

November/December 2009

Vol. 3, Issue 2

On Wisconsin Outdoors

with the
Dick Ellis Experts

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EXCLUSIVE, ON-SITE REPORT FROM THE FIELD BY DICK ELLIS

ON WISCONSIN OUTDOORS

A bear for the book

Snaggleteeth lives, 639 pound boar falls



Bear hunter Craig Cichanofsky of Green Bay with his 639 pound black bear taken September 17 in Bayfield County on the second day of the Wisconsin black bear season for hunters using bait. Guide Mike Foss of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters baited the station which was also visited frequently and captured on cuddeback camera by the legendary Snaggleteeth, a black bear expected to be even larger. The Cichanofsky bear skull was green scored by an official SCI scorer at 21-4/16. That will score as the third largest bear ever taken in Bayfield County, and will rank among the top 15 Boone & Crockett bears ever taken in Wisconsin. (Photo by Dick Ellis)

Wisconsin bear hunter Craig Cichanofsky's hopes began to fade like the tangled Bayfield County forest floor fast disappearing below his treestand. Cichanofsky had already held vigil for more than nine hours above the bait pile that had in recent weeks drawn in the monster bear known as Snaggleteeth. But in these final minutes of light September 17th, the legendary boar was apparently once again a no-show.

The Cuddeback camera mounted on a tree near the bait had revealed the recent visits of a bear estimated to weigh well over 600 pounds, and another bear almost as large. The long tooth jutting from the side of the bear's mouth, a badge of war almost surely inflicted in a fight for dominance with another bear earlier in life, verified that it was indeed Snaggleteeth, the startlingly large boar Guide Mike Foss had first seen years before in broad daylight during the black bear mating season.

Over several years of diligent scouting Foss, owner of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters in Washburn, had narrowed the bear's travel and bedding areas. His clients, though, had played a



Wisconsin bear hunters enjoy a 100 percent shot opportunity due to months of baiting work by Guide Mike Foss and his team at Northern Wisconsin Outfitters in Bayfield County. After four days of hunting in 2009, eight hunters out of 12 in camp had scored, including Craig Cichanofsky of Green Bay, who tagged this monster bear weighing 639 pounds. (Photo by Dick Ellis)

futile waiting game on strategically placed stands during the bear hunting seasons that came and went. Big bears don't grow to exceptional size or live to old age without an uncanny sixth sense for survival.

Cichanofsky checked his watch and checked his emotions. He could legally hunt for three more minutes. That was the plan. The digital clock on the motion camera had told Foss that Snaggleteeth was a nocturnal feeder and arrived at the bait, when he came at all, only for the final few minutes of legal shooting hours. Foss, in turn, stressed patience to the first time bear hunter from Green Bay who had already waited nine years for a coveted Wisconsin kill permit and now held vigil over bait within the favorite haunt of one of the largest bears that had ever roamed the state. With the thought of a potential face to face encounter on the ground with the enormous boar if the bear did arrive even a few minutes after legal shooting hours, Cichanofsky was not anxious to leave the stand in complete darkness

"When Mike asked me if I would like to hunt the Snaggleteeth stand, I said I would be honored to have the opportunity even though I also knew the chances of him coming to the bait were slim" Cichanofsky said. "I remembered Mike's words to be patient. But with three minutes left, my hand was literally inside my coat and on the rope that I would use to lower the rifle."

The stand itself was Cichanofsky's portable climber set in a mature poplar just 14 yards from the bait. Sweat lay heavy on the hunter in near 80 degree heat. Below, wild apple trees mingled with thick stands of briars and dense pines, sloping from the bait to tangled river bottom. Rising from the looming darkness, an eerie grunting...the rhythmic, and labored breathing of an obese bear coming to feed...broke the quiet. Cichanofsky watched the monster bear come in like a black ghost. "Snaggleteeth", he thought.

The shot of adrenalin pushed emotions even higher. He reached back to his experience as a deer hunter,



Guide Mike Foss of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters captured this Cuddeback photo of the 639 pound black bear on the bait pile less than one month before hunter Craig Cichanofsky of Green Bay tagged the big boar in Bayfield County.

mentally pushed aside the enormity of the moment, picked out a single log on the bait pile, rested the crosshairs of his Winchester Short Mag 300 on the spot, and waited for the bear to enter the field of vision....

Just a day before, Wednesday, September 16, opening day of the Wisconsin bear season for hunters using bait in Zone D, Cichanofsky had been disappointed when Foss asked him not to hunt the stand at all. A changing Lake Superior wind threatened to kill even the best laid plans that had been in motion for months and even years.

"This time of year, opening day was a prime example that we don't know what the wind will do," Foss said. "It can change in a hurry. That stand needs a southwest or a northwest wind to be alright. Three out of the first five days of the season the wind was out of the east. If Craig would have sat in that stand the first night, the game was over. The bear would have caught him without question. On the second night, the wind had changed back. The bear came in from the south. He never had an inkling Craig

was there. It was absolutely perfect."

It was a field-savvy Cichanofsky who immediately agreed to the request of a guide with a reputation for working hard from the first day of legal baiting on April 15 to ensure that his clients enjoy 100 percent shot opportunity during the September season. This year, Cichanofsky had traveled north several times to Washburn to help Foss and Northern Wisconsin Outfitter guides and assistants Bill Kurtz, Nathaniel Doucette, Jake Macabee, Gary Dressen and Chris Martens bait numerous stations on a circuit over 20 rugged square miles of Lake Superior country. Cichanofsky had even transported loads of sweet bait to Washburn received from his close friend, Brian Bolssen, who works in a Green Bay ice cream cone factory.

In 2009, bear hunters Darren Selk of Jackson, Rob Johnson of West Bend, Dave Rondeau of Plymouth, Mark Black of Lake Geneva, Chris Abel of Menasha, John Kohls of Sheboygan, Al Jordan of Waukesha, Ryan Tearney of Germantown, Bob Lipstreuer of

Burlington, Scott Pita and Kurt Rojemann of Dubuque, Iowa would reap the benefits of the team effort. By day four of the season, eight bears would be tagged with bow or firearm, and each hunter would have bears come to bait while on stands, offering the choice of shooting or not.

"Mike said 'I hate to do this to you but I'm not going to put you on stand'," Cichanofsky said. "He asked me how I felt about that. But I get it, especially when working a bear like Snaggletooth. I understand working the wind. A southeast wind would have put my scent right on the bait pile. I had mixed emotions. But I was able to sit that first night to film John Kohls' hunt when he shot a 300 pound sow. I would never have known what a grunting bear sounds like coming into the bait if I had not sat on that stand. The next night, I knew what that noise was coming into my bait."

....Cichanofsky held the 300 mag steady on the log and waited for the bear

to step in. When it did, he adjusted the crosshairs to the vitals and squeezed the trigger. The big boar dropped on the bait, never taking another step. The hunter would return to camp believing he had dropped Snaggletooth. Foss, in fact, would identify the boar as another captured on motion camera at the bait station less than a month before; not only by its obese size, but by a badly split snout that with little doubt had also been inflicted in battle with other boars during the summer mating season.

It would take 11 hunters and guides using the Bear Scents, LLC Big Game Cot of Lake Mills (taking numerous stops to rest and gaining just 10 yards of terrain at a time) to transport the bear from the wild forests of Bayfield County to the trucks. At Outdoor Allure in Washburn, the boar was unofficially weighed at 639 pounds live weight. Initially, Foss thought the bear could challenge the Wisconsin state record determined by skull size. "This is a world class bear," said Guide Kurtz,

Continued on page 30

639

pounds



Bear hunter Craig Cichanofsky is shown with a bear that weighed in at 639 pounds on the scale at Outdoor Allure Guiding Service in Washburn. (Photo by Nathaniel Doucette)

"... I bait for the hunters who come to my camp.

When they all leave, I'll hunt.

When people talk about my success rate,

it's not really mine. It's the hunters.

I can get the bears coming in,

***but then it's up to the hunters."* —Mike Foss**

MADDY LENSING

FOWL BEHAVIOR*Adventures of a youth duck hunter*

The author is all smiles after a successful youth waterfowl hunt with her dad, Todd, and his "employee," Thyme.

As I look back on last year's mid-September Wisconsin youth hunt, I know I will continue to look forward to the next youth hunt until I am no longer a youth. It was my very first time going out—just me and my dad, AKA Captain Todd, professional waterfowl guide. He lives for duck hunting and prepares for it year 'round. I'm not quite at that level, but I certainly enjoy my time in the duck boat with him.

Of course I remember my first hunt, too. Being out on the Mississippi River in the wee hours of the morning, traveling through dense fog, is extremely exhilarating. I also felt somewhat nervous when I couldn't even see dad at the other end of the boat. In the eerie silence of the quiet river, all I could hear was the soft purr of the motor. My dad decelerated the speed and soon we were barely moving,

creeping into our honey-hole in utter silence, I was in awe ... and half asleep.

We slid over the weeds, through the grass and into a willow blind. I peered warily around me into the water for animals hiding in the shallows.

Waiting for the season to officially open, I ate a sandwich. Under my layers of clothes, I started to warm up a little. Thyme, our chocolate Lab, who "works" for my dad full-time during duck season, began to pace, anxious to start his job.

Finally the sun peeked over the horizon and I perked up. The nervousness that had momentarily gone away resurfaced as I realized I would have to start getting ready for the hunt. I loaded and leaned my 20-gauge shotgun against the edge of the boat. The sun was rising slowly but gradually, but to me it seemed like it was

moving fast. It was rising behind us and I had to keep craning my neck backwards to keep glancing at it.

I dropped to my knees and dug through the bags for my " earmuffs " that I needed in order to protect my hearing when I shot.

"Dad!" I whispered sharply,

"Where are my earmuffs?"

"They're not in there?"

"Um ... no. I thought you packed them," I said distractedly still looking, wondering if in fact neither of us had packed them.

The first few shots were torture. My eardrums felt like they were exploding and I couldn't concentrate on where I was aiming.

We tried using pieces of insulation foam from the boat to cover my ears, and then broke them even smaller to try as earplugs. I could still hear plainly. I didn't want to shoot but I didn't want to give up either. We decided to head in; I felt like I had ruined my first-ever youth hunt.

The next morning went way better. We went back to the same spot, and this time we remembered my earmuffs. I shot four teal: two green-wing and two blue-wing birds. The first duck I shot was a large blue-wing teal. I remember how thrilled I felt when it fell from the sky. The next two were both green wings and I got them both with one shot! Even though I didn't get my limit, I was happy to have the chance to hunt ducks.

The day started to come to a close and we packed up and headed for home. My arm and shoulder were sore and there were bruises starting to appear. Shooting 65 shells in 4 hours can do that.

YOUTH DAY REPLAY

Fast-forward to 2009. Our friend, Steve, joined us on the first day of this year's youth hunt. Not knowing how the day would go, I was again a little nervous. Thankfully we remembered to pack my trusty earmuffs. How happy—and relieved—I was when I had my six-duck limit within a half-

hour! Thyme was back on the job for the season, effortlessly retrieving each bird. We stayed out there longer just to enjoy our hot cooked breakfast on the boat. It was awesome.

On Sunday it was just Dad and me once again. There were plenty of birds, and after shooting three teal, we decided to hold off for mallards. The decision paid off, and I ended up with two of them plus a gadwall. I shot them all—six birds—with only ten shells.

Two years, two different experiences. I know I will always remember these hunts with my dad. Events are just things that happen in life. The way you handle it is what can make it a learning experience. I learned that I truly enjoy duck hunting, no matter the outcome, and look forward to 2010.

W

Editor's Note: Maddy Lensing is the daughter and hunting partner of regular OWO contributor Todd Lensing.



Wisconsin's youth waterfowl hunt is a great way to introduce new hunters to the outdoors.

On Wisconsin
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With the Dick Ellis Experts

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and Outdoor Humor

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GARY ENGBERG

GARY ENGBERG OUTDOORS*This fall's pheasant prospects*

Despite disheartening news about current pheasant populations, those hunters who actively seek Wisconsin's wild birds will find success in 2009.

The key to pheasant numbers in any state, particularly Wisconsin and the upper Midwest, is habitat. Wild pheasant numbers are driven by habitat, and the loss of more than 1 million habitat acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands in the main core of Midwestern states will leave hunters finding fewer pheasants than they have the past few years.

In addition, another 3.8 million acres of CRP will expire this fall, 4.4 million acres next fall and 21 million acres will be gone from the program by the end of 2012. And without a new CRP general sign-up—of which none are scheduled—by the Department of Agriculture, hunters are left to worry and wonder.

DO YOUR PART

The CRP initiative has been one of the most successful programs that the Government has ever implemented, producing benefits of improved soil quality, cleaner water, less soil erosion and increased habitat for game animals, game birds and song birds. The continued loss of CRP acres in key states will be a disaster for the conservationists.

If you are a pheasant hunter (there are more than 60,000 pheasant hunters in Wisconsin and 2 million nationally)

and conservationist, it's important that you contact your elected officials and "lobby" them for a continuation of the CRP program with a new general sign-up, expansion of the wildlife friendly CRP practice known as State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE or CP 38), and the expansion of the Upland Bird Habitat Buffers practice (CP 33) also within CRP.

I strongly suggest that pheasant hunters join Pheasants Forever, which is a high-quality, conservation-minded organization that does wonders for all wildlife nationally and within Wisconsin.

Wisconsin has seen its CRP acres dwindle from 700,000 acres in the mid 1990s to the present level of less than 500,000 acres. Add this loss of habitat to the long, snowy and cold winters of 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, along with the wet and cool spring of 2008, and the state's pheasant numbers have severely diminished.

The spring crowing counts showed a 36 percent decrease in pheasant numbers, and the rural mail carrier survey showed a 35 percent decrease, so hunters can expect the statewide harvest to drop below the 323,000 wild pheasants that were harvested last year.

Surveys have shown that the best

counties for pheasant hunting include Dodge, Fond du Lac and Kenosha counties, which had the highest harvest numbers last season. This year, Lafayette, Washington, St. Croix, and Polk counties reported the strongest numbers from the rural mail carrier survey. Another benefit for Wisconsin bird hunters would be the state's prairie and grassland CRP SAFE projects, if it could get fully enrolled and add another 10,000 acres of improved habitat.

The Wisconsin pheasant season opened on October 17 and runs through December 31. There are wild or native pheasants in scattered pockets in the southern half of the state, but hunters must drive the counties many back-roads looking for farms that might still be in the CRP program or have good habitat that will hold pheasants.

The state no longer publishes a separate booklet about pheasant hunting, so hunters must have a small game hunting regulation book to check on rules and regulations. Hunters must have a small game license and a pheasant stamp to legally hunt pheasants in Wisconsin.

Most of Wisconsin hunters are going to be hunting on state public hunting grounds for their pheasants. The state plans to stock 45,000 pheasants on 71 public hunting grounds this fall. Maps for these public hunting grounds can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/hunt/pheasant/map.htm>.

Before hunting on public lands, be sure to check for special requirements that apply including 2 p.m. closing

Continued on page 8

PUBLIC-GROUND PHEASANTS**COLUMBIA COUNTY**

French Creek: 1600 acres with 520 pheasants released in 2008.

Mud Lake: 1,300 acres with a 2 p.m. closing, and 520 pheasants released in 2008.

Pine Island: 2,400 acres with a 2 p.m. closing, and 900 pheasants released in 2008.

DANE COUNTY

Badfish Creek: 1,980 acres with 180 released pheasants in 2008.

Lodi Marsh: 1,140 acres and 280 pheasants released in 2008.

Mazomanie: 3,600 acres, a 2 p.m. closing and 500 birds stocked in 2008.

Deansville: 1,668 acres and 780 birds stocked in 2008.

GREEN COUNTY

Brooklyn: 4,000 acres, a 2 p.m. closing and 1540 stocked pheasants released in 2008.

Albany: 1,040 acres and 460 pheasants released in 2008.

IOWA COUNTY

Avoca: 2,000 acres, hen-rooster and 1,020 released pheasants in 2008.

Blackhawk Lake: 1,450 acres and 420 stocked pheasants in 2008.

JEFFERSON COUNTY

Jefferson Marsh: 3,700 acres and 1,140 pheasants released in 2008.

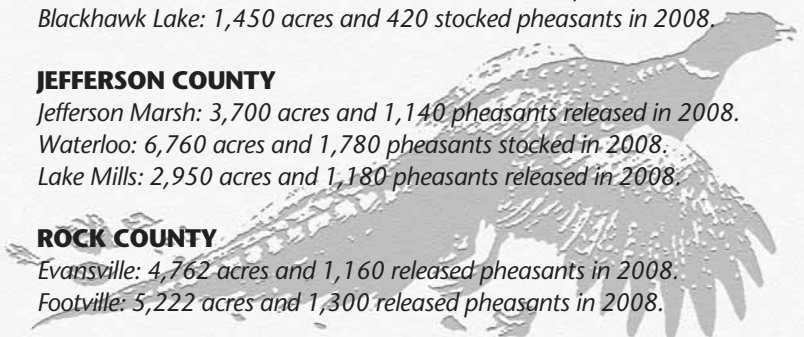
Waterloo: 6,760 acres and 1,780 pheasants stocked in 2008.

Lake Mills: 2,950 acres and 1,180 pheasants released in 2008.

ROCK COUNTY

Evansville: 4,762 acres and 1,160 released pheasants in 2008.

Footville: 5,222 acres and 1,300 released pheasants in 2008.



DAN MOERICKE

AN "UP NORT" REPORT

The sportsmen's stimulus package

Two or three times a year I get out all my gear and clothes and make an attempt to organize by sorting them into piles around my basement. Usually, this occurs with the changing of the seasons. By changing of the seasons, of course, I'm referring to the changing of the sportsmen's seasons, not the calendar seasons.

The most recent accounting exercise was brought on by the upcoming deer firearms season. During this ritual, it became apparent to me that, over the years, I've managed to accumulate a lot of truly "cruddy" stuff. Just a cursory survey of my hunting and fishing arsenal revealed that I've got:

- ✗ Two-piece fishing rods that were originally one-piece rods
- ✗ Five-foot, 8-inch rods that were once 6 footers
- ✗ Reels that "sort of" work
- ✗ Waders that leak in varying degrees at various depths
- ✗ Multiple pairs of pants with inexplicably inadequate waistlines
- ✗ Guns that won't shoot straight
- ✗ A few dozen arrows missing nocks and/or fletching
- ✗ A blind that I can set up but can't take down
- ✗ Treestands with seats gnawed to shreds by red squirrels
- ✗ Waterproof stuff that keeps me wet
- ✗ Three to eight pairs of scratched sunglasses
- ✗ Tangled and mangled anchor ropes

- ✗ Lots of single gloves (why is the left one always missing?)
- ✗ Several old tackle boxes full of rusty lures
- ✗ A couple non-functioning fish locators
- ✗ Zip-lock bags full of unidentifiable shotgun shells
- ✗ A half-dozen padlocks with no keys, and vice versa

Upon surveying my hunting and fishing buddies, I found that I'm not alone in this untidy state. Dean-O has even more worthless stuff than I do. Lard has less volume, but his stuff is more worthless than most. Jackson has more higher-quality stuff, but still a lot of worthless gear. Tim has all top-of-the-line stuff, but way more than he can possibly use. Even his cruddy stuff is better than my good stuff.

But, I digress. My point is this: We've all got a lot of clothing and gear we shouldn't have to (or don't) use anymore.

So there I stood, standing in awe of myself and the pile of not-so-great outdoor stuff I've gathered through the years, and it got me to thinking ... not only about myself, but about my buddies and all the other outdoorsmen and women out there ... all of us surrounded by piles of semi-functional gear.

It took a couple cold Leinie's and a fair amount of thinkin' before the solution finally bubbled-up in my noggin like a big, brown trout slurping a mayfly off the surface of a slowly swirling eddy.

With the economy in a tailspin, the government has created a lot of programs during the past year to try to get it back on track. I've heard all of the high-brow economists throwing



The author knew it was time for a "gear upgrade" when he realized his best rain jacket looked a bit too much like his neighbor's trash bag.

around \$50 words trying to explain it, but all of them ultimately arriving at one simple conclusion: The key to getting the economy growing again requires a big increase in consumer spending.

FIX-ALL, END-ALL

So here's my idea. How about a "Cash for Crud" stimulus package? Bring in your old hunting, fishing and camping gear, and in exchange the government gives you gift cards for Cabela's, Gander Mountain, Fleet Farm and other similar stores. Talk about a boost to consumer spending and the ailing economy!

All of the outdoor folks I know would be beating a path to the nearest store to load up on new stuff ... and, if

it's camo colored, they'd likely be willing to spend an additional 10-20 percent for it.

Personally, a pocketful of those cards would enable me to upgrade to some new and different stuff that I've either misplaced or forgotten I own. Anyway, with Christmas just around the corner, I'm sure there's something in the latest catalog that would help to fill whatever gaps there might be in my collection of crud. Stimulus package or not, I'm going to do what I can to get the economy moving again. *W*

Dan Moericke is an avid and successful Wisconsin fisherman from Wausau and an occasional guest on outdoor fishing programs. On the water, he always tells us some version of the truth.

PHEASANTS, from page 7

hours and hen-rooster hunting. There also are additional pheasant hunting opportunities provided by conservation clubs that are enrolled in the Day-Old Chick program. These clubs raise and release pheasants on private lands open to public hunting or on approved state-owned lands. To find out more about this state Chick program go to

the DNR website for more information or call (608)-635-8120.

For those of you who travel out of state to hunt pheasants, you'll find pheasant numbers are down all across the pheasant belt. Iowa had the lowest pheasant harvest on record last year. Minnesota, which had been seeing a growing population, is down considerably.

And the king of all pheasant states,

South Dakota, has both good and bad news. Their pheasants numbers are down 26 percent, which follows the 24 percent decline in CRP land. But South Dakota still had 1.9 million pheasants harvested in 2008 and they had the 4th highest spring count ever recorded. You can do well in South Dakota on public lands, but much of the private land is now leased by outfitters.

Though the numbers are down in

Wisconsin, the smart hunter who puts in their time, does some research, and has a good dog can still bring some tasty roosters to the oven! *W*

Contact Gary Engberg at 608. 795.4208. gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com or visit www.garyengbergoutdoors.com for good fishing information.

SUZETTE CURTIS

RECIPES BY SUZETTE**Oh, Deer!**

Venison is my favorite meat with which to cook. We have a lot of variety with venison in our household, but it sure is fun to come up with even more new ideas every year. Swapping recipes with friends is a great way to add to your recipe file, and in this issue we have a great recipe from family friend Stephanie Floyd I know you will enjoy.

Suzette Curtis of Oshkosh cooks for a family of hunters and fishermen, and says she tries to fill their menu with recipes for meals made with venison, upland birds, and fish. She does just that with great expertise.

Venison Tenderloin with Caper Sauce

By Stephanie Floyd

Venison tenderloin
3 T. butter
½ c. dry Vermouth
2 T. green onions, chopped
1 c. heavy whipping cream

2 T. capers, drained
2 ½ t. Dijon mustard
1 t. salt
½ t. course-ground black pepper
1 t. beef bouillon granules

In 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat, cook tenderloin in butter until browned on both sides. Remove tenderloin from pan and finish on grill to desired doneness. Turn (skillet) heat down to medium. In same skillet, add vermouth and green onions to drippings; cook about 2 minutes, stirring to loosen brown bits on bottom of skillet. Stir in cream, capers, Dijon mustard, salt, ground black pepper and bouillon; heat until boiling.

To serve, slice tenderloin into medallions (½-inch thick) and top with caper sauce. Serve with garlic mashed potatoes and a dinner salad. Pair with a medium-bodied red wine.

Venison Meatloaf

1 lb. ground venison
1 T. Worcestershire Sauce
One lg. onion, finely chopped
½ c. ketchup (plus extra for topping)
One egg

1 T. Dried parsley
1 c. shredded zucchini
1 t. black pepper

Wash zucchini and cut open to remove any seeds. Finely shred zucchini and place into large bowl. Add all remaining ingredients and mix thoroughly. Place mixture into loaf pan and drizzle ketchup over top. Bake at 350 degree for 45 minutes.

Notice that there are no breadcrumbs in this recipe. Because we've replaced the breadcrumbs with zucchini, this meatloaf is not only super moist, but it's also a healthy alternative. I didn't tell anybody there was zucchini in this recipe the first time I made it, but even the self proclaimed "zucchini haters" loved the meatloaf.

This will serve 3-4 people, but make two batches if you have more people or if you like cold meatloaf sandwiches for lunch the next day.

Venison Steak Stroganoff

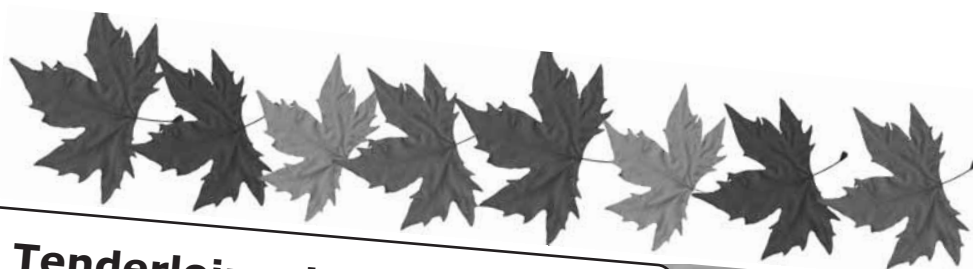
2 lbs. Venison steaks
2 c. beef stock
1 T olive oil
½ c. dry red wine
½ t. salt
2 T. minced onion

½ t. pepper
2 T. tomato paste
5 T. flour
3 T. sour cream
5 T. butter
1 lb. mushrooms, sliced

Cut steaks into serving-sized pieces, about ½-inch thick. Place on broiler rack, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a large skillet, melt butter. Add flour, one tablespoon at a time, stirring until paste forms. Gradually add beef stock and wine, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and cook until mixture thickens, stirring occasionally. Add remaining ingredients and continue to simmer on low heat until mushrooms soften and are cooked through.

Meanwhile, place steaks under broiler and cook about 3 minutes each side for rare, or 4-5 minutes each side for medium. Place cooked steaks on dinner plates and spoon stroganoff sauce over the top of each steak. If you desire, you might start with a bed of hot egg noodles and place the steaks and sauce directly over top. Serves 5-6.



DAVE DUWE

WISCONSIN'S WATER WOLF

Big pike 101

First ice means pike. Northern Pike will be in shallow weedy bays, which will always freeze first. The good news is that early ice pike will be hungry and readily available to be caught.

During early ice, the weeds in shallow bays will still be alive, which provides food, shelter and oxygen for small fish. These small fish are food for hungry northern pike. Choose weed flats that vary in depth from 4-10 feet of water. With clear ice, finding holes in the weeds is pretty easy; snow cover obviously increases the challenge.

If you take a few friends out with you, you can spread your tip-ups over a large area. I will always choose a lake with a large pike population. Living in southeastern Wisconsin, I like to fish Lake Como or Delavan Lake, both in Walworth County.

PRESENTATION, PERFECTED

The basic presentation is simple; tip-ups. I use the Arctic Fisherman tip-up (Beaver Dam) spooled with 30-50 pound-test Dacron fishing line. With clear water and the availability of different fish species, I always use a monofilament leader, such as Silver Thread or Trilene XL, or 20-pound test clear fishing line. The limp fishing line seems to fish better and it doesn't get kinks in it.

Have a 2-3 foot-long leader attached to the Dacron line with a snap swivel. I prefer a No. 6 or No. 8 treble hook. Put

one split-shot weight on the line, the size will depend on the bait size. You want the sinker to pull the bait down to desired depth without hindering the baits swimming ability.

I will place the bait 1 foot above the weed growth. In shallow water, look down the hole to position the bait. Use a small bobber as a line marker to maintain repeatable set up.

On a couple of leaders, I will add some additional flash. This can be achieved by adding a clevis and a small Indiana blade. I use Astro brite blades from Bait Rigs. The action of the minnow adds the movement to the blade.

CHOOSING CHOW

For bait, you can try suckers, golden shiners or red tail chubs. Dead bait, such as smelt, can also be productive, but it requires a different leader set up. My personal preference is for golden shiners; I hook the shiner by the dorsal fin because it seems to make them swim harder and attract more fish.

'TAKE 'EM' TIME

When you arrive at the tip-up, the top spindle of the tip-up will be spinning like mad. I will usually wait until the spinning stops before gently lifting up the tip-up. I will feel for the fish and lightly set the hook. You need to be gentle because you are using monofilament. When pulling up a large fish, be careful when you get near the hole; the



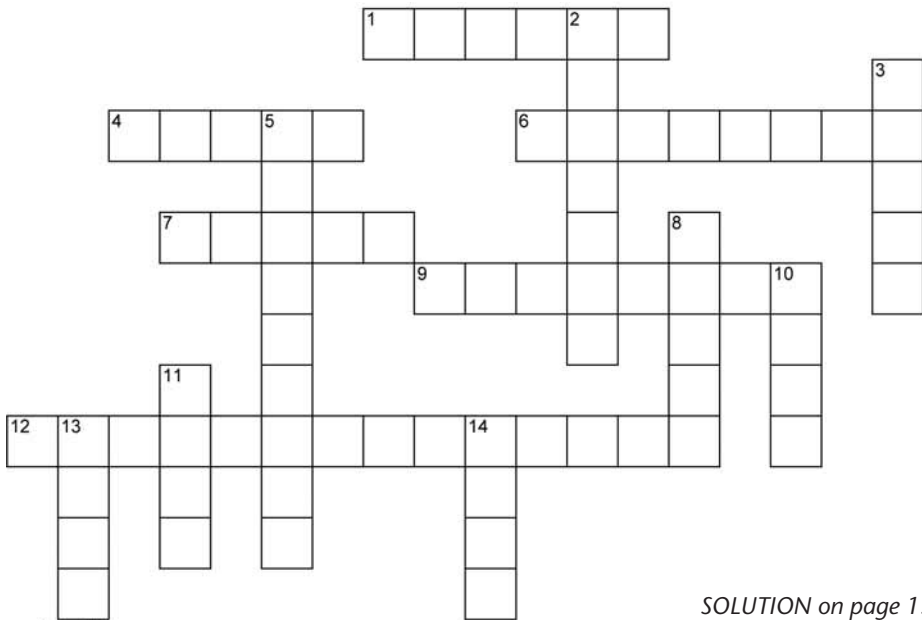
The author's son proudly boasts an early ice pike caught with a tip-up.

fish will likely make several runs and you don't want to put too much pressure on the fishing line.

Northern pike don't seem too particular about the time of day they feed like a walleye would be. If you plan to keep any pike, make sure you know the regulations for the particular lake you are fishing. Last but certainly most important, make sure you are aware of the ice conditions before venturing out onto the ice. *W*

Dave Duwe, owner of Dave Duwe's Guide Service, has been guiding the lakes of Southeastern Wisconsin for 15 years, specializing in Delavan Lake and Lake Geneva. Go to www.fishlakegeneva.com or www.fishdelavanlake.com.

Outdoor Criss Cross



ACROSS

- 1 Upland bird that drums.
- 4 Egg-sack bait.
- 6 A rangefinder manufacturer.
- 7 Power-pushes a boat.
- 9 OWO's black-bear expert (2 words).
- 12 Michael Waddell's TV show (2 words).

DOWN

- 2 Lightly-fried food.
- 3 Be a hero. Give "_____."
- 5 Another name for ducks.
- 8 Adjust clarity on binoculars.
- 10 Helps track deer in winter.
- 11 A large group of deer.
- 13 Eliminate this prior to hunting.
- 14 A firearm accessory.

SOLUTION on page 13

JERRY KIESOW

FLY FISHING IN WISCONSIN

Time to relax a bit and look ahead



Part of the fun of tying your own flies is gathering your own materials, and November and December offer some great material-gathering opportunities.

November and December is a time for fly fishers to take a little break. Clean your lines, rods and reels, and put them in the rack for a while. Oh, I know we can always find some open water in which to cast, and I will surely do that once or twice, but I will be spending most of these two months in the woods and fields instead of the rivers and streams. And maybe you should, too.

Hunting, for me, is a good end-of-the-main-fly-fishing-season-break, plus it's an opportunity to restock some of my fly tying supplies. I walk the old logging roads for grouse, and shuffle through both private and public fields for those long-tailed, cackle birds ... their tails and hackle feathers are

required for several patterns I tie.

I take to the hardwoods for squirrel and deer, which I need for their hair when dubbing nymphs and stacking bug heads, and their tails for creating wings on streamers and dry flies. If I add a few woodcock, duck and goose feathers to the mix throughout the season, I am a richer tyer for it. Of course, turkey wings are always needed for a variety of patterns, too.

I also take this time of the year to look back at the past fly fishing season. Was it good? Well, as they say, "The fishing is always good, it is the catching that needs a little work." I caught a fair number of fish, but nothing special size wise.

Did I fish any new water? I have to admit I did not. I will have to try harder to do that.

What was my best catch? Believe it or not, and this is not because of size but rather because of the experience ... a carp I caught on the 3-weight gave me my most interesting time. It was not that big, only 24 inches, but it had friends who "tried to help." I'll have to tell you about that one of these days.

Did I fish often enough? No (don't ask my wife). When the time comes

and bleaching will no longer make it respectable ... even on a backwoods stream? A new vest (or another rod, reel, etc.) would look good under the tree. If he or she ties their own flies, a new vice or one of the instructional books would be nice. Many books specialize in tying specific types of flies ... terrestrials, tubes, nymphs, etc.

For everyone: Of course, outdoor books and magazine subscriptions are always appreciated. So, if you are reading this as a freebee, courtesy of

"Hunting, for me, is a good end-of-the-main-fly-fishing-season-break, plus it's an opportunity to restock some of my fly tying supplies."

that I can log in some fly fishing time every day, then I will say that I have fished often enough (maybe).

So much for looking back.

Now for some looking ahead.

Christmas is coming and if you or someone you know is a fly fisher, or just a want-to-be, here are a few suggestions he/she will appreciate.


For the want-to-bes: Take a class on what fly fishing is all about. Beginning in January, many fly shops and organizations will be having seminars. These will be short workshops for those who have never fly fished before but want to know what is involved and how to go about trying the sport economically. Keep an eye on the newspapers or search the Internet to find such listings.

For those who already fly fish and would like to tie their own flies: There are kits with how-to CDs available. But what would be better is a hands-on class. Again, the local fly shops and organizations will be holding classes in February through March or April. You can usually pre-register ahead of time so the class will make a great surprise gift.

For the experienced: New equipment is always appreciated. Does his or her vest look really shabby, so bad that washing

one of the sports shops which give them away, think of how more convenient it would be if it came directly to your mailbox. (End of commercial.)

For myself: I will try to wet a line or two in some open water for steelhead and browns before the rivers freeze. Beginning in January, I will be getting ready for my classes. I will be spending more than normal time at my fly-tying bench, bringing my supply of flies up to date and reorganizing the boxes ... they became exceptionally messy this season. And, I will be looking forward to the next issue of OWO when I will begin to talk about tying your own flies.

Keep a good thought! 

Jerry Kiesow fly fishes in Wisconsin year round, and teaches fly tying and fly fishing in the Grafton area. If you have questions about his classes, contact him via email at mmrprg8@wi.rr.com.



MICHAEL BRECKE

THE COMING OF AGE

Memories of partridge hunting in northern Wisconsin



For the author, the beauty of hunting Wisconsin's ruffed grouse (or partridge, as he refers to them), is a major part of the sport's allure.

The air seemed to change when it was time to get ready for partridge season. The air was crisper, full of the smell of apples baking. It was the in-between time, between summer and winter. Bird hunting was special for me, and partridge was my bird of choice. (Call them ruffed grouse if you want to; they will always be partridge to me.)

Getting ready for bird hunting had to do with shotguns. When I was 6 or 7 years old and allowed only an occasional walk in the woods with my father and grandfather, I marveled at those guns. The two men both carried 12 gauges, and those guns made an incredible noise to an eager youngster.

When they shot a bird and it fell to the ground, I would run as fast as my stubby little legs would carry me and try to find the bird before they did. Sometimes I managed just that and was so very proud.

In those days, I always asked my dad, "When will I be old enough to shoot a shotgun?" As I got older, I became more insistent. I would beg my dad to let me shoot; he used to smile and my grandfather would laugh.

When I was about 12 years old, my

"The next thing I knew I was on my back, still holding onto the gun for dear life. My father and grandfather now stood over me. Both were chuckling, grinning from ear to ear."

dad and grandfather were doing their fall ritual of readying for bird hunting. They would go into the country and practice shooting, and they always went to the same place, a place called Moore, just east of the county line. We had family ties to the land and the name, and they would set up cans and shoot at them. I'll never forget the late September day when my dad asked if I wanted to go along to watch grandpa and him. I jumped at the chance.

PASSING THE TORCH

They shot a few times and then Dad looked at me and said, "Do you want to try it?" The words wouldn't come out of my mouth. I just looked at him. My heart pounded. I wanted to jump up and down and say "Yes!" but suddenly part of me was afraid of that moment. That big gun. That loud noise. I had wanted to for so long. I had hounded my dad. Now it was here, that moment. I was going to shoot the 12-gauge shotgun. I think my eyes filled with tears and I finally said, "Yes."

My dad went over safety and other features of the gun and then handed it to me. It was a double-barreled side-by-side. The stock was covered with a piece of leather from an old pair of boots and had a small pad affixed to the stock's heel.

I took the gun from my father. It felt heavy in my hands. I pulled it up to my shoulder and sighted. Then I lowered the gun and looked at my father. My grandfather was back from setting up a can or two for me to shoot at. My dad lit a cigarette. My grandfa-

ther lit his pipe.

The two watched me. My hands began to sweat. I raised the gun again and aimed at one of the cans and pulled the trigger. The roar of the gun was incredible. The kick was like nothing I had ever experienced before. The barrel of the gun flew up, and for a moment I was looking up the barrel into the blue autumn sky.

The next thing I knew I was on my back, still holding onto the gun for dear life. My father and grandfather now stood over me. Both were chuckling, grinning from ear to ear.

My dad helped me to my feet. My grandfather dusted off my back and my butt. My dad, still smiling, said, "We'll try it again next year."

TAKING THE TORCH

The following year my dad bought me a .410 shotgun. That was the year I shot my first partridge. From that year forward, bird hunting was both a ritual and a time with my father almost sacred in nature.

We hunted partridge every chance we got. Along the Ashland County line road, mostly on land that he knew, land that belonged to Carl Messerly and Oscar Markala. We hunted where my father had hunted when he was a child.

Occasionally, we made the big trek to Twenty Three Falls, which had beautiful waterfalls and was good partridge territory because of the forest crop and ground cover favored by partridge.

Our routine was to pack our lunch and leave right after my dad got off work on Saturday to walk the old logging road. Birds flew up with that incredible noise, thdthdthdthdthd. Our guns flew to our shoulders and we took aim. The birds dropped and we searched for them in the long autumn grasses. My dad always had a bird pouch on the back of his hunting jacket and it was usually full when we got home.

After we cleaned the birds, my mother would plan to have a partridge dinner within the next few days. I think

I loved eating them almost as much as I did hunting them. My mother was, and still is, a very fine cook.

Sometime in the early years of my partridge hunting career my grandfather died. I missed his part in the autumn ritual. I missed his stories and I missed his telling me, one day when he and I were hunting alone, that I was "a damn waste of ammunition," after I went wide with my second failed shot. There was a twinkle in his eye when he said it, but I knew in my heart that he lived through a time when there was never a lot of money to buy shells and that hitting the target meant food on the table.

When I left northwestern Wisconsin and moved to other states such as Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Maine and Missouri, every fall when the air changed I would remember. I would remember the ritual of getting ready for bird hunting. I would remember my grandfather and my father and those 12-gauge shotguns, and I would remember the hunting trips and the taste of partridge. And when I remembered, those precious moments would come back to life, if only for a few precious moments.

I have hunted pheasants and quail in Missouri and Kansas. I have worked with pointers to shoot ring-necked pheasants or a quail. I have carried my father's shotgun and killed lots of birds. But none of those hunts or none of those game meals that came from those other states could ever compare with what happened every fall when I was a young boy, when it was bird hunting time in northern Wisconsin. *W*

A native of Wisconsin Michael Brecke graduated from WSU River Falls graduating with a B.S. in Journalism. Went on to Seminary at Yale Divinity School. Has been a parish pastor for 36 years in the Lutheran Church. Returned to Wisconsin in 2001 and is currently living in Door County. Brecke writes for The Echo and The Door County Advocate. His columns have also appeared in the Mellen Weekly.

BOB DOBSEN

BLOOD BROTHERS OUTDOORS*The one that got away*

It was 4:30 a.m., the outside thermometer read 20 degrees, a fresh 2 inches of snow was spread across the yard, the rut was peaking and I couldn't think of a better recipe for bucks to be on the move. To top that, friend Dan Infalt was up from Jefferson and we made plans to swap hunting/filming duties for the weekend during a bowhunt deep into public land.

It would be more than a mile walk into a spot I previously scouted, to hunt the rim of a valley between two ridges. A good jaunt into the hike, after climbing a lung-busting hill, I wondered how many more years my body would hold up to this type of abuse. A half-mile later, the straight-trunked red oak was a welcome sight.

We quickly hung our stands and settled in. The morning was gorgeous, a white blanket below with crisp, still air, kept me on high alert for the first hour. Idle chit-chat gave way to long stares when I heard a muffled crack to my left. I looked over to see nicely spaced G2's and G3's 50 yards out and whispered, "Shooter buck."

As I stood, the buck turned toward us and I knew he would be in range soon. The mature timber was certain to allow an open shot. As he plodded closer, I took a couple deep breaths to keep my nerves at bay, and focused all attention on his actions. Just as I was sure he would pass downhill to my left, a 90-degree turn took him broadside and heading to my right. I glanced ahead for a wide opening and found that just beyond a poplar tree.

As the buck stepped into the kill



"My fall-away rest now resides in the 'will never use again but too expensive to throw out' box."

zone, adrenaline cranked up the volume of my "stop" bleat and he slammed on the brakes. My sight pin had just settled on center, directly behind the shoulder, when the string dropped. I saw no arrow, no white nock, no spinning fletching. My shot had gone everywhere but through the vitals.

I was in disbelief when he took two jumps and trotted away, only slightly distracted from his morning of lady chasing. I cursed, and immediately blamed my misfortune on not settling the pin for that crucial half-second. It seemed as though I'd hit a new hunting low: I had a full-bodied,

mature 8-pointer standing in fresh snow in broad daylight with a camera rolling over my shoulder ... and blew it.

Worse yet, now I had to explain this scenario to an audience. Somewhere in my depressing skit I mentioned how the buck was probably Pope and Young Club caliber. Cameraman Dan, a veteran big-buck killer, said, "That buck was at least 140 inches!" The bottom dropped out again. We sat tight for the next hour, but I really didn't have it in me, and the cold winds were a great excuse to get out of the tree.

Reaching the ground, I soon

found my arrow 21 steps from our stands. Looking closely at its angle of contact and distance beyond the long striding tracks, the arrow should have smashed right through his chest. Now I really didn't know what happened, but it didn't matter much.

It was a long walk back to the truck, but I tried to keep my chin up. I did a lot of things right on this hunt. Scouting and reasoning put me in a location where most people wouldn't go and it produced a shooter buck on the first crack.

We reached the truck, loaded up and headed to the closest TV to review the footage. The first review of the footage showed that this buck was a hog, long bodied and barrel-chested, and was easily a 4-year-old deer. It was hard to watch so I busied myself making a sandwich when Dan blurted out, "You missed him by 3 feet!"

I was in no joking mood, and openly voiced my attitude, when Dan replied, "You actually shot 3 feet in front of him!" I watched in slow motion and, sure enough, a black streak appeared a few feet in front of the buck's shoulder.

I've missed deer before, but missing by 3 feet at 21 yards hinted something other than buck fever kept this lucky buck walking. We watched the footage from front to back a couple times before the clue surfaced: A little "tick" just as I reached full draw.

I knew exactly what that sound was: My arrow wasn't on the rest at the shot. The combination of one heavily mitted bow hand, new fall-away rest and a broadhead tuned by Murphy's Law cost me a filled tag. It was a tough pill to swallow but an easy problem to fix. My fall-away rest now resides in the "will never use again but too expensive to throw out" box replaced by thoughts of his tracks and the snowy days I'll get before the season ends. *W*

Bob Dobson lives in Spring Green and is a Pro-Staffer for Blood Brothers Outdoors. The video account of this story can be seen on Blood Brothers latest video, "Hill Country Bucks", which is available online at www.bloodbro.com or on the video shelves at Gander Mountain stores.

PUZZLE on page 10

DARRELL PENDERGRASS

OUT THERE

Every duck hunter everywhere is an eternal optimist

A duck hunter believes in luck. He believes a good day will always follow a bad. And he trusts that with grit and determination, and through faith and prayer, good fortune eventually finds every waterfowler.

Nobody but a duck hunter will routinely rise at the ungodly hour of 4 a.m., risk waking the family to face the wrath of the house, and go walking and falling through the cattails and reeds, to drag themselves through the pitch-black of an early morning to stand on the icy shores of a frosted pond, all for an opportunity to stare into the gray chilled skies in anticipation that maybe – possibly – ducks will soar down from heaven to pass over a spread of bouncing decoys. And, should that happen, they believe that they – the duck hunter – possess the skills it takes to make a successful passing shot on a jet powered bluebill. Only an optimist would think to do all that for a slight chance at success, or even think they should.

That, or it's someone with little to no common sense whatsoever.

So, there we stood inside the house in the dark of morning, me and Jack, just minutes before the 5-o'clock hour. Clad in our white long-jons, my nine-year-old

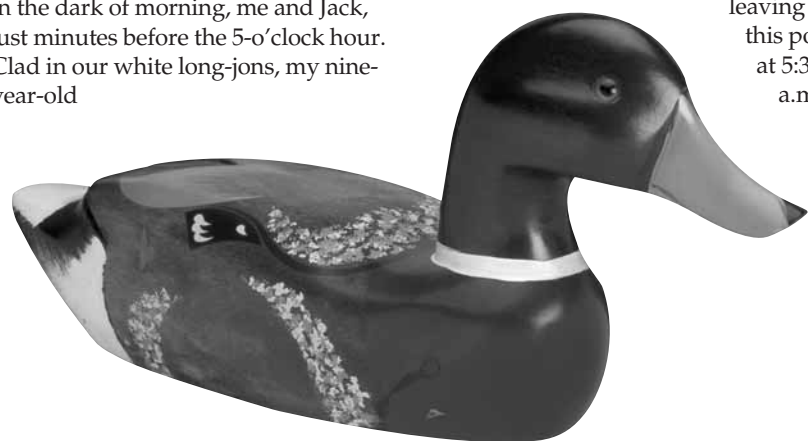
and I were staring out the living-room window. A blanket of snow lay outside. A Manitoba cold front had blown down the night before and a frosted Canadian hand now gripped northwest Wisconsin.

"It's going to be cold," Jack said, still staring out the window, a blank expression on his face.

"Yep," I replied, equally expressionless. "Think we'll get any ducks?"

"Yep," Jack said. "But it's going to be cold."

The self-elected leader of The Experts with whom I hunt – my father-in-law – had called the night before and said we were going to a tried-and-true haunt we frequent every October. It's here that as a boy nearly 60-years ago that my father-in-law, who with his own grandfather, had stuck a 4-10 shotgun barrel through the brush of a well-hidden blind and taken aim on an unsuspecting duck; his first encounter with the sporting life of waterfowl. So the story goes, and goes, and goes. John likes to tell the same stories over and over. John had said we'd be leaving for this pond at 5:30 a.m.



Silently the boy and I dressed, then walked down to the garage to put on our waders, just barely prepared to leave when one of the other poor souls who was going arrived to pick us up.

"John went up ahead to put the boat in the water," Troy said, opening the door of his truck and answering the question I hadn't asked. "You ready?"

"We're ready," Jack said, pushing me aside and climbing in. "It's going to be cold."

At the lake we watched for nearly 20 minutes as by design John backed his truck up, went forward, and backed up again, only to be followed by another forward and then another backwards, all in failed attempts to put the boat in the water. Design and skill were going to have no part in the launching of our skiff. A pitch black morning necessitated blind luck, eventually he just gunned the truck and the boat was in.

Across the pond now, there were seven of us, five shooters and two tag-along boys. Decoys spread wildly, we piled onto shore and took up our positions. I sort of separated myself from the main blind, taking a perch nearby, just for safety's sake.

Collectively our eyes were focused on the horizon. Each of us trembled in various degrees of early-onset hypothermia. "I told you it would be cold," Jack said, his face reddened in the chill of the air.

We watched the skies. The sun began to creep over the steaming eastern tree line. It was shooting time and we could legally take any duck that perused our set. A half hour later we had not broken the silence of morning.

Well," John said, he begins every story that way. We all cringed. "Did I ever tell you about the time I came here when I was a boy, with Gramps, and I stuck a 4-10 barrel through the blind?"

The other six of us rolled our eyes at one another.

A lone mallard came into focus. It broke down through the gray sky and winged its way over the decoys. In the blind we all grinned in anticipation. The duck never had a chance.

Inside the blind we smiled the smile of hunting men who had succeeded in their endeavors, patted one another on the back, and deemed our little venture a success. We'd gotten a duck. One duck, mind you, but still a duck. We even asked John to finish his story. Which of course, he did.

In the end we'd taken the one duck. We also froze our tails off. Nobody fell in the pond though. While the rest of the civilized world slept under warm blankets to rise later inside a household of convenience, we had stepped out of doors. We're better men for having done it, we kept telling ourselves.

So, we'll go again, and things can only get better. That's why we call ourselves optimists.

We can't very well call ourselves dumb. *W*

Out There: Twenty years of family, fishing, farming and a life afield," a collection of stories by Darrell Pendergrass, can be purchased by sending \$15 and \$3 for shipping and handling to Darrell Pendergrass, 52405 Otto Olson Road, Grand View, WI 54839.

HARTWICH'S BAIT & TACKLE

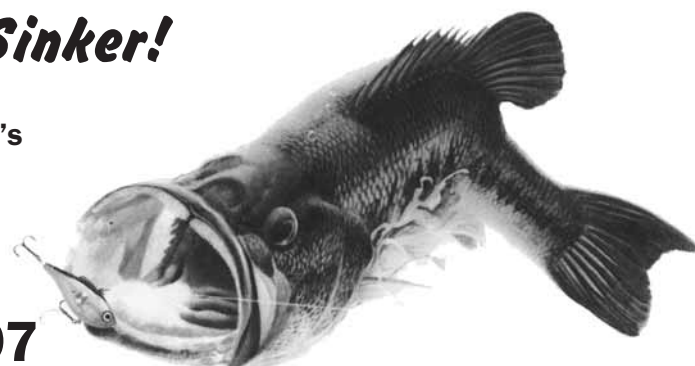
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TOM CARPENTER

MIDWEEK WHITETAILS

Schoolbus bucks

I call them schoolbus bucks. But I also hunt school bus does.

These are the deer you pursue during those “in-between” days—Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday—of Wisconsin’s traditional gun deer season. Yellow school buses rumble the back roads early and late in the day, reminders that opening weekend is gone and you are still in the woods with your orange on.

Yes, hunting now is work. But it’s infinitely better work than that other kind—back at the office or behind the wheel or at the shop or wherever making a living regularly finds you. You’re hunting. That’s positive!

Yellow buses also signify the schooling that remaining whitetails have gained. So here are four ways to hunt up a deer now—even if opening weekend didn’t pan out, even when school buses are coursing the backroads at dawn and dusk.

SIT TIGHT, SIT RIGHT

Get away from the same old routine and standard spots. Fields and traditional escape routes aren’t your best stand sites now. With fewer hunters moving, and the deer sitting so tight, your chances here are slim.

Instead, set the alarm earlier than you did opening weekend and head to a tree- or ground-stand in the thickest, meanest hiding cover you have access to. Sit quietly all day, even if the deer



Midday deer movements are arguably the most overlooked opportunity by hunters to harvest a mature buck. Here, the author skipped a midday siesta to hunt—and reaped the rewards.

don’t show up at gray light (they’re probably already there). Bring a lunch—you aren’t going to shoot a deer at the café, at camp or at home. Pressured deer will move a little under cover, around midmorning and high noon, grabbing a bite to eat or shifting their beds. Be there.

Toward late afternoon, resist the

temptation to go set up on a field. Stay back in the timber or cover. Deer might stage back here, browsing until the coast is clear out where the crops are.

AN EASY PUSH

With a small group of hunters—a pair or trio—you can be very effective at moving deer into your party’s sights. A quiet, leisurely but thorough approach to scouring cover will move skulking, sneaking deer around for silent, patient sitters waiting off to the side. Here’s how.

The pusher and sitter(s) must be sneaky in getting to their starting point and stand(s) before the hunt begins. The pusher then still-hunts through bedding cover—slowly, thoroughly, at the ready. He or she is as likely to shoot a deer as a sitter! The sitter waits at a likely crossing that, in all likelihood, is off on some tangent (either to the side or even behind) the cover being driven.

THE CIRCLE MOVE

Here’s a version of the “easy push” that works in bigger cover. You really only need two hunters. One pushes, one posts. If you have three hunters, post two.

Conduct the circle move in thick, expansive bedding cover. Post the stander at a spot with decent visibility.

The mover gets out of sight (maybe 50 yards if the cover is incredibly thick, maybe 100 yards in more open woods) and ever-so-slowly still-hunts a circle around the poster.

Bedded deer will get up to circle, evade and “outsneak” the mover/still-hunter, possibly crossing the poster’s sights while traveling back and forth. The mover should hunt, too. He or she conducts three or four circles, bigger and then smaller again, before returning to check in with the poster, switching roles and moving on to the next setup.

COTTONTAIL TRICKS

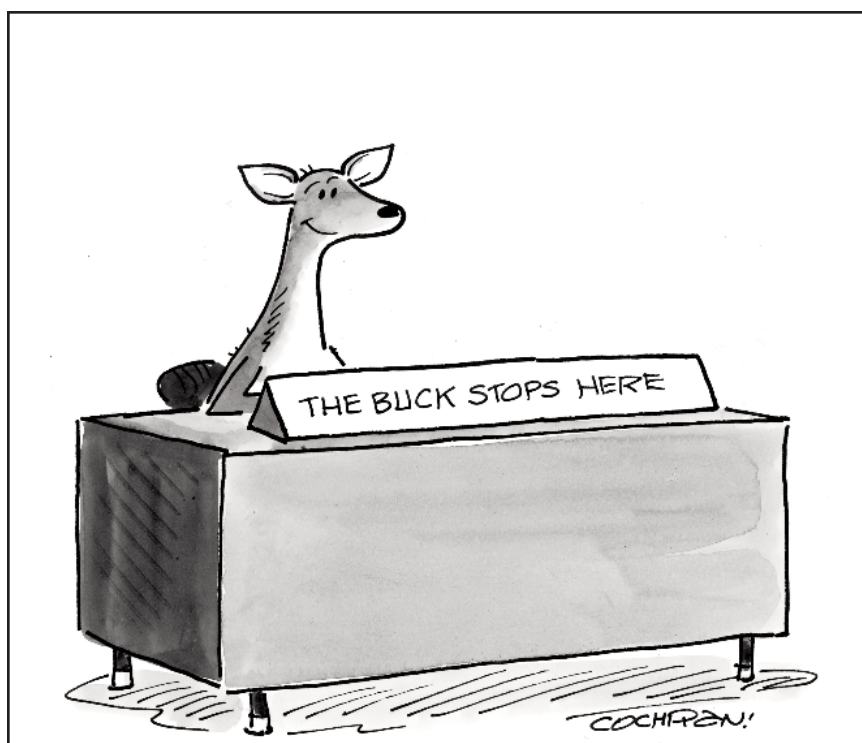
I love to hunt schoolbus deer this way: alone, one-one-one, right in thick cover with the whitetails, trying to roust one out and connect on a snap-shot right there. True, it takes a certain amount of energy and luck to kill a deer cottontail-style. But it’s exciting, and surprisingly effective if you hunt with purpose and a strategy.

The strategy is simple. Pick out thick cover—places you know deer will be bedding. Don’t worry about stealth. This isn’t a still-hunt. But don’t make it a stroll in the park. It’s like rabbit hunting. Walk slowly from patch of cover to patch of cover. Go through the worst stuff, not around it. Remember—these deer have seen it all and will sit tight if you let them.

Kick brush piles. Wade through raspberry brambles. Hit that patch of grass over there. Weave your way through thornapples, plum brush or tag alders. Stop and wait for a minute, gun ready. Go again. Zig. Zag. Backtrack. Wait some more. Don’t get into a pattern. Make the deer nervous. Pressured whitetails will let you get almighty close before they jump. Always be ready to shoot quickly.

Get out of the woods too. Cattail swamps are great. Where they still exist, grassy or brushy fencelines will hide whitetails. Fallow and CRP fields hold deer now too.

Pull out this bag of ideas and you’ll have a better chance of taking the only shot to be heard in the township that mid-season day. If your aim is true, you’ll have an extra passenger for the ride back to camp or home. You might even get stuck behind a schoolbus. *W*



Native son Tom Carpenter writes about the outdoor world for a variety of national and regional publications.

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REVIEW: BY RICKY SOSEBEE, OFFROAD.COM**2009 KingQuad 500AXi Power Steering**

When it comes to smoothing out the ride, Suzuki's new 2009 power steering KingQuad line has the advantage. With strides in comfort and the reduction of fatigue, the smart folks behind the new power steering have been hard at work. This is where we, the media, try to dispel the myth and find out for ourselves. Our decision? The new Suzuki KingQuad 500 Power Steering ATV has really improved in many ways, so let's dig in and explain.

The frame of the 2009 KQ 500 has been modified to create room for the new power steering and it's many parts. With these changes come many others down the line. The front-end alignment had to be reconfigured as well as the front upper and lower A-arms. There was also an increase in the front shock preload. The front wheels gained 7mm of offset while the rear wheels had been reduced by 5mm in offset. With the additional weight of the PS system there had to be a few changes to accommodate the extra pounds. With 13 pounds added there was also 13 to lose and the engineers at Suzuki had to dig into some existing features to make this happen. Some weight savings had come from the use of thinner materials along the way as well as different materials being used to soften the load.

Comfort on the trail is a big favorite of many riders and it can make or break a newbie in our sport. With the option of power steering on the new KingQuad it make the ride in many ways a bit safer. Having the dampening ability of power steering means those obstacles you hit in the trail may not be felt as easily in the bars. Suzuki simply took some of the expertise from the automotive side of their industry and made the advancement on a smaller scale.

Basically, using a torsion bar the input and output shafts are connected in order to calculate the amount of assist that is needed. When you turn the bars at slow

speeds this torsion bar creates and angular displacement that triggers a sleeve which moves and this movement is converted to an electrical signal. When converted the signal is either above 2.5volts or below 2.5 volts. This is how the EPS computer knows if your turning left or right.

KingQuad 500AXi as it is a bit higher and the bars actually have a little different bend to them as they tip downward just a bit more.

Suzuki's new displacement of 500cc's is obviously what sets the KQ 500 apart from its family of 450 and 750cc kin. The engine has just

is just that much better. Can we say that the Engineers have corrected all of the problems that kept the King out of the negative spotlight with this machine? Let's find out!

Tackling the very rocky Blue Ridge mountain trails can be tough and we intended to give our Suzuki KingQuad the best - or rather the worst - of our favorite trails. We have a place called Blood Mountain over here in the Eastern states, and a novice rider can realize quickly why that name sticks.

Crawling the '09 Suzuki KingQuad through near-vertical crevices and shelf rock formations, it was apparent that the power steering gave us freedom to concentrate on the trail and not the ride. The low rpm/speed steering dampening worked flawlessly and even seemed to take the twitchy feeling away from the KingQuad's of old. Having the extra power of the 500 was very good advancement but I didn't really feel that there was a very noticeable difference in power between the 450 and the 500. This could be to the over richening of the EFI by the Suzuki engineers and may be cured with just a bit of programming and a good-forest friendly pipe. I'm sure the extra 39cc's or 3mm bore upgrade help the engine but to what extent is unclear.

I usually like to stand when I ride but with such a plush seat, I preferred to sit on this one.

After careful consideration I think the new Suzuki King can be a great ATV and can be ridden all day long without wearing you out. Getting out in the woods to ride can be a challenge to some folks and if you're looking for a great worker or just a trail buster this is a great choice. Overall this is a winner.

The base 2009 Suzuki KingQuad 500 PS is priced at \$7,599, while its Camo and Limited Edition's are priced a bit higher at \$7,899 and \$7,999, respectively.



In a nutshell the input from the rider determines the output of the power steering unit.

All of this is controlled through a reduction gear mechanism and it is affected by rider input or by obstacles in the trail. Obviously this system will make crawling the rocky sections or rough trails a bit more fun as the rider will be more in control of the machine. The feel and amount of assist will reduce quickly as the machine picks up speed as the assist goes away for better control on faster trails.

We immediately notice the bar height as well on the new

slightly bigger bore at 87mm compared to the 450's 84mm bore. This increases the engine displacement to 493cc's from 454cc's. There are also other internal differences such as L-type rings for better sealing and a new style cylinder, piston combination. The throttle body on the new KQ 500 was changed in size as well from 35mm to 37mm for the increased engine displacement. This is what gives the additional power for traction to the rear wheels.

As in past tests the Suzuki has been a very likeable, power-filled ride and with these advancements it

This article originally appeared in Off-Road.com, August 11, 2009.

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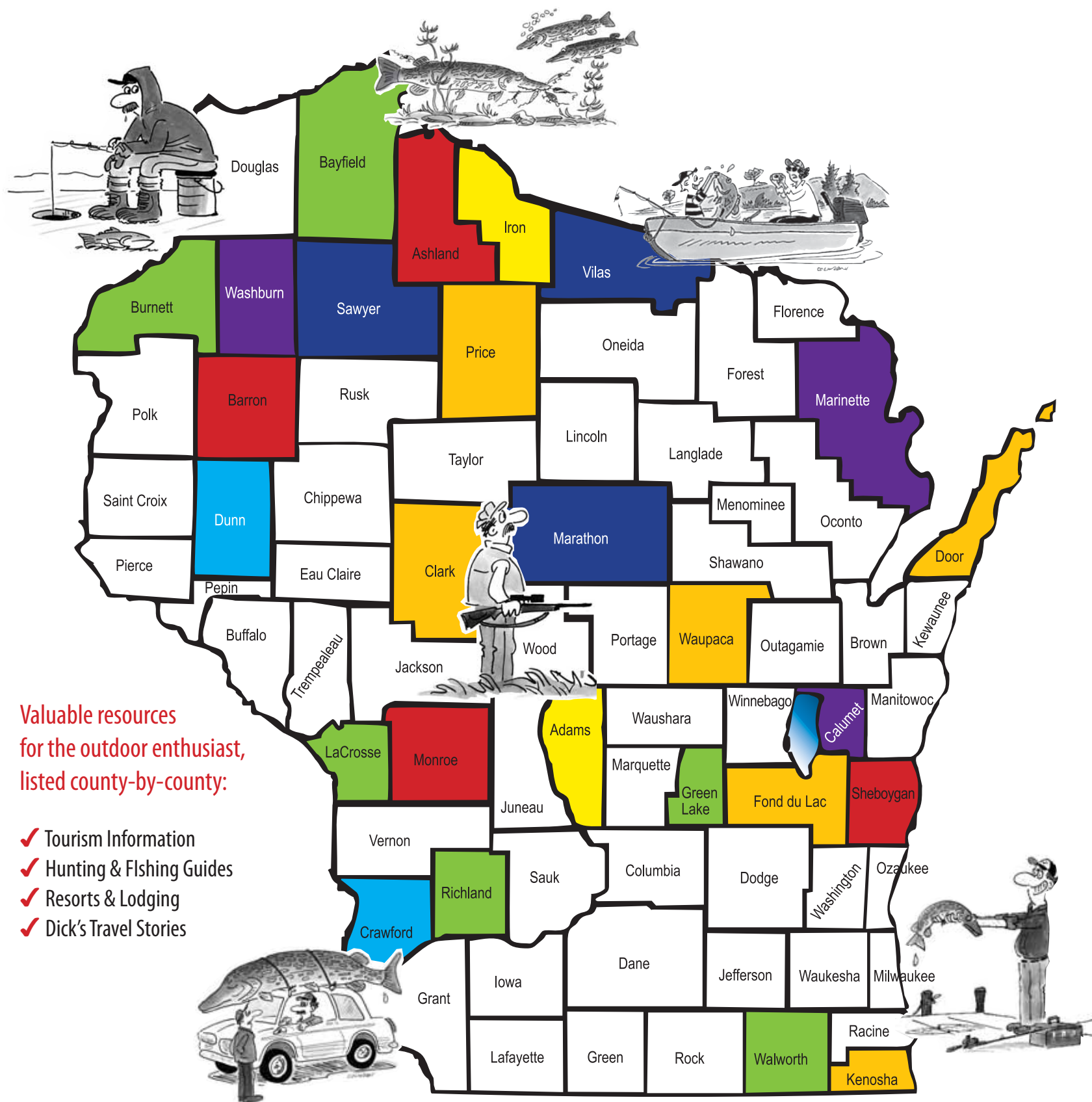
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DICK ELLIS

ON WISCONSIN OUTDOORS

The Northern Hunt: Where are the deer?



Better days in the north woods; John and Jim Ellis in Vilas County.

Why is the state still offering antlerless only hunts in northern Wisconsin, and selling antlerless only harvest permits? Based on extensive field time and observation from my hunting partners, many other experienced hunters, and me, the DNR continues to target a herd that over very large areas of the north barely exists. Despite working closely with and having great respect for countless state wildlife and fisheries experts over 20 years of writing, in my opinion this is poor deer management. In my opinion, to start the recovery process this antlerless herd needs to be left alone. The deer, especially the fawns, are already falling in great numbers to other predators besides man.

At the turn of the last decade, from about 1999 through 2006, our hunting camp began to reap the rewards of learning how to hunt the north woods in Unit 34 near Boulder Junction. After cutting our teeth bow and gun hunting on public lands in the northern unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest in southern Wisconsin as young men, four Ellis brothers, our sons and our friends began to hunt the Chequamegon National Forest in Taylor County. We moved again after buying property and building a hunting cabin on the Manitowish Chain near Boulder Junction.

Vilas County is different than Sheboygan County. We don't bait. In fact, any hunter that believes that

baiting is imperative to filling a tag in the northern forest is wrong. We needed to figure out the puzzle that is the big woods, and learn from our mistakes...our ample mistakes. Natural funnels, pockets of dense wood adjacent to long tamarack swamps, isolated oak stands during a good mast crop, and patience became some of the keys to success.

Our routine is to leave the cabin in the black of night to scatter over Vilas County to proven stands, or explore some more. We carry portable tree-stands on our backs and usually know if we can expect gun deer activity from our vigils during the archery season. We are sighted-in. Recovery of the animal is the first priority, regardless of size.

During those hey-day years, does came and went and were occasionally tagged. My partners scored often enough with very nice bucks on these vast public tracts. A 50 percent individual success rate and a 50 percent cabin success rate was an acceptable mark. I personally hunt the clutter with the rifle and bow probably more suited for an archer. Two big nines and an eight have fallen in that clutter; first-light kills of less than 40 yards in the jungle. As often, I went home with no tag filled. That too, was fine.

We'll repeat the ritual in 2009 and take our stands. But something is very different in our north woods over the last several years. Instead of optimism

that we can expect visitors, it's likely that the number of deer I see all week will be counted on three fingers. Nothing has hung from the meat pole in 2007 or 2008. One partner hunted with a bow and gun four day weekends from September through November last year and saw two deer. I saw three deer during gun season hunting seven hours each of nine days from portable climbers. I could not pull the trigger on the spike buck at 20 yards. Two does also passed.

Even the "pets", those local deer from a herd of maybe a dozen deemed off limits by the hunters of this cabin, have faded to nothing. We saw just one fawn in the spring of 2009 over a stretch of miles. She hasn't been seen in four weeks. Old timers we know from the Manitowish Waters area are hanging up their rifles. Not because they can't hunt. But because you can't hunt what is not here.

Wolf tracks are prevalent now, even in the cabin areas. Wolf kills are without question a significant factor in deer mortality. Bear sightings are much more frequent. Deer on the hoof are cause for a long look of appreciation. And still in 2009, there is a statewide four-day antlerless only season slated behind the regular gun season. This puzzle instead should be being looked at and managed piece by piece.

My very good friend, Deer & Bear Guide Mike Foss of Northern Wisconsin Outfitters is a 90 minute drive northwest of here near Washburn in Bayfield County. He is a tenacious guide, doing what he has to do to bring bears to bait and deer within range of archers and

gun hunters. Although he plants food plots, hunts private and public land and uses motion cameras to monitor the deer, things I do not do, there is an eerily similar decline in the deer populations in his forest and mine.

In 2006, his six hunters passed up 14 bucks on opening day. Anecdotal, on the Pub & Grub buck board last year near Washburn, 205 hunters registered 15 deer. Deer numbers have drastically declined and today, despite traveling miles of back country on his ATV, he is hard pressed to cut a track.

"We're seeing less deer this year than last and last year was a very bad year," Foss said. "I have cameras out for weeks at a time on six food plots and travel miles and miles. I've seen one fawn. There are very deer tracks. I've cancelled hunts. The quality is just not up here to justify guiding for deer. There might be pockets of deer populations like up in the farm country near Mason but they speak of declining deer numbers too and increasing predation in the last several years. And the deer are not here in the big woods."

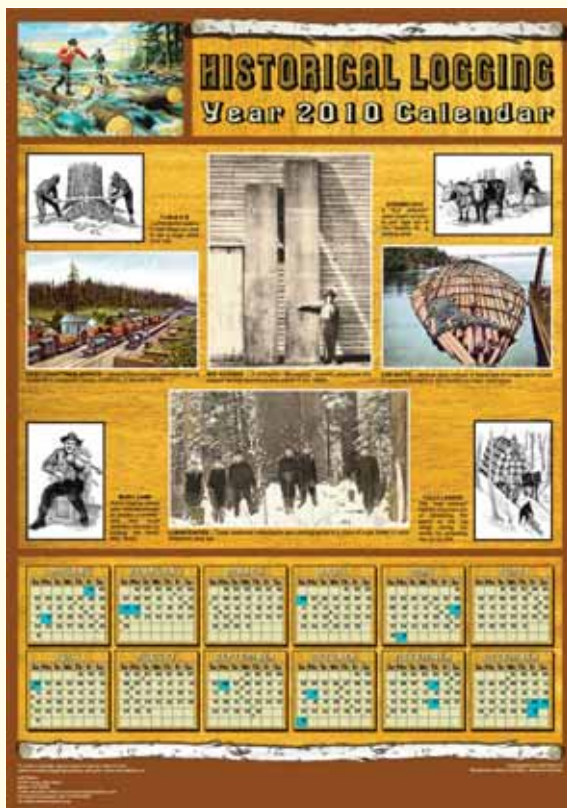
Foss believes there are more bears

Continued on page 23



Better days for Mike Foss in Bayfield County.

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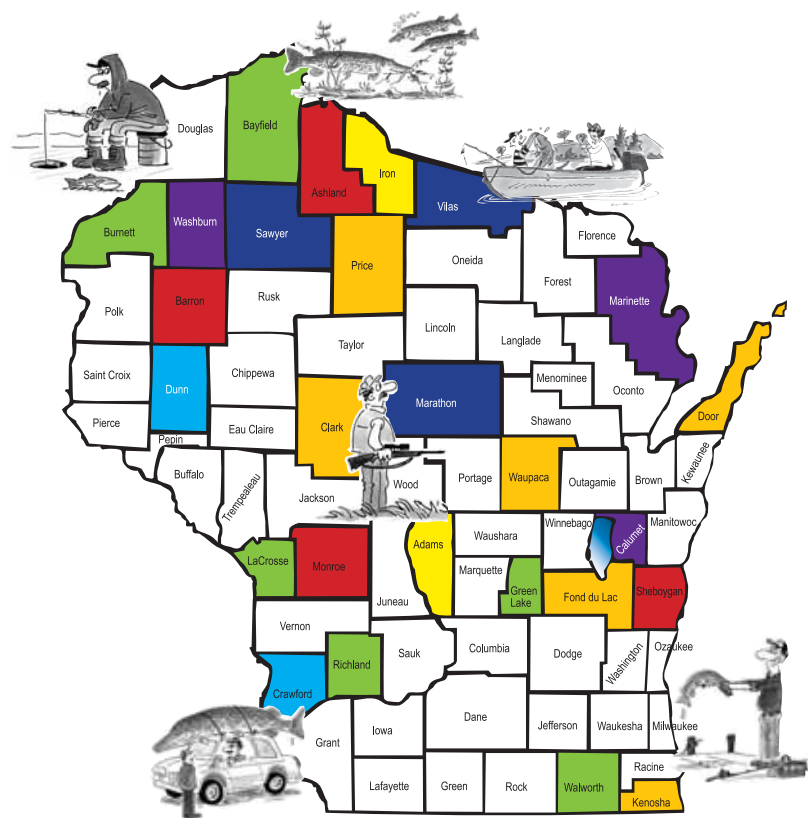
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TERRY BITZ

OUTDOOR CONVERGENCE

Aim small, miss small



A blaze-orange picnic is an excellent way to spend some family time. Here, the authors son, Devin, man's the guard tower.

"I can't believe I missed the deer."

Those were my words to my son Devin at approximately 11 a.m. It was November 22, on opening day of the 2008 gun deer season. I had just fired two shots at a deer.

Our day started hours earlier at 4:30 a.m. A quick breakfast was followed by the packing of lunches and the filling of the thermos with hot chocolate.

By 6:15 a.m., Devin and I were settled into our hunting spots on public land just north of Tomah. We were sitting on a large ridge, typical of

the kind found in the western part of the state. I had found our exact spots the day before and locked them into my handheld GPS so I could find them in the dark.

Devin was facing north, looking down a steep incline and a large ravine that lead to the top. It was a classic funnel spot where deer often run to get over the ridge.

I was on the other side of the hill, 200 feet behind him, facing south watching over a large opening in the tree line. From the top of the ridge, I could easily see lights 15 miles away in the cold, clear air.

Though shooting hours began about 6:40 a.m., we would not hear a

gunshot closer than a half-mile until about 8 a.m. It would be indicative of a gun hunt where there seemed a lot less shooting than normal.

At 9 a.m. a shot went off just behind me causing my heart to jump into my throat. I knew that Devin had fired his gun.

After a couple minutes, I called Devin on the two-way radio to find out what happened. He responded that he had shot at a doe. It had run off without appearing to have been wounded.

I left my stand to help him look for blood just in case the animal had been hit. It was clear though that he had missed while attempting a somewhat difficult shot. I eventually returned to my chair to continue my vigil over the south side of the ridge.

Just before 11 a.m., I heard the sound of crashing brush at the bottom of the hill. I saw a large deer briefly run through an opening. Behind it was a smaller deer. As they ran into another opening, I could see that the large deer was a huge doe and it was running away to my left.

Just as I thought they would continue moving away, the lead doe turned and started running up a swale about 100 yards to my left. I pulled up my gun and decided I would take a shot if I got the chance because the deer was too big to pass up.

As she cleared some thick brush, I aimed just behind her shoulder and fired. At the exact moment I pulled the trigger, she had turned and ran directly toward me. I figured I missed and cycled a new round into my rifle's chamber.

She ran into a clearing and came to a stop. I set the crosshairs of the scope on her and again pulled the

trigger. I saw her make a slight jump at the loud bark of the gun. I cycled another round into the chamber and placed the scope on her side. I believed I could see where the bullet had struck her and decided to not fire another round. Though I expected her to fall down, she took off up the hill and ran over its crest with the yearling following behind.

I jumped up in disbelief. What happened? How could I miss? Did I hit her in the paunch? I began to wonder if my rifle scope had gotten knocked out of alignment.

As I started walking to where the animal had been standing, I called Devin on the radio. I was telling him that I thought I missed a huge doe. To my surprise, Devin told me he thought he heard something big fall over in the brush. He joined me to look for the animal.

It turned out the doe had indeed fallen dead on the other side of the ridge. Both of my shots had found their mark making for a quick kill. Seeing her close up, I realized that I had never shot a doe close to that size. She was even bigger than almost every other buck I had shot.

I estimate that, from the time I first saw the deer to when I fired shot No. 2 that only 15 seconds had elapsed. The intense activity of seeing and shooting at a deer often lasts for just a few seconds. The memories though last much longer, especially when you don't miss the target. *W*

Terry Bitz is a freelance writer who resides in Pleasant Prairie, WI. He can be contacted at tbitz@wi.rr.com, or by visiting his website at www.outdoorconvergence.com.

ELLIS, from page 21

than whitetail deer over much of Bayfield County, and that bear predation has had a significant effect on fawn mortality, similar to annual elk calf losses at Clam Lake. He stressed that both wolves and bear are efficient predators. And he said he completely trusts reports from two associates who watched and heard bears take panicked fawns.

"Bears know when the fawns are dropping," Foss said. "Wolf predation and hunter predation of course also

play a major role in mortality, and the collective impact on the deer population does not justify the number of special hunts and antlerless tags slated for much of the north."

Foss calls it an imbalance. Wolves continually expand and form new packs with little fear of man. Hunters are told they must reduce the herd and have obediently followed orders.

"These bear numbers are fantastic for a bear guide, but I also love deer hunting," he said. "I work in the Twin

Cities and there are more dead deer now on the highways of Minnesota than in Wisconsin. This is really, really hurting our tourism and hunting. There will be less and less people coming to the north woods. That tradition...that camaraderie that everyone looked forward to like nothing else once a year, well they're going to go somewhere else to find it."

"DNR is hurting more and more for money. Youth hunts, lowering the age limit to hunt and the antlerless

hunts have all been part of it. They should just take away the doe tags for awhile to help the deer recover. Because the deer are not here. It's not a food problem. It's a predation problem. And we're part of the predation chain."

"Something drastic went on in the last few years. It's scary. I guarantee you that the fawns are not surviving." *W*

JEFF PETERS

OF ICE AND MEN

Ice-safety knowledge is your best defense



*"... I would have been another statistic.
Except that statistics don't have
friends and families."*

I have fallen through the ice twice. Each time I had a boat and life jacket, and each time I survived. But the last experience drove home an important fact: There is no fish—anywhere—as important as staying alive. If you're like me your friends and family will miss you after a tragic accident but your family, in my case a great wife and daughter, would grieve for a lifetime.

And ask yourself, "Is it worth spending a few minutes on learning ice safety, or is that 'early ice' walleye more important?" Pretty darn simple answer, yet each year we read about drowning victims who either didn't know the ice conditions and/or were not prepared in case they did fall through.

The axiom "be prepared" must be part of every ice fishers mental and physical tool kit. Listed are a few tips

offered by several Department of Natural Resources that are a must-read before you start your ice fishing season.

Let me leave you with one final thought about the last time I dropped through a spring hole on my favorite lake while ice fishing walleyes. If I had not been able to pull myself back in the boat, and then had not been rescued by the Mellen Fire Department, I would have been another statistic. Except that statistics don't have friends and families.

They're not statistics. They're people. I can think of no greater loss. Be smart out there on first ice. *WP*

Jeff Peters of Mellen, Wisconsin, is publisher of "The Echo", a Wisconsin historical newspaper.



SAFETY FIRST

Here are some things to keep in mind while ice fishing to increase your safety while you are on and around the ice.

COLD, HARD FACTS

- * New ice is usually stronger than old ice. Four inches of clear, newly formed ice might support one person on foot, while a foot or more of old, partially thawed ice might not.
- * Ice seldom freezes uniformly. It might be 12 inches thick in one location and only a few inches thick a few feet away.
- * Ice formed over flowing water and currents is often dangerous. This is especially true near streams, bridges and culverts. Also, the ice on outside river bends is usually weaker due to the undermining effects of the faster current.
- * The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process. The extra weight also reduces how much weight the ice sheet can support. Also, ice near shore can be weaker than ice that is farther out.
- * Booming and cracking ice isn't necessarily dangerous. It only means that the ice is expanding and contracting as the temperature changes, usually actually making more new, strong ice.

Stay warm. Dress in layers. Wear wool hats, mittens and waterproof boots. Ice shanties keep the wind and blowing snow from chilling you to the bone.

Don't get lost. To avoid getting lost on a large lake, be aware of daylight and weather conditions. Learn to use a map and compass to stay oriented.

A Simple tool to save your life. Drive a nail in one end of two stubby dowels, and drill a hole in each of the opposing ends and tie a rope through the holes, connecting the two "picks." Always keep this around your neck so it's handy. Use it to dig into the ice and quickly claw your way out if you fall through. Once on the ice surface, head back to shore the way you came.

Stay on top of the ice. The WDNR does not monitor ice conditions or the thickness of the ice. Check ice conditions before heading out. Make sure the ice is at least 4 inches thick before walking out onto it. If taking a snowmobile, ATV or other vehicle, at least 5 inches is needed to safely travel onto the ice. Because thickness can vary across an area, check more than one spot. Remember this rule of thumb: "Thick and blue, tried and true. Thin and crispy, way too risky."

Don't go out alone. Head out with fishing friends. Take a cell phone and make sure someone knows where you are and when you're expected to return.

KEVIN MICHALOWSKI

DOG TALK*When a new puppy comes home*

Well, I've stepped in it now. After much consideration and a long difficult search, I found just the right puppy, plunked down my money and immediately began contemplating, "What was I thinking?"

Yup, I bought a puppy. I sure did. I bought a whining, pooping, chewing machine and my older dog, who is 2 years old and has some faults of her own that I want to cure, doesn't like it one bit. But that's the way it goes.

I have always believed that a guy with two kids should have two dogs. Actually, that's not the reason, but that's what I tell the neighbors. A second dog, even though it takes more time and often causes some disruption of the daily routine, actually helps with the training ... in the long run. The new pup provides companionship and distraction for the older dog and the older dog shows the younger dog how things need to be.

A case in point: Teddy, the new pup, can't keep up with Cocoa, so during retrieval drills, he just watches, and then romps around. When Cocoa gets back, I give her the sit command (having a puppy nearby is a major distraction) and make a couple short tosses for Teddy; he fetches up his dummy and everyone is happy.

As I write this, Teddy is only 10 weeks old, there isn't much serious training going on. We are teaching Teddy to come when called, getting him used to carrying a dummy around and letting him learn to give

in to the leash.

Teddy is also getting instruction on who is boss from the kids, Cocoa and me. Teddy certainly won't be hunting this fall, but as soon as he gets all of his shots he will be accompanying me into woods for walks and further instruction.

The big issue right now is to make sure the puppy gets a good start in life. That means he has to have his shots and his vet check-ups. He also has to get socialized, meaning he needs to know his place with people and other dogs.

FIRST AND FOREMOST

But most importantly, Teddy has to eat. You've all seen puppies eat. They hit the food bowl like a line-backer hitting a quarterback. When Teddy eats, birds gather around to get the crumbs that come flying out of his bowl. No matter where I put that bowl in his kennel, he ends up

pushing it to the corner and driving his face into it until he has consumed every crumb of food. The dog is always hungry.

But the trick is not to let that voracious appetite fool you. Limit the food to what it says on the bag. I'm currently feeding Teddy Purina Puppy Chow, the large breed formula. And he's getting about a cup and a half, twice a day. He still whines and cries and eats like a maniac when I feed him, but he's not getting any extra. The vet says he's gaining weight nicely and does not look malnourished.

When you feed puppies too much and they grow too quickly, it puts stress on their bones and they will have problems later in life; sometimes just as soon as they reach adulthood. So, limit the food and keep an eye on the dog's growth rate.

LEARNING THE ROPES

Second only to creating a healthy puppy is creating one that understands he or she is a dog and must

obey your commands. Until a dog reaches 6 months of age, the animal is really too young to handle serious training, but there are important things you must do.

First, get the puppy to understand you control everything. Make the pup wait for food. Don't open the kennel door when the pup is barking and jumping up. Don't let the pup bolt out the kennel door when you open it. Clip on a leash and start getting the dog to understand that it must submit to the leash.

Then of course there is playtime. Get the dog used to the idea that spending time with you is always fun. Pretty soon the real training will start. Teddy can hardly wait. *WB*

Kevin Michalowski is author of "15 Minutes to a Great Dog" and "15 Minutes to a Great Puppy" (Krause Publications, \$12.95 each) and has been training dogs for 10 years. If you have questions or comments on dog care, email Kevin Michalowski at askdogtalk@hotmail.com.



The author's son, Adam, and Teddy try to decide who gets to hold the training dummy. Adam won the first round, but Teddy keeps trying.

TAKE SOMEONE HUNTING -

Start a lifetime of memories!



Starting September 1, 2009 Wisconsin hunters can provide people 10 years of age and older a mentored hunting experience.

This new opportunity is designed to introduce someone to hunting under controlled conditions that will enhance safety and learning:

- One-on-one mentoring
- Only one firearm or bow between the two
- Within arms reach of the mentor

This is a chance for you to share the hunting experience and do your part to field the next generation of hunters. Pass on our hunting heritage and the conservation ethic.

Take someone hunting.

To find out more, Google "HUNTING IN WISCONSIN" or call toll free 1-888-WDRINFO, 7AM - 10PM, 7 days a week.

TOM CARPENTER

BADGER BIRDS*White-breasted nuthatch*

With its handsome blue-gray topcoat, black cap, bright eyes, cream belly and chestnut wash below the tail, the white-breasted nuthatch is one of Wisconsin's most subtly handsome birds. Add to that a distinctive call and the magnificent adaptation of being able to work a tree trunk from the top down, and the nuthatch becomes a bird worthy of our respect and admiration. White-breasted nuthatches make Wisconsin home year-round.

Listen for nuthatches' distinctive and nasal yank-yank-yank calls in the treetops. The song is a simple series of low whi-whi-whi notes.

Look for white-breasted nuthatches in mixed groups of chickadees, creepers and woodpeckers. The different species can hang together because each works a different part of a tree. Nuthatches use their narrow, slightly upturned bills to probe deep bark crevices for insects, larvae and eggs.

Feed white-breasted nuthatches suet in a hanging basket. Save the fat when

you butcher a deer and use that—nuthatches absolutely love the “real thing.” Hanging feeders filled with sunflower seed attract nuthatches, too.

Did you know that male white-breasted nuthatches sport darker caps (almost black) than the females, which have dark blue or gray caps? There's a deer-stand challenge for you when a couple friendly nuthatches visit your spot in the woods this fall. *W*



TOM CARPENTER

CUB'S CORNER*Sometimes, it takes a village*

The author (center) has spent many hours in the woods since harvesting his first deer, but has more recently been blessed to share the “first deer” experience with his sons.

Everybody was a cub once, and everybody loves to tell the story of their first deer. With November here and the excitement of gun season in the air, there's nothing like a good deer hunting story to crank up the excitement. Here's the story of one boy's first deer.

This happened way back in Wisconsin's old party permit days, where four hunters could apply for one antlerless tag. The boy had dutifully filled out all the paperwork for his family hunting group for 2 years running. This was sure to be the year the coveted armband (to identify the party member who could shoot a doe) and deer tag finally arrived.

present ever: an envelope from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. A party permit! Since he had done all the work, there was no question he would be the anointed one for shooting the one antlerless deer allowed on the permit. His mom sewed the armband on his orange hooded hunting sweatshirt that evening.

Sleep came tough for the next 2 weeks, and it was nonexistent the night before the opener. On a scouting trip, the boy picked out the very tree he would wait at: a big white oak in a brushy, abandoned sidehill pasture. Arising at 3:45 a.m., the four hunters were off by 4:30 for their hour-long drive to the secluded crossroads of

Bucks were tough to come by in the Iowa County hills, but armed with a party permit, the boy knew he had a good chance at shooting a deer. He recounted in his hunting log all the opportunities where he could have taken a shot at a doe, had he been carrying the proper credentials.

On his birthday, November 7, he got the best

Jonesdale, just west of Hollandale.

Waiting at the oak, the boy felt lonely, scared, excited and happy all at once. It was deer season. Any deer was fair game, and certainly it wouldn't hurt to shoot one doe where sometimes he would see a dozen in a day!

As light slowly crept over the eastern horizon, the woods lightened a bit. Every sound and sight became a deer: the mouse tunneling under the leaves; the cardinal rustling through the bushes; the shape of an old log on the ground. And then it arrived—6:30 a.m. Shooting light.

His was the first shot of the day.

He heard the thump of hooves on frozen ground. He looked into the timber below—nothing. Glancing up into the grassy pasture and then twisting to look around the tree—a deer! Broadside at 50 yards, across a swale, it stood there alertly, nose in the air and one hoof up. Her every breath vaporized in the frosty air.

Bringing the slug-loaded shotgun up ever-so-slowly, the young hunter nestled his cheek into the cold stock, willed the dancing bead to old still, and pulled the trigger. Fire flew from the barrel, and the deer whirled and scurried away, heading uphill toward a ridgetop alfalfa field that edged the abandoned pasture.

The young hunter walked over, shaking not from the cold but from being so alive, and found where the deer had stood. Hair! He walked the direction the deer had fled, found no blood, circled some more, then

returned to his tree. Dejected, he stood there and waited, thinking. I hit that deer, I have to go look some more.

Just then, he heard crunches in the frosted grass. A hunter approached, a stranger. He wore red-and-black checked wool, with an orange vest to be legal. “Did you shoot at a nice doe?” he asked. “Yes, I think I hit her,” the boy replied.

“Follow me,” he said. The boy struggled to keep up, and 100 yards later, the man pointed out into the alfalfa. “There she is—congratulations,” he smiled, extending his hand. The boy shook it heartily, blabbered a mouthful of thanks, and then was alone with the deer.

It was beautiful—everything he dreamed that his first whitetail would be. Heavy (he could hardly move her). Thick coated. Soft ears. Snow-white belly. A long tail—even bigger than he had imagined it would be, and he had seen a lot of white tails flagging goodbye. He got out his knife and stood there, perplexed. Studying the diagrams in the Outdoor Encyclopedia and George Mattis's Whitetail book was one thing. Digging into the warm flesh of a deer was another.

Soon, more help arrived. The boy's oldest brother approached, laughing. “I saw it all from way up there,” he said, pointing to his own stand. “I was wondering when you were going to find her. That's a nice deer. I'll gut her out for you, one-time only. So watch close.”

Continued on page 27

BILL CUNNEA

COMPANION AND HUNTER

Young Bert's double adventure



It is often said that it's difficult to teach an old dog new tricks. And as the author discovered, it can be a challenge to teach a young dog new tricks, too. Fetch, Bert. Fetch.

Bert had done very well the past two times out, while I had missed everything in the sky that I shot at, including, perhaps, the atmosphere. Rather than take responsibility for the misses, I blamed the shotgun—an old Stevens Model 311—and took off the 1-inch-thick recoil pad. (Bert did not blame the shotgun.)

The weather had been unseasonably warm, and although overcast, it refused to rain, couldn't possibly snow (the temp was in the mid 40s), and seemed to always have a light wind.

There were a few other cars in the parking area, but only two hunters within sight. Bert thought the outing was a good idea, and I found myself pleased that the shotgun shells I brought fit the shotgun I brought—this is not always the case. I've learned to appreciate small joys.

We walked. And walked. Then, we walked some more. Oddly, the miniature cow bell on Bert's collar became a focused sound, and the cadence and volume send information to me—where he is, how he's moving, if there's a scent that makes him slow, or

speed up. ...

Nothing. Two other hunters stopped to chat. They'd seen a bird, and had been told that 60 or so were spread out across the 1,000 acres. They were nice guys, one having taken the afternoon off to hunt before winter shut down the possibility; the other had hunted this same area in the morning, and thought I might find some pheasants in the woods. "Might" was definitely the operative word.

Bert and I meandered on, working the high grass edging the woods. He got birdy a few times, but

nothing materialized. I kept waiting for him to encounter a skunk, but I couldn't say I looked forward to it. I'd educated him once on the consequences of deer chasing, but I wasn't sure just how well the lesson took. Time would tell.

At the back of the property, near where two small fields are occasionally planted with corn, and near where a friend once shot, in sequence, two single birds that flushed simultaneously, Bert started getting interested.

At least I think he did. The grass was about 7 feet tall, and I am not. He might have been shaking the cowbell with his paw.

But, I began my "vintage stalker" walk and the sounds from the bell slowly died just in front of me.

I chose to think Bert was on point. He might, in fact, have been devouring a field mouse, which to him are like Cheetos (another thing I will never understand). I came upon the brown behind of Young Bert, who is pointing at ... something. The something is in front of him. I edge up to him; he edged a bit forward.

Cackle ... thrash ... cackle! Cackle ... thrash ... flap, flap, flap. Two roosters got up and away: one to the front, one to the left. I leveled the gun (I think, dunno, happens fast) fire the right barrel at the straight-away bird, swivel, and fire the left at the bird on the left side ...

UNBELIEVEABLE!

They both went down. I just shot an un-witnessed, sequential pair of single pheasants. Not sure, maybe the second time in my life ... maybe the first.

I walked on a line to the left-side bird, found it, and set about field dressing it, waiting (hoping) to see Bert show up with the first bird after which he had charged. Bert arrived. No bird. Hmmm. That doesn't mean I missed it (I know I didn't miss it). I resisted the temptation to go look immediately for it, and finished with the first bird. Bert seemed surprised to see it.

Heck, I was surprised.

After I finished with the first bird, I walked through the high grass, and Bert surged ahead, to the second bird. "Fetch," I commanded. He looked at me. Then he flopped down next to it.

We have some work to do on "fetch."

But, by-golly, I went from missing the sky to hitting a set of two sequential singles. I knew it was the shotgun. *W*

Bill Cunnea has been a writer, teacher, consultant and outdoorsman for over 30 years. He continues to be taught lessons by his dogs in southwest Wisconsin, where he's lived for 20 years. He's never caught a lunker, nor shot a 12 point buck, and he's got the lack of trophies to prove it.

CUB'S CORNER, from page 26

After the chore was finished, the brother gave the boy a piece of rope. "Drag her out," he said. "I'm going hunting. I'll see you at lunchtime." During the drag, which was quite arduous, for the deer was almost as heavy as the boy, more help appeared, this time in the form of his other brother. "I heard you shoot, figured you had something. Here, let me drag for awhile." And so he did.

Finally, in the last field, the boy's Dad approached, a big grin on his face. "Oh, you did good," he said, shaking the boy's hand in a way that he had never shaken it before. Somehow it

made the boy feel very big and proud, and his Dad grabbed the rope and helped him finish the pull.

Sitting on the tailgate of the car—looking out across the southwestern Wisconsin hills rolling to every horizon, drinking hot chocolate and telling his dad the whole story again—the boy felt as good as he ever had. It took a village to help him get that deer, but he was on his way. *W*

Native son Tom Carpenter writes about the outdoor world for a variety of national and regional publications.



JIM BERG

THE FLY FISHING BLUES

A lesson in humility



I camped and fished the Bois Brule River recently with my 7-year-old son, Beau.

I'm teaching myself (or, more honestly, trying to teach myself) the art of fly fishing. And this was my first trip to a real trout stream—with waders and scads of assorted fly fishing paraphernalia in tow. A cool hat. A line clippers. A clip box of assorted flies. And, of course, a book on how to tie fly fishing knots. An art in and of itself.

Our camp, at the Bois Brule State Park, was a dream—one of the two secluded sites just off the river. And as

we were setting up camp that night, Beau ran to my side and whispered in hushed, reverent tones, "Dad, it's a fly fisherman. A real one." I looked up to see an older man in the water, working his way upstream past our campsite—his eyes intent on the water, his rod arm moving like a metronome, tick, tick, tick, the fly line a perfect elongated "S" above him, then lashing forward and touching lightly on the water.

Beau and I stood mesmerized. This was the real deal. And as he worked the stream, I moved behind a pine tree, watching, studying his mechanics, but mostly, I think, watching in sheer admiration. It was truly a thing of beauty: the grace and simplicity of his motions. Hemingway wrote that "less is more," and, perhaps for the first time, I truly understood what he meant.

We fell asleep that night listening to the gurgling stream and dreaming of browns and rainbows.

The next morning, with a light mist lifting off the water and sunlight filtering through the early morning darkness, I stepped into the legendary Brule ... and proceeded to fish for 3 hours without a hit. I did manage to work on my mechanics with Beau fishing and coaching from the shore: "Nice one, Dad." Or: "10 o'clock to 2 o'clock, Dad." (I guess he actually paid attention to some of those videos we watched.) And the most insightful:

"Try to do it a bit more like that guy last night."

That evening, I sat reading on the asphalt at the canoe landing while Beau fished the shoreline. I peered up at the darkening sky, the popcorn clouds, and then I saw him on the asphalt 30 feet away, snapping off graceful little roll casts. Again, I was struck by the simplicity and the elegance of his casts.

When he pulled in a small fish, I took the opportunity to approach. "What'da'catch?" I asked.

"Just a little rainbow," he said, holding the fish for Beau and me to see. Then he bent forward and held the fish in the water until it had its bearing and squirted away.

"What fly did ya use?" Beau asked.

The man smiled warmly, the lines on his face meandering like so many trout streams, and replied: "A prince nymph." And he held it in the palm of his hand for Beau to see. "With a little rabbit fur, on a barbless hook."

His hair was silver-white, his skin hardened by the sun glancing off rivers, his eyes half closed when he spoke—but penetrating. Intent. And, in a voice soft and sure, he spoke of fly fishing and little else.

"Start fishing down stream," he said, "with a wet fly or a prince nymph. Just let it drift out there a bit and pull some line in slowly. Practice casting. It'll come. Don't force it or try

to overpower it.

"And when you catch that first big one," he said, with a smile creeping across his face, "the fun begins. It's not just about hooking 'em and reeling 'em in. You gotta play them, tire 'em out."

"A lot of times," he said, "they get away. And that's all right."

We left him filled with awe—and two hand-tied flies. Gifts: a wet fly and a prince nymph. We left him with practical advice and metaphors for life.

Fly fishing is—if I might read between the lines—as much about the stream as fishing. Feeling the river wrap around your legs. Matching your fly to the conditions. Fly fishing is embracing the landscape, rather than driving by and snapping a photo. Fly fishing is a timeless act of grace and eloquence. A passion. A reverence for nature and your prey. And, hopefully, a heck of a lot fun.

In the morning, after Beau and I had packed up for the trip home, I wet my line one last time. I even managed a handful of decent casts before dangling my line in brush. On the shore, Beau smiled. "That's all right, Dad. Sometimes they get away, and sometimes you just get stuck in the trees." *WB*

Jim Berg is an avid outdoorsman who, like many die-hard fishermen, has been forced to take a course or two in humility through the years



Payday

Molly Maahs, of Wausau, poses with her bear "Payday." The bear was shot in Oneida County on September 18, 2009. The bear's nickname was coined during the baiting period when outdated Payday candy bars were used as bait.

Molly waited patiently in a tree with her father, Brian, for more than 12 hours before Payday appeared. Molly made a clean, 30 yard shot with a .270 Win. rifle.

On Wisconsin
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PHIL SCHWEIK

LINES FROM A HOOKSETTER

Muskiemaniacs



The author is all smiles (or is simply gritting his teeth from the stress of holding the fish) after connecting with a huge, late-fall muskie.

Are we all nuts?

We are only a week or two away ... if not a few days ... from total freeze-up. I think about this as I break away the ice from the shoreline in an effort to launch my boat for another day, maybe my last day of the year on the water.

It is mid-November in Wisconsin and, if I'm lucky, I have 2 weeks left to fish muskies this season. The air temperature might be cold, but the muskie bite is red-hot.

This is the time of the year I wait for ... the time when all "big dogs" come out to play. If you want an honest-to-goodness opportunity at landing a truly giant muskie, this is the time of the year to be on the water.

BIG, SLOW-MOVING BAITS

Fall fishing means colder water, and colder water means lethargic fish. Lethargic fish will not chase or strike swift-moving baits. These are fish that have become passive by the cooler water temperatures and don't want to exert the energy to chase after quickly moving prey.

On the other hand, tantalizing, slow-moving baits will trigger more strikes and give you more opportunities at landing fish. The muskies are still feeding at this time of the year and they are still searching for food, but they are opportunistic feeders and will take the easy meal rather than have to pursue quickly moving bait-fish to satisfy their hunger.

During summer, when water temperatures are hot, it might take a very fast-moving bait to provoke a reaction strike. The water temperatures often become so warm that it actually slows the muskies metabolism down as well as their desire to feed. The metabolism of a muskie during fall is very different, but they still want to feed!

As the water temperatures cool, muskies want and need to begin bulking up for the upcoming winter. Even though they have slowed down their metabolism and are a lot more sluggish, they are still looking for that big, easy meal to satisfy their hunger. Big baits such as Bulldawgs, Depth Raiders, Suicks, Ducktail Weed Warrior jerkbaits, Grandma's and

Shallow Raiders all work very well, but proper presentation is the key.

Gig baits need to be worked slowly and methodically over known muskie haunts. You want your jerkbaits to glide smoothly through an area rather than to rip through it. Swim your crankbaits and Bulldawgs methodically through and around structure rather than the constant, hard and quick ripping and jerking that you might have done earlier in the summer. You want the musky to be able to easily locate and pursue your bait, while at the same time exerting as little effort as possible in attacking your presentation.

LOCATIONAL MUSKIES

For key fishing locations in the fall, the main thing to consider is water temperature. I like to concentrate on working deeper water early in the morning and through mid day, focusing on main lake basins, deep weed edges or sharply dropping rocky shorelines. This is where the majority of the fish will hang out during this time of year.

As the day progresses, I like to target muskies in shallow water. The constant warm rays from the daylight and sun will warm up shallow water throughout the day and concentrate fish on known structure.

I prefer to target weedbeds, downed timber and rocky shorelines late in the day and into the early evening hours. These types of structure soak-up the warmth from the day and warm up the water around them, attracting muskies. Work these areas thoroughly and meticulously with large, slow-moving baits to find the active fish that have moved into these areas to feed.

Now, as I continue to break away the ice from the shoreline to get my boat out, I watch as a light fog elevates from the surface of the lake and gaze at the sun as it creeps over the tree tops. It's going to be another great day on the water.

Phil Schweik owns and operates Hooksetters Guide Service. As of October 19, Phil Schweik client's had caught and released 118 muskies, with a large fish of 51 inches and 35 pounds. Contact Phil at 715.581.2620 or by visiting www.hooksetters.biz.



SNAGGLE TOOTH ... THE SAGA CONTINUES

Snaggle Tooth once again apparently survived the Wisconsin bear and hound seasons after being a routine visitor at Mike Foss bait pile approximately three times a week prior to opening morning. Before he became a regular diner though, in the tangled lair that Foss has come to know as the giant boar's haunt, he gave the Washburn-based bear and buck guide some sleepless nights by not showing up at all.

"I started baiting over 20 square miles on the first legal day, which was April 15," Foss said. "But he just wasn't coming and I thought he might not have survived the winter. He showed up on my camera on July 20, and he would show two or three times a week between 5:00 and 7:30 p.m. I'm sure he was running sows. Sometimes 20 minutes after the bait was dropped he was on it."

According to Foss the bait station is frequented by several big bruins and he has never seen a sow or cubs on the bait. The bears would be killed, he said, by the bigger bears that range from 300 pounds, to 400, to the 639 pound live-weight boar taken by Craig Cichanofsky, to Snaggle Tooth.

"Snaggle Tooth and Craig's bear probably banged heads," Foss said. "They were coming to the bait very close to each other and ended up giving each other space. But just like Snaggle Tooth's tooth is jutting out probably from battle in his younger years, the other big bear had his nose split wide open. We have it on camera."

"Now Snaggle Tooth has one less, very big competitor on the bait. I can tell from the photos that he is declining. He's still well over 600 pounds. But I can tell he's a very old bear."

RECORD BEAR, from page 5

who also serves as the camp bear butcher at Northern Wisconsin Outfitters. "Most people won't see a bear like this...even on another hunter's truck. It's 100 pounds bigger than the black bears found in Alaska or a coastal black bear. Tagging this bear was like winning the lottery. It can happen to anyone, but it's very rare. Field cameras are great for narrowing down the areas being used by a special bear, but a bear

like this knows every bait station around for 20 miles. We're not trying to bait the bear as much as we're trying to out bait the other hunters. They like different foods and we try to give them what they like. These big boars are gorging themselves trying to get enough carbohydrates for winter hibernation after running sows in May and June. If you're finding leftovers, someone else is baiting in the area and the bears don't like

yours."

According to Steve Ashley, Director of Records for the Wisconsin Buck & Bear Club, there is a 60 day drying period after the skull is cleaned before the bear is scored to the nearest one-sixteenth of an inch by measuring length plus width. The current state record, according to the most recent Wisconsin trophy Records book published by the Buck & Bear Club, is 22-12/16 taken in Zone A1 in Washburn County in 2002 by George Spaulding of Shell Lake. Regardless, the Cichanofsky bear is a once in a lifetime trophy in any bear hunter's book, targeted by a one-of-a-kind professional guide.

"An average bear is 125 pounds but I don't think people realize how big some bears are out there. The bait pile is placed in a big bear Mecca," Foss said. "It's a honey hole like you might find a whitetail deer corridor used by big bucks. Now we've taken bears off of this bait that weighed 300, 400, and 600 pounds-plus and I believe a near 700 pound bear is still out there."

"In all the years we have had a camera on this bait, we have never seen a sow or a sow with cubs on it. A big boar would kill the cubs, just like they will kill a smaller bear. I wouldn't have put Craig on this stand if I knew he would shoot a smaller bear. I wanted him to give this stand at least three days. This is like shooting a 200-plus inch buck. I don't think I'll ever match it. But Snaggle Tooth is still out there and he might be bigger than this. Maybe we'll find out next year."

"Mike Foss...he's the man who made this happen," Cichanofsky said.

"He's down to earth and tells you how it is. He's the perfect guide. As it got darker and darker I kept remembering his voice; patience....patience. I'm still numb. But patience paid off big."

Mike Foss begins baiting the first day that baiting is legal April 15 and intensives baiting over vast areas on public and private properties as the season approaches. Because of his work and his "client come first attitude", he enjoys a near 100 percent shot opportunity over the years. With his own bear harvest permit expected to be issued within the next two seasons, Foss was asked if he will save a stand known to be frequented by a special bear for his own. He seemed surprised by the question.

"I could never do that," he said. "I don't think it would be right. I bait for the hunters who come to my camp. When they all leave, I'll hunt. When people talk about my success rate, it's not really mine. It's the hunters. I can get the bears coming in, but then it's up to the hunters. Are they going to make the right decisions? Are they going to make the right shot? It's all up to the hunters. How are they going to perform?" *W*

Contact Mike Foss and Northern Wisconsin Outfitters at 715-373-0344 or www.northernwisconsinoutfitters.com. In addition to Bear Scents LLC, Northern Wisconsin Outfitters is sponsored by Suzuki, Bear Hunting Magazine, Buck Knives, Lost Camo, Gamehide, Mathews Solocam, G5 Montec Broadheads, Bushnell Flashlights and Delta Targets.



Similar to Snaggle Tooth's mouth injury no doubt inflicted in a battle with other boars over female companionship, a close-up of the Cichanofsky bear shows the mangled and split snout. A tooth was extracted from the black bear for aging purposes. A large bear is not always an old bear and this animal had feet that measured only five inches across. (Photo by Dick Ellis)

On Wisconsin Outdoors Board of Directors



Rex Rodsalotta

*Dear Rex Rodsalotta,
I've never ice fished before. I can't wait. Any advice?*

—Mike Mueller, Lancaster

Hi Mike,
Since you can't wait, we better address safety. First ice means great fishing but often the most dangerous hardwater. Jeff Peters has a column on this very thing in this very issue of OWO by the way. You know how a guy only needs to be faster than one of his hunting partners when encountering an angry bear in the woods? Consider a bit of reverse strategy. Make sure when venturing out on thin ice that you're walking behind at least one guy fatter than you are. Life can be simple when we think logically.

—Rex Rodsalotta



Conibear Smith

*Dear Conibear Smith,
I've been reading up on the Endangered Species License Plates. The new design selected by online voting will be available in addition to the Grey Wolf. The candidates are the Badger, Tiger Swallowtail and Eastern Meadowlark. What do you think?*

—Sarah Dorflinger, Hudson

Dear Sarah,
Not so fast. This entire movement is already in litigation. It seems the 25,000 endangered Wisconsin Grey Wolves have formed a Union and don't want to share plate time. Rumor has it that a Federal Judge will side with the wolves.

—Conibear Smith



Hunter Daily

*Dear Hunter Daily,
Do you know that nine states including Wisconsin have claimed the whitetail deer as their state animal?*

—John Baskins, Fond du Lac

Dear John,
So that's where they went.

—Hunter Daily

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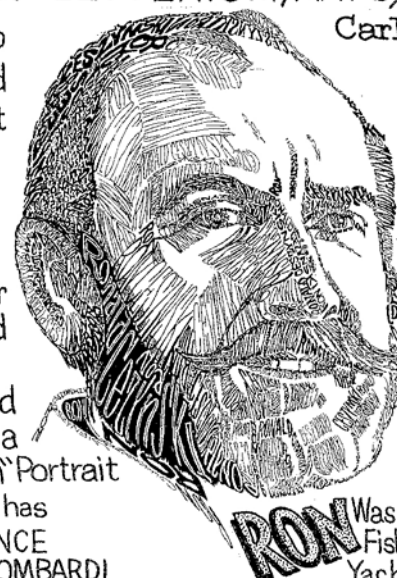
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Not everyone can afford a matching numbers World War II vintage Mauser Model 98k in pristine condition for their collection. Such rifles easily command upwards of \$1,000 when they can be found. They have become so valuable, in fact, that it's probably best to relegate them to safe queen status and not fire them if you want to preserve their value. Gun stocks that are sixty years old and older can and do split under recoil and corrosive ammunition will wreak havoc on a pristine bore in short order.

What if you want to enjoy shooting a rifle with a real history that you can also be proud to display without breaking the bank or risk ruining at great financial loss? The answer is a Russian captured 98k. Act quickly. The supply of these guns is drying up and prices for decent examples are climbing.

Russian captured 98s (RC98s) are inexpensive because absolutely none of them are in as-issued condition. After the war, the Russians found themselves in possession of literally hundreds of thousands of captured Axis weapons, the vast majority being the ubiquitous 98s. Unlike their American and British allies, the Russians rounded up and kept, rather than destroyed, most, if not all, captured Nazi munitions that fell into their hands. Soviet leader Joseph

Stalin, by most accounts, feared another invasion from the West until the day he died. Were an army or armies from the West to invade again, the Russians would not be caught without weapons to defend themselves, as they were in the early stages of Operation Barbarossa, the Nazi code name for their invasion of the Soviet Union.

From the thousands they captured, the Russians took an unknown quantity, completely disassembled them right down to the front sight hoods, placed the parts in bins, and reassembled rifles from them (without, for some reason, the front sight hoods, magazine cover and trigger guard capture screws, and bayonets). The only truly matching numbers you will ever find on an RC 98 are on the barrel and receiver. RCs do feature matching numbers, in a fashion. All major components, including bolts, stocks and receivers,

will feature electro-penciled numbers indicating that the weapons were assembled from parts to make a "matching rifle."

RCs often exhibit pitted metal and poor bores with frosted lands and grooves from firing corrosive ammunition. In many cases, the hated swastikas have been peened out from the original proof marks. This is not true in all cases. What is true is that rifles still retaining their swastikas bring at least a 10 percent premium.

Many RCs released from Russia (or more likely the Ukraine), have been smothered in cosmoline grease and red shellac to preserve them while in storage. Stripped of gook, the guns underneath are often pretty nice looking. Cleaning up a 98k can be a daunting task, requiring as it does lots of smelly and dangerous solvents and steel wool by the bushel basket. Even after all of that work, they will still exhibit an extremely thin re-blued finish and some metal may be painted in a black that will disappear upon contact with a bore cleaner.

There is, however, another route to a presentable and shootable RC 98k. A limited number of these rifles have been recently rebuilt for Century Arms from RCs put together during the postwar period and with far more care than that exhibited by their original Soviet armorers. Available for a reasonable price, these rifles feature refinished wood, nicely applied blueing, and no unsightly electro-penciled numbers. Although the stock finish is a little on the glossy side and some polishing is evident on the metal work, they look very much like they did when they left the original German factories.

They also shoot and handle the same. The rifle featured in this article was built in 1941 by Erma and had a pristine bore. The barreled action was

properly fit to the stock. There were no unsightly, accuracy-ruining gaps between the magazine and stock or receiver tang and stock. Like all 98ks, with the exception of the sniper rifles, this one featured a rear sight with a very narrow "V" adjustable for only elevation and a slightly ramped front sight under a protective hood. Such sights were designed for young men and are totally unsuitable for 50-year-old gun scribes. Under these conditions, accuracy results are meaningless. Typically, when new, and this gun was new for all practical purposes, a 98k will shoot two to three-inch groups, or less, at 100 yards, with decent ammunition.

Recoil was stout, but manageable. Function was typical Mauser, meaning 100 percent reliable. The five-round magazine was easily loaded and spent cases ejected flawlessly. The safety was effective, although rather slow to operate. 98ks were not built for comfort, 29 inches long and 9 lbs loaded, they are somewhat ungainly and the sparse pistol grip doesn't exactly enhance accuracy, nor does the long, heavy, two-stage trigger.

The 98k was an effective weapon during World War II. Make no mistake, millions of soldiers and civilians lost their lives to Nazis armed with them. The Russians thought enough of these rifles to keep them for decades, asleep in warehouses, ready to be unleashed on any army that dared to again violate the borders of Mother Russia.

Thanks to Century Arms International for the use of the rifle featured in this article. *W*

S. Wilkerson is an award-winning Wisconsin journalist, firearms expert and student of the Second Amendment.



DIANE SCHAUER

ON WISCONSIN'S DEFENSE*Attack of the giant hogweed*

Nobody likes more rules and regulations imposed on their enjoyment of the outdoors, but a new state-wide rule went into effect on September 1, 2009, that all outdoor enthusiasts should celebrate. It's NR 40, Wisconsin's first Invasive Species Identification, Classification and Control (ISICC) rule.

The rule identifies plants, animals and other organisms that can become or already are invasive in Wisconsin. These invaders were classified as either "prohibited" or "restricted." With a few exceptions, "no person may transport, possess, transfer or introduce" a prohibited or restricted invasive species listed in the new rules.

According to Julia Solomon, aquatic invasives education specialist for the WDNR, "The new invasive species classification rule (NR 40) is a much-needed tool that will help keep invasive plants and animals from spreading in Wisconsin. It focuses our attention on preventing and responding to the most problematic species, and closes down pathways that let invaders move around."

A case in point: Giant hogweed is a plant on the prohibited list. It's a nasty plant: The sap can cause burns on your flesh and discolor your skin. There are three populations of this plant in Iron County, and also across the state line in Gogebic County, Michigan.

Recently, populations of giant hogweed have also been confirmed in Manitowoc County. What connection is there? Some Manitowoc County folks head up to Iron County where they cruise around on their ATV's. Some have admitted seeing the plants there and riding through them. No one thought that they would transfer the seeds back to their homes on their ATV or other equipment. Now it's on their properties, critters are spreading it around the neighborhood and it will take years of work and lots of costly herbicide to eradicate these new resident plants.

This situation was preventable, and can also cause the spread of other nasty invaders. By following some simple prevention practices, ATV



The giant hogweed truly lives up to its name. With leaves more than 2 feet in diameter, it doesn't take long for the plant to crowd out native greens.

users and other outdoor enthusiasts can avoid spreading unwanted species around the state.

ONE IF BY LAND

Learn the invasive species in the area where you do most of your recreation. Be careful not to travel through infested areas with your dogs and equipment. If you do, remember to remove any plant or animal material from all your gear before you leave the area. Avoid riding your ATV through a river or stream to clean it, because invasive weed seeds can travel downstream to pristine areas and become established.

TWO IF BY SEA

Water fowling and anglers have known for years that it's against the law to introduce aquatic plants, animals or water from one water body into another. With the new ISICC rule, you also cannot leave the boat launch or shoreline with aquatic plants attached to your boat, trailer or any other gear. This includes decoys and

blinds, landing nets and anchors, and all other equipment you move from site to site.

HOW THIS INFLUENCES YOU

Why should you care? Because taking these steps will protect the outdoor resources we all love, of course. But you should also care because it could mean a citation if you are found to be transporting invasive species or aquatic plants on your equipment. Citations can be issued by WDNR personnel to those who violate this new rule.

But there are exceptions, and one exception is if the department determines that the transportation, possession, transfer or introduction was inci-



dental or unknowing, and was not due to the person's failure to take reasonable precautions. There are quite a few other reasonable exceptions that you can find on the WDNR website. The entire rule is briefly explained and lists all the prohibited and restricted species.

So take reasonable precautions. Our woodlands, grasslands, lakes and rivers will benefit by being protected from these invaders. Preventing the spread of invasive species has always been an important part of preserving the outdoors that we enjoy; now it's also the law. ⁹⁶

Diane Schauer is the aquatic invasive species coordinator for Calumet County.



Great gear for the woods, fields and waterways

By JJ Reich

Here's the rundown on six hunting and fishing products that you might find useful in the woods, fields and waterways. We did.

OUTDOOR INSTRUMENT TETHER

For \$25, Gear Keeper's Outdoor Instrument Tether secures your equipment close and ready for action. The versatile system connects to GPS units, radios, game calls, range finders, dog transmitters and more.



This kit is very versatile. It includes two mounting options, three styles of tethers and a durable 31-inch retracting extension line. It will hook to almost anything. I like mine on my range finder when I'm bowhunting—just range, drop and draw.

GearKeeper.com.

DURASEAL SPINNER TARGET

For \$18, Champion's 5 1/2-inch bright-orange diamond spinning target features the revolutionary DuraSeal material, a non-metal, self-sealing target that lets bullets pass through with minimal damage. The self-sealing target absorbs hundreds of rounds, from .17 cal to most large calibers, while still maintaining its shape.



OK, I admit I barely passed my science classes in high school, and I don't understand this stuff, but it works! This crazy, self-sealing material takes hundreds of hits and continues to keep its shape. Whatever it is, it provides hours of shooting fun for a low cost and it spins upon bullet impact. I like bright-colored things that spin.

ChampionTarget.com

SMITH & WESSON MICARTA KNIFE

For \$29, this big game skinning knife features a 2 1/2-inch stainless-steel blade. The stout, 7-inch knife features a heavy-duty Micarta handle with built-in gut-hook, thumb notch and finger guard, and it comes with a leather sheath.



The photo above does not do this knife justice. If you see the high-quality steel and Micarta handle up close, you'll agree ... it's very handsome. It also has a comfortable grip and its compact design allows for precise cuts when skinning big game.

TaylorBrandsLLC.com

DURASAFE ELECTRONIC LOCK

For \$25, this kit secures bracket-mounted electronics by replacing the factory knob with a compact and easy-to-install lock to deter theft. It's made of durable, marine-grade materials. Its universal design fits most GPS units, depth finders and other electronics.



I like peace-of-mind of knowing the expensive electronics in my boat will not get stolen when I'm at McDonalds stuffing my face with a McGriddle before a day on the water. This kit also includes extra-strong installation hardware necessary to provide even more security.

DuraSafeLocks.com

SMITH EDGE STICK SHARPENER

For \$24, Smith Pro Series Edge Stick sharpener creates a precise, long-lasting edge on knives, broadheads and other tools. It features reversible/replaceable, precision-ground carbide blades, interrupted-surface diamond stone and durable cast-aluminum housing.



This little compact tool is neat. Just a few pulls through the carbides puts on a quick edge, and a finish on the diamond stone takes just moments. With the compact carry case, you'll want to take it everywhere.

SmithsEdge.com

PINE RIDGE CALL HOLDER

For \$5, Pine Ridge Archery offers the E/Z Mount Call Holder. Made of durable materials, the strap fits snugly around your forearm or wrist and accommodates any-sized duck, goose, predator or deer call. The built-in swivel moves to any position: turn it out of your way when not in use, then shift it to the perfect position when the hunt is on.

If you hunt with a grunt call, you



know that it can be difficult to access it without making noise or excessive movement. This wrist-wrap call holder is a reliable, cheap solution to the problem.

PineRidgeArchery.com

JJ Reich is an outdoor writer who contributes product-related articles to several national publications and is the author of Kampp Tales™ hunting books for children (www.kamptales.com).

The advertisement features a rustic log cabin interior with a large stone fireplace. A family of three is gathered around the fireplace, warming themselves by the fire. In the foreground, a large glass of dark beer with a thick head of foam sits next to a condensation-covered bottle of Leinenkugel's Fireside Nut Brown. The scene is framed by a rustic wooden border. The brand name 'Leinenkugel's' is written in a large, stylized script across the top of the image.

Leinenkugel's

Gather 'Round A Fireside.

Join Us Out Here™ November through December to share the inviting toasted malt flavor of Leinenkugel's Fireside Nut Brown®. With its maple aroma, warm chestnut color, hazelnut top notes and perfectly balanced English malt character, Leinie's Fireside Nut Brown is far more comfortable to enjoy than most traditional English Nut Browns and holiday beers.

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