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NEW
IN '22**

**WINTER WINGSHOOTING
FROM EAST TO WEST**

- **CHASING CHUKARS**
- **DECOYING CACKLERS**
- **QUAIL ON STATE LAND**

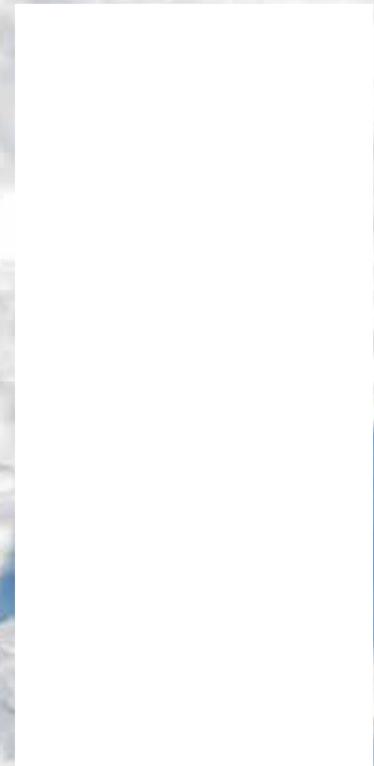
**BOWHUNTING
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10-11

Oregon Afield:
Spring bear, quail on state land, and a sharptail update



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What's New in '22:
New elk archery regs lead the list of changes for this year



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It's a cool time to enjoy Oregon's wintering wonderland

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Cacklers and chukars offer Oregon hunters winter wingshooting on both sides of the Cascades



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Bull recently found in Catherine Creek will rank as Oregon's new #2 Rocky Mountain elk



Cover: Baker County mule deer photo by OHA member Jim Ward of La Grande



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GILCHRIST Hwy 97 CROSSING

FINDING DIRECTION

BY MIKE TOTEY,
OHA CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

Raising our sights: chapters get more bang for bucks

The Oregon Hunters Association is proving to be more than the sum of its parts. OHA chapters have joined forces recently to contribute more than \$225,000 to a pair of major projects east of the Cascades – one that will help keep migrating wildlife alive in central Oregon, and another that will help protect critical wildlife habitat and hunting access in northeast Oregon.

OHA has always been an organization that works from the ground up. Every OHA chapter is involved in its natural resource community – with local wildlife biologists, with other conservation groups, and with projects in their area. However, just because a chapter is located in one part of our state, doesn't mean that local chapters don't look at the big picture for wildlife and conservation across Oregon.

There are many examples of chapters doing great work in their own backyard, but there are also plenty of examples of chapters doing great work travelling to other parts of the state to work on conservation projects. The "All Hands All Brands for Public Lands" project is an excellent example. Multiple chapters from around the state find their way to the Ochocos to collaborate with other conservation partners and agency staff to provide meaningful improvements for wildlife. "Regional Projects" has become a term used for OHA-led projects that expand beyond the boundaries of the local chapter to include resources and man-power from multiple chapters to accomplish conservation work that benefits wildlife, and all of us.

OHA chapters have combined to donate more than \$225,000 to keep migrating wildlife alive and secure key habitat and hunting access.

OHA chapters have stepped up to make major financial contributions to help fund large-scale conservation efforts in different parts of the state that will provide long-term benefits to us all. A new Highway 97 underpass construction effort and the purchase of 16,000 acres to add to the Minam River Wildlife Area demonstrate unprecedented cooperative successes in statewide conservation work that no single local chapter could have accomplished.

OHA chapters have contributed \$118,500 toward the completion of the Highway 97 underpass project near Gilchrist. Projects like this, when fully implemented, have reduced wildlife-vehicle collision by over 85 percent. When we look at the broader context of how this project will benefit migrating mule deer, the conservation value alone is immense. Adding in the benefits to all wildlife, both game and non-game, and the reduction in vehicle damage and human injuries, amplifies the value of projects like this.

OHA chapters have contributed \$100,000 toward the first phase of a land acquisition in northeast Oregon in the Minam River drainage in a project led by RMEF and ODFW. This property has exceptional ecological, cultural and recreational value. It provides a diversity of habitat for species of concern, critical wintering habitat for elk, and more than 100 stream miles supporting threatened Chinook salmon, steelhead and bull trout. Protection of this property will conserve these natural values while increasing public access to hunting, wildlife viewing, fishing, and other recreational activities.

The power of our organization to come together to support these large-scale conservation efforts is a clear demonstration of our unprecedented success in our mission to support wildlife, habitat and our hunting heritage. These are great examples of OHA chapters pooling their dollars to get much more bang for their bucks.

OREGON HUNTER

- Editor & Publisher**
Duane Dungannon (541) 772-7313
- Editorial Assistants**
Cynthia Martinich, Bret Moore
- State Officers**
- President: Mike Ayers (541) 840-3723
- Vice President: Steve Hagan (503) 551-8645
- Secretary: Mary Jo Hedrick (541) 576-4006
- Treasurer: Mike Vallery (503) 538-8232
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- Southeast: Gary Lewis (541) 317-0116
- Southeast: Ralph Goode (541) 505-4826
- OHA State Coordinator**
Duane Dungannon (541) 772-7313
- Field Director**
Bryan Cook (971) 270-7035
- Conservation Director**
Mike Totey (541) 974-4084
- Conservation Coordinator**
Tyler Dungannon (541) 778-1976
- Outreach Coordinator**
Amy Patrick (503) 949-9785
- Lobbyist**
Al Elkins (503) 780-6824



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Our mission: Protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.

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- Which color isn't part of a teal's name?
 a) blue c) green
 b) white d) cinnamon
- Which is thought to have the best vision?
 a) deer c) antelope
 b) elk d) bear
- Which likely has the best sense of smell?
 a) bear c) antelope
 b) cougar d) bighorn
- Which grouse are you most likely to encounter in the Beatys Butte Unit?
 a) blue c) sage
 b) ruffed d) sharptail
- Mallards take how long to hatch?
 a) 14 days c) 28 days
 b) 21 days d) 35 days
- A 2-year-old bull elk most commonly has how many antler points per side?
 a) one c) three
 b) two d) four or more
- Ceanothus is the genus for:
 a) sagebrush c) bitterbrush
 b) buckbrush d) mahogany
- Juniper spread is blamed on lack of:
 a) fire c) large herbivores
 b) water d) large predators
- The first digit in hunt #210 indicates:
 a) elk c) antelope
 b) deer d) bear
- Which quail isn't native to Oregon?
 a) scaled c) Bob White
 b) Gamble's d) all of the above

TRUE OR FALSE?

- Dabbling ducks are better walkers than diving ducks.
- Quail eggs are blue.

ANSWERS: 1-b; 2-c; 3-a; 4-c; 5-c; 6-d; 7-b; 8-a; 9-a; 10-d; 11-T; 12-F.



WHERE IN OREGON WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN?

Identify this Oregon rim and lake, be drawn from all correct entries, and win a Work Sharp Original Knife and Tool Sharpener! Send your best guess to Oregon Hunting Quiz, OHA, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501, or submit your guess at oregonhunters.org, where a larger version of the photo appears. One entry per OHA member.

Entry deadline: January 20, 2022.



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Nathan Flint, Vale

Nathan's name was drawn from among the OHA members who correctly identified Lookout Mountain.

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

DECEMBER 31
 Bear, cougar & pheasant seasons end

JANUARY 1
 2022 licenses required;
 Cougar season opens

JANUARY 16
 Sauvie Island youth waterfowl hunt

JANUARY 31
 Harvest reporting deadline, most tags;
 Most upland bird seasons end

FEBRUARY 1
 Deadline to file for OHA state elections;
 Legislative session begins

FEBRUARY 4
 Eugene Boat & Sportsmen's Show opens

FEBRUARY 10
 Deadline to apply for spring bear tags

FEBRUARY 11
 Douglas County Sportsmen's & Outdoor
 Recreation Show opens in Roseburg

FEBRUARY 16
 Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show
 opens in Portland

FEBRUARY 19
 Pioneer Chapter auctions A&H Statewide
 Elk Tag at NW Sports Show 971-270-7035

FEBRUARY 20
 Spring bear draw results available

FEBRUARY 25
 Jackson County Sportsmen's & Outdoor
 Recreation Show opens,
 Jackson County Expo

FEBRUARY 26
 OHA chapter banquets:
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OREGON AFIELD

BILL LITTLEFIELD

Set your sights on a northeast spring bear hunt

It's sneaking up on you fast – Oregon's February 10 spring bear application deadline.

It's hard to pick a better corner of the state for black bear hunting than northeast Oregon, where we have nine hunts to choose from, and they each have their good points. Consider access first. Some units have higher percentages of public land, while other units have more developed road systems or better trails. Most of it is elk country, and where there are elk calves, there are bears.

One of the interesting metrics to consider is the harvest success for each hunt choice and its corresponding game management units.

Judging by the 2020 estimated black



bear harvest, the 754A Mt. Emily-Walla Walla hunt is a great choice with a harvest success of better than 33 percent. I have been tracking these numbers for a long time and have to conclude that we hunters are getting better at taking black bears. And of course there are a lot more bears eating elk calves than there were in 1994, when Measure 18 banned hunting bears with dogs. The Lookout Mountain (764), Minam-Imnaha (760A) and Pine Creek-Keating-Catherine Creek (762A) are also turning out harvest success up to 20 percent, depending on the unit.

The Snake River and the Wenaha hunts are also great choices with success rates at 17 and 18 percent, respectively.

Harvest success is lower in the S. Blue

OHA member Bill Littlefield of Bend took this brown-phase black bear in the spring season. When a bear emerges from its den, it seeks available forage that will include grass, forbs (broadleaf plants), bulbs and grubs. At this time of year, the bear needs to jump-start its digestion in order to process more complex foods later in the season.

Mtns (746A), but it can be easier to draw this tag. For best bear numbers in this hunt, consider the Desolation and Sumpter units.

Especially in the watersheds of the Minam, Wallowa, Grande Ronde, Imnaha and the Snake, bears track elk to catch cows and newborn calves when they are most vulnerable. Mountain meadows and river bottoms with a gentle grade are favored calving grounds and a good place to call bears. Frantic calf elk calls and fawn-in-distress cries can bring a bear on the run.

A couple of years ago, the state standardized the spring bear seasons, allowing hunters to take the field from the first of April to the last day of May. Don't be tricked into hunting northeast Oregon units early. Late April to late May offer the best chances at seeing bears.

It's one of the best hunts of the year, but you don't get the tag if you don't apply. Do it today. —GARY LEWIS

State wildlife areas offer public access to plentiful quail



GARY LEWIS OUTDOORS.COM

Chris Lewis connected on his first quail on a bird hunt at a state wildlife area.

Two days after Christmas, the sky was blue, and for once the wind was calm. Out on the edge of the water, the leaves of the willows were golden.

Chris Lewis and I unsheathed a pair of over/unders and plunked loads of No. 8s into the steel barrels.

Liesl the pudelpointer stretched her legs, keeping an eye over her shoulder to make sure we stayed close. It took most of a half-mile to find the first bird, and soon Liesl streaked back and forth to lock up with her nose in a bush. The gun shot like it was an extension of my mind and soon there was a pleasing weight in the bird vest – half a limit in a half-mile walk.

Many Oregon hunters avoid hunting the state wildlife areas because they don't know the regulations. But these are public lands owned by every Oregonian in common and funded with our license dollars. This is your ground to hunt. Get to know it. First, click on <https://myodfw.com/visit-odfw-wildlife-areas>

East of the Cascades, the state lists 13 wildlife areas, many of which are populated with valley quail. Looking for a place to start, run the cursor along the Columbia Basin options from The Dalles area east to Pendleton and south to Ladd Marsh and Bridge Creek. Click on one.

Rules vary by wildlife area, but a hunter needs to know:

An ODFW Wildlife Area parking permit may be required (if you purchased a Sports Pac, you have a parking permit). Hunters may be required to obtain a daily entry permit and check out at the end of the day. Some areas will be posted as refuge, while other areas are open to hunting. Upland bird hunters may be required to use federally-approved non-toxic shot.

Do your research before you go. Bring a map or download a map on your phone. Pack a box of non-toxic shot and put your parking permit in the window. Explore the state wildlife areas and get to know one in particular. This is your land. —GARY LEWIS

Quest for sharptails

Are there any Columbian sharp-tailed grouse left in Oregon? Even researchers aren't sure.

Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are thought to have been extirpated from Oregon by the 1970s, but ODFW began an intensive translocation effort in the 1990s to restore the species. Between 1991 and 2008, 368 sharptails were translocated to Wallowa County, and further effort was employed thereafter to reestablish the population via additional translocated birds, and monitoring.

Today, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are a part of the Oregon Conservation Strategy, but ODFW isn't sure there are any birds left in our state. According to ODFW Upland Gamebird Coordinator, Mikal Cline "the translocation wasn't successful ... we would have needed to release a lot more birds, and we ran out of states that were willing to give us birds."

Retired ODFW District Wildlife Biologist and current OHA Expert Advisory Council member Vic Coggins was an integral part of the translocation effort. "I thought we had the habitat, but the difficulty with lekking birds is there's so much they have to learn. It's a long process, but we shouldn't give up. It's our duty to restore the species," Coggins said.

A resurrection of the translocation effort isn't likely in the near future, but there's still hope. "ODFW is interested in bringing sharptails back to Oregon, but first we need habitat sufficient to maintain the population, and a Columbian sharp-tailed grouse source," Cline added.

Emerging research into grouse translocations, and sharptails specifically, will play an important role if this project is to get off the ground again. For example, Nevada research recently found that offspring of translocated sharptails drove their successful translocation. In other words, our odds of successful sharptail reestablishment may be much better if we translocate chicks before they develop fidelity to their native habitat.

The ultimate goal for Oregon upland hunters should be that Columbian sharp-tailed grouse someday recover and reclaim their huntable status, but first we must gain momentum and support for continued efforts to reestablish the species.

—TYLER DUNGANNON

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OHA-funded poll on IP13 shows positive results

By Al Elkins & Amy Patrick, OHA Lobbyists
Alvinelkins@yahoo.com

OHA continues to actively work with two large coalitions to wage a “NO on IP13” campaign. Initiative Petition 13 would criminalize hunting, fishing and trapping activities and classify them as animal abuse; it also makes it virtually impossible to raise livestock in either a large-scale capacity or simply raising a few animals to be self-sufficient.

Recent polling conducted by one of the coalitions and partially funded by OHA has shown promising responses with a high level of support for protecting the right to hunt and fish in Oregon.

OHA has assisted in crafting the talking points and messaging plan for the coalition of sporting groups in support of our grassroots campaign.

Check out the online auction for the Sportsmen's Caucus annual fund-raiser

The Oregon Sportsmen's Caucus (OSC), made up of legislators, special interest groups and their lobbyists who work to pass legislation that has a positive impact on hunting, fishing, and wildlife in Oregon, will hold a fund-raising event in February, and you're invited.

Each year the OSC holds a fund-raising event to help fund OSC activities and staff, and OHA is an annual sponsor.

In 2022 OSC will offer a virtual auction. The online auction will kick off Feb. 1 and end Feb. 10.

OHA invites you to participate in the virtual fundraiser. Find the event link at: cbo.io/bidapp/index.php?slug=oregonscf

New laws will go into effect in '22

HB 3152 Wildlife Inspection Points

This OHA-sponsored bill gives ODFW authority to operate wildlife inspection points for purposes of preventing the spread of infections or infestations harmful to wildlife and to further wildlife management efforts. This will be critical now that CWD has been discovered in Idaho only 30 miles from the Oregon border (See Page 48).

HB 3163 Residency Requirements

This OHA-sponsored bill makes a change in residency requirements for purposes of licenses, tags, and permits related to wildlife. Through discussions with law enforcement, it was discovered that prosecuting offenders with dual state residencies had become a concern of Oregon District Attorneys and they had become reluctant to prosecute wildlife offenders that fit into the dual state category.

The new language in the bill changes the residency definition so that a resident is a person who has physically resided in Oregon for not less than six consecutive months immediately prior to the date of making application for a license, tag, or permit issued by the State Fish and Wildlife Commission. It further defines a resident as not someone who merely owns real property or pays property taxes in this state; or who has resident privileges in another state or county for any purpose.

SB 289 Bias Crime

This bill prohibits a person convicted of a bias crime committed while on state waters or publicly owned outdoor recreation land from entering area under jurisdiction of State Parks and Recreation Department. It gives the State Marine Board authority to revoke certain privileges from a person convicted of a bias crime committed while on state waters or publicly owned outdoor recreation land. The law adds bias crime conviction to circumstances in which court may order State Fish and Wildlife Commission to revoke licenses, tags, and permits.

Oregon sports groups explore forming coalition

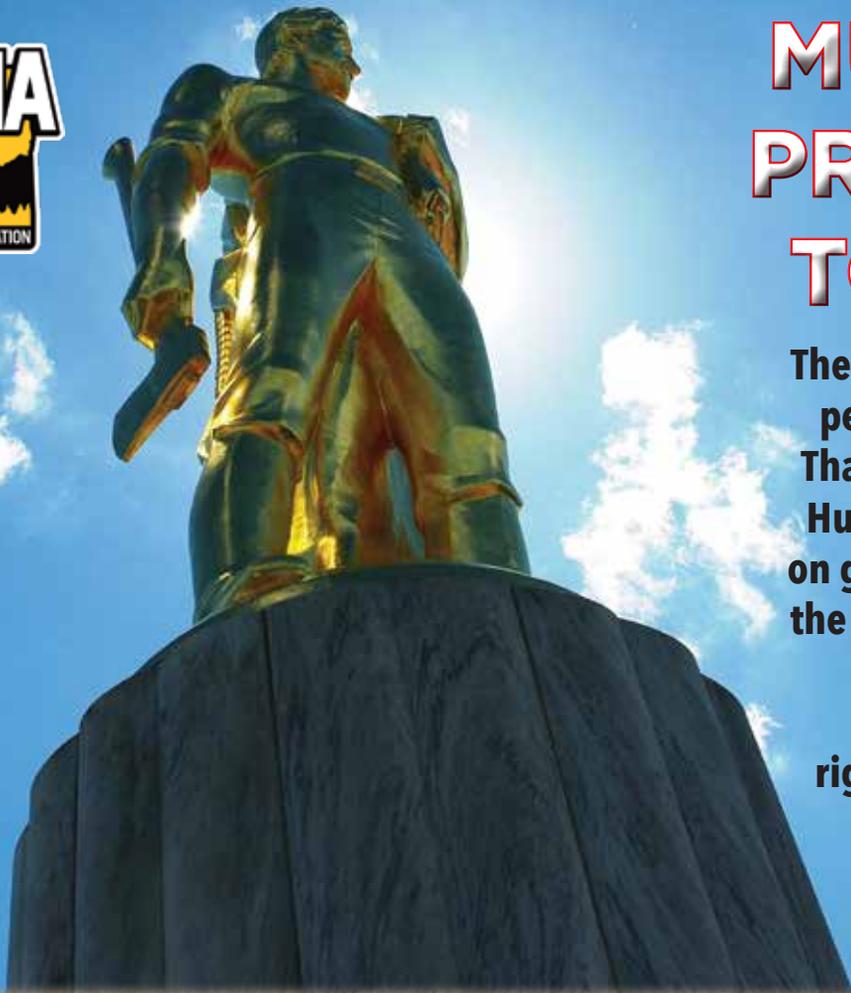
Oregon representatives of hunting, fishing, trapping, and shooting organizations recently met with Bill Gaines of the California Hunting & Conservation Coalition (CHCC), a very successful coalition of similar organizations. Gaines explained the makeup of the 36-member group, how they make decisions, and their ongoing work with the agencies and commissions that oversee hunting and fishing in California. He also gave an overview of how the group defends the rights of those that hunt and fish and the effectiveness of the coalition in doing so.

OHA and the other Oregon groups represented at the meeting are developing a framework for an Oregon coalition, and we will share the development of this coalition as it takes shape.

House passes bill to address CWD

The U.S. House of Representatives delivered a significant victory for America's sportsmen and women on Dec. 8 with the successful passage of H.R. 5608, the Chronic Wasting Disease Research and Management Act. The Act will help address CWD by authorizing \$70 million annually from Fiscal Year 2022 to Fiscal Year 2028 to be split evenly between CWD research and management efforts. Of this, \$35 million will be dedicated annually for CWD research to develop testing methods. — CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S FOUNDATION (CWD found near Oregon; See Page 48.)

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BLACK POWDER

By MIKAYLA LEWIS

A Pronghorn Postponed

A hunt that took a lot of time and a little toilet paper

When I was nine, one of my sisters shot a bear – an act that cemented my identity as “the one who didn’t shoot a bear.”

Our dad wanted each of us kids to get into hunting, and as incentive, each of us was promised one unique hunt. One sister went deer hunting in Texas. Another sister, as you may remember, shot the bear. My special hunt was next. Dad asked if I wanted to shoot a bear, too, but my enthusiasm was low. That had been done before. I wasn’t the one who shot the bear. I would shoot an antelope.

Dad and I began to talk about the details of our hypothetical hunt. Maybe we’d go when I was 14? Maybe to Wyoming? There was a lot of “maybe.” Turns out, antelope don’t come easy. I was 24 by the time my dad and I put an antelope hunt on our calendars. And one more thing – we were going to build our own guns for it. My dad had already gotten the kits.

I was excited to start on what I called a “high-stakes Lego set.” But as I got to work, sanding the wood, breaking the wood, applying the wood glue... it hit me that this would be the first time I’d shoot a gun built by someone as unqualified as I was.

Once my gun was in one functional piece, Dad taught me how to use it. I’ve been firing guns all my life, but not ones like these. Those kits had been for mid-1800s-style muzzleloaders.

While I followed my dad’s instructions to load the gun, I began to make a comment.

“If I was in a war with this...”

“You’d be dead,” he agreed.

We were on the same page.



The author took this Oregon pronghorn with a black powder rifle she built herself.

GARYLEWISOUTDOORS.COM

Maybe I should have told dad I wanted to hunt a bear. If he’d suggested a muzzleloader with a sticky trigger for that kind of a hunt, I probably could have turned him over to Child Protective Services.

We spent the first day of our hunt by a remote watering hole. It was a promising area, but the antelope didn’t like it as much as we did. We read and watched ravens peck at the animal bones scattered around us. We headed back to the cabin that night empty-handed.

Still, I didn’t feel right moving on from the watering hole just yet. We decided to give it another shot the next morning.

There wasn’t a creature in sight back at our old hunting grounds, but we still felt inclined to crouch as we approached. Birds started to appear once they realized we weren’t causing a scene. They watched as Dad and I fashioned a blind out of sage brush and wood scraps; they tilted their heads as we inspected the bones they’d picked clean.

I pulled a hip bone out of the cracked mud, out of sheer curiosity. Then something more curious happened when Dad produced a roll of toilet paper. He came over and stuck a few sheets of paper on the bone. They waved like a bizarre little flag in the light breeze.

Small as it was, we hoped this interruption in the landscape would be enough to spark an antelope’s interest.

We settled in under the blazing sun, each of us reading our books from yesterday – we’d pulled a couple of westerns

from the bookshelves back at the cabin. Not usually my genre, but when I tired of the desert landscape, I turned my attention to Hunky McLoner’s property dispute with pompous Mr. No-Redeeming Qualities. Up at the sand, down at my book. Back and forth. Dad slept next to me with his hat over his eyes, but he awoke right in time.

Antelope were moving in our direction from behind a dune. If they’d come from any other direction, they might have noticed us. Instead, they noticed our bizarre little flag.

A buck with proud horns took a step toward our trap and into my sights. I breathed out a silent thank-you to the stunning creature and squeezed the trigger that I’d fought with so much.

There was a deafening bang, followed by the smack of impact. All but one of the animals bolted.

It had been over a decade since I’d first imagined this hunt, and now the antelope was waiting for me to go and claim him. Here was something I was done waiting for.

Earlier in the trip, I would have changed everything about the hunt. I would have done it sooner, with a gun I liked, and I probably wouldn’t have been reading about Hunky Loner’s property rights. But I did everything the way I did: at a time in my life I could appreciate it, with a gun I built spending time with my dad. It was an experience I adored. It happened the way it was meant to, and ultimately the way I wanted most.



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Forget the Cold Duck; toast a New Year turkey

My buddy Jody Smith and I looked at one another in disbelief. More than 40 turkeys were sprinting across an open meadow, right at us. Once the flock reached the strutting decoy, toms incessantly strutted and gobbled around it, while hens and jakes pummeled the hen decoy, bending the iron rod that supported it to a 45° angle.

It was January, and we were in the rolling foothills of the Coast Range.

Last year Oregon saw an extension of the fall turkey season, and it runs through January, setting the stage for some of the best turkey encounters a bowhunter could ask for.

One of the biggest benefits of turkey hunting in January is grass and cover are short, meaning decoys are easy to position for birds to see from a great distance. Clear shooting lanes are easy to achieve and a lack of cover also makes it easy to set up pop-up blinds.

Remember, turkeys see color, and have eyes as powerful as 8x binoculars. Place the decoys where they can be seen from a long way, and turkeys often come running in without a call even being made.

But turkeys also have monocular vision due to their eyes being set on the side of the head, not in front. This means their depth perception is poor, so don't be afraid to put a pop-up blind in an open meadow. Turkeys do see in great detail, though, so keep movement to a minimum and close all windows but the one you'll shoot from.

I called in multiple flocks last January and found two decoys to be advantageous. An upright hen decoy attracts hens and jakes, and bachelor flocks of mature toms often follow once they see other birds getting excited. I also like a strutting tom decoy, as it really gets bachelor flocks of toms fired up.



Mild January days turn a tom's thoughts to spring.

January is made for bowhunting turkeys, as bachelor flocks respond readily to calls and decoys, and vegetation is short, which means clear shooting lanes.

I had better success on sunny days versus cold, rainy days. Jody said mild January days turn a tom's thoughts to spring.

"Toms seem ready to breed, as I've heard them gobbling and watched them strut in January for years," noted Smith, one of Oregon's most successful turkey guides (jodysmithguideservice.com). "I actually think toms are more aggressive this time of year, as they'll come in fast and hang around the decoys for a long time." This means bowhunters can take their time and wait for the perfect shot angle.

As for calls, I like using yelps, clucks and kee-kee sounds in January. The first two sounds simulate a hen doing her thing; the latter, a fall flock that's reassembling. Don't be afraid to get loud with the calls if you see turkeys at long range, because it's nothing for them to travel a half-mile if they can hear your calls and see the decoys.

Placing the decoys 10 yards in front of the blind is ideal; you can even go five yards. Turkeys have a small kill zone with the lungs positioned tight against the back—between the shoulders, so the closer they are, the higher the shot percentage. While some hunters boast of head-shots, I'm not a fan of this, as too much can go wrong due to the nervous, skittish nature of turkeys.

Whatever decoy or decoys you use, position them so they're facing parallel to the shooting window of your blind. This

is because when turkeys approach a decoy, they like getting in front of them. This time of year they'll often walk around decoys multiple times, providing plenty of shot opportunities from all angles.

Patterning turkeys is important for January hunts, as birds are in large winter flocks and habitual in their daily movements to acquire food. Watch where they roost, fly down to in the morning, then feed throughout the day. Trail cameras are great scouting aids.

Unlike spring turkey hunting, where you might make multiple sets in a morning, be patient in winter. I've had the best success putting up the blind and decoys in one spot, waiting for turkeys to work the area. As soon as you see or hear them, start calling. Eventually they usually show up, but it can take a while if it's cold, raining, or they've yet to make visual contact with the decoy or hear your calls.

Depressed that big game seasons are over and spring hunts are months away? Now that Oregon's fall turkey season runs through January, there's some fun hunting and great table fare to be had right now.

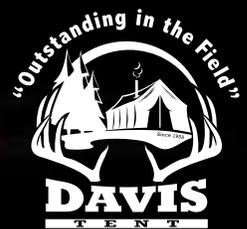


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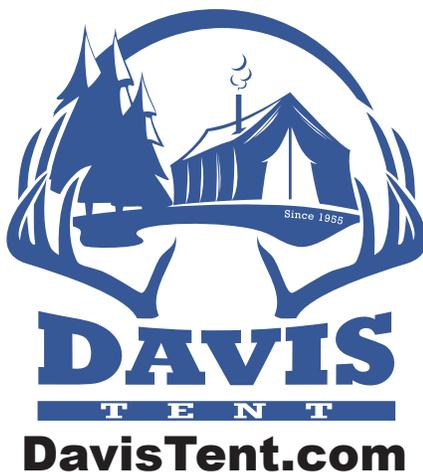
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RYAN HOEFT

What's New in '22

New northeast Oregon elk archery regs lead the list of changes on the horizon.

BY JIM YUSKAVITCH

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the 2022 Big Game Hunting Regulations at its September meeting, as it does each year, based on staff recommendations and the latest big game population and harvest data. In 2017 ODFW began reviewing its big game regulations to simplify them and make them easier to understand. The process is being done in phases over multiple years, with this year's focus on eastern Oregon archery elk hunts. Next year's plan will focus on Western Oregon late season hunts.

Here's an overview of what's in store for big game hunting regulations for 2022.

Deer

For the 100 Series controlled buck hunts, eight hunt changes will be implemented for next year. This includes the addition of five new youth buck hunts in south-central Oregon, including a Keno Unit Youth Hunt (131T), Klamath Falls Unit Youth Hunt (132T), Sprague Unit Youth Hunt (133T), Silver Lake Youth Hunt (176T), and Fort Rock Youth Hunt (177T). In addition, the second Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge hunt is being deleted. There are no changes for the Series 600 controlled antlerless hunts.

For 2022, ODFW will offer 71,114 controlled deer tags, a less than 1-percent increase from last year.

Oregon's mule deer population is



JOHN McFARLAND III/CREATION-MOMENTS.COM

Oregon's mule deer continue to decline, and OHA will make updating the state's mule deer management plan a priority in 2022.

estimated at 168,000 animals, which continues to decline. Mule deer numbers are at or above management objectives in only three wildlife management units – West Biggs, Wagontire and Keno, and at 76 to 99 percent of objective only in the Ukiah Unit. Mule deer numbers are at 50 percent or below in 18 eastern Oregon units.

Although there are no official population estimates for black-tailed deer in western Oregon, recent genetic sampling methods indicate their numbers are stabilizing and possibly increasing in some areas.

Elk

Sixteen new eastern Oregon controlled archery elk hunts are being sanctioned for 2022. This includes hunts in the Murderers Creek, Desolation, Northside, Heppner, Ukiah, Sumpter, Starkey, Snake River, Beulah, Malheur and Silvies units, as well as North Fork and Eagle Cap Zone hunts. The 274R Warner archery bull hunt is being converted to the general archery season. The 255B Walla Walla Private and 216C Mollala hunts are being deleted, because they are no longer needed to address elk damage. In addition, 11 tags are being removed from the 252D Peach Tree hunt, and the limitation on the Starkey Bull hunt (252A1) Land Owner Preference tags

is being removed. Three Starkey hunts are being deleted because of low success, while two new hunts have been added – Zumwalt Prairie 258A5, and Starkey Experimental Forest 252C1.

Overall, ODFW will offer 65,802 controlled elk tags for 2022, a 16-percent increase over the previous year.

The Rocky Mountain elk population is estimated at 69,718, with more than half of eastern Oregon units at or above management objectives.

In western Oregon, some Roosevelt elk herds are struggling, with the only unit above objective being the Sixes Unit. The overall Roosevelt elk population is currently about 56,000 animals – 79 percent of their objective of 71,050.

Bighorn Sheep

One new Rocky Mountain bighorn hunt, Wenaha 556 for one ram, will be implemented as a rotating hunt among Washington and Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation. Meanwhile, Hunt 551, Burnt River Canyon, Sumpter Unit, is being deleted due to pneumonia impacts on local bighorns.

Overall, there will be a total of 86 bighorn tags in 33 hunts, including California bighorn ram tags, 12 ewe tags, and six

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Rocky Mountain ram tags.

The California bighorn sheep population is estimated to be 4,000 to 4,500 animals, while the Rocky Mountain bighorn population numbers 600 to 800.

Rocky Mountain Goats

For 2022, 29 Rocky Mountain goat tags will be offered in 16 different hunts, with two tags reserved for non-residents. The Oregon Rocky Mountain goat population is currently around 1,200 animals. Most are in the Elkhorn and Wallowa mountains, as well as a growing population in the central Cascades.

Pronghorn

The number of pronghorn tags will decrease by 4 percent from 2021, with 2,013 tags offered in 55 hunts.

Pronghorn populations are still recovering from the winter of 2016-17, and subsequent drought conditions have slowed their recovery even more. The Oregon pronghorn population is estimated at 16,000 to 19,000.

Bear

Eighteen hunts for a total of 10,462 tags will be offered for the 2022 spring

bear season. Changes include an increase in tags from 400 to 495 in the 731A South Central hunt due to increasing hunter interest in that hunt, and a new youth hunt, 745T Mt. Emily-Walla Walla youth hunt. This hunt will be the closest northeast Oregon spring bear youth hunt to western Oregon, to provide additional spring bear opportunities to youth who live on the west side of the Cascades.

No changes have been made for the 2022 general bear season.

Oregon's black bear population is estimated at 25,000 to 30,000.

Cougar

There are no changes for cougars for 2022. ODFW will continue to manage the population for no fewer than 3,000. The cougar population has been increasing for the past 15 years by about 15 percent per year. The current Oregon cougar population is estimated to be almost 7,000 animals.

Premium Hunts

For 2022, ODFW will offer 67 Premium Hunt tags for deer, 64 for elk and 27 for pronghorn. Premium hunts offer an Aug. 1 to Nov. 30 season, no advantage for



WILLY ONARHEIM

Continued drought conditions are hurting pronghorn herds in Oregon, and tags will decline by 4 percent in 2022.

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Only six tags will be issued in 2022 for Oregon Rocky Mountain bighorn rams.

preference points, and can be in addition to a controlled hunt or general tag.

Legislation

House Bill 3163 amends the residency requirements for those applying for licenses, tags and permits. The law clarifies that to be considered a resident, a person must have lived in Oregon for at least six consecutive months. Anyone who is a resident

of another state, or who only owns property in Oregon is ineligible for resident status.

Wildlife Areas & Public Lands

In order to protect local bighorn sheep herds, grazing domestic sheep and goats will be prohibited at Little Sheep, Lower Deschutes, Riverside, Phillip W. Schneider and Wenaha wildlife areas. Some Oregon bighorn sheep herds have been struggling

with Mycoplasma ovipneumonia (Movi) that causes an often fatal respiratory disease in wild sheep, transmitted by domestic sheep and goats.

In addition, the parking permit requirement for the Wenaha Wildlife Area is being removed, because of the difficulty in reaching this remote area in far northeast Oregon.

ODFW and the U.S. Forest Service have also agreed to use the Umatilla National Forest motor vehicle use map as a Travel Management Area to manage motor vehicle access to protect wildlife, and big game in particular. This agreement will not result in any new motor vehicle access closures. The Mid-Coast and East Lane travel management areas will also be continued into 2022.



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WINTERING WONDERLAND

In habitats and climates as varied as you'll find across the West, some of Oregon's wildlife must scrape out a living in a harsh environment, while others settle in for a long winter's nap. And it's truly a cool time to be afield hunting.



Crawling into a big, hollow log, all I could see was darkness at the other end. Inching forward and turning up my headlamp, blackness transformed into a sleeping bear.

The sow was tightly curled up. Two red ear tags stood out. I could see the faint outline of a radio collar around her neck; this is how the ODFW biologist I was with located the bear high in the Cascades, above Rock Creek. Dave Immell, lead biologist on this project at the time, had gone in before me, sedating the sow so he could check on her and her cub. She was in such a deep sleep, it didn't take much.

"You think the last den was impressive, check out that one," pointed Immell, finger stretched toward a massive Douglas fir whose top had been blown out in a wind storm.

"There's a sow up in the top of that thing," he shared. "In fact, that's where most of the sows dened this year, high in those broken-topped firs." A glimpse of the tree amid the vast Oregon forest, envisioning the sow scaling the snag, then spending all winter in there and giving birth, left me speechless. It was a glimpse into just how awesome Oregon's wildlife is.

Animal movement across the state varies this time of year, just like the habitats you'll find from the coast to the Snake River, the Columbia River to the state's southern border. Rocky Mountain elk are at their wintering grounds, waiting for spring green-up so they can move to higher ground. Roosevelt elk are hanging out in their usual haunts west of the Cascades, as winters aren't harsh enough to drive them anywhere, save for select herds in the Cascades.

OREGON PHOTO ESSAY BY SCOTT HAUGEN



FERN RIDGE



ROGUE UNIT

Chukars have for decades offered wild winter hunting, and now turkeys can be hunted here until the end of January, as well.



OWYHEE UNIT



It looks like only a dead snag in the Cascades, but in the top is a black bear sow and her cubs. Such trees are popular denning sites for female black bears. Meanwhile, a tagged and collared sow black bear dozes in her den deep in the Cascades of the Umpqua River drainage.



For deer, now is a vital time. Cold weather can take a toll on deer, as can severe freezes that lock-up food sources. Bucks are still licking their wounds from the rut, in what could be the worst timing for any big game breeding season. As if injury isn't enough when heading into winter, add to it very little nutritional value in what little food exists, and it's surprising many deer make it through winter, at all.

If you're a bird hunter, now is an exciting time. We plan hunts around winter storms, gauging road travel for upland birds on the east side and hoping for intense storms up north to push waterfowl our direction. With more cacklers wintering in the Willamette Valley these days, some hunters are happy. So are those who pursue winter coveys of quail and chukar.

And don't forget turkeys, now that the fall season extends through January.

Speaking of calling, now is prime-time for predator action, too. Coyote and cougar hunters likely will be more active now than the rest of the year combined, as coyote breeding season means it's time to call. Calling in coyotes and other varmints is one thing; calling in a cougar that has no trouble killing an elk evokes different emotions as they draw close.

Birds continue their migration south. During mild winters, we'll witness the movement of birds back toward summer nest-

ing grounds. Snow goose numbers continue to build, offering spring hunting opportunities we anticipate this time of year. For addicted duck hunters in the valleys, we're just hoping for a crack at a prized Eurasian wigeon before the season ends, which is when they typically start showing up.

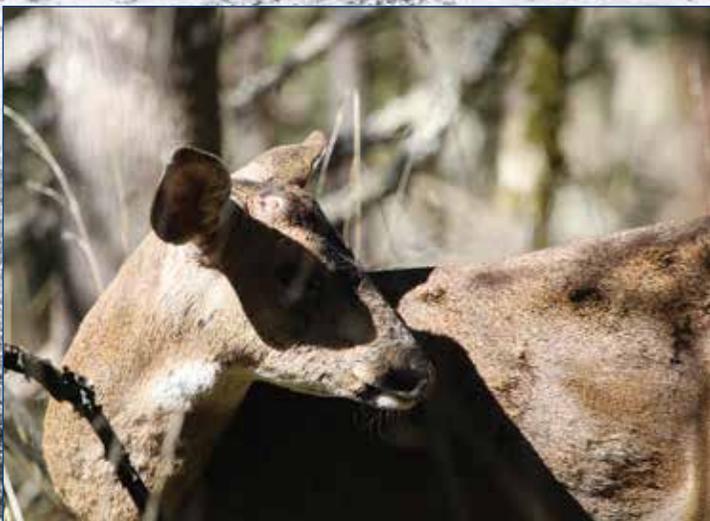
Many shed hunters find blacktail antlers in early January every year, though the height of the shed hunting season is still weeks away. Be it on your own or with a dog, shed hunting is like looking for Easter eggs, just a lot more challenging.

Winter in Oregon is a fine time to be afield. From breaking ice on frozen ponds and creeks to set duck decoys, to donning white camo for a predator hunt in the snow, it's a special time to be out there.

There's no time I don't like being out in Oregon's great outdoors. There's a reason we call Oregon home, why we choose to live here. While the hunting may be different than the past, for younger generations, these are the good ol' days, so make the most of it, wherever you are.



Scott Haugen is a full-time author and photographer living in Waltherville. Learn more about his long list of hunting, fishing, and cooking books at www.scotthaugen.com and follow his adventures on Instagram and Facebook.



Bulls and bucks like this Cascade blacktail typically shed their antlers in late winter, offering a great low-key lure for the whole family to venture afield.





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CHECKING OUR BACKTRAIL

2021 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

OHA Moved Mountains for Conservation in 2021

The OHA conservation staff and board members from OHA's Wildlife-Lands Committee have continued to work on a number of priority issues throughout 2021. COVID-19 restricted in-person meetings, but did nothing to slow the onslaught of conservation issues, so OHA used every means available to weigh in.

OHA's new conservation staff were left holding the reins as Jim Akenson, former senior conservation director, retired from the staff, and eventually moved into the Northeast Oregon State Board position.

Continued conversations on elk archery regulation changes in eastern Oregon and executing OHA's first-ever conservation easement dominated the early part of the year. Ongoing work on safe wildlife passage structures, ungulate migration, and providing OHA's perspective on federal land management projects and ODFW wildlife management area plans were all priorities in 2021.

OHA Launches New Expert Advisory Council

This past year saw the startup of an OHA Advisory Council, the first of its kind for our organization. The Advisory Council is comprised of wildlife experts from a range of backgrounds.

The group has been instrumental in providing input, advice and direct contributions to a number of conservation and legislative issues.



From funding fencing for the new Highway 97 wildlife underpass to seeding a burned area on our new conservation easement in central Oregon, OHA stepped up everywhere for conservation in 2021.

OHA Plays Key Roles in Trapping Workgroups, Conservation Coalitions

OHA conservation staff invested considerable time on two newly formed Fish and Wildlife Commission work groups. These groups are working on two long-time issues that the Fish and Wildlife Commission have been addressing: beaver management on federal lands, and trap-check intervals. The work groups have been challenging to say the least, as the underlying tone within both groups has been dominated by organizations aimed at further restricting or eliminating trapping in any way they can.

Work to conserve and protect the places that provide valuable wildlife habitat and where we hunt continued in 2021,

with OHA's involvement in the Owyhee Sportsman Coalition, the Elliott State Forest planning, and the fund-raising efforts for the Minam property acquisition.

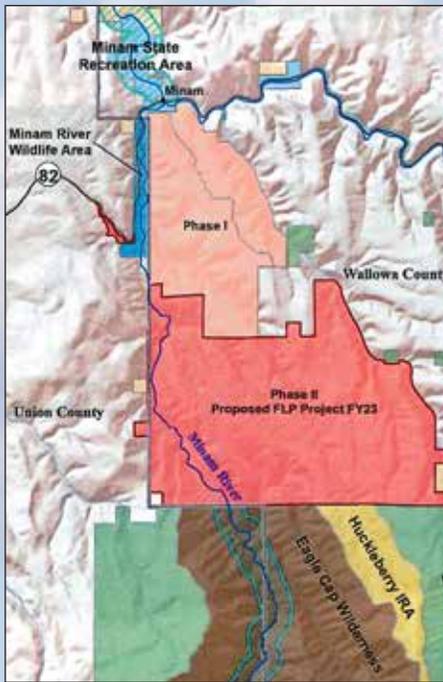
OHA Secures, Enhances Conservation Easement

OHA completed the first iteration of our Potter Conservation Easement Management Plan, and that plan was almost immediately updated to include restoration expectations after the Grandview Fire burned a corner of the property in August. The property is considered mule deer winter range, and OHA will enhance and maintain the property to suit mule deer and other wildlife. Conservation staff will work with ODFW to ensure this property will provide long-term, quality habitat for mule deer.

SUMPTER/DUANE DUNGANNON

Updating Oregon's Mule Deer Plan will be a major focus for OHA in 2022.





COURTESY RMF

The land acquisition will connect the Minam Wildlife Area and Eagle Cap Wilderness Area.

OHA Contributed to Key Minam Land Acquisition

In 2021, an opportunity to make a truly lasting impact on wildlife, conservation, and hunting access came along when the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, ODFW, and Hancock Forest Management came together to negotiate the acquisition of more than 15,500 acres of critical elk winter range that is strategically located between the Eagle Cap Wilderness and the existing Minam River Wildlife Management Area.

The first part of the two-phase acquisition, totaling over 4,600 acres, is scheduled to close in late 2021. Early in 2021, a call came out to help raise money for this first acquisition phase, and OHA chapters stepped up to the plate. By September, chapters had pledged over \$100,000 toward the acquisition – a remarkable achievement given the current constraints on chapter fund-raising.

OHA Stepped up Again for Safe Wildlife Migration

OHA asserted itself this year as a leader in wildlife passage efforts across the state. OHA identified several areas in need

of wildlife passage, and we are assisting agencies to prioritize crossing structures across Oregon so our state is competitive in receiving federal funding for wildlife crossings. We were instrumental in assisting Oregon Wildlife Foundation sell 3,000 Watch for Wildlife license plate vouchers needed to get the plate into production. These license plates will ultimately provide funding for wildlife crossings and projects aimed at improving habitat connectivity for wildlife.

OHA Weighed in on Elk Archery Changes for 2022

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife released its initial strategy for moving a bigger portion of eastern Oregon archery elk hunts to a controlled hunt system in the spring of 2021. This was a continuation of a process and proposal that actually began in 2020, but was deferred to 2021 to allow more input and further refinement. ODFW issued a release that described the proposal, along with a map, and a process for hunters to provide their input.

OHA continued to track this proposal and participate in multiple discussions with the ODFW staff charged with leading the review. OHA representatives reviewed data and information on the current elk archery hunting, assessed potential impacts of the proposal, participated in sport group meetings, and worked hard to make sure our members had an opportunity to engage in the discussion, including an OHA-specific meeting with ODFW staff on the proposal.

Jeremy Thompson, ODFW District Wildlife Biologist from The Dalles, served as the agency lead for the process. In a release from ODFW, Jeremy stated, “We have tried to craft a solution that addresses the problems we are seeing in some units, while continuing to retain as much general-season opportunity as possible. We recognize that any change we propose will impact hunters, but we will also be impacting hunters if we do not make a change.”

In the end, the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted rules that moved 11 units and two combined-unit zones to controlled hunts for archery elk. Changes made on the elk archery seasons will be implemented for the 2022 hunting season.



RYAN HOEFT

OHA's in-person and online courses and resources are helping newcomers learn to hunt.

OHA Helped Advance Learn to Hunt Program

OHA's 2021 outreach efforts have centered around the creation of our new Learn to Hunt Program. Championed by Kelly Parkman, president of the Hoodview Chapter, the Learn to Hunt Program (LTH) is targeted toward recruiting new hunters with beginner in-person and online courses, online hunting resources, and an interactive communication system with students and members.

OHA staff and board members have worked on the program for over a year to craft course curriculum and create the online educational component, while the Hoodview Chapter has piloted the in-person courses and hands-on field trips for new students.

The program continues to evolve and should be ready for expanded chapter involvement and implementation in early 2022.

OHA Reaching out to Oregon's Landowners

OHA is creating a simple yet effective outreach tool to help chapters contact local landowners. The Landowner Outreach Letter is derived from a similar letter drafted by the Mid-Willamette Chapter to thank landowners for allowing public access on their lands. A letter template and implementation guidelines have been drafted and will also be available to chapters in early 2022.

OHA fought hunting ban, gun control petitions in '21

Initiative Petitions that threaten hunting and gun ownership have been filed and are collecting signatures for the 2022 ballot, and OHA and our allies are already working to defeat them.

Initiative Petition 13:

OHA successfully submitted comments challenging the ballot language and making it more clear that this radical petition would criminalize hunting, fishing, and trapping in Oregon. Additionally, this petition would outlaw slaughtering livestock, transporting livestock, raising commercial poultry, rodeos and similar events, wildlife conservation practices, good husbandry practices, training practices, education and research with animals, and pest control. It even goes so far as to reclassify common breeding practices, such as artificial insemination or castration, as sexual assault.

The petitioners have until July 8 to collect 112,020 signatures to place the initiative on the ballot. OHA is working doubly hard on this issue with two different coalitions to create No on IP13 campaigns. We have also created a page on our website specific to this topic with the intent of keeping our members and others updated on the topic.

Initiative Petitions 17 & 18:

Two gun control initiatives aimed for the November 2022 ballot have been filed with the Oregon Attorney General:

- **IP17** - Prohibits the use and possession of ammunition magazines that hold more than 10 rounds.

- **IP18** - Prohibits manufacturing, possessing, and transferring many semi-automatic firearms and creates a new gun permit system. OHA submitted a letter about IP17 to the Attorney General stating that the petition violates the constitutional provision that initiatives only address one subject. OHA also sent a letter to the Attorney General on IP18 that in part stated: "IP18 also purports to prohibit the use of covered firearms for practice and target shooting expressly permitted under federal law on federal public lands such as the national forests and BLM lands, which comprise almost 50 percent of Oregon's land. The Draft Ballot Title does

OHA's 2021 Investments in Our Mission

Projects benefiting Oregon's wildlife & sportsmen:	\$205,811
Publications, information & education:	\$237,812
Defending hunting rights/Advocating for wildlife:	\$176,780
Fighting poaching in Oregon:	\$18,400
Volunteer hours donated by OHA members:	11,746

not inform voters of this radical, indeed unprecedented effect of IP18."

OHA is working closely with gun advocate groups to stop these two petitions.

OHA Passed 2 Key Bills in 2021 Legislative Session

Some 1,800 plus bills were introduced during the 2021 Oregon Legislative session, and OHA tracked close to 400 of them. It was an intense legislative session to say the least, with all hearings, testimony and work sessions done virtually.

OHA had two bills that we requested and passed on the last days of the session. We are happy to report that both bills will become law in 2022 (see below). One bill dealt with Oregon residency requirements for purposes of licenses, tags, and permits related to wildlife. The second bill allows ODFW the authority to operate wildlife inspection stations to prevent the spread of disease and to collect information related to wildlife management efforts.

In the bill mix were several bills that OHA fought to defeat. The banning of coyote contests in Oregon, the prohibition on beaver trapping on federally managed public lands and the banning of the use of lead shot were just a few of the bills that OHA fought vigorously and that did not pass.

Bills that OHA helped pass included the wildlife corridor funding bill, the establishment of a new Habitat Division within ODFW and the full funding for the anti-poaching program.

In addition to the many hunting, wild-

life, and habitat bills, there were numerous gun bills that OHA opposed. After months of rumors and hearings, two gun bills were combined, passed, and signed by the Governor. Hunters should pay close attention to the provisions of this bill for safe transportation, transfers and use by minors. The implications are still subject to interpretation.

New laws will go into effect in 2022

• HB 3152 Wildlife Inspection Points:

This OHA-sponsored bill gives ODFW authority to operate wildlife inspection points for purposes of preventing the spread of infections or infestations harmful to wildlife and to further wildlife management efforts.

• HB 3163 Residency Requirements:

This OHA-sponsored bill makes a change in residency requirements for purposes of licenses, tags, and permits related to wildlife. Through discussions with law enforcement, it was discovered that prosecuting offenders with dual state residencies had become a concern of Oregon District Attorneys, and they had become reluctant to prosecute wildlife offenders that fit into the dual state category. The new language in the bill changes the residency definition so that a resident is a person who has physically resided in Oregon for not less than six consecutive months immediately prior to the date of making application for a license, tag, or permit issued by the State Fish and Wildlife Commission. It further defines a resident as not someone who merely owns real property or pays property taxes in this state; or who has resident privileges in another state or county for any purpose.



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MAXIMIZING MINIMAS

BY NOLAN COOK



If you've cruised down I-5 during the fall, winter or beginning of spring, at some point you have probably seen the occasional swarm of cackling geese (*Branta Hutchinsii Minima*) sitting in a ryegrass field. These small, high-pitched geese can be a thrill to hunt, but can also cause stress and frustration when they don't cooperate. Sometimes they seem to give up easy and drop from the sky into the decoys, and other times it seems that they can smell trouble from a mile away. Luckily, there are some decoy

tips and tricks to help you fool those clever little birds.

I grew up in the Willamette Valley and spent a lot of time lying in a coffin blind, staring into the sky, as I watched a grind of cacklers drop into the decoys. My hunting buddies and I have bought and hunted over almost every brand and type of goose decoy there is on the market. Silhouettes, Silosocks, regular socks, shells, full bodies – you name it, and we've tried it. We have had success with them all, and everything can work in different situations, but there

has always been one type of decoy that stays consistent through the season and years – the full-body decoy. Not just any full-body, though. Large, honker-sized decoys do work on occasion, but true cackler full bodies are unarguably the best. There are two companies that produce full-body cackler decoys now: Dave Smith Decoys and Greenhead Gear. Both decoys are good quality and work well in the field. A ratio of 70 percent feeders to 30 percent uprights is about perfect when trying to replicate a group of relaxed birds.

Oregon's opportunities for cacklers have never been better, but that doesn't mean it's easy.



Four hunters took their limits over a few dozen full-body cackler decoys. It doesn't take a large number of decoys to lure these wary birds.

Photos by the author



The author took a limit of geese over two dozen full body cackler decoys. The birds worked in tight, and it was quick work with the 20 gauge.

The die-hard cackler hunters that I've been around have a saying: "When it comes to decoys, quality or quantity."

I've seen decoy spreads of 300 or more silhouettes or socks that birds make one pass over and head in the opposite direction. Then I've seen spreads of two dozen full-body cackler decoys and birds don't even hesitate as they touch down into the spread. Being in the right field or on the "X" can also make a huge difference, although I have successfully lured birds into a field that they didn't want to be in, using just a few dozen realistic cackler decoys.

If you must consider weight and packability because you have a long walk into your spot, two dozen full-body cacklers are easy for one person to handle. Even better if you have a decoy cart. Using a small, realistic spread will also set you apart from the cookie-cutter decoy spreads that other hunters may use in your area. Late-season cacklers have seen quite a few decoy setups, and it's worth showing them something that they haven't seen yet.

Once you get to your spot with your decoys, you are now tasked with deciding how you want your spread to look. I've tried many different types of "U" or "J" shaped spreads, with occasional success.

But one day it dawned on me, the way I was setting up my decoys made them look like a decoy spread. I didn't want them to look like a decoy spread; I wanted them to look like a flock of geese. Since then, I have adopted a very relaxed type of setup.

If I'm using more than 5 dozen decoys and the wind is consistent, I do form somewhat of a "J" hook with the bottom of the "J" upwind and the leg closest to me.

When hunting with less than 5 dozen decoys, placing decoys in a blob with no discernable shape is my go-to, but I still put most of the decoys up-wind of me. Birds will come into the spread against the wind, so they can slow down when they try to land. Place your blind and decoys so that the wind is at your back or coming from your side, so when the geese decoy, they will be in the best position in front of you.

Decoy spacing and direction is key. Your spacing should be sporadic and inconsistent, making it look like a group of aggressively feeding geese. I tend to place decoys on the upwind end of the spread closer together, and then loosen them up on the downwind side.

An easy mistake is pointing all your decoys in the same direction (usually into the wind). It's true that cacklers do feed

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A Willamette Valley sunrise peeks over the Cascade Mountains. A small, realistic spread is set and ready to decoy birds.

into the wind, but if you watch a group of birds, they switch from right to left, and even backwards trying to find the best grass. Keep in mind that the goal is to replicate a group of relaxed, calm birds that do not look like a decoy spread.

Many other variables affect cackler hunting, such as calling, scouting and concealment, but your decoy spread can be the most important, and should not be overlooked. Think outside the box and try a new strategy. Don't be afraid to evolve as the season goes on, but most of all, be safe and have fun.



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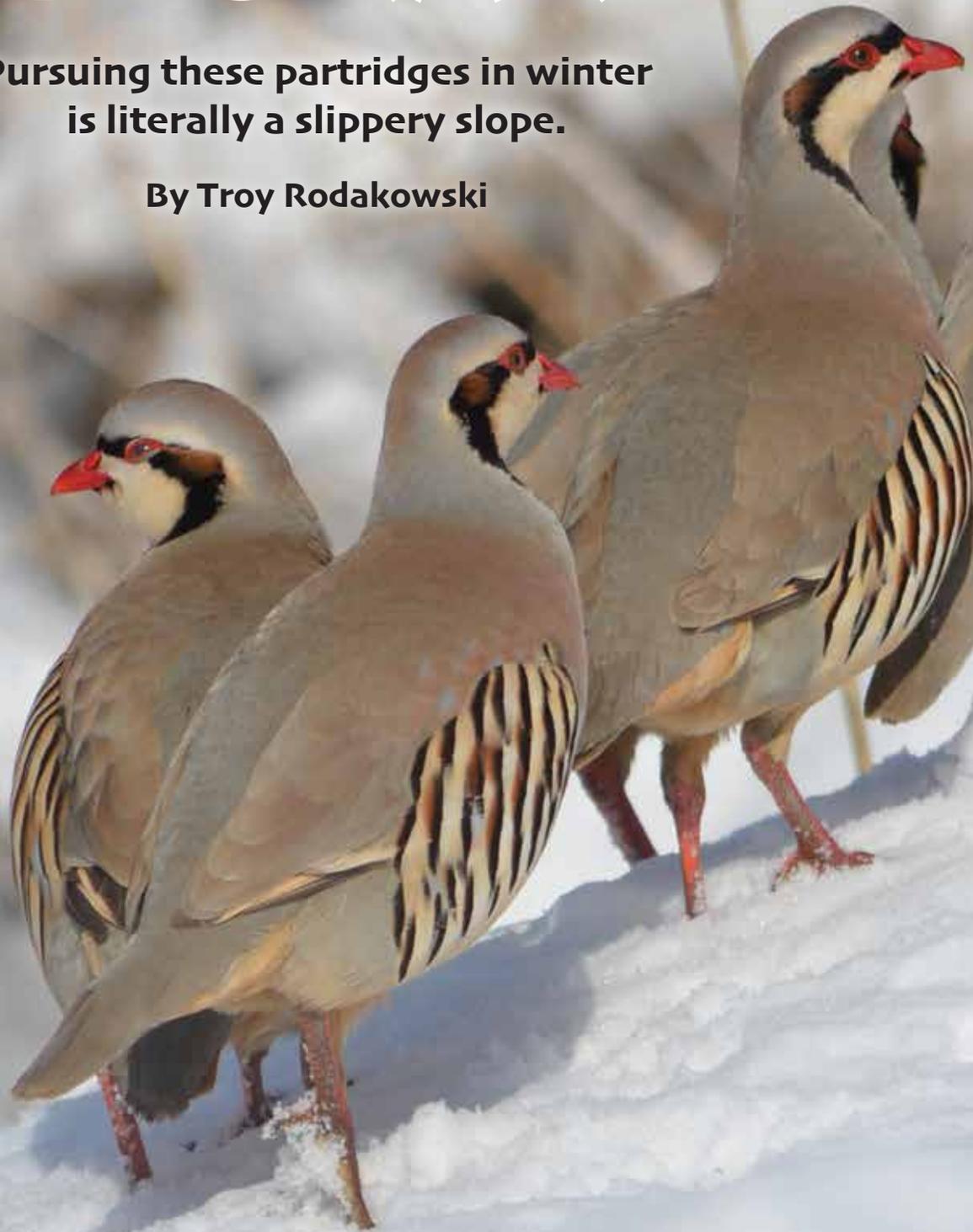
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CHALLENGING CHUKARS

Pursuing these partridges in winter
is literally a slippery slope.

By Troy Rodakowski





It's not easy hunting these fast-flying birds as they spring off cliffs and fly across large expanses of Oregon's canyon country. The bird dogs make the rigorous terrain look easy to cover, but for us aged folks in blaze orange, it's a real workout. But that's why these birds are prized quarry and make for some of the toughest bird hunting in the West.

My German shorthair, Porter, likes to make sure to wear me out on our trips to the east side of the mountains chasing these amazing birds. Finding birds isn't as easy as it used to be, but we always manage to run into a few coveys. The hills didn't

seem as steep 20 years ago, and recovering from long hunts came much faster than it does today. The dog's first wild birds as a youngster were chukars, and we manage to make a few trips to chukar country each season.

THE HUNTING:

The frosty morning led us from a watering trough up a grassy hill toward some small rock outcroppings. The dogs' noses were catching wind currents and scent of birds as their tails told the tale that we were getting close. The breeze was in their faces, which was perfect. Porter lifted his head and paused for a moment as his trot slowed to a walk.

"There they are, point, he's on point," I hollered. We slowly converged on the thick grass above the rocks with our guns readied. Hunting these birds, you come to

realize that they will move and often be several yards in front of the dog. Focusing to the front about 30 yards, I saw the grass move as the first birds flushed, followed by several more.

Shots rang out across the grassy hill as the familiar smell of gunpowder filled the air. We managed to knock down a handful from the covey of about 15 birds. It was nice to have a few birds in hand for dinner. Plus, it feels better when there is a little weight in your bird vest. By this time the sweat was dripping down my face and soaking my undershirt. By the end of the day, a few layers would be shed. It was cold, 28 degrees, but the uphill climbs quickly warmed us all. We found two more small coveys, which produced a pair of chukars and even a Hungarian partridge. The dogs were finally tiring, and their feet were becoming sore. I like to pay close attention to their feet during these hunts, because some of the rocks can occasionally tear pads. At times I have my dog wear booties, and it's of course entirely



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Hungarian partridge and other upland game birds offer bonus opportunities for Oregon chukar hunters.

dependent on the area we will be hunting that given day.

In snow and cold weather, birds will tend to hold a bit more. This is nice, but the hiking and ground coverage to find the birds is twice as much work. Not to mention keeping up with the energetic bird dog isn't quite as easy. Marking on a GPS or OnX map where you find coveys will help once the weather takes a turn for the worse. Keep in mind that the birds will be found in good cover out of the wind and snow on southern slopes or sheltered draws.

THE BIRDS:

Chukars were introduced from Pakistan in 1893 with more introductions between 1931 and 1970. They are now thriving across the West with huntable populations in most states. Oregon provides some great habitat for these birds. The rolling hills and sage-covered rock outcroppings provide excellent nesting, good cover and feed.

Our recent drought conditions have hampered brood success and population growth. During the past few seasons, I have focused on locations that have water during the early fall. Wells, windmill irrigation and springs are where we like to focus our hunting efforts. Chukars, like

all upland game, need good water sources for survival. You will find birds where you find water.

These birds run up eastern Oregon's steep grades like a mountain goat with ease and have been known to be called, "the devil bird," by many hunters. I remember the first time I hunted them and thought to myself that I'll never do this again. Of course, I was young, and over time I learned to love the challenge and exercise, at least to a certain degree.

Chukars feed on an a variety of seeds and insects, with one of their favorites being Canada thistle. The eastern quarter of Oregon and portions of the gorge provide the main home range for these birds, though they have been slowly expanding. Loss of habitat has slowed the expansion in most cases. Though recent fires will ultimately be beneficial in the long run, they have put a temporary damper on expansion.

Oregon bird hunters bagged 33,241 chukars last year, the largest tally since 2015.

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LOCATIONS & NUMBERS:

For me, the drive takes nearly six hours toward Burns. We have hunted around here for several seasons and had some great success. Other places between Vale and Juntura also hold birds, and there are a few public access points along the way. Near Ontario one can also find some good access on private lands as well as public access on some CRP. In the gorge between Heppner and Hermiston, there are many acres of CRP that can be accessed where we have also done very well in the past. The Jordan Valley has several access points along the Owyhee River and includes BLM and additional CRP. There are well over 250,000 CRP acres enrolled in the middle Columbia region that comprise both public and private access. In 2020 there were 33,241 birds harvested in eastern Oregon, which is the largest tally since 2015. From 2001-2006, Oregon saw harvests over 100,000.

Regardless of all the sweat and achy muscles these birds can inflict, they present a great challenge to any new or seasoned bird hunter. These “devil birds” are well worth the chase, with the ultimate reward being a full vest and a tired dog at day’s end. Chukars are one of the tastiest game birds with many different options for



A good hard day's work produced this bag of 'devil birds' for the author.

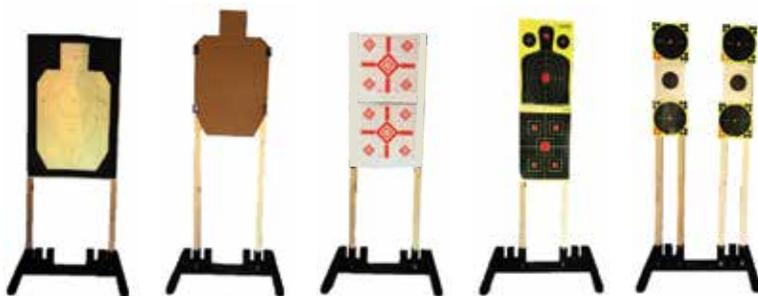
cooking on the grill, over open flame or in the oven. One of my favorites involves jalapeño peppers, bacon and cream cheese, all washed down by an ice-cold beverage.

Be prepared for drastic weather changes and extreme temperatures, as well as

winter driving conditions, and pack extra clothes and a change of socks. Take plenty of water and high-energy food for you and your dogs. Chukar country is challenging, so make sure you’re up to the challenge for a great day afield. 

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YOUNG GUNS

By MACY MORNARICH

C2 Ranch hunt gives kids a great shot at blacktails

Growing up hunting, one of the first things you learn is to hunt from dawn to dark, or in other words, to never give up. I really put that classic lesson to the test on one of the most memorable hunts I've been on: my 2020 Rogue Unit blacktail hunt.

My dad, my Uncle Joe, Ronnie the C2 ranch hand, and I were on the mountain before first light, ready to glass. In the first half of the day, we saw 21 does, but not a single buck. As the day progressed, we started seeing fewer animals, unless you count the bovine in the bottom pastures of the beautiful C2 Cattle Ranch, where I was fortunate enough to hunt.

The hunt is made possible by the C2 Ranch, OHA and the Access & Habitat Program.

After hiking through a few draws and glassing numerous locations, we still hadn't seen any form of horns. However, no one lost hope as we moved to our next location and began glassing once more. By the end of the day, we were all thinking we weren't going to see anything.

Heading back to the road, I had the option of one last trek across a hillside. We only had about 40 minutes until dark, so my options were: more walking in the frigid December air, or call it a day and return to a warm house. Knowing this was my last chance hunting at the C2 Cattle Ranch, and remembering that lesson I learned growing up, I said "Let's do it."

After 20 minutes of hiking across the hill, it felt like the three of us saw him at the same exact time. We all exchanged the same glance, and, without words, Joe and my dad got their binoculars and rangefinder on him, while I got my gun



Macy Mornarich took this trophy blacktail in a special youth hunt opportunity in southern Oregon.

set up and the buck in my crosshairs. My dad told me they were ready when I was. This is when all the preparation comes in – the hours of repetition and practice just so I can make a good shot through the adrenaline. Breathe in to the top of the breath, breathe out to the bottom. Boom. He rolls over in his bed.

One shot, 345 yards, pure elation. I hear the first whoop to my right, as it always has been. My trusty hunting buddy since Day One, my Uncle Joe, confirms that the buck is down. My dad on my left starts the celebration. High fives are exchanged all around as I pack up my rifle and we head up the hill.

The image dancing through my mind as I approached him was a respectable buck; however, that image did not match the buck of a lifetime lying in front of me.

Thank you to Ronnie, who went from daylight to dark with us in our persistent hunt despite the cold. I am so thankful of the C2 Cattle Company for this wonderful opportunity to hunt on their land and for giving other youth hunters like me the chance for these once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Also, thank you to my dad and Uncle Joe for all they have done: teaching me how to shoot, hunt, and always taking me hunting.



Macy Mornarich is a sophomore at Glide High School who belongs to a family of OHA members and supporters.

Apply to hunt C2 in '22!

Youth hunters can enter a drawing for a one-day guided hunt on the C2 Ranch, a 10,000-acre property near Eagle Point. Five lucky applicants will have an opportunity to harvest a southwest Oregon black-tailed deer.

Young hunters apply in the fall. To be eligible, youth need to either have a Rogue Unit youth deer tag (630T) or are eligible to participate through the Youth "First Time" program for a 600-series tag.

It is free to apply and free to hunt for those who win the opportunity (winner must possess current hunting license and tag). ODFW contacts draw winners and coordinates a hunting date. Hunting dates are from mid-December to early January. For more information on the draw, visit myodfw.com

The Access and Habitat Program helps to fund projects and provides hunter access and/or improves wildlife habitat on private land in Oregon. The A&H program is funded primarily by a \$4 surcharge on hunting licenses, big game auction and raffle tag sales.

The C2 Cattle Company is a conservation-minded ranch working to preserve the land and natural resources, including wild game, while operating a working cattle ranch. This youth hunt opportunity is also made possible with additional support from the OHA Rogue Valley Chapter.

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GAME ON THE GRILL

By TIFFANY HAUGEN

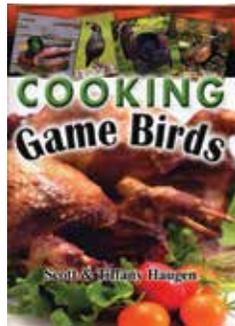
Make your mouth water with a Waterfowl Hamburg Sandwich

Opinions vary on whether the hamburger actually originated in Hamburg, Germany, or has deeper roots among the Mongol horsemen. Any way you grind it, hamburgers with all the trimmings are a popular item.

Lightly seasoned ground or finely chopped waterfowl (ducks or geese) makes a great burger option. Don't forget to amp up the flavors with your favorite burger additions. To keep with German flavors, this burger is served on a bed of caramelized onions and sauerkraut and topped with a cheddar/Swiss cheese sauce.

1.5 pounds ground or finely chopped waterfowl breasts & thighs
2 tablespoons stone ground or Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Olive oil for pan frying
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 onion
- 1 cup sauerkraut
- 4 pretzel buns



In a medium bowl, mix ground or chopped waterfowl with mustard, parsley and spices. In a large skillet, sauté onion in olive oil and butter on medium-high heat until lightly browned and caramelized. Add sauerkraut and continue to sauté 2-3 minutes until there is no liquid in the skillet. Remove onion and sauerkraut mixture and set aside. Add another tablespoon of olive oil to the skillet and place on medium heat. Form four patties from meat mixture and place in skillet. Turn heat to high and brown patties on each side. Turn heat to medium-low and finish cooking to desired doneness. Place onion/sauerkraut mixture on the dressed (mayonnaise or mustard) bottom of the toasted pretzel bun, top with waterfowl patty and drizzle with Cheddar/Swiss Cheese Sauce or cheese sauce of choice.

Cheddar/Swiss Cheese Sauce

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese



To add German flavors, this burger is served on a bed of caramelized onions and sauerkraut and topped with a cheddar/Swiss cheese sauce.

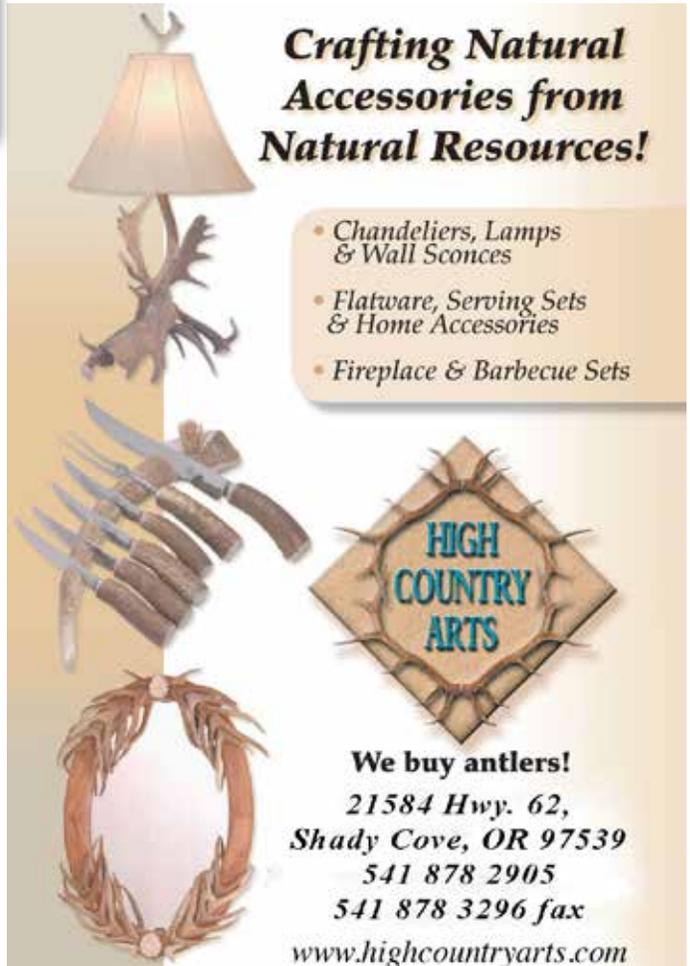
In a small saucepan, melt butter on medium-high heat. Add flour and whisk for 1 minute. Slowly add milk, whisking constantly. Remove from heat and stir in shredded cheeses. Keep warm until ready to serve.



For signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular book, *Cooking Game Birds*, send a check for \$20 to Haugen Enterprises, P.O. Box 275, Walterville, OR 97489 or visit www.scotthaugen.com for this and other titles.

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CWD detected in two Idaho mule deer

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

Two mule deer bucks harvested in October in the Slate Creek drainage near Lucile in Idaho County, Idaho, tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), according to Idaho Fish and Game. This is the first confirmed detection of CWD in a state adjoining Oregon, and cause for concern.

CWD, known to exist in the western United States for over 40 years, is fatal to deer, elk, moose and caribou.

To sample for CWD, lymph node tissue from fresh or frozen harvested heads is extracted. Meat or muscle tissue cannot be used to test for CWD. Samples from the diseased mule deer were tested at the Colorado State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab and are being verified by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

The passage of an OHA-supported bill to authorize game check stations will be a critical part of efforts to monitor for this disease and others in Oregon.

For more, visit <https://idfg.idaho.gov/press/chronic-wasting-disease-detected-two-idaho-mule-deer>

Monument proposed in Wheeler County

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

Oregon Senators Merkley and Wyden introduced legislation in early November to create a new national monument in the Painted Hills area of Wheeler County that would be known as the Sutton Mountain National Monument.

The legislation would create a national monument in an area that is currently a wilderness study area.

The proposed legislation does not eliminate hunting, fishing, grazing or any existing improved access.

The legislation protects the area from

new energy site development (wind farms or solar farms that the Biden administration is promoting on public lands) or mining.

It would also support active management to improve the area for wildlife and fire resiliency.

Concerns remain that the legislation could be altered before its final approval (if passed), or that it could attract an influx of visitors to the area, which the bill is promoting along with some of the community members in Wheeler County.

OHA will track the legislation and advocate for wildlife, habitat and hunting access.

For more information about the proposal, visit <https://www.merkley.senate.gov/news/press-releases/merkley-wyden-introduce-bill-to-support-oregon-conservation-economic-development-2021>

OHA welcomes our new office manager

OHA is pleased to announce our newest staff team member, Michelle Duer of Grants Pass, who will serve as our new office manager. Michelle follows in the footsteps of Cindy Martinich, who is retiring after 27 years in OHA's office.

Michelle is a hunter and OHA member who comes to our staff from a position as a financial service representative at First Interstate, where OHA has accounts.

Michelle began her training in mid-December and steps into the position with both boots after the first of the new year, when

Cindy will move into a consulting role to ensure a seamless transition. OHA thanks Cindy and welcomes Michelle!



New OHA office manager Michelle Duer took this buck in the Applegate Unit, but won't tell us where.

OHA STATE-LEVEL SPONSORSHIPS

Please support the sponsors who support OHA's mission of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.

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For information about OHA state-level sponsorship opportunities, call the OHA State Office at (541) 772-7313.



OHA staff and volunteers recently seeded an area of our new conservation easement that was damaged by the Grandview fire this summer.

OHA seeds C. Oregon conservation easement

By Tyler Dungannon & Mike Totey

In response to the Grandview Fire that burned part of OHA's new conservation easement this summer, OHA conservation staff and more than a dozen members from the Bend and Redmond chapters planted sagebrush plants and seeded dozer lines on Dec. 2 for the benefit of mule deer.

In cooperation with the landowner, OHA seeded the affected area with a mix of local native seed that will provide multiple benefits. It will provide soil stabilization for the exposed ground, provide valuable wildlife forage, and help prevent invasive species from taking over the site.



OHA Citizen Landowner of the Year David Potter

The landowners and OHA staff worked with members of the ODF Incident Management Team during fire fighting efforts on the property. After the fire, OHA staff and the landowner assessed the area and developed the plan for restoring the burned area with technical assistance from ODFW and input from Monty Gregg of USFS.

The property owners, David and Pamela Potter, recently were recognized with OHA's Citizen Landowner of the Year Award. OHA conservation staff presented the award plaque to the landowner on the day of the seeding project.

OHA expands wildlife crossing efforts to SW Oregon

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

OHA actively contributes to efforts to improve wildlife habitat connectivity and reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions across Oregon, and we are now working as part of the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition (SOWCC) to mitigate negative impacts of Interstate 5 south of Ashland.

Like our involvement with the Oregon Action Team on Ungulate Migration, SOWCC is diverse in composition and includes representation from ODFW, BLM, Southern Oregon University, Trout Unlimited, and many others.

Oregon Department of Transportation has identified several stretches of high wildlife-vehicle collision density between Ashland and the California border. Working with Coalition partners, we have identified six sites with high potential for effective wildlife crossings in this stretch.

Our next step is to undertake a feasibility study and preliminary design for the most practical and effectual sites to get wildlife across the interstate safely.



The number of deer killed on southern Oregon roadways is staggering.



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You're invited to OHA chapter events in 2022!

Chapters of OHA combined to contribute more than \$100,000 to the RMEF project to purchase additional land for the Minam River Wildlife Area. For project details, see OHA in Action on Page 52.

Below are the regularly scheduled times and places for chapter meetings, many of which were suspended at press time, and previously scheduled projects. Please confirm all information here.

BAKER

Charlie Brinton
(541) 403-0402

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Best Western Sun Ridge Inn; optional dinner 6 p.m.

2022 fundraiser: April 2

Update: Go to our Facebook page for news and updates. We plan to hold a scholarship raffle and issue a scholarship this year.

BEND

Rex Parks
541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Bend Golf & Country Club

2022 fundraiser: March 12, The River House; call 541-480-9848.

Update: The annual Youth Upland Bird Hunt took place Nov. 20 in Powell Butte. The chapter voted to purchase some sporting clays equipment for potential use at our annual Youth Upland Bird Hunt, hunter ed classes and special activities.

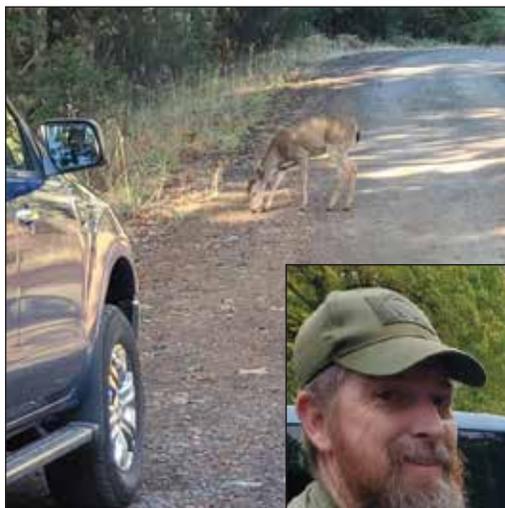
BLUE MOUNTAIN

Dean Groshong
(541) 377-1227

ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday of the month, The Saddle, 2200 Court St., Pendleton, 6 p.m. meeting, 5:30 p.m. dinner and drinks available.

2022 fundraiser: April 2, Pendleton Convention Center; call 541-231-4384.



These happy hunters were able to take home this buck thanks to OHA Yamhill County volunteers who monitored a Stimson Lumber gate on weekends this fall in exchange for public hunting access. An interested deer monitored the gate, as well.

Update: Raffle winners for the Coastal and General raffles were drawn Nov. 23 at our meeting. Our chapter donated \$1,000 to the Minam land acquisition project.

CAPITOL

Erik Colville
(503) 851-8409
ohacapitol.webs.com

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m., via Zoom through 2021.

2022 fundraiser: April 2, Columbia Hall, Oregon State Fair & Exposition Center.

Update: Our chapter contributed \$5,000 toward the Minam land acquisition. We held our chapter holiday potluck Dec. 4 at Four Corners Rod & Gun Club.

CHETCO

David Green
(541) 207-4866

Chapter Meetings: 5:30 p.m.; next meetings TBD.

CLATSOP COUNTY

Troy Laws
503-738-6962

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. speaker, 4H Clubhouse, Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

2022 fundraiser: March 19.

OHA's Pioneer Chapter will auction an A&H Statewide Elk Tag at the Pacific NW Sports Show on Feb. 19



PHOTOS BY BRYAN COOK

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Jordan Hicks
(949) 533-7271

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m., location listed in the newsletter

2022 fundraiser: Feb. 26, Columbia County Fairgrounds.

Update: Chapter members volunteered at a cleanup project on Sauvie Island. Our chapter is pledging an additional \$500 per animal to TIP rewards in two Columbia County poaching cases.

EMERALD VALLEY

Tony Hilsendager
(541) 729-0877
EmeraldOHA@live.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 7 p.m., Sizzlers on Gateway

2022 fundraiser: March 5, The Graduate Hotel, Eugene; 541-729-5220.

Update: We are raffling two rifles to raise funds: the winner of the Christensen Arms rifle donated by Coastal was drawn at

our meeting on Dec. 8, and the General Raffle .30-06 Mossberg winner will be drawn at the Eugene Boat and Sportsman Show Feb. 6.

HOODVIEW

Kelly Parkman
(503) 706-7481

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Portland Gun Club

2022 fundraiser: Feb. 26, Monarch Inn, Clackamas; ohahoodview2019@gmail.com

Update: Come to our family friendly general membership meeting Jan. 12.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

Cliff Peery
(541) 761-3200

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., Elmer's Restaurant, Grants Pass.

2022 fundraiser: March 19, Josephine County Fairgrounds, 541-821-1511.

Update: We are accepting applications for college scholarships.

KLAMATH

Allan Wiard
(541) 884-5773

ohaklamath.webs.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., Shasta View Community Center.

2022 fundraiser: April 30, Klamath County Fairgrounds; 541-882-9593.

Update: Due to years of drought raising the importance of wildlife watering, we had a special meeting Dec. 9 for guzzler maintenance planning.

LAKE COUNTY

Larry Lucas
(541) 417-2983

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday at 6 p.m., Dinner Bell Cafe, Lakeview.

2022 fundraiser: April 2, Lake County Fairgrounds; 541-417-2983.

Update: Our last guzzler project for 2021 took place Oct. 30.

LINCOLN COUNTY

Todd Williver
(541) 648-6815

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 6 p.m., OSU extension office, Newport.

MALHEUR COUNTY

Bruce Hunter
(208) 573-5556

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m., no host dinner 5:30, location TBA in the chapter newsletter.

Update: We had a Christmas party Dec. 2 at the Boulevard Grange.

MID-COLUMBIA

Stanley Walasavage
(541) 296-1022

Quarterly Chapter Meetings: 6 p.m., ODFW Screen Shop, The Dalles.

Update: Next meeting will be in February, details in the chapter newsletter.

MID-WILLAMETTE

Jeff Mack
(503) 949-3787

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., board meeting at 6 p.m., Old Armory, 4th and Lyons, Albany.

2022 fundraiser: April 9, Boys & Girls Club, Albany, 541-220-2220.

Update: Our chapter donated \$10,000 to the Minam property acquisition.

OCHOCO

John Dehler, III
(541) 815-5817

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m., Room 1868, 152 NW 4th St., Prineville.

PIONEER

Brian Andrews
(503) 266-2900

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 1st Wednesday, 7 p.m., come early for dinner, Canby Rod & Gun Club.

2022 fundraiser: March 5, Mt. Angel Community Festival Hall; call 503-710-1233. We will auction an Access & Habitat Statewide Elk tag on Feb. 19 at the Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show.

Update: We currently have two gun raffles, one to support youth and wildlife projects, the other to support the Minam River Wildlife Area land acquisition. Winners will be drawn at the Sportsmen's Show Feb. 20.

REDMOND

K. C. Thrasher
(541) 419-7215

OHA line (541) 383-1099

oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, VFW Hall. Dinner at 5, member meeting at 6, board meeting follows.

2022 fundraiser: Feb. 26, Deschutes County Expo.

Update: We donated \$10,000 to the Minam land acquisition. We held a toy and canned food drive in November and December. Volunteers joined Bend and Rogue Valley chapters Dec. 2 to plant seed for the OHA Potter Conservation Easement Project.

ROGUE VALLEY

Ricky Clark
(530) 905-1186

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 6 p.m. social & dinner, 7 p.m. presentation, Eagles Club, 2000 Table Rock Rd.

2022 banquet: March 19, 530-250-3000.

Update: We sponsored a forage seed giveaway with ODFW again this year.

TILLAMOOK

John Putman
(503) 842-7733

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Monday, 7 p.m., Tillamook PUD.

2022 fundraiser: May 7, 503-842-7153

TIOGA

Marcey Fullerton
(541) 267-2577

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 6 p.m., Uncle Randy's Café, Coquille.

2022 fundraiser: April 2.

TUALATIN VALLEY

Tony Kind
(503) 290-6143

oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting at 7, Prime Time Restaurant & Sports Bar, Forest Grove.

UMPQUA

Tadd Moore
(541) 580-5660

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m.

2022 fundraiser: April 9, Seven Feathers Hotel & Casino Resort; 541-430-7324.

Update: The January chapter newsletter will have either a Zoom link or the good news that we can resume in-person meetings at the Roseburg ODFW office.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

Morgan Olson
(541) 786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

Update: We're raffling a TNC elk hunt to raise funds for our \$20,000 contribution to the Minam land purchase; see Page 23.

YAMHILL COUNTY

Andy Bodeen
(503) 490-2489

ohayamhill.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., 6 p.m. dinner, American Legion Hall, 126 NE Atlantic, McMinnville.

2022 fundraiser: March 19

Update: Volunteers helped staff the Stimson gate for youth deer hunt weekend in November. The chapter donated \$10,000 for the Minam land acquisition. 



OHA IN ACTION

BY MIKE TOTY & JIM AKENSON

MINAM RIVER

OHA chapters combine to contribute \$100,000 to Minam acquisition

In late 2021, 4,600 acres of public hunting area were added to the existing Minam River Wildlife Area as the result of the purchase of the property from Hancock Natural Resource Group in a project led by RMEF and ODFW and supported by OHA. It has taken years to come to fruition.

The good news is the major addition to the existing Minam River Wildlife Area. The better news is the future addition of nearly 11,000 more acres in a second phase of the major land acquisition. This will effectively bridge an area along the upper Minam River that will create public lands from the Eagle Cap Wilderness on the south to the confluence of the Minam and Willowa Rivers to the north.

This area is well known for its existing wildlife values, and it has a unique human history, too – both indigenous use and more recent settlement. It provides winter range for Rocky Mountain elk, habitat for mule deer, white-tailed deer, turkey, grouse and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep. The upper Minam River itself is home to steelhead, Chinook salmon and bull trout.

The uplands portion of this property was known as “Minam on Top” by white settlers. It was first homesteaded just over 100 years ago, and many acres were converted to dryland farming and pasture improvement. The 1930s were tough on these homesteaders, mostly due to prolonged drought, and most homesteads were abandoned or sold by WW II. More recent years saw the primary land use as cattle grazing and then timber harvest. After WW II, several stock ponds were developed to augment livestock needs. These ponds continue for this use, and they provide some excellent water sources for wildlife. Now all they need is some access restrictions for overuse from livestock and elk.

OHA chapters around the state stepped



RMEF PHOTOS BY DAVID JENSEN

up to provide a \$100,000 contribution toward the first purchase. We have also been active in providing support for grant funding for the second phase purchase. But our involvement will go far beyond the financial contributions. Upon purchase of the property, ownership will be directly transferred to ODFW to be added to the existing wildlife area. OHA plans to have a strong presence in the development of a management plan for the property. It is already stated that this will continue to be a “working landscape,” providing managed grazing to condition forage for elk winter range, timber management to keep forests healthy and resilient, and riparian management for a range of benefits.

Jim Akenson, Northeast Director for the OHA State Board, is very familiar with this tract of land. The existing values are notable, but Jim has already started looking at potential projects to make the area even better for wildlife and the public.

“As I see it, the key with this landscape is having quality water sources available for a variety of wildlife, and livestock too,” he said. “The area has a history of being a working landscape, and continuation of this land-use approach, combined with measures to maintain a low level of disturbance – such as from vehicle and ATV activities – will greatly enhance opportunities for huntable species like elk, deer, bear, turkey and grouse. The potential for sportsmen-led conservation is huge.”

Vic Coggins, former OHA Northeast



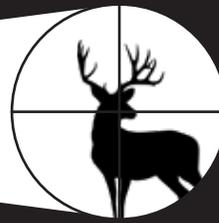
OHA provided \$100,000 toward the recent and historic Minam Wildlife Area Acquisition. This project, led by RMEF and ODFW, will ultimately provide nearly 16,000 acres for hunters and enhance elk winter range. OHA has pledged additional funds for a sizable future habitat project on the property for the benefit of wildlife.

Director, and perhaps one of the most knowledgeable wildlife biologists for the area, added: “There is a great opportunity to improve ranges in the lower Minam,” noting that the purchase of this land by a public agency would ensure winter range for more than half of the Minam elk herd. “Managing this winter range would be the single most critical management activity to benefit this important elk herd.”

Let’s celebrate the addition of increased public hunting opportunity, and roll up our sleeves on making this valuable piece of property even better for the wildlife we care about.

Many OHA chapters contributed to the property acquisition effort, including:

Union/Wallowa	\$20,000
Josephine County	\$10,000
Redmond	\$10,000
Emerald Valley	\$10,000
Bend	\$10,000
Pioneer	\$10,000
Yamhill County	\$10,000
Mid-Willamette	\$10,000
Capitol	\$5,000
Umpqua	\$5,000
Rogue Valley	\$5,000
Lake County	\$2,500
Blue Mountain	\$1,200
Mid-Columbia	\$1,000



OHA chapters raise the stakes on poachers

Poachers are busy day and night in Oregon. Three cases around Halloween have OSP Troopers asking the public for information about these incidents, while OHA has raised the collective reward amounts to \$3,500 for those who report it.

Troopers discovered all three poaching scenes after alert members of the community reported hearing shots fired or finding a carcass.

Informants may remain anonymous and collect either rewards from OHA's Turn In Poachers fund or big game preference points from ODFW.

A Douglas County deer case is offering \$500 or four preference points for information that leads to an arrest or citation, while a pair of elk cases offer \$1,500 or four preference points.

On Oct. 30, a member of the public called 911 to report someone was shooting at a deer from Interstate 5, in Douglas County, near the crest of Roberts Mountain. The incident happened on the east side of the freeway, at about 5 p.m. The man then pulled over, retrieved the deer, put it in his truck, and left the scene traveling northbound on I-5 about 15 minutes later. Troopers were able to retrieve a photo of his pickup and would like to hear from anyone who might know the driver. It is a newer model burgundy or maroon GMC Sierra (or similar model) 4-door truck with black rims and a black step bar. The truck left the area northbound on I-5 at about 5:15 p.m.



OSP would like information on the driver of this newer GMC Sierra or similar model 4-door truck with black rims and a black step bar. It was seen northbound on I-5 on Oct. 30 after picking up a deer illegally shot near I-5 at the crest of Roberts Mountain in Douglas County.



This elk was shot near Lane Creek Mainline near milepost 21 in Columbia County Oct. 22 or 23.

On Oct. 28, around 2:30 a.m. neighbors in the Fernhill Road area in Columbia County heard shots fired. They reported the incident to OSP. The following morning troopers located a bull elk that had been shot on private property and left to waste in a field near Fernhill Road and Cook Road. The carcass was located about 50 yards from Fernhill Road. The reward for information that leads to an arrest or citation is \$1,500 from TIP and the OHA Columbia County and Tualatin Valley chapters or four ODFW hunter preference points.

On Oct. 23, OSP responded to the report of a bull elk shot near Mist. Troopers located what was left of a bull elk carcass, near Lane Creek Mainline off the Columbia River Mainline. They estimate the elk had been poached between Oct. 22 and the morning of Oct 23. Four quarters of meat were taken but the rest was left to waste. The reward for information that leads to an arrest or citation stands at \$1,500 from TIP and the OHA Columbia County and Tualatin Valley chapters or four ODFW hunter preference points.

In 2020, OHA distributed more than \$20,000 in rewards from the Turn In Poachers (TIP) fund. ODFW gave out 135



This bull elk was illegally shot and left to waste near Fernhill Rd. in Columbia County on Oct. 28.

hunter preference points for those who preferred hunting preference points over financial reward. Cash rewards and hunter preference points can offer that nudge to action for people who might not otherwise report, according to Stop Poaching campaign coordinator Yvonne Shaw.

“We rely on members of the public to call the TIP line if they see or suspect illegal activities,” she said, “We have a better chance of catching poachers when law enforcement and the general public work as a team. We thank the members of the public who called OSP when they heard shooting, and urge anyone with more information to step forward and provide information on these cases.”

There are 128 Fish and Wildlife troopers across the state – not nearly enough to patrol more than 90,000 square miles of Oregon land, as well as inland and marine waterways. OHA Vice President Steve Hagan is enthusiastic about the move to increase reward amounts.

“We want to catch these guys,” he said, “Columbia County and Tualatin Valley chapters are contributing \$1,000 each for these two elk to try to catch whoever did this.”



TACTACAM TRAIL CAM CONTEST

See rules and enter your best shots at oregonhunters.org for a chance to win a great Tactacam prize!



WINNER:
OHA member Ryan Gertken of Port Orford wins a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for this photo of a pair of spikes sparring in the Sixes Unit, probably just about ready to shed those spikes.

HONORABLE MENTION:



Pete Soderstrom, OHA member in Columbia City, earns an OHA hat for this shot of a trio of Saddle Mountain bulls.



OHA member Bill Wirth of Pendleton gets an OHA hat for this photo of a Catherine Creek bull shortly before bow season.



Brent Wright, OHA member in Bend, receives an OHA hat for this photo of a Paulina muley.



OHA member Jeremi Johnson of Eugene scores an OHA hat for this photo of an owl.



OHA member Tim Mickelson of Independence earns an OHA hat for this shot of a Grant County bull.

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Bull elk found is Oregon's second-largest

The antlers of a Union County bull elk have been officially scored at 406 6/8, which would make it the second-place record for a typical Rocky Mountain elk in Oregon. The bull was found by a cone collecting crew on private timberland in the Catherine Creek Unit during the summer and turned in to ODFW.

Mark Penninger, a certified scorer for Northwest Big Game Records Inc., officially scored the elk in early November after waiting the required 60 days. (An animal must undergo a minimum of 60-day drying period before it is officially scored as skulls and antlers will shrink some after their first “green” score immediately after harvest or pick-up.)

“Bull elk of this caliber are incredibly rare in Oregon but it’s great to see that they are still around,” said Penninger, who described the antlers as “jawdropping.”

“This bull is testament that age, good genetics, and high-quality habitat can produce truly world class elk,” he said.

ODFW does not track trophy records but will be submitting the score to Northwest Big Game Records for official placement. Northwest Big Game Records is one organization that keeps records of game animals including both those that are harvested by hunters and those that are found dead. (In Oregon, due to poaching concerns, it is unlawful to possess or transport found dead game mammals or their parts, except for naturally shed antlers or certain parts when salvaging roadkill.)

The last time an elk with typical antlers scoring higher than 400 was found or harvested was 1984 by Randy Ryerse in Crook County, an elk now standing as the #4 record with a 400 0/8 score.

The #1 Rocky Mountain elk was a 418 2/8 bull taken in Crook County in 1942 or earlier and attributed to Hugh Evans.

Until now, the second largest was a



The rack from a magnificent bull found in the Catherine Creek Unit scored 406 6/8 and will rank as Oregon's new No. 2 Rocky Mountain elk.



bull taken in Grant County by Jim Sproul with antlers measuring 401 1/8. This bull was displayed in the John Day Elks Lodge until it was lost in a fire when the building burned down, according to Penninger. The bull had the longest main beam of any bull anywhere for a long time, he said.

With this Catherine Creek elk, the top four Rocky Mountain elk will all score higher than 400. After that, antler scores drop into the high 300s.

The Two Tafts

The top 10 for typical Rocky Mountain elk still includes “Taft,” a Wallowa Lake bull that was scored at 391 4/8 for a typical Rocky Mountain elk in 1930. This bull is ranked even higher in the non-typical category — it’s the #3 state record with an official score of 411 0/8.

“In fairly rare cases, an animal meets minimum qualifications for both typical and non-typical categories for the species,” said Penninger. “Typical scores subtract non-typical points.” (Learn more about how elk and other big game are scored by listening to this week’s Beaver State Podcast with Penninger.)

According to David Morris of Northwest Big Game, this record setting bull is often mixed up with another one of the same name (both are named after William H. Taft, who served as U.S. President 1909-1913). But there were actually two different Rocky Mountain elk that came to be called “Taft” in northeast Oregon in the early 20th century.

While historic records indicate elk were abundant in the Wallowa Mountains and Blue Mountain Plateau, market hunting

had reduced numbers to a few small herds by the late 1800s/early 20th century, so elk were transplanted into the state to restore the population. (The Oregon Legislature provided protection for elk in 1899 by making it illegal to sell meat from wild animals and by closing elk season from 1909 through 1932, and the Rocky Mountain elk population has since rebounded to more than 70,000 today.)

The first “Taft” was one of the original elk relocated from the Jackson Hole area to Oregon in the early 20th century. In 1912, 15 elk from Wyoming were released at Billy Meadows in Wallowa County, followed by another 15 in 1913, and one of those was the first “Taft.”

The first Taft’s shed antlers are still displayed at the Enterprise Elks Lodge. Sheds from the second Taft (the 1930 record-setting bull) were displayed at La Grande’s Elks Lodge and are now at the Baker City Elks Lodge, according to Morris. Their antlers look different.

Morris spent several years researching the two Tafts, and the story about what he found is in his book (The Record Book for Oregon’s Big Game Animals, 6th Edition). Based on his research, Morris says the second Taft was likely one of a handful of elk born in one of the enclosures at Billy Meadows where the transplanted elk lived for several years; the fences were taken down in 1922.

ODFW hopes to eventually display the Catherine Creek bull’s record antlers in one of our offices and thanks taxidermist Brody Turner for working with us to get them ready for display.

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2022 PHOTO CONTEST

FINALIST PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded in general and youth categories.

1ST PRIZE: Nosler M48 Heritage Rifle

2ND PRIZE: Case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo

3RD PRIZE: Leupold Scope

4TH PRIZE: Danner Alesia Hunting Boots

5TH PRIZE: Benchmade Altitude Hunting Knife

Each finalist will receive an OHA-engraved Coast knife, and entrants whose photos are selected to appear in Oregon Hunter will receive a Nosler hat.

Two finalists in each category will be chosen and published in each issue of Oregon Hunter, beginning with the March-April issue and ending with the November-December issue. From the 10 finalists in each category, five finalist prize winners will be chosen. These will be announced in the January-February issue of Oregon Hunter. Photos received after the entry deadline will be judged for the next issue.

ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

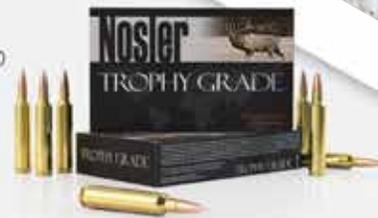
Go to **OHA's website at www.oregonhunters.org** Click on **OHA CONTESTS**. Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of Nosler, proud sponsor and OHA supporter for more than a quarter century!

PHOTO CATEGORIES

GENERAL: Any aspect of hunting, including but not limited to preparation, camping, hunting situations, game and packing.

YOUTH: Same as above, except photos must feature a person who was 18 or younger at the time the photo was taken.

Current year contest prizes will be delivered the following year.



NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY WINNERS

FIRST PLACE
OHA member
Dennis Potter of
Prineville bags
a Nosler M48
Heritage rifle for
this photo of a
mule deer and
magpie on
Steens Mountain.



SECOND PLACE
Bill Martin, OHA
member in Prineville,
wins a case of Nosler
ammunition for this
photo of Eric Martin
with a blacktail buck he
took on Halloween in
the Alsea Unit.

LAKE COUNTY SUNRISE/DUANE DUNGANON



THIRD PLACE
OHA member
Bob Mumford
of Anchorage
claims a Leupold
scope for this
photo of rooster
pheasants
fighting near
Vale.

FOURTH PLACE
Brad Mombert, OHA
member in Bend,
wins a pair of Danner
Alsea boots for this
photo of a bobcat
treed in the Upper
Deschutes Unit.



FIFTH PLACE
OHA member
Justin Wise of
Medford bags
a Benchmade
Altitude
knife for this
photo of a
Dall sheep he
took on the
eighth day of
his hunt in
Alaska.

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YOUTH CATEGORY WINNERS



FIRST PLACE
OHA member
Josh Scott of
Salem claims
a Nosler M48
Heritage rifle
for this photo of
Mackenzie Scott
with a Rogue
Unit blacktail
she took on
youth extended
deer hunting
weekend.



SECOND PLACE
OHA member Kirsten
Ornelas of Baker City
scores a case of Nosler
ammunition for this photo
of Marjorie Ornelas with a
coyote she took during the
Flat Creek youth elk hunt.
The coyote was stalking a
band of antelope.



THIRD PLACE
Bend OHA member Bill Littlefield wins a Leupold scope for this photo of Bryn Littlefield with her Wyoming antelope.

FOURTH PLACE
OHA member John Pomazi of Sandy wins a pair of Danner Alsea boots for this photo of Mattie Pomazi, 13, with an impala she took with a crossbow in South Africa.



FIFTH PLACE
Beaverton OHA member Ashley Rudishauser claims a Benchmade Altitude knife for this photo of Makena with a mallard taken at Sauvie Island.

DERR MEADOW BUCK & POLE FENCE, BUILT BY OHA VOLUNTEERS AND OTHERS IN THE 2021 ALL HANDS ALL BRANDS PROJECT IN THE OCHOCOS. PHOTO BY DUANE DUNGANNON

PARTING SHOTS

By Uncle Geddy

Coffee Sometimes Strikes Twice

They say the man above speaks in various ways. Sometimes he reveals his will to us with an impression. Sometimes he whispers by an inner voice. Sometimes we hear him speak through the speech of a stranger. I can't help but wonder if he doesn't also speak through a fellow's dog.

About a dozen years ago, a longtime friend, Dave, a non-hunter, told me he reckoned he would buy a black Labrador retriever.

His offspring had provided him with a grandson who liked spending time with Dave, and Dave figured the two of them would like to have a black Lab to go fishing with them.

Regular readers of this column will remember I am not of the unbelief a certain amount of unspoken communication goes on between a thoughtful dog owner and a thoughtful dog.

Of course, there are thoughtless dogs and thoughtless dog owners and they can be exempted from this conversation, but yes, I believe the channels of communication can open up when a dog and its owner are in a state of communion.

Dave named the puppy Tye. When the Lab pup opened his eyes and looked around at his new family, he noticed right off none of them were hunters. That was fixin' to change.

Dave realized one day his dog was telling him to buy a shotgun. So, Dave searched the classifieds and bought a 12-gauge Remington and began to look around for places to use it.

Dave and his dog began to hunt for pheasants and ducks in the marshes around his hometown. But the trouble was as soon as their seasons seemed to be getting going, they were over. That's when Dave looked at a map and discovered Arizona, with four agreeable species of quail and warm January weather. Dave pulled his trailer south.

After a couple of weeks, Dave located a back road out of Nogales along the Mexico border that locals said led to good quail hunting. Based out of an RV park near Tucson, it was not a long drive to the border and to the right turn out into the cactus and chaparral. Let's let Dave tell the story.

"One morning, I had a good breakfast, drank a couple of cups of coffee and left the trailer park and turned right at Nogales and started working my way west."

That road gets western. Crossing dry creek beds, winding up switchbacks over cactus-studded ridges and down again. The only signs of civilization a quail hunter might glimpse are empty cans left by border crossers and the occasional deer hunter out hunting for Coues deer in that late deer season. Oh yeah, and the Border Patrol, watching everything from the ridge tops.

"That big breakfast and those two cups of coffee and the coffee I had been drinking along the way, all started to percolate," Dave said. "So I looked for a place to park, and when I found it, I left Tye in the truck and worked my way down through the mesquite and scrub oak, and found a nice quiet place with a log where I could sit for a minute and take care of business."

Dave took care of business and walked back up to the road,



got back in his rig and continued on his way. The quail were sporting that day and Tye found the ones Dave shot. There was a lot of tail wagging and patting of the head, and by the time Dave had gotten back to his trailer that night, he purposed he would hunt the same spot the next morning.

"Of course I had a big breakfast and a couple cups of coffee and I headed down to Nogales and turned right and drove west along the border. And wouldn't you know it, everything seemed to line up the same way it had lined up the day before and when I felt that coffee and the breakfast begin to brew, I remembered where I had parked the day before and how perfect that log was, and I just stopped in the same place and walked down the same trail and backed up to the same log."

It is a beautiful nature story.

Dave was ready to walk back to the truck when he heard a voice from above.

They say the man above speaks in all sorts of ways. This time the voice asked a question.

"Are you going to poop here tomorrow, too?"

Well that's when Dave learned some hunters sit in tree stands in oak trees and watch for little white-tailed deer. Dave hurried his little white tail back up to the truck and got out of there. He didn't tell Tye about it for a couple of hours.

Later that day, Dave bumped into what he thought was a bunch of javelina, all resting in the shade of a scrub oak. But it turned out it was a wild boar with a bunch of half-grown piglets running every which way. He said sometimes you see a thing like that and you think it's a bacon tree. But it's really more like a ham bush.



In these days of political correctness, we are told we cannot use the word rattlers anymore. We have to call them cautionary tails. Contact Gary Lewis at www.garylewisoutdoors.com

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