

Vernonian one of the winners of ODFW Sports Pac for hunters

Robert R. Gregg of Vernonia was one of 49 lucky Oregon hunters to win a 2013 Sports Pac (a \$164.75 value), and one Californian won a 2013 Non-Resident Hunting License (\$140.40 value), because they applied early for their 2012 fall big game controlled hunts. The 50 hunters were drawn from a pool of 13,887 people that applied by January 31.

Fifty more 2013 Sports Pacs or Non-Resident Hunting Licenses will be given away over two additional drawings. To be eligible, hunters must:

- Apply for and be issued a controlled hunt application by March 15, 2012 for a chance to win one of 30 Sports Pac or Non-Resident Hunting Licenses.

- Apply for and be issued a controlled hunt application by April 15, 2012 for a chance to win one of the remaining 20 Sports Pac or Non-Resident Hunting Licenses.

The next drawings will take place March 16 and April 19 and winners will be notified by mail. Hunters unsuccessful in early drawings are re-entered into future drawings. Only one

entry per hunter is allowed, meaning hunters apply for several controlled hunts are still entered only once.

ODFW and the vendor that manages its license sales system are giving away a total of 100 free 2013 Sports Pacs (or Non-Resident Hunting Licenses) over three separate drawings to encourage hunters to apply early for a 2012 fall controlled hunt. A Sports Pac includes a Combination Angling/Hunting/Shellfish License, a Combined Angling Harvest Tag, a Validation for Upland Bird and Waterfowl hunting, plus a General or Controlled Deer, General or Controlled Elk, General Cougar, General or Controlled Bear, Spring Turkey Tag and a Wildlife Area Parking Permit.

Hunters can apply for controlled hunts online, at a license sales agent, at ODFW offices that sell licenses, or by mail or fax order using the application on page 17 of the 2012 Oregon Big Game Regulations.

Mail order/fax applicants should allow 7-10 days for their applications to be processed and issued. To be eligible for

the drawing, the controlled hunt application must be issued, not just received, by the drawing deadlines (March 15 and April 15). Controlled hunt applications can be processed and issued immediately online and at license sales agents or ODFW offices.

The deadline to apply for a controlled hunt is May 15 each year. In 2011, 79,481 out of 380,639 total applications, or almost 21 percent, were processed by April 15, 2011. That compares to 21 percent in 2011 and 16 percent in 2010.

"Most controlled hunt applications are received during the last few days," said Deanna Erickson, ODFW license sales services manager. "However, these drawings have increased the number of early applicants."

In the past, the high volume of sales activity in the last few days prior to the May 15 deadline led to long lines and slowed or crashed the system.

To encourage hunters to apply early, ODFW began this special drawing a few years ago. The vendor that manages the license sales system is pur-

chasing the Sports Pac and Non-Resident Hunting Licenses for the winners.

Some of Oregon's big game hunts are limited entry, including almost all rifle hunting of

deer and elk east of the Cascades and pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, and Rocky Mountain goat hunts. These hunts require a controlled hunt application.

You can take part in the 2012 Great Backyard Bird Count

Warmer temperatures and lack of snow in parts of North America are setting the stage for what could be a most intriguing 15th annual Great Backyard Bird Count, coming up February 17-20.

Bird watchers across the U.S. and Canada are getting ready to tally millions of birds in the annual count coordinated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada.

In past counts, participants were most likely to report American Robins in areas without snow. Will more robins be seen farther north this year? Will some birds, such as Eastern Phoebes, begin their migrations earlier? And where will the "Harry Potter" owl turn up next? Snowy Owls have dazzled spectators as these Arctic birds have ventured south in unusual numbers this winter – an unpredictable occurrence that experts believe is related more to the availability of food than to weather.

"This count is so much fun because anyone can take part – we all learn and watch birds together – whether you are an expert, novice, or feeder

watcher," said Gary Langham, Audubon's Chief Scientist. "I like to invite new birders to join me and share the experience. Get involved, invite your friends, and see how your favorite spot stacks up."

Participants count birds at any location they wish for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, then enter their tallies at www.birdcount.org. Anyone can participate in the free event, and no registration is required.

Last year, participants submitted more than 92,000 checklists with more than 11 million bird observations. These data capture a picture of how bird populations are changing across the continent year after year – a feat that would be impossible without the help of tens of thousands of participants.

To learn more about how to join the count, get bird ID tips, downloadable instructions, a how-to video, past results, and more, visit www.birdcount.org. The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter at least one bird checklist online.

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