

## **2021 Lathrop and Capurro Internship Summary Dalton Kinamon**

My internship with the western region at NDOW was one of the best experiences of my life. Growing up as an avid sportsman I have always dreamed of working in the field of wildlife. For my first year I was able to be close to home and began to learn about the management of wildlife through the perspective of NDOW. On my first day I went to headquarters for orientation, and I met my supervisor at the Valley Road office, Copper Munson. After my first day I was thrown right into the action, and I jumped right in as best as I knew how.

The first week of my internship I had the opportunity to work with the eastern region Habitat Division. This opportunity was possible because Jason Salisbury, a western region biologist, was aiding with the project. Over the course of two days, we completed the first NDOW tree planting project, where we planted crabapple trees in marshy meadows to supply wildlife with food. This project was led by Jeremy and Caleb out of the eastern region, and we planted the trees north of Austin. This was an exciting project to be a part of and will hopefully pave the way for other new habitat projects to enhance wildlife food sources in Nevada.



I also was included on an attempt to capture a mountain lion with our veterinarian Nate and his tech/assistance Chris Morris my first week. We met in Spanish Springs at 4am with two dog runners who would aid us in the capture of the female lion. One of the dog runners was

named Boonie, who had stories of his experience hunting wild cats around the world. Sadly, after a full day's work of trying to locate the lion, we were unable to find her. Mid-day our GPS locations showed that she had traveled across the Pah Rah Range in 12 hours, which explained our difficulty locating her. Coincidentally, on my drive home from Reno on Saturday of that weekend, I saw Nate, Chris, and the dog runners near Derby Dam returning from a successful capture and release of our target lion.

After my first week, my mentor Sam Oberto began his summer internship, and we spent the rest of the summer working together. Due to Sam's EMT course he was restricted with his work schedule, and I spent time working without him picking up extra experience and time with biologists.

Throughout the summer we camped out doing chukar and guzzler surveys across the western region. Depending on the area and the amount of time we had our surveys could be a one-day trip or we would camp for 4-5 days at a time. During our surveys we concentrated our efforts walking a one-mile circle around guzzlers or spring and recording the small game we saw. While observing the small game we would note the habitat condition, water levels, guzzler conditions, and the spring conditions. Upon return we would then compose a report from each trip that would include the data we collected in our survey and pass the report onto the biologist overseeing the area.

In addition to the chukar surveys we conducted a ruffed grouse and sheep survey near Paradise Valley on the Calico Mountain Range. During our sheep survey we located a herd with two collared ewes and attempted a composition survey. In the brief time we were able to spot the herd we were able to see the group did not contain any lambs. Closer to our camp we conducted

morning ruffed grouse drum survey and heard two grouse drumming in the aspen patches along the Lye creek.

I also spent three weeks of our summer doing a geese capture project in the Reno/Carson area with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) partnered with NDOW. During this project we captured geese in local parks and at golf courses for relocation to other regions of Nevada. During the project we successfully captured, banded, and relocated well over 1000 geese. While capturing the geese, we put an identification band on their leg that would allow us to record their travel patterns after relocation when they are harvested or recaptured by NDOW. This project was a great experience of how to capture and handle birds for relocation via vehicle transportation.

Much of my summer was spent working with our two black bear biologists Heather and Carl who were constantly busy with bear projects and captures. Over the course of the summer, I would work extra hours on Fridays to aid with bear projects and releases. I helped set culvert traps used to catch problem bears without causing any physical harm. Once we had captured a bear and it was sedated, I

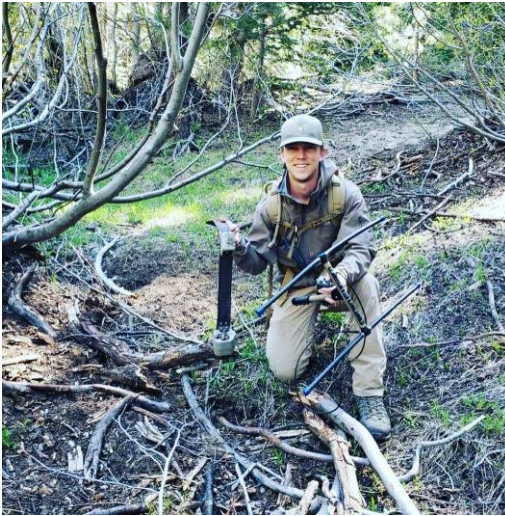


helped with identifying, checking and monitoring the vitals and health, collaring, and tagging of each bear (if needed). After our examination the bear was then monitored through recovery before being released. Our goal when releasing the bear was to make the experience of people negative but not harmful to prevent future problems. We used Karelian bear dogs to chase the bears on or off leash depending on if it was a hard or soft release. With a hard release we would

let the dogs chase the bears without being restrained by a leash, while a soft release we would chase the bears with the dogs under our control on a leash. These dogs are very effective with chasing bears and creating a negative experience by barking, nipping, and chasing without aggressively attacking the released bear.

A special release for me was when we released four yearling black bears that had just returned from a rehab facility. We released the four yearlings all together in the Pine Nut Mountains on a healthy spring. Before the release we had to use BAM to sedate the bears so we would be able to tag their ears for future identification. The use of BAM allowed us to quickly reverse the sedative so that after tagging we could transport them to the release site. Due to the use of BAM, I learned that the four bears consisting of three males and one female all weighed about 210lbs. This was significant since an average adult female weighs 180-200lbs on average, but the extra weight gave the yearlings more time to discover food sources in their new location.

Periodically throughout the summer I also spent time using GPS and telemetry to locate



and recover bear collars that had fallen off black bears. Most of our dropped collars were in or around the Tahoe Basin leading to hikes with beautiful views of the Tahoe area. The size of the collars made finding them in the bottom of drainages and on hill sides slightly easier, especially when they were completely dead, and I only had a rough GPS location. My first collar retrieval was my

introduction to telemetry and provided a good crash course on how telemetry is affected by canyons and dense pine trees.

For two weeks out of the summer NDOW also did an annual black bear snaring trapline in the Pine Nut Mountain Range and near Hobart Reservoir. The goal of this trapline was to see where bears previously tagged were located and to do an overall population wellness check. Any new bears caught would be recorded and tagged for future reference as well. However, this was the first year in which only one bear was caught over the 10-day period.

At the end of my summer, I was given a folder containing the coordinates of bear dens to survey. This was one of the most fun parts of my summer where I collected data on location and elevation of bear dens, the size, and the amount of effort put into creating a den. Some dens were dug into the root base of a tree on a steep slope, some were beneath granite rock piles, there was a couple



hollow bases of trees and a hollow tree stump that was still standing. The most fascinating den was in a granite rock pile with an entrance that was 18 inches wide and 10 inches tall. This entrance led to a 4-foot drop into a small, enclosed area with another entrance to a large bedding area. Over three weeks Sam and I collected data on roughly 15 dens and wrote a compilation report for our bear biologists to utilize.

During July, I had another unique experience where I represented NDOW as a volunteer at the Maison Ortiz Youth Camp. I worked with Carl our bear biologist in the survival skills tent. In our station we taught kids survival skills and gave them their own premade survival kits. We taught basic skills such as fire making, signaling, and covered different way to build a shelter. We taught the campers the rules of 3 of survival; 3 minutes without air, 3 hours in harsh

conditions, 3 days without water, and 3 weeks without food. In an attempt to prevent an information overload, we took a break halfway through for making paracord bracelets, followed by testing how well they retained the knowledge.

During my summer Sam and I were also tasked with trapping beavers in Clover Valley. The beavers were causing waterway issues for the mine in the valley and over our three days we caught one female beaver that weighed roughly 40lbs and recorded the conditions of the creek. We found over 20 dams in the short two miles that the water flowed, and our information was used to plan further actions by NDOW biologists.



This summer position gave me some of the best field experience I could have hoped for with NDOW. I learned about relocation, trapping, survey work, and sedation of our wildlife. I also learned about some of the work our habitat division does to manage our wildlife. Now that my first summer has concluded, I still have so much to learn, and I cannot wait to see where my next summer takes me.