

# Arizona Game and Fish Department 2008-2009 Annual Report





Larry D. Voyles

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The national economic downturn has presented some formidable challenges over the past year. The economy has not only affected our constituents, but has had a profound impact on the state budget. The Governor and Legislature continue to deal with a difficult budget situation, and we acknowledge the tough choices and decisions facing them.

It is important to keep an optimistic outlook, as there are some silver linings. Wildlife recreation—hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing—continues to be a two billion dollar industry in Arizona that helps wildlife conservation through license sales and excise taxes and positively affects the economy and local communities.

While the department feels the pinch of budget constraints, the entrepreneurial model that we use for revenue generation and management has provided a foundation of fiscal responsibility during these tough times. We continue to plan for the future, making carefully considered, responsible choices addressing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Through these efforts we continue to serve you, the passionate supporters of wildlife.

There have been successes to celebrate. New and existing partnerships are teaming up to recruit more people, including youth and families, into outdoor recreational pursuits such as hunting, fishing, shooting sports and wildlife viewing. We are offering a wide diversity of activities—small game camps, fishing clinics, youth programs, wildlife talks—to help people connect with the outdoors. Our annual Outdoor Expo broke all previous attendance records when more than 35,000 people came to the Ben Avery Shooting Facility and learned about outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation.

New OHV laws went into effect to help better manage skyrocketing OHV use, protect natural resources, and maintain and enhance OHV opportunities. We continue to work with a wide range of partners on habitat improvement and other conservation projects. Through research and new products, we are gaining the knowledge and tools that will enable us to work with planners and stakeholders to ensure a future for wildlife as our state grows.

From Willcox to Kingman, Pinetop to Yuma, the department is making a positive difference in our state. We look forward to our continued work with partners and the public so that one of Arizona's most desirable resources—its wildlife—is sustained and accessible for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry D. Voyles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Larry D. Voyles

Director



*Archery instruction was just one of the many exciting activities offered at the Outdoor Expo.*

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Outdoor Expo sets another attendance record with 35,000

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's 2009 Outdoor Expo drew a record 35,000 people over the March 28-29 weekend, breaking last year's record attendance of 26,000. The event gives outdoor enthusiasts and novices a hands-on chance to discover and experience activities such as wildlife viewing, fishing, shooting sports, archery, hunting techniques, off-highway vehicle recreation and boating recreation. Expo activities were held in four different locations throughout the 1,650 acre Ben Avery Shooting Facility. Hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing have a \$2 billion positive annual impact to Arizona's economy.

### Public process helps develop hunt guidelines

The hunt guidelines that provide the framework for developing the specific hunt recommendations and permit levels for Arizona's fall 2010 through spring 2013 hunting seasons were formulated through an extensive collaborative effort between department personnel and the public. During many stages

of this process the public was invited to provide input to help shape the guidelines, using many venues including statewide public meetings, direct mailings, surveys (mailed and online), and general comments via mail or email. The guidelines are based on sound science but also give consideration to input on social desires. The guidelines were approved by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission at its September meeting.

### Unique seasonal fishery opens at Fossil Creek

The grand opening in October of the seasonal catch-and-release native chub fishery at Fossil Creek can be summed up in four little words – mentoring, fishing, families and beauty. About 40 youngsters and their families and five different angling-conservation groups joined forces for catch-and-release mentoring with fly rods and spinning rods in hand. Participants also helped fill bags with trash collected along the stream banks from

*Youngsters were mentored in fly fishing at the opening of the catch-and-release chub season at Fossil Creek.*



*Bald eagle numbers continued to grow in Arizona.*

other less conscientious users of this remarkable riparian area. The fishery gives the public an opportunity to experience these native fish via hands-on angling conservation in action, and gives them a vested interest in helping to protect this special area.

### **New laws help better manage OHV use**

Thanks in large part to a joint effort between sportsmen's/conservation groups, off-highway vehicle user groups and elected officials, new regulations to better manage Arizona's growing OHV use went into effect Jan. 1, 2009. The



*The new OHV Decal program will help ensure resource protection and sustainable OHV recreation opportunities.*

new laws stipulate that all OHVs designed by the manufacturer primarily for use over unimproved terrain and weighing 1,800 pounds or less must annually purchase an OHV Decal (currently priced at \$25).

Revenue raised through this program will help fund law enforcement, signage and grants for trail reconstruction. The new laws also require that OHVs stay on roads and trails (unless otherwise allowed by the land management agency), prohibit travel by motorized vehicles that causes damage to cultural or natural resources, and include certain equipment requirements (including a helmet requirement for individuals under age 18).

### **Bald eagles in Arizona continue to flourish**

The numbers for the 2009 breeding season are in, and bald eagles in Arizona continued to flourish. A record 77 eggs were laid, an increase of six over last year, with a record 67

*The Arizona Game and Fish Department headquarters building received "platinum" LEED certification in 2009.*



of those eggs hatching successfully. In addition, the state celebrated the second-best year on record for the number of fledglings that took to Arizona's skies. Forty-seven eaglets reached the critical point of taking their first flight, an important milestone for a young bird's chances of survival. Bald eagle numbers over the past 30 years have grown more than 600 percent in the state. Bald eagles in Arizona are assisted by the active management efforts of the Arizona Game and Fish Department and the multi-partner Southwestern Bald Eagle Management Committee.

### **Headquarters facility receives highest green building rating**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's headquarters building in Phoenix received "platinum" certification—the highest awarded—through the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification program. The building, built in 2007, employs design features and technology that reduce the need for artificial light, help with temperature



control, cut exterior water usage through natural landscaping, and scale back interior water use via water-efficient plumbing fixtures. Among the features is a 189-kilowatt rooftop photovoltaic solar system that is expected to generate an estimated 290,000 kWh (kilowatt hours) annually. This renewable power will offset the equivalent of 208 metric tons of CO2 emissions. This is only the fourth building in Arizona that has received platinum certification.

### **Support increases for voluntary non-lead ammunition program**

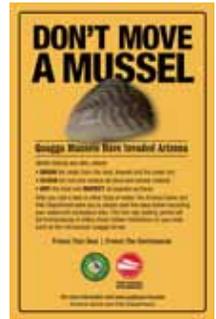
Arizona's sportsmen and women continue to step up to help the recovery of endangered California condors. For the fourth consecutive year, participation in the state's voluntary non-lead ammunition program has grown. Surveys show that in 2008, 90 percent of hunters in the condor's core range took measures to reduce the amount of available spent lead ammunition (versus 80 percent the year prior). Lead poisoning has been identified as the leading cause of death in condors and an obstacle to a self-sustaining population in Arizona. Studies show that lead shot and bullet fragments found in game carcasses and gut piles are the main source of lead in condors.

### **New aquatic invasive species legislation**

New legislation was enacted that will better assist the department in its efforts to fight the spread of aquatic invasive species, such as quagga and zebra mussels, in Arizona's waters. The bill authorizes the Game and Fish director to establish an aquatic invasive species program, including identification of aquatic invasive species, identification of waters containing those species, and director's orders establishing mandatory conditions for transporting watercraft from those waters. Quagga mussels have been found in several Arizona waters over the past three years. They can clog boat intakes and water delivery systems, and it is estimated they have cost industries and businesses hundreds of millions of dollars in the Midwest. Boaters and anglers can help prevent their spread by cleaning, draining and drying their boats before moving them to another body of water.

### **Mentored camps seek to introduce newcomers to hunting**

The department has partnered with the National Shooting Sports Foundation and local sportsmen's groups to offer first-time hunters dozens of mentored, hands-on,



*Boaters are urged to clean, drain and dry their boats to prevent the spread of invasive mussels.*

*Mentored hunt camps provide hands-on learning opportunities for youngsters and first-time hunters.*



*Biologists prepare native fish for transfer to new habitat as part of a Safe Harbor Program for recovering threatened and endangered fish (see article on next page).*



how-to hunting and shooting opportunities. These opportunities come thanks to a pass-through grant program funded by the National Shooting Sports Foundation's Hunting Heritage Partnership (which supports state agencies to expand hunter recruitment and retention), and volunteer efforts by sportsmen's groups to serve as mentors. For the majority of the camp events, all the participant has to do is show up and the mentors take care of the rest, including food and equipment. For others, participants must bring basic outdoor camping gear, and some hunts may require a hunting license and appropriate tags or stamps. Mentored experiences have been identified as one of the most effective ways to provide the exposure and skills needed for newcomers to continue fostering their interest in hunting.

### **No CWD found in Arizona deer and elk testing**

The department's monitoring program for chronic wasting disease (CWD) showed no sign of the disease in any of the 2,343 lab-tested samples from hunter-harvested or road-killed deer and elk during Arizona's 2008-09 hunting season. The department has tested approximately 12,500 deer and elk samples since beginning its surveillance program in 1998. None have tested positive for the disease. Although CWD has not yet been found in

Arizona, it is present in three neighboring states: Utah, Colorado and New Mexico. The wildlife disease is fatal to deer and elk, but currently there is no evidence that CWD poses a risk for humans.

### **Indoor range improvements expand opportunities for air gun, archery enthusiasts**

The Ben Avery Shooting Facility has made extensive improvements to its Indoor Range. Now fully paved and well lighted, the range offers 42 firing points for air gun and 24 shooting lanes for archery. The range is temperature controlled for year-round activity. All shooting lanes are freshly painted and identified, as are both the yellow and red firing lines. There is a raised platform booth for the range master with a full PA system for conducting safe shoots. Stadium seating is planned for the future.

### **New efforts to grow archery and bow-hunting programs for youngsters**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Archery Trade Association have teamed up to increase archery and bow-hunting programs for youngsters throughout Arizona and enhance facilities in the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas. Through the agreement, the ATA will provide

funding to the Game and Fish Department for additional staffing, and will assist with efforts to continue and grow community-based archery programs like National Archery in the Schools, After School Archery, and Junior Olympic Archery Development.

## CONSERVATION

### Safe Harbor Program helps conserve T&E species

The department continued to work with its partners in conservation efforts for several endangered and threatened fish and frog species through a Safe Harbor Program that allows non-federal and private landowners the opportunity to provide habitat for establishing new populations. More than 100 Gila topminnow and several hundred desert pupfish were released last spring at McDowell Mountain Regional Park near Fountain Hills. About 600 Gila topminnow and 130 desert pupfish were released in the fall into two ponds at the Robbins Butte Wildlife Area near Buckeye. The first release of Chiricahua leopard frogs under the program took place over the summer, when about 30 frogs, including adults and tadpoles, were released into a protected pond on private property near Show Low.

### Sportsmen raise more than \$540,000 for wildlife conservation in Arizona

The 2009 Arizona Big Game Super Raffle sold a total of 34,614 raffle tickets and raised more than \$540,000 to benefit Arizona's wildlife. Eleven winners were selected at the July drawing to receive the ten special big game tags (one for each big game species) and one Swarovski optics package. The money raised goes back to the department for wildlife conservation benefiting those species. Management of the dollars and approved projects is in cooperation with the Arizona Habitat Partnership Committee. Input from 12 statewide habitat partners and the organizations involved in the fundraising collectively determine which projects will provide the most benefit to each species represented.

### Biologists conduct marathon collaring effort to study wildlife movements

Department biologists conducted a marathon aerial capture effort at three different study areas hundreds of miles apart last fall, as part of ongoing research studies aimed at facilitating safer wildlife movement across roadways. On Sept. 29, 10 pronghorn antelope were captured and fitted with GPS-equipped radio telemetry collars in the Chino Valley area as part of a



*Tracking research, such as that involving pronghorn antelope, is seeking to find ways to reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions while mitigating the barrier effect that highways can pose to wildlife movement.*

study that will provide pronghorn movement information that will be incorporated into the planning of the Great Western Extension Bypass. The next day and 200 miles northwest near Hoover Dam, 10 desert bighorn sheep were captured and collared to supplement 20 GPS-collared sheep already in that area. This project is evaluating the effects of the Highway 93 construction activities on the area's bighorn sheep herd and will provide information to help guide actions to retain habitat connectivity across the newly expanded highway. The next day, 250 miles to the east, five pronghorn antelope were captured and collared north of Flagstaff. This data will supplement other collared pronghorn in the area to evaluate the removal and modification of various stretches of highway and pasture fencing.

### **Road map for Apache Trout recovery unveiled**

There is now a new road map for the recovery of Arizona's state fish, the Apache Trout, which had been on the brink of extinction three decades ago. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the availability of a revised Apache Trout Recovery Plan. This plan identifies actions to bolster populations in the wild, establishes benchmarks for measuring the progress of

recovery, and estimates the costs of recovery. Broad support for this collaborative recovery effort was highlighted at a signing ceremony at the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Sipe Wildlife Area south of Springerville. It was attended by representatives from Arizona Game and Fish, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and the U.S. Forest Service. Due to ongoing recovery actions, the pure strains of the species are now found in 28 populations on the Tribe's Fort Apache Indian Reservation and in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

### **Black-tailed prairie dog recovery efforts continue**

Biologists continued their multi-partner reintroduction efforts of black-tailed prairie dogs with the September 2009 release of 27 animals into the wild on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area near Sonoita. This release was later supplemented with the release of an additional 41 prairie dogs at the same site, along with the release of 39 prairie dogs at a different site on nearby state land where 74 prairie dogs were released last year. Surveys conducted at the state land site in June indicated prairie dogs from the original release had begun to

*Signing ceremony for the Apache Trout Recovery Plan (l to r): Corbin L. Newman, southwest regional forester for the U.S. Forest Service; Dr. Benjamin Tuggle, director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Region 2; John Cade, director of the White Mountain Apache Tribe Wildlife and Outdoor Recreation Division; Larry Voyles, director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.*



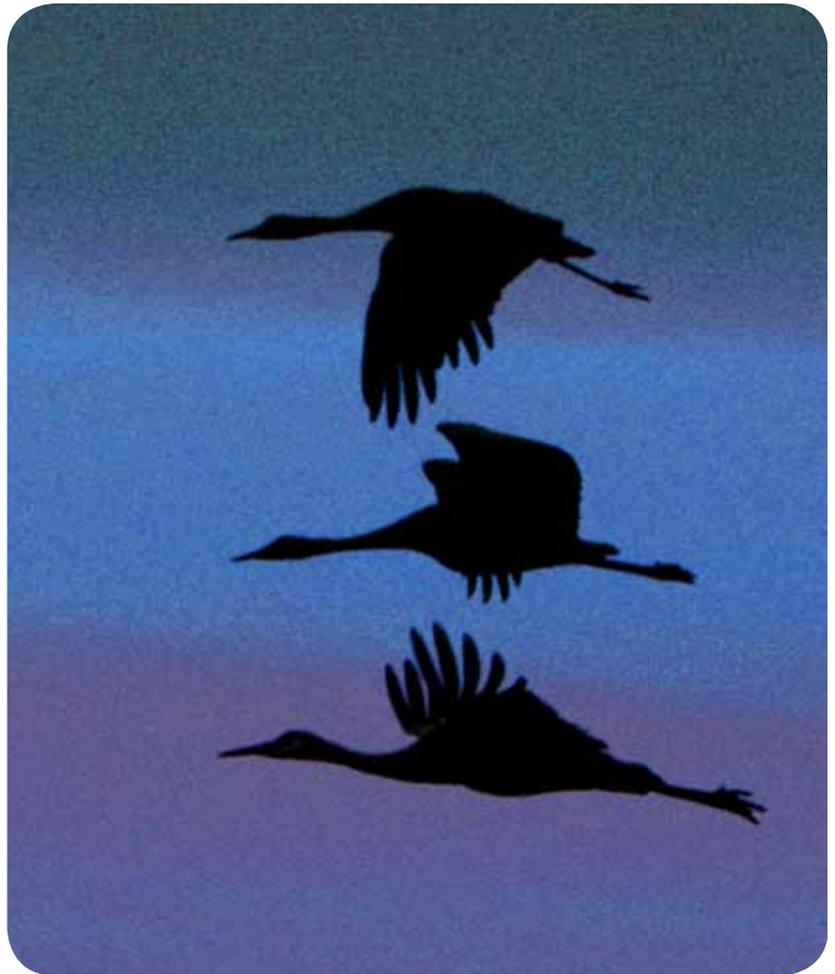
establish a foothold in their new community with the addition of at least two litters of pups. These releases were another step in the effort to establish self-sustaining colonies to repopulate the animals to where they once existed nearly 50 years ago before they vanished from the state's landscape.

### **Agencies team up to protect Tres Rios area**

The Arizona Game and Fish Department, Maricopa County Attorney's Office, and the Goodyear and Avondale Police Departments announced the establishment of a collaborative protocol for enforcement of state and local laws to better protect the Tres Rios Project Area in the southwest Valley. Under the agreement, the agencies will collaborate on law enforcement patrols, signage, and investigation and prosecution of crimes that occur in the Tres Rios Project Area. The agencies will also participate in coordination of clean-up efforts in the area. The Tres Rios Project Area encompasses portions of the Salt, Gila and Agua Fria rivers and includes the 200-acre Base and Meridian Wildlife Area (site of the annual Tres Rios Nature Festival) about 15 miles west of Phoenix. The area includes unique riparian habitat but has been impacted in recent years by littering and various other illegal and inappropriate activities.

### **Rare Gila trout get new mountain homes**

Arizona's recovering Gila trout population was given a boost in November when these rare native trout received a short helicopter ride into a remote creek on the steep side of the Pinaleño Mountains in southern Arizona. The fish were trucked in from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mora National Fish Hatchery and Technology Center in New Mexico to the department's Cluff Ranch Wildlife Area near Pima, Arizona. They were transferred to transport drums, which were attached to a helicopter by long line slings, then flown to Frye Creek. This effort crossed two states and was a model of cooperative conservation among state and federal agencies, involving biologists from the Arizona Game and Fish Department,



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service, with a helping hand from Trout Unlimited as well. Gila trout were also stocked into Grapevine Creek in the Prescott National Forest.

### **28,000 wintering sandhill cranes thrill Wings Over Willcox attendees**

More than 28,000-plus wintering sandhill cranes took center stage with a supporting cast of other birds, bats, rocks and plants to delight and enchant those attending the 16th annual Wings Over Willcox nature festival in January 2009. This annual festival near Willcox has become one of the state's preeminent nature festivals. This year, Game and Fish biologists recently surveyed 28,814 winter sandhill cranes in the valley, including about 8,000 at Crane Lake in the Willcox Playa Wildlife Area, 5,000 at the Apache Generating Station viewing area, and 10,000 at the Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area.

*Sandhill cranes thrill visitors each year at the Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area.*

*Programs such as the new Apprentice Hunting License make it easier for first-time hunters to enjoy a hunting experience with an experienced mentor.*



### **State receives riparian habitat for conservation**

Arizona received some valuable riparian habitat along the Lower San Pedro River as part of a natural resources damage settlement. The settlement provides for the transfer of three parcels of land, totaling about 1,000 acres, and provides the opportunity to take conservation actions which will benefit 5 federally listed species and 8 species identified as species of critical concern in the state of Arizona.

## **INNOVATIONS**

### **Apprentice hunting license offers 'test drive' at no cost**

The department introduced a new "Apprentice Hunting License" to encourage existing hunters to become mentors and introduce a friend, neighbor, relative, or co-worker to hunting. The Apprentice License allows an already licensed hunter to take a beginner on an actual hunt—without the beginner having to buy a hunting license. The license is free for residents and nonresidents and is valid for two consecutive days for the take of small game, fur-bearing, predatory and nongame mammals, nongame birds, and upland game birds. (To take migratory birds or waterfowl, the appropriate

stamps are required at regular costs). The license is not valid for the take of big game. The Apprentice Hunting License removes the initial cost barrier of having to buy a license, so that newcomers can "try before they buy."

### **Webcast technology helps increase public participation**

In an effort to reduce costs while utilizing technology to increase public participation, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission held all of its regularly scheduled 2009 public meetings in Phoenix and implemented a process to Webcast the meetings live over the Internet. Constituents wishing to submit public comment ("blue slips") during the meeting were able to do so either by attending the Phoenix meeting or by going to one of the regional Game and Fish offices to view the Webcast.

### **Videos attract 1 million-plus viewers**

Online videos provided by the Arizona Game and Fish Department exceeded the one-million-viewer mark this past year. All of the department's "Arizona Wildlife Views" television shows (which air on public broadcasting stations in Phoenix and Tucson and various cable stations across the state) are posted to [www.azgfd.gov/video](http://www.azgfd.gov/video). In addition,

the department posts other informative video segments on a variety of topics. Other places to find Arizona Game and Fish Department videos include MyOutdoorTV.com, DailyMotion, Yahoo, MySpace, Metacafe, Blip.tv, Veoh, Viddler, Howcast, and Facebook Video.

### **Get the latest AGFD news in multiple ways**

The department is utilizing social media outlets to provide outdoor enthusiasts with multiple ways to get timely information, even while they are on the go. Constituents can now sign up to receive department news through Facebook or Twitter, in addition to receiving information through e-newsletters, blogs and the Web site. The Web site includes interactive features such as a "Your Photos" section that allow constituents to submit photos they've taken, or an online event calendar that allows organizations to submit public events related to the department's mission.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Online education courses available for hunter education, boating, OHV**

The department offers a variety of user-friendly, self-paced online education courses. The hunter education course provides information to be a safer and more knowledgeable hunter. Receiving a completion certificate requires attending a field day and passing the field day qualification exam (cost is \$15). The boating education course gives participants the information needed to be a safer, more responsible boater. Receiving a completion certificate requires passing the Arizona boating exam (cost is \$20). The new off-highway vehicle (OHV) safety education course includes instruction on the basic skills required to safely ride or operate an OHV, responsibilities of OHV riders to others and the environment, and information on resources, laws, rules and regulations. Receiving a completion certificate requires passing the Arizona OHV safety certification exam (cost is \$30). For more information, visit [www.azgfd.gov/education](http://www.azgfd.gov/education).

### **New OHV Laws and Places to Ride booklet available**

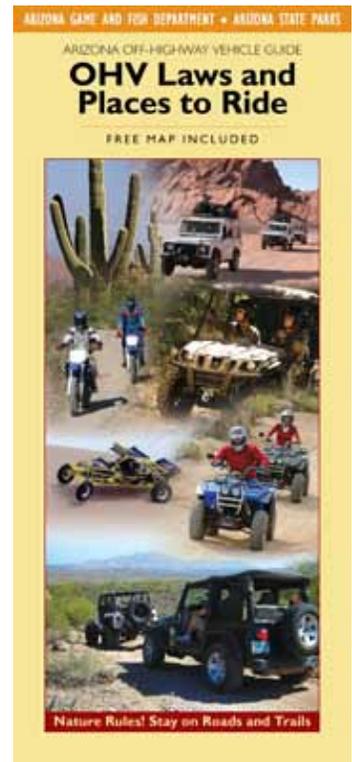
The Arizona Game and Fish Department and Arizona State Parks partnered to produce a new booklet with an overview of the OHV management laws currently in effect in Arizona as well as a list of places to ride across the state. The booklet includes explanations about Arizona titling, registration and the OHV Decal, information about equipment and protective gear needed to ride, as well as educational and training options and opportunities. Funding for this project came from the new OHV Decal program that went into effect Jan. 1, 2009.

### **Spring youth camps teach turkey hunting**

About 180 youngsters learned about the outdoors and turkey hunting during two youth hunting camps held the opening weekend of the spring turkey hunts. Department personnel and dedicated volunteers from sportsmen's groups conducted the two camps, one along the Mogollon Rim, the other in the White Mountains. This was the first spring hunt with over-the-counter youth turkey tags available. In past years, youth and adults had to enter the big game drawing for the available tags. Now any youth between the ages of 10 and 17 can get a turkey tag over-the-counter that is good for both the spring and fall hunts, although only one turkey can be harvested each year by an individual. In addition to hunting skills, the camps teach how hunting is utilized as a valuable wildlife management and conservation tool.

### **Public outreach events**

Informational booths and/or educational presentations on the value and diversity of Arizona's wildlife were held around the state. Among the events the department either conducted or participated in were: Arizona Game and Fish Department Outdoor Expo, International Sportsmen's Exposition, Kingman



*A new booklet includes information on off-highway vehicle laws and areas where OHV recreationists can ride.*

*Department staff provide information to the public at a wide range of outdoor expos, festivals and community events.*



Wildlife Fair, National Public Lands Day, Urban Watchable Wildlife Bat Workshops, Payson Wildlife Fair, Verde Valley Birding and Nature Festival, High Country Hummingbird Event, Bighorn Sheep Workshops, Wings Over Willcox Birding and Nature Festival, Elk-Viewing Workshop, Yuma Birding and Nature Festival, Tres Rios Birding and Nature Festival, and Bald Eagle Workshops.

## **ISSUES**

### **Jaguar conservation**

A wild jaguar was captured inadvertently by the department in February during a black bear and mountain lion research study south of Tucson. Analysis of photos indicated this was the jaguar known as Macho B that had been previously photographed at various times over the past 14 years. Using a handling and capture protocol developed by leading jaguar experts, biologists took the opportunity to fit the cat with a lightweight satellite tracking collar in the hopes of learning more about the species' existence in Arizona. After several days, tracking collar data revealed a reduced pattern of movement and foraging. A field team was deployed to locate the animal and assess its overall condition. The

team determined the jaguar required recapture so his condition could be better evaluated by expert veterinarians. Through blood tests and physical exam, the veterinarians found the cat was suffering from severe and unrecoverable kidney failure. Concurring with the veterinarians' recommendation, the department passed the recommendation to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The Service approved the jaguar's euthanization to end his suffering. In late March, new information surfaced that prompted the department to initiate an internal investigation and request (along with other parties) an independent external investigation into the circumstances related to the capture, recapture and euthanization of the jaguar. As of this writing, the department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are investigating the matter. The department is cooperating fully in the external investigation. The department has played a prominent role in the conservation of threatened and endangered species in Arizona and has allocated significant resources over the years to the conservation and recovery of listed species. The department remains committed to these efforts now and in the future.



*The department continued to work on the environmental assessment and NEPA process regarding fish stocking activities.*

### **Public scoping conducted on fish stocking program**

The department continued to work in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the environmental assessment and NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) process that is required for the department to continue to use federal funding for sport fish stocking activities in Arizona. Public input was collected in late 2008 and early 2009 to identify the extent and variety of issues that may be associated with fish stockings in the state. Completion of the NEPA process is anticipated sometime in 2010.

### **Director addresses House panel on horse and burro management**

Arizona Game and Fish Department Director Larry Voyles addressed a congressional panel in April 2009 about potential impacts of proposed federal legislation that would change the way free-roaming horses and burros are managed. Speaking on behalf of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA), Director Voyles told the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands that the proposed bill (H.R. 1018, also known as ROAM)

could result in adverse impacts to wildlife and habitat, as well as to the horses and burros the legislation seeks to further protect. The director offered several recommendations for ensuring a viable future for horses, burros and wildlife. ROAM was passed by the House during the summer and was forwarded for consideration by the Senate. The Arizona Game and Fish Commission took a position in opposition to the legislation as written at the time. A new proposal from Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has led to further discussions over this legislation and other alternatives regarding horse and burro management.

### **Biologists continue efforts to aid historic Kofa bighorn sheep herd**

Wildlife biologists continued their efforts to recover the important Kofa desert bighorn sheep herd from near record-low population numbers. The department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are working collaboratively to analyze and address a variety of factors, including predation by mountain lions, drought, disease and human disturbance. The department ended its self-imposed moratorium on lethal removal (off the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge) of mountain lions collared on the Refuge.

*Biologists continued their efforts to help recover the struggling Kofa bighorn sheep herd.*



The Service is conducting an environmental assessment process with regard to management of mountain lion predation on bighorn sheep within the Refuge. The Kofa herd declined from an estimated high of 812 bighorn sheep in 2000 to an estimated 390 in 2006. The last two surveys have shown an estimated 437 in 2008 and 410 in 2009.

### **Efforts continue to establish a Northern Arizona Shooting Range**

The department continued to work on a number of fronts to establish a shooting range near the Flagstaff area. Coordination efforts have been ongoing with the Coconino National Forest for the Willard Springs land exchange, with the regional forester providing the final agreement necessary to initiate the National Environmental Policy Act process. The department is also looking at two potential alternative sites: one at Cochrane Hill, located on the Coconino National Forest, and a 160-acre deeded property just south of I-40 from the Winona exit. These sites are still being evaluated. A private deeded property transaction could have the shortest timeline for establishing a shooting range.

### **AWARDS**

#### **Bald Eagle Nestwatch program earns “Showcase in Excellence” award**

The Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program operated by the department received a Showcase in Excellence award from the Arizona Quality Alliance (AQA) in 2009. The Nestwatch Program is a unique, cost-effective process that involves cooperation from federal, state, local and tribal agencies, as well as nongovernmental organizations and private landowners, to help conserve Arizona’s bald eagle population in areas with high recreational pressures. Nestwatchers contracted annually by the department monitor bald eagle nests from February to June. They act as a safeguard to the bald eagle’s breeding activities by directing people away from the sensitive areas where they nest, and notifying department biologists when bald eagles are in life-threatening situations. Due in part to the long-term success of the program, the bald eagle numbers over the past 30 years have grown nearly 600 percent in the state.

## Bahti named Shikar-Safari officer of the year

Kurt Bahti, wildlife manager supervisor for the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Tucson region before retiring in 2009, received the Shikar-Safari Club's Officer of the Year Award for Arizona for his lifelong service and impeccable record.

## Langley selected as NWTF officer of the year

The National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) awarded Rick Langley, game specialist for the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Pinetop region, as its Arizona Wildlife Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for his efforts in Arizona wildlife conservation.

## AGFD garners conservation communications honors

The Arizona Game and Fish Department received national recognition for its conservation communications efforts by winning 10 awards - three 1st-place, one 2nd-place and six 3rd-place awards - at the annual Association for Conservation Information (ACI) Conference in Baton Rouge, La., July 16.

## Five inductees honored at Outdoor Hall of Fame banquet

The Arizona Outdoor Hall of Fame's class of 2009 included five inductees: Bill Post, Frances Werner, Dr. Robert Ohmart, the Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club, and the Mesa Hunter Education Instructor Team. The inductees were honored at the Wildlife for Tomorrow Foundation's annual Outdoor Hall of Fame banquet in August. The Arizona Outdoor Hall of Fame was developed in 1998 by the Wildlife for Tomorrow Foundation to honor those who have made significant contributions to Arizona's wildlife, the welfare of its natural resources, and the state's outdoor heritage.

## Commission awards

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission selected its 2009 commission award recipients, who will be honored at the annual Commission Awards Banquet in January 2010. Award



*Kurt Bahti was named Shikar-Safari's "Officer of the Year" for Arizona before his retirement in 2009.*

categories and winners are: *Awards of Excellence* – Phoenix Herpetological Society, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Rachel Bacalzo, Eric English; *Youth Environmentalist of the Year* – Shelby Miller; *Outdoor Writer of the Year* – Stephanie Rainey; *Media of the Year* – Outdoor Wires; *Conservation Organization of the Year* – Liberty Wildlife; *Conservationist of the Year* – Jim Unmacht; *Natural Resource Professional of the Year* – Heidi Blasius; *Volunteer of the Year* – Steve Clark; *Educator of the Year* – Dave Brown; *Mentor of the Year* – Scott Bonar; *Advocate of the Year* – Sandy Bahr; *License Dealer of the Year* – Sprague's Sports; *Wildlife Habitat Stewardship Award* – Jim O'Haco. The commission awards recognize those who have contributed significantly to the welfare of Arizona's wildlife and the mission of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

*2009 inductees into the Arizona Outdoor Hall of Fame (l to r): Yuma Valley Rod & Gun Club (accepting award is President Jim Ammons); Frances Werner; Mesa Hunter Education Instructor Team (accepting award is Chief Instructor Michael Zaccardi); Dr. Robert Ohmart; Bill Post.*



## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Fiscal Year Revenues by Fund	2007-08	2008-09
Game and Fish Fund .....	\$32,279,875..	\$27,632,527
Watercraft Licensing Fund.....	5,244,405.....	5,487,923
Game, Nongame Fund.....	251,756.....	232,857
Federal Assistance (Includes Matching Funds).....	29,192,255.....	31,052,942
Heritage Fund.....	14,531,647.....	6,295,957*
Off-highway Vehicle Fund.....	786,499.....	1,285,779
Capital Improvement/Conservation Dev. Funds.....	1,764,206.....	1,644,707
Wildlife Conservation Fund.....	7,256,138.....	6,245,815
Indirect Cost Fund.....	2,265,400.....	2,302,226
Other Funds (See Detail Below).....	4,069,251.....	2,965,363
<b>Total Revenue All Sources .....</b>	<b>\$97,641,432..</b>	<b>\$85,146,096</b>

### Other Funds Detail

GF Land and Water Conservation/ Recreation Development.....	\$1,382 .....	\$592
Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund.....	222,232 .....	136,604
Waterfowl Conservation Fund.....	132,406 .....	74,278
Wildlife Endowment Fund.....	210,469 .....	167,794
Trust/Donation Fund.....	3,228,136 .....	2,215,063
Firearms Safety and Ranges Fund.....	21,386 .....	3,519
W/L Habitat and Restoration fund.....	57,344 .....	3,017
Game & Fish Kaibab Coop .....	— .....	182,552
Publications Revolving Fund.....	195,896 .....	181,943
<b>Total Other Funds .....</b>	<b>\$4,069,251 .....</b>	<b>\$2,965,363</b>

Fiscal Year Expenditures by Fund	2007-08	2008-09
Game and Fish Fund .....	\$29,262,352..	\$28,892,431
Watercraft Licensing Fund.....	5,886,249.....	2,429,607
Game, Nongame Fund.....	235,455.....	292,642
Federal Assistance (Includes Matching Funds).....	29,029,433.....	30,404,832
Heritage Fund.....	19,032,125.....	5,474,767*
Off-highway Vehicle Fund.....	868,122.....	734,547
Capital Improvement/Conservation Dev. Funds.....	722,947.....	691,172
Wildlife Conservation Fund.....	8,763,916.....	6,012,389
Indirect Cost Fund.....	3,144,133.....	2,093,312
Other Funds (See Detail Below).....	3,575,912.....	3,936,997
<b>Total Revenue All Sources .....</b>	<b>\$100,520,644 .....</b>	<b>\$80,962,695</b>

### Other Funds Detail

GF Land and Water Conservation/ Recreation Development.....	\$ 0 .....	\$ 0
Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund.....	202,982 .....	162,742
Waterfowl Conservation Fund.....	71,737 .....	96,019
Wildlife Endowment Fund.....	0 .....	0
Trust/Donation Fund.....	2,794,502 .....	3,279,876
Firearms Safety and Ranges Fund.....	211,442 .....	325,523
Game & Fish Kaibab Coop .....	57,718 .....	3,003
Publications Revolving Fund.....	237,531 .....	69,834
<b>Total Other Funds .....</b>	<b>\$3,575,912 .....</b>	<b>\$3,936,997</b>

\*Accounting correction involving real property escrow refund.

Calendar Year Sales in Numbers by Group	2007	2008
Licenses (see detail below) .....	467,698.....	451,790
Resident Trout Stamps .....	82,124.....	79,399
Nonresident Trout Stamps.....	260.....	258
Tags .....	149,181.....	154,562
Misc Permits/Licenses.....	2,506.....	2,980
Special Use Licenses/Stamps .....	68,500.....	64,678
Two Pole Stamp .....	62,328.....	60,064
Resident Additional Day Stamps.....	1,710.....	1,854
Nonresident Additional Day Stamps .....	2,089.....	1,902
Arizona Waterfowl Stamps .....	7,072.....	6,159
Migratory Bird Stamps .....	48,659.....	47,972
Utah Lake Powell Stamps.....	10.....	0
Kaibab 12A Archery Deer Stamps .....	3,847.....	2,631
Restricted Non-permit Tags.....	116.....	4
Supplemental Hunt Tags.....	43.....	12
Companion Hunt Tags .....	—.....	98
<b>Totals .....</b>	<b>896,143.....</b>	<b>874,363</b>

Lifetime License/Stamp Sales	2007	2008
Lifetime License Sales Fish.....	73.....	53
Lifetime License Sales Hunt .....	89.....	96
Lifetime License Sales Combo .....	111.....	115
Lifetime License Sales Trout Stamps .....	47.....	41
<b>Totals .....</b>	<b>320.....</b>	<b>305</b>

Calendar Year License Sales by Category	2007	2008
Resident General Fish.....	161,879.....	155,214
Nonresident General Fish .....	1,489.....	1,097
Family/Primary Fish .....	3,635.....	3,590
Family/Spouse Fish .....	2,046.....	1,727
Family/Child Fish .....	1,688.....	1,582
Resident Super Fish/Trout/Urban License .....	8,216.....	10,995
Nonresident Super Fish/Trout/Urban License.....	1,233.....	1,335
Resident General Hunt.....	58,931.....	56,331
Nonresident General Hunt .....	23,659.....	20,466
Computer Family/Primary Hunt .....	542.....	540
Computer Family/Secondary (Spouse) Hunt .....	319.....	277
Computer Family/Youth & Child/10-13 Hunt .....	899.....	1,384
Resident Hunt/Fish.....	76,121.....	73,646
Nonresident Hunt/Fish .....	917.....	632
Computer Family/Primary Hunt/Fish .....	2,499.....	2,127
Computer Family/Secondary Hunt/Fish.....	1,364.....	1,162
Computer Family/Youth & Child/10-13 Hunt/Fish .....	1,922.....	1,566
Computer Super Hunt w/Stamps.....	277.....	207
Computer Super Hunt/Fish w/Stamps .....	1,131.....	1,143
Nonresident 3-Day Hunt.....	7,913.....	7,258
Urban Fishing .....	28,609.....	28,274
Nonresident Colorado River Fish .....	1,693.....	1,544
Nonresident 5-Day Fish.....	9,982.....	9,148
Resident Youth Hunt/Fish .....	23,443.....	23,212
Nonresident 4-Month Fish.....	8,393.....	7,927
Resident/Nonresident 1-Day Fish.....	32,995.....	32,751
Resident Youth Group 2-Day Fish .....	91.....	72
Resident General Fish Nov/Dec .....	3,917.....	3,878
Nonresident General Fish Nov/Dec .....	177.....	184
Computer Family/Primary Half Fish Nov/Dec .....	20.....	12
Computer Family/Spouse Half Fish Nov/Dec .....	6.....	1
Urban Fishing Nov/Dec .....	1,692.....	2,508
<b>Grand Totals .....</b>	<b>467,698.....</b>	<b>451,790</b>

Calendar Year License and Tag Sales	2007	2008
Licenses.....	\$16,361,714..	\$16,948,437
Stamps.....	2,178,210.....	2,159,937
Tags .....	4,809,142.....	8,063,170
<b>Total Value.....</b>	<b>\$23,349,066..</b>	<b>\$27,171,544</b>



Bob Hernbrode, Chair



Jennifer L. Martin



Robert R. Woodhouse



Norman W. Freeman



Jack F. Husted

## THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

Under the provisions of the Arizona Revised Statutes 17-231, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission establishes policy for the management, preservation and harvest of wildlife. The commission makes rules and regulations for managing, conserving and protecting wildlife and fisheries resources, and safe and regulated watercraft and off-highway vehicle operations for the benefit of the citizens of Arizona. In support of the commission's obligations, the director, as chief administrative officer, provides general supervision and control of all department functions and activities.

The commission is composed of five members appointed by the governor pursuant to ARS 38-211. The commission appoints the director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the director serves as secretary to the commission. No more than one commissioner may be from any one county. No more than three may be from the same political party. Each commissioner serves a five-year term, staggered. Commissioners customarily serve as chair during their last year.

## OUR MISSION

To conserve, enhance and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and habitats through aggressive protection and management programs, and to provide wildlife resources and safe watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation for the enjoyment, appreciation and use by present and future generations.



The Arizona Game and Fish Department prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. If anyone believes that they have been discriminated against in any of the AGFD's programs or activities, including employment practices, they may file a complaint with the Director's Office, 5000 W. Carefree Highway, Phoenix, AZ 85086, (602) 942-3000, or with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4040 N. Fairfax Dr., Ste. 130, Arlington, VA 22203. Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation or this document in an alternative format by contacting the Director's Office as listed above.

# Arizona Game and Fish Department

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