questions, continued



How do beavers help with climate change (cont'd)?

Beaver ponds, wetlands and wet meadows hold water in storage and slowly release it, helping to offset declines in stream flows and water quality related to declining snowpack and spring melt. These natural fire breaks create safety zones for wildlife to survive extreme fire events that are expected to increase with climate change, and can help slow down the spread of fire across a landscape.

How do beavers help with wildfires?

Beavers create and maintain wetlands, wet meadows, and ponds which are natural fire breaks. The areas provide refuge for livestock and wildlife during fires and habitat post-fire which are critical to helping wildlife survive the winter. Because vegetation remains, these areas trap soil eroding from surrounding hillsides post wildfire and prevent it from reaching streams, helping protect water quality.

How do beavers help native fish?

Beavers create habitat that improve the function and diversity of the biological and physical systems native fish need to survive and thrive. Ponds provide critical winter rearing habitat for juvenile Coho salmon. Ponds and wetlands temporarily store surface and groundwater which later contribute to cooler stream temperatures. Currently, ODEQ has identified more than 89,000 miles of streams as too warm. Improved riparian conditions result in greater vegetation and insect life, which enhances food sources for native fish.

How many beavers are there in Oregon?

We don't know. The only information on beaver numbers comes from the number killed and reported by people hunting and trapping with a "furbearer" license. Between 2000 and 2020 more than 51,000 beavers were reported to ODFW as killed under the furbearer regulations and more than 10,000 were killed by Wildlife Services. Hence, 61,000 is the minimum number because not all human-cause mortality is reported.

How do beavers help farmers and ranchers, and cities and towns?

Farmers and ranchers need water during to grow crops and raise livestock. Cities and towns need dependable high-quality water, and drinking water for many Oregonians come from our forests. Beaver created habitats temporarily store water in ponds and in the ground, which is then slowly and sustainably released. Because the ponds create conditions that allow for regular groundwater recharge, benefits are maintained over time. This temporary storage helps offset impacts of drought, decreases the frequency and magnitude of downstream flooding, and improves water quality (i.e. stream temperatures, turbidity) and stream flows.

HB 3464 asks that ORS 610.002 that defines "predatory animals" apply to all "rodents" except beavers. It does not change the scientific classification of beavers.