

# Pilot Rock man's last pronghorn is a trophy

By **TIM TRAINOR**  
East Oregonian

On the first day of pronghorn season, and with a tag in his back pocket, Doug Holcomb saw a herd of the animals about 900 yards away. His son said to go after them.

For the 76-year-old Pilot Rock man, that was easier said than done. "I had to crawl about 700 yards to get into range," he said. "My knees don't work that well anymore."

Doug and his son Jeff were "60 miles away from anywhere," along the western edge of the Owyhee Unit where Doug had drawn. It was August 13, opening day for pronghorn season, and they had parked their truck and motorcycle near the only tree they could see. It was the first time since the early 1980s that Doug had drawn a pronghorn tag and had the opportunity to shoot an animal of either sex.

It took about 90 minutes to cover the 700 yards, Doug putting forearm in front of forearm and keeping his backside beneath two feet of sagebrush cover. The ground was covered in thorns and hard rock, making the traveling hard and slow. "I was wearing long pants but it didn't help none," Holcomb said.

"He's still got cuts," said his wife Tedde.

The Army crawl is an oft-employed tactic for pronghorn hunting. The animals are well known to



Doug Holcomb of Pilot Rock poses with the trophy-quality pronghorn he killed on opening day in the Owyhee Unit.

appreciate the wide open prairies, where trees and other natural cover are few and far between.

But hunters appreciate the challenge of trying to close the gap, and also the fact that you can hunt all day and always have animals in sight. They may be a mile or two or ten away, but there they are.

In the American West, pronghorn are often called antelope, although they are not antelope. Their closest cousins are giraffes and okapi.

Many hunters try to appeal to their curiosity instead of trying to stay out of their impressive eyesight. A fluttering rag can be used to attract faraway herds, and

a colorful vehicle can be used to the hunter's advantage, rather than causing the animals to run.

After Doug Holcomb had crawled his way within range of his .243 Winchester, he slowly sat up to find the herd still bedded down nearby. He needed to raise them, but not spook them.

So he started to whistle. Quietly, then louder. A few animals stood up and scanned for the source of the noise, but not the big buck that Holcomb had seen on his way in. After awhile, Holcomb barked and yipped his best coyote imitation, and that got the whole herd's attention. The buck stood broadside, offering an excellent shot. But Holcomb was on his rump with no good support, and the first shot he touched off flew past. The animals sped off in all directions. Doug fired and missed again.

At full speed, pronghorn can run up to 55 mph, the fastest land animals in the Americas. His third shot had the speed timed right, however, and Doug said the big buck was hit, began to slow and eventually fell.

It was a large, trophy-quality animal, its horns measuring 15 inches in length. The Holcombs said they got about 30 pounds of meat off the animal, which they've turned into steaks, sausage and burgers.

Holcomb said this will be his last pronghorn hunt. If it takes another decade or more to draw a tag, he doubts he'll be up for doing the requisite crawling.

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## BLOOMIN' BLUES



Photo courtesy Bruce Barnes

### Shrubby Cinquefoil

## Shrubby cinquefoil a fine back yard bush

By **BRUCE BARNES**  
For the East Oregonian

**Name:** Shrubby Cinquefoil  
**Scientific name:** *Dasiphora fruticosa*

The plant in this article is an attractive native shrub that is found at most elevations throughout western North America to the Rockies, and across southeast Canada and northeast U.S.

Around here it is found in open areas in the Wallows. In addition, the native plant as well as hybrids of it are found in local yards. We've had two bushes of it in our yard for nearly 40 years, and hybrids with white flowers are used often by landscapers.

This plant was once included along with the plant in last week's article in the genus *Potentilla*, then in the genus *Pentaphylloides*, and now in *Dasiphora*.

However, unlike the plant last week there has never been any debate about it being a single, separate species. *Dasiphora* comes from Latin "dasi" for thick hair, and "phorus" for bearing, likely referring to the plant's thickly hairy fruit. *Fruticosa* means shrubby or woody.

Cinquefoil means five

fingers, referring to the larger leaves usually having 5 leaflets.

Shrubby Cinquefoil is a small to medium bush, usually about 2-3 feet high. New growth stems are reddish or purplish, later becoming gray or brownish with shredding bark on the lower main stems. The leaves are short and divided into 3-7 narrow leaflets up to 3/4 of an inch. The 5-petaled flowers are bright yellow.

There have been many uses for this plant, particularly by various Indian tribes. Dried leaves were used for tea, and were also mixed with meat for a spice.

Other tribes considered the plant poisonous. Powdered leaves were used as a ceremonial medicine against enemies. The flowers were used in summer dances. Peeling bark was used as tinder for starting fires, and the leaves were used to stuff pillows.

**Where to find:** This bush can be found in the Wallowa Wilderness, including a short walk in from the north on the Hurricane Creek Trail, where it is probably still blooming. If you want one in your yard, go to a nursery; their hybrids will grow better in that environment.

## Advocates outraged that state plans to kill wolves

Associated Press

SPOKANE, Wash. — Some wolf advocates are outraged that the state is preparing for the second time to exterminate an entire wolf pack for preying on livestock in northeastern Washington state.

This is the second time in four years that a pack of endangered wolves has received the death penalty because of the grazing of privately owned cattle on publicly owned lands, the Center for Biological Diversity said.

Washington is home to about 90 wolves, and killing the 11 members of the Profanity Peak pack would amount to 12 percent of the population.

"By no stretch of the imagination can killing 12 percent of the state's tiny population of 90 wolves be consistent with recovery," said Amaroq Weiss, of the Center for Biological Diversity, on Thursday.

"We can't keep placing wolves in harm's way by repeatedly dumping livestock onto public lands with indefensible terrain, then killing the wolves when conflicts arise," she said.

Last week, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife announced it would exterminate the Profanity Peak pack in Ferry County. Since mid-July, the agency has confirmed that wolves have killed or injured six cattle and probably five others, based on staff investigations.

Jim Unsworth, director of the agency, authorized the wolf hunts between the towns of Republic and Kettle Falls.

Wildlife officials shot two pack members Aug. 5, but temporarily ended wolf-removal efforts after two weeks passed without finding any more evidence of wolf predation on cattle.

"At that time, we said we would restart this operation if there was another wolf attack, and now we have three," said Donny Martorello, WDFW wolf policy lead. "The department is committed to wolf recovery, but we also have a shared responsibility to protect livestock from repeated depredation by wolves."

Since 2008, the state's wolf popu-



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife via AP, File

**This March 2014 file photo provided by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife shows a female wolf from the Minam pack outside La Grande after it was fitted with a tracking collar.**

lation has grown from two wolves in one pack to at least 90 wolves and 19 packs.

Wolves were hunted to extinction in Washington at the beginning of the last century. Since the early 2000s, they've moved back into the state from neighboring Idaho and British Columbia.

That has set off alarm bells from people in rural areas, especially in northeastern Washington where the animals are concentrated.

The Department of Fish and Wildlife has walked a fine line between environmental groups, who support wolf recovery, and ranchers who want to protect their herds. The issue has become a dividing line between urban and rural residents.

In 2012, hunters hired by the state killed members of the Wedge pack of wolves, in the same general area, for killing livestock.

Conservation groups say the livestock is the problem, not wolves.

"Cows grazing in thick forest and downed trees in the Colville National Forest are in an indefensible situation," said Tim Coleman, executive director for Kettle Range Conservation Group.

"We believe the wildest areas of our national forests should be a place where wolves can roam free."

Under Washington's wolf plan, livestock owners are eligible for taxpayer-funded compensation for losses. Taxpayers have also funded the radio collars placed on wolves.

Those collars are now being used to locate and kill the wolves. This practice is referred to as the use of "Judas wolves," because the collared wolves unknowingly betray the location of their family members, Weiss said.

Some conservation groups do not oppose the hunt. Wolf Haven International, the Humane Society of the United States, Defenders of Wildlife, and Conservation Northwest said they are focused on long-term goals.

"We remain steadfast that our important goals remain the long-term recovery and public acceptance of wolves in our state alongside thriving rural communities," the groups said in a press release. "We believe that ultimately we can create conditions where everyone's values are respected and the needs of wildlife, wildlife advocates, and rural communities are met."

## BRIEFLY

### Theodore Roosevelt National Park quarter officially released

MEDORA, N.D. (AP) — The U.S. Mint and the National Park Service have released a commemorative coin honoring Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

The park is being recognized through the U.S. Mint's America the Beautiful Quarters Program. A ceremony was held Thursday at the Painted Canyon visitor center in western North Dakota.

The park is named for the 26th president of the United States, who ranched in the North Dakota Badlands before moving on to the White House. Roosevelt also founded the U.S. Forest Service.

The coin depicts a young Roosevelt on horseback, surveying the terrain near the Little Missouri River.

The America the Beautiful Quarters Program is a years-old initiative designed to honor national

parks and other national sites.

### Historian McCullough to be honored by park service

CORNISH, N.H. (AP) — Historian and author David McCullough is being recognized for sharing with readers the stories of prominent Americans with connections to National Park Service properties.

McCullough will be receiving the Saint-Gaudens Medal and the Honorary Park Ranger Award on Oct. 4 in Boston. The Saint-Gaudens National Historic site in Cornish, New Hampshire, is the home of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, who is featured in McCullough's "The Greater Journey: Americans in Paris."

The park ranger award is the highest civilian honor awarded by the National Park Service and is given to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to

the National Park Service as a whole.

The announcement was made Thursday, the 100-year anniversary of President Woodrow Wilson's creation of the National Park Service.

### Idaho Fish and Game halts online sales after computer breach

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The Idaho Department of Fish and Game says there's been a computer breach and it has suspended online sales of hunting and fishing licenses.

Fish and Game spokesman Mike Keckler said Thursday the agency is working with its vendor, a Dallas, Texas-based company called Active Network, to determine if hackers gained access to personal information.

Active Network on its website says more than 42,000 organizers use its event and activity management software.

The company didn't immediately return calls or respond to emails from The Associated Press on Thursday.

Keckler said Idaho's online licensing system run by Active Network will be down indefinitely.

He said licenses can still be purchased at businesses that sell Idaho hunting or fishing licenses because they use a separate system that hasn't been breached.

Keckler said about 80 percent of the license sales are at businesses with the remaining 20 percent purchased online. Keckler didn't have an estimate of how many people might be affected.

Active Network in 2014 in a letter apologized to Idaho Fish and Game officials following a shutdown due to a large volume of transactions involving hunting tag purchases.

The shutdown meant hundreds of hunters were unable to complete their transactions for resident elk tags.

Have an outdoor story you'd like to tell?

An amazing wildlife encounter, or the tale of an epic hunt? Know a great place to camp and hike? Have a photo of a trophy animal you'd like to show off?

Email [ttrainor@eastoregonian.com](mailto:ttrainor@eastoregonian.com) or call 541-966-0835.