



# OHA TRACKER

October 2022



WENDY RENNIKE

## OHA protects spring bear hunting, offers input on other big game issues

By Tyler Dungannon, OHA Conservation Coordinator  
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OHA had a strong presence with three representatives at the September Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting in Burns, where big game regulation proposals were ultimately approved. OHA was one of only two organizations to testify at this important meeting, and OHA's representatives were the only ones to testify on behalf of Oregon hunters in person.

OHA staff expressed to the Commission that OHA should play an important role in the creation of the new Mule Deer Management Plan, and that one of our highest priorities is to bolster mule deer populations, while also optimizing hunting opportunity and quality. OHA's Mule Deer Sub-Committee is comprised of mule deer experts from Oregon, Idaho and Montana, and they are eager to help develop the new plan.

### Spring Bear Hunting

After a commissioner pressed concerns about the ethics of spring bear hunting, and Washington's recent ban on spring bear hunts, OHA stepped up in support of continued spring bear hunting in Oregon. Our black bear population is strong and increasing, and ODFW does an excellent job of protecting sows with cubs and making use of the extensive data that are collected from harvested bears. ODFW has a mandatory check-in for bears, and the data collected inform population models. As a result of these data and others, Oregon's bear population estimate sits at 34,000 bears.

OHA also thanked ODFW for carrying out OHA's desire to create more youth archery elk hunting opportunity in light of ar-



GREG PETSCH

OHA defended the science for Oregon spring bear hunting at the September Commission meeting.

chery regulation changes in eastern Oregon. OHA is confident that this will maintain and improve archery hunter recruitment.

### Chronic Wasting Disease

OHA applauded ODFW for their work to prevent Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Oregon, including their effort to partner with Oregon State University, which will allow for in-state CWD testing of ungulate samples. Hunters were reminded to stop at roadside check-stations this fall and allow ODFW to collect samples in an effort to monitor for the presence of the disease.

ODFW has an excellent CWD web page complete with resources for Oregon hunters. To learn more about CWD, check the status of your sample, the laws in effect pertaining to CWD prevention, and what ODFW is doing to prevent the disease, please visit <https://myodfw.com/CWD>.

In addition to working with ODFW, OHA is also working closely with legislators to develop legislative concepts aimed at securing funds to maintain the in-state testing opportunity with OSU, as well as added personnel specific to CWD research and sample collection.

## OHA requests NE wolf damage hunts

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director  
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OHA representatives attended the recent ODFW Commission meeting and educational tour held in Burns. The tour, held the day before the commission meeting, delved into wolf management, including how the department confirms a depredation, complete with a deceased calf confirmed to be a wolf depredation. Additional information was presented around the agency's use of trapping and collaring to count wolves, as well as what non-lethal measures are utilized to reduce depredations. OHA participated as members of the public, along with a representative from the Oregon Cattlemen's Association. OHA's participation on the tour was noted by several commissioners.

OHA staff provided testimony during the Commission meeting addressing our letter, which was submitted to the Commission in August, requesting the Commission develop damage hunts that could solve the chronic depredation issues ongoing in northeast Oregon. Comments were provided during the public forum portion of the meeting, along with similar testimony by the OCA representative.

OHA's request for damage hunts is well within the parameters of the current wolf management plan and provides the framework that would not only assist livestock producers, but also involve hunters as part of the solution. Wolf management will be a hot topic as the current wolf plan review process is undertaken in the near future. OHA will continue to advocate for wolf management based on sound science.

# OHA braces for election, 2023 legislative session

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director  
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Looking ahead to the November election, as well as the 2023 legislative session, OHA sees a mixed bag of potential outcomes for hunters. In several areas, such as the attempt to secure a 2024 referendum from the legislature to Constitutionally protect our right to hunt, fish, and harvest, there are huge opportunities to gain ground. However, in the near term, the November election brings potential issues, such as Measure 114's egregious gun control proposals. Here are a few items to highlight as we move through the election and into the legislative session:

- **Ballot Measure 114:** Billed as the "Reduction of Gun Violence Act," 114 would negatively impact law-abiding firearms owners. The measure would create a permit-to-purchase system for all Oregonians who want to purchase a firearm, including in its qualifications a live-fire course that does not currently exist. If passed, it would effectively stop firearms purchases for an undetermined amount of time while the framework for the permitting system was decided upon and implemented. It would also create a searchable database to house all personal information of permit-holders, to include a record of all firearms purchased, for an indefinite length of time. In an attempt to ban "large capacity" magazines, defined as anything over 10 rounds, the measure would ban several firearms such as shotguns and rifles that can hold more than 10 rounds in an internal tube or chamber. Additionally, the effects of this measure on fundraising events for sportsmen's organizations, such as OHA, would be devastating.

We already have OSP background checks that take too long. Local law enforcement agencies, which are already strained to provide current services, would have no mandate to offer the required training, and OSP estimates that no permits would be issued in 2023. What will be the impact on sporting goods stores if no firearm transactions occur in 2023, and then only to those who are willing and able to obtain the new permits thereafter? Would your local gun shops even be in business at this time next year? Local governments and law enforcement are opposing Measure 114, and we hope most Oregonians do, as well.

- **Governor's Race:** The battle for the governor's seat is the most talked about race on the ballot, repeatedly making national news. The governor's office is critical to hunters, because the governor appoints Fish and Wildlife Commissioners and submits the budget for ODFW, just for starters. The governor's policies on firearms ownership, predator management and energy development in critical wildlife habitat are key concerns.

- **State Legislature:** The leaning of the state legislature is critical in moving forward several natural resources-specific concepts such as the right to hunt, fish, and harvest. In addition, OHA is taking the lead in moving forward additional funding for ODFW specific to Chronic Wasting Disease sampling, research, and establishment of in-state testing.

The ODFW Commission structure will be the topic of another piece of legislation OHA will move forward. The Commission consists of one representative from each of the five congressional districts, plus one at-large representative each from east of the Cascades and west of the Cascades. Since Oregon now has six congressional districts, the statute must be adjusted to reflect new representation. OHA will forward a concept that keeps the Commission as a seven-member body with equal representation from all areas of the state.

OHA encourages our membership to register to vote and make our presence known in both the upcoming election and the 2023 legislative session. To register to vote, simply go to the Secretary of State's webpage by Oct. 18: [www.oregonvotes.org](http://www.oregonvotes.org)

Follow the OHA Legislative News webpage for the most up-to-date information on both the election and the legislative session: <https://oregonhunters.org/legislative-news/>

**REGISTER TO VOTE  
BY OCTOBER 18**

[www.oregonvotes.org](http://www.oregonvotes.org)

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AND GET A SHOT  
AT A GREAT GUN!**

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