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# Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



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## Region 6 Priority Projects

### Prairie Dogs

Rickey Jones continued the black-tailed prairie dog translocation project at Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD) with the assistance of Dustin Casady, Dana Shellhorn, Kyle Colburn (SCA) and Colorado State University-Pueblo students and professor. The December 2019 trapping effort captured 19 black-tailed prairie dogs from a Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) owned property in Pueblo West, CO that were then released on PCD. Trapping efforts will continue summer and fall 2020. Re-establishing the historic prairie dog population will help increase bio-diversity on PCD, attracting burrowing owls, mountain plovers, swift fox, and ferruginous hawks to the short-grass prairie habitat.



Top: Black-tailed prairie dog captured and released at Pueblo Chemical Depot.

Right: Red tailed hawks observed during raptor surveys at Buckley AFB



Jones and Colburn transferring prairie dogs from traps to transport kennels.

### Pronghorn

Alex Schubert and Cole Brittain completed a monthly pronghorn survey at F.E. Warren AFB. They counted 208 pronghorn, which is less than the month before and one year ago. A major snowstorm prior to the survey may have caused many pronghorn to exit the base. They also deployed five game trail cameras and the base's exit points to determine pronghorn movement patterns.

### Raptors

The Buckley Air Force Base Natural Resource Program conducted two winter raptor surveys in December. These surveys examine raptor species and behaviors that occur on base. This information ultimately guides management decisions such as habitat modification to reduce bird activity around the airfield. They can also give insight into effectiveness of management activities.

### Hunting

US Air Force Academy (USAFA) hosted the 2019 deer hunt Dec. 7-8 and 14-15. Many members of FWCO staff assisted with the hunt as escorts. 27 hunters came out over the two weekends and 26 filled their tags, harvesting 22 bucks and 4 does during the hunt. The hunt manages deer populations on the academy and helps lower animal-vehicle accidents. All animals harvested during the hunt were tested for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) by Colorado Parks and Wildlife.



Top: A hunter displays his buck harvested during the USAFA December deer hunts.



## Partnerships & Accountability



Colorado River Cutthroat Trout  
(credit Michael Forsberg)

- Chris Kennedy and Solomon Pomerantz attended the Colorado River Cutthroat (CRC) Trout Coordination Team meeting in Grand Junction, CO with state, federal, tribal, local, and NGO partners from across Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, and Utah to discuss the recovery of this important subspecies of cutthroat trout. Partners presented numerous recovery projects undertaken in the past year, including several which Colorado FWCO staff have played a role in.
- Dustin Casady attended the semi-annual Buckley Air Force Base (BAFB) Bird Hazard Working Group (BHWG) Meeting. During this meeting members discussed the 2018 and 2019 bird strike data, current Bird Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) projects, and future BASH projects. The BHWG Meeting members were pleased with progress on BASH projects. They also acknowledged the great teamwork of U.S. Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Department of Agriculture in working together on BASH projects.

## Leadership in Science and Technology

Graduate Research underway at Colorado State University (CSU) – Cole Brittain (USWFS) is currently conducting a research project at CSU aimed at improving rock ramp fishways for small bodied native fish. Testing will be completed on a rock ramp fishway replica built inside the Foothills Fisheries Laboratory that accommodates a wide range of manipulations in order to pursue research goals. After months of preparation, research is now underway to determine the ideal size substrate which should be placed on the fishway floor to achieve maximum passage success for Arkansas Darters, Flat-head Chub and Stonecats.

River sediment, the size of pea gravel, installed as the first of four various sized substrates that is being tested in the fishway.



## Habitat Conservation & Management

- Brian Mihlbachler participated in the Jacks Valley planning charrette for long-term use and development of the USAFA training area. He provided input on new road/trail development, fire protection, storm water management, noxious weed control, cultural resource protection, and wildlife management.
- Brian Wilfong conducted forest health and hazard tree inspection on USAFA grounds. He documented compromised trees via GPS and marked trees for removal or further assessment/monitoring. He has been refining forest health and hazard tree monitoring/data collection using cloud based GIS/GPS apps Collector for ArcMap by storing and providing access to collected data in a user-friendly format.

## Welcome to the FWCO!

We would like to welcome Solomon Pomerantz, Mike Jungen, Montanna Hayes, and Katy Fitzgerald to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. Solomon joins us as the assistant project leader on detail from US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Mike is taking over as the fish and wildlife biologist at McConnell AFB in Wichita, KS and Montanna is the Student Conservation Association (SCA) intern at the base. Katy is the new biologist at Peterson, Schriever, and Cheyenne Mountain AFB in Colorado Springs, CO.

