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Volume 2  
Number 1

# LONGBOWS & RECURVES

TRADITIONAL BOWHUNTING AT ITS BEST

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Younger Years

"JAKES" and  
Opening Day

Shooting Tips

For  
Hunters

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## TURKEY TROUBLES



# Longbows & Recurves

TRADITIONAL BOWHUNTING AT ITS BEST



Volume 2  
Number 1

**SPRING ISSUE**



# **Longbows & Recurves** TRADITIONAL BOWHUNTING AT ITS BEST

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Thanks to all of our friends.

## DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE WHISPERIN' PINES—Bob Wesley

SOUTHERN REVIEW—Don Francois

WILD GAME RECIPES—Claire W. Stanley

EQUIPMENT EDITOR—Sam Fadala

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# **PUBLISHER'S LETTER**



## **Our Readers Matter**

Our readers mean everything to us at *Longbows & Recurves*™, so our goal is to go beyond the ordinary in meeting your needs and expectations with each issue. We want to consistently create a high quality magazine that provides information and brings enjoyment for traditional archery.

In meeting the needs of our readers, feedback is important because this magazine, like life itself, is not static; it's a living, changing, ongoing journey. The responses to our survey provide some very useful information. Let me share something of what we found from our premiere issue's survey.

One seventh of our respondents use compound bows as well as traditional equipment. Hopefully, more and more folks will realize the beauty of traditional archery. The opposite sex took third place as the preferred quarry to hunt, behind deer and turkey. Apart from live game, our readers are mostly pursuing clothing, arrows, and archery tackle. One third of our respondents purchased a bow within the last six months, while one quarter of the respondents own an ATV.

As far as editorial content goes, our readers want "how-to" articles as well as true hunting stories and feature articles the most. Tips from top shooters like Bob Wesley in his department, "From the Whisperin' Pines," scored well.

I want to especially thank the readers who participated in our survey. Some of you provided some amusing comments which scored with us and made being inside instead of outside shooting bearable.

Speaking of scoring, the turkey on the cover is like the one that Matt Schuster did not score on, as he describes in his article, "Turkey Troubles," on page 32. I think you will have as much fun reading it as Matt had experiencing it.

No doubt, the kids that participated in JAKES weekend, sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation, will have better fortune than Matt did. See page 25 for an article/pictorial about a worthy endeavor that introduces some terrific kids to turkey hunting and archery. The combination of kids and archery is something we all need to be thinking about. As Joey Buchanan points out, we are not only teaching, but learning as well.

Remember, we are interested in news from *all* parts of the country so please send some good information from the North and the West.

Enjoy the magazine and pass it along to a friend.

*Mike*

Michael K. Stanley  
 Publisher/Editor-In-Chief





# Longbows & Recurves™

TRADITIONAL BOWHUNTING AT ITS BEST

Spring 1997

Volume 2, Issue 1

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While big game may be the bowhunter's main pursuit, it does not have to be the only one. *by Tony Kinton*

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This traditional archer gives an arrow by arrow report of a day spent rabbit hunting. *by Lee Foote*

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For an instant you may not be sure if you missed or if you scored a hit. That is part of the fun of bowfishing. *by Keith de Noble*



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An exceptional reason has to present itself to interfere with opening day of deer season. These bowhunters found the exceptional at JAKES. *by Joey Buchanan*

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*Photograph by Jim Whitcomb.*

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Longbows & Recurves™





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# WRITE ON TARGET

*The views expressed by letter writers in Write on Target are not necessarily the views of the magazine, LONGBOWS & RECURVES™. The publisher does welcome your comments and opinions, but reserves the right to condense and edit letters due to space availability and/or appropriateness. Letters should not exceed 300 words.*

## Thank You

Most archery/bowhunting magazines concern themselves with compound bows, radical cams, overdraws, and carbon arrows. There are exceptions... but for traditional enthusiasts, there is never enough "traditional" information available! ... I was browsing in a bookstore in San Antonio, Texas, and stumbled onto your premiere issue! What a delight! I immediately made the purchase, completed the questionnaire/survey in hopes of winning a t-shirt, and immediately subscribed to your publication. In my rush, I failed to include this letter of thank you.

There are probably as many reasons for bowhunting as there are bowhunters. However, there is something about traditional archery and traditional archers that seems to bring a deeper, more personal involvement in the art....

Ownership and appreciation of traditional equipment is not only extremely satisfying, but indeed therapeutic! I truly feel that I have acquired a "prescription" of your publication rather than a "subscription" to your magazine! It is my hope you will provide more information and stories on such greats as Howard Hill (great story in the premiere issue), Fred Bear, Saxton Pope and Art Young, and others who have paved the way for the rest of us. Additionally, I hope you will also fill your pages with the most minute details of their equipment, and help us all make contact with the traditional heroes of the present and future— G. Fred Asbill, Earl Hoyt, Bob Lee, Dan

Quillian, Sam Fadala, Keith Chastain, etc, etc, etc.

Congratulations on what will no doubt be a source of great enjoyment for those of us not so obsessed with cams, cables, and carbon!...

Gil Lindsey  
New Braunfels, Texas

## In the News

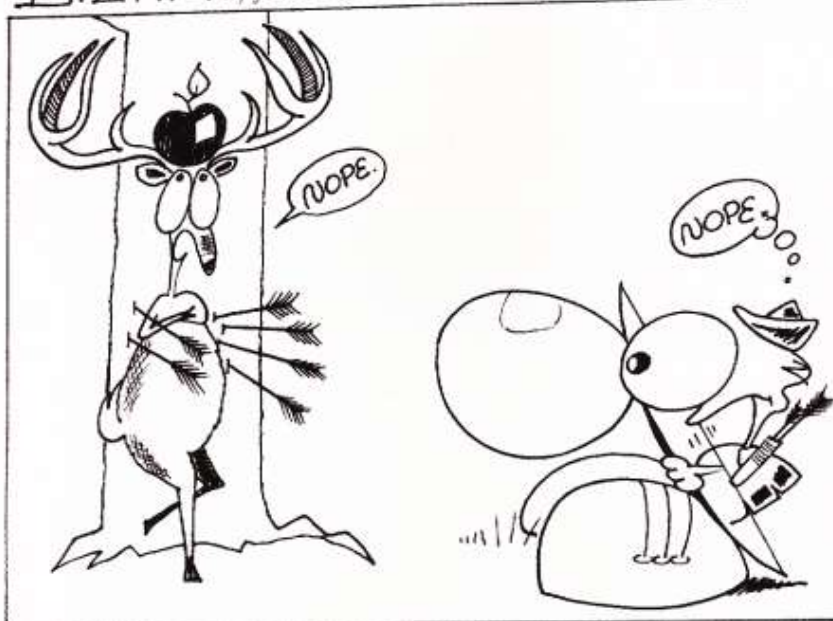
Sunday October 10, 1996—  
Anchorage Daily News Reports Mike Stanley introduces a new traditional magazine.

My feelings raced wildly and drift back in time.

A young lad of eight years, influenced by my father and uncle to shoot a bow. Little known then that a small lad of middle Michigan would love archery for the rest of time.

I can't remember where my first bow went, perhaps lost in a forgotten closet, to be found later by someone unknown. I would hope (that other people) enjoy archery as much as I do. I look at archery as (giving) to others my joy of the traditional archery field. When I see new books and magazines this makes me feel there is someone with the same feelings. I welcome your new magazine and have told many friends...

## B.ZAR by Jeff Curtis





I hope and pray your adventures are plenty, your arrows are straight....

Harold White  
Palmer, Alaska

### Let Me See Eyelashes

I was happy to see your magazine in an Illinois gas station on the way back to Wisconsin from an Iowa whitetail hunting weekend. Please sign me up. I've hunted with a recurve or longbow for the last ten years and subscribe to one traditional and two "string gun" magazines. We really need another traditional point of view because I don't consider the modern archery arms race really archery. Who wants to shoot an animal at fifty to sixty yards? Give me a ten yard shot where I can see eyelashes.

To answer your Reader Survey: I only hunt with a traditional bow, in fact hunting with something other than archery equipment is called shopping. My interests in hunting do include the opposite sex, but I've found out that for

some strange reason the relationships end in September and begin in January. Do we (humans) rut?...

Yes, I confess I have bought hunting equipment in the last six months (hours). I think I average one bow every six months, two in the last six. I don't plan to purchase anything in the next six, but I know that will change (since) I'm going to Africa....

My shirt size is large and I'll bet its hard to get a magazine off the ground. Sign me up for three years. Best of luck.

Todd M. Szmania  
New Berlin, WI

### God Bless!

Think first, then go ahead.  
God bless!

Kerry Jones  
Harrisburg, Illinois

L&R: Davy Crockett once said, "I leave this rule for others when I'm dead, Be

always sure you're right— then go ahead." Thank you for the reminder.

### Congratulations

Congratulations on your magazine! I wish you well.

It's good to open up and see faces such as Howard Hill, Paul Brunner, and not see all the high-tech add-ons. That's what brought me to the recurve; it's so simple and natural.

Thanks for a great magazine.

Brent Patrick  
Shelbyville, Tennessee

### Kudos

I'm just getting back into traditional archery from compounds. I've been shooting since I was five, but getting back into the technical selection of traditional is a little overwhelming.

Thank God for your magazine!

Robert Jenne  
Reno, Nevada

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Pounds	Spine class	Spine class	Spine class	Spine class	Spine class
35-40	620	520	440	405	375
40-45	570	480	405	375	350
45-50	520	440	375	350	330
50-55	480	405	350	330	310
55-60	440	375	330	310	290
60-65	405	350	310	290	275
65-70	375	330	290	275	260
70-75	350	310	275	260	245
75-80	330	290	260	245	230
80-85	310	275	245	230	-
85-90	290	260	230	-	-
90-95	275	245	-	-	-
95-100	260	230	-	-	-

NOTE: For arrows longer than 28", add 5# to actual draw weight for each inch over 28". For shorter arrows, subtract 5# per inch.



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## And More Kudos

A nice magazine. I found the articles interesting... I would like a one year subscription... I've shot traditional for ten to fifteen years. I am now friends with five to eight men who saw how much fun it was and now they shoot traditional as well as compound, and they enjoy traditional more.

Thomas F. Harrison  
Utica, New York

## Read the Whole Thing

Enjoyed your magazine and read the whole thing in one evening. Got excited enough to start looking for another recurve....

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Mayo, Florida



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### WPAC

Bob Wesley has been in archery for over forty years. He is a former president of the Mississippi Archery Association. He served on the board of directors for the Mississippi Bowhunters Association. He has many state titles and the 1982 Howard Hill World Archery Championship. He received personal instruction from Mr. Howard Hill. Bob was inducted into the Mississippi Bowhunters Hall of Fame in 1989.



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# BIONOTES

Hunting with his homemade glass recurve, **Joey Buchanan** heads out often for the swamps of south Georgia. Joey is president of the Traditional Bowhunters of Georgia, a member of the Professional Bowhunters Society, and life member of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

A native Louisianan, **Lee Foote** has been bowhunting for small game since childhood and says he "thrives on the poetry of an arrow in flight." Lee credits the groundwork of his rabbit hunt article to hunting and writing colleagues Eric Seeger and Steve Ellsworth.



**Tony Kinton** is not only a veteran bowhunter, having hunted extensively in fourteen states and three Canadian Provinces, but a veteran of more than twenty years as an outdoor writer. We are sure

that, if he is not already, he will become a favorite writer of our readers.

Everyone who knows or has heard of **Wayne "Biggie" Hoffman** also knows of his reputation as a bowhunting advocate par excellence. He is currently serving as council member of the Professional Bowhunters Society. His elk hunting article will certainly inspire you to call your travel agent right now.



An avid outdoorsman, **Donald L. Patterson** has been involved in bowhunting for over twelve years. A published author from Mississippi, this is his first article for Longbows and Recurves. We know you will appreciate his special insight into bowhunting.

An orthodontist in northeast Mississippi, **Dr. Robert H. (Bo) Perry** is a lifelong hunter. In recent years, he has become involved in hunter education instruction.

**Mark Livingston** takes responsible hunting seriously; as examples, he became the first certified bowhunter education instructor by the state of Mississippi, he is current legislative chairman and editor of Mississippi Bowhunter, and is a regular member of the Professional Bowhunters Society. His article in this issue on responsible hunting gives us pause for thought.

**H. Keith de Noble** is a freelance writer and photographer who has published archery, bowhunting, and bowfishing articles in numerous publications. With fellow bowfishers he was instrumental in formation of The Bowfishers of Arkansas and in early organization of the Bowfishers of America.



**Matt Schuster** is not only an active outdoor writer, but also editor of the Traditional Bowhunters of Georgia magazine and member of The Professional Bowhunters Society. Besides that, he is an independent manufacturer's rep in the sporting goods industry.

Professional archer **Jerry Hill** had the good fortune to be born great nephew of archery-great Howard Hill. Jerry's annual Howard Hill World Longbow and Recurve Championship has been held each spring for sixteen years in Wilsonville, Alabama.



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Sam Fadala



# FROM THE WHISPERIN' PINES by Bob Wesley

## Understanding Correct Traditional Shooting Form

Correct shooting form is essential for the development of your full potential as a traditional archer. To know that you've done your homework, put in your practice, and have a system of shooting accurately with consistency gives a special feeling of inner gratification, especially when sitting up in a swaying tree at a freezing temperature for several hours and then seeing a magnificent buck suddenly appear below you.

Understanding correct traditional shooting form is necessary in achieving correct form. This can be divided into three parts: correct stance, aim, and proper shot execution. While it is perhaps academic to suggest that good physical conditioning and a desire to practice on a regular basis complements the process, I think it bears repeating.

Correct stance may be divided into proper bow hand placement, the bow arm elbow, the bow arm shoulder, feet, hip and head posture, anchor, the hold, string finger placement, and the follow-through.

Bow hand placement is essential to minimize bow torque, to allow maximum power to be transmitted back into the bow arm, and thus to permit steadiness in aiming. Several years ago as my good friend Wally Renner from Kentucky and I were shooting a scored round on my 3-D traditional range, he was ahead just a few points. It seemed that the harder I would try to gain points, the more he would move ahead. Finally, after the last target had been shot and the scores added, we found he had won. I noticed a big smile on his face and

asked him what it was all about. "Bob, draw your bow," Wally replied. "Now, look at your bow hand." And sure enough, in becoming tense I had allowed my bow hand to move slightly counter-clockwise on the handle and had too much bend in the back part of my wrist. This caused torque in the bow and upon release the arrow left the bow with too much parallax, resulting in right and left inaccuracy. "Wally, why didn't you point this out back when you first noticed it?" I asked him. "Bob, that's the reason for the smile," he replied.

The bow hand should be placed with a low wrist with the back flat part of the wrist almost flat. As a check, the



center of the large knuckle at the base of the thumb should be just one-eighth of an inch from a line drawn down the center of the bow to the right if you are right-handed and your left hand is your bow hand.

***"Mrs. Howard Hill once pointed out that my main form area to be improved upon was a bit more bend in my bow arm and a slightly lower bow shoulder."***

When teaching this, I make a linear mark on this knuckle and also one on the bow and ask the shooter to keep these two marks in line. This minimizes bow torque and keeps the point inside the bow hand where contact is

made with the bow in direct alignment with the bones of the bow arm. All of this permits a steadier bow hold.

The bow arm elbow should be very slightly bent and with the front of the elbow in a lateral rather than upwards position. In my opinion, this promotes steadiness by allowing the power to flow more evenly back into the bow shoulder.

A down and back-in-the-socket bow shoulder absorbs the power uniformly and consistently. It tends to ward off fatigue by allowing a greater involvement of the muscles of the back. Mrs. Howard Hill once pointed out that my main form area to be improved upon was a bit more bend in my bow arm and a slightly lower bow shoulder.

The archer's feet should be somewhat parallel to the target with the foot closest to the target turned a few degrees in the direction of the target and supporting about 60 percent of the body's weight. The hips should be parallel to the ground. The archer's head should lean slightly to allow the dominant or shooting eye a position directly over the drawn arrow. To check to be certain that the bow shoulder is adequately down and back, have someone measure the distance from the lateral part of the biceps of the bow arm across to the drawn arrow. This distance should be from four to five and one-half inches, depending upon the build of the archer. Less than this indicates that the bow arm is not seated far enough back into the shoulder socket.



Anchor should be uniform and consistent. It should be a specific spot that the archer can find without conscious effort. Usually the middle finger finds an upper jaw tooth or some bone reference which will feel comfortable. It should locate the arrow directly under the dominant shooting eye. Both eyes should remain open when shooting. You might try coming to full draw (without releasing) while looking into a mirror to assure that the arrow is full length under the center of the pupil of the shooting eye.

At full draw it is essential to learn to shift the holding weight into the back muscles. This allows a minimum of tension in the draw arm and the anchor hand. This comes from effort, practice, and patience. You can actually feel a slight separation of the bones of the hand as the tension drains from it. This allows a crisp, smooth release of the

***"At full draw it is essential to learn to shift the holding weight into the back muscles."***

it with his left arm). Such action is evident if you observe the follow-through of Howard Hill with slow motion film or video. For example, watch "Points on Arrows." I once observed this same follow-through when shooting with two-time Olympic gold medal winner Daryl Pace at Metairie, Louisiana. This hold, using primarily the back muscles, will minimize anchor hand tension and also prevent nock pinching, which tends to put a bend in the arrow at full draw. Some archers require a spacer in their tab or glove to minimize this because they have not learned to hold with their

arrow with a minimum of lateral oscillation. If the archer has shifted this power into his back, upon release his anchor hand will remain on his face or move slightly backwards towards the ear. The bow arm will move slightly to the left (if the archer is holding

back muscles. This hold also tends to prevent the "its"\* or a panic release which can make shooting less than pleasant.

Remember that correct, grooved-in stance is essential prior to beginning the proper aiming process. Without consistent shooting, aiming is impossible. I suggest that the correct fundamentals of stance be mastered at a distance of no more than fifteen yards before you begin to work on aiming.

I have covered only correct stance in this column; I will cover aim and proper shot execution in future issues. Until then I extend to you my best wishes for many hours of enjoyment with your bow traditional style. May your heart always quicken to the music of the bowstring and the flight of the gray goose.

*\*L&R: Competitive archers know the "its" as a shooting phobia that affects the archer's aim. Instead of focusing on the primary target, the shooter focuses on spots around the primary target.*



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# SOUTHERN REVIEW by Don Francois

## Exercising Our Bow Arms

**T**he cold winter months seem to be endless, but before we know it, spring will be here and we'll be thinking about exercising our bow arms at a 3-D tournament. A good place to start is Alabama.

For the past six years the Alabama Society of Traditional Bowmen (ASTB) has sponsored the Children's Hospital Shoot. With the generous help of participants and vendors, ASTB has donated over twelve thousand dollars to the Children's Hospital of Alabama. All proceeds from the shoot are used by the hospital for research expenses and lab equipment.

The Children's Hospital Shoot is traditional only, and bowmen may pay a per round fee or choose a weekend or family plan. Trophies are awarded in Men, Women, Junior, Youth, and Cub classes. All Cubs receive a participation award. The tourney is set up in two, fifteen-round courses with at least one moving target on each course. There are also novelty shoots and plenty of vendors. After the Saturday evening barbeque, there is a "trade blanket" where bowmen may barter and trade for archery items with one another.

The 1997 Children's Hospital Shoot will be held the last weekend of April at Tannehill State Park near Bessemer, Alabama. Primitive camping is available as well as hook-ups for motor homes.

For more information, contact John Kimbrell, President, ASTB, P. O. Box 1070 Columbiana, AL, 35051.

I spoke to Rick Fowler, Secretary of the Kentucky Traditional Bowhunters Association (KTBA), and he is excited about the outlook for Kentucky's deer and turkey seasons. Rick said that good management programs have greatly increased the quality of the deer herd over the last few years, and he believes Kentucky will soon be putting some of those bluegrass bucks in the record books.

**"...responsible hunting is an environmentally safe, acceptable, and humane method of game management."**

Kentucky bowhunters have something else to smile about. The state wildlife department has been engaged in a turkey restocking program for twenty years and is seeing great success. Last season was the first time that every county in the state was open for turkey hunting.

The KTBA is also proud of their involvement in getting an extended fall, archery-only season for turkey. What started



out as a month-long special season has been extended over the years until now when Kentucky archers have three months in the fall to go after the big birds.

In the good news/bad news department, I found both in an article out of Mississippi by Bobby Cleveland, Outdoor Editor for the Jackson Clarion-Ledger. According to his article, surveys taken by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks show the number of hunters in the Magnolia State is generally declining with the biggest drops found in the ranks of small game hunters. The number of rabbit, squirrel, and raccoon hunters has decreased by half since 1985. The number of deer hunters (all methods) has decreased by about 11 percent in the same period.

The drop in the number of Mississippi hunters reflects a national trend. The article noted the expense of licenses, equipment, and hunting leases as contributing factors but also noted the increase in the number of single parent households.

What is the good news in all of this? According to the survey, the number of bowhunters for deer has increased by 34 percent in ten years! More people are finding out what we already know: bowhunting places more emphasis on the hunt as opposed to the kill, and long seasons mean preparations aren't made all year for only a few weeks of hunting opportunity. Hunting with a bow also opens up a lot more habitat that might be off limits to a firearm hunter.

The sobering fact remains, however, that the population of the United States is increasing, yet fewer and fewer people are taking up hunting as a form of recreation. Game managers have done a wonderful job in the past few decades, and populations of game species are thriving in most areas, even to the point of overpopulation in some cases. Still, emotionalism and anthropomorphism (attributing human qualities to animals) continue to influence some people more than facts and reality.

Where does this leave us, the bowhunters of the last decade of the twentieth century?

It leaves us with an obligation to spread the word that responsible hunting is an environmentally safe, acceptable, and humane method of game management. We won't do



any good by getting up on a stump and arguing with the anti's. We won't ever change their minds. Instead, we need to be examples to others of what a responsible hunter really represents.

The traditional bowhunters of Alabama are doing just that with their Children's Hospital Shoot. Many communities have a program where hunters donate wild game to feed the hungry. If a community doesn't, why shouldn't hunters start one? Clubs should participate in a Hunting and Fishing Day on a state level to help more people learn the joys of traditional archery.

Probably the best thing any of us can do to preserve our hunting heritage is to take the time to introduce a youngster to archery and hunting. Most youngsters are brimming with curiosity and need only an introduction to bows and arrows to plant what may grow into a lifelong interest. If they don't hear an intelligent discussion of the role hunting plays in game management from one of us, who will they hear it from? Even if the young charge does not become a bowhunter, the exposure to hunting and the outdoors will at least show him or her that nature's course is not set by some executive at the Disney studios. Whether they hunt or not, one day these young people will vote.

Theodore Roosevelt said, "In a civilized, cultivated country, wild animals only continue to exist at all when preserved by sportsmen." Perhaps we cannot change our "civilized, cultivated country," but we can help create more sportsmen.



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# WILD GAME RECIPES

by Claire W. Stanley



The Wild Game Recipe Department was well received according to your response surveys... Thank you! In this issue, I am forwarding on a Fried Venison and Cajun Venison recipe from Hamilton Mathis in Florida... a special treat for those of you who enjoy some spice in your foods. I have also come across some grand cookbooks specifically for wild game. The rabbit recipes come from Sam and Nancy Fadala's cookbook, *The Complete Guide to Game Care and Cookery*— and it is complete— from the skinning and preserving to the cooking, it is all in this book. The turkey recipes come from The National Wild Turkey Federation's new cookbook *Wild About Turkey*. My third find, another complete cookbook, is *The Complete Venison Cookbook* by Harold W. Webster, Jr. published by Quail Ridge Press. I hope you enjoy the following recipes and find them a little bit out of the ordinary....

## CROCK POT RABBIT

*This dish is at its best served over rice with a fresh green salad.*

- 2 rabbits, cut into serving pieces
- 1 cup celery, sliced
- 1 cup carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 can water chestnuts, sliced
- 2 cups fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 3 cups chicken broth
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 cup sherry

Place all ingredients except cornstarch and sherry in crock pot and cook on low for 6 hours. Remove rabbit from pot. In a separate bowl, combine sherry and cornstarch. Pour into crock pot to thicken the sauce. Return rabbit to the crock pot and mix. Servings: 6-8.



We would love to hear from you. If you would like to submit a recipe, please send it to:  
 Claire W. Stanley, *Longbows & Recurves*™, 1828 Proper Street, Corinth, MS 38834-5134



## MARINATED WILD TURKEY ROLLS

- 1 (5-pound) wild turkey breast, deboned
- 12 ounces commercial Italian dressing
- 12 strips thickly sliced bacon

Cut breast meat along the grain into long, thin 1/4-inch-thick strips. Submerge strips in dressing, cover, and marinate in the refrigerator for 3 to 6 hours. Drain. Wrap each meat strip in bacon, roll into a pinwheel, and secure with a toothpick. Place in a large non-stick skillet, and cook over very low heat for about an hour. The turkey roll is done before bacon browns. Yield: 6 servings.

Gary L. Crafton  
Coffeeville, MS

## CAJUN VENISON

In a large baking pan, slice a whole sweet onion, bell pepper, mushrooms and lay approximately 6 strips of bacon on top. Season shoulders with salt, pepper, Cavanders, red pepper or cajun seasoning and place shoulders on top. Repeat the process on top of the shoulders, i.e. bacon, mushrooms, bell pepper, onions and bake at 300 degrees for 5 hours. Make sure you cover it all with aluminum foil. Remove foil and bones and add more red pepper, if desired, and a few dashes of Worcestershire sauce.

Hamilton "Hambone" Mathis  
Mayo, FL

## FRIED VENISON WITH PARMESAN CHEESE

Marinate 3/4 inch thick backstrap in a mixture of eggs and soy sauce for 2 to 3 hours, or longer if desired. Season with favorite seasoning. Place meat in paper bag containing 1/2 flour and 1/2 Parmesan cheese. Fry.

Hamilton "Hambone" Mathis  
Mayo, FL

## WILD TURKEY GUMBO

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup olive oil
- 4 quarts turkey broth
- 1 1/2 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 large red or yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1 1/2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 1/2 teaspoons pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 1/2 teaspoons paprika
- 2 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 3/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 bay leaf
- 8 cups cubed turkey breast
- 1/2 pound smoked deer or pork sausage, cubed

Make roux by blending flour and oil in a heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly for 30 to 45 minutes until chocolate in color. Do not leave unattended or it will burn. Set aside to cool. Remove excess oil from top, and reserve. Gradually add roux to broth; bring to a slow boil. In oil reserved from roux, sauté vegetables until tender. Add seasonings, turkey cubes, and vegetables into boiling broth. Brown deer or pork sausage in skillet. Drain. Add to soup pot and cook 1 hour. Serve over steamed rice. Yield: 16 (12-ounce) servings.

Dale Bounds  
Lufkin, TX

## TIPS FOR DEEP-FRYING A TURKEY

Always make sure the turkey is thawed completely. Clean turkey in the same manner you would for roasting. Do not stuff the turkey when deep frying. Either inject turkey with liquid seasoning or rub dry seasonings inside and out. Some examples include:

- hot pepper sauce
- black pepper
- Italian dressing
- Cajun seasonings
- paprika

To determine how much oil to use, first fill the pot with water and lower the turkey into it (water should cover turkey without spilling over; adjust water level accordingly. Remove the turkey and note how much water is in pot (or measure it). Discard water and fill pot with oil. Heat oil (to at least 310 degrees) before adding turkey. A heavy wire coat hanger hooked to the band securing the drumsticks is a handy tool for lowering and raising the turkey. Be careful during either procedure.

### Cooking time table:

Skinless turkey—3 minutes per pound.  
Turkey with skin—3 1/2 minutes per pound. Let turkey set for 20 to 30 minutes before carving.

Jamie Adams  
Bushnell, FL

## RABBIT FRICASSEE

Serve with a carrot or sweet potato dish and a heavy, thick-crusted bread.

- 2 cups red wine
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon marjoram
- Salt and pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 rabbits, cut into serving pieces
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch

Mix wine, lemon juice, bay leaves, thyme, marjoram, salt, pepper and garlic powder to make a marinade. Place rabbit in large baking dish and pour marinade over rabbit. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Remove rabbit from marinade when ready to cook and dry well. Strain marinade and save. Heat oil in a large skillet. Sauté onions and garlic. Add rabbit and brown. Add cornstarch to marinade and pour over rabbit. Cover and simmer 1-1 1/2 hours or until tender. Servings: 6-8.



# WILD GAME RECIPES

## GRILLED VENISON FLANK STEAK, ONION AND BELL PEPPER SANDWICHES

- 3 cups dry red wine
- 3 cups Vidalia onions, chopped
- 2 1/4 cups teriyaki sauce
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 8 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 1/2 tea-  
spoons dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 1/2 tea-  
spoons ground ginger
- 4 1/2 pounds venison flank or brisket  
steaks
- 6 large bell peppers (red, yellow  
and/or green) cut into 3/4"  
wide strips
- 3 large red onions, cut 1/2" thick  
rings
- Grilled French Bread Rolls

Combine first 7 ingredients in a large bowl. Divide steaks, bell peppers and red onions among large shallow pans. Pour marinade over. Turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate 3 to 6 hours. Heat barbecue grill to high heat. Drain steaks and vegetables. Grill steaks to desired degree of doneness. Slice steaks thinly across the grain. Arrange steaks and vegetables on large platter. Serve with grilled rolls. Allow diners to assemble individual sandwiches. Serves 12.

## ZITI PASTA SALAD WITH VENISON SAUSAGE

- 1/3 cup red wine
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon dried rosemary,  
crumbled
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano,  
crumbled

- 1/4 teaspoon dried basil, crumbled
- 1 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese
- 12 ounces ziti pasta
- 2 pounds Garlic Venison Sausage  
thinly sliced and fried
- 1 pound zucchini, thinly sliced
- 4 medium tomatoes, cut in wedges
- 1 medium green bell pepper,  
coarsely chopped
- 1 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 3 ounces pimento, chopped
- Parmesan cheese

Combine wine, salt, pepper and herbs in small bowl. Whisk in oil in slow steady stream until well blended. Mix in 1/4 cup Parmesan. Set dressing aside. Cook ziti in 4 to 6 quarts boiling water until just firm but tender to the bite, about 7 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water until cool. Drain again. Combine ziti and remaining ingredi-  
ents, except Parmesan, in large bowl. Add half of dressing and toss. Add as much of the remaining dressing as necessary to coat salad thoroughly. Sprinkle with additional Parmesan if desired and serve. Serves 6 to 8.

## GARLIC VENISON SAUSAGE

- 1 small white onion, quartered
- 2 pounds boneless venison
- 3/4 pound pork fat
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon sage
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice

Grind onion with coarse disc into large bowl. Add meat, fat, and seasonings. Toss until well coated. Grind with coarse disc and stuff into casings or

shape into patties. Cook or freeze. Makes 2 1/2 pounds.

## WOODARD'S WILD TURKEY FRY

- 3 tablespoons liquid onion
- 1/4 bottle liquid crab boil
- 3/4 [16-ounce] bottle Italian dressing
- 2 tablespoons cayenne pepper
- 1 [12-pound] wild turkey
- Salt to taste
- Peanut oil
- Crab boil packet

Mix first 4 ingredients. Store in refrigerator for up to 4 hours. The night before cooking the turkey, remove giblets, and coat with salt, if desired. Inject prepared mixture into thighs, drumsticks, wings, back, and breasts. Massage each injection point site in order to spread seasoning throughout body. Wire legs together. Wrap in plastic wrap and store in refrigerator overnight. Heat oil to 300 degrees. Add crab boil packet to turkey cavity. Submerge turkey in oil, remove from cooker and drain well. Yield: 12 to 14 servings.

James and Kathryn Woodard  
Jacksonville, TX





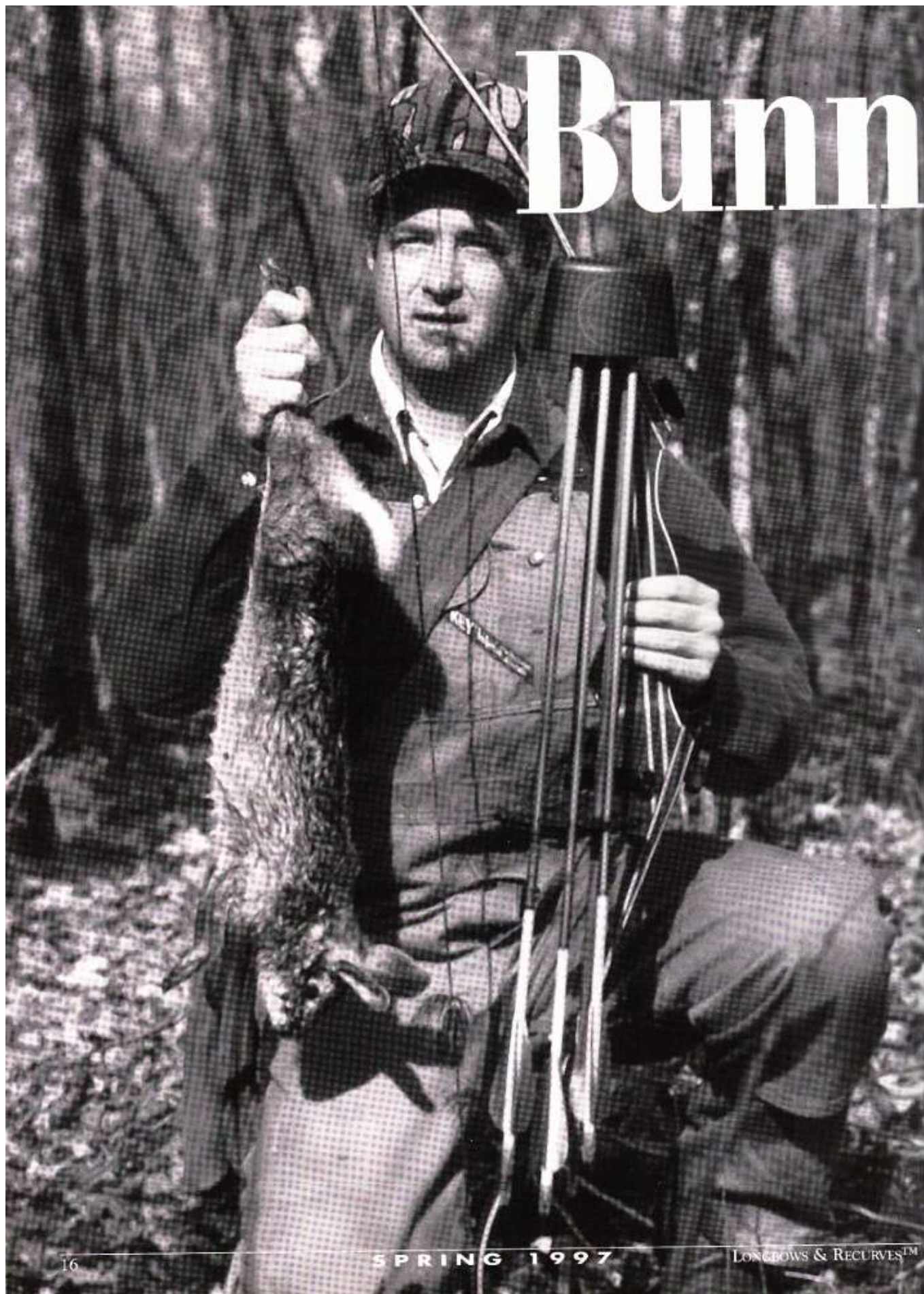
# Longbows & Recurves

TRADITIONAL BOWHUNTING AT ITS BEST



Spring  
1997









# ies and Bows

by Tony Kinton

A big swamp rabbit, well in front of tiny hounds, eased from behind an aging oak. The distance was forty yards, and the traditional bowhunter kept repeating, "Pick a spot. Concentrate. Full draw. Smooth release." At fifteen steps the rabbit stopped and the procedure that the hunter had been rehearsing in his head came into play. The target was there when the arrow arrived. The hunter was resplendent, satisfied. He hoisted his prize and moved toward the others of his party.

While this may sound a little incredible to some hunters, the possibility of hunting small game, rabbits in this case, with traditional archery gear is well in order. Consider: The primary target(s) of bowhunters is big game. Although many areas have a solid season that allows the hunter countless days afield, compared to small game such seasons pale. Big game hunting is usually measured in days or weeks, but the small game potential stretches into months.

Apart from days the season is open, opportunity must be factored into the equation. Even the most fortunate of deer hunters will likely count his offered shots per year on one hand. Not so with rabbits and the like. There may be more shooting in one morning of rabbit hunting than there is in an entire year of chasing whitetails, mule deer, elk, or bears. If actual shooting, the chance to perfect skills under field conditions, is important to the archer, small game wins handily. Also, such activity fits perfectly into the scheme of the instinctive art of bowhunting with traditional equipment.

If rabbits are the game you seek, there are some aspects of the pursuit to remember. Rabbits, when jumped from their forms, run a tight little circle and return to or very near the spot from

which they started. This is due in part to their propensity of holding close to home. Rabbits know the surroundings of their area quite well, and they are more than reluctant to leave, even when being chased. So, if the hunter determines where the rabbit came from, a shot can be practically assured by staying at that spot.

Any sort of elevation can be a boost: downed trees, stumps, a mound of dirt. Such stations will permit seeing into undergrowth, and since the rabbit is virtually silent in his travels and since he will likely be far ahead of the hounds, any advantage in sight is a definite plus for the hunter. Once the chase is on, move to an elevated spot that overlooks the probable route if possible. Stay alert. Scan the cover. A rabbit will be along presently!

The procedure just outlined is based on the accompaniment of hound music. And while this is the most productive – and some would argue the most enjoyable – approach to rabbit hunting, it is not the only way. Rabbits can be bumped from cover by a walking hunter which may offer a quick shot. Another tactic sans beagles is to position standers/shooters and employ a "driver" to walk the cover toward those waiting. This individual will need to kick about extensively to move a bunny, but it certainly can be done with a measure of success. Just because a pack of hounds is not present is little reason to avoid rabbit hunting.

Equipping for rabbits is similar to equipping for any other game animal, but there are some pieces of the gear that will need to be changed. Since most hunters will be hesitant to purchase a bow specifically for rabbit hunting, the same one used for deer is fine. If the hunter chooses to rig out for small game, a light-draw bow of forty pounds or so is ideal. Such a unit is easily drawn and held if the need arises, and it packs more than enough power for rabbits. The biggest adaptation comes not in the bow, but the arrows thrown by that bow.

*Traditional archery gear is more than suitable for small game such as rabbits.*

Photographs by Tony Kinton.





*The sound of the hounds is music to the ears of many rabbit hunters.*

Rabbit hunting does not require broadheads. In fact, these could be a drawback, for they are easily embedded in tree trunks and stumps, or they can too quickly scoot up under debris and be lost. The cost and/or labor required to procure a set of broadhead-tipped arrows prohibits foolish loss. As a result, these are best reserved for bigger animals.

Rabbits and other small game can be bagged with little fuss; thus, a blunt arrow works well. Rubber blunts are fine, and so are arrows with a cartridge case glued over the end. Those wire-armed bird points will dispatch a rabbit. But, the very best choice is the Judo point. This rig will smack any small game animal with authority, and it is practically impossible to lose. The springy fingers of Judos grab onto leaves and grass and quickly upset the arrow, stopping it in short order.

Another arrow adaptation the archer might consider is the flu-flu. This is nothing more than untrimmed or spiraled feathers in place of the traditional fletching, and it serves to slow the arrow after a burst of speed. The system is seldom any hindrance because most shots are at close range, and the arrow retains plenty of zip for such work. The flu-flu also can reduce arrow loss.

Quivers are a matter of personal taste,

and one serves about as well as another. Remember, though, that rabbits often inhabit heavy cover. If a given quiver is prone to snagging or if the arrows in it are positioned so that they hang brush and briars, you could be in for some unneeded frustration. Select a quiver that is compact and one that handles easily. The bow quiver must get serious consideration here.

The same that was said of quivers can be said of the hunter's attire. Clothing that tears readily or that prohibits the hunter from moving into the thickest of cover is a poor choice. Pick something like heavy-weave cotton or other "brush" fabrics. If you head toward the lowlands, rubber boots are a must. Should you be hunting during a firearms season for deer or with fellow hunters who are using shotguns, a hunter-orange vest is certainly in order.

Rabbit hunting with traditional archery gear is not something that is seen everyday or everywhere, and as a result you, if you elect to try it, will likely be in the minority. Still it is something that shouldn't be dismissed, if for no other reason than to see the expressions on the faces of fellow hunters. Don't, however, forget the primary reason behind the pastime: It is plain and simple fun.



*S. Davidson*

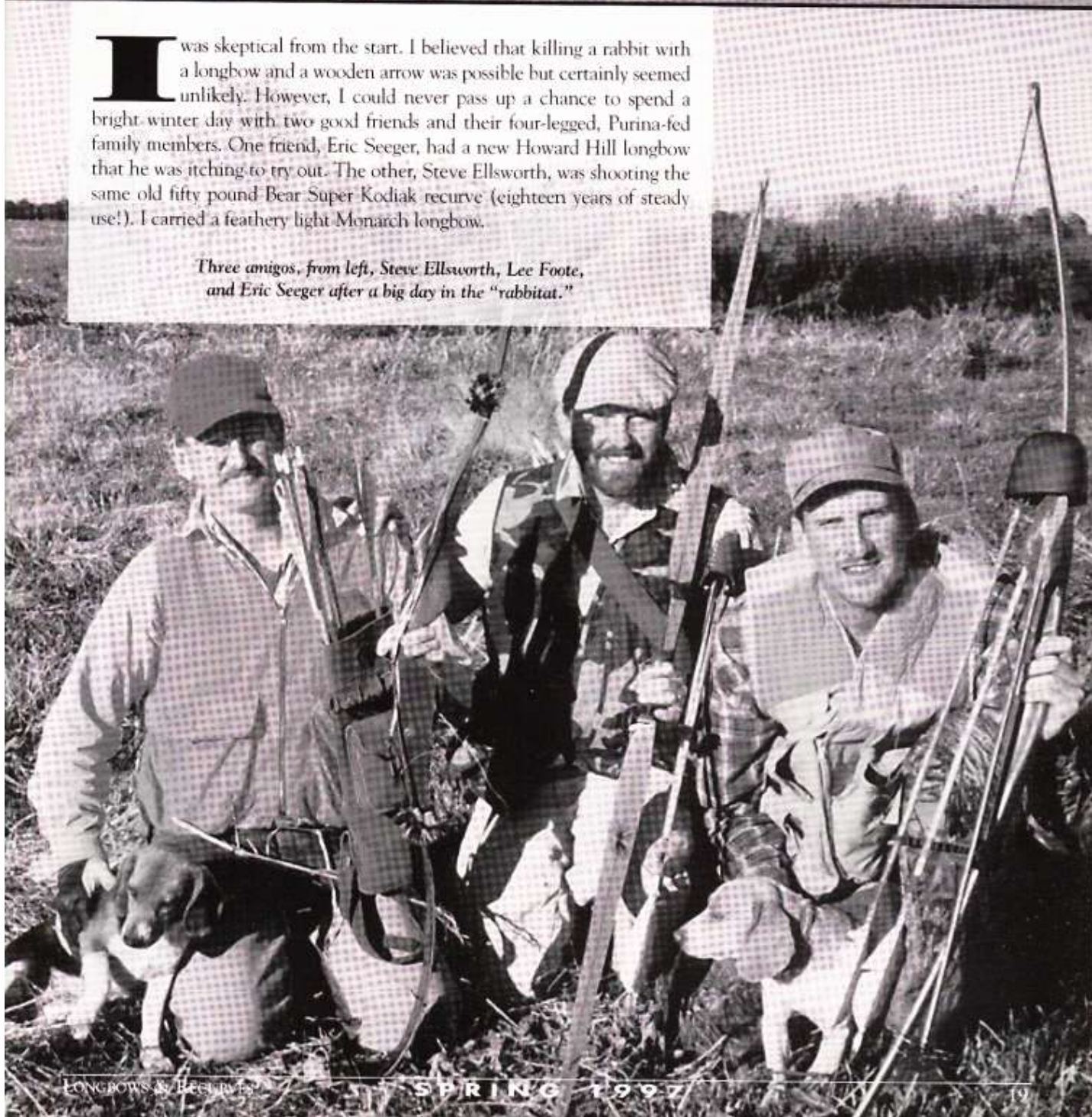


# COASTAL RABBIT Quickdraw

by Lee Foote

**I** was skeptical from the start. I believed that killing a rabbit with a longbow and a wooden arrow was possible but certainly seemed unlikely. However, I could never pass up a chance to spend a bright winter day with two good friends and their four-legged, Purina-fed family members. One friend, Eric Seeger, had a new Howard Hill longbow that he was itching to try out. The other, Steve Ellsworth, was shooting the same old fifty pound Bear Super Kodiak recurve (eighteen years of steady use!). I carried a feathery light Monarch longbow.

*Three amigos, from left, Steve Ellsworth, Lee Foote, and Eric Seeger after a big day in the "rabbitat."*



LONGBOWS & RECURVES

SPRING 1997



**M**y purist partners were disdainful of me; I also had a shotgun in the truck. We had practiced our instinctive shooting on rolling targets, hand-thrown milk jugs, and even some flying discs, and we knew that the shots could be made if we had faith. Still, the thought of shooting rabbits, something the size of a thermos bottle darting through the brush, seemed daunting.

Meat alone was not the motivation in this rabbit hunt. Steve had managed to kill a five-point apple-fed Pennsylvania whitetail earlier in the year. Eric and I had hunted hard with our longbows and finally decided they called them longbows because of the long hours required between kills. We both went soft and switched to firearms at the season's end when Eric took a beautiful eight-point Catahoula Parish whitetail and I settled for a pair of acorn-fat does.

The end of January in Louisiana means that rabbit, woodcock, and the late snowgoose season are the only seasons available to us. Louisiana is fortunate to have a rabbit season almost five months long, and ricefield rabbits are plentiful. We had permission to hunt on a farm belonging to Eric's Cajun girlfriend, Helen. The farm is several miles from Gueydan, Louisiana known as the duck and goose capital of Louisiana. The extensive rice prairie hosts tens of thousands of geese, and we were never out of sight of flocks, skeins, vee's, and circling towers of them. Fields were distractingly full of geese.

Earlier in the season we had hunted geese several times (shotguns fellas, shotguns!) with some success. Because retrieving geese in a dry field is the easiest work a Labrador retriever will ever have, my twelve-year-old lab was with us only out of habit. We shot, Scoop marked the fall of the large feathery bird, then made a twenty-five-second retrieve. He would get maybe, oh... three minutes of work per hunt. As a consolation prize, on the way out of the field after goose hunting, I sent him quartering for rails, quail, or whatever might flush.

It was then that we realized we had stumbled across the great ricefield rabbit haven. Scoop keyed in on rabbits with an enthusiasm usually reserved for chasing nutria, those little rodents we know so well. Somehow it seemed too easy for the shooters though. Little skill was nec-

essary to tumble one rabbit after another. The heavy goose loads, straight-away shots, and scant cover made for a series of skillet shots. But we all love to eat rabbits and they were plen-

*"Rabbit hunting is quite different from the long motionless and cold hours in a stand hunting deer."*



Eric Seeger with beagle, quarry, and Bamboo Longhunter bow.

tiful. We came to realize that ricefields with nearby weedy and woody cover make good rabbit habitat, what Steve calls "rabbitat." Rabbits thrive in the briars and shrubs and feed on the patches of uncut rice and late winter greenery sprouting in the unplowed field margins. After the rice has been harvested and a hard freeze has removed leaves and most grasses, the rabbits are, of necessity, concentrated in the remaining cover.

Steve is the expert on rabbits. We met years ago while working on advanced degrees in Wildlife Management at Louisiana State University where part of his research was investigating rabbit habitat. He has been a committed hound man and rabbit hunter ever since. We have chased rabbits, and sometimes beagles, all over the piney woods of central Louisiana, the bottomlands of the Atchafalaya Basin, the barrier islands and live oak islands along the coast, woodlots along the Mississippi River, and now the rice fields of the Cajun rice prairie. Some beagles are prone to chase deer,



and it is an advantage of the rice areas that there are few deer. Rice country has its own distractions, however, in the form of raccoons, nutria, and skunks, what a beagler would call running "trash." But mostly the rice country is burgeoning with bunnies.

The tactics of rabbit hunting are similar for bow or gun. The hunters and dogs walk through rabbit cover where they may flush rabbits or, more likely, cause them to move a short distance ahead to better cover. Though unseen by hunters, the movement lays down a fresh trail for the beagles. Instinctively driven to trail and bark, the beagles take up the track, sometimes surprisingly far behind the rabbit. Rabbits usually seem almost nonchalant about the slow moving and mouthy dogs. It is not uncommon to see rabbits sitting still and pivoting their ears as they track the dog's progress, creeping along a trail, or loping between patches of cover.

The bowhunter's tactic is to sit still and quiet near the place where the rabbit was first jumped. In an almost magical way the rabbits almost always circle and pass within feet of their original escape trail. Steve tells me that there is some relationship between the home range size of the rabbit and this circuit it runs ahead of the dogs. In rice country the "circle" may actually be a long rectangle up and down each side of a levee or canal. Rabbits do not seem to recognize a motionless human figure as a threat, and it is not uncommon to have them pass within inches of the hunter's feet.

**I**f Steve is the expert, Eric is the faithful and confident that our bows are both adequate and appropriate for rabbits. As luck would have it, in the first five minutes of hunting this day, the dogs pushed a rabbit in a complete circle and Eric made a shot that knocked four hairs off of a sneaking cottontail. Wiser, slightly bruised, and safe, the rabbit swam a canal and threw the pack off its trail. Confidence replaced incredulity after we had all inspected the arrow, the tuft of hair, and offered some comments about Eric being under-bowed and lacking prowess. The dogs were really getting tuned up, and we started seeing rabbits streak past or sneaking between clumps of grass fairly regularly.

There are two species of rabbits in Louisiana. There is the Eastern Cottontail (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) which is the smallish rabbit that is well known from the western plains to the Atlantic Ocean, and overlapping the southern part of this range is the darker and larger swamp rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*) or "cane-cutter," so named because of their abundance in southern canebreaks. Swamp rabbits are the largest cottontail species in the world, and large individuals grow to five pounds. People accustomed to Texas whitetails would think them a large target! The gen-

erous bag limit of eight rabbits per day can garner a skilled hunter twenty-five to thirty pounds of tender lapin. Cottontail and swamp rabbits occur throughout Louisiana; both are delicious in the pan and almost no hunter whether winged, furred, or in blaze orange makes much of a distinction. Steve's dogs ran both well, no discrimination there.

**R**abbit hunting is quite different from the long motionless and cold hours in a stand hunting deer. Dogs are snuffling and barking, and strings twanging. Jokes are told, disparaging remarks are made after each missed shot, and even one futile volley of arrows may be loosed at a low and foolish snowgoose. But surprise of surprises, every now and then we actually connect and bag a rabbit!

We each killed one rabbit this winter day and rough calculations were that we each took fifteen or so shots that afternoon. One of the more memorable shots was a clean miss when a smallish rabbit streaked across an open plowed field to skirt around the hunters on the levee. We all

*"...weedy and woody cover  
make good rabbit habitat,  
what Steve calls 'rabbitat.'"*

attempted the twenty yard shot; however, no arrow came within fifteen feet of catching up with the rabbit we dubbed "Eveready."

I also made what may be the most memorable shot of my life on this day. In a thick briar patch we flushed a woodcock that only flew about forty yards before dropping into a weedy fencerow. Just for fun, Eric and I decided to stalk him. While Eric was at full draw, my arrow pinned the bird to the ground. I don't know who was more surprised, me, Eric, or the bird.

By midafternoon the dogs, hunters, and rabbits were giving it everything we had. We had selected and practiced with our meager stick and string weapons, put in the miles of walking and months of dog training, had applied our understanding of rabbit populations, and now we were immersed in the hunt. The rabbits had the homecourt advantage. If scores must be kept, the rabbits would have won 45 to 3.

This day was not about scores or body counts though, rather it was one of those straight-up doses of hunting in that we were trying as hard as we could to kill rabbits within the pre-set limitations of our gear and skill. No prey selection necessary, no shots too far, or too close, no too small, no throw him back. We were hunting as if the evening meal depended on our success, and what did we end up with: tired legs, some shared humor, lighter quivers, and enough rabbit sauce piquante to feed our families for a single day if we used lots of rice. But, that one magical day of rabbit hunting captured the purest essence of why we return to the field with bows and arrows each season.





# Splish Splash

## I Was Taking a...

by Keith de Noble

**A**h yes, spring is coming. All the plants, grasses, and trees are renewing themselves, turned on by the warming of a spring sun and nights not so cold to send hunters scurrying for a place by the fire.

As the days and nights get warmer so does the water. Fish come out of a sluggish nap of inactivity and another season looms over the calendar. As the water warms with the advance of spring and reaches certain temperatures, a flurry of activity can be seen in most waters, be it rivers, lakes, sloughs, ponds, streams, or bayous. Fish start spawning, specifically rough fish.

What has that got to do with longbow and recurve toters? It means making some minor equipment changes, then going somewhere to get wet— to go bowfishing.



Many years ago a friend and I endured a cool late spring morning to get in some crappie fishing on a local lake. The water level was a little higher than normal with it lapping back in the brush and grasses of flat areas along the edges. We were annoyed by splishing and splashing coming from the shallow areas. Finally, curiosity led us to check it out.

Sculling carefully into the flooded brush we experienced a wondrous sight. Carp... everywhere carp were swimming this way and that, big ones and little ones, rolling, flouncing, and chasing, sometimes through water so shallow their backs would be sticking out. Our presence hardly disturbed their activity, and the boat was bumped and rocked by several large fish. To my partner, a neophyte bowhunter, the spectacle we saw held little promise of excitement. To me, who had bowhunted for a whopping three years and only dabbled in bowfishing below a spillway of a small lake, this melee held promise of some great times.

Since that day, unless work or business interfered, my bowhunting season has never ended. Only the target has changed. I love bowhunting for deer. Deer hunting is an activity of patience, better described as an inactivity of patience. In contrast is bowfishing. A sport of high activity, bowfishing offers a great variety of targets and fast action. It's a sport of slimy, smelly clothes, sore feet, and aching shoulder, arm and back muscles. I have been on and in the water for ten or more hours at a time. But it's worth it.

I am going to ask the reader to use his imagination for a moment. Imagine you are in a flooded flat as I described earlier. Your favorite recurve or longbow is comfortably perched in your hand. To that trusty bow is attached a bowfishing reel loaded with strong line tied to an arrow tipped with a barbed point. You look out over the water to see carp swimming in all directions. You have so many targets it is difficult to choose one. Then you find yourself looking for the biggest, most likely female, escorted by a male on either side. You have spotted your target, a nice fat carp of twenty plus pounds, almost golden in her bright yellowish-orange color, swimming lazily in your direction. Finally, guided by the smaller males or simply because she wanted to, she makes a broadside turn. You can't miss.

The draw, aim, and release happens quickly. Your arrow pierces the water. Suddenly, activity explodes. For only an instant you are not sure if you missed and spooked the fish, or if you scored a hit. The answer comes as your line tightens and begins to slip quickly through your fingers and you let go before getting burned. The fight is on in a see-saw battle. She begins to tire and finally after a few minutes of adrenaline-induced high, the first fish of the day is yours. Quickly, you recock your arrow and search for another target.

When rough fish are spawning, the action can go on for

hours with little time of inactivity except to move to another spot for clearer water and less spooky fish. This is real exciting stuff. Anyway, it beats spring cleaning.

Carp are not the only rough fish available to bowfishers, however. Depending on state regulations, several other species may be listed as potential targets, such as buffalo, white amur, drum, grinnel, shad, telapia.

When spring comes around, the more numerous targets are spawning carp and gar, with buffalo in certain waters. Carp and gar are present in all kinds of water, be it moving or not, clear or dingy. Gar have been around since prehistoric times; it has been said the last fish to die in polluted water will be the gar. Spotted and short nose gar are the lightweights of this ancient fish. They are often found in shallows, feeding on smaller fish and spawn in shallow vegetated areas with a soft bottom.

**“Suddenly, activity explodes. For only an instant you are not sure if you missed and spooked the fish, or if you scored a hit.”**

The longnose gar is the light heavyweight often called fish gar. They are found spawning in shallow water and feed in many different areas. The longnose can grow to well over fifty pounds. The king of this gar is the alligator gar which can grow to weights approaching or possibly exceeding three hundred pounds and has a mouth full of sharp teeth resembling an alligator's. Because of changes in big river systems, the alligator gar is in declining numbers. Some agencies are studying them along with the other big river fish, paddlefish and sturgeon. The alligator gar eats when and where he wants and is not often seen during spring spawn bowfishing.

Carp, first introduced to our waters as a foreign fish, are prolific breeders and have populated, many times with too many numbers, nearly every water in North America. Most sport fishermen and government game and fish agencies welcome bowfishing as a way to get some of these fish out of the water. Carp can grow to over forty pounds, and sometimes one over sixty pounds can be taken. They congregate in numbers during the spawn and to some degree when feeding.

A cousin of the carp is the white amur often called grass carp. White amur were imported from Asia and seldom breed successfully. They will go through spawning activity, but the conditions do not exist for there to be enough success to amount to any numbers at all. The white amur has an insatiable appetite for grass and other green vegetation. It grows quickly and is sleeker and a more powerful swimmer than the carp. Some of these fish grow to





over sixty pounds, and a few are recorded over eighty pounds. The amur has not been introduced in all states or waters but is a worthy target where they can be found. These white torpedoes are not seen in large schools since they tend to spread out in vegetated areas.

Buffalo fish come in different sub-species which grow to varying sizes. Some grow to over sixty or seventy pounds and all are powerful, quick swimmers. When buffalo are located, a larger school is usually seen than with the other three fish mentioned above.

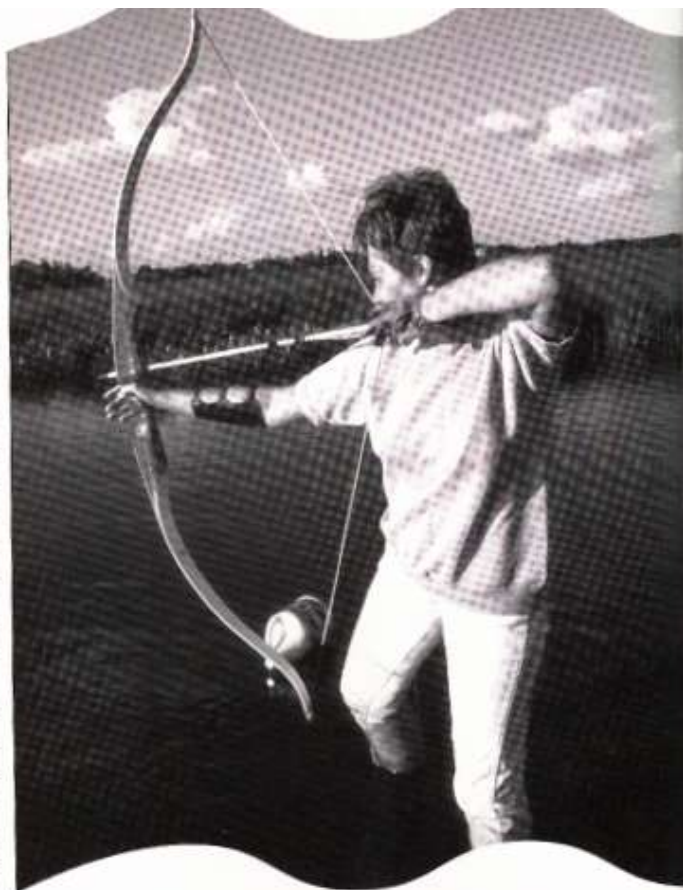
Bowfishing is one of those versatile sports that can be enjoyed any time of day or night depending on your local regulations. Most times during the year a bowfisher will see far more fish at night than in the day. During the spawn, however, activity may not get really heated up until later in the morning after the sun warms the water. Once the water temperature is suitable, spawning will continue until conditions change, or the fish have completed the process.

In recent years, specially rigged boats have been used by both recreational and competitive bowfishers. Bowfishing from a boat is not necessary, but it will get the bowfisher to more water than what would normally be available to someone on foot. On the other foot (pun intended), there are many places a boat cannot go.

Boats can be rigged many ways for both day and night bowfishing, but for the occasional bowfisher I suggest keeping it simple and light. The same goes for the bow setup. Through the years I have used all types of bows while hunting fish. My preference for lightness in hand

**"The sign of a good day is when the back, arms, and hands are sore from so much shooting, fighting, and retrieving fish."**

and quick, smooth shooting reaction is a recurve in the forty to fifty pound draw range. A longbow is just as much fun but is more cumbersome when wading in brushy shallows, but it does make a better wading stick than a recurve. I install a set of No-Glov's on the string because it is simpler and faster than using a tab or archer's glove.



*Flinging arrows at rough fish is great fun.*

Most occasional bowfishers use a wrap reel, one where you manually wrap the line back on after every shot. I really like "lock and load" shooting, however, and prefer large capacity, closed face spin-cast reels. They retrieve the line incredibly fast yet still allow the bowfisher to hand haul and fight a big fish.

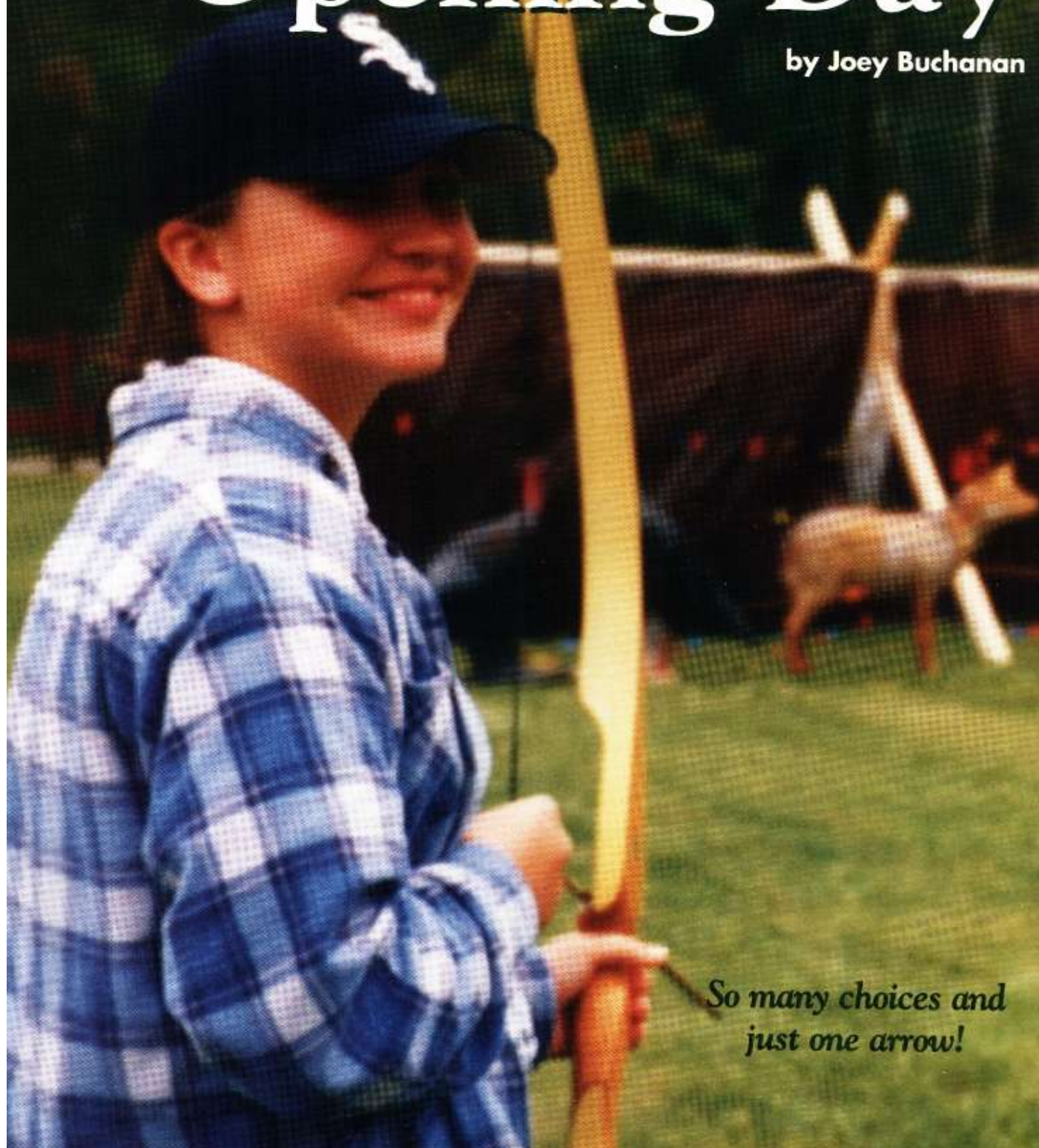
For years all I used was snagging line until the introduction of Fast Flight which comes in two hundred and four hundred pound test. This line is very slick, coils and uncoils with little memory and, of course, is very strong. It can easily cut skin, so a pair of light leather glove is advised.

It doesn't take much fancy equipment to go bowfishing; what it does take is a little desire and anticipation for some fast action. A little scouting and learning about the fish in an area can lead to a great time this spring flinging arrows at rough fish. The sign of a good day is when the back, arms, and hands are sore from so much shooting, fighting, and retrieving fish. These fish can even be appreciated as good table fare when prepared properly. But, that is a whole other story.



# "JAKES" and Opening Day

by Joey Buchanan



*So many choices and  
just one arrow!*





Missing opening day of the 1996 Georgia deer season was absolutely the farthest thing on my mind of things to do for the third weekend of September. With the opportunity to put a real bow in the eager hands of four hundred kids, however, my plans changed.

As president of the Traditional Bowhunters of Georgia, I had been looking for a worthy endeavor to get our club involved in. When Mike Kenney of Archery Traditions in Athens, Georgia called and asked for my help in a program to introduce archery to young people, I recognized the opportunity. Missing opening day for the first time in fifteen years became somewhat less important.

The event was the Aiken, South Carolina National Wild Turkey Federation Chapter's 1996 JAKES Day on September 21, 1996. The youth program put on by the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWF) is appropriately called "JAKES" which stands for Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics, and Sportsmanship. Sponsorship is from country music legend Porter Wagoner and Johnny Morris of Bass Pro Shops.

Aiken's JAKES Day, a myriad of outdoor learning activities for youth, turned out to be much more than just a day of teaching for the six hard-core traditionalists from Georgia who agreed to embark on the mission; it was a day of learning too.

We learned quickly that kids love archery. Our archery station was one of the ten designated stops for the four hundred kids and their parents. (Oh yeah, I forgot to mention over three hundred parents were exposed to traditional archery that day also.) Our station was divided into three sub-stations: a reenactment from the 1600s to the 1900s, a modern station, and a shooting station.

Scott Moore, a veteran teacher of the traditional way through public schools and clubs in Georgia and South Carolina, gave a reenactment of a traditional hunter from the mid-1600s to the turn of the century. Scott dons his traditional garb that he has handmade himself. At JAKES he showed them everything from flintknapping to self-bowmaking.

Top left: Georgia state champion, Dickie "Mudcat" Fogal, demonstrates his winning instinctive form.

Center: Sometimes the parents competed for the archery tackle.

Bottom: Scott Moore instructs eager students.

Facing Page: Dickie "Mudcat" Fogal, left, watches as Joey Buchanan, right, and a JAKES participant combine forces on a shot.



Photograph this page and preceding page, by Mike Kenney.

Photograph by Camille Roberts Myers.









From there the youths rotated to our modern traditional station. Mickey Wilson, educational chairman of Traditional Bowhunters of Georgia, taught modern traditional ways. The kids saw types of hunting tackle traditional bowhunters use today.

At our third station, we actually put a bow in the participant's hands and let him relentlessly pound away at McKenzie targets and balloons in front of a makeshift backstop. With over five dozen arrows donated from Archery Traditions and every low poundage bow we could beg, borrow, steal, and make, we embarked on the mission of teaching ten groups of forty wild-eyed kids traditional archery.

As the day wore on, our instructions turned from an eloquent five minute speech to a mere five words for the last couple of groups, "Grip it and rip it!" These kids did not have time for instructions, all they wanted to do was shoot the bow. We found early that it was not uncommon for a departing group to give us hugs as they left for their next station. My hunting buddy, Dickie "Mudcat" Fogal, who could be a role model for a man's-man-kind-of-guy, was almost brought to tears when a young lad insisted that Mudcat join him and his family for the lunch activities. Ironically, Mudcat hadn't missed opening day of deer season in twenty-five years.

What we had anticipated was a day of teaching and fellowship among strangers. Instead we found out we were learning something about ourselves from each and every group that sprinted our way. We were able to make a kid smile with an instrument we ourselves so dearly love. Through the bow and arrow, a kid was given the experience of success. Not only does the bow and arrow have a "medicinal" effect for hunters, but it gives an accomplishing sense of pride to kids. Archery is a sport with no gender, age, race, or monetary discrimination.

That foggy Saturday morning we learned about giving not teaching. Giving reaches much closer to the heart. Opening day of 1997 will be here in due time, and we already have our stands picked out. Again it will be in Aiken, South Carolina at JAKES weekend.

*Editor's Note: For more information on how to become active in a JAKES program, please contact the National Wild Turkey Federation at 1-800-THE-NWTF.*

*Top: The "Hardy Crew" before the storm. Left to right; Dickie "Mudcat" Fogal, Joey Buchanan, T.J. Rodgers, Mike Kenney, Scott Moore, and Mickey Wilson.*

*Bottom: Scott Moore, right, critiques Joey Buchanan's home-made black locust limb bow.*

*Facing Page: "Grip it and rip it!" became the simple instructions.*

Photographs by Mike Kenney







# OF WHITETAILS, BOWS, AND RESPONSIBILITY

by Mark Livingston



**T**he whitetail deer is immensely popular as the traditional bowhunter's big game animal in North America. No other big game animal rivals the whitetail in adaptability and accessibility. From the urban population centers of the North, south to the swampy everglades of Florida, west to the dry plains of Texas, and northward to the cold winters of Canada, the whitetail has shown the ability not only to survive but actually flourish in a range of human population, climate, and geographic differences. Such adaptability has helped to produce an animal that provides the ultimate challenge for the archer, regardless of the region of the country it is hunted.



For the traditional archer, the white-tail presents a challenge greater than that to the firearm hunter and even to some degree, to archers of more modern persuasion. While the use of traditional equipment demands more of the archer, regardless of species hunted, the white-tail's lightning fast reflexes and uncanny ability to sense and evade danger put it in a special class of recognition. Equipment and the hunter himself must be up to the task of humane harvest; not all bowhunters can agree, unfortunately, that their equipment or they are up to this task.

The reflexes of the whitetail are legendary; it is known that a deer can drop its body width in less than a third of a second. It seems logical, therefore, that close shots should be strived for by the hunter. Not close, but "real close" shots.

Most bowhunters agree that about forty to fifty yards is the limit of effective shooting, but for the traditional archer, a maximum of twenty-five yards might be more responsible.

While 200+ feet per second is obtainable from some setups, most recurves and longbows are probably shooting 165 to 190 feet per second. Close shots allow the hunter more accurate arrow placement and less reaction time for the animal to attempt to evade the arrow. Of course, if the effective range is less than twenty-five yards, then the maximum shot distance should be limited to the effective range.

Limiting shots to good fifteen yard shots is far more noble than wounding an animal at a longer distance. The desire for success should not overrule the greater goal of responsibility to the animal and the sport.

Another aspect of bowhunting whitetail often overlooked is proper bow clearance when hunting out of tree stands and its relationship to humane shooting and hunter safety. Whitetails, being hunted mostly from ground blinds and tree stands, create special problems to the



bowhunter because of the greater overall length of traditional bows. Such a small matter, most would agree, but important because of the damage which can be done when an archer whacks a bow limb into something. An example happened a couple of years ago as a doe moved into

shooting position for a traditional bowhunter. Upon the string's release, the archer heard a loud metallic crack and saw the arrow die ten feet in front of the doe. What had happened was the upper limb had smashed into a hand-climber hung high above the archer's head on the tree trunk. Luckily no damage occurred either to the bow, deer, or the archer, but the potential was very real.

Responsible bowhunting should also address broadhead/arrow combinations when hunting whitetails with traditional equipment. Lightweight bow poundages and/or short draw lengths (less than twenty-eight inches) demand special attention to insure proper penetration on even deer-sized animals.

Two-blade broadhead designs that cut on impact are very popular with most traditional archers. Such setups insure the maximum penetration possible for quick humane kills. This by no means should discourage hunters shooting longer draw lengths, heavier arrows, and bow poundages from shooting the multi-blade broadhead of their choice. The goal, however, should be for the bowhunter to analyze his setup and choose a responsible broadhead/arrow combination that works well with his particular traditional bow's capabilities.

Whether you are an experienced traditional bowhunter or just beginning, it's important to be reminded of the responsibility required to "meet the challenge" of bowhunting. As traditional bowhunters take to the woods this fall to enjoy the sport, they must remember the responsibility they carry. By acting responsibly, they will help insure the bowhunting tradition will be carried on.







# Turkey Troubles

by Matt Schuster

I vividly remember every bite of the last meal of smoked wild turkey breast that I and several hunting buddies devoured on a warm spring night three years ago. The meal was memorable not only for the food and the company, but also for the reaction of the one female present when a half-digested acorn showed up on her plate. I never was very good at cleaning out those body cavities, but then again, real men don't worry about little details like a stray acorn or two at hunt camp.

I really do like the taste of wild turkey and I miss it. Unfortunately, I have not tasted it since making the commitment to hunt turkeys exclusively with a traditional bow, and, in truth, I have not come all that close except for the time I ran into one on the interstate, but I never found that one.

My first two years of bowhunting for gobblers were particularly fruitless. I drew on only one bird, a nice gobbler that was walking quickly away from me after catching a minuscule movement as I drew my longbow. The two seasons were certainly not a total waste though. When a bowhunter turkey hunts and limits himself to fifteen yard shots, he gets to watch a lot of turkey action that he would never see if he simply pulled the trigger on a gobbler at thirty-five yards. I watched more strutting, chasing, mating, (and spooking) than I had seen in any five years of gun hunting. The problem was in luring the birds in extremely close, then drawing the bow. In spite of using various blinds, every attempt that I made to draw my bow resulted in an airborne tom. I decided to get serious and purchased the ultimate bowhunting blind: one that hangs from a tree, opens like an umbrella, and envelopes the hunter in cave-like darkness, visible to the outside world only through a small shooting window. This would certainly be the ticket to fresh turkey breast, I thought.

Photograph by Jim Whitcomb.

Unfortunately at about the same time, I lost access to a prime hunting lease of over five thousand acres in my home state of Georgia prior to the 1996 season and ended up without good turkey property on which to hunt. There is a lot of good public land available in my state, but after having a huge gobbler shot literally right out from under me several years ago, I cannot get myself to slip onto public land with a bow in hand. That gobbler was forty yards away from me when another hunter, who had to know exactly where I was, snuck in without calling, blasted the bird, sprinted up to his fallen prey within seconds, and grabbed the flopping bird on the run. He took off at a sprint before I could crawl out from under the roots of the tree that I had buried myself under at the sound of his gun. Nope, no public land bowhunting for me.

My one ace in the hole for the 1996 season was a weekend trip to the XQZ Ranch outside of San Angelo, Texas to chase the numerous Rio Grande gobblers strutting around the twenty thousand acre spread. The XQZ, which had been open to turkey hunting only for the last two seasons, is expertly managed by outfitter Rocky Woodford and his wife, Gerrie. Although their primary business is in providing outstanding trophy hunts for wide-racked Texas white-tails, they have quickly developed quite a reputation in turkey-talking circles.

Several buddies and I met Rocky several years ago at a hunting show in Atlanta where he expressed quite a degree of amazement that a group of southern rednecks would be willing to travel all the way to Texas to bowhunt a critter that at that time he considered slightly better than a varmint. "Oh, yeah," Rocky said, "those gobblers are hollerin' all over the place. I guess y'all can come hunt 'em if you want." Now the turkey hunts are sold out a year in advance, and Rocky himself chases them around as enthusiastically as his hunters.







In essence, the XQZ is a twenty thousand acre pasture sprouting mesquite trees like weeds and is broken up by numerous dry creek beds and prominent rocky mesas. Large trees are scarce except for towering live oaks lined up like telephone poles down each creek bed. The terrain is exceptionally beautiful in the spring when every rain shower causes the foliage to green up and explode with yellow wildflowers and the famous bluebonnets of Texas. Turkeys can be found virtually anywhere in this area but congregate around the roost trees and creek bottoms containing the occasional water holes.

It was ninety degrees when we arrived in Texas but had snowed only seven days earlier. Hunters in the airport complained that the wild temperature changes had made for infrequent gobbling over the previous week, but my enthusiasm was not dampened. After all, the XQZ was underhunted, I was shooting well, at least well for me, and I had my super secret cave blind. How could I be disappointed?

The first morning, we got a late start due to the fact that all of us hunting were single and not used to being served the kind of gourmet Tex-Mex breakfast that Gerrie had prepared. We ate so much that we could barely move and just managed to get out by first light. The area that I drew contained a prominent granite ridge with uncharacteristically big oak trees dotting its peak above a beautiful mesquite-filled valley floor falling into a dry creek bottom. Within minutes of being dropped off, I heard turkey talk all around me on the perfectly clear, still Texas morning. I headed west to the edge of the ridge where the trees were large enough to support my blind and twice had to freeze for several minutes at a time as turkeys sailed off the ridge over my head to land within a hundred yards. I quickly picked a spot and set up my blind, spooking two hens as I placed decoys ten yards out.

My first cut was enthusiastically answered by gobblers both east and west of me, subsequent calls brought immediate and rapidly approaching responses from the westward bird. It just could not happen this easily, I thought as I gazed out of my window in my blind for a glimpse of the Rio Grande. Every call I made brought a response, and at least three other gobblers were sounding off in the distance. The gobbler approaching me slowed as he got closer but never failed to let me know exactly where he was. Excitement built as I strained for a glimpse of the bird that sounded close enough to touch as I mentally prepared for the shot and made sure that I could shoot without hitting any part of my blind. Finally, he appeared thirty-five yards away, and he was staring holes into my blind through a thin mesquite tree. I called. He strutted. I called. He looked, and looked hard, and I realized for the first time that the ever present Texas wind had begun for the day and my blind was blowing around like the back of grandad's long johns after a midnight trip to the outhouse. The gobbler simply walked off and my first chance was over before it started.

In the flatlands of the XQZ, the wind blows constantly

and blows hard, but the foliage grows low and is built to withstand the constant pressure. Branches do not blow around violently like they do on the dogwoods and white oaks of the Southeast. They also don't blow around like some of the more expensive turkey blinds of the Southeast. Anybody want to buy a two hundred dollar blind?

The rest of the morning was not uneventful, but I could not get either of the constantly gobbling toms that I chased to leave their ladies and attempt to woo me. I also enjoyed seeing a couple of coiled rattlers which served as a reminder that in this country, the hunter must always watch his step.

At precisely 11:00, I opened a can of Diet Coke, ate a Snickers, and leaned back against the large live oak tree under which Rocky was supposed to pick me up for lunch. Occasionally, I put in a mouth call and made a few yelps, just in case a lonely tom happened to be walking by. At 11:20, I decided to mosey down to a waterhole eighty yards away just to see what kind of critters might be hanging around. I stood up, took two steps, then saw three glowing red-blue heads walking straight toward me only fifty yards away. I dove back behind the oak tree, which was large enough to hide my whole body, whipped my head net on and peered around the trunk. Amazingly the three young birds, each sporting a five-inch beard, were still heading my way. I clucked softly as I put an arrow on the string and cursed myself silently for not being more ready.

I was on my knees, with no cover but a tree trunk, and the turkeys were closing straight in on me with no indication of from which side of the tree they would emerge. I eased back behind the tree where I could not see the birds and guessed that they would appear to my right. I was partially wrong. The lead gobbler poked his glowing head around the tree from the left and looked right through me at a distance of only five yards. I froze, and he did not seem overly concerned at the absence of the lovesick hen he expected to find. After seconds that seemed like hours, he turned and walked back around the tree. I quickly leaned out and saw the other two boys in full strut about eighteen steps away. I drew slowly as the first bird reemerged behind me and







Photograph by Jim Whitcomb.

started putting. My mind raced, sure that I would not have time to release an arrow. I reached full draw and fired at the nearest strutting bird.

It was very apparent that I did not pick a spot when I had to admit later that I was not sure if I missed high or low, or left or right, because I did not, and still do not know. All I know is I missed and I also know that it was one of the most exciting moments of my hunting life, and I could not wait to go through the experience again.

That afternoon I heard occasional gobbles but set up only once and immediately attracted a herd of twenty range cattle that seemed particularly enamored with my style of calling. They gathered around me, surrounding me within ten yards and simply would not leave. It is not easy to call in a turkey and stampede cattle at the same time. Quick motion sent the cows lumbering off only to immediately return and begin mooing as soon as I became still. It was a frustrating affair, and to top it off, the gobbler quit gobbling a hundred yards out for which I blamed the cows and fully intended to punish them for their intrusion. I waited ten minutes, set aside my bow, gathered a few dead branches, then sprung up like an angry bull moose, waving and throwing sticks at the closest bovine beasts. The cows ran like hell, and so did one surprised gobbler who had snuck within forty yards of my setup.

**T**he next morning dawned clear, quiet, and beautiful. Unfortunately, a broken electronic gate refusing to open caused me to see this beautiful sunrise through the front windshield of a truck, but it was beautiful nonetheless. As I walked to my area along a public highway, it was not hard to tell that the local gobbler population was in the mood for love. I heard six different birds as I still-hunted my

way through several thick stands of mesquite, sure that with every footstep I would send gobblers flying off in all directions. Visibility was a good hundred yards and, once again, I had to stop to let hens work past me as they answered the summons of various feathered suitors. Finally a gobbler thundered close, real close. I circled further into the mesquite just to be safe until I came to a dry creek bed with a large oak jutting from the top of a steep bank. At the tree's base several cedar bushes provided both back and front cover; the rising sun was at my back and would shine directly into the eyes of any turkey approaching my decoys from the west.

With a perfect ambush planned, I yelped and clucked as softly as possible. Nothing. I waited several minutes as gobblers announced their presence in the distance, but none sounded off nearby. I cut quietly but with enthusiasm, but still the closest gobbler remained silent. Had I spooked him by setting in too close? Doubt crept into my mind, and I struggled to stay still as other gobblers continued their chorus in the distance. Then as if on cue, two blue heads bobbed from behind a brush pile and headed straight at my decoys. They were jakes and they acted like they had just hit the jackpot finding two unescorted hens on such a lovely spring morning. Within thirty seconds they were on top of me, struttin' their stuff for my two foam ladies.

After these meatless turkey seasons, I was not about to pass up this chance, so I knelt fully tensed ready to draw as soon as two sets of keen eyes would allow. For what seemed like an eternity, I did not breathe, or blink, and I even tried to keep my heart from pounding as I prayed for a clear shot. Finally, the nearest jake emerged from behind the bush where I crouched, and the other stood two feet to his left looking straight away from me. I fought a sudden attack of





Photograph courtesy of Matt Schuster

*Matt Schuster, the one inside the blind, waits for the "huge boss gobbler."*

excitement-induced arm weakness as I shakily drew on the unobscured bird while trying to watch both turkeys for any indication of alarm. As the strutting tom moved out from behind the mesquite, for some reason, turkey fever probably, I decided to switch targets and moved my deadly intentions to the displaying tom. Unfortunately for me, when I hit anchor, the arrow usually leaves, ready or not. In this case, it was not, and my shot went just in front of my target and actually passed between the jakes. They both jumped and began clucking as I zapped another cedar arrow onto my bowstring. Twenty yards away, both birds began to settle down until their nemesis, a much bigger bird, showed up to see what was causing all the excitement.

This gobbler was no youngster, and he did not take kindly to two jakes intruding on his territory. He came into view puffed up and doing the mean walk straight at the young toms who did not move until the big guy got within a few yards, dropped his wings, and began a hissing charge, sending them fleeing right back at yours truly. By this time, I was a

mental mess, my knees ached, and my back had more kinks in it than a tabloid newspaper.

**W**ith his superiority quickly established, the big tom began strutting and strutting back and forth behind the same mesquite bush from which he had first appeared and reinforced my belief that there are not many sights as impressive as a mature, strutting Rio Grande Gobbler. His head radiated blue and red in the direct morning sunlight, and his fan looked enormous. Although he was only twenty yards away, he offered no clear shot. The jakes tiptoed all around me on high alert, still totally unaware of my existence. In hindsight, I should have made another attempt at one of the young toms. After all, it certainly would have been a trophy in my eyes, which are the only eyes that really matter in judging hunting accomplishments. But at the time, I wanted a chance at the boss, and I was not all that anxious to end what was becoming one of the most memorable hunting experiences that I will ever enjoy.

For a full five minutes, the gobbler displayed, never clos-



er than twenty yards. He only stopped twice, both times to scowl off the jakes who had wandered between his position and my sexy decoys. I could have shot at the youngsters at any time but was convinced that sooner or later the boss would approach my position. Things started to unravel when a real live hen showed up down in the creek bottom and began yelping softly. The jakes went for her first but were quickly cut off by the gobbler. Moments later, all four of them were fifty yards away. I was alone.

Over the course of the day, I called in another mature gobbler but once again passed up a twenty yard shot in the hopes of getting the bird close enough for a chip shot. I guess he got frustrated with my unresponsive decoys because he only hung around for thirty seconds then wandered off to find some hens who would chase him. I have to admit, I know how he felt, but that is another story. Later that evening, three jakes put the silent sneak on me from behind as I readied my camera to snap a photo of a hen feeding in front of a makeshift blind. My fumbling attempt to exchange camera for bow as they danced around putting in alarm must have been a lot more amusing to them than it was to me because they waited until I got an arrow on the string and my bow arm raised before exploding into the air. All in all, it was a great day, but I have to admit I certainly did not feel like much of a predator and certainly would have had to dine on armadillos, rattlesnakes, and jackrabbits if forced to live off of my own bow-kills in this open country.

**T**he last night in camp I got to taste that fresh wild turkey I wanted so badly, even though it wasn't mine. The turkey fell before one of the gunhunters sharing our camp and was prepared expertly Texas-style by Gerrie. Strips of breast meat were twisted around thick slices of fresh jalapeno pepper, wrapped in bacon, and the entire morsel was skewered with a Texas-size toothpick then slowly smoked over mesquite coals. These gastronomic treats, plus a frighteningly huge steak cooked so rare a good veterinarian could have brought it back to life, made for a meal to remember. I could not wait to invite my bowhunting friends back in Georgia to experience this same meal in celebration of my bow-killed bird. I had one more morning to make it happen.

Sunday morning dawned in exact replica of the previous two mornings except for one small difference. I actually made it into my hunting area while it was still dark. There is something tremendously exciting about standing in the pre-dawn darkness just waiting for that first indication that the natural world is waking up, and with it would come whatever predatory experiences that are destined that day. The first sound I heard that morning was a deer blowing in alarm, letting me know that it did not appreciate my odor (scent is not a strong

enough word to describe how one smells after three days in south Texas) interrupting its morning stroll. Soon after, ducks began whistling into a nearby waterhole and song-birds' melodies welcomed the sun. Unlike back home, there were no "who cooks for you" proclamation from owls, and I never heard a crow all week. Gobblers seemed to gobble just because that is what they are supposed to do. And gobble they did, all morning long, even after the wind got so blustery that I had to put my face mask on just to keep the dust out of my mouth.

**M**id-morning found me set up on the highest ridge in sight where I had heard a gobbler sounding off non-stop all morning. I was set up on him for the third time, but it was rather obvious that he was not coming in. He responded to anything and everything and at times sounded as if he was within fifty yards, then five minutes later he would cut loose from hundreds of yards away. I finally figured out that he was operating on the peak of the ridge, was gobbling from one side of the ridge to the east with the wind, which was blowing toward me, then immediately walking to the other side and gobbling against the wind down into the flatlands below. For no less than an hour, he worked the ridge, one side then the other, at times so close that I felt like I could smell the acorns on his breath, then minutes later he would be on the other side. He never gobbled twice in a row on the same side of the ridge.

At 11:00 that morning I had to be in the truck on the way back to camp to start to the airport, so at 10:20, with time running out, I decided that the situation called for a little sneaking action. Every time the gobbler sounded off close to me, I gave him thirty seconds then headed straight for him, stopping only when he gobbled on the other side and headed back my way. After twenty minutes, I knew I was pushing my luck, so I buried into a cedar bush and cut loose with every thing I had. He gobbled so close that I could almost "pick a spot" from the sound. Surely he was coming. A minute later, he gobbled again over the ridge. This ole boy was not stupid. He was simply not going to chase any hen that he could not see.

With five minutes of hunting left, I took one step from my cover and saw an awesome sight. The huge boss gobbler was in full strut, fanned out on the pinnacle of a rock strewn ridge, fighting the wind as two hens picked their way toward him from my side of the ridge. His gobbling strategy worked, and now he would be rewarded.

I eased my bow down, snapped a couple of pictures of the monarch (which, of course, did not turn out) and began easing back toward the truck. Have a nice afternoon big guy, I thought. I will be back next year, and I will still be hungry.





## FICTION

## A LEARN

by John L. Sloan

**D**awn was slow in coming. In the darkness, the plop of raindrops from last night's shower ticked off the minutes as gray finally slid onto the eastern edge of the distant ridge line. In a bit, it would be daylight and time to get started. Right now we nibble our honeybuns and drink cold milk.

By noon, it will be a soaking, humid ninety-five degrees. For now, just as crimson touches the underbelly of the clouds, it is comfortable. Maybe even cool. I shiver a little. Perhaps it's the excitement I always feel when scouting new territory. Or, maybe just an errant drop of rain down my neck. It's hard to explain the anticipation to Jason. He's ten years old, not yet addicted to the adventure of unraveling the mystery of deer hunting. Today will be a learning day... for both of us.

It's light now. I can see the map. I show Jason the boundaries, the landmarks we must work between.

"How many acres all together?"

"Just over a thousand total, Jason. Today we won't see a fourth of it. Today we are looking for the obvious. It will take us a year to really learn the place, maybe longer. We have time. No hurry. Listen. Hear that?"

Jason squirms in his effort to hear. He hears but doesn't know what he is hearing.

"That's coyotes. They are singing about their night's hunt. Probably lying about what they caught," I chuckle. "Somewhere on that ridge behind us is a hen turkey. Heard her yelp just now. If she does it again, I'll point it out so you can remember it next time you hear one. We best get going before it gets too hot and the mosquitoes get too bad." I hand Jason the binoculars and a compass.

We move slowly off the ridge. Like the deer, we take the path of least resistance. I show Jason the faint trail. Looks like it wasn't used much during the fall.

"This trail doesn't go anywhere special, Jason. That's why it isn't plain. It probably only gets used when the acorns are dropping a lot on this ridge," I explain. "It's something to remember but not the kind of place we're looking for. Trails, son, only do three things. They go somewhere, they leave somewhere, or they connect something. This trail, some years, goes to a feeding area."

"How do you know? What are the deer feeding on?" he asks.

"Look at the trees. What kind are they?" I ask in return.

"Well, that one's a hickory. I know that shaggy bark," he answers proudly.

"Right, but most of these others are white oak. When



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# ING DAY

the white oak acorns are dropping, they are a deer's favorite food. Look at the high branches through the binoculars. See any little acorns?"

Jason strains to bend back far enough to see the treetops. "I don't see anything."

"I don't either, son. I don't think there was any mast here last year either, so the trail didn't get used, but we should remember it for other years. This ridge top would make a good morning stand when the trees are bearing."

We cross a small creek which is clear, cold, and shallow. I point out a crawfish scurrying for a rock. On the far side is an open area, grown high in broom sage and small, scattered cedars. A gnat takes a drink from the corner of my eye.

"I hate them suckers," I say.

Motioning Jason with a hand, I skirt the edge of the old, grown-up field. Finally I see it. The old logs are rotted, but the rocks that made the corners level give me the outline. I caution Jason to watch out for a possible old well. Behind the old homestead, I find the first clue in the mystery we are unraveling.

The clay is red and turned slick with the recent rain. It is about the size of my poker table at home. A few inches of water are in the middle.

"What is it?" Jason questions.

"Well, maybe fifty years ago it was a smokehouse. The folks who lived in the house smoked their meat here. When they did, they used a lot of salt. Now it's a salt lick; deer come to lick the salty clay. Do you think they like to play in the cool mud some too? Anyway, next time we come, I'll bring fifty pounds of mineral salt to freshen it."

"Will we hang a stand here, dad?"

"No Jase. It's illegal. But, we'll use this for information. Mostly does and young deer come to salt licks, but they have to come from somewhere, don't they? So let's see what we can learn here."

**L**ike spokes, the trails fan out from the lick. I show Jason the tracks and mud splashed on the grass. I pick a trail going the direction I want and we follow it, with me looking sharply and Jason fanning mosquitoes and matching my steps.

I can see the next clue in the mystery from fifty yards away. I want Jason to see it. It is near the field edge. The sage and briars give way to a dense cedar thicket. The first cedar tree on the right

of the trail bears a truly impressive rub. So does the one behind it, but they are different.

I point out the first one to Jason and he spots the second. I explain to him how they were made in two different years. I show him the degree of freshness. I explain about traditional rubs. I tell him they could have been made by two different deer. Then I show him the third rub a few yards off to the site. I show him an old scrape.

"This is the place to shoot a buck in late October or early November. This is where he comes to find a girlfriend," I say to my ten-year-old who knows about these things from other of our conversations in the woods. "What we want to do now is find a stand tree and clear a shooting lane if we need to. We won't come back here until time to hunt this buck."

"Why won't we come back before then, Dad?"

"This is a big buck place... At least there is one good buck using here. He may not even come by here until the rut starts. So, we don't want to spend a lot of time here and maybe spook him. We'll pick the stand spot and clear a shooting lane or two before he even knows he is going to be here. We'll know when it is time. The rest of the woods will tell us."

**W**here the thicket joins the hardwoods, I find a tree. It is sixteen yards off the trail and gives a good view of the approach to the grown-up field. It provides good cover. I show all this to Jason. I let him use his compass to figure what wind directions will work for this stand. I show him how to mark it on the map. I trim a few small trees and make the notes in my pocket notebook. I show Jason how I remember what tree is the stand tree.

A mosquito buzzes by and I flick sweat from my eyes. Jason's shirt is soaked. I remember he's only ten. This is enough for one morning. I want him to want to come scouting with me again. We start out.

Something gray catches my eye. I stop and nudge it with the toe of my boot.

"Look Jase." I put it in the palm of my hand. "It's a bird point. Indians used it instead of the points we have today. It's made of flint. We sure aren't the first bowhunters on this land. Maybe they camped here since it's a natural place." I give it to Jason. It will go in his "possibles" box at home.

We have made a pretty good round. I've spotted a few oaks that will need to be looked at in September. I've seen some trails that need following. We found two good looking creek crossings and a couple persimmon trees that will drop early.

We come to the truck from a side ridge. I stop halfway up. A pileated woodpecker beats his brains out against the side of a snag and Jason grins a snagged-tooth grin at me. His sweaty, grimy hand somehow finds its way into mine, and we continue up the rest of the low ridge.

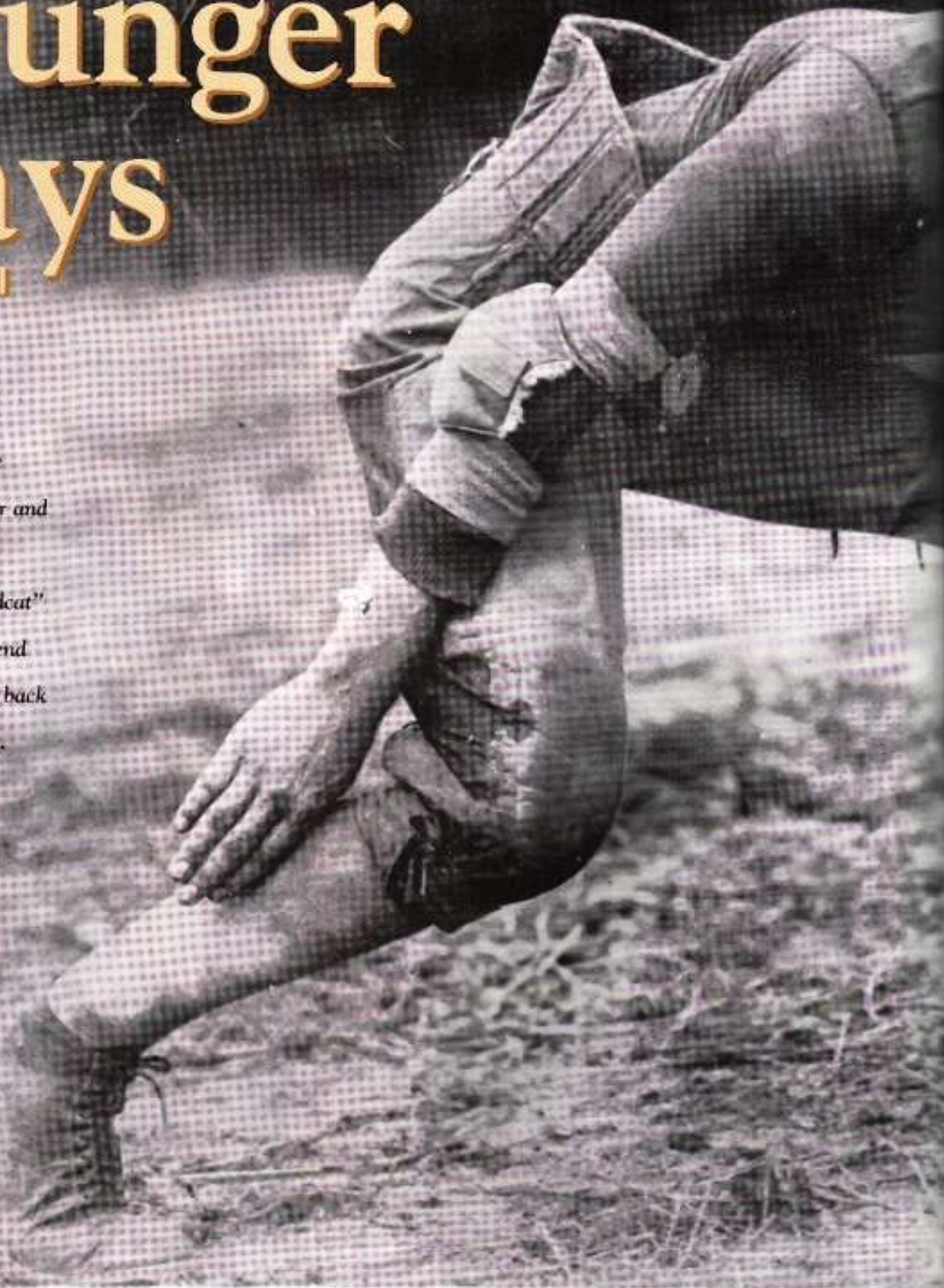




# Howard Hill's Younger Days

by Jerry Hill

*Before his fame as the world's greatest archer and his roles on the silver screen, Howard "Wildcat" Hill played defensive end and offensive blocking back for the Auburn Tigers.*







*Editor's Note: Archery great Howard Hill had his childhood dream of shooting an elephant with a bow and arrow fulfilled in 1950 when he was fifty years old. In our previous issue, Hill's nine-month African expedition and the resulting film "Tembo" were featured. This second part features anecdotes of Hill's life long before his fame as an archer was established.*

Meeting a challenge started early with Howard Hill. As inauspicious as his start was on a farm in Alabama, he went on to become a world renowned archer primarily because of this quality in his personality.

A family story tells how Howard first set his greatest challenge and determined he would do something great with a bow. John Franklin Hill, who young Howard always referred to as "Poppa," heard his four-year-old son speak longingly of a bow and arrow. In response, he fashioned a little bow out of a strip of wood from a white oak tree, such as was used quite often to make large baskets for corn and other farm-picked items. "Poppa" also used them to make hoops for fish baskets set in the river to catch fish.

Thrilled with his bow and simple arrows, little Howard put before him the challenge of his first hunt. Down the trail he hurried from the farmhouse towards the Coosa River banks abounding with rabbits and squirrels. It wasn't long before "Tip," little Howard's dog, jumped a rabbit, and Howard was right there with his new bow and arrows. Later, showing Poppa the game, the little boy who had seen the huge elephants from a circus train told him that one day he would shoot an elephant using a bow just like the one Poppa made.

*Photographs courtesy of Jerry Hill.*



Howard had a mischievous, spirited quality as a young boy, a characteristic which probably stood him in good stead later in life as he faced the professional challenges he put before himself. Growing up surrounded by a large family in Alabama, this mischievousness was known to exasperate the adults around him sometimes.

One family anecdote relates the story of Howard as a young boy with his pet rooster, "Rusty." While Howard's brothers readied their fishing poles and dug fish bait, young Howard had other plans. That day, Rusty was to prove his prowess over a neighbor's rooster.

"Ah, that rooster couldn't whip Edna's Rhode Island red rooster over there by the hen house," his brother, Off (Theophilous was his real name), told him. Immediately Howard threw Rusty down and the fight with Edna's red rooster was on. Around and around they both went, dust and feathers flying. Hearing the racket of cackling hens, barking dogs, and whoops of Howard and Off, Edna ran through the house to see what was going on. About the time she reached the front door, all she could see was a cloud of dust. When the dust finally settled, Rusty crowed in triumph over Edna's red rooster. Seeing that, Edna ran off the porch with broom in hand, shouting how much that rooster had cost her and how she was going to beat the price out of them both. Howard and his brother Off didn't stay around long enough for that to happen.

Even as a young adult, Howard Hill accepted challenges placed before him. While still helping out on the farm, Howard played basketball, baseball, and football at Shelby County High School in Alabama. Spotted by an Auburn University football scout, he was offered an early college opportunity if he could make the grades. Howard worked hard and was accepted at Auburn, lettering the first year in all sports first string. Yellowed newspaper clippings held by the family show him as "Wildcat" Hill, labeled as such by sports writers and announcers because his home was in Shelby County known for its "wildcat whisky" operations.

One game still remembered by family tells how Howard was playing right end in a game against Georgia Tech. In this game, as he had related to family members, a Georgia Tech player threw a handful of dirt in his eye each time the ball was snapped, followed by a hit of such force that it would almost take Howard's head off his shoulders, as he told it. After a couple of plays like this and listening to the threat by the other player about how he was going to be flattened, Howard had enough. As the ball was snapped, he closed his eyes for the dirt. When he opened them, he met the other player with a surprise, an upper-cut to the jaw, turning him a flip. The rest of the team joined in the fight, and the game was postponed until order was established.

Anymore fighting, the coach told him, and he would be off the team. There wasn't.

Family stories tell of Howard as a college student with

## S.C.H.S. Baseball Play



Left to right: Edwin Pitts, Soop Wilson, Black Acuff, Gerald Fulton (Pitcher), Alvin Left Slick Averyt, Paul Longshore, Rip Cox, H



Howard Hill, upper right, during his college years at Auburn.



ers 1918-1919



Lyon, Howard Hill, Homer Walton, Paul Sanders and Coach Hovater.



Howard Hill suits up.

NOVEMBER 9, 1951

BIRMINGHAM POST-HERALD

# Old Auburn, 'Wildcat' Howard Hill Recall Rough Tiger Teams Of 20's

BY NAYLOR STONE  
Post-Herald Sports Editor

Why, the guy looks like he can go out on the gridiron today and play a bruising 50 minutes. This fellow is tall and lean and der, current world's champion grid and arrow shooter and longtime fill-in, or double, for Errol Flynn in the galloping celluloids.

Although he has been far from moved from the Plains a lot of years, Hill still is an ardent Auburn fan, keeps up with them and today is rooting hard for the rejuvenated Tiger of the gridiron to go the rest of the way without losing another decision.

Ralph Jordan is doing a magnificent job," Hill said yesterday, while lunching with Clint Bonner, Thomas M. "Sonny" Nesbitt and Jimmy Couey. "I'm proud of 'em."

This year's Auburn team is akin to the Auburns of 1921, 1922 and 1923, when Hill was a great defensive end and offensive blocker. In 1921, Auburn won five and lost three. Triumphs were over Howard, Spring Hill, Clemson, Port Benning and Tulane.

In 1922, the Tigers conquered Marion Institute, Howard, Spring Hill, Mercer, Port Benning, Clemson, Tulane and Georgia Tech by close scores. That winter graduation Tigers a solid

the team won three, lost three and tied three. Birmingham-Southern, Georgia and Center, while draws were fought with Clemson, Tulane and Georgia Tech.

So Auburn's over-all record for the three years that Hill played was 16 victories, eight defeats and three ties, which is slightly better than Southeastern Conference.

"Mike Donahue was head coach when I was a Tiger," Hill reminded me. "Great coach, too. But he talked with his players or something like that. Giraffes are dumb, and I know I'm not that dumb." Ford grinned.

"What's the matter?" Bonner asked me. "I just told you, Donahue, I answered, 'Go on out and you'll have no more trouble with him. Bonner promised I went out and Coach Donahue didn't say anything the rest of the season to me."

The next year Coach Donahue can't take that riding from Coach Blake. Atlanta sports writer, gave it to me. He was covering one of our practice sessions. Where you from, 'boy?' he asked. "Down in Shelby County," I answered. "That's where they made that line wildcat raised."

Ford went into the dressing room trying for a tongue lashing Coach Donahue had given him. The coach had called him a "dumb giraffe."

"I'll never forget the day Flynn was trying for a tongue lashing Coach Donahue had given him. The coach had called him a 'dumb giraffe.'"

"Know how I got the nickname of 'Wildcat'?" he asked. "Morgan Blake, Atlanta sports writer, gave it to me. He was covering one of our practice sessions. Where you from, 'boy?' he asked. 'Down in Shelby County,' I answered. 'That's where they made that line wildcat raised.'"

whisky. Ever afterward, when I write about me, I was 'Wildcat' with Morgan Blake."

No longer does Howard (W) Hill fill in for Errol Flynn in the moving picture industry.

"I got back from Africa a month ago," he said. "While I was in Africa, I made Tembo, a wild game picture in Technicolor, which is being distributed by RKO. I'm showing it here in December or January."

Hill does all his wild game hunting with only bow and arrow.

"Tell Shug Jordan and those fine Ole Miss game at Mobile, but I'll be pulling for them," Hill said as the luncheon broke up. "Bless 'em!"

LONGBOWS & RECURVES

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*Howard Hill, far right, was active in many sports including basketball at Shelby County High School in Alabama.*

that same mischievousness he had as a young boy. For instance, when he found first year students were not allowed by the older students to go "up town," he went anyway. The tradition was that when a first year transgressor was spotted, the older students would run the first-year student back on campus with their belts swinging at his rear or they would form a belt line and each older student would get one lick with his belt. Howard wouldn't run like many of the boys, but would bend over and take the whipping. After catching Howard several times, the older students finally let him get by because he just wasn't any fun to whip. He was too tough.

One challenge which influenced Howard's entire life was persuading his high school teacher, Elizabeth Hodges, to date him. After being offered a chance at attending Auburn, Howard knew he needed tutoring to keep high grades for entrance. The young teacher, just out of college herself, told him if he would study hard and get himself the college offer, she would date him once he got to college. He met the challenge. Howard got to college, they dated, and after leaving college he married this high school teacher. Elizabeth Hodges proved to be a valuable helpmate to Howard not only in his personal, but in his professional life as an archer.

Howard's slowly building reputation as a great archer originated in Florida where the couple moved in the 1920s at Elizabeth's brother's suggestion. Working with a well-known land developer, Howard continued to bowhunt every chance he had; the trips

spotted by management while consistently popping every balloon at a kiddie park bow and arrow shooting gallery, Howard soon was asked to not only give promotional demonstrations for them up and down the East Coast, but to make their bows too.

During the years spent in Florida, Howard was making archery history with record-setting shooting. In 1926, he set a long distance flight record of 391 yards, 2 feet, 11 inches, which also beat the foot bow record at that time. The bow weight he used was 172 pounds pull.

All the time Elizabeth kept telling Howard that with his special talent, sooner or later he would be able to give up selling real estate and become a professional full-time archer.

This unwavering belief in Howard provided the impetus for Howard's move to Hollywood. Reading the glamour-type magazines popular at the time, Elizabeth came upon a classified advertisement for a movie role for someone who could ride a horse while shooting a bow and arrow. Immediately wiring that her husband was the man for the job, she followed with a wire to Howard, who was on a hunting trip in the West, to take a train to Hollywood because a movie audition awaited him.

While he did get the movie part, fame didn't come immediately, or without hard work. Unlike the flash-in-the-pan fame coming to some, Howard Hill's fame as the world's greatest archer was built slowly and steadily and was well-deserved.







*The stability of a ladder stand is only as good as the strapping method that holds it to the tree.*

# Rx For Tree Stand Safety

by Dr. Robert H. (Bo) Perry

A local friend of mine, Larry King, had just finished his morning climb. Reaching down to pull the seat up from his climbing tree stand, he felt that it was slightly stuck. One tug, he figured, would free it. No, it was stuck a little worse than that. He pulled harder. Suddenly, the stand gave way beneath him and spiraled to the bottom of the tree. King was left hanging, arms and legs outspread, looking for all the world like a duck about to light upon the water, except he was twenty-five feet in the air. Slowly, carefully, he turned to face the tree, undid his safety belt, and slid, bear-hugging the tree, all the way to the ground. Larry is convinced that a safety belt attached to the tree saved his life.

Billy Riddell, another Mississippi hunter, had a more tragic outcome with his tree stand accident. After rigging a climbing stand only eight feet off the ground so that he could have his feet on it and sit on a limb, he was sent tumbling backwards when the limb broke without warning. Riddell landed on his neck and became partially paralyzed. Today, fourteen years later, he walks with the aid of a cane.

Most tragic is the third incident. Dr. Richard Sullivan, of Tennessee, fell to his death from a tree stand. Apparently, he had been removing a jacket when he lost his balance.

Sit with any group of deer hunters and you can hear similar stories. These three different incidents, and vastly different outcomes, are representative of the need to use caution when hunting from elevated stands. An article in the newsletter of the International Hunter Education Association states that each year there are from two thousand to three thousand reported tree stand accidents, probably a low figure since most accidents are not reported. Even so, the statistics show six hundred temporary injuries, thirty permanent disablements, and ten fatalities nationwide each year. With the increased use of and interest in this type of hunting, the number of these accidents can be expected to grow.



Any time hunters choose to get very far off the ground, they stand the chance of returning to it abruptly. While some accidents cannot be completely eliminated, many of them certainly can be. As a hunter education instructor in Mississippi, one of my interests has been to help hunter/students develop a philosophy by which all accidents, including those involving tree stands, can be greatly reduced in number.

## BASIC PREPARATION

Basic preparation starts with that most able of computers, the human brain. I teach that the hunter should use it wisely and think for a long time about the things that can happen when leaving the ground. If a dangerous situation exists, don't delay. Respond to it right away. Think in terms of defense-in-depth. This means never trusting your life or health to any single entity. If you are climbing a branched tree, don't depend on a single limb to hold you. Test each limb vigorously while holding onto the tree trunk, if possible. The odds that both the limb will break and also that the whole tree will fall are not very great. Always observe each limb closely before you trust it. In early fall, limbs with no leaves are a giveaway, but after the leaves drop, look for sloughing bark. Also, just because a limb has leaves on it does not necessarily mean it is safe. Compare these leaves with those on the rest of the tree. If they are different, beware.

A prime example of this happened this last fall while I was climbing a tree to a built stand. The tree steps stopped and limbs were obviously used to continue climbing. As I continued upward, I placed my hand on a limb and inspected it. Looking out on the limb, which was covered with leaves, I noticed that they were different from those of the tree and, in fact, belonged to a muscadine vine. I shook the limb harder and it came away in my hand.

When using nailed tree step boards, try to step on the middle nearest where the nails are driven. If this is not possible, test each step with a hand before putting your weight on it, and always hold the tree trunk with the other hand if possible.

## TESTING

It's a good idea to practice what I call "pre-hunt stressing" of any and all tree stands. If they are built on site in the woods, invite someone along. When you reach the stand, check it, strap yourself in, and then romp, stomp, wiggle, and push against the stand and its rails.

With portable stands this can be done in your backyard



*Test Your Equipment. The light cord hanging from the tree can be used to right an upside down bowhunter.*



*It's better to trust the tree than the ladder.*



*Tripod stands should always be staked with ropes or cords opposite the legs.*

if you have a tree handy. Do it in daylight, but you might try to not let the neighbors see you. Some of them already think bowhunters, and especially traditional archers, are a bit odd, and the sight of you gyrating in your stand may cause them to worry that you have gone over the edge.

Bowhunters especially should practice shooting in their stands. Most stands built for bowhunting do not have a safety bar or rail on the notion that it will interfere with shooting. While this can be true, this also renders them less safe. Most problems of shooting with or without a safety bar or rail can be cured with some practice. From my profession in the dental field, I can tell you that the limb of a bow striking a safety rail during the shot is almost guaranteed to loosen every tooth in your head, and a few other things as well.

Any discussion of tree stands should include the basic types. Tree stands encompass a wide range of contrivances. They are built on site, manufactured in the finest factories, and put together in welding shops and backyards of eager do-it-yourselfers. Some will climb trees and take you along, and others need to be hung and a means of getting up to them



procured. Others are free-standing, as in tripods or boxes, which arguably are not tree stands at all, but still a considerable distance to the ground exists. All stands have drawbacks and strong points, but the bottom line is, a hunter can fall out of all of them.

## BUILT TREE STANDS

These stands have the potential for being the most comfortable of all; some are even roofed and heated. One problem with these stands is that they (and the steps that lead up to them) usually stay up year after year, and every time the wind blows and the tree moves, the nails are gently, but incessantly subjected to twisting and torquing forces which would seek to loosen and remove them. Each season a decision must be made if the stand has another year's worth of hunting left before it must be torn down and replaced. Sometimes the knowledge that the time was this year is gained, unfortunately, the hard way. Built stands should include some sort of railing, and as with all stands, some sort of belt should be worn while in them.

## CLIMBING AND HANG-ON STANDS

These stands offer the greatest ability to be portable that is to be had of all models. Some climbing stands are one piece with a hand-climber and others have two sections. The ones with two sections are slightly heavier and noisier to set up, but they offer twice the chance of avoiding the "big dive." Both climbing and hang-on stands depend on the constant weight of the hunter to stay stable. Take away that constant weight, and "freaky" things can sometimes occur.

## LADDER, BOX, AND TRIPOD STANDS

These stands are probably the safest of all types, and they are easier to get into for children and elderly hunters. Be advised, however, that the stability of a ladder stand is only as good as the strapping method that holds it to the tree. If this is too loose, a rapid game of "ring around the tree" may occur. Box and tripod stands are susceptible to being blown over by strong winds; proper stand placement on fairly flat ground is imperative. These stands should always be staked with ropes or cord on the sides opposite the legs. There are few more sinking feelings than when one of these stands starts to tip and there is no tree or bush to grab.

In tree stand hunting, safety belts, harnesses, and climbing belts are all essential to the defense-in-depth concept discussed earlier. The best are those with two buckles and a short trailer between the tree belt and the hunter's belt. The one-piece straps that are often found in tree stand boxes are much less desirable since they tighten around a hunter's waist or torso

when a fall occurs. Trying to free yourself from a safety device after a fall is much easier if you can breathe fairly normally.

Straps that incorporate both belt and over-the-shoulder harnesses probably provide the most comfortable fall of all, but you pay a price in using them in terms of maneuverability in the stand. When using any belt, it is imperative to situate it so that the belt is around your chest, not around your waist. This makes certain a head upright position in the event of a fall. Also important is to be sure that you will drop only twelve inches or less.

Many tree stand accidents, like plane crashes, happen either on the ascent or descent. Climbing belts are available which are similar to those used by utility linemen. Some will climb and then be your safety belt as well.

## CLASSIC EXCUSES

Otherwise careful hunters often decline the use of safety belts. The reasons sometimes even sound similar to excuses from people not using automobile safety belts:

1. "They're too much trouble."
2. "I can't shift positions while I'm in the stand."

Or:

3. "I don't want to be left hanging twenty-five feet up in a tree." (You prefer a twenty-five foot fall to the ground?)
4. "I fell twenty feet out of a tree stand last year and nothing happened. I was fine." (Better luck next time?)

Such arguments are at best specious and at worst foolhardy. Almost all the negatives of safety belt usage can be overcome with practice and technique so that their confining influence is minimal. As for being held twenty-five feet up in a tree, I offer the following solution. Since you should always pull your bow or gun up with some sort of rope or cord, if you will simply attach this rope to the tree belt and make it sturdy enough, it can be used as a means to lower yourself safely to the ground in the event of an accident.

## SAFE HUNTING

In the incidents mentioned at the beginning of this article, the people involved were found or rescued by their hunting companion. If you decide to hunt alone, tell someone where you will be going and when to expect your return. Try to make this person someone who has enough knowledge of the area so you can be found in as short a length of time as possible. Familiarize yourself with first aid and emergency procedures. A great way to do this is to take or refresh a Hunter Education Course.

If all this sounds like you are taking your life in your hands when you hunt from tree stands, then that is fairly accurate. Hunting from tree stands is great fun and the view is wonderful; however, like razor sharp arrows (and firearms), tree stands should be treated with a healthy respect.





E Q U I P M E




*Above: Look for a part, not the whole. While these bucks are easy to spot with their mossy antlers rising above the grass, deer are not always such stand-outs.*

# BINOS FOR

Photographs by Sam Fadala.



N T G U I D E



**A**s the fingers of the sun lifted the white mist of the quiet landscape, I began to make things out in the distance. My goal was simple: to fill an antlerless mule deer tag. All I had to do was find the one I wanted, get close enough, and let my Ferret recurve do the rest. It happened just that way. I did find a dry doe. I did get close. The recurve bow did put an arrow on target. Without the optical instrument around my neck, however, turning distant dots into deer never would have happened. I couldn't see the deer with my naked eye.

I call binoculars the "Eye of the Hunter," useful for everything from elk in black timber to whitetails in the thicket, to antelope on the prairie. I have shown my wife, sons, daughters, friends, and visitors how binoculars can pick up game that would otherwise go undetected, also proving that when the hunter sees his quarry before it spots him, the advantage goes in favor of the sportsman. My family, and most of my hunting friends, now find much of their game with the glass. I would like to convince you to do the same.

Most hunters own binoculars. They use them to magnify what they have already spotted, few actually finding game with them. Meanwhile, over half of the deer I've taken, perhaps 90% of my antelope and almost all of my javelina, were found first with binoculars, then stalked. So do yourself a big favor. Start using binoculars as hunting tools, not simply magnifiers of things your unaided eye already detected. Carry the glass to increase your outdoor enjoyment, too, bringing nature closer. Put a good pair of binoculars on your "must-have" list, and I promise you will increase your chances of taking game with the string-gun because you will see more wildlife to begin with, and you will see it before it sees you.

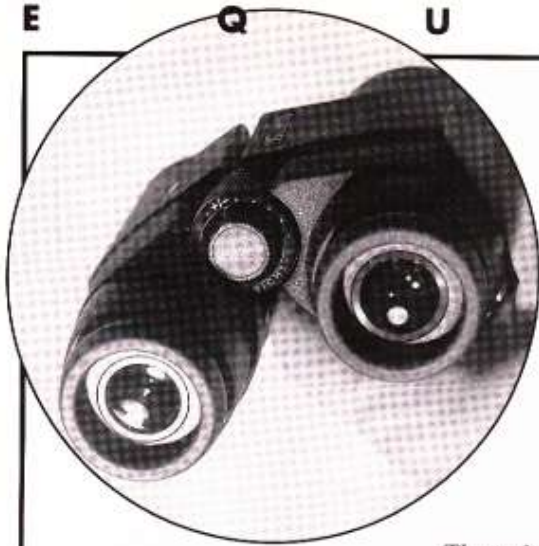
Binocular game-finding is more than sticking a pair in front of your face and glancing through them. The peek-a-hoo method has been promoted by outdoor magazines forever, especially in photos where the hunter glances wistfully into the distance, pinching the glass 'twixt thumb and forefinger like an opera-gazer. This is not a game-finding technique. Two things are important: buy the best model you can afford and adopt a game-finding method in using them.

# BOWHUNTERS

by Sam Fadala



## E Q U I P M E N T



*The oculars of these Swarovski 10x42mm binoculars are large with retractable eye cups to suit even those who do wear eye glasses.*

**F**irst, the glass itself. Field glasses (non-prismatic) are out of vogue. There are two basic types of prism glass: Porro and roof. Currently, the roof prism glass is more popular than the Porro design. Super optical resolution is possible with roof prisms, as proved by Bausch & Lomb's latest Elites, and their compactness delights those who go afield, or for that matter, sit in treestands or blinds. If you find a good Porro prism glass, don't turn it down, but roof prism models are currently the ticket.

As for power, the basic function of a binocular is obviously magnification. A 7X glass "blows the object up" seven times, or to think of it another way, makes it appear one-seventh as far away from the viewer. Neither of these explanations is precisely correct, but for our purposes, both are good enough. There is no single best power. I use three different magnifications in my own hunting. The 10X glass is my all-around favorite. It's controllable and excellent for finding far-off game. For small game, as well as brush and thicker big game, I like 6X or 7X glasses. They have sufficient magnification, but come in small packages.

Most big game animals are crepuscular, meaning they move and feed in morning and afternoon, so light-gathering ability is important in a glass. Objective lens size tells much about light transmission, with excellence of lenses and lens coatings also ranking high. Consider the old standby 7x35 glass. The first number is for magnification. The second represents width of the objective lens in mil-

limeters. Bigger objectives are better, but weight and size must be considered. Binoculars with large objective lenses can get pretty heavy, and most hunters are unwilling to pack the weight.

Relative brightness is computed by first the diameter of the exit pupil. Exit pupil is easily illustrated. Hold your binoculars at arm's length aimed at the sky or a light-colored background. The small circles of light seen on the ocular lenses are the exit pupils. Exit pupil itself is determined by dividing the power of the glass into the size of the objective lens. So compare a 35mm objective lens with a 50mm objective lens and see what you get. The 7x35 glass has an exit pupil of 5.0 mm, while the 7x50 unit has an exit pupil of 7.1 mm. Squared, these become a relative brightness of 25.0 for the 7x35 glass and a relative brightness of 50.4 for the 7x50 glass, the latter enjoying a clear advantage for morning and afternoon shadows, while in midday, the 35mm objective lens admits all the light the human eye can use.

The term "light-gathering" is purely colloquial. No ordinary binocular gathers light. Optical lenses are hungry; each digests a little of the light that strikes it. Furthermore, while relative

*The retractable eye cups on these Swarovski 10x42mm binoculars move upward, as on the left, for those who do not wear eye glasses, and down, as on the right ocular, for those who do wear eye-glasses. The author has slipped O-Rings beneath the retractable eye cup to prevent it from sliding downward since he does not wear eye glasses.*



brightness remains an accepted American measurement of light-passing efficiency, some optical engineers believe that twilight factor or twilight performance is a better formula. It works by multiplying the diameter of the objective lens by the magnification of the binocular, then





## N T G U I D E

extracting the square root of the product. A 7x35 glass has a twilight factor of 16. A 7x50 glass has a twilight factor of 19. A 10x50 glass has a twilight factor of 22. Twilight performance is a good measure because it includes the magnification of the glass, which is important in enhancing an object in any light.

In buying a glass, think quality. The high-quality instrument stays in collimation longer than a cheaply-made glass. In other words, the two barrels remain aligned. Better binoculars are also more moisture resistant. Some are even waterproof. They also have properly-coated lenses, and all integral parts are not only more precisely compatible, but a few bumps will not knock these elements out of whack. Binoculars can be purchased for the price of a tank of gasoline, but some low-cost models last about as long as a tank of gasoline. Also, you may get a headache looking through the cheap glass, while quality glass allows long sessions without eye fatigue.

Top-drawer binoculars have something else going for

them. Call it optical resolution. When a glass has it, you can pluck a buck right out of the landscape. My tests for optical resolution are non-scientific and simple. I read distant signs, especially trying to make things out that are in shadows. I also look at far away objects to see if I can determine what they are. For example, where I live, there is a good view of a mountain with intervening hills. On one of those hills there are objects scattered among bushes. With some binoculars, I cannot make these things out. With other glasses of identical magnification, I can tell that they are wooden boards of various shape, color, and texture. The quality makes the difference.

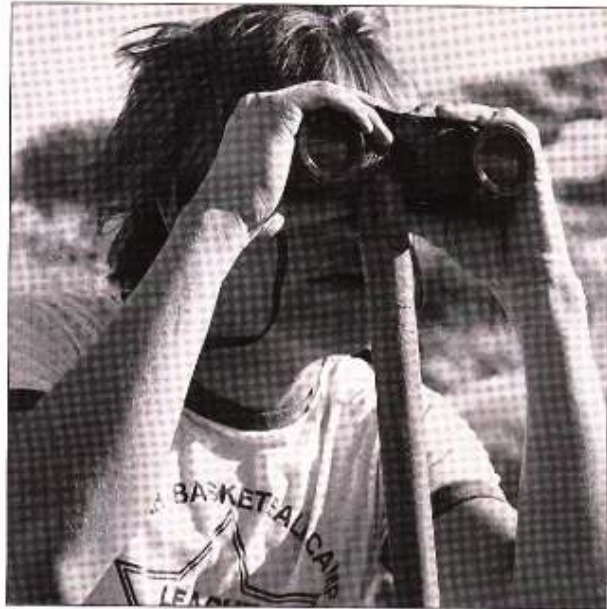
Field of view is often heavily considered in binocular selection, but not by me. There is nothing wrong with high-quality wide-angle glasses, but field of view, measured in feet at one thousand yards, is not nearly as important as other criteria, especially instrument quality. If a glass has high optical excellence, and it is well-built, I will live with a little narrower field of view.



*Author Fadala says that the vast majority of his antelope have been located with optics. This bino-found buck was taken with a Herb Meland Ferret sixty-one pound recurve bow and tapered cedar arrows tipped with Grizzly broadheads.*



## E Q U I P M E N T



*Getting a good rest for binocular-searching cannot be over-rated. Here, a walking stick is used to steady the view of the glass.*

The second point of using binoculars is adopting a game-finding technique. Before learning how to find game with binoculars, consider an attitude adjustment. Make up your mind that you are going to use your glass as a game-finding tool and not simply to spot your tent on the way back to camp. I use frames of reference in teaching binocular game-finding techniques.

Here is how I began with a friend: "Look at that white boulder at the bottom of the canyon." He found the boulder. "See those two green trees close together about two hundred yards to the left of the boulder?" He saw them. "Look at that fallen log about 50 yards above the trees." He saw the log. "Now, only thirty or forty yards to the right of that log is a bedded mule deer buck. Do you see him?" He did. That's how a newcomer should be trained to find game, not "There's a buck on that hill" when the hill is larger than three football fields combined.

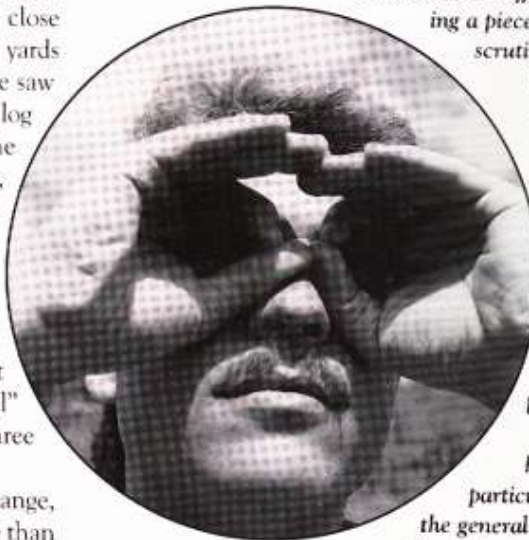
As part of the attitude change, remember that glasses do more than magnify. They isolate chunks of territory for scrutiny, focusing

concentration on one piece of the environment at a time. Glasses can optically separate game from habitat. They show detail in line, form, and color. They promote hunter interest in the landscape. Binoculars can change a hunter's goal from a general approach of finding game to a specific one.

Early in this century, the great Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson summarized proper game-finding binocular technique when he said: "In hunting on the grassy plains of the Arctic, a good pair of glasses and a knowledge of their use are about as important as the quality of your rifle and the pair of legs that carry you. I have found it as difficult to teach a new man the proper use of field glasses as to teach the use of the rifle.... The green man stands erect with his heels together, lifts the glass jauntily to his eyes and spins slowly around one one heel, taking from half a minute to a minute to make a complete survey of the horizon. Then he announces that there is no game in sight. The experienced hunter will take some pains to find the best place to sit down.... If the landscape is well within the power of his glasses he will probably rest his elbows on his knees, but if the distance is great or if the wind is blowing, he will lie down flat with elbows on the ground, or will build up out of stones or any available material a rest [so] the glasses... cannot be shaken by the wind."

Your technique should also include getting comfortable. You cannot glass efficiently when chilled. Carry a jacket for long glassing sessions. Put it on when you sit to look; take it off to hike. Wear a hat that provides eye shade. Also, get steady. Nothing is wrong with

*Binoculars are effective in isolating a piece of territory for scrutiny. The importance of this is seen in a trick called "owl eye," in which the observer simply cups his thumb and forefinger around each eye to block out light, and to isolate his view on the particular, instead of the general. John Fadala, the author's son, shows the*



*"owl eye" method for getting an isolated view of something even without binoculars.*

frequent sweeps of the landscape from the standing position, but if you want to find something, sit down, preferably with back rested, elbows planted firmly into the knees. Relax. Study the area carefully. Use a walking stick to rest the glass in the standing posture. And, alter your focus. Your focus wheel should not be set for one distance and left there. Adjust the wheel often, sharpening





*While the author insists that only a good steady view is permissible when trying to locate game in the distance, he has no objection to the occasional glance at the countryside, as shown here with a compact pair of B&L Discoverer glasses.*

and softening the picture. This tactic helps to optically evaluate an object. Is it plant, mineral, or animal? I have found that I prefer center focus over individual focus or auto-focus glasses since I can soften and harden the image as I look for game. An important point to remember is to not look for a whole deer, whole elk, or any other whole animal. Instead, look for only a part of an animal.

Big game standing in the open shows up for what it is, but game in trees or brush is another matter. If you want to chalk up some fantastic finds, learn what wild animals really look like under real field conditions. Most of the time, game blends into its habitat. Think of it as an optical puzzle where your job is to find a clown concealed by many confusing lines in the picture. Once you see the clown, he's obvious,

but before you see him, he's optically hidden in plain sight. So look for a part of an animal and the whole animal will follow. Most of the deer I find are parts of deer, especially when the animals are bedded or standing in foliage. An ear. A bit of bony antler. A leg.

Study texture. I found this particularly important on one hunt in Mexico. My eye returned over and over to a gray log on the side of an open hill which looked like a chunk of oak tree. I suspected the log was a lie, but it did not move. I focused and refocused. The texture of that log was just too soft to be wood. Finally, the "log" turned into a whitetail buck lying doggo with its head flat on the ground.

My tutor John Doyle used to say that "you must look behind the trees and through the rocks." His meaning was to look hard with great concentration. A big difference exists between concentrated scrutiny and haphazard glancing.

When to look? All day long, searching especially hard in the morning and afternoon when most big game is looking for food or is on the move. How long to glass in one place? Depending on the game and the habitat, a hunter might be wise to look from a good vantage point for thirty minutes, or even an hour, before hiking on. Where to look? As his hunting experiences grow, the outdoorsman will find special niches for specific game revealing themselves, such as shady spots on a brushy hillside, beds beneath trees, resting places by boulders.

So start shopping for that good pair of binoculars. They will cost you bucks, but they will also show you bucks. And that is no bull.

*These are all ten-power binoculars, yet they don't look alike. On the left, the 10x42mm Swarovski glass is a bit shorter and wider than the 10x42mm Bausch & Lomb Elites on the far right, while the Zeiss 10x56mm glass in the center is considerably larger than its companions.*





**E**ven in traditional archery, problems arise that require solutions. Several problems that frequently arise in the traditional ranks are: the right-handed shooter discovers that he has a left dominant aiming eye, the new \$450 longbow or recurve begins to make excessive noise, and a clean release seems more difficult to come by when the pressure is on.

Way back in the sixties, my wife Fran Wesley developed an interest in competitive target and field archery. A predicament which confronted her was that upon lining up her arrow directly with the center of the target, her arrows grouped neatly together five inches to the right of her intended mark from a distance of twenty yards. Upon visiting an archery pro (because instructors should not be an archer's own wife or husband), it was determined that as a right-handed archer she had a left dominant aiming eye.

There are several solutions to the off dominant aiming eye problem. The choice must, however, be left to the discretion of the individual archer. If the archer adamantly prefers to shoot right-handed, then he should consider the following procedure which often results in dominant aiming eye shift. This was successful with Fran. She simply covered the outer half of the left lens of a pair of sunglasses with dark paper. As she came to full draw slightly tilting her head to the right, the vision in the left dominant eye was cut off. After a week of daily sessions, aiming eye dominance shifted to the right eye, and the sunglass blinders were retired. When the problem re-occurred a time or two, out came the sunglass blinders. The illustration is, of course, applicable vice versa.

A second solution is to shift to left-handed shooting. However, the archer should wait a bit before selling the old bow. Shifting requires developing new "muscle memory." For some archers this is a transition requiring more effort than they are willing to put forth.

A third solution for the archer is to simply condition himself to hold over a bit to compensate for this. Here again,

it is a choice for the individual.

For the archer wanting to determine the "dominant" aiming eye, he should simply extend both arms to arm's length in front of his body. A diamond-shaped opening about three inches across is formed with the back of the hands. He should then frame some object in the center of this opening with both eyes open. Without moving the head he can shut the right eye.

If the object remains in the center of the opening, the archer is left eye dominant. By reversing the procedure and shutting the left eye, right eye dominance is established if the object remains in the center of the opening.

How important is it to the instinctive archer to have the drawn arrow, full length directly under the dominant aiming eye? The answer to this, as stated before, will have to be determined on an

# Traditiona TO THREE COMMON

by Bob Wesley



**"The average archer should have the drawn arrow under the dominant eye."**



# Solutions

## HOOTING PROBLEMS



individual basis. While Howard Hill, who was right-handed and left eye dominant, shot coins out of the air at thirty feet right-handed, it is important to note that Hill, a superb athlete in all respects, was a master at the use of "indirect aiming" and could focus on a secondary aiming spot several inches to the right of his target with great proficiency. The average archer should have the drawn arrow under the dominant eye.

Sometimes archers find their favorite bows are making excessive noise upon release. Before fearing that the bow is breaking or that the design is faulty, several other possibilities should be considered. The bowstring might

*A hunter determining his dominant eye can save time, money, and the frustration of missing the mark.*

have stretched causing the fistmele or brace height to drop, the bowstring needs more strands, or the arrow being used is too light in stiffness or weight. Often the bowyer sends a string on a bow not completely stretched which can cause the brace height to drop a full inch. Most strings can be removed from the bow and twisted to shorten the length, thereby restoring the proper brace height. (Care should be taken to twist the string with the natural twist.) I prefer at least fourteen to sixteen strands in my bowstrings for a draw weight from fifty-two to sixty-two

pounds (many more strands if using the fast flight type of string rather than dacron).

Due to the increased performance of modern bows, it is generally necessary to use an arrow spined about seven to ten pounds stiffer than the bow weight. An arrow which is not stiff enough for the bow being used will generally slap the bow upon release, making a loud noise. For my fifty-nine pound draw weight longbow, which I affectionately named "Elephant Walk," I use arrows spined from sixty-seven to seventy-two pounds at a weight of at least 530 grains. I custom fit my nock size to my bowstring serving size. If the nock fits too tight, I dip the nock while it's on my arrow into hot boiling water for thirty seconds and then while it is still hot and slightly softened, I force it on the serving. This slightly opens the nock and sizes it for a smoother departure from the string upon release.

Finally, I use fur string silencers on my bowstring when bowhunting. This reduces the noise of the string and can possibly make the difference in placing the arrow through both lungs of a somewhat nervous deer that could otherwise respond to the string noise and duck the arrow.

What is the best way to achieve a crisp, clean release even when under pressure or nervous? By using the rhomboid muscles of the back to hold the weight of the drawn bow, the archer can best reduce tension in the drawing arm and knuckles of the anchor hand thus resulting in a cleaner release with minimal string jerk or creeping. The archer can simply relax the hand holding the drawn bowstring to release it rather than have a forced plucking in the process of release. If this is done correctly, the anchor hand will either remain on the face or move slightly backwards as a reflex. This back-powered release is achieved through mental effort, practice and when possible, under the watchful eye of a good traditional archery instructor.



# Elk Hunting the Rockies from the South

by Wayne "BIGGIE" Hoffman



*Elk hunting in the Rocky Mountains is a dream for many of us southern boys. As good as some writers are at "putting you there," the dream cannot be realized until you are there in the pre-dawn darkness challenging a herd bull and hearing his response. No hunting video or tape recording can give the tingle of a real life encounter with an elk.*

Now I'm a regular guy with a regular job like most of you. I have been fortunate, however, to realize my western dream several times and I'd like to pass on to you some options that are available to us working stiff.

At one end of the spectrum is the guided hunt. Usually this endeavor runs anywhere from three hundred dollars a day and up. Don't forget the airfare, and the three hundred a day does not include your license. Of course, that tidy little sum will probably give you a

better than average chance at some elk steaks since most guides charge on the success rates they can boast. If you do your homework and find a good reputable guide and outfitter, you will probably have an excellent hunt with many comforts, good food, horses to ride in and out of the mountains, and no dishes to wash. If you just pick a name out of a magazine however, you will probably get what you deserve and all the bologna you ate saving up for the trip will be for naught.

An item I forgot to mention is the advantage you gain on a trip where your time is limited. The outfitter will know where the animals are and can save several days of locating herds, especially if they are not being very vocal. My friends and I have spent five and six days of our allotted time away from work just locating herds that have become closed mouthed for one reason or another. Now you may feel locating is all just part of the hunt, but I would rather spend my days hunting elk and not locating them.

On the other end of the scale lies the do-it-yourself-camp-out total-wilderness-experience-hunt. I know several groups that outfit their own camps from tents to striking paper. They drive their pickups, pull a trailer, and hunt public land in New Mexico. They hunt two full weeks and see a variety of game including some huge bulls. The biggest single expense is the license. The hunters take turns cooking and cleaning up, which is all part of it, and they don't have to worry about breaking anything (bones or bows) if the horse bucks them off since there isn't one. This type of hunt makes you do all the work, and justly, the rewards are greater. No one shows you where the critters are, bugles them in for you, skins and packs out the meat, or has a hot meal ready when you return. This type of hunt is the handyman special and, including license, you generally get out and back for around six hundred dollars a piece. A real bargain in this day and times. You can spend more money than that staying home for two weeks!





Photographs by Pinnacle Photography.

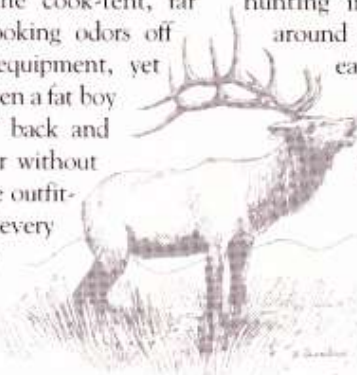
The last type of hunt, and the one I am most comfortable with, is the drop camp. Here, in my opinion, is the best of both worlds. I don't particularly enjoy the thirty hour road trips anymore so a 727 is the way to get there and not waste four of your cherished vacation days behind the wheel. If you start hounding your travel agent in March or April, he or she will eventually get you a good rate just to keep you from calling every week and asking if a better deal has been found yet. The outfitter picks you up at the airport, will take you by the grocery, and deliver you and your supplies to camp, which normally consists of a cook tent and a separate sleeping tent.

Allow me to use Bill Wallace as an example. Bill and his family run a guide service out of Collbran, Colorado. I make this trip every other year with my hunting partner Mike Douthat from Greenville, Tennessee to hunt elk and mulies from one of his drop camps close to the Grand Mesa near Grand Junction. After the grocery, Bill takes us

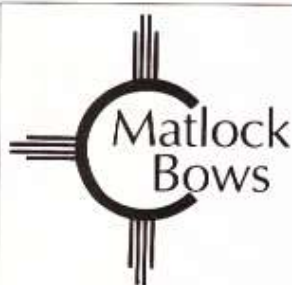
to buy the necessary license, then straight to camp. The cook tent has a large table, and a regular-sized kitchen stove fueled by propane gas. The lanterns that hang from the ridgepole are also fed by this never ending cylinder of fuel. There are plenty of cooking utensils and twenty gallons of fresh water in five gallon plastic containers. Both tents have wood stoves and outside there is a cord of wood cut and stacked just in case a September cold snap invades the camp. The sleep tent contains four cots and carpet on the floor. It is thoughtfully placed thirty yards upwind of the cook-tent, far enough to keep cooking odors off your clothes and equipment, yet close enough that even a fat boy like me can "dash" back and forth in a downpour without getting too wet. The outfitter comes into camp every evening and brings fresh water and carries off any trash we may

have accumulated. If we need anything from the store, we just leave a note and Bill will bring it up the next night. If we are fortunate enough to tag an elk in the next basin, he will bring in horses to pack it out and take the meat to town to a locker until we are ready to leave. We have nine full days to hunt twenty five hundred acres of private land that backs up to eighty thousand acres of Bureau of Land Management land. It is actually a four-man camp, but we pay a little extra to have it to ourselves. Even with that little extra to the outfitter and the airfare, we get in some excellent hunting in beautiful country for around fifteen hundred dollars each. That includes the pre-flight trip to K-Mart for enough socks and shorts to last nine days.

So, there you have it guys and gals. Three options. Pick one and make your dreams come true.







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*Montgomery Bowhunters Club*, Bill Powell, P.O. Box 1367, Montgomery, AL 36102, 334-277-7592

*Traditional and Primitive Archers of Alabama*, Troy D. Breeding, 981 Union Road, Somerville, AL 35670, 205-778-8871

## ALASKA

*Alaska Bowhunters Association*, P.O. Box 935, Homer, AK 99603-0935, 907-235-5602

## ARKANSAS

*Traditional Bowhunters of Arkansas*, Wayne Millican 501-327-8637, or Joe Clark 501-834-8883

*Ozark Traditional Bowhunters*, John Wolf, 4322 Beaver Lane, Fayetteville, AR 72704-5535, 501-575-0784

*Bowfishers of Arkansas*, James Howey, 18210 Thomas Trail, Little Rock, AR 72206, 501-565-9656

*Bowfishing Association of America*, Danny Nichols, 619 Elk Court, Monticello, AR 71655, 501-367-2554

## ARIZONA

*Archers Who Care*, Jim Schultz, 16144 E. Palisades Blvd., Fountain Hills, AZ 85268, 602-837-3119

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*Traditional Archers of California*, Olivia and Robert Lawson, 6109 26th Street, Rio Linda, CA 95673-4608, 916-991-5350

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*Willow Ridge Traditional Bowhunters*, Jeff Barker, 2823 Howell Drive E., Regina, SK, Canada S4N 6G1, 306-789-8859

*Traditional Bowhunters of Manitoba, Inc.*, Ron Missyabit, 338 Victor Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3G 1P6, 204-772-8585

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*National Archery Association of the U.S.*, Robert Balink, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909-5778, 719-578-4576

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*Indiana Traditional Bowhunters Association*, O. J. Cornett, 2810 N. Slab, Austin, IN 47102, 812-752-6264

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## FROM THE FIELD

### Role Models

An interesting note from Stotler Archery's Jerry Dishion of Coquille, Oregon tells of how his first interest in bowhunting was pricked as an eleven-year-old back in the late 1940s. This note also reminds us of the different kind of role models young boys had then, compared to what they have today. Howard Hill had come to his school in California to put on an exhibition with the bow and arrow which thoroughly impressed him, Jerry wrote. Not long after, he also saw Hill's "Tembo" about the acclaimed African hunting trip in which Hill downed an elephant with a bow and arrow. "I talked my dad into buying me a longbow and some arrows just like Howard Hill's," Jerry wrote. "I stalked the riverbed by our home every time I got the chance and when I was in the brush I WAS Howard Hill sneaking through the wilds of Africa with only my trusty bow and arrows to protect me from the ferocious beasts that lie in wait for an unsuspecting soul to pass within striking distance of their razor-like claws and teeth."



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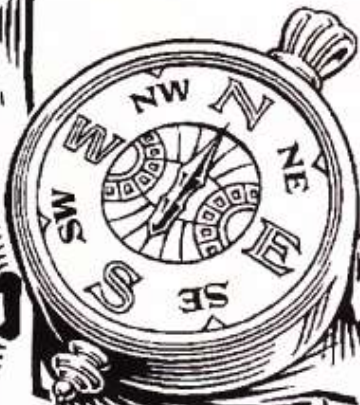
Danny Franks (photo at right) and Robert Shackleford from Savannah, Tennessee, along with guide Sidney Montgomery, were on their way by jeep to the deer stand on the second day of their Thanksgiving hunt at Willow Point South in Vicksburg, Mississippi. The weather was terrible, and the deer were beginning to move. Robert, riding in the back, just mentioned that the guides at Willow Point were great and would "put the deer right in your lap." Riding down a logging trail, the jeep was forced to stop suddenly when from out of nowhere, a doe jumped right into the front seat, landing in Danny's lap. We agree. Those Willow Point guides are really something!



## Opening Day

Opening Day of a hunting trip is sometimes enough to make a strong man cry. Hunting with "Hatfield," his sixty-eight pound takedown recurve, Mike Kuhn, of St. Petersburg, Florida, won't let Opening Day, or any other day, make him cry "uncle," however. Following is his tale of a recent Opening Day: "After a cup of what Larry (my hunting partner) swore was coffee, we were ready to start our hunt... I somehow talked Larry into helping me carry a twelve foot long, two by ten into the woods to my secret hunting spot. I needed the board to cross a raging creek to an island that grew deer bigger than mortal men ever dreamed. After carrying the board about three hundred yards, Larry mentioned that the trail to our right looked a lot like the main road. I assured him I knew exactly where we were, then told him we needed to turn 180 degrees and go three hundred yards and start over again (Woods-1, Mike-0). When we finally got to the creek I broke out into a dance to celebrate that the island was still cut off by the eight foot wide dark water. Before my dance was complete, a turkey spooked from the far bank and took off (Woods-2, Mike-0).

When we reached the creek, however, I was shocked to see it was only six inches deep (Woods-3, Mike-0), and Larry called me an idiot. The evening hunt went no better with only one squirrel and two squirrely bowhunters spotted." After eight similarly frustrating days, Kuhn reports, he was back in his tree stand the following weekend and was able to "blow a chance at a trophy eight-point buck."





# A PARTING SHOT

## Arrow at Nock

by Donald L. Patterson

I sat and was comfortable. The strong arms of the mother oak enfolded me in her arms and the thick moss carpeting of her boughs offered me a cushion that technology could not improve upon.

I sat and watched. The birds flying south had run into the rainbow, shattering its colors which had settled upon the leaves of the forest spread before me. Autumn had come. The equinox had fulfilled its task and nature's creatures were serving its agenda. Squirrels were busy storing away nuts. Deer were transforming vegetative mast into winter coats. Spider lilies were desperately reaching their tentacles further toward the sky. The loblollies were dropping their excess weight, healing with pine pitch the sores where the dead branches had hung.

I sat with my bow across my lap. It has lived with me for years, assuming my personality. The scars marring its finish are not so much indications of its limitations as they are boundaries measuring its abilities. It does not function despite its imperfections; it functions as a result of them. I have come to know its abilities and respect them for their worth. I do not ask of it that which it cannot do.

I sat with arrow at nock. Would it fly true? So many considerations: Was my decision to opt for a different fletching this year well-founded? Was the spine consistent or aberrant from the others in the quiver? In the passion of the moment would I pinch the string, over-roll the serving, or throw the bow? Ultimately, none of these is of great import. The difference is simple: either the arrow flies true or I make excuses.

I sat and smiled. Rising had been dark, yet illuminating, for the pre-dawn sky was filled with stars, and the kerosene in the lantern released its magic at the touch of the match. A fresh pot of coffee's responsibility was well-fulfilled. The bacon was fried just crisp enough. It broke at the bite, yet was chewy on the rebound. And the biscuits, oh the biscuits... just like your mama's. All in all, life was just right.

I sat and reflected. Yes, the world changes constantly. Seasons cycle. In man's world, relationships are altered. Children grow up, never down. New challenging faces come as old comforting faces go. New ways of living out our values wait to be discovered.

Friendships pursued lead to even more friendships. Day by day, we learn to adapt in order to fulfill our ordained purpose in a changing world. The lyric before me was quite clear and simple. It is the lyric of life. Listening well means the difference between purposeful living and no purpose at all. Listening appreciatively brings satisfaction in the journey. Simply listening makes the hunt.

I sat. This is why I came.

Illustration by Claire W. Stanley



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