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Vol. 1 Issue 192

Fall 2009



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Cover Photo

Was this musky a state record?
Charles Braniff, from Vienna,
fished at Burnsville Lake for this
whopper musky. He measured
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Burnsville Lake is noted for
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Ask The Pro - Carl Svbek III

Q: What is the one fishing-related question you have been asked most often since turning pro?

- OperationBass.com staff

A: The most popular questions are probably: "How did you become a professional fisherman?" and "How can someone become a professional fisherman?" The truth is that it takes a lot of time, effort, dedication, determination and money. And it doesn't happen overnight. By the time that most people see the "big name" fishermen on television programs and in news articles, that fisherman has probably already been around a few years, struggling to make his way to the top. I began fishing competitively at 9 years old, which is when I joined my first bass club with my dad. By the time I was 16, I realized that I wanted to fish professionally so I began to fish the

Red Man Tournament Trail. The key is to start with local circuits as you usually have more success locally. Then, as you get more comfortable, you can begin fishing the larger, regional tournaments. The Red Man Tournament Trail and the Everstart Series are great circuits to fish because you can begin to hone your fishing skills. These tournaments are also set up in a pro and no-boater format, so you can fish either side. It is wise for an inexperienced tournament fisherman to start on the no-boater side and then work up to paying the bigger entry fees for the pro side.

Q: When I watch fishing shows on TV, I hear the pros talk about the success they have sight fishing.



Bo Wolfe hooked a big smallmouth bass. Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawn-brokers in Beckley.

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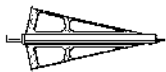
Whenever I try it, it spooks the fish. What are the secrets to this technique?

- Joel Saxen, Mesa, Ariz.

A: Well, Joel, it is a tough technique to master. Part of the technique is learning the stages that the fish are going through during the spawning process. I try to determine whether the fish are in the pre-spawn,

continue to the next page

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spawning or post-spawning phase. While the fish are in the pre-spawn stage, when they are just starting to move up to make their beds, they are more apt to be "spooked." To be successful at this stage, locate the fish, and then back off a bit. You should throw real subtle type of baits, like a wacky worm. Try to make long casts with finesse baits or soft jerkbaits, throwing the lure past the fish, and then working it back towards the boat. When the fish are actually on the bed, they are "locked down"; if you spook them, back off and wait, and chances are that the fish will come back. Sometimes fishermen spook the fish and then just leave, thinking they are gone for good. But if the fish are

up on the bed, then they'll more than likely come back. Position the boat far enough from the bed so it doesn't disturb the fish. Rely on your casting skills, not boat position, to put the bait in front of the fish. Use small tube baits, small finesse or small jigs. I prefer to use a small Gambler tube. During post-spawn, you may see bass that are guarding the fry. These fish are sometimes difficult to catch as they are typically just "cruising." As if
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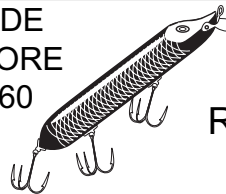
Dave McNemar caught and released this huge bass caught in a Parkersburg farm pond. *Photo courtesy of Star Printing in Ravenswood.*



Chris Waldron and son Josh are shown with a quality Burnsville Lake bass. *Photo courtesy of Burnsville Docks on the lake.*

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you are fishing for pre-spawn bass, position the boat far enough from the fish and make long casts. You will typically find reaction-type strikes? the fish will hit the bait out of aggravation more than anything. At this stage, topwater and spinnerbaits work well. I would suggest practicing these techniques in small ponds that are relatively clear. Be sure you have a good pair of polarized sunglasses - it makes it much easier to see the fish. It really takes a lot of practice and experience to master this technique, but it definitely pays off!

Q: I've fished natural waters my entire life and just moved to an area of the country where the only bodies of water are reservoirs. I'm finding the standing timber a bit intimidating. Can you give me any tips on locating bass and what tackle I should use?

- G. Skubal, Muskogee, Okla.

A: Learning to fish the timber is very important in reservoirs, and can be a key to success on such bodies of water. To try to locate the bass, look for shallow areas in



Tank Prudy landed a big ocean cobia. Photo courtesy of Outdoor Specialties in Winfield.

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the timber, especially in the fall. Look for sloughs and rivers and areas near creek channels. Typically in the fall, fish will move into the creeks to ambush their food. So that is a good place to begin to locate these fish. Using baits with non-exposed hooks, such as Texas-rigged worms, craw-worms or lizards can

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can greatly increase your chances of success. Spinnerbaits are a good bet as well if you run them close to the surface of the water. Don't let the timber intimidate you. Don't hesitate to throw it into thick timber - you are going to get hung up, but you'll also be putting your bait where the fish are. Of course, make sure you have plenty of baits - I've lost more than my share in timber. Also, look for larger trees that have bigger root systems, because a lot of times the fish will hold in the roots. Look for fallen timber, too, that provides ambush areas for bass (areas that bass will hold in, waiting for crawfish or baitfish). Once you've caught a bass or two off of a particular piece of brush or tree, look for similar trees or bushes for your next stop.

Q: When fishing soft plastics, how do you decide when to use a crawfish, lizard or a worm pattern?

- Jon Andersen, Hattiesburg, Miss.

A: I typically throw a lizard or
continue to the next page



Abby Todd, 6 years old, hooked this 29" catfish. Photo courtesy of Starcher's Sport Shop in Lubeck.



Another huge catfish was hooked by this angler at Burnsville Lake. Photo courtesy of Burnsville Docks on the lake.



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craw-worms in the springtime when the bass move up into the shallow water. All three baits are very productive baits year-round; however, I've had better success in the springtime with them. A lot of it depends on personal preference and experience. I love to fish with a wacky worm when I'm bed fishing, but I will switch to a lizard or crawfish when flipping shallow brush. In the summer, I typically throw a 7-inch Texas-rigged worm. In the fall, I'll usually throw a craw-worm. In the winter, I like to throw a craw-worm on the back of a jig. Living on Lake Sam Rayburn, which also has a lot of hydrilla, I use the worm in the summer because it seems to penetrate the grass better and the fish love it. A lot of times, you really just have to go out there and spend some time working the different soft baits and see which ones work best for you.

Keep in mind that it is helpful to know the bass' food source. If you know what the fish are feeding on in the area (ex: crawfish), then begin with a crawfish pattern.

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Bub Harris, from Vienna, got his 1st bow buck last season.

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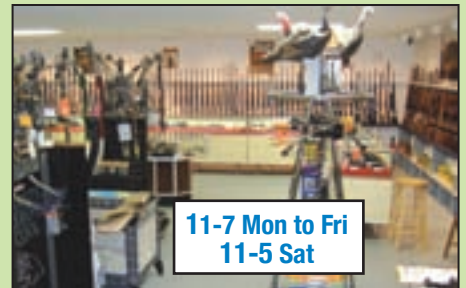
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Bryan Reger, from Buckhannon, went to Canada recently for this massive buck. *Photo courtesy of Rick's Taxidermy in Buckhannon.*



Bo Wolfe landed a farm pond large-mouth bass. *Photo courtesy of Cardina Pawnbrokers in Beckley.*



Daron Headley hooked a large-mouth bass. *Photo courtesy of MAD Sporting Goods in Boaz.*

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Young Brady Phillips caught a catfish. *Photo courtesy of Family Fishing & Camping in Grafton.*

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Anthony Walton hooked a real nice flathead catfish at Burnsville Lake on a guided trip. *Photo courtesy of Burnsville Docks on the lake.*

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Mast Survey And Season Outlook

The 2009 "Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook" is available on the Division of Natural Resources' Web site and at DNR district offices, according to Randy Tucker, Wildlife Biologist for the DNR Wildlife Resources Section. Since 1970, the Wildlife Resources Section, in cooperation with volunteers from numerous other agencies, has conducted a fall mast survey to determine the abundance of mast produced by 18 species of trees and shrubs.

"The availability of fall foods has a significant impact on wildlife populations and harvests," said Tucker. "Our biologists have used the mast survey data to demonstrate the strong correlation between mast conditions and deer, bear and turkey harvests. In addition to the impact on harvests, the amount of food available each year can affect the reproductive success



Derrick Burdette fished in the Ohio River for these two huge catfish.

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of numerous species which will affect population sizes in the following years."

Production of acorns, walnuts, beechnuts and hickory nuts are well below the 39-year average and will have noticeable effects on the 2009-2010 hunting seasons. "It is very important for hunters to scout and consider the type and amount





Bill Leasure hoked his 1st musky.

of food available in the areas that they hunt," Tucker added. "Hunters can find a wealth of knowledge in the 'Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook' and it should provide them valuable information before heading into the field."

Certain species of wildlife will move larger distances in search of food due to the reduced amount of mast in 2009. West Virginia residents are reminded to make sure that bird seed, pet food and trash are properly stored so that roaming wildlife, particularly black bears, do not become a nuisance.

Copies of the 2009 Mast Survey and Hunting Outlook may be found on the DNR Web site at www.wvdnr.gov under "Hunting." Information analyzing mast conditions and wildlife harvests is also available on the Web site.

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Special Youth Hunting Days

Youth hunters between the ages of 8 and 14 will have the opportunity to harvest an antlerless deer during three days in 2009. Youth deer hunting days will be October 31, December 26 and December 28, according to Frank Jezioro, Director of the Division of Natural Resources.

“Youth deer hunting days are an excellent opportunity to introduce young hunters to the sport of deer hunting,” said Jezioro. “The October deer hunting day is a good way to let young people experience deer hunting while temperatures are mild. In addition, foliage is at peak color and wildlife is very active. The days in late December coincide with a time of year when many families are together celebrating the holidays. The youth hunting days in December may allow young hunters to hunt with family members who are not able to participate at other times of the year.

The special split youth deer season will be held on private land in all counties having a firearms deer hunting season and on 47 specified Wildlife Management Areas and three state forests listed on page 31 of the 2009-2010 Hunting and Trapping Regulations Summary. Youth hunters must be accompanied by a licensed adult at least 21 years of age who must also wear 400 square inches of blaze orange, cannot carry a gun or bow, and must remain near enough to the youth to render advice and assistance.

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Keeping A Hunting Journal

Twentieth Century philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it." Chances are he wasn't thinking about deer hunting when he spoke those words, but the principal still applies, none-the-less. If you are like me, just remembering what happened on your last hunt is challenging enough. Being able to recall specific details of the hunts from years past would be dang near impossible without having some type of written account. That is why a hunting journal can be such a great resource for the serious deer hunter.

More than just a means of reminiscing about past hunts, the deer hunting journal can be a powerful tool for choosing when and where to maximize your hunting efforts. When faced with common deer hunting variables on the properties that you hunt - changing weather conditions, the presence or absence of specific crops or food plots, the local mast crop, or even the seasonal timing - a quick glance back through a few years' worth of entries can provide a wealth of information on how the deer have reacted to those same circumstances in the past.

Consequently, knowing how the deer will react will go a long in de-

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veloping a plan to take advantage of those factors.

Deer journals can come in all shapes and sizes - from a simple notebook, to computer generated data sheets in a three-ring binder.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Since a hunting journal is simply a personal account of your hunting experiences, there is no right or wrong way to set one up. It can be as basic or as detailed as you want to make it. However, the more details included in the journal, the more accurately you will be able to draw conclusions on the deer's

continue to the next page



Danny and Baily Schofield, from Ashton, teamed up for a spring gobbler.



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behavior and patterns on the properties that you are hunting.

It is important to update deer journals as soon after the hunt as possible,

while all of the important details are still fresh on your mind.

So, just what types of information should you include in your hunting journal? Below are some of the basic fields that I recommend, along with a brief description of each. The goal is to try and cover the most common variables that influence a deer's behavior, without making the journal so detailed that it becomes tedious to keep up with.

1. PRE-SEASON SUMMARY

I like to start each season of my hunting journal with what I call a 'pre-season summary'. This consists of a brief description of the

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properties that I have permission to hunt, including acreage, landowner contacts, and any plantings or major changes that have taken place since last season that may affect deer movement on that particular piece of land. This serves as a reminder of what was going on with each property during any given year. As a result, you are not left

trying to remember what year the Smith farm was logged, or what was planted on the Jones' farm the year you shot that 140" ten-pointer.

With that section complete, I go straight into my daily hunt logs.

2. DATE

This probably goes without saying, but the very first detail that I include on every entry is the date that the hunt takes place. The time of year a hunt takes place influences almost every aspect of a deer's behavior - its feeding and travel patterns, as well as the effects of the rut. The only way you will be able to accurately compare these behaviors from year to year is to know exactly what dates your hunts took place.

3. LOCATION

continue to the next page



Mike Black hooked a big blue catfish at this popular lake. *Photo courtesy of Catfish Cove in Hurricane.*



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As important as the date is the location of the hunt. Knowing when you've seen the most deer, or the biggest bucks over the course of several years won't do you much good if you cannot remember where you saw those deer. This may seem trivial if you only have one or two places that you hunt, but keep in mind that maintaining a deer hunting journal should be seen as a long-term project. Over the period of several years, old hunting spots can be lost and new ones can be gained, so take the time to keep track of your general location and the information you gather will be much more valuable to you.

Beyond just what farm you were hunting, you will also want to include your specific stand location for each hunt. If you are hunting standard stand locations that you have given names to over the years, then simply identifying the stand by name should suffice. If, however, you are hunting a new area, or are not the type to give your stands a name, then a detailed description of your location will serve as a substitute. If you go this route, you may also want to include a hand-drawn map to compliment your description for future reference. For the high-tech hunter, all of these issues can be resolved by identifying each stand with its GPS coordinates. This leaves no room

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for misinterpretation, regardless of who uses the data, or how the property has changed since the information was recorded.

4.HOURS HUNTED

Another basic detail that you will want to include is the time of day that you were hunting. This can be as simple as including a starting time and a stopping time for each hunt. If I hunt from daylight until dark, with a lunch break mid-day, then I will log it as two separate hunts. That way it is easier to keep track of what happened in the morning versus what went on that evening.

Some hunting journals I have seen ask for the number of hours hunted, followed by an AM or PM. While that will work fine, I prefer to have the specific times of my hunt recorded. If I look back at an entry that lists three hours hunted AM, then I have no way to know if I climbed into my stand before daylight, if I was late getting in the

woods, or if it was more of a mid-morning hunt. That will not be an issue when you have your specific starting and stopping times recorded.

5.MOON PHASE

Though there is still some debate about exactly how the moon influences deer behavior, there is little doubt that it does have an effect. Research has shown that daytime

continue to the next page



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deer activity increases with a new moon and decreases when the moon turns full. The same research also suggests that rutting activity may also be triggered by the moon phase.

You don't have to take the experts word on the moon's influence on deer, however. By including the moon phases in your hunting log, over time you will be able to draw your own conclusions on how the moon phase affects deer in your area.

6.WEATHER

This is where the hunting journal can get as complex as you want it to be. There are numerous weather factors that can influence deer movement, and you have to decide how many of those you want to try to keep up with. At a bare minimum, I would include the temperature at the time of your hunt, wind speed and direction, and a general description of the weather conditions - overcast with light rain, sunny and hot, or partly cloudy with an approaching cold front, for example.

7.NUMBER OF DEER SEEN

This field is pretty self-explanatory. Simply jot down the number of deer you saw while hunting, breaking them down into one of four groups: bucks, does, fawns, and unknown. I throw in the "unknown" option as a means of quantifying deer that you just get a glimpse of, or deer that are too far away to determine sex.

8.HUNT NOTES

This is the meat and potatoes of a hunting journal. The catch-all portion where you can give a brief narrative of your hunt, explaining what you saw, when you saw it, what direction it came from, etc. This portion of the journal is critical in order to fill in the gaps of the basic details that you have included. Knowing not only that you saw six deer on a particular hunt, but that the deer came down the trail from the east at 6:35 p.m., crossed a saddle and passed by just out of bow range is much more useful for making future decisions regarding stand placement, hunt times, etc.

9.MAP

While certainly not necessary, a map can be a valuable visual

aid when included in your hunting journal. It doesn't have to be a work of art or a precise, scale drawing. The main goal is to show what deer movement and behavior you witnessed in relation to where you were hunting. It should also include any pertinent sign in the area, such as rubs, scrapes, large tracks, etc. When combined with your detailed hunting notes, the map should provide an accurate picture of what took place during your time on the stand.

With topographic maps and aerial photos readily available on the internet, it is now easier than ever to include detailed maps in your hunting journal for future reference.

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 Page 3

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Walt Allen used a bow last year for this big buck.. Photo courtesy of MAD Sporting Goods in Boaz.



Tim Peyton, from Belleville, took an early black bear.

**Mail In Your BIG FISH Pictures
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Form Is On Page 38**



3 year old, Code Mackey caught his 1st fish. Photo courtesy of Starcher's Sport Shop in Lubeck.

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Doctors David Hubard and Kelly Bal bid on the catfish trip at Burnsville Lake at the Shawn Stewart memorial auction this year. This benefit was to help out with expenses for Shawn's family after his tragic hunting accident during spring turkey season. Outpost Productions sponsored the fishing trip at the lake.



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Mike McGraw hooked a chunky New River samllmouth bass. *Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.*



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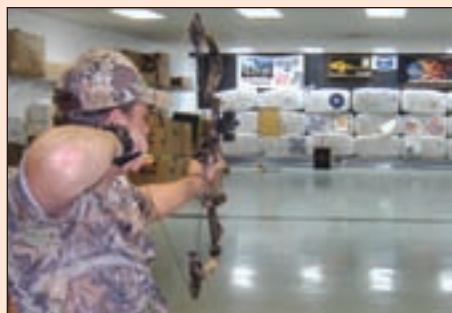
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Arland Griffith caught a nice channel catfish. Photo courtesy of Cardiant Pawnbrokers in Beckley.



Zack Ellison landed a 10 pound drum. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.



Cecil Gillette hooked a 31 pound catfish. Photo courtesy of Riverside Bait & Tackle in Hockingport, ohio.

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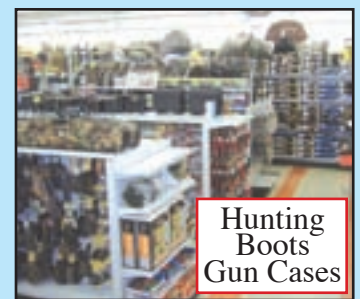
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Beyond BOW Hunts In 2009

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – The Wildlife Resources Section of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources will sponsor a Beyond BOW (Becoming an Outdoors-Woman) Women's Squirrel and Archery Deer Hunt, Oct. 15-17, for women interested in squirrel hunting and/or archery deer hunting. There is no structured instruction, but a number of women will be available for assistance. All participants will need a valid hunting license. Early registration is recommended as space is limited.

Participants will stay the nights of October 15, 16, and 17 at the Lantz House, a farmhouse owned and operated by Wheeling Jesuit University, which adjoins Lewis Wetzel Wildlife Management Area near Jacksonburg in Wetzel County.

Archery Hunt: If you choose to take part in this hunt you must be an experienced archer with your own equipment and be able to show proficiency.

Squirrel Hunt: You must bring your own .22 caliber rifle or shotgun with appropriate ammunition. Blaze orange is not required, but recommended.

“We are also planning a Beyond

BOW Women's Deer Hunt December 5-7,” said event organizer Billie Shearer. “This antlerless deer hunt will be in Lewis County. Participants will receive instruction on basic firearms safety, deer hunting techniques and field dressing. There will be a trip to the rifle range to sight in your firearm and for target practice.”

To participate in this antlerless deer hunt, you must be at least 18 years old and preference will be given to those who have attended a BOW workshop, a BOW hunter safety class, and those who have not attended a previous BOW hunt. Participants will need a valid hunting license and a Class N stamp. All participants will need to bring their own firearm and ammunition. All licenses may be purchased at any license agent or online at www.wvhunt.com.

Applications are now available, but space is very limited. For more information, please contact Billie Shearer at 304-558-2771 or billieshearer@wvdnr.gov.

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David Osbourne caught a New River musky. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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The Daily Grind

Once upon a time several years ago there arose the perfect hoax. In my lifetime, I have never lived through a joke, prank or "gotcha" like I did back during my Webster County days while living in an area called Bergoo. Most of you fishermen know Bergoo for the Elk River, streams, wildlife and great four-wheelin' trails. However, when the Webster Echo came out one day many years ago, life changed for one short week in this utopia of the great outdoors.

The story was written by an older gentleman, Jim Wilson, with far too much time on his hands. He and I bantered within our columns in the Echo for more than 10 years and played tit for tat on a weekly basis. He would tell blonde jokes (hey, I can take it), and I would reciprocate only to find out he'd made up a story about me and the girls in the paper office once again. But one week, he went too far, or so some would think.

Personally the article amused me probably more than anything in years. And honestly it has never been topped in my estimation. Though I would enjoy sharing this with you in its entirety and without the opening paragraph, most

By Kimberly Short Wolfe

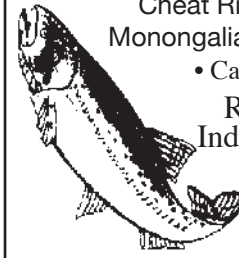
defiantly my publisher and editor would probably have the same reaction as the Echo editor and be ready to ring my proverbial neck.

So, here it is, as told by Jim Wilson, aka "Pops," to my kids and I:

continue to the next page

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Josh Murray learned a new trick last year - bowhunting for Canadian geese.
Photo courtesy of Starcher's Sport Shop in Lubeck.

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“The Abbagoochie.”

What is an Abbagoochie? How did they get here ... and who brought them?

Costa Rican natives call Abbagoochies “dry land piranhas” because of their insatiable appetites. They are only about 3 feet long and weigh an average of 35 pounds as adults. But they are all teeth and muscle and can consume many times their own weight in one days feeding.

The elusive part of their makeup is rather than risk capture by human beings, Abbagoochies, if cornered, will spin and twirl like a Tasmanian Devil and consume themselves - as in poof, they’re gone. Wildlife authorities in Pennsylvania, British Columbia and Canada, as well as West Virginia, have studied these creature’s habits since 2001 and believe these mammals are highly intelligent and willing to sacrifice themselves in order to protect a secret society that was heretofore un-

known to exist in Mammalia.

They were brought into West Virginia by wildlife officials in order to eradicate nuisance animals such as coyotes, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, lady bugs, locusts and a small wolf population.

Rumors exist, but are denied by wildlife personnel, that the Division of Natural Resources traded whitetail deer and turkey to western states for the coyotes, mountain li-

ons and wolves. Later, they regretted these trades because the transplanted animals were decimating farmers’ livestock to the point of oblivion and bankruptcy. Added to the fact was the DNR was paying out tens of thousands of dollars to farmers official claims of destroyed livestock.

Thus, the introduction of the Abbagoochie into West Virginia’s wilds continue to the next page



Roger Johnson reeled in a 21 pound blue catfish. *Photo courtesy of Catfish Cove in Hurricane.*

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and the secrecy behind same.

But the best laid plans of man and Abbagoochies oft goes astray. Since their placement in 1999, the smallish monsters have consumed everything they were brought in to destroy - but also thrive on livestock and family pets. A Field & Stream editor asked WVDNR game biologist Jim Evans if the Abbagoochies attacked humans. Evans replied, "People are disappearing. Draw your own conclusion."

Now, to say that this article created a stir is an understatement. The fact that he used names and the DNR prompted many phone calls from them to the prankster asking him to "please not do that again." Especially because Jim was buddies with many of these guys and everyone knew he had created the classic hoax.

I assume the DNR phones rang off the hook that week as folks were literally sleeping in their barns to protect livestock and parents were walking their kids to school. Chuckle if you must, but know that if I had printed the article in its entirety, you would understand the people's perspective in believing such a lie. The details were amazing.

The next week, together with the Echo office, we "got him good." I wrote a poem exposing his deception and included a picture of the

continue to the next page

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INDOOR RANGE



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of the Abbagoochie with Jim's face in it. Folks still talk today about Jim's furry friend. He carried the creature around and took pictures along with a fun lovin' conservation officer and various individuals making up lie after lie - I mean story after story about the critter. It entertained many of us for a long time.

Since that time, the Abbagoochie has been in major magazines (no kidding), has its own Web site and is on e-Bay. The Abbagoochie was actually created by taxidermist David Vandevender of Bergoo. If you don't find humor in all this, I suppose, you just had to be there. I'd say a movie may just be in the makin'.

Below is the poem I wrote in order to expose the hoax and the writer:

The Ol' Man on the Mountain
There was an ole man who lived on a

mountain,
Who told so many lies, we could not count them.
He scared little ladies with tales of beasts,
While he sat laughing and having a feast.
Soon his tales would come back to haunt him,
As plans were made by blondes to taunt him.
Shivering and frightened he cowered in fear,
That blondes with PMS would soon be near.
But when they arrived, their plot to unfold,
This is the tale that they were told.
A wild animal had come to their little man's house,
And opened the door as quiet as a mouse.
It climbed the stairs to where he was sleeping,
And what did he see - the little ole man was weeping.
He had come to the end of his life that day,
And what did the little old man have to say?

"I have treated blondes with cruelty and woe,
And now each and everyone is my foe."

I made up stories of friends far and wide,
Now Rich has had to go and hide.
He cannot help me, nor can my wife,
For the ferocious beast is taking my life.

The blondes who saw it, shook their heads in dismay,
For the little ole man would no longer be in the way.

continue to the next page



SJ Pack hooked a nice largemouth bass. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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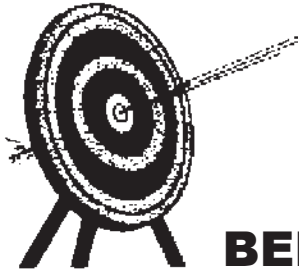
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INDOOR RANGE



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His lies and deceit were spinning out of control,
As the little ole man ran to find himself a hole.
The creature pursued him with blondes a cheerin'.
They could not believe the words they were hearin'.
The little ole man was saying he was sorry,
To blondes and Rich, and those he'd offended,
With stories and jokes, the truth he had bended.
Now the Abbagoochie was laughing at the man's plight,
Then he went spinning until out of sight.
With sweat and tears the man awakened.
His body was trembling - his voice a quakin'.
It had been a dream during the night,
Though it seemed so real - his plight.

The twinkle returning to the little man's eye,
He would not tell a story, a lie or a joke
Until at least he'd had his smoke.
He winked at the picture that stood by the lotion,
The one that had caused such a stir and commotion.
The Abbagoochie winked back then spoke a clear warning:
"Remember, Mr. Wilson to watch your words,
For sometimes your lies will not be heard.
You'll be like the little boy who cried 'Wolfe,'
And out will walk a blonde who has the last word."

(Kimberly Short Wolfe, MA, is a home school mom and the grief counselor/chaplain for Mountain Hospice. She can be reached by e-mailing kwolfe@mountainhospice.com or calling 304-823-3922, ext. 136.)



Tom Harris, from Vienna, scored a nice buck last season.



Daniel McFee shot a 38 pound coyote. Photo courtesy of Jarrett's Bait in Elizabeth.

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BIG BUCK PICS 38

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Young Derrick Kemp caught a nice catfish.. Photo courtesy of Crossroads General Store near Newark.



This angler hooked a nice rainbow trout. Photo courtesy of Amish Country Store in Marmet.



Joe Lilly brought in a smallmouth bass. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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Young Seth Witt reeled in a 23 pound catfish. Photo courtesy of Catfish Cove in Hurricane.

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Matthew Summers hooked a monster bass. Photo courtesy of Burnsville Docks in Burnsville.



Phil Cooper bagged a 184 class buck last year. Photo courtesy of MAD Sporting Goods in Boaz.



Paul Fox used a bow last season in McDowell County. Photo courtesy of Cardinal Pawnbrokers in Beckley.

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Every hunter alive has probably read, heard or watched on television about the importance of personal scent control. It has been drilled into our heads to wash our clothes in unscented detergents and wash our bodies with soaps produced specifically with the big game hunter in mind. Unfortunately, there are still some hunters out there that know very little about the subject, and others that are still disbelievers as to how important it is to eliminate as much human related odors as possible. They feel that they have been successful without following a scent control program and using such products, so they believe it is all hype.

On the other extreme, there is the archery hunter. One of the most dedicated species of hunter alive, and in that category there are those like myself that take everything they do to an extreme. I have been called obsessed with it, and I will admit that I am just that, but with having a high success rate and having countless experiences with big game of many different species at close range, with a personal best of having a whitetail buck at a distance of three feet while at ground level for over 30 minutes. I take

great satisfaction in knowing that I have successfully fooled the nose of one of the most wary animals in the wild. What makes up the term "extreme scent control?" I put practices to use in the category that many don't know about and even fewer put into practice.

Most everyone knows the importance of washing their clothes in the hunter detergents, washing their bodies in hunter soaps and shampoos and staying away from

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This angler landed a whopper Bluestone Lake carp. Photo courtesy of PC Bait & Tackle in Hinton.

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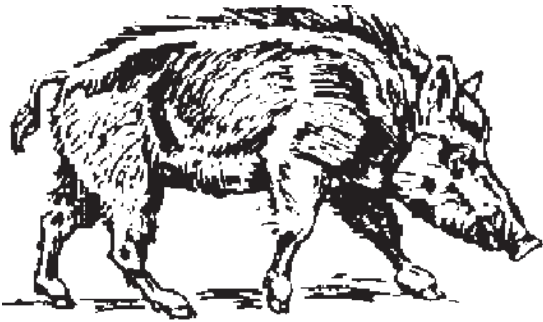


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fuels like gasoline and kerosene. But to be truly extreme about your personal scent control, what do you have to do to become known as obsessed and ridiculous when it comes to this topic. Do what I do and you'll soon find out.

Scent control begins long before the hunt even begins. It begins in overlooked areas like where you store your equipment. Avoid storing treestands, clothing and other related equipment anywhere that they can come into contact with harmful odors, such as any kind of fuels or other human related odors that can permeate any fabrics that may be attached to the equipment. Store them in areas solely designated for hunting equipment, even if that means building a shed for that purpose alone.

Before you even wash your clothes, be sure to wash out the

washer tub to remove any residual household detergents. Rinsing the entire tub and thoroughly cleaning the agitator where a build-up of detergents usually occurs is extremely important. Before placing your hunting clothes in the dryer, be sure to clean out the lint trap as a filled lint trap can create a back pressure of air which can push odors from previous fabric softeners and regular clothes washing back onto your hunting clothes. Also, use dryer sheets made specifically for hunters like those made by Hunters Specialties.

It is very important not to forget to wash your hats. Many hunters I know are fanatical about washing their clothes and yet wear the same hat, day after day without washing them - sometimes never washing

them. Hatbands can be some of the foulest smelling pieces of clothing worn if not cleaned regularly.

Immediately after drying your clothes thoroughly, place them in a scent free container. This can be

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something specially made for storing hunting clothes or just a plain, unscented garbage bag. If you are hunting in an area that has pine or hemlock, it can be extremely beneficial to place limbs from those trees inside the bags or containers to allow the clothes to absorb the natural odors.

The order that the clothes are placed in the container should also be considered. Keep in mind that the least amount of time that the clothes are handled, the less amount of human contamination takes place on them. I place my clothes into the containers in the reverse order that I will be putting them on. Which means outer layers are placed on the bottom, middle layers next and followed by undergarments on top. The last thing you want to do is pull scent free clothes from the container and set them on a floor or other area where harmful odors can come into contact, while you're digging around for your next layer to put on.

Cleaning your body to be as scent free as possible can also be taken

to an extreme and this is what often separates the men from the boys on this one. While some of my practices may be viewed as somewhat strange and unnecessary, I really don't care as I take great pride in having the ability to be up wind of an animal at ground level and for them to still be comfortable in thinking that there is no nearby danger.

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I begin my process of cleaning my body by keeping body hair to a minimum. Hair holds odors the most so by reducing the amount of hair on your body, the fewer odors you will carry around. Now I'm not saying you have to shave your

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Another large catfish was landed at Burnsville Lake. Photo courtesy of Burnsville Docks on the lake.

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whole body, but by trimming arm-pit hairs and removing hair in other areas that could potentially be the foulest part of the body, you have taken away some of the smelliest parts of the human body's problem areas when it comes to odor.

Another factor is the showering procedure. It is extremely important to take your bathroom break BEFORE you shower and not after. By using the toilet first and then showering, you can be sure to remove and residual urine or fecal matter from your body by paying close attention to those areas. As gross as this all may sound to some of you, it is one of the most crucial parts of personal scent control and yet probably one of the least adhered to in today's hunting society.

I prefer to take showers as this allows clean water to run over my body continuously instead of sitting in increasingly dirty water. During the shower I prefer to take one as hot as I can stand it. I find that this seems to loosen up the dead decaying skin the most, and it is that dead skin that causes the

formation of bacteria which in turn causes odor. I will lather my entire body with the hunter's soaps and shampoos and then scrub my entire body with a loufa. The loufa will additionally help remove the odor forming dead and decaying skin, not to mention those hard to reach areas that often become a haven for odors like your back.

Once I get out of the shower I will dry off using towels that have also been washed in a hunter's detergent. It does absolutely no good to go through all the previous processes to only dry off with a towel that smells like a fresh ocean breeze. From there I can go to my clothes, which are already set up in the containers in the order that I plan to put them on. Finishing the cleaning process with the application of a hunter's deodorant is also

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Travis Starkey caught a nice large-mouth bass. Photo courtesy of Broken Wheel Campground in Weston.

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important to help reduce the formation of scent forming bacterium. Using the deodorant under the armpits, feet and behind the knees will also help reduce odors.

An important aspect of extreme scent control is diet. This is a year round program as it is important that you constantly monitor what foods your body can process properly and what foods it can't. This process is year round, year after year because a person's body changes as it gets older and while some foods you may still like and enjoy - your body may not agree. Then there are the foods that just everyone has trouble with like the dreaded "musical fruit," more commonly known as "beans" that should be avoided by just about everyone during the hunting season.

Odorous foods such as onions, peppers, garlic and other like foods and spices should also be avoided, not only because of the foul odors it can create through your digestive system but from the bad breath they can create as well. Mouth odor is another one of the most commonly overlooked aspects of scent control as well and products such as chlorophyll tablets or special hunter's chewing gum can help alleviate this problem as well.

What you drink before and during



Glen Tracewell, from Parkersburg, caught a 10 pound, 4 oz. bass in Florida this year.

www.wvasportsman.net

a hunt can also have a detrimental effect on the amount of odor your body creates. Alcohol can produce foul odors the next day and drinks such as coffee, soda and tea contain caffeine which will increase the need for urination which can harm a hunt should the need to urinate

come over you while on stand. For that reason it is a good idea to have a urination bottle on hand if you plan on being on stand for several hours.

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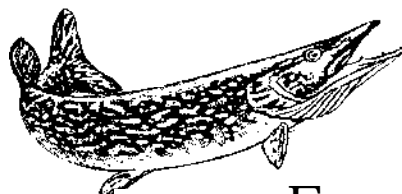
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