

Oregon bowhunters bracing for elk limits

ODFW proposing major changes in 2022 for archery elk hunters

By JAYSON JACOBY
Baker City Herald

PENDLETON — A major change to archery elk hunting seasons in most of Northeast Oregon could start in 2022.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is proposing to shift the archery season in 13 units and parts of three others from the current general hunt — meaning there's no limit on the number of tags sold — to a controlled hunt, with a limited number of tags.

In a controlled hunt, archers would have to apply for a tag through the state's computer lottery system.

In June 2020, ODFW announced that the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission would consider changing the archery season in all units east of the Cascades from general to controlled hunts, and for elk as well as buck deer hunting.

But in August 2020, the agency said the commission would decide on changes to buck deer archery seasons, but that it would delay any decision on elk seasons.

In September 2020, the

commission approved the proposal to change buck deer archery hunting from a general season to a controlled season starting in 2021.

Multiple reasons proposed for the change

Oregon has had general archery hunts in Eastern Oregon, for buck deer and for elk, since 1979. Since 1983, the archery season for both species has lasted for one month, starting in late August.

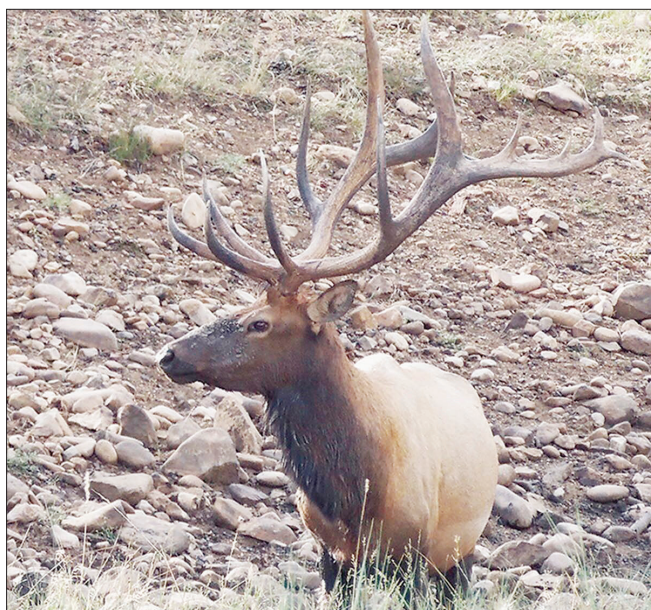
ODFW officials have cited multiple reasons for proposing the shift from general to controlled archery seasons.

One is the increasing number of archery hunters over the past few decades. ODFW said the number of archers hunting elk in Eastern Oregon rose from about 12,300 in 1995 to about 18,500 in 2019.

And due in part to improvements in technology, which allow hunters to make longer kill shots, archery hunters have higher success rates.

But because the archery seasons have remained general seasons, with no limits on how many tags are sold, ODFW's lone tool to limit hunting to protect deer and elk herds has been to cut the number of tags for rifle hunts, which are controlled hunts with limited tags awarded through the lottery system.

"Currently, the controlled



Gary Lewis/Contributed Photo

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is proposing significant changes to elk-hunting rules for archers.

rifle season is the one place we have the ability to adjust hunter harvest, and they have taken almost all the tag reductions in the last 25 years," said Jeremy Thompson, district wildlife biologist for ODFW's Mid-Columbia area, who is managing the review of elk archery hunts. "The ultimate goal of this proposal is to be able to make management actions equitable for all users."

In choosing which units to propose the change from a general to a controlled archery season, ODFW officials considered the current

elk populations in those units, as well as hunter density and hunter displacement, which are based on a public survey of hunters done in 2020.

Solving problems while saving general season

Units where the bull ratio — the number of bulls per cows — has not met the state's goals in three out of five years are proposed to change from general to controlled archery hunts in 2022.

"We have tried to craft a solution that addresses the problems we are seeing in

SUBMIT COMMENTS

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is asking hunters to submit comments on the proposed shift in the archery season in 13 units and parts of three others, which the Fish and Wildlife Commission is scheduled to discuss during its June 18 meeting.

The commission will make a final decision on archery seasons for 2022 during its September 2021 meeting. More information is available online at myodfw.com/articles/big-game-hunting-season-review. Comments should be emailed to odfw.wildlifeinfo@state.or.us no later than April 15. There will be additional opportunities to comment before and during the commission's June 18 meeting.

some units, while continuing to retain as much general season opportunity as possible," Thompson said.

ODFW is proposing to change from a general to a controlled elk archery hunt in some other units because although those units are meeting bull ratio goals, the bull elk harvest is near what biologists consider the unit's capacity. In some units, archery hunters have been taking as many or more branch-antlered bulls than rifle hunters have, according to ODFW.

Two Baker County archery hunters, Bob Reedy and Keith Jensen, said they have concerns about the potential effects of ODFW's proposed changes.

Reedy, who lives in Baker City and also owns an archery

shop, disputes ODFW's contention that switching from a general to a controlled season for elk is necessary to deal with declining elk populations and bull ratios.

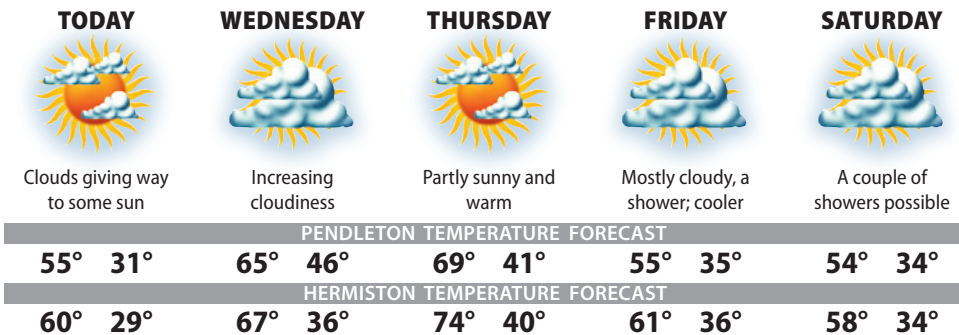
"I think a lot of this is about the state mismanaging the animals," Reedy said.

He contends the state could either temporarily ban hunters from killing bulls, whether they use bows or rifles, or change the bag limit to prohibit hunters from shooting spike bulls.

By restricting hunters to harvesting only mature, branch-antlered bulls, Reedy believes the state could boost bull ratios in units where they're below state objectives.

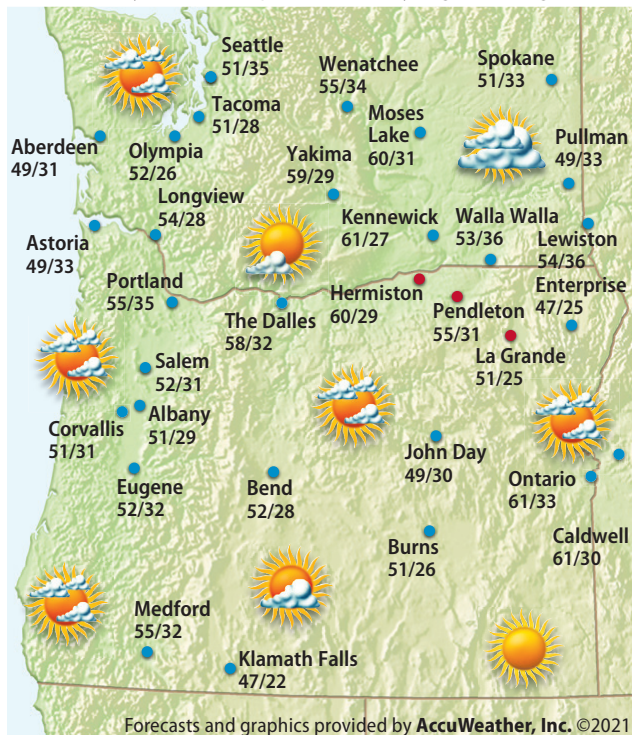
"If they want better bull ratios, stop shooting so many bulls," he said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	41°	33°
Normals	55°	35°
Records	78° (1901)	1° (1906)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.05"
Month to date	0.09"
Normal month to date	0.61"
Year to date	3.11"
Last year to date	4.67"
Normal year to date	3.12"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	47°	37°
Normals	58°	34°
Records	77° (1940)	15° (1944)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.03"
Month to date	0.07"
Normal month to date	0.47"
Year to date	1.15"
Last year to date	0.48"
Normal year to date	2.71"

WINDS (in mph)

Today	Wed.
Boardman SW 4-8	NE 4-8
Pendleton W 4-8	ENE 4-8

SUN AND MOON

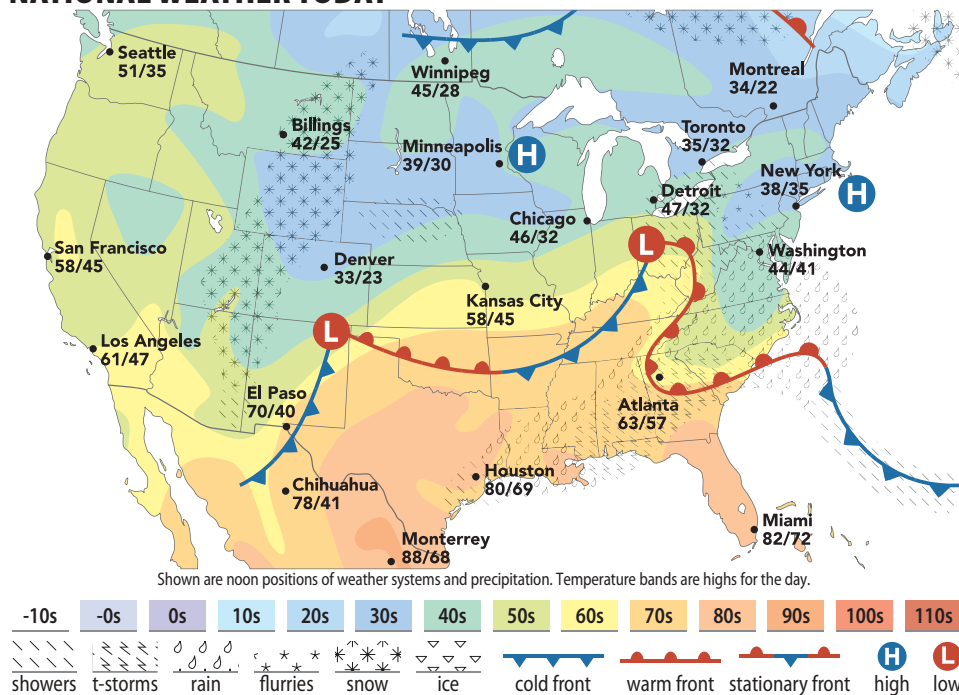
Sunrise today	7:06 a.m.
Sunset tonight	7:03 p.m.
Moonrise today	8:45 a.m.
Moonset today	10:36 p.m.

First Full Last New
Mar 21 Mar 28 Apr 4 Apr 11

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 90° in Zapata, Texas Low -5° in Antero Reservoir, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Elgin student on comeback trail

By DICK MASON
La Grande Observer

ELGIN — The comeback of Rylee Sandland, an Elgin High School freshman seriously injured in a snowmobile crash in early February, is picking up speed.

Sandland, who was hospitalized at St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Boise, Idaho, for a month after the mishap, recently returned to her home in Elgin.

"She is just so happy to be back home," said Mandi Parsons, a teacher at Stella Mayfield School who is leading fundraising efforts for Sandland and her family.

Parsons said one of the best parts of being back for Sandland is having the chance to see her friends again. Parsons explained that at St. Alphonsus only her family could visit because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Sandland suffered a broken pelvis, a broken rib and a punctured lung in the crash, which occurred east of Union in the Catherine

Creek area. An emergency helicopter flew the teen from the crash site to St. Alphonsus. Parsons said the helicopter made a big difference in getting Sandland rescued quickly.

If not for the air ambulance, Parsons said, the situation would have been a lot tougher.

She also said Sandland's recovery is ahead of schedule and doctors anticipate she will fully recover.

Sandland returned home two weeks ago and still faces significant challenges. The broken pelvis, for example, prevents her from walking. But Parsons said Sandland is not letting her health challenges get her down.

"Her spirits are very high," the educator said. "She always positive."

Sandland, who loves farm animals and horseback riding, has been an active member of Elgin High School's FFA chapter and made friends with chapter members soon after her family moved to Elgin from La Grande less than a

year ago.

"The students welcomed her as if she had always been here," said Daniel Bolen, Elgin High School's agricultural sciences teacher and FFA chapter adviser.

Sandland's personable nature made it easier for her to make quick connections.

"She is super caring and sweet and thoughtful of others," Bolen said.

Parsons said Sandland, 15, has a special charisma that reflects her Christian faith.

"She has a wonderful soul. Her smile lights up a room," Parsons said.

About \$3,000 has been raised to help Rylee Sandland and her family with medical and other associated expenses caused by the snowmobile crash. A big part of it has come from the sale of sweatshirts Parsons designed. All have the outline of a heart and an illustration of a girl riding a horse on the left side and a snowmobile on the right. Above the heart are the words "Rylee Rides Again."

IN BRIEF

Kathy Oliver to lead Eastern Oregon region of Lions

SUMMERVILLE — Kathy Oliver does not know what the future holds but she does know this: Her 15th year as a member of the Elgin Lions Club promises to be one of her most memorable — and busiest.

The International Association of Lions Clubs has named Oliver the next governor for District 36G, which encompasses much of the portion of Oregon east of the Cascades and has about 20 clubs. Oliver said she is honored and moved by the confidence the Lions organization has shown in her.

"People have been so supportive," Oliver said.

The Summerville resident will take the reins of District 36G in June and serve one year. She will succeed John Taylor of Pendleton, who is completing his one-year term as governor.

Oliver has an upbeat vision for a district that is part of an organization renowned for saving sight.

She wants to help her district rebound after being rattled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Oliver noted that across the district, clubs have been hurt by declining membership caused by COVID-19 concerns. The Elgin Lions Club, which Oliver is president of, for example, has declined just under 10% in the past year.

Oliver will be traveling throughout Eastern Oregon to visit chapters to encourage them to take steps to boost membership back up to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. She will be encouraging clubs to invite former members back, and to arrange for them to take part in club projects.

"The key is getting people involved," said Oliver, who was named first vice president of District 36G in November 2020.

—EO Media Group

CORRECTIONS: The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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