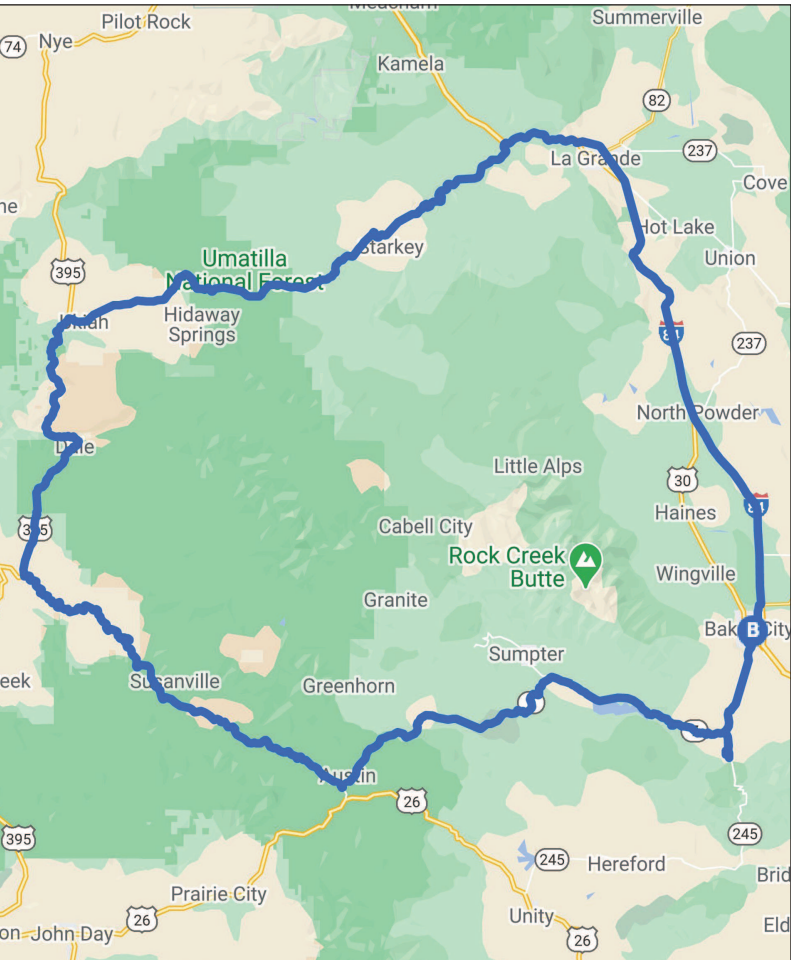




This 215-mile loop through the Blue Mountains passes through Baker City and La Grande.

CHUKAR

Continued from Page 1B

Fresh snow holds the birds a little tighter, their tracks betraying their presence. Even without snow, Chas traverses the rolling sagebrush beyond the cliffs, inspecting the recency of scat, and slowing to a halt when it's fresh. Remaining still unnerves birds that may be holding nearby. I've seen it work time and again. The covey's thunderous flush like a time bomb exploding at an unknown moment. Remaining calm on the flush is key to drawing an accurate bead.

We have had some good days in the rolling sage. The place literally crawling with birds. A large sagebrush-steppe slope with a few deep crevasses rolls along the western edge of the Central Washington scablands, much like the Eastern Oregon landscape. I recall a day running Finn with Chas and having a ball. Coveys dappled the terrain, flushing



Finn takes a break in the sagebrush, listening to the tempting, maniacal "chuking" of chukar.

wild and valiantly fleeing into the cliffs where they would "chuk" manically, tempting the foolish predator. At long last, a covey held tight and two came to the vest once our barrels were empty.

With the season ending Jan. 31, only a few weeks remain to seek the elusive

"devil bird" in Eastern Oregon. The grasslands west of the Blues are usually a good, relatively local area, but chukar numbers seem a bit lower than usual this year, which is interestingly consistent with Central Washington. Puzzling is the conversely exceptional Hun year about an hour north near Walla Walla.

Regardless of bird numbers, you should take a hike. Your scatter gun and bird dog, if you have one, would appreciate the exercise. And cabin fever looms, compounded by another nine months before the 2021 chukar season.

Brad Trumbo is a fish and wildlife biologist and outdoor writer in Waitsburg, Washington, where he also actively serves the Walla Walla-based Blue Mountain Pheasants Forever chapter. For tips and tales of outdoor pursuits and conservation, visit www.bradtrumbo.com.

WANDERLUST

Continued from Page 1B

Over the final 10 miles or so, only along the river itself, and on the north-facing slopes of its ever-deepening canyon, do the ponderosas hang on.

About 20 miles west of Bates the road goes through Galena, a legacy of the 19th century gold mining boom. Many of the mines were a couple miles to the north along Elk Creek and clustered near Susanville, a town far more ghostly than Galena.

A road leads about a quarter mile north from Galena to the town's historic cemetery. We walked through it back in September during a camping trip and I was intrigued to see it with snow softening the scene. It is perhaps the most tranquil burying ground I've visited. The cemetery lies on a knoll among second-growth pines, the ground immaculately maintained and the only sound, while we were there, the whisper of the winter wind. It is a fine place for contemplation, to read the inscriptions and to ponder lives both long and short.

Where the Middle Fork Road meets Highway 395, turn right and immediately start climbing back into the mountains.

The highway, after crossing Mead-owbrook Summit, commences a winding course along two streams. For several miles the road parallels the North Fork of the John Day River. Then, when the North Fork veers west into its lower canyon, where it will many miles later join the Middle Fork, the highway follows Camas Creek.

After about 28 miles on Highway 395, turn right (east) on Highway 244 at a sign for Ukiah.

Highway 244, known variously as the Ukiah-Hilgard or Starkey Highway, is a delightful drive in any season. Traffic is light and the scenery varied, as the highway bisects both forest and mountain meadow, with Camas Creek usually close by.

We stopped to snow-shoe around the Bear Wallow campground, about 10 1/2 miles east



Lisa Britton/For EO Media Group

Interpretive signs at Bear Wallow campground explain how steelhead spawn in the creek of the same name along Highway 244.

of Ukiah. The campground is closed, of course, but the half-mile nature trail along its namesake creek was easy to follow, and Max in particular enjoyed scraping snow off the many signs that described the importance of the stream as spawning habitat for steelhead.

Highway 244 tops out at Blue Mountain Summit, the divide between the North Fork John Day and Grande Ronde river drainages, then descends to the Grande Ronde near Starkey.

Interstate 84 is about 11 miles farther.



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CROSSWORD PUZZLER

- ACROSS
- 1 List detail

5 Pita treat

9 Perceive

12 Boy or man

13 Juice a grapefruit

14 Cobbler's tool

15 Excessively optimistic person

17 Valuable mineral

18 Gridiron stats

19 Finds out about

21 Captures

24 Connery of "Dr. No"

26 Dry

27 German connector

28 View from an oasis

32 Energy-efficient bulb

33 Call — cab

34 Hair goop
- 35 Boors

37 Dawber or Shriver

38 Smooth-talking

39 Ivory source

41 Eric Clapton classic

42 Bobby of Indy fame

45 Yes, in Kyoto

46 Gehrig or Rawls

47 Pilot's instrument

53 Bite

54 Fixed the table

55 Pamplona runner

56 Easel display

57 Indefinite amount

58 Jellystone bear
- DOWN
- 1 Mischievous child

2 Chinese "way"

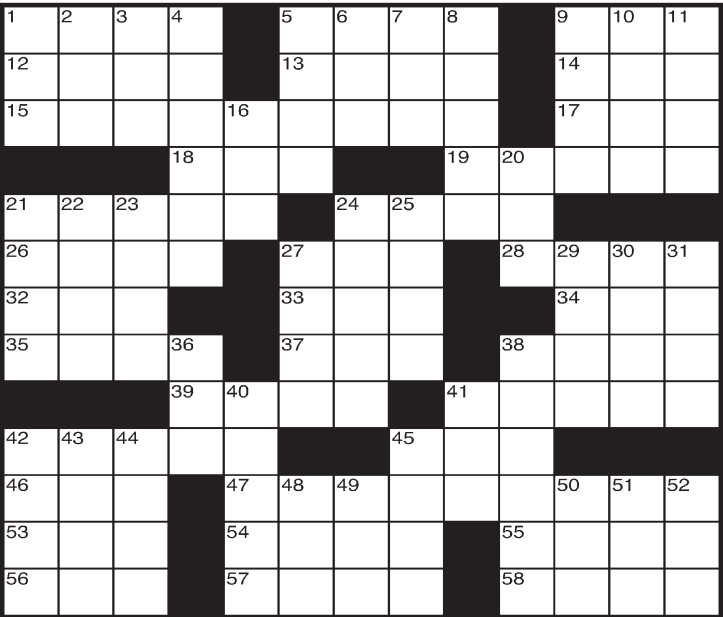
3 Pipe bend

4 Liquefied

Answer to Previous Puzzle



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- 5 Pâté de foie —

6 Itch

7 Was up for election

8 Cornhusker city
- 9 Heroic tale

10 Water vessel

11 Endangered trees

16 Gridiron divs.

20 Conclude

21 Dusting powder

22 Land measure

23 Pirate captain

24 Underhanded person

25 Holland export

27 Refs' kin

29 Not pretty

30 Buzz's capsule-mate

31 Isle off Sicily

36 Fem. saint

38 High spirits

40 Europe-Asia divider

41 Flee

42 Radius neighbor

43 Roulette color

44 Bldg. manager

45 Conceal

48 Philosopher — tzu

49 Mr. Burton

50 Unduly

51 Work unit

52 King, to monsieur

110 Announcements

110 Announcements

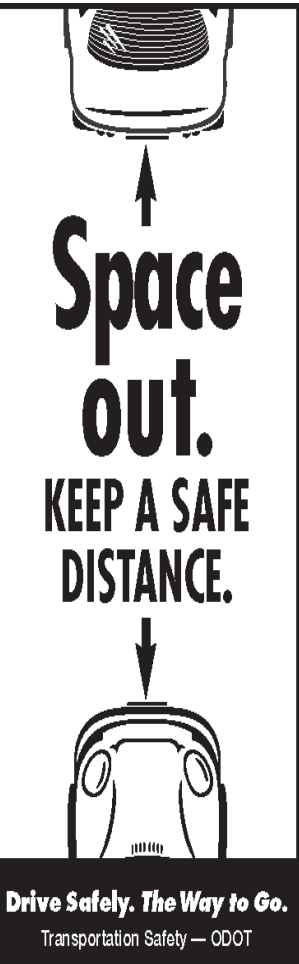
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