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**OREGON
AFIELD**
Field updates
on elk
damage
hunts, burn
recovery
and juniper
removal

10



**BOW &
BLACKPOWDER**
Controlled
muley bow
tags to target
and seeking
blackpowder
elk hunting
redemption

14



CAT CALLING
Cougars are
Oregon's
lone year-
round big
game hunt,
so get
dialed in
and call one

18



**BEARS AT
THE BUZZER**
The 4th
quarter is
the most
exciting
part of this
game, and
here's why

22



RATTYSHACK
Take your
best swing
at sage rats
and other
varmints this
spring and
make a hole
in one!

30



MAY MADNESS
It's the
second half
of the season,
and we go
hard in the
hardwoods
for our big
fans

34



CONTENTS

VOL. 41, NO. 3

WILLY ONARHEIM

FEATURES

18 Cat Calling

By Max Zeller

Cougars are Oregon's only year-round big game. Get dialed-in and call one.

22 Buzzer-Beater Bears

By Scott Haugen

Oregon's spring bear season heats up in the 4th quarter. Here's why.

30 Rattyshack – Rats in the Rough

By Gary Lewis

Take a swing at sage rats and other varmints this spring, and make a hole in one!

34 May Madness for Oregon Turkeys

By Gary Lewis

We go hard in the hardwoods for our fans and pick up some personal fowls.

OREGON AFIELD

10 General elk damage hunt update after first two seasons

10 Oregon burns are recovering, but hazards remain for hunters

11 Removing junipers helps wildlife wet their whistles

DEPARTMENTS

6 FINDING DIRECTION

8 OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

8 HUNTING CALENDAR

12 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

14 BLACKPOWDER

16 BOWHUNTING

38 TRAIL CAM CONTEST

42 OHA NEWS & VIEWS

44 OHA CHAPTER NEWS

46 OHA IN ACTION

50 ASK ODFW

51 NOSLER PHOTO CONTEST

54 PARTING SHOTS

Managing public land for hunting

Know Oregon? Win a Work Sharp!

Apply for controlled hunts by May 15

The latest on new Oregon gun bills

Elk Redemption

Oregon's muley draw: Tags to target

Enter to win a prize from Tactacam

Wildlife crossings hit the fast lane

Join your chapter for a spring project

OHA bats cleanup for public access

How the controlled hunt draw works

Your best shot could win a Nosler rifle!

Bear Hunter's Guide to Precious Gems

Cover: Jackson County cougar by Randy Shipley wrshipley.zenfolio.com

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BRAD SMITH

OREGON HUNTER

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Managing public lands for hunting

Hunting on public lands is part of our hunting heritage in Oregon, but simply having access doesn't necessarily promote or benefit hunting on these lands. Determining whether the lands are benefitting the hunting community is another key factor.

A lack of active management, particularly on federal lands, has changed the once bountiful habitat for deer and elk to a fraction of what it used to be, especially in western Oregon.

As a result of management strategies like those included in the Northwest Forest Plan, pressure and litigation from protectionist groups, and other factors, western Oregon federal lands are all predominately managed for late succession habitats. That's over 5.6 million acres. Western Oregon BLM lands are mostly the same, with a limited exception of the O&C lands that the BLM is responsible for.

Similar management is now being adopted on most state forest lands in western Oregon. The Elliott State Research Forest (80,000+ acres) and western Oregon state forests (700,000+ acres) are both in the process of getting Habitat Conservation Plans that will put 65 percent and 50 percent of those forests, respectively, on a pathway for late succession habitat.

The good news is that in most cases you can still hunt on these public lands, but if we are not promoting hunting as one of the long-standing forms of recreation, and habitat for game species, the quality of the hunt may be in question.

In eastern Oregon, a lack of active management, specifically for winter range, has led to situations where big game are leaving public lands and moving to private lands where access is limited, or expensive, or unavailable altogether.

Promoting active management for game species needs to be part of our public lands management. Waiting for wildfires (sometimes catastrophic) to create habitat is not the approach we should be relying on, particularly because these fires have led to long term public closures on the lands.

Seasonal road closures are a management strategy that can benefit both hunters and game animals in many cases. It has been well documented how traffic on roads (and even bikers and hikers on trails) can displace game. Winter closures on critical winter range have been very effective in addressing this.

What are the things that OHA can do to promote hunting and wildlife for hunting? Obvious answers include making sure our voice is heard in public land management decisions. We must continue to engage in public land management discussions. If our voice isn't heard, decision makers will continue to listen to those who are not advocating for active management and game species. These decisions encompass everything from access to the lands for hunting, to ensuring management of the lands considers and promotes habitat for game species, and compatibility of hunting with other recreation uses.

OHA is welcome in these discussions, from public land managers, anxious to hear our perspective. We are viewed as the organization that advocates for active management, wildlife and conservation. That's attractive to those who have been constantly subjected to the "all or nothing" rhetoric that's taken place for years. But our voice alone keeps us in the minority.

We must build and maintain partnerships with other conservation groups and pro-management advocates. This is where partners, such as recognized tribes, can really influence the conversations. Their voices will be heard in conversations where ours could be ignored.

Investing our funds and sweat equity continues to gain us ground. On-the-ground habitat work benefits the wildlife we care about on public and private lands, and demonstrates that hunters need to be considered in all management decisions.





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KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

- The sure-fire way to tell a mule deer from a blacktail is by the length of its
 - antlers
 - ears
 - jaw
 - metatarsal glands
- A way a game officer may tell a bird is from a preserve is the size of the bird's
 - tail
 - nostrils
 - spurs
 - none of the above
- Oregon's smallest deer is the
 - blacktail
 - Idaho whitetail
 - mule deer
 - Columbian whitetail
- Oregon's biggest duck is the
 - canvasback
 - mallard
 - redhead
 - pintail
- Which is classed as a duck?
 - merganser
 - coot
 - brant
 - none of the above
- Which had the top 2021 cougar harvest?
 - NW zone
 - NE zone
 - SW zone
 - SE zone
- Which wilderness is on the Oregon-California border?
 - Kalmiopsis
 - Mountain Lakes
 - Red Buttes
 - none of the above
- You're most likely to find antelope in which state forest?
 - Elliott
 - Sun Pass
 - Clatsop
 - Santiam
- Which bird sports an orange beak?
 - chukar
 - Hungarian partridge
 - blue grouse
 - valley quail

TRUE OR FALSE?

- Fewer Oregonians hunt deer now than 50 years ago.
- The statewide harvest of elk in recent years was about half the harvest in 1994, the year Measure 18 passed.
- The statewide buck harvest is now less than the doe harvest was in 1961.
- Oregon's statewide deer harvest is currently about half of what it was in 1990.

ANSWERS: 1-d; 2-c; 3-d; 4-a; 5-a; 6-a; 7-b; 8-c; 9-a; 10-f; 11-f; 12-f; 13-f



WHERE
IN OREGON?

WHERE IN OREGON WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN?

Identify this Oregon river bend, be drawn from all correct entries, and win a Work Sharp Original Knife and Tool Sharpener! Send your 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: MAY 20, 2023.



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Matthew McCadden, Klamath Falls

Matthew's name was drawn from among the OHA members who identified Agency Lake.

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

MAY 6

OHA State Convention, A&H Statewide Elk tag auction, Chinook Winds Casino, Lincoln City, 541-772-7313
www.oregonhunters.org;
OHA Tillamook Chapter banquet, 503-801-3779;
OHA Tioga Youth Day, 541-267-2577

MAY 15

Controlled hunt application deadline

MAY 19-21

Westside (Detroit Lake) Habitat Project, 503-910-2913

MAY 20

OHA Lake County Chapter Banquet, 541-417-2983

MAY 20-21

OHA Hart Mountain project, 541-591-9700

MAY 31

Turkey, spring bear seasons close

JUNE 3

Rogue Valley Chapter Banquet 541-773-8736;

OHA Klamath Chapter forest cleanup, 541-281-2224;

OHA youth & family events: Bend 541-480-7323

Josephine County 541-218-2836
Tualatin Valley 541-453-7520

JUNE 9-11

White River project, 503-706-7481, td@oregonhunters.org

JUNE 12

Controlled hunt results available

JUNE 16-18

OHA Pioneer Chapter weekend Guzzler campout, 503-932-7202

JUNE 23-25

All Hands All Brands for Public Lands weekend project, Ochocos, 541-480-0230

JUNE 24

OHA Lake County youth & family event, 541-417-2983

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OREGON AFIELD

CAYUSE FLAT/JIM AKENSON

ODFW hopes hunting pressure will help ease elk damage problems.



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Elk damage hunt update

A new pilot OTC general antlerless elk damage hunt began in 2020 due to “chronic elk damage and increasing private land elk populations.” The detailed hunt area polygons are almost entirely private agricultural lands within five units in western Oregon and around 20 in the Northeast and Columbia zones. There’s no tag sale deadline, and seasons are long (August-March and August-November in the Northeast). Many of the zones are in “elk deemphasis areas” as defined by ODFW.

Harvest stats are now available. Here’s what we know:

Statewide harvest in 2020 was 2,245, and overall success was 49 percent. About 4,568 hunters participated. The Northeast

More than 4,000 antlerless elk have been taken in two years of the general season damage hunts.

was the highest producing region by far at 1,717 antlerless elk taken and 54-percent success. Heppner led with 294 animals and 59-percent success. Hunters took 189 elk in Catherine Creek. Chesnimnus had the highest success at 68 percent, but only produced 36 animals.

Hunters took 265 elk in the Northwest, primarily in the Willamette Unit, but also plenty in a sliver of the Trask along the east boundary of Highway 47. Only 112 elk were taken in the Southwest, 87 in the Melrose Unit and only 8 in the Rogue. Columbia hunters took 151 elk, mostly in the Biggs Unit.

What did this accomplish and what did 2021 look like? According to ODFW Ungulate Management Coordinator Don Whittaker, the pilot appears to be working so far, as the data “point toward a reduction in the number of landowner damage

tags issued the old way.” There have been fewer complaints and the long seasons have hunters pushing elk around for long periods, according to Whittaker, who said pressure and harvest seem to be working.

Second-season harvest data (2021) shows fewer elk taken statewide (1,819) and reduced success (45 percent). Total harvest was down across all regions, with a few local exceptions. The Rogue Unit saw a slight increase from 8 to 18 animals and the Pine Creek Unit went from 49 to 67 animals. These bumps could be attributed to anything from new farming practices, changing herd movements, weather or landowner motivation and generosity. Maybe hunters just figured things out in year two. Regardless, removing 4,064 antlerless elk from the landscape in two years will have impacts we will monitor.

—JASON HALEY

Burns recovering, but hazards remain for hunters



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Major wildfires blazed in northeast Oregon along the breaks of Hells Canyon and in the Wallowa Mountains last year, and that could affect bear hunters this spring. The Double Creek fire, spanning over 173,000 acres, covered much of the Snake River Unit.

The U.S. Forest Service is not expecting any area closures, but hunters could encounter both trail and road hazards – especially at higher elevations in the Snake River Unit where the fire burned the hottest. Roads could be affected by washouts from spring rains, and both Hells Canyon Wilderness and Recreation Area trails will have tread damage and downed trees from the fire, according to Sweyn Wall, Recreation Staff at the Wallowa Mountain Office of the Wallowa Whitman National Forest (541-426-5546).

“Due to fire activity extending late into 2022, we don’t have a good understanding of specific trail conditions as we move into

the spring,” Wall said. “We do know that hazards for visitors traveling and camping in burned areas tend to increase immediately after fire activity. We want to make sure visitors are aware of that potential and are able to make informed decisions about their trips.

“While increased risks can exist anywhere within the fire perimeter, areas with higher burn severity tend to translate to an increase in hazards,” Wall explained. “These can include damage to trail tread from burned out roots and stumps, an increased number of falling trees, falling rocks and logs – especially on steep slopes, and flash flooding or debris flows. The Forest is working this spring and summer to post signs at trailheads to help raise awareness about these fire-related hazards. We are also pursuing funding to accomplish post-fire rehabilitation that includes trail maintenance over the next several years.”

—JIM AKENSON, OHA NE BOARD DIRECTOR

Snake River spring bear hunters should find green-up in last year’s major burns.



Juniper removal helps wet wildlife's whistles

One of the perennially hot topics east of the Cascades is the speculation on how much water an individual juniper tree might use and how that water use would affect stream flow, spring charge and soil moisture. A lot of land managers have noticed more water in seasonal creeks after juniper removal. In Crook County, the Oregon State University extension agent set out to study the impacts of juniper encroachment and the supposed benefits of juniper removal.

In the Camp Creek paired watershed study, Tim Deboodt identified two adjacent watersheds (approximately 260 acres each) to see if the relationships that were identified prior to treatment would change as a result of juniper removal.

After 11 years of monitoring vegetation, groundwater, spring flow and soil moisture, all trees less than 140 years old were cut in one of the watersheds.

Old growth trees, with rounded tops and deeply folded bark, were left in place.

Analysis of the data showed an increase in deep soil moisture, which moves through the soil and becomes groundwater. One of the wells that went dry each year prior to treatment has not gone dry since the treatment. The number of days in which water was recorded in all wells on the treated property increased an average of 41 days.

The final measure was spring flow, primarily late season flow from mid-July through September. Following the cutting of the trees, spring output increased 3 to 5 gallons per minute during the late season period. The increased late-season flow benefited forage management by making water available for both livestock and wildlife.

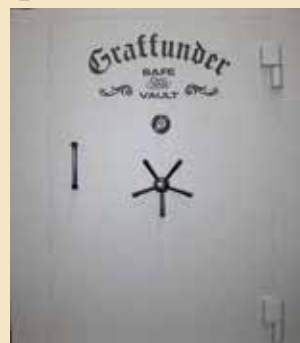
Through juniper removal and re-establishment of historical native shrubs and grasses, precipitation can be captured by improved soil/water filtration, groundwater recharge and stream flow. —GARY LEWIS

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



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Legislative deadlines doom some bills, some still in play

Gun bill package gets Governor, legislator support

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director

Amy@oregonhunters.org

The first major deadlines of the 2023 legislative session have passed and changed the landscape of bills OHA is tracking and engaging. As of April 5, all bills had to have work sessions completed in the policy committee of origin. There are a few exceptions to this deadline, such as the committees on revenue, rules, and all joint committees.

Here's a brief breakdown of bills that died and bills that are still alive to fight another day:

ALIVE: OHA's bill seeking funding for the establishment of in-state testing for Chronic Wasting Disease (HB 2532) and increased sample collection and research was passed out of its original committee with a "do pass" recommendation. It is still in play and awaiting a hearing in the Joint Ways & Means Committee.

ALIVE: OHA's bill seeking a referendum to the 2024 ballot for the people of Oregon to vote on a Constitutional amendment that would protect the right to fish, hunt, harvest, and gather (HJR 5) is still in play and awaiting a work session in the House Rules Committee.

ALIVE: The numerous bills aimed at reforming the Fish & Wildlife Commission make-up have been winnowed into one remaining bill, HB 3086. OHA has been leading the efforts to reform the representative structure from congressional districts to a more regionally equitable model based on the five river basin management areas. The bill has garnered support from the members of the Oregon Sportsmen's Conservation Partnership, Oregon Cattlemen's Association, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Forest Industries Council, Oregon Water Resource Congress, Oregon Seed Council, and Eastern Oregon Counties



LUCY LANGER

OHA's Right to Hunt bill cleared the first hurdle.

Association. In addition, five Tribes have submitted formal support for the bill: Coquille Indian Tribe, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians, Burns Paiute Tribe, and Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians. OHA members provided written testimony in support of HB 3086 and we were able to secure at least five votes in favor of the model, but environmental groups successfully applied pressure to the Governor and Speaker of the House offices. As such, the bill was not allowed to be voted on, but was instead moved to the House Rules Committee. OHA will continue the work of passing substantial reform for the ODFW Commission structure regardless of the committee in which the bill resides.

DEAD: All six bills, in both the House and Senate, that were attempting to bring back the use of hounds for cougar hunting have died. Likewise, the bill that sought to further restrict the use of hounds on bobcat and lynx is also dead.

DEAD: All bills that would have legalized hunting with crossbows have died.

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Governor Kotek announced a package of three bills, HB 2005, HB 2006, and HB 2007, that are endorsed by her office and deemed a priority by the Attorney General's office.

• **HB 2005** would criminalize so-called "ghost guns" and restrict the manufacturing of firearms by individuals. While this bill is aimed at tracking non-serialized firearms, its unfortunate consequences affect hobbyists who build and repair firearms.

• **HB 2006** would restrict the purchase and ownership of certain firearms, specifically semi-automatic firearms, for Oregonians aged 18-21.

• **HB 2007** increases ability of public entities to restrict the ability of individuals to carry concealed weapons. All three bills have been incorporated into HB 2005 through subsequent amendments.

On the Senate side, SB 348 is the most egregious gun control bill to come out of committee. Initially, the bill reads as though it repeals Measure 114 components, but it not only implements all of the 114 components but adds additional restrictions and hurdles. The bill implements the "large capacity" magazine ban retroactive to December 2022, increases the age requirement for a permit-to-purchase to 21, triples the fees, and increases the processing time from 30 days to 60.

Additionally, and most concerning, the latest amendment contains language stipulating that any legal challenge, including a challenge of constitutionality, must be filed in the Circuit Court of Marion County.

OHA has provided testimony in opposition to the entire suite of bills regarding the direct impacts for law-abiding firearms ownership. OHA will continue to engage these bills as the session progresses.

—AMY PATRICK



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OHA is a strong voice for Oregon hunters with a full-time staff working on issues that are important in our state. Join us and support our efforts!

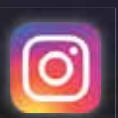
- Leading the fight to protect our hunting heritage.
- Pressing for increased predator management, including wolf damage hunts.
- Advocating for science-based wildlife management.
- Increasing recruitment through our Learn to Hunt Program.
- Leading efforts to combat poaching.
- Enhancing habitat where you live and hunt.
- Safeguarding wildlands and access to hunt them.
- Funding safe-crossing projects to keep wildlife alive.
- Actively representing hunters in Salem.



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BLACK POWDER

By GARY LEWIS

Muzzleloader Elk Redemption

If I could do it all over again, I would have sat for a half hour after the shot.” In the fall of 2017, Andy Maphet and his dad, CJ, were in the elk woods, in their favorite place. It was opening day.

“I just had a group of elk walk through. At first it was a couple of cows and a calf that came through. I started seeing flashes of movement out front and could hear and see a decent group of elk.”

Then Maphet saw the bull. Big. About 55 yards out. Maphet set the rifle in the shooting sticks and snugged the rifle against his shoulder, putting the front bead on the transition of dark and light hair on the neck. When his shot was steady, he squeezed the trigger.

At the shot, a cloud of smoke hung in the air. Maphet knew his dad was close and would walk to the sound.

“In waiting for my dad to get up to me, I walked through the smoke and I could see the bull and a few cows. Alert, the animals moved off, and Maphet saw his bull go with them. Father and son began to track, finding blood.

“Had I waited, the bull might have laid down,” Maphet said later. “We tracked it down the hill and then up the next hill and we started to find more blood where the bull had laid down. Not too long after that they heard two shots almost simultaneously.

“And I knew someone had found my bull. We believe that those bullets were not fired into my bull, but were fired into a tree,” Maphet said later.

“The next day dad went out and crossed an old forest road and found the gut pile and a hide. And, I have to give them credit, they had done a good job cleaning up the meat. And there was only one hole in the hide and it was in the chest.”

It was a light-horned bull, Maphet said. It ended up being a young five-point. The elder Maphet went into their camp and played dumb and talked to the guys and saw the rack.

“My grandpa had a bull taken away from him a long time ago,” Maphet said, “so I knew it could happen.”

It is one of those things a person might have to deal with on an elk hunt on public land. Andy Maphet chalked it up to experience and hoped to learn from it. He drew the tag again in the 2022 season. It was a week before the season that he got his muzzleloader out again and took it to the range on the windiest day of November.

SEEKING REDEMPTION

October of 2022 was hot and dry, but a couple of storms rolled off the Pacific and into the Cascades in early November. The regular rifle elk season kicked off with three to four inches of snow.

Word was that rifle hunters took a number of bulls in the ideal conditions. It was not going to be ideal the next week when the



PHOTOS COURTESY ANDY MAPHET
Andy Maphet of Prineville hunted the whole season and was rewarded with an elk that stepped into a shooting lane at 75 yards.

muzzleloader season kicked off, but the Maphets were excited – Andy, especially, as this was his first opportunity to try to find a bull since he lost the five-point in 2017.

“By their tracks we could see where the elk wanted to be. We took the first two days of the season to check out some spots, including some corridors elk use,” Maphet said. “Monday came and we had some elk move in on us.”

That Monday morning, another hunter walked into their hunt area and bumped a coyote that walked right by. Figuring the area had too much pressure, they rested it on Tuesday and Wednesday. When Thursday came, now the final day of the season, it dawned cold on the snowy, crunchy ground.

The pair decided to stay together on the last day of their hunt. Tracks showed elk had moved through in the last few hours. It was hard to stay warm, Maphet said. Still, he had told himself and told his dad that they would sit till 10 a.m. The temperature was not expected to get above 25 degrees.

“And then at a quarter to 10, I started hearing stuff. At 75 yards out through the trees and limbs and bushes, he could see elk legs. Then more elk legs.

Maphet felt himself shaking. The elk were milling around as if they were going to bed down soon. Then elk began to move in on a different line. Andy’s dad saw the bull and whispered, and pointed.

Andy had the angle, and he saw the bull put its head down. He had an 18-inch gap through which to shoot, the black powder gun up on the sticks. And then the bull stepped into the shooting lane. The fiber optic bead found the crease and Andy squeezed the trigger.

This time the smoke blew away. Andy stood back and gathered powder, poured it down the barrel of his Knight Bighorn – still shaking – followed it with a 300-grain bullet, started it, tamped it, capped the gun. Andy’s dad walked up on the bull, a spike with brow tines. And now it was their turn to do a clean job of the meat, skinning out a bull with only one hole in the hide.

HUNTS TO PLAN FOR

For the 2023 season, ODFW is offering 12 muzzleloader elk hunts. The Cascade Muzzleloader (200M) season has a new time frame, starting Nov. 25 and running through Dec. 1, and additional tags for a total of 990.

The new Catherine Creek (253M) hunt offers a chance at one antlerless elk with a season that runs Nov. 25 to Dec. 3.



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BOWHUNTING

By JASON HALEY

Mule deer draw: Tags to target

Until recently, bowhunters enjoyed general seasons that allowed early-season hunting virtually anywhere and the flexibility to hunt the not-too-shabby late-season in western Oregon. Elk junkies could focus on wapiti, stick a buck if it got in the way, but still hunt the late general deer season if not. That changed in 2021. All eastern Oregon mule deer hunts are a draw now. There are still oodles of virtually guaranteed tags, but now you have to pick a unit and you're stuck there.

We're two years in. What's trending? Are there hunts to target or to avoid? What hunts should applicants make as their first choice or their fifth?

I reviewed 2021 harvest stats, 2023 regs, and spoke to successful and very connected bowhunters. I also reviewed the current draw odds.

If you're thinking more about success filling tags than drawing them, very little jumps out. Thirty-percent success is about as good as it gets. This is bowhunting, after all. Rates are generally up across the board compared to 2018-2020, with a few exceptions. It's hard to say why.

I like the South-Central units. They posted 28-percent success overall. Interstate was 30 percent and Fort Rock was 29. Archers took 77 bucks in Fort Rock. Elk tags aren't controlled in this region (yet), so combo hunts are another plus. The early Keno hunt was also 29 percent. There is plenty of public ground.

The Metolius early season intrigues me. It's the only eastside hunt with more first-choice applicants (299 in 2022) than tags (264) this season. Demand could be from proximity to Bend/Redmond and Portland, but it also offers 66 percent public land with forested wilderness trailheads on the westside to high-desert BLM lands on the eastside and solid deer numbers. Early success was only 20 percent. The late hunt is better and more popular.

The Southeast units reported 28 per-



Interstate is an easy draw on your first two choices and you're hunting bucks like this one taken by Michael Crawford after a morning-long spot-and-stalk.

cent harvest. Steens Mountain produced 12 bucks at 22 percent, but there were only 58 hunters spending just over 6 days on average. I'd hunt it. Although, by all accounts, it's not what it once was, it's still a unique destination for a traditional spot-and-stalk early bowhunt. They killed 91 bucks in Malheur River (16 four-points) and 117 in Silvies for 30 and 29 percent, respectively.

**Nearly all
formerly
general muley
bowhunts are
easy draws on
first choice,
but some are
tough to draw
on second.**

In the Northeast, I'd consider Lookout Mountain. They killed 42 bucks in 2021 for 42 percent success. It's an easy draw without points, but access is limited, and you can expect company in the accessible areas. As Yogi Berra said, "Nobody goes there anymore. It's too crowded."

Controlled hunt stinkers include the Sprague. I saw two of the biggest velvet bucks of my life there while elk hunting. One looked like a satellite dish. Still, 10-percent success and a grand total of two bucks is poor. Starkey is elky, but it was 9 percent success for bucks. Sled Springs wasn't much better. Same deal.

NOW THE DRAW:

Nearly all formerly general eastside units are easy draws – on first choice.

Steens may take a point to draw this season. Metolius might take a point. There are plenty of tags available across the board and there will be leftovers. Be careful, though.

At first glance, there are no worries with the draw. It's 100 percent with 0 points for all new hunts except those mentioned, but the iceberg under the surface is your second choice draw. While your odds are 100 percent for Steens on first choice, they're only 9 percent on second. And the Trout Creeks Traditional that used to go begging on fifth choice is now only less than 1-in-3 chance on second choice.

This means if you have your heart set on a hunt like this, you better make it your first choice. And if you're applying for some coveted opportunity (late Metolius, Hart Mountain, or even a rifle tag) on your first choice, Steens is a lousy second choice because you'll likely draw nothing. But if you do apply for a long-odds second choice, better make sure your third choice is at or near 100 percent, and if not, your fourth or fifth better be. Consult Ron Wold's website (<https://oregontags.com/2022-second-fifth-choice-drawing>) before making your selections. Interstate (80), Fort Rock (70) and Malheur (85) have good second-choice odds.

There are a few hunts you can expect to draw on your fifth choice: East Whitehorse, Columbia Plateau, Fossil, Northside, Heppner, Ukiah, Starkey, Snake River and Pine Creek are 100 percent.

As Yogi once philosophized, 90 percent of drawing a tag is half mental. 🍀

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CAT CALLING

BY MAX ZELLER

Are my eyes deceiving me? I still think that every time, even after 31 successful cougar calling encounters. As usual, I had to blink, do a double-take and refocus when the big cat slunk into my calling set-up. Sure enough, this panther was real, and it was now time to focus on the shot before it realized it was being duped. The 40-yard frontal shot was true in this instance, but not all successful call-in scenarios end with a cat in the bag or even a shot opportunity.

Unlike other hunting pursuits, mountain lions are seldom seen and rarely heard. But don't be discouraged – it can be done. There are now more than 7,000 estimated mountain lions calling Oregon home, so chances of calling one in grows each year as their numbers increase. This is where perseverance and patience are key. Let's explore a few strategies and scenarios to become a more successful catamount caller.

Like most hunts, scouting is key to finding areas mountain lions frequent. But what do you look for? Cougars need to eat. Deer and elk hunters already have a leg up scouting out your favorite haunts. Beavers are also a favorite food source for lions, so swampy areas with a lot of beaver activity are a natural draw. Be on the lookout for fresh cougar sign in the form of tracks in the snow or mud, fresh kills, scratchings, exposed scat and covered territorial scent piles. Trail cameras are valuable scouting tools when set up in known cougar territory, giving you vital information such as size, sex, age class, frequency of use and direction of travel.

Scouting for the upcoming archery elk season along a small bench on a steep hillside of young reprod, I found a very fresh territorial scent pile from a lion. Wild cats normally defecate

on the bare ground with no cover-up, but in the case of marking one's territory, a lion will cover his feces with debris and urinate on the pile. This pile was exceptionally fresh, located in prime elk habitat with equally fresh elk droppings. That same evening, I was overlooking the bench with only my favorite calf-elk call in hand. My lungs were getting winded after nearly an hour of lonesome calf calling, when out of the reprod stepped a 150-pound tom.

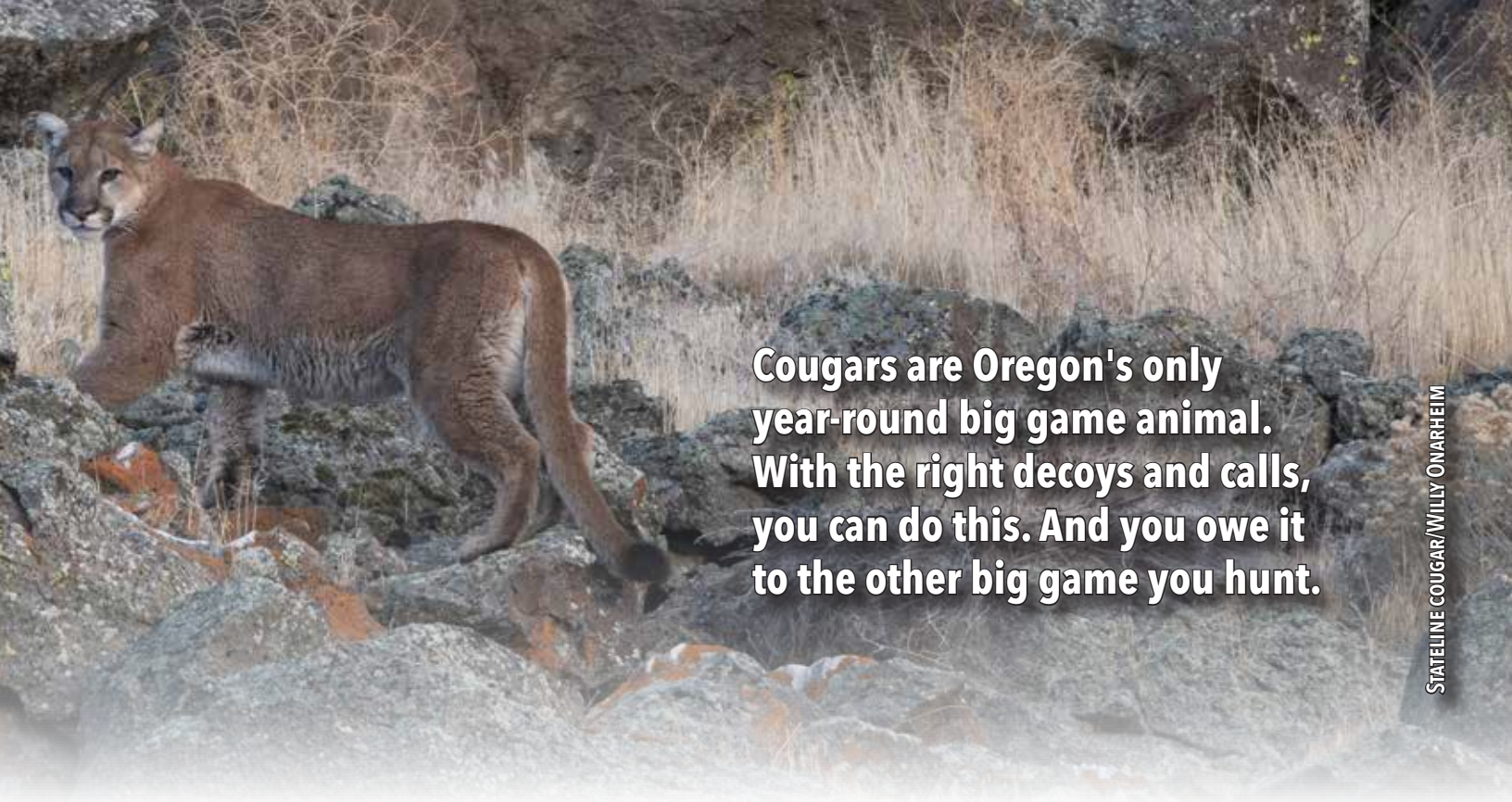
He was cool and calm, slinking toward me, in and out of my sight picture through the young trees. At 60 yards he turned broadside in a small opening, which was his demise.

What calls attract cats? All distress sounds seem to work, even animal vocalizations not indigenous to your area, so with their extensive library of sounds and downloads, electronic callers are invaluable. Don't be afraid to improvise. Personally, I usually call in tandem with my favorite mouth calls and am proficient with all types of distress sounds from birds to big game. Double-calling adds excitement and realism to the calling sequence.

It was early April, and I was scouting some new spring bear territory in the Coast Range, when I stumbled into a small high-mountain, brushy meadow created by beaver activity along the creek that ran through the middle of the bowl. Huge decaying snags from trees of by-gone days littered the flooded grounds, having been the recipients of untold woodpecker and flicker assaults. Walking through the whole park, I couldn't believe the amount of bird activity in the surrounding trees, thinking maybe it was a favorite roost or nesting site. Of even greater interest were several piles of puma scat loaded with feathers from unsuspecting woodpeckers feeding too low on the stumps as the cat was lying in wait. I was back in the bowl the next several evenings

Calling these secretive cats is surreal and addictive, but because of the rarity, all cat sightings make for a successful hunt.





STATELINE COUGAR/WILLY ONARHEIM

Cougars are Oregon's only year-round big game animal. With the right decoys and calls, you can do this. And you owe it to the other big game you hunt.

tucked away in an old-growth root-wad with a commanding view of the entire meadow. I used an electronic call and a mouth call in tandem to belt out woodpecker-in-distress music, and using a feather-on-a-string next to the e-caller. The big tom materialized out of the towering dark timber, but was soon lying dead at my feet.

Mountain lions will breed throughout the year, so cougar vocalizations are also a good calling strategy year-round, as well. Not to take away from their keen sense of smell, but cats live more in a visual and auditory world and depend on their uncanny ability to detect motion—be it food, foe or curiosity. Good cover, camo and remaining still are a hunter's best defense against detection. Move your eyes over your calling area before you slowly follow with your head. Partnering-up can provide added security and an important extra set of eyes. Several years ago, Oregon legalized electronic motion devices to lure in the big cats, and working in tandem with e-callers, attention is diverted from the hunter's position. Pay attention to the natural world around you, as well. Winged scavengers like crows, ravens and magpies can be a good indicator of a predator in the area; they follow the predators in hopes of stealing scraps, and predators follow them to a possible food source.

I was calling on a decommissioned USFS road several years after a thin on a five-acre section. The brushy edges were a haven for bunny activity, which was a magnet for felines as evidenced by the numerous piles of bobcat and cougar scat. I set up my e-caller

and electronic decoy along the edge of the brushy road and took an elevated position backing up against a large maple. I started with a rabbit-in-distress squeal on the e-caller and crow-talk on my mouth call.



The author took this bobcat while calling cougars.

Within 15 minutes, a raven squawked on the forested slope to my right, which in turn triggered a long growl from an irritated cougar. Soon the raven was flying over my head and perched above my e-caller and decoy set-up, talking his head off. Knowing I had a lion within 100 yards, I shut up and switched my e-caller to female cougar growls. The raven continued to scold as the cat moved down the trail to intercept the perceived interloper. I took her down head-on at 40 yards.

How often and in what sequence do you call? That's up to the caller. I've called continuously throughout the session, or intermediately as is more natural, raising and lowering the volume at my discretion. Both have worked. I start off calling the first 15-30 minutes using both e-caller and mouth calls, complementing whatever sound I've chosen on the electronic device (calf/cow, fawn/doe, distressed birds or rodent/scavenger). After the first half-hour, I use only the e-caller and always call each set-up for no less than 90 minutes. Some cats come in relatively fast, but most stage up in cover and assess the situation, sometimes for a half hour or more.

It was October and I was scouting some of my favorite blacktail deer grounds. While hiking out of the area right at last light, I came around a sharp curve in the trail, only to run head-on into a large cougar strolling the opposite way. The next



Forget the notion that Oregon predator calling is strictly a winter pursuit. The author called in this cougar last summer.

morning I was set up overlooking a long stretch of the trail, with my favorite fawn decoy supplying the visual deception as my e-caller belted out continuous fawn-in-distress bawls and I intermittently mouth-called my best rendition of doe-in-distress. Right at the two-hour mark, the large tom from the previous night came in surprisingly fast. I rushed and muffed the shot with a clean miss just over his back.

It's worth mentioning that bobcats, which share many of the same behavioral traits as mountain lions, make winter calling for wild cats even more of an adventure. Remember, bobcats are regulated as a furbearer with a season (Dec. 1 through February), requiring a separate Furbearing Hunting License and "punch card," and a mandatory check-in to ODFW. Calling these secretive cats is surreal and addictive, but because of the rarity, all cat sightings make for a successful hunt and one of the coolest encounters hunters will experience.



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BUZZER-BEATER BEARS

BY SCOTT HAUGEN

The author has taken more than 50 bears, and the 4th quarter is his favorite time to hunt the spring season. Here's why.

Hunting spring bears is like basketball: the later in the season it gets, the better it gets. Last spring I hunted the southern Cascades for bears. I didn't see any bears early, but in the last five days of the season, I saw six bears. They were not what I was looking for, so I didn't fire a shot.

This year I drew the same Southwest tag. Sure, I'll hunt early in the season, hoping to find a boar with a big noggin, but what most excites me is the prospects of the final days of the spring bear season.

No matter what time of year, in order to find consistent success in bear hunting, it comes down to their stomachs. Bears have a short intestinal

tract, so their digestive system is inefficient. Look at fresh bear scat in the fall, when it's full of berries. The fruit is so well intact you could practically take the berries, wash them off and put them in pancakes. But please don't.

Due to a less than efficient digestive system, bears eat a lot. Their life centers around food all summer and fall as they prepare for winter. In spring, they're set on gathering food to recover lost weight from winter. But late in May, something else affects bear behavior: mating season.

The bear rut starts in late May and peaks in June. To find love, boars will travel over 25 miles a day, through the roughest terrain the Cascade Mountains and Coast Range have to offer. Rather than skirting slopes and making travel simple, boars will go straight up and down mountains, gaining and losing elevation, as if it were nothing. Rather than walk, they'll

run – or walk at a quickened pace we could never keep up with – often for miles if they catch scent of a sow in heat.

How good is a bear's nose? When I lived in Alaska's high Arctic, polar bear research was being done in the village. Biologists confirmed it was nothing for a polar bear to smell food from over 10 miles away. Imagine having a sniffer that powerful. We'd hate life.

And while bears might appear lazy and lethargic at times, their strength and stamina are unmatched. I've watched grizzly bears run down caribou on the tundra. Seeing a bear accelerate from 0 to 35 mph in a few strides is mind boggling. I was once charged by a brown bear that covered 50 yards before I

could get the bear spray from my holster. I've seen bears scale vertical shale cliffs, chasing Dall sheep. I've watched them fight off a mother moose to kill the calf. Bears – all bears – are tough and strong beyond our comprehension. But know their food sources and capitalize on the rut, and the chances of filling a tag improve.

As with most males of the animal kingdom, bears are ready to breed well before the females come into heat. This means late May finds boars on the move, searching for receptive sows. Boars cover a lot of ground, and in doing so, get hungry. They'll graze on grass, dig for bulbs, tubers and roots, but they'll also prey on predators. This means calling can be effective.

From Alaska through Canada, around Oregon, Washington and parts of the West, I've called in more bears late in the spring season than any other time. Early fall can be good, too, prior to berry patches ripen-

ing. In late spring, predator sounds, bird distress, fawn bawls, and calf elk cries can all be effective in calling in bears. Does calling always work? Of course not. Just like the buzzer beater shot at the end of the ballgame: you don't know how it's going to turn out, but you never know unless you try. I've had dozens of dry sets in a row, where no bear came in. Then, on the next setup, had three bears approach. One bear I called in popped its jaws and tore up a stump for over an hour before charging out of the brush, where my buddy got a clear shot.

When calling bears, I like being able to see them first, to watch how they react. Sometimes they lift their head and come on the run. Sometimes they don't even acknowledge the sounds. Sometimes they start in, then lose interest. When this happens, keep calling, switching up sounds to keep their interest. Bear cub distress sounds can be good late in the season, as boars will kill cubs to bring a sow into heat.

If you see a sow late in the season, keep watching, for a boar can show up at any time. This is how I killed one of my biggest Oregon bears. First a sow came out of a creek bottom, then a monster boar followed. He was actually trying to mount her when I ended the love game.

A lot of the habitat I hunt is brushy, and if I'm not seeing bears feeding on south-facing slopes where I can call and pull them within shooting range, I'll look for sign. Bear scat is easy to read. It quickly oxidizes and turns black. Take a stick and dig it apart. If the crusted outer layer is hard to break it's likely a couple days old. If it's easy to break through and just under the surface is green, undigested grass, set up and call. That bear could be close.

The bear rut starts in late May and peaks in June.





Big bears have big paws, as this one shows, with a .45-70 cartridge for scale.

I hear a lot of hunters say, “The bear’s been eating meat, you can tell by the black scat.” Dig through it and you’ll likely see it’s not rotting flesh, rather grass. It’s like the wet grass that collects on your lawn mower this time of year. Within hours it turns black, and you can smell it as it breaks down.

I also look for bear tracks. If it’s a big track, one where the front paw measures 5 inches or more across, I’ll follow it as far as I can. Then I’ll either set up and glass the area, sometimes for hours, or call. If the tracks head into a bowl pocked by grassy

meadows, I’ll glass. If the area is lacking food, I’ll call. It’s all about their stomachs and hunger levels.

Just like Game 7 of the NBA Finals, or the final minutes of the 4th quarter, anything can happen in the bear woods late in the season. And the later in the game it gets, the better chance you have of making a game-winning shot.



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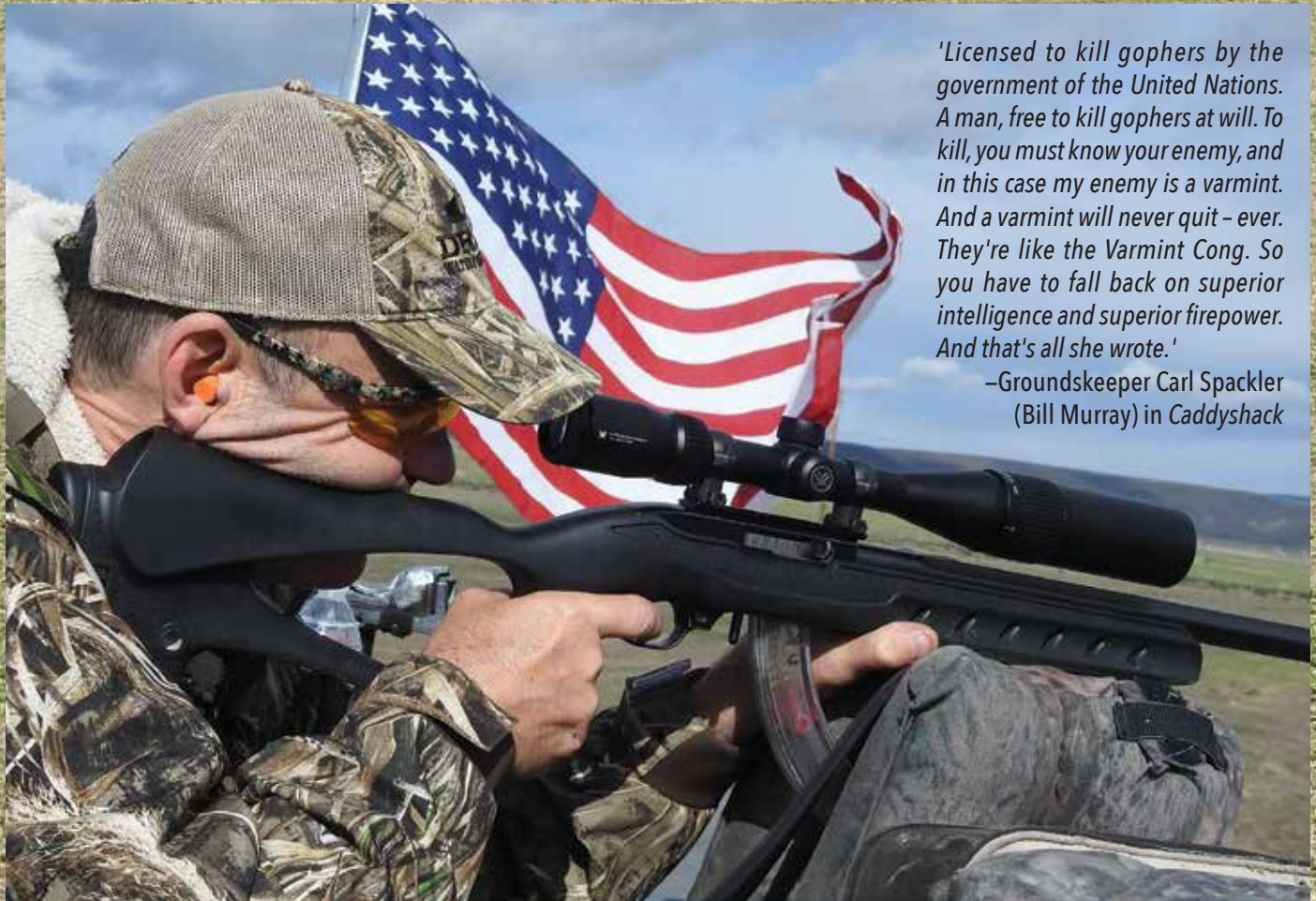
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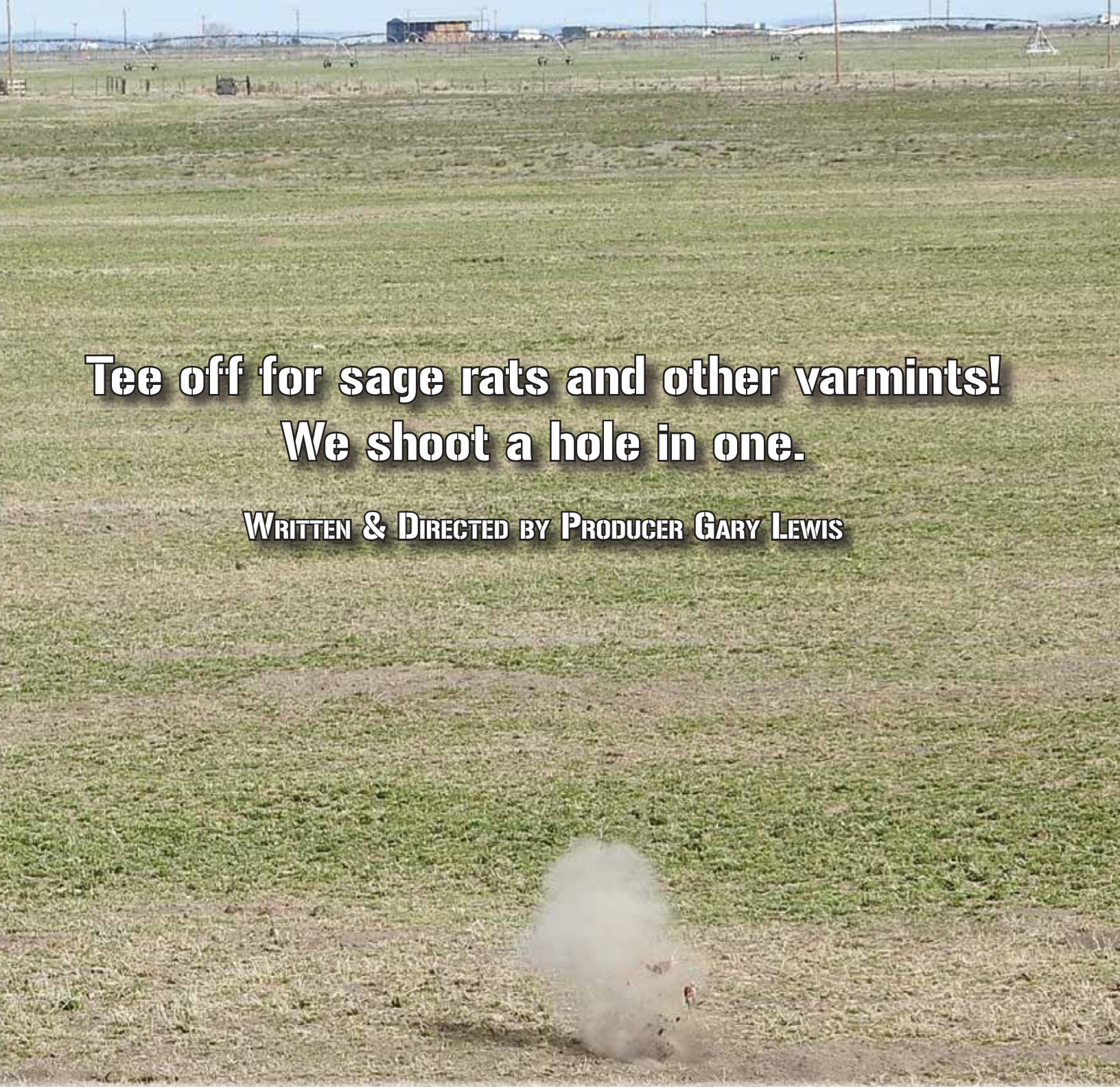
*—Groundskeeper Carl Spackler
(Bill Murray) in Caddyshack*

It's a Cinderella story. Outta nowhere. In 1983, an upstart groundskeeper of an organization called the Oregon Hunters Association, stood in the ornamental flowerbed of Salem politics. Carl Spackler described it the best... "And this unknown, comes out of nowhere, to lead the pack. He's about 455 yards away, he's gonna hit about a 2-iron, I think... Oh, he got all of that." What are we talking about?

This momentous time we find ourselves at is the year 2023, the 40-year anniversary of OHA, which happens to coincide with the 43-year anniversary of *Caddyshack*, the movie, which is convergent this spring with the US Open and the PGA tournament and the annual shooting of sage rats, rock chucks and badgers in eastern Oregon.

Everyone knows the game of golf originated in Scotland. Or did it? Here is

what the USGA Museum says: "considerable evidence suggests that the game derived from stick-and-ball games that were played in France, Germany and the Low Countries." Part of the evidence is the etymology of the word golf, which came from the Old Scots "golfe" and the medieval Dutch word "kolf." That old word actually meant "club," and the Dutch played on ice, while the Scots played on park lands. The game of golf is also supposed



Tee off for sage rats and other varmints! We shoot a hole in one.

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY PRODUCER GARY LEWIS

to be descended from a game the Romans played called paganica. There is, in fact, a golf course in Wisconsin called Paganica, which was established in 1961, the same year Barbie got a boyfriend. And what did Ken have? He had golf clubs.

IT'S IN THE HOLE

What we really want to do, if we're honest, is shoot a hole-in-one. I confess, I have played golf, but I have never, ever, as they say in the parlance, shot a hole-

in-one. I have though, shot a badger in a hole. It happened last spring, when I had the distinct feeling we were going to see a badger while we were shooting sage rats. I even told the guys at breakfast. "We are probably going to see a badger today," I said. "And if I see it, I am going to tell you about it, and if you see it, I will let you shoot it. But if you don't see it when I point it out, then I am going to shoot it." Well, that's what happened. I shot a hole in one.

With the Ruger .204. And I put gloves on to pull it out of the hole. And the farmer was happy.

A VARMINT WILL NEVER QUIT, EVER

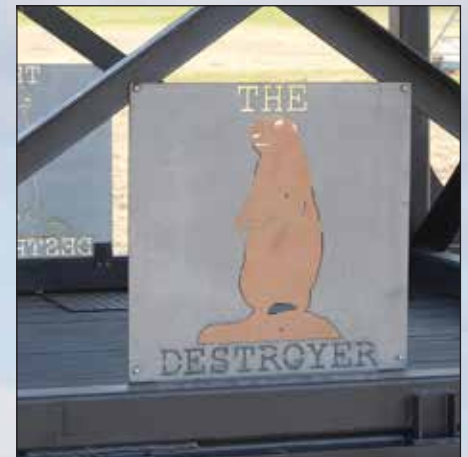
Lay a map of Oregon on a table and look east of the Cascades. Sage rats in shootable numbers can be found from Poe Valley, east of Klamath Falls, way out past Bly and Lakeview to Steens and beyond. Any field of green from Paisley to Christmas Valley to Bend, including all the golf



Some golf tournaments have shotgun starts. A good rat shooting tournament should have a rifle start, like this one aboard a raised platform at Diamond A Guides, owned by Justin and Nikki Aamodt of Hines.



Any firearm is the right weapon for sage rats.



'I have to laugh, because I've outsmarted even myself. My enemy, my foe, is an animal. In order to conquer the animal, I have to learn to think like an animal. And, whenever possible, to look like one. I've gotta get inside this guy's pelt and crawl around for a few days.' —Carl Spackler



GUNGA-GALUNGA

You will likely miss a few rodents this spring. Take a tip from groundskeeper Carl Spackler and the Dalai Lama and say gunga, gunga galunga, which is the enlightened way to peacefully express dismay after hitting an errant golf shot.

Wherever varmint shooting takes you this season, you, as an OHA member, are carrying a proud tradition. These 40 years later, OHA is an organization of 26 chapters and 10,000 conservation-minded sportsmen, and fields an award-winning magazine and calendar. OHA employs a year-round lobbyist, a conservation staff, and a field director to advocate for our membership's goals and support our positions on key issues. We are a force for wildlife, habitat and hunters.

So, as Carl Spackler once commented, we got that going for us, which is nice.



For a signed copy of Bob Nosler Born Ballistic, send \$29.95 (free shipping) to Gary Lewis Outdoors, P.O. Box 1364, Bend, OR 97709 or visit garylewisoutdoors.com



Who needs the country club when you've got a wall tent, hot springs and great grub?



Badgers won't put the dent in the sage rat and rock chuck populations that a platoon of plinkers can, and the holes they leave are leg-breakers.



Like the movie Caddyshack, we close with an unscathed varmint dancing to Kenny Loggins' classic – "I'm all right... don't nobody worry 'bout me..."

MAY MADNESS

By GARY LEWIS



It's the second half of the season, and we go hard in the hardwoods.

In April, we forget all about March Madness because that's when turkey season starts. If there's anything more exciting, it's the month of May and the best turkey hunting of the year. Only one thing makes it better, and that's when your favorite basketball team is in the NBA playoffs.

Let's hear it in the announcer's voice: "Nine-tenths of a second left. A three wins the series. It's Lillard! He got the shot off. And the Blazers win the series for the first time in 14 years!"

It was a walk-off "3" to win. It was May 2, 2014, and no one who saw it would ever forget it. Lillard could feel it. Coach Stotts said later LaMarcus Aldridge was the first option, but "he (Lillard) lives for those moments." Lillard was calling for the ball on the out-of-bounds play, jogging the three-point arc, clapping his hands, now with the ball, now with the jumper. Damian Lillard sends the Blazers to the second round of the playoffs.

Twenty-two days later I was on a hill north of Eugene with teammate Troy Rodakowski and I was about to make the longest shot of my life. We started the pre-game warm-up at 4 a.m., and had been up and down the hills now for hours.

The sun marched across the sky, shadows shifted and the temperature climbed. Everywhere we saw poison oak, its leaves oily and new, and wildflowers in bloom.

We had traded baskets with a big old tom for more than two hours. The game was winding down. We had been watching a blacktail buck while we called and listened to a gobbler we couldn't quite get eyes on. That buck was watching something. We guessed it was our gobbler. If the buck was watching the turkey, that was

our clue to the bird's position. I called a time-out and we discussed the play.

THE LONG BOMB

I had long range capability. My load was a 3-inch turkey round with No. 6s. The shotgun was a semi-auto Weatherby with Tru-Glo front and rear sights. Up front I had a special screw-in turkey choke that held a tight pattern past 50 yards.

The clock started ticking again and we made our move. If the gobbler wanted us to come to him, we'd take him two-on-one.

Both of us were equipped for the long bomb. If Troy had the ball, he could do the pump-fake and step-back three. It was going to come down to one of us feeling it at the moment, asking for the ball with the clock running down.

We guessed he was a little more than 100 yards away. We slipped from tree to tree, scanning for movement. Now we were in the shadows, and for a moment, the turkey was visible for the first time, in the sunlight, headed for a wall of brush. He slowed for a look back and I took two-and-a-half

steps, shouldered the gun, front bead more than a foot over the gobbler's red noggin, and fired.

DOWNING THE SPURS

The bird went down on its chin. Rodakowski got to him first while I paced the shot. Sixty-five yards with No. 6s. That's more than two NBA courts back to back. Up in the brush, I admired the big gobbler, its seven-inch beard and inch-long spurs.

The gobbler's foot had been broken and had healed crooked. It was no wonder he played close to the basket. He expected the game and the hens to come to him. Now that big turkey was headed to the dinner table, and our team was headed to the second round.

AVOID A TECHNICAL FOWL

In almost 40 seasons in this league, I've noticed a run-and-gun approach can work during May Madness, but it opens the hunter up to getting called for a technical fowl. That's what I call a gobbler or a hen that spots a hunter on the move.

Get called for a technical fowl, and you are going to sit on the bench. To avoid a technical fowl, I plan to hunt as much as I can from one good spot, set up in a brushed-in hide or tucked inside my ground blind. And on every hunt, I wear thin camo gloves and a full face mask. We move our hands more than any other part of our body and it's a dead giveaway without gloves.

HIT THE HARDWOOD

When looking for a bird that will come to the call in the second half of the season, think about what other hunters are doing and do the opposite. Look for pockets of habitat that hold turkeys, places other hunters drive by or overlook. Don't be afraid to stop and talk to a landowner. If the birds are making a nuisance of themselves, there's a good chance you can get permission on the property.

Turkeys tend to roost in tall firs or pine trees where they can see a long ways. When the sun is up, they bomb down out of the branches and often work their way into grassy meadows and small stands of oak trees. Those acorns on the ground are a magnet.

TRAVELING CALLS

There are huntable populations of turkeys in easy driving range of any hunter in the state. Sometimes I'll get a call like this, "Hey, Gary, there's a lot of turkeys in so-and-so's yard outside of (Eugene or Keno or Dayville) and if you can be here in the morning, we can put a hunt on them." That's a traveling call.

Going by the numbers, Oregon's best turkey habitat is in the southwest corner of the state. Over the last few years, the top

In the post-game show, Troy Rodakowski admitted he wouldn't play this game if it weren't for the fans.



IRROY RODAKOWSKI

After almost 10 hours of coaxing, the author anchored this bird with a last-ditch 65-yard shot.

producer in the spring season is the Rogue Unit with an annual take of over 500 birds. The Applegate and the nearby Evans Creek are also in Oregon's top 5.

North on Interstate 5, the freeway takes the hunter into the west side's second best bet. The Melrose Unit sees more than 700 hunters each season and at an average 3.34 hunter days with a shooting percentage over 50 percent. Next in line is the Willamette Unit, another turkey producing powerhouse.

Over on the east slope, the White River attracts the most turkey hunters in the state, about 1,700 each season, turning out a harvest of about 400 birds.

After the White River, the Northside, Sled Springs, Heppner, Mt. Emily, Ochoco and Fossil are the top eastside units.

One thing to keep in mind is bigger units can post higher numbers than smaller ones by virtue of the real estate available to hunt. A savvy hunter can focus on pockets of good ground in units like the Imnaha on the east side and, west of the Cascades, in the Dixon, Alsea, Siuslaw, Trask and Powers units.

THE DOUBLE TEAM

Suspicion keeps wild turkeys alive, but it doesn't take an expert caller to get a gobbler in range. One of the best ways to team up on a bird is to cut the distance and put the shooter 25 to 50 yards ahead of the caller. The bird wants to show itself, but is not likely to charge right in to soft yelps. Instead, it wants to gobble and strut and drag its wingtips in the dirt and let the girls flock to him.

Set up inside a tree line with the gobbler coming on and the caller making sweet coaxing hen sounds behind. Orient the muzzle of the gun toward the bird so that when it shows itself there is a minimum of movement necessary to put the bead on its head.

THREE PERSONAL FOWLS

Oregon's spring season runs April 15 to May 31, with a daily bag limit of one male turkey or a turkey with a visible beard. Hunters are allowed three tags, each allowing harvest of one turkey. In this game, you want to fowl out!

GREAT FANS

One of Troy Rodakowski's favorite end-of-game moves is to zip-tie a spread-out turkey fan to an old arrow shaft. The fan makes a fast-deploying decoy that will stop any gobbler as soon as he comes into view. Just stab it in the ground. It's like having a guy post up and set a screen while you call for the ball.

In the post-game show, Troy Rodakowski admitted he wouldn't play this game if it weren't for the fans. "We have the best fans in all of turkey hunting."



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

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Each year, almost 6,000 drivers in Oregon are involved in a collision with deer, elk, bears, or other wildlife species. Working together with partners like OHA, we're reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions through projects that help wildlife move safely under or over busy roadways. Funding for these efforts comes in part from the sale of the Watch for Wildlife specialty license plate.

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TACTACAM TRAIL CAM CONTEST

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

WINNER:

This coyote knows how to get a head in life. OHA member Joey McCain of St. Paul wins a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for his mid-November photo capture of a coyote near Colton.



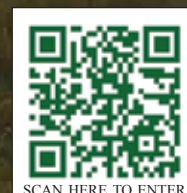
HONORABLE MENTION:

OHA member Matthew Hedgpeth of Baker City earns honorable mention and an OHA hat for this shot of a bull elk enjoying some shade in Baker County last summer.



A bobcat with attitude. Jeff Studnick of Scio scores an OHA hat for this snap of a Linn County kitty on the hunt in the Santiam Unit.

OHA members may submit up to 2 trail cam photos per month showing the date stamp, taken within the last year. Good luck!



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White River Black-tail REGIONAL PROJECT

June 10-11, 2023



REGISTER:

Scan the QR code, register as a volunteer, and we will be in touch with more details



REGIONAL PROJECT LED BY
STATE OHA
HOODVIEW CHAPTER
MID-COLUMBIA CHAPTER



WIN: Volunteers will be entered to win prizes from Sig Sauer, Benchmade, Work Sharp, Napier Outdoors and the grand prize, a Howa Carbon Fiber 6.5 PRC with Nikko Stirling Optics and Buffalo River Bi-pod donated by Legacy Sports International

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Fell & buck trees to increase ungulate forage
Build buck and pole fencing to protect aspen
Remove invasive weeds

WHERE:

White River Wildlife Area
Camping for the event will be held along Happy Ridge/Badger Ck Rd on White River Wildlife Area
Campsite Coordinates: 45.27322 -121.27789



CONTACT:

Tyler Dungannon
(541) 778-1976
td@oregonhunters.org



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- Wildlife management and conservation
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- Outdoor safety

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) 947-6002
Email: hunter.ed@odfw.oregon.gov





C. Oregon safe crossing projects moving forward

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

The Bend to Suttle Lake Wildlife Passage Initiative (B2S) is a new central Oregon coalition of state and federal agencies, nonprofit partners, and community leaders working to improve wildlife passage and motorist safety along Highway 20 between Bend and Suttle Lake. OHA has been a partner in a number of these coalitions across the state, and the B2S coalition is another example of how we can help protect mule deer and elk in a key area of our state.

Highway 20 between Bend and Suttle Lake has the highest density of mule deer and elk wildlife-vehicle collisions in the entire state. From Bend, this section of highway travels through the communities of Tumalo, Plainview, Cloverdale, Sisters, Tollgate, and Black Butte Ranch. Individuals traveling and commuting along this stretch of Highway 20 face an increased risk of colliding with large animals, posing a serious risk to human life, property and wildlife.

Currently the coalition is seeking grant funding to complete a feasibility study to identify priority wildlife crossing site locations, assess site conditions, and evaluate crossing designs and configurations along the 35-mile stretch of Highway 20 between Bend and Suttle Lake. The feasibility study will include a more detailed planning and structural design process for a wildlife crossing site near Indian Ford Creek at the base of Black Butte. Oregon Department of Transportation carcass collection data and the recently completed Oregon Conservation and Mapping Project have identified this site as a priority location for wildlife passage in the area, particularly for mule deer and elk.

CENTRAL OREGON/RYAN HOEFF



OHA staff are actively engaged in advocating for and facilitating safe crossing projects in Oregon.

Overcrossings in SW Oregon hit the fast lane

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

OHA conservation staff and other representatives for the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition recently met with ODOT Transportation Project Manager Dan Roberts and 17 additional ODOT staffers to officially kick off project implementation for two wildlife overpasses on Interstate 5 south of Ashland. ODOT outlined a progressive schedule that aims to complete all survey, design and engineering work for the overcrossings and fencing by the end of 2024.

Survey work will begin on the overcrossing structures soon, likely within the next 4-6 weeks at the Mariposa Preserve (Mile Post 1.4), and Barron Creek (Mile Post 8.7) thereafter. ODOT will have a number of traffic challenges to tackle, ranging from relatively simple issues, such as lighting in the tunnels, to very complex questions, such as whether the structures should be wide enough to allow for additional traffic lane construction in the future.

OHA conservation staff have established a role on the overpass project design team to ensure these passage structures efficiently facilitate movement and safe passage of ungulates and other wildlife. The next progress meeting will likely be in May.

OHA continues to fight CWD

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

With the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) just across the border in Idaho in the fall of 2021, OHA and ODFW have ramped up efforts in Oregon to try to prevent and detect the disease.

Previous planning and legislation in Oregon allowed ODFW to set up mandatory check stations and develop procedures for testing Oregon's deer and elk, and also prevent a potentially infected animal that was harvested out of state from contaminating our local wildlife.

Check stations and sampling really began in earnest last fall. More than 2,600 samples have been taken from harvested and salvaged deer and elk in Oregon since July 1, 2022. The good news is that there have been no detections of CWD in Oregon.

This is only the beginning, though.

Early detection is key in minimizing the impacts to our deer and elk herds. OHA has introduced legislation (HB 2532) to help boost the testing of samples collected here. Currently, all samples are sent to Colorado for analysis. Because other states are doing the same thing, samples get backlogged and results are slow to get reported.

Having an in-state testing facility at Oregon State University will expedite our results from testing and allow faster responses from ODFW if CWD is detected in Oregon.

OHA comments about public land solar farms


With Oregon's mandates for clean renewable energy, planning for and development of renewable energy facilities is accelerating in our state, including BLM lands. OHA recently provided comments on the BLM's "Western Solar Plan" expansion into Oregon outlining specific areas and places that solar farms should not be allowed on BLM lands to protect hunting access and habitat. OHA is also tracking and commenting on various legislative proposals to address renewable energy siting and processes in the current legislative session. —*MIKE TOTEY*

OHA supports BLM bid for John Day River land

OHA has sent a letter of support to BLM for its possible acquisition of an area known as McDonald's Ferry in the lower John Day River area, where public access is scarce. The acquisition would add over 4,000 acres of public lands that will improve access to that section of the river, connect existing BLM parcels, and ensure the area is managed for wildlife and public access. —*MIKE TOTEY*


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OHA pays out \$3,900 in rewards in 10 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued 12 reward checks to informants in 10 cases totaling \$3,900 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: Unlawful Take/Possession of Elk x 4, Unlawful Take/Possession of Elk by a juvenile, Aiding/counseling in a wildlife crime, exceeding bag limit of Dungeness Crab, Unlawful Take of Crab x 2, Unlawful take of female Crab, No hunting license x 2, Waste of a Game Animal, Take/Possession of Antlerless Deer x 2, Hunting in a Closed Season.



Get your 2024 Gun Calendar now at oregonhunters.org/store

Latest Gun Calendar winners announced

Winners of the 2023 Gun Calendar Raffle are posted every Wednesday on OHA's Facebook page and website. Here are the February and March winners:

- Springfield Hellcat 9mm, Christina O'Hearn, Albany
- Sig Sauer Cross .308, Christine Baird, Eugene
- Howa Yote package .223, Pete Sanok, South Beach
- Henry Big Boy .44 Mag, Joe Morse, Unity
- Springfield 1911 45 ACP, Ted Helmer, Silverton
- Tikka T3x Lite Rifle .30-06, Jim Slawter, Prineville
- Howa M1500 .270 Win, Bob Maderos, Forest Grove
- Ruger American .308 Win, Albert Wilder, Chiloquin
- Browning A-Bolt III .300WM, Richard Seiple, Sisters

Sales of the 2024 OHA Gun Raffle Calendar began in February, at sports shows, participating OHA banquets, and by calling the OHA state office at 541-772-7313 or visiting OHA's website at: www.oregonhunters.org/store



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CHAPTER NEWS

PHOTOS BY ERIC BROWN

Chapters wrap up banquets, head afield for wildlife projects

BAKER

CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6 p.m., Oregon Trail Restaurant.

2023 Fundraiser: Canceled

BEND

REX PARKS 541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter

Chapter Meetings: Please see newsletter for date and time.

2023 Fundraiser: Held March 11.

Update: May 13 we will need sawyers and spotters to help reduce trees around the meadow on EFM property. Join us for Youth and Family Outdoor Day on June 3 and the All Hands All Brands project in the Ochocos June 23-25.

BLUE MOUNTAIN

KEVIN MARTIN 541-969-6744

ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com

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

2023 Fundraiser: April 29, Pendleton Convention Center, 541-231-4384.

Update: Be sure to get your tickets for the Hunters Special Raffle with a chance to win a cow elk hunt on private property.

CAPITOL

ERIK COLVILLE 503-851-8409

ohacapitol.webs.com

2023 Fundraiser: Held April 22.

Update: The Westside (Detroit) Habitat Project will be held on May 19-21, contact Joe Ricker jricke1@ix.netcom.com or 503-910-2913.

CLATSOP COUNTY

TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

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

2023 Fundraiser: Canceled

COLUMBIA COUNTY

JORDAN HICKS 949-533-7271

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 25.

CURRY

MATT THOMPSON 530-351-5847

mandmthompson02@yahoo.com

Chapter Meetings: 1st Wednesday, Double D's Café in Gold Beach, 6:30 p.m.

2023 Fundraiser: Our Beast Feast on March 11 was a sold-out success.

Update: May 20 youth firearms safety and range day, Curry County public range; free lunch and safety equipment for all youths.

EMERALD VALLEY

TONY HILSENDAGER 541-729-0877

EmeraldOHA@live.com

<https://ohaemeraldvalley.webs.com>

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

2023 Fundraiser: July 29 family fundraising event.

Update: We are changing things up a bit with our new fundraiser on July 29. Stay tuned for details.

HOODVIEW

KELLY PARKMAN 503-706-7481

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

Chapter Meetings: April 13 General Chapter Meeting – ODFW Black Bear Plan.

2023 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 25.

Update: White River Blacktail Regional

Join OHA for the White River Blacktail project June 10-11 and All Hands, All Brands in the Ochocos June 23-25.



OHA Bend Chapter teamed up with Ochoco National Forest on March 21 to work on the Monner Springs fence, which will keep cattle out of a narrow draw that holds prime habitat for game birds and other wildlife. Last year, Bend OHA members rebuilt a guzzler there that had been damaged by fire.

Project will take place on June 10-11. See Page 40. Help enhance wildlife habitat on White River Wildlife Area. <https://oregon-hunters.org/regional-projects/white-river-black-tail-regional-project/>

The White River Youth Turkey Clinic was held April 1.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

CLIFF PEERY 541-761-3200

peery@charter.net

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held March 18.

Update: Josephine County Chapter Youth Day will be held June 3, JoCo Sportsman Association (gun range).

KLAMATH

ALLAN WIARD 541-884-5773

ohaklamath.webs.com

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held April 29.

Update: Our annual Hart Mountain campout is scheduled for May 20-21; call 541-891-2456.

LAKE COUNTY

LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 5 p.m., VFW Hall, Lakeview.

2023 Fundraiser: May 20, Lake County Fairgrounds.

Update: Our chapter is helping with the second burn planting in the Hope & Habitat Project.

LINCOLN COUNTY

TODD THOMPSON 541-270-2393

tjaz@charter.net

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 6 p.m. meeting, dinner 5:30, Rogue Brewing Public House on the Bayfront, Newport.

SPRING YOUTH EVENTS

April 29: OHA Pioneer Chapter Spring Youth Day, 503-936-4718

May 6: OHA Tioga Chapter Youth Day, 541-267-2577

May 20: OHA Curry youth firearms safety & range day, 530-351-5847

June 3: OHA Bend Chapter Youth & Family Day, 541-480-7323;
OHA Josephine County Chapter Youth Day, 541-218-2836

June 3-4: OHA Tualatin Valley Chapter Youth Event at Hagg Lake, 503-453-0521

June 24: OHA Lake County Chapter Youth Day, 541-417-2983

Upcoming Event: Pint night on June 13.

Update: President Todd Thompson has volunteered to become certified as a Learn to Hunt Program Instructor and would like to ask others to do so as well.

MALHEUR COUNTY

BRUCE HUNTER 208-573-5556

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

2023 Fundraiser: TBD

Update: Snake River Sportsman's Clay Shoot May 13. Chapter Youth Clay Shoot Aug. 12 from 9-12 with lunch included.

MID-COLUMBIA

CHUCK ASHLEY 541-993-8076

Chuckashley4120@gmail.com

Quarterly Chapter Meetings: 6 p.m., ODFW's screen print shop on Klindt Drive, The Dalles.

2023 Fundraiser: TBD

Update: White River Blacktail Regional Project will take place on June 10-11. See Page 40. Help enhance wildlife habitat on White River Wildlife Area. <https://oregonhunters.org/regional-projects/white-river-black-tail-regional-project/>

The White River Youth Turkey Clinic was held April 1.

MID-WILLAMETTE

JOHN TACKE 541-231-8165

john@visitnrc.com

<https://www.facebook.com/midwillamettechapteroregonhuntersassociation>

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m.,

meeting 6 p.m., Old Armory, Albany.

2023 Fundraiser: Held April 15.

Update: Thank you to our meeting speaker, Jennifer Beathe, a forester at Starker Forests. She spoke on how to pass on a family hunting tradition.

OCHOCO

JOHN DEHLER, III 541-815-5817

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 18.

Updates: Thanks to all who made OHA's first fundraiser of 2023 a big success!

PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 503-266-2900

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held March 4.

Update: Pioneer Chapter co-hosted the booth at the Pacific NW Sportsman's Show where we gave out OHA information and sold 110 Gun Calendar Raffle tickets.

REDMOND

K.C. THRASHER 541-419-7215

OHA line 541-383-1099

oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 25.

Update: All Hands, All Brands for Public Lands will be constructing Beaver Dam Analogs on June 24-25. Please join us!

ROGUE VALLEY

RICKY CLARK 530-905-1186

Chapter Meetings: Eagles, 2nd Thursday, 6 p.m. social/dinner, 7 p.m. presentation.

2023 Fundraiser: June 3, Ashland Hills Inn.

TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Monday, 7 p.m., OR Fish & Wildlife 4907 3rd St., Tillamook.

2023 Fundraiser: May 6, Tillamook County Fairgrounds, 503-801-3779 or 503-842-7153.

TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

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



LAST CALL FOR OHA'S LAST 2023 BANQUETS

Apr. 29	Blue Mountain	541-231-4384
Apr. 29	Klamath	541-884-5773
May 6	Tillamook	503-801-3779
May 6	OHA 40th State Convention, Chinook Winds Casino, featuring A&H Statewide Elk tag auction,	541-772-7313
May 20	Lake County	541-219-0614
June 3	Rogue Valley	541-773-8736

2023 Fundraiser: Held April 1.

Update: Tioga Chapter Youth Day will be held May 6 at Myrtle Point Gun Club.

TUALATIN VALLEY

TONY KIND 503-290-6143

oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held March 25.

Update: Tualatin Valley Chapter co-hosted the booth at the Pacific NW Sportsman's Show where we gave out OHA information and sold 100 Gun Calendar Raffle tickets.

UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held April 8.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

2023 Fundraiser: Held March 11. We sold the state mountain goat auction tag for \$61,000. Our online auction was another hit.

YAMHILL COUNTY

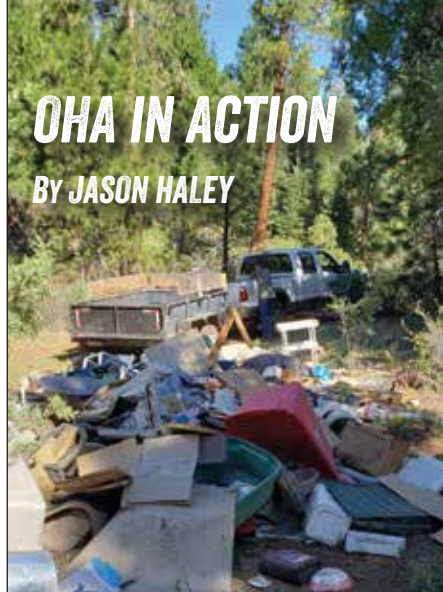
ANDY BODEEN 503-490-2489

ohayamhill.com

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

2023 Fundraiser: Held March 18.





OHA IN ACTION

BY JASON HALEY



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA HAMMOND

OHA's trash-pickup efforts help preserve free public hunting access to Green Diamond forestland.

Batting cleanup for public access

Klamath OHA project keeps timberland open to hunting

My pop was a wizard at securing permission to hunt private land. I was always amazed. He'd be sitting on the porch drinking Pepsi with the landowner and name dropping within 10 minutes of first contact. Post-hunt he'd help fix a fence or return a lost cow or drop-off a cord of wood. Sometimes he'd clean and deliver ducks or pheasants

or bring backstrap. He found and secured places for me.

Of course, much of the private timberland was just open to the public in those days. Nobody thought twice about it. That's not the case now. For several years, OHA has taken this same good-neighbor access concept to the statewide level by cleaning up Green Diamond Resource Company land on behalf of all Oregon hunters.

Green Diamond has been hit particularly hard by equipment vandalism and dumping. It's common to find abandoned vehicles, RV's, household furniture and appliances and other garbage scattered throughout multiple dump sites. Despite an existing Access & Habitat agreement with ODFW, the company has considered eliminating public access. In fact, it closes gates in certain areas for most of the year now prior to hunting season. That's where the OHA Klamath Chapter comes in.

Secretary Christina Hammond and other members collaborate with the Klamath County Landfill for garbage fee waivers, Rogue Klamath Transfer to provide trucking to the Dry Creek Landfill in Medford, Waste Management for two free, large roll-off containers, Basin Tire (for tire pick-up) and Bill Sholtes' Klamath Sportsman's Park for use of their property as a staging site for the containers.

OHA's Green Diamond cleanup had 33 volunteers of all ages totaling 134 volunteer hours last year. Volunteers used their own pickups and trailers, rakes, and other tools. Hammond noted that one of the head guys for Green Diamond participated and was very appreciative of all the volunteers. The company will also provide gate keys

to volunteers who agree to look for trash.

Green Diamond is a fifth-generation, family-owned forest products company. It's one of the five largest in the U.S. managing forests in nine states. It was originally founded as Simpson Logging Company in 1890. It now has more than 375 employees and five primary businesses, making biofuels and renewable energy, community grants, projects, and scholarships. Their Oregon timberlands are scattered throughout several hunt units, including large blocks in the Keno, Klamath Falls, Interstate, and Fort Rock areas, and are shown on ODFW's Hunting Access Map, the OnX Hunt app and other sources.

I've personally enjoyed days afield on Green Diamond land chasing deer, elk, antelope and birds. After failing to secure permission on other properties, it feels so good to enter without a fuss — after reading the signs at the gate, of course.

In an access landscape that is increasingly difficult for hunters, the Klamath Chapter/Green Diamond relationship stands out and provides hope. This and similar models can be used elsewhere.

Cheers to the numerous OHA volunteers and Green Diamond professionals helping to preserve our heritage.

This year's calendar shows the OHA-Green Diamond cleanup on June 3. Former OHA State President and Mule Deer Foundation Regional Director Ken Hand will be organizing. Ken grew up hunting some of these areas and plans on involving OSP and Green Diamond resources to identify dumps in advance this year to make the most use of time. Volunteers from other chapters are needed; call Ken at 541-281-2224.



Volunteers are needed for this year's project on June 3.

Basin Tire accepts a ridiculous quantity of dumped tires collected by tireless volunteers.

Your trophy is waiting...
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ASK ODFW: HOW DOES THE CONTROLLED HUNT DRAW WORK?

MAY 15 APPLICATION DEADLINE. Each application is assigned a unique random 7-digit number.

CORRECT APPLICATION BY MAY 25. After this date, applications and their 7-digit numbers are locked.

SEED NUMBER SELECTION. Members of the public draw 7 seed numbers for each hunt series at ODFW HQ (May 26 this year); numbers posted in lobby and online. Hunters can see their application # in account.

TESTING. With seed number and application numbers locked, ODFW staff begin testing the draw for each series and manually reviewing results to make sure there are no errors in the process or the code. Each draw complies to certain business rules that factor in party size, non-resident quotas, landowner apps, and more.

THE DRAW. Each hunt series has a separate draw in this automated process that takes just a few minutes. The first 75% of tags are awarded to those first-choice applications with the most preference points starting with the application number closest to the seed number. It's not just how close you are but if your number is in the right direction that counts—the application with the next highest number is awarded next. (E.g. if the seed number starts with a 7 and your application starts with a 6, the draw will award tags to those starting with 8, 9, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 before it gets to yours.)

So every first choice hunter has a chance to draw, preference points don't matter for the remaining 25% of tags awarded. These go randomly to first-choice hunters, again beginning with the application number closest to the seed number and then the next highest number. Once all first-choice applicants draw the tag, the draw begins awarding second choice applicants.

JUNE 12 - PUBLISH DRAW RESULTS. Tags are available for purchase same day as are reports about draw (in each account or search "point summary report" online).

JULY 1 LEFTOVER TAGS ON SALE. Online only and limited to those who have not drawn a tag in series. For the first 24 hours, customers can wait in a virtual waiting room to be let into the sale. After that, leftovers remain in the catalog for purchase. Hunters can also forfeit their tag and pick up a leftover tag instead.



2022 seed numbers selected by the public.

NEW THIS YEAR:

Draw results available June 12 (instead of June 20), thanks to efficiencies from the Electronic Licensing System. **Application changes due by May 25** (instead of June 1).

Friday, May 26: Seed number drawing about 12:30 p.m., big game hunt raffle at 2 p.m. at ODFW HQ in Salem. Buy raffle tickets online until 10 a.m. Watch raffle in person or on ODFW's YouTube channel.

Tips for controlled hunts

- Double check your hunt number and party. Don't waste a bunch of points by accidentally applying for the wrong hunt.
- Apply online and make edits from any mobile device. No need to stand in line!
- Use Group Purchase to apply for members in your party or other family or friends.
- Make sure there is a good email in your profile so ODFW can get in touch if there is a problem with your application.

NOSLER®

2023 PHOTO CONTEST

FINALIST PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded in general and youth categories.

1ST 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



SCAN HERE TO ENTER

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS

Twenty-five miles out of town and minus-25 in the ice fog, those were the winning numbers on this musk ox hunt. OHA member Mike Menasco of Martinez, California, claims an OHA Coast knife and entry in the finals of the 2023 Nosler Photo Contest for this photo of himself with the trophy musk ox he took on Alaska's Nunivak Island last February.



DIAMOND LAKE AT TWILIGHT/TYLER DUNGANNON

John Shipley, OHA member in Albany, claims an OHA Coast knife and entry in the finals of the 2023 Nosler Photo Contest for this picture of Brenda Shipley and her Ukiah Unit elk. It was Brenda's first bull, called to within 10 yards.



NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS

Hannah Leavitt won her 7mm-08 from OHA and made her shot on opening day to tag this blacktail buck. Russ Leavitt of Warrenton claims an OHA Coast knife and a spot in the finals of the 2023 Nosler Youth Photo Contest for this picture of Hannah and a Clatsop County blacktail.



Reminder: Please read the contest rules. If required for a youth's hunt, orange must be visible.

Tel Painter of Baker City tagged his fall turkey in the Keating Unit. It was his second turkey of the year using his great grandpa's sweet 16 gauge Remington Model 48. Painter bags an OHA Coast knife and a spot in the finals of the 2023 Nosler Youth Photo Contest.

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

HONORABLE MENTION



OHA member Spencer Hill earns a Nosler hat and honorable mention for this picture from his Cariboo Mountains B.C. moose hunt last fall. Spencer and his grandpa Chris Cook called their bulls to within 30 yards. Hill carried a 1964 Remington 700 in .30-06 on this hunt.



Matt Marcum, Tillamook OHA member, receives honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of his nephew Mason Marcum with his first buck, which he took on a mentored hunt last fall on the coast with a 250-yard shot after a long stalk of more than a mile.



OHA member Mike Mordell earns a Nosler hat and honorable mention for this picture of Rob Cannon helping to pack out Mike Mordell's whopper 137 gross B&C Coues deer in Sonora, Mexico. Mordell used a Gunwerks 6.5 PRC on this hunt.



Newberg OHA member Justin Lenhardt collects honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Jordan with her first buck, taken in the Willamette Unit last fall while participating in the Mentored Youth Hunter Program.



Josh Tacchini of Albany earns a Nosler hat for this photo of Collin Tacchini with his North Bank Habitat Area Columbian whitetail buck. Collin took his buck with a Tikka T3X youth model chambered for the 6.5 Creedmoor.



First light on a minus-11 morning on the Columbia. OHA member Chad Williams of Hermiston earns honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this memorable picture on a duck hunt.



One shot at 300 yards with a .300 Winchester Magnum. OHA member Mark Knaupp of Rickreall earns a Nosler hat and honorable mention for this picture of Casey Knaupp with her Utah bull.



Roseburg resident and OHA member Josh Beattie earns honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this picture of his Douglas County blacktail. On the ground in the first hour of daylight, Beattie carried his Fierce Rival rifle chambered in .28 Nosler.



OHA member Richard Niggli of Carlton receives a Nosler hat and honorable mention for this picture of his first bow-killed elk taken from the Trask Unit.

PARTING SHOTS

BY UNCLE GEDDY



A Bear Hunter's Guide to Gems and Gentle Women

Q: What decays faster than regular rocks yet lasts longer than most relationships?

From time to time, we get letters from readers seeking answers to life's difficult questions, and they don't know where else to turn. Today we are going to go to the mail bag. This first is from a reader in Elkton.

Dear Uncle Geddy,

I was thinking about taking up rock climbing between turkey season and elk season, and I heard about the mountain climber in Japan who was attacked by a bear. Do you think that could happen here?

—Jody S.

I had heard about this story. It happened on Japan's Mount Futago. In his account, the climber fended off the bear's advances while clinging to a rock ledge, screaming at the bear and punching. Coincidentally, this sounds like my first date. The bear kept returning and lunging at the man. The climber credits kar-ate and mixed martial arts training for living through the encounter.

Well, I have studied coy-ote and the mixed marital arts, and I think this story is simply a metaphor.

This next letter comes from Clyde in Louisiana.

Dear Uncle Geddy,

My name is Clyde and me and my best girl like guns and cars and we want to get married. I do a little free-lancing with my brother Buck and I make about \$750 on each job. If I buy my girlfriend Bonnie a diamond, how much should I figger to spend on the rang?

—Beatin' the streets in Bienville Parish

Dear Clyde,

You sound like a very nice man and Bonnie sounds like a lovely lady. I'm sure you'll be happy.

There is a difference between what you get your fiancée if you have plenty of money and if you don't. Got a good job and lots of time? You buy a ring when you can afford it. If her daddy is making threats to your sensitive body parts, you go right out and buy that rang. Get it done, man!

Consider this 100 percent fact: In 1947, the De Beers Diamond Company was hurting. Diamond sales were down. Mr. Oppenheimer hired N.W. Ayer & Son, the same ad agency who brought us the tagline, "I'd walk a mile to smoke a Camel" cigarette. They

created the "A diamond is forever," slogan, followed by the film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* featuring the song *Diamonds Are A Girl's Best Friend* murmured by Marilyn Monroe. By the middle of the Korean War, girls everywhere from Astoria to Asotin had to wear a rock on their finger.

Then the sports bra was discovered in 1977 and diamond sales plummeted again, so the jewelry industry trotted out the current rule modeled by a soon-to-be-wed lass. The public relations message this time: "Two months' salary showed the future Mrs. Smith what the future will be like."

I don't know about you, Clyde, but two months' salary is more than I forked over for my last rifle, range finder AND Sports Pac put together. If a young husband-to-be is going to ditch two months of pay, he might as well go hunting. Grab that final paycheck. Tell the boss, "I quit. Take this job and shove it." This should be accomplished at the end of September with a smile and a sensible gift.

Next thing? Pick up your intended and take her down to the salad bar to celebrate. Do not pass the bleu cheese. Do not collect croutons if you're gluten intolerant. Do not collect \$200. Get down on one knee.

This is NOT the time to proffer an engagement ring, you numbskull. This is when you break the news: "I lost my job. But I'm going to get you that diamond rang, darn it, as soon as I see how much money I'm going to make in the next two months." Which just happens to be deer and elk season. You can beg for your old job back in December.

Another rule of thumb says the size of the gem should equal the age of the gentlewoman. For example, if the man proposes to a 62-year-old dame, he should be prepared to plunk plenteous pesos to procure 6.2 carats of permafrost.

My interns looked it up and found where a 6.2 carat diamond sold at auction for \$127,000 while a commensurate lab-crafted sparkler cost a cool \$23,000. If you want to save substantial coin, propose to a 16-year-old instead and buy a 1.6 carat piece of ice, current price: \$4,000.

Which begs the question: To buy lab grown or mined diamonds for the special lady?

Lab-curated and pressurized carbon or slave-labor-mineral, here's how to decide. If 'they're real and they're spectacular,' pony up, cowboy. But if the significant other has – shall we say – certain synthetic refinements, she is all good with lab-grown gems.

See how much money can be saved? That brings us to how to spend the extra cash, and this next letter from Bert in Beaverton.

Dear Uncle Geddy,

I saved so much on the engagement ring, I'm going on my first guided bear hunt in the Snake River Canyon, and I want to make sure I know how much to tip the guide. What is the etiquette in this situation?

—Bearin' Down from Beaverton

A very good question. I contacted the Hunting Union for Guides Syndicate (a.k.a. HUGS) at their offices in Hermiston for the answer. Their public relations people say they want to show the bear hunting guide what his future will be like. Give him a pack of smokes. Tell him you'll walk a mile to smoke a bear.



For a signed 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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