

Meat of hunting season underway

Archery season begins today, with controlled hunts for deer in all units

EO Media Group

Oregon's big game hunting season is already underway, with bear, antelope and some other hunts ongoing, but the meat of the season begins today with the start of archery season.

The 2021 season is noteworthy for one significant change — all archery deer hunting in Eastern Oregon is controlled this year.

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission decided last year to end the general archery season for Eastern Oregon, in which there was no limit on tags, and archers could hunt in any legal area. But this year bowhunters had to apply for a deer tag for a specific unit, the same system that applies for rifle seasons.

Eastern Oregon controlled archery deer tags are not valid in the Western Oregon general archery season. Eastern Oregon controlled archery deer tags are valid only in the unit or units identified for each hunt.

The Fish and Wildlife Commission is considering making a similar change for archery elk hunting starting in 2022, although some units would retain general seasons based on the current proposal. Another change affects bear hunters.

Due to COVID-19-re-

lated office closures, bear hunters are temporarily not required to check-in their animal at an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) office, though they do still need to report basic information about their harvest within 10 days. Hunters need to call the field or district office closest to their house and report their name, ODFW ID number, date of harvest, location of harvest (wildlife management unit), sex of animal and confirmation number for electronic tags. Or, they can email all the above information to ODFW.WildlifeInfo@state.or.us.

ODFW has released a hunting forecast for this fall.

The agency predicts that hunters might see a few more yearling bucks thanks to a mild winter and good overwinter survival. Early season hunters will be challenged by the dry conditions, however.

Beulah, Sumpter, Keating, Pine Creek, Lookout Mt. units

Fire conditions are extreme and hunters should check with local land managers to find out the latest conditions, as they can change rapidly. The Wallowa-Whitman and Umattilla national forests eased public use restrictions to Phase B starting today. That means campfires are allowed in campgrounds and other designated recreation areas, as well as in wilderness areas.

On the Malheur National

Forest, Phase C restrictions, which prohibit all campfires, remain in effect.

DEER

Overwinter survival was fair in Baker County with an average fawn ratio of 30 per 100 adults counted in the spring of 2021. Animals will be the most active early in the morning and late in the afternoon when temperatures cool off. Hunters should concentrate their efforts in areas of good forage near north slopes that provide good bedding cover.

The Beulah unit is still recovering from the winter of 2016-17 with a fawn ratio of 24 per 100 adults. The buck ratio is 14 per 100 does, which is just below the buck management objective of 15 per 100 does. As a result, tag numbers will remain at lower levels into the future to allow population to recover. With last year's tag cuts, hunter success was 35%, which was down 10 percent from the previous year. There will be a few more yearling bucks available for harvest this year, but only a small increase.

ELK

Elk herds in Baker County came out of the winter in good shape. Bull ratios are at or near management objective and calf ratios were good in all units. Elk populations in the Keating, Pine Creek and Lookout Mountain units continue to grow and offer good opportunity for hunters. For the best chance

at tagging an elk, get as far away from roads as possible, perhaps by hunting in one of the cooperative Travel Management Areas. Dry conditions can make hunting difficult. Animals will be the most active early in the morning and late in the afternoon when temperatures cool off. Hunters should concentrate their efforts in areas of good forage near north slopes that provide good bedding cover.

Wenaha, Sled Springs, Chesnimnus, Snake River, Minam, Imnaha units

DEER, ELK

While mule deer populations are still low, white-tailed deer have had better fawn survival and buck season is expected to be fair in all units. Elk populations are doing well, and hunters can expect good prospects for bull hunting in all units. Deer populations are below management objective in all units, while elk populations are above in all units except the Wenaha and Snake River.

Archery season is expected to be warm and dry, making hunting conditions a little difficult. Archers in the Sled Springs unit need to be aware of motor vehicle restrictions and no camping restrictions on Hancock Timber property during fire season.

The district has not detected any drop in deer or elk populations as a result of wolf activity.

Starkey, Catherine Creek, East Mt. Emily units

Deer populations are below management objective in all units. Catherine Creek buck ratios are climbing and have been over the past three years. Hunters may encounter more yearling bucks this season due to an increase in fawn survival over the winter. Starkey unit buck ratios are below management objectives and have been for several years; fawn survival over winter was average. East Mount Emily buck numbers are stable and above management objectives.

White-tailed deer numbers remain stable across the county. A disease outbreak (EHD) in Northeastern Oregon had little impact on the white-tailed deer in Union County.

The Grande Ronde muzzleloader hunt is a great opportunity for hunters to

harvest an animal.

ELK

Elk numbers are stable throughout Union County. Over winter survival was high with good calf numbers overall. Bull ratios have been low in the Starkey Unit but are above average in the Catherine Creek Unit. Mt. Emily Unit continue to provide trophy quality hunting opportunity.

The Starkey Unit Travel Management Area is a great place to start for big game hunters new to the area; maps are available online or at the La Grande office. General spike season is a great time to elk hunt in the Starkey unit without the crowds of first season.

Look for elk in the steep terrain of the Starkey and Catherine Creek units. The Access and Habitat program continues to provide genuine hunting opportunities within Union County and should not be overlooked.

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110 Announcements

110 Announcements

114 Self-Help Group Meetings

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 Joseph Methodist Church (basement on northside)
 Joseph, OR
 6-7pm. Contact 541-398-1398

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS
 1 Swit co-star
 5 Sing loudly
 9 Talented
 12 Thin
 13 Dumpster output
 14 Tissue layer
 15 Quickly
 17 Have a late meal
 18 Punch
 19 Attack on a fort
 21 Trout habitats
 24 The very essence
 26 Part of a list
 27 Large amount
 28 Hang five
 32 "Simpsons" bartender
 33 Goddess of dawn
 34 Like the horizon
 35 Dr.'s visit

DOWN
 1 High peak
 2 August kid, maybe
 3 Court figures, briefly
 4 Ballgame opener
 5 Skiff or dinghy

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE
 CORK IDLE BOB
 ULNA COAL AHA
 RESIDENCE RIB
 SOD CANOE
 EMCEE FATS
 NEAR LED PICA
 YAM IDA CUM
 ATOM FEM GOBI
 ALEX RENEE
 KNOW GUT
 YEW ATTENUATE
 REL MAUL PAIR
 ADS ARTS SAME

6 Publishing execs
 7 Parcel of land
 8 Ringlet
 9 Church part
 10 Stopper
 11 Sort
 16 That fellow's
 20 That thing's
 21 Peru's capital
 22 At the peak
 23 Retain
 24 Hired thugs
 25 Technical sch.
 27 Pierre's head
 29 Sci-fi landers
 30 Inflatable item, maybe
 31 Unravel
 36 Harbor vessel
 38 Motion detector
 40 Lines of stitches
 41 Last letter
 42 Aparicio of baseball
 43 "— and the King"
 44 Wands
 45 Propagated
 48 — few rounds
 49 Six-shooter
 50 Kind of jump
 51 Big galoot
 52 Deli loaf

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110 Announcements

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