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OREGON AFIELD: • Chukar

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What a difference a week makes in later big game seasons

ΡΗΟΤΟ ESSAY: TURN A **BLIND EYE** 

Inspiring images captured from Oregon duck blinds

#### **RETURN TO THE BURN**

- Life springs anew from the ashes of Oregon's devastating **Holiday Farm** Fire
- **SPARKS** AGAINST THE SKY **OHA toasts** 40 years of defending Oregon's hunting heritage

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Cover: Blacktail photographed by Douglas County OHA member John Wheland

VOL. 41, NO. 1

By Troy Rodakowski

By Scott Haugen

By Gary Lewis

By OHA staff

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## FINDING DIRECTION

BY MIKE TOTEY, OHA CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

## OHA to Commission: it's time for an Oregon wolf damage hunt

n August OHA submitted a letter to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission asking them to direct ODFW to initiate a framework for a wolf damage hunt to be used in areas of chronic livestock depredation. The letter was intended to start the discussion with the Commission, ODFW and all those interested in wolves, around proactive management of wolves in Oregon. The letter was prompted by OHA leadership in northeast Oregon who have witnessed first-hand the effects of wolves on the community, the agency, and on livestock producers.

To be clear, the Commission doesn't need OHA to ask for this action to do something. The authorization has been clearly set for the Commission to do this in the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan since the wolf was delisted in the eastern part of Oregon. Separating emotions from biology, facts from fiction, and management from politics are major roadblocks that must be overcome before

Wildlife staff must be given the tools and discretion to manage wolves like other game animals. proactive wolf management can happen in our state. In the meantime, agency staff and producers will take the brunt of the pain. Frustration on all sides will continue, and the situation will quite possibly become worse.

What can ODFW do, other than react to additional depredation reports and create annual reports for the Commission? First and foremost, Oregon must begin to manage wolves like all other game mammals. Realistic population modelling has been a glowing need. Until we have this, the agency will be held accountable to a verified minimum wolf count. Imagine if we managed elk solely based on the number of animals with radio/GPS collars and a handful of others that were observed by ODFW. No other game animal in Oregon is managed with a minimum count.

We need information on how wolves are impacting game animals. This assessment is also outlined in the current wolf plan, but little has been accomplished. Along with this, a better understanding of the interactions amongst all the predators and their impact on prey species would be useful for management decisions.

Wolves are now a permanent part of Oregon's landscape. There's little doubt that management of wolves, whether addressing livestock depredation or creating a wolf hunt, will be controversial for some time. The sooner wildlife staff are given the tools and discretion to manage wolves like other game animals in our state, the sooner it will become a permanent part of our wildlife management culture, and not front-page news.

So what's next? OHA received a response from the Fish and Wildlife Commission that essentially ignores our request, but instead points to updating the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. This serves as an indication of what is in front of us. What we asked for seems simple and straightforward. Start a conversation with decision makers, and implement the plan. Nothing more, nothing less.



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#### 2. You're most likely to find scaup at:

a) Summer Lake	c) Tillamook Bay
b) Hells Canyon	d) Gilligan's Island

#### 3. Which is not classed as a furbearer?

a) badger c) otter b) bobcat d) raccoon

#### 4. The home of the Antlers is where?

a) Wallowa High	c) Elkton High
b) Bonanza High	d) Rocky Mountain High

## 5. The big attraction at Bridge Creek Wildlife Area is:

a) snow geese	c) pheasants
b) Columbian whitetails	d) elk

## 6. Oregon's Rocky Mountain bighorns are confined to which corner of the state?

a)ı	northwest	c)	nor	the	eas	t	
b):	southwest	d)	sol	ıth	ea	st	

#### 7. What Oregon animal has no relatives?

a) pronghorn	c) couga
b) bear	d) mule

#### 8. Which is native to Oregon?

a) turkey	c) sharp-tailed grouse
b) pheasant	d) chukar

#### 9. Which goose nests in Oregon?

a) snow goose	c) Western Canada
b) white-front	d) dusky Canada

#### 10. What duck was formerly oldsquaw?

a) long-tailed b) pintail

#### c) ring-necked d) black duck

deer

#### TRUE OR FALSE:

- 11. Canada geese nest as yearlings.
- 12. Buckshot is legal for taking bear.

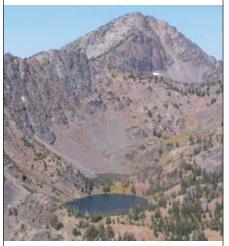
P-c; 10-a; 11-F; 12-T. 9-c; 10-a; 11-F; 12-T.



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

#### ENTRY DEADLINE: JAN. 20, 2023.





LAST ISSUE'S WINNER: Bill Harrel, Rainier Bill's name was drawn from among the OHA

members who identified the Twin Lakes in the Elkhorn Mountains.

# OUTDOOF

DECEMBER 26 Last day to purchase OHA Gun Raffle Calendar tickets

JANUARY 1 2023 licenses required; Cougar season opens; Tualatin River NWR youth waterfowl hunt

JANUARY 7 Tualatin River NWR youth waterfowl hunt

JANUARY 15 Sauvie Island youth waterfowl hunt

JANUARY 21 Klamath PLAY Outdoors, 541-281-2224

JANUARY 31 Harvest reporting deadline, most tags; Most upland bird seasons end

FEBRUARY 1 Deadline to file for OHA state elections

FEBRUARY 3 Eugene Boat & Sportsmen's Show opens (See Page 7)

FEBRUARY 10 Deadline to apply for spring bear tags; Douglas County Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show opens in Roseburg (See Page 7); Willamette Sportsmen's Show Opens in Albany (See Page 22)

FEBRUARY 15 Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show opens in Portland (See Page 63)

FEBRUARY 18 OHA Ochoco Chapter banquet: 541-777-4830

FEBRUARY 20 Spring bear draw results available

FEBRUARY 24

Jackson County Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show opens, Jackson County Expo (See Page 7)

FEBRUARY 25 OHA Chapter Banquets: Redmond 541-419-7215 Hoodview 503-314-3090 Columbia County 949-533-7271





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# OREGON AFIELD

# Blue skies with a chance of chukar

entral Oregon chukar did not live up to advance billing last year in the Deschutes and the John Day. A few hunters got into birds, but for the most part, hunters worked hard to find coveys.

"There are still plenty of chukar on the Deschutes and John Day this season," Mikal Cline said when we caught up with her in September. Cline is an enthusiastic chukar hunter, and Oregon's upland bird biologist.

"Overall, we had more harvest last January than in December," Cline said. "And Harney and Malheur counties produced more birds per hunter than expected."

Last winter was mild. Across eastern Oregon, the tops of the mountains were accessible through the end of January and the birds were strong and healthy.



Liesl, the well-dressed pudelpointer, retrieved this pair of late-season chukar.

"Coming out of winter, our females were in pretty good condition," Cline said.

Then came spring with the rain falling in buckets in April, continuing cold and wet through May. What could have been catastrophic for chukar produced better cover and vegetation in a lot of places. Grass is good for bugs, and bugs are what baby chukar need to survive.

"Spring precipitation put a lot of food on the ground," Cline reported. If eggs were ruined or chicks were killed by hail, the chukar produced second and third clutches.

When the rain stopped, it stopped hard, and eastern Oregon stayed dry until the fourth week of October, when the reports began to come in from the field biologists. Expect a lot of young birds.

HOTO BY THE AUTHOF

"Malheur county is looking good. Baker county is looking good. Harney county is going to be fine," Cline said. "And Brownlee Reservoir is going to be good."

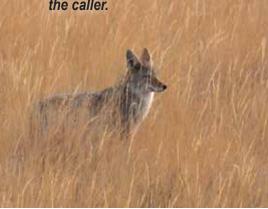
On the flip side, chukar and quail numbers are trending down in the Columbia Basin.

Chukar harvest picks up later in the season. Watch the weather, save your gas money, and mark a few days out of January. Our forecast? Blue skies with a chance of chukar.

Bag limit is 8 chukar or gray partridge with a possession limit of 24. —*GARY LEWIS* 

## Don't get comfy - the season is just getting started

Decoys keep a coyote's attention focused away from the caller.



A winter coyote stops to survey the scene after responding to the author's predator call. Distress calls work best this time of year.

e see them all the time out hunting and sometimes pass on the opportunity to shoot because it might mess up our hunting. But really, we shouldn't pass on these canines, because in all reality, they may ruin our opportunities in the long run. Coyotes are devastating on Oregon's newborn fawns and calves. These dogs sometimes work in packs to prey on vulnerable animals.

I have always liked calling these hungry predators with a Fox Pro from an elevated location with a good field of view. Fawn-in-distress and rabbit-in-distress calls work best during the winter months. Pup howls have also been known to work 單 on the song dogs as well.

It's important to try to double team them, because more often than not yotes will appear quickly within close range. Having one shooter with longer range capabilities and one armed with short range ammo like a shotgun with slugs will increase your success.

We have also used rabbit decoys and spinners to catch their attention. It keeps them occupied and focused on something other than a hunter in a blind. Keeping the wind in your favor is probably the most important thing, because coyotes are adept at smelling anything from a gut pile to potential danger. Deer and elk hunters frequently find success shooting coyotes over gut piles following harvest of their game, because coyotes will readily come to a fresh kill. Usually, I plan a hunt over a pile 2-3 days following my kill.

Coyotes often will sing and vocalize after dusk and begin to search for rodents, rabbits and gut piles during the night. Early morning and evening coyote hunts can be amazing if you have the patience and time. The added bonus is that you can come away with some nice pelts and feel good about helping Oregon's big game populations. —*TROY RODAKOWSKI* 

## **Hold Your Horses**

ild horses are a symbol of the American West. They were hunted commercially and controlled privately on western rangelands until the 1950s. The Wild Horses Act became law in 1959, prohibiting the use of vehicles to hunt horses on public land. Congress passed the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act in 1971, establishing federal management and protection.

Fast-forward 50 years: we're inundated with feral horses and they're tearing up critical deer, elk, pronghorn and sage grouse habitat. The BLM presides over Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in 10 western states. There are 19 in Oregon and two California border-crossing herds affecting native wildlife, also.

ODFW has nothing to do with management, despite awareness of the adverse conservation issues. Their website doesn't mention horses. No photos, no description, no discussion of the issues. A plethora of aquatic invasive species are profiled, as well as feral swine. According to Michelle Dennehy, ODFW Statewide Communications Coordinator, wild horses are "not wildlife, they're not anything." Broadly, ODFW works with federal agencies to address the negative impacts and follows their management plans. There is a working group and Deputy Administrator Brian Wolfer is on it.

ODFW biologist Matt Vargas stated, "We don't do anything with them. It's out of our jurisdiction. They're very destructive for native wildlife. I wish they weren't there." ODFW counted 90 horses displacing deer and elk on the California border last year. Those were from the Pokegama herd, which is the only herd in the Cascade Range (Klamath and Keno Units). Published data has the western edge of that herd's 80,885-acre range at Jenny Creek, but it's actually further west to Interstate 5 in the Rogue Unit.

They're fearless and even somewhat aggressive at times. Drought has exacerbated the problem, as horses will run native wildlife off water sources.

There are growing herds in Beatys Butte, Whitehorse, Murderers Creek and other units. Things are getting worse, and one thing is certain: business-as-usual isn't working. —JASON HALEY

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OHA has joined legal challenges to Measure 114, which bans certain firearms and magazines, while requiring firearm purchasers to obtain and purchase a permit in a bureaucratic system that does not even exist.

## **OHA joins legal challenge of Measure 114**

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

LEGISLATIVE

UPDATE

ith the passage of Measure 114, by an exceptionally thin margin, the fight against the gun control measure now turns to litigation. The coalition that was created to fight the measure at the ballot box will continue to stand together and support the individual organizations seeking legal action.

OHA will file an amicus brief to join with our partners and express the concerns of the sporting community.

OHA is working closely with the sportsmen's coalition partners, National Shooting Sports Foundation and Oregon State Shooting Association, who have filed a joint lawsuit. OHA will file an amicus brief to join our partners and express the concerns of the sporting community.

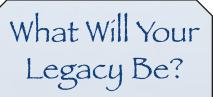
The litigation arena is full, with five different suits brought against the measure. The first to file was Oregon Firearms Federation (OFF), who put forth their lawsuit on Nov. 20, along with the Sherman County Sheriff and the owners of Coat of Arms Firearms. The initial court date was set for Dec. 2, but the judge did not rule on the requested injunction until Dec. 6. At that time, the federal judge ruled a 30-day hold on the permit-to-purchase requirement, but allowed the other components of the measure, namely the magazine ban, to take effect as of Dec. 8.

However, a mere 3 hours later, a judge in Harney County granted a temporary restraining order against all provisions of Measure 114 in a ruling tied to a lawsuit brought by Gun Owners of America. This order put a hold on the entirety of Measure 114 until a Dec. 13 hearing to further review the suit's request for a preliminary injunction. As of Dec. 7, the Oregon Supreme Court denied the state's request to throw out the Harney County ruling, which meant Measure 114 would remain on hold until further hearings.

Several lawsuits are still pending, the aforementioned suit brought by the National Shooting Sports Federation and Oregon State Shooting Association, and two additional lawsuits brought by Firearms Coalition Policy, one with Sportsman's Warehouse, and another with Grayguns, Inc. and G4 Archery.

While the effective date of Measure 114 may be evolving daily due to the litigation efforts, OHA is working continuously on both the litigation and legislation fronts to block overreaching gun control measures and promote firearm safety and responsible firearm ownership.

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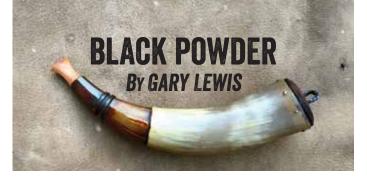


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## Elk Moves

#### Workin' on mysteries without any clues

he other day when I was lifting weights, a song came on the radio and it got to the part where Bob Seger starts "humming a song from 1962," and I got to wondering... Just what song was he humming from 1962?

He says he woke last night to the sound of thunder. Maybe it was because he lives by the train tracks and, "Everyone's doing the Loco-Motion." Or maybe Missus Seger has been eating the refried? Or maybe he wakes up humming "The Wanderer" by Dion?

Well, I'm the type of elk that will never settle down, where pretty cows are, well, you know that I'm around.

Could be. My interns were young and restless and bored one day, and did some research on the origins of the song, and

You may still hear a locate bugle in late October, but the go-to calls are herd sounds. reported Seger said the tune he had in mind was "Be My Baby" by the Ronettes, which was actually released in '63.

I would be willing to bet my buddy's Mt. Emily tag that Seger sometimes wakes up humming Herb Alpert's "The Lonely Bull," which was released in '62. Because along about October, the bulls are lonely. This is the time of year a rag-horn gets a chance to play herd bull before the snow flies.

If we have established Bob Seger could be listening to Herb Alpert and thinking about elk hunting, let's see what else we can learn.

My interns said Seger is nodding back to what he called grassers when he and his friends would park their '60 Chevys and '56 Fairlanes and turn on the radios to the same stations and dance in the headlights. I can honestly say I never did that, and I never had a '60 Chevy, but I did have a '49 Chevy and we did take it out...

#### OUT PAST THE CORNFIELDS WHERE THE WOODS GOT HEAVY

We were hunting rabbits, but hey, you have to start somewhere.

What we're looking for now is a black-maned beauty with big dark eyes, and points sitting way up high. Preferably six or seven points on each side. And we've got 100 grains of powder sitting behind a .54-cal. live bullet. And a cap under the hammer.

#### WORKIN' ON MYSTERIES WITHOUT ANY CLUES

The real mystery in October is where did the elk go?



Use cow and calf sounds to coax a satellite bull into the open.

For me, the first clue is on the calendar. What phase of the moon are we in? Elk are likely to group under the nights of the full moon. In the dark of the new moon, elk tend to separate.

This is important, because some strategies work better when elk are herded up and other plans work better when elk are separated. Think about it. If elk are grouped together, feeding all night under a full moon, where are they likely to go at dawn? To their bedding area to lay down and chew the cud. Along about midday, they get up and feed a bit, or go to water. Conversely, in the days of the new moon, elk are more likely to feed into the mid-morning then bed midday and start feeding again before dark.

#### FELT THE LIGHTNING, WAITED ON THE THUNDER

What the muzzleloading hunter wants to know is how to call elk in late fall. The good news is elk breeding may still be going on in early November. Younger females tend to come into estrus later, and also, a cow may not have bred successfully, in which case it can come into estrus again. Cow elk can cycle up to four times if they have not been bred. That's why a hunter may see breeding activity in the second week of November and call it a late rut.

The bulls that come to cow sounds in October and November are the lovesick raghorns, satellites and lonely spikes that have been kicked out of the herds. Yes, a hunter might still hear a locate bugle in late October, but the go-to calls are herd sounds: cow bugles, chirps, mews and estrus mews. Calf calls are always a good choice.

When calling in late fall, one hunter can use two or three calls to sound like a small herd. Each call set should go for at least 45 minutes. Throw whining, pleading estrus sounds in at about 20 minutes. Then go silent and wait and watch 15 more minutes. Elk tend to come in quietly and often approach from high on a ridge. Keep an eye on the high ground.

One late night in September I parked way up above Mitchell to catch some sleep, and woke to the sound of hooves and ankle bones clicking and cow calls and calf mews. How far off? I opened the door and walked over, sat in wonder on the guardrail, and watched a herd of 400 elk moving in the moonlight. And started humming a song from 1977.

Ain't it funny how the elk moves? With autumn closing in...

۲

Listen to Gary's podcast, Ballistic Chronicles, on Spotify, iTunes, Apple Podcasts and other podcast platforms. Or visit www.GaryLewisOutdoors.com.

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## BOWHUNTING By GARY LEWIS

## Black Bear in the Grizzly Unit

### He found his elk. It had a bear on it.

t had been a long, hot archery elk season and now it was almost over. Mike Crumrine had divided his attention between the Ochocos, trying to help his son and dad find the elk, and his own hunt in the Grizzly Unit.

Crumrine called his friend Bryon Salaz and picked him up for an evening hunt.

"It was hot and crowded. There were a lot of folks, and I was to option number 5 for places to go for a walk-in evening hunt," Crumrine said.

"After we had checked the box for all the places I knew elk like to escape to when they're pressured, I just decided to walk in farther than I wanted to in a road closure area."

For two miles, the hunters walked down a long ridge. Finding fresh sign, they paused to call. Further in, now crossing through an area with a lot of windfalls, with the sun getting low in the sky, they found an active elk scrape. That was when Crumrine noticed the birds.

"There was a clatter of ravens we could hear up on the side of the ridge; we weren't getting any response from elk, so we kept moving toward the ravens."

While Salaz looked for elk sign, Crumrine kept his attention on the birds and began to notice that while the birds would fly up from time to time, they seemed to be moving around something large and black on the ground. The pair watched for a few minutes.

"The wind was quartering toward the bear and a little left. We could see the bear was eating on an elk carcass. It was snapping at bees and at the birds, and from time to time it would sniff at the wind and look around."

Crumrine decided to make a play. With the rangefinder, he read the distance at a little better than 100 yards through the timber. The bear was facing directly away when Crumrine began to inch his way forward. When he ranged the bear again, he had closed the gap to 55 yards and the wind had begun to shift.

"The bear was checking the wind and looking both directions," Crumrine said, "but was intent on its evening meal."

Then the bear stepped left into an open lane in the timber. Crumrine drew his 70-pound Bowtech Carbon Zion to full draw, felt the arrow touch his anchor point, steadied his 50-yard pin high, and tickled the trigger.

"The bear was quartering toward me and the arrow hit him in front of the left shoulder and passed through the chest cavity and out the right shoulder."

The bear let out a growl, took a long stride, lost its footing, snapped back at the 100-grain broadhead, somersaulted twice and made one long moan.

Crumrine knew he had just shot a bear and it looked big, but



At the end of bow season, Mike Crumrine made one last evening hunt and a last-ditch play for a bear that was feeding on an elk carcass.

he wasn't sure what the death rattle meant.

"It was hard to believe. We were looking at each other with stupid amazed looks on our faces," Crumrine said. "We waited for a bit and looked through binoculars. Kind of nervous about approaching, we got up the courage and moved forward."

Salaz snapped a few pictures before they moved the bear.

"It felt heavy. It was about all the two of us could do to move it over a log into an open area and get it to a place where we could field dress it," Crumrine said.

Skinning for a rug, they divided the animal into quarters and bagged the meat and hung it in the limbs of the tree. Then the pair filled their small day packs with meat and started toward the truck.

By 9 p.m. they were back at the truck where they retrieved pack boards, grabbed a bite to eat and turned around. They reached the meat at 11 p.m., packed up all that was left and carried out the meat, hide and head tied to two heavy packs.

For the first half mile, they had to re-negotiate the deadfall, every few steps pausing to throw first one leg over a fallen tree then the other, sliding over to do it again on the next tree. That second load took four hours. They were back to the truck at 3 a.m.

"I drove my buddy back to his house and then I was home at 5 a.m. and to church at 6 a.m." It was a Sunday morning and he had to set up the audio/video equipment for the 9 a.m. service.

The 50-year-old Crumrine says he was at the right place at the right time. The skull is going to measure just shy of 19 inches, Crumrine figures. The hide is in the salt. He estimates the bear's live weight at 350 pounds.

"I've had a few roasts and steaks so far," Crumrine said. "I'm going to grind up a lot of it for sausage and burger. It has been a tasty bear."

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# HORIZON IN 2023

#### What a Difference a Week Makes in Later Oregon Big Game Hunts

#### **By JIM YUSKAVITCH**



ome of the most notable changes in hunting regulations for 2023 stem from a recent change in the season date structure that will result in most big game seasons and even some bird seasons starting later than usual. Deer season for any legal weapon (rifle season),

instead of starting on the Saturday closest to Oct. 1, now starts the first Saturday in October. That meant Oct. 1 in 2022, but it will be Oct. 7 in 2023.

The ripple effects are intriguing:

• Bow season won't start until Sept. 3 this year.

• Western deer season will run through Nov. 10, into the rut.

• Chukar and pheasant won't open until Oct. 14.

• Elk hunters might see more snow in the major seasons that will start later than usual, culminating with the second Coast elk season ending on Dec. 1.

Here's an overview of what to expect for the 2023 big game seasons, including changes from 2022.

#### Deer

Controlled deer hunts are slated for a number of changes for 2023. This includes a new early buck deer archery hunt that encompasses the Applegate, Evans Creek, Dixon and Rogue wildlife management units. However, any hunter drawing this tag would not be eligible for the western Oregon general archery season. New hunts include any-weapon hunts in the Wilson Unit and West High Cascades, Rogue-Siskiyou Early Bow Hunt, and Mount Emily Youth Hunt – all one buck with visible antler.

Overall, 100 Series Controlled Hunt tags have been increased by 1 percent to 61,386, primarily in units with buck ratios above management objectives, although there are fewer tags for some hunts due to declines in population estimates and buck ratios below management objectives. The 152B Starkey Experimental Forest Hunt is being deleted due to low deer population levels.

For the controlled antlerless deer 600 Series hunts, there is a 7-percent increase to 10,072 in tags. In addition, the Morrow County Youth Hunt will have a boundary changed to include Gilliam County.

Oregon's 2022 mule deer population was estimated at 160,000 to 165,000 and experienced only a 0.2 percent decline from the previous year. Of Oregon's 49 wildlife management units, mule deer numbers have declined in 23 populations and increased in 19. However, populations are below management objective in all units except for West Biggs.

According to spotlighting surveys and hunter harvest data, black-tailed deer populations may no longer be in decline and may even be increasing in some units.

ODFW is also in the process of updating its 2003 Mule Deer Management Plan and a draft table of contents has been developed based on staff suggestions and input from sports group leaders. More public input will be solicited as the plan moves forward, and OHA is actively involved in helping to shape the plan.



Most elk seasons will start a week later than usual, which could mean more tracking snow.

#### Elk

Changes to controlled elk hunts for 2023 include new hunts: North Ukiah (249D), Starkey Unit (252C1), Lookout Mountain Unit No. 3 (264A3) and Catherine Creek Unit Muzzleloader (253M). Several antlerless/youth elk damage hunts are being deleted because they are no longer needed. These include the Starkey Experimental Forest No. 1 Hunt (252C1), N Juniper No. 2 Hunt (271B2) and the Flat Creek Youth Hunt (246T2), along with the Clear Lake-Deadhorse Hunt (261A).

There will also be a new youth archery hunt that is valid in all wildlife management areas to allow youth hunters to hunt with family members who may have elk tags in different units. OHA was the proponent of this new opportunity.

While tag numbers for some hunts have been increased and others decreased depending on specific elk populations, bull ratios and fawn survival, ODFW is offering a total of 66,023 tags, essentially the same as 2022.

Rocky Mountain elk populations in eastern Oregon are faring well. Of the 35 units with Rocky Mountain elk herds, 17 are over management objective, and ODFW is trying to reduce elk numbers in the Maupin-Biggs-Columbia and East Beulah areas to address damage issues.

The Rocky Mountain elk population is estimated near 70,876 animals or 96 percent of desired management objective. Roosevelt elk in western Oregon are not doing as well, with a population of around 56,000 or 79 percent of objectives. The only unit above management objective is the Sixes.

#### **Bighorn Sheep**

NION

ODFW will offer 99 bighorn sheep tags for 2023, including 5 Rocky Mountain ram tags, 72 California bighorn ram tags and 22 California bighorn ewe tags. This is a 15-percent increase in tag numbers from 2022. Seven tags will be available to non-residents.

The Rocky Mountain bighorn 556 hunt is being deleted for 2023, as this is a hunt that is rotated among Oregon, Washington and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The Oregon Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep population is estimated at 800 to 900, while the California bighorn population numbers 4,200 to 4,500. Most of Oregon's bighorn populations are stable, although some herds continue to be impacted by respiratory disease.



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East and West Beatys pronghorn hunts become unit-wide hunts in 2023.





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#### **Rocky Mountain Goats**

ODFW will offer 30 Rocky Mountain goat tags in 16 hunts for 2023, with two going to non-residents. Most of the Oregon populations of about 1,200 Rocky Mountain goats are located in the Elkhorn and Wallowa mountains, although there are also populations in the Strawberry Mountains region and central Cascade Mountains.

#### Pronghorn

A total of 2,017 pronghorn tags in 54 hunts will be offered for 2023, roughly the same as last year. There are some hunt changes for the Beatys Butte Unit. These include the replacement of all East and West Beatys Butte hunts with unit-wide Beatys Butte hunts. The East Beatys Butte muzzleloader hunt will be deleted and replaced with a new muzzleloader opportunity in the Steens Mountain Unit.

Oregon's pronghorn population is estimated at 16,000 to 19,000 animals.

#### Bear

ODFW is offering an increase of 165 tags for the 2023 spring bear hunt, totaling 10,627 tags over 18 hunts. This includes 30 additional tags in the White River-Hood hunt, partly to address damage issues. No changes have been made for the general bear season.

Oregon's black bear population is estimated at about 34,000, plus or minus 5,000.

#### Cougar

No changes were made for the cougar season or quota, which is 970 statewide. Cougar numbers in Oregon have been increasing, with the current population estimated to be 6,987 animals.

#### **Travel Management Areas**

Travel use dates and other changes are pending for a number of Cooperative Travel Management Areas variously to increase wildlife habitat protection, minimize disturbance to wildlife and make travel use more consistent between hunting and nonhunting users.

These include expanding the effective travel management period starting Aug. 20 for the Rager TMA in the Ochoco Unit to protect elk herds from disturbance and increase elk use of public lands. Expanding the effective period is also being proposed for the Camp Creek TMA in the Northside Unit that will include archery seasons. However, some roads will be open to travel for retrieving harvested game.

A number of use date changes are planned for several TMAs in northeast Oregon to improve use consistency between hunters and non-hunters, and make non-hunters more aware of hunting seasons and TMA regulations. These include: Making the effective use period on the Clear Creek, Trail Creek, Indian Creek/ Gorham Butte, Dark Canyon and Chesnimnus TMAs from Aug. 20 through Nov. 20; Lake Fork, Dutchman, Okanogan, Fish and Patrick Creek TMAs to Aug. 20 through Nov. 20, and May 1 through July 1; Grouse-Lick-Canal Creek TMA to Aug. 20 to Dec. 1 and; McCarty Winter Range closure from Dec. 15 to April 30.

TMA additions and expansions include adding the Bald-Angel TMA within the Keating and Catherine Creek units, and expanding the Meacham, Little Catherine Creek, Noregaard, Shamrock and Whiskey Creek TMAs to year-round management.

These changes are contingent on final agreements between participating managing agencies, private landowners and the renewal of an ODFW Access and Habitat Program grant.



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# Turna Blind Eye

Inspiring images from Oregon duck blinds

Photo Essay by Troy Rodakowski

t's most definitely not always about shooting ducks when I visit my duck blinds here in Oregon. Duck hunting is a precious game of cat and mouse, hot coffee, cocoa, food, fellowship and even the occasional stogie. Bringing home birds is just some really tasty frosting on an already sweet cake.

Waterfowl hunters are a special breed of folks in an almost secret societal club with a special knock or password to enter. It takes years of experience to become a seasoned veteran decorated with bands hanging from one's neck and numerous stories of cold, foggy, icy, snowy and stormy mornings to tell. If you have ever read any of Gordon MacQuarrie's "Stories of the Old Duck Hunters," this is the essence of what being in a duck blind is all about, not to mention the camaraderie that comes along with it.

Some mornings it seems like the canvas for an oil painting is right there in your lap and you are part of the living masterpiece. Whistling wings from above make you twist your head quickly, almost pulling muscles in your neck. I like to drink some great tasting coffee and tuck it under the blind cover as I wait for the next flight of birds, and I always bring something good to eat for breakfast like a sausage, egg, potato and cheese burrito or some good pepperoni, crackers and cheese to nibble on while I wait.



The author always like to spoil those hard-working duck dogs after a cold day retrieving birds.

Of course, the dog always wants a bite or two from our snack bags. Dogs are a big part of our lives and definitely important members of our club of waterfowl hunters. Needless to say, they do most of the dirty work retrieving the birds from muddy ice-cold waters and thick patches of brush, happily bringing them back to our warm gloved hands. We learn to take good care of our four-legged fur buddies and provide them with insulated, covered blinds of their own and neoprene vests to help keep them warm on the coldest days afield.

These hunts bring people together and renew the fire that smolders deep down to be a part of something enjoyable – so much so that stories are made for generations to hear. My favorite is taking youngsters along and lighting that new addiction to waterfowling. I also enjoy taking an older gent hunting for the first time in a couple decades in which he makes plans to go buy new gear and start hunting again. "I can still shoot," is one of my favorite phrases and music to my ears. After a great morning, it becomes apparent that "the club" just regained a lost member.

It's the special things like recipes to prepare the meat from wild fowl that we share for generations. "This was my great, great grandma's recipe for roast mallard." Not everyone likes duck or goose, but over time, hunters acquire a taste, whether it's jerky, pepperoni, slow roasted, stuffed, grilled or baked. Yet I have also hunted with a few who just like to shoot and recreate, laugh and enjoy a day in the blind, and end up giving their bags of birds to others.

As the morning sun continues to rise over the community of duck blinds, we will continue to laugh, eat, tell stories and shoot birds for many years to come. But most importantly, we will remember our time together.



This really nice limit from a blind in the central Willamette Valley rewarded the author's group during a hunt in the 2021 season.





Reese Rodakowski loves her time in the blind with her dad and loves to help him with his ducks.



Cold weather and iced-over ponds can make for some miserable conditions but some of the best hunting.



On even the coldest of days our dogs work hard to please us.

# RETURN TO THE BURN

t was the middle of the night when our phone alarms went off. The alert was to evacuate immediately, as a raging forest fire was headed our direction. My wife, our two sons and I had enough time to grab hard drives, laptops, passports, a few valuables and our three dogs. It's humbling how so many items that you thought were important simply lose value at a time like this. Soon we were out the door, uncertain as to when we'd return, or if we'd have a home to return to. Eleven days later we were back. We were fortunate; our home incurred minimal damage. Many of our friends and some relatives weren't so lucky. Some had no time to grab a single thing, not even clothes. Some lost everything they owned.

It was September, 2020, and the Holiday Farm Fire ranked as one of

the biggest wildfires in Oregon history. The 173,393-acre fire was sparked in the McKenzie River Valley, a place where my wife and I grew up. Our parents and grandparents carved out lives here. Tiffany's side of the family homesteaded here in the mid-1800s. Special places in this valley, as well as other parts of Oregon, bear her family names: Walterville, Millican, Fountain, to name a few. Much of the land our families grew

**OREGON HUNTER, January/February 2023** 

Oregon's Holiday Farm Fire torched over 173,000 acres, destroying habitat and killing wildlife. But already life is springing up from the ashes.

**STORY & PHOTOS BY SCOTT HAUGEN** 

While some Roosevelt elk were reportedly engulfed in flames, others escaped. Many now live at lower elevations along the McKenzie River and on surrounding farmland.

up hunting was burned. For two years, most of it was closed to access as crews diligently worked to clean up, salvage what logs they could, and make traveling safe. Some areas are still closed. Landslides are still a major concern.

But in August, much of the land was reopened to public access. This meant – barring more fires – we were going to have a hunting season here, our first in two years. In early August, I started scouting multiple days a week. Though the places where the fire burned the hottest were still deeply scarred, there were other places that looked like paradise.

There's no question in my mind that the lack of public ground logging has played a major hand in declining blacktail populations. Whether the deer simply aren't surviving, or have moved to other locations, is hard to say. But on my first scouting trip into the fringe of the burned area, I saw over two dozen blacktails, and over half were bucks. Multiple days a week I continued scouting, seeing more blacktails than I'd dreamed of. Dad and I each took our bucks in the general rifle season, in a place he'd been hunting since the early 1950s.

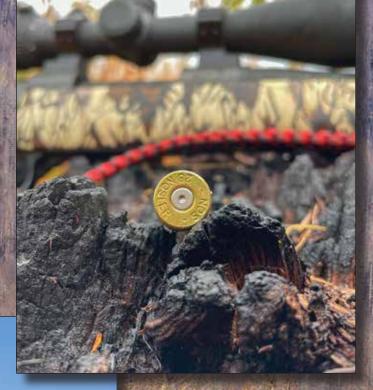
The two-year break from hunters and other foot traffic, along with favorable habitat created by fire, yielded an

abundance of insect life. Never had I seen so many grasshoppers and spiders, both of which are primary food sources of upland birds. The forest grouse and quail hunting was incredible in early fall, with the highest numbers of blue grouse and mountain quail I'd ever seen in the area.

The bandtail pigeon hunting was also reminiscent of the good old days, where flocks of hundreds of birds blanketed the hillsides feeding on various berries and drinking from little creeks in the gullies.

The author took this blacktail near the edge of the Holiday Farm Fire burn.

With the lack of public land logging to create forage openings, burns can be some of the best habitats to hunt.



Shortly after the Holiday Farm Fire, the habitat looked desolate and the outlook, bleak. But in places where the fire didn't burn excessively hot, the land and the wildlife are recovering. Seeing more than 1,000 pigeons a day was the norm.

In the summer I watched deer and elk from a distance as they rolled in the powdery dirt and ashes, delousing themselves. When fall temperatures arrived, along with the rains, animals took advantage of the fresh sprouting grass, blackberries, vine maple, and more, on the edges of the burn.

Fireweed came back in many burned areas, and standing nearly 10 feet tall made easy hiding places for deer. Blackberries thrived, as did black bears that wore trails into the middle of some impressive tangles to feast on berries all fall.

I'd heard reports from firefighters who found multiple herds of Roosevelt elk that had been burned. Those elk sought refuge in the bottom of timbered draws, only to be consumed by blazes on either side. Many elk and deer escaped, relocating to new areas where they thrive today.

If you're driving up the McKenzie River, keep an eye out along the river banks as you work your way past Leaburg. Multiple elk herds can be seen grazing along river's edge. Many deer and elk took up residency on the valley floor, too.

Wildlife in the McKenzie River Valley is doing fine, even better than I'd imagined. We in the area look forward to more memorable hunting seasons that lie ahead.

For signed copies of Scott Haugen's bestselling book, Trophy Blacktails: The Science of the Hunt, and other titles, visit www.scotthaugen.com.

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Elderberries are thriving in much of the lightly burned mountains, attracting large numbers of bandtailed pigeons, forest grouse and quail, and bears.

Even wild turkey populations have expanded into the fringe areas that were burned, taking up residency in places where the author has never before seen them.

**OREGON HUNTER, January/February 2023** 







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# Sparks Against The Sky

OHA toasts 40 years of fighting for our hunting heritage from the breaks of the Snake to the breakers of the Pacific.

#### **By GARY LEWIS**

t was a snowy November evening and a group of hunters sat around a fire while the sparks from the tamarack crackled against the nighttime sky. At first, they talked about elk and then they talked rifles, but the topics soon turned to bad legislation in Salem and cutting back on antlerless deer seasons, privatization of public lands, timber and mining projects, and the loss of wildlife habitat.

Someone asked, "What are we going to do about it?" and the idea was formed to create an association of Oregon hunters. That next year in 1983, a board of directors was formed that included Brian Adams of Spray, Dan Boone of Bend, Lee Carver of Prineville, Pat Johnsrud of Drain, Jerry Norris of Klamath Falls, George Price of Portland, and Max Walker of Enterprise.

A membership drive member in 1983 a large number of people

who believed enough in the mission to sign up as life members of the fledgling organization. Ed Park was hired as executive editor of THE OREGON HUNTER magazine, Neil Rodgers was managing editor, and Mark Bagett was staff photographer and northwest field editor. The first issue was published June 1983.

Said one Prineville member in 1983, "Oregon hunters can no longer sit back and expect hunting opportunities like they've experienced in the past to be laid in their laps every year. We have all got to fight for our hunting every year."

#### AN EARLY IMPACT

One of the early projects was a quick response to the brutal winter of 1983-84. Baker and Union counties were hit hard by blankets of deep snow followed by freezing rain, which sealed the snow with a layer of ice two inches thick. The

'Oregon hunters can no longer sit back and expect hunting opportunities like they've experienced in the past to be laid in their laps every year. We have all got to fight for our hunting every year.' –Prineville OHA member in 1983 ice crust lasted for two months and a whole crop of fawns starved to death, along with a lot of elk calves. Wallowa, Harney and Malheur counties also suffered substantial losses of deer, elk, antelope and game birds. ODFW Baker biologist Dick Humphreys called it a "killer winter." ODFW quickly exhausted their budget for wildlife feeding.

Spearheaded by OHA's Union County chapter, a special fund was set up to accept donations

to go directly into winter feeding efforts, and OHA volunteers quickly organized to help with feeding efforts. Up to 10 OHA members per day helped ODFW personnel feed deer, elk and game birds. The OHA fund helped feed 7,100 deer and 2,400 elk daily in the form of 43 tons of specially formulated deer pellets. ODFW biologist Mark Henjum of La Grande said, "Whenever wildlife is in trouble, the first ones to get involved are always the hunters."

#### **OHA TODAY**

In recent years, OHA has been instrumental in helping ODFW develop its predator management plans, working to keep the Elliott State Forest and other lands in public hands, passing laws to increase penalties for poaching, and preserving traditional public hunting access in the Owyhee, the Ochocos, the Cascades and monuments in southwest Oregon.

Recently OHA allocated \$10,000 to ODFW for a wildlife forage enhancement project at Clarks Fork near Butte Falls. OHA's contribution allowed ODFW to receive a 3-to-1 match in funds from the Pittman-Robertson fund.

To bolster the anti-poaching effort, the OHA grant committee awarded \$2,750 to the Oregon State Police to help purchase special trail cameras that can capture license plates on moving vehicles after dark. This will help with efforts in the Mid-Columbia region where trespassing and illegal take of mule deer, bears and turkeys has reached chronic levels.

Working with partners and state agencies, OHA has been instrumental in reducing vehicle and deer collisions through donations to wildlife underpasses and strategic fencing.

To battle the threat of chronic wasting disease, OHA has worked with ODFW to encourage check stations on well-traveled highways.

In Central Oregon, efforts to protect mule deer winter range paid off with a conservation easement in critical habitat.

Last August, our state board sent a letter to the ODFW Commission, regarding implementation of a wolf depredation hunt to help landowners deal with wolves predating on livestock. Thanks in part to OHA's efforts, Phase III of Oregon's current wolf conservation and management plan includes using controlled hunting, and we believe the benchmarks have been met to allow for implementation of the plan.

Commission approval is required and will occur in a separate rulemaking process, according to Commission chair Mary Wahl. In her response, she indicated the Commission will review the plan in 2023, and controlled hunting will be one topic in the review process. Wallowa County/Duane Dungannon



*Energy development poses many concerns, not the least of which is simply the loss of critical winter range habitat. OHA is monitoring and weighing in on new energy development proposals.* 

On the ground in Oregon, OHA conservation coordinator Tyler Dungannon recently led a new project to restore mule deer habitat in the recently burned Interstate Unit where half a million acres burned in 2021. In concert with many partners and the Warner Creek Correctional Facility, sagebrush and bitterbrush plugs were raised in the prison and planted in critical mule deer range.

#### A SHARED VISION

Today, OHA is an organization of 26 chapters and 10,000 conservation-minded hunters and publishes an award-winning magazine and Oregon Hunter's calendar. OHA employs a year-round policy director, conservation staff and field director to advocate for our membership's goals and support our positions on key issues.

Every now and then you meet a person whose eyes sparkle when they talk about their last hunt or the next one. It drives them. It fuels them. People like Amy Patrick, our policy director and Steve Hagan, a long-term board member now serving as OHA president.

Patrick believes our strength as an organization lies in our laser focus on the mission statement, allocating staff and volunteer time to those things that line up with our core values. An advocate for hunters' rights and for science-based wildlife management, she filled her first deer tag in October 2022, and took her trophy home to process the meat herself, cut the steaks, grind the burger and make sausage.

She figured out that becoming a hunter is a process and nobody has all the answers.

"It is weird, I felt like part of the hunting community before, but now I made it, and it feels really great. This ability to bring the animal home and do the work of breaking the animal down and make the meat makes me realize it is OK to figure it out as I'm going along."

When OHA President Steve Hagan took the phone call for this interview, he was in his favorite place in the Northside Unit, scouting for elk, with a shotgun by his side and a turkey tag in his virtual pocket.

"One of our greatest strengths is the collaborative work within each chapter and among the chapters," Hagan said. "We have individual chapter presidents and leadership at the chapter level who have a forward-thinking mindset and are open to communicating with a younger-thanboomer hunting community."

Hagan sees chapters embracing different youth opportunities to learn to hunt as well as adult onset hunters who are getting into the sport in their 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s. "We are even getting hunters from new families that have not had hunting as a part of their background," Hagan said. Looking ahead, Hagan would like to see people hunting small game again and he would like to see hunters set aside their differences.

He believes we can work for better access and more animal opportunity on accessible lands. "We need to stop divisiveness in the hunting community and not let apathy set in where the anti's have a chance to use wedge issues to erode our gopportunities," he said.

"And we want to hold the agency (ODFW) to its beliefs that they are a science-based organization and believe in the North American model of wildlife management."

Oh, and 20 minutes after we talked, he tagged his first wild turkey.

OHA has forged strong partnerships with other conservation groups like the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, as well as industry partners. OHA recently contributed \$100,000 to an ODFW/RMEF project to add important acreage to the Minam Wildlife Area.

These have been 40 good years, and as we look ahead to the next 40, we must not forget:

When those sparks crackle against the night sky on our next elk hunt, remember we are part of a legacy, responsible to pass this heritage on. "We have all got to fight for our hunting every year."

#### Č

Listen to Gary's podcast - Ballistic Chronicles - on Spotify, iTunes, Apple Podcasts and other podcast platforms. Or visit www.GaryLewisOutdoors.com.



Like solar farms, wolves were the farthest thing from anyone's mind when OHA was founded in 1983. Times have changed, and OHA has asked the Commission to sanction Oregon's first wolf damage hunt.



#### 2022 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

### OHA stepped up to defend our hunting heritage in 2022

#### **Oregon sportsmen's partnership launches**

The Oregon Sportsmen's Conservation Partnership (OSCP) was formed in 2022 to amplify the voices of sportsmen and women in Oregon. Created in response to the constant pressure of attacks by anti-hunting, animal rights, and environmental advocacy groups, the OSCP's goals are to increase the presence of sportsmen and women in the legislature and policy arenas, as well as encourage communication and collaboration among existing sports groups.

The OSCP held its inaugural meeting in January to establish its leadership, hear from agency staff on important topics, and review legislative topics arising in the 2022 legislative session. About 20 hunting, fishing, and trapping organizations were in attendance. The OSCP identified CWD detection funding and advocating for federal infrastructure funding for Oregon's natural resource agencies as its initial priorities, in addition to the ongoing fight against IP3.

#### 2022 Legislative Session Wrap-up

The 2022 Legislative Session closed with several good bills receiving funding. Here's a brief recap of bills OHA engaged:

• HB 4130 requested \$5 million to fund wildlife crossing projects. The bill itself did not make it through the entire committee process, but the appropriate funding, at an increased amount of \$7 million, was included in the end-of-session bill.

• SB 1546 established the Elliott State Research Forest and passed with amendments. While the Elliott has been a contentious issue for years, OHA continues to advocate for access, a recreational focus, and an amount of managed forest to benefit both local economies and provide wildlife habitat.

#### IP3 gets ballot approval for 2024

Initiative Petition 3 (IP3), the initiative that aims to criminalize hunting, fishing, and trapping, along with farming and ranching, received certified ballot language as of June 2022. OHA submitted comments requesting additional changes to the ballot language and was successful on several points to further clarify the damage this initiative would do to all Oregonians. In addition to OHA, comments were submitted by Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Safari Club International, American Kennel Club, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Ducks Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, and several farming and ranching

#### **OHA's 2022 Investments in Our Mission**

Projects benefiting Oregon's wildlife & sportsmen:	\$376,412
Publications, information & education:	\$237,519
Defending hunting rights/Advocating for wildlife:	\$162,663
Fighting poaching in Oregon:	\$18,400
Volunteer hours donated by OHA members:	32,549

organizations.

With the certification of the ballot language, the proponents of IP3 have until July 2024 to gather the 112,020 signatures needed to qualify for the November 2024 ballot.

#### Measure 114 passes, OHA continues the fight

Measure 114, the gun control initiative, passed in the November election by a mere 1.5 percent margin. With this result, OHA will transition our fight into the arenas of litigation and legislation. While OHA will not be the lead organization on the lawsuits, we are working closely with our sportsmen's coalition partners and supporting those that are seeking litigation through financial contributions and strategic use of our legislative efforts.

#### Beaver Management Workgroup reaches endpoint

After almost a year of work, the Beaver Management Workgroup finalized its recommendation to the ODFW Commission. The workgroup was originally formed in June 2020 and sanctioned again in November 2020 as the result of a narrowly defeated petition to ban beaver trapping on all federally managed public lands. While the primary impetus of the petitioning groups was to ban all beaver trapping, the group ultimately formed management recommendations around habitat needs and expanded data collection relative to the current beaver population in the state.

The Commission accepted the document put forth by the workgroup and requested that staff support the recommendations and return to the Commission in August with actionable items related to increasing beaver habitat on federally managed lands. It was noted by the Commission that the focus of such actions should be on the landscape-level rather than simply restrictions on trapping.



## **OHA covered the conservation landscape in 2022**

OHA's Conservation staff, committee members and volunteers saw another very busy year in 2022. Work ranged from supporting legislation in Salem to planning field work in south central Oregon to tracking wildfire impacts in northeast Oregon and drought effects in southeast Oregon.

To address some of the workload and expertise needed, OHA's Wildlife-Lands Committee formed two sub-committees in 2022. One was for mule deer to help provide input on and review the Oregon Mule Deer Management Plan update that was initiated in 2022. The other subcommittee was formed to provide input on the ongoing wolf-related challenges in Oregon, specifically livestock depredation and how hunting can be used as a tool to alleviate some of the damage associated with wolves.

OHA continued its work with partners from agencies and other organizations to plan for, fund, and implement safe wildlife crossings in Oregon. The long-awaited fencing project associated with the wildlife crossing at Gilchrist was finally completed in late 2022.

Not all of the news in 2022 was good news. In late 2021, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was discovered in Idaho, not far from Oregon's border. OHA has worked continuously to keep membership informed, track the situation in Idaho, and support a robust program in Oregon for detecting and preventing the disease.

Work to conserve and protect the places that provide valuable wildlife habitat and where we hunt continued in 2022 with OHA's involvement in the Owyhee Sportsmen Coalition, the Elliott and western Oregon State Forests planning, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Lands to name just a few.

Much of the planning and policy work accomplished in 2022 lays the groundwork for implementation in 2023 and beyond.

#### **OHA restores deer winter range**

In response to wildfires that burned more than 500,000 acres in the Interstate Unit in 2021, OHA and partners recently planted thousands of sage and bitterbrush seedlings to help restore mule deer winter range. (See Page 46.)



OHA defended the science for spring bear hunting at the September Commission meeting.

#### OHA protects spring bear hunts

OHA had a strong presence with three representatives at the September Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting in Burns, where big game regulation proposals were ultimately approved. OHA was one of only two organizations to testify at this important meeting, and OHA's representatives were the only ones to testify on behalf of Oregon hunters in person. OHA staff expressed to the Commission that OHA should play an important role in the creation of the new Mule Deer Management Plan, and that one of our highest priorities is to bolster mule deer populations, while also optimizing hunting opportunity and quality. OHA's Mule Deer Sub-Committee is comprised of mule deer experts from Oregon, Idaho and Montana, and they are eager to help develop the new plan.

After a commissioner pressed concerns about the ethics of spring bear hunting, and Washington's recent ban on spring bear hunts, OHA stepped up in support of continued spring bear hunting in Oregon. Our bear population is strong and increasing, and ODFW does an excellent job of protecting sows with cubs and making use of the extensive data that are collected from harvested bears. ODFW has a mandatory check-in for bears, and the data collected inform population models. As a result of these data and others, Oregon's bear population estimate sits at 34,000 bears.

#### OHA champions youth archery

OHA also thanked ODFW for carrying out OHA's desire to create more youth archery elk hunting opportunity in light of archery regulation changes in eastern Oregon. OHA is confident that this will maintain and improve archery hunter recruitment.

#### **OHA requests wolf damage hunt**

The OHA Board of Directors sanctioned the formation of a wolf subcommittee that consists of wolf experts from around the region. Wolves have been in the headlines for years and continue to be a concern for both hunters and landowners. The subcommittee focused on pressing for implementation of the existing Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan that was updated in June 2019, particularly in the northeast portion of the state where wolves have been in Phase 3 (well established) for some time. This work will be critical for improving agency and landowner relations where they are currently strained and set the stage for an eventual update to the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan.

OHA staff provided testimony during the Commission meeting addressing OHA's request to implement wolf damage hunts, which was submitted to the Commission in August, requesting the Commission develop hunts that could solve the chronic depredation issues ongoing in northeast Oregon. Damage hunts are well within the parameters of the current wolf management plan, thanks to OHA's relentless efforts to keep hunting and trapping in the most recent wolf plan revision.

#### **OHA fights to defend trapping**

In response to discussion of current trap check intervals by some ODFW commissioners, a workgroup was formed to address concerns of those commissioners and protectionist groups. OHA stood tall in this workgroup comprised at least initially of groups and individuals with anti-trapping bias. The workgroup met nine times, and each contentious meeting was minimally productive from the OHA perspective, and likely the same from the protectionist point of view. Ultimately, the group could not come to consensus on any interval, so the workgroup dissolved without a recommendation to the Commission. As a result of the workgroup, and OHA's efforts, ODFW staff recommended only one change: reducing the 30-day interval for lethal sets when damage is occurring to 14 days. OHA provided testimony in support of the staff recommendations.

The Commission was not satisfied with the staff recommendation, and instead approved reductions to two additional damage-related intervals. The new regulations put in place a 48-hour check time for all trap check intervals except the lethal sets for damage, which is the 14 days recommended by staff. The commission's decision was disappointing, as it was not based on staff recommendations or the best available science and did not take into account the financial hardship that livestock producers and land managers will incur. **OHA tackles conservation issues** 

#### across the state's landscape

OHA conservation staff and volunteers constantly work to fulfill OHA's mission. The diversity of wildlife and conservation opportunities and challenges are vast, and seem to be never-ending. Examples in 2022 and on-going work include participating in the Mountain Lion Workshop and Black-Tailed Deer Summit; working on the Oregon Mule Deer Plan update; working to further implement the Oregon Wolf Conservation and Management Plan; addressing elk distribution; monitoring and tracking wildlife disease outbreaks such as CWD, EHD and others; and facilitating on-the-ground projects to conserve and improve habitat. Other work continues with the Access and Habitat Program; working with the ODFW Commission; Southeast Oregon and Western Oregon BLM Resource Advisory Committees; and tracking landscape scale projects on public lands. Species that received attention in 2022: Columbian blacktails, mule deer, whitetailed deer, cougar, bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain elk, Roosevelt elk, waterfowl and upland birds. Public lands that had our attention in 2022: Elliott State Research Forest, ODF State Forests; Mt. Hood, Willamette, Fremont-Winema, Umatilla, Umpqua and Ochoco National Forests, Crooked River National Grasslands, Hart Mountain NWR and Vale District BLM. **OHA works to prevent CWD** 

Since the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease in Idaho, OHA has worked with ODFW and legislators to develop legislative concepts aimed at securing funds to maintain the in-state testing opportunity with Oregon State University, as well as added personnel specific to CWD research and sample collection. (See Page 42.)



OHA has identified needs, funded and maintained fencing to funnel deer into safe wildlife crossings.

#### OHA works to reduce vehicle/ wildlife collisions in Oregon

In an effort to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions on our highways via wildlife crossing structures, OHA has helped clear financial hurdles to implement safe passage infrastructure. OHA strongly supported and helped pass HB 4130-01 (Wildlife Crossing Investment Act), which has allocated \$7 million to the Oregon Department of Transportation to invest in wildlife crossings across the state. OHA has testified in support of this bill and has testified on multiple occasions in front of the Oregon Transportation Commission in support of allocating ODOT funds to wildlife crossings. In order to ensure Oregon is ready to compete for federal funds for impending wildlife crossing grants, OHA has dug deep and developed a priority list of wildlife crossing projects that are currently being constructed, near completion or undergoing initial consideration. OHA is currently advocating for wildlife crossings across the state from northeast Oregon on Interstate 84 to southwest Oregon on Interstate 5.

#### **OHA enhances hunter reporting**

OHA believes that Oregon hunters deserve access to harvest statistics at the wildlife management unit scale, and we maintain that hunters play a critical role in wildlife management by providing harvest data to wildlife management agencies. After many discussions between OHA and ODFW over the last six years on the topic, this year via mandatory hunter reporting surveys, ODFW is asking successful big game hunters whether they harvested their animal on public land, private land, or private lands that allow public hunting access (e.g., Access and Habitat properties).

If you have ever perused harvest stats for a unit before applying for a controlled hunt, you have probably wondered whether the harvest success stat for a given unit was representative of the unit's public land for which you have access. For example, the Ochoco Unit's estimated harvest success for any legal weapon buck deer was 25 percent in 2021. Just 53 percent of the unit is public land, so what percentage of the harvest occurred on public land? These are questions that OHA believes hunters deserve to have answered, particularly because hunters are providing the data.

With ongoing ungulate distribution issues, and efforts underway to retain ungulates on public lands, this information will benefit ODFW and enhance the agency's ability to manage big game populations. The data provided by hunters should increase support for the Access and Habitat Program, and help hunters be better informed when planning hunts.

## Learn to Hunt Program rolled out to chapters

OHA's Learn to Hunt Program (LTH) was rolled out to chapters in early February with opportunities for chapter representatives to become instructors and also join the Learn to Hunt Committee to help direct the future of the LTH Program.

The LTH Program has created a substantial catalog of online courses and carefully curated resources specific to hunting in Oregon. Since its inception in 2020, the program has taught almost 200 students who became OHA associate members and also added numerous full OHA members. The program continues to grow with the addition of new learning modules, increased membership responsiveness, and the creation of more in-person courses and field days.

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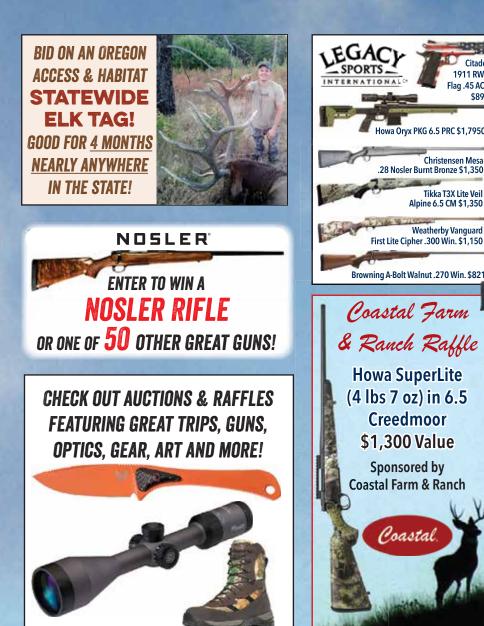
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## OHA NEWS & VIEWS

## Hunters should have their heads examined

## *ODFW tests big game heads for Chronic Wasting Disease*

#### By Mike Totey, Conservation Director mtotey@oregonhunters.org

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is looking for the help of hunters in preventing Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) from entering Oregon, and detecting CWD if it already has. CWD is a fatal neurological disease infecting deer and elk across North America.

OHA President Steve Hagan spent the first three days of the deer season assisting ODFW at the big game check station in Prineville. Samples were taken from 49 deer and one elk that weekend at the check station. Other check stations at Celilo and Elgin collected 104 and 15 samples, respectively. These samples will be tested for the presence of CWD to find out if the disease has already spread into Oregon. It was recently detected in Idaho very close to the Oregon border.

While check stations in Prineville, Elgin and Celilo were all mandatory check stations for those who pass by, any hunter who harvests a deer or elk is encouraged to contact a local ODFW office to make an appointment to take a sample from the harvested animal.

For testing, ODFW will need the animal's head and at least one vertebrae below the skull. Keep your deer or elk head cool prior to sampling if possible. Once your sample is collected, you'll be able to get the results of the test online.

If you plan to take your animal to a taxidermist or butcher, ODFW has a program in place for those facilities to take the sample from your animal and submit it.

Currently all samples are sent out of state to other wildlife disease labs for analysis. OHA has been working hard to support an in-state testing facility at Or-



OHA President Steve Hagan collects a sample from a deer to be tested for CWD at a hunter check station in Prineville. OHA seeks funding for faster in-state CWD testing.

egon State University. This will increase capacity for testing, and also help get test results to the hunter faster.

If you are one of the lucky hunters travelling out of state, keep in mind the strict rules for transporting your harvested animal home, specifically the ban on bringing home the brain and spinal column.

For more, visit ODFW's webpage about CWD and what can be done to fight its spread: www.myodfw.com/CWD



OHA is working tirelessly to improve ungulate migration, and reduce wildlifevehicle collisions in Oregon. Many aspects of this example in Nevada apply



to Oregon, and we need your help to achieve what other states have done to bolster big game populations.

Join our efforts at www.oregonhunters.org

Scan the code or visit this link to watch a compelling video on the need for more safe crossing structures: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKmyhPMokY&t=4s

#### Leupold steps up as OHA State Title Sponsor

Leupold & Stevens, Inc., provider of rugged, lightweight, and clear sport optics, is pleased to announce that it is now the official title sponsor of the Oregon Hunters Association.

Founded in 1983, OHA's mission is to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage. OHA has 25 chapters and 10,000 members.

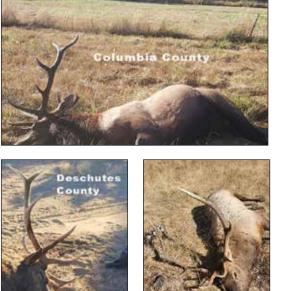
"No optics company does more for conservation and hunting rights than Leupold & Stevens, both nationally and here in Oregon, our home for 115 years," said Bruce Pettet, President and Chief Executive Officer for Leupold & Stevens, Inc. "Our team members are hunters, our friends, family, and neighbors are hunters. Protecting our state's hunting heritage is incredibly important to us, and that's why we're partnered with the Oregon Hunters Association. OHA fights for conservation and hunters' rights day in, day out, and we're proud to support the organization however we can."

In the last year, OHA has increased its presence in Oregon's Capitol building, defeating multiple anti-hunting and antiwildlife management bills. In 2021, the organization procured its first conservation easement, contributed \$115,000 to fence a wildlife underpass, and donated \$100,000 to the ODFW/RMEF Minam Wildlife Area purchase. Further programs are underway to battle upcoming challenges like Initiative Petition 3, which will attempt to ban hunting, fishing, and trapping in Oregon.

"We've fought for the rights of Oregon's hunters for nearly 40 years, and the challenges today are some of the toughest we've faced," said OHA President Steve Hagan. "Leupold has long been a staple of Oregon's hunting community, and we're ecstatic to have them on board as we work to protect the traditions that so many of us hold dear."

For more information on Leupold products, visit Leupold.com.

Join the discussion on Facebook at Facebook.com/LeupoldOptics, on Twitter at Twitter.com/LeupoldOptics, or on Instagram at Instagram.com/ LeupoldOptics





## **OHA offers rewards in 4 elk cases**

OSP seeks tips in four elk poaching cases across the state this fall, and the Oregon Hunters Association is offering rewards for information leading to a citation in each case. OHA is offering its standard \$500 elk reward from its Turn in Poachers (TIP) reward fund, and the OHA Bend Chapter is offering an additional \$1,000 in a case in Deschutes County. Informants can remain anonymous and still collect a reward: call the TIP line at 1-800-452-7888, \*OSP (\*677), or email at TIP@osp.oregon.gov **Disphine County** - Two elk were shot within 100 yards of the freeway, near milepost 84. I-5 south near Glendale on Oct. 25. Reference case number SP22288310. **Columbia County -** A large bull elk was

**Columbia County** - A large bull elk was killed with a rifle on private property off Stoney Point Road in Vernonia and left to waste on Sept. 23. Please reference case number SP22256433.

**Deschutes County** - Two bull elk were killed by trespassers on private property near Tumalo early morning on Sept. 26, the

**OHA STATE-LEVEL SPONSORSHIPS** 

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

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day after bow season ended. Two subjects, a male and female, were observed leaving the property where they did not have permission to hunt and were seen packing the head and antlers of a bull elk to a vehicle – thought to be a red pickup – parked at the intersection of HWY 20W and Innes Market Rd. Please reference case number SP2225969.

► Union County - A branch antlered bull elk was poached in the Wenaha Unit north of Elgin on the evening of Sept. 30, one day prior to the opening of the controlled rifle buck deer season. The bull was shot on private timber lands off Kingsbury Lane near Darr Road. The bull was left to waste. Please reference case number SP22-265831

OHA typically pays about \$20,000 annually to informants in fish and wildlife violation cases through our Turn In Poachers (TIP) Reward Fund. OHA has also helped pass laws for tougher penalties for poaching.



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## OHA pays out \$700 in rewards in 3 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued three reward checks to informants in three cases totaling \$700 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund.

Charges included: Hunting from or Across a Highway, Lend, Borrow or Sell a Big Game Tag and Criminal Trespass II for each of 2 offenders; Taking of Undersized Dungeness Crab, Unlawful Take/Possession of Chinook Salmon-Closed Stream. The salmon were located and confiscated at a local Sushi restaurant.

OHA's TIP fund has paid informants in Oregon poaching cases a total of \$13,330 in 2022.

# CHAPTER NEWS

## OHA chapters provide hunting opportunities

#### BAKER

#### CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Wednesday, 6 p.m., Oregon Trail Restaurant.

**2023 Fundraiser:** April 1, Baker County Event Center.

#### BEND

#### REX PARKS 541-480-0230

oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter

**Chapter Meetings:** Please see newsletter for date and time.

**2023 Fundraiser:** March 11, Riverhouse Convention Center, 541-480-9848. **Update:** Our annual Wayne Elliott Memorial Youth Upland Bird Hunt in November was another smashing success.

#### **BLUE MOUNTAIN**

#### KEVIN MARTIN 541-96<u>9-6744</u>

ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com Chapter Meetings: 4th Tuesday, The Saddle, Pendleton, 6 p.m. meeting, 5:30 p.m. 2023 Fundraiser: April 29, Pendleton Convention Center, 541-231-4384.

#### CAPITOL

#### ERIK COLVILLE 503-851-8409

#### ohacapitol.webs.com

**Chapter Meetings:** No in-person meetings. **2023 Fundraiser:** April 22, Columbia Hall Oregon State Fairgrounds.

**Update:** We held our Holiday Potluck Dinner on Dec 3. Our chapter was awarded an Access & Habitat statewide deer tag to auction at our 2023 banquet.

#### CHETCO

#### MATT THOMPSON 530-351-5847 mandmthompson02@yahoo.com

**Chapter Meetings:** 1st Wednesday at Sunset Family Pizza in Gold Beach at 6:30 p.m.



The OHA Klamath Chapter's annual youth chukar hunt offered a great day afield for families.

**Update:** Chetco Chapter is having a Big Buck/Big Bull photo contest. Contact Ruth Dixon (541-373-0554) before Jan. 5. We're also planning a Beast Feast on March 11 at the Event Center on the Beach.

#### **CLATSOP COUNTY**

#### TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Tuesday 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. 4H Clubhouse, Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

**2023 Fundraiser:** March 18 at Clatsop County Fairgrounds, 503-440-9934.

#### **COLUMBIA COUNTY**

#### JORDAN HICKS 949-533-7271

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m., location listed in the newsletter

**2023 Fundraiser:** Feb. 25 at Columbia County Fairgrounds; 503-366-4292.

**Update:** Our chapter was a sponsor of the Oregon Duck State Calling Contest in 2022 to encourage other hunters toward OHA. Congrats to chapter member Eric Strand on appointment to the OHA state board.

#### EMERALD VALLEY

#### TONY HILSENDAGER 541-729-0877 EmeraldOHA@live.com

https://ohaemeraldvalley.webs.com

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Wednesday, 7 p.m., Sizzlers on Gateway.

**2023 Fundraiser:** TBD. We are tentatively looking at a summer banquet date.

**Update:** We have an even better Sponsor Banquet Table available for the 2023 banquet event. See newsletter for details.

#### HOODVIEW

#### KELLY PARKMAN 503-706-7481

oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter Facebook: Hoodview OHA



The OHA Bend Chapter's annual Wayne Elliott Memorial Youth Bird Hunt held on Nov. 19 was another big hit for young guns.

**Chapter Meetings:** See chapter newsletter and e-media for meeting event details. **2023 Fundraiser:** Feb. 25 at the Gresham Armory; 503-314-3090.

**Update:** Learn to Hunt Online Academy has more than 200 lessons, articles and videos for new hunters. Check it out at oregonhunters.org/learntohunt.

#### **JOSEPHINE COUNTY**

#### CLIFF PEERY 541-761-3200

#### peery@charter.net

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., dinner, 6 p.m., Elmer's, Grants Pass. **2023 Fundraiser:** March 18, JoCo Fairgrounds; 541-821-1511.

**Update:** Our chapter once again had a successful Holiday Basket food drive. Thanks to our very generous members and community.

OREGON HUNTER, January/February 2023

#### **KLAMATH**

ALLAN WIARD 541-884-5773

#### ohaklamath.webs.com

Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., Shasta View Community Center.
2023 Fundraiser: April 29, Klamath County Fairgrounds, 541-884-5773.
Update: We hosted our annual youth chukar hunt in Klamath Hills Oct. 22 and 23. Klamath PLAY Outdoors Event is Jan. 21, Klamath County Fairgrounds, 541-281-2224.

#### LAKE COUNTY

#### LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

Chapter Meetings: 1st Tuesday at 5 p.m., VFW Hall, Lakeview. 2023 Fundraiser: TBD

#### LINCOLN COUNTY

#### TODD THOMPSON 541-270-2393

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Tuesday, 6 p.m. meeting, Jack Sprat's Restaurant, Newport. **2023 Fundraiser:** TBD

**Update:** We drew the Coastal Farm & Ranch raffle at our Dec. 12 meeting. We are looking into a fundraiser in 2023. Contact Todd Thompson tjaz@charter.net if you can help or have ideas.

#### **MALHEUR COUNTY**

#### BRUCE HUNTER 208-573-5556

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

#### **MID-COLUMBIA**

#### CHUCK ASHLEY 541-993-8076

**Quarterly Chapter Meetings:** 6 p.m., at ODFW's screen print shop, The Dalles. **Update:** Our chapter is laying out plans for 2023 events, including a major local habitat project we will discuss at an upcoming pub night. We are also eager to enhance our engagement with chapter members, including social media. We need helping hands in these efforts, so contact Chuck Ashley at chuckashley4120@gmail.com to jump in.

#### **MID-WILLAMETTE**

#### JEFF MACK 503-949-3787

https://ohamidwillamette.webs.com/ Chapter Meetings: 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., board meeting 6 p.m. Old Armory, Albany. 2023 Fundraiser: April 15, Albany Boys & Girls Club, 541-971-3351.



The OHA Yamhill County Chapter manned the Stimson mainline gate for eight weekends this fall, providing public hunting access.

#### осносо

#### JOHN DEHLER, III 541-815-5817

**Chapter Meetings:** 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m., Crook County Library.

**2023 Fundraiser:** Feb. 18, 541-777-4830

#### PIONEER

**BRIAN ANDREWS 503-266-2900** 

oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter Chapter Meetings: 1st Wednesday, 7 p.m., (early for dinner), Canby Rod & Gun Club. 2023 Fundraiser: March 4, Mt. Angel Community Festival Hall, 503-710-1233. Update: In December we gave away 15 hams for Christmas dinners. Congratulations to all the winners.

#### 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.

**2023 Fundraiser:** Feb. 25, Deschutes County Expo Center.

#### **ROGUE VALLEY**

#### RICKY CLARK 530-905-1186

**Chapter Meetings:** Eagles, 2nd Thursday, 6 p.m. social/dinner, 7 p.m. presentation. **2023 Fundraiser:** June 3, Ashland Hills Inn, 541-773-8736.

**Update:** Thanks go out to Tyler Dungannon as our most recent guest speaker. Tyler updated us on recent conservation projects ongoing with OHA.

#### TILLAMOOK

#### JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

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

**2023 Fundraiser:** May 6 at Tillamook County Fairgrounds, 503-801-3779 or 503-842-7153.

#### TIOGA

#### MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

**Chapter Meetings:** 4th Tuesday, 6 p.m., Uncle Randy's Café, Coquille. **2023 Fundraiser:** April 1, Coquille Com-

त्य 2023 Fundraiser: April 1, Coquille Com-ह munity Building.

#### **TUALATIN VALLEY**

#### TONY KIND 503-290-6143

oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter **Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday, dinner 6 p.m., meeting at 7, Prime Time Restaurant & Sports Bar, Forest Grove.

**2023 Fundraiser:** March 25, Wingspan Event Center at Washington County Fair Complex, 503-502-0611.

**Update:** Our chapter Christmas Party was Dec. 17 at Carpenter Creek Farm & Winery.

#### UMPQUA

#### TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

https://www.umpquaoha.org

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m., Backside Brewery.

**2023 Fundraiser:** April 8, Seven Feathers. **Update:** Our January Guest Speaker will be John Punches from Search & Rescue on "How to be Prepared."

#### **UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY**

#### MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

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

**2023 Fundraiser:** March 11 at Blue Mountain Conference Center.

**Update:** We received the state mountain goat tag to auction at our 2023 banquet.

#### **YAMHILL COUNTY**

ANDY BODEEN 503-490-2489

#### ohayamhill.com

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

**2023 Fundraiser:** March 18, Yamhill County Fairgrounds.

**Update:** We manned the Stimson mainline gate on eight weekends, offering access to hundreds of happy hunters.

## **OHA IN ACTION**



OHA volunteers braved sub-zero temperatures to plant thousands of forage seedlings in an Interstate Unit burn Nov. 19-20.

## **OHA restores** mule deer winter range

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

n response to wildfires that burned over 500,000 acres in the Interstate Unit last year, OHA and partners planted thousands of sage and bitterbrush seedlings to help restore Lake County mule deer winter range on Nov. 18-20.

OHA staff will set a date to plant 6,000 more seedlings in spring.

Foraging mule deer rely almost exclusively on sagebrush and bitterbrush to survive the winter, and multiple recent wildfires have decimated their primary food source in much of the Interstate Unit. These fires burned mule deer summer range as well, but summer range habitat is much quicker to

regenerate naturally, given these areas are higher in elevation, and moisture is generally available throughout much of the year. In contrast, mule deer winter range is characterized by low elevation habitat and reduced moisture content. Native winter range habitat is slow to regenerate naturally, and these areas are particularly susceptible to non-native, annual grass invasion, which presents a threat to mule deer populations across the West.

OHA conservation staff worked diligently to attain grant funding to restore winter range in an effort to bolster mule



deer populations in the region. After funds were approved, Adults in Custody at the Warner Creek Correctional Facility sowed sage and bitterbrush plants beginning in May and nursed them through November.

As part of the project, Adults in Custody planted 400 plants and protected them with vexar tubing and bamboo stakes in three hours on Nov. 18. Then 40 OHA volunteers took the torch over the weekend. An actual torch would have been nice, as morning low temperatures were -8 on both Saturday and Sunday. Still, most volunteers were shedding layers by 10 a.m. and enjoying blue bird days.

OHA conservation staff broadcasted sage and bitterbrush seed, and our hardy volunteers planted and protected roughly 6,000 seedlings near Clover Flat, west of Lake Abert. However, there is still more work to do. OHA staff will set a date to plant 6,000 more seedlings for spring of 2023, when we hope to see mild weather.

were below zero on Nov. 19-20.

Future planting dates have yet to be determined, but please stay tuned if you're interested in restoring mule deer winter range. Contact Tyler Dungannon (td@ oregonhunters.org) for information.

State OHA and OHA's Klamath and Lake County chapters each contributed \$3,000 to the 2022 project. OHA conservation staff secured grant funding to make this project possible, and these grants were awarded by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund (\$23,000) and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (\$10,000). Backcountry Hunters and Anglers donated more than \$1,000 of sage and bitterbrush seed, and Legacy Sports International, Benchmade, and Sig Sauer donated amazing drawing prizes for volunteers. Institute for Applied Ecology, the BLM and the Warner Creek Correctional Facility have played pivotal roles in making this project a success, and OHA is looking forward to continuing these partnerships. Ò

## You're Invited to Our 2023 Banquets for Oregon's Wildlife & Sportsment



40th Anniversary

## **2023 OHA BANQUETS**

TBD	Lake County	
TBD	<b>Emerald Valley</b>	
Feb. 18	Ochoco	541-777-4830
Feb. 25	Columbia Co.	949-553-7271
Feb. 25	Hoodview	503-314-3090
Feb. 25	Redmond	541-419-7215
Mar. 4	Pioneer	503-710-1233
Mar. 11	Union-Wallowa	541-786-1283
Mar. 11	Bend	541-480-9848
Mar. 18	Josephine Co.	541-821-1511
Mar. 18	Yamhill County	503-490-2489
Mar. 18	<b>Clatsop County</b>	503-440-9934
Mar. 25	<b>Tualatin Valley</b>	503-502-0611
Apr. 1	Baker	541-403-0402
Apr. 1	Tioga	541-267-2577
	Umpqua	541-580-5660
-	Mid-Willamette	541-971-3351
	Capitol **	503-851-8409
	Blue Mountain	541-231-4384
Apr. 29	Klamath	541-884-5773
May 6	Tillamook	503-801-3779
May 6 OHA State Convention,*** Chinook Winds Casino, 541-772-7313		
June 3	Rogue Valley	541-773-8736

\* Oregon Mountain Goat Tag Auction \*\* A&H Statewide Deer Tag auction \*\*\* A&H Statewide Elk Tag auction

"OLD GROWTH" OHA 40TH ANNIVERSARY ART BY DAVE BARTHOLET/DAVEBARTHOLET.COM  Rafiles
 Auctions
 Great Guns, Gear, Trips, Art and much more!

OHA banquets in 2023 will feature a Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle for a Howa SuperLite in 6.5 CM!

**OHA Platinum Sponsors:** 

Coastal







## GET in GAME

## OHA is protecting our wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage.

OHA is a strong voice for Oregon hunters with a full-time staff working on issues that are important in our state. Join us and support our efforts!

- Leading the fight to protect our hunting heritage.
- Pressing for increased predator management, including wolf damage hunts.
- Advocating for science-based wildlife management.
- Increasing recruitment through our Learn to Hunt Program.
- Leading efforts to combat poaching.
- Enhancing habitat where you live and hunt.
- Safeguarding wildlands and access to hunt them.
- Funding safe-crossing projects to keep wildlife alive.
- Actively representing hunters in Salem.

#### We Need You in Our Camp!

Join OHA or renew your membership and



get 6 issues of Oregon Hunter magazine and your Oregon Hunter's Calendar. oregonhunters.org





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

> The 2023 raffle will be held on May 26, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at ODFW Headquarters in Salem, Oregon.



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

The event will also be livestreamed starting at 2:00 p.m. on May 26. Go to **www.youtube.com/user/IEODFW** to attend the event.



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

### TACTACAM TRAIL CAM CONTEST

See rules and enter your best shots at oregonhunters.org for a chance to win a great Tactacam prize!





OHA member Josh Scrocca of Prineville wins a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for this trail camera photo of a mature Melrose Unit blacktail rounding the corner out of the blackberries.



#### **HONORABLE MENTION:**



OHA member Brent Wright of Bend earns an OHA hat for this photo of a Deschutes County song dog on the alert.



Justin Lenhardt of Newberg set his camera for sidelight in the Yamhill Unit and this bear stepped right into the pages of OREGON HUNTER, earning Lenhardt an OHA hat.



OHA member Matthew Hedgpeth of Baker City didn't have to go far to get his lens in front of a branch bull. Hedgpeth earns honorable mention for this September still shot.



OHA member Isaac Doubrava of Hubbard earns honorable mention and an OHA hat for this memorable June trail cam image of a Paulina Unit cow and calf.



TACTACAM

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#### **REVEALCELLCAM.COM**

## GAME ON THE GRILL By TIFFANY HAUGEN

#### Savor a Sweet & Sour Forest Slam

ny of Oregon's upland game birds can be cooked up "mixed-bag" style, as they have roughly the same cooking times. The trick is to slice them all into small bite-sized portions to ensure even cooking. Do not overcook these tender game birds, as they will toughen up quickly.

All of Oregon's upland birds are excellent eating, which is why mixing multiple species is a safe bet. Last fall my husband Scott went grouse hunting in the Cascades Range, not far from our home in Walterville. He shot a ruffed grouse right off the bat, then happened upon a big blue grouse. On his way out of the hills, he added a pair of quail to the bag.

With four fresh forest birds in the kitchen, my wheels started turning, and this recipe is the result. I slow-cooked the legs and thighs in a small crockpot. Here's what I did with the breast meat:

Breast meat from 4 game birds (about 1 pound)

#### **Bird Marinade:**

2 tablespoons orange or pineapple juice 2 tablespoons soy sauce

- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1/2 teaspoon powdered ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

#### Stir Fry Ingredients:

2 tablespoons peanut or coconut oil
1/2 onion, chopped
1/2 bell pepper, chopped
2 chili peppers, halved (optional)
2 green onions, sliced
1/2-inch fresh ginger, julienned

#### Sweet & Sour Sauce:

- 1/4 cup orange or pineapple juice
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons water 1/4 teaspoon salt

In a small bowl, mix Sweet and Sour Sauce ingredients until thoroughly combined. Be sure to dissolve the cornstarch in the water before adding to the sauce. Set sauce aside.

In a medium bowl, mix bird pieces with marinade until thoroughly combined. Set aside. In a large skillet, sauté onions on medium-high heat until soft. Add peppers, green onions and ginger and continue sautéing 1-2 minutes. Push everything in the pan to the edges and add marinated birds, with marinade, to the center of the pan in a single layer. Cook on each side 1-2





Oregon's upland birds are all fine fare, so mixing species is a safe bet.

minutes and then mix all ingredients together.

Add Sweet & Sour Sauce to the skillet and continue to sauté 2-5 more minutes or until sauce thickens and bird meat is cooked to desired texture. Serve over rice or noodles and garnish with more green onion, basil and sesame seeds if desired.

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To order signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular book, Cooking Game Birds, visit www.scotthaugen.com for this and other titles.



## **HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS**



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

#### **ODFW's Hunter Education Program NEEDS you!**

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

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

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

#### How do I become a Certified Instructor?

Easy process: contact the number below for an application.



Hunter Education

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





## On the Zumwalt Prairie in Wallowa County

The Nature Conservancy has generously donated a Zumwalt Prairie Bull Elk hunt to the Friends of the Wallowa School District, which we are raffling off to raise funds for our many education enhancing projects for Wallowa schools.



- Tickets are \$20.00 each. A maximum of 500 tickets will be available.
- Drawing will be held March 25, 2023.
- Party size limited to three, plus the guide.
- Winner is responsible for their license and tag fees.
- Vehicles limited to established roads, and game must be packed to a road.
- Terrain varies and hunters should be in good physical condition.

Tickets can be purchased from any FWSD member, or by sending a check, payable to FWSD, to:

> FWSD/Bull Elk Hunt P.O. Box 229 Wallowa, OR 97885

Please be sure to include a return address and contact information, including a phone number. We will fill out your ticket(s) stubs, place them in the draw, and mail the tickets to you. For more information or if you have any questions, please contact: K. Schmitt at 541-398-2244

The Nature Conservancy's Zumwalt Prairie Hunt is not a guaranteed hunt but the success rate on previous hunts is in excess of ninety-five percent.



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A widespread outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza has caused the death of many wild and domestic birds in Oregon. Here's what hunters need to know about the disease.

### What makes this outbreak different?

Low pathogenic strains of avian flu naturally circulate in wild waterfowl and do not kill wild birds. The last highly pathogenic strain occurred in the winter of 2014-2015 and mostly affected domestic poultry and some raptors before being replaced by a low pathogenic strain.

Unfortunately, the current highly pathogenic strain first detected in North America in 2021 is causing more sickness and death in wild birds, especially waterfowl that migrate and winter here. Cackling geese are the most common species infected and significant numbers of snow geese have also died. The outbreak is expected to continue into 2023.

#### What are the symptoms?

Lethargy, inability to fly, erratic behavior, loss of coordination, cloudy eyes, swimming in circles, head shaking. Birds typically die within 72 hours of symptom onset.

### What should I do if I see sick or dead birds?

ODFW can't test every dead bird but may want to test when multiple birds have died at same location and the disease has not yet been detected there. Contact ODFW's Wildlife Health Lab (866-968-2600). Report to land manager if at refuge, wildlife area or any public land.



Is there a human health risk? It's a very low risk. The only known cases involved two people who were in close contact with domestic poultry. But take precautions:

Don't harvest birds that are obviously sick or found dead.

When handling game birds: Wear rubber or latex gloves and don't eat, drink, smoke or touch your face.

Keep uncooked meat and juices away from other foods.

Clean knives and other equipment that touch birds (1/3 cup of chlorine bleach per one gallon of water).

Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds after handling birds (or with alcoholbased products).

Cook all game meat thoroughly (up to at least 165° F) to kill disease organisms including bacteria, viruses and parasites.

Don't feed dogs any raw meat from harvested waterfowl or allow dogs to interact with sick or dead birds. How do I dispose of dead birds? Do not transport or move dead birds as that could spread the disease.

If dead birds are in your yard, you can double bag them and put them in the trash. Wear gloves so you don't directly touch any sick birds.

If you are in the field on your own property, you can also bury deceased wildlife.

Hunters who encounter sick birds while hunting should not kill those birds or allow retrieving dogs to interact with sick or dead birds.

Wildlife areas, refuges and other public lands handle disposal of dead birds on their lands.



What kind of impact will this have on bird populations? Unfortunately, if the mortality levels seen during late 2022 continue through winter, this outbreak of avian flu could noticeably reduce some waterfowl populations. Next year's surveys will tell us more about the impact.

## NOSLER®

### 2023 PHOTO CONTEST

#### **FINALIST PRIZES**

Prizes will be awarded in general and youth categories. **IST PRIZE:** Nosler Model 21 rifle **2ND PRIZE:** Case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo **3RD PRIZE:** Leupold Scope **4TH PRIZE:** Danner Alsea Hunting Boots **5TH PRIZE:** Benchmade Altitude Hunting Knife

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

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

#### ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

Go to OHA's website at www.oregonhunters.org 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

## **NDSLER PHOTO CONTEST** GENERAL CATEGORY WINNERS

FIRST PLACE Scott Campbell tagged this Silvies Unit antelope with a Bergara B14 Hunter in .300 Win Mag. Jon Campbell snapped the picture, and OHA member Kathy Campbell of Lebanon submitted the photo for 1st place and a Nosler M48 Heritage rifle!





#### **SECOND PLACE**

What better way to spend Christmas day than in the poison oak thickets of the North Bank Habitat Area? OHA member Joshua Knoebel claims 10 boxes of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo for this picture of a trophy Columbian whitetail.

**OREGON HUNTER, January/February 2023** 

THIRD PLACE OHA member Viri Glennon of Bend wins a new Leupold rifle scope for this photo of herself with a Murderers Creek bull she took with a rifle in late October 2021.





#### **FOURTH PLACE**

OHA member Bryce Purtzer of Canby is going to be hiking those ridge tops in a new pair of Danner Alsea boots next season for this great portrait of a mule deer buck taken in Idaho's Frank Church Wilderness.



FIFTH PLACE Mark Knaupp, OHA member in Rickreall, scores a new Altitude hunting knife from Benchmade for this image from an elk hunt in British Columbia. Knaupp carried a .300 Win Mag for this trophy Roosevelt bull. SECOND-MORNING SUNRISE

## NDSLER<sup>®</sup> PHOTO CONTEST

YOUTH CATEGORY WINNERS

FIRST PLACE Kori Groff was hunting the youth-only weekend when she tagged her trophy tom. OHA member Will Waddell of Springfield claims a Nosler M48 Heritage rifle for this photo of Kori in the Siuslaw Unit.





**OREGON HUNTER, January/February 2023** 

SECOND PLACE Ten boxes of Nosler Trophy Grade ammo go to OHA member

Nathan Fisher of Eugene for this photo of Brooke Fisher's first elk, taken in the Indigo Unit in the Cascade

Rifle elk hunt.





#### THIRD PLACE

OHA member Tyler Douglas of Medford picks up a new Leupold scope for this photo of Easton Douglas on his blacktail buck hunt in the Applegate.



#### **FOURTH PLACE**

Sawyer Brown participated in the mentored youth program and filled the California bighorn ewe tag with a Tikka in 6.5 Creedmoor. OHA member Chase Brown claims a pair of Danner Alsea hunting boots for submitting the photo.

#### **FIFTH PLACE**

A photo of a mixed bag on a muddy day end-of-December hunt earns Rickreall OHA member Mark Knaupp a Benchmade Altitude hunting knife for this photo of Blake and Troy Tow in the slough.



## Relationship Status: It's Complicated

#### *Never. Never. Never get married in October. And if it's too late, well, we can help.*

hat is easier to change? Your wedding anniversary or hunting season? My father-in-law had other things on his mind when he got married on Oct. 1 back in '62. "I don't know what I was thinking," he is reported to have said every deer season for nigh on 50 years. I heard him say it a dozen times.

Lately my mind has been on the plight of the unwed, those brothers and sisters of the hunt who are going through the seasons without the presence of life partners and teenyboppers. But who can blame them? It is like I told O'Jambo long ago: A bear hunter can have a spouse to make the sandwiches and kids to do the laundry, but only if he follows three important rules.

Rule Number One is you have to pick the right spouse. Take the prospective partner on a hunt. If she brings lunch and a camo umbrella and doesn't mind watching a clearcut for eight hours, you might have a keeper.

Rule Number Two is there is no good time to get married. But there are really, really bad times to get married. Like May and October.

If there really was such a person as Hunter Ed, he would make sure we learned this before we got our first hunting license.

May, of course, is the month when you are most likely to have a spring bear tag. And tie the knot in October and you can count on missing a lot of good deer and duck hunting.

The best bet is to get married in June or July. Spring bear season is over, and you can honeymoon until the end of summer when it's time to put on skunk oil and call coyotes.

June anniversaries are nice because, as years go by, you can make them scouting trips without a non-participant spouse noticing.

Another point in favor of a June wedding is high school graduations take place in June. A future anniversary trip with your spouse might keep you from sitting through some nephew's cap and gown ceremony.

Rule Number Three: Birth your children early in the year. Procreate in July and August. Just add nine months. See how well Rule Number Three fits in with rules number one and two? If birthdays are strategically planned, there is no danger you will be absent at an important family event that just happens to coincide with the opening of bear season. And you can tell the in-laws that Junior needs new camo or a set of mallard decoys for his birthday. As Junior gets older, you can take him scouting on extended getaways. When he's old enough, you can let him use the shotgun you bought on his first birthday.

But I forgot, we were talking about how to change your wedding anniversary. You're saying, "Uncle Geddy, what about me? I've been married for 37 years, and I finally drew a sheep tag, and the season starts Oct. 15, and my anniversary is the 16th. How do I convince my wife I HAVE to go on this sheep hunt?"

Which brings us to the Four Ways to Change the Date of Your Special Day.

Option A: think back to when you first started dating and the day you became engaged, add to that the day of the wedding, and take an average of the three. This is your new special day. If that is too complicated, try this simple formula:

MONTH and DAY OF FIRST DATE + HOUR and MINUTE OF FIRST KISS + MONTH and DAY OF ENGAGEMENT divided by the AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURE (Fahrenheit) OF THE ORIGINAL HONEYMOON DESTINATION

In our example, let's assume a first date of 2/14, first kiss at 2,100 hours, engaged on 12/25 and married on 10/15 divided by 97 degrees in Bora Bora = Feb. 2.

Feb. 2 is ideal because it is Groundhog Day, Ayn Rand Day and World Wetlands Day, which is part of Woman's Heart Week and US Snow Sculpting Week. Also, steelhead fishing is not going to get good till later in the month.

Option B: Change the wedding date on your marriage license with white-out. Then plan your wedding anniversary around the new date. As an option, you could change your date at the courthouse with the Registrar of Marriages with relevant evidence as to how and under which circumstances (e.g. adult beverages) the date is wrong on the original marriage certificate. This might require hiring an advocate, making an affidavit, submitting a falsified marriage announcement card and a witness, all of which could land you in jail, but probably not long enough for you to miss your sheep hunt.

Option C: A lot of big game hunters might not know that you can change an anniversary date in Facebook. Just wait until your significant other leaves their Facebook page open. Then go in and change their relationship status by clicking on the About section on their timeline and then scroll down to the Relationship section. Hit Edit on the upper right corner and change privacy settings to Only Me then change status to It's Complicated. Next do the same on your own Facebook account. Then wait for your special someone to notice. It will take about a day. This opens the door to a frank discussion about what your anniversary should represent.

Option D: This might be the best course of action, is to plan a renewal of the vows to take place on a different date that is not October and which, by your spouse's signature (in very small print) nullifies a requirement to celebrate the original wedding day from this day henceforth.

I ran all this by T. Roy, who is a confirmed bachelor, and he said a marriage license should be like a hunting license. It expires every year. And if you go out of state you can get a 3-day license.

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For a signed copy of A Bear Hunter's Guide to the Universe, send \$24.95 to Gary Lewis Outdoors, P.O. Box 1364, Bend, OR 97709



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