



OHA TRACKER

September 2020



Lake County sage grouse this August – do you see both birds?

DUANE DUNGANNON

Commission approves sage grouse season, additional hunt opportunities

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

OHA was the only participant to testify in the Aug. 7 Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting in support of continued harvest of sage-grouse and other pertinent gamebird regulation proposals.

OHA urged the Commission to continue to allow sage-grouse harvest due to the biological data that it yields, and the recreational opportunity that it provides hunters lucky enough to draw a permit. Sage-grouse hunters provide biological data by sending hundreds of harvested wings each year to ODFW for analysis, and this information is critical to effectively manage sage-grouse across the state for analysis of specific demographic rates such as nest success, sex ratio and age structure.



Many factors drive population decline, including predation and habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation, but the conservative hunter harvest does not limit sage-grouse populations in Oregon.

ODFW offered an impressive presentation on sage-grouse hunting data, and the Commission approved the season structure as proposed by ODFW staff.

ODFW delays elk bow regs changes

By Jim Akenson, OHA Sr. Conservation Director
Jim@oregonhunters.org

ODFW announced in August it will delay until 2022 the proposed changes to eastern Oregon archery elk season to become all controlled hunts. Department staff evaluated all their surveys and other forms of input, including recommendations from OHA and other sport group organizations, before making this announcement.

As OHA urged, ODFW decided to slow the process, allowing for more unit-specific hunter input and giving further refinement on tag numbers per unit, preference point variables, and the overall biological situation of elk per management unit.

ODFW still plans to move ahead with proposals to make all of eastern Oregon

controlled hunts of archery mule deer and to move the Cascade elk any-legal weapon season from October back to November.

OHA did not oppose the ODFW proposal to make all eastern Oregon units controlled for mule deer, based on the entire region experiencing poor survey counts or averaging just 50 percent of management objectives. Controlled hunts for mule deer will help better distribute hunting pressure and reduce hunter crowding in popular areas. Currently, there is essentially no control or management of either.

A decision on controlled bow hunts and other changes to the 2021 big game seasons will occur on Sept. 11, when the Fish and Wildlife Commission convenes to adopt next year's regulations.

Anti-poaching campaign takes budget cut

By Al Elkins, OHA Lobbyist
Alvinelkins@yahoo.com



The anti-poaching campaign OHA fought for came out of Special Session 2 with a reduced budget. The program took a one-time reduction in services and supplies for the anti-poaching informational campaign portion of the program, but funding was continued for the campaign coordinator position.

“Our work continues, although the start of the paid advertising campaign will be delayed due to temporary budget cuts,” said Yvonne Shaw, the Stop Poach-

ing Campaign Coordinator at ODFW.

These program cuts are the result of state agencies being asked to submit budget cuts for the current 2019-2021 biennium. This is due to projected loss of general fund revenues considering the current pandemic crisis. OHA testified before the legislature to not cut this program in its entirety and keep a level of funding to help make the public aware of the poaching crisis in Oregon.

This state agency realignment budget has now gone to the Governor for her signature.

OHA chapters stay engaged for mission

By Mike Totey, OHA Conservation Director
MTotey@oregonhunters.org

Even amid the chaos resulting from the COVID pandemic, OHA chapters continue to stay engaged with local partners doing conservation projects, and ODFW continues to work on updating plans and regulations.

Staying engaged in projects and policy changes is a major part of the work that OHA members and staff do. Making positive gains for wildlife habitat and influencing policy decisions are not only avenues for staying engaged, but necessary to accomplish our mission.

OHA helps our members video-conference

By Amy Patrick, OHA Outreach Coordinator
Amy@oregonhunters.org

Video meetings are now the primary venue for organizations and agencies to carry on with meetings, conferences and even social interactions. Because the pandemic restrictions have no clear endpoint, adapting to the new technology is crucial for staying engaged and informed.

OHA and public agencies like ODFW are using platforms such as Zoom to conduct necessary business and policy-making meetings, so it's important that OHA members learn how to use this tool that people are discovering is superior to in-person meetings in many respects, and will be around long after this virus is gone.

Video meetings offer many benefits, including ability to attend meetings across town or across the state without leaving home. OHA staff is producing information to help members participate on the Zoom platform. The opportunity to participate in local chapter meetings, state leadership events, and even provide testimony for commission meetings far outweighs the very small learning curve needed to get started.

Recently in our Monday evening Summit meetings – held by video conference in lieu of the annual Chapter Leadership Summit – we highlighted a number of ongoing and upcoming conservation projects that offer opportunities for members to get involved and get outside. Examples included a BPA powerline project, assisting the Burns Paiute Tribe with assessment of mule deer movement, and the Highway 97 underpass fencing project.

These projects get our youth members involved in a learning environment, build new partnerships, and put OHA dollars on the ground improving vital habitat.

Setting up an account is easy, free, and no additional hardware or software is needed. You can use a desktop, laptop, smart phone, or regular phone and join to your level of comfort: phone line only, computer without the camera activated, or utilizing both the computer camera and microphone.

Ready to Zoom?

Zoom is the video meeting platform used by OHA and many organizations. You don't need any additional hardware or software, and you can Zoom on a desktop, laptop, smart phone, or regular phone line.

To get started, go to zoom.us to set up your free account; there are only a few steps to follow. Once you have an account set up, you can host a meeting or easily accept meeting links that you receive.



Deer are dying needlessly on our highways, sometimes taking human life with them. OHA has committed more than \$114,000 to the next Hwy 97 undercrossing and successfully lobbied to get grant funding, as well. How can you help? Reserve a mule deer license plate that helps fund wildlife crossings. Visit <https://www.myowf.org>

Crossbows proposed for any-weapon hunts

By Al Elkins, OHA Lobbyist
Alvinelkins@yahoo.com

ODFW is proposing that the use of crossbows be allowed in Oregon during any-legal-weapon seasons for big game (when rifles, bows, handguns, and other weapons are also allowed). OHA will not object to the use of crossbows in any-legal-weapon seasons, but will vigorously oppose any attempt to legalize crossbows for bow seasons.

Legislative days approaching

Well before the election, Legislative Days will begin in September. OHA will talk with legislators about the 2021 Legislative Session and the need to restore funding for the anti-poaching campaign program, which includes funding for a position at the Department of Justice to work with district attorneys around the state on major poaching violations cases. These and other issues will be in the forefront for the 2021 Legislative Session.

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OHA's Virtual Convention raffles are still rolling with tickets available on OHA's web store at <https://oregonhunters.org/store/> Raffles include the premier gun raffles offered at OHA State Conventions: the Nosler Rifle Raffle for a Nosler Liberty .270 Winchester, the Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle for a Nosler M48 .300 Win Mag, the Les Schwab Raffle for a \$750 Schwab gift card, and the ever-popular Wall of Guns, featuring 6 premium firearms!

