

## 2022 BPA/GPUD Avian Monitoring Report 04/25 – 05/01/2022

### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES & UPCOMING EVENTS

ACTIVITIES	DATE
Survey of site in The Dalles Pool	04/25
Survey of sites in John Day Pool	04/25
Survey of site in McNary NWR off the Columbia River	04/25-04/27
Survey of sites in Potholes Reservoir	04/27
Survey of sites in Lenore Lake	04/28
Survey of sites in Banks Lake	04/28
Survey of site in Sprague Lake	04/28
UPCOMING EVENTS	
Survey of sites in McNary Pool below the Snake River confluence	05/02-05/08
Survey of sites in Potholes Reservoir	05/02-05/08
Survey of sites in McNary Pool above the Snake River confluence	05/02-05/08
Survey of site in The Dalles Pool	05/02-05/08

### COLONY MONITORING & WATERBIRD SURVEYS

**The Dalles Pool:** Sites were visited on April 25.

Compared to our last survey of Miller Rocks on April 13, when no gulls were observed (see 04/11-04/17 weekly report), gulls have resumed nesting at Miller Rocks as of April 25. The first gull eggs were also confirmed on April 25 by Yakama Nation which has been conducting non-lethal management of the Miller Rocks colony beginning in March. At the four islands in the Miller Rocks complex (Upstream, Middle, Downstream, and Southern), ~ 1,350 nesting gulls were observed. Air cannons were heard during our observations, although gulls appeared to have habituated to this dissuasion strategy.

**John Day Pool:** Sites were visited on April 25.

#### Long, Middle, and Southern Islands

No Caspian terns, double crested cormorants, or American white pelicans were observed. When John Day Pool elevations are above 264 ft, all available breeding habitat for the historic Caspian tern colonies at Long, Middle, and Southern islands is submerged (see *Figure 1*). During our survey on April 25, 2022, pool elevation was 265.4 ft.

~100 loafing gulls were observed on the submerged islands.

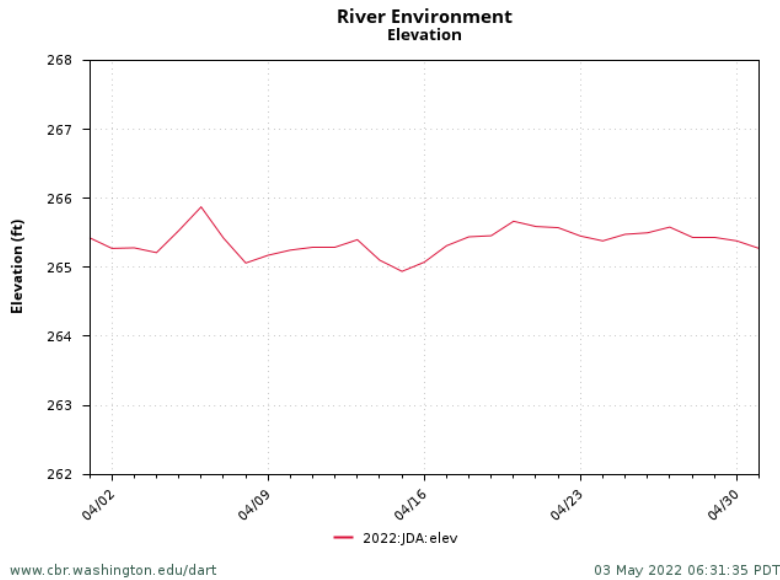


Figure 1: John Day Pool elevation from 04/01 - 05/1, 2022.

Rock Island

7 loafing Caspian terns, 27 American white pelicans, and 6 gulls were observed. Most available breeding habitat was submerged with pool elevations at 265.4 ft. (see Figure 1 above).

Anvil Island

No Caspian terns or American white pelicans were observed.

8 loafing double-crested cormorants were observed.

~840 nesting gulls, mostly California gulls, were observed at the island’s interior, areas unaffected by current management of John Day Pool elevations. Most of the interior nesting colony was obstructed from our vantage from the boat, so this is a minimum count. The entire colony will be surveyed via aerial surveys in the coming weeks.

Straight Six Island

No piscivorous waterbirds were observed. The island’s interior on Straight Six remains unaffected by current management of John Day Pool elevations.

Basketball Island

No piscivorous waterbirds were observed. Most available breeding and loafing habitat were submerged with pool elevations at 265.4 ft.

Little Blalock Island

12 loafing American white pelicans were observed.

**McNary NWR off the Columbia River:** Site was visited on April 25, 26, and 27.

#### Burbank Slough

No piscivorous waterbirds were observed during a shore-based survey on April 25.

74 loafing Caspian terns and 3 gulls were observed during a shore-based survey on April 26.

18 loafing Caspian terns were observed during a shore-based survey on April 27. Copulations were observed, although no nesting was confirmed.

**Potholes Reservoir:** Sites were visited on April 27.

#### Goose Island

At the time of our survey, another contractor was maintaining flagging to the passive dissuasion array on Goose Island. Flagging appeared evenly spaced covering the main island where Caspian terns have historically nested. No Caspian terns were observed on Goose Island and its surrounding islets. Two Caspian terns were observed flying over the island. The historic Caspian tern colony area (on top of the island was not visible from our vantage on the boat.

20 loafing double-crested cormorants were observed on an outlying island to Goose Island (see *Figure 2*). No nesting was confirmed.



*Figure 2. Double-crested cormorants observed on an outlying island at Goose Island in Potholes Reservoir on April 27, 2022.*

~6,290 nesting gulls were observed amidst the dissuasion on Goose Island and surrounding islets (see *Figure 3*). Gull attendance continued to increase and more than doubled compared to counts from our last survey on April 18.



*Figure 3: Gulls nesting amidst the dissuasion flagging at Goose Island on April 27, 2022.*

#### Northern Potholes Reservoir

1 loafing Caspian tern was observed at the former colony site (2016). 16 loafing gulls were observed at two sites (2016 Colony and Macaroni Island).

No piscivorous waterbirds were observed at any other location in Northern Potholes Reservoir. Current reservoir levels have flooded some former loafing and nesting areas.

**Lake Lenore:** Sites were visited on April 28.

#### North Rock Island

No Caspian terns were observed.

~160 double-crested cormorants and ~60 attended nests were observed.

1 loafing American white pelican was observed.

~370 nesting gulls were observed.

#### Shoal Island

9 loafing Caspian terns were observed.

3 loafing double-crested cormorants were observed.

~210 nesting gulls were observed.

### Unnamed Island

~250 nesting gulls were observed on an unnamed island, located north of North Rock Island.

**Banks Lake:** Sites were visited on April 28.

### Twinning Island

~1,100 nesting California gulls were observed. Gulls were bringing nesting material to the island and engaging in other breeding behaviors (e.g., copulation).

### Goose Island

~520 nesting ring-billed gulls were observed. Gulls were bringing nesting material to the island and engaging in other breeding behaviors (e.g., copulation).

**Sprague Lake:** Sites were visited on April 28.

### Harper Island

1 Caspian tern was observed flying over the island, although no terns were observed on the island.

~373 double-crested cormorants and ~100 attended nests were observed (See *Figure 4*).



*Figure 4: Double-crested cormorants and gulls on Harper Island on April 28, 2022.*

6 American white pelicans were observed loafing.

~980 nesting gulls were observed (See *Figure 4*).

Throughout Sprague Lake and its unnamed islands, ~90 double-crested cormorants and ~240 American white pelicans were observed loafing and foraging.

#### PIT TAGGING OF STEELHEAD AT ROCK ISLAND DAM

Steelhead smolt tagging commenced at Rock Island Dam on April 8th. As of May 1<sup>st</sup>, a total of 533 steelhead smolts (474 hatchery and 79 wild) have been PIT-tagged. Steelhead are selected for tagging at random, regardless of their size, condition, or rear-type (hatchery, wild) and are tagged in proportion to and in-concert with the run at-large (tagged and untagged) passing Rock Island Dam. Following the 2022 breeding season (August-September), we will scan bird colonies for smolt PIT tags to estimate predation rates on steelhead and on other groups of tagged fish.