

# Bill would reward tipsters in poaching cases

By MARK FREEMAN  
Medford Mail-Tribune

The Oregon Legislature is mulling a bill that would offer increased sport-hunting opportunities for people who turn in and help prosecute wildlife poachers, yet hunters themselves are questioning whether it's the right approach to curb illegal wildlife killing.

House Bill 3158 would allow the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to offer, for instance, a guarantee to purchase a tough-to-get Rocky Mountain elk tag in an Eastern Oregon hunting unit for someone who helps Oregon State Police capture

and convict an elk poacher in that same hunting unit.

The bill is being pushed as a complement to the Turn In Poachers (TIP) program managed by the Oregon Hunters Association that pays cash rewards for similar assistance.

The bill is co-sponsored by Republican Rep. Mike McLane of Powell Butte and Rep. Sal Esquivel of Medford and it received its first public hearing Thursday in the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

McLane, whose district includes eastern Jackson County and a sliver of northeast Medford, said

he drafted the bill after learning from a hunting outfitter friend that Utah has a similar program to help curb poaching.

"For a lot of the hunters, getting a tough-to-get tag is actually more valuable than a \$500 reward," McLane said.

"Poachers are cheaters," McLane said. "They're criminals. No one likes them."

However, OHA leaders, who are always looking for ways to curb poaching, say such a program could bring unintentional pitfalls.

Paul Donheffner, the former director of the Oregon State Marine Board who is chair of OHA's legislative committee, said

the bill as written contains a broad definition of wildlife that makes meting out more tags potentially problematic, particularly in hunts with very limited tag numbers.

In the case of bighorn sheep, for instance, ODFW offers only a handful of tags in this once-in-a-lifetime hunting opportunity, and "there may be reasons why you don't want to offer" an extra tag.

"The devil's in the details," Donheffner said. "We appreciate the effort to come up with tools to combat poaching. 'We're just not sure it's the right tool.'"

McLane said he may consider amending the bill to

drop the hunting tag opportunity and instead offer "preference points," which are part of an ODFW system to give hunters unsuccessful at drawing hard-to-get hunting tags a greater shot at future success.

Donheffner said OHA leadership has always been leery of using preference points as "candy for different kinds of things and different kinds of people."

Duane Dungannon, secretary of the Medford-based OHA, said the association is interested in adding to the bill mandatory restitution paid to the TIP program by poachers convicted with the help of a TIP reward.

Prosecutors across Oregon are inconsistent in requesting restitution to TIP, which is funded largely through restitution covering the amount of reward paid in the defendant's particular case, Dungannon said.

The OHA pays out about \$13,000 a year from TIP, which allows informants to remain anonymous yet still receive payments.

Capt. Jeff Samuels, who heads the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division, which partners with the OHA in TIP, said 66 informants were paid TIP money involving 62 cases in Oregon during the past two years.



Steve Tool/EO Media Group

Bowerman Ranch co-owner Wendy McCullough with just a few of her goat friends at the foot of Mt. Joseph.

## The goats with the most

By STEVE TOOL  
EO Media Group

Anytime you see Bowerman Ranch co-owner Wendy McCullough, you can bet that goats aren't far from her thoughts.

In the shadow of Mt. Joseph, at the end of road named for her family, the third generation to live on the ranch quietly goes about her business of raising goats.

For the most part, these are not milk goats. These goats are for the dinner table.

McCullough, a Wallowa County native, has raised goats on the several-hundred acre ranch since 2006.

It has been a circuitous route back to the ranch McCullough was raised on. After graduation from Joseph High School, McCullough left the area in 1969 to attend Oregon State University. She married and moved to Baker City, where she lived for the next 13 years before departing for the warmer climes of Arizona where she stayed six years, before making a move to Virginia for another 13 years. Still, Wallowa County was never far from her mind. McCullough's mother, who lived on the ranch, passed away in 2004 and McCullough saw the possibility to return and keep the family business running. "I'd wanted to come back for years,"

she said. "The kids were grown up and I took the chance."

McCullough quit her job in Virginia and returned to Bowerman Ranch in 2006. That's when the work started.

The ranch had fallen into disuse and the grass was eye-high. She had heard that goats were good at clearing land. A love affair started when she rented goats to eat down the grass.

"They did a marvelous job, and I rented them for two more months," she said. "I was in love with the goats, and I thought, 'This is my calling.'"

The goats stayed for the winter, and McCullough bought six of the them and the seller threw in a seventh for free. She was in.

McCullough started raising goats for meat, laughing that she's too lazy for milking. The goats are mainly Boers and Boers crossed with Texmasters, which are 85 percent Myotonic, or fainting goats. The fainting helps build muscle, which translates into meat, which is USDA inspected and gaining a regional following through both retail stores and Saturday market sales. McCullough's partner in the venture is fellow goat raiser Nancy Noble.

"It's grass fed, low fat, high protein and low cholesterol," she said. "It's yummy!"

She also raises some Boer/La Mancha goats to provide milk for her

other venture, Sally B. Farms, which features handmade goat milk soap. That entity is McCullough's own venture. The ranch still belongs to the Bowerman Family Trust.

At the moment, McCullough has 25 adult goats, along with some young kids.

"Once in awhile, if one of the market goats has an unusual personality, I'll hang a name on it while it's here," she said.

McCullough is currently in the midst of kidding season, which has its difficulties.

"Kidding is fun, but there's a lot of stress involved between cold weather and water freezing," she said. McCullough also said that she wouldn't have made it though the first season if not for her friend Debbie Gilbert, who showed her the ropes.

"It didn't matter when I called her. If I had a question or needed help at the barn she was always there for me," McCullough said.

The most challenging part, though, is the amount of time involved in their care.

"You have to feed them twice a day, trim feet, give shots, stuff like that. It's time consuming."

At the same time, McCullough also finds her chosen profession rewarding.

"I just love these goats. I'm putting out a good product."

## Sockeye salmon removed from flood-threatened Idaho hatchery

By KEITH RIDLER  
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — About 4,000 endangered Snake River sockeye salmon have been evacuated from a flood-threatened hatchery in southwestern Idaho.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game on Thursday loaded the fish at the Eagle Fish Hatchery west of Boise into four trucks for transportation to the Springfield Fish Hatchery in eastern Idaho.

The 4,000 fish are broodstock that produce future generations of sockeye. Officials say the primary fear was that floodwater would reach the hatchery's electrical pumps that keep oxygenated water circulating.

"I'm relieved," said Dan Baker, Fish and Game's Eagle Fish Hatchery manager. "I know they're in a safe environment over there and we can focus on some critical buildings here."

Snake River sockeye teetered on the brink of extinction in the early 1990s. They've been the focus of an intense recovery program centered at the Eagle Fish Hatchery after being listed for federal protection in 1991.

The Boise River is expected to remain high for two months as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers releases water from upstream dams to make room for snowmelt in the mountains.

Sandbags have been protecting the Eagle Fish Hatchery, but Baker said there are weak spots in the bank, and moving the fish to a different facility seemed prudent.

The evacuated include 1-year-olds, 2-year-olds and 3-year-old fish. The two older age classes have special tags so they can be individually identified to track the genetics of the population.

The Eagle Fish Hatchery has a lab to make sure its sockeye have genetic diversity so future generations can eventually sustain a wild population in Idaho, the ultimate goal. Adult fish returning from the ocean travel 900 miles up the Columbia,

"I know they're in a safe environment over there and we can focus on some critical buildings here."

— Dan Baker, hatchery manager

Snake and Salmon rivers to high-elevation Sawtooth basin lakes in central Idaho. The hope is that the hatchery-raised fish and the returning fish will spawn.

As a safety net to the Eagle Fish Hatchery, another 4,000 sockeye salmon are used as broodstock at NOAA Fisheries' Manchester Research Station in Port Orchard, Washington, Baker said.

Eggs produced by that hatchery and Eagle Fish are sent to the Springfield Fish Hatchery to be raised into young fish that are released into the wild. Fish and Game expects to release about 735,000 young sockeye into Idaho's Redfish Lake Creek in about a month.

Gary Byrne, who oversees Idaho Fish and Game's hatcheries, said moving the broodstock will not interfere with artificial spawning in the fall. He said the broodstock will likely be back at the Eagle Fish Hatchery by then, and if not, they can be artificially spawned at the eastern Idaho facility.

The goal of a self-sustaining wild population took a hit in 2015 when warm water in the Columbia River Basin killed 99 percent of returning adult fish, with only 55 completing the journey. A trap at a Snake River dam captured another 35 sockeye salmon. Of the 90 total fish, five were released to spawn naturally and 85 went to the Eagle Fish Hatchery for artificial spawning.

The fish rebounded in 2016 when 567 sockeye returned to the Sawtooth Valley.

### BRIEFLY

#### Oregon man not cited for picking up bear cub

SALEM (AP) — State authorities say a man who found a 3-month-old black bear along an Oregon hiking trail and took it to a wildlife rehabilitation center has been warned but not cited.

KGW-TV reports Corey Hancock says he found the cub not moving and barely breathing Monday. He then took it to Turtle Ridge Wildlife Rehab, where the bear has been nursed back

to health.

Wildlife officials say it's illegal to take wildlife out of their habitat, but Oregon State Police said Wednesday that Hancock won't be punished.

Sgt. James Halsey says the decision was made after authorities determined Hancock believed he was helping the bear cub without knowing the mother bear may have been nearby.

The cub is now in the custody of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

## DOJO: Part of the training deals with mental, spiritual strength

Continued from 1C

aggressor's arm and disable them."

Stephens also teaches his students not to harm the opponent right away.

"Don't cut them," he says, placing a wooden sword on his opponent's arm, but applying no pressure. "If they move, they choose whether they get cut or not."

Stephens said he began studying martial arts after reading a few books about the subject. His students say they were drawn in by the desire to try something new.

"I mainly started out of curiosity," said Perez, a purple belt student who has been training for nearly three years. "I had a lot of perceptions about martial arts, things I saw on TV or in films. This turned out to be much different."

Stephens said his training occasionally comes in handy for his job as a firefighter.

"In my line of work, we have to be very gentle most of the time," he said. "But there are times when you have violent people — the

cops might call us. I might go in, push on some things. It's easier to handcuff them if they're focused on something else."

As Stephens demonstrates different techniques to his students, he points out there's really only one principle to remember.

"The grandmaster says there's only one technique — and that's to change," Stephens said. He relies often on compromising the opponent's eyesight, and disrupting their balance. Each class is unique, and the next class may look completely different than this one.

Although the class teaches people how to fight, Stephens said the warrior should be at peace inside.

"There should be no fighting in your heart," he said. "Things unfold, hopefully the way they're supposed to, and hopefully in your favor."

But it's still about combat. "We learn how to use weapons in the first class," he said, as his students fight using swords. "Humans have been using weapons for

sands of years. It's all combat. You're trying to break them down."

Stephens said he doesn't currently teach any military professionals, and is not a veteran himself, but mental training can be as important as physical for those who may have to inflict physical harm on others for their jobs. Part of the Bujinkan training, he said, is to deal with the realities of hurting other people.

"It helps balance the mind with things you have to do in the physical world," he said. "Soldiers train mentally from a young age to accept the fact that to protect land, to protect themselves, they may have to kill and be OK with that. It delves into spiritual access."

The spiritual aspect of the class is not religious, although Stephens said Bujinkan incorporates both Shinto and Buddhist principles.

"Bujinkan itself doesn't push anyone's religion," he said. "But they expect everyone to have some spiritual pursuit."

An hour into class, Stephens and his students sit

down on the mat for a break. Stephens pours hot tea out of a small stone teapot, and the students take out notebooks while the sensei tells stories about his training experiences, or other knowledge he's gleaned over the years.

"The tea break is to transmit the oral traditions of the art," Stephens said.

Stephens said training in the martial arts has helped him be more relaxed in other aspects of his life.

"As a younger man, I had issues with ... most of the time I was calm, but I would have fits of rage," he said. "This beat it out of me."

Stephens added that in real life, attacks may not be physical, but emotional or ideological. Training, he said, has helped him remain calm in the face of those problems.

"I think on a spiritual level it helps you grow as a person," he said. "It doesn't bother me anymore."

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at 541-564-4534 or jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com