



September 12, 2024

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, OR 97302

Dear Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission,

The undersigned organizations, representing hundreds of thousands of hunters and anglers across the state of Oregon and nation, support the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) staff recommendations for the 2025 big game regulations. We appreciate that ODFW continues to base its management decisions on science and robust data. The recommendations reflect a commitment to evidence-based wildlife management, a pillar of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which is essential for the long-term sustainability of our state's diverse wildlife populations. Oregon's sportsmen and women stand behind ODFW's scientific management of our big game species.

Our support of these professional ODFW recommendations includes the management of the black bear population through the spring season. With the bear population growing from an estimated 34,000 in 2020 to 44,000 in 2024, the data confirms that the population is healthy and expanding. The mandatory check-ins of harvested bears provide biologists with critical data that ensures hunting opportunities align with sustainable population growth. Despite the 28% increase in the bear population, the proposed increase in tag numbers has remained conservative, further underscoring the department's commitment to maintaining a balanced and thriving bear population.

Hunters play a crucial role in wildlife management. Through hunting, valuable data is gathered on various species that cannot be obtained through other means. For instance, sage grouse wings provide essential population data, while deer and elk sampling help track chronic wasting disease. Data gathered from harvested cougars and bears, such as teeth and reproductive tracts, offer critical information on age structure and population dynamics. The participation of hunters in this process makes them indispensable to the data collection efforts that guide wildlife management decisions.

Hunters' contributions extend far beyond big game species. The data collected through hunting benefits a wide array of wildlife, including upland birds, migratory species, furbearers, and even unprotected mammals. Biologists rely on the unique and extensive datasets that hunters provide to make informed decisions that benefit all wildlife across the state.

Furthermore, hunters are active conservationists who not only collect vital data through harvesting but also engage in hands-on or by directly funding conservation work and research. Many sportsmen and women volunteer their time for projects such as constructing water guzzlers, maintaining wildlife-friendly fencing, replanting forests, building beaver dam analogs and by directing collecting management and disease data. These contributions directly support habitat preservation and restoration efforts, ensuring that wildlife populations continue to thrive.

Oregon's sportsmen and women are deeply invested in the future of our wildlife. We recognize that well-managed populations, both game and non-game species, are the result of science-based, data-driven decisions. ODFW's staff recommendations for 2025 reflect this understanding, and we encourage the Commission to continue to support agency recommendations to ensure that our wildlife continues to flourish for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and for considering the voices of Oregon's sportsmen and women in these important decisions.

Sincerely,

American Bear Foundation
The Boone and Crockett Club
Ducks Unlimited
Fur Takers of America
HOWL For Wildlife
National Trappers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
Oregon Anglers Alliance
Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
Oregon Hunters Association
Oregon Trappers Association
Oregon United Sporting Dogs Association

Oregon Wild Sheep Foundation
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wild Sheep Foundation