



## OHA TRACKER APRIL 2016



APRIL 2016, DUANE DUNGANNON

# Wolf delisting, poaching penalties signed into law

**O**regon Governor Kate Brown on March 15 signed into law two legislative bills that will ratify the delisting of wolves in Oregon and increase penalties for poaching.

## HB 4040 Wolf Delisting Bill

House Bill 4040A ratifies into statute the recent decision by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to remove wolves from the state's threatened and endangered list in accordance with Oregon's Wolf Conservation Plan. Three environmental groups had filed suit against the Commission's action, but the new law will protect and uphold the Commission's decision.

"OHA wants to thank the legislature for passing this important bill and Governor Brown for signing it into law," said OHA Conservation Director Jim Akenson. "This new law will allow the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife more options for management of Oregon's growing wolf population moving forward."

In its letter urging Governor Brown to sign the bill, OHA underlined the need to continue with the Oregon Wolf Conservation Plan designed to manage Oregon's wolf population. OHA emphasized the need to get to phase three of the plan and the importance of following the direction of the wolf plan, which was developed with buy-in from many diverse stakeholders.

In addition, OHA noted that, contrary to some claims, delisting does not remove protections for Oregon wolves, which now number greater than 110 in the state and are growing at a 36-percent rate annually.

## HB 4046 Unlawful Take Penalties

Governor Brown also signed into law House Bill 4046, which increases penalties for deliberate acts of unlawfully taking or killing certain game wildlife, such as killing an animal out of season, without a license or with a prohibited weapon or in a prohibited manner. Killing a protected species, exceeding a bag limit or killing an animal while trespassing also can be considered poaching.

"OHA is adamantly opposed to poaching," said Akenson. "As the administrator of the Turn In Poachers (TIP)

*Despite the penalties currently in place, poaching continues to run rampant in Oregon.*

program that annually pays more than \$13,000 to informants in poaching cases, OHA has been a leader in the fight against poaching for more than three decades. However, despite the penalties currently in place, poaching continues to run rampant in Oregon. OHA supports HB 4046B as it increases penalties to create a deterrent to these crimes.

"HB 4046B gives law enforcement and our court system additional tools to address poaching of Oregon wildlife and will help deter this illegal activity by increasing the financial and criminal penalties for violating the illegal take laws."

OHA asked that language be added to the bill to draw a distinction between accidental harvest and deliberate acts of poaching. —AL ELKINS, OHA LOBBYIST

## OHA speaks on wolf panel

The Oregon Hunters Association appeared before the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission at the March Commission meeting in Salem to participate in a review of the Oregon Wolf Conservation Plan. OHA was a member of a panel along with representatives from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Oregon Cattlemen's Association and the Oregon Farm Bureau.

Also participating in the discussion was a panel made up of representatives from Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, and Oregon Wild. Three of these groups filed a court challenge to overturn the Commission's recent decision to delist wolves in Oregon.

"Once the wolf population objectives have been exceeded, the next round of planning will need to address hunting as a management tool, since wolves are considered a special-status mammal within the game mammal category," OHA Conservation Director Jim Akenson said during his presentation before the Commission.

—AL ELKINS, OHA LOBBYIST

See this week's Hunting Headlines at [www.oregonhunters.org](http://www.oregonhunters.org)

# OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

APRIL 1

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

APRIL 2

Youth turkey clinic, 503-947-6016;  
OHA chapter banquets:  
Baker County 541-523-6626  
Lake County 541-417-2329

APRIL 9-10

Statewide youth spring turkey hunt

APRIL 15

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

APRIL 16

OHA chapter banquet:  
Mid-Willamette 541-619-8393

APRIL 23

OHA chapter banquets:  
Klamath 541-882-9593  
Tioga 541-267-2577

APRIL 30

OHA chapter banquet:  
Tualatin Valley 503-646-4733;  
OHA Pioneer Chapter Youth Day,  
503-829-2912

MAY 6-7

OHA Capitol Chapter weekend powerline project; 503-767-3657

MAY 7

OHA Redmond Chapter Bridge Creek weekend project 541-233-3740;  
OHA Bend juniper cutting 541-847-0424;  
Lake County guzzler project 541-219-0614

MAY 14

OHA Tillamook banquet 503-842-2475;  
OHA chapter youth events:  
Rogue Valley 541-773-1587  
Tioga 541-267-2577  
OHA chapter projects:  
Tualatin Vly Tillamook Forest 503-407-2486;  
OHA Klamath weekend Hart Mountain  
541-884-5773;  
OHA Emerald Valley weekend Pine Grass  
541-729-0877

## OHA weighs in on wolves, wilderness and wildlife

OHA's recent conservation agenda has been dominated by wolves, wilderness and wildlife. February and March were busy again on the wolf front with a bill brought before the Legislature to ratify the wolf delisting decision made by the Fish and Wildlife Commission in November. OHA actively supported HB4040, which passed the House and Senate, and was signed by the Governor on March 15. OHA presented oral testimony at every opportunity and rallied members to send letters of support.

The next step with wolves is the five-year Wolf Plan revision process. OHA was invited to participate in a panel presentation to the Fish and Wildlife Commission on March 18 to express our concerns and recommended actions for Phase III of the pending plan, which is the management phase. OHA teamed with the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and the Oregon Farm Bureau. We each addressed different aspects but also blended our concerns. OHA stated a need for wolf cap (maximum) numbers, and that they should be tied to game species management objective numbers and combined with the occurrence of livestock depredation. OHA proposed that this management language connect hunting to ease problems in chronic livestock depredation areas.

### Public Land Designations

Land designation issues are burning like wildfires across the state, from the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument south of Ontario (2.5 million acres with 2.0 million of designated wilderness), to the proposed Ochoco National Recreation Area east of Prineville (312,000 acres total with 25,700 of proposed wilderness), to a possible Crater Lake Wilderness, with 500,000 acres proposed surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and most recently, a proposed 500,000-acre protected area called Douglas Fir National Monument – which includes the Santiam River watershed and parts of Linn and Marion Counties along the west side of the Cascades.

The groups pushing these proposals are trying to capitalize on the political moment when the out-going president

can use the American Antiquities Act of 1906 to make designations on federal lands. From the OHA perspective, and in accord with our adopted position statements, there are undoubtedly, portions of these areas that are worthy of wilderness consideration. Our issue is the sheer magnitude – taking a “broad-brush” approach to a complex issue.

In the Owyhee, OHA has teamed with other sportsmen's groups to present a much more reasonable alternative expressed in a joint letter. These views are being presented to state and federal lawmakers. The focus of this letter is to keep the Owyhee country as close to the way it is now as possible, and primarily in a multiple-use framework.

Another big consideration – in any of these places – is the will of local residents. The Malheur County Court asked voters what they thought of a National Monument designation in Owyhee, and 90 percent expressed opposition, with over 50 percent of the registered voters in that county participating.

OHA will continue to be an informed and wise voice that considers the best interests of hunting and other recreational opportunities for our membership.

### Big Game Management Objectives

On the wildlife front, OHA representatives were recently invited to participate on deer and elk management objective review committees hosted by ODFW district biologists. The recommendations made by OHA reps were either to maintain what we have now for numbers and bull-to-cow ratios or increase them.

For deer it was generally a case of setting them high, with hopes of getting back up to those better numbers that we saw in past years. OHA also addressed the problem of elk favoring private property. OHA is heading up a pilot project in the Chesnimnus Unit to try to remedy, or at least lessen, this distribution problem. This effort aims to improve elk hunting on public land. There might be some trade-offs with access versus opportunity, but we believe this can be accomplished in a reasonable fashion. The final product from these discussions will be presented to the Commission. —JIM AKENSON, OHA CONSERVATION DIRECTOR