

THE MOBILE HUNTING CRAZE

BOWHUNTING

The Modern Bowhunting Community

July 2023

SADDLES vs. LOCK-ONS

p.26

WHAT'S THE BEST OPTION
FOR HANG-AND-HUNT BUCKS?

ONE STICK TO RULE THEM ALL

ONE-STICKING UNLOCKS
UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITY

KEEP IT FRESH!

HOW TO HUNT UNPRESSURED
DEER ALL SEASON LONG

p.48

BOW TESTS BOWTECH CARBON ONE p.24
BEARX CONSTRICTOR PRO

P L U S

- › WHITETAIL PERSONALITY TEST p.18
- › ATTACK PLAN FOR NEW HUNTING GROUNDS
- › THE FUTURE OF FOOD PLOTTING

COMMAND THE QUIET



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

LANDSLYDE **NEW 23**

SLIDER SIGHT WITH **RANGER**

PIN



AVAILABLE IN
**DIRECT MOUNT,
CARBON PRO MODEL,
OR PICATINNY MOUNT**



THE REAL #1

ANYONE CAN CLAIM IT. WE PROVE IT!

FEATURES

- 26 THE GREAT DEBATE**
Tree Saddles vs. Hang-On Treestands:
What's the Best Option for Mobile Bowhunters?
By Weston Schrank and Jace Bauserman
- 32 THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED**
Try the One-Stick Climbing Method
to Lose Weight and Gain Mobility
By Greg Staggs
- 42 THE WHITETAIL 'SQUEEZE PLAY'**
Attack New Hunting Areas
from the Outside In
By Bill Winke
- 48 KEEP IT FRESH**
Why You Should Rarely Hunt
the Same Spot Twice
By Clint Casper
- 54 BRINGING BACK THE MYSTERY**
Uncertainty Is a Key Ingredient
of Good Bowhunting
By Jim Bouchard



24

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 First Shot** *By Christian Berg*
- 10 Live 2 Hunt** *By Cody Robbins*
- 12 Whitetails** *By Jason Snavelly*
- 16 Better Bowhunting** *By Randy Ulmer*
- 18 Bowhunting Wisdom** *By Bill Winke*
- 20 Crossbows** *By Brad Fenson*
- 22 Spot-On** *By Cabe Johnson*
- 64 The DIY Guy** *By Eddie Claypool*

GEAR

- 24 Bow Test** *By Jon E. Silks*
Bowtech Carbon One
- 58 Crossbow Test** *By Jon E. Silks*
BearX Constrictor Pro
- 60 Field Tested** *By BOWHUNTING Editors*
Elevation Equipped Modular Gear System and
Primos Trigger Stick Apex Carbon Fiber Tripod
- 62 New Gear** *By Mark Demko*



32



48

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





By **CHRISTIAN BERG**

FIRST SHOT

PETERSEN'S BOWHUNTING

An Outdoor Sportsman Group® Publication

PUBLISHER Jeff Waring

EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITOR Christian Berg
ART DIRECTOR Mark Olszewski
ASSOCIATE EDITOR Mark Demko
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Sally Burkey
ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR Jason Henning
SR. DIGITAL EDITOR Drew Pellman

FIELD EDITORS

THE DIY GUY Eddie Claypool
GEAR TESTING Jon E. Silks
BETTER BOWHUNTING Randy Ulmer
BOWHUNTING WISDOM Bill Winke

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@hutchlooney.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.bowhuntingmag.com

BOWHUNTING, (ISSN # 1049-9768) is published 8 times a year, including two double issues: March (Gear Guide), Apr/May, June, July, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov/Dec, 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 Bowhunting, 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 Bowhunting, P.O. Box 37539, Boone, IA 50037-0539, or e-mail us at bnccustserv@cdsfulfillment.com, or call TOLL FREE (800) 800-4269. **BE AWARE THAT PETERSEN'S BOWHUNTING 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 Petersen's Bowhunting, please call 1-800-800-4269 to determine if the agent is authorized. For more information on subscription scams, please visit www.ftc.gov.

Subscription rate for one year is \$17.97 (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 privacy@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: Bowhunting • 6385 Flank Drive, Suite 800 • Harrisburg, PA 17112-2784 (717) 695-8085 Fax: (717) 545-2527

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



WIRELESS BOWHUNTING

THOSE WHO are “middle-aged” or older grew up well before the age of smartphones, or even flip phones.

Back when I was a kid in the 1970s, telephones had wires plugged into the wall, and the handsets we used to listen and talk had cords that physically attached them to the phone's base.

I know it seems archaic to you younger folks, but somehow we managed to get by — albeit not without a bit of discomfort. For example, let's say you wanted to ask Suzy from chemistry class to the prom. You spent hours working up the nerve to call, and when you finally entered Suzy's numbers via the rotary dial, you had to have the entire conversation standing in the kitchen, with your annoying kid brother watching, because the phone cord was only five feet long!

The point is this: For a long, long time after the telephone's invention, the use of its amazing, long-distance communication capabilities was limited by wires. If you wanted to *use* the phone, you had to be *near* the phone.

Wireless technology changed all that, ushering in a new era of communications freedom our grandparents never could have imagined. Nowadays, I don't think a hunt goes by when I don't text with friends, check social media or even download trail-cam images while waiting for a deer to walk past.

In much the same way mobile phones revolutionized communications — giving us freedom to enjoy the benefits of technology far from a wire's reach — we are now living in a golden age of mobile bowhunting, with a plethora of lightweight treestands, saddles and climbing gear making it easier than ever to enjoy the benefits of hunting new locations throughout the

season. No longer are we “wired” to a handful of semi-permanent stands set up prior to opening day. Instead, today's bowhunters are free to monitor changing deer behavior throughout the season and capitalize on the hottest sign, food source or travel corridor simply by walking into the woods and climbing a tree in the chosen spot.

Certainly, savvy bowhunters have been moving like this for generations. Still, there's no denying today's mobile gear is much lighter, quieter and more capable than ever — or that bowhunters are embracing it with unprecedented fervor.

My mobile-bowhunting epiphany came during a Montana whitetail hunt in September 2020. Rather than pack a climber or several hang-on stands, I brought only a Tethrd tree saddle, saddle platform and a few sets of lightweight climbing sticks. A quick scouting foray revealed some potential hotspots, and on the third morning of the hunt I had a nice, public-land buck on the ground.

Ever since, I have spent far more time hunting whitetails out of saddles than treestands of any kind. And this fall, I plan to give “one-sticking” a try in hopes of taking my bowhunting mobility to the next level. If you aren't familiar with one-sticking, you'll find a feature about this unique climbing method on p. 32. And if you have yet to fully embrace a mobile bowhunting mentality, I urge you to cut the cord! **E**



Editor Christian Berg used his Tethrd tree saddle and platform with a set of Stacked Outdoors climbing sticks to take this public-land Montana buck in September 2020. The hunt was a watershed moment in his journey as a mobile bowhunter.



Protect your suite way to travel

Get coverage from a leader in RV insurance.

1-800-PROGRESSIVE / PROGRESSIVE.COM

PROGRESSIVE®

Quote in
as little as
4 minutes





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



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
rifleshooter.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.

Bowhunting® 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: Lance Krueger



JOIN THE REVOLUTION!

Crossbow Revolution #1
On Sale June 20, 2023

Crossbow Revolution #2
On Sale August 29, 2023

OSGNEWSSTAND.COM



(Get your copies at the local newsstand or wherever magazines are sold.)



HUNTING
USA



Includes

10 Year Passport Warranty
For more information visit:
bit.ly/leicapassportwarranty

NEW!



Leica ProTrack features GPS mapping integration through Basemap, Google Maps and Garmin mapping that even works without cell signal.

GEOVID PRO 32

MASTER THE DISTANCE

THE WORLD'S MOST COMPACT AND FUNCTIONAL LASER RANGEFINDING BINOCULAR



Applied Ballistics



Bluetooth



Compass



Ballistics



Wind Correction



Calculation



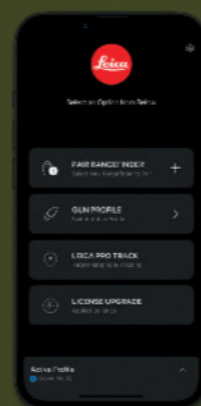
Basemap



Leica ProTrack



Atmospheric Sensors



AVAILABLE IN 8X32mm AND 10X32mm MODELS.
(GEOVID PRO 32 1:1 SCALE WITH IPHONE 13 PRO MAX)

leica-geovid-pro.com

@LeicaHuntingUSA



APPLIED BALLISTICS
THE SCIENCE OF ACCURACY



GARMIN.

BASEMAP

30 YEARS
LEICA PIONEER OF
RANGEFINDING



Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play

A man with a beard and mustache is smiling broadly, looking down at a large, dark antler he is holding with his right hand. He is wearing a camouflage baseball cap with a brown mesh back and a patch that reads "BONE COLLECTOR" with a skull and antlers logo. He is also wearing a camouflage jacket. The background is a blurred forest scene with trees and foliage.

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.

MOTV
MY OUTDOOR TV®



By **CODY ROBBINS**

LIVE 2 HUNT



Your clothing is a critical component of your bowhunting arsenal. Make sure to choose quiet apparel that allows you to move and draw your bow without making any game-spooking noises.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NOMAD

MAKE YOUR OWN LUCK

Don't Overlook Your Clothing's Impact on the Hunt!

LUCK CERTAINLY PLAYS a role in bowhunting, but I also believe each of us is responsible for creating most of that luck, whether good or bad.

Right now, in the months leading up to opening day, there are many things we can do to prepare ourselves for the “big moment” we all hope to experience this fall. We can practice shooting, hang trail cameras and cut shooting lanes. We can also consider past mistakes and do whatever possible to prevent the same ones from happening again. This month, I want to focus on one often overlooked area that can be a big mistake — heading afield with noisy bowhunting clothing.

Let's dip back into your hunting memory vault. Remember that time you waited all fall for a chance at your target buck? Finally, it happened, but just as you were getting to full draw that buck heard you and ran away. Man, that was bad luck, right? Wrong!

Perhaps you think the buck heard your arrow sliding across the rest, or maybe your stand creaked as you

shifted into shooting position. While those things do happen, I contend that in the vast majority of cases it is the bowhunter's clothing that is too loud. In fact, I believe this so strongly that it has become one of biggest pet peeves about the hunting industry.

Nowadays, you can go to a big hunting store and try on 20 different articles of clothing. I guarantee 15 of them are made from fabric that is too loud for you to draw your bow without a nearby deer hearing it. What really bothers me is the fact that so many fellow bowhunters will live out that exact situation and blame themselves for moving at the wrong time. They don't even realize how loud their clothing is.

Here's my advice: Go back to that hunting store and find some clothing that is going to give you the best chance of success. This starts with picking a camo pattern that's best

suited for the terrain where you'll be hunting. That's one of the reasons I love Mossy Oak, because the company offers patterns for any bowhunting scenario imaginable, from Obsession in the spring woods to Country DNA in the fall woods to Mountain Country in the Rockies and even Break-Up Eclipse in ground blinds.

Once you've got the right pattern, find some items that fit you really well — not too tight and not too loose. You don't want baggy bowhunting clothing that could get in the way of your bowstring or brush against your stand while you are maneuvering for the shot.

Now that you've found a few items that you really like, make sure they are made from material that is silent. To do this, go through the motions of the hunt, right there in the middle of the store or in the dressing room. Pretend to reach up and grab your bow off its hanger, then go through all the motions of raising your bow, drawing the string and settling in at anchor. As you do this, focus on the noise the clothing makes. Listen closely. Better yet, ask someone to stand several feet away and listen.

If the clothing makes any noise you can hear, take it off and walk away. If clothing makes noise that registers to a human while standing in a store, I guarantee it will spook a deer once you are outside on a cold, calm day in the woods.

Start the whole process over and repeat until you find the perfect clothing that checks all the boxes — it fits you well, it blends seamlessly into to your hunting area and it's silent. That last detail is just as important as practicing all summer with your bow and doing your scouting homework so you know where to set up on opening morning. After all, if you can't get to full draw undetected, all the other effort you put into your hunt is wasted.

Bowhunting is a game of small details, and it took me many years to truly appreciate just how critical a detail quiet clothing can be. This year, make sure your bowhunting apparel is as stealthy as you are. I guarantee adding this detail to your pre-season preparation will boost your luck this fall! **E**

BOWTECH®

**LIGHT, SMOOTH, AND NO VIBRATION.
IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER!**

—LADEN FORCE
NORTH AMERICAN WHITETAIL TV

**NOT ONLY DOES IT
LOOK AWESOME,
IT SHOOTS AWESOME!**

—MATT DUFF
MAJOR LEAGUE BOWHUNTER

**I'M ABSOLUTELY IN
LOVE WITH THIS BOW!
IT'S A KILLER!**

—MIKE HUNSUCKER
HEARTLAND BOWHUNTER

IT'S ONE GOOD LOOKING BOW. THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT.

—CHRISTIAN BERG
EDITOR, PETERSEN'S BOWHUNTING

CARBON ONE™

**THE CARBON ONE SAYS
SOMETHING TO EVERYONE.
HOW DOES IT SPEAK TO YOU?**

GET TO YOUR LOCAL DEALER TODAY
AND FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF



**SCAN THE
QR CODE TO
FIND YOURS**

BOWTECHARCHERY.COM



FLAT
DARK
EARTH



By **JASON SNAVELY**

WHITETAILS

FUTURE-PROOF FOOD PLOTS

The Best Manmade Food Sources
Are Created in Nature's Image



Food plots that include a wide variety of plant species may not look as good as a perfectly manicured field of corn or clover, but they offer tremendous benefits for both soil quality and deer nutrition.

THE MODERN food-plotting movement began in the 1930s, coinciding with whitetail restocking efforts across the nation. The early food plots were “wildlife openings” created by game managers in states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. These openings were primarily dominated by monoculture stands of clover.

From a whitetails’ perspective, you could argue that food plots really didn’t change a whole lot for the next 90 years, as even today most plots consist of a single plant species. However, in more recent years there have been some dramatic and exciting changes, giving rise to a new paradigm known as regenerative food plotting. I believe this shift is a real game-changer for the benefit of deer and deer hunters, as it addresses the underlying causes

of a whole host of problems caused by poor soil health.

Based on current trends, I feel confident saying that in the future, food plotting will look vastly different than it does today. That’s because — much like “modern” agriculture — conventional food-plot techniques have caused serious damage to ecosystems and deer health. Unless we change course, we will continue to degrade soil health, and that is the very founda-

tion of growing giant whitetails. The microbiome (immune system) of the soil is directly linked to the health of the local whitetail herd. As I work with my land-management clients across the country, I continue to gain valuable, optimistic glimpses of the future, and in this column, I’d like to offer some insights into how you can begin future-proofing your own food plots right now.

In Nature's Image

The future food plotter will first and foremost change how they see a food plot in their mind’s eye. The days of perfectly manicured, monoculture plots that are totally dependent on synthetic, chemically intensive fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides will fade simply because these practices degrade the ecosystem and fail to grow healthy whitetails. While many hunters inaccurately

AUTHOR'S PHOTO



BROWNING®

TRAIL CAMERAS

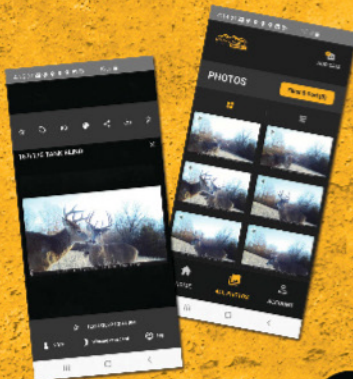


BTC-PSMX



BTC-VP-ATT/BTC-VP-VZW

EXTERNAL LONG RANGE ANTENNA



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



BTC-5FHDX



BTC-5PX-1080



BTC-4E22



BTC-6PX-1080



BTC-6FHDX

WHITETAILS

rately label the venison they eat as “organic” and “healthier than beef,” researchers have proven there are plenty of toxic agricultural and industrial chemicals found in whitetails. While we can’t control what deer eat when they venture *off* our properties, we can present nutrient dense, toxin-free plants *on* the properties we hunt.

Regarding change, it has been said that if you change the way you look at things, the things you look at will change. The food plotter of the future will look at the soil as the foundation of whitetail health and once again realize that by nourishing the soil, healthy, mature bucks are a guaranteed byproduct. In fact, prior to the advent of chemical agriculture, this is how our ancestors and farmers of the era looked at agriculture: the health of the soil is the foundation of all health on earth! Food plotters of the future will worry less about how their food plots look and more about managing soil health for nutrient-dense landscapes.

We all need a food-plot “cookbook” outlining the ingredients and a series of major steps or we will lose sight of the end goal. While there is no official user’s manual for future-proof food plotting (or farming), there are some basic principles that must be followed. If a user’s manual was available, it would likely be titled, “Food Plotting in Nature’s Image,” and the tools and techniques described would be based on mirroring the way nature does things. Food-plotting practices would be geared toward increased plant diversity, maintaining a year-round, living plant community with healthy roots and above-ground plant biomass that armors the soil from wind and water erosion.

Future-proof food plotters won’t concern themselves with using genetically modified plants so that toxic, manmade chemicals can be sprayed to eliminate hundreds of plants (aka “weeds”) whitetails use for nourishment and self-medication. Instead, older varieties such as the ancient and heritage grains will become more popular. The fact is, many of the herbicides food plotters commonly use are pat-

ented as antibiotics, and while many doctors avoid overprescribing antibiotics to humans, more than 300 million pounds of one popular weed killer that also works as an antibiotic is sprayed on farms, lawns and golf courses each year! This must stop.

The future-proof farmer will have a better understand of what farming practices degrade soil and whitetail health and what practices promote and attract healthy whitetails. If we truly desire healthy whitetails, all life-killing chemicals must become a last resort. The truth is, these chemicals disrupt physiological and biological systems and lead to disease. As many common herbicides and pesticides are banned and/or exposed for what they truly do to living organisms of all kinds, the future-proof food plotter better learn how to successfully work without them!

Maximize the Good

Food plotting for the future requires a better understanding of what whitetails lack in their diets. If we truly want to turn the tide with problems such as Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), we must address the

DURABULL



2 PANEL
STAKEOUT™



SURROUNDVIEW™
MAX™



SURROUNDVIEW™
DOUBLE WIDE™



ROUGHNECK™



3 PANEL
STAKEOUT™



Food-plot blends that include seed from a wide variety of plants will help food plotters successfully attract and grow whitetails without a constant reliance on synthetic herbicides and pesticides.

toxic and nutrient-lacking agricultural and food-plotting strategies we use currently. We are adding an excess of the bad and not enough of the good! As a society, our agronomic practices have focused far too much on growing three main crops: corn, soybeans and wheat. While there are many reasons for this, food plotters must realize whitetails have evolved to rely on hundreds of different plants for their nutritional and medicinal needs; not merely the big three.

Our human food supply is woe-

fully lacking in nutrient density and has been the true, underlying cause of most, if not all, of our diseases. The food-plot industry once focused primarily on clover and one or two other small grains. Even today, with so many diverse cover crop species available, most food plotters still ignore their enormous benefits to both soil health and whitetail health. Just as the answer to addressing human disease and malnutrition will be through using our food as medicine, the future-proof food plotter will use plants, and

their powerful phytochemicals, to fight disease and optimize health and antler size.

Food plots for whitetails are written about extensively because they work! Anyone who has incorporated food plots into their whitetail-management program knows they are a game-changer when it comes to maximizing deer utilization of a small piece of property and putting more antlers on the wall and delicious food in the freezer. The future of food plotting excites me, and if you want to remain on the cutting edge of food plotting, you better future-proof your plots by changing how you plant them today.

Next month, I'll explain how many cutting-edge food plotters are looking to regenerative wildlife agriculture to attract and nourish whitetails. We'll look at some of the strategies that will dominate the playbook of the future-proof food plotter. I'll also lay out how you can get started in your own regenerative food-plotting journey, no matter how large or small your food-plot plan is, so you too will end up on the right side of food-plotting history! **E**

AUTHOR'S PHOTO

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



By **RANDY ULMER**

BETTER BOWHUNTING



Laser-rangefinding sights such as the Burris Oracle 2 shown here significantly reduce the time and motion required to range an animal, aim and shoot.

PART 3 RANGEFINDERS

Laser-Rangefinding Bow Sights Are a Game Changer

TRULY REVOLUTIONARY, new equipment is rare in the archery world these days. Sure, plenty of novel gadgets pop up every year, but very few of these gizmos significantly and fundamentally change the way we engage our equipment to harvest animals. The laser-rangefinding bow sight, however, is absolutely a game-changing device. It's a quantum leap forward in both rangefinding and sighting.

Laser-rangefinding sights such as the Garmin Xero AL1 Pro and Burris Oracle 2 are a relatively recent advent. So, just in case you have been hiding in a cave for the last few years, let me explain what they are and how they work.

The Basics

These sights have two unique characteristics. Obviously, they incorporate an internal laser rangefinder to determine the distance to the target. They also have a heads-up LED sight reticle that projects an "electronic pin" onto the glass lens in the sight aperture (viewing window). This pin is usually a red or green dot projected onto the glass. It is positioned to shoot the exact distance the laser rangefinder measured to the target.

Once mounted to the bow and cali-

brated properly, this sight allows you to range the target while at full draw by merely pushing a small button with one of your bow hand fingers. The button can be attached anywhere on the bow you'd like. Most hunters place it so it is directly under a fingertip at full draw. Very little motion is required to push the button and acquire the range.

The Benefits

The advantages of this sight are instantly obvious to anyone who has ever bowhunted using a traditional rangefinder and sight. These pluses are very simple but very important — the sight greatly reduces the time and the motion required to range the animal, dial in a sight pin and shoot. It also allows you to range the animal again if the animal happens to move while you are at full draw.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BURRIS OPTICS

When using a traditional rangefinder you must pull the device out of its pouch, lift the rangefinder to your eye, range the animal and then put the rangefinder back into its pouch. Then, if you are using a movable-pin sight, you must reach down and adjust your sight to the proper distance before you draw your bow.

All of these processes take time and, more important, they require a lot of motion. If the animal happens to change positions while you are at full draw, you must either guess how far it has moved and compensate by aiming high or low, or you must let the bow down and repeat the rangefinding process and sight adjustment all over again.

Laser-rangefinding sights reduce the number of steps involved in these processes. So, once you come to full draw, you will not have any more significant movement that an animal has the potential of seeing. And, even if the animal moves while you are at full draw, all you need to do is push the ranging button again. The sight will automatically move the electronic pin to the correct shooting distance.

If you choose, you can easily turn off the single-pin feature of this sight. The single-pin feature can be switched instantly to a fixed-pin system with pins at say 20, 30, 40, 50 and 60 yards, just like a traditional bow sight. The sight will display the pins in the positions that you've previously sighted them in for.

So, the process is extremely simple — you point the sight at the target, push the button, aim and shoot. When you point the sight at the target and push the button, it shows the LED yardage, then displays a digital LED pin for that particular distance. You aim and shoot; no guesswork.

The viewing pane is much like the scopes used by target archery shooters. It is a single plate of glass that the digital pin is projected onto. One of the cool things about this system is that your sight picture is completely clear of any obstructions. All you see is one small dot, and you can change the brightness and color of the dot.

Programming the Sight

Some people who are unfamiliar with the new laser-rangefinding sights may be concerned with the installation and fine-tuning of the sight, as the

process is unlike setting up any other sight. Of course, there are instructional videos online for all of these sights that walk you through the process. It's quite simple once you become familiar with the sight setup. When you sight in with one of these devices you are literally programming the sight's computer to your form, the bow and your arrow's flight characteristics.

Some of these sights can be programmed for different arrow profiles. This is a nice feature if you want to switch between a heavy arrow for big-boned game such as elk and a lighter, faster arrow for smaller game such as deer. The arrow profile is set for a given arrow weight and fletching pattern and determines the yardage settings for each of your pins. You must always shoot your bow to verify that each of the pin settings is "field tested." Once you have sighted in for each arrow profile, you can toggle between these profiles depending on which arrow you are shooting.

A Few Cons

In ideal conditions laser-ranging sights are a no-brainer; however, they do have their real and perceived issues. First of all, they are very expensive, and they're also quite heavy. As with any glass sighting system, they also can get wet or dirty, making visibility challenging. Plus, when sighting directly into the morning or evening sun you may encounter a light flare, making it difficult to see your target. Finally, on occasion, the glass lens may produce a reflection that might spook your quarry.

Because these sights use a more diffused laser than a traditional handheld rangefinder, and because they are harder to hold steady, it is much more difficult to shoot the laser through a small opening in the bushes to the target, or to range a small object such as an antler tip. They also violate one of my overriding commandments when it comes to my bowhunting equipment — K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple Stupid).

It's also worth noting that laser-rangefinding sights do add more "things" to an already long list of things that can go wrong while bowhunting. In my case, Murphy's Law — anything that can go wrong will go wrong — seems to be proven on each and every hunt! **E**

PRESENTED BY:



Lancaster
ARCHERY SUPPLY
WWW.LANCASTERARCHERY.COM



THE
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





BOWHUNTING WISDOM

By **BILL WINKE**

EVERY BUCK IS DIFFERENT

You Must Hunt Mature Bucks as Individuals



Field Editor Bill Winke killed the Double G4 buck on Nov. 3, 2012. Amazingly, the giant, 7-year-old buck was the most visible deer on the farm, never leaving a roughly 30-acre home area.

ONE OF THE MOST interesting lessons I ever learned about buck behavior came from two deer that lived on my farm at the same time. I ended up killing them both in 2012, when they were both 7 years old. So, they were both old bucks, but that is where the similarities end. In fact, those bucks were an amazing study in how the behavior of one buck can be so different from another of the same age class.

In this column, I will move quickly through the timeline and explain how the behavior of these two bucks evolved as they aged. Then I will draw a few interesting conclusions.

The Timeline

I nicknamed the two bucks “Double G4” and “Loppy.” Not surprisingly, their names came from antler characteristics each buck exhibited when they were young. I was aware of Double G4 in 2008, when he was a 3-year-old, but

didn’t start hunting him until the next year. I found Loppy when he was very likely 4 years old the following fall. Both bucks were living on the same ridge in the middle of the farm in 2009, when I figured they were both 4.

2009: A few times I saw both Loppy and G4 on the same day. G4 was a mid-160s bucks and Loppy was just cool, with a lopsided rack that would not score much but had great character.

I was not able to kill either buck in 2009. I saw G4 three times and got a

few trail-cam photos of him. He covered about 300 acres that I knew of; his range was likely bigger, because the neighbor talked about him too.

I saw Loppy three times that fall also, but always within the same 50-acre area. He may have been ranging wider, but I can’t say for sure. Despite my best efforts to end it in 2009, the hunt for both bucks carried over into the next fall.

2010: Double G4 was still living on the same ridge. He had grown into a high-170s buck that inspired awe on the very few trail-cam photos I got of him that season — all at night.

Loppy had moved about a quarter mile to the west and had grown a really cool, multi-branching Christmas tree where one of his brow tines had been the year before. I can’t really say if they had been standing side by side which one I would have shot. I really liked them both and hunted them relentlessly.

Both bucks were now 5 years old. I

AUTHOR'S PHOTOS

got only a few photos of them, and all the photos of both bucks were at night. I know I was at least near their core areas, but they just didn't move much. Though I hunted that area and those bucks 50 straight days, I never saw either one. So, the hunt carried over for another year.

2011: As 6-year-olds, these bucks kept changing. G4 grew into a monster, grossing well over 200 inches as a typical buck, and Loppy had lost the Christmas tree — dang it — and was non-spectacular, to be honest. I still wanted him because of my history, but he was not a buck to get many second looks hanging on the wall.

G4 was still in the same area where I started hunting him in 2009, but Loppy had moved another quarter mile to the west — now about a half mile from where I started hunting him!

By moving cameras using a system that I evolved during those years, I was able to keep tabs on both bucks and learn a lot about them.

Loppy rarely showed up on camera during daylight in 2011. We got a bit of summer video footage of him on the beams that year, but zero daylight photos and zero sightings from the field during the season. G4 was just the opposite — he was super visible. It is interesting how much different they became at this age. Seemingly, G4 had done his time as a ghost and was ready for daylight.

I killed another buck on that same ridge where G4 was living in November (I have two buck tags for the rut in Iowa, being a landowner). When that other buck was gone, G4 started working on his suntan. He became the most visible deer on the farm, often the first deer out in the afternoons, arriving even before the does and little bucks. And he would use the same feeding area day after day.

Imagine a giant buck with such

seemingly reckless behavior! I thought about him every day. He must have felt bulletproof out there. As a 6-year-old, G4 acted more like a yearling; he had reverted to his childhood. I would like to say I killed him that year, but I didn't get it done. I had him within 40 yards three times, but each time I messed up or he just got lucky. So, the hunt for both Loppy and G4 spilled over into its fourth season.

2012: As I mentioned at the beginning, I was fortunate enough to kill both Loppy and G4 in 2012, but prior to each fateful day, their personalities took even more interesting twists. Loppy moved another quarter mile west (he was now three quarters of a mile from where I started hunting him) and G4 once again lived on the same ridge and was still highly visible. G4's entire range (as best I could tell) was now about 30 acres. Think about a daylight-active giant living on just 30 acres. I will never see another opportunity to hunt a buck like that for as long as I live. He was truly a once-in-a-lifetime deer.

It was just a matter of time with G4. I hunted him carefully, because it made no sense to hunt him aggressively — his behavior and history suggested he wasn't going anywhere. After missing him from a blind at 30 yards in late October (I thought it was 40 yards as the light was getting low), I killed him a few days later, on Nov. 3, about 200 yards from that spot.

I won't say G4 was easy to kill — you still have to be careful to keep them from knowing you are hunting them — but he was the easiest buck to hunt that I have ever encountered because he was so visible within such a small range. I stayed out of a small valley, where he lived adjacent to the ridge because of swirling winds. But nearly every time

the wind was right to hunt the ridge, I saw him. What a crazy deal.

I doubt G4 was dumb. To my knowledge, I never bumped him. So, he never had a decidedly negative experience with people. It pays to be careful, but it pays even more to be lucky enough to have a buck with that kind of personality living on your farm.

OK, back to Loppy. He was showing up on trail cameras regularly by 2012, but always at night. On Dec. 20, a big snowstorm came through and the next day was very cold with high pressure; the perfect recipe for late-season success. I headed right to Loppy's area and was very lucky when the buck came out an hour before the end of legal shooting time.

It was the first time I had seen him in daylight since 2009, three years prior. It took him 30 minutes to feed his way within bow range, but I finally got a nice, clean, 25-yard shot.

Lessons Learned

As we compare Loppy's and G4's personalities over those years, you can clearly see a huge takeaway — every mature buck has a unique personality, and you have to hunt them as individuals.

I believe you can hunt generic younger bucks with a standard method. But once you select one buck to hunt, you have to learn that deer and really zero-in on his specific behavior. Some will be homebodies while others roam. For example, I once hunted a buck that kept getting away until he was 8 years old. That buck never was a homebody. While most bucks have smaller ranges as they age, he never did.

Also, while most bucks become more daylight active past a certain age, usually age 6, not all of them do. Loppy didn't.

This information is not just for people who have the good fortune to hunt old deer. I have seen these same differences play out in younger bucks. Really starting at age 3, bucks start to develop their own tendencies. You have to learn them individually if you want to enjoy consistent success hunting specific bucks.

I really enjoy that style of hunting and look for any opportunity to hunt a certain buck, just so I have an excuse to learn what makes him tick. Some are similar, but others have vast differences (such as Loppy and G4). That's what makes this quest so much fun and so fascinating. Good luck this fall! **B**



Winke killed Loppy on Dec. 20, 2012. Although Loppy was the same age as the G4 buck, he was far less visible and largely nocturnal.



By **BRAD FENSON**

CROSSBOWS



A quality crossbow case, such as the TenPoint HALO Bowpack shown here, protects your crossbow while traveling to and from your hunting area.

ORGANIZE AND ACCESSORIZE FOR SUCCESS

Go Over Every Detail Before You Hit the Field

THERE IS A LOT to be said for being an organized hunter. Knowing your gear intimately and being able to head out the door at a moment's notice helps identify and define those hunters who really do not want to miss an opportunity. This includes being well prepared from the accessories standpoint.

When it comes to accessories, crossbow manufacturers package most premium bows with the essentials necessary to get into the field and shoot. An optic, quiver, bolts and cocking aid are all vital for using the crossbow, but in some cases they are basic. That said, they can all be upgraded. For example, advanced optic options on the market nowadays range targets, provide aiming points or utilize turrets for adjustments. A premium optic can reduce the time needed to take a shot, see the target clearly or provide aiming options to offset trajectory.

Slings and Packs

One of my favorite accessories is a good sling. Carrying a crossbow in hand can cause muscle fatigue, and packing a crossbow through the woods quickly reminds us they are front-heavy, wide and sometimes awkward. A quality sling will hold in place on synthetic fabrics and allow the bow's weight to be carried across your shoulders, helping to make travel easier.

When hunting in rough or uneven terrain, a good backpack with a crossbow holder helps to maintain balance and protect your equipment. A pack can

also assist with keeping the crossbow string protected, especially if you are traveling with a cocked bow. One example is the ALPS Matrix pack, which is designed with a dropdown pocket to hold the buttstock of the crossbow. Two padded straps then wrap around the bow to tighten it on the top end.

When you're on the move, keeping your bolt in the quiver until you anticipate a shot is the best course of action for safety reasons. Never travel, hike, climb or stalk with a bolt loaded on the rail!

Rests

Having a solid support to steady a crossbow provides a hunter with a considerable advantage. So, as you prepare for your hunt, make sure to incorporate accessories to support the front of the crossbow for any shot.

The Primos Trigger Stick is handy when stalking game or when you are on the run, like when hunting elk. The sticks can be used in a treestand with the legs supported on the foot platform or tucked into the top of a boot. There are also some newer options on the market, including the Swagger QD72 Bipod, which is flexible and stable, allowing it to be used in any terrain. In addition, TenPoint makes the SteddyEddy, a telescoping, two-section monopod that attaches to your crossbow using a 360-degree rapid-pivot tube and clamps under the stock when you want to store it out of the way. You can set the desired length for standing or sitting with a turn of the extension pole.

De-Cocking Options

With the advancements in technology, most crossbow enthusiasts now want a de-cocking device. Not having to shoot your crossbow at the end of the day can save bolts, and it allows you to leave your hunting area undisturbed. Plus, you don't want to leave your bow cocked for long periods to help prevent limb issues from developing.

TenPoint, Ravin, Excalibur and other bows have de-cocking options built right in, but there are also aftermarket

PHOTO COURTESY OF TENPOINT CROSSBOW TECHNOLOGIES

options for most crossbows. Another option is an unloading bolt that the hunter uses to discharge his bow at the end of the day. Some of these are biodegradable for one-time use, while others can be shot into soft earth, recovered and used again.

Lubricants and Waxes

Rail lube and string wax are sometimes overlooked items that reduce string wear and help protect against the elements. The best advice when crossbow hunting is to have tubes of lube and sticks of wax in your crossbow case, daypack or anywhere else you can find them quickly. Seeing these items in your case or pack is a good reminder to use them. The newer crossbows will heat up a string quickly when shooting without lube, so it should be applied every 10 shots or so. Carrying a small piece of leather to work the wax into the string is also a good idea.

Bow Cases

Quality crossbow cases should be considered necessary accessories for protecting your investment and equipment. The traveling hunter will want a hard case for airline travel, while soft cases are necessary for accessing hunting areas on an all-terrain vehicle or even a truck or boat. These cases help protect crossbows from accidents like stepping on them or bumping the limbs with force. Most important, the cases protect the string and prevent

debris from getting caught in the cams or other moving parts, which could cause a derailment when cocking the bow. In addition, the protective padding helps to prevent shock and jarring of the bow in transport.

Bolt Protection

A bolt case is often overlooked but keeps bolts and vanes pristine. Cramming bolts into a case can curl vanes and could cause flight issues for the bolt. A dedicated case means your bolts are perfect for hunting or target practice whenever you use them. Cases also allow you to hold bolts set up and tuned with broadheads. A broadhead case is another option for storing heads and ensures they do not accidentally find your bowstring or cause other damage.

If you want to secure your bolts tightly in your quiver, consider purchasing some Velcro straps from a Dollar Store or elsewhere. They also come in handy to wrap around cocking handles to ensure they do not wiggle loose or fall out.

Bolt Retrieval

The speed of modern crossbows means bolts create a lot of friction when they enter a target, making them challenging to retrieve. However, a bit of planning will make this task easier. For example, arrow release fluid, bolt pullers and even a bar of soap are great ideas for getting your projectile out of a target.

Other Tips

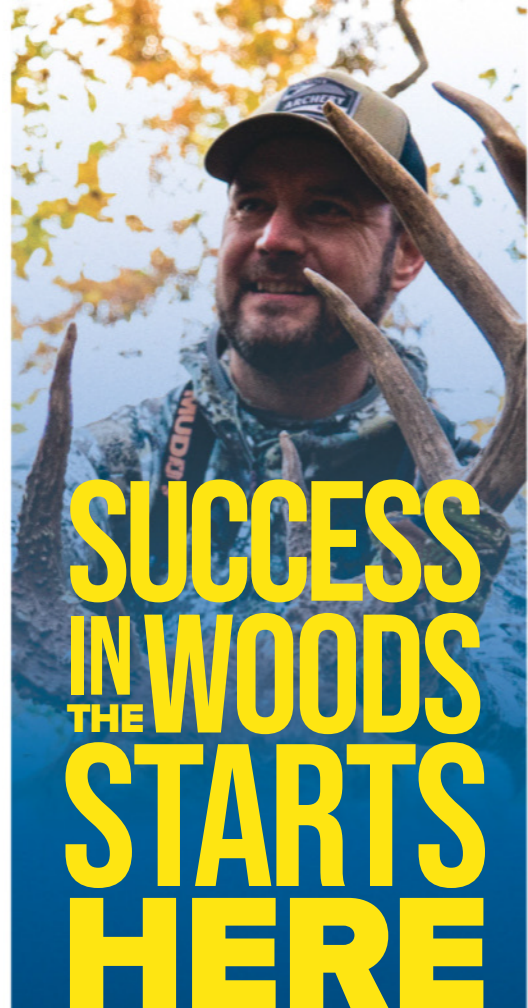
There's no doubt that the little things often make a big difference when it comes to success in the field. Being prepared with accessories and gadgets may sound trivial, but it can definitely impact success. Upgrading components, especially optics, can expedite a shot and reduce movement and the need for a separate rangefinder.

I have a set of Allen wrenches in every archery case and pack that I use, and a small tool set that stays with my bow in its carrying case. You never know when you'll need them, but they come in handy when you do and you'll know where to find them.

One last bit of advice is to make a packing list for the range or your next hunting trip and put it in your crossbow case so that you double-check that you have everything whenever you head out. In my opinion, being organized and accessorized is the only way to go. **B**



Going over all of your gear meticulously, including making sure you have the right accessories, helps ensure you are properly prepared for every hunt.



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



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>

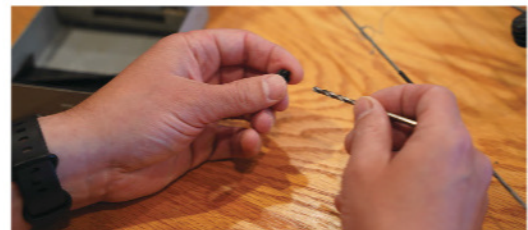


By **CABE JOHNSON**

THE PERFECT PEEP SIGHT SETUP

Try Drilling for Improved Accuracy!

WE LOVE shooting our bows!
So, when the weather is bad
in the winter, we spend time
shooting indoors.



Some of us are trying to stay sharp for hunting season and some are shooting competitively. Either way, we use this time to make improvements to our shooting form and equipment.

One of the things we learned while shooting indoors is a new aiming technique. We learned at full draw to center our pin guard inside the circular hole in our peep sight. Centering the pin guard worked well, but the aiming still seemed a little sloppy. Part of the problem was that everyone's draw length and anchor points were different, so the peep hole needed to be a different size for each person.

So, one of us got clever and put a small-holed peep into his bowstring. Then, he used a set of drill bits and enlarged the peep hole by hand one drill size at a time until at full draw he could perfectly align the pin guard inside the peep hole. In no time at all, he was shooting the best indoor scores he had ever shot. We all followed suit and began to hand drill our peeps. A word of caution, though — don't use an electric drill as it can grab and turn the peep, cutting your bowstring.

As for the results of our handiwork, we enjoyed our newfound accuracy all winter. However, when spring came and we began shooting outside we found that our peep hole was way too small to center our pin guard housing in. But, when we went back inside, our peep hole size seemed to be fine.

Our peep hole appeared to change size with the varying lighting conditions. Whether this was caused by light bending through the peep hole

or our pupils dilating to the different light, we're not quite sure. But what we found was that in the bright sunlight the peep hole appeared to shrink in size, and in lower light it appeared much bigger in size. We could see this just by shooting in the sun and then shooting in the shade.

With the peep hole varying in different lighting conditions, how do you know what size to drill your peep out to? Well, we found that to maximize our accuracy we needed to be able to see our pin guard in all conditions. So, we go out in the sunshine and enlarge the hole in our peep sight until at full draw we can just see the inside edge of the pin guard. Since we know that in darker conditions our peep hole will seem larger, we know we will be able to see our pin guard in all conditions. We just need to make sure that in those conditions we center the pin guard in the peep hole the best we can.

In darker conditions, we're able to see the pin guard and some light around the outside of it; it's really the gap of air that becomes visible around the outside of the guard when we look through the peep at full draw. We always try to have an even light gap around the pin guard, but this can be hard since you often can't see the whole guard due to the riser. If we don't balance out the gap on all visible sides, we won't hit what we aim at.

Nowadays, we all have our peep holes adjusted to the proper size and watch our centering carefully in the different light conditions. This gives us maximum aiming accuracy. **B**

AUTHOR'S PHOTO

3 Individually Adjustable PINS

3 Individually Adjustable POINTERS

MADE IN
THE USA



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.



By **JON E. SILKS**

BOW TEST

BOWTECH CARBON ONE

A Sleek Rig With an All-New Riser Design

BOWTECH IS AN aptly named company that has long been at the forefront of archery innovation.

For 2023, the company continues to build on this legacy with the Carbon One, a rig that takes a fresh approach to creating what Bowtech calls “the ultimate hunting bow.”

The Carbon One is built on a carbon riser crafted with a specialized lay-up process that results in flowing lines and an extremely rigid platform that brings both good looks and excellent shooting performance. A set of Orbit Dampeners on the riser join the past-parallel limbs and String Stop to reduce vibration and noise. Dual Lock Pockets align the carbon split limbs to the riser, while the DeadLock Cams offer a unique tuning feature, rotating modules for easy draw-length adjustments and FlipDisc Technology for two distinct shooting experiences.

Carbon Creation

While the Carbon One is not Bowtech's first carbon bow, it is by far the most advanced carbon bow in company history. The premium, carbon construction consists of a custom lay-up procedure that allows complete control in design. Structural bridging, component assimilation, angles, contours and more were at the disposal of Bowtech engineers, and they took full advantage to create a riser that serves

Bowtech's Carbon One has a unique look and sleek geometry thanks to new carbon-riser technology.

THE SPECS

Manufacturer: Bowtech Archery, 888-689-1289; bowtecharchery.com

Model: Carbon One

Riser: Carbon Lay-Up, Center Pivot, Reflex

Grip: Clutch Grip, molded polymer, modular wrist position

Limbs: Machined carbon, wide-stance, past parallel

Draw Weights: 50, 60 and 70 pounds peak

Draw Lengths: 25.5-30.5 inches, in half-inch increments; rotating module

Cam System: Deadlock, Binary

Letoff: 85 percent in Performance mode/87 percent in Comfort mode (advertised); 83.6 percent in Performance mode/86.2 percent in Comfort mode (as tested)

String: BCY 452X, 60.235 inches

Cables (x2): BCY 452X, 35.375 inches

Brace Height: 6.63 inches

Axle-to-Axle Length: 30 inches

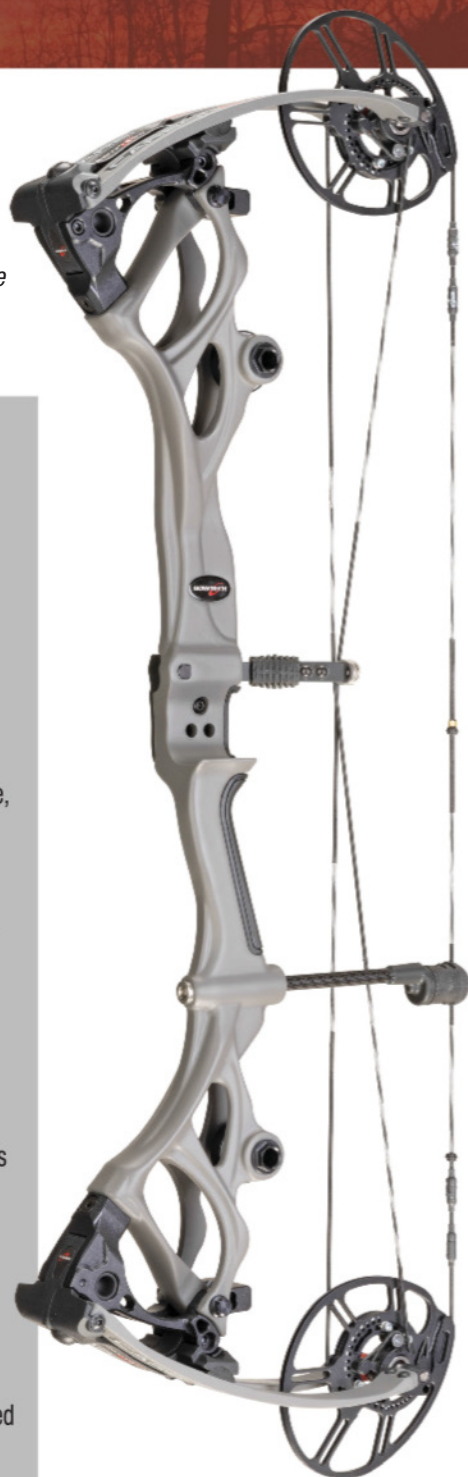
Weight: 4.5 pounds (advertised); 4.7 pounds (as tested)

Finish: Smoke Grey (pictured), Flat Dark Earth, OD Green and Black

Advertised IBO Speed: 335 fps

MSRP: \$1,799

Comments: A versatile bow that earned high marks across the board.



as the core of this flagship while offering a rigid platform and great looks. As a riser material, carbon fiber is proven to dampen vibration more effectively than aluminum, all while weighing considerably less and providing more comfort in cold temperatures.

With a laser focus on reducing vibration, Bowtech designed the Car-

bon One riser to accept a set of Orbit Dampeners, one near each end. A center mounting axle is surrounded by an elastomer material that supports an outside weighted ring. This design quickly deadens vibration from the shot. Additional Orbit Dampeners can be purchased and strategically stacked and/or placed to further reduce vibra-

tion and offset the weight of bow accessories for enhanced balance. Mounting blocks at both ends of the riser offer three separate mounting positions each. Orbit Dampeners are available in multiple colors that can be matched with the color selected for the Clutch Grip. Bowtech's popular molded polymer grip is modular, with the low-profile version shipping standard and a higher wrist model sold separately.

Bowtech delivers versatility in the riser by adding a rear dovetail rest mount compatible with popular Integrate rests, in addition to two threaded and tapped holes for standard arrow rests. Additionally, the Carbon One riser features two sight-mounting positions and triangle-shaped receivers for a Bowtech two-piece quiver. A String Stop is mounted opposite the stainless-steel stabilizer-mounting insert.

Last, but certainly not least, is the company's FLX-Guard cable-containment system that employs a miniature, limb-like arm and rollers that flex toward the centerline of the bow during the draw cycle to reduce torque and increase consistency and accuracy. At the shot, this arm springs away from the string's path to ensure full vane clearance. A small plate traps the cables in the rollers to avoid accidental dislodging.

Tunability and Power

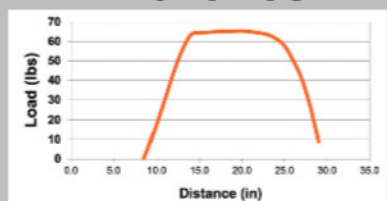
Bowtech's unique Dual Lock Pocket System serves to position and align the limbs and riser at this critical interface. The Pocket System was beefed up to create a receiver for an elongated tab that protrudes down from the limb cap, since this feature could not be machined directly into the carbon. The precision of that receiver, along with the extended surface contact and precision tolerance of the tab, ensure a positive lock and exact alignment. Additionally, limbs are locked to the pockets and the pockets locked to the riser for even more support.

The Carbon One is outfitted with a set of wide-stance split limbs machined from carbon material and matched into sets based on deflec-

SPEED & ENERGY COMFORT

	375-GRAIN ARROW	425-GRAIN ARROW
ARROW SPEED	296 fps	279 fps
KINETIC ENERGY	72.97 ft./lbs.	73.5 ft./lbs.
DYNAMIC EFFICIENCY	84.1%	84.6%
SHOT NOISE	89.8 dBA	89.7 dBA

DRAW-FORCE CURVE



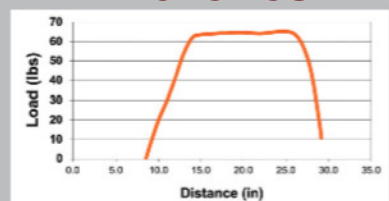
EDITOR'S NOTE:

All of our Bow Tests are conducted using the same standardized procedures and professionally calibrated testing equipment. Bows are tested with a draw length of 29 inches and a draw weight of 65 pounds, unless otherwise noted.

SPEED & ENERGY PERFORMANCE

	375-GRAIN ARROW	425-GRAIN ARROW
ARROW SPEED	305 fps	287 fps
KINETIC ENERGY	77.48 ft./lbs.	77.75 ft./lbs.
DYNAMIC EFFICIENCY	84.9%	85.2%
SHOT NOISE	90.8 dBA	90.0 dBA

DRAW-FORCE CURVE



tion values. The limbs are designed to team with the Center Pivot Technology (CPT) built into the riser ends. CPT moves the pivot point of the limbs closer to the throat of the grip, creating a more stable configuration that improves shooting consistency while reducing bow torque, vibration and shot noise.

Bowtech's DeadLock Cam System features the DeadLock Adjustment Block, situated on the end of the axle assembly on each cam. This block engages the axle assembly as the user loosens the lock screw and turns the adjustment screw to move the cam left and right. Once proper tuning is achieved, it can be locked down for hassle-free shooting. Meanwhile, Bowtech's rotating FlipDisc module moves the cam through its 25.5-30.5-inch draw-length range, in half-inch increments, and offers two modes — Comfort and Performance. The Comfort setting produces a smoother draw cycle and 87 percent letoff, while the Performance mode comes with a more aggressive draw cycle, 85 percent letoff and faster arrow speeds. As the name FlipDisc implies, to switch between

shooting modes, all you have to do is loosen two screws, flip the discs over to the other side and retighten the screws. It's that easy!

Range Notes

FlipDisc Technology is not just marketing hype — there is a very distinct difference between the Comfort and Performance settings, both in terms of the way the draw cycle feels and the Carbon One's performance. A super-smooth draw cycle in the Comfort mode turned into an aggressive one in Performance setting, while arrow speeds varied by 8-9 fps.

Hand shock while shooting the Carbon One was noticeable but minor. Vibration was almost non-existent, and shot noise was very low. In fact, to me the bow seemed even quieter than our sound meter reading would suggest.

Although this is a carbon bow, it is not particularly lightweight. However, I don't believe just building a light bow was Bowtech's focus for the Carbon One. Rather, they wanted to build a stable, well-balanced, quiet and accurate hunting rig, and carbon was just one of the tools used to get there. **B**

THE GREAT TREE SADDLES VS. HA



WHAT'S THE BEST OPTION

The Case for Tree Saddle Stands BY WESTON SCHRANK

MY FEET WERE SORE and my back ached. I was hiking above 10,000 feet in elevation, with 17 miles behind me and several days remaining in my hunt. After a week of grueling ascents and descents, blowing snow and drenching rain, my companions and I never saw a single elk. I'll gladly admit my first DIY elk hunt in Colorado was nothing more than a glorified backpacking trip. However, that hunt forever changed my outlook to the chase Back East. This

was the first domino to fall in what would lead me to being obsessed with saddle hunting.

In fact, the past few years have been a perfect storm in this regard. For starters, I had just returned from my trip out west where I had spent countless hours and way too much cash dialing in my backcountry gear to absurd weight reductions. I had also recently lost several private-

continued on page 28

AT DEBATE

HANG-ON TREESTANDS:



FOR MOBILE BOWHUNTERS?

The Case for Hang-On Stands BY JACE BAUSERMAN

I SADDLE HUNTED ONCE, and that was enough for me. No, I'm not a saddle curmudgeon, and I don't have issues with the new breed of saddle hunters taking the whitetail woods by storm. I simply prefer a lightweight lock-on to a saddle.

While you can teach an old dog new tricks, the saddle system wasn't for me and may not be for you. I cut my public-land whitetail teeth using lightweight lock-ons, climbing

sticks, a safety harness and a lifeline. It's what I know, and it's a system that makes sense to me and, in my opinion, beats any saddle.

When I walk into the woods with an 8.5-pound Millennium M7 Microlite and uber-light climbing sticks lashed to my ALPS pack, I can be up a tree — even gnarled and crooked cottonwoods — in less than 15 minutes. I know

continued on page 29

land hunting opportunities in my home state of Indiana, amounting to more than 700 acres of ground. I was sick and tired of tearing down hang-on sets, ladder stands and, finally, removing heavy old climbers from their designated trees. My backyard shed was now an accumulation of rusty metal stands that, frankly, I didn't want to spend the time or energy to set back up somewhere else.

The last and final domino to fall was moving my family closer to some of the best public-land hunting opportunities Indiana has to offer. Add it all up, and my circumstances left me eager to jump into saddle hunting with both feet and enjoy the advantages saddles offer versus treestands!

Weight

The year prior to making the switch to saddles, I had started taking public-land bowhunting seriously, going in "deep." I *thought* I had dialed-in my gear to one of the lightest options, a Lone Wolf hand climber with a minimalist pack. My stand weighed 14 pounds, a nice cut from the 20-pound Summit climber I used previously. Add in my additional hunting gear and camera equipment used to self-film my hunts and I was still heading into the woods with a load that tipped the scales at roughly 25 pounds. It just didn't make sense!

The more you search for an ultralight treestand, the more you can't



A saddle setup is not only lighter than a comparable stand setup but also more compact.

help but drift into shopping for saddle platforms. The fact is, they are roughly a third to a half the weight of most lightweight hang-on stands. I eventually ended up with an extremely packable and lightweight saddle system consisting of three Trophyline Double Step Mini Sticks, a Trophyline Wingman Platform and Trophyline Venatic Saddle Kit. The platform and sticks weigh a total of 7.7 pounds, which is roughly half that of my Lone Wolf climber. And swapping my old treestand safety harness and tether for the Venatic saddle with two, 8mm ropes stored in a single pouch saved me even more weight. With a lightweight pack

to carry everything and a movable aider that could extend the distance I could climb with each stick, I could now ascend more than 18 feet off the ground with equipment considerably lighter than my old setup. All in all, I find the saddle system makes me feel faster, freer and more agile.

Packability

Coming off my Colorado elk hunt, I had learned a lot about weight reduction and silhouette reduction. I know a few of you are nodding your heads right now, reliving the feeling of a tree limb snagging the top of your climber or hang-on during your walk into the woods. Do you want the silhouette of a giant turtle or an outline no bigger than your normal body? Saddle hunting with compact climbing sticks and a small tree platform produces the latter.

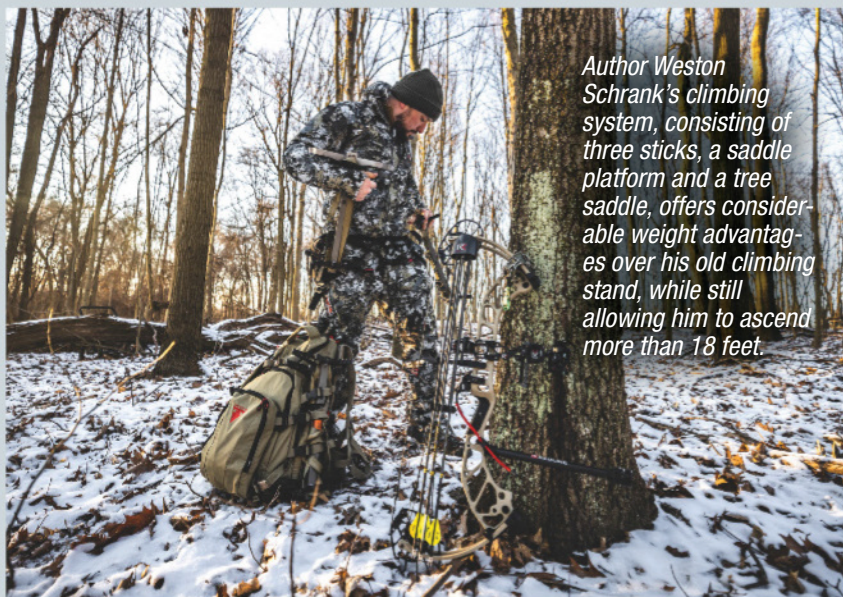
Comfort

The tree saddle does take practice, and if you're able, try it in person before jumping in. I discovered quickly the system you create around your needs is a breeze to run and — contrary to how it appears at first glance — way more comfortable to hunt in than a treestand. When hunters try a saddle for the first time in a store or at an educational event, nine times out of 10 their first reaction is, "Wow, this is way more comfortable than it seems!" And their second comment is often, "I could do this all day."

In a treestand you have two options: sit or stand. Spend enough time up there and either your legs will be tired or your butt will be sore. However, the saddle gives you way more options. I can now sit, stand, lean, recline (with a back band) and everything in between. With slight adjustments to tether length or body position, I am able to disperse my weight differently, avoiding fatigue and keeping me comfortable all day.

Safety

It's not that treestand hunting isn't safe. After all, whether you are installing a hang-on stand or a saddle platform, you should be constantly connected to the tree via a lineman's belt. However, hunting from a saddle



Author Weston Schrank's climbing system, consisting of three sticks, a saddle platform and a tree saddle, offers considerable weight advantages over his old climbing stand, while still allowing him to ascend more than 18 feet.

continued on page 30

my system inside and out, and over the past decade, it has proven very effective.

Mobile Hang-On Musts

During my time 18 feet up, I've learned a few mobile hunting must-dos, and if you implement these strategies into your run-and-gun whitetail game, you'll experience more success, enjoyment and comfort.

First, grab a roll of black Gorilla tape. This stuff is sticky and thick, and when you intricately cut it to fit and cover any metal buckles or metal-to-metal contact areas on your stand and sticks, your stealth game goes up. Nothing is worse than walking through the woods and hearing even the slightest *clank*.



Author Jace Bauserman says you can't beat a lightweight hang-on stand for quick hang-and-hunts or for walking into different public-land spots and setting up multiple stands you plan to use during your hunt.

When you cover all metal contact points with Gorilla tape, whitetail-spooking noises are greatly reduced. Several times, before whitetail assassin Alex Gyllstrom taught me this tactic, I would swing a climbing stick buckle around a tree, the buckle would hit metal and, in my mind, it sounded like a bomb went off in the woods.

With all your metal contact points



A compact hang-on stand with platform and seat adjustments will fit in just about any tree, allowing the hunter to capitalize on right-now whitetail movement.

taken care of, next you'll want to find a good whitetail pack that will serve you well. When using lightweight stands such as the Millennium M7 paired with lightweight climbing sticks, I prefer ALPS' Impulse or Pursuit packs. The Pursuit is a tad beefier and makes stand-and-stick transport a bit easier if you're trekking a long way into a public-land honey hole, but I do love the design and functionality of the Impulse. It will handle a stand and sticks but also helps you organize all inside-the-pack gear.

Whatever type or brand of pack you decide on, develop a repeatable system for attaching your stand and sticks. In addition, it's essential to create an everything-has-its-place plan. For instance, the side pockets on my Impulse hold my headlamp, extra wind checker and bow haul rope. One side mesh pocket holds a bottle of Wildlife Research Center Scent Killer Gold Field Spray, and the other has my HSS (Hunter Safety System) lineman's rope. When you develop a system, you

can operate efficiently under a headlamp's red or green glow.

Perfect Practice

I like competition, even if I'm competing against myself. Every year, for as long as I can remember, I take my hang-on system into the whitetail woods mid-summer and practice putting it up and taking it down. I time myself and practice stand-hanging missions in the dead of night and in the heat of day. I want to prove my hang-and-hunt system to myself, and each year I learn something new about how to be more efficient.

I have seen mobile hang-on hunters attempt their first-ever hang-and-hunt in the darkness of a late-October morning, and I promise you what I've witnessed was far from stealthy and efficient. Do the work ahead of time. After all, perfect practice leads to perfect results.

Comfort and Efficiency

When I go into a public-land white-

continued on page 31

vs. a treestand safety harness is drastically different! Here, it becomes fall arrest (stand harness) vs. a device that will never allow a fall in the first place (saddle).

From personal experience, I say it's just plain easier to be careless and not remain connected to the tree at all times while hunting out of a treestand. With a saddle, the fall is prevented before it ever happens simply because of the methods you must use to be in the saddle. With a saddle, it is impossible to be off the ground without being attached to the tree. So, you never have to worry about falling, dealing with suspension trauma or having a plan to rescue yourself if you fall and get stuck 15 feet off the ground!

Tree Selection

One of the biggest advantages saddles offer over stands is the ability to hunt out of virtually any tree! With my climber, I couldn't use any tree much wider than a basketball, and I certainly couldn't scale trees with a lot of limbs below hunting height. With a saddle, not only can I climb trees with lots of branches (which offer great cover while hunting), I can also use leaning trees and those oddball trees with lots of "character."

For example, my saddle combined

with a platform that has built-in angle adjustment can make quick work of a tree that even those using climbing sticks and a portable hang-on would struggle to hunt from comfortably.

Shot Opportunities

Bowhunting from a saddle was a major improvement from a treestand in terms of shot opportunities. Even when properly tethered in, you can fall off a stand platform. So, you have to be conscious of where your feet are, even while lining up the shot at a great buck.

That restriction does not exist in a saddle since you can use your feet to maneuver on your platform or even twist and hang in the saddle while shooting, allowing the saddle itself to support your weight as you pivot around the tree.

The big difference maker for me, however, when it comes to a saddle vs. stand is the sturdiness of my shot. I'm mainly talking about contact points here. In a treestand, you have two contact points — your feet — maybe a third by sitting or even leaning somehow against the seat. In a saddle, you can have as many as four: both your feet, the saddle tethered to a tree, and potentially your knee into the side of the tree.

In a saddle, you can also stand up

on the platform, tuck your shoulder under the tree tether and shoot while facing away from the tree. I call this the "seatbelt method," and it produces a shooting position that's similar to that of standing on a regular treestand platform but with the added benefit of giving you a rock-solid core to shoot with.

Regardless of position, I believe a saddle simply offers bowhunters more potential shot opportunities and more stability for making those shots accurately.

True Freedom

With my tree saddle setup, I no longer worry about distance or terrain when planning my hunts, as I am no longer burdened by unwieldy gear. My scouting, camera placement and observation hunts now center on the best sign I can find. I pass good sign close to the trailhead to get to great sign deep off the beaten path.

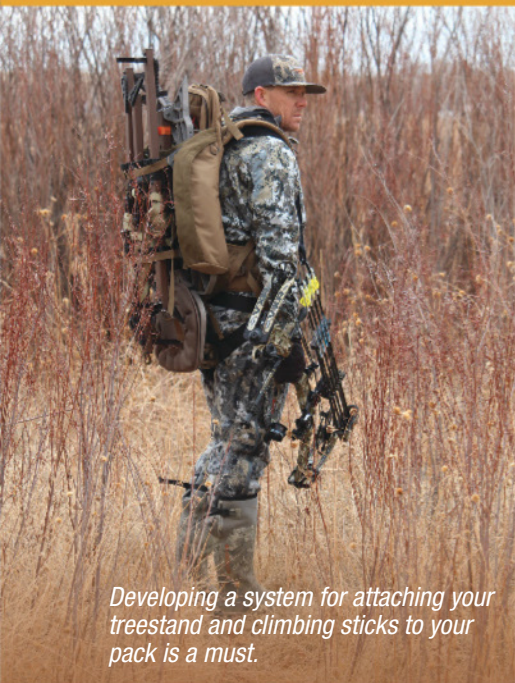
Last fall I was rewarded for those efforts with likely the third-biggest buck I've had the privilege of hunting on public ground. I located the buck's core area in late October, dialing-in his movements off of funnels and scrapes leading directly out of a few beds I'd found. I took an aggressive but ultimately still too conservative approach to hunting him. I had the privilege of seeing this buck on the hoof at 60 and 80 yards but simply never got the shot I needed.

Depending on prevailing wind, I hunted four separate trees south and three separate trees north of his bedding area. I continued to make more and more aggressive moves, picking slightly riskier trees that put me 50 yards closer to the beds I knew about. Despite all these moves, I never caught up to him. Ultimately, I remained too conservative, something I blame on my private-land background. When a good buck is on the move in daylight, and you know its core area, be aggressive. I won't make the same mistake again.

If you're on the fence about saddle hunting, give it a try. Chances are good that you already have a buddy who is saddle hunting — and shouting about the greener grass. Free yourself and your hunting strategy, and you won't have time to look back as the dominoes start falling and you become a more effective bowhunter. **B**



Saddle hunting requires you to be constantly tethered to the tree, giving it a significant safety advantage over treestands. Inset: Last fall, Schrank caught his target buck on camera eight times in daylight over a 48-hour period. He used his saddle to hunt from four different trees within 100 yards of one another, encountering the buck twice while hunting.



Developing a system for attaching your treestand and climbing sticks to your pack is a must.

tail area, especially when pushing the envelope and creeping close to identified bedding, I often sit from well before dawn to after dark. The comfort of a saddle doesn't compete with a quality, lightweight lock-on. You can't beat Millennium's ComfortMax seat when sitting in a treestand all day. Plus, the stands are efficient. As previously mentioned, the M7 weighs just 8.5 pounds, while Elevate Stand Co.'s Element Ultra weighs just 6.25 pounds. Of course, these are both very compact stands, and while you can certainly choose other



Bauserman appreciates the all-day comfort he enjoys with a quality hang-on stand, making it easier to sit long hours waiting for an elusive buck.

options with larger platforms, weight increases with platform size.

Although I haven't yet used the Elevate Element Ultra, both it and the Millennium M7 are compact enough to fit in any tree and so light you can easily pull them up with your bow rope. I can speak from personal experience that the M7's CamLock Receiver System makes hanging this stand super simple. Just wrap the receiver strap around the tree, insert a pin and slide the stand post into the receiver. The Element Ultra offers the added feature of leveling adjustments, allowing you to place the stand on trees that are far from perfectly straight.

Climbing Sticks

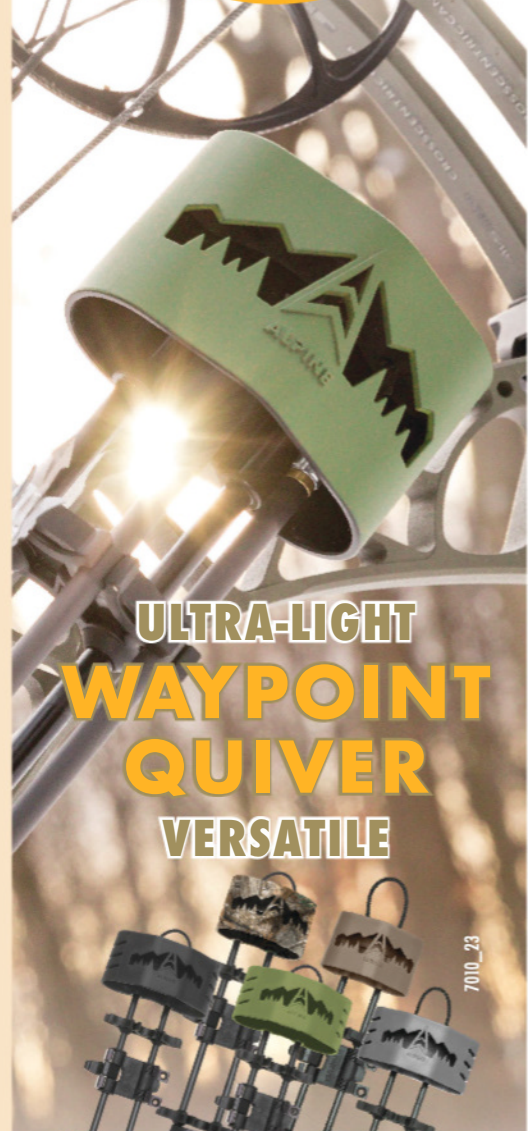
I don't overthink climbing sticks, and I don't worry about matching my steps to my stand. Lone Wolf's original, 32-inch climbing sticks are often lashed to my pack. These sticks have been discontinued, but I have eight sticks and plan to make no change. What matters is that your sticks are functional, easy to attach, sturdy and provide climbing confidence.

My main piece of climbing stick advice is this: don't be under-sticked, meaning don't take three sticks when you need four. I can get 18 feet up a hardwood with three Lone Wolf sticks, but often, because of the curvature of the tree, I'll need four sticks to make it 16 feet up a western cottonwood.

Final Thoughts

Like all hunting gear, the right equipment comes down to what gives you peace of mind and bowhunting confidence. I don't feel comfortable in a saddle, and after four hours, my groin hurts and my hips start to ache. My 43-year-old body may have gotten soft, but I will take the comfort and efficiency of a lock-on any day of the week and twice on Sunday.

If you're a lightweight hang-on hunter and happy with your setup, don't let anyone convince you that you're wrong or too "old school" to bag big bucks with the best of them. If your system works and you kill deer, hunting from a saddle doesn't make you any cooler or more mobile. This fall, you do you! Stay safe, and just savor every moment you get to spend bowhunting! **E**



ULTRA-LIGHT WAYPOINT QUIVER VERSATILE

**MATCH WITH
INDUSTRY-LEADING
BOW MODELS**
3 or 4 Arrow Configurations

**MADE IN
USA**

AlpineArchery.com



Constructed with a titanium frame and aluminum steps, Tethrd's One Climbing Stick weighs just 1 pound, including the DynaLite attachment rope, and can support up to 300 pounds of weight.



THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED

BY GREG STAGGS
PHOTO COURTESY OF TETHRD

TRY THE ONE-STICK CLIMBING METHOD TO LOSE WEIGHT AND GAIN MOBILITY

That's the most ridiculous thing I think I've ever seen.

That pretty much sums up my reaction the first time I ever watched a video of a fellow hunter demonstrating the one-stick tree climbing method. Well, as it turns out, I was wrong. In fact, I have gone from one-stick skeptic to true believer whose YouTube videos have helped thousands of others get started with this game-changing climbing method.

Personally, I can't imagine walking into the woods with anything but my tree saddle and 12-inch climbing stick, ascending as high as 40 feet off the ground and safely rappelling down at the end of my hunt. In this article, I explain

how you can do the same and enjoy all the benefits one-sticking has brought to my bowhunting game.

Breaking Tradition

If you've been around the mobile bowhunting game as long as I have, you're probably accustomed to going up trees with a climbing stand or a set of four climbing sticks and a hang-on stand — arguably the two most popular methods of reaching hunting height.

As easy as climbing stands are, most folks who have hunted with them recognize two big drawbacks. One,

THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED

climbers can be used only on relatively straight trees with no limbs below hunting height. In some areas of the country, this makes a climber virtually useless. Two, even in places where there are suitable trees, committing to a climber often forces you to choose your hunting location based on the tree rather than the best ambush location for the buck you're after.

As a result, many hunters prefer to carry a portable hang-on stand into the woods along with four climbing

sticks. Sticks certainly allow you to move around and past limbs, but they can also be cumbersome. Plus, installing them and then getting your stand attached often involves multiple climbs up and down the tree, presenting you with plenty of opportunities to make noise and work up a good sweat before your hunt ever begins.

When my youngest son Gabe was 13, he abandoned the clunky climbing stand that hit him in the legs with every step in favor of a tree saddle. For a young, aspiring bowhunter, it was a match made in heaven. Still, every time we hunted together, I was left impatiently waiting for him to

FOLLOW OUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO ONE-STICKING!



STEP 1: Author Greg Staggs prefers using a Madrock Safe-guard for one-sticking, as it can be used as both an ascender to climb and a descender to rappel down. He clips in before ever leaving the ground.



STEP 2: The author sets his stick with built-in platform slightly higher than his head and secures his tether as high as he can reach before placing his foot inside the aider. He digs his toes into the tree as he climbs for added stability.



STEP 3: When the author reaches the bottom step of his stick, he pauses and moves the tether up again to keep tether slack to a minimum. He will move the tether up yet again when he reaches the platform on the top of the stick.



STEP 4: This is the only real difference with one-sticking, according to the author. Instead of placing a second stick at this point, Staggs simply leans down and retrieves his stick.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR MOBILE AND SADDLE HUNTERS

BY MARK DEMKO

TROPHYLINE ONYX SADDLE PLATFORM

Blending elements from three different Trophyline platforms, the new ONYX is designed to be the perfect combination of size and enhanced function. The platform measures 14.9x13 inches and checks in at only 4.5 pounds, making it lightweight and compact. It also features an angled perimeter, with built-in nonslip ridges, providing additional contact points for foot placement and comfort when leaning, rolling to stand or turning to shoot your weak side. The ONYX, which also includes a platform leveling system, can handle weights to 300 pounds and fits trees 4-22 inches around.

\$229.99 | trophyline.com



TETHRD LOCKDOWN SADDLE

Tethrd's new LockDown saddle is engineered to be extremely user-friendly and comfortable. Highlighting its innovative design is the Expandable Saddle Body with LockDown Link construction that allows the saddle to expand and work with you while on the hunt. The adjustable, replaceable LockDown Links keep the pleat closed while in transport mode to and from your hunting area, while the expandable body allows you to customize the amount of body support you want while hunting. The LockDown also features an integrated shoulder harness and offers many of the other features Tethrd is known for, including the UtiliBridge, integrated lineman's loops and Comfort Channels that provide seven settings for adjusting the saddle while in the tree. Plus, new, oversized LockDown pockets offer easy, one-handed access to essential gear.

\$349.99 | tethrdnation.com



LATITUDE CARBON SS CLIMBING STICKS

When every ounce counts, even your sticks need to be as light as possible. Enter the Carbon SS Climbing Stick from Latitude Outdoors. This new-for-2023 climbing stick is made from one continuous piece of carbon fiber composite, making it extremely durable while weighing only 19 ounces. Plus, there are no moving parts or hardware to come off or break, potentially ruining a hunt before it even starts. Sticks are 18 inches long, come with slots for adding an aider and are rated for weights up to 275 pounds. Also of note are the attachment wings that allow for flat, compact stacking.

\$84.99 (one stick); \$239.99 (three-pack) | latitudeoutdoors.com



ULTIMAIDER

Billed as the most versatile aider on the market, the UltimAider offers incredible customization, with the ability to adjust the distance between steps up to 20 inches, plus steps can be added or removed at any time to best suit your climbing needs. Able to handle weights to 300 pounds, the UltimAider is available in one-, two- and three-step options, as well as black, coyote brown and olive drab colors. Weight ranges from 3.9 ounces for a one-step aider to 11 ounces for the three-step model.

\$19.99-\$59.99 | ultimaider.com



WILD EDGE BERSERKER SADDLE

Built for Wild Edge by safety and climbing company Kong USA, the Berserker tree saddle features an adjustable seat that allows you to set the optimum position for comfort yet remains closed while walking and sitting. It also has numerous molle loops for attaching ropes and gear; lightweight, flat, quiet-closing leg buckles — all buckles are intentionally positioned to the sides and out of the way — and two large, structured D-rings that make girth hitching lineman's ropes smooth and easy. The saddle comes with Sterling OpLux 8mm rope bridge and 6.8mm T-Vac prusik. It's available in small, medium and large sizes.

\$275 | wildedgeinc.com



THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED



STEP 5: Pushing away from the tree to give himself space, the author wedges the stick below his tether, allowing him to have both hands free to pass the rope around the tree and back through the cam cleat attached to his climbing stick.



STEP 6: Staggs is back to climbing, just as he did in his first “move” when he left the ground. He can repeat the process as many times as he likes, but two or three moves are usually all that’s necessary to reach the desired hunting height.



STEP 7: At the end of the hunt, Staggs rappels down the tree using the same, 40-foot rope that served as his tree tether while climbing and hunting. His climbing stick of choice, a 12-inch Ultimate One-Stick from Eastern Woods Outdoors, rides along while securely clipped to his tree saddle.

pack up his four climbing sticks at the bottom of the tree and strap them together for the walk back to our vehicle. I had already rebuffed a friend a couple times when he talked about one-sticking, but he persuaded me to let him show Gabe.

As I stood at the base of the tree watching my buddy teach Gabe, suddenly it all clicked. He used a different technique than in the video I referenced at the beginning of this article, and it all made sense. I realized Gabe would be far safer while climbing, as he was always tethered in on the way up and, at the end of the hunt, he simply walked

himself down the tree via rappelling. It was literally like playing Batman! The very next day, Gabe and I ordered our one-sticking gear and have never looked back.

One-Sticking Explained

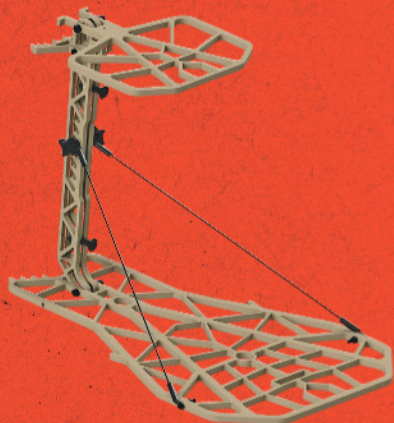
So, how *exactly* do you climb 20 feet, 30 feet or even higher with a single stick? Well, that’s a great question! I think the easiest way to answer it is by saying I climb the same way most people do with four sticks, with one important exception.

When it comes to the mobile-hunting game, almost no one uses full-length climbing sticks anymore: I’m talking

EASTERN WOODS OUTDOORS ULTIMATE ONE-STICK

Build your stick your way with Eastern Woods Outdoors' Ultimate One-Stick. Sticks are available in lengths of 12, 15 or 18 inches and can be customized with choice of platform atop the stick and lower step; as well as an optional one-, two- or three-step aider. Constructed of 1-inch, machined-aluminum tubing, the sticks also come either black anodized or in TrueTimber Strata. The Ultimate One-Stick weight varies by design; for example, a stick with the 10x3.25-inch Scout Platform included weighs 3 pounds. Stick arrives at your home fully assembled and comes with: a Harken 150 cam cleat; plastic-covered, wire-rope handle; and Amsteel tree rope.

Price Varies by Design | doublesteps.com



ELEVATE STAND CO. RIZE HANG-ON STAND

Since launching in 2021, Elevate Stand Co. has become a favorite with bowhunters because of its quality hang-and-hunt systems. The company's new Rize mid-sized hang-on stand is designed to fit the sweet spot between its lightweight, compact Element Ultra (17x23.75 inches; 6.25 pounds) and its Element (29x18.75 inches; 10.4 pounds), designed for bowhunters who prefer a larger platform. The Rize, constructed of 6061-T6 aluminum, weighs 8.3 pounds and features a 27.44x17.5-inch platform and 12x12.88-inch seat. Like Elevate's other stands, it's built to carry the company's 17- and 20-inch Ascend Climbing Sticks, which feature a magnetic design that makes stacking and transporting easy. Other stand highlights include additional stand adjustment points, a new tree brace/bracket and more.

\$439.99 | elevatestand.co

HUNTER SAFETY SYSTEM SHADOW HARNESS

Whether you're climbing your tree or on stand, safety should always be the top priority, which makes a safety harness an essential piece of equipment. Designed with the minimalist hunter in mind, Hunter Safety Systems' Shadow is the company's lightest, most flexible harness, weighing only 27 ounces yet able to handle weights up to 300 pounds. The harness features an innovative design that eliminates weave-through buckles and dangling straps, and it comes with adjustable shoulder and leg straps, quick-snap buckles, built-in lineman's loops, shock-absorbing tether and an adjustable tree strap.

\$69.99 | huntersafetyssystem.com



KIFARU STRYKER XL PACK

KIFARU's Stryker XL is an ideal pack option for mobile hunters, with ample room for gear and equipment, while the pack itself only weighs 2.75 pounds. The Stryker XL offers 1,900 cubic inches of space for holding saddle, ropes, bowhunting accessories and extra layers of clothes. It has an integrated load sling and cargo panel and is bladder compatible, with dual, upper hose ports that make staying hydrated easy. PALS webbing lines the back of the pack and inner sleeve so you can load out the pockets the way you want them. With this pack, carrying sticks, platform and other gear is no obstacle (Note: external frame required).

\$325 | kifaru.net



MILLENNIUM M7 MICROLITE HANG-ON STAND

Millennium's lightest treestand, the M7 Microlite is perfect for hunters who like to travel far from the parking lot. The stand weighs 8.5 pounds, has a 20.5-inch-wide by 26-inch-deep platform and is built to support weights up to 300 pounds. It features aluminum construction with a durable, powder-coat finish and comes with Millennium's comfortable ComfortMax contoured, tight-sling seat that folds back for standing shots. Backpack straps for carrying the stand are also included.

\$257.99 | millenniumstands.com

THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED

about the old, 32-inch sticks that were once standard issue. Try walking through the woods with your favorite spinning rod/reel combo and not getting it hung up in branches and you'll have an idea what it was like navigating a trip into the woods with them. As a result, hunters began cutting those sticks down to size, and in more recent years, manufacturers followed suit by simply offering more compact sticks right from the factory. These days, most popular sticks range in length from 17-20 inches.

Although shorter sticks are great for packing, three or four of them aren't going to allow most folks to get 20 feet off the ground. So, many hunters pair the shorter sticks

with aiders — usually a two- or three-step, ladder-style system made from nylon webbing and sections of rubber hose inside the “step” areas to maintain shape and hold the steps open so you can get your boot in there while climbing. With a compact stick/aider combination, hunters can reach the desired height while also being lighter, quieter and more mobile.

Using a set of sticks and an aider, a hunter places his first stick onto the tree at roughly shoulder or head height, depending on the length of the aider. Once the stick is set and the aider is attached, he would either throw his lineman's belt around the tree or affix his tether above everything and begin the climb. When he reached the top of the stick, he would attach his second stick, again at shoulder or head

FOUR RULES OF ONE-STICKING



1. YOU MUST USE AN AIDER.

The gains you make while one-sticking (or the height you achieve with each “move”) comes from the overall distance you cover with each set of the stick. Using a multi-step aider becomes imperative to maximize that distance, especially the first time you set your stick and leave the ground. I prefer the UltimAider, which is infinitely adjustable in length and step configuration.



2. YOU MUST USE A CAM CLEAT.

Yes, I know there are a few people who've managed to one-stick without a good cleat such as the Harken 150 shown here, but the emphasis is on “few.” Employ a good cam cleat and it'll make your life MUCH easier when it comes time to reach down and remove the rope from your stick with one hand to pull it up for the next move.



3. YOU MUST RAPPEL DOWN.

If you try to reverse the one-sticking process and climb back down, you'll quickly figure out one thing: it sucks! One-sticking is MEANT to be used in conjunction with rappelling. It's like peanut butter and jelly. Biscuits and gravy. Bacon and eggs. My rope of choice is Canyon Elite. It meets spec for favorite belay device (the Madrock Safeguard) and remains supple and isn't prone to developing a memory like other ropes I've used.

4. YOU MUST USE A NON-STRETCH PULL-DOWN ROPE.

So many people want to skimp out on their pull-down rope because they already have a 40-foot spool of paracord at home or can pick some up cheap at the local Walmart. Trust me, the only people who claim you can use paracord to retrieve your rappel line from the tree after hitting the ground are people who haven't one-sticked. Paracord is WAY too stretchy, and it'll eat up the energy you apply into getting your rope down. Retrieving your rope at the end of the hunt should be easy, not a ridiculous chore that makes you regret trying one-sticking. I recommend Dynaglide, though some people use a thin Amsteel rope.



CARBON SS CLIMBING STICKS

Made in the USA

**Eliminate metal noise in the woods for good.
19oz Weight - Metal Free - Flat Stacking**

Latitude
OUTDOORS



www.LatitudeOutdoors.com

THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED

height, move the aider from the first step to the second and repeat the process.

My one-sticking method is basically the same. However, when I reach the top of my stick, and with my tether secured on the tree above my head, I use it to support my weight and simply hang in my saddle while turning and reaching down to grab my stick. I then push out from the tree trunk with my feet to give myself room and attach that same stick where I would attach a second, third or fourth stick if I was using a complete set.

Using this technique, I can climb as high as I want with a single stick and aider. The only limitation on height is the length of the rope I use as my tree tether. Why is that you may ask? Well, because I'm going to use that rope to walk myself back down the tree at the end of the hunt! My personal tether rope is 40 feet long and weighs about 2 pounds.

I will make this claim without reservation: Rappelling down at the end of the hunt is the absolute *safest* way to descend a tree, irrespective of your climbing method. Just as most treestand accidents happen when people transition to and from their treestands, a lot can happen when moving from stick to stick. When you're rappelling down, if you slip due to frozen fingers, icy tree bark or anything else, you'll just hang there. Sure, you may swing a foot or two into the tree, but you'll be no worse for wear.

Beyond the safety aspect, rappelling down is just plain fun. I've received dozens of messages from people saying that after the first couple times, rappelling becomes one of the most anticipated aspects of every trip afield.

Why Try One-Sticking?

So, we've touched on the "how" of one-sticking, but what about the "why?" Well, because who doesn't want to walk into the woods with about five pounds of climbing gear and be able to hunt any tree in the woods? I don't have to unpack two halves of a climbing stand, nor do I have to worry about catching anything on limbs or bushes walking through the woods. I can climb almost silently, because I am only managing a single, 12-inch stick. I'm always in complete control of where it is, and I don't have to worry about extra sticks banging into anything.

We often deal with a full leaf canopy early in the season. During that time, I rarely make more than two moves, counting me leaving the ground initially as one. Conversely, there are times late in the season when I like to hunt a nearby national forest that has huge draws and ravines. Sometimes, wind direction necessitates setting up on the side of a ridge and beginning my climb much lower than the trail I'll be watching. In such scenarios, it's nice to be able to shimmy 35 feet up the tree to position myself well above the line of sight of passing deer — all while using exactly the same gear I did on those early-season hunts when I was only 10 feet off the ground!

At this point, there may be two nagging questions you're left with. One, does one-sticking require a lot of physical effort? And two, how long does it take to get from the ground to hunting height?

The first question was an initial concern I had regarding one-sticking. I thought I'd be in a full sweat and worn out by the time I got up the tree. But once I tried it, I realized all I was doing was hanging by the rope and reaching down

and grabbing my stick. There is literally zero calorie burn in the action. I can climb in hot, early-season conditions just as easily as I can with heavy base layers during the frigid days of January.

As for the time required to get from the base of the tree to hunting height, well, I can honestly say that I can one-stick my way up a tree faster than I could with a climbing stand. And that isn't just some bold claim from a one-sticking evangelist; it's based on real-world experience that comes from 100-plus one-sticking sits per season. Of course, newcomers to the one-sticking game may not be quite as fast as veterans. But even if you're a little slower going up, I guarantee you'll be faster — and a lot safer — coming down!

Proof Positive

Last November, I headed into a public conservation area an hour before light. It was my first time ever setting foot on the property. I picked a tree, made three moves up and settled in, listening as the woods slowly came to life. It wasn't long before a spike buck walked by about 85 yards to the south of me. About 30 minutes later, a forkhorn walked almost the same path. I decided I wouldn't watch a third buck pass out of bow range.

Within minutes, I had my gear packed and was removing my stick from the tree. Thirty seconds later, I had wrapped up its rope and clipped it onto my saddle, and it took about the same amount of time for my boots to hit the ground from more than 25 feet high. I picked up my bow and wound my rappel rope around my hand and elbow like an extension cord before walking to a tree where I'd watched both bucks pass.

Less than 10 minutes later, I was back at hunting height in my new spot, with my release aid clipped onto my nocking loop as I watched yet another buck approach from the same direction. Though he turned out to be a non-shooter, it wasn't because I was in the wrong tree. I had the choice to give him a pass because I was there.

Choice is what one-sticking gives me: the choice to go in further because I'm carrying less weight. The choice to hunt any tree I want, because limbs or multiple trunks don't deter me. As ridiculous as I thought one-sticking looked at first, I now choose to hunt that way every day I'm in the woods. **B**

THE BOWHUNTING PODCAST

CHECK OUT OUR ONE-STICKING PODCAST!

Hungry for more one-sticking info? In Episode 66 of *The Bowhunting Podcast*, one-sticking expert Greg Staggs joins Editor Christian Berg to discuss the fine details of his one-sticking method, gear selection and top tips to help one-sticking newbies get started.

DOWNLOAD OR STREAM TODAY AT BOWHUNTING.PODBEAN.COM

FORMULA™

Flambeau

BOW CASE

UNRIVALED STORAGE SOLUTION with the **REVOLUTIONARY ADJUSTABLE BOW SECURITY (A.B.S.) System: FOAMLESS Chassis Assembly That FREE-FLOATS Critical Precision Components — Sight, Cams, Cables, and String — FOR CONTACT FREE PRESERVATION.**



FEATURING:

x2 Nite Ize®
Gear Tie® Mega™ Bow Tie Downs



www.FLAMBEAUOUTDOORS.com



@flambeauoutdoors



@flambeau_outdoors

© 2023 FLAMBEAU INC.

THE WHITETAIL “SQUEEZE PLAY”

THE FUNDAMENTALS of deer hunting are so important I am tempted to classify them as the true “secrets” of the game. These secrets will make you a better bowhunter overnight — as soon as you apply them. I am going to rely on one of these basic principles in this feature as I go over the best ways to find great stands in new areas.

Here it is: *Don't let the deer know you are hunting them.* It really is that simple, and that difficult. When deer realize you are where people usually aren't, they'll exhibit one of three responses. One, they may avoid that spot for several days, a little wiser for the experience. Two, they may move less in daylight in the entire area. Or three, they'll become so wary they never move near your stand sites without an absolute wind advantage. Even does become tough targets when they know they are being hunted. And any of these three responses makes the deer in your hunting area many times more difficult to kill.

Of course, the flipside is where the opportunity lies. Anything you can do to reduce your impact even slightly — keeping even one more deer from knowing you are in the area — will make you a more successful deer hunter. Hunting new areas has this advantage *if* you do it correctly. The real challenge is to find great stands in new areas without the deer knowing you are doing it.

6 Super Stands

I'd as soon hunt blindfolded as go into a season without access to aerial photos and topographic maps. There are so many ways you can find these photos now, from Google Maps to a host of hunting-specific smartphone apps such as onX Hunt.

Once you learn how to use these tools, all the information you need is right there: cover type and amount, most

likely travel routes and even the probable food sources and bedding areas. When hunting an area for the first time, aerial photos and topo maps may be your single greatest pre-hunt advantage and are an excellent way to stay ahead of changing travel patterns, even in areas you hunt every year.

Aerial photos specialize in showing the cover, and topo maps specialize in showing terrain. The more recent the photos, the better. For example, the HuntStand mapping app shows low-resolution overlays for each of the past months. You can see what is currently planted in each area and even see whether there has been any large-scale human activity such as timber cutting and development. That is an important starting point.

The terrain is just as important as the cover. You need to use the topo line overlay on your maps to really see the terrain. This overlay shows contour lines that expose features such as bluff edges, low saddles and ditches that will influence where a buck is likely to walk during the rut.

Here are six super stand sites that are easy to find simply by combining the power of aerial photos and topo maps with a little basic understanding of deer behavior.

Cover-Related Bottlenecks: The aerial photo will show natural bottlenecks such as brushy fence lines crossing open areas, or the hourglass shape made when one block of timber corners with another one. Both cover-related features are natural and very productive funnels for hunting rutting bucks. They are obvious, first-rate stand sites that don't require any work to identify.

Outside Creek Bends: When you see a creek going across open areas on your aerial photo, you will likely notice that the inside bends are filled with cover while the farm fields butt right up to the bank on the outside bends

ATTACK NEW HUNTING AREAS FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

By **BILL WINKE**



You can keep the element of surprise in your favor as long as possible by starting to hunt along the edges of your whitetail area and gradually working your way to the interior.

TAMPICO
VISTA



THE WHITETAIL 'SQUEEZE PLAY'

of the creek. On deep creeks and rivers, these outside bends make perfect funnels for bucks traveling from the cover of one inside bend to the cover of the next one. With shallow creeks or rivers, the deer will just cross the creek or river to go between inside bends.

Creek Crossings: Another good stand site that will jump out at you is a creek that winds through a wooded area. Where the creek makes an S-shape you are likely to find a great crossing right in the middle of that S, between the two bends that likely have high banks. The deer will cross heavily on the gradual banks at the middle of the S rather than try to climb up or down at the high banks. And, sneaking in the creek itself will give you a great access route to that spot.

Ditch Crossings: Ditches are also no-brainer stand sites, and the topo map will show those most easily. When you see the contour lines make a sharp turn and then come back onto themselves, you have found a deep draw. Generally, in most deer areas, the soil will be loose enough that there will be an erosion ditch at the bottoms of these draws.

The deer will avoid the steep and deep sections of the

ditch and cross where the banks are gradual. Or they will simply go around the very top of the ditch. The funnel made at the top of the ditch is a natural bowhunting hotspot. Bucks will cross through this spot at all times of day, and these spots are very easy to find just from studying a topo map. If you can access the stand by sneaking up the ditch from below, it is even better.

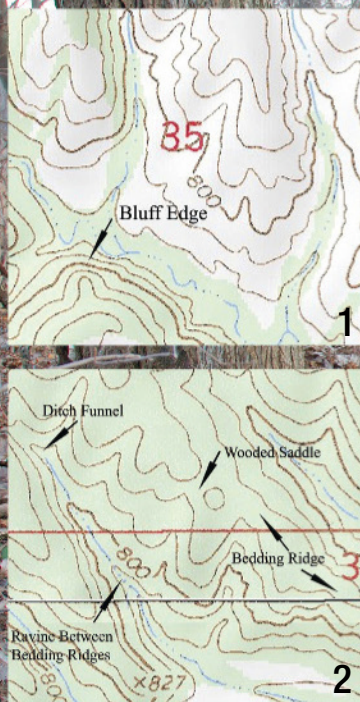
Bluff Edges: The topo map will also show bluff edges or really steep spots. Those are the areas where the contour lines are very close together. Deer generally don't go up and down these steep areas and will prefer to stay on a contour when traveling, often very close to the top. I really like hunting bluff edges when the wind blows my scent off the bluff top and away from any deer noses. I can access the treestand by climbing the bluff and no deer are likely to know that I am, or was, there.

Bedding Areas: The combination of aerial photos and topo maps will help reveal likely bedding areas. It is tough for me to anticipate all the places deer bed in each part of the country, but here in the Midwest it is easy. They tend

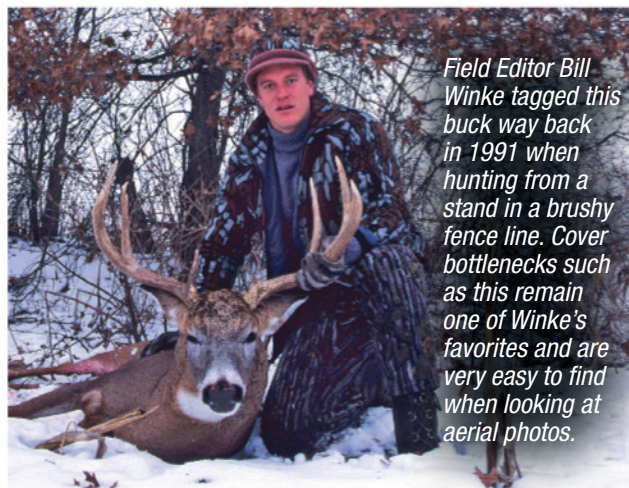
Deer cross ditches and creeks where the banks are gradual. You can often see these likely crossings when studying a topo map and aerial photo of the area.



There is normally a great funnel at the top of a ditch, where the deer go around the head. You can easily see these terrain features on topo maps.



1. Contour lines are close together where the terrain is steep, such as this bluff edge. 2. The contour lines on topo maps can show you a lot of terrain features that produce great stand locations.



Field Editor Bill Winke tagged this buck way back in 1991 when hunting from a stand in a brushy fence line. Cover bottlenecks such as this remain one of Winke's favorites and are very easy to find when looking at aerial photos.

to bed high, on ridges and points, whenever possible. In areas without these significant terrain changes, they will still bed on smaller rises or anywhere they can be right next to heavy cover. If you are fortunate to hunt an area that has terrain changes, you can use the maps to anticipate where deer are likely to bed.

Word of Mouth

Never underestimate the importance of information you can pull from the landowner or others who live near your hunting area. Even though they may not be deer hunters, they still notice when a buck crosses a road or an open field. They know things such as where the buck ran when they combined the back cornfield and where they usually cross between two woodlots. Find out everything you can: when each sighting took place, time of the day, direction of travel, etc.

Often, seemingly isolated incidents are not isolated when you start putting them together. Terrain or cover will influence the patterns of traveling deer in ways you never anticipated. Only actual sightings can reveal this mystery. I've taken several nice bucks through the years as the direct result of advice received from area farmers. It usually goes something like this: "I always see that buck crossing the road right up on the hill," or "Whenever I drive back to feed the cattle, there's a buck down along the creek by that bend." This is the very best low-impact resource at your disposal. Cultivate these relationships and act on the information. Trust me, these guys know.

Road Crossings

The soft, dusty earth found on the sides of secondary roads and field lanes carries important information to help you choose a good, low-impact stand location. I study the tracks in these places to learn two things: the number of deer in various parts of the hunting area and the size of the tracks.

Of course, big tracks are best. I sometimes hunt the trails that cross interior lanes, but at the very least they become great trail-camera locations I can check them easily and quickly, without unnatural intrusion.

Putting It All Together

Take everything you've learned from low-impact scouting and then make it your mission to work in from the fringes. By starting on the edges of your hunting area and slowly working toward the middle, you keep the whole area fresh for as long as possible. It is deer hunting's version of the squeeze play. You learn as you go, moving ever closer to the interior of the property without educating a lot of deer in the process.

THE WHITETAIL 'SQUEEZE PLAY'

A typical hunt might have you spending the first afternoon in a stand along an overgrown fence line near a woodlot, hoping to catch the deer as they pass in and out of the woodlot. Not only are you observing and learning, you're hunting a good travel route. There is a very real chance a nice buck will use the fence line and give you a close shot.

Fringe stands also offer easy access, one of the most important aspects of any good strategy. Getting in and out is the point where too many deer hunters go wrong. They use obvious entry and exit routes that deer pick up on right away. If the deer know you are coming and going, they stop moving naturally and you will ruin your hunting area very quickly.

Getting back to the example, you can hunt the fence line stand for a day or two before moving in and setting up on a creek crossing or ditch funnel. Slowly but surely, you work closer to what you believe is the area's hotspot, perhaps a suspected bedding area.

This hunting approach is very efficient and calculated. As your hunting time starts to run out, you move more toward what you think are likely the best, but higher risk, spots. Those are the spots farther into the cover, where it gets increasingly harder to keep the deer from knowing you are hunting them.

On a short hunt, you move through the fringe stands more quickly, but on a longer hunt you have to move more slowly, sticking to low-impact stands for a longer portion of the time.

Sightings from local residents and farmers will really help you select great stand locations in areas you have never hunted before. Don't overlook this important resource.



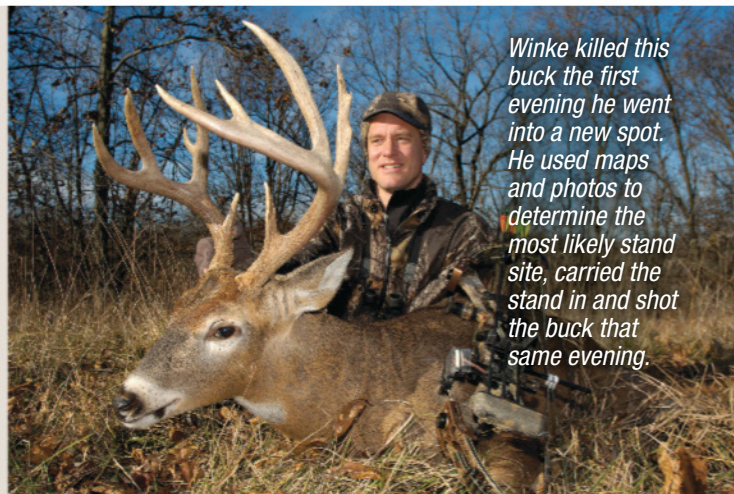
If you spend your whole season in a relatively small hunting area, like most eastern hunters are forced to do, or if you prefer to hunt a specific buck, you should immediately see the value of these fringe stands in keeping the deer moving naturally as long as possible.

You probably know at least one hunter who seems to take a good buck every year. The "secret" they all share is a simple fundamental of deer hunting: scout and hunt in such a way the deer don't realize they're being hunted. Then it becomes just a matter of time (with some luck added for good measure) before you will be dragging out a good one. **B**

IN-SEASON SCOUTING



Winke killed this buck the first evening he went into a new spot. He used maps and photos to determine the most likely stand site, carried the stand in and shot the buck that same evening.



THERE'S NO ADVANTAGE in spending more time than necessary (and taking extra trips) just to put up stands. In fact, much of my hunting as a young man was done by carrying my stand into a new area I had scouted via aerial photos, putting up the stand and hunting it immediately. I rarely made scouting trips.

When you are forced to cover ground on foot to select good stand sites, avoid getting too analytical. You need to be able to make fast decisions, because you can't cover every inch of the place. Use your instincts. If it makes sense that a buck would travel through when looking for a doe, or it feels like a spot a buck would use to access a secluded food source, go with it. Trust your gut and get your butt in the tree!

Whenever possible, avoid bedding areas while scouting. Deer are much more sensitive to human scent in their living rooms than they are around fringe cover. However, when you do feel the need to scout a sanctuary, don't try to sneak in. All you will do is create close-range panic; deer don't like surprises.

Instead, drive close in your vehicle or ATV, slam the door a few times, clang around or run a chainsaw. You are trying to get the deer to leave before you get into the most sensitive areas, so you don't startle them at close range. They are much quicker to forgive "a guy out cutting firewood" than a hunter sneaking around.

I have done it many times. This "big noise" approach really does work when setting stands in bedding areas. In other words, if you can't sneak in totally undetected, you are better off making a bunch of noise and clearing out all the deer first. Of course, this is only when scouting and setting stands; not when you come back to hunt! Then you must be able to sneak in, usually on days when the wind is blowing hard enough to provide audio-visual cover to your approach.

BOWHUNTER TV



PRESENTED BY

RAM

Premieres
TUESDAYS
7:30 PM ET

TUESDAY
11:30 PM ET

THURSDAY
11:30 AM ET

Outdoor
CHANNEL

FAR NORTH BEARS

► Bowhunter Magazine & TV Contributor Danny Farris is all smiles after taking this hefty Saskatchewan boar. Tune in the week of June 26 as Danny, Editor Curt Wells, and Publisher Jeff Waring head north to hunt black bears with Kent and Lori Wolowski's Rock Ridge Outfitting; rockridgeoutfitting.com; (306) 401-7500.



BROWNING
The Best There Is

CVIX



WTA
Wilderness Trail Archery
Produced/Owned by *Colin*



Lumenok
LIGHT 'EM UP



Kenetrek
Boots
FOR THE TRAIL LESS TRAVELED



SIGSAUER
NEVER SETTLE



Keep *it* Fresh!

WHY YOU SHOULD RARELY HUNT THE SAME SPOT TWICE

By Clint Casper

PHOTO COURTESY OF LATITUDE OUTDOORS

Mobility is a big buzzword in the whitetail-hunting world. Many of today's top buck slayers are constantly on the move, rarely hunting from the same tree twice. This is a great approach when it comes to keeping the element of surprise in your favor. Staying mobile also allows you to move with the action, keeping you on top of your game as preferred food sources and deer behavior shift throughout the season.

Still, as good as mobility is, there are times I wish I would have stayed put! Determining whether to stick it out in your current spot or strike out in search of greener pastures is a conflict every bowhunter faces from time to time. In this article, we'll break it down and take a closer look at the reasons to stay on the move and when to understand that it's OK to settle in at a spot that deserves to be hunted more than once.



Today's bowhunters have a plethora of lightweight climbing equipment at their disposal — such as the tree saddle and climbing sticks shown here — making it easy to stay mobile and hunt fresh areas throughout the season.

Keep it Fresh!

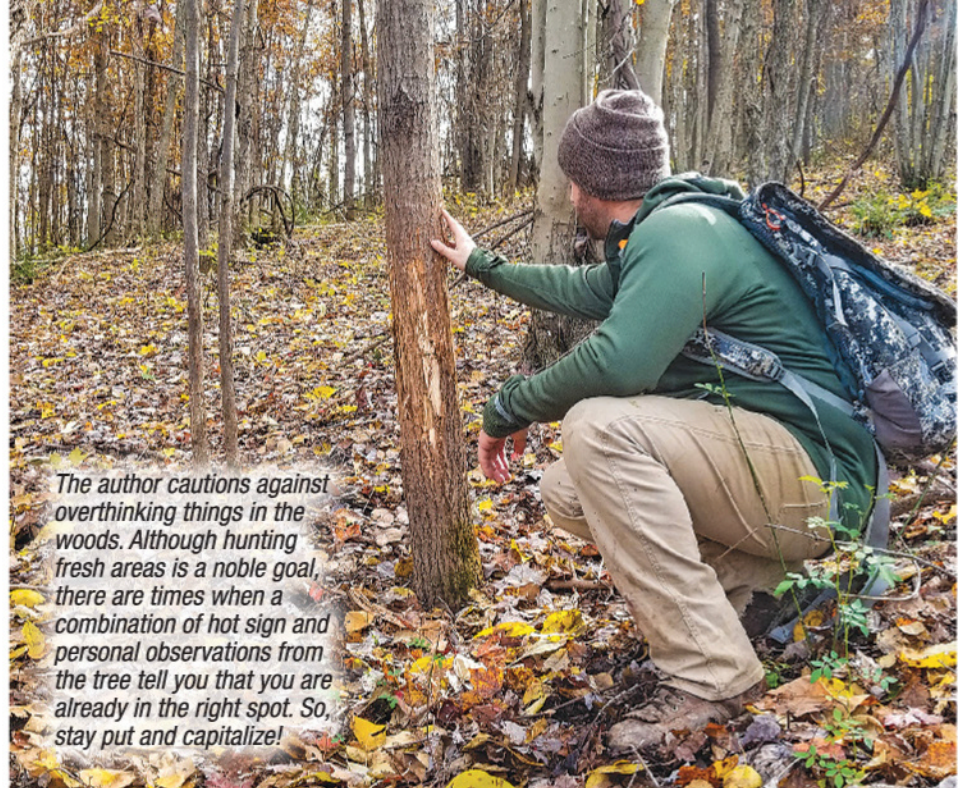
Reasons to Go

Back when I started bowhunting whitetails 20-some years ago, equipment was not exactly mobile friendly! At that time, comfort trumped portability. Climbing stands and hang-ons of the day were heavy, bulky and noisy. In those days, being mobile meant setting up as many stands as possible before the season opener so you could hopscotch from stand to stand as conditions dictated.

Sometimes during the season I'd have to take those stands down and move them based on what I was seeing. Or I would have to go hunt other areas and try to figure out how and where to find a buck to hunt. Regardless, I did a lot of bouncing around back then, just like I do now, but it was not nearly as easy as it is currently.

My reason for moving frequently is simple: I want the buck I'm bowhunting to have no clue I'm on his tail! I do not want a buck to have any inclination he's being hunted by hearing me, seeing me, winding me or picking out my stand location. This holds true for the rest of the deer herd as well, because even though I'm not hunting the whole herd, it's very important that they do not figure me out and alert my target buck of my presence.

Moving stand locations frequently — particularly on highly pressured ground — keeps deer and other hunters from patterning me as I'm trying to pattern a buck. Also, sometimes we just need to change locations due to lack of deer sightings or not seeing any good



The author cautions against overthinking things in the woods. Although hunting fresh areas is a noble goal, there are times when a combination of hot sign and personal observations from the tree tell you that you are already in the right spot. So, stay put and capitalize!

bucks. In these types of scenarios, staying on the move is a great strategy.

Choose Your Battles

My goal every year is to find a mature buck, learn his haunts and habits and then put an arrow through his lungs! Unfortunately, that is much easier said than done. This is where being mobile and not repeatedly hunting the same spot is so important. But knowing whether to stay or go is a tough call, and you must pick your battles.

For example, a few years ago I was hunting a great buck on a farm where I didn't have a lot of experience. I had glassed the buck there on two occasions in October, but aside from that

I had no intel at all. So, I threw some trail cameras out and started hunting. My plan was to be as mobile as possible; with a lightweight hang-on stand and four climbing sticks, I could easily and quietly hike in anywhere on the property and get 20 feet off the ground. My plan was to pick an area, go in early in the afternoon, find hot sign and hunt over it! Meanwhile, as I gathered firsthand observations, I would wait for the cameras to reveal their own insights.

Bouncing around and hunting a new spot almost every evening allowed me to cover a ton of country, but I just didn't find what I was looking for. Then, one Saturday afternoon, my luck completely changed! I decided to go into a deep creek bottom and look for fresh sign. It was the end of October, so I knew there should be plenty of fresh rubs and scrapes in areas with high buck activity. Sure enough, I found an area just like that. A deep drainage led into this creek, and at the bottom of it was a sharp bend in the creek, providing the perfect in-woods funnel! This area was clearly hot, so I immediately climbed a tree and got set up for the evening hunt. Although I did not see my target buck that night, I did see five other bucks cruising the creek bottom, and every one of them used that creek crossing!

My plan was to now fine-tune my approach by making small moves

Casper relies on multiple trail cameras to help identify areas frequented by big bucks. Once he has a general idea where a target buck is spending its time, he will begin hunting various locations within that area using mobile gear such as a lightweight climbing stand.



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

Keep it Fresh!

within that general vicinity until I found the perfect ambush. Six hunts and six different trees later, I killed a fantastic buck! That would not have happened without me picking and choosing my battles of where to hunt and how long to hunt there. I knew I needed to be in that area, but I also knew that I had to stay flexible until I found the perfect tree. I didn't want to hunt the same exact spot twice and give away my location to the local deer. On the night I killed that buck, I felt like I was in the perfect tree in the perfect spot. In fact, had I not killed my target buck the first evening there, I would have hunted there a few more days before moving again.

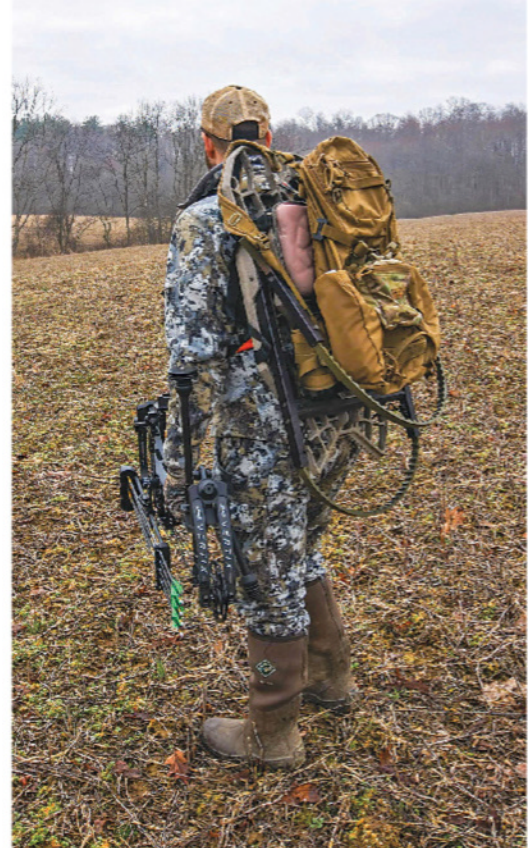
Reasons to Stay

As much as I love being a mobile, run-and-gun guy, I have learned over

the years there are times when you must stay put. That's right; I'm now telling you to hunt the same spot twice, or three or four times!

As I explained earlier, my whitetail-hunting goal is to never be seen, heard or winded by my target buck or any other deer. By bouncing around, I feel like I am giving myself the upper hand in the chess matches with mature whitetails. But there is an exception to every rule. Sometimes, a spot is worth hunting multiple times. Maybe this is a spot you've stumbled on while scouting and you find a tree you know you can slip into and out of undetected. Or maybe it's off the edge of a cut cornfield the farmer just combined, and you just know the area will be pounded by the local deer herd for the next several days as they scavenge what's been left behind.

Regardless, if your gut tell you there is a good reason to hunt a spot



Author Clint Casper found this great Ohio buck feeding in a standing beanfield in the evenings and then employed his mobile hunting strategy to set up an ambush and punch his tag.



more than once, listen to it! This is especially true during certain times of the season. For example, during the early season you may find an oak ridge where tons of acorns are dropping before many acorns are available elsewhere. Well, that ridge will absolutely be on fire with deer activity. In my opinion, that's a great time to find a tree that works for you and spend a few days in it! Another example would be when a funnel is creating a high volume of daylight buck activity during the rut. In that scenario, I think you should set up shop for a few days, roll the dice and see what happens.

Don't Overthink It!

As bowhunters, we've all been guilty of hunting the same spot repeatedly and burning the location out. In my experience, once you burn a spot out, it's burned out for the entire fall. Trust me, I've learned from experience that no matter how good you think the spot looks, or how much you believe a certain buck just "has to" walk by at some point, it probably isn't going to turn out like you hoped. If something isn't working or producing, it's time to move on even though that can be difficult to accept. But what happens when the opposite happens? Let me explain.

Let's say you're bouncing around from spot to spot, being mobile, in mid-October and you stumble upon a ridge covered with fresh scrapes and big, orange rubs. We all know what this means; a big buck is living close by and you should definitely jump on that hot sign NOW! You've been bouncing around waiting to find "the spot;" now you have, and it is time to set up shop!

I have to admit that in the past, I've been guilty of overthinking such scenarios. I've tried to reinvent the wheel instead of taking the gift right in front of me. Because I've been in such a mobile mindset, I felt like I should only hunt the hotspot a time or two and bounce again. Wrong! The spot is hot right now! Maybe the sign tells us that, or trail cameras are confirming a buck is there frequently in daylight. Regardless, the time to strike is right now!

Most hotspots are only hot for very short windows during the season. They will produce excellent hunting, but it won't last long. So, buckle in, stay alert and be prepared for that big buck to stroll on by! **B**

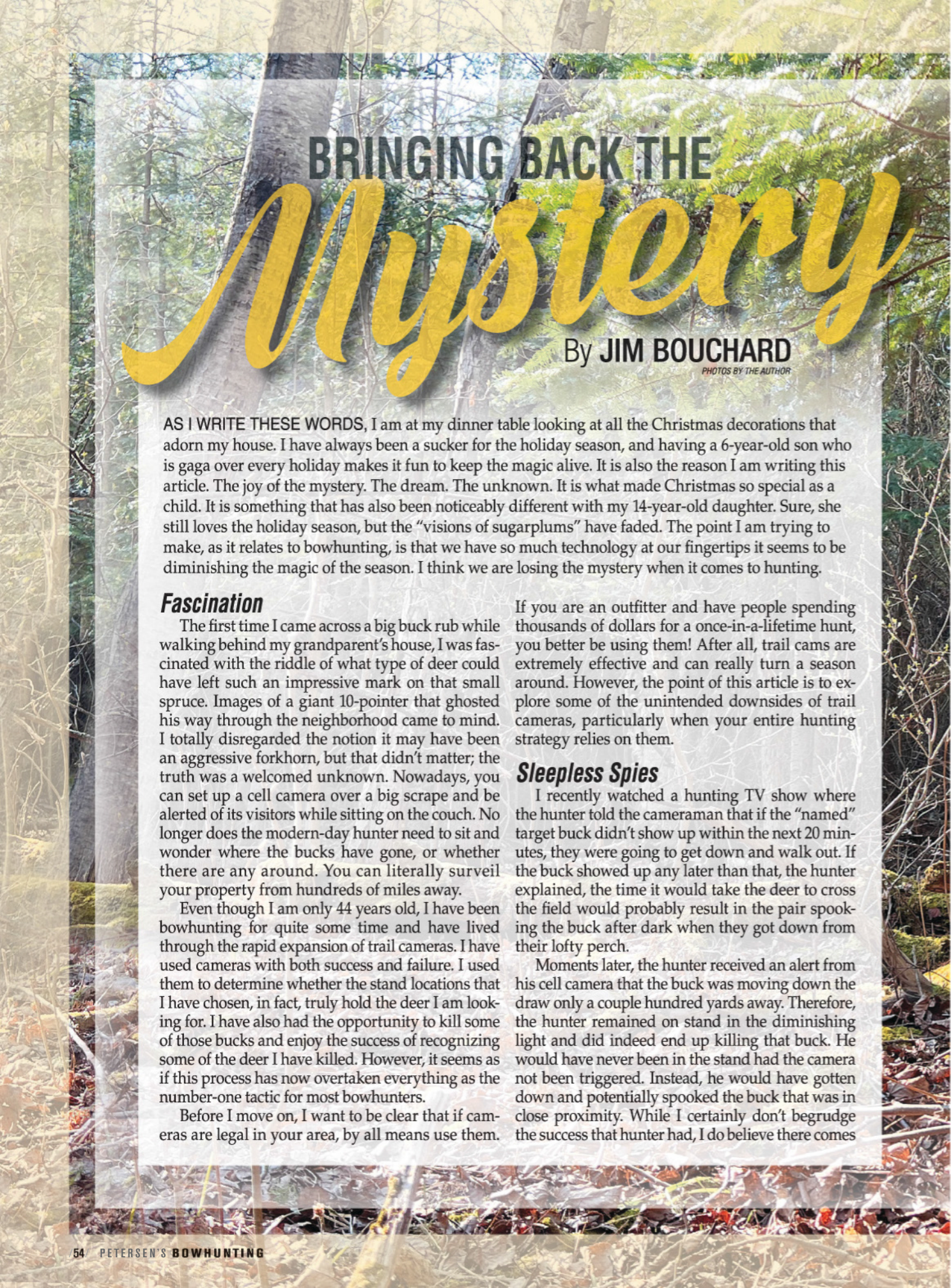
"WE TAKE YOUR SHOTS SERIOUSLY."



877-893-7155

AMERICASBESTBOWSTRINGS.COM





BRINGING BACK THE *Mystery*

By **JIM BOUCHARD**

PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

AS I WRITE THESE WORDS, I am at my dinner table looking at all the Christmas decorations that adorn my house. I have always been a sucker for the holiday season, and having a 6-year-old son who is gaga over every holiday makes it fun to keep the magic alive. It is also the reason I am writing this article. The joy of the mystery. The dream. The unknown. It is what made Christmas so special as a child. It is something that has also been noticeably different with my 14-year-old daughter. Sure, she still loves the holiday season, but the “visions of sugarplums” have faded. The point I am trying to make, as it relates to bowhunting, is that we have so much technology at our fingertips it seems to be diminishing the magic of the season. I think we are losing the mystery when it comes to hunting.

Fascination

The first time I came across a big buck rub while walking behind my grandparent's house, I was fascinated with the riddle of what type of deer could have left such an impressive mark on that small spruce. Images of a giant 10-pointer that ghosted his way through the neighborhood came to mind. I totally disregarded the notion it may have been an aggressive forkhorn, but that didn't matter; the truth was a welcomed unknown. Nowadays, you can set up a cell camera over a big scrape and be alerted of its visitors while sitting on the couch. No longer does the modern-day hunter need to sit and wonder where the bucks have gone, or whether there are any around. You can literally surveil your property from hundreds of miles away.

Even though I am only 44 years old, I have been bowhunting for quite some time and have lived through the rapid expansion of trail cameras. I have used cameras with both success and failure. I used them to determine whether the stand locations that I have chosen, in fact, truly hold the deer I am looking for. I have also had the opportunity to kill some of those bucks and enjoy the success of recognizing some of the deer I have killed. However, it seems as if this process has now overtaken everything as the number-one tactic for most bowhunters.

Before I move on, I want to be clear that if cameras are legal in your area, by all means use them.

If you are an outfitter and have people spending thousands of dollars for a once-in-a-lifetime hunt, you better be using them! After all, trail cams are extremely effective and can really turn a season around. However, the point of this article is to explore some of the unintended downsides of trail cameras, particularly when your entire hunting strategy relies on them.

Sleepless Spies

I recently watched a hunting TV show where the hunter told the cameraman that if the “named” target buck didn't show up within the next 20 minutes, they were going to get down and walk out. If the buck showed up any later than that, the hunter explained, the time it would take the deer to cross the field would probably result in the pair spooking the buck after dark when they got down from their lofty perch.

Moments later, the hunter received an alert from his cell camera that the buck was moving down the draw only a couple hundred yards away. Therefore, the hunter remained on stand in the diminishing light and did indeed end up killing that buck. He would have never been in the stand had the camera not been triggered. Instead, he would have gotten down and potentially spooked the buck that was in close proximity. While I certainly don't begrudge the success that hunter had, I do believe there comes

A man wearing a camouflage jacket, dark pants, and a black and white baseball cap is crouching in a forest. He is positioned next to a large, moss-covered log. The forest floor is covered with dry, brown leaves. The background is filled with trees and branches, creating a dense woodland scene. The lighting suggests it's daytime, with sunlight filtering through the trees.

Uncertainty Is a Key Ingredient of Good Bowhunting

Finding a big rub such as this in your hunting area begs the question — what does the buck that created it look like? While the use of a trail camera may answer that question, the author argues perhaps you are better off not knowing.

BRINGING BACK THE MYSTERY

a time when a hunter needs to *hunt*, relying on intuition and hard work more than a sleepless complement of electronic spies scattered throughout the forest.

Another observation I made this season is how the typical hunting conversation has changed throughout the years. Stories used to consist of firsthand accounts of how someone saw a big buck, or had a close call only to come up empty-handed. Or how a ridgeline was littered with scrapes and rubs, and hopes of seeing that big buck were high for the next day. I, for one, cannot wait to hear all the same, old stories when I go to deer camp each fall. I have heard many of these stories countless times, but I still look forward to the next telling. I love visualizing how big a buck my uncle missed and what that thick draw looked like below my cousin's stand.

Sadly, most of today's stories begin with a trail-cam picture or video that answers those questions before they can even be asked. Don't get me wrong; trail-cam footage is really entertaining to see. However, it certainly doesn't keep any secrets. The mystery is gone. The buck that made that scrape now has a name and will be the tag end of the oft-repeated, modern-day hunting phrase, *We have a lot of history with this buck*.

In recent years, there has been an increase in regulations on types and duration of camera usage for multiple reasons. Clearly, I am not the only one who believes there are some issues related to trail-cam technology that ought to be addressed. The question is, how far will regulators go? Many popular hunting podcasts are flooded with trail-cam discussion. It is now standard operating procedure for serious bowhunters to collect years of footage from their hunting areas, with more and more cameras deployed each year.

In my job as a high-school teacher in Northern Michigan, I regularly get to see trail-cam images captured by my students, who show them to me on the screens of their smartphones. I actually really enjoy this interaction, and I hope one positive of cell cameras is getting more kids in the woods. Still, I can't help think at times that many of these students have invested more time and money into becoming good trail-cam operators than they have in developing strong scouting and woodsmanship skills.

Grumpy Old Man

I realize there is always pushback against transformational new technology. Whenever there is change, it is hard not to channel your inner "grumpy old man" and say things such as, "When I was a kid, I had to use a stickbow on the ground, with a match stick for a sight!"

The truth is, I am being somewhat hypocritical in my criticism of trail cameras. After all, I take advantage of a lot of modern-day archery gear. Quiet, warm clothing. Fast, reliable bows. Accurate rangefinders. Super light and comfortable treestands. All of these items and more help me stay afield longer and make me a more effective bowhunter. However, none of them can predict the future and diminish the mystery of what is "out there." I have to put in the time and effort to know where and when to sit, and I certainly don't always choose correctly, which makes the season challenging. Every serious bowhunter wants to make the most of his or her limited time in the woods, but to what end?

A Season in the Dark

Last summer, I decided I wasn't going to use any trail cameras during the 2022 archery season. I was going to rely strictly on off-season scouting and my firsthand observations during the season. I knew I would be ostracized from the rest of the crowd, because I wouldn't have any "hit list" bucks or pictures to go with them. However, I was willing to sacrifice that for the chance to once again experience the thrills I enjoyed regularly as a young hunter. I also came to realize that I would much rather share a picture of me holding a buck than another trail-cam picture of a big buck working a field-edge scrape at 3 a.m.

Well, my season started very slowly. In my hunting area, there were no acorns to be found, and that's really bad news in the big woods of Northern Michigan, where acorns are the biggest wildlife draw of all. Deer, bears, turkeys, squirrels and more rely heavily on acorns to help them fatten up for winter. The spots that were successful in the past were now dry of deer sign, and I was forced to abandon some locations that were outstanding just the previous year. I didn't even have any pictures logged away in my phone to keep me optimistic about what could potentially show up. I just had to grind it out and adapt to conditions.

It wasn't until Oct. 30 that my chance finally came. I arrowed a great buck I called in while he was cruising the river on one of my favorite rut funnels. I had sat in the same spot three other times earlier in the season without seeing a single deer. However, it made the hunt that much sweeter. I didn't get a picture on my phone showing the buck cruising into the woodlot the night before. I just knew that if I put in enough time, I would eventually connect with an antsy



Finding and deciphering deer sign has always been paramount to hunting success. In addition to helping you form strategies and choose hunting locations, sign allows your imagination to wander about the bucks that created it and adds excitement to your season.





The author took this buck (above) with his bow on a perfect morning in late October. He had no knowledge of the buck, but he put himself in the right place and let the mystery of the morning unfold. The author felt extremely fortunate to take the buck (inset, right) that shed the antler he found previously (inset, top right) during the 2022 Michigan rifle season. He said the surprise of not knowing it was the same buck until after the hunt was over only added to the experience.

buck looking for that first hot doe. I had no history with the buck and had never laid eyes on him until he altered his course and came to my grunt call. And yet, I was giddy as a little boy as I watched the deer go down in the tall grass just 40 yards from the base of my tree.

Some say cameras help encourage people to pass on younger bucks because they know larger bucks live in the area. I get it, and I believe there is truth to that. I also believe scouting and looking for sheds in the off-season can create some amazing canvases for your imagination to paint. After all, who is to say the bucks that exist only in your mind's eye are any less real than those you see only in trail-cam images but never in real life?

I love walking the woods after the season to find all the rut sign I missed while sitting on stand throughout the season. Nothing gets my heart pounding like seeing pockets of destroyed saplings and dished-out scrapes. It is even better to pick up and hold the antlers of a stud buck or an up-and-comer. Not only do you literally have a piece of that deer to keep the dream alive, but you also earned it. You have to be out there in the woods. Yes, the goal is to find sign and antlers, but along the way you learn so much more. I have found many hotspots by pounding the ground scouting and looking for sheds. My time walking the woods has been exponentially more beneficial — to my mental health, physical health and my bowhunting — than pouring out a pile of corn in front of a camera and seeing what's around.

After my bowhunting success last fall, I participated in the Michigan rifle season as I always do. Now, I realize this is a bowhunting magazine, but please bear with me. Last spring, I found a giant shed antler in a cornfield on a property where I regularly hunt. I searched three days to find

the match, with no success. Well, fast-forward to opening day of rifle season and I was sitting in the general vicinity of where that shed was found but not so close I really thought about that buck as a realistic target. The first deer that appeared on that frosty morning was a lone doe walking east to west out of a cattail marsh. For the next 10 minutes, I was on high alert, anticipating the appearance of a giant swamp buck.

Just as that dream faded away, I heard a loud grunt to the north. It was so loud and perfect I almost second guessed what I heard. Shortly, I could see movement through the cedars and I will never forget the first sight of the buck. I immediately knew it was a great buck, and only seconds later it was lying dead just 50 yards away. I honestly wasn't sure *exactly* how big the deer was; I just knew he was a "good one." It wasn't until I finally got up to the deer and grabbed those antlers that I realized it was the buck whose shed I had picked up back in the spring. I was shocked. It was one of those dreams that came true right in front of me. I will never forget the true surprise I felt grabbing those antlers. I had been dreaming of that deer all spring and summer, and there he was. I wasn't tipped off on my camera, nor did I have any video footage. I just had a big, old antler to fuel my fire, and my butt was in the right tree.

This season, just like my son going to sleep on Christmas Eve, I got up not knowing what to expect. Would I get a shot at a giant buck? Would I be skunked again? It was all a mystery, fueled by desire and trust in my scouting. So, maybe if you are tired of investing thousands of dollars into cameras, batteries and data plans, try putting them away for a season and stepping back in time to a simpler, more mysterious era. I bet you won't regret it. **B**



By **JON E. SILKS**

CROSSBOW TEST



BearX's new Constrictor Pro offers many useful features and plenty of hunting capability at a price that is very attractive relative to the competition.

BEARX CONSTRICTOR PRO

A Good Rig Gets Better —
and Offers a Great Value!

BEARX CROSSBOWS IS a relatively young crossbow manufacturer, though parent company Bear Archery has been serving hunters for 90 years and carries the name of its founder, the legendary Fred Bear.

With that kind of experience and tradition behind BearX, we expect good things! The company's Constrictor has been successful in past years, and for 2023 it has been made even better.

The new Constrictor Pro features a bow assembly built on a stout riser complete with built-in limb pockets,

broadhead clearance scoop, dual string stops, rubber-coated foot stirrup and quiver mount. A set of fiberglass split limbs work with the large dual cams to send 400-grain bolts downrange at 400 fps. Separate stock, pistol grip and forearm components mount directly to the machined aluminum rail and provide comfort and control. The trigger box includes an auto-engaged safety, anti-dry fire mechanism, scope mount and bolt-retention device.

Power to the People

Bear is putting power in the hands of the masses by offering a crossbow that generates 400-fps speeds with 400-grain bolts at an attractive price point of only \$699.99. The Constrictor Pro's bow assembly is centered on a stout, compact aluminum riser configured with numerous cutouts to reduce overall weight and bridging and flares to enhance strength and rigidity. Limb pocket bases are machined into the riser and are complemented by machined aluminum limb caps that work with the limb bolts to control the critical limb-to-riser interface. A broadhead clearance scoop, rubber-coated

THE SPECS

Manufacturer: BearX Crossbows, 800-694-9494; beararchery.com

Model: Constrictor Pro

Safety Features: Anti-dry fire mechanism, auto-engaging trigger safety and forestock safety wings

Cam System: Dual, machined aluminum

Riser: Compact, black anodized aluminum

Overall Length: 33.5 inches

Axle-to-Axle Width: 8.125 inches (cocked); 12.0625 inches (at rest)

Advertised Weight: 8.2 pounds (crossbow only)

String: D97, 28 strands, 34.8125 inches

Cables(x2): D97, 28 strands, 13.25 inches

Limbs: Compression-molded fiberglass, split

Draw Weight: 185 pounds

Power Stroke: 15.5 inches

Stock/Forearm: Multi-piece, molded polymer

Finish: Stone, with your choice of True Timber Strata or Veil Whitetail camouflage limbs

Advertised Speed: 400 fps with a 400-grain bolt

MSRP: \$699.99

Comments: A bona fide workhorse.

foot stirrup and dual string stops complete the riser package.

The Constrictor Pro's compression-molded, fiberglass split limbs measure 11 inches long and flare out at the ends to accept the large, machined-aluminum dual cams and rotating cable anchor attached to the axle assembly. The cams feature a reverse-draw configuration, with the string drawn from the side farthest away from the trigger box, to increase the distance it must be moved to get to full draw (power stroke) and boost bolt speed.

Shooter Connection

As the shooter, your main points of interface with the crossbow is the butt stock, cheek piece, pistol grip, trigger



The Constrictor Pro weighs 9.5 pounds with accessories, is 11.75 inches wide when cocked and capable of launching 400-grain bolts up to 400 fps.

SPEED & ENERGY

	BOLT SPEED	KINETIC ENERGY
420-GRAIN BOLT	385 fps	138.3 ft./lbs.
500-GRAIN BOLT	359 fps	143.1 ft./lbs.
403-GRAIN MFR. BOLT	392 fps	137.3 ft./lbs.

BOWHUNTING Test Measurements:

Maximum Width: 11.75 inches (cocked); 17.5 inches (at rest)

Overall Length: 33.5 inches

Mass Weight: 8.03 pounds (crossbow only); 9.5 pounds (with all accessories)

Average Trigger Pull: 2.66 pounds

Length of Pull: 14.5 inches

Average Shot Noise: 102.47 dBA w/420-grain bolt; 101.07 dBA w/500-grain bolt

Maximum Shot Deviation at 35 Yards: .75-inch

and foregrip. Bear makes the Constrictor Pro's stock, pistol grip and foregrip from lightweight, molded polymer components that are stone colored. The butt stock is outfitted with a BearX logo inlay on either side, as well as a rubber inlay at the rear to enhance shoulder grip. A rubber inlay is also used on the bottom of the pass-through foregrip/safety wing combo component to promote control. The safety wings are intended to keep the shooter's hand and fingers below the flight deck and out of harm's way. A generously sized trigger guard, designed to accept gloved fingers, is coupled with a contoured pistol grip into a single, molded unit and is attached to the rail just behind the foregrip. The final piece combines

an optimally positioned cheek piece for eye alignment and a rope slot for the manual cocking device.

Triggered

A black-anodized, machined-aluminum rail ties the whole rig together as it spans nearly its entire length and serves as the anchor and hub for a majority of the components. The trigger housing is seated and attached at the rear of the rail and is home to two important safety features — an anti-dry fire mechanism that will not allow the bow to be fired without a bolt properly installed, and an auto-engaging trigger safety that must be pushed forward to the "red" position before the trigger can be pulled. A robust scope-mounting rail and a ball-detent-style bolt-retention device round out the package.

What's in the Box?

The BearX Constrictor Pro crossbow comes with an illuminated, speed-adjustable scope; two BearX TrueX bolts; a 4-bolt, top-mount, adjustable quiver; crossbow sling; rope-cocking sled; rail lube; and string wax.

Range Notes

After spending some time with the Constrictor Pro on the range, I can say this is a no-nonsense hunting rig that will get the job done in the field. I also think it's a sharp-looking crossbow, as I really like the contrast between the stone-colored polymer components and the black aluminum rail and other black metal components.

As for shooting performance, our measurements were close to Bear's advertised specifications, while the integrated pistol grip and foregrips offered plenty of control while aiming and shooting. You really can't go wrong buying a crossbow of this caliber for a price under \$700! **B**

ELEVATION MODULAR GEAR SYSTEM:

SMART, SAFE STORAGE SOLUTIONS

THESE WELL-DESIGNED ACCESSORIES keep critical gear protected and at the ready.

When bowhunting, certain items must always be close at hand. Binoculars, rangefinders and release aids probably top the list for most hunters, though a host of other items such as trail cameras, game calls, smartphones, scents, knives and licenses certainly qualify.

As the years of bowhunting experience gather under our belts, we each develop our own “system” for how we like to carry our gear in the field. And while I am a firm believer in the old adage, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” I also believe there is always room for improvement.

Enter the Modular Gear System (MGS) from Elevation, a smartly designed series of accessories that will help keep your optics and other essentials safe and organized while allowing you to quickly and quietly access them in the field. I recently had the opportunity to test four MGS items — the Encompass Bino Harness, Rangefinder Case, Utility Pouch and Utility Box — that will be mainstays of my hunting outings this fall.

These days, a good bino harness is a must for serious bowhunters. In fact, I rarely head afield to scout or hunt without a good binocular on my chest, and I give Elevation high marks for making a durable, comfortable, quiet harness that will accommodate your favorite 8X, 10X or even 12X glass. Highlights of the Encompass harness include padded shoulder straps and neoprene-sheathed, quick-connect side buckles; dual magnetic closures for the main binocular compartment; a zippered front pocket perfect for handheld



Encompass Bino Harness (\$99.99), Rangefinder Case (\$26.99), Utility Pouch (\$39.99) and Utility Box (\$26.99) / Elevation, 717-492-8035; elevationequipped.com

release aids; stretch side pockets for wind checkers and other small items; an integrated lens-cleaning cloth; integrated tree strap; and built-in, adjustable binocular tethers that allow you to keep your hands free when necessary.

Meanwhile, Elevation’s Rangefinder Case melds seamlessly with the bino harness via the MGS attachment points. It is easy to attach the case to the bottom of the harness or, as I prefer, to one of the two chest straps, keeping your range reader within easy reach at all times. The Rangefinder Case features both magnetic and elastic closures, a push-up design that makes it easy to get your rangefinder out of the case, small side pockets to store small items such as SD cards and an integrated lens cloth.

Much like the Bino Harness and Rangefinder Case, the MGS Utility Pouch and Utility Box go together like peanut butter and jelly. Featuring a four-point, snap attachment system on the back, the Utility Pouch rides perfectly on a belt for summertime scouting missions, making it easy to keep a couple trail cams, a pair of pruning shears and more at the ready. And during hunting season, this pouch will undoubtedly be attached to my tree saddle to help store

tether lines, haul ropes and more. I love the fact that, unlike most saddle pouches, the Utility Pouch holds its shape, a feature that makes it *much* easier to both remove and stow items with one hand while hanging 20 feet off the ground. A drawstring closure on the top of the pouch keeps gear secure while hiking to and from the truck, and smaller side pockets are perfect for holding bottles of attractant scent or scent-elimination spray.

For smaller items, use the many rows of webbing loops on the front of the pouch to attach the MGS Utility Box. Featuring a full zipper closure and smaller interior pockets, the Utility Box is perfect for organizing multiple SD cards, spare trail-cam batteries, licenses, field-dressing kits, mouth calls and more.

All four of these useful, feature-rich MGS items are constructed from strong but quiet fabrics in Ambush green. When used collectively as a system, these products easily provide sufficient gear storage to make summer scouting hikes and even quick morning and afternoon hunts without the need for an additional pack. Honestly, they’re a perfect choice for today’s mobile bowhunter. **E**

— Editor Christian Berg

**PRIMOS TRIGGER STICK
APEX CARBON FIBER TRIPOD:**

ROCK-SOLID CROSSBOW STABILITY

TODAY'S CROSSBOWS are faster, flatter-shooting and more accurate than ever, allowing hunters to attempt shots at longer distances with the proper practice and preparation.

Doing so, however, requires an exceptional shooting rest or shooting sticks that provide the necessary stability and support to attempt safe, ethical shots at their quarry. To this end, there may be no better option than a tripod.

One prime example of a high-quality, lightweight tripod is Primos Hunting's new Trigger Stick Apex Carbon Fiber Tripod. Weighing in at 7 pounds, the Trigger Stick Apex is light enough you can easily carry it to your ground blind, or even secure it to your pack for a hike away from the roads. The secret behind the tripod's lightweight design is the trio of carbon-fiber wrapped aluminum legs that provide strength and durability — the tripod is capable of handling up to 50 pounds — while also shedding much of the poundage associated with some other tripods.

The real benefit of the Trigger Stick Apex, however, is its extreme adjustability, coupled with its Trigger Stick that allows for quick and easy, one-handed adjustment when setting up, even on rough and uneven terrain. The legs have three sections that can be adjusted, allowing them to extend from 32 inches when fully collapsed to 62 inches fully extended. The Trigger Stick handle in the center of the tripod allows you to quickly set up or tweak



the legs with the simple squeeze of the trigger. There's no need to manually unlock the sections on each leg to get set up properly, and the seconds you save could mean the difference between getting a shot or watching your target animal walk away. The wide range of adjustment also means you can get the right height and setup whether you're sitting in a blind, standing or even kneeling for a shot.

Each leg also has a locking switch that allows you to secure the legs at different angles, providing even more flexibility. You can literally tap lightly on one of the legs to make a quick adjustment or tweak — 4-5 seconds is really all it takes.

As for the Apex Clamp atop the tripod, it offers a vice-like grip to securely hold your crossbow — or, of course, a firearm if you also gun hunt — in place. If you want to remove the clamp, you simply loosen and unscrew it from the tripod. Plus, the Trigger Stick Apex allows you to add an adapter to hold a spotting scope, binoculars or even a camera for those who enjoy photography. Other highlights of the Trigger Stick Apex include a built-in level to ensure the tripod is well balanced and a carrying case for toting and storing the tripod.

It's worth noting that for 2023, the Trigger Stick Apex is also available with Spartan Precision's Davros head. This magnetic, quick-detach system features a friction-adjustable ball joint that permits smooth,

360-degree range of motion, allowing for even greater crossbow movement and quicker adjustment for almost any shot angle.

Last fall, I twice found myself forgoing hunting from my treestand to venture out and explore new areas of the farm that I hunt. After finding an ideal spot for a ground ambush on the edge of a small field, I settled in and immediately wished I had a rest like the Trigger Stick Apex tripod since the shooting sticks I had were too rickety to competently handle a 10-pound crossbow. The Trigger Stick Apex's extreme adjustability and flexibility, coupled with its swiveling Apex Clamp, are perfect for providing a rock-solid foundation and offering the ability to quickly and easily move with an animal if it takes a step or two. There's no doubt this tripod would have been perfect for covering the area I was watching, especially since deer were coming from three directions, making it hard to move the crossbow around without being detected by their keen eyesight.

From providing a solid rest while sighting in your crossbow in the backyard or on the range, to giving you the confidence to make good on your shot at a deer, elk or turkey in the field, the Primos Trigger Stick Apex Carbon Fiber Tripod is one piece of equipment that would benefit every crossbow hunter. **E**

— Associate Editor Mark Demko



By **MARK DEMKO**

NEW GEAR



A NEW HIDEOUT

\$429.99; \$529.99 FOR THE XL
Rig'Em Right Outdoors; rigemright.com

Rig'Em Right Outdoors' HydeOut Ground Blinds offer 360-degree views, with large windows for multiple shot angles; silent entry and exit; high-visibility window latches that are easy to see in low light; and a camouflaged interior that allows you to blend into the blind when wearing camo. The orange center hub makes it easy to locate, while removable reflectors allow you to easily find the blind in the dark. The blind also comes with straps for securing natural cover, heavy duty ground stakes and a camo backpack with shoulder straps for carrying the blind. The HydeOut, designed for 1-2 people, weighs 19 pounds and is 55x55 inches, with a 65-inch height, while the HydeOut XL, which can hold up to three people, weighs 26 pounds and is 65x65 inches, with a 72-inch height. Both are available in GORE OPTIFADE Subalpine and Timber.



24-HOUR SURVEILLANCE

\$299.99
Bushnell; bushnell.com

If you need deer action 24/7, Bushnell's CelluCORE Live is for you. This new cellular trail cam features live-streaming capabilities via Bushnell's app so you can always keep an eye on your property or scout for deer. The camera also features dual SIM cards and an optimized antenna so you always get the best signal and feed, high-output No Glow IR LEDs for 100-foot night range and the ability to sort images by weather, wind, moon phase and more. It runs on 12 AA batteries; data plans start at 9.99 per month.

LONG-RANGE ASSASSIN

**\$139.99 (FLETCHED);
\$229.99 (SHAFTS)**
Gold Tip; goldtip.com

The Pierce LRT is Gold Tip's most advanced long-range tactical arrow ever, with a micro-diameter size designed for better penetration and less wind drift at longer distances. Key features include a patent-pending component system that's easy to install perfectly straight every time and DYNASLICKSHIELD coating for better penetration and easier removal from targets. The arrow comes in spine sizes of 250, 300, 340, 400 and 500 and boasts a +/- .001-inch straightness tolerance. It's available as a six-pack fletched or one-dozen shafts and comes with GTO nocks.



SERIOUS HUNTING PANTS

\$199
KUIU; kuiu.com

If you hunt rugged country filled with brush or briars, you need pants that can take a beating and protect your legs. Enter the PRO Brush Pant, made from lightweight, four-way stretch fabric with reinforced panels in high-contact areas like knees, thighs and lower legs. Pants feature adjustable, removable suspenders; zippered inner and outer leg vents for temperature control; water-resistant treatment and boot lace hooks to keep the pants in place. Available in regular, short and tall options.



JAZZ UP DINNER

\$12.50
The Provider;
theproviderlife.com

Tag a deer, elk or moose? Take your venison to the next level with Provider's rubs and spices. Go bold with The Brit, a dry seasoning blend that features garlic, pepper, paprika, coconut sugar and other spices. Or, put your meat in the Crosshairs, a classic combo of salt, pepper, dill and more that's guaranteed to brighten any red meat. If you really want to cover the gamut, check out the Provider's Ultimate Pack, featuring all 11 of the company's rubs and spices.

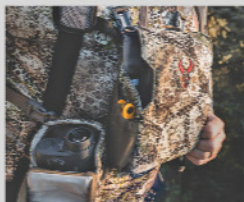


SUPERIOR STABILIZER KIT

\$449

Axcel Archery; truball.com

The Antler Ridge Hunting Stabilizer Kit features all the components necessary to create a superior, well-balanced stabilizer setup on your bow. The kit is built around the Bio-Composite Hybrid Archery Stabilizer, billed as the strongest .550-inch carbon stabilizer on the market. It includes front and back bars, front and back Kryptos Arc Vibration Dampeners, adjustable offset mount, quick-disconnect and a pair of 2-ounce weights on each bar. Available in 6- and 8-, 8- and 10-, and 10- and 12-inch combos.



FIRST-RATE BINO HARNESS

\$99.99

Badlands; badlandsgear.com

The BINO-AXS bino harness is an ideal option for mobile hunters. The lightweight case features a magnetic closure that keeps the lid secured whether open or closed, while the open sides allow for quick and easy extraction of binos. Other highlights include quiet, soft interior fabric; numerous attachment points on the side wings and bottom; and elastic exterior pockets and inner pocket for holding essentials. Available in small (6.125x5.25x3 inches) and medium (7.25x6x3.25 inches).



EXPERT BOW PROTECTION

\$220

Flambeau Outdoors;
flambeauoutdoors.com

The Formula Bow Case uses a foamless chassis assembly instead of foam layers or straps to secure your bow, allowing cams, string and sight to free-float to prevent damage. The adjustable system features two chassis sleds that bow limbs rest against. Nite Ize Mega Gear Ties then lock the riser in place to spinal tabs on the sleds, anchoring the bow securely. The 47x20x9.5-inch case accommodates bows up to 43 inches long and comes with accessory pouch and 8-arrow holder.



ARROW QUIVER PLUS

\$139.99

Elevation Equipped;
elevationequipped.com

Bowhunters who shoot 3-D courses and competitions will appreciate Elevation Equipped's Terra MGS Sleeve Quiver Package. Available in Ambush green, this modular gear system features everything you need to hold arrows and essential items. It comes with the Terra MGS Sleeve Quiver, Utility Pouch, Rangefinder Case, Utility Box and Pro Shooter's Belt. The quiver has oversized arrow sleeve pockets, two pen sleeves and more.

B WHERE TO GO/MARKETPLACE

Lowdown™

HIGH SPEED TRAIL CAM VIEWER

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

3x FASTER

Over
60% LARGER EASY

- View
- Save
- Delete



LEARN MORE/GET ONE:
LOWDOWNVIEWER.COM

9"
NO CALIBER
TRUCK
SHELL

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

SCORPION VENOM™



Venomize Your Bow

PO Box 931 Deer Park, NY 11729

www.scorpionvenom-archery.com

For more information or to place an order, call Jeff Millar at 717-695-8081. Visa, Mastercard and American Express accepted. Write: **Where To Go or Marketplace** section, Petersen's BOWHUNTING, 6385 Flank Drive, Suite 800, Harrisburg, PA 17112; or email at jeff.millar@outdoorsg.com.

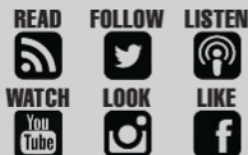
Alberta Spring Bear Hunting
Two Bear Area

Fall Moose Hunting

Great with add on Elk or Whitetail
(license extra)

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

ENGAGE WITH OUR HARDCORE BOWHUNTING COMMUNITY.



PETERSEN'S
BOWHUNTING



BOWHUNTING.PODBEAN.COM



INSTAGRAM.COM/PETERSENSBOWHUNTING



TWITTER.COM/BOWHUNTINGMAG

**AT HOME &
ON THE GO**

- bowhuntingmag.com
- mymagnow.com



By **EDDIE CLAYPOOL**

THE DIY GUY

THE LONGEST MILE

Learning the Hard Way!

A SCOUTING TRIP to southeastern Colorado in August of 1989 had provided me with access to a great property along the Arkansas River. It was now November, and as I visited with the farmer who had granted me permission to bowhunt, I was told to “*stay outta sight*” and “*not tell anyone else I was hunting on his land.*” I was more than willing to accommodate these simple requests.

As I wheeled my pickup onto the faint two-track that left his barnyard and headed down toward the brush-lined river, anticipation was high. Finding a hidden nook where I could park out of sight, I was now ready to hit the ground running. Grabbing my bow, I headed for a distant grove of cottonwoods to see if I might get a feel for the deer activity on the place.

A couple hours later, after covering a decent amount of ground foot-scouting, the deer sign had been impressive. Clearly, this place supported plenty of deer and some mature bucks. Large rubs dotted the landscape and trails with “four-finger-wide” tracks were plentiful. Making my way back toward my truck, I happened to pass through an area of concentrated big-buck sign; the hair on the back of my neck stood up. With only an hour of daylight

left, and no treestand in possession, I wondered how I might make the most of this awesome hotspot.

Looking around, I spotted a cottonwood that held potential as a “natural” treestand. Tying my bow to a string, I climbed the limbs of the tree, and when about 20 feet elevated, came upon an excellent junction of limbs and tree trunk that offered a comfortable perch. Pulling my bow up, I settled in for the show.

Shortly, a nice buck made its way past my hide; exhibiting uncharacteristic patience, I left my bow hanging. After all, I had a week of hunting time ahead of me. It was peak-rut, and there were certainly bucks on this property that exceeded this low-end Pope and Young-caliber specimen. As the sun slowly sank below the western horizon, no other visitors graced me with their presence.

Starting to exit my elevated hide as twilight settled onto the scene, a quick mistake changed everything. While using a dead limb as a handhold, in a *snap* I found myself plunging forward and down. Bouncing off a big limb about halfway to the ground, my fall was broken, but at a dear cost. Hitting the sandy ground somewhat softly, I instantly knew the landing hadn't been a problem, but that big impact halfway down had done some serious damage. Having landed on the limb across my left ribcage, I was now suffering from pain like I'd never experienced before; and to compound the matter, I couldn't breathe. Writhing in pain, unable to pull air into my lungs, I prayed for unconsciousness.

A little later, as I finally came back to my senses, I tried to lay still and breathe, even though every breath was like a dagger being thrust into my side. A mile from my truck, cross-country, in full darkness, with very little ability to move, I was now in a first-class bind. Attempting to gain my feet, the pain in my side shot lightning bolts through my head. Finally becoming erect, I could only shuffle my feet



along; attempting to lift a foot off the ground incurred excruciating pain.

For the next few hours, I slowly inched toward my truck. Taking a few falls here and there, there was a lot of simply lying on the ground. Several times, while lying on the sandy ground, I slipped into unconsciousness until the cold November night awakened me. Then, stiffly, I would force myself back into action.

This battle lasted until the eastern sky began to lighten. Reaching the truck as sunlight flooded the landscape, I crawled into my pickup camper, pulled my sleeping bag over my body and fell into rest. Finally awakening at midday, I slowly and carefully placed my distraught body into the cab of the truck and started driving toward Oklahoma. Twelve hours later, I pulled into my home and a warm shower. My hunt was over, and my bow was yet lying under a lone cottonwood in eastern Colorado. I finally retrieved it three months later.

Never say never; accidents can — *and will* — happen. Always wear a fall-restraint harness, use a lineman's belt and/or safety line and have a plan B in place for your hunt if you happen to forget a critical piece of safety gear at home. **B**

MARK ANDERSON ILLUSTRATION

A man wearing a camouflage hat and jacket is smiling while holding a large set of antlers. The antlers are light-colored and have a textured surface. The background is dark and out of focus.

AS PURE AS IT GETS

Proud to represent America's hunting community, the *Bone Collector* team has a pure passion for the game, the land and the lifestyle. Hosts Michael Waddell, Nick Mundt and Travis "T-Bone" Turner keep it real as they celebrate the true brotherhood and sisterhood of hunting.

BONE COLLECTOR
WITH MICHAEL WADDELL

SUNDAYS 9:30 P ET

SCHEDULE SUBJECT TO CHANGE


Outdoor

WATCH

**BONE
COLLECTOR**

MOTV

MYOUTDOORTV.COM

MORE THAN A BOW.™



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 they're even quieter with In-Line™ accessories. Either way, tags will be filled. Shoot both at your local Hoyt dealer and learn more at Hoyt.com.

CARBON RX-7™

VTM™

HOYT
ARCHERY