

OHA Bend Chapter Annual Wayne Elliott Memorial Youth Upland Bird Hunt Report Saturday November 20. 2021

What a day the Youth attendees, their parents and the volunteers had. This is undoubtedly the most popular event we hold every year – and it's no surprise.

We had 34 youngsters participate this year with about 50% for the first time. As in the past every participant enjoyed a minimum of 3-4 hours of one on one time with some of the most experienced outdoorsmen/women and dogs in Central Oregon. Every participant hunted 5 live birds – 2 Pheasants & 3 Chukars with a few shooters bagging all 5 birds. 31 Volunteers invested about 274 hours over 2 days to welcome and make every youngster's day safe, productive and thoroughly enjoyable. Roughly 65 meals were served to all who attended.



5 STEPS FOR EVERY PARTICIPANT

1st Stop: After a brief check-in, each youngster and accompanying parent attended a 15-20 minute intro by Certified Hunter Instructor Roy Geiger. Roy began with an examination and explanation of each participant's firearm that they'd brought for the day. Roy then followed with how best to safely hold and handle their guns throughout the day, especially while hunting in the field where things happen quite fast. Roy did an outstanding job actively engaging every youngster with a combination of questions and hands on demonstrations – a genuinely first class “show & tell” session that also helped to break the ice with many of the youngsters who arrived a bit nervous!



2nd Stop: The next stop for every participant was the Clay Pigeon Shooting Range where Doug Stout held another Safety Q&A and then with Dale Putnam, both certified instructors and two of our most experienced hunters, provided one on one coaching with THREE objectives: 1) **Safety** in general & specifically the handling of each attendee's firearm before, during and after shooting, 2) **Proper Technique** for holding & aiming their firearms when live shooting to optimize accuracy. and 3) **Safety Clearance** for the next stop where live birds, dogs, handlers and other young hunters make things happen fast & unpredictably. *Every participant took at least 10 shots at targets!*

For many it was their first time pulling a trigger and yet before they were done, their growing confidence was evident as many began hitting 2 and sometimes even 3 targets in a row – no small feat considering the small gauge, often single shot shotguns most brought for the day.



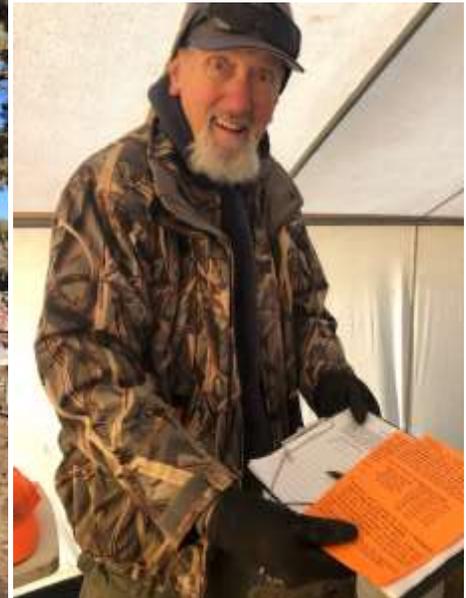
3rd Stop: What followed next was nothing short of pure excitement. Participants were ushered to one of three typical rolling high dessert fields full of sage and bunchgrass where live birds had already been randomly placed. There they met the dogs and dog handlers assigned to them. After going over safety reminders again, they took to the fields for an entire hour – *the hunt was on!* Almost every hunter shot a bird, many 2-3 and a few got their 5 bird limit. The entire time they were coached on how to be safe and successful in the field.



4th Stop: Here they learned the proper method, and then actually cleaned the birds they'd shot. This is one of the most overlooked yet vital lessons of the day. Troy Boyd did an outstanding job helping each hunter prep their bird(s) to ensure a safe and tasty meal afterwards. They also learned to NEVER just shoot and leave a bird to waste.



5th Stop: The chow line where a team of volunteers prepared & served everyone drinks, snacks and at the end of the day a well-earned meal. A few OHA Bend members generously donated elk meat that was cut & ground into some of the best home-made Chili in Central Oregon. And before departing every attendee should have received a copy of "Some of our Favorite Pheasant & Chukar Recipes" Cookbooks. If not call Wendy (541-480-0748) for one.



To round out the perfect experience we had a camp fire going all day. Aside from helping warm everyone, it's where new acquaintances were made, a few friendships renewed and special memories of the day shared.

We have more people than space to thank for so successful a day. But let's try. For the 11th year in a row Kevin & Wendy Borst led the effort spending months organizing and then orchestrating the day which went so well. Unfortunately Wendy had to miss the big day due to an unexpected illness and Kevin did her proud.

A special shout out to the dog handlers without whom the day would not have been near as special. These include Holly Higgins (steensmountainsetters@gmail.com) from Burns who generously shared her valuable time, experience and exceptionally well trained competition quality dogs. In addition Nancy Bruener, Sallie & Eric Nigg, Jeff Nye, Tate Sellers, Tom Price and Dave Jarschke shared their dogs to enrich every young hunter's experience.



A big thank you to the landowners who freely permitted us to use their property for the 6th year in a row, Doug Stout & Bob Buddenbohn who built & setup the 2 new Clay Pigeon launchers and shooting stations, along with Kevin Pill & Jeff Robertson who helped run the Clay Shoot. Dale Putman & Troy Boyd who picked up and delivered the live birds. Eric Brown, Rex Parks, Bill Littlefield, Greg Petz, Brian Gainer, Casey Schneider, and Jaret & JR

Lorremor for planting live birds in fields all day. John Bambe, Teri Gainer who greeted every participant at the sign in booth and Keith Newburn who welcomed volunteers. Calvin & Colleen Schneider and their team who kept the grub fresh and hot all day. All the volunteers including Dennis Hungerford who went out a day ahead to set everything up and then helped where needed the day of the hunt. And our OHA Youth including Carli Holme who helped throughout the day.



We also genuinely appreciate the participants' families who made generous unsolicited donations afterwards as their way of thanking OHA Bend for so complete and rewarding a day they had.

Our very special thanks to ODFW for helping make all this possible and to KOHD & Brook Snavely of KOHA for coming to capture the day on film and share it with all of their Great Outdoor Program viewers.

While the day will be hard to beat, we hope to see even more Youth Hunters next year. Note that **Attendees do not need to be OHA members nor do they need to have hunters in their family.** In fact some of our best attendees were simply curious about hunting, willing to learn and open to the prospect of a whole new experience and circle of friends. For those of you with children and grandchildren 17 or younger, join us next year. Mark your calendar right now for the Saturday before Thanksgiving – November 19, 2022. Registration opens October 1. If worried about cost - it's just \$10/youngster (a \$200-300/hunter value) that we're absolutely confident will become one of the most memorable, quite possibly life altering days in the lives of your young ones.

Till next year, Happy Holidays! For additional information contact Kevin or Wendy Borst at 541-480-7323.



If happiness is measured in smiles, newfound confidence and warm friendship, then our Youth Hunt is an unmitigated success!