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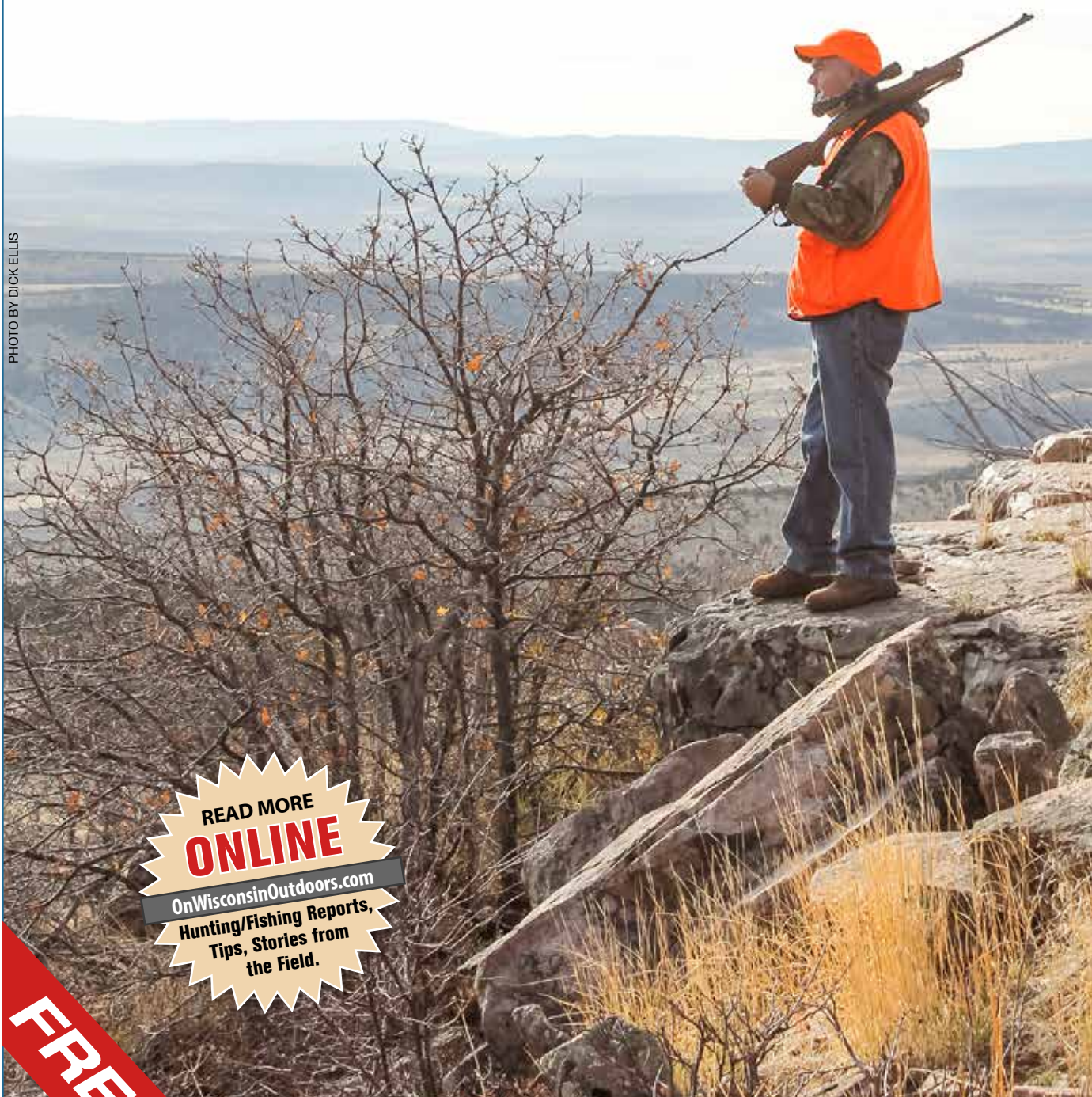
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On Wisconsin Outdoors

PHOTO BY DICK ELLIS



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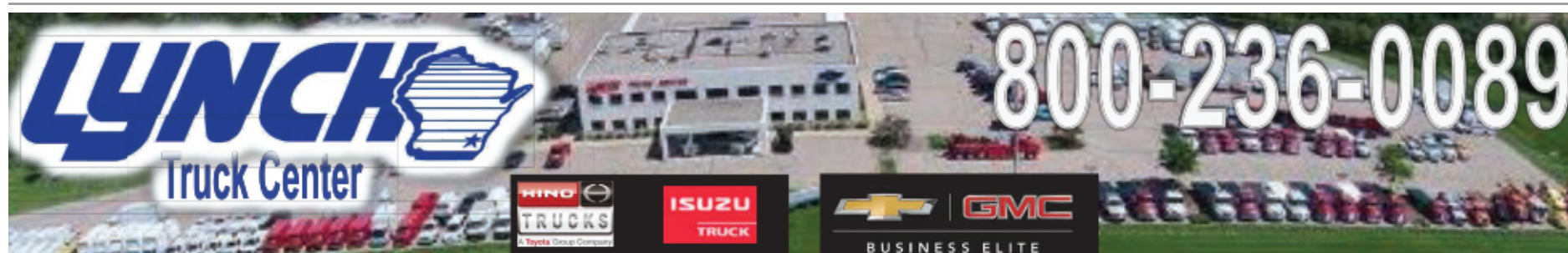
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CAPTAIN DAVE DUWE

Destination Delavan Lake

An abundant perch population

Delavan Lake is one of the finest fishing destinations in southeastern Wisconsin. The lake is an hour from Milwaukee and one and a half hours from Chicago. Delavan Lake is approximately 2200 acres with a maximum depth of 52 feet. The lake has many different fishing opportunities, including deep water yellow perch and weedline walleyes, as well as shallow bays that make northern pike available while providing great bluegill action. During the midwinter period the most consistent bite is the yellow perch.

Deep water perch fishing is my most constant pattern. Deeper water to me means greater than 20 feet, and on Delavan Lake the best depth is 35 - 45 feet. The biggest challenge while ice fishing perch is locating them. A good pair of boots and a Vexilar flasher are necessities. Perch roam in small to massive schools. Finding an active school can provide all-day action. It is always better to bring a friend along both for safety and eliminating unproductive water. Once I get to my desired area, I drill a bunch of holes and start searching. Perch can be belly to the bottom or suspended up from the bottom. I always fish the suspended fish first to prevent spooking the lower fish.

Make sure to fish every hole a sufficient amount of time since the fish won't show up on the Vexilar until a bait is presented. A good search bait is the Lindy Rattlin' Flyer or the Perch Talker. The lure can be fished quickly to help find the roaming schools.



Larry Twist with a nice Delavan Lake perch.

These spoons put out plenty of flash and good vibrations. Hop the spoon off the bottom a few times to see if you can get the actively-feeding fish. As I am working the bait, I constantly watch my Vexilar FLX-28.

Spoons are good for actively-feeding perch; however, most of the time perch are neutral or in a negative feeding pattern. With this in mind, it's time to get subtle. A tear drop jig or Lindy's Toad jig are great choices. When fishing in deep or dirty water applications, the color choice is important. Always use a glow color to add visibility, which helps with the bite. Add a heavy weight 3 to 4 inches above the jig. The

weight allows you to fish faster, getting the jig to the fish. Fishing faster in deep water prevents the fish from roaming away before you catch as many as possible.

Tip your ice jigs with spikes or wax worms. If I am over a big school, I put another pole down, a dead stick, about 1 foot above. A dead stick is a pole you just let fish without any action. I bait my dead stick poles with live bait, namely, a small minnow or wiggler. I use a stiff small jig pole with a spinning reel spooled with 4-pound test. When fishing in such deep water, you need to reel in the fish. Also, when the fish bite the stiffer rod, it will let you set the hook more effectively.

Delavan Lake has an ample supply of perch if you're willing to search for them. The main lake basin is the best spot to start the hunt. Delavan perch are usually feeding on small blood worms on the bottom. Good spots are the southwest part of the lake, by Belvidere Park and off of Willow Point. I have had great success fishing the pressure crack, which forms from the Yacht Club to the Village Supper Club point. This spot can be dangerous, so be careful. The best parking is at the Township Park located at the southeast side of the lake. *WD*

Captain Dave Duwe is owner of Dave Duwe's Guide Service and guides the lakes of southeastern Wisconsin, specializing in Delavan Lake and Lake Geneva. Find him at fishlakegeneva.com or fishdelavanlake.com or contact him at 262.728.8063.

GARY ENGBERG

Gary Engberg Outdoors

Early season ice fishing around Madison

The most important thing to remember when going ice fishing is safety. Use your head on the early ice until you're positive that the ice is safe. As a rule, don't venture out on any ice unless it is at least 3 or 4 inches thick. We all know that fishing on the first ice of the season can be the best of the year, but no fish is worth doing something foolish like risking your life to be the first one ice fishing.

Here are some safety guidelines for early season ice.

1. Make sure there is 3 to 4 inches of solid ice before you consider going fishing. I usually wait for 5 inches to be sure the ice is safe.
2. Stay away from spring holes, warm water discharges and feeder creeks and streams. These locations are dangerous even later in

the season because these areas never form good ice.

3. Bring along a pair of ice picks and wear them around your neck for quick use if the worst should happen. If you're unsure of the ice, stay off it. Wearing a life jacket is never a bad idea on early ice when you'll be on water that is less than 10 feet deep. Never bring children and dogs out on the ice the first week of fishing.
4. Avoid groups of anglers on early ice. Too many people in close proximity is never a good idea. Staying away from others on thin ice can also improve your fishing because people cause unnecessary noise that can spook fish. Noise spooks fish!
5. If there is a path out on the lake, follow it because others have

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PHIL SCHWEIK

Mid-Winter Blues

Ice fishing 101 offers perfect remedy

It's the middle of winter, football season is over and you are looking for something to do. Why not try ice fishing? It's fun, it's easy and with today's technology you can be very successful with little knowledge or experience. Here are a few quick ideas for getting started.

First and foremost, when it comes to ice fishing, a person has to have a place to go. There are thousands of lakes to fish, so where do you start? With today's technology and the Internet a simple search can be very rewarding in finding local fishing hotspots. Once locations are selected you need to narrow down your search. What species are you primarily targeting and what type of equipment are you going to need?

First thing is an ice auger, which is a simple way of being able to get through the ice so that you can get to the fish. Whether it is a hand auger or a power ice auger, or even an ice chisel is totally up to you. Generally, ice thickness determines the auger you

need.

If you are a walleye/pike fisherman, you will more than likely need a few tip-ups and some simple equipment for getting started like hooks, sinkers, etc. When it comes to panfish, it can become a little more complex. There are thousands of lures and jigs for pan-fishing on the market, not to mention the hundreds of rods and reel combinations available to today's angler. Then there are locators, underwater cameras and a multitude of ice shacks that can add to the excitement and comfort of your success. But we won't get into that now.

Once you have your gear and location selected, you can head out on the ice. Use caution if you have never been on ice before. When you are on the ice, you will need to find a location to set up. Usually, people tend to start near other anglers. I strongly advise against that. Try looking for locations that are similar to what other anglers are fishing or locations that look appealing from what you have found by doing your homework (you can determine that by

studying your lake map), then start drilling a few holes in the ice.


After you get a few holes drilled, you can begin fishing. Grab your rod and reel or tip-up and get started; it is that easy. There can be a few more steps to getting started than this, but I just wanted to give you a quick summary on how quick and easy it is to get out on the ice.

If buying a bunch of gear and equipment to give ice fishing a try is not something you want to do, check out a successful guide service. This way, you do not have to spend a ton of money on gear that you may not ever use again and you will be out with a knowledgeable guide that can teach and instruct you on ice fishing. Your guide will make sure that your day on the ice is not only successful but informative. We here at Hooksetters Guide Service take out hundreds of customers and clients every winter, and they always head home with a ton of information, a bucket full of fish and a smile on their face!

The next time you're sitting in front of the



Chad Schudy with a nice ice walleye.

TV on a Saturday afternoon with nothing to do, give ice fishing a try. You may find a new pastime and end up coming home with fresh walleyes or a nice bucket full of panfish. 

Phil is the owner of Hooksetters Guide Service in central Wisconsin and Hookset Adventures in Eagle River, Wisconsin, which keeps him on the water over 200 days a year. Phil lives in Mosinee, Wisconsin, and can be reached at pschweik@dwave.net, on his website: hooksetters.biz or hooksetadventures.com, at 715.693.5843 or on Facebook at Phil Schweik.



The boys from Milwaukee with some dandy perch.

WAYNE MORGENTHALER

Wisconsin River Ice

Where, how to fish the backwaters

Waiting for that first ice can take some time, so keep your ears and eyes open. I like to watch the weather forecast for a few days in the high 30s and lows of around 20, preferably no snow so that the ice can form nice and clear. About four inches is a good starting barometer for making your way out slowly. The buddy system is the best with one person walking a few yards ahead to check for any weak spots. That person is usually me with a good, strong rope tied around my waist.

My lakes range from 4 feet in depth to about 25 feet. The backwaters of the Wis-

consin River generally are not any deeper than 12 feet. On your first trip to the backwaters have about three lakes on your list. (You can look them up on Google Earth.) I generally fish between Spring Green and Boscobel. There are several lakes that hold nice pan fish, but you need to find the ones that have the hot bite. Try the local bait shops for the most current information.

When you have a backwater lake in mind, try the west side of the lake first. Generally, there is more vegetation because of the sun and water temperatures being a little warmer. Look for land points or beaver houses. Beavers have good runways and like deeper

water. A Vexilar is great to take along, as they will help with depth and weeds. Most of the time 4 - 6 six feet is good along weed lines. Make sure to drill plenty of holes at first and then start back at the first hole you drilled. Fish with two poles, use baits of different colors and vary your depths with the lures.

In lakes with many depths, I like the 12 - 20-foot range. I now add a GPS unit to the mix, as once I find a good spot I can use this for future reference. The GPS makes the difference as to getting back to the exact same location, since snow falls can cover up old

continued on page 6



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KYLER CHELMINIAK

Rules For Ice Fishing

Learn the top pros' keys to success

Attention fellow junior anglers! Are you tired of watching everyone else catch monster fish on TV all winter? When will you land those prized "eaters" and "wall-hangers"? I say, the time is now!

But before we go and bounce our moms, dads, aunts, uncles or grandparents out of bed at four o'clock in the morning, we need to be prepared. I've been studying the patterns of the pros for a couple of years now, so I'm going to share with you the most successful ways to "jack 'em and stack 'em," and you'll even have the TV guys asking you for advice.

First off, we have to be properly dressed when we head out and face the unseasonable cold fronts and harsh lake effect winds that are always challenging the top ice anglers. Therefore, we need to save almost every penny of our birthday, first communion, lawn-mowing, tooth-fairy, dish-washing, and Christmas dollars to invest in the best gear in the business. Buy only jackets, bibs and boots with the biggest, coolest logo. Time after time I see the coolest-looking guys always catching the big fish. But be careful; if you buy a jacket from one company, you also have to buy everything else with the same logo because it's bad luck to


mismatch your clothes.

If you still have some money left to spend, you'll have to have something to fish with. And you definitely won't have to worry about live bait, because all of the big fish are caught on lures. It can be confusing because no two pros ever use the same lure, but here are some that have earned major TV time. For panfish, you can never go wrong with the Laser Etched 1.73856-gram Tungsten Turbite Dirtball Jiggler in Orange Sherbet or Moldy White Bread colors. For the bass, I've watched many fish catches on a Spindy Irish Tap Dancer Hula-Hoop Supreme but only on Tyrannosaurus Shad and Baltic Sea Turtle colors. And for the giant "eyes," numerous limits have been filled by using a Banana Sparkle Shape-Shifting Revocator Spoon, especially in the Spit Shine color.

Lastly, you will need a portable gas grill to cook all of the fish that will be caught. Caviar, ceviche and/or kabobs are the usual dishes of choice on the ice. It will warm you up in the deep freeze, and all pros will tell you that a full stomach of fish is the only way to find another hungry one. And always share your food with your fellow anglers, just like they do on TV.



Shayne and Kyler Chelminiak (from left to right) thrillingly show off their catch while panfishing with their dad on a lake in southeastern Wisconsin.

Why settle for ice fishing with your dad or uncle, who has been filling the fish freezer for 30 years? What can they teach you about setting tip-ups and jigging for panfish? Who needs that tucked-away secret lake full of northern pike and trophy walleyes? What fun would that be? 

Kyler Chelminiak is a collegiate angler at Bethel University in McKenzie, Tennessee, but still calls Wisconsin land his home. Aside from his devotion to bass fishing, Kyler embraces any and all activities in the outdoors with faith, family and friends.

ENGBERG, from page 3

paved the way before you.


- The area around Madison is full of good lakes and sloughs that can freeze early: by the first or second week of December. Big Lake Mendota rarely freezes before Christmas, and lately the mild winters have delayed that until January. One of the first places to fish in the Madison area is the "Triangle" area on Madison's Isthmus. This is the area around Brittingham Park and Monona Bay and is decent for both early crappies and bluegills that will require some "sorting," because you'll catch many small fish that are too small to clean.
- Cherokee Marsh is good for early ice crappies and the occasional northern pike. It is located on the north side of Lake Mendota and is less than a mile from the lake. Lake Wingra, located inside the Madison city limits, is shallow



Ice fishing is for everyone.

and freezes early in December and has lots of bluegills. But size is small to medium (5 to 7 inches), and you will have to again sort through the fish to get a meal.

- Marshall Park, on Mendota's west side, freezes weeks before the main lake and produces decent-sized panfish. Spring Harbor, which is off Madison's University Avenue, freezes about the same time Marshall Park does, and nice bluegills and crappies can be caught regularly.

There also is a new product that has been on the market for a few years called the Nebulus. It's a floatation device that will prevent you, your ATV and snowmobile from sinking in open water. The Nebulus is a must-have piece of equipment for the serious ice angler. 

Contact Gary Engberg at 608.795.4208 or gengberg@garyengbergoutdoors.com, or visit garyengbergoutdoors.com. Information; McFarland's True Value, Sauk City: 608-643.3311. Guides: Wally Banfi, 608.644.9823 and Ron Barefield, 608-235.7685.

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MORGENTHALER, from page 4

holes and make them difficult to find.

The Vexilar tells you the depth and what level the fish are at. When you fish lakes that have crappies, they can be at various levels and you need that presentation to be right in front of their noses. When bluegills are the dominant fish, fishing at the bottom gives better results. Bouncing the bait off the bottom of the lake stirs up the dirt. This little trick will bring them in and help activate a bite.

If you like to fish with red worms, try just hooking one end of the worm and let the rest dangle. As soon as you see a bite, drop your pole about a foot and count to three. Then give a good tug. Many times you will catch the fish. Most people will jerk when they see a bite and the bluegill will tear part of the worm off. By dropping the bait to the bottom, you give them a chance to pick up the entire worm in their mouth.

Good luck ice fishing and remember to support those bait shops.

Wayne Morgenthaler has fished southwestern Wisconsin for the past 45 years. He has written outdoor articles for MidWest News' website under the name Little Bobber. A retired high school teacher and coach, Wayne is married with three children.



A good day's catch with an excellent fish fry coming up.



The author gets lucky on some crappie action.

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TYLER FLORCZAK

Simple Tactics For Targeting Winter Walleyes

Early, mid and late ice patterns

After another mild fall, ice fishing season is finally upon us, and that means walleye anglers are already licking their chops. Whether it's the delectable fillets or sheer number of trophy fish in the Badger State, walleyes are always a hot commodity for anyone with a line in the water. However, too many ice fishermen make the common mistake of fishing just one lake year round or sticking with their favorite spot for the entire season. So instead of following the crowd or reliving yesterday's catch, be more persistent and knowledgeable when targeting walleyes and stay mobile as their patterns shift throughout the winter months.

Early Ice (Late November/ Early December)

Walleyes tend to be shallower during the first ice period, usually in 10 feet of water or less, depending on the lake. Vegetation is still present at this time and is holding bait fish, which keeps hungry walleyes close as they put on the feedbag for the cold winter.

Shallow and mid-depth mud flats, weedlines, bays and areas with flowing water tend to hold the most and biggest walleye early in the ice fishing season. Other spots include gravel bars, sand bars and areas where gravel or sand turns to a soft bot-

tom. First ice is a good time to target walleyes using tip-ups baited with small golden shiners, suckers and even red-tail chubs, if anglers can find them at bait shops.

Mid Ice (Late December/January)

About three weeks after the ice forms, the walleye bite will begin to slow and fish gravitate to the main lake basin. At this time, walleyes relate more to main lake points, rocky drop-offs, deep weedlines and especially shelves and bars. They often spend most of the day in the main lake basin and come up out of the depths onto the bars, flats and structure shallower than the main lake to feed in low-light hours.

Since the Badger State allows each angler three fishing lines, this is a good time to deploy two tip-ups—one a few feet off of the main lake basin and another 3 to 5 feet shallower and closer to the bar or flat—while jig-fishing with Rapalas, spoons or Swedish Pimples tipped with a small minnow.


Late Ice (Last Few Weeks of February)

Every February Mother Nature slips in a few warm, sunny days. This allows streams and creeks to run with snow and ice slowly melting. These streams and rivers carry running water into lakes and provide fresh oxygen and slightly warmer water

than what has sat stagnant under the ice for the past few months. With fresh water and more oxygen filtering into the lake, it's time to get back to early ice spots.

Shallower flats, weedlines and bays near creeks and streams should become better fishing locations as the ice melts. Known spawning grounds are also late-season hot spots for walleye and northern pike.

Other Tips to Consider

- Evening is generally the best time to catch winter walleyes; however, fishing tends to be at its best during the early-ice period, rewarding anglers who get out before prime time.
- The old adage "bigger bait means bigger fish" often holds true. But when fishing in a group, try different depths in the water column, various species of bait and multiple sizes of bait to see what works best. Fish live bait either side of 12 inches off of the bottom for walleye.
- The best-eating walleye are in the 15-19-inch range. Anglers should release anything larger than that, unless mounting it, to ensure future walleye populations. 



Target whopper walleyes through the ice this winter whether it's early-, mid- or late-ice conditions. Tyler Florczak with a 31-inch, 11-plus pound walleye caught on the Chetek Chain of Lakes.

Tyler Florczak is a sports and outdoors editor for The Chetek Alert newspaper in Chetek. He has been working as a writer, photographer and videographer for more than five years. His 182-inch whitetail buck harvested in 2015 was accepted into the Boone & Crockett Club and was featured in Field & Stream, Deer and Deer Hunting and North American Whitetail.

DENNY MURAWSKA

Will The Spirit Subside?

A question of deer hunting passion

I never thought I would write this. Perhaps the time has come. Each year I age there is a fear that bubbles up inside. It is one of those things you do not think of in your youth, but now it haunts me. It is the nagging thought that, someday, the desire to hunt will disappear. I admit to being a hypochondriac, running to my doctor with every hangnail, tick bite and paranoid fantasy. I am assured I am fine and that assurance stays with me until, in the middle of some night, I begin to doubt.

All my good friends hunt, fish and relish the outdoors. In our talks, I have noticed a trend, which I vehemently

deny but one which permeates my soul. It is a question: will my passion to hunt ever die? I am certain that sounds absolutely silly coming from an outdoor writer, but it torments me. It is a form of impotence that I, as a man, do not want to confront. But I must.

I have run into so many men who at one time were avid and enthusiastic hunters. Now they hunt no more. Most are able to do so yet have relinquished the tradition to a younger, more vibrant generation. I do recall the primal thrill of writhing in bed the night before a quail hunt or field trial. The thrill resonated through every fiber of my

being. Now, as a 63-year-old man, I still succumb to waves of desire for the hunt, but they are not as intense. I have spent far too many hours taking pictures of fawns I find on my place, watching them grow, and, yes, the Bambi syndrome whacks me across the face at times. I can still arrow my neighbor's deer, just not "mine."

I have had the conversations with my soul. I can justify anything. If I don't harvest them, somebody else will. "Nature, red in tooth and claw" has no mercy for the young,

continued on page 10

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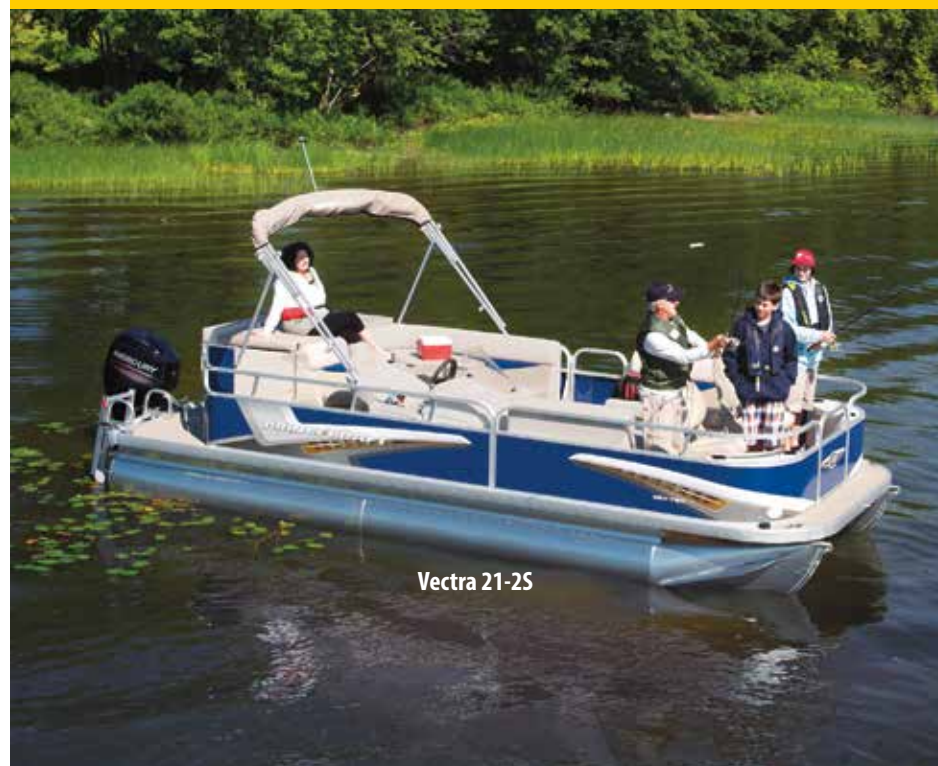
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TOM LUBA

Making The Canadian Jig Fly

A super effective walleye jig

My introduction to the Canadian Jig Fly was from a good fisherman who was staying at the same resort as my brother and I a long time ago. He made them, gave us some and told us how to do the two-pump retrieve (pull, pull, drop back). We didn't even know enough to tip them with live bait, but we still caught fish!

When I moved north to the shores of Lake Winnebago, I figured out how to make my own. I have found the blue and white colors work best. Here's how I do it:

Put the jig head in the vise, hook point down. Make a few wraps with blue thread on hook shank at end of jig collar. Secure with a dab of super glue.

Use two blue hackle feathers and affix over thread and glue. Wrap several times. Place feathers so the ends point out like a minnow tail.

Start blue chenille body on glued thread and wind up over collar and back to tail to form body. Put a dab of glue

on the back end and wrap with thread. Then wrap thread along body to the jig head and let thread bobbin hang straight down from jig head.

Use a hackle pliers and another hackle feather and wrap around where body meets jig head so it forms a cowl. Use a few loops of thread to secure it, and add a drop of super glue to hold it.

Let it sit for a minute for the glue to dry, then snip thread up as close to the neck hackle as possible. Then use them to catch fish this spring.

Use white jig heads when making these; either paint your own or buy them. They look better with eyes. The easy way to make the eyes is to put a straight pin into the eraser of a pencil.

Then, dab the pin head into black paint and make two quick dabs on either side of the jig head. Viola, eyes!

For materials, I use royal blue hackle feathers (both neck



This blue and white Canadian Jig Fly is ready to fool some walleyes.

and saddle will work) and blue chenille body. I use traditional jig and fly tying hardware: vise, thread bobbin and hackle pliers, and regular super glue. Don't over use the super glue. I suggest getting a regular blue jig/fly tying thread to start with, as it is stronger. After years of doing this, I have gravitated toward regular sewing thread. It's cheaper but it also is not as strong and it will break. Once I learned how much pressure to use in wrapping, I switched to the

continued on page 13

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JERRY KIESOW

Fly Fishing In Wisconsin Leaders and tippets, part one

Last time, I mentioned that leaders/tippets play an important part in fly presentation and even have a bearing on how we select our rod/line weight. Let's talk about that now.

First, an explanation of my use of leader/tippet terminology. Every leader purchased today is tapered. Some fly fisherpersons do make their own, but one does not cut off a piece of his/her spinning mono and use it for a leader on the fly rod. The base of the leader, the end connected to the line, is heavy. The other end, to which you tie the fly, is fine and called the tippet. Therefore, when I say leader/tippet, I refer to tapered leaders with corresponding tippets. From here on I will just say "leader."

Leaders come in various lengths: 6 to 12 feet, generally. The tippet is about 14 inches and is level. It gives the leader its rating (X). This is the portion of the leader that gets trimmed every time you change flies. When that tippet is gone, you tie on a new piece of tippet, 16 to 24 inches, from the spool of tippet material you bought when you purchased the leaders. (They should both have the same X factor.) When you check out the "ratings" in the sidebar, you are seeing the X factor of the leader, which

is the breaking point of the tippet.

Just as the size and air-resistance of flies are mostly (there are exceptions) related to the weight of the rods we use, so are the leaders. Generally, the heavier the rod, the heavier the leader. You cannot present a 5-inch fly very well with a 6X leader. There is no way you will cast the fly and lay it down straight with an inadequate, flimsy, leader.

So, what's the problem? If you use a #8 weight rod, just use an 8X leader. Wrong!

An 8-weight rod is pretty heavy gear. I use my 8 for salmon and steelhead and to toss 4- to 6- inch streamers to pike and muskies. If I were to use an 8X leader, I would be using a leader with approximately a 1-to 2-pound tippet. I could hardly cast the fly, and heaven forbid I should get a fish on ... even for a nano-second.

With rods and lines, as the numbers go up, the rods and lines get heavier. Whereas with a leader, the higher the X factor the lower the breaking point (see sidebar).

Another consideration when selecting leaders is the size of the fly's hook eye. It is impossible to attach a #16 fly using a 1X or 2X leader; you can't get the tippet through the eye. (See sidebar for the relationship of



Always buy the tippet size that matches the leader.

tippet to fly.)

Over the years, fluorocarbon has become the leader material of choice for most, but not me. More about that and tying knots with different leaders next time. The two are connected (pun intended).

See you in the river.

Keep a good thought!

Jerry enjoys all aspects of the outdoors, not only fly fishing, which he teaches. That was proven in his first book, "Tales of The Peshtigo Putzer." His second book, "Photos, Poems, and a Little Bit of Prose" reinforces that truth. Check out his website for books (they make great gifts) and his upcoming classes on tying flies: jerrykiesowoc.com.

TIPPET RATING CHART

(These are averages. They can vary depending on the manufacturer.)

Ratings:	0X	1X	2X	3X	4X	5X	6X	7X	8X
Pound test:	12-15	10-14	8-12	6-8.5	4.5-6	4-5	3-3.5	2-2.5	1-1.75
Diameter:	.011	.010	.009	.008	.007	.006	.005	.004	.003
Hook size:	1/0-4	2-6	6-10	10-14	12-16	14-18	16-22	20-26	24-32

(Note the overlap of hook sizes.)

By the way, X designation means, "X is a factor that designates leader tippet diameter. It was used during the era ... of silkworm gut ... X equals eleven." Therefore, "If you subtract the X factor from eleven you will arrive at the diameter of the leader in one-thousands of an inch." So says www.flyfishusa.com.

MURAWSKA, from page 7

the disabled, the old and weak. There is no easy death or natural death in the wild. How much better a quick end with so little suffering. I would wish the same for myself.

As most hunters agree, the kill is simply a culmination of inevitable circumstances. There is anticipation, the scouting and setup of a stand. The quietude of the pre-dawn darkness and evening dusk. The soft mossy trails festooned with edible mushrooms. The slick, widely spread hoof marks in the mud. Sometimes the tiny ray of light piercing the black woods to follow a blood trail is a heady experience. Still, some intangible drive seems to wane.

No longer do I hunt much in the early morning. If it is really cold, forget it. I cannot swing from the tenuous branches and perch myself as I used to. Cushy box blinds and comfy seats rule my stand options these days. I love the fresh air, stealthy walks and the total concentration of the hunt. Like many experiences, sometimes the satisfaction is in the journey and not the final shot.

Denny Murawska has been a contributor to the wacky UP Magazine, Wishigan, Verse Wisconsin, and The Pulse. His church is the pine cathedral that surrounds him at his home near Black River Falls.



JOHN LUTHENS

Graveyard Of The Trout

Unraveling the science behind the mystery of dead Lake Superior browns

I breathed the falling dusk of November, parting the chokecherry tangles of Douglas County and sliding down the cold rope of the Brule River. I'd taken down my fly rod and was using it as a machete to hack along the banks. It was the last trip of the year and I'd cast deep into the brushy bottoms after phantom shadows of spawning trout that were fresh from the cold depths of Lake Superior.

Darkness fell down the valley at an even pace with temperature. Steam rose from the bundled sweat of my fishing jacket and misted into the pines. The Brule at season's end brings frosted leaves and the sounds of branches scraping in the wind. I slid into the middle of a trout graveyard before I realized what was happening.

White bellies and glassy eyes rose from the mouth of a small inlet. Five trout rested within the span of 20 yards, glowing and floating like ghosts in the overhung shadows of a rocky spring creek. I lifted the biggest one from the bottom to get a better look: pale, faded spots and a hook-jawed mouth thrust forward in an eternal grimace. It was a 5-pound Lake Superior brown trout and it rolled against the bank with a heavy splash.

I've come across dead fish before: salmon bobbing gently in a pool after the rigors of spawning, northern pike hit by a fast-moving boat propeller. Occasionally, trout are hooked badly or improperly released and end up floating in the current instead of frying in a pan. This felt different. It felt like I'd stumbled across an eerie resting place of nature that had been hidden from man's prying eyes.

I snuck from the Brule valley under the waning light of a harvest moon, but the watery graveyard had captured my imagination and stalked after me. It was a forensic mystery and I needed an expert.

Paul Piszczek is the Department of Natural Resource's senior fisheries biologist for the northern region of Wisconsin and oversees segments of the vast network of Lake Superior tributaries between the borders of Michigan and Minnesota. I trudged into his Superior office on a miserable snowy



A Lake Superior brown trout discovered in a tributary stream of the Bois Brule River.


day when any thoughts of trout should be pushed far beneath the frozen banks.

Paul's scientific experiences with trout habitat have spanned from Maine to Tennessee. Papers, books and graphs on stream ecology were spilling from the desk in his small cubicle. "I like to think of myself as a glorified fish counter," he said.

"That's like calling Frank Lloyd Wright a carpenter," I thought to myself. It's impossible not to like someone like that. I knew I'd come to the right place.

"We've had multiple reports of dead lake-run fish this year," Paul went on. "It's hard to say for sure, but looking over data from past years, it's not that uncommon. Year to year, depending on the number of fish and natural conditions, spawning trout can develop micro-abrasions from moving over shallow rocks and become infected with bacteria, fungi or viruses. It's likely quite normal in the big picture of Mother Nature's course."

It made perfect sense. No matter the species, if there isn't a robust population, there is no need for a cemetery. I was content in the knowledge that there were enough healthy spawning trout in the system to create a wild and mysterious graveyard in the first place.

I pondered as I crossed the Brule River in the snow and headed home. One mystery solved but another dilemma had now reared its thrashing mouth: how to best position myself to catch all the trout swimming to pay their respects at the graveyard next summer! 

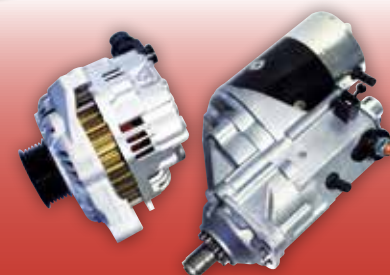
John Luthens is a freelance writer from Grafton, Wisconsin. His first novel, Taconite Creek, is available on Amazon or at cablepublishing.com, or by contacting the author at luthens@hotmail.com.

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DAN MOERICKE

An "Up Nort" Report

Hunting the Northwoods deer desert

To say that all was quiet in the Northwoods on opening day would not be totally accurate. The wind was howling at 30 - 40 miles an hour, trees bent ... some snapped. I heard two gunshots by 8:00 AM. There were maybe a half dozen more the rest of the day.

Sunday would be different, or so we thought. The winds were down, the temperatures were down and the rut was hopefully still on. The deer *had* to move. But if they did, it wasn't anywhere that we could see them. Again, I heard about eight shots all day.

On the third day, the heavens opened and my buddy Lard knocked down a spike buck that responded to a bleat call. Our deer camp rejoiced. For the record, after three days of hunting, it was the only buck harvested among four deer camps occupied by approximately three dozen hunters. An oasis is rare in the deer desert.

When I refer to the Northwoods as the "deer desert," my friends in farm country just can't relate. It wasn't until the fourth day of the gun season that I actually *saw* a deer in the woods. Just seeing that doe was a huge victory. I doubt that many farm country hunters have spent four full days in the woods without seeing a deer.

Two or three years of bucks-only regulations have barely moved the needle on

the deer herd meter, in my estimation going from "pitiful" to "poor." To be fair, we are seeing more deer than we did three years ago, but "more" is a relative term.

So why continue to hunt in the desert, you ask? Well, I've hunted farm country. The more deer that people are used to seeing, the more important the act of filling tags seems to become. Property owners claim ownership of the deer herd. Individual deer are given names. Property lines become lines in the sand. Neighbors and even families have feuds that last for decades. The Nicolet National Forest, on the other hand, offers hundreds of thousands of acres absent of No Trespassing signs. If I want to get up and walk a mile, it's not going to bother anyone.

Thankfully, there is much more to the hunt than just shooting a buck. The camaraderie of deer camp is priceless. We call our gang the "Pine River Boys," even though it's been a long time since any of us were boys, and our hunting grounds have expanded quite a bit from the banks of the Pine River where we started hunting over 30 years ago.

Our "camp" is comfortably located in my buddy's lake home east of Eagle River. The meals alone are worth the trip. Friday night was a fish fry second to none, topped off by some triple-berry cheesecake courtesy of Deano. Freezing our butts off on opening day, we were

warmed by the thoughts of creamed pheasant over wild rice and hot apple pie for dessert that would be waiting back at camp. Our deer camp is no weight loss clinic.

In the great scheme of things, whether or not I shoot or even see a buck doesn't matter. You see, I've got friends and family dealing with cancer, illness and loss of loved ones. Somehow, next to all that, the importance of shooting a buck gets pretty small. While seeing lots of deer and shooting a monster buck would be great, the solitude and scenery offered by the Northwoods deer desert will keep me coming back. Just sayin'. *Wo*

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



A rare scene in the deer desert: two of the Pine River Boys dragging a buck out of the Nicolet National Forest.

LUBA, from page 9

cheaper thread. I still break it from time to time, but things don't have to be perfect and I always expect to lose a bunch. Lake and river bottoms will always be bait eaters.

Size your jigs according to the water you fish. I probably use more ¼- ounce jigs, especially in wind. One-eighth- and 3/8-ounce also figure into the mix based

on how windy it gets.

As a side note, there are a lot of colors of hackle and chenille available in case the fish in your area prefer something other than blue and white. I have made orange and green versions of the bait, too. *Wo*

Tom Luba is a freelance outdoor writer and bass fishing fan from New London, Wisconsin. Tom fishes as much as he can and never gets tired of setting the hook.



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FRED SCHAFFHAUSER

Make Next Bow Season Better

Looking back at last season will help ensure great future seasons

Now that we are at the end of the bow season here in Wisconsin it's a good time to look back at the past 3 ½ months and assess the season. At the end of each hunting season I sit down and write out notes on my observations. It is inevitable, whether you were successful or not, that revelations were made during the season that will help you in future seasons. Making notes of the things learned can put you ahead of the game come next season and maybe stop you from making the mistakes you made this season. Likewise, it is a great time to look at your hunting equipment. There is no doubt that some improvement to your gear may have made a positive difference in your hunting this last fall. Now is the time to look for that new equipment while the hunting season is still fresh in your mind.

Bow performance can make a huge difference in your ability to put that trophy on the wall. That 10-year-old bow you have been using will do the job as well as it ever has, but advancements in bow technology

recently have made bows faster, quieter and more stable to hold and shoot. A newer bow just might make you more proficient at farther distances, and that adds up to more shot opportunities. Many archers who have always limited themselves to 20- to 30-yard shots have found themselves comfortable extending their shots 5 to 10 yards more than in the past. Imagine what that might do for your hunting.

Arrow rest technology has changed dramatically over the last 10 years. If you have an arrow rest that allows the arrow to fall off while sitting or drawing, you really do need to upgrade to a full-capture-style arrow rest. These drop-away and whisker type rests will not let you down when drawing on that buck of a lifetime.

Sights just keep getting better and better. Stronger materials and designs and smaller, more precise fiber optic dots improve aiming at farther distances. Adjustments are easier than ever, and the brightness of most sights today allow you to see the pins in all shooting conditions without the need



If your quiver is full of mismatched arrows like this, it's time for a new set!

for a battery-powered sight light. Sights like the IQ brand with Retina-Lock technology can make us aware if we are torquing our grip. Grip torque is a huge reason for bad broadhead flight, inaccuracy and poor penetration. This technology will help novice to expert be a better shot.


Broadheads obviously are a big part of the successful setup. I will stay out of the broadhead debate ... for now. If I've learned anything over my lifetime of hunting and running an archery pro shop, it's that *everybody* has strong opinions on broadheads. I will say this: make sure that whatever broadhead you use is sharp. Practice with your broadheads and understand no broadhead can make up for poor shot placement.

Check that your arrows are in good shape and matched. If you have a quiver full of mismatched arrows with different weights, spines, nocks, fletching styles and



A new sight with Retina-Lock technology will make you a better shot on targets and that trophy buck.

tips, you are setting yourself up for disaster. Take those mismatched arrows and turn them into tomato stakes and get yourself a properly matched set of new arrows. It's more important than any other piece of equipment!

If you missed or wounded one too many deer this season, you might consider some off-season indoor practice. Wisconsin's long winter is perfect for indoor target shooting. Join a league and stay sharp this off-season. You will have fun, I promise, and it's way better than bowling. Use your experiences from this last season to make next season the best you'll ever have. 

Fred is co-owner of West Town Archery in Brookfield, Wisconsin. An avid bowhunter, archery technician and target shooter, Fred has two national titles and several state titles in indoor target archery to his credit. Connect with him at westtownarchery.com.

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LEE GATZKE

NextBuk Outdoors

Hunting Across The Border

The thought of hunting big game in other states appeals to many Wisconsinites. Whenever I drive out of state to hunt, I see a lot of Wisconsin license plates on the pickups loaded with hunters and gear criss-crossing the roadways. Experiencing the new challenges that hunting in unfamiliar territory brings is a big part of the attraction and reward associated with hunting out of state.

The key to an enjoyable hunt is in finding a place to hunt that fulfills your expectations. I've been bow hunting for mule deer the past seven years. Only twice have I filled my tag, yet the allure of spot and stalk hunting on the treeless prairie satisfies my expectations. For your successful hunt, you may want meat for the freezer or a trophy animal.

Fulfilling your expectations for a fruitful hunt takes research well ahead of time. I like the do-it-yourself approach when it comes to picking out a new area. I begin my research by talking to my "hunting buddy network." I look for the recommendations of experienced hunters who have

already taken out-of-state hunts similar to what I will be undertaking. Next, I look online or in publications to find places that have the species I'm after and the land (most often public) available to hunt it. If you're acquainted with anyone living in a place that has access to the game you're after and land to hunt it on, it's a no-brainer to take advantage of that. Most of the time we'll need to rely on good ole public land to make our hunt a reality. Contacting state wildlife people at the various Fish and Game Departments or DNR is an important connection to finding places that offer good hunting and access to it.

Once I've whittled the possibilities down to a few places, I study the areas on computer mappings sites like Google Earth to familiarize myself with the terrain and land features. Then, after checking into the availability of motels or camping sites, I choose a destination. You'll discover that once you meet the locals or other hunters in the area, they will point you to additional places worth checking out. The more years you return to an area the more hunting spots be-



Hunting out of state brings us new landscapes and challenges.

come available through networking on site.

For hunters who don't have the time to do the research to gain access to good hunting ground, an outfitter would be a wise investment. Outfitters provide everything you'll need to make your hunt happen. Show up with your hunting clothes and a weapon and a reputable outfitter will take care of everything else. Of course, you'll need to bring your checkbook since an outfitter makes his living doing this. Utilizing an outfitter will give you valuable insight into what is involved with creating a successful hunt. Insights that you may use in future years to give you the confidence to forego

continued on page 33



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DICK ELLIS

Badgers In Colorado

Self-guided mule deer, elk hunt on public land

The last morning in paradise began with the billion stars of northwest Colorado's October sky stretching on toward the orange glow in the east and the taillights of the Chevy truck disappearing toward Juniper Mountain. My brothers, Badgers Steve Ellis of Wausau and John Ellis of Muskego, had filled mule deer tags days before and now faded down the highway looking to fill bull and cow elk tags in higher country.

I had passed good shots on smaller mulies many times over the past week in the sage brush. Now I moved into the black of our last morning in the field looking again for that elusive big buck. Chances had already come. One notable "shooter" had busted cover in the comical, cartoon-like bouncing exit classic of a muley. Having put more than 50 rounds through the .30-06 on a Wisconsin range at 100 yards prior to the hunt, the buck's exit was intently scrutinized through the scope but with restraint on the trigger. He had never stopped, as mule deer so often do, turned or even slowed before

disappearing into a sage bowl.

Later, impressive twin mulies with racks high and maybe 22 inches wide stood stone-still, staring back at 200 yards before bolting as I sat quickly on a hillside among the dust, cactus and sage for a more stable shot. We had venison in the freezer, and, despite the adrenalin-pumping encounter with two very impressive bucks, a "high-odds" shot for a quick kill trumped the risk for a wounded animal.

Lifelong Wisconsin deer hunters discouraged with the dismal but slowly improving deer numbers in northern counties the last decade, we had chosen the "do-it-yourself-non-guided" 2016 hunt offered by Wapiti Cross Ranch. Located in beautiful north-west Colorado and among one of the largest elk herds in the nation with high deer numbers, Wapiti Cross Ranch was established by Scott and Robin Paul in 2005. Located 14 miles west of Maybell off of US Highway 40 in Moffat County and backed against Cross Mountain and miles of public hunting land, we would eat, sleep and relax at home base

each night, then separate to hunt all day. Of Colorado's 23 million acres of public land, almost one-half million acres lie north and south of the Wapiti cabins.

Cozy, clean log cabins provide a comfortable starting point for each day's adventure. Each unit includes heat, bath with shower, refrigerator and microwave with dining table and chairs and four-foot open porch. Sleeping areas include bunk beds for four hunters. Ample parking for large trucks and trailers with large barn equipped with a big freezer and all butchering needs in preparation of transporting your venison on the long ride home is included. Site your rifles in right outside the door and know all your valuables are secure with locked gate at the bordering highway as cabin guest hunters come and go. With a phone call, Scott Paul stands ready to help hoist and transport your elk, muley, antelope or bear from the field.

Wapiti Cross Ranch borders some of Colorado's prime trophy units. The ranch is the springboard allowing hunters to experience



John Ellis scores a muley on his first hunt to Colorado.

some of the most magnificent country in North America and provides guests great opportunities of seeing and tagging trophy class animals.

continued on page 17



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Scott and Robin Paul and Wapiti Cross Ranch near Craig, Colorado, provide the lodging and turn hunters loose on hundreds of thousands of public acreage to chase elk and mule deer.

ELLIS, from page 16

On morning one, John sat 100 yards above a huge lone bull for 20 minutes, the cow tag in his pocket no doubt whispering a “told you so” taunt. Steve, with bull tag, was now just an orange speck on the mountain-top above us. In mid-week, Steve watched as a monster muley emerged from the river bottom far below his foothill vigil, followed by four more trophies, each larger than the previous buck. Running for three-quarters of a mile in a calculated guess to head off the impressive quintuplets in the right pass, Steve missed one long shot as he recovered his breath. No pain in two artificial knees, though, left the 66-year old retiree pleased to be able to take on the physical challenge as he has for decades in this part of Colorado as a young man.

Terrain here is diverse, including rolling hills, sage brush, pinion pines, junipers and cedars, deep rocky or desert canyons, aspen pockets, black timber, and oak brush ridges. With my final morning, I would return to great numbers of deer discovered in the cactus plains but bring a bit of Wisconsin tactics to the Colorado game. Instead of walking the sage and kicking up deer, I would take a sitting stand in the pre-dawn black on a hill three miles from the nearest highway and simply watch the surrounding flat country awaken. Four hours and 16 does later, I stood to begin the long walk out to rendezvous with the truck and my final pick-up.

With 10 minutes left of my week-long journey, no shot yet taken and my brothers watching from the truck in the distance, the sage couldn't hide the antlers as the buck pressed flat to the ground in hiding. He busted cover quickly and I swung, repeating

the ritual of scoping the buck as he churned dirt at ... 90 ... 100 ... 110 yards. This time, he did slow and turn hard left briefly to risk a look back. I shot and missed, a fact verified by a three-man, 20-minute search for blood in the wake of the muley's exit.

We were headed for the truck ... and home. My tag wasn't filled, but my head was filled with the sympathy of good brothers and more great memories to add to decades already in the mind cellar.

“Well, at least he can write a good story...” John said.

“He can also sit in the back,” Steve said. “It's only 18 hours.”

Information for Your Hunt

Connect with Wapiti Cross Ranch and Scott and Robin Paul, 17 West CR 85, Maybell, CO 81640, at wapiticrossranch.com, or 386.867.4886. In the off season (now), also mail Scott and Robin at 227 NE Carnation Place, Lake City, FL 32055. Lodging cost varies from \$1500 to \$1800 per hunting season.

Northwest Colorado is home to one-third of the state's 275,000 elk running in 10 to 12 herds and the vast majority of Colorado's mule deer and antelope. To apply for individual or group licenses and all details including cost, available seasons, zone information, big game hunt deadlines, etc., connect with the Big Game Division of Wildlife, 6060m Broadway, Denver, CO 80216, 303.297.1192 or 800.244.5613, or wildlife.state.co.us.

The three Ellis brothers applied as a group for the season 2 mule deer season. Division of Wildlife informed us that we had an approximate 90 percent chance of

continued on page 20

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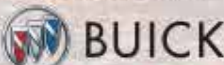
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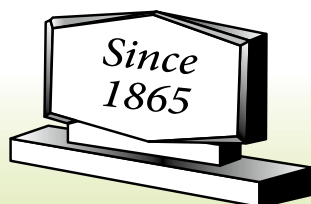
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ELLIS, from page 17

securing tags due to the strong number of deer. We received our mule deer permits for the October 22 through 30 season at a cost of \$379 each. Steve also purchased an over-the-counter bull elk tag (Walmart) at a cost of \$629. John purchased a cow elk tag at a cost of \$629. My United Airline pilot brothers make more than this publisher, although I did purchase an extra-large bag of sunflower seeds at Walmart for \$4.00.

John Ellis

Tips for Your Colorado Hunt

As my head topped the crest of the hill, a very large buck exploded from his bed 100 yards from me. He was able to increase that distance to 300 yards in a matter of seconds. Before I knew it, he was gone. When I say "big," I don't know exactly how big. But as he ran away, my impression was one of shaking fat and lots of points on a very wide, high rack.

That was my first encounter with a mule deer buck while hunting the sage brush of northwest Colorado. I had seen some does earlier that day, but they were much closer and not in nearly as much of a hurry to "get out of the county." I know my limitations as a shooter, so I never even considered taking a shot at "Mr. Big." But I also knew that it was early in the hunt and felt confident that other, better opportunities would present themselves in time. But that first meeting left me thinking, this is fun!

When you hunt this part of Colorado, you can hunt the high mountain country or the lower sage brush and canyons. You also have the option, during the combined rifle seasons, of hunting mule deer, elk or both. My brother Steve and I chose to hunt both but agree we wouldn't do that again; we would put all of our effort into one or the other. On my next hunt, I will be chasing mule deer exclusively. There are a number of reasons for this, but first is your chance for success. A good hunter will probably have the opportunity to shoot at least one legal buck every day. The cost of a mule deer license is also cheaper than an elk license, and, as a group, my brothers and I had a 90% chance of drawing a tag in our units: 11 and 211.

At Wapiti Cross Ranch, we were just minutes from thousands of acres of public sage brush and canyon land. It was loaded with deer and we had it virtually all to ourselves. The afternoon that I shot my deer I left Steve to hunt one side of a highway while I took the other. After shooting hours, we would meet back at the truck and return to a very comfortable cabin for a hot shower, a cold beer, a warm meal and to plan the


next day.

I had just crossed a fence and was working my way into the sage when I heard distant shooting. A few minutes later two does, followed by a buck, appeared on the horizon. They could have gone anywhere they wanted in the vast acreage, but, for whatever reason, they chose to come directly to me. They came so close that after the fact I told Dick and Steve I thought I was going to have to fix a bayonet for their charge. I told you earlier in this article that I know my shooting limitations, so when they came within 10 yards of me, I thought, "close enough" and took the shot. I ended up with a 3-point, western count mule deer (my first ever) taken at about 2:30 in the afternoon. Inside tenderloins, served with eggs the next morning re-enforced why it's so much fun to hunt deer where there are deer.

To the Hunt!

From Wisconsin to Maybell, Colorado

Maybell, Colorado, is about 15 miles northeast of Wapiti Cross Ranch. There are several ways to get there from Wisconsin. We chose to go via I-90 to Rapid City, South Dakota. Once there we stayed at a Sleep Inn and Suites motel. The rooms cost about \$55.00 a night, were very clean and comfortable, and a free breakfast buffet was served in the morning. After leaving Rapid City, our route took us southwest to Casper, Wyoming, and then on to Craig, Colorado. Craig is just 31 miles east of Maybell.

The total drive time on this route was about 18 hours: 10 hours to Rapid City and 8 hours to Maybell. Along the way there was lots of good conversation and the anticipation of the coming hunt. Once we got into South Dakota we passed through some great-looking whitetail and pheasant land, and beyond Rapid City you really get the feel that you're "out west." Mountains, deer and Pronghorn antelope become common sightings for the rest of the drive. 



Steve Ellis was happy to run pain-free after knee replacement surgery for a half-mile in Colorado hill country in an effort to head off five monster mule deer spotted running together from river bottom toward the hunter's position in hill country. He tagged this buck later.

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JOHN CLER

Measuring Deer Hunting Success

It's not always about filling your own tag

The 2016 deer season on our property in Richland County was a resounding success! I never filled a tag but enjoyed every minute spent chasing whitetails. As this was the first year I was to be “retired,” I anticipated lots of mornings and evenings with longbow in hand. I especially looked forward to being able to hunt without restriction during the rut.

The biggest buck of the archery season walked directly underneath my treestand on the last day I was able to hunt prior to leaving for an elk hunting trip to Colorado in mid-November. Most people would assume that this should result in some great trophy pictures and venison steaks. When a deer walks directly underneath your stand, you see its chest as it approach-

es and its rump as it walks away. There is no opportunity for an ethical shot with archery equipment. I will admit there was some frustration involving my inability to connect with a well-placed arrow, but this is only part of the story.

My oldest granddaughter, Claire, turned 10 in January. This made her eligible to take part in the various youth hunts Wisconsin offers. She was a willing learner and participant during the youth turkey hunt in April and the youth duck hunt in September. We had turkeys nearby that offered no opportunity for a shot and she took a few shots at passing wood ducks that came close enough to our blind, but no game was harmed or harvested. When I asked whether she would like to try deer hunting,

she answered with an immediate “yes.”

Claire began her rifle training shooting a scoped .22 at paper targets. We quickly moved to shooting cans and metal gongs to get her used to loading, aiming and shooting a rifle. I had decided to not have her shoot the deer rifle (7mm-08) until she had a deer in front of her. I did not want her to develop any poor habits that might result in a bad hit and a terrible first experience. I agonized over this decision but it worked.

I set up a ground blind in a cornfield overlooking a food plot the day before the youth hunt. I spent nearly an hour covering the blind with corn stalks to make it all but invisible. I placed two chairs and my shooting tripod in the blind so all would



The author's granddaughter, Claire Ready, with her first deer.

be ready the next day.

The first day of the hunt dawned clear and cold. About an hour after first light, a pair of does suddenly showed up in front of our blind. I assisted Claire in getting set up for the shot and told her to shoot when she was ready. Her shot was nearly perfect, resulting in a first deer and an excited 10-year-old girl (and a proud grandfather).

continued on page 33

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JERRY DAVIS

Feeding To Study Wildlife

The proactive bird watcher

Do birds need to have us feed them? Probably not. Then why do we continue to erect feeders?

In many hunting situations, it is illegal to feed or bait to attract wildlife. The primary reason for this ban is likely ethics and fair chase if hunting is involved. Disease-spreading has come into the picture with white-tailed deer. Increasing populations beyond the carrying capacity of the land is another factor.

Why, then, do millions of us feed songbirds and other critters? The philosophical answer probably is to get animals to come close to our homes. We surely enjoy looking at them close up to watch their actions and antics.

We might sell ourselves on the idea we are helping the birds, and yet research shows that on average no more than 20 percent of a bird's diet comes from bird feeder food. In most cases, they don't need us.

But we need them and that's why we

feed animals wherever we can. We love to study them, count them, name them, list them and photograph them. Here are some hints to get more involved in bird feeding.

Birds have different kinds of bills depending on what they eat, as do pheasants and turkeys. Many birds stand on one leg for long periods, in part to rest the other leg or warm it up. Canada geese do this when standing on ice. Birds frequently preen themselves to clean their feathers.

Some species are dominant over others at feeding stations. They chase others away from food. Dominance even shows within a species. Other birds, like turkeys, are gregarious, at least to a point and have a need to be together.

Birds molt but not all of their feathers at the same time, otherwise they couldn't fly very well, if at all. Geese, for example, molt most of their primary feathers almost completely and are flightless for a time—a time when they are sometimes caught by hand and banded.

Birds let other birds know it's mating season by changing their plumage. They get all dressed up and may even be flamboyant. Unfortunately for those who admire mounted ducks, the best duck plumage is not usually during the fall hunting season but during spring mating season.

Most birds communicate vocally. Turkeys certainly do, but what are they saying? Do these sounds attract or repel other birds?

If we accept why we feed birds, how can we best accomplish this feat without fear of disease and putting the birds in vulnerable situations with predators? We can learn how by watching. Many birds need a perch to fly away to and eat. These perches should be close to the feeder where the birds can rest, eat and be protected.


Some birds feed on the ground, others eat in elevated places, so provide food at both. Almost all birds need water, even during winter. Provide a heated water bath for bathing and drinking. Certain birds are



Black-capped chickadees require a perch to sit and eat. Red-osier dogwoods work well.

dawn and dusk feeders, other are less discriminate. Make sure the right food is out at the right time.

Finally, avoid exposing the birds' feeders where avian predators can pick off smaller birds. Sheltered perches are a start. Or maybe we should be fine with watching nature's food chain in action when a small hawk takes a goldfinch.

Winter is also a great time to photograph birds. Perches away from feeders make much more pleasing shots than birds sitting on a feeder, which becomes the center of attraction in a photograph. 

Jerry Davis, a Wisconsin native, retired from university teaching and now lives in Iowa County. He applies arts and sciences to writing and enjoying Wisconsin's outdoors. Contact him at sivadjam@mhtc.net.



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JIM SERVI

Silent Sports Make Winter Fun

Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and fat tire biking

Even the most dedicated outdoor enthusiasts sometimes succumb to the dreaded cabin fever with our cold, unpredictable weather here in Wisconsin. But there is a great way to fight that fever while exploring some of the many outdoor gems that Wisconsin offers. Plus, you'll be in great shape to hit the ground running when winter finally breaks and spring arrives.

Winter's silent sports: cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and fat tire biking have grown in popularity in recent years. Many communities now offer local opportunities to experience silent sports, and there has been a surge in trail improvements and new trails across Wisconsin. Here are some great destinations to try.

Several locations on the Ice Age Trail are excellent for cross-country skiing, especially a beautiful 7.1-mile segment near Baraboo with spectacular views of Devils Lake. The 4,755-acre Nine Mile Forest also has a series of trails that are very popular at the base of


Rib Mountain State Park. Another favorite location for cross-country skiing called the Old World Wisconsin Blue Trail, near Eagle, is just over three miles and gives you a feel of Europe. With their vivid re-creation of European farmsteads and settlements from the 1800s, you'll experience firsthand what it looked like when Wisconsin was settled. Once you're hooked on cross-country skiing, there is no greater challenge than the American Birkebeiner. This 50-kilometer route from Cable to Hayward is North America's largest cross-country ski marathon and attracts more than 10,000 skiers from across the globe.

Snowshoeing is another great way to enjoy the outdoors during winter and has less of a learning curve than cross-country skiing. High Cliff Staff Park is an excellent place to start. The 2.3-mile Lime-Kiln trail offers remarkable views of the bluffs around Lake Winnebago. With 1,147 acres, there is also ample opportunity to break your own trail in fresh powder. Wisconsin offers a

Snowshoe Scurry Series with multiple destinations, and there are local races in communities throughout Wisconsin. There is one can't-miss location to snowshoe: the ice caves of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore on Lake Superior. But there is a catch. They aren't accessible every year. The weather and conditions must be just right. 2014 and 2015 were excellent years with nearly 200,000 visitors, but they were inaccessible during several of the proceeding years. Call ahead to check ice conditions and don't miss this opportunity if you get a chance to go.

Fat tire biking has been the rage the last few years and with that attention opportunities now abound. For destinations, the Chequamegon Area Mountain Bike Association (CAMBA) trail system is hard to beat. Often called one of the best trail systems in the country for biking, there are 28 trails with more than 300 miles passing by lakes and streams and through nearly every forest type that northern Wisconsin offers. The Levis-Trow Mounds Recreation-

al Area, near Neillsville, has a challenging trail that weaves through the sandstone crags left by retreating glacial ice. Easier trails can be found at both locations as well. Levis Mounds Trails holds an annual fat tire race, along with other events including winter camping for the adventurous. The John Muir Trails in the Kettle Moraine State Forest are also extremely popular with their relatively close proximity to Milwaukee, Madison and Chicago.

These destinations are some of the best that Wisconsin offers, but we're fortunate to have locations in every corner of the state to take advantage of winter's silent sports. Giving them a try will make winter a little more exciting while exploring some of Wisconsin's great outdoor places. Hope to see you out there. 

Jim Servi is a freelance writer who spends every opportunity he can in the great outdoors with his wife and three boys. Contact Jim at jimservi10@gmail.com.



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My husband and I were married 17 years ago, and at that time I declared myself the primary cook for our household of five. But when I first brought out the slow cooker, he cringed and tried to overrule my status as chef in charge. The very idea of me “ruining a perfectly good piece of meat” by “cooking it to death” in the crock pot was simply unacceptable. Little did he realize that these wonderful concoctions would become some of our all-time favorite meals. Enjoy!

Slow Cooker Rabbit

2 rabbits, cut into bite-sized pieces	½ cup wine
1 T paprika	1 cup sour cream
2 tsp. salt	1 cup heavy cream
2 tsp. pepper	½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 large onions, sliced	2 tsp. dried thyme
8 oz. fresh mushrooms, sliced	1 T minced garlic

Toss rabbit pieces in a large bowl or Ziploc bag with paprika, salt and pepper. Place into bottom of slow cooker alternating with layers of onions and mushrooms.

Combine wine, sour cream, heavy cream, Worcestershire sauce, thyme and garlic in small bowl; mix well. Pour sauce over rabbit and onions in slow cooker.

Cook on low for 7 to 9 hours until rabbit is very tender. Serve over rice, noodles, or mashed potatoes.

Slower Cooker Pheasant

1 pheasant, cut into serving pieces	¾ cup red wine (Marsala, Madeira, or Burgundy)
1 tsp. salt	
1 small onion, finely diced	1 tsp. lemon or orange juice
8 oz. fresh mushrooms, sliced	1 T cornstarch
¾ cup chicken broth	2 T water

Place pheasant pieces in bottom of slow cooker and salt lightly. Arrange onions and mushrooms over pheasant.

Combine broth, wine and lemon or orange juice in small bowl; pour over pheasant and vegetables. Cook on low for 7 hours.

With slotted spoon, remove pheasant and vegetables from slow cooker to serving dish; cover and set aside.


Turn slow cooker to high. Dissolve cornstarch in water and slowly pour into slow cooker, stirring constantly. Continue stirring until sauce starts to thicken.

Pour thickened sauce over pheasant and serve immediately.

Slow Cooker Venison Chili

1 lb. venison, cut into bite-sized chunks	3 cans diced tomatoes
1 large onion, diced	2 T chili powder
1 can diced green chilis	1 T dried parsley
2 cloves garlic, minced	Sour cream
2 cans black beans, drained	Cheddar cheese, shredded

Place all ingredients (except sour cream and cheese) in slow cooker; cook on low for 7 to 9 hours.

Ladle chili into soup bowls; top with sour cream and cheese. 

Suzette Curtis, of Oshkosh, cooks for a family of hunters and fishermen and 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.



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Jim Servi is a freelance writer who spends every opportunity he can in the great outdoors with his wife and three boys. Contact Jim at jimservi10@gmail.com.

Check out more product reviews at www.onwisconsinoutdoors.com!

TOM CARPENTER

Planting A Conservation Ethic

Three ways to get your young sports person thinking “bigger picture”

When I was a Badger Cub running around the hills and valleys of Green, Lafayette and Iowa counties in every sort of hunting and fishing pursuit available, we didn't think much about long-term conservation topics. The land and water was just there and it was bountiful indeed.

Sure, Dad instilled a strict code of conduct for following all game and fish laws to the letter. But the conservation ethic—the idea that you should be giving back to the resource, not just taking from it—didn't enter the equation for me until later.

Now, it's often a primary focus of my outdoor energies. I like to think I've made it a part of my kids' priorities, too. If you've got Badger Cubs in your life, here are three ways to get them giving back.

Join

It's easy and fun to join any one of the great conservation organizations out there today, and it's the perfect start to thinking “bigger picture.” Most of the following groups offer youth memberships, and they all do excellent work on the ground. Find opportunities to participate in those on-the-ground activities and get out in the field when you're not hunting or fishing.

Pheasants Forever (pheasantsforever.org) does great work preserving and developing grassland that benefits roosters, as well as many other kinds of wildlife such as whitetails, ducks and songbirds.

Ducks Unlimited (ducks.org) is perhaps our country's largest conservation organization, and its power for preserving wetland area is unmatched. **Delta Waterfowl** (deltawaterfowl.org) is a great addition (many waterfowlers join both) or alternative, with its focus on heavy predator control and deep research.

The National Wild Turkey Federation (nwtf.org) is strong everywhere, and Wisconsin is now one of the country's top turkey states. Join this winter and attend a banquet. Kids have a blast, as this organization knows how to hook them for a bright wild turkey future.

Whitetails Unlimited (whitetailsunlimited.com) has a great presence in our state and helps foster our rich deer hunting tradition. It's easy to forget about whitetails, but they need conservation attention, too.

Build

Get out in your garage or workshop and build some bird nesting structures with your Badger Cubs and put the results in the field when milder weather arrives.

Build some wood duck nest boxes (find great plans at the National Wildlife Federation website, nwf.org) and put out a trail near some ponds, wetlands, creek bottoms or river backwaters near you. There's nothing like knowing you've contributed to the local wood duck population



Wood duck nest boxes are just one small way you can instill a conservation mindset in your young sports person.

during the youth waterfowl hunt or regular duck opener.


Bluebirds are songbirds that return in spring, with their electric-blue backs and beautiful calls. Bluebirds always need nesting help. Build some bluebird nest houses and put up a local bluebird trail. Good bluebird house plans are available at nabluebirdsociety.org.

Purple martins are another cool bird that we don't hunt but that are entertaining to have around. A fun project is to build gourd houses they can call home and see if you can attract some of these swift-flying insect eaters to your yard this summer. Explore purplemartin.org.

Teach

Finally, take the time to teach about the wildlife you're hunting, fishing for or watching and pass along that knowledge to your young sportsmen and women.

When you bag a pheasant, talk about the habitat that helped raise that bird. With a duck, talk about the nesting habitat, maybe a grass field up on the Canadian prairie, that hatched that magnificent creature. And when you catch a trout, talk about the cold and clean water it needed to survive.

Planting a conservation ethic is easy, fun and rewarding. It creates more togetherness between you and your Badger Cub. And it's an investment in the future of Wisconsin's great outdoors. 

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



TOM CARPENTER

Badger Birds

Downy woodpecker

Because they are half tail, downy woodpeckers look much bigger than they actually are. With a body sized like a sparrow but leaner, this tiny hunter works his way up a tree trunk—using tail as both prop and counter-balance—as he pecks, prods, pokes and probes for insects and larvae.

Downies grace backyards, parks, gardens and feeders across Wisconsin. Downy woodpeckers also provide much entertainment for me while I wait on-stand in the deer woods. What happy, energetic company to keep a hunter awake on a somber fall day!

Wintertime is a great time to see downies, too. These always-on-the-move birds stay with us year-round. This may be our most common Wisconsin woodpecker, but a downy is a uniquely handsome and extremely interesting bird in its own right.


Look for a striking black and white bird: black wings spotted with white, a white back, creamy belly and white stripes above and below the eye. Males have a red nape (back of the neck) that really stands out and flashes bright.

Listen for the downy's descending raspy and rattling slur of notes. They also call *pik* when feeding.

Feed downies sunflowers seeds. An awesome attractor is suet. But best of all is real, unrendered fat, such as the trimmings left over from butchering your deer. Offer either in a hanging suet basket or bag. If you live in the country, hang a deer leg from a back tree and let the downies (and chickadees) have at it!

Spare dead trees or snags on your property. Downies love the associated insect life, larvae and eggs found there. These places can also provide nesting holes.

Tell downy woodpeckers apart from look-alike hairy woodpeckers by size (downies are much smaller) and bill (a downy's is much slimmer).

Did you know that a downy woodpecker sports four toes? And that two face forward and two backward? This helps him do all those acrobatics while clinging to tree trunks and bird feeders. 

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

GARY GREENE

Memories From An Old Hunter

Already anticipating the next waterfowl season

I always have withdrawal symptoms when another Wisconsin waterfowl season comes to an end. The closed state pheasant season is not as traumatizing, because until mid-April I can still get my dogs out and chase some pheasants at our state's fine hunting clubs.

After his army ranger career ended, my son, Nate, became completely engrossed in duck hunting. I also jumped on board his skiff. Though many have been wet, white or frigid, at least once a week for the last six waterfowl seasons duck hunting has us sharing a sunrise.

Duck hunting requires significantly more time, money and equipment than pheasant hunting. With pheasants, you throw on your blaze, grab your gun and dog, pocket some shells and you are out the door. Duck hunting preparation requires scouting, selecting a hunting location, monitoring weather patterns, maybe building a blind, and possibly buying a boat and mud motor. Water fowlers must have decoys, then more decoys,

then better decoys, and then intensify with action decoys. You also need waders and waterproof this and that, plus the best shells, and don't forget the duck calls ... the marsh grass is always greener with better calls. Finally, set the alarm for 4:00 AM, the awakening hour.

Some days we leave the marsh just as we greeted it ... with no birds on our stringer. The shared father/son hours make all the hunts successful but then build in the anticipation that the next moment might produce a larger-than-ever-imagined flock of greenheads. It is a bonus to witness Nate work his magic calls and have ducks cupping into our decoys. I have never taken that scene for granted with each approach being as intoxicating and breathtaking as the first.

There are days when the only ducks we see are before shooting time, after shooting time, during a bathroom break, or just after we have cased our guns and are in the boat collecting the dekes. Water fowlers know that once you start picking up your dekes




Our waterfowl blind is closed this year.

your decoy spread immediately becomes a duck magnet. We have had ducks in our spread swimming in front of us as if they were protecting our decoys.

For a few years now, with tongue in cheek, Nate and I have issued a challenge to the ducks, and yearly that game has expanded. Our challenge started by notifying the ducks when we are ending our hunt. We verbally declare, for all ducks to hear, that

we are going to stop hunting at, say, 10:00 AM. Then, we really extend our hunt until 10:30, because, in theory, the ducks counting on us to clean up at 10:00 will now show up.

This year we increased the challenge by an early removal of a shell from our guns. We have also started an early camouflage cleanup of the blind and boat. As my ex-army son says, "You are only as good as your worst camouflage." All these factors give us a disadvantage and the late-arriving ducks a better chance of survival. Again, in theory, the ducks will now show up. When the skies are empty, we have had our share of laughs from our challenge and are always seeking new ways to outsmart the ducks.

Whatever techniques we use, the ducks normally win. I wonder if our Mississippi Flyway ducks are always on daylight saving time or possibly flying in other time zones. We are never totally capable of stopping our hunt at just the precise duck-less time. 

Gary Greene is a lifelong bird hunter and for years has been a pheasant hunting guide. He also writes a weekly column for the OWO website. Gary, his veterinarian wife, Chris, and their five labs live in East Troy. You can contact Gary at ganggreene2002@yahoo.com.



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TOM MUELLER

Choosing A Retriever Pup ... Continued

More questions

I ended my article in the November/December issue of *On Wisconsin Outdoors* recommending that you ask the breeder questions about the sire and dam so you will have a sense of what to expect for a pup's demeanor and personality. Again, questions about how quickly the dog learned the concepts it was being taught, whether or not it was trained by a pro or if it was trained by an amateur, and what some of the personality traits or habits the parents and grandparents have will help you determine if a pup from this breeder's litter will be the dog for you. Also, when planning to add a retriever pup to your family, your lifestyle is something that should be

given serious consideration. A seven- or eight-week old retriever is somewhat easy to take care of, but if you picked one from high energy parents, a month or two down the road when they start to become rambunctious, you might be regretting that decision.

With regard to asking questions, that door swings both ways. Many breeders are just as careful about who gets their puppies. As much as they want to sell them, their reputation is at stake with every buyer, so you can expect to be asked questions, too. They might ask if this is your first retriever and what it is going to be used for. If you're

continued on page 35

MIKE YURK

The .41 Mag Is Alive And Well

Best of both worlds

The .41 Magnum is the in-between caliber. It was developed and championed by the legendary gun writer Elmer Keith, who also developed the .357 Magnum and the .44 Magnum.

Elmer Keith cut a large path through the shooting world from the 1920s until his death in 1984. Known for his cigars and ten gallon hat, he was a rancher in Idaho and handgun expert who became a major writer for gun magazines. As well, he was an early proponent of using powerful handguns for deer hunting.

Keith first began to experiment with handloads leading to the .357 Magnum, which became available in 1935. After the Second World War, he continued to experiment, resulting in the .44 Magnum, which was introduced commercially in 1956.

Although both rounds were popular, some felt the .357 was a bit light for certain situations and the .44 was too harsh to shoot regularly with its substantial recoil. Again, Keith began experiments to find another

magnum round in between the .357 Magnum and the .44 Magnum. This led to his development of the .41 Magnum, introduced in 1963.

The Best of Both Worlds

The .41 Magnum was considered the best of both worlds. It had more punch than the .357 but lighter recoil. It was initially promoted as a better round for law enforcement needs, and a number of agencies adopted it for their officers. The greater firepower with the lighter recoil, which allowed for quicker recovery while shooting, has been credited in saving the lives of those officers who had one when they needed it the most.

A friend who lived in Alaska during the mid-1970s through the early 1980s told me the .41 Magnum was popular with many of his hunting and fishing buddies as a defensive handgun against bears; however, it never became as popular as either the .357 Magnum or the .44 Magnum. In searching, I found the Ruger Blackhawk and Redhawk,

the Smith & Wesson Model 57 and Freedom Arms Model 97 as the only handguns currently available in the .41 Magnum.

Ammunition for the .41 Magnum is also tough to find. I checked with outdoor chain stores, a Fleet Farm and a local gun shop where I live in northwestern Wisconsin. None of them carried any handguns in .41 Magnum or ammunition. One clerk told me he hadn't anyone ask about .41 Magnum ammunition in years. Ammunition for the .41 Magnum is expensive when found, so many shooters who have a .41 Magnum handload their own ammunition.

Henry Rifles

Although not as popular a round as the .357 Magnum or the .44 Magnum, there are enough enthusiasts for the .41 Magnum to keep it alive. This year Henry Rifles offered the .41 Magnum in their Henry Big Boy Steel joining the .44 Magnum, .45 Colt and the .357 Magnum in that lever action rifle.


I asked Andy Wickstrom, General Manager of the Henry Rifle facility at Rice Lake,

The Ruger Redhawk is one of four handguns currently available in the .41 Magnum caliber.



what prompted them to start making the Big Boy Steel in the .41 Magnum. "We had been getting a lot of requests for a rifle in the .41 Magnum," he told me. "Consumers were asking why no one else was doing it, so it put us in a unique position."

"We started in 2016 and exceeded our forecast," Andy said. "It has been real popular. We sold over five thousand this year."

There is greater interest in the .41 Magnum than anyone realized, and those who own a handgun or now a rifle in that caliber are very passionate about it. The .41 Magnum lives on, finding not only its place among today's handgun enthusiasts but also generating increased interest with new shooters. 

Mike Yurk has published more than 600 articles in national and regional outdoor publications. He has published five books on outdoor subjects. He is a retired Army officer and lives in Hudson, Wisconsin. Contact Mike at bassinmajor@yahoo.com.



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Presents Firearms Info from Ron Stresing

RON STRESING

Cleaning And Maintaining Your Valuable Firearm

It's easier than you think!

Maybe you saved up for the SKB shotgun of your dreams, or you found one of those lovely long gun boxes under the Christmas tree. Now that you own that gun you also have to clean and maintain it. Today's shotgunner has a wide selection of high quality imports as well as U.S.-made guns to choose from. No matter what shotgun you own, from a simple single-shot to a new high tech, inertia driven semi-auto, eventually you are going to need to clean it. Here are some basics.

Why do you need to clean your shotgun? Burnt powder produces soot and carbon residue that attracts and holds moisture. Salts from your perspiration can form rust, and melted plastic from wads can block gas ports or vents on muzzle brakes. The metal needs to be cleaned then re-oiled to prevent corrosion. The same solvents that strip away residue also strip away any remaining gun oil that was protecting the metal.

So how do I do it? Consult the owner's manual for model-specific cleaning instructions. No one knows more about



Gas operated semi-auto shotguns like the author's SKB need to be cleaned often.

that firearm than the folks who built it. There are also some really well-made videos on cleaning specific models on YouTube that are great for beginners. Resist the temptation to field strip the gun down past its basic parts. You probably don't need to remove and clean the firing pin after a year's worth of normal use in the field. Clean the barrel and re-

ceiver then reassemble and re-lubricate the firearm. Usually, this is about all you need to do. A final wipe down with an oiled cloth prevents rust.

Gather all your gun cleaning supplies before starting. You can find shotgun cleaning kits with a rod, brushes, patch holders, oil, etc. in most sporting goods stores. Make sure you have a well-ventilated area to work in and an old plastic tablecloth to cover the cleaning surface. Make sure the firearm is *unloaded* by visually checking the receiver. With a pump or auto loader check the magazine also.

Begin by scrubbing out the barrel with a solvent-soaked bristle brush. Next, swab the barrel with a patch soaked in cleaning solvent and repeat the process until a clean patch is obtained. Remember, the solvent that removed the burned powder residue also removed any oils. Swab the barrel with oiled patches, then with a dry patch to remove excess oil. Clean the receiver, bolt and ejector with solvent. An old

continued on page 33





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STUART WILKERSON

Concealed Carry (Not so) mighty mites

Small caliber pocket pistols may not be the best choice for personal defense, but something is better than nothing. Beretta's .25 caliber Jetfire and .22 Short caliber Minx are two of the better choices in easily concealable, lightweight pocket pistols.

Manufactured from 1952 to 2003, the two guns may not be powerful, but they are viable concealed carry options within their limitations. Those limitations are a distinct lack of power and the need for proper shot placement to be effective. A typical 50-grain, .25 caliber, jacketed hollow point is only putting out 65 pounds of foot energy at the muzzle while travelling about 800 feet per second through the Jetfire's two-inch barrel at the muzzle. A common, 29 grain, .22 Short caliber Minx is even less powerful, producing a mere 44 pounds of foot energy at 830 feet per second.

There are certainly more powerful pocket pistols but few as concealable. Both have an overall length of approximately 4.5 inches, 3.3 inches in height and weigh about 9.5 ounces empty. They have a simple blowback

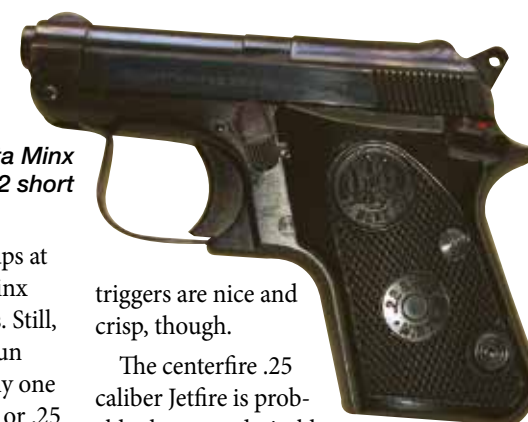
action ... so simple, in fact, that they do not have a cartridge extractor. After a shot has been fired through the 2.4-inch barrel, the resulting pressure simply launches the spent case through a hole in the slide. The slides are forced back and another round is chambered from the magazine.

One particularly interesting feature of the small Berettas' is their tip-up barrels. Many micro-sized pocket pistols, such as the long discontinued Colt Junior and Baby Browning, have dinky, difficult-to-grasp slides, making it tough to pull them back to chamber or manually eject a round. The Berettas feature a tip-up barrel, negating the need to somehow grasp a tiny slide to put a cartridge into battery or eject a round. With the Minx and Jetfire, simply pop open the barrel by pushing a lever, insert a round, shut it, cock the hammer and pull the trigger.

Neither the Minx nor the Jetfire will provide target pistol accuracy. In fact, they don't provide much in the way of accuracy at all. These are short-range pistols, and by short, think really short, like 10 yard-

range-short and six-inch offhand groups at that distance. Mounted on rest, the Minx and Jetfire are accurate out to 25 yards. Still, probably more often than not either gun should stop or at least give pause to any one on the receiving end of their .22 Short or .25 caliber bullet.


The little Berettas are well-made pistols. Receivers are made of aluminum, while barrels and slides are manufactured from steel. They were made with nicely blued or chrome finishes, with blue being far more common. The .22 caliber Minx holds seven rounds in the magazine and one in the barrel. The .25 caliber Jetfire holds eight rounds in the magazine with one in the barrel. Sights, while included, may as well have not been; they are that useless. On the other hand, for pistols made for distances of seven yards or less, sights that are adjustable for elevation and windage would be pointless to the extreme. No need to worry about which two-hand hold to use when shooting these two pistols; you only need one hand to shoot a Minx or a Jetta and only two fingers of that hand will fit their plastic grips. The



The Beretta Minx
in .22 short

triggers are nice and crisp, though.


The centerfire .25 caliber Jetfire is probably the more desirable of the two pistols. Most review comparisons between it and the Minx note that the Jetfire is the more reliable of the two. In addition, .25 is much easier to find than .22 Short, although more expensive.

The Minx and Jetfire would not be my first choice for a concealed carry gun, although they would make for fine backup pistols. They are fun to shoot, and, since their recoil is virtually nil, they might make for a good introduction to first-time pistol shooters. The little Berettas were made by the tens of thousands, and specimens in excellent condition can often be found used for less than \$300. But for \$300 there are better used and even new options. 

Stuart Wilkerson is a longtime OWO contributor, award-winning Wisconsin journalist, and firearms expert specializing in historical firearms and collecting.

GATZKE, from page 15


the outfitter and try a do-it-yourself hunt. It's like hiring a fishing guide who shows you where and how to catch a limit one day then returning the next day to try it on your own.

Perhaps the most lasting benefit of hunting out of state is that the knowledge gained by taking on this challenge rewards you with new insights you can use to become a more effective hunter here at home. 

Lee Gatzke is co-owner of NextBuk Outdoors, producers of tactical hunting videos. In grade school he chased rabbits with his homemade bow and arrows, which lead to a passion for hunting bigger game all over the Midwest and western states. In between hunting seasons Lee is usually scouting for his next buck.

CLER, from page 22

Claire's aunt, my youngest daughter, Beth, had also expressed some interest in deer hunting. She had hunted briefly when she turned 12 but had declined to hunt after that. Now at age 30 she sounded excited to give deer hunting another chance. We did some practice shooting with the deer rifle and headed to a haybale blind a couple of days after Thanksgiving. She also made a great shot when a small doe presented an opportunity, resulting in a first deer, an excited 30-year-old woman and a proud father.

My tags are still in the pocket of my hunting coat, but it was a great deer season! 

John Cler is a retired principal and science teacher residing in Richland County. He and his wife, Vickie, have two grown daughters, three grandchildren and a black lab that keep them on the move.


STRESING, from page 32

toothbrush works wonders. Then re-lubricate, being sure to wipe away excess oil, which can cause all sorts of problems. Consult the owner's manual for instructions on how to and how often to remove the trigger group for cleaning. If you have done a good job, the bore of your shotgun should shine like a mirror when held up to a light. If cleaning a rifled shotgun barrel for shooting slugs, try a "fouling shot" to assure the shotgun will be on-target after cleaning.

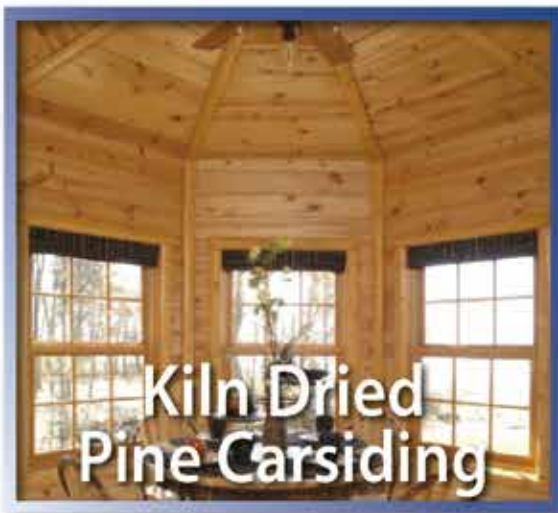
There are a number of good powder solvents on the market, like the old classic Hoppe's No. 9. I suggest shopping around and watching for sales. Your gun oil can be anything from the old standby of 3-in-1 oil to the new super lubricants used by our Special Forces guys made to stand up to any climate on the planet. Save old flannel shirts and nightgowns for cutting up into patches

and gun cleaning rags. Dispose of all oil or solvent-soaked rags safely and wash your hands well after cleaning.

Your final step is to wipe down all the metal surfaces to give them a light coating of oil. Keep the oil off wood or synthetic stocks and firearms. I've seen damaged wood on some classic firearms caused by the owner letting the wooden stocks absorb oil.

Cleaning your shotgun isn't really all that hard or complicated. A little time and maintenance now will help you get a lifetime of service from your firearm, allowing you to pass it down for another generation to enjoy. 

Ron Stresing has been an outdoor writer since 1996 and has had articles published in Midwest Outdoors, Fur-Fish-Game, and Badger Sportsman magazines. He lives in South Milwaukee with his wife, Donna.



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STUART WILKERSON

Riding With The Long Ranger

Henry's innovative lever action rifle combines speed with accuracy

Henry Repeating Arms' new Long Ranger rifle combines bolt action accuracy with lever action speed. Introduced last year in .223, .243 and .308 calibers, the new Henry is a modern interpretation of a classic American invention: the lever action rifle. Made in Rice Lake, Wisconsin, the new rifle is the company's first venture in the field of long-range caliber firearms.

Bolt action rifles are generally the most accurate, and among the slowest, of rifle actions. They can be more accurate than semiautomatics and pumps, for instance, because they can be built to tighter tolerances, have fewer moving parts that can impact accuracy, and, most importantly, the front bolt lugs solidly lock into the receiver breech.

Bolt rifles may be accurate, but follow-up shots are not quickly accomplished. When shot from anything but a bench rest, the arm, shoulder and wrist movements necessary for the shooter to chamber another round is not going to happen at light speed and neither is getting the sights back on target.

Traditional lever rifles are less accurate than bolts for several reasons. Rear bolt lugs do not provide as solid of a lock up as do the front lugs of a bolt. Indifferently-fitted two-piece stocks do not provide as stable of a receiver and barrel platform as do the one-piece stocks of most bolt action ri-

fles. Lever action rifles do make for much quicker follow-up shots because they do not require as many anatomical contortions to put another cartridge into play. Push the lever down and up and a new round is chambered and ready for action; the sights barely leave the target. Lever action rifles also don't care if you're right or left handed.

The Long Ranger is essentially a bolt action rifle activated by a slick, quick, gear-driven lever. There are six locking lugs on the face of the rotary bolt that securely lock it into the breech. The 20-inch barrel is free-floated so that the harmonics resulting from a bullet travelling through the barrel have minimal or no effect on the barrel's accuracy potential. The Long Ranger featured in this review was chambered in .243 caliber, an extremely versatile round. Depending on bullet weight, the .243 can be used to hunt prairie dogs and pronghorn antelope, and everything in between, as far as 300 to 400 yards away. Try doing that with a 30/.30.


Long Rangers do not have an external safety but do have a transfer bar safety between the hammer and the firing pin to prevent discharge in the event of a fall. Long Rangers have detachable box magazines and eject spent shells from the side.

The rifles come with Skinner scope mount bases, which easily accept Weaver-style rings. Currently, the rifles are not offered with iron sights, but the

Long Ranger was designed for long range, accurate shooting, not as a brush gun, although it is handy enough to be used as one.

As one would expect from a Henry product, the action is smooth and the trigger light and crisp with a pull weight of less than five pounds. The two-piece, oil-finished American Walnut stock on the featured rifle was spectacularly figured. The machined checkering was flawless and the rubber buttplate fit well and kept recoil to a minimum. Bench-rested and fitted with a decent scope, expect 100-yard, three-shot groups of an inch or less with just about any load.

The Long Ranger is a premium, unique, long-range rifle and an extremely viable alternative to bolt rifles. Attractive and highly accurate, it shoulders quickly, and, weighing less than eight pounds, it also travels well. Henry's reputation as one of America's premier firearm companies remains secure with the Long Ranger.

For more information regarding Henry Repeating Arms, visit their website at henryrifles.com or see them in person at Shorty's Sporting Goods in West Allis. 

Stuart Wilkerson is a longtime OWO contributor, award-winning Wisconsin journalist, and firearms expert specializing in historical firearms and collecting.

True to its name, the Henry Repeating Arms' Long Ranger is accurate up to 300 - 400 yards.




MUELLER, from page 30

looking at a litter that has hunt test or field trial lineage, I would expect that the breeder is going to want to know if you intend to use the dog for that. They might also ask if you're going to be doing the training or if you're having it trained by a pro. Many a breeder of fine retrievers has a vested interest in who they sell their dogs to. They want to make sure that the dog is going to be trained well for the job that it was bred to do. If this is your first retriever, or you feel that you're not that skilled at training one, something you might want to ask the breeder is for help with the training or if they can recommend a pro or a retriever club. Often the breeder is a hunter who trains for and enters his dog in hunt tests or field trials. He belongs to a club and trains with the other club members on a regular basis.

Once you've selected a breeder, next comes the daunting task of actually picking a pup out of the litter. How do you know which one to select? Visions of what you want your dog to be have been racing

through your imagination since you decided to get a retriever for your hunting companion. But how do you pick the right one for you? That's a very good question that has a lot of answers and opinions. The easiest part is deciding whether your pup is going to be a male or female. That's often decided way back at the beginning, but even that question comes with opinions that one sex might be better than the other. It all depends on who you ask and their experiences. In the end, the decision to pick a male pup over a female or a female pup over a male is yours. Over the years, I've owned and trained nine golden retrievers. All but one were females.

In the next issue, I'll share with you some insight from my experiences of picking the pup from a litter. 

Tom has been avidly training retrievers since the early 1980s. His passion has evolved into helping others achieve the satisfaction that he has had. For questions regarding retriever training contact Tom at winddancer.rtrvrs@hotmail.com.



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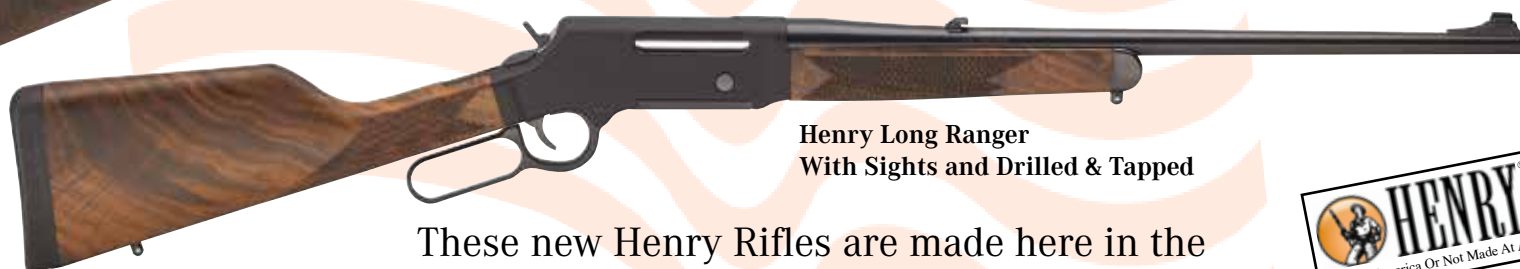
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