



TO: Members, Committee on Ways & Means Natural Resources Subcommittee

RE: Portland Audubon 2023-2025 ODFW Budget Priorities

March 21, 2023

Dear Co-Chairs Dembrow and Pham and Members of the Committee:

Portland Audubon has advocated for Oregon's wildlife and wild places for more than 100 years. Our mission is to inspire all people to love and protect birds, wildlife, and the natural environment upon which life depends. We care deeply about the mission and activities of ODFW.

Portland Audubon respectfully requests inclusion of funding in the ODFW budget for the Wildlife Coexistence Program to include five biologist positions (Natural Resource Specialist 2 C8502) and one Coexistence Communications Coordinator (Public Affairs Specialist C0865) to expand education and outreach efforts focused on urban and suburban environments on how they interact with wildlife. The goal of these positions is to avoid conflicts, work with local governments, homeowners, and community groups, to provide training on how to avoid and mitigate increasingly common conflicts with wildlife.

These biologists would also provide critically needed training to law enforcement, animal control, and other and local wildlife rehabilitation workers to understand rules for holding and proper treatment of wildlife, conduct facility inspections and assist with permitting challenges.

The estimated costs of this program is \$2,077,403 General Fund. This small investment will help avoid extremely costly and emotionally charged conflicts between Oregonians and wildlife.

Additionally, we strongly support reinstatement of the Communications Project Leader for ODFW's Marine Reserve Program. This position was swept from the Governor's Recommended Budget. However, this key position is a critical connection point between coastal communities and Oregon's Marine Reserves.

Please include \$187,000 for this role to maintain clear lines of communication between coastal residents, commercial and recreational fisheries, conservation interests, and the marine research community. This small investment will go a long way to building trust and understanding around Marine Reserves.

We respectfully urge funding for the Wildlife Coexistence Program and the Marine Reserves Program Communications Project Leader in the 2023-2025 ODFW budget.

Thank you for your time and attention to these important matters.

Questions: Kyle Linhares (503) 536-3338 or kyle@steadfastadvocates.com