Fall tags reduced for some deer, elk hunts

this fall have been reduced from the numbers shown in the 2020 Big Game Regula-

The reduction of a total of 3,953 buck tags and 287 antlerless deer tags affects deer hunts in Desolation, Fort Rock, Hood, Metolius, Mt Emily, Northside, Paulina, Silver Lake, Sprague, Ukiah, Walla Walla, and White River Units.

A total of 670 elk tags are being reduced in Imnaha, Maury, and Zumwalt Prairie hunts (Sled Springs and Chesnimnus). See tables below for details.

The deer tag reductions are due to fewer mule deer being observed during fall sur-ODFW wildlife biologists believe ongo-

ing disease outbreaks in central and eastern Oregon are the main cause of the decline.

A large outbreak of EHD was document-

Tag numbers for some deer and elk hunts ed this year, which led to a die-off of whitetailed deer in the Walla Walla, Mt. Emily and Ukiah Units and also impacted some mule deer. In addition to EHD, an uptick of cases of adenovirus hemorrhagic disease (AHD) has been observed throughout the

The disease is usually fatal to deer and death can occur in three to five days from the time the deer was exposed to the virus.

AHD is transmitted primarily from "nose-to-nose" contact between infected animals and usually occurs in summer through fall, particularly during drier weather that congregates deer near water.

"While not as severe as the EHD outbreak that caused a significant die-off of white-tails, we have continued to see AHDcaused mortalities of mule deer in central and south central Oregon for the last several years," said Kevin Blakely, ODFW assis-

tant wildlife division administrator. "Fewer reduced to numbers intended to maintain mule deer were observed during population surveys in these units so we need to reduce tags.

"While cutting buck tags will not result in a population increase, as populations decline fewer bucks are available, so tags need to be reduced to maintain buck ratios."

Earlier this year ODFW announced hunt cancellations for white-tailed deer hunts in Walla Walla, Mt. Emily and Ukiah Units due to the outbreak of EHD.

Tag numbers for some elk hunts are also being reduced, though not due to disease.

While Rocky Mountain elk are doing well throughout eastern Oregon, antlerless elk tags are being reduced in the Imnaha and Chesnimnus units.

The elk populations in these two units are now at or close to the population MOs (management objectives) so tags are being populations near MO.

Elk tags are also being reduced in the Maury unit where fewer elk were in the unit the last several hunting seasons and hunter success has been very low.

The controlled hunt deadline remains May 15, 2020. Hunters who have already applied may change their hunt choices free of charge until June 1, 2020.

through their online account (under Recreational Portfolio/Controlled Hunts; see how-to online).

Hunters can adjust their application

If you need assistance, contact ODFW Licensing at odfw.websales@state.or.us, (503) 947-6101.

Note that fewer licensing staff are currently working due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so be patient when calling or email-

Wildfire Awareness Month focuses on making homes wildfire-safe

May is Wildfire Awareness Month in Oregon, and federal, state and firefighting agencies are encouraging Oregonians to make sure their homes and property are protected from wildfire.

The Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal and Keep Oregon Green, in collaboration with Oregon forest protective associations, the Office of Emergency Management and federal wildland agencies, are taking this opportunity to promote defensible space around homes before fire strikes this summer. With many Oregonians spending more time at home because of statewide efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, residents can use the coming weeks to reduce risks and make their homes and communities

"The roof is one of the most critical parts of the house when it comes to wildfire protection," says fense against wildfire," says move quickly, so residents Oregon State Fire Marshal Jim Walker. "Embers can collect and ignite on the roof, in gutters and enter unscreened openings around the house. Non-combustible roofing material is preferred. Regardless of the construction, please keep your roofs, gutters and eaves clear of all leaves, pine needles and other flammable debris."

To reduce the risk, fire officials suggest removing dead vegetation a minimum of 30 feet around homes and other structures. In most cases, trees and healthy plants do not need to be removed. However, trees should be pruned and grass kept short and green to keep fire on the ground and more manageable by fire crews. Maintain a fivefoot fire-free area closest to the home using nonflammable landscaping material and fire-resistant plants.

"Defensible space is a property's first line of de-

Oregon Department of Forestry Fire Prevention Coordinator Tom Fields. "Creating and maintaining defensible space around homes can improve your property's likelihood of surviving a wildfire. Having defensible space also makes it safer for firefighters who may have to defend someone's home."

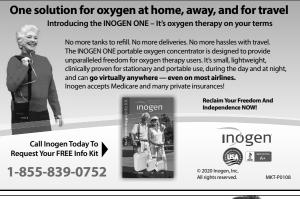
Homeowners should also consider access issues for large fire trucks. Long driveways should be at least 12 feet wide, have 10 feet of vegetation clearance from the centerline out, and about 14 feet overhead. Large vehicle turnaround areas are critical for your safety as well as firefighter safety.

Should a fire occur near a community, Oregon Office of Emergency Management Director Andrew Phelps encourages residents to be prepared if an evacuation is necessary. "Wildfires can come without warning and

need to prepare now in case they have to leave their home," Phelps said. "Make sure to put together a 'Go Kit,' register for emergency notification systems in your community and make a plan where your family will go and how you will stay in contact if evacuated."

It is the homeowner's responsibility to protect their homes by building defensible space. For more information, visit the websites for the Office of State Fire Marshal, the Office of Emergency Management, Keep Oregon Green and the Oregon Department of Forestry, or call your nearest ODF or forest protective association office.

Additional information on preparing for wildfires can be found on the Ready. gov website.







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Families who have experienced significant income loss may have become eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, and there is still time to apply. Apply online at https:// www.ode.state.or.us/apps/ FRLApp/Default or contact your local school.

Benefits will be retroactive to March 16 for students who received free and reduced-price meals when schools closed. For newly eligible free or reduced-price meals or SNAP households, benefits will start at the beginning of the month they become eligible. Eligible families will receive the following for each child:

- \$69 for March
- \$126 in April
- \$120 in May • \$69 in June
- Additional options to strengthen food security among Oregonians, in-
- clude the ability for households to: • Use their EBT card to include online food pur-
- chases through Amazon and Walmart (delivery fees not included). • Take advantage of the
- double up food bucks program, which matches every \$1 of EBT funds spent - up to \$10 - on fresh fruit and vegetables at participating local farmers markets.
- DHS will continue to work with federal partners to provide greater assistance to Oregonians in need. To apply for Nutrition Assistance, visit needfood.oregon.gov or call 2-1-1.



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