

RECREATION
REPORT

Personal-use
mushroom
picking free
on national
forests

Personal-use mushroom picking is free on the Wallowa-Whitman, Umatilla and Malheur national forests and does not require a permit for people who pick, possess and transport less than 1 gallon of mushrooms in Oregon and fewer than 5 gallons in Washington.

These free mushrooms are only for personal consumption and cannot be sold, bartered, or given away.

To help slow the spread of COVID-19, supervisors of the three national forests in the Blue Mountains have decided not to issue any commercial permits this year.

Pikeminnow
reward fishery
opens May 11

PORTLAND — The 2020 Northern Pikeminnow Sport-Reward Fishery will start on May 11 and continue through Sept. 30 on the Columbia and Snake rivers.

The program, which pays anglers for every northern pikeminnow 9 inches or longer brought to a registration station, was delayed from its usual opening on May 1 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Anglers will receive \$5 for each pikeminnow up to 25 fish. Anglers who catch more will get \$6 per fish from numbers 26 through 200. Each fish above 200 is worth \$8. There are also tagged pikeminnows worth \$500 each. Northern pikeminnow are voracious eaters, consuming millions of young salmon and steelhead each year.

To register or for more information, go to www.pikeminnow.org

Northeast Oregon’s Bounty Of Spring Wildflowers



Lisa Britton / For EO Media Group

Balsamroot ↑

↓ Grass Widows



Lisa Britton / For EO Media Group

↓ Camas



Lisa Britton / For EO Media Group

We walked into the meadow and for a moment I wondered whether some noxious substance had been spilled across the otherwise sylvan scene. The light green expanse among the ponderosa pines in the hills north of Phillips Reservoir seemed to be stained by a sort of soft pink fuzz. It was almost as though a ground fog had formed in the meadow, albeit a curiously colorful fog.



ON THE TRAIL
JAYSON JACOBY

But once my eyes adjusted after a few seconds I realized the source of this illusion wasn’t a toxic accident, but purely the product of nature. The tinge was caused by a proliferation of wildflowers unlike any I’d seen before. And it was a single species that had

Bluebells →



Olivia Jacoby / For EO Media Group

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ODFW addresses hunters’
coronavirus concerns

SALEM — Controlled hunt applications are still due May 15, but the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) recognizes some hunters may be concerned about applying due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While ODFW does not anticipate COVID-19-related effects on fall big game hunting seasons, the agency already has a process to restore preference points if hunters cannot go hunting. “We want to reassure hunters that we already have processes in place to deal with situations when hunters cannot hunt,” said ODFW Director Curt Melcher. “You will not lose your hard-earned preference points if you are unable to go hunting.” ODFW will reinstate preference points when a significant portion of a hunt area is closed for a large part of the season, which has happened due to wildfires in the past. Points can also be reinstated when someone can’t go on their hunt due to a serious illness or injury. (License and application fees are not refunded as hunters keep their

points, get one additional point for the current year; and may use their license later in the year.) “What’s happened with the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented,” Melcher said. “We cannot predict what the situation will look like in the fall so we understand some hunters have reservations about hunting this year.” Hunters who are considering just getting a preference point this year can wait to make that decision. Preference points can be purchased from July 1 until Nov. 30 for any hunter who chooses not to apply for a controlled hunt by May 15. Nonresidents may also apply for fall controlled hunts. Oregon resumed allowing nonresidents to hunt and fish in the state on May 5, though clamming and crabbing remain closed to nonresidents for now. For hunters who want to apply for a tag this year, apply online at <https://odfw.huntfishoregon.com/login>.

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Great Gray Owl Watches Over Her Brood



Photo and caption by Jim Ward

A mother great gray owl guards her youngster from 100 feet up. The birds are not plentiful anywhere in the U.S., but there is a viable population in the Spring Creek area west of La Grande. The birds don’t make any attempt to build their own nest, but will use abandoned hawk nests, the broken off top of a large tree and even artificial nesting platforms, if erected in suitable habitat.