

## Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Hunting Report

by ODFW

Open: Rocky Mt. bull elk (open Nov. 3-11 in some portions of zone), pheasant, chukar, duck, forest grouse, California quail, mt quail (open in Wheeler, Hood Rvr and Wasco counties) cougar, bear, crow

### Ochoco Wildlife District

Recent weather conditions have been better for camping than elk hunting. Despite the sunny days and clear nights, hunters during the opening weekend had improved success compared to recent years. Bulls were observed taken at all elevations, on both public and private lands, with the majority of animals seen taken being mature bulls. For opening weekend of the second season, 152 hunters were checked with nine bulls. All nine were mature (3 pt ) compared to last year's 75% mature composition. This year's second season 6% rate was above the 4% observed last year, but was below the 16% rate observed during this year's first period.

With last years large calf crop, there are still good opportunities for those hunters still out in the field to take spike bulls. Hunters are reminded the South Boundary and Rager Green Dot Travel Management Areas (TMA) with restrictions on motorized vehicles are in effect in the Ochoco unit. Maps are available at portal signs as you enter the TMA's, or from local ODFW and forest service offices.

Cougar are scattered at all elevations across both public and private lands. With deer numbers are greatest at higher elevations on the Ochoco National Forest; hunters can expect cougar to be present as well. Areas to consider include Lookout and Pisgah Mountains and Sunflower Creek (Ochoco unit) and Green Mountain and Mill Creek (Grizzly unit).

Valley quail numbers appear strong, with the best opportunities on agricultural private lands throughout Crook and Jefferson Counties. Springs, stream areas, and other rangelands with cover and water on the Crooked River National Grasslands and BLM lands would also be good area to check.

Chukar are more limited in distribution, with areas along the Crooked, Deschutes, and John Day Rivers offering the best opportunities. Much of this involves private lands where permission from the landowner is needed.

The best opportunities for blue and ruffed grouse will be on the higher elevations on the Ochoco National Forest. The better areas will be on the heavier forested north slopes across the Paulina and Lookout Mountain Ranger Districts.

Duck and goose hunters will find most birds present are residents, with migrating birds yet to arrive in any numbers. This area is challenging as most of the better hunting is on private lands. There are limited opportunities on public land around Prineville Res., and along the Crooked River.

## The Dalles Wildlife District

Rocky mt bull elk season is open. 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. Bull numbers are fair, but heavy cover makes harvesting one a challenge

The Hood unit and the forested portion of White River Wildlife Area can provide excellent opportunity for bear hunters, especially in clear cuts and huckleberry fields. Hunters should focus on still hunting in clearings, spending a good deal of time glassing.

Hunters wishing to pursue cougar should focus their efforts in areas where big game populations are found. The boundary between the White River Wildlife area and the Mount Hood National forest can provide good opportunity.

Grouse wing barrels are scattered around the White River and Hood units to collect wings of blue and ruffed grouse and mt. quail. We ask each successful hunter to contribute a wing and tail off of each harvested bird.

Waterfowl season is now open within the district. The majority of waterfowl hunting opportunities are present on private lands, with a few exceptions along the Columbia and Deschutes rivers.

Upland game birds are found throughout the district. Bird production was fair in the area this year, with populations being at or near the ten year average. Hunters wishing to target pheasant and quail should focus on areas in and around streams or near agricultural areas. Public access can be found on the Lower Deschutes and White River Wildlife areas, as well as BLM property in the Deschutes and John Day canyons. Hunters should be aware that bird hunting is prohibited within  $\hat{A}$ ¼ mile of the John Day River from the Columbia upstream to Thirtymile Creek.