

# Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



JANUARY 2020

## Region 6 Priority Projects



Black-tailed prairie dog captured at Pueblo Chemical Depot in December.

### Prairie Dogs

Rickey Jones completed boundary-mapping surveys on the black-tailed prairie dog release sites at the Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD), as part of the 2020 translocation project. Release site boundaries were mapped along with burrow locations and depths. This will determine where prairie dogs will be released on PCD from the summer and fall trapping efforts and how many prairie dogs each release site will support.



Left: Black Rosy-Finch captured during trapping efforts. Right: Brown-capped Rosy-Finch held for identification using plumage characteristics.

### Birds

US Air Force Academy (USAFA) held a Christmas Bird Count on January 3rd. A total of 18 individuals came out to help count both on and off the base. During the count 49 species were documented and 2876 individual birds were counted.

Dana Shellhorn assisted Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) with trapping Rosy-Finches near Gunnison, CO. Brown-capped, Gray-crowned, and Black Rosy-Finches were all captured during the four days of trapping. This was part of the CPW's ongoing monitoring project for Brown-capped Rosy-Finches that has occurred over several years. The three species of Rosy-Finches live in the high alpine and Brown-capped Rosy-Finches have the smallest range of them all. They are found only in the mountains of Colorado and northern New Mexico.



Mule deer buck observed at US Air Force Academy during wildlife survey.

### Hunting

USAFA natural resource office coordinated with local Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) biologists to organize and conduct an annual deer and elk survey at USAFA. CPW is summarizing the survey data, which is useful for assessing long-term trends in herd size, age/sex ratios, and setting hunter harvest objectives. This year 241 deer were counted with 42.59 adult bucks per 100 does.

During the monthly pronghorn survey at F.E. Warren Air Force Base Alex Schubert and Cole Brittain counted 163 animals. This is an all-time low but does fall within the target social carrying capacity for the area. The low numbers this month could be due to the hunting pressure on the installation. Over 50 pronghorn hunters per year have been pursuing the animals in the designated F. E. Warren AFB Hunter Management Area for the past three pronghorn hunting seasons.

## Partnerships & Accountability

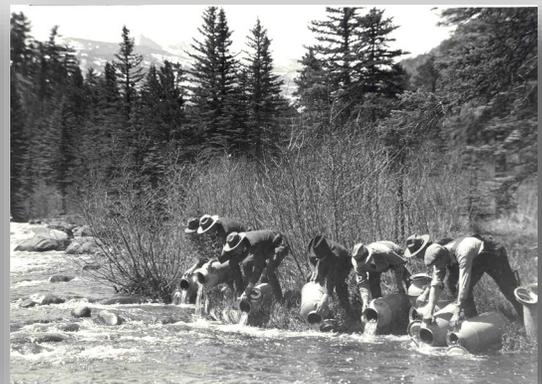


Top: Rio Grande Sucker  
Bottom: Rio Grande Chub

- Cole Brittain, Dana Shellhorn and Solomon Pomerantz travelled to Santa Fe, NM for the annual Rio Grande Sucker and Chub team meeting. Representatives from Colorado Parks and Wildlife, New Mexico Dept. of Game and Fish, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and USFWS from both Colorado and New Mexico, National Park Service, Tribal partners, and other NGO partners attended the meeting. Dana and Cole presented on the sampling efforts and ongoing monitoring occurring at the Baca National Wildlife Refuge. The meeting also discussed the use of a new database to spatially catalogue fish data, genetic analysis of these fish populations as well as conservation strategies and long-term team goals for recovery of these species.
- Alex Schubert coordinated with USFWS Partners for Wildlife, USFWS Wyoming Endangered Species Office, Dept. of Defense (DoD), WY Dept. of Transportation, Federal Highway Department, and other partners to assess impacts of a proposed stream restoration project along Crow Creek downstream from the F. E. Warren AFB.

## Leadership in Science and Technology

Chris Kennedy completed and submitted article on Greenback Cutthroat Trout and contemporary and historic photos to the Fish and Wildlife Service sesquicentennial book project. The year 2021 marks the 150th anniversary of fisheries conservation in the United States and this book will chronicle this history through biographical sketches, photos and species profiles.



Left: Historic fish spawning at Rocky Mountain National Park. Right: Historic fish stocking at RMNP.

## Habitat Conservation & Management

- Bryan Wilfong, USAFA forestry technician began sampling salt damaged trees in areas where salinity values were collected from drainages and exploring relationships between those values in an ArcGIS environment. He continued collecting data on water and salinity values in drainages around the base.
- Dustin Casady, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Kris Kooi, U.S. Department of Agriculture, worked with the U.S. Air Force Wildland Fire Center to cut and chip over two hundred juniper trees at Buckley Air Force Base. The team also worked to clean up areas where trees had been previously removed but not completely cleaned up.