



## How to smoke a Christmas turkey

Gary Lewis/Contributed Photo

In Eastern Oregon, fall turkey tags may be purchased through the end of the season. After the first of December, turkeys may still be hunted on private lands with permission.



Gary Lewis/Contributed Photo

Even if hunting with a familiar gun and a proven load it makes sense to go to the range and confirm the pattern and effective range including holdovers at 30, 40 and 50 yards.



**GARY LEWIS**  
ON THE TRAIL

The recipe is as follows: Pour 100 grains of powder down the barrel, load a plastic cup with 1 1/4 ounces of lead and seal it with a fiber wad. A shotgun primer goes under the hammer.

In my possible bag, I keep the plastic shot cups pre-made, ready to go for quick reloads. Quick reloads are important.

One of my favorite shotguns is an Austin & Halleck bolt-action muzzle-loader designed by my friend Ray Crow. I call it Old Crow.

Once a year I take Old Crow out for a walk. Sometimes for grouse, sometimes for pheasant, but the most memorable hunts are for wild turkey.

At zero-dark-thirty we sped south, fueled on coffee, bacon and eggs. My friend Troy Rodakowski had a line on a flock of turkeys that were roosting on timber company land and feeding in a friend's fields.

When the sun lit the eastern horizon, a thin orange line beneath the brooding clouds, the rain began to pour. We pulled into the driveway where we were greeted by the landowner wearing a slicker. He indicated we could hunt anywhere on the

property, but for best results we should use the barn as cover and take a peek into the canyon first. Never one to second-guess a host, I agreed. Troy was a bit skeptical of our chances. We couldn't hear any birds and, in the downpour, we couldn't see any birds.

It was 80 yards through the rain to the barn then we had to sneak alongside the tractor and peer into the canyon.

A flock of 20 birds were spread out along the far side of the canyon. Hens and jakes. I picked out a jake standing still, shouldered the gun, put the bead above the bird's head and squeezed.

Click. I quickly threw the bolt and squeezed again. Click. A bad cap.

In my pocket I had another cap. I pulled the dimpled one off and put the new one on. Now the turkeys were nervous, exiting stage left. One lingered. A jake craned his neck for a better look.

Boom.

One of the things I always forget is the big white curtain of smoke the muzzleloader throws up. I couldn't see whether I'd hit the bird or not. The rest of the flock legged it up the hill and out of sight.

Forty-two yards is a long shot for a muzzleloader. We had to chase down my trophy and finish it off. It was a young gobbler, perhaps an 11-pound bird.

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## ODFW ramps up monitoring for elk, deer disease

### Chronic Wasting Disease, never confirmed in Oregon, was found in two deer in Idaho in October

EO Media Group

Oregon wildlife officials are expanding their surveillance for a disease that can kill deer and elk after the illness was confirmed in two mule deer killed by hunters in Idaho near the Oregon border in October.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has been testing deer and elk for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) for more than two decades.

Since the late 1990s the agency has tested more than 23,000 samples from deer and elk harvested by hunters or hit by vehicles. CWD has never been detected in Oregon.

But the level of concern among ODFW officials rose recently when Idaho Fish and Game confirmed CWD in deer killed by hunters within 30 miles of

the Snake River, the border between the two states.

It was the first confirmed incidence of CWD in Idaho. The two infected deer, both bucks, were killed in the Slate Creek drainage near Lucile, Idaho, which is along the Salmon River north of Riggins.

The Idaho agency has also increased its surveillance, including scheduling a special hunt in that area, according to ODFW.

ODFW is asking hunters, those who salvage roadkilled deer and elk, and others to help the agency monitor local herds for CWD.

"The news of an Idaho detection is alarming, but we have been working for years to keep CWD out of Oregon and preparing to respond if it is detected here," said Colin Gillin,

ODFW's state wildlife veterinarian.

ODFW has emailed tag holders for ongoing and upcoming deer and elk hunts in some Northeastern Oregon units requesting they provide parts from their deer or elk for testing if they are successful on the hunt. Barrels placed at three ODFW offices will make it easier for these hunters to submit a head for sampling by biologists and veterinarians.

The barrels are at:

- Grande Ronde Watershed District office, 107 20th St., La Grande
- Baker City field office, 2995 Hughes Lane
- Enterprise field office, 64945 Alder Slope Road

Starting in 2022, it will be mandatory for anyone transporting wildlife carcasses or parts to stop at a check station if they encounter one and to allow their animal to be tested.

A cervid parts import ban also remains in effect: Oregon residents or those traveling through who are returning from hunting out of state may not bring in

certain cervid (deer, elk, and moose) parts that contain brain or spinal cord tissues as these are known to be tissues of CWD concentration in infected animals. Several hunters have been cited for violating this regulation, most recently in Klamath County. Oregonians who hunt in other states also need to be aware of and follow that state's regulations for CWD.

**What is CWD?**  
CWD is a fatal neurological disease found in the North American cervid family, which includes deer, elk and moose. A specific type of prion protein is the cause of the disease, which damages the animal's brain and causes progressive loss of body condition, behavioral changes, excessive salivation and eventual death. It was first identified among captive deer at a research facility in Colorado in 1967 according to the CWD Alliance.

The prions that cause the disease can last a long time in the environment, potentially re-infecting new animals that come in contact

with infected soil or other surfaces. It is found in saliva, urine and feces and contaminates soil in the animal's habitat. Because it can be passed in urine, the Oregon legislature banned the use or possession of commercial scent lures containing cervid urine beginning in 2020.

CWD is only considered a disease risk to cervids. There is no evidence it can spread to people through contact with a sick animal or consumption of meat from a sick animal. However, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and state fish and wildlife agencies, do not recommend the consumption of meat from any sick or infected animals, including CWD.

The disease does not spread to livestock.

**What are the symptoms of CWD in deer and elk?**

In most cases, it is difficult to determine if an animal has CWD until it is tested, because the disease takes months to several years to cause clinical

symptoms and eventual death.

Deer and elk with late-stage CWD suffer a loss of bodily functions which causes abnormal behaviors including:

- Staggering or standing with very poor posture or an exaggerated wide posture (legs in very wide stance)
- Carrying head and ears lowered
- Emaciated body condition (thus the term "wasting" disease)
- Consuming large amounts of water and staying near water
- Drooling or excessive salivation

Other diseases or parasites present in deer and elk can cause similar symptoms, especially in chronic cases. More information at [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/health\\_program/](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/health_program/).

**What should I do if I see an animal I think might have CWD?**

Call your nearest ODFW office or contact ODFW's Wildlife Health

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