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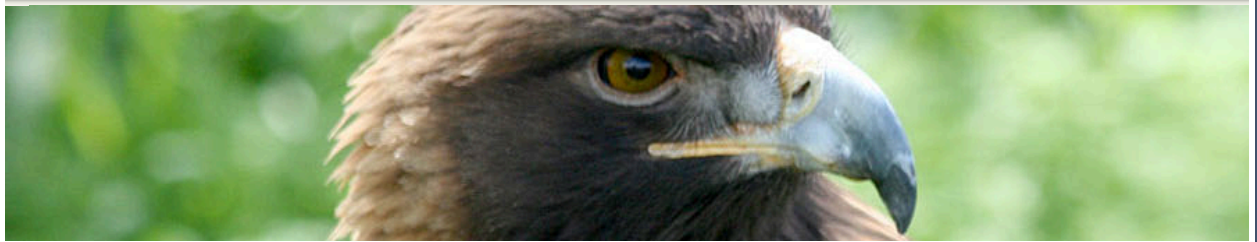
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ODFW RESOURCES

News Releases

ODFW fish hatcheries to close to visitors as precaution against COVID-19

Post

As of March 18, all ODFW fish hatcheries are closed to visitors as precaution against COVID-19.

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

SALEM, Ore.—Effective tomorrow, Wednesday March 18, all of ODFW's state-operated fish hatcheries are closed to public access and all visitors.

The closure is meant to protect staff so they can continue to operate the 33 hatcheries which raise millions of fish critical to the state's economy and biological systems.

While hatcheries are closed, fish stocking of lakes and ponds continue for now. See the trout stocking schedule at <https://myodfw.com/fishing/species/trout/stocking-schedule> or visit the [Recreation Report](#)

Fishing and other outdoor activities like wildlife viewing, hiking and hunting can enable people to get outdoors and still practice social distancing (staying ideally 6 feet from others). Remember before heading outdoors that besides social distancing, you should stay home if you are sick, wash your hands frequently, cover your cough and sneezes, and take other recommended steps to protect yourself, friends, and family while slowing the spread of COVID-19.

ODFW's wildlife areas, which are great places to watch wildlife, will remain open for now, except those areas annually closed until spring to protect wintering big game or migratory birds (see list below). However, visitor centers or areas where the public might congregate indoors will be closed. Bathrooms at wildlife areas remain open. More information about wildlife areas is available at <https://myodfw.com/visit-odfw-wildlife-areas>

ODFW Deputy Director Shannon Hurn notes that many fish hatcheries are operated by a small number of staff (<6) that live on site with their families in state housing. These facilities have confined spaces where the public congregates to view fish or educational materials.

"The risk of having one of our staff exposed to COVID-19 thru interaction with the public or while cleaning areas extensively used by the public (ex. restroom facilities) is concerning," said Hurn. "If a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in our hatchery employees, the department will struggle to operate the facility, and potentially have to expose more employees if onsite staff become unavailable due to illness."

The announcement follows actions by ODFW's federal partners that are also closing public access to federally-owned and operated hatcheries.

Below is a list of wildlife areas that are entirely or partially closed annually until spring to protect wintering wildlife including big game and migratory birds (see the [Wildlife Area Visitor Guide](#), or [Big Game Regulations](#) and [Bird Game Regulations](#) for details). Please follow any motor vehicle restrictions at other wildlife areas.

- Bridge Creek WA (Umatilla County) – Reopens April 15.
- Elkhorn WA (Baker and Union counties) – Reopens April 11.
- Fern Ridge WA (Lane County) – Portions closed through April 30 except on Saturdays.
- Jewell Meadows WA (Clatsop County) – Some refuge and area closures in effect.
- Klamath Wildlife Area (Klamath County) – Portions closed through April 30, reopen May 1.
- Ladd Marsh WA (Union County) – Lands west of Foothill Rd reopen April 1.
- Phillip W Schneider (Grant County) – Reopens April 15.
- Prineville Reservoir WA (Crook County) – Closed to motor vehicles but reopens April 16.

- Sauvie Island WA – There are viewing opportunities but much of WA is closed until April 16 or May 1.
- Wenaha WA (Wallowa County) – Reopens April 1.
- White River WA (Wasco County) – Lands north of Forest Road 27 reopen April 1.

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Contact: Michelle Dennehy
(503) 947-6022
michelle.n.dennehy@odfw.oregon.gov



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4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE :: Salem, OR 97302 :: Main Phone (503) 947-6000 or (800) 720-ODFW [6339]

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