

November/December 2011
Vol. 5, Issue 2

On Wisconsin Outdoors

with the
Dick Ellis Experts

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Photo by Dick Ellis

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TOM CARPENTER

Fields Of Dreams

Deer from the open spaces



Effective field hunting takes much more than just a plop-down-and-wait attitude. The author shot this fine Green County 9-pointer as it crossed a cut cornfield on gun season's opening day.

Hunting a field is much more than just a plop-and-wait proposition. Here's how to hunt the deer fields this gun season.

If you pursue Wisconsin whitetails, you probably spend some of your hunting time on, in or around fields. This is especially true in the central and southern parts of our state, but deer fields appear in the north's hunting landscape too.

When you hunt fields, you make the most of your hunting area. Deer eat in, travel across and make escapes through fields. A whitetail going from point A to point B has no reservations about heading cross-country through wide-open space. As a hunter, choosing the right place from which to sit, wait and watch is critical.

Deer travel across fields naturally and to evade other hunters. A stand

overlooking a field offers advantages over a post in thick cover: You can see deer coming from farther away, get longer and unobstructed shots, and hunt multiple crossings. The best way to locate a good stand site on a field

is to hunt an area for a season or two and actually see how the deer travel the land.

One year, waiting on a hillside where whitetails liked to cross a fallow field between two woodlots, I saw five different deer or groups of deer travel the edge of an alfalfa field a quarter mile away. The animals were evading hunters in a creek bottom and traveling up to a hilltop

timber. I guess I'm a slow learner. I should have gone over to that field after the second or third deer passed. But I learn nonetheless. The next year's

"The best way to locate a good stand site on a field is to hunt an area for a season or two and actually see how the deer travel the land."

opening morning I stationed myself at the crossing. At 7:25 a.m. a stocky little six-pointer trotted past and my tag was filled.

That was a good spot for four years until the fence line was removed. The local deer don't cross as regularly there now, and I've since found other good field stands. But that's part of the game. Land use, crop rotation and other factors will cause deer to shift their field habits. You have to shift with the times. On the other hand, I know field crossings that generations of deer have used since I began hunting, and that's almost 40 years ago now.

One of the most challenging parts of hunting field deer is staying as still as possible. In the woods you have some cover to drink a cup of coffee, eat a sandwich, wipe your nose, or shift your stiff body. When you're hunting a field, take a moment to scan your surroundings before making any move.

To break up your silhouette, sit or wait against a tree, fencepost or other background. One year, with permission, I made a small blind from

a couple hay bales and took a doe from that field corner.

Personally, I'm not fond of field hunting from a treestand. Open country gives you the visibility you need. With the leaves down, you're exposed to both the deer and the November elements. And after being bowhunted for a couple months, a Wisconsin whitetail knows how to look up for danger.

Everybody's hunting spot is different, so you'll have to determine—through scouting and observation—good field stand sites. Some of my favorites include the corner where a fencerow or other cover meets a woods, a point of woods or finger of brush jutting into a field, a four-way fence corner, and a T-shaped fence corner.

A little elevation is good. Dips in the land, where deer can sneak through a field with minimum exposure, make great crossings, as do low or sagging spots in a fence. Last year I saw two different groups of deer run through a

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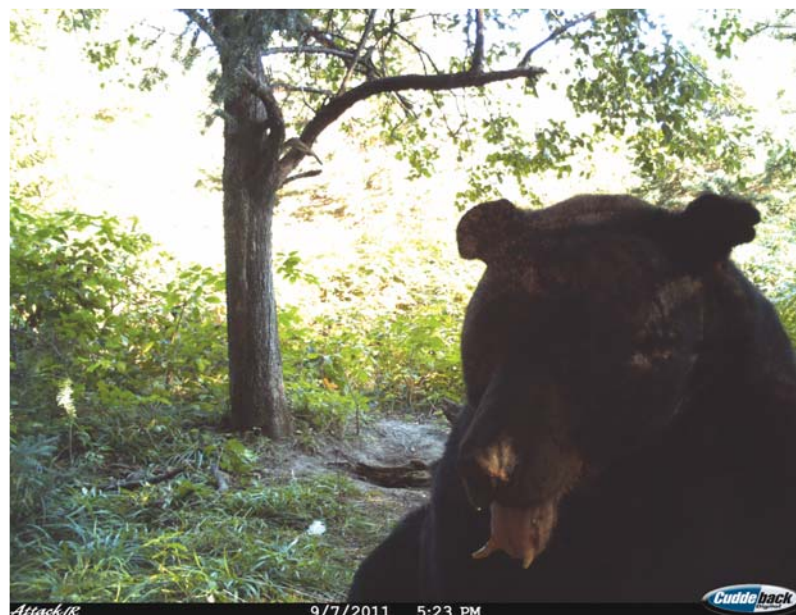
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DICK ELLIS

On Wisconsin Outdoors

Goodbye Snaggleteeth



Snaggleteeth sat down and looked into the lens of the motion camera the day before he was killed during the September season.

Mike Foss and I have a running script we play out during the late summer months prior to the Wisconsin September bear season or during the season itself. I journey 400 miles northwest from the Milwaukee suburbs to the Foss bear camp in Bayfield County near Washburn and shadow the professional guide as he replenishes the bait stations, many of which he has methodically visited since April. By the time the hunters arrive who have waited eight years on average building the points necessary to draw a tag to harvest a bear, Foss has the bears reliably coming to the majority of baits over 30 square miles of rugged Superior country. When the smoke clears on another season, these hunters almost certainly will have 100 percent shot opportunity due to a guide with a tenacious work ethic and a sixth sense when it comes to knowing where to find very big bears.

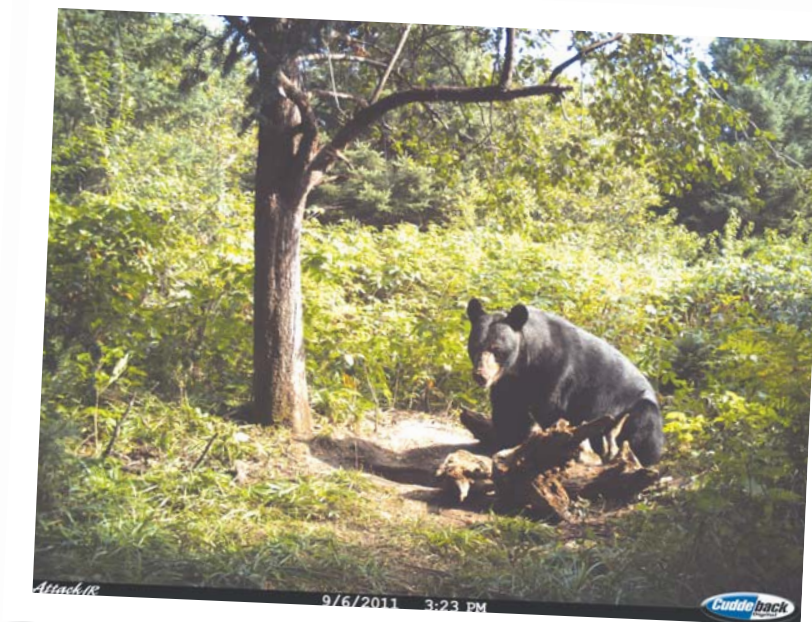
Some of these bears are

extraordinarily large. Some give even veteran hunters the butterflies when walking out in the dark from a stand that is purposely maintained to bring the giants in. A 639-pound bear was killed in this camp two years ago. Four hundred pound-plus bears are not "common," but one or two usually

In his prime, Snaggleteeth, so named due to a tooth that jutted from the boar's mouth captured on motion cameras set over bait piles, might have weighed 700 pounds.

die here every year if an average of 20 hunters takes to the field. And then there is Snaggleteeth. Then ... there was Snaggleteeth.

Foss first saw the monster bear nine years ago running in broad daylight during the bear mating



Snaggleteeth is captured at the Mike Foss bait pile on this motion camera photo and weighed 597 pounds when killed in September.

season in pursuit of sows. In his prime, Snaggleteeth, so named due to a tooth that jutted from the boar's mouth captured on motion cameras set over bait piles, might have weighed 700 pounds. The injury probably was incurred during a fight in his younger years with other boars for female companionship.

It took the guide five years after that first encounter to figure out that the bear lived in a dark and tangled creek bottom lair.

sense of his own. Yes, Snaggleteeth would show at the bait. Three thousand Foss Cuddeback motion photos of the boar at the bait since July 9 of 2011 prove it over and over. But never once over the years when a Foss hunter held vigil over the bait would Snaggleteeth show. Even when photos captured the bear on bait the day before with no hunter on stand due to a betraying wind that the guide knew would blow the ambush.

But back to our "script". When quietly following Foss and his bait piles into Snaggleteeth country, I admit that maneuvering the berry patches and creek bottoms in the dark forests of the bear's haunt was hair-raising. "Don't worry Mike," I would whisper. "I'm right behind you ... way behind you." And I would watch my friend's shoulders go up and down in muffled laughter. Foss knows too that I embrace the old rule that a hunter trying to escape an angry bear only need be faster than one other hunter. I was confident that I could run faster than my big, tough friend who spends half of his life in this rugged country alone and unafraid among the monster bears of Bayfield County.

Soon after, the bear was coming to one of Foss's bait stations carefully set in consideration of prevailing winds and hunter stand placement. But a bear doesn't become old and gargantuan without a certain intelligence and maybe a sixth

But Mike Foss isn't really so tough. He donates bear hunts at no cost to kids with cancer and their families and survivors of cancer. When I sat across from him at his kitchen table scribbling in a reporter's notebook, tears rolled down his face as he tried to talk about the little girl and high school boy who were in his stands but who would both die within a year of leaving the Foss camp. In 2011, again he sat with 12-year-old cancer survivor, Sara McQuiston, until she tagged her bear.

And last month, when he called to tell me that Snaggletooth had died to hound hunters a day before the 2011 bait season opened, he couldn't talk at all. He tried, but the emotion of it all stopped him, and it really had nothing to do with one of Foss's hunters not killing the bear. Perhaps some will not understand this, but I know Foss had grown to love the bear he worked so hard to outwit, and I completely understood it. As much as I had loved to report and take photos annually on this extraordinarily successful camp, I also quietly hoped each season that Snaggletooth would survive again; just simply die a legend's death some day alone in a berry patch of old age, leaving every one of us to simply wonder over the years, "What happened to Snaggletooth?"

"I have so many pictures of him since July," Foss said. "The very last photos of him, he's so close to the camera that you can only see part of

his body. The last photo he's sitting down maybe two feet from the camera and all you can see is his head as he looks right at the lens. He had never done that before. It's like he knows this is his last shot and he's telling me goodbye."

The giant bear was killed the next day and Foss's camp went on. The first time I spoke with Foss, 13 of 16 hunters had filled tags, with a 472-pound bear killed over the Snaggletooth bait and other bears at 331, 325, 275, and 217 also part of the harvest. By the time the curtain had fallen on the Washburn camp, 16 of 17 tags had been filled, and the 100 percent shot opportunity standard had been maintained. All on the back of Guide Mike Foss and his small team of guides.

One last note from the 2011 season: Mike Foss slipped the photo card from one of the motion cameras set over one of his baits into the computer and saw a tremendous bear he had never seen before. "He's at least 600 pounds," Foss said. "His belly is so round and the bear is so huge that he looks like a giant wood tick. I'm calling him Wood Tick."

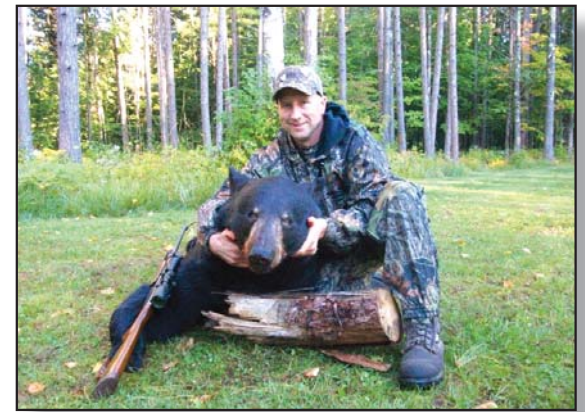
The King is dead. Long live the King. 

Read Mike Foss's thoughts on the end of Snaggletooth at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com.

Dick Ellis is publisher/editor of On Wisconsin Outdoors and a Wisconsin syndicated outdoor columnist.



Wisconsin bear hunter John Wisnepske took this 325-pound bear with a muzzleloader while hunting with guide Mike Foss in Bayfield County.



Brian Bolsom of Green Bay tagged this 472-pound bear from the Mike Foss camp in Bayfield County days after the legendary Snaggletooth was killed by hunters with hounds.

Bear Necessities Cap Long Recovery

Cancer survivor Sara McQuiston, 12, found a friend in bear guide Mike Foss this September, like so many other young people who faced cancer over the years.

Sara, of Alma, Wisconsin, was diagnosed at age four at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota with medulloblastoma; a walnut-sized brain tumor had grown on the cerebellum where head meets spine. Headaches and a balance problem with their young daughter, according to her mother, Melanie, was thought to be associated with strep throat prior to a frightening experience while Sara swam with family and friends at a local motel.


"She said, 'I can't see' and her eyes were going every which way," said Melanie. "She couldn't feel her hands or feet. Of course I was all worked up and took her to emergency. They told us we needed to go right to the Mayo Clinic."

On February 19, 2004, medulloblastoma was diagnosed. Six hours later, surgeons were able to remove 95 percent of the tumor during a six hour operation.


Removing any more of the tumor embedded in Sara's brain would wipe out her motor skills. Instead, an aggressive combination of radiation and chemotherapy was utilized to attack the remaining growth. Because Sara's body was able to tolerate the highest level of chemo and radiation the doctors could safely order, the approach worked.

"Sara took everything they could give her, and that meant an 80 percent chance that the cancer would not come back," Melanie said. "The chemotherapy and radiation was done in April of 2005. We had to keep going back for scans to see if the tumor was returning every month, then every six months, and then once a year. There has never been a hint of it returning. After five years, they called Sara cured. Sara is strong. She'll fight you tooth and nail. She never complained, never asked 'why me?' She just knew she had to be strong and fight it."

Sara was born into a family of hunters. Her father, Chance, taught her to use a turkey mouth call at age three. By age 12, she had killed mule deer and antelope. When her grandfather donated his 2011 bear tag to Sara, Chance approached Mike Foss for costs and details of hunts provided with Northern Wisconsin Outfitters. It was Foss who said, "No charge for Sara." And it was Sara who headed home to Alma after spending time on stand with Foss and her dad with a bear taken with one shot from a 30-06.

"Sara spent 32 hours on stand over seven nights," Melanie said. "It wasn't a 300-pound bear but it was her bear and she was ecstatic and very excited. Mike is a good guy, just nice and enthusiastic. He told us to use whatever we needed to make our trip easier. And he knows what he's talking about with bear hunting. He takes care of the hunter. He and Sara mentally connected. He was going to take care of her one way or another." 



Cancer survivor Sara McQuiston, 12, harvests her bear after sitting withenthusiastic. He told us to use whatever we needed to make our trip easier. And he knows what he's talking about with bear hunting. He takes care of the hunter. He and Sara mentally connected. He was going to take care of her one way or another." 

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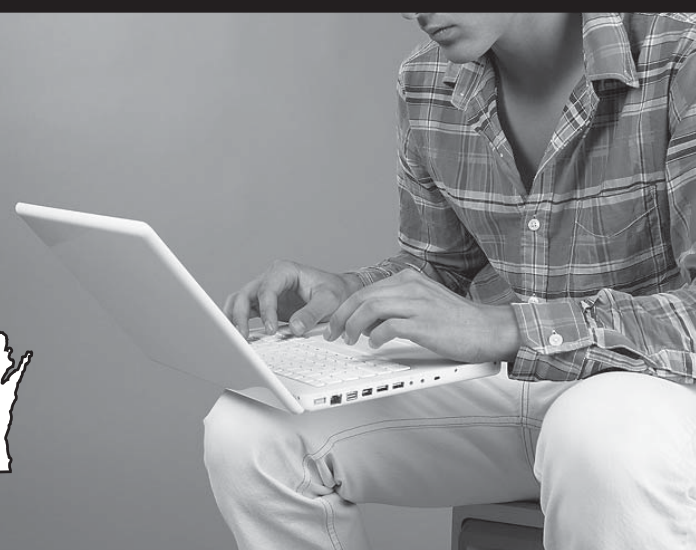
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GARY ENGBERG

Gary Engberg Outdoors

Fish Lake Mendota's deep water for late fall walleyes

Lake Mendota is one of south-central Wisconsin's premier fishing lakes despite being a "metro" lake bordering Madison, the state capital. Being so close to the University of Wisconsin and the state DNR headquarters, Lake Mendota has had many different studies and research projects done on its waters over the years.

The lake is good sized with 9,842 acres that have a maximum depth of 83 feet, which is deep by most lake standards in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest. The average depth is about 35 feet, and 70 percent of the lake's area is greater than 20 feet deep. The lake is a drainage lake with the major inlets being the Yahara River and Sixmile Creek on the north end and Pheasant Branch Creek on the west end of the lake. The Yahara River's outlet is on the southeast side and flows into Lake Monona, another fine fishing lake on the Madison Chain with all gamefish present in good numbers and muskies over 50 inches.

The shoreline is entirely upland except for the areas around the Yahara

River inlet, which is marsh and lowland. Although the shoreline has high banks and is greatly developed, there are numerous public parks and boat landings surrounding Lake Mendota (and the other "Chain" lakes too) for anglers and those who'd like to camp while fishing for a day or two. The lake's bottom is mostly sand and gravel with some large rock areas and muck in most of Lake Mendota's bays.

Lake Mendota's water is very fertile and stained or off-color. The clarity of the water changes with the extent of the annual summer algae bloom. The algae blooms are very cyclical and are influenced by city and country runoff and water temperature. The most common weeds present are coontail, water celery, Eurasian milfoil, and various kinds of pond weed. There's a well-defined weedline which starts at about 10 to 12 feet. You can also find a deep water weedline where you'll come across sand grass in water 20-feet deep and sometimes even deeper. The weedline depth varies with the amount of algae bloom, which affects the depth of light penetration and the corresponding weed growth.

The Lake Mendota fishery is varied with most northern water gamefish present and in good numbers. The walleye population has increased due to heavy stocking by the DNR, but fishery personnel are always worried about overexploitation by anglers. Lake Mendota has a minimum size of 18 inches and a daily limit of three fish, which has helped the walleye



DNR Fisheries Technician Dick Brandt with a big Lake Mendota walleye.

numbers bounce back from some lower population numbers in the 1990s. Biologists have said that a harvest of 35 percent is needed to maintain a healthy fishery without any stocking. But angler harvest was 60 percent in the early 1990s and in some previous years. The larger size minimum and reduced bag numbers have helped the walleye population rebound and allowed them a year or two of added growth time.

The other fish species that is thriving in Lake Mendota is the smallmouth bass. You can't talk about Lake Mendota without mentioning the great smallmouth fishing. Their natural reproduction is very good, and their numbers and size seem to be increasing each and every year. The smallmouth bass, the walleye, and the northern pike are all doing well in most of these local waters, and one day the DNR may not have to rely on stocking for many of the Madison Chain's fish. Often in the late fall, you'll catch big smallmouth in some of the same spots where you're catching walleyes. Both species like the steep drops, rocks, and hard bottom this time of year. Though this may never happen, Lake Mendota has the size, depth, structure, and forage to support a thriving fishery and, hopefully, one that can provide some natural reproduction in future years.

The fall walleye locations in October, November, and even into

December are basically the same as they are in the late summer time period.

I suggest that you fish early or late in the day for best results. But as the fall progresses and the lake waters cool, you can get on the water by mid-morning and still have a good day of fishing. After the fall's turnover, walleyes are usually found in deep water, ranging in depths from 25 to 40 feet and over the many rock bars and areas with a hard bottom. Steep breaks, deep water bars, and points can all hold fish this time of year. Live bait rigs and jigs (Bait Rigs Slo-Pokes) tipped with minnows (red tail chubs, if you can find them) slowly worked across the bottom or dragged is very effective this time of year. Use large minnows, Gulp, or Powerbait minnows, because walleyes, and particularly big walleyes, want a "meal," not a snack, as they bulk up before the hard water period of winter. You can also catch walleyes on Lake Mendota by trolling, but this time of the year, as in spring, I prefer jigging and live-bait rigging for my walleyes.

Pike began to move to the weedy flats and shoreline points late in August or by the first week of September. By October and into November, there is a movement of pike to deep water until ice-up, when they'll move shallow again. As water temperatures fall in October and November, smallmouth

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SUZETTE CURTIS

Recipes By Suzette Wunderbar Venison

It's time to gear up for the 2011 deer hunting season, and that means it's also time to use up any Venison left over from the 2010 season. So, dig into that freezer and see what you still have before adding more. Here are a few ideas to help you enjoy right now. 

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. recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com

Slow Cooker Shredded Venison Sandwiches

- 3 lbs Venison roast
- ¼ cup brown sugar, packed
- 2 tbs olive oil
- 2 tbs cider vinegar
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 tsp dry mustard
- 3 ribs celery, chopped
- ½ tsp chili powder
- 2 beef bouillon cubes,
- ¼ tsp paprika dissolved in 2 cups water
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tbs minced garlic
- 1 bay leaf
- ¼ cup ketchup

Heat oil over medium high heat in large pan. Brown both sides of roast to seal; then place roast in bottom of slow cooker. Cover with onions, celery and beef bouillon/water. Cover and cook on high 4 hours.

Remove roast from slow cooker and reserve 1 ½ cups cooking liquid. After roast cools slightly, shred with forks and return to slow cooker.

In large bowl, mix reserved cooking liquid with remaining ingredients. Add to shredded meat in slow cooker; stirring and mixing well. Cover and heat on low for about 1 hour.

Serve on sandwich buns while still hot.

Venison Mushroom Burgers

- 2 lbs ground Venison*
- 2 tsp dried tarragon
- 8 oz fresh mushrooms, finely chopped
- 2 tsp sea salt
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 1 tbs dried parsley

In large bowl, mix all ingredients until well blended (using your hands for this really works best). Cover bowl and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours to allow flavors to meld. Remove from refrigerator and shape mixture into patties and grill or broil until desired doneness.

Serve with horseradish sauce or spiced ketchup (ketchup mixed with a little all-spice, ground cloves and garlic powder).

** When I grind Venison
I add a little beef tallow.
This gives the Venison
enough added fat
to keep the burgers
from falling apart.*

Venison Cabbage Rolls

- 1 lb ground Venison
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 3 cups tomato sauce, divided
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 8 outer cabbage leaves
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 cups uncooked brown rice

Cook rice according to package directions. While rice is cooking, fill large pot 2/3 full of water and heat until boiling. Add cabbage leaves and continue boiling for 2 to 3 minutes until leaves are wilted. Drain cabbage and place on paper toweling to dry. Set aside.

Heat oil over medium high heat in large skillet. Add Venison, onion, sea salt and nutmeg. Cook until meat is browned and onion is translucent. Stir in 1 cup tomato sauce.

Divide meat mixture evenly among the eight cabbage leaves. Folding in the sides of the leaves, roll the cabbage around the meat filling.

Transfer cooked rice to the skillet used for the meat mixture, spreading evenly over bottom of pan. Place cabbage rolls (seam side down) atop rice and pour remaining tomato sauce over all. Cover skillet and heat on low 20 to 25 minutes.

ENGBERG, from page 7

move to slightly shallower water (12 to 15 feet) and greatly increase their feeding activity. Then, as fall becomes winter, smallmouth move deeper and become basically inactive.

The deeper rock bars on Lake Mendota like Dunn's Bar, Brearly Street Bar, Picnic Point, Second Point, the Maple Bluff shoreline, Fox Bluff Point, and the deep structure off Governors Island all have deep water areas which will hold walleyes in the fall. And I mean big walleyes. Drag and jig a ¼ ounce jig in orange, chartreuse, green, or black up and down the steep breaks and drop-offs. Mid-to late November and even into December is the time when the big walleyes are going on a major feeding binge to bulk up for the winter. Remember to use the largest and best quality minnows that you can find and lip hook the bait through both lips from the lower lip to the top lip. Then, slowly work or drag your jig/minnow across the bottom and up and down the drop-offs. The key is a slow presentation! Very, very slow.

As I write this article, Lake Mendota still has water temperatures in the low 60s and upper 50s. The water temperature has to drop, and the lake must turn over before the big girls (walleyes) get active and start biting. This is a body of water that gets better as the fall progresses and the temperatures drop as we get into November. So, mark your maps for good locations, dress properly, and slowly work the deep water drop-offs and structure for fall's bounty of trophy walleyes on southern Wisconsin's Lake Mendota.

If the weather stays fishable (not frozen) late in the fall, Lake Monona and the southern Wisconsin musky season is open until the end of December, and that is most definitely big fish time!

Guides and contacts:

D & S Bait, 608.242.4225; Tony Puccio, 608.845.5410; Wally Banfi, 608.644.9823; Gary Engberg, 608.795.4208 or www.garyengbergoutdoors.com; Ron Barefield, 608.838.8756; Lee Tauchen, 608.444.2180

Contact Gary Engberg at 608.795.4208 or gengberg@chorus.net or at www.garyengbergoutdoors.com.



JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing In Wisconsin

Cold weather can still mean hot fishing

So here it is November, with December right around the corner and full-blown winter sneaking up fast. Not exactly our best fly fishing months. Really? Does that mean that there is nothing left for us who like to wave wands to do but put on heavy clothes, pull out the bows and guns, and hunt? Well, that certainly is an option, but if you really want to continue fishing, here are some suggestions.

As long as the rivers remain open, there are steelhead and brown trout to cast and drift to. Granted, it will be a bit nippy, and perhaps you may not be able to stay in the water for more than a half hour at a time, but it can be done. And it can produce some really nice fish.

Let's talk a bit about the fish. We have two strains of rainbow trout (steelhead) that live in Lake Michigan and move into the tributaries (the Root, Menominee, Milwaukee, and Sheboygan in my part of the state) this time of the year: the Chambers Creek and Ganaraska River species. We also have two varieties of brown trout: Seeforellen and Wild Rose. How do you tell which strain is which? I have been told that the only way is to know what the fin clip i.d.s are. I don't know them therefore I don't worry about it.

Generally, the Chambers Creek enter during mid-November but do not spawn until January or February. Ganaraskas come in to spawn anywhere from late February through May, depending on the weather—meaning water temperature and flow. The browns come and go. So as one year ends and another begins, both

species are available.

What all this means is, if you are not a hunter, or if you just need to keep fly fishing, there are challenging fish out there to test your skills—and patience.

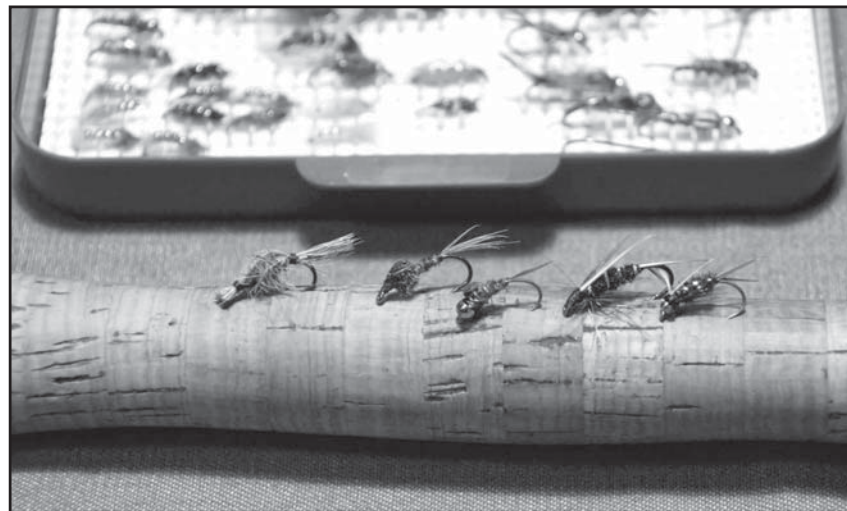
So you ask, "What kind of flies would I use if I am fishing for these fish at any time from now until the spring run is over?" Right now, and until the spring spawning is on, I will fish nymphs 85 percent of the time. Why? Well, nymphs are the most abundant natural food, and these fish have to eat.

These are not 4-year-old salmon that come into the rivers to spawn, do not feed, and then die. These fish come into the rivers to spawn, but they continue to feed and return to Lake Michigan when their procreation process is over. Their main fare consists of those tiny creatures living among the rocks and debris on the rivers' bottom: nymphs. Yes, minnows are there too, so a streamer will work sometimes, but their main diet consists of nymphs.

Egg patterns come into the picture later next year. I have three patterns that I favor during the winter months: the Prince, the Pheasant Tail, and my own Rapids Nymph.

The Prince is an interesting pattern. It has some natural color and the profile is stonefly-like. However, no one I have talked to and nothing I've read can explain what the white biots are supposed to be. The fly works, so maybe the white is the attraction.

The Pheasant Tail, specifically the Sawyer Pheasant Tail is probably the most popular nymph pattern ever created. If



Even though the author carries a variety of nymphs in his box, these three patterns—I. to r.: the Rapids Nymph; the Sawyer Pheasant Tail, both without and with a beadhead; and the Prince, plain and beadhead—are his most reliable this time of the year.

not, it is tied for that honor with another pattern, the Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear, which is another pattern you can carry. I favor the P.T. because it is easier to tie.

My Rapids Nymph was not created to represent any specific nymph. It was intended to simulate many. It has a good, basic profile and that is what I think makes it work.

All of these patterns can be tied in sizes 8 through 14. Some tie them even smaller for normal stream trout during the regular season. Personally, I tie them exclusively on # 10s and 12s. I tie them with and without a beadhead, on straight and curved hooks. All are weighted.

As far as fishing them is concerned ... well, they are nymphs; fish them as such. The only thing you must do this time of year is fish them slow and deep. For that, if I am drifting an especially deep hole, I use a sinking tip along with a sinking leader so I do not have to use that dreaded split shot. Admittedly, the sinking tip and leader is not easy to lift from the water to cast, but with patience and by retrieving longer to get closer to your body which keeps the pick-up short, they work just fine.

There you have it. If you have to get out and float a fly during these months (and why not?), I have suggested where to go and what to use. You can also check out the DNR website for additional suggestions of where to fish.

Now if you will excuse me, I have to try to get some grouse, venison, squirrels,

and one more turkey for our freezer. I will add steelhead and browns once that is accomplished.

Something New

Over the past few years we have introduced you to fly fishing, helped you choose your tackle, and walked you through a few patterns. Starting in our next issue, we will be adding something new: a Q&A opportunity for you. You ask the question and I will try to get the correct answer for you. No, this is not "stump the chump"! This is serious.

We cover a lot of subjects in the fly fishing world, but maybe not the specific subject you would like to know about. Maybe there is a fly pattern you would like to learn more about or a term you would like to have explained. Now you can ask. Email me at flyfishing@onwisconsinoutdoors.com. Tell me what you are having difficulty with. I will help you. Or at least I will try. You know, our publisher, Dick Ellis, calls all his writers "experts." I will be tested.

Keep a good thought! 

Jerry teaches fly tying and fly fishing at Riveredge Nature Center in Newburg. He enjoys all aspects of the outdoors and shares some of his experiences in his book "Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer." To find his 2012 class schedule, review his book, and see what else he has to offer, go to www.jerrykiesowoc.com.



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— Fishing Guide — DENNIS RADLOFF

DENNIS RADLOFF

The "Need For Feed"

Fall musky fishing offers some of the greatest opportunities to catch a big fish. It doesn't matter if it's a 32-, 42-, or 52-inch musky, in the fall they are all running at maximum weight. If we take a look at the two main factors of what makes muskies move in the fall, we can identify specific areas to find them on the waters we fish. In the state of Wisconsin, we have until the end of November north of Highway 10 and even through December south of Highway 10 to experience some great musky fishing.

The "Need For Feed"

All muskies put on the "feedbag" in the fall. Muskies will digest what they eat only as fast as their metabolism will allow. That metabolic rate is controlled entirely by water temperatures. This may be the best explanation for those muskies we see in the summer sunning themselves in shallow water. I believe when I see a musky up shallow in the middle

of summer, it's most likely that they have moved up out of colder deeper water where they just ate a big meal to utilize the warmer shallow water to accelerate the digestion process.

When water temperatures begin to cool in the fall, muskies seem to know it's time to bulk up for winter. Water temperatures dropping from the lower 70-degree range through the mid 40-degree range offer some fierce feeding windows, often several times a day, and provide fall muskies the opportunity to still digest at a multi-day rate and continue feeding actively. Once water temperatures drop below 40 degrees, feeding windows become less frequent as it takes longer to process the last meal.

Another important factor of the "need for feed" has to do with female muskies having fully developed spawn sacks by early fall. While these spawn sacks are still rock hard and months from maturity for next spring's spawn, they still require additional

nourishment and protein, requiring excessive feeding.

Fall Staging

This is a term used to describe the movement from open water to the areas adjacent to where muskies will be spawning next spring. Muskies start moving out of deep open water in early September and finally spend most of the winter months hanging out at the mouths of rivers or shallow bays. This move puts them close to the areas they will spawn next spring along with optimal shallow water feeding opportunities. This staging process makes fall a great time to contact some of the big females that would ordinarily be hard to find. It also puts a large population of actively feeding muskies into small, concentrated areas.

When we put these two factors together, you will be looking for schools of bait fish near river mouths, shallow bay entrances, and underwater points. When you can locate this combination, you will surely find big muskies looking for food.

Success in finding a big one this fall will be yours when casting, trolling, or even using live bait with suckers rigged up on quick strike rigs if you take advantage of the muskies' "need for feed." *OW*

Captain Dennis Radloff owns and operates Sterling Guide Service. He guides on the waters of Green Bay and Southeastern Wisconsin seven days a week April through November. Contact Dennis through his website sterlingmusky.com or at 262.443.9993.



Mary Pikora with her personal best 52" x 26" musky (calculated weight 43.95 pounds) RIGHT: Close-up of the tail of a 20"+ sucker Mary's musky was working on swallowing when it struck her 8" crank bait ... talk about the "need for feed."



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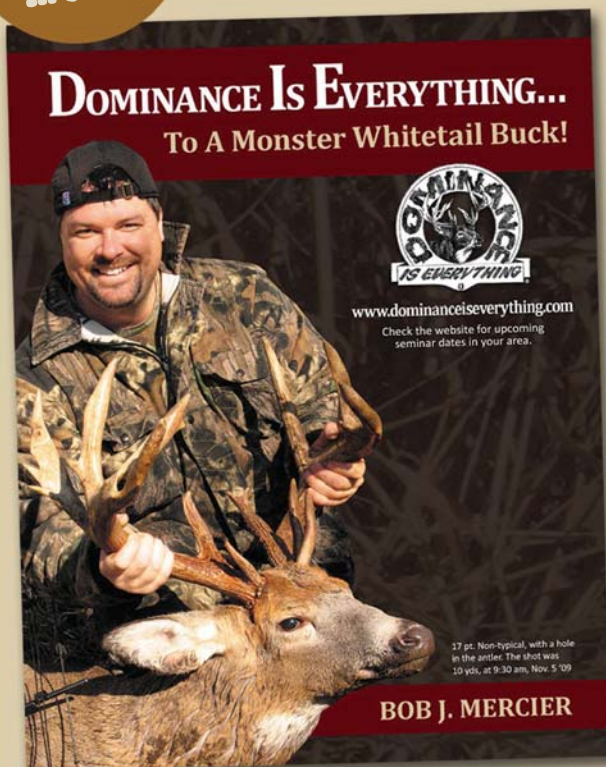
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LEE FAHRNEY

Deer Management Scrutinized

Executive order appoints deer trustee

Dr. James Kroll, a.k.a. Dr. Deer, began his duties as the new Wisconsin deer trustee with a visit to Wisconsin recently to review current policies regarding white-tailed deer management and to obtain feedback on citizen attitudes. Kroll's appointment was the result of an executive order from Governor Scott Walker directing the Department of Administration to hire the trustee.

After briefings in Madison on current deer management practices, Dr. Kroll met with a group of landowners/hunters on Oct. 19 at Pappas Trading Post near Arena in Iowa County to hear their concerns. He told the group that his authority from the Governor is to gather information and gauge public opinion.

"I am responsible to the Governor and the Legislature," Dr. Kroll told the group. "Our goal is to get to the facts and the truth."

"We can tell the difference between good data and bad data," Dr. Kroll asserted. "It'll be pretty difficult to get anything by us." The Governor's directive requires an interim report on March 15, 2012, and a final report by June 30, 2012.

Dr. Kroll is currently a professor of forestry and wildlife at Steven F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas

and serves as director of the Institute for White-tailed Deer Management and Research. He has been engaged in deer management programs for more than three decades and has conducted research in nearly every state and in most provinces in Canada and Mexico. Dr. Kroll is often referred to as "the father of modern deer management."

Dr. Deer will be joined in the \$125,000 project by Gary Alt, a Pennsylvania deer management specialist who has presented previously in Wisconsin on deer management issues. Alt is generally credited with establishing a landmark deer management program in Pennsylvania.

David Guynn, professor emeritus from Clemson University, rounds out the team. Dr. Guynn's expertise lies with research and a teaching emphasis in forest wildlife management at Clemson.

While Kroll's team will examine all aspects of Wisconsin's deer management efforts, the small group of sportsmen assembled at the Arena venue was particularly concerned about Department of Natural Resources policies regarding Chronic Wasting Disease in southern Wisconsin.

Participants expressed a belief that the DNR has used CWD as an underhanded way to gain control over

continued on page 23



Dr. James Kroll, the new deer trustee for Wisconsin, is touring the state to obtain feedback on citizen attitudes regarding the management of the state's whitetail deer herd. Kroll and his wife, Susie, meet here with a group of landowner/hunters at Pappas Trading Post near Arena in Iowa County.



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LEE GATZKE

NextBuk Outdoors Hunting on faith

I'd found his track while scouting a property in early April. Deer tracks of this size are not common these days. The CWD rules in effect for this area saw to it that few deer survived long enough to grow a hoof this large. Frequent glassing of this spot and the surrounding area failed to produce a sighting of a deer capable of making the big, splayed print. I made a ritual of glassing here throughout the summer and into late September, but my vigilance had gone unrewarded. Occasionally I would walk the edge of a cornfield on the public ground and find his track, verifying he was still in the neighborhood. It was all the evidence I needed to decide to hunt this buck. To be honest, there weren't many other options available due to low deer numbers locally.

My spring scouting on this public ground revealed a number of bedding areas I suspected he was using. The beauty of having so much public land available, as we do in Wisconsin, is that it offers room to roam and options that private land does not. When you're limited to 100 or so acres of private land that you're sharing with family and friends, it gets crowded. So many of us experience overcrowding on public land also, but in my case I've discovered by putting in the effort to scout ahead of the hunting seasons, I find more solitude on public land.

The bedding areas I was hunting were clumped in places here and there, spread out over a half mile wide swath of terrain. I would employ a tactic that requires hunting one spot per day and moving on, checking for his track using the trails entering or leaving the bedding area and setting up downwind to hunt it right then and there when I found it. By not hunting more than one day on each spot before moving to another, I'd be hunting fresh stands each time I went out. It burns up a lot of ground, but that's where having a lot of public ground available is a plus. This style of "running and gunning" requires knowledge of many bedding areas. It's effective because the particular deer you're hunting doesn't pattern the hunter, as so often happens when we hunt the same stand over and over again. It requires that you get close to the bedding area, but not too close that you are seen, heard, or scented

while setting up your portable stand. Getting close to bedding areas means you'll have a better chance of catching a deer on its feet in daylight, since they sometimes don't bed down until after sunup and typically leave their beds shortly before sundown.

Due to the heavy hunting pressure this buck had experienced, I reasoned he did not move much in daylight. I'd be hunting him on faith, that at some point he would get on his feet in daylight and I'd be close enough to get a shot. I hunted him a half dozen times during the early bow season employing this tactic and still hadn't spotted him. It was apparent that it would take extraordinary circumstances to catch this elusive buck on his feet in daylight. The upcoming rut could be just the ticket.

October 28th was windy with rain forecasted for mid-morning. I set up my portable 75 yards downwind of a bedding area in the pre-dawn darkness, overlooking a trail that led into thick cover. An hour after sunrise a thunderstorm got me thinking that I'd better abandon my hunting plans. I decided to spot-check another bedding area for his track on the way out during the downpour. One hundred yards downwind of that bedding area, with rain hammering down and thunder adding to the commotion, a buck jumped out of his bed and soon disappeared in the cattails. I saw he carried a good rack and was shocked that he could detect my approach from upwind at that distance in those conditions. He must have spotted me through the cattails in a driving thunderstorm. "Pretty amazing," I thought.

The next morning I was set up on a trail downwind of the bedding area where the buck bolted out the day before. I hunted there until noon, backed out and returned at 3:00 p.m. He didn't show. The following morning found me set up 60 yards downwind of yet another bedding area nearby. All was quiet until shortly before 9:00 a.m. when a buck slowly became apparent through the brush. The tag alder I was perched in didn't offer much concealment, but by now he was broadside at 25 yards and I was at full draw. His next step exposed



After seven months of eluding the author, the public land 8-pointer finally showed himself.

his chest, and my arrow connected behind his shoulder. He ran 30 yards and tipped over. When I arrived at the spot where my arrow passed through him, I carefully examined his splayed hoofprint. No doubt it was the same one I first saw back in April. After seven months of him eluding me, I finally

catch him coming back to bed after a long night of socializing. It made for a hunt I'll always treasure. *W*

Lee Gatzke is a member of NextBuk Outdoors (formerly Blood Brothers Outdoors), creators of tactical deer hunting videos. Gatzke can be reached at www.nextbukoutdoors.com.

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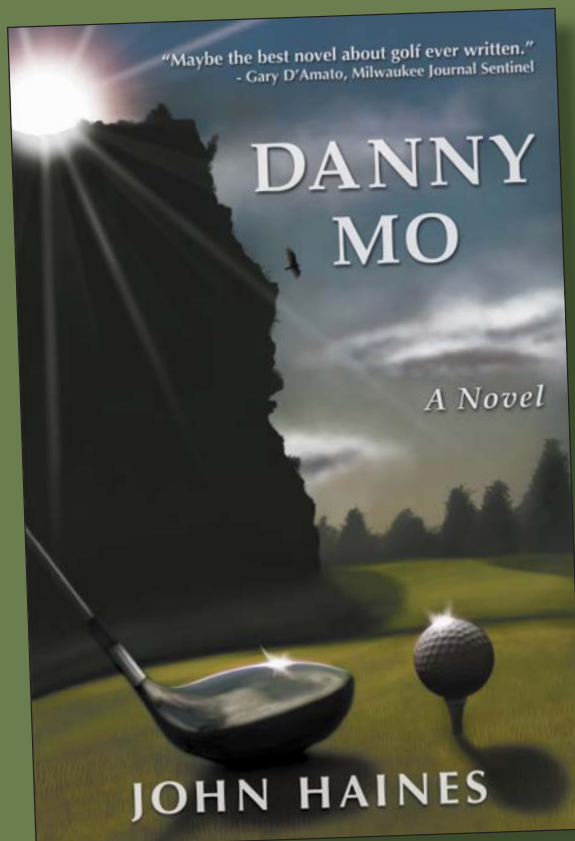
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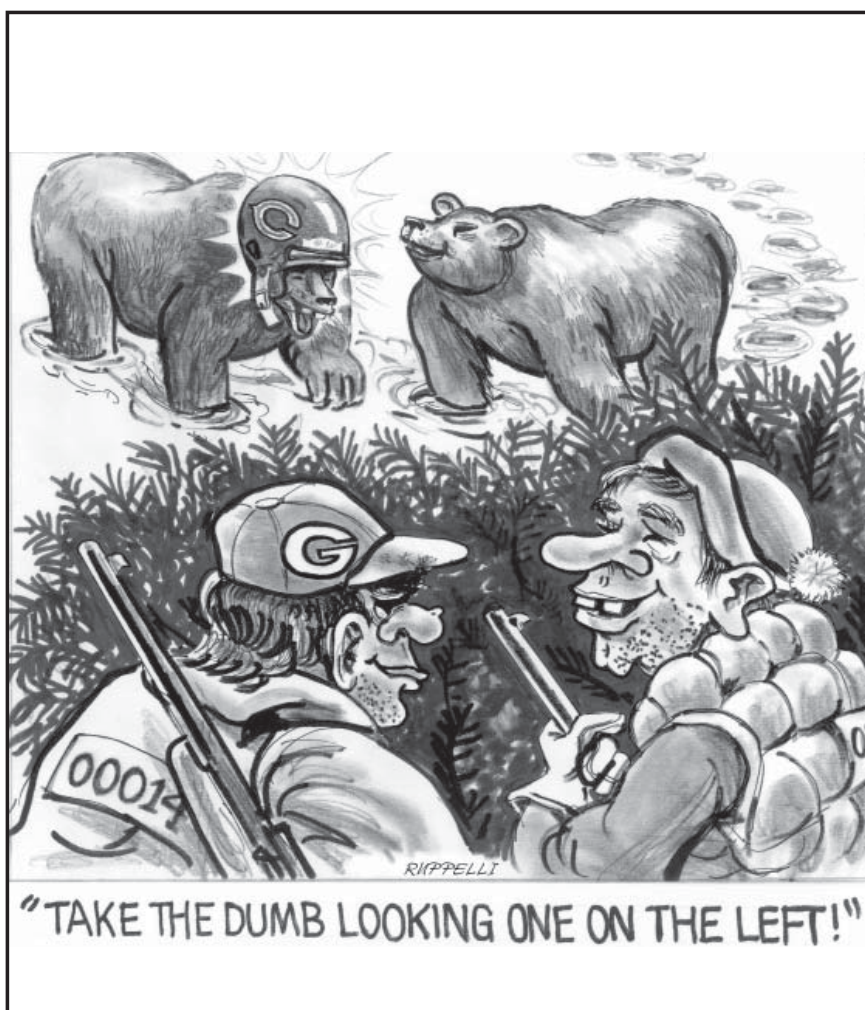
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venison in the freezer. December can bring the **first ice fishing of the season**, along with **snowmobiling and cross country** skiing. [Click on Polk County.](#)

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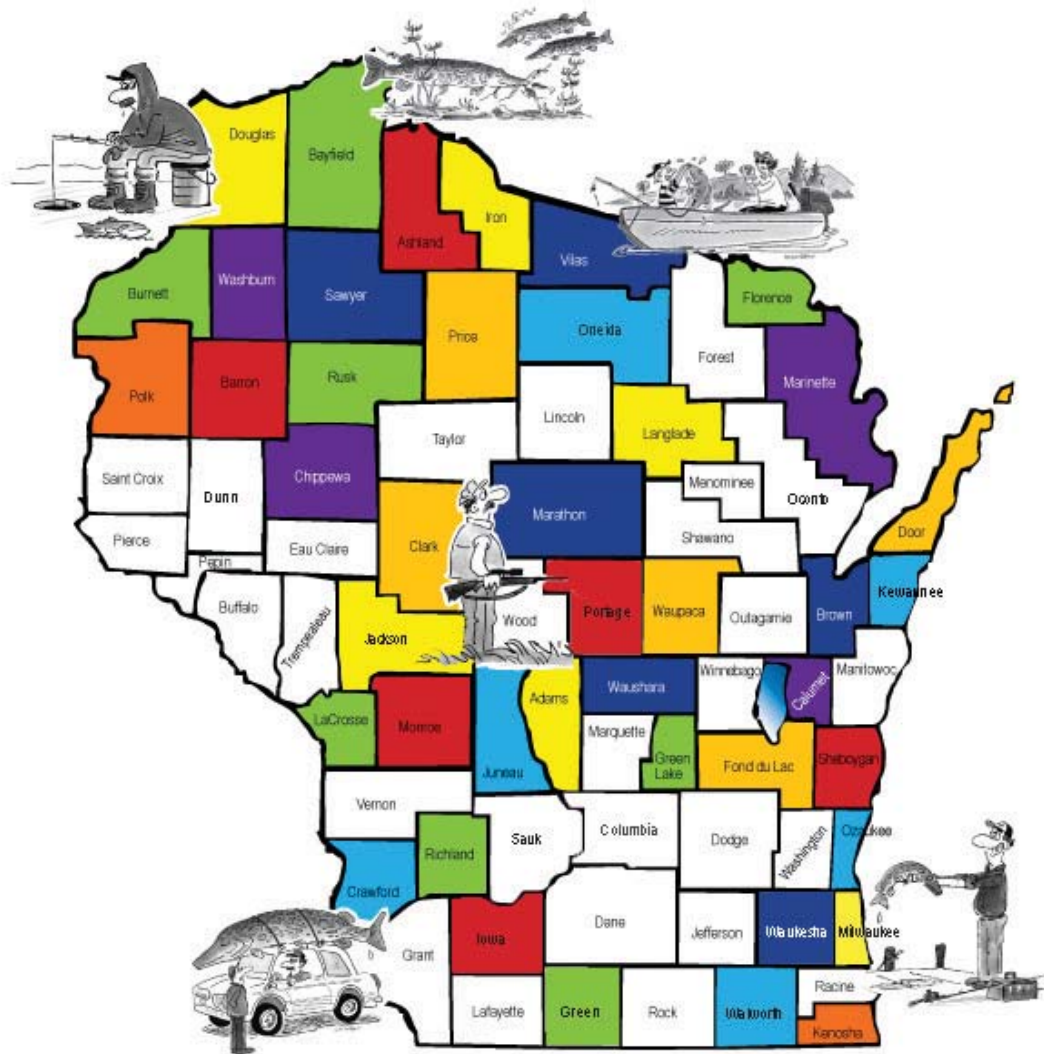
All aboard to Green Bay's **National Railroad Museum** for some Christmas fun! November 25-27 and December 1-4, the Museum will host "**Polar Express**". The classic Christmas tale of the Polar Express comes alive with a dramatic reading, a themed train ride and warm refreshments! Gather the whole family and get in the Christmas spirit in Green Bay! [Click on Brown County.](#)

A family memory ... are you getting together with family and friends on fall hunting trips, for Thanksgiving, Christmas? How does one say Thank You for a great experience? **Give a lasting memory.** Wolf Pack Adventures can help with a **gift certificate** for that great adventure, fishing, hunting, dining, and relaxing. Talk about it and [click on Sheboygan County.](#)

Do you dream of owning your own slice of rural Wisconsin? Whether you're looking to build that perfect country home or you want to enjoy the outdoors on your own private recreational land, **Badgerland Financial** provides country living loans to make those dreams possible. Contact Badgerland Financial at 800.356.2197. [Click on Jackson County.](#)

As the weather gets colder, come out and try our sheltered **5-Stand and trap fields! Stay warm and dry all winter.** We are the only club we know of in the area with these amenities. [Click on Waukesha County.](#)

Over **148,000 acres of county forest**, 950+ lakes and **hundreds of miles of ATV, snowmobile and cross country ski trails** make Washburn County a great destination to visit this time of



year. Fall/Winter events include **Santa's Pizza Party Train Rides, Christmas Arts & Craft Show** and more! To order trail maps or visitor guides, [click on Washburn County](#).

Be thankful to be in Green County and **hit the trails**. You will find great views and some of the **best cheese** to feast on. **The Badger State Trail** consists of 40 miles and **The Cheese Country Trail** consists of 47 miles and both are open to **hiking, snowmobiling and ATVs** in some areas. After your day of fun, shop, dine and relax in Monroe. We welcome you!! [Click on Green County](#).

If you like ice angling and having **fun** with family and friends, you will love Price County's **ice fishing events**. Whether event organizers call them tournaments, rumbles, contests or fests, the outcome for the 6 scheduled events promises to be the same ... **big fish and big winnings**. Check out our website's events page to find out when

and where you can join in on the **fun** this winter! [Click on Price County](#).

Lakeview Log Cabin Resort is an outdoorsman's get-away located on Lake DuBay, which yields **walleye, musky, northern, bass, catfish, and panfish** year round. Hiking, skiing, hunting, and biking can be enjoyed at Rib Mountain State Park, Nine Mile Forest, Green Circle Trail, and various wildlife refuges. [Click on Marathon County](#).

There are BIG reasons to visit Juneau County this fall ... **Big fish, Big bucks, Big turkeys, and Big events!** Come enjoy the **big waters, woods and hospitality** of our county; home to Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Castle Rock & Petenwell Lakes, 4 winding rivers and tons of outdoor fun! [Click on Juneau County](#).

Visit the Waupaca area with an abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities. **With more than 130**

lakes and 10 high quality trout streams, the Waupaca area is a destination for all anglers. Waupaca also offers many acres of public hunting lands. [Click on Waupaca County](#).

Hunters' widows can revel in the holiday spirit at **Markesan's Homespun Holidays on November 18 and 19**. City Hall hosts the annual craft fair along with a silent auction, and shopkeepers offer pre-holiday specials. On December 10, the library holds its popular **Cookie Walk**. [Click on Green Lake County](#).

Do you dream of **owning** your own slice of rural Wisconsin? Whether you're looking to **build that perfect country home** or you want to enjoy the outdoors on your own private recreational land, Badgerland Financial provides **country living loans** to make those dreams possible. Contact Badgerland Financial at 800.356.2197. [Click on Iowa County](#).

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- Iron County Development
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- Juneau County

KENOSHA COUNTY

- Wildlife Visions

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LACROSSE COUNTY

- LaCrosse Area Visitors Bureau

LANGLADE COUNTY

- Antigo/Langlade Chamber

MARATHON COUNTY

- Hooksetters Fishing Guide
- Lakeview Log Cabin Resort

MARINETTE COUNTY

- Marinette County Tourism
- A River Guide (Jason Guarke)

MILWAUKEE COUNTY

- Fish Chaser Guide Service

MONROE COUNTY

- Sparta Area Chamber

ONEIDA COUNTY

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OZAUKEE COUNTY

- Port Washington Tourism

POLK COUNTY

- Polk County Information Center

PORTAGE COUNTY

- Stevens Point Area CVB

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- Park Falls Area Chamber
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- Wounded Warriors in Action

RICHLAND COUNTY

- Hybrid Redneck Events

RUSK COUNTY

- Rusk County

SAWYER COUNTY

- Hayward Lakes Visitors Bureau
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- Sheboygan County Tourism
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- Washburn County Tourism

WAUKESHA COUNTY

- Waukesha Gun Club

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- Fremont Area Chamber
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- Wolf River Outfitters Resort

WAUSHARA COUNTY

- First Weber Real Estate

KEVIN MICHALOWSKI

Dog Talk

Winter training

“No matter the weather, this time of year can be perfect for some easily repeatable training in the grass, weeds and brush.”

There are a lot of clichés out there about fighting like you train and playing like you practice, but when it comes to working a dog in cover, there's no quick fix. If you want your dog to work well in heavy cover, you've got to train your dog in heavy cover.

There have always been a couple of drawbacks. In the summer months the heat in the deep grass can be downright dangerous for a dog. And the green grass of summer is filled with chlorophyll, which works amazingly well to mask scent. If you wait until the grass dries up, well, that's hunting

season, and most of us would like to spend our free time actually hunting instead of coaxing a dog to work through cover. After the hunting season, we need to pick and choose our dates and locations.

Even if you have to deal with a bit of snow, winter training works. No matter the weather, this time of year can be perfect for some easily repeatable training in the grass, weeds and brush.

We all want our pheasant dogs to do two things in the deep cover: quarter nicely to find birds and “hunt dead” when we have something down. You can teach both these skills with a few



There is no substitute for training a dog in deep grass. The trick is helping the dog to succeed. Once he understands he's expected to find the dummy with his nose ...

training dummies, a bottle of bird scent and a couple acres of deep grass.

The first thing you need to do is soak your dummies with scent. Apply it liberally and put on a glove to rub it in if you want to. The goal is to create a powerful scent trail that helps the dog to succeed. You want to encourage the dog to keep working the scent until he

finds the dummy, and the best way to do that is to make sure nothing else out there competes for the dog's attention.

With those young dogs that haven't done a lot of quartering yet, you'll start the training by having the dog hunt dead. The key is to make the dog succeed, so throw a dummy or two into the grass. Don't throw them far. Let the

continued on page 22

“I hunt Idaho.”

- Nathan DeNardi

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DAN MOERICKE

The 'Up Nort' Report

Just a dog

Autumn is here and winter is coming fast. Too fast.

For the past 12 winters, our family has included a black lab named Cleo. Formally, the name is Cleo Caroline Rose according to her AKC papers, but it's "Cleo" on an everyday basis. "Cleo Caroline Rose" is reserved only for special occasions of especially naughty behavior.

We almost lost her in August when old age, respiratory issues, and heat combined for a near-fatal episode of heatstroke. She pulled through, however, and continues to stare me straight in the eye whenever I have anything to eat that she believes should be shared. But it is painfully evident that our time with her is winding down, and that has caused me to reflect on what Cleo's legacy will be.

Over the years, I've read hundreds, if not thousands, of articles about great hunting dogs. Some written in past tense by grief-stricken authors shortly after their companion had moved on to the great thickets and sloughs in the sky. The articles are always choked full of memories about incredible retrieves, long days in the field or in the duck blind, and usually some sort of testimony to the dog's near-human intellect.

This is not one of those articles, for

*"The only thing that
she is passionate about
(other than food)
is fishing ..."*



alas, a great hunter Cleo is not. That fact is probably more of a reflection on her owner than on her. I've always thought that perhaps if we could tie dog treats to pheasants' tails, she might transform into a field trial champion. Absent that, she has little interest in birds, squirrels, or other animals in general.

The fact that she is a purebred Labrador Retriever suggests that, hunter or not, she should at least retrieve. She does not. She may bring back a thrown object once, but if you're stupid enough to throw it again, she figures you're on your own. Get it yourself.

Cleo knows a handful of tricks, all of which revolve around dog treats. No treats, no tricks. It's that simple.

The only thing that she is passionate about (other than food) is fishing ... and that, I think, will be her legacy. From the moment the boat trailer is hooked onto the truck, she stands stubbornly at the tailgate with a hopeful look in her eyes. While she may sleep 22 hours a day at home, she refuses to so much as lie down when out in the boat. Her eyes are keenly trained on every bobber, her breathing accelerates to a pant, and fast reeling by anyone in the boat draws her full and immediate attention.

After all these years, I'm still not sure what it is she's trying to achieve. She doesn't eat the fish. She doesn't play with the fish. As fish are swung aboard, she'll nip at them. When a fish is thrown into the livewell, she will immerse her head to try and catch it. If she does, she'll flip it onto the boat floor and then ignore it. I don't get it.

Ice fishing is more of the same. Years ago on Cleo's first ice fishing trip, I set the hook and began reeling up a crappie. She ran frantically from hole to hole watching for a fish to emerge. It only took about four or five repetitions for her to figure out that the fish always came out of the hole where I was sitting. Since then, she's been a total pain in the butt to have on the ice since her head is always hovering over the hole. Any fish that is released runs the risk of being snatched back out of the hole by a gray muzzle and flipped onto the ice. It's just kind of her thing—her legacy.

These days, Cleo needs help to get into the car and in and out of the



boat. Her joints get sore, her barking is hoarse, but her eyes are still bright. She's definitely in the late autumn of her life and winter is coming fast. Too fast. And yes, I know that she's just a dog. But she's our dog and she's part of our family.

I'm sure going to miss her when

she's gone. I'm not ready for winter yet. All of you dog owners know what I mean. Just sayin'. *WO*

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.

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JJ REICH

The Reich Stuff


Wisconsin game farms offer economic alternative

These days, many people, including myself, are holding back on their spending. For instance, budget woes caused me to cancel some of my fall hunting trips. The latest victim to get the axe was my annual South Dakota pheasant hunt.

Instead of embarking outside Wisconsin, I took a small portion of the money I would have spent on an out-of-state license, gas, hotel, and other travel expenses and used it for a fun weekend at a game farm closer to home.

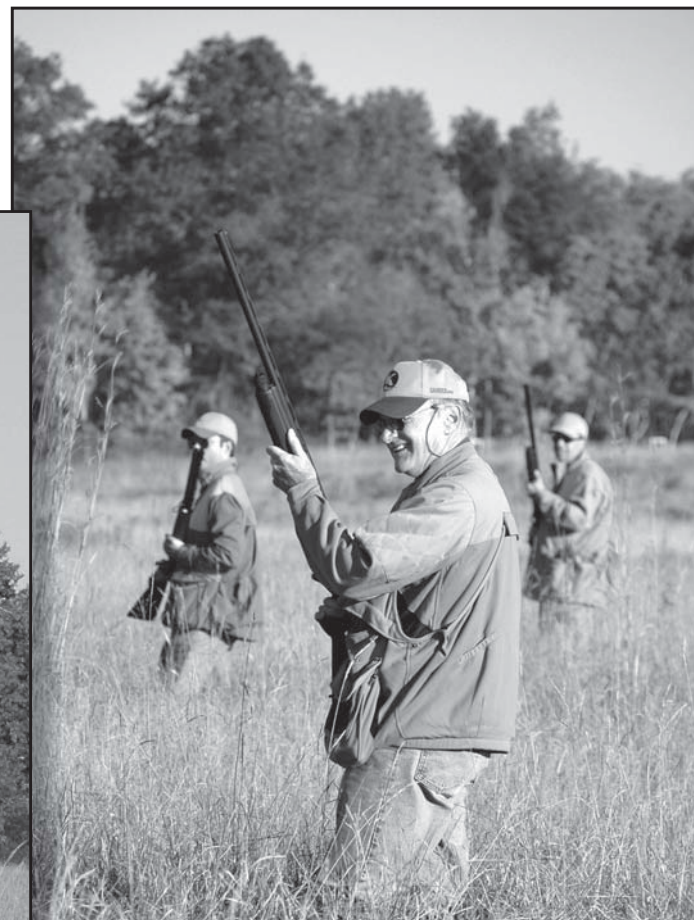
I met up with five of my buddies for a two-day hunt at Coyland Creek Sporting Clay and Game Preserve near Siren, Wisconsin. This place is open to the public and has 610 acres of prime hunting land. Plus, the property has two sporting clays courses, a five-stand clay shooting setup, a clubhouse with a bar, and even a large outdoor facility for weddings and other big gatherings.

We spent the morning walking Coyland's beautiful Prairie Pheasants Sporting Clays course. Next we put out 24 birds in one of their 35-acre hunting fields. The following day we spent a few more hours flushing and shooting another 24 birds. And later, I found time to sight-in my deer rifle at their rifle and handgun range. We all had a blast!

Don't get me wrong; I hope to go back and hunt wild pheasants in South Dakota next year. But Wisconsin's game farms, like Coyland Creek, offer challenge and a lot of fun. They are perfect places to spend a few days enjoying some shooting sports—all for a fraction of what a far away trip might cost. So this year, consider spending some time and money at a local game farm near you. 

To learn more about Coyland Creek, contact Mitch and Kelsie Coyour at 715. 653.4273 or visit www.coyland.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 at www.kampptales.com.



“This place is open to the public and has 610 acres of prime hunting land.”



“I took a small portion of the money I would have spent on an out-of-state license, gas, hotel, and other travel expenses and used it for a fun weekend at a game farm closer to home.”

DENNY MURAWSKA

Safety In The Deer Stand

It is no accident

Each year tragedy strikes many hunters who choose to stalk their prey from trees. Only a few miles from my home, on land I hunt near a friend's farm, a hunter sustained severe, life-altering injuries from a fall involving an unsafe stand.

As I heard it, two hunters ventured into a stretch of vast woods that is unbroken for miles near Alma Center, Wisconsin. It is the same forest I love to hunt. The terrain is wild country, full of deer, bear, wolves and confirmed cougar pictures from trail cams.

One of the hunters wanted to inspect the old two-man stand to ascertain whether it was suitable for the upcoming season. Crawling up to the platform without any safety device, the stand was unhitched from the tree. Unknown to the two men, the ladder below had rusted in two. The result was catastrophic. As the stand collapsed, the man who had ascended it hit his head on several branches on the long fall down. He sustained permanent brain injury, and I was told he is now unable to work. His vehicle was parked far into the woods, and in this hilly terrain, cell phones were of no use. Ambulances and a helicopter came pouring into my friend's farm in hopes of finding the two. They had only a rough idea of where the hunters might be. It was a terrible accident that did not have to happen.

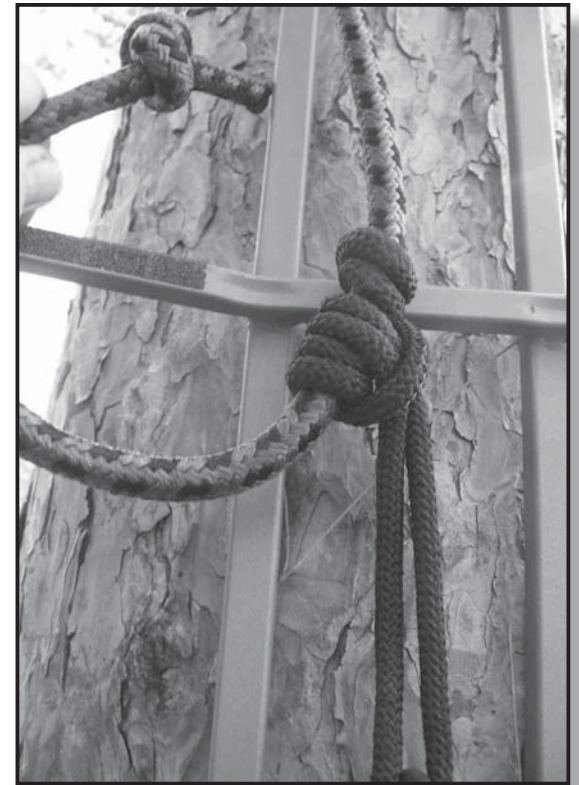
Many of us are tempted to take a cavalier attitude when it comes to climbing. It is estimated that 10% of treestand hunters will suffer an accident. Between the

years of 2000-2007, 46,860 accidents were attributed to the use of tree platforms. Twice as many men as women are victims. Go figure! While there are a number of devices designed to hitch you into place once you are up in the stand, they won't do you any good on the way up or on the way down when you are most vulnerable.

I plead guilty to taking such chances when I was younger, sitting on old, rotten wood platforms and trusting questionable branches. As I got older, less nimble, and became the proud owner of a new artificial hip, I had to become a lot more cautious. It was then I discovered a simple device that is as safe as safe gets and cranks down my anxiety of heights to near zero.

The Prusik knot is elegant in its simplicity and reliability. It is a type of friction hitch, invented by Dr. Karl Prusik in 1931. The knot is tied around strong nylon rope and has been used by climbers and mountaineers since its inception. Basically, the knot can be pushed forward as one ascends or downward as one descends. However, in the event of a slip or fall, friction immediately causes the hitch to grab onto the main rope, stopping any further descent. You are safe from the ground to whatever height you wish to hunt from. In fact, during routine training, rangers are required to go 90 feet in less than a minute.

Some other devices are available that can be utilized for going up and down trees. One is the



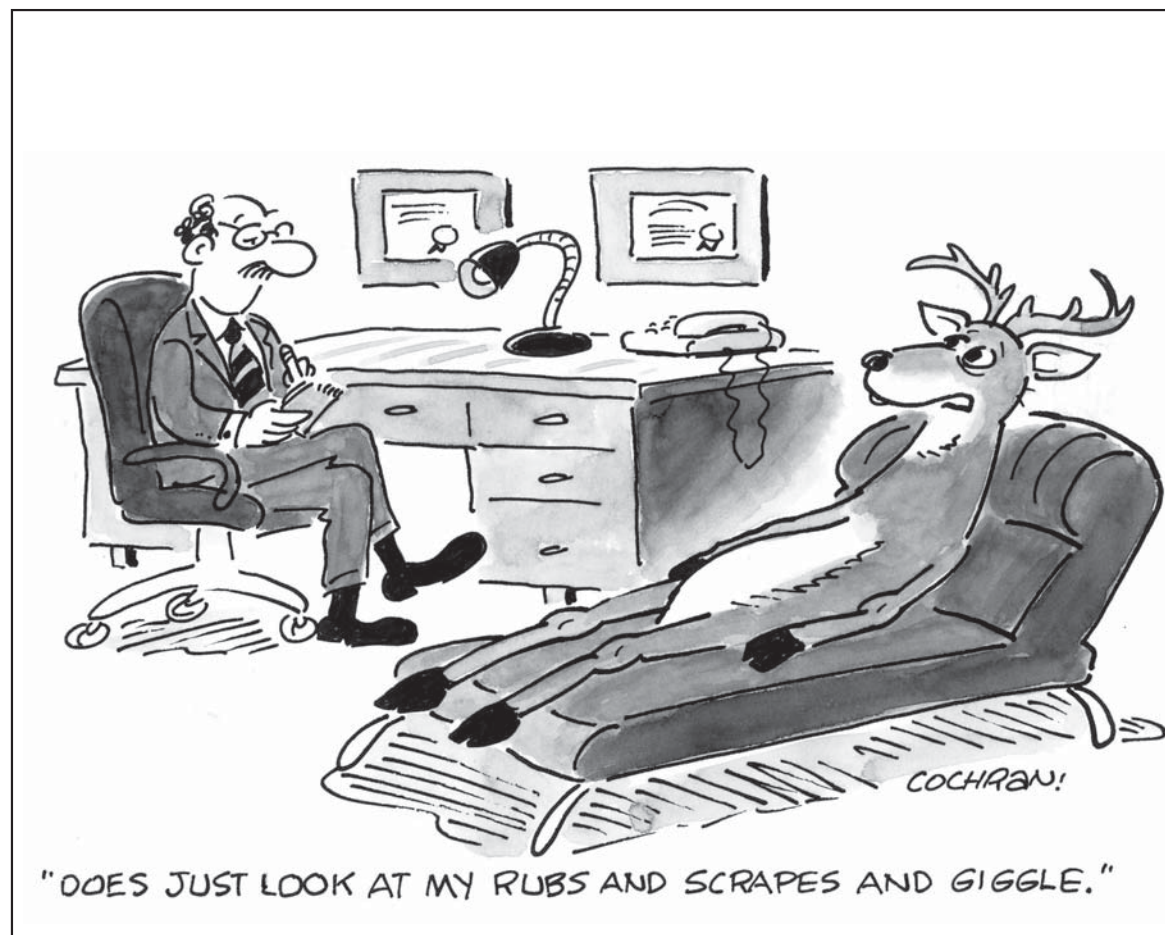
The Prusik knot, invented by Dr. Karl Prusik in 1931.

linesmans cord that wraps around one's waist as well as the tree. The problem with this is branches! Another I used to like and use operated much like a car's seatbelt. It is rolled up in a plastic housing, and as long as one is moving slowly up or down, the nylon strap feeds in and out of its housing. If there is any sudden acceleration, it stops the fall. It is the same feeling you get when you jerk a seatbelt quickly. However, weather and water can take their toll on any mechanical device. It always left just a hint of doubt in my mind as to whether it would work if it became iced up or corroded by moisture.

Even the Prusik knot has vulnerability. An icy coating on the rope will render it useless. I enter the field with a spare on a shorter, 8-foot rope. Each end has a carabineer, so as I go up the tree, I can attach it as I go and finally fasten it to my nylon strap up in the stand. Although you can make these yourself, several versions are available through the usual outdoors outlets. Hunter Safety Systems carries a great version.

Oh, I almost forgot. One minor hitch occurs if you forget to unbuckle your safety cord when you reach ground level. I use a 30-foot cord and have started walking away from my stand without unhitching. This results in an embarrassing and abrupt jerking halt at some point. Normally, no one else is around to laugh at me but myself and perhaps a big buck! ^{OW}

Denny Murawska's outdoor musings have been a part of Wisconsin lore for more than 12 years. A world-respected fish taxidermist, Denny operates Angler's Art Fish Taxidermy and writes regularly on the subject. Contact Denny at 715.964.1159 or find him at www.aa-taxidermy.com.



"DOES JUST LOOK AT MY RUBS AND SCRAPES AND GIGGLE."

TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds

White-breasted Nuthatch

With its handsome blue-gray topcoat, black cap, bright eyes, creamy 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—antics which entertain many a deer hunter on stand every fall—and the nuthatch becomes a bird worthy of our respect and admiration. White-breasted nuthatches live in wooded areas across Wisconsin year-round.

Listen for nuthatches' distinctive and nasal 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 feed through the woods 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. Plain, unrendered animal fat works even better in cold weather. Acrobatic nuthatches love hanging feeders filled with sunflower seeds too.

Did you know that male white-breasted nuthatches sport darker caps (almost black) than the



females, which have dark blue or gray caps? You'll need to compare two birds in close proximity to be able to tell a difference, though. Take note next time you're bird watching. *OW*

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

DOG TALK, from page 18



... getting him to bring it back is really no trouble at all. Make sure you provide lots of praise and plenty of chances for the dog to succeed. (Photos Adam Michalowski)

dog see them fall and send him on a couple marked retrieves. This gives him the idea that he's in the grass looking for something. Keep adding to the number of dummies you're throwing until you stump the dog. Most young dogs will get confused with five or six dummies tossed in five different directions. Throw out five, let the dog watch them fall, then start sending him in to make retrieves. You'll have a ton of scent in the grass, but that's fine. You want the dog to follow his nose to where the scent is strongest and bring back the dummies.

By now your dog should be good

and excited, and he should be starting to understand that if he keeps crashing through the brush and grass, he'll find what he's looking for. Now is the time to take a short break and give the dog a drink. After about five minutes' rest and plenty of fresh water, grab three dummies and head into the grass. It's time to start the quartering.

This is when you'll really like to have some orange dummies just in case both of you forget where you dropped the things and the dog can't seem to find them. If you don't have orange, use what you have, but try to drop them near a minor landmark, odd-looking

weed or small tree. It makes things easier if the early training doesn't work just as planned.

Put the wind at your back and start walking through the field with the wind. Just let the dog go for now. As you walk, drop the three dummies in a rough zigzag pattern about 10 to 15 paces apart. Walk 15 paces past the last dummy and call the dog. Have him sit at your side for a minute and then point in the direction of the closest dummy and say, "Hunt 'em up." As the dog gets near the first dummy he will get a nose full of scent. Keep encouraging him. When he finds the "bird," command him to fetch it, then praise him like he's the best dog in the world; lavish it on. After a minute or two, you'll be ready to move toward the next "bird." Keep up the encouragement and really get the dog excited about finding something in the grass. As soon as the dog finds all three dummies, head downwind a few yards and start over. Two or three times should be enough to give the dog the idea, but also not too much to allow him to get bored. Keep the session short and fun.

It's important during this type of training that you don't get frustrated with the dog and lose your cool. If the dog is not finding the bird that means he just doesn't understand what you want him to do; so show him. Move closer to the dummy and point directly at it and say, "Find the bird; get 'em up." When he gets anywhere near it, praise him. When he picks it up, you should sound as if you're overjoyed. If you get mad and yell at the dog, he won't have

fun looking for birds and he won't want to do it.

The Next Step

Once you've got the basics down and your dog understands there are good things in the grass, you can switch to live birds, but start with a very controlled situation. Find a hunting club that will allow you to train instead of hunt. You'll need an assistant for this. Plant one bird at a time and keep the dog on a 30-foot check cord as you work the animal into the scent. Keep hold of the cord as the dog approaches the bird. When he flushes it, command "sit" and hold the cord to keep the dog from chasing the bird. Be calm, but make the dog sit. If your partner is a good shot, you'll be able to send the dog for a marked retrieve. If not, go get another bird and try again. The goal here is to steady the bird to the flush and the shot. This can take a bit of work, but it's worth it to develop a good, solid dog.

It's important to take advantage of deep grass training, especially when conditions are good. The routine allows your dog to learn about scent and cover very quickly in a controlled environment. Even if you don't move up to live bird training, just having the dog search deep cover for a dummy will give the animal the general idea that birds hide in deep cover and it takes a good nose to find them. *OW*

Kevin Michalowski is author of "15 Minutes to a Great Dog" (Krause Publications, \$12.95) and has been training dogs for 10 years.

TOM CARPENTER

Cubs Corner

Roosters of November

When I say “ring-necked pheasant,” what vision pops into your head? Like most Wisconsin hunters, you probably picture golden fields of corn stubble, tawny fields of grass, yellow and russet trees decorating the hills and farmsteads, and gaudy roosters catapulting and cackling into a clear-blue October sky. Opening day bliss!

But once the year's young and naive roosters have made their way into hunter's gamebags, what do you have left? A landscape transformed from bright and vibrant hues to tones of brown and drab. Gray skies, often with snow spitting out of the leaden clouds. Leafless trees swaying in the cold wind. And November roosters—real survivors—to confuse and confound you with their sneaky maneuvers.

As much as I fondly recall the mild days of Indian Summer, when thinking of the roosters of my youth in southern Wisconsin, it is the pheasants of the year's eleventh month that are etched most prominently in my memory bank.

I still remember a certain Thanksgiving day like it was yesterday. I was 13 years old, according to my hunting logs, and I'm probably dating myself here, but these were the days when counties like Green

and Lafayette—where we lived and did our hunting—only had a three-day deer season the weekend before Thanksgiving. So we were happily relegated to chasing rabbits and birds on the holiday.

It snowed an inch or two during the night, and we skidded out of town on County Trunk Y after breakfast to a special valley anchored by an abandoned farmstead far up the hollow. The unused pastures (now filled with tall grass) and weedy cornfields (harvested but as yet unplowed) made for a game paradise.

How fresh the cold air was and how clean it tasted with a hint of snow for flavor. Working our way up the small valley, we started seeing tracks in the skiff of snow. A few belonged to pheasants, but others were strangely small.

Whirrrrrrrrr! A covey of bobwhite quail buzzed like bumblebees out of a patch of ragweed in a forgotten corral. A couple of the tiny, beautiful gamebirds fell to our shotguns and we felt no remorse. There were still some coveys around the countryside then, and it later became clear that habitat loss—and not hunters' guns—was responsible for extirpating most of the bobwhites from their Wisconsin range,

kindred victims to the small dairy farms that were also losing their way of life.

But there were still big three-toed bird tracks in the snow, and we followed them along a brushy fenceline toward an old windmill that still croaked in the breeze. Nikki the Bassett hound—she was an excellent bird dog when she wasn't chasing rabbits—was getting “birdy.” The pheasants must have been running ahead of us, and they started erupting from the weed patch as we closed in. Four empty guns later, there were two birds on the ground. I knew neither was mine.

And then I learned a lesson that has served me well to this day: There could be another one here. So instead of feeling bad about missing, I reloaded and hunted around as Chuck and Larry searched for their trophies.

Coming back to windmill, it happened. The grass exploded next to me, and a cackling rooster sprung into the sky. Acting on mere instinct with the cat-like reflexes of an adolescent, I swung and shot ... and the bird tumbled. Running over, it was hard to control my elation at seeing a long-tailed November rooster! I held him up and felt my dad's smile as he laughed from up on the hill.



Sometimes, part of being a smart hunter is knowing when to quit. Dad knew. How could we top three November roosters? We finished our swing around the valley, loaded up into the old Impala sedan, and headed for home. My mom and sister would be waiting, the Packers would be on TV, there was a venison roast along with the turkey in the oven, apple pie on the counter, and we would be together.

My pheasant rode in the car with me, and I didn't clean that November rooster until late that evening after dinner was over and everybody was stuffed and half asleep. I guess I didn't want the day to end. As I write about it now, I realize it never did. *WO*

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

FAHRNEY, TRUSTEE from page 13

hunting on both private and public land. “It's an agenda-driven program,” said Mark Peck of Arena. Others questioned whether CWD has the potential, as claimed, to wipe out the deer herd.

“They panicked,” Dr. Kroll said. “There is no scientific evidence that CWD has decimated any (deer) population. The average time for CWD to evolve is longer than the average life span of the deer.”

While declining to comment on the DNR's 15-year CWD plan, Dr. Kroll anticipates taking an in-depth look at the plan. “The three of us are going take that (15-year plan) apart,” he asserted. The team will also look at the results of the DNR Stakeholder Advisory Group proceedings and a Legislative Audit Bureau report that concluded the DNR's program to control CWD had not succeeded.

Based on previous lectures and publications, Alt apparently shares with Dr. Kroll the need to maintain a balanced deer herd by harvesting an adequate number of does each year. “You should always remove at least as many does from your herd as you do bucks,” Kroll noted. These sentiments suggest that the new deer trustee shares at least some common ground with current DNR policies. In the past, the agency's deer biologists have suggested shooting two antlerless deer for every buck taken to maintain a healthy deer herd.

Dr. Kroll stated that a deer management system requires an ecological approach—“managing the entire system—habitat, populations and people.” According to Kroll, this contrasts with a hunter opportunity system which, he asserts, is a “political model that on the surface sounds good but is code for license sales and income.”

He added, “There is a big difference between the opportunity to hunt and the opportunity to have a quality experience.”

Dr. Kroll also spoke to the importance of a science-based system which “revolves around the collection and timely analysis of relevant data on the health and productivity of the deer herd.” He described a science-based system as one in which “you establish goals and develop a design to collect data that tell you where you are in achieving your goals.”

Dr. Tony Grabski, who helped organize the Arena event, agreed with Kroll's assessment. Grabski is critical of the department's CWD testing program which, in 2011, will focus on the core area in western Dane and eastern Iowa counties. “We should be testing on the periphery of the CWD zone,” he suggested. “Otherwise, we're simply verifying the data we already have.”

While asserting an independent stance, Dr. Kroll anticipates full cooperation from the DNR. “The overall attitude inside the DNR is positive; they're saying, ‘Let's fix this thing.’”

Steve Gehrke, a member of the Stakeholder Advisory Group, lives near Lancaster on the fringe of the western CWD Management Zone. He also expressed optimism about the initiative. “Hopefully, we can look at this with an open mind,” he said.

Citing Wisconsin as perhaps the greatest destination in the country for deer hunting, Kroll declared, “Wisconsin is a jewel and we need to keep it that way.” *WO*

Lee Fahrney is a freelance outdoors writer with several hundred articles to his credit. He also serves as Secretary on the Wisconsin Conservation Congress from Iowa County where he lives and hunts with his sidekick, Major, on 160 acres of upland forest and converted cropland.

S. WILKERSON

Surplus Firearms

The least and the most

The M14 didn't last long as a general issue weapon. Yet more than 50 years after its debut, it remains in service.

After four years of bloody struggle against the Nazis, post-war Soviet tacticians and weapon experts knew what traits were needed in an effective infantry rifle. Years of warfare under extreme weather conditions, savage street fighting, and prolonged battles demonstrated the value of a relatively light, reliable, mid-power rifle with the capability of fully automatic fire. The Soviets saw the worth of such a weapon when one fitting this description was aimed against them: the German MP 44, the world's first widely issued assault rifle. Firing a truncated version of the Model 98 8mm round, the MP 44 was light, reliable, cheap to produce, plenty accurate, and powerful enough.

The appeal of such a weapon was lost on the United States, despite the relative success of its own lightweight, albeit somewhat underpowered, M1 carbine during World War II. The carbine was popular with most of the troops that were issued it because it carried easily, was quick to aim, took detachable box magazines that held 15 or 30 rounds, and was reliable. Carbines were made by a number of manufacturers and in several configurations, including folding stock and selective fire models. What it didn't have was a lot of oomph. Firing a .30 caliber cartridge that approximated the power of a .38 Special, the carbine was anemic compared to its general issue brother, the M1 Garand, which shot the venerable 30'06 round.

Like the Soviets, the United States realized the value of selective fire and decided that its next infantry rifle would possess this capability. Unlike the Soviets, who saw little need for large, powerful cartridges when most combatants fired away within 100 yards of each other, the United States remained enamored with big bullets. Given the choice of developing a mid-power, lightweight weapon along the lines of the M1 carbine or further developing the big bore Garand, the United States chose the Garand. At great cost and years of development, the end result was the M14, a weapon that served less than

a decade in general use before it was replaced by the M16.

The M14 looks and functions very much like the M1 from which it was developed, and some parts interchange. Both weapons are gas operated. Gas from a fired cartridge is diverted into a gas cylinder which activates a piston-driven operating rod. The operating rod is pushed rearward by the gas and engages a rotating bolt which ejects the spent cartridge and also initiates the cocking mechanism. Upon its return, the bolt strips off another round and

round it fires is slightly smaller and less powerful than that of the M1 30'06.

After too many wild shots in machine gun mode, most M14 selector switches were welded into the semi-automatic position by the armed forces armorers early in the rifle's career.


It was a short career, too. The M14 proved to be too big, too heavy, and too uncontrollable in full-auto when it made its Vietnam debut shortly after its introduction in 1958. The lighter, smaller, more controllable AK47 in the hands of North Vietnamese regulars and

in the hands of designated marksmen in Iraq and Afghanistan. The rifle has about twice the effective range of the general issue M4, the carbine successor to the M16, and a lot more punch. An M14 7.62 x 51 round will pass through a cinder block that will stop or deflect an M4 5.56 x 45 bullet.

Like the M4, there are semiautomatic civilian versions of the M14. Unlike many of the M4 clones, all of the M14 replicas are expensive. Serviceable M4s can be found for less than \$700. The least expensive of the M14 replicas (and some consider the best), are those that were briefly exported into the United States circa 1988–1994 from China. Once considered junk by the uninformed and overly opinionated, the Norinco and Polytech variants in decent shape go for upwards of \$800. A standard grade Springfield Armory M1A, the company's least expensive M14 clone, retails at over \$1,200.

The M4 and M14 shooting experiences are totally different. The M4 is much easier to aim and get on target, especially with an optical sight, and fire accurately, even with the typically heavy factory triggers. M4s have virtually no recoil and are just plain easy for almost anyone to shoot well without even trying. The variety of accessories available for the M4 is mind-boggling.

The M14 is the antithesis of the M4. Mounting an optical sight correctly is an expensive and frustrating endeavor. This is not the gun with which to introduce your new girlfriend to shooting. At over 10 pounds, it's heavy and it recoils. Shooting it well takes time and practice. There are few accessories available for it, and those that are, are costly. M14 ammunition costs about twice as much on average as does M4 ammunition.

Given all that, I prefer to shoot my Springfield M1A over my Colt 6920, an M4 clone. The Springfield is simply more challenging and fun to shoot. On the other hand, were I in an SHTF situation, I would forgo both and run to my Chinese AK. 

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***“The M14 proved to be too big, too heavy,
and too uncontrollable in full-auto
when it made its Vietnam debut
shortly after its introduction in 1958.”***

places it into the chamber and brings the rifle to battery.

Whereas the Garand requires the pull of a trigger each time to fire, a single pull of the M14 trigger will fire and eject shells until the magazine runs dry or the shooter's finger is removed from the trigger, which, in full auto mode, happened in short order. An M14 on full auto is virtually uncontrollable, even though the 7.62 x 51 (.308) caliber

the Vietcong completely outmatched the M14. So much so that the Army almost immediately began casting about for a replacement and soon found it in the M16, which became an even worse debacle.

M14 firepower, in most modern warfare, is too much. As mentioned, most firefights take place within ranges of 100 yards. Some do not, which is why the M14 is still proving its worth

CARPENTER DEER, from page 3

low spot in an alfalfa field and cross a fence where the top two wires were down. I will put that secret little honeyhole to good use this season.

Know the land you're watching. Subtle creases and folds in the terrain, along with swales, gullies, washes and ditches present many opportunities for a 3-foot tall deer to vanish. I can't count the number of times I've been ready to squeeze the trigger on a walking or jogging deer when he just disappeared! Likewise, uneven terrain accounts for whitetails that appear in front of you like ghosts out of nowhere.

No matter how good your chosen stand site, always have a "Plan B" in case the wind doesn't cooperate. Before the season begins, get out and plan how you will shift your post when needed so that your scent will not blow to where you expect the deer will be.

Those moments of truth are critical

to field hunting. Whitetails are always edgy in the open, and there is little cover to hide your movements. Don't panic when you see a deer coming. Slowly bring up your gun only when the deer is moving or, better yet, looking the other way. Many whitetails live through every gun season courtesy of excited hunters jerking up their guns in a rush of nervous surprise.

Conclusion

Whitetails use fields every day of their lives for feeding, travel, escape and hiding. Do your scouting and scheming and then prepare for an all-day sit, especially on opening day of the gun season. This should be a good year to spend some time in the deer fields. *WO*

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

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www.sliderg5.com

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www.otteroutdoors.com

Product 6-Pack contributors include Dick Ellis (D.E.), Luke Hartle (L.H.) and JJ Reich (J.J.R.). If you have recommendations for good gear that works for you, tell us about it: email: ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com.



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