

Return of the elusive CATBIRD



BRAD TRUMBO
UPLAND PURSUITS

The cool humidity of summer rain stuck to my skin as the front rumbled in. Lightning flashed in the distance casting a disco ball lighting effect on the riparian floor beneath the dense stand of white alder and choke-cherry. The alder catkins released the few remaining tufts of cotton seeds as the branches rattled in the breeze, and among the clatter of leaves, the faint cry of the gray catbird drifted through the timber.

The catbird was one of a few species to successfully raise a clutch for the first time in the alder run during the spring of 2021 and I was unsure if it would return. When I purchased the property in 2016, cattle had been grazing the meager acreage and kept the brush tamped down in the now lush creek corridor and the birds have taken notice of the vegetation rebound. Bullock's orioles, yellow warblers, and even a varied thrush all appeared last spring, but their appearance in 2022 was uncertain.

I had stalked the catbird with my Nikon for a week and it proved formidable in the predator avoidance department. Wary and cunning, it would tolerate only fleeting glimpses, bolting the moment it realized I had established line-of-sight. The bird left me to log dozens of useless photos as my target acquisition skills had rusted since the upland bird hunting season closed.

I knew its namesake cat-like call, but the variety of other voices I thought I was hearing was the cat-

An excellent photo of the gray catbird exercising its vocal cords.
John Benson/
Contributed Photo



Stalking this master of mimicry with a camera

bird proudly showcasing its robust vocal array. Kneeling by the paddock fence and peering through the lichen-encrusted rails and tree branches finally provided a couple moments to observe the wary bird.

Male catbirds sing a tune that can be minutes long and comprised of bits of other bird songs, even those of domestic chickens and frog ribbits. Tones of the American robin, red-winged blackbird, lesser goldfinch, House finch, and House wren projected from the catbird's powerful vocal cords as I photographed. All of these species were simul-

taneously present on the homestead, but had I never laid eyes on them, I would have been left to assume the catbird was putting me on.

While not as showy as beauties like the Bullock's oriole, the catbird is a beauty in its own right. If you believe the color gray can be rich and deep, then you've probably spied the catbird at some point in time.

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It took a week to capture this modest photo of the gray catbird as it darted among the alders and shrubbery.

Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

Chinook season opens June 25 on Imnaha and Wallowa rivers

EO Media Group

ENTERPRISE — For the first time since 2016, anglers will be able to fish for spring chinook salmon in the Imnaha and Wallowa rivers.

This year's spring chinook run is exceeding biologists' expectations.

"All current projections indicate this year's run will exceed our preseason forecast and provide an opportunity to harvest spring chinook locally," said Kyle Bratcher, district fish biologist at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) office in Enterprise. "In the past, these have been popular fisheries and we're glad to see numbers that allow anglers to get out there."

Through June 1, a total of 149,031 adult chinook had passed Bonneville Dam on the Columbia River near Cascade Locks. That's 29% above the average for 2012-2021, and 110% above the 2017-21 average.

Regulations for the two rivers:

- Imnaha River: Open June 25 to July 10 from the confluence with the Snake River upstream to the Summit Creek Bridge.

- Wallowa River: Open June 25 to July 24 from the lower fence of Minam State Park upstream to the confluence with the Lostine River.

The bag limit for both rivers is two adult hatchery spring chinook per day, and five hatchery jacks. Anglers must stop fishing for salmon for the day when they retain two adult salmon and may not continue to fish for jacks (which are under 24 inches long).

Hook gaps can't exceed 3/4 of an inch, and all other statewide and zone regulations apply.

Want to make dad's day? We love our gear and gimmicks

So much is going on in the outdoor world that I almost forgot that Father's Day is barreling down on us. I'd already written and submitted another article and suddenly remembered and had to cancel the first one to slip this one in.

I'm lucky, I had the best mom and dad in the world and I hope you did too. But even if they aren't perfect, your dad still holds the position of the most influential man in your life. But if you're like me, I never knew what

to get dad. He seemed to have everything he needed. When he got older, he didn't

hunt and fish as much and pretty much just wanted to work on the farm and fix fence and feed cattle. So all he'd ever ask for is a pair of leather work gloves.

Come on, you can put a little more effort into buying your dad a Father's Day gift than I did. Now for the good news. If your dad is an outdoorsman then take heart — outdoorsmen are easy to buy for. We love our gear and gimmicks. And due to a deluge of advertising we're convinced that if we could just have this lure or that bullet that our life

would be great and we'd be successful.

You don't have to spend a fortune to light up his eyes, BUT, you do have to buy exactly what he wants. His tastes/needs will be very, very specific. So do a little research. Ask him what he wants. Get a list so it will still be a surprise as to what he gets. Or talk to a local outdoor store and ask them what is hot.

Or, I get to test a lot of gear every year. Here are some items that have caught my eye.

FISHING

- Mister Twister plastics
- Mister Twister jig heads
- Flies from flydealflies.com These are very economical

• New fishing rod/reel. Buy him a good one that will last for a long time and he'll remember you every time he uses it.

• Frogg Togg rain gear

• Dip net

• ProLine Baits Spray this in a bag of his Mister Twister tails and it will increase his catch.

• 5.11 tactical pants. Great for fishing due to having multiple pockets.

• Electric fish fillet knife from Smith's Consumer Products

• Heybo fishing shirts

HUNTING

- Smith's Consumer Products and Knives of Alaska both make the two top boning knives on the market.

- Ammo—this one will be very specific.

- Smith's line of knife sharpening gear

- Day packs

- GPS

- Fire starting gear. Waterproof matches, fire starting tinder and I always carry a few cheap Bic lighters.

- Blue Book of Gun Values

- Bowden Tactical. They offer a lot of accessories to dress up his AR.

- CLAMTAINERS offers plastic containers to carry his ammo.

- Alien holsters

- 5.11 tactical pants are great for hunting

- UMAREX Airguns. Airguns are wildly popular right now and Umarex offers a plethora of options.

- JSB makes the best pellets

- XGO base layers

- Otis Lead Remover hand wipes

- Otis Elite Range Box

- Axil hearing protection

BACKPACKING

- Alps Mountaineering "Dash" backpacking chair

- Alps Mountaineering tents. They offer

all sizes.

• Garmont makes some awesome hiking boots. Italian boot companies are legendary for mountain climbing boots.

- Firestarting gear

- I just found some flashlights. They utilize solar charging so you don't have to carry a lot of batteries plus, you can also charge other gear off of them. How cool is that? Check out hybridlight.com.

- Small aluminum coffee pot. I pick these up at garage sales.

- Alps sleeping pad

- Hiking socks

- Backpacking meals

- Smith's Consumer folding knives.

They offer a lot of options.

- Adventure Medical Kits gear. I love their moleskin for blisters when hiking.

- Aquimira filtered water bottles

BONUS GIFTS

- BRG9 Elite 9mm. Very economical.

\$399.99 16+1 Great EDC gun.

- Guided fishing trip

- Go fishing with him this summer. That will be the best gift you could ever give him. I love it when Katy or my girls go fishing with me.

- 5.11 wrist watch

- Diamond Blades Surge knife



Tom Claycomb/Contributed Photo
Outdoorsmen love their gear. In this one Otis Range Box alone I have a million different pull-through cables, jags, brushes, cleaning oils, patches and the list goes on and on.