

The Nature Conservancy offers youth elk hunt

The Nature Conservancy would like to offer a youth bull elk hunting opportunity to the youth of Wallowa County. Wallowa County youth

between the ages of 12-17 with a valid elk tag for 258Y (Nov 2-10) are eligible to apply for permission to hunt the Zumwalt Preserve. One per-

mission will be granted via random draw. Youth must be accompanied by an adult. Opportunity is for one bull elk with 5 points or less on each

side. To sign up: Email Chad Dotson at chad.dotson@tnc.org or sign up at the TNC Enterprise office 906 S River st. Deadline to apply October 25.



Idaho Fish and Game

Steelhead season may be limited to a single fish this year in Wallowa County streams.

Major bird hunting seasons are opening in October

Bird hunters can opt for paper or electronic licenses, validations

ODFW

SALEM, Ore.—Several of Oregon's major bird hunting seasons open in October, including duck (Oct. 5 for Zone 2 eastern Oregon, Oct. 12 for Zone 1 Western Oregon and the Columbia Basin) and chukar, gray partridge and pheasant plus remaining quail seasons (opening on Oct. 5).

Bird hunters will be using ODFW's new electronic licensing system and have the choice of using either paper or electronic licenses and validations. SportsPac holders are reminded to redeem your 2019-20 Upland Game Bird and Waterfowl Validations by logging in and "purchasing" (at zero cost) these documents before hunting. The free Migratory Game Bird HIP Validation survey can also be completed online in your account. Bird hunters can also purchase or redeem all these documents at license sale agents.

Federal duck stamps (required for duck, goose, merganser, brant hunting) are not sold through ODFW's licensing system and will not appear on the MyODFW app or in your online account. Hunters need to carry their federal duck stamp in addition to their ODFW licenses. Purchase your stamp at a post office or another location that sells them (such as an outdoor retailer or national wildlife refuge). Electronic Federal duck stamps can also be purchased from several vendors online, see <https://www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp/>



Stock photo

Merriam's Tom turkeys, like the one above, are one of two turkey species hunters can find in Wallowa County.



USFWS Mountain-Prairie

A Canada goose gets some exercise before heading south.

e-stamp.php for more information.

More fall turkey tags are available for eastern Oregon this year. Fall turkey hunters who choose e-tagging need to use the same method as big game hunters: Validate your turkey tag on the MyODFW app after you harvest it, and then attach flagging tape or some

other material to the turkey with Confirmation number, ODFW ID and other information. See page 18 of the Game Bird Regulations for details.

Below are some highlights on what bird hunters should expect this season. Visit the 2019-20 Game Bird Hunting Forecast to find out more.

Duck: North American duck populations are down from recent highs but still 10 percent above the long-term average. Closer to home, breeding mallard numbers in California, Oregon and Washington were down slightly from last year, though wetland conditions, especially in eastern Oregon, were excellent this spring. The only regulation change hunters should be aware of this season is that the bag limit for pintail has decreased to one per day.

Pheasant: Eastern Oregon's pheasant numbers have declined after last year's peak. Production was positive, but overall hunters will find fewer birds on the ground. The highest densities were found in the Malheur, Umatilla, Heppner and Mid-Columbia, districts, respectively. Pheasant brood production was highest in the Heppner, Malheur, Umatilla and Mid-Columbia, districts, respectively.

California quail: Statewide California (valley) quail populations continue on their upward trend, particularly in the high desert. Of the areas surveyed, the highest production effort by California quail was in the Harney, Wallowa, and Mid-Columbia districts, respectively. Biologists found the highest overall densities in the Harney, Malheur and Umatilla districts.

Chukar: Known for their large annual population fluctuations, chukar are down slightly statewide, but are on the increase in southeast Oregon. Overall, Malheur and Harney districts found the highest densities of chukar, followed by the Heppner District. The Malheur and Grant districts had the highest chukar production with an average of 4.5 chicks/adult, followed by Harney (3.6 chicks/adult).

Steelhead season may be curtailed

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

Steelhead season is a cold-weather institution for Wallowa County fishermen. But this year's steelhead run is going to be small, according to ODFW fishery biologist Kyle Bratcher. "We're well into the steelhead run this year and we're getting a clearer picture of what returns will look like... It's going to be a pretty tough year," he said.

So far this season, only about 3,700 steelhead that are bound for the Grande Ronde, Wallowa, and Imnaha Rivers have made it over Bonneville Dam. Usually the number is about 10,000 by now.

Ocean conditions have been adverse for steelhead—and most salmonids—on Bratcher said. Ocean waters have been warm, reducing upwelling that provides nutrients and, ultimately, food for growing steelhead. Warmer ocean waters also mean that predatory species like mackerel, that often favor warmer water, hang around in steelhead territory longer. They compete with steelhead for food—and also dine on the younger steelhead. And there just isn't much food, Bratcher said. "NOAA and others do tawls in the ocean to monitor how the fishery is doing," he said. "The fish they found this year are not in good condition."

Because of overall low return numbers, the Columbia and Snake Rivers are shut down to angling for steelhead. Many of the steelhead bound for Wallowa County rivers are still moving up through the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Oregon, Washington and Idaho biologists are monitoring those movements as they make

their way to Lower Granite Dam.

"My projections suggest we can have a steelhead season on our rivers in Oregon and still get enough fish back to the hatcheries to make broodstock goals," Bratcher said. "Maintaining a one-fish limit on steelhead will help ensure this." The one-fish limit provides a slight advantage for wild fish, Bratcher said. He estimates that about half the returning fish are hatchery-produced. So if fishermen can keep just one fish, and it's a hatchery broodstock, that will leave more wild fish to spawn.

Fishing for steelhead is closed on the Clearwater and other Idaho rivers, Bratcher noted. That's because those fish are part of the "B run" Snake River steelhead. Those fish remain in the ocean for two to three years, and return to their natal streams earlier than the "A" run fish that are native to Wallowa County's streams.

"Our" Wallowa County steelhead ply Pacific Ocean waters for only one to two years. The longer residence time in the ocean means that the Clearwater's "B" run steelhead are larger—but also more vulnerable to ocean conditions. And that means that fishing is closed for the "B" team fish.

At present, there's a temporary rule that ends steelhead season on December 31, with a bag limit of one fish. But Bratcher is optimistic that "our" Wallowa County and Grande Ronde "A" run steelhead, currently crossing Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River just below Lewiston and showing up in local rivers, will be abundant enough to allow for a one-catch steelhead fishing season that will extend through April 1.



Contributed photo

The Northeast Oregon Youth Wrestling Club, coached by Troy Farwell, begins its 15th year. The club is open to all boys and girls, ages 5 to 14.

Youth Wrestling Club begins its 15th year

Troy L. Farwell
Northeast Oregon Wrestling Club

The Northeast Oregon Wrestling Club based in Wallowa County will again be hosting a Youth Wrestling Club. This is open to all boys and girls in the county ranging from ages 5 to 14. There will be five different level pairings: 5 & 6, 7 & 8, 9 & 10, 11 & 12, and 13 & 14 year olds together for tournament competition. This will be our 15th year as a competing club.

Wrestling practices will be held at Enterprise High School on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. There will possibly be an alternate Monday night practice from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. strictly for the first year wrestlers in addition to the Tuesday and Thursday night practices, depending on numbers of kids. The kids will be taught all the basic techniques in wrestling, so they will be able to compete in tournament competition if they wish to.

There will be a parent information meeting held at Enterprise High School Gymnasium on Tuesday, October 15th, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. Only parents need to attend this first meeting. The first practice will be held Tuesday, October 22nd at Enterprise High School.

Come and meet the coaches. If you should have any questions, they can be answered at the parent meeting on the 15th, or you may also call Troy Farwell (Coach) at (541) 263-1555.

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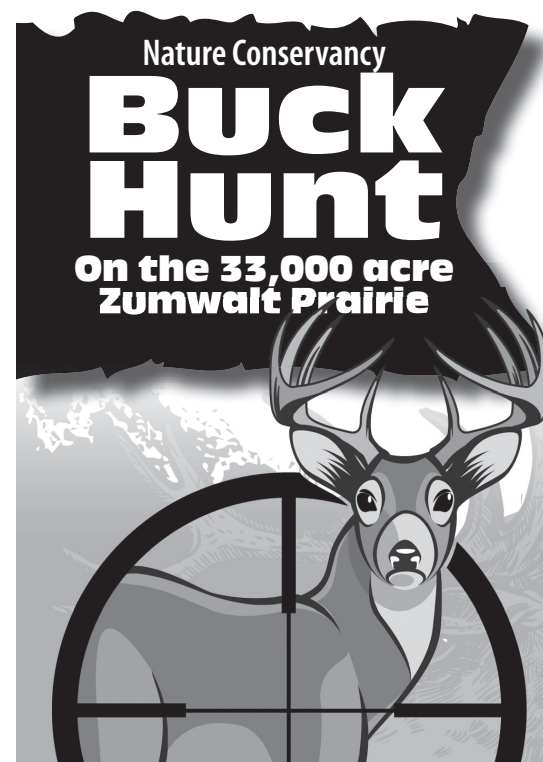


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