Oregon Big Game Preview

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Cover: Deschutes County mule deer photographed by Ryan Hoeft





OHA's work benefits everyone

regon Hunters Association chapters, Board of Directors and staff work hard to achieve OHA's mission of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage. Promoting our priorities also benefits our partners, everyone who hunts and enjoys wildlife in Oregon. It's impressive to think that an organization like ours, roughly 3 percent of the licensed hunters in Oregon, can produce benefits that spread so far.

OHA's work at the legislature and at the Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings benefits and supports the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and its mission to

Managing

between

predators

and prey

will benefit

ranchers.

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for balance

protect and enhance Oregon's fish and wildlife and their habitats for use and enjoyment by present and future generations. While state agencies are often restricted from promoting or supporting legislation, OHA's perspective on ODFW staff recommendations are held in high regard by most commission members. Being engaged on the front end of policy and plan development allows OHA to provide our perspective before a plan is written or a policy is adopted, thus meeting the objectives of both the agency and OHA proactively, rather than trying to affect a change after the fact. Our work in these venues allows us to speak openly about the benefits or drawbacks to proposed laws or rules that the agency might well appreciate, but must stay silent about.

OHA chapters team up with their local natural resource agencies to conduct important habitat projects and other conservation work that fulfills both our mission and that of the agency. As an example, OHA has been a key player in the planning and development of safe wildlife crossings on busy highways. This work benefits migrating mule deer, and also makes the roads safer for drivers, a key mission for ODOT.

OHA has long recognized that the work we do on the ground to benefit a specific type of wildlife frequently benefits a broad range of species and habitat conditions. Our efforts to defend gun ownership benefit all gun owners, not just those who hunt. One might consider these to be beneficial unintended outcomes, but we have always recognized this.

Looking ahead, we must continue this work to improve the conditions for mule deer, to proactively ward off the introduction of new wildlife disease like CWD, and to expand hunting opportunities and maintain those that are threatened. New work is in front of us. Updating the mule deer management plan is a priority for OHA that will benefit deer and deer hunters. Working to restore areas devastated by wildfires will improve conditions for big game in those areas, and all who enjoy our public lands. Addressing elk distribution challenges will benefit elk, hunters, wildlife watchers, and landowners. Managing for balance between predators and prey will benefit ungulates and ranchers. Working to defeat IP3 will benefit wildlife, livestock growers, ODFW, FFA, 4H and all Oregonians who enjoy the outdoors, as well as anyone who eats meat.

When we are successful with these efforts, once again, many will benefit.



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WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ HELPING SHARP OREGON HUNTERS HOLD THEIR EDGE

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1. Which migrates south the earliest? a) mourning dove c) snow goose d) Canada goose b) mallard 2. Which of these is the smallest? a) pintail c) bufflehead b) scoter d) gadwall 3. Males of which will kill their young? c) bobcat a) bear b) cougar d) all of the above 4. Which has not been transplanted into Oregon? a) bighorn c) pronghorn b) elk d) mountain goat 5. Franklin's grouse is another name for which Oregon grouse? a) blue c) spruce b) ruffed d) sage 6. Which duck doesn't visit Oregon? c) ring-necked duck a) ruddy duck b) black duck d) harlequin duck 7. Another name for Hun is: a) chukar c) gray partridge d) snipe b) coot 8. Females of which may sport horns? a) antelope c) mountain goat b) bighorn d) all of the above 9. Mt. Hood is in what unit? a) Hood c) White River b) Santiam d) none of the above

10. Bridge Creek Wildlife Area is in the:a) Heppner Unitb) Northside Unitd) Starkey Unit

TRUE OR FALSE?

11. Winter Ridge overlooks Summer Lake.

12. Interstate 5 borders the Interstate Unit.

7-c; 8-d; 9-a; 10-c; 11-T; 12-F.



WHERE IN OREGON WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN?

Identify this lake full of lunkers in Cascade elk country, 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: July 20, 2022.



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER: Matthew Ebner, Klamath Falls Matthew's name was drawn from among the OHA members who identified Crump Lake near Hart Mtn.

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

JUNE 23-26 OHA Josephine County Chapter family weekend campout, 541-761-3200

> JUNE 25 OHA youth & family event: Lake County, 541-417-2983

JULY 1 Leftover tags go on sale

JULY 9 Lake County Youth Day, 541-417-2983; Tioga Sportsman Show, 541-267-2577

JULY 15 Ladies Hunting Camp, ladieshunting.com

> JULY 16 OHA Tillamook Chapter Banquet, 503-842-7153; Pioneer Chapter Guzzler Project, 503-874-9851

JULY 22 Bend Chapter New Youth Hunting Camp, 541-480-7323

JULY 30 Lane County Archery Hunter Ed Field Day at Cole Range, 541-935-5331

> AUGUST 1 Bear season opens statewide

AUGUST 13 Standard antelope Season opens; OHA Yamhill Chapter Youth Shotgun Shoot, 503-490-2489

AUGUST 15 Youth Antlerless Elk Hunts begin

AUGUST 19 OHA Klamath Chapter's Gerber Reservoir youth antelope hunt BBQ, 503-490-2489

AUGUST 20 Malheur County Free Youth Shoot, 208-573-5556

> AUGUST 26 Bow tag sale deadline

AUGUST 27 General bow season opens







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OREGON AFIELD

Target berries for bear or pie

regon offers some of the best bear hunting options in the country, and with all that opportunity, it's a nobrainer to put in the time to chase bruins in throughout the year. If you have a family, the fall is an excellent time to combine family camping trips to your favorite country in search of bruins. The relatively mild weather and actively feeding bears in the early fall make for an enjoyable trip for all.

As bears progress past the rut phase of the early summer months, it's important to remember what these omnivores are thinking. They are preparing for the upcoming winter, and they're after food. Packing on fat stores in order to survive the long winter ahead is their primary goal. With that in mind, let's highlight a few spots that will likely hold your fall bruin.

I live in northeast Oregon, where my fall bear country varies from season to



Knowing coyote behavior is key to efficiently and effectively hunting them this time of year, no matter where in Oregon you're hunting.



Bears and bear hunters alike love berries in the fall. Hunt the huckleberry and blackberry patches with your family, and the least you'll get out of the trip is a berry pie and some sweet ice cream toppings.

season, and it's a far cry from hunting the coastal rainforest. With the fall bear opener approaching, I focus on two main areas for scouting and hunting. The first area I focus on is likely berry patches. This is a twofold mission for me: one, I'm in search of bears, and sign; and two, my wife is always on the lookout for the next best huckleberry patch. By keeping my eyes peeled for huckleberries, I've stumbled onto to some excellent areas to catch unsuspecting bears gorging themselves on berries.

My second spot I focus on is water sources. If I can find a vantage point and

glass a water-filled draw, I will sit this out as long as it takes. If the country is thick and I can't access a good vantage point to glass from, I will position myself just above the brush line of the creek bottom and walk the draw. This area has produced several close calls for me in the past, some closer than I care to admit.

You can't go wrong with getting out and chasing after a bruin in the fall. Every fall I find myself picking berries or stomping a creek bottom in search of fall bears with excitement and wonder.

-ZACH MANSFIELD

Hunt coyotes in summer's dog days

ot many Oregon hunters are thinking covotes this time of year, but you should be. Though it's hot, maturing pups are starting to venture out on their own, exploring and even hunting. If you're looking to do some summer predator control, coyotes can respond aggressively to calls in the summer.

Coyotes have to eat, so focus on food sources in your hunting area. In sage brush country of eastern Oregon, hit those jackrabbit calls. In agricultural lands east of the Cascades, distressed rabbit, ground squirrel, and rodent calls can be the ticket. In the western hills of the Cascades, fawn distress, along with a mix of predator calls, can be good, including bird distress sounds. On the valley floors, cottontail distress and angry bird sounds work.

Using decoys in the summer can add realism to a set and bring gullible covotes on the run. Rabbit and bird decoys, even wings and feathers, especially moving ones, can be effective.

If looking to hunt coyotes this winter when pelts are prime – now is the time to scout. Many accomplished coyote hunters spend time scouting. When scouting for big game this summer, look for coyotes and covote sign, too.

Trail cameras are a great tool for coyote scouting, as they are your eyes in the woods. Since a majority of covote movement takes place at night, cameras are great gauges for accurately determining how many coyotes are in an area.

When setting up, make sure you can see a lot of land in front of you. Oregon's covote habitats are vast and often rugged, and you don't want to get yourself in a hole that limits visibility. You want to see approaching coyotes before they see you.

Coyote families can be very vocal this time of year, so making pup distress calls can be effective. Pay attention to coyote behavior and how it's changing, and adjust your calling accordingly, no matter where in Oregon you're hunting. -Scott HAUGEN

Dove is in the Air

grew up hunting the edges of production fields in the Willamette Valley, where I shot my first bird at age 10. Now I make sure to mark the opener on my calendar every season.

Hunters harvest more than 20 million mourning doves, and they remain one of our most abundant birds with a U.S. population estimated at nearly 350 million.

There seemed to be doves everywhere as I drove through the Willamette Valley looking for promising places to take the gentlemen who purchased the hunt at the OHA State Convention to shoot some doves during the coming week. Old wheat fields, ryegrass stubble, millet, sunflower and several other seed crops were available. I chose a place where the birds would come to feed just prior to roosting. There was no shortage of birds.

After meeting for lunch, we loaded up our vehicles and made the short 10-minute drive to the farm we'd be hunting. I grabbed a half dozen decoys and a couple boxes of ammo. We all got set up and proceeded to burn plenty of ammo. We only produced a halfway decent pile of birds, but we had fun shooting that day.

Where To Look: I like to start out near the riverbanks where birds will find grit and water during the day. These are great public access points throughout the Willamette Valley to keep in mind. Several of the river locations also border good agricultural ground, as well. I have good luck knocking on doors, as most landowners are more than happy to grant you access for dove hunting. Good roost trees are important to locate, because birds will sit near food sources and rest before their next meal.

Burned areas near agricultural land also hold good numbers of birds that will pick through the charred landscape in search of exposed seeds.

Dove season is one of Oregon's earliest bird openers. The season runs from Sept 1 to Oct 30. Eurasian collared doves can be hunted year-round, as they are an invasive species and also don't count toward your limit. Taking your time finding good places to hunt prior to the season is essential for success. Just a small amount of time scouting can make for an entire season of fun. —*TROY RODAKOWSKI*



The author (right) donated this Willamette Valley dove hunt to last year's OHA State Convention.



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Gun control IPs near deadline for '22 ballot

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director Amy@oregonhunters.org

Initiative Petitions 17 and 18, both sponsored by the same organization, are nearing the deadline to submit enough signatures to qualify for the November 2022 ballot. Each of the initiatives must submit 112,020 certified signatures by July 8.

Should they qualify, the Secretary of State will assign ballot measure numbers once all 2022 petitions have been verified, likely in late July or early August.

Initiative Petition 17, the "Reduction in Gun Violence Act," would require a permit to purchase a firearm, which requires safety training of both classroom and live-fire, a complete background check prior to release of a firearm, and a database to track firearms. Additionally, it would prohibit the manufacture, sale, transfer, and possession of "large capacity" magazines, which are defined as over 10 rounds.

Initiative Petition 18, the "Reduction of Harm from Weapons Act," would prohibit the manufacture, import, purchase, transfer, possession, and use of many semiautomatic firearms, including rifles, pistols and shotguns. Any of these weapons currently owned would be allowed to be retained only if registered with the state and if use is limited to owner's property, shooting ranges, and hunting.

With the most recent acts of gun violence across the nation, gun control has been thrust into the spotlight once again. The ongoing criminal activity involving guns in the Portland area has also brought the topic into focus in Oregon's largest metropolitan area.

OHA will continue to work with our partners to combat these extreme restrictions to gun ownership.



Elkins honored at Convention *Retiring OHA lobbyist Al Elkins, shown with*

a sculpture given to him by OHA legislative committee chairman Paul Donheffner, was honored on May 14 at the OHA State Convention for 25 years of service to OHA's mission of Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage.

Hunt ban ballot language released

The proponents of IP3 have successfully gathered the 1,000 sponsoring signatures to qualify for draft ballot title/language.

The language was released on May 12 and can be read here:

https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/irr/003dbt.pdf.

It is largely the same language we saw for IP13 with a few minor edits due to the additional language specifying artificial insemination as sexual assault.

OHA and our allies in both the sportsmen's community and the farming and ranching communities will submit comments on the draft language and work on strategic next steps.

ODFW proposes 2023-25 budget with no fee hikes

ODFW has proposed its draft budget for the 2023-25 biennium based on no fee increases. With the recent increase in hunting and angling licenses, the department's financial outlook appears solid enough to forgo any fee increase for license products.

OHA testified before the Commission in support of the proposed funding requested related to the Mule Deer Coordinator, Mule Deer Research and Data Management positions, and the Minam acquisition.

OHA staff also expressed concern over a lack of funding to establish in-state testing for Chronic Wasting Disease.

Commission accepts beaver workgroup recommendations

After almost a year of work, the Beaver Management Workgroup has finalized its recommendation to the ODFW Commission. The workgroup was originally formed in June 2020 and sanctioned again in November 2020 as the result of a narrowly defeated petition to ban beaver trapping on all federally managed public lands.

While the primary impetus of the petitioning groups was to ban all beaver trapping, the group ultimately formed management recommendations around habitat needs and expanded data collection relative to Oregon's current beaver population.

The Commission accepted the document put forth by the workgroup and requested that staff support the recommendations and return to the commission in August with actionable items related to increasing beaver habitat on federally managed lands. It was noted by the Commission that the focus of such actions should be on the landscape rather than simply restrictions on trapping. OHA will remain involved in these discussions as they continue in August and beyond.





UTSTANDING IN THE FIELD

OHA removed beetle-killed trees on White River Wildlife Area on June 12 and turned them into firewood. JOIN US IN OREGON'S OUTDOORS TO IMPROVE WILDLIFE HABITAT WHERE YOU LIVE AND HUNT.

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BLACK POWDER By TROY RODAKOWSKI

An Antidote for Antelope

ow that you have finally drawn the tag, it's time to start preparing for a challenging, but rewarding blackpowder pronghorn hunt. It's likely that the Oregon outback will once again be short on water this coming season. Many water sources will be dry by the time late summer arrives, making for some tough hunting. Preseason scouting is where you will create your success. Finding good water sources that will not dry up near available food will be the ticket this year.

Last season I was lucky to draw a muzzleloader permit for one of southeast Oregon's premier hunts. We scouted sever-

Work up the right load and develop consistency before heading to the field. al times prior to the hunt. Good thing, too, because several of our favorite watering holes were totally dry. We knew then that we'd have to find some new places where the ani-

mals had reliable water. The pronghorns were very scattered and not in large herds by the time my hunt was ready to open. Though the rut was approaching, it was more common to see smaller groups of animals.

Competition with other wildlife and feral horses looked like a problem during our hunt. Luckily, prior to season, we found a few good prospective bucks, which kept our spirits high. Dominant bucks will want to maintain their territory and be on guard to chase subordinates away. Cattle and antelope decoys have worked well,



The author took this Lake County pronghorn with a .50 caliber White rifle. Continued drought in southeast Oregon may mean fewer water sources where animals can be found.

especially in late August, closer to the rut when trying to stalk closer to individual or small groups of animals. Use caution when using decoys, as this may also attract other hunters.

"Waterholes should hold into summer and keep animals more spread out than in years past," says Randy Lewis, ODFW biologist in Bend. This holds true for most all of the eastern portion of Oregon. Also, remember to not camp near waterholes, as all animals rely on them heavily during late summer and early fall.

"We have also been seeing a good number of yearling bucks being recruited into the population," adds Lewis.

Pronghorn populations in Oregon have topped 12,000 in the last several years, but recent drought conditions and increased predator issues have inhibited population growth over the past few seasons.

In early late summer, pronghorn bucks will establish territories and gather does for breeding.

Many pronghorns are now finding secluded habitat in sparse pine or juniper forests. In fact, some of the largest bucks have been found in many of these hidden locations.

While mule deer hunting a pine draw years, ago I remember seeing one of the largest antelope bucks I have ever had the pleasure of watching. He had to be almost 18 inches with great mass and awesome diggers. I thought to myself, "what a smart goat!" The buck had a small group of does with him as they worked down the draw to water at a nearby creek. I can almost guarantee this buck spent many seasons here and very likely died of old age. So don't overlook some of these sparsely timbered areas when scouting out a new area. You will be surprised how many pronghorns live in terrain with a good amount of trees for cover.

The key to blackpowder pronghorn hunting is finding good concealment and a good place to set up to intercept approaching or moving animals. Antelope will approach slowly and carefully, stopping several times to survey their surroundings. They are very wary, and patience is the trick to bagging one.

Muzzleloaders are somewhat a midrange weapon, and hunters need to be mindful of their smoke poles' effective range. Work up the right load and develop some good consistency before heading to the field.

Finding a good place to stay or camp is very important. The desert is unforgiving with its hot days and cool nights. So, if camping, find a place with good shelter from the sun and wind.

Though it may take hours of lying on sun-baked shale ledges or finding good hiding spots behind tall sage, we usually seem to find something worth looking at through our glass. It's a long process scouring the desert that these Oregon pronghorns call home, but it's something we can enjoy and cherish forever.

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Back on Track

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t's been suffocating. Three years ago, in this exact wilderness system, I hit and lost a bull. It was my dream hunt, a horseback elk hunt deep within the wilderness. It was my September nightmare.

I put down the bow that day for two years. Didn't touch it. I owed the animals I hunted more, and I couldn't stand to think about what kind of misery I put that elk through for nothing. I hunted with my trusty .300 Win Mag for a couple years d with success.

Then I decided I shouldn't give up on archery hunting altogether, and dusted off the bow and had one of the best seasons I can remember.

I had more elk encounters that season than I've probably had in all of my years of archery elk hunting. It was magical, it seemed like everywhere I went I was tripping on elk.

I blocked out a week of Oregon's general archery season to saddle up my stock and head deep into the Eagle Cap Wilderness. It was everything I wanted: a rugged, Western adventure that is unparalleled in my book. A horseback elk hunt is the most uniquely Western hunting style there is. It's one part danger, one part adventure, one part hunting, one part work; all these add up to elk hunting the exact way I want to do it and how I intend to do it from this point forward.

My hunting partner and I spent three and a half hours in the saddle to find a perfect meadow to high line the horses and mules, set up his fancy new tent and begin hunting. From camp, we would strike out in whichever direction we needed to go to find our quarry. As with most elk hunts, there were ups and downs, blown opportunities, and in the case of this season, one good blood trail.

We cruised through some prime bedding only to gently bump some elk. Ben and I separated without saying a word,



After a painful experience losing a bull, the author found healing and redemption with a hardearned spike he took deep in a northeast Oregon wilderness with friend Ben Rodriguez.

and we began a cow and calf chatter. Only a mere 20 yards apart, we sounded like a handful of elk just between the two of us. It was a symphony of elk calling if I've ever heard one. Just 15 minutes into our call sequence, I heard a few twigs break, then

The arrow flew true, and the unmistakable sound of impact resounded. 'Breathe,' I said to myself. a flash of hair, and suddenly a spike bull stuck his head out right next to a tree I had just ranged.

I hadn't intended on shooting a spike bull this far back, but I am by no means a trophy hunter. I was practically raised on overthe-counter spike

tags, and they have taught me well in my younger years of hunting. Something told me I needed this bull. I needed the calmness of the situation, the confidence of the exact known range, the steady anchor, and a quick clean kill.

I drew my bow, and in those few moments, the bull from years prior flashed through my mind. I took an extra couple moments and settled my pin right where it needed to be, focused on where I wanted to hit, and gently compressed my trigger until it broke free of the D loop and sent my arrow down range. The arrow flew true, and the unmistakable sound of impact resounded.

"Breathe," I said to myself.

I looked down at my hands shaking from adrenalin, nerves, and uncertainty.

The shot looked great, but I have been here before. You think you have a lethal shot, only to track an animal for hours and days, with nothing to show for it. I'd be lying if I said I wasn't second guessing myself. Confidence is a funny thing, and with archery equipment, I'll admit it's not always on my side.

The shot was true, and the blood trail led me right to a wonderful spike bull.

I've had plenty of time to reflect on this hunt. I've come to figure out I got exactly what I wanted and needed: a few days with a good friend, I got to use grandpa's old knife, got to test my legs under the burden of an absurdly heavy pack for a short distance to my stock. To top off the trip, I got to spend time in some of my favorite country, right out my back door.

I'm certain there will be more archery hunts in my future; I love it too much to ever hang up the bow just to collect dust again. No bull, no matter how big or small, will be as meaningful as this one.

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OREGON 2022 FALL BIG GAME OUTLOOK

A mild winter followed by good spring forage growth should have hunters aiming high this season.

By JIM YUSKAVITCH

OREGON HUNTER, July/August 2022

eather and wildfire seem to be the watchwords for Oregon's big game species in 2022. A

mild winter in most, but not all, of the state helped the animals get through the cold season in pretty good shape for the most part. Continued drought in southeast Oregon is still taking a longterm toll on some herds. However, the news is mostly reasonably good. Here's a snapshot of how big game populations are doing around the state from the perspective of local Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists.

Deer

Tillamook-based ODFW District Wildlife Biologist Dave Nuzum reports, "Deer are doing pretty well. The population is still above baseline." However, this is one part of the state that had a tougher winter including a cold snap, followed by late-season snow. Because of that, there is the possibility of increased winter mortality, especially for fawns. However, Nuzum is not getting an excessive number of calls from the public reporting dead deer, so he is hopeful the harder winter won't have had much negative impact.

In the west central Cascades and Coast Range, District Wildlife Biologist Chris Yee in Springfield says, "We had a fairly mild winter, so our deer seem to be doing well. And we also had a good fawn crop last year and good overwinter survival." One area of concern is that there was still a lot of snow in some of the higher elevations; since many of the deer in the Cascades in his district aren't migratory, and don't move downslope in the winter, it's possible some of those herds could be having more trouble finding food than normal. He expects a pretty good hunting season this year, as well as a good fawn crop this year that will increase next year's numbers.



Mule deer continue to struggle in Oregon due to habitat changes and predation.

"Deer are doing very well," says Tod Lum, District Wildlife Biologist at the ODFW Roseburg office. "We had good fawn ratios and good fawn survival over the winter." He notes that there had been concerns among hunters that adding spikes to the harvest last year would cause a serious decline in deer numbers, but that has not been the case. Lum thinks that's because hunters are still being discerning about the animals they target and are mostly leaving the smaller bucks alone.

Out in the Blue Mountains of northeast Oregon, mule deer, as in most of eastern Oregon, and throughout the West, are still struggling. John Day-based District Wildlife Biologist Ryan Torland reports that local fawn-to-doe ratios are on the low side ranging from the low 30s to upper 20s per hundred does. "It's not that bad, but not that good, either," he says. One result of the lower fawn ratios will be fewer little bucks next year. For the most part, the deer in his area are congregating in burned areas that are now growing back forage. He advises that those recovering burns will be the best places to hunt this season.

Deer also continue to struggle in the High Desert, particularly from weatherrelated issues. "Our deer herds are still affected by the hard winter of 2016-17," explains Assistant District Wildlife biologist Lee Foster in Hines. "We didn't produce all that many fawns last year, and not a lot came through the winter. We will see some increases in our deer herds over the next year, but I'm not optimistic after that."

The Oregon mule deer population is currently estimated at about 168,000. There are no population estimates for black-tailed deer, but ODFW is obtaining population density estimates for specific

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Elk

There was a significant elk mortality event on the North Coast, with a large number of calves found dead on a local farm. An investigation revealed they died of pneumonia. ODFW biologists hunted around to see if there were other mortalities but didn't document significant additional numbers. It appears that only elk calves, not adults, were affected. In spite of that, "Elk are doing fine and our numbers are all above benchmark," says Dave Nuzum.

On the west slope of the Cascade Mountains and Coast Range, elk are still suffering from less quality habitat because of the decline in logging operations that create early seral stage plant growth that elk – and deer – need. But biologist Yee reports seeing increasing numbers of elk on the fringes of the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire where vegetation is beginning to grow back, and says hunters who focus on these kinds of areas will do best. He suggests the same strategy for deer hunters, as well.

The elk situation is similar in southwest Oregon. Tod Lum reports spotting more elk this year than normal during their aerial surveys, and he is seeing older wildfire burns beginning to produce good ungulate forage that will benefit the herds.

In the Blue Mountains, around John Day, elk are struggling a little with calfto-cow ratios of 13 to 100, which is less than ideal. Forage conditions are not the best either. "We had a dry summer last year and a dry spring this year that results in less quality forage, so that may be affecting them," says Torland. On a positive note, bull ratios are decent.

In the High Desert, Foster reports that elk are fairly stable, except in the Silvies Unit, where their numbers are increasing. ODFW recently cut the number of tags to help improve hunter success levels, which had been declining, and that seems to have helped.

The eastern Oregon elk population of Rocky Mountain elk is estimated at 71,500, and 56,000 Roosevelt elk west of the Cascades.

Pronghorn

Pronghorn populations in Oregon, although experiencing ups and downs, have generally tended to be stable over the long run. However, according to Lee Foster in Hines, pronghorns are being affected



Drought in southeast Oregon is affecting pronghorn distribution in the region.

considerably by the ongoing drought conditions in the High Desert region. Foster reports that last year the East Beatys Butte area went completely dry and there was no open water available. "We had a 90 percent reduction in pronghorns there," relates Foster. "We think they might have moved to the West Beatys Butte Unit, to Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge or even to the Sheldon National Wildlife



OREGON HUNTER, July/August 2022



A reintroduction success story, mountain goats now number over 1,200 in Oregon's high country.

Refuge in Nevada." Because of that situation, ODFW offered hunters who had tags for the East Beatys Butte Unit the option of trading in their tags in return for preference points, which a number of hunters opted to do. However, according to Foster, they will not be making that offer again this year if a similar situation occurs. Foster notes that while other herds are doing better, the drought is still having a long-term negative effect on pronghorns. The Silvies and Malheur River herds are stable, while the Steens Mountain herd is down.

The statewide pronghorn population is estimated at 16,000 to 19,000.

Bighorn Sheep

"Our bighorn sheep seem to be fairly stable," says Ryan Torland. "We have good

ram and lamb ratios and no disease issues." The two bighorn sheep herds Torland manages include the Aldrich and McClellan mountains herds.

Similarly, Lee Foster in Hines reports that the High Desert bighorn herds are stable as well. "We have good ram numbers, but the Sheepshead herd has seen a decline due to drought conditions," he says.

Oregon has an estimated California bighorn sheep population of 4,000 to 4,400 animals and 600 to 800 Rocky Mountain bighorns.

Rocky Mountain Goats

Rocky Mountain goats are generally doing well throughout their Oregon range, with the largest population living in the Elkhorn Mountains in northeast Oregon.

In the Strawberry Mountains, the goat



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population is stable, and ODFW added two tags in 2021. Torland reports that there are about 80 to 90 goats in the Strawberry Mountains and 20 to 30 in the Vinegar Hills that are probably an extension of the Strawberry herd. Goats are also in the Desolation Unit and Canyon Mountain areas.

The Oregon Rocky Mountain goat population is about 1,200.

Bear and Cougar

Oregon continues to have a strong cougar population with the southwest and northeast parts of the state holding the most cats. Cougars also continue to expand their range and numbers into northwest Oregon. Dave Nuzum, in Tillamook, continues to log increasing numbers of cougar sightings, damage complaints and roadkill each year.

There are about 7,000 cougars in Oregon.

Black bear numbers also continue to be strong, with the largest population along the coast, and numbers increasing farther south.

The Oregon black bear population ranges from 25,000 to 30,000.

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From lofty ledges with a view to cool coulees out of sight, bucks respond to pressure by playing hide & seek.

STORY & PHOTOS BY GARY LEWIS



till in velvet, the buck looked like the biggest deer on the mountain as he fed through a stand of bitterbrush. Had to be 800 yards. Too far for a shot.

This was the biggest buck we had seen in four days.

A smaller buck was with it, and, as we watched through the spotting scopes, we saw there were eight does and fawns with the pair.

Shadows began to give way as the sun came up. I had won the coin toss, so it was my stalk, my play to make. Across the canyon, on the far slope, the deer lined out, single file, and they moved across the hillside, vanishing in open country.

I flicked open the topo map and saw the reason why. There was a narrow flat spot, and from our location below, we could not see the deer on this spot they had chosen to hide in plain sight, under the midday sun.

My partner stayed behind the scope while I went around the back of our hill and then plunged down into the draw and started up the other side. It would take most of an hour to get there. What I did not know was 10 other does and fawns had joined the first herd.

When I hit the bench, I had the wind full at my back and the does were streaming uphill, 18 of them. I turned away from the does to find the bucks. They were doing the opposite thing. The smaller buck was just 10 yards from me, slipping around a juniper tree, while the big one was on its belly, trying to exit stage left. Those big velvet antlers gave it away and I anchored it with a 160-grain Nosler Partition, then turned to look at the smaller buck as it slipped out and down the hill. By the end of the first day of the season, open country mule deer feel the pressure and look for refuge in the small pockets that hunters tend to overlook. The deer have not vanished into thin air, but it seems like it.

Here are the types of habitat that deer will move into after opening day, and how to think about approaches and strategy.

THICKETS, WEDGES, SWAMPS

A buck does not require a lot of cover. Even a quarter of an acre, if it has feed and a place to bed, can hide a deer after opening day. In these habitat types, we should be looking for the browse mule deer need, looking for the oval beds on the edges of small openings.

Patches of mountain mahogany (Cercocarpus ledifolius) provide escape cover, shelter cover and food. If a patch of mahogany is big enough, the deer does not have to leave except for water. To the buck's advantage, it is so hard to move silently through mahogany, most hunters

Mule deer feel the pressure and hide in small pockets hunters tend to overlook. The deer have not vanished into thin air, but it seems like it. go around it. Yet there are ways to hunt these places, sometimes from a tree stand, sometimes from the top of a nearby hill with good glass, watching the small openings.

Another way to think is to look of for wedges of sometimes where two drainages come together, sometimes at the

intersection of a couple of roads or twotracks. It does not take much to hide a deer.

Because swamps can offer cooling on the downwind side, as well as blocking the approach of potential predators from at least one direction, swamps can hold deer.

Think about using the scent of one hunter on the upwind side to motivate deer to begin to move toward the exits. Two other hunters in position can watch the side trails. Bucks do not like to go directly away from a hunter, instead looking for a way to button-hook or double back.



This bow season buck was bedded in a thicket of fir trees with berry vines and grasses on the edges.

CAVES, COULEES, FLATS, DITCHES

In open country, deer feed out on the tops of the hills and then go to the coulees to find shade and cover in the long grasses. If there are few trees in an area, a buck will bed in tall rye grass or sagebrush. Limited shade does not necessarily limit bedding areas. Deer adapt.

This is some of the most difficult hunting for the mule deer hunter. People prepare for long shots, but more often the shots are 15 to 75 yards when bucks leap from beds and bound away.

The longest coulees, the hardest spots

to reach from a road, these are the places to hunt. Long hikes are the rule and long packs out with big deer can be the payoff. Spotting scopes can help, but can often be just extra weight in a lot of situations. Two hunters work better than one, as two hunters walking 10 yards apart in tall rye can kick up a buck that would otherwise stay planted.

Out on the flats in open sun, some bucks just slide in under sage brush and watch all the approaches. If a hunter gets within 500 yards, the buck notices; if the hunter closes the gap to 400, it is up and gone and hard to hit in zigzag bounds.

Deep drainage ditches offer some of the best bedding habitat in wheat land country. A buck can occupy a bed the size of a piano bench and be out of the direct sun. To look into these places, a hunter might have to walk several miles, thumb on the safety, scope dialed down to 2X as the shots can be muzzle close in some cases.

Once I looked down into a cave and found three small bucks tucked in the mouth, and they did not move until I waved my hat. If there had been a big buck there, my buddies would have missed it anyway.

SLIDES, PARKS, RIMROCKS

In sub-alpine habitats, and even in drier country, bigger mule deer bucks tend to gravitate toward parks, shale slides and rimrock pockets where they can watch approaches from below and catch the wind lifted on morning breezes.

At the heads of springs or seeps they benefit from the cooling breeze and from the moisture in the air. Any sound in the rocks will alert them to danger.





Stands of bitterbrush near to a grove of junipers allowed an opening to spot this buck.



When the wind turned, three mule deer bucks exited the coulee. There was probably a fourth. That's the buck you want to see.

How Springs Moderate Local Temperatures (and how deer use them)

Early in the season, temperatures may still be in the 80s, 90s or even hit the triple digits. Deer feed early and late and sit out the heat of the day in cool shade. The air is coolest in places where evaporative cooling reduces the temperature, even by a few degrees.

Evaporative cooling produces a reduction in temperature from the evaporation of water, which removes latent heat from the surface.

Picture the swamp cooler, those boxlike units scabbed on the sides of homes and on the roofs all across the southwest. The design came from nature.

In dry, desert or high mountain air, the temperature can drop significantly around springs or bogs as liquid water turns to water vapor, bringing a local change in temperature and more moisture. Deer bedded nearby enjoy respite from the heat and, with more moisture in the air, are better able to scent the approach of predators.

From late morning to early afternoon, the wind often rises up a slope, blowing across springs, swamps and bogs, blowing cool air. The evaporative cooling effect can extend a hundred yards or more. -GARY LEWIS Better to glass from afar or find places where the terrain can offer looks into bedding areas from hard contours.

Use a topo map to look for the pockets that will hold deer, and make an X on the spot where a deer is likely to be. Now hunt that spot like you believe a deer is bedded there.

Keep the wind in your face, and perhaps post a hunter to watch a side exit. If there is a spring, watch the spot where the wind blows the cool air.

Mature bucks use smaller bucks and does as shills, decoys in their confidence game. A spike or a forked horn or small three-point that travels in the company of larger bucks goes first down trails, through canyons and over fences. The smaller buck draws the attention of predators and hunters, while the bigger buck slips away, doing the opposite thing. The motivation is on the tips of antlers. A big buck will hook the smaller buck and drive it the way it is supposed to go to draw attention and create a diversion.

Look for trails that go up through shale slides and look for the tips of antlers on the far side of boulders. In such places, the feed is often red or purple while everything else is either green or yellow. There is a deer bedded nearby. And if the buck is barely legal, hold your fire. He is a shill. The big buck is there. Somewhere. It is still early in the season. All you have is time.

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Gary's latest book is Bob Nosler Born Ballistic. For a signed copy, send \$30 to Gary Lewis Outdoors, PO Box 1364, Bend, OR 97709. Contact Lewis at www. garylewisoutdoors.com

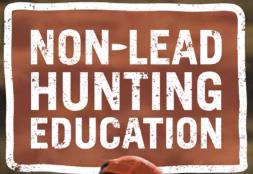


Its antlers gave it away in its rye grass bed. This October buck had not fully rubbed out because the closest things to trees in this country are mailboxes, telephone poles and fence posts.



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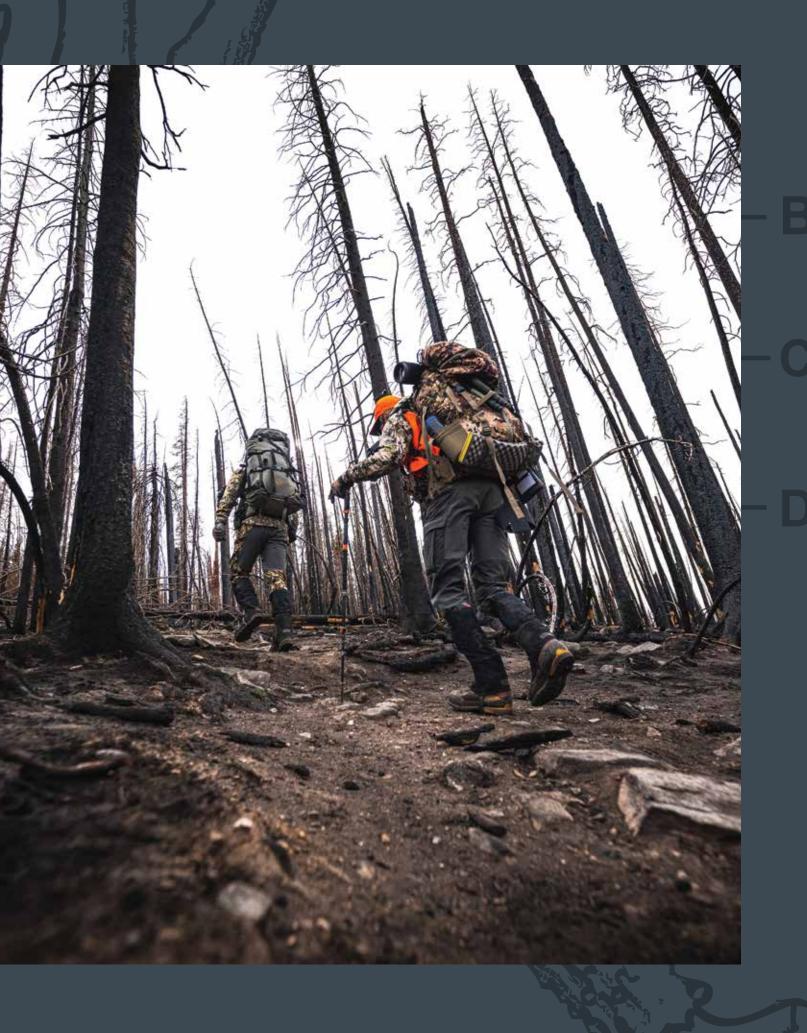








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Blackalls

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STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT HAUGEN

s I watched from atop a ridge, a big blacktail buck walked up the same trail it had used the past two mornings, and lay in the same exact bed. The buck was across a deep draw from me, lying below a rocky outcropping on the western slopes of the Cascades. It had a commanding view of the open land in front of it, all the way to timber line.

From where I sat, there was only one place I could see any chance of getting a shot at that buck, but there was no way of reaching the spot unless the wind changed.

After four mornings of targeting the buck, finally, the wind switched. Now was my chance. I hiked over a mile to my glassing spot, confident the buck would be there. But when I looked through my spotting scope, the big buck was nowhere to be seen. I glassed all morning, but never saw that buck again. With the change in wind direction, the buck sought another, more protected bedding area – one I never found.

Filling an early-season blacktail tag is one of North America's most challenging hunts. These deer have incredible eyesight and acute hearing that can detect the slightest of sounds, and dry conditions don't help. Combine that sense with what's allegedly a nose capable of being 1,000 times more powerful than ours, and it's a miracle any mature blacktail buck is killed this time of year.

After decades of hunting these awesome deer, I still have much to learn, but despite all the challenges, there are steps to take to help get within range of cagey blacktails. **Gain Elevation**

Heat is a big challenge for early-season blacktail hunters to overcome, but it can also be your best friend. One of my favorite conditions in which to hunt early season blacktails is when it's hot. The hotter the better, for multiple reasons.

Hot days mean humidity levels are high, and the higher the humidity, the less human scent hangs in the air. We're usually sweaty and smelly early in the hunt, as covering ground to simply get into hunting position is strenuous work in the blacktail woods. On days where temperatures exceed 75 degrees, the air thins out, meaning our scent rises and dissipates faster than when air molecules are more dense.

Hotter temperatures also mean thermals stabilize earlier in the morning and remain constant throughout the day. For hunters, this means you can make a move on a buck early



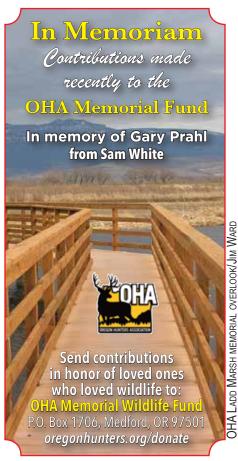
in the day, or watch where it beds and wait for the air to stabilize, then commence a stalk.

On hotter days, I find deer move to higher elevations to bed. Blacktails, especially mature bucks, have multiple bedding areas, and where they bed this time of year depends on many factors, not the least of which are wind direction and temperature.

Because rising thermals gain speed with elevation, they can offer deer more relief higher on the ridges. This is why you often find deer beds atop ridges and knolls, where winds cool them down on hot days. Typically, these beds are beneath trees offering shade, or against rocks that block the sun.

If the grass is too tall, or the beds are situated near rocks, where getting a shot is impossible, try to get into shooting position and wait. Track the sun's movement and know that once it starts beating down on the deer, they will eventually rise to their feet, then re-bed in a shady spot. When this happens, that's the shot opportunity you're looking for.

If the bed is situated in a place that's impossible to reach, anticipate the buck's exit route, then set up accordingly if the



wind allows for it. Often the buck won't move until right before dark, which is why being close to its bedding area is key to getting a shot. Then again, if the buck doesn't move until the air cools and thermals begin to drop, you're out of luck. Welcome to blacktail hunting.

Head for a Tree

If you've been scouting and know where bucks are bedding on hot days, consider hanging a treestand near the bed or along travel routes connecting feeding and bedding areas. Since these beds are often high atop ridges early in the season, it can take deer the better part of a morning to reach them. I've seen mature bucks not enter these high elevation beds until 10 a.m. or later. I've also found them in these beds at daylight, meaning they began their trek in the middle of the night.

While more blacktail hunters are realizing the benefits of treestands, I'm still surprised by the number of hunters not taking advantage of these efficient tools. What I like most about treestands is that they get your scent off the ground. Air travels in layers, much like water, and the higher you can get, the better for keeping your scent rising and traveling above the deer.

Hanging treestands toward the top of a knoll or ridge ensures that as thermals rise and stabilize, your scent will be carried away from approaching deer. Entering these higher elevation stands also eliminates the need to walk where deer will follow you amid draws and benches, thus minimizing the spreading of your scent.

Treestands also offer an elevated view. Gaining the high ground is synonymous with efficient hunting, and what you can see from a treestand will surprise you. Watching deer go about their daily business, totally unaware that you're sitting above them, is an experience to behold.

While deer have eyes far superior to ours, their pupils are shaped in such a way that they struggle to decipher detail when looking up at a steep angle. This explains why deer may stare at you in a treestand, then go back to feeding as long as you're perfectly still.

The go back to feeding as long as you're perfectly still.
 If you've not hunted from a treestand,
 be sure to practice shooting from one.
 Make certain to use a harness and practice
 Shooting at targets from both sitting and
 standing positions. Shots from treestands
 typically come at close range, so practice those shots.



Treestands offer an elevated viewing platform and keep your scent off the ground.

Head For Cover

If the day isn't going to be excessively hot, hunt thicker cover. Rather than chase deer up the hillside on cooler days as they move from feeding to bedding areas, try to get inside of the cover early, and let the deer move toward you. The key is paying close attention to the wind.

Time your arrival in a prime hunting area with the changes in wind direction. Don't get in the cover too early, when the air is cool, heavy, and still sinking, because this will carry your scent downhill, toward the deer traveling uphill to bed. Instead, hike as close as you can to the deer's bedding area, then wait for the wind to start rising. Then hunt your way downhill, to where the deer are moving, bedding, or still feeding.

Should rains and high winds be present, get aggressive. Rain makes the forest floor quiet, allowing you to move quickly and silently. Rain also knocks down your scent. Wind will also move brush and tree limbs, making them the perfect cover to move amongst. The biggest challenge on these days comes in getting a steady wind with which to work, so be patient.

Keep Running Trail Cameras

To learn where blacktails feed, travel and bed, keep those trail cameras out. Just because the season has started doesn't mean you should quit using trail cameras. You've done all that work scouting in spring and summer and have hopefully found multiple bucks to hunt. Now that the bucks have stripped their velvet, and their movements have become more restricted, the challenge lies in figuring out where they are and when.



Erik Gossler went to a treestand to intercept this river bottom blacktail in the Willamette Valley.

This time of year the bucks will be near where you initially located them in the summer, but they have likely retreated into thicker brush, reprod, and possibly in shaded draws near water. Trails in these areas are where you want to hang your cameras, to learn where the deer have relocated.

Know that a big blacktail buck rarely uses the same trail on consecutive days this time of year. They'll likely bed and feed in the same area, but they'll typically get to these points on different routes. If you're after a big buck, but are only capturing small bucks on trail cameras, know that these insubordinate bucks often move ahead of a big buck. Young bucks often share main trails with does. Old bucks will follow, but often it's several yards behind and to the side of the other deer, on a different trail, or even no trail at all.

Early Season Calls

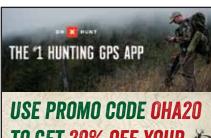
Calls are what many blacktail hunters equate with pre-rut and peak-rut hunting techniques. Typically, calls aren't used until late October, through all of November, and into December. However, once a blacktail buck strips the velvet from its rack, it's entering a state of pre-rut. As daylight hours continue to dwindle and testosterone production rises, bucks start paying closer attention to the movement of other deer. They know the bachelor herd of bucks they were with all summer, but they also know more bucks will show up, especially if doe densities are high.

If doe numbers are high, and fawn recruitment solid in your hunting area, the early season is a great time to employ fawn distress calls. These calls will often bring in concerned does on the run, and curious bucks may follow.

Using a fawn decoy in conjunction with fawn distress sounds will sometimes bring deer right to you. Montana Decoys makes a great looking whitetail fawn decoy that's light, easy to carry, and works on blacktails. Using calls and a decoy from a treestand optimizes both your visibility and shot opportunity.

This September, play the wind, monitor blacktail movements throughout the archery season, and don't get stuck in a rut. If there's one thing I've learned through my more than 45 years of blacktail hunting, it's that there's always something to learn, no matter when or where you hunt these grand deer.

To order Scott Haugen's best-selling book, Trophy Blacktails: The Science of The Hunt, visit www.scotthaugen.com. Follow his adventures on Instagram.



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Elk are so deeply ingrained here that nearly everything bears their name - from cities to streams, and yes, even mascots.

PHOTO ESSAY BY JASON HALEY

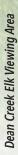


ou've got your red states and your blue states. There's been a lot of talk about it lately. Migrations are occurring like checkers on a board: California to Texas, Oregon to Idaho and New York to Florida. The reasons are many and varied, but largely culture and quality of life, pros and cons.

But what about elk states? That's part of the equation, right? What about elk steaks? Oops. I digress. Hunters know

exactly what I'm talking about. If the lifestyle is in your blood, you're looking for the right place to call home; a place to find fellowship with likeminded others. Heck, for some of us, it's the only reason we're here. Elk!

Remember the "Got Milk" ad campaign and the celebs sporting milk mustaches? Well, say what you want about Oregon, and it's easy to complain, but if you're into elk, we've got 'em. We've got outdoor industry celebs with grip-andgrins to prove it, too, but there's really no need for that kind



of advertising. Take a Sunday drive. Our cities and towns, natural landmarks and place names paint the picture.

Travel through Elk Creek, Elkton, Elk City, or Elk Head. There's more but that's off the top of MY head. Visit the Elkhorn Mountains, Upper Elk Meadows, Elk Prairie, or Elk Rock Island. Only 43 miles from Portland, the Tillamook State Forest encompasses Elk Mountain and Elk Creek and namesake hiking trails. A cursory review reveals locations like Big Elk Road in Eagle Point and Elk Lane in Grants Pass. Lest we forget the Native American name for these massive critters with the white rump. Maybe you live near Wapiti Way in Tillamook or Wapiti Lane in Umpqua? We've got apartments in Warrenton and an archery club in Lebanon bearing the native name for the whistling cervid. Camp at Wapiti RV Park in Lincoln City, or Rogue Elk Park in Trail (let's not mention the nearby Elk Creek Dam fiasco).

Speaking of fiascos, the famous elk statue in downtown Portland could be returning after being damaged in the 2020 riots. According to the Oregon Encyclopedia (a project of the Oregon Historical Society), Tecumtum was the principal chief of the Etch-kataw-wah band of Athabaskan Indians during the Rogue River War in the mid-1850s. He lived on Deer Creek in the Illinois Valley near present day Selma. His name means Elk Killer.

Before that, Lewis and Clark relied heavily on elk, particularly during their stay on the south side of the Columbia at Fort Clatsop in 1805-1806. The decision to stay there was made due to the abundance of Roosevelts. Lewis wrote, "the flesh of this animal is our principal dependance for subsistence." Visit the area near Astoria today and you're still likely to see a herd. Think back. Make that connection and drift away for a moment. Amazing.

We have elk in the swamps and flooded meadows of the Oregon coast. Nomadic herds in the scabrock flats and juniper hills of the southeast. Herds roam Crater Lake National Park down to the buckbrush hills and oak-savanna woodlands of the southwest and east to the lodgepole thickets of southcentral Oregon. We've got 'em throughout the Blues and the industrial timberlands and National Forests of the Cascades. They're on our beaches, backyards, and wilderness areas.

Among the 31 elk states, only Colorado and possibly Montana have higher populations than Oregon. That's more elk than Idaho. That's more than the celebrated states of Arizona and New Mexico. That's more than Wyoming and Utah. A recent article listed Oregon as No. 2 in the top ten states for hunting elk. As much as we like to moan, being guaranteed an elk tag of some kind every year is pretty awesome and should never be taken for granted.

For 40 years, OHA and RMEF have raised funds and invested them in projects to benefit elk and elk habitat in Oregon. And that benefits elk hunters. Enjoy and take pride. Despite the challenges to be met on many fronts, there's a bright future for Oregon elk, in spirit and in deed.



There goes the neighborhood...



In Cannon Beach, hunters are less likely to get winded by elk.



When elk hunting, always look for elk sign.



At the Elkton High School gym, the elk make good shots, too.



Special delivery? In Reedsport, they know what a priority male looks like.



How did Elkhead get its name? We're left hanging...



Field of Dreams: If you build it, they will come...



OHA Convention another big hit

A lively crowd of nearly 500 guests toasted OHA's 39 years of conservation at OHA's 2022 State Convention May 14 at Seven Feathers Casino Resort. The event netted \$120,000 for OHA's mission.



More than 70 great firearms are going to new homes, including premium firearms donated by Legacy Sports International, Sig Sauer, Coastal Farm & Ranch, Cabela's, Centerfire Gunworks, and Nosler. Guests took home an amazing array of optics donated by OHA Platinum

Sponsors Leupold

Bidder 109 won a pistol in the Wall of Guns...

& Stevens and Sig Electro Optics. Donations were too many to list here, but included great gear from Benchmade, KUIU, Coast, Work Sharp, Danner, Langer's



... then didn't win the key gun but congratulated the happy winner. We do have fun at this party.

Family Entertainment Center, Vortex, G4 Outdoors, and Sportsman's Warehouse.

Awesome adventures came from S2 Outfitters, Broken Arrow Outfitters, Troy Rodakowski, Jody Smith Guide Service, Upfront Outfitters, Ladies Hunting Camp, Diamond A Guides, Sunriver Lodging, The Allison Inn & Spa, Hammerhead Guide Service, Chinook Winds, Rocha's Dory, J&J Offshore Fishing and Argentina's TGB Outfitters.

Complimentary tulip glasses were sponsored by Cascade Lakes Brewing, crafters of Elk Camp IPA.

While many supporters contributed to making the night a success, special thanks



.... then bought the classic kids car donated by Leroy & Joy Miller with a youth shotgun...

go to OHA Pioneer, Rogue Valley and Umpqua chapters and volunteers from many chapters, auctioneer Mike Jardine, Shirley Pritchett, Tom Derbyshire & Capper's Frames & Prints, Leroy & Joy Miller, Connie Rodriguez, Waldron's Outdoor Sports, Century Printing, Valley Web Printing, ProntoPrint, and last but not least, our VIP's: Bryan Vigue and Dan & Linda Green; Herd Bulls: Jim Thompson, Kyle Humphrys & Zack Dahl (Table Mountain Forestry), Bill & Tiffany Ogren (KMK Cattle Co.), Doug Daniken (Douglas Daniken Plumbing); and Benefactors: Howard N. Kem, Don & Janel Phillips, Rick & Jill Hutchins, Byron Collman, Mark & Melanie Plaster, Kelly & Melissa Perry, Cris & Brandi Benitez, Troy Davis, Joel & Megan Jones, Marvin Pace and Klyn Kloxin.

Make plans to attend OHA's 40th Anniversary State Convention at Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City on May 6!



OHA will work to help improve the state's Mule Deer Management Plan in the coming months.

OHA conservation efforts covering Oregon's landscape

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director mtotey@oregonhunters.org

OHA conservation staff and volunteers are constantly working to fulfill OHA's mission. The diversity of wildlife and conservation opportunities and challenges are vast, and seem to be never-ending.

Examples of recent and on-going work include participating in the Mountain Lion Workshop and Black-Tailed Deer Summit; working on the Oregon Mule Deer Plan update; working to further implementation of the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan; addressing elk distribution; monitoring and tracking wildlife disease outbreaks such as CWD, EHD and others; and facilitating on-the-ground projects to conserve and improve habitat.

Other work continues with the Access and Habitat Program; working with the ODFW Commission; Southeast Oregon and Western Oregon BLM Resource Advisory Committees; and tracking landscape scale projects on public lands.

Species that have received attention in 2022: Columbian black-tailed deer, mule deer, white-tailed deer, cougar, bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain elk, Roosevelt elk, waterfowl and upland birds.

Public lands that have our attention so far in 2022: Elliott State Research Forest, ODF State Forests; Mt. Hood, Willamette, Fremont-Winema, Umatilla, Umpqua and Ochoco National Forests, Crooked River National Grasslands, Hart Mountain NWR and Vale District BLM.

OHA elects state officers, board

OHA members elected a pair of officers and a trio of board members to serve on the OHA State Board of Directors in annual elections held this spring.

OHA State Vice President Steve Hagan was elected State President, while longtime Mid-Columbia Chapter member Renee Walasavage was elected Secretary, filling

Commission updates game bird bag limits

stamp funds.

By Mike Totey, OHA Conservation Director and Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission updated bird hunting regulations and game bird regulations for the 2022-23 at its April meeting, where OHA testified. A few notable updates include regulations for Canada geese, fall turkey and sagegrouse.

FALL TURKEY — The ODFW Commission recently approved the ODFW staff proposal to increase the daily bag

limit for the General Western Oregon Fall Turkey Season to two turkeys per day. The season limit of two turkeys of either sex has not changed, but this change now allows hunters to fill both tags on the same day. OHA testified at the April Commission meeting acknowledging the effort by ODFW to expand hunting opportunity while using hunters to address damage issues. In response to the daily bag limit increase for western Oregon fall turkey, OHA asked that ODFW continue to carefully monitor turkey populations in western Oregon, particularly on public lands, because OHA does not support reducing turkey populations on public lands.

SAGE-GROUSE — OHA continues to have strong influence in protecting sagegrouse hunting in Oregon. There are many factors driving sage-grouse populations, but hunter harvest does not contribute to any decline in Oregon. Hunting yields vital rate data for biologists, and ODFW currently uses more than 50 percent of upland gamebird stamp funds to benefit sage-grouse. Hunters also pay for sagein for Mary Jo Hedrick, who was elected Southeast Director.

Northeast Director Fred Walasavage and Southwest Director Bob Webber were re-elected to their respective positions.

OHA thanks outgoing President Mike Avers for a decade of service on the state board, including three terms as President.

grouse permits and applications, while

hunting organizations, including OHA,

frequently contribute large sums to the

species' research and conservation. OHA

asserted that sage-grouse must retain their

gamebird status if they are to continue

receiving this substantial chunk of upland

sage-grouse permits similar to those al-

located in 2021. ODFW staff have the

authority to implement a temporary rule

to alter permit allocations later this

summer if breeding survey data

indicate change is needed.

CANADA GEESE -

Due to declining cackling,

Taverners, and struggling

Dusky Canada goose

populations, the ODFW

Commission approved

the ODFW staff propos-

al to reduce the limit on

all Canada geese in the

northwest Oregon permit

zone to 3 per day beginning

There are seven sub-spe-

in the 2022-23 season.

cies of Canada geese that can

be found in the northwest Oregon

permit zone. All but the dusky have open

seasons. Cackling and Taverners Canada

geese typically make up a large portion of

the geese harvested in the northwest permit

zone. OHA testified at the April Commis-

sion meeting and did not stand in the way

of this change because recent surveys in

Alaska are showing the cackling Canada

geese population at just over 200,000.

The population goal for the species is

250,000, and Taverners Canada geese

have experienced a population decline.

Other waterfowl seasons for the state will

be similar to the 2021-22 season for bag

limits and season length.

The ODFW Commission approved



Black-tailed deer habitat and population trends are key concerns for OHA.

OHA co-sponsors blacktail workshop

By Mike Totey, OHA Conservation Director & Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator

OHA conservation staff recently attended and co-sponsored the Black-tailed Deer Summit at Leupold & Stevens headquarters in Beaverton, where the focus was Columbian and Sitka black-tailed deer status and ongoing research from California to Alaska.

OHA seized this opportunity to expand our partnerships with other organizations, hear about challenges in other states with Columbian black-tailed deer, and stay up to date with the latest ongoing research conducted by ODFW.

The ODFW West Region Wildlife Research Supervisor, Dr. DeWayne Jackson, and his research team are in the process of attaining black-tailed deer density estimates in western Oregon. They are using scat detection dogs and collecting fecal data to estimate densities across wildlife management units. OHA staff were encouraged by this work, and we look forward to working with ODFW to improve our knowledge of deer populations west of the Cascades.

Leupold & Stevens is an OHA State Title Sponsor, and OHA is excited about our collaboration for the benefit of black-tailed deer. Mule Deer Foundation organized the event, and agencies in attendance included ODFW, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, California Fish and Game, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service.

OREGON HUNTER, July/August 2022

CHAPTER NEWS

OHA chapters host habitat projects and youth events

BAKER Charlie Brinton (541) 403-0402

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6 p.m., New Location: Oregon Trail Restaurant. **2022 Fundraiser:** Held April 2.

Update: Congratulations to William Seggerman, who is the Harold and RoJean Atkins Scholarship recipient.

BEND Rex Parks

541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., new location: Laurie's Grill.
2022 Fundraiser: Held March 12; we netted a new OHA chapter record \$102,000.
Update: Bend Youth Day was June 4 at Cyrus Ranch, Sisters. All Hands, All Brands was held June 17-19.

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: Held on April 2.

Update: All members are welcome to come to the chapter meetings and lots of volunteer activities are available. Please come get involved.

CAPITOL Erik Colville (503) 851-8409

ohacapitol.webs.com

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m., 4090 Cherry Ave, in Keizer. The Eagles have a full bar and menu food service available to us during our meetings.

2022 Fundraiser: Held April 2.

Update: Prairie City Aspen Protection Project was held June 10-12.

OHA will invest more than \$300,000 and 30,000 volunteer hours in Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage in 2022.



OHA's Redmond Chapter in April completed its 15th year of the annual Bridge Creek/Priest Hole project on BLM land near Mitchell, where 32 volunteers invested 568 hours in habitat work. Volunteers planted 300 cottonwood trees to create fawning and calving areas along Bridge Creek, while cooling the creek for native steelhead. Chapter members repaired 2 miles of riparian fencing, seeded a 20-acre BLM wildlife field, and laid out irrigation pipe to water the forage.

CHETCO David Green (541) 207-4866

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

Update: We are currently selling Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle tickets for a Browning Hells Canyon rifle in 6.5 PRC; contact Dave 541-207-4866.

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: Will be a virtual auction. Contact Troy Laws at 503-738-6962.

COLUMBIA COUNTY Jordan Hicks (949) 533-7271

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

2022 Fundraiser: Held May 14.

Update: Winner of the quarterly \$300 gift card was Beau Hudspeth.

EMERALD VALLEY Tony Hilsendager (541) 729-0877

EmeraldOHA@live.com **Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Wednesday, 7 p.m., Sizzlers on Gateway.

2022 Fundraiser: Held March 5.

Update: Lane County Archery Field Days June 25 or July 30. Must have completed online course and ODFW registration.

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: Held Feb. 19.

Update: Our White River Habitat Project was held June 10-12, where we removed standing beetle-killed trees. June meeting speakers were Chad Purdum and Kelly Parkman presenting OnX for your phone.

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: Held March 19.

Update: Youth day was held on June 4 at the All Sports Park in Grants Pass. JoCo Chapter Family Campout June 23-26 at Willow Lake.

KLAMATH Allan Wiard

(541) 884-5773

ohaklamath.webs.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m.,Shasta View Community Center.2022 Fundraiser: Held April 30.

Update: The Green Diamond Cleanup took

place on June 4. A total of 33 volunteers removed trash from private land that is open to public hunting access.

LAKE COUNTY Larry Lucas (541) 417-2983

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday at 6 p.m., VFW Hall, Lakeview.2022 Fundraiser: Held April 2.

Update: Lake County Youth Day is June 25; call 541-417-2983.

LINCOLN COUNTY Todd Thompson (541) 541-270-2393

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 6 p.m. Jack Sprats Bayfront at the Embarcadero. **Update:** We are currently selling Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle tickets for a Browning Hells Canyon rifle in 6.5 PRC.

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 are raffling a Browning Hells Canyon Speed 6.5 PRC to help sponsor our free youth shooting event on Aug. 20.

MID-COLUMBIA Stanley Walasavage (541) 296-1022

Quarterly Chapter Meetings: 6 p.m., at Spooky's Pizza, The Dalles.

Update: All chapter members will be entered into a drawing at each meeting to win a \$100 Coastal Farm & Ranch gift certificate; must be present to win.

MID-WILLAMETTE Jeff Mack (503) 949-3787

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

2022 Fundraiser: Held on April 9.

Update: In May we had a guest speaker from Oregon State Police. Local FFA students earned a well deserved donation for their help at our chapter banquet.

OCHOCO John Dehler, III (541) 815-5817

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m., Crook County Library.

2022 Fundraiser: Online, held June 4-14. **Updates:** All Hands All Brands for Public Lands project was held June 17-19. **PIONEER**

Brian Andrews (503) 266-2900

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter Chapter Meetings: 1st Wednesday, 7 p.m.,



A total of 33 volunteers on June 4 picked up 2.5 tons of trash and 66 tires from Green Diamond property in Klamath County that is open to public hunting access. OHA worked with Rogue Klamath Transfer, Klamath County, Basin Tire and Waste Management, Green Diamond and other local volunteers.

come early for dinner, Canby Rod & Gun Club.

2022 Fundraiser: Held March 5.

Update: Spring/Summer Gun Raffles have started. Buy tickets now for a chance to win a Browning rifle and a Browning shotgun. Winner to be drawn at the September meeting.

Annual Family Campout and Guzzler Project was June 17-19

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: Was held Feb. 26. We netted over \$100,000, a new OHA chapter record at the time.

Update: May meeting guest speaker was Tim McClurg on how to refinish you guns with coatings.

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 Fundraiser: Held on March 19. **Update:** We have many events planned from the spring, Youth Turkey Clinic, Young Oregon Hunter's Day, and our RV OHA pheasant hunt at Denman Wildlife Area.

TILLAMOOK John Putman (503) 842-7733

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

2022 Fundraiser: July 16 at Tillamook Fairgrounds. Call 503-842-7153 or 503-801-3779.

TIOGA Marcey Fullerton (541) 267-2577

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 6 p.m., Uncle Randy's Café, Coquille. **2022 Fundraiser:** Held April 2.

Update: The Dean Creek Shed Hunt took place June 11.

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.

2022 Fundraiser: Held March 26.

Update: Guest speaker at our May meeting was Leland Brown, speaking about non-lead ammunition. Youth event was held June 4-5 at Henry Hagg Lake.

UMPQUA

Tadd Moore

(541) 580-5660

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m. at Backside Brewery.

2022 Fundraiser: Held April 9.

Update: New board members are Shannon Sebastian, Mike Axtel and Ralph Moore.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY Morgan Olson

(541) 786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

2022 Fundraiser: Online, March 19-April 11.

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: Held March 19.

Update: Youth Shotgun Shoot will be held Aug. 13, Newberg Rod & Gun Club.

TACTACAM TRAIL CAM CONTEST

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



EOTC SHOP

WINNER:

OHA member **Calvin Davis** of Pendleton wins a Tactacam **Reveal Trail Camera for this** August 2021 trail camera photo of two **Union County** bulls tangling their tines.

08/30/2021 07:35AM

HONORABLE MENTION:



OHA member Calvin Davis of Pendleton receives an OHA hat for this September 2021 trail cam capture of a bugling Union County bull.



Jerry English, of Oakridge, set up the camera just right to catch a memorable image of this Lane County Roosevelt bull. English earns an OHA hat.



OHA member Mike Mordell, of Kennewick, Wash., claims an OHA hat for this photo of mule deer at a water tank in Wheeler County at the end of June 2021.



OHA member Jerry English of Oakridge garners honorable mention for this February 2022 trail cam capture of a Lane County mountain lion.



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YOUNG GUNS BY SHANNON FITZGERALD

Volleyball Kill

Florence athlete gets a second chance after breaking both legs

t was summer of 2019, and 14-year-old Bailey Myrick of Florence was packed and ready with her East Beatys Butte antelope tag that she drew with no points, and then decided to sneak in one last volleyball practice at Siuslaw High School.

That's when an eight-hour adventure to the high desert was exchanged for a painful four-hour trip to a Portland hospital.

When Bailey jumped to hit the ball, she landed normally, but something didn't feel right.

"I dropped to the floor in excruciating pain, and was hysterical," Bailey remembered.

Nobody could see what was wrong, but Bailey's legs quickly began to swell. Her teammates carried her from the gym to a waiting car.

It was late, and the small hospital in Florence provided x-rays, pain killers, then a phone call to Portland. Doernbecher Children's Hospital requested Bailey be there by the following morning.

Doernbecher postponed Bailey's surgery an additional day. She had broken both legs just below the knee. One screw was inserted in her broken right fibula and two screws in her left leg where both the fibula and larger tibia were broken.

Her father Stew called ODFW to see if Bailey's hunt could be salvaged. Even with a doctor's note, the agency would provide only one point for a hunt usually taking 15 years to draw.

Several friends and family members had planned to join Bailey on the hunt, but in one awkward landing, she lost both her antelope hunt and volleyball season.

Bailey's Uncle Doug was excited to accompany his niece, so Stew informed him of the bad news.

"She broke her legs," Stew said.

"That's all right ... she can still walk," her optimistic uncle pleaded. "She can still What's luckier than drawing a pronghorn tag with no points? Drawing it again two years later.



Volleyball player Bailey Myrick scored a kill when she tagged this pronghorn in Oregon's Pueblo Mountains.

go and use crutches."

"No, you don't understand," Stew clarified. "She broke both legs!"

The subsequent season came and went without Bailey redrawing her antelope tag, but on an early June morning in 2021, Stew woke his daughter with a smile.

"Really, there's no way!" Bailey replied in disbelief after her dad explained the news.

When Uncle Doug got wind Bailey was getting a second dig, he suggested bubble wrap for the protection of his fragile niece until opening day.

"The sunsets and stars were unreal," Bailey recalled of her first trip to the eastern Oregon desert. "And it was amazing to have so much family there."

Friday, while scouting, Bailey got a closeup view of a huge antelope buck standing near a dry waterhole. "That really got me excited for opening morning."

The next day, Bailey and her entourage hiked out of a canyon, and after clearing the rimrocks onto a plateau high in the Pueblo Mountains, beheld an amazing sunrise.

They bumped a few antelope, before spotting a herd lying down on another plateau.

When Bailey crested the top, antelope

were already running. Distracted, she didn't realize the buck hadn't gone anywhere, and stopped nonchalantly to pee, which saved his life.

Surprised by the buck, Bailey hadn't gotten set for her shot. The second shot had less chance when the pronghorn figured he should do what antelope do best – run.

It was 10:30, and already hot. Her Uncle Doug spotted another buck, miles away.

They were able to close some distance in vehicles, but still had a mile of desert on foot. By noon it was even hotter. Only Uncle Doug, dad, and step-mom Dustee set out with Bailey.

Crossing the baking desert, Stew hung back with Dustee, who was suffering from the heat.

"It was pretty hot for us coastees," Stew admitted.

Up ahead, Bailey and her uncle crawled up through the sage brush on a little rise to spot the buck. Stew quietly approached with her shooting sticks.

Bailey hit the antelope hard in the shoulder.

"We thought he dropped," Stew explained, "but the antelope wasn't there."

Doug caught sight of him again, in a bowl. They crawled into the shade of some rimrock waiting for the buck to lie down. Then a herd of range cows spooked the antelope over the ridge.

Dustee had hung tough for Bailey's hunt, but to prevent heatstroke, Stew called his buddy Jeff Stinger to pick up his wife, who was waiting with the rest of the family a mile away.

Halfway up the ridge, the heat started to get to Stew. "I was a little worried about my dad, too," Bailey recalled.

On the ridge, Bailey put her antelope down.

"It was exhilarating!" Bailey exclaimed. "It was one of the proudest moments in my life."

After hiking 15 desert miles for Bailey's hunt, everyone was feeling the heat. But the family found that the cure for pronghorn hunting heatstroke was back in Fields with ice cold milkshakes.

WANTED: HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS



Remember the thrill of your first hunt? Do you have a passion for hunting that you would like to pass on to others?

ODFW's Hunter Education Program NEEDS you!

The hunter education program involves passing on the hunting tradition to future generations in a safe, fun, and responsible manner.

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Hunter education instructors are individuals 21 and older who have a passion for hunting. You do not need to be an expert hunter to teach this course; a strong interest in introducing young people and adults to the sport is what is required.

How do I become a Certified Instructor?

• Easy process: contact the number below for an application.



Hunter Education

ODFW Hunter Education Program 503-947-6028 www.dfw.state.or.us



GAME ON THE GRILL By TIFFANY HAUGEN

Get on the stick with kebabs

f you're looking for a meal that's easy to prep ahead of time, look no further than simple grilled kebabs. Regardless of the meat you have available, be it fresh from the field or taken from the freezer, kebabs can be customized to please any eater.

When using multiple meats, try marinating them in their own, separate brine to enhance the flavor of an all-meat kebab. Many fruits and vegetables taste great when paired with wild game on a kebab and they need no extra seasonings. It's summer; get creative and throw some kebabs on the grill.

Hunter's Kebabs

pound venison
 pound wild turkey breast
 onion
 bell pepper
 pineapple

Venison Marinade

2 tablespoons raspberry balsamic vinegar 1 tablespoon olive oil

- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

Wild Turkey Marinade

1/3 cup orange juice2 tablespoons soy sauce2-3 cloves minced garlic1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes

Chop both the venison and wild turkey breast into bite-sized chunks. Place venison in a medium bowl, add Venison Marinade ingredients and stir well. Cover and refrigerate 6-12 hours. Place wild turkey in another medium bowl, add Wild Turkey Marinade and stir well. Cover and refrigerate 6-12 hours.

Prepare onion, bell pepper, pineapple and any other desired kebab additions, by chopping into bite-sized chunks. When ready to assemble kebabs, drain and discard meat marinades and thread meat, fruits and vegetables on to skewers. Let meat sit at room temperature 10-15 minutes before grilling.

Heat grill to medium-high heat. Lubricate grill grates and place kebabs a few inches apart. Close grill and cook 2-3 minutes. Carefully turn kebabs every few minutes for even cooking on all sides.

Meat Care Tip: If you didn't get rid of all the bloodshot and silver skin prior to freezing your venison or wild turkey, do it before cooking. Any remaining blood will result in a wild flavor, while any remaining sinew or silver skin will make the meat tough. Wild game, even game birds, can get a bad rap for being gamey tasting, but what it all comes down to is proper field care and making sure the meat is clean prior to freezing, and especially, cooking it.



Many fruits and vegetables taste great when paired with wild game on a kebab and they need no extra seasonings.

For signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular book, Cooking Big Game, 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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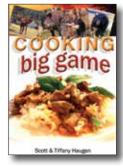
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OREGON HUNTER, July/August 2022





We want you... to volunteer for ODFW

Volunteers are critical to ODFW's mission of protecting and enhancing Oregon's fish, wildlife, and their habitats for present and future generations

ODFW offers a variety of volunteer assignments including restoring habitat, assisting biologists with surveys, teaching fishing, archery and hunting skills, RV host at wildlife area or hatchery and participating on a task force or board.

Interested? Visit odfw.com and look under About Us / Volunteering / Current Volunteer Opportunities and sign up for a project. You can also join the Volunteer Mailing List from the webpage or follow the ODFW Volunteer page on Facebook to find out about projects in need of volunteers.

All volunteers are subject to a screening process prior to beginning volunteer service that can include check of references, Oregon Driver's Records, State Criminal History, Fish & Wildlife Violations and/or National Background Check.

Volunteer for:

Shooting Sports Instructor Shotgun Skills Instructor Hunter Education Instructor Archery Instructor Grouse Wing Collection Fern Ridge Tuesday Crew Hunter Check Stations Turtle Trapping Anti-Poaching Campaign Adopt a Lek Keep Our Rivers Clean RV Host Angler Education Instructor And more!

Thank you for your interest in volunteering for ODFW in support of fish, wildlife and their habitats.



POACHING SPOTLIGHT

DIAL *OSP TO REPORT VIOLATIONS

Turn in poachers, earn cash or preference points

The eyes and ears of hunters in the field are some of the best tools for combatting poaching in Oregon. As you start scouting this summer, and later when you're hunting, keep an eye out for anything that doesn't look right, and use your mobile phone to call *OSP and report wildlife violations.

OHA pays rewards from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund for information leading to a citation in connection with the illegal possession, killing, taking, and/ or waste of deer, elk, antelope, bear, cougar, wolf, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose, furbearers or game birds, license and tag violations and habitat damage.

Informants may remain anonymous and still collect a reward.

TIP reward levels are as follows:

- **\$1,000** Bighorn Sheep, Mountain Goat and Moose
- \$500 Elk, Deer and Antelope

- \$300 Bear, Cougar and Wolf
- **\$300** Habitat Destruction
- \$100 Game Fish and Shellfish
- \$100 Upland Birds and Waterfowl
- \$100 Furbearers

The TIP program also offers the option of ODFW preference point rewards instead of cash rewards for information leading to an arrest or issuance of a citation for the unlawful take/possession or waste of big game mammals.

Preference Point Rewards:

• **5 points** for reporting a case involving bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose or wolf;

• **4 points** for reporting a case involving elk, deer, antelope, bear or cougar.

How to report a wildlife and/or habitat law violation or suspicious activity:

TIP Hotline: 1-800-452-7888 (24/7)

TIP E-Mail: TIP@state.or.us (monitored M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)



SPONSORED BY OHA, OSP & ODFW

OHA pays out \$1,200 in rewards in 5 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued five reward checks to informants in cases totaling \$1,200 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: failing to validate a big game tag (deer) and exceeding bag limit (deer); hunting game birds over baited area (geese); unlawful take/possession of oversized white sturgeon; unlawful take of coho salmon with a net.



For poaching news as it happens, find OHA on Facebook

facebook.com/OregonHunters

NOSLER®

2022 PHOTO CONTEST

FINALIST PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded in general and youth categories. **IST PRIZE:** Nosler Model 21 rifle **2ND PRIZE:** Case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo **3RD PRIZE:** Leupold Scope **4TH PRIZE:** Danner Alsea 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

NDSLER PHOTO CONTEST GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS



Beau Hudspeth, OHA member in St. Helens, claims an OHA Coast knife and entry in the finals of the 2022 Nosler Photo Contest for this photo of a herd of Rocky Mountain elk in Wheeler County.



OREGON HUNTER, July/August 2022

BAKER COUNTY/DUANE DUNGANNON

NDSLER[®] **PHOTO CONTEST** *YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS*



OHA member Will Waddell of Springfield scores an OHA Coast knife and a spot in the finals of the 2022 Nosler Photo Contest for this photo of Kori Groff with her 2022 youth-weekend tom, taken in the Siuslaw Unit with a 20 gauge Remington.



It was youth turkey weekend in the Heppner Unit with snow on the ground and turkeys trolling for hens. OHA member Brent Wright of Bend claims an OHA Coast knife and a spot in the finals of the 2022 Nosler Photo Contest for this photo of Matthew Wright and Thomas Wright with their shotgun double play.

NDSLER[®] **PHOTO CONTEST** HONORABLE MENTION



Portland OHA member Darrell Auvil takes honorable mention for this photo of Sauvie Island with Mt. Rainier in the background.



OHA member Darrell Auvil of Portland gains honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Darrell, Dale and Cal Auvil with canvasbacks in December 2020 on Sauvie Island.



OHA member Ryan Garrett of Sweet Home collects honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Zoe Garrett and her Ukiah unit elk taken in October 2021.



ntur

OHA member Matt Marcum of Tillamook receives honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of his brother Dylan and a coast bull taken with his Bowtech bow.



OHA member Brent Wright of Bend earns honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Michael Wright with a Heppner Unit gobbler taken on Youth Turkey weekend.

Bend OHA member John Bambe garners honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this picture of himself with a Wasco County turkey taken with his 12 gauge SKB on opening day 2019.

OREGON HUNTER, July/August 2022



New Guy at Bear Camp

T can be a little intimidating. It's your first bear camp. It's just you, showing up to camp with two or three or nine other guys, all of whom know each other. But they don't know you. Or they know you and some of them didn't want you to come.

It's like that old saying, nine out of 10 people can be the best of friends, but you're number 10.

When you show up in bear camp, I hope you're not expecting to be met by a welcome committee.

If someone says, "Hey man, glad you could make it," you are not in bear camp, you are at the Newunschwander family reunion and maybe if you drive down the road a couple of miles you will be in the right place.

But let's say you have found the right place and there is a feller splitting firewood or standing in the yard. What you don't want to do is get out

of your Ford or your Chevy. Best thing to do is roll down your window and look at him.

If the feller says, "Bout time," or, "What," you've found the right place. This is bear camp. And he will probably tell you where to park. Now you can get out of the car, unless the car is a Subaru, in which case you should drive back to town and start over.

Once you arrive at bear camp, the first thing to do is stroll around the outside. Look at the firewood. Pick up the axe and check the bit. Peer at the four-wheelers or the horses. There'll be plenty of time for carrying stuff in the cabin or the wall tent later.

The secret to not being pegged as the new guy at bear camp is to avoid the issue. Deflect. You start off with something like: "I see you planted a pink dogwood in the yard since I was here last." Or, "I passed the nudist camp on the way here and saw a couple bare."

Let's say you recognize an old friend or a guy from high school. At this point you may be tempted to go in for a bear camp bear hug. This would be a mistake. And this is not the time for a chest bump either. Or even a fist bump. You can get by with a handshake. But I'd go for the slow chin lift and the significant eye squint.

This might be one of those bear camps with dogs in it. First thing you want to do is figure out who owns the dogs. You ask him, "How long have you been in the dog business?" to which he will answer with something like, "Since I was hip-high to a Bluetick." Then you can tell him you stepped in the dog business when you got out of the car and could you have the borrow of a good bristle brush and some dish soap?

If you have arrived any time before five o'clock, someone is likely to ask if you would like a little lunch, which, of course, you would, so you say no, but thank you. Courtesy dictates that they must ask you two more times at which point you should say, "You bet."

Now this is the point where someone is going to check in with you. He'll say, "How long you had that truck?" Doesn't matter what the truth is. You say, "Nigh on twenty year." He doesn't care what you say because he is really setting you up for the next question. What someone is going to ask you is what rifle you brought to bear camp. This gets problematic. What you don't want to do is tell them what you brought right off.

Someone will start by saying something like, "So... then, whatchagot in that rifle case?"

If they ask you what gun you're carrying, at all costs avoid the following kind of reply: "What? Are you kidding me? I put a bullet in it, I shoot. If I miss, I take it to the gunsmith to fix it. Let's talk about something important."

> Best thing to do is leave your gun in the case. But you can talk about it.

> You can say something like, "Oh, this little sweetheart? This is Betsy." Or you can call her Squirrel Tooth Alice or Genevieve. Or Bruce. That will throw them off for a bit.

Let's say your gun is stocked in a finefigured golden hardwood. You say something like, "She's a curly blonde east European beech. We've been together 20 years. She's much more stable now. I took her for a walk last bear season then stripped her down and had her vacuum

impregnated with acrylic and put oil on her and she shined up really nice. Just like the old days."

If the guys still want to see your gun, you tell them about your other favorite rifle, the one you left at home. "Now Ginger, she's a different story. She's fancy but a little thick. I'd let you borrow her for a week if you promise to float her barrel."

Women at bear camp may also talk about guns, but they mainly talk about men and guns together. It goes something like this:

Jenny: "Sometimes I wonder if Jimmy doesn't love that Winchester more than he loves me. He spends more time with it. He talks to it. He caresses it more."

Susan: "My mother said I should watch out for other women. She didn't say anything about watching out for guns."

Jenny: "I know. If Jimmy looked at another woman I guess I'd take it as a sign of health."

There are several of you reading this column that have already broken bear camp rule number one or you are intending to. You drive a Subaru with a bike rack and you're going to take it to bear camp anyway.

Here's what you do. You roll up to camp and walk straight into the wall tent and throw out your chest and say, "Who's the strongest man in this camp?" A tough looking guy is going to stand up and say, "I'm the strongest man here, who wants to know?" That's when you say, "Can you help me push my Subaru into the yard?" Then hand him a box with 10 pounds of bacon. You'll fit right in if you bring bacon.

Brown bear: play dead. Black bear: fight back. Couple bare: look the other way.



For a copy of *A Bear Hunter's Guide to the Universe,* send \$24.95 to Gary Lewis Outdoors, P.O. Box 1364, Bend, OR 97709.



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