



Two motor vehicle crashes kept Illinois Valley Fire District (IVFD) and American Medical Response (AMR) busy. A two-car crash (above) was reported Saturday afternoon, Sept. 29 at I.V. Building Supply on Caves Hwy. Drivers were identified as Padraic N. Cotta, 21, of Selma; and Kimberly Christophersen, 41, of Cave Junction. She was

treated and released at Three Rivers Community Hospital. Personnel also responded Friday afternoon, Sept. 28 to a single-vehicle crash near milepost 38 on Hwy. 199. A woman from California was transported by AMR. (Top, left photo by IVN; photo top, right by Dale & Elaine Sandberg, IVFD Media Dept.)



Fire season rained out, says state forestry agency

An end to the 2007 fire season was declared Monday, Oct. 1 by Oregon Dept. of Forestry (ODF) Southwestern Oregon District.

The declaration affects state, private, county and Bureau of Land Manage-

ment forestland in Josephine and Jackson counties. Current and predicted rainfall is sufficient to lower the public-use fire danger level to “Low,” said ODF.

All public-use restrictions and fire season-related

closures on industrial operations were removed as of 8 a.m. Oct. 1.

Debris pile and barrel burning now is allowed on ODF-protected land. However, open burning is regulated for air quality in

all of Jackson County, and in the Rogue Basin Open Burn Control Area in Josephine County. Before starting a burn, phone the open burning advisory number for Josephine County at 476-9663.

Some fire agencies have additional restrictions, or may require a burning permit. ODF recommends phoning Illinois Valley Fire District’s information line at 592-2121 before burning.

Fire season for the S.W. Oregon District began June 11 and lasted 113 days, 30 days shorter than average. As of Sept. 24, 259 fires occurred on ODF-protected lands and blackened 720 acres of vegetation.

Fire season information is posted at www.swofire.oregon.gov. Information also is available at 474-3152.

Elk, black bear seasons previewed

(Editor’s Note: The following, by Jim Yuskavitch, is reprinted from *Oregon Hunter* magazine through the courtesy of the Oregon Hunters Association).

Elk

Elk are looking good in the High Desert this year.

“The numbers are stable and we had calf recruitment in the mid-40s per 100 cows,” says Ron Garner. “That’s very good. There will be a lot of yearling bulls.” The Silvies, Malheur River and High Desert units all look promis-

ing. He believes that there are still plenty of elk on national forest lands, but with logging reductions they are more evenly distributed across the landscape than in past years and you are less likely to find elk “hotspots.”

Lum reports stable elk populations in his area of Southwestern Oregon, with higher numbers in the Tioga unit.

In Roosevelt elk country, Dave Nuzum reports that population numbers are at management objectives in all three of his units that include Saddle Mountain, Trask and Wilson.

“All the units have good bull ratios and good numbers of adult bulls,” he says. “We saw lots of branched bulls while we were doing our surveys.”

Hunters, he advises, need to do some serious pre-season scouting to locate the different herds and learn their travel patterns.

Pronghorn

For the most part, pronghorn are a bright spot on Oregon’s big game roundup. Southeast Oregon populations remain high, with a herd of between 6,000 to 10,000 animals.

But Garner warns that a slow population decline is anticipated at least while coyote populations remain high. He notes that jackrabbit numbers are up now, which tends to raise coyote numbers as well. Eventually the hares’ numbers will drop, as will the coyotes and the threat they pose to antelope along with them.

He says that hunters who manage to draw an antelope tag this season can count on a typical high-quality hunt that the region is known for.

Brian Ferry is seeing good numbers of pronghorn in the Maury and Ochoco units and hunting opportunities should be favorable. Because a drier year is anticipated, hunting waterholes will be key. He notes, however, that conflicts have arisen in the past when there have not been enough waterholes to accommodate every hunter who wants to stake one out.

Bighorn Sheep

How bighorn sheep are faring depends on what herd you are talking about. By and large, bighorns in the south-east are doing pretty well with one additional tag slated for the Catlow herd for a total of two, according to Garner.

Bighorn herds in the Ea-

gle Cap Wilderness, Wenaha River drainage, lower Imnaha River drainage and Hells Canyon total about 600 animals and are mostly doing fine, with the exception of Hells Canyon where wild sheep are being exposed to deadly pasturella from contact with domestic goats that are being used for noxious weed control.

Pat Matthews, assistant district biologist out of Enterprise says that tag numbers will be the same as last year adding, “We have high hunter success rates with our big-horn hunts.”

Black Bear

“We have folks who specifically target bear in the spring and fall,” says Dave Nuzum, of the North Coast. “They do a lot of patterning and selective calling and it is very effective.”

He doesn’t have as many bears in his district as the mid- and south coast areas, but numbers are still good.

Southwest is where some of the state’s highest bear numbers can be found and Tod Lum suggests hunters concentrate on open grassy slopes in spring, and berry patches and orchards in the fall.

On coastal streams, hunters can sometimes find high concentrations of bears where salmon are spawning.

In the Coast Range and Cascades, Wolfer suggests that fall bear hunters follow the berry crops, just as the



bears do, beginning with blackberries, and then moving to the higher elevations for the huckleberry crop. He reports strong bear populations throughout his district.

Northeast Oregon has very respectable bear numbers as well. Cadwell says that spring bears in his region are on south slopes feeding on grass and wild onions until other food becomes available. In the fall, in addition to berry patches and orchards, areas with torn-up downed logs where bears are grubbing for carpenter ants can be productive locations.

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ing for elk this season.

According to Jim Cadwell, the Starkey Wildlife Management Unit is below management objectives, but two-thirds of its 11 bulls per 100 cows are branched bulls.

“If you can get a tag for the Starkey Unit there will be good opportunities for branched bulls,” says Cadwell, although he notes that this is a difficult unit for obtaining tags. Cadwell also mentions that, due to high levels of cougar predation that are affecting the core elk research herd in the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range, no tags for the Youth “First Time” Hunt will be offered this year in that unit.

“Elk look good,” says Ferry of Ochoco area herds. “They were in great shape after the winter.” He also reports that calf recruitment was pretty favorable at 52 to 60 per 100 cows. “It’s shaping up to be a pretty good year,” he said.

He also emphasizes the importance of advance scouting for bow hunters and rifle hunters.

Wolfer notes strong bull ratios in the McKenzie and South Santiam units. At 14 to 15 bulls per 100 cows, it is well over the management objective of 10-to-100. He also notes that more elk are moving onto private timberlands where logging is occur-