

# OREGON HUNTER

January-  
February  
2024  
\$3.95



**FOWL PLAY**

MEMBERSHIP PUBLICATION OF THE OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

WHAT'S  
**NEW**  
IN '24

**Huns &  
Chukars**  
for **Dummies**

**Bowhunting**  
**PREDATORS**

**OREGON**  
**AFIELD:**

- **Quail**
- **Bobcat**
- **Waterfowl**

**Win a Zumwalt Prairie**  
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**JUDGE BLOCKS**  
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## Like success in hunting, defining success for OHA isn't always easy

**D**efining success is often a subjective opinion. A successful hunt for one person might be quality time spent with family and friends or mentoring a new hunter. For others it might be filling a tag or bagging a bird. While for others, anything less than harvesting a trophy animal would be considered a failure.

We find this same range of perspectives when we try to define success with the conservation work OHA is doing. If our only definition of successful conservation work is creating habitat or a situation where you can consistently harvest trophy animals year after year, we will not be successful very often. Having a goal like this would have limits and would quite likely be prohibitively expensive and time consuming.

In some circumstances, our most successful conservation work could be keeping a situation from getting worse. Other situations may call for making bad conditions better. Is saving a population of animals a success, or is it only when we have healthy sustainable populations that we can hunt the measure of success?

OHA is a hunting organization. Will we only be successful if we do conservation work for species we can hunt, in areas where we can hunt them? Or should we try to benefit the habitat and species as a whole? These are complex questions. Without reaching consensus on the answers, we will not be able to truly define success with our conservation work.

For now, we do some of all of these things. We work on improving broad scale habitat. We work to maintain habitat connectivity. We work to restore damaged habitat. We work on individual species management, and multiple species management at the same time. Much of this work not only benefits the wildlife we care about most, but can also benefit a wide variety of non-game species.

To be sure, our conservation work seldom focuses on producing big bucks and big bulls. It frequently benefits the species overall in that geographic area. But we will never be able to do as much as we want in all the places that need conservation work.

Like all conservation organizations, we have limits to our bandwidth and finances. With these limitations comes a need to prioritize where we put our time and money. Do we only invest where we can be certain of a positive outcome, or do we invest our resources in places or species in our state that have the most need for conservation work, knowing that it may take years to see a positive change? Either option is a positive step. Being proactive with our conservation work will yield benefits, however we measure them. Doing nothing is the worst decision we could make.

# OREGON HUNTER

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Official publication of the Oregon Hunters Association, dedicated to wise management of Oregon's huntable wildlife. United in protecting hunter interests in the state of Oregon.

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

OREGON HUNTER (ISSN 1545-8059) is published bimonthly by the Oregon Hunters Association for its membership and is sold on newsstands statewide. Membership rates are: Individual: \$35 a year, \$65 for two years, \$90 for three years, \$800 for lifetime, \$10 for junior, \$12.50 for full-time student; family: \$45 a year, \$80 for two years, \$900 lifetime; business membership \$75. Memberships include \$5 magazine subscription. Periodicals postage paid at Medford, Ore., and at additional mailing offices.

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Advertising media kits are available. OHA does not necessarily endorse advertisers, or goods and services advertised in OREGON HUNTER.

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# WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

HELPING SHARP OREGON HUNTERS HOLD THEIR EDGE

## KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

1. The West High Cascade buck deer rifle hunt takes place in what month?

- a) September      c) November
- b) October        d) December

2. E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area is nearest:

- a) Portland        c) Corvallis
- b) Eugene        d) Medford

3. Which unit has a 3-point-or-better bag limit for its bull elk seasons?

- a) Wilson        c) Scappoose
- b) Trask        d) Saddle Mountain

4. A new beardless turkey permit is available through Jan. 31 in all but which unit?

- a) Sumpter        c) Murderers Creek
- b) Northside     d) Desolation

5. Wolverines have been found in all of the following Oregon counties except which?

- a) Linn            c) Wallowa
- b) Jackson      d) Harney

6. Moose have been spotted in Oregon's:

- a) Imnaha Unit    c) Sled Springs Unit
- b) Pine Cr. Unit   d) all of the above

7. What wildlife area is closed to hunting?

- a) Wanaket        c) Rimrock Springs
- b) Riverside      d) none of the above

8. The term "benchleg" means a hybrid:

- a) deer            c) bighorn sheep
- b) elk             d) turkey

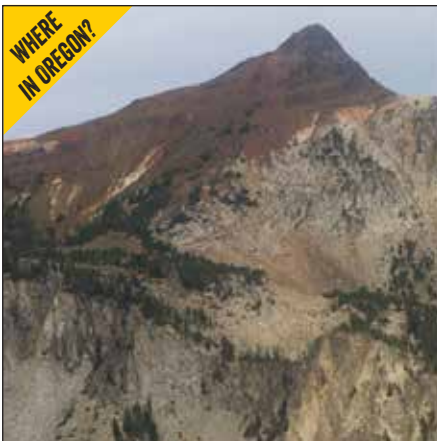
9. Which has the poorest vision?

- a) antelope        c) cougar
- b) bear            d) turkey

10. Which unit is not a W. Cascade elk unit?

- a) Keno            c) Rogue
- b) Evans Creek   d) Dixon

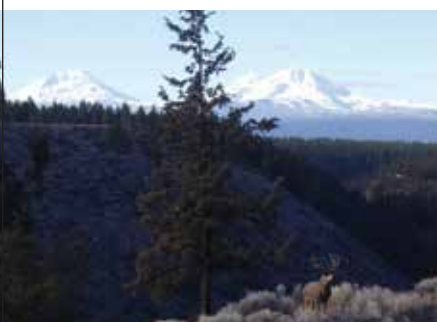
ANSWERS: 1-a; 2-c; 3-d; 4-a; 5-b; 6-d; 7-c; 8-a; 9-b; 10-a.



Identify this sharp peak, 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](http://oregonhunters.org), where a larger version of the photo appears. One entry per OHA member.

**ENTRY DEADLINE: JAN. 20, 2024.**



### LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

**Jason M. Barnes, Columbia City**

Jason's name was drawn from among the OHA members who identified the Three Sisters behind this mule deer.

## OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

DECEMBER 27

Last day to purchase OHA Gun Calendar Raffle tickets, [oregonhunters.org/store](http://oregonhunters.org/store)

DECEMBER 31

Seasons end for pheasant, cougar, bear

JANUARY 1

2024 licenses required;  
Cougar season opens

JANUARY 6

Tualatin River NWR youth waterfowl hunt

JANUARY 13

Sauvie Island youth waterfowl hunt

JANUARY 20

Klamath PLAY Outdoors, 541-891-3501

JANUARY 28

Duck season ends

JANUARY 31

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

FEBRUARY 2

Eugene Boat & Sportsmen's Show opens

FEBRUARY 3

Veterans & active military waterfowl day;  
Partners in Conservation Family Expo,  
Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center  
541-420-2741

FEBRUARY 9

Douglas County Show opens in Roseburg;  
Willamette Sports Show opens in Albany

FEBRUARY 10

Deadline to apply for spring bear tags

FEBRUARY 14

Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show  
opens in Portland

FEBRUARY 17

OHA Ochoco banquet, 541-777-4830

FEBRUARY 20

Spring bear draw results available

FEBRUARY 23

Jackson County Sportsmen's Show opens

FEBRUARY 24

OHA Redmond banquet 541-419-7215  
OHA Columbia Co. banquet 949-533-7271  
OHA Hoodview banquet 503-314-3090  
OHA Union/Wallowa banquet 541-786-1283



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## You'll reach your limits before the quail bag limits

**O**ur lack of early-season water may influence some Oregon quail hunting destinations, but for the most part, birds have had it fairly good.

"The wet winter of 2022-23 was a critical shot in the arm for drought-affected areas in central and eastern Oregon, but it will take more than one good winter to make up for several dry years," said ODFW Upland Bird Biologist Mikal Cline.

ODFW surveys have pointed to large broods of valley quail this year, and if survival is good going into winter, wing shooters may be in for a real treat.



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Author Troy Rodakowski bagged these mountain quail on a recent hunt near Mapleton.

Most of the hunting in and near the Willamette Valley is on private lands and refuges that allow harvest of upland birds. Populations in the Columbia Basin and Malheur NWR are reported to be stable but also limited. This late season, most of the birds will be found near available water and good cover. Several hunters last fall reported seeing multiple coveys of birds on opening weekend and more than they had seen for several seasons near towns of Vale and Juntura.

Mountain quail are thriving in the Oregon coast range and throughout southwest

Oregon, especially in habitat near and adjacent to recent burns. Burns in the coast range and lower Cascades are excellent places to find coveys of quail. Smaller burns create fresh feed, cover and have been an excellent aide in bolstering bird populations. Small farming communities across the state have excellent bird habitat to access, but if you aren't knocking on doors, look into some of the state wildlife areas for hunt opportunities.

You'll need plenty of opportunities to bag your limit of 10 quail per day.

—TROY RODAKOWSKI



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Navy Special Ops Veteran Terry Rodakowski shows off his limit of drake green wing teal on a recent hunt with the author near Brownsville.

## Veterans can earn wings on Feb. 3

**O**regon's Veterans & Military waterfowl day provides an extra waterfowl hunting day to reward those who have served our country and enjoy the great outdoors together. Last season I took my father, who was with the Navy's Special Operations (SEAL Teams). It had been a while since we had waterfowl hunted together, so it was a special day, regardless if we put birds in our bag or not.

This hunt is open statewide on Feb. 3, but some public lands may not be open for hunting on this day. Please check with the appropriate management agency before hunting during this hunt. All ODFW wildlife areas, except those with seasonal closures to protect big game (Elkhorn, Bridge Creek, etc.) are open for this hunt. Daily hunt permits, where required during the regular season, are required. At Fern Ridge W.A. (East, West, and South Coyote units) and Sauvie Island W.A. (Eastside, Westside and Oak Island) public hunt permits will be issued through a random drawing conducted at the check stations.

Eligibility: Veterans (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code) and members of the Armed Forces on active duty, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty (other than for training), may participate (federal regulation defines those eligible to participate in this hunt).

What makes this so great is the opportunity to allow our service men and women a special day to get out and enjoy some very good shooting. Most ducks and geese are down for the winter and in full plumage. Dad and I had a great time together and one we soon won't forget.


Each hunter must have in possession:

- ✔ A valid hunting license
- ✔ A valid state waterfowl or nonresident game bird validation
- ✔ A valid HIP validation
- ✔ A valid Federal Duck stamp
- ✔ Valid proof of veterans or active duty status issued by the U.S. Department of Defense or Veteran's Affairs.

—TROY RODAKOWSKI



# Hunting cool cats can help you beat the winter blues

Got the post big-game hunting season blues? And you still have a hankering to chase fur instead of fins and feathers? Predator hunting will scratch that itch, and at the same time keep your hunting and shooting skills sharp. 

Coyotes get all the attention, but let's take it up a notch and talk about calling in bobcats – the cream of the crop of all small game furbearers. Even the most hardcore coyote hunters in the country cherish that special moment a bobcat enters their calling setup. But before you get started hunting Oregon's bobtailed wildcats and other furbearers, there are some special licensing and harvesting issues to know. Contact your local ODFW office for information, or consult the Oregon Furbearer Trapping and Hunting Regulations.

Bobcat season runs from Dec. 1 through Feb. 29 on both east and west sides of the state. Concentrate your efforts along brushy creek bottom draws, rocky outcroppings, standing water riparian zones, landings at the end of decommissioned USFS roads, and forest edges bordering meadows and agricultural lands. Frequented bobcat toilets and abundant prey species are a dead giveaway that bobcats are in the area. Any number of prey distress sounds from house cats to fawns, using an electronic caller or hand calls, can be effective. Bobcats are cautious, so patience, camouflage and remaining as still as possible on each stand for up to 45 minutes are keys to success.

I would be remiss not mentioning the pursuit of the coyote's little cousin, the fox – both red and gray. Unlike cats, the squirrely fox can come in fast and furious to the call. I've had grays run right over my outstretched legs while hand-calling. The red fox is distributed statewide, favoring agricultural lands, while the gray fox is mainly found westside with decent numbers in hilly, coastal and dune habitats. Fox-in-distress calls are deadly, especially on grays. Fun fact: gray fox are the only North American fox that climbs trees, so squirrel-in-distress calls can be especially effective.

The use of dogs is permitted to hunt both bobcat and fox, and bobcats can be hunted at night with an artificial light (not attached to a motor vehicle or boat).

—MAX ZELLER



Bobcat season  
runs through  
Feb. 29  
statewide.

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

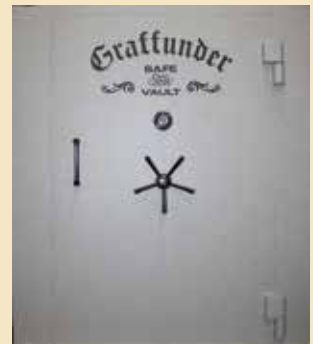
Author Max Zeller took this bobcat in a brushy creek bottom draw using a bird-in-distress hand call. Any number of prey distress sounds – from house cats to fawns – can be effective.

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JOIN/RENEW MEMBERSHIP

## OHA tracks wildlife bills in '24 session

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director  
[Amy@oregonhunters.org](mailto:Amy@oregonhunters.org)

The 2024 Oregon Legislative "short" session will begin on Feb. 5 and run for a maximum of 35 days. Though the timeline is abbreviated, the impact of bills brought in the short session can be extensive.

Several bills are anticipated that Oregon's sportsmen and women will be interested in following.

A wildlife omnibus bill is being discussed that would include several wildlife issues in one legislation concept. Potential issues include expanded wildlife crossing policy language, funding for wildlife coexistence efforts, and a return of the Chronic Wasting Disease funding request that OHA put forth in the 2023 session.

Compensation for landowners experiencing chronic elk and deer depredation on crops and infrastructure will likely make its way into the 2024 session, as well. OHA has been involved in preliminary workgroup discussion around this concept and will continue to watch this issue closely as it develops.

As always, OHA will be in the Capitol working on behalf of our membership and all sportsmen and women in the state.

## Funding restored to schools with shooting programs

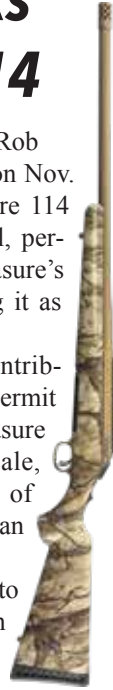
As reported earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Education cut funding to schools with hunting, archery, or sport shooting programs and courses. OHA members, along with many hunters and sport shooters across the country, made their voices heard among our federal lawmakers. Bipartisan legislation, titled the

## Harney County judge blocks Measure 114

Harney County Judge Rob Raschio issued his ruling on Nov. 21 on the ongoing Measure 114 litigation at the state level, permanently blocking the measure's implementation and ruling it as unconstitutional.

Two major factors contributed to his findings, the permit to purchase scheme of Measure 114 and the ban on the sale, transfer, and manufacture of magazines holding more than 10 rounds.

The State is expected to appeal the ruling, which will likely end up before the Oregon Supreme Court.



Protecting Hunting Heritage and Education Act, amended the previous language to clarify that school programs "training students in archery, hunting, or other shooting sports" are eligible for federal funding. The bill passed the House of Representatives with a 424-1 vote, while its companion bill in the Senate was approved unanimously. President Biden signed the bill into law on Oct. 6.

The voices of sportsmen and women around the country were well represented by organizations such as OHA, Safari Club International, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, and many others.

## IP3 proponents eye 2026 ballot

*Over 30,000 signatures have been collected*

Proponents of IP3 have gathered almost 31,000 signatures in their efforts to put the egregious, ridiculous, and downright offensive initiative petition that would ban legal hunting, fishing, and trapping on the 2024 ballot.

In addition to prohibiting hunting, fishing, and trapping, the initiative would also criminalize wildlife management efforts, education and research with animals, and even trapping vermin, such as mice and gophers. It would also effectively end farming, ranching, and eating Oregon-grown animal products such as meat, dairy and seafood.

However, even with an influx of funding received earlier this year, and the initial efforts to gain the signature threshold (120,000) to make the ballot, it appears the proponents are now looking to the 2026 election.

Initiative Petition 28 (IP28) has been filed with the Secretary of State for the 2026 ballot and is a new iteration of the language that began as IP13 in 2020 and returned as IP3 in 2022. With few substantial changes, IP28 rolls forward the IP3 efforts to 2026 and gives them three years to continue their plans to take this extreme agenda to Oregonians.

OHA continues to lead the opposition to this proposed measure, so stay tuned for more information.

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*Zumwalt Prairie Trophy Bull*



Photo: Chad Dolson



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*Zumwalt Prairie Trophy Muley*



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**500 offered. Value: \$4,900.**

**Drawing: March 14, 2024, 2 p.m.**

**For tickets, call 541-772-7313,**

**visit [oregonhunters.org/store](https://oregonhunters.org/store) or**

**mail check & contact info to OHA,**

**PO Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501.**

3-day guided rifle hunt for 1 hunter on the 33,000-acre Zumwalt Prairie Preserve in Oregon's Wallowa County during the fall 2024 season. Hunter may bring up to 2 guests who do not hunt. Hunting is all on foot and hunters should be in good physical condition. Recent hunter success has been close to 100%. Mature animals are common with trophy potential. The Preserve is part of the largest remaining intact Pacific Northwest bunchgrass prairie in North America. Food, beverages, gear, and gratuity not included. Transportation to the Preserve not included (once there, your guide will provide transportation). Tag is guaranteed, but hunter is responsible for license & tag cost. Valid for the fall 2024 season only; must make arrangements by April 1, 2024. Sponsored by The Nature Conservancy.

Elk raffle proceeds benefit OHA. Deer raffle proceeds dedicated to Blue Mountains habitat work.

Drawing: 3/14/24, OHA Office, 301 Crater Lake Ave., Medford, OR, 2 pm. Need not be present to win.



# BLACK POWDER

By GARY LEWIS

## Built for black powder and back in business

### Two ways to put that wall-hanger back to work with low-pressure reloads

**A**ce locked up in the tall grass along the ditch, and for once he was pointing back toward us, which, if I read the English setter's body language right, meant the bird would flush right-to-left or possibly left-to-right. If it was the former, and if it was a rooster, I was ready.

Earlier in the hunt at Badger Creek Ranch, I had shot at and missed a rooster in the timber over the dogs. I didn't want to miss again. For the second hunt in a row I was carrying a 16-gauge Remington Arms Company side-by-side manufactured about 1900, when bird hunters were still shooting black powder. Although it was probably shot by several generations of hunters, up through the 1950s if I guessed right, the gun might as well have been custom-ordered for me; it fits me that well.

My friend Matthew McFarland had a hard-to-get supply of 16-gauge RST low-pressure loads and brought me four boxes before the hunt – No. 7s for targets and No. 5s for pheasant and partridge. From the first time I shouldered the gun, the wood came right to my cheek and the rib disappeared, the little gold bead the only thing between my eye and the target.

On the first hunt with the old Remington, I had shot RST low-pressure No. 5 loads and made some of the longest shots of my life on partridge.

The stock is English walnut fitted sometime in the past



The old Remington Arms Company 16-gauge side-by-side was made with Damascus barrels. To shoot the gun safely, it can be fired with low pressure loads like those pictured from RST Ammunition.

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR



This Tygh Valley rooster fell to a load of .410 No. 6s from a 16-gauge Remington Arms Company shotgun with Damascus barrels. To shoot the .410s, the gun was fitted with a pair of Savage Four-tenners.

with a recoil pad. The 30-inch barrels are crafted of three-bar Damascus steel.

Damascus steel is made through a type of forging where steel and iron are combined for greater strength. A Frenchman from Liege was among the first gunmakers to experiment with Damascus. A pair of Englishmen patented a process of turning a band of metal into a spiral twist. Barrel ribbons were wound around a mandrel. Usually, seven feet of hammered rod was required for 12 inches of barrel. Barrels were commonly made from Damascus steel until higher-pressure smokeless powders came into use. As ammunition pressures increased, Damascus-barreled shotguns were turned into wall hangers. But low-pressure shotgun loads can help put a Damascus gun back into the field.

#### THE SAVAGE FOUR-TENNER

On this hunt in Tygh Valley, I had a pair of Four-tenners installed in the 16-gauge. This brilliant invention was offered for years in the Savage catalog for the discriminating shotgunner who wanted to be able to shoot .410 loads in a 12-, 16- or 20-gauge.

One of the things that makes this product work is the substantial barrel length (sealed by an O-ring) that allows for proper pressure in the larger barrel. The other thing is the extractor works with the factory extractor mechanism.

A hunt on the Internet can turn up the Savage Four-tenner. I found several for sale on gunbroker.com

Would I say it is a perfect way to shoot .410 loads? No. If you really want to shoot birds with a .410, buy a Four-Ten. But if you are looking for a good way to put an old shotgun back in the field, try to picture this:

Walking toward Ace, his tail rigid, body taut, I heard the pheasant before I saw it and then time seemed to slow down, the rooster floating across in front of me right-to-left. I swung out in front of it and squeezed and saw the bird crumple over the Damascus barrels. Just like 1905. Just like 1919 – after The Great War to End All Wars. Just like 1946 after the Next War.

Maybe several generations of pheasant hunters are looking down from the Happy Hunting Grounds. Perhaps they nod approvingly. I betcha I shoot this gun at least as well as they did.

Listen to Gary's podcast – *Ballistic Chronicles* – on Spotify, iTunes, Apple Podcasts and other podcast platforms. Or visit [www.GaryLewisOutdoors.com](http://www.GaryLewisOutdoors.com)



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## Predator Bonus Round

*When big game seasons wind down, the game ratchets up*

**W**ith big game seasons behind us, don't put away that bow just yet. If you want to take your shooting and hunting skills to the next level, head afield in search of predators.

Whether you're calling in coyotes, bobcats, foxes or raccoons, the setup is critical. Using an electronic caller with a moving decoy will keep an approaching predator focused on the device, not you, as it draws near.

Set your popup ground blind at a 90-degree angle from where you anticipate the predator approaching. Setting up on game trails and along narrow openings helps you control the predator's path of travel so it doesn't approach from a direction or angle from which you can't get a shot.

Placing the blind at a sharp angle also ensures a higher-percentage broadside shot, verses facing them head-on. Set the blind 15-20 yards from the electronic call and decoy. The nerves of predators are wound tight, and they can react to a string popping and arrow flying faster than any big game you'll ever shoot at. Accuracy is crucial.

The most challenging part of bowhunting predators is reaching full draw. This is where the popup blind comes in handy. Hunting from a treestand can also be effective, but know that these animals have incredible eyesight, even when looking skyward. If hunting from trees, don't move until the animal is in shooting position. The slightest movement will alert a keen-eyed predator, especially this time of year when trees are devoid of leaves.

Some bowhunters use ghillie suits when on the ground. In this case, place the e-caller and decoy beyond you so the approaching predator has to pass by. It will likely result in a quartering away shot, but this positioning will increase the odds of reaching full draw without getting busted.

Once set, have an arrow nocked and release on your string before making the first round of sounds. A majority of coyotes and gray foxes come running to the call within the first two minutes, so be ready. Bobcats take longer, up to an hour or more, so be patient if that's your quarry.

If going after canines, call for 30 seconds, wait for a minute, then call again for one to two minutes. Call lightly at first in case an animal is near. Pause for a couple more minutes, and if nothing comes in, increase the volume of your e-caller and run it for two more minutes. Repeat this series, and if nothing shows after 20 minutes, head to another spot.

Raccoons will also come in aggressively to a call. River bottoms and creek beds are prime locations to target masked bandits. They can be hard to find in daylight hours, so cover ground.



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

*The most challenging part of bowhunting predators is reaching full draw.*

*If you're serious about taking your hunting and shooting skills to the next level, set your sights on Oregon's predators this winter.*

Cougar numbers are on the rise, and they can be called. Tracking them in the snow is possible, but tough for bowhunters. This is a game of patience and dedication.

*The slightest movement will alert a keen-eyed predator, especially this time of year when trees are without leaves.*

If calling coyotes in eastern Oregon, don't overlook badgers. Badgers can come in fast and strong. You don't need a ground blind to pull off a shot, as badgers can be fearless and persistent, and sage brush offers good cover. I like using an open reed mouth call for badgers, with crippled bird, rabbit and rodent distresses being my go-to sounds, respectively.

Rabbit, squirrel and bird distress sounds are tops for winter predators. Don't be afraid to change up the sounds, especially if you're seeing fresh sign and nothing is coming in. As for your bow, use the same setup that you would for big game, including broadheads and draw weight.

If hunting amid thick cover in western Oregon, hang the e-caller in a tree so the sounds can travel. This is especially true in wet, windy conditions. If the moving decoy is attached to the caller, place the unit on a stump or rock to make sure the ground doesn't muffle the sounds.

Cougars require a big game tag, while fox and bobcat require a furtaker's license. Bobcat hides must have a locking tag attached to them. Make sure you know the laws and have the proper license and tags before targeting furbearers.

Bowhunting for predators will not only hone your hunting skills, it will enhance your shooting ability. You can punch paper any time, but to call in, reach full draw, and hit the small kill zone of wily predators, that's another story.



*For signed copies of Scott Haugen's popular adventure book, Bowhunting The West & Beyond, visit [scotthaugen.com](http://scotthaugen.com). Follow Scott's adventures on Instagram and Facebook.*



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*A handful of new hunts highlight the changes for the new year.*

*By JIM YUSKAVITCH*

# WHAT'S NEW IN '24

*While western Oregon elk are well below population objectives, the state's Rocky Mountain elk herds are faring better overall, with a few notable exceptions.*

**T**here aren't a great many changes for big game regulations and hunts slated for the 2024 seasons, but that's not a bad thing, and doesn't mean that a lot hasn't been happening behind the scenes in the world of managing Oregon's big game animals.

On a practical level for hunters, it means fewer new regulations, hunt dates and other changes to the 2024 seasons to navigate.

On a management level, it suggests that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's long-term effort, beginning in 2018, to simplify hunting regulations and test some wildlife management actions to provide more hunting opportunities may be starting to bear some fruit.

Nevertheless, there are a few changes of note. Here's a brief overview of those changes and what went into the decisions.

## **DEER**

When ODFW began its review and update of big game hunting regulations in 2018, one of the major ideas they explored, and implemented in 2020, was the concept of including western Oregon spike bucks in the bag limit by changing the regulations from "one buck having not less than a forked antler" to "one buck with visible antler," along with changing the Oregon 600-series bag limit from "one antlerless or spike deer" to "one antlerless deer."

The idea behind this concept was to make deer bag limits consistent throughout the state that would in turn reduce the number of spikes mistaken for bucks while allowing for increased hunting opportunities. For the 600-series hunts, the focus was on population and damage control. In analyzing the harvest after three years of

implementing the concept, ODFW biologists found that including spike bucks in the western Oregon bag limits has not impacted mature buck harvest stats to date. Overall, ODFW believes the concept is working, although ODFW and OHA will continue to monitor ongoing harvest data.

Unfortunately, Oregon's mule deer population continues to decline with a 3.6-percent drop for 2023 to between 150,000 to 160,000 animals. Mule deer populations were below management objective across the state except one unit in 2023. The situation is a little better for black-tailed deer, where new methods for counting them have been developed that are more accurate than the traditional spotlighting surveys. Current data suggest that the black-tailed deer population in western Oregon is no longer declining and may even be increasing in some management units.

The few changes for 2024 include five new youth buck hunts in southeast Oregon offering a total of 110 tags, and a late-season archery hunt for white-tailed deer in Grant County. Population declines in some hunt areas, combined with low hunter success, is resulting in a 1.2-percent decrease in 100-series controlled buck hunt tags to 60,639 for 2023, while the 600 series antlerless hunt will see a 0.4-percent increase to 10,109 tags.

## **ELK**

The other major hunt concept that ODFW introduced in 2020 was the General Season Antlerless Elk Damage Tag. These tags are valid for specific areas

experiencing elk damage, replacing landowner damage tags in those areas during open elk seasons. A review of results shows that the concept has resulted in reducing the need for landowner damage tags statewide by 22 percent while increasing elk harvest by 27 percent in affected areas.

ODFW plans to continue the General Season Antlerless Elk Damage Tag hunts, and possibly expand it into other areas as appropriate. However, OHA has asked that ODFW reevaluate this program in areas where elk are not meeting population management objectives.

In general, Rocky Mountain elk in eastern Oregon are faring well, as they have been for a number of years, with 22 of 29 wildlife management units at or near management objectives, though some prime units are down. Eastern Oregon's elk population is about 71,150 – a little below the objective of 73,650 animals. Roosevelt elk populations in western Oregon are not doing as well, with an estimated population of 54,830 compared to the objective of 70,850.

Some units did not have elk herd composition data available for 2023. OHA is concerned that the workload for ODFW staff in some districts, largely driven by wolf management activities, has contributed to ODFW staffing issues and has hamstrung agency staff in collecting and analyzing big game herd composition data. These data are important for monitoring elk populations and critical for units not meeting objectives. Therefore, OHA strongly encourages ODFW and the Commission to prioritize the collection of these data and adjust management accordingly to meet elk management objectives.

PHOTO BY JOHN WHELAND





WARNER UNIT/JOHN McFARLAND III

Oregon's California bighorns are flourishing, while our Rocky Mountain bighorns are floundering.

Changes for 2024 include deleting three antlerless elk hunts, as they are no longer required due to the impact of the General Season Antlerless Elk Damage Tag. A controlled youth elk hunt will be added in the Interstate-Silver Lake units, along with a new muzzleloader hunt in the Sixes Unit in southwest Oregon. Controlled elk tags will be increased by less than 1 percent for 2024.

## PRONGHORN

Difficult 2023 winter conditions in the High Desert that lasted well into the spring raised concerns about impacts on the pronghorn population, which is sensitive to environmental conditions such as weather. But the deeper snow that persisted in the spring was mostly in higher elevations outside of pronghorn range, and a

good green-up as the snow melted helped improve habitat conditions. An increase in pronghorn populations in the Beulah Unit is prompting an increase in tag numbers for that hunt. However, a population decline in the South Wagontire hunt area will result in fewer tags there. At 2,072 tags, the number of tags available for 2024 is the same as for 2023.

Oregon's pronghorn population has remained fairly stable for the past several years at 16,000 to 19,000 animals.

## BIGHORN SHEEP

A significant increase in bighorn sheep tags – 24 percent over 2023 – will be available in 2024. That largely reflects the difference in herd health between Oregon's two bighorn species, Rocky Mountain and California bighorns, and location-specific hunt conditions.

California bighorn sheep numbers are largely stable, although there are a few herds in the extreme southeastern portion of their Oregon range that are struggling a little. The total population is estimated to be 4,200 to 4,500.

The Rocky Mountain bighorn population in northeast Oregon is considerably



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smaller at an estimated 800 to 900 animals, and some herds continue to contend with respiratory disease problems. One of the major steps ODFW is taking to address the disease problem is their work with area landowners in the tristate area of Oregon, Washington and Idaho, through the Hells Canyon Restoration Initiative to find ways to limit interaction between wild sheep and domestic sheep, which are the source of the respiratory diseases.

For 2024, there will be 122 tags offered in 30 hunts. That includes five Rocky Mountain rams in three hunts, and 77 California rams along with 40 California ewes in 27 hunts. The California bighorn sheep ewes account for the increase in tags offered for 2024. Six California ram tags and three ewe tags will be available to non-resident hunters. The California bighorn hunt, 548 Heppner Unit, is being cancelled due to low herd numbers and the difficulty in locating rams in the area.

## 🔪 MOUNTAIN GOATS 🔪

While Oregon's Rocky Mountain goat population, at around 1,200, is stable and even increasing in some places, four hunts will be eliminated in 2024 due to the



Two Oregon spring bear hunts will see an increase in tags for 2024.

continued impact of 2022 wildfires that resulted in some herd population declines.

For 2024, there will be 21 Rocky Mountain goat tags offered in 12 hunts. Two tags will be available to non-resident hunters.



## BEAR & COUGAR



Bear populations are strong in Oregon based on ODFW's monitoring that includes compiling the ages and sex of bears harvested for both spring and fall hunts. Based on criteria from the Oregon Bear Management Plan, bears are not being over-harvested if the overall median age for all harvested bears is greater than or equal to three years old, two years for

males, and four years for females. Actual data indicated those harvest numbers in 2022 were four years, four years and five years, respectively, showing the bear harvest to be in the sustainable range.

With Oregon's bear population well within harvest parameters, 146 more controlled tags will be available for 2024 than in 2023. That will be a total of 10,773 controlled hunt tags in 18 hunts. Hunts seeing increased tag numbers include the 762A Pine Creek-Keating-Catherine Creek Hunt and 731A South Central Hunt, where bear numbers are abundant enough to sustain increased harvest.

ODFW tracks cougar populations by monitoring mortality rates that include both harvest and non-harvest mortality.

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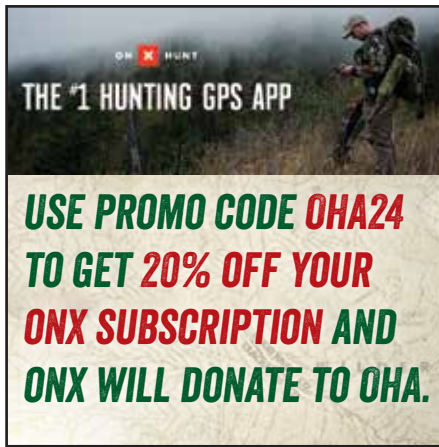
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Based on that data, the current Oregon cougar population, which includes all age classes, is estimated at 7,068. That no cougar zones reached their mortality cap indicates that the population is continuing to grow. For these reasons, no changes for the cougar season or zone quotas are being made for 2024.



## **WILDLIFE AREAS**



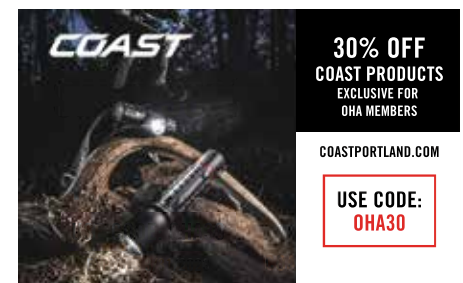
One big change that hunters can get excited about is the pending substantial increase in the size of the Minam River Wildlife Area in northeast Oregon, located about 30 miles northeast of La Grande.

This is a project involving ODFW, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, US Department of Agriculture Forest Legacy Program, OHA and other partners. It will add a significant addition to the current wildlife area through the purchase of 10,946 adjacent acres, expanding it to more than 15,000 acres available for public access, including nearly six miles along the Minam River and Minam River Trail.

Approval of Phase II of the acquisition project includes \$3.5 million from the RMEF and \$9.7 million from the Forest Legacy Program. As part of the deal, ODFW will pay fire protection fees and “in-lieu” of property taxes to maintain county tax revenue.

The acquisition will provide additional critical winter habitat protection for a herd of about 1,400 Rocky Mountain elk along with other wildlife species.

OHA contributed \$100,000 toward this land acquisition.

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# Willamette Valley

## FOWL PLAY

*From sprigs and spoonies to greenheads and coppertops, the valley offers a vast variety of winter waterfowling.*

STORY & PHOTOS  
BY SCOTT HAUGEN





A

pair of wigeon banked hard into the silhouette decoys. When they dropped the landing gear, I took the bird on the right. I knew it was a drake by its chunky body and blocky head. It was backlit so I couldn't see any color.

The other bird peeled to the left. When it flared into the sunlight, my 82-year-old dad, Jerry Haugen, hammered it. We'd just limited for the day.

Echo was on my bird while Kona, my other dog, headed for Dad's. We watched Kona stride through the water, maneuvering amid floating decoys to seize the prize. He eagerly delivered the duck to Dad.

When I looked down, Echo was quietly sitting by my side. In her mouth was my dream bird, one I've wanted since I began duck hunting in Oregon in 1975. The brilliant head of the Eurasian wigeon glowed even more beautifully than I'd imagined it would. It was a fitting end to a memorable hunt – a moment neither Dad nor I will forget.

That hunt took place two seasons ago, near Harrisburg. It was the best season of duck hunting we'd had in the Willamette Valley since the early 1980s. Not only were wigeon numbers booming in the valley, but mallards were thick all season.

Green-winged teal showed up early in the season, as usual, and offered challenging shooting. Many of the tiny bombers stuck

around all winter. Some went south, but along with wigeon and pintail, began their migration north in January. That's when duck numbers noticeably build in the Valley. It happens every year in January.

Add stunningly plumed shovelers to the mix and the joy of duck hunting in the Willamette Valley keeps getting sweeter. It seems every mature drake spoony I hold, I want to have mounted in an effort to preserve the beauty of the moment. A stud drake's breast is whiter than white, their feet glow fluorescent orange and their plumage will keep you spellbound as you twist, turn and admire it on a sunny day.

Last season was good too, especially for mallards on big rivers and in skinny, wooded creeks. In fact, it was the most mallards I ever recall seeing in the upper Willamette Valley. Many fellow hunters shared the same sentiments. Weekends were best as more hunters were out, keeping birds on the move.

Over the years we've had some good hunts at Fern Ridge, both on the public and refuge side. Last year was a struggle, mostly due to competing with other hunters amid minimal food sources and birds moving late in the day, but that's hunting.

At the valley's other end, hunting the Columbia River can be epic, especially late in the season, as can the permit hunting at Sauvie Island, one of the nation's largest islands at 26,000 acres.



Even after your one pintail per hunter is taken, it's fun decoying these elegant birds during the rest of the hunt.





Hunters have noticed a rise in the number of Eurasian wigeon in the Valley. The author got this American-Euro hybrid east of Monroe.

Sauvie Island offers waterfowl hunting worth experiencing, no matter how far you have to drive.





A lot of folks flock to Sauvie, but there's so much prime ground to hunt, it's an experience worth making the effort for. Days can be long when you include travel and manage massive decoy spreads, but that's the joy of waterfowl hunting; often the harder you work, the greater the reward.

And let's not forget the tiny geese. I'm fortunate to travel the country, and it seems no matter where I am or who I'm hunting with, the conversation turns to cacklers. Every waterfowler is enamored with these little gems, and rightly so. If you've never experienced a flock of 10,000 geese screaming at the top of their little lungs as they funnel into the decoys, you must. You'll go to bed that night with high-pitched cackles ringing in your head.

The agricultural land between Salem and Eugene is the epicenter of tiny goose land. But these little birds are far from a slam

dunk. Three days of scouting before hunting a field is the norm, and on day four there's no guarantee birds will show up. With lots of feed and hunting pressure, massive flocks move with deceptive ease in the late season.

The early September Canada goose hunt can be excellent, too. Freshly harvested crops create food sources big birds love. Honkers are a big draw all season long in the Valley.

With more snow geese showing up each winter in the grass seed capital of the world, hunters are hoping their numbers continue to build; farmers are not.

However it unfolds, it's the uncertainty and anticipation that keep hunters going in a magical place that I'm proud to not only call home, but label as one of the most underrated waterfowl destinations in the country.



**The later in the season it gets, the more water accumulates in the Willamette Valley, making for some of the country's best waterfowl action.**









# WINGSHOOTING CHUKAR & HUN FOR DUMMIES

STORY & PHOTOS BY GARY LEWIS

Traipsing  
around Oregon's  
Outback for  
Himalayan  
and Hungarian  
partridge

**Y**ou can walk for miles and miles on your own land, the ground you own in common with every other American, and carry a shotgun. The payoff is good eating, good exercise and a good time away from the boss, the biddies and the men with man purses.

We call it chukar hunting, and if you have never hunted chukar before, you have certainly come to the right place.

**PARTRIDGE  
CAN BE  
HUNTED IN  
NEARLY EVERY  
MAJOR RIVER  
DRAINAGE  
IN EASTERN  
OREGON.**

Chukar ain't from here, dude. They're from the Himalayas. And gray partridge? They're from the Hungarian steppe. Pheasants, chukar, Huns – they came here on boats. Pheasants (from China) started in the Americas in Oregon first and spread east. The partridges got their start in the early 1900s. And all of this upland hunting wonderment we are enamored with was handed down to us from the European continent, our traditions, the way we work the dogs, the manners, the etiquette. There is a long tradition, but a lot of how we approach the hunt is uniquely American. So be proud of the heritage. Third, you're going to need a hunting license and an upland bird hunting validation. The birds belong to the public. The public has agreed that you can hunt



*Hungarian partridge a.k.a. gray alien (top) and chukar. It might be an 8-bird limit, but you rarely get your limit.*

them if you pay a service fee. The public lands belong to you. Hunt where you wish and as hard as you want.

## **A WORD ABOUT CHUKAR GUNS**

If you're going to hunt with me, I want you to use a break-open over/under or a side-by-side. The simple reason is I can look at your gun and quickly know if the gun is in a safe condition or not. You can break the gun and hold it over your arm. This is a big deal for me and a lot of other people that you will end up hunting with. But you might say you want a semi-auto or you already have a pump-action, and that is fine, too. I might let you hunt with me anyway. You might also have your grandpa's old bolt-action 12-gauge Stevens

and you want to hunt with that. That's fine, too, you big dummy.

To hunt chukar and Huns on your own public land you will need shotgun ammunition sized in No. 7-1/2 to No. 6. And you should probably have someone throw clay pigeons for you, so you get an idea how to shoot at flying birds because that is what we do, we wait for them to get up in the air and then we pick one out, swing with it, through it and squeeze the trigger and follow-through and then watch where it falls and then go pick it up. Try it. You'll like it. But you're probably going to miss a lot of birds, at least at first.

## **DON'T ASK YOUR UNCLE**

You're going to need a dog. That's what most people will tell you. And they're right. And maybe you have one. Or you can borrow one from your favorite aunt. It doesn't matter what breed you have, that dog has been dreaming about going hunting at least as long as you have. Ever watch them sleeping? They are dreaming about bird hunting. Get them out there. It doesn't matter whether it's a border collie or a Pomeranian\* or a labradoodle, the dog wants to hunt.

If you decide you like traipsing all over eastern Oregon with dog and shotgun, you will probably want to make your next dog a German shorthaired pointer or a wirehair or a pudelpointer or a springer spaniel or an English cocker, but hey, we all have to start somewhere.

Regardless of the breed of dog you hunt with, you're going to have to get one thing straight: Trust the dog, dummy. Obey the hound. Most of the time. Start the hunt with the wind in the dog's face and let it





*Chukar dogs, Liesl the pudelpointer honors the GSP Duchess's point.*

work out where birds are. And are not. Because you're going to find places where they aren't. That's the easy part.

\* If your Pomeranian goes schnozzle to proboscis with a porcupine, that's on you, pilgrim. Bring pliers.

#### **MAYBE YOU WANT TO HUNT WITHOUT A DOG?**

You can hunt without a dog, too. How do you smell? Not too good, I hear. But yes, you can hunt without a dog. Walk the ridge tops. Hunt above the rim and below it. Look for the little pockets where birds go to get out of the wind. Hunt the south-facing slope when there is snow on the ground. Try to get above the line where you think the birds are. Listen to hear birds calling. Use binoculars to scout for the lone lookout that perches on a rock. Do all the same things with or without the dog.

#### **WHERE TO HUNT (AND CAMP)**

The Deschutes River, the Malheur, the Owyhee, the Powder, Snake and John Day River. Run your finger along those ribbons of blue and you are looking at chukar country. *Alectoris Chukar* can be found in almost every major river drainage in eastern Oregon.

Look a little closer. A lot of that ground



*Liesl the pudelpointer retrieves a chukar.*

is public land, and while the terrain isn't easy, it's not supposed to be easy.

Chukar make their living on cheatgrass, which is an unwelcome transplant from the same place chukar come from. Look for cheatgrass on the slopes above the river, and there's a good chance chukar won't be very far away.

Certain types of habitat hold more birds. Look for features that seem out of place: where the green shows against a dry brown hillside, where a bump in the ground provides shelter from the wind, where a rocky outcrop juts up from an otherwise barren slope.

In Morrow, Gilliam, Wheeler counties, look for gray partridge on the tops of the rolling hills. Sometimes hawks can clue you in. They're hunting grays, too.

Travelers from the Portland area might head to the lower Deschutes River, or the John Day River drainage. In Hood, Wasco and Sherman counties, the forecast for both chukar and Huns is good this season.

Some of Oregon's best chukar hunting areas can be found in southeast Oregon. In the small town of Juntura you'll find RV parking, a motel and a restaurant. This is a good base for a hunt.

In southeast Oregon, try Steens Mountain Resort ([www.steensmountainresort.com](http://www.steensmountainresort.com)) in Frenchglen. Chukar hunting is available within an easy drive, but it helps to have a good map that shows property ownership.

There's good chukar hunting near the town of Fields, as well. Fields Station (541-495-2275) offers accommodations and good burgers, but call first to make sure they are open. For a soak in a hot tub after a day on the chukar slopes, try Crystal Crane Hot Springs, located 25 miles southeast of Burns on Highway 78. Cabins, RV sites and tent camping are available.

And don't forget Rome. It's out of the way, but easy to find, even for dummies. All roads lead there.



*Author Gary Lewis is an award-winning outdoor writer and television host. Visit [garylewisoutdoors.com](http://garylewisoutdoors.com)*





*There's no harm in carrying it around, but it's best to invest in a vest.*

## DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU, DUMMY

Hunting licenses are available at over 600 agents around the state, including most sporting goods stores. Licenses may be purchased online at [MyODFW.com](http://MyODFW.com)

Much of eastern Oregon is owned by state and federal agencies. Use a BLM map or an online application like OnX to determine the ownership of the land.

Using the OnX app can help you navi-

gate checkerboarded public and private lands in eastern Oregon's river canyons. Use promo code OHA24 to get a discount, and OnX will make a donation to OHA.

For the largest selection of maps east of the Cascades, including BLM maps, contact Bend Mapping at 541-389-7440 or visit [www.bendmapping.com](http://www.bendmapping.com)

—GARY LEWIS

## ACCESS FOR DUMMIES

One oft-overlooked opportunity for upland hunting is the access available on private lands enrolled in Oregon's Access & Habitat program. For a quick look at properties involved in the A&H program, click on [www.oregonhuntingmap.com](http://www.oregonhuntingmap.com). To narrow down the search to a specific hunting unit, click on Wildlife Management Units. —GARY LEWIS



*Did we get a limit yet? Because it sure feels like it...*









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## BE RELENTLESS





# Homeless Deer

*Drifters in illegal forest camps are killing and displacing central Oregon deer.*

BY GARY LEWIS

*A tent city litters the landscape just off China Hat Road in the shade of the Ponderosas. According to Forest Service guidelines, encampments are supposed to be moved after 14 days. How's that working out?*

**H**ighway 97 is the boundary line between the Upper Deschutes and the Paulina game management units, both mule deer powerhouses in the 1960s through the early '90s.

OHA member Bill Beckley, who celebrated his 72nd birthday this year, has seen the deer population rise and fall. He grew up in Bend and has hunted the Paulina Unit almost every year since he was 8 years old. It has grown harder to draw a tag, he said, and he has had to work harder and harder just to find deer tracks.

China Hat Road intersects with Highway 97 at the south end of Bend and heads east into the desert. Once a quiet red cinder road, it is now a busy thoroughfare with residents of hundreds of forest camps on bicycles and in their cars.

"It used to be hunters from Bend would go to Deschutes River Woods to get their deer at the end of the season if they hadn't filled their tag," Beckley recalled. Then, after DRW was developed in the '70s and '80s, the attention shifted out to China Hat Road.

Back then, it was a place where nature lovers would go to see the caves, hike the buttes, target shoot, hunt rabbits and watch wildlife.

"I don't see the deer out there anymore," Bend chapter member Eric Brown said. "It's just the sheer volume of traffic now. Thirty years ago, it was clean, there was nobody there. Now it's homeless camps as far as you can see."



*A tent city has popped up west of Sisters, and deer are being killed or displaced. The town has been there a long time, but the camps (and their canines) are new to the winter range. Deer must either adjust or die.*

Greg Petsch moved to Bend in 1995 and has seen the decline in mule deer wintering south of Bend since the early 2000s. "There were always deer along the road in the '90s," Petsch said, "and even a few antelope."

James Hays, a senior trooper for the Oregon State Police, said the biggest impact the homeless camps have on the wildlife is the disturbance.

"You have vehicle traffic 24/7 and in the middle of the night the deer get hit by

cars. There are a lot of vehicle collisions with people driving around in the middle of the night at high speed, hitting up to 100 miles per hour."

But it's not just China Hat Road, Hays hastened to add, "A lot of these winter range areas from La Pine through Redmond and out to Sisters – they are all loaded up with camps."

Hays, who patrols throughout central Oregon, says the homeless camps have clogged all the major deer migration routes outside of Bend, Sisters, Redmond and La Pine.

"These guys are addicted to meth, they stay up all night and they steal from each other," Hays said. "They keep pit bulls, and the pit bulls are probably chasing deer and killing them."

Bend chapter member Randy Windlinx has lived in the area since the 1970s. He pointed out it has been since China Hat Road was paved that the homeless started using it.

"Once you pave a road like that you are putting a freeway out in the rural areas," Windlinx said. Call it homeless infrastructure, the term coined by Deschutes County Sheriff Shane Nelson for any paved road, trail or tunnel in the National Forest.

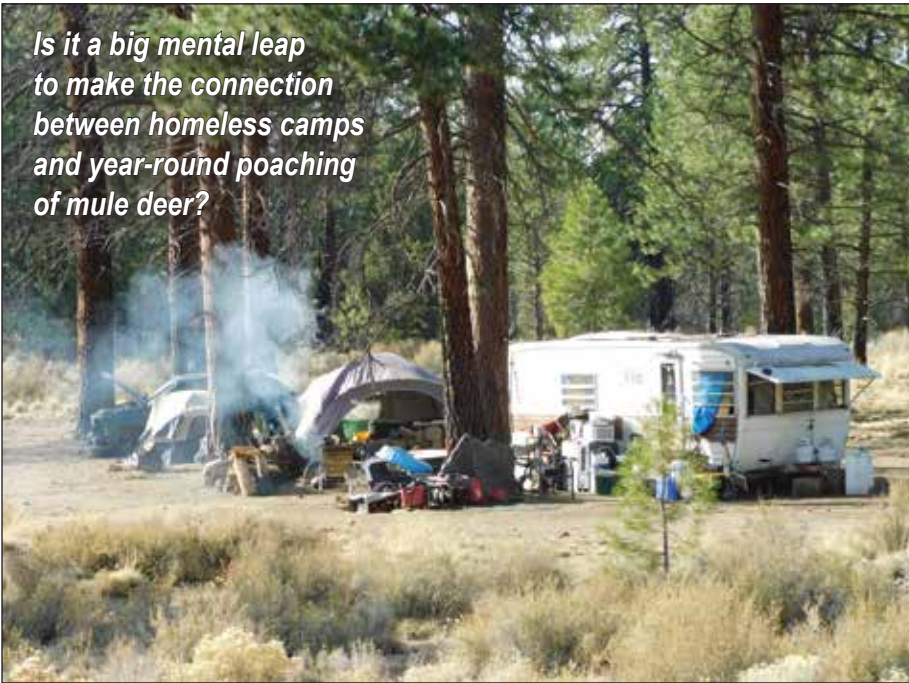
Is it a big mental leap to make the connection between homeless camps and year-round poaching of mule deer?

"We find carcasses out there," Windlinx said. "Do I have absolute proof of poaching? The smoking gun is this: we have very few deer on our property

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR



*Is it a big mental leap to make the connection between homeless camps and year-round poaching of mule deer?*



*On the big game winter range south of China Hat Road, transient camps stretch back into the forest. Most of the camps have aggressive dogs for security. Ever wonder what happened to the deer that used to winter here?*

and there used to be a lot of deer. The deer count is inversely proportional to the homeless activity.”

Windlinx remembers seeing hundreds of mule deer on the winter range on January days in the 1980s.

“We didn’t have hundreds of homeless camps all over the area back then.”

Today the homeless set their tents against his property line.

“My son Wyatt has been riding his bike on Forest Service land since he took the training wheels off and he has seen explosive growth in the number of homeless camps, not limited to the China Hat Road, but also all the way out to Bessie Butte. He rides by a homeless camp and the next thing he knows he is being chased by two or three pit bulls,” Windlinx said.

Many of the camps have a canine component, which magnifies the disruption to the mule deer environment.

This isn’t Deschutes River Woods, where the family dog sees the deer every day. The central Oregon homeless are coming and going in and out of the National Forest on bikes and in cars. Their dogs

run loose, and who can guess how many animals are pulled down by the dogs?

“It is the proximity to town that makes China Hat a magnet for the homeless camps.


Anything you do to make it easier for them, they will come,” Windlinx said.

Paved roads, paved trails and bike tunnels in the National Forest, Windlinx channels Sheriff Nelson calling it homeless infrastructure.

All the studies tell us elk, deer and antelope are displaced by walking paths, mountain bike paths, motorcycle trails and traffic.

In central Oregon, some of those animals get driven into the urban areas. Those are the lucky ones. The rest? Are they feeding the pit bulls or going into the stew pots?

Mule deer are suffering because of failure to enforce laws, which include offensive littering, vagrancy, poaching, animal control and zoning. We are failing the mule deer while we are failing to address the homeless situation.

  
*Gary Lewis is an outdoor writer who makes his home in Central Oregon.*

**Many of the camps have a canine component which magnifies the disruption to the mule deer environment.**

## What people are saying about China Hat Road

Source:

[www.campendium.com/china-hat-road](http://www.campendium.com/china-hat-road)

*One of the worst areas I have ever seen. The place has clearly been overrun for years by local vagrants. It is a trash dump like you would not believe. Dead animal carcasses every few feet...*

—Van Tramp

*I wouldn’t recommend staying here. It’s a bunch of broke down RVs and tents with garbage everywhere. It’s like a junkyard with people living there. Sad.* —Freedom

*Mounds of garbage are unsightly and unhealthy. Long-term camping at this dispersed camping area appears to be in violation to the 14 day stay limit.* —LivingOurDreamNow

*Site was not labeled clearly and was full of campers and tents in multiple clusters, many broken down campers and setups with multiple tents, was not comfortable tent camping and moved on.* —Abbypaige

*As we were getting our stuff together the couple at the other rv had an epic fight. Screaming, yelling, kicking, someone threatened to call the sheriff. At one point the guy got into the car to drive away and the girl jumped onto the back trunk and promptly fell off as he sped away. She chased him on foot, he stopped and they walked back to the rv together holding hands. At this point we felt safe to drive past them and get out. Go to the forest service when you arrive in Bend. They will give you a 7 map set of all the allowed dispersed camping in the Deschutes National Forest. There are thousands of places to stay. Don’t stay here.*

—ExploreSomethingNew

*Thought we would give this place a try since the most recent review said it wasn’t that bad. Still full of trash, homeless tents and animal carcasses. A serious case of the icks.*

—Wheeledandfree

*We ended up not staying there because it was just too dirty. There are maybe 3 spots in total that would fit a rig like ours and all of them were covered in animal carcasses (seriously covered, we counted almost 20), plus half a car (oil pan, tires and stuff) and various other trash.*

—Remember to explore



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# CHECKING OUR BACKTRAIL

## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

### Legal and legislative fights filled OHA's card in 2023

#### Legislative session produced major victories for Oregon's sportsmen's community

While not successful in securing a ballot referendum in the 2023 Oregon Legislative Session to constitutionally protect the right to fish, hunt, harvest, and gather, the sportsmen's community had several major victories.

- **Commission Restructure** - HB 3086, the bill to restructure the map by which ODFW Commissioners are selected, passed in the final hours of the session. The commission was previously aligned to congressional districts plus two at-large positions. The new statute bases all positions in the river basin regions with two commissioners each from the Northwest and West Central Regions, and one commissioner each from the Southwest, North Central, and Eastern Regions. This provides greater representation to the eastern portion of the state and ensures we will no longer have three, or more, commissioners centered in the Portland area.

- **Conservation Funding** - OHA's bill seeking funds for in-state testing for chronic wasting disease was not included in the budget, but there were some financial wins. In addition to \$5 million appropriated for wildlife crossings, the Minam River Wildlife Area Acquisition Phase II funding was approved, and the Mule Deer Coordination position was funded in a permanent status.

Defeating a bad bill is a win in itself. From further restrictions on hunting with hounds and criminalizing fur sales to restrictions of managing predatory animals, the engagement of sportsmen and women around the state were instrumental in defeating or modifying several bills that would have had detrimental outcomes.

- **Gun Control Bills** - The two major gun bills were negotiated when the Senate Republicans returned to the Capitol. HB 2005, which would have restricted so-called "ghost guns," instituted a restriction on firearms ownership and possession, and restricted concealed carry abilities, was reduced to restrictions on home-made firearms. Additionally, SB 348, which would have instituted all components of Measure 114, was effectively shelved.

#### Oregon Sportsmen's Conservation Partnership proved effective in legislative session

The Oregon Sportsmen's Conservation Partnership proved to be an effective coalition in the 2023 Legislature. The Partnership was formed in January 2022 from the initial group of sportsmen's organizations that began fighting the extreme IP3, which would criminalize hunting, fishing, and trapping, as well as animal agriculture. The Partnership has grown to include 36 wildlife and fisheries organizations and engaged on many conservation topics.

#### OHA's 2023 Investments in Our Mission

Projects benefiting Oregon's wildlife & sportsmen:	\$270,050
Publications, information & education:	\$264,580
Defending hunting rights/Advocating for wildlife:	\$149,623
Fighting poaching in Oregon:	\$18,019
Volunteer hours donated by OHA members:	30,678

#### Litigation filed against Measure 114

OHA filed two amicus briefs in early January supporting the Measure 114 lawsuit brought by National Shooting Sports Foundation and Oregon State Shooting Association.

In June, a federal court in Portland ruled that the measure's permit-to-purchase scheme was, in fact, constitutional. That ruling is being appealed at the federal level.

In November, a Harney County judge ruled the measure's provisions violate the state's constitution.

This fight is far from over. From helping to form the opposition campaign against Measure 114 to providing amicus briefs and financial support for federal lawsuits, OHA has been actively fighting the unreasonable restrictions the measure would place on Oregonians. When legislators attempted to subvert the litigation efforts by moving bills forward that would mimic the measure's egregious components, OHA was there to fight them.

#### IP3 proponents filed IP28 for 2026 ballot

IP3 proponents have gathered over 30,000 signatures in their efforts to put their extremist initiative petition that would ban legal hunting, fishing, and trapping on the 2024 ballot.

In addition to criminalizing hunting, fishing, and trapping, the initiative would also criminalize wildlife management efforts, education and research with animals, and even trapping vermin such as mice and gophers. It would also effectively end farming, ranching.

Even with an influx of funding earlier this year and efforts to gain the signature threshold (120,000) to make the ballot, it appears the proponents are now looking to the 2026 election. Initiative Petition 28 (IP28) has been filed with the Secretary of State for the 2026 ballot and gives them three years to continue their plans to take this extreme agenda to Oregonians.



# OHA efforts for conservation make impacts across Oregon

OHA's Conservation Team was busy in 2023 working for on-the-ground habitat restoration and enhancement, as well as influencing important wildlife and land management decisions. OHA focused on conservation priorities across the state in various arenas.

## Highlight priorities for 2023

### OHA Regional Habitat Projects

OHA hit the ground running with our new and inspiring regional project concept in which multiple OHA chapters work together with state OHA to complete landscape-scale habitat projects across the state. OHA wrapped up a wildfire restoration project and planted nearly 16,000 sage and bitterbrush seedlings on mule deer winter range in the Interstate Unit. OHA, partners, and agency staff built 68 beaver

***OHA's Conservation Team of staff, committee members, and volunteers have sought to restore and reclaim recognition that sportsmen and women are our state's premier conservationists.***

dam analogs at various locations in the Ochoco Mountains, OHA and ODFW installed nearly 4,000 feet of wildlife-friendly buck-and-pole fencing to protect one of only two aspen stands on White River Wildlife Area, and OHA installed critical wildlife friendly fencing to protect meadow systems in the southwest Cascades.

### Weighing in on Mule Deer Issues

OHA has been working to influence the revision of the Mule Deer Management Plan for the benefit of mule deer and hunters. To date, nine draft chapters have been released, including important



*OHA volunteers helped construct nearly 4,000 feet of buck-and-pole fence to protect an aspen stand at the White River Wildlife Area on June 10 and 11.*

chapters such as Migration, Movements and Habitat Connectivity, Nutrition and Habitat, Predation and Harvest Management. OHA has reviewed these chapters pointing out areas where the plan could be improved. The final draft of the plan is expected to reach completion and Commission approval in 2024.

### Pressing for Intensive Wolf Management and Hunting Opportunity

ODFW released its Annual Wolf Report in 2023. Wolf packs in Oregon continue to increase, new sightings and groups of wolves are more common, wolves continue to expand to new areas in Oregon, and impacts to livestock producers continue. OHA has strongly encouraged ODFW to better understand wolf predation on ungulates.

OHA was successful in keeping future hunting and trapping included as management tools during the last wolf plan review, and OHA will work to stop wolf protectionists from stripping wildlife managers of those options in the future.

### Public Land Management and Projects

The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) is in the process of revising the Monument's Resource Management Plan (RMP) and OHA is involved. OHA strongly supported continued use of the CSNM for hunting and suggested managers increase hunting opportunities where possible. OHA urged CSNM managers to create additional early seral habitat for species such as black-tailed deer, elk, and numerous others.

### Engaging with Oregon Tribes Following New Agreements with ODFW

OHA is closely watching new agreements between tribes and ODFW. OHA is engaged in conversations with the multiple tribes to address valid concerns of Oregon hunters regarding these new agreements between the tribes and ODFW.

OHA is interested in potential impacts of these agreements on ungulate populations and ODFW management objectives in Oregon, but those won't be known until the tribes' first-year harvest figures are published. If OHA believes that the impacts are substantial, we will engage with the tribes, ODFW, and other entities to share those concerns.

In the long-term, our best approach is to develop and foster relationships with the tribes. The tribes possesses substantial influence at both the state and federal level and now stand on equal footing with ODFW in making management decisions in their service area.

OHA has been advised that the tribes share a similar mindset of increasing deer and elk populations to sustain harvest, and that benefits all hunters.

Tribes are powerful entities that are capable of influencing land management decisions. Without this influence, federal land managers will continue to manage for late seral forests, which indirectly limit deer and elk populations due to reduced forage.

In the policy world, tribal alignment benefits sportsmen in that the tribes do





not align with anti-hunting groups. In many cases, the goals of the tribes, such as hunting and predator management programs, are directly opposed to protectionist agendas.

### **Elliott State Forest & W. Oregon State Forests Plans and HCP's**

OHA played a major role in ensuring public hunting access to the 83,000-acre Elliott State Forest by supporting the preferred alternative, which allows the forest to remain open to public access and hunting for 80 years.

### **Working to Keep Renewable Energy Facilities off Public Lands**

With BLM's Western Solar Plan expansion into Oregon, OHA outlined specific areas and places that solar farms should not be allowed on BLM lands to protect hunting access and habitat. OHA is committed to protecting wildlife habitat on all public lands. Specific impacts from energy development on public lands will be evaluated on a site-by-site basis.

### **Preventing Spread of CWD**

OHA is committed to preventing the spread of CWD to – and ultimately within – our state. OHA encouraged the ODFW Commission to continue its effort to increase CWD funding and awareness. The future support of the Commission and our partners is vital in preventing and ultimately reducing prevalence of the disease.

### **Testimony at Commission Meetings**

OHA testified at ODFW Commission meetings and flagged several wildlife management issues that we will continue to work on into the foreseeable future. OHA was the only organization to testify on game bird regulations at April's ODFW Commission meeting. OHA supported continued controlled sage-grouse hunting that yields critical population information for wildlife managers, supported new youth pheasant hunting opportunities, new turkey hunting opportunities on EE Wilson Wildlife Area, and thanked ODFW for using hunters to mitigate turkey damage. OHA expressed concerns regarding impacts of this change on western Oregon turkey populations that predominantly use public lands, but we will look at the data next year and reassess whether this was a sound science-based decision to maintain quality hunting opportunity on public lands in western Oregon. At the big game regulations Commission meeting, OHA summarized comments and provided



*Adults in custody helped raise seedlings for an OHA planting project in a Lake County burn.*

in-person testimony pertaining to Rocky Mountain elk populations in northeast Oregon, chronic wasting disease (CWD), mule and black-tailed deer, and cougar.

In general, Rocky Mountain elk populations are doing well in eastern Oregon, but elk populations in some historically renowned elk units appear to be struggling. ODFW data indicate that several units were all well below elk population management objectives in 2022, and therefore need management attention. OHA requested that we begin discussions with the department as to how we can improve elk populations in these areas. Follow-up conversations with ODFW staff have led OHA staff to believe that improving elk populations in the units where elk are struggling is a priority for ODFW, and we look forward to engaging on this issue in the near future.

### **OHA Doubles Turn-In-Poachers Rewards**

OHA doubled down on efforts to fight poaching in Oregon by doubling the rewards paid to informants in fish and game poaching cases through OHA's Turn in Poachers (TIP) reward program. OSP, ODFW and OHA have collaborated on the TIP program, which provides cash rewards to persons who report unlawful killing of wildlife, fish, upland birds, and waterfowl and/or destruction of habitat.

For more, visit [oregonhunters.org/turn-in-poachers-tip](https://oregonhunters.org/turn-in-poachers-tip)

### **Habitat Connectivity/Wildlife Migration**

OHA worked tirelessly to improve habitat connectivity and reduce wildlife vehicle collisions. Conservation staff have been involved in wildlife crossing projects across the state including projects on Interstates 5 and 84, and state highways 20, 97, 238, 140, and 26.

## **Learn to Hunt Program teaches new hunters**

The OHA Learn to Hunt Program was officially launched in 2022 with a focus on reaching adult first-time hunters. Since its launch, it has successfully reached hundreds of new students and grown OHA's membership. In several instances, new hunters have become new OHA members and even chapter board members within a year of attending courses.

In 2023, the program expanded beyond the flagship chapter, Hoodview, to include the Pioneer, Lincoln County, and Emerald Valley chapters. Made up of both in-person and online courses and materials, the program is aimed at adults with an interest in learning to hunt.

Supported by generous funding from the Leupold & Stevens Foundation, the Learn to Hunt Program will continue to evolve, providing courses and materials in an effort to bring new hunters into camp.

## **OHA to create network for women in hunting**

Women are the fastest growing demographic in the hunting community and a growing percentage of OHA's membership. As such, OHA is adding a new program to our suite of outreach efforts with the creation of a women's "network."

The Ladies of OHA program will include a comprehensive resource hub specific to women in hunting, such as gear selection, safety concerns, fitness, and many other topics. Events with invited speakers, skills building courses, and Q&A sessions are also planned.

The network will include a strong focus on mentoring. Providing new hunters with mentors who can help them traverse their first hunting experience is a high priority for the new program.

The Ladies of OHA program will launch in January 2024 with a monthly digital newsletter as well as plans for regional clinics and conservation projects. Women who would like to receive the newsletter and information on events are encouraged to email Amy Patrick at [amy@oregonhunters.org](mailto:amy@oregonhunters.org).

This program is supported by generous funding from the Leupold & Stevens Foundation.



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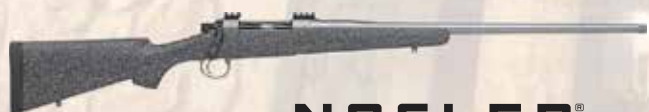
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- 1 Christensen Mesa (caliber choice!) & 1 Trophy package • Special recognition & extra goodies

## TROPHY PACKAGE \$400\*

- 1 in 10 wins a Howa 1500 7mm PRC. (\$599)
- 2 Dinners & 6 Drink Tickets
- 8 Party Starter Raffle Tickets
- 8 Special Raffle Tickets
- 72 General Raffle Tickets
- 8 Early Bird Tickets\*\*
- 2 Commemorative Gifts

## LONE WOLF PACKAGE \$300\* (1-PERSON TROPHY PACKAGE)

- 1 in 10 wins a Howa 1500 7mm PRC. (\$599)
- 1 Dinner & 3 Drink Tickets
- 8 Party Starter Tickets
- 8 Special Raffle Tickets
- 72 General Raffle Tickets
- 8 Early Bird Tickets\*\*
- 1 Commemorative Gift

## DELUXE PACKAGE \$300\*

- 2 Dinners & 2 Drink Tickets
- 2 Party Starter Raffle Tickets
- 24 General Raffle Tickets
- 2 Early Bird Tickets\*\*
- 2 Commemorative Gifts

## STAG PACKAGE \$150\*

- 1 Dinner & 1 Drink Ticket
- 1 Party Starter Raffle Ticket
- 12 General Raffle Tickets
- 1 Early Bird Ticket\*\*
- 1 Commemorative Gift

\* OHA member prices. Nonmembers add \$35 for 1-year OHA membership.

\*\* Early Bird tickets must be ordered by April 4, 2024.

Party Starter: 2 guns (\$599 & \$569). Max 1,900 tickets.  
Special: Rifle (\$800); Knife (\$40). Max 1,760 tickets.  
General: 45 items (>\$7,000 total). Max 24,000 tickets.  
Early Bird: Rifle (\$699); Knife (\$40). Max 1,900 tickets.





METOLIUS BUCK/JIM YUSKAVITCH

## OHA joins coalition for Metolius area winter range

By Mike Totey, OHA Conservation Director  
[mtotey@oregonhunters.org](mailto:mtotey@oregonhunters.org)

A group of wildlife professionals, agency staff and conservation organizations have formed a coalition to address winter range conservation needs in the Metolius area. This group includes representatives from OHA, ODFW, BLM, Crooked River National Grasslands, PGE, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Deschutes Land Trust, and others. The goal is the long-term conservation of the area for wintering mule deer and other wildlife.

The group has identified key private lands parcels that are important for mule deer migration, habitat connectivity and winter range. When any of these parcels become available on the market, efforts are made to conserve them.

The most recent example was the purchase of multiple parcels that became available. The group worked with a “conservation buyer” to secure the property before they were sold to another party that perhaps would not prioritize conservation of the lands. A conservation buyer is a person or entity with the liquid cash available to purchase and hold the property while conservation groups, in this case the winter range coalition, raises the cash to purchase the property.

In the end, the lands could be conveyed to a public agency or other entity with the assurance that the lands will be open to the public, conserved as winter range, and available for hunting. The group is now trying to raise over \$400,000 to complete this latest transaction.

OHA secured its first conservation easement in January 2021. This was in recognition of the conservation needs in a key area of winter range for the Metolius mule deer herd.

## OHA wraps up multi-year sage and bitterbrush planting project

By Tyler Dungannon, OHA Conservation Coordinator  
[TD@oregonhunters.org](mailto:TD@oregonhunters.org)

OHA and partnering contractors planted more than 5,500 antelope bitterbrush seedlings in the Bootleg fire scar north of Bly in mid-October. This recent planting effort increased our total planted sage and bitterbrush seedlings to 15,575 in the Interstate Unit in 2022 and 2023. These plants were strategically planted on mule deer winter range within primary wildlife connectivity areas outlined by ODFW.

The Interstate Unit has seen unprecedented wildfire frequency and intensity in the last decade, and over a half-million acres burned in the unit in 2021 alone.

In response, OHA conservation staff pursued and attained external grant funding, and rallied support for this project while collaborating with more than a dozen partners.

This project supported Institute for Applied Ecology’s Sagebrush in Prisons Project, which provides incarcerated adults the opportunity to grow native plants from seed to help restore native habitat for wildlife. Institute for Applied Ecology staff and

Adults in Custody enrolled in the Sagebrush and Prisons Project grew all of the sage and bitterbrush seedlings that OHA planted. Adults in custody also got their boots dirty planting roughly 1,000 seedlings in November 2022 and April 2023.

This project was made possible by OHA conservation staff, OHA chapters and our partners. Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund awarded OHA a grant of \$23,000, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation awarded \$10,000, OHA’s Klamath Chapter provided \$5,500, OHA’s Lake County Chapter gave \$5,000, and State OHA contributed \$3,000 from our Wildlife Superfund.

OHA thanks the numerous OHA volunteers around the state who made the trip to the Interstate Unit to plant and protect sage and bitterbrush.

Project Partners: Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund, Institute for Applied Ecology, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, USFS, ODFW, BLM, Legacy Sports International, Ecopoint, Inc., Benchmade, Sig Sauer, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Coast and Work Sharp.

## OHA revises board selection process

By Cindy Rooney, OHA Vice President  
[cindyrooneyoha@outlook.com](mailto:cindyrooneyoha@outlook.com)



The OHA State Board of Directors has been working on restructuring the way our state board works and recruits new board members. These changes will allow for selection of board members based on qualifications and OHA’s needs.

Starting in January 2024, the only board members to be elected by the membership will be the President and Vice President, and all officers and directors will be recruited by the board and our membership.

In support of these efforts, a Governance Committee has been established to review performance of current board members, vet new board candidates and present nominations to the board for approval. Any recruited directors will need to submit an application to be presented

to the Committee and go through an interview process. Once all applicants are vetted, the Committee will present the candidates and its recommendations to the board.

Once elected, directors will serve no more than four, three-year terms and will go through a yearly evaluation by the Committee. This process will allow the board to review each candidate, discuss where improvement is needed, and discuss the needs of the board to further advance.

If you or someone you know is enthusiastic about serving OHA’s mission at the state level, contact a state board member to discuss this new process and your interest and skills for serving on the State Board, or contact the OHA State Office for more information, [oha@oregonhunters.org](mailto:oha@oregonhunters.org) or 541-772-7313.



# OHA to weigh in on Blue Mt forest plan

By Mike Totey, OHA Conservation Director  
[mtotey@oregonhunters.org](mailto:mtotey@oregonhunters.org)

The Forest Plan Revision process has started for the Umatilla National Forest, Malheur National Forest, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in a project titled "The Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision." These national forests total 5.5 million acres of public lands that are critical for elk, mule deer, and numerous other species.

OHA has been looking forward to this process, as these are some of our most valuable hunting areas in the state. Staff recently sat in on a public meeting to learn about the revision process, the timelines associated with the process, and where OHA will need to weigh in with our perspective.

The U.S. Forest Service states that "Public input will be integral to the success of the forest plan revision and ensuring that, in the end, we have forest plans that provide for sustainable management well



JIM WARD

OHA has pledged \$25,000 annually to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative.

into the future."

Revising a National Forest Plan involves many steps, from public input, assessing the current state of the forests, Wilderness inventories, Wild and Scenic River inventories, developing a list of species of conservation concern and eventually completing the NEPA process. Working through this process for any one forest is complex and difficult. Attempting to cover multiple national forests in one revision process will add to the complexity. This will likely take years to complete.

For more information visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/yubnj5n>



## OHA pays out \$3,300 in rewards in 8 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued 8 reward checks to informants in 8 cases totaling \$3,300 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: Hunting while criminally trespassing, failing to validate big game tag, exceeding bag limit of bull elk, habitat destruction, snagging, angling during closed hours, angling while suspended, take/possession of salmon in closed area, unlawful take of sturgeon. One man was jailed and charged with unlawful use of weapon, reckless endangering, take/possession of buck, and tampering with physical evidence.

## OHA STATE-LEVEL SPONSORSHIPS

Please support the sponsors who support OHA's mission of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage. For information about OHA state-level sponsorship opportunities, call the OHA State Office at (541) 772-7313.

### PLATINUM

**Coastal Farm & Ranch**  
[coastalcountry.com](http://coastalcountry.com)

**Leupold & Stevens Foundation**  
[leupold.com](http://leupold.com)

**Sig Electro Optics**  
[sigsauer.com](http://sigsauer.com)

### STATE TITLE SPONSOR

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**Nosler, Inc.**  
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**Legacy Sports International**  
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**G4 Archery Outdoors**  
[G4archery.com](http://G4archery.com)



### SILVER

**Work Sharp**  
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[coastportland.com](http://coastportland.com)

### BRONZE

**Cascade Lakes Brewing**  
[cascadelakes.com](http://cascadelakes.com)

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[sportsmans.com](http://sportsmans.com)

#### Silencer Central

[silencercentral.com](http://silencercentral.com)

#### Wilderness Packs

[wildernesspacks.net](http://wildernesspacks.net)

#### Ukiah

[ukiahco.com](http://ukiahco.com)

#### Sunset Lodging

[sunriverlodging.com](http://sunriverlodging.com)

#### Black Rifle Coffee Co.

[blackriflecoffee.com](http://blackriflecoffee.com)

## McDonald's Ferry in public hands



By Mike Totey, Conservation Director  
[mtotey@oregonhunters.org](mailto:mtotey@oregonhunters.org)

With private land occupying much of the landscape on the lower part of the John Day River, access for river rafting, hunting and fishing have been limited. The Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC), with financial assistance from other partners like onX, recently secured access to a 4,054-acre parcel known as McDonald's Ferry Ranch. The parcel has served as "the last takeover" for rafters and a productive landscape for chasing chukar. It also allows public access to other existing BLM parcels that were landlocked because they were surrounded by private property.

WRC conveyed the property to the Bureau of Land Management on Aug. 30. While the management plans are yet to be finalized, hunters and other users can expect that the property will fall under the BLM's plan for the John Day as a whole.

OHA had earlier submitted comments in support of this transaction.



## CHAPTER NEWS

OHA banquets in 2024 will feature a Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle for a Browning Xbolt Speed LR OviX 7mm PRC!

## You're invited to an OHA banquet near you in '24!

### BEND

REX PARKS 541-480-0230

[oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter](https://oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter)

**Chapter Meetings:** TBA; see newsletter.

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 9, Riverhouse Hotel & Convention Center, John Bambe 541-480-9848.

**Update:** Feb. 3, Oregon Partners in Conservation family event at the Deschutes County Fair & Expo Center. Bring the kids down and check out the many booths and games, 541-420-2741. We pledged \$10,000 to the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative for habitat work in 2023 and committed another \$10,000 in 2024.

### BLUE MOUNTAIN

KEVIN MARTIN 541-969-6744

[ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com](mailto:ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 23, Pendleton Convention Center, 541-231-4384.

**Update:** We have placed Turn In Poachers signs along major forest access points.

### CAPITOL

DANNY SOUTH 503-577-6033

[ohacapitol.webs.com](https://ohacapitol.webs.com)

**Chapter Meetings:** No longer having in-person meetings.

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 16, Columbia Hall, State Fair & Expo Center, 503-930-8586.

**Update:** We committed \$5,000 to the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative for habitat improvements. We are looking for volunteers as well as guests for our annual fundraising banquet in March.

### CLATSOP COUNTY

TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 23, Clatsop County Fairgrounds, David Richards 503-440-9934.

### COLUMBIA COUNTY

JORDAN HICKS 949-533-7271

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 24, Columbia County Fairgrounds.

### CURRY

MATT THOMPSON 530-351-5847

[mandmthompson02@yahoo.com](mailto:mandmthompson02@yahoo.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** Curry Beast Feast Banquet, April 27, Event Center on the Beach.

### EMERALD VALLEY

TONY HILSENDAGER 541-729-0877

[EmeraldOHA@live.com](mailto:EmeraldOHA@live.com)

<https://ohaemeraldvalley.webs.com>

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Wednesday, 7 p.m., Sizzlers 1010 Postal Way Springfield.

**2024 Fundraiser:** July 20, Cascadian Bowman, 91714 Poole Cr. Rd., Noti, 623-670-6701.

**Update:** We pledged \$2,500 to the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative for habitat work.

### HOODVIEW

KELLY PARKMAN 503-706-7481

[oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter](https://oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter)

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

**Chapter Meetings:** Second Thursday, Elmer's Restaurant, Portland.

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 24, Monarch Inn, Clackamas, Kaleena [ohahoodview2019@gmail.com](mailto:ohahoodview2019@gmail.com) or 503-314-3090.

**Update:** We pledged \$2,000 to the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative for habitat work in 2023 and pledged another \$2,000 in 2024.

### JOSEPHINE COUNTY

DAVID DOWNS 541-821-1511

[ddowns2646@gmail.com](mailto:ddowns2646@gmail.com)

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., dinner 6 p.m., Black Bear Diner, Grants Pass.

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 16, Josephine County Fairgrounds.

**Update:** Let the Fiesta begin! Our OHA banquet this year will be a Fiesta so come join us for a fun evening with friends!

### KLAMATH

ALLAN WIARD 541-591-9700

[Ohaklamath.webs.com](https://Ohaklamath.webs.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 27, Klamath County Fairgrounds, Julie East 541-884-5773.

**Update:** Join us for the annual Klamath PLAY Outdoors Event at the Klamath County Fairgrounds on Jan. 20; for information, call 541-891-3501.

### LAKE COUNTY

LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 6, Lake County Fairgrounds.

**Update:** We committed \$2,500 to the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative for habitat enhancement.



Young hunters return from the field during the Bend OHA youth upland bird hunt.

CARLY HUGHES



## LINCOLN COUNTY

TODD THOMPSON 541-270-2393

[tjaz@charter.net](mailto:tjaz@charter.net)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** TBD

**Update:** We are restructuring our monthly meetings in 2024. Please contact Todd with some meeting ideas.

## 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.

**2024 Fundraiser:** TBD

**Update:** We had a great turnout at our Youth Day in the fall with over 30 youngsters attending.

## MID-COLUMBIA

CHUCK ASHLEY 541-993-8076

[Chuckashley4120@gmail.com](mailto:Chuckashley4120@gmail.com)

**Quarterly Chapter Meetings:** July 13 at 6 p.m., ODFW's screen print shop on Klindt Drive, The Dalles.

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 30, Shilo Inn, The Dalles, Tony White 541-490-2980 or Chuck Ashley 541-993-8076.

## MID-WILLAMETTE

JOHN TACKE 541-231-8165

[john@visitnrc.com](mailto:john@visitnrc.com)

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

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., meeting 6 p.m., Old Armory, Albany.

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 13, Albany Boys & Girls Club, contact Debbie Mode 541-971-3351.

**Update:** Please join us for our January chapter meeting as our guest speaker will be Tyler Dungannon, OHA State Conservation Coordinator, for a presentation on various local and regional projects.

## OCHOCO

JOHN DEHLER, III 541-815-5817

**Chapter Meetings:** 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m., COCC Open Campus Room 119.

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 17, Crook County Fairgrounds – Carey Foster Hall, Hanna 541-777-4830.

**Updates:** We will be hosting the first OHA banquet of the year. Come join us to kick off this fundraising season with a bang.

## PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 503-266-2900

[oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter](http://oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 2, Mt. Angel Community Festive Hall, Mt. Angel, David Scott 503-710-1233.

**Update:** We pledged \$5,000 to the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative for habitat work in 2023 and committed another \$5,000 in 2024.

## REDMOND

K. C. THRASHER 541-419-7215

OHA line 541-383-1099

[oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter](http://oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 24, Deschutes County Expo Center,

**Update:** Our chapter pledged \$10,000 to the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative for habitat work in 2023 and committed another \$10,000 in 2024.

## ROGUE VALLEY

PAUL THOMPSON 541-941-6978

[Firepmt29@gmail.com](mailto:Firepmt29@gmail.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 16, Ashland Hills Inn, Richard 541-773-8736.

**Update:** The Rogue Valley Chapter is accepting applications for scholarships. We have five Scholarships available and the deadline to apply is March 31.

## TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

**Chapter Meetings:** Jan/Feb meetings only - 3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m., ODFW Tillamook Office, 4909 Third St., Tillamook.

**2024 Fundraiser:** May 4, Tillamook County Fairgrounds, Dixie Whitehead 503-842-7153 or Glenice Smith 503-842-2475.

**Update:** Our thanks to Keith Whitehead for leading a class in how to be a better tracker.

## TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 6, Coquille Community Building.

## TUALATIN VALLEY

TONY KIND 503-290-6143

[oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter](http://oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 23, The Wingspan Event Center, Hillsboro, 503-502-0611 or [tvcoha@outlook.com](mailto:tvcoha@outlook.com)

**Update:** We held our annual Christmas Party at Carpenter Creek Farm & Winery.

## UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 6, Seven Feathers Casino Resort.

**Update:** We contributed \$2,500 to the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative for habitat enhancement.

Our chapter is collecting recipes to put together a cookbook to be for sale in 2024. If you have a favorite recipe, email it to Christy at [OHA.umpqua-secretary@outlook.com](mailto:OHA.umpqua-secretary@outlook.com)

## UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

**Chapter Meetings:** La Grande Library, next date TBA.

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 24, Blue Mountain Conference Center.

## YAMHILL COUNTY

ANDY BODEEN 503-490-2489

[ohayamhill.com](http://ohayamhill.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 16, Yamhill County Fairgrounds, McMinnville, call 503-737-9483 or 503-490-2489.



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## OHA IN ACTION



A plaque honoring loved ones in whose memory contributions were made now adorns the blind.

### Recent Donations to the OHA Memorial Fund

**In memory of Ted Morehouse**  
from Mike Ayres, Rogue Valley OHA,  
Bryan & Tammy Cook, State OHA

**In memory of V. Gary Shoepe**  
from Mark Gustafson, Judy Myers,  
Ervin & Jeannette Kelley, Tom Wilson,  
David & Marguerite Obersinner,  
Henry & Lorraine Geshwill

**In memory of Eric Newman**  
from Bryan & Tammy Cook



Send contributions  
in honor of loved ones  
who loved wildlife to:

**OHA Memorial Wildlife Fund**  
P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501  
[oregonhunters.org/donate](https://oregonhunters.org/donate)

OHA LADD MARSH MEMORIAL OVERLOOK/JIM WARD



Young hunters afield in November were among the first to enjoy hunting from a waterfowl blind at Tualatin River NWR funded by OHA's Memorial Fund.

## OHA Memorial Fund creates new duck blind for public use

By Bryan Cook, OHA Field Director  
[Bryan@oregonhunters.org](mailto:Bryan@oregonhunters.org)

Youth hunters tested out a new OHA waterfowl blind at the Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge on Nov. 11. Conditions were perfect, and the kids had a blast with birds working all day.

The blind's steel frame was built by The Tigard High School metal shop class. It was sandblasted, and powder coated before being delivered to the refuge by OHA staff. At 7 feet deep and 12 feet long, this youth/ADA duck blind has plenty of room for four people and allows great wheelchair mobility within the blind.

The project was funded by OHA's Memorial Fund, and a commemorative plaque adorns the inside of the blind.

OHA's Memorial Fund is supported

entirely by contributions by individuals in honor of loved ones who loved wildlife. Started in 1997, the fund has now funded three memorial projects.

The initial project was a wildlife viewing kiosk and fishing platform at Denman Wildlife Area not far from the OHA State Office in Medford. OHA's Rogue Valley Chapter and other local donors also contributed to that project.

The second project was a wildlife viewing platform at Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area in La Grande.

To contribute to OHA's Memorial Fund and the next memorial project, call the OHA State Office at 541-772-7313 or visit <https://oregonhunters.org/donate>

Contributions to OHA's Memorial Fund honoring loved ones are published in OREGON HUNTER magazine.

RANDY SHIPLEY/WRSHIPLEY.ZENFOLIO.COM

Goslings at Denman Wildlife Area,  
site of an OHA Memorial  
covered viewing platform.





# You're Invited to OHA's 2024 Banquets for Oregon's Wildlife & Sportsmen!



"SUNSET MULEY" BY DAVE BARTHOLET/DAVEBARTHOLET.COM

## Raffles & Auctions!

Great Guns,  
Gear, Trips,  
Art and  
much more!

OHA banquets in 2024 will feature  
a Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle for a  
Browning Xbolt Speed LR OviX 7mm PRC!

Feb. 17 Ochoco	541-777-4830
Feb. 24 Columbia Co.	949-553-7271
Feb. 24 Hoodview	503-314-3090
Feb. 24 Redmond	541-419-7215
Feb. 24 Union-Wallowa	541-786-1283
Mar. 2 Pioneer	503-710-1233
Mar. 9 Bend	541-480-9848
Mar. 16 Josephine Co.	541-821-1511
Mar. 16 Capitol	503-930-8586
Mar. 16 Rogue Valley	541-773-8736
Mar. 16 Yamhill County	503-490-2489
Mar. 23 Blue Mountain*	541-231-4384
Mar. 23 Clatsop County	503-440-9934

Mar. 23 Tualatin Valley	503-502-0611
Mar. 30 Mid-Columbia	541-490-2980
Apr. 6 Tioga	541-294-7912
Apr. 6 Umpqua	541-580-5660
Apr. 6 Lake County	541-417-2983
Apr. 13 Mid-Willamette	541-971-3351
Apr. 27 Klamath	541-884-5773
Apr. 27 Curry	530-351-5847
May 4 Tillamook	503-842-7153
May 4 OHA State Convention,**	
Seven Feathers Casino,	541-772-7313

\* A&H Statewide Elk Tag auction  
\*\* A&H Statewide Deer Tag auction

## OHA Platinum Sponsors:



**LEUPOLD**



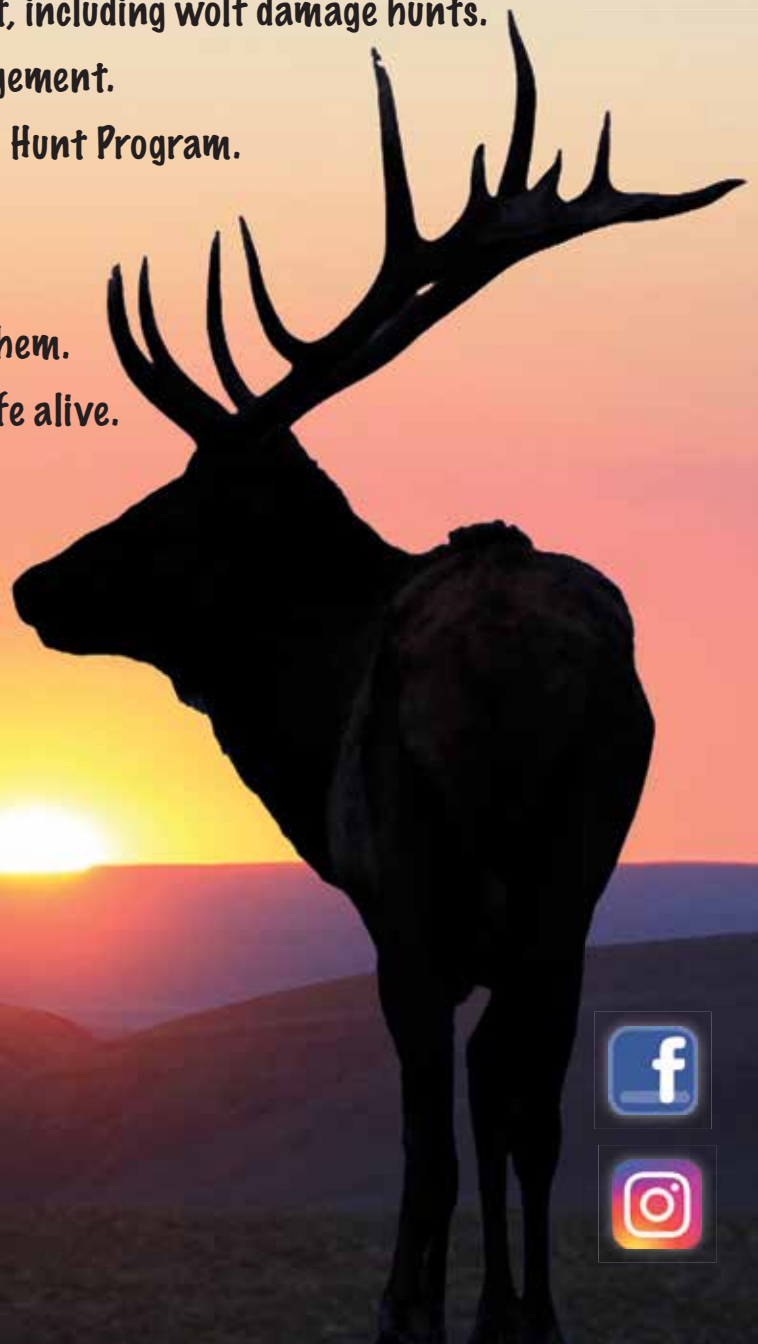


# **GET** *in the* **GAME**

**OHA is protecting our wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.**

**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!**

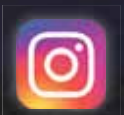
- Leading the fight to protect our hunting heritage.
- Pressing for increased predator management, including wolf damage hunts.
- Advocating for science-based wildlife management.
- Increasing recruitment through our Learn to Hunt Program.
- Leading efforts to combat poaching.
- Enhancing habitat where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



**We Need You  
in Our Camp!**

Join OHA or renew  
your membership and  
get 6 issues of Oregon Hunter magazine  
and your Oregon Hunter's Calendar.

**[oregonhunters.org](http://oregonhunters.org)**





**GET THE TAG OF A LIFETIME**

**Oregon**

**BIG GAME RAFFLE HUNTS**

**ENTRIES START AT \$4.50**

Deer

Elk

Rocky Mountain Goat

Pronghorn

Bighorn Sheep

**The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's  
Access & Habitat program is raffling off  
*12 exclusive tags* with statewide & regional hunts,  
the use of any legal weapon, & extended season dates.**

**The 2024 raffle will be held on  
May 28, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.  
at ODFW Headquarters in Salem, Oregon.**



**FOR MORE INFO:**

**Scan the QR code** or go to

**<https://tinyurl.com/4wevpusk>**

**The event will also be livestreamed starting at 2:00 p.m. on May 28.  
Go to [www.youtube.com/user/IEODFW](https://www.youtube.com/user/IEODFW) to attend the event.**



All proceeds go to the management & research of the species, hunter access, & habitat enhancement.



# TACTACAM TRAIL CAM CONTEST

See rules and enter your best shots at [oregonhunters.org](http://oregonhunters.org) for a chance to win a great Tactacam prize!



## WINNER:

*"It's late September and I really should be back at school."*  
OHA member Mike Mordell of Kennewick, Wash., scores an OHA hat for this image of a bugling Fossil Unit bull and its herd.



## HONORABLE MENTION:



A big Roosevelt bull pushes his cows along a gated logging road in Benton County. OHA member Eric Martin of Corvallis earns an OHA hat for this September image of a bull elk coming out of the alders.



OHA member Josh Scrocca of Sublimity captured this picture in early September in the Metolius Unit and garners honorable mention and an OHA hat.

OHA member John Pomazi of Sandy caught this pic of his Starkey bull (not Wenaha as was programmed into the camera) five seconds before he arrowed it from a tree stand. Pomazi not only tagged the big bull, he scores honorable mention for the photo and an OHA hat.

"PARTLY CLOUDY" AT 7,000 FEET IN THE SISKIYOU



# REVEAL X

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## You'll go nuts for Filbert-Crusted Duck

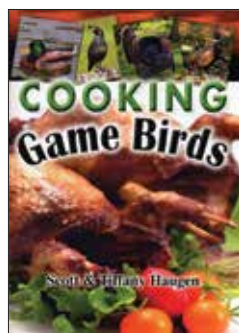
**M**y family – the Fountains and Millican's – homesteaded the McKenzie River Valley in the late 1800s. They logged, and ran cattle and sheep. The valley is fertile, making it not only ideal for livestock but for farming, as well. In fact, the McKenzie River Valley is one of the most fertile sections of land in the entire world to grow filberts, what younger generations call hazelnuts.

Today, filbert farming has expanded, reaching east and west in the McKenzie Valley and dominating much of the Willamette Valley. Don't be surprised if the Grass Seed Capitol of the World soon becomes the Filbert Capitol, I mean Hazelnut Capitol.

Filbert farms have attracted an increasing number of wood ducks, even mallards, overwintering to feast on the fine morsels they love gobbling down. Last season, my husband Scott brought home a limit of wood ducks whose expanded esophaguses (ducks do not have crops) were full of filberts; one drake had 17. Ducks swallow filberts whole. I took them out, rinsed, cracked and ground them to use in this recipe.

We're a fan of eating ducks fresh, as freezing imparts a gamey taste. But this recipe works well with both, just make sure all bloodshot and wound channels are cleaned prior to cooking.

- 1 pound duck breasts
- 1/2 cup ground filberts
- 1/2 cup panko (breadcrumbs)
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1-2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil



Clean duck breasts and remove tenderloins to use in another recipe; think stir-fry. Cut larger breasts in half. Pound out breast meat between sheets of waxed paper to 1/4" thickness. In a medium bowl, whisk mayonnaise, mustard and honey until thoroughly combined. Add duck breasts and marinate 10-15 minutes. In a shallow bowl mix ground hazelnuts, panko, salt, pepper and parsley until combined. Heat butter and olive oil in a skillet on medium-high heat. Remove duck breast from mayonnaise mixture and coat with nut mixture on both sides. Place in hot pan and repeat with remaining breasts. Cook 2-3 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Do not overcook, or it will be tough and gamey tasting. Garnish with fresh parsley if desired.



For signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular book, *Cooking Game Birds*, visit [www.scotthaugen.com](http://www.scotthaugen.com) for this and other titles.



*Ducks love to dine on Oregon's filberts - or hazelnuts - and ground filberts make a tasty crust for duck breasts. For best flavor, enjoy ducks fresh and don't overcook them.*



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# WANTED:

## HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS



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

### **ODFW's Hunter Education Program NEEDS you!**

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

- Firearm and hunter safety
- Wildlife management and conservation
- Hunter ethics and responsibilities
- 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](mailto:hunter.ed@odfw.oregon.gov)**







## Partners In Conservation Family Expo aims to draw kids to outdoor pursuits

*New event slated for Feb. 3 in Redmond*

For me it started when my dad took me for a walk in the woods with a gun. I was 3 years old, dad was hunting grouse for the table, and before we were finished, he had coached me on my first lessons in gun safety. I never forgot what he drilled into my impressionable skull.

Years later, I became a successful hunter when I harvested my first rabbit, and shortly after that completed the circle with a 12-gauge and a ruffed grouse. That was a very sweet tasting bird sautéed in butter with spinach, mushrooms and onions.

We all have to start somewhere, and OHA has started a new program to welcome the whole family to hunting, shooting, fishing, glamping, backcountry camping and a lot more.

It's called the Oregon Partners In Conservation Family Expo, and it is slated for Feb. 3 at the Deschutes County Expo Center in Redmond. It could not be more centrally located to give every Oregonian a chance to drive north, south, east and west on Highway 97 or Highway 126 to get there.

This free event is all about bringing the outdoors inside on a Saturday in February where more than 40 organizations will be gathered in one location, providing interactive, family-friendly exhibits to explain and show boys and girls, mothers and fathers and significant others and grandma and grandpa what they do and how youngsters and their associated oldsters can get started, get back into it, get more involved in small game hunting, big game hunting, target shooting disciplines, rock hounding, hiking, crab-



*Introducing youths to shooting sports is one aim of the new family event.*



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

*OHA hopes that this new event, funded in part by the Leupold & Stevens Foundation and OHA's Youth Heritage Fund with more than 40 partner organizations, will help families get involved with hunting and conservation.*

bing, clamming, scuba diving, freshwater and saltwater fishing and kayaking.

Expect the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the US Forest Service and Oregon Department of Forestry to be represented, with information on access, habitat restoration and careers in the outdoors.

The Oregon Partners In Conservation Family Expo is a collaboration of outdoors enthusiast groups seeking to reach families with the message that the outdoor lifestyle helps start young people on a path that leads to healthy living and healthy choices.

At the event, ODFW will provide information on ways to get involved by taking Hunter Education classes, while OHA will host a booth for its Learn To Hunt program funded by the Leupold & Stevens Foundation, and OHA's Bend Chapter will share information on participating in the chapter's Youth & Family Day (which takes place in June) and the Youth Pheasant Hunt (which takes place in November).

The event is funded in part by the Leupold & Stevens Foundation and OHA's Youth Heritage Fund, which is supported entirely by individual OHA member donations. To contribute to the Youth Heritage Fund, visit [oregonhunters.org/donate](https://oregonhunters.org/donate)

For more, call 541-420-2741, email [jr.tra19@gmail.com](mailto:jr.tra19@gmail.com) or visit: <https://oregonhunters.org/oregon-partners-in-conservation>

This event is free and open to the public.



*Gary Lewis is an award-winning outdoor writer and television host. Visit [garylewisoutdoors.com](https://garylewisoutdoors.com)*

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR



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# AVIAN FLU UPDATE



**Highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)** first hit Oregon's waterfowl populations in spring 2022. Unlike low pathogenic strains that naturally circulate in waterfowl and usually don't kill wild birds, this strain (known as H5N1) has caused significant mortality in some wild waterfowl populations, especially geese. Cackling geese are the most common species killed in the Willamette Valley and significant numbers of snow geese also died last year in the Columbia Basin.

This outbreak has also lasted longer than previous ones. Oregon is again seeing an increase in geese mortality including a large die-off of 1000+ birds at Staats Lake this fall.

ODFW, USFWS, USDA and others continue to track the disease and test birds to document where cases are occurring and to determine the severity, species infected, and distribution of the outbreak.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF AVIAN FLU?

**Lethargy, inability to fly, erratic behavior, loss of coordination, cloudy eyes, swimming in circles, head shaking.** Birds typically die within 72 hours of symptom onset.

## IS THERE A HUMAN HEALTH RISK?

It's a very low risk according to the CDC. The only known cases involved two people who were in close contact with domestic poultry. But take precautions:

- Don't harvest birds that are obviously sick or found dead.
- When handling game birds: Wear rubber or latex gloves and don't eat, drink, smoke or touch your face.
- Keep uncooked meat and juices away from other foods.
- Clean knives and other equipment that touch birds (1/3 cup of chlorine bleach per one gallon of water).
- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after handling birds (or with alcohol-based products).
- Cook all game meat thoroughly (up to at least 165° F) to kill disease organisms including bacteria, viruses and parasites.
- Don't feed dogs any raw meat from harvested waterfowl or allow dogs to interact with sick or dead birds.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I SEE SICK OR DEAD BIRDS?

ODFW can't test every dead bird but may want to test when multiple birds have died at same location and the disease has not yet been detected there. Contact **ODFW's Wildlife Health Lab (866-968-2600)** or email [Wildlife.Health@odfw.oregon.gov](mailto:Wildlife.Health@odfw.oregon.gov). You can also report to the land manager if at refuge, wildlife area or any public land—though some are well aware of mortality and have posted signs that no further reports are needed.

## HOW DO I DISPOSE OF DEAD BIRDS?

- Do not transport or move dead birds as that could spread the disease.
- If dead birds are in your yard, you can double bag them and put them in the trash. Wear gloves so you don't directly touch any sick birds.
- If you are in the field on your own property, you can also bury deceased wildlife.
- Hunters who encounter sick birds while hunting should not kill those birds or allow retrieving dogs to interact with sick or dead birds.
- Wildlife areas, refuges and other public lands handle disposal of dead birds on their lands.





# NOSLER<sup>®</sup>

## 2024 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

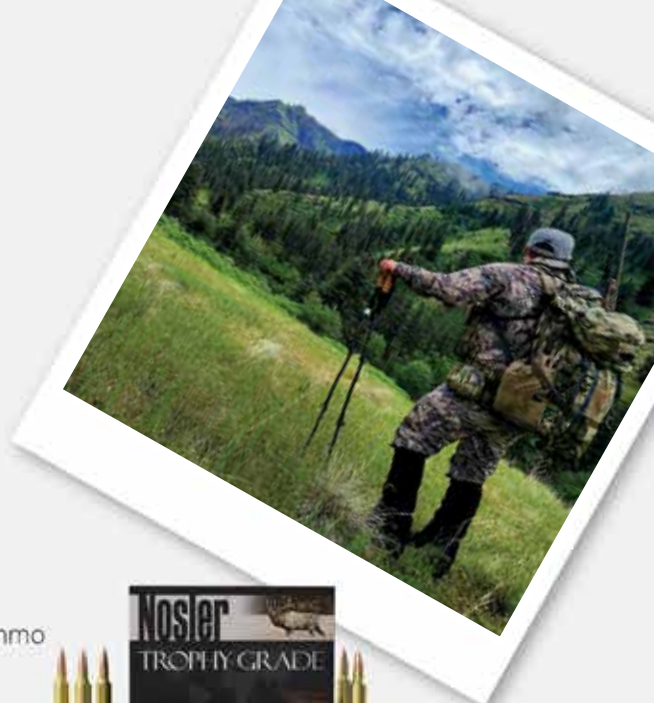
Go to **OHA's website at [www.oregonhunters.org](http://www.oregonhunters.org)** Click on **OHA CONTESTS**. Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of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

### PHOTO CATEGORIES

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

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

Current year contest prizes will be delivered the following year





# NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

## GENERAL CATEGORY WINNERS



**FIRST PLACE**  
OHA member  
Mike Menasco, of  
Martinez, Calif.,  
wins a Nosler Model  
21 rifle for this  
picture of himself  
and a trophy musk  
ox he took on  
Nunivak Island,  
Alaska last February  
at minus-25 in the  
icy fog.



**SECOND PLACE**  
Called to 10 yards!  
Check out this first bull elk for  
Brenda Shipley hunting in the Ukiah  
Unit. John Shipley of Albany takes  
home 10 boxes of Nosler Trophy  
Grade ammo for this picture of  
Brenda and her archery bull.

CHUKAR ESCAPE ROUTE, BAKER COUNTY



**THIRD PLACE**  
This ram was spotted at four miles and the stalk lasted four hours. OHA member David Varner of Salem lands a Leupold scope for this picture of himself with the Whitehorse Unit bighorn he tagged last September.



#### FOURTH PLACE

Somebody is going to be bear hunting in a new pair of Danner boots this season. Austin Bersin of Stayton claims a new pair of Danners for this picture of the family on Hollie's first spring bear hunt. Hollie hunted in the Willow River area of British Columbia in May 2023 and anchored her bear with a Tikka rifle chambered for .270 WSM.

**FIFTH PLACE**  
On a second-season spike-only elk hunt, sometimes your best trophy is the one you take with a camera. For this picture of a great Desolation Unit mule deer, OHA member Julie Sandstrom of Warren will carve her next trophy with a new Altitude hunting knife from Benchmade.





# NOSLER<sup>®</sup> PHOTO CONTEST

## YOUTH CATEGORY WINNERS



**FIRST PLACE**  
The Applegate Unit gave up a blacktail for Easton, and Tyler Douglas of Medford wins a Nosler Model 21 rifle for this picture of Easton Douglas with his 2022 season buck.



**SECOND PLACE**  
A stroll in the blacktail woods. Anna Yarbrough of Fall Creek bags 10 boxes of Nosler Trophy Grade ammo for this picture of herself and Sawyer learning the ways of the forest in Lane County.

2 BUCKS 2 MINUTES APART, ROGUE UNIT





### THIRD PLACE

First morning of a first elk hunt. Jody Brown of Hubbard lands a Leupold scope for this picture of grandfather and grandson and a Nosler M48 on a hunt in Tillamook County.



### FOURTH PLACE

Riding shotgun, 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. Tel bags a new pair of Danner boots.



### FIFTH PLACE

Twelve-year-old Avery Varner of Salem claims a new Altitude hunting knife from Benchmade for this picture of her great Willamette Unit buck taken on the first day of November.





## Let Us Paws to Consider

How to tell if your family pet is in fact a bear

**P**eople are always saying, “Bears are more afraid of you than you are of them,” and “All you have to do is yell real loud and they run off,” and “Bears are our friends.” That’s like saying all U.S. presidents liked to raise our taxes.

Let me put it this way, did you ever notice how Yogi Bear hates the ranger? And Smokey Bear IS the ranger? Or at least bears the resemblance? And Boo-Boo wears a blue bowtie. That proves no three bears can be expected to act alike.

But people are not just confused about bears and presidents. People are also mixed up about Man’s Best Friend.

In Kunming, in the Yunnan province in China, a lady who lives there named Su Yun, which means perfect lotus blossom, bought a puppy for her family, believing it to be a Tibetan mastiff, a heavy well-built dog of a Tibetan breed with a long thick coat and bushy tail curled over its back. Except it wasn’t a mastiff, it was a xiong, which translated into English is pronounced bear.

According to Su Yun, it took a couple of years for the puppy to develop a real appetite. And it sometimes walked around on two legs. And sometimes, like when it had been eating pears, its poop smelled darn good. In fact, that’s when Su Yun had a beautiful realization.

In China, the pear symbolizes the sign of a beautiful realization. And the bear symbolizes the northern gate of heaven. Confucius say one who bears pears is like a tree loaded with beautiful thoughts. And Confucius further say one who pairs bears end up with cubs. Or worse.

In case your significant other has brought home a new rescue puppy in the last couple of years and you are not quite sure what it is, here are some helpful tips.

### HOW TO TELL IF YOUR NEW PUPPY MIGHT BE A BEAR

It claws its way through the garage door when you bring home a salmon

It sleeps from mid-November all the way till the first day of spring

It would rather eat a jar of honey than a can of Ol’ Roy

It ate all the raspberries in your neighbor’s garden

It speaks with big pawuses

It would rather eat donuts than kibble

It climbs trees when it sees other dogs

It destroys your picnic basket

It chews on skunk cabbage

Its poop has little bells in it and smells like pepper



When we talked about this at the most recent gathering of the Bear Mountain Gang, Harlan Peebles said it is important to know what kind of bear you are dealing with. If it climbs the tree and eats you, it’s a black bear. If it knocks down the tree and eats you, it’s a grizzly.

Pistol Pete said, “If it knocks over your neighbor’s garbage can and hauls away the bag and strews it all over your yard, then knocks over your can and distributes your garbage on the neighbor’s property, it might be a Soviet bear.”

O’Jambo said, “In capitalist America, you run from bear. But Soviet bear run for you.” Figley said, “Communist jokes are only funny if everyone gets them.”

Dewey said, “Your dog might be a Bear if it likes pears and hates the Packers. Or if he rips the boards off his kennel to get access to the bird feeders.” (Hint to prospective first-time dog owners – get a bird dog, they won’t raid the bird feeders).

Dewey also said that if one of your dogs mauls your barbeque at night, rips off the grease pan then scatters the content in the green grass where you can’t find the bits in the dark but your pair of small self-identifying tri-color scent hounds DO find them, DO ingest them and later DO regurgitate them all over your carpet – one of the dogs in your beagle pack might be a bear. Odds are it’s the one with the very short tail and the rounded ears.

I think if I had a big hairy black dog and it liked to park itself under the pear tree, I might have paws to consider. But if it uses its bear hands to catch the goldfish, that would be a dead giveaway.

...

Cousin Leddy says what do you call a bear that’s missing an ear?

Answer: a b



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