

SHOOTING THE BREEZE Good shooting accessories are worth the extra weight

Technology is always advancing and while I don't pretend nor predicate that greater skill comes with the purchase of cunning gadgets, there are things that you can buy that can be game-changers. For the sake of brevity, I want to focus on three extremely useful accessories you can carry on your hunt.



Dale Valade

uphill and downhill shots. Mostly they take the guesswork out of making your shots, whether you're a bow hunter up close or a rifleman shooting several football fields away. There are various brands and designs starting for around an affordable \$200 and going up from there.

They are certainly worth every penny. Third and finally, the collapsible tripod. Many is the time you've read that I espouse using field rests and the four shooting positions; I assure you that advice still stands where possible. Once in a while you may have a shot situation where you simply cannot get steady from a field position or improvised rest.

On my recent aoudad hunt I was caught in a place where I could not shoot prone, nor sitting, nor kneeling. To stand up would've betrayed us to our quarry, which would've fled. Thankfully, I brought my BOG Pod tripod, and with a little ingenuity we were able to make the shot.

I've seen these tripods in action many times and in open country with lots of uneven ground and tall brush, they can be the difference between feast or famine. The BOG Pod is constructed of lightweight aluminum and plastic with quiet telescopic legs making stealth adjustments with ease.

Adding more weight to your hunting pack is hardly an idea any of us want to entertain. But if you cut back to only 10 extra cartridges and leave your lucky set of horseshoes at home to make room for the three aforementioned items, you'll be able to dust off those game bags for the pack out. You may not need them today, but the time will come that you do!

What are some gadgets that you never leave home? Write to us at shootingthebreeze@me.com or check us out on Facebook!

Dale Valade is a local country gent with a love for the outdoors, handloading, hunting and shooting.

The first is the binocular harness strap. Some hunters minimize the carrying of binoculars at all. This to me is foolish, but I can empathize. Ounces make pounds and after hiking the hills all day, any extra weight is looked upon with the same withering gaze as dirty dishwater, but making sure of your target before you let fly is too important.

Binoculars traditionally come with a lanyard, dangling the weight of your field glasses around your nape. Bino harnesses and harness straps are offered by multiple manufacturers and by design encourage bringing those weighty field glasses along. Incorporating adjustable stretchy material, they rest the weight of the binoculars upon your shoulders.

Your field glasses are carried in a low yet quickly accessible position on your chest or abdomen. The harness works like a minipack, with pockets for whatever you deem important, while the harness strap is purely for your binoculars.

The second and most expensive item on our list is the rangefinder. My uncle Mick Jenison showed me the first rangefinder I ever personally saw in the early '90s. It was about the size of a red brick and kind of a one-trick pony. Many of you have been carrying these since they became widely available, but if not I assure you contemporary rangefinders are better than ever.

About one-quarter the size of the first one I saw as a kid, the rangefinders of today can be programmed with holdovers for your cartridge and factor in the angles of those pesky

Tribes sue over water releases

By GEORGE PLAVEN
Capital Press

KLAMATH FALLS — The Klamath Tribes are suing the federal government under the Endangered Species Act to halt water diversions from Upper Klamath Lake for irrigated agriculture along the Oregon-California border.

The lawsuit, filed May 9 against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Reclamation, seeks to protect two species of endangered sucker fish, C'waam and Koptu, that are endemic in the Upper Klamath River drainage.

C'waam and Koptu are culturally significant to the Klamath Tribes, used historically for food and ceremonial purposes. Both species were listed as endangered in 1988, and populations that once numbered in the tens of millions have since declined to fewer than 50,000 surviving fish, according to tribal estimates.

Reclamation operates the Klamath Project, delivering irrigation water from Upper Klamath Lake for 170,000 acres of farmland straddling Southern Oregon and Northern California. Farmers in the basin grow potatoes, onions, horseradish, garlic, mint and hay, among other crops.

As part of an environmental assessment



George Plaven/Capital Press

The Klamath Tribes are suing the federal government under the to halt water diversions for irrigation from Upper Klamath Lake.

with the USFWS — known as a Biological Opinion, or BiOp — Reclamation must maintain a minimum surface elevation of 4,142 feet in Upper Klamath Lake during April and May for C'waam and Koptu to access shoreline spawning habitat.

However, with the basin suffering through its third consecutive year of extreme drought, the agencies acknowledged there is not enough water in the system to meet that objective.

Despite this, Reclamation announced in April it would release approximately 50,000 acre-feet of water for irrigators. That is just 15% of full demand.

Despite the limited allocation the Tribes argue the government is willingly violat-

ing the ESA while C'waam and Koptu slip closer to extinction. In a statement, the Tribes claimed they "see no alternative" but to sue the federal agencies.

"When their own longstanding formula (driving their own ecologically inadequate BiOp) showed that zero water could be safely taken from endangered fish for agriculture, (Reclamation) simply tossed it aside and made the cynical political calculation that they could ignore the ESA with impunity, allocate water to Project farmers and hasten the imminent extinction of fish that have lived here, and only here, in the homeland of the Klamath Tribes for thousands of years," the Tribes stated.

UPLAND PURSUITS

Patterns key to tricking turkeys

By BRAD TRUMBO

Spring is upon us, and with the return of hummingbirds and the onset of flower and fruit tree bloom comes the wild turkey breeding and hunting seasons. The thunderous gobble of a dashing mature tom (male) puffed up and strutting to impress the ladies induces heart-racing, palm-sweating and immense anticipation for the fanatic turkey hunter.

A wild turkey's keen vision and hearing makes for a challenging hunt. Turkeys are notoriously difficult to call, and successful hunts often require years of practice to perfect call techniques and positioning for the bird's approach. Embracing and learning from failure is part of the game, but scouting flocks and identifying their patterns on patchwork landscapes gives the hunter an advantage, particularly when hunting the Rio Grande (Rio) turkeys of the Blue Mountains.

The Blue Mountain foothills provide cover, shade and nightly roosting trees while allowing safe access to the grain fields and grassy slopes along brushy creek bottoms. Spotting a flock can be easy in the mornings and afternoons. Rio often

stick to routine preferred covers within a home range that averages between 370 and 1,360 acres, according to the National Wild Turkey Federation, and learning a flock's daily movement and whereabouts makes the right time and place two easy ingredients for success.

Just past five in the evening, a passel of toms and hens erupted in discordant gobbles and yelps up the canyon ahead. Like clockwork, the birds were stirring for their evening routine. Timber concealed them, so I kept watch over the open ridgelines. Fire had swept through about five years prior, thinning the timber and leaving open slopes with biscuitroot in full bloom and blackberry thickets leafing out in the draws.

A gray hen decoy stood off to my right. Over my left shoulder, I spied a red head pop up above the ridgeline, hundreds of yards distant. It was a lone tom and gut instinct whispered that I would come to know this bird well before the evening ended.

In the span of about 10 minutes, the tom worked his way down to a logging road that followed the canyon bottom. It was then that I decided to strike up a conversation. A series of questionable, high-pitched yelps drifted from my box call,

which I had rigged to work in a pinch after busting a key component. The calls sent the cadre of love-sick gobblers into panic mode but the tom I had spotted first simply kept quiet, flipped a U-turn, and started in my direction. Wow, "Quiet Tom" is actually coming, I thought, nearly out loud.

The logging road suddenly became a turkey lek. Seven toms spewed from the timber onto the road, puffed up into full strut, sidled up to the ladies, and gobbled at every call. Hens began filing by and an old girl piped up with a unique rough voice like playing a güiro. The flock soon started my way, but "Quiet Tom" was ahead of them all. He had skirted the masses, popped out on the road below them, and spied my decoy.

His black, rope-like beard bounced against his chest as he closed the distance. Preparing for action, I shifted slightly, disengaged the safety on my black Stevens 12-gauge and steadied the bead around the decoy. The brush pile I sat behind blocked me entirely from the end of the road. The only place a bird could get an eye on me was alongside the decoy, and by then it would be too late.

"Quiet Tom" reached 40 yards and pecked a few small gravels before committing to the decoy. A well-timed kissing sound caused him to stretch his neck out in curiosity. An eye-blink later, I stood to retrieve my first turkey of the year and gave thanks for the blessing of a stunning young tom.

What appeared to be jet-black body feathers shone marvelous emerald, ruby, and bronze when rolled in the orange glow of the evening sun.

His beard was twice the circumference and immaculately full compared to the other toms I had been watching. His spurs were short, only a half-inch or so, but as big around as a dime. His tail fan and rump feathers were flawless, possibly because he was a younger bird who avoided tussles with the older toms.

"I'm going to pretend that bird came to my calling," I mentioned to my buddy Dean, who had filmed the hunt, knowing that the screeching from the box call would likely have cost me that bird had it been later in the season. Had I not called at all, it's a safe bet that his evening routine would have brought him to me regardless.

I had watched this flock from the point of a lower ridge for two days and knew where and how they moved. The flock was roosting and sheltering in the canyon conifers and traveling the logging road morning, noon, and night. Thirteen toms were visible from my vantage and the seven that called that canyon home would take turns strutting in pairs in the opening at the end of the logging road. I set my hen decoy at the mouth of the road and slipped in behind the brush pile 30 yards adjacent while the birds loafed in the timber. It was a slam dunk.

Whether you are new to the game of gobblers or you have mastered sweet-talking the wisest old toms, scouting and patterning Rios can be an ace in the hole for bagging spring long-beards in the Blues.

Brad Trumbo is a fish and wildlife biologist and outdoor writer in Waitsburg, Washington. For tips and tales of outdoor pursuits and conservation, visit www.bradtrumbo.com.

Daily & Weekly Rates

Budget 8 Motel

711 W Main St, John Day, OR 97845 • (541) 575-2155

Sponsor:

value of newspaper in the classroom Test scores improve

CONNECTIONS
Connect to what's important... FASTER!

Blue Mountain EAGLE

5275526-1

Careers that make a difference
Work with people with disabilities!

www.ImpactOregon.careers

impact
ORGANIZATION

AW CONSTRUCTION, LLC
Featuring:

- Roofing
- Remodeling
- Fences
- Decks
- Storage Sheds
- General Construction

and Much More!

Andy Wolfer 541-910-6609 CCB#186113

CANYON CREEK Clinic

Shawna Clark, DNP, FNP
541-575-1263

235 S. Canyon Blvd. John Day, Oregon 97845

Accepting new Patients! Go to:
www.canyoncreekclinic.com

Leaf Filter
GUTTER PROTECTION

BACKED BY A YEAR-ROUND CLOG-FREE GUARANTEE

EXCLUSIVE LIMITED TIME OFFER!

15% OFF & **10% OFF**

FINANCING THAT FITS YOUR BUDGET!

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE 1-855-536-8838

Prepare for Power Outages & Save Money

GENERAC PWRCELL
SOLAR + BATTERY STORAGE SYSTEM

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!

ACT NOW TO RECEIVE A \$300 SPECIAL OFFER!
(844) 989-2328

GENERAC

Prepare for power outages today

WITH A HOME STANDBY GENERATOR

FREE 7-Year Extended Warranty* A \$695 Value!

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE
CALL NOW BEFORE THE NEXT POWER OUTAGE
(877) 557-1912

dish **BRING EVERYTHING YOU LOVE TOGETHER!**

Blazing Fast Internet! ADD TO YOUR PACKAGE FOR ONLY **\$19.99** /mo. where available

2-YEAR TV PRICE GUARANTEE **\$69.99** /mo. **190 CHANNELS** Including Local Channels!

CALL TODAY - For \$100 Gift Card Promo Code: DISH100

1-866-373-9175 Offer ends 7/13/22.

AT&T internet

FEEL THE SPEED, EVEN AT PEAK TIMES.

- Get strong, fast Wi-Fi to work and play throughout your home.*
- No annual contract.
- Power multiple devices at once—everyone can enjoy their own screen.
- Over 99% reliability.

888-486-0359

Smart security. Professionally installed.

Protection starts with prevention

Get FREE Professional Installation and Four FREE Months of Monitoring Service*

CALL NOW TO CUSTOMIZE YOUR SYSTEM
844-894-8790

vivint