

Oregon
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program
Deschutes Habitat Priorities

Biological Description

This area will focus on the upper Deschutes and lower Crooked river subbasins. The majority of the land is in Federal ownership and is comprised of a diverse landscape with deep canyons, high mountain meadows and arid deserts. Fish resources are a primary program focus, with populations of listed bull trout and interior redband trout, a Service species of concern. Anadromous species, including steelhead, fall Chinook, and sockeye, are being reintroduced in conjunction with hydropower activities and will also benefit from our stream restoration actions. Stream flows are heavily influenced by dam operations and irrigation withdrawals. Irrigation diversions provide barriers to fish movement and entrainment and mortality in irrigation ditches. Wetland habitats along rivers provide important functions in maintaining baseflows and providing migratory bird habitat, as well as supporting key populations of Oregon spotted frog in specific areas, such as the Little Deschutes. Uplands are characterized by expansive sage brush communities with greater sage-grouse lek areas. Ranching is the primary private land-use. Deschutes is Oregon's fastest growing county since the late 1980's which contributes to the threats to habitat. In particular, threats come from recreation, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, inappropriate livestock management, and development.

Priority Habitats/Key Resources

In-Stream Habitat	Shrub-Steppe
Riparian & Floodplain Habitat	Migratory birds (upland & wetland dependent)
Permanent and seasonal wetland basins	

Focus species: Bull trout, interior redband trout, and reintroduced anadromous species, Oregon spotted frog, greater sage grouse, migratory wetland and riparian birds, shrub steppe and grassland birds.

Important Factors

The focus area offers the Service unique opportunities to work within the ranching and agricultural communities to provide technical assistance and funding to proactively restore fish passage, stream meander patterns, floodplain connectivity, restore permanent & seasonal wetlands, reduce impacts of cattle, and establish riparian vegetation to improve stream conditions. Strategic opportunities to restore shrub steppe will be sought to improve shrub habitats *while* sustaining healthy rangeland to benefit grazing. Current Partners program activity in this area has exhibited excellent partnership potential with ODFW, Crooked River Watershed Council, Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, Crook County SWCD, and numerous private landowners.