

Nov/Dec 2016
Ice Fishing
(and More)

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Winter is at our doorstep and ice fishing is deeply in our icehead friends minds.

Where do we go from here?

Let's get to it with this edition of ODU Magazine. This magazine breaks down into coverage on ice fishing, a buyer's guide for all outdoorsmen this holiday season, open water fishing coverage and of course a bit on hunting. Ice fishing hits on the points you will

EDITOR'S LETTER

be looking for; from getting started, to early techniques to make your first excursions successful.



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Being thankful... As December grows towards the New Year many people reflect on the year behind. **OutDoors Unlimited Media (ODU)** is thankful for our friends who have been instrumental in our growth. What is growth? To us it is the sheer number of visitors who visit www.odumagazine.com each month to read the outdoor, fishing and hunting news or to catch the latest magazine we have delivered. We have exceeded a 40% growth (new visitors, total visits and page views) in traffic to www.odumagazine.com and that tells us we need to do more of the same for 2017. And we will.

Did You Miss ODU Magazine's Last Editions?



April 16'



May 16'



Jun/Jul 16'



Aug 16'



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Thankful for our loyal readers and our new readers...

Email us at odu.media@odumagazine.com if you have a story we should share, a video that everyone needs to see or if you want to be a monthly contributor on the website. We were founded as a website and digital publication for fishermen/hunters/outdoorsmen by fishermen/hunters/outdoorsmen. We are the ones on the water and in the woods all the time, so let us share your stories.

Thank you to all who have contributed to make this and past editions a success!

And please, enjoy the outdoors.

***Larry Thornhill and William Schwarz
Co-Founders of ODU Magazine***



I am more than a weekend warrior.

I'm also a dad. Soon my kids will be old enough to be out here with me. That's why I switched to lead-free weights and biodegradable baits. I pick up and recycle used fishing line. I never dump unused live bait into my lake. It's SAFE Angling, and it will ensure that my kids enjoy a clean and healthy lake. Now I'm more than a weekend warrior.

I am a steward.





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IT'S HERE!!! ICE FISHING





Through dad Dax Clark's instruction, son Max is learning how to ice-fish at a young age.

ICE FISHING IS COMING

By Bob Jensen

It may not look like it now, but soon the outdoor landscape is going to change. It could be tomorrow or next week, but it's going to get cold, it's going to snow, there's going to be ice on the ponds and lakes, and we're going to have the opportunity to go ice-fishing. There are many young and more mature anglers who would like to become ice-anglers. Following are some ideas for making that happen.

In open water fishing, one of the most important things, perhaps the most important thing for new anglers, is to catch fish. When it comes to ice-fishing, catching fish is important, but being comfortable is perhaps even more important. It's hard to convince a novice angler that they're having a good time if they're not comfortable, and comfortable means warm. There's no reason to be cold on the ice anymore. Technology enables us to keep warm without wearing heavy, bulky clothing. Cabela's MTP Tech is an outstanding base layer to insure a warm day on the ice.

Now that we know we'll be comfortable on the ice, the catching fish part becomes much more important. New anglers to the sport want to catch fish. They don't need to be big, but the catching needs to be frequent. Bluegills or yellow bass, depending on where you live, are usually reliable biters under the ice.

Sonar really enhances the experience for beginning ice-anglers. With sonar, you know if there's a fish below you. This adds excitement, and it also lets the angler know that there are fish in the area. Video games are a big deal to many young anglers, and ice-fishing with sonar is similar to a video game in their minds. Young people are very tech-driven and can figure out sonar and its application to ice-fishing quickly. Vexilar is the leader in ice-fishing sonar technology. They have created a line-up of sonar units that will fill anyone's needs.

Now for presentation. It's thought that what's a good presentation for the accomplished ice-angler should be good for the novice, and sonar certainly makes that more true. You can see the fish approach your bait on the sonar, and if you're paying attention or watching your rod tip you can feel or see them take the bait. However, there's something magical about watching a bobber floating in a hole in the ice, then see it slowly sink out of sight, or at least sink below the ice. Not a lot of finesse is required, and new anglers generally don't possess a lot of finesse. Sometimes, in fact much of the time, there's nothing better for the beginning ice-angler to use than a hook and minnow below a slip-bobber. The key is, set the bobber so the hook and minnow are above the level where the fish are.

As our ice-angler becomes better at knowing what the sonar is revealing, it will be good to go to a small jig and no bobber. The jigs location can be adjusted much faster without the bobber, so we can keep the bait at the desired level much easier.

Please don't think that I'm suggesting buying a sonar unit for a first time ice-angler. When you take a novice fishing, you need to devote time to instruction, and that means that you'll need to put your rod down, let him/her use your sonar, and you watch and teach. If you do it right, it won't be long before your new ice-angler is offering to mow the yard and shovel the sidewalk to earn money to buy his/her own ice-fishing gear, and that's a good thing.

To see all the most recent episodes of the Fishing the Midwest television series, new fishing related tips and fishing articles from the past, go to www.fishingthemidwest.com. If you do Facebook, check us out for a variety of fishing related things.



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THE WOMEN ICE ANGLER PROJECT



By Barb Carey

The Women Ice Angler Project (WIAP) is a media event that was started two years ago. The goal was to create media content including professional videos, photographs, and stories to increase awareness of just how many women fish hard water.

Clam Ice Team Pro's Shelly Holland and myself was part of the team. Both years, this event took place on Lake of the Woods with the help of Joe Henry, Executive Director at Lake of the Woods Tourism Bureau. Women-owned Cyrus Resort hosted the event in February, 2016, and the fish cooperated. The biggest pike we landed was just shy of 40 inches and we had to go in after it as it t-boned at the bottom of the hole.

The excitement that came out of the first press coverage quickly spread and in 2016, WI Women Fish

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"Many women who contacted me after seeing the story said the No. 1 barrier that keeps them from ice fishing is lack of a fishing partner. The opportunities to get out on the ice are increasing every year, and last year at Clam's Ice Team University, a record number of women attended. BY BARB CAREY"

brought more than 30 women back to Lake of the Woods for a trip of their own. Good food, good fishing and good friends made the trip one to remember. For many, it was their first trip to Lake of the Woods. I bet it won't be their last.

After this year's event, women contacted me from many states and Canada to share their passion for hard water fishing. Many of them shared stories and hoped to get involved in spreading the word on the great experiences of ice fishing. We created a Facebook page called Women Ice Angler Project and we've enjoyed seeing all the great photos of women ice fishing. Share photos and look for

contests on this page this winter and see what other women across the ice belt are up to.

Many women who contacted me after seeing the story said the No. 1 barrier that keeps them from ice fishing is lack of a fishing partner. The opportunities to get out on the ice are increasing every year, and last year at Clam's Ice Team University, a record number of women attended. Look for this year's Ice Team University as it heads to Devils Lake.

There are opportunities for women to find others to fish with throughout the midwest. In Minnesota, The Woman Anglers of MN is a women's fishing club that has been active for 40 years. In Wisconsin, WI Women Fish holds ice fishing classes, fishing trips and also provides women a place to network with fellow anglers. For the women in Canada, the active group there is the Ontario Women Anglers.

Other members of the media team are award-winning author Kristine Houtman; Clam Power Stick pros Bonnie Timm and Rikki Holland; photographer Hannah Hudson; and longtime fishing instructor Holly Hanson. The event is sponsored by Clam Outdoors, Ice Team, Lake of the Woods Tourism, Outdoor First Media, Vexilar. Aqua Vu, Fish on Kids Books, Jiffy On Ice and the Great Wild Radio Show.

Barb Carey is the founder and president of WI Women Fish. Carey is an award-winning author, a teacher, the voice of Wild Barb on the Great Wild Radio Show and an active member of the Wisconsin Fisheries Advisory Council.

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Spoon Tweaking Perch

By Jason Mitchell

Few lures can be as effective day in and day out for jumbo perch as spoons. This lure category packs weight, flash and water displacement into the presentation. Spoons can be seen and one aspect of finding fish is making sure that the fish can find you. An easy to find profile not only pulls fish in but can also raise fish further off the bottom and the higher you can lift perch, the easier they are to catch. Day in and day out, I find myself using some type of spoon whenever I am looking for perch or hunting down schools of aggressive fish. Spoons can shine whenever you need to eliminate water or are in a situation where the battle is simply finding fish knowing that if you can hunt these fish down... you will catch them.

What can make winter perch fishing challenging is the somewhat randomness of their location and the fact that these fish are often moving. Perch can often be found relating to some type of definite edge but when schools of fish start roaming expansive flats and basins, there is a certain unpredictable ness where you have to be willing to drill holes in order to find fish. Perch can also range dramatically in aggressiveness from recklessness to demanding finesse. While tough bites can demand small tungsten jig profiles or even dead stick presentations, many bites can be discovered and maximized by using spoons.

Deep Water Exploration

Spoons can shine over deep water for a variety of reasons. Deep water is often darker so the larger profile and flash of a spoon can be seen from further away. Most of the time in water deeper



than twenty feet, I like to use a lead spoon that drops fast to maximize my fishing time but also drops straight down without swaying to the edge of the cone angle so I can watch the spoon on my electronics through the entire descent. The Clam Tackle Speed Spoon was designed specifically for this application.

This particular spoon drops through the water fast and drops straight down without any drift and features a short dropper chain which is deadly for combining a little bit of finesse to the presentation. On hotter bites, replace the chain with a treble hook. I find that my batting average is better if I use a treble hook whenever tipping with anything that has bulk like a minnow head, perch eye (where legal) or a Makki XL Mino.

Besides adding some weight for pounding the mud along with profile and flash, a spoon also essentially works as a delivery system for your bait whether you are using soft plastics, Eurolarvae, a minnow or some other type of live bait. With that being said, I often find myself changing hooks on the spoon to maximize the efficiency of the presentation. When finesse requires wax worms or Eurolarvae, I often stick with the chain dropper but switch hooks when I can. I have the mentality that I am going to use the largest hook I can get away with because when you hook fish on a larger hook, you can reel the fish up faster and put a lot more leverage on the fish and also unhook the fish faster.

Another deep-water spoon tactic we pioneered many years ago is a method we call "bottom dragging" which shines whenever fish are keying on invertebrates in the mud. If you catch perch that have mud in their gills or really pink gills and pink scales on the belly, those fish are rubbing on the bottom. The bottom dragging technique requires a spoon like the Clam Tackle Blade Spoon that does drift to the side of the hole when fished over deeper water. To maximize the drift, let the spoon free fall to the side of the hole as far as possible. When the spoon hits the bottom, slowly drag the



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spoon back towards the center of the hole. I find that I often do better with this technique if I tie about a six-inch dropper below the spoon. The drag has to be slow and tedious. We have seen this presentation shine on tough bites where the fish won't accelerate toward the presentation or lift off the bottom.

Running and Gunning Shallow Water

The nuances of finding perch changes in less than ten feet of water. Flutter spoons can really shine particularly in clear water. There are times when we see perch respond to a spoon as soon as it clears the bottom of the hole in really clear water. I also find myself incorporating soft plastics with a single hook spoon much more so in shallow water or in some cases not using any bait at all. Shallow water fish are notorious for being more aggressive so your presentation and strategy should reflect the attitude of the fish.

So often, shallow water demands even more mobility as it seems like ninety percent of the fish can be caught in ten percent windows... where you have to simply eliminate water and find that hot hole or two each day where you can wind up on the fish. When you finally find the fish, you are on them where multiple fish are stacked up below and you literally have a fish on as soon as you get back down. The key to catching fish is simply finding them and then being as efficient as possible so you catch as many fish as possible before you lose them.

On these torrid shallow water bites, I like the efficiency of a large gap single hook. No split ring or treble hook, use a fixed hook spoon like the Clam Tackle Blade Jig where a larger hook is molded into the spoon. This single hook accomplishes a couple of things... you can load up a soft plastic or more bait on to the hook but also the larger hook allows you to reel the fish up faster and allows you to unhook the fish much faster which speeds up your turn around time. I will even go so far as to bend out the hook and pinch down the barb so I can get fish unhooked even faster. I will also use heavier line and a stiffer rod just so I can crank the fish up as fast as possible as the name of the game is maximizing your opportunities.



One of my favorite presentations over shallow water is to horizontally rig a Makki XL Minnow on to a Blade Jig. We filmed an episode on Lake Winnibigoshish a few winters ago with this presentation and the number of fish you can catch on a soft plastic is staggering. Again, you make yourself more efficient by being able to get fish unhooked faster and not having to rebait.



TOM'S TOP 10" FIRST ICE SAFETY CHECKLIST

By Tom Gruenwald

The process begins nearly imperceptibly.

As autumn progresses, daily lows begin steadily dropping, eventually falling below the freezing mark. Observant ice anglers, noticing frost appearing across shaded lawns, roof tops and windshields on chilly mornings, sense pending change and respond by monitoring local waters.

They know what's coming. Although it takes time, surface temperatures are cooling, and upon reaching that critical point—much like a kernel of popcorn exposed to just the right temperature in hot oil—one exposed water molecule will suddenly pop and swell, instantly transforming from a liquid to a solid...then another, followed by another and yet another as a chain reaction spreads across the surface, forming a sticky, cohesive bonding mass that steadily begins to congeal and strengthen.

The next frosty morning, ice anglers are rewarded with the sight they've been longing for: That unmistakable, glassy surface atop a frozen lake; an icy promise welcoming the season ahead.

ODU MAGAZINE VIDEO BLOCK (www.odumagazine.com)

Given the right conditions and some time, a solid coating strong enough to support the weight of anglers outfitted with gear will eventually form...but just in case an unforeseen rendezvous with a thin or weak spot is encountered, the smartest always have several first ice safety items readily available amid their chosen armament.

Here are the ones included on my checklist.

PERSONAL FLOTATION DEVICE

It stands to reason these are required by law when navigating open water, so why not when traversing an unpredictable crust of ice coating an icy bath below?

When negotiating first ice, especially on unfamiliar waters, wearing a PFD is a prudent choice—and note this need not be a traditional, bulky bright orange ‘horse collar’ life preserver. Stylish, warm, comfortable and fully functional U.S. Coast Guard approved PFD’s and float suits are now available from well established companies—and wearing one constitutes a choice that could save your life.



ICE CLEATS

Since first ice is often smooth and slickened and by thin coatings of snow, slush or water generated by drilled holes—ice cleats are nearly a necessity.

While cleats won't provide infallible traction, they're a good preventative measure against avoiding embarrassing, painful ending slips or worse yet, serious injuries due to a fall.

ICE PICKS

Should the unthinkable happen and you break through, ice picks provide the means to establish a firm grip on the edge of solid ice, ensuring your head remains above water while awaiting help, or provided you're endowed with suitable strength, the ability to independently pull yourself from the water.



WHISTLE

A whistle not only creates awareness by sounding out an attention demanding alarm, but also helps rescuers locate you during periods of limited visibility due to reduced light, blowing snow or fog.

RESCUE THROW ROPE

Like a PFD, I'm a strong proponent of seeing throw ropes become more commonly used. Should someone break through, a throw rope can quickly be extended and used to pull victims back to safety.

LIGHT SOURCE

Bright L.E.D. lights can be used to locate the edge of the ice, or help rescuers find you during periods of low light or poor visibility.

CELL PHONE

A FULLY CHARGED "sport" or waterproof cell phone, placed within a water resistant case and stored in a sealed plastic bag to protect sensitive internal electronics--is strongly recommended. Besides providing a means of communicating the need for help, lighting and GPS functions can be used as critically time-saving measures to direct rescuers to your exact location.

BATH TOWEL AND EXTRA SET OF CLOTHES SEALED IN A WATERPROOF BAG

This may seem extreme, but faced with an emergency, having the ability to strip wet clothing, dry off and replace those wet garments with dry ones could easily be an action that saves your life--or that of another.



SMALL PORTABLE HUB SHELTER AND PORTABLE HEATER



Although early season temperatures often don't mandate use of a portable ice shack to provide fishing comfort, they do offer a distinct secondary benefit: Shelter from the elements.

In an emergency, minimal time is required to snap up a small hub style shelter, and most of these can be warmed quickly with even a modest sized propane heater. Compact, lightweight hub models like HT's 2-Person Insta-Shack fit the bill perfectly.

NEBULUS EMERGENCY FLOATATION DEVICE

As the ice thickens and you begin traveling further out, consider a Nebulus. These self-inflating rubber rafts provide immediate flotation—and not just for anglers!

Strapped to the handlebars of a snowmobile or ATV, the Nebulus E.F.D. will support your machine--plus as many as three passengers for a load totaling up to 1,000 pounds--potentially saving both lives and the expenses associated with retrieving a submerged vehicle.

Remember, ice fishing success is based on playing the game smart—and that process begins by playing it safe.



THE LINK BETWEEN YOU AND THE FISH

By Dennis Kassube

In the world of ice fishing it seems that line is the least talked about part of the sequence.

It may be the most important part of the whole setup because the only thing between you and that fish is the line.

There are three main categories of line for ice fishing: nylon monofilament, flourocarbon and thermally fused superline. Mono is generally more forgiving than the other lines. You can tie almost any knot as long as it doesn't slip. You can also reach almost 100 percent knot strength with the right knot. Mono is slightly higher in density than water so it will suspend or slowly sink. You are able to have a very slow presentation, which can really be the ticket on off days. Mono does have some spool memory; always stretch out your line at the start of your fishing day.

Flourocarbon is virtually invisible to fish because it bends light in a way similar to water. It sinks a lot faster than mono so your lure will fall faster. Flouroc arbon has very little stretch, which makes it more sensitive than mono. Flourocarbon is very sensitive to heat, which is the number one reason for knot failure. Knots must be always tied wet and slow.

Superline is the ultimate in line sensitivity. It has very little stretch, almost no spool memory and is much more abrasion resistant than mono/fluoro of the same size. It falls much faster and needs to be used when fish are very active. The best knot for this line is the Palomar. Some line suggestions would be Berkley's Trilene Micro Ice, Trilene Flourocarbon Ice, Fireline Micro Ice and Nanofil. My go-to rig for panfish is Clams Pro series Light Action Spring Bobber rod spooled with Berkley's Trilene Micro Ice 3-pound test. Give this setup a try you will be impressed.

Dennis Kassube, South Dakota, is a professional angler and promoter. His knack for fishing a wide array of lake types makes him one of the more versatile ice anglers in the game today.



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BY CLAM

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WINTER PERCH

By Brian "Bro" Brosdahl

Early in the ice fishing season, most perch anglers start out on shoreline connected structure because of the thin ice conditions. Once there is more ice on the lakes, anglers can begin searching for perch in deeper water and on mid lake structures.

Small lakes seldom provide everything perch need to grow to jumbo size. When something essential is missing in a lake, it limits the growth potential of the perch and usually results in a stunted perch population.

The best perch lakes are usually larger lakes that are at least a few thousand acres or more in size. The lakes have to have plenty of perch-friendly food during all four seasons of the year for the perch to thrive.

This usually means multiple shoreline connected flats and several larger mid-lake humps and bars with the right depth on top. The lakes also need several large basin areas full of nymphs and aquatic insects for perch to feed on during the winter.

Perch also need substantial amounts of standing weeds to lay their eggs on in the spring. If there are not enough of the right kind of weeds, the perch population will suffer. A strong perch population depends on having huge numbers of perch hatching every spring, with strong age classes of perch nearly every year.

Perch have a limited life span regardless of where they live. Only a small fraction of the perch population grows fish older than ten years, so the perch need to grow fast to reach jumbo size.

Perch have high rates of attrition all of their lives. A healthy perch population can provide good forage

for just about everything else in the lake, including other perch and still have enough perch left to provide anglers with good fishing year round.

Perch are feeding machines and will pillage and plunder their way across the shallow flats like an invading hoard, devouring whatever forage they can find.

The typical perch diet includes a variety of minnows and smaller fish, along with aquatic insects, freshwater shrimp, crayfish and young-of-the-year perch.

Perch like to feed on both shallow and deep flats, depending on what type of forage the perch are targeting. Most good perch lakes have both shallow and deep patterns for perch most of the winter.

At first glance, most shallow flats may look like a featureless desert, with no logical place for anglers to begin searching for perch. Anglers have to resist the urge to look at the big picture too much and try looking for the smaller details.

Shoreline connected flats go from the shore to the primary drop-off. A flat usually implies a slow taper,



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with the flat extending a long distance from shore before dropping into deeper water.

Flats may not have a lot of obvious features, but there are usually many subtle features that are formed from different types of edges. An edge is simply the area between two or more different things. An edge may be an inside weedline, an outside weedline, an edge between weed types, a hole in the weeds, a finger of weeds, a patch of unusually green and healthy weeds, a heavier patch of chara covered bottom or any patch of weeds that is next to rocks or some other change in bottom type.

The reason edges are good places for perch to feed is they provide more than one type of habitat in a limited area. Perch feeding along edges have a better chance of finding something to eat and also have the opportunity to find a greater variety of forage.

The main focus of most perch is food and safety. They want to find plenty of food, but always leave themselves an escape route if a predator shows up trying to eat them.

Rises on the flats, depressions in the flats and other features like old river channels can all be important keys to finding perch on the flats. Perch want to be able to dive into a depression or hole on the flat, hide in some thicker patch of weeds, drop between some big rocks or swim off the side of the flat into deeper water when they get spooked or when they are done feeding.

Once anglers find some good locations that provide all of things perch need, the same areas will likely

be good year after year unless the area gets too much fishing pressure.

Weather conditions can also have a dramatic effect on perch fishing. Perch usually like to feed in full sun rather than shade, because the larger predators come out to play under low light conditions.

I use my Humminbird Ice Helix 7 to check out spots from previous winters or spots that I have marked on GPS during the summer when I begin searching for perch.

I like to go light early in the season, so I use an electric drill with a 6 inch Nils auger bit to drill my holes.

There is no need to drill as many holes as some anglers do when searching for perch. Perch are curious and can see your bait from a distance. When in doubt, I also like to use my AquaVu Micro 5 to put down the holes and check all around the hole for larger perch.

The trick is to catch a few keeper size perch, so you know they are in the area. Then anglers can drill a few more holes to try and figure out where the rest of the school is located.

Speed is another important aspect of perch fishing. The longer it takes you to get your bait back down the hole when you are on fish, the fewer fish you are going to catch.

I like to use two Bro Series light action rods, with one rod with 4 pound test Sunline Ice rigged with a Buckshot Flutter Spoon and a minnow head. The second rod will have 3 Sunline and the new Dart Jig and Impulse Water Flea, which I helped design this past year.

This winter I will be styling in my new Frabill I Float Suit to keep me safe and warm on the ice...See you all on the Bro Road Show this winter or on one of the many lakes in the Ice Belt!



Follow my fishing adventures and Bro Rd Show travels on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook

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DOUBLE YOUR ICE FISHING SUCCESS

By Matt Johnson



The All new Double Vision by Vexilar will open your eyes to an exciting new way of fishing and understanding what goes on below the ice. For years, Vexilar has been the innovator and leader in three-color flasher sonar technology and truly catapulted modern day ice fishing to what it is today. Vexilar has become a household name with anglers, and to their credit, Vexilar products have stood the test of time as well with over a million units on the ice today and many over ten years old and still working like new. The efforts from the engineers at Vexilar don't stop with just three- color flashers now, the Fish Scout camera systems amazed anglers with the new wide screen LCD color display and the fact that you can use the system for over 12 hours on a single battery charge. With this breakthrough energy efficiency and slim profile it made it possible for Vexilar to create the ultimate fishing machine for the winter angler and it is called the Double Vision. On top of leading the field in efficiency, you also have a lightweight, leak-proof camera capping off a list of elite qualities. This is a system that incorporates a Vexilar Flasher sonar AND a Fish Scout color monitor into one stand-alone system. The Double Vision system gives anglers the flexibility of using either the camera or the sonar to more fully understand what is going on below the ice. And this season the new DTD camera systems have gone to a new level with the first digital Depth, Temperature and Direction display on the monitor so you know exactly where your camera is below you and where it is pointing. Vexilar has answered the call of ice anglers by putting together all the bells and whistles in one exceptional and affordable package.

Benefits of having the Double Vision: Both units are together, making your job as an angler easier and more focused on catching fish. Portability, organization, efficiency these are a just a few simple terms that come to mind. Learn how your flasher works better understand the many variables with sonar by tying the flasher right into the underwater camera, allowing you to actually see what's occurring in relation to the image portrayed on your flasher. This is education at its finest, and something that anglers of all levels can benefit from. Its entertainment for both kids and adults it's no secret that watching fish swim around brings excitement to anglers of all ages, and actually watching a fish eat your presentation jump-starts your adrenaline and makes even the coldest days on the ice seem warm!

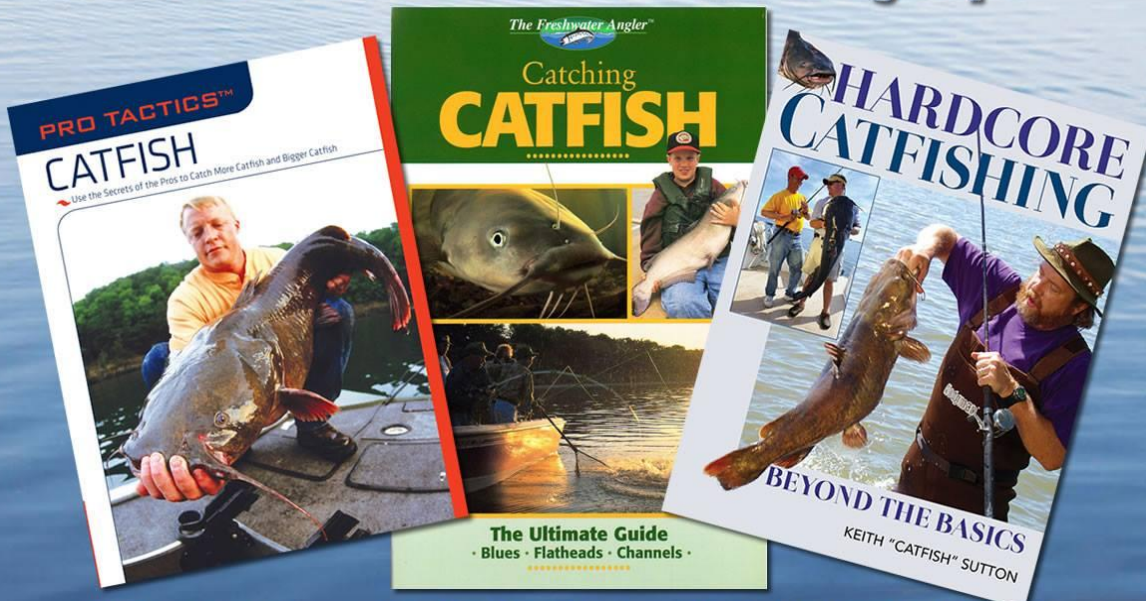
There are basically two types of Double Vision packs. One comes with an FL-20 flasher along with the camera and monitor. The other Double vision pack comes without the flasher. So, if you have an existing Vexilar, you can combine your current Vexilar Flasher with the Fish Scout and create your own Double Vision pack. The Double Vision system without sonar comes pre-wired to power either the FL-8 or FL-18

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or the FL-12, FL-20 or FL-22 systems. Remember though, you can incorporate any Vexilar flasher into the Double Vision system by purchasing either the FSDV01 or FSDV01DT, which come with your choice

of camera but allow for the addition of your favorite Vexilar flasher unit. So, no matter the Vexilar flasher you currently own, you know have an option to turn your system in a powerful one-two-punch! Vexilar is very excited to introduce the new line-up of Double Vision systems and were happy to answer the demands of the modern ice angler. Have fun out there and enjoy your Double Vision system!

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SEEING IS BELIEVING

By Team Northland

My winter fishing has changed in recent years. I used to spend hours staring at my flasher, waiting for “marks” to appear. I now prefer to actually see what’s going on below the ice, by direct eyesight or through the use of an underwater camera. Whether chasing panfish or larger predator species, sight fishing is a recipe for winter fun!

While I continue to use my Marcum flasher when employing a “search and destroy” approach, once I’ve located a hot travel route, I’ll get comfortable inside my portable house and set up for the show. I often have one of my kids fishing with me, as they all love sight fishing. I’ll auger three holes, two to fish through, and one for the camera, a Marcum VS 825SD. I’ll situate the holes in-line so the camera can view both lures.



Panfish Fun

Most often, my sight fishing takes place while targeting panfish. Sunfish and perch are generally active during midday hours, the best time for viewing underwater. These fish are not typically camera shy either. In fact, panfish species will even act curious about the camera. Crappies often become active late in the afternoon and can be caught on camera too.



A great location to set up camp for sunfish and crappies is along the outside edge of a deep weedline, as they often travel these edges. Sunnies and crappies eat small stuff, particularly in winter. Northland’s Hexi Fly jig (pictured) tied to Bionic Ice or Fluorosilk has been a fine combo for both species. I’ll add a real waxworm or an Impulse Waxie and jig aggressively until I see fish on the camera. Then, I’ll hold the jig still. At that point the fun begins! It’s a game of eye-hand coordination. Winter

sunfish and crappies bite very light in many cases. I set the hook when I see the bait disappear. Even with the aid of a camera, I'll often miss fish. Many will bite again. It can be quite a cat and mouse game!

For perch, I like to find a flat with active fish before setting up. A small jigging spoon adorned with part of a minnow or a couple waxies is the ticket. Spoons show up well on camera too. Again, I'll jig aggressively until I see fish on the screen. Then, I'll just make the spoon quiver. Perch will also pick at the bait but bite multiple times.

Predator Rush

For an adrenaline igniting experience, there's nothing better on ice than sight fishing for larger predator fish. Pike and walleye can be caught in plain view or on camera.

I'll target pike on shallow flats, in which case I can often forgo the camera and simply peer down the hole from within my portable shelter. I usually just fish one line also. If I think I've found a spot that warrants some time, I'll cut double holes, two ten inch holes side by side, and then chisel the ice out between them. This gives me a better field of view. When fishing shallow water, it's paramount to keep light from entering the shelter. I'll bank the edges with snow and tightly close all doors and windows.

This makes it easier to see into the water. Fish are less likely to spook as well. My favorite set-up for pike is Northland's new Predator Rig baited with a dead smelt or live sucker. This "quick-strike" presentation is generally reserved for rigging below tip-ups. For sight-fishing however, I rig it on a medium-heavy action spinning rod, spooled with 10 or 15 pound Bionic Braid. When using dead bait, I'll occasionally jig the presentation just enough to get the Baitfish Image attractor blades to flutter and reflect light. Pike are weird. One day they will power in and strike viciously. The next day they'll glide in every so slowly, nose the bait, and swim away.

Of the different fish species I target on ice, walleyes are the most aggressive. When chasing winter walleyes in clear water, I like to set-up on predetermined hot-spots, discovered over the years. With the camera set up, I use vibrating lures to increase the strike zone and call fish from a distance. The Buck-Shot Rattle Spoon has been my favorite for years. However, Northland's new Live-Forage Rippin Shad, is getting a lot of play too. I've found that sitting tight on a precision spot and using vibrating baits, will at times, produce more walleyes than moving around. For me, sight fishing for walleyes and employing rattling lures compares to stand hunting and rattling for whitetails.

Through sight fishing, with and without the use of an underwater camera, I've learned more about fish behavior and had a lot of fun. Seeing is believing!





Ice Fishing's Beyond Black Friday

Bro Retail 'Road Show' kicks off a huge consumer draw started in November

If a singular, larger-than-life personality applies to ice fishing, it's certainly Brian "Bro" Brosdahl—a true legend of the sport—who embarks on his annual Bro Road Show, beginning in November. For the past fifteen years, Bro has traveled the Ice Belt, visiting up to 150 retail locations every winter. At each stop, from Gander Mountain to Mills Fleet Farm, Cabela's and numerous independents in between, Bro offers on-the-spot fishing seminars and in-store training on trending products for sales staff, while leaving plenty of time to hang out with store customers, answer questions and scribble icy autographs.

But more often than not, Bro simply swaps fishing stories. Everyone who meets the affable angler, it seems, comes away with a smile, a story and a few new fishing gadgets.

"Bro has a gift for inviting folks into his inner circle with a simple handshake, a laugh and perhaps a tip related to the fish in their home waters, which more than likely, Bro's fished at some point in his travels," says Noel Vick, lifelong friend and president of Traditions Media, a fishing-focused PR-marketing firm with lengthy roots in the ice fishing industry.

Recognizing the obvious draw Bro affects at each Road Show stop, retailers often schedule his visits to coincide with special sales and promotions, as well as in-store seminars. The results consistently yield noticeable upticks in store traffic and receipts, particularly among the brands Bro promotes: Frabill, Plano, and Aqua-Vu, among others.

“When I start planning for our annual Ice Institute, Bro is the first person I contact,” says Todd Heitkamp, owner of Dakota Angler in Sioux Falls, SD. “The knowledge that he passes on to all those who come and see him is unbelievable. He’s a super promoter for us and the tackle we sell, but is really a great friend to the entire fishing industry, from individual anglers on up to the companies he represents, including Aqua-Vu, Frabill and Plano.”

“Ice fishing has become as much about the culture as the pursuit itself,” says Bro. “People see ice fishing in the media and they want the lifestyle; to be a part of this sport... it’s got an allure and a camaraderie that’s unique in the industry. In boats, people want to fish in solitude, but on the ice, people are drawn to each other... to stop by and talk. It’s one of the things that keeps growing the sport.”

Says Justina Whalen, Marketing & Pro-Staff Coordinator for Plano Synergy: “Bro embodies ice fishing. From that unmistakable fiery red goatee and approachable realness, to his status as a founder of modern ice fishing, Bro’s simply the best. For us, his value at retail is truly special. But it’s Bro’s authenticity and ability to connect with folks he’s never met before that matters most.”

“Couldn’t agree more,” adds Ben Gibbs, President of Aqua-Vu. “Plus, Bro’s a legitimate endorser of our underwater cameras and the other products he promotes. It’s not in Bro’s DNA to promote gear you won’t find in his garage, fish house and truck. Bro fishes with our stuff, believes in it.”

In terms of trends in consumer buying habits, Bro sees an uptick in the willingness to buy premium-

quality gear, even if it means a few bucks more at the check-out lane. “I’m seeing more people who want to be comfortable, and they’re willing to spend \$700 to \$800 on a quality insulated portable shelter. Same thing with high-end underwater Aqua-Vu cameras and first-rate rods and reels. They want premium and are no



longer so deterred by price, as in the past.

“It’s amazing how many Frabill combos I sell to people each winter,” Bro continues. “Many times, I’ll enter a store in December, and already they’ll be sold out of all Bro Series combos. Anglers want more options for specific techniques and species, not just an all-purpose rod or two.”

Bro is also surprised by how many people new to the sport will drop \$2,000 to \$3,000 all at once to fully outfit themselves with a shelter, clothing, electronics, auger, and tackle in the same day. All of which points to one, final poignant question: What are the hot new trends in ice fishing?

“Definitely the new Frabill Bro SideStep shelter,” Bro laughs, seeing the irony. “It’s an insulated two-person flip-over, has convenient SideStep entry with a vertical front wall, and special exterior Pro-Series Arctic Ice Camo cosmetics.

“Safety on ice is vital,” he adds. “It’s why we’re so excited to finally have a flotation suit for early ice excursions. Frabill’s I-Float suit just won ICAST’s Best Technical Apparel category and is USCG-approved, for total piece of mind any time you’re on the hardwater.”

“The coolest thing I’ve seen? Undoubtedly, it’s Aqua-Vu’s new HD700i underwater camera. You can’t believe the clarity, panoramic picture and sunlight-viewability of this new viewing system. Underwater cameras are hot in ice fishing and Aqua-Vu’s new high-def system is going to amaze anglers when they see it, no doubt.”

If you live in the Ice Belt, there’s a 2016/2017 Bro “Road Show” event near you. Don’t miss the fun.

Tentative 2016/2017 Bro “Road Show” Events

Dec. 9	Ace Hardware, Wis. Rapids, WI
Dec. 10	Gander Mountain, Wausau, WI
Dec. 11	Cabela’s, Green Bay, WI
Dec. 12	Mills Fleet Farm, Stevens Point, WI
Dec. 13	Mills Fleet Farm, Appleton, WI
Dec. 14	Gander Mountain, Appleton, WI
Dec. 15	Cabela’s, Richfield, WI
Dec. 16	Bass Pro Shops, Gurnee Mills, IL
Dec. 17	Cabela’s, Hoffman Estates, IL
Dec. 18	Cabela’s, Hammond, IN
Dec. 19	Gander Mountain, DeForest, IL
Dec. 20	Gander Mountain, Eau Claire, WI
Dec. 21	Gander Mountain, Lakeville, MN
Dec. 22	Cabela’s, Rogers, MN
Jan. 12-15	Ultimate Fishing Show, Novi/Detroit, MI
Feb. 24-26	Wisconsin Fishing Expo, Madison, WI
Mar. 10-12	Iowa Boat & RV Show, Cedar Falls, IA





SPoon IDEAS FOR ICING WALLEYES

By Bob Jensen

It won't be long until we're on the ice chasing walleyes. There are a lot of different ways to catch walleyes under the ice, but it seems like many, maybe even most walleye ice-anglers like to use spoons. There's a good reason for that: Spoons and other styles of hard baits catch walleyes really effectively. There are a bunch of different types of spoons and hard baits available to walleye anglers. Although they may look similar, there are some differences, and there are a few things you should consider when you're deciding what spoon to tie onto the end of your line. Here are some of those considerations.

Is the water clear or cloudy? In cloudy water, a noisy spoon like a Buck-Shot Rattle Spoon is the way to go. The rattling noise coming from the spoon will help walleyes find the bait easier when their sight is limited.

In clear water the rattling noise isn't as necessary, but it still doesn't hurt. However, if you're fishing clear water and see fish on your sonar come in and look at your lure but not eat it, and if you're using a rattling lure, switch to a spoon that doesn't rattle. A quiet lure, at times, will be more productive, especially in clear water.

Consider the color of the spoon. Again, clear or cloudy water will



have a bearing on what color to start with. Clear water: Something natural in appearance.

Cloudy water: Go with something brighter, something that will be more visible in limited visibility conditions. The new UV colors that Northland paints many of their best fish-catchers with will, at times, produce noticeably better than ordinary colors. And, again, if the fish are looking but not eating, try something else. Sometimes bright lures perform very well in clear water.

If you're fishing walleyes that have been getting a lot of fishing pressure, try something way different. Fish become conditioned to a particular presentation. If everyone is doing the same thing and it's not working, try something else.

When the fish are finicky, a spoon that's smaller in appearance will often be better.

A bait that doesn't really fit the "spoon" description but is kind of similar is a Puppet Minnow. These baits glide and fall in a unique manner that the walleyes really like at times. If traditional spoons aren't working, give this style of bait a try. In fact, if you're fishing with a group, everyone should be trying different baits until the best one is determined.

Spoons catch walleyes as well as perch and crappies and pike. Give them a try this winter. If you're fishing near fish, and if those fish are just a little bit hungry, they're going to eat your spoon.

To see all the most recent episodes of the Fishing the Midwest television series, new fishing related tips, and fishing articles from the past, go to www.fishingthemidwest.com



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GOING

TO SCHOOL

By Jason Mitchell

No secret that so many fish we like to target through the ice will eventually slide out and winter over holes and basins. These wintering holes will typically load up with fish each winter. While you might be targeting crappie or bluegill, you might encounter channel catfish, drum, white bass or tullibee depending on the water.

What fascinates me when I drop an underwater camera down into these clouds of fish is how often different species of fish school together. Very seldom are these fish static just hanging in one spot, they often seem to be simply swimming in circles and I have watched waves of fish come through that were made up of several species. Very common for crappie, largemouth bass and sunfish to swim and school together. I have seen walleye, white bass, drum and catfish swim around together.

Reservoirs in particular can often be the most challenging to correctly identify what you are fishing because reservoirs simply have such a wide variety of biomass. Reservoirs typically host the native river fish along with several other fish species that were suited after the river was dammed to form a reservoir.

Every body of water will have specific tendencies that need to be deciphered by spending time on the water. On some lakes for example, the crappies tend to ride on the top of the school. Other bodies of water see the large panfish on the bottom of the school or the front of the school. These patterns can sometimes change from day to day but each body of water will have it's own personality. Figuring out



the dynamics of these suspending schools of fish can be challenging but crucial for maximizing your catch. This is a situation where underwater cameras shine.

Analyzing the dynamics of a school of fish can be done precisely with a camera assuming that you have enough light and good enough water clarity to see. This visual image can help immensely and gives you that inside knowledge and understanding of the water you are fishing which can be applied to your sonar. Ninety percent of the time, I pick a Vexilar flasher over an underwater camera because of the speed in which I can fish through water with a Vexilar but a camera can aid sonar by answering questions. Vexilar's Scout Camera is a rugged and durable camera unit that truly compliments the flasher lineup so popular with ice anglers.

Some of those questions answered quickly by a camera might be a visual picture of the bottom or type of weeds present but where a camera can really outperform sonar is when determining species of fish. When you are marking all kinds of fish, different species of fish will all make the same red marks on the flasher. A camera can let you know what the red marks are. Taking camera use a step further, you can get an understanding of how the fish are schooling so you can adapt your fishing strategy. If crappies are indeed on the top of the school, you now know to fish above the fish and separate the crappie by fishing high. If the big bluegill or other targeted species are in the bottom, you now know to fish down fast through the fish so you can reach what you are after without getting bit on the way down.

So often when I use a camera for studying the dynamics of a cloud of suspended fish, I don't use the camera to find my lure and fish... all I want is the visual. Once I have that mental picture of how the fish are moving and relating to each other, I put the camera away and use the Vexilar just so I can fish faster. While nothing beats a camera for ID, you can also lean on the flasher to also help your sort through unintended species to reach panfish particularly after having a few questions answered by dropping down a camera.

As a rule of thumb, panfish don't typically dart in and out of the cone angle slashing at your bait. Something else you can do to test a fish is seeing if the target

will chase down hard after a bait. Tullibee for example will often burn down at a fast rate after you when you drop the bait where as crappie typically stall and won't follow a bait down and if they do chase, they are noticeably slow.

Finding these small nuances and getting a more intimate understanding of the water you are fishing can allow you to sort through rough fish better or in some cases target the larger fish. When targeting panfish over wintering holes this winter, remember that panfish are not the only fish species that use these locations and one of the most effective strategies for picking apart this water is by using the one two punch of both underwater camera and flasher.



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WHAT IS THE BLUE X FACTOR?

From Team Clam

It's the quality that goes into all Clam products and the difference that outdoorsmen and women expect! Innovation, quality and durability are all part of Clam® Outdoors' brand, but add in the biggest and most-talented pro staff in the business, top-knotch customer service plus a state-of-the-art distribution facility, and you'll see why all this synergy earned its own identity known as "the Blue X Factor™."

With the Blue X Factor, Clam sets all standards from shelters to clothing to tackle as well as screen tents and landscape trailers. Drawing on the top, most-talented employees available, Clam begins with a team of people who love the outdoors and understand the application of their products in the field. Key positions meet weekly to discuss product innovations and out-of-the-box solutions. It's one of the ways Clam is the leader in the world of outdoor recreation.

Steve Geertsen, President of Clam Outdoors admits they're proud of the company and their methods. "We take this seriously, we really do," Geertsen said. "We are always looking for ways to improve and innovate in all areas of our product lines, and we have a lot of them." In fact, Clam Outdoors has grown to distribute over 1000 SKUs, and while their products span beyond ice fishing with screen tents, hunting shelters, summer rods, reels, lures and tackle as well as landscape trailers and carts; the

humbling beginnings have grown this Minnesota-based company into the #1 company in ice fishing sales in the world.

In addition to a dedicated research and development team, customer service is also key, and that means making it right with consumers and more than 1400 retail outlets. Connecting with consumers through integrated marketing and answering questions to find solutions is a big part of the Blue X Factor, and the depth and breadth of talent in the Clam Pro Staff make that happen. “We have the finest ice anglers on our team, the most professional and passionate,” Matt Johnson said, manager of Ice Team, Clam Pro Staff and events. “We’re also serious about supporting the entire family outdoors and to back it up, we have exponentially more women on our pro staff than any other brand.”

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“We keep the quality up, that’s the Blue X Factor to me,” Tom Walter said, manager of research and development. “We go the extra mile—using two-sided support poles not one, reinforcing wear spots and back stitching trouble spots to prolong use into multiple seasons—for example.”

Innovation and quality known as the Blue X Factor™ can be found in all brands including: Clam® (shelters, auger systems, rods, reels and accessories), Quick-Set® by Clam® (screen shelters), Clam Pro Tackle™ (jigs, lures and artificial baits), IceArmor® by Clam® (cold weather gear), Dave Genz (shelters, rods, reels and tackle), Big Tooth Tackle™ (lures), Today’s Tackle™ (fishing accessories), Jason Mitchell Elite Series™ (rods, reels and shelters), and Polar® by Clam® (trailers, carts and landscape accessories).

A fisherman wearing a white cap, blue sunglasses, a blue jacket, and a red apron is holding a large fish. The fish has a mottled pattern of yellow and black. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

TRICKED OUT TUNGSTEN

Custom Jigs & Spins ice fishing pros offer technical jig tips

Tungsten jigs activate soft ice plastics like a fat bat on a fastball, a spring on a trap, a hammer on a bullet. Even while the hype over ‘rates of fall’ and ‘sinking fast to active fish’ permeates conventional conversations around holes in the ice, the truth is, heavy-for-its-size tungsten serves another, equally effective function.

It’s the reason some of North America’s finest hardwater anglers choose to match tungsten to plastic, even in shallow water. “Tungsten’s significant weight-to-size ratio means that relative to lead, a jig like a Custom Jigs & Spins Majmün moves and responds much more quickly underwater,” says ice pro Walt



Matan, “like the difference between a speed bag and a punching bag.”

The weight of tungsten, Matan and other anglers believe, animates the tiny tails and appendages of micro soft plastics, with a noticeable jump in what he calls, nervous energy.

“Line weight and jig stroke being equal, a Majmün Tungsten Jig will energize the same Finesse Plastic or other softbait tail much more radically than a lead jig,” Matan offers. “It’s the reason many of the top anglers on the North American Ice Fishing Circuit (NAIFC) keep Majmüns rigged for most of their fishing.”

Matan’s activation advantage has inspired further ice jig mods, including a soft plastics tweak known as

‘3D jigging.’ Borrowing from the bass world, Matan builds a sweet little ice bug, first sliding one or two sets of Nuclear Ant Legs (a spiderlike microplastic) onto the jig shank for a collar-effect. He then threads a Wedgee, Finesse Plastic or live larvae onto the jig. The result is a morsel that moves on multiple planes—fine legs quivering in one direction and sliver-thin tail shaking and undulating in another.



“The wispieness of the material,” he offers, “assures that even when deadsticked in suspended animation, 3D jigs continue working for you, little appendages quivering and breathing with the slightest underwater current.”

Shawn Bjonfald, a topnotch angler on the NAIFC trail, interjects additional tungsten intelligence: “Most of the best anglers I know thread their softbaits onto the hook, like a bass grub, rather than nipping them through the head. Shows fish a much more streamlined, natural presentation, and with a dot of superglue on the jig collar, your durability factor skyrockets.”



In the 'super secret-agent' category, Bjornfald divulges perhaps the ultimate jig-and-plastic nugget. "When fishing an ultra-thin softbait, such as a Wedgee or Micro Noodel, we like to use ice fishing's version of a Texas rig. It's a killer move for not only presenting tiny softbaits naturally, but also working



cleanly through vegetation, wood or fish cribs. Thread the bait onto the jighook, maybe one-eighth of an inch, turn the hook and reinsert it another quarter-inch or so toward the tail. Push the hook-point all the way through, exposing only the point—as opposed to hiding it in the plastic. You get a perfectly straight presentation that stays on the hook, pins fish, and yet won't tear the material."

A progressive ice jig style, the Majmün Tungsten Jig is increasingly turning up in hushed discussions over tournament-winning tackle. Pronounced "my-moon," Custom Jigs & Spins' leading edge ice jig now shows off six exclusive multi-colors, including Lemon Lime, Plum Glow and Fire Tiger. Accentuating its classic ballhead shape is a high-tech Owner® jig hook, positioned to maximize gap and hooking power. Input from Custom Jigs & Spins pros generated a 45-degree eyelet angle, giving the jighead a slightly "hook-down"

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position—another hookset assist.

Tungsten shines for far more than sinking fast to 30 feet—that's old news. The tournament guys tie it on because it brings mad action to all soft plastics . . . and wins at the weigh-in.

Comprehensive Coverage On Ice

A towable, two-person flip-over shelter lies at the center of any serious ice angler's gear arsenal. It's the best way to get anglers and their equipment out on the lake, fish all day in comfort, and return home with everything neatly packed in place for the next fishing adventure.

Frabill understands that your shelter is your ice fishing central command, and should allow for flawless execution of your plan of attack on any given day on any piece of frozen water... no matter how or



where you fish. It's why they designed and released their line of incredibly flexible Aegis shelters last season – shelters that pack it all and do it all with more customizable options than any other two-person shelters on the market.

New for the 2016/2017 ice fishing season, Frabill announces the addition of the Aegis Model 2415 to this highly versatile and workmanlike lineup of five Aegis shelters, providing anglers with an unprecedented combination of five distinct seating options, three insulation choices and two distinct entry configurations. The result? You fish how you want, not how your shelter dictates.

The new Aegis Model 2415 brings SideStep™ Entry to the Aegis line. With doors located on either end of the shelter, anglers no longer need to step over holes and gear during entry and exit. A near-vertical front wall optimizes 20 square feet of fishable space by increasing headroom at the front of the shelter, providing more room for hook sets, and reducing the risk of heater damage to the front wall.

Comfort and efficiency are the hallmarks of the new Aegis Model 2415. Durable 600D tent construction and top insulation defy inhospitable outside temperatures, while Frabill's innovative Combo-Case Bench



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Seating delivers all-day comfort and maximum protection to stored gear. This unique and efficient seating option places a padded, hard-wearing, cordura-covered bench seating surface and integral backrest atop a heavy-duty, molded case providing secure, padded and lockable storage for rod and reel combos and other accessories below. The new Model 2415 is built on a thick and durable thermo-formed sled base, and is supported by an alloy frame that is 30% stronger and 30% lighter than traditional frames.



NEW Frabill Aegis Model 2415 Shelter

- Item 640450
- Alloy frame is 30% stronger and 30% lighter than traditional frames
- Sturdy thermo-formed base
- SideStep™ Entry
- 20 square feet of optimized fishable space
- Well-placed windows and openings
- Innovative Combo-Case Bench seating
- 600D tent construction
- Top insulation
- Folded dimensions: 58.5"L x 35.5"W x 24"H



- Dimensions when set up: 84"L x 58.5"W x 64"H
- Weight: 95 lbs.
- Average Retail Price: \$579.99

Preparation is the key to execution in the world of ice fishing. And selecting the right shelter is one of the most important steps in that preparation. Don't settle for someone else's ice fishing shelter. Choose the one that provides the specific combination of features that support your own fishing style with proven Frabill engineering, function and comfort. Frabill's Aegis Series is simply the most customizable line of towable, flip-over, two-person shelters available.

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

FOR OUTDOORSMEN, FISHERMEN AND HUNTERS

For the Camper:

Coleman Carlsbad 6P Fast Pitch Dome Tent with Screen Room -

Grab more zzz's with Coleman's Carlsbad Tent, featuring the brand's new Dark Room technology, which blocks 99.7% of sunlight. A special coating on the rainfly and windows helps block light as does the black tent fabric. Don't let the sun keep



your kids up and no more waking with the sun! Bonus: a screened in front room for bug-free lounging. \$200. [Link.](#)

Coleman Comfort Cloud 40 Sleeping Bag - Add an extra layer of comfort between you and your sleeping pad with Coleman's new Comfort Cloud 40 Sleeping Bag. The fleecy synthetic



sleeping bag has a layer of memory foam for luxurious comfort and added insulation. Meant for 30- to 50-degree nights, this rectangular bag is roomy in the legs and supremely comfortable. \$70. [Link](#).

Coleman ComfortSmart InterLock Breeze Sling Chair - Set up this sling chair on the sand and feel the cool breeze across your back all day. The mostly mesh ComfortSmart Interlock Breeze chair is designed with bungee loops laced down the chair so that it conforms to your body, but also offers incredible support. Bonus: a swiveling cup holder will keep your beverage at-hand. \$50. [Coleman Link](#)

GSI Outdoors MICROLITE 500. Question: What happens when you take a normal chunky one-half liter bottle and put it with GSI Outdoors' new manufacturing process? Answer: the new GSI Outdoors Microlite 500 Stainless Vacuum Bottle. Weighing in one-third lighter than traditional designs at 7.9, it is the lightest of their size and most compact stainless vacuum bottles on the market. Period. The bottle will provide eight-hour heat and cold retention. A 2mm wall is actually thinner than most single wall plastic bottles, providing an unsurpassed compact footprint. Push button, flip-top cap locks for transport and opens easily for drinking. Available in six colors. \$26. [LINK](#).

Napier Backroadz SUV Tent - Take your camping experience to new heights with Napier's Backroadz SUV Tent. This spacious 9-ft. x 9-ft. tent comfortably sleeps four adults, and attaches to the back of your vehicle for easy access – letting you charge gadgets, store gear and more without leaving the shelter of your tent. Rugged 800mm PU-coated polyester rainfly and tent walls with a polyethylene floor are





supported by three fiberglass poles to keep you sleeping soundly through wind, rain and other nasty weather. A large door with storm flap allows easy entry and exit, and three mesh windows enhance ventilation while keeping out bugs. Over 7 ft. of headroom reduces condensation and lets you stand upright. One storage pocket stashes essentials. Lantern holder for easy illumination. Sleeps four. \$250. [Napier Site](#).

Napier Sportz Cove 61500 - Get this tent by Napier to turn your vehicle into a spacious vacation house in a blink of an eye. Designed to make your everyday outdoor adventures more enjoyable, this product brings a perfect blend of comfort and functionality. It provides over 2 feet of awning coverage to protect from excessive sunshine and features a mesh screen door that enables you to enjoy great bug-free views. The attachment sleeve allows to accommodate all mid to full-size SUV's, CUV's, and minivans. \$200. [Napier Site](#).



Lander's Cascade Portable 5200mAh 2x Charger is the ideal on-the-go power source for mobile devices.

Featuring Lander's signature coining design, this power bank is built to last while maintaining a sleek profile. Pre-charged and ready to use, it features Smart Charge technology with an auto-off energy saving mode, LED power indicator lights and an auto-off energy saving mode. It comes pre-charged and includes an Illumaweave Reflective lanyard for quick location in the dark as well as a handy travel case for easy portability. \$50. www.lander.com

The Clam Quick-Set™ Pavilion is a six sided screen shelter that comes with wind panels and/or privacy screens already attached. The wind panels are easy to use and can be rolled up or down at



moment's notice. All in one this is the Cadillac of screen shelters. This 8 person tent has plenty of room for a picnic table and a handful of camp chairs - it is the perfect party tent for an evening of enjoyment with friends or family. Ready to use out of the box, no assembly and it takes a mere 45 seconds to setup. Complete with no-see-sum mesh and an extra wide skirt will keep all the bugs out! It is great for activities such as camping, picnics, family gatherings or setup for the long days at the kid's soccer games. This is so easy to use you will want to enjoy the outdoors even more. \$450. [Clam Site.](#)

For the Angler:

Hobie Soft Coolers/Fish Bag. When keeping fish to eat, it's important to store your catch away from predators and out of the sun, so Hobie has added two sizes of soft coolers/fish bags to do just that. Just add ice or a cold pack so that fish, refreshments and food are kept cool. This is thanks to the highest quality materials on the market: half-inch closed cell foam that insulates, vinyl





coated polyester for durability and YKK zippers for strength. They'll keep your catch cold and insulated all day, even in very hot conditions. Carry handles are included as well as D-rings on the sides for attaching to kayaks. The medium size bag fits inside the front hatch of many Hobie models. MSRP: \$179 Large Soft Cooler/Fish Bag. \$130. www.hobie.com/

Walleye Lure. Storm Hot 'n Tot Mad Flash. A metal lip and erratic, side-to-side searching action make this a go-to choice for walleye trolling. Detailed external scale patterns, classic and UV Bright finish choices and 3-D holographic eyes make the Hot 'n Tot Mad Flash visually appealing and VMC premium black nickel hooks make it good at latching onto whatever bites.

Bass Lure. Rat-L-Trap originally created the StutterStep to provoke strikes out of tigerfish in Zimbabwe. However, its collection of unique topwater actions drives American whoppers into a feeding frenzy. Like the name implies, its StutterStep action gives a fantastic walk-in-place action. Its Wag-the-Tail Action offers a tempting tail kick as you walk it. And when you do the Turnaround Twitch, its specially shaped belly allows for a full 180° spin that really gets 'em going.



Crappie Lure. Strike King Mr. Crappie Slabalicious are awesome baits with incredible paddle tail action. These baits feature soft plastic, baitfish profile bodies and come in a variety of bright colors.

Strike King Mr. Crappie Slabalicious baits are designed specifically to target crappie and other panfish. Each bait is two inches in length.



Pike/Musky Lure. This revolutionary Chaos Tackle Regular Medussa Swimbait lure is like nothing you've ever seen, but it's everything that big muskies dream of! The extra-lively, triple-tailed, brilliantly colored Medussa features a rock-solid interior harness locked onto two big, sticky-sharp trebles; and the overall quality of construction is as good as it gets! Jerk it, rip it, troll it, slow roll it, or straight-retrieve it; it doesn't matter how you fish it—muskellunge just want to eat it!





Trout/Salmon Lure. Start on any high mountain lake. Follow the water through countless rivers that increase in size before finally reaching ocean estuaries. Continue to the beach, pass the near shore

structure, and head into the blue water. At any point in the journey you can catch fish on a **Krocodile**, whether the fish are trout or bass, salmon or stripers, bluefish or calicos, halibut or tuna. It's been that way for generations. The Krocodile operates on a simple premise: big fish eat smaller fish. Year in and year out, the Krocodile proves itself to be the most productive spoon ever built. It can be cast and retrieved, jigged over structure, or trolled.

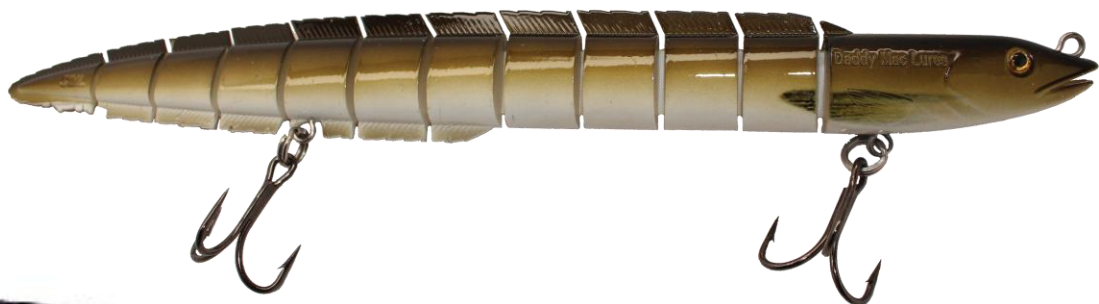
Redfish Lure. Shimano's Suspending Waxwing suspends at 3 ft., allowing you to make the most out of close-to-the-surface feeding frenzies. Walk-the-dog motion, lifelike matte-rubber finish and rattle combine to attract large saltwater predators from a distance. Corrosion-resistant tin-coated treble hooks. Keimura lateral line.



Striper Lure. Daddy Mac Lures Viper Series: The meticulous detail and craftsmanship of these unique Kevlar jointed lures are enhanced by features such as audible clacking to attract fish and an

unprecedented 10 splits making it the most lifelike swimmer on the market.

Perch Lure. Get big action in a small package. The **Rapala® Ultra Light Minnow Lures** are highlighted by a weighted body that casts an incredible distance



for such a small bait. Slow sinking, its unique swimming lip design creates an enticing wobbling and rolling action that gets any passing gamefish's attention. Other features include external scales and 3D holographic eyes.



For the Boater:

MOB+ wireless cut-off switch - intelligent man-over-board system, all you need to get started boating wireless! With the MOB+ base pack you get a MOB+ xHub with connection cables and antenna to mount in your boat, an xFOB, butt splices for cable connections and user

manual. Choose to combine the MOB+ base pack with either or both of the XBAND and xTAG. You can also add additional xFOB to your system if you have several user of your boat. The xFOB has over 300 hours of battery life in active use. \$180. www.fellmarine.com

The **Hobie Mirage Eclipse 12 Pedal Board** is a paddle board that you can pedal with your feet using Hobie's revolutionary Mirage drive system. A great watercraft for fitness paddlers who want to spend time on the water instead of the gym! The Mirage drive is pedaled via a stair stepper motion, which drives the board forward. To steer the board, simply squeeze the left or right pressure handles on the stand up handlebar. The kick up rudder means that grounding the board on accident will not damage it. The stand up handlebar can even be removed to transform the Eclipse into a standard paddle board. \$2500. www.hobie.com/stand-up-paddleboards/



For the Hunter:

RENEGADE GTX®

MID - LOWA's best-selling boot worldwide is a perennial favorite. It is multifunctional, designed with LOWA's proprietary MONOWRAP® frame midsole construction that wraps around the lower part of the upper for stability and support. A PU midsole ensures shock absorption, rebound sensitivity



and environmental sustainability. Other features include a Nubuck leather upper, Vibram® EVO outsole, waterproof and breathable GORE-TEX® lining and derby-style lacing. Available in narrow, medium and wide widths for men and women. Bottom line: It fits right out of the box for nearly everyone that puts it on. It's versatility takes it from mountain to path to field to cobblestone streets in comfort. \$230. www.lowaboosts.com

RefrigiWear Flex-Wear Hooded Base Layer. Flex-Wear is an extremely comfortable material that flexes and stretches with your movements. Best of all, it is very thin and lightweight, providing you with warmth without weighing you down. The Flex-Wear Hooded Base Layer provides 4-in-1 versatility by allowing you to wear it in several configurations: with hood, hood with mask, hood with neck gaiter or gaiter only. Comfort and warmth are enhanced with a brushed inner lining and extending thumbhole cuffs to create a better wind-seal. \$50.

FISHING ZONE





Fishing Boat



Fish Catching Boat

The Good Old Dependable Redfish

By O'Neill Williams

www.oneilloutside.com

Are you a Bass guy? Bet you are. I am too. Ever caught a 51- pounder or, for that matter, many or any over 10 pounds? Very few folks have although many think they have but that's another subject for another column I have in mind. I've been promoting a new horizon for the Bass angler and have said so many times during our show productions. What's that new

horizon? Inshore Saltwater. This time, permit me to circle around a single 'finny' critter, the magnificent Redfish, and point you to two places where you can get it done and with whom. Just thought of another, so it's really three.

First let's talk about the fish and what to expect. The World Record is 94 pounds, caught many years ago. OK, enough about that. You're not going to catch a new world record, just a few for the adventure and for the grill. The guy is dumb as a rock, he can be spooked and still will bite,



is always hungry, is a survivor, grows rapidly, eats plastics, spinnerbaits, crankbaits, can be spotted in the shallows and is a target for casts and finally, is a fabulous table fish.

My largest is 51-pounds and I've included a photo from my trophy





room. It's a fiberglass replica, of course, because we weighed him and put him back to make other Redfish to catch later. I don't care, just wanted you to see it. I was fishing in the Banana River near Cocoa Beach and saw this giant at the head of a school in about 2-feet of water, casted a small curly tail jig on 12-pound test line and he took it. After the hook set, the fish swam past the boat and my fabulous guide,

Shawn Foster, also known as Doctor Drum (Cocoa Beach, Florida Phone: 321 784-0094), shouted, "That's a 50 pounder". It weighed 51- pounds. Ok, enough about me, what about you?

Let me direct you to three target destinations and the people who will act as your hosts.

Spring! Theophile Bougeois and the Cajun Vista Lodge (pictured above); lodging in private rooms in a fabulous 100-year-old renovated school house, Theophile can easily accommodate over sixty guests, the meals are always a fresh fish banquet with gumbo and Cajun dishes, you'll walk to the boats only 30 yards away, partner with seasoned guides and cast to thousands of redfish spread out across what may be the best inshore light tackle fishing in the world. Located in Barataria, Louisiana, Theophile operates the most comfortable and productive destination on the Gulf Coast that I have ever visited. Using Bass fishing weight tackle, 8 to 12-pound test line, terminal tackle spinner baits, plastics, crank baits and, for some, a popping cork over a live shrimp, you'll limit out every day on 4 to 15-pound Redfish. You'll be fishing the 'marsh', 30 miles wide and 90 miles long with most areas less than 6-feet deep. It's a nursery for Reds and it's full of bait, casting targets, grass flats, canals and creeks. From early March through the hot summer, the Gulf Coast Reds are a calling card for the weekend angler. See Theophile's website at www.neworleansfishing.com.

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Fall! Oh, my goodness. 500 to 700 pounds a day? Yep. Georgia coast. Surprised? I was, but not now. Telephone Mark Noble, long time guide, local booster of fishing, St Simons Island native. He's the man, has spent his life fishing these waters and knows exactly when, where and how. You can come along. From September through November in the shallow waters near the river mouths that flow into the bay, the Redfish gang up like I've never seen before and although you're gonna beef up your tackle a bit because the fish are so large, it's still sporting. The minimum length to keep a Red there is 27 inches. I've fished with Mark over a dozen times, caught probably over 6,000 pounds of Reds and never had one small enough to keep. I didn't mind. Maybe you should look up Mark at www.georgiafishing.net. It was some years



ago that one of my sponsors staged what we called the 'Fishing Trip of a Lifetime' and a father and son from South Alabama won the trip. Sure enough, using three rods, one for me and the each of them, we often caught three reds at a time with an average of 35 pounds. Think about that a moment, over 100 pounds of beautiful Georgia Coast Reds at once. The photos of that trip are long since gone but we'll put one or two more current ones to demonstrate the productivity you can expect when visiting Mark Noble.

Winter! After reading this, I'll be expecting you to head to Pensacola Bay and Navarre Beach in December. Eddie Woodall is his name and schooling Redfish is part of his game. I'm not sure exactly what happens but it's something like this; when the river waters cool in December, it sends tons upon tons of bait down current into the bay. When this happens every year, hundreds of schools of Redfish, with thousands in each school, push the Pogies to the surface. Low and behold, when the surface feeding birds give you the signal of activity, you'll motor over and begin casting and reeling large Road Runners tipped with plastics. Virtually every cast under the birds gets a hookup. When visiting Eddie



the first time a couple of December's ago, he hyped it up but in his soft voice so not to get me too expectant. The birds indicated the first school and I hooked and caught a 20-pound Redfish on the first cast. After that stunning start, we caught and released at least 20 similar Reds before lunch time. Eddie's site is www.fullnetfishingcharters.com.

So, why not give the Good Old Dependable Redfish a chance and visit these fellows to make it complete.

Want to kiss more fish like this?
Then switch to
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Jimmy Houston



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Three Requirements for a Great Redfish Outing

By Jake Bussolini

As an avid freshwater angler and author of seven books about freshwater fishing, it takes a lot for me to define one fishing trip as a great day. I have fished more than 75 freshwater lakes and rivers and I probably have witnessed just about every thrill that exists for that type of fishing, but I just raised the bar for defining a great day of fishing with a recent redfish experience with Capt Fred Rourk of Sweet Tea Charters out of Georgetown SC.

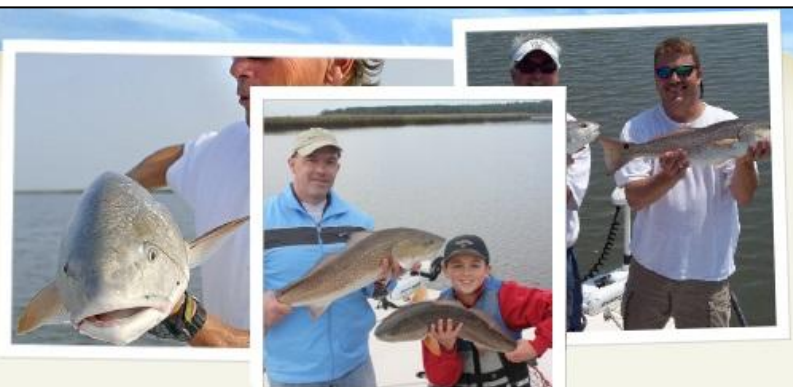
I had fished with Fred before but never under quite the same circumstances. I was his lone fisherman and I had my own ideas about how to catch red fish. I was first introduced to this species a few years ago at Lake Charles Louisiana. I thought this was an excellent cross-over species to pursue because it still used freshwater gear and freshwater tactics but provided much bigger and harder fighting fish.

I had always believed that the three things that are required for a good fishing day were a knowledgeable boat operator who thoroughly understood the habits of the fish, in this case Capt Rourk. The second was the availability of an abundant food source for the fish and the third was an angling strategy that matched conditions. On this day all three of these conditions existed.

According to Capt. Rourk, the red fish population in the North Inlet at Georgetown seemed to have been reduced due to the spring floods that ravished that area. He indicated that the food source was more than adequate but we should probably try to catch the larger mullets for bait. With all the food available to the reds, they would probably be more inclined to attack the bigger mullets. I agreed with that opinion even though it took a little longer to find and catch the bigger mullets.

Rourk was an expert with the cast net and although it took a little longer to get the size that we wanted, that extra time eventually paid off.

Sweet Tea Charters
With
Captain Fred Rourk



The real success of this day would be the strategy of fishing at the intersections of multiple creeks. The thought here was that as the tides lowered the water, the reds would move toward the intersection where the water was deeper. That appeared to be exactly what happened. Within five minutes after the first stop I hooked a beautiful red. Since the rest of my family was vacationing up the road at Myrtle Beach, I didn't want to keep any fish so it was catch, photograph and release.

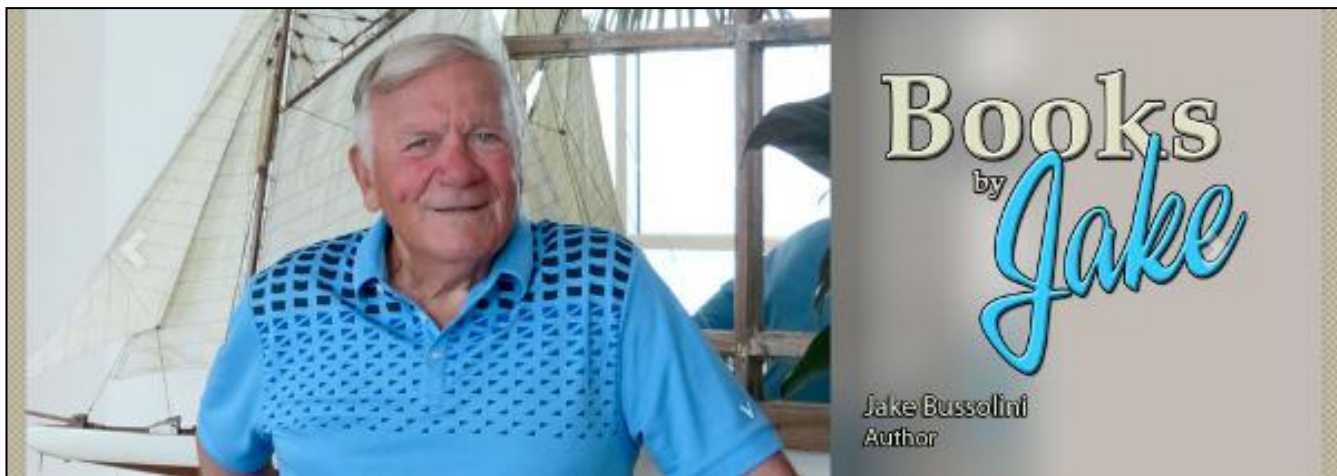


The secret that I had learned from previous red fishing trips was to keep my eye on the line. Many anglers feel that big red fish will grab the bait and run and they take their eye off the movement of the line itself. With an anchored boat and little wind, the only reason the line will move out or even in is when a fish is carrying the bait. This initial movement is not always rapid and I have found that I can see the bite before I feel it and this technique has worked well for me. If I see the line moving, I wait a few seconds until I feel the fish has started to move with the bait, then I simply start my rapid retrieve, without any massive tug on the line I simply start a fast cranking of the reel. This technique has been very successful for me, especially when using circle hooks.

I informed Capt. Rourk at the beginning of the day that a three fish catch would make an OK day, a five fish catch would make it a great day. That was the standard that I set.

When we decided to leave the first location I had boated and released five big fish. The second stop used the same strategy, three creeks flowing into one intersection. As the tide lowered the water, the reds moved toward the deeper water at the intersection and we were there waiting for them. I boated six more big fish, all using my same "line watching" technique.

At that point I had far surpassed my "great" day definition and with eleven fish caught and released, I was satisfied to call it a day



defining it as a "super" fishing day, using a very knowledgeable boat Captain, securing the right size bait and using a fishing technique that has proved successful for me in the past.

Jake Bussolini is a freelance writer who has published seven books about freshwater fishing. His books can be examined and purchased at www.booksbyjake.com. Fred Rourk can be contacted at fishfred1@yahoo.com.

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By David A. Brown

DAN'S FISH 'N' TALES®



SHADES OF GREY

By Dan Galusha

In the 1980's a device came along called the Color-C-Lector. Some were a bit skeptical about the information given on what colors to use, but many quickly found it worked. That aside, there is another system that works, which can be called "shades of grey". This system is everything from white to black.

I've fished this system for many years, but TJ Stallings of TTI-Blakemore brought it back to mind after reading one of his blogs regarding what fish generally see in color. The following excerpt has been copied from TJ's blog:

We all know the theory "dark colors for dark conditions". The other train of thought is "opaque colors in dark conditions" or "transparent colors in

Swimming a white Blitz Spyder Finesse Jig with a green/pearl Mann's Auger Frog, and an application of Kick'n Bass Attractants' Anise Shad, produced this nice bass, along with several others holding to weedlines and deeper water weed islands.



light conditions”. Set those theories aside a while.

Let us think like a fish for a few minutes. Okay, you are fish. You are swimming along just off the bottom. Your eyes are on top of your head, so you gaze upward constantly. The barometric pressure is steady. You are a happy, yet hungry fish.

You see something. The sun’s position behind this critter reveals little at first. Then you see a constant flash of the Road Runner blade. It appears to be breathing as it makes its descent. Then the white body becomes visible. The lure changes direction and begins to swim parallel to the bottom. Your fins expand and you charge the lure.

Wake up. Are you back? What did you learn? Fish look up all the time. The shad, shiners, and minnows they eat, have a white belly. Fish are naturally trained to seek white bellies.

The theory has repeated itself so many times personally, it makes us chuckle. We will throw a half-dozen colors; switch to white and boom, fish on!

While TJ has profoundly touched on the productivity of white, I am going to talk about everything as it darkens. As was said, white is a good color, and can catch many fish, but take a look at the natural food, such as shad and bottom crawling creatures. Most have black somewhere on their bodies, and especially the back. Also, most shad and minnows have grey on the sides.

Because of this when fish are feeding on minnows and shad I like to use white, pearl, white/grey, smoke, and shad patterns such as Road Runner’s Sushi Reality Shad, which has a dark grey on the back. This goes for fairly much every species, but especially black bass, white bass, crappie and bluegill.

A favorite for a plastic worm, like the 4” B-Fish-N Ringworm, is black with a white tail. I was introduced to the success of this color in the 80’s when I was fishing bass tournaments. I’ve found it to work extremely well for flipping/pitching, as well as worked with a lift and drop when casting. From all indications, the contrast of the two allows the very active white tail to work to its maximum



Don Banning used the greyish color of a Power Minnow to hook this 16 1/2” crappie, that netted him an In-Fisherman Master Angler Award.

to tempt fish to strike. Another thing that I will sometimes do is team the worm with a white/chrome Blitz Spyder Finesse Jig, but normally this will be used with a twin tail trailer.

Along the same line in plastic worms is one that is completely black, especially with a ribbon tail, or one that has a full side of black.

For swimbaits and jerk worms/shad the aforementioned minnow type colors are good, but I also like adding an Oyster color, which again, is a type of greyish/blueish/pearl color that puts out a great shad type flash.

By varying the size, a curl tail grub is a great producer for all species. The grub can be found in sizes from 1" to 6" in length. I mainly use 2, 3 and 4-inch. While I have several colors, just three, white, black and smoke, with smoke being the coverall, could do all of the work. In fact, if there was only one lure available; the curl tail grub could cover it all with a regular jig head like a B-Fish- H2O; Road Runner or Casey's Runner heads, which adds the flash of a blade; and a Blitz Spyder Finesse Jig.

When using a spinnerbait or swimming jig almost 100% of the time I will use white, white/chartreuse, white/chartreuse/blue, oyster, pearl or shad skirts. With trailers for the jigs being white, pearl, green/pearl, smoke or oyster.

Many times when the fishing is tough, one of the "shades of grey", worked with the right lure, can save the day.

Thanks to TJ Stallings for allowing me to share his theory and knowledge with you, as well as inspiring me to extend it to "shades of grey".

The next time you go fishing, think about all the options from white to black, and turn these options into a successful day of fishing.

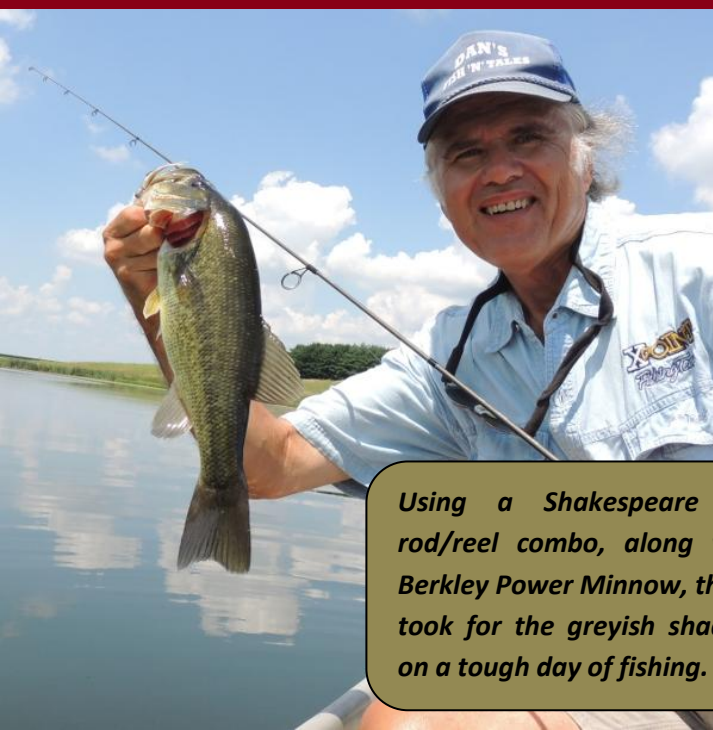
If you would like to see more of TJ Stallings' blogs go to www.ttiblackmore.com and click on his tab at the top of their page.

For questions on this or another fishing subject drop me a line through the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® website at www.dansfishntales.com. This site also provides a link to the Dan's Fish 'N' Tales® Facebook page at www.facebook.com/dansfishntales - click on the "like" button to follow more tips and fishing reports.

Until next time, get out on the water and enjoy a great day of fishing.



Two of the author's favorite Road Runner Reality Shad "shades of grey" are shad (top) and cream/pearl (bottom).



Using a Shakespeare Micro rod/reel combo, along with a Berkley Power Minnow, this bass took for the greyish shad color on a tough day of fishing.



FISHING MEMORIES

By Bob Jensen

Another open water fishing season is in the books: It was a nice season. Caught good numbers of fish most days, had a great time every day. I got to fish with old friends and new friends. It's at this time of year that I like to reflect on those days of fishing, but I also can't help thinking of the friends I didn't get to fish with this year. Sometimes there just aren't enough days to get together with the friends that you'd like to fish with, but sometimes you can't fish with those friends because they're not around anymore, at least physically. They're always around in our memories. Three of those friends that I always think of in these reflective moments are Jim McDonnell, "Toad" Smith, and Patrick Sheahan. Mac and Toad called the Iowa Great Lakes in northwest Iowa home, Patrick lived on the border of Wisconsin and Michigan near Land O'Lakes Wisconsin. All three were wonderful people who lived for their families and friends and the outdoors.

My last fishing trip with Mac is a fond memory. We were on Storm Lake in western Iowa chasing and catching walleyes. At the time, planer board fishing was kind of new to that area, but Mac was a pioneer in fishing techniques and wanted to give boards a try. Other anglers in the area that we were fishing couldn't figure out what we were doing with those yellow things on our line way out to the side of the boat. And, while we caught fish and they didn't, Mac gave anyone who asked a quick seminar on what we were doing and why. He always took time to teach others how to enjoy their outdoor

experience even more. Mac died a few years ago after a day of hunting, ice-fishing, and checking traps. Toad Smith's given name was Otis, but if you called him Otis, he thought you were angry with him. However, it was next to impossible to be angry with Toad. Toad's health was not real good his last few years: He couldn't work, but he sure could be outside. The last time we fished together we were on Rainy Lake catching crappies. Toad liked to catch anything: Crappies, carp, catfish, he didn't care, and I appreciated that. We had much in common that way.

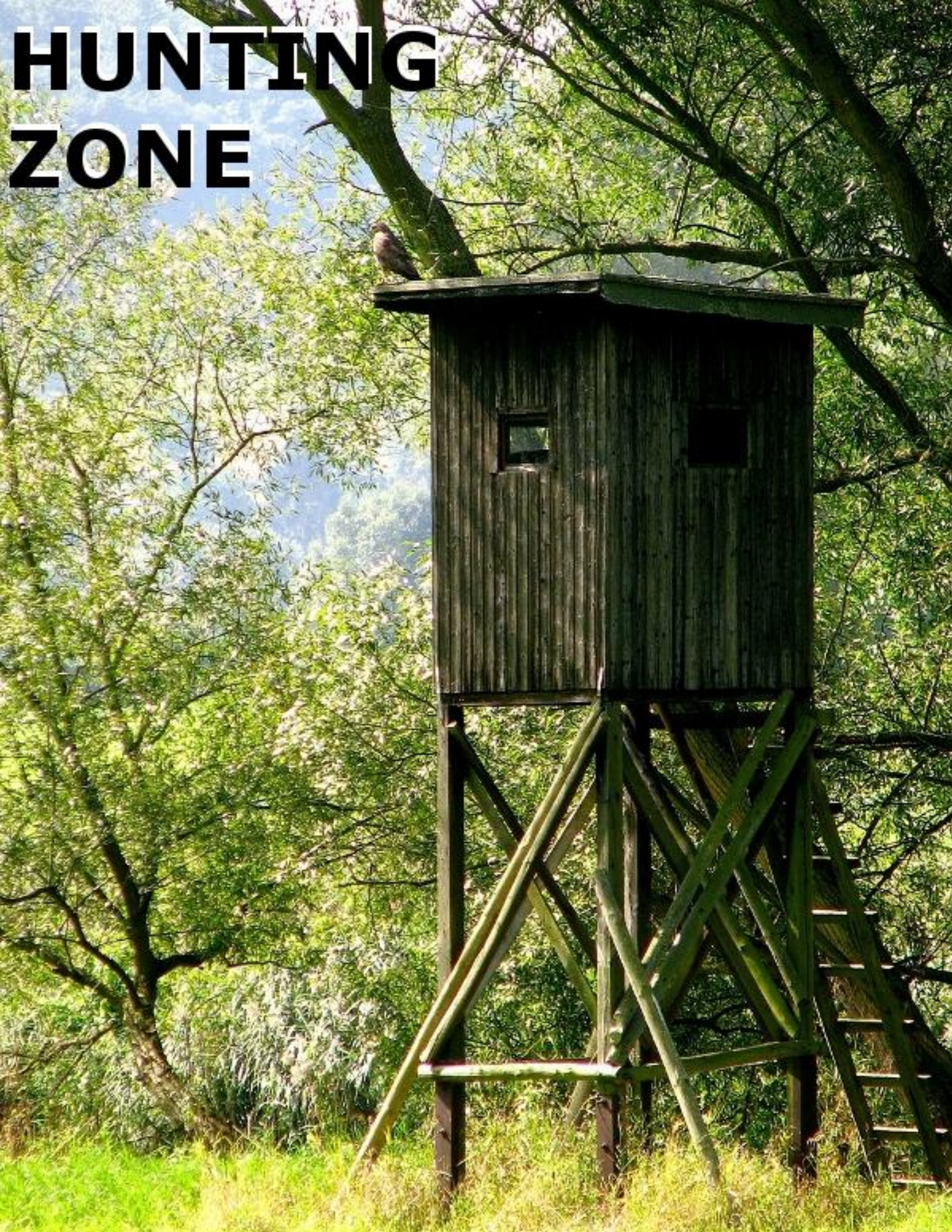
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Toad died on the way to deer camp. There had been a snow storm the day before. On the way to deer camp, Toad and his hunting partner saw two rooster pheasants and decided to see if they could harvest them for supper. Toad walked back to where they saw the pheasants. Both roosters took flight: Toad shot once and both fell. Toad picked up the birds, was walking back to the truck, and collapsed. Toad would have thought that type of departure was pretty cool.

Patrick Sheahan was a fishing explorer: He was constantly trying to locate new bodies of water to add to his guiding exploits. If you told Patrick that you wanted to catch walleyes, he would go into this trance-like state for a few seconds. He'd consider weather conditions, season, time of day, and other factors that most anglers wouldn't think of. Then we'd go to that body of water and usually have outstanding success. Patrick died in a snowmobile accident while returning home from an ice-fishing trip.

Note how Mac, Toad, and Patrick departed. They would all agree that theirs was not a bad way to go for someone who's, much, not all, but much of their life revolved around the outdoors. They would also remind us to cherish every day that we spend with a family member or friend because "you just never know".

HUNTING ZONE



Grouse and Woodcock Hunting in the North Country

By Dana Benner

As I was loading my truck, preparing for the drive home, the North Country of New Hampshire was getting its first dose of wet snow. It was almost the end of October and you have to know that cold, wet weather will come sooner or later. I was leaving earlier than expected, but like most things in northern New England, the weather often dictates what you do and when you do them. Mark and I had intended to get out for a few hours this morning, hitting a few more grouse covers, but high winds and the wet snow that was falling changed our plans.

I was up in the Lancaster, New Hampshire area as a guest of my good friends Mark and Wendy. Mark has been wanting me to come up to hunt for a long time, but due to my teaching schedule and article deadlines I just didn't have the time. Though I still really didn't have the time, I made the trip anyway. I needed to get away from the computer and phone for a few days at least.





When I finally arrived it was about noon on Friday. No sooner had I unpacked my gear Mark and I headed over to Groveton Fish & Game Club to do a little shooting. I grabbed my Springfield XD-S .45 ACP, which I carry in my Blackhawk rig while in the woods, and a box of American Eagle practice rounds, jumped in Mark's truck and we were on our way. After a few hours of shooting we headed back to Mark's house to plan our next day of hunting. Well, as it was to turn out, it was good we left the range when we did as the heavens opened up with a heavy rain. Back at the house we discussed areas that we would hunt and we both hoped that this rain was not a sign of things to come. It was a busy day for me so I decided to hit the rack early, but before I called it a night Mark jumped on the computer to

check the weather report. They were calling for the rain to end and though it would remain cloudy, it would be dry. The hunt was on.



When we awoke the rain had stopped so we grabbed a coffee, loaded our gear into the truck and prepared to head out. Like usual I was carrying my Mossberg 500 12 gauge pump (above) with a modified choke. The pockets of my jacket were full of #7 steel shot. Mark was carrying his 12 gauge side-by-side. In one pocket he carried #6s and in the other #7 1/2s. As you never realize what you may run into I was also carrying my .45 and Mark carried a .357 magnum. I also brought along my Blackhawk pack full of all those things I would need if something was to happen.

Our first stop was Mark's camp way out in the middle of nowhere. The trees were soaked from the previous night's rain, but it wasn't raining (yet) so we had high hopes. We didn't have a dog so this was walk-up hunting at its very best. Then it happened. As if the water laden spruce and hemlock branches weren't enough, it started to rain. So much for the weather report. Despite the rain we pushed on.

Mark and I split up, agreeing to meet up again at the top of the hill. The rain got worse and nothing was moving in the woods except us. When

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we finally met up Mark told me that he flushed one grouse, but it was flushed too far ahead of him to get a shot. With that we worked our way back down the hill and to the truck with the score being grouse 1; hunters 0.

As we sat in the truck we needed to make a decision. Do we head back to the house, dry off and wait until it stopped raining or do we push on? The decision was made to push on as it didn't look like the rain was going to let up anytime soon. We were already wet so we might as well continue.

Our next stop was the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Refuge. While our access point was in the town of Whitefield, this refuge covers territory in four states: New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut and Massachusetts (though Massachusetts is really not a state. It is a Commonwealth). The area we were in looked real birdie with a mix of alder, birch and aspen. It reminded me more of woodcock habitat than it did grouse and as it would turn out, I was right. I later found out that the portion of the refuge that lies in Vermont is much better for grouse do to its forest makeup, so I think that the next time I visit I will head to the Vermont side.

As we walked we came to a point where three "trails" intersected. One branched to the right and led into an open field. One branched to the left and worked its way to higher ground and the third lead straight into a grove of aspen. We decided to go straight and I am glad that we did.

The trail was narrow, probably made by deer, moose or both. I took point with Mark walking about 20



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feet behind me. This is good practice as grouse will often flush after the hunter passes by. If this should happen perhaps Mark could get a shot off. As we moved into the aspen there was a flush from the trees. It was a woodcock and it only gave me one chance and I took it. A load of #7 steel found its mark. Hunters 1; woodcock 0. Retrieving the bird we pushed on. Soon the aspen grove opened up into an area that had been logged. I warned Mark to be ready as this was prime real estate for woodcock and I was right. No sooner had I stepped into the clearing than a bird flushed to my right. I was out of position so no shot was made though I did watch where the bird went down.

As we made our way in the direction of the bird it flushed again. This time I shot, but the woodcock did what woodcock do; it made a sharp turn to the left and that load of #7s passed by harmlessly. This bird was gone, but it was good to know that my instincts were dead on. The score was now tied and this is how the "game" would end up.

We continued to walk the trails, but nothing else flushed. I'm thinking that the woodcock that we did put up were part of the first wave of birds coming down from Canada as there weren't many of them. After about five hours of hunting both Mark and I were soaked to the bone. Our pants were so water logged that they were getting heavy. We had three flushes; one grouse and two woodcock, with one bird in the bag. The rain wasn't letting up so we decided to call it a day.

The highlight of the morning happed while at the refuge. As we walked around a pond we heard the mating call of a bull moose. The more we walked, the loader the calls became. As thrilling as it was, the last thing I wanted to do was to come face to face with a moose, especially one that was a jacked up as this one was. As it turned out we never did see the moose.

Some may say that this wasn't a productive day, but I have to disagree. Yes, I didn't bag the number of birds I would have liked, but that is not the real importance of this time I spent in the North Country. While I do hunt to put food in the freezer, I also hunt for the experience. I spent the day in the woods with a good friend. I left with the smell of balsam in my nose and on my clothes. I heard the call of a moose and experienced the flush of a woodcock. In my mind it doesn't get any better than this.





LIVE DUCKS THE ONLY JUDGES THAT MATTER

***TO CONSISTENTLY CALL DUCKS INTO RANGE
WHILE HUNTING TRY SOUNDING LIKE ONE***

By Sammy Bruce

I pity the up-and-coming duck hunter, anxious to learn the intricacies of calling but with nowhere to turn for guidance but YouTube and calling contests. While such resources occasional offer a handy tip, most are so crowded with useless chaos they're often difficult to watch all the way through.

Somewhere along the line, it seems, duck calling contests began rewarding contestants for performing instrumental symphonies on duck calls, rather than for sounding like a duck. So became the accepted measure of



success within the industry: Champion callers are often those who can manipulate a duck call to sound the most extreme, not necessarily those who produce the sounds that consistently put the most ducks on the strap.

Practical ways to consistently call ducks are increasingly becoming lost in our modern teachings. As ducks in the wild never perform machine-gun feed chatter or ear-piercing hail calls, it stands to reason that our calling shouldn't either. To consistently be successful in the field, hunters should first master the basics of calling, and then learn when to further expand their auditory offerings.

After literally thousands of hours listening to live ducks in and around refuges, one thing becomes abundantly clear: Ducks make very basic noises the vast majority of the time. Of all puddle duck species, hen mallards are the most vocal, and the most imitated by hunters. The basic vocalizations of the hen mallard can be broken down into three categories.

The hail or greeting call

The hail call is the basic greeting call hen mallards use to encourage other ducks, often flying overhead, to come join their group. This call usually consists of three to seven notes ("KAH, Kah, kah, kah, kah..."). The first or second note is nearly always emphasized, and the sequence often tapers off in volume and tone.

Greeting and hail calls should always remain realistic in tone and sequence, but can vary greatly in volume depending on the particular hunting setting and the distance to the birds being called. When hunting over expansive areas of water or large fields, for example, hunters who really let this call sing can often turn birds from incredible distances and heights. The Zink NGB call specializes in this, as its design responds well to a huge volume of air. This single-reed monster also features Zink's proprietary Z-Cut tone channel, which prevents sticking by moving air through the reed, regardless of how much moisture is in the call.

The greeting or hail call is most useful in attracting the attention of ducks passing by and turning them towards a decoy spread. The same call is equally effective when used to redirect ducks that may have flown over the spread, and are debating leaving the area. This method, called calling on the corners,



refers to the use of a hail call just as the birds are beginning to turn away. It can be tricky to master the timing, and hunters should note that the same sounds are used throughout the sequence, although they can and should be toned down once ducks are circling in tight.



Smart hunters often switch from wide-open large-volume calls to models designed to sound their best at softer volumes when birds are in close. Zink's ATM Green Machine call is the Ohio-based company's bestseller, and for good reason. A superb finishing call, this double-reed model makes the soft, sweet sounds that bring birds feet-down into the decoys, with just the right amount of volume for versatility.

The basic quack

Ducks quack for a lot of reasons ("Qu-aaat") and do so regularly. This single sound plays a Swiss-Army-Knife role in duck calling, and mastery of this basic vocalization is incredibly valuable and underrated in the world of waterfowl hunting.

Hen mallards often quack when they first land in a decoy spread or with real birds. They will also quack when seeking or directing their young – often well into the hunting season. In addition, hens may frequently quack when a drake approaches them late in the winter when breeding couples begin paring off. Finally, hen mallards also quack when alarmed or while taking off.

A single quack call, repeated about once every second, is an assurance call that can seal the deal on birds circling in tight. It allows hunters to keep a little chatter going with the birds as they make their final descent, and actually works to calm down members of the hunting party and allow the birds to settle in to the kill hole, preventing premature shots. The next time ducks are debating landing in your spread, try quacking them down right into the hole.

The feeding calls

Without question, the feeding call, or feeding chuckle, is the most misunderstood and misused call in duck hunting. True feeding calls are a series of short, pressurized tongue-taps ("Tet-tet-tettet-tet..."). Nearly all modern calling resources, however, insist that the feeding calls of ducks are long, drawn out, machine-gun affairs, where the caller occasionally rolls their tongue throughout, or exhibits incredible air control to prevent doing so. Thankfully, the true sounds mallard ducks make while feeding are simple, single "tets" as they swim or walk around, pecking like pigeons or scooping up floating matter.

Faster feeding calls can be used to mimic large groups of ducks, but be sure to incorporate a large decoy spread in an area known for heavy feeding to aid in realism. In addition, the use of decoys mimicking feeding birds can help to sell your trap. Avian-X Topflight Mallard Backwater Packs contain active feeding poses that effectively portray feeding birds. Jerk rigs nearly always help the cause, too, giving live birds the impression that they're missing out on a good opportunity.

A good feeding call can be used to convince circling birds to commit. Use it in conjunction with the single quack once the attention of the birds is turned toward the decoy spread. These light calls are best performed with a low-key call like the aforementioned Zink ATM, or the Zink Double Magnum Power Hen PH-2, known for its deep, raspy realism. Feed calls often have the greatest effectiveness late in the season, as ducks need increased nutrition to fend off cold temperatures and recover from energy-draining migrations.

Overlooked additions

Hen mallards get all the press when it comes to duck vocalizations, but they aren't the only birds using sound to communicate. Drake mallards produce a throaty, filtered whistle ("weejsht, weejsht") most often heard when they are alone or in situations of reduced visibility like twilight or dense fog. Again, hunters can use this call to bring ducks down into the hole. It's also incredibly effective on quiet, still mornings, and can be magical on pressured birds.

Other species of ducks vocalize very uniquely. All species of teal "peep", while American wigeon use a three-note whistle, with emphasis on the second inflection, to communicate. Pintails talk through a throaty whistle that takes a bit of practice to produce.

The good news is that all of these unique duck sounds can be mimicked with one call, the Zink Mallard Drake Whistle. This unique looking device – with the shape and coloration of a drake mallard head – is an inexpensive way to create additional realism in your calling sequences and put the odds in your favor when calling numerous species.

Duck hunting can seem complicated, complete with more variables than we can mentally manage. It isn't, so don't make it that way. Becoming proficient with the hail call, basic quack and feed call – and understanding when to use them – will get the job done in the field. After all, hunting isn't a competition, and the only judges that matter are the birds.





Encounters in Hunter Ethics

By John Simeone

They had climbed high in the Chugiak Mountains, a lonesome wild place, remote and uncharted, the year 1961. Harry Swank and his guide stalked within iron sight range of the greatest Dall

Ram of all time. It was a trophy of 10 lifetimes, a Boone and Crockett/Sagamore Hill World Record. They did it right, Ram and Hunter immortalized in time and memorial, a once in a lifetime event never to be duplicated. I lectured at the Alaska Wildlife Museum at Ft Richardson during my tenure in the Military Police. When I met the Swank family, although Harry had passed, I mentioned the additional Sagamore Hill Award which has now become a reality.

Beautiful Louisiana; The Sportsman's Paradise, a great phantom buck had eluded hunters for enough years to become a magnificent trophy. For the Bow Hunter a 125 would make the Pope and Young book, this one was a 205. Everybody seemed to like the Hunter as he was invited as a guest on an old hunting club with good members, but little did the other guys know the intent of the individual was to carelessly hunt without a license, because his hunting privileges had been suspended due to a prior game violation.

No one knew but the Poacher, and when he foolishly displayed the Buck in camp one of the club members, in good faith, called the Game Warden to confirm a record book harvest with a bow. However, this caused a firestorm when it was found that this was an illegal kill resulting in a massive fine and disqualification for the record books. The only thing good about it was the fine taxidermy work done by retired Game Warden, Bill Tyree as the trophy is now displayed at the Pineville office of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

There is a movement (started by yours truly) to pardon the buck himself as I see no guilt there, and enroll him in the record book as the Louisiana Dream Buck of the People, as it now becomes the icon for all good hunters as a reminder that there is still a great buck out there for the ethical core hunter.

Ethics of hunting are written as laws, protocols and unwritten within the opinions of hunters past and even political correctness. Being regional, some go back to Europe as traditional ways over a thousand years old. While some ethical behavior is challenged by



new ideas and technology, many old traditions stick with us while others die out as forgotten footnotes how things once were and never will be again.

In Vermont there is a season where they actually shoot fish from a tree stand, with a gun, perfectly legal and ethical. If, you take the same person and tell them in the state of Louisiana you are going to put the gun fisherman on a stand and run a deer by him with the dogs he might think you're crazy. In some places both are perfectly legal and acceptable.

As in Rome do as the Romans so before hunting in a region you're not familiar discuss hunting protocols with the locals that are in the know. A tall order if you're local or guide is a slob hunter and you don't know it. These days you just have to check and recheck if you suspect a Red Flag.

Where did the ethics and rules of fair chase come from? The legend of the Apostle of Ardennes in which a Prince was distraught when his wife and baby died and took out his anger on the wild game of the Ardennes Forest killing everything in sight. When told not to hunt on Good Friday, the Prince paid no head and coursed with his hounds all day a great Stag until it was brought to bay.

When the Prince raised his bow, a flaming cross appeared between the antlers of the Stag, and the voice of the almighty told him to change his ways. The Prince joined the church later to become a Bishop. In time he was canonized and became the Patron Saint of Hunters and Hunting Dogs. Many of the old world ethics and traditions came from St. Hubert, such as honoring the fallen beast with the last bite and the "bleeding" of the new hunter as a rite of passage. His breed of dogs the St Hubert Hound is not too well known because we know them as Blood Hounds.

The Cherokee believed if you have been a good person all year the deer would come out and give themselves to the hunter. However, you must offer a pinch of tobacco to the 4 winds to appease "The Little People," and to ask permission to hunt the game. To them it's all about respect something that needs rekindling.



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Mike Berovic Photography

At the turn of the twentieth century Theodore Roosevelt saw the demise of the American Bison and other species and endorsed changes in conservation. This included the Boone and Crockett book of big game world records, with the all-time best of the best being the Sagamore Hill Award (The Roosevelt Home place).

The first account of ethical fair chase was the celebrated Louisiana bear hunt during Roosevelt's Presidency. Hunting the Tensas area, an unscrupulous guide tied a bear to a stump to ensure success. Pointing this out to the president, the old Rough Rider was infuriated and refused to take the shot. The bear was released and the guide fired. Not long thereafter, New York Toy companies heard about the story and created the famous stuffed animal that kids love today, the Teddy Bear.

Many believe if it's legal it's ethical, but whoa, not so fast. It is quite legal to cultivate private super deer and then sell semen to other deer farmers to increase the size of the trophy and genetics. It doesn't always work, any more than Frankenstein's Monster. These awesome Lab rats have no natural immunities therefore they don't do well outside the pen. Subsequently they can never be released into the wild to increase the genetics of the indigenous heard. So to what end you ask?

For a simple fee of what I make in a year or two a wealthy hunter can go into a fenced enclosure (no matter what the size) and shoot what appears to be a beyond world class buck, when only hours before it was eating out of someone's hand in the pen. A true fair chase hunter that follows the old ways of ethics would never have anything to do with this. This is why even the practice of quality deer management somehow seems dubiously related when fee hunting is involved. The core hunter that hunts public or unincorporated private land must go by the luck of the draw. Hunting a wild free ranging animal is the ultimate challenge for the ethical hunter.

10-year-old, Landon Harrison was taught by myself to be ethical hunter. I received no pay. I saw a kid that didn't go outside much, preferring electronical video adventures to the real thing. Using his late grandfather's rifle, Landon made a perfect shot unassisted in any way at the moment of truth. The buck just touched the 150 B&C he needed 170 for the books (10 pointer at 250 pounds). No food plots, no genetic cultivation, no gun vice, just a calm voice that said, "Shoot him when he stops." By the luck of the draw his first deer was a priceless wild free ranging buck, by fair chase.



The Boone and Crockett Club does not recognize trophy's that are not taken under the rules of fair chase along with a lot of other aggravating clauses referring to methods and means that keeps the hunter honest. But, to circumvent this for the endowed and privileged, other record books were created to accommodate those of trophy obsession. It all depends on how your character adapts to the truth or a lie to yourself, as no one is really looking, right. Wrong, everyone is watching the hunter; even other hunters that can be the worst of critics.

Traditionalists are always at edge, with techno progressives, while fish and game commissions try to find a compromise. My state of Louisiana does a pretty good job of making most of us happy. In the end it becomes a contest of "The Haves" and "The Have Not's." Never meant to be a contest, ethical hunting is a test of the individual's character.

Hunters can become at odds with themselves, as with the conflict between Bow Hunters and Crossbowmen. Most states now allow both and some during the same seasonal time period. Both claimed hunting rites with the weapon of choice while the vertical archers claimed a higher prestige in the hunting world and an outcry ensued. When the issue was resolved in Louisiana it boiled down to jealousy, animosity and selfishness at the child level. I know this as I was directly involved as the investigative reporter for the Crossbow. Reality showed the introduction of the crossbow instilled more hunter interest while increasing state revenue, to a national dwindling population of hunters in general. Ethics perhaps, but more human nature, the owners of Archery Shops around the state that opposed the crossbows, ironically, now have them hanging from the ceilings and will sell you one at a premium price. The American Crossbow Association has a book of world records just like the Pope and Young Club (no love lost), while any legal/ethical take can be listed in the Boone and Crockett Club regardless of the weapon.

I once enjoyed Hunting Deer with Dogs in Louisiana, we did it right. When the old dog men began to die out so did ethics and tradition. Careless dog hunters trespassed on private land, broke game

laws, littered and raced vehicles up and down public roads until much of the sport was stopped by the complaints of landowners that were non hunters. In this case they just never learned.

Long range technology allows for the practiced few Nimrods to make clean kills on big game out to one thousand yards, that being said the rest of us need to learn to stalk within at least three hundred yards. Super Bow Hunters can go to one hundred yards while the rest of us need to stick to thirty yards. Ethics tell us, "You have to know your limitations." In this case it ain't the arrow it's the Indian.

Anti-Hunters don't like anything we do; this will never change. They have no ethics and will do anything they can get away with to stop hunting. A military class I attended revealed a major homeland terrorist threat was wacko Eco terrorist. One such group operating from their cowardly safe spaces, hired outlaws to shoot cattle with arrows to make hunters look the blame. Laws protect both Hunters and the Liberals but only one group has a set of ethics. Truth is simple; hunters are part of the food chain as long as they follow the rules of conservation, while public opinion can be misleading.

Ted Nugent tells us Hunting is sport, meat and the trophy which obviates the truth that we that hunt by the rules of fair chase find ourselves earning and respecting the game we hunt and through good conservation we replenish what we have taken...Pass it on.

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DRIVEN/TOWER SHOOT AT GREEN MOUNTAIN SHOOTING PRESERVE

By Dana Benner

It was around 8:00AM when I pulled into the parking area at Green Mountain Shooting Preserve in Effingham, New Hampshire. It was the end of October and though the skies were clear and there was no snow on the ground (yet), there was a crisp fall feel in the air. I was there because I had been invited by the preserve's owner, David Bardzik, to participate in a "European style" driven/tower shoot. Green Mountain Shooting Preserve is a top notch operation so I had a feeling this was going to be good. This type of shooting is not the norm here in the States and the phrase "European style" intrigued me so I decided to look into this a bit more.

Driven/tower shoots are common in many parts of Europe and involve a select number of shooter at

specific parts of the shooting area. The birds are released and driven from a central location. As they fly over the different stations the shooters try to bring them down. The shooters must only shoot at birds within their lane of fire. As nobody knows where the birds will fly some stations will see more action than others from one minute to the next.

My best point of reference for this research were the pages of many of the British shooting publications. The first thing I noticed were the photos of people dressed in tweed and fancy boots and all of them were carrying either side-by-side or over and under shotguns. As I read some of these articles I also noticed that there were other people, non-shooters, loading the guns of the shooters. I began to hope that this wasn't what they meant by "European style" as I don't shoot a double, I don't own any tweed or fancy boots, and the last thing I want is someone handing me my shells.

I can't tell you the relief I felt when I jumped out of my truck and saw no one wearing tweed. All of the shooters were dressed as I was; jeans, various patterns of camo clothing and blaze orange hats and vests. The blaze orange is a rule at Green Mountain due to safety concerns. As far as guns were concerned, though there was a fair share of doubles, there were just as many pumps and semi-automatics. Most were 12 and 20 gauges though there were also a few 28 gauges represented. I was carrying my Mossberg 500 12 gauge pump outfitted with a modified choke. As I was to find out, the birds would be flying high, really high, and the modified choke gave me the ability to reach out for those longer shots. My ammunition consisted of a few boxes of Federal 2 3/4 inch #6 steel shot. The preserve doesn't allow for magnum or 3 inch shells that





are very popular when pheasant hunting in the Plains states where long shots are the norm. They also don't allow shot size any larger than #6. As I was shooting steel, #4s would have been better for pheasants, but when you're playing at someone else's house, you play by their rules.

Sometime around 9:00AM we all gathered around for a safety briefing. David explained to all of the shooters on how the shoot would operate. Around the base of a "mountain", really a large hill, were set up 10 stations and each station was to have two shooters for a total of 20. There were to be 350 pheasants released on this shoot, 35 at a time. When all of the shooters were in position a horn would blow signaling the shooters to load up. Those of us with pumps and semi-automatic shotguns were limited to only loading three shells at a time. From the top of the hill 35 pheasants would be released and driven off of the hill. After all 35 birds were driven off of the hill a second horn would blow at which time all guns were unloaded and the shooters would move to the next station. This would continue until all shooters had a chance to shoot from all of the stations.

At this briefing we all also found out who our shooting partners would be and what station we would begin at. I was partnered with a man named Robert Lee and our starting point was station 4. Before heading out to our stations we all stopped at the five-stand clays course for a little warm up; some of us needing it more than others, including myself. Soon it was time to get into position at our stations. Besides the shooters there were dog handlers out there with retrievers to pick up the fallen birds. As the shooting could be pretty fast there would be no time for the shooters to retrieve the birds. This is where the dog handlers came into play and it was good to see them there as nobody wants a bird lost. To my relief there was nobody out there handing me my shells.



With the sound of the horn Robert and I loaded up. As it was to turn out we only had three birds fly over our station, with two of them coming down. Our next station was much different. It seemed like all of the birds were coming over us, and all of them flying very high. I'm not used to shooting at high

flying birds and needless to say many flew on unscathed. I do have to say that once I got my rhythm the modified choke did give me the ability to bring down some of these high flying birds. This continued throughout the rest of the morning with more than a fair share of the birds living on to fly another day.

At the end of it all, it was a great amount of fun. I made new friends, people I might not otherwise have met if it wasn't for this event. After a fine lunch at the Green Mountain Clubhouse some of the shooters planned to head off to do what is called a "cleanup hunt". This is where hunters go into the field, with dogs, to hunt the birds that managed to get away. I opted to skip that hunt, instead staying in the clubhouse and talk with my fellow shooters.

Unlike some of the European events that I had read about, we didn't cap off the event with a glass of brandy. With all guns put away and the shooting done for the day we shared our experiences and excuses over a cold beer. Believe me we all had our own stories, with each one being better than the other.

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How To Attract Deer Fast, In Five Steps

By Kevin Steffey

Let's face it, every deer hunter wants to attract deer fast. If you own a piece of land, then you can certainly attract deer fast and easily. Deer are elusive animals, and most of us have spent almost all day waiting to catch a glimpse only to be infuriated that we didn't see even a single one. Whether you are trying to attract deer to hunt them or to look at them, there are many ways you can achieve this. Deer are attracted to certain plants, foods, and scents. Before you dust off your hunting boots, oil down your deer hunting rifles and head out to your hunting spot, read on to find out how to attract deer to your land.

1. Scout the land

Regardless of whether the property you are on is big or small, be sure to scout it out. Once you have scouted the area, start reaching out to your neighbors one by one to see if this something they would get on board with. If some of your neighbors don't live on their property, search property tax records to obtain contact info and send them an email introducing yourself as their neighbor. The primary goal of your conversation should be meeting and sharing the idea with them. Depending on the neighbors, it might be difficult to convince them to take similar steps, but you have to try.

2. Plant a food plot

A food plot should be your main consideration for drawing deer onto the land. You can attract a number of them by planting a few plants. While you have to put in some work, you will without a doubt love the





payoff. Deer are attracted to foods that are packed with proteins such as peas, alfalfa, turnips and soybeans. While results are not instantaneous, mast trees offer deer their favourite foods once the trees start bearing nuts. Other trees that bear fruits that attract deer include persimmons, apples and pears. Be sure to spread the seed according to the

manufactures' instructions.

3. A comfortable place to rest

If you have the structure on your land, consider making it a "safety zone" for the deer you are trying to draw. Without adequate cover, the deer won't call your property home and they may look elsewhere. If you have a thickly forested section of the land, make it inaccessible to everyone so as to allow the deer to remain undisturbed until you get the shot. If you don't have enough property you can still create a bit of traffic by allowing parts of your property to become heavily forested and leaving them alone all year-round.

4. Place salt and mineral blocks

As most hunters know, deer are attracted to mineral sources, and you can attract some more deer to your land by ensuring that they are ever present. Simply bury the salt block below the surface of the ground, within a hole about 3-4 inches deep and cover the block with soil. Sprinkle some salt on top of the soil. Realize that the block should sit there for a few hours, or perhaps even days, before deer can check it out. Remain patient as they will find the holes, dig the blocks out and start to lick. Be sure to pick the right spot where there won't be negative outcome from this mess happening.

5. Provide your deer with water source

Deer require water to survive, but it is particularly important during summer months. A single deer needs about 2 quarts of water on a daily basis. So having water on your land may mean the disparity between deer staying or going. They don't need to be large. A quarter acre pond can serve the water needs of the whole herd. If you have access to 55 gallon drums, cut them in half and counter-sink them into the ground. Multiple water sources are ideal for deer so they don't have to travel far and feel comfy using them.

There you have it, tips on how to attract deer fast. Whatever deer hunting times, these tips will help you create a serene and stable environment for the deer to live in. Once the deer feel safe and comfortable in your land, you will find your property teeming with deer of all sizes even during the off-season.

Editors Note: Kevin Steffey is an avid hunter and freelance writer. He loves spending time in the field with his rifle more than almost anything else, and occupies his off-time discussing deer and their habits online. He is a founder at www.deerhuntingfield.com




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