

Hunting For Hare Habitat

Snow leads to a surprising discovery



BRAD TRUMBO
UPLAND PURSUITS

Six feet of snow piled atop the Forest Service gate that separated us from our mountaintop destination – another 30-minute climb on a summer day. I had snowshoes in the back, but it would have taken the rest of the day to make the hike. Walking to the rig behind me, I peered through the window at friends Doug and Bob.

“What do ya think? Chain up and give it hell?” I asked with a grin. “You first!” Doug said through a nervous chuckle.

We had talked of chasing snowshoe hares since Christmas, and about a week before the season closed in mid-March, we finally pulled together a late morning hunt. Faced with the wall of snow standing between us and our original plans, “Plan B” took a different approach, leaving the deep forest, circumventing a mountain range and coming into the creek bottom in the next drainage over. Bob didn’t have snowshoes, so we played it safe by



Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

The beauty of a snowshoe hare makes it a difficult animal to hunt, but the table fare is equally difficult to deny.

staying low in elevation, but I was skeptical of our hare-finding prospects.

The snow had mostly melted in the creek bottom, save for the toe of the eastern slope which contained the right mix of ferns, ninebark, hawthorn, serviceberry, rose, and raspberry, packed tight against a steep hillside that was punctuated with eroded basalt bands and outcrops. I had only hunted the area during grouse season and the dogs had never moved a hare to my knowledge. The likelihood of jumping one was entirely unknown and unexpected by the three of us.



Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

Snowshoe hares have impressively large hind feet to distribute their weight in deep snow.

See, Hares/Page B2

Bear, cougar hunters required to check in animals

Rule, suspended during pandemic, also affects people who salvage roadkilled deer or elk

EO Media Group

SALEM — After a nearly two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, a state rule that requires bear and cougar hunters who harvest an animal to have it checked at an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) office is back in effect starting Saturday, March 19.

The rule, which dates back many years, requires successful cougar and bear hunters to bring certain parts of the animal to an ODFW office within 10 days of harvest. The requirement was suspended during the pandemic, as ODFW offices were closed to the public.

Although the check-in rule has resumed, ODFW offices remain closed to the public and aren’t expected to reopen until May 1 at the earlier, so hunters will need to set up an appointment.

A list of field offices is available at <https://myodfw.com/contact-us>.

For cougars, hunters are required to bring the hide with skull, and proof of sex attached. For female cougars, the reproductive tract must be brought to the check-in as well.

Bear hunters are required to bring only the skull (although ODFW also asks hunters to voluntarily include the reproductive tract for research purposes).

If a cougar or bear skull has been frozen, it must be thawed prior to the appointment, and hunters should prop open the animal’s mouth to make it easier for ODFW biologists to extract a tooth. ODFW uses the teeth to gauge the animal’s age, information that helps the agency estimate bear and cougar populations.

Hunters also will need to show their license and tag during the appointment, and report the unit where they killed the animal.

Cougar season is open year round in Oregon.

The spring bear season opens April 1.

Roadkill salvage

Also starting on Saturday, March 19, residents who salvage a roadkilled deer or elk will have to call the nearest ODFW office and schedule an appointment to have the animal checked and turn in the head (including antlers, if it’s a buck or bull).

The appointments are required within five business days of collecting the carcass.

The purpose is to allow ODFW biologists to take tissue samples that are tested for Chronic Wasting Disease, a potentially devastating affliction that has not been confirmed in Oregon.

Deer with the disease were found in Idaho last year within 30 miles of the Oregon border, however.

Oregon’s roadkill salvage rule took effect Jan. 1, 2019.

The law requires people to fill out a permit within 24 hours of salvaging the deer or elk. That can be done online. The permit includes details such as the person’s name, where and when the animal was salvaged, and whether the person who collected the meat also struck the animal.

It is legal, in certain cases, for a person to salvage a deer or elk that another driver struck. That’s lawful so long as the animal is dead and doesn’t have to be put out of its misery with a gunshot.

But if a driver hits and wounds an animal, then has to euthanize it, only the driver can legally salvage the meat. In those cases the driver is also required to immediately notify law enforcement.

The driver who hits an animal can also salvage the meat if a police officer dispatches a wounded animal.

More information is available at <https://myodfw.com/articles/roadkill-salvage-permits>.

The most magical of kids camps



TOM CLAYCOMB
BASE CAMP

I first became acquainted with the Scooters Youth Hunting Camp (SYHC) back in 2004 or 2005. My wife came home from school one day and told me that she’d signed up two kids in her school in some kind of youth hunting camp and that I had to take them to it. What?!

The camp is held the first Saturday in May every year. That is right in the middle of primo bear and whistle pig hunting and crappie fishing ... and turkey hunting ... and morel mushroom picking season!

I don’t want to sound self-centered but I was stuck no matter how much I whined. So, I dutifully took the two young boys. Little did I know that I would end up liking the camp better than they did. In fact, I’ve been a volunteer ever since. And the two young boys have grown up to be good young men and I later got to take them both on their first deer hunt.

I conduct 40 to 60 outdoor seminars/speaking engagements per year all the way from Texas to Alaska. I had five in Vegas in January alone and yet the SYHC is the coolest deal that I do all year. Founder Scott originally did it to help single moms. He couldn’t deny kids with two parents to come but his heart was originally to help single moms in getting their kids in the outdoors to help them stay out of trouble.

In the beginning kids mailed in applications and all were accepted. I think in those days we had about 140 kids. Finally, it kept growing until we had to hire someone to do a call-in registration. Last year it filled up with 250 kids in 47 seconds. It is the coolest deal in the world.

Here’s the format. The kids show up and sign in and are divided into six groups. To begin we meet and say the Pledge of Allegiance, a local pastor says a prayer and then group one goes to the first station, group two to the second one and so on.

There are six stations: trap shooting, .22 range, blackpower range, archery



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo

The Scooters Youth Hunting Camp at Emmett, Idaho, gives youth a chance to learn a variety of outdoor skills.

range, survival range, gun cleaning/knife sharpening.

After 45 minutes, all groups reconvene in the meeting area and a seminar is put on by a Prostaff member. They are great seminars and I always learn a lot at them. When the seminar is over the kids rotate to their next station.

At lunch time we break and eat lunch that has been prepared by a group of volunteers. What makes the camp really cool is that due to generous local businesses the food and snacks are all donated and cooked by volunteers so they eat for free. After lunch the kids rotate to their next station.

After the kids have hit all of the stations they reconvene in the meeting area for Scott’s favorite event — the kids drawing. Due to local businesses and major companies donating items, every kid draws a gift. And I meant nice gifts. Companies and local businesses are over-the-top generous. Companies like Knives of Alaska, Smith’s Consumer Products, Spyderco, Swab-its, Otis, Umarex Air-guns, Swab-its and the list goes on and on.

All of the kids get to go free due to the generosity of local and national businesses and volunteer help. Where the heck was the SYHC at when I was a kid?!

Here are a few general rules but check the website below to ensure that you don’t miss the registration!

- Registration opens April 1, 2022 at 10 a.m. Mountain time.
- Kids must be 9-16 years old.
- Camp will be held rain or shine.

Nothing short of the rapture will stop the camp from occurring.

- The camp will be photographed by various media sources. If you do not want your kid filmed, then DO NOT attend.
- it will take place in Emmett, Idaho, at the Gem County Rod and Gun Club.

(OK, I hate to be juvenile, but here’s the highlight for me. HeBrews coffee in Emmett sets up a doughnut trailer at start-up. Let’s just say, I eat more than my fair share of sugar/cinnamon doughnuts.)

More information is available here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-scooters-youth-hunting-camp-tickets-153236060181>