

# On the track of the bear



GARY LEWIS

ON THE TRAIL

There was a time when bighorn sheep were numerous as deer in these canyons. And more recently, there was a time when deer were too many to count. In our corner of the Pine Creek Unit, we saw a lone mountain goat, a small herd of elk, a precious few mule deer, and bears — maybe too many bears.

On this hunt with Pine Valley Outfitters and guide Lucas Simpson, of Halfway, it took three days before we found the bears, all together in one canyon feeding on the hawthorn berries.

We had four hours maybe, for this last effort. Out in the August sun now, the temperature hovered in the mid-80s.

Up onto the hogback we climbed, saving our strength, going slow, one foot in front of another. Hundreds of yards up the rising plateau we stopped. Sweating, we folded

our mountain-burned legs in the shade of a grove of trees. Here there was a spring and some cooling in the shade.

Shadows lengthened, yet the sun was still full on the rock faces of the mountain.

This is how it happens, I reminded myself. Sit in one good place. Let the animals move. Let them show themselves.

There comes a moment in days like this when the animals have to move. A time for water. And there is no giving up. Hunt till dark. Stay at it. Believe in the process.

A bear. It was on a level as high as the goat had been the day before, and it strolled a narrow ledge like it was a sidewalk. Black. Almost silver-black against the granite cliffs, its coat seemed to glint in the afternoon light. It turned and showed a white patch on its chest. When it reached the shoulder of the ridge, it angled into a stand of hawthorn and fed through it and out into the open again. It was on a course straight for us, but when it went out of sight, it veered into a side canyon.

We had found where the bears were. They were in the hawthorn patches and it did

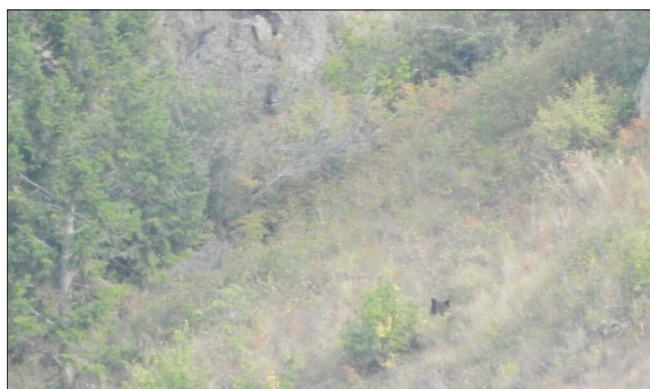
not matter that apples, plums and seven other kinds of berries were on the bushes. The bears wanted hawthorn berries. And here were hawthorns. And fresh piles of scat on every trail.

In the last 15 minutes of light, a dark chocolate brown shape materialized on the brush line and then the bear stood up on its back legs. Not the black one I had seen earlier, a different bear. Watching its back trail, it seemed to be looking for our guide Lucas Simpson in the canyon below. How many other bears were in there?

In the scope, I could see the white hair on the bear's chest. Under my thumb, the safety clicked through into "fire" and the crosshair found the white patch. Finger on the trigger, three pounds of squeeze, the punch of the rifle on my shoulder.

Down in the creek bottom at sunrise, we found the bear where it had cooled to 40 degrees, and skinned it for a rug and for the burger and steaks it would provide.

At this time of year in the Blues, in the Wallows and the Elkhorns, a hunter should prospect for bears in the high



Gary Lewis/Contributed Photo

**Oregon's bear population is thought to number close to 30,000 animals, spread over approximately 40,000 square miles of habitat. Plentiful, but not easy to find. In the late summer and early fall, a hunter should focus on the groceries to find a bear.**

## MORE INFORMATION

The fall black bear hunting season opened Aug. 1 in Oregon, and continues through the end of 2021. The deadline to buy a tag is Oct. 1.

unseasonably hot, expect to see bear earlier in the day and again later in the evening. But a person should commit to hunting the whole of the day; bears feed any time they feel like it.

Berries are a food source that can be counted on year after year. Some seasons are not as productive as others, but when the berries are ripe, the bear know it.

*Gary Lewis is the author of Bob Nosler Born Ballistic and Fishing Central Oregon and other titles. Gary's podcast is called Ballistic Chronicles. To contact Gary, visit [www.garylewisdoors.com](http://www.garylewisdoors.com)*

meadows and old burns. Patches of hawthorn berries are a favorite food source, but not the only one. Where huckleberries and blackberries grow wild, a hunter can find a bear by watching trails that lead from bedding areas to feeding areas.

When the weather is

# Youth pheasant hunts planned this fall in Oregon

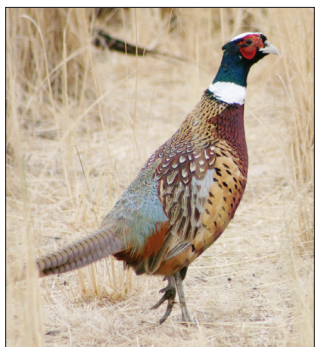
EO Media Group

SALEM — Hunters 17 and younger can sign up for free pheasant hunts happening around the state this fall, including events near La Grande, Irrigon, Ontario and the John Day Valley.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and its partners stock pheasants at these special hunts that give youth a head start on regular pheasant seasons, which start in October.

Most hunts are at ODFW wildlife areas in September, with some scheduled for October.

Register by logging in to the youth's account at MyODFW's Licensing page. Then go to "Purchase from the



Rick Swart/Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Hunters 17 and younger can sign up for free pheasant hunts around Oregon, including in Irrigon, this fall.**

Catalog" and look under the Category/ Class/Workshop / Outdoor Skills. Hunts are listed alphabetically by city name. Registration is only

online; it is not available at license sale agents.

These events are open only to youth who have passed hunter education. Volunteers bring their trained hunting dogs to some events to hunt with participants. Some events also host a shooting skills session before the hunt.

The hunts are free, though participants need a valid hunting license (\$10 for youth 12 and older, free for age 11 and under) to hunt.

Youth hunters age 12-17 also need an upland game bird validation (\$4). Purchase before the event, online or at a license sales agent (reminder that ODFW offices remain closed to public access until Sept. 1.) Licenses and validations will

not be sold at the events.

Some areas will host the event both Saturday and Sunday. Youth who register for one day may hunt stand by on the other day.

"Youth pheasant hunts are a great chance for young hunters to find early success and put the lessons learned in hunter education to work in the field," said Jered Goodwin, ODFW hunter education coordinator.

For help signing up, contact Myrna Britton at 503- 947-6028 or by email,

Myrna.B.Britton@odfw.oregon.gov.

Event dates and locations:

- Irrigon Wildlife Area (between Irrigon and Umatilla), Sept. 25 and Sept. 26. Sign up for morning or evening hunt (morning only on Sunday).

- John Day Valley, Sept. 18 and Sept. 19.

- La Grande, Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area, Sept. 18 and Sept. 19. No advance registration required.

- Ontario (on city property), Oct. 16 and 17.

## ROGERS

TOYOTA OF HERMISTON

# SHOW & SHINE

2nd Annual

Friday, August 20, 2021

**Car Show 4 pm - 8 pm**

**at Rogers Toyota of Hermiston!**

**80364 N. HWY 395, Hermiston, OR**

**PRIZE DRAWINGS**

throughout the event!

**Live Music by the**

**BRASS FIRE BAND!**

**HOT AUGUST**

Wheels

**OUR BEST PRICES**

**OF THE SUMMER**

**ALL MONTH LONG!**

Donations accepted. All proceeds go to:

Sweet Potatoes Closet

[sweetpotatoescloset.org](http://sweetpotatoescloset.org)

**FREE Registration!**

Begins at Noon on Show Day

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

**toyotaofhermiston.com**

## Coach

Continued from Page B1

"I'm excited to take the job," Ashby said. "The kids are great, they want to come out and work. I did two years as the offensive coordinator. Boor gave the program everything he had. He did a great job."

Ashby grew up in Pocatello, Idaho, and played basketball at Eastern Oregon.

"I got my masters in teaching there," Ashby said of EOU. "I met Boor at a job fair, and here I am. I teach weights and I love it. It's a great job. We got a new weight room two years ago."

After Boor stepped down, Ashby threw his hat in the ring for the job.

"When I found out I had the job at the end of the year, I had about 30 kids tell me they were going to come out. About half of our kids, maybe 10-15, have been showing up and working out. They seem pretty excited to play. A lot of them work and they put in long hours at their jobs. They are hard workers."

Ashby will get help from Florida native Tyler Volpi, who will coach the offensive line and will be the defensive coordinator.

"He played college ball and is pretty knowledgeable," Ashby said. "He's great."

Ashby will have a handful of returning players with experience.

"I know for sure we will have two seniors, Nate Graham (running back/wide receiver/outside linebacker) and Nathan Ellis (safety/running back)," he said. "They are a big part of what we do. I have young quarterbacks in Riley Lantis and Anthony Lopez, and Tyrese Boyd at wide receiver. Once they are there, they work hard. The problem is getting them here."

## PENDLETON LINEBACKER'S CLUB HALL OF FAME CELEBRATION

**HALL OF FAME BANQUET**  
**Friday, August 20th at the**  
**Pendleton Convention Center**  
**5 PM- 9 PM**

**Tickets available at the Door, \$35**

In spite of not having our annual Hall of Fame event last June, Linebackers continued to honor all of its scholarship commitments which amounted to \$25,500 including the Shindler-Bunch Scholarship. We have continued our scholarship support in 2021 in spite of limited competition, fewer home games, and the inability to actually watch athletes compete.

The Buckaroo football team went 5-2 this year and with many young players the future looks very bright. This year's Requa Scholarship goes to Tyasin Burns; the Alex Stuvland Memorial Scholarship goes to Sam Coleman; and the Schindler-Bunch Scholarship goes to Blake Swanson. It should be noted that Mike Schindler and Dick and Anne Bunch have graciously increased the amount of this scholarship to a \$15,000 one time gift. Congratulations to all of our scholarship winners and thank you Mike, Dick and Anne for your continued support and generosity.

**We look forward to seeing you at the**  
**Hall of Fame Banquet!**

We will be honoring those inductees who were actually selected last year.

Jim Malcom • John Vorvick • Nicole Osborne-Stewart  
 Shawn Flanagan • Bobby Jones • Brent Merriman • Debbie Kishpaugh  
 Steve Richards • Craig Christianson  
 Rob Burnside

The 1954-55 Buckaroo Football Team  
 The 1964-65 Buckaroo Football Team