

Official Publication for the members of the Professional Bowhunters Society

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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Cover Photo - Regular PBS Member Steve Griffith of Brandon, SD on his mule deer hunt in South Dakota.

THE PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTER MAGAZINE

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President's Message

by Matt Schuster

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I did not grow up in a hunting family. My father hunted small game as a child but gave it up for my mother. At the age of twelve and fired up by Outdoor Life and Field & Stream, I got him back into it. My mother has never forgiven me, but my father and I had a lot of great times together and all our most serious conversations about life took place around a campfire at deer camp. I got my first recurve at age sixteen, but my father remained mostly a gun hunter although he did manage to kill a big black sow with a recurve at age seventy-one. He was and is a wonderful father, but was a poor woodsman and hunter which, of course, is totally unimportant in any big picture. As he got older, I began walking him to and from his deer stands, both for safety and because in the evening he would aggravate other hunters by getting down and walking back to the truck at the absolute best time to kill a deer insisting that it was already dark – I remember how tough it was as a kid when I realized that my father, and role model in so many ways, was genuinely afraid to be in the woods after dark. Of course, as I got older it was just a fun thing to tease him about while he insisted that his superior ethics did not allow for shooting in poor light so there was no need to wait in the woods when he could go back to camp and start dinner.

Anyway, twelve years ago I set him in a ladder stand and then hung a stand in a tree about forty yards to his right facing away but well within sight. An hour into the hunt I was watching a doe when she bolted. I glanced behind me and saw my father climb down from his stand and start rummaging around in the leaves at the base of his tree. He then walked off toward the truck. Thirty minutes later, an eight-point was working toward me on a trail that would bring him within fifteen yards so I started visualizing the shot and was just about to draw when he took off like a rocket. I looked backwards again and there

was my dad, back at his stand, rooting around at the base of the ladder so I climbed down, walked over and got the story. After realizing that he was hunting with no clip in his automatic 30-06, my father figured he must have dropped it so he had climbed down to find it, couldn't, then went back to the truck to check there. Not finding it there neither, he came back to check the bottom of his stand again. That was my father's last hunt, and the first time that I admitted to myself that his mental faculties were fading because I realized that he did not remember that I was hunting forty yards directly in front of him and within sight. Over the past decade, dementia has slowly taken away his desire to do any of the things he used to love other than eating ice cream which he does all day to fuel his walks from his chair to the refrigerator. He is ninety-four, still recognizes his family, but might eat lunch three times a day or not at all. He just can't remember – but I thank God every day for the fact that he is mostly a happy crazy old guy. He still reads Outdoor Life magazine, and after each issue, he looks at me and says, "I don't think I'll hunt this year." I laugh and tell him that he hasn't hunted in years, and he just shrugs and repeats that he won't hunt this year either. This story has no real point beyond that we all need to enjoy each other as much as we can while we can. Life is short, and nothing is guaranteed. I thought of it because he reads Outdoor Life, which I will get to in a few lines.

I am writing this column from Las Vegas where I am attending the SHOT Show, the largest tactical, shooting, and hunting show in the world. I attend because my business requires it and it's my least favorite week of the entire year. But it is interesting - the show is huge, and is a who's who of the big-time hunting world, and I am rarely anywhere that I feel so at odds with so many people with whom I should feel some sort of bond. That is not a value judgement on folks who do not hunt the way we hunt but it is absolutely a statement of value about people who do hunt like we do. We are different, and I think to say that we care as much about how we do things as what we bring back and put in the freezer is an understatement – not that most of us don't bring back plenty in that regard. We also value the failures – all the times we come close but do not get a shot; although, I hesitate to even call them that. If I am

stalking pigs and have a fifteen-yard shot but think I can get to five then I try to get to five. If I fail, I am far from upset so how can it be a failure? I experienced the heart-pounding thrill of being close with a tight string, got to watch a wild animal acting wild for a few more minutes, and got to see just how stealthy I could be. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. But that intimacy with my quarry, that something-has-got-to-happen-right-now-or-else feeling is what turns me on. And any hunter who is working and watching, trying to get close to his prey learns immeasurably more about his quarry and about nature than one who just sees an animal at a hundred or even fifty yards and just kills it. In today's culture, most hunters are not looking for a more difficult yet more rewarding path, but certainly many are, they just don't know it yet. And there is evidence out there supporting this.

My father still receives Outdoor Life magazine, and recently they ran an article titled something like "When is Enough Enough?" It was a feature, written by one of their editors, and asks whether we have reached a point where there is simply too much technology in hunting? When is it time to simply focus on the hunt more and the results less? For a mainstream magazine dependent on advertising to allow this article from an editor was gutsy. The author, a lifelong rifle hunter, describes how he picked up a crossbow during gun season and the steps he took to learn to get close enough to a deer to kill it. I admit some disappointment that he chose a crossbow, but this is not about crossbows. For the author, this was a nice achievement and he was rightly thrilled. The article was well-timed, and the letters published in the next issue were all positive and that is heartening. The audience is out there for a simpler, more meaningful way to hunt, and one of my goals for our club is to figure out a way to get this message to folks open to it. So the next time you go to a PBS Hunt, or a shoot at your local traditional bowhunting organization, invite someone you believe might be open to learning to come along. Not necessarily to sign them up for PBS but to plant a seed that might change their life and lead them down the incredibly rewarding path that most of us follow.

One final thought – the difference between how I feel here, and how I will feel in a few weeks in Springfield is profound.

Here at the SHOT Show there is a lot of chest-pounding, look-at-me stuff designed to promote both people and products. They are trying to make a living and that is ok. At our Gathering, I know I will be surrounded

by the most humble yet most talented group of bowhunters and woodsmen in the world. I see old friends that are like family and will meet new folks and in just a few minutes feel the same way about them. I hope you

are one of them and look forward to seeing you all in a few weeks.

Matt Schuster

Vice President's Message

by Terry Receveur

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First of all I want to say THANK YOU to all who have donated items for our upcoming Biennial Gathering in Springfield, MO on March 12 – 15, 2020. The generosity and commitment to PBS is inspirational. We have donations ranging from a petrified deer antler to a week's accommodation in a luxurious Moloka'i, Hawaii vacation home.

Bows, arrows, knives, premier clothing, jewelry, hunts, custom hand made pens, books, quivers, and so much more will be on the auction block and we need you to bring a little extra cash to buy a few of these amazing items. PBS has restructured the event to make it more affordable for our membership. You will notice the hotel rate is reasonable and the cost of the meals and other events have been lowered from prior years. We really want you to attend and if possible buy one of the many items. The auctions are where PBS raises much of the funds necessary to keep the organization solvent. Granted, the financial situation is now much better thanks to all of you and your generosity, but we need to keep on track and we need you. Please bid on some of these amazing items and I'm sure you'll get great value for your dollar. If you haven't yet signed up to attend the Gathering, it's not too late. You are welcome anytime.

Second, a big kudos to Harmony for getting the membership directory online and available to our membership. Those who have opted out, please reconsider. The directory is a fantastic tool to help you connect with

your fellow bowhunters. Just recently, we had a long time Associate reach out to ask for names of Regular members in his area. He has a "bucket list" goal to qualify and apply for Regular member status and one of the requirements is to have a sponsor. Sponsors are current Regular members who hunt with and ultimately endorse the Associate. The directory facilitated this request quickly and easily. If you haven't used the directory yet, please give it a try and see who is in your area. You might just be surprised at who your neighbor is.

Third, as noted above, the process to become a Regular member entails having a sponsor. If you are a Regular member and are contacted by an Associate looking for a sponsor, please take the time to respond and get to know the person. It is a great honor and responsibility. As stated in my last column, Regular members are the ones who vote on our future. They help keep PBS the way we like it and in accordance with the mission of the organization. Sponsors help future Regular members understand what we are all about and teach them what it means to be a Regular.

Lastly, please embrace Knowledge Through Experience! This is a two way street. If you have knowledge in a particular area, please share it and likewise, if you are looking to learn from some of the world's best bowhunters take advantage of the many opportunities PBS provides. Membership hunts are the premier venue for learning, the Gathering can't be beat for schmoozing with the great-



est, the magazine is phenomenal and chocked plumb full of great information, the PBS forum can teach you volumes, and lastly just ask a fellow PBS member. The PBS is truly a brotherhood of like minded individuals and I know they are happy to help in anyway. I know I have benefited in so many ways from my fellow members.

I started with a THANK YOU and I'll end with a THANK YOU. Thank you to all who make PBS great! See you in Springfield.

Aim small and miss small!

Terry Receveur

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Want to be in-the-know about all things PBS? Join our emailing list for all the latest updates on your organization. If you have not received an email from the PBS President in the last month then we do not have your correct email address. (Be sure to check your junk mail folder as well as sometimes your email system may filter them as spam.)

Please email Harmony your best email address at professionalbowhunters@gmail.com to be added to our email list!



I am sitting in a hotel room in Kalamazoo, Michigan after the first night of the Great Northern Trad Bow Expo. It's always great to catch up with the many PBS friends I've made through the years and this is a great place to do it. We've been hard at work getting the last of the details nailed down for our upcoming banquet, and with hunting seasons wrapping up across the country I think many, like me are glad to have a weekend to reflect and share stories of the year's adventures. We are expecting this year's banquet to be a great one and like many of you I am

anxiously awaiting! If you haven't gotten your banquet tickets there is still time. Even though we have filled our hotel room blocks at two hotels, there are still rooms available at other nearby. Harmony has done an outstanding job (as usual) and has helped make this years banquet planning easier than ever for us on Council. So if you haven't already, make plans to be there and join in the fun and camaraderie!

This will be my final report as Councilman and I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank everyone that I have had the pleasure to work with on Council, and to the membership of the PBS. It's been an honor to have served an organization that has meant so much to me over the years. Serving on Council has been a challenge at times, but I wouldn't trade anything for the experience. We've seen some changes as an organization and some difficult decisions had to be made. I commend our current and past Council for stepping up to the

challenge and facing this head on. I believe in the end we are stronger for the difficulties we face in life. Having the kind of members we are so fortunate to have in the PBS has made these challenges easier as well. I would also like to thank Preston Lay and Sean Bleakley for stepping up to run for Council. We can't lose, as long as quality and caring members like Preston and Sean are willing to stand up.

I can't wait to see what the future holds for PBS. I am looking forward to seeing everyone in Springfield, and I already know that weekend will fly by way too fast! Thank you again for allowing me this opportunity and I hope to be able to share a campfire with as many of you as I possibly can in the future.

Ethan Rodrigue

Council's Report

by Tom Vanasche
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Hopefully you will be reading this BEFORE the Gathering. It's somewhat difficult to get all this info to Harmony, the printer and edited in a timely fashion. When you all get this in March we have had to compile it by the third week of January. What is news then, may be old hat in March.

The Gathering should be fabulous with our lineup of speakers and auction items and side trips. There will be a host of bows up for auction, as well as for sale from our vendors. Speaking of which, several will have come from long distances and all will have donated something valuable from their wares. Please thank them when you tour their goods and try to make a purchase to keep them coming back. Many other donors have committed and we will have gear from KUIU, Sitka, Kryptek, CRKT, 3 Rivers and many others. Keep these donors in mind when you upgrade your gear or are thinking of presents for others. Keep an eye out for email blasts from Terry Recev-

eur listing donations and make a budget (and then break it!). Besides goods, there will be hunts and vacations including Doug Borland's Moloka'i condo and my townhouse in Bend, Oregon, which can be any season.

We have finally gotten our membership listing on the website and hopefully you can use this to find members that may be near you, particularly if you are a new member. Fellowship is what PBS is all about and this should bring us all even closer. I frequently see people inquiring on the website or when I send them a welcoming email, "Are there any members close to me that I can shoot with?" This feature should answer those questions and make our membership stronger and even more close knit. Thanks Harmony for finally getting that all put together!

When you read this we should have a new Councilman on board as well. Thanks for Preston and Sean stepping up and running and thanks to Ethan Rodrigue for his strong work on Council the last three years. It takes a



commitment to do this and these people have generously and graciously donated their time and energy to make PBS viable and stronger. When you see Ethan, give him a thank you and welcome our new Councilman as well.

We all have our differences and if you have any comments or concerns you can bring them to our group meeting at the Gathering and discuss them respectfully.

Safe and happy travels and I'll see you all in March.

Tom Vanasche

Council's Report

by Jeff Holchin
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Three bowhunting-related activities are dominating my thoughts and actions as I write this report in late January. The first is the annual coastal Georgia hog hunt for Members that I am hosting with Tim Antoine in a week from this writing. We could have as many as nineteen PBSers on this hunt, so it takes a lot of planning and work before and during the hunt, especially since we use boats to get to the islands that we camp and hunt on. My boat is like my horses at the farm - sometimes useful but can't be trusted except to cause trouble at the worst possible time.... There will be a handful of new guys on this hunt and I am looking forward to hunting with them as well as my old buddies who have been on this hunt before. I don't know how well the hogs will cooperate, but I do know that we'll enjoy some warmer weather, good food and great fellowship. These Membership hunts are a great benefit of PBS membership and you should really try to participate in one soon, if you haven't already. Mine is Membership Hunt #3 for 2020 with a handful more planned for later in the year. If you want to share a good hunting spot, consider hosting one in your neck of the woods, or wherever your hunting spot is located - last year I hosted a Membership Hunt 1500 miles from home and it worked out OK. They are so rewarding! I plan to provide poster boards about our Membership Hunts at the Banquet, so that our

members can learn more about them.

The upcoming Banquet in Springfield is next in line and all the hard work from Council and members will soon culminate in a wonderful social and fundraising event for us bowhunters. If you are still undecided about attending but are within driving distance that weekend and don't have plans, please come join us, and bring a bowhunting friend that you think might be PBS material! For those attending, don't be bashful like I have been at past Banquets; just walk up and introduce yourself - it's so easy when bowhunting is something that we all have in common. If you have some spare time and are willing, offer to help with errands, logging in the donations, or whatever needs to be done. The auctions will have some great items, so please bid early and often, and support the vendors whenever possible.

The last item that consumes a lot of my time now is planning my bowhunts for the fall, especially the western hunts that require applying and using preference points. Each state has a different application process and of course things change every year it seems. If you are like me, the planning part of the hunt is very enjoyable and I love sharing intel and strategies with my PBS buddies, especially if we're going to hunt together. Almost all of my hunts are with my PBS buddies anyway. Thanks to Harmony, you can locate on the PBS website the names and contact information of PBSers in the areas that you are plan-



ning a hunt and contact them to ask for help. The older I get (and especially after starting my own business a few years ago), the more I appreciate the benefit of networking. Try it, it works. In closing, I suggest that you hunt hard, hunt often, hunt safe, and do it now instead of later, because later may never come. I just lost a good hunting buddy who was only fifty-seven - we had planned a lot of hunts together for the upcoming years and now they won't happen. Every day is a gift from God, I believe. Another reason to do those hunts now, especially the physically demanding ones, is that if you wait until you retire to finally have the time and/or \$, your body just might not be able to handle it. I know that those Rocky Mountains sure seem to get steeper every year, and I'm only fifty-three! Final thought - Thank you Ethan Rodrigue for your service to the PBS!

Jeff Holchin

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Chaplain's Corner

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It is a beautiful January day in West Virginia today. Sandy took a walk down in our closest field yesterday and found a shed deer antler with a lot of mass, beam length, and four long tines. She went out to the chicken coop today to gather eggs and lo and behold there laid the other antler just outside the fence gate. He shed it last night. It matched the other side with four points also. We each got a nice big buck this past fall but the biggest buck we saw on our farm avoided our efforts to waylay him. It was always at a distance when he showed himself and we never could determine if he was an eight or ten point. We just knew he was a nice one. It is good to know that he made it through all the seasons. Our Mountaineer Heritage Traditional Season was two weeks ago and the deer are relatively safe now if they stay off of the roads. It gives us hope for him being even bigger next year. We also let several smaller bucks walk. Hope for the future!

I am thinking about two months from now when Sandy and I will be in Springfield, Missouri with many of our PBS family enjoying the Gathering. It is not just the destination we are excited about, for we have been to Springfield before. It is a homecoming, a family gathering, and the excitement we feel is because we have so many wonderful relationships with PB-

Sers that live all over the U.S. and the world. It will be good to see so many great old friends, and make new friends. We have not seen most of y'all since Madison, Wisconsin two years ago. Sandy and I are reminiscing, and remembering great times also at past Gatherings in Wheeling, West Virginia, Baltimore, Maryland, San Antonio, Texas, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Portland, Oregon, Charlotte, North Carolina, Cincinnati, Ohio, and St. Augustine, Florida. We remember St. Louis, Missouri and/or Cincinnati, Ohio but our getting older brains are fuzzy on the where/when details.

My own personal family is scattered all over the map and sadly the only times we seem to get together is for funerals and weddings. My aunt, who was my dad's sister, passed on last fall and family came in from Texas, Alabama, Wyoming, Ohio, Maryland and other states for her funeral. Everyone looks older, because we are older. It is always good to see family but the weddings are always more joyful than the funerals. My dad and his brother and two sisters are all gone now. My mom is ninety-three and has a brother that is ninety-five. Her sister and other four brothers are gone. We have to cherish the moment, and the people we are with, while we have them. Life continually brings change. The older we get the more friends and family we have that drop out of existence in this life. I have lost several hunting buddies in the last few years, and a few others have dropped out, or backed off, of bowhunting because of back, shoulder, and knee issues. Change is not always good but that is what life brings to our plate as we age. We are not without hope though. Adversities can be overcome. Health issues can be healed. It is not over till it is over. We have to resolve to live one day at a time, make the most of what life gives us, and be thankful for what we have. Serving the Lord has benefits that change the playing field of life.

Psalm 34:19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.

There's nothing quite like a homecoming. When we think of homecomings our minds might wander back to our high school or college days, when homecoming was celebrated with the big homecoming football or basketball game against an arch rival, and the crowning of the homecoming queen. We think of those touching scenes of soldiers being reunited with their families after months or years of deployment in some

The Great Homecoming!

miserable battle torn country halfway around the world. We think of loved ones coming in from out-of-state to spend a few days with us at Thanksgiving or Christmas. There's something so special and heart-warming about a homecoming! The Bible speaks of a great homecoming when we all are gathered around the throne of God in heaven. Whether by the first death or the rapture of the church, we are all headed to those streets of gold inside the city of God.

REVELATION 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.

4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

The great homecoming is something that we as Christians are looking forward to. One day we will be in His Presence. We will sit down to a banquet just as we PBSeers will in Springfield in March. It is called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. When we get to the Oasis in Springfield and get to the door of the banquet hall we will have to produce a ticket to get in. The good news about the banquet in heaven is that your ticket has already been paid for. Jesus paid the price on the cross so that you can enter in. You do have to have a ticket though. If you have asked Jesus Christ to be your Savior in true repentance and faith then your name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. That is your ticket! If you have not acquired your ticket yet, the good news is that there is unlimited space for writing names in The Book. All those that call upon His Name shall be saved. Call on Him today! You do not want to miss that homecoming. Sandy and I could not make the PBS Gathering in Seattle, Washington a few years ago. It was something we still feel loss over. We missed out on a really good one. I can't even fathom the depth of regret one would feel one minute after they cross over to the other side without having made Jesus their Lord and Savior. It will be an eternity of regret. Don't make that mistake! Don't wait. Get your Great Homecoming banquet ticket.

Revelation 19:6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

Sandy and I are looking forward to seeing many of you in Springfield. It is going to be a wonderful time together. The speakers and seminars will be great. The tours will be fun. The accommodations will be awesome. The food will be delicious. There will be awesome prizes and auction items. The fellowship will be just what we need. The time will pass way too quickly. I can hardly wait! What a homecoming it will be. We hope, and pray, even more to see all of you in heaven some sweet day for the **Great Homecoming!**

2019

Profit and Loss Statement January - December

Revenue

Associate Member Dues	\$27,500.00
Regular Member Dues	\$13,590.00
Magazine Ad Income	\$4,180.00
Merchandise Sales	\$2,353.01
2020 Gathering Early Registrations	\$27,030.50
Etar	\$1,638.00
Oyg	\$2,224.00
2019 Online Auction	\$9,119.61
Kalamazoo	\$450.00
Misc. Member Contributions	\$1,078.13

Revenue Total \$89,163.25

Expenses

Magazine (3 Issues)	\$18,262.68
Merchandise	\$2,392.60
Etar Booth Fee	\$235.00
Travel Expense-2019 Meeting	\$3,040.87
2018 Membership Drive	\$262.00
Marketing Materials	\$480.07
Trademark Renewal + Legal Fees	\$1,268.50
Sponsorship	\$315.00
Phone	\$240.00
Postage/Stamps/P.o. Box	\$1,094.73
Insurance	\$3,389.00
Accounting	\$2,350.00
Bank Charges	\$163.82
Merchant Processing Charges	\$1,263.44
Payroll + Employment Taxes	\$23,463.08
Office Supplies/Expenses	\$563.75
Website And Forum	\$672.80
Online Auction	\$1,077.43

Expenses Total \$60,534.77

Total Profit/Loss for 2019 \$28,628.48

2020

General Expense Account Budget January - December

Estimated Revenue

Current Associate Member Dues	\$27,000.00
Projected New Member Dues	\$2,000.00
Regular Member Dues	\$14,500.00
Magazine Ad Income	\$5,000.00
Merchandise Sales	\$2,000.00

Biennial Gathering

2020 Registrations	\$10,200.00
Merchandise Sales	\$2,800.00
Auctions	\$60,000.00

Subtotal For Gathering \$73,000.00

Misc. Member Contributions \$1,500.00

Projected Total \$125,000.00

Estimated Expenses

Magazine (4 Issues)	\$24,000.00
Merchandise	\$2,000.00

Biennial Gathering

Travel For Council	\$4,300.00
Auctioneer	\$1,000.00
Banquet Meals And Events	\$24,700.00
Merchandise	\$600.00
Name Badges	\$1,950.00
Awards	\$1,250.00
Mugs	\$1,600.00

Subtotal For Gathering \$49,971.32

2020 Election	\$180.00
Stamps/Postage	\$1,000
Phone	\$240.00
Insurance	\$3,500.00
Accounting	\$2,400.00
Bank Charges	\$50.00
Merchant Processing Charges	\$2,000.00
Payroll	\$23,500.00
Office Supplies/Expenses	\$500.00
Website And Forum Fees	\$500.00

Projected Total \$95,270.00

Estimated Profit/Loss for 2020 \$29,730.00

Regional Profile →

This is an ongoing segment in the magazine titled “REGIONAL PROFILE”. In this segment we will highlight one state and give a brief explanation of species available to hunt, out of state license fees, public land opportunities, and any other information that might be helpful to fellow members interested in taking advantage of that state’s hunting opportunities. This addition will probably be an evolving process so

any suggestions or comments are welcome!

Ideally, we would like to select a state in one region then move to another region altogether and continue the cycle until we have eventually covered all states. So please give some thought to contributing to the magazine in this small way for upcoming issues.



Delaware

By John Dietterick



The “first state” may be small in size but it is a big surprise when it comes to bowhunting opportunities. It got its name by being the 1st of the original thirteen states to ratify the U.S Constitution in 1787. It is now one of the first states to open an early bow season, starting September 1st. As a bowhunter you can hunt every day from September 1 all the way thru to the last day which is on or around January 31st.

An estimated 45,000 whitetails roam the state and your state wide hunting license consists of four antlerless tags and one buck tag. You can also purchase a “quality buck” tag in addition but that can only be used on a buck with an outside spread of fifteen inches. All tags are good for the entire three counties of the state.

Only having three counties may seem small but each has its own unique features. Northernmost New Castle County would be a more urban area with Wilmington and its surrounding areas holding the most people and all that goes with that. You can imagine just like other urban non hunted areas there can be some monster bucks lurking in people’s back yards. The middle county of Kent is a mixture of urban and more traditional hunting grounds but may be the best buck producer. While southern Sussex has the most public ground and larger chunks of

timber that make for outstanding hunting for both numbers of deer and good bucks.

One of the things that constantly impresses me about this small state is how much public hunting ground there is. There is an estimate 56,000 acres set aside for hunting and it is spread out over a large and diverse area. Timbered pine plantations, overgrown cutovers to salt water marshes just off the Atlantic Ocean make up some very interesting hunting scenarios. There are numerous bow only areas set aside also but take note Delaware legalized crossbows two years ago and with it an increase in hunter usage in those areas.

Now while the long bow season is nice Delaware is just as liberal with other weapons seasons. Several weeks of black powder hunting including an early October hunt plus a week of “doe only” hunts. They also have a ten day shotgun hunt at the absolute peak of the rut in mid-November. Some really big bucks are obviously harvested at this time. We often wonder at the buck potential of Delaware if they would just move this one season, but it’s been like that for years. There are also more December and January gun and black powder hunts and even a week of “pistol” season thrown in there amongst it all. So you can see as a

bowhunter you wear fluorescent orange a lot!

While whitetails are the primarily pursued animal, Delaware has an excellent flock of turkeys. They only have a spring season that starts in early April. A turkey education class is required and most of all the public land is an application process but the hunting experiences in most areas are excellent and worth the effort to get drawn. I’ve yet to arrow a spring gobbler in Delaware but it’s not been for lack of action or shots!

Another attraction to take into account is the wide diversity of bowfishing action there is. Carp of course are everywhere but there are also stingrays in all the salt water bays and numerous other

runs of rough fish in the miles and miles of rivers, streams and small creeks that are all over the state. The state is encouraging the use of bow fishing to help with the invasive snakeheads and blue catfish that are wreaking havoc with local fish and crustacean populations. That and the fact they make great table fare is a real win for guys willing to string up the bow and get muddy!

Resident hunting licenses are forty dollars compared to non-residents who pay two hundred dollars. Quality buck tags are twenty dollars for residents and fifty dollars for non-residents. For the quality of the hunting experience Delaware is the real deal in this day and age. Happy Hunting!

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PBS – Regionally Speaking

by Randy Brookshier - First Quarter 2020

We had several excellent regional hunts sponsored around the country this past fall. Some, such as Holchin's Georgia hunt, are ongoing as I type this. These member sponsored hunts are an excellent opportunity to meet some of our members and are always an excellent time, regardless of whether any game is taken. Now is the time to start planning on hosting a hunt for this coming fall, or figuring out which hunt you want to try and attend.

Region

States

Pacific West Alaska, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Washington
Rocky Mountain West Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming
North Central Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
South Central Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas
Great Lakes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
Northeast Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont
Appalachian Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia
Southeast Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee
International Australia, Canada, England, France, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, All Other Countries



The current Regional Representatives are as follows:

Chairman – Randy Brookshier (stykbow59@comcast.net)
 Appalachian - Randy Brookshier (stykbow59@comcast.net)
 Great Lakes - Tim Nebel (tnebel20@gmail.com)
 International - Alessandro Fodera (alessandro.fodera@gmail.com)
 North and Central Plains - Mark Viehweg (mark@v-testequipment.com or mark@tradbow.com)
 Northeast – Sean Blakely (seanbleakley45@gmail.com)
 Pacific West - Tom Vanasche (tomvanasche@mac.com)
 Rocky Mountain West – Paul Schnell (pschnell0@gmail.com)
 South Central - Preston Lay (longbow@cimtel.net)
 Southeast - Vance Henry (vhenry.ga@gmail.com)

Pacific West Report

(Washington, Oregon, Nevada, California, Alaska, Hawaii)

Tom Vanasche – Regional Representative



Oregon: The state did take one of our two trad hunts away and then granted us an additional five days of elk hunting in one unit after the end of the regular archery season. You have to use your points to get it and I feel like it is a nothing burger. They talk of giving us an additional opportunity in blacktail season but we shall see. Muzzleloaders, which I feel are just trad rifle hunters have a host of separate seasons.

Nevada: The Traditional Archers of Nevada is up and going and PBS has members there now. You can look at the new registry on our website to find PBSers by state or alphabetically. The application period for big game will be fast approaching. Apply for hunts or build up points.

California: Rain and cold in California in January. That makes the hogs slurp up worms and chow down on the green grass. It's always hog time in Cali. Turkey season begins at the end of March and draw deadlines are June 1st.

Washington: At the time of writing steelhead and razor clam digging are in full swing. Eastern whitetail hunting had marked restric-

tions allegedly due to wolf predation. Hoof rot is still a major concern across the state for elk herds. Turkey season is April 15- May 31. Spring black bear is always a fun time. Go to Washington!

Rocky Mountain West Report

(Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho)

Paul Schnell - Regional Representative



Arizona - Rick Wildermuth: The January 2020 PBS Members hunt, held 12/31/9 thru 1/8/20 was a tremendous success. Food was delicious, new friends made, old friends reunited. We hit the mule deer rut in full swing. Many bucks and hundreds of doe spotted. Several stalks started, from camp, before the coffee was finished.

In Arizona legislative news, two bills were written to stop cameras and hunting within hundreds of yards of any water source from July thru January. The bill did not make it out of committee. Many contacts were made by sportsman to their legislature, condemning this suggested bill.

Utah - Craig Burris: Starting in 2020, there will be new hunts for bighorn sheep, bison, deer and pronghorn.

In 2020, there will be three new extended archery deer areas and one new extended archery elk area.

~ continued on page 10 ~

PBS Regionally Speaking

~ continued from page 9

Starting in 2020, if you draw a limited-entry buck deer permit, your waiting period will be five years, instead of two years. This increase will make the waiting period for limited-entry deer consistent with that of limited-entry elk. If you're already in the middle of a two-year waiting period for limited-entry buck deer in 2020, your waiting period will be grandfathered in and will not increase to five years.

Starting in 2020, there will be three new limited-entry buck deer hunts that occur from Nov. 6-27 and that allow the hunter to use only a handgun, archery equipment, a muzzleloader and/or a shotgun.

Montana - Scott Myers: I hope everyone had a great 2019 season and the larders are filled with delicious treats from our amazing ecosystem. We just finished up with weapons restricted whitetail doe in unit 309 on January 15th. There are still units with shoulder seasons (A shoulder season is for cow only. It starts right after general season closes.). If you have yet to punch an elk tag get out there and try to fill that tag. There are lots of possibilities and very low hunter pressure.

If you haven't already tuned in check out The Bowhunting Montana Podcast. They are doing a great job promoting traditional archery and bowhunting.

There are a few new points of interest on the FWP website. Our yellow license tags are going by the wayside so no more weather resistant paper. Overall cost and outdated equipment to produce these licenses and tags has prompted them to just go to paper. That being said, we can now print carcass tags from home and some licenses will have the option of being legal on your mobile device. I will miss our yellow tags.

Since online tag applications have reached a high level of interest and usage these days it has allowed FWP to speed up the draw process in 2020 which is really nice. Draw results will be posted in two weeks instead of six weeks after drawing deadlines close. This will give people more time to plan and hopefully increase chances of finding a good spot to get some tags filled.

Colorado - Scott George: I'm Scott George, a native of Colorado. This is my first attempt at the regional report for CO, and hopefully not my last.

Not sure who said it first but the times are a changing... rings true in the face of hunting here in my home state with the influx of people (80,000 more permanent residents in 2018) and I expect that number to increase in 2019-20. Hunting in CO as we have known it is going to change drastically. Bowhunting is coming in the bulls eye, and many of the SW elk units are now draw units for archery. If I could look into my crystal ball, I'd bet a box of donuts that OTC archery elk hunting will be a thing of the past within five years.

How will this affect you? If you are sitting on elk points you better start planning how to spend them because once OTC licenses are gone you will have to spend your points to hunt elk ANYWHERE or sit on the sidelines. The units that require three to four points will be flooded with people that have seven to eight preference points and so on. It will eventually catch up after everyone has dumped their points, but how long will that take? CO sells approximately 225,000 elk licenses (gun and bow) every year. How many people are sitting on points in that crowd?

Times are a changing... November of this year CO voters will decide whether to introduce gray wolves into Colorado. The pro-wolfers have enough signatures to get this on the general election - Ballot Box Biology at its best, CPW came out in opposition to this forced introduction back in the 1990's but, being federally mandated, the state's hands are going to be tied if this comes about. If you remember, we lost spring bear hunting and trapping due to BBB, but as of now this

isn't a done deal. The livestock industry, hunters, guides, and many non-hunters, are against the propaganda that's being spewed. County commissioners especially on the western slope are viewing this as a huge hit to their economy with WY, MT and ID, suffering from the forced introduction of wolves.

Now for a little good news. We have had some very mild winters in the lower country and very good early spring moisture the last several years which equates into some exceptional horn and antler growth on all big game species. This also translates to very good fawn and calf production in the past several hunting seasons. It has been abnormally hot and dry, so the overall harvest is down or holding steady, this equals more carry over animals. Did you know the average age of a harvested bull elk?

Great Plains Central Report

(North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa)

Mark Viehweg - Regional Representative



North Dakota - Mark Viehweg: North Dakota experienced one of the wettest falls on record in 2019 especially in the eastern half of the state. The result has been nearly half of our corn crop remaining unharvested. While adding stress to farmers, it is a benefit to our wintering deer. The snowpack is above average in the east but temperatures

haven't been too bad by North Dakota standards. We should be able to look forward to decent deer numbers and a few extra bucks surviving with all the corn up during our gun season. On the down side, eight new CWD cases were confirmed in western ND bringing our total to twenty four over the last ten years. All cases were limited to previous CWD areas and none have been found in the eastern half of the state. If you do hunt those areas be aware of carcass movement restrictions out of those units. Mule deer numbers continue to improve and for non-residents who can draw one of the limited any deer permits, they should have a great hunt. The Badlands of western ND are a unique and beautiful adventure. I am optimistic for 2020 and look forward to a better year for our ag industry and a great year for our deer herd.

South Dakota: As mentioned in the previous issue of the magazine, Steve Hohensee and I are hosting a Spring Turkey Membership hunt in the Black Hills of South Dakota. This will be for Merriam's. It will run from April 6-11 to coincide with the archery only portion of the season. If this is a turkey on your wish list, this would be a great opportunity to join with PBS mem-

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bers in a beautiful part of the country to chase turkeys. We have a couple of slots still open. Also, if you haven't been to Mount Rushmore or Devil's Tower in Wyoming, they are within a short drive.

Nebraska - Bryce Lambley: On the positive side, any PBSers thinking about a deer hunt in Nebraska, archery (Sept. 1-Dec. 31) permits are still reasonable and over-the-counter. It is anticipated the nine-day firearm season will begin on Nov. 14. Many bowhunters will plan their hunts for early November, but I heard something online that rang true with my experiences in hunting almost every day of October and November. I'm paraphrasing, but Bill Winke said this past season he had good hunts on about twenty days in October and ten in November in Iowa. That was my exact experience in eastern Nebraska. I guess my point is that if you've wanted to hunt the Midwest but can't carve out time in November, October is a very good consolation prize and in some years, like 2019, a better one.

The spring turkey season is typically March 25-May 31, again with over-the-counter tags and big discounts for kids' permits.

South Central Report

(Louisiana, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Texas)

by Preston Lay – Regional Representative



Oklahoma - Preston Lay: Another great hunting season is in the books with more memories and great times including trips with PBS members. If you haven't hunted with other members do yourself a favor and sign up for a group hunt. It's almost certain that great friendships will be made which will bring many new opportunities. Oklahoma is proposing adding a third week to

rifle deer season. They have asked for public opinion via their website. The Traditional Bowhunters of Oklahoma has put word out to the membership about this. I have certainly given my opinion and I hate to think of another week of intrusion into bow season. Not to mention having to wear blaze orange for three consecutive weeks. The gun hunters are arguing they want more time in the woods like bowhunters.

Louisiana - Emile P. LeBlanc: Louisiana has one of the longest big game bowhunting seasons in the country. The latest portion of the deer season runs through the middle of February in the central portion of the Atchafalaya Basin as it has the latest rutting activity in the state.

As the deer season is winding down, anticipation grows for a late winter bowfishing trip with the emphasis on red drum (redfish), sheephead, garfish and big catfish early in the spring along the coastal marshes. Wild hogs can also be found across most of Louisiana and the season never closes so if you're not interested in bowfishing, there are always hogs that you can be chasing! Hog hunting and bowfishing can be pursued all year long on private lands while hog seasons are closed on most WMA's with the close of deer season unless there is a special season for hogs.

So if you northern guys and gals feel the need to get away from the frozen north country, southern winters are mostly mild and opportunities are available!

Texas - William "Bubba" Graves: As of this writing the Texas deer season has ended, and we are looking forward to spring and the beginning of the spring turkey season. However, in the meantime we can get out and pursue feral pigs. With a statewide estimate between 1.8 and 3.4 million, with the average being 2.6 million there are plenty of pigs to chase around.

Texas does have a bit of public land for those who do not have ac-

cess to land, with over 1 million acres available to hunt there is surely some where close by to hunt. One does have to buy an annual public hunting land permit. The permit can be purchased at any retailer that sells hunting license for forty-eight dollars.

My PBS member hunt just finished up in the Davis Mountains and a good time was had by all. Everyone had shot opportunities and we were into hogs every day. Look for the details to be published soon in an upcoming quarterly.

I would like to welcome the following new members from Texas to the PBS: Robert Butler, Bradley Rutledge, and Jake Tessmann.

Hopefully everyone had a great season and are looking forward to getting out in the field with bow in hand. Keep honing those skills, introduce someone new to the joys of archery and sign up a new member to the PBS.

Hope to see you guys in Springfield, MO in March. Till next time!

Great Lakes Report

(Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Missouri)

Tim Nebel - Regional Representative



Illinois - Paul Ladner: Just got back from the PBS hunt in the Davis Mountains Texas. Great hunt and great group of guys. Of note one of the attendees was Tyson Woolbaum from British Columbia. He heard about PBS via a Stick-bow Chronicles podcast. He joined in November and took a chance signing up to attend the hunt. He was a great guy and our "outreach" worked. Good job!! I can't speak for him, but he seemed to have a good time and I think we made a generally favorable impression on him. If you haven't participated in a PBS hunt you should. Thanks Bubba Graves for hosting this hunt.

Well, laundry is done and repack nearly complete for the Georgia Hog Hunt hosted by Jeff Holchin (thanks Jeff). Looks like weather will be warm which means bugs, snakes and gators may be out. Ah the adventure. I hate to be a hunt hog, but this stuff is too good to pass up. My son Richard, will be joining us and Jeff's son Daniel, will be there, too. The two sons met at the Utah youth hunt probably ten years ago. It will be great for both of them to meet up again. They both let hunting slip a bit in their late teens and early twenties, but now in their late twenties they are both hitting it hard. I would like to thank all who made the youth hunt all those years ago a reality.

Illinois' archery deer harvest set a new record at 66,897 with three days left in the season. I don't see the breakdown of deer taken with what equipment, but I assume the crossbow harvest will be nearly fifty percent of the total as it was approaching that last season. There are those complaining that too many deer are being taken and that there needs to be limitations on the number of permits, hunting days etc... I have heard nothing from the DNR about any changes pending, but the greater efficiency of the crossbow will continue to put pressure on the deer herd. We currently enjoy a very long season (111 days) and generous harvest (two antlered bucks and unlimited does). I hate to see anything change that especially because of technological pressure. We have that enough in life.

Ohio - Tim Nebel: No report

Wisconsin - Michael Theis: No report

Indiana - Jake Hawkins: No report

Michigan - Steve Chapell: No report

Northeastern Report

(New York, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey)

Sean Blakely - Regional Representative

~ continued on page 12

PBS Regionally Speaking

~ continued from page 11



Connecticut: Deadly Mosquitos

Hunters, especially those in the southeastern part of the state from the lower Connecticut River Valley to the Rhode Island border, are advised to protect themselves and their children by taking personal precautions to prevent mosquito bites until the first hard frost of the fall. Consideration should also be given to minimizing outdoor activity from dusk to dawn, when mosquitoes are most active. The Department of Public Health announced on Oct. 1, 2019, that a third person has died this year in CT from Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and a fourth person remains hospitalized due to EEE. Weekly surveillance updates of mosquito and virus activity, precautionary and control methods, and the current list of certified applicators can be found at <https://portal.ct.gov/mosquito>.

Maine - John Holyoke: Bear Hunting Could be Tough

Randy Cross has been studying black bears and their habits for more than 30 years. That's why, when the Maine wildlife biologist gives his opinion on the bear-hunting season, it makes sense to listen closely. And this year (unfortunately for the hunters, or fortunately for the bears), Cross thinks it'll be tougher for hunters to fill their tags, especially early in the season, which kicked off with Youth Bear Day. The reason: There's plenty of natural bear food out there, and those bears won't be nearly as tempted to visit bait sites as they might be in other, less productive, food years.

According to the DIF&W, Maine's bear population is estimated at more than 36,000. The state allows people to take two bears per year, one by hunting and one by trapping. The bear harvest in the past three years has amounted to 3,314 in 2018, 2,897 in 2017 and 2,859 in 2016. This year's general bear hunting season runs from Aug. 26 through Nov. 30.

Massachusetts - Shira Schoenberg: Putting Some Bite in Hunter Harassment Laws

Jon Green was hunting deer in Shrewsbury when he arrived at his tree stand to find part of it ripped off, bent and thrown several yards away.

Green said the vandalism to the tree was "very disheartening," and in another circumstance, could have been dangerous. Jim Wallace, executive director of GOAL, said since the state's initial anti-harassment laws were written more than twenty-five years ago, anti-hunting groups have escalated their harassment, sabotaging equipment, vehicles and tree stands. "What we want to do is amend the laws to match the escalation, whether it's destruction or outright violence," Wallace said.

Sen. Michael Moore, D-Millbury, sponsored the bill, S.997. Moore was swayed by the story of Matthew Pearle, a Wareham hunter who fell twenty-five feet and broke his back after his tree stand was sabotaged.

Under current law, the punishment for harassing a hunter is a fine of up to \$500 or 14 days in jail. But practically, retired environmental police officer John Pajak said, disrupting a hunt generally results in a \$50 ticket for a first-time offense.

Moore's bill would make vandalism of hunting equipment a criminal charge, punishable by up to two years in jail and a \$5,000 fine. Vandalism resulting in bodily injury could be punished by up to five years in jail and a \$10,000 fine. The bill would add new offenses to the statute, including using aerial technology like drones to disrupt a hunt, verbally or physically threatening a hunter, and falsely posting

property as restricted. Those offenses, along with types of harassment that are already illegal — such as standing in the line of fire or using noise to drive away animals — would be punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

New Hampshire: Don't Use Natural Deer Urine

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department urges hunters not to use natural urine-based deer lures. These products can potentially spread Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a neurological disorder that is always fatal to white-tailed deer and moose. Synthetic lures are suggested. Do your part and help keep our deer herd free of CWD. Learn more at www.huntnh.com/wildlife/cwd.

New Jersey: Hunters have killed 171 bears so far during New Jersey's latest black bear hunt. The state's Division of Fish & Wildlife says nineteen bruins were culled Wednesday. That came after fifty-eight were killed on Tuesday and 94 were harvested on Monday, the hunt's opening day. The hunt is restricted to five zones, as Gov. Phil Murphy has again prohibited hunting on state lands. The highest number of kills have been reported in two zones in northern and northeastern Jersey, where 122 bears overall have been harvested so far. During the first three days, hunters could only use bows and arrows. Hunters killed 225 bears in 2018, the lowest amount since 2003.

New York: Take it, Tag it, Report it!

DEC reminds New York hunters of the importance of reporting their harvest. Harvest reporting is critical to wildlife management, and hunters are required to report their harvest of deer, bear, and turkey within seven days of taking the animal. The easiest way to report is via DEC's HuntFishNY mobile app. Through this app, hunters, anglers, and trappers can access an electronic version of their licenses and privileges, and report the harvest of deer, bear, and turkey quickly while afield on their mobile device. Hunters may still use the phone report system, but online and mobile systems are faster, more convenient, and easier for hunters to accurately enter information.

Rhode Island: Don't Forget Your Hunter Orange

ALL users of state management areas and undeveloped state parks during firearms season are required to wear at least two hundred square inches of fluorescent orange. This includes anyone using the areas, not just hunters.

Vermont: Blood Tracking Dogs Allowed

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department provides a list of certified leashed tracking dog owners who volunteer during the hunting seasons to help hunters locate deer or bear that have been shot during hunting season but not yet recovered. The leashed tracking dog owners must pass an extensive exam administered by Fish and Wildlife in order to be certified and licensed to provide their services. This list, which may be updated during hunting seasons, is available on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

Appalachia Report

(Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky)

Randy Brookshier – Regional Representative



Maryland - Tony Sanders: Favorable weather conditions helped bear hunters enjoy success during Maryland's 16th annual black bear hunt.

Official results reported by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources show that 145 hunters harvested a bear during the five-day hunt held in Allegany, Frederick,

Garrett, and Washington counties.

The largest bear taken weighed 539 pounds and was harvested in Garrett County by Carl Lee of Swanton. Other notable bears included a 529-pound bear, also taken in Garrett County, by Tyler Minnick of Grantsville, and a 422-pound bruin taken in Washington County by Robert Droneburg of Rohrsersville.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources announced that hunters reported taking 27,088 deer during the state's most popular hunt, the two-week firearms season. The total harvest was 14% lower than last year's official count of 31,631. Bad weather on key weekends contributed to the decline in many parts of the state.

More than 2,000 deer were taken on the two Sundays during the season, representing 8% the total harvest. Sunday hunting is currently permitted on select Sundays in twenty of twenty-three counties.

"Rain, ice, and fog once again hampered parts of the firearms season this year," Wildlife and Heritage Service Director Paul Peditto said. "Fortunately, deer hunters in Maryland have additional opportunities to fill their freezer with venison during the remaining hunting dates in December and January."

Hunters reported taking 10,249 antlered deer during the two-week season, down from last year's official total of 13,283. The antlerless harvest decreased from 18,348 last year to 16,839 this year. Sika deer represented 387 of the total antlered harvest and 507 of the total antlerless harvest.

Pennsylvania - Tim Denial: In Pennsylvania the game commission, after weeks of intensive investigation, filed charges against the two irresponsible teenagers that made national news after posting on social media of themselves holding down and kicking a wounded deer. There have been numerous charges filed against each.

Here in Pennsylvania due to added archery and muzzleloading seasons along with the gun season we had the largest bear take in Pa. history at over 4,577. Almost 1,800 of those were taken in those early seasons.

Virginia - Frank Whittaker: Well, with the exception of the late urban archery season (Jan. 5 to Mar. 29) the season is over. Hope everyone had a safe and productive season.

With the deer population at around 1 million and the total number of deer taken between 175,000 to 200,000 each season by hunting, the future looks great for us. The success rate for hunters buying a license is about sixty percent.

The harvest number of deer taken with archery equipment in VA. runs between 25,000 to 28,000. An alarming trend is developing with the crossbow kill exceeding all other forms of archery equipment combined!

Another alarming trend is developing with the decline of hunters in VA. Since the middle '90's the state has lost around 100,000 hunters buying licenses! Please introduce hunting to a young person or a friend to try to stop this trend. Even though my Dad is not with me anymore, I thank him every day for taking the time to take me hunting and fishing!

On a positive note the elk herd in VA. has grown to approximately 200 head. The Game Commission is currently working on a game management plan for them. Hunting would be a tool that is included, probably with a lottery draw.

I hope to see y'all in Springfield, Mo. In March. Keep em sharp!

North Carolina - Jeff Holchin: The NC spring turkey season in 2020 will be from April 11 to May 9, with a two gobbler limit and a youth hunt on the weekend prior to the statewide opener. The NC Division of Wildlife is considering allowing Sunday hunting on public land this year; currently Sunday hunting is only allowed on private land with some time restrictions.

I hope you had a great hunting season as well as an outstanding

Holiday season. If you have any Regional hunts or other Appalachian Region information shoot me an Email. Stykbow59@comcast.net

West Virginia- Gene Thorn: No Report

Kentucky - Scott Record: No Report

Southeast Report

(Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, Tennessee)

Vance Henry – Regional Representative



If you live in the south, this is a great time of year to be in the woods. The weather is very pleasant and the mosquitos have still yet to emerge, at least in mass quantities, making for any outdoor activity a pleasure.

If you are a fan of chasing hogs, there is no better time, and the opportunities are plentiful here in the south. There are numerous public grounds to hunt hogs, just make sure to read the state regulations. Some public areas will only allow hog hunting if deer, small game or turkey seasons are open. If on private lands, one can hunt hogs year around. Small game seasons here in the south typically stay open till the end of February. A good young pine thicket can certainly produce its share of rabbits.

For me personally, this time of year I like to do some post season scouting for deer. Its always fun to find ideal stand locations I wish I would have found four months earlier. Oh well, wait till next year... Old scrapes and rubs are still present, and trails are much more obvious this time of year. Occasionally I'll come across a persimmon tree that I would bet the ranch wasn't there last year, or maybe I just overlooked it. And furthermore, right about now is a great time to start looking for those elusive sheds. Some seasons I don't find any, and others a handful. Always a good time regardless. And if you're a step counter, (I'm not) what a great opportunity.

Of course I haven't mentioned stump shooting, some things are just understood, at least with this crowd...

International Report

(Australia, Canada, England, France, Italy, Mexico, New Zealand, All Other Countries)

Alessandro Fodero – Regional Representative

Italy - Alessandro Fodera: Dear brothers and sisters, first off I hope everyone had a successful and enjoyable season; and your freezer is full of good meat.

We are in the end of the small game hunting season right now here in Italy. Bowhunters pursuing small game are very few but they had a good hunting season. In many areas there were few hunters with rifles probably due to the fact that in the flat areas the farmers began to work the fields almost coinciding with the opening of the hunting season and the intricate vegetation, especially brambles and junipers which, thanks to the climatic conditions of last summer, made hunting with rifles difficult.

I'm pleased to inform you that for the first time some Italian members of the PBS found themselves on a pheasant hunt. Other hunting trips will be organized in the future.



PBS 2020 BIENNIAL GATHERING

SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI

Ticket Order Form

March 12 – 15, 2020

Name _____ Regular Life _____ Regular _____ Associate _____

Spouse/Guest's Name (if attending) _____

Children's Names (if attending) _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Day Phone _____ Evening Phone _____ Email _____

Individual Pricing:

Friday Dinner & Auction	# _____ @ \$45	\$ _____
Saturday Dinner & Auction	# _____ @ \$45	\$ _____
Regular Life Member Breakfast (Friday)	# _____ @ \$20	\$ _____
Thursday Social	# _____ @ \$25	\$ _____
Ladies Luncheon & Auction (Saturday)	# _____ @ \$30	\$ _____
Ladies Tour & Luncheon (Friday)	# _____ @ \$50	\$ _____

Half Draw Package:

1 Friday Dinner & Auction Ticket		
1 Saturday Dinner & Auction Ticket		
100 "General" Raffle Tickets	# _____ @ \$100	\$ _____

Full Draw Package:

2 Friday Dinner & Auction Tickets		
2 Saturday Dinner & Auction Tickets		
200 "General" Raffle Tickets	# _____ @ \$200	\$ _____
Additional "General" Raffle Tickets		
100 for \$50; 35 for \$20; 15 for \$10	# _____	\$ _____

Sat Dinner Choice: ☐ Steak ☐ Fish ☐ Veg (G.F.) **Ladies Luncheon Choice:** ☐ Chicken ☐ Pork ☐ Fish (G.F.)

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

CHECK OUT THE BENEFITS OF EARLY REGISTRATION (Before Dec 31, 2019)

- **Be one of the first 150 to register and have a chance to win a custom Great Northern bow. A hinged or snake skinned bow will be additional cost to the winner.**
- Receive a hard plastic printed name badge for each adult attendee. Registrants after Dec 31, 2019 will receive a stick-on name tag.
- Receive an additional 50 free "General" raffle tickets for each Full or Half Draw Package.

Please register online at www.professionalbowhunters.org or make all checks payable to PBS and mail to: PBS, P.O. Box 22631, Indianapolis, IN 46222. For questions call (801) 888-3802.



International members must send International Cashiers Checks or Money Orders payable in U.S. funds. Credit card purchases will have a 2.5% surcharge to your total amount.

Please provide the following information:

Name & Phone # if different from above: _____

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____ CCV # _____

Signature _____

Deadline for receiving this form in the PBS Home Office is March 1, 2020. Tickets will be picked up at the PBS registration desk in Springfield. Tickets will not be mailed.

PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTERS SOCIETY

2020 BIENNIAL GATHERING

MARCH 12 - 15, 2020



PBS KNIFE CONTEST

- OPEN TO ALL. THE MEMBERSHIP WILL VOTE ON THE BEST HUNTING KNIFE.
- ALL ENTRIES BECOME THE PROPERTY OF PBS AND WILL BE HIGHLIGHTED IN THE SATURDAY NIGHT AUCTION.
- ENTRANTS NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.
- ENTRIES CAN BE SENT TO TIM DONNELLY AT 3922 W. TRACY ST. SPRINGFIELD, MO 65807. PLEASE NOTE CLEARLY THAT THE KNIFE IS TO BE ENTERED IN THE KNIFE CONTEST.
- INCLUDE AN INDEX CARD WITH ENTRANT'S NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER AND ANY OTHER INFORMATION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE THE JUDGING MEMBERSHIP TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR ENTRY.



PBS PHOTO CONTEST

- 1) SCENIC/WILDLIFE (ALSO INCLUDES HUNTING ACTION SHOTS)
- 2) HERO SHOT (INCLUDES BIG AND SMALL GAME HERO SHOTS)
- 3) TRAIL CAMERA
- 4) YOUTH



CONTEST RULES

- PARTICIPANTS MAY ENTER MULTIPLE PHOTOS PER CATEGORY , ALL PHOTOS MUST BE 8"X10" PRINTS , ALL PHOTOS BECOME PROPERTY OF PBS , ALL MAILED PHOTOS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 5, 2020.
- PHOTOS MAY BE HAND DELIVERED AT THE GATHERING.
- EACH PHOTO MUST BE MARKED WITH ENTRANT'S NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS.
- ALL PHOTOS MUST BE ON PHOTO PAPER OR LIGHT BACKING MATERIAL.
- NO MATTING OR FRAMING.

PLEASE PACKAGE PHOTOS TO PREVENT BENDING AND SEND TO:

PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTERS SOCIETY

P.O. Box 22631

INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46222

PBS ARROW BUILDING CONTEST

- OPEN TO ANY PBS MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING.
- MEMBERS NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN.
- IF THE ARROW SHAFT IS FOOTED, SELF-NOCKED, OR INLAID, THEN ALL WORK MUST HAVE BEEN DONE BY THE ENTRANT. NO SHARP BROADHEADS OR FIELD POINTS.
- NO ILLEGAL COMPONENTS (EAGLE FEATHERS, ETC.)
- ALL ENTRIES BECOME PROPERTY OF PBS

CATEGORIES

- BEST MATCHED 3-ARROW SET PROFESSIONAL CLASS
- BEST MATCHED 3 ARROW SET AMATEUR CLASS
- BEST ONE ARROW ARTISTIC – THIS CAN BE PRIMITIVE, ARTSY, OR WHATEVER THE MAKER DESIRES.

EACH ENTRY MUST BE TITLED AND INCLUDE AN INDEX CARD WITH THE TITLE, ENTRANT'S NAME, ADDRESS AND ANY OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION THAT THE ENTRANT WANTS THE JUDGING MEMBERS TO KNOW.

SEND INDEX CARDS ONLY (OR E-MAIL) TO HARMONY RECEVEUR AT THE HOME OFFICE--PBS, P. O. Box 22631, INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46222

(OR BY E-MAIL: PROFESSIONALBOWHUNTERS@GMAIL.COM) BEFORE FEBRUARY 15, 2020.

THIS WILL GIVE US AN IDEA OF HOW MANY ENTRIES AND ALLOW US TIME TO MAKE DISPLAY SIGNS FOR EACH ENTRY.

DEADLINE FOR ARROW ARRIVAL AT GATHERING IS NOON ON MARCH 13, 2020.

THOSE MEMBERS PLANNING TO ATTEND ARE ASKED TO PLEASE BRING ENTRIES WITH YOU. FOR THOSE NOT BRINGING THEIR ARROWS, THEY CAN BE SENT TO TIM DONNELLY AT 3922 W. TRACY ST. SPRINGFIELD, MO 65807. ENTRIES MUST REACH TIM BEFORE MARCH 5, 2020.

JERRY PIERCE BOWYERS CONTEST

1) PROFESSIONAL CLASS

CAN BE RECURVE OR LONGBOW MADE BY THOSE WHO SELL BOWS COMMERCIALY

2) AMATEUR

CAN BE RECURVE OR LONGBOW MADE BY THOSE WHO DO NOT SELL THEIR WORK

3) PRIMITIVE

SELF BOWS ONLY

BOWS BECOME THE PROPERTY OF PBS AND ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN THE SATURDAY NIGHT AUCTION

2020 PROFESSIONAL BOWHUNTERS SOCIETY BIENNIAL GATHERING

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LUNCH BUFFET IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF YOUR TICKET AND TAX AND GRATUITY ARE INCLUDED, AS WELL AS A NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINK. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES CAN BE PURCHASED FOR AN ADDITIONAL CHARGE.





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- That by choice, bowhunting is their primary archery interest, and their ultimate aim and interest is the taking of wild game by bow and arrow of suitable weights in a humane and sportsmanlike manner;
- To share their experiences, knowledge and shooting skills;
- To be a conscientious bowhunter, promoting bowhunting by working to elevate its standards and the standards of those who practice the art of bowhunting;
- To provide training on safety, shooting and hunting techniques;
- To practice the wise use of our natural resources, the conservation of our wild game and the preservation of our natural habitat.

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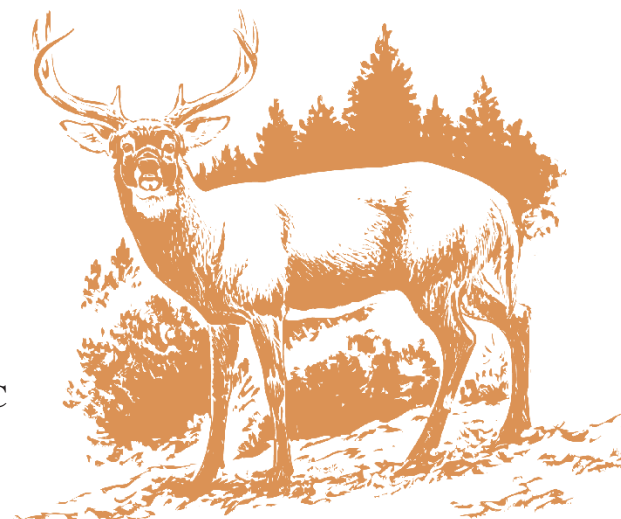
December

Kameron Gordon - Klamath Falls, OR
Colter Webb - Pea Ridge, AR
Jason Wright - Lenoir City, TN
Dave Armstrong - Newnan, GA
Jon-mark Waters - Cayce, SC
Kolton Schenker - Derby, KS
Doug Otte - St. Paul, NE
Chas Burch - Kennett, MO
Alexander Granick - Vista, CA
Caleb Dietz - Columbia Falls, MT
Brad Jones - Newcastle, WY
Gregg Ausbrook - Mountain Home, TX
Chad Graham - Eaton Rapids, MI
Dave Baker - Bath, MI
Mike Fink - Westphalia, MI
Bob Wyman - Lansing, MI
Dan Toles - Dansville, MI
Jeremie Smith - Mount Juliet, TN
Chris Joshi - Nixa, MO
James Thomas - Barneveld, NY

January

Chris Jasmine - Spring Creek, NV
Jack Lewis - Fleetwood, NC
Tim Hoeck - Henry, SD
Tyler Moore - Colorado Springs, CO
Brad Davis - Dickinson, ND
Greg Hanzlick - Springfield, MO
David Adams - Opp, AL
Brandon Burns - Boaz, AL
Paul Kemper - Bozeman, MT
Kirk Candee - North Plains, OR
Dane Rider - Bozeman, MT
Jacob Cholock - Greensburg, PA
Eric Dickerson - Deputy, IN
Teresa Williams - Ashley, IN
Garin Haak - Gann Valley, SD
Donald Willis - Elizabeth City, NC
Keith Allison - Old Fort, NC
James Neuman - Shelby, MI
Garrett Feik - Aledo, IL

Rick Cross - Mt Morris, MI
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Preston Lay!*

Vote Totals

175	Preston Lay
65	Sean Bleakley
5	Abstain

*Thank you to
Ethan Rodrigue for all
his work he did on Council.*



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BIG RUBS AND DOUBLE DRAGS

By Joel M. Riotto

The two does fed their way up the hill and continued browsing in my direction. My stand was on the downhill side of a ledge that ran horizontally along the hillside for several hundred feet narrowing and swinging uphill to the beech thickets that served as their bedding area. A huge boulder, almost centered on the ledge, created an obstacle that forced deer to walk around one side or the other. As luck would have it, the does split up, one walking on the uphill side of the boulder and the other walking on the downhill side. They passed by me, totally unaware of my presence, confirming my choice of trees.

About fifteen minutes later, a young buck, neck outstretched and nose to the ground, followed the does. When he reached the boulder he paused, looking one way, then the other. He took a few steps along one trail, backed up and started along the other trail. When he stopped and repeated the process he reminded me of my old beagle hound who acted this way, when temporarily confused, on a cold trail. Eventually the buck walked quickly along the trail, passing my stand, and followed the does up hill and out of sight. Fifteen minutes later a chunky spike buck came trotting up the trail and followed the three other deer. When he reached the boulder he came unglued, first going one way then the other. It was comical to watch as he passed my stand and proceeded up the hill.

My best guess was that both does were nearing estrus and the bucks didn't know which one to follow. I thought about the confusion shown by these two young bucks and wondered if I could create the same response in mature deer. Initially, I just did a double drag using the same lure. I

thought that simply putting down additional scent might work, and it did, to a point. However, by using lures from different companies at the same time I observed a more excited reaction with some of the bucks following the double drags. With so many lure companies proclaiming that the lure in



each of their bottles is collected from the same doe, rather than a blend of urines, I began developing a strategy to use two different drags from two different companies simultaneously.

I tied each scent wick to a cord approximately six feet long, a red wick on one side, a blue wick on the other. I

dipped the red wick in the red bottle and the blue wick in the blue bottle. I tied the other end of each cord to a sapling about eight feet long, grabbed it in the middle, and started walking. I gave careful thought to the actual route I took as I always wanted to pass by one of my existing stand locations. I refreshed each lure several times during the drag, depending on how far I had to go and how damp the ground was. I dragged the lures past my selected stand site being sure to make a wide circle around any large tree in front of the stand. This created a double drag circle in front of my stand. I always refreshed each wick when making the circle in front of my stand, as it doesn't hurt to have an extra drop of scent on a leaf or twig right in front of the stand. I continued to drag the lures past my stand. After about twenty-five yards I

hung the wicks from a bush with the hopes of enticing a buck to walk past my stand, and by following my double drags, to slow down and circle in front of my stand, thus affording me additional shooting opportunities. I always wore surgical gloves and rubber soled boots to minimize my scent. In addition,



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tion, I followed a regular routine of treating all my clothes and equipment with scent eliminating spray. The first two bucks that followed my initial double drags passed by my stand so quickly that I realized I had not placed the scent wick far enough upwind and had hung it too high in a bush. As the bucks got close they simply raised their noses and followed the air borne scent directly to the wicks. As soon as I corrected my mistake, my success improved greatly.

I carry the two bottles of lure in separate zip lock bags and when finished for the day, I drop the scent wick into the appropriate bag for repeated use. I tie a small piece of colored flagging ribbon to each scent wick. The color of the ribbon matches the color of the label on the bottle so even I can't get things mixed up!

Whitetails are challenging animals no matter where you hunt. The strategies and tactics that are successful in the creek bottoms and CRP fields of Iowa and Illinois are usually less effective in the big woods of the Catskill Mountains of New York. I spend a great deal of my time in these hardwood ridges each fall and since there isn't a CRP field or soy bean field within miles of my area, I have been forced to be creative and have developed a rather successful system. Everyone I discussed this system with had their own opinion

as to the best place to start the double drag line. In my eagerness to try different applications of this double drag system, I tried starting the drag from "inside" the wood line and proceeded out and along the edge of a clover field and past my stand. Currently I am still experimenting with this application because I have experienced a problem with the reaction of some bucks. It seems that, once a buck is in the open, he picks up his head and looks for the doe he has been trailing. When he doesn't see a doe he seems

to lose interest in continuing.

I have two ideas for next season. I will re-visit this application and have the double drags lead out to a decoy



placed in front of my field edge tree stand. I expect that the decoy will be a positive addition to this technique by providing visual confirmation.

With this in mind I will also try placing a decoy on an old logging road and do a double drag into the decoy from both directions. By starting out about 150 yards away from



the decoy on each side I can lay down three hundred yards of scent using the double drags. The obvious beauty of this approach is that I can place a stand on both sides of the logging road by the decoy so that wind direction won't be a problem.

Until then I find myself going back to my old favorites; rub lines and community rub trees. A serious rub line, or cluster of good sized rubs, is good sign anywhere. It's what you do with that knowledge that can spell success. In this area we rarely see the classic

daily movement of bedding to feeding and back. In the big woods deer seem to follow the food source and many times will bed close by when acorns or beech nuts are falling. As soon as that food source dries up they move again, often changing bedding areas.

With a buck to doe ratio of one buck to six or seven does in our area, there isn't a lot of classic scraping activity to be found as there seems to be no need for it. For me, at least, the one constant is an active rub line or a cluster of rubs. It seems that no matter where the deer are feeding, at any given time, bucks return to these community, or signpost rubs.

In 2010, and again in 2012, I had trail camera photos of at least six different bucks revisiting the same community rub. This has been a constant on my property since 2006. The buck I harvested in 2010 was a four and a half year old, eight point deer and I had at least five different photos of him at this rub over a period of three weeks. My 2012 buck was six and a half years old and I had nine photos of him at, or along, the rub line north of this community rub tree during a two week period. These photos made starting my drags at the community rub a no brainer. By starting my double drags at a community rub, or from an active rub line, I increase my chances of having a mature buck pick up the scent trail and follow the double drags to my stand site.

With technology invading our sport, with new gadgets being designed to make things easier and less time consuming, I take great pride in utilizing good woodsmanship and common sense in the pursuit of the magnificent whitetail buck.

Adventure is

By Brian Kauffman

My name is Brian Kauffman and I am an associate member of the PBS as of March. First off I want to thank my friend Alvin Martin for inviting me to the Odd Year Gathering at Tim Denial's place in March of 2019. We made the drive from central Pennsylvania to northwestern Pennsylvania for Saturday into Sunday. I was amazed at the brotherhood amongst all the members there. I enjoyed the activities throughout the day and one of my favorite memories was the campfire stories Saturday evening. I sat and listened to Bill Terry, Randy Brookshier, and Terry Receveur talk about hunts of the past. Those guys have hunted places I can only dream of as a twenty-nine year old.

This leads me to why I submitted an article. Recently while listening to our buddies Rob, Ethan, and Jesse of The Stickbow Chronicles podcast, they were interviewing Denny Sturgis. They talked of his Africa adventures, and how he got to Africa his first time. The main thing that stuck with me was Denny's words stating, "Your adventure is all between your ears."

I work at a sawmill and have only five days of vacation per calendar year. Do you think I ever see myself going on any adventure hunts out west or anything as awesome as Alaska? I'd say not, time wouldn't allow that for me and certainly not with my income.

With today's social media, you'll see hunters and their planning of big hunting trips. It is easy for a guy like myself to want the greener grass on the other side of the fence, too! The wanderlust sets in and you can ask my wife, I tend to dwell and talk about it far too much. Recently it occurred to me why that is--it is a lack of contentment. My discontented nature was never being satisfied or excited with hunting locally. However, reflecting on Denny's words it hit me: this style of hunting is often overlooked as being an adventure because it's around home.

But I've come to realize that I do have something that some folks don't. I have a neighbor with thirty acres absolutely loaded with whitetails that I can bowhunt. I have 8,000+ acres of state forest within a short drive from my home that has deer, turkey and black bear. I have my father-in-law's 110 acre farm to hunt as well. My options are far and wide here in an area littered with posted signs and leased properties so I consider myself fortunate.

My last few years bowhunting has been incredible. Two years ago I took a public land buck and two does with a longbow. This past fall I arrowed a buck and a doe in a twelve hour period of time the first



What You Make It

week of our statewide archery season. God has truly blessed me as a bowhunter. People have said, "Man you get on deer!" But honestly I think I just get lucky, it doesn't hurt that our deer numbers are very good here of late.

My adventures have always been right here or within three hours of home.

In 2014 I had numerous opportunities that resulted in several missed shots and even poorly hit deer. One three-day hunt that season I saw fourteen different bucks and missed three times while hunting with a recurve in the big woods of Potter County, Pennsylvania. One night after work, I emptied all four arrows out of my quiver, which I blame that on a steep ridge angle shooting nearly straight down, the deer just kept coming! What a frustrating season but I've never experienced so much deer action in my life. I had practiced a lot, I could hit the target but nothing could replicate when a live deer was within bow range, that would come only with time. I went back to a compound in 2015 and easily harvested a buck and two does with the bow that fall. Something was lacking, and I thought it felt like there was no great accomplishment. Sure it was exciting but it wasn't the same. I knew what it was like to take a deer with a traditional bow and I knew that was what I wanted ultimately, to be successful with traditional archery.

I decided to build myself a longbow and did just that in the summer of 2017. I managed to take a buck and two does that fall with the longbow I made. What an accomplishment I thought, I'm never going back!

I played around with another design and made myself another bow and took a buck and a doe last fall. Things were coming together.

Last fall I hunted three days in Tioga County while base camped out of a little 5x10 homemade camper I built. I sat it back in on a large chunk of state land. It rained every day at some point or another but it was still a good time. I stalked a doe in a clear cut edge, it was thick but wet which allowed me to close the ground. I made it to thirty-eight yards but couldn't get myself to try to shoot that far.

This fall we have a second child due in mid October. However I am not the least bit concerned with my limited time to hunt. It only takes one time out, one arrow and a small piece of property to give me the adventure I crave!



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SEASON OF REDEMPTION



By Aaron J. Miller

As I sat in my turkey blind surrounded by complete darkness I couldn't help but reflect on what this day meant and what it represented. It was opening day of our 2019 Spring Turkey Season in Ohio and I was in my favorite strut zone on a 140 acre farm I knew well. It had been a great location to hunt for many years but I was currently flirting with a four-year slump. Somehow bad luck, mental errors and unfortunate circumstances had taken over and my mental game was at rock bottom. Blown opportunities on wise old gobblers was starting to become the annual blueprint for my spring season and somehow I needed to get the monkey off my back. It was obvious around our home and with my hunting buddies. They all knew my confidence was in question. Even my seven-year-old son Jett, whom had accompanied me on many hunts was giving me pep talks. As soon as the 2018 season ended and another unfilled tag sat unsigned on my desk I began planning for the next year. I purposely left the unfilled tag in plain sight as a daily reminder and as motivation from another disappointing season.

Hunting out of a blind has its advantages but there were a few details that I needed to work out. I also planned to utilize the off season to shoot more out of the blind while sitting in a chair, concentrating on my breathing and shot selection. It felt like I

had rushed a few of my shot opportunities instead of taking more time while the birds were focusing on the decoys. A few of my friends were very influential about their thoughts in the utilization of a string tracking device. They had been using them on their bows and were sold on the advantages for turkeys. As for myself, I had my doubts. Being a creature of habit, change in my hunting gear isn't something that I am usually open minded about. Just ask anyone who knows me and they will probably agree that I can be stubborn with the likes of change. The fact that I still shoot wood arrows is a good example. However, I did take it into consideration as my friend Dave was only lacking the Osceola to complete his Grand-Slam with traditional archery tackle. I figured if he recommended it then I should be more open minded as he is an elite level turkey hunter. I still had my doubts about it causing drag and hindering arrow flight. After much field testing at different distances and arrow configurations it became clear to me that using a string tracker was the way to go. Turkeys have such a small vital zone that body shots need to be very precise. Especially on an animal that never stops moving and has eyes comparable to a bird of prey. They can pick up the slightest movement so the window for a shot opportunity is very small. Turkeys also have the ability to run or fly off after a shot and hide in brush, blow downs and briars making a recovery very difficult. Some bowhunters prefer the "all or nothing" approach by utilizing the



head shot. The advantage of this would be a quick recovery if a good shot was achieved. However, this isn't a shot I was interested in so I implemented the use of the string tracker to help in the recovery efforts.

After some good off season scouting, attention to detail and a couple subtle changes in my hunting gear my feeling was one of confidence as the sun broke over the timbered ridge. The weather was perfect as a good high pressure system had settled in over the Midwest with comfortable temps and blue skies. The light and variable winds made it perfect conditions to "talk turkey." My location was on the spine of a hayfield ridge which is surrounded by mature oak timber that holds a creek drainage in the northeast corner. Most birds typically like to roost from the vantage point above the drainage then pitch down into the field once they can see. Gobblers were sounding off from their preferred roost location as I had anticipated. While checking the time on my watch I knew fly down would be at any moment. Once the turkeys hit the ground we went back and forth for a few minutes. I could soon tell they had joined up with a group of hens so I sat quietly, I knew I was in the perfect mid morning spot. My focus was overtaken by a few deer in the distance as I glassed another field to the west for strutters. At approximately 8:15 a few hens worked their way up the ridge and passed the blind at twenty yards. They were heading south which was very typical for this particular location. A tandem of jakes soon brought up the end of the parade but none of the big toms I had anticipated chose to follow suit. My scouting confirmed a group of five to six different toms were in the area. They had been on a routine circuit each day from mid morning and into the afternoon while finally making their way back to roost in the evening. It was just a matter of time until one of them would show up. There was a nice pair of longbeards that hung together which I made a mental note of. It was easy to distinguish them in the distance as they always gobbled at the same time. It had become entertaining to listen to them both. It was almost as if they were frustrated with one another overstepping what the other bird had to say. But the tom I was most interested in on this day was a big bird that carried a "V" shape in his beard. If he decided to make his appearance I needed to be on my game. It was enjoyable listening to the turkeys hammering around me in the distance. What a blessing I thought to myself. But it had become quiet on the ridge till a gobbler sounded off behind me. The time read ten o'clock, this was usually when the action would get good. I gave him a couple of soft yelps and went silent. He immediately gobbled back followed by a gobble from a different bird. They seemed to cut half the distance in a matter of minutes and had to be no more than fifty yards and closing. Assuming it was the same pair that had been sticking together I prepared for what might unfold. By the way my decoys were positioned it was going to be impossible for them to see them by the route they were taking. Both birds needed to walk the path in the timber and clear the fence gap before they would see the decoys in the field. I had set up anticipating birds coming off the roost but these boys must have lost the hens and made a "J" hook into my calling. Dang it! Here we go again, I thought to myself. Another gobble rang out behind me as I jumped with surprise. They were close! As they sounded off I could tell one bird was hung up. I peeked cautiously out of the rear window through the thick fence row and could see both birds. One tom was ten yards behind the fence but for some reason he couldn't figure out how

to access the field through the fence gap. I assumed he was being cautious as I knew he was on his home turf and familiar with the access point. I could see the other longbeard on top of the hill looking at the fence gap. A couple of soft purrs was all he needed in order to take the path of least resistance. As he

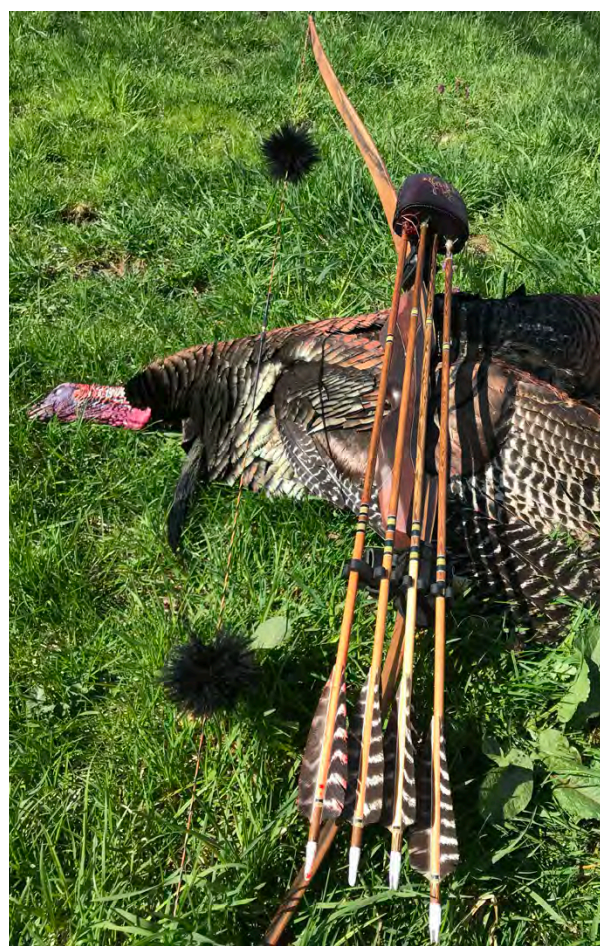
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approached the decoys he made a wide clockwise circle and decided to stay out at a distance of fifty yards. This put him on top of the ridge where he could see the entire field. He began to strut back and forth, gobbling and looking for what he thought was another hen in the area. Or so I thought. Finally he began to slowly make his way into my set up. As my luck would have it the wise old bird decided to make a complete circle and come in on the opposite side of the blind where I wasn't able to shoot! The best part is he was sharp enough to hug the base of the blind as he made his way past the decoys and literally look in the window as if he knew the boogeyman was inside! He was so close I'm sure I could have reached out the window and grabbed him by the neck! And to top it off he went back the way he came through the fence and continued to gobble behind me for another fifteen minutes. At this point I was in disbelief. How in the world could I have been that close and have nothing to show for it? What did I do wrong this time? All types of thoughts were going through my mind. Keep

your head straight, I said to myself. There is still plenty of time left I thought. Unfortunately that wasn't the case. Hunters need to be out of the woods by noon the first part of our spring season and the time was approaching eleven o'clock. With less than a hour left to hunt I tried to remain positive but couldn't help thinking of another blown opportunity. About fifteen minutes went by and the calm silence was broken with a lone gobble to the northeast. As I began to reach for my favorite slate friction call another gobble rang out! The overwhelming feeling that IT was going to finally happen overtook my previous thoughts of negativity. In a matter of minutes it was all about to change. While making a few aggressive cuts and yelps my calling was immediately overtaken by his deep thunderous gobbles. The dominant tom was on top of me in less than a few minutes as he closed the distance to within sight of my location. Peering out the window to my right stood the big bird with the split "V" beard and he was fixated on the life-like decoy spread. The half strut jake I had positioned overtaking the submissive hen was too much for this boss gobbler to accept as he was on a direct path to impose his will and assert dominance amongst the ranks. After picking up my longbow I adjusted myself in the blind, put tension on the string and made ready for my quarry to make his appearance into my shooting lane. As he did he approached with aggressive dominance, overtaking the jake and beating him into submission. Once he turned away and I recognized my shot opportunity I drew with one fluid motion, came to anchor, picked my spot and released the arrow. Almost as if time was in slow motion I watched the barred turkey feathers on my Douglas fir shaft in flight as it buried itself into his burnt orange plumage. Chaos erupted as he began to run but his attempt at flight was futile. All at once the string peeling off the tracker like drag on a reel had stopped and all was quiet in a matter of seconds. Did that just happen, I thought? In just a few minutes I had gone from feeling like my hunt was blown to complete jubilation. After some reflection and prayer I exited the blind with anticipation. With a



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couple short strides I crested the ridge but there was no need to glass the field as the big tom was laying motionless a mere fifty yards away. As I approached with caution it took a few minutes to grasp the reality of what had just taken place. Three long years had passed since my last turkey tag was filled. To say I was elated would have been a major understatement! After settling down I took a few minutes to honor the tom and thank him for the life long memories he had given me on this day. His colors and markings struck me as I began to examine him in more detail. He was a fine example of the species and I was honored to have outsmarted him on this day. I decided right then and there he would grace the walls of our home so I could always have a reminder of the hunt and a story to share with friends and family. Chasing turkeys in the spring is something I look forward to every year. I am a firm believer that sometimes things happen for a reason. The one lesson I can attest to is, never count yourself out until the very end!



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Mahalo nui Moloka'i

By Allen Clark

The state of Hawaii has been on my list to hunt for quite a while. I had sent off and gotten my letter of exemption to purchase a license years ago, knowing I would eventually need it.

That day suddenly arrived in early February. My wife had to make a trip to Honolulu for business. I scrambled to schedule the time to ride along.

We spent a few days in town doing the tourist thing, including a thirty-two mile bike ride up the coast. Then I chartered a flight to Moloka'i.

I had met Walter Naki years ago and had kept in contact with him over the years.

A quick phone call and he assured me he would help me find a place to hunt.

I arrived on the island Monday afternoon on the fourth. I let Walter sleep in from the Superbowl the night before as he is quite the fan.

I rented the only van available and drove east to his home.

After intros and conversation, he agreed to send me on my own to some property I could camp and hunt on.

I had brought all my usual backpacking gear to utilize on this trip. Walter drew me a map and sent me on my way. I would be spending a couple days exploring the east end of the island.

I found the place, packed supplies for a few days and headed up into the mountains.

I had to remove my boots and wade across the inlet to gain access. I found an old trail that hopefully would take me most of the way. What these mountains lack in size, they make up for it in steepness.

I started seeing Axis deer and goats right away. Getting close proved to be just as tough as anywhere else. My presence got noticed quite a bit. I learned about their strange sounding bark. Most of the bucks I saw were in velvet. Hunting private land means no season or limit on Moloka'i.

The trade winds here are out of the east so it was at my back going up. My plan was to hike north to the cliffs and set up my camp at the head of the valley. This would give me good visibility to glass from, and be downwind. Over the course of two days I spotted many bucks and made several unsuccessfull stalks. These deer would not stand much pressure as they would spook at great distances.

Seeing several goats in the area, I went after them. I thought surely I could get close to one of them. I soon learned they spend their time feeding above the cliffs over the ocean.

These cliffs were a thousand feet above the sea and just so happen to be the place Walter made me promise not to go as it was way too dangerous to traverse.

Right before dark the deer would get up

from their beds and start down the mountain towards the ocean. I would try to get in front of them, then wait for them to come to me.

I made it within range several times, but brush kept me from getting a shot. I decided to try another spot.

I packed my gear out to my van and drove back to Walter's. He was worried as he had not heard from me for a few days. I promised to check in from now on.

The next spot he sent me to was a lush valley that looked like a rain forest. It was a smaller area so I just planned to day hunt it. It had rained last evening so it was wet and muddy.

I hunted my way up the valley following a creek up towards a big waterfall at the head.

Walter said this area was good for goats, but I started seeing lots of fresh deer sign.

I saw several deer crossing the valley up in front of me. The wind was at my back so I favored one side and walked to the head of the valley and crossed the creek to the other side and turned into the wind to hunt my way out. Right off I could see several deer coming my way. I would try and get in front of them for a shot. I continued this approach until I spotted a

scant twelve yards away. I drew my fifty-nine lb longbow and focused on one of his many spots and shot. I was told they were jumpy so I aimed a little lower.

I hit him low and tight behind the shoulder. My 720 grain arrow zipped right through. He acted like any other deer, bucked up and took off up into the rocks. I knew the shot was good and heard him crash into the rocks up ahead. It gave me a few minutes to collect myself then take up the trail. Within one jump there was blood and my arrow. I followed the trail for twenty-five yards to a nice set of fuzzy horns. He had broken one side off when he hit the rocks.

After a few pictures, I boned him out and loaded three sacks of meat into bags. I loaded the bags into my pack and headed out to my van. Two hours and several slipped steps later I arrived at the van.

I had called Walter and left him a message, so when I got to the road there were several locals there wanting to see the buck. They were amazed that it could be done with my equipment.

I spent the night at Walter's while waiting for the meat to freeze in his freezer. After



couple bucks and a few does heading my way. I watched them until I thought I knew which trail they were going to go on and made my move. I saw a big tree up in front of me that I thought I could make it to that was very close to the trail they were on. As they fed along I would close the gap. As they got closer it became apparent I had guessed the right trail. I was standing by a tree in the shade when they walked by. As luck would have it, the biggest buck was first. As he walked into my shooting lane he put his head down to feed a

pizza, I hit the sack as my flight back was early. The next morning, I flew back to Honolulu to spend a few more days with my wife before heading home.

I really enjoyed my visit to the island as it is a fantastic place to explore. I spent six days on the island and feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to harvest such a buck.

Special thanks to Walter for allowing me the opportunity.

THE ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL



Photo by Tim Lewis

By Don Davis

I think a special place lingers in each of our minds, one that holds memories we simply don't want to let go. My wife, Penny, has a special fondness for the Florida Keys, the setting of our honeymoon. My kids, Megan and Brooke, although they seldom agree on anything, both think the Disney cruise we took a few years ago was "way cool" despite the fact that poor Dad missed a critical weekend of central Florida's spring gobbler season. My special place, as with most bowhunters, involves a certain section of woods that has provided countless memories over the years.

I am fortunate to have been raised in Melbourne, Florida, between the St. Johns River, which Maurice Thompson mentioned often in his classic book *The Witchery Of Archery*, and the Indian River Lagoon, one of the most diverse coastal estuaries in the world. In fact, Thompson chronicled a hunt along the southern reaches of the lagoon during which he took a Florida panther by longbow with the aid of a Seminole Indian. However, I grew up hunting and fishing these waterways without fully understanding or appreciating how truly beautiful these treasures are. It was simply my home.

I first realized how special that home was when I left to attend college. As I drove back home on spring break, windows down and Lynyrd Skynyrd blasting, I was suddenly

struck by the powerful scent of orange blossoms near Orlando. I knew the scent well, having worked in the groves as a teen, but this time I truly took notice. I guess after living in a dorm the sweet smell of those tiny blossoms shocked my senses back to life. From then on oranges, from blossom to fruition, symbolized how lucky I am to live where I do.

Over the last decade I've hunted a working ranch west of Melbourne that evokes many reminders of Florida's rich history of cattle and citrus. My favorite stand was once a resting place for some cow hunter many decades ago. I would like to believe this spot was once on a trail that led from the cattle markets at Kissimmee to the port at Ft. Pierce. But it's more likely that the ranch was so vast that my predecessor simply needed overnight shelter during his many sojourns into the Florida wilderness to hunt for the wild cattle that ranged freely before the days of fences. This guy was no dummy. He built a small pole shed in an ancient live oak grove that still stays dry, even during our lengthy monsoon season. Based on the construction of the shelter, I'd guess it was built fifty to seventy-five years ago. Someone eventually added a gas stove, the remnants of which remain. But what impresses me most about the spot is simply the extraordinary beauty of the ancient live oaks and the abundance of sweet orange trees.

Perhaps a hundred orange trees cover about

a quarter acre of ground, scattered randomly among the huge oaks. These trees obviously weren't all planted, as they are in various stages of growth. All the trees bearing fruit yield sweet oranges. Wild oranges are not uncommon in central Florida, but they are usually quite sour. Most sweet oranges are the result of a graft between a rootstock and a sweet orange shoot. Most sweet oranges produce seedlings that will revert back to their sour state. Many sour orange trees will start to produce sweet fruit after several decades, but I find many more mature sour trees than sweet ones. My unknown cow hunter friend evidently planted a tree or two for himself and inadvertently created a wild grove of Florida gold.

I happen to love oranges of any type, even the sour ones. Orange slices, orange juice, orange marmalade, sour orange pie or marinade...you name it. With regard to oranges, I know how Bubba from *Forrest Gump* felt with his shrimp. But I take them for granted most of the time. After all, if I want oranges during season, a few well-placed phone calls usually result in a tree owner begging me to harvest all I can. A single mature tree's annual yield can be enough to overwhelm several families with fruit. The sweet wild trees don't seem to produce much less and the raccoon and hog populations would be hard pressed to keep up with just a few trees' production, let alone

a hundred or more. And by the way, Florida whitetails LOVE oranges!

I admit I didn't start hunting the grove because of the oranges. Shoot, I didn't even think about deer eating the oranges at first. I was hunting it because it was the only spot I knew that was producing acorns in an otherwise lean year for the mast crop. The deer came to the acorns and I was fortunate to kill a couple before the oranges started dropping. I'd placed my stand in a mature Sabal palm tree near the shed, as the Florida archery season falls during the peak of the monsoon. Afternoon thunderstorms can be menacing, but afterwards the slight cooling they produce gets the game moving and a serious hunter doesn't want to stray far from the feeding areas as deer will inevitably set out soon to eat.

That first year I enjoyed early success but late season frustration as I saw few deer after the mast crop disappeared. Fall gave way to winter, albeit not much of one by northern standards, but a Florida winter nonetheless. I had abandoned the grove as there were no longer any acorns and my frustration over seeing few deer must have shown on my face

as I sat in camp that night. Friend and longtime traditional archer, Tim Lewis had been seeing deer regularly, including a good number of bucks. Tim informed me that he was hunting near a couple of wild sweet orange trees in the swamp and the deer were coming in to them. The proverbial bells and whistles went off and I went straight to the grove at first light.

A Florida sunrise is special. A light fog usually escorts the sunlight into the woods and among the grove's live oaks this sight was truly one to behold. The woods came alive with bird chatter and the owls began to call as Osceola turkeys flew down. Though I was hoping the deer would join the chorus with the steady beat of hooves, none came by. A quick scan revealed many tracks among the orange trees,



The old cow hunter's cabin in an ancient oak grove.

but it didn't appear the deer were eating the fruit as there were no remnants or rinds on the ground. Still, tracks don't lie so I hung a stand back in the palm tree and quietly exited hoping for more action later.

Evening found ~ continued on page 34



The bobcat stalked near the author's stand, most likely trying to waylay one of the Osceola turkeys.

me back in the stand. There weren't any acorns on the ground but a few oranges had dropped since that morning. Without rinds on the ground, I was sure hogs had laid claim to the grove and run the deer off. Soon a few hen turkeys came in and scratched the ground beneath the oaks for any missed acorns. From the corner of my eye I was fortunate to see a mature bobcat slip into view. The cat was stalking the Osceolas and might have been successful had a hen not recognized my outline in the stand. The hens scurried off and the bobcat eyed me, probably dreaming of an appropriate punishment for the intruder in his hunting area before he quietly disappeared.

The turkeys' noisy exit and the scent of the bobcat made it unlikely I'd see any deer, so I sat back to enjoy a beautiful Florida subtropical sunset.

The end of deer season was only a few days away and lacking a true hot spot I decided to end the season in the prettiest place possible: the orange grove stand. The next Saturday found me back in the stand enjoying another colorful sunrise with a family of wild hogs that decided to relax in the grove right beneath me. As usual, the nicest Osceola gobbler of the year happened by, well within bow range but nearly two weeks after fall turkey season had closed. Just as well; it's a whole lot easier to say I could have taken him than to actually

have done so. Not much more happened that morning, so I left the stand and returned a few fir shafts to the woods by launching them at some of the area's many squirrels.

After a nap at camp I left for the stand armed with my trusty Schafer and a ripe orange to squeeze around the area as cover scent. The evening was warm and before long the mosquitoes and deer flies tempted me to leave the stand and still-hunt through the swamp. I decided to stick it out a little longer as the ground was too noisy for good stalking. Before long the familiar sounds of little critters gave way to the deliberate, steady cadence of a large animal. Since I didn't hear any of the telltale grunts that give the local hogs away, I

The Thompson Brothers

"So long as the new moon returns in heaven a bent, beautiful bow, so long will the fascination of archery keep hold of the hearts of men." Most bowhunters are probably familiar with this quote and with Maurice and Will Thompson because of Maurice's book *The Witchery of Archery*. These brothers wrote of archery shortly after the Civil War for many of the outdoor periodicals of their day reminding all of the romance and beauty of the bow and popularizing bowhunting. Their deep love of archery and nature shines through their literary works. Many of their bowhunting adventures occurred in Florida and offer beautiful glimpses of the wildlands of the state in their pristine condition.

The war impoverished them in circumstance and health and in its aftermath they were disallowed firearms. The difficulties and troubles of the giant events that shaped their early lives did not daunt the young men who went on to become authors and attorneys and to enjoy wildwood adventure with bows and arrows. Many people attribute the Thompsons' love of bowhunting to their lack of firearms, but in truth, they bowhunted even as youngsters.

Pope and Young are familiar names to all bowhunters and some perspective of the Thompsons' contribution to archery and bowhunting might best be conveyed by quoting Saxton Pope: "To Will and Maurice Thompson we owe a debt of gratitude hard to pay. The tale of their sylvan exploits in the everglades of Florida has a charm that borders on the fay. We who shoot the bow today are children of their fantasy, offspring of their magic. As parents of American archery, we offer them homage and honor."

Both Maurice and Will were gifted artisans with pen

and paper and to introduce you to the heart and soul of these archers an excerpt from Will's writing late in life may serve best: "I would give almost any precious thing I hold to fare with you once to the game land of your choice, and to watch and wait by a slender trail while you and your young, strong comrades stole the secret haunts of the wild things, and to listen to the faint footfalls of the coming deer, roused by your entrance into their secret lairs. To see the soft and devious approach of the wary thing; to see the lifted light head turned sharply back toward the evil that roused it from its bed of ferns; to feel the strong bow tightening in my hand as the thin, hard string comes back; to feel the leap of the loosened cord, the jar of the bow, and see the long streak of the going shaft, and hear the almost sickening 'chuck' of the stabbing arrow. No one can know how I have loved the woods, the streams, the trails of the wild, the ways of the things of slender limbs, of fine nose, of great eager ears, of mild wary eyes, and of vague and half-revealed forms and colors."

One last excerpt from Maurice is worth including and, if you're like me, you may find yourself envying their vacation schedule. I'll also mention that while not yet finding any of their arrowheads, I've imbedded more than a few of my own.

"How dreary a thing it is to come back to the humdrum and vexation of business life after four months of freedom, and all the charms of wild camp-life in such a region as Florida! For a time one is restless, and champs the bits of restraint, but all is for the best and eight months will soon run by. They have run by again and again, and Will and I have drawn the bow on spots in Florida where never a white man fired a gun. Our steel arrow-heads will be found imbedded in the trees of those strange forest a hundred years from now."

Tim Lewis

figured I finally had a deer coming to get its daily vitamin C.

It proved to be a six-point buck, small in body and rack, but a six point for sure and a deer I knew I wanted. I had only killed a few bucks back then and only one was larger than a spike. As far as I was concerned, this buck could not have excited me more had he been a monster ten-point. Well, maybe a little more! My heart seemed to be jumping out of my chest and I searched for a way to calm down a bit. Something worked, as my heart finally slowed and its rhythm seemed to merge with the cadence of the deer's hooves. My attention focused on the buck as he focused his on the oranges.

I remember that deer eating a fallen orange as clearly today as if it just happened. Slightly quartering towards me and cautiously approaching, he seemed visually locked onto the few remaining oranges. As expected, he paused, checked the wind and then proceeded ahead. The oranges were maybe seven yards away and I remember thinking how cool it would be to bring a buck into camp when few of the gun hunters were seeing any deer at all. Competitive thoughts of that nature seldom result in good things happening.

Sure enough, the deer made it to the oranges without presenting a good shot angle, but he seemed so relaxed I knew it was only a matter of time. The young buck smelled an orange, picked it up and thrust his neck upwards in an attempt to bite into the fruit. I watched intently for my chance, but what I saw caught me off guard. The orange burst open. Surely the buck expected this, but he still seemed surprised as the juice sprayed all over his face, causing him to jump back blinking and shaking his head. Unable to help myself, I started laughing. Not loudly mind you, but



The author's largest buck taken from the old orange grove.

enough to startle the buck, causing him to bound back about twenty yards.

All this was killing me. Not because the deer spooked, but because I was doing my damndest to stifle my laughter and it was hurting! Eventually I regained my composure. I certainly didn't expect the little buck to be anywhere near but there he was, locked onto the burst orange and advancing purposefully. I quickly regained my focus and watched the deer come directly to the same spot he'd spooked from earlier, where he enthusiastically devoured the orange, rind and all. Not satisfied, he soon started towards another orange, exposing his side. Moments later, my fir shaft was quivering in the ground after a complete pass-through. The buck fell within sight.

Since then I've seen many deer eating oranges in the same manner as that young six-point many years ago. I have great memories of many hunts and numerous deer killed from that grove, although not all came when the oranges were falling. Those memories include a large eight-point that weighed 160 pounds and produced one of the more challenging blood trails I've ever encountered, thanks to hurricane Erin and the floods that came with her. And just a couple of years ago, I was certain a ghost was floating above the palmettos on the last evening of the season. My mind went wild imagining my cow hunter friend returning from beyond to reclaim his grove. The ghost turned out to be

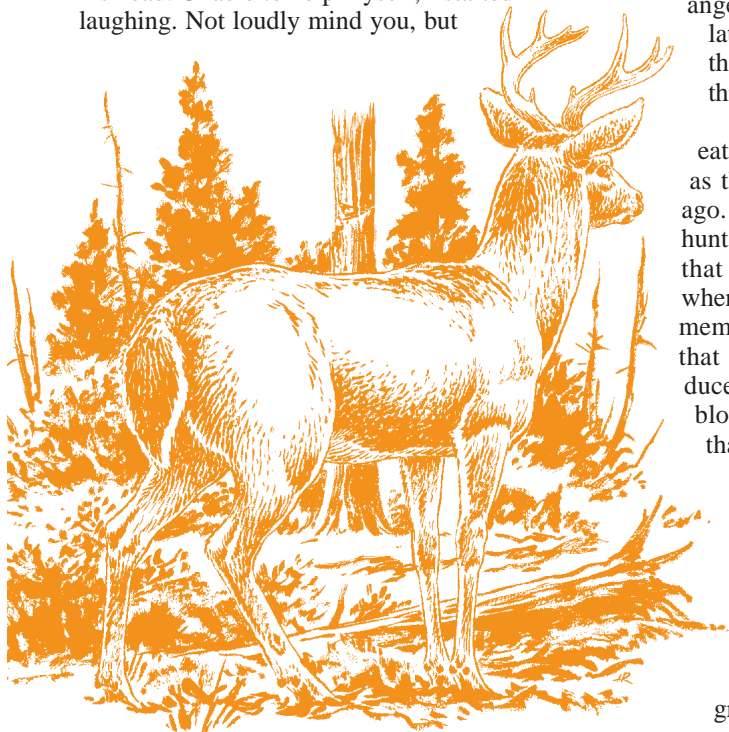
a large piebald doe whose white, mottled neck appeared to float above her brown body in the evening light. She had just finished having a little orange dessert when I shot, and her beautiful hide now adorns my family room wall.

As I mature as a bowhunter, I'm still drawn to that grove during all seasons. The oranges may not be falling and the deer may be traveling elsewhere, but the sheer beauty of the wild grove and ancient oaks allows me a link to the past I'm not sure I would appreciate otherwise. My wife and friends understand that when I pass away, some of my ashes are to be scattered in my secret snook fishing hole (although I'm not sure I want to reveal the location to them before that time comes), and some in my favorite hunting spot: the orange grove.

Looking at that weathered shed, I think of what the old cow hunter must have thought when he decided to build a shelter there. Was he also taken by the beauty of the light filtering down through the fog and oaks, or was he just being practical? Probably the latter, but deep down inside I still like to think he knew he was making a sweet place even sweeter.

An insurance adjuster in Melbourne, Florida, Don Davis lives with his wife Penny. He notes that their daughter Brooke's middle name is Hunter and that he cut her umbilical cord with a 2-blade Zwickey.

Equipment Notes: Don Davis hunts Florida deer with Schafer Silvertip and Robertson Vision Falcon recurves, cedar arrows from Kustom King, and 2-blade Zwickey Deltas.





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Pigger Comes Through Again

By Walter Francis

The short version (How I normally recount one of my hunts):

Walking to my stand I spooked two bucks. After getting in the stand, a buck I named Flop was following a doe named Daisy and they both bedded behind me (If you want to know why they got their names read the recounting below.). Daisy got up to leave and Flop started to follow. Pigger, my snaky, 57#, osage selfbow, put an arrow into Flop's chest and killed him. Look at the pictures.

The Long version:

This hunt started early Sunday morning when I sat what my hunting partner, Lenny Brown and I call the corner stand. It has a fence that parallels the north side of largest bedding area for several miles in each direction. It has produced a lot of shot opportunities over the years, mostly does, but during the rut the does cause the bucks to cruise the area. This hunt provided the normal opportunity on a couple of doe/fawn combinations, but we let them walk. We like the female deer to feel safe, thinking of them as our mobile decoys during the rut. Most often we do not start taking does until the Saturday and Sunday after Thanksgiving, the last weekend of the season, or until both of us have taken a buck. A while back all of the ranchers and homeowners collectively agreed to limit any gun hunting to the surrounding cultivated fields (mostly wheat, barley, corn and sunflowers) while designating approximately a half mile by three mile area as bowhunting only. Unfortunately, the majority of bucks are killed in the crop fields before reaching their full growth potential.

After getting off the stand at 10:30 a.m. I stopped and talked with Nate and Jason, the two young men renting the ranch. They are usually good for information regarding the movements of any good bucks they saw while gun hunting the surrounding open fields. They were in the process of heading out to track a "huge 160+ buck" that Jason had hit in the right front leg a couple of miles away. He had taken a really long shot, breaking the buck's leg; they saw the leg flopping as it ran away. I offered my help with tracking, but it was declined. They went tracking. I went home and took my two redbone hounds, Addie and Molly, out for their daily run. Back at the ranch by one o'clock, their truck was parked at the house but neither of them came out to let me know how the tracking went. I figured it didn't go very well or they would have the buck hung in the tractor shed.

My plan was to hunt the funnel stand until about three o'clock, if it was slow, I'd move the two hundred yards to the triple stand which had a really active scrape going. The funnel stand has been good to us over the years, the first time we put anybody in it (Jason and Nate's brother) he shot a 115" buck ten minutes after Lenny walked him into and sat him it. It is the same stand I took a 4x5 from four years back.

Approximately eighty yards from the funnel stand I crossed the fence and headed towards a small creek. Normally, when entering this stand from this direction, I walk in the creek for twenty yards to avoid leaving my scent at two well used deer crossings, then go directly to the stand. I still have to cross the major trail the deer travel, but I cross



it where their head is behind a tree giving me a perfect shot opportunity, if/when they stop to smell my tracks. This trick was learned from one of Uncle Barry's videos close to thirty years ago. Over the years several deer have been taken in that spot as they were sniffing my tracks.

As I am pulling my pants legs above my boot to keep them from getting wet, a big doe suddenly comes out of the brush, jumps in the creek and runs directly towards me. Instinctively, I grab for an arrow thinking there has to be a buck following. Catching my movement, she suddenly stops. I freeze with the arrow out of the quiver but not yet nocked on the string. For ten seconds we have a stare down, you know the one it seems like you always lose. The face-off is suddenly interrupted by a buck, a nice buck for this ranch, walking along the bank of the stream. Miss Daisy the doe (we'll get to how she got her name in a little while) decides she has had enough of both of us, turns tail, runs back up the stream, then jumps out and disappears into the main bedding area behind my stand. Naturally, the buck ran after her never presenting a shot opportunity. That is when I realize he is limping, and the front right leg is flopping around like it is broken. My plan is to get settled in my stand then text Jason to let him know a wounded buck was spotted chasing a doe, but it was much smaller than the one he described.

After pulling my pant legs up, the creek is entered and slowly navigated up stream for twenty yards. Two steps out of the stream, heading toward the tree with the Screaming Eagle hanging on it, a different set of antlers are seen slowly moving away from me, further into the bedding area. He is a solid 4x4, a couple of quick grunts are made but he continues on, disappearing into the bedding area. Moving to the tree, it is quickly ascended, the safety rope hooked to it, and after sitting down an arrow is nocked. Now the events of the past several minutes start replaying in my mind and the lessons learned / what if sequences are started and reviewed. After a few minutes of reliving the encounters in my mind it is apparent that not much else could have been done to change the outcome, sometimes... it just happens.

After another five minutes of surveying the area and seeing nothing I slowly reach for the phone in the cargo pocket on my pants. As my hand grasps the phone a movement is caught out of the corner of my eye. Freeze! Count to twenty then slowly turn my head to the left as far as possible without moving my any other part of my body. Nothing. Wait another thirty seconds before seeing an ear twitch at the edge of my vision. Moving very slowly the body is shifted enough to face the deer, eventually I see a yearling feeding on the tall, dead, grass at the edge of the thicket. She is undisturbed. The wind is good, out of the south, opposite of the norm. My body slowly relaxes, nothing is going to happen soon. A few minutes later, while watching the yearling, another movement is seen behind some brush. The movement eventually turns into antlers. It is time to stand, if possible, to do so unnoticed, and get ready should something good happen. Slowly I start to stand when Miss Daisy materializes in the brush a few yards from the antlers. She

is acting nervous and keeps looking behind her at the buck in the brush.

Be ready, this could get fun real fast...or not.

A few minutes later neither have moved. However, during this time I managed to stand all the way up, turn sideways hoping my fat belly wouldn't protrude too far past the fourteen inch aspen tree, lean against the tree, get



fairly comfortable, and ready. A couple of minutes later the buck comes out of the brush trying to sniff the doe's posterior. It is the flopped legged buck. Miss Daisy moves to what I think is twenty five yards from me then beds down behind a big clump of brush. Hobbling along behind, Flop leg catches up and nudges Daisy several times. She doesn't move. He limps a few yards away, laying down facing her behind a different clump of brush, then starts licking his bad joint.

~ continued on page 40

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~ continued from page 39

With the naked eye they are barely discernible behind the brush. Had I not watched them bed it is unlikely I would have known they were there. After a few minutes I start getting antsy and need to think of things to keep my mind occupied, while minimizing any movement. I try to get a better look at them. Eventually my Leicas are discretely removed from under my vest allowing me to peek around the tree and watch pieces of Daisy and Flop through the brush. Here is where Daisy got her name, right over the spot on the chest one would normally pick when releasing an arrow there was a weed shaped somewhat like a Daisy. For the next two hours they laid there, her chewing her cud, him licking his leg and sniffing the wind. Preparing for when they leave, my mind plays every scenario it can think of and plans accordingly. As usual, Pigger, my snaky 57# Osage selfbow is with me. She has taken me on numerous hunts and always comes through. Using a visualization technique adapted from my golfing days, arrow flights through various shooting lanes and holes in the brush are visualized. Various stances and what is needed to contort around the tree to make each shot are analyzed. Hey, don't laugh, visualization works, try it.

Finally, Daisy stands up surveying the surrounding area looking for danger. Flop gets up. I pray they come my direction, giving me a clean shot. Flop nudges Daisy, she runs around him heading away from me. Flop takes a couple of steps and is quartered away. Quickly I put "Tension on the String" (you really ought to read Mark Baker's book, it is good) and grunt with my mouth. He stops, looking back, directly at me. We both freeze for about fifteen to twenty seconds, then he turns his head and starts licking his leg. My instincts kick in; my mind again visualizes the arrow's flight through an opening picked earlier. My version of Rod Jenkins' mantra goes through my mind: Grip; Pick the Spot; Anchor, Pick the Spot, Make It Dead (Expand to Conclusion), the arrow is on the way. It flies true, as



visualized, through the opening, and hits perfect for a high lung quartering away shot. Flop runs hard, directly away for twenty yards and turns into the brush. I think I see him stumble as he enters the brush but am not certain.

Post shot adrenaline letdown starts, sitting down for the first time in over two hours, my mind replaying the arrow's flight, its impact, and Flop's sudden dash. Quartering away as Flop was, concern immediately enters my mind, the angle was excessive for where the arrow hit. It might have

missed one of the lungs. The phone comes out, it is 3:40, two hours before dark. I decide to wait until fifteen minutes before dark and then follow the trail for seventy-five yards or until dark, if he is not found we come back in the morning. Twenty minutes after the shot (and after texting my hunting buddies Hunter and Lenny) I slip out of the stand, leaving the same way I came via the creek. At the ranch house nobody is there, Nate and Jason have gone hunting. After killing a whole five minutes at the truck I decide to drive around to the back pasture and watch it until tracking time.

While glassing the pasture the plan changes, my gut says to slowly sneak in to where I think Flop went down from



the south instead of tracking from the north where the shot was taken. Then if he was still alive and spooked, maybe he'll head north staying on this property. Fifteen minutes before dark the stalk is started, several deer are busted from their beds along the way. They all sound like they are running on four legs, but that could be my imagination and hopeful thinking. When reaching the place where Flop had disappeared there was a set of antlers five yards further into the brush, outlined in the light brown grass.

Stepping it off last Saturday Flop made it twenty-five to twenty-six yards before dying. Unlike my initial estimate of twenty-eight yards, the shot was twenty-two yards, still it was the longest shot Pigger has taken on any animal.

Jason and Nate were called, they both came to look at the deer and confirmed it was the one Jason had hit earlier. Twenty five years ago my brother shot a three legged deer with a funky rack with his 270. The deer was running faster than the three other bucks with it. The farmer told us it had been on his farm for three years. This buck was hit at the elbow joint below the ham (hey, I'm a project manager not an anatomy professor), I think it would have survived and had funky a rack on the left side.

I apologize for the quality of the photographs; they were taken with my cell phone or a camera without a flash.

Got to thank both Lenny and Hunter for coming out and helping me with the photographs and cleaning the deer. It is appreciated.

GIVING UP BUCK

By Brandon Burns

The alarm rang out at 5:00 a.m. this morning. I heard rain pouring down and the wind was already howling and I told myself I'm just not going this morning. I hit the snooze. I woke up again at 5:30 a.m. I told myself I will regret it if I don't get my butt out of bed. So I got up, fixed my coffee and headed out. I'm blessed enough to be able to leave my house and be on stand in ten to fifteen minutes depending on which stand I'm hunting. This season has been real frustrating in the fact that I have not been getting the shots I want. I've been seeing plenty of deer, just the situation has been wrong.

I was settled in ready to shoot at six in the morning. The wind was almost wrong for the stand I was in, but it was blowing so hard I really don't think it would have mattered. The misting rain and the wind gusting at twenty-five miles per hour was starting to hurt my feelings. The sad part is, I had only been in the stand forty-five minutes and was ready to go. Just five more minutes I told myself. Well at 6:48 a.m. I returned my arrow to its quiver and clipped on my pull up rope. I looked around one last time only to see horns coming dead at me.



I quickly knocked an arrow and got turned the direction he was going to cross the fire break. In the middle of that process I pulled out my phone and took a quick video. As I stood there waiting I knew the shot was going to be pushing it. I practice out to thirty yards just for situations like these, although I try to keep my shots under fifteen.

I had tension on the string, picked out an opening and as he crossed the fire break into my spot, I let it fly. He never knew what hit him. Double lung pass through. He trotted about fifteen yards, stopped, then fell over dead. I could not believe what had just happened. The time was 6:53 a.m. That just goes to show how fast a hunt can change.

So with this story I leave you some pictures and a few words of advice. If your season is going rough and you're getting burnt out, suck it up butter cup. It could all change in a blink of an eye.

TWENTY FIVE YEARS

By Preston Lay

The burning desire has always been there, I never knew why it started. My dad was an avid bird hunter and had only hunted deer one time with a gun, yet from as far back as I can remember I've had a fascination with bows, arrows and hunting. Although not explainable the reality is, the bow and arrow is a way of life with me.

I had a great mentor and friend growing up. Gregg Ausbrook introduced me to traditional archery in 1993. Gregg told me that it was an advantage, not the disadvantage that was rumored. He showed and explained that with hunting, the traditional bow was the way to go. So, in early 1994 I ordered a custom handcrafted Black Widow recurve. I was twenty-five years old.

I quickly learned the ways of instinctive shooting. I took a doe whitetail that first October and the fire was lit, and I've never looked back. I took a lot of different critters with that Widow, but I grew a desire to try other bows. I progressed a few years with a longbow and then on to other recurves, to the point I have a rack of many traditional bows. I have no regrets with any of those bows, each is special in its own way.

In 2018 I was planning a mountain elk hunt with PBS member Duane Kronen. During the summer I looked up at the rack of many bows and my eye fixed on that old Black Widow. I took it out for an evening shooting session. It was like two old friends that had separated then reunited and wondered why we hadn't got together



Preston, in 1994 with a new bow and meat for the freezer.

sooner.

During the elk hunt Duane admired the bow. I told him my story of ordering it. Duane related that his own bow limb design was inspired by Widows. He also noted that master bowyer Bill Bonner most likely tillered those limbs. That fall I had many great outings including two bucks taken the second week in November. Both arrows were complete pass throughs.

September of 2019 brought me and Duane together on another backcountry elk hunt. Duane again noticed the old Widow and explained how neat those old Graybarks aged. They develop a yellow and green hue with time. I told Duane something memorable was in order this season. The bow was now as old as I was when I got it. No elk were taken on that trip, but I was again reminded why PBS is a special group. So twenty five years later, my hair

has found mostly gray. I've had to learn to shoot/hunt with, eye glasses. I often wondered what uncle Gene meant when he said he used to stand until his legs got tired and now he sits until his butt is sore. Well now I know.

The magic of November, the ninth to be exact, found me sitting a hardwood shelf, in north-central, Oklahoma. The set-up is situated in the northeast end of a large woodlot surrounded by agriculture fields. The stand sits on the north edge of a drainage that extends southward. To the northwest is a brushy ridge. Between is the flat

with mast trees. I take advantage of a south wind that results in undisturbed deer movement. That evening at around 5:00 p.m. I heard a buck grunt up the ridge. Then I heard rustling and my ears knew it was a deer. I finally caught a glimpse of it headed my way. My binoculars confirmed it to be a mature buck.

As if the buck heard me tell him where I would like him to be for a shot, there he was. Eighteen yards upwind, completely unaware I was there. I drew and released and watched the arrow barely miss over his back. I couldn't believe it, I lost my cool! He whirled to the right running about sixty yards up the ridge and stopped. I gave a soft nasal grunt and to my amazement he started back my way. This time he was skirting downwind. He was looking away and slightly over twenty yards. I concentrated, drew and the arrow struck him low in the chest. I could see my yellow fletch, then he was gone, running hard.

I sat for thirty minutes thinking about how odd it was for him to come back. I've been at this a long time and mature bucks don't usually stick around for round two. I walked back to the pickup to retrieve a light and returned, fifty minutes had passed. I found

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The old bow with a new rub that motivates us for long sits in the November woods.



Preston and the 2019 November buck from Oklahoma.

a heavy blood trail. About fifty yards into it I heard him get up and then lay back down in a short distance. I shut off the light and as quietly as possible left the area. The only thing to do was let him lay overnight.

I got no sleep through the night. My mind reeled over the shot, the coyotes and whether I would find him where I heard him lie back down. I was back in the stand more than an hour before the crack of dawn. As soon as I saw pink light, I took up the trail. I had no trouble locating where he was bedded the first and second time. But the buck wasn't there. The trail continued west, at first looking good but then less and less until I was on hands and knees trying to spot specks. I finally lost it all and leaned my bow on a tree where I found the last sign. I then fanned out to any and all likely paths but found nothing. I remembered an old skid road up ahead a couple hundred yards. The road hasn't seen use in many years and is now overgrown but still defined as an old road.

It happened upon a worn game trail running down the road. I was moving along the trail when I noticed a large drop of blood. Then more and then I was back on the trail. The blood trail left the road angling southwest. At times it was decent but never heavy. I was able to just follow the track in the soft soil for long distances and would get a drop blood often enough to confirm I was on the right trail. Now it's easier to refer to the distance traveled to the nearest mile rather than hundreds of yards. I suddenly jumped three does and they ran northeast. I studied them as they ran to see if the buck was one of them. I continued and then blood was everywhere, my left, my right, looked to be circles. I was confused and back tracked. I concluded he must have been chasing does, as the ground was ruffled from running deer. I was slowly walking, looking and heard a snort wheeze so loud and close the hair stood on the back of my neck. I turned and saw the buck laying under a tree top that had fallen but was still partly attached up the trunk. My mind raced. My bow was at least a quarter a mile back towards the stand.

He wasn't smelling me so I acted like I never saw him and slowly and quietly as possible walked out to retrieve my bow. Every so often I glanced back and he was just watching me as I moved on. I tried to make some mental notes of the terrain and trees so I could recognize it when I returned. Comfortably out of sight I sped up the pace. I couldn't find the bow. Several attempts left me empty handed. The mid-morning was warming up and I finally decided I would shed some thermal clothes at the truck and then retraced the blood trail to my bow. I was then able to retrieve the bow and tried to stay along the blood trail as best I could. For whatever reason, I had trouble this time around. I thought I knew about where he was so I continued on. When I arrived I glassed the fallen tree and was stunned that he was gone. I approached and crawled up under the tree and saw the bed with some blood, my heart sank. I looked around. I noticed a few drops of fresh blood exiting to the south. I crawled out, then stood and noticed more as I moved forward. All of a sudden I saw him at about ten feet jumping to his feet and he ran thirty fives yards and stopped. I asked God for a good arrow, I drew and re-

leased, and the arrow struck home through both lungs. A few minutes later the buck took his last breath.

I approached him and gave many thanks. He was a fine representative of a whitetail buck, huge body and heavy 5 x 6 antlers with bladed brows. Closer inspection revealed my initial arrow had passed through the lower shoulder/upper leg, into his chest cavity and out the opposite leg, it had missed both bones and all vitals. After a few pictures the real work started getting him loaded in the pickup.

Bowhunting teaches us many of life's lessons, the desire to procreate never stops, the will to live is everything and in the end we all will die. When I die and arrive at heaven I hope every week is the second week of November.

Preston lives near Jennings, OK. Preston used the bow described a carbon arrow and four bladed Zwickey Delta broadheads.



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Hambushing Hogs

By Mark Wang

Cunning and clever, they are one of the most prized animals we as bow hunters can ever pursue. The “North American” wild hog. Fact: this animal is found only in North America. Although there are many subspecies, the one I’m most familiar with is *Sus scrofa texicanis alpinus* or, Texas Mountain Pig. Oh sure, hogs may have the eye sight of a coyote. They probably have a better nose than a grizzly bear, and, it’s been said they have the best hearing of any animal in North America. They are as graceful as a gazelle. They are also more likely to charge a person than to ever run. Also, they can out run and out distance an antelope across open ground or in thick cover. These facts of course, are from my personal collection of facts that I have acquired over many years of pursuing these magnificent creatures. And to those who might want to dispute these facts, I invite you to hunt with me for a week and you will never look at hunting hogs, or hunting any animal the same way again.

Now I’m going to tell the truth. It’s not all fun and games. In fact it can be downright dangerous. There is always a sense of the unknown, tension and fear. Sometimes we aren’t even sure we are going to make it out alive, or if our friends will make it through the night. Of course that’s only the part where we are sleeping in the same bunk house with the world’s most prolific snorers. One time, I remember one of my closest friends almost died due to sleep apnea and snoring in the middle of the night. If I had thought to pin his arms down before putting the pillow over his head, he would not be with us today. But, this is also the reason for the great high we get from surviving the night and seeing

everyone at breakfast.

I’d like to clear up a few myths about hogs. First of all there are two main species of hogs in the U.S.

They are: mostly dark gray or black.

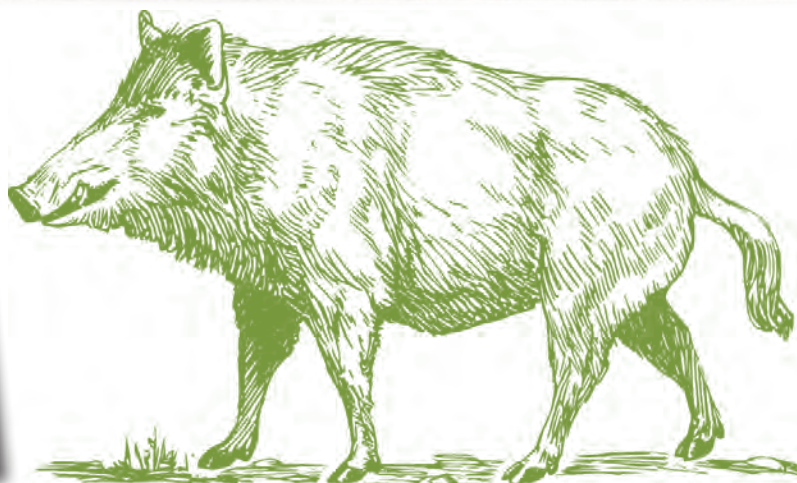
And different colored.

Some people have been told they are hunting Russian boar when in reality they are hunting hogs. This confusion has been caused by local terminology. I believe the first time a northerner or Yankee bowhunter ventured south to hunt hogs, he did so as a guest of a good old redneck local. As they moved into the brush looking for hogs, they encountered a sounder of pigs. The swine busted out of the cover in all directions. The Yankee, being soundly startled asked what happened. The redneck told him, “They’s rushin’ ain’t they?” Of course this isn’t the only part of the language barrier that had to be overcome.

Both species come in two sizes, 115 pounds and smaller, and bigger than 150 pounds. I have also observed that the further away from a road or vehicle, the bigger a hog becomes. I’ve seen a similar phenomenon with deer.

The morning is usually started with a five mile jog with any members of the hunting party that are up at 4:00 A.M. As not many are as willing to get up that early, the run is normally a solo outing by myself. Oh sure, there are some guys that don’t believe I make this run every morning, but to them I say, “Did so!” At one time, we would have followed the run with thirty minutes of exercise. Now, as most of us are getting up in age, we hold it to about fifteen minutes or so.

The morning hunt itself can be something of an endurance test. We



jump in our trucks with three or four hunters per vehicle and disperse in various directions. After about twenty minutes of driving someone will remember they forgot their bow, another will need his binoculars, finger tab, etc. We head back and retrieve all forgotten items and talk to the other guys in the other trucks, retrieving similar things and head back out.

The hunt can now begin. We park the truck in plain view from all the surrounding hills and head off in different directions. We all move along at a pace that some people call “poking along”. We check out known feeders or water sources in the area. This activity continues for about an hour or two. After hiking about three to five miles we realize we can’t remember where the truck is so we climb the nearest hill to locate it. This is when one realizes that poking along is more like “making a beeline for parts unknown.” The truck is a speck in the distance about twenty miles away. We spend the rest of the morning heading back that way. The sun is now starting to warm us up nicely. At ninety degrees, it doesn’t take long to warm up.

All participants of the hunt are accounted for and the decision to head back to camp is put into effect. Lunch or brunch is usually the next activity. This can be dicey at times. Normally there’s diced taters with diced onions and celery, etc. These along with some form of Cajun meats and grits can really make for a great meal. At this point the hunters participate in some form of midday meditation such as sun bathing or eye resting. However, naps are frowned upon.

The afternoon hunt is often an under taking in aggravation. The hunt begins in the same manner as the morning hunt with a few trips back and forth to the

hunting area. For this reason it’s important to get an early start. After dispersing again, I like to use a hunting technique I call “cowing”. This involves making enough noise that most wildlife perceive as a small herd of bovine. It takes practice but after many years of hunting, I have become a master. The only real problem with this style of hunting occurs when one encounters a real herd of cows. They don’t seem to fall for the ruse as most animals.

Over the years I have resisted taking many hogs. The main reason for this is the same reason I don’t like to shoot giant whitetails. You shoot one and then you gotta tell everyone and their brother the story about how it happened. Believe me, that gets really tedious. I also found if you shoot a bunch of hogs, people will start believing everything ya tell em... Next time I will discuss choosing the right deer stand using only an Ouija board and your horoscope.

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Taken by Preston Lay in Osage County, OK on November 16, 2019

Member

Photos



Texas Boar taken by Clay Burkhart on February 6, 2020





Gary Landry
Montana, September 2019
 I used a longbow I built. 55# carbon arrow Zwickey
 2 bld. No guided hunt, no trespass fee.



Gary Landry's daughter
Montana, September 2019
 52# Wellman recurve, carbon arrow, Muzzy broadhead.

Member

Photos



On May 29, 2019 Bill Terry, Sr. shot this black bear in New Brunswick, Canada
 He used a solid fiberglass arrow with a big Zephyr head, the arrow weighed 1250 gr. and was shot from a 53lb Stalker longbow.

Send in your photos!

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