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your best
bets for
badger and
late spring
turkey



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VOL. 39, NO. 3

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new trail cam
photo contest!



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Time to do all we can for Oregon's mule deer

Mule deer have long been one of the premier big game species in Oregon, and hunters are passionate about deer and deer hunting. Unfortunately, our opportunities to hunt mule deer in Oregon have been diminishing for years now, as a direct result of declining deer numbers across their range in eastern Oregon.

Information on the decline in mule deer numbers in Oregon when compared to established management objectives is abundant (see "OHA to be active in updating Oregon's mule deer plan" in the March/April issue of OREGON HUNTER). Whether we are looking at overall population numbers, fawn production and survival rates, or buck ratio numbers, similar situations exist.

Oregon is not alone here. Similar trends are being observed across the west. Ryan Platt, ODFW assistant district wildlife biologist in the John Day field office, stated, "It's just a bad time to be a mule deer in the West. Pretty much all populations are going down, and no one has found that silver bullet cure to change the trajectory."

Management of mule deer in Oregon is guided by the Mule Deer Management Plan. This plan, last updated in 2003, is scheduled for an update in 2021. With this updated plan, everything that we have learned about mule deer – their habitat needs, their migration patterns, the effects of predation, the threats of disease – must all be incorporated and considered. For this updated plan to be viable, it must be comprehensive, use the best available information and science, be broadly supported, and it must be implementable.

Numerous factors affect Oregon's mule deer. Many hunters immediately point toward predation. While predators are a factor, and predator management must be considered, how much of a factor it is varies across the state. During the time since using hounds to hunt cougars was banned by voters in 1994, the cougar population has doubled and mule deer harvest has dropped in half. Disease is also a factor. As an example, we have already seen instances of epizootic hemorrhagic disease in mule deer. While these factors and others need to be incorporated in the updated mule deer management plan, above all, habitat is the most important factor to consider. Without necessary habitat, we can't have deer, and the other factors become moot.

Since the last revision of the mule deer plan in 2003, we have learned an incredible amount about the habitat mule deer use, and how they use it. Studies on mule deer have brought to light the significant needs of not only summer range and winter range habitat, but the migration habitat itself (roughly 60 percent of Oregon's mule deer are migratory).

Much of the summer range is on public land, which has seen little proactive management and endured severe wildfires over the last two decades. Much of the winter range is on private lands that are being converted into new subdivisions and renewable energy sites. The migration routes between summer and winter range have been found to be highly habitual for mule deer. They use the same routes and the same stopover areas year after year. If the migration route is suddenly blocked by a highway, new development, or solar farm, this becomes a permanent impact to that habitat and the deer in that area. OHA has invested more than \$114,000 in the next underpass on Highway 97, and we are researching other areas with major needs for safer migration.

Now is the time for OHA members to get involved. How our public lands are managed can have a significant impact on mule deer. Working and partnering with private landowners is absolutely critical to support mule deer recovery in Oregon. OHA members need to be informed and engaged on critical habitat and migration area needs across the range of mule deer in Oregon. The time for rhetoric has passed; now we need informed proactive communication and management to help turn the trend on mule deer populations around.

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WORK SHARP OREGON HUNTING QUIZ

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1. Which Oregon duck prefers to eat fish?
a) canvasback c) merganser
b) wigeon d) wood duck
2. Which duck likes Oregon hazelnuts?
a) canvasback c) merganser
b) wigeon d) wood duck
3. You can use an artificial light to hunt:
a) gray squirrel c) coyote
b) bobcat d) none of the above
4. Which unit is NOT included in the South Blue Mountains spring bear hunt?
a) Heppner c) Desolation
b) Ukiah d) Sumpter
5. How many eggs does a band-tailed pigeon typically lay in one nest?
a) 1 c) 6 to 8
b) 3 or 4 d) 10 or more
6. Which Oregon unit is NOT included in the Southwest spring bear hunt?
a) Siuslaw c) Applegate
b) Indigo d) Keno
7. Klamath and Agency Lakes are within which wildlife management unit?
a) Klamath Falls c) Sprague
b) Silver Lake d) Keno
8. Fall turkey season now ends on:
a) Oct. 31 c) Dec. 31
b) Nov. 30 d) Jan. 31
9. The bear tooth biologists want hunters to return is a:
a) premolar c) incisor
b) molar d) canine
10. Biologists want the tails of:
a) sage grouse c) mountain quail
b) forest grouse d) none of the above



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Send your best guess to Oregon Hunting Quiz, OHA, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501, or submit your guess at oregonhunters.org, where a larger version of the photo appears. One entry per OHA member.

Entry deadline: May 20, 2021.



LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

Ken Caudle, Bend

Ken's name was drawn from among the OHA members who recognized Summer Lake.

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

MAY 1-14

OHA Pioneer Chapter Online Fund-raiser,
<https://ohapioneer.cbo.io>

MAY 1

Tioga Chapter Youth Day, 541-294-7912

MAY 15

Controlled hunt application deadline;

OHA chapter projects:

Hart Mountain 541-884-5773

Barney Reservoir 503-290-6143

Lake County guzzler 541-417-1750

MAY 31

Turkey & spring bear seasons close

JUNE 5

OHA chapter banquets:

Redmond 541-233-3740;

Columbia County, 949-533-7271.

OHA Klamath forest cleanup 541-884-5773;

OHA youth & family events:

Bend 541-480-7323

Josephine County 541-218-2836

Tualatin Valley 503-290-6143

JUNE 6

OHA youth & family event:

Tualatin Valley 503-290-6143

JUNE 9-13

OHA Klamath Chapter Online Fund-raiser,
ohaklamath.maestroweb.com

JUNE 19

OHA chapter banquet:

Mid-Willamette, 541-971-3351

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

OHA Pioneer Chapter weekend guzzler
campout 503-710-1233

JUNE 20

Controlled hunt results available

JUNE 24

OHA Josephine County family weekend
campout 541-761-3200

JUNE 26

OHA youth & family events:

Clatsop County 503-791-0549

Lake County 541-621-8123

Mt. McLoughlin & Fish Lake/Duane Dunganon

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



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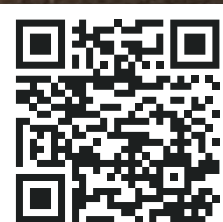
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Turkey opener has come and gone; now what?

Go where the turkeys are. I wish it were that easy. It wasn't that easy for me when I started hunting turkeys. During that time, I struggled to find birds and didn't capitalize on the short amount of time I had to hunt. Eventually, I shortened my learning curve, and in the last two years I've been able to fill all three turkey tags allowed during Oregon's spring season. Here are three things you want to keep in mind when scouting and hunting turkeys.

Use local resources

If this is your first time hunting Oregon turkeys, be smart and use the resources at



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

The author enjoys the moment after taking one of the three Oregon turkeys he bagged in 2020.

your disposal. Grab your smart device and find ODFW's turkey density maps. It's a great resource to point you in the right direction. Remember, you want to hunt where the birds are.

Follow the food and watch the temp

Turkey habitat west of the Cascades doesn't get much snow, which means birds have plenty of food throughout the season, keeping them within a small home range. If you find birds west of the Cascades early in

the season, you can bet they won't venture far the rest of the season.

East of the Cascades is a little different. While looking for birds, you have to take into account two things: food and temperature. Turkeys will follow the snow melt, feeding on new growth, while also staying cool amid rising temperatures. Birds at lower elevations in the beginning of the season will move farther up the drainage, following the melting snowline later in the season.

Hunt the edges and openings

Turkeys love edge habitat. Birds will work the edges of forests, trails, creek beds and fields. Knowing this makes analyzing geography easier when scouting or picking out hunt areas on Google Earth. Look for a good mix of open habitat with enough surrounding cover.

East of the Cascades, sparse oaks or conifers that open into healthy fields or meadows are my favorites. West of the cascades, habitat that holds turkeys could be clear cuts, oak savannas or open farm fields. —CHRIS HAGER

Badgers are one of Oregon's most overlooked varmints

On a January coyote trip in the Beulah Unit, we were walking to our stand at the edge of a field when Flip spotted a badger that had just come out of a hole in a creek bank. Since the badger had not spied us yet and it had given him a clear shot, Flip thumbed the safety and smoked it.

Badgers are an often-overlooked opportunity for varmint hunters. They are unprotected, and there are no seasons or bag limits.

Evidence of badger industry was everywhere we looked. The road was almost unusable because of badger holes. The creek bank was riddled with ground squirrel burrows and the big crescent-shaped holes the low-slung pesterers made going in after them.

We were on a ranch and now we could report that another road-wrecking badger had been eliminated. Some years it seems badgers are everywhere and other seasons they are scarce.

Jon Muir, ODFW district wildlife biologist in Lakeview, thinks we might see more of the short-legged omnivores soon.

"I maybe have seen less of them lately, but that shouldn't surprise me. We're kind of coming off the tail end of the rabbit and rodent cycle. Now that we're starting to see



DEMIS KIRKLAND, HISIMAGES.COM

The badger is on the prowl wherever ground squirrels are abundant. Snakes, birds, insects and sage grouse eggs are on the daily menu.

more rabbits and probably more ground squirrels again, I imagine in the next five years I'm going to start seeing more badgers and getting more damage complaints from landowners, too."

Badgers can help keep a ground squirrel population under control, but they create a different problem, turning small tunnels into big tunnels, and ranchers and farmers try to manage them every chance they get.

"Their cycle is on the same curve as the Belding's ground squirrels," Muir said. "Three years after a boom in ground squirrels you are likely to see a peak in the badger numbers. They are so tied to their foods, that's what regulates the population."

Badgers like to live in old canals, creek beds and washouts where the digging is easy, especially close to large ground squirrel populations. Many badgers are taken each year by sage rat shooters. Best opportunities are in early morning.

Badgers respond to calls, but are not likely to travel far to reach the caller. Successful badger hunters stay on the move until a badger is spotted at long range, then set up to call.

When using an electronic call, dial up sounds made by easily-caught ground dwellers like squirrels. Woodpeckers, flickers and other bird-in-distress sounds can also bring a badger on the scoot.

—GARY LEWIS

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TBA	Blue Mountain	541-231-4384	June 9-13	Klamath (online)	541-882-9593
TBA	Lake County	541-810-1617	June 19	Mid-Willamette	541-971-3351
TBA	Tualatin Valley	503-502-0611	July 17	State Convention, Chinook	
May 1-14	Pioneer (online)	503-710-1233		Winds Casino, Lincoln City,	541-772-7313
June 5	Columbia Co.	949-533-7271	July 31	Capitol (online)	503-851-8409

BARTHOLET-
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Transferring firearms in Oregon is already a nightmare, and a new bill could make it much worse.

Gun bills, coyote contest ban bill on fast track

By Al Elkins & Amy Patrick, OHA Lobbyists
Alvinelkins@yahoo.com

March saw the first bill deadline come and go in the 2021 Legislative Session. The mid-March deadline stopped the bills that were not going anywhere and extended the life of bills that had hearings and work sessions scheduled for the remainder of March and beyond.

HB 2548 Wildlife Corridor Funding

Directs the Legislative Policy and Research Office to study issues related to funding construction of wildlife corridor road crossings and report to legislature its findings on or before Sept. 15, 2022.

Update: At a February hearing, OHA testified in support. The bill had a work session scheduled in late March.

HB 2728 Coyote Contests

It's back! However, this version has an amendment that protects certain aspects of nonprofit contests (Section 5 of the bill lines 17-19). The bill prohibits a person from conducting or participating in a contest, competition, tournament, or derby that has the objective of taking coyotes for cash or prizes. Provides that prohibition does not apply to raffles conducted by nonprofit organizations if the organization does not award raffle prizes based on number, weight or size of coyotes taken. Punishes

violation of prohibition by maximum fine of \$2,000.

Update: The bill had a work session. An amendment to allow for a county-by-county vote on contest restrictions failed. The bill was passed out of committee and now goes to House floor for a vote.

HB 2844 Beaver Bill

This bill would remove beaver from both the predatory animal designation and rodent listing in statute. It would hamper a landowner's ability to deal with damage-causing beavers by removing them from the current management structure and requiring landowners to now receive a permit, similar to furtaker requirements. No exemption for emergency damage mitigation has been included.

Update: The bill had a public hearing. OHA staff worked with Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Forest & Industries Council, and the Oregon Cattlemen in a coordinated effort to stop this bill. The bill has not been scheduled for a work session and will not move forward in the legislative session.

SB 630 Elk Damage Tag Bill

Authorizes use of landowner damage tags to take elk on adjacent property with consent of the owner of the adjacent property.

Update: Senator Hansell, the sponsor of the bill, formed a work group to discuss

the provisions of the bill in relation to what is currently allowed under ODFW rules related to damage tags. The workgroup consisted of Senator Hansell, landowners, an OHA representative and personnel from ODFW. The workgroup met twice and decided that current ODFW rules address the provisions in the bill. It was therefore decided that no legislation on this subject would be needed at this time.

Gun Bills

HB 2543 Firearm Transfer Prohibition

Prohibits transfer of firearms by gun dealers or private parties if OSP is unable to determine whether recipient is qualified to receive a firearm.

Update: OHA opposes this bill, which was scheduled for a work session in late March.

SB 554 Concealed Weapon Laws

Authorizes city, county, metropolitan service district, port operating commercial airport, school district, college, or university to adopt ordinances or policies limiting or precluding affirmative defense for possession of firearms in public buildings by concealed handgun licensees.

Update: OHA opposes this bill, which is now awaiting a floor vote of the Senate.

...

To learn more about these bills, visit www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws

ODFW unveils archery elk plan; offer your comments

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
mtotey@oregonhunters.org

ODFW has released its initial strategy for moving more eastern Oregon archery elk hunts to the controlled hunt system. On March 11, ODFW issued a release that described the proposal, along with a map and a process for hunters to provide their input. Information is available on Page 48 and on the Big Game Review page on the ODFW website at: <https://myodfw.com/articles/big-game-hunting-season-review>

OHA continues to track this proposal and participate in discussions with ODFW staff. OHA representatives are reviewing information on the current elk archery

hunting rules, assessing potential impacts if the current proposal is implemented, and making sure our members have an opportunity to engage in the discussion.

Jeremy Thompson, ODFW District Wildlife Biologist from The Dalles, who serves as the agency lead for the process, said in the release, "We have tried to craft a solution that addresses the problems we are seeing in some units, while continuing to retain as much general season opportunity as possible. We recognize that any change we propose will impact hunters, but we will also be impacting hunters if we do not make a change."

ODFW has a goal of getting a decision

on the potential elk archery hunt changes by the June Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting, rather than waiting until the normal meeting date of September when most archery hunters are in the field. Any changes made on the elk archery seasons would not be implemented until the 2022 hunting season.

ODFW will share their information and describe the proposed changes in a meeting specifically for OHA members.

Join an April 28 Zoom meeting at 6 p.m.:
<https://zoom.us/j/98322391188?pwd=S3dVcllhdkFk3d3FLUXVQm1qRW5HZz09>
Meeting ID: 983 2239 1188 Passcode: 045108
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BLACK POWDER

By TROY RODAKOWSKI

McKenzie & Indigo muzzleloader deer

We found ourselves sneaking along the moss-covered forest floor, winding our way through a 20-year-old reprod patch in the upper McKenzie Unit. The old cat road that was barely visible and mossy covering made for a nice quiet trail. A couple weeks prior we had hung synthetic scent wicks and had seen several deer visit the area on our trail camera. It was a cold and foggy mid-November day with dripping dew that fell like rain as it began to break light.

We quickly found a place to set up and call about 50 yards below the tree where our wicks were hanging. The temperature was a balmy 34 degrees around 3,000 feet of elevation.

After calling for about 15 minutes, we saw a very nice buck move almost undetected through a window in the fog about 80 yards above us. I didn't have time to get the hammer back on my Thompson muzzleloader. Both dad and I waited 10 more minutes and called lightly using estrus bleats, when suddenly, I caught movement below us. A buck had just thrown his head into a Douglas fir tree to distribute some pre-orbital scent. Fortunately, that offered enough time for me to settle my peep on his vitals and drop the hammer.

Once the smoke and smell of sulphur cleared, I had a nice three-point on the ground and venison for the freezer.

In the higher elevations of the McKenzie and Indigo, snowfall will push deer into migratory mode, and with the rut progressively ramping up, bucks will continue to breed does that are on the move. Deer here will travel greater distances in comparison to others at lower elevations.

Snowline hunting has become the norm for many late-season muzzleloader hunters as numerous deer will drop in elevation with accumulating snow. It's amazing to see trail camera footage and hear reports of large bucks taken in sev-



Terry Rodakowski shows off his McKenzie Unit buck from this past season, taken with a 90-yard shot while the buck was following a doe. The author accompanied him on the hunt.

eral inches of snow. Many deer are much slower to migrate and can be found at elevations from 3,000 to 5,000 feet through much of November.

In the Indigo, locations around Hills Creek Reservoir begin to heat up once the snow begins to fall.

"Access can sometimes be difficult," said Tod Lum, ODFW District Biologist in Roseburg. However, he pointed out that there are some very nice deer living in and around many locations from the reservoir to the south. Here especially, migration and hunting the snow lines will be key.

Finding migration routes and isolated hidey holes for these deer is essential, and many hunters enjoy success by calling, rattling and hunting from tree stands and ground blinds in the lower Cascade foothills. Bucks at higher elevation are difficult to pattern, especially late in the season as the weather and rut greatly affect their habits.

The Holiday Farm Fire has drastically changed the landscape in the McKenzie Unit, where it torched over 173,000 acres. By hunting season, there will have been several landslides and road closures

throughout the unit. Historically, the 2400 and 2600 road systems near Blue River have been great places to explore and set-up for rutting deer. However, late-season muzzleloader hunters will likely have to find other promising places with good fresh browse.

Enhanced forage and open canopies for good deer habitat are silver linings from the recent fires.

"Overwinter survival was likely high across most areas on the district," noted Chris Yee, ODFW District Wildlife Biologist in Springfield.

"Conditions were mild with very little snow accumulation. The exception would be in the Holiday Farm Fire perimeter. Large areas within the burn still do not have green-up. The seed bed was likely damaged or destroyed in these severely burned areas. We suspect higher than normal mortality rates in severely burned areas.

"Many new hunters or those who have not hunted for years chose to hunt last year," Yee added. "These new and returning participants will affect the normal success rates we expect. Additionally, the Big Game Regulations underwent an overhaul. Many hunts were deleted or combined into unit-wide hunts. This overhaul may have caused hunters to choose different hunts than they normally choose. "It will take a couple normal years to really sort out what to expect."

Finally, wildlife managers say the increase in hunter participation resulting from the pandemic will likely cause success rates, preference points, and areas of use to be anomalous for the next few years. Hunters should be cautious when viewing the recent hunting harvest statistics and preference point summaries.

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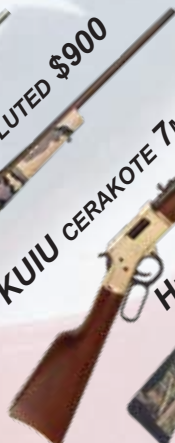
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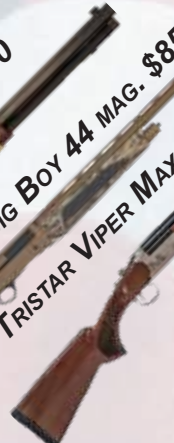
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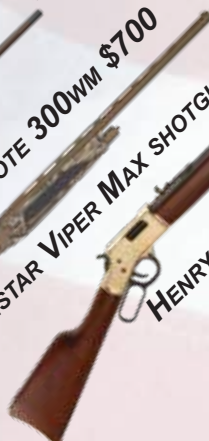
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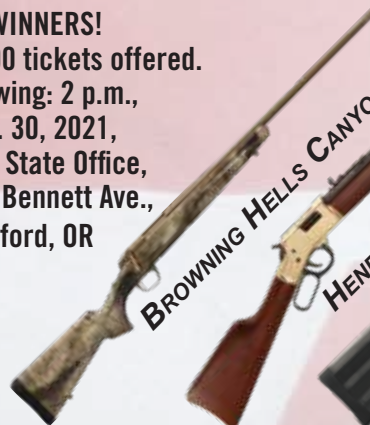
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The bow season that ended before it even started

A very painful reminder about tree stand safety

I have been using tree stands as one of my primary hunting tools for more than 35 years. It just seemed natural, because climbing trees was something I have done since childhood. Friends even started calling me “monkey man” several years ago in recognition of the relative ease with which I would get up and down the tree. The peace and quiet of a day spent perched high, undetected like a proverbial fly on the wall, is one of the ways I enjoy observing the natural world and recharging my spiritual batteries.

That year I was setting up a pair of tree stands about a week before opening day of archery season on our tree farm about 15 miles outside of Baker City. My daughter’s stand is the more difficult one to set up, and I did it first. Although she prefers ladder steps that are strapped to the tree and are very easy to install, the stand itself is challenging to get securely fastened. With the help of a few select curse words, I got the job done.

My wife and I then moved a couple ridges over to the location where I was going to set up my stand. I prefer screw-in steps, and my stand can be hung on its own screw to make strapping it to the tree relatively easy. I used a hand saw to cut various limbs out of the way along the ascent path and for clearance when in the stand for drawing and aiming. I installed one extra step above the stand as a hand hold that would also serve as a hook to hang my backpack on.

Everything went smoothly until I started to come down. I grabbed the upper step with my left hand and then stepped off the platform onto a step with my left



The author stands at the base of the tree from which he fell eight weeks earlier in a tree stand accident in Baker County.

Lessons Learned:

- ✗ Always be mindful of what is below you and clear away any objects that could impale you if you were to fall on them.
- ✗ Cut away all limbs that are punky or rotten along and between your pegs.
- ✗ Space your pegs close enough to enable safe movement up and down the tree.
- ✗ Stay acutely focused on the task at hand.
- ✗ Slow down and confirm your grip and footing before letting go or moving to the next position – maintain 3 solid points of contact.
- ✗ Wear a safety harness and use it properly.
- ✗ Make sure someone knows where your stand is so they can find you if something happens.

foot while holding onto the stand with my right hand. As I started to lower my right foot to the next peg below, I let go with my left hand. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw what looked like another step to my left, but when I grabbed it I suddenly realized it was a punky stub of a branch that crumbled in my grip. It totally threw me off balance. As I started to fall, I heard my boots scraping bark and felt my legs stiffen as if applying the brakes. It was 16 feet to the ground and I remained upright until the impact at which time I fell backward. Fortunately, I landed between several logs, missing one with my head by only a couple inches.

Thankfully my wife was there and checked me over to make sure I was not bleeding. The first thing I did was wiggle my toes to make sure I was not paralyzed. The pain was not severe, probably due in part to shock. However, when I tried to stand, the “crunch” in my right ankle told me something was definitely broken. I broke both ankles and suffered a compression fracture in my back (L2). Two weeks later, I had surgery to install a plate with 5 screws on one side and 2 more screws on the other side of my right tibia. I was really lucky in so many ways.

I faithfully strap in when I am in my stand, but I have not used any safety gear climbing up or down. The harnesses provided with my older stands were limited to use when seated. I will be investigating alternatives before next season.

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The (Almost) June Swoon

Why Oregon Spring Bear Hunting is Greater Later

BY MAX ZELLER

Now that I've acquired sexagenarian status, I'm somewhat nostalgic of my bear hunting past. I remember hunting spring bears in earnest right after my retirement at the turn of the century, when the spring bear season in a couple units began in early May and ended the last week of June. But changes in spring bear hunting seasons were on the horizon, and now all hunts end May 31.

I just happened to live in one of those units when the seasons extended into June, and it was during this time when I pulled out some record-book, love-sick bruins cruising for receptive sows. The peak of the bears' breeding season, or rut, in the Northwest occurs around the month of June, but that's just a generalization. The bear rut actually kicks into gear by mid-May, so for the savvy spring bear hunter, it's still possible to take down that big boar cruising for sows those last couple weeks of May.

Scouting and patience are the keys to success. If I decide to hold out for that late May mature boar, it's actually not him that I am looking for, but a sow that is frequenting a mature boar's core area. If I carefully stake out her primary domain and bide my time, there's a good chance a mature boar will enter the scene. I just have to be set up and prepared for that encounter to come to fruition. The last thing you want to do is get busted and have her go nocturnal or leave the area entirely. Here's how that perfect

scenario played out last spring.

My late April scouting trip in the high foothills of the southern Cascades produced a lone young sow in a small isolated meadow, and it seemed to me she wasn't going anywhere any time soon. Conditions were perfect – grassy meadows, surrounded by thick timber and wetlands with plenty of water and the security of isolation. As is my preference, this was going to be tight-quarters bear hunting, so my plan was to enter that meadow the exact same way each time, keeping in mind the lay of the land from which bears may enter or exit the meadow, the prevailing wind direction and my human scent cone while on stand.

I set up bear camp in mid-May and visited that small meadow every few days. Every evening, like clockwork, the young sow came out to feed two hours before sunset. I had a good feeling that if she continued her regimen, and I didn't screw things up by spooking her out of the area, she would eventually draw in a boar as the month of May was coming to a close and the spring bear rut started to take shape.

In the meantime, I continued to hunt my other productive bear habitats. Several days passed and the moon was entering the waning gibbous phase. A three-quarter lit moon, waxing or waning, is what I personally call a bear moon, and I always seem to have luck spotting or taking a bear during this moon phase. I entered the sow's small meadow at morning's first light, and there



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This sow served as a decoy to attract boars to the author's hunting area.

she was, feeding away until she faded into the thick timber for her day's nap.

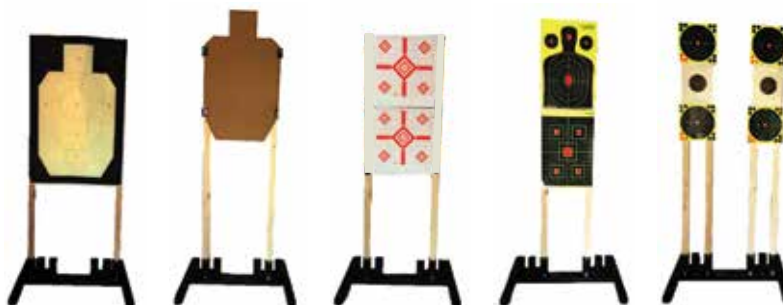
I slipped away, but not before I noticed something that wasn't in the meadow in past outings – a new large scat pile that didn't come from the sow. I explored some new ground the rest of the day before returning to the small meadow in the early afternoon for the evening hunt. I knew from previous scouting trips this was the time when the prevailing winds shifted out of the north and was perfect for my set up on the south end of the meadow.

I sat nestled against the base of a large Ponderosa pine. Within minutes, a large-racked bull elk in full velvet entered the scene 50 yards to my left and fed in front of me before disappearing back into the timber for the night. Soon thereafter, two coyotes entered the meadow from the large

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The familiar sow entered the meadow after a confrontation with this coyote in the timber.

wetland to my right and began prowling the field. One yote pounced high into the air and came up with a large vole, gobbling it down like a dumpling. The second coyote entered the timber to the north, and within seconds, a large commotion ensued; complete with breaking branches and a growling bear. That piqued the curiosity of the vole-eating coyote and he followed the first dog into the woods. Now, a louder melee ensued. The coyotes never re-entered the meadow, but five minutes later the familiar sow emerged and fed for over an hour before exiting where the coyotes had entered.

It was getting toward the last hour of daylight and the dark fingers of shadows began encroaching on the meadow from the tall timber bordering the west side of the park. A half-hour before dark, I again caught movement to my left. This time the



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The author took this large boar after a sow left the area. Boars are searching for sows in late May.

bull elk was replaced by the black hide of a large bruin. When he fully emerged head-on at 70 yards, I knew he was a mature boar, complete with an all-around

thickness, an arrogant swagger, and even a pronounced griz-like hump between his shoulders. I knew this was the bear I was patiently waiting and planning for, but I

needed him to turn broadside for the most ethical shot on a bear – about four inches behind the shoulder, and in the middle from top to bottom.

He slowly fed my way, obscured by the few pines in the middle of the field. Between mouthfuls of grass, he cautiously sniffed the air and ground, either to detect danger or the scent of the resident sow – probably both. When he fed behind one of those pines, I carefully switched positions for a steady hold. My vigilance in determining prevailing wind conditions paid off; this boar had no idea I was in his living room, even at such close range.

Within a minute, green grass and 40 yards were all that separated us when the big fella finally turned broadside. My crosshairs had followed him the whole way when I squeezed the trigger of my trusty .45-70 for a perfect heart shot. He took two huge leaps growling and swatting at what bit him, but he never came close to the thickness and safety of the forest. He lay still after that second leap. As I stood over him and thanked him for his gift, I peered back over my shoulder into the dark timber where the sow exited the meadow only a few hours earlier. I thanked her, too. 🐾

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TURKEY WELL DONE

AIM FOR A HIGHER LEVEL OF HUNT THIS SPRING.

BY JASON HALEY

At first our tom didn't gobble on the roost. Dad had to start him up. We knew the high-mountain meadow. The birds roosted in a certain section of the long ridge above. Sure enough, our tom fired back, where expected, after dad's second series of soft tree yelps. Dad gave me that familiar nod, indicating it was game-on. Anytime a bird answers twice consecutively, particularly on the ground, he's usually at least going to come take a look. We didn't need to call this guy on the ground; he walked straight at our decoy from a quarter-mile away, directly into the business end of my Stevens Model 90, single-barrel 12. That was that.

I turned and smiled at dad, who was seated against a pine 40 yards behind me. "That's all of it," he whispered, grinning. We started toward each other, still whispering even though the silence was broken.

Every hunt is different, and they are all good, win or lose. But we walked five miles through snow drifts for this boss after the pickup wouldn't go any further. I also had a close encounter with him the weekend before. He put on a show and answered numerous times, but was henned-up and wouldn't leave his girls. It wasn't happening that day. Not to be deterred, I drove 4 hours back the next weekend and enlisted the help of a more experienced caller. Pro tip number one!

In the beginning

My dad, Wayne, and buddy, Gerald Parnell, took one of the first wild turkeys on the west coast in 1972, a short time after introduction. It was the same method: one caller, one shooter. Dad operated a guide

service starting in the early 80s. I began tagging along before I could hunt, but bagged my first bird in 1983. We scouted for weeks and spent several nights "roosting" a group of gobblers in a canyon from the mountain above. That spray-painted single-barrel kicked the tar out of me.

There were fewer birds in those days. They were hard to find and hunt. Every time I went it required wading a swollen creek to get to a ridge, which only sometimes held ghostlike gobblers that would thunder on the roost, but go silent on the ground.

The Golden Age

It's now. We are living in the heyday of turkey hunting. Be thankful. What a great problem to have, especially for young hunters. Oregon's wild turkeys went bonkers since the first introductions, particularly after the more adaptable Rio Grande subspecies was introduced in 1975. Since the first spring season in '87, we now have turkeys in every county and a liberal six-week season. We also have damage/nuisance complaints. Some scoff at the notion of hunting turkeys.

"Too easy," they say. "I've got 'em on my front porch." We're talking about hunting wild birds, not pest control.

Amazing senses

I've seen birds hang-up or spook at the smallest wrong color or unpainted face. A tiny movement can spoil a hunt. Once I moved my gun from my cheek to my eye, slowly, on a gobbler that was walking in. He caught the movement, whirled and launched instantly. I was amazed, but already on him and instinctively knocked him out of the air and found the cripple later that morning. Don't do that! That's bad form. The point is amazing instincts.

I've seen them fly off the roost across remote river canyons landing within gun range. I've watched them run like roosters, belly under and jump fences and spook off the roost from long distance. They're notorious for hanging up out of gun range and displaying, preferring to bring hens to them. They find ways to place objects between you at close range. They will circle behind a seated caller and pin you down, staring a hole in your back while you cramp with red ants in your ears. I pulled a call-shy bird by scratching oak leaves with my free hand. He'd hung up in the brush at close range and wouldn't budge or talk. Most callers have experienced the need for that bright red head to take one more step. They seem to know.

Few things in the outdoors are more rewarding than closing the deal on a spring gobbler the right way. If you think turkeys are easy or somehow unworthy of our time and respect, you simply haven't hunted them enough. Or maybe you're going about it wrong. Try this:

Scout

Look for feathers, droppings, scratchings and tracks. Sometimes roost trees will have droppings under horizontal limbs. I've seen historic roost trees on private land with piles a foot high at the base. Maybe find some shed antlers and burn calories while you're at it. I remember a beautiful albeit bleached-out 4-point shed that had grown into an oak.

Put one to bed

Roost your birds. Walk in before season and set up within hearing distance of likely ridges or roost trees. You might hear gobbling activity or soft yelps just before fly-up as they try to locate each other. You might even see them fly up or watch them sound off on the roost, but at least try to hear some gobbles. Over time, you might learn to distinguish jakes from older birds, but they can fool you. If they aren't talking,

If you think turkeys are easy or somehow unworthy of our time and respect, you simply haven't hunted them enough. Or maybe you're going about it wrong.



TROY RODAKOWSKI

Hunt turkeys using traditional techniques this spring, and get the most out of the experience.

try a crow call to make them shock gobble. If that doesn't work, slam the truck door on the way home or honk the horn. I joke, but some guys get off work too late to roost, so they drive mountain roads after dark and stop to honk periodically. It works.

Say good morning

Spring turkey hunting is an up-early thing. Slip in before daylight and talk to him on the roost. If possible, let him gobble

first. Then just let him know where you are with a soft tree yelp. It doesn't take much. Don't over-call. They have a GPS in that tiny brain. They know precisely where you are. If he answers on the roost, you're in business typically, but he'll usually go quiet on the ground. Assume he's coming, and be patient. If he's gobbling without you, he's got hens or buddies that have him stirred up. Or, another hunter may be calling. Stick around. Let the morning develop and read the signs. Sometimes breeding activity doesn't begin in earnest until afternoon.

Call 'em in close

It's about pulling the lovesick "king of spring" within shotgun range through situational calling. Modern shotguns and choke tubes allow hunters to pop birds that used to be out of range. But why, when you can reduce cripples and get them in close for a show? My son blew four chances last season before getting it done, but we watched big gobblers spit, drum and strut for hours. Two years ago, we worked the biggest long-beard I've ever seen. It took over 2 hours to get him in. We watched him spit and drum and pace on a trail, in full strut, for another hour while he studied our decoy. He was just out of 20-gauge

range and eventually walked off. Unforgettable bird! He saw our decoy, but also saw us with small-diameter trees on our backs. He didn't like it and wouldn't take another step.

One-shot kill

Try a single-barrel. Dad bought two cannons from co-workers years ago and had fun spray-painting them. They are light for packing all day and blend well. Jacob missed a big bird clean last season by shooting over it. That bird won the day. There was no follow-up shot. I did the same thing once. The bird stretched his neck out looking for the source of the noise and I fished a shell out of my pocket and reloaded. He had a thick 10-inch beard.

Half-day hunts

There's legal and there's well done. Give them a few hours to breed. We are spoiled, but many states only allow hunting until afternoon. I grew up with noon, and later 2 p.m. shooting hours. Neighboring states now close at 4 p.m. That's plenty of time. Sometimes it takes a half-day for gobblers to finish with their hens and feed before they start cruising and getting vocal again. I get it. But, if you don't close the deal before 2 p.m., consider calling it a day. You lost. That's ok. Get up and try him



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Well done

My gramps was a houndsman and cattleman. He wasn't much of a deer hunter and knew less about turkeys, but had his opinions. I hunted his cattle leases while he worked. He referred to gobblers as "roosters" and couldn't figure out for the life of him why a young fella would carry around a rubber duck (i.e., decoy), especially when he sees turkeys blocking the gate every day.

He was right, of course. There's more than one way to hunt spring turkeys. But unless your objective is simply food, sitting on well-used trails or under roost trees before dark isn't the way. Get the most out of your season and develop a life-long passion by hunting toms the hard way. 🐔

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LET 'ER BUCK!

Rounding up bucks in the Columbia Basin makes for a wild ride.

By Gary Lewis

Photos by Gary Lewis
and Samuel Pyke



One of two bucks the hunters had in their sights. With every bounce, it changed direction and didn't stop to look back. When the buck crested the top of the ridge it was 600 yards away, going like a tumbleweed in a blue norther. In the right place at the right time, Alan Roberts (right) saw this buck when it crested the hill.



When we saw the first bunch of mule deer, there were four: a good buck with antlers as wide as its ears, a second 4x4, a 3x3 and a forked horn. We guessed where they were headed and stalked in on hands and knees to 300 yards. When we blew the stalk, and the deer kicked up dust trails to the horizon, we began to look for the big one we had been told about.

My friend Bob Roberts, who has lived in the Columbia Basin his whole life, farming and hunting and fishing this dry country, rolled up in his white Ford at mid-morning.

"There's a buck bedded in the cut-bank," he said. "I can take you right to it."

In our haste to get out the door that morning, Mikayla, who was about to turn 21 and should have been keeping track of such things, had left her rifle in the bunkhouse.

I handed her mine, a Montana Rifle Company bolt-action chambered for the 6.5 Creedmoor. We dialed the scope to 2X in case the action was up close.

Now we walked a narrow two-track along a deep slash in the ground. Under overhanging cut banks, mule deer had carved out oval beds against the walls of the ditch.

The buck's head was up, bedded right under the rim of the ditch.

What we didn't know was the deer was wounded — shot through the right front leg. At 77 yards, Mikayla slipped the rifle off her shoulder, while I set up shooting sticks.

Let 'er buck, Mikayla!

When the rifle crashed, the 129-grain Nosler bullet laced through the bottom of the throat patch, severed the spine and blew a puff of dirt out of the bank behind it. Its suffering was over.

I traced my finger in the week-old wound where a bullet punched out that front leg opening weekend. It was the right deer to take.

Counting Bucks

Sometimes a hunter will see the big one and then the word spreads. Alan Roberts, Bob's older brother, had seen it on opening day and missed it. Bob told us about it.

There were two bucks we wanted. One was the biggest we had glimpsed that first morning and the other that, Alan said, would dwarf it.

We consulted a map and set out to cover ground and look into every canyon we could.

Slipping down a long slope, Bob was the one that spotted the next deer.

It spotted us and stood out of its bed. A quick glance showed it was a spike, nervous now. I sprinted to the edge of the bluff and threw the gun up. A doe and four small bucks lit out of the small canyon.

Thirty minutes later, I kicked a ragged three-point out of its bed and could have shot it at 40 yards as it bounced up and over the top of a dike.

We counted 17 bucks and counted it a good day when the sun bled to a red line

on the western horizon and we kicked off our boots at the door of the bunkhouse.

Let 'er Buck!

One of the old World War II barracks at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport is now the home of Severe Brothers Saddlery, where Randy Severe carries on the tradition started by his dad and his uncle back in the 1950s.

On the second floor is the Hotel de Cowpunch, which turns into a cowboy

bunkhouse during the Pendleton Roundup. In the 1950s, when a cowboy couldn't find a place to sleep, Old Duff Severe offered him a spot to throw down his bedroll on a saddle shop bench. The cowboy took him up on the offer and the next year four more cowboys showed up with sleeping bags. The year after that the Severe brothers installed a kitchen, bought Army surplus bunkbeds and fashioned a roping steer out of a bale of hay, rawhide and horns.



One of several bucks the author passed up, this 3-point was bedded in waist high cover and it let the hunters get to 40 yards before it jumped.



Randy Severe is the designer of a saddle that encases the bottom of a bottle of Pendleton Whisky Directors' Reserve. He cracked the bottle of 20-year-old spirits and poured.



The author's daughter Mikayla Lewis visits the Hotel de Cowpunch. The Severe family bought this old Army barracks in 1946 and converted it to a saddle shop in the early '50s. The second story is home to the Hotel de Cowpunch, which is packed with cowboys during the Pendleton Roundup.

Randy Severe and his family have built saddles for ranchers, rodeo cowboys and presidents. A custom saddle uses the hide from 1 1/2 cows and takes at least 80 hours from start to finish.

Better Luck

It was the seventh day of the season when 20-year-old Tanner Roberts and I got a second look at the second biggest buck in the area. At mid-morning, footsore, we started down a long incline. I wanted to

look into a side canyon and made a hard right turn. The rest of the group followed and that was the moment the buck jumped.

The buck was 450 yards away on its second bound.

Sixty seconds passed before we heard the shot. And then another shot. And another.

Twenty minutes later we walked down into the valley where the 23-inch 4x4 had run into Alan Roberts with his bolt-action

.270 and a pocketful of Nosler Partitions.

We passed up 10 smaller bucks on the second to the last day, and then drove home, with Mikayla's buck in the truck and the rumor of a 30-inch Columbia Basin four-point to haunt our dreams.



*Gary Lewis is an award-winning outdoor writer and television host. Check out **Bal-listic Chronicles** on iTunes and Spotify. Contact Lewis at garylewisoutdoors.com*



Mikayla Lewis has been hunting big game since she was 12. This was her first mule deer after many seasons hunting blacktails and elk.



Antlered Art

Don Burda of High Country Arts is ahead of his time.

BY SHANNON FITZGERALD

Running out of your burning house – what would you grab? Most people have pondered that unfortunate possibility. Likely, it would be a gift, something handmade or a family heirloom. But it probably would be something with substantive value, beyond just use.

Years ago, Don Burda, owner and founder of High Country Arts, had one Black Hills customer answer that very question.

During a forest fire near Keystone, S.D., the customer wasn't given much time to evacuate his souvenir shop. In a store full of valuables, he elected to grab the moose antlers. Don had meticulously hand carved wildlife scenes through the widest webbed portions of the horns.

It was a testament to Don's workmanship and the time he has spent creating amazing and useful art from the antlers of animals.

Born in North Dakota, Don moved to the southern Oregon area in 1966, when he was 14.

"I thought I had died and gone to heaven, because where I came from all the pheasants were starving to death because their beaks froze shut," Don joked of the



How can anything be a crown jewel if it's not jewelry made from an antler crown?

Dakota weather. "I didn't realize everything could be so green in the winter."

Always with a passion for archaeology and wildlife, he later studied anthropology and geology at Southern Oregon College. This is where Don's interest in flaking stone tools and arrowheads transitioned into carving belt buckles from the bases of antlers.

Don worked for the BLM and Forest

Service after college until lured away to Wyoming in the late 70s by friends who had started a survey company. With lots of elk antlers available, Don continued his passion of carving wildlife into the buckles.

In 1977, while in Casper, he sold some of his buckles to a large popular western store named Lou Taubert Ranch Outfitters.

"They still order from me. Their father used to buy from me, and now his kids do."

In 1978 Don came back to Oregon and created High Country Arts, but would return to Wyoming each May and attend the Elkfest in Jackson Hole to sell everything he carved during the past winter, and then buy more elk antlers from the Boy Scouts at the Elkfest.

In 1981, Don was able to rent a suite at a new hotel in Jackson to display his art for 10 years. Horn prices in Jackson eventually became too expensive in response to the growing popularity of antlers in Asia.

Don then tapped into both the Seattle Gift Market, where buyers traveled from as far as Alaska, and also the Sacramento Western Apparel Market, which sells to western stores throughout the country. Soon High Country Arts had show rooms in Atlanta, Dallas, Minneapolis, Maine and North Carolina.



High Country Arts became popular with many conservation groups such as Whitetails Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Oregon Hunters Association, who all purchase the artwork for fundraisers.

In 2000, the height of his business, High Country Arts was shipping out 20 chandeliers per month; however, things changed. Resin casting of antler art became popular at the turn of the century, because bigger companies wanted the look, but not the price.

"2008 and before that, literally tens of thousands of independent retailers went under," Don explained, especially in Minnesota, which had nearly 4,000 resorts until they sold out to real estate companies. With only around 700 resorts left, Don mostly pulled out.

Still, after 40 years, Don is creating antler art in southern Oregon and selling it all around the country.

High Country Arts work begins on the heads of antlered animals such as deer, elk, moose, caribou, etc. These antlers are

Whether you call them drinking horns or brautins, any good pint deserves a good point. And only a crown from a royal should pour your Crown Royal.

some of the fastest multiplying cells in the world. While in summer velvet, deer antlers can grow as much as a half inch a day, and moose horns can gain up to 8 ounces per day while in velvet. By fall, the antlers have hardened, and the velvet has been scraped off.

The antlers are used for attracting females, defense and fighting. When the antlers harden in late summer, they can withstand impacts that would sheer normal bone, which provides Don a resiliently tough, yet beautiful base material to carve his art.

Don doesn't have to talk the animals out of their antlers – they shed them naturally before spring. He now buys most of his antlers locally, but highlights one of his more interesting antler finds in 1986.

While canoeing the Little Missouri in the Bad Lands of North Dakota, Don

excavated an elk antler from the riverbank buried beneath 15 feet of soil stratification with cottonwood floodplain above. Don figured the antler was extremely old. The elk horn was rust colored from the high iron content in the Badlands soil.

He packaged up a sample and sent it to Cambridge, Mass., where they carbon dated the antler at about 500 years.

If you are interested in antler art, or a unique hand crafted gift idea with some mystery and history, give High Country Arts a look.

Don Burda's art can be found at his website: www.highcountryarts.com. His products can also be found on Amazon. Don will post new art on his Facebook page. If you happen to be in southern Oregon, stop by the High Country Arts showroom in Shady Cove (541-826-4055) and talk to Don personally.



An antlered mirror makes a nice reflection on its owner, while antler lamps and chandeliers offer a thousand points of light.



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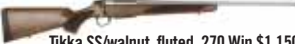


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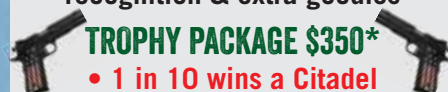



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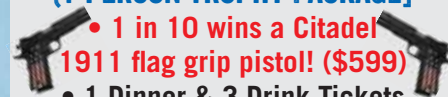
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- 1 Dinner & 3 Drink Tickets
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- 1 Commemorative Gift

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- 2 Early Bird Tickets**
- 2 Commemorative Gifts

STAG PACKAGE \$125*

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- 1 Early Bird Ticket**
- 1 Commemorative Gift

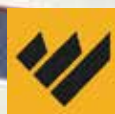
* OHA member prices. Nonmembers add \$35 for 1-year OHA membership.

** Early Bird tickets must be ordered by June 17, 2021.

Party Starter: 2 guns (\$599 & \$349). Max 1,900 tickets.
Special: Rifle (\$960); Knife (\$40). Max 1,760 tickets.
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Previous conventions sold out early, so don't delay!
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Tickets must be ordered and prepaid by July 7, 2021.
To order your tickets, call (541) 772-7313
or visit oregonhunters.org/store



GAME ON THE GRILL

By TIFFANY HAUGEN

Big Game Freezer Clean-out

Spring is a great time to go through the freezer and make sure all your big game meat from last season doesn't get neglected and freezer-burned. Remember, when you're cooking with frozen big game meat, you must thaw it slowly by taking it out of the freezer and thawing it in the refrigerator, so be sure to plan your meals ahead.

While there are countless ways to cook big game from the freezer, give these two simple recipes a try. These are ones everyone in our family loves, and ones I never tire of making.

Smoky BBQ Steak Rub

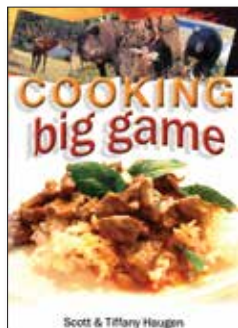
- 2 tablespoons smoked sweet paprika
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 3 teaspoons fresh ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)

If marinating meat longer than 30 minutes, always refrigerate. This is a super flavorful, sweet, smoky Southwestern rub that's great cooked on the grill or fried up in a skillet, hot and fast.

Elk Keema

Don't be scared! Keema just means "minced meat." Although Indian spices are used here, this recipe can be adapted to any taste.

- 1 pound ground elk
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 large onion, minced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 3 bay leaves
- 1-2 small green chili peppers
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons garam masala
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/3 cup plain yogurt
- Salt & pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup fresh chopped cilantro
- Lemon or lime for garnish



In a large skillet, caramelize onion in butter on medium heat, about 5-10 minutes. Add garlic, ginger, bay leaves and peppers and continue to sauté 3-5 minutes. Add tomatoes and increase heat, stirring until any liquid is evaporated. Add ground elk and continue to sauté until meat is browned. Sprinkle garam masala and turmeric on meat and continue to cook 1-2 minutes. Add yogurt and remove from heat. Stir in cilantro. Serve over rice or noodles with a squeeze of lemon or lime.



Minced or ground game meat offers endless possibilities for tasty meals.

For signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular book, *Cooking Big Game*, send a check for \$20 to Haugen Enterprises, P.O. Box 275, Waltherville, OR 97489 or visit www.scotthaugen.com for this and other titles.



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How do I become a Certified Instructor?

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Hunter Education

ODFW Hunter Education Program 503-947-6028
www.dfw.state.or.us



YOUNG GUNS

By JASON HALEY

Bang for the buck: Our priceless OHA youth turkey hunt

I've shared all things outdoors with my son Jacob, hoping some of it would stick, and I'd have me an outdoor buddy. He once told me, "I think turkey is my favorite kind of hunting." This brought a smile to my face and joy to my heart. I grew up hunting gobblers and can't disagree. What's not to like about the king of spring?

So when my wife Tracy and I noticed the youth turkey hunt at OHA's 2017 State Convention in Canyonville, it was a no-brainer. Our auction bid was the steal of the night.

The donor and guide was OHA member and turkey guru, Troy Rodakowski of Junction City, now affectionately known to us as Turkey Troy. He made everything easy for my 13-year-old. We met the night before to discuss logistics, but I could tell it was also to stir up a little excitement and anticipation for my youngster.

It worked.

Troy picked us up early Saturday and supplied delicious hot breakfast sandwiches, which hit the spot on the frosty, cold April morning. We drove to our first spot and set up before daylight on a brushy fence line. It was freezing and obvious it could take a while for things to develop. Regardless, it was a small property and required us sneaking in plenty early and silently. Troy wanted me to tag along, which I appreciated. He was confident we could make it work, despite having to conceal a third body.

After hours of sitting motionless and a few rounds of calling, it was apparent nothing was happening. Troy's birds had drifted. "Let's go check another spot," he whispered. We were all too happy to climb in the heated pickup. I know Jake was worried, but I was secretly happy. It's about the experience and I wanted us to work for it.

A short drive through beautiful farmland found us gaining elevation before arriving at private timberlands and tree-



Jacob Haley took this tom with his Weatherby Youth Model 20 gauge on a hunt donated to OHA's State Convention by Troy Rodakowski.

farms. Wet meadows were interspersed. We parked in a landing and let the noise dissipate before listening from the truck. Again, nothing.

The songbirds were audible, and the woods were waking up and warming, so we slipped out quietly. Our guide led us down a muddy access road, stopping several times to cast calls into the timber in various directions. We never sat down. Watching those two ahead of me was awesome. This was exactly what I'd hoped for. Troy slowed as we approached a creek corridor. Grassy flats on the other side were barely visible through the willows. We could hear the water gurgling. The spot looked good.

He made soft putts and purrs, assuming the birds could be close by, feeding. Nothing answered, so he brought the volume up, hoping for a shock-gobble or distant response. We moved on.

We passed through flat woods with tall conifers and grassy clearings before nearing an overlook. A gorgeous valley lay below with the trail leading toward the bottom. This hunt kept getting better. It was ideal habitat with scattered oaks and wildflowers. Troy launched aggressive calls toward the bottom from our perch. There he was! The response was distant, but clear. We all heard it. We were in business.

We slipped down the now-overgrown game trail, scanning the meadow carefully. Troy was trying to get a tad closer before setting up. Suddenly, there he was: a big black thing in the meadow 200 yards below. "He's in full strut," Troy whispered, turning back to us. It was big eyes and shared nervous excitement all around.

Suddenly, we were scanning the

ground for a place to set up. That was as far as we could go. I instinctively ducked and dropped back while Troy got Jacob set before creeping out to place a hen decoy in the trail. He returned to sit by Jake. I got comfortable and concealed, not wanting to mess things up.

Troy tried him again and he answered instantly, this time closer and louder. I was worried about Jake's youth model 20 gauge being a little light, but Troy didn't bat an eye when asked about it previously. It was what he was used to. Another soft yelp was interrupted by a thunderous gobble. He was right there!

I pictured our bird just out of shotgun range below the decoy in full strut. "I hope he doesn't shoot too soon and miss," I thought. I couldn't see the bird, but could see both hunters and saw Jacob's gun come up. I figured we might be in for a wait, as those last 10 steps can take forever, when, BOOM! The silence was broken and I observed the recoil.

"One shot..." I thought, wondering, as the boys jumped up and started celebrating with high-fives, laughter and chatter. I rushed down to join the party. "Great shot, Jacob, you did everything just right!" Troy said. I could see the bird flopping next to the decoy.

"Did you see him in full strut coming up the trail!?"

"I saw him strut, but only when he appeared by the decoy!" Jacob replied excitedly. "He got there fast!" The post-adrenaline chit-chat continued as we walked down to examine our bird.

What a dandy tom he was: full-fan, 10-inch beard, good spurs. Now the sun was out and there was nothing to do but bask in the moment and take pictures. What a morning.

Turkeys are great for kids. We have birds in every Oregon county. You never have to drive across the state or spend preference points. The long, low-key season provides plenty of weekends without missing school. There's time to teach them about everything from mosquitos to wildflowers. Gobblers provide valuable lessons in teamwork, patience and persistence in a mentoring atmosphere.

OHA's advocacy and proposals have led to half-price turkey tags for kids, as well as the Youth Sports Pac. The money you save right there is enough to pay for your annual OHA membership. The value of that is, well... priceless.



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OHA NEWS & VIEWS

POKER JIM RIDGE

OHA forms expert advisory council

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

The OHA Board of Directors has approved the formation of a new advisory council that will be chaired by Jim Aken-son, past OHA Senior Conservation Direc-tor, who was appointed to that position in January. Eight other people were invited to serve on the council based on their in-dividual experience and professional work.

The council will be used to help provide technical information and data on a number of new and ongoing projects and issues that OHA is involved with.

Other council members include: Holly Akenson, a wildlife biologist, researcher and former Fish and Wildlife Commission member; Vic Coggins, retired ODFW bi-

ologist and current OHA State Board mem-ber; Craig "Foz" Foster, retired ODFW biologist; Todd Hoodenpyl, a retired OSP Game Officer; Tim Hiller, former ODFW furbearer program leader and currently a consulting wildlife biologist; Monty Gregg, the forest wildlife biologist on the Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grasslands; Steve Denny, a retired ODFW wildlife manager and bi-ologist; and Mike Schlegel, a retired IDFG wildlife biologist and elk researcher.

The council is already providing input to staff and project leaders on several top-ics, including anti-beaver trapping legisla-tion, hunt results reporting (were hunts on public or private land), and wildlife area management plan reviews.

Volunteers will help others learn to hunt

By Amy Patrick, OHA Outreach Coordinator
Amy@oregonhunters.org

OHA is encouraging members to be-come certified instructors of the Intro to Big Game Hunting course through ODFW. ODFW is interested in certifying OHA members as instructors through their Train the Trainer program, which would allow the courses to be taught throughout the state.

Members are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to become instructors and begin hosting Intro to Big Game Hunting courses in their local ar-eas. To become certified as an instructor, contact Cat Sandor-Korte with ODFW at catherine.N.Sandor-Korte@state.or.us for more information.

This opportunity is also the initial phase of a larger Learn to Hunt Program that OHA is developing and plans to roll out to chapters this year.

OHA's program includes additional components, such as a library of course outlines and teaching tools, a guide for hands-on day trip modules, and an online resource library.

In Memoriam *Contributions made recently to the OHA Memorial Fund*

In memory of
JOYCE WEAVER
from Erika Balbier

In memory of
EVAN DUANE SCHWEBKE
from Brian M. Spears



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OHA is pleased to unveil our new Trail Cam Photo Contest sponsored by Tactacam! Enter your best trail cam photos captured in the last year on OHA's website at www.oregonhunters.org now for a chance to win a Tactacam Reveal trail camera!



TNC ZUMWALT PRAIRIE PRESERVE

2 lucky winners bag dream hunts

We have winners for OHA's TNC Zumwalt Prairie Preserve guided deer and elk hunt raffles drawn on March 17 at the OHA Office.

Deer Hunt Winner:

Mike Highland, Sherwood

Elk Hunt Winner:

William O'Neil, Battleground, WA

Raffle proceeds support OHA's mission of Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage.

OHA congratulates the winners and thanks all who purchased tickets. Watch for new raffles this year for 2022.


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CHAPTER NEWS

Chapters set slate of fund-raisers, projects

Chapters of OHA are scheduling an ambitious slate of spring events, subject to gathering restrictions. Please confirm all information found here.

BAKER

Charlie Brinton
(541) 403-0402

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Best Western Sun Ridge Inn; optional dinner 6 p.m.

2021 banquet: To be announced.

Update: Tickets for the Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle are on sale now. The banquet has been postponed; go to our Facebook page for news and updates. We plan to hold a scholarship raffle and issue a scholarship this year.

BEND

Rex Parks
541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Bend Golf & Country Club.

2021 banquet: held online March 17-April 8. We auctioned an A&H statewide deer tag March 13.

Update: We held an in-person meeting March 10. We scheduled an April 24 project to build Smoke Creek buck and pole fencing on EcoTrust Forest Management property. The fencing is part of a larger project partially funded by OHA at the state level. June 5 is Youth Day at Cyrus Ranch in Sisters; call 541-480-7323. All Hands All Brands for Your Public Lands is slated for June 18-20; call 541-647-0424.

BLUE MOUNTAIN

Dean Groshong
(541) 377-1227

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday of the month, The Saddle, 2200 Court St., Pendleton, 6 p.m. meeting, 5:30 p.m. dinner and drinks available.

2021 banquet: To be announced.

CAPITOL

Erik Colville
(503) 851-8409

ohacapitol.webs.com

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m.,



OHA volunteers will complete the second half of a buck-and-pole fence to protect the riparian area along Smoke Creek in Lake County during a project on April 24. OHA has provided funding at the state level for the project, which will permit wildlife access but guard against livestock damage. Volunteers will camp at Pothole Springs. For information, contact Joe Giacinto at 541-410-4555 or Eric Brown at 541-647-0424, Ebrown@bendcable.com

Marion County Fire Station #1, 300 Cordon Rd. NE, Salem.

2021 banquet: July 31 online; call 503-851-8409.

Update: The in-person banquet scheduled for July 31 has been replaced with an online auction and raffle. Details will be shared in the monthly chapter newsletter and OHA electronic media. We will work with the USFS Prairie City Ranger District June 25-26 to repair fences we constructed in the past; contact project manager Joe Purdy at ydrupj@Q.com or 503-689-4334. We are discussing with the USFS Detroit Ranger District the possibility of performing our long-running meadow enhancement project just in areas outside the 2020 burn area. At press time, the USFS has advised no work will be allowed.

CHETCO

David Green
(541) 207-4866

Chapter Meetings: 5:30 p.m.: next meetings TBD.

CLATSOP COUNTY

Jim Bergeron
(503) 458-6829

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

dinner, 7 p.m. speaker, 4H Clubhouse, Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

2021 banquet: canceled

Update: We will hold the Les Schwab and Coastal raffles in 2021. Youth Day will be June 26 at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds. The wildlife trailer educated more than 200 students at a Newberg school in March.

COLUMBIA COUNTY

Jordan Hicks
(949) 533-7271

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., Moose Lodge, 57317 Old Portland Rd., Warren.

2021 banquet: June 5, Columbia County Fairgrounds

Update: Our February membership meeting was held via Zoom; in March we were back at the Moose Lodge in Warren. Our June 5 banquet will be different this year, during the day, partially inside and outside, and with catered BBQ box lunches.

EMERALD VALLEY

Tony Hilsendager
(541) 729-0877
EmeraldOHA@live.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, Board meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Update: Our activities are on hold, but we hope to hold events again soon.

HOODVIEW

Kelly Parkman
(503) 706-7481
oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., board meeting at 5:50, Elmer's, 1933 NE 181st Ave., Portland.

2021 banquet: canceled.

Update: We are presenting adult Learn to Hunt classes, via Zoom and in person at Sportsman's Warehouse in Portland. We hope to have a habitat project at White River Wildlife Area this summer.

JOSEPHINE COUNTY

Cliff Peery
(541) 761-3200

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., Elmer's Restaurant, Grants Pass.

2021 banquet: held online March 20-28

Update: Youth Day will be at Josephine County Sportsman's Association June 5; call 541-218-2836. Our Willow Lake chapter family campout is June 24-27. If you are new to hunting or your partners have retired, join our Hunters Without Partners group; mmmmull@aol.com

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Contacts/RSVP:

Eric Brown, Bend OHA @ 541-647-0424 or ebrown@bendcable.com

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KLAMATH

Allan Wiard

(541) 884-5773

ohaklamath.webs.com

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

2021 banquet: online June 9-13; call 541-882-9593; ohaklamath.maestroweb.com

Update: We scheduled and hope the Hart Mountain campout and work party will take place May 15-16. We will do trash cleanup June 5 on Green Diamond property near Keno. The chapter will put on a BBQ for youth hunters Aug. 20 at Gerber Reservoir; call 541-281-6518. Regular membership meetings are on hold until larger groups can meet indoors; meanwhile our board members continue to meet and take care of business issues.

LAKE COUNTY

Larry Lucas

(530) 640-3368

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday at 6 p.m., Dinner Bell Cafe, Lakeview.

2021 banquet: To be announced.

Update: Our first 2021 guzzler project is scheduled for May 15; call 541-417-1750. Youth Day is June 26 at Juniper RV Resort in Lakeview; call 541-621-8123.

LINCOLN COUNTY

Todd Williver

(541) 648-6815

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Tuesday, 6 p.m. meeting, OSU extension office, Newport.

MALHEUR COUNTY

Bruce Hunter

(208) 573-5556

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m., no host dinner 5:30, location TBA in the chapter newsletter.

Update: Though general membership meetings are on hold, our board continues to meet and conduct chapter business.

MID-COLUMBIA

Stanley Walasavage

(541) 296-1022

Chapter Meetings: Quarterly, 6 p.m., ODFW Screen Shop, The Dalles.

Update: We held our March meeting in the afternoon at the Sid White football field. The chapter bought four Campark trail cameras with Python cable locks and donated them to OSP in The Dalles. Thanks to Coastal Farm & Ranch for the donation of our raffle gun, a Christensen Arms Mesa Titanium .28 Nosler; for tickets email swalasavage@gmail.com or call 541-296-1022.

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MID-WILLAMETTE

Jeff Mack

(503) 949-3787

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., board meeting at 6 p.m., Old Armory, 4th and Lyons, Albany.

2021 banquet: June 19, Boys & Girls Club, Albany; call 541-971-3351.

OCHOCO

John Dehler, III

(541) 815-5817

2021 banquet: held online March 15-25

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m., Room 1868, 152 NW 4th St., Prineville.

2021 banquet: held online March 15-25.

PIONEER

Brian Andrews

(503) 266-2900

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter

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

2021 banquet: May 1-14 online at <https://ohapioneer.cbo.io> Call 503-710-1233.

Update: The Buck & Bull Contest at the February meeting was expanded this year to include bears and turkeys. Our chapter hosted a booth at the Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show March 24-28. Youth Day is April 24 at Canby Rod & Gun Club; call 503-829-2912. Guzzler work party trips begin again in May. Our family campout will take place June 18-21; call 503-710-1233. We'll have a booth at the Molalla Buckaroo July 1-4, and at the Clackamas County Fair Aug. 17-21; call 503-710-1233 for both.

REDMOND

K. C. Thrasher

(541) 419-7215

OHA line (541) 383-1099

oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter

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

2021 banquet: June 5, Deschutes County Expo; call 541-233-3740

Update: Redmond OHA will host our live Annual Fundraiser June 5. Presold tickets only; email jlcrafton@hotmail.com We scheduled an April 23-25 project to plant 800 wildlife shrubs, fence in cottonwood trees to stop beaver destruction and take out old wildlife-crippling fence wire at our annual Bridge Creek, Priest Hole project. Our chapter agreed to donate \$1,000 to USDA Wildlife Services for managing predation.

ROGUE VALLEY

Ricky Clark

(530) 905-1186

oregonhunters.org/rogue-valley-chapter

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 6 p.m. social & dinner, 7 p.m. presentation, Eagles Club, 2000 Table Rock Rd.

Update: We will hold the Les Schwab and Coastal Farm & Ranch raffles in 2021.

TILLAMOOK

John Putman

(503) 842-7733

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

2021 banquet: canceled

Update: We will hold the Les Schwab and Coastal Farm & Ranch raffles in 2021.

TIOGA

Marcey Fullerton

(541) 267-2577

Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m., 6 p.m. no host dinner, Puerto Vallarta restaurant, Coos Bay.

2021 banquet: held March 20.

Update: Tioga Chapter Youth Day is May 1; call 541-267-2577 or 541-297-6178.

TUALATIN VALLEY

Tony Kind

(503) 290-6143

oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter

Chapter Meetings (on hold): 3rd Tuesday, dinner at 6 p.m., meeting at 7, Prime Time Restaurant & Sports Bar, Forest Grove.

2021 banquet: date TBD. We auctioned an A&H statewide deer tag April 10.

Update: We had a booth at the Pacific NW Sportsmen's show March 24-28. Our

Barney Reservoir habitat project will be on May 15; call 503-290-6143. The Henry Hagg Lake youth event is scheduled for June 5-6; call 503-290-6143. Volunteers will meet to clean up a Tillamook Forest target shooting area July 24.

UMPQUA

Tadd Moore

(541) 580-5660

Chapter Meetings: 3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m., currently via Zoom.

2021 banquet: canceled

Update: The board is working with local agencies to prepare for potential wildlife habitat projects and revitalization of recreation areas. The annual chapter picnic at Roseburg Rod & Gun Club is scheduled for July 20; call 541-430-7324.

UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

Morgan Olson

(541) 786-1283

Chapter Meetings: La Grande Library, next date TBA.

2021 banquet: held online April 1-15

YAMHILL COUNTY

Andy Bodeen

(503) 490-2489

ohayamhill.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., 6 p.m. dinner, American Legion Hall, 126 NE Atlantic, McMinnville.

2021 banquet: Held online March 26-31.

Update: We had a small in-person general membership meeting March 11. Elections will be held at the May meeting. Our Youth Shotgun Shoot will take place Aug. 14; call 503-737-9483.

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POACHING SPOTLIGHT

See Portrait of a Poacher, an article about a White City man sentenced this year for violating the Lacey Act by illegally poaching a trophy bull elk in Crater Lake National Park at <https://oregonhunters.org>

OHA offers \$1,000 reward in blow dart poaching case

Two mule deer died and at least three more were injured after being struck with blow gun darts within the Burns city limits over the last four months. The Oregon Hunters Association is offering \$1,000 in reward money for information leading to a citation. Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Troopers responded to a citizen report of an injured deer in Burns around noon on Feb. 13. They found a mule deer doe in failing health with a blow dart lodged in her side. Unable to save her life, troopers euthanized the doe where they found her, near Court St. and Railroad Ave.

Troopers found the carcass of a mule deer fawn in the same area with a similar blow dart lodged in its neck on Nov. 6.

Between November 2020 and February 2021, ODFW biologists and OSP Troopers found three additional mule deer in the area with blow gun darts lodged in their bodies. In all three cases, biologists sedated the animals, surgically removed the darts and released the deer. They expect the deer to recover.

Blow gun darts (which are illegal to use for hunting deer in Oregon) are effective at killing small animals like rabbits and squirrels. When used on larger animals, the darts cause damage that may be mortal over time. Injuring an animal with a non-lethal weapon and leaving it to suffer and likely die is extremely cruel, according to ODFW biologist Rod Klus, who assisted in saving the three wounded deer.

"Either the wound will lead to an infection, or if the stomach or intestines are punctured, the deer will die, but it will take a while, and it will be painful," he said, "It takes a deer anywhere from days to weeks to die from infection."

The city-dwelling deer, acclimated to humans, are an easy target for poachers, according to Ken Hand, Regional Director for the Mule Deer Foundation.

"Using a dart is an inhumane way to kill a deer. It would take a while for them to die," he said. "Poaching is believed to



Several deer recently were killed or injured by blow darts inside the Burns city limits.

be one of the factors behind declines in mule deer across the state. Aside from being cruel, this is illegal, and it is wanton waste of the animals," he said.

Fred Walasavage, OHA State Board Chair, agrees.

"It is no secret that mule deer populations continue to be on a decline in Oregon," he said, "Granted there are many factors such as habitat loss, road kills, and predation, but when it comes to intentionally poaching wildlife, that's where OHA members draw the line."

Poaching animals – whether they are big game, fish, birds, or other wildlife – is a crime that steals from all Oregonians, according to ODFW Stop Poaching campaign coordinator Yvonne Shaw.

"Poaching steals natural resources from all Oregonians," Shaw said, "In this case, poaching takes a cruel turn. Thankfully, residents in Burns are quick to alert OSP Troopers by calling the TIP Line. Let's hope they find whoever is doing this."



OHA pays out 3 TIP rewards totaling \$700

In the last two months, OHA issued 3 reward checks to informants in 3 cases totaling \$700 from our Turn In Poachers reward fund. Charges included: Unlawful Take Buck Deer; Criminal Trespass; Hunt Game Mammal Prohibited Method; Take/Game Bird; Waste of Game Bird; Possession of Sport Caught Crab with the Intent to sell; Sale of Sport Caught Crab.

Klus worries that ODFW will get more reports on wounded deer.

"This has been going on for a while," he said, "These cases take time and drain resources when we could be doing other things for wildlife."

OHA offers rewards for calls to the Turn In Poachers (TIP) Line that lead to a citation. Because of the nature of this crime, OHA considers the doe that was euthanized to be in the same category as the fawn that was killed outright. In this case, the payout now stands at \$500 for each animal, totaling \$1,000. Anyone wishing to contribute to the reward fund may do so by contacting their county OHA chapter. The TIP Line phone number is *OSP (677) or 800-452-7888. Or report by email: TIP@osp.oregon.gov

The Stop Poaching Campaign educates the public on how to recognize and report poaching. This campaign is a collaboration among hunters, conservationists, land owners and recreationists.



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Eastern Oregon archery elk changes being considered

ODFW staff are planning to propose changes to the 2022 archery elk seasons to better manage elk populations and hunting pressure in popular units.

Under an initial draft proposal, archery elk hunting would remain a general season hunting opportunity in western Oregon and much of eastern Oregon. However, several northeast Oregon units (see map) would move from general season hunting to some form of controlled archery hunting to better manage elk populations and more equitably distribute necessary harvest reductions between rifle and archery hunters.

Tags would not be portable to general season hunts. Archery elk hunters would need to choose either Eastern Oregon General, Western Oregon General, or the controlled hunt tag they drew and would not be able to hunt one of the other seasons.

Units considered for the change were chosen based on the current elk population as well as the challenges with hunter density and displacement highlighted through ODFW's public process in 2020. The primary elk population issue that ODFW staff used in refining the archery hunt proposal revolves around post hunting season bull ratios and the individual unit's bull ratio management objective. Units where the bull ratio (number of bulls per cows) have not met management objectives for three out of five years need a reduction in bull harvest and are being considered to go to controlled archery hunting with this draft proposal.

"We have tried to craft a solution that addresses the problems we are seeing in some units, while continuing to retain as much general season opportunity as possible," says Jeremy Thompson, the ODFW district wildlife biologist for the Mid-Columbia who is managing the elk archery review. "We recognize that any change we propose will impact hunters, but we will also be impacting hunters if we do not make a change."

The ultimate goal of this proposal is to be able to make management actions equitable for all users," he continued. "Currently the controlled rifle season is the one place we have the ability to adjust hunter harvest, and they have taken almost all the tag reductions in the last 25 years."

Additional units are being considered to change from general archery to some form of controlled archery hunting because although they are currently achieving bull ratio management objectives, they have limited capacity to absorb additional bull harvest. Many of these units have branch bull harvest in the general archery season that is equal to or greater than the harvest in the controlled rifle bull season.

For example, the Starkey Unit has not achieved bull management objective in the last five years, 60 percent of the branch bull harvest occurs during the archery season, and tag reductions have only affected the controlled rifle season. If the Starkey Unit alone was moved from general archery hunting to a controlled archery



Draft 2022 Archery Regulation Proposal



hunt, the Ukiah or other adjacent units would likely see an increase in archery hunters and harvest if they remain a general season.

The Commission discussion of archery elk changes is happening at their June 18 meeting to ensure archers can attend the meeting outside of archery season; final archery elk regulations will be adopted at their Aug. 6 meeting (and remaining 2022 Big Game Regulations in September). Please review the proposal online and then send comments to odfw.wildlifeinfo@state.or.us

There will be additional opportunities to comment during the online June and August commission meetings.

This proposal is the latest in a years-long effort to improve the big game hunting regulations and align them with current biological objectives for wildlife and preferences among hunters. As a part of this larger effort, ODFW conducted a statistically valid survey of elk hunters throughout Oregon. From this study it was shown that 75 percent of all elk hunters preferred hunting with a rifle, while 23 percent reported preferring archery.

The general season archery structure for deer and elk in Eastern Oregon began in 1979 (when archery hunting was less popular, technology was limited and success rates were lower) and the current 30-day general season beginning in late August/early September has been in place since 1983. The season was originally intended to draw some hunters away from crowded rifle seasons.

Over the last 40 years, archery hunting has certainly become increasingly popular, with participation and harvest now exceeding limited entry rifle bull hunts in some units. Biologists believe the structure of the season is also contributing to complaints about over-crowding among archery hunters and elk distribution problems, with more elk on private land and fewer on public land during hunting seasons.

For more information about the big game review, including public opinion surveys, visit <https://myodfw.com/articles/big-game-hunting-season-review>

ODFW will continue to update the page with updated information as we refine proposals based on public input.

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2021 PHOTO CONTEST

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3RD PRIZE: Leupold Scope

4TH PRIZE: Danner Alsea Hunting Boots

5TH PRIZE: Benchmade Altitude Hunting Knife

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

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

ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

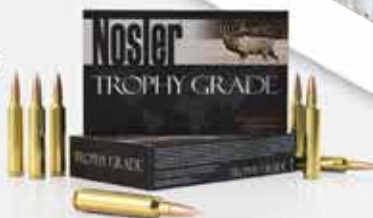
Go to **OHA's website at www.oregonhunters.org** Click on **OHA CONTESTS**. Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of Nosler, proud sponsor and OHA supporter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

PHOTO CATEGORIES

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

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

Current year contest prizes will be delivered the following year



NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS



OHA member Dennis Potter of Prineville bags an OHA Coast knife and entry to the finals of the 2021 Nosler Photo Contest for this photo of a mule deer and magpie on Steens Mountain last November.

Bill Martin, OHA member in Prineville, wins an OHA Coast Knife and a spot in the finals of the 2021 Nosler Photo Contest for this photo of Eric Martin with a blacktail buck he took last Halloween in the Alsea Unit.



NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS

OHA member John Pomazi of Sandy wins an OHA Coast Knife and a spot in the finals of the 2021 Nosler Photo Contest for this photo of Mattie Pomazi, 13, with an impala she took with a crossbow in South Africa.



Forest Grove OHA member Josh Vanderzanden claims an OHA Coast Knife and a place in the finals of the 2021 Nosler Photo Contest for this photo of Trevor Vanderzanden with his first buck, a Silvies mule deer taken last year using Josh's tag in the Mentored Youth Hunter Program.

NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

HONORABLE MENTION



OHA member Jeff Lewis of Merlin gains honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of a coyote taken with a .22 magnum this winter in the Evans Creek Unit.



OHA member Jensen Newton earns honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of a fall black bear he killed with a Tikka 7mm in the Santiam Unit.



Mark Knaupp, OHA member in Rickreall, receives honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of himself with a moose he took with a .300 Win Mag in British Columbia.



Medford OHA member Mike Messenger earns honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Kurt Messenger with a trophy muley taken last September in Wyoming.



OHA member Sydney Federico of Central Point scores honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of herself with a blacktail buck she bagged in a Rogue Unit youth hunt last December.



Molalla OHA member Brian Ferlan receives honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of his son Wyatt Ferlan with a tom he took last year on youth turkey weekend in the White River Unit.



John Bennett, OHA member in La Pine, earns honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Gavin and Beau Bennett with Gavin's mule deer, tagged last fall in the Upper Deschutes Unit.



Prineville OHA member Travis Rutz bags honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Harper retrieving a pintail in her rookie season near Scappoose in January.



OHA member Adam Stebbins of Salem gets honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Keaton Brown on a cold January duck hunt in Benton County.

PARTING SHOTS

By Uncle Geddy

Let Bear Rugs Lie

I ran into RaeBelle, the future missus T.Roy, as she was coming out of the bakery. I wouldn't have recognized her except she had her Wuhan mask down around her chin and half an apple fritter in her mouth.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon, which meant doughnuts were two-for-the-price-of-one. Not that I would know.

RaeBelle waved the business end of that apple fritter at me and said she was worried about T.Roy because he had been lying to his dog. T.Roy recently told his dog that he was not going hunting, but was just taking his rifle to the gunsmith. All while wearing camouflage and face paint.

I told her it was common to lie to a person's dog and she should not worry about it. "What you don't want," I told RaeBelle, "is to have a bear rug that lies to you."

RaeBelle said she was in a real hurry and although she would love to talk, she had to go see her old mother. Which was three lies in the same sentence. I wondered if I should tell T.Roy I was worried about RaeBelle's fibs. But we expect people to lie to us, especially when they have apple fritters.

Our old friend Ping showed up at the recent gathering of the Bear Mountain Gang.

It was all-you-can-eat night at Charlie's Fish & Chips. Lovers of the fried fish cruised the buffet like trawlers, their cardigans and pullovers spattered with lemon seeds and tartar sauce.

The Bear Mountain Gang had assembled at our customary table next to the galley where Harlan Peebles and T.Roy were arguing about which blade was a better skinning knife, the drop point, which Harlan favored, or your basic Green River, which T.Roy prefers. Both had produced their blades and were cutting up imaginary bears, flicking out organs lickety split and separating imaginary muscle groups.

Ping, the pharmacist, though, had my full attention. As a full-fledged member of the Bear Mountain Gang since he bagged his first boar on Huckleberry Ridge while impersonating a rock, he has a bear rug named Ivan on the floor of his home.

Ping's complaint had to do with the state to which his bear rug has deteriorated. "Gosh," he said, shaking his head, "Ivan is sure getting beat up at our house."

Now I have lectured on the proper way to display a bear rug. The bear rug should be considered a piece of furniture. Properly dressed, the bear rug is laid flat with a lining affixed, double stitched and prepared with a filler that gives it heft. My buddy and taxidermist Tubbs has educated me in this manner. Each foot and the head are ringed so as to provide wall mounting points.

My favored way to display a bear rug is to hang it on the wall. Another appropriate way to display the rug is to put it on the back of a couch. Jaws, of course, are open with teeth and tongue displayed and beady little brown eyes that watch everything in the room. Still, folks persist on putting their bear rugs on the floor, and that is what was causing Ping's problems.



In his culture, folks take off their shoes when they enter the home, and several of his friends had sustained injuries. Ping, of course, is not named Ping. His real name is Pong, but we do not let on that we know.

"Ping..." I said, and paused to let him talk.

"The name is Pong."

"Yes, of course. The trouble is you leave Ivan lying on the floor. Am I correct in assuming several of your friends have sustained injuries by accidentally kicking a foot into Ivan's mouth?"

"That's happened," Ping said. He went on to describe some of the other indignities Ivan has endured.

Many of Ping's wife's friends and co-workers are millennials who bring their dogs, which they call fur babies. German shepherds, chows, Pomeranians, and Rhodesian and Norwegian ridgebacks have camped out on Ivan. A beagle had chewed on one ear. A Chihuahua pulled out enough hair to make a little nest behind the head.

A freelance fly-tyer clipped off some tail hairs. Now the teeth were loose, the tongue was wagging and one eye had begun to wander. And the bear rug was in similarly bad shape, as well.

This may seem like a lot of problems for a bear like Ivan to endure, but live bears have many more problems. Live bears have to put up with ticks and fleas, ingrown toenails, cavities, abscesses, depression, insomnia, the squirts, halitosis and dandruff.

Bears also have to put up with solar farms, juniper encroachment and wolf introductions, which sneak up on them from behind.

Speaking of pains in the rear, biologists are a major irritation to the bears in these parts. Bears have to put up with biologists that wake them up out of hibernation and put electronic collars on them. Biologists commonly leave out tetracycline-laced baits for the black bears which might do something for their acne, but leaves a permanent yellow stain on their teeth. And sometimes biologists ship trouble bears from one area right into a peaceful bear's home territory. If I was a biologist, I would just do the bear minimum.

And polar bears, I found out why they have to stand up all the time. They get polaroids, which can make them bipolar.

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