

OREGON HUNTER

JULY-AUGUST
2026

\$3.95



2026 OREGON BIG GAME OUTLOOK

**IP28 Near
Fall Ballot**

**OHA Seeks
Wolf Hunt**

TARGETING HERD BULLS

SPEED GOATS & MOUNTAIN GOATS

PLUS:

- **BEST BETS FOR BEAR**
- **DOG-DAY COYOTES**
- **LEFTOVER DEER TAGS**
- **FALL TURKEY**





Only at **KUIU**



LIFETIME WARRANTY ON ALL OUR GEAR

BASE LAYERS | INSULATION | OUTERWEAR | PACKS | SLEEP SYSTEMS | FOOTWEAR | ACCESSORIES



 **KUIU**[®]
ULTRALIGHT HUNTING



CONTENTS

VOL. 44, NO. 4

THE KIND FAMILY

OREGON HUNTER

FEATURES

16 Oregon Fall Big Game Preview *By Jim Yuskavitch*
New mule deer hunt areas highlight the changes for the fall season.

22 Targeting Herd Bulls *By Chad Dotson*
Sometimes a screaming match just gives him the heads-up to move his harem.

26 OHA State Convention Hits the Mark
OHA's 2026 convention was a blast, and bigger plans are on tap for 2027.

30 Drawing a Dream Antelope Hunt *By Jenn Kepler*
Two women of OHA take the High Desert by storm on a pronghorn bowhunt.

34 Two of a Kind Get Their Goats *By Jason Haley*
Husband and wife Milo and Joy Kind both draw goat tags for the same hunt.

OREGON AFIELD



10 BEAR: Check out Oregon's best bets for fall bear.

10 COYOTES: Hunt Oregon desert dogs in the dog days of summer.

11 LEFTOVER TAGS: Will eastside deer changes leave leftovers?

DEPARTMENTS

- 6 SETTING OUR SIGHTS** *6,000 Miles of OHA Momentum*
- 8 OREGON HUNTING QUIZ** *Know Oregon? Win a Work Sharp!*
- 8 HUNTING CALENDAR** *Leftover tags go on sale July 1*
- 12 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE** *IP 28 near ballot; OHA seeks wolf hunt*
- 14 BOWHUNTING** *Tech Can't Trump Technique*
- 38 TRADITIONS** *A Bull in a Bear Market*
- 39 FIELD TO TABLE** *Hungry for Huckleberry Deer Steak?*
- 40 SHARING THE HERITAGE** *A Game Grouse and a First Gobbler*
- 42 TRAIL CAM CONTEST** *Enter to win a prize from Tactacam*
- 44 OHA CHAPTER NEWS** *Chapters host projects, youth days*
- 46 OHA NEWS & VIEWS** *OHA improves Oregon wildlife habitat*
- 48 ASK ODFW** *Tips for scouting & hunting in drought*
- 49 NOSLER PHOTO CONTEST** *Your best shot could win a Nosler rifle!*
- 54 PARTING SHOTS** *Garden Variety Guns*

Cover: South coast elk photographed by Ryan Hoefft

OHA State Office:
541-772-7313 oha@oregonhunters.org
Executive Director
Dr. Todd Adkins tadkins@oregonhunters.org
Editor & Media Director
Duane Dunganon DD@oregonhunters.org
Editorial Assistants
Michelle Simpson, Bret Moore, Amanda Willis
State Officers
President: Steve Hagan 503-551-8645
Vice President: Cindy Rooney 541-430-4722
Secretary: Renee Walasavage 541-705-5762
Treasurer: Christy Hall-Scheufele 541-817-2020
OHA Board of Directors
Chairman Fred Walasavage 541-705-0214
Jim Akenson 541-398-2636
Brian Andrews 971-221-8827
Scott Cain 303-717-3011
Garrett Clark 971-777-0066
Jim Clark 503-547-7354
Paul Donheffner 503-399-1993
Haley Fetzer 971-708-8593
Kelly Forney 541-580-7056
Craig Foster 541-219-9202
Mary Jo Hedrick 541-576-4006
Craig Pfeifer 503-936-4385
Mike Totey 541-974-4084
Conservation Director
TD@oregonhunters.org
Field Director
Bryan Cook 971-270-7035

Official publication of the Oregon Hunters Association, dedicated to wise management of Oregon's huntable wildlife. United in protecting hunter interests in the state of Oregon.

Our mission: Protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.

OREGON HUNTER welcomes articles and photos pertaining to wildlife and hunting in Oregon. We are not responsible for unsolicited material. Unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped return envelope.

Advertising media kits are available. OHA does not necessarily endorse advertisers, or goods and services advertised in OREGON HUNTER.

Address inquiries to OHA State Office, 301 Crater Lake Ave. #C, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501, 541-772-7313, oha@oregonhunters.org <http://www.oregonhunters.org>

OREGON HUNTER (ISSN 1545-8059) is published bimonthly by the Oregon Hunters Association for its membership and is sold on newsstands statewide. Membership rates are: Individual: \$35 a year, \$65 for two years, \$90 for three years, \$800 for lifetime, \$10 for junior, \$12.50 for full-time student; family: \$45 a year, \$80 for two years, \$900 lifetime; business membership \$75. Memberships include \$5 magazine subscription.

Periodicals postage paid at Medford, Ore., and at additional mailing offices. Known Office of Publication: OHA State Office, 301 Crater Lake Ave. #C, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501.

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

Howa™

LIGHT & FAST

22 ARC

VARMINT / TARGET PRECISION MINI ACTIONS



- Available in 22" Std, 20" Steel Light Varmint & 20" Carbon Fiber
- Threaded Barrel / Suppressor Ready
- Machined Receiver & Forged Bolt
- Large Integral Front Barrel Lug
- Tool-Less Firing Pin Removal
- Mini Actions Also Available in .223, 7.62x39, 6.5 Grendel, 350 Legend, 6mmARC
- M-16 Style Extractor
- 5 rd Detachable Mag
- 3 Position Safety
- 12% Shorter Bolt Throw Than Std. Short Actions

SHIPPING NOW!

- 22 ARC outperforms all 22 caliber cartridges in its class
- 22 ARC rivals 22-250 performance from a mini action
- 22 ARC dual-purpose match and varmint applications
- 22 ARC designed to take advantage of today's long ogive, high-BC bullets



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOWA'S 22ARC MA



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: LEGACYSPORTS.COM
CATALOG OUT NOW - REQUEST YOUR FREE COPY TODAY: 1.800.553.4229



LegacySportsIntl



LegacySportsInternational



LegacySportsInt

LEGACY SPORTS INTERNATIONAL



LEARN MORE AT HORNADY.COM

SETTING OUR SIGHTS

BY DR. TODD ADKINS, OHA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SPRAGUE UNIT

State of the State: 6,000 Miles of OHA Momentum

As the dust settles on a whirlwind spring, I find myself looking at a map of Oregon with a profound sense of gratitude and urgency. Since February, I have logged over 6,000 miles driving across our great state. From the high desert to the coast, I have spent the last four months attending local chapter banquets, participating in regular chapter meetings, listening to our members, and witnessing the heartbeat of the Oregon Hunters Association directly. I even wrapped up the coolest trip of the spring by driving from Lincoln City to Ontario in a single day.

We need every single member to register to vote, stay informed on the issues, and help us protect the lifestyle we cherish.

Our local chapters are the absolute lifeblood of this organization. Whether sitting in on your regular monthly meetings to discuss local conservation projects or joining the celebration at annual banquets, I saw the incredible passion of our members, families, and dedicated volunteers. My miles on the road also reinforced my commitment to ensure the state office steps up to find every possible way to assist our local leaders, streamlining our processes and providing the direct support required to maximize our local impact. Every community deserves a strong voice, and we need all 26 of our chapters firing on all cylinders.

Beyond the local meetings, I have enjoyed engagement with the hunting community more broadly. I traveled north to join our chapters in working the Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show, engaging with thousands of outdoor enthusiasts. I also joined OHA staff and Board Members attending crucial Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) commission meetings to monitor wildlife policies that impact our community. Everywhere I went, the message was clear: OHA is engaged, proactive, and respected. And this has been true well before I was hired as your Executive Director.

We have had a truly phenomenal spring. Our community is unified, and our momentum is undeniable. But as we transition into early summer, we must channel this incredible energy into the critical arena where our future will be decided. We are ready for the strategic challenge ahead in this year's election.

Make no mistake, the upcoming election cycle poses serious challenges to our hunting heritage and scientific wildlife management. Specifically, the impending threat of Initiative Petition 28 (IP 28) seeks to upend our outdoor traditions entirely. The decisions made at the ballot box this November will resonate for generations. Our opponents are organized, well-funded, and determined to destroy our Oregon way of life.

To lead this fight, we have built a campaign plan that will be powerful, focused, and stretch every dollar we raise to maximize our win. OHA is mobilizing our resources strategically to ensure that the voice of the Oregon hunter is loud, clear, and fully funded right here at home to educate voters and send the extremists packing.

Your involvement is the deciding factor in this effort. Enjoy your summer scouting trips, time on the water, and preparation for the fall seasons. But keep your eyes on the horizon. We need every single member to register to vote, stay informed on the issues, and help us protect the lifestyle we cherish. We have proven what we can accomplish when we stand together. Let's take that 6,000-mile momentum straight to the ballot box and win big.

Future generations are counting on us, and I know we will not fail them.



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.



oregonhunters.org



Join OHA and get 6 issues of Oregon Hunter magazine & Oregon Hunter's Calendar. Call us at 541-772-7313 or visit oregonhunters.org



**PROUD TO SUPPORT THE
OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION
AND THE
NEXT GENERATION
OF RESPONSIBLE
SPORTSMEN!**



SAVE \$10
ON A \$50
PURCHASE

IN-STORE ONLY

Coupon required for discount. No photocopies accepted. Limit one per household. Excludes gift cards, game licenses, and permits. Cannot be combined with any other offer. No exchanges. Discount off regular priced merchandise only. VALID THROUGH 12/31/2026



40088889023

FIND A STORE IN YOUR AREA AT www.COASTALCOUNTRY.com



WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

HELPING SHARP OREGON HUNTERS HOLD THEIR EDGE

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

1. Not all roads lead to Rome. Which road does?

- a) 395 c) 140
- b) 95 d) none of the above

2. Places you're most likely to find sage grouse are places you're unlikely to find:

- a) antelope c) blacktails
- b) mule deer d) jackrabbits

3. Which of the following are divers?

- a) redheads c) canvasbacks
- b) buffleheads d) all of the above

4. An Oregon deer with 30-inch wide bifurcated antlers is almost certainly a:

- a) blacktail c) Idaho whitetail
- b) mule deer d) Columbia whitetail

5. A duck that goes nuts over filberts is:

- a) goldeneye c) bluebill
- b) canvasback d) wood duck

6. Bridge Creek Wilderness is in which?

- a) Grizzly Unit c) Ochoco Unit
- b) Fossil Unit d) Murderers Cr. Unit

7. Antelope roam in which units?

- a) Lookout Mountain & Steens Mountain
- b) Stott Mountain & Saddle Mountain
- c) all of the above
- d) none of the above

8. If you get gold tamarack needles down your shirt, you're probably hunting:

- a) blacktail c) Rocky Mountain elk
- b) Roosevelt elk d) spring bear

9. Bear season closes in W. Oregon on:

- a) Oct. 31 c) Dec. 31
- b) Nov. 30 d) Jan. 31

10. Cold Springs Refuge is in the:

- a) Rogue Valley c) Willamette Valley
- b) Klamath Basin d) Columbia Basin

TRUE OR FALSE:

11. Canvasback drakes have green heads.

12. Mountain goats are native to Oregon.



Where in Oregon?

Identify this Oregon river, 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 July 15!



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Jason Tobias, Klamath Falls

Jason's name was drawn from among the OHA members who recognized Picture Gorge in Grant County.

JUNE 26-28

OHA SW Cascades meadow fencing project, TD@oregonhunters.org

JUNE 27

OHA Lake County Youth Day 541-417-0042

JULY 1

Leftover tags go on sale

AUGUST 1

Fall bear season opens; Elk damage general season opens

AUGUST 8

OHA Malheur County Chapter youth shotgun shoot 208-573-5556

AUGUST 15

OHA Yamhill Chapter youth shotgun shoot 503-737-9483

AUGUST 21

OHA Klamath Chapter Gerber Reservoir youth antelope hunt BBQ 541-281-6518

AUGUST 22

OHA Ochoco Chapter Celebrate the Outdoors 541-408-4816

AUGUST 28

Bow tag sale deadline

AUGUST 29

General archery and most controlled bow seasons open

SEPTEMBER 1

Seasons open for mourning dove, forest grouse, western Oregon quail & fall turkey

SEPTEMBER 12-13

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

SEPTEMBER 19-20

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

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



WORK SHARP
SHARPENERS

THE KNIFE SHARPENING COMPANY

MAKE SHARP HAPPEN.



**KNIFE SHARPENERS
BUILT FOR HUNTERS.**

Designed by hunters, for hunters. Work Sharp sharpeners are fast, easy to use, and work every time—even at night, with blood on your hands, and snow on the ground.

SHOP OUR SELECTION OF FIELD SHARPENERS AT
WORKSHARPTOOLS.COM



WORKSHARPTOOLS.COM

TOP FIELD SHARPENERS

GUIDED FIELD SHARPENER



FOLDING FIELD SHARPENER



POCKET KNIFE SHARPENER





CASCADES/J. ENGLISH

Oregon's Best Bets for Fall Bear

The controlled spring bear seasons are popular, but spring isn't the best time for hunters simply itching to take the field early and have a shot. Harvest stats aren't great. And the fall offers a five-month season with over-the-counter tags, an Aug. 1 opener for those needing an excuse to head for the hills, and a vast hunt area that's almost too vast.

So where should fall bear hunters go? Here's what harvest data and ODFW Rogue District Biologist Mathew Vargas suggest.

The Southwest is best, followed by the Northwest. Applegate produced 139 fall bears in 2024 and 95 last year with the general tag. Hunters take a dozen others with "Additional Fall Bear" tags.

The Rogue produced 108 fall bears (second most) in 2024, and another 101



OHA member Jensen Newton didn't wait for deer and elk seasons to take this August Santiam bear.

last year, but posted many more hunters and less success.

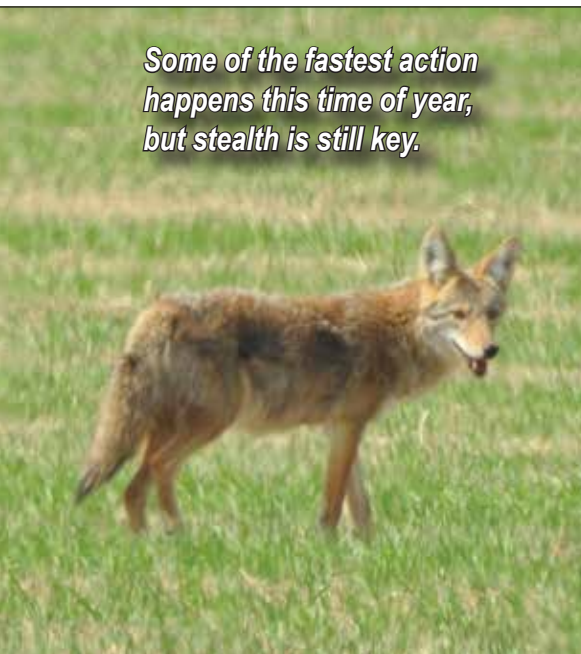
The Northwest produced 436 fall bears (2024), with Santiam accounting for 97. Santiam is large with a good mix of high/middle elevation public lands. It had the most hunters and 5.8% success. It recorded 102 bears last year.

Siuslaw produced 66 fall bears but is king in spring with 130 taken and 22% success. Last year saw 134 spring bears and 28% success. Vargas attributed this to large clearcuts on private timberland and

numerous hunters from the Willamette Valley hunting the closest portion of the SW hunt area.

"Jackson and Josephine have lots of bears," he said. Rogue Unit fall production is due to "more hunters with deer and elk tags and chance encounters." Most of the bears hunters check in at ODFW are in October during deer and elk seasons.

Vargas said few hunters target the Aug. 1 opener, so you can probably have your favorite hunt areas and camp spots to yourself. —JASON HALEY



Some of the fastest action happens this time of year, but stealth is still key.

Hunting Coyotes in Dog Days

Summertime is a season of bad decision making. There are never more coyotes on Oregon's landscape than in July and in August. We hear their barks, their howls, their screeches. We hear the pups on a clear night. And sometimes we hear them gather for the chase – well fed, sassy and under-informed.

If there is one best place to scout for coyotes it is around cattle. In the absence of beef, an elk herd is the next best bet. Some coyotes make their whole living off elk. And there should be consequences for that.

Some of the fastest action happens this time of year, but stealth is still a top priority. Hide the vehicle behind a fold in the ground. Close the doors softly. Approach the call set walking into the wind. Sit down, backs to a fence post or a tree or a bush to break up the silhouettes. One hunter should watch the downwind side. Face masks and gloves are mandatory.

The sounds could be coyote vocalizations. Coyotes are territorial and want to investigate if other coyotes enter their territory. Try pup sounds.

An alternative is to start with a lone-some howl then go quiet for two minutes. Then turn to bird sounds like a woodpecker or a flicker in distress. Call for 30 seconds and go quiet for two minutes and repeat the cycle.

In elk country, calf elk sounds can bring in coyotes and larger predators. Elk is every predator's favorite main course.

After 15 minutes of calling, go quiet and watch five more minutes.

I use a Fox Pro electronic call, but there are other good choices. If the batteries die, I pull a call out of my pocket.

If I could only hunt coyotes one month of the year, it would be August. There is no better time to hunt the little prairie wolf than in the season of bad choices. —GARY LEWIS

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Some coyotes are mousers, like this one between Bend and Sisters. A mouser is likely to come to bird sounds. Use squeaks to get it to come within shotgun range.

Got Leftovers?

New deer hunt areas may leave some without tags, but might produce leftovers in a few hunts

How did you do in the controlled tag drawing? With the implementation of the Oregon Mule Deer Plan, the hunts are now organized according to herd ranges, which should point us toward better management of mule deer in the long term. We already knew there was going to be a 9-percent reduction in eastern Oregon deer tags, so not drawing a tag should not be a surprise. But there is another chance in the leftover tag pool.

If you didn't draw a deer tag, then pay attention: there is still a chance to get leftovers. Here is what you need to know.

Leftover tags, which are the deer (and elk) tags which were not awarded in the controlled tag drawing, will be available first-come, first served on July 1, starting at 10 a.m. Note: hunters who were successful in the hunt draw or already purchased a tag will not be eligible for a hunt for the same species.

On July 1, log in with your ODFW username and password, then navigate to the online licensing page and hit refresh to see the Enter Leftover Tag Sale button at 10 a.m. From here you will be directed to a purchase page or to a queue if there is a line. Once in the queue, wait your turn. At this point, you have 15 minutes to make a purchase.

Some tags are for areas with a high percentage of private land. Do the research before July 1. Check success rates in the big game statistics at MyODFW.com

WALLOWA COUNTY/CHAD DOTSON



Could new northeast Oregon whitetail-only tags appear among the leftovers this year?

There is an option to exchange a general season or controlled hunt tag for a leftover tag, starting July 2.

With the changes in eastside controlled hunts and uncertainty about where hunters will apply, with no track record, all a person can do is make an educated guess. Look at the new layout of game manage-

ment units for eastside deer and contrast the overlay from the past management strategy.

Sometimes leftovers are better the second time around.

For more information, click on <https://myodfw.com/articles/how-to-purchase-leftover-tags> —GARY LEWIS

Don't Be Misled!!!

Remember... Your Valuables Are Important to You.



Come let Knute and Marie show you the difference in safes!



Before you consider buying a safe ANYWHERE...

Go to www.RogueSafe.com and view our video! See how easily a typical safe can be broken into in under two minutes!

Rogue Safe

773-6020
1904 Hazel Street
Medford

ON X HUNT
THE #1 HUNTING GPS APP

USE PROMO CODE OHA26 TO GET 20% OFF YOUR ONX SUBSCRIPTION AND ONX WILL DONATE TO OHA.



OHA presses need for controlled take of wolves in NE Oregon

Proposed pilot program would normalize wolf management

OHA has again asked the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to direct ODFW staff to initiate a wolf management pilot project using controlled take along with a monitoring program within the Willowa District of the Northeast Region.

“Wolves have prospered in Oregon, and this past year’s 13% minimum population growth is a strong indicator,” said Jim Akenson, OHA State Board member. “It is time to normalize the species and consider other wildlife and social values that wolves are negatively influencing, such as ranching and elk hunting.”

The Willowa County Wolf Work Group – in which OHA participates – had an opportunity to address the Commission at its April meeting in Lincoln City to inform them on the current impacts of wolves and the need for a pilot project involving controlled hunting of wolves in a specific area.

“We had hoped for the Commission to direct ODFW staff to pursue that,” Akenson said. “We may not have accomplished that objective, but feedback indicates that our message on management need was both clear and urgent. OHA’s request connects to the criteria for applied controlled take in the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan and meets the conditions of chronic

livestock depredation and elk populations not meeting management objectives.”

All six wildlife management units in the Willowa District are below elk management objectives, according to 2026 ODFW data. Elk populations in the Willowa District range from a low of 31% of management objective in the Wenaha Unit to 91% in the Chesnimnus Unit. The three units where livestock depredation is current and persistent are Minam, Chesnimnus, and Sled Springs, which are at 55%, 91%, and 58% of management objective, respectively.

Another key indicator of elk population health is cow-calf ratios, which currently occur at 17 calves per 100 cows for the Minam, Chesnimnus, and Sled Springs units, respectively. These are not adequate ratios, and they are well below a targeted minimum of 30 per 100 desirable to support a healthy elk population.

OHA will continue working to ensure we better understand the impacts of wolf predation on ungulates and that intensive management of wolves occurs for the benefit of deer, elk and moose in Oregon.

OHA seeks to ensure that intensive management of wolves occurs for the benefit of deer, elk and moose in Oregon.

DONATE TO OHA'S VICTORY FUND AT
www.oregonhunters.org/donate

IP28 surpasses signature goal

Extreme measure now on pace for November ballot

As of May 20, IP28, also known as the PEACE Act, has reached 120,935 signatures, surpassing the minimum signature threshold of 117,173.

While it is estimated they still need to collect an additional 20,000 signatures to have enough coverage to account for the signature validation process, this signals a definitive milestone for the initiative on its way to qualifying for the November ballot.

“OHA has worked against this initiative, and all its previous iterations, for the last five years,” said OHA lobbyist Amy Patrick. “This is when all of the warnings OHA has provided to our membership come to fruition: it’s time for battle. Should this qualify for the November ballot, we want Oregonians to hand it a historical defeat that echoes throughout the nation and warns others who might think Oregon is an easy mark for these types of efforts.”

The proponents have until July 2 to collect and submit signatures. With good weather and the sizable crowds expected for the 10-day Portland Rose Festival, they are expected to gather enough signatures to qualify for the ballot.

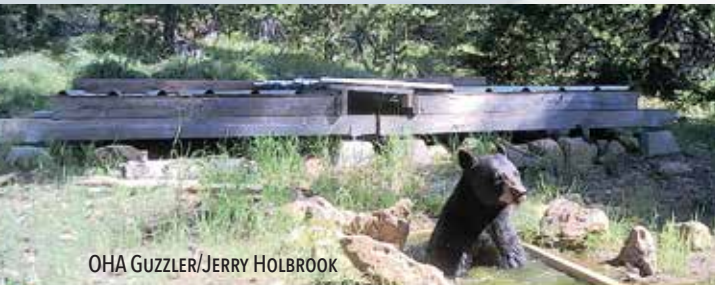
OHA continues to lead the fight against IP28. Visit our website (<https://oregonhunters.org/initiative-petition-28-2>) for additional information and be ready to join the call to action this summer if they qualify.

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 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

Wildlife Super Fund

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

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



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

P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501
(541) 772-7313

www.oregonhunters.org/donate **OR DONATE ONLINE!**



Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone: Home _____ Work _____
 Email (optional): _____

Please accept my contribution to OHA's Special Funds:

Oregon Hunters' Victory Fund:
 \$20 \$50 \$100 Other: \$ _____

OHA Wildlife Super Fund:
 \$20 \$50 \$100 Other: \$ _____

OHA Youth Heritage Fund:
 \$20 \$50 \$100 Other: \$ _____

Unrestricted Gift to be used where needed most:
 \$20 \$50 \$100 Other: \$ _____

Total contribution: \$ _____

Check Charge my: Visa/MC/Discover/Amex Exp. date _____

Card # _____

CV2# on back _____ Signature _____

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

From Cotton Pants to Carbon Fiber

Tech can't trump technique

My brother and I hustled through the dark woods, trying to position ourselves below the bugling bull in Oregon's Aldrich Mountains. Without headlamps, we stumbled over logs and pushed through prickly brush. Our cotton pants snagged every thorn, collected every hooked seed, and soaked up the dew from knee-high grasses. My wood frame trappers pack, with no waistbelt, squeaked with every step, and the canvas material swept loudly against the brush. I carried a heavy compound bow, 43 inches long with fixed metal sight pins, no glow. My arrows were bulky aluminum shafts. But none of these inconveniences were on our minds. Our singular focus was to get in a position for a shot.

Our dash paid off. The bull was now above us and moving in our direction. Kneeling behind a downed tree, I estimated yardage of trees around me and watched the 6-point bull following a single cow. I held the bow string tightly with my three fingered, leather shooting glove, hoping for a chance to shoot. He followed her tracks 50 yards away, a distance too far for me. The opportunity seemed to slip away.

That was 1995. This early hunting experience was one of many that helped my brother and I become successful bowhunters. The gear we used was the same as our father used when he taught us to elk hunt. We were often cold, wet, and uncomfortable. Our bows lobbed bulky arrows shot with a finger release, so our range was limited to about 40 yards.

Much has changed since then.

In this modern world, we go to the woods with confidence in our gear and comfortable clothing. Being cold and wet



Since the author packed this elk with his wood frame trapper's pack in 1995, tech has advanced and fashions have changed, but neither will get you a bull without elk knowledge and hunting skills.

is rare because of high tech clothing. Accurate shots out to 60 yards are common with highly engineered bows that shoot lightweight carbon fiber arrows. Rangefinders and bow releases increase our accuracy. Digital mapping keeps track of points of interest where we hunt.

But technology can't trump the development of hunting skills through experience passed down over generations.

For example, our father, uncles, and their close friends taught us that successful elk hunting was about understanding elk behavior. Elk have large home ranges, which move around the landscape depending on the time of year. In the summer

months, bulls will be in bachelor groups separate from the small groups of cows and calves. They feed on summer ranges at higher elevations.


By September, the bulls start rutting and compete to enlarge their harems. These small herds of elk move to feeding grounds overnight and early morning, then move to bedding areas in dark timber at first light. Finding feeding areas, travel routes, and bedding areas are important skills to learn if you want to get close to elk.

Bulls bugle to locate other bulls and intimidate each other. Cows mew to communicate with calves and other cows. As

a bowhunter, the trick is to know when and how loud to make these sounds. Cow calls in early season are effective to bring bulls into bow range. Bugling in the early morning can help locate rutting bulls. In our experience, bugling near bulls with several cows will often push them away to avoid conflict with another bull. Sometimes bugles work great if you can position yourself between a bull and his cows. Trial and error are the best way to learn what calls work well in specific locations.

On that morning in 1995, Ron waited for the right moment to bugle at the bull as if challenging for his cow. The 6-point screamed back followed by a thundering chuckle while plodding in our direction, antlers forward as if to say, "don't mess with me!" The woods went eerily quiet, and it felt like my heart was in my throat. This biggest bull of my young bowhunting career was about to turn broadside at 30 yards. This was it. My bulky aluminum shaft and broadhead found its mark.

We didn't forget this lesson.

Technology has surely changed the way we hunt, but the heart of bowhunting remains unchanged. Patience, observation, and experience are the foundations of every successful hunt. Modern equipment and clothing make the hunt easier and more comfortable, but success is not certain. Take it from an old hunter: spend time afield keeping track of failures and success, understand the game you pursue, be persistent, and success will follow. 

Technology has changed the way we hunt, but the heart of bowhunting remains unchanged.



Check Out
Our Hunting
Package
Specials at
DavisTent.com



Supporting Conservation of Land & Wildlife

Davis Tent supports and are lifetime members of:

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
The Mule Deer Foundation
Colorado Outfitters Association
Colorado Foundation for Agriculture
Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society


Davis Tent also supports:

Wounded Veteran Organizations
Youth Hunting Opportunities
Oregon Hunters Association



PROTECTING WHAT WE LOVE

We are a Certified 2% For Conservation Business



1-877-ELK-CAMP ▪ DavisTent.com
4230 Broadway St. Denver, Colorado 80216



2026 Oregon Big Game Preview

**New mule deer
hunt areas highlight
changes for this fall.**

BY JIM YUSKAVITCH

A mild winter followed by a likely hot, dry summer are the bookends between which this year's big game prospects are lodged. The mild, lean-snow winter made for easier access to forage and minimal winter mortality for both adults and offspring. But a droughty summer, especially if it's severe and lengthy, will give big game animals a challenge to navigate. Such summer weather conditions could also affect hunter access for the upcoming season if large swaths of timberlands are closed due to wildfire danger, especially if the risk continues well into the fall where it will affect more hunts.

But overall, it looks like hunters will encounter generally healthy numbers of deer, elk and other big game, with exceptions here and there. A selection of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists from around the state offered their views on big game numbers and how things might shake out for hunters this year. Here's what they had to say.

Deer

Black-tailed deer populations within their range west of the Cascades have been making what appears to be a steady comeback over the past five years or so. Reasons for past lower numbers included predation, habitat changes and disease. More recent surveys show a stable population along with gains in some wildlife management units.

Deer hair loss syndrome is still present in Coast Range animals, and at one time was widespread. It's less common now, and because it doesn't cause much mortality, it's no longer a particular concern.

"Overall, things are looking good for black-tailed deer on the North Coast," said Tillamook-based Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Austin Reeder. "Deer numbers are looking strong." He did express some concern over the mild winter, which, while good for deer and elk survival, might affect the severity of the fire season. That will be the general situation all the way down the Coast Range.

The status for black-tailed deer along the west slope of the Cascade Range is equally good.

"Our deer are doing pretty well, and the numbers are going up," reported Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Alejandra Martinez, who works out of the Springfield office. "We're seeing lots of young bucks, but the older, bigger bucks are getting harder to find on the landscape."



JOHN MCFARLAND III

Poachers using thermals may be taking a toll on big blacktail bucks.

That's setting off alarm bells because that relatively recent decline in trophy buck numbers is due largely to poachers' increasing use of thermal imaging devices to locate animals.

Under current rules, if you are in possession of a firearm, tag and thermal device, you are breaking the law.

The situation is serious enough that industrial timberlands owners are getting involved. If someone hunting in the East Lane Travel Management Area is caught with a thermal imaging device, they and their entire party will be permanently banned from the property.

East of the Cascades, in mule deer country, the situation is different. Mule deer populations have been declining across the western U.S. for a number of years and Oregon's mule deer haven't been spared. There are multiple causes for this decline, but habitat degradation and loss is the primary culprit.

But that doesn't mean all is doom and gloom for hunting prospects. Even with an ongoing population-wide decline, deer numbers can still be up in particular places. That's the current case for northeast Oregon mule deer.

"Deer are doing pretty good," said Enterprise-based Assistant District Wildlife Biologist Katrina Lopez. "We had a significantly high survival rate over the winter, and we are above all our goals."

Northeast Oregon is also white-tailed deer country, and this year deer in the Wallowa Valley had some problems with Epizootic hemorrhagic disease, or EHD, a viral infection that can cause extensive hemorrhaging and is sometimes fatal.

"But we still have lots of white-tailed deer and good hunting opportunities, especially in the national forest, upper Wallowa Valley, and the Lostine and Wenaha areas," said Lopez.

Further south in High Desert country, Hines-based District Wildlife Biologist Lee Foster reported, "We had a mild winter with good overwinter survival. Our buck ratios are at or above management objectives."

He noted that beginning this year, ODFW is implementing new hunt areas for deer that, in addition to potentially boosting hunter success rates, will give the agency additional data for tracking and assessing mule deer numbers.

On a more negative note, Foster added, "It looks like we are going into a drought this year. The desert is going to be very dry, and water will be a valuable commodity."

ODFW estimates the current mule deer population in Oregon at 113,084 within 77 hunt units — well below the statewide management objective of 346,200.



Hunters are important stewards of Oregon's wildlife.



Protect Oregon's Wildlife by turning in poachers.
 Call *OSP (*677) on mobile or 1-800-452-7888 to report.
 Visit — ProtectOregonsWildlife.com to learn more.

Elk

Although Roosevelt elk herds are not doing as well overall as their eastern Oregon counterparts, hunters can expect decent hunting opportunities along the Coast Range, driven partially by the mild winter and ongoing logging operations on private timberlands that produce early seral-stage vegetation.

Austin Reeder reported that his North Coast elk herds are fine and are at management objective in the Saddle Mountain Unit.

It's a different story along the west slope of the Cascade Range.

"Elk are still having difficulty in the Cascades," explained Alejandra Martinez. "The habitat isn't as good as it used to be due to a decline in logging that opened up habitat for them."

Unlike the Coast Range, where considerable acreage is in active commercial timberlands ownership, the majority of the Cascades is managed by the U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management where the number of timber sales has dropped considerably over the past three decades.

While wildfire on the Cascade landscape does open habitat to new growth, it doesn't help elk as much as one might assume. Christopher Yee, wildlife biologist also based in Springfield, pointed out that while both deer and elk use areas after a fire, elk don't respond with a big population jump the way deer do. ODFW has stopped offering cow tags in the Cascades to help stem the decline, but that is really their only tool, because it's the federal government that manages the habitat.

"Habitat," said Martinez, "is our biggest concern."

As is typical, the scenario for Rocky Mountain elk in northeast Oregon is considerably better.

"Elk had really good survival over the year and roughly the same numbers as last year," said Katrina Lopez of the Enterprise

COAST ELK/WILLY ONARHEIM



Private-land logging has Coast elk in better shape than in the Cascades.

ODFW office. "We had a mild winter, and the elk stayed up in the forest a little longer."

She did note that they are going into drought conditions and that may result in poor forage, which – along with predation – could affect elk numbers over the course of the year.

The biggest challenge to elk hunters in that part of the state may be access rather than elk numbers. Industrial timberlands owner Manulife has ended its public access agreement with ODFW's Access and Habitat Program to 270,000 acres in northeast Oregon along with another 12,400 acres in southwest Oregon.

While not known for its elk hunting, the High Desert region does provide some opportunity, mainly in the Silvies, North Malheur and High Desert units. Lee Foster reported some good news in that, after years of struggling with low bull ratios, they are now at management objective in the North Malheur Unit.

ONE SPARK CHANGES EVERYTHING

Check fire restrictions before heading afield. Prevent your campfires, smoking materials, equipment and off-road vehicles from sparking the next wildfire.



LAKE COUNTY/RANDY SHIPLEY

A harsh winter followed a good pronghorn fawn crop two years ago in Lake County. Regardless, there's no bad year to draw an antelope tag.

Foster noted that, "Calf ratios were not that great this year. That's a result of the winter kill from winter of 2024-25 that reduced cow elk numbers." Because of that delayed effect, hunters will be seeing fewer spike bulls this year than is typical.

The current Roosevelt elk population estimate is 48,944. Management objective is 70,850. There are an estimated 67,394 Rocky Mountain elk in the state, just shy of the 73,450 objective.

Pronghorn

"We had a really good crop two years ago," said Lee Foster. "They won't be mature bucks this year, but they will be next year. Hopefully, hunters will recognize that."

He did note that the hard winter of 2024-25 also took a bite out of the pronghorn population, although the impacts were most severe in the southern part of Lake County.

The current pronghorn population is estimated at 25,000.

Bighorn Sheep

Both Lopez in Enterprise and Foster in Hines reported that their bighorn herds – Rocky Mountain bighorns and California bighorns, respectively – are doing well with no recent disease issues. Lopez noted that the last pneumonia outbreak in her district was the Wenaha herd in 2024.

Nevertheless, ODFW continues to monitor bighorn herds statewide for *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, or Movi, infections. In February, working with the Hells Canyon Bighorn Sheep Recovery Initiative partners, ODFW biologists captured and GPS collared 59 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep from the Mountain View herd and another 29 from the Wenaha Wildlife Area as part of its ongoing disease testing work.

General estimates for bighorn populations in Oregon are 900 to 1,000 Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep and 4,000 California bighorns.

Rocky Mountain Goat

Oregon's Rocky Mountain goat population continues to do well and is largely stable. The estimated population is 1,100 to 1,300 with most in the Elkhorn and Wallowa Mountains, along with herds in the Strawberry Mountains and central Cascades around Mount Jefferson.

Lopez noted that two tags have been cut from the Snake River Herd hunt as ODFW felt they had been taking out too many nannies.



GUN RIGHTS RESTORED



*Felonies Reduced, Crimes Removed,
Rights Restored!*

Serving ALL of Oregon

 OREGON GUN LAW

oregongunlaw.com



(541) 227-2266



info@oregongunlaw.com

CALL OR EMAIL FOR A **FREE** CONSULTATION



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

40% OFF

JULY 6 - SEPT 25, 2026

EXCLUSIVE RETAIL STORE DISCOUNT



Win this Knife!

When you spend \$200 or more, you will be automatically entered into a raffle to win a 15535OR-01 Taggedout®. Drawing will be held October 2nd, 2026.

PERSONALIZE WITH TEXT LASERMARKING

FOR ONLY \$25

QUESTIONS?

PLEASE EMAIL

RETAILSTORE@BENCHMADE.COM



SCAN THE QR CODE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS LIMITED TIME OFFER

1. DOWNLOAD AND FILL OUT THE ORDER FORM
2. COMPLETE THE LASERMARK FORM (IF APPLICABLE)
3. SUBMIT COMPLETED FORM(S) IN PERSON OR TO
RETAILSTORE@BENCHMADE.COM

Exclusions & Proof of Affiliation: Limited to 10 knives per person. Limited to knives only and not eligible for use on gold class, customs, cutlery, unlimited limited models or other Benchmade products. NO AUTOMATIC KNIVES OUTSIDE OF OREGON. No cash or checks accepted with order form. Lasermark images are excluded from this offer. Acceptable proof of affiliation include business card, membership card, or most recent newsletter. Exclusive to OHA members only. To be eligible to enter raffle customer must be a Member of the OHA and purchase a knife during the promotional period. Once entry per person. Drawing to be held by October 2nd, 2026. Need not be present to win. Winner will be contacted by phone/email and knife will be shipped direct to you. Must be a minimum of 20 orders for raffle to take place. **NOTE: ALL ORDER LEAD TIMES ARE 1-5 BUSINESS DAYS.**

TARGETING HERD BULLS



Embrace the chaos of Oregon's elk rut.

By Chad Dotson

While shadowing an elk herd, I bugled from a distance and then worked my way into the herd that was slowly grazing up the mountain to bed for the day. I made a few elk noises as I got close, but I didn't bugle at the herd bull as I worked my way in. Even after he bugled at me a couple times trying to get me to disclose my position, I did not respond. Here's why.

What is a Herd Bull?

Oregon hunters often talk of herd bulls, but what are we really talking about? A herd bull is one that is mature enough that he has secured a harem of cows and established himself as the dominant breeding bull in that herd. We aren't talking about yearling bulls following their mothers around. Also, let's toss all the 2-year-old raghorn bulls out with the spikes. Can a 2-year-old bull breed cows? Absolutely. Can you find a 2-year-old bull with a group of cows acting very much like he thinks he is the king? Yes. But his reign will only last until the first 3-year-old shows up.

When hunters think of herd bulls, we all like to envision the thick-necked old troll with heavy, towering black antlers whose gravelly bugle strikes fear in the hearts of all other bulls. But let's keep it real. Most Oregon archery units outside of the "Big 3" are managed for opportunity rather than quality, so we are going to consider any 3-year-old bull (generally your solid 5 point) and older capable of being a herd bull.

Throughout archery season, pre-rut, full-rut and post-rut behavior can vary dramatically, even among individual elk or herds.

Hunting the Early Season Pre-Rut

Oregon archery elk season starts during the last weekend of August, when most mature bulls are still by themselves. Bachelor groups of mature bulls have mostly broken up as testosterone levels are surging. Bulls that have been buddies since last winter are suddenly not getting along very well. These bulls are generally still on the same summer loop or circuit they used to run, but they are putting an emphasis on prepping for the upcoming rut.

The bull answers your every bugle, not because he wants to fight you, but because he wants you to keep telling him where you are.

Ambush hunting at this time of year can be an effective way to kill the biggest bulls in your unit. It also requires the most homework. If your summer scouting or trail cameras have told you a target bull likes a specific area, setting an ambush to intercept him on his circuit can be effective.

I've heard all the excuses as to why western hunters don't want to use treestands for elk, but tree stands aren't just for whitetails; they can be deadly for big bulls. Focus on water sources (elk require 4 gallons of water per day), wallows, rub lines, meadow edges or major trails on established benches.

Will you have to spend long boring hours hanging on the side of a tree? Likely. Will you see endless elk? Very unlikely. But if your target bull comes by your tree while you're sitting in it, you won't have an entire herd of cows using their eyes, ears and noses to try to rat you out.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

The author took this Wallowa Mountains herd bull by slipping into the herd without announcing himself with bugles and revealing his location.

Your biggest problem will be keeping your heart from beating so loud that he hears it.

In broken country where glassing is an option, spot-and-stalking big bulls can prove effective. In this scenario, you need to think less like an elk hunter and more like a mule deer hunter. Get the wind and cover in your favor and be sneaky.

Searching for Cows

In the short window of time when a mature bull goes from being on his own to establishing himself in a herd of cows, he is probably the most vulnerable he will be for the entire season. While he is searching for cows, he is simply cruising to find other elk, so calling can bring him in for a closer look. He might get very vocal and come charging in, but more likely than not, a mature bull will talk very little. He may even come in silently. Your calling setup should last longer than normal, and your calling frequency should be less. Resist the urge to overcall, and stay patient.

Shadowing the Herd

Once the mature bulls have joined up with cows it can be very difficult to call them in, and it's very unlikely that you will call them away from their cows, but you may get a bull to cross

through his cow group to your side to position himself between you and his cows. Most of the best mature bull hunters employ herd shadowing to some extent. Mostly, it just means putting yourself as close to the herd as you can for as long as you can and hoping an opportunity presents itself.

When herd shadowing, I like to bugle at the herd bull once from several hundred yards. This tells every elk in the herd (not just the herd bull) that there is another bull nearby. Then, I get quiet and try not to bugle to him anymore. Many times, I have made the mistake of calling my way into the herd.

Hunters often say, "He was answering me every time I bugled but never got closer than 150 yards the whole time. When I pressed him, he shut up and pushed his cows out of there!" I believe he is answering your every bugle not because he wants to fight you, but because he wants you to keep telling him where you are. He is assessing the threat level, and you keep obliging him with your whereabouts. Use raking or other non-verbal elk noises to let the herd know that the bull they heard earlier is still around. All the while you are quietly sneaking closer to the herd.

Now is where it gets tricky. Once I have snuck in close, I don't like to blow a face-melting bugle at him. I like to add more raking, or glunking, or tending squeals to let him know I've successfully infiltrated his cow herd. Not only was I able to get the sneak on him, but now I'm tending one of his cows. At this point, you need to read the room. If he is getting worked up, then you can match him. If he is getting heated, this is a good time for a lip bawl bugle. If he still doesn't want a screaming match with you, don't try to start one. Stay as close as you can for as long as you can.

Embracing the Chaos

The elk rut can be chaotic. Elk do things that distract other elk in the group. Use these instances to your advantage.

Just as I was getting into the elk bubble of that herd I was shadowing, an unseen cow pegged my movement. She didn't see me, but she knew something wasn't right. She busted, so I immediately grabbed my bugle and bugled at her. She forced my hand, but up until that point I hadn't played that card. These elk were expecting a bull to appear there, and that mysterious intruder had just pushed the herd bull's cow. At least that's what I hoped the herd bull would think.

He fired a bugle back. The other cows began to move, but because they thought I was another bull, they didn't blow out of the country.

The herd bull didn't race in to beat me up, but now he was in a panic because his cows were spread out and unorganized, and there was another bull nearby ready to take them.

He repeatedly screamed and trotted from one cow to the next, trying to gather them up. This made for a herd that was very distracted. This also opened an entirely new playbook. I could be a cow that he left behind, a lost calf that evokes reactions out of cows and bulls alike, or I could continue being the challenger bull.

I may have screamed at him a time or two more, not with the intention to call him in, but to keep him worried about impending theft of his cows.

I didn't have to stay still, because the chaos allowed me to move quickly and precisely until I slipped an arrow behind his shoulder and watched him fall in sight.

If you bump a herd, stay on them, embrace the chaos, and claim your herd bull.





GUN CALENDAR RAFFLE '27

SEE WINNERS AT
oregonhunters.org
EVERY WEEK!

**Enter NOW for a chance
to win 1 of 52 gun prizes!
A GUN EVERY WEEK IN 2027!**

Values \$500-\$1,800!



SCAN TO SEE PRIZES
& BUY CALENDARS!

Each \$50 purchased
chance to win includes:

-  2027 OHA Gun Raffle Calendar
& Chance to Win 1 of 52 Guns!
-  1-year OHA Membership
(new, renewal or a gift membership,
or \$35 toward pledge life membership).

4,000 offered. Drawing:
Dec. 30, 2026, 2 p.m., OHA State Office,
301 Crater Lake Ave. Suite C, Medford, OR.
NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.

**Call OHA at 541-772-7313
or visit OHA's online store at
www.oregonhunters.org/store**



**WHY RENEW
ANY OTHER WAY?**

**BUY NOW AND GET A
YEAR ADDED ON TO
YOUR MEMBERSHIP!**





Umpqua Chapter members baked desserts that were auctioned for a chance to win the Key Gun. Each sold for close to \$1,000. That takes the cake!

OHA CONVENTION

HITS THE MARK

Annual banquet celebrates 43 years of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage.



Buyers of a Mystery Bag found two great guns, which they donated back for auction.

A spirited crowd of more than 500 OHA members celebrated OHA's 43rd Anniversary at the OHA State Convention at Seven Feathers Casino Resort. Conventioneers enjoyed a great buffet dinner, live and silent auctions of more than 100 items, and raffles featuring over 100 great items to be given away, including more than 70 firearms donated by Legacy Sports International, Sig Sauer, Coastal Farm & Ranch, Centerfire Gunworks, Weatherby, Christensen, and Retay.

Premium optics were donated by OHA Platinum Sponsors Sig Electro Optics and Leupold & Stevens.

Other great items included gear from OnX, SilencerCo, Benchmade, KUIU, Unknown Suppressors, Coast, KuduPoint, Born & Raised Outdoors, Mystery Ranch, North American Taxidermy, Langer's

Family Entertainment Center, Vortex, G4 Outdoors, and many others.

Auctioneer George Tavera sold an Oregon Access & Habitat Statewide Deer and Elk Combo Tag for \$140,000, and then auctioned amazing trips donated by Jody Smith Guide Service, Sunset Lodging, Hammerhead Guide Service, Chinook Winds, Patriot Guide Service, Sage Canyon Outfitters, Big Creek Fishing Club, TGB Outfitters in Argentina, and Sabudawn Safaris and Ibamba Safaris of South Africa.

Oregon outdoor gear companies supporting the event included Gerber, Magview/Warne, Work Sharp, Fisherman's Marine & Outdoor, North American Taxidermy, Wilderness Pack Specialties, and Grizzly Cartridge Company.

Longtime OHA member Shirley Pritchett donated another amazing afghan,



Leupold & Stevens Foundation Chairman Michael Slack donated an original oil painting by Hayden Lambson for the Convention's live auction.



Lincoln County OHA leaders Antoine and Chelsea Diosdado doubled down running a pair of raffles, including the ever-popular gun raffle sponsored by OHA Platinum Sponsor Coastal Farm & Ranch.



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE SUMMERS

Douglas County scholarship pageant contestants stand ready to deliver prizes to raffle winners. More than 70 guns found happy homes.

while Joy Miller donated cute baby quilts. OHA leaders like State OHA Vice President Cindy Rooney and Treasurer Christy Hall-Scheufele donated handcrafted items, as did Redmond Chapter President KC Thrasher, and some killer cake makers from the Umpqua Chapter, who literally gave the event local flavor.

Auctions featured stunning artwork donated by Michael Slack, Jane Vanderzanden, Dave Bartholet, and Tom Derbyshire and Capper's Framing. Longtime supporters Howard Kem, Tammy Cook and Cris Benitez of Acme Construction Supply contributed auction items.

Hundreds of donors contributed to the event, and special thanks go to Waldron's Outdoor Sports, Valley Web Printing, Pronto Print, and Enthusiast Media Group.

OHA tips our hunting hat to our 2026 Convention VIP Joe Chenoweth, Herd

Bulls Ron Zelvay, Webb Kittinger, Travis Ludwig, Cassidy Stanley, Jake Summerfield and Justin Stinson – and Benefactors David Foreman, Bruce Wilson, Ryan Snider, Bob Trask, Elliot Pitzer, Howard Kem, Randy Rieger, Ryan McCormick, Douglas Shepherd, Britney Young and Byron Collman.

After the last auction gavel fell, convention guests pledged thousands more in a paddle raise to protect our heritage.

This year's event featured a Heritage Walk with portraits and biographies of inspirational OHA members we have recently lost.

You're invited to hit the beach with us for OHA's 2027 Convention on May 1 at Chinook Winds Casino Resort in Lincoln City, where we'll feature more awesome events Friday and Saturday before the banquet. See you in camp!



Winners show off Leupold optics, a Benchmade knife, and ammo with a Ruger American rifle.



OHA Executive Director Todd Adkins addresses the crowd before a paddle raise to support Oregon's hunting heritage.



A former U.S. Congressman said it best: "I have more guns than I need, but not as many as I want."





LEAVE NO DOUBT

Confidence comes from knowing your gear will deliver. The VX®-4HD delivers edge-to-edge clarity, rock-solid precision, and the rugged reliability you need when conditions go sideways. Designed, machined, and assembled in Oregon, it's built for those who leave no doubt.

VX-4HD



CUSTOM DIAL SYSTEM
(CDS®) WITH ZEROLOCK®

INTEGRATED
THROW LEVER

ILLUMINATED RETICLES WITH
MOTION SENSOR TECHNOLOGY (MST™)
(select models)

ELITE OPTICAL SYSTEM
FOR DAWN TO DUSK
CLARITY



BE RELENTLESS®

DRAWING A DREAM HUNT

Women of OHA take Oregon's High Desert by storm on an antelope archery hunt.

BY JENN KEPLER



'I love a good adventure and to learn as I go.'

In the southeast corner of Oregon, near the Nevada border, lies a sagebrush sea with rolling and rugged hills, broad valleys, spring-fed creeks, and dry lake beds. The dirt roads that run through this area are rough and become impassable in snow and wet conditions. There are no developed hiking trails, and help is a long way away.

Here, the Beatys Butte Unit covers roughly 2,360 square miles, 83 percent of which is public land. The Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge, established in 1936 by Franklin D. Roosevelt to help protect the declining pronghorn population, is nestled in the northwest corner of the unit. The Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, also established by Roosevelt's 1936 executive order, sits 20 miles to the south, in Nevada. These two refuges provide important habitat for America's fastest land mammal, whose population has significantly rebounded thanks to wildlife management and conservation efforts. ODFW estimates there are roughly 25,000 pronghorn in the state.

This dramatic and remote landscape is also home to bighorn sheep, mule deer, sage-grouse, and hundreds of other diverse wildlife. But Kristie Hendon didn't see any animals as she and a friend ventured into the Beatys Butte Unit for Kristie's September 2024 controlled pronghorn hunt.

Kristie had been applying for a rifle pronghorn tag for 10 years.

"I was starting to feel like I'd never be able to hunt a pronghorn, because most rifle tags seem to require about 20 points to draw," Kristie said. So she started looking into archery tags. "Sure enough, I had enough points to draw the tag," she said. "I was so excited that I got a tag."

Kristie grew up in a family that rifle hunted for deer and elk on the Oregon coast. She didn't get into hunting until she was 16, when she would stay with her grandparents and go with her grandfather.

"I just loved being in the woods looking for animals," she said. When she was 17, she hunted in the Ochoco Mountains with her grandfather, and he taught her how to field dress a deer.

"I knew at that moment that I loved hunting," Kristie said. She hunted with her dad for a few years after that, and even after becoming pregnant with her first child. But soon she found herself homebound with her kids for about 12 years.

"I really wanted to be in the woods, but it was hard with three little ones," she said. As her kids got older, she started going hunting with their father. "He started bowhunting in 2012, and I quickly fell in love

with archery after I called in his first elk. I had no idea you could call in an animal and get that close to them. I purchased a bow and started going hunting during archery elk season."

'If you are lucky enough to draw a tag, the pronghorn hunting community is very helpful.'

The Beatys Butte hunt unit in southeast Oregon covers roughly 2,360 square miles, 83 percent of which is public land.

With the Beatys Butte Unit being a seven-hour drive from her home, most of Kristie's scouting was done via OnX. She also found an Oregon pronghorn hunters group on Facebook and made a post, fully expecting backlash, but instead was astonished when members sent her OnX pins and tips and said she could reach out to them at any time with questions.

Kristie also attended an archery skills camp for women hosted by Her Outdoor Journey at the NW Mountain Challenge. "I made sure I was shooting well for the hunt," Kristie said. "I left the camp feeling confident that I could shoot an animal successfully with my bow."

With several watering holes marked on her OnX and her shooting skills on point, Kristie invited her friend Aubree Cook to join her on the hunt.

"When Kristie asked me to come with her on this hunt, I'm not going to lie, I was a bit nervous, but mostly excited," Aubree said. "I'm very grateful for all of Kristie's research prior to this hunt."

Equipped with Aubree's Starlink, a rooftop tent, freeze-dried meals, and hunting gear, the two women embarked on the long and bumpy drive to Kristie's first OnX pin. They arrived the day before the season started, and there was already a blind set up at the first watering hole. So they went to the next pin – another watering hole – where they found another blind. They had yet to see any pronghorn, but with only



Kristie heads back to the truck with her hard-earned harvest.

one day to scout before the season opener, they continued onward to Kristie's third OnX pin. Not only did this watering hole not have any water, but there also weren't any pronghorn. "I wasn't going to set up my blind there," Kristie said.

She had one more spot to check.

"I'm more of a 'Let's just go and see what happens' kind of person," Kristie said. "I love a good adventure and to learn as I go." They parked by a berm at the final pin and could hardly believe what they saw at the watering hole: a herd of at least 100 pronghorn – and no hunting blind.

This was the place, Kristie knew. She and Aubree set up their blind near the watering hole, then curled up in their sleeping bags in the rooftop tent for a few hours of shut-eye.

They were in the blind before sunup, and that was where they stayed for the next 12 hours – without a single bathroom break. "The first day in the blind was very cold and wet," Kristie said. It rained for a good part of the day. Everything was wet, including her bow. "Hot coffee and chicken broth were lifesavers," Kristie said. Despite watching pronghorn for most of the day from the blind, Kristie didn't have an opportunity to take a shot.

That night, the rooftop tent shook wildly with the wind. She and Aubree decided not to sit in the blind the next day. Instead, they explored the desert terrain, collected obsidian, looked for arrowheads, admired rabbits, and glassed the pronghorn from the berm.

On the third day of the hunt, they returned to the blind before sunup. The pronghorn were still there. "I drew my bow about 10 times," Kristie said. She had ranged the watering hole at 45 yards from the blind, and she knew where a buck would need to be to get a good shot.

Just before noon, a pronghorn buck appeared at the watering hole, right where she wanted him. "He was tiny, though," Kristie said. She'd waited so long for one to appear in this spot, she was prepared to take the shot. But he was not alone for long. Several does walked up behind him; they could sense movement in the blind and started to spook. And then it happened: A large buck made his way through the does and went straight to the watering hole. He was in the spot for the shot.

Kristie let her arrow fly.

They watched him run about 100 hundred yards and then collapse.


"Walking toward him, all I could think about was being thankful for everything that led to this moment: my friend who was experiencing this with me, and a good shot that made sure the pronghorn didn't suffer," Kristie said. This Beatys Butte pronghorn was Kristie's first archery harvest.

It was hot out, so they got to work right away. Kristie let Aubree take the lead with skinning the hide. Aubree, a taxidermist with Pack Out Taxidermy in Scappoose, would be mounting the pronghorn for Kristie. She showed Kristie how to cut around the horns. "She took great care with his hide because pronghorn hides tend to go bad fast, and their hair will fall out," Kristie said. The two women worked together to field dress the pronghorn and get the meat on ice quickly.

They stayed one more night in the desert and then made their way back home the next day. At home, Kristie cooked the meat and savored the reward for all her patience and determination.

"It was the best game meat I've ever had, and I love blacktail – it's my favorite," she said. "I can't explain what it tastes like, other than just really good meat."

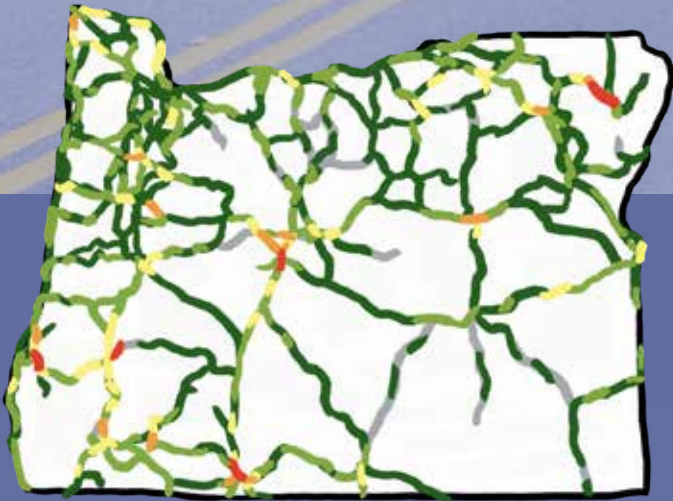
If you've never hunted pronghorn, Kristie's advice is to go for it.

"If you are lucky enough to draw a tag, the pronghorn hunting community is very helpful," she said. "Reach out to people who know the area, or reach out to the Oregon Hunters Association, because they have a lot of resources, as well. Ask questions and just go do it." 



Kristie and Aubree celebrate their unforgettable archery antelope hunt in Beatys Butte.

There are an estimated 5,000 collisions involving deer, elk, bear, and other large animals each and every year in Oregon.



The Oregon Wildlife Foundation, alongside partners including OHA, is working to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. Wildlife passage projects decrease collisions and increase habitat connectivity; outcomes that are good for all species.

Proceeds from the sale and renewal of the Watch for Wildlife specialty license plate are used to help fund these projects. As a plate owner, your support is making our roads safer for wildlife and people too.

To learn more, visit us online at myowf.org/watchforwildlife, or scan the code below.

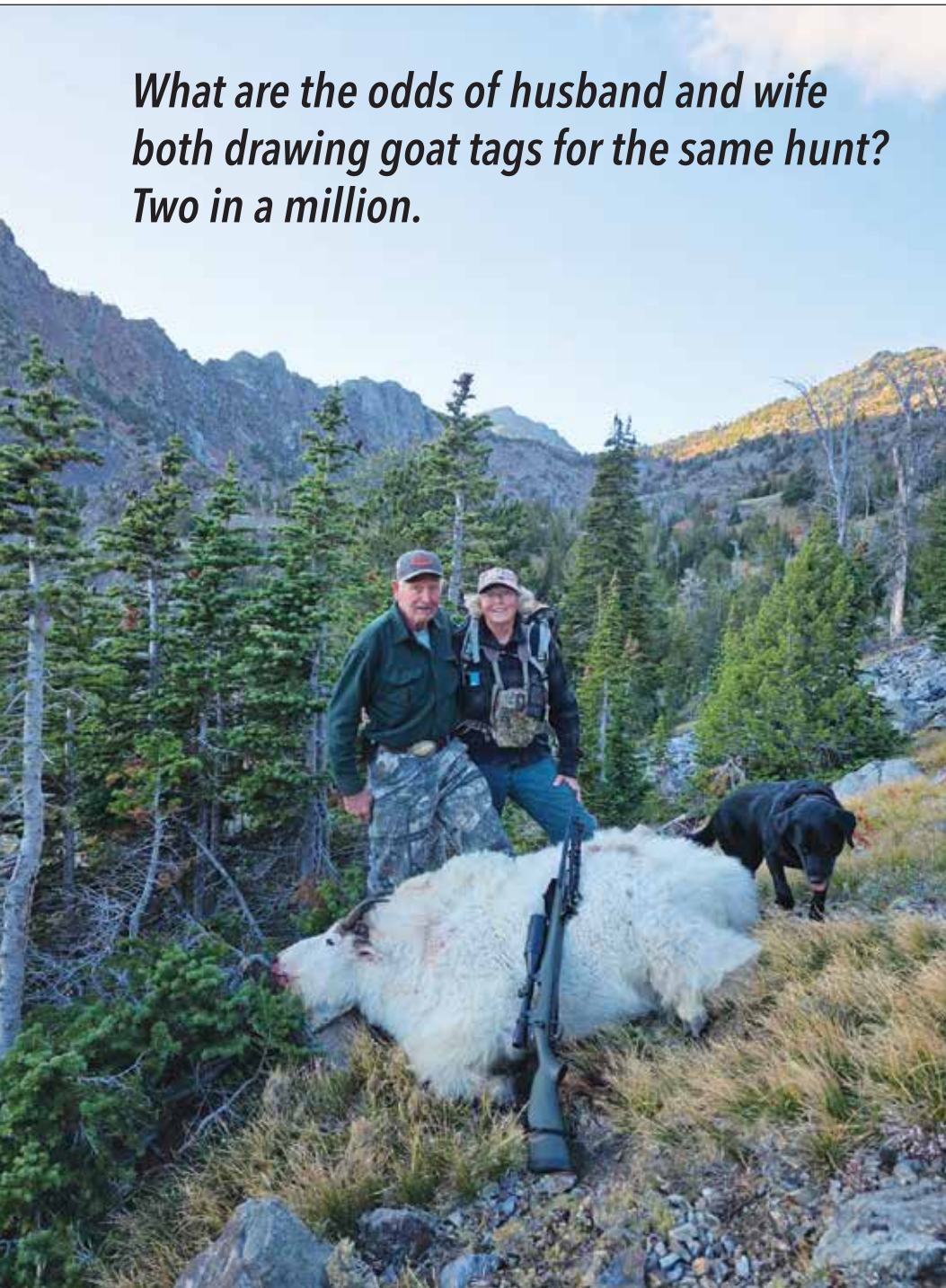


LEARN MORE

TWO OF A KIND GET THEIR GOATS

BY JASON HALEY

What are the odds of husband and wife both drawing goat tags for the same hunt? Two in a million.



OHA members Milo and Joy Kind and canine key carrier Bailey enjoy the moment with Milo's goat.

At the start of the new year in 2025, Joy and Milo Kind agreed to go on diets. People do that. But this was the beginning of something magical they couldn't begin to imagine.

Early October found the longtime OHA couple in the rugged Elkhorn Mountains at an elevation of 8,400 feet. Joy (65) had lost 45 pounds and Milo (75) had lost 35 pounds. What's more, they were surrounded by friends and family, having just completed an epic six-day Rocky Mountain goat hunt with a pair of beautiful trophies down. That's a remarkable story. The back story is against all odds. Literally.

The pair could be considered OHA "insiders." Their family is active in leadership and fundraising for the Tualatin Valley Chapter. They are no strangers to the ODFW controlled hunt application process, but we all know that can be, and usually is, a heartbreaker.

Last June, Milo was working in the garden at their home northwest of Hillsboro, when Joy decided to check her draw results. "Holy cow. I drew it!" she recalled, leaving immediately to tell her husband. When they logged in to the website again to confirm, they noticed he had drawn a goat tag, too. Excitement and momentary confusion set in. "I thought they'd made a mistake or something," Milo said. Nope. They had both drawn Rocky Mountain goat tags. Not just that, but both tags for the third season in the Elkhorns (Elkhorn No. 3). No party applications are allowed. As Al Michaels famously said when USA Hockey beat the Soviets in the 1980 Winter Olympics, "Do you believe in miracles!?"

Now for perspective. The statistician/tag guru, Ron Wold (oregontags.com) took a break from the 2026 predictions and



Joy Kind's second-chance billy scored an impressive 49 1/4 inches.

calculated the probability of a husband and wife both drawing. The odds of both drawing 950A3 (Elkhorn No. 3) in 2025 was 0.00000220 or 1 in 454,000. That's roughly once in a half million.

Now, as Paul Harvey used to say, "the rest of the story." It was never a consideration, initially, but the October season, good for all of Unit 50 (Desolation) and 51 (Sumpter), just happened to suit their respective schedules. Their extended family of hunters and some experienced friends were also able to swing it. The stage was set.

Milo is a cancer survivor (including a recurrence) and has had knee and hip replacements. Joy survived a heart attack and was apprehensive about pushing it on steep ground. They scouted the week before season, nonetheless, consulting with locals, ODFW and BLM for intel. They even hooked up with the "water bureau" to access a remote area near Marble Creek Pass. This required scheduling a meet-up with an employee, proof of tags, and gated roads. Milo described seeing 80 goats one day and maybe 20 per day on average. It was amazing, although many of the billys

they spotted were on cliffs that would make recovery nearly impossible.

They enjoyed t-shirt weather scouting. That changed on the first day of the hunt. "The weather turned nasty," Joy said. They got wind, rain, snow, and fog, which created visibility issues. They had to wait it out.

On Oct. 4 (the fourth day), Milo, who had won the coin toss and was up first, connected with his billy. It was 300 yards above the trail through his Leupold when he touched off the .300 Remington Ultra Mag firing a 200-grain Barnes TSX. The goat was 560 yards below the steep trail when it quit rolling, but in surprisingly good condition. Another tremendous piece of luck.

That was 4 p.m. They toiled after midnight getting the animal caped and packed out. Fortunately, there was a trail in the bottom of the canyon, and they were able to get a pickup lined up below it, eventually. One of their crew accidentally climbed the hill with the keys in their pocket, rendering the pickup nonoperative, and nobody wanted to make the steep climb twice, but their trusty dog Bailey brought the keys.



Milo and team line up a shot on the fourth afternoon of the hunt.



Losing 80 pounds together and doing this hunt was "very difficult, but well worth it," Joy said.

No joke!

Joy filled her tag two days later on Oct. 6 in nearly the same spot. She packed a similar .300 Ultra Mag/Leupold combo with a stainless barrel and signature gold-ringed scope.

"I missed the first one," she said, "killed a rock, big as day." The couple were animated, reliving the hunt. The miss turned out for the best. They had a

Swarovski hooked to a phone scope when someone said, "you missed," as the billy disappeared into the trees.

Suddenly two bigger goats stepped into the same spot. Wanting to be absolutely sure, she made her team confirm before beading down again. "Are you sure they're billies?" she asked. Someone replied, "yes" and that was that. Her beautiful billy was 360 yards uphill, but hung-up on a bushy whitebark pine averting potential problems.

The average billy in this region scores 45-46. Milo's trophy scored 47.5 and Joy's second-chance goat scored 49.25. They left for a buck hunt in the Beulah Unit soon thereafter and were unsuccessful. Nobody cared. The Elkhorns got snowed-in days later on Oct. 10. They hit it just right.

The third season was never really a plan, Milo said, but he noted that the white hair on their animals was longer. "That'll make for better mounts," I chuckled, now completely enthralled in the story. "Exactly!" he exclaimed. The one-of-a-kind pair will have a full house soon. They ordered full body mounts with one goat facing uphill and one facing downhill. The elaborate piece of taxidermy will be designed to come apart, so that their son and daughter will each inherit trophies when they pass. That's way cool.

Prior to the application deadline, he "put his picks in" first and she made her selections the next day. After drawing, Joy

asked for tips on one of the online hunting forums. Predictably, some users popped off about ODFW corruption or the draw being fixed. Clearly, something more was involved here.

In the 1977 film Star Wars, gunslinger Han Solo (Harrison Ford) says, "Kid, I've flown from one side of this galaxy to the other; I've seen a lot of strange stuff. But I've never seen anything to make me believe that there's one all-powerful Force controlling everything. There's no mystical energy field that controls my destiny."

Then in the 2015 reprisal, The Force Awakens, Solo says "It's true. The Force, the Jedi...All of it. It's all true."

Experience changed his mind.

Here are more of Wold's outcomes for comparison:

"You are twice as likely to draw the hardest-to-draw elk tag (Wenaha bow – 24-point hunt) and the hardest-to-draw deer tag (White River #2 – 24-point hunt) in the same year, with no preference points.

"You are three times more likely to draw a Wenaha big bull rifle tag, back-to-back years, with no points.

"The odds are about the same as being struck by lightning. You are more likely to be killed by a meteorite. You are more likely to find a two-headed animal."

Hunt long enough and you experience crazy things. We should all keep waking up, getting up, and, most importantly, putting in.



Many hands make light work to pack out a big goat: Milo, Woody Ehrhart, Dave Geelan, Joy, Weston Keller, Nicole Keller, Maverick Keller, and Bailey.



SIGSAUER

**YOUR HANDS
AREN'T STEADY.**

OURS ARE.

ZULU6™ HDX PRO IMAGE STABILIZED BINOCULARS

Shake isn't a flaw. It's human. Muscle fatigue. Wind. Distance. Adrenaline. It all adds up, right when the moment matters most.

Optical Image Stabilization™ removes what you can't control, so what you're looking at stays exactly where it should. Because the difference between seeing it and losing it is smaller than you think.



TRADITIONS

By CLINT EPPS



APPLGATE UNIT/RANDY SHIPLEY

A Bull in a Bear Market

I'm not much of a bear hunter. In 10 years of occasional attempts, I've killed only one – a fall bear, luckily, as I prize the rendered oil above even the meat.

Yet, I have my heart set on getting one with a flintlock muzzleloader. That's straightforward where baiting or hound hunting is legal, but requires more luck and persistence in a state like Oregon where those methods are not. Oregon's Coast Range makes this a possibility, as stalking overgrown, closed logging tracks can yield close encounters. Nine years ago, I was close enough to a big bear to hear it breathing. It stretched itself up on the bole of a big hemlock at 25 yards, head and shoulders clear in the scope of my 9.3x62. I did not shoot. The bear had climbed the hillside toward me, unseen in the brush but breath rasping in its chest, bellowing several times – a strange sound in those deep woods, and one I thought could be associated with cubs. Given time of year and behavior, I'm now convinced it was a big male, but so it goes. Once a bullet is sent on its way, you can't call it back.

Last September, I decided to try again. While accompanying my daughter on a youth cow elk hunt in late August, we'd found a "bear pen." In the fall, bears may use a small area intensively when resources are abundant. Blackberries and huckleberries grew thick along an overgrown track and a former meadow, now deep in brambles, not far from a river. Bear droppings and crushed blackberry canes were everywhere.



If it walks and talks like a bear, climbs a tree or scratches its back on one, it's probably a bear.

SIXES UNIT/RYAN GERTKEN

Late in the afternoon on the day before my 50th birthday, I drove the winding roads to the coast. I loaded my big .58 flintlock rifle, slung on my pack, binoculars, shot pouch, and horn, belted on a .44 Special single-action, and began my stalk down the gated track.

Within 50 yards, I encountered wet bear droppings, dark with berry stain. I stepped slowly. My rifle is almost 5 feet in length but carries well and inspired confidence. Just five evenings before, on the east side, I'd killed a buck pronghorn with it at 90 yards.

The air was dead still, warm and humid under the high clouds. Mosquitoes jabbed at my face and hands, but I kept my hold on the big rifle. I could not afford the crack of a single twig underfoot.

A dark shape rose on the trail, 75 yards ahead.

Man? No. Bear.

I raised my binoculars and saw the broad head of a moderate-sized bear as it dropped back down and resumed walking up the trail toward me, immediately obscured again by brambles and a fold in the ground.


I crouched, eased back the cock of my rifle, holding back the trigger to avoid the sharp click and releasing it to engage the sear, fingers clumsy with adrenaline. Push forward for a better view, or hold and hope? I knelt with the rifle poised, and breathed.

A minute. I craned my neck and saw the brush flick off the side of the trail. And that was it. A few sticks cracked as it passed slowly through the heavy brush below the lip of the road to my right, no chance of a sighting or a shot.

When I walked forward, I saw that it had simply followed an elk trail off the side. I don't think it saw me.

A slow stalk to the meadow yielded no other signs, although three Steller's jays began shrieking on the road behind me at one point. Years ago, I learned the hard way that alarm calls from birds warrant attention when doing risky things in remote places. I watched behind me for long minutes, wondering if the bear had circled to my rear, or if a cougar was following. Nothing.

I walked back in the dark. At the truck, I blew the priming powder from my rifle's pan and plugged the vent with a feather, only to hear a rock click on the road and a low rumble. A large black animal bore down on me, 25 yards and closing.

Bear? No. Angus cow. I was on national forest land, but had seen signs of cattle, and knew I was not far from a farm. No. An angus BULL. I pressed against the side of the truck as he walked past and down the road, never turning his head. 



Huckleberry Deer Steak

If It Grows Together, It Goes Together

Huckleberry picking was a family outing never missed in my youth. The Elkhorn Range on the west side of the Powder Valley often grew large patches of tart, flavor-packed berries. My grandmother usually led the expedition. She loved finding the best huckleberry patches and turning her fingertips purple. She had a quart-sized tin bucket tied by its handle to her waist with a string. The bucket would hang down as she leaned forward to glean plump berries. Every family member had their own technique, but mostly they followed grandma's lead.

As a kid, I never had the patience to fill a bucket. Mostly I ate them. My meager pickings didn't add much to the family harvest, but I certainly took full advantage of the sweet treats that followed. My mom would make huckleberry pancakes, jam and pies. Nothing compares to a slice of homemade, hot huckleberry pie with a dollop of vanilla ice cream. My mouth waters just thinking about it. Pies and pancakes were ephemeral, but jam lasted through the winter months. In those days, huckleberries were only used for largely sugary recipes. It wasn't until later in life that we learned to use huckleberries in the main course.

My mom taught my brother and I how to cook when we were young boys. She especially wanted us to know how to prepare the foods we brought home from the mountains, streams or fields. Like huckleberries, wild game was seasonal. We shot ducks and geese in the late fall and winter months. Morel and other types of mushrooms were picked as soon as the snow melted. And if we were lucky, elk and deer meat hung in the shed in the fall. All this bounty made wonderful meals, but like the huckleberry, our recipes were simple.

Somewhere along the road of life, our family started taking a keen interest in trying new and interesting ways to prepare wild game. My wife and I started sharing recipe ideas as part of the stories we told during our past television show, *The Northwest Outdoorsmen*. It was during this time that we were fortunate to meet Chef Patty Oliver. She taught us to think about fish, wild game, and gathered foods in a whole new light.

One saying she told us was "if it grows together, it goes together." The idea is to pair different ingredients found or growing in the same area to make unique and delicious meals. Now, we see the huckleberry not just as a dessert item, but as an ingredient for enhancing wild game, especially steaks.

Huckleberry Venison Steak

3-4 medium sized steaks

Harrod's Cookhouse Sunrise to Sunset Seasoning (<https://harrodoutdoors.com/shop>) to taste

½ finely chopped small, sweet onion



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Huckleberries - they're not just for breakfast and dessert anymore.

- 1 chopped clove garlic
- 1 Tbsp chopped thyme
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 2/3 cup red wine
- 1 Tbsp currant jelly
- 1 cup huckleberries or blueberries
- 1 Tbsp butter
- salt and pepper to taste



Season deer, elk, or antelope steaks and grill to medium rare. While the steaks are cooking, fry onion, garlic, and thyme in olive oil until onions are translucent. Add wine and jelly, reduce mixture by half. Add berries and continue to cook until berries burst and the mixture thickens. Finish with butter, salt and pepper to taste. Cover medium rare steaks with huckleberry sauce. Enjoy! 🍷



Crafting Natural Accessories from Natural Resources!

- Chandeliers, Lamps & Wall Sconces
- Flatware, Serving Sets & Home Accessories
- Fireplace & Barbecue Sets

HIGH COUNTRY ARTS

We buy antlers!
 21584 Hwy. 62,
 Shady Cove, OR 97539
 541 878 2905
 541 878 3296 fax
www.highcountryarts.com

SHARING THE HERITAGE

By GARY LEWIS

My Feathered Nemesis and a Fall Gobbler

Hunting a mixed bag in Oregon's Coast Range

My nemesis is a ruffed grouse that lives at the base of a ridge in the Alsea Unit. Two or three times a season I make a play for him, sometimes with the dog and sometimes without. This time I brought my daughter and son-in-law.

We had looked forward to this for most of a year, having marked it on the calendar back in February. My son-in-law had never hunted before, and for his coming-out, we decided to make a hunt for fall turkey.

My youngest daughter, Mikayla (sometimes referred to in these pages as Lil Sassy) had interrupted her string of 15 big game harvests and a half-dozen turkey kills to grow up, get a job, get married, travel and do all kinds of other boring things. It was good to see her in the field again carrying a 1930s Lefever 12 gauge.

The son-in-law, Evan, carried an over-and-under 12 gauge loaded with No. 6s. The gun has been in our family a long time, a Ted Williams commemorative built in the Winchester factory back when the "Thumper" was breaking home run records. On the drive over the Cascades to western Oregon, I told Evan and Mikayla about my grouse.

The average life span of a grouse is under 12 months, but a lot of birds make it to one or two years old and some individuals go five years, and one grouse is said to have lived to eight or nine years, and another online authority says some birds can make it 11 years. I don't know about that, but I would venture that a few grouse have outlived some great gun dogs.

My grouse was hatched in 2018. His mother was a dusky virgin frequently seen in the company of a thunderbird when the tops of the fiddlehead ferns were tender.

My grouse is so big now the tree leans when he lands in it. When he flies down, the alders rustle in Veneta. When he drums in the spring, seismic engineers in Portland check their needles and the fire chief in Mapleton has been known to send a volunteer to shimmy up a pole to check for a tsunami.

I have hunted my grouse long enough that I plan deer hunts for dad or friends and September bear hunts for Troy Rodakowski. Then, when no one is looking, I grab the shotgun.

Most times I don't get closer than 70 yards before the grouse flushes. He might be on the ground when I get there. He might be lounging on a stout branch. He could be feeding a quarter-mile away. He never gives me an angle for a shot.

On this Saturday we walked past the grouse's ancient maple



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Evan Gibson (center) thumped his first turkey at the tail end of a November hunt in the foothills of the Coast Range. Mikayla made the retrieve.

and continued up the hill. I was ready to turn back, but Evan wanted to walk further.

"I feel like there is something in there," Evan pointed to a patch of Oregon grape and vine maples. We were at a bend in the trail. I pointed him in, and when he shouldered through the branches, the grouse erupted in a whirr of wings and flashed past Mikayla and me between the limbs of a huge maple tree. We all saw it but no one was fast enough. Another win for *bonasa umbellus*.

Before dusk, a covey of mountain quail made a rare mistake, and I gave them a right and a left with the old L.C. Smith side-by-side and collected feathered prizes. At dawn we tried for my grouse again, but he was absent, and we harvested mushrooms and white truffles instead. Time was growing short for Evan's chance at a turkey. We held a vote and it was unanimous: eat lunch and spend a couple more hours trying.

I had seen a gobbler at the place where we were staying, an old loner bird with a broken spur and a long wispy beard. I hoped we would see it again. Evan had cased the shotgun and left it at the door. We made sandwiches and talked about mushrooms and ruffed grouse, and then when no one was looking, I left to take a look around.

The gobbler was back on the tree line. And Evan was waving his sandwich in the middle of a story when I returned.

"Evan, put down that sandwich and go get your turkey."

Using cover, Evan was able to get within 20 yards. Alerted, the bird stretched straight up and Evan hammered it with the Ted Williams's 12-gauge thumper. Mikayla dashed ahead and jumped on the gobbler. It was all over.

The bird had a 9 1/2-inch beard and one wicked spur 1-3/8 inches long. It was a trophy, but not near as big as my grouse.



To contact Gary Lewis, visit www.garylewisoutdoors.com

WANTED:

HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS



**Remember the thrill of your first hunt?
Do you have a passion for hunting that you would like to pass on to others?**

ODFW's Hunter Education Program NEEDS you!

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

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

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

How do I become a Certified Instructor?

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



Hunter Education

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



TACTACAM TRAIL CAM CONTEST

SEE RULES AND ENTER YOUR BEST SHOTS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A GREAT TACTACAM PRIZE AT OREGONHUNTERS.ORG!



WINNER:

OHA member Calvin Davis of Pendleton wins a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for his September closeup photo of a Union County bull.

HONORABLE MENTION:



In addition to his winning photo, Pendleton OHA member Calvin Davis also scored an OHA hat and Honorable Mention for another photo of a Union County bull.



OHA member Stan Croghan from Terrebonne had a surprise visitor to his bear den in January. The wolf photo lands Stan an OHA hat and Honorable Mention



OHA member Mike Davis of Seneca captured a photo of a Murderer's Creek bull last July, earning an OHA hat and Honorable Mention.



OHA member John Duerst earns Honorable Mention and an OHA hat for his photo of a Wallowa County bull elk last December.



Bend OHA member Ross Scrocca's photo of a curious Deschutes County coyote wins him an OHA hat and Honorable Mention.

OREGON SPRING SUNSET/DUANE DUNGANNON

REVEAL

ULTRA

PRO 3.0

X 3.0



FEATURES

X 3.0

PRO 3.0

ULTRA

IR TECHNOLOGY	LOW GLOW	NO GLOW	BOTH
BURST MODE	3 PHOTOS	5 PHOTOS	9 PHOTOS
BUILT-IN GPS	✓	✓	✓
IMPROVED IMAGE SENSOR	✓	✓	✓
LIVE AIMING VIA WI-FI	✓	✓	✓
INTERNAL SD, OPTIONAL SD SLOT	✓	✓	✓
1080P FHD VIDEO	✓	✓	✓
ON-DEMAND VIDEO REQUESTS		✓	✓
2" LCD SCREEN		✓	✓
LIVE STREAMING			✓
ACTIVE GPS - WITH BATTERY BACKUP			✓

REVEAL
CELLULAR CAMERA

OREGON TACTACAM Just 2026

DESIGNED BY HUNTERS,
FOR HUNTERS.

EFFORTLESS SETUP
AND OPERATION.

SUPERIOR SERVICE
COVERAGE.



CHAPTER NEWS

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA HAMMOND

OHA chapters host projects, youth days

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: We hosted our annual youth and family day on May 30. The date for the annual All Hands All Brands habitat project was set for June 19-21. Our annual youth upland bird hunt will be held on Oct. 17.

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.

2026 Fundraiser: Our pub event was held on May 9.

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.

Update: Our Westside Habitat Enforcement & Cleanup Project was held May 16.

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, Astoria.

Update: Held April 11.



OHA volunteers cleaned and repaired wildlife guzzlers at this annual Klamath Chapter project.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

VACANT

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m., Village Inn, St. Helens.

Update: Our chapter held a habitat project at Jewell Meadows June 4-6.

CURRY

TONY DONALDSON 541-425-0006

aadtony@hotmail.com

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 25.

EMERALD VALLEY

RON MARTIN 541-954-5459

EmeraldOHA@live.com

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

HOODVIEW

LEVI BARRERA 503-863-4495

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter

Chapter Meetings: Please check our website for meeting schedule.

Update: Our annual White River project took place June 5-7, when we removed old fencing on the wildlife area.

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: The Southwest Cascades Meadow Protection Project will be June 26-28. Join us at Short Creek Prairie in the Rogue Unit.

Contact TD@oregonhunters.org We hosted our annual youth day event on June 6, and our chapter picnic was held on June 13.

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: We conducted a wildlife guzzler project on May 16, our annual Hart Mountain habitat project May 22-24, and our forest cleanup project that provides public access to private timberland on 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: Our annual youth day was hosted on June 6.

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: Held June 12, Pint Night at Rogue Brewers.

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 hosted a fund-raising shotgun shoot on April 2. Our annual youth shotgun shoot will be held Aug. 8.

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

TRAVIS WARWICK 458-272-8207

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., Albany.

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 18.

Update: We held our youth day on May 9 and assisted with a forage seed giveaway at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area (see Page 46).

OCHOCO

JAMES COX 541-408-4816

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 21.

Update: We host our 2nd annual Celebrate the Outdoors Event, supported by Cabela's Bass Pro Outdoor Fund, on Aug. 22 from 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at 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 held our spring youth day April 25 and our weekend guzzler campout June 13-14.

REDMOND

WADE MCDONALD 541-408-3271

oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held Feb. 28.

ROGUE VALLEY

RICKY CLARK 530-905-1186

Firepmt29@gmail.com

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held March 14.

Update: The Southwest Cascades Meadow Protection Project will take place June 26-28. Join us at Short Creek Prairie in the Rogue Unit; camping is available nearby. Contact TD@oregonhunters.org



LYNNE WARWICK

Archery skills were among the offerings at the E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area youth event hosted by the OHA Mid-Willamette Chapter on May 9.

TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held May 2.

TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 11.

Update: Our youth day was held May 2.

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 youth event took place June 6.

UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

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

2026 Fundraiser: Held April 4.

Update: The Umpqua Chapter donated medicated food blocks to ODFW to treat an outbreak of lungworm in local elk.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

2026 Fundraiser: Held March 28.

Update: Our aspen enhancement project took place June 6 at Elkhorn Wildlife Area.

YAMHILL COUNTY

RUSS BRANDT 503-407-1761

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 annual youth shotgun shoot will take place on Aug. 15.



In the Heart of the Blue Mountains

Units: • Desolation
• Ukiah • Northside
• Heppner • Starkey

Fish the John Day

Rooms • Showers

• Game Cooler • Gift Shop
PO Box 97, Ukiah, OR 97880

541-427-3492

Contributions made recently to the

OHA Memorial Fund

In memory of Bill Jackson
from Bryan & Tammy Cook

In memory of Buck Teasley
from OHA Pioneer Chapter



Send contributions in honor of loved ones who loved wildlife to:

OHA Memorial Wildlife Fund
P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501
oregonhunters.org/donate

OHA LADD MARSH MEMORIAL OVERLOOK/JIM WARD



OHA, ODFW give away forage seed

OHA and ODFW gave away more than 500 bags of free seed to Oregon landowners at E.E. Wilson Wildlife Area on May 9. Each bag will cover at least two acres of wildlife habitat.

The seed was provided at no cost thanks to contributions from OHA and Turf Merchants, Inc. The mix is a cool season blend of species that attract wildlife, game birds, and mammals. It contains grains, grasses, legumes, and brassica that provide critical food sources for animals during fall, winter, and early spring in places where native forage is lacking or has deteriorated. This mixture is designed to be used on a wide range of revegetation sites, pre-formulated based on seeds per square foot, species establishment and final mixture diversity upon maturation.

It is ideal for project sites not requiring continual maintenance.

Enhancing wildlife habitat on private lands where wildlife winter and fawn plays a critical role in sustaining Oregon's native species. Private landowners can enhance habitat with seed mixes that regulations might prohibit on nearby federal lands. Through efforts like this seed giveaway, OHA is working to improve habitat for wildlife.

Private land provides critical winter range and is not subject to federal regs on seed.



OHA, ODFW and Turf Merchants teamed up to offer 500 bags of wildlife forage seed to landowners.

Two win guided Maine bear hunts

Jacob Dunnivant of Roseburg and Zach Pliska of Portland are the lucky winners of two guided Maine fall 2026 bear hunts co-sponsored by the Oregon Hunters Association and ExpoSure Shows (www.ExposureShows.com).

Dunnivant entered a free drawing at the Newswatch 12 Sportsmen's and Outdoor Recreation Show at the Jackson County Expo, one of four Oregon ExpoSure shows where the drawing was offered at OHA booths.

Pliska purchased one of 500 OHA raffle tickets available for the same experience, and his name was drawn at the OHA office on April 1. When contacted, he thought it might be an April Fool's joke.

Sunkhaze Outfitters of Bangor, Maine, will play host to the two Oregon hunters. Jeff Fahey and Rob Gould are co-owners of the outfitting business.

The hunt will be out of a traditional Maine hunting camp which is a cabin several miles into Maine's densely wooded backcountry. The hunters will be set up in a tree stand or ground blind at a bait site that is legal in Maine.

OHA thanks all those who visited our booths and entered the free drawings, as well as those who purchased tickets for the raffle and supported OHA's mission.



OHA member bags Habitat Raffle rifle

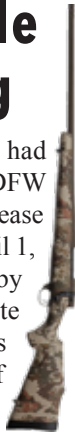
Jerry Walker of OHA's Mid-Willamette Chapter won a Howa 1500 heavy barrel chassis 6.5 CR Flat Dark Earth cerakote and camo stock with a 4-16x50 Nikko Stirling Silver scope, all donated by Legacy Sports International for OHA's annual Habitat Raffle.

The annual Habitat Raffle funds wildlife habitat enhancement in Oregon.

OHA congratulates Jerry and thanks all who participated to support OHA's mission of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.

OHA awards rifle for CWD testing

Melanie Bjerke of Silverton had her mule deer sampled at the ODFW Celilo Park Chronic Wasting Disease check station in 2025, and on April 1, 2026, OHA gave her a Weatherby Vanguard 7mm Rem in First Lite Specter valued at \$1,150. Melanie's name was drawn from a pool of 3,408 hunters who submitted a CWD sample last year.



If you submitted a sample at an ODFW CWD check station, ODFW Field or District Office, participating meat processor, or taxidermist, you were automatically entered into this drawing.

Next year, OHA will be offering another prize – a Howa .223. Again, if you submit a CWD sample this upcoming hunting season, you will automatically be entered to win a rifle.

OHA is invested in keeping Oregon a CWD-free state for as long as possible, but early detection of the disease 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 populations. Currently, the disease has been detected in three of Oregon's four neighboring states (Washington, California and Idaho).

It is easy to submit CWD samples at ODFW check stations, ODFW field and district offices, and cooperating taxidermists and meat processors. A list of cooperating taxidermists and meat processors can be found on ODFW's website <https://myodfw.com/articles/other-ways-get-your-animal-tested-cwd#Cooperating-taxidermists-and-meat-processors>

Two Zumwalt Prairie hunt winners drawn

The winners of OHA's raffle for dream deer and elk hunts on The Nature Conservancy's Zumwalt Prairie, drawn on April 22 at the OHA office, are:

Elk Hunt: Donald Monroe, Klamath Falls
Deer Hunt: Jon Blocker, Bend

OHA thanks all who bought tickets to support Blue Mountains habitat work and OHA's mission, as well as TNC for their commitment to conservation.

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.

- ★ **4/15/26 Stoeger M3000 Max 7 camo**
Traci McDonald, Pioneer Chapter
- ★ **4/22/26 Christensen Evoke Hunter 7mm PRC**
Kerry Johnson, Klamath Chapter
- ★ **4/29/26 Howa 1500 Flag .243 Win.**
Brent McNeill, Pioneer Chapter
- ★ **5/6/26 Sig Zulu6 HDX 16x42 binoculars**
Debbie Judd, Klamath Chapter
- ★ **5/13 Weatherby Vanguard Badlands .270**
Crystal Gerard, Pioneer Chapter
- ★ **5/20 Browning A-bolt III Hunter .300 Win**
Eric Strecker, Tualatin Valley Chapter
- ★ **5/27 Pointer O/U 12 gauge**
Charles "Dale" Putman, Bend Chapter



OHA pays \$7,200 in 12 TIP rewards

In the last two months, OHA issued 12 reward checks to informants in 12 cases totaling \$7,200 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: Hunting, scouting and locating game with a thermal device, take/possess turkey with prohibited method and no turkey tag, unlawful attempted take of doe, hunting enclosed lands of another, take of 4 bucks with the use of thermal imaging device, guide/outfitter received 3 felony charges of hunting bighorn sheep with the aid of dogs, take of antlerless elk out of season, take of Canada goose during closed season with a pellet gun, unlawful take of turkey in prohibited area.

To report a wildlife and/or habitat law violation or suspicious activity:
TIP Hotline: 1-800-452-7888 (24/7)
TIP E-Mail: TIP@state.or.us
(Monitored 8-5 M-F)



OHA STATE-LEVEL SPONSORSHIPS

Please support the sponsors who support OHA's mission of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage. For information about OHA state-level sponsorship opportunities, call the OHA State Office at (541) 772-7313.

PLATINUM

Coastal Farm & Ranch
coastalcountry.com

Leupold & Stevens Foundation
leupold.com

Sig Electro Optics
sigsauer.com

Silencer Central
silencercentral.com

Coast
coastportland.com

Magview/Warne
magviewgear.com

Roby's Furniture & Appliance
robysfurniture.com

SilencerCo
silencerco.com

BRONZE

Christensen Arms
christensenarms.com

Giustina Resources
giustinaresources.com

Nosler, Inc.
nosler.com

OnX
onxmaps.com

Pronto Print
goprnto.com

Sunset Lodging
sunriverlodging.com

Weatherby
weatherby.com

GOLD

Benchmade
Benchmade.com

Legacy Sports International
legacysports.com

SILVER

Bass Pro Shops & Cabela's
Outdoor Fund
Basspro.com

Cascade Lakes Brewing
cascadelakes.com

Tips for **Scouting & Hunting** during **DROUGHT**

Oregon's snowpack is at a record-breaking low this year and most of the state is in moderate to extreme drought as of June 2026. Communities are also bracing for an intense fire season this year due to drought.

Hunters and everyone recreating outdoors are asked to take steps to reduce the unintended impacts of recreation on fish, wildlife, and their habitats during drought and wildfire season.

GIVE WILDLIFE & LIVESTOCK ACCESS TO WATER

Please hunt ethically and give wildlife access to water. Do not camp within 300 feet of a water source to allow livestock and wildlife access to water at night. Also, consider the impact your scent or blind may have on animal use even when you are not there.

Never divert water or modify water troughs, reservoirs, springs or other developments. Most water sources have legal water rights associated with them, so tampering with their location or flow is illegal. Also, diverting water sources could reduce their benefit to livestock and wildlife.

FOLLOW ROAD CLOSURES

Do not drive on roads when vegetation is touching the bottom of your vehicle, even if the road appears to be open on a map. It could spark a wildfire. Never drive on or through streambeds (wet or dry).

KEEP DOGS UNDER CONTROL

Keep your dogs on leash (or under your control at a minimum) and on trail to limit disturbance to wildlife sheltering nearby. This also reduces the risk that the dog will get into a conflict with other wildlife. Other canids like coyotes and wolves can get aggressive towards domestic dogs, and unleashed dogs that get into problems with a carnivore are likely to bring the problem back to you.

FOLLOW FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Reduce the likelihood of wildfire by completely extinguishing your campfire (embers and

ashes too). Fire restrictions are likely to be in effect though parts of hunting season this year so check before you head out. Usually, they require that vehicles have a gallon of water or a fully charged and operational 2½-pound fire extinguisher and shovel when not on state highways or county roads. ATVs must have an extinguisher, too. Campfires and off-road driving may also be prohibited.

USE BLINDS ETHICALLY

With water sources reduced due to the drought, hunters may face more competition for blind placement near a water source this year. Suggested best practices for blind use on public land include:

- Use portable blinds. Any construction materials you use should be removable.
- Check with the land manager for any regulations regarding placement dates. Some may require that you place and remove your blind within a certain timeframe before and after your hunt.
- Label your blind with your full name and zip code.
- Placement of a blind on public land does not convey exclusive right of use on federal land. But hunters should be respectful of each other's efforts and give the hunter who set up the blind first claim on the blind when they are hunting.

BE REACHABLE

Not just by your loved ones. Be sure ODFW has a valid email address for you in our licensing system so we can contact you if there are significant fire-related closures in your hunt area.



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.

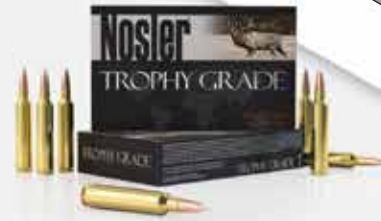
ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

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

Terrebonne OHA member Bryce Denfeld captures a spot in the 2026 Nosler Photo Contest finals and wins an OHA Coast knife for his October photo of this Metolius Unit mule deer "best" buck.



OHA member Lane Rutz from St. Helens is a finalist in the 2026 Nosler Photo Contest, winning an OHA Coast knife for his photo of Jessie Rutz and a Jackson County black bear taken last October.

APLEGATE/TERI DUNGANNON

NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



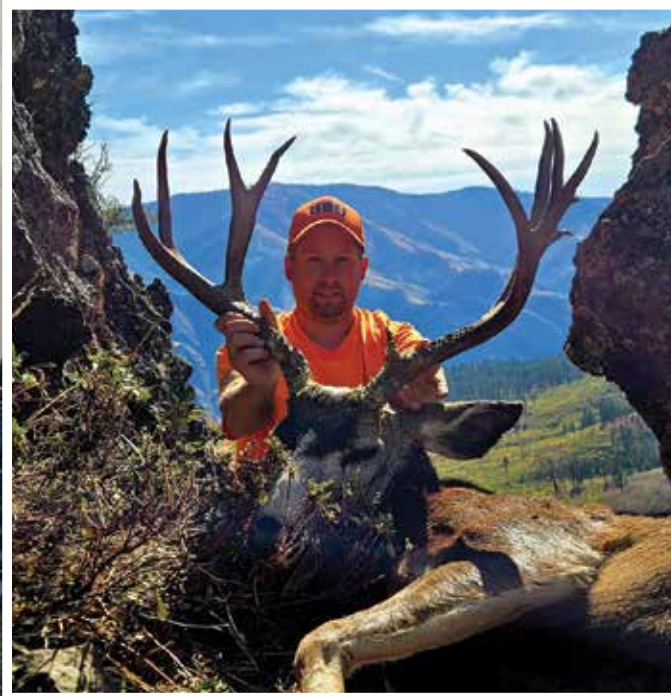
Hillsboro OHA member Brent Tannock wins a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his Union County turkey artfully posed this past April.



OHA member Tyler Audisio grabs Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his photo of an Applegate Unit "tax day red bear" taken this year on April 15.



Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat await OHA member Cam Moore for his "biggest buck of all time" photo from the Malheur River Unit last October.



OHA member Matt Marcum from Tillamook and his photo of Dylan Marcum and his Hells Canyon first mule deer last October garner Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat.

NOSLER[®] PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS

OHA member Tony Jeffries from Dundee is a finalist in the 2026 Nosler Photo Contest and wins an OHA Coast knife for his photo of Paisley Jeffries and her Roseburg area blacktail this past November.



Medford OHA member Allen Sedey wins a spot in the 2026 Nosler Photo Contest finals with his photo of Franklin Van Pelt's Rogue Unit turkey last April.

NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY HONORABLE MENTION



OHA member Brian Wadyka of Damascus captures Honorable Mention and a Nosler hat for his photo of Lily Wadyka and her first turkey taken last April in the White River Unit.



OHA Life Member Gabe Lindsey from Prineville wins a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for a photo of stoked Gage Lindsey and his first turkey taken last April in Crook County.



Scappoose OHA member Aubree Cook is an Honorable Mention and Nosler hat winner for her photo of daughter Kaycee Comfort and her August 2025 Columbia County cow elk.



OHA member Tim Johnson from Astoria snags a Nosler hat and Honorable Mention for his photo of Cody Johnson after some long, hard miles posing with his Saddle Mountain Unit Roosevelt bull last November.

OREGON'S HIGH DESERT, OPENING MORNING/DUANE DUNGANNON



Garden Variety Guns

We've been living in the new place for nigh on six years and the Missus informed me she has been missing a certain something.

"I beg your pardon," I said, "I never promised you a rose garden." But then I realized. I had promised her a rose garden when we got married. So I sat down and started drawing up plans for rose bushes and realized if she is going to have a bigger garden, the Missus is going to need a bigger garden gun. Which got me thinking about guns and vegetables and the time Lil Sassy brought home a vegetarian.

We decided to go shooting. I brought out a variety of animal targets for the other offspring and their significant others to shoot, but I had the vegetarian shoot a can of beans with an old muzzleloader.

Of course, the vegetarian is too young to remember, but shooting vegetables is a time-honored tradition that goes all the way back to the time the peashooter was invented.

Lil Sassy and the vegetarian eventually broke up, partly because of someone or something named herb. Now he is selling veggie burgers made from refried beans and a special blend of rose hips. When I called him, he said he couldn't talk because he had a bunch of taste testers in the lunchroom. "I think it's going good," he said, "but I'm looking through rose-colored gases right now."

Well, thyme flies, and if we don't start talking about garden guns, we will run out of room. So, lettuce begin.

There are 10 main threats to the health of the rose bush and of the garden in general. Rabbits are at the top of the list. Number two is deer. The best way to deal with deer is to make a pre-emptive strike every October and hunt them on their own ground before you have to deal with them in your garden. Deer hunting is a lifetime commitment. I think Vice President Dick Cheney said it best, "There's not going to be an end date that we say, 'There, it's all over with.'"

The missus doesn't quite comprehend how hunting deer on public land protects her rose garden, but I offered an explanation from Cheney, who used to speak in a rose garden:

"If we go after the terrorists, if we deny them sanctuary, if we take out their bases and their locations where they operate, that's probably the most effective way to deal with this threat."

Think of it as nipping the threat to roses in the bud.

Rabbits, squirrels, gophers, voles and raccoons are common garden threats. Certain types of birds may also have to be dealt with.

A lot of people think the air gun is a good choice for the garden, and I tend to concur, but air power is limited in range. A .177-caliber pellet is good for feathered pests out to 20 yards. A



.22- or .25-caliber pellet is preferred for rabbits and squirrels, and again, effective range is out to 30 yards except for the very best guns and good shots. If I had to assemble an armory of garden guns, I would start with an Umarex Legend lever action.

Tuck the gun against your body and load 10 BB cartridges into the loading gate. Put the rifle to your shoulder and work the action. The Umarex Cowboy Lever Action, which looks and feels almost like a Model 94, feeds rounds and spits empties like a Winchester, but it's backyard-friendly and quiet as a librarian. You need CO2 cartridges and plenty of BBs. My Umarex lever gun delivers 650 feet per second and a satisfying thwack when employed on collared doves.

Note: If you live in city limits, the gun isn't the best way to deal with pests. If you live in town and want to protect your garden, maybe it's time to move to the country.

Next in the line-up would be any sort of single-shot .22 rifle with a fixed 4-power scope, sighted-in to rosebush range (say 20 to 30 yards) with CCI's CB Caps (very quiet). A single-shot rimfire can be used to head-shoot rabbits or raccoons and can be loaded alternatively with snake shot to deal with birds. Just don't pepper the peppers.

For those with bigger gardens and bigger pests, a lever action .410 like Henry's H18 Protector (20-inch barrel) & Provider (24-inch barrel) line might be the answer. A lever action shotgun can be used to shoot rabbits, harvest turkeys and fend off coyotes.

If you're going to get a garden gun, you have to be careful. If you hit a pumpkin, it could become a squash. If you miss and hit the cucumber, you could be in a pickle you won't relish.

•••

Uncle Geddy has started a new business making small garden birds out of mahogany. It'd be great if we had a joke about this, wooden it?



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

CASCADE LAKES

BREWING CO

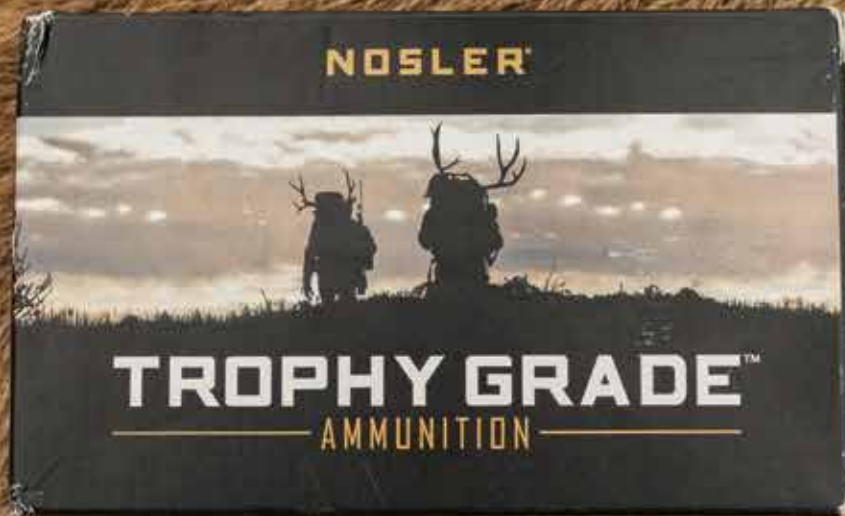
**ELK CAMP IPA
NOW AVAILABLE**

**The official beer
of the bull chase**



10% of proceeds are donated to support OHA
Join us on the hunt at Cascadelakes.com

PROVEN



TROPHY GRADE AMMUNITION

Nosler's Trophy Grade Ammunition is loaded with the three most effective big game bullets Nosler has ever built: Partition®, AccuBond®, and AccuBond® LR. When your hunt depends on one shot, rely on the bullets and ammunition that have proven themselves in the field for decades. They've put countless trophies on the wall and thousands of meals on the table. Prove it for yourself with Nosler Trophy Grade.

NOSLER[®]
www.nosler.com