



# Hunting-related bills face survival of the fittest

With the 2015 Oregon Legislative Session's do-or-die deadline looming for bills to have hearings or perish, OHA has been tracking some 19 pages of hunting-related bills affecting wildlife, habitat and hunting rights – from drones to cougars, and everything in between.

Some bills are mired in workgroup sessions, including bills that would allow hunting cougars with dogs, step up penalties for commercial poaching of wildlife, increase license and tag fees, govern predator and habitat management, provide incentives for juniper removal, and create a wild bird seed tax.

Here are just a few of the highlights. For a more complete and up-to-date roundup of bills OHA is tracking, visit [www.oregonhunters.org/legislative.html](http://www.oregonhunters.org/legislative.html)

## House Bills

### Battery-Powered Scopes – HB 2049:

The bill authorizes a hunter with a visually impaired hunter license to use battery-powered scoping devices, pin sight lights and laser sighting devices to hunt.

**Comment:** OHA is opposed to this bill because it introduces “high-tech” hardware for hunting into Oregon and makes it legal. If the legislature is to approve the introduction of “high-tech” hunting hardware then we need to look at the “universe of high-tech hunting hardware” and the effect it will have on Oregon’s deer and elk populations. OHA is being lobbied very hard to support this bill, but we will continue to oppose it. Others opposed to the bill include the Traditional Archers of Oregon (TAO).

### Cougars and Dogs HB 2050 – HB 2181:

These two bills are the same bill. These bills provide that a county is exempt from the statute banning use of dogs to hunt or pursue cougars if voters

approve a county measure proposed by initiative petition or referred to people by the governing body of the county.

**Comment:** These two bills are in a workgroup. The workgroup consists of those advocating from all sides of the cougar/dog issue. The workgroup has had two meetings in March and is continuing to meet. The group is trying to find middle ground on this issue. It is hoped that a solution can be reached so that a bill can be brought forward.

### Drones for Hunting – HB 2534:



The bill directs ODFW to adopt rules prohibiting use of drones for angling or hunting.

**Comment:** This bill passed the House Chamber with 59 yes votes and one excused vote. This is an OHA bill that basically takes the drone usage factor out of hunting and fishing. It’s a great bill and one that will serve future hunting generations well with the preservation of fair chase.

### Wild Bird Feed Tax – HB 2401:

This bill creates an excise tax on wild bird feed. As outlined in the bill the tax would go to the establishment of a Greater Sage Grouse Conservation Fund and the Wild Bird Conservation Fund.

**Comment:** A group of lobbyists has formed a coalition to aid in getting this bill passed. There may be much action on this bill toward the end of the session.

### ODFW Funding Task Force – HB 2402:

This is a bill from the office of the Governor and provides for the establishment of a task force to identify and recommend potential alternative funding sources for ODFW, including the sale of recreational outdoor equipment, clothing or related goods, as well as contributions from businesses and other organizations

to support the protection and preservation of nongame wildlife and their habitat.

**Comment:** The workgroup assigned to this issue probably will work through the legislative session and beyond to come up with funding alternatives.

### Consent for Inspection – HB 2536:

This bill requires an applicant for license, tag or permit to angle, take, and hunt or trap to attest that the applicant consents to inspection of the tag or permit, as well as any wildlife taken.

**Comment:** This bill takes the right to inspect language out of the Big Game Regulations and puts it into statute form. The bill has had one hearing at which time the issue of game check stations was discussed.

## Senate Bills

### Task Force on Natural Resource Agency Consolidation – SB 24:

This bill establishes a Task Force on Natural Resource Agency Consolidation. The bill directs the task force to study the benefits of abolishing or consolidating state agencies involved in the management of natural resources, including: Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of State Lands, Land Use Board of Appeals, Water Resources Department, Department of Agriculture, Columbia River Gorge Commission, Oregon Forest Resources Institute, Forestry Department, Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Marine Board, Parks and Recreation Department, and Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

**Comment:** This bill has had one hearing and has created a great deal of interest on both sides of the issue.

# OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

## APRIL 1

Spring bear season opens in West Blue Mountains and Western Oregon hunt areas

## APRIL 4

OHA Mid-Columbia youth turkey clinic,  
503-947-6019;

OHA chapter banquets:

Baker County 541-403-0402

Lake County 541-417-0512

Capitol 971-599-8715

Josephine County 541-761-1852

## APRIL 11-12

Statewide youth spring turkey hunt

## APRIL 15

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

## APRIL 18

OHA Chapter banquets:

Siuslaw 541-999-9222

Mid-Willamette 541-619-8393

## APRIL 25

OHA Pioneer Spring Youth Day 503-829-2912

OHA Chapter banquets:

Tioga 541-267-2577

Klamath 541-891-5301

## MAY 1-2

OHA Capitol Chapter Detroit powerline  
project 503-767-3657

## MAY 2

OHA Tioga Chapter Youth Day 541-267-2577

Tillamook Chapter banquet 503-842-2475

## MAY 2-3

OHA Redmond Chapter Bridge Creek  
project 541-233-3740

## MAY 3

OHA Tualatin Valley Barney Reservoir  
project 503-310-7575

## MAY 9-10

OHA Lake County guzzler project  
541-947-3231

## OHA approves \$30,000 in grants to fund projects

The OHA State Board of Directors in March approved grants for two major projects that will improve wildlife habitat in western Oregon. The proposals OHA approved included \$20,000 for the Pine Grass forage enhancement project in the Cascades near the southern Willamette Valley, and \$10,000 for prescribed burning in the Rogue Unit.

## Commission briefed on wolf population growth

Wolves are increasing in abundance and expanding in distribution across Oregon, the Fish and Wildlife Commission heard at its March meeting in Salem.



ODFW Wolf Coordinator Russ Morgan presented the 2014 Oregon Wolf Report. ODFW documented 77 known wolves in Oregon in 2014, including 26 pups that survived through the end of the year. Eight of Oregon's nine known wolf packs were "breeding pairs," meaning they had at least two pups born in spring that survived through the end of the year. Six new pairs of wolves were also documented in Oregon last year, Morgan said.

While 2014 saw fewer incidents of livestock depredation by wolves than the previous year, Morgan noted an increase in sheep depredation. He also discussed the management rules in effect since late January 2015 in the eastern third of Oregon (east of Hwy 395-78-95), where the state is in Phase II of its Wolf Management Plan.

OHA is poised to petition to delist wolves in Oregon pending an April review.

## ODFW considers buying 10,000 acres on Lower Deschutes River Canyon

In collaboration with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), ODFW is considering acquiring about 10,000 acres in the Lower Deschutes River Canyon in north central Oregon (Wasco County).

The property is known as the Lower Deschutes River Ranch. Its purchase by ODFW would add to



the existing 8,000-acre Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area and create 25,000 acres of contiguous wildlife habitat and public access on the west side of the Deschutes River.

The parcel contains several key Oregon Conservation Strategy habitats, including the easternmost remnant stand of oak woodlands left in Oregon. ODFW would work to protect and restore these habitats while also providing hunting, wildlife viewing and fishing opportunities to the public.

ODFW staff are working with TPL to establish a purchase and sale agreement for ODFW to purchase the land from TPL. A final agreement will require ODFW completion of state due diligence requirements, Fish and Wildlife Commission approval and legislative budget approval.

Funds for the purchase have been obtained through the TPL and multiple outside grant sources. ODFW would also use internal mitigation funds and Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program funds administered by US Fish and Wildlife Service.

OHA is supporting the acquisition.

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