

2012 Fall Hunting Forecast

Fire restrictions and closures

Hunters need to check fire restrictions and closures before going afield, especially early in the season. Some helpful links to do that:

Oregon Dept of Forestry fire restrictions and closures

http://cms.oregon.gov/odf/pages/fire/fire.aspx#Forest_Restrictions_Closures

InciWeb

<http://inciweb.nwccg.gov/state/38/>

US Forest Service

http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/map/state_list.shtml#O

BLM

<http://www.blm.gov/or/index.php>

Turn in Poachers

Did you know that during a six-year study in southcentral Oregon, poachers killed more radio-collared mule deer than legal hunters?

Turn in Poachers using the state hotline 1-800-452-7888 or email TIP@state.or.us

Hunting statistics

Find out how hunters did last year for big game species including deer, elk, bear and cougar by reviewing ODFW's [big game hunting statistics](#)

Penalties for not reporting could begin with this year's tags

Report 2012 big game and turkey tags no later than Jan. 31, 2013—[online](#) or by calling 1-866-947-6339. Complete a report for each and every deer, elk, cougar, bear, pronghorn antelope, and turkey tag purchased—even if you didn't fill your tag or go hunting. (For 2012 hunts that end between Jan. 1-March 31, 2013, the deadline to report is April 15, 2013.)

Reporting has been mandatory for the past several years. But compliance rates are still too low to reliably use the data hunters provide, which ODFW needs to set seasons and controlled hunt tag numbers.

Penalties for not reporting could begin with the purchase of 2014 hunting licenses (available for sale Dec. 1, 2013). Hunters that fail to report their 2012 deer and elk tags could face a penalty fee of up to \$25 when they go to purchase a 2014 hunting license. This fee will be set by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission at their Oct. 5, 2012 meeting in Salem.

Deer and Elk

Hunters can thank the mild winter for good over-winter survival in many elk herds, though the dry fall sent calves into winter in less than ideal body condition in parts of the state.

Elk populations continue to be mostly stable in Oregon, though some districts are still experiencing low calf survival. See the reports from each district for more details.

The bowhunting cover girl for the 2012 Big Game Regulations, Amanda Alexander, took another elk in 2011! So did her husband, Ira—four elk in two years for the couple. Read their [full story here](#) see all the photos from their hunting trips at [ODFW's Facebook page](#):

The Alexanders shared these elk hunting tips with ODFW:

- Get in shape before hunting season—so you're ready for long hikes and heavy packs if an animal is taken. "In 2010 we did all the packing out ourselves—it took six hours to debone and bag up both elk and then eight straight hours and three trips per person to get the meat out of the woods back to camp."
- Practice often with equipment so you are confident in your equipment and your shot.
- Study your hunting spot before going afield. Use oregonhuntingmap.com, Google Earth, good BLM maps (which can be ordered) and download the topo maps to GPS. Also review [statistics](#) from the annual state Fish and Game manual to help decide which zone to apply for or where to hunt.
- Look for an area with lots of public land or property open to hunting—the bigger the better so there are more places to roam.
- Look for feed and water for the animals you will hunt.
- Look for road access or trail access. Some road access is fine but not too much. "You can't just drive around on a quad and look for elk. Maybe you can for deer but in my experience, the elk hear that from far away."
- Hunting elk is completely different than hunting deer. "It's more like hunting a big turkey during the rut. Spot and stalk."
- Look for wallows, old rubs, scat and other signs of elk.
- Put on the miles. Keep moving, slowly of course. Keep looking with binos or spot scope. And when you spot something miles away, don't be afraid to go after it.
- Learn how to be silent and keep the wind in your face. Not letting elk see or smell you is half the battle.
- Get in range and make your shot count. If all the practice and homework is done your chances increase dramatically. Right place at the right time always helps too!
- Leave the area the same as you entered it (no tire tracks or fire pits) to keep the hunting environment as natural as possible. "When we were cutting up our elk from our 2010 hunt there were elk just a few hundred yards away feeding and a nice bull screaming. We just were there doing our business not making too much noise or attention. The herd was able to do their thing. It was amazing to watch."

Black-tailed deer hunting continues to be challenging, especially on public land, but hunters have some factors working in their favor this year: Most districts report good buck survival from last year, a decrease in Deer Hair Loss Syndrome and good spring vegetation growth due to rains.

ODFW is working on better estimating black-tailed deer in western Oregon. These deer are secretive and live in dense forests, making them difficult to count. Successful western Oregon deer hunters are asked to return deer teeth which are used in population modeling efforts. See [this flyer for directions](#) on how to remove a tooth and return it with your name, address, date of kill, species killed, sex of animal, and wildlife management unit or hunt where harvested to: ODFW Wildlife Population Lab, 7118 NE Vandenberg Ave, Adair Village, OR 97330. Pre-paid, pre-addressed envelopes for teeth are available at ODFW offices and many license sales agents. Hunters that submit a tooth will receive a postcard from ODFW with information about their animal after about nine months.

Hunters could also encounter radio-collared deer. It is fine to harvest a collared deer but please return the collar to ODFW.

Reports are mixed for mule deer in eastern Oregon. Many districts saw good fawn survival due to the mild winter, but overall fawn numbers going into the winter were low. Some

districts are in a drought while others got plenty of rain. See the regional reports for more information.

ODFW continues work on the Mule Deer Initiative, an effort to reverse the trend of declining mule deer numbers focused at first on five units (Heppner, Maury, Murderers Creek, Steens Mountain and Warner). Projects include predator control, habitat improvement and increased law enforcement. An update on the effort will be available later in the fall.

Upland Birds

Oregonhuntingmap.com makes it easy to find bird hunting locations throughout Oregon. New this year, upland game bird species ranges are overlaid on the map.

Regulation changes: The possession limit forest grouse and quail (in most places) is being increased from two to three times the daily limit –so nine for each species of forest grouse (ruffed and blue) and 30 for quail (singly or in aggregate for the mtn and Calif quail). See page 14 of the Game Bird Regulations.

Heavy rains in spring meant some upland birds lost their first hatch or had reduced chick survival. But birds that re-nested generally encountered good habitat conditions, as the rains helped grass and forb growth, improving cover and food conditions for those birds with later hatches.

CHUKAR

Last year's chukar harvest of more than 75K birds was the best Oregon has seen since 2006 and close to the 20-year average. Weather within chukar range was wetter than average in the western and northern regions but very dry in the late spring and summer in southeast region. Wildfires in SE Oregon will have affected some chukar hunting areas but millions of acres of public land are still open for hunting.

HUNGARIAN GRAY PARTRIDGE

These are not the most numerous or popular of Oregon's upland game birds and their range is limited. But gray partridge numbers have been relatively strong the past few years and that trend is expected to continue in 2012.

PHEASANT

Pheasant surveys in population strongholds of Columbia Basin and northern Malheur County suggest improved populations over last year. So pheasant hunting in these areas should be better than recent averages. ODFW stocks pheasants at Denman, Fern Ridge, Sauvie Island and EE Wilson Wildlife Area; see page 14 of the Game Bird Regulations for dates on Western Oregon fee pheasant hunting.

CALIFORNIA QUAIL

About 80 percent of wildlife districts report seeing more quail this year. Production likely took a hit due to wet spring weather so the chick to adult ratio is lower, but good over-winter survival means total bird numbers in much of eastern Oregon are up.

FOREST GROUSE

These are Oregon's most popular upland bird to hunt and can be found in much of the state. Hunting will be mixed this year, with some districts reporting good production and higher than average numbers and others the opposite. Statewide, both ruffed and blue grouse numbers are expected to be below average due to three consecutive years of average or below average production.

SAGE-GROUSE

Populations improved slightly over last year and hunters can expect a larger fall population. The Whitehorse Unit was hard-hit by wildfires this year so ODFW is not offering a sage-grouse permit in that unit this year. [More information](#)

Waterfowl hunting

Duck numbers were at a record high this year in North America since surveys began in 1955, 43 percent above the long-term average according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service surveys. And this is after last year's incredible duck hunting on the westside: Sauvie Island had its best season since 1978-79, with nearly 22,000 birds taken. Fern Ridge had the highest harvest (5,500 ducks) since record keeping began in the late 1980s and 1,900 more than in 2011.

Regulation changes for waterfowl/migratory bird hunting:

- Eurasian collared-doves are now classified as unprotected wildlife and can be taken freely (no bag limit or season).
- NW Oregon General Zone goose hunting is split into three time periods to align dates with the NW Oregon Permit Goose Zone. Last period closes March 10.
- In the NW Permit Goose Zone, shooting hours extend to 4 p.m. (previously closed 3 p.m.) and check stations will be open from 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. (previously 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.).
- Tillamook County goose seasons are no longer separate from the rest of the Northwest Permit Zone.
- The South Coast Zone bag limit for dark geese during the third hunt period increases by two and white geese can now be taken during all hunt periods in this zone.
- Eurasian collared-doves are now classified as unprotected wildlife and can be taken freely (no bag limit or season).

Cougar

Advice to cougar hunters remains the same: Purchase a cougar tag and take it with you when you are hunting other big game. Most cougar are taken when hunters are pursuing other species. Tracking after snow or predator calls can also work.

Though it happened very late in the season (Dec. 29, three days before the end of the 2011 season), ODFW closed a cougar hunting season for only the third year ever last year. [The Coast/North Cascades season was closed](#) after the zone's quota of 120 cougars was reached.

The Blue Mountains zone (Zone E) saw the most cougars taken by sport hunters last year, with 93 taken. Next up was the Coast/North Cascades with 60.

See cougar harvest trends [here](#) and zone quotas [here](#). If you take a cougar, don't forget to check in your cougar (hide and skull) at an ODFW office within 10 days of harvest and to bring them in unfrozen. It's also a good idea to prop the cougar's mouth open with a stick after harvest for easier tissue sampling, teeth collection and tagging. See regulations for details.

Bear

A fall bear tag is another good thing to carry as many are taken when hunters are pursuing other species.

Especially early in the season, bear are most likely to be found in close to ripe berry crops. Look for large patches of salmonberry, thimbleberry, huckleberry, salal and, later on, Himalaya berry, and you will probably find bears. Fresh scat is your best indicator that one or more are working an area.

Successful hunters, remember you must check in bear (skull, at a minimum) at an ODFW office within 10 days of harvest and bring them in unfrozen. It's also a good idea to prop their mouths open with a stick after harvest for easier tissue sampling, teeth collection and tagging. See regulations for details.

Northwest Region Deer and Elk

RETURN DEER TEETH: Successful western Oregon deer hunters are asked to return deer teeth which are used in population modeling efforts. See [this flyer for directions](#) on how to remove a tooth and return it with your name, address, date of kill, species killed, sex of animal, and wildlife management unit or hunt where harvested to: ODFW Wildlife Population Lab, 7118 NE Vandenberg Ave, Adair Village, OR 97330. Pre-paid, pre-addressed envelopes for teeth are available at ODFW offices and many license sales agents. Hunters that submit a tooth will receive a postcard from ODFW with information about their animal after about nine months.

North Coast Watershed District (Saddle Mt., Wilson, western Trask, western Stott Mt., western Alsea, north Siuslaw wildlife management units)

DEER

Black-tailed deer on the north coast (Saddle Mt., Wilson, western Trask wildlife management units) had to survive a relatively cool and wet winter and spring. However, forage conditions have been excellent this summer. While deer densities overall are only moderate, good survival of bucks from last year's hunting season should give hunters a decent chance this year, especially in the Wilson WMU. Generally, deer densities tend to be highest in the eastern portions of these units.

Along the mid-coast (western Stott Mt., western Alsea, north Siuslaw), deer numbers appear to be increasing in various areas. The prevalence of deer hair loss syndrome continues to decrease. Buck numbers in most areas are fair to good. As in 2011, growth of vegetation has been exceptional this year and the deer appear in good body condition. The best deer hunting opportunities are the central to eastern portions of the Alsea unit and Siuslaw unit; deer numbers decline as one gets closer to the ocean. Both private industrial forestlands, state forestry and federal lands offer deer hunting opportunities. The Stott Mt – North Alsea Travel Management area also provides walk-in hunting opportunities.

Fire season may affect access on both private and public forest lands. Hunters should check with landowners or the Department of Forestry for information on forest closures.

In 2012, the deer bag limit for archery hunters and hunters with a disability permit has been changed to one buck deer having not less than a forked antler.

SADDLE MOUNTAIN UNIT

Some areas to look at include Davis Point, the lower Lewis and Clark River and the lower Necanicum River in Clatsop County and upper Rock Creek and Clear Creek in Columbia County.

WILSON UNIT

Clearcut habitat is increasing, with most occurring on private corporate forestlands. In recent years, the amount of partial and clearcut harvest on state forest lands has increased substantially. Areas with recent logging include the lower Wilson River, North Fork Wilson River, Gales Creek, Spruce Run and Camp Olson.

WESTERN TRASK UNIT

On state forest lands in the western portion, look in the Trask River and lower Wilson River basins. But some of the best hunting is on private timberlands in the *eastern* portion of the WMU where timber harvest has occurred within the last three to five years. Some areas to consider in the eastern Trask Unit are the upper portions of the Yamhill River and upper Willamina Creek. Hunters looking to experience less road traffic and more walk-in hunting opportunities are encouraged to explore the Upper Tualatin-Trask Travel Management Area located west of Henry Hagg Lake.

ELK

On the north coast (Saddle Mt., Wilson, western Trask), elk populations continue to be robust, with the highest densities in the western portions of these WMUs. Bull elk hunting this year should be very good in the Wilson and Trask due to high bull survival from last year's hunting seasons. Both WMUs have general season archery and rifle hunting opportunities. The Saddle Mountain also had high bull survival from the last two seasons.

Along the mid-coast (western Stott Mt., western Alsea, north Siuslaw), elk numbers are relatively unchanged this year: however, the observed bull ratio in the Alsea unit was slightly below management objective of 10 bulls per 100 cows. The ratio is above 10 in the Stott Mt unit. The second rifle bull elk season in Siuslaw has a bag limit of one spike bull; the bull ratio there continues to be well below management objectives.

In February 2012 the observed bull ratios in the mid-coast (Alsea, Stott Mt and Siuslaw units) was above 10 bulls per 100 cows in the Alsea Unit, but below 10 in the Stott Mt unit. The Alsea, Stott Mt and Siuslaw unit's elk populations are below management objectives at this time. The second rifle bull elk season in Siuslaw has a bag limit of one spike bull; the bull ratio there has climbed to above 10 for the first time in many years, however bulls are spread out in the unit and hunting is difficult.

Elk will be scattered throughout the units, with larger numbers of elk close to agricultural valleys. Industrial forestlands north of Highway 20 typically receive lots of hunting pressure, with young tree plantations providing good visibility and some travel management roads providing walk-in access. Forest Service lands south of Highway 34 have considerable

numbers of elk, but they are much more difficult to hunt in the thick vegetation and rugged terrain.

SADDLE MOUNTAIN

Elk rifle hunting in this unit is all limited entry, but archery elk hunting is through a single general season; both are managed under a 3-point minimum regulation. Areas with high elk numbers and open habitat include Davis Point, the lower Lewis and Clark River, Big Creek, lower Necanicum River and upper Rock Creek.

WILSON UNIT

Some popular hunting areas are the lower Wilson River, Kilchis River, Cook Creek, upper North Fork Nehalem River, Standard Grade, Spruce Run and Camp Olson.

WESTERN TRASK UNIT

Some popular areas with high numbers of elk and open habitats include Cape Lookout, Wilson River tributaries, lower Nestucca River and the Trask River.

STOTT MOUNTAIN, ALSEA UNITS

Some popular areas to hunt elk in the Stott Mountain Unit include the South Fork Siletz River, Fanno Ridge, Gravel Creek, Mill Creek, Elk Creek, Euchre Creek, and the mainstem Siletz River. Popular elk hunting areas in the Alsea include the Yachats River, Five Rivers, North Fork Siuslaw River, Big Rock Creek Road, Luckiamute River, Airlie, Burnt Woods, Grant Creek, Wolf Creek, Logsdon, Pee Dee Creek, and Dunn Forest.

NORTH WILLAMETTE WATERSHED DISTRICT (Scappoose, eastern Trask, north Willamette, north Santiam wildlife management units)

DEER

Hunters heading to the North Willamette Watershed (Scappoose, north Willamette, eastern Trask and north Santiam Units) will find mixed opportunities for black-tailed bucks this year. An increase in post-season buck ratios in the Scappoose and eastern Trask units will provide more mature bucks for hunters while the number of bucks has decreased in the north Santiam (23 bucks per 100 does).

Cool and rainy spring weather conditions increased the level of Deer Hair Loss Syndrome in the Scappoose unit for black-tails but had little effect in the eastern Trask and north Santiam units.

Hunters are reminded to contact local timber companies to obtain updated information because some roads may be closed to access due to ongoing logging operations or road building. Please read and obey all informational signs to ensure continued access to opportunities. The majority of properties in the Willamette Unit are privately owned and hunters are reminded to obtain permission before hunting on those lands. Hunters headed to the north Santiam have a variety of access opportunities from federal forestland, private

timberland and agricultural properties. Hunters should check out the [Abiqua Basin Access Area](#), a cooperative access program between Longview Timber, ODFW's A&H program and the Capitol Chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association.

Scappoose Unit

Increased buck escapement from last season and a minor decrease in fawn survival should result in improved hunting this fall. While younger age class bucks typically make up the majority of the harvest, hunters should also find a few mature bucks to keep things interesting. Hunters should be looking for habitat that has a variety of plant components and associated water sources for deer concentrations. Hunters with access to agricultural lands will find higher populations of deer. Some areas to locate deer this fall include Coal Creek, Baker Point, Peterson Point, Bacona and the upper portions of the Clatskanie River.

Eastern Trask Unit

Deer surveys show an increased buck ratio and opportunities for deer hunters should be good this fall in the eastern portion of the Trask Unit. Some of the best hunting is on private timberlands in the eastern portion of the WMU where timber harvest has occurred within the last three to five years. Hunters wanting to experience less road traffic and more walk-in hunting opportunities are encouraged to explore the Upper Tualatin-Trask Travel Management Area located west of Henry Hagg Lake. Some areas with good habitat include the upper portions of the Yamhill and Tualatin Rivers, Trask Mountain, Baker Creek, and Willamina Creek.

North Santiam Unit

The north Santiam Unit buck ratios decreased to 23 bucks per 100 does so prospects for those hunters willing to hunt thick cover where deer concentrate should be average this season. Hunters will find a wide diversity of terrain in the unit, ranging from high elevation meadows, thick old growth forests, industrial forestlands and agricultural fields, so a variety of hunting styles can be accommodated. Whether hunters choose to still hunt, set up a tree stand, rattle antlers or conduct deer drives, scouting will be critical for success. Snow in the higher elevations of the Mount Hood National Forest will improve tracking conditions and make deer more visible. Hunters looking to stay closer to home should consider hunting on industrial forestlands where land managers are reporting deer damage to recently planted conifer stands. Some locations to consider include the upper Collawash and Clackamas Rivers, Abiqua Creek, Granite Peaks, High Rocks, Butte Creek, Molalla River and the [Abiqua Basin Access Area](#).

North Willamette Unit

The long hunting season in the Willamette Unit should provide hunters with a very good opportunity to harvest a deer this season. Deer damage to agricultural crops remains high throughout the northern portion of the unit. Hunters are reminded that land within this unit is primarily privately owned. Hunters need to have established a good relationship with landowners to ensure a hunting opportunity. Hunters can find some public land hunting

opportunities in the Willamette River Recreation Guide available at [Marine Board website](#); many of the hunting spots are also listed on ODFW's [Hunting Access Map](#).

ELK

Bull elk hunting in the coastal units of the North Willamette District should be good in both the eastern Trask Unit and Scappoose Unit due to the improved bull survival during the 2011 hunting season. In the Scappoose Unit, elk are more numerous in the timberlands of the northwestern portion of the unit. In the eastern Trask, elk are widely scattered and can be found near agricultural fields and within the private timberlands.

While populations of elk in the Mt. Hood National Forest continue to decline due to limited forage opportunities, more elk can be located in the industrial forestlands and agricultural fields at lower elevations. Hunters should concentrate their efforts on these low elevation lands for their best chance of success. Contacting private landowners prior to the hunting season will be the key to finding these elk. Hunters are reminded to always ask for permission before entering private lands.

Scappoose Unit

Good bull escapement combined with improved calf recruitment should mean above average bull hunting this fall. Harvest should continue to be dominated by younger age class bulls but there should be a few mature bulls available for the persistent hunter. Hunting for antlerless elk should be similar to last year with just a few adjustments in tag numbers. Hunters are reminded that most of the timberland managers within this unit participate in the North Coast Travel Management Area and hunters should read and follow all posted regulations to ensure continued access. Some popular areas include Bacona, Rye Hill, Long Mt., Cedar Creek, Baker Point, Peterson Point and Buxton.

East Trask Unit

Slightly improved bull escapement from last hunting season will likely mean an above average opportunity for bull elk hunters this fall. Bulls will be widely scattered throughout the unit and hunters are encouraged to spend time scouting in order to locate elk before the season begins. Late season antlerless elk hunters should still have good success if they can find elk concentrated near agricultural fields and low elevation timber stands. Hunters need to be aware of frequent changes of land ownership in the agricultural-forest fringes and always ask for permission before entering private lands. Hunters wanting to do more walk-in hunting should be looking at the [Upper Tualatin-Trask Travel Management Area](#) west of Forest Grove as a good option. Other areas to consider include Trask Mt., Stony Mt. and Neverstill.

North Santiam Unit

Declining elk numbers within the Mt. Hood National Forest will make for poor elk hunting on public lands while elk hunter success should be slightly above average on lower elevation private timberlands. Hunters heading for the Mt. Hood National Forest will find elk highly

scattered and difficult to locate. Scout early and often to be successful there. Places to begin include Timothy Lake, Rhododendron Ridge and Granite Peaks. At lower elevations hunters should explore the Abiqua Basin, Butte Creek, Upper Molalla River and Eagle Creek.

SOUTH WILLAMETTE WATERSHED DISTRICT (S. Santiam, McKenzie, N. Indigo wildlife management units)

DEER

Black-tailed deer populations remain below historic levels. There are still deer available but hunters need to hunt hard and smart in order to have consistent success. The bright spot is that surveys last fall indicate that post season buck ratios remain strong with an overall ratio of 25 bucks per 100 does in the District. This means there is the potential for hunters to take some mature bucks again this year.

South Santiam Unit

The B&B Fire area of the southeast Santiam offers one of the better places to find deer on National Forest land within the District. The burn is getting brushy which is good for deer populations but can make hunting challenging. The southwest portion of the Santiam unit is primarily private lands and hunters should verify the access policy of the particular timber landowner where they plan to hunt.

McKenzie Unit

Finding deer on national forestlands in the McKenzie can be challenging. Hunters should look for areas with recent thinning projects or controlled burns. Some thinning has occurred around the North Fork of the Middle Fork Willamette and in the Scott Creek area west of the Mt Washington Wilderness. There are strong deer populations on Weyerhaeuser property in the Wendling and Fall Creek areas. Access is often limited to specific days and areas. Please call the Weyerhaeuser Access Hotline at 1-888-741-5403 for the latest on hunter access restrictions. Hunters should be aware that the Wendling Travel Management Area is in effect this year through the end of general rifle deer season. This project has increased hunter access with 7-day a week hunting but vehicle travel will be restricted to designated open roads. Open roads will be designated with orange road markers in the field. Access may be closed or restricted due to fire danger, management needs, or timber harvest activities. Call the Weyerhaeuser Access Hotline at 1-888-741-5403 prompt #6 for updated information on access restrictions. Hunter compliance is important for this increase in access to continue into future years. During 2011, the Wendling TMA was very popular with hunters and experienced a high volume of use. For example, 279 vehicles entered the TMA on the opening morning of general rifle deer season. Hunters concerned with potential crowding can take advantage of the 7 day a week access to hunt mid-week.

N. Indigo

The northern portion of the Indigo unit constantly has a high buck ratio but can be challenging to hunt. The 2009 Tumblebug Fire is starting to produce forage and deer populations in the area should begin to respond. Hunters will have the best success around

the edges of the burn or in areas where the fire was patchy. Deer numbers have started improving on private timberlands southeast of Cottage Grove with recent timber harvest activity. Please call the Weyerhaeuser Access Hotline at 1-888-741-5403 for the latest on hunter access restrictions. Hunters may encounter radio collared deer in the Indigo Unit. Hunters are reminded to contact ODFW if they harvest a radio collared deer.

ELK

Expect elk hunting to be similar to recent years. Bull ratios have remained at or above management objective for most areas but hunters need to work hard in order to be successful. Hunters tend to have higher success rates in the coastal units than in the Cascades.

Elk populations in the Cascades appear stable to increasing on private lands but decreasing on national forestlands. The result is lower hunter success rates as hunters have a difficult time finding elk on national forestland and have limited access to private lands. All this makes pre-season scouting very important. Hunters are advised to look just outside high elevation wilderness areas for elk as the wilderness areas tend to be lacking in high quality forage. More elk are likely to be found along the higher elevation fringes where past timber management improved forage. Lower elevation private timberland is also a good place to hunt for elk when access is allowed by the landowner. Timber harvest on these lands has increased forage while the motor vehicle access restrictions in place most of the year keeps disturbance low. In areas where access is restricted to weekends only, hunters may want to hunt the private lands during the weekend and move to the national forest to hunt the weekdays.

Northwest Region Big Game Hunting Locations

Remember you can now find many hunting locations and even scout from home using ODFW's [Oregon Hunting Access Map](#).

[ODFW Wildlife Management Units](#)

North Coast Watershed District (Saddle Mt., Wilson, west Trask, western Stott Mt., western Alsea, north Siuslaw)

Along the north coast (Saddle Mt, Wilson, Trask units), Saddle Mt. is 25% state forest lands, Wilson 70% state forest lands, and Trask 50% state and federal forestlands. Hunters have access to 1.5 million acres of private forestland in the three units plus Scappoose through the A&H program's North Coast Access Area (no map available, see pg 96 of Big Game Regs for description). Within the Wilson unit, note there is a travel management area in the greater God's Valley area on [Oregon Department of Forestry](#) lands. The [Jewell Meadows Wildlife Area](#) is open for some big game hunting but there are access changes this year (see page 98 of Big Game Regs). Take note of closures of certain areas including posted portions of the Beneke Tract during the Saddle Mt elk rifle and archery season and the entire Fishhawk tract, which is a refuge.

Along the mid-coast, (western Stott Mt., western Alsea, north Siuslaw), the Siuslaw National Forest and [BLM](#) lands provide some quality deer and elk hunting opportunities. Try BLM lands in the eastern portion of the Siuslaw and state [Department of Forestry](#) lands in east Alsea unit for good deer hunting. Private industrial forestlands are usually very accessible to hunters outside of fire season thanks to the A&H program including the [Stott Mt .-North Alsea TMA \(map second page\)](#). Several travel management areas operate in the mid-coast; see page 96 of the Oregon Big Game Regulations. Please respect motorized access restrictions, which help keep bull ratios healthy, protect important wintering habitat for elk and provide areas for walk-in hunting. Permanent road closures exist in western portion of Siuslaw National Forest south of Hwy 34, in Polk County near the old Valsetz town site, in the Hadsall Creek area near Mapleton. There is also a large seasonal road closure on several private industrial forestlands in the north Alsea (north of Hwy 20) and Stott Mt units. Hunters using the Siuslaw National Forest should obtain a Motor Vehicle Use Map.

North Willamette Watershed District (Scappoose, east Trask, north Willamette and north Santiam)

The Mt Hood National Forest and most BLM lands should be open to public access, even during dry fall weather. Be aware of any public use restrictions before you hunt. Hunters should always carry a shovel, fire extinguisher, and gallon of water when hunting in case you come across a smoldering campfire. There is limited road maintenance in Mt Hood NF so be careful when negotiating over-grown or water-damaged roads. If you plan to hunt deer or elk in the Mt. Hood, take plenty of time to scout beforehand because big game are scattered and difficult to locate in heavy vegetation and rugged terrain. Hunters heading to the coastal units of the North Willamette Watershed should always check the access policies of industrial forestland owners before heading out into the field. Many of these timber companies have easily accessible hunter hotlines where you can gather the most up-to-date information available. Travel management agreements, funded by ODFW's Access and Habitat Program, limit motorized access to protect wildlife and the environment and enable walk-in hunting: [Abiqua Basin Access Area](#), [Upper Tualatin-Trask Travel Management Area](#), North Coast Travel Management Area. Visit the [Access and Habitat program page](#) for more opportunities.

South Willamette Watershed District (east Alsea, north Indigo, McKenzie, south Santiam, south Willamette, Siuslaw)

The [Abiqua Basin A&H](#) project (mostly the N. Willamette Watershed District), [Thomas Creek A&H](#) project, and the Wendling Travel Management Area A&H project allow for hunter access during the general rifle deer season. These areas are open during the week as well as on weekends. In general private timberlands are good areas to hunt if access is allowed. Call the Weyerhaeuser Hunter/Access Hotline for access information (541-741-5403 or 1-888-741-5403). On the national forest, hunters may want to try the B&B fire area that burned the Santiam Pass and Mt Jefferson Wilderness area in 2003. The burned area is recovering and producing abundant forage. In addition to the Wendling TMA, there are five additional Cooperative Travel Management Areas in the McKenzie unit. Three of these are permanent, one is September thru November, and one is three days prior to the general

Cascade elk season and runs for the length of that season. Slight changes to regs for deer hunting at William Finley NWR; see page 98 of the Big Game Regs.

Northwest Region Upland Game Bird

Free youth upland bird hunts

Sign up online or at a license sales agent for free youth pheasant hunts. Hunters age 17 and under are eligible. Details here: <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2012/August/081312.asp>

- Corvallis (Monmouth), EE Wilson Wildlife Area, Sept. 15, 16, 22, 23. Call tel. 541-745-5334 for more information.
- Eugene (Fern Ridge Wildlife Area): Sept. 8, 9. No advance registration needed, hunters can begin checking in at 6:30 a.m. at check station in Nielsen Rd parking lot. Call 541-935-2591 for more information.
- Portland (Sauvie Island Wildlife Area): Sept. 15, 16. Call tel. 503-621-3488 for more information.

Fee pheasant hunting

ODFW stocks pheasants at these locations to create hunting opportunity. Hunting requires an upland bird validation, HIP validation and \$17 fee pheasant tag; bag limit two roosters. See regulations for more details.

E.E. Wilson, Oct. 1-31

Fern Ridge, Sept. 10-Oct. 7

Sauvie Island, Sept. 17-30

Return mountain quail and grouse wings and tails

Please return wings and tails if you take one of these birds; they provide important information about populations. Remove one entire wing and whole tail including small feathers. Place in paper collecting bags (your own or those provided at ODFW offices), one bird per bag. Mark the bag with the species, date taken, county taken and general location. Drop it off at a designated collection sites (ODFW offices or collection barrels). Freeze the bag if you will be delayed in dropping it off.

North Coast (Clatsop, Tillamook counties) –Ruffed grouse, blue grouse and mountain quail are present in the northern coast range but at lower densities than most other forested habitats in the state. Based on the wet and cool weather conditions during the nesting season, production of grouse broods should be low with mountain quail production low to average. Ruffed grouse are usually found along riparian areas and mid-slopes, while blue grouse prefer high-elevation ridges. Mountain quail frequent brushy clearcuts, especially those along south- and west-facing slopes.

Mid Coast (Lincoln, western Lane counties) – Ruffed grouse and mountain quail numbers appear to be low again this year. Cool, wet spring weather may have resulted in poor nest success. Hunt for mountain quail in brushy clearcuts and near gravel roads but realize they become difficult to find once the fall rains begin. Ruffed grouse are usually observed along streams and in well-developed or older forest areas. Grouse are typically observed by deer and elk hunters.

North Willamette District (Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Columbia, Yamhill, Marion counties) – Surveys indicate an average production year for grouse and mountain quail this year so hunting is likely to be similar to the past few seasons. Another cool, wet spring caused many birds to re-nest this year; those that were successful will have very small chicks when the hunting season starts. Covering lots of ground in newer clearcuts with a well-trained dog should help hunters find a few scattered coveys of mountain quail. Turkey production was average this year and populations in the southwest portion of the district continue to slowly increase; many turkey hunting opportunities are on private land.

South Willamette District (Marion, Polk, Linn, Lane, Benton counties) - Cool, wet springs usually have a negative effect on the nesting success of both blue and ruffed grouse. This spring was cool and wet but biologists are seeing some grouse broods in the forest. In general, hunters should expect to find fewer grouse again this year. Mountain quail, while not common in this district, tend to nest later than the grouse and may not have been affected as severely by the weather. Hunters looking for mountain quail should seek out drier sites with a lot of brush. There are plenty of turkeys but most are on private land, particularly small landowners on the edge of the valley, so prepare to knock on some doors.

Upland game bird hunting locations: Explore Oregon's [Hunting Access Map](#) for bird hunting locations. Try ODFW's [Sauvie Island](#) (Portland), [EE Wilson](#) (Monmouth) and [Fern Ridge](#) (Eugene) wildlife areas. Some industrial private forest lands are accessible through the [Access and Habitat Program](#). See page 28-34 of the Game Bird Regulations for more information on hunting locations.

Waterfowl in the Northwest Region

Resident mallards will continue to provide fair early-season hunting along the Willamette River and in local ponds, wetlands and lakes. Early duck hunting should also be fair to good on coastal bays. A mix of ducks (mainly wigeon, pintails, mallards and divers) should be available in larger north coast estuaries, such as the lower Columbia River and Tillamook, Nestucca and Nehalem bays. In recent years, the numbers of ducks on these estuaries tends to be greater earlier in the season, with numbers diminishing by December. However, numbers and distribution can change on a yearly basis and success can be good in these areas into January. The best hunting generally occurs during storms before heavy rains flood fields and disperses birds, making them harder to hunt. Another excellent time to hunt the coast is during cold spells when some inland waters are ice-covered.

Late-season hunting is expected to be good for migrant ducks and geese when cold winter weather brings northern migrants into the state. Duck hunters should scout for good spots on backwater sloughs, or secure permission to hunt private properties.

GOOSE

Though restrictive, goose hunting opportunities in the Willamette Valley and lower Columbia River should be good. This year the daily bag limit on cackling Canada geese has been increased to three in both the NW Oregon General Zone and the NW Oregon Permit Zone.

Healthy resident Canada goose populations and very liberal bag limits should provide very good opportunities for September waterfowl hunters willing to do some pre-season scouting to learn the birds' movement patterns. Resident goose populations can be found throughout the Willamette Valley, lower Columbia River and coastal estuaries. Pre-scouting goose movements is an essential part of goose hunting.

ODFW hopes to open additional private property to goose hunting in the Willamette Valley during the fall through the new [Open Fields](#) program. Properties will be announced on the [Hunting Resources/Waterfowl](#) page.

NORTH COAST - On the north coast, expect continued good hunting as excellent production of ducks up north should result in high numbers of birds there this. With the onset of storms comes the best waterfowl hunting on the north coast. Stormy weather moves birds off the bays and into more sheltered waters where they can be hunted more effectively. However, when there is too much rain, birds move into agricultural areas where hunting cover tends to be limited or nonexistent.

NORTH WILLAMETTE DISTRICT – Waterfowl hunting should be good this season with hunters having the best chance for success early in the season for locally produced birds and following colder weather when birds move south. Finding locations to hunt is difficult in the North Willamette Watershed without access to private lands. Hunters without this access should explore opportunities to hunt waterfowl along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. Multiple hunting opportunities along the Willamette River can be located in the Oregon State Parks and Oregon State Marine Board's Willamette River Recreation Guide available at the [Marine Board website](#). The majority of these sites are only accessible by boat but there are several locations that can be reached from local roadways. Hunters are reminded to review the [Oregon Department of State Lands website](#) for information concerning the use of Oregon's waterways and the land underlying and adjacent to them. Additional information concerning waterfowl hunting can be found in the State and Federal Refuge Areas Regulations in the Oregon Game Bird regulations.

SAUVIE ISLAND – Waterfowl hunting on Sauvie Island Wildlife Area should be good again this year. Last year was one of the top six seasons since 1964. The population estimates for most species are up and hunters will likely have a productive season. The best hunting is

usually during colder weather when birds are pushed south from Alaska and Canada. The wildlife area's crop production will be late this year due to the wet spring and summer. In addition, more low lying areas were incorporated into a new "moist soil" management program, which provides an abundance of natural food sources. Numerous wetlands and hunt areas will be flooded prior to the season. Ongoing work on wetland and food resources on the wildlife area will continue to improve hunting in future years. There will be a new ADA Compliant Disabled Hunter Blind in the restored Boy's wetland. The Northwest Oregon Special Permit Goose Zone will be closed on Sauvie Island Wildlife Area.

If you are new to waterfowl hunting on Sauvie Island, see our [Beginners Guide](#).

Special youth waterfowl hunts for hunters age 17 and younger Oct. 28, Nov. 17, Dec. 9 and 26 and Jan. 13. See page 22 of the Game Bird Regulations for details.

FERN RIDGE WILDLIFE AREA - 2012-13 Hunt Season – Fern Ridge is coming off a great year for duck hunting, with nearly 5,500 taken last year, the highest since record keeping began in the late 1980s. During duck season, the entire lake area and majority of the wildlife area remain open to hunting daily. Concurrent with duck season dates, the Fisher Butte and Royal Amazon units remain open seven days a week with hunting ending at 1 p.m. each day. These units are closed to all public access daily after 2 p.m. to provide daily predictable periods of sanctuary for wintering waterfowl. The East and West Coyote units are closed to all access from Oct. 8-Nov. 16 with the reservation waterfowl hunt beginning Nov. 17. Application information for the reservation hunt can be found in the game bird regulation booklet. The eastern portion of the Kirk Park unit is open three days a week during duck season, with hunting allowed on a Saturdays, Sundays, Wednesdays and holidays. Shooting hours are posted in the game bird regulations shooting hours table. Hunters are encouraged to carefully read posted regulation signs and the printed game bird hunting regulations. For questions or to obtain a map, contact the wildlife area at 541-935-2591.

Fern Ridge Wildlife Area is located west of Eugene and offers a variety of hunting opportunities. The area is open for archery deer hunting, general season deer hunting (shotguns only, no rifles), mourning dove season, September Canada goose season (closed to goose hunting during general season), pheasant and quail hunting including the Western Oregon Fee Pheasant Hunt Program from Sept 10 to Oct 7, and duck hunting including a reservation waterfowl hunt program. There is a youth upland hunt program on Sept 8 and 9 and designated youth waterfowl hunt days on Sept 22 and 23 (statewide, hunters 15 yrs and younger) and Nov 24 and Dec 26 (reservation hunt for hunters age 17 and younger). The Oregon Game Bird Regulation booklet outlines all Fern Ridge Wildlife Area hunting regulations.

A free daily self-service hunt permit is required for hunting in five units (East Coyote, West Coyote, Fisher Butte, Royal Amazon and Kirk Park units). Seasonal access restrictions are

in effect for all visitors from Oct. 8- April 30. Hunters, birdwatchers, and hikers should become familiar with area regulations and access restrictions before entering the field.

ALL VISITORS are reminded that effective Jan. 1, 2012, a Wildlife Area Parking Permit is required to for each vehicle to park on the wildlife area. A free annual permit will be included with the purchase of annual hunting, Combination, Pioneer, and Sports Pac licenses and the Habitat Conservation Stamp. All other Wildlife Area users will be required to purchase a permit; daily permits (\$7) and annual permits (\$22) will be available where fishing and hunting licenses are sold and on the ODFW's website, www.dfw.state.or.us.

Waterfowl Hunting locations

Explore Oregon's [Hunting Access Map](#) for bird hunting locations.

Try ODFW's [Sauvie Island](#) (Portland), [EE Wilson](#) (Monmouth) and [Fern Ridge](#) (Eugene) wildlife areas. On the North Coast you can hunt around estuaries on the coast and in the lower Columbia River; call ODFW's Tillamook Office for more information or try ODF for a map that shows public and private lands. The Willamette River has some decoy and drifting opportunities; see the Willamette River Recreation Guide on the [Oregon Department of State Lands website](#) for more info.

<h3>Northwest Region Bear and Cougar</h3>
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Successful bear and cougar hunters, remember [check-in](#) is mandatory and so is bringing in a thawed hide and skull! For best results, prop the animal's mouth open with a stick after harvest. Only certain ODFW offices can check in bears and cougars; call first to confirm someone is available to help you.

North Coast Watershed District (Saddle Mt., Wilson, western Trask, western Stott Mt., western Alsea, north Siuslaw wildlife management units)

The bear outlook looks fair to good for the north coast (Saddle Mt., Wilson, western Trask). Bear densities tend to increase from north to south and from east to west, with the highest densities in the western fringe of the Trask WMU. This year's early berry crops appear to be excellent, so bears will most likely be out in open areas such as clearcuts during the early part of the fall.

Along the mid-coast (Alsea, Siuslaw) bear numbers appear to be high and hunters are having good success. Fewer bears are observed or harvested in the Stott Mt unit than units to the south. Vegetation including berries are late-maturing but very abundant this year. Areas where berries and other fruits are available will be very attractive to bears. Bears are more abundant closer to the coast than the Willamette Valley side of the coastal mountains. Some areas within the Siuslaw unit are popular to hunters and may be fairly crowded at times.

Cougars are relatively rare along the north and mid-coast and all indications are that the population is relatively low. Recommended locations to hunt cougars are the Alsea and Siuslaw units in particular, west of Dallas, west of Dawson, and south and west of Philomath. As with bears, predator calling is by far the most effective way to harvest a cougar. Most cougars are harvested by hunters during the deer and elk hunting seasons.

North Willamette Watershed District: Scappoose, east Trask, north Willamette, north Santiam wildlife management units

Bear hunting in the eastern slopes of the Coast Range should be average this year. The low densities of bears combined with the heavy vegetation in the Scappoose Unit and eastern section of the Trask Unit will make animals difficult to locate. Overall harvest in these units is low and most bears are typically taken by hunters participating in other big game hunts. Hunters targeting bears in these units should be looking for food source such as blackberry patches and abandoned fruit orchards that will concentrate bears.

In the northern portion of the Santiam Unit bear hunters will find higher densities of bears and average hunting opportunities this year. Food sources appear to be improved from previous years and bears are concentrated on those available food sources making it easier for hunters to key into their location and movement patterns. Early August season hunters are reporting multiple bear sightings and ample opportunities to fill their tag.

Cougar densities remain low in the Scappoose and eastern portions of the Trask Unit and hunting success will be poor this year. Higher densities of cougar in the northern Santiam Unit will provide hunters with their best chance for success. Successful hunters in 2011 found using predator calls that mimic a prey species to be very effective. For safety, hunters should always have a partner along when predator calling. Tracking cougars through fresh snow near concentrations of deer and elk is another technique that has proven to be effective.

South Willamette Watershed District (east Alsea, north Indigo, McKenzie, south Santiam, south Willamette, northeast Siuslaw)

Bear populations are strong in the District. One of the keys to successful bear hunting is to target the food sources and hunters in this area have a variety of food sources to target throughout the season. The cool, wet spring this year has delayed all the berry crops. Hunters can expect the berries to be a couple of weeks later than usual this year. In August hunters should look for areas with early season berries, such as blackcap raspberries and trailing blackberries. Expect to find bears feeding on Armenian (Himalayan) blackberries or huckleberries when they ripen in late August or September.

In this area bears tend to be found throughout the Indigo and Siuslaw units. Bears are less wide spread in the McKenzie and hunters will want to look for recent bear sign to know if bears are using the area.

The district has plenty of cougar (except in the north coast area) but they are difficult to hunt, especially early in the season when deer and elk are scattered. Try predator calling early in the season and then hunt those concentrated deer and elk areas once there is snow and the big game start using winter range. The vast majority of cougar taken nowadays are

taken incidentally while hunting for other species. As they are widespread off the valley floor in this district, you could run into them in a variety of areas. Buy your tag prior to hunting for other species so can take one if you see it.

Southwest Region Deer and Elk

RETURN DEER TEETH: Successful western Oregon deer hunters are asked to return deer teeth which are used in population modeling efforts. See [this flyer for directions](#) on how to remove a tooth and return it with your name, address, date of kill, species killed, sex of animal, and wildlife management unit or hunt where harvested to: ODFW Wildlife Population Lab, 7118 NE Vandenberg Ave, Adair Village, OR 97330. Pre-paid, pre-addressed envelopes for teeth are available at ODFW offices and many license sales agents. Hunters that submit a tooth will receive a postcard from ODFW with information about their animal after about nine months.

DEER

COOS COUNTY (west Tioga, west Powers, north Sixes, southwest Siuslaw)

Deer populations in Coos County appear to be improving similar to what has been seen over the past few years. Fawn production and survival appears to be fairly good possibly due to a decreased prevalence of deer hair loss syndrome. Buck survival during last season appeared to be fairly high as well. Hunting prospects are good in all units but there is more accessible public land in the Tioga Unit. The Sixes and Powers Units have good deer populations but access to them is on private land. Hunters should contact timber companies and ranch owners to ask for hunting access. Hunt for deer in brushy openings, meadows and clear cuts where brush is beginning to grow up. Areas where vehicle access is limited will be the most productive for deer.

DOUGLAS COUNTY (Dixon, S. Indigo, NW Evans Creek, Melrose, SW Siuslaw, E. Tioga and NE Powers Units)

Deer populations remain similar to last year with large numbers on the Umpqua Valley floor and lower populations in the Cascades and Coast ranges. Fawn ratios have been good the last ten years, showing good overall deer recruitment throughout the county. Buck ratios are similar to last year so hunters should expect to find a good number of legal bucks if they work clear cuts and other places that have brushy habitats. In addition, mild winter conditions over the last few years have contributed to excellent survival providing a good deer harvest opportunity this season.

Most property on the Umpqua valley floor is privately owned and hunters are reminded to obtain permission before hunting on private lands. For hunters looking to hunt on private timber lands, don't forget to check with local timber companies to obtain information on access restrictions related to fire conditions. During the early part of rifle and archery season, hunters should find deer on the northerly slopes, near water and green up areas.

JACKSON, JOSEPHINE, CURRY COUNTIES (Applegate, Chetco, Evans Creek, Rogue, portions of Dixon, and Sixes)

For the third year we have had a slight decrease in our trend data, although buck and fawn ratios continue to remain high. Hunting is expected to be average for all of our units. Early indications show that oak trees will have plenty of acorns for late season hunting. Most deer will be in high elevations through September. Hunter success is generally weather-dependent with rain and snow bringing the best hunting. Unlike many black-tails, Jackson County's deer are migratory and hunters are encouraged to hunt high elevations in the first part of the season, switching to mid to low elevations later in the season. Josephine and Curry counties deer population show very little migration and deer can be found throughout all elevations. Don't forget to check fire restrictions before heading out especially early in the season.

ELK

COOS COUNTY (west Tioga, west Powers, north Sixes, southwest Siuslaw)

Similar to last year, forage production in Coos County was good in most places due to rain that occurred in the spring. Elk are expected to be in good physical shape due to the fact that a large amount of feed is available. Elk populations are above the Management Objective in the Sixes Unit and close to objective in Powers. Over the past few years the population appears to have slipped in the Tioga. Surveys done in February indicate the Tioga elk population is about 1,000 animals below Management Objective. So in an effort to improve these numbers, hunters with Disability Permits and bowhunters can no longer harvest antlerless animals. It is expected this change will allow the population to continue to increase and reach the Management Objective.

Clearly the most important factor that determines where elk will be found is human activity. Elk can be expected to move to places where vehicle and other human activity is minimized. Road closures often are the best places to find elk on a regular basis. Within these areas, hunting will be best on north-facing slopes in the early seasons. Later in the season, elk often move to south-facing slopes where green-up starts earlier. A particularly productive habitat type to hunt in the Oregon Coast Range is areas where foresters have thinned timber stands. Thinning the tree canopy encourages grass and brush growth on the ground, improving feed quality.

DOUGLAS COUNTY (Dixon, S. Indigo, NW Evans Creek, Melrose, SW Siuslaw, E. Tioga and NE Powers Units)

The outlook for hunters this elk season looks to be similar to last year. February aerial surveys found good bull and calf ratios at our close to our management objectives. Good escapement from the 2011 hunting season and another mild winter increased elk herd survival. Elk numbers are greatest in the E. Tioga, mid to high elevations of the Dixon and S. Indigo and the perimeter of the Melrose units. Early in the season, some of the local private timberlands are restricting access due to the high fire danger so hunters should obtain more information on any restrictions before hunting.

JACKSON, JOSEPHINE, CURRY COUNTIES (Applegate, Chetco, Evans Creek, Rogue, portions of Tioga, Dixon, and Sixes)

Bull and calf ratios remain good for all of our units. With the potential hot fall during Cascade elk season, it is important for hunters to pre-scout areas for elk. Known water sources or wallows can be good locations to start your scouting activities. Archery hunters need to focus on north-facing hills, in higher elevation or areas of cooler draws where they can retreat into during the heat of the day. Elk populations are minimal in the E. Chetco and the Applegate though some can be found in select drainages in Applegate. Units along the coast have higher elk numbers on private property. Elk in the Evans Creek Unit are primarily found near private properties. There are also lots of elk down low in and amongst private land but gaining access to these properties requires homework early in the season.

Southwest Region Big Game Hunting Locations

Explore Oregon's [Hunting Access Map](#) for hunting locations.

[ODFW Wildlife Management Units](#)

Good public hunting opportunities exist on [Forest Service](#) (Siskiyou, Siuslaw, Rogue River, Umpqua NFs) and [BLM](#) lands; some [state forest lands](#) can also be hunted. Timber company lands in the Rogue, Evans creek, and Applegate are open to public hunting opportunities. In Sixes, there is public hunting opportunity in Coos County Forest in the north portion of the unit and the Siskiyou National Forest in the south. The Jackson Travel Management Area ([JACTMA](#)), which includes private forestlands, provides quality non-motorized hunting for deer, elk, turkeys and mountain quail. This area restricts entry by motor vehicles from three days prior to General Cascade Elk season until April 30. The Upper Rogue Green Dot Travel Management program again will be in effect on the Prospect and Butte Falls Ranger Districts in the Rogue River National Forest; it restricts motorized vehicle access to designated roads during the General Cascade Elk season. The Forest Service combined and renamed the Prospect and Butte Falls Ranger Districts to the "High Cascades Ranger District." TMA maps are available at the Central Point ODFW office 541-826-8774 and online as linked above. See page 96 of the Oregon Big Game Regulations for more on locations and TMAs (travel management areas).

Southwest Region Upland Bird

[Sign up for free youth upland bird hunts](#)

Youth hunters age 17 and under can hunt at the **Denman Wildlife Area in Medford/White City Sept. 15 and 16**. Sign up online or at a license sales agent. Call tel. 541-826-8774 for more information and see the link above for more information.

Fee pheasant hunting at Denman Wildlife Area

From Sept. 17-Oct. 5, ODFW plants pheasants at the wildlife area to create hunting opportunity. You need a Western Oregon fee pheasant tag (\$17) to hunt.

Return mountain quail and grouse wings and tails - Please return wings and tails if you take one of these birds; the parts provide important information about populations.

Remove one enter wing and whole tail including small feathers. Place in paper collecting bags (your own or those provided at ODFW offices), one bird per bag. Mark the bag with the species, date taken, county taken and general location where taken. Drop it off at a designated collection sites (ODFW offices or collection barrel). Freeze the bag if you will be delayed in dropping it off.

COOS COUNTY – As was the case last year, blue grouse, ruffed grouse and wild turkey production appears to be poor due to the long, winter-like spring. In these conditions, grouse and turkey broods often die from hypothermia because staying dry and warm is difficult. Mountain quail and California quail will likely do better because their broods hatch later in the spring than grouse. However, rain in June probably had a negative effect on these birds as well. Those interested in hunting grouse will find them on closed forest roads or near creek bottoms. Quail will be found around clearcuts and exposed ridges. While wild turkeys can be found in forested areas in the county, the best hunting is generally in the vicinity of agricultural areas.

DOUGLAS COUNTY – Overall, hunters can expect a slightly below average year for upland game birds due to reduced numbers and lower recruitment levels. It is slightly lower because of the extended wet periods this spring and summer combined with lower production the previous two years. This year like last year, our turkey production was below our 15-year average in poult production. The expected hunter harvest should be near average because of a large carryover of adult turkeys the last few years. Most turkeys can be found on or adjacent to low-mid elevation private lands associated with oak savannah habitat. Mountain quail nesting season was good with average numbers produced so hunting success should still be good. Success is best in the mid-elevations of the Cascades and Coast Range near brushy clear-cuts on secondary forest roads. California (Valley) quail counts were low this year because of the long and wet spring so hunting success should be lower than average. Most California quail are found on agricultural and low elevation forestland. Pheasant outlook continues to be poor since the Umpqua Valley lowlands have very few pheasants that still exist on private lands. Blue and ruffed grouse brood counts for this year indicate slightly lower than average production. Hunting availability and success for forest grouse should be fair to good this season. Blue grouse success is best in mid to high elevations of the Cascades in partly open conifer stands. Ruffed grouse can be found near creeks mostly at mid elevations of both the Cascades and Coast Range. Hunters may use rimfire rifles or pistols to harvest forest grouse.

Hunters are reminded to help ODFW by providing one wing and tail fan with rump feathers from blue and ruffed grouse and mountain quail. Paper collection bags and simple instructions are available at ODFW offices. All bags with samples (1 bird per bag) should be dropped off at any ODFW office with harvest date, and general area of harvest. This information helps ODFW determines hatching dates, sex and age composition, an indicator of annual production and general health of local populations.

JACKSON, JOSEPHINE AND CURRY COUNTIES – Most first hatches for forest grouse and quail failed with the rains although many were able to nest again so early in the season hunters may find small birds. Forest grouse can be found in timbered creek draws and mountain quail will be found in brushy clearcuts near water. A good bird dog will aid greatly in bird retrieval. Fall turkey hunting should be fair but developing a relationship with landowners is key to getting at them on private property. Bureau of Land Management

lands with oak/grassland habitat below 3000ft are prime habitat for turkeys, although we have a growing number of turkeys in elevation over 3000ft. Remember turkey hunters may use dogs during the fall season. Pheasant hunting in our counties are limited primary on private lands. The only real public pheasant hunting opportunity is during the fee season Sept. 17-Oct. 5 at Denman Wildlife Area.

Southwest upland game bird hunting locations

Explore Oregon's [Hunting Access Map](#) for bird hunting locations. ODFW's [Denman Wildlife Area](#) in Central Point provides public game bird hunting along with some [national forestland](#) and [state forests](#). The [Jackson TMA](#) has grouse and quail. Much opportunity in the region is on private properties; hunters will need to gain permission. Please be considerate of private residences along the river. See the Game Bird Regulations more information on hunting locations.

Southwest Region Waterfowl

COOS COUNTY -

Ducks will begin moving into the county early in the fall and initially concentrate in coastal bays and other large water bodies. Duck abundance should be high this year due to the fact that the US Fish and Wildlife Services estimate of reproduction in the Pacific flyway is high. A large portion of Coos Bay is open to hunting even though some of it is within the City Limits of Coos Bay. Some areas within the city limits of Coos Bay and all areas within city limits of North Bend are closed to hunting. Also, there is an area near the North Bend Airport that is closed to hunting. For information on the area open for hunting contact the ODFW Charleston Field Office (541) 888-5515. As winter comes on and the rainy season starts, waterfowl will disperse inland to flooded river valleys like the Coquille.

Geese will concentrate on private pastures around river valleys. Canada goose populations have been growing over the past few years. Good goose hunting can be found throughout most of the county. The key to a successful hunt is scouting before the hunt for areas where geese are going to feed or rest.

DOUGLAS COUNTY - Hunting for resident geese in Douglas County should be good this year as northwest goose production was good. The early September goose hunt should be excellent for hunters along river gravel bars frequented by geese or for those with permitted access to private property. Hunting for resident geese in Douglas County should be fair to good this year as goose production was slightly below average. Local duck production was fair to good this year. Duck hunting conditions should improve as the fall migrating ducks arrive, especially since production up north was above good this year. Nearly all waterfowl hunting in the Umpqua Valley is on private property and hunters are reminded to obtain landowner permission before hunting. Plat-I Reservoir in Sutherlin, the Umpqua River and its tributaries offer the best waterfowl hunting in the Umpqua Valley.

JACKSON, JOSEPHINE AND CURRY COUNTIES – Take advantage of the September Canada goose season this year. A good number of residential flocks of geese are in valley floors, agricultural land, and at Denman Wildlife Area. Gaining access to private property is

key to getting at many of these geese. The best waterfowl hunting at Denman Wildlife Area tends to occur around the end of November; area managers continue to plant crops and flood fields to attract waterfowl to Denman. Stormy weather plays a big factor in migratory birds coming into our valley and hunter success.

Southwest waterfowl hunting locations

Explore bird hunting locations with ODFW's [Oregon Hunting Access Map](#).

Try ODFW's [Denman Wildlife Area](#) (near Central Point); there are also some public hunting opportunities on the Rogue and Umpqua Rivers and area reservoirs. Much opportunity in the region is on private properties; hunters will need to gain permission. Please be considerate of private residences along the riverbanks.

Southwest Region Bear and Cougar

Successful bear and cougar hunters, remember [check-in](#) is mandatory! Bring a thawed hide and skull within 10 days to [certain ODFW offices](#) (call to make sure someone is available first). For best results prop the animal's mouth open with a stick after harvest.

COOS COUNTY

Bear and cougar populations are similar to last year. The highest bear densities appear to be near the Umpqua River close to the coast. Bear hunting opportunities will be best near blackberry patches in the early season. These patches can be found in creek bottoms in clearcuts or along deactivated forest roads that are "brushing in." Like last year, when winter-like conditions extended late into the spring, berry production was delayed. For the first few weeks of the season, bears should be feeding on black cap and trailing black berries, so hunters should hunt based on where these berries are found. Getting into late August and early September, Himalayan black berries will ripen and become bears primary food source. Blackberries appear to be coming on strong and although few are ripe at this writing in August, a strong crop is expected. Tree stand or ground blind hunting near Himalayan black berries can be very productive when bears are feeding on this food source. Once blackberries are no longer available, bears will turn to huckleberries. This causes bears to be somewhat dispersed. Hunting bears with predator calls may be a good method to use at that time.

Cougars are difficult to locate in Coos County but some hunters find success hunting them with predator calls in areas where the hunter finds fresh cougar sign or areas where deer and elk concentrate. Often cougars approach calls slowly and they are easily distracted if calling is not consistent. So, many successful cougar hunters find electric calls to be useful tools to hunt cougars. Fawn or calf distress calls may be the best choice for hunting cougars near deer and elk concentrations.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

The normal late summer and early fall dry weather conditions will concentrate bears near streams where foraging will be better. Hunters are advised to concentrate their efforts in the berry patches in early morning and late afternoon. Bear numbers are highest at middle to low elevations in the Coast range with lower numbers in the Cascades. Cougars are abundant throughout Douglas County and are a challenge to hunt, but harvest success is greatest adjacent to private low elevation lands using a predator call.

JACKSON, JOSEPHINE, CURRY COUNTIES

Hunters can expect an above average year. Bear numbers appear to be abundant. Early in the season in hot dry weather, bears will be found around cooler wet drainages. The berry crops are plentiful this year, hunters should locate these areas to find bears. The best times to look for bears are in the early morning and late evenings.

Cougars are found throughout the district and can be hunted all year long. They can pose a challenge to hunt, hunters are finding the use of predator calls along major ridge lines as a way to increase their odds. Don't forget to purchase a tag so you can take one if you see it; the vast majority of cougars taken today are by hunters pursuing other species.

High Desert Region Deer and Elk
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DEER

Mid-Columbia District (Hood, White River, Maupin, West Biggs)

The Hood Unit offers good hunting prospects for those that put in the time to hunt the thick cover; this is where hunters will find the older-age class-bucks. Rains during the season will improve hunting conditions and put bucks on the move during daylight hours. Older clearcuts are also a favorite place for deer in the Hood Unit as they provide good browse and adjacent cover. Deer activity is typically highest during first and last light.

The West Biggs Unit has good numbers of deer and a strong component of mature bucks. Much of the unit is private. The Deschutes and John Day canyons are great public places to find weary bucks, especially later in the season.

The Maupin Unit has great buck ratios and should provide good opportunities at older bucks for those hunters with access to private lands.

Buck numbers are slightly depressed and below management objectives in the White River Unit though fawn recruitment was good coming out of another mild winter. Weather permitting, this should provide for good harvest opportunities. Cooler, wetter spring and summer conditions have kept some deer at lower elevations than they are typically found. Look for secure areas away from roads and other hunters for your best chances at a nice buck.

DEER MIGRATION STUDY: ODFW is conducting a buck deer study in the southern portion of the White River Unit to improve its knowledge of local deer herds. Radio-collared deer in this unit are legal to shoot but return collar and identify location of the kill to The Dalles District office (3701 W 13th Street, tel. 541-296-4628).

Prineville District (Maury, Ochoco, Grizzly)

New travel rules for the Ochoco and Deschutes national forests went into effect last August. Pick up a motor vehicle use map so you know what's open vs. closed. If you're in the area the three days before opening day, stop by the national forest's hunter information booth at Ray's Grocery Store in Prineville, Sept. 26-28, open from 5 a.m.-6 p.m.

Deer hunters should find good prospects for a buck this fall. Buck ratios are near or above management objective in all Prineville District units. Rifle buck tags remain unchanged from last year. Spring rains produced enough forage to support healthy populations, however the hot and dry summer conditions may have an impact on hunting success and vegetation quality depending on precipitation this fall. Fawn recruitment and body condition is average across all units. Overall, deer populations continue to be lower than desired due to disease, habitat loss and disturbance, poaching, predation, and road kills.

The MAURY unit is approximately 65% public lands, with BLM managing most of the public lands available to hunters. The unit does include the Maury Mountains managed by the Ochoco National Forest. The Gerry Mountain, S. Fork Crooked River, Sand Hollow Well and Hampton Butte Wilderness Study Areas are on BLM lands and offer challenging and more roadless hunting opportunities. Archery hunters are reminded that as part of the [Mule Deer Initiative](#) (MDI); the Maury unit is now a controlled deer archery unit requiring archers to possess a controlled entry buck tag. Hunters can expect to see larger, older age class bucks as a result of MDI-related tag reductions in the last three hunting seasons. Hunters should expect to see juniper cuts within the Maury unit.

OCHOCO unit is approximately 50% Ochoco National Forest, 10% BLM, with the remainder private. The [South Boundary](#) and [Rager](#) Travel Management Areas (TMAs) are in this unit on Ochoco National Forest lands. Motorized vehicles are allowed, but are restricted to designated roads. Maps for both TMA's are available at portal signs and at Ochoco National Forest and Prineville ODFW offices. Hunters observing illegal vehicle use or any other violations are encouraged to use the TIP hotline (1-800-452-7888).

GRIZZLY is approximately 70% private land so access is challenging. Public lands are mostly on the Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grassland.

Deschutes District (Upper Deschutes, Paulina, North Wagontire, Northwest Fort Rock, Metolius)

Spring 2012 fawn ratios were only fair across much of the Deschutes District, these animals are this fall's spike and 2-point bucks. Buck ratios are near, or above, management objectives in all Deschutes District units. There should be decent numbers of mature bucks and slightly fewer yearling bucks available in most units relative to the population size. Measures including controlled hunting, increased enforcement, disease monitoring and

closures to protect wintering habitat have helped bring buck ratios up. Overall, deer populations continue to be significantly lower than desired due to disease, habitat loss and disturbance, poaching, predation, and road kills. As a result, hunter success will probably be lower than average this year in the Paulina, Upper Deschutes, North Wagontire and Ft. Rock units. Hunter success is expected to be above average in the Metolius unit.

Please be careful when hunting around hay and agricultural fields. ODFW Deschutes District has received reports of problems with arrows getting cut up and baled in hay fields. These sharp pieces of metal in hay bales can kill horses and cows if they ingest them. ODFW has also received reports of problems with rifle hunters pointing loaded rifles into fields while workers are in the fields.

MULE DEER STUDY: ODFW is conducting a mule deer study in most Central Oregon Wildlife Management Units to improve its knowledge of local deer herds. Radio-collared deer in these units are legal to shoot (if they are legal for the bag limit in that particular hunt) but please return collar and identify location of the kill to ODFW Bend office (61374 Parrell Road, Bend, OR 97702 tel. 541-388-6363). Information about the deer will be provided back to the hunter.

Klamath District (Keno, Klamath Falls, Sprague, SW portion of Ft Rock, West portion of Silver Lake, West Interstate)

Overwinter fawn survival was actually fairly good, however the fall fawn ratio was lower so there were lower fawn numbers entering winter. For all units, buck ratios are above management objective. Tag numbers remain unchanged in all units with the exception of the Interstate Unit where tags were increased slightly due to the high buck ratio. Hunters can expect an average year with slightly lower numbers of yearling bucks available due to lower fawn numbers.

Lake District (Warner, Interstate, Silver Lake, southern portions of Beatys Butte, Fort Rock and Wagontire)

Buck ratios were at or above management objective in all units. Fawn recruitment was below maintenance in Silver Lake, Fort Rock, Interstate and Warner. The lower fawn recruitment means there will be fewer yearling bucks in the population and therefore hunter success is expected to be slightly below average. Fawn recruitment in Beatys Butte and Wagontire was above maintenance levels. At this time the desert units are very dry and water is limited. Lower elevations in the forested units also are very dry. Without some late summer rains, deer will be foraging on shrubs and hunters should focus on those areas with shrubs in the understory. Some recommended locations for hunting are the 2002 Tool Box fire in Silver Lake where forage is recovering. Focus on the fringe of the fire for best results. Forage on the Grassy Fire area of the Fremont National Forest in North Warner and the Burnt Willow Fire in South Warner are also recovering nicely. Beatys Butte, Wagontire and South Juniper are all desert units with low deer populations. Hunters in these units should focus on the desert rims with sagebrush or bitterbrush for best success. Archery season in the Warner unit is limited entry.

MULE DEER STUDY: ODFW is conducting a mule deer study in this area to improve its knowledge of local deer herds. Hunter participation in this study is needed. Remember to return one tooth of any deer harvested in the Interstate, Silver Lake, Fort Rock and Wagontire units in envelope provided. Radio-collared deer in these units are legal to shoot (if they are legal for the bag limit for a particular hunt) but please return collar and location of the kill to ODFW.

Harney District (Silvies, Malheur River, Steens Mt, Juniper, portions of Beatys Butte and Wagontire)

Deer populations are stable throughout the district due to a mild winter leading to good fawn survival over the winter. Buck ratios in all units are at or above management objective with good numbers of younger bucks.

Habitat conditions in the forested areas of the Silvies and Malheur are generally good, but the desert portions will be extremely dry unless we get some late summer or fall rains. The Egley Complex fire in 2006, which burned approximately 140,000 acres in the Silvies Unit, is generally recovering and providing good early stage habitat for both deer and elk.

Deer populations in the Beatys Butte, Wagontire, Juniper, Steens and Trout Creek portions of the Whitehorse unit are all desert units with low deer populations. These units continue to be well below management objectives, but with good fawn recruitment over the last few years there should be an increasing number of bucks in the population. Hunters should focus on the desert rims with sagebrush or bitterbrush for best success. Water is very limited in these units this year due to very little precipitation this winter, spring and summer. The Trout Creek portion of the Whitehorse Unit and the SE part of the Juniper both burned this summer, affecting some deer hunting areas.

Malheur District (Whitehorse, Owyhee and Beulah Units)

Winter conditions were extremely mild in the Beulah Unit this year. Fawn recruitment was only fair to good but still an improvement from the previous year's harsh winter. This translates to fewer yearling bucks being available this fall and a decline in hunter success as much of the harvest in this unit is comprised of yearlings. Post-season buck ratios were at management objective last year so older age class buck numbers should be similar to recent years. Much of the best hunting is on public land near the edge of the Malheur National Forest. Other areas within the National Forest that have had recent fires or logging activity can also be productive. The Beulah Unit experienced one fire this summer. The Bonita fire burned 18,188 acre north of Westfall to Juniper Mountain. It was a very mosaic pattern fire and will displace some deer but should not have a significant impact on hunters.

For the Owyhee Unit, the deer population is stable and buck ratios are at or above management objective. For 2011, hunter success was 50% and there was still a good proportion of mature bucks in the harvest. However it is still a very challenging unit to hunt. Deer are widely scattered in the unit with no one area with consistently good deer numbers.

East Whitehorse Unit has had two major fires to date which has had a negative effect on deer habitat and will concentrate deer and deer hunters this season. The Ten Mile Fire burned 14,036 acres north and east of McDermitt and the Long Draw fire burned 557,648

acres from Basque Station east to Antelope Creek near 3-Forks on the Owyhee River. On a more positive note the buck ratio remains above management objective.

Trout Creek Mountains: on Aug. 6th a lightning strike started the Holloway fire which burned the south half of the hunt unit. Department staff has not had the opportunity to access the extent of the fire.

ELK

Mid-Columbia District (Hood, White River, Maupin, West Biggs)

Elk numbers in the White River and Hood units are near the management objective and will be found scattered in small groups throughout the units. Herd numbers have been slightly increasing annually with fair bull numbers. Heavy cover makes harvesting a bull challenging. Most mature bulls are found at higher elevations, especially during the first season. Many hunters choose to hunt the second of the two general seasons. The second season is longer, with a greater chance of winter weather to improve hunting conditions and success. Bull elk hunting in the Maupin and West Biggs also is a general season, but the animals are almost exclusively found on private lands. Gaining landowner permission in that area could result in a successful hunt. The [White River Wildlife Area](#) has fair numbers of elk and is open to public hunting; remember fire restrictions are likely in effect during archery season.

Prineville District (Maury, Ochoco, Grizzly)

Elk populations are below management objectives and bull ratios are quite variable in all three units. Elk are in good body condition and highly mobile across their range. Depending on weather conditions, hunters should expect to find elk on north-slope drainages and high elevations during archery season and more scattered during bull seasons.

The Maury and Ochoco units offer the best opportunities for bagging an animal on public land, while the Grizzly unit is mostly private land where access can be difficult. Ochoco unit rifle hunters are reminded the [Rager](#) and [South Boundary](#) TMA motorized vehicle restrictions will be in effect. Maps of those areas are available on site and from ODFW and Ochoco National Forest offices. Elk tag numbers were decreased in portions of all units as a result of low population estimates and lower bull ratios. Elk bow hunters must also have a controlled Maury Unit deer bow tag (used/unused) to hunt elk in the Maury Unit.

Deschutes– Upper Deschutes, Paulina, north Wagontire, north Fort Rock, Metolius)

Paulina and Fort Rock units have good bull ratios. Relative to the number of elk, branch antlered bull opportunity will be good in the Paulina and East Fort Rock units. Herds are at relatively low densities and cover a lot of country, so hunter success is typically low.

Elk numbers continue to grow slowly in the Cascade units. The Upper Deschutes, Metolius and West Fort Rock units are managed under the general season 'Cascade' hunt. Elk densities are moderate, but hunter densities are high in the roaded portions of the Cascade units. For solitude, seek more remote wilderness and roadless areas in the Cascades.

Elk numbers in the North Wagontire (High Desert hunts) are quite variable due to large movements these animals make. The elk are most consistent in their daily patterns near alfalfa fields. Hunters are advised to select their target animal carefully when elk are in open country, and in large herds, to try and avoid wounded animals or multiple animals being hit.

Harney District (Silvies, Malheur River, Steens Mt, Juniper, portions of Beatys Butte and Wagontire)

Elk populations in the Silvies and Malheur River units remain at or above management objectives and bull ratios are similar to previous years with good numbers of adult bulls available. Both units offer good hunting opportunities for elk. The Egley Complex fire in 2006, which burned approximately 140,000 acres in the Silvies Unit, is generally recovering and providing good early growth for both elk and deer.

Elk densities in the Steens, Juniper and portions of Beatys and Wagontire (High Desert hunts) are low. Elk movement can be quite variable traveling long distances in short periods of time, making hunting difficult.

Malheur District (Whitehorse, Owyhee and Beulah Units)

E Beulah is an elk de-emphasis zone. Tag numbers are high with numerous long seasons to keep the elk population under control. Success rates are poor without access to private lands. Whitehorse and Owyhee units are part of the High Desert hunt area. Whitehorse unit has very few elk. An increasing number of elk have been observed in the northwestern portion of the Owyhee unit. These elk are often observed in large groups and very nomadic which makes them difficult to locate consistently.

Klamath District (Keno, Klamath Falls, Sprague, SW portion of Ft Rock, West portion of Silver Lake, West Interstate)

The Cascades offer the best opportunities for elk hunting. The Cascade Area west of Highway 97 is a general season tag. Bull ratios are above management objective and some older age bulls are available. Elk numbers are lower in the eastern part of the county, and seasons east of Highway 97 are limited entry. Overall population trends are stable to slightly increasing in some areas but below population management objectives like much of the region.

Lake County District (Warner, Interstate, Silver Lake, southern portions of Beatys Butte, Fort Rock and Wagontire)

Bull ratios are at or above objectives but elk densities are very low. Elk numbers are generally higher in the Silver Lake and Fort Rock units than in units further south. All rifle elk seasons are limited entry with a bull-only bag limit. Archery seasons are general with a bull-only bag limit in Silver Lake, Interstate and Warner. Fort Rock unit is a general season with an either sex bag limit. Hunters wishing to hunt elk in Warner, are required to possess a limited entry deer tag.

High Desert Big Game Hunting Locations

Explore hunting locations through the Oregon Hunting [Access Map](#).

ODFW [Wildlife Management Units](#)

Deschutes District (Metolius, Upper Deschutes, Paulina, north Wagontire, and north Ft. Rock)

Hunters can utilize BLM lands as well as Deschutes, Ochoco, and Fremont-Winema National Forest lands in these units. The [Fox Butte and Walker Rim](#) TMA's will be in effect three days prior through the controlled buck deer seasons and the [Timbers and Spring Butte](#) TMA's are in effect year round.

Mid-Columbia District (Hood, White River, Maupin, West Biggs)

Mt Hood National Forest, White River and Lower Deschutes wildlife areas offer big game hunting. Public access in the Maupin and West Biggs Units are limited to the [Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area](#) and [BLM](#) lands in the Deschutes and John Day River Canyons.

Prineville District (Maury, Ochoco, Grizzly)

Hunters should contact the [Prineville BLM](#) or the Ochoco National Forest for maps that show public lands in these units. Remember, the South Boundary and Rager Travel Management Areas (TMAs) have motorized vehicle restrictions effect. Maps showing these TMAs are available from federal agencies, ODFW, and from portal signs on-site. New travel rules for the Ochoco and Deschutes national forests went into effect last August. Pick up a motor vehicle use map so you know what's open vs. closed. You can get a map and other information at the national forest's hunter information booth at Ray's Grocery Store in Prineville, Sept. 26-28, open from 5 a.m.-6 p.m.

Harney District (Silvies, Malheur River, Steens Mt, Juniper, portions of Beatys Butte and Wagontire)

The county is mostly [BLM](#) land. Silvies contains portions of the Ochoco and Malheur national forests. See the Malheur National Forest Web site for the latest information on closures and fire restrictions. Some private lands in Harney County are open thanks to the [Access and Habitat Program](#), contact ODFW Hines office (541) 573-6582 for more information.

Klamath and Lake Counties (Klamath Falls, Keno, Srague, Silver Lake, Interstate, Warner, Fort Rock)

New Travel Management Rules which went into effect this year on the Fremont Winema National Forest. Motor Vehicle Use Maps are available from U.S. Forest Service offices.

A high proportion of these counties are publicly-owned which results in few hunting access issues. The Klamath Falls unit may be an exception to this trend, and hunters are warned to make sure they have secured access to hunt before entering private lands. Although most of the forest habitats are managed by the Fremont-Winema National Forest, there are

extensive tracts of private timber lands. The majority of these properties are open to public access hunting, although hunters are strongly encouraged to respect this access as a privilege. While these landowners appreciate the value of public access hunting, continued public use of these lands may be in jeopardy if off-road vehicle use, vandalism, and littering continue. Lakeview [BLM](#) manages most of the desert habitat. Hunters can also hunt the Summer Lake Wildlife Area for some (archery mule deer and Silver Lake and Wagontire unit controlled hunt buck mule deer hunts with a few restrictions). Klamath Wildlife Area is closed to deer hunting.

Malheur District (Whitehorse, Owyhee and Beulah)

Much of the area is [BLM land](#). Beulah contains portions of the Malheur National Forest. [ODFW's Riverside Wildlife Area](#) is open to hunting for deer, elk and upland game. The use of motor vehicles on the area is limited to the main entrance road near the community of Riverside and the Long Siding Road near Juniper Basin, though this road is not maintained, is suitable only for high-clearance 4WD vehicles and is impassable during wet weather. Use the road and bridges at your own risk.

There are many [Access and Habitat projects](#) opening private lands to hunters too.

High Desert Region Upland Bird

Return mountain quail and grouse wings and tails

Please return wings and tails if you take one of these birds; they provide important information about populations. Remove one entire wing and whole tail including small feathers. Place in paper collecting bags (your own or those provided at ODFW offices), one bird per bag. Mark the bag with the species, date taken, county taken and general location taken. Drop it off at a designated collection sites (ODFW offices or collection barrels). Freeze the bag if you will be delayed in dropping it off.

Report mountain quail observations east of the Cascades

Email David.A.Budeau@state.or.us with any observations of mountain quail east of the Cascade Mountains, including date, specific location (nearest creek, town, road, etc.) county of observation and number of quail seen.

Mid-Columbia (Wasco and Sherman counties) - Hunters should do well this year. Surveys found a good quail hatch, while chukar and pheasant hatches appear down. Most pheasant and quail opportunities are on private lands. Look for these birds throughout upland grass stands, especially in Sherman and eastern Wasco counties. Chukars are found within the Deschutes and John Day river canyons. Public access is generally from the river, or through private lands.

Deschutes County - Most upland game bird species are limited by available habitat and climate in this district. California quail populations are healthy but down slightly, with

habitat loss from development likely taking a toll. Most California quail are found on private lands and access is difficult. Good forest grouse habitat is limited in the district but populations are stable, albeit at low numbers in the Cascade portion of the district. ODFW re-introduced mountain quail into the Metolius unit a few years ago but district population remains too low to hunt at this time, so mountain quail hunting is closed in this district. Please report any Deschutes District mountain quail sightings to the ODFW Bend office. Dove hunters are encouraged to take advantage of the expanding (and invasive) Eurasian collared dove population on the District during the standard mourning dove season.

Crook, Wheeler, Jefferson counties- Hunting opportunities are limited in central Oregon as a majority of upland bird populations occur on private lands. Mourning dove counts were similar to last year, and hunters should expect good hunting while warm weather continues. The best opportunities for doves will be at lower elevations, including private agricultural lands, and adjoining BLM and Crooked River National Grasslands. Doves may use public lands for roosting and watering, and scouting these lands can help in locating such hunting opportunities.

Lake and Klamath counties- The best areas for forest grouse are in the Cascades on Winema National Forest. Blue grouse can be found along ridge tops in more open forest habitats in both Klamath and Lake counties while ruffed grouse are generally found along riparian areas, with few ruffed grouse found in Lake County. Fair mountain quail hunting opportunities are available in the Cascades. Hunters are reminded of the two-bird bag limit in Klamath County. Lake County is closed to mountain quail hunting. Quail production was fair to good and there should be favorable quail hunting opportunities. No pheasants are released at Summer Lake Wildlife Area, and wild pheasant numbers are at very low levels. In Klamath County, chukars (provided by Klamath Chapter Oregon Hunters Association) will again be released in the Klamath Hills. Chukar populations in Lake County are expected to be fair this year. Summer brood routes indicated good but not excellent production. Wild pheasant numbers remain at extremely low levels. Unlimited Pheasants will be releasing pheasants at Klamath Wildlife Area and selected private lands open to the public.

Harney County –Overall chukar production was poor this year due to drought conditions. Chukar surveys on established routes in 2012 resulted in 4.9 birds per mile and 8.3 chicks per brood, which was down 35% and 40% compared to 2011. Quail production was below average this year, down 40% from the previous three-year average. Quail hunting opportunities are good throughout Harney county around both agricultural and rangelands in the Steens, Pueblos and Trout Creeks focusing on basins and creek bottoms. Most pheasant hunting in the county occurs on and around Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Some quail and chucker hunting areas in the Whitehorse and Juniper units could have been affected by summer fires.

Malheur County – Overall it appears to be a good year for upland birds. An abnormally mild winter and dry spring have benefited pheasants and quail in agricultural areas. While chukar and quail associate with rangelands, they had good survival but poor production this year.

Chukar

Chukar surveys on established routes yielded 38.7 chukar per 10 miles and production of 9.6 chicks per brood. This is only a slight decrease from last year when 39.2 per 10 miles were measured but still below the 10-year average of 60.1 birds per 10 miles.

The Succor Creek/Leslie Gulch area has only experienced limited recovery. The poor range conditions caused by ongoing invasion of medusahead likely limits the ability of birds in this area to successfully raise broods. The most productive routes were South of Harper in the Cottonwood Canyon, Freezout/Dry Creek (west side of the Owyhee Reservoir) and Cottonwood Mountain.

Pheasant

Mild winter conditions and a dry spring benefited pheasant numbers. The surveys along established routes yielded 10.9 birds per 10 miles which is a 188% increase in number of birds observed from last year's survey and 31% above the 10-year average. Chick production was good, averaging 3.5 chicks per brood. Hunting prospects will vary depending on the farming practices in the area you have permission to hunt. The outlying areas around Willow Creek and Vale have higher bird numbers than areas closer to Ontario and Nyssa.

California quail

Quail production was good in agricultural areas and poor in rangelands but overall population remains the same as last year. Surveys on established routes showed 46.9 quail per 10 miles, up 3.4% over last year and 26.3% above the 10-year average. Production was 8.4 chicks per brood with decreased production observed primarily in rangelands. Hunting prospects in the rangeland look fair in the north half of the county. Hunting around the irrigated agricultural areas should be comparable to last year.

Upland bird hunting locations

See ODFW's new [Columbia Basin Bird Hunting Guide](#) for how to hunt the 250K acres open to hunters in the area. Also see ODFW's [Oregon Hunting Access Map](#) and wildlife areas [Summer Lake](#), [Klamath](#) (Klamath Falls), [Lower Deschutes](#), [Prineville Reservoir](#), [Riverside](#) and [White River](#) (Tygh Valley).

Some private lands are accessible through the [Access and Habitat program](#). Through ODFW's [Upland Cooperative Access Program](#), hunters can access private land in Wasco and Sherman counties in the Columbia Basin to hunt.

High Desert Region Waterfowl

DESCHUTES COUNTY

Goose hunting should be very good; resident Canada geese had a good production year. Duck hunting should be average or above average for local birds prior to freeze up. Hunters hunting the upper Deschutes River area, remember that by Deschutes County Ordinance

portions of the river between Sunriver and Fall River are closed to the discharge of firearms (contact the Deschutes County Sheriff for more information).

WASCO, SHERMAN AND HOOD COUNTIES

Duck hunting is mostly jump shooting on private lands and should offer good opportunity where available. Goose hunting opportunity in wheat fields should be fair with most access via private land. Some private land access can be found through [Upland Cooperative Access Program](#) lands in Sherman County. See regulations for details.

JEFFERSON AND CROOK COUNTIES

Mallards and Canada geese are the most common waterfowl species in these counties. Wet spring conditions provided near ideal nesting, and brood production was similar to last year. Hunting opportunities are limited due to the lack of wetlands, marshes, and access, especially on public lands. Most of the better hunting is associated with private agricultural lands where access can be difficult. Resident ducks and geese had average production, and early season hunting should be good if hunters can get access to private lands.

KLAMATH COUNTY

Waterfowl hunting in the Klamath Basin should be very good this year. Early season usually is best for local and early migrant birds, and hunters can expect to find abundant gadwall and mallard in the Klamath Basin and up into the Summer Lake Basin in Lake County. Hunting prospects will depend on Pacific Northwest weather systems moving birds in Klamath and Lake Counties before freeze-up.

Most goose hunting opportunities are for resident Canada geese, however there are some white-fronted geese, snow, and Ross's geese staging in the Klamath Basin prior to continuing south. Goose hunting should improve later into the season with freezing conditions, which tend to concentrate geese near open water areas. Ample public land opportunities exist with area refuges and state managed wildlife areas in addition to private lands.

The Klamath County Goose Zone will continue similar to last season. The white-fronted goose bag limit will remain at four per day due to robust populations in the Pacific Flyway. The bag limit for white geese remains at six per day. This bag limit includes snow and Ross' geese. This late goose season is only open on private lands. The hunt helps alleviate agricultural damage from large numbers of white-fronted geese, snow, and Ross' geese. Spring surveys observed over 400,000 white-fronted geese staging in the Klamath Basin during early March. Hunters are responsible for first obtaining permission from private landowners to take part in this hunt. Private lands with areas of high goose concentrations are normally in close proximity to state and federal refuges, the Klamath River, Lost River and several private lakes. Most damage complaints received in the area come from locations between the California and Oregon state line and the city of Klamath Falls. Additional damage is happening in Yonna and Langell Valleys east of Klamath Falls. Contact ODFW's Klamath Falls office at (541) 883-5732 for more information.

KLAMATH WILDLIFE AREA

Early season is usually best for local and early migrant birds, and hunters can expect to find abundant gadwalls and mallards in Klamath Basin.

Favorable weather conditions will be necessary to encourage large numbers of ducks and geese to stage in the basin, reduce overflights to wintering areas further south, and create favorable hunting conditions. Goose hunting should improve later in the season with geese utilizing frozen ponds for loafing and the small grain fields for forage.

Pheasant Hunters: Pheasants will be released only in Unit C during the first week of the season. After Oct. 13, pheasants will be released in all units on non-hunt days until approximately Thanksgiving weekend.

Days open for game bird hunting are Oct. 6*, 7*, 9, 11, 13*, 15 17, 21*, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, even days in November and December, and odd days in January. (*Hunting on Oct. 6, 7, and 13 is on a reservation basis with standby and refill. Oct. 21 is the youth waterfowl reservation hunt in Units A and B, with Unit C open to the general public on a first-come, first-served basis.) October 19 is closed due to a statewide closure day.

Due to the concurrent opening of waterfowl and upland game birds in Zone 2, reservations for Klamath Wildlife Area on Oct. 6, 7, and 13 will be for both waterfowl and upland game birds. **Hunters successful in obtaining reservations to hunt these days will need to check in at the check station at least ½ hour before WATERFOWL shooting hours begins, even if you only want to hunt upland game birds.** Make sure that if you have a reservation that you have gotten your reservation permit slip from a license sales agent or online from the ODFW website. Reservation permits will not be available at the check station. This will allow us to refill any unused reservation spots as early as possible to allow hunters to get out into the field.

The south end of Unit B (south of the boat ramp) and the west unit in Unit C, south of the first cross dike along the Miller Slough, will be dry during October to do habitat manipulations to improve hunting and waterfowl habitat for the future.

Burning of decadent vegetation on the larger of the Gorr Island Units may occur in late December to January depending on weather.

Special youth waterfowl hunt Oct. 21, open to hunters age 17 and younger. See page 22 of the Oregon Game Bird Regulations.

LAKE COUNTY

It should be good duck and Canada goose hunting early in the season, before water bodies freeze. The Warner Wetlands and Warner Valley lakes north of Hart Lake are all full. Restrictions remain in place for white-fronted goose hunting in Lake County during the

youth hunts and the general goose season. They are designed to reduce harvest of the tule white-fronted goose. Production surveys for snow geese on Wrangle Island were not completed this year. There is no forecast for what the fall flight coming out of Siberia and into Oregon might look like.

SUMMER LAKE WILDLIFE AREA

Over 60 percent of this almost 19,000-acre area is open for waterfowl hunting seven days a week during authorized seasons. Early season is usually best for local and early migrant birds, and hunters can expect to find abundant gadwalls and mallards in Summer Lake Basin. By mid to late-November, freezing conditions occur and most waterfowl will have migrated south to wintering areas.

Habitat work on Summer Lake, which involves drawing down and holding dry some water areas to control excessively dense vegetation, re-establish open water features and rehabilitate local marshes, will continue this year. Though hunters might see a short-term impact to their regular hunting spot, these habitat improvements will improve conditions for waterfowl and for hunters over the long term. The Between the Dikes Habitat Management Unit will be dry during the 2011 season while habitat work is completed. To compensate for the diminished size of hunting areas, the northern portion of Bullgate Refuge (620 acres) will be open to hunting.

Please see pages 26 and 36 of the Oregon Game Bird Regulations for hunter advisories and additional information regarding Summer Lake Wildlife Area rules and regulations.

CLOSURE: Access to hunting areas south of Thousand Springs Lane (Lake Co. Rd 4-17, except the Foster Place) will be prohibited from Oct. 1, 2011 until 4:00 am on opening day. This seven-day closure will reduce disturbance to staging waterfowl and improve hunter success. Campgrounds and open roads will remain available for use.

Summer Lake is closed during the September Canada goose season but regular season goose hunting at Summer Lake Wildlife Area should be fair for locally produced Canada geese. Canada goose hunting should improve later in the season with freezing conditions, which tend to concentrate geese near open water. In an attempt to reduce harvest pressure on the rarer Tule white-fronted goose, the daily bag limit is one.

Production from snow geese on Wrangel Island, Russia was reported to be favorable this year although adverse weather conditions coupled with arctic fox predation affected gosling survival. The spring population remains above management objective levels and has been on the increase for several years. A good number of adults but a small number of juveniles in the fall flight are expected. Adult birds are more wary than juveniles so hunting will likely be slow and the number of snow geese staging will probably be low. A large portion of this population is now wintering in NW Washington/SW British Columbia and not migrating through Oregon. However, other light goose populations (which migrate through Summer

Lake Basin to some degree) have been increasing at significant rates, which allowed an increase in the white goose bag limit from 4 to 6 a few years ago. Favorable weather conditions will be necessary to encourage large numbers of geese to stage in the basin, reduce overflights to wintering areas further south, and create favorable hunting conditions.

HARNEY COUNTY

Waterfowl hunting opportunity in the Harney District will be good this year. Record water levels from the previous year lead to good waterfowl production and increased public hunting opportunity until freeze-up occurs. Water levels are lower than last year however and will continue to drop due to limited snow pack this winter and very little precipitation this spring and summer. Chickahominy Reservoir and Warm Springs Reservoir are still about half full as of early August. Early and late season goose hunting for resident populations of Canada geese should be good on private agricultural lands in the Harney Basin.

MALHEUR COUNTY

Expect fair hunting this year. Many of the desert ponds still have water, which will provide good opportunity for jump shooting ducks early in the season. September goose hunting should be good on private agricultural lands in the Jordan Valley, Arock and Rome area for those hunters willing to scout fields for geese and secure permission.

SNAKE RIVER VALLEY

Fair waterfowl hunting is available in the area most of the season, and improves significantly during cold weather events. Cold weather events reduce open water concentrating birds and increasing the time spent foraging. Field hunting for both geese and ducks can be good for hunters willing to spend the time and effort to secure private land access.

Waterfowl Hunting Locations:

Explore bird hunting locations using ODFW's [Oregon Hunting Access Map](#). ODFW's [Summer Lake](#) and [Klamath](#) wildlife areas are major winter staging areas for waterfowl and provide great hunting opportunities. Some private lands are accessible through the [Access and Habitat program](#). See page 30-36 of the Game Bird Regulations for more information on hunting locations. Remember to ask permission before hunting on private lands.

<h3>Bear and Cougar in the High Desert Region</h3>

Successful bear and cougar hunters, remember [check-in](#) is mandatory! Bring a thawed hide and skull within 10 days to ODFW offices (call first to make an appointment); for best results prop the animal's mouth open with a stick after harvest.

Most cougars and many bears are taken when hunters are pursuing other species (like deer and elk). Be ready for the opportunity—purchase a cougar or bear tag before you hunt this fall!

Deschutes– Upper Deschutes, Paulina, north Wagontire, north Fort Rock, Metolious

Bear populations are stable in the district but due to limited suitable habitat, bear numbers are lower here than in other portions of the state. Highest bear densities are west of Highway 97 at the higher elevations. Cougar populations are healthy due to relatively abundant prey and low mortality. Cougars can be found throughout the district, but will be easier to locate once there is snow on the ground and tracking conditions improve.

Mid-Columbia District (Hood, White River, Maupin, West Biggs)

Both bear and cougar populations are abundant in the White River and Hood Units. Cougars are moving into canyons of the Deschutes and John Day River systems, and are found in good abundance throughout the Hood and White River units. Predator calling and locating a fresh kill may increase hunter success. For bears, hunters should focus on clearcuts or natural openings in the forest, especially those with good berry crops.

Prineville District (Maury, Ochoco, Grizzly)

Bear and cougar appear to be stable, with low population density and harvest reported for bear, and better opportunities for cougar. Good quality bear habitat is limited, with the better habitat present in the northern portions of the Ochoco unit, on the Lookout Mountain and Paulina Ranger Districts of the Ochoco National Forest. Cougars are more widely dispersed throughout all three units and generally will be associated with deer, elk, or pronghorn. Hunting during the winter when big game is concentrated on winter range using calls has been effective for some hunters. Areas to consider scouting include: Maury Mountains, Salt Creek and S.F. Crooked River (Maury unit); Lookout Mountain, upper Bridge Creek and South Fork John Day River (Ochoco); and Mill Creek and Green Mountain (Grizzly).

Klamath District (Keno, Klamath Falls, Sprague, SW portion of Ft Rock, West portion of Silver Lake, West Interstate)

Though bear and cougar populations appear stable, harvest in the units is generally low. The Cascade Mountains region of the Klamath District traditionally provides the most opportunity for bear hunters in the area. Most bear harvest occurs incidentally while hunters are out pursuing deer and elk. Hunters are reminded to purchase bear and cougar tags prior to opening day of buck season.

Lake County District (Warner, Interstate, Silver Lake, southern portions of Beatys Butte, Fort Rock and Wagontire)

Bear habitat is limited so populations are low compared to other areas of the state. Yamsey Mountain, Booth Ridge, Winter Rim in the Silver Lake Unit, Coleman Rim in the Interstate Unit and the forested portions of the Warner Unit provide the most opportunity for bear hunters in the area. Hunters should focus on clearcuts or natural openings in the forest especially those with good berry crops. Cougar populations are healthy due to good habitat and prey base. Cougar hunting is most productive following low elevation snow events when cougar tracks can be observed. Hunters have also had success using predator calls.

Harney District (Silvies, Malheur River, Steens Mt, Juniper, portions of Beatys Butte and Wagontire)

While bear density is generally low here, hunting this fall is expected to be fair as bears respond to berry production in the forest. Fall bear hunting in berry patches in the national forest can be productive. Cougar populations are healthy and distributed throughout the district in any area with a big game prey base. Cougar hunting is most productive following low elevation snow events when cougar tracks can be observed.

Malheur District (Whitehorse, Owyhee and Beulah Units)

Bear habitat is very limited in this district. Cougar populations are healthy and distributed throughout the district in any area with a big game prey base. Cougar hunting is most productive following low elevation snow events when cougar tracks can be observed.

Northeast Region Deer and Elk

Wolves are present in northeast Oregon

Wolves are protected statewide and it is unlawful to shoot one, except in defense of human life. As of late summer 2012, ODFW is monitoring five known wolf packs in northeast Oregon.

[Tips on identifying wolves vs coyotes and protecting dogs from wolves](#)

Wolf pups can look like coyotes so carefully identify your target before shooting. Wolves are larger than coyotes, have shorter, rounder ears, and a blocky face and muzzle as opposed to coyotes' pointed face and muzzle. Wolf tracks are about 5 inches long, twice the size of coyote tracks (2.5 inches long).

Wolves are by nature territorial and guard their territory from other canids, including domestic dogs. To protect your dogs, consider placing a bell on them, keep them close and within view, and leash them and leave the area if wolves or [fresh sign](#) are seen.

Hunters that see a wolf or wolf sign (tracks, howls, scat) are asked to report the information to ODFW at 541-963-2138 or [online](#).

BAKER DISTRICT: Sumpter, Keating, Pine Creek, Lookout Mt. wildlife management units

DEER

Over-winter survival was better than average due to the light winter. Buck ratios are still at or above management objectives. Overall deer numbers are still down from the hard winter of 2010. The body condition of animals should be excellent with the above average spring and early summer rains.

ELK

Elk herds in Baker County came out of the winter in good shape with large healthy calves. Bull ratios are at or near management objective for all units. Calf ratios are average throughout the units, with the highest in the Sumpter Unit. 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.

GRANT DISTRICT

DEER- Deer populations in Grant County continue to be below management objectives. Grant County experienced an unusually warm and dry winter which led to good adult survival but fawn survival was just average due to lack of fall green up. Also, more coyotes were observed during spring flights than past years and that may have contributed to some lower fawn survival. The spring was fairly cool and wet but not enough to make up for the dry winter and the district appears to be in a drought situation this summer. Buck ratios are hovering right around management objective.

Remember the Murderers Creek-Flagtail Travel Management Area begins three days prior to archery season again this year (rather than three days prior to rifle season).

ELK

Most elk populations are at or above management objectives in the Grant district units. Calf ratios were higher at the end of the winter than they had been the past few years, except in Desolation which is still experiencing reduced calf recruitment. Because of the higher calf recruitment, elk hunting may be better than past year. Due to the dry conditions elk will be focusing on areas of good forage at least early in the fall.

Remember the Murderers Creek-Flagtail Travel Management Area begins three days prior to archery season again this year (rather than three days prior to rifle season).

HEPPNER DISTRICT: Heppner, Fossil, East Biggs, southern Columbia Basin wildlife management units

Deer in Heppner are stable to slightly increasing and buck ratios are good. Adult deer survived the mild winter well and fawn survival was similar to last year. Improved fawn recruitment should mean more yearling bucks for hunters to pursue this fall.

The Fossil unit deer numbers are also stable to slightly increasing. Public lands hunters can work the old Wheeler Burn, which is still producing a fair number of deer and is historically a good spot.

The Columbia Basin and East Biggs deer herds are stable. If you can find access to private land in the Columbia Basin or John Day River Canyon, you should expect decent hunting.

ELK

Hunting should be similar to last year. With another good calf ratio last spring, the population continues to expand. Bull ratios are slightly below objectives but ODFW is starting to see some older-age class bulls. Bull ratios in Fossil are above management objective but calf ratios are still down.

UNION DISTRICT: Starkey, Catherine Creek, East Mt. Emily, portions of Sled Springs, and Wenaha wildlife management units

DEER

Deer in Union County survived the winter reasonably well this year. It's likely to be a good year for hunter success. Deer appear to be in excellent physical condition due to high quality forage produced by a very wet spring. Buck ratios are up slightly in Starkey, about the same in Catherine Creek and down slightly in East Mt. Emily. Fawn survival through the winter was 77% or higher in the units mentioned above. The Catherine Creek unit continues to be well under our target population objective; East Mt. Emily and Starkey are at or above population target levels. Buck ratios (bucks per 100 does) are 17 in the Starkey, 16 in Catherine Creek and 12 in East Mt. Emily Hunt units.

ELK

Elk hunting should be above-average in the Starkey unit with an increase in calf survival over last year. Catherine Creek unit hunter success should be up due to a slightly elevated population. Prospects for the East Mt. Emily unit are expected to be better than average due to an increase in calf survival and bull ratios.

Elk in the Starkey and Catherine Creek units came through the winter in relatively good condition. Starkey is just below population management objective and Catherine Creek is well above the objective. Bull ratios (bulls per 100 cows) are 9, 12, and 13 respectively for the Starkey, Catherine Creek and east side of the Mt. Emily units. These bull ratios are either the same or up from the previous year. Calf ratios (calves per 100 cows) are 26, 29 and 28 respectively for the Starkey, Catherine Creek and east side of the Mt. Emily units. These calf ratios are all up from the previous year.

UMATILLA DISTRICT: Walla Walla, Mt. Emily, Ukiah, eastern portion of Heppner, northern Columbia Basin

DEER

Hunting should be average. The winter was dry, but was followed by an extremely wet spring. Conditions were favorable when fawning occurred and deer came through to mid-summer in excellent condition. Ukiah and Walla Walla are good places to get a buck as numbers are good. West Mt Emily has the bigger bucks. While deer continue to persist in good numbers in the Blue Mountains, the deer factory that was the Tower Fire (Ukiah unit) is coming to an end; populations are shrinking naturally along with forage.

ELK

Mt Emily and Walla Walla continue to offer very high quality branch bull hunting for those hunters lucky enough to have a tag. Heppner is another bright spot; calf ratios are up. However, it will be a tough year for spike hunters in the Walla Walla and Mt. Emily Units due to what biologists believe is continued high predation. The Ukiah unit has improved in the past year where ODFW has been thinning cougar populations for the past two years. This last spring's calf ratio was higher than in recent years and will provide more spike bulls for harvest. The unit is not at desired recruitment levels yet, but is moving in the right direction for more spike bull harvest.

WALLOWA DISTRICT: Wenaha, Sled Springs, Chesnimnus, Snake River, Minam, Imnaha

DEER

Despite a relatively mild winter, deer numbers are still low in all units with this past year's fawn survival lower than the previous year. Predation on adults and fawns continues to hold deer populations well below management objective levels. We have had great spring and summer weather, with good moisture producing an abundance of forage, so deer will be entering the fall in good body condition. Hunters can expect to see fewer yearling bucks this year, but adult buck ratios have remained stable in all units. There should still be opportunity for older age class bucks for hunters willing to spend the time and effort.

ELK

Elk numbers continue to increase slowly in most units. The past year's district calf survival was low, averaging 20 calves per 100 cows. Predation on elk calves continues to hold calf recruitment at low levels. Hunters can expect to see fewer yearling (spike) bulls this fall. Most units have good numbers of branched bulls and hunting success should be good. The Wenaha Unit population is still below management objective level, and spike hunters can expect low success.

Northeast Big Game Hunting Locations

Find hunting locations and even scout from home using ODFW's [Oregon Hunting Access Map](#).

[ODFW Wildlife Management Units](#)

Baker District (Sumpter, Keating, Pine Creek, Lookout Mt. wildlife management units)

Baker District includes the Wallowa Whitman National Forest and [Vale District BLM land](#). Hunters can also access many private lands thanks to the [A&H program](#). Remember travel

management area regulations are in effect for Dark Canyon, Patrick Creek, Melhorn, Lake Fork-Dutchman, Okanogan-Fish, Summit Point and Eagle Creek.

Grant District (Murderers Creek, Northside, Desolation, southeast Heppner, northwest Beulah wildlife management units)

Remember the Flagtail-Murderers Creek TMA begins three days prior to archery season again this year. Hunters will find many good public land hunting opportunities in Grant County, including the Malheur National Forest and [P.W. Schneider Wildlife Area](#). The Fox Valley Access and Habitat area in the Northside Unit is open to walk in access from Aug. 1-Jan. 31. Due to the dry conditions, hunter should look for north slopes, springs, or other areas with good forage. Roadless areas in the North Fork John Day Wilderness, Desolation and Northside travel management areas are good places to big game hunt. Remember the [Camp Creek](#) and Murderers Creek/Flagtail travel management areas are in effect, meaning no vehicle access in certain areas to protect wildlife and habitat and promote quality hunting. Please respect all road closures, gated or not.

Heppner District (Heppner, Fossil, East Biggs, southern Columbia Basin wildlife management units)

Hunters will find most public lands opportunities in the Heppner and Fossil units and can also access private land through the [Heppner Regulated Hunt Area](#), and the Lost Valley Regulated Hunt Area thanks to ODFW's A&H Program. The old Wheeler burn in the Fossil unit would be a good bet for deer hunters.

Umatilla District (Walla Walla, Mt. Emily, Ukiah, eastern portion of Heppner, northern Columbia Basin)

Hunters without access to private land can utilize the Umatilla National Forest and ODFW's [Bridge Creek](#) and Columbia Basin ([Irrigon](#) and [Willow Creek](#)) wildlife areas.

Union District (Starkey, Catherine Creek, East Mt. Emily, portions of Sled Springs, and Wenaha wildlife management units)

The Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests and ODFW's [Ladd Marsh](#) and Elkhorn Wildlife Areas near La Grande are open to the public for hunting. In Catherine Creek, Starkey and Wenaha units, Forest Capital timberlands have been sold to Hancock Timber Resource Group. These lands will be open to public hunting at least through the end of the year. The Access and Habitat Program (funded by a \$4 fee on your hunting license) has helped keep these lands open to the public. The Dry Beaver-Ladd TMA will be in effect, meaning no vehicle access in certain areas to protect wildlife and habitat and promote quality hunting. There are seven TMAs that exist in Union County. You can access TMA maps on the [ODFW website](#).

Wallowa District (Wenaha, Sled Springs, Chesnimnus, Snake River, Imnaha)

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and [Wenaha Wildlife Area](#) provide public hunting opportunities. Remember several travel management restrictions are in effect in the district including the Noregaard, Whiskey Creek and Shamrock TMAs in Sled Springs, the Chesnimnus TMA in Chesnimnus and the Grouse Lick Creeks in Imnaha during bull season.

In the Snake River unit, the Lord Flat Road north of Warnock Corral and the Summit Ridge Road north of PO Saddle will not be open to motor vehicles.

Northeast Region Upland Game Bird

[Sign up online for free youth upland bird hunts](#)

Sign up online or at a license sales agent for free youth pheasant hunts. Hunters age 17 and under are eligible. Details here: <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2012/August/081312.asp>

- Baker City – Sept. 8, 9. Call 541-963-2138 for more information.
- Irrigon (Umatilla County): Sept. 22, 23. Call 541-276-2344 for more information.
- John Day: Sept. 15, 16. Call 541-575-1167 for more information.
- La Grande (Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area): Sept. 15, 16. **No advanced registrations needed**, just check in at HQ, 59116 Pierce Rd. Check in opens 7 a.m. and hunting hours are 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Baker County – Baker County –Chukar and other bird production looks fair this year. It appears that nest success was average throughout the season with good chick survival. Brood sizes are average. [A&H properties](#) offer good upland hunting and access to public land.

Morrow, Gilliam, Wheeler Counties – Production is down from last year for all species and is still below the long-term average. Total birds seen on ODFW routes were down across all species and ranged from down 35% for pheasants to 64% for Hungarian partridges. Brood sizes for all species are down from last year. Hunters should still be able to find birds to pursue but success should not be as high as last year. In this district hunters can use lands in the [Upland Cooperative Access Program](#) and the [Heppner Regulated Hunt Area](#) and Lost Valley Regulated Hunt Area. Also see ODFW's [Columbia Basin Bird Hunting Guide](#) for maps and other good information on the 250K acres open to public hunting.

Grant County –Upland game bird production appears to be good this year. Good over winter survival has contributed to good brood production. The [Philip W. Schneider Wildlife Area](#) is open to the public and offers good bird hunting.

Union County - The wet spring and flooding in the Grande Ronde Valley has resulted in many birds having to re-nest. The re-nesting effort was strong and the number of quail broods is above average. Pheasant production is about average. Hunters need to be aware that some of the birds from these late broods are likely to be very small when the seasons open. These late broods will also contain individuals that may not be fully 'colored-up' which will make identification difficult.

The best hunting will be in areas with permanent cover. Hunters should work ridge tops for blue grouse and stream corridors for ruffed grouse. Hunters are asked to provide wings and tails from harvested grouse at collection barrels located in the field.

Dove numbers are about average this year. Eurasian collared doves are now relatively common in this area and can be taken and included in the mourning dove bag limit. Please report all banded birds taken.

Umatilla County - Hunting should be average this year. Quail are holding their own but brood sizes are moderate compared to previous years. Mountain quail hunters will find the largest number of birds in the side drainages of the North Fork John Day River. It will be an average year for pheasants; biologists did not see many broods. Huns can be found in the foothills of the Blues and appear to have produced well this last year. There are a few chukar but most hunting is on private land.

Wallowa County – Heavy May-June rains and cooler temperatures have resulted in much reduced chick survival for most upland bird species. In general, wildlife biologists observed fewer birds on survey routes than observed in recent years. Chukar hunting will remain poor and numbers are still below long-term average. Blue grouse numbers and chicks per brood were below last year's, so hunters can expect to see fewer birds. Hunting timbered ridges adjacent to open grass slopes, and canyon draws with hawthorn are good places to find birds. Turkey chick survival is well below last year's and the numbers of birds observed is down.

Northeast Region Waterfowl

BAKER COUNTY

Duck and goose hunting is expected to be similar to past years with a few resident birds early in the season. More migrant birds will arrive later in the season and hunting should improve, especially in the Baker and Keating Valleys. Almost all hunting is on private property, so be sure to ask permission before hunting. The Powder River from Baker City to Brownlee Reservoir offers the best waterfowl hunting.

GRANT COUNTY

Grant County offers very limited waterfowl hunting opportunities due to lack of habitat; there are a few opportunities on private land along the John Day River.

UMATILLA COUNTY

Habitat conditions in the Columbia Basin still support large numbers of wintering Canada geese. Try hunting the Columbia Basin Wildlife Areas ([Power City](#), [Irrigon](#), [Coyote Springs](#), [Willow Creek](#)). Food crops are being planted, ponds are being enhanced, all of which will make conditions better for waterfowl hunting on these lands.

Special youth waterfowl hunt at the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge Nov. 10. Open to hunters ages 10-17. Applications due by Sept. 14. [Apply here.](#)

UNION COUNTY

Waterfowl hunting for Union County is expected to be good. Late spring and early summer rains have been beneficial to the waterfowl without flooding the nests. Mallards and gadwall are the more abundant birds from local production. Local geese produced in the Grande Ronde Basin appear to be staying in the area. This should benefit September Canada Goose hunters. If the lack of summer precipitation continues, there may be some issues with water availability at the opener of the season.

Northeast Region Bear and Cougar

BAKER DISTRICT: Sumpter, Keating, Pine Creek, Lookout Mt. wildlife management units

Bear and cougar hunting should be good. Fall bear hunters have best success in higher elevation areas of the Keating and Pine Creek Units on the Wallowa Whitman National Forest. Find cougars just about anywhere; remember to carry a tag. Hunt for bears in high elevation open areas with lots of berries.

GRANT DISTRICT: Murderers Creek, Northside, Desolation, southeast Heppner, northwest Beulah wildlife management units:

Bear and cougar hunting should be decent this fall. Often hunters will run into cougar or black bear while pursuing other species, so it is good to have the tags in your possession. Look for black bear in high elevations in the Murderers Creek and Beulah units and around huckleberry patched in mid-August.

HEPPNER DISTRICT (Morrow, Gilliam and Wheeler counties): Heppner, Fossil, East Biggs, southern Columbia Basin wildlife management units

Hunters are still seeing cougars in Heppner and throughout the district so there is opportunity for hunters. This District is not the best place to hunt bears as habitat does not favor them, but they can be encountered by deer and elk hunters so carry a tag.

UMATILLA DISTRICT: Walla Walla, Mt. Emily, Ukiah, eastern portion of Heppner, northern Columbia Basin

Getting a spring bear tag in Umatilla is not easy so fall is your chance to hunt here under a general season. Bears are high up early in the season and will pull down slowly. Look in hawthorn and elderberry concentrations to find them; early on they will be on edges of clearing and clearcuts near berry crops in high country. The best bear hunting is north of I-84 in Mt Emily and Walla Walla units. Cougar populations are healthy; carry a tag while hunting deer or elk as you may get the chance to take a cougar while you're at it.

