

Waste not, want not

Idahoans embrace roadkill law

By ERIC BARKER
Lewiston Tribune

LEWISTON, Idaho — You may hear little of it, but Idaho's nearly 4-year-old law that allows people to salvage roadkill is surprisingly popular.

According to an online database maintained by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, more than 4,800 animals have been salvaged from the state's roadways since the law took effect. That includes 1,996 whitetail deer, 1,405 mule deer, 798 elk and 308 moose.

Salvaging roadkill is most popular in the Panhandle region, where 1,803 animals have been recovered. The Southwest region comes in second with 634 salvages, the Clearwater region is third at 521, followed by the Magic Valley with 480, upper Snake 478, Southeast 447 and the Salmon Region with 356.

"There is lots of folks taking advantage of it all across the state in all of the regions on all of the highways," said Gregg Servheen of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game at Boise. "We have like 31,000 roadkill records (in the database). Of those, maybe we have 15 percent that are salvaged."

But that doesn't mean 15 percent of animals killed on highways are salvaged. The database is an incomplete record of road-killed animals that dates back decades. Servheen said it doesn't begin to represent the true toll highways and roads take on



In this undated photo, a whitetail deer pauses while crossing State Highway 11 near Pierce, Idaho, before safely making it across. A 2012 law lets people salvage less fortunate animals, those killed on Idaho's roads and highways. According to an online database maintained by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, more than 4,800 animals have been salvaged from the state's roadways since the law took effect.

wildlife.

The database is maintained by employees of the Idaho Transportation Department and Idaho Department of Fish and Game who try to keep track of roadkill they remove. Since 2012, it includes information from those who salvage roadkill. According to the roadkill salvage law, people who pick up animals must submit a report within 24 hours and receive a salvage permit within 72 hours.

The simplest way to do that is to visit <https://idfg.idaho.gov/species/roadkill/add>. Those who report salvages by visiting the

website and filling out a form can print a salvage permit. No other action is required. People can also report roadkill without salvaging by visiting the website.

Those who report by phone are mailed a permit.

People who salvage can take as little or as much of the animals as they wish. For example, they can take just the antlers. Or they can take just the backstraps. If hunters were to do that with a deer or elk they shot, they would face prosecution for wasting a game animal. But roadkill is different.

"It's not a question of waste,"

Servheen said. "It's not a legal take, it was an accident take via collision."

A list of animals that are legal to salvage is available at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/species/roadkill/salvage/list>.

Mark Carson, conservation supervisor for the Clearwater region at Lewiston, said there was some worry among conservation officers when the law first hit the books.

"They were concerned guys were going to be covering illegal critters and say it's roadkill. That may be occurring some places, but

it's certainly not widespread," he said. "It puts thousands of pounds of game meat back on the table instead of on the side of the road, which is a really good thing."

The reports are viewable by anybody who visits the website, although names are not displayed. Some reporters leave scant information. Others provide details. For example, consider this report from Jan. 14 regarding a whitetail deer hit by a car on Highway 54 near Farragut State Park:

"Normal whitetail deer color, young of the year, was still alive when first seen. I went home to get a hammer to kill it, but deer was dead when I returned. Deer had 2 broken legs and a broken hip."

Or this snippet from a Feb. 14 report of a salvaged elk on U.S. Highway 26 near Ririe in the upper Snake region: "3 dead someone salvaged 1 I salvaged 1 the other was pretty much toast."

Servheen said the salvage rule is also helping biologists track where animal/vehicle collisions are happening and in places where it is frequent to explore possible solutions.

Wildlife underpasses have been constructed outside of Boise, near Silverwood north of Coeur d'Alene and north of Copeland in the Panhandle to try to protect both wildlife and drivers. North of Moscow, a moose alert sign flashes when an animal is sensed crossing U.S. Highway 95.

"We have made some tentative work toward trying to address the problem, but we have a long way to go to help driver safety and to keep our wildlife and drivers safe," Servheen said.

PENDLETON



Photo contributed by Tom Campbell

Tim Campbell, Darin Nelson and Rick Ella, with the Pendleton chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, build an enclosed fence around an aspen grove on the North Fork John Day Ranger District of the Umatilla National Forest.

Elk Foundation hosts banquet

RMEF's 2016 fundraiser lands on March 19

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

The Pendleton chapter of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation will host its biggest fundraiser of the year, the 29th annual Big Game Banquet, on Saturday, March 19 at the Pendleton Convention Center.

Last year's banquet brought in just less than \$50,000, said Tim Campbell, the local chapter chairman. That was good enough to place Pendleton in the top 10 of all Oregon RMEF chapters across the state.

"We continue to experience a significant amount of local support," Campbell said.

Money raised by the foundation goes toward research, outreach and habitat improvements that benefit not only elk, but all wildlife in the area, Campbell said. The RMEF collaborates locally with counties, tribes and the Forest Service on a range of projects, such as the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative that celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2015.

And, as members have proven on multiple occasions, they aren't afraid to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty.

About 15-20 volunteers pitched in last May to build fences around aspen groves on the North Fork John Day Ranger District of the Umatilla National Forest, Campbell said.

Forest employees had previously done a controlled burn to improve forage conditions, and fences were needed to keep elk away from the young aspens and allow them to grow.

Members camped two nights in the woods between Heppner and Ukiah, and Campbell figures they fenced roughly 20 acres of trees.

"We made a weekend out of it," he said. "It was a good time for a great cause."

Later in the fall, the foundation again partnered with the North Fork John Day District to clear roughly three miles of trail leading into the wilderness south of Ukiah.

"It was a good time for a great cause."

— Tim Campbell,
Chairman of the Rocky Mountain Elk
Foundation's Pendleton chapter

Because it was a designated wilderness area, Campbell said all the work had to be done with hand tools — no chainsaws allowed.

By the next day, people were already using the trail again, Campbell said.

"We ran into some archery hunters who had avoided that trail because it was so overgrown," he said. "Almost immediately, there was traffic on that trail."

The foundation already has plans to get back to work on the Umatilla National Forest in 2016, partnering with Backcountry Hunters and Anglers on a project June 4-5 near Ukiah. Members also plan to head out later in June to Enterprise, where they will work with range management staff on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest along Salt Creek summit.

Campbell stressed the important role these partnerships play in getting projects done with limited resources and manpower.

"I think it's crucial," he said. "You have to put the politics aside and focus on what's really needed."

In Oregon alone, the RMEF and partners have completed 821 conservation and outreach projects with a combined value of nearly \$55 million. The projects have protected or enhanced 783,907 acres of habitat and opened public access to another 28,463 acres.

"The projects we're working on, it's an opportunity for the average guy to go out and make a difference," Campbell said.

Doors for the Pendleton Big Game Banquet open at 4:30 p.m. For more information or to buy tickets, visit www.events.rmef.org or call Marla Campbell at 541-379-0488.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

BRIEFLY

Kids now need fishing, hunting license at 12

East Oregonian

As families venture out into the outdoors this spring, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reminds parents that youths aged 12 to 17 need a license if they plan to hunt, fish or shellfish.

Although fishing now requires a license two years earlier than in the past — at age 12 instead of age 14 — the cost of the license is significantly less than it was before. Now a combination youth hunting/fishing/shellfishing license costs just \$5 more. Youngsters can also purchase a tag that will allow them to catch salmon, steelhead, sturgeon and halibut. That cost \$41.75 last year, a cost reduction of 64 percent.

The youth license was developed to simplify the youth license requirements for hunting and fishing. "There was way too much complexity involved for parents to get hunting and fishing licenses for their kids," Rick Hargrave, administrator of ODFW's Information and Education Division said. "We removed those barriers and came up with a single, significantly discounted, youth combination license for kids 12-17."

There is no distinction in the fee structure between resident and nonresident youths; they pay the same for hunting/fishing licenses and tags.

U.S. seeks end to Yellowstone grizzly protections

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The federal government is proposing to lift threatened-species protections for hundreds of Yellowstone-area grizzlies, opening the door to future hunts for the fearsome bears across parts of three states for the first time since the 1970s.

The Associated Press obtained details of the proposal in advance of a planned Thursday announcement. It caps a four-decade, government-sponsored effort to rebuild the grizzly population and follows the lifting of protections in recent years for more than a dozen other species, including the gray wolf, brown pelican and flying squirrel.

Hunting within Yellowstone National Park

would still be prohibited. But the proposal could allow animals to be taken in surrounding parts of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

"By the time the curtain closes on the Obama administration, we are on track to have delisted more species due to recovery than all previous administrations combined," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe told the AP. "We've done that because of several decades of hard work, like with the grizzly bear."

Grizzlies once roamed much of North America and came to symbolize the continent's untamed wilderness. Hunters and trappers had nearly wiped them out across most of the Lower 48 states by the late 1800s.

A final decision on the proposal is due within a year. It could come sooner if state wildlife commissioners act quickly to adopt rules on how much hunting is allowed. Those rules are not mandatory under the federal proposal, federal officials said.

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock told the AP that the bear population would be responsibly managed by state wildlife officials. The Democrat said if a public hunt for the animals is pursued, it could be done in a way that avoids killing bears that live on the periphery of Yellowstone National Park.

Bighorn protection plan in Idaho upheld by federal court

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — A ruling on Wednesday by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the reduction of domestic sheep grazing in Payette National Forest in Idaho by about 70 percent to protect bighorn sheep from diseases.

The three-judge panel said the U.S. Forest Service had met the requirements of federal law in deciding to

reduce sheep grazing in the area.

The Idaho Wool Growers Association, American Sheep Industry Association and other groups joined several Idaho sheep ranchers in filing the lawsuit in 2012.

The move came two years after the Forest Service announced its bighorn sheep protection plan that limited domestic sheep grazing.

In 2014, a federal judge for the District of Idaho ruled against the domestic sheep growers. The appeals court upheld that decision.

Barry Duellke, president of the Idaho Wool Growers Association, said he hadn't seen the latest ruling and couldn't comment.

SKI REPORT

Spout Springs
Tollgate, Ore.
CLOSED
May re-open this season, needs more snow.

Anthony Lakes
North Powder, Ore.
New snow: 2"
Base depth: 67"
Conditions/events:
Spring skiing conditions, good coverage remains. Celebrating Snow Blast 2016 on Saturday.

Ski Bluewood
Dayton, Wash.
New snow: None
Base depth: 69"
Conditions: Machine groomed, spring conditions

Ski Fergi
Joseph, Ore.
New snow: None
Base depth: 26"
Conditions/events:
Kitchen in the lodge.

Mt. Hood Meadows
Government Camp, Ore.
None
Base: 98"
Conditions: Packed powder and hardpack on the groom. Off the groom there's hardpack and moguls down low with fresh snow on top at higher elevations.

Anthony Lakes
SAME AS IT EVER WAS
Spring Break Camp for Kids
March 21 - March 25
Five-consecutive days of skiing/riding for 7-18 year olds for just \$80!
Space is limited, register at www.AnthonyLakes.com

SPOUT SPRINGS
SKI AREA
Friday: 5 pm to 9 pm
Saturday: 9 am to 9 pm
Sunday: 9 am to 4 pm
All Holidays: 9 am to 4 pm
Night skiing starts January 1st and is Friday 5 pm - 9 pm & Saturday 5 pm - 9 pm