

Kyle Larsen

Lathrop & Capurro Intern Year End Report

Before I knew it, my sophomore year of college was over, and I was coming back home to Nevada where I could continue to expand my knowledge in the wildlife field as a Lathrop-Capurro intern. Despite being in the program for three seasons, I am still amazed at how much I learn and much experience I gain in just a few months of work.

I spent my third summer in the eastern region, which was a big change of scenery from my last couple summers. I spent my first week in eastern region traveling throughout area six conducting ruffed grouse surveys. I learned how a ruffed grouse sounds when it drums and what the preferred habitat is for these birds. My second week was spent in area six as well. I met up with the other eastern region Lathrop-Capurro intern before traveling to the Diamond A ranch where we conducted elk incentive surveys to observe the amount of elk usage on the private property. After completing the surveys, we spent time finding and observing historically recorded Goshawk nests to see if they were being used and to record the condition of the nest. I was able to learn about the habitat that goshawks use and what they prefer to build their nests in. We were also able to spot one flying by, which allowed me to see what an adult goshawk looks like. I had never spent a lot of time around non-game birds, so it was a great learning experience for me. My third week was spent looking for collars on deceased deer and for a sage grouse transmitter in the Owyhee desert that had gone into mortality mode. Finding the deer collars gave me a chance to learn more about telemetry and how to locate a collar. I also learned how the bone marrow should look in a healthy deer opposed to an unhealthy one. Unfortunately, the telemetry was not working on the sage grouse transmitter, so it I was unable to locate it.

My fourth week of the summer was one where I gained a lot of experience. I traveled down to Ely to meet up with game biologist Kody Menghini and technicians from Utah State University. We drove out to Duck Creek to try and capture dusky grouse. We set up nets down in



the middle of the draw where we were going to try and push the birds down into them. After setting up the nets, two technicians and I went to the top of the draw and began walking down to flush birds downhill. We flushed a few birds down, but they did not fly into the nets. Once we got further down the hill, almost to the end point, we spotted a hen just below us. Using a long noose pole, we were able to catch her. Measurements were taken of the bird and a backpack transmitter was put on her. It

was interesting to see how the bird was handled safely using a bag to cover her eyes to limit stress and how to hold them so movement is limited. It was also interesting to see how the transmitters were placed on the bird. This was overall a new and memorable experience for me. The rest of this week was spent building jack leg fence around springs to keep horses and cattle out.

My next week of work was spent in area seven looking for collared deer to see if they had fawns. We would get the last known GPS point of the does and then use telemetry to find the exact location of the deer. It was a great opportunity to gain telemetry experience and see that the deer are having good fawn recruitment. The following week, I traveled to the Goshute range to build pipe rail fence around a spring. The spring was in bad condition due to heavy wild horse usage; therefore, the fence was built to try and restore the habitat that was damaged. I learned how the pipe rail fence is built and what its ultimate purpose is. Despite the hard work that goes

into the build, it was rewarding to see the fence up and knowing that the wildlife in the area were going to benefit from it.

I spent the next three weeks in area six and seven checking up on the collared does to see the fawn survival rate and finding collars from deceased deer. The fawns seemed to be doing well and the deer were not dying due to sickness, which was a good sign. One day during the three-week period, I traveled out to the Owyhee desert with game biologist, Matt Jeffress, to find a sage grouse hen with a transmitter that made a mass movement across the desert to a riparian area on the IL ranch. The hen was in good health, but we were unable to find any chicks with her. I was able to learn a lot of small tricks that helped with telemetry.



The following week, I traveled to Ely where I spent the week with the technicians conducting the dusky grouse study. In the morning, we would spend time hiking and running the bird dogs to try and flush up birds, so we could make an attempt to capture them with a noose pole. In the afternoon, we would go around and check the traps that were set. This week sprung a lot of firsts for me. I learned why the traps were designed like they were, and I learned about the movements of the grouse and the behavior of the grouse, especially when a distress call is made. Although we did not catch any birds all week, it was a great experience for me.

After traveling back to Elko at the end of the week, I was given the opportunity to go on an antelope flight in area six. I had never flown in a helicopter before, so it was a new feeling to me.

It was an incredible experience to see the wildlife and country from that perspective and to learn a little bit about how a biologist's population counts operate.



After my week in Ely, I traveled out to Ruby valley to build a 7000 ft. pipe rail fence to keep the wild horses out. While it was hard work, it was great to watch the fence go up and know that in a few years the habitat in the area was going to benefit greatly.



My second to last week of summer, I went to the Toiyabe Range to look for turkey hens and broods. I had never spent much time dealing with turkeys, so it was fairly new to me. We found a good population of turkeys, and all the hens we saw had at least 2-3 chicks with it. I learned that this was a good recruitment for turkeys and that if the populations keep going like they are; there will be a good survival rate for these birds. I also learned how to change the frequency when using telemetry to better hone in on the birds' location. It was also interesting to see the collars they put on the turkeys.



My last week of the summer, I went out to the Owyhee desert to check on guzzler conditions and to try and find sage grouse in the area of the recent Martin fire. Unfortunately, the fire claimed a large amount of sage grouse habitat and we did not see any birds. One of the two guzzlers was damaged as well. However, one guzzler was in good condition and both of them had water in them still. We also saw sign that the antelope in the area were still using the water development sites to drink.

My third summer drew to an end, but my time in the eastern region was one for the books. The amount of knowledge and experience I attained this summer is something I can carry with me into my future in this field of work. Being able to learn things in the field and apply what I learn in a classroom is a great experience. This summer was one I'll never forget. I cannot thank the NDOW biologists and staff enough for taking me under their wing and teaching me skills and knowledge that I can use to be successful in my future. I would also like to give a huge thanks to Nevada Bighorns Unlimited, the Nevada Wildlife Record Book, and Nevada Department of Wildlife for giving me the opportunity to experience this field of work and gain

the memories and knowledge that will help me pursue my goal of working with wildlife in the future.