



THE OHA TRACKER

APRIL 2014



Oregonhunters.org

OHA Board Receives Response on Cougar Plan Review Request

In January of this year, the state board of the Oregon Hunters Association sent a letter to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission asking them to review the cougar management plan. In the letter, the OHA board asked questions ranging from what population of cougars can Oregon realistically support to whether the current zones are an adequate representation of the management challenges and predation control requirements within them.

In March, ODFW sent a response to the request for a cougar management plan review. Here are some of the highlights of that response from ODFW:

- The Cougar plan was last updated by the Commission in 2006 and we currently are looking to conduct a review of the Cougar Plan in 2016.

We are also anticipating that the Commission may be considering delisting wolves in 2015.

- Secondly, as adopted in Rule by the Commission, we are required to open and revise our Wolf Conservation and Management Plan in 2015. We are also anticipating that the Commission may be considering delisting wolves in 2015. These are two separate and distinct processes that will require full staff attention and it would be difficult to undertake both of these and a revision of the Cougar Plan all in the same year.

In closing, the ODFW letter to the OHA board observes, "Your letter does raise appropriate questions about cougar management and are all things that should be considered in the next revision of the Cougar Management Plan."



USFWS

ODFW plans to review the state's cougar plan following a review of the wolf plan.

States to Receive Federal Funds

In March, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and U.S. Department of Interior agreed to release funding sequestered from the Wildlife Restoration, Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Trust Funds to the states. Money for the Trust Funds is derived from excise taxes levied on motorboat fuel and hunting and fishing equipment and then are distributed back to the states to pay for projects and programs important to outdoor recreation activities.

Trust funds are the foundation of the unique American System of Conservation Funding, a "user pays-public benefits" program. This user-pays funding strategy has produced numerous public benefits including: abundant fish and wildlife populations, access to public lands and clean waters, improved fish and wildlife habitat, improved soil and water conservation, shooting ranges, and boating access facilities.

2014 Legislative Session Wrap-Up

The short even-year legislative session, which started in February and ended in early March, brought forth a number of issues for OHA to address, but as has been the case since OHA first maintained a year-round lobbying presence in the state Capitol, no bills we opposed were passed.

HB 4075, if passed, would have allowed legally blind hunters to use laser scopes and sights. The bill was assigned to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, which held a hearing on the bill. During the hearing, committee members raised many concerns about the bill, including the issue of "fair chase" in relation to the "use of high-tech add ons." After much discussion, the bill died in committee.

The universal background check gun bill also failed. After much discussion and a great deal of maneuvering, the bill died in the Senate Rules Committee. We are certain that a bill similar to this one will be back in the 2015 Legislative Session.

Feral Horse Lawsuit Filed

The Nevada Association of Counties (NAC) has filed a lawsuit against the BLM over the management of feral horses on BLM land. The BLM is responsible for over 40,000 feral horses on the range in 10 Western states where they compete with cattle and wildlife for diminishing supplies of food and water.

According to the NAC, the BLM is not enforcing a portion of the current federal law that requires BLM to manage feral horses in a way that maintains ecological balance of all species. NAC goes on to point out that the severe drought has brought on huge impacts on rangeland. We will keep you posted on the advancement of this lawsuit as it journeys through the courts.

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

MARCH 29

OHA chapter banquet:
Capitol 503-910-7410

APRIL 1

Spring bear season opens in W. Blue Mountains and W. Oregon hunt areas

APRIL 5

OHA Mid-Columbia Youth Turkey Clinic
541-296-6124;

OHA Chapter banquets:
Baker County 541-523-6626
Lake County 541-417-2329
Tioga 541-267-2577

Lincoln County 541-265-7466
Josephine County 541-761-1852

APRIL 12

OHA Chapter banquets:
Malheur County 541-216-0485
Klamath 541-891-5301

APRIL 12-13

Statewide youth spring turkey hunt

APRIL 15

Harvest reporting deadline, winter tags;
Deadline for OHA state election ballots;
Spring bear season opens in most areas
of E. Oregon;
Spring turkey season opens

APRIL 26

OHA Pioneer Youth Day 503-829-2912
OHA Chapter banquet:
Mid-Willamette 541-401-0421

MAY 3

OHA Tioga Chapter Youth Day,
541-267-2577;
OHA Chapter banquet:
Tillamook 503-842-2475

MAY 10

OHA chapter banquet:
Union/Wallowa County 541-786-1283

MAY 15

Application deadline for controlled hunts

MAY 17

OHA State Convention, Seven Feathers
Casino, 541-772-7313

OHA Board Adopts Wildlife Work Plan

The OHA State Board of Directors at its March meeting in Salem adopted a "Wildlife Committee Work Plan" for 2014. This plan includes goals that the board will be addressing and completing during the course of the year. These goals include:

- ✓ Pursue options to address predator control and management by exploring ways to allow for more harvest opportunities.
- ✓ Pursue the review of the Cougar Management Plan
- ✓ Evaluate and make proposed changes to ODFW license package proposal.

- ✓ Pursue options to disallow antlerless hunts where populations are significantly below management objectives.
- ✓ Review and comment on proposed 2015 hunting regulations.
- ✓ Evaluate technology advancements and implications to hunters.
- ✓ Create a clearing-house for information pertaining to the banning of lead shot.

Each of the goals has been assigned to an OHA state board member who is responsible for monitoring the goal and implementing any action plan associated with the goal.

OHA Announces Bear & Cougar Contest Winners

One successful bear hunter and three tag purchasers were drawn recently to win prizes in the 2013 OHA Bear & Cougar Contest. Each successful hunter receives one wildlife print from Oregon artist Dave Bartholet (www.davebartholet.com).

Successful Hunter Winner:

- Michael Ramsdal of Deadwood, who took a bear on the coast last fall, wins a Redfield spotting scope for entering his harvest sheet.

Bear & Cougar Tag Drawing Winners:

- 1st** - Steven Berg of Clatskanie wins Redfield binoculars.
2nd - Vicki Swindler of Klamath Falls wins a Redfield rifle scope.
3rd - Steven Nicovich of White City wins a Redfield rangefinder.

OHA recognizes that predation has a big impact on Oregon big game populations. This contest is aimed at encouraging hunters to buy bear and cougar tags to hunt these major predators, so three of the four prizes go to tag buyers, whether they fill their tags or not. Send a photocopy of your 2014 bear or cougar tag to OHA, and you could win one of three great optics prizes!

Three members who submit a 2014 bear or cougar tag or copy thereof will win one of the following prizes:

1) Redfield binoculars; 2) Redfield scope; 3) Redfield rangefinder.

One successful hunter will win a Redfield Spotting Scope! Only bears and cougars taken on a sporting tag are



"Hillside Bruin" by Dave Bartholet/DaveBartholet.com

eligible. ODFW rules require that each cougar or bear killed must be presented to an ODFW employee for inspection within 10 days of the kill. The ODFW employee will fill out a harvest sheet for the state recording the vital details of the animal. To be eligible for the prize drawing, the hunter must request a copy of that form and send the form or a photocopy to OHA.

Contest rules are as follows:

1. The contest is open to all OHA members in good standing. 2. The contest runs from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2014. 3. Entries for 2014 must be received by 5 p.m., Jan. 6, 2015.

Mail entries to OHA Bear & Cougar Contest, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501, or fax to (541) 772-0964.