

## 2022 BPA/GPUD Avian Monitoring Report 05/30 – 06/05/2022

### WEEKLY ACTIVITIES & UPCOMING EVENTS

ACTIVITIES	DATE
Survey of sites in Banks Lake	05/31
Survey of sites in Lake Lenore	05/31
Survey of sites in McNary Pool above the Snake River confluence	06/01
Survey of Potholes Reservoir	06/01
Survey of sites in McNary Pool below the Snake River confluence	06/02
Survey of site in McNary NWR off the Columbia River	06/02
UPCOMING EVENTS	
Survey of site in Potholes Reservoir	06/06-06/12
Survey of sites in Lake Lenore	06/06-06/12
Survey of sites in McNary Pool below the Snake River confluence	06/06-06/12
Survey of sites in John Day Pool	06/06-06/12
Fixed-wing aerial surveys of Columbia River basin	06/06-06/12

### COLONY MONITORING & WATERBIRD SURVEYS

Due to poor weather conditions, fixed-wing and drone surveys were postponed to the week of June 6 - 12. An update will be provided in next week's report.

**Banks Lake:** Sites were visited May 31.

#### Twinning Island

~1,150 nesting gulls were observed with chicks (aged 1-2 weeks). About 90% were California gulls and 10% were ring-billed gulls.

3 double-crescent cormorants observed loafing.

#### Goose Island

2 Caspian terns were observed loafing in the center of the northern portion of the island. No nesting behavior was observed (*See Figure 1*).

~430 gulls observed nesting with chicks (ages < 1 week). About 90% were ring-billed gulls.



*Figure 1: Caspian tern and ring-billed gulls observed at Banks Lake (Goose Island) on May 31, 2022.*

**Lake Lenore:** Sites were visited May 31.

#### Shoal Island

28 nesting Caspian terns were observed on the island's interior from a boat survey. Aerial imagery continues to provide the most accurate individual and attended nest counts for this colony which is partially obstructed due to vegetation and rocks from the boat or shoreline.

~160 California and ring-billed gulls were observed nesting on the interior of the island from the boat survey.

3 double-crested cormorants were observed loafing.

#### North Rock Island

No Caspian terns were observed.

129 double-crested cormorants and 80 attended nests with chicks (ages 1-4 weeks) were observed on three ground-nesting colonies.

~ 550 nesting gulls were observed. ~80% were California gulls and ~20% were ring-billed gulls.

**McNary Pool above the Snake River Confluence:** Sites were visited June 1.

#### Island 20

1 double-crested cormorant was observed loafing.

~3,330 nesting gulls were observed. The colony was split into two distinct breeding areas on the south-central end of the island (~2,630 gulls) and the north-central end of the island (~700 gulls). Chicks (ages 1-3 weeks) were observed only on the south-central colony. Water levels were higher during our shore-based visit; the northern shoreline was no longer visible. We estimate that approximately 90% of the colony was visible from our vantage.

### Hanford Reach – Island A

~70 double-crested cormorants and 34 attended nests with chicks (ages 2-5 weeks) were observed.

### Hanford Reach – Island B

No piscivorous waterbirds were observed.

### Hanford Reach – Unnamed Island (downstream of Island B)

7 ring-billed gulls were observed loafing.

### Hanford Reach - Locke Island Complex

19 American white pelicans were observed loafing.

**Potholes Reservoir:** Sites were visited on June 1.

### Goose Island

Caspian terns were counted in 12 different locations on Goose Island and its surrounding islets (*Table 1*). 4 Caspian terns were observed loafing along the South Spit, and 5 Caspian terns were observed loafing on Southwest Main (*Table 1, Figure 2*).

*Table 1. Caspian tern counts by location at Goose Island from 4/12 – 6/01. [NA: Not Available]*

LOCATION	Caspian terns						
	04/12	04/18	04/27 <sup>2</sup>	5/03	5/17	5/24 <sup>3</sup>	6/01
Northwest Main	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Northeast Main	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Southeast Main	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Spit	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
South Beach	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Colony Area <sup>1</sup>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	2	NA
Southwest Main	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
West Main	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Beach	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Rocks	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Northeast Rocks	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest Rocks	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>

<sup>1</sup> Complete obstruction from boat vantage.

<sup>2</sup> Nesting dissuasion activities occurred during counts.

<sup>3</sup> Counts conducted from aerial imagery.



*Figure 2: Caspian terns observed on the southwest portion of Goose Island on May 31, 2022.*

### Northern Potholes

2 Caspian terns and 2 gulls were observed loafing at the 2016 Caspian tern colony site.

No other piscivorous waterbirds were observed at any other site in Northern Potholes. Reservoir levels are close to full pool, flooding many of the low-lying islands in North Potholes.

**McNary Pool below the Snake River Confluence:** Sites were visited on June 2.

### Foundation Island

~180 double-crested cormorants and ~210 nests were observed. Many nests did not have adults present, and chicks (ages 5-7 weeks) were more numerous than adults with the oldest chicks close to fledging (*Figure 3*).



*Figure 3: Double-crested cormorant chicks at Foundation Island on June 2, 2022.*

### Badger Island

From the boat, ~250 nesting Caspian terns were observed on the shoreline colony. No colony disturbances were observed. Much of the eastern shoreline was underwater due to higher McNary Pool elevations.

14 double-crested cormorants were observed loafing.

~70 American white pelicans were observed nesting and loafing along the northeastern shoreline. Most interior nesting areas for pelicans were obstructed from our view from the boat. Complete counts will be conducted from aerial imagery.

~630 nesting gulls with chicks (ages 2-3 weeks) were observed on the western shoreline. ~10 gulls were observed loafing on the eastern shoreline. More complete counts, including interior nesting colonies, will be conducted from aerial imagery.

### Crescent Island

Much of the shoreline was underwater due to elevated McNary Pool elevations.

Caspian terns were seen flying and landing on the interior of the island from the boat. No counts were available this week since the colony is completely obstructed by vegetation.

~50 nesting double-crested cormorants and ~40 attended nests were observed in the trees on Crescent Island.

~390 nesting gulls were observed. Most interior nesting colonies were obstructed due to vegetation. Complete counts will be conducted with aerial imagery.

**McNary NWR off the Columbia River:** Site was visited on June 2.

### Burbank Slough

31 Caspian terns were observed loafing during a shore-based survey.

## PIT TAGGING OF STEELHEAD AT ROCK ISLAND DAM

Steelhead smolt tagging commenced at Rock Island Dam on April 8. As of June 5, a total of 5,329 steelhead smolts (3,875 hatchery and 1,454 wild) have been captured, PIT-tagged, and released (*Figure 4*). 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.

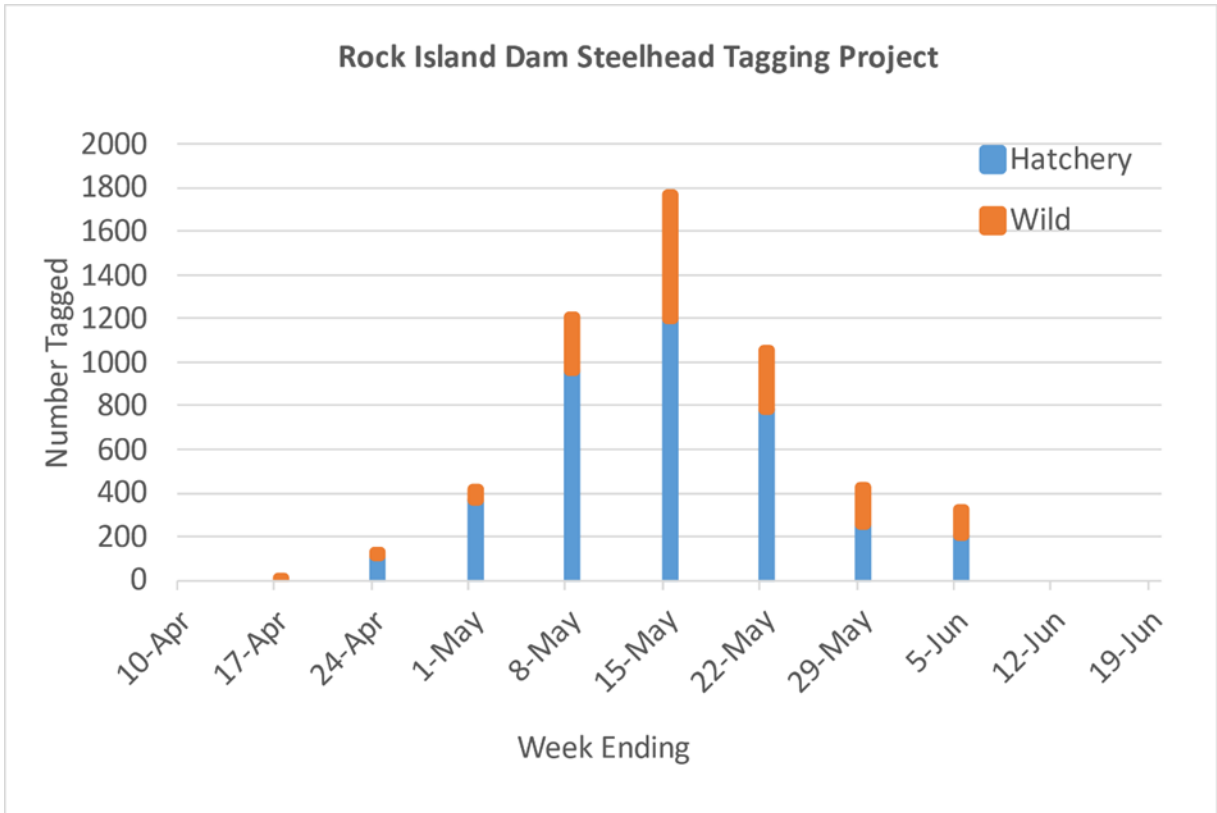


Figure 4. Steelhead smolt tagging at Rock Island Dam in 2022.