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Lathrop & Capurro Intern Year End Report

I have now completed my third and final season with the Nevada Department of Wildlife under the James Lathrop & Wayne Capurro Internship program. I am confident in saying that these last few years have taught me much of what I had hoped to gain from this position. The ability to dive headfirst and catch a glimpse of the life of a Nevada game biologist has been truly rewarding. I would like to thank the Nevada Wildlife Record Book, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited and the Nevada Department of Wildlife for providing me with the opportunity to aid in better conserving Nevada's wildlife and habitat. This summer I was able to perform a wide variety of tasks spread over the Eastern Region of Nevada and I will do my best to summarize them here in this report.

I hit the ground running this year when I started working and haven't stopped since, which I thoroughly enjoyed because I was always in a new place performing new duties. Earlier this year I performed elk incentive for a few biologists. Elk incentive counts are performed for those who own private lands which have a number of elk on them interfering with the landowners' ability to carry out their tasks. The landowner enrolls into a program with NDOW and the game biologist determines what can be done to better manage the elk population on the private land. I am very familiar with this task because I grew up as an avid sportsman always looking at big game animals; therefore, I was effective in locating and counting the number of elk on these private lands.

I was able to perform several northern goshawk surveys for the Eastern Region diversity biologist. Performing these types of surveys was new to me, but I was excited to learn something

new and survey a Nevada species I never thought twice about before. Later in the summer I was lucky enough to go on a norther goshawk trapping venture in the East Humboldts; however, we were unsuccessful. Although we were unsuccessful, I was able to gain knowledge on how to set up a modified miss-net for these kinds of traps and a great horned owl was used to lure the birds in.

This summer I was sent, on several occasions, to locate deer collars that were giving a mortality signal. This was new for me because I have never been sent to retrieve a collar from a dead animal. I have surveyed plenty of alive big game species with collars using satellite and VHF technologies. This was tricky in some instances because I have never been used to getting that close to a collar using telemetry. However, it was very rewarding in learning how to better use this mode of tracking because I feel that it will be necessary to know in the future.

One task that I spent a fair amount of time on this summer was building fences to keep out wild horses and cattle from certain areas such as spring heads and sensitive riparian areas. I was able to build fence in the White Pine Range, Ruby Valley, and the Goshute Mountain Range. Although these fence builds were arduous, it was rewarding to see the potential benefit these wildlife fences would have on sensitive areas. The fences are designed to keep out wild horses and cattle, but allow wildlife to move across them and utilize these areas far into the future. These fences will drastically slow down the degradation of these sensitive areas and given enough time will rehabilitate, naturally or with the help of seeding, back to their native state.

I was sent on several occasions to locate multiple collared deer to asses if they had a fawn. This was important because the biologist wanted to better understand fawn recruitment throughout the summer in order to understand the population dynamics of the deer in the area.

This was challenging work in the heat, but with the use of telemetry I was able to close in on several deer to take notes on their body condition as well as look to see if they had a fawn.

I also worked with a research team out of Utah State University to aid in capturing dusky grouse near Ely, NV to apply backpack transmitters for their project. This was an interesting experience because it was, again, something I have never done before. I have always hunted these birds growing up, but trying to capture them for a research project gave me a new appreciation for this species. Although I never was able to capture any, I was within 30 feet of numerous birds with a noose pole. I also learned how to set up and maintain a walk-in trap for these birds.

I was fortunate enough to be able to go with one of the biologists to perform aerial antelope surveys in the North Tuscarora Mountains. This was a truly rewarding experience to be a part of because although I have had plenty of hours in aircraft, the intensity and precision of these sort of flights astounded me. We were able to locate and classify over 400 antelope in that area, which put into perspective of how much of the landscape this species can inhabit.

As the end of the summer came to an abrupt end, I was able to perform turkey surveys near Austin, NV. I have never had much experience with these birds and it was interesting to be able to observe them and note similarities and differences between other large ground birds in Nevada. It was exciting to see that these birds were doing so well in their first year of introduction into this part of Nevada.

Having the opportunity to gain experience working as a conservation aid for the last three summers has been the most fulfilling aspect of my post-primary school life. I wish that I could have had the opportunity to work the full four seasons, but I am intending to graduate early,

October 2018, from the University of Montana Western with a BS in Ecology focusing on Fish and Wildlife Management. I am thankful to have worked as an intern for the Nevada Department of Wildlife with the help of NWRB and NBU. The experience I have gained from this position has further solidified the fact that I will do everything in my power to become a biologist for the State of Nevada so that I can do my best job in conserving Nevada's wildlife and habitat for future generations. One thing that I have learned about this job is that there are some days where backbreaking labor is needed to meet a conservation goal while other days require the use of every neuron in my brain to meet another; therefore, being a well-rounded individual with a strong work ethic and determination is greatly beneficial to the species of Nevada.

Although the picture is blurry, there is a collared doe with two fawns suckling. This was an amazing sight to see because I have personally never seen twin fawns suckling at the same time.

I had several encounters with rattlesnakes this summer. After this job I feel differently about them and realize they are trying just as hard as everything else to survive.

This picture fully illustrates the impact that wild horses have on Nevada's ecosystem. This is a spring that has undergone severe degradation from over usage. We fenced this off with 700 lineal feet of pipe rail fence to keep the wild horses out and still allow the wildlife in.

Sometimes I find some treasures while hiking around performing elk incentive.

Being able to have the opportunity to fly as an intern was a humbling experience.