

DO-IT-YOURSELF SPECIAL

Bowhunter[®]

THE #1 BOWHUNTING MAGAZINE

JULY 2023

HARD WORK
NOW...

...BREEDS SUCCESS LATER

P.32 PUBLIC LAND DONE RIGHT
TEAMING UP FOR BULL ELK
VENISON VERSUS PIGSKIN

P.48 BECOME ONE WITH YOUR OPTICS
28 TIPS FOR GROUND-POUNDERS

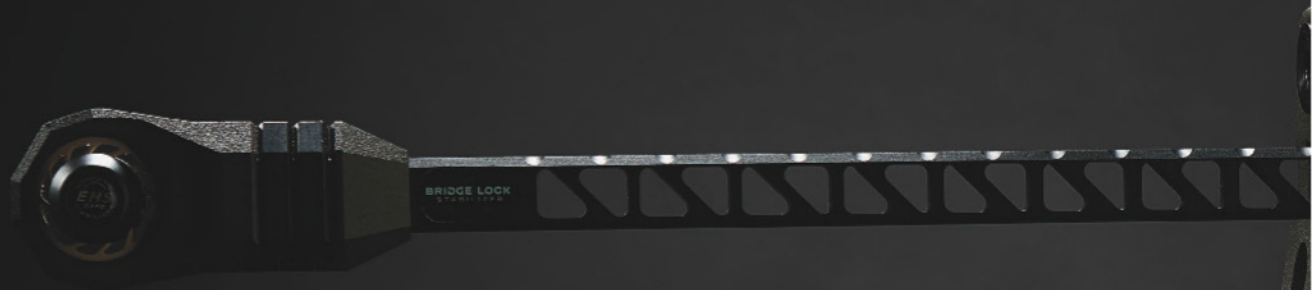
P.22 DRONING ON

A NEW "FAIR CHASE" DEBATE

SMART MOVES

ACCURACY IS ALL IN THE GRIP P.20
BROADHEADS — A SOCIAL AFFAIR
THE BEST TOOLS FOR FIELD TO TABLE
5 TIPS TO MAXIMIZE STEADINESS P.28

P.10 P&Y CLUB UPDATE
13 WORLD'S RECORDS BROKEN



COMMAND THE QUIET





■ LEARN MORE ABOUT THE 2023 PHASE4
AT [MATHEWSINC.COM](https://www.mathewsinc.com)



FEATURES

32 Going Back To The Well

By Jacob Emery

Hunting public land is a test of will, but if you do the work, you'll reap the rewards.

36 It's Hard To Pay Them All Back

By Nick White

Elk hunting is often a team effort...just make sure your team is solid.

42 Superior Glassing Techniques

By Joe Bell, Technical Editor

Spotting game in wide-open spaces at long distances is both art and science.

48 Bugling Bulls & The Art Of Deception

By Lane Farris

With a college football career over, what better way to channel your energy than tackling elk.

52 28 Tips To Ground Blind Success

By Wade Grassedonio

Bowhunting big game at eye level from a blind is awesome — if you know how to do it properly.

BONUS!

10 Reno Rewrites The Record Book

By Lynn Burkhead, OSG Senior Digital Editor

The most recent P&Y Biennial Convention was literally "one for the books!"

DEPARTMENTS

4 EDITORIAL | By Curt Wells, Editor

58 WHAT'S NEW | By Brian Fortenbaugh, Assistant Editor

62 WHERE TO GO/MARKETPLACE | Special Advertising Section

64 ASK BOWHUNTER | Curt Wells Goes Social On Broadheads

COLUMNS

14 ON THE TRACK | By Chuck Adams

16 THE TRADITIONAL WAY | By Fred Eichler, Traditional Editor

20 NEXT-LEVEL BOWHUNTING | By Joe Bell, Technical Editor

22 HUNTING WHITETAILS | By C.J. Winand

24 TRIED AND TRUE | By Brian K. Strickland, Equipment Editor

28 THE EMPTY QUIVER | By Danny Farris

30 KNOW HUNTING | By Dr. Dave Samuel, Conservation Editor

KNOW THE CAPABILITY OF YOUR EQUIPMENT... THEN TACK ON
**A LITTLE MORE WITH THE
PIERCE LRT.**
TACTICAL PRECISION AT ANY RANGE.



Should you take every long-range shot? No. Can you nail more of the ones you take? With the Pierce **LRT**, absolutely. It's the ultimate Long Range Tactical micro-diameter arrow built for more wind drift-reducing accuracy and deeper penetration. All of which helps you shoot confidently. Improve your tactical precision at more ranges. Get the Pierce **LRT**.

G- GOLD TIP
START TOUGH. STAY TRUE.



EDITORIAL

CURT WELLS | EDITOR

DIY: SKILLS BEFORE HUNTS

PROPER PREPARATION, THE RIGHT GEAR, AND THE NECESSARY SKILLS WILL START YOU ON THE PATH TO EXPERIENCE.

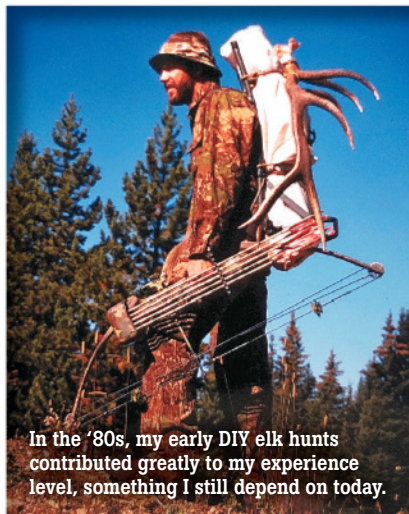
BACK IN THE DAY, learning bowhunting skills was difficult. Sources of information were limited to mentors, seminars at gatherings, and, of course, *Bowhunter* Magazine.

We learned the hard way compared to today, where you can find an unlimited number of online “experts.” Many of the skills we developed were rooted in trial and error with a little help from our friends. Most of my hunts were do-it-yourself adventures that came packaged with equal parts frustration and satisfaction. That last one was the driving force because of the self-pride that is felt when you get it done on your own.

Today, bowhunters can embark on their first DIY hunt equipped with much of the “canned” knowledge and appropriate gear necessary to get the job done. They can feel somewhat confident they have everything they need for most any adventure based, in many cases, on someone else’s experience.

Experience, by any definition, can only be found in one place — time spent actually hunting and learning. You can watch all the YouTube videos you want on how to call elk, but until you get in the mountains and hear bulls bugling, you can’t know the reality. How do you respond? When, and in what manner? Do you advance, or sit tight and call? You will learn quickly that every bull is different, every situation is different, and your response may have to be different from everything you’ve read or watched.

Another aspect of many DIY hunts is the skill of accommodating yourself. Where are you going to sleep, and what are you going to eat? Will you have sufficient, clean water? Here, experience is invaluable. You can seek out recommen-



In the '80s, my early DIY elk hunts contributed greatly to my experience level, something I still depend on today.

dations from a multitude of information sources, but will you be truly confident in your comfort and welfare in the backcountry? Your level of confidence will never be where it needs to be until you’ve “been there and done that.”

Sadly, some bowhunters never get over the trepidation of not having experience. They fear failure and don’t tackle adventures they’ve always dreamed of because they’re “inexperienced.” That is the worst possible excuse for not reaching for a dream. Adventure is supposed to be a test. Because you cannot buy experience, your only choice is to grab the bull by the antlers and go get it. Risk failure. Bet on success. Don’t be a wuss.

But two things come first. The best gear always makes a DIY hunt better. A tent that doesn’t leak, a packable trees-stand/saddle so you can go deep for public land whitetails. The best optics you can afford. A body fit for the adventure, and shooting skills that instill confidence. The ability to make elk sounds, or glass efficiently. Can you make a ground blind disappear? Gear and skills must precede the acquisition of experience.

In this issue, you’ll find several articles that will help you succeed on your own. Read closely. Notice the tips and advice woven into each story. It’s there for the discerning eye to see. And, just like back in the day, that is still true inside every issue of *Bowhunter*. **BH**

Bowhunter®

An Outdoor Sportsman Group® Publication

PUBLISHER Jeff Waring

EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR Curt Wells
ART DIRECTOR Mark Olszewski
ASSISTANT EDITOR Brian Fortenbaugh
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Sally Burkey
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR Jason Henning
SR. DIGITAL EDITOR Drew Pellman

FIELD EDITORS

FOUNDER M. R. James
CONSERVATION Dr. Dave Samuel
TECHNICAL Joe Bell
TRADITIONAL Fred Eichler
EQUIPMENT Brian K. Strickland

CONTRIBUTORS

Chuck Adams • Joe Blake • Chuck Denault • Danny Farris • Jeff Frey • Cameron R. Hanes • Donald M. Jones • Larry D. Jones • Judy Kovar • Lon Lauber • Pat Lefemine • Ron Niziolek • Frank Noska • Matt Palmquist • Tony J. Peterson • John Solomon • Dan Staton • Randy Ulmer • John “Lefty” Wilson • C.J. Winand

ADVERTISING SALES

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER Jeff Millar
(717) 695-8081; jeff.millar@outdoorsg.com

PRODUCTION

MANAGER Brittany Kennedy
(717) 695-8089; brittany.kennedy@outdoorsg.com

ENDEMIC AD SALES

VP, ENDEMIC SALES
Mike Savino mike.savino@outdoorsg.com
NATIONAL ENDEMIC SALES
Jim McConville (440) 791-7017
WESTERN REGION
Hutch Looney hutch@hlooney.com

NATIONAL AD SALES

ACCOUNT DIRECTOR — DETROIT OFFICE
Kevin Donley (248) 798-4458
NATIONAL ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE — CHICAGO OFFICE
Carl Benson (312) 955-0496
DIRECT RESPONSE ADVERTISING/NON-ENDEMIC
Anthony Smyth (914) 409-4202

www.bowhunter.com

Bowhunter, (ISSN # 0273-7434) is published 8 times a year, including two double issues: February (Winter Special), April/May, June (Gear Special), July, August (Big Game Special), September, October, November/December (Whitetail Special), by OUTDOOR SPORTSMAN GROUP®, 1040 6th Ave., 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018. Periodical postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address change (form 3579) to *Bowhunter*, P.O. Box 37539, Boone, IA 50037-0539. Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: 500 Rt. 46 East, Clifton, NJ 07011. Canada Post Publications Mail Agreement No. 41405030.

SUBSCRIPTIONS INQUIRIES: Should you wish to change your address, order new subscriptions, or report a problem with your current subscription, you can do so by writing *Bowhunter*, P.O. Box 37539, Boone, IA 50037-0539, or e-mail us at bowcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com, or call TOLL FREE (800) 829-2543. **BE AWARE THAT BOWHUNTER ONLY ACCEPTS SUBSCRIPTION REQUESTS FROM AUTHORIZED AGENTS! WE MAY NOT HONOR REQUESTS FROM UNAUTHORIZED AGENTS, AND YOU THEREFORE MAY LOSE YOUR MONEY IF YOU BUY FROM AN UNAUTHORIZED AGENT.** If you are offered a subscription to *Bowhunter*, please call 1-800-829-2543 to determine if the agent is authorized. For more information on subscription scams, please visit www.ftc.gov.

Subscription rate for one year is \$29.94 (U.S., APO, FPO, and U.S. possessions). Canada add \$13.00 (U.S. funds) per year, includes sales tax and GST. Foreign add \$15.00 (U.S. funds) per year.

Occasionally, our subscriber list is made available to reputable firms offering goods and services that we believe would be of interest to our readers. If you prefer to be excluded, please send your current address label and a note requesting to be excluded from these promotions to: Outdoor Sportsman Group®, 1040 6th Ave., 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018 • Attn: Privacy Coordinator, or email your label information and note to privacycoordinator@outdoorsg.com.

FOR REPRINTS: For Reprints/Eprints or Licensing/Permissions, please contact: Wright’s Media — TOLL FREE (877) 652-5295.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Manuscripts, photographs and artwork must be submitted to the Editorial Office with a SASE. The Publisher assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to unsolicited material. Please send to: *Bowhunter* • 6385 Flank Drive, Suite 800 • Harrisburg, PA 17112-2784 • (717) 695-8085 Fax: (717) 545-2527





PIGMAN: THE SERIES

**WATCH
PIGMAN
MOTV**
MYOUTDOORTV.COM

THE SQUEAL IS REAL

Brian "Pigman" Quaca is a true American original. Well-known in the outdoor world for his swine shanking prowess, he's out for blood in a wild new season of *Pigman: The Series* on Sportsman Channel.

ALL NEW
SUNDAYS
8:30 P ET
SPORTSMAN

SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE



SCAN TO SEE WHY THE
NEW PHOTON IS SO
DEADLY ACCURATE

Lee Lakosky,
CRUSH
with Lee & Tiffany

SHOOT BETTER. HUNT BETTER.

CARBON EXPRESS®
MAXIMA
PHOTON SD

carbonexpressarrows.com
f o s

OUTDOOR SPORTSMAN

GROUP®

PUBLISHING & BRANDED MEDIA

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,
PUBLISHING & BRANDED MEDIA Mike Carney

EVP, GROUP PUBLISHER & OPERATIONS Derek Sevcik

VP, CONSUMER MARKETING Peter Watt

VP, MANUFACTURING Deb Daniels

SENIOR DIRECTOR, PRODUCTION Connie Mendoza

DIRECTOR, PUBLISHING TECHNOLOGY Kyle Morgan

SENIOR CREATIVE DIRECTOR Tim Neher

DIRECTOR, DIGITAL EDITOR Darren Choate

For questions regarding digital editions, please contact
digitalsupport@outdoorsg.com

MEDIA
outdoorsg.com

TELEVISION
outdoorchannel.com
thesportsmanchannel.com
worldfishingnetwork.com

HUNTING
bowhunter.com
bowhuntingmag.com
gundogmag.com
petersenshunting.com
northamericanwhitetail.com
wildfowlmag.com

FISHING
bassfan.com
floridasportsman.com
flyfisherman.com
gameandfishmag.com
in-fisherman.com

SHOOTING
gunsandammo.com
handguns.com
rifleshootermag.com
shootingtimes.com
firearmsnews.com

Copyright 2023 by Outdoor Sportsman Group®

All Rights Reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced without written permission.

Bowhunter® is a registered trademark of Outdoor Sportsman Group® in the United States.

The Publisher and authors make no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of the information contained in this publication. Any reliance or use of the information is solely at your own risk, and the authors and Publisher disclaim any and all liability relating thereto. Any prices given in this issue were suggested prices at the press time and are subject to change.

Some advertisements in this magazine may concern products that are not legally for sale to California residents or residents in other jurisdictions.

Cover Photo: PETER EADES/Images On The Wildside



Bowhunter

NEXT ISSUE AUGUST-BIG GAME SPECIAL

- Two Tales of Recent P&Y World Record Animals
- An Epic Red Stag Hunt in Argentina
- Monster Whitetails from Saskatchewan / U.S.
- Muskox in Greenland
- All this plus articles on elk, moose, new equipment, shooting tips, and much more

THE STRONG, SILENT TYPE



THE ALL-ELECTRIC VOLCON STAG
DESIGNED & ASSEMBLED IN THE USA

FINANCING AVAILABLE





Only at **KUIU.COM**



LIFETIME WARRANTY ON ALL OUR GEAR

BASE LAYERS | INSULATION | OUTERWEAR | PACKS | SLEEP SYSTEMS | FOOTWEAR | ACCESSORIES



 **KUIU**[®]
ULTRALIGHT HUNTING

POPE AND YOUNG CONVENTION

LYNN BURKHEAD | OSG SENIOR DIGITAL EDITOR



The trophy display was one that was the talk of the entire convention center...and for good reason, with 174 animals in the room, the most ever.

STAFF PHOTOS

RENO REWRITES THE RECORD BOOK

THE KEEPER OF ARCHERY RECORDS PUTS A BOW ON BIG NUMBERS AT THE LATEST CONVENTION!

AT THE RECENT Pope & Young Club Convention (pope-young.org) in Reno, Nevada, several hundred gathered and found ample reasons to see and believe that the modern era of bowhunting is alive and well, and in some ways, as big as ever.

Surely, somewhere in eternity, the late, great father of modern bowhunting, Fred Bear, and the late P&Y Club Founder, Glenn St. Charles, are sharing a heavenly campfire and smiling big. And I'll bet the late, great Dwight Schuh, a longtime P&Y member and former Editor of **Bowhunter**, is enjoying that campfire, too (bowhunter.com/editorial/the-last-stand-dwight-schuhs-final-buck/367818).

That trio of bowhunters would have certainly grinned at the lineup of bow-killed animals recently displayed at the 2023 P&Y Convention. In fact, when I

asked **Bowhunter** Publisher Jeff Waring what his takeaway was from the Reno convention, he mentioned just that — the incredibly impressive display of world-class animals taken by bowhunters during the most recent recording period.

Sporting an amazing lucky 13 newly recognized World Records, the P&Y Club's 33rd Biennium North American Big Game Exhibit at the April 12–15 convention in the shadows of the Sierra Nevada Mountains was quite simply the biggest display of big-game bowkills ever set out at the Club's convention gatherings.

And that news comes on the heels of the Club's biggest record book ever published (bowhunter.com/editorial/9th-edition-bowhunting-big-game-record-of-north-america/468932), a two-volume 9th Edition set released in Reno and now available on the Club's website (pope-young.org/products/61715/9th-Edition-Bowhunting-Big-Game-Records-of-North-America).

When the mid-April convention gathering had finished with a rousing banquet that capped four days of meetings, activities, and seminars — including talks by **Bowhunter** Editor Curt

Wells and “Hunting Whitetails” columnist and wildlife biologist, C.J. Winand — the Club’s biennial gathering had seen the distribution of more than 180 awards and the featuring of 174 of the largest animals ever harvested with a bow and arrow. As noted previously, that included just more than a dozen newly recognized P&Y World Records.

Incidentally, Winand, who has served **Bowhunter** readers for many years, was honored by P&Y with the Lee Gladfelter Memorial Award, which is given in appreciation for significant contributions to bowhunting and wildlife conservation. And C.J. received his highly coveted honor 20 years to the day after longtime **Bowhunter** Conservation Editor Dr. Dave Samuel received the same prestigious recognition!

Another well-deserved recognition — actually, the most significant award given out by the P&Y Club — was also awarded at the recent Reno gathering.

“The Ishi Award was given to Bowdy Gardner’s giant Utah typical mule deer, the largest ever taken by a hunter with any weapon,” noted Curt Wells. “The Gardner buck, killed in 2012, scored 218 $\frac{1}{8}$ ” and is only the 21st recipient of the coveted Ishi Award.”

While those two awards were definitely big headlines in Reno, there was so much more to the 2023 gathering; other things worth celebrating and helpful in fostering a renewed sense of working hard to keep wildlife numbers strong, key habitat protected, and the bowhunting tradition secure for many years to come.

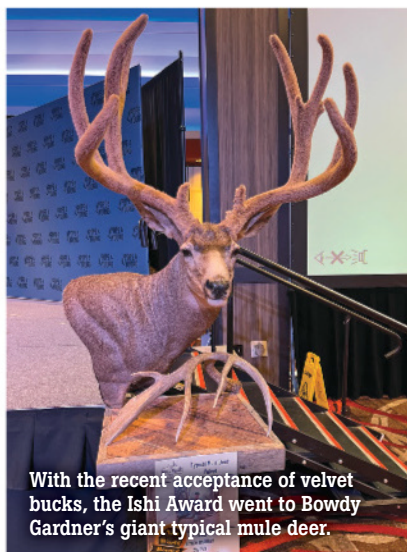
“The 33rd Biennial P&Y Convention



Editor Curt Wells with his friend, the legend, Larry D. Jones.



Bowhunter columnist C.J. Winand and Publisher Jeff Waring pose with C.J.'s Lee Gladfelter Memorial Award plaque.



With the recent acceptance of velvet bucks, the Ishi Award went to Bowdy Gardner's giant typical mule deer.

showcases America’s commitment to bowhunting and bowhunting conservation,” stated P&Y Marketing Director Dylan Ray in a Club news release. “It is a gathering of the finest bowhunting conservationists in the world, and an opportunity to recognize their accomplishments, both in terms of hunting and conservation.

“It’s so great to gather with like-minded, conservation-minded, bowhunters,” Ray continued. “The trophy display was one that was the talk of the entire convention center...and for good reason. I am already looking forward to 2025, and I’m excited to see what we can come up with for Phoenix.”

During the recording period that this most recent show celebrated, P&Y Director of Records Tim Rozewski and his P&Y Records Team had their work cut out for them in what might be described as the modern good old days of bowhunting.

“The 33rd Recording Period set a lot of new records both in the books and in the records department,” Rozewski noted in

a letter to convention-goers. “During this recording period, we implemented many new processes and programs in the Official Measurer’s Network and in our office. To boot, both myself and Records Coordinator Becca Burt began our journey with P&Y in the same short two years.”

And what a two-year period it has been since the Club last gathered in Reno in 2021 (the Club was forced to cancel its scheduled convention in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). Since then, both bowhunters and the Club itself were setting new records frequently, along with building some incredible backstories sprinkled with determination and commitment to the P&Y Club and its core values centered around big-game conservation, wildlife habitat, and our bowhunting heritage in North America.

At the 2023 convention, P&Y had some 174 trophies on display — over 40 more than ever displayed previously at a P&Y Convention. There were 52 velvet trophies on display — 14 more than ever before, according to Club officials. There were also 52 trophies on display that rank in the Top 10 all-time for their category.

In addition to the 13 newly recognized World Records shared at the convention, there were also 14 bowhunters who received more than one award in Reno.

Also worth noting is that all 29 of the North American big game species accepted by the Club were represented in this year’s display, including 51 of the 57 various records categories. And there were 32 different states and Canadian provinces also represented by trophies, including some 37 trophies from Alaska alone, according to Rozewski.

In terms of the record-book entries that helped fuel the Club’s first two-volume, record-book printing, there were 4,821 entries in the most recent recording period, according to Club officials. That’s up some 325 from the previous recording period.

“I have had the privilege to speak with virtually all of the trophy owners over the past two years, most of which will be here to support P&Y and receive recognition for their amazing bowhunting accomplishments,” Rozewski reported to convention-goers as the proceedings began. “With so many incredible trophies, I hope you take the time to say hello to these amazing hunters and take some long-lasting photos in the Big Game Display ballroom! I know I plan to.”

The 13 new World Record bowkills included two trophies from Hall of Fame bowhunter and longtime **Bowhunter** columnist and contributor, Chuck Adams. The Wyoming resident has enjoyed a couple of stellar fall seasons in a row in Alaska, including the arrowing of a 109% Typical Sitka Blacktail Deer velvet buck (taken on Kodiak Island, Alaska, 8-12-2021), and a 117% Non-Typical Sitka Blacktail Deer velvet buck (taken on Kodiak Island, Alaska, 8-25-2022).

Taken barely a year apart, Chuck's two World Record Sitka blacktails now occupy both sides of the ledger in the P&Y record book!

Also included in the newly recognized World Record bowkills in the most recent recording period were Angelo Nogara's Non-Typical Columbian Blacktail Deer velvetbuck scoring 157% (Sonoma County, CA, 7-29-2005); Rodney Cockeram's Central Canada Barren Ground Caribou velvet bull scoring 384% (Humpy Lake, NWT, Canada, 9-3-2005); Eric Bethune's 336% Tule Elk (Mendocino County, CA, 8-24-2022); and Travis Peterson's 168% Canada Moose velvet bull (Limestone Mountain, Alberta, Canada, 8-25-2003).

There was also James Stewart's 115% Typical Coues Deer velvet buck (Santa Cruz County, AZ, 9-2-2022); Kyle Johnson's 387% Quebec-Labrador Caribou velvet bull (Lake King, Quebec, Canada, 8-28-2016); Daniel Welker's 362% Woodland Caribou velvet bull (Bergeo, Newfoundland, Canada, 8-28-2021); and Gregory L. Wing's 150% Typical Columbian Blacktail Deer velvet buck (Marion County, OR, 8-29-2021).

Rounding out the newly recognized World-Record specimens were Jim Wondzell's 257% Tule Elk velvet bull (San Luis Obispo County, CA, 7-19-2021); Bowdy Gardner's 218% Typical Mule Deer velvet buck (Kane County, UT, 8-28-2012); and J. Dean Bodoh's 432% Mountain Caribou velvet bull (O'Grady Lake, NWT, Canada, 8-12-1990).

Of the total of 4,821 accepted entries during the recent P&Y recording period, leading the pack were 2,856 entries for typical whitetail deer. That was followed by the rest of the Top 10 big game species leaders including Typical American Elk with 362 entries, Black Bear (328 entries), Non-Typical Whitetail Deer (302 entries), Pronghorn Antelope (210 entries), Typi-



The #1 typical whitetail for the scoring period taped out at 191" even and was arrowed by Ohio bowhunter Nicole Miller.

cal Mule Deer (118 entries), Typical Coues Deer (78 entries), Typical Mule Deer Velvet (54 entries), Typical Whitetail Deer Velvet (40 entries), and Typical Columbian Blacktail Deer (33 entries).

Incidentally, all of the 4,800-plus entries accepted during the 33rd Recording Period came during a January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2022, acceptance window. The 34th Recording Period is now off and running, going from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2024, a recording period that will be recognized and awarded when the P&Y Club gathers in Phoenix, AZ, in 2025.

It's also worth noting that the 13 World Record specimens recently honored were panel-measured in February of this year when a panel-measuring crew of nearly 40 individuals gathered in Reno to



The whitetail display was incredible.

verify the scoring of some 169 big-game bowkills. Those animals had been previously scored by several dozen members of the army of official measurers who volunteer their time to P&Y every year.

"The P&Y Club's Records Program is considered to be the backbone of the organization," noted Roy E. Grace, Records Chairman for P&Y in convention material. "The volunteer measurers of the Club, nearly 900, are very important as they keep the Records Program moving forward. The well-trained measurers put in countless, and oftentimes thankless, hours working with bowhunters to accurately measure their trophies and submitting them for entry. Without a doubt, this organization would not be where it is today without them."

If there was a somber note to the recent panel-measuring session prior to the 2023 Convention, it was the recent loss of longtime veteran P&Y measurer Ken Witt, a Lone Star State resident from the Burleson, TX, area who passed away earlier this year. Longtime owner of the Arlington Bowhunter's World archery shop, Witt was highly respected in measuring circles and participated in numerous panel sessions for both P&Y and the Boone and Crockett Club (boone-crockett.org).

When P&Y gathers in two years for another panel-measuring session and convention, it will mark the second time that P&Y has assembled in Phoenix. Other convention sites over the years have included Chicago, Denver, Boulder, Bismarck, Salt Lake City, Spokane, Milwaukee, Tulsa, Boise, Seattle, Minneapolis, Traverse City, Edmonton, Omaha, Madison, Springfield (Missouri), Lancaster, Rochester, Dallas, St. Louis, and Reno.

Between now and then, is a great time to support the P&Y Club — North America's leading bowhunting conservation organization — and its ongoing commitment to preserve, protect, and promote bowhunting.

As P&Y notes: If you're a fair chase, ethical bowhunter, and you care about preserving the culture and future of bowhunting, then you should consider belonging to the Club.

Who knows? Maybe you'll be an Award Winner or new World Record holder at the next P&Y gathering in the Grand Canyon State's desert country in only a couple of more years. Bowhunting is big, the Grand Canyon is big, and the good-old days are indeed now! **BH**

BOWHUNTER TV



PRESENTED BY

RAM



Premieres

TUESDAYS

7:30 PM ET

TUESDAY

11:30 PM ET

THURSDAY

11:30 AM ET

Outdoor
CHANNEL

OUR GREENLAND STORY, PARTS 1 & 2

► Tune in the TV weeks of July 10 and 17 as we document the *Bowhunter Magazine & TV Team's* pioneering hunts for muskox and caribou in Greenland, and watch as Contributor Danny Farris and longtime friend Jon Syverson stalk into range of their own big woolly beasts! To learn more about booking your own adventure with outfitter Frank Feldmann, visit www.greenlandbowhunting.com.



KIFARU
INTERNATIONAL



LEUPOLD



WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,
providing you various content:
brand new books, trending movies,
fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

One site



AVX LIVE : ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>



ON THE TRACK

CHUCK ADAMS



My current choice in a spotting scope for serious backpacking is Swarovski's super-compact 17-40X STC.



A quality rangefinder binocular has helped me to harvest critters like turkeys and Sitka deer in fast-moving situations.

OPTICAL STRATEGIES FOR BOWHUNTING

NO MATTER THE SPECIES YOU'RE BOWHUNTING, HELP YOUR EYES WITH QUALITY GLASS.

I CROUCHED BEHIND a fringe of sagebrush and let go another series of calls. The critter I was after answered immediately, and I realized he had cut the distance between us in half. I called again, nocked an arrow, and peeked beyond the bushes.

The big tom turkey was strutting along a ravine in front of me, his colorful head and fully fanned tail glistening in the morning sunlight. I snapped a quick reading with my rangefinding binocu-

lars and then drew my Bear Alaskan bow as the gobbler disappeared behind a bush. When the bird stepped back into full view, I settled my 30-yard pin on his wing butt. An instant later, my Easton

FMJ shaft and G5 Striker V2 broadhead smacked the bird with a mighty thump. He dropped in his tracks.

That adventure occurred one month before I wrote this, and it reminded me that no matter what, how, when, or where you bowhunt, there are optical strategies guaranteed to maximize your fun. In the case of a longbearded turkey, the only optic you might need is a quality laser rangefinder to ensure a pinpoint shot on a very small vitals area. When it comes to big game, the need for proper optics can be more complex.

Take for example one of my favorite pastimes each year — bowhunting Sitka blacktail bucks in Alaska. In August, when I prefer to go, deer are lounging in high-alpine terrain with no cover taller than my knees. A hiking archer can sometimes see upwards of three-dozen bucks per day in the broad expanses, and a high percentage of that hiking is done with eyeballs alone. You move from high point to high point, plant your fanny, and scan country with binoculars to locate the reddish summer coats of deer. From there, you size-up animals with a compact spotting scope. A lightweight tripod is essential for clear viewing with the scope, and high humidity in this soggy part of the world makes any power above 40X a waste of time. Magnification in the 30X to 35X range is usually optimal.

My personal choice for such active backpack bowhunting is Swarovski's new 17-40X STC scope; a compact unit that weighs just 34.6 ounces and measures only 11.2 inches long. Prior to the STC, I used the Swarovski STS 65.

Top optics by companies like Swarovski, Kowa, Leupold, and Zeiss are worth every penny you pay, with rugged durability, clear viewing in low light, and no eye strain during many hours of scanning slopes for game. In binoculars and spotting scopes, you usually get what you pay for, and I would encourage you to purchase the best optics you can afford. In the long run, this is always one of the best investments a serious bowhunter can make.



When pursuing animals like pronghorns, mule deer, elk, sheep, and caribou, there is no doubt that 10X binoculars are the all-around best. More power means too much handheld wiggle for clear viewing, and less power sacrifices your ability to find and judge critters.

A practical 10X hunting binocular weighs between 25 and 35 ounces. So-called “mini-binos” might be nice to tote on your neck or in a pocket, but usually sacrifice too much clarity and light-gathering ability early and late in the day. By comparison, a full-size 10X binocular with 40mm or 42mm objective lenses is always a delight to use.

Close-range bowhunting for deepwoods species like whitetail deer and Roosevelt elk usually requires less magnification in a binocular, which means less carrying weight. A quality 6X or 8X glass might serve you well. Some archers mistakenly believe binoculars are unnecessary for close viewing, but every bowhunt is better with a bino. Even at 30 or 40 yards, good optics will help you pick out an antler in the brush when light is fleeting.

The past few years, I’ve used rangefinding binoculars by Leica and Swarovski to speed up my ability to shoot. Such optics tend to be pricey, but they eliminate the need to use a separate rangefinder. With rangefinding binoculars, you glass the target, press a button, and instantly see the range while still glassing. My favorite rangefinding bins also give me the exact angle of the shot, thus eliminating high hits when hunting from a treestand or in steep terrain.

I have taken several nice animals with quick shots that would not have been possible with a separate belt-carried rangefinder. To each his own, but rangefinder and binoculars all in one is the quickest, most efficient setup.

Specialized bowhunting requires specialized optics. For example, Southwestern Coues deer are usually located via serious, all-day glassing. For comfort and reduced eye strain, high-powered binoculars like the Vortex Kaibab 18X, Steiner 20X, Zeiss S-Image 20X, Bushnell PowerView 20X, Newcon Big Eye 28X, or Kowa High Lander 32X can make your game-searching life easier when mounted on a sturdy tripod. Similarly, Swarovski sells a BTX, dual-eye-piece unit that attaches to their modular spotting-scope system. With the BTX, you can view through a variety of scope models with both eyes to find distant animals you might otherwise miss.

Such high-magnification systems tend to be heavy and always require a tripod. These are not for backpacking far from roads!

How should you carry your archery optics? A compact spotting scope is easily toted, with tripod attached, in a daypack. Binoculars around the neck can be problematic when you shoot a bow — especially if they swing forward during downward shots from a slope or treestand. To avoid bowstring interference, some hunters attach their optics to a harness that keeps them close to the chest.

I personally dislike extra paraphernalia around my upper body when I hunt. I simply shorten my neckstrap until it barely slips over my head, and there is almost no slack when I lift the binoculars to my eyes. Even on downward shots, the shorter strap prevents the glass from swinging like a pendulum.

Use the right binoculars and spotting scope in the right situations, and you will be a happy and more effective archer! **BH**

You can follow Chuck on Instagram and Facebook at Chuck Adams Archery. Visit Chuck’s website at chuckadamsarchery.com.

Congratulations to Chuck on his 7th World Record and the largest Sitka buck ever recorded in any category!



Chuck Adams
ARCHERY

"I finally found the perfect bow brand. I've shot many models in the past, but never was completely satisfied...until now. No matter which you choose, compound, recurve or longbow, Bear bows are carefully designed for great speed, pinpoint accuracy, and game-getting silence at a price any hunter can afford. They are true bowhunters' bows that work!"

Chuck Adams



TRADITIONAL WAY

FRED EICHLER | TRADITIONAL EDITOR



This young bull fell quickly to my well-placed arrow. His nutritious meat filled my freezer and my family's bellies. Inset: Elk ivories are just another bonus to harvesting an elk.

SNEAKY

YOU CAN BE AS STEALTHY AS POSSIBLE, BUT ODDS ARE YOUR TARGET ANIMAL IS EVEN STEALTHIER.

IT WAS PITCH-BLACK when we left the truck and started hiking along the ridge before dropping into the thick brush along the river. Our pace quickened when we heard a bugle in the dark, upriver from our position. There is just something about a bugle that makes you want to get into position or want to close the distance quickly, but my plan for that day wasn't to be mobile, but rather to sit and wait, and hope the elk came to us.

Tim, who was running the camera on this hunt, climbed up the Millennium double ladder stand in front of me. It was still pretty dark, but the Eastern sky was starting to light up on the horizon. The ladder stand was made for two, but when both guys are over six-feet tall and in the 200-pound range, it gets pretty tight — especially when you add a camera and a recurve bow to the mix!

We had already guided some archery elk clients on bulls, and now it was my turn to finally go out and see if I could get some elk meat for my freezer. I had taken a cow elk the year before, and I would be happy to take any legal elk that showed up. Tim knew this, and he smiled in the



dark when I whispered, "First one by us is the first one in the freezer."

As I practiced drawing before hanging my Bear recurve in the tree, I realized that Tim and I kept bumping into each other. Consequently, I made a mental note to be careful to avoid making any excess noise bumping into him or his camera or monopod if an elk did come by.

Some of our clients had shot elk from this same stand, and the elk were starting to get wise to the setup. I was hoping the rut would keep the bulls a little off their game. The cows are usually so busy trying to stay away from the bulls they often miss things they would normally catch. On this particular morning, I was hoping two guys in a tree wouldn't look suspicious at all.

My bow sported 40-pound limbs that made my setup roughly 45 pounds at my draw length. Most would say that is too light for elk, but the last nine elk I've harvested would disagree. I find that Fred Bear had the right idea on arrow weight as well. It still holds true, and that was 10 grains per pound of bow weight. My Easton Legacy shaft tipped with a Muzzy weighed in just over that, and I'd already arrowed a bull earlier in the year in Oregon with said rig. I was confident in my setup — all I needed now was for an elk to wander by.



Today's equipment is effective even at lighter poundages. Here is my Bear Recurve and Easton arrows that I used to harvest my Colorado bull.

As the morning progressed, nothing had come by what I thought was the perfect ambush for a morning hunt. What made me question my spot choice even more was a bull bugling off to the north that was obviously going to pass by a few hundred yards out of range.

I caught a glimpse of some bulls through the trees, but I knew they were definitely not headed in our direction. So, I decided to bugle softly in an attempt to sound like a young bull. I then threw out a few cow calls.

I couldn't see the elk, and nothing responded, so I assumed we were out of luck. Experience has taught me that elk often sneak in without making a sound, so I stayed vigilant but also doubtful.

My first clue anything was even close to us was the click of a hoof hitting a rock. I lifted my recurve off its hanger as a bull stepped out of the brush. There was a small clearing in front of us, and the bull was scanning it and checking the wind, which was still in our favor.

You could tell the bull was listening and looking for the elk he thought should be close by. I mentally kicked myself for not having a decoy out in the opening, because I think it would have worked like a charm. The bull, not seeing anything, stayed in the brush but was now going to walk *behind* our stand. That's when the rodeo started!

I was trying to turn around and find a hole between the ladder stand and the brush. Tim was trying to turn around with his camera.

Eventually, I found a small hole, but I knew the only way I could get drawn was to lean against my harness that was now way too tight as I kind of hit three-quarters draw. It was all I could get and it felt good, so I let fly.

My arrow flashed through the 20 yards of air separating me and the bull, and I saw it bury deep in the bull's chest. Tim and I were both freaking out at our ridiculous good fortune of having a bull slip in quietly, not to mention the fact that we had both managed to turn around without either of us testing our safety harnesses. Within 20 seconds, we heard the bull crash in the riverbottom, at which point Tim and I excitedly crawled down from the stand.

The young bull was perfect. I had elk meat for myself, plus plenty to share. It had also been a quick, clean kill, and it really doesn't get much better than that. **BH**

For more information, visit fredeichler.com, and don't miss Fred's new show, "Everything Eichler," every Sunday at 12:30 p.m. on Sportsman Channel.

LEGENDXR



MADE IN THE USA



A man with a beard and a camouflage baseball cap is smiling while holding a large, light-colored bone. The cap has a patch that reads "BONE COLLECTOR" with a skull and antlers logo. He is wearing a camouflage jacket and is in a wooded area with trees and foliage in the background.

What's Your

MOTIV

Scan now or visit MyOutdoorTV.com to
START YOUR **FREE TRIAL**



VATION

[hands-on exhibit]

No matter what motivates you, MyOutdoorTV has you covered with world-class hunting, fishing and shooting content — every way you want it. The new MyOutdoorTV gives you more ways to watch: On Demand; Live Events including Major League Fishing; our Live Channels HuntStream and AnglerStream; and our innovative JustShot™ library, featuring fresh-from-the-field content.





NEXT-LEVEL BOWHUNTING

JOE BELL | TECHNICAL EDITOR



A relaxed shooting grip is crucial since it's the foundation for shooting a bow accurately.

BOW GRIP SPECIFICS

THE GRIP IS THE PRIMARY CONTACT ON THE BOW — THEREFORE, IT INFLUENCES ACCURACY MORE THAN ANY OTHER FACTOR.

HOW YOU GRIP the bow is paramount to shooting consistency. If you position your hand one way for a shot and a slightly different way the next shot, your arrow's impact will vary.

The logic is simple: Once the position of the hand changes, the distribution of pressure across the palm area changes as well, causing the handle to torque differently as the arrow cycles through the bow. To be deadly consistent as an archer, you must learn to place your hand on the grip exactly the same way for every shot.

Of course, this is easier said than done. Even with a good pre-shot checklist where you put a lot of emphasis on gripping the bow correctly, subtle variances in bow-hand pressure can still occur. The culprit could be you, or it could actually be the design of the grip. Let's examine different grip designs and what qualities tend to enhance or degrade accuracy.

Grip Thickness

To be accurate, you must remove as much muscle tension as possible from the shooting process. To maintain a tension-free hold on the bow, your hand must be relaxed, with no muscle exertion across the hand and forearm. The only way to produce this type of comfort is to align the bow grip so it bisects the end of the radius bone on your hand. This point of contact places the base of the thumb square with the center of the grip. To achieve this, your hand will have to be turned approximately 45 degrees to the side, with the center of the grip on the thumb side of your lifeline. This will eliminate contact with the palm region, which collapses easily upon pressure from the handle, forcing the use of hand and forearm muscles to hold the bow steady.

The thickness of the bow grip can detract from the proper positioning of the hand. With too much surface width, you can be quick to place the hand a certain way, but once the bow is drawn and full pressure is being applied, it's easy for the hand (or base of the thumb) to slide around, creating a different pressure point and a loss of consistency.

With a narrower bow grip, if your holding pressure isn't perfectly centered, you'll feel it quickly. The thumb base will actually press against the edge of the grip, and you'll want to recenter it naturally. In this case, there's less chance to grip it wrong. This makes it more repeatable.

This is why you see tournament archers removing the grip from their bows (if it's the replaceable type) and shooting directly from the riser. This is in an attempt to improve shooting performance. With my hunting bows, I almost always remove the grip if it has one, then wrap the grip area with athletic tape. This keeps the grip thin, comfortable, and slightly insulated for hunting purposes.

Grip Shape

Some grips are completely flat along the face, rounded, or a little bit of both.



Many bows use a replaceable grip, but you can remove the grip and then wrap it with athletic tape to improve its comfort and feel.

In my opinion, to equalize the pressure against the base of the thumb, a flat surface face is best. However, if it's just flat with no rounded contours along the edges, it'll be uncomfortable. For this reason, a flat surface with short contours seems to accentuate the best combination for comfort and consistency.

Some bows with "riser grips" have this type of holding surface built in. For example, I removed the grip on my Hoyt Venum Pro, and I find its under-grip very comfortable and accurate. It's flat with small radiuses along the edges.

But other bows with removable grips don't have the same quality. Some under-grips are simply too thin or have sharp edges. In this case, you'll have to upgrade to an aftermarket grip with better geometry. I've used Shrewd grips for more than a decade, due to their exceptional ergonomics. However, Torqueless, Total Peep, Ultraview, and others make superb grips as well. I urge you to test out as many aftermarket grips as you can in search of the right one. You may have to

order several grips online, see how they feel, and then return those that don't fit your fancy.

Some custom grips come with a textured surface to reduce hand slip and to guide the hand into a consistent spot. A great example is the Ultraview BeeReal grip, which uses a honeycomb textured surface. With this grip, you set the base of the thumb so it rests in one of the honeycomb circles or on the centerline between two of them. The hand will settle into a specific spot each time, promoting consistency. I sometimes add a small indent or scratch to the grip's surface so I can "feel" where the pressure point needs to be. My friend Mike Slinkard, the originator of Winner's Choice Bowstrings, often threaded a small screw to the grip's surface so he could feel it pressed against the heel of his thumb on every shot. Of course, adding a screw to the riser will void your warranty for sure and is certainly not recommended, but it emphasizes the importance of a repeatable bow grip.

Grip Angle

This pertains to the positioning of the wrist at full draw. Some grips promote a low or medium-style wrist position. A low grip will distribute the pressure point lower into the heel area of the grip, whereas a medium grip will keep the pressure more centerline with the wrist. What is best for accuracy depends on the archer. I personally prefer a medium or standard-angled grip. Shrewd offers low and standard-angled grips, and I've found the standard grip the most comfortable and accurate.

This could also be because I acquired tennis elbow years ago, and with low-angled grips my forearm gets cranky after long shooting bouts. But with standard or medium-angled grips, my forearm

stays more relaxed, particularly during the initial drawing of the bow.

For this reason, when shooting directly off the bow handle, I sometimes glue in or double tape a thin wooden or rubber spacer to the heel of the handle, then wrap it with athletic tape. This increases the angle slightly, while improving feel and shooting consistency.

The angle of the grip can be a crucial point. The key is to figure out what keeps your hand in the most relaxed position, so it follows the force of the bow during the shot. When the shot breaks, the bowhand should jump naturally in the direction of the arrow then slightly to the left (for a right-handed archer) due to back-tension built up in the release and draw arm.

Tips For Better Shooting

Perhaps the most important step in all of this is to set the bow hand prior to drawing the bow. When using a grip with good ergonomics, in due time you'll establish the sweet spot for where to place the base of your thumb on the grip's surface. Lock this sensation in your mind, so you can "feel it" on every shooting cycle.

A good shooting routine should go like this: 1) Clip the arrow to the string; 2) establish your stance; 3) attach the release to the string loop; 4) take up about an inch or so of tension on the release hand while the bow's cam is propped against your upper leg; 5) set the bow hand on the grip in the right place; 6) lift up the bow and point it slightly to the target; 7) center the grip perfectly by finding the right feel at the base of the thumb; 8) draw the bowstring to full anchor; 9) relax the bow hand and forearm completely; 10) acquire the target smoothly, and then aim, aim, aim until the shot breaks.

Remember, once you draw the bow back, the hand must stay relaxed, without shifting anything into place. If you realign the hand on the grip at this point, you'll surely induce torque and ruin the shot. Keep the hand relaxed and motionless until the arrow strikes the target. Do it this way until the step becomes automatic.

Don't take how you grip the bow lightly. Remember, it's your only real contact with the bow. In other words, it's the foundation for everything you do in the shooting process. With the right bow grip in place, it'll be easier to find the sweet spot and to keep it there, improving your accuracy and confidence as a bowhunter. **BH**



The best place to position the grip's pressure point is at the base of the thumb where it meets the arm's radius bone. This will yield the least amount of torque, improving accuracy.



HUNTING WHITETAILS

C.J. WINAND



Mike Yoder, of Drone Deer Recovery (DDR), is in his element. If you're interested in viewing some actual drone deer recoveries, check him out on YouTube. For more information about DDR, contact Yoder at info@dronedeerrecovery.com, or visit his website at dronedeerrecovery.com.

LEAVE NO DEER BEHIND!

DOES USING DRONE TECHNOLOGY TO FIND YOUR DEER QUALIFY AS FAIR CHASE?

Successfully harvesting a big-game animal with a bow can be an incredible experience, but what happens when things don't go your way and you don't make a quick recovery? Sleepless nights trying to reconstruct a shot in your mind can drive you crazy.

Worse yet, going back to the scene of your shot can further disturb the area with human scent and noises.

Years ago, a good friend of mine made a "perfect" shot on a 200-class buck. But his 30-plus years of bowhunting experience was challenged when he couldn't find the deer. After two days of searching, and still convinced he had killed the buck, he rented an airplane to search for his deer. It only took an hour of flight time to find his buck.

When my friend entered his buck into the P&Y record book, he discovered it wouldn't have been accepted had he

hunted another deer or "gave up chase" on his buck. Also, while in the air, if he "found" the buck was still alive and went in to kill it, this would be illegal because he'd used an aircraft to locate a live deer.

Additionally, many states and provinces have re-evaluated the use of tracking dogs and trail cameras in recovering downed game. Some states now allow the use of a leashed dog(s) to track deer; other states have totally outlawed trail cameras.

What constitutes "Fair Chase" for some, can be something else for others. For example, in Europe, shooting a roe deer with a rifle is perfectly acceptable,

if the bowhunter can't initially recover the animal.

Anders Gejer, from Sweden, reports, "When it comes to a confirmed hit and unrecovered deer, almost any means possible can be used. It's not uncommon to release a dog to either bay or to pull down the deer. You can even use a vehicle to intercept a wounded deer."

Nowadays, the use of drones and our definition of "Fair Chase" has become a new topic of conversation. The Pope & Young Club's policy on the use of drones states, "Use of these highly sophisticated, remote-controlled aircraft to scout, monitor and stalk North American big game to aid in bowhunting activities is a fundamental violation of the rules of Fair Chase. Using drones while bowhunting violates the existing rule that states, 'You may not use electronic devices for attracting, locating, or pursuing game, or guiding the hunter to such game.'" The important point in the P&Y policy is it doesn't include drone use for recovery purposes.

P&Y Records Chairman, Roy Grace, knows of only one hunter who had attempted to enter a buck into the record book while using a drone in the recovery process. It was later discovered the hunter abandoned chase after hunting another deer (a doe). However, drone usage after the original hunt was not the disqualifying factor. Grace points out that finding an animal with dog(s), trail cameras, or drones is just another tool in locating an animal. Although you may not agree with this ruling, drone technology is the new player.

In Alabama, drone use is legal for scouting purposes — even on the same day you hunt. Think about this example. You're deciding which food plot to hunt, so you fly your drone to check out all your potential stand sites across the hunting property. By scouting from the air, you have significantly minimized human disturbance and any scent signatures. Does this meet your definition of "Fair Chase?" Would you support such a law in your state/province?

On the other end of the laws determining drone use is Texas. Using drones to recover deer in the Lone Star State is illegal. Almost as restrictive is Tennessee, where it's unlawful to use a drone for any purpose on a TWRA wildlife management area, refuge, or national park.

Mike Yoder, of Drone Deer Recovery (DDR) from Ohio, is incorporating his drone expertise in helping hunters find their deer. Yoder started DDR when he realized thermal technology was a viable tool for helping hunters recover deer.

DDR has spent a lot of time and money learning what works. Now they're training, supporting, and sending deer-recovery calls to their network of certified and licensed DDR operators.

Yoder's service already has over 1,300 applications for pilot operators and has over 25 certified operators in 15 states.

Yoder's drones are expensive and sophisticated. Getting his drone to your location as soon as possible is a major factor, but he has found deer up to 48 hours after being shot.

Obviously, a lot of site-specific variables such as temperature, weather, time of year, foliage coverage, etc., will factor into finding your deer. Finding deer at night — when there's no tree foliage and

the temps are colder — is best, because the heat signatures really stand out.

Many hunters ask Yoder, "How can you tell if it's the deer I shot?" Yoder has a 200X zoom camera mounted on his drone that lets him find a specific deer from various elevations in the sky, and the clarity is incredible.

Yoder's drones have night-vision and thermal-imaging cameras to help him recover deer both day and night. If the deer is already expired, its body heat can be detected hours after the fact.

Another common question is, "Do the drones scare deer away?" Although Yoder's drones are larger than the ones we would normally see flying around, the answer is "no."

Yoder is required to have a pilot's license and has several laws he must follow while searching. He can pin a location, but he's not allowed to use his phone or radio to direct you to the exact location of the deer. In fact, it's illegal for Yoder to assist in tracking a deer that's still alive.

Barb Terry is on the Board of Directors of the National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF). Terry has worked with DDR in two hunting camps for handicapped hunters. She summed

up her feelings with, "It's an amazing sight to see Yoder do his job."

When a person decides to contact DDR, they go through a few easy steps: 1) Confirm that the DDR team is available by filling out an online form, 2) Pay the recovery fee of \$450, plus an additional \$100 if the deer is recovered, and 3) Meet at the site and watch the drone go to work. The result is usually a happy hunter with a recovered animal. **BH**

C.J.'S SUMMARY: I believe whatever technology that's legal in the state/province after the shot should qualify as "Fair Chase." Steve Keithley serves on the Maryland Wildlife Advisory Commission, and he sums up the whole drone topic very well by saying, "The use of dogs to find mortally wounded deer has really grown here. Many deer are found that wouldn't have been recovered 10 years ago. I feel any means (including drones) to recover a dead animal quickly is a good thing."

P&V's Conservation Chairman Doug Clayton says, "...I'm thinking it [drone recovery] could be the equivalent of Pandora's Box that once opened, will end up with results no one can foresee, and may not like."



Lumenok

THE **#1**
LIGHTED NOCK
FOR CROSSBOWS

NOW AVAILABLE
BUILD A BOLT; CUSTOM BOLT BUILDER
COMPLETE BOLT PACKS



(309) 358-1602
LUMENOK.COM



***AVAILABLE NOW IN**
CRESCENT, CAPTURE, & FLAT



TRIED AND TRUE

BRIAN K. STRICKLAND | EQUIPMENT EDITOR



Few things are more satisfying than feeding your family the healthy, all-natural protein that you provided with your own hands.

FROM FIELD TO TABLE

DON'T SPOIL YOUR HARD-EARNED PRIZE
WITH POOR MEAT MANAGEMENT!

AS BOWHUNTERS, nothing is more valuable than the experience of the adventure and the hard-earned prize that we hope will wear our tag on the ride home.

It's truly something special when both aspects collide with a simple drop of the string and we leave the field with memories of the hunt and coolers full of protein that we get to enjoy and share. Frankly, it's the latter that seems to get me more excited as I've gotten older, and with all the ways we have to prepare wild game, it should be considered a valued commodity instead of just a byproduct of the hunt.

That said, proper meat care is essential for a tasty result, so taking the time

to invest in the right equipment and learn how to use it effectively will make the outcome more enjoyable. It's often said the work begins once the arrow flies; so luckily for us, there's no shortage of quality equipment to pick from to ensure we get the work done right.

Obviously, having a quality knife is a good place to start, and it's hard to beat what today's replaceable-blade systems have to offer. Sharp, functional, and precise, the new [1] *Schrade Enrage Series*

(\$39.99–\$74.99) from **Feradyne Outdoors** (feradyne.com) is just one example. Featuring the slicing qualities of the popular Rage Trypan, this trio of knives features a scalpel-sharp, .24" stainless-steel replaceable blade that has a narrow point and up to 20% more cutting surface than those made by their competitors. They sport a proprietary locking system, so the blades don't slip, and with the Ultra-Glide bearing system, it opens with the flip of your finger and locks into place. Available in 6", 7", and 8" configurations, they have a carbon-fiber handle, dual-slide blade case, sheath, and handy pocket clip.

Another great replaceable-blade knife is the [2] *RazorPro S* (\$89.95) from **Outdoor Edge** (outdooredge.com). The new S model features a bone saw that is forged from spring steel to ensure wear resistance and toughness as you use it to power through heavy bone. Combined with their replaceable 3.5" stainless-steel Drop Point blade that locks in tight but is easy to replace, it's an ideal lightweight knife when it's time to get dirty. It comes with six replaceable blades, has a TPR rubberized handle, and a Kryptek camo sheath.

At less than 2 oz., Havalon's (havalon.com) [3] *Piranta-Edge* (\$54.99) is the ideal solution for the bowhunter wanting to shave some ounces. There's a reason it's Havalon's best-selling skinning knife. It features a scalpel-sharp stainless-steel blade, and with Havalon's Quick-Change Technology, blades can be easily replaced. Its overall length is 7¼", and it sports ambidextrous thumb studs and a rugged blaze-orange handle with black rubber inserts for a stable grip when wet. The system includes 12 additional stainless-steel blades, a removable holster clip, and a nylon holster.

Combining a must-have gut hook with a bone saw, **Browning** (browning.com) gives us the [4] *Game Reaper T-Handle Saw* (\$30.49). Made from 440C stainless steel, it has a molded composite T-shaped grip for easy handling and comes with a nylon belt sheath when on the move.



Although there are some items we can skimp on as bowhunters, [5] **Game Bags** shouldn't be one of them if you want to keep your meat clean and allow it to cool. Shaped to complement **Mystery Ranch's** (mysteryranch.com) Guide Light pack frame for stable hauling, these breathable nylon bags have drawstring closures and a pair of reflective handles for easy hanging, carrying, and locating at night. Sizes include **20L, 40L, 60L and 80L** (\$32–\$40), or as a **Kit** (\$159).

Accidents happen, especially when racing against time to process game, and the [6] **Wound Closure Kit** (\$149.99) from **My Medic** (mymedic.com) can minimize that worry. Equipped with five wound-dressing options in one lightweight kit, it has what you need should that slip of the knife happen. The

Kit includes sutures, surgical tape, adhesives, staples, and closure strips to treat both minor and significant cuts.

If you want to be old-school and drag your buck out, the [7] **Leg Cuff Deer Drag** (\$19.99) from **Feradyne Outdoors** (feradyne.com) is a handy option. This simple but effective tool secures the buck's head off the ground while dragging for easier hauling. Just "cuff" the front legs, position the head, and start walking.

Nothing's worse than excessive hair sticking to your meat when skinning. **Koola Buck** (koolabuck.com) solves that with the [8] **Hide Ripper** (\$389.99). The quickest, cleanest, and easiest way to skin a carcass — simply skin the back legs, insert the gambrel, and start winching. It attaches to your truck for portability

and doubles as a game-hanger when it's time to break down your prize.

Keep your meat clean and minimize waste with **Hunters Specialties** (hunterspec.com) [9] **Butt Hook Combo** (\$24.99). Featuring their patented Butt Out 2 field-dressing tool with Gut Hook knife, it's designed to disconnect the anal canal with a simple twist and pull. No more having to cut the pelvic bone or worry about puncturing the bladder. And with the uniquely designed gut hook, you won't clip the intestines.

For those of us who value the field-to-grill lifestyle, **Pit Boss** (pitboss-grills.com) offers the [10] **Sportsman 5 Wood Pellet Vertical Smoker** (\$659). With a 55-lb. hopper, it holds enough pellets when you want to smoke low and slow, and with the five adjustable cooking racks that offer



over 1,500 sq. in. of total cooking space, as well as six sausage hooks, it can handle a pile of meat. It also sports a large viewing window for monitoring your meat and dial-in digital controls with LED for precise temperature settings.

Making it easy to prepare the best-tasting jerky to hit your taste buds, **Hi Mountain Seasonings** (himtnjerky.com) offers its complete [11] **Jerky Maker Kit** (\$89.99). Giving us the very best in wild-game seasonings for over three decades, the Kit features their Ultimate Jerky Cutting Board and Knife, so you can easily cut uniform slices that are

either $\frac{1}{4}$ " or $\frac{3}{8}$ " thick, a digital scale for mixing the right amount of seasoning, a Jerky Screen for even cooking, a wireless thermometer to check the internal temperature, and several seasoning flavors: Mesquite, Hickory, Cajun, and my personal favorite — Cracked Pepper N Garlic.

When it's time to lay some wild game slabs on the grill, it's hard to beat the tasteful benefits of a good dry rub, and with the [12] **Ultimate Pack** (\$137.50) from **The Provider** (theproviderlife.com), you'll have endless opportunities to fire-up your tastebuds. The pack in-

cludes a dozen carefully crafted blends, and with names like "Drop Tine," "Crosshairs," "Fowl," and "Covey," you know it's made for the meats that live in wild places.

Although **Traeger** (traeger.com) has earned its reputation by designing some of the best grills for cooking and smoking all sorts of meats, they also offer a seemingly endless supply of [13] **Rubs** (\$10) to make our trophies taste as good as they look. My favorites are their Jerky, Breakfast, and Burger Rubs, but any one of their 15-plus blends will wake up the taste of any game meat. **BH**

REDI FOR EVERY DAY

It took over three years of R&D to create the first Havalon EDC. The REDI features the all new REDI-Lock replaceable blade system, which lets you easily swap between styles of semi-permanent AUS-8 steel blades. Unlike the original Piranta line, REDI blades are designed for extended use and abuse, and can even be re-sharpened. The REDI is also the first Havalon to have spring assist for smooth, one hand opening, further proving that it is REDI for any adventure.

REDI
EVERYDAY CARRY
— BY —
HAYALON
KNIVES

Bushnell®



SEE IT ALL LIVE, KNOW IT ALL NOW.

LIVE STREAMING CELLULAR TRAIL CAMERA

With the touch of a button on your smart phone, the CelluCORE™ LIVE lets you see LIVE video of the deer you manage, the spots you scout, the property you protect, or any other scenario that matters to you. That means you get more real-time info than you've ever had before. And, with Dual SIM Connectivity, it automatically connects to the strongest cellular network signal in your camera's area.

CELLU
CORE
LIVE



BUILT FOR THE PURSUIT

BUSHNELL.COM





THE EMPTY QUIVER

DANNY FARRIS



Maximum stability at full draw requires both experimentation and practice. Big improvements can be made by simply holding on targets for extended periods and focusing on being steady.

becomes a haloed blur. If I focus on the pin, I have the same issue with the target. Visiting my eye doctor and experimenting with Specialty Archery's Verifier peep sights, have helped me clear-up my sight picture, but there's really no way to train yourself to have better vision. It is what it is.

The second issue I've been dealing with can be improved with a little experimentation and training, and that's keeping steady at full draw. When I was in my 30s, I felt like I was almost rock-solid at full draw, and now my pin seems to dance around the target like a chicken full of Ex-Lax! It's frustrating to say the least, because it's a problem that snowballs and creates other problems. The more your pin moves, the more anxious you are at full draw, and the more likely you are to start suffering from target panic.

Here are some tips on how aging bowhunters, or any bowhunter for that matter, can work to improve steadiness while holding your bow at full draw.

Strength Training

Start doing some strength training. Focus on exercises that target the muscles used in archery — such as the back, shoulders, and arms. Strengthening these muscles can improve stability and help you hold your bow steadier at full draw.

Draw Length

Experiment with your draw length. For years, I typically leaned toward a draw length that was a tad short. This allowed me to keep a little more bend in my bow arm to avoid string contact with my forearm when I was wearing bulkier clothes. I was amazed at how much steadier I could hold by lengthening my draw length by as little as a quarter-inch.

Conversely, many bowhunters might be able to hold steadier by shortening their draw just a bit. With a little experimentation, you will find that there's a sweet spot where your body seems to naturally relax. Even if you have been comfortable at a consistent draw length for years, adjustments may be needed as you age and your strength or range of motion changes.

AUTHOR'S PHOTO/ILLUSTRATION: TIM "SPIKE" DAVIS

STEADY YOUR SHOT

FIVE TIPS TO MAXIMIZING STABILITY AT FULL DRAW.

MY FAVORITE Toby Keith lyric goes, "I ain't as good as I once was, but I'm as good once, as I ever was." I quote that song from time to time, and when it comes to bow-hunting, it's true in some instances.

By nature, I'm an aggressive bowhunter, but experience has taught me to make better judgment calls, and as a result, I've become more patient when I need to be. When it comes to shooting, however, it's an outright lie! I turned 50 this year, and the sad fact is, I'm simply not capable of shooting as well as I did 10–15 years ago.

As I've aged, two issues have become more pronounced in my shooting, and I'm not alone in dealing with these challenges. The first issue is my vision. The human eye is incapable of focusing on both your pin and your target at the same time; however, both used to be much clearer in my youth. These days, if I focus on the target, my pin



As we age, routine tasks like holding your bow steady at full draw, become new challenges.

Practice Being Steady

Start incorporating some stability-building exercises into your practice routine. Begin by taking a small paper plate and pinning it to your target. Now, back up in 10-yard increments, until you find the distance at which you begin to struggle to keep your sight pin within

the edges of the plate. At the end of each practice session, return to that distance and simply stand and hold the pin on the plate for as long as you can. Don't shoot — just hold and aim. As your stability improves, keep moving back. Not only will this exercise help you become steadier at full draw, it will also dramatically increase the amount of time you are capable of holding your bow at full draw before executing an accurate shot.

Stabilizers & Side Bars

Change the balance of your bow by experimenting with stabilizers and side bars. Return to the small paper plate that you have pinned to your target. If you have already noted the distance at which you begin to struggle holding your pins within the borders of the plate, you might be surprised at how many yards you can add to that distance by playing around with the balance of your bow. Adding a longer stabilizer and potentially a side bar can make your bow much more stable at full draw.

Experiment with the length and weight of these accessories to see how much steadier you become at full draw. Just remember that running a longer or heavier stabilizer or side bar can lead to

new challenges when bowhunting with them in the field. There can be a trade-off for the extra stability you gain with them, so make sure to take that into consideration.

Shot Process

Create a shot process or routine that forces you to focus on controlled breathing, stability, and visualization of an accurate shot. Develop your shot routine by talking yourself through each step, and I mean actually talk to yourself. The routine becomes a mantra, and mine goes something like this: Knuckle to jaw, nose to string, breath out, breath in, see it, steady, squeeze. Many coaches recommend creating a mantra out of your shot routine to keep you calm, focused, and steady.

Watching a legend like Larry D. Jones bowhunt well into his 80s, and to continue to thrive while doing so, is a real inspiration to me. As we age, routine tasks, like remaining steady at full draw, become new challenges. But with proper adjustments, practice, and focus, aging bowhunters can continue to shoot with accuracy and precision. The real key is to embrace the challenges, adapt, and continue to pursue your passion for bowhunting. **BH**



Kenetrek
Boots
FOR THE TRAIL LESS TRAVELED



BRIDGER LOW

You know that feeling... when your feet barely touch the ground as you glide over uneven terrain... and whether you're racing across trails or running errands, super-light and exceptionally tough gets you there without a care in the world. With bedrock support and weighing in at just over two pounds, these water tight, easy-breathing boots will be your best friend every day.



WWW.KENETREK.COM

800-232-6064



KNOW HUNTING

DR. DAVE SAMUEL | CONSERVATION EDITOR



Raising white rhinos in captivity seemed like a good idea at the time, but it's not working as planned.

CAN RHINOS BE FARMED FOR THEIR HORNS?

RHINO FARMING AND LEGISLATING THE BIG 5
TOP THE LATEST WILDLIFE NEWS.

A WEEK AGO (as I write this), a friend of mine returned from a trip to Zambia. He told me about some of the following items he read in the local papers while he was there.

It seems that a wealthy South African businessman, who made his fortune in the African tourism industry, wanted to do one last business venture before retiring. His name was John Hume, and his idea was to farm white rhinos for their horns. Hume's idea seemed simple enough: Raise rhinos in captivity, remove their horns (the horns grow back in two or three years), sell the horns on the open market, and create a scenario where you make rhinos worth more alive than dead — thus eliminating poaching. It sounded like something that might work, because it would price the poachers out of the market. This idea has now been tried, and it hasn't worked.

Here is what Hume did. He bought 21,000 acres, fenced it, stocked it with some rhinos, hired numerous workers, installed high-tech infrared security, and even purchased a helicopter to protect his farm from poachers. With poachers active in South Africa, protecting his growing rhino herd became paramount. At one point, he was spending thousands each month to do that. He kept poachers out, but there was one huge problem: The Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) does not allow the sale of rhino horns from South Africa.

Rhino horn is used in traditional

medicine in Asia, with the major countries being Vietnam, Korea, and China. The perceived medicinal value is used for at least 20 ailments that include cancer and hangovers. The horns are also made into pendants, decorative carvings, tea sets, etc.

I found one publication on the legal status and arrests in Vietnam. In Vietnam major trafficking networks are linked to many African countries. In Africa, it starts with poachers who sell the horns to network operatives, who then smuggle the horns back to Vietnam. These operatives hire people to smuggle the horns in personal luggage on flights, or through seaports, air freight, and express-mail services. No matter where they enter Vietnam, there are lots of chances for kick-back payments to employees. The horns, or processed products, are then sold to consumers or smuggled into China.

There are some arrests in Vietnam. From 2017 to the end of 2021, the Vietnam Crime Unit was involved in 342 cases that included 394 individuals. Of those, there were 35 seizures of rhino horns at seaports, airports, and land borders. In 30 of those horn seizures, 59 individual arrests were made, and as of January 2022, 20 cases resulted in prosecutions

DENVER BRYAN/IMAGES ON THE WILDSIDE

and convictions. Prison sentences were given in 17 cases; 27 individuals received prison sentences that averaged six years. The highest sentence was 15 years.

The level of arrests from 2017 through 2021 showed no evidence that these arrests led to a decrease in rhino horn trade. The report I found on the Vietnam rhino trade noted the major problem was a “lack of aggressive investigations focused on network leaders...”

Hume has around 2,000 captive rhinos, with hundreds of pregnant females, but since he cannot sell the horns, he has them stored, and they are apparently worth over \$5 million. Various groups have concerns about letting him sell horns. Some feel that legalizing trade in South Africa would stimulate poaching in surrounding countries such as Zimbabwe. Kill them in Zimbabwe and smuggle the horns into South Africa for legal sale. Another concern is that legal horn trade will drive up demand, and more poaching will result.

With thousands of rhinos to feed and protect, Hume is running out of money. So now he wants out. From April 26 to May 1, Hume held an online auction to sell everything. The minimum bid had to be \$10 million. He's hoping that some

billionaire will buy his rhinos and all his facilities to keep his idea alive, until such time that selling them becomes legal.

Hume has definitely increased the number of white rhinos in Africa. If Hume's ranch can stay open under another owner, it could be a source for rhinos everywhere — if someone will buy, move, and feed them with supplemental food as they get accustomed to their new environment in the wild. So, you see that what seemed like a great idea, has hit a stone wall for various reasons. Chances are that no one will bid on Hume's rhino farm, and then what will happen to them? I'll keep following this and let you know what happens.

New York Trying To Ban Trophy Imports

In March, the New York Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 3302 — the Big Five Trophies Act. Along with Assembly Bill 584, the Big Five Trophies Act would ban the importation, transportation, and possession of lions, elephants, leopards, black or white rhinos, and giraffes in New York. Bill 3302 has been forwarded to the Assembly Committee on Environmental Conservation, but there has been no vote as of this writing.

There is nothing good here. Safari Club International has notified the New York legislators that such bills are preempted by the federal courts, which have held that state laws restricting such importation of species regulated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are unenforceable under the Endangered Species Act. They also advised that similar bills in New Jersey and California were struck down in 2016.

SCI also noted that banning such imports negatively impacts populations of these species in Africa. The legislators who voted for this Act ignored the fact that hunter dollars create the funds used to manage these species in Africa. Safari operators also provide poaching patrols to prevent poaching. In addition, SCI pointed out that hunting encourages local residents to participate in the conservation of these species. The New York Senate also ignored the fact that most of these species are doing well, relative to numbers in the wild, and that the largest numbers live in countries where regulated hunting exists. What is it that these legislators don't understand? **BH**

If you have questions about topics covered in this column or on any wildlife-management issues or wildlife species, contact Dr. Dave at drdave4@comcast.net.

introducing the LOCKDOWN

The **KING of COMFORT**
HAS ARRIVED...

Over the past 2 years we've tested and refined a new approach to our saddle lineup. We wanted to reimagine comfort and user-friendliness. The LockDown takes best in class features from our Phantom and adds in our all new **Expandable Saddle Body** with LockDown Link construction to create a mega-comfortable saddle that expands and contracts with you throughout your hunt.

USE COUPON CODE

BOWHUNTERCASH

to score the LockDown Saddle for
\$379 (MSRP \$429)

TETHRDNATION.COM

f i y / TETHRDNATION

Coupon code good while supplies last.



LEARN MORE



GOING BACK TO THE WELL

When you kill a whitetail buck like this one on public ground, there's good reason to smile.

PUBLIC LAND CAN BE FANTASTIC,
IF YOU'RE WILLING TO WORK AT IT. **By JACOB EMERY**

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

THERE'S SOMETHING ROMANTIC about heading to your magical "spot." Maybe it's that half-rotten wooden hut where you shot your first deer. It could be the old buddy stand overlooking the greenfield where you and your grandfather spent hours watching the day come to life. Or that ridgetop where you arrowed your best buck. We all have places that we visit either mentally or physically, that make us feel more alive as a hunter. I discovered a place I've come to love in the southern part of the Hoosier State that has treated me very well over the years.

I grew up in the small town of Calhoun, Kentucky, where I cut my teeth in the early days of my hunting "career." Some of the spots mentioned above are still available to visit to this day. But unfortunately, due to loss of permission and the selling of these small properties, most of those old hunting grounds are now relegated to memory lane. I gave up knocking on doors, and the thought of dropping thousands of dollars a year on a subpar lease

makes my stomach feel like I've eaten some expired gas-station sushi. I've accepted my reality and joined the crowds on public land.

My transition to public ground was driven by several realities. First off, more opportunities. It's an amazing feeling knowing no matter the species or the state I'm hunting, there will be a place for me to hunt. Secondly, I hate being confined to the micro-tracts of private land that I still have access to. They can produce killer hunts, but I enjoy the freedom to bounce around and roam. Finally, the challenge. Don't get me wrong, as private land offers its own set of difficulties: Money, unpredictable weather, and trespassers to name a few. But the unknown factors of public land can add up quick. Ungodly hunting pressure, sometimes questionable quality of deer herds, lack of true sanctuaries, and either extremely widespread food sources or lack of food in general.

Finding one of those magical spots on public land is



BH 
FEATURES

GOING BACK TO THE WELL

rare but not impossible. I just happened to stumble upon one while E-scouting one rainy morning amidst the COVID scare back in 2020 — an area in a National Forest that wasn't drawing a ton of attention, except for maybe duck hunters. The tract had everything a big buck looks for, especially when the orange-coats start moving in and the pressure increases to an extreme level.

It had food — both early and late. Being a wetland area, there was no shortage of natural browse throughout the slough edges and bottomlands. Cropfields within a reasonable walking distance provided both early and late-season attractants. Not to mention, those ancient swamp and red oaks that are nearly untouchable to logging equipment.

And, it had water. I love areas with a multitude of water sources, and so do whitetails. Creeks, ponds, lakes, rivers, and swamps all provide adequate hydrating sources. But what I believe makes the water features attractive to the deer is due more so to the feeling of security than a place to drink. Heck, a mature whitetail buck may visit a hollowed-out stump 10 times as much as that pond you stumble across that you dream is going to be a goldmine, but almost never is. The point is, I believe mature bucks know that the more water between them and us two-legged monsters, the safer they are.

Finally, I found refuge. This is what really makes this area age like fine wine each season. Surrounded by mainly private land (owned by antihunters) on almost all sides, makes it extremely time-consuming — and a pain in the rear to access. By boat, it takes me 45 minutes of fighting both deep and shallow waters and numerous beaver dams to get there. By foot, almost 90 minutes, if I'm lucky. You will sweat, you will be tired, and you may even spew a curse word or two on the adventure in,



I killed this buck in 2021 from the same area described in this story.

but it's worth it. Essentially, the more pressure applied in the surrounding property, the better the hunt goes. Activity really tends to peak around the third week of November. That's when my luck would turn.

After coming off my best season in 2021, when I killed two bucks, I knew topping that year would be tough. Unfortunately, on August 7, I got the phone call from my sister that I'd been dreading since I was a young boy. I had lost the man who raised me — my grandfather. He was my best friend, and my hunting partner. I promised myself after his passing that I would push myself to scout and hunt harder than I ever had before. Luckily, a 167-inch velvet giant that I took down in Tennessee while hunting with all my friends would kickstart this incredible year. That was followed by a depressing span of unending work and bad weather through the middle part of November. Then came Thanksgiving Day...

The night before Turkey Day, I asked my wife if a hunt till 9:30 a.m. the next morning was out of the question. Of course, she stressed that we had to be at dinner by noon, but I did re-



Accessing this public-land spot can be challenging, to say the least.



My kids, Kyeson and Layken Wayne, and I sure did enjoy our time in the deer woods with my grandfather.

ceive her blessing. So, at 4 a.m., I loaded up my kayak and set off for the National Forest.

Upon arrival, I was quickly disappointed. The previous week, a burst of Canadian air sent down some super-chilly temps. Unfortunately, the 50-degree day prior to this hunt wasn't enough to completely thaw out the creek that I used to access my area. Sure, I could have fought the thin layer of ice and saved a ton of walking, but it would have made enough ruckus to wake up my wife back at home, 30 miles away. With two hours until grey light, I started the exhausting trek deep into the bottomlands.

Something I feel that has truly made me more successful in recent years, is my attention to access. I cannot stress how important it is to keep yourself hidden from those eyes, ears, and noses when walking in and out of the whitetail woods. The more undetected you can be in their bedroom, the more break-ins you can get away with before they're on to you. That's my favorite thing about hunting this spot: I'm able to sneak in and efficiently hunt 270 degrees of wind directions, regardless of whether it's foot or water access, without leaving a trace of disturbance.

The first hour of the walk is relatively easy, but very time-consuming due to having to loop around the massive swamp. From there it gets a little slower, taking my time diving from ditch to ditch to stay hidden in the flat bottomlands.

My destination was a multi-branched ash tree on the creek side of the most faithful pinch-point I've found in 22 years of hunting. I call it "The Island." Although it's not really an island, it is one of the drier spots in the area. The deer there are forced to use it to travel back and forth to avoid sticky, belly-deep mud, or swimming the creek.

Using my one-stick method, I was able to climb high enough to feel secure from wandering eyes in the leafless block of timber. At 33 feet, the conditions were perfect. Set up with the sun and main creek to my back, and another slough 45 yards in front of me, my thermals were pulling straight to the warm rays over the body of water that the deer try to avoid. If they were to move, they would provide me with a 35-yard shot. But would they?

By 9:20 a.m., the sun had risen high in the sky, and the only entertainment that morning was a spike buck slipping on the icy creek behind me in his attempt to cross it. In disbelief of the lack of action, I actually started to call it quits when I

reached in my backpack for my rappel rope. Then, the undeniable sound of a heavy, four-legged creature stopped me cold. I scanned for the culprit, but I still couldn't see him. The scrapping of dirt and leaves confirmed it was definitely a buck.

But was it a buck worth being late to Thanksgiving dinner? Oh, yes! A few steps past a cluster of oaks would reveal a very respectful public-land buck making his way toward me. I was nervous that he wouldn't make up his mind in time for me to position myself correctly in my saddle. For a right-handed shooter, the 3-6 o'clock positions are the toughest shots to pull off when hunting in a saddle. But at 30 yards, he veered toward my frontal shooting lane. I arrowed him at seven steps and was relieved to watch him fall over 60 yards from my tree. A flood of emotions hit me as I rejoiced over making a clean, quick kill. Sobbing like a baby, out of instinct I grabbed my phone to call my grandad — even though I knew he wouldn't answer.

After rappelling down and gathering up my gear, I took up one of the shortest tracking jobs of my life. The buck's last few steps led him to the sticky mud of those bottoms that I've come to love. These deer, the grind, the adventure, and the passion, are what people like me live for. A quick quartering and cape job later, and the buck was on my pack and ready for the much heavier walk out. This spot has produced two great hunts in a short amount of time.

As I started the trek out of the swamp, a few things were heavy on my mind: What this spot may produce next year, and if I'd still be married after being late to Thanksgiving dinner!

The author, a union electrician for 13 years, lives in Western Kentucky with his understanding wife and three children.

Author's Note: On this hunt, I used a Mathews Triax bow, Victory VAP TKO arrows, SEVR 1.5 broadheads, Latitude Method 2 saddle, EWO Ultimate One Stick, and a Mystery Ranch Pop-Up 28 pack.



It was with great pride that I took this picture of my public-land buck before packing him out.

IT'S HARD TO PAY

YOU MIGHT BE THE ONE TO LOOSE AN ARROW, BUT IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO HUNT BACKCOUNTRY ELK.

BY NICK WHITE

This summer, I was fortunate enough to draw an elk tag in an area my brothers and I have hunted off and on for the past six years. On years when we didn't draw the tag, we would backpack into the area, scout from a distance, and learn the elk's patterns and habits. It's not often that nonresident bowhunters are able to repeatedly hunt in such a special place. To say we feel blessed would be an understatement.

We decided to hunt the last two weeks of September — a week later than previous years — and we were prepared to spend the full two weeks in the moun-

tains if that's what it took. My brothers, Matt and Scott, my wife, Dessirae, and I reached our trailhead camp early on the afternoon of September 17. The midday arrival allowed us plenty of daylight to put our packs together, eat that last real meal, and acclimate for a full day before heading up above 11,000 feet for the first six days of our trip.

Like most years, Day One proved to be one of the most challenging. Living in Kansas at 1,500 feet in elevation, the acclimation period tends to be a rough transition for the first few days. The altitude adjustment coupled with an eight-

mile pack-in with over 60 pounds on your back can make you question your sanity. Every year, we joke that it's a good thing we have short memories. Joking aside, our team maintains positivity. Negativity burns energy we aren't willing to waste. Bowhunting elk in this area presents enough challenges as it is.

Once camp was established, we began our ascent to the top of a basin we call "Jurassic Park." Like in years past, the joint was hopping with multiple shooter bulls and lots of rut activity. The challenge, as always, was figuring out how to get stickbow close. Our go-to ap-

THEM ALL BACK



Our elk hunting team took time for a photo before saying goodbye to my wife, Des, after the first week of elk hunting.

proach is to wait for the right, consistent wind direction, then drop-in to the rut frenzy from above. Although we've become better elk callers the past few years, we've never relied on calling alone. "Wait for your set," as the surfing community says. Be in the right position, wait for the elk to sound off, then drop-in on them.

Days Three and Four brought torrential rain. After spending most of Day Three hiding under tarps, we chose to wait out the Day Four monsoon in the Kifaru Sawtooth tipi. Hitting a bull and losing the blood trail in the rain wasn't an option for us, and the forecast was



My wife, Dessirae, and I take a midday break on the way to our initial basecamp.

IT'S HARD TO PAY THEM ALL BACK

This is sunset on a Day One filled with anticipation.

supposed to be great after the storm passed. Patience hasn't always been our strong suit, but as we've seasoned, we've learned that educated decisions typically end better than pushing the issue.

Day Five was going to be a huge day once the weather broke. We left the tent in the dark, but with enough light to make out objects across the landscape to ensure we weren't going to push elk

off the top of the mountain. Making our way into a basin we call the "Amphitheater," we planned to get into a saddle before the elk started their descent back into the timber, haze them from above, and try to call one back to us. This worked perfectly on multiple satellite and raghorn bulls, but we just couldn't call any of the older-class bulls in close.

The team made the entire loop around the mountain and ended up in the bottom of Jurassic Park at last light. After a short debrief, we began the grueling 1,500-foot climb out of that hole and back toward camp to lick our wounds. We were discouraged at our lack of opportunities that day, although we observed some of the herd bulls' patterns that would prove beneficial in the days to come.

DURABULL

2 PANEL
STAKEOUT™

SURROUNDVIEW™
MAX™

SURROUNDVIEW™
DOUBLE WIDE™

ROUGHNECK™

3 PANEL
STAKEOUT™

On Day Six, Dessirae was planning to pack out and head home. We'd decided to hunt that morning, break down camp, and escort her back to our base camp. This would allow us to take a halftime break to restock our food supplies, eat at a restaurant, and discuss our strategy for the remainder of the hunt. Taking a hot shower, eating good food, and spending an evening with the wife before she left the following morning was exactly the breather I needed.

After kissing the wife goodbye on Day Seven, I went straight back to our base camp and presented the plan to my brothers. Without hesitation, they were on board for packing straight back to the Amphitheater. We had acquired too much intel on the elk patterns there and had to capitalize on it.

We wasted no time getting packed back in, dumping the gear, setting up the shelter, and mobilizing toward the Amphitheater. The prevailing wind was again southwest, which was ideal for the direction we'd be approaching from. The herd bulls had been pushing their cows along the top two benches in the evenings, so we decided to hunker down on the top bench in hopes they'd read the script and come in below us.

After a full day of rain and fog, my brothers and I head back to camp.



We had ample cover to drop benches quickly, if needed.

As bowhunters, we always have a plan, but the plan will often require modifications. Thirty minutes into our original plan, the bottom of the basin erupted with what sounded like 10 to 15 bulls screaming relentlessly. After dropping a couple benches to get a better read on the 'bulls' location, we listened intently for 20 minutes. "Listen to what the world is trying to tell you," is a phrase I've heard in the past from men much wiser

than me. At that moment, that phrase rang truer than ever before.

Without hesitation, I told my brothers to drop their packs and we bailed off into the bottom of the basin. We were familiar with the terrain and knew of a tight pinch-point where we thought this rodeo was going down. On the descent, we ran into younger bulls but just blew right past them — we knew we had to get to the source of the rut-fest.

After a few minutes of hurdling rocks and deadfall as we charged downhill, we

Double Bull® blinds are field-tested to be more reliable, more durable, and more adaptable, with more ways to make you invisible. And the warranty? That's a lifetime thing, too. All of which makes the Double Bull® difference undeniable.

RELIABULL | INVISABULL | ADAPTABULL | AFFORDABULL



DOUBLEBULL®
BE UNSTOPPABULL



October Mountain Products®

MODERN ARCHERY

PRO TOOLS

TRADITIONAL ARCHERY

PRO
TOOLS

AT THE SHOP
&
IN YOUR GARAGE

7009_23

OctoberMountainProducts.com

IT'S HARD TO PAY THEM ALL BACK

found ourselves within 60 yards of the chaos. I quickly knocked an arrow and hunkered down in a small group of dead pines to wait patiently.

After an hour and a half of the most intense elk action we'd ever witnessed, one of the herd bulls we'd seen fight three bulls off that evening pushed his hot cow right into our laps. They were within 15 yards for a few minutes, but the bull only provided quartering-to-shot opportunities. I had already been at full draw three times when he finally pushed his cow out of the trees while screaming repeatedly in our direction. I leaned out to slip a perfectly placed arrow right behind his shoulder. Watching that arrow disappear into his vitals will forever be engrained in my soul.

Within seconds, my brothers were at my side, and we heard the giant bull crash down the hill. My brothers made their way down to the bull first, and we

documented my reaction as I made my way to the incredible beast. After retrieving our packs, we immediately began breaking down my bull. Scott and I started in on the bull as Matt built a meat pole, took pictures, and built a fire. By 10:30 p.m., we had the meat hung and began our climb out of the basin. With our bull on the ground, the weight on our shoulders had been lifted.

Everything from that point on was only hard work, which is what my brothers and I strive for daily. The only concern left was ensuring that we got the meat back to our camp safe and sound.

Arrangements were made prior to the hunt with a couple of good friends with horses. They were familiar with the area we were hunting and agreed to come in to help retrieve the meat if we were lucky enough to tag a bull. We made the call to our packers, Justin and Kim, but they had prior engagements in the morning and wouldn't be able to come until the next day. My brothers needed to get back



Here, I am wearing a permanent smile just before the reality of breaking down my bull set in. We spent over a week hunting hard and living out of a backpack, but all that effort is worth it when you can pose with a bull elk like this one. I am thankful for all my friends who helped make it happen.



to work, so we broke our camp down and headed back to base camp.

Early the next morning, I headed back up the trail to get in front of the horses, as they were coming in from another direction. I knew my legs couldn't keep up, so I wanted a head start. Within a few hours, we'd made it to the bull and found the meat just as we'd left it. Before loading the meat, I told the guys I needed to sit down and eat something. I was out of gas from the hike in and the eight days of hard hunting. Justin reached into one of the game bags, grabbed a tenderloin, and began cutting slices. He said, "Here, eat this." The three of us ate nearly half that tenderloin, and within minutes I felt like a new man.

We sat in the basin for nearly an hour, talking about life and just enjoying the moment. It was completely astonishing to me that they would take time out of their schedules to pack miles back into the mountains just to help me. I will be forever grateful for these men.

We loaded the pack horses equally with the deboned elk meat and secured the panniers. I carried the head out, as the skull and antlers can poke the horses and cause unnecessary issues. Carrying antlers off the mountain is an honor and the least we can do to show our appreciation for the bull's giving his life.

Justin and his pack horse took up the trail, and before Kim gave his horse the kick to take off, he looked back at me. Kim, being a fellow traditional bowhunter, knows the trials of the task we had accomplished. No words were necessary — the look in his eyes told me he

was proud of us, and he was honored to be a part of it. There is no doubt that this day bonded us for life.

As I watched the horses carry the elk meat out of sight, I couldn't contain my emotions any longer. Tears swelled with pride as I followed the cowboys out of the basin, feeling like the luckiest soul on Earth. Five individuals had given me their time, knowledge, and energy to help make my hunt unforgettable.

I would never have attempted to hunt that deep in the backcountry without my brothers at my side and the cowboys willing to come in and pack us out.

It's going to be hard to pay them all back, but I'm darn sure going to try.

The author lives in central Kansas with his wife, Dessirae, and three daughters, Brooke, Rylie, and Danni. He has an obsession for traditional archery, big whitetails, and backpack hunting in the Rocky Mountains with his brothers.

Author's Notes: On this hunt, I used a Stalker Stickbow 62-inch Coyote w/ longbow limbs, Easton Axis 340 shafts, and 150-grain Magnus Stinger broadheads. Other gear included Sitka Gear apparel, Kifaru Muskeg 7000 backpack, LaCrosse Lodestar boots, Swarovski SLC 10x50 binoculars, and a Marsupial Binocular Pack.

A special thanks to my wife for spending a full week with us, enduring the elements. One can't explain what these hunts mean to us, so I was very grateful to have her experience it firsthand. **BH**



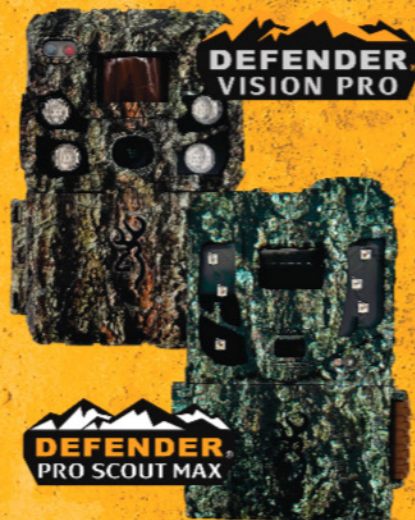
Our packers, Justin and Kim, collect some sunshine before rigging the horses to pack my elk off the mountain.



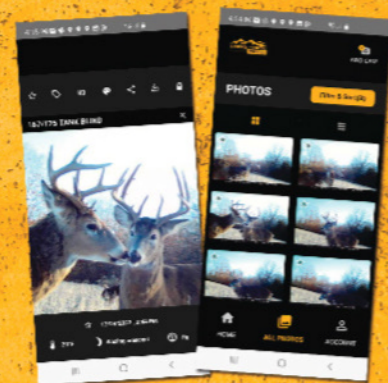
BROWNING

TRAIL CAMERAS

NEW FOR 2023!



- ✓ NEW CELL CAMS
- ✓ NEW APP EXPERIENCE
- ✓ SAME WORLD CLASS PERFORMANCE



OUR CAMERAS CAPTURE THE INDUSTRY'S BEST TRAIL CAM PICS & VIDEOS WITH THE RELIABILITY YOU'VE COME TO EXPECT FROM BROWNING. THE BEST THERE IS.

WWW.BROWNINGTRAILCAMERAS.COM
Browning trademarks licensed from Browning

Superior GLASSING TECHNIQUES

SPOTTING BIG GAME IN THE WIDE-OPEN SPACES OF THE WEST IS BOTH ART AND SCIENCE. HERE'S HOW TO DO IT RIGHT.

By Joe Bell, Technical Editor

Hunting big country out west is never without its ups and downs, and this morning was no different. Massive snowstorms hit the foothills near my Arizona home, and the roads leading to my honey holes were blocked off or covered in knee-high snow. I had to improvise.

I took inventory of a set of ridges coming off a busy highway area but leading straight into prime hunting ground. Moments later, I quickly banked my truck and grabbed my glassing gear for a quick look-see. Before I knew it, I was

set up and glancing down into a deep, gnarly canyon that “just looked right.”

My eyes, now glued to a Swarovski 15x56 binocular atop a neck-high tripod, immediately shifted to various patches of terrain. There was no system to my initial glassing method, only my gut instinct moving the optic ever-so-slowly from place to place. Suddenly, I noticed an odd shape in a patch of scrub. I sharpened the binocular's focus and paused intently, wondering if this unique form would eventually move. Just as I was about to forget about it, the



Coues deer are petite and quickly vanish in broken terrain. This buck is easy to see in the open, but the doe nearby is hidden beneath the shadows of a juniper tree.



For general-use viewing, binoculars in the 7X-10X range are ideal. My favorite binoculars for Western hunting are Swarovski's 10x42 EL. After countless hunting trips during the past 15-plus years, these binos have proven to be dependable performers.



SUPERIOR GLASSING TECHNIQUES

shape moved! A small Coues doe materialized, probably a mile away. A few minutes later, another odd shape appeared, then another — all does creeping out from the foliage. Eventually, a Coues buck popped into view as well. I couldn't believe it. A five-minute walk from my truck, and a busy highway, and this place was coming alive!

Unfortunately, I never got a shot at that buck, but I came close. I managed to stalk within 45 yards of the deer, but after taking one wrong step, he boogered off. But what a lesson I learned that day.

This scenario took place just last season, and it served as yet another reminder that productive glassing never follows a basic formula. Sure, being patient and using high-quality optics are critical, but just following these two conditions won't ensure success. Every hunting area is unique, and you must know "how" and "where" to look, and be willing to improvise and adjust your tactics when it's needed, just as I did on that day.

After more than two decades of glassing the rugged mountains of the West, here's what I've learned through trial and error and by watching and listen-

ing to some of the best glassers I know. If you heed this advice, I have no doubt you'll double your chances at seeing more game.

Choose The Right Optic

Describing in detail what makes a great optic is beyond the scope of this article, but I will say that topnotch optics provide two things: High-quality, rugged glass that is bright in lowlight conditions, and magnification that is appropriate for the environment.

We will cover spotting scopes another time, but in terms of binoculars, there are two types: general-use and long-range.

General-Use Binoculars: For quick glassing while hiking or still-hunting, binoculars in the 7X to 10X range are ideal, with 10x42s being my choice for serious Western hunting. I've found 7X to 8.5X binoculars are fine, and all things being equal (i.e., same optical quality), they are brighter in low light and easier to hold still. But sooner or later, particularly when glassing vast hillsides, the 10X glass offers an edge for discerning distant animals in hard-to-see places.

Some hunters prefer 12X binoculars for all-around use, but based on my years of experience, I believe 12X mag-



When glassing expansive country, extra-large optics like Kowa's Highlander 32x82mm binoculars can give you a serious viewing advantage.

nification may be a tad too much for basic handholding applications.

Remember, the higher the magnification, the larger the objective lens must

MORE THAN A BOW.



WISDOM FROM THE PROS

My friends Ron Way (RW) and Nick Perchetti (NP) are seasoned hunters with immense glassing experience. Ron has hunted throughout the West, using his glassing tactics to hunt mule deer, Coues deer, elk, and javelina. Nick is a veteran hunting guide with Timberline Outfitters in central Nevada. I quizzed both on the most important aspects of glassing. Here's what they said:

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON USING THE GRID-TECHNIQUE?

RW: I like the grid-method because it helps break up large, overwhelming areas into smaller, easier-to-focus-on chunks. This improves your chances of seeing that tiny shape of an ear, leg, or antler. Look at every "block" within your binocular's field of view before moving on to the next section of the hillside. Be disciplined, and it will pay off.

NP: I can't ever remember using the grid-pattern. I like to focus on areas where I think animals feed, move through, or bed. I scour such areas before moving on to the next location. If something needs a closer look, I cover these areas thoroughly using a high-power spotting scope.

WHEN YOU SET UP TO GLASS, WHAT ARE THE FIRST THINGS YOU DO?

RW: When I arrive at a glassing spot, I take a quick scan of the immediate area, just to make sure there isn't a big buck or bull close. I can't tell you how many times I've sat down to glass, got set up, and then noticed a big trophy running away because I was moving around too much.

NP: I focus a lot on areas where I can free-hand glass before transitioning to a bigger optic. When easing over a ridge and glassing the next valley, I've often found the animals are already there,

100-300 yards out. It's an important step before sitting down to glass for a long time.

WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED GLASSING SYSTEM FOR HUNTING THE SOUTHWEST?

RW: I favor the grid technique using 15X binoculars, but it has become a second step after I glass over areas that look most interesting based on previous hunting experience, then transition into an ultra-slow grid method. This helps "clear my mind," knowing I'm not missing the obvious.

WHAT TYPE OF EQUIPMENT DO YOU RECOMMEND FOR THOSE JUST GETTING INTO GLASSING BIG COUNTRY, AND WHAT DO YOU USE?

RW: You're better off saving money then buying the best optics available, rather than acquiring a low-grade alternative. A dear friend of mine once told me, "You will never make enough money in your life to buy anything but the best." I use Swarovski optics and believe 15X is minimum for serious glassing. Such optics are a little heavy, but anything less will prove underwhelming.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST MISTAKES YOU SEE NOVICE HUNTERS MAKE?

RW: One thing is glassing while they're in a hurry. They throw up their binoculars for maybe a

minute or two, then move along, then repeat. I've scoured mountainsides for a half-hour, only to watch several range cows step out of the vegetation. Don't ever believe you have seen everything when you finish glassing an area.

NP: Novice hunters think the more country you cover, the more game you'll see. It's not that way. I can walk one to two miles while glassing all day and see maybe 15 bucks, compared to walking 15 miles while glassing less and see maybe one to two bucks.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE HARDEST ANIMALS IN THE SOUTHWEST TO GLASS-UP, AND WHY?

RW: I think the most difficult animal to glass is the Coues deer. They're small, and have excellent camouflage for the terrain they live in. I have spotted these deer on occasion when they bed in thickets of catclaw by picking up a shiny nose or their eyes. You must look very carefully.

NP: I think a trophy mule deer is the most difficult animal to hunt. I've seen a lot of big bucks, but typically I only see a big buck one time, and one time only. With other big game, including Coues deer and elk, I can often find them again. Big mule deer tend to go nocturnal, making them hard to glass.

Either way, you're about to make the right choice.

When bowhunters ask, what bow should I choose? Carbon or aluminum? Our answer is simple: it's in your hands. Nothing will tell you more than shooting a Carbon RX-7 or VTM for yourself. Both flagship bows are smoother, quieter, and more dead in hand than any bows we've ever built. And there's proof in that pudding. Either way, tags will be filled. Shoot both at your local Hoyt dealer and learn more at Hoyt.com.



HOYT
ARCHERY

CARBON RX-7

VTM



ELEVATION

EVERY SHOOT. EVERY SEASON.

EVERY SHOOT.



SUPERIOR GLASSING TECHNIQUES

be to maintain a good exit pupil size. Exit pupil is important, because as light increases, your pupils will dilate to no more than 5mm, meaning the best binoculars for low-light viewing will have an exit-pupil size close to 5mm. With a 10x42 binocular, the exit pupil is 4.2mm (42 divided by 10). To maintain this same exit pupil with 12X binoculars, the objective lens must be 50mm (50 divided by 12 = 4.16). This means a heavier and bulkier binocular that's not ideal for carrying all day, particularly when stalking.

Long-Range Binoculars: When hunting super-vast terrain, extra magnification can make all the difference in the world. I define "super vast" as terrain that requires glassing beyond two miles. In this type of country, 15x56 binoculars are standard. But such optics require a solid tripod. This equipment is an investment, and it's bulky and heavy to pack. However, without this type of setup, you'll struggle with spotting game, especially Coues deer, javelina, and even mule deer and big-horn sheep. All these animals are like chameleons in the thick, undulating, desert scrub habitat of the Southwest. From a distance, this country looks wide-open, but this is an optical illusion. There are countless washes, ravines, and swells in this type of habitat, so don't be fooled.

When on a high vantage point, this country also lends itself to glassing at extreme distances — such as beyond the three-mile mark. In these scenarios, extra-large, extended-distance binoculars provide an edge. Examples of this include the Kowa Highlander 32x82 binoculars and the Swarovski BTX Spotting Scope System with the variable 30X or 35X eyepiece and 65, 85, 95, or 115mm objective lens. Both optics provide edge-to-edge clarity at extreme glassing distances.

While hunting mule deer in "The Strip" area of northern Arizona, I watched my guide use his massive Kowa binoculars to pick out a single deer leg from a maze of pinyon-juniper from more than a mile away. What made it impressive to me was that I had glassed the same area over and over with my 15X binoculars and couldn't see a thing. A bigger optic can sometimes give you the upper hand.

Look For Odd Shapes

A deer standing in an open patch of grass or meadow is sometimes hard

to see, depending on the distance and how well it blends into the environment. However, take this same deer and put it behind a tree, patch of brush, or rock, and it becomes almost impossible to make out. Mature, elusive trophies don't traipse around in the open all day, so don't expect to see the entire animal. Look for an ear, leg, rump, or antler tine protruding above vegetation.

Areas that receive a lot of hunting pressure require extra attention and patience. In one of my Coues spots, I noticed the majority of the bucks I see are in big canyons with thick tree cover. At dusk and dawn, you can find them feeding in small patches of semi-open terrain, but once hunters arrive, they retreat quickly into the thick cover.

The more you glass, looking intently for parts of an animal, the better you'll get at spotting game. In time, it will become completely natural.

Glass Naturally

Years ago, the grid-system of glassing was big. A lot of Western hunters talked about it and how well it works. However, I believe glassing technique varies based on hunting area and a hunter's personal



Southwest landscapes are predominately rolling hills and plateaus covered with desert scrub or pinyon-juniper. Glassing from a standing position provides more effective and efficient viewing of such terrain.



Ron Way is a seasoned bowhunter with years of experience glassing game animals like Coues deer, muleys, elk, and javelina.

ity, so I prefer not to get too fixated on picking apart a hillside in a certain way. I simply pick it apart and seldom use a specific pre-arranged system.

When using the grid-system, you place each part of a hillside into box-like sections. You move the optic's field of view to one box and glass it intently from one edge to the other, then move to the next box, and so on. Your eyes focus intently across the sight picture, without moving the optic.

Personally, I like to glass like I still-hunt: I hone-in on areas I think are best (e.g., vegetation edges and saddles), conducting a very slow, methodical stop-and-inch-along method. When I see an odd shape, I bear down on it, amping my focus. I do this repeatedly and I can cover a lot of ground. More than anything, I enjoy glassing this way — and that's very important. Spending a lot of time behind the optic and finding pleasure in the process is what builds success.

Despite all this, I will use the grid-system, but only after I've already scoured a hillside using my hybrid method. In this case, my mind is convinced there's something there and I'm ready for a more methodical tactic.

Stand Don't Sit

So far, I haven't talked about where you should glass from. A high vantage point is the obvious. However, in the rolling, plateau country of the Southwest, a big hill doesn't always exist. In this case, glassing from a sitting position may be limited so standing up works much better.

I used to glass with my 15X binos from a sitting position, but seven years ago I switched to a taller tripod and be-

gan glassing while standing up. It has been a game-changer for me. I find myself setting up faster, acquiring a better view of the terrain, and spotting way more game. I can also pivot around 360 degrees with ease, without having to find a spot to reposition my body and butt pad.

When using a general-use binocular, glassing from a standing position isn't the best, unless you mount the optic to a tripod or are just taking quick inventory of a hillside for game. If I must glass a little longer than a quick view, I often sup-

port my binoculars by bracing my bow's limb or cam up against it. This adds additional support for a steadier picture.

Glassing for big game in the rugged mountains of the West is sometimes difficult and frustrating. But it can be fun and effective if you use the right tactics. I have no doubt these glassing strategies will improve your ability to spot more game and provide additional stalking and shooting opportunity. **BH**

The author lives and works in Prescott, Arizona.



YOUR NEXT BIG DEER WILL ALERT YOU WHEN HE'S READY.



- DUAL-SIM auto connects to the best cellular network
- PHOTO AND VIDEO transmission
- EASY TO SET UP AND USE
- 100 FREE PHOTOS every month. No fees. No commitment.

FLEX G-36

THE PERFORMANCE YOU WANT, THE FREEDOM YOU NEED

SPYPOINT

SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED A LITTLE VISUAL INCENTIVE TO
ENTICE THOSE STUBBORN BULLS TO COME A LITTLE CLOSER.

BUGLING BULLS & THE ART OF

Two is always better than one. No matter where you are hunting, never let your partner slack. Luckily, I've got a dedicated hunting buddy.

DECEPTION

BY LANE FARRIS

DANNY FARRIS PHOTO

I HAD TO COME TO TERMS with my football career ending. Everyone says your playing days end sooner than you expect. My college career took place over six years and 43 starts. There were times I thought it might last forever. I was voted first team All-RMAC Conference and first team All-Colorado as a linebacker, and Western Colorado won a conference championship for the first time in 24 years and went to the NCAA playoffs. After the season, I got myself in front of NFL scouts at a PRO-Day, and while I never got the call, I can't imagine a better way to close a very important chapter in my life. I was proud of the way my football career ended, but the truth is bowhunting had stolen my heart long before I ever held a football.

Football and elk season don't get along, so every year I saved up preference points for Colorado's draw. By the end of my football career, I had enough to draw a premier unit in the state. My dad, Danny, and I had discussed draw strategy, and we ultimately selected a unit in the central part of the state based on firsthand accounts from friends and the bull-cow ratio.

September finally arrived, and I couldn't hold out any longer, so I hit the road a day early. My dad and cameraman Nick Prete would join me the following day, so I had a free day to make a gameplan.

I headed up to my glassing point overlooking an area that had been heavily mitigated for fire prevention and was also very accessible. Right before dark, I noticed a few elk spill into a meadow a mile or two below me. That group turned into a herd of 50-plus cows. Suddenly, a bull I judged to be in the 330-range ran into the meadow after the cows.

I watched the big bull and his subordinates until dusk. The herd bull was pushing his cows around and had zero tolerance for any other bulls, which made me wonder if the rut had started early.

BUGLING BULLS & THE ART OF DECEPTION

I was shaking with excitement, because I had been deprived of elk hunting for so long. Coming off the mountain that night, I started formulating grand schemes for the days to come.

Dad and I planned to spike out, and after setting up camp and collecting water, we put in some miles getting to know the area. Our objectives were to identify where the elk were watering, and to locate any hot wallows, popular bedding areas, and any other useful information we could collect.

It was hot, and the elk weren't talking much. The bulls would bugle early but would shut down by 7 a.m. After that, the wilderness was quiet until right before the last light of day started to fade, at which point the bulls would start bugling.

We laid eyes on a few bulls that had cows, but most had satellite bulls intermingling with the harem. That told us there was no way the cows were in heat. My observations from above the night before were not holding up.

In the early morning, while the bulls were still bugling, we worked in tight in an attempt to figure out our best plan of attack. After listening to multiple bulls below us, Dad and I eventually chose one we thought might want to play the game with us.

The wind was ideal, so we started down the ridge, moving slow and silent, trying to pinpoint his exact location. The last time he bugled, I was certain he'd crested the ridge and was feeding on the other side. I moved faster, using the spine of the ridge for cover.

The plan was to get set up in the bull's "bubble" and make a few cow calls. Suddenly, I saw tines in an opening, 50 yards away. The bull and I locked eyes, and it was over — he never looked back, but I remember the length of his tines.

We took one afternoon off to replenish food and batteries. I ended up on the mountain, glassing our hunt area, and got to lay eyes on my first "rut fest." Several herds of cows were being pushed by bulls from every direction. Once all the elk were on top of the ridge, the bulls started going wild — running around the cows and separating them from each other. Fights were breaking out, and bulls were chasing bulls. This party lasted for an hour, before the victors took the cows they'd won and drifted back into the timber. Talk about a bad day to be stuck at base camp!

The plan for the next morning, my dad's 50th birthday, was to hike back to spike camp and stay as long as needed.

As I sat listening for elk in the predawn darkness, I took off my Kifaru backpack and thought about Dad's special day. I don't have many hunting stories that he doesn't play a key role in. He set the precedent for what my life should look like. Problem is, Dad's birthday is an awful day for elk hunting. He has never killed a bull on his birthday, and it's typically a miserable day for him. I was praying for a good birthday, but we spent that entire day without even hearing a twig break. Dad's birthday might be a curse, but I sure was glad to spend it with him doing what we both love.

The next morning, I opened my eyes just as the sun was peeking over the horizon. Late! We all flew out of our bags and geared up, afraid we'd miss all the morning activity. Luckily, a bull sounded off near camp, so we tore off after him.

Besides our tardiness, everything was going right for us: The wind was perfect, and it seemed like the elk were moving toward us as we were closing the gap. I found a good spot to make a set, and as soon as we called, a bull hammered back at us!

Just as my blood pressure was starting to spike, a muley doe showed up at 20 yards, caught my wind, and bounded away.

Seeing the doe's reaction, the elk promptly followed her lead. Talk about a demoralizing moment!

I was three-quarters of the way through my hunt, in a limited-entry unit with as many elk as there are people, and I had yet to draw on a bull. I was starting to fear that I might not get an opportunity. But it was the fourth quarter, and I had to keep going and be prepared — just in case.

The morning of September 10 felt special. The temperature had dropped, and as we drank our coffee in the dark, the elk were sounding off in the distance.

As dawn emerged, there was a light mist and thick cloud cover that would keep things cool. I grabbed my trusty Hoyt and had just selected one of the distant bugles when a bull erupted just above our camp.

The front end of this bull's bugle sounded like the low notes of a howling wolf — ending with a guttural grunt. As other bulls would bugle, this bull would cut them off. The odd bugle and his aggressive nature convinced us it was another hunter. His bugles were terrible!

Dad and I started heading toward a more distant bugle, when the "guy" above us bugled again. I grabbed Dad. I had changed my mind, because the last note of this bugle was so guttural and deep, I knew no human could replicate it.

Our calling sets were not working on this bull. He'd hear our pleading, bugle back at us, and then continue on his way. I



AUTHOR'S PHOTO

While packing for elk camp, think lightweight. Kifaru's Supertarp has been my shelter of choice for a few years now. Pair it with a lightweight bivy sack, pad, and Kifaru's SlickBag, and you have the ultimate spike-camp setup. Below: Instead of taking midday off, our crew would set up over wallows and waterholes.



DANNY FARRIS PHOTO

After saving preference points for 10 years, I took this bull on Day 10 of the hunt. Showing this bull the decoys pulled him right to me.



DANNY FARRIS PHOTO

knew exactly where this bull was heading — a patch of timber commonly used as a bedding area.

This bull was not going to be convinced by calling alone, so we doubled our pace while trying to lay eyes on him. Finally, I caught movement, and it was the bull passing through a meadow across the drainage. I was fixated on the length and mass of the bull's fourth "royal" points. If I got an opportunity, I was going to take it.

The bull walked by us, 100 yards away, on his way to his bed.

We needed to get his attention quickly, so Dad raised his tube and let out a few excited cow calls. This got the bull to look back toward us and rip a bugle. While we had the bull's eyes, Dad used his Stalker Elk Butt decoy to slowly backpedal up the ridge behind us, getting the bull's full attention. The goal was to show the bull that he had missed some cows that were now leaving him.

That was all this bull needed. He turned 180 degrees and headed straight at us!

As I set up, Dad eased up on the calling and started making elk-walking sounds with a stick. After 15 minutes, the bull still hadn't shown up. Being patient is tough in tense moments like this, but with my lesson in patience still fresh in my mind, we gave the bull a little more time. Sure enough, the bull screamed a bellowing bugle, letting us know he was right on top of us.

As the wet, muddy bull made his way into the opening, my heart started pounding out of my chest. This was the moment I had been waiting on for 10 years.

The bull had pinpointed Dad's calling and was walking toward him. As he passed behind a lone tree, I drew back my RX-5 Ultra and settled my 20-yard pin just behind his shoulder.

The shot broke, and I heard my arrow impact as the bull spun. Not knowing what had happened, the bull trotted 60

yards and then looked back. I could tell he was hit hard. Using my Stalker Decoy for cover, I nocked another arrow, took a few steps to my side to clear obstructions, drew back, and let another arrow fly. I hit him again, and he disappeared.

I had made two great shots on a bull I'd dreamed about for a long time. As Dad made his way down to me, we heard a loud crash not too far off. Surely, that was my bull.

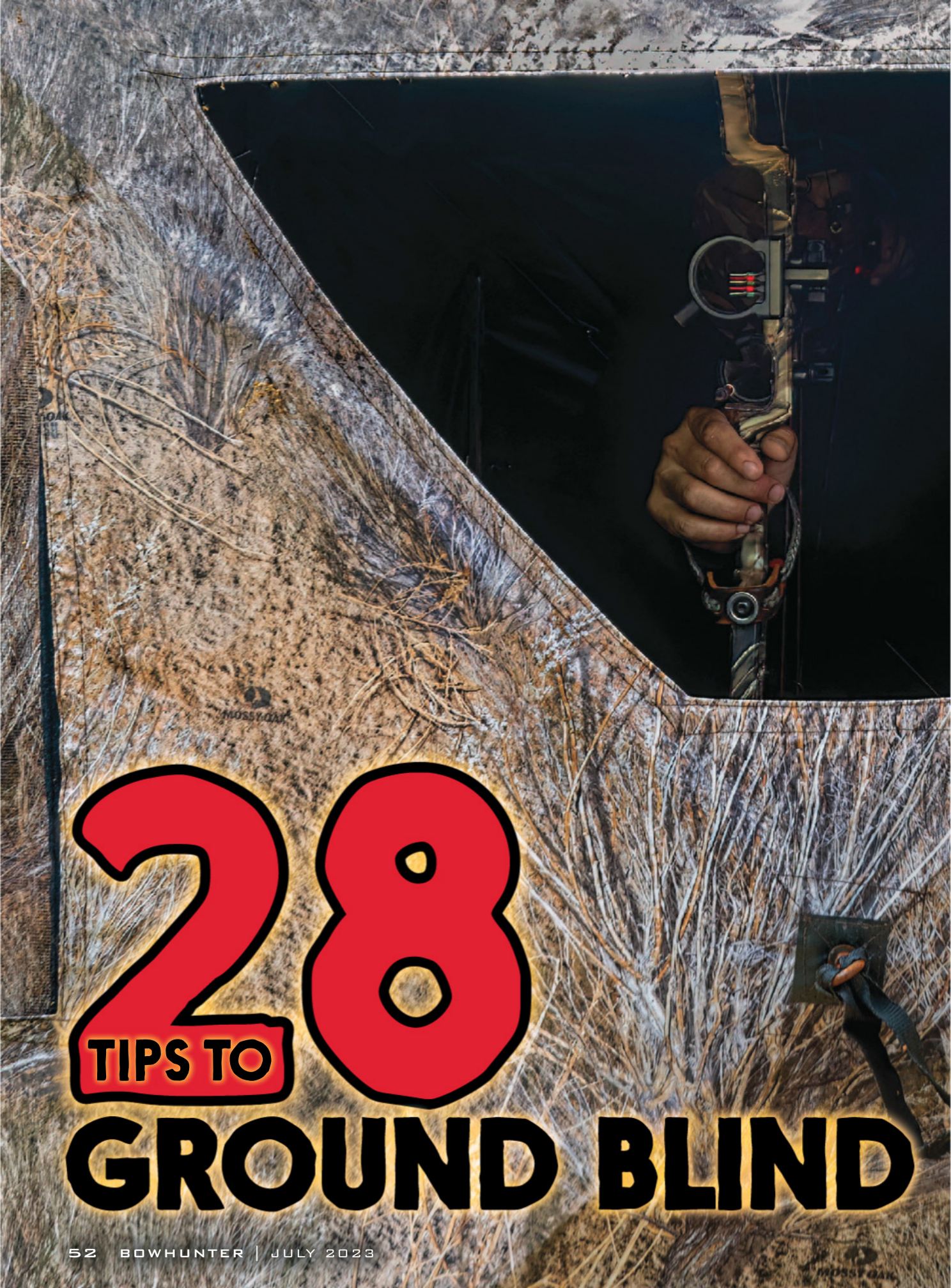
After a brief discussion, I then threw on my Skopt Blood Vision glasses and started trailing the bull. The weird thing is, not only am I color-blind, so is my dad and cameraman Nick! Thanks to said blood-trailing glasses and a well-placed arrow, it didn't take us long to locate my bull.

Throughout my football career, I was constantly reminded that there would be plenty of time for hunting after I was done playing ball. As I looked over the beautiful bull laying before me, I knew those words of wisdom were in fact true, and that I was now off to another great start! **BH**

Author's Notes: My equipment on this hunt included a 70-lb. Hoyt RX-5 Ultra, Spot-Hogg Fast Eddie sight, arrows fletched with Tac vanes and wraps and tipped with Muzzy Trocar broadheads, Stan Solex release, Browning apparel in Ovix camo, Kenetrek boots, Kifaru's Hoodlum pack, Garmin Rino GPS, and Ultimate Predator's Stalker Elk Decoys (pictured at right).

I'd like to give special thanks to my dad, who I've been following through the woods my whole life. Without him, I wouldn't be doing any of this.



A person is visible through a triangular opening in a ground blind, holding a bow. The blind is covered in a dense, brown and tan camouflage pattern. The person is wearing a dark shirt and a headlamp. The bow is a compound bow with a sight and stabilizers. The background is dark, suggesting a night or low-light setting.

28

TIPS TO

GROUND BLIND



By **WADE GRASSEDONIO**

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

IF YOU HAVEN'T SPENT MUCH TIME BOWHUNTING FROM A GROUND BLIND, YOU'RE MISSING SOME EXCITEMENT.

BOWHUNTER TEARS! Whether they come out of your eyes or stay inside and burn holes through your soul, we've all felt them. They burst forth as soon as that massive set of antlers bounds away through the brush, never to be seen again.

Bowhunter tears are usually accompanied by a slack jaw, dropped head, closed eyes and a conversation with oneself that begins as follows: (PG version) "I can't believe I did that. What was I thinking?"

We've all been there and done that. Unfortunately, due to my tendency to screw up even the simplest of tasks, I have been there more than most. In fact, I have been there so often I not only have the T-shirt, but the shorts, flip flops and koozie to go with it.

There is one saving grace, and that is: I learn from my mistakes, and I've learned a lot over 42 years of bowhunting. The tips I share here have been gathered through the school of hard knocks. Please, for the love of all that is good, learn from my mistakes. You may not harvest the animal of your dreams, but you will gather a plethora of stories to tell about the ones that got away.

Let's get started.

SUCCESS

TripleStack

by SPOT-HOGG



3 Individually Adjustable PINS



3 Individually Adjustable POINTERS

MADE IN THE USA

SPOT-HOGG.COM - 541.995.3702

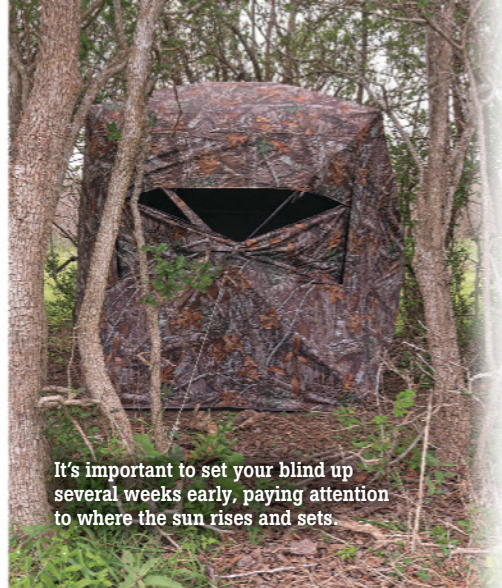
28 TIPS TO GROUND BLIND SUCCESS

BENEFITS

Ground blinds are a great way to increase your hunting success while boosting your enjoyment. Where else but in a ground blind can you hunt while you eat, drink, stretch, share the experience with children, and stave off the cold. Also, they are safer than treestands. I had a treestand fall out of a tree once with me in it, and it is not very much fun. I recommend the good ol' ground blind for superior hunting enjoyment.

PURCHASING

►1. Make sure the blind you choose is deep enough from front to back to accommodate an archer at full draw. There needs to be enough space in front of your hand to keep the tip of the arrow inside the blind and allow for follow-through after the shot. The blind also needs to be tall enough that bow limbs do not hit the ceiling at any time while drawing back or shooting. Traditional archers really need to pay attention to this because their limbs are significantly longer than those of a compound bow. Nothing is more agonizing than not being able to shoot because your bow or elbow is hitting the blind. I learned this the hard way!



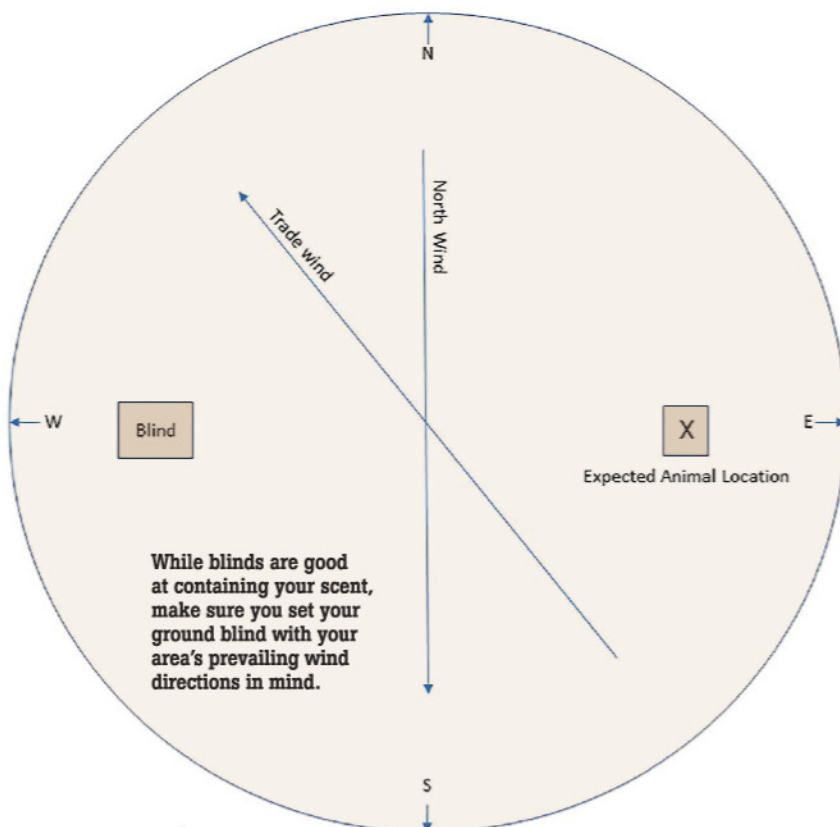
It's important to set your blind up several weeks early, paying attention to where the sun rises and sets.

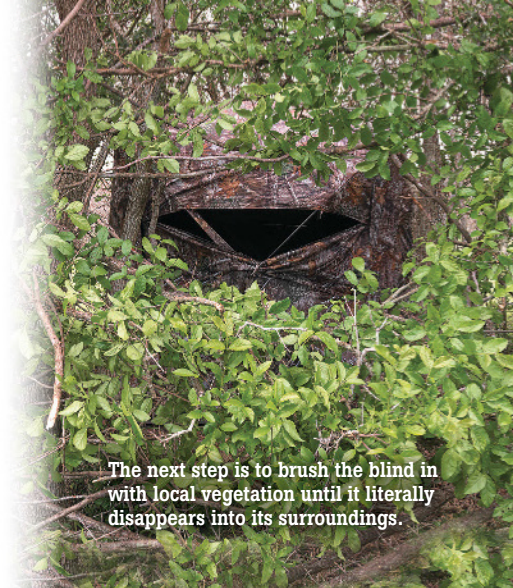
SITE

►2. Set up your ground blind several weeks early. More time is better than less. You're setting up something new in their home and it will take time for them to get accustomed to it. If someone suddenly put new furniture in your den, you would notice immediately and be suspicious.

►3. Pay attention to the position of the sun. Whether you're hunting in the morning or the evening, set the blind so the sun does not shine straight into the shooting window and light you up.

►4. As with all bowhunting, take wind direction into account. In South





The next step is to brush the blind in with local vegetation until it literally disappears into its surroundings.

Texas, where I live, we have two predominant winds — southeast and north. To prevent my scent from blowing toward the expected location of the animals, I set my blind up west of that point. Most of the time, my scent is blowing in an acceptable direction.

►5. Do not leave your blind in the field any longer than necessary, as the sun will bleach it and weaken the fabric. Also, raccoons, packrats, and other assorted critters will use the time to remodel the blind and make it nice and comfy to their specifications.

SET UP – OUTSIDE

►6. My advice is to ditch the skinny pins that come with the blinds and use big tent stakes to anchor the blind. Rebar works well, too, if you bend it into the shape of an “L”. Anchor the blind to the ground in every place the blind allows, usually loops along the bottom edge.

Attach ropes to the center of the exterior walls at the hubs and tie them to trees and brush to prevent the blind from moving. If suitable trees and brush are not available, hammer tent spikes into the ground about six feet from the blind and attach the ropes at a steep downward angle, which helps hold the blind tight to the ground when the wind is trying to lift it.

If it is possible to tie the apex of the roof hub to a tree limb above the blind, do it. When the winds get up to 30 or 40 mph, like they do in South Texas, this will prevent the roof from collapsing. I have had to search large areas of woods to find a blind that did a tumbleweed impression and went on a journey.

►7. You can leave a blind out in the open in some cases, especially if it is set well in advance, but if you want a chance at mature animals, you’ll want to brush the blind in the best way you can. Branches,

limbs, cornstalks, and other material can go a long way toward easing the fears of passing game.

►8. DO NOT allow branches, sticks, or young saplings to maintain contact with the blind. Over time, with movement from the wind, they may wear a hole in the material.

SET UP – INSIDE

►9. Clean the ground inside the blind. This is huge! It’s easier if you do most of it before you set the blind in place, but the floor needs to be as clean

as possible. Bare dirt is best. Otherwise, you will make a lot of noise with your feet and gear. Ground blinds offer a false sense of security when it comes to noise and scent control. Don’t fall for it!

►10. Make sure there is no light leaking into the blind, especially direct sunlight, as it will illuminate you and spook game. Many blind manufacturers use a minimal amount of material when it comes to window covers, so light leaks are common. Seal every light leak you can by adjusting the window coverings. Stubborn windows can be sealed with



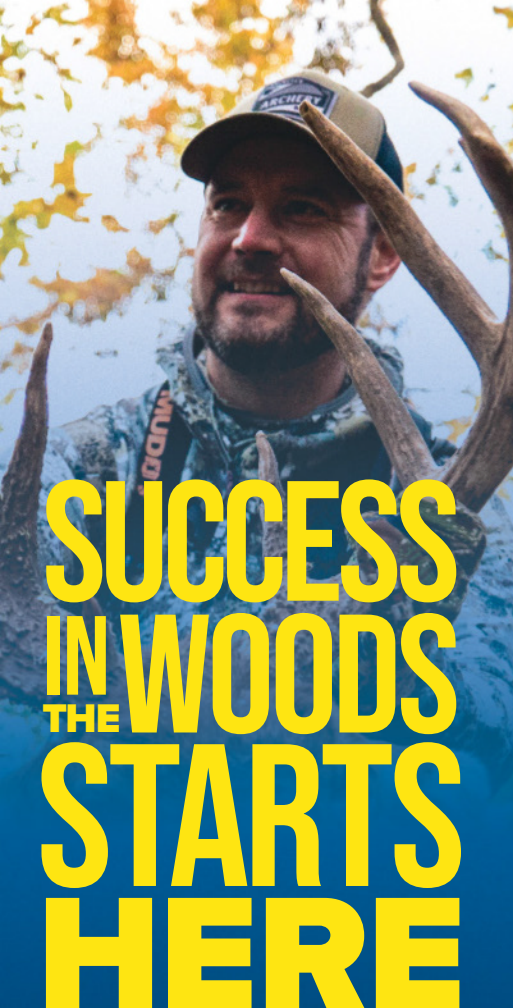
YOUR NEXT BIG DEER WILL ALERT YOU WHEN HE'S READY.



- 20 MP Photos
- 90 FT Flash and Detection Range
- Optimized Connectivity
- Flexible Transmission Plans - from FREE to Unlimited

LM2 THE EVOLUTION OF THE REVOLUTION

SPYPOINT



SUCCESS IN THE WOODS STARTS HERE

Huge selection and fast shipping for everything you need from hunt to harvest.

- Treestands
- Saddles
- Blinds
- Cameras
- Apparel
- Decoys
- Game Calls
- Scent Control
- Scents & Lures
- Packs & Bags
- Knives & Saws
- Accessories

And naturally — everything else for the sport of archery.



(800) 829-7408
LANCASTERARCHERY.COM



**LEADING THE WORLD IN
3D AND TARGET ARCHERY**



28 TIPS TO GROUND BLIND SUCCESS

small binder clips or even large paper clips to hold window flaps in place. Also, make certain you are not backlit by light coming in from behind you or any opening on either side, as animals can easily pick off that movement. The only light coming in should be through your shooting window.

►11. Keep all gear and yourself away from the front window. The closer things are to the front window, the easier they are for the animals to see. Many forget that their broadhead is almost poking through the front window and very visible when they are about to draw.

►12. Minimize the size of the front window if possible. Some blinds have gigantic front windows that extend from one side of the blind to the other. That's way too much light. Use clips and dark or camouflage material to cover excess window openings, leaving just enough to shoot through.

►13. If you must peek out the sides or back, designate a tiny spot on each window where you can pull the flap silently aside a quarter of an inch to see. Small peep holes offer great vision if you have your eye close enough to the hole.

►14. Use a comfortable, quiet chair. The more comfortable you are, the more likely you are to hold still. Arm rests are nice but make certain they don't interfere with your bowstring at full draw. I like the one-piece, stackable plastic chairs.

►15. Do not position your chair in the middle of the blind. Instead, place it near one of the back corners. This gives you more room for your feet and gear and takes you out of direct line of sight through the front window. Be careful not to place it so far back that your elbow hits the back wall when at full draw.

GEAR

►16. This is gross but a major necessity. You will need a pee bottle. One of the advantages of a ground blind is that you can have drinks and snacks. Well, if you are drinking, you are going to need to relieve yourself. Hunting is supposed to be fun, but being miserable for hours because you have to pee saps the fun right out of the experience. Bring an empty sports drink bottle with you. They do not make the crackling noise of water bottles and they have a strong screw-on cap that you can twist on tightly, so the scent does not escape.

►17. Use some type of a bow stand so you can stand your bow up within easy

reach. This keeps your bow out of the way and prevents unwanted noises created when you try to lean it up against the wall or your pack. Hanging it from the roof of a hub blind seldom works because the weight of the bow may collapse the hub and any type of hook could be in your way when you come to full draw.

►18. Distances can be quite deceiving when viewed through a blind window so make sure you have your trusty rangefinder handy.

►19. If you choose to bring food or drinks into the blind, do everything you can to limit the noise and scent. As for drinks, crack the lids as soon as you get in the blind. If you bring a Thermos of coffee, loosen the lid slightly so escaping pressure does not cause it to squeak when you open it. Any food you bring should be taken out of packaging that will make noise. Wrap it in paper towels, shove it into your pockets or use lightweight resealable bags. Do whatever it takes, just get rid of the crinkly wrappers.

►20. If you are a seasoned hunter and have learned from the school of hard knocks, you will have a backpack with all your essential gear. Open all the zippers upon entering the blind. Zippers are crazy loud when an animal is ten yards away.

►21. Wear black or very dark clothes that are extremely quiet. This is not just



Set up properly, ground blinds are great tools for bowhunters looking to put their tag on animals like this whitetail buck.



These photos illustrate my Bonus Tip (#28), which creates a moveable mesh screen across the front window of most commercial blinds.

good advice; it is a must! Since your bow hand will be close to the window, be sure to wear a dark glove, at least on that hand. Wear a dark facemask or headnet, too.

►22. Place your gear around the inside edges of the blind so your feet have as much room as possible. Put the things you need, like binoculars or grunt calls, close to your chair and place other gear in front of light leaks between the ground and bottom edge of the blind. If it's windy and your blind is moving, tie your pack to a hub so the weight helps keep the blind stable.

HUNTING

►23. Be quiet and scent-free. Ground blinds will not conceal a noisy, smelly hunter.

►24. Do not let the animals see you enter or exit the blind, if possible. If they get the idea that people may be in the blind, they may avoid your hunting area altogether.

►25. Check the inside of the blind for undesirable critters before you climb in. You don't want to set up and get comfy only to find a snake or nasty spider in there with you.

►26. Once you are set up, draw your bow, and make sure there are no points of contact top, bottom, front and on all sides. And most of all, remember that your arrow's line of flight is three or four inches below your line of sight. Assure the bottom of the blind window is well below your arrow when preparing for the shot.

►27. Avoid using a cell phone when it is dark or close to dark outside. They will light you up like a streetlight. Turn the screen brightness way down and turn off all sounds and vibrations.

BONUS TIP

►28. Most hunters lower or remove the screen covers of the windows because they do not like the idea of shooting through them. Removing the screen,

however, makes it easier for animals to see inside. Through sheer frustration, I have come up with a solution by creating a moveable screen that is dead silent. All you need is mosquito netting or camouflage burlap, monofilament fishing line and binder clips. Tie the monofilament to the upper frame of your blind near the front window. Drape the screen material over the fishing line and secure in place with the binder clips. The binder clips should not pinch the monofilament. When completed, it will roughly resemble the setup of a shower curtain hanging from a rod. You should be able to slide it sideways without making any

noise. While hunting, have the screen closed so it keeps you from being seen through the front window of the blind. When you are ready to draw, use the arrow tip to slowly slide the screen to one side then draw and shoot.

Part of the fun of bowhunting is learning what works and what doesn't. Hopefully, these tips will help you shorten that learning curve and you'll discover the effectiveness and enjoyment of hunting from a ground blind. **BH**

The author lives in Corpus Christi, Texas, and has 40 years of South Texas bowhunting experience.

NOTHING Stops a DR® Field & Brush Mower!

★ **USA**

ENGINEERED AND BUILT

Assembled in the USA
using domestic and
foreign parts.

Starting at just
\$1999⁹⁹



The LEADER in Field & Brush Mowers

- Up to 2X THE POWER of the competition
- CUT 3" THICK BRUSH & tall field grass with ease
- WIDEST SELECTION of deck sizes and features
- GO-ANYWHERE power steering & hydrostatic drive options



PLUS

Tow-Behind, Commercial, & NEW ELECTRIC models

SALE!

FREE SHIPPING

SOME LIMITATIONS APPLY

Go online to request your FREE Product Catalog

DRfieldbrush.com





WHAT'S NEW

BRIAN FORTENBAUGH | ASSISTANT EDITOR



CARBON EXPRESS® MAXIMA PHOTON SD™

The Maxima Photon SD (\$134.99/half-dozen fletched) is available in spines of 300, 350, and 400. A custom-carbon weave boosts consistency, and CX's engineers have done testing that proves this shaft recovers up to 25% faster out of the bow than comparable shafts. The .203" inner diameter reduces wind-drag, while enabling it to remain directly behind your broadheads upon impact. **Carbon Express**, feradyne.com.



KUIU® PRO BRUSH PANT™

The PRO Brush Pant (\$199) is designed for hunters who frequent thorn-choked terrains. The lower leg, knees, and thighs have reinforced panels that resist snagging/ripping; the less-exposed areas have a lightweight Primeflex™ fabric for mobility/breathability. Weighing 19.6 oz. and offered in KUIU's camo patterns and solids, you won't get pricked or overheated in these pants. **KUIU**, kuiu.com.



KENETREK® SLIDE ROCK HIKER™

Kenetrek's Slide Rock Hiker (\$325) is a 7" boot that combines agility and toughness while weighing just 3.6 lbs. Waterproof and breathable, they consist of all-leather, lace-to-toe uppers; 5mm, full-length nylon midsoles to keep you steady in rugged terrain; reinforced rubber toe and heel guards for abrasion protection; and super-gripping Grapron™ outsoles. **Kenetrek Boots**, kenetrek.com.



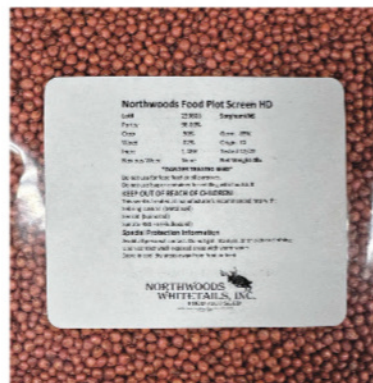
SPYPOINT® LM2™

The LM2 (\$99.99), available this summer, is a compact trail camera that's big on performance. The LM2 offers hunters 20MP photos, and the new LM2 antenna maximizes available signal in a given area, ensuring photos are viewable in the app. The half-second trigger speed and 90' detection/flash range makes it nearly impossible for any critter to slip past undetected. **SPYPOINT**, spypoint.com.



TROPHY RIDGE® DIGITAL REACT® 1-PIN W/BRIDGE-LOCK™

Trophy Ridge upped its lineup with the Digital React 1-Pin w/Bridge-Lock (\$399.99). It has a floating pin (.010" or .019"). Pins/yardage indicators adjust for accuracy at any distance. The screen shows distance in half-yard increments. Highlights include 3rd-axis leveling, customizable screen colors, and five arrow profiles. **Trophy Ridge**, bearchery.com.



NORTHWOODS WHITETAILS® FOOD PLOT SEEDS

Northwoods Whitetails' seed blends (**PRICES VARY**) have been designed by hunters for hunters, with a lot of thought and testing involved in the process. Northwoods offers a wide variety of products such as brassicas, clovers, cereal grain blends, the popular RC line of switchgrass, and the industry leading HD Food Plot Screen. **Northwoods Whitetails**, northwoodswhitetails.com.

ON  HUNT



KNOW WHERE YOU STAND

TRUSTED BY MILLIONS OF HUNTERS

For more information on the most comprehensive hunting map app available visit:

[ONXMAPS.COM/HUNT](https://onxmaps.com/hunt)



GET IT ON
Google Play



Download on the
App Store

PRESENTED BY



QAD® ULTRAREST® INTEGRATE MX

You can now get QAD's ULTRAREST Integrate MX rest (**\$269.99**) in new colors and with new features like an improved area for its machined metal launcher and silencing upgrades to make it even quieter than it already was. Other notables include micro-click adjustments, full containment, no bounce-back, and more. **QAD, Inc.**, qadinc.com.



LEICA® GEOVID® PRO 32

Geovid Pro 32 Rangefinding Binoculars (**\$2,900**) — available in 8x32 and 10x32 — provide superb viewing with 2,500-yard ranging capabilities. They are lightweight, considering their dual purposes. Accurate to within a half-yard, the magnesium housing is nitrogen-filled to prevent fogging; lenses are multi-coated. **Leica**, leica-sportoptics.com



VAPOR TRAIL® VTX™ BOWSTRINGS

Want a quality set of strings/cables? Then consider Vapor Trail's VTX Bowstrings (**\$109.99-\$159.99**). A proprietary fiber blend guarantees zero peep rotation and no worries in changing weather conditions. They are available in myriad color choices to set your rig apart from those of friends and family. **Vapor Trail**, vaportrailarchery.com.

PRESENTED BY:



THE PETERSEN'S BOWHUNTING PODCAST

**ALL BOWHUNTING.
ALL THE TIME.**

The Petersen's Bowhunting Podcast is dedicated to serious bowhunters. Listen each week as Editor Christian Berg and Associate Editor Mark Demko interview guests who will not only keep you entertained but help you punch more tags in the field!

DOWNLOAD THE LATEST
EPISODE TODAY AT:

BOWHUNTING.PODBEAN.COM





**NOW PLAYING:
182 EPISODES OF BOWHUNTER TV**

GET MORE OUT OF EVERY HUNT

MOTV
MYOUTDOORTV.COM

SCAN TO
START YOUR
FREE TRIAL
TODAY



🍏 App Store ▶ Google Play **Roku** amazon fire tv 🍏 tv 🎮 XBOX 📺 LG **SAMSUNG**

BH WHERE TO GO/MARKETPLACE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ADVERTISING IN THIS SECTION, PLEASE CONTACT
JEFF MILLAR AT 717-695-8081; E-MAIL: JEFF.MILLAR@OUTDOORSG.COM

LOWDOWN
HIGH SPEED TRAIL CAM VIEWER

IT'S FLIPPIN' FAST, SUPER-SIMPLE AND DANG BIG!

3x FASTER
Over **60% LARGER EASY**

LEARN MORE/GET ONE:
LOWDOWNVIEWER.COM

9"

View
Save
Delete

30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE • 1-YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY

BOWHUNTERS GET THE NO-GLOV

BENDERS NO-GLOV Pat. 2,910,058

- A "must" for every bowhunter
- Protects the fingers
- Eliminates tabs, gloves, etc.
- Positive nocking point
- No finger pinching of nock
- Smoother and free release of arrow
- Improves shooting
- Form fit for fingers

Send \$5.00 PLEASE ADD \$1 S&H
1511 NAKOMIS AVE., LA CROSSE, WI 54603

KENTUCKASEE FARMS

Strickly Managed for Big Bucks & Wildlife!

RENT FOR SHORT TERM FARMS TO HUNT BIG BUCKS KENTUCKY TENNESSEE

TEXT OR CALL FOR BROCHURE
270.707.6511

www.trueflightfeathers.com
TRUEFLIGHT FEATHERS

Beauty, Variety, and Performance!

- Spiral Wrap+® Flu-Flu's
- Camo and Trueflight Barred®
- Brilliant Solid Colors
- Full Length, or Die-Cut to Shape
- Free Samples
- Free Newsletter

email@trueflightfeathers.com
TRUEFLIGHT
Manufacturing Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 1000, MANITOWISH WATERS, WI 54545, USA (715) 543-8451
World Leader in Precision Feathers for over 65 years.

Alberta Spring Bear Hunting
Two Bear Area

Fall Moose Hunting
Great with add on Elk or Whitetail (license extra)

1-800-899-5064 or
hunting@telusplanet.net

MISSOURI

Self-Guided Northeast Missouri Hunts - Four-day spring turkey \$400. Six-day archery deer \$1,000. Five-day rifle deer \$1,300. Nemohuntingcompany.com. 660-216-0439

SCORPION VENOM™

Venomize Your Bow
PO Box 931 Deer Park, NY 11729
www.scorpionvenom-archery.com

Now Available on the iPad®!

GEAR SPECIAL 2023
Bowhunter
175+ TRAILBLAZING PRODUCTS
TO LEAD YOU DOWN THE PATH TO SUCCESS!

GO BIG... OR GO HOME!
WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!
GET IT NOW! GET THE LOW!
GET IT NOW! GET THE LOW!
GET IT NOW! GET THE LOW!
GET IT NOW! GET THE LOW!

For more information go to
www.mymagnow.com

iPad is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

ENGAGE WITH OUR HARDCORE BOWHUNTING COMMUNITY.

Bowhunter
WWW.BOWHUNTER.COM

READ LOOK WATCH FOLLOW LIKE LISTEN

CHECK US OUT AT
www.bowhunter.com
FOR GREAT HUNTING HOW-TO AND GEAR ADVICE

ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

DIGITAL ACCESS NOW INCLUDED WITH YOUR PAID SUBSCRIPTION!

ENJOY DIGITAL ACCESS ON YOUR PHONE, TABLET & MORE*



SUBSCRIBE TODAY AT

BOWHUNTER.COM

OR SCAN THIS CODE
TO GO DIRECTLY
TO THE ORDER PAGE



CURRENT SUBSCRIBERS GO TO MYMAGNOW.COM
AND SELECT "CREATE DIGITAL ACCOUNT"

*Digital Edition is available on updated iPad/iPhone, most Android devices, and the Microsoft Store for Windows. Limited Time Offer.



Editor's Note: In an effort to try something new, we posed the following question on social media, and we chose to publish some responses below. We have also included our own comments regarding each response. Look for upcoming questions on our Instagram page and follow us @Bowhunter.

Q Do you typically hunt with a fixed blade or a mechanical broadhead?

A “IN GENERAL, I PREFER mechanical broadheads. I have been using them for a few years with good success. I use multiple ways of tuning and shoot fixed heads to verify they fly well, but then I gravitate toward a mechanical head. They offer larger cuts for better blood-trailing, have less planing on longer shots, and are not affected by wind as drastically. I think you need to have a setup that allows for the use of a mechanical head. And above all else, shot placement is key.” — Jordyn Doud (@jdoud33)

Our response: Jordyn makes a great point about tuning his bow to ensure fixed heads fly well, because that forces you to end up with a well-tuned bow. If you can get arrows that have “wings” on the front to fly well, most any broadhead you choose

will fly well, including mechanicals. We also agree with the larger entrance and exit holes created by wide-cut mechanicals. However, should you choose to shoot large, two-inch-cut mechanicals, be sure you’re shooting sufficient energy to drive that wide cut through an animal.

“I prefer mechanicals for deer, bears, and turkeys; fixed blades for bigger game like elk or moose. You can also kill any animal with any broadhead. A tuned bow and proper shot placement is most important!” — Eric (@reezen05)

Our response: Eric’s philosophy is a good one. Broadhead choice should be tailored to the game animal being pursued. A contributing factor is the energy generated by the archer’s draw weight, draw length, and arrow weight. That combination of factors is a major consideration in broadhead choice. And it’s true that any sharp broadhead from a tuned bow will kill an animal, if the shot placement is perfect. However, broadhead choice should not be based on what it will do when the shot is perfect, but what it will do when the shot isn’t perfect. I must also say that in 42 years of bowhunting, I have never had a bad out-

come that I could unequivocally blame on the broadhead. And I’ve never witnessed such a failure. The cause was either poor shot placement or the archer chose the wrong broadhead for the job. That is not the broadheads fault. Choose wisely, based on the aforementioned factors.

“Fixed-blade — I’m a true believer in the rawest of fundamentals.” — Bobby Deis (@cleared_hot_bowhunting)

Our response: Thanks for the comment, Bobby. Any bowhunter with a few years of bowhunting in the rearview mirror will agree that simple and fundamental is a good approach. Injecting variables into your bowhunting comes with a price. You may experience improved performance, but those variables can come back to haunt you when the going gets tough. It is somewhat ironic that the one broadhead design that will always...I repeat, will always give you deeper penetration is also the simplest design. The cut-on-contact, two-blade head, where the sharpened edge goes all the way to the tip, has been the best-penetrating head since archery was invented centuries ago. Simple still works best for most things in life. BH

AUTHOR'S PHOTO

TRACK GAME

GAME ON

Protection during work and play

Get coverage that goes beyond your homeowners' policy with comprehensive ATV insurance to protect your off-road vehicle, belongings, accessories and more – no matter where you ride.

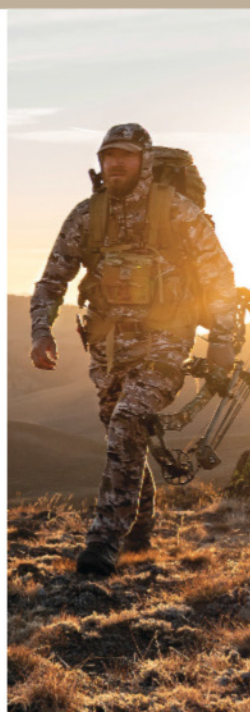
1-800-PROGRESSIVE / [PROGRESSIVE.COM](https://www.progressive.com)

PROGRESSIVE

Quote ATV
insurance in
as little as
3 minutes



Progressive Casualty Insurance Co. & affiliates. Prices vary based on how you buy. Custom accessories coverage included with the purchase of comprehensive and collision coverage. Protection for personal belongings offered with optional Carried Contents coverage. Coverage subject to policy terms and conditions.



PAHVANT PRO JACKET

→ in OVIX™ Concealment



browning.com