

OREGON HUNTER

NOVEMBER-
DECEMBER
2024

250th ISSUE

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Field Updates:

- **CWD • Wildfires**
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OREGON AFIELD
No-interest Cascade elk, burning questions for chukars, and high time for high water



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Save a blacktail for a rainy day, and fill your turkey feather tags this season



OREGON ELK WELL DONE
Digging deep into Oregon's frigid freezer to find fresh elk steaks



HOLIDAY GAME BIRDS
Oregon's abundant upland birds offer fare for your holiday table



WIGEON ADDICTION
For all you cotton top addicts, here are some quick tricks to help you get your fix



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OHA is doing our part to stop CWD; do yours

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is at the forefront of our minds at OHA. This always-fatal, highly contagious spongiform encephalopathy disease could have devastating effects on our deer, elk and moose populations. Recently, CWD was discovered in Washington near Spokane, the third state adjacent to Oregon to confirm the presence of the disease.

OHA is working tirelessly to keep this dreaded disease out of our state. We've engaged at the legislature to get additional support and funding with an OHA-created bill for staff and a local testing facility. With that, ODFW will be adding extra field staff for efforts such as check stations and sampling. Having an in-state testing facility will add capacity to the testing, which will drastically reduce the amount of time to get results back from the samples that are taken.

We're working with ODFW on a public information campaign to better inform hunters and members of the public about the disease and its impacts. We've even helped at CWD check stations collecting samples from harvested deer and elk, and now we're offering a rifle and scope package drawing as incentive for hunters to submit samples.

The best thing we can do as hunters is make sure we are not bringing the disease in by transporting an infected carcass from outside our state, and participate in the testing in our state. If you hunt out of state, don't transport any of the brain or spinal cord of deer, elk or moose back to Oregon with you. Looking at where the disease has first been detected in Idaho, California and Washington suggests that the disease did not naturally spread into those areas, but rather was likely transported in from an infected animal or carcass.

Given the proximity of the disease in Idaho relative to Oregon's border, there is a chance of infected animals distributing the disease themselves through seasonal movements of migrating ungulates. If you are successful in filling a tag in Oregon, we must absolutely make sure you get your harvested deer or elk tested. Early detection of the disease gives wildlife managers the best chance to keep the impacts of the disease manageable, and testing harvested animals is the primary way to do this. Samples can be taken at check stations that are set up by ODFW, and at any ODFW office (make sure to call in advance to make sure there's someone there to help you). Many taxidermists and game meat processors are partnering with ODFW to collect samples, as well.

In areas where the disease takes hold, such as in Idaho for example, game managers have few options. Most rely on reducing populations to minimize the disease spread among the animals in that area, and hopefully keep it from spreading outside the area. Emergency hunts with high harvest levels are used to both get additional samples to see how far the disease has spread, and to reduce population densities in infected areas to slow transmission among remaining animals. This is a sobering approach to consider, given the woeful condition of mule deer in Oregon.

For more information, see Pages 42 and 48, and visit the ODFW CWD web page at: <https://myodfw.com/CWD>

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OREGON HUNTER

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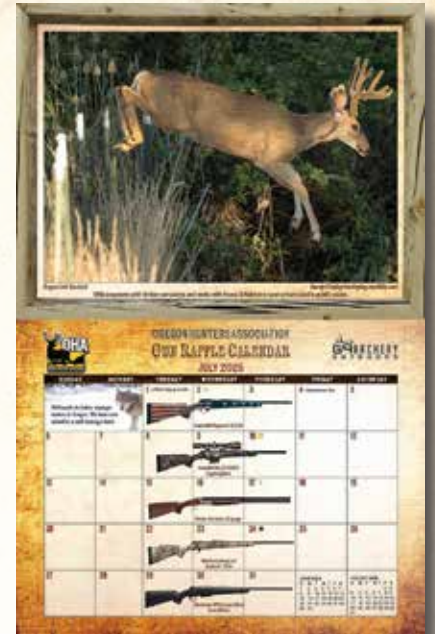
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WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

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1. How many folks hunt big game in Oregon?

- a) 150,000-200,000
- c) 250,000-300,000
- b) 200,000-250,000
- d) over 300,000

2. What % of those carry a cougar tag?

- a) 9 percent
- c) 36 percent
- b) 18 percent
- d) 72 percent

3. Season ends Dec. 31 for all but which?

- a) fall bear
- b) fall turkey
- c) cougar
- d) pheasant

4. Rogers Wildlife Area is in what region of Oregon?

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

5. Oregon's black bear population is greatest in which corner of Oregon?

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

6. Which county is tops for turkeys?

- a) Jackson
- c) Douglas
- b) Josephine
- d) Klamath

7. Which unit is easiest to draw but hard to hunt for antelope due to tree cover?

- a) Beatys Butte
- c) Silver Lake/Ft. Rock
- b) Owyhee
- d) Juniper

8. Which area offers hunts for deer, elk, antelope, bighorn and mountain goat?

- a) Sumpter
- c) Steens Mountain
- b) Hart Mountain
- d) Snake River

9. In which wilderness can you hunt four of the five big game animals listed above?

- a) Eagle Cap
- c) Steens Mountain
- b) Hells Canyon
- d) all of the above

10. A mallard nest will incubate in about:

- a) 2 weeks
- c) 4 weeks
- b) 3 weeks
- d) 5 weeks



WHERE IN OREGON WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN?

Identify this state wildlife area, 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: NOVEMBER 15, 2024



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Eric Martin, Corvallis

Eric's name was drawn from among the OHA members who recognized Little Blitzen Gorge on Steens Mountain.

OCTOBER 26

Lake County guzzler project,
541-417-2983

OCTOBER 26-27

OHA Klamath Chapter Youth
Chukar Hunt, 541-883-8326

NOVEMBER 3

Rocky Mountain elk 1st season closes

NOVEMBER 8

Any legal weapon deer season closes

NOVEMBER 9

W. Cascade & 2nd Rocky
Mountain elk seasons open

NOVEMBER 9-10

Youth general rifle season
Western deer hunt weekend

NOVEMBER 15

W. Cascade elk closes

NOVEMBER 16

Coast elk 1st season opens;
Late SW deer bow season opens

NOVEMBER 17

Rocky Mountain elk 2nd season ends

NOVEMBER 19

Coast elk 1st season closes

NOVEMBER 23

Coast elk 2nd season opens;
Late NW deer bow opens

NOVEMBER 29

Coast elk 2nd season closes

DECEMBER 1

Bobcat season opens

DECEMBER 3

Giving Tuesday - Please remember OHA
Oregonhunters.org/donate

DECEMBER 8

Late SW deer bow season ends

DECEMBER 15

Late NW deer bow season ends

DECEMBER 31

Seasons end for pheasant, cougar & bear

9-d; 10-c

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

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CHRIS SCHACHER

Burning questions for chukars

Remember July, when temps were in the triple digits and smoke was in the air? By early August, foresters were calling the summer of '24 the worst fire season in recent memory and a million acres were on fire in Oregon.

By mid-August, the Badland Complex, the Durkee and the Cow Valley fires combined for almost a half million acres, much of it chukar habitat. Meanwhile, the Crazy Creek, Lone Rock and Battle Mountain fires were gobbling up forest grouse habitat.

Some of us began to wonder, what's going to be left?

"It's the irony of us actually having a couple of good precipitation years," said ODFW's upland bird coordinator Mikal Cline, who keeps track of bird populations with her eye on habitat.



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Despite the fires in chukar country this summer, ODFW biologists anticipate one of the best chukar seasons in many years this fall. But what is the long-term outlook in areas with massive burns?

"There's a ton of forage out there," Cline said. "And our wildlife are having a nice, positive response to all that cover and all that feed. But the moisture also created a huge fuel load, especially when it got so hot this summer. When we had a week over 100 degrees, that just dried out all that forage, and it was ripe to burn."

Did we lose birds to the fires? "There's going to be some mortality," Cline said. "Especially if it's a real fast-moving fire. It may be hard for those birds to get out of the way. But in general, I think it's not going to have a huge impact on our immediate populations."

We can expect a rebound in cheatgrass, which is not great for wildlife.

Except chukar. Chukar make their living on cheatgrass.

The challenge will be replanting sagebrush and other perennials in that burned-over ground from Bully Creek Reservoir north to Malheur Reservoir and over to Brogan, Durkee and Huntington.

On the positive side, from Malheur and Harney counties, field biologists began reporting numbers starting in mid-August.

"We're seeing quail and chukar densities beyond what we've seen in 20 years," Cline noted. "It just goes to show what adding a little moisture to that country can do."

For a look at the wildfire footprints, click on <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/>

— GARY LEWIS

Fowl water awaits southeast Oregon waterfowlers



KLAMATH BASIN/JOHN MCFARLAND III

For those who've been chasing deer but would like to squeeze in a waterfowl hunt this fall, we have encouraging news from the southeast counties of Klamath, Lake and Malheur. That's Miller Island, Klamath Marsh, Lower Klamath NWR, Summer Lake, and Malheur refuges, among other duck holes.

A positive regional report from ODFW Waterfowl Coordinator Brandon Reishus finds water conditions "better than the severe drought years of 2021-22; we had a good snowpack two years ago and an average one this year." Overall, he described "adequate" water in the major basins for this waterfowl season.

Based on recent banding efforts, Reishus reported "pretty good production" in terms of nesting, and local water conditions should be good for local birds and migrants as the season progresses.

Reishus said avian botulism is not a problem compared to the 10,000-plus dead birds of the recent past. Check before going to Lower Klamath, as 20,000 dead birds have been collected so far on the California side of the basin.

Next season the pintail bag limit reportedly will increase from 1 to 3, nationwide. While that seems like a large jump, Reishus confirmed that recent technology and harvest reporting show that this new limit is sustainable, even though pintail numbers are still below management objectives.

That remains to be seen, but it's more positive news. Final thoughts: Don't overlook public rangelands for early-season jump-shooting. If there are cows, there are usually stock ponds. Obviously, I'm not a purist. And get out there before you have to break ice. It gets cold fast on the dry side. — JASON HALEY

Improved water levels in southeast Oregon should mean better production for local nesters as well as migrating ducks this season.

No-interest Cascade elk – buy now!

In 1986, the Cascade elk hunt was moved to mid-October with the goal to improve bull ratios in the Cascades. In 2021, ODFW moved the season back to November in an effort to increase harvest success in the Santiam, McKenzie, Indigo, Dixon, Evans Creek and Rogue units.

Don Whittaker, ODFW ungulate species coordinator, pointed to the low harvest in what is now the West Cascade hunt, and said ODFW determined moving the season to November would help a few more hunters tag bulls, but the number of elk taken would not make a big impact.

It was interesting to compare data from 2014 with 2019 and 2023. In 2014, some 2,003 Santiam Unit hunters spent an average of 4.16 days to tie tags on 72 bulls for an average of 115 hunter days per bull and 4-percent harvest success. Contrast that with 2019 when 1,478 Santiam hunters harvested 82 bulls for an average of 74 hunter days per bull and 6-percent harvest success. In 2023, 1,550 Santiam hunters harvested 115 bulls for an average of 51 hunter days per bull and 8-percent harvest.

While the switch to a November season has translated to a "spike" in harvest in the Santiam, the trend is going the other way in the Rogue, where harvest declined from 94 bulls and 5-percent harvest in 2014, to 36 bulls and 3-percent harvest in 2023. What's even worse is Rogue Unit hunters are spending 169 hunter days for each bull harvested. That's longer than chukar season. The average Rogue Unit hunter spent 4.36 days in the field last year and 97 out of 100 went home without an elk. If said hunters bagged the average 1.5 chukars per day, they would each bring home 250 chukars in those 169 days between harvested elk.

Still, November tracking snow can help turn an elk season around fast. This year's hunt takes place Nov. 9-15 and tags are available over the counter. If you don't yet have an elk tag in your possession by the time deer rifle season ends in the Cascades, it's an option. Or you can chuck it and go chukar hunting. —GARY LEWIS



PHOTO COURTESY JON DITGEN

An early snowfall can help your chances in the Cascades. Mendell Gosnell overcame the long odds and tied his tag to this bull while hunting near the crest of the Cascades.

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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Commission sets big game regs, supports spring bear

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



Following an outpouring of support by the sportsmen's community, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission voted unanimously to approve the 2025 Big Game Regulations as presented by ODFW staff, which included a 2-percent increase in the number of spring bear tags and a new youth spring bear hunt in the Alsea-Stott Mountain area.

About 30 people provided testimony on the proposed regulations, primarily around the spring bear regulations. OHA staff was on hand to speak directly to the issue and also provided expanded testimony related to our concerns around

Oregon's small moose population.

While two commissioners expressed discomfort with the spring bear season, they made the astute decision to trust the science and data presented by ODFW staff and voted to approve the expanded spring bear opportunities as part of the overall proposed regulations. ODFW staff provided clear data showing Oregon's robust bear population of 44,000 is not negatively impacted by the spring season opportunities.

OHA partnered with Howl for Wildlife to produce an action alert for sportsmen and women to voice their support for spring bear hunting and worked with the Oregon Sportsmen's Conservation

Partnership to provide a sign-on letter supporting the entirety of the big game regulations, including the expanded spring bear opportunities.

Friday's win was accomplished by the overwhelming support generated by the sportsmen's community, and OHA thanks everyone who took the time to participate in our call to action.

The sportsmen's community did an excellent job of engaging on this issue, generating 3,000 emails to the commission in a mere five days. Though the season was approved for 2025, the attacks on Oregon's spring bear hunting are likely to continue, and the hunting community will need to remain vigilant.

Wildlife program funding will highlight '25 legislative session

The 2025 legislative session is still several weeks away, but OHA staff has been working on potential bills since the summer. While it's too early for a complete list of issues OHA will be engaging on, there are a few that have already risen to the top of our list.

★ **Agency Budgets** - OHA will focus primarily on the ODFW budget, and subsequent rate increase, throughout the 2025 session. The budgets for the Oregon State Police, specific to fish and wildlife enforcement and poaching, and the Oregon Department of Transportation, specific to wildlife crossings, will round out our agency budget support.

★ **Energy Siting** - OHA remains vigilant regarding new or changed regulations for siting of new renewable energy projects, specifically relating to the potential impacts for fish, wildlife, and habitat.

★ **Wildlife Issues** - Bills related to wildlife stewardship, predator management, beaver habitat, and the perennial attempts to reinstate cougar hunting with hounds will continue to be topics OHA regularly weighs in on.

As the 2025 session approaches, OHA staff will keep the membership up to date on the latest developments on bills relevant to OHA's mission. —AMY PATRICK

OHA joins national coalition to enhance presence on federal level

In an effort to increase effectiveness in the policy arena, OHA joined the State Action Coalition in 2024. The coalition is made up of conservation and wildlife-focused organizations across the country and focuses on increasing awareness and engagement at the national level. Assisted by two lobbyists and organizational experts, the coalition meets regularly to discuss federal policy and current bills that may be beneficial to its interests.

OHA has closely followed and engaged on issues such as funding requests for wild horse/burro management, the BLM's programmatic environmental impact statement and proposed plan for utility-scale solar energy development, chronic wasting disease funding, Hunters for the Hungry funding, potential legislation to keep non-lead ammunition use voluntary, the Farm Bill, the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), and several other related topics.

While OHA remains focused on Oregon, the increased awareness of federal level policies enhances our effectiveness to advocate for federal funding, expanded resources, and greater public input. As an example, both the chronic wasting disease funding and the BLM solar energy siting information proved invaluable to OHA's local advocacy on both issues within the state. —AMY PATRICK



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TRADITIONS

By TROY RODAKOWSKI

Save a Blacktail for a Rainy Day

Western Oregon's rainy season can put a damper on your muzzleloader success

Hearing the words “wet powder,” makes me cringe in the worst way. It can ruin months of preparation and hard work in an instant. I’m always very careful about my powder, especially hunting in wet western locations across the Beaver State. As a black powder hunter, there is a certain amount of trust you have to hold in yourself and your equipment.

Wet powder or dry powder, I never found out on that hill last season what could have been.

Hunting season in 2023 was pushed back a week due to regulation changes, and I was optimistic the blacktail rut would be in full swing by mid-November. Opening day, I saw well over 30 deer and a few small bucks chasing does. That looked promising, and I was eager to see how the muzzleloader season would unfold. As the season progressed, the deer became less active and fewer bucks were making appearances behind does. Visiting with my good friend and fellow outdoorsman Gary Lewis about the ongoing rut, I remained optimistic that I’d eventually get a chance at a decent buck.

Feeling that the rut was past peak, I hoped that mature bucks would still be roaming around in search of the few remaining does that were in estrus. The rain had now set in, with the 36-degree weather and accompanying gusty winds, making for classic blacktail hunting. I worry about powder getting wet during some of the nastiest conditions, and it is always in the back of my mind when hunting. I never have had powder fail to ignite. I have had caps not snap, safeties stick, actions not close all the way and so on, but never once a problem with wet powder.

With the rut likely fading, it was time to re-evaluate my standards. Meat in the freezer is always the main goal. Shooting a respectable 3-point or better was now likely off the table, and I was perfectly content with that. There’s nothing quite like fresh back strap, onions, taters and gravy. The smell alone makes my mouth water, and I wasn’t planning to mis out this year on any of it.

This black powder pursuit has become increasingly addictive. Using primitive methods to harvest game animals enhances the challenge of the sport – from powder loads, to bullets, sights, pat-



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Hunting with a muzzleloader is loaded with challenges – from powder loads, to bullets, sights, patterning and learning your rifle to be effective in the field. There are so many potential pitfalls that a black powder harvest is always a trophy, regardless the size.

tern and learning your desired weapon in order to be effective in the field. There are seemingly endless variables and chances for failure that a person is required to be aware of and account for. These are a few of the reasons a muzzy harvest is always a trophy no matter the size.

Muzzleloader seasons typically follow rifle hunts. That’s great for the rut, but early-season hunts would offer their own appeal. Nevertheless, I was staring at the remainder of my late blacktail season with fading hopes. It’s not like I wasn’t seeing deer. In fact, I was seeing 20 to 30 does a day, but the bucks – including the yearlings – had all but disappeared. I had to remind myself that things can always change in the blink of an eye.

Next to the last day of season, I found myself in a familiar place against my favorite big rock, watching the ravine and converging trails below. About 200 yards away, a doe burst into the open on a full run with a small forky behind her. Her tongue was hanging out, and it was apparent she had been running a while. They passed right in front of me at 40 yards. I had my gun ready, safety off, and watched the little buck run her in circles. I put my buckhorn on his vitals, and for some reason didn’t pull the trigger. I watched the little buck walk slowly up the opposite hill and vanish into the oaks.

Wet powder or dry powder, I never found out on that hill last season what could have been. I do know this: looking back, I wish that I would have at least squeezed the trigger.

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BOWHUNTING

By SCOTT HAUGEN

Fill feather tags for the holidays

With two holidays ahead, now is a great time for hunting fall turkeys in Oregon. In addition to toms, hens can be killed in the fall, making this a feather tag – turkey hunting’s equivalent to a hair tag. See current regulations for details and fall hunt options.

The great part about shooting a hen is you can skin it, cook the whole bird, and save the skin to make your own turkey decoy to hunt with in the spring. Remove the head and legs

from the skin, **Bowhunting for fall turkey is a lot like hunting big game. Scout, pattern their movements, and then set a pop-up ground blind in their path of travel.**

legs into the form. It’s not fancy, but is one of the best decoys you’ll ever use.

Bowhunting for fall turkey is a lot like hunting big game. Scout, pattern their movements, and then set a pop-up ground blind in their path of travel. Fall turkey flocks are big, the result of many hens and their broods having joined together. Sometimes you’ll find young toms mixed in. Mature toms are hanging out in their own bachelor flocks.

Focusing on a turkey’s food sources is important to patterning them. Sprouting grass in the valleys, rose hips in the



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Fall turkey hunting with a bow can take on many forms, and with multiple tags available, Oregon hunters enjoy abundant opportunity afield.

hills, insects, earth worms, apple orchards, acorns and other mast crops can all be primary fall foods. They’re opportunistic feeders and can cover a lot of ground in a day.

If you can’t physically be out scouting for turkeys on a regular basis, run trail cameras. I set dozens of Moultrie Mobile cellular trail cameras to help keep track of turkeys. Place cameras along game trails, where multiple trails intersect and where travel routes funnel down.

If you lack the patience to sit in a blind, consider calling. I’ve had my best luck calling fall toms when the sun breaks out. If the sun shines and temperatures warm slightly, you can get toms to gobble, even come to a decoy.

Hens can also be called in during the fall season. Search for a flock heading into the trees to preen or escape bad weather, then run in and bust up the flock. Some birds might run, some may hold in thick cover, and others – sometimes all – will take to the trees. Back out, and 15 minutes later approach the flock from the opposite side, making certain to stay quiet and out of sight.

Once you hear the hens, jakes and jennies chatting with kee-kee calls, do the same. This call is best mimicked with a single-reed diaphragm call. The high-pitched two- to three-note sound is how birds communicate and reunite as a flock.

When they hear you calling on the ground, they’ll think it’s a hen and come walking in. This is a tough situation to hunt from a blind, so tuck into good cover and make sure you have a window to reach full draw without getting busted.

And don’t neglect one of bowhunting’s greatest skill sets – spot and stalk. Keep in mind that turkeys have incredible hearing, their eyesight is equivalent to 8x binoculars, and they see in color. But their sense of smell is lacking. This means you don’t have to play the wind when stalking turkeys. Rainy, windy days are great for stalking turkeys as they mask your movement and sound.

Wait for birds to feed in the morning, then head to the timber to rest and preen. If it’s raining hard, turkeys will often remain in the same spot – usually under a tree – for hours. The biggest challenge lies in getting close to a big flock of birds, because they’re always on alert.

Be sure to range the bird before taking a shot, as turkeys can be deceptive in size, especially when in cover.

Once you get a taste of these great-eating game birds, hunting and eating them will become a holiday tradition.



For signed copies of Scott Haugen’s popular book, Turkey Hunting The West, visit scotthaugen.com. Follow Scott’s adventures on Instagram and Facebook.

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ELK Well Done

Digging deep into Oregon's freezer to find elk steaks

BY ZACH MANSFIELD

Reluctantly, I rolled out of my cot. The snow and high winds from the night before had almost convinced me to stay in my sleeping bag and just break down camp and head for home. Luckily for me, I had a good hunting partner with me, who also rolled out of his cot and began the morning rituals around camp.

We pounded trail for just over an hour, dodging falling trees and weathering intense gusts, getting to our glassing spot at daybreak. I first started on making a warming fire while Ben glassed. After a couple of failed attempts, I gave up and turned my attention to glassing. Ben and I traded places between glassing and fire duties while the clouds painted the jagged edge of these canyons with a soft layer of snow.

After 15 minutes of glassing, I spotted him. “There he is,” I snapped, almost ordering Ben to stop with his fire-making duty and get eyes on the bull.

“Three ridges over, maybe 1,000 yards? In the bottom. I think we can loop around this big basin and get to the ridge right there,” I said, pointing to the closest ridge to the bull but farthest from us.

Ben confirmed with a subtle nod as he viewed through his 10x42 Swarovski. We abandoned our futile attempt to build a fire and loaded up our packs to get within range.

Oregon will always have a soft spot in my heart when it comes to hunting elk. By no means is it the best, but it’s where I cut my teeth on elk hunting.

The rich hunting history that I have here at home means I will always have a Beaver State elk tag in my pocket. For the Oregon hunter interested in hunting the east side of the state, there are a few options to notch your tag on a bull. The first season hunt typically runs at the end of October, sometimes into the early part of November. This hunt is great for catching bulls just pulling away from cows and heading into their winter range to get their fat stores up for winter.

When targeting these bulls, I like to find natural corridors and heavy pockets of timber that offer concealment and water. If the hunts land early enough, sometimes you can still catch some late-season rut activity. My first ever branch-antlered bull came

In late-season hunts, big bulls will be pulled off by themselves, trying to regain energy needed to get through the winter ahead.

If you bring an elk out of Oregon's backcountry in November, you will earn it.



All uphill, the author ascends the final stretch of the trek to a staging point to load meat and antlers on Ben's mules.

from a first-season hunt over a decade ago. We spotted the elk from high above on a vantage point, worked our way down to where we thought the elk were, and waited. As we sat and surveyed the scene, the unsuspecting bull let out a volley of bugles that would make a person think it was mid-September. Chad and I waited the bull out and made one 350-yard shot on a beautiful Oregon 6-point.

The other primary option for Oregon hunters is the second season. Usually running from the first part of November until the middle, I have really come to love these hunts for a few reasons. You have a better chance of getting some tracking snow. The time frame also works well with my hunt and life schedule. In lucky years, I've been hunting deer right up until the end of October in neighboring states. If I had a first-season elk tag in my pocket, I would've been very torn on which animal to pursue. Another great bonus to the second-season hunts is their extended season. The first only offers you five days to hunt, whereas the second-season hunts offer you nine days. With the second-season hunts landing later in the year, you can all but guarantee that big bulls will be pulled off

by themselves, trying with all their might to eat and regain the energy needed to get through the upcoming winter ahead – which is exactly how we found this bull.

We looped through the big basin that separated us from the bull, crept up to the adjacent ridge, surveyed the scene, and spotted the bull in the bottom. We took our time. At this point in the season, the last day, we were pretty certain that we were the only knuckleheads out on the end of this ridge system. I deployed my bipod and set my pack underneath the rear of my .300 Weatherby to ensure a completely stable

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shooting platform. Ben was prone as well, with a lightweight shooting bag in the rear and a bipod in front of his trusty .28 Nosler, ready to shoot backup if need be. I lasered the bull with the range finder.

"228 yards," I stated to Ben as we crept behind our scopes.

I had a couple of things working against me as I settled in behind the scope. I was gassed from hustling around that basin to get to the bull, and the wind was fierce. I would have to sit in my scope until my breathing settled and wait for the wind to give us a break.

The wind subsided, I settled the cross-hairs behind the shoulder of the old bull, compressed the trigger to the rear, and the roar of the gun filled the canyon. Out of adrenaline and good practice, I stroked another round, ready to send 200 grains of lead at the elk if need be. He stumbled, tripped, and lay down in a bed of boulders – a fitting end for a bull who was as rugged and tough as the canyons he made his home. Ben and I reveled in our success as we butchered and packed meat for the rest of the day, and capped off Oregon's second season with a bang.



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Holiday Harvest

Oregon's plentiful game birds offer fare for your table.

STORY & PHOTOS BY TROY RODAKOWSKI

I have always relished the first hint of fall and the progression of the seasons as the leaves slowly changed to brilliant reds and yellows. The smell of the first fall rains and the feel of cool crisp mornings resonated throughout, with sweatshirt weather and warm coffee becoming a daily necessity.

It's hunting season in Oregon.

My daughter frequently asks me what my favorite holiday is, and I always reply with "Hunting Season." All the brilliant colors of pumpkins, gourds, Indian corn, apples, pears and late-season nuts decorate my mind with warm feelings of fantastic Thanksgiving and Christmas meals with family. Of course, most of these meals include wild venison, turkey, quail, pheasant, duck, goose and chukar.

Gone are hot-weather hunts for doves and bandtails while swatting mosquitoes, replaced by frost on the pumpkin and pheasants in the frosty fields, turkeys ghosting through the foggy oaks, mallards on a misty pond with ice around the edges, and the distant cackles of Canadas on the crisp morning air.

Small farming communities across the state are home to excellent upland bird habitat, and leftover crops and stubble bring in the birds looking for a holiday feast. It's the stuff wildlife paintings are made of. If you aren't knocking on doors, you should be looking into some of the opportunities for public access to private property, such as the Access & Habitat program (<https://myodfw.com/articles/hunting-private-lands-access-habitat-program>) and the Upland Cooperative Access Program and Regulated Hunt Areas (<https://myodfw.com/articles/hunting-private-lands-ucap-and-regulated-hunt-areas>).

Earlier this fall, while I was pronghorn hunting in Harney County, I was happy to see there were so many chukars around.

So many in fact, they seemed like hordes of locusts invading the lowland sage and grass prairies.

"This year looks to be one of the best chukar seasons in recent history," said Mikal Cline, Game Bird Coordinator for ODFW. The season for these tasty birds runs from Oct. 12 to the end of January, and looks to be lights out.

Mountain and valley quail numbers are very good, as well, and offer some excellent wing shooting opportunities

the end of January. Birds require good water sources for survival, so focusing on areas with good cover near water will increase a hunter's opportunities.

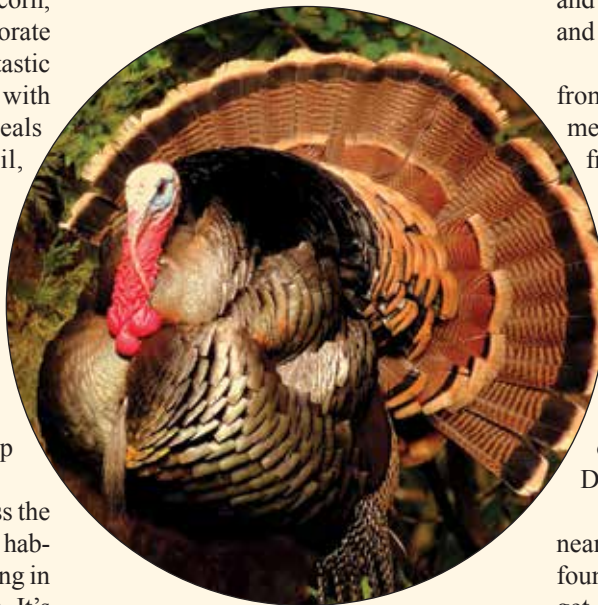
Grouse have been reported to have nested later than normal this year, so the jury is still out on how well their broods survived the summer, but the esteemed editor of this publication reported getting into multiple broods of blues dining on undersized huckleberries on opening weekend in the south Cascades. Ruffed and blue grouse seasons open on Sept. 1 and run through Jan. 31.

Wild pheasant hunting has suffered from loss of habitat and efficient farming methods, but huntable numbers persist from the Columbia Basin, to Wallowa, Harney and Malheur counties. This region is home to many of the UCAP properties and regulated hunt areas.

Several hunters last fall reported seeing more wild birds on opening weekend than they had seen for several seasons near Vale, Juntura and Ontario. Rooster pheasant season opens on Oct. 12 this year and ends Dec. 31.

I recall hunting vast acreage of CRP near Heppner for wild roosters, and we found good numbers of birds. We would get points in shallow green draws with thick sage and grass where the pheasants would prefer to hunker down and hide. On snowy days when the sun would appear, they would feed out and scratch through the snow, looking for seeds, grains and plants to nibble on.

Many holiday bird hunters spend winter days tucked into warm blinds sheltered from the rain, wind, sleet and snow. This year seems to be shaping up nicely for many species of ducks in the Pacific Flyway. Mallard numbers are up 8 percent from 2023, with wigeon numbers up 55 percent. Green-winged teal and scaup are



Oregon hunting opportunities are better than ever for the original holiday bird.

throughout the state. Good coveys of birds and above average habitat conditions have bolstered the numbers. The recent upturn in moisture this year aided in above-average brood success. Mountain quail are thriving in the Oregon coast range and throughout southwest Oregon, especially in habitat with recent burns.

Valley and mountain quail seasons opened on Sept. 1 in western Oregon and Oct. 12 on the eastside; both run through



Prized pintails and other waterfowl provide a bounty of holiday table fare for Oregon hunters.

up 20 and 18 percent, respectively. Pintail populations are like politics; it depends on who you talk to, and reliable information seems to be elusive.

After Thanksgiving, when the cackling Canada geese arrive, there are plenty of opportunities on private agricultural tracts where geese create extensive crop damage and many landowners are happy to grant access to hunt.

We have seen slow mornings in the duck blind change quickly when large flocks of migrating cacklers show up. These birds don't decoy easily, but they provide some excellent pass shooting and will add some good weight to your lanyard at the end of the day. They make the perfect little roast Christmas goose with stuffing and homemade cranberry orange sauce glaze.


Last but not least is the most famous holiday bird of all, the wild turkey. Hunters tend to overlook the fall season Oregon offers on these magnificent birds, but with expanding populations, increased bag limits and depredation hunts, we sport a good chance to stuff one for Thanksgiving or Christmas. One year, I harvested a late-season bird just before New Year's

Eve, and we made sure that he was in the fryer before the ball dropped.

Turkeys will be found in larger flocks and usually will respond to regrouping calls if scattered. Otherwise, I like to pattern them and patiently wait for birds to pass within range. Typically, hunters harvest 2,200 fall birds or more throughout Oregon, and with recent expanded opportunity, harvest has continued to increase. With seasons beginning as early as Sept. 1 and running through the end of January, there are plenty of excellent opportunities.

Visit <https://myodfw.com/game-bird-hunting> for Oregon regulations and a treasure trove of upland game bird hunting information to help you harvest the bounty for your holiday table.





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WIGEON ADDICTION

The morning started slowly. The wood ducks and mallards weren't coming into the slough as I'd hoped. Then, a few hours after sunup, I saw a flock of ducks dive into the middle of a rye grass field behind me. Soon, another flock joined them, followed by a third. I picked up my dozen decoys and hiked to the farmer's field I had permission to hunt.

I jumped the birds – all wigeon – tossed out the decoys into a little depression that held water, then sat against the base of a tall cedar tree. It didn't take long before wigeon started piling in. I had a limit in short order.

I was hunting along the McKenzie River near my boyhood home in Walterville. The year was 1979. That's when my wigeon addiction began, and today it's stronger than ever.

The last four seasons in the valleys and along the coast have produced some of the best wigeon hunting in the country. Hunters from all over are traveling to Oregon to hunt cotton tops. Many folks just want to experience hunting these ducks, while others are seeking the prized Eurasian wigeon, of which a growing number are taken every year. Regardless of the reason, once you get a taste of wigeon hunting, you'll be hooked.

THE ADDICTION

Having hunted wigeon for almost 50 years, it's the sight and sound of working a field of 5,000 birds that most excites me. Wigeon are usually aggressive to decoy, and they love hearing themselves talk, which adds to the joy of the hunt.

I primarily hunt wigeon in the Willamette Valley between Eugene and Salem. Dubbed the Grass Seed Capitol of the World, it's rye grass that attracts the biggest numbers of wigeon in this area, and the later in the season it gets, the better the hunting gets. Green grass and holding ponds keep wigeon around all winter.

Along the Oregon Coast, decoying massive flocks of wigeon can be exceptional. The coastline is where a lot of wigeon migrate, and the mild conditions

and abundance of food often keeps them there all season. Setting decoys in tidal flats and hitting incoming and high tides can be productive.

In the early 1900s, wigeon migrations out of Canada and Alaska were largely tracked by hunters. In fact, some migratory maps were created showing wigeon flight paths based on the information hunters provided, because surveys were not conducted where wigeon nested. Even today, these maps are very accurate.

"When wigeon migrate from their boreal nesting grounds in Canada and Alaska, they do so in a huge fan, not a narrow band like pintails or green-winged teal," noted Chris Nicolai, waterfowl scientist for Delta Waterfowl. "Once they head south, roughly one-third of wigeon migrate over the Pacific Ocean, a third over the Cascades and Rockies, and a third over the prairies. That's a wide span for any migrating waterfowl, and since these birds aren't counted in their boreal nesting grounds up North, getting an accurate count isn't easy."

When I shared with Nicolai what I thought was the biggest push of wigeon I'd seen the past few years since the '70s, he confirmed that over the last nine years their numbers have continued to build to proportions that have not been seen in nearly 50 years.

THE HUNT

Some of my buddies live to hunt wigeon. They'll shoot greenheads if they're around, but if there are wigeon working a field and mallards in a nearby creek, they head to the field every time.

In the wet, green grass fields, flooded coastal plains, and ponds where wigeon are hunted in western Oregon, big decoy spreads have become popular, thanks to silhouettes.

"It's so easy to put out 15-20 dozen silhouettes and move them if birds aren't dropping in," shared Monroe resident Austin Crowson, an admitted wigeon addict who lives in the heart of what could be the best wigeon hunting in the country. "Sometimes I'll just put out three floating decoys on a jerk cord and the rest are

TRY THESE TRICKS TO GET YOUR FIX.

BY SCOTT HAUGEN







PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

WIGEON WATCHING

Scouting plays a big part in wigeon hunting success. For every day we hunt wigeon, buddies and I have one to three days of scouting invested. Scouting is usually done immediately following a hunt or in the evenings to find where wigeon are feeding. We're looking for large numbers of birds to keep building up in one specific place, be it a flooded field or amid sprouting green grass.

A few years ago, I started using trail cameras to scout for ducks. Last season I upped my scouting game with several Moultrie Mobile cellular trail cameras. Instantly the cellular trail cameras boosted my wigeon hunting opportunities. With these trail cameras, you know exactly where birds are and when. I set the decoy spreads to mimic what's captured on trail cameras.

Put in the work on the front end, make sure all is in order during the hunt, and soon you'll understand that the addiction to wigeon is very real.



Author Scott Haugen is a full-time freelance writer and photographer from Walterville. Follow his adventures on Instagram and Facebook.

Big Al's wigeon silhouette decoys have helped the author take wigeon hunting to a new level.

silhouettes. Those flat decoys really have pulling power.”

When decoying wigeon on ponds where birds rest during the day, but also feed on the edges, my typical spread is a dozen of the Final Approach Live Floating Wigeon decoys and five to 10 dozen Big Al's wigeon silhouettes. I love the large, life-like head and precise paint jobs of the floaters, and the photo quality and durability of Big Al's silhouettes are tough to beat. On bigger water, during stormy days, or amid dense fog, I'll run two dozen floating decoys and pack the silhouettes tight

to shore, near the floaters. Sometimes I'll run up to 15 dozen silhouettes along the shore and around my blind to simulate a feeding flock.

When hunting wigeon in green grass fields with only a few inches of water, I'll run 20 dozen or more silhouettes made up of wigeon, mallard and pintail. Adding goose silhouettes to the upwind side of the spread can add confidence.

Wigeon are gregarious, opportunistic feeders. Often they'll swim next to feeding geese, other puddle ducks, even rafts of coots, to feast on vegetation they uproot.

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Our debut issue, May/June 1983, proclaimed Any Elk Is a Good Elk.

250 issues later, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

BY GARY LEWIS

OREGON HUNTER celebrates our 250th issue

Sometimes whether an organization lives or dies comes down to one little thing. Like an ad on the inside front cover of a magazine.

“Remember Michaels of Oregon?” Duane Dungannon asked. “OREGON HUNTER magazine and OHA might not be here if they hadn’t bought that first inside front cover ad.”

That’s how thin the margins were in the early days of OHA. When OHA moved its office from Redmond to Medford and hired Dungannon as its lone employee in 1994, the funds in OHA’s bank account would not cover the bills in the mailbox. At least

one OHA State Board member at the time thought OHA should stop publishing a magazine, which Dungannon believed was akin to eating your seed grain in the winter.

But the Oregon Hunters Association thrived while other groups did not survive.

Dungannon is OHA State Coordinator and the editor of OREGON HUNTER magazine.

To Duane, and to most of us, the magazine is the heartbeat of the organization. It informs, it educates and entertains, and it binds a community of more than 12,000 hunters from around the state, around the Northwest and even around the country,

because if a person hunts in Oregon, they are an Oregon hunter, even if they live in New Amsterdam.

“While many of us may hunt out of state, we are all Oregon hunters,” Dungannon said. “Unlike Maine moose or Wisconsin whitetails, everything you see in the pages of OREGON HUNTER is right outside your door.” Be careful when you walk outside.

This issue of OREGON HUNTER that you, dear reader, hold in your hands is the 250th issue of the magazine going back nearly 42 years. That’s when Ed Park was the editor, writing stories for the magazine, collecting

content from other writers, some of them reluctant, some of them not really good writers, editing their work, using his own photos and running on enthusiasm for a fledgling group of hunters who wanted to make a difference in Oregon and for the future of hunting.

Ed Park kept the magazine going for the first few years. Then for some forgotten reason, he gave up the editorial position to Linda Borine for a number of years. Ed Park took management back over again, and you could say OREGON HUNTER magazine was double-parked through the 1980s.

The Leupold/Nosler photo contest was started in 1986, and shortly after that the contest was funded solely by Nosler and has been a mainstay for the magazine and one of its most popular features.

**'I got 250 issues, and running out of words ain't one of them!'
-Uncle Geddy, Oregon Hunter humor writer**

One of the things Ed Park insisted on was writers be paid for their work. Ed was a pro, and Ed knew pros had to be paid, and it was the only honest way to keep a high level of top quality content in the magazine. Which brings us to Dewey Delaney.

Young desperate Dewey was earning \$10 an article for selling humor columns to OREGON HUNTER, and although it wasn't much, it was pay for work.

"OREGON HUNTER landed on my desk at the Tidings," Dungannon recalled. He was sports editor at the *Ashland Daily Tidings* then while freelancing for FIELD & STREAM. "I thought this might be the one hunting magazine desperate enough to print my humor columns." He started writing Delaney's Delusions.

While Dewey Delaney was struggling to make \$10 a column, Ed Park was also writing under various names to make the content seem like it was coming from several different sources. Park wrote under the nom de plume E.H. Van Blaricom and others. Which was cute, because he had some advice for Dewey.

"You've got to change your name," Ed Park told young Dewey one day. "You need a manly name, one like Duane. And



The March/April 1993 issue of OREGON HUNTER was the first to appear on newsstands, sporting a shiny gloss cover the distributor required. The cover price was \$1.95. Soon more than 6,000 copies were distributed statewide each issue.

you need a good strong surname and I think it should be named after a border town in Northern Ireland." And so Dewey changed his name to Duane Dungannon, which was a relief for everyone, including his two children Darwin and Derwood, who also got to change their first names.

Ed Park may or may not have said any of that, but it's something he would have said. And it's sure he saw promise in young Dungannon.

He saw promise in OREGON HUNTER, which, at the time, resembled a thick membership newsletter, printed on book stock instead of gloss.

Dungannon took the helm as editor on Oct. 17, 1992, which was opening day of pheasant season and the Cascade elk hunt, and *The Last of the Mohicans* was the top movie at the box office.

Those were the days of grid sheets, Amberlith, border tape and exacto knives. No one had ever heard of MacBook or Creative Suite. The smell of boiled wax was common every couple of months in the Dungannon household, where the young editor pasted up each issue before taking it to the printer.

At one point, the publisher of the *Tidings* told Dungannon he needed to choose between the *Tidings* and OREGON HUNTER. Easy call. OREGON HUNTER has more than quadrupled its circulation since then.

The Daily Tidings is now defunct.

Dungannon's first issue was the January/February 1993 edition, to which he added eight pages, made the photos bigger and added more color. He sold a few key ads to pay for it, including maybe the most important ad of all, to Michaels of Oregon, which helped keep the magazine afloat.

Next, Dungannon took the magazine to the local Medford magazine distributor, Northwest News, and asked if they would put it on the newsstands. They said, "If you put a gloss cover on it, we will." And then flush with that bit of success, Dungannon persuaded the other six regional distributors to pick up the magazine.

That helped land advertisers, and the advertising paid for more pages and color, the gloss covers and a budget to pay freelance writers. Soon OREGON HUNTER was all gloss and selling 6,000 copies on the newsstands, which helped to grow OHA's membership.

OREGON HUNTER grew along with the organization to become the award-winning publication it is today. It is rare among our 50 states to have a dedicated hunters' association, and even more unique to find one that is involved at the policy level and a part of the local scene in every corner of the state.

I stopped in at Troy Boyd's house in Bend one August day and picked up a copy of that first issue of OREGON HUNTER published 41 years ago. The Premier issue had a 6-point bull elk on the cover and the content included an Ed Park classic: ANY Elk is a Good Elk; a story on elk country; another on pronghorns; maps for hunters and a short article about hunting spring rockchucks. It was called THE OREGON HUNTER and there was a big ad on the back cover for Dan'l Boone's Tom Tom Restaurant, open 24 hours every day in Bend, where you could get buffalo burgers and buffalo ground round steak.

You can bet someone bellied up to the bar at the old Tom Tom with a copy of the first OREGON HUNTER in hand, ordered a buffalo burger – medium rare please – and read "Bag That Coyote And Pay For Your Hunt" by E.H. Van Blaricom, eh?



Author Gary Lewis is the host of Frontier Unlimited TV. His evil twin Uncle Geddy has captured numerous awards for humor articles in OREGON HUNTER. Contact either of them at www.garylewisoutdoors.com



FIELD TO TABLE
By TIFFANY HAUGEN

Fresh Take on Waterfowl

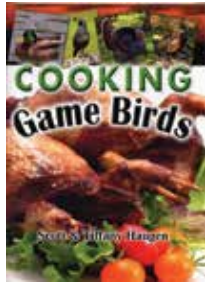
With the peak of Oregon's waterfowl season near, I'm always looking for fun, unique ways to prepare ducks and geese. We like eating fowl fresh, not freezing them, as this creates a gamey flavor.

This time of year, I have two or three brines going where incoming breasts are corned. When done, what we don't eat is then frozen. Legs and thighs are slow-cooked in a crockpot. We make jerky with waterfowl, too.

We also eat a lot of fresh ducks many days of the week. For these meals, thinly slicing the meat and cooking it hot and fast results in tender, tasty birds. Whenever I prepare this recipe for the family, there are never any leftovers. It works great with any ducks or geese.

WATERFOWL PEPPER STEAK & NOODLES

- 2-4 waterfowl breasts (about a pound)
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons dry sherry or red wine
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon puréed garlic
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons olive or coconut oil
- 1 yellow onion, sliced
- 1 red or yellow bell pepper, sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup chopped green onion or chives
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
- Cooked noodles of choice



In a medium bowl, mix soy sauce, sherry, sesame oil, garlic, black and red pepper flakes until thoroughly combined. Slice waterfowl breasts across the grain into thin strips and add to the brine. Let sit at room temperature 30 minutes (or refrigerate up to 8 hours).

In a large skillet, sauté onions and bell pepper over medium-high heat in olive or coconut oil 2-3 minutes. Add salt. Push onions and peppers aside and add sliced waterfowl to the pan. Spread meat out in a single layer. Once waterfowl begins to brown, turn over and brown the other side. Do not overcook waterfowl, as the flavor will become stronger the more it is cooked. Once browned, mix meat into onion and peppers, add green onions and chives. Serve over noodles and garnish with toasted sesame seeds.

For signed copies of author Tiffany Haugen's popular cookbook, *Cooking Game Birds*, visit scotthaugen.com



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Hunters' Victory Fund

Your tax-deductible* donation to the Oregon Hunters Association Hunters' Victory Fund will be dedicated for fighting legal and legislative battles to protect hunting rights in Oregon. Petitioners are gathering signatures to place a ban on hunting, trapping and fishing on Oregon's ballot! In the coming months we face legislative challenges where we must fight to protect your right to hunt, trap and own firearms!



Youth Heritage Fund

Tax-deductible* donations to OHA's Youth Heritage Fund help train tomorrow's hunters & conservationists who will carry on our proud hunting heritage.



Wildlife Super Fund



OHA GUZZLER/JERRY HOLBROOK

Tax-deductible* donations to the Oregon Hunters Association's Wildlife Super Fund will be dedicated for critical projects and programs aimed at advocating for wildlife and enhancing habitat right here in Oregon where you live and hunt.

Members who contribute \$20 or more to OHA's Special Funds receive a Silver Edition OHA Supporting Member decal. Donors of \$100 or more receive a Gold Edition Sustaining Member decal.



Oregon Hunters Association Special Funds Donations

P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501
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www.oregonhunters.org/donate ONLINE!



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\$20 \$50 \$100 Other: \$ _____

OHA Youth Heritage Fund:

\$20 \$50 \$100 Other: \$ _____

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* OHA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The OHA Hunters' Victory Fund is not a PAC. Please consult your tax preparer.

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WINNER:
OHA member Jeff Heil from Medford wins a Tactacam Reveal trail camera for his image of a jumbo Jackson County blacktail last September.



HONORABLE MENTION:



OHA member Calvin Davis of Pendleton earns Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for this Union County bull and his harem from last October.



Bend OHA member Brent Wright captures Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for this gathering of sage grouse and mule deer in Deschutes County in August.



OHA member Lily Langer of Sherwood garners Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for her photo of a Wheeler County bull.



This Klamath County cougar captured in August is an Honorable Mention and an OHA hat winner for Bly OHA member Marty Dillavou.



Murderers Creek mountain goats grab Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for Torin Foster, an OHA member from Seneca.

FINALLY FALL/DUANE DUNGANNON

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Sudden Death

IN THE Postseason

The way Oregon's youth extended deer weekend was shaking out, 14-year-old Derrick Eckis of Silverton was skeptical enough of tagging his first deer, let alone his first elk.

Youth Weekend is the two days tacked on to the end of the Western Oregon Deer Season for hunters ages 12-17. It offers kids who have an unfilled tag a couple extra days to hunt without crowding from adults hunting.

When the West Cascade Elk Season shifted back to November in 2021, it overlapped with Youth Deer Weekend. A youth with both tags might bag a deer and elk within the same weekend, or theoretically on the same day, or within a few remarkable moments.



Derrick Eckis scored on a sneak to bag this buck after football practice on youth weekend.



Derrick sealed the win with a pick-six minutes later when he took this six-point Cascade bull.

John Eckis described his son as a naturally good shot from an early age – from John's friend giving Derrick an Elmer Fudd hat and rubber band gun to hunt the wascally family chickens, to later being part of a 4-H shooting club.

But John was worried. Derrick had experienced a string of unlucky mentored youth seasons. John couldn't find a buck for his son when he was 9. At 10, Derrick got a shot, but the buck ran over a hill into the next camp, where they shot and tagged it. At 11, Derrick's Grandma passed away, and nobody hunted. Next time, they saw only 10 deer in 13 days.

"I felt like it was a make-or-break year for Derrick," John explained. Then things got more complicated.

Derrick's freshman football season ended, but Silverton High made the playoffs. They asked if he'd suit up with the varsity, and Derrick was honored. Silverton won their first playoff game, which meant Derrick's commitment would cut into his Youth Weekend.

A Saturday morning football practice left little time for Derrick and his best friend Judah. It was also pouring rain that afternoon. But John knew a spot 45 min-

utes away and encouraged the boys to give it a shot anyway.

At 2:30 p.m. they parked and stepped into a chilly rain. The timber company allows people to walk in, but the three were taking a chance because some hunters possess gate keys. To be passed by hunters in a warm dry truck would be extremely discouraging.

A mile in, the rain stopped, reluctantly allowing a sliver of blue sky. John, Derrick and Judah found themselves approaching a steep clearing of a logged burn. The boys were chilly and wanted to keep moving, but John repeated what his dad said years before, "Just sit down and let the forest come alive around you."

Derrick and Judah were watching from two charred stumps. "It was dead quiet..." Derrick remembered. "There weren't even any birds chirping yet when we heard a crackling noise below." After some quiet deliberation, they confirmed horns. When Derrick let his shot rip, the buck flipped and fell right there.

With dark approaching, far from the truck with a buck downhill, John was scrambling to come up with a big game plan. Right then Derrick spotted a bull elk 100 yards farther up the draw from where his buck was laying. The bull was quartered away at 400 yards when Derrick fired. John witnessed the bull drop, get up, and disappear into a thicket. He was worried it was wounded.

"We had to zig-zag down the hill because it was really slick and steep," Derrick recalled.

They worked down to the buck, dropped a waypoint, and used that as a reference to catch up with the bull.

Derrick entered the thicket and found the bull swaying back and forth and put him down. When John was cleaning the elk, he was relieved to find that Derrick hit the top of the heart with the first shot.

Derrick Eckis had taken full advantage of Youth Weekend. "I was shocked, and overwhelmed," Derrick remembered.

John had always promised his son he'd spring for taxidermy on his first animal.

"My wife Lisa already thinks the house looks like Cabela's, so I was surprised when she insisted there was no way we couldn't get them both mounted!"

After the Eckis family processed the meat from the bull and the buck, Lisa would also need a new freezer.

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

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- Wildlife management and conservation
- Hunter ethics and responsibilities
- Outdoor safety

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

How do I become a Certified Instructor?

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



Hunter Education

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





CWD surrounds Oregon; OHA ups the ante

By Mike Totey, OHA Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) recently was discovered in Washington near Spokane. With the disease now confirmed in Idaho, California and Washington, it seems inevitable that this always-fatal disease will find its way to Oregon, where it could have devastating effects on our deer, elk and moose populations.

CWD has now been found in 3 states that border Oregon

Our best hope is to do our part as hunters and conservationists. If you are hunting out of state, do not transport any of the brain or spinal cord back to Oregon with you. If you are successful in filling a tag (or hopefully two!) in Oregon, make sure you get your harvested deer or elk tested. Early detection of the disease gives wildlife managers the best chance to keep the impacts of the disease manageable, and testing harvested animals is the primary way to do this.

OHA is working hard with ODFW to ramp up testing in Oregon. OHA was instrumental in getting funding to add capacity for the field work needed with testing for CWD, and for laying the groundwork to get a testing facility started at Oregon State University.

OHA is offering an incentive to those who get their deer or elk tested. Everyone who submits their harvested animal for testing will be entered into a drawing to win a Howa 1500 .223 with a 4-12x40 scope.

For more information, check out the ODFW CWD web page at: <https://myodfw.com/CWD>



One hunter who has an animal tested for CWD at an ODFW check station or field office, or with a taxidermist or meat processor, will win this rifle and scope package donated by OHA, while another will win a Sig scope.

Test your animal for CWD, get a chance to win a great gun donated by OHA

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

OHA is partnering with ODFW to offer an incentive drawing for hunters who submit chronic wasting disease (CWD) samples from their harvested deer and elk this season. For each deer or elk sample provided, hunters will receive an entry to win a Howa 1500 .223 rifle with mounted Nikko Stirling Gamepro 4-12x40mm Scope combo. A second hunter will be drawn to receive a Sig Sauer Whiskey3 4-12x40mm Quadplex scope.

OHA and ODFW are committed to reducing the spread of CWD. In the 2024 Oregon Legislative Session, OHA's two-year effort to secure legislative funding toward CWD monitoring, detection, and testing culminated in the successful allocation of \$2.7 million in state funding.

CWD has now been positively confirmed in California, Idaho and Washington.

“With chronic wasting disease detected in three bordering states, it is more imperative than ever for hunters to provide our unique contribution toward CWD detection by voluntarily submitting samples from our harvests,” said OHA Policy Director Amy Patrick.

ODFW has yet to detect a case of CWD in Oregon, but increasing sampling efforts will be critical in preventing the spread of CWD in Oregon.

Hunters who submit a CWD sample from a harvested deer or elk between Aug. 1, 2024 and April 30, 2025 will be entered to win the prizes. Successful hunters will receive one entry for every legally harvested deer or elk for which they provide a CWD sample. Hunters can submit samples at CWD check stations or at any ODFW office.

Visit <https://myodfw.com/CWD> for more information.



OHA raffled a HOWA M1500 donated by Legacy Sports International to benefit OHA habitat projects.

Rifle raffle benefits Oregon habitat

Matt Shorb of Powers won a Howa M1500 6.5CR with Bipod and 4-16 Nikko Stirling Scope (\$1497 MRSP) donated by Legacy Sports International in OHA's Habitat Raffle, drawn on Sept. 4 at the OHA office.

Congratulations to Matt and thanks to all who entered. Proceeds will be used for OHA Regional Habitat Projects where multiple OHA chapters come together with State OHA for landscape-scale projects to benefit wildlife.

OHA testifies at Commission meeting on behalf of Oregon moose



By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

Shiras moose in Oregon are rarely discussed publicly, and OHA aims to change that. It is a shame that we have such a coveted species within our borders, and we do not have, nor do we prioritize the resources needed to effectively manage and monitor our moose population.

We really do not know how many moose we have in Oregon today; we really do not know what our bull:cow or cow:calf ratios are at this time. Efforts have been made by ODFW in the past to monitor moose herd composition, but that effort has subsided. The ODFW Enterprise Field Office is currently inundated with more work than its staff can handle with wolf-livestock conflicts and a multitude of other efforts.

OHA believes we need to find the means to increase capacity in this northeast Oregon district to achieve ODFW's mission, and we offered these points in testimony at the September Fish & Wildlife Commission meeting.

Some of our neighboring states are seeing increasing moose populations, and OHA believes Oregon should strive to achieve a sufficiently large and healthy moose population. Nevada is a state much like Oregon in that moose are on the edge of the species' range. Despite this, Nevada is currently seeing an increase in its moose population, and they are now actively managing roughly 100 moose. In some areas, bull ratios are very high, and simply put, this can negatively impact the population in a number of ways. In response, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) offered two bull moose tags this year to residents only. NDOW received 21,914 applications for those two tags and brought in \$349,553 from those applications and fees for NDOW to use to manage Nevada's fish and wildlife. These funds will also be used to increase poaching enforcement in the Silver State.

It goes without saying that this species is and will be valued by all Oregonians, and we should all strive to attain the resources we need to manage moose.



OHA pays out \$800 in rewards in 4 cases

In the last two summer months, OHA issued four reward checks to informants in four cases totaling \$800 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: snagging salmon, no current angling license/tag, angling in a closed area, unlawful take of steelhead, unlawful take of a large grocery bag full of female Dungeness crab, exceeding daily bag limit of halibut, failure to validate halibut harvest tag.

Latest Gun Calendar winners announced

OHA Gun Calendar Raffle winners are posted every Wednesday on OHA's social media, but Facebook and Instagram have been taking down the posts because they contain guns.

See weekly winners on OHA's website or download our app, which you can also use to enter contests and get timely notifications.

Get your 2025 OHA Gun Raffle Calendar now by calling the OHA state office at 541-772-7313 or visiting OHA's website at: www.oregonhunters.org/store

-  **Aug. 28: Henry Golden Boy 22LR**
Austin Wilson of Longview
-  **Sept. 4: Pointer O/U Acrius 12 Ga.**
Steve Fox of Terrebonne
-  **Sept. 11: Browning A Bolt III .300 Win.**
Dennis Stacey of Scotts Mills
-  **Sept. 18: Christensen Mesa**
Jerry Rosenblad of Salem



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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CHAPTER NEWS

OHA SW CASCADES



Chapters wrap up projects, slate events for fall

BAKER

CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

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

BEND

REX PARKS 541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Big E's.

2025 Fundraiser: March 8, Bend Riverhouse Lodge, 541-480-9848.

Update: Thank you to everyone who contributed to our annual Youth Upland Bird Hunt on Oct. 19. Get your raffle tickets for the winter steelhead fishing trip for two. Drawing to be held Nov. 13 at the monthly meeting; call John Bambe: 541-480-9848.

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.

Update: Blue Mountain chapter has assisted with duck banding at Wanaket Wildlife Area and donated to five high school trap clubs and awarded three scholarships.

CAPITOL

DANNY SOUTH 503-577-6033

<https://oregonhunters.org/capitol-chapter/>

Chapter Meetings: See chapter newsletter for date and time.

2025 Fundraiser: March 15, Oregon State Fairgrounds, 503-990-2978.

Update: The Capitol Chapter has partnered with the Mid-Willamette Chapter for our Youth Hunting Safety Day held in September. It was a great success, and we look forward to partnering again.

OHA's Capitol Chapter enhanced Cascade meadow habitat by removing encroaching conifers at its annual Westside Project.

CLATSOP COUNTY

TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

ClatsopCountyOHA@pacifier.com

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 6:30 snacks, 7 p.m. meeting, 4H Clubhouse, Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

JORDAN HICKS 949-533-7271

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m., Elks Lodge, 350 Belton Rd., St. Helens.

CURRY

JAMIE BADGER 541-499-2245

Badgergirls3@gmail.com

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

Update: Andrew Dominguez was the lucky winner of a Browning Xbolt speed LR OviX 7mm PRC at our last chapter meeting.

EMERALD VALLEY

TONY HILSENDAGER 541-729-0877

EmeraldOHA@live.com

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

Update: Our most recent guest speaker was Dr. Ulrike Streicher, a certified wildlife rehabilitator and Director of the Cascades Raptor Center.

HOODVIEW

KELLY PARKMAN 503-706-7481

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

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

2025 Fundraiser: Feb. 22, Monarch Inn, Clackamas, 503-314-3090.

Update: Plan to join us at our Holiday Potluck on Dec. 7. There are many Learn to Hunt opportunities ahead, so if you or someone you know is new to hunting, go to the OHA website to find classes and events.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

DAVID DOWNS 541-821-1511

ddowns2646@gmail.com

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m., dinner 6 p.m., Black Bear Diner, Grants Pass.

2025 Fundraiser: March 22, Josephine County Fairgrounds, 541-660-5861 or 541-761-1852.

Update: Be sure to attend our December chapter meeting and bring your antlers for our scoring competition.

KLAMATH

DENNIS WIARD 541-891-3549

dtward@charter.net

<https://oregonhunters.org/klamath-chapter>

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

2025 Fundraiser: April 26, Klamath County Fairgrounds, 541-891-3549.

Update: The Youth Chukar Hunt is set for Oct. 26 and 27 in the Klamath Hills.

LAKE COUNTY

LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

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

2025 Fundraiser: April 5.

Update: We set our annual guzzler project for Oct. 26.

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.

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.

Update: The OHA Malheur County Chapter Youth Shoot event was a great success with 32 youth attending. Austin Keller won the 20 gauge pump shotgun.

MID-COLUMBIA

TONY WHITE 541-490-2980

Quarterly Chapter Meeting: Nov. 20, 6 p.m., ODFW screen print shop, The Dalles.

OREGON HUNTER, November/December 2024

Update: Our chapter donated funds to purchase additional pheasants for the youth hunt at the White River Wildlife Area on Sept. 14 and 15.

MID-WILLAMETTE

KEN MCCALL 541-753-8588

kenemccall@gmail.com

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

2025 Fundraiser: April 5, Albany Boys & Girls Club, 541-971-3351.

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday of odd numbered months, Board meets at 6 p.m., general meeting at 7 p.m., Old Armory, Albany.

Update: Our Chapter has pledged an additional \$500 to the TIP reward for the late August poaching and waste of a five-point bull elk in Linn County.

OCHOCO

JAMES COX 541-408-4816

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

2025 Fundraiser: Feb. 15, Crook County Fairgrounds, 541-410-5050.

Update: The Ochoco Chapter is proud to support Yow Hunting Camps. If you are looking for a great camp, they have many camps each year. <https://yowhunting.com/>

PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 503-266-2900

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter

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

2025 Fundraiser: March 1, Mt. Angel Community Festhalle, 506-710-1233.

Update: The Pioneer Chapter hosted Sight-in Days at Canby Rod & Gun Club on Sept. 14-15 and 21-22. It was a great chance to get your rifle ready for the start of fall rifle seasons. Our chapter was named OHA Chapter of the Year, and members Kolin Theil and Scott Jones received awards, for wildlife and organization contributions.

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.

2025 Fundraiser: Feb. 22.

Update: We will auction an Access & Habitat Statewide Deer Tag at our banquet.

ROGUE VALLEY

PAUL THOMPSON 541-941-6978

Firepmt29@gmail.com

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

2025 Fundraiser: March 15.

Update: A new event for our chapter, Open Range Night, was held this summer with about 30 adults and kids attending. Thanks to Matt at Dewclaw Archery and our volunteers. We again sponsored wildlife forage seed to enhance local habitat.

TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Monday in December, Board Meeting 6:30; 3rd Monday in December, General Meeting 7 p.m., ODFW Tillamook Office.

2025 Fundraiser: May 3, Tillamook Fairgrounds, 503-842-7153. We will auction an Access & Habitat Statewide Elk Tag.

Update: Chapter members will check hunters in and out at the Stimson gate for the weekends of the coast elk first and second seasons. Stimson Timber supports hunters and allows walk-in elk hunters in this unit during open, general season dates.

TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 6 p.m., Corner Bar & Grill, Coquille.

2025 Fundraiser: April 5.

Update: The Tioga Chapter held a giant yard sale to sell many donated items. All proceeds went to our youth program.

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.

2025 Fundraiser: March 29.

Update: Congratulations to the local high schools that placed well at the Clay Target League National Championships. Our meeting guest speaker was Tony Gilbertson, who is the 2024 World Elk Calling Champion.

UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

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

2025 Fundraiser: April 5, Seven Feathers

Casino, please call 541-580-5660.

Update: Robert Luck won a Citadel Trakr .22 long rifle at our chapter meeting.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

2025 Fundraiser: March 15.

Update: If you are looking for a great volunteer opportunity, contact us about joining our chapter as a board member, officer or newsletter editor.

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.

2025 Fundraiser: March 15.

Update: We will open the Stimson tree farm gate by Hagg Lake again this year. It will be open weekends for general deer, youth weekend and first and second elk seasons. If you would like to volunteer to help, contact Andy 503-490-2489. Our chapter was honored to meet Buck, Oregon's first conservation dog, and his partner OSP Wildlife Trooper Josh Wolcott. Buck is trained in detecting human tracking, wildlife violations and more. 🐾

Contributions made recently to the OHA Memorial Fund

In memory of Kathy Oriet from Bryan Cook, Kay Varuska & Kathryn Krieger



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

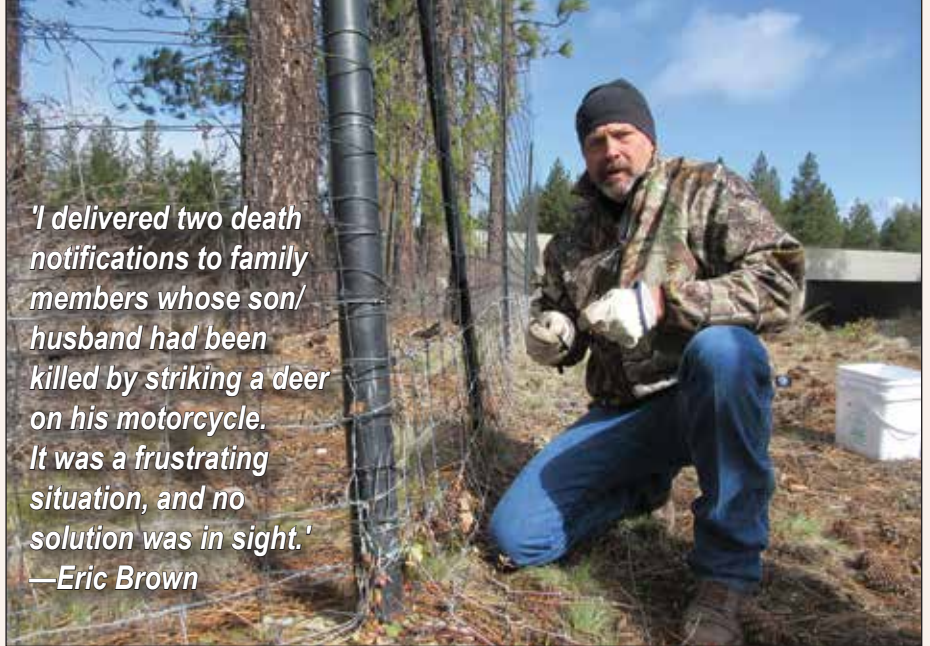
OHA IN ACTION

BY ERIC BROWN



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

'I delivered two death notifications to family members whose son/husband had been killed by striking a deer on his motorcycle. It was a frustrating situation, and no solution was in sight.'
—Eric Brown



OHA mends fences to save wildlife

During my 28 years with Oregon State Police, a good portion of those years were in Gilchrist and Bend, where I saw too many deer vs. motor vehicle crashes each year on the highway, especially during the migration. While in Gilchrist I delivered two death notifications to family members whose son/husband had been killed by striking a deer on his motorcycle.

It was a frustrating situation, and no solution was in sight.

Years later in 2016, while acting as the volunteer coordinator for Bend OHA and seeing the beginning of the newly installed wildlife fence from Lava Butte to Sunriver, I reached out to ODFW to learn more about how the fence is maintained. At that time, an ODFW employee would patrol the fence and flag damage, which would then be reported to USFS, who would repair the fence. If additional materials were needed, they would contact

OHA Bend Chapter members regularly monitor and repair the fences that funnel wildlife safely into underpasses on Highway 97. November is a peak migration month, so please watch for wildlife.

ODOT for those materials. Our chapter made a proposal to do the patrols and maintenance as long as it was not beyond our capabilities.

Bend OHA took over patrolling the fence line in 2017 about three times a year using ATVs. If there is a major wind storm, we will often do an extra patrol to check on trees over the fence. Trees that had fallen onto the fence would be removed, and any needed fence repairs would be made. If the damage was caused by a motor vehicle and ODOT had obtained operator and insurance information, they would have a local fence company make the repairs.

This fence has since been extended three miles to just south of Vandever Road. Our biggest repair to date was replacing 120 feet of fence during the winter after a truck drove through it. A typical patrol consists of tightening a few brace connections, cutting brush out of our trail, picking up litter and removing a tree or two.

The normal amount of time we spend on a patrol, including travel time, is around 3 to 4 hours.

We took over the patrol and maintenance of the newly installed fence north of Gilchrist in 2023. The Gilchrist fence is not on federal land, so our main contact is ODOT and ODFW. Bend has eight primary volunteers who patrol these fences. We have conducted 28 fence patrols, investing 340 hours of volunteer time and 2,769 miles travelled with vehicles and ATVs. We have an excellent communication channel with ODOT, ODFW and USFS.

OHA members observing new damage to the fence can reach out and contact us.

If there is an upcoming wildlife fence to be installed in your area, please reach out to our state and federal partners about doing the patrol and light maintenance of the fence. Build your volunteer base to do these patrols and know that you are making a difference.



OHA contributed more than \$115,000 to Highway 97 crossings, which reduce vehicle/wildlife collisions by 85 percent.



Happy 250th Issue OHA!

**YOUR SUPPORT OF THE WATCH FOR WILDLIFE LICENSE PLATE
HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ITS SUCCESS**



**THE SALE AND RENEWAL OF THE WATCH FOR WILDLIFE LICENSE PLATE
HELPS FUND HABITAT CONNECTIVITY AND WILDLIFE PASSAGE PROJECTS.**

The roads crisscrossing Oregon make finding food, shelter, and mates a dangerous and sometimes fatal activity for more than 5,000 deer, elk, bear, and other large animals every year. Collisions with wildlife and accident avoidance also claim the lives of 1-2 motorists annually in Oregon.

It's not just a pretty license plate. Proceeds from its sale and renewal help wildlife safely get where they need to go and reduce accidents on our roads and highways.



OREGON WILDLIFE
FOUNDATION

Scan to learn more, or visit us
at myowf.org/wildlifemoves



Hunters key to protecting Oregon's big game from Chronic Wasting Disease

Watch for signs for CWD check stations during certain weekends of major deer and elk seasons.

There is an invisible threat to elk and deer populations here in Oregon. Chronic Wasting Disease lurks close to Oregon's borders with detections in free-ranging deer or elk in surrounding states Idaho, California and Washington.

CWD is an always fatal, incurable, infectious disease caused by a prion, or misfolded protein, that causes progressive brain damage in elk, deer, caribou and moose. Animals can be infected and spreading the disease for years before finally showing symptoms (drooling, lack of balance, wasting) and dying.

No state or country has successfully eradicated it but there are ways to help limit CWD's impact. The disease can cause declines in big game populations if it's not managed to prevent high infection rates and spread.

Early detection is the best tool against the disease – if it's found early, Oregon may be able to isolate it. This will only be possible with support from Oregon's hunters.

If you harvest a deer or elk anywhere in Oregon, please provide a sample.

Biologists will take a piece of brain tissue or lymph node from your animal's head; this won't impact taxidermy plans. There are several convenient ways to provide a sample, visit MyODFW.com/CWD for more details

- Stop at a check station in Baker City, off I-84 near Biggs Junction (Celilo Park), Elgin, Prineville or other locations on certain weekends of major hunting seasons (required if you drive by one while transporting game).
- Work with a participating taxidermist or meat processor (see list online at MyODFW.com/CWD).
- Call your local ODFW office to arrange an appointment.
- Drop head in a barrel at a participating ODFW office.
- Test results are posted online in 3-5 weeks. While there is no evidence that humans can contract CWD from eating or handling contaminated meat, the CDC advises against eating meat from infected animals.

Other regulations to protect against CWD:

- If hunting out of state, don't bring certain parts back to Oregon—nothing with spinal cord or brain tissue where prions concentrate is allowed back into Oregon. See page 16 of the 2024 Big Game Hunting Regulations for details.
- Do not use or possess commercial urine scent lures; the prions that cause CWD can be spread through urine, so these products have been banned.

HELP PROTECT OREGON'S DEER AND ELK HERDS

Hunters that submit a CWD test from a harvested deer or elk between **Aug. 1, 2024** and **April 1, 2025** will automatically be entered to win either a **Howa 1500 .223 with mounted Nikko Sterling Gamepro 4-12x40mm Scope combo** or a **Sig Sauer Whiskey3 4-12x40mm Quadplex scope**. OHA is providing these prizes and will draw the winner on **April 30, 2025**.



WIN A RIFLE COMBO OR SCOPE

For more information scan the QR code or visit MyODFW.com/CWD



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

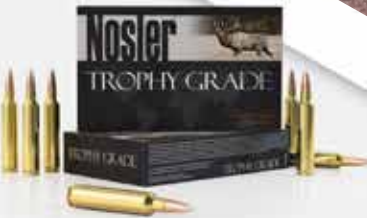
Go to **OHA's website at www.oregonhunters.org** Click on **OHA CONTESTS**. Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of Nosler, proud sponsor and OHA supporter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



**ENTERING IS EASY
WITH OHA'S APP!**

DOWNLOAD IT NOW!



SCAN



NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS



OHA member August Welch of Portland earns a spot in the 2024 Nosler Photo Contest and an OHA Coast knife for his photo of Archer Welch and their spaniel at a youth pheasant hunt this September on Sauvie Island.



Eric Martin, OHA member from Corvallis, wins a place in the finals of the 2024 Nosler Photo Contest and an OHA Coast knife with this photo of Dad, sons Mason and Logan, and Mason's first turkey from a mentored hunt in the Alsea Unit this past May.

ROGUE-UMPOUA DIVIDE WILDERNESS/DUJANE DUNGANNON

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS



Matt Langer, an OHA member out of Sherwood, battled bad weather and rough roads to claim a place in the 2024 Nosler Photo Contest finals and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of an August Harney County pronghorn.

OHA member Casey Tone from Tualatin bags a finalist spot in the 2024 Nosler Photo Contest and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of a Wallowa Mountains spring bear.



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WITH OHA'S APP!**

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NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

HONORABLE MENTION



Medford OHA member Dominic Jones snags a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of Rachel Jones, himself, and an Applegate blacktail last October.



Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat belong to OHA member Keaton Zarbano for this photo of Kathwryne Zarbano and a 2023 Douglas County blacktail.



OHA Life Member Randy Windsor of Keizer collects Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his Ochoco pronghorn in August.



Dayton OHA member Raymond Wurdinger nabs Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his photo of Liz Wurdinger with a Beatys Butte pronghorn taken in September with a Nosler Model 48 rifle won at the OHA Pioneer Chapter banquet.



Hannah Walasavage, OHA member in Junction City, arrows an elk, Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat from her Pine Creek September hunt.



OHA member Rick Carson of Beaverton traveled to Maui last June and shot this axis deer, nabbing Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat.



50 Ways to Leave Your Lever

Lil Sassy asked the other day about my musical influences. I thought she was working on a report for school, but she reminded me she graduated 10 years ago. When I thought back to my favorite songs, I had to say it was the great cowboy anthems that inspired me.

Lil Sassy wanted to know if I could name a cowboy song since she had never heard me listen to cowboy songs. As if she had earplugs in the whole time she was growing up. Which would explain a lot.

To answer her question, I had to tell her about my first lever action rifle. There was a new band on the scene called Leverboy and I would tune in on a little red transistor radio.

Leverboy sang, “We’ll have to wait and see if there’s anything we can save.” Which I could relate to. At the time I was saving for a Marlin 336, which was chambered for .30-30 and would hold six plus one.

Lil Sassy looked confused, so I explained my infatuation with cowboy lever guns went back to my first Daisy.

“I don’t think you know what I mean,” Lil Sassy stomped her foot, but I was between her and the door, so I told her how frustrated I was with that Daisy BB gun. I could hit a starling like one out of 10 shots. And I wasn’t the only one having trouble with a lever in the ‘70s.

Rod Stewart inherited his momma’s rusty Winchester. I knew that because I heard him on my little red transistor radio sing, “Mother, what a lever, you wore me out.” I knew how he felt. Sometimes I shot yellowjackets around the plum trees and you could plumb wear yourself out shooting BBs at drunk bees.

Eventually I saved enough grass-cutting green to fork it over for a Marlin 336. Boy, did she kick when I touched her, but I loved putting my cheek against that walnut figure. I even built a spot for her on the wall out of deer feet. My friends liked to come over and stare at her rack.

I bought a Winchester Model 94 when I was working for the weekend in my early 20s. When I got my big chance at a blacktail deer cross-canyon, I missed all three shots. Reckon I shot under. Or maybe I shot over it. I was sad, but it wasn’t the *Chance Of A Lifetime*, which would come later, but it did remind me of another Leverboy tune called *The One That Got Away*.

Leverboy wrote a dozen songs about cowboy guns. There was *Bullet In The Chamber* and *Lovin’ Every Minute Of It*, which was about the first day of deer season, and *Steal The Thunder*, which I think was about installing a suppressor on a short-barreled .44 Magnum.

Leverboy also wrote *That’s Where My Money Goes* – a song about their gun collections.

Once I made a deal for what I thought was a *Dream Lever*, which Bobby Darin sang about in the ‘60s. Mine was a post-’64 John Wayne commemorative with an octagon barrel and wouldn’t even fire a bullet.

Our modern lever action, I explained to Lil Sassy, is based on the design of a rifle that saw action at the end of the Civil War, replacing muzzleloaders and open ignition.

Lever guns are fast, hold plenty of ammo and are some of the most reliable actions ever designed. Built with shorter barrels and flat-sided receivers, the lever gun is perfect for stalking blacktail deer in timber and slides easily in and out of a scabbard.

“I know all that, but did you ever have an *Imaginary Lever*?” Lil Sassy wanted to know.

Kind of personal. That was a song by the Atlanta Rhythm Section, but no, that will make you go blind.

The artist formerly known as Johnny Cougar wrote a song I understood. *I Need A Lever That Won’t Drive Me Crazy*. Just like John Cougar Mellencamp, I needed a lever action that wouldn’t drive me mad.

What you want, I told Lil Sassy, is a low-maintenance lever, one who knows what it means to . . .

“Hey, hit the highway?”

You betcha.

Another reason to carry a lever instead of a muzzleloader was lever actions were better for hunting in the Pacific Northwest. Try humming *Rainy Day Levers* by Gordon Lightfoot on a wet October morning when you haven’t seen a deer in 15

days. Rainy day levers don’t lie when they tell you they been down like you.

A lot of songs have been written about levers and not all good.

Case in point: *Perfect Lever* by Kansas, which came off the *Best of Kansas* album, and I mean came off. They replaced it with three other songs when they re-released the album. A better hunting song by Kansas was their 80’s hit *Slay The Game Tonight*.

I started thinking about my next lever when I heard *Certified Lever Boy*, the new song from Drake, which I thought was some kind of water foul.

Now I can’t decide between a sweet little Browning and a Henry American Beauty. I’ve put hands on both down at the gun store. I might end up with one and then who knows . . . I’m torn between two levers.

“I’m feelin’ like listening to Tool,” Lil Sassy said.

At least I think that’s what she said.



Only a classy classic rock band puts a lever action rifle on the cover of their debut album. Kansas later recorded such hunting anthems as ‘Perfect Lever’ and ‘Slay The Game Tonight.’





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