



OHA TRACKER

MARCH 2019



Oregon hunters face most threats ever in Legislature

The Oregon Hunters Association is currently tracking more than 100 hunting-related bills in the state legislature, and more are being introduced daily. Gun ownership continues to come under fire, as well as predator hunting and bird preserves. Bills to add or increase fees abound. Crossbows are back in bill form, as are tax-deductible gun safes.

Hearings on bills started in late February, most notably on a cougar relief bill for which OHA rallied support.

Here are the highlights of the latest news from Salem affecting Oregon hunters, habitat and wildlife.

Hearings Held on Cougar Bill

Two hearings were held on HB 2795 on Feb. 21. The bill, if passed, would:

- ✓ Create a pilot program that allows a person to use dogs in the hunting and in the nonlethal pursuit of cougars within a county that elects to participate in the pilot program.
- ✓ Authorize ODFW to designate wildlife management areas of certain counties. These counties are: Umatilla, Wallowa, Union, Baker, Grant, Douglas, Coos, Curry, Josephine, Jackson, Linn and Marion.

The morning hearing included call-in testimony from Jim Akenson, OHA Conservation Director, explaining cougar science management and the need to do something about the growing cougar population. The evening hearing included testimony from those in favor of the bill and those opposed to the new plan.

New Bills Introduced

- **HB 2955** – Would require ODFW to allow a person meeting criteria to hunt game mammals using crossbow.
- **HB 2950** – Would allow for subtraction from the federal taxable income for purchase of qualifying gun safe.
- **SB 801** – Would authorize public schools to provide firearm safety and



Even time-honored classic guns like the Ruger 10/22 could be banned in Oregon by recently introduced legislation.

accident prevention class to all students in first grade.

Here is a partial list of the bills OHA is following:

HOUSE BILLS:

- **HB 2069** – This bill would remove the requirement that ODFW issue unallocated game mammal hunting tags in order requested. Leftover tags would still be sold over the counter until they are sold out, but a purchaser of a leftover tag will only be able to have one tag per hunt series.
- **HB 2072** – Would authorize ODFW to operate wildlife inspection stations for purposes of preventing spread of infections or infestations harmful to wildlife or of furthering wildlife management efforts.
- **HB 2080** – Would raise boat registration fees by 32 percent, doubling them since 2015. Hunters who own motorboats should take note. New fee is almost \$6 per foot.
- **HB 2082** – Would require Class II and Class IV all-terrain vehicle operator 16 years of age or older to carry and present both driver license and all-terrain vehicle operator permit.
- **HB 2566** – Would require owner to register all-terrain vehicle with DMV, if vehicle is not otherwise registered in this state (Class II). Fees in addition to State

Park ATV permit. Requires numbers or plates on ATV.

SENATE BILLS:

- **SB 723** – Would prohibit a person from organizing, sponsoring, promoting, conducting or participating in contest, competition, tournament or derby that has objective of taking wildlife for prizes or other inducement or for entertainment. Requires transportation of injured wildlife to licensed wildlife rehabilitation facility or veterinarian. Would ban big “buck and bull” contests, might prohibit entries into Pope and Young, or Boone and Crockett.
- **SB 47** – Would require a person operating a nonmotorized boat to have a waterway access permit. Hunters with canoes, kayaks, layout boats or drift boats should take notice.
- **SB 340** – Would require ODFW to annually establish special season during which holder of cougar tag or purchaser of SportsPac may use dogs to hunt cougars.
- **SB 439** – This bill prohibits confining, restricting or exercising control over movements of game bird or game mammal for use in or promotion of hunting.
- **SB 655** – Requires ODFW to report on Access and Habitat programs/projects. Prohibits persons from receiving program grants if fees are charged for access, or sites are closed to the public.

For more information about bills:

<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2019R1/Measures/list/>

You can find your legislator at:

www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html

See OHA legislative updates: <https://oregonhunters.org/legislative-news>



Cougar Bills

• **HB 2370, HB 2795, SB 306, SB 340 and SB 622** all deal with cougars and are various attempts to establish county-based programs, pilot programs or special requirements to allow the use of dogs to hunt cougars. There is a great deal of interest in cougars, and OHA is closely tracking and supporting these efforts.

Elk Damage Bills

• **HB 2067, SB 301, SB 302, SB 303, SB 398** deal with the issue of elk damage on private lands and the issuance of damage tags, kill permits and elk numbers. OHA is on top of this issue and will be working to protect hunters' interests.

Gun Bills

• **HB 2505 and SB 275** – Recycled versions of Initiative Petition 44. Would require the owner or possessor of a firearm to secure the firearm with a trigger or cable lock or in a locked container. Makes failure to report theft (with serial number) a crime, with strict liability for any injuries/deaths that result. Negatively impacts youth hunting.

• **HB 2251** – Governor Brown's gun bill. Defines "assault rifle." The bill also prohibits the transfer of a handgun or centerfire assault rifle to a person under 21 years of age. Makes background checks more restrictive. Creates crime of endangering a minor if a person under 18 has access to firearms, with 1 year in jail and 5-year prohibition on owning firearms if guilty.

• **SB 5** – Would make shooting ranges subject to city and county regulations. Any person discharging a firearm at a shooting range strictly liable for injuries resulting from bullets that stray outside boundaries of the shooting range. Intended to address illegal shooting from a gravel pit, it makes things much worse for organized shooting ranges.

• **SB 87** – Would prohibit sale or transfer of firearms or ammunition to persons under 21. Prohibits parent, guardian (or person with permission of parent/guardian e.g. grandparent) from giving a firearm to person under 21. Prohibits transfer of firearms to youth for hunting.

• **SB 501** – This bill is a kitchen sink full of bad ideas that will negatively impact law abiding hunters and gun owners in Oregon. Requires permit from Sheriff before purchasing firearm (in addition to

background check). More gun locks and theft reporting or you're a criminal. Ban on magazines over 5 rounds, or you're a criminal. Requires a background check to buy ammunition, limits sales to 20 rounds within 30 days, and much more. This is by far the biggest threat yet to gun ownership and our rights. OHA is strongly opposed and will work with other groups to stop these bad ideas from becoming law.



Central Oregon's deer are at a crossroads.

OHA seeks to connect Hwy 97 underpasses to high quality habitat

By Ken McCall, OHA Resource Director
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OHA's 2017 and 2018 participation with a coalition of partners to raise funding for the Gilchrist under-crossing and raise public awareness of migration barriers is a great example of a project with benefits for our mule deer and other wildlife. The Lava Butte crossing has reduced wildlife-vehicle crashes by nearly 90 percent, thanks to the underpass construction and to the fence maintenance by OHA's Bend Chapter.

There is a second consideration in the success of the existing Lava Butte undercrossing and Gilchrist plans: effective winter and summer range habitat.

Wildlife habitat in central Oregon is in trouble due to development, habitat quality degradation and recent droughts. OHA is currently working to create partnerships with other wildlife sports groups and private and public land managers in the Fort Rock area through our state grant program. We are planning a timber thinning and spring-fed water source protection project with Ecotrust Forest Management and ODFW. This project would add to a suite of winter range habitat projects supported by the Mule Deer Initiative and partnerships. As the project develops, chapters across the state will continue to have opportunities to engage and support these efforts.

Sing along if you know this one:

Wolf Plan vote delayed again

By Jim Akenson, OHA Conservation Director
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The final vote on the wolf plan has been delayed again. This time the reason is insufficient time for public comment on the latest plan revisions that are slated for staff to complete around March 1, with the next Commission meeting occurring March 14. Once we know a new date for the plan vote, we will notify the membership that input is timely.



Moose numbers may be suppressed by wolves

The scant northeast Oregon moose population is holding on at a low level, according to ODFW. A helicopter moose survey was done in the Wenaha and West Sled Springs Units in late January. A total of 13 moose, including 4 cows, 2 calves, and 7 bulls were located. Moose numbers appear to be dropping in northeast Oregon from the 36 observed in 2009. Surrounding states have seen similar moose number declines in areas that contain thriving wolf populations.

Mountain bikers eye trails in the Ochocos

By Karl Findling
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Similar to the proposed Summit OHV trail system in the Ochoco National Forest that OHA successfully defeated, a central Oregon mountain bike advocacy group has proposed a cluster of mountain bike trails, in three locations, near existing infrastructure in place on the forest. Meetings have had participants looking over ODFW-supplied maps of the critical habitat for elk. Participants have been very aware of the previous suit and our position on impacts to elk calving areas, disturbance and displacement.