

A wide-angle landscape photograph of a desert canyon. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by layered, light-colored rock formations, likely sandstone or limestone, showing signs of erosion. A river flows through the canyon, winding from the right towards the center. The background shows rolling hills and a vast, open landscape under a clear sky. The lighting suggests late afternoon or early morning, with warm, golden light illuminating the rock faces.

2026

# WILD DESERT CALENDAR

Oregon Natural Desert Association



## Oregon's Distinctive Desert

Oregon's high desert is an extraordinary landscape featuring impressive rivers, craggy canyons, towering peaks, and undulating hills. Innumerable petroglyphs and pictographs record Indigenous presence since time immemorial. By day, the desert sun shines over a sea of sagebrush. At night, dark skies sparkle with countless stars.

## Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA)

As the only organization dedicated exclusively to conserving the region's remarkable public lands, ONDA protects, defends and restores the wonders of Oregon's high desert for future generations to love and enjoy just as we do today.

ONDA connects people to the high desert and ensures conservation supporters have a say in how these public lands are managed. Thousands of dedicated donors, passionate advocates and determined volunteers fuel ONDA's strategic conservation campaigns, policy initiatives and restoration projects each year, working together to keep Oregon's desert natural and thriving.

We hope your passion for conserving the desert's essential lands, waters and wildlife is ignited each month as you page through the breathtaking scenery showcased in this year's Wild Desert Calendar.

## Gratitude

Special thanks for this publication go to all of the photographers who submitted images for consideration, the naturalists who shared phenological observations, and this year's volunteer calendar committee: Jon Cain, Mark Chidlaw, Mark Darnell, James Parsons, and Dave Caplan.

*Copyright to all photographs herein belongs to the photographers who generously donated these images.*

ROW 1 (L-R): Setting up camp in the Owyhee Canyonlands. Photo: John Aylward. ONDA group stewardship trip to Reynolds Pond supporting the construction of accessible trails. Photo: Renee Patrick. Hiker observing the winter reflections of Lake Owyhee. Photo: Brijean Brennan.

ROW 2 (L-R): Happy hiker at Acty Mountain. Photo: Anne White. Kayaking on the Owyhee River. Photo: Stephanie Hazen. 2024 Tribal Stewards monitoring wildlife in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Photo: Gena Goodman-Campbell.

ROW 3 (L-R): Spring hikers on Leslie Gulch trail in the Owyhee Canyonlands. Photo: Mary Ann Ruiz. Fly fishing on the John Day River. Photo: Victoria Pettit. ONDA volunteer and staff on a group stewardship trip to install monitoring wells and plant trees on South Fork Crooked River. Photo: Jefferson Jacobs.

ROW 4 (L-R): Hiker overlooking East Fork Owyhee River. Photo: Mike Turaski. 2024 Tribal Stewards in the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. Photo: Sarah Lindsay. Spring hiking in McDermitt Caldera. Photo: Jim Davis.

Cover: Sunrise at Chalk Basin, Owyhee River, Owyhee Canyonlands. Photo: Patrick Stoll



# CONSERVING OREGON'S DESERT PUBLIC LANDS, WATERS AND WILDLIFE

ONDA conserves the most spectacular and ecologically important public lands in Oregon's high desert. Our solutions-oriented and inclusive conservation initiatives support a thriving future for lands, waters, wildlife and communities throughout eastern Oregon.

Since its founding in 1987, ONDA has partnered with Tribal and Indigenous communities, land management agencies, elected leaders and committed people like you to advocate for conservation actions that protect, defend and restore Oregon's high desert.

## WHERE ONDA WORKS

### OWYHEE CANYONLANDS

● Oregon's Owyhee Canyonlands is the largest unprotected expanse of wildlands in the contiguous United States. Its deep canyons, rushing rivers, rich cultural history and diversity of wildlife set it apart from anywhere else in Oregon. Our campaign to permanently protect the Owyhee is a national conservation priority. See *January, May, July, August and September*.

### CENTRAL OREGON BACKCOUNTRY

● With rolling sagebrush plains and dramatic river canyons, this gateway into Oregon's dry side offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Many of its waterways provide spawning habitat for salmon and steelhead. ONDA works with community members to conserve and restore the natural values of this beloved landscape. See *June and November*.

### JOHN DAY RIVER BASIN

● Without dams to block migration, the John Day River provides safe passage for summer steelhead and Chinook salmon. The surrounding landscape supports abundant habitat for mule deer, elk and more, with exceptional recreational opportunities too. ONDA is partnering with local communities and other organizations to promote permanent protection for Sutton Mountain and surrounding landscapes. See *April*.

### TRIBAL AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Oregon's high desert is the homeland of a diversity of Indigenous people, including the Northern Paiute, Shoshone, Bannock, Wasco, Warm Springs, Yahooskin, Cayuse, Walla Walla and Umatilla peoples organized within several Tribes. These include the Burns Paiute Tribe, Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribes, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, the Klamath Tribes, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and others.

ONDA is committed to collaborating with these communities and eager to continue learning more about how our conservation mission can complement Tribal and Indigenous conservation goals.

### GREATER HART-SHELDON

● The Greater Hart-Sheldon encompasses a vast region of mountains, wetlands and sagebrush steppe supporting an abundance of wildlife. Migrating waterfowl, pronghorn, the imperiled greater sage-grouse and more thrive here. ONDA's advocacy to strengthen protections and counter threats will sustain wildlife, habitat, cultural values and public enjoyment for generations to come. See *February and March*.

### STEENS MOUNTAIN

● With spectacular streams coursing through deep gorges, golden aspen groves and lush wildflower meadows, Steens Mountain is simply stunning. ONDA played a critical role in securing wilderness designation for Steens and remains a vigilant advocate for this iconic mountain today. ONDA also joins partners to steward the nearby Alvord Desert and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. See *October and December*.

### OREGON DESERT TRAIL

● Showcasing the natural wonders and conservation opportunities of Oregon's high desert, the Oregon Desert Trail is a long-distance hiking route like no other. Whether you head out for a day, a week, or a month, this route through eastern Oregon's public lands will deepen your connection to this exceptional landscape. See *February, March, July, September, October and December*.





# JANUARY

Snow falling on Succor Creek, Owyhee Canyonlands. Photo: Tyson Fisher



Horned lark. Photo: Alan St. John

*"Out here, there is another way to be.  
There is a rising brightness in the rock,  
a singing in the silence of the tree.  
Something is always moving, running free,  
as quick and still as quail move in a flock.  
The hills out here know a hard way to be."*

**URSULA K. LE GUIN**  
Poet and Author,  
High Desert

January brings crisp cold air and offers quiet solitude in Oregon's high desert. Red-tailed hawk, rough-legged hawk, bald eagle and golden eagle are all searching for food and found in large concentrations at Fort Rock, Christmas Valley, Silver Lake, Summer Lake Wildlife Area and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	1 New Year's Day Last day of Kwanzaa	2	3 ○ Quadrantid meteor shower (40/hour) Perihelion (Earth closest to Sun) 9:15 A.M. PST
4	5 ONDA incorporated, 1989	6	7	8	9	10 ◐
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 ●	19 Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday observed	20	21	22	23	24
25 ◐	26	27	28	29	30	31



# FEBRUARY

Abert Rim above Juniper Creek and Lake Abert, Greater Hart-Sheldon. Photo: Mark Darnell



American avocets. Photo: Shannon Phifer

*“Rounding the corner of Oregon’s Highway 395, nestled underneath the towering Abert Rim, a vast, bright blue lake appears, seemingly out of thin air. It would be fair to question one’s eyesight, with such a stark contrast to the otherwise tan and rocky high desert landscape, but this is no mirage. It is Lake Abert, Oregon’s sole salt lake and one of the three hypersaline lakes in the Great Basin.”*

**HAILEY TOBIASON**  
ONDA 2023 Hillis Intern,  
*Look Back: A Summer Desert Oasis*

Greater sage-grouse, mule deer, pronghorn and numerous other wildlife species are surviving thanks to the evergreen leaves of big sagebrush. ♦ With increasing sunlight and warmth, hardy plants like bitterbrush and ponderosa pines will begin sprouting by mid-month, the product of forgotten seed stashes made by jays in an earlier season. ♦ Perennial mosses and many cliff and rock ferns are green and growing.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
○ 1 Black History Month	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	☾ 9	10	11	12	13	14 Valentines Day
15	16	● 17 First day of Ramadan Lunar New Year	18	19	20	21
22	23	☾ 24	25	26	27	28
1	2	○ 3	4	5	6	7



# MARCH

Spring sunrise over the Rabbit Hills, Greater Hart-Sheldon. Photo: Bryan Andresen



Greater sage-grouse. Photo: Richard Eltrich

*"I always feel sad leaving Hart Mountain. Yet after I travel a few hours, and turn to see its great bulk against the sky, my heart rejoices. The refuge will leave our grandsons and granddaughters an inheritance that no dollars could recreate. Here they will find life teeming throughout all the life zones that lead from desert to alpine meadows."*

**WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS**  
1960 Supreme Court Justice

As snowmelt soaks in and soils start to warm, many hardy perennial grasses and forbs resume growing. This includes Idaho fescue, Great Basin wildrye, sagebrush buttercup, yellow bells and grass widows, as well as various *Lomatium* and *Lewisia*. ♦ Found only in the American West, mountain mahogany trees wake up, with both the leaves and blossoms emitting a lovely smell. ♦ Shorebirds, such as American avocets and killdeer, begin to arrive on their quest to find enough food to sustain a brood. Look for them around our lakes and marshes, especially Lake Abert, Summer Lake and Harney Basin. ♦ Ungulate herds begin to move off their winter ranges as they begin to search for safe birthing spots. ♦ Abundant side-blotched lizards, with thin, flat bodies that heat quickly, perch on sun-bathed rocks—our first reptile species to become active in spring. ♦ Greater sage-grouse males begin their spectacular courting on their leks, performing elaborate dances to attract females.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1  Women's History Month Meteorological Spring Begins	2	3 ○  Total Lunar Eclipse 3:33 A.M. PDT (max)	4	5	6	7
8  Daylight Saving Time begins, 2 A.M.	9	10	11 ☾	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 ●  Ash Wednesday	19  Last day of Ramadan	20  Spring Equinox, 7:46 A.M. PDT	21
22	23	24	25 ☾	26	27	28
29	30	31	1 ○  Spring Basin and Oregon Badlands Wilderness Areas established, 2009	2	3	4



# APRIL

Misty John Day River Canyon, west of Sutton Mountain, John Day River Basin. Photo: Tyson Fisher



Parent and fledgling cedar waxwing. Photo: Lane Wintermute

*"The John Day River, which zigzags north and west through Oregon's arid middle, is undammed for its entire length. This makes the river a sort of symbolic character to the state—the John Day is free, wild and unpredictable."*

**ERIK GAUGER**  
Writer and Photographer,  
*Notes From The Road*

Bitterroot begins blooming in April from the Central Oregon Backcountry to the Owyhee Canyonlands. ♦ Greater sage-grouse congregate as lekking activity peaks in early April, with males aiming to attract female attention with their elaborate courtship display. ♦ Flocks of shorebirds such as least and western sandpipers stop along shorelines and mud flats to fatten up for their long migration to breeding habitat above the Arctic Circle.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	31	○ 1 <small>Passover (begins at sunset)</small>	2	3	4
5 <small>Easter</small>	6	7	8	☾ 9 <small>Last day of Passover</small>	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	● 17	18
19	20	21	22 <small>Earth Day Lyrid meteor shower (20/hour)</small>	☾ 23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	○ 1	2



# MAY

Summer afternoon at lower McDermitt Creek, Owyhee Canyonlands. Photo: Ellen Morris Bishop



Pronghorn. Photo: Gary Calicott

*"The very silts, sky, sun, waters, you suspected as bleak*

*Proves to you once more her magical prowess and you fall deep, deeper, in gratitude of her gifts*

*Into the endless record of time, stories, memories, beings, she holds within her body, bones, layers*

*Feeling called now, moved, to protect her shifting ways*

*Her cleverness. Her duality. Her charm. Her might. Forever.*

*The Desert. The Trickster."*

**KARLY FOSTER**  
Former ONDA Staff,  
*An Ode to the McDermitt Caldera*

In the high desert's aquatic habitats, the eggs of frogs, toads and salamanders have now hatched, attracting garter snakes to feed on the plump tadpoles. ♦ Many waterfowl species and many varieties of warblers, tanagers and other neotropical passerines are arriving in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Warner Wetlands. ♦ Pronghorn and other mammals are giving birth. ♦ Early summer wildflowers in bloom include globemallow, balsamroot, purple sage, shooting star, lupine, vetch, and other members of the pea family, members of the buckwheat family, and many more. ♦ Found in sandy and more alkaline soils, the tips of the desert shrub spiny hopsage begin flushing a deep pink.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	○ 1 <small>Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month</small>	2
3	4	5	6 <small>Eta Aquarid meteor shower (30/hour)</small>	7	8	● 9
10 <small>Mother's Day</small>	11	12	13	14	15	● 16
17	18	19	20	21	22	● 23
○ 24/31	25 <small>Memorial Day</small>	26 <small>First day of Eid al-Adha</small>	27 <small>Last day of Eid al-Adha</small>	28	29	30



# JUNE

Spring sunset over the Middle Deschutes River, Central Oregon Backcountry. Photo: James Parsons



Edith's checkerspot butterfly. Photo: Kari Ferber

*"But the enduring fascination of the high desert, and the reason its survival as a wild place is within reach, may well lie in the fact that this vast open can't quite be named. It stays always one step ahead of the namers, luring us who would try deeper and deeper into its embrace."*

**ELLEN WATERSON**  
Poet and Author,  
*Walking the High Desert*

Newly hatched flying insects are attracting and supporting many species of birds, such as swallows, flycatchers, and warblers. ♦ The nests of shorebirds, such as the black-necked stilt, snowy plover and spotted sandpiper are filled with eggs, and downy chicks will arrive soon. ♦ As rivers warm up and water levels drop, many cold-loving fish migrate upstream, or hunker down in deeper pools. ♦ Many widespread flowering plants and shrubs are in full bloom, including paintbrush, owl's-clover, fleabane, mariposa lily and snowberry. If you missed some favorite wildflowers earlier in the spring, you may find them in bloom at higher elevations—such as Sutton Mountain and Pat's Cabin Wilderness Study Areas, Hart Mountain, Steens Mountain, and Beatys Butte, or on top of ranges like the Pueblo, Trout Creek, and Oregon Canyon mountains.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
○ 31	1 LGBTQ+ Pride Month Meteorological Summer Begins	2	3	4	5	6
7	☾ 8	9	10	11	12	13
● 14	15	16	17	18	19 Juneteenth	20
☾ 21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Father's Day Summer Solstice, 1:24 A.M. PDT	28	29	30	1	2	3
○ 31	1	2	3	4	5	6



# JULY

Summer sunset in the Owyhee Canyonlands. Photo: Jim Davis



Lupine blue butterfly. Photo: Sue Anderson

*"Rivers know this: there is no hurry. We shall get there some day."*

**A. A. MILNE**

Author,

*Pooh's Little Instruction Book*

All of our reptiles are out and about now, including horned lizards, whiptails, and the long-nosed leopard lizard—an active hunter often seen climbing into and atop bushes after insects. ♦ Summer wildflower species include: endemic Steens Mountain thistle, blazingstar, polemonium, elephant's head, gentian, sedum, many varieties of orchids, and a great abundance of the Aster and Penstemon families. ♦ Baby rodents, lagomorphs and ungulates are out and about, learning from their parents, honing survival skills, and often feeding their mammalian predators like coyotes, bobcats, cougars and various raptors and owls. ♦ Insects abound too, with abundant moths, beetles, mayflies and other aquatics, and many species of bees. An amazing variety of gorgeous dragonflies are at peak population now, eating one another as well as supplying their predators with a steady food source. Grasshoppers can be very abundant as well, with many types historically gathered for food by various Native Tribes. In certain places and years, the desert experiences swarms of Mormon crickets that can grow up to three inches long.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	○ 29	30	1	2	3	4 <small>Independence Day</small>
5	6 <small>Aphelion (Earth farthest from Sun), 10:30 A.M. PDT</small>	● 7	8	9	10	11
12	13	● 14	15	16	17	18
19	20	● 21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	○ 29 <small>Delta Aquarid meteor shower (20/hour)</small>	30	31	1



# AUGUST

A golden gleam breaks through refreshing raindrops. McIntyre Ridge, Owyhee Canyonlands. Photo: Mark Darnell



Great Basin collared lizard. Photo: Alan St. John

*"The Owyhee is rich with a deep cultural history, abundant wildlife and biodiversity, and a sense of wildness unlike anywhere else in Oregon."*

**RYAN HOUSTON**  
ONDA Executive Director

American pika are busy cutting and drying little "haystacks" to provide the food stores they will depend upon in winter, as they do not hibernate. ♦ Green rabbitbrush explodes into waves of bright yellow blooms this month all across the high desert. ♦ Subalpine wildflowers in the upper meadows and gorges of Steens Mountain, Hart Mountain and in the Pueblo, Trout Creek and Oregon Canyon mountains are reaching their peak. ♦ Many shorebirds will begin their southward migration now. ♦ American kestrel are searching fields for their favorite and most abundant prey: grasshoppers. ♦ Seed-eating birds are busy fattening up as fruit ripens. ♦ Most reptiles retreat into cool hiding places at midday, except for the heat-adapted Great Basin collared lizard which can be seen basking on boulders—even when it's 100 degrees.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	○ 29	30	31	1
2	3	4	● 5	6	7	8
9	10	11	● 12	13	14	15
			Perseid meteor shower (60/hour)			
16	17	18	● 19	20	21	22
	Malheur National Wildlife Refuge established, 1908					
23/30	24/31	25	26	○ 27	28	29



# SEPTEMBER

Sunrise at Chalk Basin, Owyhee River, Owyhee Canyonlands. Photo: Patrick Stoll



Ground snakes. Photo: Alan St. John

*"My time in the remote areas has made me respect even more the fragility of the earth, but has also reminded me of how many great small places there are."*

**GARY CALICOTT (1964-2025)**  
ONDA Volunteer Photographer

When water is available, large numbers of Wilson's phalaropes, eared grebes and American avocets are preparing to depart Lake Abert where they feasted on brine shrimp and alkali flies in preparation for their southward migration. ♦ Gray rabbitbrush is in bloom, feeding the same pollinators that enjoyed green rabbitbrush blooms last month. ♦ Through early autumn, Aster species abound and, with enough summer rain, the endemic narrow-leaved monardella may bloom again.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	1 Meteorological Autumn begins	2 The Wilderness Act passed, 1964	3	4 ☾	5
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10 ●	11 Rosh Hashanah (begins at sunset)	12
13 Rosh Hashanah (ends at sunset)	14	15 Hispanic Heritage Month (Sept. 15-Oct. 15)	16	17	18 ☾	19
20 Yom Kippur (begins at sunset)	21 Yom Kippur (ends at sunset)	22 Autumn Equinox, 5:05 P.M. PDT	23	24	25	26 ○
27	28	29	30	1	2	3 ☾



# OCTOBER

Aspens and afternoon frost, Steens Mountain Region. Photo: Greg Burke



Bighorn sheep. Photo: Kari Ferber

*"O that I should make you see  
where the quaking Aspen be,  
with her colour changing leaf,  
with her fluffy seeds relief,  
in her spring or autumn suit  
now in winter sadly mute,  
ruler of the woody glade,  
pageant queen of nature play'd!"*

**LULU GEE**  
Poet,  
*The Quaking Aspen*

The large aspen groves on Hart and Steens mountains are taking on burnished hues of yellow, orange and red. ♦ This is mating season for deer, elk, pronghorn and bighorn sheep. Listen for elk bugling in forested areas. ♦ The flowers on most shrubs have faded, but big sagebrush blooms may still be found. ♦ Mushrooms appear across a variety of habitats, especially following rains. ♦ Many species of raptors migrate south as prey species begin to den up and diminish in abundance.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	1	2 <small>National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act passed, 1968</small>	3 ☾
4	5	6	7	8 <small>John Day Fossil Beds National Monument established, 1975</small>	9 <small>National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act signed into law, 1997</small>	10 ●
11	12 <small>Indigenous Peoples' Day</small>	13	14	15	16	17
18 ☾	19	20	21 <small>Orionid meteor shower (20/hour)</small>	22	23	24
25 ○	26	27	28 <small>Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act passed, 1988</small>	29	30 <small>Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act passed, 2000</small>	31 <small>Halloween</small>



# NOVEMBER

Morning on Whychus Creek, Deschutes River, Central Oregon Backcountry. Photo: Kari Ferber



Coyote. Photo: Jon Nelson

*“Coyotes have the gift of seldom being seen; they keep to the edge of vision and beyond, loping in and out of cover on the plains and highlands. And at night, when the whole world belongs to them, they parley at the river with the dogs, their higher, sharper voices full of authority and rebuke. They are an old council of clowns, and they are listened to.”*

**N. SCOTT MOMADAY**  
Kiowa Poet and Author

Birds hanging around now are primarily those who winter in Oregon, including the spotted towhee who will forage in and around shrubbery, subsisting mostly on the remaining seeds and insect larvae. ♦ November can be an excellent time to take those last hikes into the high and middle elevations before the serious snows set in, and it's an excellent season to watch animals before the heavier snows drive them down from the high country. In the depths of winter, ungulates will converge along riparian corridors and in more densely vegetated areas, for weather protection as well as water and forage. ♦ American pika have cut, dried and stored enough greens from the growing season to survive until spring—assuming they are not hunted by a weasel, their primary predator, over the winter. ♦ Tundra swans are assessing the temperatures and water remaining, deciding whether they will stay for the entire winter at Summer Lake Wildlife Area, or need to carry on southward. ♦ Mammals have shed their lighter summer pelage in favor of longer and thicker pelts for weather protection. Some, such as snowshoe hare and weasels, change colors to a wintery camouflage.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
☾ 1 First day of Dia de los Muertos Native American Heritage Month Daylight Saving Time ends, 2A.M.	2 Last day of Dia de los Muertos	3	4	5	6	7
● 8 Diwali	9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14
15	16	☾ 17 Leonid meteor shower (15/hour)	18	19	20	21
22	23	○ 24	25	26 Thanksgiving	27 Native American Heritage Day	28
29	☾ 30	1	2	3	4	5



# DECEMBER

Winter storm, Steens Mountain Region. Photo: James Baker



Burrowing owl. Photo: Tara Lemezis

*"I wonder what it is about rugged, inhospitable landscapes that draw some of our most sensitive and creative souls. Maybe there's something about the isolation that allows someone to look inward to tap their creative forces. And maybe there's something about the barrier of a difficult journey that means that only like-minded people make it out to visit and connect, helping to filter out unnecessary distractions."*

**CASEY SCHREINER**  
Modern Hiker Newsletter

Short-tailed and long-tailed weasels are investigating brush and rock piles, hunting for ground squirrels, mice and pack rats. ♦ Beaver are living off the hardwood sticks cached at the bottom of their pond, staying below the ice until the spring thaw. ♦ Mule deer and elk can be seen in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and concentrated in places where snow cover is thinner with brushy or treed cover. If you come across them in rut, be careful not to intrude.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
29	30	1 Meteorological Winter Begins	2	3 International Day of Persons with Disabilities	4 Hanukkah (begins at sunset)	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Hanukkah (ends at sunset)
13 Geminid meteor shower (100/hour)	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge established, 1936	21 Winter Solstice, 12:50 P.M. PST	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26 First day of Kwanzaa
27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	1 Last day of Kwanzaa New Year's Day	2

# OREGON'S HIGH DESERT THROUGH THE SEASONS



JANUARY OWYHEE CANYONLANDS



FEBRUARY GREATER HART-SHELDON



MARCH GREATER HART-SHELDON



APRIL JOHN DAY RIVER BASIN



MAY OWYHEE CANYONLANDS



JUNE CENTRAL OREGON BACKCOUNTRY



JULY OWYHEE CANYONLANDS



AUGUST OWYHEE CANYONLANDS



SEPTEMBER OWYHEE CANYONLANDS



OCTOBER STEENS MOUNTAIN



NOVEMBER CENTRAL OREGON BACKCOUNTRY



DECEMBER STEENS MOUNTAIN

This **Wild Desert Calendar** will immerse you in twelve of the most dramatic, inspiring landscapes in Oregon's vast high desert. You will experience wildflowers blooming over river canyons, aspens aflame in the Steens, snowfall over rushing creeks, and both sunrises and sunsets in the Owyhee Canyonlands. You'll also enjoy a closer look at the wildlife that inhabit this landscape, and you can appreciate the resiliency of greater sage-grouse in the chill of winter, the vibrancy of various species of desert butterflies, the grace of burrowing owl and more. Prose, poetry and thoughts from ONDA Executive Director Ryan Houston, former Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, Photographer Gary Calicott, Poet Ellen Waterston and others will inspire contemplation and action. And, with information about moon phases, meteor showers, wildflower blooms and migratory bird arrivals provided, you can use this calendar as a guide to experiencing the desert.

All proceeds of this publication benefit Oregon Natural Desert Association. ONDA protects, defends and restores public lands in the Owyhee Canyonlands, Central Oregon Backcountry, Greater Hart-Sheldon, John Day River Basin and Steens Mountain. To conserve the desert places you love, visit [ONDA.org/donate](http://ONDA.org/donate).

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