



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Fisheries and Habitat Conservation

Fish & Wildlife Conservation Offices *Tribal Assistance*



A member of the Menominee Nation helps a FWC biologist relocate a large adult lake sturgeon to Menominee Reservation, WI.

There are **561** Federally recognized tribes in the United States, including **225** villages in Alaska. All together, there are **55.7** million acres on **304** reservations. Many Indian lands have remained untouched by conventional land use practices and therefore are islands of high quality ecosystems that attract many sensitive species. Reservations support important fish and wildlife resources, such as antelope, Apache trout, bighorn sheep, bison, elk, Gila trout, mule deer, Pacific salmon, sturgeon, and whitetailed deer.

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCOs) provide technical assistance to Tribal governments and other State or Federal agencies. FWCO biologists help assess the fishery resources on reservations, for example, by developing fishery management

Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCOs) strive to fulfill Federal trust responsibilities to Native American Tribes. We are working with them to conserve and manage fish and wildlife resources on Tribal lands and ceded territories, some of the most important fish and wildlife resources in the Nation.



Shoshone and Arapaho Tribal Fish & Game warden holds a greater sage grouse on Wind River Reservation, WY. The radio collared grouse is part of a collaborative project with Lander FWCO.

plans, coordinating fish habitat improvement, and evaluating the results of management directives. By providing this management assistance and leadership, FWCOs attend to important Federal obligations, improve the quality of life for Native Americans, and fulfill the agency's mission to *conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats.*



Salmon dry on racks in the village of Kaltag, AK. Subsistence fishing is often a necessity for rural tribal villages.

Working with our Tribal partners to conserve fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats.

FWCO Tribal Assistance projects include:

In 2008, the Lander FWCO surveyed 54 sage grouse leks (i.e., breeding grounds) to determine relative abundance on the Wind River Reservation. Sage grouse are a native game species that are also culturally important to Tribal members. The best available method to assess populations has been the lek count. Leks are historic breeding grounds occupied by individual groups of birds and are ideal for monitoring changes in populations. Males observed on leks decreased 50% compared to 2007, due to lower chick survival and recruitment, and increased adult mortality from West Nile Virus. The decrease is likely due to poor chick survival and recruitment due to drought conditions and a decline in cottontail rabbits, an alternate prey species.



The Green Bay FWCO recently assisted the Oneida Conservation Department with a fishery population estimate on Osnuhsa Lake, WI. A two night mark recapture boomshocking assessment was used to estimate populations of bluegill and largemouth bass. Population estimates assist Tribal directors when making management decisions.



With more than 800 miles of streams and 2,300 acres of lakes, the Fort Apache Indian Reservation has more than one-third of the coldwater fishery resources in the state of Arizona. In 2008, the Arizona FWCO and the White Mountain Apache Tribe conducted 1 lake surveys, 10 stream surveys, water quality monitoring in 6 lakes and streams, assisted with 2 elk surveys, and mechanically controlled non-native trout in 4 streams.

Columbia River Fisheries Program Office staff help the Yakama Indian Nation conduct coho marking programs for tribal restoration efforts in the Yakima River, WA. In 2007, the Service adipose clipped 479,717 coho at Eagle Creek National Fish Hatchery for release into the Yakima River in support of the evaluation efforts of the Tribal coho restoration program.



For more information about Tribal Assistance, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Fisheries and Habitat Conservation at (202) 208-6394 or visit <http://www.fws.gov/fisheries/fwco/>

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
(800) 344-WILD
<http://www.fws.gov>**

Fall 2008