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# Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



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## Unified Regions 5/7 Priority Projects

### Species Conservation & Management

Alex Schubert coordinated with Department of Defense (DoD), U.S. Air Force and Pleasant Valley Fish Farm to stock 894lbs of Donaldson Rainbow Trout in North and South Pearson Lakes in early March at F.E. Warren Air Force Base (AFB). As the winter ice melted off, more anglers began catching fish from the lakes. Staff from the F.E. Warren AFB outdoor recreation office volunteered to monitor the lakes on a sporadic basis and inform people of the fishing limits, check creels, and take down information of violators.



Alex Schubert releases a net full of Rainbow Trout during fish stocking in North and South Pearson Lakes at F.E. Warren AFB.

Rickey Jones met with a DoD contractor for the completion of base-wide planning level surveys on Pueblo Chemical Depot which includes flora and fauna surveys. This consists of traversing sites on the base and recording vegetation communities, vegetation condition, all plant species observed, and visual or audible detections of mammals, birds, herpetofauna, and invertebrates as well as signs of occupancy. An inventory of the flora and fauna detected within the installation will provide management recommendations for the report.

### Leadership in Science & Technology



Arkansas Darter using pectoral fins to rest from flows during experiment trials at Colorado State University's fish lab.

- Cole Brittain is continuing graduate research at Colorado State University to determine the effects different sized substrate on fish passage. Substrate can potentially have a large effect on rock-ramp fish passage structures for small bodied native fish from the Great Plains eco-region. Arkansas Darters, one of three species used in this study, have shown the ability to use their pectoral fins to help rest from the flows.
- Dustin Casady attended the Colorado Arborist and Lawn Care Professionals Conference in Fort Collins, CO in early March. The conference was a training session for pesticide applicators to receive continuing education credits and renew their licenses. Dustin also gained invaluable knowledge on new and better application methods, tools, and pesticide products to combat invasive species on Buckley AFB.

## Partnerships & Accountability

Since mid-March all members of the COFWCO staff have been teleworking due to COVID-19 until further notice. The staff is finding creative ways to carry out the Fish and Wildlife Service mission while maintaining social distancing and other safety recommendations.



- Pam Sponholtz, Brian Mhlbachler, Katy Fitzgerald, and Dustin Casady attended the National Military Fish and Wildlife Association meeting in the Omaha, Nebraska in early March. Brian presented a paper entitled “Unique Hunting Opportunities on Semi-Urbanized Areas and Training Lands of the US Air Force Academy.” Dustin prepared a poster on Integrated Bird/Wildlife Aircraft Strike Hazard Mitigation at Buckley Air Force Base.
- Bryan Wilfong designed a trail monitoring reporting form that allows trail users to become volunteer trail condition monitors for the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) trail system. The form uses a downloadable app or web browser that allows participants to describe the problem, record date of observation and location, and include a photograph. He has also developed a fact sheet with basic trail concepts and common trail problems to inform monitors on how to assess and report trail conditions using the form.
- Dana Shellhorn traveled to the Denver Zoo for the Boreal Toad Team meeting in early March. Multiple state and federal partners attended and presented on their conservation projects from the 2019 field season including reintroduction of Boreal Toads on the Gunnison and Rio Grande National Forests in which Dana participated. The Denver zoo gave a tour of their reptile and amphibian research facility and discussed the possibility of increasing Boreal Toad breeding and tadpole raising facilities after successfully breeding and releasing tadpoles in 2019.

Top: Hunters pose with a buck during the USAFA annual deer hunts in December.

Bottom: Boreal Toad captured during a breeding survey on the Gunnison National Forest, CO.



## Habitat Conservation & Management

- Joe Murphy, USAFA Forester met with representatives from the Colorado State Forest Service which holds a cooperative agreement to plant a series of trees and woody vegetation in USAFA’s urban areas. This meeting in early March was the first on-site meeting to further narrow down planting sites and suitable species. Planting was expected to begin in spring/summer of 2020 but that has been postponed.
- Melissa Whittingslow is growing milkweed from seeds collected at USAFA last fall and other native flowering plant seeds in a small grow area she has created at her house. All of the successful plants will be transplanted to the pollinator gardens in the Douglass Valley Park and outside the Natural Resources Office at the USAFA this spring.



Spring in the FWCO! From left to right: Mule deer fawn at Buckley AFB, Swift Fox from a game camera at Pueblo Chemical Depot, and Burrowing owl at Buckley AFB.