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DICK ELLIS

# On Wisconsin Outdoors

## The biggest bucks of 2012

**I**ntegrity is often defined by the actions a man will take when no one is around to watch.

Bow hunter Adam Fuss of Winneconne was a solitary man with a decision to make on stand in southwest Columbia County November 13. A massive buck traveled on the edge of giving him a shot or as likely disappearing into the brush forever. This wasn't Fuss's property; he might never see an opportunity to hunt the QDM land again or see this animal that without doubt was a once-in-a-lifetime Wisconsin whitetail.

The avid bow hunter carried enough experience to handle pressure, even when facing a monster. In 2011 on November 16, he shot a nice 8-point with a 17 1/2-inch insider spread on the Wednesday before the gun hunt. He was used to time on stand in any weather, especially through the rut, to increase the odds of tagging a big buck. This year, Fuss and his wife, Alysha Fuss, were blessed with their first son on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

"This obviously limited some of my hunting during the precious rut, but it all worked out in the end," he said. "This year was similar to last. It turned out to be the last Tuesday before gun season. I obviously waited both years and sat many hours in the stand to get these opportunities. I also passed a lot of small bucks to do so."

This buck was so close he could

almost feel it, including branches ripped from trees and brush clinging to immense antlers. But in the world of hunting, so close can be oh so excruciatingly far. And right is right and wrong is wrong no matter how long you look at it.

"I had been on stand about 15 minutes," Fuss said. "I heard branches crunching and saw the buck walking near me at 40 yards in thick brush. I had one small hole to use my range finder, but it wouldn't register; it said 19 yards, but I knew it was closer to 40. When the buck's vitals came into that hole, I was at full draw, but it just didn't feel right. And I knew it wasn't going to get any closer."

There would be no compromise of ethics for Fuss. Eventually, he would be given an opportunity to take a high percentage shot for a clean kill or he would not take the shot at all. Fate smiled. The buck adjusted its travel on a course that would take it closer to the hunter. Fuss's eyes moved ahead to find another hole in the brush at 30 yards. Likely, he determined, the kill could be made here.

"I don't shoot at a deer without the odds being high for a good clean kill," he said. "I would feel terrible if I would wound any deer, but especially a big buck and especially on someone else's property."

Fuss usually spends his hours on stand nearer home in Winneconne, but

*continued on page 20*



Avid bowhunter Adam Fuss of Winneconne scored big November 13 when hunting in southwest Columbia County. The 11-point buck has a preliminary score of 182.

## Stories from the hunt.

[OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/HuntingWisconsin](http://OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/HuntingWisconsin)



Rob Gramoll of Milwaukee shook off the no-deer blues during opening weekend of the gun season big time. His 15 point buck post-Thanksgiving is expected to be the new Juneau County record and is likely to be among the best 10 typical bucks ever taken in Wisconsin. The monster grossed 202-1/8 before preliminary deductions placed the score at 184-5/8. Go to [OnWisconsinOutdoors.com](http://OnWisconsinOutdoors.com) and click on "Deer Hunting" for another look at these bucks.

**R**ob Gramoll hadn't seen a deer during the opening weekend of the Wisconsin deer season. After taking off of work from his Milwaukee job Friday before the opener, he headed north to the Lyndon Station area to hunt family property but didn't let the no-deer blues interfere with plans to be right back in the saddle after a short work week.

"My boss, Jerry Shesler, has property not far from me in Juneau County, and we headed back on Thanksgiving night," Gramoll said. We stayed in a trailer on my land, hunted the morning, saw nothing, and headed over to his 90 acres. His brother had shot a doe on the land earlier."

Although Gramoll said he knows hunting doesn't guarantee success or even seeing deer, he said seeing no deer after several days in the field was discouraging. He and his hunting partner agreed that they would sit again for much of the day Saturday, but the truck would be packed and ready for the trip home Saturday night if the trend of experiencing virtually no deer activity continued over the next day.

Gramoll, 30, headed to a

permanent stand 12 feet off the ground in bright sunshine with temperatures in the mid-30s. The plan was for Sheslar to follow 30 minutes later to his own stand with the hope that he might kick any bedded deer between the two hunters toward Gramoll. The stands were chosen from several on the property with consideration of the wind direction.

"I never saw or heard Jerry come in to his stand," Gramoll said. "But I did hear branches cracking to my left and turned to get a glimpse of a buck with a very big rack at about 75 yards in thick brush. I remember thinking, 'it's about time I'm seeing a big rack.' But I think he busted me at the same time and headed into rough terrain."

Despite the clutter, Gramoll was able to bring his Remington semiautomatic .30-06 to his shoulder, find the buck in the scope, and squeezed off the shot with the crosshairs on the heart area. He believed the buck went down and died on the shot, gave the situation some time, and abandoned the stand to begin the recovery.

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ROB AND STEVE TOBIN

# Wing's Tradition

## Old and new memories at a family farm

### Hunting Adventures.

OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/HuntingWisconsin

I can remember it like it was yesterday: tapping my pen and daydreaming about the big 12-point buck sauntering the trail right beside my treestand during the opening weekend of the Wisconsin nine-day gun deer hunt. As a 13-year-old hunter, I couldn't wait to head up to the great north woods of Antigo, Wisconsin. The worst part was I still had to focus in Mrs. Fare's lousy English class, because Mom wouldn't let me have two days off with a D+ average and I didn't want to miss opening morning with my family and friends.

Now I am a young husband and father and nothing has changed. I'm still just as excited to go, but I have a bit more responsibilities at work and home before I leave to go hunting. Hence, standing in a long line at Walmart buying my tags a half hour before leaving is not a good idea.

Friday morning we loaded up the truck, ATVs, and treestands and were ready to hit the road. We always start off our trip up north with a quick stop at the local Antigo Pizza Hut for lunch. (I swear that hostess has been working there for the last 20 years.) So why Antigo?

To rewind the story a little further, Steve, my younger brother, and I are invited because of my grandfather, Bob, who has been hunting the last 50 years with his best friends, Bill Wing and Gill Plewa. Bill bought a 160-acre plot in Antigo in the 1960s and has been adding on to the farm ever since. Bill, Gill, and Gramps all brought their families, which included my dad, Gill's son, Corky, and Bill's son, Jimmy. This was the start of three generations of hunters to come and enjoy the Wing Farm in the picturesque north woods of Wisconsin.

The 2012 hunt was my nineteenth year, and I have never missed an opening day. However, in the last 60 years, things have changed a little. Some things are positive and some negative.

After the old farm house burnt down in 1991, the Wing family rebuilt the farm. It is now a large five-bedroom, two-bathroom home with a spacious metal barn. The Wing Farm now sits on 400 acres of beautiful hardwoods, thick creek bottoms, and a large rolling field that surrounds the cabin. All of the old-timers and I are pretty happy with the newer facilities.



Traditions and generations make Wisconsin deer hunting memories.

In the 1950s, Antigo, Wisconsin, was a leader in growing and selling potatoes, which we all know equals huge bucks. The deer herd was still growing in northern Wisconsin and the deer loved the potatoes. They were even able to paw them up year round during the harsh cold winters that my dad and grandpa would always talk about. I have heard stories and seen old black and white pictures of the meat pole full of large bucks, which, today, is usually only in my imagination.

As the years continued and the farmers got older, the planting stopped and the deer woods changed. There is just not as much food for them today. The deer resort to corn fields a mile away or browse for food in the expansive thick woods. It also doesn't help that I only hunt in Antigo for three days a year, which means no scouting. I think

scouting is the most important aspect of hunting, overlooked by a lot of hunters. If you can find where the deer eat and move to their beds in the morning, it is going to be a successful year.

So as a result, the deer drive was born for hunters who wanted to move deer through the dense woods to the lucky standers waiting for a glimpse of antlers. After eating Jimmy's enormous breakfast, our group always puts on a few afternoon drives to stir up some action. Last year Steve shot a nice 9-pointer as a driver, the best deer I have seen taken in a few years.

Regardless of food and scouting, every year I take my old metal treestand to the same tree back in the middle of nowhere and get ready to sit patiently for a few days with nature and my thoughts. I still get chills walking to the stand alone with heavy breath in the



Sometimes, filled tags are part of the memories.

cold, dark woods, eager to watch nature wake up.

When I was 13, all I wanted to do was give a deer a ride home in the trailer. But today, with two busy family businesses, an ever-growing honey-do list, and a cute two-year-old daughter, the time off and seclusion in the deer stand is all I need to be successful these days. Having a few beers in the barn at night isn't so bad either.

With the loss of Bill Wing in 2009, Jim Wing took over the tradition, continuing great camaraderie, food, lodging, and hunting. We totaled 13 hunters this opening weekend, two of whom have hunted the farm for over 50 years: Gramps, who still talks about his big 10-point he shot 15 years ago, and Gil, whose sense of humor and passion for the outdoors just makes you smile.

If you hunt, please take someone hunting and begin your own "Wing Tradition." I hope one day my daughter, Tess, is tapping her pen anxiously awaiting opening day with her dad. 

Rob and Steve Tobin are avid deer hunters and waterfowlers and fish throughout Wisconsin.

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The author with a Florida largemouth.

BILL SCHULTZ

## Kayak Fishing Wisconsin Fired up for kayak fishing in 2013

outings, and it's a great time of year if you're buying your first fishing kayak or upgrading from what you currently paddle. Check with your local outfitter and you may be pleasantly surprised at the great prices on remaining 2012 kayaks, paddles, and accessories.

Some may have rentals that are even a better bargain. Going online to a site like Hook1 at [www.kayakfishinggear.com](http://www.kayakfishinggear.com) may also get you a tough-to-beat deal. Also, all the kayak and paddle companies have great websites where you can learn even more.

Another enjoyable winter outing, and the perfect place to see and touch everything related to kayaks, is Canoecopia. This is the largest kayak/canoe expo in the country, which takes place on the weekend of March 9-11 at the Alliant Center in Madison. I'll again be conducting two seminars. This year I'll speak on "Kayaking for Monster Door County Smallies." This seminar will give you all the information you'll need to find, and, ideally, catch and release, some real trophies. I'll also be talking kayak fishing and kayaks at the Wilderness Systems display area.

Along with Canoecopia, you

should consider Laacke & Joys' Paddlefest May 18-19 at their downtown Milwaukee store on the Milwaukee River. This is a wonderful opportunity to test the top kayaks on the water. I'll be there discussing fishing kayaks and giving a seminar.

This is a perfect time of year to assess all your fishing tackle. We are fortunate in Wisconsin and Northern Illinois to have many great sports shows that feature outstanding seminars and the chance to see all the latest rods, reels, and lures. These shows also have exhibitors from top fishing destinations throughout the Midwest and Canada. You might find that perfect location for your next memorable kayak fishing trip.

On Wednesday, April 10, I will be holding my third "Smallie Night Out." If you are a smallmouth bass enthusiast, this evening at the Thunder Bay Grille in Waukesha is one you won't want to miss. I'll be giving a talk along with another "well-known" speaker. This event has a low admission fee, free take-home lures, and a free raffle with tremendous items.

As you can see, there are plenty of kayak fishing and general fishing

activities to help get us through our Wisconsin winter. However, if you are the adventurous type who likes to take a trip south for some warm weather, you could think about some fine kayak fishing in any one of a number of southern states. The past four years I've had the opportunity to spend a couple of days on the water in south Florida chasing peacock and largemouth bass with friend and top kayak angler, Steve Starr. Highlights included my biggest largemouth bass and an 18-inch peacock bass. I might be in Florida in March and may just have to see about tarpon or redfish.

Depending on where you would like to visit and fish, you should be able to find kayak fishing guides by searching Google or calling outfitters in the area you are considering.

Well, it's only been a month since I was on the water catching my last smallie of 2012, and, as you can see, I'm already fired up for some great kayak fishing in 2013! 

*Bill Schultz has caught thousands of smallmouth bass on the waters of Wisconsin. He is an active outdoor writer/speaker and can be reached at [www.smalliecentral.com](http://www.smalliecentral.com).*

**W**e've just paddled into 2013 and I can't wait to get back on the water chasing smallies in one of my Wilderness Systems kayaks. 2012 was a year I'd love to clone. My first smallie came on an 82-degree March 18 and my last on a 60-degree December 2. In between I had the pleasure of catching and releasing over 1,400 smallies, many while in one of my kayaks. We can only hope for such great weather and fishing opportunities this year.

Now is the perfect time to begin planning for your 2013 kayak fishing

TOM CARPENTER

## Cottontail Time

*Roust some rabbits and find your hunting roots this winter*

**M**idwinter is the perfect time to get out rabbit hunting. For you, it can be a trip back to your outdoor roots and simpler times, or an introduction to something you've been missing. For young hunters in your life, it can be a chance to get out in the field and find some bonus hunting action and excitement.

That's exactly what cottontail hunting is about. There is no sitting for endless hours waiting for a whitetail, duck, or turkey. Rabbit hunting lets you take the hunt to the game, get some exercise in the crisp winter air, feel the thrill of the hunt when you otherwise might be couch-potatoing it, and gather some fine game meals.

Cottontail hunting isn't rocket

science. On the other hand, it's not just a stroll through the woods, either, and that's literally speaking.

Cottontails use cover that's dense and close to the ground. Think thickets, bushes, brush, brush piles, fallen trees, raspberry canes, calf-height grass, and wild or forgotten corners. Ignore mature forest, wide-open places, and areas devoid of vegetative cover for a

2-pound bunny. Focus on the margins between thick areas of hiding cover and open areas; like most game, rabbits love edges.

Hunting is easy. Since most folks don't keep beagles or hounds these days, the best approach is to line up and work the cover—walking through, rooting around, and kicking near rabbit hiding spots—trying to flush bunnies. You quickly learn the kinds of places that rabbits like to hide. For instance, in my younger days, I quickly discovered that a downed treetop with grass growing around and in it was almost a guaranteed cottontail hideout.

Shotguns are best. Any gauge and action will do, but a 20-gauge is just about perfect and a pump action ideal.

More important is the barrel's choke. Improved cylinder is your best bet, because shots are very close in the thick cover.

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## More Upland & Small Game.

[OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/UplandGameHunting](http://OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/UplandGameHunting)



An array of Jake Schroven's creations.

Beneath the miniature cities that spring to life on the February ice plains of Lake Winnebago, the window of opportunity opens and closes in a heartbeat of time.

Some of the mightiest of sturgeon have shadowed beneath the square-carved ice holes for over a century, lured to a passing window of chance with a waiting spear, tempted by an array of decoys as rich in tradition as the spearing game itself.

The decoys are as much a part of the game as the spearing and the fish. Indeed, the carvers themselves live on through their art, carving and painting the historic Winnebago season with colorful pasts and stories that dangle beneath the February ice of the Winnebago spearing towns.

My first real window glimpse into the tradition happened on a snow-blinding bright February afternoon. I'd spent some previous time in a darkened shanty, but honestly, I didn't really get it. I am an impatient waiter. So a mutual friend steered me to Clarence "Jake" Schroven's house, where I was told I'd gain a bigger picture of the whole spearing ordeal.

I got that and more, because Jake Schroven left a mark on me as lasting and fine as the art he created. He gave

me a glimpse into what it means to be a part of the Winnebago sturgeon season. Now it seems I seldom walk the expanses of the heaving ice without remembering the creations and the stories he shared on that afternoon that seems so long ago.

Jake was 86 years old and hadn't dropped a spear at a passing fish in quite a while. "I can't see myself sliding around on the ice anymore," he said. "I've got two artificial knees and a new hip. It's too much touchy work on the ice for my age."

He still had a fire in his eye when he talked, though. He rivaled the age and wisdom of the greatest sturgeon swimming along the mud flats of the Winnebago system. He still had the fire in his voice. He still had the passion. He was an expert decoy carver. And while he didn't carve his new leg joints himself, I got the feeling he probably could have.

"I started spearing sturgeon when I was 14," Jake said. "The limit was five fish and there were no registration tags. We hauled our shanty out on the lake, behind an old Model A Ford. We'd walk out every morning with armloads of firewood for the potbelly stove."

"This picture was taken in 1945," Jake said, pointing a finger at one of

JOHN LUTHENS

## Windows In The Ice A decoy carver's legacy

many yellowed photographs tacked to his garage wall. I was just out of the service after World War II, and it was a relief to be back on Winnebago."

He was stationed in New Guinea where he contracted a severe case of malaria. But war-time memories were one subject that Jake didn't care to discuss. The important memories were in the photograph. Five beautiful fish were spread on the ice, with faded pen scrawls on the back of the picture remembering the weights.

Talking through more pictures and memories, Jake told me that in the mix of his youth he dreamed of riding in the rodeo, hopping freight trains out to the western plains to follow the moving shows. He stopped for a week or so at a time, working on a ranch wherever the rails took him, before moving on to chase the next rodeo down the range.

Somewhere in that wild, early time he began carving sturgeon decoys while working the family farm in Stockbridge, on the eastern shores of Winnebago, learning the carving tradition by watching Native American Indians ply their skill on the lake shores. "I remember an old Indian gentleman sitting on the porch," said Jake. "He waited until the sun was just right. Then he slowly began carving the wood with a sharpened piece of glass."

Jake settled for a spoke shave to carve his fish, and he turned out many of them. The shelves of his house and basement overflowed with the beautifully carved truth of his art. Some resembled sturgeon only surrealistically, painted in bright colors. There was even a golden Green Bay Packer fish in the mix.

Others were carved accurately down to the smallest carved scales, fins, and barbel whiskers. "I walked into the kitchen with this one," said Schroven of one heavy-set decoy that looked like it had just risen from the depths. "My

wife asked me if I'd just speared one and had it mounted."

He didn't carve for money, simply for the love of the creation. He gave away many of his replicas as gifts. When the wood carving got too hard on his fingers, he shaped and polished elk bones and antlers, creating belt buckles and whistles along with the fish. He even made slingshots out of the fork tines for the neighborhood kids.

Jake laughed heartily at the memories, and the afternoon wore away in that storytelling and laughing manner that the Winnebago spearing tradition seems to bring out.

I always told myself I'd write of Jake, write of a special afternoon and a glimpse back into history. Jake passed away in 2009, a scant month before the opening of another spearing season. What remains are my notes and pictures from a bright February day.

I still can't sit very long in a dark shack, staring through the ice windows into the stained water for hours on end. But every year when the shanty cities spring back to life, I go out on the snow-packed lake to wander around just the same, out from the landings and along the shores, watching and listening.

Then I see through the windows of the past. Jake Schroven and many others live on in the cold, green waters below the shelving ice, decoys swimming to life and luring an ancient breed of fish in a tradition as old as the carved replicas they created. 

John Luthens travels Wisconsin, visiting favorite trout waters and exploring back road country often from the family cabin, near the Bois Brule River in Douglas County. Fishing the Winnebago system is a favorite pastime. He chronicles his outdoor journeys from his home in Grafton, where he resides with his wife and two children. Contact him at [Luthens@hotmail.com](mailto:Luthens@hotmail.com).

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**PUBLISHER/EDITOR:**

Dick Ellis  
[ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:ellis@onwisconsinoutdoors.com)

**COPY EDITOR:**

Heidi Rich  
[submissions@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:submissions@onwisconsinoutdoors.com)

**PRODUCTION & ADVERTISING:**

Karen Cluppert, Not Just Words  
[ads@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:ads@onwisconsinoutdoors.com)

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LEE GATZKE

## NextBuk Outdoors

### Winding down into the off-season

More Hunting.

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The Iwom Hunting Parka is insulated and waterproof, which allows hunters to hunt in whatever weather conditions they encounter in the January bow season.

It's inevitable—deer season will end in early January. The few diehards left in the woods and swamps cling to the hope of filling a tag as the end of the statewide bow season is only days away. Personally, I enjoy having the woods to myself now, even though the weather can be brutal. For those who think public lands host a hunter behind every tree when the deer season is in session, try hunting in January.

The past few years I've incorporated a few accessories to make hunting in cold weather a lot more comfortable. Hunting out of a bale blind placed on a food source has been very productive, especially in very cold weather. Deer that have experienced the hunting pressure of the early bow season through gun and muzzle loader seasons are finally beginning to settle back down after the holidays. In early January, deer converge on the best available food sources and do so in daylight. Lack of hunting pressure now has deer feeding any time they wish, and their preference is to feed during the warmest time of the day, usually



Hunting in a Blind Ambitions Bale Blind allows the author to hunt effectively during late season bitter cold.

mid-afternoon until evening.

Settling into the bale blind from noon until sunset, I typically see the majority of deer visiting the food source I'm hunting. Heavy snow, blustery winds, and cold are rendered tolerable while inside the bale blind. The inside of the blind is very comfortable since it blocks all wind and seems to retain your body heat well; you're also shielded from falling snow or sleet. The reason bale blinds are my choice of blind is that they imitate a round bale of hay, so common over the landscape in most of the state at this time of year. Typically, deer are not put on alert by their presence even if you have just set them up. I frequently get deer walking past my blind within an arm's reach of it while I'm inside. It all adds up to a comfortable, safe environment that allows a hunter to effectively hunt in any weather conditions.

Another way I stay comfortable on bitter cold January days in the treestand is by using a body parka-type coverall garment. It's kind of like taking a sleeping bag in the treestand with you to wrap up in to ward off the elements. I use this garment to allow for treestand hunting in bitter cold conditions since it insulates me from cold and wind and it is waterproof to keep snow that lands on me from melting and soaking through the fabric. The Iwom Hunting Parka I use allows for shooting a bow or gun without having to remove the garment, and it is easily carried in its own attached scrunch sack, so you can put it on after walking to your stand.

After the late bow season has expired and I've used my final tag, either on a deer or in a soup recipe, it's time to usher in the off-season. Off-season is a time to reflect back on the past season, take a break away from deer hunting, and begin to plan for the upcoming one.

Most of the year I glass, shine (where legal), and monitor deer with trail cameras, but during the

January/February off-season, I give the deer a break also. No monitoring from me at this time of year since the deer are going through their most stressful period just trying to find shelter and get enough to eat to survive. Mother Nature puts a hurt on deer through prolonged cold weather and deep snow, which test the animals' ability to survive. I don't need to add to their stress by hiking or snowshoeing through their bedrooms and nosing around their winter hideouts, bumping them all over the landscape. Deer never get an off-season when it comes to trying to stay alive. One constant in Wisconsin is that the first two months of each new year are the worst Mother Nature typically dishes out. Hunters have, for the most part, given up on deer hunting after the holiday season and are ready for some R&R. Sleeping in on the weekends during this time is an easy sell.

Welcome to the off-season. 

Lee Gatzke is a member of NextBuk Outdoors, creators of tactical deer hunting videos. Gatzke can be reached at [www.nextbukoutdoors.com](http://www.nextbukoutdoors.com).

TOM CARPENTER

## Badger Birds: Red crossbill

At first glance you might pity the poor red crossbill. Its offset beak looks unnatural and painful. But it is neither. Rather, nature has armed the crossbill with a unique tool for wrestling the cone from a pine tree, prying off the scales, and slipping a tongue in to pull out a seed. Try that with a straight beak sometime! Crossbills come from the Canadian boreal to visit Wisconsin in wintertime.

Look for muted-red male birds, a little smaller than cardinals. Females are

olive-green with yellow rumps. Both males and females have dark to black wings.

**Listen** for the crossbill's chip-chip chip chee-chee-chee song.

**Attract** crossbills with black oil sunflower seed. Crossbills are adept at plucking seed from hanging feeders, but the birds will also readily visit tray feeders.

**Enjoy** crossbills while you have them, for they are ever-nomadic in their search for seeds to eat.

**Understand** that whether in the wilderness or visiting your yard, crossbills are tied to habitat with pine, spruce, and fir trees.

Did you know that there is a white-winged crossbill too? To make the distinction from a red crossbill, simply look for two broad, white wing bars. 

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



SUZETTE CURTIS

## Recipes By Suzette Outdoor edibles

**H**ave you ever tried venison ribs? I had not until recently, but with the latest deer harvest we had a special treat. They turned out wonderfully, and I am sure that from now on the ribs will be a regular part of our family's venison tradition. Following is the basic routine with three different choices for barbecue sauce. *OW*

### Grilled Venison Ribs

Place ribs (cut into manageably-sized pieces) into a large stock pot and cover with cold water. Add a generous amount of salt, pepper and garlic to the pot and bring to a boil (this may take upwards of half an hour). Once boiling temperature has been reached, reduce heat and simmer (covered) for 1 ½ to 2 hours until fork tender. Remove ribs from pot and set aside to cool.

Grill ribs over hot coals, turning once and continuously basting with your choice of barbecue sauce until nicely browned, about 5 to 7 minutes on each side. Serve with remaining sauce.

### Barbecue Sauce Recipe I

- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. ground cloves
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 T. brown sugar
- 2 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 T. flour
- 1 cup pickle juice \*
- 2 T. yellow mustard
- 1 cup catsup

Heat oil in saucepan and sauté onions over medium heat until soft. Add remaining ingredients; reduce heat and simmer, stirring frequently, about 20

minutes to blend flavors.

\*This is a great way to use that pickle juice that I always hate to throw away when the pickles are gone. I especially love to use the juice from homemade dill pickles.

### Barbecue Sauce Recipe II

- ¼ cup butter
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- ½ cup canola oil
- 1 T. salt
- ½ cup cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. grated lemon rind
- 2 T. catsup
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 ½ T. Worcestershire sauce

Combine all ingredients in saucepan; whisk well and bring to a boil. Cover and remove from heat letting sauce stand at room temperature for about 30 minutes before using.

### Barbecue Sauce Recipe III

- 1 clove garlic
- 6 drops hot pepper sauce
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- 4 tsp. orange juice
- 2/3 cup catsup
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. yellow mustard
- pinch of salt
- ½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Crush garlic in bottom of medium-sized bowl. Whisk in remaining ingredients until well mixed. Done!

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](mailto:recipesbysuzette@onwisconsinoutdoors.com).



**CARPENTER**, from page 5

Some hunters like to use .22 rifles for cottontails and take more of a still-hunting approach. This works too. Wander, weave, and stalk slowly to still-hunt through good rabbit cover. Use your eyes as much as your legs. Try to spot rabbits sitting in their forms or hideouts in the brush. Then line up a shot. If you flush a rabbit, get ready to shoot; cottontails will often pause before moving off again.

I grew up with Basset Hounds, and they added another element to the sport. The slow-moving dogs just pushed rabbits ahead, and the cottontails would make a big circle through their habitat, ending up about where they were originally flushed. We got to the point in our family hunting group where we would not shoot rabbits on the initial flush but only when they had been brought back to the gun after circling ahead of a bawling Basset Hound.

That was as much outdoor fun as I've ever had, down in the hills of Green and Lafayette counties. In fact, I eventually put down the shotgun and only used a .22 to shoot rabbits hopping and pausing ahead of the hounds. My brothers and I also had lots of fun fanning out across the landscape to try to head off rabbits at the pass before they returned to from where they were flushed. That was where Dad usually was, and he got as many cottontails as any of us.

You won't have a problem finding a good place to hunt rabbits. Landowners are pretty easy to convince if all you want to do is chase a few rabbits in December. Bring along a young hunter and you have an ace-in-the-hole for access. There are plenty of good public land opportunities for rabbits across Wisconsin also.

It's cottontail time! Get out there and give rabbit hunting a go this winter. *OW*

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

Have a favorite

## Wild Game Recipe?

Email us your recipe and we'll publish it on our Wild Game Recipe page at [OnWisconsinOutdoors.com](http://OnWisconsinOutdoors.com)

Send your recipe to [Recipes@OnWisconsinOutdoors.com](mailto:Recipes@OnWisconsinOutdoors.com)



BILL CUNNEA

# Mick Delivers

## Snow, rooster mean early present

*“Who wudda thunk it? No birds around to speak of, early morning in my (basically) backyard, and the bird flushed in MY direction.”*

**M**y area of Wisconsin is reckoned to be about eight or nine inches shy of normal rainfall for the year. Crop insurance had to be called in for the high ground at harvest, and yield for the low ground was good but much less than it could have been.

This morning dawned with heavy snow falling: a wet, dense snowfall, the first ground-covering snow, and the edge of a front from the northwest with temperatures that dropped just below freezing, so the snow was melting almost as it came down. Good moisture for the farmers, and beautiful to those of us who were warm and sitting with strong coffee in their homes.

In addition to the comfort, the Bears and Vikings were to play this afternoon, and the Packers had the Sunday evening game ... all-in-all, a lazy man's dream day.

I put Mick out on the leash (the goof would rather hang out in the yard than stay in the house even in harsh weather,) and walked around the yard looking down at the rural scenery of the neighbors' farms.

As I was walking back into the house I thought I heard something. Wandering over to that side of the house, I heard it again: the cackle of a rooster pheasant, where none had been heard all year long. Hmm ... probably a wandering young rooster complaining about his first snow.

I went back in the house. Then I went back outside, just to, you know, check the weather and the footing, and to see if the neighbor's heifers were in the pasture below the house and whether the bull was in with them. A couple of inches of snow had accumulated. No cattle in sight. When's the game start?

Got the rubber boots out, the blaze orange jacket (four-day doe season in progress), and the 12 gauge AyA/Sears side-by-side shotgun I'd picked up from



*Mick sniffs the wet pheasant.*

GunBroker earlier this year. Its choke had been honed to improved cylinder/modified from its original modified/full.

Put on a waterproof hat and headed out with the game bag and shotgun. Mick started bouncing when he saw the gun. For a dog that has selective deafness, he sure can pick up on clues when he wants to.

Slid under one barbed wire/hot wire fence, then gingerly picked my way down the slope of the pasture adjoining my house. No cows, no cover, just walking over to the minimal cover that the neighbor has left as he tries to grow something everywhere. Mick settled down and more or less walked at heel as we approached cover. The ground was muddy-soft under the snow, but stable enough as we moved over to some brush in the lee of rock outcroppings. We worked that area, then took the long walk along a drainage culvert over to the crick. I was carrying a fair amount of the field along with us on my boots. I wear out a lot quicker these days than in former years. I blame global warming, or the fiscal cliff.

Directed Mick along the crick, with the brush on either side serving as decent cover in previous years for the few birds that show up around here. In spite of the

## Duck. Duck. Goose.

OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/WaterfowlHunting

Mick and I walked over to the stacks and over the fence (I went over; he went under.) I got him over the fence on the other side of the road and indicated that he should go up the hillside, into the dense junk trees. He went up a bit, then down into the brush along the road. I figured that the pheasant left no scent in his high flight to the hillside. I kept on sending Mick back up, and he'd look and then come on back to where game usually would be.

With entirely appropriate adjectival descriptions of the dog, the fence, the snow, the thorn-laden trees, and the stubborn determination of your average dumb guy, I went over the fence and up into the dense wood. I thought though that a grouse would have a hard time flying through this junk, the pheasant would surely just run until it saw daylight and then take off, cackling in disdain.

Still, Mick came up to me and I sent him ahead, higher up on the hillside. He got interested, then disappeared from view. OK, he's got the scent. I waited to hear the wings flapping and noise of the departing rooster somewhere far out of sight.

Damn. Somehow, the dance between dog and bird brought it up into one of the few openings in the tree branches that was within my view, and more importantly, my range.

I didn't think; I just brought the gun up and shot. The bird was just reaching a height higher than the treetops and fell at my shot. Mick reappeared and grabbed it.

I just gaped. Who wudda thunk it? No birds around to speak of, early morning in my (basically) backyard, and the bird flushed in MY direction. A gift. It is better to be lucky than good.

Mick and I once again had our intermittent argument about what comprised a retrieval.

The snow let me see the bird, gave the earth some much-needed moisture, and made for what I am choosing to call an early Christmas gift. ☺

temps, Mick happily swam the crick back and forth, investigating the ever-more-sparse untilled land. We walked about a half mile or so, heading roughly back to the road below the house.

I admired the snow covered ground and the silence of the morning. In a few months, my admiration will be substantially faded, but at the moment the first snow is lovely.

Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed some slight movement. I focused on it, and darned if it wasn't a rooster pheasant across the entire field, walking the fence line with casual deliberation towards some higher weeds and brush. I watched as the bird disappeared into the brush that grows along the road up the hill to my house. Then the pheasant hopped up on the stacks of corn husks that the neighbor puts there for subsequent stall lining for his milk cows.

I called Mick to heel and headed in that direction. The pheasant watched us and then flew off up on my hillside into some damnable wild cherry trees—a nuisance growth which is the bane of land owners here. The trees grow like bamboo, tight and thorny, and need sawing, not cutting, to eliminate them. The pheasant might as well have gone into his own secure fortress.

*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.*



DENNIS RADLOFF

## Musky Methods In The Off Season

**H**appy New Year to all my good friends here at OWO! I hope you have been enjoying a great holiday season and that you received all the musky gear on your Christmas list!

With another musky season behind us and the 2013 season still months away, we can start our planning now. January through March is the time of year to take advantage of the many musky shows that are available throughout the region. Musky shows offer us the opportunity to talk with a variety of individuals and ask questions about the products they manufacture, whether it's a boat, rod, reel, line, lures, terminal tackle, or a destination. The shows also offer the ability to talk one-on-one with guides from around the Midwest and learn about the bodies of water they work on.

One of my favorite components about the musky shows is the seminars. I enjoy conducting them as a way of sharing useful information about the bodies of water I target and the productive techniques that offer success on a daily basis. I also enjoy attending seminars by guides and television personalities to hear them talk about what has been working for them. This is where I gain some of the leading edge information about new techniques, enforcement on things I'm already

doing, and sometimes a new twist on an old favorite.

In addition to learning great information through these seminars, the best part is at the end of each one. Like most in the industry, I always end my seminar with an open question-and-answer session. Here's where you really get the opportunity to obtain answers to the questions you may have about a certain body of water, specific technique, or presentation tactics.

Wisconsin continues to be a network hub in the musky world with many of the industry's services and products based here, including the original Milwaukee Musky Show. This year's Milwaukee show will take place on February 15, 16, and 17 at State Fair Park with seminars every day and exhibitors from all over the Midwest. I will have a booth there for Sterling Guide Service and will be available every day to talk about musky fishing, answer questions, and even book some trips. You can find more information about the Milwaukee Show online at [www.muskieexpo.com](http://www.muskieexpo.com).

Another in-state show will occur in Wausau on March 1, 2, and 3. This is the Wisconsin Musky Expo, located at the Patriot Center, which will have seminars and exhibitors all three days. I will have a booth at this



Friend and Guide Captain Lynn Niklasch conducting a seminar at Dave's Fishing Expo 2012. Dave's Fishing Expo 2013 will be held in April.

show and will also be doing a seminar on Friday night at 7:00 PM. You can learn more about this show at [www.wisconsinmuskieexpo.com](http://www.wisconsinmuskieexpo.com).

As always, we will be holding our annual Dave's Fishing Expo in April with several great seminars. More details on this show will be listed in the March/April issue of OWO.

Come on out to the shows! I hope to see you there. Please stop by to say hello. 

Captain Dennis Radloff 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](http://sterlingmusky.com) or at 262.443.9993.

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DICK ELLIS

## Life, Business Starts Outside For OWO Sponsor



Gregg Borneman of the Cap Connection is one of the many On Wisconsin Outdoors sponsors whose advertising brings our print publication to outdoorsmen and women at no cost. Like any product, we don't tell you what to buy, but we ask you to check out our sponsors' products before you make your choice.

Cap Connection founder Gregg Borneman discovered early in life what it takes to be an angler and hunter on the Mississippi backwaters near Trempealeau in west-central Wisconsin. His father's cabin was raised on stilts to protect it from periodic flood waters that a young boy viewed as a certain paradise. Just outside, a young boy could take a skiff to find often fabulous bluebill and mallard hunting, or maybe look for a tangle with an overweight pike.

"I spent a lot of days on the Mississippi River," Borneman said. "If you wanted to be with my dad, you had better hunt and fish. I grew up in Wauwatosa and he worked in Milwaukee. Every weekend I would go fishing with him. I spent the summer there. In the summer you would get a lot of northern, bass, and two-pound black crappie. We fished inland lakes and the river wing dams. I remember in the summer months using Johnson weedless silver spoons and catching 20-pound pike and big bass. The cabin on stilts was really a mobile

home with the wheels taken off. You would look down at the flood waters underneath you. That was pretty cool for a kid."

Borneman wouldn't lose the love for the outdoors that he inherited from his father. But he would also credit his mother for instilling in him a certain work ethic blended with professional integrity that would serve him well as a young man with a young family willing to take a risk in business.

"I was a mechanic since I could pump gas," he said. "My mother's greenhouse was right here. (Cap Connection is located at 1855 East Moreland Boulevard in Waukesha, one mile west of Gander Mountain.) I knew I didn't want to be a mechanic my whole life. I thought I would be a greenhouse owner."

The Cap Connection was born in the 1980s with an initial inventory of pop-up campers. His wife, Robbi, Gregg said, came up with the name for the business and accepted the lion's share of raising two daughters and a

son.

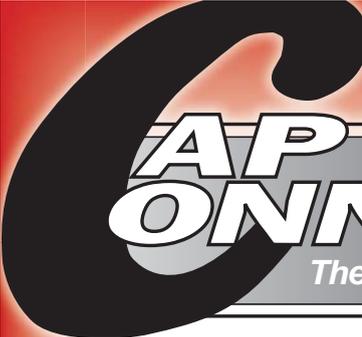
"It was scary. We were a young family," Gregg said. "We gutted the flower shop and made it a showroom. We borrowed \$25,000. I was either going to make it or be a mechanic. My mom encouraged me and even said that if I couldn't make my house payment, she would. She knew my work ethic. She knew I was a hard worker."

Borneman remembers falling asleep with no customers. The business had opened in the spring when placing an ad in the yellow pages wasn't available. But he also remembers the day he called his mother in Arizona to tell her that he had sold 10 truck caps that week.

"I thought then that we would make it," he said. "We didn't have a garage. We would put on truck caps and running boards in the snow ... and that was back when we had real winters."

Cap Connection did make it.

*continued on page 25*



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**NEWS**

Saje Events, Inc. has confirmed that Pat Reeve and Nicole Jones will be the featured seminar speakers at this year's Wisconsin State Hunting Expo, formerly known as the Wisconsin Deer Classic. In addition to Pat and Nicole, from *Driven TV*, the Wisconsin State Hunting Expo will be featuring an indoor, pop-up, 3D archery shoot. Mark your calendars now, because you do not want to miss the next Hunting Expo at Shopko Hall in Green Bay!

And there's more. Northeast Wisconsin Sport Fishin' Show is moving to Appleton! The new home of the Sport Fishin' Show is Players Choice of the Fox Cities. Coincidentally, in 2012, *Outdoor Life* ranked Appleton, WI the number one city in America to live in, if you are an outdoors person. To celebrate this move, Saje Events, Inc. will be giving away over \$20,000 in door prizes at the Fishin' Show!

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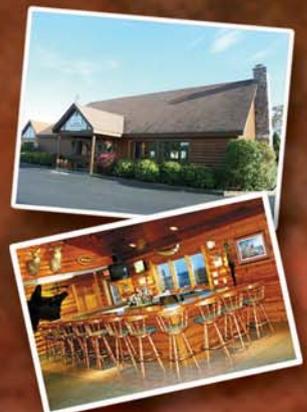
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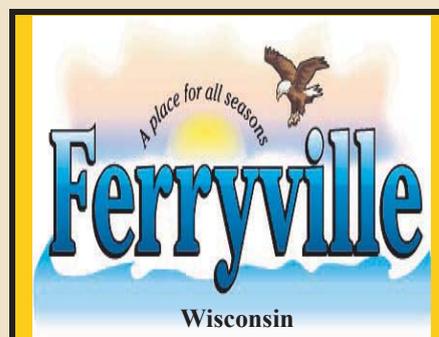
- Green Lake Country Visitors

### GREEN COUNTY

- Monroe Chamber of Commerce

Don't just shovel the snow, RIDE IT in Richland County! Check out **Screamin' Half Mile Oval Race January 26 at the Richland County Fairgrounds**. Don't let the winter blues get you down. For current events that will warm you up this winter season, [click on Richland County](#).

Ice Fishing is a big time draw in Ferryville on the Mississippi River. Pan fish are a favorite. Use the **Ferryville Boat Launch** to access the best fishing on the river. **March 2, 2013 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. is Bald Eagle & Raptor Day** featuring live Eagle programs, Lois the owl who flies around the room and **U.S. Fish and Wildlife** will be there



**March 2 2013**

**Bald Eagle & Raptor Day**

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to tell us about eagles in the Upper Mississippi River Refuge all at Village Hall, Ferryville, WI. [Click on Crawford County](#)

Birkie Fever Turns 40! For a lot of skiers, the **40th American Birkebeiner** is a time to reflect on decades of skiing the race, and for many more it's just the beginning of a new adventure. On **February 23, 2013**, the Hayward/Cable Areas welcome cross-country enthusiasts to join the fun at the annual event. [Click on Sawyer County](#).

Whatever your pleasure, we have what you crave in Marinette County—the real north! Set your own pace by **snowmobile, ATV, cross-country ski, or back country snowshoe**. Drop your line or set your tip-ups and relax. The real north is your **four season destination** for outdoor fun! [Click on Marinette County](#).

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A Calumet County tradition, **sturgeon spearing on Lake Winnebago**, runs **February 9-24** from 6:30 AM- 12:30 PM. Head to Harbor Bar near Stockbridge on **February 9 at 11:00 AM to watch Alice in Dairyland**, Rochelle Ripp, help register and learn about these incredible fish. [Click on Calumet County](#).

Wolf Pack Adventures will soon be **"Walking on Water."** You can too ... while using the cutting edge ice fishing equipment in pursuit of a **hard-water winter adventure**. Don't be couch potatoes this winter; join the Pack and enjoy what Mother Nature has to offer in Sheboygan County. [Click on Sheboygan County](#).

Winter in Ashland will showcase **Northwoods Harness Club Sleigh & Cutter Rally, Book Across the Bay XC Ski Race & Snowshoe Trek, King of the Bay Snow Drags**, XC skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, ice fishing, murals, historic downtown shopping, dining and lodging, all waiting for your winter visit to **Ashland, Lake Superior's hometown**. [Click on Ashland County](#).

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Clark County is all about love this time of year. **Love of the outdoors, love of winter sports, love of snowmobiling and ATVing, love of winter festivals.** Come find the love of your life in Clark County this winter! *Click on Clark County.*

Time to head over to the river. The **Mississippi** will soon be ready for another season of **fantastic ice fishing.** If that's not your thing, how about just getting away from home for some peace and quiet? Your friends at the **Grandview Motel** will be happy to accommodate your visit! *Click on Crawford County.*

Treat your sweetheart to some February fun. **Sample local brews, vintages and appetizers during the Wine and Roses event,** check out artistic and musical talent at the **Mid-Winter Art Faire,** or spend the evening enjoying a **Moonlight Walk and Campfire Cookout.** *Click on Green Lake County.*

Ice fishing is a popular sport in **Price County.** Hard water anglers will catch walleye, panfish and northern. Roll-In-Point Bar & Grill hosts an **Ice Fishing Rumble the 1st Saturday of each winter month.** Cash prizes are awarded! For information on this event and other ice fishing tournaments *click on Price County.*

Happy New Year! Are you ready for some fishing? Come see us at the sport shows in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay and Chicago and book your trip to **Manotak Lodge in Canada.** Check out our half price trip for our fall special. 1.800.541.3431. *Click on Waupaca County.*

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The artwork is a detail from "The Winter Hunter", Paul Calle is courtesy of the artist & art publisher Mill Pond Press.



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### ELLIS-Gramol, from page 3

"I saw Jerry," he said. "I told him I had shot a nice buck. When we walked up on the buck, Jerry's mouth just dropped. There's obviously something special about the size of that rack. I had never seen a rack worthy of mounting. I have shot some 'eights' and even a ten pointer but nothing worthy of a spot on the wall."

begin to answer the question and verify that the buck was uniquely special. Ramsey agreed to meet Gramoll on the parents' property to green score the buck.

"We drove into Lyndon Station and immediately a crowd gathered," Gramoll said. "I felt like the town hero; everyone was shaking my hand. At Tiff's parents', we backed into the barn

**"Their mouths dropped too and their eyes lit up. Tim said, 'You don't know what you've got here.'"**

The immensity of the 15-point rack was obvious to anyone, but Gramoll was about to find out just how special the buck was by official score. He called his long-time best friends, hunting and fishing buddies, and Juneau County neighbors, Tim and Tiff Belle, and told them to come over and see a big buck. Tim Belle, Gramoll said, is a research enthusiast with significant knowledge regarding antler scoring.

"They were walking over when I lifted the buck's head," Gramoll said. "Their mouths dropped too and their eyes lit up. Tim said, 'You don't know what you've got here.'"

Official scorer John Ramsey, a friend of Tiff Belle's parents, would

and Ramsey took the measurements. He knew it would break the Juneau County record by six inches for typical whitetailed deer and probably will be among the top 10 best bucks ever shot in Wisconsin. The 15-point buck gross scored 202-18 and carried a preliminary score of 184-5/8 after deductions.

"It's been just overwhelming," Gramoll said. "Who would have known? I would have never even believed I could have seen something like this in the field ... let alone drop it."

Dick Ellis is publisher of On Wisconsin Outdoors. Read Dick's blog on the website at OnWisconsinOutdoors.com.



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ARNOLD GROEHLER

# On The Trapline

## Beaver fur and Wisconsin's heritage

**Wisconsin Trapping.**
[OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/TrappingInWisconsin.](http://OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/TrappingInWisconsin)


Arnie Groehler with a nice 60-pounder.

This week found me taking care of some beaver trapping opportunities. While the summer drought and hot temperatures greatly reduced the muskrat population, the beaver numbers actually increased. Beavers are a relative newcomer to present day southern Wisconsin. When I first started trapping during the 1960s, there were no beavers around here; I trapped my first one in 1975. Now virtually every river, creek, and water system has a resident population.

This increase in numbers has been a mixed blessing. To trappers like me, they are a special fur-bearing animal, providing a link to the days of the mountain men and wilderness trappers. To many farmers and property owners, they have become an unwanted nuisance; dropping trees and

damming waterways. Beavers are one of the few animal species that can alter their habitat to better suit their liking. In doing so they can cause conflicts with man, which is where I come in. I receive many calls requesting that I remove them.

The quest for beaver fur (soft gold) is one of the primary reasons that the early explorers traveled through the territory which would become Wisconsin. The soft under-fur was used to make top hats in Europe. Beaver pelts brought top dollar and provided the settlers with a ready income source. Even Congress got involved by having the Lewis and Clark expedition note where there were large numbers of beavers. Wisconsin may be known as the dairy state, but I believe that California has now surpassed us in

the amount of milk produced. Perhaps we should change our motto to: "Wisconsin, the fur state." When you add up all of the fur products from Wisconsin, including ranch mink, fox, and wild fur, we lead the nation by a large margin. And it was the beaver that started it all.

### Conservation Means Wise Use Of A Natural Resource

We trappers try to use all parts of the animals we catch. The beaver is a good example of this. The fur is used to make quality garments and hats. Beaver meat, when properly prepared, is similar to venison in texture and taste. I have had it shredded, with a barbecue sauce, roasted, and made into sausage. It was all good. Lewis and Clark wrote in their journal that the beaver tail was their favorite delicacy. Somehow they

were able to get the thick gristle to their liking. Many sled dog racers feed it to their dogs before competition, as it provides a high energy protein source.

The beaver glands, called castor glands, are used as a base for the finest perfumes. It takes two years to tincture them down, but they then can maintain the correct scent pattern desired by the manufacturer. There have been some years when the beaver glands brought more money than the fur. The tail has a thick leather similar to an alligator hide and is used to make wallets. Even the bones are ground down and made into bone meal for roses. Lately the rendering companies have been reducing the fat into bio-diesel. Nothing goes to waste; we have found a use for every part of the beaver.

*continued on page 21*



Beavers can cause a lot of damage to trees.

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- just to name a few of the topics.

JJ REICH

## The Reich Stuff Ice line by design

**I**ce fishing line is manufactured specifically for better performance in cold weather. The brainy product engineers who created it strived for high-abrasion resistance (to withstand frays due to cutting ice), low line memory (to combat the coiling on small reels), and minimal water absorption (to avoid freeze-ups in frigid temperatures and whipping winds).

Depending on water clarity and conditions, some pros also look for low-visibility line that their prey can't detect underwater. Other anglers prefer high-visibility colors for better visual bite detection against glaring bright ice or in a darkened shanty.

Cory Schmidt, a long-time fishing industry professional, offers his insights on ice fishing lines. His knowledge provides a deeper understanding of why a high-performance fishing line—one designed specifically for ice—is one of your most important secrets for success.

### Schmidt's Strategies

"When battling a fish in close quarters, I prefer a line that stretches. This way, it's harder for hooks to be pulled out or for slack line to occur when a fish pulls hard or surges forward. So most of the time, I am spooled with P-Line's Floroice," explained Schmidt. "Floroice is a combination of copolymer line with a silicon fluorocarbon coating. It's nice and smooth, and it never coils, so you always maintain a totally direct connection to the lure, as opposed to having coils and memory in the line that blocks sensitivity. I also like this line's near invisibility, strength and tremendous abrasion resistance. Floroice is just a sweet, fisherman-friendly ice line. It's one of those *once you use it, you just know* type of things."

"For braid, I use Power Pro Ice (in the blue color)," described Schmidt. "I find the 5-pound test great for deep jigging walleyes or perch. Eight- or ten-pound test works well for lake trout. I also use straight Seaguar fluorocarbon as a shock-absorbing leader, ahead of the braid. I think this line is the most abrasion resistant compared to other types of lines."

"The only time I use braid is for deeper water presentations, such as

when targeting lake trout, walleye jigging in depths greater than 25 feet, and deep jigging for catfish," continued Schmidt. "Low-stretch braid is ideal for maintaining contact with your lure in deep water. It provides greater sensitivity to feel bites, and it also allows you to perform fine-tuned maneuvers with your spoon, or other ice lure, when fishing in greater depths."



Cory Schmidt chooses P-Line Floroice in 5- or 6-pound test when jigging with spoons for walleyes in moderate depths. He switches to Power Pro Ice in 5- or 8-pound test with an 18-inch Seaguar Blue Label leader in 6- or 8-pound test when fishing in deep water or when fishing an aggressive swimming lure.



Cory Schmidt chooses P-Line Floroice in 2-pound test when finesse fishing for sunfish with micro jigs in waters with minimum cover. He uses P-Line Floroice in 3-pound test when targeting sunfish in vegetation. 

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](http://www.kampptales.com).

ELLIS-Fuss, from page 3

when he had an opportunity to hunt after a work trip during the November peak of the rut on a co-worker's private property in southwest Columbia County, he was grateful for it. Fuss had never hunted the land and was led to a stand by his host who pointed out trails and shooting lanes. As his friend began the trek to his own stand, Fuss climbed the permanent stand with PSC X-Force and rage-tipped broadheads and began to hold vigil like so many times before. The day had broken sunny, with 10-15 mile per hour winds and temperatures in the low 30s.

The buck took the stage almost immediately, and after Fuss's initial restraint on the string, the story hurried toward the hopeful conclusion centered on a one-foot hole in the brush. Fuss drew back, aimed, and timed the pace that would place the buck's vitals in the perfect window. As the moment of truth materialized, Fuss's grunt/bleat call brought the buck to a stop in the hole between two trees. The arrow rocketed toward its target.

The shot behind the shoulder scored a heart and lung hit, but Fuss was confident only that the buck had traveled a

**"I texted my friend,  
'shot monster,' but he  
didn't reply for  
five minutes," Fuss said.**

**"That was like forever."**

short distance. The "clean, pass-through shot" he said, had happened so quickly that, although he believed the buck was finished, he remained cautious as the seconds passed on stand.

"I texted my friend, 'shot monster,' but he didn't reply for five minutes," Fuss said. "That was like forever. The reason for that was that he had just arrived at his stand and was replying to e-mails. His jacket wasn't even zipped and his release wasn't even on the string yet. He texted me back that he was coming right over. I called my dad to tell him I had just shot the biggest buck of my life. We do everything together. My dad taught me how to hunt and bought me my first compound when I was nine years old. I've been shooting ever since. He was my best man."

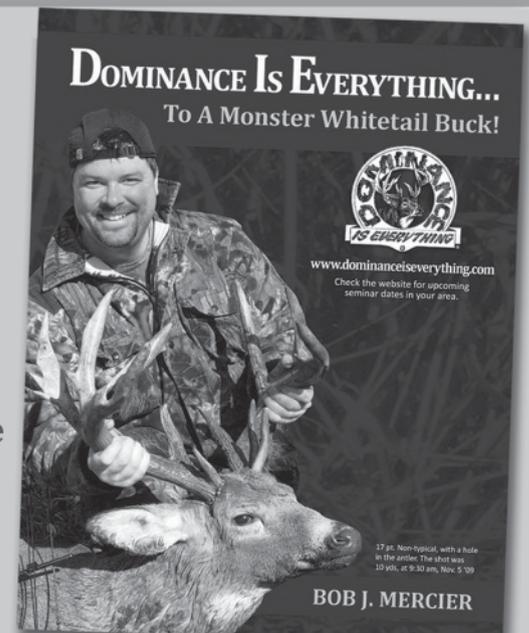
*continued on page 23*

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TOM CARPENTER

## Cubs Corner: Winter bird feeding fun

Even though winter is here, it's not too late to start feeding birds in your yard. Bird feeding is great together time for kids and parents. Shopping for feeders and seeds together is fun, and keeping feeders stocked with seeds, suet, and other offerings is a good and regular responsibility for kids. Watching feeder visitors is a healthy, natural, and reflective diversion for young minds; it gets them off the computer and electronic gaming devices.

Three words form the basis for any winter bird feeding program: black oil sunflower. These seeds are easily available, highly affordable, and best of all, attractive to a wide variety of Wisconsin's winter birds. Our feathered friends absolutely love them.

There are a couple ways to offer black oil sunflower. Tray feeders are effective, whether mounted on top of a pole or post or suspended from a rope or chain. Tube-style hanging feeders, with feeding ports along with perches for the birds to sit on, are great too. It's a good plan to have at least one of each style of feeder at your station.

The list of potential avian visitors to sunflower seeds is long. The likeliest attendees include black-capped chickadees, white-breasted nuthatches, red-breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, hairy woodpeckers and cardinals. Cardinals like sturdier-based tray feeders better than hanging feeders, and for me that's reason enough to have both types.

Black oil sunflower also attracts winter visitors that aren't as common. Evening grosbeaks, crossbills, and tufted titmice come to mind.

Another suitable kind of seed to offer is thistle. These tiny seeds are perfect for the goldfinches that winter in Wisconsin, as well as pine siskins. Goldfinches' and siskins' tiny beaks are suited to the little seeds. Thistle (also

***“Three words form the basis for any winter bird feeding program: black oil sunflower.”***

known as nyjer or black thistle) also attracts the common and hoary redpolls that sometimes visit our state in winter when seed supplies are short in their arctic homes.

The best way to offer thistle seed is through a tube feeder with tiny ports to dispense it. There are also low-cost mesh thistle sacks that hold seed. Hang one and be entertained watching the acrobatic birds hang, cling, and contort as they extract seeds.

To round out your winter feeding program, offer suet. Suet, which is really rendered animal fat, is high in calories, which birds really need in winter. You can buy suet in ready-made blocks that

fit in special suet cages you hang.

Here's another plan. Every year I save the fat trimmed when cutting up deer (most whitetails have thick layers of it over their rumps and elsewhere), chunk up the greasy stuff, and save it in the freezer. The birds go completely NUTS over it. I suspect this because it's so natural: the real thing!

Woodpeckers (downies and hairies alike) love suet. You might convince some big pileated woodpeckers to visit. But nuthatches will flock to suet too, as will brown creepers. These small birds are all meat eaters of larvae and insects, and they instinctively go for the fat. Chickadees hit suet too.



There you have it—a simple winter bird feeding program. Get three or maybe four feeders (a tray and hanging sunflower feeder, a thistle feeder, and a suet cage), place them where they're easily viewed from a window or two in your home, and keep a pair of binoculars handy.

The hours I've spent watching winter birds out the windows with my kids are locked away in my soul, and they are together-time memories that will always live with me. <sup>WO</sup>

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

**GROEHLER**, from page 19

### The Castor Mound Set

One of the best sets to capture beavers is called the castor mound set. Beavers are territorial and will not tolerate other beavers moving into their colony area. The castor mound set simulates that an outside intruder beaver has arrived and is trying to take over part of the established colony's territory. Beavers mark their colony boundaries by scraping together piles of leaves and mud and then depositing some castor gland oil. These castor mounds equate to a no trespassing sign to other beavers.

I will locate one of the existing castor mounds and then destroy it. A few feet away I will make an imitation castor mound complete with the castor oil from a beaver which I previously trapped from another colony. In the water directly in front of this imitation castor mound I conceal the trap, which has a long slide wire going out to deeper water. An adult beaver from the colony will smell this new castor from an intruder beaver and come over to investigate. In the process it will get caught in the trap; at least that is the plan.

### Something That You Do Not Know About Beavers

Every year I learn more about these interesting fur-bearing animals.

This summer a Maine biologist informed me that beavers are creatures that need to digest their food twice (referred to as coprophagy). So after chewing on some tree bark, they digest and excrete it, then eat it again. Hopefully, they can keep track of which droppings are on their first or second cycle.

### The Special Moments

The deer rut started in earnest the week of my writing this article. Virtually every year I get to witness bucks fighting and displaying all sorts of strange behavior while running my trap line. It is neat to see a buck with a large rack up close grunting at you or shredding a small sapling ... as long as it keeps its distance. Once they get closer than 20 feet I get concerned. There seems to be something about the different trapping/animal smells on me that gets these bucks all riled up. Several times I have had to yell, wave my arms, and throw rocks at bucks who wanted to challenge me. I believe that my greatest danger as a trapper in the woods is not from wolves, bears, or mountain lions but from a 10-point buck with an attitude during the rut.

I was down in a creek taking a raccoon out of a trap when I heard the sounds of two bucks fighting. They sounded like a herd of elephants

crashing through the cornfield above me. As they came into view, I could see a large 8-pointer that was being chased by a small 6-point. The little buck was giving it everything he had, charging nonstop at the big guy, while the 8-point was trying to ignore him, looking rather annoyed.

As they passed by, the bigger buck suddenly stopped and looked down at me in the water. The smaller buck kept up his attack. With a whisk of his antlers, the 8-point lifted the smaller buck up off of his feet and pushed him down the bank right at me. The little buck fell head-over-heels and landed in the water close by. For a few long seconds I froze with a case of "trapper-in-the-headlights," as I did not know what to do next. The little buck looked at me, looked at the 8-point, then back at me. In an instant he charged back up the bank and resumed chasing after the bigger buck.

Why can't I see things like this from my stand on opening day of the deer gun season? <sup>WO</sup>

*Arnie Groehler is a seasoned trapper of over forty years who shares his many years of experience as a Wisconsin Trapper Education instructor. He serves as the director for District 11 of the Wisconsin Trappers Association, and is chairman of the North American Wild Fur Shippers Council.*

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S. WILKERSON

# Surplus Firearms

## Jungle love

The Lee Enfield Mk V is one of the best-looking bolt action carbines ever made and one of the most ferocious to shoot.

Not only was the sun setting on the British Empire when the Lee Enfield Mk V “Jungle Carbine” was put into service, but so, too, was the reign of bolt action shoulder weapons. England was one of the last major countries to issue manual repeaters to its armed services, and the Mk V was already long obsolete when it debuted in March of 1944.

By that point, the United States had been issuing semiautomatic M1 rifles for nearly a decade and the Germans were fielding significant numbers of the world’s first mass produced assault rifle, the select fire MP 44. In 1947, the Soviet Union would adopt the most successful assault rifle in history, the AK 47, the same year that the British would end production of the Mk V. It would be at least another decade before British armed forces would phase out manual repeaters in favor of modern assault rifles.

The Mk V was a shorter, handier, lighter, and much-less-pleasant-to-shoot version of the MK IV, which was introduced in 1939 and was based on the Mk III. The Mk III could trace its lineage back to 1907. Firing a .303 caliber cartridge and boasting a 10-round, clip-fed, box magazine; excellent sites; a smooth cock-on-closing bolt action; and a high degree of accuracy, the Mk III was the best battle rifle of WWI. The Mk IV shared the same attributes as the Mk III but was not quite as ugly. The Mk V, on the other hand, was, without a doubt, a sexy beast.

Small, purposeful, and muscular

in form as well as function, the Mk V is one of the best-looking military carbines ever made and an absolute beast to shoot. Firing a full-house .303, 174 grain bullet at 2,470 feet per second, the MK V gives new meaning to the term “felt recoil.” Each round fired feels like being kicked in the shoulder by an ostrich. While the Mk IV weighed nine pounds and had 25 inches of barrel to tame its recoil, the Mk V only weighed seven pounds and

fired the same bullet through an 18.5-inch barrel.

The Jungle Carbine doesn’t kick quite as bad as a Mosin-Nagant M44 carbine or a short variant of a Mauser Model 1898, but kick it does. England never was a nation of riflemen, although target shooting in that country was once a major sport among the well-heeled. The Mk V could not have been a pleasant first-time shooting experience for a typical recruit who had never shot a firearm in his life. Supposedly, the British considered adopting the Mk V as their standard infantry weapon but never did. Some have speculated that the carbine’s ferocious recoil played a role in this decision. Despite its less than ideal shooting characteristics, the Mk V proved popular among airborne troops and those fighting in the Far East during the Second World War and Malaysia in the post-war period. As a side note, most of the Mk Vs that have been imported in recent years came from Malaysia and demonstrate years of hard duty.

In 1947, after producing less than 300,000 Mk Vs, the British government pulled the plug on the carbine after only four years of production. The official reason was not recoil but a malady known as “wandering zero.” According to armorers, the Mk V would not stay

## Collectible Firearms.

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sighted in for reasons that no one has ever been able to explain. Some theories suggest that lightening cuts in the receiver allowed it to torque under recoil. Another points to the flash hider disturbing barrel harmonics, while still another opines that humidity in tropical climates (where many Mk Vs saw duty, hence the term “Jungle Carbine”) caused the stock to swell and upset receiver bedding, and, along with it, accuracy.

***“Small, purposeful, and muscular in form as well as function, the Mk V is one of the best-looking military carbines ever made and an absolute beast to shoot.”***

Since 1947, the legend of the Mk V wandering zero has been accepted as gospel among many gun writers, although no one who actually owns one seems to have that problem, including myself. On the other hand, there may very well have been something to the wandering zero charge; after all, the British retained the Mk IV rifle in service and production for years after manufacture of the Mk V ceased.

Despite its harsh kick, the Mk V is a fun and practical rifle. It is light, shoulders easily, and has an excellent two-stage trigger. Unlike the comparable Russian M44, the Mk V has a flash hider, meaning that every round fired is not accompanied by a Great Pumpkin-sized fire ball (which is half the fun of shooting an M44.) The Mk V shares some other important dissimilarities with the M44, like an easily manipulated safety and respectable sites. Furthermore, you don’t have to attach a foot-long bayonet to the barrel of an Mk V to get decent accuracy, unlike the M44, which was designed to be sighted in and fired with the bayonet attached.

Claims of a wandering zero aside the Mk V is a pretty accurate weapon, thanks to its adjustable rear peep site and a stock with a pistol grip. The M44 has a stock with no pistol grip to help steady your aim and an extremely

small u-notch rear site in which swims the front site post. Add the wildly wide bore dimension variations found on war-time M44s, 100-yard groups will range from about three inches up to and beyond six inches. With decent ammunition, that is, just about anything not made in India or Pakistan, Jungle Carbine groups of less than three inches are not uncommon.

One area that the M44 does have all over the Mk V is ammunition availability. The M44 fires 7.62 x 54 ammunition, which is almost as cheap as dirt and about as easy to find. It’s corrosive, but, being a bolt action rifle, the M44 is very easy to clean.

The Mk V is also easy to clean, and once it is cleaned, it will probably stay that way. Inexpensive surplus ammunition is long gone, which is hard to believe considering how many countries comprised the British Commonwealth and issued its weapons in .303 caliber. Of course, the sun set on the Empire a long time ago. Newly made .303 ammunition is available, but it is expensive—like \$15—and expensive for a 20-round box of non-corrosive ammunition from Serbia. It is great ammunition, though, and far better than the extremely corrosive, sometimes unreliable, and rarely accurate Pakistani and Indian surplus stuff that was fairly common—and cheap—10 years ago.

Back when ammunition was still to be found, Mk Vs were pretty desirable, collectible, and expensive. Now that ammunition is costly and hard to find, prices on these little carbines (and their rifle counterparts) seem to have flattened. Of course, all things are relative. A box of decent, newly manufactured, .303 FMJ ammunition is no more expensive than, say, a box of softpoint 30/30 ammunition. The Mk V is a much more interesting firearm to shoot and collect than a modern era lever action deer hunting rifle. Given all that, wandering around searching for an Mk V is worth the effort and, like all surplus guns, they will rise in value.

OW

S. Wilkerson is an award-winning Wisconsin journalist, firearms expert and student of the Second Amendment. Contact him by email at [cheapshots@onwisconsinoutdoors.com](mailto:cheapshots@onwisconsinoutdoors.com).

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*High Noon Holsters stands out at the top of my list of the best holsters that I have used.*

Like many of my fellow Wisconsinites, I'm fairly new to concealed carry. Having served in the Marines, I'm not new to carrying pistols, though, having had an M9 strapped to my side or chest throughout the majority of my nearly 11 years in. Being a gun writer also gives me an advantage in that I get to try a lot of different styles, brands, and materials of holsters.

Of the nearly two dozen holsters I've used, I have developed a definite preference for leather. Other materials work great, but nothing works as well, nor looks as good, as ol' animal hide.

With all of that said, High Noon Holsters stands out at the top of my list of the best holsters I have used.

#### Initial Thoughts/Impressions

As I pulled the holster out of the package, I was struck by its simple beauty. The large grains of leather are striking, as is the contrast between the rich, brown leather and the yellow stitching. It's crafted with such precision that it looks like a carefully painted plastic replica. But I assure you it's not; it's 100 percent real.

Slipping my pistol into the Slide

Guard was like sliding in behind the wheel of a fine German automobile—and with the similar smell of fine leather. At first it was just a touch tight and it stuck on the draw, but after a week of wear, it fits perfectly.

One advantage that High Noon Holsters gives you that a lot of other leather holsters do not is a tension adjustment screw, so that if it were to ever get too loose, there's a quick fix. More on that below in the Retention/Draw section.

Since pulling it out of the package three weeks ago, I've worn the Slide Guard almost every waking minute, with exception to a day trip to Illinois. I will tell you point blank, the craftsmanship is topnotch. It is two-piece leather construction with quality double stitching, and it has been form fitted by hand to the gun model of your choosing. Most important, this holster is built very solidly; it isn't going to fail any time soon. In fact, from the feel of it, it will last decades, if not longer, and will definitely outlast me. If that's not enough, HNH gives you a 100 percent lifetime guarantee on quality, workmanship, and hardware.

"At 15 yards I already felt very good," Fuss said. "I looked up and there he lay. I saw his white belly. I met my friend. He has done a lot of quality deer management work. Before I hunted on the land, I asked him the rules. He said, 'Adam if you're going to put it on the wall, I would be more than happy for you if you take one of these bucks.'"
 

The 11-point buck would gross 182, but the story took on another twist when

#### ELLIS-Fuss, from page 20

After another eternal 10-minute wait, Fuss lowered to the ground to search for the arrow. The initial bright red blood reinforced his confidence that he had seen a fatal lung hit, despite the lingering doubt often experienced by a hunter. He began to move along the trail taken by the buck and immediately found "blood everywhere."

a nearby landowner contacted Fuss to let him know he had been watching the same buck that had taken up residence on adjacent property. Sheds and trail cam photos the landowner had gathered verified that the buck was 7 1/2 years old.

ROBB MANNING

## Every Day Carry High Noon Holster's Slide Guard

#### Concealability

I wear a Spec-Ops brand 1.75-inch web belt with which my Slide Guard works perfectly. My carry gun is a Kimber Solo, and with the Slide Guard I can wear just about any shirt without printing. I'll even throw on a T-shirt and you can't tell my rig is there. In fact, most people are more drawn to my weak side, where I clip my iPhone case. The great concealability is due in large part to the curvature of the holster, which hugs the upper hip and keeps the butt of the pistol nice and snug against the body. It's also due to it having the perfect cant angle, 15 degrees, and just the right height above the belt. When it comes to concealment, the Slide Guard is tough to beat.

#### Comfort

When I first got my CCW license earlier this year, I was so excited to be able to legally carry, it didn't matter what kind of holster I used; any hunk of plastic or cloth would do. Burlap lined with lava rock shards would have sufficed. But as the novelty and excitement of a new CCW license wore off, that "any ol' holster will do" mentality also wore off—and quickly. Nowadays, the more uncomfortable a holster is the further back in the dresser drawer it ends up. It has to be that way; we're talking about something we carry on us all day and sometimes all night!

The Slide Guard is so comfortable, even when I can't carry or choose not to carry I just leave the empty holster on my belt. No need to take it off; I hardly notice it's there. Of the nearly two dozen holsters I own, I have two that I can do that with, and I'm happy to say the Slide Guard is one of them.

#### Retention/Draw

Retention in the Slide Guard is excellent. When it is fully seated, it almost snaps into place. The only time your pistol will leave this holster is when you intend it to. Further, the tension screw assures that it will never get too loose or too tight. High Noon likes to refer to this as their "insurance for the future" in that no matter if your holster loosens up with age, you'll be able to fine tune your holster's retention. It will also allow you to keep the desired retention of your holster despite external factors such as horseback riding, hand injuries, and aging (arthritis, et cetera). As for draw, the 15-degree cant of the holster puts it in the perfect position to grab the pistol and pull it out smoothly for a quick presentation to the target.

#### Wrap Up

In conclusion, the Slide Guard is an excellent holster in every aspect, and I think High Noon Holsters makes an outstanding product. Overall quality is topnotch. As for looks, the leather is really attractive and the contrast between the leather and yellow stitching is unique and looks great. I highly recommend this holster.

*High Noon Holsters offers holsters for hundreds of different makes and models of firearms and with several options, including material and color. A cowhide unlined holster can be purchased for \$99.95 at [www.highnoonholsters.com](http://www.highnoonholsters.com).*

*Robb Manning served in the U.S. Marine Corps for nearly 11 years where he developed a passion and knowledge for firearms of all types. Since 2010 Robb has been a gun/hunting writer, and also films gun and gear videos for his Youtube channel 762x51n8o.*

ing so hard on where to shoot him to cleanly kill him. I wasn't trying to just put an arrow in him. I was trying to hit him behind the shoulder. I think that helped calm me. I was pretty ecstatic. I was very fortunate and thankful for the opportunity to hunt the property where my friend had done so much management work." 

*Dick Ellis is publisher of On Wisconsin Outdoors.*

DAN MOERICKE

# The “Up Nort” Report

## Rut Camp 2012: Oops, there it is

*In the last issue, the author gave an account of a 2011 encounter with a giant buck in the Nicolet National Forest that ended poorly. He promised to report on his much hoped for rematch in this issue.*

If I'm one of the “Ellis Experts,” then I have to say that Dick Ellis uses the term “expert” loosely. The past couple years of bowhunting adventures and misadventures are testament to that.

Rut Camp 2012 started with great anticipation and high expectations. I'd done a lot of scouting over the course of the spring and summer months and was confident that I had a half dozen really good stand sites selected.

**Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>.** The rest of the guys weren't scheduled to arrive until sometime that afternoon, so I elected to hunt from the ladder stand behind my cabin that morning in hopes of at least having a doe on the meat pole to greet them. All was going according to plan when a fat doe walked in about 8:30. After about five minutes, she finally offered me a broadside shot. While I normally like to aim “low heart,” for a reason that I still can't articulate, I talked myself into aiming mid-deer this time. The arrow sailed smoothly over her back. #%@\*! Zero for one. Shot a couple dozen arrows.

For the afternoon/evening hunt, I elected to go back to the area where I'd had the encounter with the big buck

in 2011. The wind was light out of the southwest ... perfect for that stand. When I got to my stand, I was really excited to see that a couple of new scrapes had appeared since I'd checked it the week prior. As daylight was starting to fade, I gave three low grunts on the call and promptly heard the “crunch, crunch, crunch” of a deer walking my way through the crisp leaves.

The buck was about 100 yards away when I first got a glimpse of him on the hillside. It was the nice 8-pointer that I had gotten trail camera pictures of during August. The path he took down to his scrape was meandering and his pace was turtle-like. Daylight was fading fast! He finally made it down to his scrape, but I had to wait for him to turn away before I had a clear shot.

Still stinging from missing the doe that morning, I told myself to aim low. I did. The arrow went cleanly underneath him. When I got down from the stand and paced off the shot, I figured out why. The shot was about eight yards further than I had thought.

#%@\*! Zero for two. I reported back to camp, assessed myself two penalty shots, and slept badly that night.

**Thursday, November 1<sup>st</sup>.** Went to

one of my really remote stands this morning. Got in early and quiet. Had a spike buck come in about 8:00 AM. About an hour later, I saw a bigger buck sneaking through the brush to my right but had no shot. Great morning in the stand!

I had a work commitment that afternoon until 4:00 PM. That didn't leave me enough time to get to any of my national forest stands, so I once again hopped up the ladder stand by my cabin in hopes of getting another crack at that doe. Just as daylight was fading, a fawn came running into the clearing on top of the ridge. Shortly after that, I heard footsteps and a mature doe walked directly behind my stand into a balsam thicket. Straining to see her in the balsams in the fading daylight, suddenly, there she was ... broadside, about 10 yards left of where I'd last seen her. The shot was true and the line sizzled out of my string tracker. We finally had a blood trail!

The guys convened at the cabin an hour later to take up the blood trail and retrieve my doe. All went quickly with the string taking us the first 200 yards or so. From there, the blood trail was easy to follow (for people who aren't colorblind, at least), and soon we had the deer in our flashlight beams. Walking up to her, I was more than a little chagrined to find that she'd magically grown antlers in the hour since I shot her.

So there I was, after a year of anticipation and dreaming of shooting a big whitetail with my bow, standing over a yearling buck with 4 ½-inch spikes just 50 yards from my cabin. I'd be lying if I said that a bad thought or two didn't cross my mind. But it was what it was, and my 2012 archery buck tag was history.

**Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>.** Taking my climber into a swamp edge in the



*The author with his archery doe that magically sprouted antlers between the shot and the recovery.*

Nicolet, I had a nice fat fork-horn walk right underneath my stand Friday morning. Perfect shot opportunities but no buck tag on my back.

For the evening hunt, I took my climber up a big red pine on the edge of a swamp on some forest crop land. A spike buck came in about 4:00 PM and was chased off by a big doe shortly after. My shot was true, and she went less than 200 yards. Again, the string tracker helped this colorblind hunter immensely on what would have been a near impossible tracking job into a boggy cedar swamp.

I purchased another antlerless tag, so I was able to keep hunting the remainder of Rut Camp but, as it usually seems to work, all I encountered were bucks.

So being a glass-half-full kind of guy, I'd assess my bow hunt this way: I put some excellent venison in my freezer and saw a bunch of bucks, all while keeping my taxidermy fund intact. I'm already looking forward to shooting a HUGE buck next year.

In the meantime, maybe Dick Ellis needs to take me off the expert list and put me in the “enthusiast” category. Just sayin'. *DM*

*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.*



DAVE DUWE

# Long Pole Ice Fishing

## *A more comfortable way to fish*

**Hardwater Fishing.**
[OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/WisconsinFishing](http://OnWisconsinOutdoors.com/WisconsinFishing)

Does ice fishing for panfish give you a sore back and stiff neck? If the answer is yes, there is a simple solution. It is ice fishing with a long pole. I consider a long pole to be one with a length of 42-54 inches. The beauty of fishing a long pole is that you never have to bend down or sit while fishing. When you fish standing up, mobility is a snap, so you can keep moving trying to find active fish.

Long poles are very sensitive poles with a line running through the rod blank. The reel is there to basically hold the 1-pound test mono line. A spring bobber is attached to the tip of the pole. Attached to the line I prefer a heavy ice jig like a Bait Rigs Panfish Cobra in a size #14. The preferred bait has always been wax worms or spikes. These two baits seem to produce the most bluegills. A subtle jigging action usually gets the most attention. With a heavier weighted jig, there isn't a need to add on an additional split shot to the line. The heavy jig will also aid in bite detection in windy conditions by keeping the line tight without bows in the line.

My favorite fish to ice fish for are bluegills. In most lakes they tend to stay in the shallow weed flats in 4-8 feet of water. The shallow water has everything that a bluegill requires: food and cover from the toothy critters. It just so happens that long pole fishing is ideal for the 4-8 feet depth range, making it the perfect technique for bluegill



Jeff Wolters with a Monona Bay, WI, bluegill caught on a long pole.

***“It just so happens that long pole fishing is ideal for the 4-8 feet depth range, making it the perfect technique for bluegill fishing.”***

fishing.

How I set the depth of my line is simple and effective. Let out enough line from the reel to allow your ice jig to lie on the bottom. While the jig remains on bottom, I reel the extra line until the

tip of the spring bobber touches the top of the water in the hole. This means if your rod tip is a foot off the water in the hole, your jig will be a foot off bottom. Most of the time, the water depth in the weed flats is pretty consistent. You

rarely need to check the depth more than once or twice. If you find a hole your line won't go down, this usually means that the weeds are higher in the water column than other holes. When catching the fish, you can simply lift the rod upward and pull the fish out. When fighting fish on a long pole with a light line, you do need to use caution lifting the fish out of the hole; the light line can break easily.

When I arrive at the weed flat that I intend to fish, I drill 10 to 15 holes to move to and from. This presentation is “hole hopping.” Fish a hole for two to three minutes. If you don't catch anything, it's time to move on to the next. I find that if fish are there, they will consistently bite the first time the bait goes down the hole.

The only factor that is out of your control while fishing this technique is the weather. With the use of such a long pole, you can't fish in an ice house. Ultra cold or windy conditions make long pole fishing hard to detect the light biters and to keep your hole from freezing over.

This season avoid the bucket butt and try the long pole technique for some shallow water bluegills. 

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 [fishlakegeneva.com](http://fishlakegeneva.com) or [fishdelavanlake.com](http://fishdelavanlake.com).

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ELLIS-Cap Connection, from page 13



Twenty-six years later, the business has five employees and is looked to by truck owners and other customers who appreciate a blend of quality product, customer service, and price.

Borneman spends time today on his “small cabin on a small lake” of the

Three Lakes Chain. Like his days as a child on the Mississippi River, he finds peace on the water, more often these days, he said, searching for walleyes.

“To me peace comes with being out there,” he said. “I wish I would have brought a pad and pen with me to write down everything you think of with all the dead time on the water, things about business or family. You're out there enjoying the beauty all around you that God created and you think of things that you forget. My dog was always with me and that is another great part. Being at peace brings a lot

out of you.”

He looks forward to soon spending even more time outdoors, like days long ago on the Mississippi. But not quite yet. There's still work to do.

“The big thing is, you don't stay in business this long by cheating,” Borneman said. “We know what we're doing and will compete with anyone. We take pride in our customer service. To me that is everything; customer service is number one. Anyone can sell product, but are you going to back it up? That starts on the phone.”

“I've been fortunate. I'm grateful and thankful to be successful. I think it comes from running an honest, fair business. It's been fun ... hard work too, but fun.”

Connect with the Cap Connection at [www.thecapconnection.com](http://www.thecapconnection.com) or [sales@thecapconnection.com](mailto:sales@thecapconnection.com) or 262.524.8420. Dick Ellis has used the Cap Connection for 15 years.

Dick Ellis is publisher of On Wisconsin Outdoors. Read Dick's blog on the website at [OnWisconsinOutdoors.com](http://OnWisconsinOutdoors.com).



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