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VOL. 43, NO. 3



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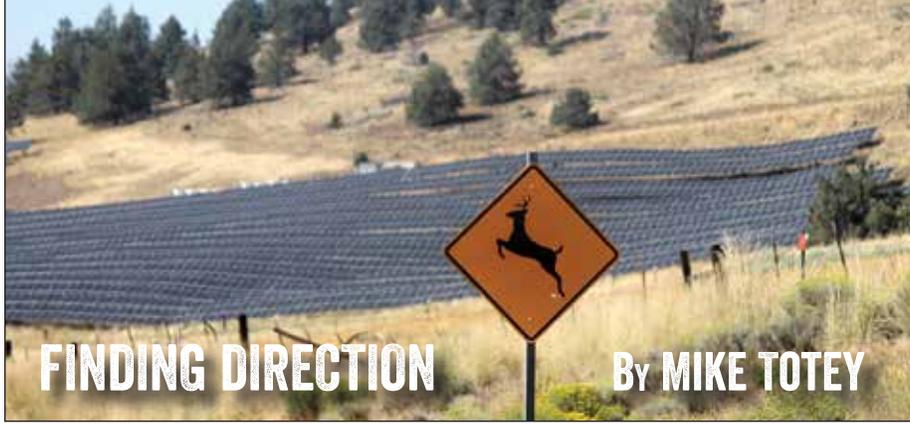
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**By MIKE TOTEY**

TYLER DUNGANNON

# OREGON HUNTER

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<http://www.oregonhunters.org>

**POSTMASTER:** Send changes to Oregon Hunter, PO Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501.

## BLM opens public lands to solar farms

Imagine standing on top of Steens Mountain in southeast Oregon and looking to the east over the Alvord Desert and seeing a glistening reflection from a massive solar farm. This same scenario could be repeated in other areas of central and southeast Oregon.

In December 2024, the BLM released the final documents for its updated Western Solar Plan. According to a press release from BLM, "The updated Western Solar Plan identifies the availability of over 31 million acres of public lands across the 11 Western states for utility-scale solar project applications." This includes over one million acres in Oregon.

OHA provided comments throughout the planning process and supported comments submitted by ODFW that helped keep important habitats off limits. OHA staff and volunteers attended public meetings, worked with other partners, submitted comments, and lobbied for a balanced approach that considered and minimized impacts from solar farm development.

While we were mostly successful at protecting things like critical big game migration corridors and sage grouse habitat, other impacts will be unavoidable. Utility-scale solar developments are a real possibility on public lands in Oregon. These solar farms are surrounded by high fences for security reasons and, where allowed, will be prioritized over public access, hunting, and habitat to help meet the nation's energy demands. They will also preclude other uses like grazing.

Current technology for solar energy generation continues to improve. Economics, transmission limitations, development costs, geography and other factors all need to be considered, as well. Because of these factors, energy developers are looking to build large-scale projects. It takes roughly 6 to 8 acres to generate 1 megawatt of power. Developers then need to build in additional capacity because solar panels lose some of their energy generating effectiveness over time (1/2 to 1% per year). Most projects currently proposed in Oregon through the Energy Facility Siting Council are thousands of acres. Because typical solar farms have a lifespan of about 30 years before they are either mothballed or refitted with new panels, many biologists look at these developments as a permanent loss of habitat.

BLM is quick to point out that "No [specific] solar projects are authorized through this planning effort; all individual proposed projects must still undergo site-specific environmental review with opportunity for public comment before a decision is made on whether to approve them." This is a critical step that OHA will need to stay vigilant on into the future. If you have a favorite spot on BLM lands in eastern Oregon, you are encouraged to get involved and make your voice heard as these projects are proposed.

*OHA lobbied for a balanced approach that considered and minimized impacts from solar farm development.*



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# WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

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# OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

## KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

- The proper name for "specks" is:
  - duskys
  - snows
  - cacklers
  - white-fronts
- The elk term "raghorn" best suits:
  - spike
  - 4-point
  - 7-point
  - none of the above
- Dewclaws most commonly show up in the tracks of which?
  - doe deer
  - cow elk
  - trophy buck
  - trophy bull
- Cascade elk share habitat with:
  - blacktail
  - mule deer
  - Columbian whitetails
  - all of the above
- A good place to hunt scaup would be:
  - Clatsop County
  - Klamath County
  - Tillamook County
  - All of the above
- Southern Oregon's highest peak is:
  - Mt. McLoughlin
  - Mt. Thielsen
  - Mt. Ashland
  - none of the above
- To get an eastern Oregon LOP buck deer tag, you must have how many acres?
  - 40
  - 80
  - 160
  - 320
- The High Cascade buck hunt includes which southwest Oregon wilderness area?
  - Kalmiopsis
  - Sky Lakes
  - Mountain Lakes
  - Wild/Scenic Rogue
- The division of ruminants includes:
  - deer
  - bighorns
  - mountain goats
  - all of the above
- Which Oregon county has more deer than people?
  - Deschutes
  - Washington
  - Wheeler
  - None of the above



### WHERE IN OREGON WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN?

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

**ENTRY DEADLINE: MAY 15, 2025**



### LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

**Charles Putman, Mesa, AZ**

Charles's name was drawn from among the OHA members who recognized Kiger Gorge on Steens Mountain.

#### MAY 3

OHA State Convention with  
A&H Statewide Deer Tag auction,  
Chinook Winds Casino,  
541-772-7313 oregonhunters.org



OHA Tillamook Chapter banquet with  
A&H Statewide Elk Tag auction,  
503-812-3832



OHA Tioga Chapter Youth Day,  
541-294-7912

#### MAY 15

Application deadline for controlled hunts

#### MAY 17

OHA Tillamook Youth Shoot,  
503-842-7153

#### MAY 17-18

OHA Hart Mountain weekend project,  
541-891-3549

#### MAY 31

Turkey, spring bear seasons close



OHA Bend Chapter Youth & Family Day,  
541-480-7323

#### JUNE 6

White River weekend project,  
503-706-7481

#### JUNE 7

OHA Klamath Chapter forest cleanup,  
541-891-3549



OHA youth & family events:  
Tualatin Valley 503-701-2852  
Josephine County 541-218-2836

#### JUNE 12

Controlled hunt results available

#### JUNE 13-15

OHA Pioneer Chapter weekend  
guzzler campout, 503-874-9851

#### JUNE 27-29

All Hands All Brands for  
Public Lands weekend project,  
541-647-0424

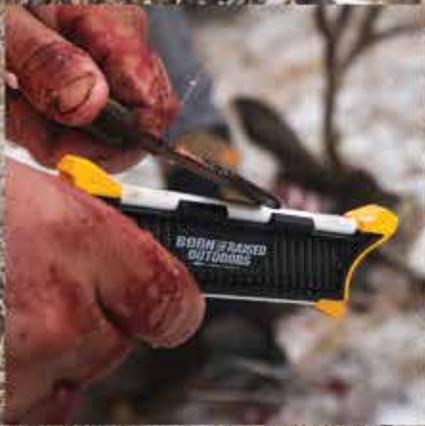
ANSWERS: 1-d; 2-b; 3-c; 4-d; 5-d; 6-a; 7-c; 8-b; 9-d; 10-c



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OREGON AFIELD

KYLE PAYNE

## Get in a rut for spring bruins

The peak of the black bear rut is the month of June. But hunters throughout Oregon can see boars exhibiting rutting behavior as early as mid-May. By the final week of the spring bear season, sows start coming into heat and boars are ready.

Radio collared boars have been tracked traveling 25 miles a day amid some of Oregon's most rugged terrain in the Cascades. Their drive to reproduce is strong. With boars covering so much ground, they become more visible to hunters. Patiently glassing south-facing slopes where food sources flourish late in the season is a great starting point.

Bears graze on lush green grass, dig for various bulbs and tubers, and will scavenge for carrion late in the season.



SCOTTHAUGEN.COM

Bears cover considerable ground during the rut, often following the paths of least resistance, including trails and closed roads.

They'll dig up ground squirrel dens and devour elk calves as they hit the ground.

Look for shredded wooden road signs, scratches on trees, and torn up stumps.

Keep an eye out for droppings in the road and on primary game trails. Boars cover a lot of ground on paths of least resistance, pumping their noses to detect a sow in heat.

If the droppings are green and fresh, using predator calls to bring a bear out

of thick cover can be productive, and exciting. Electronic calls allow sounds to continuously roll, without interruption. Switch up the sounds, from fawn distress to calf elk distress, rabbits to birds, and more. Bears aren't picky when it comes to prey sounds. The goal is to find a sound bears like and keeps them coming your way. It's best to first spot a bear prior to calling, so you can observe how it's reacting.

—SCOTT HAUGEN

## Tips for tagging an Oregon tom late in the game



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Late in the spring season, toms begin to form small bachelor flocks, and they often hang out in cool stands of timber.

Though many turkey tags already have been filled, don't overlook the final weeks of the season if you're looking to score on a boss tom. In parts of Oregon, turkey breeding commences in late February. The breeding ramps up through March, typically ending by mid-April. By the final days of the season, most hens are tending broods. This sets the stage for closing the deal on a tom.

Toms intensely feed following the rut. Grass seeds have come to a head, various weeds are flourishing, and left-over mast crops, insects, and budding fruits are foods toms target. Calling early in the morning and later in the afternoon on the fringes of where turkeys forage can be productive. If it's cloudy and cool, hunting food sources in the middle of the day can pay off.

On hot days, toms often hang out in tall grass meadows and fields, where there's

food and shade. It can be hard coaxing them out. But hot days can find toms moving into wooded habitats for shade, to seek a cooling breeze, and drink. Timbered hill country and wooded river bottoms can be excellent places to call in a late-season tom.

If toms are forming bachelor flocks, using a strutting tom decoy can help bring them in, as they won't shy away from a fight. If targeting a lone tom, a less aggressive jake decoy may be a better choice. Lone toms can be timid late in the season.

When hunting amid trees and cover, a preening hen decoy or upright hen decoy can bring toms on the run. Late in the season, some hens have lost their broods and may be looking to breed. Observe how turkeys are behaving, and let that be your guide as to how to best hunt them in the final days.

—SCOTT HAUGEN

# Learn to make second choice second nature

**L**ike you, I am planning my fall hunts in the spring. It's not human nature to plan our hunts this far out, but it is the system foisted upon us, so we might as well learn how it works.

When I plan a hunt with a buddy, the conversation goes like this:

Me: Hey Bud, let's put in as a party for Whitehorse antelope.

Bud: Hey, sounds good. So Whitehorse first choice, then what shall we put for second choice?

Me: I have always maintained you have a banana slug between your ears. Listen to me. After first choice for antelope, the second, third, fourth and fifth choices are just there to make you think you have a chance.

Some deer and elk tags don't fill after the first choices have been assigned. Consider spike-only elk hunts. But note the number of tags and the number of applicants from previous years. There is a difference between 10 tags left over for the second-choice pool and 110 tags left over. Don't be one of hundreds of hunters listing that hunt with 10 tags left over as their second choice, because that other hunt with 110 tags left over won't be around on third choice. Don't put off until third choice what you can only draw on second.

Remember, preference points count for nothing on second choice.

It used to be that you could draw a decent cow elk tag on third choice before the advent of cougars and wolves to "bring the herds into management objective." No longer. About all that is left on third choice are the zero-percent public land tags.

Do the research. Check the success rates in the big game stats at MyODFW.com. You'll see you don't want any part of a second-choice Klamath Falls elk tag. Or even fifth choice. It's like meth: not even once. You may decide that a general season tag is better than a second-choice hunt.

Hey, if you can't draw a good hunt, go duck hunting in Klamath instead. You will get a lot more shots and probably take home some meat. —GARY LEWIS



*Don't put off until third choice what you can only draw on second.*

The author took this buck with a second-choice tag, proving that sometimes a second-choice hunt can be a real drag.

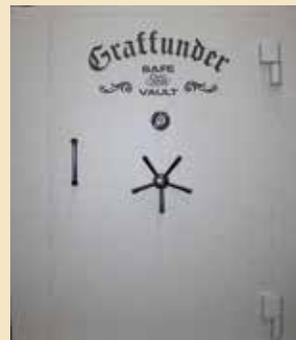
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# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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JOIN/RENEW MEMBERSHIP

## Measure 114 ruled constitutional, appeal pending

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

The Oregon Court of Appeals on March 12 ruled that Measure 114 does not violate the Oregon State Constitution, a decision that runs counter to the Harney County opinion issued in November 2023. The litigants who brought the initial case against Measure 114 have already indicated their intent to file an appeal with the Oregon Supreme Court within the 35-day appeal time frame.

Measure 114's components, to include the magazine ban, will not immediately go into effect. The Court of Appeals judgment will be held during the 35-day appeal window and then, if the Oregon Supreme Court accepts the appeal and takes the case, it will likely continue to be held at bay during that process. Should the Court deny the ap-



peal, there is an additional 28-day time frame for the litigants to ask the Court to reconsider.

Considering these time frames, we believe the earliest potential filing date for the Court of Appeals judgment would be mid-May.

This is one of two cases against Measure 114. This case, Arnold vs. Kotek, is the state-level challenge claiming the measure violates the Oregon Constitution.

The second case, Eyre vs. Rosenblum, is the federal challenge claiming violation of the U.S. Constitution. The federal case has been paused in the Ninth Circuit while waiting for the decision on California's magazine ban (Duncan

vs. Bonta), which was issued on March 20. That decision, unfortunately, ruled that California's ban against magazines larger than 10 rounds does not violate

the constitution. While the ruling will be appealed, perhaps to the U.S. Supreme Court, this ruling may have negative effects on the Oregon challenge.

The litigation team leading the Oregon lawsuit is a local law firm from Canby. With the continued work to appeal to the Oregon Supreme Court, the funding for the

lawsuit is running very low. To donate to their efforts to continue fighting the Measure 114 case, go to:

[www.givesendgo.com/StateCourt\\_StopMeasure114](http://www.givesendgo.com/StateCourt_StopMeasure114)

*This is one of two cases against Measure 114. This case is the state-level challenge.*

## Barrage of firearms bills aimed at Oregon gun owners

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

Approaching the midpoint of the 2025 legislative session, firearms bills are taking center stage in OHA's legislative work. Currently, there are 30 bills that address firearms purchase, possession and ownership.



The most dangerous bills:

• **HB 3075** - Implements Measure 114, along with several additional components, such as increased fees, increased waiting periods, and a requirement of any potential lawsuits to be filed in Marion County Courts only. This bill had a public hearing on March 17 with a large amount of testimony in opposition.

• **HB 3076** - Creates a new sector of the Department of Justice to create and implement a state-level regulation for firearms dealers that would layer new requirements beyond the federal regulations from the ATF. A public hearing for this bill was held on March 20 with a large amount of testimony in opposition.

• **SB 429** - Institutes a mandatory 72-hour waiting period before a firearm transfer could be completed, regardless of the amount of time for the background check to be completed.

• **SB 697** - Restricts ownership and possession of firearms for citizens under the age of 21. Current bill language attempts to exempt certain firearms for the pur-

poses of hunting, but continues to restrict semi-automatic firearms in all cases.

• **SB 698** - Restricts certain public spaces from legal concealed carry. Primarily aimed at city halls and other public buildings, there remain several potential ramifications for open spaces.

Many of these bills will have public hearings this spring; watch for OHA Call to Action alerts for ways to engage and provide testimony.

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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

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# Sounds of Silence

## The Case Against Calling

Stepping out of the pickup at a trailhead on a crisp mid-September morning in elk country is a feeling many big game hunters dream of year-round. My hunter and I, equally excited for what the morning was about to bring, quickly gave our gear a once-over before heading out to get to the patch of timber where we last saw a bull and his group of cows the night before.

As we closed the distance to our destination just before shooting light, the forest edge to the west erupted with bugles. We counted three within close to a mile of each other, all distinct in their pitches and locations, with a few high-pitched cow calls randomly thrown into the mix. We spotted the bull from the evening before following his cows at a dead run away from the timber. We changed course and headed to the north to circle around the bull, hoping that the ruckus wasn't enough to push them into the neighboring unit.

Using calls for elk hunting is an incredible tool; between diaphragms, tubes, and handhelds, the possibilities are seemingly endless and accessible for hunters of all levels of experience. Even during rifle seasons, I will use a quick cow call to get the attention of an elk to give my hunters a better shot angle, providing the animal takes a moment of pause to try and figure out where the sound came from.

That being said, using calls can work against you. Elk can become increasingly call-wary depending on how much pressure is in the area.

With an increasing number of predators in the field, including mountain lions, wolves, and bears, elk will be less vocal to avoid drawing attention to themselves.

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR



*There are plenty of noises that elk make that aren't bugles or cow mews.*

*The author and hunter under 100 yards from two bulls in rangeland, waiting for the younger to bed.*



*The author lured this satellite bull in by raking.*

You will need to adapt to this and learn how to locate animals without immediately defaulting to locator bugles and cow call series. The animals will know something is out of place and will likely vacate the area to avoid becoming the target of whatever predator is nearby. This tactic may in fact work in calling in a bear or lion, so make sure you have that tag in your pocket.

There are plenty of noises that elk make that aren't bugles or cow mews. These are large animals that can make a great deal of noise when they are moving. Elk feeding through the pines will break sticks, crush pinecones, and hit their hooves on rocks. Raking is a great way of getting the attention of a satellite bull and is a great tool to use when you know there is one in the area. I have done call sets where

I raked saplings and stomped pinecones for 20-30 minutes and that was enough to have curious bulls come in on a trot.

We are heavily reliant on our senses when we are in the field, much like any animal. The key difference between us and an elk, however, is scent. An elk will pick up your scent quickly, and if you are upwind, it can be impossible to close the distance to even a reasonable rifle range. No matter what, you can't beat the wind. Humans rely much more heavily on sight and sound to guide us into animals, and while elk utilize these as well, their strength is scent. I have helped many hunters get well under 100 yards in both open country and timbered ground without the use of calling solely by maintaining the wind in our face. Keeping the wind direction the forefront of your focus is your greatest ally in closing distance with elk.

There are thousands of articles, videos, and even classes you can take that teach you how to bugle or call elk, and while they are great resources, your success in the field is determined by many factors other than the perfect bugle.

As fun as calling elk may be, if you find yourself calling without responses or elk going silent after you do a call set, it may be best to change your tactics to get close. Try sitting over a wallow or follow a recently used game trail.

While ripping a bugle in the timber is fun, keep in mind the words of the author William C. Taylor, "Just because you can, doesn't mean that you should." 



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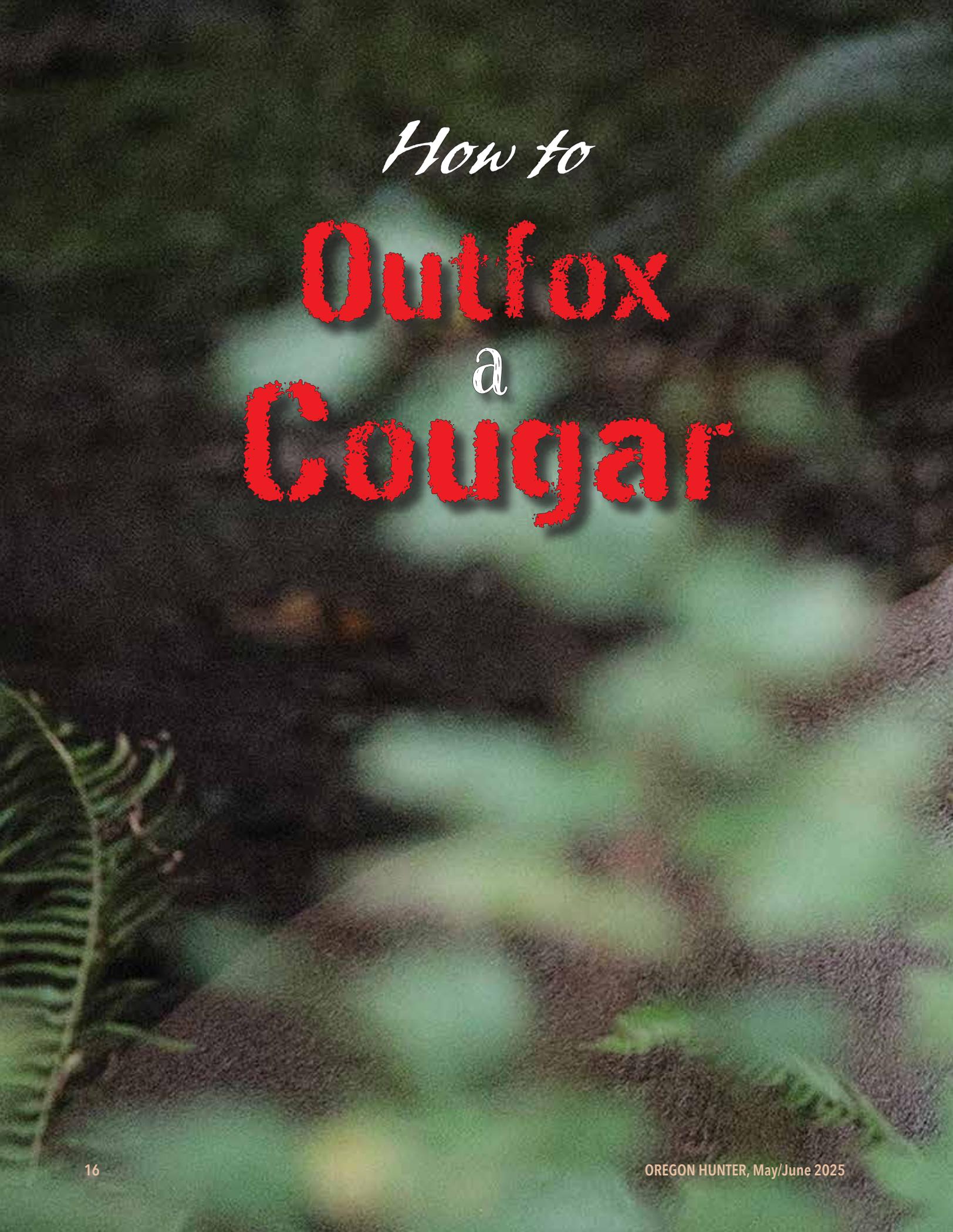


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## Story & Photos By Scott Haugen

I set a FoxPro X24 30 yards from me, on the other side of a game trail I thought the cat would come down. I played jackrabbit distress sounds that started quietly, but increased in volume until they were full blast, penetrating the timbered ridge.

A gray fox came barreling down the trail I'd expected the cat to be on. It turned hard right, sprinting right at me. I was already in the gun which was set on tripod shooting sticks. I'd called in a lot of gray fox and immediately knew something wasn't right. This fox wasn't closing in for a kill; it was running for its life.

I put my eye to the scope to track the scurrying fox. The conscious effort was more to see if I could do it should the cat miraculously appear. I quickly picked up the tiny speedster as it sprinted toward me.

The fox was running so fast, I thought it was going to hit me. That's when I saw one of the most impressive scenes I've ever witnessed.

Right behind the gray fox came the mountain lion. It was running full speed. The gray fox was coming to my call when the tables turned and it became the hunted. The instant I saw the dark colored lion I knew it was the same one on the Moultrie trail camera, a half-mile to the east.



The author used a combination of calls to bring in a fox and a cougar.

I was already in the scope because I was tracking the fox. I shoot with both eyes open and I'm glad, for what happened in the next fleeting moment was the most awesome encounter I've had in nearly 50 years of big game hunting, which includes chasing man-eating predators on three continents.

When the cat bolted out of the forest trail, it was running downhill. It turned 90 degrees to the right to keep up with the fox. It made a big leap, hind-end elevated, planted on both front paws, then pivoted right at me. Its thick tail twirled in a perfect, smooth circle in an effort to maintain balance. It was so fluid. So effortless. And it was dead silent.

The cougar was 23 yards from me when it first appeared. In a fraction of a second, the lion was stretched out right behind the fox, sprinting directly at me. Its blocky head filled the scope which was set on 4x. In a flash the cat hit 30 mph, likely faster. When a cat is closing in for a kill, it's another level of speed than when running from danger. The cat never blinked. I knew exactly what was happening and what to do.

The cat didn't make eye contact with me; it was locked on the fox at ground level. This made me realize the shot would have to be perfect, either in the head or center of the chest.

With the green dot of the Trijicon reticle steady, I waited for the cat to take another stride and position itself in the scope before touching the trigger. Had I moved the scope a fraction of an inch in the opposite direction the cat's body was moving, I'd be off the mark at such close range. Though it was only for a fleeting moment, I held the rifle steady, waiting for the speeding cat to move into the center of the scope. When the cougar lunged forward and increased its speed, its head lifted as anticipated.

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The reticle tracked down the cat's face. Right when the dot passed the white hair on the lower lip, I pulled the trigger. The lion was 16 yards away. The energy from the 175-grain AccuBond fired from my .28 Nosler smacked the cat square in the chest. Its hind end cartwheeled over its head. It felt like I could reach out and grab the tail as it rolled into my lap.

I jacked in another round, but by the time I could fire, the cat was on its feet, diving into the brush, seven steps from me. I listened for the cat crashing through the brush. I heard nothing.

Looking into the curtain of tangled briars, brush, and low-growing fir trees where the cat escaped, I expected to see it dead. It wasn't there.

For the first 15 yards, there was no blood, hair, or even a visible trail in the dense brush. It was hands and knees tracking and the going was slow due to massive tangles of blackberries covered in needle-sharp thorns.

Ten more yards, and blood appeared; lots of it. Fifteen minutes later, 20 yards deeper into the brush, I found the cat piled-up in the bottom of the draw. It was two steps from me before I saw it.

That night I only slept two hours. Over the next four days I got very little sleep. There was so much adrenaline pumping through my body, I couldn't. I didn't want to. I kept wanting to relive every detail. It was a high like I'd never known.

It wasn't scary. It wasn't stressful. What it was, was the single most thrilling and rewarding hunting moment of my entire life, and I didn't want that feeling to end.



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



*Author Scott Haugen catches numerous mountain lions on trail camera every year in the McKenzie River Valley. This time, preparation met persistence. For a pair of killer cougar recipes, see Page 36.*



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# BLACK BEARS *in the* BLUES

BY HANNAH MABBOTT



PHOTO BY JEFF RICH

# Spring and fall bear hunting will require a change of menu in this venue.

**S**easonal cuisine gives us all something to look forward to each year, whether it's peppermint goodies in the winter or pumpkin-spiced everything in the fall. Regardless of your food preferences, with the coming of each season there is a reoccurring and familiar flavor profile to accompany the changing temperature outside. Call it pattern recognition. This is something we humans are familiar with, and so are many other animals, including bears. These animals are highly motivated by food and can be more easily targeted by finding what, where, and when they are feeding.

The flora and fauna of the Blue Mountains vary depending on elevation

and season. Being omnivorous, bears will consume a wide variety of food, often whatever is most plentiful and calorie-dense. In the spring, slopes covered in wild onion, skunk cabbage, and lomatium (biscuit root) will be a favorite of the bears coming out of hibernation. These types of forage can be found from the Snake River canyons to the breaks of the Blues in both the Walla Walla and Mt. Emily units.

In the south Blue Mountains, focus on the burned areas where the snow melt will trigger grassy shoots coming through the settled rubble, as well as mushrooms and insects.

Bears are well known for having a keen sense of smell they use to find fragrant

plants and roots. If you can smell something, you can bet bears will, too. While large grassy patches are bear favorites, I have found higher densities of bears in the other varieties of forage over grass alone, possibly due to caloric density. If you find a patch of onion or biscuit root, sit on it for a few hours. It's only a matter of time; bears can't avoid it, and depending on how many are in the area, you may see multiple bears stopping by throughout the day. The younger bears may come in first, but before last light the bigger bears will come lumbering in.

This exact situation occurred on a hunt in the spring of 2024, when a friend and I were en route to a particularly good looking brushy draw to glass for the day when



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

*This large black bear is cruising the Sumpter Unit in May. When the bear rut begins in late May, bears are set in motion looking for love.*

we spotted a blonde bear munching on onions just after noon.

One of the motives for harvesting bears in the spring is due to their predation on elk calves and deer fawns. A study conducted in 2018 by biologists with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish on calf survival and predation noted that black bears were the primary cause of mortality in calves within the first few months of birth. Bears were the cause of the vast majority of calf predation in the study, and the removal of each additional bear in the units the radio-collared elk were in increased their survival by 2.4 percent. That's a significant improvement in survival, considering that increase is per bear.

Using calls to mimic a fawn or calf in distress can work well during prime birthing times in spring months. Find a herd of cows or does feeding in grassy areas, as this provides a bear multiple sources of feed in one location, and you have live decoys.

While food is a major factor in finding a bear, the springtime breeding season will also affect movement. If you are specifically targeting a boar, the spring hunt season is your best bet. They will be roaming the hills looking for females to breed.

Unfortunate and ironic as it is, boars play a large factor in cub mortality. A study conducted by Arizona Game and Fish showed that half of the cubs in their study died due to cannibalism. Boars do this to push the female into heat and remove potential competition or kill the offspring of a different boar. If you are in an area with

a mature boar and you are trying to get him out into a shooting lane, using a bear cub in distress call may bring him running. Black bears tend to rut from late May through early July, so if you haven't seen that big boar that you have been looking for, but you know where a cub-less sow is living, it may not be the worst idea to keep an eye on her, as she will likely have some suitors coming to visit.

With an abundance of food sources on the east side in the fall, keep an eye out for fresh bear scat. This will help you determine what your local bruin is enjoying. The Blue Mountains are rich in huckleberries, elderberries, and various other calorie-dense foods that attract animals of all types. Bears seem to have an unappeasable hunger for fall berries, and the berry patches in any of the units in the northeast corner of the state can house them day in and day out. Berries ripen generally at the end of July and early August after steady summer heat, which is convenient as the season begins Aug. 1.

As bears are preparing for their winter slumber, they are increasing their food intake as much as they can, up to 20,000 calories or more a day. They will use any source they can, though berries seem to be



*The author tagged this jet black boar in a creek bottom last fall. Spring and fall seasons are only 2 months apart, but light years in some respects.*

a fall favorite. Focus on the patches that have fresh bear sign and plentiful berries, and invest some time there.

Water sources offer a fantastic way to find late-summer bears, as high temperatures will keep them close to a water hole or stream to take both dips and drinks. In the south Blues or closer to the Idaho border where water may be more scarce in the summer months, this would be a great option. I have taken bears in areas where traditionally they may seem out of place – in juniper-studded draws and flats covered in sage. Bears go where they feel safe and unbothered, and sometimes you may come across one where you expect to find a mule deer buck.

No matter if it's the spring or fall season, there are plenty of methods to locate and harvest a bruin in Oregon. If you are fortunate enough to draw that coveted mule deer or Rocky Mountain elk tag you've been saving points for, try taking a bear out of the unit when you do your fall scouting (the other animals will thank you).

While the west side may have a higher concentration, the east side should not be overlooked. Between the dense wilderness in the Wenaha and Minam units, to the juniper and sage filled canyons in Beulah and Northside, you have a good shot to glass up a bear out looking for its next meal. 🐾

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—HANNAH MABBOTT



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The author has taken more than 50 Oregon backcountry bears by spot & stalk, and uses all the parts he can pack.

A large brown bear is lying in a grassy meadow, partially obscured by a log. The background is a dense forest of evergreen trees.

# Make *the* Most of Your Bruin

There are no spare bear parts.

**BY MAX ZELLER**

I was spring bear hunting the eastern slopes of the Cascades five miles behind a locked gate, the last two of which I still-hunted along a tight riparian corridor that occasionally opened up into sweet little meadows. I was approaching a blind corner into one of the last of those grassy openings when I spied movement across the creek through the thick willows.

Right in the middle of the small meadow, a large cinnamon-phase black bear was chomping on grass like a shaggy Highland cow.

I had a small dilemma even though only 30 yards separated us. My side of the creek was choked with the head-high willows and only a few very small openings for a shot opportunity, so further movement had to be kept at a minimum. My only advantages were that the breeze was in my face, and he had no idea I was there. No matter what your opinion is of their eyesight, black bears have an uncanny ability to detect movement.

As the boar briefly turned his head away, I knelt and leaned ever so slowly toward a small, football-sized opening. He was moving in that direction, too.



*Pens made from a boar's, uh, baculum bone get some added flair you just can't find on Amazon.*



*Rendered bear fat has many uses, from cooking to soaps, lotions, balms, and even fuel in oil lamps.*

I just waited until he passed the cross-hairs of my Marlin .45-70, and then touched it off. On the bullet's impact, his whole body quivered like a big bowl of Jell-O, and he only ran 10 yards to the edge of the thick timber before succumbing to the heart shot. The large boar had the most beautiful cinnamon coat along with some interesting fighting scars on his face.

I only had two hours of daylight left and at least two packing trips over uneven ground five miles back to the gate, so packing decisions had to be made. After a few photos and a couple hours of processing, normally one starts to think about minimizing the pack-out weight by leaving "nonessential" body parts behind (the bear's, not mine). However, being a craft-minded outdoorsman, and out of respect for a life taken, I try to utilize as much of the animals as I can, and this holds especially true for bears, which offer such a wide array of useful parts. So, aside from the mandatory extraction of high-quality meat and skull, let's look into other useful items the craft-minded bear hunter might want to take into consideration.

I tend to pack the entire hide with paws, claws, and head attached if I'm planning some taxidermy. When choosing a taxidermist, take a close look at their work portfolio of prior bear mounts. Bears and cats, in my opinion, take a different skill set, and not all taxidermists specialize in capturing realistic bear and cat facial features. That said, you now have a choice from a wide array of mounting options: shoulder/head mount, 1/2 mount (head, arms, chest), 3/4 mount (head, arms, chest, belly), full mounts in every position imaginable from standing on two legs to sitting, the ever-popular felted rug, and mounts attached to a pedestal, wall or any habitat scenario you and your taxidermist can dream up.

If the whole hide is less than ideal for traditional taxidermy work, I will skin just the premium section of the hide for later sewing projects, and leave the bones in the quartered leg sections with paws and claws attached. The sections of prime fur I find most useful usually start dorsally along the back and then down the sides of the bear (the belly fur tends to be thinner and patchier for sewing projects). Spring bears tend to be the most prime, especially in early spring before they start rubbing and shedding as the seasons warm. Any sewing project starts by tanning the hide fur-on, and for small do-it-yourself projects such as this, you can order tanning supplies and instructions from any number of trap-

***You can make a rifle rack for your favorite bear gun from your bear's paws.***



*Anything is made cooler when you add bear claws, and we're not talking about the pastries. They make great stocking stuffers from Santa Claws.*

ping/taxidermy outlets, including places like Research Mannikins here in Oregon.

Did you know those tall furry hats the British Royal Guards wear are made from black bear fur? I don't make my bear hats that tall, but they still get a good chuckle from family and friends, and everyone wants to try them on and look in the mirror. Hand muffs, mittens and gator-like leggings are other great items made from bear hides and are relatively simple to make with minimum sewing skills. And man, are they warm.

After butchering, some leg bones of larger bears can make great knife handles and even pistol-grip inserts for handguns. Claws can be removed, cleaned and saved for any number of craft projects. Drill a small hole through the bony end and you can dangle them from knife handles or ear lobes – whatever tickles your fancy.

If I do leave the leg bones in when packing out bear quarters, I sometimes leave fur attached from the elbow down through the paws which, of course, includes the wrists. The idea here is you can make a rifle rack similar to the old-fashioned deer-hoof rifle racks so popular over the years. Just think of your favorite bear rifle supported by bear paws turned up at the wrist and attached to a fancy plank. This may be another idea for your taxidermist to tackle.

When removing fat from bears in the field for later rendering, take the time to keep it as clean as possible, and place it in a separate game bag. Rendered bear fat has so many uses. It was so valued in the pioneer days, it was used as currency in some circles. For baking it has no equal, but it doesn't stop there. Soaps, lotions, balms, leather care, corrosion prevention on metal

and even fuel in oil lamps are just some of the uses rendered bear fat provides.

Lastly, I always save the baculum of all male bears. The baculum – that long, thin penile bone – can be used for unique craft projects, and is one heck of a conversation piece. A bear baculum doesn't compare to the legendary meter-long os priapi of a walrus, but we're not making pogo sticks here. The baculum of an adult male black bear is usually between 5 and 7 inches long, and is the perfect size to make a writing pen.

By carefully drilling out the soft core of the baculum and inserting the internal ink cartridge of a BIC Round Stic ballpoint pen, you will create the BAC Crooked Stic ballpoint pen. I like to add some "redneck bling" at the knobbed end of the baculum, like a thin leather cord-wrap with a bear claw attached or even one of the many bobcat tails I save from the tanned hides I use on several sewing projects. Those of you with finer skills (such as scrimshawing) can probably think of even more ways to enhance your work.

If you don't appreciate the finer points of a pen, a baculum also serves as a swizzle stick. If that has you bruin' up ideas, you can add a new twist to an old classic: One Bourbon, One Scotch, and One Bear. 🐻



Mad Max the mad hatter believes it's better to have a bear skin head than a bare skin head.

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# SPRING GOBBLERS IN SIGHT!

## AFTERNOON DELIGHT!



**The early bird doesn't always bag the tom.**

**BY JASON HALEY**

**A**n hour after I started up this big tom, a lousy caller chimed in from the hillside to my right. I groaned silently, not at all surprised. It was public land in Jackson County, after all. That kind of noise normally attracts attention. It rarely occurs that someone might already be working a bird.

The yelps were loud and obnoxious and too frequent. The tone was awful. I wanted to remain silent at that point in the calling process, but had to call to let these hunters know my location. I was hoping they'd drift, but getting shot also crossed my mind. I touched my call softly in response, figuring they'd see me and vanish, or push through the pines to chat.

Suddenly, here they came, crashing through the trees, no longer trying to be silent. That same instant, I heard something large whizzing through the sky like a missile and caught peripheral movement with my eyes still trained forward scanning for my gobbler on the ground 200 yards away. It was a crazy hen! She zipped past my face and landed 10 yards off my left shoulder in the heavy buckbrush. I couldn't believe it. I was relieved it wasn't hunters, but figured she'd booger my setup just as much. She had that familiar angry hen vibe but drifted away toward my gobbler and his hens instead.

I passed a jake and killed that tom an hour later from the same seated position. It was one of the biggest birds I've taken and my first double-beard. I was thrilled with the victory, but somewhat somber also having tricked this majestic monarch now flopping 10 yards from me in the thick brush. I was also amazed to have taken another mature spring gobbler the same way as the previous year: mid-afternoon, after numerous hunters had spent the morning in the field. I learned something important.

When I was young (and when I started my son), I insisted on doing things right, from start to finish. That's roosting the night before and arriving before daylight to hear 'em in the trees before fly-down. That's the ultimate. Working a bird this way makes you feel like you've really earned it. Hearing the world wake up and packing out a bird in time to slap sandwiches together on the tailgate is spectacular.

But with more than 40 seasons behind me, comfort and a good night's sleep are more attractive now. Leaving home late enough to stop for a drop of gas or a donut is a plus. There's anxiety associated with traveling to your spot in broad daylight, thinking you're missing out, but I have that feeling less and less nowadays. I've also taken some dandy afternoon strutters recently.



*The author's son Jacob took this Josephine County gobbler after a long afternoon with gobblers in sight.*

The spring before last there were three hunting crews parked in the vicinity. From a distance, I watched pickups leave before swooping in and bailing out around 1 p.m. After a long, brisk walk with boot tracks everywhere, I stopped at a place that looked right for an afternoon loafer. The feeling was strong, so I persisted and called numerous times with my box trying to penetrate the wind. Nothing. I was convinced and kept calling loudly before getting an answer around 1:30. When he answered a

second time, I imagined my dad's classic nod, mouth call hanging out his mouth. Game on. I dusted him just before 4 p.m., which is as late as I let myself hunt for sporting purposes. He had two hens.

It's rare to call a mature bird straight off the roost. Depending on weather, a typical morning usually involves freezing for hours while listening to early gobbling activity, then perhaps a gobbler or two on the ground. Then they go silent and begin to cruise, feed, and frolic. You grow tired

of silence and waiting, so you move toward a bird, only to hear him searching for you back where you just came from. If you're lucky, your legs aren't numb and clumsy anymore now that the blood is flowing. Rinse, repeat. This might occur several times before afternoon when a big gobbler gets sufficiently warmed up and receptive.

I tagged last year's gobbler around 2 p.m. after starting him at noon. Experienced turkey hunters, like Dad and the late outdoor writer John Higley, have shared their belief that mature birds tend to their hens in the morning and then cruise, looking for newbies. That's true. Some feeding occurs early, but usually the crops of these poor dudes are completely empty minus a single yellow Buttercup or a small rock. They rut hard, brooming off

***I'm certain other hunters had my birds in the proper mood the last two seasons.***



wing-feathers by mid-season and getting skinny. There isn't much left sometimes, except beautiful puffy feathers and a big head/neck that glows various shades of red, white and blue.

There's something to literally being warmed up, also. Hot afternoons help. And while pressured birds are difficult to hunt, hearing a few different turkey calls isn't the end of the world. I'm certain other hunters had my birds in the proper mood the last two seasons. Overcalling can be a deal-breaker, and nobody wants to be that guy, but it takes an extrovert sometimes.

Late last season, when the grass was brown, I took my college kid out for his one and only day in the field. We started before daylight and made three stops before something similar happened at our final one. I found a sunny strutting meadow that looked good and tried to conjure one up. We hadn't heard a peep all day and I could tell Jacob thought we were wasting our time as I launched locator yelps into the distance.

I was semi-surprised myself when we heard a distant gobbler. Several hens, three-amigo jakes and two hours later it turned into a rodeo. We nearly got him a longbeard, and may have, if I hadn't tried to relocate at precisely the wrong time.

Everything went silent and drifted. I wasn't carrying my Stevens Model 90 single-barrel, not wanting to take more than one bird last season.

Before Jacob graduated, we hunted a private field in Josephine County after school. It was dead. I'd been calling periodically to no avail. Then we saw two gobblers in the distance following hens. They'd been within earshot ignoring me. I called aggressively then and could gauge their reaction. I've been stonewalled in similar situations, but one gobbler soon took interest and started to drift our way.

Soon they were both gobbling and strutting their way (a horrible long distance) before hanging up. After an eternity and a dazzling display, with full fans two-stepping 10 yards forward and 10 back, he shot the smaller, closer gobbler. I wouldn't have called persistently if those big gobblers weren't in sight, and we weren't stuck on a small property with no roaming ability.

Afternoons can be boring, quiet, and hot, but also unforgettable. Big birds can be had. If they aren't talking, don't quit. Try a crow call or a gobble hose. If he's gobbling on his own, he could be cruising and looking for love. He could have hens. A caller could be working him. Respect that. Try elsewhere. Sometimes the action doesn't begin until afternoon.



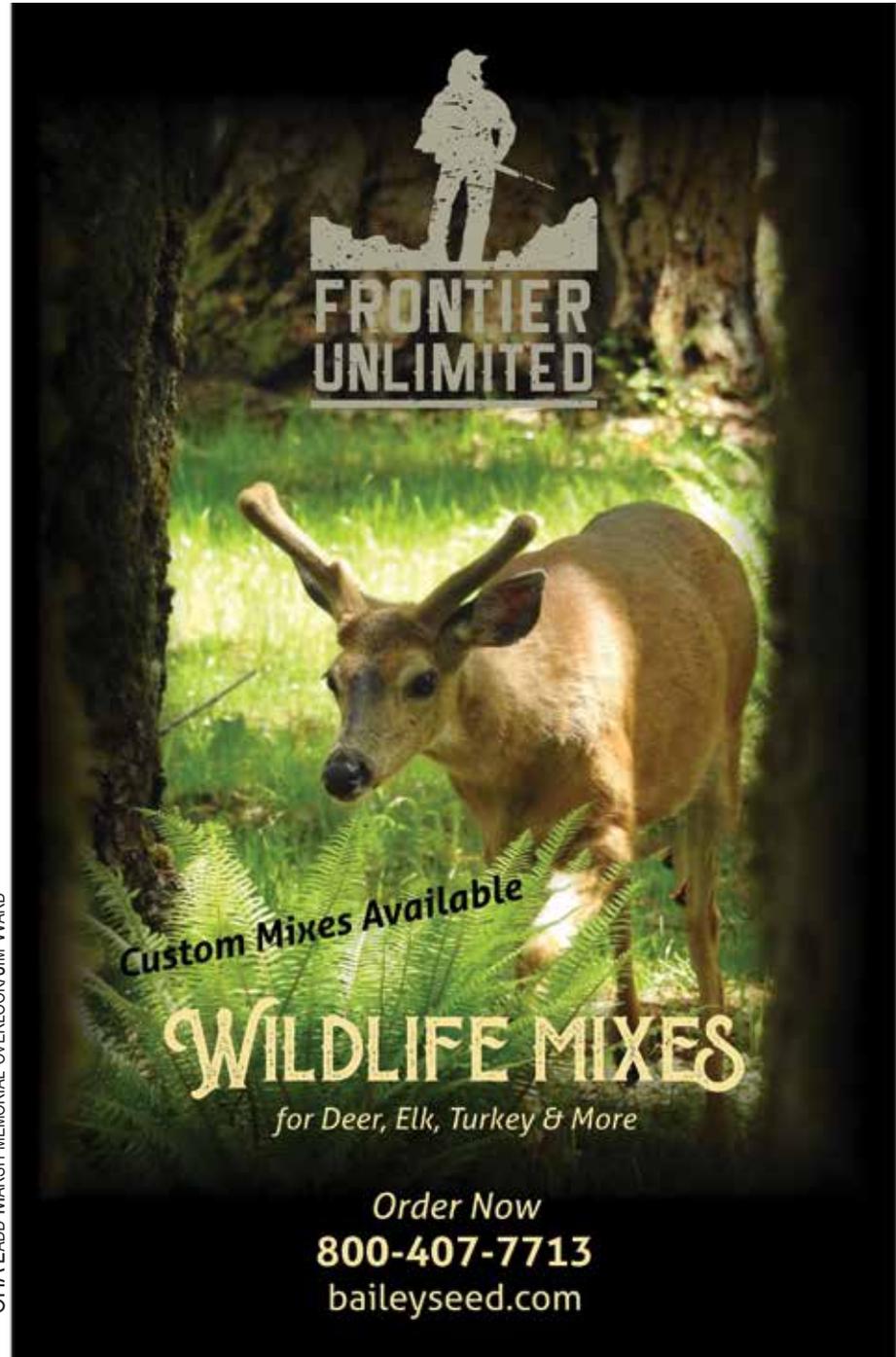
The author called this Jackson County gobbler to within 10 yards last spring after the morning crowds dispersed.

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# TRADITIONS

By JASON HALEY

## WHEN THE PAST COMES CALLING

Collecting old game calls is a fun tradition. There's a plethora of reasons and everyone has their own. Some hunters like the look and decorate trophy rooms with them. Hand-me-down calls remind us of our favorite hunting buddy or granddad. The smell of an old wooden call might conjure memories of a special hunt: a boy's first greenhead or the coyote your uncle called in the fresh powder when you were 12.

I've got a Dick Kirby-signature, Quaker Boy Original Grand Master turkey call that's not old, but holds meaning. My pops bought it for me after I broke my previous (Walmart) box call (and my left hand) on a nasty, face-first spill chasing a crippled jake downhill in a cow pasture. It's never about numbers with those magnificent birds, but I carve notches in that call, for fun, like my uncle did.

I gifted my son a box call signed by "The Turkey Man" Eddie Salter, and Eddie called me in person to make sure I'd received it. His signature includes turkey tracks cleverly drawn with a Sharpie. Now that's cool!

But the craziest thing this hoarder ever encountered happened recently. Growing up, I witnessed the many phases of my dad's turkey hunting career. From the novelty of hunting some of the first wild birds

on the West Coast in the early 1970s, to developing his own style and becoming a pro guide in the 80s, I paid close attention. He started out with box calls and slates. They had a look and smell that made the gun cabinet a veritable wonderland for a kid. The guns were locked behind glass, of course, but we could still gawk. He used mouth calls during his guiding days. When I was in college in the 90s, he switched to a box and routinely killed big gobblers and sent photos, which made it hard to stay focused on academics.

Dad used a variety of sweet-sounding box calls in recent years, before his legs quit him, but he always had the classic Lynch's box calls in the old days and a piece of chalk trapped inside with a rubber band for quietness. He had several. I borrowed one of the darker wood versions, which neither of us thought had the same easy tone. I hadn't seen those calls in

ages, and hadn't thought about them, until I noticed a listing on Facebook Marketplace. They looked like any old Lynch's calls, except for the initials WH. And not just dad's initials, but the distinctive way he wrote it, seemingly on EVERYTHING. It was a running joke among family and friends. Wayne Haley was either really proud of his stuff, super afraid of theft, or...? Nobody knew. But you always knew which tree-stand or box of shells was his.

*Their sounds may call birds, but the look, feel and smell of old calls can summon great memories.*

*The author was surprised to see his dad's initials on three old turkey calls for sale on Marketplace.*

I had to double take. "Could they be anyone else's?" I thought. "How'd they get into the hands of this seller?" I kept stewing. The seller lived near dad. "Were they stolen?" They were exactly what I remembered. I couldn't stand it and sent Dad a photo. He texted back instantly. "Where'd you get those? That looks like my writing." I explained and asked if he still had his old Lynch's.

Dad shuffled to his hunting room to check. He didn't have them and couldn't remember the last time he did. We wondered if he gave them to his younger brother, Uncle Harv. Harv was notorious when it came to collecting and he had a regular table at a big swap meet nearby before he passed. Harv famously sold dad's '56 Chevy Bel Air after borrowing it when dad left for college.

Did pops give them to a friend who passed? I called the seller. He was a former turkey hunter and fellow collector but had a side hustle picking estate sales and selling. We laughed and discussed possibilities. The calls came from a collector who passed. Uncle Harv? A buddy? The collector could have gotten them from anywhere. They might not even have been his initials.

We'll never know, but we agreed not to let facts get in the way of a good story.

My brother-in-law picked the calls up the next day. They're mine now.

I don't really care if they're dad's or not. The experience evoked memories of wading swift creeks, struggling to pull the hammer back (silently) on the old single-barrel 12 gauge, and fascination with wily old gobblers.



PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR





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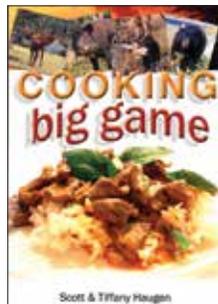
## More than 1 way to cook a cat

**T**he key to tasty, tender mountain lion meat is the same as with all big game: not overcooking it. Cat meat is firm, not tough. If it's tough, you've likely overcooked it or not properly removed the silver skin and other connective tissues from tender cuts of meat like backstrap or roasts.

If there are any feline-feasting skeptics in the crowd, these two recipes will make them believers.

### Chicken-Fried Cougar Steaks with Gravy

- 1 pound cougar backstrap
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon granulated onion
- 1 beaten egg
- 1 tablespoon cold water
- 1 cup panko or breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil



### Gravy:

- Pan drippings from Chicken-Fried Cougar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 3/4 cup chicken broth
- 1/2 cup whole milk

Slice backstrap across the grain into 1/2" steaks. Between two layers of waxed paper, pound steaks to 1/4". Prepare three shallow dishes for the three-step process. In the first dish, mix flour, salt, paprika, garlic and granulated onion. In the second dish, beat the egg with 1 tablespoon water. In the third dish, place panko or breadcrumbs.

In a large skillet, heat oil on medium-high heat. One at a time, take venison steaks through flour mixture, then egg mixture and finally coat thoroughly with panko or bread crumbs and add to hot oil. Steaks are thin and only need to cook 3-4 minutes per side. When steaks are done, set aside and use pan drippings to make gravy if desired.

To make gravy, add additional butter to skillet and melt. Using a wire whisk, whisk flour into the pan. Reduce heat to medium and whisk until smooth and bubbly. Slowly add chicken broth, continuously stirring. When gravy begins to thicken, add milk, stirring constantly. If a thick gravy is desired, add less liquid. If a thin gravy is preferred, add water or more milk until gravy reaches desired thickness. Season with salt and pepper and serve over steaks.

### Slow Cooked Cougar Shanks

- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic



*Cat meat is firm, but slow-cooking shanks will have them falling apart.*

- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon granulated onion
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional

In a small bowl, combine all rub ingredients. Using half the rub, coat cougar shanks and refrigerate 2-4 hours. Place shanks in a slow cooker and sprinkle on the other half of the rub. Slow cook on high 4-5 hours or until meat begins to fall apart. Serve over rice, with noodles or in a bun with your favorite BBQ sauce.



For signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular cookbook, *Cooking Big Game*, visit [scotthaugen.com](http://scotthaugen.com)

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## WINNER:

Milwaukie OHA member Don Vernam is the winner of a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for his November photo of Wasco County turkeys looking nervous just a week before Thanksgiving.



## HONORABLE MENTION:



OHA member Chad Moles of Powell Butte is an Honorable Mention and OHA hat recipient for his image of a Grizzly Unit bull elk last fall.



Dave Boyd, OHA member from Albany, lands Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for his photo of a Calapooia River wood duck pair in February.

Prineville OHA member Roger Stanley captures Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for his Ochoco Unit elk last August.



Klamath OHA member Mike Stone grabs an OHA hat and Honorable Mention for his Klamath County mule deer buck in November.

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# Hatching a Turkey Hunter

I never thought I'd become a father. Not that I didn't want to, but it's kind of a rough world out there. I was lucky in 2017 to hatch my best little buddy, who fortunately happens to love what I do and chooses to participate in it with me. She loves to see turkeys and call them, and begs to go hunting with me every time I break out the gear. Most folks likely won't understand the emotions and feelings unless they have children of their own, but it's pretty amazing – the connection and the significance of a hunting trip together. The memories that are made we relish for a lifetime.

My daughter loves turkeys, and I feel fortunate that she does. It's most definitely in her blood. I have been blessed taking her on trips and patterning guns together over the last several years. She was born into this lifestyle, and luckily, she is a natural. Back in February we were driving down a road and she was quick to point out, "Dad, there's a strutter!" I was thoroughly impressed and quickly asked her, "Well, what does that mean?" The immediate reply: "He's showing off for the girls, and it's getting closer to turkey season."

Winner, winner turkey dinner.

Turkey hunting is something we will share for the rest of our lives. I have been able to share many memories with my father, and now my young daughter for seasons to come. We have been looking forward to the 2025 season since last year, planning several trips to the turkey woods. There really isn't much of an "off season." Spring and fall seasons combine for about half the year now, and during the other half we always are thinking about turkey season, practicing our calling, scouting,



GARY LEWIS

*Time is a gift, and time spent with your child in the turkey woods is priceless.*

and gearing up for the next season. These are the things that we do together, and it makes it fun.

"Dad, are you going to get me some new camo for this year?" Yes, I get that a lot, and I'm a sucker for those little brown eyes when she asks.

Last season we spent some very good time in the woods together, and I was fortunate to have her by my side while harvesting one of my birds. She loved the experience, helped clean and dress the bird, and of course we both can't wait until she's old enough to harvest her own gobbler. In the meantime, snacks of candy bars, dried fruit, pepperoni sticks, cheese, jerky and

apples will have to do. I make sure to take plenty of water for both of us and carry insect repellent for the flies, mosquitos, and ticks. Those blood suckers can ruin any picnic quickly. We only spend 5 or 6 hours afield at a time, making sure to not wear her out. Before long she will be grown and wearing me out.

Remember OHA's wisdom from the White River Youth Turkey Clinic: "Pack the Snack," "Comfort is King," and "Have Fun or Be Done."

Of course, we have a fun time looking at the wildflowers, finding mushrooms and finding the occasional shed antler. It's a great time to teach, as well, and I like to have her identify tracks in the mud, point out what poison oak looks like and the names of various plants and birds we encounter throughout the woods. We should all know a bunting from a bluebird.

OHA has been instrumental initiating half-priced youth turkey tags and discounted Youth Sports Pacts. OHA and ODFW have teamed up and organized turkey clinics for interested youth and first-time hunters.

The ODFW Mentored Youth Hunter Program for kids ages 9-15 is a great way to introduce youngsters to turkey hunting, and I plan to participate with my daughter. If you have a youngster who has not yet taken Hunter Education, he or she can enroll in the mentor program and hunt under your immediate supervision with your tags until the spring season ends May 31. For details, visit <https://myodfw.com/articles/mentored-youth-hunter-program>



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

*The author's daughter shows off a nice gobbler taken last spring in the Siuslaw Unit.*

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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.

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## Court upholds corner crossing

*Ruling could affect Oregon*

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

The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on March 18 in favor of four hunters charged with civil trespass for using the practice of “corner crossing” to access landlocked public land. Corner crossing is the act of stepping from public land to public land where corners intersect with private land without setting foot on the private land.

The case stems from a 2021 incident in which four hunters used an a-frame ladder to gain access to public land. The landowner claimed this constituted trespass, as the hunters temporarily occupied the air space of the private land corners as they crossed, even though they never touched the private land. The hunters were issued criminal trespass citations but later found not guilty by a lower court. The landowner charged them with civil trespass and the case made its way to the Tenth Circuit in 2022.

The ruling provides clarity for the six states within the court’s purview: Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming and Utah.

Because Oregon is in the Ninth Circuit, this ruling does not automatically provide Oregon with a clear legal pathway for corner crossings.

The Tenth Circuit ruling provides “persuasive authority” for any potential legal case, but ultimately the courts or the legislature will need to provide a definitive legal ruling for Oregon.



C. OREGON/RYAN HOEFT

Recently approved OHA Mule Deer Fund projects will enhance Oregon's winter range.

## OHA leverages big bucks for projects with Mule Deer Fund contributions

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

In its first year, the OHA Mule Deer Fund provided critical match funds for 5 projects that will be specifically implemented to benefit mule deer. OHA allocated \$61,115 to these projects that seek to leverage \$1,372,000, combined.

🦌 OHA funded a Metolius winter range land acquisition project that will protect 300 acres of prime mule deer winter range and open this area to hunting.

🦌 OHA also funded a bitterbrush planting project in this area that will put 30,000 plants in the ground to improve forage availability for wintering mule deer.

🦌 OHA invested in the Bend to Suttle Lake Wildlife Passage Initiative and funded efforts to benefit the Deschutes mule deer herd by enhancing their movement and migration corridors, restoring habitat connectivity, and reducing deer-vehicle collisions.

🦌 On the Elkhorn Wildlife Area near North Powder, OHA is funding work to protect, restore and enhance aspen stands for the Sumpter herd range. With this contribution from OHA, ODFW will leverage Pittman-Robertson Funds to remove encroaching conifers and construct protective fencing to allow the aspen stands to regenerate. Efforts will also be made to improve water storage in and near these stands.

🦌 The Crescent herd range has experienced the direst population decline in the

### OHA Mule Deer Fund Project Contributions

Umpqua OHA	\$7,500
Redmond OHA	\$10,000
Central Oregon Quail & Upland Wildlife Federation	\$5,000
Pioneer OHA	\$15,000
Bend OHA	\$10,000
Klamath OHA	\$5,000
Capitol OHA	\$5,000
Josephine County OHA	\$5,000
Mid-Willamette OHA	\$5,000
Ochoco OHA	\$5,000
Lincoln County OHA	\$ 500
Lake County OHA	\$3,000



last five years compared to any other herd range in Oregon. OHA is supporting work to enhance riparian vegetation within the Smoke Creek drainage by reducing conifer canopy cover. By removing encroaching conifers in the riparian area, grass, forb and shrub quantity and quality will improve mule deer transition and winter range habitat for the Crescent herd range.

The OHA Mule Deer Fund is financially driven by OHA chapters and coordinated by OHA staff and the OHA deer subcommittee. OHA looks forward to funding more outstanding projects aimed at improving conditions for mule deer again this winter.

## OHA seeks treasurer to join State Board

The OHA State Board of Directors seeks a qualified volunteer to serve as OHA State Treasurer.

The board meets four to six times a year virtually for approximately 90 minutes and in person up to three times a year, including the OHA State Convention. Hybrid options are available to accommodate special circumstances. Much of the board's important work takes place during monthly committee meetings.

A position description and expectations of state board members can be found at [oregonhunters.org/documents](https://oregonhunters.org/documents)

For more information about this opportunity, contact Vice President Cindy Rooney at [cindyrooneyoha@outlook.com](mailto:cindyrooneyoha@outlook.com)

## Spring & Summer OHA Youth Events

**APRIL 26**

Pioneer Chapter Youth Day, 503-936-4718

**MAY 3**

Tioga Chapter Youth Day, 541-294-7912

**MAY 17**

Tillamook Chapter Youth Trap Shoot,  
503-842-7153

**MAY 31**

Bend Chapter Youth Day, 541-480-7323

**JUNE 7**

Josephine County Chapter  
Youth Day, 541-218-2836

**JUNE 7-8**

Tualatin Valley Chapter  
Youth Event, 503-701-2852

**JUNE 28**

Lake County Chapter  
Youth Event, 541-417-0042

**JULY 19**

Emerald Valley Chapter Family Event,  
541-729-0877

**AUGUST 16**

Yamhill Chapter Youth Shotgun Shoot,  
503-737-9483

**AUGUST 23-24**

Ochoco Chapter Youth and Family Day,  
541-408-4816

## OHA pays out \$7,600 in rewards in 11 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued 11 reward checks to informants in 11 cases totaling \$7,600 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: unlawful take/possession of buck deer, hunting elk on another's cultivated or enclosed land, waste of a game mammal (cow elk), aiding in wildlife offense, unlawful take of cow elk and lending/borrowing big game tag, unlawful take of a protected bird, aiding in a wildlife offense, possession of unlawfully taken buck, hunting in violation of criminal trespass, hunting outside controlled hunt area, hunting prohibited area-public road, take possession of bull elk, unlawful possession of white-fronted geese for five suspects. One TIP reward check was returned because the recipient "just wanted to do the right thing."

## First Gun Calendar winners announced

The first winners for OHA's 2025 Gun Calendar Raffle have been announced, and the 2026 OHA Gun Raffle Calendar is on sale now! Call 541-772-7313 or visit <https://oregonhunters.org/shop/#raffles>

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

★ **Citadel 1911 RWB Flag .45 ACP**

George Krumm, Hoodview Chapter

★ **Christensen Mesa .28 Nosler**

Jeffrey Phillips, Yamhill Chapter

★ **Browning A-Bolt 3 Composite Stalker 7mm**

Trevor Humes, Pioneer Chapter

★ **Pointer Acrius O/U 12 ga.**

Jennifer Taylor, Pioneer Chapter

★ **Sig Cross 6.5 CR**

Dennis Cabatic, Mid-Willamette Chapter

★ **Howa 1500 Carbon Fiber Barrel 6.5 PRC**

Paul Erickson, Columbia County Chapter

★ **Howa M1500 .22-250 T/C Kryptek Typhon**

Kirk Nolan, Tualatin Valley Chapter



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# CHAPTER NEWS



OHA PIONEER BANQUET

## Chapters wrap up banquets, slate projects

### BAKER

CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Wednesday, 5:30 p.m., Oregon Trail Restaurant.

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held April 5, Community Event Center, Baker City.

### BEND

REX PARKS 541-480-0230

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

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Wednesday, 6 p.m., VFW Post 1643, 1503 NE 4th St., Bend.

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held March 8, Bend Riverhouse Lodge.

**Update:** Bend Chapter Youth & Family Day will be held May 31 at Cyrus Ranch, call 541-480-7323. All Hands, All Brands for Public Lands will be June 27-29 on the Ochoco National Forest; call 541-647-0424.

### BLUE MOUNTAIN

KEVIN MARTIN 541-969-6744

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

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

**Update:** We will hold our Pub Night event on May 14 at Backfire Restaurant at 5:30 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at the door, so join us for a fun evening with friends.

### CLATSOP COUNTY

TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

[ClatsopCountyOHA@pacifier.com](mailto:ClatsopCountyOHA@pacifier.com)

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Thursday, 5:30 p.m. no-host dinner, 6:30 p.m. meeting, Hong Kong Restaurant, 2813 Marine Dr., Astoria.

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held April 5, Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

**Update:** The chapter would like to thank



GARY LEWIS

*Jake Thomas parlays his green into green 50/50 tickets at the sold-out OHA Bend Chapter banquet.*

and welcome Tami George as our newsletter editor. She has put in a lot of effort to get our newsletter up and running again.

### CAPITOL

DANNY SOUTH 503-577-6033

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

**Chapter Meetings:** See chapter newsletter for date and time of meetings.

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held March 15, Oregon State Fairgrounds.

### COLUMBIA COUNTY

JORDAN HICKS 949-533-7271

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Canceled.

**Update:** The Columbia County Chapter will hold a special election for several board positions. If you are interested in running for a position, call Jordan Hicks and he will get you on the ballot.

### CURRY

JAMIE BADGER 541-499-2245

[Badgergirls3@gmail.com](mailto:Badgergirls3@gmail.com)

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** April 26, Event Center on the Beach, 406-499-2234.

### EMERALD VALLEY

RON MARTIN 541-954-5459

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

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** July 19, Cascadian Bowmen, 91714 Poole Creek Rd., Noti; 541-729-0877.

**Update:** OHA member Ryan Nelson re-

cently built several wood duck nesting boxes with materials donated by Reece Wilson of Architectural Millwork MFG Company. The boxes were placed in various locations near the Fern Ridge Wildlife Area and along the Yamhill River.

### HOODVIEW

KELLY PARKMAN 503-706-7481

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

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

**Chapter Meetings:** Please check our website for meeting schedule.

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held Feb. 22, Monarch Inn, Clackamas.

**Update:** The annual OHA and ODFW youth turkey clinic was held on April 5 at the White River Wildlife Area. Our next event will be the White River Project, set for June 6-8.

### JOSEPHINE COUNTY

DAVID DOWNS 541-821-1511

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

Website: [ohajoco.mailchimpsites.com](http://ohajoco.mailchimpsites.com)

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held March 22.

**Update:** Be sure to join us at our annual chapter youth day on June 7 at JoCo Sportsman Association Range; call 541-218-2836

### KLAMATH

DENNIS WIARD 541-891-3549

[dtwiard@charter.net](mailto:dtwiard@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.

**Update:** We hosted a booth March 14-16 at the Klamath Falls Sportsmen's & Outdoor Show, dedicated to former chapter and state OHA President Ken Hand. Join us for our Hart Mountain Campout on May 17-18, as well as the Green Diamond clean up day on June 7.

### LAKE COUNTY

LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held April 5, Lake County Fairgrounds.

**Update:** Our chapter will host the annual guzzler project on May 17. Our youth event will be held June 28; call 541-417-0042.

## LINCOLN COUNTY

TODD THOMPSON 541-270-2393

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

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

**Update:** Chapter officers are needed if our chapter is to continue. We have board members and support in place to help new chapter leaders.

## 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:** Mark your calendars for our youth day shoot on Aug. 9. Details to follow.

## MID-COLUMBIA

TONY WHITE 541-490-2980

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

**Update:** Turkey clinic was held April 5.

## MID-WILLAMETTE

KEN MCCALL 541-753-8588

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

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

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held April 5, Albany Boys & Girls Club.

**Update:** Scholarships are available. If you are a new or returning college student in a field of study that aligns with our mission, please apply.

## OCHOCO

JAMES COX 541-408-4816

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held Feb. 15, Crook County Fairgrounds.

**Updates:** Save the date, Aug. 23-24 for our 1st Annual Celebrate the Outdoors event in memory of Gary Prah at the beautiful Crooked River Park.

## PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 971-221-8827

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

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held March 1. We netted over \$100,000, thanks to great support!

**Update:** We will host our youth day event at the Canby Rod & Gun Club on April 26 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Children ages 8-18 are welcome to join us for a day of shooting and learning. Our guzzler campout will be June 13-15.

## REDMOND

K. C. THRASHER 541-419-7215

OHA line 541-383-1099

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

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held Feb. 22, Deschutes County Expo Center.

**Update:** Redmond Chapter members planted 3,050 cottonwood trees during our spring work project at Priest Hole.

## ROGUE VALLEY

PAUL THOMPSON 541-941-6978

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

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held March 15, Ashland Hills Inn.

**Update:** ODFW and OHA held our Youth Turkey Clinic on April 5 at Denman Wildlife Area.

## TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Monday, 7 p.m., ODFW Tillamook Office.

**2025 Fundraiser:** May 3, Tillamook County Fairgrounds, featuring an Oregon Access & Habitat Statewide Elk Tag auction, 503-842-7153.

**Update:** Our chapter's youth trap shoot will be held May 17; call 503-842-7153.

## TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held April 5, Coquille Community Building.

**Update:** The Tioga Chapter Youth Day will be held May 3 at the Myrtle Point Sportsman's Club. This event is free to kids and only \$3 for adults attending.

## TUALATIN VALLEY

KIRK NOLAN (INTERIM) 503-701-2852

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

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday, dinner 6



*More than 50 OHA Redmond Chapter volunteers planted 3,050 cottonwood trees at Priest Hole on the John Day River the last weekend of March. The area is critical wintering ground for deer, elk and upland game birds.*

p.m., meeting 7, Prime Time Restaurant & Sports Bar, Forest Grove.

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held March 29, Wingspan Event Center.

**Update:** We hosted a booth at the NW Hunt Expo on March 7 in Hillsboro. Our youth event will be held June 7-8 at Henry Hagg Lake; call 503-701-2852.

## UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday, 6 p.m. Backside Brewery.

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held April 5, Seven Feathers Casino.

## UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held March 15, EOU Field House.

## YAMHILL COUNTY

ANDY BODEEN 503-490-2489

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

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

**2025 Fundraiser:** Held March 15, Yamhill County Fairgrounds

**Update:** 2025 Yamhill Chapter Scholarship deadline is May 2.

GET THE TAG OF A LIFETIME

Oregon

BIG GAME RAFFLE HUNTS

ENTRIES START AT \$4.50

Deer

Elk

Rocky Mountain Goat

Pronghorn

Bighorn Sheep

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

The 2025 raffle will be held on  
May 27, 2025 at 2:00 P.M.  
at ODFW Headquarters in Salem, Oregon.



FOR MORE INFO:  
Scan the QR code or go to  
<https://tinyurl.com/4wevpusk>

The event will also be livestreamed starting at 2:00 p.m. on May 27th.  
Go to [www.youtube.com/user/IEODFW](https://www.youtube.com/user/IEODFW) to attend the  
event.



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

# REWARD



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& \$10,000+ IN PRIZES TO THOSE WHO TRIED NON-LEAD AMMO.

# YOU COULD BE NEXT!

TOP

6

REASONS TO APPLY  
FOR A HUNT AT THE



**LAST MINUTE**

1

The thrill of being locked out of your account at 11:50 p.m. on May 15 because you forgot your password.

4

The camaraderie of standing in a long line with other hunters at a license sale agent.

2

The frantic group texting on the last day to make sure everyone applies on time and for the right hunt.

5

Waking up in your own bed in your warm house in November because you didn't apply on time and aren't sleeping in a wall tent at elk camp.

3

That annual phone call with your great uncle who is in your party but doesn't text.

6

The chance to hunt in a new location because you accidentally applied for the wrong hunt and didn't give yourself time to correct it.



Apply until the last minute  
**11:59 pm, Thursday May 15**

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

MAY

15

# NOSLER®

## 2025 PHOTO CONTEST

### FINALIST PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded in general and youth categories.

**1ST PRIZE:** Nosler Model 21 rifle

**2ND PRIZE:** Case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo

**3RD PRIZE:** Leupold Scope

**4TH PRIZE:** Danner Alsea Hunting Boots

**5TH PRIZE:** Benchmade Altitude Hunting Knife

Each finalist will receive an OHA-engraved Coast knife, and entrants whose photos are selected to appear in Oregon Hunter will receive a Nosler hat.

Two finalists in each category will be chosen and published in each issue of Oregon Hunter, beginning with the March-April issue and ending with the November-December issue. From the 10 finalists in each category, five finalist prize winners will be chosen. These will be announced in the January-February issue of Oregon Hunter. Photos received after the entry deadline will be judged for the next issue.

### ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

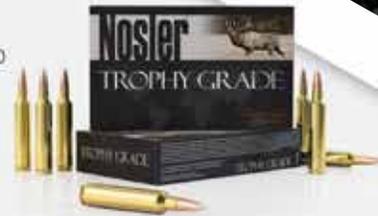
Go to **OHA's website at [www.oregonhunters.org](http://www.oregonhunters.org)** Click on **OHA CONTESTS**. Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of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

### PHOTO CATEGORIES

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

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

Current year contest prizes will be delivered the following year



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

**DOWNLOAD IT NOW!**



SCAN



# NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

## GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS

OHA member Matt Langer of Sherwood scores a spot in the 2025 Nosler Photo Contest finals and an OHA Coast knife for his photo of Kevin Blair and a Wheeler County mule deer this past fall.



SLED SPRINGS CANYON DEVOID OF DEER



OHA member Natalie Godwin from Corvallis wins an OHA Coast knife and a berth in the finals of the 2025 Nosler Photo Contest for her photo of a Willamette Unit turkey last April.

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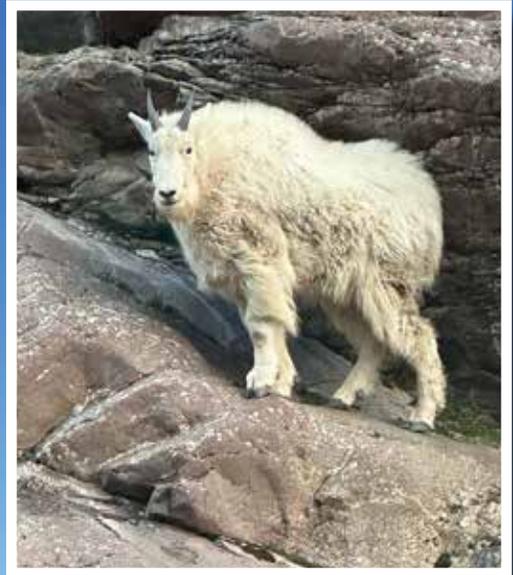
SCAN

# NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

## GENERAL CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



Warm Springs OHA member Chad Thurby grabs a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of Vanessa and a mountain goat taken this past September in the Elkhorn Mountains.



Klamath OHA member Donald Monroe, Sr. nabs a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of a Hells Canyon mountain goat he photographed while steelhead fishing.



OHA member Curt Gibson from Prineville bags Honorable Mention and wins a Nosler hat for his photo of Gabi and a mixed bag of ducks from the Fern Ridge Wildlife Area in January.



OHA member Chad Moles of Powell Butte and his photo of a Grizzly Unit elk taken during the archery season last September win a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention.

# NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

## YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS



Coquille OHA member Ken Wilson garners a spot in the finals of the 2025 Nosler Photo Contest and an OHA Coast knife for his photo of Ensley Morris. Ensley battled a long day of wind and rain for her Sixes Unit blacktail buck last November.



OHA member Justin Botefuhr from Heppner is a finalist in the 2025 Nosler Photo Contest and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of Avia Botefuhr and her first buck. Avia bagged her youth tag buck with a Browning .243 in the Juniper Unit.

# NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

## YOUTH CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



OHA member and The Dalles resident Larry Powell wins Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of grandson Alex Powell and his October Wasco County blacktail taken with a Remington Model 788 6mm.



OHA member Justin Botefuhr from Heppner snags a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of Kason Botefuhr and his first buck taken from the Juniper Unit with a Browning .243.



Myrtle Point OHA member Ben Voth's photo of Molly and David Voth and their first turkeys from the Melrose Unit last April earns Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat.



Astoria OHA member Mathew Dornin's photo of Harley Dornin wins a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention. Harley filled her fourth elk tag from a Wilson Unit youth cow hunt last December with her Savage Axis 6.5 Creedmoor.



# Slimmer than the Average Bear

**A**s a powerful and influential member of the media, I am expected to comment on current events. For example, last month my mother asked if I knew anything about an anthropomorphic animal convention, which I thought might be a trick question. But she had just heard about the phenomenon.

"It ain't me. I ain't no fur-tunate son," I told her.

"I mean, what causes certain people to become furrries?"

I said I wasn't sure, but I guessed furomones.

Last month T. Roy sent a video that was used to justify an insurance claim wherein an expensive luxury car was damaged by a bear. What T. Roy wanted to know was would I have shot the bear if the season was on?

It's a good question and one I have wrestled with my whole bear hunting career. Do you shoot the first legal bear you see, or do you hold out for a bigger one?

In the video, which was captured with a common Ring-type camera mounted far off and high up, you see a bear crawl on all fours up to the passenger door of a Mercedes and lift the door handle and let itself in. Very clever these California bears, I says to myself.

Once inside the car, the bear puts its paws on the steering wheel and looks out the windshield as if it is trying to remember something.

"Hmm, let's see," I think he said, "Just take Manzanita down to Olympic make a right over by the Von's Pavilion. Take that all the way down to Robertson. Make a right and keep going... Or was it a left?"

Then the bear claws at the passenger seat and makes its way into the backseat where it cavorts like it is pawing up a ground squirrel.

It looked like a spring bear to me with lots of loose skin after three years hibernation and no trips to the donut shop. One of those emo bears. Big in the hips, but no cubs anywhere to be seen, so legal.

And I was clicking off the safety on my imaginary Winchester. But then it turned, and it looked like a grizzly bear. In fact, it looked just like the bear that works the crowd at Pauley Pavilion for the UCLA Bruins on Saturdays in February. So no, I wouldn't have shot it, because grizzly bears aren't legal in California, and I told T. Roy so and said he ought to know better.

Well, it turns out the bear was not a bear at all, police charge, but an Armenian in a bear suit, the kind you can buy for \$285 on the Googler. The costume, I mean. Armenians cost a bit more.



And I'm reckoning it was a female, which would make it more expensive in some neighborhoods that are not Venice Beach.

In fact, the video was part of a series of insurance scams allegedly run by four clever Armenians in California, one named after a popular sandwich and another after the mountain where Noah's boat ran aground. Ruben, Ararat, Vahe and Alfiya had filed three insurance claims with three different insurance companies.

An agent cracked the case by finding multiple claims with the same date of loss and the same location involving a Mercedes G63 and a 2022 Mercedes E350. Losses included upholstery damage where a very precise set of bear claws were used to make scratch marks. In fact, the claw marks were allegedly made with kitchen accessories used to shred meat for pulled pork sandwiches, commonly called Bear Claws. They're rarely used to make Rubens.

So, for \$15 for a set of Bear Claws and another \$285 for a costume, and some grainy footage from your Ring camera, you could get recurring payments from a large corporation. Not bad for a \$300 investment, huh? Investigators claim Ruben and the crew pocketed \$147,000 from the insurance companies before an alert claims adjuster looked closer at the video.

I called the insurance adjuster to ask how he solved this crime so quickly and after I pressed 2 for English and 3 for Other and 9 for Media Relations and 2 for Not A Former NBA Player, I got a real person on the line who said *We know a thing or two because we've seen a thing or two.*

I wanted to know if the company was going to make changes to their policies to prevent incidents like this in the future. Like maybe adding a fake bear clause.

He asked if I had any other questions, and I said, well I just have to know: what's the difference between a furry and an Armenian in a bear suit? And how would he know? To which he replied he was a furry on weekends. I wanted to ask if you go for the first legal bear or you wait for a bigger one. But I had a lot to anthro-pologize for already. I offered to shake hands, but that was a faux paw.

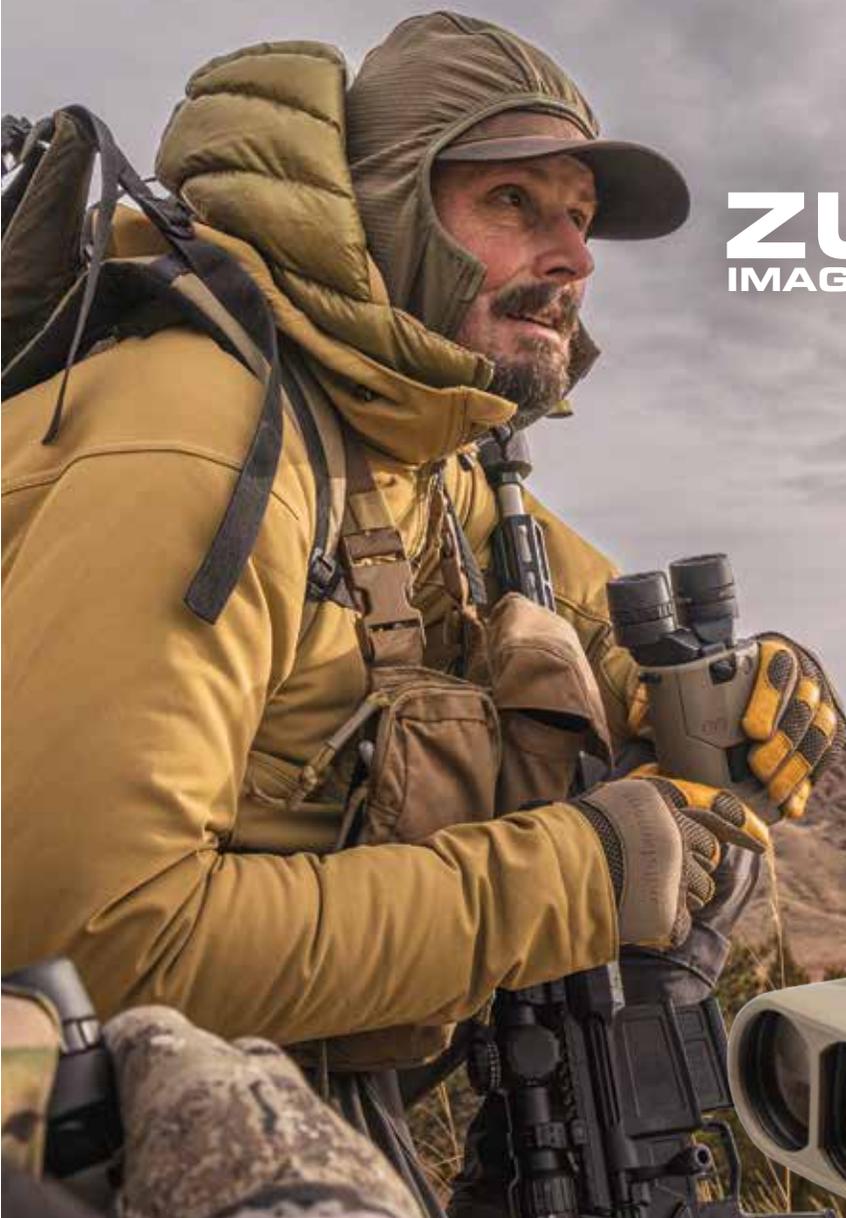


*Q:* What is smarter than the average bear?

*A:* Roughly half of all bears.

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