

The Arizona Game and Fish Department
Annual Report



Fiscal Year 2002-2003

From the Director

The Arizona Game and Fish Department receives no general fund monies and must therefore conduct its operations like a business to ensure that it fully meets its statutory operational responsibilities.

The department is constantly striving to increase the efficiency of its programs, while at the same time working to reduce costs and improve services. Improving efficiency and reducing costs is truly a part of the culture at the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and we work hard every day to find new ways to reach these goals.

We take our responsibility as stewards of the state's wildlife very seriously, and this is reflected by our efforts to do our job in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible—in this way we can be certain that our precious and limited resources are put to the best possible use for the future of our wildlife heritage.



Above, research biologist Shelli Dubay prepares a sample of deer brain to test for chronic wasting disease.

Below, Gould's turkeys captured in Mexico were released in southeastern Arizona's Chiricahua Mountains.



Major Accomplishments

Gould's Turkey Reintroduction Working with the National Wild Turkey Federation, local ranchers, Wingshooters Lodge, the Forest Service and other federal agencies, the department released 39 Gould's turkeys from Mexico's Sierra Madre into the Chiricahua Mountains in southeastern Arizona. The reintroduction was the culmination of several decades of work by the department and the federation to reestablish Gould's turkeys in portions of their former range. Ranchers, the federation, and a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant covered virtually all expenses, which exceeded \$200,000, to carry out this historic restoration effort.

Chronic Wasting Disease Arizona remained free of CWD, a fatal neurological disease in deer and elk, but it has been detected in three states bordering us. The department developed a disease response plan and trained all employees on the basics of CWD and how to detect it in the field. To reduce the potential for CWD to enter Arizona, the commission approved a ban on the transport of deer and elk into or within the state.

United States/Canada/Mexico Trilateral Committee The department participated in the 2003 meeting of the Trilateral Commit-

tee for Wildlife and Ecosystem Management and Conservation, providing technical expertise at the Executive, Migratory Birds and Wetlands, Law Enforcement, Shared Species, and Wildlife without Borders working tables.

BLM and Forest Service Wilderness Areas The department hosted and facilitated an International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies subcommittee meeting to work on policies and guidelines for fish and wildlife management in BLM and Forest Service wilderness areas. A draft addendum was completed that clarifies existing policies and guidelines and the role of state fish and wildlife agencies in managing fish and wildlife populations in wilderness areas.

Mount Graham Red Squirrel The department, the University of Arizona, the Wildlife Society, Coronado National Forest and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, cosponsored a symposium on the endangered Mount Graham red squirrel. Participants examined current research to be used in revising the 1993 Recovery Plan.

Bat Conservation The department hosted the Arizona Bat Conservation Partnership Workshop at the Phoenix Zoo. Sixty-five participants from 13 state and federal agencies and 13 nongovernmental organizations attended.

Additional support came from the Western Bat Working Group, Bat Conservation International, and the North American Bat Conservation Partnership.

Roosevelt Lake Habitat Conservation Plan The department worked cooperatively with Salt River Project and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the development of the Roosevelt Lake Habitat Conservation Plan, which was approved in January 2003. The plan permits SRP to conduct full operation and storage of water behind the dam while minimizing and mitigating the negative effects of “taking” listed and candidate species and the habitats upon which they depend.

Grants, Awards, and Incentives

Landowner Grants A new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partnership program awarded Arizona \$1.74 million in grants to assist private landowners in conserving and restoring habitat of endangered species and other at-risk plants and animals. Arizona received the maximum amount available to support efforts of local partners to identify new and enhanced conservation methods.

Native Fishes The department received two new federal grants for and began work on projects designed to keep native fishes off the endangered species list, or to prevent those already on the list from becoming further imperiled.

Heritage Fund Grants Schools, universities, and government agencies completed 31 department-administered grant projects assisted by \$646,726 from the Heritage Fund. Projects ranged from a study of plague in Gunnison’s prairie dogs to a Patagonia Elementary School habitat project, “Where Kids Meet Wildlife.” The department awarded 21 Heritage Fund grants totaling \$542,500 for new projects starting in July 2004.

Heritage Fund for Festivals The department continued its support of rural ecotourism by participating in birding and nature festivals and fairs across the state. Four Heritage Fund donations of \$10,000 each were made to the Wings Over Willcox Sandhill Crane Celebration, Bisbee’s Southwest Wings Festival and the Yuma and Verde Valley birding festivals. The department also provided seed money to the Show Low Chamber of Commerce to develop a White Mountain birding and nature festival for the summer of 2004.

Rise to the Future The Gila Trout Recovery Team, which includes the department, received the U.S. Forest Service *Rise to the Future Award* for collaborative efforts in the recovery of this native fish.

Innovation

Traveler’s Information Radio Station The department completed the installation of a low-power traveler’s information radio station at the Grasslands Wildlife Area about

eight miles west of Eagar and Springerville. The station presents a variety of short, seasonal messages about the area’s outdoor recreational opportunities.

Big Game Stewardship The Big Game Stewardship Program, which works with private landowners to address habitat for big game on private lands, continued to grow. The Pinetop region has more than 40 active stewardships with private landowners to improve forage conditions for big game and other wildlife as well as livestock.

United States/Mexico Bird Projects Department staff participated in a meeting cohosted by the Tucson Audubon Society and the U.S. Forest Service to discuss opportunities for collaborative bird projects between the U.S. and Mexico. The department will participate on committees devoted to habitat restoration on important bird areas, outreach to landowners and training for citizen science in Mexico.

Resource Management Plans The department worked with the Army on their five-year review and update of the Yuma Proving Ground Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, and with the Air Force and Marine Corps in developing a similar plan for the Barry M. Goldwater Range. The department also worked with the Bureau of Land Management in developing plans for the Lake Havasu and Phoenix north and south areas, and the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

Bald Eagle The department met with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the timing and content of the anticipated delisting package and the roles and responsibilities of the states in monitoring and data collection when the bald eagle is delisted. Comment was provided on the drafting of the post-delisting monitoring protocol.

The department hosted a bald eagle banding trip at the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community for Bureau of Indian Affairs national and regional endangered species coordinators.

The department’s Arizona Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program celebrated its 25th anniversary. Department personnel confirmed Arizona’s newest bald eagle breeding area on Crescent Lake. One of the two adults was banded in Arizona and may be the first nestling from the Luna Lake breeding area to return to the state to breed.

The Arizona Bald Eagle Nestwatch Program celebrated its 25th anniversary. In the past 25 years, the nestwatchers have helped to save the lives of more than 60 nestlings in life-threatening situations. The department confirmed Arizona’s newest bald eagle breeding area at Crescent Lake south of Springerville.





Desert Tortoise Biologists from the department and the Smithsonian Institution and paid contractors conducted a desert tortoise foraging study at Sugarloaf Mountain, Tonto National Forest, to better understand the habitat requirements of desert tortoises. Other desert tortoise studies include a collaboration with the University of Southern Georgia to measure nest temperatures. Results will aid in future research efforts on temperature sex determination in desert tortoises.

Elk-Cams The department is using remote video cameras, infrared sensors and satellite uplinks to study elk movement in proximity to the Highway 260 widening and realignment project east of Payson to assist the Arizona Department of Transportation in its efforts to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.

Efficiency

Cost Savings In a year when the state and nation experienced a financial downturn, the department weathered the economic hard times by reducing costs, increasing efficiency and improving services to its customer, and realized annual savings of more than \$1.3 million.

Web Site The department unveiled its improved Web site this year, drawing an average of 7,250 visitors a day. Customers can now go to the site to download regulations, find out about clinics and classes, read the latest wildlife news, purchase licenses, apply for the hunt draw, and more. This was the second year that hunters could apply online for

the fall big-game draw, and the number of online applications increased by 46 percent.

Water for Wildlife Addressing drought-related challenges called for preemptive measures. In 2002, the department delivered more than 1.8 million gallons of water to wildlife water catchments statewide, more than quadruple the normal average. To avoid a similar situation in 2003, we made a significant effort to conduct preventative water hauling during the first quarter. More than 121,000 gallons of water were hauled in southwestern Arizona, well in advance of the high summer temperatures. This effort, along with much needed winter rainfall, resulted in the need to haul only 42,000 additional gallons of water during the spring, down approximately 80 percent from 2002.

In addition to preventative water hauling, personnel and volunteers from conservation organizations upgraded more than 25 wildlife water developments statewide. These upgraded facilities gather and store natural rainwater more efficiently. None of them required supplemental water hauling during 2003.

Intranet Site The department's Intranet site was launched on June 25, 2003. The site provides a place for employees to learn, share and communicate work-related information. It reduces the amount of interoffice mail and paycheck stuffers and is an important time-saver for field employees with home offices.

Wolf Pack Patrols The department led or participated in 17 multi-agency "wolf pack" patrols for off-highway-vehicle law enforcement

Above, Mark McKechnie of the department's Canyon Creek Hatchery releases trout in Tempe Town Lake. Right, providing safe opportunities for recreational shooting sports remains a department priority. Opposite page, the department provided a \$10,000 Heritage Fund donation and staff assistance for the Yuma Birding Festival.



and education. Officers made 3,280 contacts, issued 68 citations and gave 305 warnings. The department led or participated in 14 multi-agency operating under the influence (OUI) check points and wolf pack patrols for watercraft law enforcement and education. Officers made 5,625 contacts, issued 464 citations and gave 111 warnings.

Statewide Shooting Ranges A meeting was held with the Bureau of Land Management and Coronado Forest in Tucson to discuss recreational shooting issues. The group agreed to proceed with comprehensive planning efforts on shooting issues in the Tucson basin. Outcomes will involve policy statements, shooting management needs and potential range sites



Outreach

Events In addition to birding and nature festivals and fairs held around the state, the department also participated in the International Sportsmen's Expo in Phoenix, our annual fishing clinic for persons with disabilities, the Arizona Envirothon competition for high school teams, and a pilot project at Desert Harbor retirement community to generate fishing opportunities for residents of adult care facilities. The department also cooperated with Sky Harbor Airport in developing a special exhibit for Terminal Two titled *Fish Stories*, which focused on fish art by local artists and artisans

Tempe Town Lake A partnership between the department, the city of Tempe, and anglers to stock trout at Tempe Town Lake was a big hit. Approximately 30,000 trout were stocked in November, including some very big fish that were extremely popular with anglers. Fishing activity was high throughout the winter.

on public lands. The shooting range staff met with an independent facilitation group to set the parameters for developing a comprehensive public dialogue on recreational shooting issues in the Tucson basin.

Audubon Society The department worked with the Northern Arizona Audubon Society on birding and nature trails at Page Springs and Bubbling Ponds State Fish Hatcheries. The National Audubon Society has designated the sites an "Important Birding Area."

Project WILD The department conducted 30 Project WILD workshops this past year to reach 677 educators. The aim of Project WILD is to provide teachers with training and materials so they can incorporate natural resource education into their classroom routines.

Economic Impact A survey conducted for the Arizona Game and Fish Department showed

that hunters and anglers are having a positive economic impact: they generate around \$1.3 billion in retail sales annually for the state, with much of that economic activity occurring in rural counties.

Issues

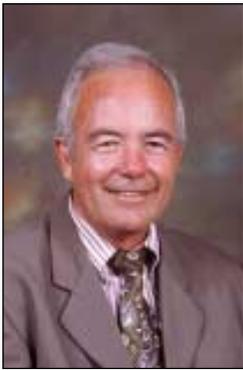
Drought Record drought conditions continued to take their toll on the state's wildlife. For the fall 2003 season, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission approved the lowest number of deer permits since the permit system was developed. Elk hunt-permit levels were slightly lower than last year.

West Nile Virus All employees were required to attend training on West Nile Virus and how to avoid contracting it. This mosquito-borne virus was first detected in the United States in 1999 and has since traveled to 46 states, including Arizona. The department's Wildlife Center at Adobe Mountain worked with medical personnel and the National Veterinary Services Laboratory to test the amount and timing of West Nile Virus vaccinations for birds.

Invasive Species This issue of growing concern nationally and internationally can affect economies, ecosystems and human health. The department has responded with public information campaigns and other actions, including a meeting with the departments of Agriculture and Transportation and a member of the Governor's staff to discuss potential development of an invasive species policy for Arizona and working with the Giant Salvinia Task Force on an eradication effort in the Colorado River.

Exotic Newcastle Disease In conjunction with the Arizona Department of Agriculture's Administrative Order to aid in preventing the spread of Exotic Newcastle Disease to birds within the state, the department temporarily suspended issuance of field trial and field trial training licenses and shooting preserve licenses where birds are transported. Persons who had already obtained licenses were advised to cancel or delay the event until the order was lifted.

Monkey Pox The department participated in a multiagency task force to aid in the management of monkey pox, should it appear in Arizona. Due to the department's statutory authority for wildlife, we will play a key role in containment if a positive case is found here.



Joe Carter, Chairman



Susan E. Chilton



W. Hays Gilstrap



Joe Melton



Michael M. Golightly

The 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 chairman 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.

Officer Brian Anthony talks with a dirt bike rider near Sycamore Creek in the Tonto National Forest. The department stepped up coordination efforts for off-highway-vehicle law enforcement and education, leading or participating in 17 multiagency OHV "wolf pack" patrols.



Financial Statement

Fiscal Year Revenues by Fund	2001-02	2002-03
Game and Fish Fund	\$21,585,300	\$19,425,100
Watercraft Licensing Fund	2,271,500	2,094,900
Game, Nongame Fund	193,600	184,300
Federal Fund	16,796,700	20,657,500
Heritage Fund	9,627,400	10,154,300
Off-highway Vehicle Fund	699,500	842,900
Capital Improvement/Conservation Development Funds	903,900	733,200
Other Funds (See Detail Below)	1,335,700	1,801,500
Total Revenue All Sources	\$53,413,600	\$55,893,700

Other Funds Detail

GF Land and Water Conservation/ Recreation Development	\$ 900	\$ 500
Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund	169,900	140,500
Waterfowl Conservation Fund	89,000	78,500
Wildlife Endowment Fund	57,500	70,700
Trust/Donation Fund	783,000	1,255,100
Publications Revolving Fund	235,400	256,200
Total Other Funds	\$1,335,700	\$1,801,500

Fiscal Year Expenditures by Fund	2001-02	2002-03
Game and Fish Fund	\$20,369,700	\$20,195,300
Watercraft Licensing Fund	2,148,800	2,440,000
Game, Nongame Fund	158,500	243,900
Federal Fund	16,796,700	19,605,000
Heritage Fund	8,603,100	10,739,120
Off-highway Vehicle Fund	686,600	759,700
Capital Improvement/Conservation Development Funds	853,700	37,200
Other Funds (See Detail Below)	1,590,200	1,427,100
Total Expenditures All Sources	\$51,207,300	\$55,447,320

Other Funds Detail

Game and Fish Land and Water Conservation/Recreation Dev.	\$ 0	\$ 0
Wildlife Theft Prevention Fund	162,300	121,800
Waterfowl Conservation Fund	53,100	154,800
Wildlife Endowment Fund	15,200	8,300
Trust/Donation Fund	1,128,200	865,100
Publications Revolving Fund	231,400	277,100
Total Other Funds	\$1,590,200	\$1,427,100

Fiscal Year Heritage Funds Allocation	2001-02	2002-03
Environmental Education	\$438,425	\$465,372
Public Access	438,425	465,372
Habitat Evaluation and Protection	1,315,275	1,396,118
Urban Wildlife	1,315,275	1,396,118
Habitat Acquisition	2,104,440	2,233,788
IIAPM (Identification, Inventory, Acquisition, Protection, and Management)	3,156,660	3,350,682
Total Allocation	\$8,768,500	\$9,307,450

Calendar Year Sales in Numbers by Group	2001	2002
Licenses (see detail below)	471,016	422,590
Trout stamps	95,504	71,423
Tags	157,812	148,953
Special use licenses/stamps	42,882	96,414
Two Pole Stamp	59,508	57,278
Waterfowl Stamps	7,733	6,733
Migratory Bird Stamps	59,667	58,109
Utah Lake Powell Stamps	2,143	2,029
Miscellaneous permits/licenses	2,188	2,105
Totals	898,453	865,634

Calendar Year License Sales by Category

Resident General Fish	184,991	153,562
Nonresident General Fish	2,272	2,296
Family Fish	3,376	3,638
Resident General Hunt	65,084	61,778
Nonresident General Hunt	17,731	18,407
Resident Hunt/Fish	77,886	73,684
Nonresident Hunt/Fish	1,068	767
Nonresident 3 Day Hunt	8,923	8,398
Urban Fishing	26,412	27,533
Nonresident Colorado River Fish	1,282	1,263
Nonresident 5 Day Fish	15,021	13,068
Resident Youth Hunt/Fish	21,543	20,149
Nonresident 4 Month Fish	7,064	6,533
Resident/Nonresident 1 Day Fish	33,949	28,078
Resident Youth Group 2 Day Fish	80	77
Resident General Fish Nov/Dec	3,936	3,121
Nonresident General Fish Nov/Dec	280	238
Lifetime License	118	143
Grand Totals	471,016	422,733

Calendar Year License and Tag Sales	2001	2002
Licenses	\$13,644,478	\$12,641,910
Stamps	1,655,399	1,547,037
Tags	5,026,645	4,498,915
Total Value	\$20,326,522	\$18,687,862

Notes

1. All figures are rounded to the nearest one hundred.
2. Capital Improvement and Conservation Development Funds are combined for revenues, as the Cap. Improvement Fund earns interest only. The Conservation Development Fund receives revenue from the surcharge on license sales.

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