

Local prospects not so good

Eastern Oregon hunting season to open Sat. Oct. 4

Eastern Oregon deer hunting season opens a week from Saturday, October 4, and although good prospects are seen generally for the eastern part of the state, Fish & Wildlife officials say the Heppner area isn't looking that good.

Fish and Wildlife spokesmen say that production and survival of mule deer in the Columbia Basin, Heppner and Fossil units was the lowest on record in 1979 which will mean extremely poor numbers of yearling deer in the coming season.

The following is a general rundown on Northeastern Oregon units and the prospects for the upcoming deer, elk, bear, upland game and waterfowl seasons:

Deer

Production and survival of mule deer in the Columbia Basin, Heppner and Fossil units was the lowest on record in 1979 which will mean extremely poor numbers of yearling deer in the coming season. Some older age-class bucks will be found at the higher elevations in these units in heavily timbered areas. Deer are generally not concentrated near agricultural lands this year due to abundant forage and water.

In Walla Walla and Mt. Emily units good numbers of forked horns are available this year but older age bucks will be scarce. The good forage production has animals concentrated at higher elevations.

The north half of Ukiah Unit is recovering fairly well from heavy fawn losses two years ago and populations of deer will be heavy to yearling age-class animals. The south half of the unit, however, has not yet recovered and buck numbers are quite low.

Wallowa County mule deer populations are below 1979 levels. The Imnaha, Minam and Sled Springs units had better fawn survival in 1980 but production is still below average. Because of the poor fawn survival, yearling buck numbers will be below normal.

Union County deer populations have shown much improvement following the severe winter losses of two years ago. Good numbers of mature bucks are available as well as good numbers of yearling deer. Best prospects appear to be in Catherine Creek and Starkey units.

Sumpter, Keating, Lookout Mountain and Pine Creek Unit deer numbers are similar to what was found last year. Fawn survival was up somewhat so a larger percentage of the available buck crop should be of yearling age-class. There will be somewhat fewer older age bucks.

Fair deer hunting is expected this year in Grant County. There is substantial improvement over the very poor prospects seen last year although deer populations are still somewhat below average.

Elk

Elk populations are showing a slight decline in Heppner and Fossil units because of the extensive road systems and reduced cover due to logging. Elk are scattered in small herds. Stormy weather will be needed to improve success after the opening weekend. Because of heavy harvest last

year branch-antlered bulls will be fewer in number.

Bull numbers in Walla Walla, Mt. Emily and Ukiah units appear to be up somewhat with a fair to good carryover of older age-class bulls. Elk are widely distributed although the mid-elevations may be better than usual early in the season.

Prospects are very good later for hunters with permits to hunt the antlerless seasons.

Elk hunting prospects are good in most of Wallowa County Cheshinimms Unit and Snake River three-point units are by permit only as they were in 1979. Bull hunting success is expected to be good in both units.

The Imnaha, Sled Springs and Wenaha units are expected to be equal to or above last year's success. All three units are quite popular with hunters so there will be congestion in some areas. The Minam Unit experienced low calf production in 1979 so fewer yearling bulls will be available. Road closures will again be in effect in the Noregaard, Cheshinimms and Grouse-Lick Creek areas.

First season tagholders should expect fair to good success in Starkey Unit. Dry conditions during last year's hunting season reduced success so a larger percentage of older bulls are available. Stormy weather prior to the opening day will greatly improve success. The Catherine Creek Unit should be comparable with last year. Success again will depend heavily on weather conditions.

Elk numbers are about the same as last year in Pine Creek Unit but up somewhat in Sumpter and Keating units. Lookout Mountain, although not a primary elk area, does have some animals available and those hunters who know the country can do fairly well.

Elk hunting prospects in Grant County look pretty good this year. Bull numbers are generally up and a season at least as good as last year is anticipated. Better populations are found in management units in the northern half of the county, although chances for a real trophy bull are better in the south half.

Bear

Bear populations on the forested regions of northeast Oregon continue on a gradual increase. Logged areas in Starkey and Catherine Creek units appear to be especially productive. The use of dogs is almost a must for those mainly interested in bear although some are taken by deer and elk hunters. A bear tag is required and the sale cutoff date was August 22, the day before the general season opened.

Gospel music to be presented at Irrigon church

by Frances Rose Wilson

A local instrumental and singing group "The Promise," will present gospel music at the Irrigon Assembly of God on Sunday, Sept. 28, at 11 a.m. A member of the group who spent some time in Hong Kong will give a slide presentation of that city.

Upland Game

Upland game production was above average for all species in Gilliam, Morrow and Wheeler counties. Chukar and Hungarian partridge populations are high but birds are well scattered due to the abundant food and water this past summer.

Lots of moisture came at the wrong time in Umatilla County and first-attempt nesting success for pheasants was not very good. But there was a substantial re-nesting effort and biologists have observed three distinct age-classes of young pheasants. There was a good carryover of adult birds and a population equal to or nearly equal to last year is expected. The bulk of this hunting is on private land and permission is essential. Quail were also late producers this year and it looks like fairly good populations after all in spite of early pessimism. Extremely heavy ground cover exists this year and a good dog will be even more beneficial than usual.

Pheasant hunting prospects in the Grande Ronde Valley are poor to fair. Low nesting

success was observed. Pen-raised birds will again be released on Ladd Marsh Management Area. Quail and Hun populations should be comparable to last year.

Baker County upland species enjoyed an easy winter and a good adult carry-over was recorded for all species of upland game. But cold wet spring weather reduced nesting success. Huns did a bit better than other species, and quail numbers appear to be up this year.

A fair chukar season is expected on the mainstem John Day River in the Mt. Vernon to Kimberley area and on the South Fork John Day above Dayville. Brood counts were down but biologists have been seeing more birds since then.

There is not a great deal of pheasant hunting in the John Day Valley, but quail hunting can be good. Most is on private property, however, and landowner permission must be obtained.

Waterfowl

Waterfowling in Columbia Basin counties is heavily dependent on flights of mi-

grating waterfowl from the north. Little early season shooting is available.

Good numbers of resident birds are available in the Grande Ronde Valley. Prospects are good for the first week. Late season success will depend on weather and movement of migrant birds.

A good hatch of resident geese in Baker County should mean fair hunting early in the season. Better hunting will occur later.

Jump shooting for scattered ducks and geese is possible on all the streams in northeast Oregon.

Dates of Interest

October 3 - Deer Tag Sale Deadline (Eastern & Western Oregon); Handgun Validation Deadline for Deer.

October 4 - General Deer Season Opens (Eastern & Western Oregon); Chukar and Hungarian Partridge Season Opens (Eastern Oregon).

October 18 - Pheasant and Valley Quail Season Opens (Eastern Oregon); Chukar and Hungarian Partridge

Season Opens (Western Oregon).

October 31 - Rocky Mt. Elk Tag Sale Deadline (First and Second Period Tags); Hunter's Choice Deer Season Opens (Northwest Oregon).

November 1 - Rocky Mt. Elk Season - First Period Opens. November 7 - Roosevelt Elk Tag Sale Deadline (First and Second Period Tags). November 8 - Rocky Mt. Elk Season - Second Period Opens. Roosevelt Elk Season -

First Period Opens. November 15 - Roosevelt Elk Season - Second Period Opens. November 30 - Handgun Validation Deadline for Cougar.

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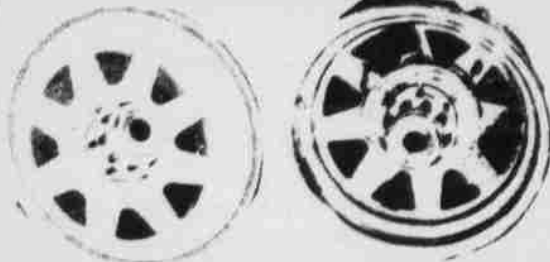
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