

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE 6.5 CREEDMOOR

DEER & DEER HUNTING®

SCOUT
MANAGE
HUNT

WWW.DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM

APRIL 2023

VOLUME 46 ■ ISSUE 9

**NO
MORE
NIGHT
PHOTOS** CAMERA STRATEGIES
THAT WORK

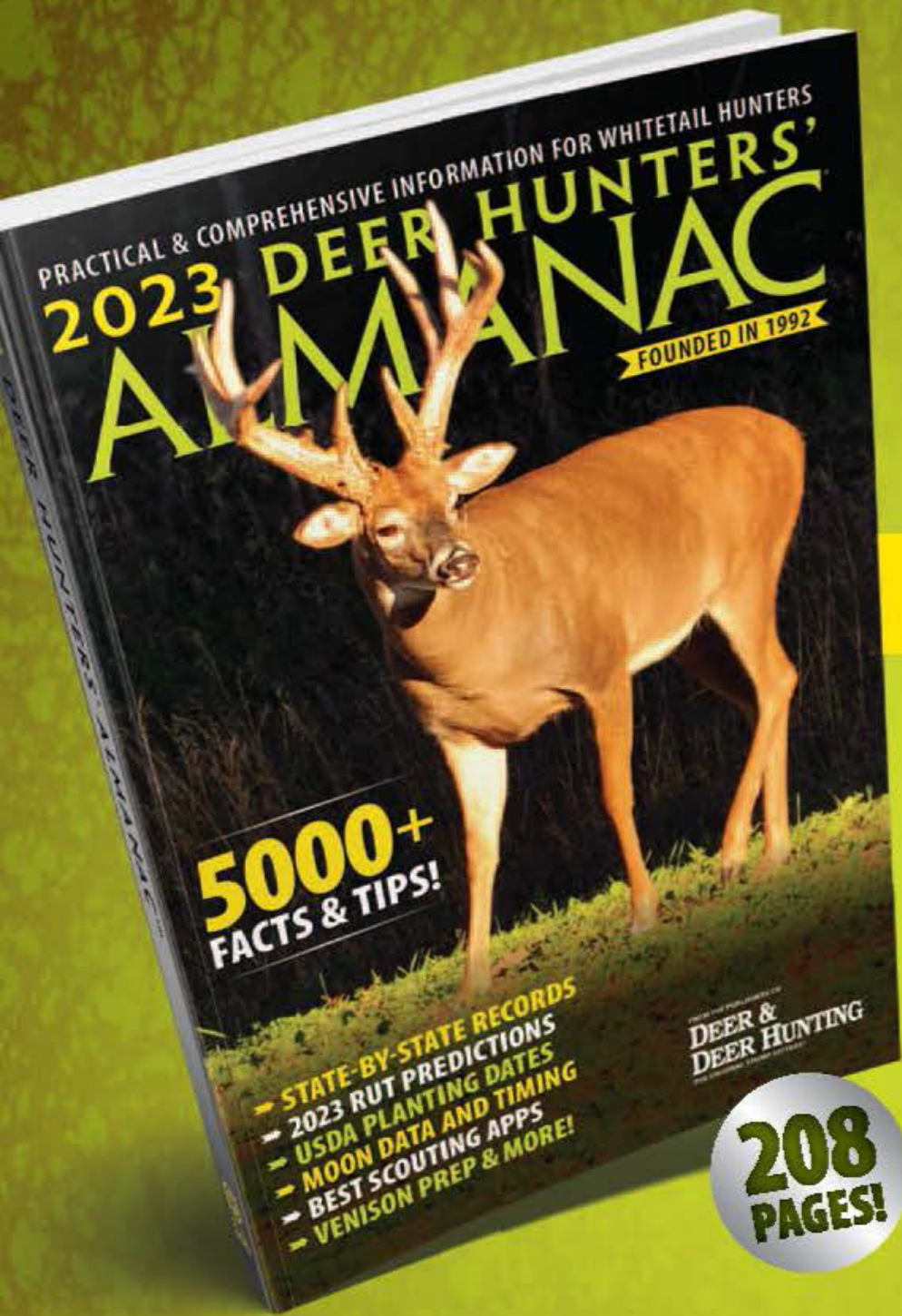
RESEARCH
HOW NUTRITION AFFECTS
DEER REPRODUCTION

**DEER
ON CARS:**

A DEER-CAMP
TRADITION

**TIPS FROM A
VENISON
SAUSAGE PRO**





LIMITED EDITION!

2023 DEER HUNTERS' ALMANAC

- ➔ STATE-BY-STATE RECORDS
- ➔ 2023 RUT PREDICTIONS
- ➔ USDA PLANTING DATES
- ➔ MOON DATA AND TIMING
- ➔ BEST SCOUTING APPS
- ➔ VENISON PREP & MORE!

**AVAILABLE ONLINE OR
MAIL-IN ORDER BELOW**

**SHOP.DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM/
2023-DEER-AND-DEER-HUNTING-ALMANAC**

AMERICA'S FAVORITE
WHITETAIL DIGEST SINCE 1992

- **COMPACT SIZE IS PERFECT FOR BACKPACKS**
- **INFO FOR BOW, CROSSBOW, RIFLE, SHOTGUN & MUZZLELOADER HUNTERS**



YES! SEND ME MY
2023 DEER HUNTERS' ALMANAC

**\$14 EACH
(PRICE INCLUDES SHIPPING)**

**FOR FIVE OR MORE ALMANACS CONTACT:
SUSIE.MELUM@MEDIA360LLC.COM**

BECAUSE QUANTITIES ARE VERY LIMITED,
WE ARE ONLY ACCEPTING MAIL-IN ORDERS
PAID WITH CHECK OR MONEY ORDER. CREDIT
CARDS ACCEPTED ONLINE ONLY. NO CREDIT
CARD PAYMENTS CAN BE MADE ON MAIL-IN
ORDERS AT THIS TIME.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: MEDIA 360, LLC
FOR PROMPT SERVICE, SEND THIS COUPON
AND PAYMENT TO:
MEDIA 360, LLC
ATTN: 2023 ALMANAC
P.O. BOX 548, WAUPACA, WI 54981

PAYMENT:

Check ☐ or Money Order ☐

QUANTITY: _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

**MEDIA
360**



LEADING OFF

About 70% of fawns born to poorly fed prime-age mothers will be bucks. By comparison, bucks comprise only 46% of the offspring of well-fed does. See John Ozoga's research article on page 20 for more insights.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHARLES ALSHEIMER





FEATURES

10 | BROWSE

An incredible story about a boy's stolen buck – and how it was recovered. by Chris Bennett

20 | DEER RESEARCH

A closer look at how nutrition affects whitetail reproductive health. by John J. Ozoga

26 | GO UNDERGROUND

No trees to hang your bowhunting stand? Grab a shovel, and dig a hole! by Glenn Helgeland

32 | NO MORE NIGHT PHOTOS!

Learn how to cure one of deer management's most annoying problems. by Paul Annear

40 | SCOUT WITH A PURPOSE

Get the drop on bigger and better bucks with this proven off-season plan. by Steve Bartylla

46 | VELVET DREAMS

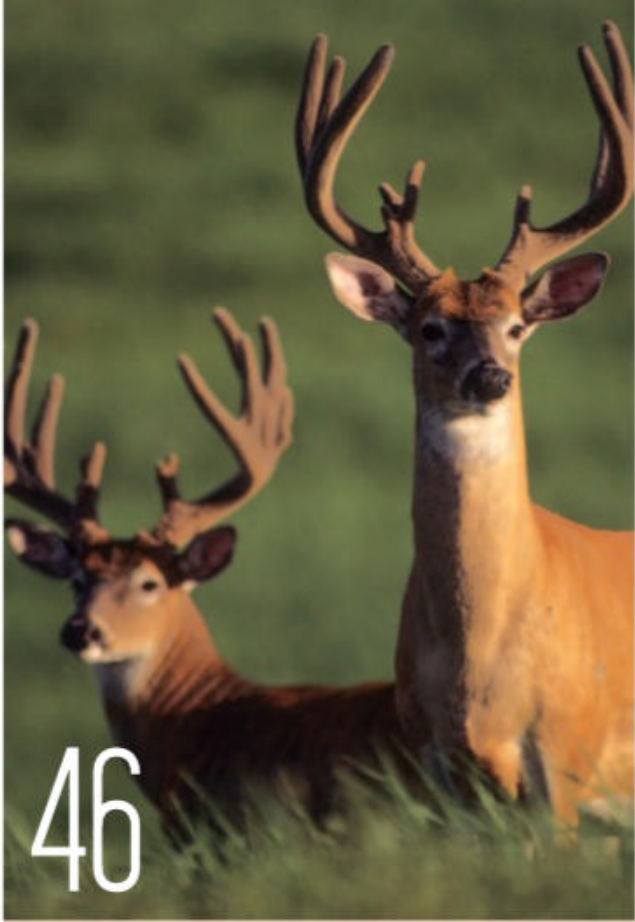
The long summer nights will soon be replaced by those first few days in the archery stand or ground blind. by Daniel E. Schmidt

51 | GIRLS WITH GUNS

The boys have nothing on these sure-fire options for the gun-toting gals. by Serena Juchnowski

55 | THE DIEHARD BUCK

Here's one incredible tale. by Richard P. Smith



DEPARTMENTS

- 6 | EDITOR'S STUMP
- 8 | D&DH COMMUNITY
- 10 | DEER BROWSE
- 17 | PODCAST INFO
- 63 | D&DH NOTEBOOK
- 64 | BOW SHOP
- 66 | GUN SHOP
- 69 | GROW 'EM BIG
- 70 | BUCK SHOTS
- 71 | BUTCHER SHOP
- 74 | PURSUIT COMMUNITY
- 76 | TURKEY HUNTING BONUS
- 92 | TURKEY GEAR
- 94 | WHERE TO GO

92

59 | OFF-SEASON PLANS

The ultimate list of winter, spring and summer tasks to accomplish before fall. by Josh Honeycutt

64 | WHISPER TAMES THE LION

Here are some tips about how to make your compound bow deadly silent for whitetails.

66 | THE 6.5 CREEDMOOR

This is the cold truth about one of today's most popular rifle cartridges. by Bryce M. Towsley

71 | ALL ABOUT VENISON SAUSAGE

These are the do's and don'ts you need to know to create the best venison sausage possible. by Dr. Joe Sebranek

96 | GRANDPA'S LESSONS

It all started with some bright-eyed enthusiasm and a few guidelines from a man who knew a thing or two about the outdoors. by Al Raychard

ON THE COVER – PHOTO BY: MATT HANSEN

PAGE 4 – PHOTOS: TOP: BILL KINNEY/WINDIGO

BOTTOM LEFT AND PAGE 5: CHARLES J. ALSHEIMER

BOTTOM RIGHT: BRYCE M. TOWSLEY



How to Contact Us

Visit us online:
WWW.DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM

- Sign up for our free newsletter.
- Participate in deer hunting forums.
- Participate in deer hunting surveys.
- Renew your magazine subscription.
- Share whitetail insights with other members of the prestigious Stump Sitters Whitetail Study Group.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES: Visit us on the web at www.deeranddeerhunting.com, or call (386) 246-3414

Deer & Deer Hunting Magazine publishes 10 issues per year, which may include an occasional special, combined or expanded issue that may count as two issues toward your subscription.

ADVERTISING: Call Brad Rucks at (920) 284-8732 or send an email to him at brad.rucks@media360llc.com. For a media kit write to: Deer & Deer Hunting, P.O. Box 548, Waupaca, WI 54981.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Send letters to Daniel E. Schmidt, D&DH, P.O. Box 548, Waupaca, WI 54981. Or send an email to dan.schmidt@media360llc.com.





The Meat of the Matter

DANIEL E. SCHMIDT

Beef, pork, chicken, lamb and, yes, venison. Who eats the most? Let's get into the real numbers, because I know I can't be the only one who is always crunching the stats.

It's easy to jump on the Internet these days and find info to support a preconceived premise. However, the numbers you're about to consume only represent the facts. My source on domestic meat comes from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The venison figures come from our Deer Hunters' 2023 Almanac®, a publication that has meticulously tracked North America's whitetail harvest information since 1992.

Here are those facts:

WHO EATS THE MOST BEEF?

#1: ARGENTINA
87.96 POUNDS PER PERSON, ANNUALLY
HUMAN POPULATION: 46 MILLION
BEEF CONSUMPTION: 4 BILLION POUNDS
CATTLE CONSUMED: 6.3 MILLION

WHO EATS THE MOST PORK?

#1: CHINA
78.26 POUNDS PER PERSON, ANNUALLY
HUMAN POPULATION: 1.4 BILLION
PORK CONSUMPTION: 109 BILLION POUNDS
HOGS CONSUMED: 757 MILLION

WHO EATS THE MOST CHICKEN?

#1: ISRAEL
143.08 POUNDS PER PERSON
HUMAN POPULATION: 9 MILLION
CHICKEN CONSUMPTION: 1.2 BILLION POUNDS
CHICKENS CONSUMED: 210 MILLION

WHO EATS THE MOST LAMB?

#1: KAZAKHSTAN
18.73 POUNDS PER PERSON, ANNUALLY
HUMAN POPULATION: 19.4 MILLION
CONSUMPTION: 169 MILLION POUNDS
SHEEP CONSUMED: 5 MILLION

WHO EATS THE MOST (WILD) VENISON?

#1: UNITED STATES
28.6 POUNDS PER PERSON, ANNUALLY
DEER HUNTERS: 11 MILLION
(OF COURSE, OTHERS EAT IT, TOO)
TOTAL WILD VENISON CONSUMPTION:
315 MILLION POUNDS, ANNUALLY
WILD DEER CONSUMED: 7 MILLION, ANNUALLY

FINAL THOUGHTS

Globally, humans consume more than 50 billion chickens, 2 billion hogs, 635 million turkeys, 630 million rabbits, 600 million sheep, 500 million goats, and 325 million cows, 12 million red deer, and 9 million white-tailed deer, annually.

These statistics underscore not only the importance of meat as protein for the human population, but also the significance that wild venison plays in this role.

Bon appétit!

WEB: DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM
FACEBOOK: FACEBOOK.COM/DANSCHMIDTDEER
INSTAGRAM: INSTAGRAM.COM/DANSCHMIDTDEER
TWITTER: @DANSCHMIDTDEER

DEER & DEER HUNTING

"THE ORIGINAL STUMP SITTERS MAGAZINE"

Established In 1977

WWW.DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM

EDITORIAL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Daniel E. Schmidt

SENIOR EDITOR

Chris Berens

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Rebecca Vogel

ONLINE CONTENT SPECIALIST

Sara Gilane

DEER RESEARCH FIELD EDITOR

John J. Ozoga

FIELD CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Bartylla, Bob Zaiglin,

Dr. Stephen Ditchkoff, Steve Sorensen

COPY EDITOR

Taylor Grace Schmidt

ADVERTISING SALES

PUBLISHER

Brad Rucks, brad.rucks@media360llc.com

SALES ASSOCIATES

Casey Lenz, casey.lenz@media360llc.com

Noah Rucks, noah.rucks@media360llc.com

ADVERTISING COORDINATOR

Lisa Richter, lisa.richter@media360llc.com

OFFICE MANAGER

Susie Melum, susie.melum@media360llc.com

TELEVISION & ONLINE VIDEO

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

David Gilane

PRODUCERS

Ian Sanchez, Mackenzie Pelo

D&DH PROPERTIES

PRESIDENT

Jason Rieckmann, jason@ddhproperties.com

Deer & Deer Hunting (ISSN 01647318) is published 10x per year: February, April (double issue), June, Equipment Annual, August, September, October, November and December by Media 360, LLC, P.O. Box 548, Waupaca, WI 54981. Periodical postage paid at Iowa, WI 54945, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian Agreement No. 40665675.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Deer & Deer Hunting, P.O. BOX 37180 BOONE, IA 50037-0180

Copyright 2023 by Media 360, LLC. | Printed in the U.S.A.

Deer & Deer Hunting and its logo are registered trademarks. Other names and logos referred to or displayed in editorial or advertising content may be trademarked or copyright. D&DH assumes no responsibility for unsolicited materials sent to it. Publisher and advertisers are not liable for typographical errors that may appear in prices or descriptions in advertisements.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 800.250.9159 (U.S. and Canada)

P.O. BOX 37180 BOONE, IA 50037-0180

Outside the U.S., call 386.246.3414

MEDIA360

1990 Godfrey Drive | Waupaca, WI 54981

Brad Rucks, **PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER**

Daniel Schmidt, **VICE PRESIDENT**

FACEBOOK: @DEERHUNTINGMAG

YOUTUBE: WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/DDHONLINE

TWITTER: @DEERHUNTINGMAG

INSTAGRAM: @DEERANDDEERHUNTING

TIKTOK: @DEERANDDEERHUNTING

PINTEREST: @DEERHUNTINGMAG

MOSSBERG® | PATRIOT™ LR TACTICAL

**MAXIMIZE
YOUR
DOWN-RANGE
POTENTIAL.**

SCAN CODE FOR
MORE INFO



Patriot LR Tactical
MDT® Adjustable Stock with M-LOK® Forend
AICS-Style Magazine; Available in 3 calibers
(Scope not included)

THE ADJUSTABLE, CUSTOMIZABLE, ALL-NEW PATRIOT LR TACTICAL

Our new tack driver sports a long list of long-range features. From its multi-axis adjustable MDT® stock with aluminum V-block bedding and M-LOK® compatible forend, to its 20 MOA scope base, user-adjustable trigger, AICS-style magazine, and suppressor-ready threaded barrel—these bolt-actions deliver target-finding precision at the range or on the hunt.

Mossberg—Makers of dependable, hardworking firearms for more than a century.

LEARN MORE AT
MOSSBERG.COM

MOSSBERG®
SINCE 1919

M-LOK is a registered trademark of Magpul Industries Corp.
MDT is a registered trademark of Modular Driven Technologies.

SAFETY TIP

Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users. Consult and comply with any and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, requirements, and/or restrictions, including but not limited to those regarding the purchase, ownership, use, transport, and carrying of a firearm. Not all products are available in all states or jurisdictions.



CONNECT & WATCH OUR 4 SHOWS

WWW.DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM

DEER & DEER HUNTING • DEERTECH • DEERTOPIA • LAND OF WHITETAIL

SOCIAL MEDIA, WEBSITES/STREAMING APPS

FACEBOOK: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/DEERHUNTINGMAG

YOUTUBE: WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/DDHONLINE

INSTAGRAM: WWW.INSTAGRAM.COM/DEERANDDEERHUNTING

PURSUITUP: WWW.PURSUITUP.TV.COM/DEER-AND-DEER-HUNTING/

WAYPOINT TV: WWW.WAYPOINTTV.COM/DEER-AND-DEER-HUNTING

WILDTV: WWW.WILDTV.CA/PROGRAM/DEERDEER

RUMBLE: WWW.RUMBLE.COM/C/DEERANDDEERHUNTING

TWITTER: @DEERHUNTINGMAG

PINTEREST: WWW.PINTEREST.COM/DEERHUNTINGMAG/

BROADCAST TELEVISION

PURSUIT CHANNEL - SATURDAY NIGHT DEER CAMP

WILD TV • WAYPOINT TV



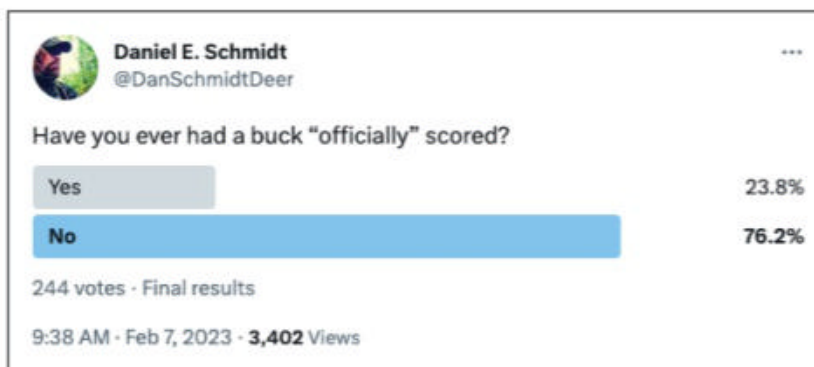
WAYPOINT TV

DDH BUCKS OF THE MONTH

NOAH & MULUKEN RUCKS

Awesome back-to-back bowhunts for the Rucks brothers here in Wisconsin last season. First, Noah Rucks arrowed a big 10-pointer on a Monday afternoon hunt before snow swept across the state. Next, Muluken Rucks didn't let the weather stop him as he got in a blind for a morning hunt and he scored on his first bow buck ever. Way to go, guys!!

WHAT'S NEW ON TWITTER? WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ANTLER SCORING?



@rickstahl3: No. Deductions are for taxes, nets are for fishing and neither are for antler scoring!!

@Ima_SaltyDog: Don't care, honestly. I know enough to be able to guess-timate a buck on the hoof but at the end of the day - doesn't matter. I don't see enough big bucks as it is.

@pdblaskowski: My first bow buck. My son now does ours- his HS teacher taught the class how to, so now he enjoys doing all of them at camp.

@sycamoretwitch: No... I'd say if I killed one here in Indiana north of 180" or so I might just so I can tell an accurate story... But I don't really care about the nostalgia or history of it that much. It would just be for personal knowledge to be able to tell the story of a truly world-class buck.

SOCIAL SNAPSHOT DEER & DEER HUNTING

*MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR JAN./FEB. 2021

FACEBOOK • PINTEREST • INSTAGRAM • TWITTER • YOUTUBE

FOLLOWERS: 1.01 MILLION

REACH: 7.6 MILLION

VIDEO VIEWS: 1.93 MILLION



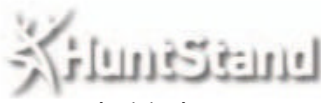
D&DH TV IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



hornady.com



sevrbroadheads.com



huntstand.com



tenpointcrossbows.com



silencercentral.com



cuddeback.com



wildlife.com



sigsauer.com



mathewsinc.com



banksoutdoors.com



eastonarchery.com

GEAR THAT PROTECTS- AS HARD AS IT HUNTS!



**ElimiTick clothing protects you from
ticks, chiggers and other biting insects!**

**(888) 267-3591
Gamehide.com**

Save On Bundled ElimiTick Items!

**Mens
Deep Woods Bundle**



**Bundle Price!
\$187.95**

**Womens
Lightweight Bundle**



**Bundle Price!
\$147.97**

**Elite
Bib Bundle**



**Bundle Price!
\$171.97**

STOLEN YOUTH



MONSTER BUCK ANTLERS STOLEN FROM TEEN DEER HUNTER **RECOVERED AFTER 14 YEARS**

Buck fever darkens the heart of man. When 14-year-old Dave Richmond eyed a 14-point buck of a lifetime, he pulled the trigger on a 14-year chain of theft and lies, bookended by the outrageously unlikely recovery of a magnificent set of antlers.

After Richmond's deer of dreams was stolen within days of the kill, he carried an obsessive vigil into adulthood — hoping and believing for the return of a spectacular rack. Following 14 years of cold-nosing deadend trails, Richmond was stunned to receive a message from an anonymous young hunter — age 14: "I know where your deer is."

Dumbfounded, Richmond was unable to accept the claim. "Impossible. Just no way. I figured it had to be someone pranking me."

Two days later, he received a second message from the teen, along with an unmistakable photo.

"The picture told it all," Richmond says. "I was looking at my deer."

Welcome to a tale of deceit trumped by the enduring faith of a 14-year-old.

THE MONSTER

Mercury falling, several weeks prior to the opening day of the 1998 gun season in Baltimore County, Maryland, on a November morning with enough chill to keep deer moving, young Dave Richmond walked behind his house to scout.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF WHITETAIL OBSESSION OUTDOORS

Richmond's father, Dave, Sr., owned a modest 2 acres that served as a corridor to a neighbor's further 10 acres, and the conjoined block rubbed against several hundred wooded acres of county land. Flat as an anvil, the area received minimal pressure and was ideal hunting ground for a 14-year-old hopeful.

Although destined for a life in land management as CEO and founder of Whitetail Obsession Outdoors, focused on soil health, cover crops and wildlife proliferation, Richmond was green in 1998, without a buck-notch on his belt.

As he headed toward the woods, hoping to catch sight of a deer, or at least find a scrape or rub, Richmond froze in his tracks while his adrenaline went into hyperdrive. One hundred yards distant, beneath a persimmon tree, a buck was feasting on a bounty of bitter, orange-tinted fruit.

Although a buck was a buck to teenaged Richmond, the creature before him was extra. Simply, this buck wore a Christmas tree atop its head.

"In that moment, I did not know it was a 14-point or a special deer," Richmond recalled. "All I knew was that it was big."

Big? How about roughly 240 pounds and 14 points across a 185 nontypical Boone and Crockett score?

Big, indeed. Big enough to draw the eye of a thief.

TELLTALE FINGERPRINTS

With gun season waiting in the wings (the Saturday after Thanksgiving Day), Richmond and Dave, Sr., secured a ladder stand to the persimmon tree — and began a nervy wait, hoping the buck wouldn't be claimed by a bowhunter.

Opening day and light rain, the father-and-son pair climbed the ladder stand and settled in for an afternoon hunt. Within 30 minutes, the 14-point made an appearance, crossing dead-ahead of the stand roughly 40 yards from Richmond. Dry-mouthed and pulse exploding, Richmond raised a Remington 870 Junior 20 gauge, and slammed a slug into the deer, hitting it just behind

the shoulder and penetrating both lungs — hemorrhagic shock.

The buck ran onto the neighbor's 10 acres and collapsed. Approximately 30 minutes later, Richmond and Dave, Sr., crawled out of the stand, tracked the blood trail, and found a trophy.

"Even when I walked up on the buck on the ground, I still didn't have a clue how special he was," Richmond said. "But when I saw Dad's reaction, that was the moment I knew it was way, way different."

"My Lord, he's huge," Dave, Sr., gasped, in total surprise.

Pulling out an old-school film camera and 35-millimeter lens, Dave, Sr., snapped photos of his son alongside the buck. In a sense, Dave, Sr., inadvertently preserved the deer's fingerprints — no two racks exactly alike.

A successful father-and-son opening-day effort. A trophy deer. A boy's first buck. A trip to an eastern Maryland taxidermist for a shoulder mount. "That's the way my hunting story should have ended," Richmond said. "Turns out it was only just beginning."

30 MILES

One week before Christmas, the Richmond family phone rang with a call from the taxidermist. A break-in and burglary — stolen antlers. "It was pretty much cut and dried," Richmond recalled. "The taxidermist said he always, always locked up all antlers, but on this one night, he didn't do it, and then somebody broke in and took my deer."

Dave, Sr., instantly filed a police report, but a stolen rack during Christmas season ranked low on the law enforcement ladder of priority. The Richmond family went into overdrive, trying to raise community awareness to gain a lead or tip — even the tiniest clue. Dave, Sr., alerted the public via The Outdoorsman Radio Show, but the trail was stone cold. No hints and no horns.

Richmond was trapped in an unsettling, dead calm. He and his family believed the taxidermy theft was a ruse. "Something was off with the story. We couldn't prove a thing, but everyone knew there was a huge market for big antlers — there

could be thousands of dollars in play for the right person. Someone sneaks into a business on the single occasion the antlers aren't locked up? What were the odds?

"I was heartbroken and gutted," Richmond said. "All these lifelong hunters would see the picture and say, 'That is world-class. We've never seen a such a deer,' and I'd feel even worse."

Maddeningly, Richmond believed the rack was hanging on a thief's wall. Days turned to weeks to months to years — no antlers. As an adult, Richmond achieved hunting success he'd never foreseen with Whitetail Obsession Outdoors, but the 14-year-old trapped in 1998 refused to spit the bit on a frozen memory.

"I never let it go," he said. "Probably every day I thought about my stolen deer, because every day I was doing something deer-related in life. That was my world and it all pointed back to the deer of my teens."

"It would come up in conversations with my family, especially when hunting season rolled around. My mom, Gail, would get a pained, sad look on her face. In my mind, I was convinced the rack was far away on a wall in Texas or California."

Not quite. Try 30 miles.

SET THE FUSE

At 28 years old, with 14 years in the rearview mirror since the theft, Richmond delivered a deer in late 2012 to his new taxidermist — a local Baltimore County outfit — and sat down to chew the fat with the owner and several hunters.

Back in 1998, following Richmond's harvest of the massive buck, word spread like wildfire in Baltimore County about the teen's haul. Predictably, the hunters poured into the relatively small parcel of woods searching for the same genetics. "The poachers and trespassers all showed up," Richmond described.

Turning back time on several other deer subsequently killed in the area, the subject of Richmond's stolen buck was pulled from the closet. "One of the guys asked me, 'Dave, did you ever hear anything more about your big deer? You



RESEARCH EQUALS RESULTS



WHITETAIL INSTITUTE SUPPLEMENTS

Mineral and vitamin supplementation is vital for maximum antler growth. 30-06 mineral and vitamin supplements are scientifically designed and professionally formulated to provide maximum deer nutrition. 30-06 products are also extremely attractive to whitetails.

(30-06 products might be considered bait in some states. Check your local game regulations before using or hunting over 30-06.)

Still the leader since 1988



WHITETAIL INSTITUTE

239 Whitetail Trail, Pintlala, AL 36043 • 800-688-3030 • www.whitetailinstitute.com

should post something online and see what happens.”

Richmond heeded the advice and built a user-profile on a well-known wildlife forum. He posted a picture of the missing buck, and pecked out a simple plea: “Does anyone know anything about this deer I killed as a boy? It was stolen in 1998.”

Boom. Within hours, approximately 50 comments poured in and piqued Richmond’s hopes. Nada. Each comment contained heartfelt commiseration or condemnation of the thief — but no leads.

Fifty misses, but he only needed one hit to set the fuse.

Forty-eight hours later, Richmond received a direct message with a blunt declaration: “I know where your deer is. I’ve seen it. It’s inside a gun shop by my house. I go in all the time and it’s in there.”

The message was sent by a 14-year-old local — and Richmond was not about to put stock in a teen’s unlikely claim. “Whatever. I thought he was trolling or mistaken. I messaged him back and said, ‘Next time you go into the shop, take a picture and post it on this site.’”

Two days later, Richmond’s inbox jingled.

“LET’S GO GET IT”

Richmond opened a photo attachment and stared down the barrel of proof. Flash to a bang on his computer screen, he saw the antler configuration — fingerprints — and knew the 14-year-old keyboard sleuth was telling the truth.

Richmond’s deer was a mere 30 miles distant, hanging on a gun shop wall. Next step: law enforcement.

“I called the police and tried to explain 14 years, but I kept getting redirected,” Richmond recounted. “Finally, I got an officer that was a hunter and he immediately understood the significance of what I was saying. He told me, ‘I’ll meet you at the gun shop.’”

Like clockwork, the police officer was already waiting in the lot when Richmond pulled up to the gun shop. Richmond provided more details and handed over several

more physical pictures.

Satisfied with the initial veracity of Richmond’s contention, the officer went inside the gun shop to confirm the presence of the shoulder mount. “He told me to wait outside while he checked it out,” Richmond said. “A couple minutes later, he comes out and says, ‘Your deer is on the wall inside. Let’s go get it.’ Talk about making your blood rush.”

In lockstep behind the policeman, Richmond walked in the store, hung a right toward a display of guns, and came face-to-muzzle with his deer for the first time in 14 years.

The officer asked the gun shop owner a simple question: “Where did you get this deer?”

The proprietor offered a winding explanation.

“The gun store owner said he had some rental houses and one of his tenants moved out and left this deer on the wall,” Richmond noted. “You kidding? Who leaves a deer behind? I believed, and I think the officer believed, the story was a lie. Honestly, I wanted to put my hands on this guy. What is the truth? How did my deer get here? There is one certainty: It wasn’t left on a tenant’s wall.”

The policeman spoke in the imperative, according to Richmond: “This is obviously Richmond’s deer. We can do this the easy way or the hard way.”

The shop owner immediately surrendered the mount. Within seconds, Richmond left the gun shop with his deer — beaming with the wonder of a teen killing his first buck. In that moment, Dave Richmond was again 14.

“HE BAILED”

Exiting the gun shop lot, Richmond turned the wheel away from home and toward the original taxidermist of 1998. Richmond had unfinished business. “I wanted to spook him. I wanted to deliver a message: I know.”

Mount in tow, Richmond entered the building and held the deer up to the lens of a central surveillance camera. “I spoke to the desk clerk and asked for the taxidermist. She said he was working downstairs and would be right up. Fifteen minutes went by and he was a no-show, but

I knew he was watching me on the camera. I asked the clerk one more time, and this time, she gave it away: ‘He says he’s not coming up.’”

“He bailed,” Richmond emphasizes, “and he knows why.”

BUCK FEVER

After Boone and Crockett certified the buck (185 nontypical), Richmond entered it in Maryland’s Trophy Deer Contest and won first place. He was told the buck would have to remain at the contest site for three days. “Oh, helllllll no,” Richmond said. “But I gave in when they promised me it would be safe. I called and texted them 50 times to be certain.”

Once the story (including a TikTok video) of the 14-point’s loss and recovery circulated, Richmond was inundated with stories from victims of a variety of wildlife-related thefts. “Buck fever makes people go nuts and they will do anything to get a big deer. They’ll steal and claim a deer as their own, or they’ll steal and sell the antlers. This kind of theft is much more common than I ever knew. Now, people never stop telling me stories that echo my own.”

And what of Richmond’s 14-year-old online helper? “I called his dad and asked if there was any token of thanks that his son might enjoy. The dad told me a \$50 Cabela’s gift card would be awesome. I went right out and bought him a \$300 Cabela’s gift card. It was worth every penny to me and much, much more. So fitting on how it all came together: I was 14; I killed a 14-point; 14 years went by; and a 14-year-old found my deer. I could not be more grateful.”

The monster buck now rests on Richmond’s living room wall. “He was 30 miles away the whole time, but I never quit looking to bring him home,” Richmond added. “The 14-year-old kid in me never gave up.”





TAKEDOWN TOUGH TOMS



GOLDEN TURKEY TSS

Dense patterns, deep penetration, and long-range performance combine for the ultimate tungsten turkey hunting load. Fiocchi's Golden Turkey TSS brings performance head and neck above the rest. Three-inch offerings in 12-gauge, 20-gauge, 410 bore and now 28-gauge deliver hard-hitting knockdown power using the finest 18 g/cc tungsten shot and most consistent patterns on the market. The Fiocchi product development team has developed a true, high-grade load proven effective against the toughest of birds. Avid turkey hunters know the Fiocchi Golden Turkey TSS difference.



FIOCCHIUSA.COM

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

AVXLIVE • ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

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

Go Ahead – *Tie Your Deer to the Car!*

Some 60 years ago, cars passing through the small towns of America on the opening day of deer season formed a virtual parade of bucks tied to fenders. Once I began hunting it didn't happen as often, but I did participate in the ritual on one occasion. And a quick Internet search will turn up vintage black and white photographs of our hunting forefathers with deer tied to cars.

My favorite might be the all-time biggest New York typical buck, harvested in 1939 by Roosevelt Luckey. The smiling Mr. Luckey is sitting on the front bumper of a car holding his mounted trophy head. (Maybe there was a rule that said a car had to be in the photo, whether or not the kill is fresh from the hunt or on the way home from the taxidermist.)

Back in those days such photos were a way of celebrating the hunt. People didn't seem bothered by it, but you don't see it as often today, and lots of people don't like it.



Roosevelt Luckey New York Buck, 1939.

PHOTO UNKNOWN

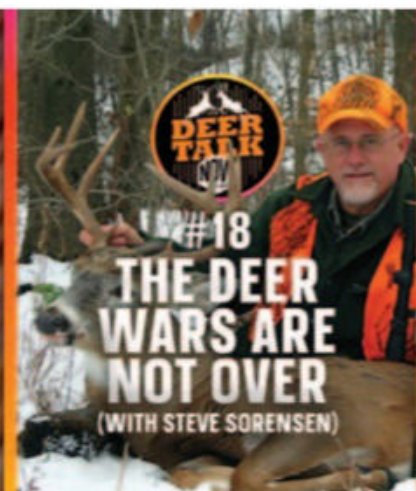
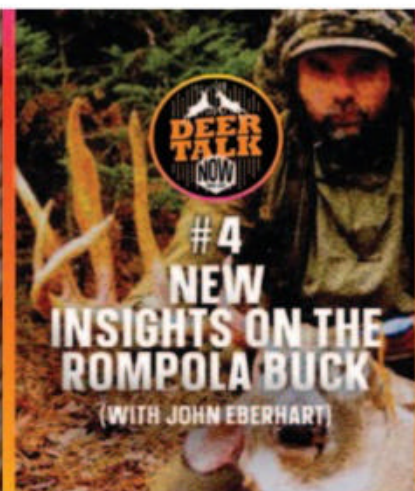
Steve & Keith buck, 1971.

PHOTO BY STEVE SORENSEN

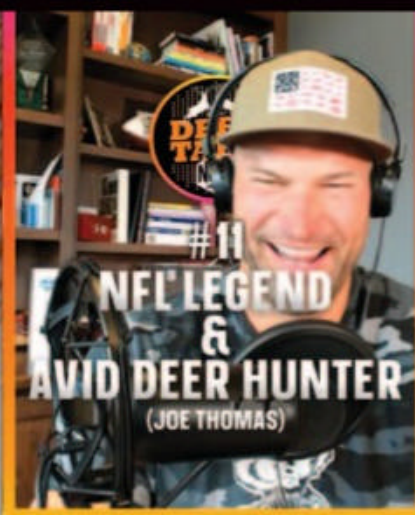
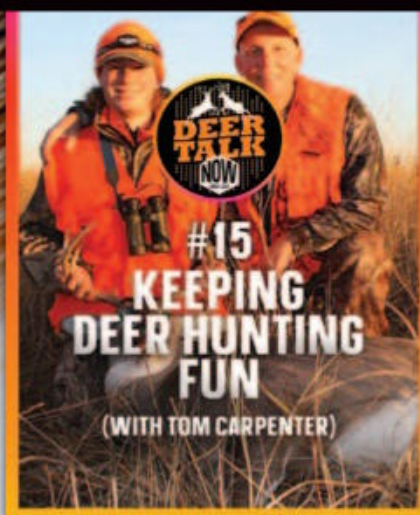




PODCAST



WE'RE BRINGING OUT THE BIG GUNS



& NO TOPIC IS **OFF-LIMITS!**

Join us every week for a comprehensive audio and video podcast where the white-tailed deer is the star of the show. Expert guests join the virtual deer camp each week to discuss everything from deer behavior, biology and scientific research to herd and land management, hunting ethics, newsworthy events, and hunting tips, tactics and strategies.

Hosted by Daniel Schmidt, **DEER TALK NOW** is your virtual deer camp where no topic is off-limits. Listen on most of your favorite podcast apps, or watch online!

MEDIA360

A few years ago on the second day of Pennsylvania's rifle season, my brother and I were following a small maroon station wagon. On its roof was a nice buck, and the closer we got the more impressive it looked. We started to pass, and my brother said, "Hey, that's Tom!" Tom is a lifelong buddy.

We waved Tom down and got him to pull into a parking lot to hear the story. The buck was magnificent — an easy qualifier for Pennsylvania's record book.

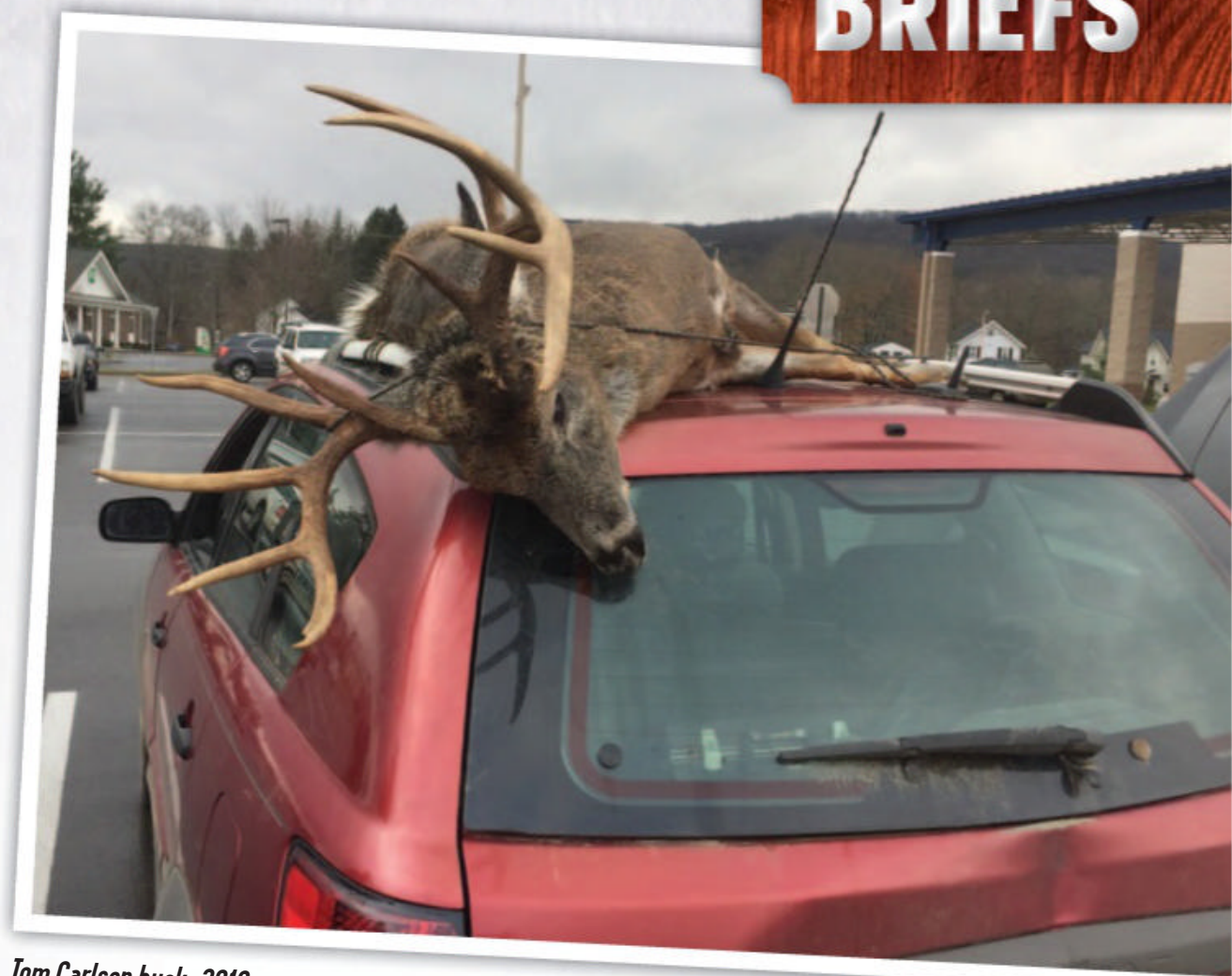
The only time I hoisted a deer onto the roof, my hunting rig was a '68 Volkswagen Beetle. It took all the strength this 19-year-old could muster to muscle the 7-pointer onto that rounded roof. As I worked to tie him down he made his best efforts to slide off the front, back, left and right. I finally got the job done well enough so he stayed there during the six-mile ride home. How else could you haul a buck on a Beetle? I love it that my admiring little brother is in the photo.

This all brings up the question of whether it's proper to display deer on vehicles. I used to side with the people who frown on it. Many think it looks barbaric. It might be insensitive to nonhunters and we worry that it could turn some of them into anti-hunters. I've heard that some people would even like a law against displaying deer on a vehicle.

I don't want to turn people's stomachs, encourage sympathy for the dead deer, or cause anyone to think my recent ancestors were Cro-Magnons, but now I see the other side of the coin. Although I do not feel the need to publicly display my deer, I now see several good reasons hunters might head out on the highway with a buck strapped to their fender.

1. Size — It's about the size of your vehicle, not the size of your buck. Not every hunter has a pickup truck, and many of us drive smaller cars these days. Thanks to all of the stuff we haul around, it's crowded inside. The obvious place for the deer is on the outside.

2. Ticks — Deer can be loaded with ticks and another critter called deer keds — many, many more than I remember when I began hunting.



Tom Carlson buck, 2016.

PHOTO BY STEVE SORENSEN

No hunter wants parasitic bugs inside the same car their kids will be riding in to church the next day.

3. Blood — I'm sorry, but dearly departed deer are bloody, and blood makes a much bigger mess inside the car than outside the car. Untie the deer after you get home, slide it off the car, and hose the car down. It's much easier than cleaning blood from the inside.

4. Heat — The deer needs to be cooled down, and body heat is dissipated more quickly when the deer is on the roof than in the cargo area of an enclosed vehicle. Better eating, and road grime isn't a factor on a short trip when the deer still has its skin on.

The popular hitch haul-style carriers come in handy these days for those with SUV-type vehicles. These flat, metal shelves fit onto a receiver hitch and eliminate the need to hoist the deer on top of the hood. It can literally be a back-saver, especially if you find yourself hunting solo.

For these reasons (and you can probably think of more), I'm no longer critical of hunters hauling deer on top of their cars. It's not an ethical issue, as some try to make it. It's a practical issue, so we have good reasons to do it. We're not necessarily saying, "Hey everybody — look at me!"

Then there was that time I brought a dead coyote home on the floor of the front seat of the family car. If neighbors and other motorists had known, they might have appreciated it. My wife knew, and she wished I would have strapped it to a fender.

— Steve Sorensen, AKA "The Everyday Hunter®," is a longtime contributor to *Deer & Deer Hunting*. He speaks frequently at sportsman's dinners. Contact him at www.EverydayHunter.com.





THE SHOOTING STICK THAT GOES FROM **8 INCHES TO OVER 60 INCHES** (and everything in-between)

Serious shooters know the value of shooting sticks, but for many years hunters have avoided using them due to their bulky nature and clumsy design. The new Solid Aim Shooting stick eliminates these flaws, giving you a sturdy solid shooting platform in a quickly deployable and ultra-compact design. At only 8 inches, the Solid Aim shooting stick will easily fit into a pocket or pack, yet still allows you to adjust from 8 inches to over 60 inches in an instant. Best of all it works with rifles, shotguns, pistols, and crossbows. Use it while stalking, in blinds, and even in tree stands.

► **EXTENDABLE**

Pull the foot to extend length

► **ADJUSTABLE**

Adjusts from 8 to over 60 inches

► **AIMABLE**

Head pivots 180 degrees left/right for easy aiming

► **RETRACTABLE**

Press the trigger to retract to 8 inches

► **PACKABLE**

The only stick that fits in your pack



AVAILABLE AT AMAZON

SOLIDAIM.COM

HOW NUTRITION AFFECTS WHITETAIL

WHITETAIL POPULATIONS AREN'T EQUALLY PROLIFIC OR HEALTHY. DEPENDING ON NUTRITION, DOE HEALTH AND PRODUCTIVITY MIGHT VARY GREATLY BY AREA OR YEAR, EVEN WITHIN THE SAME REGION.

White-tailed deer are the most prolific of the Earth's 42 deer species. Well, that's the opinion of Harry Jacobson, but who can argue? He's one of the most respected wildlife researchers in today's scientific community.



SEVENTY PERCENT of fawns born to poorly fed prime-age mothers are bucks. By comparison, bucks comprise only 46.7 percent of the offspring of well-fed does. This is why some Midwestern herds, although overpopulated, are comprised of a surprisingly equal amount of bucks and does.

CHARLES J. ALSHEIMER

REPRODUCTION





CHARLES J. ALSHMEER

Aside from colonizing a wide range of habitats and environmental conditions, whitetails, according to Jacobson, “thrive in the midst of the disturbances caused by the destructive invader of the world, man.”

A primary reason for the whitetail’s success, noted Jacobson, “is its reproductive strategies: The whitetail can breed at an early age, select the best sires in a herd, produce more than one offspring per year, arrange for the young to be born at a favorable time of year, and even alter the sex ratio within the herd to maintain a healthy population.”

Nonetheless, whitetail populations aren’t equally prolific or healthy. Doe health and productivity might vary greatly by area or year, even within the same region, depending on nutrition. Clearly, nutrition controls the growth, reproduction and survival of whitetails throughout their range.

PIONEER RESEARCH

Studies conducted in the 1950s and 1960s by Louis Verme were among the first to document how diet influences doe productivity. Verme’s findings helped categorize

the reproductive patterns of Michigan whitetails.

Verme conducted his experiments with captive deer to determine how a doe’s autumn diet influenced its reproductive performance. All deer were in excellent condition when Verme’s annual experiments began Oct. 1. Thereafter, researchers fed half of the does 3.5 pounds of pelletized feed daily, which he considered a maintenance diet. The remaining animals were given 2.5 pounds of pellets per day, about 30 percent less than the controls.

When a doe bred, researchers raised its food allotment. The test regime was reversed annually. That is, does on the high diet were switched to a low diet the next year, and vice versa.

BREEDING SEASON

Researchers strictly controlled breeding trials by introducing a buck into individual doe pens twice daily to precisely determine conception dates. As a result, Verme observed the breeding of 60 does. The mean date for breeding was Nov. 17.

On average, the breeding dates for low-diet yearlings and mature does was rather similar — Nov. 20

versus Nov. 16, respectively. The 22 older does on low diets bred within a three-week span, Nov. 5 to 24, whereas six of 13 poorly fed yearlings failed to breed.

The average breeding date for high-diet yearlings and older does was Nov. 17 for both groups. However, some does did not breed until December. Verme speculated that delayed estrus in some well-fed deer was caused by extreme obesity.

These findings differed somewhat from his earlier experiments when severely malnourished does exhibited a delayed breeding season, extending from Nov. 17 to Dec. 31.

Verme concluded the whitetail’s estrous cycle is modified only in unusual circumstances, namely when does are extremely fat or thin. Poorly fed doe fawns and yearling does frequently do not breed. In contrast, malnourished older does merely conceive fewer fetuses.

PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity of low-diet yearlings amounted to only 0.62 fawns per doe, because 46 percent of them failed to breed. All 22 low-diet does bred, but averaged only 1.36 fawns per doe, because three failed to produce fawns.

JOIN THE 200" CLUB



THERE IS NO OFF SEASON!



	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
FEEDING SCHEDULE												
JANUARY-DECEMBER	SUPPLEMENTS											
MARCH-OCTOBER	MINERALS											
JULY-FEBRUARY	ATTRACTANTS											
JANUARY-DECEMBER	ANI-SHIELD X⁴											
PLANTING SCHEDULE												
FEBRUARY-SEPTEMBER	SEEDS OF SCIENCE™											



WWW.ANILOGICS.COM • 844.372.3557



The eight high-diet yearlings bred, producing an average of 1.63 fawns per doe. Many of them produced twins and were more than 2.5 times as productive as poorly fed yearlings.

Twenty out of 25 prime-age does produced twins, for an average of 1.8 fawns per doe. For whatever reason, these well-fed older does were not as productive as might be expected.

SEX RATIO

Seventy percent of the fawns born to poorly fed prime-age mothers were bucks. By comparison, bucks comprised only 46.7 percent of the offspring of well-fed does. Oddly, the situation was reversed for yearling does. That is, low-diet yearlings produced more doe fawns, and high-diet yearlings produced more buck fawns.

Although Verme considered his sample size for yearlings too small to draw firm conclusions, his pooled data for prime-age does was more complete. Overall, 190 prime-age does produced 293 offspring. Altogether, bucks comprised 72.1 percent of the births when doe productivity averaged only 1.15 fawns per doe, because they had been underfed during the rut. In contrast, bucks made up 43.2 percent of the progeny when production rose to 1.73 fawns per doe under good nutrition.

As expected, fawn sex ratio varied with litter size. Bucks

comprised 66.7 percent of the single births among prime-age does. However, bucks comprised 45.5 percent of the twin litters, and only 41.7 percent of the triplet litters.

As a result, Verme theorized that variations in fawn-sex ratios are natural phenomena that contribute to self-regulation of a population. Logically, limited fawn production coupled with excessive buck progeny would depress a herd's growth rate in poor range. Conversely, if the habitat is capable of supporting a greater density, high productivity and more doe births would accelerate the population's growth rate.

GESTATION PERIOD

Fifty-five well-fed does in Verme's study had an average gestation period of 202 days, varying from 196 to 213 days. On average, fawns weighed 7.5 pounds at birth. In earlier studies, malnourished does' gestation averaged six days longer than normal.

Verme also concluded gestation length was inversely correlated with fetal biomass, which depends on the mother's nutrition. That is, does producing the largest fawns have the shortest pregnancy. When does were malnourished, prolonged gestation would presumably give the fetuses extra time to grow.

NEWBORN-FAWN MORTALITY

Verme's experiments on the importance of autumn nutrition complimented his efforts to determine how a pregnant doe's nutrition influenced newborn fawn survival. During earlier studies, Verme varied the diet of pregnant does so high-diet animals lost only about 6 percent of their initial body weight during winter. Does on a moderate ration lost about 16 percent of their autumn weight, while low-diet animals lost nearly 30 percent.

Verme's findings indicated a doe's nutrition during late pregnancy greatly influenced fetus growth and, therefore, the offspring's survival. When born to does malnourished throughout pregnancy, fawns died 92 percent of the time.

When fed poor winter diets and nutritious spring diets, does lost 35 percent of their fawns. Almost all, 95 percent, fawns survived if the does were well-fed throughout winter and spring. Surviving fawns weighed about 8 pounds at birth. Those that died weighed about 4 pounds. Verme concluded that any fawn weighing less than 5 pounds at birth had little chance of surviving.

However, where summer deer range provides only moderate nutrition, lactation stress can be appreciable, especially for a doe raising twins or triplets. If the habitat provides inadequate



CHARLES J. ASHEIMER

nutrition, lactating does might enter the rut in subpar physical condition and conceive only single fawns, with a progeny sex ratio approaching 1-to-1. Under such conditions, many yearling does would probably fail to breed. Also, because fawn growth stops with the arrival of cold weather and browse shortage after leaf-fall, relatively few yearling does would attain sexual maturity.

Such conditions probably prevail for whitetails across much of their range. Even in the South, infertile soils or periodic drought nutritionally stress lactating does and impair growth rates of younger individuals. Despite less-than-optimum habitat, however, the herd's productivity is probably sufficient to maintain a stable population, even with moderate deer harvests.

WINTER/SPRING NUTRITIONAL STRESS

Across much of their Northern range, whitetails endure long, tough winters and chronic malnutrition. Drastic weight loss kills many young and debilitated adult deer during winter. Consequently, many Northern herds undergo boom-and-bust population cycles, depending largely upon winter habitat and weather severity.

Although thousands of deer sometimes die during winter, malnourished newborn fawn loss is usually even greater. If does are in poor physical condition in the final stages of pregnancy, poor fetal development contributes to high newborn fawn mortality. Following harsh winters, like those that occurred in portions of the Upper Great Lakes Region in 1996, 1997 and 2001, one-third to one-half of the fawn crop might die at birth.

Where winter conditions strictly limit deer density, deer populations are often quite low on summer range. As a result, deer nutrition during snow-free months might be excellent. Does, relieved from the demands of lactation, quickly recuperate, making them productive by the rut. However, this potential for an abundant fawn crop the following year might not materialize if the cycle recurs.

Winter usually comes early on Northern range. Does with fawns

generally cannot fully recover from the strain of nursing between weaning and the rut, making them less productive.

As expected, fawn-sex ratios are usually quite variable but, overall, bucks predominate. Few doe fawns breed, probably because sexual development stops with the advent of cold weather. If they do breed, it usually isn't until December. Most yearlings probably breed during years with mild autumn weather, but many do not when cold weather arrives early.

Given such adverse conditions, without winter range improvement, Verme concludes "the long-term population trend is slowly but inexorably downward."

YEAR-ROUND NUTRITIONAL STRESS

In areas with submarginal deer range caused by high deer density, extensive overbrowsing, soil infertility or advanced forest growth, whitetails suffer at least some nutritional stress year-round. Although Verme considered such habitat limited, he acknowledged that it would likely become widespread unless "corrective measures are undertaken." Certainly, such conditions are common on certain private lands and in parks where hunting is limited or prohibited.

Wherever summer range is nutritionally inadequate, does enter the rut in poor physical condition, and even the productivity of prime-age animals will be minimal. Needless to say, few, if any, doe fawns will breed, as won't many yearlings. If nutrition is extremely poor, the rut will be delayed or protracted.

In such instances, many fawns will be stunted at birth because of poor maternal nutrition, and bucks will predominate the few surviving fawns. Although the mothers might not have supplied abundant milk during nursing, comparatively small-bodied fawns by late autumn reflect poor nutrition after weaning.

Where these conditions prevail, low productivity and a high newborn fawn mortality rate, coupled with sizable winter deer losses, will cause a steady and steep decline in deer numbers.

CONCLUSIONS

Verme admits "the reproductive classes outlined here are hardly static nor absolute." He explains, "an unusually harsh or mild winter, wet or dry growing season, good mast crop or failure, etc., in any combination could shift the pattern. ... Moreover, stringent herd control, intensive deer-yard management, or summer range improvement may, at least temporarily, raise the status of, for example, Class IV animals (those with year-round nutritional stress). In all probability, differences in reproductive performance exist within a geographic region, depending upon such influences as microclimate variations, proximity of yarding sites to summer range, or interspersions of food and cover units on the wintering grounds."

Most white-tailed deer populations probably do not achieve their maximum reproductive potential because they are periodically nutritionally stressed. Ultimately, to reverse the downward population trends caused by such malnutrition, wildlife managers must determine and address nutritional limiting factors. According to Verme, "The patterns of reproduction presented here should serve as guidelines in trying to decipher the true population dynamics of deer."

LITERATURE CITED

- Jacobson, H.A. 1994. "Reproduction." Pages 98 to 108. D. Gerlach, S. Atwater, and J. Schnell, eds. *Deer*. Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA.
- Verme, L.J. 1962. "Mortality of White-tailed Deer Fawns in Relation to Nutrition." Pages 15 to 38. *Proceedings of the National White-tailed Deer Symposium*, I. University of Georgia, Athens.
- Verme, L.J. 1965. "Reproduction Studies on Penned White-tailed Deer." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 29:74-79.
- Verme, L.J. 1969. "Reproductive Patterns of White-tailed Deer Related to Nutritional Plane." *Journal of Wildlife Management* 33:881-887.
- Whitehead, G.K. 1993. *The Whitehead Encyclopedia of Deer*. Swan Hill Press, Shrewsbury SY3 9EB.



UNDERCOVER BOWHUNTING



**GETTING CLOSE TO FARM-COUNTRY WHITETAILS
CAN BE CHALLENGING WHEN TREESTANDS AREN'T
AN OPTION. HERE'S A RADICAL TACTIC THAT WORKS
– WHEN YOU HAVE PERMISSION TO EMPLOY IT!**

My buddy, Bob, had a friend who didn't mind slinging a little dirt. Fortunately, the dirt he slung was the earthen kind, not the mental/verbal kind. But even the earthen kind got him in big trouble one time, because he didn't know when to quit. This friend was a bowhunter whose favorite game animal was the white-tailed deer.

WINDIGO



Scent control is the key in any type of deer hunting, and hole blinds can improve your scent-free approach by leaps and bounds.

WINDIGO IMAGES

Bob's buddy, call him Leo, had permission to hunt the edge of a farmer's cornfield in central Wisconsin. This area had a lot of deer. The deer liked the farmer's cornfield. The field butted up against a 15-acre swamp that the deer also liked. Plenty of deer ran a trail that came out of the swamp, wrapped around the northeast corner of the cornfield and ended a couple of hundred yards west at a white oak grove that bordered the far end of the cornfield.

Leo thought he had died and gone to heaven, deer-hunting-wise. He often said as much to Bob and other mutual buddies.

"I'm going to dig me a hole blind several yards west of the corner," he said. "Even an east wind will

blow into the south part of the cornfield. It's gonna be great."

So Leo brought a long-handle shovel to the site one day. He began digging, piling the removed loam into a couple of five-gallon buckets. He dug in the edge of the cornfield so he would be away from and downwind of the deer trail on the woodsy side of the fence.

"Deer like the aroma of freshly turned dirt," he said. "It must smell like a new scrape to them. I want to get it out of here and scatter it, most likely on the south side of this field or on the edge of the swamp a bit south."

He kept on digging and piling haulable amounts of dirt. Then he hauled the dirt away. He also tested the depth of the developing hole

blind. It was never deep enough to suit him. He dug and hauled some more ... much more.

Soon the hole was three feet deep and wide enough for him to sit in comfortably, and move his recurve without striking the edge of the hole with the bow's lower limb.

It was a BIG hole, and Leo was happily exhausted.

He began to hunt from his new hole blind, saw a few deer, as he expected, but not anything he wanted to ventilate with an arrow.

Midweek, fairly well into deer season, the farmer decided to pick his cornfield with his two-row picker. He lined up on the two outer rows of the cornfield's north side at the west end, put the corn picker in gear and started down the rows. Since he was opening up the field to corn picking, he spent as much time looking backward at the picker and the kernel-bearing cobs riding up the elevator chain as he did looking forward to be sure he stayed on the rows.

Suddenly and shockingly — to the farmer — the left rear wheel of his tractor dropped into Leo's oversize, deep and partially weed-hidden hole blind.

The farmer, whose tractor was now tipped at a sharp angle, surveyed immediately from his unsafe seat what had just happened. He swiftly and angrily scrambled off the tractor, climbing up and over the rear wheel/tire not in the oversize hole blind.

He knew, of course, who had dug the hole. He had given Leo permission to hunt, but he hadn't expected it to be of danger to him or to his farm equipment.

Leo received a phone call from the farmer that night ... a short, colorfully worded, mostly one-sided phone call. Parts of his wording questioned whether Leo's parents had ever been legally married. The farmer needed few additional words to express his displeasure over Leo's actions and hole blind. He concluded by ordering Leo to his farm the following day to help him get his tractor unstuck — at Leo's cost — and fill in the hole.

Leo showed up the next day, worked hard and bore more

NEW TV SHOW FROM DEER & DEER HUNTING!



Expand your whitetail knowledge with Deer & Deer Hunting's exclusive content hosted by management expert **STEVE BARTYLLA.**

STAY TUNED IN 2022 FOR **13 NEW EPISODES** AIRING ON PURSUIT CHANNEL

PHOTO BY CHARLES ALSHEIMER

pursuit
We Deliver the Outdoors

pursuitUP
We Deliver the Outdoors

WILD
TELEVISION NETWORK

BROUGHT TO YOU BY OUR SPONSORS:



WANT MORE ONLINE CONTENT?



• 22 EPISODES

This airs during the weeks and months leading up to hunting seasons. In this online show, Steve provides in-depth, proven methods for managing deer and local habitat.



• 13 EPISODES

This airs during the hunting season. In this online show, learn how to hunt mature whitetails by using low-impact, high-odds tactics.

NEW EPISODES AIR WEDNESDAYS ON:



DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM | YOUTUBE.COM/DDHONLINE | FACEBOOK.COM/DEERHUNTINGMAG | INSTAGRAM.COM/DEERANDDEERHUNTING

MEDIA360

wrath. The farmer did not ask Leo where he was going to get the dirt from to refill the hole.

Leo isn't the only bowhunter who has hunted from a hole blind, but none that I know of have done so that enthusiastically. Many others have dug hole blinds, more in the past than recently. I am one of them.

The first deer that I shot at with an arrow was quite awhile ago. I was in a hole blind, sitting on the ground with my legs in the hole and my butt on a pad on the ground. Dirt had been carried away. The doe did not spook, although my drawing motion got a bit of her attention. She was accustomed to movement at ground level, or just above ground level, from small wildlife — squirrels, rabbits, maybe woodchucks, other deer — so my movement to draw didn't startle her.

I had a standing shot, but in my ignorance I aimed wrong.

My arrow hit her shoulder blade and bounced back past me faster, I believe, than it left my bow. The doe vacated the area, promptly, straight away from me. She was too startled even to snort an alarm.

I haven't used a hole blind much since then. Like most whitetail hunters, I soon began using treestands, at first climbers with which I scraped patches of skin from my forearms, chest and other parts of my body. Then came lock-on stands and strap-on climbing sticks, then ladder stands as I aged and accepted the fact that I was mortal and would break if I fell. I now have a Ghost Blind, which I like and behind which I can sit comfortably on a solid chair, but not on the ground or in the ground.

I still like the hole-blind idea. I like it more and more as I think about staying down out of the wind, plus cutting some brush to position behind and in front of me to cover my ghillie-suited, camo-face-masked face, round predatory eyes, and safe-from-falling self.

I like the hole-blind concept for additional good reasons. You will, too, I believe, if you try one.

BENEFITS

- When you are downwind, deer are less likely to be alarmed. Always good.
- You will be positioned more out of the wind than if you were higher, and low-growing vegetation will slow more of the existing ground breezes.
- Wildlife is more accustomed to seeing movement close to or on the ground, as noted earlier.
- It is easy for a hunter to hide with a hole 15-18 yards downwind of the trail.
- Great arrow shot angle for aiming at vital heart/lung area behind and below scapula and upper leg bone. Smaller parts of rib bones protect less of the vital area and are easier to shoot between or break with an arrow if your shot hits one.
- Better chance of a low-in-the-vitals, double-lung shot, with two holes (entry and exit), and thus a better, more profuse blood trail.
- Lots of lower limb clearance with a shorter bow. Dig an adjunct shallow hole for lower bow limb if needed.

THE HOLE ITSELF

- It is at the right elevation; no fear of falling. As we age, this assumes more importance.
- Dig in diggable soil, unless you have no choice, with a sharp-edge, long-handle shovel. If rocks are involved, you may need to use a pick.
- Dig it long before the season, so you can set up the soil and other accompaniments (licking branch or rope, or both, at the correct height) for a mock scrape.
- Soil placement — two options:
 - 1) **Put it** at a good bow-shot distance from the hole. Pile it on the side of the trail opposite your position. Drop it so an approaching deer won't be looking at you when it stops to sniff the soil. Remember, deer can be attracted to fresh earth aroma coming from one source.

2) **Pile it** in buckets or on a tarp and disperse it a good distance from your hole blind.

A caution: Never place the hole on the field side of a fencerow, unless you want to "do a Leo."



- Close to hunting season, stick some brush in the ground for camo behind you and in front of you, with taller brush behind you to help cover any movement. Or, early before season, dig a hole in some naturally growing brush for good cover. The leaves and branches will stay fresh, and you will be pretty much out of the wind when it is from a favorable direction. Trim some of the brush in front of you if needed to not block your shot, but don't expose yourself.
- Sit on a foam pad if you want to keep your butt warm and dry.

— Glenn Helgeland is the former founder and president of Target Communications, one of the largest deer-and-turkey expo companies in the U.S.





Obtain permission first, then take your time to scout out the exact spot that will take advantage of wind and deer travel routes.

LON LAUBER/WINDIGO IMAGES

10
YEARS



NORTHWOODS WHITETAILS, INC.

FOOD PLOT SEED

**CHECK OUT OUR ENTIRE SEED SELECTION AT
NORTHWOODSWHITETAILS.COM**

The Most Trusted Name In Food Plots



DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM



APRIL 2013 31

TOO MANY NIGHTTIME TRAIL CAM PHOTOS? *DON'T FRET*

DON'T BE FOOLED INTO THINKING MATURE BUCKS ARE GHOSTS OF THE NIGHT THAT ONLY SHOW ON TRAIL CAMERAS IN THE DARKNESS. THEY ARE LIKELY MOVING IN DAYLIGHT MORE THAN YOU KNOW.

If you're like me, you get a fair number of nighttime trail camera photos. Once the initial "wow" factor wears off, you realize a 2:00 a.m. trail camera picture does you little good in terms of hunting. Or does it? Although you can't kill him at 2:00 a.m., nighttime trail camera photos of bucks may tell us more than you think about a buck's behavior and home range. Just because you don't have a daytime photo doesn't mean he isn't moving somewhere in broad daylight. He's around, you just need to stack enough odds in your favor and understand what trail cameras can and cannot do for you.



HE SKIRTED THE CAMERA

I've heard this one a lot. Heck, I've seen it myself. Whether intentional or not, there is no doubt that deer skirt just out of detection range of trail cameras. Trail cameras simply cannot catch all of the action.

A few years ago, not a single deer that I watched from my treestand during the rut walked passed a camera while I was on stand. The crazy part was, I don't think one deer did it intentionally. There was a lot of random paths taken, whether does were getting chased by bucks, or browsing in odd spots on and off trails as they worked their way into a bedding area in the early morning or feeding area for the evening.

Whitetails often take unexpected routes to their destinations. Of course, we all get excited when we scout a new property or move a treestand to a "cow path" of a deer trail. The truth is, hanging cameras or treestands near trails is just an educated guessing game. Unless you have trail cameras scattered in random areas throughout the woods, you will not catch random path movement by bucks, you'll only catch what is moving on or near the trail.

How many times have you sat in your stand and watched a group of deer browsing around only to bed down, stand back up and browse some more, all the while taking one or two hours to walk 75 to 100 yards? I've watched that scene unfold many times.

Picture this scenario: It's an early season evening hunt and you head to the woods about 4:00 p.m. Two hours later you spot a buck browsing back in a bedding area through the thick foliage. With 10 minutes of shooting light left, he creeps his way into 65 yards. As light fades, he never gets closer, and trail cameras weren't located near him.

Fast forward to midnight, you get his picture on a busy hub scrape on the edge of your best food plot. Had you not hunted that evening or seen him with your own eyes, you'd be fooled into thinking that buck is unkillable, only showing himself under the cover of darkness. Tricky



WATCH. LISTEN. LEARN.

JOIN OUR YOUTUBE DEER CAMP **IT'S FREE!**

PHOTO BY CHARLES ALSHEIMER

DDH 

109,000+
SUBSCRIBERS

7.5 MILLION
VIEWERS IN 2020

545,000
HOURS WATCHED IN 2020



WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/DDHONLINE

24/7 ACCESS TO DEER HUNTING VIDEOS | 1,200+ VIDEOS | DEER BEHAVIOR • BIOLOGY • RESEARCH • HUNTING TACTICS • NEW GEAR + MORE!
WATCH NOW, OR LATER. DEER & DEER HUNTING'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL IS YOUR ONE-STOP SOURCE FOR ALL THINGS WHITETAILS.

Master your approach, and you will subject the deer you hunt to less pressure. Less pressure means more daytime activity – even in areas where you're running trail cameras.

PAUL ANNEAR PHOTO



part is, he's very killable. Your eyes just proved it, but your trail cameras told you a very different story.

OBJECTS ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

That's a scenario that can happen, and likely has happened, to many hunters. Whitetails do odd things. Once we think we have them figured out, they pull another trick out and prove to us why they are one of North America's toughest animals to hunt.

During the 2021 bow season, I had trail camera photos of a good buck 20 minutes after legal shooting light on October 27. On October 29, I hunted the same area as the October 27 photo, and saw him chasing a doe just out of range.

Since I laid eyes on the buck and knew the doe was coming into estrous, I decided to sit a stand just around the hillside from where this chase happened and where the trail

camera photo was taken just after dark. I put myself in an area that bottlenecks movement and is more conducive to a close encounter. It proved right.

The morning of October 30, my arrow found its mark on this buck around 10:00 a.m. I had no daylight photos of this buck, but he was very killable. Later that evening, when my cell camera sent photos, I saw the buck had been on a camera at 2:00 a.m., eight hours later he was in the back of the truck. Without hunting him, I would've thought that buck was nocturnal or moving just after dark — if I was only looking at trail camera photos.

So, what exactly does a middle-of-the-night photo mean? Well, it means at that moment in time, he was in front of your camera. To a hunter, it just means he wasn't killable right then and there.

You might be wondering when

an abundance of nighttime photos crosses the threshold of convincing you that drastic changes need to happen on your hunting land? That is a tough question. If you're experiencing hunting success and getting a few solid bucks moving in daylight — it's possible that you just don't have enough trail cameras on the landscape to capture the majority of daylight action.

Conversely, if most of your target bucks are only on camera at night, it could be as simple as adjusting camera locations. If shifting cameras around for a few years doesn't increase your daylight photo count, there could be more important things at play.

It could be time for habitat improvements or changes in hunting strategies, such as stand sites and access to your stand locations. Maybe your neighbors have most of the food and cover. Find a limited resource in the area

CRACK THE CODE WITH



DEERCAS



TRACKING MOVEMENT

BAROMETER: 29.71" RAIN: 0" SNOW: 0" CLOUD COVER: 12.5%

TEMPERATURE: 60°F WIND: WNW@5 AVG HIGH: 67°F

WEATHER

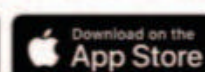
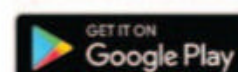


DRURY OUTDOORS | DEERCAS

With DeerCast, harness over 70 years of Mark and Terry Drury's whitetail hunting expertise through real-time, algorithm-driven deer movement forecasts based off of up-to-date weather information for your precise location. See inside your shot, track & recover your deer with the revolutionary DeerCast Track tool. Enjoy the entire catalog of classic & current DOD videos, share your kills, and get daily hunting articles. There's so much more to discover in DeerCast. Go check it out now in your app store or at DeerCast.com!



WWW.DEERCAS.COM



and address it. Your daylight trail camera photos and hunting success will follow. If your neighbors are killing all the bucks, you should give special attention to your access in and out of the property, and figure out what is missing.

If you can, talk to your neighbors about what deer they are seeing. If they're willing, have them share some daytime buck photos with you. As much as you can, study the neighbors' trail camera locations. Are they getting daylight photos off the beaten path some distance from noise, traffic and human intrusion? If so, that can clue you in on what strategies you should take up. You might be surprised to learn that daylight photos of deer are not far from your trail cameras. Oftentimes, capturing a daylight photo is closer to happening than you think.

SIFTING THROUGH INTEL

I typically run around 20 CuddeLink trail cameras on my main hunting property that is four hours away from home. Some might say that is a lot, and I don't disagree. However, I see deer take

odd trails and routes to get places while I'm hunting, so I know some deer are rarely photographed.

As I mentioned previously, deer can be right under our nose in some form or fashion during daylight. Don't get me wrong though, some hunting properties legitimately only have nocturnal buck movement. It's mostly human induced. If deer can hear you, see you or smell you walking into your food plot or stand location — it is time to make some changes. Maybe your hunting property is only geared toward certain phases of the hunting season. No doubt, let trail cameras be your guide, but not your end all be all.

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

Some of the best hunters I know understand how to sift through trail camera information and keep a level head. The ability to act on trail camera intel is what can set you apart from hunters who never see any of their target deer. If you aren't using cellular cameras, only check those cameras every 20 to 30 days.

First, you need to actually get a trail camera photo. Then, you

need to decipher the information and be a good enough hunter to put the pieces together to create a close encounter. I let trail cameras tell me that a deer is using the area. Then it's a game of understanding where he is likely to be at certain times of the day based off of food, terrain, cover or does coming into estrus.

Getting nighttime pictures doesn't have to be a curse on your hunting season. Understand that there are so many factors at play throughout deer season. Don't let trail camera photos get you too high or too low. They are another tool at the disposal of hunters, it's up to us to make them count.

— Paul Annear is a whitetail fanatic from northeastern Wisconsin.



GIVE THE GIFT OF DEER!

ACT NOW...LIMITED TIME OFFER!

- Our annual Whitetail Calendar is the perfect gift for the deer hunter on your list (or for yourself!).
- The new 2023 Whitetail Calendar® features the incredible photography and rut predictions of Charles Alsheimer. Use it to plan your vacation days and to pinpoint when deer will enter the seeking, chasing and tending phases (both North & South) in 2023.
- This collector's edition calendar is only available on national newsstands and through this limited-time sale direct from Media 360 LLC.



PREFER A DIGITAL DOWNLOAD, OR WANT TO PAY WITH A CREDIT CARD?
HEAD TO OUR ONLINE STORE AT: SHOP.DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM/2023-WHITETAIL-CALENDAR



YES! SEND ME MY

2023

**WHITETAIL
CALENDARS**

(INCLUDES SHIPPING/HANDLING)

1 TO 4 CALENDARS \$11.50 EACH
5-9 CALENDARS \$9.50 EACH
10+ CALENDARS \$8.50 EACH

QUANTITIES ARE LIMITED, PLEASE NOTE
WE CAN ONLY ACCEPT MAIL ORDERS
PAID WITH CHECK OR MONEY ORDER.
MAKE CHECKS OUT TO: MEDIA 360, LLC.

FOR PROMPT SERVICE, SEND THIS
COUPON AND PAYMENT TO:
MEDIA 360, LLC
ATTN: 2023 WHITETAIL CALENDAR
P.O. BOX 548, WAUPACA, WI 54981

PAYMENT: Check ☐ or Money Order ☐
QUANTITY: _____ TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
EMAIL: _____

**MEDIA
360**

SCOUTING THE **BIG WOOD**



*Most big-woods deer
are concentrated in
relatively small areas of
the vast timber.*

CHIP LAUGHTON/WINDIGO

Growing up on what I consider the edge of northern Wisconsin, with U.S. Highway 8 running through my hometown, the big woods has always had a special appeal to me. Sure, I was about a 20-minute drive from the northern forest, but the smaller woodlots and timber-lined rivers and creeks around Barron served as a fine training ground, until I turned 16.

It doesn't matter if we're talking about paying my way through college by trapping the small beaver ponds pocking the big timber, or striving and often failing at trying to find deer, the big woods has always had a truly special appeal to me since childhood, while being one of the ultimate deer-hunting challenges there is.

What follows is how I learned to take seemingly endless miles of timber and help make it hunt much smaller.

CONCENTRATION EFFECT

One of the first things I was able to learn about the big woods is that it's big. I know that sounds obvious, but, all else being equal, it's way easier to find your keys when you know they are somewhere in the house than when they could be anywhere you've been in the last month. Well, all else being equal, it's also a lot easier to find a buck in a 120-acre woodlot than it is in a 120,000-acre woodlot.

In the big woods, it really doesn't matter if you're talking about beaver trapping or deer hunting, there's a ton of timber and the animals are not spread out anywhere close to evenly over that area. The beavers are concentrated in the big woods' water features, while the whitetails concentrate in the areas that are currently meeting their nutritional, comfort, safety, breeding and/or social stress needs and wants, best.

Now, the want to breed rises and falls, while the comfort factor often isn't much of an issue until late season, and even nutritional needs change throughout the year. In other words, all of those factors are not equal and they shift positions of importance. With that being said, those are the whitetails' primary needs and wants that occur during deer hunting season.

Unlike farm country, where deer can typically find all they want and need in much smaller areas, often in as little as 100 acres, the big-woods habitat just isn't anywhere near as rich in the resources deer want most and actually need. Commonly, either these resources are spread out over large areas or they occur in pockets.

SHIFTING RESOURCES

Before we continue, we should agree on what we mean by home range. A whitetail's adult home range is really nothing more than the overall area it spends time in over the course of the year. But, traditional overwinter yarding and the domino effect of chasing estrus does doesn't count. Outside of those types of exceptions luring them away, wherever the deer may spend time during the year, all added together is its home range.

With that in mind, never forget, regardless of if we've talking the richest farm country, the Texas sand country, the Florida swamps, upstate New York, the plains of South Dakota or seemingly endless miles of Canadian timber, all of these deer share a key common trait. Their home range simply must be large enough to meet all of their needs, or the deer must expand their home ranges until they do or they die. It's really that simple.

The end result is that the majority of big-woods deer very often are concentrated in a minority of the habitat. For example, take an aspen-dominated forest. While still tender and growing, those small aspens leaves are nearly irresistible deer food.

During most of spring, summer and early fall, the big woods dominated by aspen offers a glut of food. Not only are the small, tender aspen leaves like candy and a true



diet staple of the resident deer, but there's also likely an abundance of wild clovers, cool-season grasses and a bunch of weeds. Many of these are great deer foods and likely in an overabundance during their window of availability.

With that being said, it's hard to beat acorns for fattening a deer up for winter. Additionally, these big-woods deer very often need fattening up even more than their farm-country brethren. Farm belt deer can often pick at crop waste all winter long, where as those living in the big woods are lucky to get even as many buds as they want and need. Never forget, most all Midwestern and northern deer run a negative energy balance during the winter, meaning they're burning more calories than they ingest each day. Well, if they're eating corn and bean waste, while also scavenging the last good acorns, their negative energy balance will be a lot tighter than if trying to sustain on just tree buds.

Big-woods deer typically don't have crop waste available, but what

The FIRMINATOR™
By Ranew's Outdoor Equipment®

SEEDING MADE EASY.



FAUNAMASTER SEEDER 105

The Faunamaster Seeder 105 handles seeds in many sizes from small, clover, alfalfa seeds, to corn and beans. Sowing depths from 0 - 3.14 inches and Faunamaster has the ability to lay out fertilizer while planting. It can be used by ATV/UTV, or by a 3-point hitch on cat. 1 tractor. It's easy to connect to ATV/UTV through the ball hitch. The built-in 12 V actuator makes it easy for the driver to operate the planter without getting off the ATV, when fully raised, ground clearance is 7.87 inches.

about that isolated stand of red oaks in that otherwise aspen-dominated timber? If those red oaks are in the farm belt, they'll likely receive some level of feeding, regardless of if there are more desirable white oaks around. Make those the only oaks in town, in limited supply, in a setting not offering a ton of farm crops, and those red oak acorns just became the most powerful deer magnet imaginable!

Now, think about what that does to the deer dispersal, in this specific example. During the period that good acorns are on the ground, the end result will likely be very few deer spread out over the surrounding aspens, with a heavy concentration around those dropping red oaks. If you're hunting those oaks, you're likely having tremendous sits, until they're cleaned up. Sit 500 yards away and you may be lucky to see birds and a few tree rats during the sit.

Now pretend there's a stand of 10-foot tall white pines within that aspen-dominated woods. Well, assuming it's in a decent place from a sun and wind standpoint, odds

are good the deer will pack into those pines when the snows get deep and/or the temps really drop. All else being equal, that stand of pines offers a considerably better "comfort factor" than the bare aspen, due to the pines' false ceiling and wind-blocking branches.

Shifting back to food, what do you think happens when that otherwise mature aspen stand gets a 200-acre clear cut? For the first handful of years, the regrowth in that cut will create a veritable smorgasbord of easy eating.

Never forget that a whitetail's range must offer everything that deer needs to survive or they will die. It's really that straightforward. Since the big woods rarely have the overall resources that farm country has to offer, the big-woods deer's home range is almost always bigger than the deer living in farm country — and typically way bigger.

At the same time, many of the resources that the deer need or want most are found in concentrated pockets.

One of the main methods that I rely on for experiencing good big-woods deer hunting action is merely to find and hunt those concentrations. In the overwhelming majority of big-woods settings I've ever hunted, the majority of the deer are typically concentrated in a minority of the big woods. Those concentration locations shift, but the deer are most often still concentrated. They're merely shifting between the clear cut, oak pocket and stand of pines, as seen in our overly simplistic example.

FINDING THE SWEET SPOTS

Before we finish with tricks for helping to find those concentrations, recall that I said hunting them was one of the main big-woods methods I use. The other is simply finding and hunting the best topographical and habitat funnels I can find. Obviously, the bigger the area that's funneled, the better potential stand site, assuming all else is equal.

Frankly, in the big woods, the two types of funnels I find most



SINCE 1981

**CHESTNUT HILL
OUTDOORS**

**10%
OFF**

**ANY WEBSITE PURCHASE
with the code **dunstan10****

The code is NOT eligible for box store purchases, only website.

EXPIRES MAY 1, 2023

Find 2 and 3-year-old trees at your local store,
or visit our website for 1-1.5-year-old trees!

855.386.7826

chestnuthilloutdoors@gmail.com

CHESTNUTHILLOUTDOORS.COM



FIND MY TREES



This fine Alberta buck came from hunting a cutline through endless miles of bush.

STEVE BARTYLLA

are habitat and topographical. The catch with topographical funnels is that most don't actually stop deer from crossing the topographical feature at other areas, merely making it easier at this one spot. Take a saddle in a ridge, for example. Heck, let's say it's a major saddle, with the ridge dipping 100 feet to create the low crossing spot, before jumping back up a 100 feet on the other side. Climbing that extra 100 feet to cross the ridge is asking a lot, when one can cross at the low spot.

When a deer is below the saddle on one side of the ridge and going to the other, of course it's going to cross at the saddle, but what about that deer a half mile down from the saddle? Is it worth it for them to walk an extra half-mile out of their way to save a 100-foot climb? How about if it's a mile down the ridge from the deer? Topographical funnels are really my second choice for funnels in the big woods.

What I'm really trying to find are habitat funnels, such as a lake that nearly touches that huge and nasty swamp, but leaves a strip of dry land between the two. Sure, the deer are very likely bedding in the swamp, but they sure would rather walk the dry land when merely traveling. So, the overwhelming majority of deer wanting to get from one side to the other have four choices: swim

the lake, bust through the nasty swamp, hook out around the outer edges of the water features or use the strip of dry land between them. Of the four, most will go for the last two, with the distance to the outer edges versus the center strip being the determining factor on which they choose to travel.

So, in this situation, one can often score a great funnel setup on the dividing strip, as well as decent stands on the outside edges of the water features.

When it comes to finding the concentration pockets, sing the old "Sesame Street" song in your head, "One of These Things Is Not Like the Others." Most large tracts of big timber are rather homogeneous. I study the most recent aerial photos that I can, merely looking for anything that stands out as being different.

For example, in swamp-dominated grounds, I'm looking for dry land. Conversely, I look for water features on otherwise dry land. Pockets of any other type of habitat, such as the pocket of oaks and pines in our aspen-woods example. In a hardwood-dominated forest, that pocket of aspen will get a scout. You better know I'll be scouting that meadow in an otherwise timbered area, same with the pockets of immature growth in a mature woods and mature pockets in an otherwise immature woods.

Obviously, the topos are showing me the lay of the land and any truly major topographical funnels. Between the photo and topo, I'm set.

Now, with a checklist of locations to scout prepared before I ever leave my office chair, I head to these locations and inspect each for deer sign, before spring green up occurs. During these trips, buck sign is most important to me. Frankly, the amount of or lack thereof of scrapes and rubs in and right around these features will go a very long way toward determining if I set a stand at this location or not. The ones with a surplus of buck sign or simply impressive buck sign tend to get stands, where those lacking are saved for if the most promising areas don't pan out.

CONCLUSION

Hunting the big woods can be extremely challenging, until one realizes what the specific limiting factors and concentration points are. Find and hunt them and suddenly the big woods hunts way smaller, and that's a great thing!

— *Steve Bartylla is host of "DeerTopia TV" on Pursuit Channel. It's part of D&DH's Saturday Night Deer Camp two-hour block.*



GROW AND HUNT BIGGER BUCKS!

EXPAND YOUR WHITETAIL KNOWLEDGE WITH DEER & DEER HUNTING'S EXCLUSIVE
ONLINE VIDEO SERIES HOSTED BY MANAGEMENT EXPERT **STEVE BARTYLLA**.



**GROW
& EM BIG**

22 EPISODES

This airs during the weeks and months leading up to hunting seasons. In this show, Steve provides in-depth, proven methods for managing deer and local habitat.

**Hunt'em
BIG**

13 EPISODES

This airs during the hunting season. Learn how to hunt mature whitetails by using low-impact, high-odds tactics.

BOTH SHOWS ARE CURRENTLY IN THEIR 8TH SEASON, AND 200+ EPISODES ARE HOUSED ON OUR D&DH PLATFORMS FOR FREE, VIEWABLE 24/7, 365 DAYS A YEAR.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY OUR SPONSORS:



**NEW EPISODES AIR
WEDNESDAYS ON:**



DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM

YOUTUBE.COM/DDHONLINE

FACEBOOK.COM/DEERHUNTINGMAG

INSTAGRAM.COM/DEERANDDEERHUNTING

MEDIA360

The whitetail's antler-growing process is amazing, and a near-finished velvet crown is a one-of-a-kind work of art. German researchers were among the first to document how antlers are comprised of spongiosa (layers) rather than solid bones like those from a skeleton. A research team led by Stefanie Krauss observed that mineralized cartilage is first transformed into a bone framework with a low degree of collagen fibril ordering at the micron level. This framework has a honeycomb-like appearance with the cylindrical pores oriented along the main antler axis.

"Later, this tissue is filled with primary osteons, whose collagen fibrils are mainly oriented along the pores, thus improving the antler's mechanical properties," Krauss reported. "This strongly suggests that to achieve very fast organ growth it is advantageous to have a longitudinal porous framework as an intermediate step in bone formation. The example of antler shows that geometric features of this framework are crucial, and a tubular geometry with a diameter in the order of hundred micrometers seems to be a good solution for fast framework-mediated bone formation."

According to our late contributor Leonard Lee Rue III, the antlers of yearling bucks are almost solid, with very little spongiosa. This has to do with the smaller size of the antler, plus the required energy (calcium) to form larger antlers.

"Increased spongiosa means a buck can grow larger antlers in succeeding years without having a complete drain on his skeletal minerals," Rue said. This elasticity helps prevent a mature buck from breaking his antlers during fights, even though broken antlers can and do occur, especially in fine-tuned herds.

IF SHOOTING A VELVET-CLAD WHITETAIL IS ON YOUR BUCKET LIST, NORTHEAST WYOMING OFFERS AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES DURING THE STATE'S OPENING WEEK OF ARCHERY SEASON.

VELVET





DREAMS

“The density varies as deer get older,” Rue said. “And that makeup occurs primarily during those early weeks and months of the growing process.”

WYOMING WONDERLAND

If you’ve read D&DH long enough, you’re aware of my infatuation with northeast Wyoming. I’ve been hunting near Devils Tower, specifically Ralph Dampman’s Trophy Ridge Outfitters (see sidebar), for nearly 15 years. This wonderland on the western outskirts of the Black Hills is nothing short of amazing when it comes to deer encounters. So many deer. Such beautiful country. And even nicer weather in early September when some of those bucks are still carrying velvet-clad crowns.

The sheer size of the properties plus the completely relaxed nature of the whitetails are perhaps the two nicest things about this annual hunt. It’s how bowhunting is supposed to be. No real worry when it comes to over-pressured animals. And practically zero chance of going home without getting a shot opportunity, because if you do screw up, there’s plenty of room to move somewhere else and try again.

That was the case in 2022 when D&DH-TV producer Mackenzie Pelo and I crawled into a Browning blind overlooking a cut hayfield on Day 1 of our trip. Guide Eric Dunn had us positioned near a waterhole that was very active in the hot weather. Deer were using it at all hours of the day, but a particularly nice, mature 7-point was showing up most afternoons. Eric said we’d have a good chance

that evening, because the wind was right ... and the hot sun would surely push deer toward the waterhole as dusk approached.

Like clockwork, deer started showing up as the sun inched toward the horizon. And, with practically no fanfare, the buck Dunn described was hot on the trail of a small family group of does.

IT’S ALMOST TOO EASY

Remember, I said it’s *almost* too easy. That’s why they call it “hunting,” because just when you think you’re cruising in for a slam-dunk, the bowhunting powers that be will set you on your ear and remind you it’s never a sure thing.

“Buck!” I hissed while raising my SIG SAUER binoculars and confirming the distance to the waterhole (32 yards). “He’s going to

end up right in our laps!”

Pelo pivoted with his video camera and was ready to record his first successful hunt for D&DH-TV.

But that didn’t happen. For reasons unbeknownst to me, the entire group of nine deer decided to feed their way across the field instead of heading in for a drink. The buck was still in range of my TenPoint Nitro 505 crossbow, however, so I exited the camp-style chair and knelt in the corner of the blind. It was one of those awkward moments where I had to croon my neck out the window to track the buck as he fed his way past the blind.

“There ... I can shoot him right there,” I whispered to Pelo as I wedged my elbow in my hip and frantically looked for a corner of the blind’s window from which to shoot out. He stopped momentarily at 35 yards. This was my chance.

Unfortunately, I rushed my setup and made the grave mistake of not making sure I had enough clearance.

WHAP! At the bolt’s release, I knew I had screwed up. The broadhead was too close to the fabric-sided window, and it sliced the blind on its way out. The result was a clean miss — a bad one at that — and one rattled but no-worse-for-the-wear buck. He hightailed it across the field about 200 yards before stopping and continuing his foraging activity. The only thing wounded in this event was my pride.

MAKING AMENDS

Back at camp, Dunn, Dampman, and the other hunters took it easy on me. That’s probably because I beat myself up enough for one



PLAN YOUR HUNT

**WHO: RALPH AND LENORA DAMPMAN,
TROPHY RIDGE OUTFITTERS**

WHAT: EARLY SEASON WHITETAILS

**WHERE: CARLILE, WYOMING
(NEAR DEVILS TOWER)**

WHEN: SEASON OPENS SEPTEMBER 1

LANDLINE: (307) 756-9776

WEB: WWW.TROPHYRIDGEOUTFITTERS.COM

TEXT: (307) 756-2194

EMAIL: TROPHY@RTCONNECT.NET

Wyoming’s early archery season offers the unique opportunity of hunting bucks that might still be in their summer bachelor groups.

WINDIGO



SUBSCRIBE NOW TO **THE BEST**



- **HOW-TO TACTICS TO HELP IMPROVE THE OUTCOME OF YOUR DEER HUNT**
- **7 OUT OF 10 READERS DO NOT READ ANY OTHER DEER HUNTING MAGAZINE!**
- **GAIN INSIGHT INTO THE BEHAVIOR AND BIOLOGY OF WHITE-TAILED DEER**
- **CHOOSE THE FORMAT THAT SUITS YOU: PRINT, DIGITAL OR BOTH (ALL-ACCESS)**
- **NEW GEAR AND HOW TOP HUNTERS ARE USING IT**

DEER & DEER HUNTING®



DEERANDDEERHUNTING.COM/**DEER-HUNTING-MAGAZINES**

MEDIA360



Northeast Wyoming's early archery season has become an annual event for DGDH's Daniel Schmidt and the TV team.

DAVID GILANE

day. Despite the clean miss, I was beyond perturbed with myself. No matter how much a guy practices; no matter how much he wants it; little things in the execution can ruin an otherwise "sure thing." I vowed not to let that happen again on this trip if I could only get another chance. And, because I was familiar with Trophy Ridge Outfitters, I knew the odds were high that I indeed would get another chance.

It only took one more hunt for that to happen.

We were greeted by another scorcher day of clear skies, high sun and warm temperatures when Dunn drove us to another agricultural area (mostly hay) that funneled toward some thicker cover.

"I'm calling an audible here," he said. "This spot won't look like much, but I promise you there are a lot of deer in here. They come up from those trees," he said, pointing toward the horizon, "and funnel their way through this low spot before heading farther out in the

fields to feed in the evening. We're going to pull that far haybale blind and move it to this low spot."

I've hunted with Dunn so many times that I've learned to trust him implicitly. When in Rome, do as the Romans do; and when hunting out of state with an outfitter, listen to your guide. They know this game forward and backward.

Dunn knew I wanted a velvet-clad buck, and he knew several were still in this area. No, they weren't all mega-giants, but that's not what drives me. I'm driven by the mere experience of the hunt and, of course, the venison. A close encounter — one that throttles the heart rate — is what it's all about.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

I'm not going to lie: The afternoon sun was freaking hot on this day. Pelo and I were roasting like baked potatoes when the sun finally dipped behind the trees.

"Deer!" I hissed. "Don't move. Do NOT move."

Standing on the edge of the woodline were twin bucks — both in velvet and incredibly beautiful.

Pelo sat stone-like, video camera rolling the entire time.

There was no time to grab my bipod. These deer were going to cut in front of our haybale blind and trot quickly toward the far side of the field. I was going to have to freestyle this, but I wasn't overly worried. It would be less than 30 yards.

The first buck was too fast. He trotted across the opening and stopped out of crossbow range. The second buck was about to do the same thing, but I made a bleat sound and he stopped perfectly at about 32 yards.

"Thunk!" The SEVR-tipped bolt hit its mark.

And just like that, my tag was punched, and the celebration was on.

CONCLUSION

In this crazy, hectic world in which we live, it's nice to know some things will never change. Like the thundering gobble of a tom turkey in early April; the mighty tug of a spawning bull bluegill in early June; and the breathtaking sight of a velvet-clad white-tailed buck trotting across the Wyoming landscape in early September.

Indeed, the more things change, the more they stay the same. I surely hope that's always the case out here on the edge of the Black Hills.

Because these experiences feed the mind, body and soul year in and year out.

— To watch video footage of Daniel Schmidt's early season bowhunt at Trophy Ridge Outfitters, tune into Pursuit Channel's Saturday Night Deer Camp this July, or download the free PURSUIT-UP app on your tablet or smartphone.

LITERATURE CITED

Krauss, Stefanie, Wagermiaser, Wolfgang, Estevez, Jose A., Currey, John, and Fratzl, Peter. Institute of Colloids and Interfaces. Journal of Structural Biology. Vol. 175, Issue 3.
Rue, Leonard Lee III. The Deer of North America. Lyons & Burford. 1997.



A GIRL'S GUIDE TO DEER GUNS



SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

I was lucky. I didn't have to think about what would be a good deer gun for me. My dad already had a .357 Max set up with handloaded ammunition on a platform that I had long been familiar with, a T/C Contender. But for a newcomer looking for their first deer rifle, the sheer number of options on the market today is overwhelming. If you're just starting out, you can drive yourself crazy trying to choose, especially if you don't know what you are looking for.

Here are a few key considerations:

LENGTH OF PULL

Length of pull (LOP) and stock fit are critical. LOP is the distance from the trigger to the rear of the buttstock. Many hunting stocks are too long for small-frame shooters. This makes it not only uncomfortable to shoot, but more difficult to do so accurately. An unstable position and improper eye relief lead to bad shots. There are many aftermarket stock options available, but for a beginner, it's generally more cost effective and simple to find a factory gun that fits you correctly in the first place.

Some stocks are adjustable, but they often come with a higher cost. A proper length of pull will be a comfortable fit and you won't be strained to reach the firearm action, safety or other controls. Don't forget that hunting season generally corresponds with cooler weather. Layers of coats and jackets make a shorter length of pull even more important.

WEIGHT

Lightweight guns are easier to carry, but can lead to greater felt recoil. The weight of a rifle really depends on the caliber chosen and type of hunting you are doing. If you are only walking a short distance into the woods, a heavier rifle isn't too bad. Hiking for miles while spot-and-stalk hunting changes the story — in this case you want to shave off as much weight from the rifle as you can.

Ruger testing: I used the Longshot LR-3 target camera system to aid in my accuracy testing. It made it very easy for me to find my shots downrange and make corrections while sighting in, without needing to walk to the target after every shot.

PHOTO BY STEVE TROMMER

TYPE OF HUNTING

What are the particulars of your hunt? What do you estimate your shot distance to be? What is the terrain like? A shorter rifle is easier to carry through thick brush. Caliber choice largely depends on what is legal in your area, and there are a variety of good options. As long as you can handle the recoil and the caliber is enough to ethically harvest a deer at the expected shooting distances, it will be suitable.

Whether you are new to deer hunting or looking for a gun to better fit yourself or another small-frame shooter, you don't need to be intimidated by firearms choices and performance. Here are five quality rifles that are perfect for any small-frame shooter who is just starting out. I personally tested each of them. These choices span several calibers and action types to show examples of the wide variety available.

GEAR LIST AND SPECS:

1. ROCK RIVER ARMS .350 LEGEND CAR SS A4 RIFLE - \$1,390 (\$1,100 RETAIL)

UPPER ONLY: **\$745 MSRP**

SCOPE: **RITON 1 PRIMAL 4-16X44 SFP MOA**

TEST AMMO: **HORNADY AMERICAN WHITETAIL 170-GR. SP, BROWNING 124-GR. FMJ, FEDERAL 180-GR. NON-TYPICAL**

2. RUGER AMERICAN COMPACT RANCH, .350 LEGEND - \$649 (\$549 RETAIL)

SCOPE: **MEOPTA RIFLESCOPE OPTIKA5 2-10X42 PA Z-PLEX**

TEST AMMO: **HORNADY AMERICAN WHITETAIL 170-GR. SP, BROWNING 124-GR. FMJ, FEDERAL 180-GR. NON-TYPICAL**

3. HENRY STEEL LEVER ACTION .30-30 WIN. SIDE GATE - \$1,017.00 (\$799.99 RETAIL)

SCOPE: **LEUPOLD 1-4X**

TEST AMMO: **HORNADY 160-GR. FTX LEVEREVOLUTION**

4. HENRY SINGLE SHOT YOUTH RIFLE .243 WIN. - \$552 (\$456 RETAIL)

SCOPE: **BURRIS FULLFIELD II 4.5-14X42**

TEST AMMO: **HORNADY PRECISION HUNTER 90-GR. ELD-X**

5. BROWNING X-BOLT MICRO COMPOSITE 6.5 CREEDMOOR - \$1,129.99 (\$979 RETAIL)

SCOPE: **SIGHTMARK PRESIDIO 1-6X24 CR1 SFP**

TEST AMMO: **FEDERAL PREMIUM 130-GR. TERMINAL ASCENT, FEDERAL PREMIUM 130-GR. BARNES TSX, HORNADY PRECISION HUNTER 143-GR. ELD-X**

*Note: All group sizes measured center to center.



Rock River Arms .350 Legend PHOTO BY SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

1. ROCK RIVER ARMS .350 LEGEND CAR A4 RIFLE

My favorite gun on this list is also the most expensive – the Rock River Arms .350 Legend CAR A4. The 2019 introduction of the .350 Legend cartridge essentially brought a fraternal twin of my beloved .357 Max to the mainstream hunting market with support from rifle and ammunition manufacturers. It has become an incredibly popular cartridge and is my #1 recommendation for small-frame shooters in straight-wall-only states.

Rock River Arms offers a complete .350 Legend A4 AR-15 and just an upper assembly. I've always trusted Rock River's products in competition and am equally impressed with their hunting rifle. This gun comes with an adjustable buttstock, making it easy to change the length of pull between multiple shooters or with the thickness of clothing worn. The two-stage trigger is match-quality with a smooth and consistent break. Those familiar with and fond of the AR platform will love this rifle, but it may come with a slight learning curve for those unfamiliar with the style. The rifle also comes with an integrated muzzle brake, which significantly cuts down the already very mild recoil. Although everyone should wear hearing protection while shooting, the flip side to the reduced recoil is a louder report. This rifle is more expensive than others on the list, but the upper is available for \$745



Ruger American Ranch .350 Legend PHOTO BY STEVE TROMMER

MSRP, and can be mounted on any traditional AR lower. This makes it even more versatile. Its winter triggerguard allows more room for gloved hands and, although RRA claims it will shoot 1 MOA at 100 yards, I found that when paired with the right ammunition, it is capable of much greater accuracy. Except for the flier from one five-shot group, four stacked shots measured just 0.6" by 0.35". My sample rifle liked Hornady American Whitetail 170-gr. SP ammunition the best. Groups fired with Browning 124-gr. FMJ and Federal 180-gr. Non-Typical ammunition showed vertical stringing measuring 1.62" and 2.72" respectively, with group width measuring 0.87" and 0.21" respectively.

2. RUGER AMERICAN COMPACT RANCH .350 LEGEND

A much more affordable and traditional .350 Legend rifle is the Ruger American Compact Ranch. It is very short with a 12.5" length of pull. At just 6 pounds, it is extremely lightweight. The bolt takes a bit of force, but the rifle performs well. My best groups measured just 1.41" by 1.23" at 100 yards with Hornady American Whitetail 170-gr. SP.

DDH TV

SEASON 18

GET READY FOR 13 BRAND-NEW
EPISODES OF AMERICA'S FAVORITE
DEER HUNTING SHOW!

DDH-TV WILL AGAIN ANCHOR
THE 2-HOUR SATURDAY NIGHT
DEER CAMP ON PURSUIT CHANNEL

pursuit
We Deliver the Outdoors

pursuitUP
We Deliver the Outdoors

WILD
TELEVISION NETWORK

PHOTO BY CHARLES ALSHEIMER

BROUGHT TO YOU BY OUR SPONSORS:





The Henry .30-30 shown doesn't have a side gate. I highly recommend Henry's current side-gate .30-30 offerings. PHOTO BY SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

3. HENRY .30-30 WIN. STEEL LEVER ACTION SIDE GATE

Lever actions are classic and fun. They are also wonderful to hunt with. The test model Henry .30-30 I worked with is the older version of the currently offered side gate model. I very much prefer a side gate in a lever action, particularly for easy loading while hunting. While you can hunt with iron sights, I'd encourage anyone to mount an optic. It takes a bit more work as this model doesn't have a built-in Picatinny rail, but it's a rewarding experience in and of itself. This rifle is easy to carry and quick to cycle for follow-up shots. Some say the .30-30 cartridge has killed more white-tailed deer than any other round in its 125-year history. By nature, a lever gun doesn't allow for as consistent of a cheek weld as other rifles do, but they are tried, true and provide a nostalgic feeling unmatched by other modern firearms. Five-shot groups with Hornady's 160-gr. FTX LEVERevolution consistently came in around 2 MOA at 100 yards. Although a larger group than other test guns, this is more than accurate enough to kill a deer (as it has been doing for many years), and I only had the opportunity to try one type of ammunition.

4. HENRY SINGLE SHOT YOUTH RIFLE .243 WIN.

If a 14" length of pull on a lever gun is too much, Henry also offers a single-shot youth rifle with a 13" length of pull. It is small, comfortable to hold, and easy to carry. Its solid blued steel and American walnut construction gives the illusion the gun is heavier than it is. (At 6.95 pounds, it's heavier than some of the other guns tested, but not significantly so.) I've hunted with a single-shot for



Henry Single Shot Youth Rifle PHOTO BY SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

years and while reloads are slow, you shouldn't need a second shot with a well-placed first. This gun has an ambidextrous locking lever setup that prevents hammer contact with the firing pin unless the trigger is pulled. It also stops the action from breaking or closing if the hammer is cocked. I was extremely impressed with this little gun. The .243 Win. has very mild recoil and is accurate out to farther distances than the larger .30-30. The scope I tested this gun with didn't consistently track (it came out of my dad's old stash in the basement), so I gave up a bit on accuracy. Even so, a four-shot 100-yard group with Hornady 90-gr. Precision Hunter ELD-X ammunition measured 0.58" by 0.47", well under a minute of angle. The last shot flew outside the group, widening the group to one minute, although I expect it was due to user error or the troublesome scope.

5. BROWNING X-BOLT MICRO COMPOSITE 6.5 CREEDMOOR

Browning's Micro X-Bolt, designed for small-frame shooters, was a dream to shoot. Its bolt was very smooth and easy to work. The safety is also

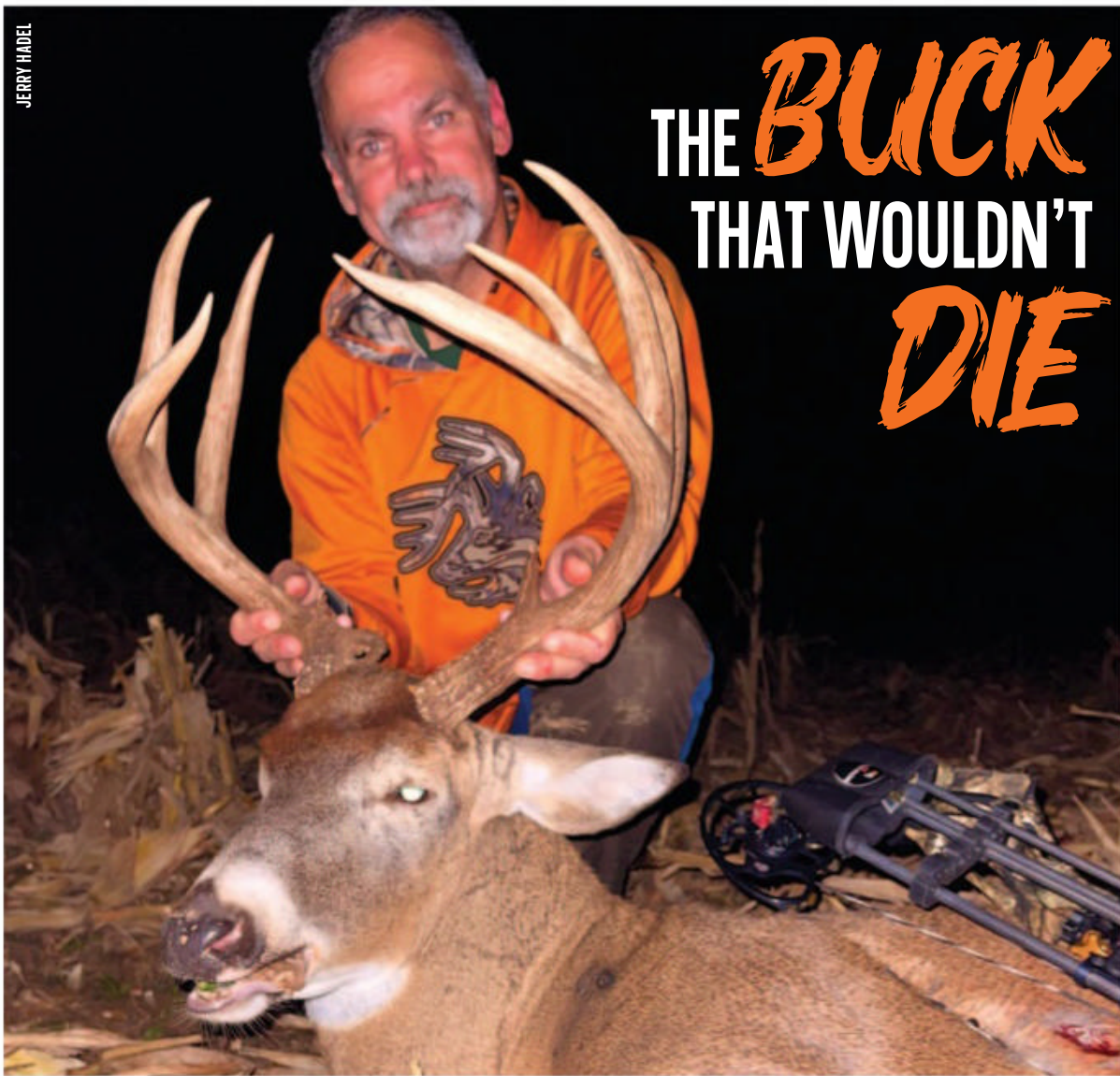
conveniently located atop the grip for easy access. This rifle came equipped with a very effective muzzle brake – recoil was extremely mild. It was also very accurate and suitable for longer ranges than many of the other calibers named in this article. Five-shot groups came in about 1 inch at 100 yards, but there were indications the gun was much more capable than we found. Four shots of a five-shot group fired with Federal Premium 130-gr. Terminal Ascent measured just larger than 1 inch in height, but had a width of 0.14". The bolt gun also shot well with Hornady Precision Hunter 143-gr. ELD-X. Comparatively, it didn't care for Federal Premium 130-gr. Barnes TSX. This rifle really shows that ammunition does make a difference.

All of these guns are well-suited to small-frame hunters and I wouldn't hesitate to personally use any of them. Regardless of what rifle you choose, be sure to try several types of ammunition and take the time to get to know the firearm. Learn if it walks after a few shots, what type of ammunition shoots the best, if it takes a few shots to settle in after cleaning. Those little extra details will make a big difference during deer season.



Browning X-Bolt Micro Composite PHOTO BY SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

THE BUCK THAT WOULDN'T DIE



RICHARD P. SMITH |

Bunny cartoon with the big bull and Bugs was the matador! He blew vapor and snot out of both nostrils on every breath, and was visibly pissed off.

"This was the only time ever in my deer hunting career that I was relieved to be in a treestand versus being on the ground. I have no doubt he would have charged me if I would have been on the ground. He would look up at me then scan the area for the fight and look back at me. He did that a number of times.

"He did not care that I was there. I felt confident I could make a quartering-on shot, if he shifted positions slightly. After what seemed like an eternity, he began to turn. Once he turned enough to give me the shot I wanted, I drew my bow, settled my sight pin and pulled the trigger on my release.

"I didn't see the arrow flight because the buck was so close. I heard the arrow hit and he spun out and away as he ran off. When about 60 yards away, the buck stopped and stood. After standing in the same spot for about a minute, the buck flipped his tail and trotted away."

Hadel shot the buck with a 70-pound-pull Bowtech Solution bow. His arrow was tipped with a fixed-blade 100-grain Muzzy Broadhead. He knew that if his arrow had gone where he wanted it to that the buck should have gone down when it stopped and stood at 60 yards.

"I was sickened immediately when the buck trotted off as that's a sign of a deer that's not mortally wounded," Jerry admitted. "I waited about 45 minutes and got down to check my arrow. The arrow had a small smear of blood on one vane and another near the nock. That's definitely not the type of blood sign I was hoping to see on an arrow that passed through the deer."

In spite of the poor blood sign on the arrow, however, Jerry explained that there was a decent amount of blood on the ground all the way around the arrow.

"I slowly walked up to the spot where the buck had paused," Hadel continued, "and found several drops of blood on the way there and a basketball-size area of many drops of blood where he had stood. The

In most cases, whitetails seldom live long nor travel far after a broadhead or bullet damages their heart, but not always. The 160-class 13-pointer that Jerry Hadel from Rock, Michigan, arrowed in Illinois on November 8, 2021, is a perfect example of an exception. That buck was still alive two days later when it was located in a cornfield where it took refuge, as the corn was being cut. Not only was the deer still alive, it attacked the harvester, and it took three more well-placed arrows to finally kill the whitetail.

This buck illustrates how tough whitetails can sometimes be and the importance of expending every effort possible to locate a deer you've shot. This example also shows how aggressive some wounded whitetails can be and the importance of being cautious when attempting to recover deer you've shot.

Hadel is an experienced bowhunter. He's been bowhunting whitetails since 1979 and collected his first deer with bow and arrow in 1982 at 16 years old. Last fall was his second year of bowhunting in Illinois and the 13-pointer was his first kill there. Jerry's sister lives in Illinois and he was hunting property near her house when he arrowed the buck about 10:00 a.m.

Jerry had seen three smaller bucks earlier in the morning, one of which was an 8-pointer that he guessed had

120-inch antlers. At 10:00, he stood up in the ladder stand he was in and rattled antlers. The stand was in a bowl, positioned such that it provided a view of several ridges.

"Immediately, I had a big buck come charging down the far ridge, straight at me," Jerry wrote in an account of the hunt on his phone. "I had just enough time to quickly hang up the antlers on a limb and grab my bow before he stopped at 12 yards!"

The buck had a big rack and it didn't take long for Jerry to decide to shoot the deer. Once he decided he was going to shoot the whitetail, he never looked at its antlers again. He focused on making the shot.

"He was facing me straight on," Jerry continued. "He had his ears laid back and all of his hair was standing on end. He was blowing so hard through his nostrils, he sounded like the Bugs

trail was fairly easy to follow because there were steady drops of blood.

"I followed the blood trail up to a tractor crossing that led from one cornfield to a smaller one behind it that was 20 acres in size. After determining the buck was heading for the smaller cornfield, I stopped and backed out."

Based on the fact there were simply drops of blood, Jerry thought his arrow might have just nicked the buck. He guessed the deer's antlers would score between 135 and 140. When he got back to camp, that's what he told the guys he was hunting with.

"I showed them the arrow and we all agreed the shot probably wasn't fatal," Jerry wrote. "But I just couldn't shake the presence of all the blood for a shot that grazed a deer. I decided to wait a few hours and pick up the trail again. My son Josh wanted to come with me, and I welcomed the extra set of eyes.

"We picked the blood trail up where I left it and followed it along the edge of some tall grass and into the 20-acre cornfield. Once in the corn, that's where he stayed. We would

track him down a row for 20 to 40 yards and then he would cross over a few rows and reverse directions. The buck maintained this zigzag pattern until about 50 rows into the corn.

"The buck bedded many times in the cornfield and we found pools of blood in every bed. We found as many as 10 beds. The tracks from both front feet had blood in them from blood that was running down both legs. I was completely baffled about what was happening with this deer. I told Josh that he had to be getting weak from blood loss and that we might walk up on him at any moment."

A mistake that Jerry made is he did not bring his bow and arrows with him when following the blood trail. The reason he didn't, of course, is he thought he made a nonfatal shot. It's always a good policy to carry a bow or gun when following up on a wounded deer during legal shooting hours, so it is available if needed.

Finding multiple beds that are sometimes not far apart is typical of gut-shot deer, but it was clear in this case that the wound was too far forward for that to be a possibility.

Obviously, other types of wounds like the one this buck suffered can cause whitetails to bed frequently. Multiple beds are a sign a deer is seriously injured.

"The last two beds we found from the buck showed signs that the wound was clotting," Jerry explained. "There was less blood. The blood in the last bed we came to was the size of a baseball. The blood trail ended within a matter of feet of that bed. We circled the area but found nothing further.

"As we walked back toward camp, the farmers were harvesting corn from another field. I waved them down and asked when they thought they would get to the 20-acre field. I told them what happened and that I thought the buck was still in the corn. They said they would watch for it and let us know if they found it."

The following day, Jerry spent another couple of hours searching the 20-acre cornfield where he and his son lost the blood trail of the buck and failed to find anything. Late on the afternoon of November 10, the harvester moved to the 20-acre cornfield and started cutting the corn there.



SASKATCHEWAN
BIG BUCK
Adventures LTD.



**WE HAVE
GIANT
BEARS**

ABOVE RIGHT PHOTO: "I went on my first bear hunt with Saskatchewan Big Buck Adventures LTD and what a hunt it was. I saw multiple bears on every sit, and was amazed at how quietly they could walk through the woods. On the night I harvested my big bore he was the ninth bear into the bait that night. Ryley's bear hunts are world class." **-Brad Rucks, Deer & Deer Hunting**

Book the Hunt of a Lifetime!

157,000 acres with two separate lodges. We offer: Bow, Muzzleloader or Rifle Hunts for Whitetails. Extremely low hunting pressure, many stands go untouched for seasons!

Give me a call, check out our website and be sure to look at our references. We strive to make sure you have a hunt of a lifetime.

RYLEY'S PHONE: **306.549.7501** | EMAIL: **Ryley@saskatchewanbigbuckadventures.com**

www.saskatchewanbigbuckadventures.com

SASKATCHEWAN'S PREMIER BEAR OUTFITTER

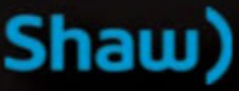
YOUR #1 SOURCE FOR OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT



WILD

TELEVISION NETWORK

CALL YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER NOW TO ENJOY WILD TV!

 TELUS  Bell  SaskTel  Shaw)

 COGECO  ROGERS

"We were just sitting down for dinner that evening when Josh got a call from the camp caretaker," Jerry wrote. "They had found my buck and he was still alive! We all rushed out of camp. Josh took the 4-wheeler. My friends Mike and Gene and I took the truck. When we got to the farm, the farmer was waiting for us and he said the deer was still alive."

Jerry and Josh rode the 4-wheeler to where the harvester was. When they got to the machine, the operator (Brad) got out and pointed to where the buck was down. Jerry was shocked at the size of the buck's antlers as it lifted its head.

"The buck was quartering away," Jerry explained. "I walked around to get into position for a heart shot that would hit the opposite shoulder to try to keep the buck on the ground. When I put another arrow into the deer, he jumped to his feet, lowered his head, laid his ears back and charged us."

"Josh and I ran around the wheeler while the 75-year-old operator of the harvester went up the harvester's ladder. After we got the wheeler between us and the deer, it just stood there with its ears back and hair on end. I slowly worked around for a broadside shot and put another arrow through the buck's heart. Blood poured out of both sides of the deer while he continued standing."

"I have a theory on shooting game, which is to keep shooting until they are on the ground or I'm out of ammo."

So I put a third arrow through the center of the buck's lungs. He took two steps forward and continued standing there. After several minutes, the buck finally started to wobble and went down."

When the buck was dead, Brad climbed down from the harvester, shook Jerry's hand and told Jerry what happened.

"About 120 yards from where Josh and I had last blood, Brad came across the wounded buck. When being approached by the harvester, the buck jumped up and onto the front of the harvester. Brad immediately shut the harvester down and raised the head, which brought the buck up to the same level as the cab Brad was in."

"When the buck turned and saw Brad, it charged the cab, slamming into the windshield three times trying to get Brad. Brad was understandably shaken by the buck's behavior. He said the deer hit the windshield so hard, he was surprised it did not shatter."

After the third charge, the buck jumped off the harvester and bedded where Jerry was able to shoot it again. When field-dressing the buck, Jerry examined the organs to determine what type of damage his arrows had done. The first two arrows Jerry used to try to finish the buck had gone through the heart. One went from back to front and the second from side-to-side. The second arrow that sliced through the heart actually cut the first arrow in half.

Jerry's third finishing arrow went through both lungs.

What damage had the first arrow done that Jerry released on November 8?

"That arrow entered where I was aiming and came out through the opposite armpit. A blade on the broadhead from the initial arrow actually cut down the side of the heart, leaving a clean cut that was 4 inches long and 3/4-of-an-inch deep."

Jerry's first arrow entered at the base of the buck's neck in front of the shoulder, went across and through the chest cavity, exiting at the armpit of the front leg on the opposite side of the deer's body. He said he has made similar shots on other whitetails with good results.

It's amazing this buck was able to survive as long as it did with that type of damage to its heart. The injury was obviously not enough to prevent the heart from pumping blood through its body and the deer did not lose enough blood to cause it to die. What is even more difficult to understand is how long the whitetail managed to survive after two additional arrows did more serious damage to the heart. The buck was estimated to be 5½ years old and weighed 189 pounds dressed.

The taxidermist found an infection between the right antler and ear that might have been partially responsible for its aggressive behavior. The infection was from an injury that the whitetail probably suffered while fighting with another buck.

There are several important points regarding Jerry's experience with this whitetail that hunters should note. First, the amount of blood on an arrow that passes through a deer is not always a true indicator of the injury's severity. Second, it's important to carry a weapon (when legal) when trailing.

Lastly, big deer die hard, and it sometimes takes extra effort to recover them. They sometimes go much farther than expected. Jerry's Illinois buck was recovered about 300 yards from where it was first arrowed.

— Richard P. Smith has been a D&DH contributor since its inception in 1977.

MONTANA WHITE TAILS
 WWW.MONTANAWHITETAILS.COM
Elk/Deer/Antelope

- + 20,000+ Acres/All Private Ranches
- + Archery & Rifle Hunts
- + 8 Miles of Private River Bottom
- + Awesome Combo Hunts Available
- + Beautiful 7 Bedroom, 4 Bath Lodge
- + Fantastic Elk Hunting
- + Call Today 717-512-3582

MANAGED FOR TROPHY BUCKS SINCE 1998!

MULE DEER WHITETAIL DEER ANTELOPE



THE OFF-SEASON

DEER SCOUTING MEGA PLAN

A large buck with impressive antlers stands in a field of tall grass. The buck is facing right, looking slightly towards the camera. Its antlers are large and multi-tined, with a reddish-brown color. The background is a soft-focus field of green and yellow grass.

A good off-season scouting plan will help set the stage for the next hunting season.

A LONG LIST OF WINTER, SPRING AND SUMMER WHITETAIL TASKS TO ACCOMPLISH.

**TEXT & PHOTOS BY
JOSH HONEYCUTT**

Hunters who find routine and regular success each deer season achieve that not with luck, but with effort. Year-round sweat and strategic planning leads to filled tags. So, as one deer season ends, the next one begins. Here is the off-season scouting mega plan. Think of it as the base, or foundation, for next deer season.



You don't want to find deadheads, but at least it provides closure, so you don't waste time or resources on a particular deer that certainly won't be back.

WINTER: IN-THE-FIELD SCOUTING

Late winter is the best time to conduct post-season scouting efforts. It should begin with digital scouting. Before heading afield, look over aerial and topo maps to learn or relearn the property. Identify key areas of interest. If needed, make notes. And once afield, have a useful hunting app,

or physical maps, to keep track of all scouting finds.

The first step is locating daytime security cover. Oftentimes, these areas come in the form of benches, CRP, cutover timber, leeward ridges, marsh islands, oxbows, ridge points, secluded cover, solar bedding (south-facing slopes), swamp interiors,

thermal bedding (coniferous trees, such as cedars, pines and spruces) and more. With that being said, it's likely going to be the thickest, nastiest cover on the property.

Next, drill down on buck bedding and doe bedding areas. Sometimes these are in the same patches of cover. However, does will be more on the fringes, and bucks deeper into the bedding area. Oftentimes, the mature bucks take the best bedding, and then deer lower on the hierarchy create layers moving outward. This is how good, effective bedding should be, whether naturally made or constructed.

Food sources are incredibly important, too. If deer aren't frequenting a property during the late and post seasons, it's a sign the area doesn't offer the necessary food sources, bedding cover or both. So, scouting all ag fields, food plots, hard mast, soft mast, pockets of browse and other food sources is part of the process.

Go as far as noting the species of oak, or whatever food it is. Then, when that species begins to hit peak attractiveness next season, you'll know exactly where to go, and when, to predict deer movement as it occurs. Mark each unique food source on an app or map for future reference.

Water sources are important, too. Large bodies of water don't see much daytime use. Small, secluded sources of water do, though. These are the important ones to remember. Chart these on your app or map, too.

Staging areas are crucial, as well. These are areas between bedding cover and more open areas where deer tend to spend time until dark. Generally, these areas don't have major food availability, but they do provide a bit of browse to consume before heading off to larger and better options.

Of course, while scouting for each of the important needs of whitetails, chart all rubs, scrapes and other discoveries. Walk each deer trail (big and small) with the "trace path" feature turned on in your app. This lights up a map with the complete trail network.

Scouting with snow on the ground makes this process easier, as it shows where deer spend the most time. You can also follow tracks back into bedding areas and see exactly

MUST-HAVE POST-SEASON SCOUTING GEAR

There are certain pieces of gear that will make your post-season scouting safer and more effective. While it isn't necessary to purchase top-of-the-line items, selecting the best you can afford will improve results.

First, have a series of maps, or better yet, a high-quality app, which can show details about the tracts you'll focus on. Having multiple layers is beneficial. Aerial photos and topo maps are the basis of scouting. Other layers are beneficial, too. I'm a HuntStand ambassador, but I used their proven layers long before joining their team. Of course, other apps on the market do the job, too. Select the one with the features that best fit your style.

Binos are crucial, too. These are great for seeing deer while scouting, but these are even more valuable for verifying scouting finds. It's much easier to raise up your glass and look 50 yards ahead at a possible rub, scrape or shed, than it is to walk over and find out it isn't one. That wastes valuable time.

Another important tool is a good pack. Most of the time, I collect my trail cameras while scouting. It knocks out two tasks at once. I also shed hunt, and a pack helps free up your hands. Of course, a pack is good for containing other items, such as toilet paper, emergency and safety kits, and more.

Those who plan to spend a lot of time in the field should wear comfortable boots. Uncomfortable footwear will lead to blisters and bruises. And wearing inadequate boots can lead to puncture wounds, if stepping on the wrong pointy object. Wear the best footwear for the job that you can budget for.

Lastly, wear chaps. This is something most people overlook. But these can certainly save your legs from thorns, vegetation that sticks to clothing, and other unwanted experiences. Having this protection, and wearing clothes that protect from such things, is a great post-season scouting practice. — J.H.

where specific deer beds are within the bedding area. That's extremely valuable information.

Furthermore, note potential stand locations, such as key pinch points, funnels, travel routes, etc. Keep track of potential access routes, too. These are just as important as stand locations. If you can't get to the stand or blind, or depart from it, without alerting deer, it's not a good spot (or route).

Finally, walk property lines. This helps identify where deer are entering and exiting your property. This is important to know, as it might influence future habitat changes or hunt plans. While walking these property lines, peer onto neighboring properties as far as you can see from your side of the line. Respect your neighbors' lands, but there's nothing wrong with looking onto their property from yours and trying to see what they're doing on their side of the fence. This is information that will influence what you do on your side of it.

WINTER/SPRING: SHED HUNTING

Another important task is shed hunting. It informs us whether a buck survived, or not. While sheds don't

FINDING *NEW GROUND*

A major aspect of off-season scouting should be finding new ground to hunt. Even hunters who already have great property access to quality private and/or public lands should be looking for additional ground. Never get too comfortable with the current access, and you'll rarely find yourself without a place to hunt. Get comfortable, gradually lose access to good hunting grounds, and wake up one season with nowhere to go.

This process begins with digital scouting. For public lands, state agency resources are great places to start. Other types of public offerings exist, too. Find lists and maps of public lands. Certain hunting apps, such as HuntStand, offer great public-land layers that show available lands.

Old-school door knocking can still work, too. It might take 50-100 doors to get the desired answer, but it's still viable. Finding that one landowner willing to give you a shot is all it takes to unlock a great hunting tract and years of good hunting.

Mailing out letters is another option. This is a solid tactic for securing permission on distant lands where it would take too much time and gas money to make it worthwhile. A well-crafted letter costs 50 cents. You can send out 100 letters for \$50. One yes and that's money well-spent.

Securing new leases is a good thing to do, too, especially if the permission game isn't panning out. Finding tracts that aren't already hunted by permission or leased can be a challenge, though. If you can't find a tract on your own, consider a trusted, proven leasing agency. Just know you'll pay a premium for their service. – J.H.

tell you where to hunt a deer during the early season, pre-rut or even the rut, they can reveal future late-season hotspots. And if an area is completely devoid of sheds, it might mean the area lacks wintertime bedding and food sources

Obviously, shed hunting at the right time is crucial. Wait until at least 80% to 90% of deer have dropped. If shed hunting prior to that, stick to

open food sources, and don't go near bedded deer. If possible, use an ATV, tractor, or vehicle to cover open areas.

Once most bucks lose their antlers, look in the right places. Scour bedding areas, food sources, water sources, staging areas, travel routes, fence crossings, ditch crossings, and other points of interest. Cover as much ground as possible, but focus on high-odds spots first.



RESEARCH EQUALS
RESULTS

WHITETAIL INSTITUTE HERBICIDE

The Choice is Clear. Our Herbicides are researched and developed to produce high quality plots. Less weeds means more quality food and simply more deer.

ORDER TODAY! 800-688-3030 www.whitetailinstitute.com 239 Whitetail Trail, Pintola, AL 36043

TOP 10 POST-SEASON SCOUTING MISTAKES

There are many mistakes to avoid while post-season scouting. However, some are bigger, more common, or more costly than others. Here are 10 to keep in mind this off-season.

1. Wearing the wrong clothing. The briars and other sharp objects will snag and poke them.
2. Waiting until green-up to scout. By then, it's difficult to see sign and sheds.
3. Not covering the entire property. By skipping acres, you could miss key components.
4. Expecting deer to spend the entire season where you find the rut sign, or most recent sign.
5. Ignoring older sign. Sometimes, rubs dry up quickly, and appear older than they are.
6. Putting too much emphasis on old sign.

Keep things in perspective.

7. Not scouting inside of the sanctuaries that are off-limits the remainder of the year.
8. Not hanging trail cameras in bedding areas to soak (go unchecked) until next off-season.
9. Failing to correctly interpret the clues that are on the landscape.
10. Ignoring either the big picture or the minor details while scouting.

Scan slowly but be efficient. Look for small things, such as the tip of a tine, or base of an antler — not the entire antler. Use binos to verify if it's an antler before walking great distances to find out it's a stick.

When possible, recruit some help. Whether that's other people, or the use of a shed dog, it will result in more antlers discovered. And don't lose focus. Stay sharp and cover as much of the property as possible.

SPRING: INFORMATION OVERVIEW

After in-the-field scouting and shed hunting are complete, it's time to study all information. Study all notes, dropped pins and photos taken in the field. Also, reflect on sightings from the past season, and key trail camera photos taken, too. Study trail cameras that soaked in bedding areas for the past year.

With all information on the table, connect the dots between bedding areas, food sources and water sources. Identify key elements of the property for the early season, pre-rut, rut and late season. Pour over various app layers, such as aerial, topography, 3D and more. Gauge how best to hunt the property for each phase of the season. Part of this process is identifying and

making plans around specific lines of movement. Knowing how deer traverse the landscape is crucial.

Then, begin making game plans centered around specific target bucks. Use historical and recent information to create these target buck game plans. Craft these for each phase of the deer season for each target buck expected to be on the property. In part, use past core area and home range knowledge to predict these periods.

Next, pinpoint areas where these bucks are vulnerable along bed-to-feed lines of movement. If the property doesn't already offer an effective plan of action, map out opportunities through strategically created bedding cover and food plots.

SPRING: IN-THE-FIELD CHANGES

With all of the in-the-field scouting completed and information studied, it's time to make in-the-field changes. This requires manipulating the habitat to attract more deer and make the property more huntable.

This might mean creating or enhancing bedding areas. It also includes planting strategic food sources. Oftentimes, this is key hard or soft mast trees. Other times, it's small food plots in L, K, T, U, V, hourglass or turkey-foot shape, which funnel deer toward key pinch points. This phase also requires establishing small, isolated water sources within bow range of the best stand locations. All of these things should be in a linear path, though, which keeps deer moving along from bed to water to food, and vice versa.

It also doesn't hurt to add some extra incentives. Consider mock scrapes, scrape trees, rubbing posts, mineral licks (where legal) and others. These bonuses can attract deer and pose them for shot opportunities.

Then, hang treestands and position hunting blinds. Locate these in key spots along the lines of movement you established with the bedding areas, food sources, and water sources. Ensure these stands and blinds have access routes that don't alert deer. Shallow streams, ditches, drainages, rolling topography, planted screening cover, and other things that limit the ability to see or hear you approaching or departing, are a must. Chart all stands, blinds and access routes on an app or map. Make notes what

wind directions each stand and blind is compatible with.

SUMMER: INVENTORYING BEGINS

With the chessboard set, and summer beginning, it's time to take inventory. Deploy trail cameras to low-pressure areas to take inventory of what bucks are in the area. Hang these in spots that deer frequent, but that are easy to check with minimal to no pressure. Place cell cameras with external battery sources in areas that are more sensitive and difficult to reach without alerting deer.

Also, begin glassing from afar. Don't push in so far that it spooks deer. Being too aggressive isn't advised. Set up shop from spots that deer won't see, hear or smell you. Try to use routes that deer won't cross and catch your ground scent.

LATE SUMMER/EARLY FALL: PATTERNING BEGINS

With inventorying winding down, it's time to start patterning target bucks. In areas where seasons open in August or early September, that process should begin in late summer. It's likely deer will still be on late-summer patterns for the first few days of the season.

In areas where seasons open in late September or early October, consider starting the patterning process in early to mid-September. This is when deer are transitioning to fall ranges. Patterning prior to that might prove a waste of time, as approximately 50% of bucks will relocate elsewhere during this shift.

Of course, the patterning process is a combination of low-impact trail camera use and glassing from afar. Once the season opens, it might even require some observation sits. Continue with digital scouting, too, which can help put the final pieces of the puzzle together.

All things considered — next season will be here soon enough. Do the work during the off-season, and experience better results. Fail to prepare, and odds of success can greatly decrease.

— *Listen and/or view
Josh Honeycutt's visit with
Dan Schmidt on the
Deer Talk Now podcast.*



DEER & DEER HUNTING

ALAN CLEMONS

Wyoming Bills Would Hit Nonresident Shed Hunters

A bill to keep nonresident shed hunters out of Wyoming for the first three days of the season that begins May 1 is drawing some pushback over concerns about tourism dollars.

Wyoming House Bill 123 passed the House on Feb. 6 and has been approved to be sent to the Senate. It would prohibit nonresidents from hunting shed antlers the first three days of the season, giving Wyoming residents a chance to get a head start. Elk antlers found on public lands can yield more than \$20 per pound.

Additionally, House Bill 276 would require nonresidents age 16 and older to purchase a \$21.50 Wyoming "conservation stamp" to be able to hunt shed antlers. If the bills are signed into law, they would go into effect July 1 this year, after the shed season has begun, and the full impact wouldn't be determined until 2024 and beyond.

Wyofile reported that along with resident hunters wanting a head start on the lucrative shed-hunting business, some believe the added pressure of nonresidents can harm wildlife. Elk, deer and other animals rebounding from winter, even late into spring during the shed-hunting season, can be impacted.

notebook



Proponents of the bills say a three-day window could ease the pressure on the animals.

House Bill 123 also says that antlers dropped on public lands become the property of the state of Wyoming. This allows the state's wildlife agency and commission the ability to create regulations and enforce the three-day nonresident prohibition.

The bills are still making their way through the state legislative process.

Kentucky Deer Hunters Notch Record Harvest

More deer were killed in Kentucky during the 2022-23 season than the previous season, state officials said, with the total being one of the highest in the last decade.

Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources officials said 144,506 deer were killed, the most in three years and fourth-most since 2013. The 2015-16 season saw a record 155,734 whitetails killed from early September to mid-January.

The top five counties in 2022-23 were Christian, Hardin, Shelby, Breckinridge and Pendleton.

"It was a solid season from start to finish," said Noelle Thompson, deer program coordinator for the Kentucky DFWR. "Favorable hunting weather during the 16-day modern gun season in November helped drive the harvest total higher. Average white oak and red oak acorn production also played into hunters' favor."

The abundance of acorns and nuts (hard mast) produced by Kentucky's hardwood trees influences whitetail behavior throughout the season as a deer's primary food source. Biologists noted before the season that dry conditions observed during the late summer

and early fall would likely lead to early mast drop of all hardwood species, meaning available hard mast could be exhausted sooner.

Hunters took more deer than the 10-year average harvest (142,712 deer) and roughly 12,000 more deer than were reported taken in the 2021-22 season.

Female deer comprised 45% and 55% were male. Of the latter, officials said 68% were mature (age 2½ years or older). Most deer killed each year are by firearms. Last season, 104,878 were killed with modern firearms, making up 73% of the total. Archery hunters killed 11%, crossbows 9% and muzzleloaders 7%.

The 2023-24 deer season opens Sept. 2 for archery hunters, as well as youth and Kentucky resident seniors hunting with crossbows. Crossbow season opens Sept. 16. Archery and crossbow seasons run through Jan. 15, 2024.

The youth-only gun season will be Oct. 14-15. Muzzleloader seasons are Oct. 21-22 and Dec. 9-17. The modern gun season will fall between those timeframes, Nov. 11-26. The free youth weekend will be Dec. 30-31.





WHEN IT COMES TO HUNTING BOWS, THERE'S QUIET, AND THEN THERE'S WHITETAIL QUIET.

When's the last time you heard a bowhunter complaining that his or her bow was too quiet? As in, "I really love how this bow feels, and it's a tack driver, but it's just too darned quiet." The answer, of course, is never – because like having too much money, there's no such thing. You're more likely to hear, "My bow seems reasonably quiet to me, but I still had a doe jump the string last season." Sound travels three to four times faster than the speediest compound, meaning you just can't beat deer to the jump by delivering faster arrows. Eliminating string jumping's best accomplished by giving deer less to react to.

Compound bows have become progressively quieter each season, most now including some form of factory silencing. But with whitetails – arguably the

jumpiest critters in North America – there's always room for improvement.

Our continued obsession with speed is the greatest enemy of bow silence. For everything gained something else is sacrificed. In general, gaining 50 fps automatically increases audible decibels. Losing 50 fps automatically decreases detectable sound – all other factors remaining equal.

Gaining speed with a given setup's as easy as shooting lighter arrows and stripping the string of added weight. Conversely, achieving maximum silence is most easily accomplished by shooting heavier arrows or adding something to the string to dampen vibrations, resulting in slower arrow velocities.

Why the continued obsession with speed, anyway? Today's "slow" bows are 50 fps faster than "fast" bows only a decade old. Most whitetails are shot at less than 35 yards, and a large percentage of those shots involve cold-stiff muscles and red-lined nerves. Here, speed bows are less forgiving.

MORE WEIGHT = MORE QUIET

Need an easy answer to making any bow quieter? Shoot heavier arrows. Easy examples: Instead of shooting Easton's Hexx (7.2 gpi in a 400 spine) or Carbon Express' Maxima Blue Streak (7.4 gpi in a 250 spine) choose Easton's Axis Full Metal Jacket (10.2 gpi in 400) or Carbon Express PileDriver Hunter (10.4 gpi in 250). Or, screw in a heavier 125-grain broadhead instead of the recent 100-grain standard – or do both. You've also just boosted arrow reliability (especially following punishing bone hits), forgiveness and increased penetration potential. What you've sacrificed is, maybe, 25 fps of arrow speed. In my book that's a bargain akin to trading a dollar for six quarters.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

Of course, there's more to the equation. String silencers are the most obvious. Most of us wouldn't think of shooting hunting bows without them – even if ours holds nifty string bumpers (which I consider more of an accuracy enhancer – promoting consistent nock separation – than a silencing tool). String bumpers make compounds quieter. Adding string silencers makes bows even more so. Silencers such as LimbSaver's String Leeches or BowJax, or Rancho Safari's original rubber CatWhiskers, remain deadly effective and moisture-impervious favorites.

Today's bowhunters have an ever-growing array of silencers designed for every component group of any modern compound bow.

Still, most bow noise today originates from the accessories we add to our high-tech shooting machines. Arrow quivers are easily the biggest offenders, especially those allowing fletching to rattle together following release.

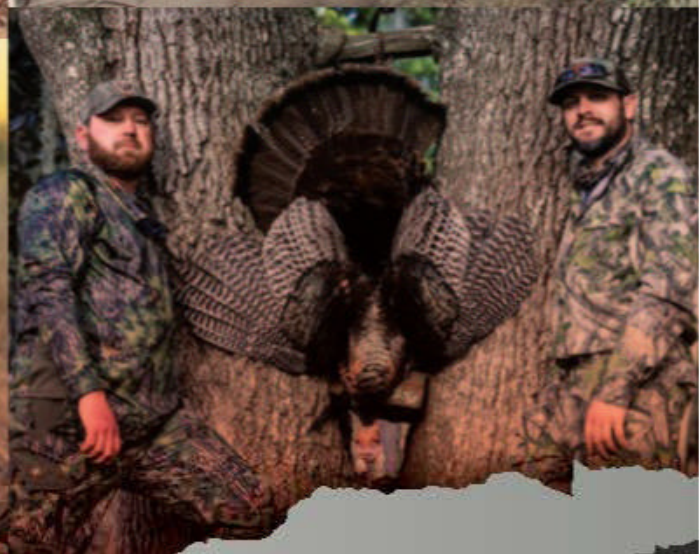
With that being said, manufacturers have begun addressing this issue, making bow quivers ever quieter. This also goes for sights and arrow rests (especially drop-aways), incorporated dampeners or rubber armoring making tuning fork buzzes and hums less common. This makes loose set screws and anchoring bolts today's more likely culprits, especially after a long summer of hard practice.



**LAND OF THE GIANTS
6 STATE HUNT OFFERS
TOP NOTCH
ACCOMMODATIONS
WORLD'S BIGGEST
TROPHY WHITETAIL DEER
& TURKEY OUTFITTER**

**WHITETAIL
HEAVEN
OUTFITTERS**
NOBODY DOES WHAT WE DO

**BOOK NOW , TO BOOK
HUNTS PLEASE CALL
859-509-2704
AND FOR ANY QUESTIONS
OR CONCERNS CALL
1-800-689-6619**



- **OVER 70,000 + ACRES**
- **SCATTERED ACROSS INDIANA, KENTUCKY, OHIO AND KANSAS FOR TROPHY BUCKS AND FLORIDA FOR OSCEOLA TURKEYS**
- **INTENSELY MANAGED, CHERRY PICKED ACRES IN THE HEART OF SOME OF THE BEST TROPHY BUCK STATES**
- **HUNT THE BOONE & CROCKETT COUNTIES WITHIN THOSE STATES**

- **SUPER HIGH SUCCESS RATES**
- **APPROXIMATE 150 INCH GROSS AVERAGE**
- **100% WILD, 100% FREE RANGE AND**
- **100% NO FENCES**
- **BEEN IN BUSINESS FOR OVER 22 YEARS**

WHITETAILHEAVENOUTFITTERS.COM
101 BRADLEY DR, NICHOLASVILLE, KY 40356, UNITED STATES

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE 6.5 CREEDMOOR

TEXT & PHOTOS BY BRYCE M. TOWSLEY

“No need to hold over out to 500 with this thing!”

I found that on social media from a longtime gun writer, who should know better. He was talking about the 6.5 Creedmoor. So I responded with something a friend of mine uses to mock the uninformed foolishly bragging about their guns.

“She don’t drop a bit out to 500 yards and after that she raises just a mite.”

“Sounds about right,” was his response.

So it goes with this cartridge. The 6.5 Creedmoor is the most successful rifle cartridge in history and the most misunderstood. Even at my own gun club I recently heard a guy saying we can’t shoot our commercial steel targets with the cartridge.

“It’s so fast it will go right through them and vaporize the steel,” he claimed.

I pointed out that I had been shooting a 6.5 Creedmoor at them when he drove in the gate and he all but called me a liar.

So what’s the truth?

During the 2007 Camp Perry matches Hornady engineer Dave Emary and High Power National Champion Dennis DeMille decided the sport needed a better factory cartridge. Emary and fellow Hornady engineer, Joe Thielen, pooled their talents and in 2008 announced a new Hornady cartridge designed for long-range shooting, called the 6.5 Creedmoor.

The 6.5 Creedmoor can trace its roots back to an odd parentage; one far from the long-range target game. The .307 Winchester was introduced in 1982 and was designed for the lever-action Winchester Model 94 rifle. That case was later modified to create the .30 TC. When that cartridge was necked down to take a .264-inch bullet, it became the 6.5 Creedmoor.

The cartridge was designed around the 140-grain A-Max bullet with a moderate 2,710 fps

muzzle velocity. The case is shorter than the .260 Remington to allow the long, sleek, bullets to be correctly seated in the cartridge and still fit in a short-action magazine. To stabilize the heavy-for-caliber bullets, the rifling twist rate was set at 1:8. By comparison, the .260 Remington is 1:9.

The concept of using heavy-for-caliber bullets with a high ballistic coefficient at a moderate velocity proved to be the magic key to long-range shooting. This kept recoil down and lessened shooter fatigue over a long day of shooting.

The 6.5 Creedmoor languished for a long time, as it was a specialty cartridge catering to a small segment of target shooters, many of them already set in their ways. About the time it was probably headed to the trash heap of obsolescence, the rifle world discovered long-range shooting and it became an “instant” success.

One aspect that helped with this success is its inherent accuracy. One major rifle maker told me that they test every gun they make for accuracy. For decades the .308 Win. was the clear leader. Now it’s the 6.5 Creedmoor. It is probably the most accurate factory loaded cartridge made today.

The cartridge stays supersonic out to about 1,200 yards, making it a great choice for those shooting at 1,000 yards. In the past, a shooter needed a bigger, harder-kicking cartridge to achieve that goal.

I have pretty extensive experience with the 6.5 Creedmoor shooting at the range. I own several, including a custom chassis rifle that on a good day can thread the bullet through a needle’s eye at 100 yards. I have tested dozens more rifles for magazines. I have handloaded and shot more than 5,000 rounds, and shot at least that many factory loads at targets out to 1,800 yards. I have shot groups at 100 yards that are one oval-shape hole, and at 500 yards that a 50-cent piece would cover.

My conclusion? This is a remarkable cartridge.

It was inevitable that this level of popularity



The author with his 2018 California blacktail taken with a Mossberg Patriot rifle in 6.5 Creedmoor, using a Riton scope.

BECOME A BETTER LAND MANAGER



- New and proven trapping strategies and tips
- Fur-handling secrets from longtime trappers
- Updates on local, state and federal laws affecting you
- State trapping association reports to help you stay current
- Choose your subscription: we offer print, digital or both (ALL ACCESS)



PREFER A DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION, OR WANT TO PAY WITH A CREDIT CARD? YOU CAN ALSO RENEW, OR GIFT A SUBSCRIPTION! HEAD TO OUR WEBSITE AT:
WWW.TRAPPERMAG.COM/MY-SUBSCRIPTIONS



WITH THIS FORM, WE CAN ONLY ACCEPT ORDERS PAID WITH CHECK OR MONEY ORDER.
FOR PROMPT SERVICE, SEND THIS COMPLETED FORM AND PAYMENT TO: MEDIA 360, LLC.
ATTN: THE TRAPPER SUBSCRIPTION, P.O. BOX 548, WAUPACA, WI 54981



1 YEAR
8 ISSUES
\$18.95

US **\$18.95**
CANADA (ADD \$11) **\$29.95**
INTERNATIONAL (ADD \$17)... **\$35.95**

SELECT PAYMENT ENCLOSED:
CHECK ☐ OR MONEY ORDER ☐

SELECT YOUR REGION:

US: ☐ **\$18.95**

CANADA: ☐ **\$29.95**

INTERNATIONAL: ☐ **\$35.95**

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____

ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

**MEDIA
360**

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE: If for any reason at any time you wish to cancel your subscription, we will send a refund for all unmailed issues. If the Postal Service alerts us that your magazine is undeliverable, we have no further obligation unless we receive a corrected address within one year. Please allow 4-6 weeks for your issue to arrive in the mail. The Trapper is published 8 times per year (January, February, April-May, Summer, September, October, November, December) by MEDIA 360 LLC.

THE “OTHER” SHORT-ACTION 6.5 MM

In 2018, Ruger introduced the “other” 6.5 cartridge for a short-action rifle. Necked down from the .300 Ruger Compact Mungum case, the 6.5 PRC drives a 143-grain ELD-X bullet at 2,960 fps. The Creedmoor drives the same bullet at 2,700 fps. The difference is noticeable. It not only shoots flatter, but it is a lot more definitive on deer. I think this may well be the ultimate 6.5mm deer cartridge.

would bleed over into the hunting world. The difference this time is social media. In years past hunters got their information from books and magazines where the writers were vetted by an editorial staff. If the writers got things wrong too often, they were replaced. This kept



The Hornady 6.5 Creedmoor cartridge (L) is made by necking down the .30 TC cartridge.

the info relatively pure. With social media, everybody’s an expert and without a filter. They did what a lot of gun writers have done for years and repeated what they read, only now nobody was there to control the truth. Some of the things I have read about this cartridge are mind blowing. For the record, it can’t slay dragons a county away. (They really need to be closer.)

It’s a medium-power, short-action rifle cartridge — that’s all. No magic. From a hunter’s standpoint, it’s the .260 Remington all over again. Maybe a bit more accurate and it can handle heavy bullets a little better. But with hunting-weight bullets, the ballistics are nearly identical.

My experience is mixed. We were hunting black-tailed deer in



If you are developing a handload for your 6.5 Creedmoor rifle and have an average for five, 5-shot 100-yard groups that is 1/2 inch, stop, you are done. Load and shoot! The better your hunting rifle will shoot, the more confidence you will carry to the hunt.

California in a lead-free zone where copper bullets were a must. I picked Barnes because of my great faith in the TSX bullet, and my deer did his part and fell down a few feet from where he was shot. Others in the party used different bullets and we wound up chasing wounded deer quite a bit. That experience might well have turned me against the cartridge. In truth, though, every deer shot is about bullet choice, bullet placement, luck and a little voodoo, so I didn’t form a concrete opinion from that one hunt. Instead, I built a database one piece at a time. Also listed in the database that I have shot several whitetails and a few hogs using 140-grain Hornady EDLX bullets with almost perfect performance. Plus, I have shot or watched someone else shoot multiple other deer while using various other bullets with mostly good results.

The greatest sin in America is success. We always attack the top guy. That’s the source of the current social media trend of badmouthing the cartridge. Those folks are just as full of BS as the ones who claim fairies steer the bullet and that it can kill mastodons with ease.

The truth is that it’s a remarkable long-range target cartridge and a pretty good deer cartridge.

— Bryce Towsley is a veteran deer hunter and guns/ammunition expert from Vermont.



The author used a 6.5 Creedmoor to take down this boar hog in Oklahoma.



STEVE BARTYLLA



I'll never forget finding scrapes in my earlier years of hunting. Deer numbers were low back then and finding scrapes was a true thrill for me, as we all "knew" that they were made to tell estrus does where to wait to get bred. The fact that it was actually wrong wouldn't come to me until many years later.

So, I'd rush to set up a stand or find a tree I could climb into, bursting with the confidence that the maker would be mine. Unfortunately, those turned out to be far better bird- and squirrel-watching stands than deer hunting stands.

What follows is how I've transformed scrape hunting from frustration to fruition.

BILLBOARD

Starting fast, scrapes aren't the breeding hubs we once mistakenly believed. They're far more analogous to billboards along highways, meant to relay info to the other resident deer, such as the maker's presence, their dominance level, general maturity, their willingness to breed and even overall health levels.

These acts of scraping can help spur estrus just a couple days early, as well as warn other bucks that this area is essentially claimed, although that often goes ignored.

Since they are meant for advertising, so long as the deer concentration points remain the same, and suitable licking branches continue existing, the most seriously used scrapes tend to be in the same spots year after year, as they are the best spots to advertise from.

SINKING THE NAIL

Here's the rub, though. A single mature buck often makes hundreds of scrapes in a single fall and most are never or barely ever visited again. Then, out of the comparatively small percentage that he does consistently

tend, the majority of that action is after dark. Add it all up and it's understandable why so many of my stands overlooking scrapes were really better for bird and squirrel watching than deer hunting.

But, this is now the key for my last week of October scrape hunting success. Inspecting last year's scrapes before spring green up allows me to gauge their usage levels, as the overly bowled or exaggeratedly large scraped earth areas clearly show which scrapes were hit the hardest. I only consider hunting those.

However, I still have to further fine-tune it by narrowing it down to those that both offer the best odds of daylight visits, as well as me being able to access them, hunt them and exit without literally exploding the deer woods. That merely takes a dash of deer knowledge and feel. That scrape on the edge of the wide-open alfalfa field that sits next to the interstate highway is very likely receiving most action after dark. But what about the truck-bed-size scrape in the creek bottom that connects the bedding ridge to that same field? How about the scrapes on that bedding ridge or those in that small, grassy meadow, surrounded by woods?

CONCLUSION

Setting up on a random scrape is like trying to find a needle in a haystack, without a magnet. Getting out there now, finding those scrapes that are both huntable and hammered in daylight during hunting season is my magnet to find the best ones.

— Catch Steve Bartylla's "Grow 'em Big" video series at www.YouTube.com/DDHonline.



JOSH HONEYCUTT

A RARE HUNT FOR THE FUZZY STUFF IN THE BUCKEYE STATE

Velvet is a rarity on September 25, but that's exactly what George Cummins saw. A cryptorchid buck that remained in velvet frequented a property he hunted. "Sunfish Valley had been trying to kill this buck for four years," Cummins said. "They guess the buck to be around 8 years old. Only one other hunter had ever seen the deer."

Destiny decided September 25 would be the final encounter. A mild cold front pushed through, dropping the temperatures into the mid 70s. A southwest wind came with it, which was ideal for hunting the buck. Still, in the hill country, wind can be tricky.

"The terrain in southern Ohio is very hilly, on the verge of being mountains," Cummins said. "This can prove difficult in playing winds in the afternoons when they want to swirl on the backside of these huge hills." His stand location was a bench that cut through the steep slopes above and below him. About three-quarter of the way up the elevation, it was the perfect location to intercept deer traveling through the area.

The hunt started off slow, though, with only sightings of turkeys and squirrels. As sunset neared, deer began moving. First, a few does worked down the hill. They almost got downwind of him, but a young 8-pointer started chasing them.

"My attention was focused on this group of deer," Cummins said. "I was afraid at any moment they could ruin my hunt, when I turned back around there was about a 145- to 150-inch 9-point working his way toward me. My guide, Anthony, told me about this buck. He was one of the shooters. I made up my mind to pass this deer to have an opportunity at the big boy."

Eventually, the 9-pointer made it within bow range, cleaning out scrapes and making rubs down the entire trail. After watching the deer for about 30



BUCK: 198 INCHES
DATE OF HARVEST:
SEPTEMBER 25
LOCATION OF HARVEST:
OHIO
WEAPON OF HARVEST:
CROSSBOW
PHOTO BY GEORGE CUMMINS

minutes, Cummins wondered if he'd made the right decision to pass. He hoped it was the right call.

With 15 minutes of legal shooting light remaining, the big buck whipped its head around and got nervous. Cummins could hear another deer descending the hill but couldn't see it. It remained hidden behind a row of mountain laurels. A few minutes later, it stopped 45 yards away and worked a scrape, but only its legs were visible.

"I knew it was a buck, but I couldn't tell how big," Cummins said. "It was at this moment the 9-pointer bristled up and began to walk around this deer to its downwind side."

Seconds later, the big buck revealed its rack, and Cummins recognized the velvet monster. The deer meandered around but didn't offer a shot opportunity. Then, he started to leave. "Through all this action of these two bucks, I had forgotten about the herd of deer working the shelf behind me," Cummins said. "At some point, the big buck got nervous with all the noise the basket rack was making and began to leave. I had to shoot quickly because my window was small."

As the buck started to turn, it opened a shot at his vitals. He carefully settled the crossbow, placed the sights

on the deer, and released the arrow. The 35-yard, slightly-quartering-to shot struck true. The buck ran 80 yards and tipped over. They watched him drop in sight.

"The legend was finally dead," Cummins said. "This truly is the buck of a lifetime. He was such a unique, old deer. He never shed his velvet. He would shed his antlers and grow a new set every year, but never shed his velvet."

Looking back, while the size of the buck is great, his favorite part of the hunt was sharing the experience with numerous friends, including the Swon brothers, his cameraman, Jack, his cousin, Sean, and McClain.

"The brotherhood that is created when you share time in camp is why I hunt," Cummins said. "To kill the deer of 10 lifetimes while having so many people close to me in camp was something I will truly never forget."

The buck scored 198 inches. You can watch the full hunt at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I4FhP2DBsWU>.



DO'S & DON'TS TO CONSIDER WHEN MAKING VENISON SAUSAGE

Making sausage with harvested venison is a way to make some great tasting products. It is also a good way to utilize the shoulder and rump muscles, as well as the trimmings from carcass processing. Of course, the loin eye (backstrap) and tenderloin muscles are best reserved for steaks and roasts, but even those muscles could be used for sausage, as well, if preferred. One of the advantages of sausage products is that they offer an almost unlimited means of changing meat texture and tenderness, as well as offering a wide variety of flavor profiles to suit your personal tastes. However, it's important to keep some things in mind when making sausage in order to achieve the greatest eating enjoyment when the products are completed.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

Times have never been better for the DIY sausage enthusiast. There is a wide range of small-scale meat-processing equipment (grinders, mixers, stuffers, smokers) available at outdoor/sporting goods retail stores and online suppliers. Most of these sources also provide sausage casings and spice blends for a wide variety of products. When selecting the appropriate equipment to purchase, match the capacity of the equipment to the amount of sausage expected to be made, then go one or two sizes larger than that recommended, especially for a grinder. You are not likely to regret it.

IMPORTANCE OF RAW MATERIALS

Regardless of the type of sausage considered, all sausage products depend on clean, well-chilled, good quality venison as a starting material. So, DO practice careful carcass dressing following the kill, quick chilling and careful skinning before removing the muscles from the skeleton. DO spend some time trimming the boneless meat to remove fat, connective tissue, bruises, and especially any damaged areas that may have occurred during harvest. DO keep the meat cold (below 40°F) during the entire process. Because meat for sausage is ground to improve tenderness and to facilitate mixing with salt and spices, this provides opportunity blend the venison, which is very lean, with pork trimmings to increase the fat

content. DON'T use any meat, either venison or pork, that is discolored or that looks and/or smells stale, even slightly so. Even if only a small amount of discolored or stale meat is used in a large batch of clean, fresh meat, the chemical changes that affect flavor have started to occur and will spread very quickly to the fresh meat of the batch. A good rule to follow is: when in doubt, throw it out — and avoid spoiling the rest of the batch.

MIXING AND BLENDING

Adding pork that is about 50% fat to lean venison in a ration of 1:1 goes a long way toward improving the juiciness and tenderness of any sausage product. Such a combination will result in a sausage product that is about 25% fat, which is considered nearly ideal for most sausage products. The best approach is to first grind the venison and the pork separately through a 3/8" (plate hole size) grinder plate, before mixing together with salt, spices and other ingredients. Some added water, depending on the product type, is also a good addition to the mixture at this point to improve product juiciness and tenderness. DO mix long enough to get a uniform blend, but DON'T mix so long that the fat begins to smear. When mixing is complete, regrind the mixture through a 1/8" or a 1/4" grinder plate. This will produce a meat particle size and mouthfeel when consumed similar to ground beef.

For mixing and blending, DO keep the meat cold (30°F to 34°F) to keep the fat from smearing (use a thermometer to check the temperature). Using meat that has been frozen and mostly but not completely thawed, or adding a little cold water or crushed ice, will help keep the meat cold during mixing. Thawing frozen meat should be done in a refrigerator at less than 40°F and is likely to take 24-48 hours depending on the size of the meat pieces. Make sure that, by the time the batch is finished mixing, the meat is completely thawed and ice (if used) is completely melted. Otherwise, there may be empty voids in the finished product where ice melts after mixing, or there may be areas in the mixture where salt and spices were not absorbed if the meat had not completely thawed before mixing was completed. DO mix only long enough to get a uniform dispersion of all the ingredients and ensure the melting of any ice present. DON'T mix to the point that the fat begins to smear, because

Venison Tequila and Pepperjack Chorizo Sausage

PHOTO & TEXT BY JACK HENNESSY



Chorizo, when done right, is a rapid-transit experience for your tastebuds—from spicy to sweet to savory. Not in that order, necessarily. While the spice list is extensive here, it's worth the effort and investment to include all, as this sausage is truly something special if you enjoy Mexican cuisine.

A note on using alcohol for sausage: While yes, we are using tequila here, we are using a small amount and diluting it with ice water. High-proof alcohol and vinegar can break the protein-fat bind in sausage, which can lead to dry, crumbly sausage. All to say: Don't get too nuts with the tequila in your sausage mix. Try to follow ratios here.

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 12 APPROXIMATELY 6-OUNCE SAUSAGES):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| + 3 pounds venison (60%) | + 8 grams cumin (0.35%) |
| + 2 pounds pork back fat (40%) | + 8 grams coriander (0.35%) |
| + 2,268 grams total meat | + 8 grams granulated garlic (0.35%) |
| | + 4 grams oregano (0.18%) |
| + 34 grams kosher salt (1.5%) | + 4 grams ground thyme (0.18%) |
| + 17 grams chipotle powder (0.75%) | + 4 grams onion powder (0.18%) |
| + 11 grams chili powder (0.5%) | + 2 grams ground all-spice (0.09%) |
| + 11 grams guajillo powder (0.5%) | + 2 grams ground cinnamon (0.09%) |
| + 11 grams ground black pepper (0.5%) | |
| + 8 grams paprika (0.35%) | |

ADDITIVES:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| + 10 grams C-Bind per 5 pounds | + 113 to 227 grams high-temp |
| + 1/4 cup ice-cold tequila, | pepper jack cubes (5% to 10%) |
| + 3/4 cup ice water per 5 pounds | |

SUGGESTED SAUSAGE CASINGS:

- + LEM Pre-Tubed Natural Hog Casings 32-35mm

OPTIONAL:

- + Queso fresco for topping
- + Roasted poblanos for side

If you're new to sausage making, watch a few videos. There are some key steps you don't want to miss, one of the biggest being keeping your meat ice-cold throughout the process. If the meat warms and fat smears, protein extraction will fail. Your fat will leak out while cooking and—same as too much high-proof alcohol—leave you with dry, flavorless sausage.

All ingredients are listed in percentages so you can adapt to any amount of meat. For equipment, you will want a grinder and a dry goods scale, potentially a larger meat scale and a meat mixer, as well as a sausage stuffer/press if you plan on making sausage links.

SPICY MAYO DRIZZLE:

- | | |
|---|---|
| + 1/4 cup of chipotle puree (chipotle peppers in adobo sauce pureed in food processor or blender) | + 2 cups mayonnaise |
| + 1/4 cup honey | + 1/2 teaspoon each of kosher salt and black pepper |

DIRECTIONS:

Make sure your total meat mixture is 60:40 venison to pork back fat. Convert your total amount of meat to grams. Use a dry goods scale set to metric and properly measure out ingredients based on percentages. (Make sure to divide percentage numbers above by 100 to properly multiple. Example: 1.5% will show up as 0.015 in the calculator. Multiply that by your total amount of meat for amount of kosher salt you need to add.)

Make absolutely sure meat stays ice-cold from grind to mixing. (Grinding partially frozen meat is an option here.) Grind meat once through coarse grinding plate, then add spice mix and coat meat. Grind a second time. If meat ever gets above 35 degrees Fahrenheit, add to the freezer until it's ice-cold again.

Using either a meat mixer or your hands, mix meat for 3 minutes. Make sure it stays ice-cold. During this time, add ice-cold tequila and ice water. Mix for another minute, then add C-Bind (carrot fiber). Mix in, then add desired amount of pepper jack cheese.

Either keep as loose sausage or stuff into casings. If stuffing, turning into links, prick any air bubbles, allow links to hang in cool, dry place with ample airflow to bloom for 1-2 hours.

Either vacuum seal or cook fresh. To cook, heat an oven to 300 degrees. Add sausage links to an oven-safe skillet. Cook for 20 minutes then flip. Cook for 10 more minutes then allow to rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Mix spicy mayo drizzle while sausage cooks and drizzle over top when serving with queso fresco and roasted poblanos.

Enjoy! Reach out to me on Instagram (@WildGameJack) with any questions or comments.

that is likely to result in excessive release and separation of fat from the product during cooking.

INGREDIENTS

Ingredients to be added to the meat blend will vary considerably depending on the type of sausage product

desired. A salt content of about 2% of the meat weight works well for most products, but can vary from 1.5% to 2.5% depending on personal preference for taste. For the remaining ingredients, including spices and a curing agent (nitrite), there are many commercial mixtures now available online or at retail sporting goods and outdoor supply stores. Many of the mixtures are likely to include salt so DO be sure to read the list of ingredients and follow the directions for use. You may also consider adding some additional ingredients of your own to any commercial spice mixture. Diced cheese, jalapeno peppers, various dried fruits (blueberries, cherries, cranberries, etc.) or pieces of bacon can be added for novelty and for a unique flavor. Almost anything is possible and the only limit is your imagination. However, if you want to experiment with some novel ingredients, DO buy some 80% lean ground beef, mix some very small batches (1-2 lbs.) with your spice mixture, then hand-form some patties to cook and taste. This will help to decide which ingredients work best and will save the venison for making the final sausage product.

TYPES OF SAUSAGE TO CONSIDER

Fresh sausage, such as breakfast sausage, bratwurst and Italian sausage, are easy to make but are highly perishable because they are typically not cooked until consumed and include minimal preservatives. Typical ingredients are simply salt and spices. DO add cold water at 3% of the meat weight during mixing to improve the dispersion of the other ingredients. If a commercial spice mixture is used, DO check to see if antioxidants such as BHA and BHT are included. Fresh sausage products will develop rancid flavors rather quickly if these antioxidants are not included. Small diameter collagen casings are best to use for these products, although breakfast sausage also works well as patties. It is also best to package and freeze these products if they are not going to be consumed within a few days.

Cured, smoked and cooked sausage products, such as frankfurters, bologna and cotto salami will include the curing agent, nitrite, with salt and spices. In this case, for these products, DO add water at 10% to 20% of the meat weight



during mixing to improve juiciness after cooking. Small-diameter casings are appropriate for frankfurter-type products, but large-diameter casings are needed for products like sandwich bologna or cotto salami that are to be sliced as luncheon meats. Because these products are intended to be ready-to-eat (RTE), the smoking/cooking treatment must achieve an internal product temperature of at least 160°F (again, DO use a thermometer) because this can be a safety issue for RTE products that are eaten cold. Smoke application is not necessary but adds considerable flavor and color to the product. After packaging, these products can be stored in a refrigerator for several days, but freezing is necessary for long-term storage.

Fermented sausage, such as summer sausage, is characterized by a bacterial fermentation that acidifies the product and results in exceptional preservation and shelf life, as well as a tangy, acidic taste. However, the process for this requires a bacterial culture and some sugar in addition to the salt, spices and nitrite, plus a fermentation period where the product is held at about 100°F for several hours. Consequently, it is best to have a commercial meat processor prepare this type of sausage because controlling the conditions during fermentation is critical to product safety. Alternatively, a summer sausage seasoning mixture with salt and nitrite cure can be used to make a cured, smoked and cooked product without fermentation, similar to the frankfurters and bologna described earlier. This product will not have the acidic, tangy taste of a true summer sausage, but will be a very acceptable sausage product by itself.

Dried sausages, such as pepperoni

and hard salami, are normally fermented first, then dried. Because of the complexity of the fermentation, and the need for careful control during the drying process, this is another sausage group that is probably best left to a commercial meat processor.

Even venison jerky can be made in a similar fashion as these sausage products. Jerky is typically done by thinly slicing lean meat into strips, which are then marinated in a solution of jerky spices and nitrite cure, followed by drying in an oven to remove 50% or so of the product weight. However, in my opinion, whole muscle jerky strips done this way can be a bit tougher and chewier than I prefer. An option is to grind the lean venison through a 1/8" or 1/4" plate, mix the ground venison with jerky spices and nitrite cure in the appropriate amounts, and then use an extruder to form strips of the ground jerky mixture. There are "jerky shooters" available at the online and retail outlets that provide the equipment and spice mixtures for sausage. These resemble a caulking gun and include an extruder attachment that will form strips of the meat mixture onto a pan that can then go into an oven for drying. Jerky made this way is still chewy after drying, but less so than the traditional whole muscle jerky.

Be sure to run through all the do's and don'ts before you make sausage. A little bit of planning will go a long way, and result in the best venison sausage you've ever had!

— Dr. Joe Sebranek is a distinguished professor of meat science at Iowa State University.





FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

FACEBOOK.COM/THEPURSUITCHANNEL
INSTAGRAM.COM/PURSUITCHANNEL
@PURSUITCHANNEL/TWEETS

FACEBOOK

Get you some of this ... AWESOME outdoor content available on Pursuit UP!
No subscription required! Dozens of providers ... like Samsung TV Plus, Xumo Play, TCL, Glewed, Vidgo and many others!
#wearepursuit

PURSUIT THANKS INDUSTRY PARTNERS AND PRODUCERS

Moving into its 15th year of business, the Pursuit family wants to thank all of its industry partners and producers for a strong 2022.

As we excitedly enter the 2023 broadcast season you can expect to see new programming and continued growth initiatives from Pursuit. As most viewers know, television still provides one of the best solutions for marketers to target key demographics and get proven sales results within the fishing, hunting, and shooting categories. With that, Pursuit provides an unmatched solution for industry partners and content creators with an ever-growing dual linear/digital distribution model that has helped to land some of the industry's most popular and well-known programs as we launch the 2023 season.

"Ted Nugent's Spirit Of The Wild" headlines the group of newcomers and returning shows that will be announced in the coming weeks. These key additions and returning programs are some of the industry's most popular and well-known personalities in the fishing, trapping, big-game, shooting and archery categories.

"We are thrilled about the upcoming 2023 season, and we have many great things in store for our beloved industry in the coming weeks and months. We believe Pursuit's model is key to the future of outdoor content distribution. Our recent accomplishments show that more and more folks are beginning to understand that," said Rusty Faulk, CEO of Pursuit Media. "We'd be nowhere without the wonderful producers we've had on the network all these years, and to be able to add a significant number of top-quality new shows to the Pursuit family says a lot about our commitment to the outdoors industry and those that believe in our vision for the future," he continued. "We've been so fortunate to maintain the distribution we have that reaches core audiences across the country that don't receive other outdoor networks, and you can look for that to grow in 2023 to increase the substantial lead even further that we hold in overall market-penetration. Thanks again to all of you that support us, and we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Pursuit's no-sub-fee model to carriers and viewers has been an invaluable component to the network in maintaining a strong linear presence to ensure Pursuit's reach. The streaming side of Pursuit's business also provides millions of viewers great outdoors content without



GO TO PURSUITCHANNEL.COM for more information on all of the great shows and schedules, and how to get Pursuit Channel from your TV service provider or streaming online source.

- DISH NETWORK CHANNEL 393
- DIRECT TV CHANNEL 604 • VERIZON CHANNEL 818
- CENTURYLINK 1677 • AT&T U-VERSE 1644
- ROKU SEARCH PURSUIT CHANNEL
- WATCH ONLINE ON VIDILLION
WWW.VIDILLION.TV/PURSUITCHANNEL/



a subscription fee with its ever-growing Pursuit UP channel. As vertical networks continue to shrink in our space, Pursuit's dual footprint remains strong and provides the freedom to its partners to garner as much additional distribution content as possible on other national platforms, as well as targeted regional and local networks.

In short, Pursuit's linear/digital dual-distribution model is the best the industry has ever seen and is here to serve the outdoors community for many years to come. For content providers, you can enjoy the access to a very engaged and responsive audience, as well as the freedom to pursue audiences on other platforms. For advertisers, affordable and flexible media buys in the form of strategic commercial schedules, category specific content sponsorships, branded interstitials, and long-form call-to-action creatives are available with guaranteed impressions on Pursuit Channel, or advanced targeting campaigns on Pursuit UP that can target any and every demo, behavioral, and geographic goals you may have.

Reach out to Pursuit today to learn all about the options available to marketers of outdoor-related products.

Contact Pursuit Media, LLC: 334.544.0701 or media@pursuitchannel.com

NOW STREAMING PAST EPISODES ON WWW.PURSUITUP.TV.COM!

DEER & DEER HUNTING TV IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



**PURSUIT CHANNEL DELIVERS THE OUTDOORS STRAIGHT
TO YOUR TV AND DEVICES WITH THE CLICK OF A BUTTON.
DOWNLOAD OUR APP TODAY AND NEVER MISS AN EPISODE.**



- DISH CHANNEL 393 •
- DIRECT TV CHANNEL 604 •
- VERIZON CHANNEL 818 •
- CENTURY LINK 1677 •
- ATT U-VERSE 1644 •
- ROKU SEARCH PURSUIT CHANNEL •
- WWW.VIDILLION.TV/PURSUITCHANNEL •

pursuit^{UP}
We Deliver the Outdoors

WWW.PURSUITUPTV.COM



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

[FACEBOOK.COM/THEPURSUITCHANNEL](https://facebook.com/thepursuitchannel)

[INSTAGRAM.COM/PURSUITCHANNEL](https://instagram.com/pursuitchannel)

[@PURSUITCHANNEL/TWEETS](https://twitter.com/pursuitchannel)



TOP TIPS TO GET THAT GOBBLER!

TURKEY & TURKEY HUNTING

AMERICA'S #1 TURKEY RESOURCE SINCE 1992

SPRING TURKEY SPECIAL!

VALUED READERS,

For years, we were limited in the number of pages we could produce in our spring issues. Now that D&DH is once again independently owned, we changed those rules. One of the most notable changes is the bonus section you are about to read. Considering the fact that 64% of D&DH readers also hunt wild turkeys, we thought it was only fitting to tack some extra pages onto this April issue and include this special bonus section. This hand-picked content comes from our sister publication, Turkey & Turkey Hunting. And if you really like chasing gobblers, we have a full 68-page version of Turkey & Turkey Hunting for 2023. It is available in our online store (shop.deeranddeerhunting.com) and on newsstands, so be sure to pick up a copy before they're all gone! From the entire team here at Media 360, have a great spring season.

PHOTO BY JOHN PENNOYER/WINDIGO IMAGES

— Dan, Brad and Steve

MEDIA360



MOSSBERG® | OPTIC-READY TURKEY

**OPTIC-
READY.
HUNT-
READY.**



940® Pro Turkey
12GA, 5-Shot
18.5" or 24"

500® Turkey
- Optic-Ready
.410 Bore, 6-Shot, 24"

(Optics shown, not included)

SAFETY TIP

Store firearms securely, inaccessible to children and unauthorized users.

Consult and comply with any and all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, requirements, and/or restrictions, including but not limited to those regarding the purchase, ownership, use, transport, and carrying of a firearm. Not all products are available in all states and jurisdictions.

OPTIC-READY KEEPS YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE.

Our optic-ready turkey guns have innovative, cut receivers that allow for direct mounting of Shield RMSc-pattern micro dot sights— for improved eye alignment and target acquisition. Renowned for their durability and smooth, reliable performance in the toughest conditions, Mossberg semi-auto and pump-action shotguns can help you take down and take home prized longbeards, season-after-season. Available in 940® Pro (12GA), 500® (20GA and .410) and 835® Ulti-Mag® (12GA) models.

Mossberg — Makers of dependable, hardworking firearms for more than a century.

**LEARN MORE AT
MOSSBERG.COM**

MOSSBERG®
SINCE 1919

SCAN CODE FOR
MORE INFO ▶



RUN & GUN PUBLIC-LAND DECOY TACTICS

THE JAKE AND BREEDER HEN

WHILE A STRUTTER is by far my favorite all-around turkey decoy, when I hunt on public land, I leave it in the truck. Instead, I pack along a jake and breeder hen combination. I can pack both in the game pouch of my turkey vest, slung over a shoulder in carry bags, or as I often do, in a medium-large daypack (which I use instead of the traditional turkey vest), then cover ground quickly and easily, and set up rapidly with a minimum of movement. And this combination is super deadly. I also like to add another hen decoy to round out the realism.

SAFETY FIRST

Public-land hunting often means you'll encounter other gobbler-getters — especially when a tom sounds off, drawing everyone within earshot to the same locale. So, when choosing a spot to set up with your decoys, bear in mind that it's possible some yahoo will shoot at the dekes without first identifying them as fakes. I try and set up with something solid behind me — big tree trunk, large rockpile — to protect my "6." I also shy away from using strutter decoys with real turkey fans, instead opting for a fake jake and laydown hen combo, which hopefully will discourage someone stalking my calling and decoys from taking a potshot at them. Lastly, if I am set up and see another hunter nearby, I call out to them, so they know where I am and that those are my decoys, not real birds. Better to blow a setup than risk an accident.

TERRAIN DICTATES TACTICS

How to hunt is largely dictated by the terrain. Public-land hunting, first and foremost, requires locating turkeys to hunt. I also try and get away from easy access points that draw lazy hunters. In big woods the best bet is to move and call, but wherever there's more open terrain — big valleys, little meadows, open grassy areas around creeks, etc. — hunters should glass. Getting on

high vantage points and glassing and listening may sound more like western deer and elk hunting, but it's a great way to spot turkeys without getting busted. Calling to try and elicit a response is standard, but these days I do as much listening as I do calling. Better that I know where they are before they know where I am.

Hunters must be flexible enough to quickly develop a plan to hunt the individual gobblers they find. If I get a bird gobbling, I try to close the gap between us to a couple hundred yards, then locate a place to set up where I can place my decoys so they can be easily seen by approaching turkeys. Edge cover is ideal, providing open space for decoys and cover to hide me.

SETTING THEM UP

Set the breeder hen at an angle facing away from you, with the jake or strutter a step off her tail at a 90-degree angle to you, more or less. When a gobbler comes in, he'll get nose-to-nose with the jake, giving you a broadside

shot. Put the decoys up on a high spot so they can be easily seen by approaching turkeys from as far away as possible. Motion is always good, so let a breeze move your jake on its stake. If the wind is strong, you can place a couple of sticks or rock on either side of the jake's tail; you don't want it spinning wildly.

On hard ground, getting a standard turkey decoy stake into the ground can be difficult, if not impossible. So bring an 18-inch long metal spike that can be driven into the ground with a rock. One reason that I like the laydown breeder hen decoy is that it doesn't need any stake.

Finally, scope out the setup before placing the decoys. Ideally they will be in the sun and you will be in the shade; if the sun is at your back, so much the better.

— Bob Robb



When setting up, put some sort of solid screen behind you in case other hunters put a sneak on your calling and decoy setup.

BOB ROBB





THE BEST LOADS FOR BIG LOADS.



When the hopes and dreams of turkey season are on the line, there's no room for error. So, when that old Tom struts into your set, put more pellets on him with unmatched speed and power. Make your turkey partner HEVI-Shot®. The right loads when you need them most. Sometimes twice.

"I DIDN'T COME THIS FAR TO MISS!"® | HEVISHOT.COM



TUNGSTEN 18 g/cc



TUNGSTEN 12 g/cc

Now available in 28 gauge



Hunter Albea
Patternmaster Field Staff
@HALbea_15



Thomas Crumley
Patternmaster Field Staff
@ThomasCrumley4



Tim Mercer
Patternmaster Field Staff
@TimMercer81

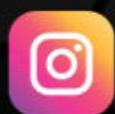


Vince Tamayo
Patternmaster Field Staff
@IdahoWaterFowler



John Weik
Patternmaster Field Staff
@Northwest_Spur_Chasers

Celebrating 30 Years of Memories



@Official_Patternmaster

PATTERNMASTER.COM

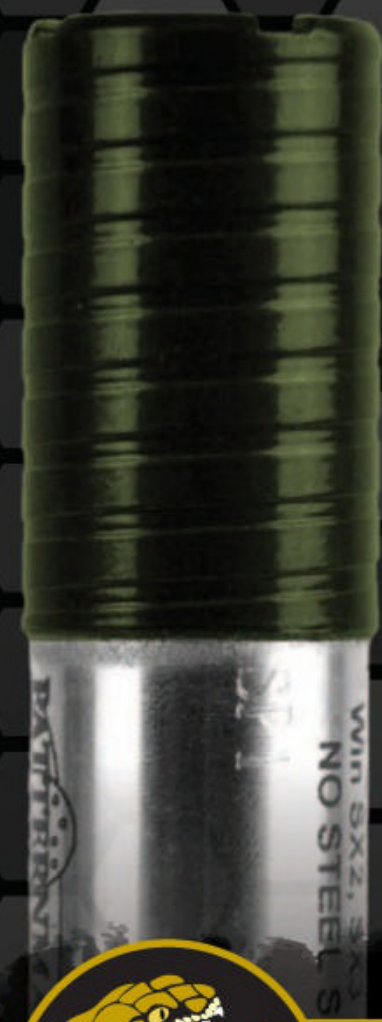
OUR HUNTERS AND FIELD STAFF KNOW THEY'RE USING THE BEST.

- ▶ PREMIUM TURKEY TUBE
- ▶ CANOE-PORTING TO REDUCE RECOIL
- ▶ 3-PHASE CONSTRICTION
- ▶ EFFECTIVE RANGE OF UP TO 60 YARDS
- ▶ MADE FROM AIRCRAFT QUALITY 17-4PH STAINLESS STEEL

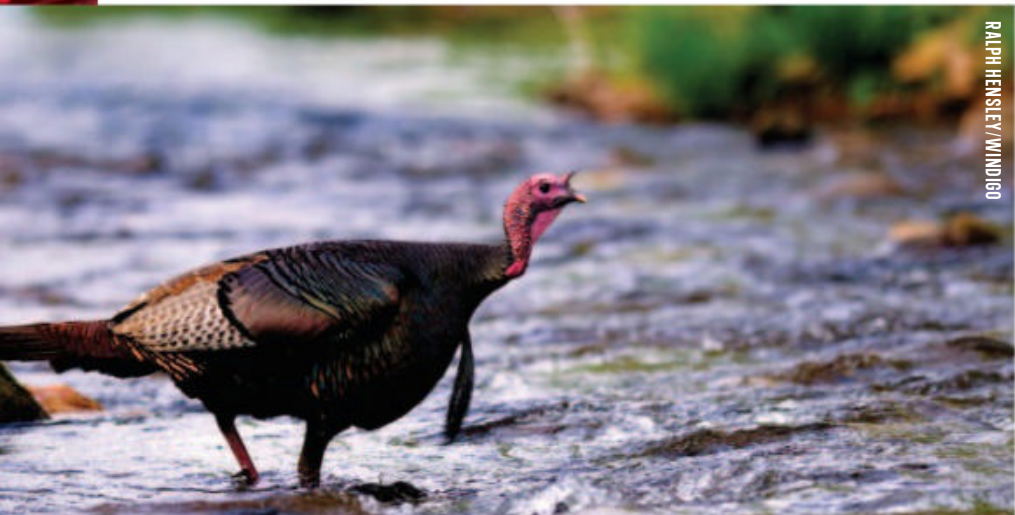


CODE
Black
TURKEY

- ▶ AFFORDABLE VERSATILITY
- ▶ COIL ZONE™ GAS OVER CONSTRICTION TECHNOLOGY
- ▶ DESIGNED TO GIVE TIGHT, CONSISTENT, FULL TO EXTRA FULL PATTERNS
- ▶ MADE FROM AIRCRAFT QUALITY 17-4PH STAINLESS STEEL



TURKEY BARRIERS



RALPH HENSLEY/WINDIGO

ANY OF US that have chased turkeys long enough have encountered a situation when they are working a gobbler and suddenly, it just stops coming. The tom responded well and advanced, but suddenly stopped, often pacing back and forth and gobbling, but not getting any closer. Suddenly, he gets quiet, and you never hear from him again or he answers as he fades away in the direction that he originally came from. In most cases that gobbler encountered a barrier. Barriers are many — some quite subtle and some substantial. It's always amazing how a smart old bird can become so ignorant at the slightest obstacle in his direction of travel.

BARRIERS

Barriers come in many shapes and sizes, from large to small. The barriers that we are talking about are any obstacle or slight terrain change that will halt an approaching turkey from reaching our desired calling setup. The most commonly encountered obstacles are fences and creeks. It's crazy, but a turkey can easily cross under a fence and will readily do so most of the time as it travels, but when being called to your location — a fence can quickly spell defeat.

The same goes for a creek — it could be anything from a deep creek to a dry creek — again they could hop, wade or fly across it easily, except when being coaxed with a call. Other examples of barriers can include railroad tracks, gravel or paved roads, rivers and lakes. Even field and timber edges, when a turkey breaks clear of timber to a field edge or crosses a field to the edge of timber, are sometimes all it takes to halt that gobbler.

BARRIER BUSTERS

Barriers can be overcome if we use a little common sense and read the situation and the terrain in advance. Most important is knowing the terrain in advance.

Many times I have worked a turkey that has stopped and eventually walked off — only to later discover an old fence or creek bed that I didn't realize was there. Turkey hunters are smart to remember those obstacles, and the next time working that turkey make sure to be on his side of the fence.

There are several tactics that we can employ to help bust the barrier situation. It seems that if you are close to a creek, the toms will hold up indefinitely, but back off a ways from the creek and they are much more likely to cross and advance toward you. If you are tight to the creek, they seem to expect the hen to come to them. Unless you can set right on the creek bank and within lethal shooting distance, it is better to stay a distance away and let them cross the creek. And just like Mark Drury coached me to stop calling when they approached the obstacle — to let them figure out that they needed to cross it. If a hunter keeps calling, the gobblers get all worked up and can't seem to reason out their next move. It's a strategic game just like chess. Survey the situation and play it out accordingly.

BARRIER TACTICS DEFINED

1. Know your terrain. Nowadays with all of the geographic mapping and hunt apps there is no reason to not know your properties intimately. Locate the creeks, roads and fences with aerial maps and then walk the property and get to know these natural and man-made barriers. Use them to your advantage and make sure you either set up on the bird's side, or back up far enough to help pull him past the obstacle.

2. When barriers present obstacles to turkeys, be sure to set up away from the barrier so that it does not appear that the hen (you) is right near it. I believe it is a psychological thing, or just how they are wired, but it seems to stack the odds in your favor if the obstacle is not near to their destination (you). So back away from the obstacle to make your calling setup.

3. When the bird is approaching the obstacle, stop calling and let the bird cross the obstacle. Again, not that that they have the intelligence to rationalize a situation, but continuing to call to them keeps them fired up and they don't seem to think clearly. The sudden lack of communication sort of brings them out of their frenzy, and they reprogram and consider how to navigate the obstacle. Once you can see or hear them again and know they have come to your side of the obstacle, continue to call and fire them back up.

— Tad Brown



HANDCRAFTED EXCELLENCE ISN'T DEAD.

YOUR TARGETS ARE ANOTHER STORY.



Available in 10ga,
12ga, 16ga, 20ga,
28ga, and 410 bore.



DOWNLOAD OUR
2023 CATALOG



EXPERIENCE YOUR BEST SHOT.™

In an age of mass-produced, factory-made shotgun ammunition, APEX stands above the rest. Every TSS turkey load we sell is hand-made, one at a time, to exacting specifications. At 18.1 g/cc, our TSS pellets are 95% pure tungsten, along with 2.5% nickel and 2.5% iron, for one of the highest densities in the business. Pair that with our tungsten grade TPS wad delivering the tightest pattern possible, and you'll experience more pellets on target than you ever thought possible. **Shop now at [APEXammunition.com](https://www.APEXammunition.com)**

APEX
AMMUNITION.

VETERAN OWNED

DIAPHRAGM CALL BASICS

SURE, YOU'VE PROBABLY heard some of this advice before, but even experts can use a refresher, and beginners probably can't get enough of mouth-calling instruction. Here's a quick primer.

CUTTING THROUGH CONFUSION

There's not much to a mouth call. It's simply one or several latex or prophylactic reeds stretched over an aluminum or plastic frame and then sealed with tape. However, because you can find seemingly endless mouth-call variations nowadays, novices are often confused when trying to find the "right" diaphragm. Should they use multiple-reed calls or stick with one-reed versions? What's the best cut; a split-v, cutter call or some other funky variation?

Don't make things too complicated. The first key is finding a diaphragm that fits your mouth. That will let you produce consistent sounds. An ill-fitting call will let air flow around the reeds, producing poor, spotty sound.

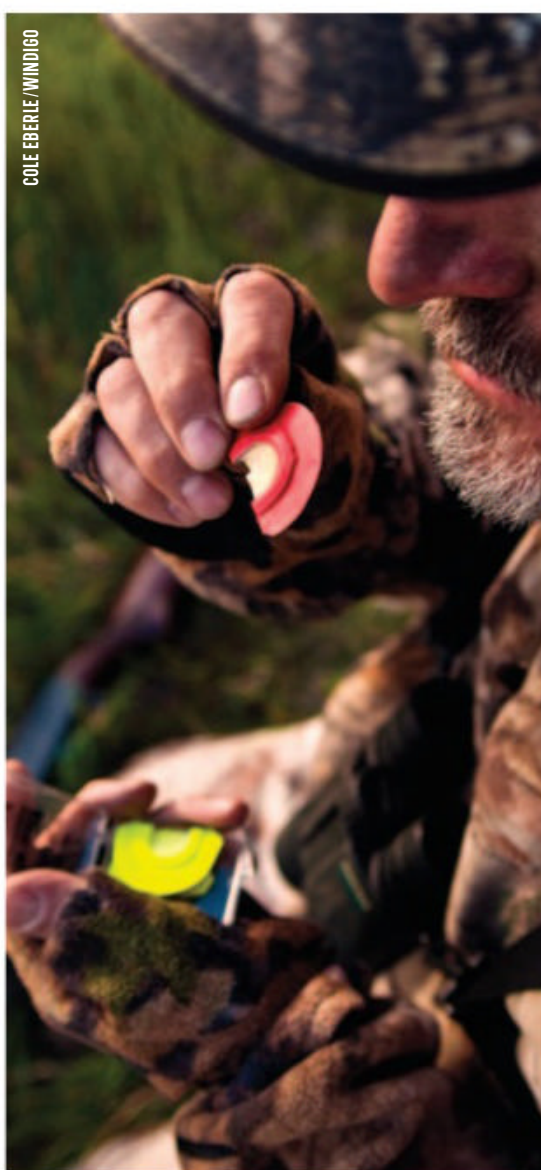
Obviously, to find the best fit, you must try several mouth calls. That will cost you more, but the added expense is worthwhile when you find one or two that really fit well.

The other big selection questions involve the number of reeds and the cut in the top reed. Conventional wisdom holds that beginners should use single-reed calls, but that's not true. Multiple-reed calls are actually much easier to control, even though they require more air to produce turkey sounds. A single-reed call is pretty much an expert's tool.

Don't worry about the cut in the top reed too much when starting. You can sweat that detail after you've learned to make consistent sounds and have mastered the basic yelp and cluck.

BASICS OF BLOWING

After you're comfortable, lightly huff — don't blow — air across the reeds. Some folks recommend using the "h" sound, which comes from your diaphragm and throat, rather than "sss," which comes from the tip of your tongue. Force the air up from your diaphragm, as if you were singing. Practice this until you can make a sustained high-pitched whistle.



If you can't make a whistle, move your tongue around on the call to find the sweet spot that will let you do so. Every call has one.

Whistling teaches you what the high end of the call should sound like. Moreover, it shows you how to find that note with your tongue and control it with a steady flow of air.

Then, you're ready for Step 2.

As you whistle, drop your jaw and tongue slightly, which engages the other reeds of the call, producing a lower note. Hold it there for a while. From there, simply coordinate and speed up the process — whistle, drop the jaw for the lower note — until you're producing competent yelps.

Don't close and open your lips as you yelp. This can prematurely cut off the sound and create a smacking noise. Remember, turkeys don't have lips. Leave yours slightly open as you call.

After you've mastered the basics of the yelp, the rest is relatively easy. To cluck on a diaphragm, simply blow a quick blast of air across the reed, as if you were saying "shut." Some folks say "pitt" or "putt," but that typically involves too much lip action.

Cutting easily follows the cluck, as it's just a series of harder clucks strung together in irregular fashion.

As you practice, focus on realism. This has two aspects, the first of which is cadence.

Some calls, such as the yelp and kee-kee, have a steady cadence and rhythm. Others, such as cutting, have a broken cadence. No matter how good or bad you sound on a diaphragm, cadence and rhythm are always more important than tone and sound quality. Your calling can be deep, raspy, trilling or high-pitched. It doesn't matter, because turkeys have different voices, just like people. Just maintain a sense of cadence and rhythm.

ONE FINAL TIP

Always work especially hard on soft, subtle calling. Anyone can blow the reeds out of a diaphragm and make noise. Only a musician can produce sweet, sultry sounds.

— Brian Lovett





GRAND SLAM
TURKEY VEST



VANTAGE
BINO HARNESS



AMBUSH
SLING PACK

ALPS OUTDOORZ

EXCEED YOUR EXPECTATIONS.



HIGH RIDGE
CHAIR



DASH PANEL
BLIND



SUPER ELITE 4.0
TURKEY VEST

SCAN HERE FOR
MORE INFORMATION

ALPSOUTDOORZ.COM



PERFECTING POT CALLS

THE GRIP'S THE THING

"THE SOUND FROM a pot call goes two ways," my friend said. "Up, and down. You want the palm of your hand away from the bottom of that call as far as you can, so the sound comes out from the bottom even better than the top. If you palm it, you not only lose half the sound, but your yelps have no ring to them."

To demonstrate, he held his slate up at eye level for me, so I could see the broad swath of daylight beneath it. The edges of the disc were braced on his fingertips, and there was only a slight curve in his digits as they pointed skyward. He was holding the call as delicately as you'd hold your grandma's favorite China tea cup. My friend's hands are anything but dainty, but he braced that slate like he was afraid he'd break it. But when I visualized little notes of turkey music slipping out the bottom of the call, it was easy to see why the tips of his fingers were all that touched the edge of the call.

"The other thing that's important is where you hold that call hand," he said. "Keep it away from your chest. Clothing is another sound-muffler. You want that call hand sitting out in front of you, not mashed into your torso like you're afraid you'll drop it."

That can take some practice to master, as it changes how you position your call hand and striker hand (more on that later). But the advice is, well, sound. If you need proof, watch a really good caller run a pot sometime. He's not sticking that call arm out for dramatic effect. He's doing it so the call can ring to its full potential.

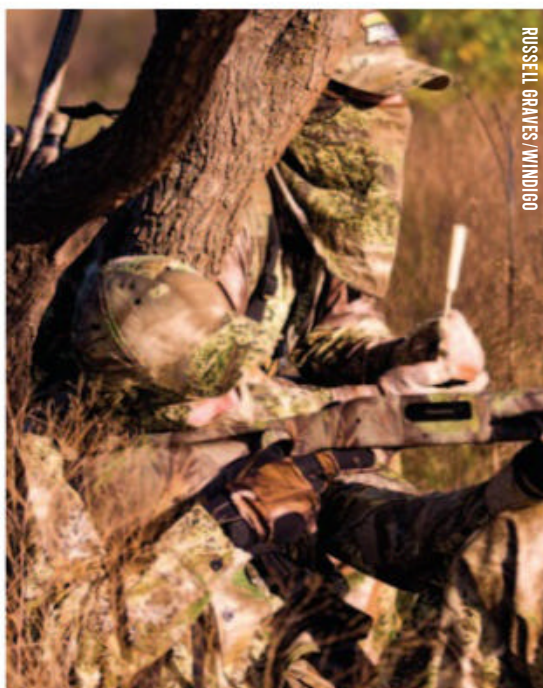
VIOLIN BOW, NOT WRITING UTENSIL

After he got me holding the pot at an awkward angle, my friend

watched my striker hand as I made a few tentative yelps.

"Here's the other mistake almost everyone makes," he said. "You already know how to write, so quit gripping that peg like a pencil."

Glancing at my fingers, I realized I was holding the slim wand of rosewood in a death grip. The broad tip of my thumb was pressing the striker against my index and middle fingers, and my fourth and fifth fingers were struggling to get in on the act if I got lazy.



My buddy knocked out a few yelps while I watched his striker hand. Like his grip on the call, his fingers didn't grasp the striker so much as they flirted with it.

"For almost all yelps, you can almost pinch the striker lightly between your thumb and middle finger," he said. "If you need that index finger at all, just use it to lightly guide the striker. It should barely touch the wood when you're doing it right. Don't even let your other fingers come close to that thing."

When you try that, you'll quickly realize it can take some practice. What great technique

does not? After the tutorial, I forced myself to shrink my finger contact with the striker. To my ear, it makes a huge difference in tone and clarity. Better, it seems to make a difference to turkeys, especially when I'm working a bird that's close and I'm striving for subtlety.

SEARCH OUT THE SWEET SPOT

Most pot calls are 4 to 5 inches wide. If you're like me, you want to make full use of as much of the playing surface as possible. Before my friend's lessons, I liked to make a fairly sweeping arc of striker along the slate, hoping that somewhere in its travels, the peg would make a pleasing sound or two.

Naturally my pal told me that approach was off course.

"The call is that big so you can hold on to it," he said sternly. "But the place where all the good notes are stored is about as large as a dime. Watch the tip of my peg while I call."

He then banged out a perfect series of yelps, morphed into some excited cutting and ended with a few happy clucks. During the run, his striker stayed in a tiny zone on the edge of the playing surface. As if to prove a point, he placed his fingertip on a small series of scratches in the roughed-up slate — the perfect tracings the peg had made during its run.

So where is the sweet spot on a pot call? It's different on every model. On some calls, the best notes are made nearly dead-center on the surface. Others might sport that zone closer to one edge. It's up to you to find the exact spot on each call that produces the best notes. Some callers mark that zone by scratching a slight scar on the edge of the pot.

— Scott Bestul





C'MON - LET'S MOVE



NOMAD

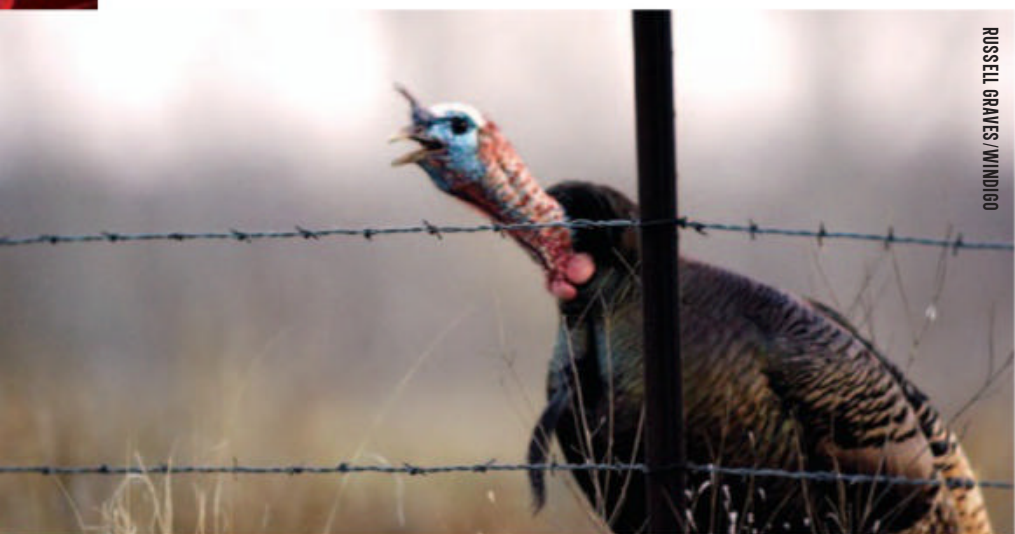
nomadoutdoor.com

The most memorable times you'll ever have are out there waiting for you. So c'mon, gear up and get to it. Even if you stumble or come up short, there will always be a story to tell.

Nomad will make sure you stay mobile, concealed, and ready for action — because opportunity is just over the next rise.

Gear that hunts

POSTED AIN'T ROASTED



RUSSELL GRAVES/INDIGO

IN A HUNTING landscape that's increasingly fragmented, hunters must often call turkeys off posted property to land they can hunt. Here's how to do it.

To call turkeys from posted property to land you can hunt, you must read the land. You need to know your limitations and range. Here are some situations and possible responses:

- **If** a dirt road or trail runs along the posted/unposted property boundary, set up on the legal side of the land, and call the bird to that spot. Hot gobblers will often take the path of least resistance — a road or game trail — and move into range.
- **If** there's heavy cover between a gobbler on posted land and your position on land you can hunt, find an open lane on either side of that thicket. When he struts in for a look on your side of the line, take him.
- **If** the gobbler is loudmouthed but hung up on posted property, keep moving around the periphery of the boundary, calling at quick setups to take his pulse. He might think you're a hen on the move, possibly going away from him. Use caution, though. In this case, if he can see your general position, he might pop into strut knowing you — the hen — should see him, too. Find a way to set up just inside a concealing canopy. That way, he might wander even closer and into range on unposted land.
- **If** the gobbler roosts on unposted land but flies down to posted property, get in there early, and set up close to the roost. Stake a bunch of decoys in the dark, slip a mouth call into the roof of your mouth, and wait. When he starts sounding off, offer some soft clucks and yelps. Don't overdo it, and definitely don't move. That tom might fly down into your lap.

LONG-DISTANCE CALLING

Often it's necessary to call gobblers off posted property from fairly long distances. First, you must hear them, though.

- **If** you have hearing difficulties, consider high-tech listening devices to pinpoint far-off toms before you try to call them onto legal land. Calls need to be considered, too.
- **If** you typically use just one turkey call, consider working many at your setup. That might just pique the curiosity of a posted-land gobbler so he minces steps in for a look, crossing onto your side of the fence.
- **If** there's a fence separating the properties, find a break in the barrier where turkeys might move through. Sign — droppings, feathers and tracks — might indicate regular use at those travel corridors. Set up nearby.
- **If** you strike a turkey that's far off, stick with it as long as the bird seems to be moving closer or if it goes silent. If the gobbler seems to be hung up, and you can't approach it because of property lines or terrain, take a nap. That might give you the patience to let that bird move closer on turkey time.
- **If** possible, carry calls that project great distances. Boat paddles and mouth calls are good choices. You can even run both at the same time.

— *Steve Hickoff*

CALLS TO USE

- **CUTTING:** A series of sharp, fast clucks, cutting works well to locate silent toms, but that doesn't always mean the turkey will come to you. You might need to switch to other calls to lure that gobbler the entire distance.
- **LOST HEN YELPING:** Loud by nature, this call involves a long string of yelps that increases and then fades in intensity and volume. It can locate and attract spring gobblers in posted/public situations. You can make a lot of racket and still sound natural. Fifteen to even twice as many notes aren't out of the question.
- **MIX IT UP:** Sometimes, using every call in your vest might seem futile, but it can also lure turkeys to your position. Cutt. Yelp. Cackle. Rest a bit. Cluck. Make kee-kee calls, even in spring, as young hens do then.
- **SLIP AWAY:** While calling, with the posted-land tom still interested, move away from the bird. Sometimes, that will make the gobbler cross to your side, as if the hen is leaving and not going to that turkey.
- **TONE IT DOWN:** Try alternating silence, plus soft clucking or yelping, with heavy doses of calling. This can be a great approach during midmorning lulls.



CRACK SOME SKULLS

40 YARDS

50 YARDS

GRAND SLAM®

Harder-hitting
copper-plated
lead payloads

3RD DEGREE®

Three-stage payload offers
forgiveness on close shots
with lethality at long range

HEAVYWEIGHT® TSS

18 g/cc Tungsten Super Shot
for extreme range patterns
and power

Don't just pepper gobblers with a few pellets. Knock them down with payloads that snap spines and shatter skulls. Federal Premium® turkey loads use the redesigned FLITECONTROL FLEX® wad to produce denser patterns through both ported and standard turkey chokes. Whatever payload you choose, it's lights out for longbeards.



EASY TIPS FOR CLEANING A TURKEY



CHRIS BERENS

TRY THESE TIPS FROM
MOSSY OAK GAMEKEEPERS
THE NEXT TIME YOU CLEAN
A GOBBLER TO MAKE THE
JOB MUCH QUICKER AND EASIER:

STEP 1: Removing the beard – If you want to save the beard you will need to remove it first. The beard can be pulled away from the breast or carefully cut away. Remove any excess tissue.

STEP 2: Removing the spurs – To remove the spurs simply apply pressure to the turkey knee joint until it pops loose. After the joint pops loose, you should be able to easily separate the skin with a sharp knife.

STEP 3: Removing the fan – Remove the fan by holding on to the base of the tail and cutting just below the lump of meat that holds the fan feathers together.

STEP 4: Skinning – To skin your turkey start by laying down the turkey breast side up. Make a small cut through the skin along the top of the breast bone. Slowly pull the skin away from the breast and legs.

STEP 5: Removing the breast meat – Locate the breast bone and make a cut down one side of the bone to loosen the breast meat. Pull breast meat away from bone while cutting along the breast bone to remove in one piece. Repeat this process on the other side of the breast bone to remove the other breast.

STEP 6: Removing the leg and thigh meat – With the turkey placed on its back, apply pressure down on the thigh until you feel the joint pop loose. Run a knife between the thigh and turkey body until the leg quarter releases from body.

• RECIPE •

FANTASTIC WILD TURKEY FAJITAS

INGREDIENTS:

- + 2 WILD TURKEY BREASTS, CUT INTO THIN STRIPS
- + 3 BELL PEPPERS (GREEN, RED AND/OR YELLOW), CUT INTO LONG STRIPS
- + 2 MEDIUM ONIONS, CUT NOT CHOPPED
- + FAJITA SEASONING
- + 2 PACKAGES OF LARGE FLOUR TORTILLAS
- + MEXICAN SHREDDED CHEESE
- + SALSA
- + ONE 16-OUNCE SOUR CREAM

DIRECTIONS:

Mix the turkey with a pack of fajita seasoning. Mix well. Coat the bottom of a large skillet with olive oil. Bring to medium heat. Toss the turkey in and simmer until almost done. Then throw in the peppers and onions. Stir fry until peppers and onions are soft. I also like to have yellow rice with this meal so get ya some of that, as well. Directions are easy.

Fill the tortilla up with the fajitas, cheese, salsa, sour cream and roll the bad boy up and get to eatin'!

Don't forget the rice.

— Adam Polvi, GA

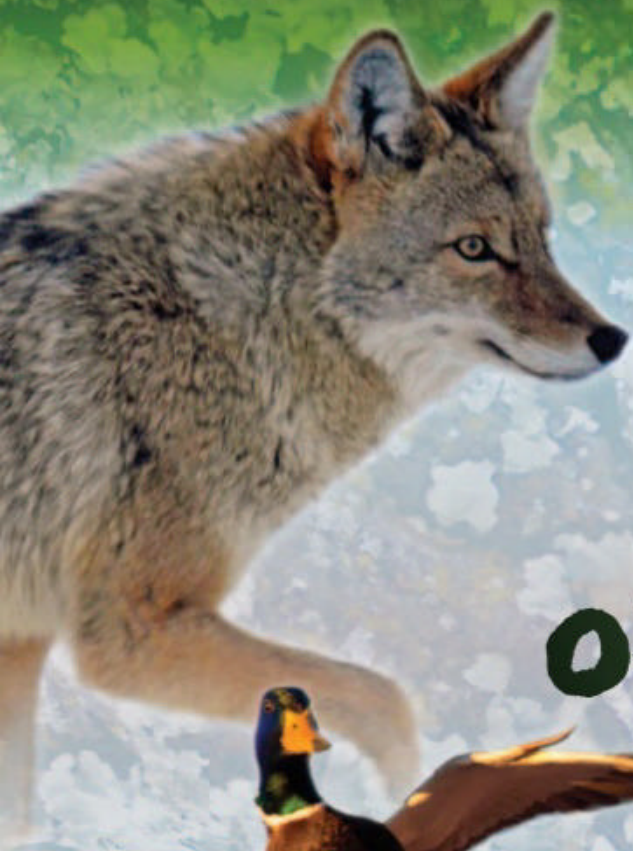




MODERN HUNTER

A BRAND-NEW TV SHOW!

THERE'S
NEVER AN
OFF-SEASON!



COMING THIS FALL TO:

WAYPOINT TV



APEX AMMUNITION MOSSY OAK GREENLEAF TURKEY TSS BLEND ➤

Available in 3-inch 12-gauge 2 -1/4-oz. loads, and 3-inch 20-gauge 1-5/8-oz. loads, these premium "duplex" shells feature a combination of No. 9 and No. 10 TSS delivering an exceptional payload of 1,096 pellets in the 12-gauge shells and 774 pellets in the 20 gauge. With an industry-leading density of 18.1 grams per cubic centimeter, the APEX tungsten super shot loads hit with devastating energy. Each meticulously handloaded shell features clean-burning powder and APEX's one-piece tungsten-grade wad system, engineered to deliver the tightest patterns possible and maximum barrel protection. This new Mossy Oak Greenleaf Turkey TSS Blend is a special offering that hits with a massive payload and exceptional retained energy.

APEX is excited to offer this new load to hard-core turkey hunters and continue their partnership with Mossy Oak.

MSRP: 12 GAUGE, \$62.99 (PER 5-ROUND BOX); 20 GAUGE, \$49.99 (PER 5-ROUND BOX)
INFO: APEXMUNITION.COM



MOSSBERG® OPTIC-READY 500® AND 835® PUMP-ACTION TURKEY GUNS ◀ ➤

Mossberg has added optic-ready versions of their venerable 500 and 835 Ulti-Mag® pump actions to their extensive line of turkey shotguns. These shotguns feature receiver cuts for low-profile, direct mounting of micro-dot sights (Shield RMSc pattern) and are fully camouflaged in Mossy Oak® Greenleaf™. The 500 Turkey Optic-Ready is available in .410 bore and 20 gauge, and the 835 Ulti-Mag Turkey Optic-Ready is a 12-gauge, 3.5-inch platform. Mossberg's pump-action shotgun design features include nonbinding twin action bars; dual extractors; a positive steel-to-steel lock-up; anti-jam elevator; anodized aluminum receiver; and universally recognized, ambidextrous top-mounted safety. These optic-ready turkey guns come standard with X-Full extended choke tubes; fiber-optic front sight; drilled and tapped receiver for added versatility; sling swivel studs; 5+1 shell capacity; and cover plate for when an optic is not used.

MSRP: MOSSBERG 500 TURKEY OPTIC-READY .410 BORE, \$644

MOSSBERG 500 TURKEY OPTIC-READY 20 GAUGE, \$644

MOSSBERG 835 ULTI-MAG TURKEY OPTIC-READY

12 GAUGE \$693 | INFO: WWW.MOSSBERG.COM



FEDERAL PREMIUM REDUCED RECOIL HEAVYWEIGHT TSS 20 GAUGE ▼

The new 2¾-inch shotshell is packed with a 1-1/8-ounce shot charge of No. 9 shot size HEAVYWEIGHT TSS for tight patterning, deep-penetrating performance. Its shorter shell length, lower overall velocity and smaller payload results in a lower felt recoil

than a comparable 3-inch 20-gauge load, but is still extremely effective in the turkey woods. Federal's Tungsten Super Shot (TSS) provides an 18 gm/cc density pellet design that is 22% higher than standard tungsten and 56% more than lead. The result is the most energy and highest velocities at extreme range. Its rear-braking FLITECONTROL FLEX® wad performs flawlessly through ported and standard turkey chokes for the most consistent, deadly patterns possible. To protect barrels from direct contact with the extra-hard pellets, the shotshell design features a full-length wad. A portion of the proceeds of each box supports the National Wild Turkey Federation.

MSRP: \$63.99 PER BOX OF FIVE.
INFO: WWW.FEDERALPREMIUM.COM



NOMAD BULL LOUNGER TURKEY VEST ▼

This vest is an outstanding option for hunters who want a tough, lightweight vest that handles anything with plenty of storage and comfort. The vest features an aluminum frame back design that allows hunters to sit upright and rigid without needing a tree to lean against while seated. The removable, high-density foam seat cushion has magnet attachments and an adjustment handle. It also has an external pocket to hold a ThermoCELL repellent unit. Other features include 14 points of adjustment for a "one size fits most" customization, 28 pockets for calls and other gear, plus a large rear game pouch. A ridged foam pocket protects friction calls, while strikers have their own dual zippered pockets and specialized holders. The horizontal box call pocket has an adjustable buckle and is designed to be more easily accessible. Available in Mossy Oak Original Bottomland and NOMAD exclusive Mossy Oak Shadow Leaf.

MSRP: \$250.00 | INFO: NOMADOUTDOOR.COM



HEVI-SHOT MAGNUM BLEND 28-GAUGE TURKEY LOADS ▼

Once for ounce, dollar for dollar, this is an extremely lethal turkey shell for the price – now available in 28 gauge. This stacked load uses three shot sizes of 12 g/cc cast Tungsten: 5, 6 and 7. With this dense shot, you can shoot one shot size smaller than lead for the same lethality (compared to 4, 5 and 6 size lead pellets). By having three shot sizes in single shell, you're shooting a versatile "cone" of lethality beyond 60 yards. This heavy load really packs some punch due to its small shot sizes and heavy payload that puts a lot of pellets downrange in a tight pattern. Length: 3 inches. Payload weight: 1 ounce. Muzzle velocity: 1,300 fps.

MSRP: \$38.99 PER BOX OF FIVE. | INFO: WWW.HEVISHOT.COM



HEVI-SHOT HEVI-18 TSS TURKEY LOADS ➤

HEVI-Shot goes ultra-dense with HEVI-18 TSS Turkey Loads. This means you get it all: High pellet counts and downrange lethality. The 18 g/cc density pellets allow for smaller shot and higher pellet counts for the ultimate in long-range lethality. HEVI-Shot achieves incredibly tight patterns thanks to their unique, friction-free, sealed-in-the-shell spherical buffer. With HEVI-18 being 48% more dense than lead, shooters can drop down three shot sizes for similar downrange lethality when compared to lead turkey loads. This means instead of shooting shot size 4 or 6 lead loads, hunters can shoot shot size 7 or 9 TSS, thus taking advantage of higher pellet counts. Now available in reduced recoil 12-, 20- and 28-gauge options.

MSRP: \$64.99 PER BOX OF FIVE FOR 12 AND 20 GAUGE; \$49.99 PER BOX OF FIVE FOR 28 GAUGE.

INFO: WWW.HEVISHOT.COM



ALPS OUTDOORZ DECEPTION BLIND ▼

Featuring a low profile of only 46 inches, the Deception is a lightweight blind perfectly suited for low-profile chairs and the Grand Slam Turkey Vest – providing you an exceptional vantage point all while staying concealed. The smaller footprint and unique four-hub design make for easy and

quiet set up. The aluminum hubs are constructed with engineered tips and pins and the frame uses strong, flexible fiberglass poles. Durable polyester fabric with blacked-out backing help keep you concealed. It also features a 270° SILENT-Trac window system for limitless window positions, and an extra-large door opening for easy access. Two interior gear pockets keep you organized and ready for action.

Includes stakes, tie downs and shoulder strap carry bag.

Available in Mossy Oak® Obsession® or New Bottomland®.

MSRP: \$199.99 | INFO: ALPSOUTDOORZ.COM



PATTERNMASTER ANACONDA STRIKER TURKEY TUBE ▼

The Anaconda Striker provides affordable, edge-of-envelope versatility with patented "Coil Zone" technology to wind gasses around the wad to assist in constricting and pattern uniformity. The Anaconda Striker was designed to give tight, consistent, full to extra full patterns with an effective range of up to 60 yards without compromise.

All Patternmaster Anaconda tubes are made from aircraft quality 17-4ph stainless steel with a military-grade Chemical Agent Resistant Coating (CARC) powder coat for a lifetime of durability. This tube is safe and effective with lead and other nontoxic shot, but is not to be used with steel shot.

MSRP: \$74.99 | INFO: WWW.PATTERNMASTER.COM



FIOCCHI GOLDEN TURKEY TSS ▼

Tungsten Super Shot has revolutionized the turkey hunting game thanks to its hard-hitting, deep-penetrating performance at long range and its incredibly dense shot patterns. Fiocchi Golden Turkey TSS is available in these gauges/loads:

- 12-gauge, 3-inch, #7 shot, 1-5/8-oz., 1,200 fps
- 12-gauge, 3-inch, #9 shot, 1-5/8-oz., 1,200 fps
- 20-gauge, 3-inch, #9 shot, 1-3/8-oz., 1,225 fps
- 28-gauge, 3-inch, #9 shot, 1-1/16-oz., 1,225 fps
- .410 bore, 3-inch, #9 shot, 13/16-oz., 1,100 fps

Golden Turkey TSS uses precision-manufactured hulls and wads combined with the world's best primers and carefully selected powder to achieve predictable and dependable results. Blended with premium 18 g/cc tungsten shot for the ultimate accuracy and terminal performance.

INFO: FIOCCHIUSA.COM



GAMEHIDE ELIMITICK BIB ➤

Get the comfort and extra protection a bib overall offers! Made from woven poly fabric that's extremely lightweight, yet tough and durable. This bib offers maximum breathability in the warmest temperatures. Its design offers extra protection around the waistline from ticks and chiggers. Other features include cargo pockets, front slash-style pockets and a zippered fly, plus a handy zippered cargo pocket on the chest. Adjustable shoulder straps provide a custom fit, and Insect Shield technology lasts the life of the garment to repel ticks, chiggers, mosquitoes and midges (no-see-ums) for invisible, odorless protection.

Available in Mossy Oak Obsession, Realtree Edge or Tan.

MSRP: \$119.99 | INFO: WWW.GAMEHIDE.COM



PATTERNMASTER CODE BLACK TURKEY CHOKE ➤

The Patternmaster Code Black Turkey choke uses several different technologies to achieve incredible downrange energy at distance. It uses Separating Ring technology, as well as proprietary canoe-porting in order to shorten the shot string by as much as 75% over other constriction tubes, while also improving the effective range. The Code Black Turkey is built from titanium-infused 17-4ph Stainless Steel, and more than 100 years of combined experience. This American-made, aircraft-quality steel is the best in the world and allows for unmatched performance and durability.

MSRP: \$99.99 | INFO: WWW.PATTERNMASTER.COM



PATIENCE

As a kid I couldn't sit still. No matter what I was doing I was like the Eveready Bunny, full of rambunctious

energy and rarely sitting still for any length of time. On many occasions I'd visit my grandfather and find him sitting in his favorite chair on his porch.

"Whatcha doing?" I'd ask.

"Just sitting. You ought to try it sometime. It's important." I'd just shake my head and move on. Even when I started hunting, I found it difficult to set up somewhere and sit tight. Within short order that little voice inside would start talking, convincing me to move. I would obey and have often wondered how many opportunities might have been lost because of my impatience.

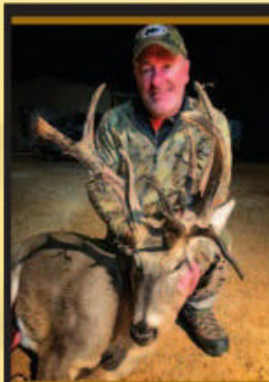
Perhaps it was my youth, a lack of experience and because I had a great deal to learn about deer and deer hunting in general. Whatever it was, it took me awhile to understand what my grandfather meant. Patience is, indeed, one of life's important virtues.

LISTENING

I wasn't exactly a chatterbox growing up, but there were times when I burned everyone's ear, including my grandfather's. Most of the time, he'd just sit there or continue with whatever he was doing and nod as if he knew I was there but wasn't really listening. I don't know when it was, but I finally realized he was listening, just not to me, not completely. More than once I recall him saying, "You can learn a lot by listening, you know," apparently hoping it would sink in. It never did until I was into my early 20s and had been hunting for a few years.

By then I was well aware of the important tactical deer hunting requirements and in the process of honing those skills, but it just never dawned on me that my ears and listening were also important. What the sudden snapping of a twig or quaint rustling of autumn leaves in the morning or late afternoon quiet could mean, or the tweeting of birds going suddenly quiet, or the squawking of squirrels suddenly growing excited. It took me awhile, but I eventually

WHERE TO GO



TROPHY RIDGE OUTFITTERS

NE Wyoming • 300,000 acres
Private • Managed for Trophies

Whitetail • Mule Deer • Elk
Antelope • Buffalo • Merriam Turkeys
Archery hunts = 95% Success Rate
Gun hunts = 100% Success Rate



Ralph and Lenora Dampman - 17985 US HWY 14, Carlile, WY 82721

Phone (307) 756-9776 or Cell (307) 756-2194

www.trophyridgeoutfitters.com

License #BG-353

HUNT MONTANA

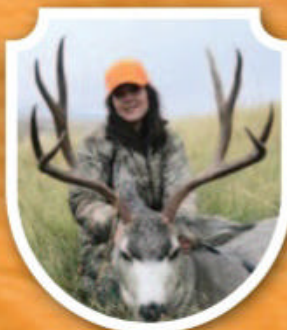
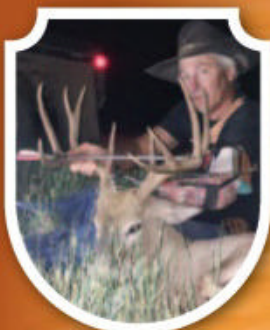


- 10,000 ACRES
- OFFERING MULE DEER, AND ANTELOPE HUNTS
- VERY LIMMITED HUNTING PRESSURE



RAFTERSTAR RANCH

CALL PEPPER FOR DETAILS | 307-737-2680 | CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE



HUNT LARGE WYOMING CATTLE RANCH

- RANCH HAS LIMITED COMMERCIAL HUNTING THE LAST TWO YEARS
- WE HAVE WHITETAIL, MULE DEER, ANTELOPE AND SEASONAL ELK
- FREE DOE TAG WITH PURCHASED HUNT
- GUIDED OR SEMI-GUIDED HUNTS
- LODGING AND MEALS AVAILABLE

RAFTERSTAR RANCH

CALL FOR DETAILS | 307-737-2680 | CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

CALL FOR
OUR ARCHERY
SPECIAL

KENTUCKASEE FARMS

*Strickly Managed for
Big Bucks & Wildlife!*

RENT FOR SHORT TERM
FARMS TO HUNT BIG BUCKS
KENTUCKY TENNESSEE

TEXT OR CALL FOR BROCHURE
270.707.6511

learned that the sounds of woodland critters that live where we hunt, or sudden lack of them, can foretell something is amiss, that something is close.

OBSERVANCE

I'm not sure if my grandfather was an observant man, but he was certainly looking at something whenever I found him sitting on the porch or leaning on a hoe in the garden looking off into space. Maybe he was just pondering the what-ifs and should-haves in his life, as many of us sometimes do. Maybe it was something as simple as hearing something in the nearby woods or looking to spot the woodchuck that had been eating his green beans. I never asked him what he was looking at, but he always seem to know what was going on around his place. It seemed important to him.

I would eventually learn that being an observant hunter is a big part of being a successful hunter. That a slight movement in the corner of the eye or behind a mass of dense undergrowth can suggest it's time to pay attention.

STICKING TO IT

I remember more than one occasion growing up when I tried doing something that seemed important to me, and grew agitated when whatever it was just didn't turn out the way I imagined. "I just can't, gramps!" I would often exclaim in my frustration, or something to that effect.

"Never say you can't do something, boy. If you do, you're beaten already. You stick with it and figure it out, or at least give it your best try." Despite my arguments to the contrary, he'd just shake his head and tell me to stick with it. Most times he was right. Even at a young age if I kept at it, tried doing things a different way or looked at it from a different perspective, things would turn out OK.

Those words must have sunk in because they have come in handy from time to time over the years. That also includes in the deer woods. As every hunter well knows or will quickly learn, deer are a challenge to hunt. No matter how much we think we know or think we have a particular animal or situation figured out, deer can be unpredictable, frustrating, some might even say maddening. Deer hunting is nearly a 50-year obsession of mine, and there are still far too

HUNTER'S CLOSET



BUILT TO LAST AND BUILT TO PERFORM

ROUGH CUT MOWERS

- Mow Food Plots & Brush
- 44" & 57" Heavy Duty Deck
- 2"-8" Height Adjustment
- 19HP-27HP Engines

43" CHISEL PLOW





For a free catalog and product DVD please call 815-539-6954 or visit www.kunzeng.com

ML KNIVES Traditional Forged
USA made Quality
ml-knives.com

Carbon steel Knives, made for the wilderness,
lover's of fine steel, & collectors alike.

WWW.ML-KNIVES.COM

many occasions when I am reminded just how smart they are.

CONFIDENCE

Like most kids I was okay at some things, not so good at others. One thing I loved was baseball. I loved watching it and loved playing it even more. I was a decent outfielder and had a strong arm, but had a problem hitting. Once in a while I would get on base, either due to four poorly thrown pitches or an on-field error but, to say the least, it wasn't my strong point. My grandfather would tell me my poor batting ability was due in part to a lack of confidence. He was no baseball expert and never once mentioned the importance of keeping an eye on the ball and proper battling stance and swing, things I would learn later, but he spent hours throwing me pitches anyway, all the while exclaiming, "You gotta have confidence, boy! Confidence! The rest will come."

I never became a future Hank Aaron, but my hitting did improve over time largely because gramps kept beating confidence and more confidence into my brain.

A positive attitude, or whatever you might call it, also plays an important role while hunting, perhaps the most important role. Confidence generally comes with experience, through

Learn Taxidermy!





FREE Catalog!

www.mckenzietaxidermy.com
1-800-279-7985

trial and error, and learning from them, but it also comes from having a high level of faith in ourselves and in the acceptance that we have done everything within our power and ability to achieve our goal.

Looking back, I have a lot to thank my grandfather for. I'm sure he was just trying to teach me certain things he felt were important in life, things that would prove helpful at some point, not knowing they would be equally important to me as a hunter.

They have. I just wish he were here so I could thank him.

— Al Raychard is a longtime whitetail hunter and Deer & Deer Hunting contributor from Maine.



Grandpa's Lessons

SOMETIMES THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS IN LIFE HAVE LITTLE TO DO WITH HUNTING, UNTIL THEY DO.



It's interesting how life goes. I didn't grow up in a hunting family but somewhere, somehow, along the way hunting became one of my true passions. I think my father had a deep respect for nature, but he worked long hours to support the family and didn't have the time to enjoy it as much as he would have liked. I can recall only a few family camping and hiking trips to the mountains when he really got away. The same goes for his dad, my grandfather.

Looking back on it, I think my first desire to hunt started with my brother, who's five years older. I was around 13 the August my brother turned 18, the age someone could legally hunt unattended by an adult. Until then, I never really knew my brother had an interest in hunting, but that November after killing a doe he came running into the house all excited, exclaiming, "I got a deer, I got a deer!" The first thing I noticed was my brother's bloody hands. At first, my mother and I thought it was deer blood, but we quickly discovered it came from a deep finger cut that occurred during field-

dressing. Long story short, in all his excitement, my brother was hardly aware of the cut and blood dripping all over my mother's floor. All I knew was I wanted to experience that same excitement.

Growing up, my grandfather lived next door and I spent a lot of time with him — pestering him, he often said. We'd work in the garden, do odd things around the yard and, when we were done or had nothing to do, we'd just sit, often on the back porch and drink a soda pop. My grandfather was a quiet man, saying little and, although young at the time, I was smart enough to know that when he did speak it was worth hearing. It wasn't until later, after he had long passed and I had been hunting for several years, when I realized my grandfather was trying to teach me something. Many of the attributes he said I should learn had not only made an indelible impression, but would have a direct impact on the way I hunted, as well. Although it would take time, they made me a better hunter. Whatever virtue he happened to bestow I recall him saying more than once, "It'll come in handy someday, son, you mark my words!" He was right.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 94



COMING TO AN AREA NEAR YOU!

**AS SEEN
ON TV!**

DEER & DEER HUNTING PROPERTIES



We specialize connecting buyers and sellers. We realize that the purchase or sale of a piece of ground is a life-altering experience and we want to ensure that you are well taken care of. Our team of professionals will guide you through the experience and help you find that piece of ground you have been looking for, or ensure that we find a buyer that will love the ground as much as you did.



• MULTIPLE OFFERS •



• MULTIPLE OFFERS •



• MULTIPLE OFFERS •

**Call today to see why so many people
are switching to Deer & Deer Hunting**

CONTACT JASON AT: 920-716-1680

THE CHAMPAGNE OF BOURBON

We Double Barrel finish our 12 Point Bourbon Whiskey in specially chosen Brandy Barrels. It gives our bourbon a sweet fruit flavor you're sure to appreciate. So, hunt



us down and give 12 Point Bourbon Whiskey a try, it'll satisfy your search for a truly great bourbon and sate your appetite for a new trophy on your shelf.

Available at D R O P T I N E . C O M

TRACKS

BY *Cuddeback*

LTE CELLULAR TRAIL CAMERA

From the innovators of CuddeLink, comes the new LTE trail camera by Cuddeback.

Designed for hunters that want Cuddeback quality, performance, and features, but don't require CuddeLink's networking capabilities.



Dual paddle antennas for excellent reception in fringe coverage areas.

Dual SIM cards. Camera can be used with Verizon and AT&T.

Low-glow IR LEDs for long range and clear night images.

Our 3rd generation animal sensor with 7 sensitivity settings.

Security grade IR-cut sensor eliminates filter mover for silent and reliable operation.

Advanced back-lite user interface with enhanced features.

SD door keeps moisture out when checking camera in rain or snow.

Cuddeback introduced the Tracks™ brand to avoid confusion with CuddeLink products. But Tracks is all Cuddeback inside, with all the advanced performance, features and patented technology Cuddeback has been known for since 1989.

And Tracks is not just another badged import. It's designed by the oldest trail camera company with over 30 years of experience, and unlike most trail cameras, Cuddeback designs our cameras with our staff in the USA.