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GOT REVENGE!

Bear Ground

**50 Shades of
BLACK**

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TROY RODAKOWSKI

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STEENS MOUNTAIN

OHA's sights set on restoring mule deer

OHA is highly supportive of ODFW's extensive effort to revise the Mule Deer Management Plan. OHA staff and our Deer Subcommittee of wildlife researchers and managers have been reviewing draft chapters of the plan for a year and a half and feel this is an important step in a collective effort to reverse mule deer declines across their range in Oregon. The mule deer management plan revision is a top priority for OHA, and it's paramount that we are able to help shape the plan for the benefit of mule deer and hunters.

Ecological conditions, biological factors, land management policies and other issues created a perfect storm for mule deer roughly four decades ago, and that storm has not let up; rather it's intensifying. Oregon boasted just north of 300,000 mule deer in 1986, but mule deer populations have declined since. As of 2022, our statewide estimate was approximately 162,000 mule deer. Today, mule deer herds are facing threats from every direction. Habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation are major concerns, while many current federal forest management policies continue to overlook the needs of declining mule deer populations. Mule deer poaching is rampant, predation is likely limiting many herds, and solar, housing, and industrial development are consuming critical habitat. Now, chronic wasting disease is knocking on Oregon's door, if it's not already inside.

ODFW has undertaken this management plan revision effort and outlined draft objectives and strategies to address these major concerns. There are numerous objectives and strategies that we agree with that are currently listed in the draft plan. However, there are also a number of changes and additions that we feel are critical to ensuring the plan is useful and will achieve the desired result, which is to increase mule deer populations.

It's important that the abysmal state of mule deer populations is reflected in the plan so OHA, ODFW, and other groups can point to this plan to get ODFW the help they need from agency partners, and other entities capable of assisting or hindering deer populations. The current draft plan is attempting to make our mule deer population management objectives more realistic, but OHA believes lowering the bar will hinder our efforts to increase populations. Further, management objectives require a level of accountability and transparency from ODFW to all who have a role in protecting and managing mule deer and their habitat.

That said, we are very supportive of ODFW's proposal to utilize the combined score of current population size in conjunction with population growth rates to determine population performance and prioritization of resources to benefit populations of greatest concern. Population growth rate integration will tell us all whether a given herd range is increasing, decreasing and by how much. Among a number of other issues, OHA is also working to make certain that ODFW maintains and utilizes the tools (e.g., predator removal) the agency has available in order to restore mule deer herds.

The mule deer plan revision will likely be approved by the ODFW Commission this spring or summer. At that time, OHA will transition its efforts from plan review to plan implementation.

OREGON HUNTER

OHA State Office:

(541) 772-7313 oha@oregonhunters.org

Editor & State Coordinator

Duane Dungannon DD@oregonhunters.org

Editorial Assistants

Michelle Simpson, Bret Moore

State Officers

President: Steve Hagan (503) 551-8645

Vice President: Cindy Rooney (541) 430-4722

Secretary: Renee Walasavage (541) 705-5762

Treasurer: Mike Vallery (503) 538-8232

OHA Board of Directors

Chairman Fred Walasavage (541) 296-6124

Eric Strand (503) 750-8271

Paul Donheffner (503) 399-1993

Bob Webber (541) 332-0886

Kelly Forney (541) 580-7056

Jim Akenson (541) 398-2636

Mary Jo Hedrick (541) 576-4006

Craig Foster (541) 219-9202

Garrett Clark (971) 777-0066

Policy Director

Amy Patrick (503) 949-9785

Field Director

Bryan Cook (971) 270-7035

Conservation Director

Mike Totey (541) 974-4084

Conservation Coordinator

Tyler Dungannon (541) 778-1976



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DEER ARE HURTING. OHA IS HELPING.



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Only ONE Oregon management unit is currently at its objective for mule deer, and most are under half. Threats to mule deer are many, and solutions can be elusive, but the Oregon Hunters Association is setting our sights on restoring our deer herds. Please join us and support us in these efforts:

- ✦ *Pressing for intensive predator management*
- ✦ *Protecting & enhancing vital mule deer habitat*
- ✦ *Funding crossings to prevent vehicle/wildlife collisions*
- ✦ *Doubling the rewards paid by OHA's Turn In Poachers program*
- ✦ *Lobbying for funding to fight the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease*
- ✦ *Contributing to Oregon's Mule Deer Plan update*

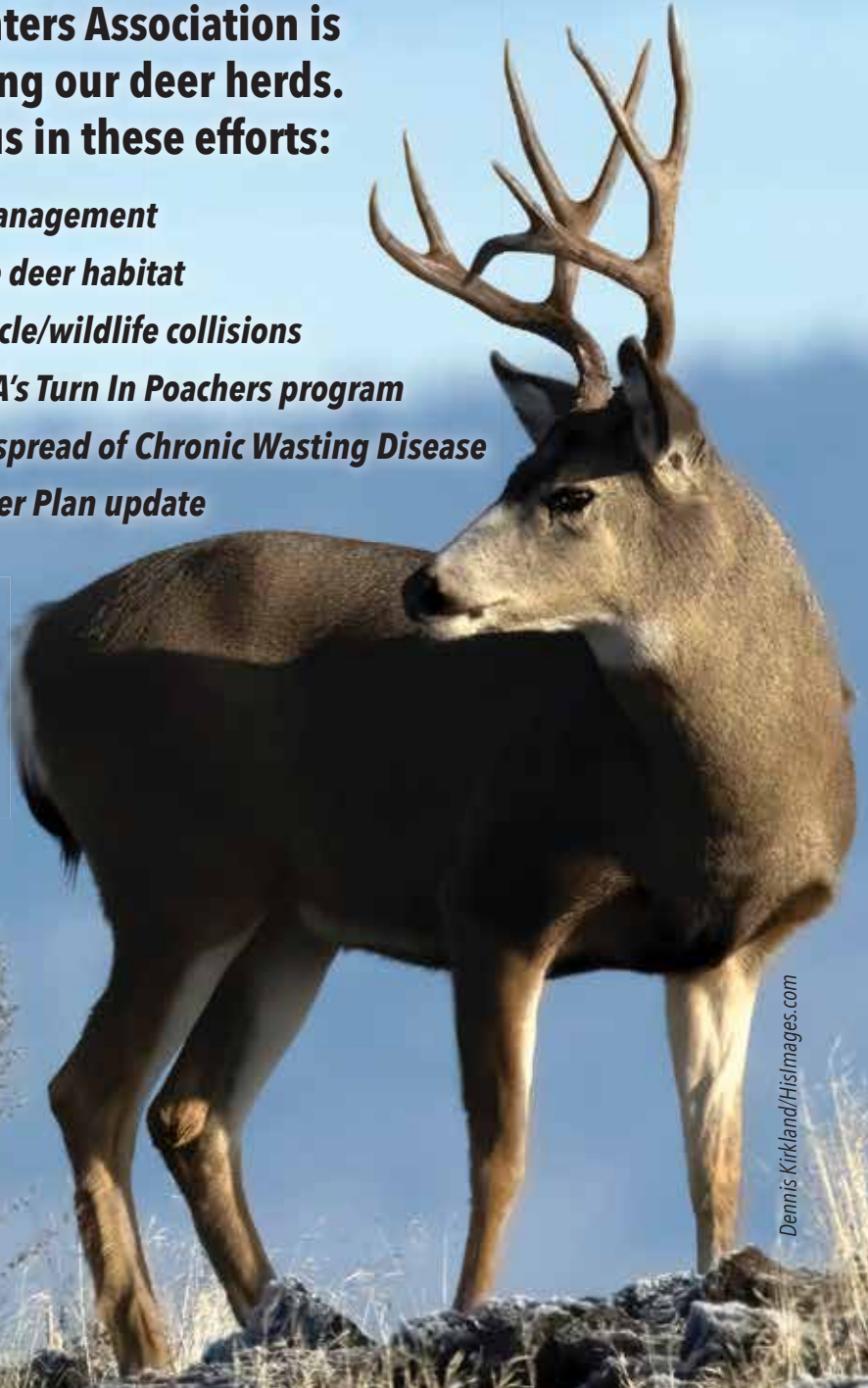


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WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

HELPING SHARP OREGON HUNTERS HOLD THEIR EDGE

KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

1. What was Oregon's most-harvested game bird last year?

- a) chukar c) ruffed grouse
- b) pheasant d) valley quail

2. A 200-series controlled hunt is for:

- a) buck deer c) antelope
- b) elk d) bighorn sheep

3. The daily limit for mourning doves is typically:

- a) 5 c) 15
- b) 10 d) 20

4. You can take a whitetail with a regular buck deer tag in which Oregon corner?

- a) northwest c) northeast
- b) southwest d) southeast

5. Which duck is least likely to be seen on a small creek in eastern Oregon?

- a) canvasback c) teal
- b) gadwall d) shoveler

6. Bears are least likely to share turf with:

- a) antelope c) cougar
- b) blacktail d) Rocky Mt. bighorn

7. Which is not a name for one of central Oregon's Three Sisters?

- a) Grace c) Faith
- b) Hope d) Charity

8. Lincoln County and Jackson County are both home to a river called

- a) Applegate c) Alsea
- b) Rogue d) Siletz

9. Which unit is not on the Snake River?

- a) Pine Creek c) Beulah
- b) Imnaha d) Lookout Mountain

10. Which is another name for the protected spruce grouse of NE Oregon?

- a) sage c) sooty
- b) dusky d) Franklin



WHERE IN OREGON WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN?

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

ENTRY DEADLINE: MARCH 15, 2024.



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Joseph Hewitt, La Grande

Joseph's name was drawn from among OHA members who identified Sawtooth Peak.

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

MARCH 7

Central Oregon Sports Show opens

MARCH 9

OHA chapter banquet:
Bend 541-480-9848

MARCH 10

Late goose seasons end

MARCH 15

Klamath Falls Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show opens, Fairgrounds

MARCH 16

OHA chapter banquets:
Capitol 503-930-8586
Josephine County 541-761-1852
Yamhill County 503-490-2489
Rogue Valley 541-773-8736

MARCH 23

OHA chapter banquets:
Tualatin Valley - SOLD OUT!
Clatsop County 503-440-9934
Blue Mountain* 541-231-4384
*A&H statewide elk tag auction

MARCH 30

OHA chapter banquet:
Mid-Columbia 541-490-2980

MARCH 31

Deadline to buy spring bear tags

APRIL 1

Spring bear opens statewide

APRIL 6

OHA chapter banquets:
Baker 541-403-0402
Lake County 541-417-2983
Tioga 541-294-7912
Umpqua 541-580-5660
Youth Turkey Clinics:
White River 503-358-7821
Rogue Valley 541-857-2407

APRIL 13

OHA chapter banquet:
Mid-Willamette 541-971-3351

APRIL 13-14

Statewide youth spring turkey hunt

APRIL 15

Spring turkey season opens;
Harvest reporting deadline for furtakers
and hunts ending after Dec. 31

APRIL 27

OHA chapter banquets:
Klamath 541-884-5773
Curry 503-351-5847
OHA Pioneer Youth day 503-936-4718

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

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OREGON AFIELD

Snake R./Randy Shipley

Collared doves: the other bird to hunt in spring

It was like we had found the source of all Eurasian collared doves. We made a drive-by reconnaissance, having first secured permission to hunt this spot near Christmas Valley.

Birds were perched in the rafters and on top of the stacked hay bales. Sentries sat atop the roof and on the ends of each side of the barn.

We parked on the north side of the barn, and then Jason, Troy and I got out, closed the doors softly and tried not to manifest intent.

“Walk like a farmer,” I whispered.

On the south end of the barn, we put our backs to the hay bales, and the birds be-



GARYLEWISOUTDOORS.COM

On the table, the Eurasian collared dove is a delicacy. Think jalapeno poppers. They all taste the same to Liesl the pudelpointer.

gan to alarm. I shot one, then another. And the birds piled out while I shucked empties and dropped new loads in the tubes.

The hay was stacked so close to the trusses, the birds had to run the tops of the bales and then launch. That didn’t make them easy to hit. When the last bird was out of the barn, I went back for the brown dog and let her find the ones that had crashed in the fields.

We left for an hour, and then returned. The birds were back and we set up the same way as before. While Troy’s shooting improved, my shooting suffered. Still, I managed to add to the score. We walked into the field, took cover next to another haystack and added to the bag by pass-shooting.

The only great thing about having this invasive species in Oregon is you can hunt them year-round and get lots of wing-shooting almost whenever you want it. Eurasian doves have colonized the whole state. Eurasian doves first arrived in the United States from Asia after being introduced into the Bahamas (1974) and thence to Florida.

First thing a hunter needs to figure out is what kind of dove it is.

Compared to a mourning dove, the Eurasian collared is larger. When perched, its most prominent characteristic is the black neck half-collar fringed in white. In flight, the most tell-tale is the tail. In place of the mourning dove’s long thin tail, a Eurasian’s is fanned and lighter. Its call sounds like oo-ooo or koo-kooo with the accent on the second syllable.

In Oregon, collared doves are considered invasive, and like rock pigeons, are legal game year-round. —GARY LEWIS

Try hunting Oregon’s other blacktail year-round



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Spring is the time to get practice with that deer rifle that never gets shot enough.

I don’t know about you, but I find hunting blacktails hard. And we might have a western Oregon deer season, but it’s not long enough. That’s why God made black-tailed jackrabbits. We can carry our blacktail rifles year-round.

The black-tailed jackrabbit hails from the low-lying deserts, but can be hunted in many parts of western Oregon, as well as east to the Owyhees.

Maybe you missed a blacktail buck last fall. Hey, it happens. Spring is the time to get practice with that deer rifle that never gets shot enough. Bring the deer rifle. The .243 Winchester, .25-06 and 6.5 Creedmoor are well-suited to long-range rabbits. Even the .27 Nosler is not too much gun.

One way to scout is to drive desert highways and byways and look for the ones that didn’t make it across the gravel. Find a couple of jacks on the roadside, and you can find good numbers in the sage.

Try to find one good place and stay put. The solitary hunter should find an

overlook from which to use the binoculars and spotting scope in sagebrush and around the bounds of farmland. Glass field edges, fence lines and openings. Coyotes and badgers can show up on a jackrabbit stand, too.

Gentleman jack likes to feed under the moon, and can be spotted moving in the last light of evening and again in the first hour of the day, but good shooting can be had at any time of day.

Base camp in Burns, Bly or Baker County. From the Columbia Basin to Klamath and east to the Snake, the Powder and the Owyhee, black-tailed jacks can be found on public land and are great sport.

Get out a map and prospect the BLM. Find playas or large bodies of water. Think Malheur Reservoir, Beulah Reservoir, Moon and Warm Springs Reservoir, west of Juntura, but also look south into the Wagontire and to the Whitehorse. Wherever there is water and nearby ag land, there will be jacks in the BLM land.

—GARY LEWIS

Landowners are often happy to allow hunting to keep jackrabbits from destroying crops.

Winging it for grouse management

If you hunt forest grouse, you've seen the blue barrels. ODFW places plastic drums near popular areas for forest grouse and mountain quail to collect wings and tails from hunters for their Parts Collection Survey."

Using hunters is more efficient than traditional survey methods for obtaining age-ratios, sex-ratios, adult survival data, hatch dates/quality information and harvest rates. Biologists posted videos demonstrating how they use molting to age and black dots to determine the sex of grouse. It's quite interesting.

But what's being learned, considering bag-limits and season dates never seem to change? The short answer is plenty, according to Upland Game Bird Coordinator Mikal Cline.

"Game bird regs operate on 5-year cycles, and these birds tend to be short-lived and fairly productive, on a sliding scale from quail and partridge up to grouse and turkeys," Cline said. "Their populations can fluctuate quite a bit from year to year. Changing seasons on an annual basis tends not to have much effect on these species, provided they have adequate habitat and there are no devastating weather events. Hunters are self-limiting, reducing effort in poor years."

ODFW may be detecting long-term declines in western sooty grouse. They have a research project in place to determine why. A population model, including data from wings, can help determine whether changing the season would have a measurable effect. Recently, Washington delayed its forest grouse season by two weeks to improve brood escapement in early September. Late-season hunting can result in additional mortality, outside of the typical rate. "All things we are thinking about as we look at the 2025 5-year upland framework," Cline said.

Use a paper bag. Plastic holds moisture, speeding decomposition. ODFW mails postage-paid bags, or use your own grocery bag. Include the harvest date and general location. County is adequate, no need to divulge secret spots. —JASON HALEY



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

ODFW has a research project in place to determine the causes of possible long-term declines in western sooty grouse. A population model that includes data from wings from hunters can help determine whether changing the season might offer a positive outcome.

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JOIN/RENEW MEMBERSHIP

NW Forest Plan to be amended

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

OHA has strived for years to improve elk and deer numbers on the west slope of the Cascades. We've had similar efforts on the east slope of the Cascades to improve mule deer numbers. One of the major causes of reduced deer and elk numbers has been a reduction in habitat, specifically on federal lands. Since 1994, the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands in these areas have been managed under the Northwest Forest Plan, which specifically set 80 percent of these lands on a pathway for old growth and late seral habitat types.

A lack of active management, including timber harvest, has dramatically reduced the amount of early seral habitat available for deer and elk on these lands. Now, the Forest Service plans to amend the Northwest Forest Plan. Clearly, the current management strategies have under-delivered on a number of items and created policy that precludes active management needed



Curtailed logging on federal lands has reduced early seral habitat for deer and elk in Oregon.

for some issues like managing fuel loads and stand health in the Wildland-Urban Interface.

OHA will provide our comments and perspectives on the need for a more balanced management approach, including high quality early seral habitat.

In total, the current Northwest Forest Plan covers 24 million acres of US Forest Service lands across western Washington, western Oregon, the east slope of the Cascades in Washington and Oregon, and northern California.

OHA weighs in on wolf plan

OHA staff participated on a panel to share our thoughts on the current Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan at the December Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting. The latest version of the plan was completed in 2019, and the agency is required to review the plan every five years.

Much of the meeting, like wolf management around Oregon, focused on wolf depredation of livestock. OHA agrees that this needs to be a continued focus of the management of wolves in Oregon.

We also emphasized the need to continue implementing other parts of the plan, such as developing a more comprehensive population monitoring plan that is needed to inform the development of a wolf population model instead of using a "minimum wolf count" that everyone knows is insuf-

ficient. This would facilitate managing wolves like other wildlife.

OHA also stressed the need to monitor the impact of wolves on moose, deer and elk, and employ the use of "controlled take" provisions that are spelled out in the plan by developing a damage hunt that could be used as another tool to address areas of chronic livestock depredation.

The Commission decided to continue with implementation of the current plan and focus on three primary areas. First is the growing need to focus on wolf-livestock conflicts, specifically those in northeast Oregon, where all tools, including lethal removal, are available. Second is to address illegal take or poaching of wolves in Oregon. Third is the development of a population monitoring tool.

—MIKE TOTEY

OHA will back omnibus bill for Oregon wildlife

CWD funding, wildlife crossings support included in package

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

House Bill 4148, a wildlife "omnibus" bill, seeks funding for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) efforts, the Invasive Species Council, efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflict, and also expands wildlife crossings policies. The comprehensive bill has bipartisan support and is led by Representative Ken Helm (D-District 27), chair of the House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water Committee.

In the 2023 session, OHA's bill seeking CWD funding passed out of Chair Helm's committee with a unanimous vote and "do pass" recommendation to the Ways & Means Committee. Unfortunately, the bill was not passed by that committee and therefore died at the end of the session. OHA is excited to get a second chance at securing the much-needed CWD funding through HB 4148 and has made it the top priority for the 2024 session.

The 2024 session is a "short session," beginning on Feb. 5 and adjourning on March 10. This abbreviated six-week length makes it difficult to pass bills with large financial components such as HB 4148's \$6.7 million price tag. However, OHA is encouraged by the bill's approach to addressing chronically underfunded aspects of wildlife health and optimistic regarding the large and diverse group of stakeholders already in support of the bill.

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BLACK POWDER

By GARY LEWIS

*Expect the coast elk
rut to still be in play
when this hunt opens.*



The new 225M hunt will offer 44 tags good for any bull Oct. 12-16 in the Sixes Unit on the south coast.

5 Days for Elk in the Sixes

Roll the dice for a chance to hunt black-maned elk (and black-tailed deer) in this new hunt

They came to southern Oregon in 1851 and they came to stay. Gold had been discovered at Rich Gulch and tent cities soon sprouted up at Ashland Mills and Jacksonville. There were two ways to get to the Rogue River gold fields: via the Applegate Trail or by sea around Cape Horn.

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hunt deer
and elk at the
same time.**

One of the first outposts on the coast was at Point Orford where nine men were put ashore on the gamble they would get a share in the treasure that was sure to be taken from the ground. What they got was a fight from the Tututni at Battle Rock. And four weeks of terror fighting a retreat up the coast to the mouth of the Umpqua where they were rescued.

John M. Kirkpatrick was one of those nine men. His account of the battle makes good reading and can be found in the book *War Drums Along The Rogue Volume I* by Colonel (Ret.) Daniel R. Edgerton

After the fight at Battle Rock, the nine survived on roasted mussels because they had to conserve powder. "We saw plenty of game, but did not dare to fire a shot, for it would have brought at least three hundred Indians on us in ten minutes, and they would have made short work of us," Kirkpatrick wrote.

An uneasy peace came to the Oregon coast in '56, and after that, hunters with long rifles supplied the mining camps and the farms with elk, deer and bear.

In the 1850s the rifle of choice for an Oregon hunter would have been a Kentucky pattern, a half-stocked mountain rifle, a Hall or a Harpers Ferry Mississippi gun all manufactured for .50-caliber and larger balls and fired by percussion caps or flintlock. The reproductions on the market are good options for an elk hunt in the Coast Range today.

For 2024, ODFW is offering a new black powder elk hunt – 225M in the Sixes Unit. The agency will make 44 tags available in the controlled hunt drawing. There will be a one-bull bag limit and the season will run Oct. 12-16.

What makes this hunt more interesting is the any-legal-weapon deer season is on at the same time. This presents a unique opportunity to hunt elk, deer, bear, squirrels, grouse and fall turkey at the same time in wild country, some of which has not changed much since the 1850s.

The Sixes Unit is bounded by Bandon and Coquille on the north, Gold Beach and Agness on the south, Forest Road 33 and Powers on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west. Twenty-nine percent of the land in the Sixes is public, composed of National Forest and small parcels of BLM.

Expect the elk rut to still be in play in mid-October, and note the full moon in October lands on Oct. 17 so the herds will likely group under the waxing lunar orb.

THE GAME PLAN

Here's the game plan. Apply in the controlled hunt drawing for No. 225M and apply for a preference point in the controlled deer drawing. Buy a western general season (any legal weapon) tag and leave the modern rifle at home. Bring an 1850s-technology rifle and a front-stuffing shotgun, too, because you will see grouse.

Block out at least seven days, starting two days before the elk opener. Use the first two days to scout for elk while hunting for deer, bear and gray squirrels. With a good map, good intel, and a bit of Kirkpatrick's luck, the hunter will have a herd of elk located when the sun comes up on the 12th.

Take a look at the Sixes Unit on a map. The distance from Bandon to Gold Beach is 55 miles via Highway 101, but the best access points for public lands are at Port Orford, Agness and Powers. You can find good restaurants and fair to great lodging in all three places, but be sure to make reservations in advance.

If you're the type of hunter who likes to hang a meat pole, make it extra strong. You could hang a lot of meat this October. Roll the dice on a muzzleloader elk hunt. It might come up Sixes.



Listen to Gary's podcast – Ballistic Chronicles – on Spotify, iTunes, Apple Podcasts and other podcast platforms. Or visit www.GaryLewisOutdoors.com.

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Fowl-Weather Toms

Early-season turkey hunting in Oregon can mean wet, cold conditions that often keep hunters home. But turkeys must eat, and their breeding season must go on.

Thunder chickens also have to escape the elements in order to survive, and this is where bowhunters can swing the odds of success in their favor. Start with a blind. Turkeys see in color, have vision comparable to 8x binoculars, and will detect the slightest movement from incredible distances. Try drawing your bow on open ground, and opportunities go awry fast.

But because the eyes of turkeys are set so wide on their head, they have poor depth perception. Enter a popup ground blind and decoy. Be sure to practice shooting from the blind you'll be using. Know the parameters of where you can move and shoot your bow. And don't be afraid to place a decoy within five paces of the blind in order to ensure a high-percentage shot opportunity. Turkeys won't hesitate coming that close to a blind if all window flaps are secured, there's no backlight, and noise and movement are kept to a minimum.

Toms get fired up and vocal when the sun comes out – even for a few minutes – and will actively respond to calls.

On rainy and windy days, turkeys often seek cover. This is a great time for archers to hunt them from the inside, out. Think of calling them deeper into the cover rather than trying to pull them into or across an open field. When weather conditions are tough, turkeys are more likely to move toward calls that are in cover rather than bust across a soaking wet meadow. I've also found toms to more readily move downhill rather than uphill, in the rain.

Once you hear or see a tom, move as close as you can to set up, then start calling. The less distance a turkey has to cover in bad weather, the greater the chance of getting it to move your way. If the wind is blowing and foliage is moving, use this to your advantage to get close.

With a blind on your back, you can run-and-gun turkeys in bad weather. Call with the wind so your sound travels – turkeys are oblivious to human odor. Keep calling, moving, and listening. Once you hear a gobble, quickly set up the blind and start calling, because the tom could be close. In windy conditions, a decoy isn't necessary. I prefer going without a decoy on windy days, as it keeps the tom moving and searching for the source of the sounds, and they'll often come right into your lap.

If you've roosted birds or see where turkeys are hanging out, you may not be able to move in and set up a blind without alerting them. This is where it's wise to go in the evening before – once turkeys have gone to roost – and set up a blind. It's not necessary to set up a blind days before a hunt in order for turkeys to get used to it; they don't care. But if you bust them while setting up

With a blind on your back, you can run-and-gun turkeys in bad weather.



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

The author took this tom in the Cascade foothills. Catch a brief break in the bad weather, and a gloomy day of turkey hunting can quickly turn bright.

a blind, it can take a few days for them to return.

Watch the weather and look for breaks. My favorite early-season hunting conditions are when it's stormy with brief bursts of sunshine. Toms get fired up when the sun comes out, even for a few minutes. They become more vocal, active and will readily move to calls. Again, hunt these conditions from the inside of cover, out. I've had better luck over the years pulling birds into tree lines, through sparse cover, even along forested and brushy edges, than pulling them across wet, grassy fields.

If toms get hung up in bad weather, be patient and call sparingly. They might hunker under a fir tree, seek shelter in thick cover, or simply stack their feathers, hold tight, and let monsoon-like rains hammer them. Wait for intense moments of stormy weather to subside before calling.

Once the weather lets up, offer subtle yelps. I like starting with a diaphragm call. If toms are gobbling back but not moving, switch to a crisp sounding slate or box call and make some yelps and purrs. If toms are still not budging, crank up the volume and intensity, even offering cackles and clucks in an effort to motivate birds to move.

Don't let foul weather ruin your spring turkey hunting. With the right tools and the right moves you can be enjoying a turkey dinner sooner rather than later.



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50 SHADES OF BLACK

Oregon hunter takes his 50th bruin since Y2K.

BY MAX ZELLER

It was August of 1960 when the agitated juvenile grizzly inserted a five-daggered paw through the car's open passenger-side window and swatted the young woman across the back of her head. At eight months pregnant, she slumped to the floor unconscious, sporting a nasty scalp wound. The husband, situated outside the vehicle and photographing the feeding of bears, was so startled by the sudden turn of events, he shakily documented the exact moment it transpired.

Foolish? Perhaps. But at that time, it was common practice for tourists to feed wildlife along the "buffet" corridors entering Yellowstone National Park. A frantic trip to the nearest medical facility revealed all was well, with no permanent head trauma to the expectant mother. One month later a bear hunter was born. The jury is still out regarding my mental stability.

I've always wondered where my deep passion for bears and hunting came from. Surviving polio, the Depression and WWII in Europe, my folks, emigrating from the rural alpine cantons of Switzerland to America in the 1950s, had no exposure to the meager and privileged European hunting and fishing pursuits we take for granted here in North America.

Did my fondness for bears get thumped into my head while in the womb, or maybe in centuries past when *Ursus* roamed freely across the European continent, my lineage were once hunters of this great bear. I'll never know, but the hunter's fire within me grew as I grew, and the hard-work ethic my parents instilled in me would pay big dividends throughout my outdoor life and beyond.

With a Wildlife Science degree, I went on to fulfill my dream working as a fish and game law enforcement officer in both Oregon and Washington. Working with wildlife biologists and contacting bear hunters in the days of hounds and bait stations provided me with a wealth of bear hunting knowledge. In the days before cell phones, computers, and limited two-way radio contact due to work area seclusion, a "game warden" was often alone and had to work in close proximity to clients when gathering evidence. Consequently, my job also shaped the way I hunted: solo, up close and personal.

Retiring in 1999 and now living within the confines of a National Forest in Oregon's Coast Range mountains, I threw myself into the bear hunting lifestyle. Always solo and DIY on Oregon public lands. Scouting, patience and perseverance culminated in the harvest of 50 bears in the past 23 years – a testament to the wonderful bear hunting opportunities Oregon has to offer.

Aside from locating main food sources and travel corridors in bear country, the most important lessons I've learned regarding close-proximity bear hunting are:

1) Pay close attention to wind direction – the bear's sense of smell is unsurpassed among all North American wildlife.

2) A bear's eyesight is not as bad as most will have you believe, and their ability to detect movement is uncanny.

3) Never ignore the subtle sounds you hear, or think you hear, in the bear woods. Which brings us to the 50th bear taken this past spring.

Upon arrival to bear camp in early May, my spring bear areas on the east side



of the Cascades were still buried in 3 to 6 feet of snow. I strapped on the snowshoes and entered some of my favorite areas, but all I found were a few bear tracks traveling in desperation trying to find what little food stuffs they could. There was some good news: the temps were hovering around 80 degrees most days my first week. The snowpacks were receding and the grass that was exposed seemed to grow a half-inch a day.



This black beast marked the fiftieth Oregon bear taken by the author on public land since the year 2000.

I did have one ace-in-the-hole – a small two-acre exposed meadow at a lower elevation that bordered a huge wetland on one side and a thick dog-haired pine forest on the other. It still had snow leading into the meadow, but the field itself was just starting to show green. I focused my first week's efforts there.

Two days into the hunt, I was sitting at the base of the large Ponderosa pine

three hours before nightfall. A half hour before shooting light ended, a very large cinnamon phase black bear materialized 30 yards directly to my right and was sniffing the exact spot where I sat two evenings prior. This bear had the most flawless hide of long flowing hair – one of the prettiest bears I have ever seen. Being a right-handed shooter and somewhat exposed, I couldn't turn my body to take

a shot without being detected. The bear was on edge and surveying the meadow carefully before committing to the open ground. All I needed was for him to travel 20 yards straight out to get my crosshairs on his vitals. He made his move, and I was seconds from a sure shot when the breeze switched and carried my scent past him. He froze midstride and stared right at me. A second later all I saw was his rear-end



Exact moment in August 1960 when a young Yellowstone grizzly takes his frustrations out on the author's mother (she is unconscious on the vehicle's floorboard).

flying through the meadow and back into the swamp.

Knowing that mature cinnamon boar would probably not return during daylight hours, I left that area to rest for a few days. When I returned three days later for another evening hunt, I noticed the prevailing breeze was opposite than normal, so I set up against another tree on the opposite side of the meadow. Right at last light I heard a single twig snap in the pine forest behind me and to my right. Bears often use this

tactic to announce their presence to other bears before entering an area. That single, subtle sound gave me the time I needed to turn and set up for what was coming. In less than 10 minutes a very large black bear came into view 50 yards away and immediately started to graze on the succulent new grass. He soon presented a perfectly broadside shot opportunity, which I took.

He ran straight at me and stumbled twice before going down for good 20 yards away – all in a couple seconds. Of all the

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The skulls of 50 bears – all taken on Oregon public land since 2000 – speak volumes to the amazing opportunities to hunt bruins here. But they don't bag themselves. Patience and perseverance are key.

hundreds of black bears I have seen in my career, this had to be the meanest looking critter and possibly the oldest. His face and most of his body was covered in new scabs and old scars; his ears were split and his lip on the left side was ripped away and healed over. All his teeth were worn down to nubs, broken off or growing out the front of his split gums and broken lower jaw – all strong indicators of a very old bear and a true warrior. His spring weight was well over 350 pounds, and his paws and wrists were so big I had a hard time moving him into position to process. I managed to get him quartered, and the first load packed out by midnight. I secured the remaining meat-laden game bags high into the trees over snow and retrieved them the next morning.

It almost seems more than a coincidence that this 50th black bear just happens to be the largest I've taken over the years (20 6/16 skull). I do know this isn't the end of the quest, however. As the ravages of time and age will undoubtedly take their toll, I will continue to pursue these magnificent creatures in the name of management and sustenance and, who knows, maybe I'll finally find that missing shade of black – the elusive blond that gentlemen prefer.



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TOMS *in the*

Go undercover for your Oregon gobbler this spring.

STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT HAUGEN

Opening morning was wet, cold and drizzling, and after three years of chasing an elusive tom, I finally caught a break. I'd not planned on seeing the prized tom, because I'd only laid eyes on it once during my preseason scouting efforts, and that was over two miles away.

I began the morning hunting down a timbered ridge, where I'd been picking up some toms on trail cameras. After not hearing a thing, I moved to the edge of the timber to glass an opening. That's when I saw the big tom on the opposite side.

Quickly, I dropped into a ravine, out of sight from the tom, and made a move. Working my way down the southern slopes of the Cascade foothills, I could see the beautiful McKenzie River Valley below, a place where there were no turkeys when I was a kid, but one that has provided some of my fond turkey hunting memories in the country over the past 20 years.

Once I got ahead of the tom, I set up a hen decoy, tucked back into the trees and started calling. I called lightly. I'd tried calling aggressively to this tom before, and it didn't work. The big bird was a loner, never with another tom when I saw it. The beard was easy to identify, as was the rough gobble and the way the heavy bird carried itself.

Nearly 15 minutes passed, and I'd not seen or heard the tom. Just as I got ready to move closer, the light-colored tips of a fanned-out turkey tail caught my eye as it moved through the forest. Then I caught a glimpse of a red, white and blue head, and it was coming my way.

Five minutes later I dropped the tom with a .410 payload of Apex tungsten inside 15 yards. The tom came in strutting, but silent. In fact, it never gobbled one time as it moved down the trail covered in fresh elk tracks.

Over the years I've taken many turkeys inside the timber throughout western Oregon, and they've not come by chance. Turkeys on both sides of the big mountains use timber quite often in Oregon, even the Coast Range.

Timber provides shelter from the rain and wind. A hen with poults will often spend the first two weeks – even more – inside the timber if it's raining and stormy in order to protect her clutch. The first 10 days are vital to poult



TIMBER

A photograph of a turkey with a red head and dark body, standing in a lush green forest. The background is slightly blurred, showing more trees and foliage.

survival, and the biggest killer is cold rain. Because hens hang out inside the timber, toms won't be far.

Toms often establish strutting grounds on timbered fringes, especially when predator numbers are high. Last spring I watched seven hens with broods. I routinely saw some of them when I was hunting, but regularly picked them all up on trail cameras. Within three weeks time, all but one hen lost their entire clutch to predators.

On my trail cameras inside the Douglas fir forests, I caught coyotes chasing turkeys by day, bobcats searching trees to climb and pluck off poults at night. Skunks, gray fox and more raptors than I'd ever seen, also claimed their share, I'm sure. With such high predator numbers, all the turkeys were hanging out in timber.

As spring advanced and grasses came to a head, turkeys ventured out to feed. But they always seemed to be on the fringes, never far from cover. They wanted the prized food, but weren't willing to spend all day walking through the fields as in the past.

Later in the spring, as conditions dried out and the grass reached about three-foot tall, the turkeys headed to the fields more often. The grass was then tall enough to offer both cover and food.

When hunting in timber in the early season, I like being mobile. These toms cover more ground than those with established strutting grounds in the rolling hills or valley floors. I've caught toms on one trail camera in the morning, only to find them more than a mile away on another camera, later in the day. And the number of deer and elk trails they utilize has amazed me, again, thanks to trail cameras.

Because toms cover so much ground, I'm calling and moving a lot in the timber. More times than not, toms will gobble to calls in the timber, but they can be very quiet and slow to move your direction, especially if it's wet and cold.

Timber provides shelter from the rain and wind. A hen with poults may spend time inside the timber, so toms won't be far. Toms often establish strutting grounds on timbered fringes.



The author took this tom in the timbered hills near his home in the McKenzie River Valley.

For this reason, I like to cover ground. Using binoculars to locate parts of birds through scant openings is effective and feels a lot like big game hunting.

Because undercover is sparse in the early season, I like using a hen decoy. Last season I filled all three of my western Oregon turkey tags while using a Dave Smith Decoys preening hen decoy. It was so wet, I was seeing a lot of hens preening inside the timber, and where hens were, toms were.

I called softly and not too often. Hens aren't overly vocal and they don't move

much when it's cold and raining. They're in the timber for protection, not to seek a mate. They have their sanctuary in the forest, and this is where hunters can move inside the cover to find success.

If tom numbers are low, I might sit in one spot and call for two to three hours. But if I'm on a ridge that's teaming with toms, and where new toms roll in throughout the season, then I'm covering a lot of ground, often three miles or more in a day.

While a high number of turkeys are taken in the morning, when hunting the timber, I'll keep at it all day. I've shot a lot of toms between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., even taken a fair number in the late afternoon and early evenings when hunting the forest. While they may be active all day, it's not often toms are in a rush to cover ground. Remember, in nature, toms stand, strut and gobble from their strutting area, making hens come to them. But in timber, toms cover more ground in search of hens, and this is where hunting all day can pay off.

Take a cushion to sit on and make sure your boots are comfortable, as you'll be sitting and walking a lot. When I know I'm going to be covering ground, I don't use a blind, relying on natural cover and big fir trees to hide me. But if focusing on one or two toms in a small area, I'll use a popup blind because I might be sitting there for three hours or more.

With spring turkey season fast approaching, now is the time to scout and locate multiple toms. Prepare as you would for big game, right down to rooting them out of the timber, and the early season could become your favorite time to pursue one of Oregon's greatest game birds.



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Sights to behold on a spring bear trip besides bears

STORY & PHOTOS BY
TROY RODAKOWSKI



Sometimes on a spring bear hunt, a spring turkey hunt breaks out.

Spring is a time when the outdoor world comes back to life, waking up from a long winter of rest and hibernation. Bears are emerging from their holes, logs, caves and such to feed after a lengthy layoff. Turkeys are gobbling throughout the canyons, and I always make sure to have a tag handy for them as well. This is a great time of year to hit the hills across Oregon, chasing bruins and turkeys. Breathtaking views of mountainside green up, roaring cold creeks and blooming wildflowers heighten the senses.

Hiking across the countryside in search of a bruin grazing on fresh grass, I

can't help but notice the plant life that is coming to life around me. Warmer longer days encourage growth of the forest's flora. Deer and elk are preparing to fawn and calve, which enhance the prospects of finding a bear looking for a fresh meaty meal. Of course, the mosquitoes, biting flies and ticks are now hatched and awake, circling like miniature fighter jets or advancing like tanks.

In the spring, bears are eating machines, constantly feeding on fresh grasses, broadleaf herbs, skunk cabbage, grubs, carrion and insects. They will look for just about anything to put in their empty stomachs and are quite opportu-

nistic. Where food is the most plentiful is where you will find the bears.

Chilly mornings can turn into 80-degree afternoons, and hiking across the Oregon countryside is a refreshing time of year to break out the binoculars and spotting scope from a nice warm perch to glass for animals and look for shed antlers along the way. Hummingbirds race around searching for fresh flowers filled with nectar, and bumble bees buzz by. As I try to concentrate on the green hillside in search of a black bear, I often find myself nodding off for an afternoon nap. From time to time, I have even caught bears napping in the sun on a warm hillside.



Find his shed during a spring bear hunt, and then find him later this fall.



Finding a turkey feather might lead you to switch guns, but buttercups are a favorite food of Oregon spring bears.

Remembering the weather can change in an instant is important. One spring we were hunting northeast Oregon and it was 75 degrees, when I saw dark clouds on the horizon billowing and building. As the morning turned into early afternoon, we were soon engulfed in a hail and snow squall that iced and soaked the surrounding countryside. In a matter of a couple hours, the temperature plummeted to a brisk 34 degrees. Luckily, we were prepared and waited out the passing cell of chilly

moisture. Mother Nature's fickle attitude in the springtime is nothing to take lightly, especially in the high country, where hunters can become stranded quickly.

Historically speaking, black bear populations have been on the rise throughout much of Oregon. Since the 1930s when it was thought that approximately 9,000 bears inhabited the state, populations have grown to well over 30,000.

In 2005, the ODFW started using tetracycline mark-recapture methods to better

estimate the current population.

Sneaking through the dense jungle of the Oregon coast range isn't easy, but some of the biggest and smartest bruins will take up residence here and travel near these places in search of food and other bears as breeding season approaches.

Bears near the coast rarely go into full hibernation and can remain active through the winter months, becoming nuisances to property owners. It's not uncommon for hunters to be presented with long-range



Nesting bluebirds and the arrival of young wildlife of the year signal the rebirth of Oregon's outdoors.





shot opportunities, but unless you're practiced at those distances, I recommend being patient for a shot you're comfortable with. Oregon offers some of the best bear hunting in the country with various climates and hunting options. Spot and stalk open country in the Blue Mountains, or head deep into the dense Cascades and Coast Range.

You never know what can happen while in the woods during the spring, so be sure to have all your bases covered. 🐻

Even if you don't bag a turkey or bear, you might score some chicken of the woods or morels.



Camas, trilliums and grass widows are just a few of the wildflowers that add living color to the landscape in spring.





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BE RELENTLESS



THE Bachelors



Bachelor Bucks Match Wits in the Northside Unit

By GARY LEWIS

When Bill Valentine called one December night and said he had pancreatic cancer, we talked about the four boys – Lindsay, Callan, Tate and Perry. He had an assignment for me, he said. And I wasn't the only one. Several other friends of Bill were given various tasks relative to the boys and their mother. My job was to make sure the kids each harvested a deer, hunted birds, cast dry flies to trout and caught a steelhead. And learned all the words to a certain George Strait song. Having made the same rules for my daughters, this was a mission for which I was eminently qualified.

When both Bill and Jessica passed, and after the celebration of life held on a June afternoon overlooking the Sunriver golf course, I got a call from Bruce Rhine. Lindsay had drawn a deer tag in the Northside Unit, and could I come up and help out?

We marked out time in the middle of the season. I had hunted with Lindsay and Callan before, but it had been long ago.

We caught up on the drive out to Kimberly and points east. Finally, I put the F-150 in 4-wheel drive for the last hill climb, and when we arrived, we met Summit High School students, Davis and Ivan. Davis had tagged his first buck opening weekend, and Bruce had invited him back to help with this hunt. Bruce showed up an hour later and we pulled out the optics to see if we could spot a buck before dark.

We had four bachelors in camp, a couple of older guys (Bruce and me) and in the early morning light we had a bachelor group of mule deer bucks in the spotting scope. Across the canyon we glassed a steep hillside studded with juniper trees, sagebrush and bitterbrush. At least four of the bucks were 4-points and the others were threes and 2x3s.

Lindsay and Callan were down in the canyon, and they had their eyes on the same bucks that we did.

They started up the hill in the gray morning light. We estimated Lindsay had a 400-foot elevation gain to get to the same



Lindsay Valentine and brother Callan slipped over the top of the ridge and Lindsay was able to make the shot resting the rifle inside his brother's boot.

level as the bucks and make a good shot.

Lindsay carried the rifle, a Nosler Model 21 chambered for the .26 Nosler cartridge. Callan had the binocular and the range finder.

The bachelor herd of seven bucks fed high on the hill opposite, and then headed to morning beds after having fed on alfalfa in the moonlight.

I tried to count antler points as deer browsed in and out of view.

To the south, Lindsay and Callan appeared briefly on a trail, and then were out of sight again. In my scope, a buck lifted its head and cocked its ears, and the others alerted, too. The bucks began to move north and filter around the end of the ridge. Three remained on our side and all we could do was wonder if Lindsay and Callan were making the right moves.

Lindsay and Cal quickly made a decision to head off the four that had gone around the corner. They slipped over the top, and using juniper trees for cover, found an opening to look through. A buck showed down below and Lindsay tried to steady the rifle.

"I'd had a cup of coffee and no breakfast," Lindsay said later. "I was super shaky." Lindsay looked at his brother. "Give me your boot." And immediately Callan unlaced his boot, peeled it off and handed it over. Lindsay, prone, the muzzle angled downhill, rested the Nosler rifle in his brother's boot, found the crosshair, snicked the safety to "fire" and touched the trigger.

He stayed in the scope and cycled the bolt for a second shot if needed. We heard the muffled boom one canyon back and heard the second shot.

We mobilized the recovery team to find the buck where it had come to rest beneath a juniper. The meat will be turned to sausage, burger and steaks, and the head and antlers will be hung over a fireplace somewhere, wherever Lindsay Valentine decides to call home in the years to come.

The Valentine men are a credit to their parents who were loved and respected in Bend, but I have to say, the two 17-year-olds from Summit High School were high quality individuals, too, lending a hand where needed, always with smiles on their faces. Ivan had just signed up for the Marine Corps, and at the time of our hunt was looking forward to boot camp without having fired a rifle. We put the .26 Nosler in his hands, and I was happy to donate a portion of my deer season ammo to watch him seat the rifle against his shoulder, work the bolt for the first time, load an AccuBond in the chamber and send it. His first two shots grouped a quarter-inch at 100 yards and then he turned his attention to the 500-yard target.

In the middle of a busy October, two guys with gray in their beards got a chance to hang out with four topnotch young men, be a part of their lives and encourage them as they find their own paths in the world.



Author Gary Lewis is the host of Frontier Unlimited TV and author of Fishing Central Oregon, Fishing Mount Hood Country and other titles. Contact Gary at www.garylewisoutdoors.com



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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 to attend the event.**



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

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



WINNER:
OHA member Joe McElligott of Lone is the winner of a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for this image of cow elk sparring in November 2023 in the Heppner Unit.

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HONORABLE MENTION:



Jeff Lewis, OHA member of Medford, caught an airborne Applegate blacktail buck and an OHA hat for this photo last November.



Prineville OHA member Josh Scrocca captures honorable mention and an OHA hat for this showdown of a nocturnal encounter between a skunk and coyote last September in the Melrose Unit.



These honorable mention images captured by OHA member Tyler Otterson of Klamath Falls at a waterhole in Klamath County show that if you're going to take a bath in Oregon's great outdoors, you never know who may be watching. And you may get cat called...

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OHA turkey clinics help youths make the right call

OHA partners with ODFW and others to host two clinics designed to get youngsters ready for the upcoming spring turkey season, which runs April 15-May 31 statewide. Non-mentored youth hunters who have completed Hunter Education have a two-day season the weekend prior to the state spring season opener.

White River Wildlife Area recently celebrated 20 years of youth turkey clinics, thanks to OHA chapters.

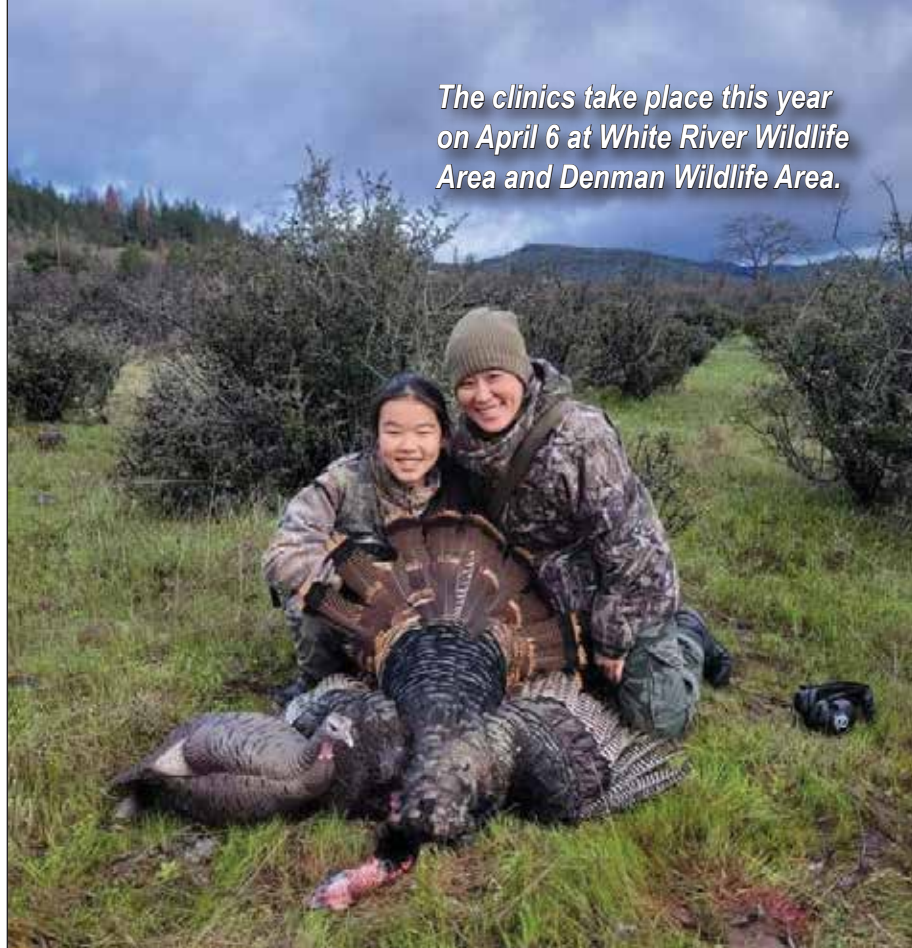
The format includes 90 minutes of education: biology, tactics, legal requirements, and safety, then small-group sessions on calling, decoys, shotgun-patterning, etc. Kids pattern their own shotguns to learn effective range concepts.

Participants hear about all the elements of a successful turkey hunt. This includes turkey behavior, Oregon's turkey hunting opportunities, turkey identification, sign recognition, scouting techniques and hunting tips, including proper gear and decoys. Attendees go home with the basic skills and a bit of equipment to start turkey hunting.

Seems like my dad just told me to quit moving, quit stepping on dead sticks, and asked why I let one walk past without shooting. I'm joking, of course. Sort of.

The events take place this year on April 6 at White River Wildlife Area in Tygh Valley and Denman Wildlife Area near Central Point.

OHA chapters sponsor and staff events, which include seminar-type presentations, gifts and handouts, and even donated gobler hunts.



Theo Whang and his mom took his first turkey in 2023 thanks to Rogue Valley Chapter volunteers.

Seriously, though, spring turkeys are ideal for new hunters. Seasons are long, days are warmer, and the gear is simple. Calling in a tom is similar to calling elk in terms of technique and excitement, and super rewarding. The principles are the same. Reading the mood of your quarry and knowing when to call and when not to is more important than the actual notes. Turkey pack-outs are much easier, of course, and you can have lunch after a successful hunt, maybe even breakfast.

White River Wildlife Area recently celebrated 20 years of youth turkey clinics, thanks to grassroots efforts of the OHA Mid-Columbia and Hoodview chapters. This is something to crow about considering the sport is still relatively new in Oregon with its first season in 1987. According to manager Chase Brown, Fred Walasavage pushed the concept until ODFW agreed to assume registration responsibility. They had 70 kids registered last year, and Brown thinks all of them attended. As many as 97 have participated some years.


Brown said an OSP Trooper donated his time and expertise last spring. We laughed. The guy is a turkey junkie who would "probably trade a moose tag" for a

turkey hunt. I totally get that.

Denman's clinic is newer, but off with a bang. District Biologist Matthew Vargas said they hit the 20-kid max last year, but ended up with 23 as more wanted in. OHA Rogue Valley Chapter volunteer Jeff Heil donated two youth-weekend hunts to kids who had never taken a turkey before. Both were successful. Josephine County chapter volunteers cooked lunch.

Vargas said additional clinic offerings are a possibility "if OHA puts its stamp of approval on it." Brown said replicating events to include eastern Oregon and rural areas were discussed by ODFW's information and education folks. OHA just needs to make it happen. We have the capabilities. E.E. Wilson is a candidate.

Youth ages 8 to 17 are eligible to attend the hunting clinics and must be accompanied by an adult. Hunter education certification is not required to attend the clinic. Registration costs \$10 and includes lunch (provided by OHA) and all the necessary equipment.

You can register online by visiting <https://odfw.huntfishoregon.com/login> or at a license sale agent. Look for the Class/Workshop category in the catalog. 

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Hunter Education

ODFW Hunter Education Program (503) 947-6002
Email: hunter.ed@odfw.oregon.gov





Cook a Whole Turkey in Parts

Unlike smaller game birds, there's a significant amount of meat on a wild turkey. Depending on how you choose to cook the bird, many meals can come out of it.

While wild turkey breast meat cooks up a lot differently than the legs and thighs, the same seasonings can be used and different cooking methods employed. Any part of a wild turkey cooked right and placed on a dressed-up salad can be a real show-stopper. Keep in mind, the quality of wild turkey on the table starts with proper field care. Cooking up the different parts of the bird in the most optimal way results in delicious table fare because legs and thighs cook differently than the breast. Our family eats a lot of turkey in the spring and fall, and this is a great recipe that utilizes the entire bird, and everyone loves it.

The following recipe is for 1 turkey breast, 1 leg and 1 thigh. Double the rub recipe if cooking the whole bird at once.

Wild Turkey BBQ Rub

- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 teaspoons black pepper
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons granulated onion
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes



In a small bowl, combine all rub ingredients. Using half the rub, cover turkey breast and refrigerate at least 2-4 hours. Place turkey thighs and turkey legs (or one of each) in a slow cooker and slather with the other half of the rub. Slow cook on high 4-5 hours or until meat separates easily from the bones. Grill turkey breast on well lubricated grill grates at medium-high heat. Cook until internal temperature reaches 155°, take care not to overcook.

Wild Turkey Salad

- 1 cup cooked & cooled turkey breast, leg or thigh meat
- 2 cups Romain lettuce, chopped
- 1 cup artichoke hearts, chopped
- 1 tomato, sliced
- 1/2 cup green or Kalamata olives, sliced
- 1/4 cup almonds, chopped
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Plate salad as desired, drizzling with oil and vinegar.



Any part of a wild turkey cooked right and placed on a dressed-up salad is sure to be a crowd-pleaser.

To order signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular book, *Cooking Game Birds*, visit www.scotthaugen.com for this and other titles.

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ERIC BROWN

Join us at an OHA chapter fund-raiser

BAKER

CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

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

2024 Fundraiser: April 6.

Update: The Baker Chapter banquet is back! But these events don't just happen, so if you want to make this one a success that will ensure future banquets, please call Charlie Brinton to offer help or donations.

BEND

REX PARKS 541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter

Chapter Meetings: Please see newsletter for date and time.

2024 Fundraiser: March 9, Riverhouse, 541-410-0824.

Update: Our chapter pledged \$10,000 annually to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for 2023, 2024 and 2025. Guest speaker Corrine Oedekerck recently spoke about the US-97 Wildlife Crossing.

BLUE MOUNTAIN

KEVIN MARTIN 541-969-6744

ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com

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

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

Update: We will auction the Oregon A&H Statewide Elk Tag at our banquet. Our chapter committed \$2,500 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for 2023.

CAPITOL

DANNY SOUTH 503-577-6033

ohacapitol.webs.com

Chapter Meetings: No longer having in person meetings.



CARLY HUGHES

These happy campers visited the OHA Bend Chapter booth at the Oregon Partners in Conservation Family Expo on Feb. 3 in Redmond. For more about the event, see OHA News & Views on Page 46.

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

Update: Our chapter committed \$5,000 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for 2023. Join us at Larry's Meadow or other spring projects.

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, 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.

Update: If you are interested in learning how to teach a Hunter Education field day, please call Joel Glass at 503-708-7628.

CURRY

MATT THOMPSON 530-351-5847

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. Call Matt for details.

Update: We are looking for donations and volunteers for our annual banquet. We appreciate your help.

EMERALD VALLEY

TONY HILSENDAGER 541-729-0877

EmeraldOHA@live.com

https://ohaemeraldvalley.webs.com

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

Sizzlers 1010 Postal Way, Springfield.

2024 Fundraiser: July 27, Cascadian Bowman 91714 Poole Creek Rd., Noti, 623-670-6701.

Update: Our chapter committed \$2,500 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for 2023. We hosted a sports show booth Feb. 2-4. Guest speaker Gary Hart from Guistina Land Company talked about the travel management program and future plans.

HOODVIEW

KELLY PARKMAN 503-706-7481

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

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

2024 Fundraiser: Feb. 24.

Update: OHA and ODFW will hold a Youth Turkey Clinic on April 6 at the White River Wildlife Area (see Page 40). Youth ages 8-17 are welcome to come and perfect their turkey knowledge and skills. Our chapter pledged \$2,000 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for both 2023 and 2024.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

DAVID DOWNS 541-821-1511

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, 541-761-1852.

Update: Our OHA banquet this year will be a Fiesta, so join us for a fun evening with friends.

KLAMATH

ALLAN WIARD 541-591-9700

Ohaklamath.webs.com

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

2024 Fundraiser: April 27, Klamath

County Fairgrounds, 541-884-5773.

Update: Visit our chapter at the First Annual Klamath County Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show at the fairgrounds on March 15-17.

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: Our chapter pledged \$2,500 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for 2023.

LINCOLN COUNTY

TODD THOMPSON 541-270-2393

tjaz@charter.net

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

2024 Fundraiser: TBD

Update: We are holding monthly meetings again and would love to have you join us.

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

MID-COLUMBIA

CHUCK ASHLEY 541-993-8076

Chuckashley4120@gmail.com

Quarterly Chapter Meetings: April 18 at 6 p.m., ODFW's screen print shop on Klindt Drive, The Dalles.

2024 Fundraiser: March 30, Shilo Inn, The Dalles, 541-490-2980 or 541-993-8076.

Update: We are going to have a great fundraising banquet this year, and it's not too late to join us.

MID-WILLAMETTE

JOHN TACKE 541-231-8165

john@visitnrc.com

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

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

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

Update: Our chapter committed \$5,000 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for 2023, 2024 and 2025. Candidates for chapter elections should throw their names in the hat before April 15.

OCHOCO

JOHN DEHLER, III 541-815-5817

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

2024 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 17.

Updates: Thanks to everyone who attended the first OHA banquet of the year. Our chapter pledged \$5,000 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for both 2023 and 2024.

PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 503-266-2900

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter

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

2024 Fundraiser: March 2 – SOLD OUT!

Update: The Pioneer Chapter Youth Day will be April 27 at Canby Rod & Gun Club. Our chapter committed \$5,000 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for both 2023 and 2024.

REDMOND

K. C. THRASHER 541-419-7215

OHA line 541-383-1099

oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter

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

2024 Fundraiser: Feb. 24 – SOLD OUT!

Update: Our chapter committed \$10,000 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for both 2023 and 2024. Congratulations to Tom Hilty, who won the Redmond OHA Scholarship Rifle Raffle for a nice Howa .223.

ROGUE VALLEY

PAUL THOMPSON 541-941-6978

Firepmt29@gmail.com

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

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

Update: We and ODFW will host a youth turkey clinic April 6 at Denman Wildlife Area. We are accepting applications for five college scholarships until March 31. We hosted a sports show booth Feb. 23-25.

TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

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

2024 Fundraiser: May 4, Tillamook County Fairgrounds, 503-842-7153 or 503-842-2475.

Update: Our volunteers staffed the Stimson Lumber check-in station, making many successful hunts possible.

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

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

2024 Fundraiser: March 23 – SOLD OUT!

Update: Michael Thompson of NW Mountain Challenge spoke at our last meeting.

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.

Update: We hosted a sports show booth Feb. 9-11.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

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

Update: Our chapter pledged \$2,500 to the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative for 2023.

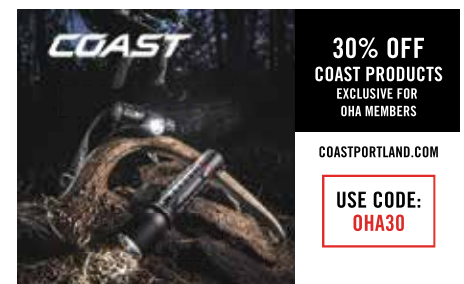
YAMHILL COUNTY

ANDY BODEEN 503-490-2489

ohayamhill.com

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

2024 Fundraiser: March 16, Yamhill County Fairgrounds, McMinnville.





BRIAN ANDREWS



Expo connects conservationists

A young boy practices his aim at a virtual duck hunt as a taxidermist adjusts a proud deer head on display. An owl perches on the arm of its trainer, spreading its wings for a gathering audience. A couple discusses the differences in animal tracks as a toddler casts out for plastic fish.

Families, professionals, and even some hiking goats gathered at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds for the inaugural Oregon Partners in Conservation Expo on Feb. 3. Both a networking opportunity for conservationists and a fun day for the community, the expo hosted numerous groups, including OHA, dedicated to Oregon's environment and outdoor recreation.

"It was a lot of months to put this together," said J.R. Lorimor, OHA Bend Chapter member and organizer of the event. "I was here past midnight last night; it was a lot of work."

The first of its kind, the expo sought to create a centralized network for conservation groups. It was not a typical expo, as it was based entirely around information.

"There's nothing for sale here; this is just about conservation," said Lorimor. "We want to bring together groups that could benefit from networking, and hopefully build partnerships."

Exhibitors included a wide range of organizations, from OHA's Learn To Hunt program supported by the Leupold & Stevens Foundation, and US Forest Service, to the Oregon Falconers Association, who brought several birds of prey to show rapt attendees.

"We've already got a waitlist for 2025," said Lorimor. "We're growing, and people are making connections." —CARLY HUGHES

OHA steps up for Blue Mountains

\$63,000 contributed to improve habitat

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

OHA has increased its impact on elk habitat and research in central and northeast Oregon. OHA partnered with the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative (BMEI) in an effort to expand our habitat restoration and enhancement efforts on the Ochoco, Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur National Forests.

OHA contributed \$15,000 to the Damon Aspen Project that will fence aspen stands, thin conifer, and improve elk security on the Malheur National Forest.

This project has thinned 11,700 acres of conifer, burned 900 acres to improve elk forage, and restored 240 acres of aspen to date. OHA funding will allow for 300 additional acres of aspen stand restoration and 100 additional acres of aspen fencing.

OHA also gave \$10,000 to the Sunflower Juniper Removal Project on the Ochoco National Forest. Juniper encroachment is a major concern for deer and elk, as it results in reduced forage for these species. OHA funding will help forest managers methodically cut 150 acres of juniper, which will restore perennial grass and bitterbrush communities in the area.

State OHA and OHA's Union-Wallowa Chapter applied for and landed an LOP deer tag on The Nature Conservancy's Zumwalt Prairie Preserve to raffie with proceeds (\$22,000) directly funding the Sheep Creek Thinning Project to

Blue Mountains Elk Initiative OHA Chapter Contributions			
Chapter	2023	2024	2025
Bend	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
Redmond	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	
Capitol	\$5,000.00		
Umpqua	\$2,500.00		
Lake Co	\$2,500.00		
Pioneer	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	
Hoodview	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00	
Emerald Valley	\$2,500.00		
Blue Mountain	\$2,500.00		
Ochoco	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	
Mid Willamette	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00

benefit deer and elk in the Starkey Unit. OHA funds will contribute to the thinning and slash reduction of 1,062 acres on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

In addition to providing funds for OHA's continued involvement with BMEI, the Bend, Redmond, and Ochoco chapters also provided a combined \$16,000 to fund an elk GPS collaring project on the Ochoco National Forest. These collars will provide important elk vital rate and movement data that will help ODFW in reducing landowner conflict and improve management of the elk herd.

Additional funds raised by chapters in 2023 will be used to support BMEI projects next year.

State OHA and OHA chapters around the state have committed to funding projects to benefit deer and elk in the Blue Mountains. OHA conservation staff will continue to work with managers of projects we funded to develop volunteer opportunities where applicable and monitor project progress.

OHA made a big splash in its first year with BMEI, and our impact will continue to be recognized, thanks to OHA chapters and their support for deer and elk in the Blue Mountains.

OHA maintains hunting access at Crump Lake

Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) recently enacted a periodic public closure of state lands within and around Crump Lake in Lake County when the water levels recede due to chronic defacement of archaeological sites and removal of artifacts.

Throughout the rulemaking process, OHA encouraged DSL to maintain hunting access, and as a result, hunters on foot in possession of a valid tag for the Beatys Butte Unit, and actively scouting or hunting deer or antelope may access the area despite the closure.

Game bird hunters will be allowed to hunt Crump Lake, but bird hunters will need to request written permission from DSL through the Real Property Program (Shawn.Zumwalt@dsl.oregon.gov).

OHA thanks Oregon State Police for collaborating with OHA to ensure hunters can still access these public lands during low water periods. —*TYLER DUNGANNON*



Women of OHA attracts following in first month

The Women of OHA program launched on New Year's Day with a digital newsletter followed by a virtual meet & greet event on Jan. 9. The response to this new network has been outstanding with the participant list tripling in the first week.

The virtual meet & greet was well attended and proved to be a great opportunity for women to get to know each other and connect on similar interests around hunting and in other aspects of life.

The February newsletter contains information on upcoming turkey clinics, as well as articles and resources related to women in the guide and outfitter industry with a focus on women-owned guide services. March will focus on turkey hunting, and there will be a special edition of the newsletter specific to fitness and the outdoors.

Join the email list to receive the newsletters and updates on events by emailing amy@oregonhunters.org —*AMY PATRICK*

First Gun Calendar winners announced

OHA drew the winners of the 2024 Gun Calendar Raffle on Jan. 3 at the OHA State Office. Winners are posted every Wednesday on OHA's Facebook page, app and website. Here are the first winners:

- Jan. 3: *Christensen Mesa .28 Nosler*
Marylyn Sumano, Baker City
- Jan. 10: *Pointer Acrius Over/Under*
Whitney Gill, Powell Butte
- Jan. 17: *Howa 1500 Flag 22-250*
Jay Pannell, Coos Bay
- Jan. 24: *Weatherby Vanguard Badlands*
Sydney Cox, Sandy
- Jan. 31: *Taurus Judge .45/410*
Rob Freel, Beaverton
- Feb. 7: *Sig Cross*
Ron Shoffeitt, Gold Beach



Sales of the 2025 OHA Gun Raffle Calendar will begin in February, at sports shows, participating OHA banquets, and by calling the OHA state office at 541-772-7313 or visiting OHA's website at: www.oregonhunters.org/store

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.

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Contributions made recently to the OHA Memorial Fund

In memory of Craig Starr from Sharon Starr

In memory of Gary Shoepe from Cathy Asher and Diana Hoff

In memory of Fred Pariano from Tim Maltoni and Tadd Moore

In memory of Greg Oriet from Jeff Stickland, Tammy & Bryan 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

OHA LADD MARSH MEMORIAL OVERLOOK/JIM WARD

CRUMP LAKE/CINDY ROONEY

OHA IN ACTION

By MIKE TOTEY
OHA CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

OHA Advisory Council lends expert insights to OHA stances on issues

INDIGO/ODFW

Wildlife conservation, management and science is as broad and variable as the places we hunt in Oregon. OHA is continually tracking, providing input on, and leading wildlife and lands conservation work across Oregon. The topics are diverse and span the range of wildlife we care about and all areas of Oregon. Having expertise and real world experience with this broad array of species is challenging at best. In order to have a “ready pool of resources and expertise” for OHA (the Wildlife/Lands Committee and Conservation Staff) to reach out to, OHA formed an advisory council.

This OHA Advisory Council, initiated in 2021, is made up of subject matter experts with a diverse array of experience and backgrounds. These experienced professionals are not limited to Oregon or any one particular background. Current and former wildlife research professionals, land managers, and former agency staff bring a pool of knowledge and experience to our organization that goes well beyond what our staff and board members can provide.

Members of the council help provide

expertise with the comments we submit on complex and technical wildlife and habitat related issues ranging from diseases, to harvest levels, to population modelling. This is cornerstone to OHA using the best available science and data when providing comments to the Fish & Wildlife Commission, to land management agencies, or on species management plans. Council members have also been pulled into various other sub-committees, including the mule deer subcommittee and wolf management subcommittee.

The council is chaired by northeast Oregon Board member Jim Akenson. Current council members include:

Mike Schlegel (Idaho). Mike was a career IDFG biologist/manager and elk research biologist. He has also been a board member and conservation Director for the Pope & Young Club. Mike grew up in Oregon and has BS and MS degrees from OSU.

Tim Hiller (Montana). Tim has a PhD in Wildlife Management and currently runs a consulting business in Montana. He is a past ODFW furbearer/carnivore biologist.

Tim recently wrote an op-ed in support of public land beaver trapping in Oregon.

Steve Denny (SW OR). Steve held several positions with ODFW over his career. He is viewed with much respect about black-tailed deer, elk, game bird, and wildlife area management.

Craig Foster (SE OR). Craig (Foz) spent a career doing district wildlife work for ODFW. Craig has worked with virtually all east-side wildlife species and really understands more arid habitats.

Todd Hoodenpyl (NE OR). Todd is retired OSP with a wildlife degree. Todd has worked various parts of Oregon and thoroughly understands both wildlife management and wildlife law enforcement.

Holly Akenson (NE OR). Holly spent 8 years on the Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission. She has an Masters degree in wildlife and extensive experience with wildlife research (carnivores and bighorns) and with wildlife policy setting.

Vic Coggins (NE OR). Vic spent a career doing district wildlife work for ODFW. He also served as one of the Northeast Oregon OHA board members.

Monty Gregg (Central OR). Monty is the wildlife biologist for the Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grasslands. He has extensive experience in the central Oregon area and with mule deer habitat work, USFS land management, and is the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative lead.

Ken McCall (Willamette Valley). A former OHA board member and vice president, Ken spent most of his professional career with the USFS. Ken brings recreation and land management experience to the council.

DeWaine Jackson (SW Oregon).

DeWaine holds a PhD from Colorado State. He served as ODFW West Region Wildlife Research Supervisor for 30 years.

Council members possess a wealth of wolf management experience inside and outside of Oregon.



KIAMATH BASIN/JOHN MCFARLAND III

OHA's Advisory Council has been reviewing and commenting on the revised Mule Deer Plan draft.

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ABOUT THESE
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TIP CASES



OHA offers rewards in moose, bighorn poaching cases

Poaching has spiraled out of control in Oregon recently, and nothing has been sacred – not bighorn sheep, not moose, not even bear cubs. Deer and elk cases span the state. Oregon State Police are seeking tips in these cases and others.

For details and photos of these incidents and more, visit t.ly/03gSe

OHA pays about \$20,000 annually to informants in fish and wildlife violation cases through our Turn In Poachers (TIP) Reward Fund. OHA has also helped pass laws for tougher penalties for poaching. If you support our efforts, please join and support OHA at oregonhunters.org. You can donate to our anti-poaching efforts at oregonhunters.org/donate



TIP rewards are paid for information leading to the arrest/conviction of person(s) for the illegal possession, killing, taking, and/or waste of deer, elk, antelope, bear, cougar, wolf, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose, furbearers and/or game birds. Informants may remain anonymous and still collect a reward.

OHA recently doubled TIP rewards:

-  **\$2,000 Bighorn Sheep, Mountain Goat and Moose**
-  **\$1,000 Elk, Deer and Antelope**
-  **\$600 Bear, Cougar and Wolf**
-  **\$300 Habitat Destruction**
-  **\$200 Game Fish and Shellfish**
-  **\$200 Upland Birds and Waterfowl**
-  **\$200 Furbearers**

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

ODFW Preference Point Rewards:

-  **5 points for reporting a case involving bighorn sheep, mountain goat, moose or wolf**
-  **4 points for reporting a case involving elk, deer, antelope, bear or cougar**

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

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

TIP E-Mail: TIP@state.or.us



OHA pays out \$12,600 in rewards in 13 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued 8 reward checks to informants in 13 cases totaling \$12,600 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: Unlawful take/possession of buck deer, criminal trespass, hunting on a public roadway, no resident hunting license, no waterfowl validation, possession of weapon by a felon, hunting on the cultivated/enclosed lands of another, unlawful take of bull and spike elk, take of a game bird, unlawful take of buck deer-felony, unlawful take of bull elk-felony, hunting while suspended, hunting with the aid of artificial light, hunting with/from a motor vehicle. A total of 14 firearms were seized.



A bighorn ram was found on Nov. 30, shot and left to waste on BLM land near Hibbard Creek Road in the Lookout Mountain Unit. Only the head and horns were taken. OHA is offering a \$2,000 reward for information leading to an arrest in the case.



A Clackamas County 3-point buck was shot multiple times and killed on private property near S. Hult Road and S. Olson Road on Nov. 5. It was then loaded onto a sled. Witnesses saw a black Ford F-150 with a canopy in the area at the time.



Poachers shot a cow moose in a field about one mile east of Ontario near the Idaho border in the Beulah Unit on Jan. 16, and OHA is offering a reward of \$2,000 for information that leads to an arrest or citation in the case.



This Umatilla bull elk was shot and left to waste on Hwy. 74, four miles west of Hwy. 395 on Oct. 4. Investigation revealed the bull was killed approximately 100 yards from the highway with a single gunshot wound to the head, then left to waste.

NOSLER®

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

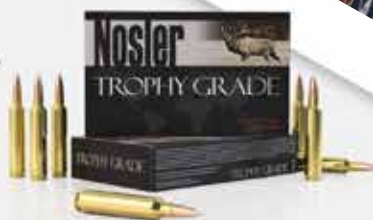
Go to **OHA's website at www.oregonhunters.org** Click on **OHA CONTESTS**. Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of Nosler, proud sponsor and OHA supporter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

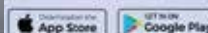
YOUTH: Same as above, except photos must feature a person who was 18 or younger at the time the photo was taken.

Current year contest prizes will be delivered the following year.



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SCAN

NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS



Anchorage OHA member Bob Mumford has earned a place in the finals of the 2024 Nosler Photo Contest and an OHA Coast knife with this photo of a flower-munching black bear taken in the Yukon in September of 2023.

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OHA member Evan Bannock of Medford secures a place in the finals of the 2024 Nosler Photo Contest and an OHA Coast knife with this photo of himself and a barren ground caribou taken in the Brooks Range of Alaska in 2021.



NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



OHA member Will Waddell poses for photographer Jeff Stone and snagged honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this Indigo Unit blacktail.



Klamath Falls OHA member Tyler Otterson's photo of Justin Halverson glassing the 231X unit on opening morning of 2023 wins a Nosler hat and honorable mention.



Kyle Payne, OHA member from Sublimity, nabs honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Josie and Carter Payne and this Santiam Unit cinnamon black bear taken in September 2023.



OHA member Jayonna Hunnell of Canyonville and her October 2023 Powers blacktail buck are honorable mention and Nosler hat winners.

NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS



Astoria resident and OHA member Mathew Dornin garners a berth in the finals of the 2024 Nosler Photo Contest and an OHA Coast knife for this photo of son James Dornin. This Saddle Mountain Unit buck was taken in October of 2023.



OHA member Randy Munch of Bend finds himself in the finals of the 2024 Nosler Photo Contest and winner of an OHA Coast knife for this photo of Owen Munch and Dakota Ellis. The boys hiked 36 miles over 4 days in the Sumpter Unit on their first official elk trip.

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BRIDGE CREEK/TYLER DUNGANNON

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



Bill Ogren, OHA member of Grants Pass, wins a Nosler hat and honorable mention for this photo of Katie Ogren and her first buck from the Applegate Unit in November.



Tillamook OHA member Matt Marcum garners honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of nephew Mason on a mentored black-tailed deer hunt last fall in southern Oregon.



Will Waddell, OHA member from Springfield, is a Nosler hat winner for this honorable mention photo of his niece Kori Goff and her first elk shot in December of 2023 in the Powers Unit.

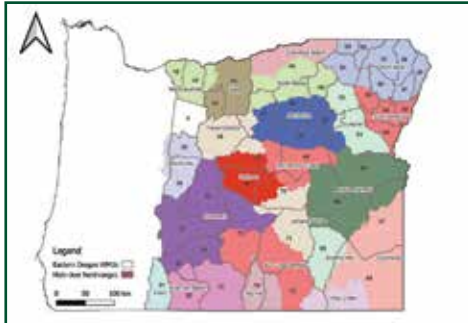


OHA member Lance Powlinson of Oregon City nabs honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Ethan Viera and a December limit of ducks in Washington County.

Mule Deer Plan revisions

Hopefully OHA members managed to catch one of ODFW's five webinars covering different chapters in the draft revised Mule Deer Plan or one of the in-person meetings in Salem, Bend or La Grande in early February. Below are some highlights from the new Plan which could be adopted by the Commission as early as April 2024.

SHIFT FROM WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT UNITS (WMU) TO HERD RANGES FOR MONITORING



The wildlife management units put in place in the mid-1900s are more about political boundaries than an actual reflection of animal behavior.

One of the focuses of ODFW's new

Mule Deer Plan is to shift population monitoring to a more biologically meaningful boundary. Moving forward, mule deer populations will be counted and tracked according to their year-round range or what's known as "herd range scale." This will help address discrepancies between population counts (conducted during winter) and tags (allocated based on summering populations).

See the map for more information.

NEW INTEGRATED POPULATION MODEL (IPM)

Another highlight of the Plan is the use of a new population model that provides more consistency and transparency in population counts, reducing the amount of variability due to sample and environmental variation. Counts can vary based on snowpack for example, as heavy snow will congregate big game and produce higher results than years with lower snowpack. In addition to annually counting fawn ratios and buck ratios (in the fall post hunting season), ODFW conducts abundance surveys of herd ranges every three years. This data is used to inform the IPM to develop annual population estimates. The IPM at herd range scale (rather than by WMU) is only expected to improve over time.

NEW APPROACH FOR MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

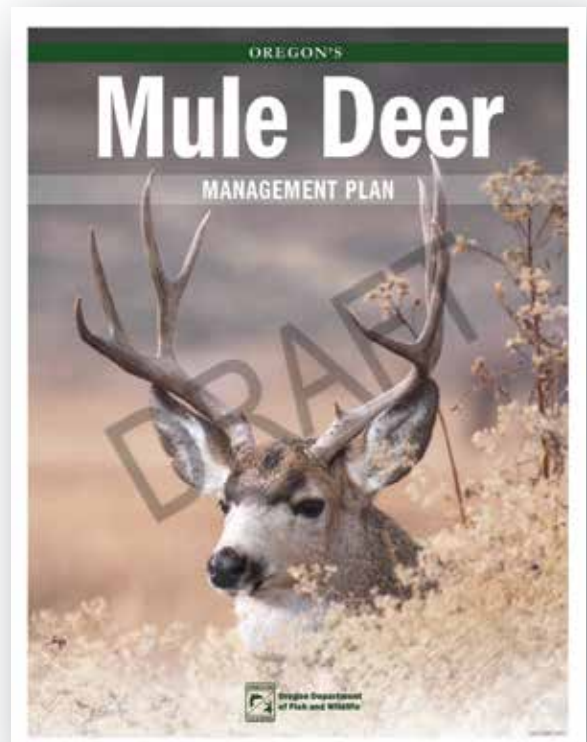
Each wildlife management unit has a population management objective or MO (the number of mule deer or elk desired in the unit during the winter) and a buck and bull ratio MO (the ratio of buck mule deer or bull elk observed per 100 females after the hunting season). A population MO is not the maximum number of animals a unit can support, but a compromise that tries to maintain deer and elk numbers at levels compatible with primary uses of the land.

Most MOs have remained the same since the 1990s despite drastic changes in habitat and other conditions. Most units never reached their population MO even back in the 1980s when mule deer populations were at their peak. Current MOs also don't account for population trends.



In the near future, ODFW expects to move to MOs at the herd range scale (rather than by WMU). The new MOs consider changing landscape conditions and reflect better enumeration techniques that

have evolved since the 1990s. Each herd will be evaluated based on a four-tiered system based on a combination of abundance and growth rate. These criteria will then be used to rank herd ranges from high to least concern. The new system will help target which herds need more attention and management activities. In addition, buck ratios will be simplified into one of three ratios (15, 20 or 25 per 100 does).



Read the entire draft Plan by scanning the QR code or visiting tinyurl.com/Mule-Deer-Plan.





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- 8 Special Raffle Tickets
- 72 General Raffle Tickets
- 8 Early Bird Tickets**
- 2 Commemorative Gifts

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- 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.

THESE "RACKS" ARE DISAPPEARING FASTER THAN BLACKTAILS IN BRUSH

Like trophy bucks, newsstands are getting harder to find. Instead of hunting for OREGON HUNTER on news racks, join OHA and get six issues delivered to your mailbox along with the Oregon Hunter's Calendar. And support the outfit that's defended Oregon's hunting heritage for 40 years.

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Goldendooddy

In which we take a close look at the dog business

As a powerful and influential member of the outdoor media, I am often consulted to answer questions of great import. Sometimes I chew on so many questions, my teeth hurt. Last month I held a press conference and a young reporter raised her hand with an important question.

"Grandpa, how many different kinds of dogs are there?"

It's a very good question and the answer might surprise you. Because there are only two different kinds of dogs.

There are dogs that come when you call them and dogs that run the other way. But then of course these dogs can be further divided. For instance, there are dogs that chase rabbits, sniff out birds, run deer and put bobcats up trees. We call these dogs beagles. More on beagles later. Then there are duck dogs. We call them labs.

"Grandpa, why do we call them labs?"

Because they were created in a laboratory instead of a puppy mill.

"Grandpa, what's a puppy mill?"

A puppy mill, of course, is a place where puppies come from.

"Sounds nice, grandpa."

The dogs are kept in wire cages with wire floors so the cages don't need cleaning. Then buyers from pet stores come to the puppy mill and examine their underbites and select the healthy ones and take them to pet stores.

"I want to go to a pet store, grandpa."

Be quiet and listen. People in our part of the country don't buy puppies from pet stores. We get puppies from rescue shelters or we create our own new kinds of dogs in laboratories. One of the earliest examples is the beagleador, which is a specialty breed and very rare.

"How rare, grandpa?"

Well, our friend and the distinguished editor of this magazine said they are harder to find than a blacktail buck and they cost big bucks. He got one quite by accident. You see, there are 13-inch beagles and 15-inch beagles, but Theodore the Beagleador (aka: Teddy Confetti) is a 19-inch beagle with lab-like tendencies. Like Terrible Ted Nugent with "Cat Chase Fever." From what I hear, the beagleador has a great nose for finding things like expensive hearing aids and important documents and shredding them into small pieces.

"What is a rescue shelter, grandpa?"

That's where they take the leftover puppies from the puppy mills.

"How do you know if a puppy is a rescue puppy?"

Don't worry, its owner will tell you. Several times.

"Sounds like a great system, grandpa."

It used to be you could buy designer dog pups – which we called mutts back then – for \$5 apiece out in front of the hardware store. Sometimes at the end of the day you could get the last puppy for FREE and they would throw in the puppy's mother for FREE.

"Grandpa, why did you say that in all capital letters?"

Some of my friends have actually accumulated too many puppies by this method.

One of my friends, let's call him Trevor, has a lot of puppies. And I told him last time I saw him, "If you take more of those, you will get a Roverdose."

"No more running to the shelter? Right, grandpa?"

Correct.

"Grandpa, where can we see some designer dogs?"

Well, once, I went to a zoo and they had lots of animals but only one designer dog. It was a shih-tzu.

Other types of useful dogs include a saint berdoodle, a schnoodle, a sheepadoodle and a shihpoo, just to name a few. Then there are several different types of pugs. You got your standard bed pugs and pug-uauas and, they tell me anything mixed with a pug will have a mandibular prognathism otherwise known as an underbite. Which reminds me, if you breed a berger picard to a bichon fries, you get a burger and fries. Which goes great with a large Coke.

If you mix a collie and a lhasa apso, you get a collapse, and they're nice because they fold up for easy transport.

My neighbor once had a bloodhound/lab mix which we called a blabador.

I might like to have a pointer-setter mix, but only at Christmas time.

Another good breed is when you mix a spitz and a chow-chow. You get a spitz-chow, which I recommend you keep out of doors.

Now I would rather have a spitz-chow than a goldendoodle from Pennsylvania, which is a place where they have to use words like Wilkes-Barre, Punxsutawney and Susquehanna on a daily basis.

Last December, Cecil the goldendoodle masticated \$4,000 in paper money – in \$50s and \$100s. I call that goldendooddy. Cecil's humans had to wait till Cecil digested the dinero before they laundered the money in the sink and put their fortune back together.

It seems to me, if they could train Cecil to eat the neighbor's cash and come home and make a big deposit on the home turf, they could be money ahead.

If I ever get around to it, I will try to breed a Newfoundland and a basset, which is a big seller to young financial advisers who call themselves newfound asset hounds.

"Grandpa, after Polyp dies do you think you will get another hound dog?"

I've been thinking about that. I like Jack Russells but I might also want a lab. I like to have a place to do experiments.

"Grandpa, did you ever know a scientist?"

Yes, my cousin worked in a cloning laboratory. After he retired, he didn't know what to do with himself.

"Grandpa, I have another question..."

Please stop. One of my canines is loose.



If your Lemon Beagle puppy comes from the lab with a Lab's head and a beagle body that make ol' Rex look like a T-Rex, he might not be a lemon; he might be a designer dog like Theodore the Beagleador here (aka: Terrible Ted). Photo by T-Dog D.

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