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RANDY SHIPLEY

OREGON HUNTER

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SETTING OUR SIGHTS

BY FRED WALASAVAGE, OHA BOARD CHAIRMAN



RANDY SHIPLEY

Charting a New Course: An Executive Director for OHA

The Oregon Hunters Association stands at a pivotal moment. With over 40 years of dedicated work in wildlife conservation, habitat preservation, and the promotion of our hunting heritage, OHA has grown into a significant force. However, as organizations evolve, so too must their leadership structures. The impending departure of Duane Dungannon after three decades as State Coordinator presents not a crisis, but a profound opportunity to redefine OHA's future and ensure its continued impact.

Duane will serve as Media Director to ensure that our award-winning magazine, calendars and other publications are still provided to our members, and he will continue his role in coordinating OHA's Convention and serve as a consultant during the transition.

Since its inception in 1995, the State Coordinator role has expanded dramatically. The complexities of managing a successful and growing nonprofit like OHA now demand a more robust and strategically focused leadership. Despite Duane's dedication, often working over 50 hours a week with 60 percent of his time committed to media, the current structure struggles to keep pace with the increasing demands for staff support, resource allocation, strategic planning, and high-level collaborations.

While OHA boasts a committed staff and passionate volunteers, the organization currently lacks an individual leader who can focus more attention on executive-level vision and fundraising. To meet escalating challenges, expand our reach, and secure long-term sustainability, hiring a full-time Executive Director is not just beneficial – it's essential.

Why an Executive Director is Imperative for OHA's Future

The addition of an Executive Director will provide essential leadership in aligning priorities, navigating complexities, fostering innovation, ensuring financial sustainability, amplifying advocacy and community impact, strategic planning, and promoting membership growth.

OHA's history is one of significant accomplishments. From the professional staff in the 1990s who improved publications and boosted membership by 1,000 members per year, to the hiring of a Field Administrator in the 2000s who dramatically increased support to the chapters, the invaluable conservation staff in the 2010s who forged partnerships and secured critical grants, the Policy Director who has put OHA in the forefront in legislative activities – OHA has consistently adapted and grown. More recently, during the COVID pandemic, OHA's professional staff provided crucial support, maintaining resilience when other organizations struggled.

A Call to Action: Investing in Our Future

OHA is at a critical juncture where hiring a top management position is not just important – it's imperative. Without a director, we face serious risks that could jeopardize our mission and threaten our long-term viability. By investing in a director, we are not merely filling a position; we are fortifying our capacity to serve our hunting community effectively and ensuring that we fulfill our mission for years to come.

The hiring of the Executive Director would not be possible without the fundraising efforts of our chapters and those who contribute to those efforts. OHA's chapter-level volunteers are the unsung heroes of the organization.

Together, we can ensure that OHA not only survives but also thrives in preserving our hunting heritage and continues to face growing challenges. It comes down to OHA collectively investing in the future. These are certainly exciting times for OHA. We thank our members, volunteers and donors for their crucial support as we take this important step forward in advancing our mission of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.



OHA Seeks EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OHA, a 12,000-member 501(c)(3) non-profit sportsmen's conservation group with 26 active chapters in Oregon, seeks an outstanding professional to lead our association to the next level in advancing our mission of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.

The ideal candidate will have a background in non-profit administration, marketing, and high-level fund-raising. Work from home with the support of OHA office staff and remote crew of skilled professionals.

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For more information, contact the OHA State Office at 541-772-7313 or oha@oregonhunters.org

LAKE COUNTY



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- *Predator Management*
- *New Mule Deer Management Plan*
- *Chronic Wasting Disease Prevention*

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wildlife, habitat and
hunting heritage.***



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STEENS MOUNTAIN/TERRY SMITH

WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

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KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

- What is the maximum number of shells allowed in a gun when bird hunting?
a) 3 c) 5
b) 4 d) none of the above
- The maximum number of shells allowed in a semi-auto rifle magazine for big game is:
a) 3 c) 5
b) 4 d) none of the above
- The maximum number of people allowed to apply as a party for elk tags is:
a) 4 c) 18
b) 6 d) no limit
- Seasons for which open Sept. 1?
a) dove c) W. Oregon fall turkey
b) forest grouse d) all of the above
- What is the smallest caliber legal for elk?
a) .22 rimfire c) .24
b) .22 centerfire d) none of the above
- What's the largest gauge legal for birds?
a) 20 c) 10
b) 12 d) none of the above
- What's the minimum distance you must be from a vehicle to shoot an antelope?
a) 50 feet c) 50 yards
b) 100 feet d) 100 yards
- More Oregon hunters pursue which?
a) deer c) pheasant
b) elk d) waterfowl
- What is the maximum number of bears you can legally tag in Oregon in 1 year?
a) 1 c) 3
b) 2 d) 4
- What unit has the highest percentage of public land?
a) Willamette c) Wagontire
b) Snake River d) Owyhee



2 WAYS TO WIN!

OHA members, you can win a Work Sharp if:

1) You recognize this Oregon river. Make your best guess on our website at www.oregonhunters.org or on our app, and if you're correct, you'll be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a Work Sharp.

Entry deadline is Sept. 15!

2) Send us a photo of a recognizable Oregon landmark (include the name in case we don't recognize it!), and whether we use it or not, we'll enter you in a drawing for a chance to win a Work Sharp! Email your photo (not your contest guess) to OHAcontests@gmail.com



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Keith Reed, Lakeview

Keith's name was drawn from among the OHA members who identified Wagontire airport.

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

SEPTEMBER 1

Openers for forest grouse, mourning dove, W. Oregon quail & fall turkey

SEPTEMBER 13-14

OHA Pioneer Chapter Sight-In Days,
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SEPTEMBER 20-21

OHA Pioneer Chapter Sight-In Days,
Canby Rod & Gun Club,
503-710-1233

SEPTEMBER 28

General archery and most controlled bow seasons end

OCTOBER 3

Deadline to buy tags for rifle deer, bear & cougar

OCTOBER 4

Deer season opens for any legal weapon

OCTOBER 11

Opener for chukar, pheasant, E. Oregon quail, Hungarian partridge and E. Oregon fall turkey

OCTOBER 15

Fox season opens;
Eastside buck season ends

OCTOBER 18

OHA Bend Chapter youth bird hunt,
541-480-7323

OCTOBER 25

OHA Lake County Chapter guzzler project,
541-417-2983

OCTOBER 25-26

OHA Klamath Chapter youth chukar hunt,
541-883-8326

OCTOBER 28

Deadline to buy tags for Rocky Mountain elk 1st season

OCTOBER 29

Rocky Mountain elk 1st season opens

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OREGON AFIELD



MALHEUR CO. SAGE GROUSE

Turkey opportunity to expand this fall

*OHA asks ODFW for
population monitoring*

By Tyler Dungannon, OHA Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted the 2025-26 Oregon Game Bird Hunting Regulations and the new 2025-2030 Upland Game Bird Hunting Season Framework at its April meeting.

Essentially the only thing that is changing from last year is the expansion of turkey hunting opportunity.

Changes for the fall turkey hunting season include combining Western and Eastern Oregon fall turkey tags into one general fall turkey tag, expanding fall turkey hunting

opportunities in the Silvies, Malheur River, Juniper and Steens Mountain wildlife management units, and implementing beardless turkey permit hunts in portions of the Fossil, Heppner, Melrose, Applegate, and Evans Creek units.

OHA supported ODFW staff in their efforts to use hunters to address turkey damage complaints rather than using administrative removal.

With this expanded turkey hunting opportunity, and significant expansionary changes implemented in the last three years, OHA expressed the need for ODFW to stick to the five-year framework and refrain from additional regulation proposals aimed at increasing fall turkey harvest in the coming years until turkey harvest and population data are available to show that the expanded opportunities are not having significant impacts on turkey populations that predominantly use public lands.

Recent efforts to increase turkey harvest are largely driven by damage complaints, and OHA is concerned that implementing broad-scale regulations to increase harvest could result in declining turkey populations that mainly inhabit public lands.

Although essentially the entire country saw a boom in turkey populations in the late 20th century, many midwest and eastern states are now seeing substantial declines as a result of hunting pressure,



JACKSON COUNTY/JIM HARRIS

Additional turkey hunting opportunities highlight game bird changes for this fall.

habitat loss and degradation, and increasing predator populations.

OHA intends to ensure that quality public-land turkey hunting opportunity is abundant in Oregon for current and future generations.



JEFF RICH

The daily limit for northern pintails increases from one to three this season.

2025-26 bag limits increased for pintails, decreased for northwest Canada geese

By Tyler Dungannon, OHA Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

Adopted migratory game bird hunting regulation changes for the 2025-26 season include an increased bag limit for northern pintail from one to three daily, as well as bag limit and season length reductions for geese in the Northwest Goose Permit Zone.

The Canada goose season in the Northwest Permit Zone will be shortened to 74 days (a nearly one-third reduction in season length), and the limit will be dropped to just two Canada geese for the 2025-26 season.

OHA encouraged ODFW staff and the Commission to maintain the current bag

limit and implement a minima cackling goose sublimit of two birds per day, but ODFW and USFWS were steadfast in reducing the limit in its entirety as a result of declining cacklers.

**See Oregon's
fall game bird
outlook on
Page 18.**

Goose hunters in the NW Permit Zone already have a shorter season and smaller bag limits on Canada geese than any of the other zones in the state. These rules will reduce the hunting opportunity even further in hopes that the minima and Taverner cackling geese will begin to see a population rebound.

OHA will continue to work with ODFW and the Commission to increase our goose hunting opportunity as we wait for next year's flyway surveys.

Habitat project replaces central Oregon drifters

One of the largest and longest-standing homeless camps in central Oregon began to be dismantled in May to make way for the 34,600-acre Cabin Butte Vegetation Management project.

In the not-too-distant past, large mule deer herds wintered in the mixed stands of Ponderosa pine, juniper and bitterbrush. In the 1990s, it was not uncommon to see more than 100 mule deer any afternoon in January.

When I toured the encampments in December of 2023 with trooper James Hayes, a La Pine-based senior trooper for the Oregon State Police, I got a firsthand look. We saw no mule deer. New roads snaked this way and that: escape routes for sex offenders, pimps, drug dealers and car theft specialists. We saw deer bones, elk bones and pit bulls chained outside tents, and unchained dogs protecting trailers. We saw the aftermath of arson fires and accidental blazes. We saw total destruction of the bitterbrush shrub component mule deer rely on to stay alive in winter. Apparently, the homeless had used the bitterbrush to start the cooking fires they barbecued their poached venison on.

The Cabin Butte project includes thinning, mowing, chipping and prescribed fire treatments under the supervision of the Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District. As of July 1, all access is restricted to China Hat Road, the nearby cave systems and Cabin Butte. Day use and overnight camping is not allowed. Prescribed burns and hazardous material clean-up efforts are in process with the aim to reduce wildfire risk and restore damaged habitat in the Wildland Urban Interface.

Randy Windlinx, whose land borders the Cabin Butte area said, "I am very excited over this closure. It's a complete shutdown. It gives us a chance to see the resiliency of the mule deer population."

After the Forest Service is finished with the selective logging operation, they will reseed and replant with native grasses and shrubs. The 34,600-acre closure will remain in effect through at least April 30, 2026. —GARY LEWIS

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR



'It gives us a chance to see the resiliency of the mule deer population.'

China Hat Road, Forest Road 18, has been closed to access through at least the end of April 2026.

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JOIN/RENEW MEMBERSHIP

IP28 nets half the signatures needed for ballot

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

The proponents of Initiative Petition 28 (IP28), have gathered approximately half the signatures needed to place the initiative on the 2026 ballot. The initiative, which has been called IP13 and IP3 in its

previous iterations, would criminalize all hunting, fishing and trapping in Oregon, as well as animal husbandry practices, raising animals for food, and even trapping mice and vermin. IP28 supporters have until July 2026 to collect and submit the required 117,173 valid signatures to gain the ballot.

Two coalitions in opposition have been established, one focused on the farming and ranching community and one made up of sportsmen's organizations. OHA participates on both coalitions and actively monitors the initiative's finances and social media.

State Supreme Court to review M-114

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

The lawsuit against Measure 114 has reached the Oregon Supreme Court.

Measure 114, the gun control ballot measure passed by a narrow margin in 2022, was ruled unconstitutional by Harney County Judge Raschio in November 2023.

At that time, the State of Oregon appealed to the Oregon Court of Appeals, which took up the case and issued a ruling in March 2025 stating the measure did not violate the state constitution.

The plaintiffs petitioned the Oregon Supreme Court to review the ruling of the Court of Appeals, which was accepted, and the case is scheduled to begin in November.

Financial assistance in support of the ongoing legal battle can be made via GiveSendGo: https://www.givesendgo.com/StateCourt_StopMeasure114

Financial support is needed to continue the ongoing challenges to Measure 114.

Firearm bills meet mixed fates

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

The 2025 legislative session ended late in the night on June 27 after a tumultuous final week. Regardless of the legislature's inability to pass a transportation package, the outcomes for Oregon's wildlife and sporting community were fairly beneficial.

Bills that passed with positive impacts for OHA's mission to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage include:

- **HB 2978** increases collaboration between ODOT and ODFW regarding wildlife crossing structure design, location, and implementation. Signed by the Governor.
- **SB 812** removes the sunset clause on the Landowner Preference Program. Signed by the Governor.
- **SB 777** assigns a multiplying factor for livestock and guard dog compensation due to wolf depredation. Signed by the Governor.
- **HB 5009** sets the ODFW agency budget for the next biennium. Headed to the Governor's desk.
- **HB 2342** increases fees for tags and licenses. While the sportsmen's community is never excited about higher prices, OHA has supported this bill due to inflation and maintaining current service level needs. Headed to the Governor's desk.

A bill that will negatively impact the sportsmen's community is **HB 3932**. The bill bans beaver trapping on federal and state lands in waterways deemed impaired

by the Department of Environmental Quality. The bill sets a troubling precedent of removing wildlife management decisions from the purview of ODFW and the Commission. Signed by the Governor.

• **HB 2167** would have appropriated \$3.5 million to the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic laboratory at Oregon State University for chronic wasting disease research and testing. Died in Ways & Means.

• **HB 2977** would have increased the state transient lodging tax by 1.25 percent to fund ODFW programs such as the Statewide Action Plan, wolf compensation funding, wolf biologist, invasive species funding, wildlife stewardship and anti-poaching funding. Died due to delays from a minority report filing.

• **HB 3075**, the Measure 114 firearms bill, and **HB 3076**, the state regulation for firearms dealers bill, both died in Ways & Means due to their high financial burden to implement.

• **SB 243**, what was the firearms omnibus bill, had the ban on firearms possession for anyone under 21 and the mandatory 72-hour wait period stripped out for a narrowed bill that bans rapid fire activators, such as forced trigger resets and auto sears, and adds new restrictions on concealed carry ability in public buildings. While not a win, the final version of the bill does not impact the youth and young adult hunting or firearms purchases. The bill passed on the final day of the session and is likely to be litigated.

Please Support OHA's Special Funds

Your tax-deductible* contributions help protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.

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!



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.

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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.

Oregon Hunters Association Special Funds Donations

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Calling Elk: Just go quiet for 15 minutes and watch out

'Elk like to get up at midday and stretch and feed a little.'

It was a game-time decision for Paul Moresi. Late in the morning by most elk hunting standards, Paul, his 7-year-old son Lucas, and his brother Ezio arrived at the trailhead at 9:30, put on their packs and began walking.

"The reason we decided to go hunting that day was because it was one of the last days I was able to hang out with my brother, and my son had a day off from school," Paul said.

"I figured we had a chance, because those elk like to get up at midday and stretch and feed a little bit."

Along the trail, Paul noticed fresh elk droppings and brand-new rubs on the small pine trees. He wanted to check on a wallow he had found a few seasons back. He and his regular hunting partner call the place Bachelor Pad because they often find the same 6 or 7 bulls using the area every year in the last week of August.

"More than anything, I just wanted to spend time with my son and my brother because it was the last opportunity we were going to get for a while," Paul said.

The trio set up on a hillside 50 to 60 yards above the wallow and felt the rising air in their faces.

"I wanted to paint the picture that we were a small herd of elk," Paul said. "I had a diaphragm call, bugle, mouth reed and a Hoochie Mama call."

Paul began with about 10 seconds of calling. Then Ezio raked a tree with an elk antler. Then they were quiet for three or four minutes and called again.

After 45 minutes, 7-year-old Lucas started getting restless. Paul recognized the signs and pulled out the Hoochie Mama



COURTESY PAUL MORESI

Paul Moresi of Bend hunted the Upper Deschutes and called this 6x5 bull in the middle of the day while on a spur-of-the-moment hunt with his 7-year-old son and his brother.

and handed it to the boy. He told him that when he started calling, then Lucas could push the Hoochie. Then Paul and Lucas crept down the hill about 150 yards while Ezio stayed in place. Ezio's foot had been hurting and he was to find out later that his heel was broken from an on-the-job injury.

Paul and Lucas made another call set, and then worked their way back up the hill to Ezio where they made another. Then Lucas asked if they could call it quits for the day.

"Dad, can we go now?"

"A couple more minutes, Lucas," Paul whispered. "Remember, when you're patient in hunting, good things will happen." Paul had one more trick in his bag. He gave Lucas a snack and began the last call set. That was when an elk chuckled. First Paul heard the chuckles. Then a locate bugle. Then chuckles again. Paul guessed the bull was about 80 yards down the hill on a bench below.

"They like the benches," Paul said. "There is forage on a bench. Water collects there. And the thermals swirl on a bench, changing direction. They have 360-degree protection because of the swirling wind."

Intent now, the trio watched for the bull to show up. But it didn't happen. The wind swirled and Paul began to second-guess. Still, he felt he had to creep downhill about 25 yards to listen. From here he could see the wallow, but the bull had not gone to the wallow.

"I decided he was gone," Paul said. "I gave one more light bugle and then walked back up to Lucas and Ezio." Paul sat down and opened his pack and took out sandwiches and shared them around, and

that was when the 7-year-old leaned back and looked along the side of the hill and saw a bull elk walking toward them. Lucas pointed and whispered.

"Dad, look."

Paul, sitting on the ground Indian-style got one look at the bull only 10 yards away and peeled an arrow out of his quiver. The bull turned left when it got to the trees. Paul got the arrow nocked, figuring he had three seconds.

"I scooted over four yards to get around a branch, leaned out to the side, tilted the bow over to clear the branch and let the arrow go."

The arrow buried all the way to the fletching and the bull charged down the hill.

Quiet. Except for the sounds of the animal crashing away. They heard the bull run into a tree. Heard it cough. Knew the arrow had found the lungs.

"I have walked a thousand miles up in those mountains with my friend Matt," Paul said later. "Every other hunt we are up there and walking in well before daylight. Not this time. We are nonchalant. My brother hobbling with his broken heel."

For the rest of the afternoon, Paul, Ezio and Lucas worked on taking the meat off the bone, getting it in packs or hanging it in trees. Well after dark, they walked out with the last load for the day. It was Paul's second bull elk, but his first bull with a bow.

Young Lucas crawled into bed at midnight and made it to class the next morning.

"He was riding on cloud nine for a week," Paul said. "Every day he would look at me and say, 'I still can't believe we got that big bad boy elk.'"





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Black-Cloud Blacktails

September rarely feels like deer season to me, despite some enjoyable High Cascades hunts. Yet, with a Willamette 615 tag last fall, I could take any deer starting Sept. 1. Access is tough, but private opportunities occur, and some public lands exist, usually shotgun- or shotgun/muzzleloader-only. My goal was to take a black-tailed deer with a muzzleloader. I chose an area close to home and set up my horn and pouch for my .58 flintlock rifle.

Dawn of the opening day found me still-hunting three miles through oaks and brush. Besides a fat gray squirrel, I saw mostly elk sign. Taking an elk with my .58 is my dream, but I had no tag and it was not the season.

The next evening, I worked along a 4x4 road in dense cover. After years of perfect vision, my eyes are slipping. Juggling glasses, binoculars, and a 42-inch barreled rifle has made this harder, but I stayed slow and focused until I heard sticks snapping in a wooded draw to my left. “Not deer,” I thought, but kept my rifle at the ready, muzzle skyward. A cow Roosevelt elk appeared, first the head, then the dark shaggy mane. I held motionless. She edged to 20 yards, peered around a maple, retreated, angled out again, staring.

“That one would be mine,” I thought. As she turned away, I moved on, hearing cracking brush and faint squeals from three directions. Deer seem to avoid elk, so I mentally gave up and committed to innocent elk stalking.

Around the next bend, a branch bull appeared at 60 yards, head and antlers visible. He stepped quickly across the road into the tall grass, angling nearly straight away – not a shot for this rifle.

Now, from behind, another heavy animal was moving. My breath was loud amid



The author claimed this blacktail buck with a .58 flintlock rifle in the fading moments of daylight as a September thunderstorm rumbled through the Willamette Valley.

the late summer drone of the crickets. Here he came, breasting the scattered brush, pausing at 25 yards – a big 6x6, perfectly broadside above the long summer grass. He stood head up, staring at me, as I mentally picked the spot on his chest, my hands tight on my rifle, muzzle still skyward. A few seconds but long enough. We locked eyes, then he tipped his long-antlered head back and trotted into the thick cover.

As the light dwindled, I walked up on a spike and more cows within easy range. When I stepped into the last field corner, it was too dark for open sights. Yet there jumped a buck. The rifle rose instinctively, and he trotted away, silhouetted briefly – against another spike elk. “No fair!” and “so much for deer avoiding elk” flitted through my mind, as I blew the priming powder from my lock and walked away.

My next chance was late Friday after work. I rarely lay for blacktails, but I thought the “elk buck” might have a pattern. I loaded my rifle at 6:30 p.m., with a rare summer storm threatening. I sat against a small tree overlooking the same field corner, rifle across my knees, with barely an hour of shooting light for open sights.

As that hour waned, clouds built to the north, bruised blue-black. Thunder.

I tracked the faded hands of my watch, turned to the inside of the wrist. Sunset, no afterglow, darkening clouds, and the wind lifting. My eyes moved to the sights. I’d hammered the foresight from an old quarter, because silver catches the dimmest light.

*The buck
stepped out,
quick and sure,
quartering
toward me
as thunder
rippled closer.
The priming
powder flashed
in my face like
lightning.*

Eight minutes, and the buck stepped out, quick and sure, quartering toward me as thunder rippled closer. Back came the cock as he paused at 80 yards. Rear sight blurring, but there, the last possible gleam of the foresight as it settled on his chest. The priming powder flashed in my face, deep flame from the muzzle, and the buck ran, angling downhill into the trees.

Darkness gathering ever faster, lightning flickering, and I rammed down powder and ball with the sick feeling sharp in my throat. Wounded? Gone?

Half-cock, prime the pan, go. I loped down the slope, searching, into the trees, tall grass, so dark, eyes failing.

And there he lay – dead, with a ball perfectly through the shoulder.

I dressed him out as lightning jagged overhead, fat drops of rain falling. By the time I’d dragged him down with my little piece of rope, a fragment of old antler looped in for a handle, the storm had passed south.



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Canada geese numbers are down from recent highs, and Northwest Canada goose season has been reduced. See related story on Page 10.

BUSINESS as USUAL

Despite drought, wildfires and even political tensions with Russia, Oregon's game birds keep on keeping on.

By Jim Yuskavitch

The best way to describe the upcoming upland gamebird seasons was recently expressed by an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist as “business as usual.” For the most part, last winter wasn’t too harsh, and spring conditions were mostly good, or at least not terrible. That adds up to generally good hunting prospects for this fall.

But, as always, there are a few flies in the ointment here and there. And some surprise good news, too. It looks like sage grouse populations are doing considerably better than previously thought, and it seems that resident ducks may be coming out of the drought-induced doldrums they had been facing over the past few years.

Probably the biggest news for bird hunters is that ODFW has developed its five-year Upland Gamebird Season Framework that will guide bird hunting seasons, bag limits and other management actions until 2030. Find more information on the ODFW website or at your local field office.

Here’s what a sampling of local ODFW field biologists had to say about current gamebird numbers and fall hunting opportunities in their districts.

Forest Grouse

Forest grouse – ruffed and blue – are arguably Oregon’s most reliable all-purpose gamebirds, regularly sought after by hunters and, even in down years, usually provide a reasonable harvest opportunity.

The rugged mountains of the Coast Range tend to be one of the more productive Oregon forest grouse regions, with generally strong populations. This year may be a little different. Said Tillamook-based assistant district wildlife biologist Austin Reeder, “This year our hooting

surveys seem to be down compared to the previous year.” Last year and the previous few years before that, Reeder noted the North Coast had very strong forest grouse production and excellent population levels.

Potential causes of the decreasing numbers include a possible hard winter or dry, early spring conditions. However, he isn’t especially concerned, but regards it as “something to keep an eye on.” He recommends that grouse hunters focus on areas above 2,000 feet in elevation with good water sources as the best places to find birds.

South and east, in the Cascades, Nick Leonetti, district wildlife biologist in Roseburg, reported good overwinter survival and good spring weather conditions that produced a productive spring green-up. That bodes well not just for forest grouse, but other upland birds throughout his district.

John Day district wildlife biologist Ryan Torland said, “We had a really dry April and May, and some of the south slopes may have dried out,” which would suppress new vegetation growth that produces the insect food base for the birds, both adults and chicks. That may impact brood survival, but as with Reeder on the north coast, he still sees good numbers of birds and hunting opportunities.

In the forested portions of the Pendleton area, assistant district biologist Gabe McNassar predicted at least an average year despite some less-than-ideal spring conditions for brood production.

Pheasant

The story of Oregon’s pheasants remains largely unchanged. Once offering outstanding hunting opportunities, especially in the Willamette Valley, human

Jeff Rich



WILLY ONARHEIM

Valley quail enjoyed a productive spring nesting season in much of the state.

development over the decades ate away at habitat, combined with more efficient farming methods that reduced the amount of crop stubble, and left fewer swaths of grass and wooded habitat on field margins. As those vital food sources and habitat vanished, so did many of the birds. There are still places in Oregon where one can hunt wild pheasants, including the Heppner, Pendleton and Ontario areas, along with scattered populations on and around Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. But today, the best odds of success are participating in ODFW's Western Oregon Fee Pheasant Hunts offered at Fern Ridge,

Sauvie Island, Denman and E.E. Wilson wildlife areas in September and October.

Quail

Valley quail, another resilient and steady Oregon gamebird, look to be doing well in Douglas County, according to Roseburg's Leonetti, who has been seeing early broods, indicating a good year. Populations tend to be higher in valley areas where there is quality habitat, water and food sources produced on irrigated agricultural lands. While it was too soon to observe mountain quail broods, based on spring weather conditions, he expects them to also do well this year.

In the Blue Mountains around John Day, dry spring conditions may have also affected quail nesting success somewhat, but hunters should still see reasonable hunting opportunities this fall.

Despite the dry spring, with good over-winter survival, McNassar in Pendleton sees at least an average year for valley quail. He noted that his district doesn't have a big mountain quail population, but for hunters targeting that species, he suggests the North Fork John Day River area as a good place to start.

There are also some populations of mountain quail on the north Coast Range that tend to have steady populations. Reed-

er suggests that mountain quail hunters focus on the east slopes where conditions are warmer and drier.

Out Ontario way, district wildlife biologist Freeman reported they had good spring and early summer conditions. "There was not a lot of water," he explained, "but a high water table should provide enough moisture for good plant growth." He noted that over the past two years they have had good brood production. He expects a respectable number of valley quail available this fall.

Chukar

"We have a little better chukar habitat than some areas of the state," said Freeman of Malheur County. As with California quail, they have seen good brood production in recent years. With favorable spring and summer weather conditions and healthy green-up, he expects that to hold true this year as well.

He does caution that over the past several years some big range fires have hit chukar habitat near Ontario and Henderson that may suppress populations, at least temporarily until grasses and other vegetation begin to recover.

Based on spring and summer conditions, Torland in John Day said, "It's probably not going to be a banner year for



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chukar, or upland birds in general. More like business as usual.” That’s probably the overall assessment for hunting opportunities in Oregon’s chukar hotspots that include the breaks of the Columbia, John Day, Snake, Owyhee, Deschutes, Malheur, Burnt and Grand Ronde rivers.

Sage Grouse

Sage grouse populations in Oregon are intensely monitored at their mating ground locations on an annual basis. Those lek surveys provide a detailed record of sage grouse population trends over the years. And the latest news is good.

During the 2024 greater sage grouse breeding season, ODFW conducted 1,550 ground lek surveys along with 63 aerial surveys. They looked at 696 lek sites that comprised 424 lek complexes, which are defined as lek sites within one mile of each other that males may travel between in search of mates.

Lek data collected between 2023 and 2024 show that the spring breeding population has increased by 63.9 percent. The highest increase was in the Lakeview area at 75 percent. The overall Oregon greater sage grouse population is estimated at 25,253 – the highest count since 2006. This indicates that sage grouse populations continue to increase, largely due to

a voluntary statewide conservation effort that includes both government agencies and private landowners.

Despite that good news, along with generally good conditions this year, there are still caveats. Freeman, whose district includes the area with the highest population increase, emphasized that the recent big range fires that affected chukar habitat will also likely impact sage grouse.

Wild Turkey

Overall, wild turkey populations have been doing very well. Good populations are now found in much of northeast Oregon, central Oregon, portions of north and south central Oregon and the Willamette Valley, as well as their traditional stronghold in the southwestern part of the state.

McNassar reports that turkey numbers are good in the Pendleton district, and said, “I have been seeing broods around. The numbers are pretty strong this year in the national forest as well as on private lands. Nothing I have seen so far makes me think this is going to be a down year.”

Torland is upbeat for wild turkey hunting in the John day area. “When I see good brood numbers from one upland bird species, inevitably, it indicates good brood production for all our other gamebird species,” he said.



Mourning dove populations are holding steady, while band-tailed pigeons are flying high again.

In southwest Oregon, Leonetti related that “We have been seeing turkey broods since mid-to-late April. That’s a little early and is usually a good sign.” He expects turkey hunting to be good this year.

Dove & Band-tailed Pigeon

Mourning doves and band-tailed pigeons tend to be stable across Oregon. For mourning doves, the trick is to get out in the field before cold fronts drive them south. For band-tailed pigeons, look for them around elderberry bushes, water sources and mineral springs. Northwest Oregon offers some of the better hunting opportunities for these birds.

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Resident gadwalls are abundant and offer excellent opportunity for Oregon waterfowlers.

One note of interest was reported by Freeman, who said that he and his crew are having more difficulty finding and catching mourning doves for the annual banding project in Malheur County. They are having the hardest time, he said, since the project started 30 years ago. Once they get enough data, they will look at whether there is some kind of population trend developing or just an anomaly involving migration patterns or temporary habitat conditions.


Ducks and Geese

Early reports by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicate that the Canadian prairie provinces are a little dry this year, with better conditions prevailing in Alaska, which sends a fair number of ducks to Oregon each fall. As usual, hunters will have to wait and see what the fall storms bring down from the north.

For resident ducks, things are looking much better. "Locally, eastern Oregon had fantastic habitat this spring," said Brandon Reishus, ODFW Migratory Game Bird Coordinator. Resident mallard numbers are up from the lows of the 2020 to 2022 drought years. Although down from previous high points, they seem to be in recovery mode. After mallards, the second duck species ODFW uses as an overall waterfowl population health indicator are gadwalls, which Reishus reported "are doing really well."

The third indicator species is northern shovelers. These counts can be misleading, because they are often observed in big, scattered flocks across random wetland habitat. This year they were found in high concentrations at known nesting grounds, indicating good production.

Resident Canada geese are down about 20 percent below their all-time population high and are still recovering from long-term drought conditions. Nevertheless, plenty of birds remain for hunters to harvest.

Like last year, due to current political tensions, there's not likely to be any snow goose breeding data from Russian Wrangell Island. Hunters will have to wait for the fall flight. Last year's flight, according to Reishus, had good numbers of adult birds but low numbers of juveniles. 



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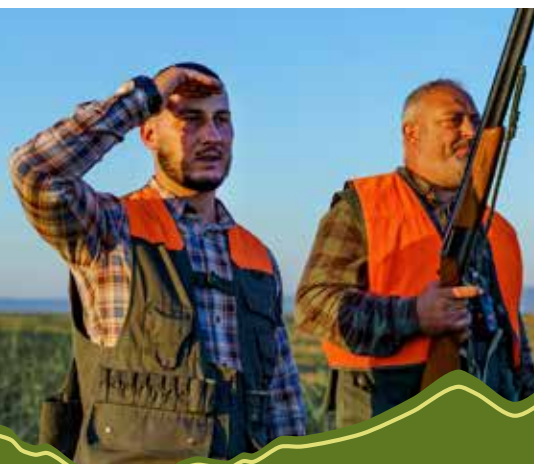
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HARVEST MOON BUCKS



If Oregon's deer season is as hot and dry as last year, the extra light afforded by the Harvest Moon might offer your best shot at bagging a buck.

BY GARY LEWIS

In the Northern Hemisphere, on the night of Oct. 7, there will be a harvest moon. This is the full moon that happens to be closest to the autumn equinox. The harvest moon gets its name from the extra light it gives farmers and hunters and was especially significant before electricity, as there was more light by which to harvest. This early October moon rises shortly after sunset, providing extra light for hunters and harvesters to reap. Its bright golden hue and the timing of the moonrise is significant for several reasons.

FEED AND MOVEMENT

Changing moonlight affects the feeding and movement patterns of deer. The full moon's effects on deer include tendency to group and feed under the light of the moon.

At this time of the season, we can expect bucks to be grouped with other bucks, or we might see a buck with, or at least close to, any group of does.

Other effects that hunters witness is that daytime activity tends to be reduced during

the period of the full moon, and deer are somewhat less active at dawn and dusk.

During a harvest moon, the moon's orbit is nearly parallel to the earth's eastern horizon at sunset, shortening the daily shift in moonrise times. At this time of year, the full moon rises right around sunset, not just one night but several nights in a row.

In the period of the harvest moon, deer can be somewhat easier to spot in daytime hours for at least three days.

However, there's a bonus. In the full moon period, we can expect a slight increase in midday movement

All of the foregoing is what longtime hunters have come to expect. And the solunar calendar agrees. The solar/lunar calendar says Monday, Oct. 6 is "SEASON'S BEST" with major movement times at 11:21 a.m. to 1:21 p.m.

A key takeaway? Don't take a break for lunch. Also make sure to hunt the day all the way until the end of shooting light. If temperatures are anything like they were during last year's Oregon mule deer season, this evening window may offer your best shot.

TERRY SMITH

JUMP SHOOTING IN THE JUNIPERS

It is an exciting time to be a hunter. A number of harvest moon bucks come to memory, but one stands out.

It was the third day of the season and we decided to hunt a different area than we had hunted the first two days. Given the full moon period, we decided to bring extra food and water with us and stay out through the middle of the day. We expected deer to move around during the noon hour as the shadows shifted. On our circuit out in the early afternoon we walked into a tighter grove of junipers.

A deer bounded out of its bed, just 40 yards away, downwind. I saw gray flashing through the junipers and pulled up my binoculars. It was a doe. Then a second and third doe made their escape. James had his rifle up, ready. No antlers.

Still, we watched, waiting. Too often we had been surprised by the sudden appearance of a doe or young buck, then missed the opportunity at a larger buck when our guard was down. Not this time.

There. The buck, its head held low, headed away in the opposite direction the does had taken. James swung his rifle to his shoulder as the deer went straight away. He fired on the wrong bounce and missed. The deer vanished in the junipers, leaving me with no shot. We followed.

We went into two-man drive mode, walking 40 yards apart, parallel to each other through the junipers along the rim.

The sun beat down and there was little shade. We followed the buck as he made his way up and down through washes and around rocky outcroppings. Catching glimpses of gray-brown hair and golden antler through the green junipers and silver sage, we followed.

The buck turned a hard left and came out into the sunlight, running. I threw rifle to shoulder, swinging the crosshairs across his body. Leading him in the brief opening in the trees, I fired. The buck slid on its chin.

Pacing off the distance allowed me to calm my nerves. I counted 137 yards. Then came the slaps on the back for this end to a hard hunt. We admired the antlers and the fine shiny coat and breathed in the delicious smell of these bucks of the sage.

The buck was heavy with antlers that taped over 28-1/2 inches wide, with four points per side and hooked eye guards.

It took two hours to cape, skin and quarter the buck, then another two hours to pack it a mile and a half out to the road.

We found a spring burbling water into a cattle tank. This was why the deer weren't bedded as high as they usually were early in

Gary Lewis and Mikayla Lewis walk out in the dark after a stalk on the first evening of a mule deer hunt in the Columbia Basin. The harvest moon brightens the evening sky around sunset for several days in a row. When the moon is close to the horizon, it can appear bigger, brighter, even orange. Photo courtesy Samuel Pyke



the season. With little rain in the past few months, other sources had dried up. My buck had bedded in the forest rather than on the mountain to be closer to water. Something to keep in mind if this year's hunt is as dry and hot.

We cupped hands to catch the water, letting it run down over our heads as the harvest moon came up over the mountain.

BLACKTAIL AT FIRST LIGHT

Once on a blacktail hunt with the moon just two nights before full and clear skies, the deer were taking full advantage, feeding in the fields through the night. Each day the bucks were bedded by first light.

Rather than try to spot deer among the mixed oaks and evergreens, I elected to go against the collective wisdom in camp and do the different thing. We had observed groups of does going to water at sunrise. Reasoning a buck might be grouped with the does under the light of the waxing moon, I elected to stalk the groups of does and see if there was a buck on the fringes.

Minutes after first legal light I walked out of camp with Sam Pyke carrying the camera. Sam spotted the deer – a heavy three-point, scent-checking a doe. As soon as the buck went broadside, I fired.

Conventional wisdom is nice, but there is no substitute for actual time in the field. I was ready to hunt every minute that day, but I only needed the first three minutes.

This season on Oct. 6, the moon will wax gibbous at 100 percent illumination and will still appear as bright as a full moon on the next night, Oct. 7.

These are the days to stay flexible, stay in the woods or desert and take other factors into account. If a sharp drop in temperature is in the forecast, expect deer to move and feed more during the day.

Don't break for lunch on the days around the full moon. Hunt out those last minutes of daylight with the sun blinking out on the horizon. Stay on stand until the last minute of legal light is gone. You can walk out under the light of the full moon.

If the buck shows up where you expect it, there are few things in life more satisfying than walking out with a full pack under a harvest moon.



Author Gary Lewis is the host of Frontier Unlimited TV and author of Born Ballistic – the Bob Nosler Story, Fishing Central Oregon and other titles. Contact Gary at www.garylewisoutdoors.com

Second-Season Oregon Muleys

*Oregon's eastside buck season is greater later,
and by Columbus Day, it's a new world.*

BY GARY LEWIS

How many of us can set aside 12 days to hunt mule deer? If we are honest, most of us can set aside about six days.

But which six days?

How many of us have hunted the last day of deer season? How many have hunted the first day? How many every day between?

Ever drive out of the desert on day 5 or 6 and see a lot of other people pulling stakes and going home at the same time, whether they had a buck hanging in camp or not?

By day 7, the woods and the high desert are far less crowded. Gone are the aluminum tents and the four-wheelers. The best camp sites are available again.

The regular hunter can set aside five or six days. They like to arrive and find

a good camp site two days before the opener. Whether they bag a deer or not, they have to go home. They run out of food and energy and desire by day 5 or 6 and head home.

And did they find the biggest buck on the mountain? I doubt it.

I have always told myself the buck I am looking for is still out there after all the other hunters quit trying.

Think back. Last time you had an eastside deer tag, when did the hunting get good? Was it opening morning? Or was it the day the rains came? Or when snow fell on the ridge tops? October is shoulder season. It can be 85 degrees one day and 45 degrees the next. And when would you rather hunt? Chances for good killing weather are better in the second half of the season.

I have dozens of examples of when we started hunting mid-season, but let's take two from this decade. In the 2021 season, opening day was Oct. 2. We started hunting on Oct. 8. On the next day we counted 38 does and saw three antelope. Oct. 10, a Sunday, was a windy day. We saw the big buck in a narrow canyon, a 180-class 4x4 at about 10 a.m. I missed him as the bullet had to arc up into the wind to get there. And I took the wrong hold. I saw the bullet smack the rock.

The next day the wind was just as bad, but now deer were on the move. We saw a half dozen young bucks and let them walk. It was enough to have been there. Oh, and I killed a gray partridge and a quail. I also marked the location of a couple of coveys for a November return trip with the pointing dogs.





PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

After several days of hunting, a group of bucks were located between two buttes. A 275-yard shot and a Nosler AccuBond anchored this buck.

In the 2022 season, the opener was Oct. 1. We drew the tag again and started on Oct. 3, that Monday evening, knowing we would not get the campsite we wanted. But we worked the plan day after day, walking and spotting from ridgetops. It was the Thursday, day 6, when I saw the big buck in the spotting scope.

The buck walked out of junipers to stand framed between two trees. Its antlers were as tall as a mature bull elk's. If I had to guess, I would say it was a 200-inch-class mule deer – on public land, just a mile away. I made my play with the sun going down, to get as close as I could, and there I ran into two bucks that dad and I had seen the day before. I shot one. And I was just happy to have been there, walking out with a full pack under a humpbacked moon.

Glass Up Your Act

More than at any other moment in the season, this second half is the time to stay rooted in one place with the far-looking glass on a tripod. It's the lens between wishes and fact. After the first five or six days of the season, the deer have been pushed around. Weather events are more likely in the last half, and wind, rain or snow could have deer on the move. A hunter who stays in one place with a spotting scope or mounted binocular is far



Don Lewis and Gary Lewis on a mule deer hunt along a tortuous part of the Oregon Trail. In this country, after a deer is spotted, the stalk can take most of a mile and shots are apt to be long.

more likely to spot a buck than the one who walks 10 miles and peers into all the canyons.

Find one knob or rimrock. Get a tree or a boulder behind you to break up your outline. Maybe set up some rocks or downed trees in front to mask movement. That can be done a month before the season starts. Then plan to stay in one place from before the sun rises until the deer begin to bed down for the day. As the sun crosses the sky, the shadows shift and deer show

It's Shotgun Season, too

The second Saturday in deer season is opening day for chukar, pheasant, eastern Oregon quail, gray partridge and eastern Oregon fall turkey. If someone in your second-week party tags out or has no tag at all, they can hunt birds that would be off limits the first week of the season.

Last fall, some friends of mine had a big family camp in the Ochocos, and while not one of them was able to tag a deer, every hunter in camp filled a turkey tag. They called it a successful season.

Take a shotgun and a box of ammo. Take a pointing dog. Or your beagle. Take the opportunity to hunt birds during deer season. —GARY LEWIS

up that were there all along. Or a big buck crosses back over the ridge to bed, and affords a stalk or a setup for the long shot.

Spotting and stalking is best with one or two partners. Someone in the group should have a small notebook and a pencil to sketch the location of a spotted deer and outline the proposed stalk.

Use the clock system to identify deer as they come into view.

One of the sweetest things someone ever said to me was, "Got a bogey at 10 o'clock." And it was my turn to stalk.

One guy stays back while the other makes the play. It is good to be able to turn and look back at the guy with the spotting scope to get hand signals.

Of course, someone should always turn around and keep an eye on the six o'clock. Deer can come from that way, too. And mountain lions like to lie up on knobs and watch the deer.

October is shoulder season, so make it shoulder mount season by letting others hunt the hot, dry opener while you hunt the late, great season.



Gary Lewis is the host of *Frontier Unlimited TV* and author of *Born Ballistic* - the Bob Nosler story, *Fishing Central Oregon* and other titles. Contact Gary at www.garylewisoutdoors.com



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BE RELENTLESS

FIRST SHOT

OHA helps youth bird hunters put feathers in their caps.

PHOTO ESSAY BY CARLY HUGHES



It's hard to say who's more excited for the hunt to begin – the youths or their canine companions.

On a crisp October morning, a low breeze whistles through pine needles, carrying the scent of sizzling bacon, and the ambient crowing of pheasants. Conversations murmur between new and experienced OHA members trading stories and tips as birdshot is loaded.

A pheasant takes flight. A shot claps. A youth exclaims, “I got him!” The young hunter holds the bird high and poses for a few phone photos before depositing it in the vest pouch.

It’s an annual tradition at youth upland bird hunts hosted by ODFW and OHA across Oregon every autumn. To see these kids succeed in something they’d worked so hard on, something with such long tradition and community support, is truly amazing.

A dog walks side-by-side with a boy, his mentor, and his firearm. Today is not



ROGUE VALLEY ROOSTER/RANDY SHIPLEY

just about taking a shot, but learning the process.

The dog cocks its head up at him, as if saying “ready?”

The boy waits patiently through minutes that feel like hours.

Snout down, the dog hunts. It sniffs through brush and grass, while the boy waits. The dog goes still, snout pointing. It points to a bush, shaking slightly as the bird begins to rustle.

As the bird takes flight, the young hunter’s shot echoes across the field. He watches as the bird falls into brush at the edge of the clearing. The dog is swift, a blur of white fur into the tan and green. The brush rustles as he holds his breath.

The dog bursts forward, the pheasant hanging between its teeth. In a sprint, the dog runs back to the boy, wagging its tail as it drops the bird at his feet.

Taking place all across Oregon, youth bird events are a great opportunity for



OHA's Roy Geiger offers some pointers on safety to young hunters before going afield.



A youth, a noble pointer and handler celebrate the moment after a good shot and retrieve.

younger members to learn new skills, hone abilities and harvest birds. Clay target practice stations are available. Most feature pheasants, while a pair of OHA events offer chukars. In-season natives – such as mourning doves – can be taken as well. If the event is on youth waterfowl weekend, then ducks and geese can be harvested.

Some youth bird hunts provide freshly cooked breakfast for attendees. Members of the Oregon Hunters Association will be on hand at many of these events, cooking food, taking kids afield with dogs, and assisting with the shotgun skills clinics. At the Bend OHA youth hunt, volunteers also teach bird field dressing.

OHA and ODFW host about a dozen youth hunts annually, from the Rogue




Youth hunter Bo Danigelis shows off two freshly bagged pheasants.



OHA volunteers run clay target shooting stations to help young hunters take their best shot.

Valley to the Grande Ronde. The Klamath Chapter hosts a youth chukar hunt in conjunction with ODFW, a unique experience for kids in the area. OHA's Bend Chapter hosts a one-of-a-kind hunt, as it is put on by OHA but takes place on private land. Youth hunts are run by a crew of enthusiastic folks who take pride in passing on the knowledge and experience of hunting to those newer to it.

OHA's Bend Chapter will host its youth hunt on Oct. 18; call Kevin Borst at 541-480-7323 for details. Klamath's youth chukar hunt will be held the following weekend; call 541-883-8326.

For other youth hunt event dates and locations, rules and regulations, visit MyODFW.com. 



The satisfaction of a job well done bagging a chukar takes the next step when it's time to turn the harvest into table fare.



A successful hunter gets a few tips on field dressing his chukar. The lessons learned will last a lifetime, as will the fond memories.



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The Dalles OHA member Larry Powell is the winner of a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for his July image of a bobcat crossing Mill Creek in Wasco County after a successful hunt.

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HONORABLE MENTION:



Matt Langer, an OHA member from Sherwood, landed two Honorable Mention photos and an OHA hat for his Wheeler County mule deer bucks last August.



OHA member Darren Davidson of Medford wins an OHA hat for his image of young cougars in Jackson County this past May.



Springfield OHA member Will Waddell grabs Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for his McKenzie Unit black bear photo.



OHA member Schyler Gorman of Medford captured a photo of Rogue Unit bulls, Honorable Mention and an OHA hat.

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OHA NEWS & VIEWS

DEER IMAGE BY RYAN HOEFT



OHA opposed a U.S. Senate scheme to sell millions of acres of public land in western states.

Women of OHA slate event, seek planner

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

The Women of OHA program, first established in January 2024, has continued to grow in its second year. From an initial distribution list of 32 women, the program currently communicates monthly with more than 250 women interested in hunting and the outdoors.

After a successful inaugural event in 2024, the second Weekend Away event has been scheduled for Oct. 18-19 near Prineville.

The overnight event will feature a chukar hunt hosted in conjunction with the Bend OHA Chapter. Space is limited to 25 hunters and registration is now open: <https://oregonhunters.org/women-of-oha-2025-weekend-away/>

Once registration is full, a waiting list will then be established; email Amy at amy@oregonhunters.org to be placed on the list.

In addition to the hunting opportunity, the Weekend Away events focus on building connections among women in the hunting community through learning, mentoring, and creating friendships and future hunting partners.

The program growth has also created a job opportunity. OHA seeks a part-time coordinator who will assist with event planning. The 10-hour per month position will assist the program leadership and act as a consistent point of contact for the program.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please contact Michelle at michelle@oregonhunters.org

OHA objects to USFS Umatilla project FEIS

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

The Ellis Integrated Vegetation Management Project on the Umatilla National Forest has been in the plans since 2018 and has moved at a painfully slow pace. The original purpose of the project was to bring active management to 105,000 acres of Forest Service lands. The objective is to address forest health, wildfire mitigation and resiliency, and improve big game habitat.

One of the key early communications on the project area was to improve elk forage, habitat and security cover to help address the ongoing concerns of elk damage on nearby private lands, particularly during the wintering period. OHA weighed in early on the project planning in support of the actions to improve habitat and security cover specifically for elk.

In May, the Umatilla National Forest issued its Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), which selected an alternative that was subsequently modified at the last minute and doesn't come close to meeting the needs of elk security, and in fact makes no attempt to improve elk security cover, even though that was a stated objective of the USFS for doing the project.

OHA has entered an official Objection to the FEIS, a step we have seldom used in the past. Other organizations (RMEF, ODFW) have also entered objections. In the end, one of the major needs/objectives of the project that the USFS identified themselves is now being ignored. OHA is simply pushing to have the USFS do what they said they would do.

Public lands not up for sale

OHA and our conservation partners helped stop a public-lands sell-off of as much as 3 million acres across 11 western states in response to a proposal from members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee that introduced language for a major sell off of public lands as part of the overall budget bill that congress was working on. The House earlier had considered a similar mandate, but in the end decided to drop that provision.

The proposal led to an outpouring of opposition from a wide range of organizations across the west. OHA was part of this opposition and submitted a letter to our Oregon delegation to oppose this action that was co-signed by many of our conservation partners. Having the language for the public land sell-off removed from the final bill that was passed proved to be an example of how public voices and hard work from conservation organizations can actually have an impact when the effort is made.

It is not unheard of for the various land management agencies to occasionally sell parcels of public lands. The Department of State Lands manages land holdings, and sells property when it determines that option best fits the economic needs. The federal agencies generally have land "disposal lists" included in their resource management plans which meet specific criteria.

A key difference that led OHA to oppose the bill language had to do with process. Differences between the long-established process and criteria for disposing of federal public lands and what was being proposed with the bill had to do with both the amount of land (massive acreages) and the process used to identify and sell the lands. Current processes and criteria include public input for disposing of, or even trading lands in a land exchange. The proposed bill language would have stripped most of this away.

Further, the proposed language would have sent the proceeds from the land sales to the U.S. Treasury, rather than the current process that reinvests 96 percent of proceeds from the sale of land for conservation and access. —MIKE TOTEY

ODFW introduces sage grouse plan update

ODFW has completed an update to the Sage-Grouse Conservation and Assessment Strategy, which addresses the obligations and authorities of the agency as Oregon continues to work on sage-grouse enhancement across southeast Oregon.

ODFW solidly articulated how hunters and hunting in Oregon are a positive impact on sage-grouse management. Hunters bring dollars (upland game bird stamp, Pittman-Robertson money, etc.) to fund the program, and successful hunters submit wings for analysis and integration into the population model that the agency uses.

The ODFW program and assessment work to benefit sage-grouse wouldn't exist in its current form without hunting. The assessment reiterates that hunter harvest of less than 5 percent of the estimated population has no negative impact on the population. —MIKE TOTEY



Submit a CWD sample for a chance to win a gun

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
TD@oregonhunters.org

OHA is offering a drawing for a Weatherby Vanguard 7mm Rem in First Lite Specter (value \$1,150) to hunters who submit chronic wasting disease samples between Aug. 1, 2025 and April 1, 2026. You get one automatic entry for every sample that you submit.

OHA is invested in keeping Oregon a CWD-free state for as long as possible, but early detection if and when found in Oregon is critical to limit the spread. CWD is a fatal disease capable of drastic negative impacts on deer, elk and moose.

It's easy to submit CWD samples at ODFW check stations, ODFW field and district offices, and cooperating taxidermists and meat processors.

A list of current cooperating taxidermists and meat processors can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/65dcj2tz>

Latest Gun Calendar winners announced

The latest winners in 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 winners on OHA's website or get our app, which you can also use to enter OHA contests and get timely notifications.

★ 6/18/25 - **Sig Sauer P320 M18**

Jordan Post, Tualatin Valley Chapter

★ 6/25/25 - **Stoeger M3000 Max 7 shotgun**

Ashley Spaur, Union-Wallowa Chapter

★ 7/2/25 - **Howa 1500 Flag RWB .22-250**

Steve McGee, Rogue Valley Chapter

★ 7/9/25 - **Howa M1500 T/C Kryptek Typhon**

Gail Cox, Ochoco Chapter

★ 7/16/25 - **Pointer Acrius 12 gauge shotgun**

Craig Elhage

★ 7/23/25 - **Weatherby Badlands .25-06**

Jeff Price, Tualatin Valley Chapter

★ 7/30/25 - **Winchester XPR Compact**

Mac McLaren

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OHA pays out \$4,200 in TIP rewards in 5 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued six reward checks to informants in five cases totaling \$4,200 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund.

Charges included: Unlawful take - No valid tag for 6-point bull elk, unlawful take of antlerless deer, unlawful take of salmon-closed area, angling from a boat in unlawful area, unlawful take Chinook salmon, violation of travel management agreement, and unlawful possession of female Dungeness crab and undersize dungeness crab (in possession of 173 illegal crab).

CHAPTER NEWS

The annual All Hands All Brands habitat project was held in June in the Ochoco National Forest.

Chapters wrap up projects before hunting season

BAKER

CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

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

BEND

REX PARKS 541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter

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

Update: The annual All Hands, All Brands for Public Lands habitat project was held June 27-29 on the Ochoco National Forest – another great show of support from OHA and our conservation partners. Our youth bird hunt is Oct. 18; call 541-480-7323.

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.

CAPITOL

DANNY SOUTH 503-577-6033

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

Chapter Meetings: See the monthly newsletter for date and time of meetings.

Update: Our chapter needs someone to prepare our bimonthly newsletter. It is printed and mailed by someone else, so this is just computer work in your home. Please contact us at capitolchapteroha@gmail.com if you are willing to do this.

CLATSOP COUNTY

TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

ClatsopCountyOHA@pacifier.com

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 5:30

Bigfoot has nine lives. Sasquatch mostly managed to escape fatal hits from a volley of nine arrows launched during the OHA Emerald Valley Chapter's Family Day June 19.

p.m. no-host dinner, 6:30 p.m. meeting, Hong Kong Restaurant, 2813 Marine Dr., Astoria.

Update: The 2026 banquet date has been set for April 11. We look forward to seeing you there.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

CODY HUMBLE 360-901-2201

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m., Village Inn, 535 S. Columbia River Hwy., St. Helens.

Update: Our 2026 chapter banquet has been scheduled for Feb. 21. Please contact a chapter board member for ticket info or to help us put on this amazing event.

CURRY

JAMIE BADGER 541-499-2245

Badgergirls3@gmail.com

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

EMERALD VALLEY

RON MARTIN 541-954-5459

EmeraldOHA@live.com

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

Update: The Emerald Valley Chapter Family Day was held July 19 and once again it was a good turnout. We thank all our volunteers who make it happen.

HOODVIEW

LEVI BARRERA 503-863-4495

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

Chapter Meetings: Please check our website for meeting schedule.

Update: Our next chapter meeting will be held on Sept. 11 at 7 p.m. at Elmers with speaker ODFW biologist David Keiter.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

DAVID DOWNS 541-821-1511

ddowns2646@gmail.com

<https://ohajoco.mailchimpsites.com/>

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

Update: Congratulations to chapter president David Downs, who was married over the summer to his beautiful bride, Sydney.

KLAMATH

DENNIS WIARD 541-891-3549

dtwiard@charter.net

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

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

Update: Our chapter partnered again this year to host the annual Gerber Reservoir Youth Antelope Hunt BBQ and orientation on Aug. 22. Our annual youth chukar hunt will be Oct. 25-26; call 541-883-8326.

LAKE COUNTY

LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

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

Update: Our annual youth event was held June 28 at Juniper Reservoir. Our guzzler project is Oct. 25; call 541-417-2983.

LINCOLN COUNTY

CHELSEA DIOSDADO 970-779-2817

chelsea.diosdado@gmail.com

Chapter Meetings: Quarterly Meetings, 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: Our annual Chapter Youth Shoot Day was held on Aug. 9. It was a great day to be a kid.

MID-COLUMBIA

TONY WHITE 541-490-2980

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

MID-WILLAMETTE

KEN MCCALL 541-753-8588

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.

BRIAN ANDREWS

OCHOCO

JAMES COX 541-408-4816

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m., COCC Open Campus Room 120.

Update: We held our 1st Annual Celebrate the Outdoors event in memory of Gary Prael at the beautiful Crooked River Park on Aug. 23-24. We thank our many volunteers and sponsors, including a generous grant from the Cabela's Bass Pro Outdoor Fund.

PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 971-221-8827

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 1st Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. meeting, Canby Rod & Gun Club.

Update: Our annual sight-in days at Canby Rod & Gun Club will be Sept. 13-14 and 20-21. We are currently selling tickets to our 2026 chapter banquet, which will be held on March 7.

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.

Update: Our thanks go to our recent meeting guest speaker Jeff Givens, who shared with us a program about his exciting African safari hunt.

ROGUE VALLEY

PAUL THOMPSON 541-941-6978

Firepmt29@gmail.com

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

Update: The Rogue Valley Chapter needs you at our next chapter meeting. We have a lot of info to get out to our members and plenty of great work to be done, but we need participation from our members. We hope to see you at the Eagles Club.



OHA's Pioneer Chapter recently held its annual weekend guzzler project in central Oregon.

TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

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

Update: We thank ODFW NW regional biologist Paul Atwood, who spoke at a recent chapter meeting about deer and elk population trends in northwest Oregon.

TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

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

Update: Our chapter is looking for kids who want to become OHA Junior Members and help out at events and projects. This could be a service opportunity for school credit. Contact Marcey if you are interested.

TUALATIN VALLEY

SHELLEY 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.

Update: Thanks go to our guest speaker Howard Baker of the Timber Beasts BB Gun Team for speaking to our chapter about this club for local youth.

UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

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

Update: We held our annual chapter picnic in July.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

Update: Our annual women's pheasant hunt will be held Oct. 18.

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.

Update: Our Youth Shotgun Shoot was held on Aug. 16 at Newberg Rod & Gun Club. Let us know if you would like to help out for our 2026 event, as we are in need of a coordinator.



In Memoriam

Contributions made recently to the

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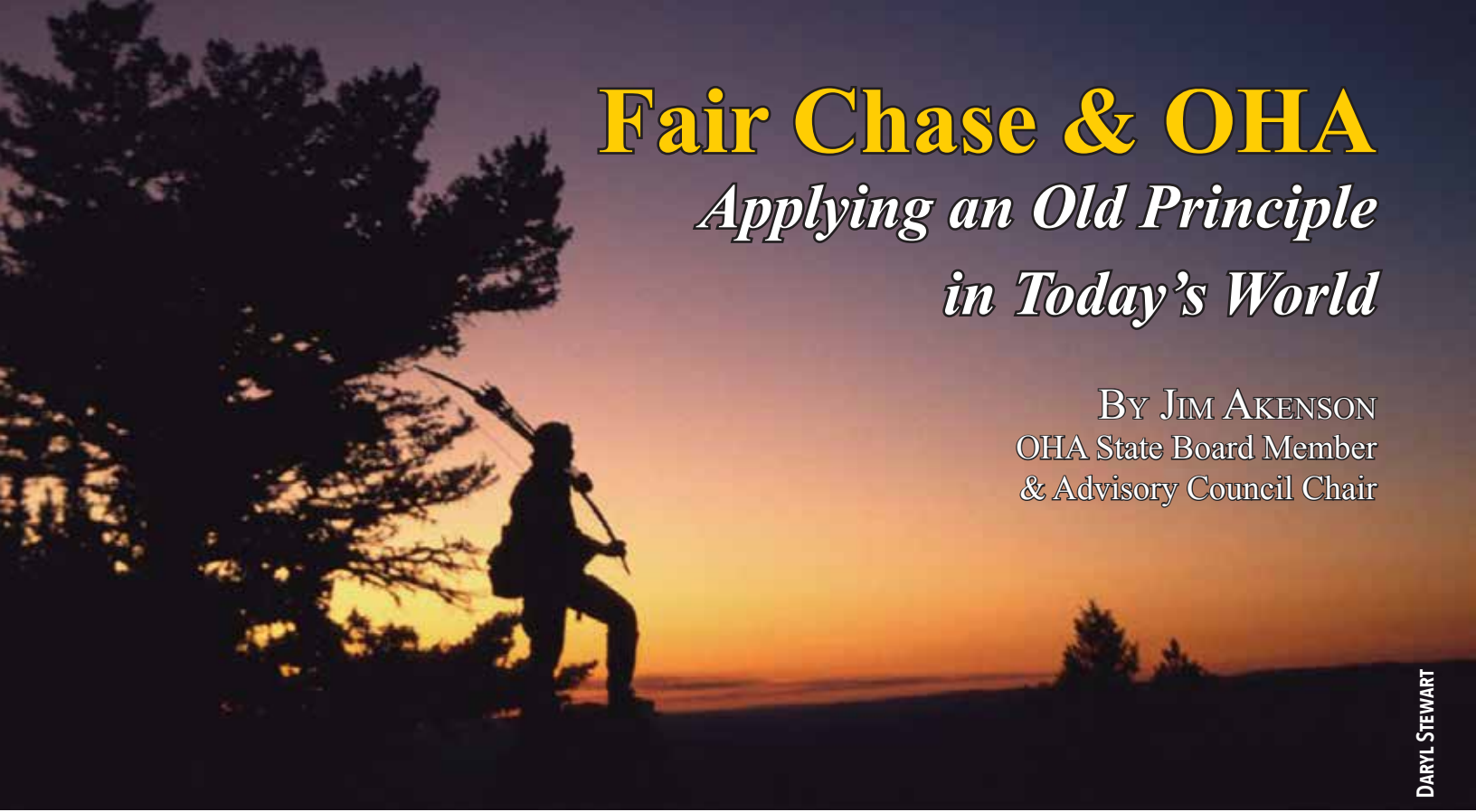
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Fair Chase & OHA

Applying an Old Principle in Today's World

BY JIM AKENSON
OHA State Board Member
& Advisory Council Chair

DARYL STEWART

The term “Fair Chase” has different meanings to different people. In the early days of sportsmanship, it related more to circumstance and opportunity – such as not shooting excessive numbers of game mammals or birds in one outing. Eventually, hunting regulations tightened up overharvest issues and sportsmanship adherence was more about following the first laws on hunting.

Fast forward to today's hunting world, where regulations are well described and enforced, and the fair chase issue is now more about how hunters apply the latest technology available.

Before evaluating OHA and fair chase for today's hunter, let's step back first to some early interpretations of this simple phrase. Well over 100 years ago, the Boone & Crockett Club began using the term “Fair Chase.” In fact, it was adopted in the club's constitution in February of 1888. The need came about to be able to distinguish the difference between the actions of market hunters from those of sportsmen hunters.

Consequently, at the very first meeting of that organization in 1887, the founders discussed the components of the sportsmen-hunters code of ethics. Over the next few decades, their statement gained an official title of “Fair Chase,” and they produced a

statement to add to what this meant: “the ethical, sportsmanlike, and lawful pursuit and taking of any free-ranging wild game animal in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper or unfair advantage over the game animals.”

OHA recently adopted a new fair chase statement in response to current technological advancements with electronic devices that can potentially be used by hunters to gain an advantage on pursued big game and game birds. Advances discussed and compared by the group included capabilities and availability of devices like aerial drones, thermal imaging

units, “smart” optics, and internet-based trail cameras that now have real-time image availability on cell phones – which can be carried in the field with ever-expanding service coverage. Some recent innovations, such as thermal devices and aerial drones,

are already illegal to be used for hunting in Oregon. The OHA State Board also recognized that establishing ethical standards is an individual decision, and in some cases only follows the line of what is legal, and for other hunters it goes beyond established hunting regulations.

So why now address this topic of Fair Chase? Primarily because the issue of appropriate use of advanced technology is a hot topic, with several state wildlife agencies and their respective commissions. It seems likely that decision makers in Oregon will follow suit in assessing the appropriate or inappropriate use of certain rifle scope optics and/or cell cameras – be they the check on-site type (pulling an SD card) or ones with real time capabilities. The OHA State Board believed it was in our best interest to give this topic serious thought and to produce a statement on Fair Chase.

In western states like Nevada, Utah, Idaho and Washington, regulation changes are happening.

Nevada's regulations state that it is illegal to place, maintain, or use trail cameras from Aug. 1 to Dec. 31, and that rule starts a month earlier if the cameras are capable of transmitting images, video, or locations of wildlife. Utah's prohibiting dates are similar but add that cameras that are not

***The abuse
of advanced
technology
– to gain an
extreme upper
hand on the
game we
pursue – truly
undermines
OHA's
conservation
philosophy.***

capable of transmitting real time data are allowed on private land.

Idaho recently pulled together a Hunting and Advanced Technology Committee that advised the IDF&G Commission that it be unlawful to use data-transmitting cameras for big game hunting from July 1 through Dec. 31. In Washington, some hunters have expressed a concern that using real time camera images and videos are unethical if used for immediate pursuit of game and suggest they should be illegal to use during established big game hunting seasons. At this date, Washington state, like Oregon, has not established regulations for cellular camera use that could directly aid with immediate hunting.

OHA's State Board developed a concise statement on the principles of Fair Chase. These are definitions provided by the Boone and Crockett Club that have been adopted and amended by OHA. These bulleted sentences capture the fundamental principles that – the ethical, sportsmanlike, and lawful pursuit and taking of any free-ranging wild game animal should occur in a manner that does not give the hunter an improper or unfair advantage over the game animals.

By being proactive on the topic of advanced technologies, we can maintain certain elements of the use of these tools that many hunters now use for scouting, assuming they can fit within the fair chase principles described here. As our neighboring states look at the question: “where is the line drawn on appropriate use of technology?” OHA must be ready for these discussions, because they will eventually occur in Oregon. Furthermore, the abuse of advanced technology – to gain an extreme upper hand on the game we pursue – truly undermines OHA's conservation philosophy of preserving our hunting heritage by protecting and promoting wildlife populations and their habitats through wise management practices. Wildlife management often balances the inverse relationship between opportunity and technology. We must not trade the former for the latter.

OHA Fair Chase Statement

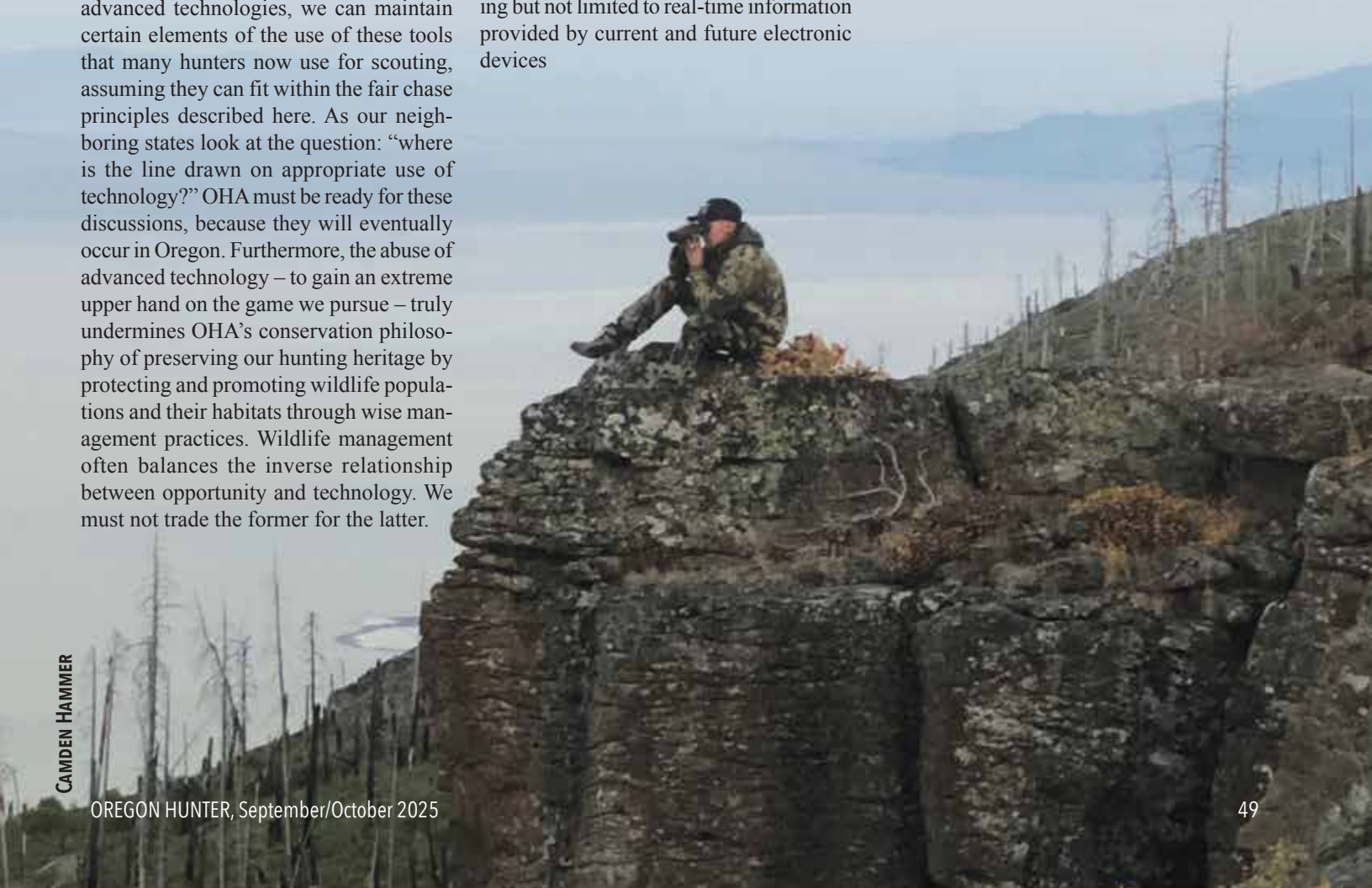
The Fair Chase Hunter:

- Knows and obeys the law, and insists others do as well
- Understands that it is not only about just what is legal, but also what is honorable and ethical
- Defines “unfair advantage” as when the game does not have a reasonable chance of escape
- Cares about and respects all wildlife and the ecosystems that support them, which includes making full use of game animals taken
- Measures success not in the quantity of game taken, but by the quality of the chase
- Embraces the “no guarantees” nature of hunting
- Uses technology in a way that does not diminish the importance of developing skills as a hunter or reduce hunting to just shooting
- Knows his or her limitations, and stretches the stalk, not the shot
- Takes pride in the decisions he or she makes in the field and takes full responsibility for his or her actions
- Does not misuse technology, including but not limited to real-time information provided by current and future electronic devices

OHA Member Pledge

As an OHA member, I pledge to:

- Respect the environment and wildlife;
 - Respect property and landowners;
 - Improve my outdoor skills and understanding of wildlife;
 - Support wildlife & habitat conservation;
 - Know and obey the law;
 - Hunt safely;
 - Show consideration of nonhunters;
 - Abide by the rules of fair chase;
 - Hunt only with ethical hunters; and
 - Pass on an ethical hunting tradition.
- (Adapted from the Hunter's Pledge of the Izaak Walton League of America)



OHA honors volunteers with state awards

OHA recently recognized outstanding volunteer efforts with the announcement of statewide annual awards. Chapters, state board members and staff nominate deserving individuals for awards, and then vote from the nominees on the ballot.

MEMBER OF THE YEAR - WILDLIFE:

Mitch Coultus, Pioneer Chapter

Mitch has volunteered at the annual banquet, served on the board for two years, worked on water guzzler projects and his remarkable stewardship of over 120 duck boxes in the Clackamas watershed, regularly representing the chapter at the Sportsman's Show, county fair and local rodeo, where he tirelessly promotes memberships and raffle ticket sales to help fund our mission.

MEMBER OF THE YEAR - ORGANIZATIONAL:

Brian Andrews, Pioneer Chapter

Brian has been seemingly everywhere for his chapter, from the Pioneer Chapter banquet to projects and events like the Portland Sports Show, where his chapter continues to amaze with memberships collected through Gun Raffle Calendar sales. He's been across the state for OHA, as well, from volunteering at the State Convention in Canyonville to staffing OHA's booth at the Oregon Partners in Conservation Expo in Redmond. This year he also stepped up to accept a position on the OHA State Board.

LANDOWNER OF THE YEAR - CITIZEN: David Sill

David Sill is a landowner in the Hillsboro area who has decided to leave his 260-acre waterfowl hunting property along the Tualatin River to OHA upon his passing to be used specifically for a public hunting and conservation property.

LANDOWNER OF THE YEAR - CORPORATE:

Cascade Timber Consulting, Inc. (CTC) Agent for the Hill Timber Limited Partnership

CTC manages 145,000 acres of forestlands in Linn County. The property has been owned by the Hill Family since 1910. The managers agree that hunting remains an important forest management tool. The Hill family and CTC welcome responsible hunters and those seeking outdoor recreation on the property at a time of ever-decreasing hunting access to private ground.

CTC is a contributor and partner in our communities, supporting local organizations, including OHA.

YOUTH MEMBER OF THE YEAR:

Cooper Sorenson, Pioneer Chapter

Cooper is one of the top-shooters on the Molalla trap team, and volunteers as a coach at her chapter's Youth Day event. Cooper has been the lead youth assistant at her chapter's banquet.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS:

• Bill Beckley, Bend Chapter

Bill recently passed away, after being nominated, and this award will be given posthumously to his son Andrew. Bill is the son of one of Bend's Charter Members, for whom he and the Bend Chapter helped establish the Charles Beckley Scholarship Raffle.

Bill's efforts helped make the Bend OHA banquet one of the highest-netting in the state.

• JR Lorimor, Bend Chapter

JR's most recent success was planning and organizing the first Oregon Partners in Conservation Event held at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds on Feb 3, 2024. JR, along with his wife Carolyn, have been key in the development of the Oregon High School Archery League. The first Oregon Indoor High School Championships were recently held at the BowTech Archery Campus in Eugene.

• Haley Fetzner, Mid-Columbia Chapter

Haley made a huge impact for OHA at the state and chapter level in 2024. She helped her own chapter put on its first banquet in many years, and then accepted a position on the OHA State Board of Directors, where she has brought valuable marketing insights from her career at OnX. As well, she procured numerous donations from OnX for the OHA State Convention and several large-scale OHA habitat projects.

• Randy Haflich, Columbia County Chapter

Randy has taken the lead or participated in a good share of his chapter's work projects, and he has been the banquet chair for many years. Even when he was down with major medical issues this past year, he would always take a call to help the chapter.

• Duane and Peggy Johnson, Pioneer Chapter

Duane and Peggy Johnson, chapter board members for over 15 years, have been the heart and soul behind the Pioneer Chapter Youth Day events, consistently dedicating their time, energy, and passion to empowering the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts and conservationists.

They are instrumental in securing donations for their annual banquet and help plan and organize the event every year.

CHAPTER OF THE YEAR: Bend Chapter

The Bend Chapter volunteered more than 1,665 hours of habitat related work last year. The Bend Chapter's annual banquet and fundraiser has consistently had one of the highest annual net proceeds. This year's banquet netted over \$114,000 to advance OHA's mission. The Bend Chapter was the first to pledge a continuing annual donation of \$10,000 toward the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative, as well as OHA's Mule Deer Fund with a \$10,000 donation. The chapter organized last year's Oregon Partners in Conservation event.

The Bend Chapter's annual Ochoco guzzler and fence building and repair work project has morphed into the All Hands, All Brands for Public Lands annual project. Since 2016, chapter volunteers have maintained the Hwy. 97 wildlife undercrossings. Recently, the Bend Chapter, along with State OHA, have been included on the Bend to Suttle Lake Wildlife Crossing committee. As invited members, OHA can provide input in regard to overpass/underpass locations.

In 2024, the chapter has donated funds to OSP wildlife officers to purchase crucial field equipment, partnered with ODFW to purchase billboard space to promote the TIP program, and provided messages warning motorists of wildlife migration.





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5,000 deer, elk, bear, and other large animals are killed in collisions with cars and trucks every year. Collisions with wildlife or accident avoidance also claim the lives of 1-2 motorists annually. Funds from your purchase of a Watch for Wildlife license plate support projects in Oregon that help wildlife move safely around busy highways and between habitat patches. Learn how you can help at myOWF.org/wildlifemoves

Visit myOWF.org/wildlifemoves

OREGON WILDLIFE
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Blue Mountain Loco Moco

Oregon's big game seasons are coming up, and those of us fortunate to have filled a tag or two last year are looking to clear some space in the freezer. Whether it's venison, elk, bear, or antelope, this recipe is a delicious and hearty meal that adds a bit of island flair that will make you reach for ground over your last package of steaks.

Burger patty

- 1 lb ground venison (4 patties)
- 2 Tbsp teriyaki marinade
- Salt & pepper to taste

Greens

- 1 bunch chopped collard greens (or chopped kale) ~ 4 cups
- 1 Tbsp neutral oil
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 Tbsp Cajun seasoning
- Salt & pepper to taste

Gravy

- 1/4 sweet onion, diced
- 1 1/2 cup morels, sliced
- 1 Tbsp neutral oil
- 2 cups beef broth
- 3 Tbsp corn starch
- 2 Tbsp minced garlic
- Salt & pepper to taste

Rice

- 1 cup white rice, rinsed
- 3 Tbsp rice vinegar or mirin
- 1 Tbsp sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp sugar

Extras, to taste or preference

- 1 avocado (large)
- Fried egg
- Sriracha
- Furikake
- Chili oil
- Spicy mayo

Start by rinsing your rice (2-3x, room temp or cold water). Once done, put in your rice cooker or oven to begin the cooking process. You will add the oil, sugar, and vinegar after the rice is cooked and before you fluff your rice before serving.

Form your burger patties into the shape/size you prefer. Season both sides with salt & pepper. Put your teriyaki marinade in the bottom of a shallow baking dish and place your patties on top (sitting in the marinade). Preheat your grill or cast iron pan.

In a small saucepan, add your neutral oil, garlic, onion, and mushrooms. In a separate bowl make a slurry by adding your corn starch, beef broth and seasonings (mix well). After ~3 minutes at medium heat (or when the onions are opaque) add in your slurry. Set this on a back burner on low heat while you finish the rest of the meal.

*This recipe is
a delicious and
hearty meal
that adds a bit
of island flair
that will make
you reach
for ground
over your last
package of
steaks.*



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Island flair brings your game meat a change as refreshing as a sea breeze.

To make the greens, I like to start with the oil and Cajun seasoning at medium heat. Add in your greens and cook on medium high for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Once they begin to crisp and wilt, remove from heat, add in your butter, and salt/pepper to taste. Set aside.

Return to the now-marinated patties and cook to your desired temp. Your gravy should be thick at this point; if it is too thin, increase the heat to further reduce and thicken the liquid.

To assemble, I layer in order from bottom to top: Rice, teriyaki, sriracha/spicy mayo, greens, patty, avocado, egg, and topped with furikake. However you decide to layer, you'll want a fork and a big appetite!





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SHARING THE HERITAGE

BY RICHY J. HARROD

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

Discovering You Have No Limits

It was a beautiful December afternoon. A mix of snow and rain had fallen constantly the past week, but now the sun shined brightly and temperatures hovered near 40. The anticipation of the pending chukar hunt was evident with my brisk stride down the overgrown two-track road. Full pockets of shotgun shells pulled the vest forward on my shoulders and muffled ticking sounds of brass on brass. Each step brought back a flood of cherished memories of chukar hunts past. I imagined the rocky hills ahead teeming with birds and hoped to trade shell weight for a gamebag full of partridge. From experience, I knew birds were likely to be found beyond the narrow grass and brush flat between the lake and towering basalt cliffs. Shooting a limit here was unlikely, but my perspective and reasons to hunt chukars has changed with age.

Chukars were the first game I hunted as a young boy because my father developed a real passion chasing the birds in eastern Oregon. His love for chukar hunting shaped my obsession. My family, friends and I hunted at every chance. Chukars are hard birds to hit, but with so many days afield, we became good shooters and often killed limits. Birds were numerous in the early 80s, helping ensure limits, especially if you were willing to hike miles to increase chances of success. We enjoyed our time together in sagebrush country, but we were focused on shooting limits.

Chukars are great-eating birds, which also led to a desire to bag a bounty of birds. Filling the freezer with birds and other game meat was especially important during my college years and when my wife and I were first married. A part-time job provided just enough money for rent, bills, tuition and ramen noodles. We lived on chukar casserole. Again, shooting a limit seemed to be the goal.

Raising kids and the press of a demanding job diminished time available to hunt the steep canyons and rocky rims of eastern Oregon. Northcentral Washington became home to pursue a career, and although chukars are found throughout the expansive Columbia Basin, bird populations are smaller and scattered, making for challenging hunts. Rarely is a limit of birds achieved, but I was beginning to understand my aging father's pure delight of shooting even just one bird on an outing.

Now, the afternoon light shimmered on the flat surface of the lake, and the lichens scattered on the surface of the basalt cliff



Evening light adorns a good day's bag of chukars in canyon country. The author emphasizes quality of the hunt over quantity in the vest.

were brilliant yellow and green. The only sounds were dabbling ducks feeding, songbirds flying among sagebrush and mock orange, and the occasional screech of a Cooper's hawk along the cliff. I found myself walking slowly, looking for the source of every sound; the setting was sublime. A sudden rustling in the giant wild rye grass ahead quickly brought my shotgun to ready as about 20 chukars exploded into the air flying toward the giant rock scree below the massive cliff.

My shooting motion after four decades of hunting upland birds occurs mostly from muscle memory. The safety button on the trigger guard is pressed as the gun rises and is pulled tight to my shoulder. My cheek hugs the stalk while leaning forward with the gun pointed at a fast flyer singled from the flock. Wide eyes guide the barrel muzzle to cover the target, and with a continuous swinging motion to match the bird's speed, the trigger is squeezed, sending a hailstorm of 7 ½ shot. Their distance allowed only one shot, but I dropped a chukar into the tall grass. After a short search, I had my prize in hand, which I admired as if it were my first.

I continued hiking toward the rocky hill. The chukar sign was lacking, but I jumped another small bunch of birds and put two more in the bag before reaching the hill crest. The commanding view from the top was mesmerizing, so I sat down to appreciate the scene. The lake shore stretched for several miles along a wide-rolling sagebrush flat. "I bet there are some chukars or hunks down there," I thought to myself. The sun was sinking on the western horizon, casting shadows in the terrain. The hike back to the pickup would take nearly an hour, and I was pleased with the three birds now pulling my vest backwards.

The quest for a limit wasn't a thought.

A lone boulder near the lake shore was an ideal stage for a photograph to remember the day. The late daylight cast a golden hue, rendering the colorful chukars even more spectacular. In this moment, the combination of the pungent smell of sagebrush, the beauty of the setting, and the soft feel of feathers in my hand gave me a sudden sense of calm and intense appreciation for the ability to hunt chukars for so many years.

Clearly, it's not about the limit. It's about appreciating sagebrush country, being thankful for acquiring any amount of game meat, and sharing time with the ones we cherish.



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- Hunter ethics and responsibilities
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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.

How do I become a Certified Instructor?

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



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Hunters who submit a sample from a deer or elk for CWD testing will be entered to win a *Weatherby Vanguard 7mm First Lite rifle* valued at \$1,150. Hunters receive one automatic entry in the drawing for every sample submitted for a deer or elk harvested between August 1, 2025 to April 1, 2026 (one sample per animal).

Gun prize sponsored by the Oregon Hunters Association



It's easy to submit samples at ODFW Check Stations, Offices or at participating meat processors or taxidermists.

Report Your Hunt

All hunters who report their hunt on time are entered to win a special big game tag with hunting privileges similar to auction and raffle tags.

ODFW draws three winners each year. Winners can choose to hunt deer, elk or pronghorn in an expanded hunt area and for an extended season. The drawing takes place in June and winners are notified in June.



Access & Habitat Permit

Fill out the A&H Access Area Daily Permit for a chance to win. Binoculars, trail cameras, and backpacks are some of prizes. Any hunter utilizing an A&H access area that has daily access permits can fill out part A of the card, go hunt the area, and return part B to the kiosk.



Though permits are voluntary, they help indicate access area usage and inform the A&H Board's project decisions. Annual drawings for the previous year's permits are held at the A&H Board's October meeting.

Optics prizes sponsored by the OHA Redmond Chapter

Visit the Sportsmen's Show

While it's not something to report, a visit to the Sportsmen's Show can get you a chance to win a *Trip of a Lifetime*.

ODFW, in partnership with the Pacific Northwest and Central Oregon Sportsmen's Shows, began a new raffle this year for two special volunteer experiences. Entry is free!

Stay tuned to ODFW's social media and e-newsletter for 2026 Sportsmen's Show *Trip of a Lifetime* raffle information.

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 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



ANIKA LINER'S FIRST BUCK TAKEN IN THE KEATING UNIT WITH NOSLER TROPHY GRADE AMMO.



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NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS



Medford OHA member Schyler Gorman is a finalist in the 2025 Nosler Photo Contest and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of a Rogue Unit blacktail this past November.

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OHA member Tyler Shackelford from Boring garners a berth in the finals of the 2025 Nosler Photo Contest and wins an OHA Coast knife. The early morning April Ukiah Unit turkey was Tyler's first.



NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



Chiloquin OHA member Randell Whiting went to South Africa to win a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of Baylie Whiting and a Red Hartebeest taken with a .300 Winchester Magnum last July.



OHA member Josh Scott is an Honorable Mention and Nosler hat recipient for his photo of daughter Mackenzie and her Colorado boyfriend and their Rogue Unit turkey in May.



Daniel Rogers, an OHA member from Springfield, lands a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of his "best bull to date" taken during archery season in September from the Fort Rock Unit.



Bend OHA member Bill Purcell bags Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his photo of Lane Purcell and a Murderers Creek mule deer.

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS



Gold Beach OHA member Daniel Crumley is a finalist in the 2025 Nosler Photo Contest and wins an OHA Coast knife for his image of his 10-year-old granddaughter Paige Crumley and her first bear. She was hunting with her parents in Curry County in May and made a one-shot kill with her .243.

OHA member Randell Whiting from Chiloquin claims a finalist spot in the 2025 Nosler Photo Contest and an OHA Coast knife, and fulfilled a bucket list item with his photo of granddaughter Olivia Andrews and a South Africa Gemsbok in July of 2024.



REMEMBER,
if a youth's hunt
requires wearing
hunter orange, it
must be visible
in the photo to be
eligible.

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



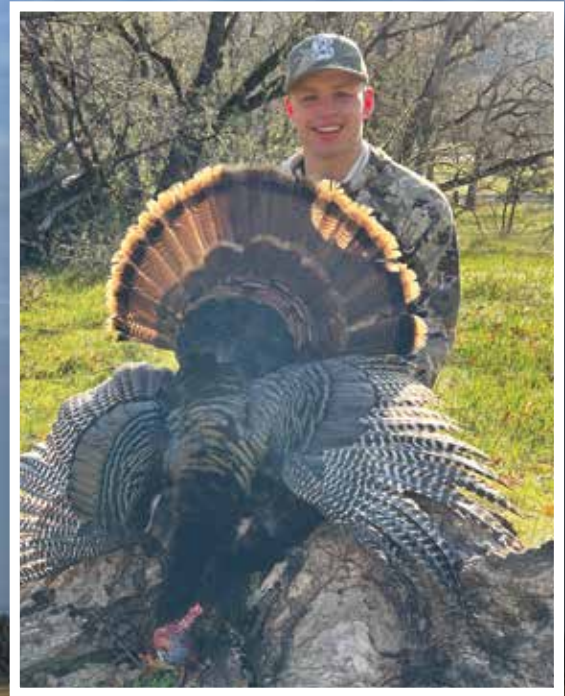
Redmond OHA member Nancy Doran lands a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for her photo of Rogen Puckett and an Ochoco Unit turkey in April.



Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat go to OHA member Tyler Shackelford for his photo of Garrett Ledin and his Ukiah turkey from the youth opener.



OHA member Scotty Bethune of Oregon City nabs Honorable Mention and a hat for this photo of his daughter Tilleigh with him on an archery turkey hunt in the Alsea Unit.



OHA member Josh Scott grabs Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his photo of Teagan Scott and his longbeard from the Rogue Unit's youth hunt.

BANDON MARSH/DUANE DUNGANNON



How to Go Hunting and Not Get a Bear

How a lonely goat herd can improve your chances

Hardly a day goes by that I am not accosted on the street, often by utter strangers, who either ask some ridiculous question about which is the best cut of bear meat or require sufficient funding for a dry martini. Often, I simply boot them in the flank steak and shoulder past. But when people ask why I get a kick out of harvesting poor innocent bears, I am moved by compassion to relieve them of their abysmal state of ignorance.

You don't have to kill bears, I am wont to explain, in order to enjoy bear hunting.

As is well known, the black bear is the largest member of the Oregon bear family. Coincidentally, the black bear is also the smallest member of the Oregon bear family. And being black, like the blackberry and the black cherry, the black bear is high in antioxidants and may be good for urinary tract infections.

There is in fact, no proved relationship between the joy of hunting bears and the joy of eating them. Most people who love hot dogs have never shot a pig in all their lives. Similarly, folks who love frankfurters have never shot a frank. Conversely, a majority of people who after driving over frogs have never stopped along the highway to consume them thereafter.

Note: one of the interns, who went to public school in Brownsville, reminded me frogs being whole foods are rich in protein and the B complex vitamins and have a taste redolent of both your lower orders and several higher orders of flies.

One thing you will notice is the black bear is never mentioned on the Food Network. Guy Fieri never throws a bear on the grill. Bobby Flay doesn't flay them or fillet them. Even in her heyday, Paula Deen avoided bears like the plague.

I know devoted bear hunters who detest the taste of bears and still have never killed one. This does not hamper in the least the enjoyment they get lounging on a hillside blooming with wildflowers in spring bear season.

As for me, I am nuts about the flavor of a well-hunted cinnamon-phase bear or even a brown- or common black phase bear, and have no pangs of conscience when I am lucky enough to shoot a bear. But I long ago conquered irrational bear greed and I do not need to eat every bear I see.

Many successful bear hunters have devised strategies in which they do not bring home a bear.

Many successful bear hunters have devised strategies in which they do not bring home a bear



Get Your Goat

One of the leading ways to not get a bear is to bring pack goats. For a few years, it was fashionable to bring large packable goats named Buck and Bleatrice laden with panniers into the mountains for a spring bear hunt. And we still highly recommend this method.

A packing goat can be loaded with the things you do not want to carry, like a tent, sleeping bag, spotting scope, camp stove, rowboat, a dozen eggs and seed oils.

The first rule of keeping goats is they should never be kept alone. One goat by itself will bleat, which may attract bears. A highly respected goat expert advised us that a lonely goat will become a bored and destructive creature that will be far more prone to escape attempts. Which can also attract bears.

To keep your goat from getting lonely, you will want to buy it a sheep or a dog or a miniature donkey. I advise against the latter, because when it rains, as is well known, you will often have a wet ass.

Once you have arrived at your bear hunting location, you will want to provide your pack goat with fencing. You will want to bring a solar panel, fencing and a controller to provide approximately 20 square feet of space per goat for sleeping. This will necessitate three more pack goats.

When more than two goats are kept in close proximity, you may note that one or more of the goats will engage in what is known as goat mating, an activity wherein the male goat will urinate on himself and make all sorts of strange noises, a combo sure to attract bears.

And if baby goats are born on a hunt, you will want to be prepared with goat milk replacement and livestock nursing bottles.

Goat experts also recommend hoof trimming, worming and the application of diatomaceous earth to prevent parasites. This will require two more goats to carry the above-mentioned supplies.

Pack goats are a great option for the bear hunter because after all the fence building, hoof trimming and animal husbandry required for the maintenance of goats, there is often enough free time to spend 15 minutes glassing for bear. If you do see a bear, it might be too small. Or too large. Or it might be a blonde-phase which doesn't provide the same antioxidants, vitamins and minerals as your average bear.



For a copy of A Bear Hunter's Guide to the Universe, send \$25 to Gary Lewis, P.O. Box 1364, Bend, OR 97709 or visit garylewisoutdoors.com

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