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Cover Shot: Storm clouds in whitetail country by Barry Raugust

EDITORIAL

A WORD TO THE WISE

Wisdom is important... especially this time of year. By it's very definition, it's the quality of having experience, knowledge, and good judgment. Quite simply it's possessing the quality of being wise. As we begin the trek into autumn, many of us will be pulling out bows, arrows, guns, knives and other bits of kit... most (if not all) of which have been collecting dust since last fall. And if that's the case, then our skills with those pieces of kit have also been collecting dust for a year, along with our experience, knowledge, and good judgment.

Proverbs 1:2-7 [NIV] says: *for gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight; for receiving instruction in prudent behavior, doing what is right and just and fair; for giving prudence to those who are simple, a knowledge and discretion to the young — let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance — for understanding proverbs and parables, the sayings and riddles of the wise. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*

This has a special context for me... and for all of us that head afield over the next few weeks. To me it's saying that we should always be willing to learn, always be willing to share what we've learned with others, and that true wisdom always welcomes further instruction. As we're dusting off the various tools of the trade, let's try to remember those traits and be willing to practice, and learn, and to be prudent about what we're doing out there in the wild places.

Get the gear out now, and refamiliarize yourself with it. Strip it down, clean it up, check it for wear and tear that you missed at the end of last season. Get in some range-time to make sure scopes and sights are still on. Head to the back yard and get your camp set up where mistakes and breakdowns can be managed in a secure setting and repairs made easily. In a nutshell, make certain that when you head out the door, you are 100% confident and capable with every piece of equipment you carry. To do anything less is unwise, indeed.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your creation,
for the land that sustains us,
the game that feeds us,
and the hunt that blesses us.
Grant us wisdom to be safe.
Grant us the patience for a clean shot,
so that we might be good stewards of every life you give.
Amen.*

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Mike Roux's OUTDOOR NOTEBOOK

Becoming an outdoor writer was never an aspiration as I grew-up and went on to school. But then again, most of where I am now was not considered a possibility way back then.

I grew-up in the perfect home. Beaver Cleaver did not have it any better than me. There was still a farm in my family and my father, Glen Roux and both Grandfathers loved to hunt and fish and were tickled to share that with me, a youngster. It was really, really good.

I also remember growing-up in Church. I recall that Dad was the Sunday School Director and it was never up for a vote about where my family would be on Sunday mornings. I also vividly remember that Tuesday afternoon when our Pastor showed-up at our house with the Evangelist that was leading our summer revival. Nobody was home but me and I sat on the front porch of 210 Crane St. in Flat River, Mo and gave my heart and life to Jesus. God set that plan in motion

and it worked out according to His will. I was baptized that next Sunday morning.

Now fast-forward 12- years. I had just graduated from Junior College and was heading to live in St. Louis to continue my education in medical imaging. I was now, overnight, on my own. There was nobody telling me where to go or what to do. I was considered a "young adult" and I suppose everyone expected me to act like one.

It did not take me long to forget about my Sunday morning routine, much less my Sunday morning commitment. Now do not get me wrong. I still had Jesus in heart and still maintained somewhat of a prayer life. But the need for Church disappeared and I spent lots of time and effort making up excuses for Dad as to why I had not joined a Church and begun serving in the city. I would never lie to him, but excuses were not lies...you know.

I graduated from not one but two imaging schools. I began a productive career and eventually moved home to take over the Nuclear Medicine program at the local hospital. I worked hard and spent every weekend either hunting or fishing. It was a great deal for a young man.

While I was living in St. Louis my Mother passed away and my Dad got bitter and walked away from the Church. So no-

body was hounding me to get back to it. I still talked to God occasionally, usually when I needed something. Then God decided to change my life...again.

A local sporting goods store was going out of business and they were having a close-out auction. As I stood in the crowd looking for deals a man tapped me on the shoulder and introduced himself. I remembered the man from Church when I was a kid. His name is Roger Lewis and he asked if I knew who he was.

After a short conversation, Roger and I began what can only be called a life-long friendship. No, that is not accurate. This man is my brother, plain and simple. Roger and I started hunting and fishing together. Roger was then a Deacon at the Church where we both grew up. Roger is about 10-years my senior. It did not take him long to start asking me to come back to Church.

I politely and repeatedly told him that I was "OK" with God and that Church was nice but not necessary. I explained that being in a bass boat or tree stand or duck blind kept me just as close to God as sitting in a pew. In fact, I told him, it probably keeps me closer to Him because it is where I truly want to be. I told him, "I work five days a week to be off two. You are asking me to give-up half of my weekly outdoor time. No thanks."

recognizing God's Will

He disagreed and assured me that if I served God as I should He would bless me in ways I had not yet imagined. Eventually his badgering paid-off and I agreed to come ONE Sunday just to shut him up. I will never be able to repay Roger for caring enough about me to keep making those invitations until I gave in.

Since that Sunday morning I have not missed very many in what is now decades. I served back then in the choir and as Director of the Sunday evening Training Union services. A short time later I moved to Quincy, Ill and joined Columbus Road Baptist Church and began serving there.

It took me many years to begin acting like I had given my life to Christ when I was eight. The second most important decision of my life was to live the life I had committed to as a child. God never gave-up on me...much like Roger.

So what was God's will for me? Beginning just after moving to Quincy I began an outdoor writing career. This venture flourished quickly and I developed, pro-



*Mike Roux never imagined he would ever catch a huge Marlin...but God did.
(Photo by Erin Pape)*

duced and hosted an outdoor TV show called, "GREAT RIVER OUTDOORS with MIKE ROUX". Shortly thereafter I created a syndicated radio program of the same name.

I now host two outdoor web sites, write weekly outdoor columns in 13 newspapers, write monthly columns in two magazines and have published two books; one on fishing and another on turkey

hunting. I now work for and write the Outdoor Blog for BECK'S HYBRIDS. This is a company owned by a Christian family and they put their Christian values up-front in their company. Finally, and for the first time in my life my employer and I are "equally-yoked". I also speak at Church wild game dinners across the country every season.

Along with Pastor Bob Cowman, God

FEATURE ARTICLE

OUTDOOR MINISTRY

allowed us to build an outreach ministry focused on hunters and anglers in the Quincy area. We hosted many day-long events that were not only designed to bring people to our campus but to bring them to Jesus, as well. Several families joined Columbus Road as a result of the Outdoor Ministries.

So what is my point here? My point is that Roger was right all those years ago. God had a plan to use my outdoor talents to His glory. It just took me opening my heart to His will for me to realize that. I did not give-up half my outdoor time to

serve Him. He multiplied my time and still gives me many opportunities to use the outdoors to serve Him.

I challenge you to strive to recognize God's will for your life. In Peter's First Epistle Chapter 4, Verse 10 the Bible says; "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

One the best highlights of this story is the answered prayer that Dad is now back serving the Lord at our home Church. Even in his darkest times God never gave-up on him. He will never

give-up on you either.

If you think you cannot give-up the time to serve God and attend Church because you would rather be on the river or in the woods, please reconsider. God has the desire for you to serve Him and the ability to make it happen so that the blessings in your life can be multiplied tenfold. Seek His will in your life and pray that you will recognize it. Hopefully it will not take you as long as it did me. You are in my prayers.

For a hunter, Africa is as good as it gets. Mike Roux's trip there was within God's will for his life as he both hunted and witnessed to the people there. (Photo by Phillip DuPlesse)



FISHING NORTH AMERICA

with Mike Roux

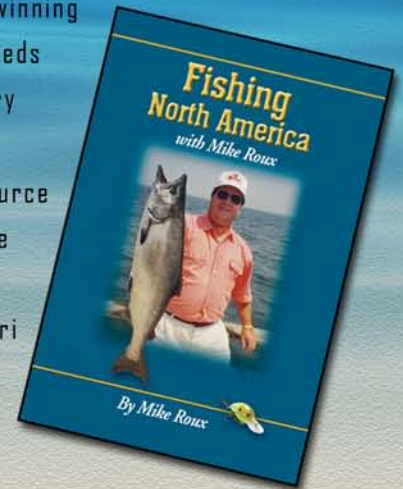


Mike Roux is proud of his new book titled, *Fishing North America*. This award winning outdoor writer has spent over 35 years on the water and has published hundreds of articles on the topic of chasing lunkers. This book is a collection of his very best works and is sure to please both novice and veteran anglers, alike.



Mike is a Regional Editor for *Outdoor Guide Magazine*, your source for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in the Midwest. He writes hundreds of articles each year and is a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America as well as the Missouri Outdoor Communicators.

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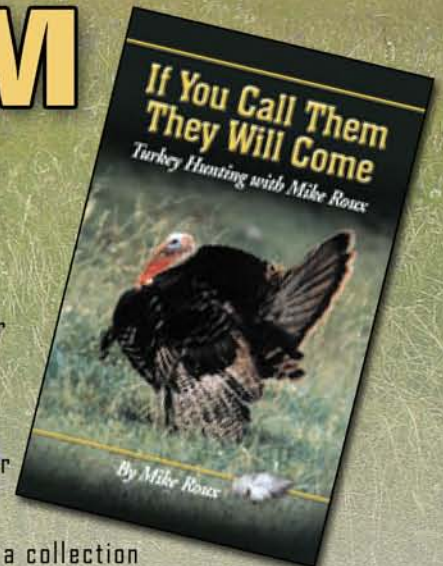
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IF YOU CALL THEM THEY WILL COME

Turkey Hunting with Mike Roux

Mike is a Regional Editor for *Heartland Sportsman's Authority*, your source for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation in the Midwest. As a book author, Roux is proud of his turkey-hunting book called, *If You Call Them...They Will Come*. This award winning outdoor writer has spent over 35-years in the turkey woods and has published hundreds of articles on the topic of chasing gobblers. This book is a collection of his very best works and is sure to please hunters of all experience levels.

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Now That's A Knife.

Derek Pletcher

Among discussions about knives, the great persistent question is always what's the best knife to have when it comes to hunting/fishing/camping/bushcraft/emergency or whatever your favorite activity may be. The standard answer is whatever knife you have on you at the time, and while that's basically true some knives may still be better than others.

Opinions about knives are about as plentiful as seeds on a dandelion, and tend to fly just about as easily. This is partially due to the myriad forms and functions of knives and multitools available on the market today, paired with clever marketing support by celebrities and mainstream media sources. While the answer of, "whatever you have" has merit... that being it's better to have it and not need it, than to need it and not have it... being able to pair a tool with the application at-hand is always preferable. This means making a choice and either committing to the so-called one tool option, or to carrying different tools based on

the activity you're involved in. One option is meant to cover all of your bases no matter what you're doing, and the other to provide latitude when it comes to the sharp objects in your pack.

When it comes to making that choice, I tend to lean towards the side of having options based on the task at hand. Consequently, I have a lot of knives and multi-tool things, and I'm always looking for more.

On any given day, I'll be carrying a folder of some kind. Generally it's my Spyderco, but I have box full of others that tag along when subtlety is a better option based on where I'm going to be. With these folding blades I've managed to successfully complete tasks like dress out deer, cook food on a grill, and open packages of all sorts. Add to that an assortment of whittling chores, cutting fishing line, and cleaning under one's fingernails and you have quite a list of things you can do with a folding knife. However, if you've carried one for any length of time and

been in a position where you really need to beat on it to get something accomplished then you know they aren't the best for these tasks. The pivot of a folding blade is its weak point, and if you apply enough torque or beat on it hard enough (as in batoning it through wood) then you're going to break it. When that happens, you may find yourself up a creek without a paddle... especially if you were in the process of using the knife to carve the paddle.

This is where the school of the full-tang knife comes into play and wins some points for practicality and strength. A full-tang knife doesn't have the weak point of a folder, so applying torque and other forces don't generally result in the same types of damaged goods. A quality blade like this will be a belt knife, and depending on the design of the blade, can handle anything from filleting fish to spreading peanut butter on a slice of bread. In my collection, there are several belt knives to choose from. Some are modern



Folding knives, like this Buck Alpha Hunter, are excellent for hunting camp... capable of dressing game and doing small chores. While built with quality materials, the pivot point is still a weak spot, and these knives won't endure the same hardships as full-tang blades.

The Fishwolf EDC Camp Knife is a beast of a blade... rugged and reliable. It's a serious tool designed for serious business in the field and around the campfire. Made to take abuse, you can rely on a knife like this no matter what situation you find yourself in.



designs made with exotic alloys and complex formulations of stainless steel. Others are simple and rugged tools, made of simple and rugged materials like high-carbon steel and walnut handles. In either case, they are strong and sharp, and reliable. And that's what you want.

These are usually the knives that inspire dreams of wild places and high adventure. There's something primal about holding a knife like this, and it causes one's blood to stir. No matter what else you take into the woods with you, it always seems like you're never quite prepared until you strap on your knife. At least that's how I feel when gearing up, and I doubt that I'm alone in that arena.

One of my newest additions to the collection is a EDC (Every Day Carry) Camp Knife from Fishwolf Knives. Although it's called an EDC, unless you're living in a wilderness environment it's a bit of a misnomer. However, if you do any camping and plan on spending several days out in the bush then this is definitely a blade worth considering. It's a beast.

It's a four-inch blade, and has a four-inch full-tang handle. It sports tan micarta scales, held down with epoxy and hollow brass pins. The blade is 1.5 inches from edge to spine, and that spine is almost a quarter of an inch thick. And it's sharp... being high-carbon steel and heat-treated very carefully by the knife maker, Jimmie Foster. With this design, you aren't going to break this knife. I've tried...

trust me on this one. I've smashed it through wrist-thick wood, pried apart boards, and almost ruined my old Workmate bench after clamping the knife down and leaning on it. The bench was crying "Uncle" way before the knife was even realized it was an option. On the other side of the spectrum, it's size allows it to be used for fine tasks as well, like whittling and making feather-sticks. It's a bit short for processing thicker pieces of firewood, but that's what axes and hatchets and tomahawks are for. Again... that's going back to having the best tool for the job you're doing. That being said, I have no doubt that if a deer goes down this season, the Fishwolf EDC knife will have absolutely no problems breaking it down into manageable parts, then helping build a fire with which to cook said-parts for dinner.

Fishwolf Knives offers a variety of blades in several styles and sizes. Look him up and place an order... you won't be disappointed. To quote the famous Crocodile Dundee... "Now that's a knife."

In closing, this is one of those topics that will always have a healthy amount of debate attached to it. There is really no completely right or wrong answer to the question of what blade is best. Whether it's an Old Hickory, a new Fishwolf or the venerable Buck 110 Folding Hunter... if it's sharp and it's within reach, it's the best you've got. God Bless.

A SHORT LIST OF FIELD KNIFE FIT AND FUNCTION...

- Food Preparation
- Game Processing
- Shelter Building
- Firewood Preparation
- Fire Building (throws a spark)
- Hunting Weapon
- Prying Tool
- Self Defense
- Digging Tool

A very handy... and some say necessary... trait of a good knife in the field is a spine with a flat grind and squared shoulders. This particular feature allows for use with a fire steel or ferro-rod, and eliminates the need to carry extra tools that can be easily lost or break when the pressure is on.

Keep it clean and keep it sharp. Most accidents are the result of a dull knife and too much pressure being applied to get a job done. Loss of control can occur this way... and that's when you get hurt. A sharp knife is easier to manipulate and requires much less energy to use. That means it's safer in any situation.

Ultimately the true value of any tool... including a knife... rests in the skill of the person using that tool. When you choose what blades you carry into the woods with you this season... choose carefully and with wisdom.





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once in a lifetime BULLS

Michael Schirer

How do you get a unique bull? You 'neak up on it. How do you get a tame bull? Tame way, you 'neak up on it.

Sometimes when something bad happens, it ends up having a positive side effect. Several years ago New Mexico Game and Fish divided the September archery elk hunt into two separate events. The first event ran from the first through the fifteenth, and the second from the sixteenth to the twenty-second. They didn't bother to increase the total tag numbers; they just gave hunters less time to hunt. It then became necessary to note preferences for first and second choice on the application.

Given my primary hunting method of ambush at water holes, the thought was that fifteen days early in September when it was still hot, was better than seven days toward the end of the month when nights were cooler. Unfortunately the Game & Fish people weren't thinking like me, and when the drawing was made in the first year of the split, my second choice was filled. To say there was

a disappointment in the drawing was an understatement. How in the world can an archer kill an elk in seven days?

If success was to be found, something different needed to be done, and that meant no more sitting at water holes. The hunt had to be taken to the elk, and so an aggressive calling strategy was implemented. Instead of trying to ambush the elk, I would be calling all week long.

That first year was a solo hunt, and a successful one, too. I covered a lot of ground and encountered a herd in the process. It had a number of satellite bulls, some of which had better racks than the herd bull. The herd bull had the biggest body, but when one of the satellites wearing a larger rack came by at twenty yards, my arrow didn't miss.

Based on that success, the late archery hunt would go down as the first choice on my application the following year. Elk hunting is really a team sport, and this go-around I would have my buddy, Matt, alongside. With an aggressive strategy it really helps to have a designated caller and a designated shooter.

On opening day after the opening call, fortune smiled on us and Matt shot a bull just fifteen minutes into the hunt. Two days later a nice 6x6 fell to one of my arrows, taken at only thirteen yards.

The next year... you guessed it... we put in for the late hunt again, and this time Matt asked his brother to join us. Three days into that hunt the brothers were set up over a ravine, each one covering a trail coming out. On the first call, a bull answered and soon a raghorn elk came out of the ravine near Matt's hiding spot. Twelve yards makes for a nice opportunity, and that one bull was taken. I repositioned slightly, aligning myself behind Matt's brother, and soon enough another bull appeared along with a cow and calf. As the bull looked for the source of the call, he passed the shooter at a mere five yards, and took an arrow as he did. Within fifteen minutes two elk had been put down. Two days later a bull fell to my arrow, brought in by Matt's calling and resulting in a fifteen yard shot.

The next year Matt and I teamed up again. He shot his elk at twenty-three

yards on the third day of the hunt, and I took mine at thirty yards on the last day. Although it took a little more time to achieve success, we had more encounters that year, including some with exceptional bulls.

In the ten years before the archery hunt was split, I had taken two bulls and Matt had shot a cow. When we were forced to change our tactics and become more aggressive, our success rate went up dramatically. What we originally took as a negative turned out to be one of the biggest favors bestowed upon us.

While our number one preference is the archery hunt, each year we do try to find hunters for the muzzleloader season. It gives us more time to be in the woods, and more practice at calling elk. This works out well for everyone since the bulls are even more responsive to calling at this time, so the hunt is anticipated as much by the callers as it is by the hunters. This past year, our good friends from Kansas, Jeff, Royce, Scott, and Steve, all drew tags and would be tagging along on the hunt. Jeff had been out with us before, and he'd start the hunt calling for Steve. I'd start the hunt calling for Royce and Scott. There were also three local boys in camp with us. Matt #2, Rick, and Doug were the lucky fellows that would have Ray, Gerry, and Matt as their callers. Ray and Gerry are two other archers that enjoy calling elk during the muzzleloader season, and Gerry

is perhaps the best caller I know.

Each year Gerry, Matt and I extend our elk hunt into the muzzleloader hunt, where we find tremendous satisfaction calling elk in for others, but it takes work. It's great that these guys present us with the chance to improve our skills, and every elk called in teaches us lessons for the next one. It's not easy, though. In fact, after a burst of good luck opening morning for the local hunters (all three shot bulls), it took nearly two more days before we were able to pull in elk again. The callers in camp have a joke about getting fired, stemming from an incident Gerry was involved with some years back when working for an outfitter.

earned that threat. (They can't really fire us because we don't charge them a thing.) For whatever reason, after opening morning none of us could call an elk. We tried all the good places... ones that had produced in the past, and a few new ones, but to no avail.

There was one place on the back side of a mesa that Gerry and Jeff tried on one of the slow days. They got responses from several different bulls, but none would come in to the call. The theory was that the hunters had arrived here behind the elk as they moved through, and the lack of activity was a timing issue. That was our hope when it was suggested that Scott, Royce and I give it a

When we were forced to change our tactics and become more aggressive, our success rate went up dramatically...

Gerry took two hung-over Californians out opening morning on a muzzleloader hunt. It was one of those mornings where nothing was working, and by the middle of the day the hunters had fired Gerry and headed home. Little did they know that one of the best elk callers in camp was working for them, and had they stuck it out they likely would have had their chance at good bulls. So the joke is that when things get slow, there's frequent talk of getting fired by the hunters. By the end of the second day, we had

shot on the coming Monday morning. Though we had tried to call the place during the archery hunt without success, it held promise.

We were there when daylight came on Monday morning, arriving early, and staying with the truck until it was light enough to shoot. We then walked the few hundred yards to our set up. As we settled in, the thermals were still flowing down the mountain, carrying our scent away from any elk above us. The first call got a response, and after a short wait I

called again. The bull had already cut the distance in half, and a few more calls brought him the rest of the way in. At this point Scott took the shot. The bull was hit so hard, the shock wave could be seen going through the elk. The bull stood up, then fell, and started kicking... all the signs of a hard hit critter. We finished the sequence of calls, hoping for a double, but it looked like it would be just one bull down on this morning.

When I stopped calling, Scott came up to tell me about the shot and revealed that the bull was still alive. As Scott was reloading, Royce walked up from the back side of the hill. He was looking for

camp for the early part of the afternoon. When it was time to go back in, Scott and Royce decided to go by themselves. Less people meant less noise, and those guys are experienced hunters more than capable of following up. That freed me up to go call for Jeff, also giving us the opportunity to spend some time getting caught up with each other.

We started out in a place called "Two Trough Spring" without luck, then we tried a bowl we call "The Teacup." We were on our way to our last location when a message came through on Jeff's phone. The guys had located Scott's bull. The bull was still alive and Scott had to shoot

gle sounded from the ridge to the east of us, and then one more from way up by a silted-in dirt tank above us. I kept an eye on that spot, and Jeff watched earnestly in the other direction.

I used my Swarovski glasses to keep an eye on the flats between us and the dirt tank. A few years back I called in three bulls from those flats, so I knew they would come if they were interested. And it wasn't long until I saw a black speck headed our way, and soon enough noticed the big rack on the elk. When Jeff finally got things situated he peered at the bull through the scope, commenting that it was a big bull. I knew, but

We Used Jeff's single-wheeled game cart to haul the elk out, and I can tell you a single wheel is much easier to maneuver in the sage brush...

a shot to finish the bull, but the angle wasn't good. The bull was feeling some pressure, and though it looked like he had been hit hard, he still managed to get up and walk over the hill. We backed out for a few hours to give the elk time to lie down, and when we returned soon found the first bed. It didn't look good, as there was little blood sign to go on. We tracked the bull a little further, and then decided to back out until later that afternoon.

On our way back to camp we tried another location called "Darrel's Well" without success. It had been a good spot in previous seasons, but this year yielded no elk during archery or muzzle-loader hunts. That meant we sat around

it again to finish the job, but we had an elk on the ground and as a bonus it was Scott's first bull.

Now if we could just make it happen again. The last call for the day took place where we called in an elk several years earlier and Jeff had made the kill. We were hoping for a repeat performance.

There was a breeze blowing, and it was strong enough that I wondered how far my call would carry. Several times during the hunt the wind had shut us down, but as the evening wore on things had calmed. We soon heard a bugle in the distance, coming from the direction of an old windmill... unfortunately this was a place off-limits to us. Then another bu-

didn't want to dwell on it. I made some more calls as the bull approached, and eventually he disappeared behind some trees. Jeff kept looking through the scope, trying to find a place for a shot. Whether Jeff calls it his zone I don't know, but I recognized the look and I could see the intensity in his face. Then smoke filled the air and the bull went down. As I put my binoculars up to take a look, the bull stood, then fell again. This time it was for good.

We've wanted to walk up on a bull like this for a long time, and as we approached the elk all we could say was, "wow." This was a super bull for the unit. He had a typical 6x6 frame, and for character had an extra sticker, making



*Michael and his magnificent bull elk.
(Photo by Michael Schirer)*

it a 7x6. I've called in big herd bulls before, but this was the first one that hit the ground. Jeff and I admired the bull for a bit, and then we started the chore of getting it to the truck. Jeff commented that this might be a once-in-a-lifetime bull, but I'm thinking it's just the beginning of putting a lot more big ones down.

It was a big bull demanding a lot of work to quarter and haul out, but the size of the antlers kept our spirits high. We used Jeff's single-wheeled game cart to haul the elk out, and I can tell you a single wheel is much easier to maneuver through the sage brush.

After all of the work was done we arrived back at camp late, and got the

news that Steve had shot a mature 5x5 right at dusk. They thought it was best to back out, and return in the morning for retrieval. The next morning found Royce and I at a place called "The Rock" as the sun was coming up and the rest of the crew headed off to retrieve Steve's bull. Royce was the last hunter with an unfilled tag and we had two days left to get one more down. We called at "The Rock" for quite a while, but decided to move on an extended period of no action. I thought of heading to the top of the mesa, and I'd been wanting to make a call there all season.

Once on top of the mesa, we hiked to an old plugged and abandoned well site

on the back side. We tried a call there but had no success. It's a great spot, and I was surprised not to have called something in but decided to move on to a deep canyon that runs from the parking area down to a wash. I'd not hunted it before, but had been there looking for sheds a few years back. I really didn't know where to call from, but figured that I'd recognize the right spot when I found it. This would be the third call of the day, and happened mostly due to the sheer determination to put an elk down.

We eventually set up on a spot that covered several trails coming up out of the canyon and onto the flat. Royce sat to the side of me, about 20 yards away.

This is one of those special places in the forest that just looks like elk habitat. The canyon was deep and filled with tall Ponderosa, and had benches running the length of it. It was a magnificent sight looking across the canyon at the tops of all those trees and I began to wonder if my call would carry.

Soon twigs could be heard snapping in the timber. I looked over at Royce but there was no indication he was seeing anything. Suddenly two bulls appeared on the side hill, heading our way. I glanced over at Royce again but he still wasn't getting ready. Granted, the elk were raghorns, but we'd already had the conversation about any elk in this unit is a good elk. In fact, I'd mentioned to all of the hunters that they would probably only see one elk during their hunt, and it would be the one they shoot.

I took a chance and whispered to Royce, pointing out the two bulls rapidly approaching. Royce leaned to one side and peered carefully around a tree in his way, then quickly swung his TC around to get a line on the elk. When the bull was just 10 yards in front of me, Royce dropped the hammer. The bull spun on a dime, and took off running down into the canyon. I saw Royce reload, then aim and fire again, but from my location I couldn't see the elk. He had stopped about 100 yards down the trail.

After a short wait we easily located the raghorn laying just twenty yards further down the trail. Royce commented that this elk was a mirror image of the one he shot the year before. He stayed with the elk and started to quarter it out while I

walked back to the truck to get game bags and call for some extra hands to haul the elk out. We wouldn't be using a game cart on this one... just pure man power. When I finally got through to Gerry, he said they had just finished loading Steve's bull in the truck. They would be on their way after fueling up and dropping Steve's bull at camp.

It was nice that everyone pitched in to haul out Royce's elk because it fell in what can only be described as a hole in the terrain. Royce had it all quartered when the team arrived, so although it was tough work it was also very satisfying. The morning put our camp at seven-for-seven, with a day and a half remaining. Not too bad.

We continue to learn more about how to call elk every year, and we continue to learn more about where the elk live and where to find them. We've learned that during the pre-rut the bulls will come in silent, generally from downwind. As the rut progresses, the bulls will respond to the call vocally, and will come directly to the call. We've called entire herd groups in at this time, with bulls pushing the cows to the sound of the call. After the rut, the bulls will again tend to approach from downwind but herd bulls can be cooperative, as their cows have already been serviced. Both Jeff and Steve shot bulls that demonstrate this. While Jeff's bull had a larger rack than the one Steve shot, Steve's bull was every bit of a trophy. Steve's bull had a 270 inch 5x5 rack, typical of many of the mature bulls in our unit – the stubby horn unit.

While Jeff commented that his was a "once in a lifetime bull," I suspect there will be more of that caliber hitting the ground. It's interesting that all of these bulls were taken by aggressive calling tactics. Had it not been for Fish and Game taking away some hunting time, it's likely that the effort would not have gone into finding different ways of hunting elk. Imposed restrictions actually increased our opportunities on elk because they forced us into changing our hunting methods. That's changing a negative into a positive, no matter how you look at it.

God Bless... Good Hunting.

SOME FACTS & FIGURES ABOUT ELK...

North American Elk, or Cervus elaphus, are split by some biologists into six subspecies:

- Rocky Mountain (Rocky Mountain West)
- Roosevelt's (Coastal Northwest)
- Tule (Central California)
- Manitoban (Great Plains)
- Merriam's (Southwest & Mexico)
- Eastern (east of Mississippi)

Range

Prior to European settlement, more than 10 million elk roamed nearly all of the United States and parts of Canada. Today, about one million elk live in the western United States, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Kansas, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina, and from Ontario west in Canada

Habitat

Food, water, shelter and space are essential to elk survival. Elk live in a variety of habitats, from rainforests to alpine meadows and dry desert valleys to hardwood forests.

Mountain Screamer

game calls



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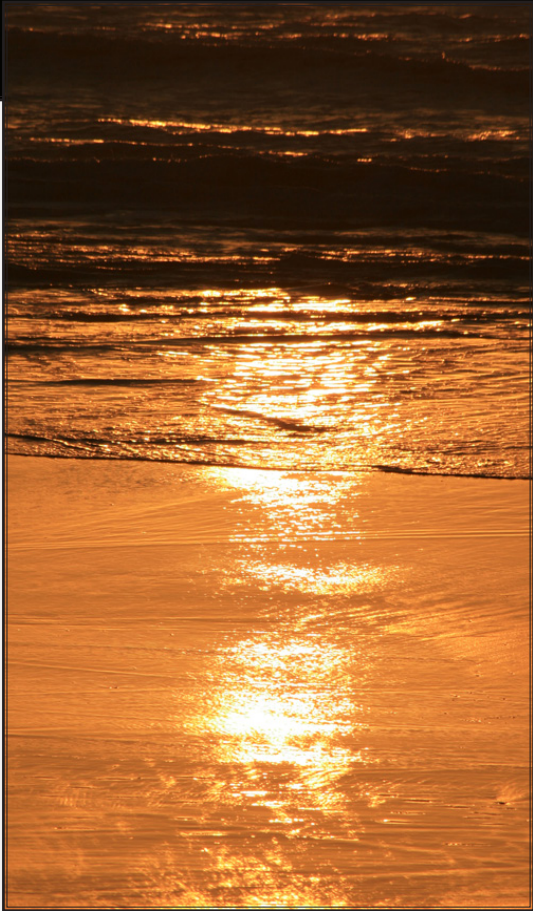
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FEATURE ARTICLE

PHOTO ESSAY

And as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds; when through clear shining after rain, the tender grass springeth out of the earth.

2 Samuel 23:4 [NIV].



Photos by Barry Raugust





Season's GREETINGS

Shawn Harding

The Good Old Days, good old ways...

Over the past decade I've watched the popularity of whitetail deer in the Midwest change the "landscape" of hunting as I knew it. I've lost a lot of ground during this time that I hunted since my teens. The increased taxes and costs of crop production and the popularity of big prairie bucks made the idea of lease hunting a more palatable than handshakes and family ties. This is a trend

that will continue to erode the hunting traditions that took our country from a market hunting plague to a model of conservation. We've watched a public owned and hunted resource turn into a "pay to play" era of hunting. It's for this very reason we need to remember more than ever to respect the animals. Treat the opportunity to hunt these animals like a gift and not like a commodity. That effort should translate even to our preparation for the hunt. That preparation

includes our efforts to shoot effectively, understand the animal's anatomy and even our approach to hunting a property.

Learning a new hunting property is like opening the big present under the Christmas tree with your name on it. The anticipation eats at you as you wait to open it and enjoy it. I get to open a "big present" this fall. Season's greetings!

I've been able to spend one day walking a portion of the half section of timber

and crop ground I'll be hunting this season after studying it for weeks on Google Maps as I waited for permission. I realize that in these times I may have only this season to breakdown and understand what this ground holds and how I can take advantage of that but I still want to enjoy the process and not make this work. I've looked for obvious funnels and staging areas and cross referenced that with the prevailing winds we deal with in the flatlands. That work can be done without ever getting up from your desk. A topographic map gives you more clues to cuts, high points and ridge lines. That's the easy stuff. The past few seasons we've watched a drought affect crops and soft mast and along with that drought we saw the devastation of EHD and its indiscriminate death sentence for deer in our region. Food is always an important piece to the puzzle but in farm land the "groceries" are usually available so I want to know where the water sources are at. That task was made easier these past few years when the rainfall totals were only a percentage of the annual average. I don't have to set up on the water but it's good to know its location as you consider stand sites. September can be hot in the Midwest and a stand on a trail to water maybe a great early season tactic.

Other things you can identify while on site and locate on your property map are soft mast foods that deer like to eat. Identify acorn bearing oaks, wild grapes, persimmon trees and paw paw trees. Note old rubs and if you are able to spend enough time looking you might

be able to identify rub lines. Mark the map with that information. I usually walk the browse line on the field edge and look for licking branches, old and potential scrape locations from the previous season. Pretty soon you'll start identifying a prevalence of activity in certain parts of the property. When I see this culmination of things I'm interested in hauling a set of climbing sticks and a stand to that area. It may not be in the perfect location but it will serve as an observation post at the start of the season. You can relocate or set another stand if you see a pattern develop that requires a change.

Calling an Audible

I'm not a big proponent of running in and out of a stand site area to retrieve trail camera cards but there is some merit in validating your decisions. Try to minimize your zeal and limit your trips in and out of the stand sites to pull cards. I will typically leave the camera and not check it until my first trip to sit the stand. By the time I make it to the stand the batteries are usually dead so I pull the camera and I'll make my decision to leave the stand or move it based on the digital information as well as the actual time on the stand. If I have to make a change

Below: Shawn inspects a great rub... Left: Hanging trail cameras can reveal lots of information on a new property. (Photos by Shawn Harding)





Try a snort wheeze when a buck ignores your doe bleats but don't sit there and pout when the deer don't walk past you as you sit in the same spot over and over as quiet a church mouse. This is an action sport!

in location I simply remove four climbing sticks and my stand and relocate it. I use a lightweight stand built by a company that just recently closed its doors, Chip-pewa Wedge-Loc. The design of the stand is to hang the aluminum stand with two wedge shaped hooks on a section of aircraft cable that is chained around the trunk of the tree. I use their smallest model and teamed with a set of climbing sticks from Lone Wolf, I have a sixteen pound stand setup that allows me get 12 to 15 feet off the ground. It's more useful than a lightweight climber and it's the lightest stand I've owned since a Loc-On Windwalker that's been out of production for many years. It is not a big cushioned seat with a "dance floor" platform but I'm willing to live with the tradeoff. Portability in a changing whitetail season is worth the lesser comfort level of the lightweight system I employ.

Transitions

The deer season is a series of transitions in weather, the property you hunt and the deer's seasonal habits. Hunting timber is improved when the crops come out of the field. It's always more entertaining to sit field edges because you can see more activity even if it's hundreds of yards away. I want twenty yard shots and sitting inside the field edges in the timber allows me to cut down those distances. The deer will use the cover of the woods more often when the crops are gone. Look at trails in the winter or early spring to see where the deer enter and exit into the fields. This constant transition requires you to either set multiple stand

sites or develop your own highly portable system. I really like areas where the timber opens up and you find a mix of "young growth" like saplings or cedars. Those areas in an inside corner of a field is "money". Deer seem to utilize these areas as staging spots before entering or exiting a crop field. Arrive early and stay late to minimize your disturbance to the deer. If your approach means skirting a field edge or crossing a field in the morning darkness you may just hunt that spot in the evenings to avoid spooking deer from the field. A well thought out entry and exit plan helps keep the deer relaxed and helps keep them from patterning your location. A combination of calls and a decoy can also work in bringing deer to your location. The buildup to the rut seems to bring most calls out of your packs but I've rattled deer in close for killing shots in early October. Temper the intensity and mimic a bachelor group sparring and see what happens. I typically have a grunt tube a can call and real antlers with me no matter what month I'm hunting.

Practice with your calls just like you should practice with your bow or gun. Annoy the spouse and kids with a mock fight in the basement. I challenge anyone to make the noises that a pair of bucks can generate in a battle for a doe. These hunting personalities "limp wristing" a mismatched set of antlers that look like drops from a two year old buck, don't come close to the real deal. Get some antlers, find some that look like they came off the deer you hope to shoot, trim off the knuckle bust-

ers and the rough stuff and make some real noise. Try a snort wheeze when a buck ignores your doe bleats but don't sit there and pout when the deer don't walk past you as you sit in the same spot over and over as quiet a church mouse. This is an action sport!

This Fall I'm opening a big present. One I won't take for granted and you shouldn't either. We still have the greatest habitat in the world to grow big deer. I look forward to matching wits with a mature buck and beating the senses of a smart old doe. I'm also going to enjoy the process that takes me from sweat and study to zip tying my tag to a hock or enjoying antlers that add to my good memories of bowhunting in the Midwest.

Uncle Rod



BLACK BEAN VENISON CHILI

3lbs Ground Venison (cooked)
2 Cans Black Beans
1 Can Chili Beans
3 Cans Rotel Tomatoes
1 Can of Yellow Corn (Optional)
1 Yellow Onion
1 Red Bell Pepper
1 Beer (your preference)
1 Bottle V8 (16oz bottle)
Chili Seasoning (to taste)

- Chop onion and bell pepper
- Add onion and pepper to stock pot with a little butter
- Cook vegetables until tender
- Add Rotel Tomatoes and corn... simmer for 15 minutes
- Add ground venison to the pot
- As pot thickens, stir in V8 and continue simmering
- Season the pot with chili seasoning, salt, and black pepper
- Add beans and stir again
- When this thickens, add the beer, stir, and simmer 15 more minutes

This chili can take up to 2 hours to properly cook... don't rush it

EATING VENISON IS EATING HEALTHY...

Venison is a true health food, as it is an excellent source of protein, is low in fat (especially saturated fat), and is a good source of iron, vitamin B12, riboflavin, niacin and vitamin B6. Plus, it is low in calories, especially when compared to other meats such as pork and beef. Four ounces of venison would provide 68.5 percent of the daily value for protein, while only adding 179 calories and 1.4 grams saturated fat.

Venison meat is lean, flavorful and wonderfully delicious, with a deep woody taste. It is a staple item on the table of many American families and can be hunted as well as bought from farms.

Venison does not have additives or antibiotics in it and proves to be the perfect alternative for commercially grown beef, but with low fat content, especially saturated fat. This makes making it the ideal choice for fat-conscious people.

The meat is a good source of iron, which is integral component of hemoglobin in the body. Iron is a necessary component that transports oxygen from the lungs to all body cells, and is also part of key enzyme systems for energy production and metabolism.

It is a good source of vitamin B12 and B6, which are required to prevent a dangerous molecule called homocysteine in the body.

The high content of riboflavin present in venison helps reduce the occurrence of migraine attacks, by improving the energy metabolism in those who suffer from migraine headaches.

The niacin (vitamin B3) present in Venison helps retard the risk of developing osteoarthritis by as much as half.

The meat has a very amount of cholesterol, even lower than chicken breast, which makes it the perfect option for those who are vulnerable to heart disease.

Activities as scouting, hiking, climbing, and dragging out deer offer a quality workout. All of this is made even better by the fact that you're spending time in God's great outdoors.

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Red River Bandit call: Produces a loud rabbit in distress that ranges from a high pitch to a medium pitch. Also produces a young male coyote howl.

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Yella-Fella call: Produces a low raspy rabbit distress and also a medium pitch rabbit distress. Also produces an adult coyote howl.

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*A male yellow shafted Northern Flicker takes in some
sunshine on a cold winter morning.*



NORTHERN FLICKER

If you've spent any time at all in the woods, there's a better than average chance you've encountered one of these large woodpeckers hustling around for a meal. Surprisingly, the majority of that hustle generally takes place on the ground... not exactly where you expect to find a woodpecker.

Although they eat fruits, berries, seeds and nuts, their primary food is insects. Ants alone can make up 45% of their diet. Other invertebrates eaten include flies, butterflies, moths, beetles, and snails. Flickers also eat berries and seeds, especially in winter, including poison oak and ivy, dogwood, sumac, wild cherry and grape, bayberries, hackberries, and elderberries, and sunflower and thistle seeds. Flickers often go after ants underground (where the nutritious larvae live), hammering at the soil the way other woodpeckers drill into wood.

North America has two easily distinguished races of Northern Flickers: the yellow-shafted form of the East, which occurs into Texas and the Great Plains, and the red-shafted form of the West.

The key difference is the color of the flight-feather shafts, which are either a lemon yellow or a rose red. Yellow-shafted forms have tan faces and gray crowns, and a red crescent on the nape. Males have a black mustache stripe. Red-shafted forms have a gray face, brown crown, and no nape crescent, with males showing a red mustache stripe. Hybrids look intermediate and are common at the edges of these two groups' ranges.

Flickers may be observed in open habitats near trees, including woodlands, edges, yards, and parks. In the western United States, one can find them in mountain forests all the way up to treeline. Northern Flickers generally nest in holes in trees like other woodpeckers. Occasionally, they have been found nesting in old, earthen burrows vacated by Belted Kingfishers or Bank Swallows. Both sexes help with nest excavation. The entrance hole is around 3 inches in diameter, and the cavity is around a foot deep. The cavity widens at bottom to make room for eggs and the in-

cubating adult. Inside, the cavity is bare except for a bed of wood chips for the eggs and chicks to rest on. Their breeding habitat consists of forested areas across North America and as far south as Central America. They are cavity nesters who typically nest in trees but they will also use posts and birdhouses if sized and situated appropriately. They prefer to excavate their own home although they will reuse and repair damaged or abandoned nests. Abandoned Flicker nests create habitat for other cavity nesters. Flickers are sometimes driven from nesting sites by another cavity nester, European starlings. A typical clutch consists of 6 to 8 eggs whose shells are pure white and high gloss.

Flickers appear brownish overall with a white rump patch that's conspicuous in flight and often visible when perched. The undersides of the wing and tail feathers are bright yellow, for eastern birds, or red, in western birds. With a closer look you'll see the brown plumage is richly patterned with black spots, bars, and crescents.

FAT HEN GOOSEFOOT PIG WEED
LAMB'S QUARTERS



Also known as Pigweed and Goosefoot, this wild spinach is a common annual that grows readily in Kansas. It ranges from one to seven feet tall, with triangular leaves having scalloped edges. To knowledgeable bush-crafters and gatherers, this plant is the choice pick for wild edibles. Its tender leaves and mild flavor are delicious and good from early spring through frost. Young plants can be added raw to salads, and the plant is a perfect substitute in a recipe needing a traditional market spinach or chard. This wild edible has an earthy, mineral rich taste; some say is close to chard. It's difficult to describe, but if you enjoy leafy greens such as kale, collards, and spinach then chances are you will like Lamb's Quarters as a wild alternative.

As a nutritious addition to a wild diet, lamb's quarter greens are also an excellent source of B vitamins, especially riboflavin and folic acid. And they are more than four percent protein.

Lamb's Quarters can frequently be found growing in vegetable gardens, on disturbed soil, and along the fringes of fields and banks. The plants can grow to about four feet in height with multiple branches forming off of a main squarish looking central stem. Lamb's quarter leaves often have a white, pollen-like substance coating their undersides which gives them a dusty look from a distance. This trait, along with leaves that have the shape of a goose foot (hence the nickname) make this plant easy to identify in the field.

WILD ABOUT LAMB'S QUARTERS...

Leaves can be used as a wild spinach substitute in salads, stir fry, and soups.

Nutritional Values (per half cup)

Lamb's Quarters Shoots & Leaves

Protein 3.5 g

Carbs 5.5 g

Calcium 324 mg

Potassium 684 mg

Beta Carotene 3800 ug

Niacin 1000 ug

Iron 1.5 mg

Health Benefits

1. Use all parts as a poultice for swelling, rheumatism and arthritis
2. Chew raw for toothaches
3. Gelatin capsules filled with Lamb's Quarters make a potent vitamin

Trivial Pursuit

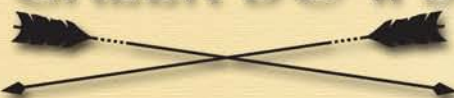
1. Lamb's Quarters ranks among the top five nutritional wild edibles
2. One cup of Lamb's Quarters can contain 11 days worth of Vitamin K
3. One plant can produce 75,000 seeds

Be Careful

1. Lamb's Quarters absorb nitrates from contaminated soil, so take care when choosing a site to harvest the plant
2. Lamb's Quarters is a relative of spinach, and as such may contain a heavy oxalic acid content. Cooking will destroy some of the oxalic acid, but if eaten raw consider using lemon juice to neutralize some of the acid. A side effect of oxalic acid is the development of kidney stones.



WILD HORSE CREEK BOWS



VISION LONGBOW – Tradition at its best. The long, narrow limbs, with a slight reflex-deflex shape, make this bow smooth shooting and accurate. Its 17" riser blends gently into the "D" shaped limbs. Available in 64" and 66" lengths.

QUEST LONGBOW – Similar to the Vision, but on a smaller frame. Its 15" riser, 62" length, and narrow limb profile make the Quest a joy to carry in the woods. This "D" style longbow's reflex-deflex design minimizes hand shock and limb stacking.

HAWK LONGBOW – The Hawk has a long history of success. It is a hybrid design, with a 16" riser and long working limbs. Pronounced reflex-deflex makes this bow hard-hitting while preserving smooth shooting characteristics. Available in 60", 62" or 64" lengths.

KESTREL LONGBOW – This is the Hawk's little brother, but it's not a toy. It has more reflex-deflex than the Hawk and is a more compact design. The riser has also been shortened to 14" to provide the maximum possible working limb length. In its 52", 54", 56", 58", and 60" lengths, the Kestrel is a pop-up blind hunter's dream.

WISP RECURVE – Reminiscent of the 1950's, the Wisp provides the light weight of a longbow while delivering the performance of a full working recurve. The Wisp's smooth, sweeping limbs "load-up" quickly during the draw to maximize the energy delivered to the arrow. Available in a 60" length.

MARIAH RECURVE – The performance characteristics of the Wisp have been captured in a smaller 54" length recurve. The goal in developing the Mariah was to create a quick, stable, and quiet bow in a compact package. The Mariah meets this goal.

Your Custom Bows Made One at a Time

Wild Horse Creek Bows are handmade by Mike Dunnaway, Bowyer
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BLOODWOOD

PURPLEHEART

OSAGE ORANGE

ZIRCOTE

TULIPWOOD

SYCAMORE

TAMO ASH

OLIVE ASH

BLACK LIMBA

TIGER MYRTLE

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