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ANNA YARBROUGH

The War on Oregon's Heritage: Why We Must Defeat IP 28

For decades, the Oregon Hunters Association has stood as the frontline defender of our state's wildlife and hunting heritage. But today, we face a threat unlike any other in our history. Initiative Petition 28 – deceptively branded by radicals as the “PEACE Act” – is not a minor policy tweak; it is a calculated, existential attempt to criminalize the very soul of Oregon.

We are fighting for the right to feed our families, our duty to manage the landscape, and our heritage as stewards of the wild.

If passed, IP 28 would strip away the long-standing legal exemptions that protect hunting, fishing, trapping, and ranching from animal abuse statutes. Let that sink in for a moment. Under this measure, harvesting an elk to feed your family or catching a salmon in our coastal rivers would be redefined as a criminal act of animal cruelty. This isn't just an attack on a “hobby;” it is a direct assault on the nearly one million Oregonians who rely on these traditions for sustenance, livelihood, and their very identity.

To OHA and every hunter in this state, this is a “fight like hell” moment. The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the global gold standard for species recovery, relies on science and regulated harvest. IP 28 seeks to dismantle this system by removing humans from the conservation equation entirely.

The irony is as dangerous as it is thick. The very people this initiative seeks to turn into felons – hunters and anglers – are the primary funders of conservation. Our license fees and federal excise taxes provide the vast majority of budget dollars for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. These funds pay for habitat restoration, wildfire recovery, and species management. If IP 28 succeeds, that funding evaporates.

Never forget: without hunters, there is no budget to protect the wildlife these extremists claim to represent.

We must fight because animal extremists are playing a deceptive, long-term game. They aren't looking for common ground; they are funded by radical outside interests to make Oregon a “test case” for a national ban on our way of life. They rely on voter confusion to get signatures now and will do the same come November in the election.

OHA is working tirelessly to educate the public, but we cannot do it alone. The deadline for signature collection is July 2. We need every member to take a stand: do not sign the petition, educate your neighbors, and support OHA by renewing or upgrading your membership now.

Oregon is at a defining crossroads. We are fighting for the right to feed our families, our duty to manage the landscape, and our heritage as stewards of the wild. If we don't stop IP 28 now, hunting in Oregon will become a relic of the past. Join us as OHA draws a line in the sand, knocks them back on their heels, and then sends them and their extreme ideology packing once and for good.

We Need You in Our Camp!

Join OHA or renew your membership, and support our mission of Protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.

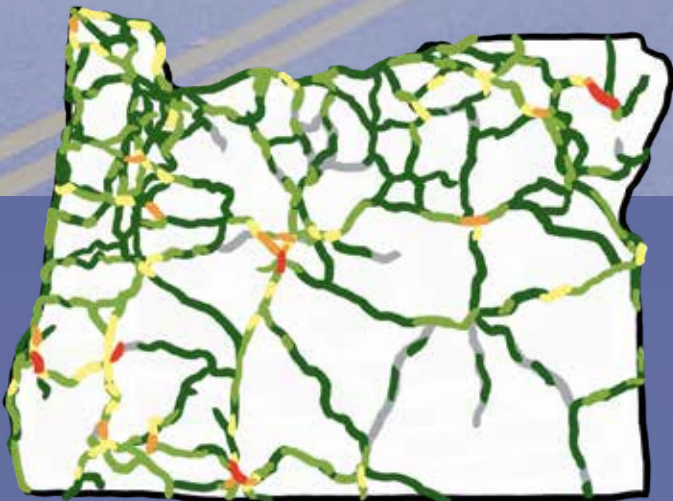


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KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

- Ceanothus is a diet staple for which?
 - blacktail
 - antelope
 - bighorn
 - bear
- Which can you hunt in the Imnaha Unit?
 - blacktail
 - antelope
 - Rocky Mountain elk
 - all of the above
- Which is legal for antelope?
 - handgun
 - buck shot
 - .22 centerfire
 - all of the above
- Which is legal for turkey?
 - .22 rimfire
 - buck shot
 - No. 1 shot
 - none of the above
- Which kills the most Oregon cougars?
 - sport hunting
 - other cougars
 - vehicles
 - none of the above
- Which unit allows late-season bow antlerless deer harvest?
 - Melrose
 - Rogue
 - Evans Creek
 - All of the above
- The mule deer and antelope play in:
 - White River
 - Sumpter
 - Silver Lake
 - all of the above
- Which unit is in Wallowa County?
 - Keating
 - Lookout Mtn.
 - Chesnimmus
 - all of the above
- Which season does NOT open Sept. 1?
 - pheasant
 - ruffed grouse
 - blue grouse
 - dove
- What wildlife area is an ex-Army base?
 - Summer Lake
 - E.E. Wilson
 - Fern Ridge
 - Phillip Schneider

TRUE OR FALSE?

- Cougars live longer than elk.
- Bobcats are unprotected mammals.
- Antelope have dewclaws.
- Wigeons are bigger than teal.
- Snipe are rails.

ANSWERS: 1-a; 2-c; 3-d; 4-d; 5-b; 6-a; 7-d; 8-c; 9-a; 10-b; 11-f; 12-f; 13-f; 14-t; 15-f.



Where in Oregon?

Identify this picturesque gorge, then be drawn from all correct entries, and win a Work Sharp Original Knife and Tool Sharpener!

Submit your guess on OHA's app, or website at oregonhunters.org, where a larger version of the photo appears. One entry per OHA member.

Entry deadline is May 15!



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Cameron Moore, Redmond

Cameron's name was drawn from among the OHA members who recognized Warm Springs Reservoir in the Malheur River Unit.

- MAY 2**
OHA Tioga Chapter
Youth Day 541-294-7912;
OHA Tillamook Chapter banquet
503-812-3832
- MAY 9**
Mid-Willamette Chapter
Youth Day 541-231-8165
- MAY 15**
Controlled hunt application deadline
- MAY 16**
OHA State Convention &
A&H deer & elk tag combo auction
Seven Feathers Casino
Canyonville 541-772-7313
www.oregonhunters.org
- MAY 22-24**
OHA Hart Mountain project 541-891-3549
- MAY 30**
OHA Bend Chapter Youth &
Family Day 541-480-7323
- MAY 31**
Turkey, spring bear seasons close
- JUNE 5-7**
White River project 503-706-7481
- JUNE 6**
OHA Klamath Chapter forest
cleanup 541-891-3549;
Aspen enhancement project on
Elkhorn Wildlife Area 541-778-1976;
OHA youth & family events:
Tualatin Valley 503-701-2852
Josephine County 541-218-2836
- JUNE 12**
Controlled hunt results available;
OHA Lincoln County Pint
Night 970-779-2817
- JUNE 13-14**
OHA Pioneer Chapter weekend
guzzler campout 503-874-9851
- JUNE 19-21**
All Hands All Brands for Public Lands
weekend project 541-647-0424
- JUNE 27**
OHA Lake County Youth
Day 541-417-0042

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PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Plan now for Pronghorns

Speed goat season comes at you fast. Here in Oregon, we learn tag draw results on June 12, and that gives us barely two months to plan a special hunt we may get once every couple of decades. Prudent pronghorn hunters make their plans even before applying.

Whether you plan to hunt with rifle, muzzleloader, or bow, carefully consider your application options. Hunts that seem easier to draw are likely in units with lower success rates. Some of the toughest places to draw in southeast Oregon can require about 20 preference points to be a done deal. Top units like Beulah, Juniper, Whitehorse, Wagontire, Silvies, Warner, Beatys Butte and Hart Mountain are all long waits.

Then again, there are a few folks that are lucky enough to draw from the 25-percent pool with fewer points in their pockets.



LAKE COUNTY/JOHN McFARLAND III

If this turns out to be a dry summer in Oregon's high desert, pronghorns will be concentrated at remaining water sources, so scouting is important to ensure you're not left high and dry.

With limited time, it's better to start planning even before you draw the tag. Some folks even put in for time off work prior to the drawing to ensure they are able to go. Trust me, it's better to tell the boss, hey, I'm going to use those days for something else following the tag lottery.

It never hurts to get outside and scout, shed hunt, camp and fish. This will put you ahead of the game if you do happen to draw an antelope tag this year. Get out the OnX and mark water sources, along with locations where you see animals feeding.

There's rarely a bad year to draw a pronghorn tag, but this year should be a

good one, according to ODFW District Biologist Lee Foster in Hines.

"This season could be really great for mature bucks, due to the fact there was a very good production of fawns in 2024," Foster said. He also pointed out that antelope tend to sport impressive horn growth once they reach the age of 3 1/2 years or older.

Foster also noted that most mature bucks tend to avoid roads and quad trails, so driving all day isn't always the best move. Save your tire tread and put some miles on your boot tread, and glass early in the morning to find that special animal this season. —TROY RODAKOWSKI

Stuff some turkey hunting in your other spring plans

Spring has sprung here in Oregon, and with it brings plenty of opportunity in the outdoors. Between foraging for mushrooms and hunting shed antlers, the famous springer run and spring bear season, Oregonians have every reason to be outside.

While you're deciding which option is going to be the best bang for your buck, don't forget about the critter that almost became our national symbol – the noble wild turkey. Stuffing a turkey hunt in your other adventures could be the gravy on top. Turkey season spans most of spring bear season, and you can hunt turkey anywhere you hunt spring bear.

I have glassed strutting toms on multiple occasions in the same drainage where

bears were feeding. Because bear hunting tends to get better as the day progresses, you could easily make the most of your time in the field by focusing on turkeys in the morning and switching to bears in the afternoon.

Don't forget to score a cougar tag before heading for the hills and calling gobblers, because turkeys are one of the prey species mountain lions target. Toss in a few shells with a slug or 00 buckshot in case the tom you call is a cat instead of a turkey.

If you're not seeing a lot of bear activity during your hunt, changing it up and targeting turkeys can help put the spring back in anyone's step, especially youngsters making one of their first forays afield.

—HANNAH MABBOTT



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

In addition to being a low-key hunt in pleasant spring weather, a turkey hunt can help keep youngsters engaged if bear hunting is slow.

Work group calls for wolf reduction in Wallowa County

OHA has been actively participating in a Wallowa County work group to demonstrate the need for broader wolf management as per the Oregon Wolf Management Plan language on “controlled take.”

Besides sportsmen representatives, the work group includes a member from the Wallowa County Commission, the Oregon Cattlemen’s Association, and the Oregon Trappers Association.

The work group produced a resolution approved by the Wallowa County Commission and a pilot project concept that would apply hunting and trapping within targeted areas of affected wildlife management units.

The resolution calls for wolf management to “protect the wildlife population at a level that hunting will continue to be available and to minimize wolf/livestock conflict to a manageable level, and to set management objectives for wolves.”

The proposed pilot project would provide the framework for public involvement through controlled hunting and trapping.

Wolves have roamed Wallowa County for many years, and the most recent population estimate states a minimum count of 67, which does not include young of the year.

Wallowa County has basically served as the nursery for the rest of the state’s wolf population and has been the focal point of livestock and big game impacts.

—JIM AKENSON



The proposed pilot project would provide the framework for public involvement through controlled hunting and trapping.

Wolves from this Middle Fork Pack in Wallowa County have a long rap sheet of attacks on livestock. There is no information about the impact of this pack and others on Oregon's big game herds.

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Lodging tax to support Oregon wildlife

By Amy Patrick, OHA Legislative Rep
driftcreekconsulting@gmail.com

The 2026 Oregon Legislative session officially ended on March 6. During this short session, OHA tracked several bills with three identified as priority bills. Here is the final outcome:

HB 4134 - The 1.25% for wildlife bill that increases the state transient lodging tax by 1.25% and sends those funds to various agencies to fund wildlife-related programs: ODFW will receive approximately \$61 million per biennium for implementation of the State Wildlife Action Plan, wildlife connectivity work, establishing a wildlife stewardship program, and funding for the Oregon Conservation & Recreation Fund. Oregon Department of Agriculture will receive approximately \$4 million biennially for the Wolf Depredation Compensation Fund and invasive species control.

Oregon State Police will receive approximately \$3 million biennially for anti-poaching enforcement, while the Department of Justice will get approximately \$450,000 for anti-poaching prosecution efforts. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission is allocated approximately \$6 million biennially for the Oregon Conservation Corps Fund.

OHA began the discussions on this concept in 2020 with a diverse group of stakeholders seeking to identify potential sources for long-term sustainable funding for ODFW.

The bill was first brought forward in the 2023 session, where it was unsuccessful. It returned in 2025 with a broad coalition in support and almost made it to the finish line before being stalled by a last-minute minority report. The bill was brought back in 2026, and the coalition in support of the bill grew to nearly 100 organizations from across the spectrum of conservation organizations, plus organizations such as Oregon Farm Bureau and Oregon Cattlemen's Association.

The bill passed the House and Senate and now awaits the Governor's signature.

This is a milestone bill that now establishes long-term, sustainable funding for ODFW, and the additional agencies, that is not placed on the shoulders of the hunting and fishing communities.

HB 4145 - The Measure 114 rewrite bill would have repealed and then replaced Measure 114 with more egregious language to increase the fees, increase the wait times for permits, and limit any litigation efforts to Marion County courts.

Following several weeks of drama, the bill was amended to remove all aspects of the bill except for the implementation date of January 2028. This stripped version of the bill passed both chambers and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

SB 1545 - The corner crossing bill brought by the bipartisan duo of Senators Broadman and McLane sought to define the act of corner crossing and under what circumstances it is not considered trespass, as well as provide protections for private landowners.

The bill garnered strong bipartisan support with the following legislators: Senators Fred Girod (R-Silverton), Jeff Golden (D-Ashland), James Manning Jr (D-Eugene), Todd Nash (R-Enterprise), Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene), David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford), and Janeen Sollman (D-Forest Grove), joining Representatives Vicki Breese-Iverson (R-Prineville), Matt Bunch (R-Canby), Emerson Levy (D-Bend), Virgil Osborne (R-Roseburg), Mark Owens (R-Burns), E. Werner Reschke (R-Klamath Falls) and House Majority Leader Ben Bowman (D-Tigard) as sponsors.

Broad support for the bill came from OHA, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Western Environmental Law Center, Oregon Farm Bureau, Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts, Oregon Recreation & Park Association, Oregon Wild Sheep Foundation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Oregon Wild, Central Oregon Landwatch, Fur Takers of America, Oregon Association of Shooting Ranges, Traditional Archers of Oregon, Oregon Trappers Association, Defenders of Wildlife, National Wild Turkey Federation, American Sportfishing Association, Oregon Bow Hunters, Howl For Wildlife, Oregon United Sporting Dogs Association, and Oregon Anglers Alliance.

While the bill had support from legislators and stakeholders, several large landowners voiced enough concern over the bill that the chief sponsors conceded to pull the bill from the 2026 session and enter a workgroup process in the interim. Both Senators have assured stakeholders that their intent is to pass the bill in the 2027 session.

Legislative turnover happens each election cycle, but many legislators are not returning this year, which will leave five seats open in the Senate and eight in the House. With 13 open legislative seats, and the potential for IP 28 to be on the November ballot, OHA encourages our members to register to vote and participate in Oregon's election process.

*Senators
have assured
stakeholders
that their intent
is to pass the
corner crossing
bill in 2027.*

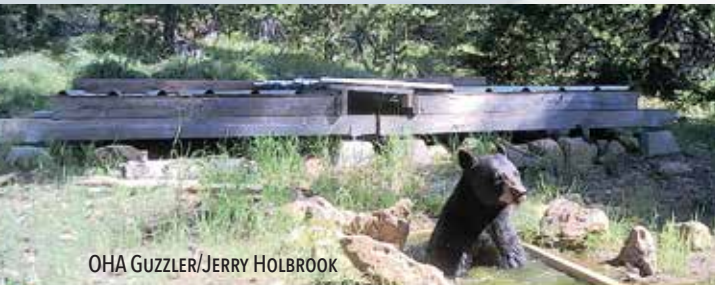
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Hunters' Victory Fund

Your tax-deductible* donation to the Oregon Hunters Association Hunters' Victory Fund will be dedicated for fighting legal and legislative battles to protect hunting rights in Oregon. Petitioners are gathering signatures to place a ban on hunting, trapping and fishing on Oregon's 2026 ballot! In the coming months we face legislative challenges where we must fight to protect your right to hunt, trap and own firearms!



OHA GUZZLER/JERRY HOLBROOK

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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.



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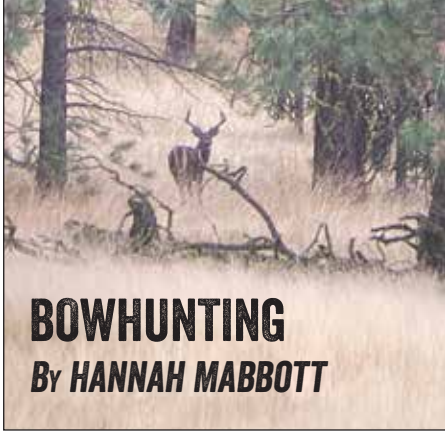
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WALLOWA COUNTY/TYLER DUNGANNON

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BOWHUNTING

By HANNAH MABBOTT

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR



Tags for whitetails will allow hunting opportunity while not putting too much pressure on mule deer.

WHY NOT WHITETAIL?

Oregon's new eastside deer hunting options include more hunts for whitetails only

Whitetails are here to stay, and the state is providing new opportunities for archery hunters to target this species.

The new changes to Oregon deer hunts may have you scratching your head, but they come with some great news. White-tailed deer have officially earned a more prominent place in our 100-series draws, offering hunters opportunities across the eastern half of the state to target these deer while also giving the struggling mule deer populations a much-needed break.

Previously the state has issued the majority of the buck tags with a bag limit of “one buck with a visible antler,” and while there are still some locations that have this requirement (mostly units that don’t have a notable whitetail population), many tags on the east side are now mule deer or whitetail specific. Targeting these bucks during archery season while they are still in velvet and well before the rut may be a challenge, but with tenacity and a few tips from hunters who have been targeting this species for generations, hunters may enjoy success in the field this fall.

Most of Oregon’s whitetails are concentrated in the northeast corner of the state. Their range is significant, with deer

dwelling in ag land and high up in the timber.

Units such as Northeast 03 and Northeast 04, previously Sled Springs and Wenaha, are adjacent to units in Washington that have supported historically strong whitetail densities. There is also a well-established whitetail population along the Lostine and Wallowa Rivers between Minam and Joseph, though the vast majority of whitetails in this area are on private land. Make sure to apply for tags in hunt areas that are public or where you have private land access.

With new whitetail tags added across the board for rifle, archery, and muzzleloader hunters alike, more opportunity awaits Oregon hunters to pursue these deer in 2026.

Early-season archery hunts offer a great opportunity to test your abilities as a hunter, and while there may be hundreds of videos and forums that will all tell you the best way to achieve success, we can’t forget the basics. White-tailed deer,

like all horned beasts, need food, water, and a comfortable place to sleep. In your pre-season scouting, locate waterholes, and consider concealing a trail camera. Bucks tend to be more predictable while still in velvet, and if they go to a water hole once, there’s a good chance they will do it again.

Glassing, covering ground and putting in some sweat equity won’t hurt. Deer don’t feel the pressure in the early

season that they do once October comes around. That mature buck may have his guard down, and this is your opportunity to capitalize.

If hunting in cooler temperatures is your preference, there are a few new opportunities to scratch that itch, as well. Though the majority of the archery whitetail tags are for the early season, there are three hunts later in the year to target whitetail during the rut. There is a Late Aldrich (Murderers Creek area) tag that is 100-series and archery-only, and two tags that essentially split the former West Blues Whitetail zone, which was a 600-series tag for archery or muzzleloader. The new late rut hunts are the NE-05 (Walla Walla Unit) and NB-01 (north half of the Ukiah Unit), which means that the former West Blues hunt is no longer valid in the Columbia Basin and Heppner units. The Late Aldrich hunt is in a new hunt area that is 66 percent public, and there are 21 total tags, so there is a good chance that this tag will see some competition and may require a few points to draw. The 600-series tags are for private land only and will provide very limited access.

With new whitetail tags added across the board for rifle, archery, and muzzleloader hunters alike, more opportunity awaits Oregon hunters to pursue these deer in 2026. This change will reduce the pressure on our struggling mule deer herds, while maintaining hunting opportunity in the region.



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WHITETAILED & BLACK POWDER

Northeast Oregon bucks beckon in a handful of hunts. By Richy J. Harrod

The buck turned his head back and forth, trying to determine from where the clicking noise and whispered profanity emanated. This was one of a half dozen controlled white-tailed deer hunts offered for muzzleloader hunters in eastern Oregon in late fall.

Although some hunt areas include public land, whitetails are often found on private property in the valley bottoms. Hunters need to plan ahead for access to private lands, and it's important to spend time asking permission to hunt and build a relationship with landowners.

The expansive rolling hills lay before us like undulating carpet. Rusty brown, senescent grasses rose above a layer of fresh snow. This wide-open landscape seemed like an unlikely place to stalk close to whitetail bucks for a shot with a black powder rifle. Friends Justin Herold and Trenton Neil had drawn tags for this part of Wallowa County, and they were confident, having hunted here in the past. Low clouds delayed the early December daylight, but the dim glow of snow revealed deer moving on the far ridgeline. We were optimistic on this opening morning.

We hiked across a broad valley through waist-high grass toward the deer we spotted.

"How the heck do you get close to whitetails in this open ground?" I asked Justin as we slogged through the grass. "You've got to use the terrain, get lucky and have one run by, or better yet, watch them bed and make a stalk in the tall grass," he reasoned.

The skiff of snow had melted on the south-facing slope. Deer would blend in with the waves of golden bunchgrasses. Our pace slowed as we neared the ridgetop and eyes strained to see the outline of a deer in the sea of amber. Movement 200 yards up the ridge caught Justin's eye.

"There they go," Justin said. Three does and a small buck trotted over the ridge. The low clouds cast gray light, making it difficult to see any contrast in the muted landscape. We hiked to various viewpoints looking for deer nearby, but no bucks were spotted.

Trenton found a large 4-point buck during the afternoon hunt. The guys hiked in different directions hoping to increase their chances of success. Snow began to fall, and soon it was a whiteout of giant snowflakes. We couldn't see more than 50 yards. The already-short winter afternoon light faded earlier, drawing the first hunt to a close.

The snowstorm passed overnight, but as usual at that time of year, the temperature plummeted. The next two mornings were around 10 degrees. Fog lay low on the hills, rendering it difficult to spot deer. A swirling mass of ice crystals gleamed like shards of glass in filtered sunlight. Snow was like fine powdered sugar and squeaked underfoot. Close encounters were hampered by the conditions, but finally on day four, the sun broke through morning fog, softened the snow, and deer were on the move.

Trenton searched for deer in a new spot, while Justin and I glassed previously hunted areas. Around mid-morning, a nice buck bedded in tall grass was spotted along a gently rolling slope.

A plan was developed for a two-way stalk: Trenton would come in above, while Justin and I would sneak up from the bottom.

A two-track dirt road followed a fenceline up to the ridgetop where the buck was bedded. Justin and I slowly hiked the road until the terrain no longer hid our approach. Crouching low, we crept away from the road uphill and through tall grass, stopping often to scan the area ahead. Justin was in the lead when he suddenly sank to one knee. He turned and whispered, "He's about 50 yards in front of us. I can barely see his antlers." I watched nervously as he readied his .50 caliber black powder rifle.

Justin stayed low, took a couple more steps to a small rise, cocked his hammer while standing to aim, and – "click" – the percussion cap didn't fire. The buck heard the click and probably some muttered cursing, but couldn't get a bearing.

With a new cap seated, Justin slowly stood to make another attempt, but the buck had other ideas and bounded away another 40 yards. He slowed to a walk, turned broadside, and Justin didn't hesitate.

At the shot, we watched anxiously through the cloud of black powder smoke. Several does scattered with the shot, but so did the buck. Clearly, it wasn't hit as he ran uphill as healthy as the others.

Trenton was another 200 yards uphill watching the entire scene. He rose from his hiding spot with the report of Justin's rifle and was surprised to see the buck running his way. Kneeling, he readied his .50 caliber rifle as the buck drew near. The buck stopped broadside just under 100 yards while Trenton took careful aim. Justin and I heard the boom of the rifle followed by the sight of a smoke cloud. We watched the buck sprint a couple yards, wobble, and then disappear into the tall grass. "Wahoo!" Justin yelled.

Northeast Oregon's whitetails are often found on private property in valley bottoms.







Trenton's buck ran by with a little help from his friends.

It was a beautiful 3x4 with long eyeguards. We took pictures, field dressed the deer, and dragged it through the tall grass and down the two-track. After four chilly days, it was a gratifying moment loading a big deer in the pickup and heading for a warm house.

Now it was time to get Justin a deer.

The following morning was cold and clear. We took advantage of the conditions to glass for whitetails from high points. Trenton spotted a buck, and we made our move.

Four-foot-tall grass rustled with every step as we moved

slowly through an old field. The buck was somewhere in a low swale 400 to 500 yards away. Sound from our stalk seemed as loud as a crinkled potato chip bag.

"I don't think we can get too much closer – we're going to spook him in this grass," Justin whispered as he crouched low in the grass.

We moved another 50 yards and waited. Minutes later Justin said in a muffled voice, "There he is!"

The buck bolted from a bed only 40 yards away. Justin raised his rifle, and in a moment of panic thinking he would escape, fired as soon as the buck turned slightly broadside.

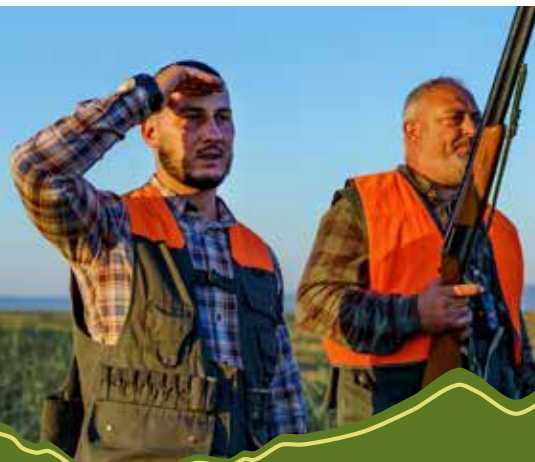
"I missed!" Justin said, realizing he rushed the shot. Instead of running away, the buck turned to jog up the far side of the swale, staying in black powder range. Justin dropped to his knees and hastily started the arduous and time-consuming task of reloading.

I nervously watched the buck move uphill about 80 yards away, eyes fixed on our location. Justin fumbled with powder, bullet, and cap in his rush to reload, but he focused on the task, and in a few seconds, was settling his aim on the shooting sticks. The three-second pause before the trigger pull was like molasses. The "click, boom" of the muzzleloader finally broke the silence, sending the .50 caliber bullet on its deadly flight. A couple of tense moments later, when the smoke cleared from our faces, we watched the buck stagger uphill, wheel backwards, and tumble.

"Can you believe that just happened?" Justin said with disbelief.

"I can't believe you got reloaded in time," I laughed in reply.

Trenton had watched the action through binoculars, and now hiked to meet us at the downed buck. It was another beautiful



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TRENTON NEIL

You may well see your breath on cold mornings in northeast Oregon, but the beauty of the landscape will take your breath away.

4-point with prominent eyeguards. The sun shined brightly on the rusty-brown hair and pearly white antler tips.

We sat for a time, reflecting on the time together over the past 5 days, thankful for the good fortune to harvest two nice bucks with primitive weapons. Justin summed it perfectly: "Hunting with friends is amazing. The stories and memories made are going to last a lifetime."



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BLUE MOON BEARS

**Hunt all the way
to the swoon of
June this spring.**

BY GARY LEWIS

The average bear hunter only bags a bruin in the spring season once in a blue moon. The next blue moon occurs on the very last day of this year's spring bear season. And what we know about bears is they mate in the sixth month, a condition that is known in some drumming circles as the June Swoon.

The closer you get to the June Swoon, the better the hunting, and you cannot get closer to June than May 31.

Let's examine the case of a bear hunter. For lack of a better name, we will call him Duane Dungannon. Said Dungannon hauls his cannon out to the bear woods as often as he can, in part because his hunting partners emphasize quantity of tags over quality.

"We probably tag as many bears as someone who only hunts every 10 years," he said, "but we get to camp more than they do, and nothing is a better prescription for spring fever than a spring bear hunt." True that.

If we go to the harvest statistics, we find that the fair-to-middlin' bear hunter only takes a spring bruin every four blue moons or so, which is about once a decade. Spring bruin success is rare and fine in a hunter's life.

TOP PERFORMERS

If you have scored a spring tag this season, it's important to recognize each hunt has certain sectors that outperform other units.

In the northwest region of Oregon, the Alsea-Stott Mountain spring bear hunt returned a 22 percent harvest success in the 2024 season, while hunters in the Siuslaw reported 22 percent success. Hunters are working harder in the Northwest region than elsewhere with a reported seven days in the field over the course of the season.

Top units in the southwest region were Evans Creek at 24 percent harvest success, 27 percent in the Melrose, and 22 percent in the Powers Unit with an average 6 1/2 days of hunter effort.

In the Columbia region, the Hood Unit was the top performer with 23 percent harvest success.

JEFF RICH



TYLER DUNGANNON

After doing everything else wrong, OREGON HUNTER editor Duane Dungannon recently took this spring bear in Lake County with a Kuiu Howa 1500 7mm Rem Mag and a single Nosler Partition.

In the southeast corner, hunters in the Warner Unit (which is designated in South Central) enjoyed 21 percent success and an average 4 1/2 days effort.

Up in the northeast, the Mt. Emily-Walla Walla hunt was the top performer and the Sled Springs-Chesnimnus returned a respectable 21 percent for 5 1/2 days of effort.

If the plan is to hunt the eve of the June Swoon all the way up to the Blue Moon,

block out that whole last week – Monday to Sunday. This is the late season, so there are three main ways to hunt.

LATE-SEASON Rx

The spot-and-stalk is still a good way to hunt late in May, but the windows are shorter. It is not as likely to see a bear out in the open at midday unless there are clouds over the sun. Instead, plan to be behind the optics in the first three hours of the day and the last two hours.

Stay downwind, and if a move must be made to look into a side canyon, keep the wind in your face, slip over the brow of the hill and sit down and glass.

A top strategy that works in the last week of the season is to use elk calf sounds or (if there are no elk in the area) deer fawn distress sounds. Bears love eating newborn elk calves, and there will be elk calves on the ground just prior to the June swoon. There is nothing a big boar likes better than eating newborn elk calves while hanging out with his main squeeze in estrus.

Calf and fawn sounds are great, but don't overlook using bear sounds. Cubs fighting, roars and other bear vocalizations will get a bear's attention. And if two bears are sighted in late May, there is a better chance that both are adult bears.

I like to use an electronic call with a remote control and set the unit 20 to 50 yards away so that the bear does not zero in on my position. If I am using a mouth call, well, I like to have someone watching my six. Don't forget that bears like to circle and come in from the downwind side. That's when they are most likely to smell the hunter and leave.

In any case, the rule for calling bears is to call steadily for an hour. Then go quiet

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and wait and watch for five more minutes before getting up.

The third way is to walk closed roads mornings and evenings. If there is no hiking traffic, bears are wont to waddle along a closed grassy road and graze on the tender grasses, tender shoots and fiddleheads. Every turn in the road can reveal a bear up ahead. It's an exciting way to hunt. If there has been a fresh rain, look for tracks at mudholes and bear tunnels coming out of the brush.

BEING THERE

Dungannon recalls his recent successful hunt as being one where he learned that doing things right isn't as important as just being out there.

"I slept in stupid late, bumbled around stupid long at the truck, stupidly left the shooting sticks in the truck, which I parked where I did because that's where the fallen tree was blocking the road."

Dungannon walked around the fallen tree and continued to walk for 10 minutes down a closed side road, saw a bear, and...

"Took a stupid long time trying to convert a pine tree into a rest, and then..." Exasperated the bear was still there after he

had steadied his cannon, Dungannon shot the bear. Dungannon thinks a little birdie gave him some luck.

He tagged his spring bear the day after the swallow blessed him with a well-aimed depth charge in the face.

"I dared not swallow," Dungannon said later.



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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GPS for the Spring Bear Hunter

Garmin's eTrex Touch is an easy-to-use GPS navigator with a vivid color touchscreen display with pre-loaded maps.

Last fall, I carried the eTrex Touch on more than a dozen hunts. It is slender, light and easy to use. Starting in September, I did not have to recharge the battery till the new year. The device offers up to 130 hours of battery on a full charge and is rated to 650 hours in expedition mode.

The first page features a trip odometer, calorie counter, map and compass.

On the second page, the compass shows up again and the hunter can track walking speed, ETA and the weather forecast. On the third screen, check elevation, location and compass heading.

It was interesting to check with the eTrex after each hunt and record the mileage in my journal.

For the bear hunter in the field ahead of the June Swoon, the eTrex Touch offers another way to plot hunts on closed roads and determine easiest meat-packing routes. Visit Garmin.com

—GARY LEWIS

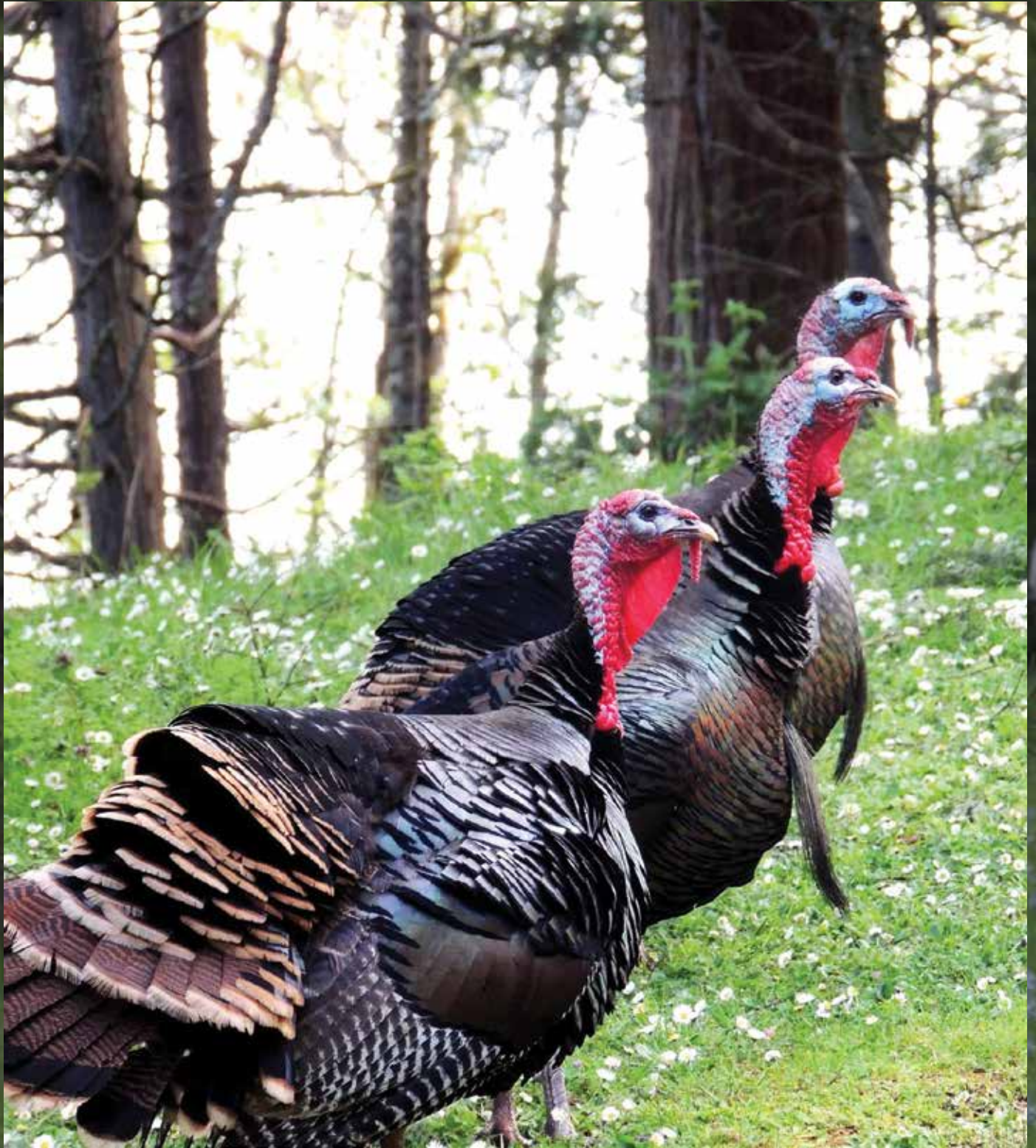
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WAITING *in the* WEEDS

Oregon's spring turkey season can try your patience in May, as you flick ticks while the hours tick by. Here's what to try when your patience is tried.

STORY & PHOTOS BY TROY RODAKOWSKI

I inhaled deeply to get a good whiff of the warm spring breeze as I slowly sipped on my water bottle, swallowing a cool drink to sooth my need to rehydrate. The view of the spring landscape from the ridgetop was amazing, and I stood admiring it for a handful of minutes.

Spring revitalizes us as much as it does the great outdoors. Even the nights are better, with the frogs croaking and the crickets chirping as life awakens from a long winter nap.

Turkeys gobbling from the roost trees and chattering with yelps and excited clucks from the limbs above set the soul on fire, and being in the spring turkey woods rekindles elements of mystery and adventure.

Special moments always seem to happen in the spring, and because many folks haven't been in the woods since late fall, turkey hunters are some of the first to explore the quiet hills and valleys the turkeys call home. Shed antlers, mushrooms, songbirds, young animals of the year, and all the blooming wildflowers provide a garden of delight for hunters prowling the woods. It all makes the harvest of a spring turkey so special, and when you don't pack one out of the woods, you still have a fresh sense of accomplishment.

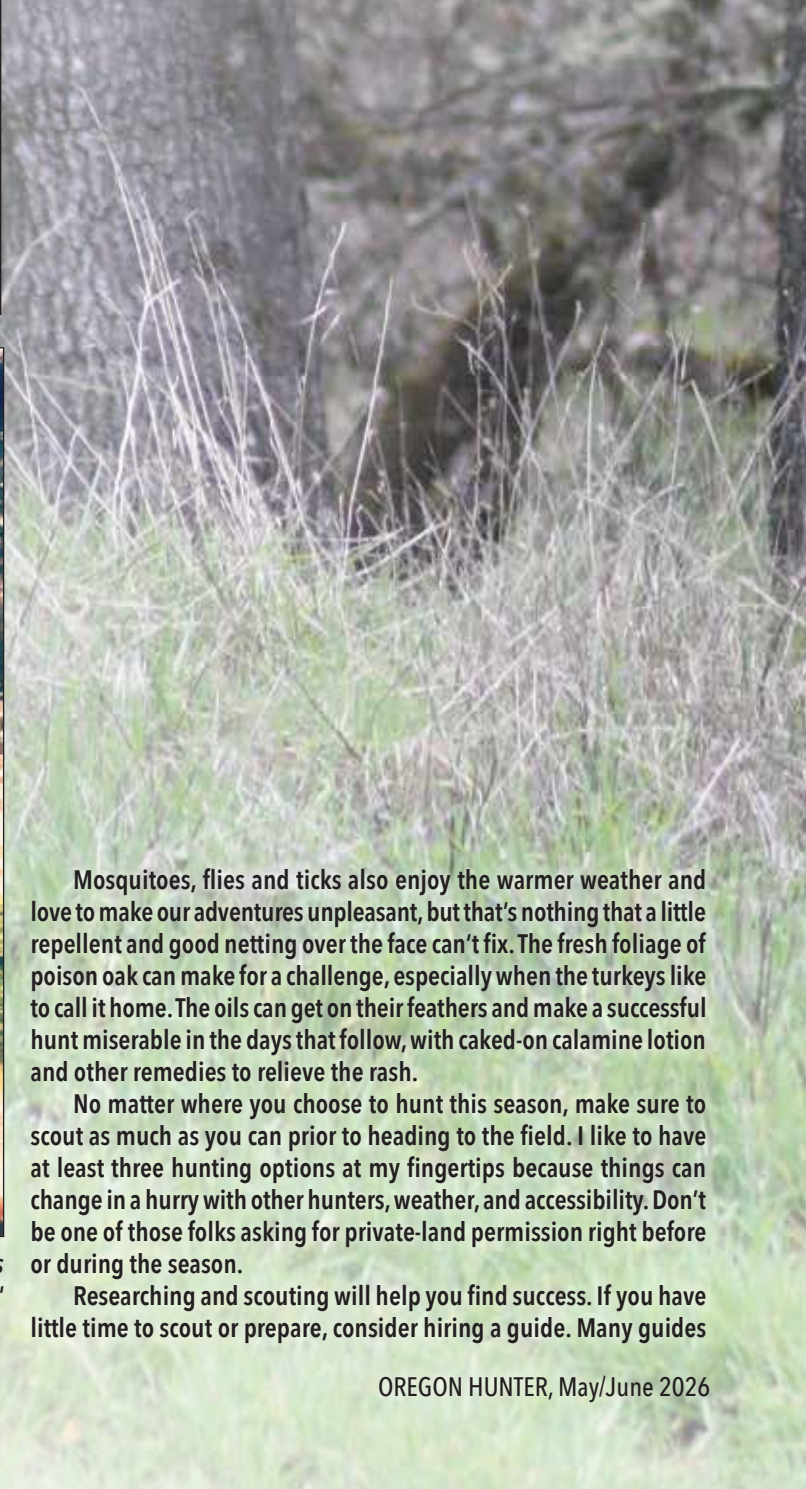
Gobbles signal a rebirth of the landscape and the new season. Creeks run high, providing water for wildlife and homes for aquatic life that turkeys thrive on. Snails, worms, small fish, tad poles and insects all make homes here and provide sustenance for hungry turkeys.

WALLOWA COUNTY/DUANE DUNGANNON

Fabulous flora like foxgloves and wild iris light up the landscape in spring. Wildflowers might not be the lures that lead you afield, but they offer a rich reward to savor nonetheless.



Stay awake on your stand by letting your favorite turkey hunting tunes flow through your mind - songs like "The Waiting Is the Hardest Part," "Too Much Time on My Hands," and "The Sound of Silence."



Mosquitoes, flies and ticks also enjoy the warmer weather and love to make our adventures unpleasant, but that's nothing that a little repellent and good netting over the face can't fix. The fresh foliage of poison oak can make for a challenge, especially when the turkeys like to call it home. The oils can get on their feathers and make a successful hunt miserable in the days that follow, with caked-on calamine lotion and other remedies to relieve the rash.

No matter where you choose to hunt this season, make sure to scout as much as you can prior to heading to the field. I like to have at least three hunting options at my fingertips because things can change in a hurry with other hunters, weather, and accessibility. Don't be one of those folks asking for private-land permission right before or during the season.

Researching and scouting will help you find success. If you have little time to scout or prepare, consider hiring a guide. Many guides

DUANE DUNGANNON



Shed antlers and mushrooms provide a springtime bonus in the turkey woods. Mushrooms nicely complement a variety of meals, from turkey soup to tag stew.



TYLER DUNGANNON



JACKSON COUNTY/DUANE DUNGANNON

across the state offer turkey hunts that can get you into the birds. Going with a guide also provides a great way to learn tactics and techniques, especially if you are new to turkey hunting.

A good nap under a tree near a bubbling creek soothes the soul. Being awakened by a gobble will send your worries scurrying away. You awaken quickly and try to collect yourself as your heart pounds and you sit still, frozen with anticipation. The warm sunshine can't even quell the shivery and shaky excitement as the wary bird slowly approaches.

You purr lightly on your call and give a soft yelp, looking for that curious red head to come into view. Steadying your gun, you wait with sweat rolling down your nose and neck as the red head finally comes into the perfect window. Your breathing steadies as you slowly pull the trigger, and now in an instant, you know without a doubt spring has truly arrived.



And only then - when you least expect it - a good nap in the warm spring sunshine is interrupted when a turkey hunt breaks out. Don't you love it when a plan comes together?





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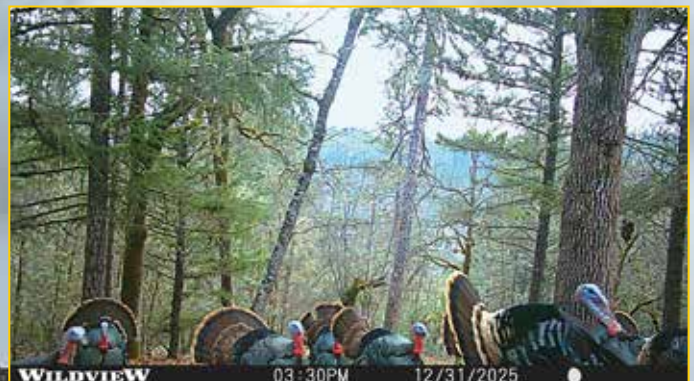


WINNER: OHA member Jeremy Schriber from Tillamook is the winner of a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for his Tillamook County bear hamming it up for the camera in October of 2025.

HONORABLE MENTION:



OHA member Jon Duerst of Peoria, Ariz., earns Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for his Willamette County elk wallowing in a waterhole.



OHA member Justin Gindlesperger grabs an OHA hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of Josephine County turkeys on New Years Eve.



Jim Gaskins, an OHA member from Roseburg, caught this Siuslaw bear in need of a good back scratch, landing an OHA hat.



Medford OHA member Schyler Gorman captured two Honorable Mentions and an OHA hat for his photos of Jackson County bull elk this past fall.



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TRADITIONS

By GARY LEWIS

ODFW has developed a transition guide to help hunters become familiar with the new deer hunt areas.

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Bag a bargain blackpowder buck this fall

Big changes in 2026 affect all deer units east of the Cascades

If you are like me, you are waiting for the last week of the application period to make a decision on which tags to apply for. As you probably already know, if you have not been hibernating under a rock, the eastside deer hunt structure has changed for 2026, and that includes muzzleloader hunts.

East of the Cascades, there are now 19 100-series muzzleloader deer hunts. Of these, seven are whitetail hunts. That is up from 17 eastside muzzleloader hunts in the 2025 regulations.

With the implementation of the Oregon Mule Deer Plan, the hunts are now organized according to herd ranges. This might be confusing in the short term, but it should point us toward better management of mule deer in the long term.

A mule deer herd range includes the entire area a herd uses in a year: summer range, winter range and migration corridors.

Let us try to wrap our heads around the new mule deer herd areas. Keep these things in mind:

1. In most cases, the newly designated hunting areas are larger than the old WMUs.
2. We can expect tag adjustments and an overall 9-percent reduction in eastern Oregon deer tags in both the 100-series buck deer and 600-series antlerless seasons.
3. The preference point system will remain unchanged.

Turn to Page 40 of the Oregon Big Game Regulations, and run your trigger finger down to the first category. The Deschutes 01 (DE101M) line item will offer 77 tags. Now flip over to page 41 of the regulations and feast your eyes on the new map.

INTERACTIVE TOOLS

Don't make the mistake of assuming the new unit Deschutes is the same as the old Upper Deschutes. Note that the old Metolius muzzleloader hunt is gone. If you used to apply for the Metolius Muzzleloader hunt, now you are going to like the DE101M hunt.

Click on the interactive <https://myodfw.com/articles/eastern-oregon-deer-hunt-areas-2026> and click on Deschutes DE-01. This map can be downloaded and/or printed.

ODFW has also developed a transition guide to help hunters become familiar with the new deer hunt areas and see

how they compare to the previous WMU-based hunts. Let's say we like to hunt the old 152M Grande Ronde (whitetail only) muzzleloader hunt. How do we find the new corresponding deer hunt area?

Click on <https://tinyurl.com/2aux5mey> then slide down to Page 6 and glide down to the Muzzleloader table. The old 152M hunt is now divided among the EH102M (overlap 37 percent), NE104M and SW102M areas.

If you have a favorite hunt you want to look at, click on <https://myodfw.com/articles/eastern-oregon-deer-hunts>

A couple of examples: The 145M Flatiron hunt is now the FX103M (Fox) with a 51-percent overlap. And the 166M

N. Malheur now equates to the JT103M (Juntura) hunt with a 56-percent overlap.

Another helpful tool can be found at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/3b6jxtfr>

Dial in close to see major highways, national forests and bodies of water.

DON'T MAKE THE CLASSIC MISTAKES

The savvy deer hunter will turn the page to the 600-series hunts and find a couple of hunts to consider for an additional deer: the North Blues 01 and the Northeast 05 with a bag limit of one white-tailed deer. Note the November timing.

With the wholesale changes to the eastern Oregon deer units, all the well known unit names and hunt IDs have changed. This year a lot of people will make mistakes with the preference points they have saved. Ron Wold from Oregontags.com says this is not the time to panic.

"Don't do anything rash and waste your points," Wold said in a recent post. "Don't apply for a hunt that is less than what you want. Also, with any new hunt, there will always be overpriced hunts (they take too many points) and super bargains (under-valued hunts)."

If how to proceed with the deer tag application is hard to figure out, consider applying for something that will take more points to draw and select a hunt that could be drawable as a second choice.

As part of the implementation of the Mule Deer Plan, ODFW is cutting tag numbers in some units. Look at this as a building year in your overall hunt planning. Do your research and forecasting. How are your fellow hunters going to react to the changes? Ron Wold said it best: there will be bargains this year. "The trick is to find the bargains."



To contact Gary Lewis, visit www.garylewisoutdoors.com



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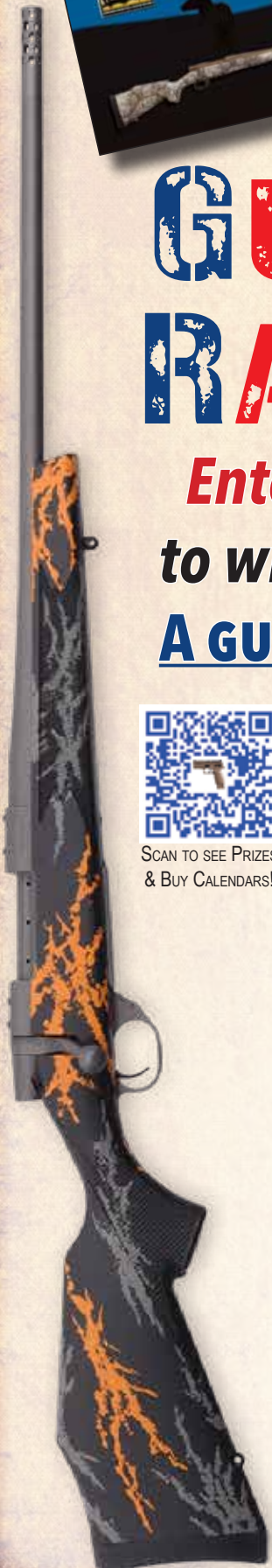
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SHARING THE HERITAGE

By SHANNON FITZGERALD

Bucking the Odds with the Ultimate Mobile Device

Too far for the naked eye, Casey labored frantically to locate the buck through his scope. “I had this thought: all these guys are going to come out for me, and I am going to miss the shot, or not even see anything,” Casey admitted.

While growing up on the Oregon coast, Casey Moore relished the outdoors. He swam, built forts, and even tried hunting, although never got anything.

But at the turn of the century, a shallow dive transformed Casey’s life. He was airlifted to Medford with a broken neck. The injury damaged the cervical vertebrae C5 and C6 of his spinal cord. Casey was forced to adjust to the unimaginable restrictions of life in a wheelchair and its considerable limitations.

Maintaining a positive demeanor, Casey used humor to push through recovery, and drawn to southern Oregon, decided to stay. Seven years later he met his wife, Michelle. And now, Casey mentors those also suffering spinal injuries.

In 2017, Michelle caught a local news segment, and could not wait to show her husband. David’s Chair: a recently created non-profit utilizing mechanized chairs outfitted with tracks to benefit people with mobility issues. Casey was impressed by the track chair’s remarkable ability to negotiate aggressive terrain that would be impossible for a traditional wheelchair.

That winter, Casey and Michelle coordinated with David’s Chair. Navigating freely through the snow of the Upper Rogue National Forest with his family was exhilarating, and emotional. “It was the first time Michelle saw me stand” referring to the track chair’s versatility in also raising the operator to a vertical position.

The David’s Chair experience presented Casey with the liberating opportunity to bulldoze through normally restrictive boundaries. It also furnished an idea for redeeming another long-lost opportunity.

After his injury, being an accurate shooter outside the range became impossible, until working with nephew Tristan Turner, and buddy Justin Ayres. With limited finger dexterity, a steady trigger pull was challenging. Justin, also a quadriplegic, helped Casey install a mechanical bite trigger created by Be Adaptive Equipment. The specialized innovation provided Casey with a stable trigger squeeze. Tristan fabricated a steel plate that inserts into his uncle’s wheelchair and also fastens to the DeathGrip 360 support mount, manufactured by Bog. This provides a solid, yet articulate, fixture allowing Casey to easily control the horizontal movement of his rifle. It wasn’t long before Casey was shooting tight groups at 200 yards.

The maneuverability of a track chair in combination with Justin and Tristan’s help at the range changed everything. “What seemed like a pipe dream before now seemed possible,” Casey declared.



With a track chair and a little help from his friends, quadriplegic Casey Moore took his first buck last fall in southern Oregon.

For the first time in 25 years, Casey could hunt again.

Casey met up with Tristan and Justin early on an October Saturday. Justin’s friends, Dom Jones and Garret Dey had scouted, and also came to help. Their mission: locate a huntable area, coordinate with David’s Chair and return with a track chair the next day. At dawn, they parked on a ridge overlooking a canyon. Casey was gathering his things when Dom ran up to his van.

“You’re not going to believe this!” he whispered emphatically. “There’s a frickin’ buck there right now!”

“Everything went into panic mode,” Casey confessed. “I didn’t have anything set up.”

The guys kept eyes on the buck until Casey could get to him. When Casey deployed his ramp, it blasted the annoying warning...BEEP, BEEP, BEEP!

The sun had just crested when he rotated his chair to face the canyon, but Casey could not see the buck with his naked eye, or through his scope. Slumped over, he could not position his eye to the exact distance required to see the black-ring in his scope.

“The chair was at a weird angle and I don’t have any trunk control,” Casey explained.

But Justin had an idea. The guys lifted Casey’s chair and wedged a rock under the tire to level his position.

“I still couldn’t find anything,” Casey remembered, recalling his frustration, “and then I saw a tail flicker.”

“\$#@...he hit it!” Dom whooped.

With a single shot at 308 yards, Casey took his first buck.

There wasn’t any complaining, as Dom and Garret couldn’t wait to pack out Casey’s buck.

Soon after his shot, fog settled into the canyon. Casey realized that without the quick, combined effort of his friends, they would have missed their chance.

“It seemed like an hour, but it probably took 15 minutes to get into position, and those guys were so patient with me,” Casey reminisced with pure gratitude

He texted Michelle, but she didn’t believe him. She would require picture proof because Casey has a reputation for practical jokes.

But she would have to wait. Casey was in the mountains and did not yet have enough mobile data.

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Q&A with OHA's New Executive Director: Insights & Vision *for the Future*



OHA Executive Director Todd Adkins and outdoor celebrity Randy Newberg share a laugh in the OHA booth at the Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show in Portland.

As the Oregon Hunters Association enters a new chapter, we are pleased to introduce our new Executive Director, Dr. Todd Adkins. With a background deeply rooted in membership organizations, Dr. Adkins brings decades of experience to OHA. In this exclusive session, we discuss leadership philosophy, strategic priorities, and the bold growth targets that will define OHA's trajectory over the coming years. The conversation below offers a glimpse into the values, aspirations, and plans shaping our organization's future during this pivotal time for Oregon's landscape.

A Connection to the Field

Q: *Many of our members live and breathe the outdoors. Can you tell us about your own experience in the field, and what made you want to lead OHA?*

A: My love of hunting runs deep, much like many of yours; it's a lifestyle rooted in respect for wildlife conservation and our shared traditions. I grew up in Michigan, where spending time in the field with friends and family is fundamentally a way of life, very similar to the culture here in Oregon. I have dedicated my career to this and wake up every day thinking about how to protect hunters and our amazing conservation legacy. I was drawn to this role specifically because of OHA's strong foundation and the incredible potential to contribute to this enduring legacy at a time when hunters' voices are more critical than ever.

Q: *Building on that, can you share a specific memory from your time in the field that shaped your decision to work for member organizations like OHA?*

A: I grew up hunting public land, including what was at the time among the finest waterfowl destinations in the Midwest. This property had a daily drawing and, for a time, would average about 500 or so parties of two, three, or four hunters. But believe it or not, I was never frustrated by this, especially as a youth. Seeing all those people who were just like me was very

KELCEY STOLLER

thrilling to me as a boy. Then and now, I recognize that we are a community, and this is why we hold the power to shape our destiny. It taught me early on that hunting isn't just about biology; it's about people with a shared identity centered on our love of the outdoors. Since that time, I've learned that when our community comes together to fight for what we care about, we are a formidable, even unstoppable, force.

Protecting Our Future: Advocacy and Strategy

Q: *What are the most important initiatives you plan to focus on during your first months concerning our hunting rights, conservation, and advocacy?*

A: Much of my time in the first months will be invested in building OHA's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

'Get active in your local chapter, invite a friend to join, and let's reach that 30,000-member milestone together.'

In simple terms, a CRM is a sophisticated member database. This is not just a technical upgrade; it is a critical step forward for OHA. It gives us the ability to more effectively serve our members, engage in real-time advocacy efforts, and facilitate chapter

communications across the state. Members will soon see a new website that acts as the hub for this system.

Q: *How will you balance bringing in new ideas while making sure we stick to our core principles and long-standing values?*

A: Innovation and tradition are partners, not rivals. While we are modernizing our operations, our compass remains centered on OHA's mission, which we are doubling down on. New ideas, such as enhanced digital advocacy tools, expanded youth outreach, and more conservation work facilitate our growth, and it all creates positive feedback strengthening our organization each and every day.

Vision for Growth: Path to 30,000

Q: *You've shared a bold vision during the interview process for the size and reach of the Oregon Hunters Association. Can you elaborate on your growth targets?*

A: To be an effective force in the state capital and in our local communities, we need numbers. I have committed to the Board that my five-year plan is to grow



A Leupold staffer demonstrates the features of a Leupold scope to Dr. Adkins during a visit to Leupold & Stevens headquarters this winter.

OHA membership to 30,000. Currently, we sit at roughly 12,000. While that is a strong and dedicated base, 30,000 members would make us an undeniable powerhouse. This growth isn't just about a number on a spreadsheet; it's about having 30,000 voices ready to advocate for habitat, 30,000 sets of hands for field projects, and 30,000 stakeholders who can help shape the future of Oregon's landscape.

Q: *How do we reach that 30,000-member goal? What is the strategy for such significant growth?*

A: It requires a multi-pronged approach. First, we must modernize our value proposition. Our new CRM and website will make it easier for people to join, renew, and see the immediate impact of their dues. Second, we are expanding our efforts to reach those who are just beginning their journey into the outdoors. That will also be driven by new marketing also facilitated by the CRM. Third, I will do everything I can to assist our 26 chapters to ramp up recruitment, as well. If every current member recruits just one or two more hunters over the next five years, we hit that target easily.

Q: *How will this growth change the way OHA operates daily?*

A: As we scale, our operations must become more efficient. A 30,000-member organization requires a higher level of legislative sophistication and more robust communication channels. However, even as we grow, we will never lose the member-


first mentality that defines OHA. The state office exists to serve the members, not the other way around.

Closing Thoughts

Q: *What can members and supporters expect in terms of hearing from us and getting involved?*

A: As we roll out the new CRM, our community will see more routine, transparent communications on everything we do – from legislative battles to conservation projects. The great news is our mission has not changed one iota; OHA is simply sharpening its resolve to serve our members and chapters, the twin pillars of what has gotten us here and will take us to new heights.

Q: *What is your final message to a member who wants to help you reach that 30,000-member milestone?*

A: My message is simple: Your membership is your voice. If you believe in scientific wildlife management over ballot-box biology, if you believe in public access, and if you believe that hunting is a vital part of Oregon's identity, then OHA is your home. Help us build the community I saw on those public lands in my youth. Get active in your local chapter, invite a friend to join, and let's reach that 30,000-member milestone together. We have the power to shape our destiny, but only if we stand together as one unified voice for all of Oregon's hunters. Let our unity be the legacy we leave for generations to come. 

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OHA NEWS & VIEWS

'We will battle like there is no tomorrow to guarantee our wildlife management remains in the hands of agency professionals and dedicated conservationists.' —OHA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TODD ADKINS

MORROW COUNTY, 3 MILE CANYON/DANA JOURNEY

NSSF awards \$50,000 to OHA to help combat extremism

OHA is pleased to announce a \$50,000 donation from the National Shooting Sports Foundation awarded to support OHA initiatives to protect hunters throughout the state.

As Oregon's largest hunting organization, OHA will use these funds to expand 2026 education projects, including a massive outreach effort planned to inform the public of IP 28, a dangerous and radical ballot proposal that would cancel hunting outright if it passes in this fall's election.

"We are incredibly grateful to NSSF for taking a clear stand against these out-of-state extremists who are hell-bent on destroying our way of life forever," said Todd Adkins, OHA's Executive Director. "IP 28 proponents have one goal, to change Oregon by removing hunters from the landscape once and for all. We can't let that happen."

The NSSF monies will support a variety of OHA initiatives, including digital media, community workshops, and educational materials that highlight the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. This model ensures that wildlife is managed as a public trust for future generations, funded largely by the contributions of hunters, anglers, and recreational shooters.

"This proposal (IP 28) is perhaps the most devastating idea ever conceived to destroy our highly successful model of wildlife conservation in America," said

Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF Senior Vice President & General Counsel. "Oregon was the recipient of over \$20 million in wildlife restoration funds from excise taxes on firearms and ammunition in 2026, which would be subject to forfeit under IP 28. The damage to Oregon's wildlife would be obvious, immediate, and irreversible."

Since its founding in the early 1980s, OHA has put "boots on the ground" for wildlife, habitat and Oregon's hunting heritage across the state through its network of 26 local chapters. This work includes hundreds of wildlife conservation projects on the ground, protecting hunter access on federal and state public lands, and fighting on behalf of sportsmen and women in the political space, where OHA has been long recognized as the state's leader for hunters.

"OHA has a long track record of advocacy success and is uniquely positioned within Oregon to lead the fight to stop this initiative," added Keane. "No organization is better equipped or more trusted by Oregon's hunting and conservation community to take on this fight."

"We will battle like there is no tomorrow to guarantee our wildlife management remains in the hands of agency professionals and dedicated conservationists, not carpet-bagging ideologues trying to change who and what we are," said Adkins. "The NSSF partnership will help OHA combat animal extremist propaganda and protect hunting long-term."

Umatilla NF moves Ellis plans ahead

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Director
TD@oregonhunters.org

OHA strongly supports increasing elk security and enhancing forage quality on U.S. Forest Service lands to ensure elk are available for hunters longer and are more reluctant to leave the forest and move to areas where they are not desired.

OHA supported the Ellis Vegetation Management Project that aims to reduce tree density in overstocked stands and improve ungulate forage quality across 110,000 acres on the Umatilla National Forest. However, while OHA supported aspects of this project that should improve habitat for big game, we also supported increasing habitat security.

Project leaders did not support secure areas for elk. Research in Oregon consistently shows Rocky Mountain elk require 30% secure habitat. Initially, USFS proposed an alternative that would provide just 11% secure habitat.

OHA formally objected to the draft record of decision, and though USFS budged, their final record of decision provides just 15% secure acres.

OHA remains hopeful that this project will be an overall benefit for elk and hunters.

OHA helps shape Minam Wildlife Area management plan

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

OHA worked with ODFW to help shape the recently adopted Minam River Wildlife Area Management Plan for the benefit of wildlife and hunters. The plan aims to 1) protect and enhance terrestrial and aquatic connectivity, 2) actively manage for high quality and resilient habitat, and 3) provide access and recreational opportunities, namely hunting and fishing.

Initially, ODFW planned to implement a winter closure of the wildlife area from Dec. 1 to March 31. OHA successfully truncated the duration of the closure to accommodate youth elk and upland game bird hunters wanting to access the wildlife area in December.

Now, hunters will be able to enjoy the wildlife area from April 1 through Dec. 31, and the plan will still accomplish its goal of providing winter refuge for big game and other wildlife. OHA was supportive of primitive camping opportunities for backcountry hunters.



Acquisition adds to Denman Wildlife Area, secures access

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

Many hunters, even those well acquainted with Denman Wildlife Area and its history, have never realized that currently, an old railroad parcel that many cross to access the wildlife area is privately owned. The owners have generously allowed the public to cross for decades, but that could have changed if the property were to change ownership.

Recently, OHA supported an effort for ODFW to acquire the narrow 5.67 acres of property within the boundary of the wildlife area in Jackson County near Medford. The acquisition will provide habitat connectivity and access for hunters parking at the Agate Road lot for future generations.

OHA announces next winners in 2026 Gun Calendar Raffle

The next winners in OHA's 2026 Gun Calendar Raffle have been announced!

The 2027 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.

- ★ *Browning A-Bolt III .300 Win*
Wesley Ham, Bend Chapter
- ★ *Weatherby Vanguard Badlands*
Cameron Cornell, Malheur County Chapter
- ★ *Howa Superlite 7mm-08*
Doug Meredith, Umpqua Chapter
- ★ *Sig Zulu6 HDX 16x42*
Paul Egan, Columbia County Chapter
- ★ *Sig P320 M18 Coyote Striker 9mm*
Byron Collman, Klamath Chapter
- ★ *Howa 1500 Black Carbon 6.5 PRC*
Nathan Fletcher Hoodview Chapter



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OHA pays \$6,000 in 8 TIP rewards

In the last two months, OHA issued 10 reward checks to informants in 8 cases totaling \$6,000 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: Unlawful take of bull elk, hunting the cultivated land of another, Unlawful take of cow elk, Unlawful take/possession of buck deer, Take/possession of bobcat during closed season, Removing antlers after hitting buck with vehicle.

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CHAPTER NEWS

JOSEPHINE COUNTY BANQUET

Chapters slate spring projects, youth events



TODD ADKINS

OHA Tualatin Valley's Wall of Dreams made dreams come true for banquet guests on March 21.

BAKER

CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 5:30 p.m., Oregon Trail Restaurant.
2026 Fundraiser: Held April 4.

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.
2026 Fundraiser: Held March 14.
Update: At The Mule Deer Classic this year, we auctioned an Oregon Access & Habitat Statewide Elk Tag for \$90,000. We will host our annual youth and family day on May 30; call 541-480-7323. The All Hands All Brands habitat project in the Ochocos takes place June 19-21.

BLUE MOUNTAIN

KEVIN MARTIN 541-969-6744

ohablumountainchapter@gmail.com
Chapter Meetings: The Saddle, 2200 Court St., Pendleton, 5:30 p.m. meeting, dinner and drinks available. Next meetings May 9 and June 23.
Update: We will host a pub event at Oregon Grain Growers Brand Distillery in Pendleton, May 9 at 4 p.m. Raffles include the Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle for a Christensen Evoke Mossy Oak Flat Dark Earth Cerakote 7mm PRC and a guided cow elk hunt with Hunt Oregon.

CAPITOL

DANNY SOUTH 503-577-6033

<https://oregonhunters.org/capitol-chapter/>
Chapter Meetings: See the monthly newsletter for date and time of meetings.
2026 Fundraiser: Held March 14.

CLATSOP COUNTY

TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

ClatsopCountyOHA@pacifier.com

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 11.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

DON MAYWALD 503-867-5073

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 21.

CURRY

TONY DONALDSON 541-425-0006

aadtony@hotmail.com

Chapter Meetings: 1st Wednesday, OSU Extension Office, Gold Beach, 6:30 p.m.
2026 Fundraiser: April 25, Event Center on the Beach, Gold Beach, 541-698-0413.

EMERALD VALLEY

RON MARTIN 541-954-5459

EmeraldOHA@live.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 7 p.m., Sizzler, 1010 Postal Way, Springfield.
Update: Everyone attending a chapter meeting will be entered into a drawing for a Howa 1500 .223 bolt action rifle with Nikko scope and camo stock. Bring a friend and get two entries.

HOODVIEW

LEVI BARRERA 503-863-4495

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter
 Facebook: Hoodview OHA

Chapter Meetings: Please check our website for meeting schedule.

2026 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 21.

Update: The White River youth turkey clinic was held April 4. Our annual White River project will take place June 5-7; call 503-706-7481.

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.

2026 Fundraiser: Held March 28.

Update: We will host our annual youth event on June 6; call 541-218-2836.

KLAMATH

DENNIS WIARD 541-891-3549

dtward@charter.net

<https://oregonhunters.org/klamath-chapter>
Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., Shasta View Community Center.

Update: We hosted a booth at the local sports show March 13-15, where we drew the winner of a guided Maine bear hunt that includes lodging and airfare, donated by ExpoSure Shows. Our annual Hart Mountain project takes place May 22-24, and our forest cleanup project will be held June 6.

LAKE COUNTY

LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 4.

Update: We host our annual youth day on June 6; call 541-417-0042.

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.

2026 Fundraiser: June 12, Pint Night at Rogue Brewers on the Bay, 970-779-2817.

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: We host a fund-raising shotgun shoot on April 25 and our annual youth shotgun shoot on Aug. 8.

MID-COLUMBIA

TONY WHITE 541-490-2980

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

Update: The Youth Turkey Clinic was held on April 4 at White River Wildlife Area.

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.

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 18.

Update: We hold our youth day on May 9; call 541-231-8165.

OCHOCO

JAMES COX 541-408-4816

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 21.

Update: Our second annual Celebrate the Outdoors youth and family event will be held Aug. 22, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Crook County Fairgrounds.

PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 971-221-8827

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held March 7.

Update: We will hold our spring youth day April 25 (503-936-4718) and our guzzler campout June 13-14 (503-874-9851).



DUANE DUNGANNON

A young man shows off his turkey target at the annual Youth Turkey Clinic hosted by OHA and ODFW at Denman Wildlife Area on April 4.

REDMOND

K. C. THRASHER 541-419-7215

OHA line 541-383-1099

oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 28.

Update: The annual Priest Hole project will not take place this year, and we are looking at a project later this year at Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area.

ROGUE VALLEY

PAUL THOMPSON 541-941-6978

Firepmt29@gmail.com

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held March 14.

Update: Youth Turkey Clinic was held on April 4 at Denman Wildlife Area.

TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

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

2026 Fundraiser: May 2, Tillamook County Fairgrounds, 503-812-3832.

TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 11.

Update: We will hold our youth day on May 2; call 541-294-7912.

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.

2026 Fundraiser: Held March 21.

Update: Our annual Hagg Lake youth event takes place June 6; call 503-701-2852.

UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 4.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

2026 Fundraiser: Held March 28.

Update: An aspen enhancement project will take place June 6 at the Elkhorn Wildlife Area; call 541-891-3549.


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.

2026 Fundraiser: Held March 14

Update: Our chapter's 2026 scholarship award deadline is May 1; contact for details: wanderingphotogal@gmail.com or 503-737-9483. Our annual youth shotgun shoot will take place on Aug. 15. 

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OHA State Convention



Banquet • Auctions • Raffles

Saturday, May 16, 2026

Seven Feathers Casino, Canyonville



SCAN FOR INFO AND TICKETS!

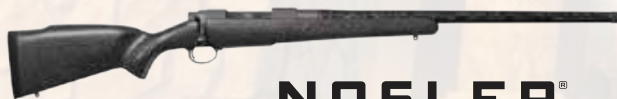
Join us when OHA's biggest bash returns to sunny Southern Oregon!

⇒ **Enjoy a Dinner Buffet Fit for a King!**

⇒ **Awesome Auctions!** More than 100 top-quality items in live and silent auctions - great trips, gear, fine art and much more!

⇒ **Rockin' Raffles!** Over 100 great prizes will be given away - guns, optics and more! Someone has to win it - Why not you?

⇒ **Great Guns!** Win 1 of 8 premium firearms in the Wall of Guns, or a Nosler rifle in the Nosler or Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffles!



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GREAT GUNS!**



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BUILT TO YOUR OWN SPECS!**

Convention Raffles Include:

- Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle
- Custom Rifle Raffle
- Nosler Rifle Raffle
- Wall of Guns
- Guns & Roses
- Bow-nanza
- Benchmade
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8 CHANCES TO WIN!!



WEATHERBY 307 RANGE XP 2.0

- Sig Cross .308 Win \$1,800 (Sponsored by Sig)
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- Weatherby 307 Range XP 2.0 7mm PRC (Sponsored by Weatherby)
- Citadel 1911 Flag .45acp \$899 (Sponsored by Legacy Sports)
- Tikka T3-Lite 6.5 PRC \$1,229
- Sig P320 X5 10mm \$1,050
- Retay ACE Type R Realtree Max 7 12ga. \$1,149
- Christensen Evoke Mossy Oak .300 PRC \$900



CITADEL 1911 FLAG .45 ACP

Tickets must be ordered and prepaid by May 6, 2026.

Order tickets at <https://oregonhunters.org/2026-oha-state-convention>
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- 1 Christensen Evoke or Weatherby Vanguard & 1 Trophy package
- Special recognition & goodies

TROPHY PACKAGE \$400*

1 in 10 wins a Ruger American Go Wild 7mm PRC & Ammo (\$675)

- 2 Dinners & 4 Drink Tickets
- 8 Party Starter Raffle Tickets
- 8 Special Raffle Tickets
- 72 General Raffle Tickets
- 2 Commemorative Gifts

**LONE WOLF PACKAGE \$300*
[1-PERSON TROPHY PACKAGE]**

1 in 10 wins a Ruger American Go Wild 7mm PRC & Ammo (\$675)

- 1 Dinner & 2 Drink Tickets
- 8 Party Starter Tickets
- 8 Special Raffle Tickets
- 72 General Raffle Tickets
- 1 Commemorative Gift

DELUXE PACKAGE \$300*

- 2 Dinners & 2 Drink Tickets
- 2 Party Starter Raffle Tickets
- 24 General Raffle Tickets
- 2 Commemorative Gifts

STAG PACKAGE \$150*

- 1 Dinner & 1 Drink Ticket
- 1 Party Starter Raffle Ticket
- 12 General Raffle Tickets
- 1 Commemorative Gift

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

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



Oregon's Evolving Dove Season

30 to 60 Days

For years, Oregon hunters operated under a simple structure: a 30 day mourning dove season confined entirely to September. That changed in 2014, when a national review of dove regulations expanded the allowable season length across the Western Dove Management Unit (WMU) from 30 to 60 days.

From 2014 to 2020, Oregon ran a straightforward 60 consecutive day season. But as more hunters asked to pursue doves later into winter—especially in areas where small concentrations linger—managers took a closer look. While wintering dove numbers in Oregon are based mostly on observation rather than hard data, the interest was enough to prompt action when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opened a window for states to revise migratory bird zones and splits in 2020.

Oregon requested permission to move from a single statewide season to a two zone, two segment structure. Using the existing duck zone boundaries for simplicity, the state created Zone 1 (west) and Zone 2 (east), allowing each to operate under different season timing.

Zones 1 & 2

Zone 1 (west), where wintering birds are more likely to appear, shifted to two 30-day segments: the familiar September opener and a second late fall/early winter opportunity.

Zone 2 (east), with its colder climate and fewer wintering birds, retained a traditional 60 day consecutive season in September and October—when doves are most consistently present.

The split season debuted in 2021. Since then, federal harvest surveys have painted a clear picture: Oregon dove hunting remains overwhelmingly a September activity. In Zone 1, 93% of hunter days from 2014–2020 occurred in September, with only 7% in October.

After the split season began, the pattern barely budged—91% of hunter days from 2021–2024 were still in September, with just 9% occurring in November or December. Wing submissions tell the same story: fewer than 1% of all wings collected since 2013 came from birds harvested after September.

For Oregon hunters, the takeaway is simple: the September hunt remains the heart of dove season, but the late split in Zone 1 is there for those who want to take advantage of it. The data shows it isn't hurting the resource—and for a few dedicated hunters, it offers a quiet, lightly pressured chance to chase doves long after summer has faded.



NOSLER[®]

2026 PHOTO CONTEST

FINALIST PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded in general and youth categories.

FIRST PRIZE: Nosler Model 21 rifle

SECOND PRIZE: Case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo

THIRD PRIZE: Leupold scope

FOURTH PRIZE: Benchmade hunting knife

FIFTH PRIZE: Born & Raised Outdoors meat bags

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

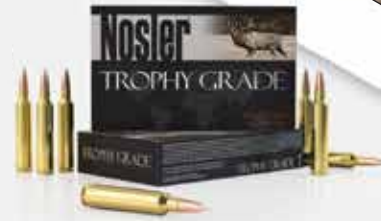
Go to **OHA's website at www.oregonhunters.org** Click on **OHA CONTESTS** Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of Nosler, proud sponsor and OHA supporter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



NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS

OHA member Brett Herb from Salem captures a berth in the 2026 Nosler Photo Contest finals and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of a British Columbia mountain lion taken this last December.



Powell Butte OHA member Galan Carter is a finalist in the 2026 Nosler Photo Contest and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of Tilly and 3 Harney County drake pintails. This put a wrap on duck season with the Veterans Waterfowl Hunt in January of 2026.

CASCADES/TERI DUNGANNON

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



Kyle Miller, an OHA member from Oakland, earns Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his photo of son Chet Miller on horseback elk hunting the rim of Hells Canyon in November of 2025.



OHA member Russell McClendon of Tillamook garners Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of himself and a Warner Unit pronghorn this past August.



Molalla OHA member Kolby Maben shares a memory of stepfather Jon Mickey posthumously of their last hunt together pursuing elk in Grant County in 2022. The photo earns Honorable Mention, a Nosler hat and a long-lasting memory.

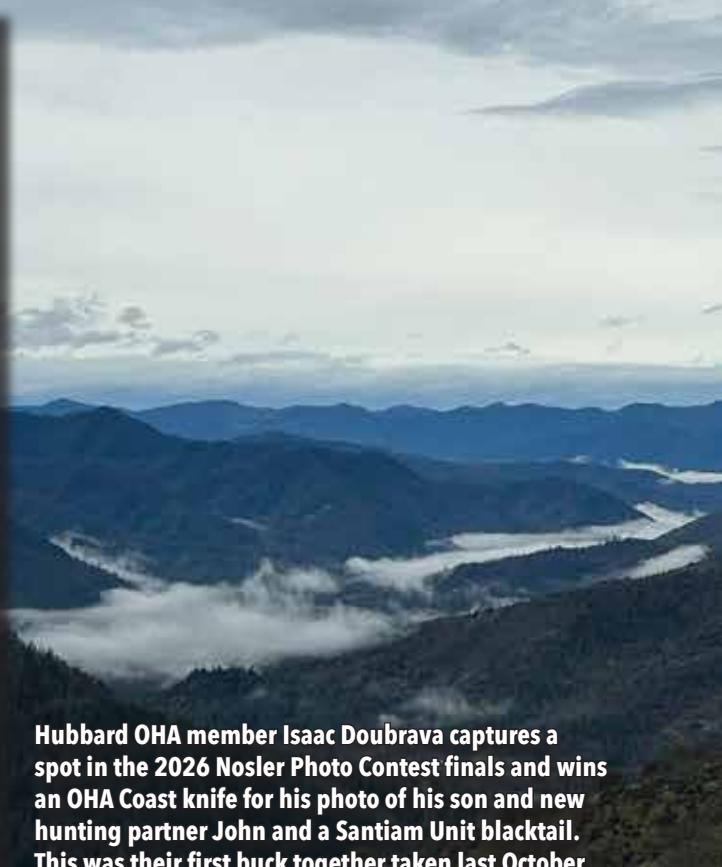


Cody Moore, an OHA member from Roseburg, wins a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of Caydence Wright enjoying a South Umpqua canoe ride after a successful Melrose Unit blacktail hunt this past season.

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS

OHA member Jerimiah Butts from Redmond is a finalist in the 2026 Nosler Photo Contest and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of tag holder Nathane, grandfather Stew, and father Jerimiah and their Deschutes ram in October of 2025.



Hubbard OHA member Isaac Doubrava captures a spot in the 2026 Nosler Photo Contest finals and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of his son and new hunting partner John and a Santiam Unit blacktail. This was their first buck together taken last October.

NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



OHA member John Baird of Lincoln City wins a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of Wyatt, Phil, and John and a 2025 Montana whitetail.



Proud dad Tim Johnson, an OHA member from Astoria, earns Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his photo of himself and 11-year-old son Ryder and his very first buck. One shot at 150 yards with his Ruger .243 concluded a successful youth mentor hunt in October 2025.



Scappoose resident and OHA life member Paul Egan garners Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his photo of Carter Egan after a "banger of a day" on Sauvie Island last December.



OHA member Allen Sedey of Medford nabs a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his January photo of Franklin Van Pelt and a Jackson County coyote taken with his .17 HMR.

RIVER OF FOG IN THE APPLIGATE/TERI DUNGANNON



What a Wonderful Squirrel

This is not a story about jazz. We are in fact, writing about sage rats, which are not rats at all, but squirrels we call rats because they look like rats, scurry across the ground like rats and breed like rats.

Also, rats are a metaphor in jazz, symbolizing urban life (sage rats live in large underground complexes), struggle and survival. Even The White Stripes had a song called *I Think I Smell A Rat*, and musicians of all stripes use rats to convey themes of betrayal and hardship. Also breeding.

For all these reasons, the Belding's ground squirrel is a wonderful squirrel as we would like to demonstrate in verse. But first we have to describe a different song called *Four*, which is an instrumental by Miles Davis whose 100th birthday we honor this May by blowing a trumpet over the sage rat grounds. Why do we do this?

Because it's a free country.

Miles Davis once said, "Music is the space between the notes." Which I think is a good way of looking at sage rat shooting, which the Missus has said is not hunting, but an excuse to not do work in the yard.

With a nod to Miles Davis, I would say hunting is the space between the rats.

Four, by Miles Davis, is not about golf and should not be confused with Foreigner's *Four* album, which featured a monster hit about sage rat hunting called "Waiting for a Squirrel Like You."

Miles Davis, as you may have guessed, was not a hunter, but a trumpet player who arrived on the scene after the genre's elder statesman, Louis Armstrong, was firmly entrenched in the hearts of the jazz-listening public.

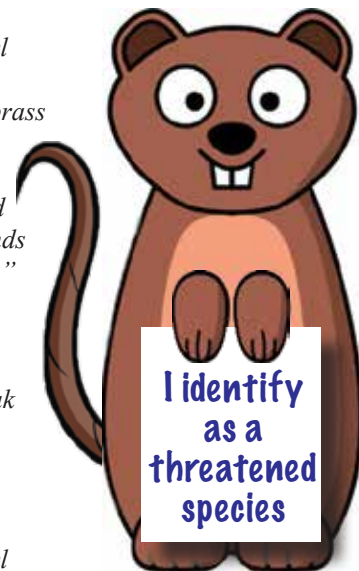
One of Armstrong's greatest hits was a song much loved across America to this day, and has been lately improved for today's hunter. Close your eyes and think 1967. You are driving to the fields in a Ford Country Squire wagon and you stick a tape in the 8-track and out of the speakers, Louis Armstrong croons. It goes something like this:

*I see fields of green, irrigation, too;
I see rifles and scopes for me and you,
And I think to myself
What a wonderful squirrel*

*I see skies of blue and rifle racks,
The bright new optics and pivot tracks
And I says to myself
What a wonderful squirrel*

*The shine of bullets and brass
So pretty on the ground
Is also reflected by
My friends coming 'round
I see farmers shaking hands
saying "How did you do?"
They're really saying
"I shoot them too"*

*I hear the sage rats squeak
I watch them mount
They'll have more babies
Than I could ever count
And I think to myself
What a wonderful squirrel*



Once Louis sang about squirrels, a lot of other artists popped up with big hits on the same topic. Take Cyndi Lauper. Please. Lauper arrived in '83 with boyfriend/manager David Wolff in tow and a hit "Squirrels Just Want to Have Fun," rated by experts as her number two best behind "Time After Time," penned when Lauper was having Wolff trouble.

Van Morrison made it big with "Brown Eyed Squirrel."

Queen pedaled to stardom with "Fat Bottomed Squirrels," while David Bowie wrote "China Squirrel" because he used to hunt out China Hat Road, where he had many encounters with pine squirrels. Same thing with Bobby Vee, who wrote "Go Away, Little Squirrel." Dylan's "Squirrel from the North Country" was actually about a beech squirrel named Bonnie. Look it up.

Remember Tears for Fears? They sang "Everybody Wants to Rule the Squirrel," which charted alongside "Trout (fish them all out)."

The Pet Shop Boys topped the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 with "West End Squirrels," which, of course was about Western gray squirrels, better known out West as silver grays. The hit was a silver record.

R.E.M. scored in '92 with "It's the End of the Squirrel as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)" alongside "Automatic for the People," which a lot of people don't know was about the Ruger 10/22.

In country music, Luke Bryan's "Country Squirrel (Shake it For Me)," "Rock My World Little Country Squirrel" by Brooks & Dunn and "Don't Take the Squirrel" by Tim McGraw all had big runs on CMTV.

Justin Bieber hit with "All Around the Squirrel" featuring Ludacris, who always had to get the Bieb to sight-in his Leupold.

Even Lil Wayne and Eminem teamed up on "Drop the Squirrel," which was recently adapted as the new fight song for the Crane High School orchestra.

Finally, music buffs might point out the Beach Boys sang "California Squirrels" in '65. But they were singing about California gray squirrels, aka gray diggers, which don't measure up to a sage rat, except in size.

SIGSAUER

**YOUR HANDS
AREN'T STEADY.**

OURS ARE.

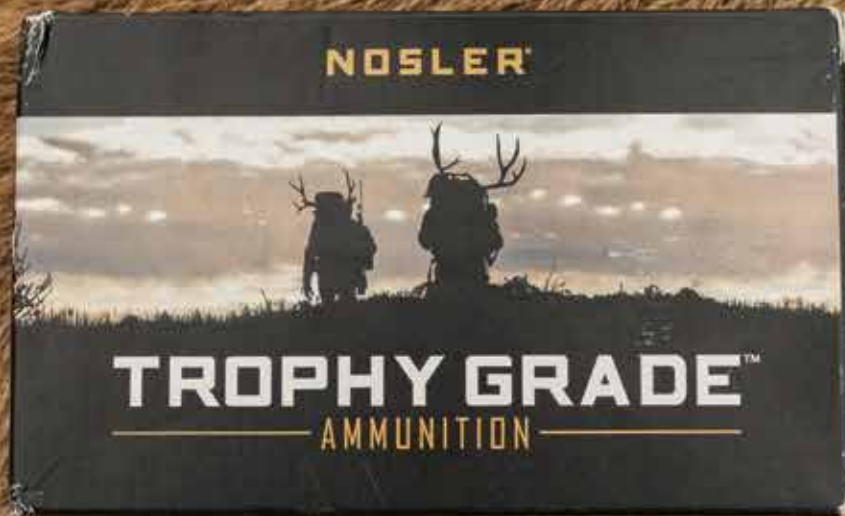
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