

# OREGON HUNTER



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## ELK CAMP

*How times have  
changed Oregon's  
traditional camps*

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SNOW BE A BAD THING?**

## UPLAND UPSIDE:

*No tags to draw, generous  
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**Cover:** Rocky Mountain elk photographed by Scott Haugen

OREGON HUNTER, November/December 2023





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- *Advocating for science-based wildlife management*
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- *Actively representing hunters in Salem*



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# It's time to take CWD seriously

Funding for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) research, testing, and sample collection remains a high priority for the sportsmen's community. While the Oregon State Legislature did not prioritize this funding in the final state budget approved for the 2023-25 biennium, OHA will continue to advocate for the finances needed to assist ODFW in their proactive efforts to curb the fatal disease.

When CWD was found in Idaho in 2021, it was met with a sense of urgency by Oregon's wildlife biologists and hunters alike. Prior to the positive Idaho tests, CWD was thought of as a distant threat that other, more unfortunate, states had to deal with. We knew it was inevitable that it would someday be upon our doorstep, yet there was relative comfort in the buffer of states between us and the infected ungulates.

When ODFW began its budget planning for the 2023-25 biennium, the initial budget presented to the Commission lacked any mention of CWD or funds needed to proactively brace the state for its ramifications. OHA provided testimony to the Commission with our concerns regarding this omission. The Commission agreed and approved a final proposed budget that included a funding request to increase staffing specific to CWD research and sample collection.

Not willing to bank on CWD funding making its way into the Governor's Recommended Budget, OHA continued to press the issue with the legislature. In late 2022, OHA staff presented to a legislative committee the need for additional funding for CWD research and establishing in-state testing at Oregon State University. The committee agreed, and a bill was drafted to encompass funds for OSU as well as the ODFW funding requested by the agency.

OHA's intuition that the agency's funding request would not be included in the Governor's budget was well-founded; indeed, the request was not included in any budget recommendations sent to the legislature for the 2023 session. However, OHA's bill to secure CWD funding made a deep run into the legislative session, passing out of its initial committee with a unanimous vote and "do pass" recommendation.

With the tumult of the 2023 legislative session, OHA's bill was not included in the final biennial budget to pass out of the Ways and Means committee. While this was an unfortunate outcome and demonstrates a marked lack of concern by some lawmakers in Salem, it is not a definitive end for CWD funding.

ODFW has secured a USDA Wildlife Services one-year grant for \$248,000, which will fund the purchase of testing equipment for OSU and a CWD coordinator within ODFW to continue development of the seasonal testing stations. While it is unfortunate the funding did not come from our state budget, the outcomes of establishing testing at OSU and continuing to increase sample collection are important benchmarks for Oregon's efforts against CWD.

In the last year, ODFW collected 2,923 samples from hunters, game processors, and taxidermists. The department has set a goal of at least 6,000 samples for 2023. Hunters are encouraged to assist in data and sample collection by turning in samples at the numerous check stations available.

OHA has made CWD funding a priority. Contributing to the sample collection effort is the next step in keeping Oregon ahead of the curve in fighting the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease. For more on CWD surveillance in Oregon, see Page 47.

## Annual Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

Oregon Hunter is published bi-monthly for the members of non-profit corporation Oregon Hunters Association, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501, by publisher and editor Duane Dungannon, and is sold on newsstands statewide. In the past year, of the average 13,833 magazine copies published each issue, 11,877 were paid subscriptions, 1,815 were sold on newsstands, 10,059 were outside-county as stated on Form 3541, 3 were other classes mailed through the USPS, and 163 were not distributed, demonstrating 99% paid and/or requested circulation. In the preceding issue, 12,400 magazine copies were published, 10,664 of which were paid subscriptions, 1,515 were sold on newsstands, 58 were outside-county as stated on Form 3541, 2 were other classes mailed through the USPS, and 148 were not distributed, demonstrating 99% paid and/or requested circulation.

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## KNOW OREGON? WIN A WORK SHARP!

- Deer in the Dixon Unit are mostly:
  - blacktail
  - Idaho whitetail
  - mule deer
  - Columbian whitetail
- Which are you least likely to bag in the Klamath Basin?
  - teal
  - canvasback
  - gadwall
  - shoveler
- Elk are fewest in what part of Oregon?
  - northwest
  - northeast
  - southwest
  - southeast
- Oregon's second-longest river (behind the Willamette) fully within the state is:
  - Deschutes
  - John Day
  - Umpqua
  - Owyhee
- What % of Oregon's forests are publicly owned?
  - 20
  - 60
  - 40
  - 80
- Whole deer and elk taken by hunters may be brought home to Oregon from:
  - Wyoming
  - Colorado
  - Montana
  - none of the above
- How many cougar target areas currently exist in Oregon?
  - 0
  - 6
  - 3
  - 9
- Sage grouse are most numerous in what region of Oregon?
  - northwest
  - northeast
  - southwest
  - southeast
- Diamond Lake is in which unit?
  - Rogue
  - Indigo
  - Dixon
  - none of the above
- Baker County encompasses all of what unit?
  - Sumpter
  - Pine Creek
  - Starkey
  - Lookout Mountain



### WHERE IN OREGON WAS THIS PHOTO TAKEN?

Identify the mountains behind the muley,, 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](http://oregonhunters.org), where a larger version of the photo appears. One entry per OHA member.

**ENTRY DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 20, 2023**



### LAST ISSUE'S WINNER:

**Jonathan Anderson, Warrenton**

Jonathan's name was drawn from among the OHA members who identified northeast Oregon's Elkhorn Mountains.

## OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

OCT 28

OHA Lake County guzzler project 541-417-2983

OCT. 31

Tag deadline for 1st Rocky Mtn elk season

NOV 1

Rocky Mountain elk 1st season opens

NOV 5

Rocky Mountain elk 1st season closes

NOV 10

Any legal weapon deer season closes; Deadline to buy elk tags for 2nd Rocky Mtn season & 2nd W. Cascade elk season

NOV 11

W. Cascade & 2nd Rocky Mountain elk seasons open

NOV 11-12

Youth general rifle season Western deer hunt weekend

NOV 17

W. Cascade elk season closes; Tag deadline for 1st coast elk season

NOV 18

Coast elk 1st season opens; Late SW deer bow season opens

NOV 19

Rocky Mountain elk 2nd season ends

NOV 21

Coast elk 1st season closes

NOV 24

Tag deadline for 2nd coast elk season

NOV 25

Coast elk 2nd season opens; Late NW deer bow opens

NOV 28

Giving Tuesday: Please remember OHA [Oregonhunters.org/donate](http://Oregonhunters.org/donate)

DEC 1

Bobcat Season opens; Coast elk 2nd season closes

DEC 10

Late SW deer bow season ends

DEC 17

Late NW deer bow season ends

DEC 31

Seasons end for pheasant, cougar, bear

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



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## Be thankful for fall turkey

**A**s the holiday season approaches, Oregon's fall turkey flocks continue to grow larger, creating fun hunting opportunities for these great-tasting birds. Here's what to look for.

Hens and their young of the year will join with other hens and their broods, creating big flocks. Seeing flocks of 75 turkeys or more is not uncommon. These big flocks are predominantly made up of juvenile birds, but you might find an occasional tom or two mixed in with them.

Hens can be taken in Oregon's fall turkey season, and though they're small, they make excellent table fare. Of course, the young of the year are most tender, but again, not very big compared to a mature tom.

If it's a tom you're after, they usually hang out in same-age flocks. These toms are friends in winter, foes during the spring

*For what to do with your holiday bird, see Page 37. For what not to do, see Page 54.*

*Every Thanksgiving and Christmas at the Haugen home, you can count on wild turkey for dinner. Author Scott Haugen took this tom just in time for the holidays, with help from his dog, Echo.*

breeding season. Patterning toms' daily movements and setting up a ground blind to intercept them is a common hunting approach. Toms can also be called in, and using a hen decoy this time of year can be a good addition to the calling.

Big flocks of hens and young are fun to hunt with a dog in the fall, when dogs are legal for turkey hunting. Send in a dog from a distance to bust up the flock, and then sneak in, out of sight. Give them 15 minutes to calm down, and start using kee kee calls and hen yelps to call them back in. No decoy is needed, as turkeys will be in a

rush to rejoin the flock. A well trained dog can sit by your side, hidden under natural cover, and will tremble with excitement when birds start coming in.

Turkeys eat a lot of insects, as well as earthworms, this time of year. They'll also dig for fallen nuts and fruits, so search for these potential food sources when looking for a place to hunt.

With two fall tags available if hunting in western Oregon, set your sights on gobbling down wild turkey for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. You won't be disappointed. —SCOTT HAUGEN

## Seemingly plentiful Pacific pintails defy pessimism

*If it walks and talks like this duck, you can only have one.*

**P**intails are special birds, and we are again only allowed one in our 7-bird limit, despite the species numbers being up nearly 25 percent from 2022 here in the Pacific Flyway, according to the Ducks Unlimited and other 2023 surveys. The USFWS conducts multiple surveys across the country on all of the major flyways and then compares harvest, brood success and nesting conditions before setting numbers for the coming seasons. Pilots last spring surveyed only 1.78 million pintails across the breeding grounds. That was a record low and 54 percent below the long-term average. That 1.78 million figure is perilously close to the federally mandated population floor of 1.75 million pintails.

Some believe we are being lumped into poor pintail survey numbers across Canada and the rest of the U.S. Some biologists surmise that nesting pintails may be moving further north out of survey areas to escape the drought conditions, skewing survey numbers. Dave Rogers, owner of

River Refuge Seed in Brownsville, said "Migrating pintails here in the Willamette Valley are seemingly doing well, mostly because they are nesting farther to the north where conditions are favorable."

Many pintails nest in Alaska on protected wetlands that are largely undisturbed by people. A warming trend "has made Alaska more friendly for breeding dabbling ducks across the last half century," said Dr. Mark Petrie, director of conservation planning in DU's Western Region. California's water crisis is a waterfowl crisis. Both California and Oregon are still in drought despite some improvement over the winter. "Right now, there's no doubt that pintail populations are impacted most by conditions on their breeding grounds," added Petrie.

Hunters should keep an open mind as to what we are truly seeing when we hunt. The "boots on the ground" view is a valid survey, as well. We know what we see afield, and most of us who are paying attention can draw our own conclusions on the pintail prognosis. —TROY RODAKOWSKI

*Chris Brigantino of Hollister, Calif., traveled to the Willamette Valley to harvest this beautiful drake in January of this year.*

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR



# Cascade Elk: Could snow be a bad thing?

**T**he big game has been delayed, and the possibility of trackable snow does not look good for the home team. Cascade elk season is going old school. It's time to relive the 1980s, when the General West Cascade rifle hunt moonwalked through the middle of November.

Dust off your leg warmers, don your favorite wool flannel, and start growing your hunting mullets, because global cooling is coming to an elk season near you.

Favorable weather during the mid-October season that lasted from the mid-1980s until a couple of years ago was unlikely – by design. Bull escapement had been poor and bull ratios were low.

In 2021, Cascade elk drifted into November, not because elk numbers were good, but because bull ratios were better.

This year, Western General Deer starts Oct. 7 and ends Nov. 10, resulting in an attractively late Nov. 11 Cascade elk opener.

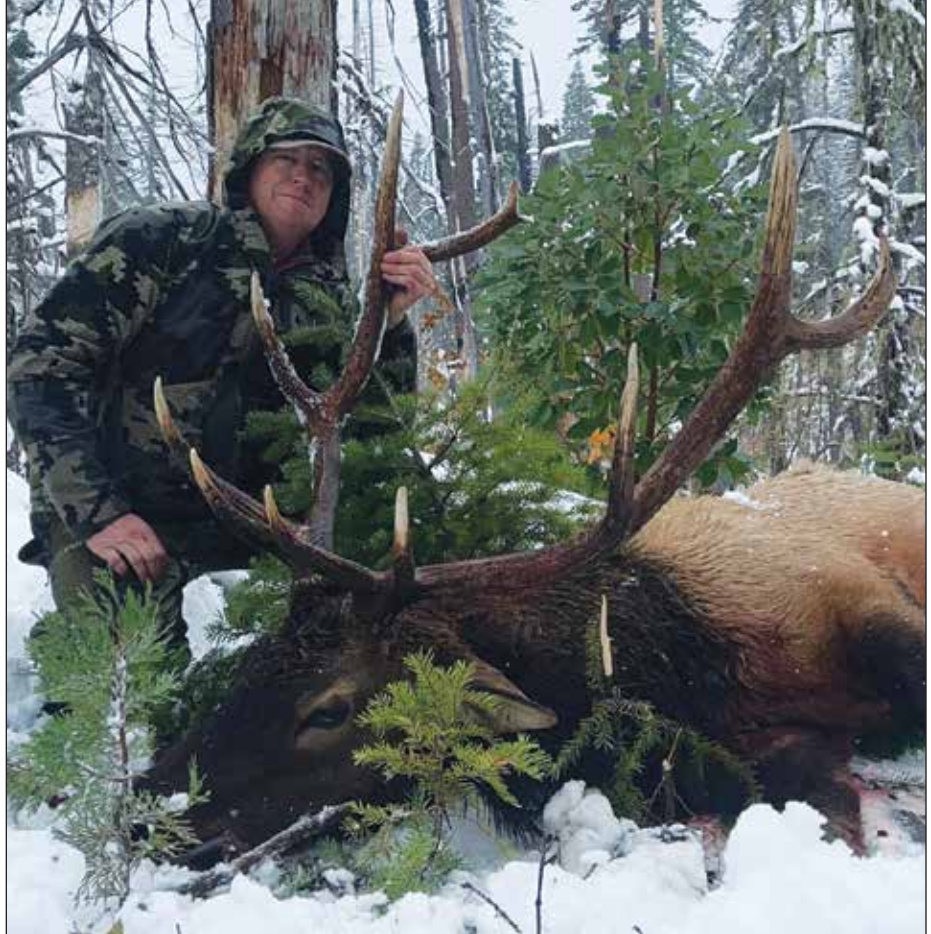
Rogue District Wildlife Biologist Matthew Vargas identified 1985 as the last time general elk opened so similarly late: Nov. 9-12. In 1986, the hunt shifted to mid-October and the season lengthened.

The late time frame this year allows for a greater possibility of snow in the Cascades, and single bulls recovering from the rut in seclusion may have a harder time covering their tracks.

“Last year was a double-edged sword, because it snowed so much, it made access to high country difficult,” reflected Vargas. “When you get up high, they’re still out there. They may be in smaller groups. It’s thicker, and you have to get closer.”

This season, an ambitious hunter might have enough weather to turn a general hunt into a premium one, but be careful. “If you get snow on the ground and it’s overcast, you can lose your sense of direction pretty quickly,” Vargas warned.

Snow changes everything. Wear the right clothing, let someone know your plan, and carry good navigational and communication equipment, such as a Garmin inReach Mini. —SHANNON FITZGERALD



OHA member and benefactor Doug Daniken took this 2022 Cascade bull in Rogue Unit. The season will be the latest it's been since the 1980s, and snow could help tracking but hamper traction.

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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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# OHA toasts 40 years of protecting hunting rights

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director

[Amy@oregonhunters.org](mailto:Amy@oregonhunters.org)

**O**HA is celebrating 40 years of defending Oregon's hunting heritage in the Capitol and being the voice of the Oregon hunter. OHA is the only organization that maintains a constant presence in the State Legislature and secured major wins for the sportsmen's community.

**Just the  
overreaching  
gun control  
bills OHA has  
helped defeat  
would fill a  
bad law book.**

time lobbyist in an effort to protect our hunting heritage. This position is tasked with being in the Capitol building to work with legislators and other lobbyists, to provide testimony, and to be the voice of Oregon's hunters in the halls.

Al Elkins held the position of OHA's lobbyist for 25 years until retiring in March of 2022. Al was stalwart in his work to protect hunting interests, battling overreaching gun control efforts, wildlife management infringements, and numerous instances of poor policy that would negatively affect sportsmen and women in the state. Upon Al's retirement, Amy Patrick moved into the role of Policy Director/Lobbyist.

It's difficult to create a comprehensive list of every legislative concept, bill, and

OHA works diligently at upholding our mission statement of "protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage." OHA is the only sportsmen's organization that has prioritized the staffing of a full-



*One ill-conceived bill OHA helped defeat years ago would have banned possession of a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school, effectively making it illegal to pass through many towns on hunting trips.*

policy issue OHA has engaged in over the last 40 years; they are seemingly innumerable. Just the overreaching gun control bills OHA has helped defeat would fill a bad law book. However, here's a look at a few of the more recent highlights.

### **Commission and Wildlife at Crossroads**

In the 2023 session, OHA led the fight to pass HB 3086, which reshaped the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to be more regionally diverse. This battle could not have been won without a lobbyist working relentlessly in the building; it passed in the final hours of the final day of session. OHA also supported additional funding for wildlife crossings in a follow-on bill to the initial funding bill from the 2022 session. We also defeated bills seeking unreasonable gun control measures, criminalization of fur sales and trades, the errant expansion of the Commission's authority and numerous others.

### **Getting Serious about the Spread of CWD**

The 2021 session brought wins by way of funding for inspection stations, a bill that positioned ODFW for success with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) sample collection when positive results were found in Idaho later that year.

### **Making Poachers Pay the Price**

In 2019, OHA successfully advocated for increased penalties for poachers and secured new funding for the anti-poaching campaign. OHA also supported the bill to ban cervid urine attractants due to the

spread of CWD. In the same year, we helped defeat numerous bad bills, such as the coyote contest ban.

### **Snatching Trapping from Jaws of Defeat**

2017 saw the largest anti-trapping push with then-Senate President Peter Courtney championing a bill to essentially ban trapping through drastic trap-check intervals. OHA worked with a large coalition of organizations to successfully defeat the bill.

### **Fighting Like Cats and Dogs**

OHA's successful presence in the Capitol has produced positive impacts on some of the most contentious topics in the hunting community. In 2007, OHA passed the bill that allowed ODFW to use citizen houndsmen as agents to remove cougars, and later successfully removed the sunset, renewing the bill in 2013. Every session has brought forward an effort to further curtail the use of hounds in hunting, and OHA has been there each time to stop them.

While these highlights show the obvious outcomes of OHA's lobbying efforts, the majority of what happens in the Capitol is behind the scenes and intangible. It is worth noting that the coalition of environmental organizations that usually opposes OHA's efforts employ more than 20 lobbyists. As such, the presence of a lobbyist whose sole purpose is to protect the interests of Oregon's sportsmen and women is a critical tool for protecting our hunting heritage.

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# BLACK POWDER

By TROY RODAKOWSKI

## Get in a rut for late-season muzzleloader blacktails

I hadn't needed a new rifle, but one of our friends had needed to borrow mine for an antelope hunt because he wasn't sure whether or not he would hunt with a muzzleloader again. Oh well, who needs a good excuse to buy a new rifle? Maybe that guy. Certainly not me. My choice was the proven .50-caliber Knight DISC with a 24-inch Green Mountain barrel, and now that I was getting to know it, I thought it just might have been a good purchase.

One-hundred-fifteen grains of FF black powder down the muzzle and a 50-caliber Hornady conical on top of the charge. This was deer season, and November, and the local blacktail deer were in the peak of the rut.

Dad had helped me sight the rifle in and choose the load. We had burned through three bullet choices and two types of powders and several combinations, even struggled getting the right caps, but the gun had a favored load and we had found it. If I could be patient, I knew I could get a buck here in the foothills of the Cascades.

Three days earlier, a big cat had crossed my path in this same spot and ran out of lives. I had been calling with estrus bleats and rattling, hoping to entice a love-struck buck, not a hungry cougar. A mere 72 hours later I returned to the spot where curiosity killed the cat, sat down with the stainless steel smokepole across my knees and told myself if I could persevere, be still long enough, a buck would show on the same trail that cougar had walked in on. And that is what happened.

The buck was on the move, its neck swollen with the rut, moving from one little canyon into another to check on another group of does. I put the bead on the point of its shoulder, squeezed the trigger, and heard the strike of the bullet.

### THE RUT

A sad-but-sure sign that deer are starting to move is the amount of road-killed deer we start to see in early November. Bucks will smell other deer and cross roads they normally wouldn't during the rest of the year. For the best success, a hunter needs to search for the handful of days deer will be most active during daylight hours, and each year is slightly different. The weather and lunar cycles play a small role in daylight activity when the largest per-

***A sad-but-sure sign that deer are starting to move is the amount of road-killed deer we start to see.*** 🍖



*The mid-November rut brought this nice three-point blacktail within range of the author's new muzzleloader. Besides the rut making them move, snow at higher elevations will push deer lower in search of fresh browse.*

centage of does are in estrus or coming into estrus. Movement usually peaks prior to Thanksgiving, depending on the location, and continues through the end of November. Keep in mind that valley deer, coastal deer and Cascade blacktails will differ slightly in peak rut periods.

Just because you see lots of bucks running around chasing does on the coast most definitely doesn't mean the rest of the blacktail world is doing the same. It's important to know the deer and scout as often as possible prior to season. Trail cameras and information from other hunters can help you keep tabs on the deer, although nothing beats actual boot leather in the woods to look and glass for deer. Finding groups of does feeding or bedded is essential, since it's very likely a buck will be nearby this time of year.

Move slowly, mind the wind, and use your optics to see into and through cover. Blacktails relish the thickest cover, which they tunnel into and weave through, enabling them to go undetected for much of their lives. Blackberry tangles and poison oak patches are just some of the types of cover blacktails burrow into.

Deer tend to gravitate toward locations with the least human activity as the season progresses, but they are likely to make mistakes and show themselves at any time of day.

My 2022 season blacktail showed itself at 7:30 in the morning, but dad and I have taken blackpowder blacktails at all times of the day in the heat of the rut.

This year the black powder blacktail hunts are slated for mid-November starts, which puts the lucky hunter smack in the middle of the rut. With a black powder rifle in hand and a blacktail tag in the pocket, a hunter doesn't have to wonder if the rut is on or not. It's on!





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# BOWHUNTING

By SCOTT HAUGEN

## Revisit those blacktail hunts and haunts

**A**s I write these words it's late July, the peak of my summer scouting for blacktails. A couple days ago, I scouted where I killed a big three point last season. Less than 200 yards from where it died, another, much bigger buck had moved in. I know where I'll be hunting this season.

Our family has been hunting Columbia blacktails in the Cascades and Cascade foothills since the 1880s, not far from their homesteads in the McKenzie River Valley. There's one thing that's been passed down in my family and my wife's family, and that is, "If you kill a big buck, go right back to the same place the following year as another one will have moved in."

I agree, and here's why.

➤ First of all, I rank consistently killing a mature blacktail buck to be the hardest big game challenge in North America. This is not only due to the cagey behavior of trophy-class bucks, but also the dense habitat they thrive in.

➤ Second, late-season bowhunters have an advantage because of the blacktail rut, and any hunter knows we stand a better chance of filling a tag during the rut than any other time of the season.

➤ Third, I don't think a mature blacktail buck is ever anywhere by mistake, other than when they get struck by a car this time of year because they're on the move and likely being driven by testosterone and lose all sense of judgement. An old buck's movements are very specific and done for a reason, either to get food, rest,

***A buck may return each year to the same spot, often on the very same days.***

fight, breed or avoid predators.

Many big bucks my family has killed have come in six or seven consecutive year spans. I think this reflects on the conduciveness of all variables within the habitat to meet the needs of a wise buck, and this is precisely why another mature buck will move in if one is taken out.

### **Bed & Breakfast**

Food is easy for blacktails to find, and this time of year, much of the moisture they require is attained from the food they eat. Aside from food, cover and does to breed, what else does a mature buck look for?

Big bucks have multiple bedding areas. They'll use beds other bucks have created, but often return to a handful of favorites. These beds may be deeply carved into the ground and often there are shallow beds nearby. This shows how older bucks rely on bedding in the presence of younger bucks, as the more eyeballs there are, the greater the chance of detecting danger.

While I'm obviously addressing homebody bucks, that's not to say a buck won't move in from higher elevations. Bucks will often drop in elevation to check for does in heat. If they find one, they might stick around and fight the local, dominant buck for breeding rights. If they win, they'll often take up residency there.

If they don't find a doe in heat, the buck that dropped down from the high country will often come back a week or so later. And if that buck finds a doe to breed, it

might return year after year to the same exact spot often on the very same days.

A few years ago, I was onto the biggest blacktail buck I'd ever seen in the McKenzie drainage. I hunted it for three years and never laid eyes on it during the late bow season. That buck dropped down from the mountains three years straight, and always between the day prior to Thanksgiving and Dec. 2. I got some great trail camera footage of that buck, all in the dark. I have arrowed a number of mature bucks I never saw before – bucks, I'm sure I bumped into as they cruised for does well below their normal home range.

If you kill a big blacktail buck and feel it was luck, don't admit it to your buddies. Instead, study the area to assess what brought the buck there and kept it in the area. Was it food, cover, prime bedding areas with multiple escape routes, lots of does, or all of the above?

If you kill a big buck on a rainy day, backtrack to see where it came from. If you find fresh rubs, search for others from years prior. Decipher the details as to why it was there, then go back the following year, for as long as the variables remain constant, another mature buck will fill in.



For signed copies of Scott Haugen's best-selling book, *Trophy Blacktails: The Science of the Hunt*, visit [scotthaugen.com](http://scotthaugen.com). Follow Scott's adventures on Instagram and Facebook.



PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

*Once a mature blacktail buck is killed, another will fill in as long as all the variables in the area remain constant. For this reason, hunters should revisit areas of past success.*



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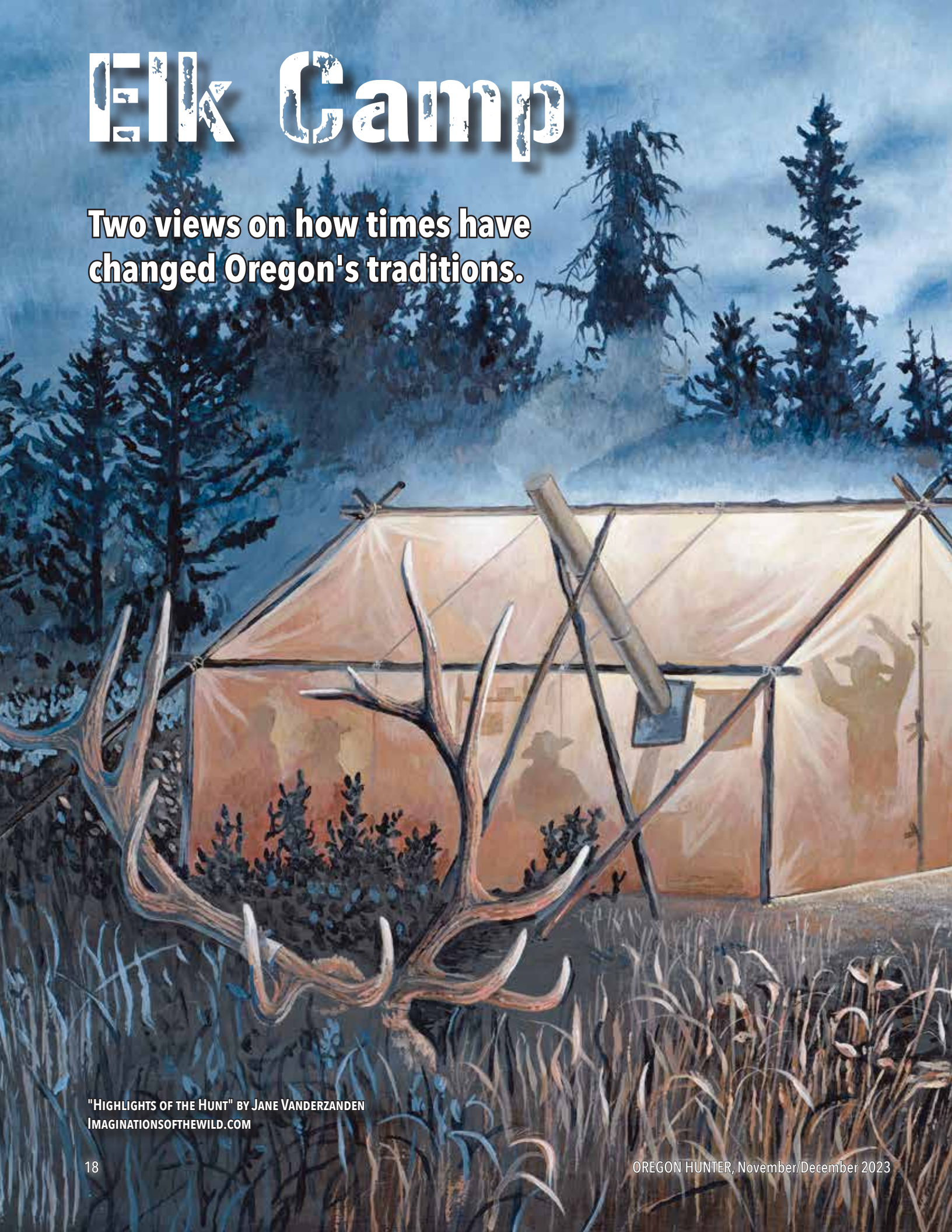
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# Elk Camp

Two views on how times have  
changed Oregon's traditions.



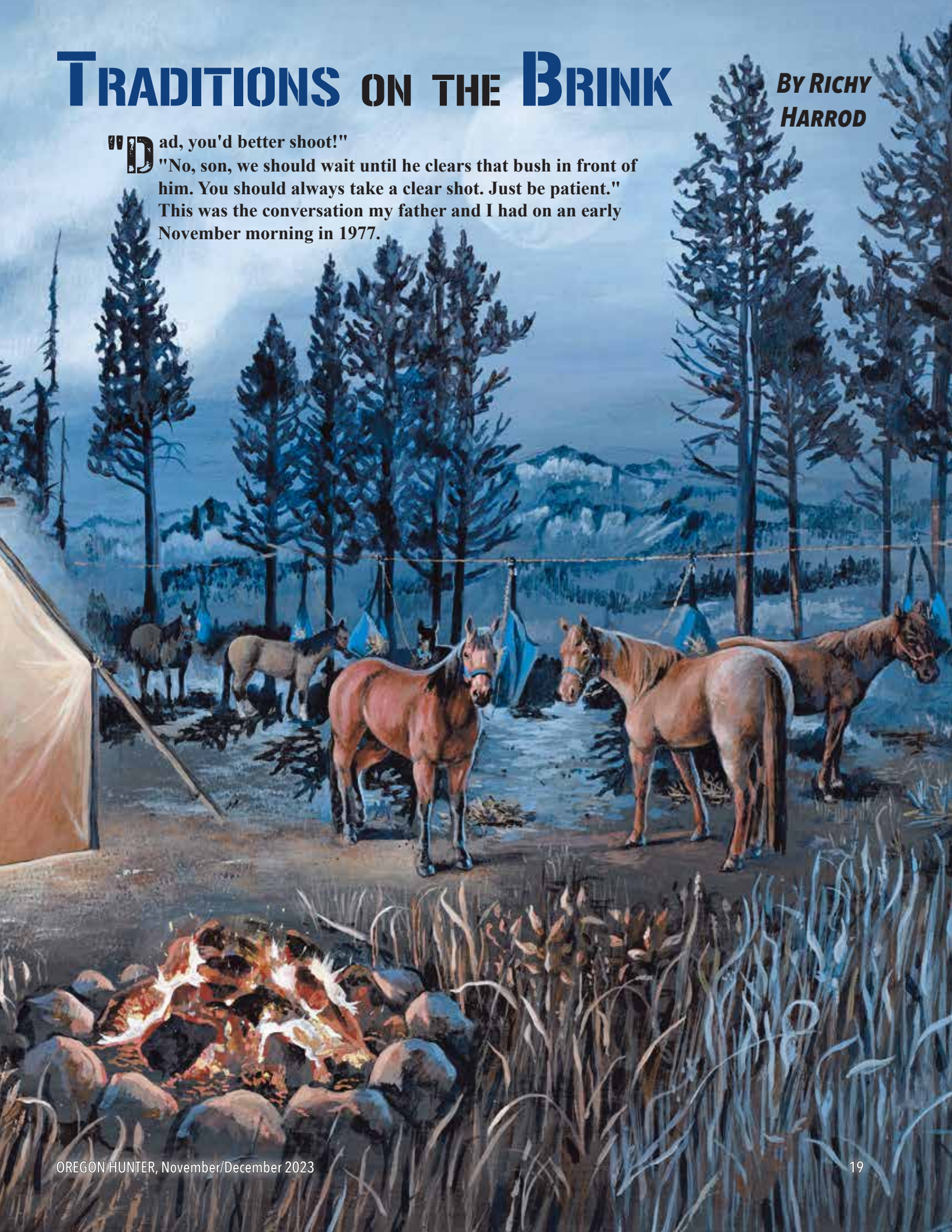
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# TRADITIONS ON THE BRINK

BY RICHY  
HARROD

"Dad, you'd better shoot!"  
"No, son, we should wait until he clears that bush in front of him. You should always take a clear shot. Just be patient."  
This was the conversation my father and I had on an early November morning in 1977.







*The author's grandmother Louise Dodson, grandfather Harold Dodson, and uncles Don and Dale Dodson pose with a bull elk in this photo taken in the early 1930s.*

I had just turned 11 years old, and this was my first elk hunting trip with dad. Hunter safety would come over the winter, and next year I would be packing a rifle in my own quest for elk, but for now I was a nervous spectator.

The 5-point bull elk stood behind a shoulder-tall bush for what seemed like forever to a kid. Dad wouldn't shoot, despite my constant urging, and then disappointment happened.

"Boom!" The bull dropped in his

tracks as another hunter had a clear shot from a different direction.

"See, dad, you should have shot," I said with displeasure.

"Well, that's OK, son; if I had shot, I may have wounded that bull and we might not have got him anyway." Learning to be an ethical hunter doesn't come easy for an 11-year-old, but this moment was much more.

Participating in a century-old tradition was a rite of passage that I had looked

forward to as long as I could remember. A passion for the pursuit of the majestic elk, a strong desire to relive the close encounter, a connection to the land and sense of place, experiencing hardship and a desire to overcome, and many other feelings hard to describe were present in that moment. I didn't know at the time how much these aspects of tradition would shape my life.

Unfortunately, I fear that my children and grandchildren won't be able to continue our family traditions, this way of life. Western states are instituting draw systems, fish and wildlife commissions are composed of nonhunters and non-anglers who don't value these traditions, and all the while many big game and fish species are in decline. Hunting families will no longer be able to hunt cherished places year after year with a draw system. Fish and wildlife commissions are currently reducing hunting opportunities: for example, the loss of the spring bear season in Washington. How will hunting traditions be passed on to the next generation in this current political environment?

Hunting has been a tradition in my family since the early 1900s and likely earlier. My grandmother was raised in deer and elk country in a small cabin located on what is now the Elkhorn Wildlife Area near North Powder. My great grandfather hunted deer as means to feed his family; elk were less numerous then due to overharvest. Hunting traditions were carried on when my grandmother married and had two boys (mom came along later). My favorite photo of my grandmother as a young woman includes an elk shot by my grandfather and my uncles as young boys clearly proud of the moment. This photo connects me to my family history of hunting, and particularly elk hunting, like no other. My grandfather had provided many meals for his wife and kids, worked hard to do so, and the photo documented an important moment for the whole family.

Dad was a young man in the 1970s when the bull was shot by another hunter. He had learned to elk hunt from my grandfather, his father-in-law, and they were carrying on the tradition depicted in my grandmother's family photo. Fall meant going to dad's favorite peaks and draws in hopes of finding a bull elk. My childhood home was a couple miles from prime elk habitat, so we gazed at the woods often with anticipation. Family members who lived far away set up an elk camp in the

OREGON HUNTER, November/December 2023



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same place every fall and we would visit their camp during midday or evenings. Our family was fortunate to harvest several elk, which led to family gatherings with friends to cut and package meat. As a teenager, the coming of fall and hunting opportunities were the most important events of the year. The start of elk season was not only important to my family, but it was a community tradition and way of life, so much so that school would close if opening day was during the week.

My brother Ron, lifelong friend Riley, and I have carried on the annual hunting tradition. For many years, we bowhunted the same areas as my father did in North Powder. As young men, we sought adventure, and in the early 1990s, hunted elk in Montana, Idaho, and even pursued javelina in Arizona. But we discovered a new elk hunting area in 1992 near John Day, only a couple hours from North Powder.

**Goals seem to be to reduce hunting opportunities, not perpetuate or increase them.**

From the beginning, the juniper, mahogany, and stately ponderosa pine near John Day had a mystical force all of its own. Stalking elk in this amazing landscape has become a lifelong obsession. A place where we have found many road-

less areas with few if any other hunters. Mountains and canyons challenge our resolve. Elk roam the many ridges and draws, but dare even the hardest hunter. These places have all the ingredients to perpetuate family traditions and strong emotional ties. The pungent smell of juniper, the high-pitched call of a distant bull, the sight of freshly, antler-shredded pine trees, all bring back a flood of cherished memories spanning 30 years and nearly 500 days afield. The stories are too numerous to chronicle here.

The past 10 years have been my opportunity to pass the hunting tradition. My daughter loves rifle deer hunting and we set up a hunting camp every year near our home in north-central Washington. These annual excursions to the mountains have new meaning. There is a sense of pride in that my daughter and I are carrying on the legacy started so long ago. More importantly it gives me hope that my grandchildren will have an opportunity to make their own memories.



*The author's father, Howard Harrod, right, with bull elk taken in the 1970s. Howard's father-in-law, Harold Dodson, stands in the middle beside long-time family friend Jerry Blankenship.*

My son-in-law is learning to be a bowhunter, and I'm fortunate to be his mentor. We are creating new deer hunting traditions, but he dreams of the experience that comes from chasing bugling bull elk. With age, I have longed for the chance to share the cherished places and experiences in our elk hunting ground in eastern Oregon. In not too many years, the mountains will once again hide its secrets from me as I will no longer conquer their grandeur. But passing along this annual tradition, is all but lost.

Elk hunting in 2021 was more bitter than sweet. Oregon instituted a draw system for most of eastern Oregon, including our traditional hunting areas. The consequence of a draw is that hunters have to choose one unit in which to hunt and the opportunity to hunt yearly in the same areas in multiple units is no more. As a result, we hunted our most prized places knowing that we likely will never return to all of them with bow in hand.

Most western states are now managing big game hunting by way of draw. In essence, they are being forced, as hunters who can no longer obtain tags in their traditional hunting areas in their home states are searching for new places to hunt. Seasons are also being shortened or eliminated altogether so success rates are decreasing with fewer days available. To be fair, state agencies are under pressure to manage deer and elk population sizes, provide all hunters opportunities regardless of weapon, and appease the non-hunting community. They must do this with an ever-decreasing budget. What is most disturbing is that fish

and wildlife departments and commissions are being led by some individuals who do not have family traditions of hunting or even fishing. In my opinion, their goals seem to be to reduce hunting opportunities, not perpetuate or increase them.

Many have argued the benefits of hunting as a management tool and it is not my intent to repeat those here. Rather, I would contend that our most concerning loss is the hunting way of life and family tradition.

Traditions exist because parents and grandparents pass long-established customs and beliefs from one generation to another. To be a hunter requires a myriad of outdoor skills and abilities that take time and frequent practice to master. Emotional connections to the lands we hunt and the animals we pursue are imprinted in our psyche at an early age and strengthen with each passing year.

Providing high-quality meat for the family table every year, or nearly so, leads to a pride in self-sufficiency. How is it possible to pass along hunting traditions to our youth when it takes years to draw a tag for that opportunity? I would argue that without the annual outings to familiar landscapes, establishing annual hunting camps, and having an honest chance to fill a tag, traditions simply can't be made.

The passion my daughter has for deer hunting comes from anticipation of an annual deer camp. From an early age, I wanted her to develop fond memories of places and experiences in the deer woods. Preparing the gear for camp, clothes and packs for the hunt, meals to be enjoyed around the campfire, and the hope of quarters hanging on the meat pole are the elements of traditions well built. These traditions are absolutely lost with reduced hunting seasons, loss of seasons, or hunting by draw only.

As we look to the future as a hunting community, I worry that politics, as with most issues in our society today, will guide decisions about hunting seasons, harvest restrictions, tags offered, and places to hunt. Hunters will turn to private lands, many of which are now charging high fees for access. The average hunter who can't afford access fees will necessarily be excluded and the cost of out-of-state tags may be prohibitive.

Hunting traditions are likely to be ignored by states, but these are the most important of all. For without them, hunting as a lifestyle will cease to exist.





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# TRADITIONS ON THE MOVE

BY GARY  
LEWIS

## How an Oregon elk party rolls with the changes.

**T**he hunter loaded his rifle again on the eighth morning of the hunt, pushing a 130-grain bullet into the chamber. He had not seen an elk in seven days, but he knew where the elk liked to be, and he walked up to the knob. As he made his way into a little opening, he saw what he thought was the yellow tops of the grass moving with the wind. But when he looked again, he could see it was the yellowed tines of three bull elk, all with their heads down, feeding. Three mature bulls.

*For the last 30 years, OHA President Steve Hagan has been part of an elk hunting tradition, camping and hunting in the same location every season.*

That was in 2015, and this was easily his biggest bull, with seven points on one side and five on the other, missing 31 inches of broken off antler that would have made the bull a 320-class 7x7.

Hagan, who makes his home in Sisters, is the president of the Oregon Hunters Association, and although he loves to hunt, the two to three weeks that make up elk season is the best time of the year. It might be a nine-day hunt, but the preparation, the planning and setting up and taking down camp takes about three weeks.

### THERE ARE NO EASY ELK

"I used to go to the sportsman's show in Seattle and listen to Jim Zumbo talk about how to get an 'easy elk,'" Hagan said. "I did exactly what he described and

In a few steps the hunter stopped, flicked the safety to the fire position, steadied the crosshair back of the foreleg and squeezed the trigger. Steve Hagan said later that he didn't even think about the size of the antlers in that moment. "I just wanted one to harvest."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEVE HAGAN



OHA President Steve Hagan took his 2011 bull with a .270 and a 150-grain Nosler Partition bullet.

found a cow hunt with limited tags and limited competition." And Hagan was an elk hunter. That was in 1994, and Steve Hagan has been an elk hunter ever since.

For the last 30 years, Hagan has been part of an elk hunting tradition, camping and hunting in the same location every season. He started as one of the youngest members of the group, and now he and his friend Mike Totey, OHA's conservation director, are the oldest members.

"The core group is a family, with usually three generations of Templetons in camp. In total, the number of family and friends tops out around 11 people. One of the girls has been coming to camp since she was four years old, which was 20 years ago."

### A FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

According to Hagan, part of their success hinges on that it is a family affair with every member of the family involved.



Every year someone banks preference points. But the party applies together, with an average of 11 people applying. The ones who do not have tags can still come to hunt grouse or turkeys between scouting, cooking and camp chores.

One of the main considerations is how soon does anyone want to go to put up the camp for the group that has been hunting in the same spot for the better part of 50 years.

For this November hunt that means setting up the tents before Halloween. Someone has to do it, and more often than not it is one of the older members of the party that volunteers, but the bonus is hunting grouse, fall turkey, bear and cougar.

Hagan says the bulk of the party is not likely to arrive until the Friday before the season starts, but that plays into the hands of the older generation.

"We have a number of people that come in on the Friday evening right before opening day. Those people get to chop a bunch of wood," Hagan said. "We want to make sure that the late arrivers, who tend to be early leavers, get some work in."

#### **FIRST DAY HUNT**

On the first Saturday of the season, the trend is to take it easy with an opening-day drive that can turn into spot-and-stalk opportunities as animals begin to be pushed from one place to another.

"In general, we head south to the top of the ridge and hunt north, back down to camp on the first day, because we have a number of people showing up late."

Seldom do hunters take stands in specific spots. "There were a set of uncles that preferred to sit, and we would set them up in areas we would call crossing spots. In a couple of cases, we put them in crossing spots and those of us that were younger would sometimes push elk to them."

Today Hagan and Totey are the oldest members of the group, but sitting on ridgetops is not their style.

"We run into a lot more elk as we push them back and forth. We're talking spot and stalk when we might see animals up to a thousand yards away."

The older hunters pass on what they know to the younger members.

"On opening day, the elk get pushed around out of spots they're in. We also know they jump over the ridge that runs east and west and they go down in the hole, which is national forest along the private boundaries.

***Snow on the ground really helps, along with knowledge of the thick cover spots reclusive bulls like to hide in.***

There are places where it's hard to go. Not everyone is willing to make the effort.

There's a place they call The Hole, and it is hard to get into and harder to get out of. It's a safety area for elk where the pole patches are thick. Coming up out of The Hole, if there is meat to pack, it must be packed over the top of the ridge to get to the nearest road.

"It's why our party sits at 11 people, so that a number of people can put things on the packboard and get elk out," Hagan said.

#### **ELK BEHAVIOR IN RIFLE SEASON**

This is the time of the season when the breeding is almost over. There may be younger bulls with the herds, but the so-called herd bulls have pulled back, gone solitary or into small groups and are seeking to put weight on before winter.

Snow on the ground really helps, along with knowledge of the thick cover spots reclusive bulls like to hide in.

"There's things you can do with snow on the ground that you can't do on bare ground. I want to hunt elk, not spend all my time finding them," Hagan said.

"They're just like blacktails in that they go into really thick stuff and they just stop. And if you don't see him or smell him in there, you don't know he is in there."

One way to move elk out of a pole patch is to have one hunter circle in from the upwind side and let the scent and sound





Taryn Templeton takes a turn at the steering wheel on an afternoon hunt. Involving the next generation is critical to keeping traditions alive.

gently move the bull toward the other side where another hunter is watching.

In November elk are not likely to make the mistake of crossing a meadow. It's more likely that they will skirt down the edge of timber. It is common for a bull to stop and look back both before moving into

an opening or when leaving an opening.

If they do cross an opening, it's going to be at top speed.

"They know that openings are a hail of gunfire. They do not go in the open unless they have no other choice. It's when they are not under duress, they are willing to go through open areas," Hagan said. "Because they have watched other elk go down. They are not moving until the cows go first."

#### CARRY A COUGAR TAG

Hagan makes sure he is legal to take a cougar every season. "I take pictures every year of cougar tracks in my area. In the spring of 2014 after the count was made, our unit was named a known wolf area." It's not as easy as it was to find elk, but Hagan recommends every hunter in the group has a cougar tag, just in case.


The most important thing an elk hunter should wrap his or her mind around is that it takes time to be a successful elk hunter.

"I like to set up the hunt to have a good eight days, and sometimes hunt the ninth day. Everyone in my party that is a serious hunter is there for the season."



Steve Hagan with his 2022 season trophy. Bagging the Thanksgiving turkey on an elk trip may not have been something your grandfather did in Oregon, but these days, not everyone has an elk tag every year.

For a signed copy of Gary's book, Bob Nosler Born Ballistic, send \$30 to Gary Lewis Outdoors, P.O. Box 1364, Bend, OR 97709 or visit [garylewisoutdoors.com](http://garylewisoutdoors.com)



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# 7 LUCKY DUCK TIPS

## 7 Tips to Bag Your Oregon Limit of 7 Ducks

Story & Photos  
By Scott Haugen

*Austin Crowson  
relied on a small  
decoy spread in  
a tiny, secluded  
section of a  
flooded field, to  
fool these ducks  
near his home in  
Monroe.*



Setting out a dozen floating decoys, I hunkered in the brush and waited. Ducks were flying, but none gave me a look. Birds weren't flaring; they just didn't want to be in the spot I chose.

I picked up my decoys, hiked a couple hundred yards to the other side of a meandering creek in the Willamette Valley and set up, again. This time ducks were interested. I shot a greenhead as it dropped into the decoys, and a nice pintail right after that. This was the spot.

Quickly I set out five dozen Big Al's silhouette decoys along the edge of the shallow pond. The silhouettes were a mix of mallard, pintail and wigeon and they worked well with the dozen Final Approach Live Wigeon decoys floating in the water. More pintails and lots of teal landed in the decoys, but I didn't shoot. Then the wigeon started flying. In less than 30 minutes I had five drake wigeon to add to the bag and was packing decoys back to the truck.

Oregon's daily bag limit is 7 ducks again this season, and here are 7 tips to add to your bag of tricks.

### 1 Going Mobile

On this hunt – as is often the case for me during Oregon's late duck season – going with a compact spread of decoys that kept me mobile was the key. In a shoulder bag I toss a dozen floating decoys, then stack five dozen silhouette decoys on top of that. Sometimes I carry a homemade, one-man panel blind on my back. It's a light load that's easy to pack and allows me to quickly relocate should ducks not be where I'd hoped.

### 2 Scout It Out

"I spend three days scouting for every day I hunt," shared Austin Crowson, one of the best duck hunters I've met. Crowson lives in Monroe and hunts throughout the Willamette Valley and beyond. "Ducks can move around a lot, especially if we get a bunch of rain," he continues. "I want to make sure ducks are comfortable using a pond, field, slough or creek before committing to hunting them. Often numbers just keep building, too, so if you're patient, you can get a crack at a lot of ducks."

Last season Crowson and I hunted a flooded field near Harrisburg. When Crowson found the field, there were a couple thousand ducks on it. We hunted it



*A dozen floating decoys, 3 dozen silhouettes and a .20 gauge shooting HEVI Shot's new HEVI-METAL Xtreme, made for a great day for the author, complete with a bonus copper top!*

three days later when there were well over 5,000 ducks using it. We shot limits, and so did two other groups who hunted different parts of the massive field.

### 3 Space Out

The landowner who gave us permission to hunt that field also let other hunters on, and we knew that going in. We all set up as far apart from one another as possible, with well over 300 yards separating us. This was plenty of room to let birds work and not have to worry about shooting birds the other hunters were calling. But that's not always the case.

Last season Crowson and I hunted Fern Ridge. We were set up early, well before daylight. Minutes before shooting time two groups moved in, one on each side of us, and both set up within 100 yards – way too close. They sky busted, shot at birds setting up to land in our decoys, and blew as loud and hard on their duck calls as they could. It was a frustrating experience, but one that's all too common on public land.

When setting up, make sure there's plenty of room between you and fellow hunters. I like a minimum of 200 yards for the simple reason wind directions change and birds can circle wide. Be aware of what birds you're shooting at. If you're hunting over decoys, don't shoot until the birds lock-up, which is easy and makes it more enjoyable and productive for everyone.

### 4 Make the Right Call

Overcalling is a major mistake I hear being made in duck blinds all the time.

It's better to not call at all than to call poorly and educate birds, or worse yet, botch opportunities for fellow hunters. Call just enough to get the attention of distant ducks then let the decoys do the rest. Don't call when birds are directly overhead, looking down on you.

Listen to how birds are calling and mimic that. Have a buddy who is honest listen to your calling and offer advice, because the way we hear our own calling is often far different than how it really sounds.

### 5 Carry the Right Load

Knowing how the shells you're shooting perform is very important, and at no time was this more evident than during the recent shotgun shell shortage. Hunters scrambled to get their hands on any waterfowl loads they could. I hunted with several folks who said they had bad days shooting, but when I saw the baggy full of five different shotgun shell brands, I knew it wasn't their marksmanship.

Waterfowl shotguns, specialized chokes and high tech loads all work together, and how one brand or type of shell performs in your gun could be different than how they perform in a buddy's gun. Your gun might handle bismuth loads just fine, but the load might fragment and get thrown all over the place in another gun. Your gun might pattern steel No. 4 shot perfectly, but have a different point of impact with another size shot or a shell that's using a different wad. If you're serious about seeing how they shoot, paper test each load before hunting with it.

### 6 Blind Ambition

I have a private lease I hunt two days a week all season. It's not a duck club with fancy blinds and planted food, just flooded farm fields that ducks like when the grass is green and the bugs are abundant; they also rest here when there's enough water. I hunt another two or three days a week in other places during the last 10 weeks of the season. No matter where I'm hunting, I make sure the hide I'm using is in top condition.

If hunting from my one-man panel blind, I make sure to break up the edges. If hunting from a layout blind, I make certain everything is covered so no shadows or unnatural lines show. If hunting from an A-frame or box blind, I continually maintain it in order to optimize cover and effectiveness.





*A good hide and smart calling are two keys to consistently bagging Oregon ducks.*

On the lease I hunt, buddies and I killed more than 250 ducks last season. Another blind not far from us struggled, not even hitting double digits. One look at their blind revealed why. It was an oversized box in a field with no natural cover whatsoever. Of course, birds wouldn't come close.

As winter storms and winds hammer blinds and natural cover you might use as a blind, make sure to maintain them. If a windstorm shreds your burlap cover, replace it. If incessant rains batter the natural cover on your blind, fix it.

When hunting after a storm, I arrive early because I know I'll need to do some

blind maintenance. If it's worse than I thought, I'll fix what I can before shooting time, then tackle the rest when I'm done hunting. Waterfowl hunters invest a lot in gear and time, so don't get lazy when it comes to optimizing the quality of your blind because it will make a difference.

### **7 Seek Uncharted Waters**

My favorite way to hunt ducks is alone, just me and my dogs. I like using simple decoy spreads in secluded places where the calling and errant shooting of fellow hunters won't bother me.

While a lot of hunters spend time knocking on doors to get permission to

hunt big fields, or hunt on refuges, rivers and other public lands, I like looking for creeks, secluded sloughs, even tiny pockets of flooded fields to base much of my late season hunting around. I'd rather set up in a small creek, away from hunting pressure, and have a crack at a handful of birds than compete with fellow hunters for limits. Put in the time scouting, and you might be shocked at how narrow of a creek or how shallow of a flooded pond or how small of a slough ducks will pile into.

On the third to the last day of the season last year, I hunted with the Kropf brothers near Brownsville. I hunt with them often. We were on a tiny creek that barely held a dozen floating decoys. At first light, mallards poured in, and we shot limits at close range. I even managed a limit of greenheads with my .410. The decoying action was nonstop.

I'm fortunate to go on over 100 waterfowl hunts a year, and most in my home state of Oregon. Put in the time, hunt wisely and efficiently, and discover how good Oregon's duck hunting can be.



*Looking for tasty ways to cook those fowl? Check out Tiffany Haugen's popular book, Cooking Game Birds. It's available at [www.scotthaugen.com](http://www.scotthaugen.com).*

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# UPLAND UPSIDE

***No tags to draw,  
long seasons, generous  
limits and abundant birds  
all add up to more bang  
for your buck!***

**STORY & PHOTOS  
BY GARY LEWIS**

IMNAHA UNIT



**S**ome of us don't draw sheep tags. And some of us did not even draw elk tags or our favorite deer units. Blame it on the predators if you want. But cougars and wolves haven't put the hurt on Huns. Or chased out the chukars. Or put the quail through the Cuisinart. Or phased out the pheasants (although phactory pharms are trying).

For the price of a leftover elk tag offering a two-percent success rate, you can score an upland bird stamp and enough shells for a great week of upland hunting.

### **GROUSIN' IN THE FOREST**

One of the most overlooked upland opportunities is forest grouse – ruffed, sooty and dusky. I cut my teeth hunting grouse, and they were the first birds for both my

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beagles and my pudelpointer, and provided some of the best memories. Ruffed grouse are most often found in canyons with a lot of cover – aspens, alders, willows, vine maple, pines and fir trees. They like a bit of elevation

change. A little bench over a spring or a swamp can pay off with looks at a bird or two or three. They flash through the timber, offering brief glimpses and a rush of wings like a heart attack.

The blue grouse are most often found closer to the tops of the ridges.

Wonder where the grouse are? They're in elk country. And yes, you can put up a canvas wall tent and hunt grouse even if you didn't draw an elk tag.

### **IN CASE OF ACCIDENT, MY BLOOD TYPE IS MOUNTAIN QUAIL**

My pudelpointer's breeder and trainer was Rod Rist, of Terrebonne, and I remember what he told me.

"The best thing you can do for that wild pup is get her on wild birds." The wildest birds I could think of were mountain quail, and at that moment they seemed like just what I needed too.

Liesl was on the leash when I saw two quail in the trail. I unclipped her and the little brown dog disappeared into the leafy

undergrowth and showed again as she crossed a skidder road. Up the hill I went, and as soon as I hit the grassed-in forgotten track, a quail blew out into the open and I swung and missed with the first barrel. The second bird was a blur, a whirr of wings, but I swung through it and fired in an opening and the bird went down. Liesl almost stepped on the bird, then picked it up and deposited it at my feet.

### **SOMETIMES ALL I CARE ABOUT IS CHUKAR PARTRIDGE AND MAYBE 3 PEOPLE**

My friend Bill Herrick worked up the hill, and I waited five minutes after he disappeared over the shoulder of the rim rock. Liesl stayed close, her nose a'twitch with the scent of something that could be chukar.

If there were birds here, they would be in the bare spots where the wind had scoured down to the cheatgrass.

One dog and two hunters were hardly the army required to surround this adversary.

Birds flushed and one gave me a long shot. I marked its location and even as I saw it go down, I heard Bill's boots in the shale, heard his gun, and when I turned, saw his shot string and a chukar in the center of the pattern, tumbling.

### **A.K.A. THE GRAY PARTRIDGE**

We call them Hungarian partridge, we call them Huns and we call them the alien grays out of eastern Europe. And where wildfires have swept out what was formerly chukar habitat, gray partridge have thrived. They inhabit grasslands and seem to top out on the low hummocks and hilltops and are usually marked by a hawk riding the thermals above them.

Chukar tend to hold high ground, the inhospitable rim rocks. Grays, on the other hand, prefer croplands, sage, and bunchgrass country at lower elevations or an acre of rye next to a small seep or a creek.

Planning a hunt? Think about all our sage brush skyline country that has burned in the last five years or so. Run a finger over the map or explore on Google Earth. Keep in mind the best habitat for grays is foothill ground close to irrigated farm land.

### **VALLEY QUAIL QUANDRY**

On this December hunt, Lauren was 14 years old. Jennifer was 21. The pup, Liesl, was 12 months old. These girls would



DESCHUTES COUNTY

*Hunters often overlook the opportunities to hunt upland birds on state wildlife areas. Learn the rules and go hunt. It's your land.*

never be this age again.

This time the landowner would hunt with us; Phil and his friend Larry led the way.

Last night's rain lay heavy on the leaves. No one expected the pup to do well, except me.

We started out from the hay barn, crossed a canal and the railroad tracks, and the pup grew intent, cut smaller diagonals and zigzagged hard. A moment later, a covey of thirty quail popped out of the willows. Too far to shoot, they blew out down the railroad tracks to veer up and over roadbed and back onto the property into a patch of cattails, blackberries and Russian olive.

We fought our way in and when I was out on the other side of the cover, a single bird buzzed out behind me and I swung, squeezed the trigger and tumbled it on a crossing shot.

### **PHEASANTS TAKE LIKE PHOREVER**

No doubt about it, a wild rooster pheasant is the top trophy for a shotgunner in these parts. Down deep in a canyon, with the other hunters scattered outside of the cover, Liesl pointed a tangle of willows, briars and Russian olive. At its base, the dead limbs were woven tight as a basket and it was two stories high.

There was no way she could get in, but she knew a bird was there. She held point for almost forever.

Inside the tangle of branches something climbed up through the limbs. Way above my head the bird crawled out, paused, and took to the air. I shot and missed. Still one-handed, I fired the second





MALHEUR COUNTY

Bill Herrick and Liesl with chukars taken on a bare slope on an otherwise snowy ridge.

barrel and, as I found out later, Phil shot at the same moment. It's enough to learn to share our pleasures.

If you didn't draw your elk tag this year, go hunt. Find a ton of great information at [myodfw.com/articles/start-hunting-game-birds](http://myodfw.com/articles/start-hunting-game-birds). Then see OHA's game bird season preview at [oregonhunters.org](http://oregonhunters.org)

With long seasons, plentiful public access and abundant game, you may find the uplands offer more bang for your hunting buck.



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Ryan Bales admires the long tailfeathers of a hard-earned pheasant.

A walk across a mile of deep crusted snow put us at the bottom of a Malheur River country canyon and the wind in the dogs' faces. Photo courtesy Ryan Bales



DOUGLAS COUNTY



10 mountain quail a day? Who even gets that many shots?



MALHEUR RIVER

Paxton Eicher calls the dogs to water on a dry November hunt for gray partridge.





## Cilantro-Lime Turkey Breast for savory holiday turkey

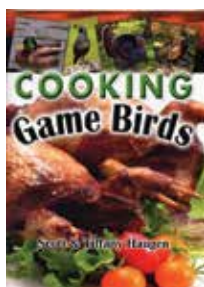
Over the years our Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday dinners have included a wild turkey. One year Scott got a big tom and it was so tender and full of flavor, many relatives didn't believe it was a wild bird.

For Christmas dinner that same year, I hunted with our dog Echo, and shot a hen that cooked up incredibly well, as expected. Scott skinned out that hen and made a mount with it, which we now use as a decoy on many hunts, so it was a win-win.

Not to be outdone, the following holiday season my dad got a tag. He dug out his old .410 that had been in the family for nearly 100 years and shot a young bird. He won. That was the most tender of all. But one thing everyone always agrees on – and the bone piles confirm it – the wild turkeys taste much better than the hormone-injected birds other relatives bring. The wild birds are always gone first. Always.

Although there are many ways to cook a wild turkey, the best way is to cook the breast meat differently than the rest of the bird. While a slow or pressure cooker will bring out the best in most of a wild turkey, the tender, delicate breast meat can be cooked very much like an organic, free-range chicken. The key is not to overcook it. It can be stuffed and roasted, or a quick marinade will do the trick with flavor, and a hot pan-fry in olive or coconut oil and a little pat of butter will cook in the caramelized goodness.

1 pound wild turkey breast  
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
Juice and zest from 2 limes  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
1 teaspoon cumin  
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4-1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes  
2-3 tablespoons olive, coconut oil and/or butter  
Additional lime wedges, optional



Cut turkey into bite-sized chunks. In a large bowl or sealable bag, mix olive oil, cilantro, lime zest & juice, garlic, Worcestershire, cumin, paprika, salt and chili flakes until thoroughly combined. Add turkey, cover or seal bag and marinate, refrigerated 4-8 hours. Take turkey out of the refrigerator and let sit 15-20 minutes before cooking. In a large skillet, heat oil and/or butter on medium-high heat. Add turkey and marinade to the pan and fry until turkey is browned and cooked through, 6-8 minutes. Serve over rice with a wedge of lime if desired. Turkey can also be threaded on to skewers and baked in a 350° oven 10-12 minutes, or grilled, 3-4 minutes per side.



*The key in any wild turkey dish is to avoid overcooking it.*

**Field Care Note:** To attain the best quality turkey meat, get it cleaned and cooling as soon as possible. Turkeys are big birds and retain a lot of heat. If cooking the bird whole, gut, skin or pluck and refrigerate or freeze. If you'll be cooking parts of your turkey, fillet the breasts, remove the legs/thighs, wings and neck, and refrigerate or freeze. Don't discard the bones; the stock from a wild turkey is both nutritious and delicious. However you cook your wild turkey, do not over-cook it. The gamey toughness many people blame wild turkeys of having are not because of the birds, but because of improper field care and the wrong cooking methods.



For signed copies of Tiffany Haugen's popular book, *Cooking Game Birds*, visit [www.scotthaugen.com](http://www.scotthaugen.com).

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OHA member Calvin Davis of Pendleton wins a Tactacam Reveal Trail Camera for this August photo capture of two mule deer beneath the rim rock in Union County.

## HONORABLE MENTION:



Hot dog on a stick. Medford OHA member Darrin Davidson earns an OHA hat for this August image of a tightly coiffed Jackson County coyote cruising down a fallen log.



In search of his next meal. OHA member Cheyenne Scrocca of Sublimity captured this pic of a Metolius Unit black bear in August and scores honorable mention and an OHA hat.



OHA member Cody Paratore of Independence bags honorable mention and an OHA hat for this August trail camera image of elk in the Willamette Unit.



OHA member Jerry Riecke of Klamath Falls scored this picture in August in western Klamath County and garners honorable mention and an OHA hat.





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DENMAN W.A./RANDY SHIPLEY

## Youth waterfowl days are calling!

I had four youngsters (and as many adults) on our balcony on Independence Day night. The fireworks got loud and frequent, building to a fast-and-furious crescendo. Everyone looked around and smiled, mutually wowed by the moment. I said the first thing that came to mind, “sounds like opening day at the refuge.” But the statement fell flat. I realized nobody had a clue what I was talking about.

Makes me grateful to have experienced those war zone bunkers as a kid, but also sad that so many others haven’t had that experience. The good news is there are special youth hunts out there still, if you know where to look.

ODFW offers youth waterfowl hunts at several wildlife areas and federal refuges each fall and winter:

- **Fern Ridge Wildlife Area:** Nov. 25 and Dec. 27. The East, West, and South Coyote units are open only to youth hunters. Hunters should apply for a hunt (see page 44 of the Game Bird regs for application procedures). Successful applicants must purchase their reservation permit before arriving at the wildlife area.

- **Klamath Wildlife Area:** Oct. 28. The Miller Island Unit will be open to youth hunters only.

- **Sauvie Island Wildlife Area:** Oct. 28, Nov. 12, Dec. 9, Dec. 28 and Jan. 13. The Mudhen, Hunt and Racetrack units will be open, except Mudhen will not be open for the Nov. 12 youth hunt. Youth only until noon. After noon, Mentored Youth Hunters and adults accompanied by youth hunters may hunt. Hunters may apply for hunts (see regs P. 44 for application procedures); however, no one over the age of 17 may apply with a youth in a party application. Hunters with reservations will have first shot at selecting hunting blinds. Successful applicants must purchase their reservation



OHA member Lucy Langer of Sherwood and Alyse Hurley enjoyed this waterfowl hunt near home during a Christmas break a few years ago.

permit before arriving at the wildlife area.

- **Tualatin River NWR:** Nov. 11, Nov. 19, Nov. 25, Dec. 3, Dec. 9, Dec. 17, Dec. 23, Dec. 31, and Jan. 6 by reservation in the Riverboat Unit. For application and more information, see [fws.gov/refuge/tualatin-river/visit-us/activities/hunting](http://fws.gov/refuge/tualatin-river/visit-us/activities/hunting). Applications are accepted Aug. 15 – Oct. 1. Phone: 503-625-5944.

- **Umatilla NWR:** Nov. 18, youths must be 10-17 years old to participate in this hunt and must be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years old. Reservation and blind fees are waived for the Youth Hunt Day. Applications for the Youth Hunt Day are accepted through the second Friday in Sept. For online applications, more information, and refuge-specific regulations, see [fws.gov/refuge/umatilla](http://fws.gov/refuge/umatilla). Phone: 509-546-8300

**Bag Limit:** Hunters may take ducks (including scaup), mergansers, coots and geese at the established bag limits (see pages 16-17).

**Eligibility:** Unless noted, hunters 17 years and younger who are accompanied by a non-hunting adult 21 years of age or older, are eligible to participate. Youth participating in the Mentored Youth Hunter Program (see regulations page 28) are not eligible to participate. On ODFW managed lands, shooting glasses (eye protection) must be worn by all participants, including adults.

**Requirements:** Each youth hunter must have in possession:

- ✦ A Hunter Education Certificate or an ODFW-issued document that includes their Hunter Education Certificate Number.

- ✦ Permit for the hunt area (if required).

- ✦ Valid hunting license with HIP validation in possession.

- ✦ Hunters 12 years of age or older must have a state waterfowl validation in possession.

- ✦ Hunters 16 years of age or older must have a valid federal duck stamp in possession.

If you’re lucky enough to get a good blind and experience a quality shoot with your kids, remember to stop and compare the moment to the 4th of July. The memory should stick.



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TY STUBBLEFIELD

## OHA to create hunting network for women

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director  
[Amy@oregonhunters.org](mailto:Amy@oregonhunters.org)

Women are the fastest growing demographic in the hunting community and a growing percentage of OHA's membership. As such, OHA staff and board members are currently working to build a new aspect of our outreach efforts with the creation of a women's "network" within the organization.

**The network will include a strong focus on mentoring and a social component aimed at building camaraderie.**

Similar to the successful Learn to Hunt Program launched in 2021, the women's network will include a comprehensive resource hub specific to women in hunting, such as gear selection, safety, fitness, and many other topics.

Special events with invited speakers, skills-building courses, and Q&A sessions are also planned as resource opportunities.

The network will also include a strong focus on mentoring. Providing new women hunters with mentors who can help them move through the entirety of their first hunting experience is a high priority for the new program.

The planned launch date for the new program will be in early 2024, with prospective events scheduled into the next year.

In addition to the resources, events, and mentoring, the program will include a social component aimed at building camaraderie and deeper relationships among OHA members, hunters and friends.



OSP

Oregon State Police Fish & Wildlife officers seized a staggering number of antler racks in this recent poaching investigation. OHA recently doubled the reward amounts offered to informants through the Turn In Poachers (TIP) program and created two new reward categories.

## OHA doubles TIP reward amounts

By Gary Lewis

The Oregon Hunters Association is doubling down on efforts to fight poaching in Oregon by doubling the rewards paid to informants in fish and game poaching cases through OHA's Turn in Poachers (TIP) reward program.

Two new categories aim to stop poaching before it happens: illegal spotlighting, and snagging or attempting to.

If a citation is issued, the standard amount of the reward may be as follows:

- Bighorn, mountain goat, moose - \$2,000
- Elk, deer, pronghorn - \$1,000
- Bear, cougar, wolf - \$600
- Upland birds, waterfowl - \$200
- Furbearers - \$200
- Illegally obtaining Oregon hunting or angling license or tags - \$200
- Salmon, steelhead, sturgeon, halibut - \$200
- Illegal spotlighting - \$200
- Snagging/attempt to snag - \$200
- Habitat destruction - \$300



Since 1986, OSP, ODFW and OHA have collaborated on the Turn In Poachers (TIP) program, which provides cash rewards to persons who report unlawful killing of wildlife, fish, upland birds and waterfowl and/or destruction of habitat.

OHA President and TIP Coordinator Steve Hagan thinks that the TIP program is a tool that conservationists can use to reverse the recent mule deer decline. "In light of the dire situation that mule deer populations are facing, this is one of the

ways we can make a difference," he said.

One ODFW study of south central Oregon mule deer found that more were killed by poachers than were taken by licensed hunters.

In a recent five-year span, the TIP program paid out more than \$100,000 in cash rewards to informants in poaching cases. Since 2018, informants have been offered the option of accepting preference points in lieu of cash, and approximately half the informants have been taking advantage of that opportunity.

Qualification for the reward depends upon the issuing of a citation by the OSP Wildlife Division for illegal taking of wildlife, fish, upland birds, waterfowl, and destruction of habitat. If the investigation by OSP finds insufficient evidence to issue a citation, no reward will be made.

OHA and our chapters sometimes offer higher rewards for information in particularly heinous cases.

To report a violation or suspicious activity, call the TIP Hotline: 800-452-7888 or \*OSP (677) (available 24/7) or email [TIP@state.or.us](mailto:TIP@state.or.us) (monitored weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

The TIP reward fund is mainly supported by court-ordered restitution from convicted poachers and individual donations.

For more information or to make a donation for anti-poaching efforts, visit <https://oregonhunters.org/turn-poachers-tip>



# Owyhee protection bill moves forward in US Senate

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director  
[mtotey@oregonhunters.org](mailto:mtotey@oregonhunters.org)



OHA is a member of the Owyhee Sportsmen Coalition that has been engaged with Senator Ron Wyden and his staff to get legislation introduced to help protect and conserve the Owyhee region in Malheur County.

The bill (S. 1890) was introduced in June in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. It includes over 1 million acres of wilderness area designations that will come from the “wilderness study areas” that have been part of the Owyhee landscape and management for many years.

An initial hearing was held on July 12, and now the bill moves to a “mark up” phase. This phase will allow a negotiation of different terms or edits to the bill. The coalition is pressing for flexibility within the designated wilderness areas to allow for management of invasive species and wildfire recovery efforts.

Most roads that are currently “driveable” will stay that way.

Known for its picturesque landscape, with thousand-foot sheer cliffs and volcanic tuff formations, Oregon’s Owyhee canyon country is home to chukar, native redband rainbow trout, mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope and California bighorn sheep.

The Owyhee region is also recognized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as one of the last remaining strongholds of intact sagebrush steppe habitat which supports Oregon’s largest population of greater sage-grouse.

Those who know the Owyhee country are familiar with this stunning landscape, vast canyon areas, solitude, and wildlife. It’s a special place that provides unique hunting opportunities.

With energy development exploding across Oregon’s landscape and displacing wildlife and hunters, it’s more important than ever to keep wild places wild.

For more, visit <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/1890?s=1&r=3>

# OHA engages on Cascade-Siskiyou Monument Plan

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator  
[TD@oregonhunters.org](mailto:TD@oregonhunters.org)

The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) is in the process of revising the Monument’s Resource Management Plan (RMP), and OHA is weighing in. OHA strongly supported continued use of the CSNM for hunting and suggested managers increase hunting opportunities where possible.

**OHA will continue to engage on the CSNM RMP revision until its approval in fall of 2024.**

One of the preliminary purposes of the revised plan was to protect and restore habitat that supports rare and endemic species, but there was little mention of other wildlife and their habitats.

OHA supported protecting and restoring habitat that supports rare and endemic species, but this goal of the RMP should extend well beyond these species. Many species that occur on the CSNM rely on early- to mid-successional habitat, and availability of habitat for these important species has been in decline for decades.

OHA urged CSNM managers to create additional early seral habitat for species such as black-tailed deer, elk, and numerous others. Creating early seral habitat can also reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

OHA has advocated for improving habitat connectivity for wildlife for over a decade, and recently we have served as a driving force for the Southern Oregon Wildlife Crossing Coalition. Together we hope to implement a wildlife overpass on Interstate 5 to connect the CSNM, but this wildlife crossing is not a silver bullet for restoring habitat connectivity, so OHA applauded the RMP goal to protect and restore wildlife migration corridors.

OHA will continue to engage on the CSNM RMP revision until its approval in fall of 2024.



Get your 2024 Gun Calendar  
now at [oregonhunters.org/store](http://oregonhunters.org/store)

# Latest Gun Calendar winners announced

Winners of the 2023 Gun Calendar Raffle are posted each Wednesday on OHA’s Facebook and website ([oregonhunters.org](http://oregonhunters.org)). Here are August and September winners: Browning A-bolt .300 WM - Lynn Richman, Silverton Christensen Mesa 6.5 CRD - Chris Hooks, Redmond Springfield 1911 .45 ACP - John Barcroft, Hebo Henry Golden Boy .22 LR - Stephen Martell, Molalla Pointer Over Under - Jennifer Hannon, LaPine Browning A-bolt 7mm - Ken Hardwick, Independence Christensen Mesa .300 Win - Tom Doupe, Canby Tikka T3 Xlite .30-06 - Michelle Kraemer, Silverton Howa Yote package .223 - David Downs, Grants Pass

Sales of the 2024 OHA Gun Raffle Calendar are underway, so get yours for a shot at one of 52 great guns by calling the OHA state office at 541-772-7313 or visiting OHA’s website at [www.oregonhunters.org/store](http://www.oregonhunters.org/store)



# OHA pays out \$2,800 in rewards in 5 cases

In the last two months, OHA issued 5 reward checks to informants in 5 cases totaling \$2,800 from our Turn In Poachers (TIP) reward fund. Charges included: Angling Prohibited Method, snagging x 3, Taking of Fin Clipped Chinook Salmon, Failing to Validate Harvest Card, No Angling License and No Columbia River Endorsement, Unlawful Take of antlerless elk, no big game tag, counseling and aiding in a wildlife offense and lending of a big game tag, and Hunting with an artificial light, Aiding/Counseling in a Wildlife Offense and Unlawful Take/Possession of Cougar.



## CHAPTER NEWS

# Chapters host youth events

### BAKER

CHARLIE BRINTON 541-403-0402

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

**Update:** The Baker Chapter needs chapter officers. If you want to make a difference in your local chapter, please call Charlie Brinton or the State Office at 541-772-7313 for info about volunteering.

### BEND

REX PARKS 541-480-0230

[oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter](http://oregonhunters.org/bend-chapter)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 9, 541-480-9848.

**Update:** Our annual youth bird hunt is Oct. 21. Craig Foster, OHA SE Director, recently spoke to us about establishing a cougar target area to improve mule deer populations.

### BLUE MOUNTAIN

KEVIN MARTIN 541-969-6744

[ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com](mailto:ohabluemountainchapter@gmail.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 23, Pendleton Convention Center, Terry Bechtold 541-231-4384.

**Update:** Blue Mountain Chapter has been working alongside ODFW with signage for their closed roads to help keep ATV's and UTV's from disturbing the wildlife.

### CAPITOL

DANNY SOUTH 503-577-6033

[ohacapitol.webs.com](http://ohacapitol.webs.com)

**Chapter Meetings:** No longer having in-person meetings.



A young man takes his best shot at the OHA Yamhill County Chapter's annual youth shotgun shoot on Aug. 12. OHA's Malheur County Chapter hosted a similar event the same day (upper left). OHA's Bend and Klamath chapters are holding youth bird hunts on Oct. 21.

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 16, Columbia Hall, State Fair & Expo Center, Deb Howard 503-930-8586.

**Update:** Our chapter is raffling an OHA 40th Anniversary Christensen Ridgeline Burnt Bronze .300 Win Mag at our next banquet. Get your tickets now to win a special rifle.

### CLATSOP COUNTY

TROY LAWS 503-738-6962

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March (date TBA).

**Update:** Get your tickets for the Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle. We are raffling a Nosler M48 .300 Win Mag Valued at \$1,935. Tickets are \$20, 3/\$50, 7/\$100.

### COLUMBIA COUNTY

JORDAN HICKS 949-533-7271

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 24.

**Update:** We are looking for Hunter Education instructors in our area. You will be able to receive the training you need to teach in Columbia and Clatsop counties. Contact Joel Glass, 503-708-7628.

### CURRY

MATT THOMPSON 530-351-5847

[mandmthompson02@yahoo.com](mailto:mandmthompson02@yahoo.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** Curry Beast Feast, April 27, Event Center on the Beach; call Matt for details.

**Update:** If you would like to help with our fundraising event, please call Matt Thompson. There are many ways you can help.

### EMERALD VALLEY

TONY HILSENDAGER 541-729-0877

[EmeraldOHA@live.com](mailto:EmeraldOHA@live.com)

<https://ohaemeraldvalley.webs.com>

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** TBA

**Update:** Our recent guest speaker Casey Ferguson offered important techniques and items we need to take along on our upcoming hunting trips.

### HOODVIEW

KELLY PARKMAN 503-706-7481

[oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter](http://oregonhunters.org/hoodview-chapter)

Facebook: Hoodview OHA

**Chapter Meetings:** Second Thursday, at Elmer's Restaurant, Portland.

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 17, Monarch Inn, Clackamas, call Kaleena at 503-314-3090, or email [ohahoodview2019@gmail.com](mailto:ohahoodview2019@gmail.com)

**Update:** We host our Holiday Party on Dec 2. Check your newsletter for coming details.

### JOSEPHINE COUNTY

DAVID DOWNS 541-821-1511

[ddowns2646@gmail.com](mailto:ddowns2646@gmail.com)

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Thursday, 7 p.m., dinner 6 p.m., Black Bear Diner, Grants Pass.

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 16.

**Update:** Our Dec. 21 general meeting will be our annual Horn Night, so join us and bring your best brag-worthy antlers.

### KLAMATH

ALLAN WIARD 541-884-5773

[ohaklamath.webs.com](http://ohaklamath.webs.com)

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



**2024 Fundraiser:** April 27.

**Update:** Our annual youth chukar hunt is Oct. 21.

### LAKE COUNTY

LARRY LUCAS 541-417-2983

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 6.

**Update:** Our guzzler project is Oct. 28; call 541-417-2983.

### LINCOLN COUNTY

TODD THOMPSON 541-270-2393

[tjaz@charter.net](mailto:tjaz@charter.net)

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Tuesday, 6 p.m. meeting, dinner 5:30, Rogue Brewing Public House on the Bayfront, Newport.

**2024 Fundraiser:** TBA.

**Update:** The guest speaker at our recent meeting was Hannah Dinell, who spoke about the benefits of non-lead ammunition.

### 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.

**2024 Fundraiser:** TBA.

**Update:** Our annual chapter youth shotgun shoot was held on Aug. 12.

### MID-COLUMBIA

CHUCK ASHLEY 541-993-8076

[Chuckashley4120@gmail.com](mailto:Chuckashley4120@gmail.com)

**Quarterly Chapter Meetings:** July 13 at 6 p.m., ODFW's screen print shop on Klindt Drive, The Dalles.

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 30, Shilo Inn, The Dalles, Tony White 541-490-2928 or Chuck Ashley 541-993-8076.

**Update:** Last chance to get your tickets for the Coastal Farm & Ranch Rifle Raffle. Some lucky person will win a new Howa SuperLite Kryptek 6.5 on Nov. 16. Call Tony at 541-490-2980.

### MID-WILLAMETTE

JOHN TACKE 541-231-8165

[john@visitnrc.com](mailto:john@visitnrc.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/midwillamettechapteroregonhuntersassociation>

**Chapter Meetings:** 2nd Thursday, 7 p.m., meeting 6 p.m., Old Armory, Albany.

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 13, Albany Boys & Girls Club, Albany, Debbie Mode 541-971-3351.

**Update:** Our chapter has purchased equip-

ment and hardware items to assist OSP Wildlife Troopers do their work in the field. They are working hard to protect our resources.

### OCHOCO

JOHN DEHLER, III 541-815-5817

**Chapter Meetings:** 1st Tuesday, 7 p.m., COCC Open Campus Room 119.

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 17.

### PIONEER

BRIAN ANDREWS 503-266-2900

[oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter](http://oregonhunters.org/pioneer-chapter)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 2, Mt. Angel Community Festive Hall, Mt. Angel, David Scott, 503-710-1233.

**Update:** Our next guzzler project is Oct. 21; call 503-678-9851. Chapter sight-in days were held Sept. 16-17 and 23-24 at the Canby Rod & Gun Club. Congratulations to our Pioneer Chapter Scholarship winners: Luke Donaldson and Kate Miller.

### REDMOND

K.C. THRASHER 541-419-7215

OHA line 541-383-1099

[oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter](http://oregonhunters.org/redmond-chapter)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 24.

**Update:** The Redmond Chapter Christmas Party will be held on Dec. 19. Please join us, and you may win one of 10 great prizes.

### ROGUE VALLEY

PAUL THOMPSON 541-941-6978

[Firepmt29@gmail.com](mailto:Firepmt29@gmail.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 16.

**Update:** Jackson County Sheriff's Search & Rescue team presented at a recent meeting.

### TILLAMOOK

JOHN PUTMAN 503-842-7733

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Monday, 7 p.m., ODFW Tillamook Office, 4909 Third St, Tillamook.

**2024 Fundraiser:** May 4, Tillamook County Fairgrounds, Dixie Whitehead 503-842-7153 or Glenice Smith 503-842-2475.

**Update:** Our chapter sponsored a gun raffle

for the Tillamook High School Trap Team, and they raised over \$8,700. This trap team will almost double in size for the 2023-24 school year.

### TIOGA

MARCEY FULLERTON 541-294-7912

**Chapter Meetings:** 4th Tuesday, 6 p.m., Uncle Randy's Café, Coquille.

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 6, 541-294-7912.

**Update:** The Tioga Chapter sold concessions at the Myrtle Point Sportsman's Club and held a raffle to earn money for chapter projects and programs.

### TUALATIN VALLEY

TONY KIND 503-290-6143

[oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter](http://oregonhunters.org/tualatin-valley-chapter)

**Chapter Meetings:** 3rd Tuesday, dinner 6 p.m., meeting 7, Prime Time Restaurant & Sports Bar, Forest Grove.

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 23, The Wingspan Event Center, Hillsboro; call Melody Kind at 503-502-0611 or email [tvcoha@outlook.com](mailto:tvcoha@outlook.com)

**Update:** Join us for the chapter Christmas Party on Dec. 9 at Carpenter Creek Farm & Winery. Santa & Mrs. Claus will be in attendance.

### UMPQUA

TADD MOORE 541-580-5660

<https://www.umpquaoha.org>

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** April 6.

**Update:** Congratulations to DeWaine Jackson for receiving the state OHA Conservationist of the Year award.

### UNION/WALLOWA COUNTY

MORGAN OLSON 541-786-1283

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** Feb. 24.

### YAMHILL COUNTY

ANDY BODEEN 503-490-2489

[ohayamhill.com](http://ohayamhill.com)

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

**2024 Fundraiser:** March 16, 503-737-9483.

**Update:** Our annual chapter youth shotgun shoot was held on Aug. 12. We are manning and monitoring the Stimson Mainline gate to provide public access on weekends during deer and elk seasons.



# OHA recognizes big achievements with state awards

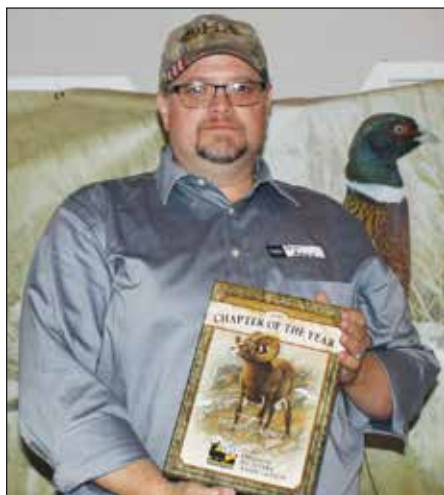
OHA recently recognized outstanding volunteer efforts with the announcement of statewide annual awards. Chapters, state board members and staff nominate deserving individuals for awards, and then vote from the nominees on the ballot.

## CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

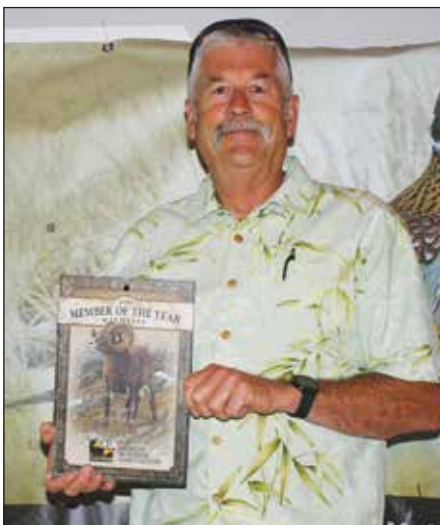
**Pioneer Chapter** – The Pioneer Chapter has logged 4,559 volunteer hours primarily focused on protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat, mentoring youth, and supporting their hunting heritage while increasing OHA memberships. The chapter's members protected wildlife habitat by managing 21 water guzzlers and 180 nesting boxes, and sold 248 Gun Calendars with OHA memberships.

## ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBER OF THE YEAR

**Marcey Fullerton** – President of the Tioga Chapter, Marcey organizes an annual youth pheasant hunt, youth outdoor skills day, does a weekly outdoor radio show, and volunteers with the local Tioga outdoors education 4H Club. To add to her resume, she taught Hunter Education classes for over 30 years. The Tioga Chapter's 2023 banquet netted \$108,195, a record for the chapter and the second-highest all-time net for any chapter in the state.



OHA Pioneer Chapter President Brian Andrews accepts the plaque for OHA's Chapter of the Year award. The Pioneer Chapter logged 4,559 volunteer hours for our mission last year.



OHA Bend Chapter member Eric Brown receives the plaque for OHA Member of the Year for Wildlife presented at the OHA Chapter Leadership Summit at Diamond Lake Resort the last weekend of July. Brown is a rare repeat winner of the award.

## WILDLIFE MEMBER OF THE YEAR

**Eric Brown** – "Eric Brown is a driving force for conservation," said OHA Conservation Coordinator Tyler Dungannon, who presented the award to Eric. "Eric has helped carry out numerous projects and fundraisers and deserves ongoing recognition for his tremendous effort. Members have commented that if OHA had 50 Eric Browns across the state, OHA would have to broaden its mission because we would have already protected all of Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and our hunting heritage."

## CONSERVATIONIST OF THE YEAR

**DeWaine Jackson, Roseburg ODFW** – DeWaine supervised and facilitated the following ODFW wildlife research projects in southwest Oregon in 2022: Black-tailed deer density estimation, blacktail winter range use, forest carnivore occupancy in the southern Cascades, Columbian white-tailed deer survival and habitat use, effects of nutrition on behavior and fawn survival of blacktails, elk survival and habitat use, vital demographic estimates and survey design for blacktails, post-fire wildlife recovery, and effects of habitat selection on blacktail survival.

## YOUTH MEMBER OF THE YEAR

**Avery Moe and Briley Courtright** – Avery and Briley are cousins who help at all of OHA's Tioga Chapter activities, from bussing tables at the banquet and selling tickets, to assisting on youth projects.

## CORPORATE LANDOWNER OF THE YEAR

**Starker Forests, Inc.** – Starker Forests, Inc. is a fifth-generation Oregon forest manager with over 91,000 acres of forestland across the Coast Range and Cascades foothills of Benton, Polk, Lincoln, Lane, and Linn counties.

In addition to practicing active forest management benefiting multiple wildlife species while allowing hunter access, the staff at Starker Forests promote and encourage recreational and educational use of their lands through free forest access permits. The majority of those free permits are issued for hunting in a variety of access types from motor vehicle, walk-in only, and special limited-range weapon hunts.

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

**Gary Hammond (Klamath Chapter)** – Gary Hammond of Klamath Falls is known to be a person whom OHA can always count on, while continuously making phone calls and talking to anyone. If he is asked to contribute to a project, he will make sure it gets finished.

**Jerry Holbrook (Pioneer Chapter)** – Jerry Holbrook of Canby has managed OHA duck box projects for over 20 years. He coordinates all duck box trips, as well as working with corporate donors for donations of materials used to support duck boxes. Jerry has also collaborated with the Mt. Hood National Forest to re-open public land after the 2020 forest fires. He is a current board member and volunteers at community outreach events such as fairs, rodeos, youth days and sight-in days.

**David Scott (Pioneer Chapter)** – David Scott of Canby has managed and run OHA's chapter fundraiser/banquet for 27 years. He has managed all aspects of the banquet such as ticket sales, donations, and organizing work parties. David is a current board member and participates in chapter wildlife projects such as guzzlers and duck boxes. He volunteers at community outreach events such as fairs, rodeos, youth days and sight-in days.

**Tom Zarosinski (Lake County Chapter)** – Tom is a huge asset to OHA in Lake County and around the state. He recently played a major role in OHA's Restoring Hope & Habitat bitterbrush planting project with weeks of time invested. Tom played a huge role in raising funds for conservation in Lake County. Tom never ceases to boost OHA morale with his contagious banter.





# CWD SURVEILLANCE IN OREGON

Deer and elk can be infected with CWD, and spreading it for years, before showing symptoms. Help Oregon detect it early and slow its spread: Get your deer or elk tested.



## How can I get my animal tested?

Stop at a CWD check station if you pass one - it's mandatory when transporting wildlife. Heads may also be deposited in drop-off containers at ODFW offices or with participating taxidermists or meat processors. Or call your local ODFW office to make other arrangements to test. See the QR code or website below for the full list of locations.

## How can I get my test results?

Find results at [MyODFW.com/CWD](https://myodfw.com/CWD) (see QR code below). Results are typically posted within 3-5 weeks after sampling. ODFW will contact hunters directly if animal tests positive.

## Is it safe to consume the meat?

There is no evidence that humans can contract CWD from eating or handling contaminated meat. CWD has never been detected in Oregon as of September 2023. If it is detected, the CDC recommends hunters wait for a negative test result before consuming.

## *What else can I do to prevent CWD?*

### **Don't bring in parts from out of state.**

If hunting in another state, it is illegal to bring any part of an animal containing central nervous system tissue (brain and spinal column) back into Oregon. See "Parts Ban" in Big Game Regulations.

### **No commercial urine scent lures**

These are banned. The prions that cause CWD can be shed in urine, bind to soil or plants and infect other animals.

### **Safely dispose of parts when hunting.**

In Oregon, leave waste parts near site of kill, dispose of in a landfill or via routine garbage disposal. Do not move remains to another area, especially brain and spinal column tissue.

### **Report sick animals.**

Report any deer or elk with abnormal behavior to (866)-968-2600.

### **Use caution when handling game.**

Wear gloves when field dressing and processing carcasses. Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing. Minimize handling of brain, spinal cord, eyes, spleen, and lymph nodes and avoid consuming these tissues. Bone out meat from the animal and avoid sawing directly through bone.



**Visit [MyODFW.com/CWD](https://myodfw.com/CWD)**





# OHA IN ACTION

BY TYLER DUNGANNON



UNION COUNTY/JIM WARD

BMEI projects include aspen restoration and protection, prescribed burning, invasive weed control, juniper removal, forage planting, dilapidated fence removal, riparian enhancement, tree thinning, guzzlers, and elk research.

## OHA steps up to support Blue Mtns Elk Initiative

OHA has undertaken a leadership role with the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative, which, for decades, has been improving elk habitat and distribution to benefit elk populations, landowners and hunters. OHA chapters have contributed to specific BMEI projects in the past, and we were pleased with project outcomes.

OHA will now fund BMEI with \$25,000 annually and will join the United States Forest Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, which collectively invest over \$250,000 per year in the Blue Mountains.

As part of the BMEI Operations Committee, OHA Conservation Staff will rank and select projects that best align with OHA's mission while influencing on-the-ground work in the Blues.

BMEI annually funds projects such as aspen restoration and protection, pre-

scribed burning, invasive weed control, juniper removal, forage planting, dilapidated fence removal, riparian enhancement, tree thinning, guzzlers, and elk research. Over

**OHA chapters across the state have contributed to this effort to ensure OHA will match ODFW's contribution.**

the past 30 years, BMEI has completed more than 350 projects, restored, or enhanced more than 300,000 acres, and leveraged more than \$10,000,000 for projects. In partnership with BMEI, OHA will leverage funds and increase our impact on deer and elk habitat on the Ochoco, Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur National Forests. Where applicable, OHA members will be invited and encouraged to help with these projects.

This commitment from OHA is timely. While elk are generally doing well in eastern Oregon, northeast populations in the Wenaha, Sled Springs, Chesnimnus, Snake River, Minam and Imnaha wildlife management units appear to be struggling. Per ODFW herd composition data, these units and Mt. Emily were all well below elk population management objectives. OHA will work with our partners to improve elk populations in these units, and our partnership with BMEI will be one way that we hope to achieve this goal.

OHA chapters across the state including Bend, Redmond, Capitol, Pioneer, Emerald Valley, Lake County, Hoodview and Umpqua, have contributed to date to ensure OHA will match ODFW's annual \$25,000 BMEI contribution for the foreseeable future. OHA Conservation Staff will provide OHA chapters with BMEI reports to ensure chapters are engaged in the efforts in the Blue Mountains.



### Blue Mountains Elk Initiative OHA Chapter Contributions



Chapter	2023	2024
Bend	\$10,000	\$10,000
Redmond	\$10,000	\$10,000
Capitol	\$5,000	
Umpqua	\$2,500	
Lake County	\$2,500	
Pioneer	\$5,000	\$5,000
Hoodview	\$2,000	\$2,000
Emerald Valley	\$2,500	



# NOSLER<sup>®</sup>

## 2023 PHOTO CONTEST

### FINALIST PRIZES

Prizes will be awarded in general and youth categories.

**1ST PRIZE:** Nosler Model 21 rifle

**2ND PRIZE:** Case (10 boxes) of Nosler Trophy Grade Ammo

**3RD PRIZE:** Leupold Scope

**4TH PRIZE:** Danner Alsea Hunting Boots

**5TH PRIZE:** Benchmade 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

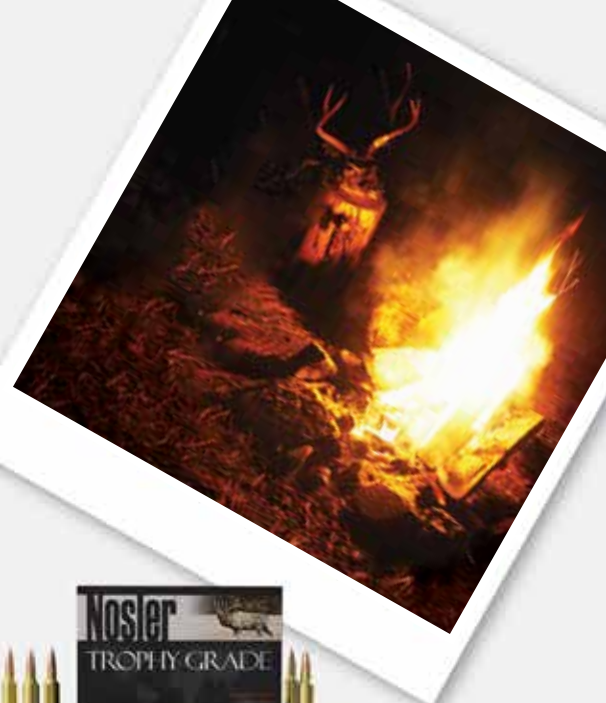
Go to **OHA's website at [www.oregonhunters.org](http://www.oregonhunters.org)** Click on **OHA CONTESTS**. Read the rules, and fill in the required fields. Click **CHOOSE FILE** and attach your photo. Click **SUBMIT**. That's it! You will be entered for a chance to win more great prizes courtesy of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



SCAN HERE TO ENTER



# NOSLER<sup>®</sup> PHOTO CONTEST

## YOUTH CATEGORY FINALISTS

OHA member Tyler Douglas of Medford claims an OHA Coast knife and a spot in the finals of the 2023 Nosler Youth Photo Contest for this picture of Easton Douglas with his 2022 season Applegate blacktail buck.



First morning of first elk hunt. OHA member Jody Brown of Hubbard captured this picture of a grandfather and grandson on a hunt in Tillamook County. The rifle is a Nosler M48. Brown scores an OHA Coast knife and a spot in the finals of the 2023 Nosler Youth Photo Contest.



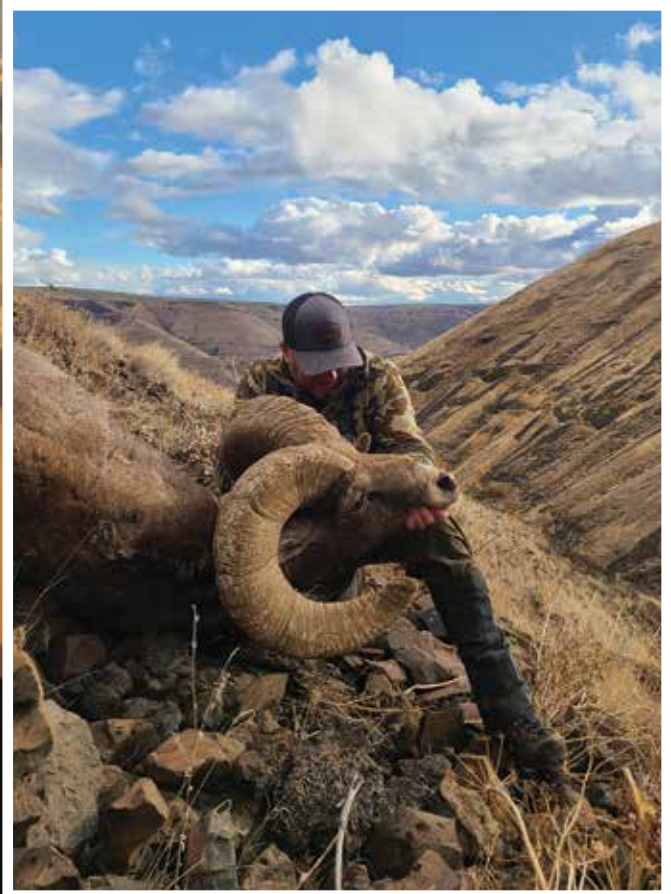
# NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

## GENERAL CATEGORY FINALISTS



Up in the Yukon! OHA member Seth Beck of La Pine claims an OHA Coast knife and entry in the finals of the 2023 Nosler Photo Contest for this picture of his trophy Alaska-Yukon moose taken in September 2022. Beck carried a .300 Win Mag to the Yukon and used a Vortex scope and a 180-grain Nosler AccuBond for the 217-yard shot.

Close-to-home bighorn for this Culver resident. OHA member Mike Macy wins an OHA Coast knife and entry in the finals of the 2023 Nosler Photo Contest for this picture of Andy Wilkins with his West Deschutes bighorn ram. Wilkins hunted with an MOA rifle chambered for the 7mm Magnum.



MAHOGANY RIDGE WSA/TYLER DUNGANNON



# NOSLER® PHOTO CONTEST

## HONORABLE MENTION



Leever action bull! Medford OHA member Bill Leever earns honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of Bill Leever, son Jeremy Leever and grandson Wyatt Leever with a Rogue Unit Roosevelt elk.



Austin Hoobler of Roseburg gets honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this photo of himself with an Evans Creek bear.



OHA member Tyler Baldwin of Tillamook garners honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this great picture from his September hunt, early in archery season in the Wilson Unit.



Tel Painter of Baker City receives honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this picture of his second gobbler of the season, taken in the Keating Unit with his 20 gauge Mossberg 500.





OHA member Roy Miller earns a Nosler hat and honorable mention for this photo of grandpa Roy and grandson Riley McCarthy from a memorable deer hunt in the Whitehorse Unit.



Portland OHA member Matt DeLong bags honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this picture of Eleanor DeLong with her first turkey from a family hunt in Idaho this spring.



OHA member Anthony Cobian collects a Nosler hat and honorable mention for this memorable picture of himself in a spring meadow in the Snake River Unit.



Josh Scott of Salem receives honorable mention and a Nosler hat for this picture of Teagan Scott and a Rogue Unit turkey.





# Where's La Boeuf?

And how to avoid swimmer's itch this Thanksgiving

**I**t's almost Thanksgiving, a time for us to pause and remember that wild turkeys can cause fiery explosions. And might inadvertently give us swimmer's itch. We are not specifically talking about live wild turkeys. No, we are talking about that most dangerous turkey, the one we plan to eat.

I base this statement on an article my research assistants found on Fox News.

"Fire departments throughout the country are reminding the public that Thanksgiving turkeys destined for deep-frying should be completely thawed and dried before they're submerged in vats of boiling oil. Failing to do so will result in a fiery explosion that can cause serious harm to Thanksgiving cooks and bystanders, according to experts."

The turkey we plan to eat is the one in our freezer, the one, it turns out, that is keeping us from hunting other turkeys. And bears.

A very important person once told me, "If you're going to go bear hunting, you're going to have to make room in the freezer." Very good advice, honey.

To tell the truth, I never thought about hunting turkeys until I saw the movie *True Grit* when Glen Campbell as LaBoeuf shoots a turkey with a Sharps rifle. And I remember saying to myself, "Them Sharps rifles don't even kick, and also, turkey hunting is cool." I was wrong about both things.

In case you are thinking of naming your child LaBoeuf and moving to L.A. Pine, you should know LaBoeuf is



pronounced "la buff" and it means a beef that has been castrated, or in other words, a steer. Might be easier for everybody if you just name the child Glen and move to Frenchglen. Frenchglen is great because there is little danger your child will grow up to be a go-go singer and get knocked off his bicycle by a turkey, a thing that could happen almost anywhere else. Like Washington D.C.

De-De is the vocalist for a D.C.-based go-go band called Rare Essence, and he reported the following incident which happened in the nation's capital. "I was just riding along the path. This gigantic turkey... kind of knocked me off my bike and proceeds to chase me around for five minutes."

Terrifying.

Wildlife experts advise you to raise your arms to look bigger and make loud noises. Note: if you are on a bicycle, don't raise both arms at the same time. That might have been De-De's first mistake.

You might be asking, "Uncle Geddy, what does all this have to do with swimmer's itch?" Good question.

The point is swimmer's itch develops because of dermatitis-producing cercariae which penetrates the skin of birds and migrates to blood vessels. Eggs are passed in feces into the water. When the eggs hatch, they liberate miracidia, which develops in a molluscan intermediate host, which produces free-swimming cercariae and causes a pox of dead baby parasites, which would be a good name for a go-go band.

In our house we like to solve problems

with food, and this has caused us to resurrect an old recipe, a special kind of deep-fried turkey called a tur-duck-en.

## HOW TO DEEP FRY A TUR-DUCK-EN

Step one is start with a fully thawed turkey. If you plan to eat the turkey on the traditional last Thursday of November, you want to start thawing the bird on the first Sunday of deer season.

Step two is to take a duck out of the freezer, but not just any duck, take a merganser out of the freezer. You know you got one in there. And a female snipe. Step three is reach your hand inside the dark slimy recesses of the departed turkey and make room for the merganser by pulling out all the little parts. These are referred to in the industry as the applets and the cotlets.

This is important because turkeys can contain salmonella. Salmon Ella was the name of a waitress in Port Orford, but that's a different story. According to the Mayo Clinic, and I'm paraphrasing, salmonella are the little salmon proteins that can turn into baby salmon that occur mainly in the intestines and this is why we put a merganser into the turkey. To eat the baby salmon. And also, because we might have a French person at our table and they might like the merganser, which means more turkey for us. And how do we know if we have a French person at our table? When they say "pass the merganser, s'il vous plait." And their name is LaBoeuf. Or LeTourneau. Or Brigitte Macron. And how do we know they like mergansers? Because, oui, oui, they have told us so.

Step four is insert the hen snipe. We insinuate the hen snipe into the merganser because, as it turns out, the common merganser is the main host for the schistosoma flatworm responsible for swimmer's itch and the hen snipe is there to eat the flatworm. This way no one can blame you for swimmer's itch after Thanksgiving.

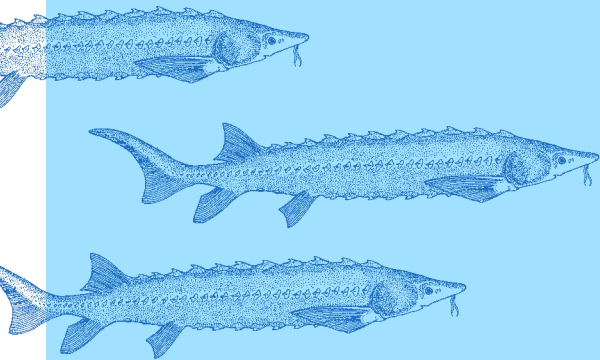
Step five, fry the tur-duck-en until it reaches a minimum internal temperature of whatever the experts recommend.

If you get swimmer's itch, put bear grease on. Never ever let your tur-duck-en create a fiery explosion which is sure to void your warranty. And if your turkey sandwich is too dry, call the Mayo Clinic and get some more.



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





# Nearly 5,000 wild animals were poached in Oregon last year.

We can all help protect Oregon's fish and wildlife populations by turning in poachers. Report suspected illegal killing of fish and wildlife.



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**Dial \*OSP (\*677) on mobile devices or call**  
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