



OREGON WILD

Protecting Oregon's wildlands, wildlife, and waters since 1974.

Date: March 22, 2023

To: Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

RE: **SB 5509 - Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Budget**

My name is Danielle Moser and I am the Wildlife Program Manager for Oregon Wild.

Oregon Wild is a state based organization that is dedicated to protecting and restoring Oregon's wildlands and wildlife as an enduring legacy for future generations. In fact, our mission is very similar to that of ODFW's - the state agency responsible for protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and habitat for use and enjoyment for present and future generations. While a coincidence, it's not entirely surprising that our missions overlap, because wanting to ensure Oregon has thriving, diverse fish and wildlife is part of our natural heritage and what makes Oregonians proud to call this place home.

Unfortunately, growing challenges from climate change, the biodiversity crisis, and other natural and human-caused impacts are taking a toll on Oregon's native fish and wildlife. More specifically, in Oregon there are nearly 300 species considered 'species of greatest conservation need', meaning they are at elevated risk of extinction without proactive conservation actions. To address the needs of these declining populations, ODFW has a state wildlife action plan known as the Oregon Conservation Strategy and Nearshore Strategy. However to date, funding for these programs has been insufficient to meet the challenges and support comprehensive recovery of our most vulnerable wildlife and habitat. Asking the legislature to fund these critical conservation programs through general fund allocations and POPs has become a biennial problem - as implementation of recovery and restoration actions requires dedicated, reliable and consistent funding over time.

While many of us work to address this problem by finding a long-term funding mechanism solution, in the meantime I urge the committee today to focus the '23-25 ODFW budget on funding programs and staff that bolster proactive species recovery and habitat restoration. Taking action now by allocating funds to these programs is much more cost effective than waiting until fish and wildlife are on the brink of extinction.

That being said, I urge you to please fund:

- POP 103 from the agency recommended budget which would create four FTEs to support implementation of the Oregon Conservation Strategy;
- POP 114 from the agency requested budget to help ODFW implement strategies from their climate and ocean change policy;
- POP 102 from the agency requested budget to increase necessary capacity within the newly created Habitat Division;
- The Communications Project Leader for the Marine Reserves Program.

Thank you.