

WESTERN HUNTING & FISHING

APRIL 2025 **NEWS**



The Key To Successful Shooting...
HSM Ammunition 
Made in Stevensville MT. Available at your local retailer.



Flathead Lake Fishing Guide

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks <https://fwp.mt.gov>

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) cooperatively manage Flathead Lake under the Flathead Lake and River Fisheries Co-management Plan. The plan seeks to increase and protect native bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout to at least secure levels, while providing a recreational fishery with harvest based on nonnative fish...

As an angler, you are key to the plan's success. In the co-management plan, recreational harvest is a major tool for managing the fish populations of Flathead Lake, especially in reducing the number of smaller lake trout (less than the slot limit of 30 inches). In addition, CSKT and FWP encourage anglers to harvest yellow perch and lake whitefish, each of which have very liberal bag limits. Controlling these nonnative fish will benefit native trout. These species are delicious when prepared properly...

Before you go fishing, please remember to pick up current copies of the state and tribes' fishing regulations. These booklets contain specific bag limits for each species, information on fish identification, and tips for properly releasing native trout you might catch.

FISHING FOR LAKE TROUT

Lake trout (or mackinaw) are primarily fish eaters. They prefer colder water and are usually found near the bottom although they can be found at all depths when the water is cold. Generally fish 30'-100' deep for smaller (2-5lb.) lakereels and over 100' deep for larger lake trout but expect lots of mixing of sizes. Generally, look for areas that will concentrate bait fish such as points, sloping areas of large rubble, or flats adjacent to drop-offs or steep slopes. Expansive flats may not hold many fish. A fish finder helps locate likely spots and may locate schools of bait fish or lake trout but lake trout can hold so tight to the bottom most fish finders won't show them. Lake trout prefer dim light so the best fishing is dawn to mid-morning with generally slow fishing at mid day and sometimes fishing picks up in the evening. Lake trout are generally easy to catch but they move a lot and action can turn on and off. If you're not catching fish and can't see them on the finder move to a new location. If you think the fish are there, try different lures and colors and vary your techniques.

Lake trout up to 5 pounds eat lots of Mysis shrimp and can be delicious fried, baked, barbecued, or smoked. Fish from 5-10 pounds are much oilier and are best if skinned, trimmed, and cooked to allow juices to drain away. Macs over 10 pounds are very oily...

A. Vertical Jigging

This technique has really revolutionized lake trout fishing since it is simple, productive, and requires little gear. A medium weight spinning or baitcasting outfit with 10-lb. test line will work. Drop the lure to the bottom, reel up about a foot and jig the lure up sharply 1-3 feet and then let it free fall back. Jig every 10-20 seconds.

Set the hook hard when you feel a tap or jerk. Often the fish will hit as the lure is dropping so if the line stays slack as the jig is sinking, reel up and strike.

Leadhead jigs with plastic "grub" or "Mr. Twister" style bodies are effective and inexpensive. Use 1/2 oz. to 2 oz. jigheads, going to larger heads as you fish deeper. Use 3" bodies for 3-5 lb. macs and go to 5" or larger bodies if you just want big fish. White, chartreuse, and glo-in-the dark are popular colors. You'll increase bites if you tip the jig with a piece of fish (sucker, Northern pike minnow, or perch) or use scents. Salmonids (trout, salmon, whitefish) are illegal as bait.

Jigging spoons can also be very effective. Leadagators, Trilobites, Nordics, Crippled Herring, Kastmasters, and Buzz Bombs will all work. White, chartreuse or green, light blue, or glow are popular colors. Scents or tipping with a small piece of fish may help.

Woods Bay, Yellow Bay, Blue Bay, and West Shore State Park are reasonably sheltered spots with deep water close to the ramp for smaller boats. Other productive jigging areas are the river mouth, Conrad Point, Painted Rocks/Cedar Island, Wildhorse Island, the Narrows, Finley Point, and Gravel Bay.

TROLLING

A. Flatlining

You can readily catch lake trout by trolling lures near the surface in April-June and October-November. Troll 3/8 oz. or larger spoons such as Krocodiles in silver/red or gold/red or minnow-imitation plugs such as Rebels or Rapalas in black/silver, black/gold or fluorescent orange. You can also troll plugs that will dive to 10'-20'. Drop the lure 100'-200' behind the boat and troll parallel to the shore 50-100 yards out in 30'-200' of water. Steeper shore-lines such as most of the east shore, Conrad Point to Painted Rocks, Wildhorse Island and around the Narrows are good spots. Concentrate on spawning areas in the fall (points with rock or cobble) such as major points, Wildhorse Island, or around the Narrows.

B. Lead-Core

Lead-core outfits such as those used for kokanee can also be used on lake trout down to 50' deep or more. Fish the same lures and locations as flatlining with 3-8 colors out. This is particularly good as lakereels move deeper in summer.

C. Diving Planers and 3-way Rigs

Diving Planers are tied inline 4-6 feet ahead of the lure. They can dive 30-50 feet but will trip when a fish hits to allow a better fight. An angler can also tie up a rig with a 3-way swivel. The mainline ties to one swivel with a 4'-6' leader off the opposite swivel to a lure. Tie a short leader off the bottom swivel to a banana sinker (2-12 oz.). Depending on the line, speed, lure, and sinker weight you can fish down to 100 feet or more.

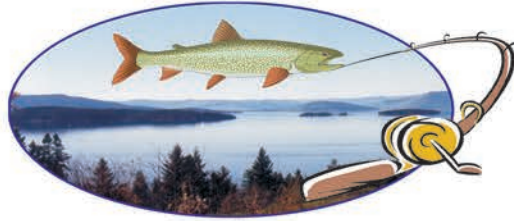
(continued on page 36)

2025 Spring Mack Days on Flathead Lake

Sponsored by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

Up to **\$225,000** in Cash and Prizes

(1)-\$10,000 & (3) \$5,000 & (5) \$1000 + over (9,000) \$500-\$100 Tagged Lake Trout



Thursday-March 13th to Saturday May 10th

9 weeks of lake trout fishing

Fish one day or several days-every lake trout entry gives you a chance to catch a tagged fish, receive bonus \$, and/or win in the lottery drawings!

Friday- Sunday-competitive Mack Days-lottery prizes, tagged fish, and bonuses-ends Fri-May 9th
Top ten angler prizes: based on your best 18 days/26 possible-Friday-Sunday-11th place-20th based on totals. Check out pick up sites on the website or turn in at Blue Bay from 10 AM till 9PM or ½ hr. before sunset-whichever comes first

40 lottery drawings **\$2,000- \$400**-all lottery drawings & prizes end Friday May 9th

Top twenty angler prizes **\$950-\$200 totals \$10,800**—if you are in the Top twenty you do not qualify for Ladies, Youth or 70 & Over awards unless you choose that prize

Siberian Cooler Tickets-1 entry for every 10 lake trout entries-2 drawings

Captains **\$250**-(4 prizes) Top lady anglers **\$300, \$200, \$100**-by total fish entered

Smallest lake trout **\$250**-(2 prizes) Largest lake trout **\$500**

Youth anglers- (17-13) 1st- **\$200**, 2nd-**\$150**, 3rd-**\$75** (12 & under)-1st-**\$100**, 2nd-**\$75**, 3rd-**\$50**

Weekend Prizes-**4@\$100 & 1@\$200 per weekend-9 weekends-\$5,400**

Golden Angler (70 & older)-**\$300 & \$200, \$100-& 2@\$50**-determined by total fish entered

Bucket Days-3 days of single/team-heaviest 4-fish-Fri March 28th, Sat April 19th, & Sun May 4th

Monday-Thursday- 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM deadline to turn in fish at Blue Bay – 4-\$50, 2-\$100, 4-\$250 lottery drawings plus bonus dollars -33 days-totaled with Fri-Sun totals at the end of the event

Saturday May 10th -SEPARATE DAY ALL ENTRIES IN BY 3:00-only AT BLUE BAY

All prizes & lottery drawings will be done on Saturday morning May 10th and posted for awards ceremony at 3:00. Cash Drawings for Saturday will be-\$400, \$350, \$300, \$200, \$150, \$100-Captains \$200, Ladies-\$100, 70 & Over \$100, Siberian Cooler, Largest lake trout under 30” \$100-1st \$75-2nd & \$50-3rd totals count for bonus awards

All it takes is one ticket (one for every lake trout under 30”) to win a lottery drawing

Bonus \$ amounts (Mon-Sun) increase as your total goes up-bonus amounts and tagged fish amounts are estimated-anglers who enter 11 or more lake trout receive bonuses-examples: 11-30 lake trout entries- \$45, 31-50-\$88, 51-75-\$150, 76-100-\$205,205-225-\$518, 301-325-\$813 on up. No pooling of fish is allowed. Lake trout are to be entered the same day as caught.

Fish the entire lake-Check in stations and times listed in emails (subject to change).

Check the rules, prizes, bonuses, check in sites at www.mackdays.com or send an email requesting information Entry page is under the events tab-email: cindy.benson@cskt.org: with your name, address, telephone #, age, male or female

Applications will be available:

Zimmers Tackle-Pablo
Walmart-Polson
Sportsman’s Warehouse-Missoula
FWP-Missoula and Kalispell
CSKT NRD Offices-Polson

Fish Camp-Kalispell
Sportsman & Ski Haus-Kalispell
Bob Ward & Sons-Missoula
Snappys Sports Senter-Kalispell
Bretz RV & Marine-Missoula
Westland Seed-Ronan

Telephone 406-675-2700 Ex. 7294 or 406-270-3386

Sanctioned by Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

The Pack Out And Why You Need To Train

By Stefan Wilson

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com



Photo credit Trail Kreitzer courtesy GOHUNT.com

Anyone who has been hunting elk for even a short amount of time knows that elk hunting is hard work. You often cover miles of rugged terrain in less than ideal conditions. You are constantly exhausted, carrying a pack full of gear along with your weapon. You work extremely hard before finally having the opportunity to take aim at your target and finally getting a change to put an elk on the ground. Then, once the excitement begins to subside, you consider the overwhelming size of the animal before you and say, “This is going to take a lot of work.” The irony is that anyone who hunts elk knows that the task of finding and harvesting an elk is only the beginning. All of the work you just put in to fill your tag was a mere warm up for the task that lays before you. All of those miles that you covered to get to that elk will be visited again and again as you make the same trip multiple times to pack all of the meat out...

The Pack Out: an Ultimate Test of Strength and Endurance

When considering how to train for a pack out, there are three factors that must be understood: muscular strength, muscular endurance and flexibility. Muscular strength is essential because an elk quarter can weigh 50 to 80 (or more) pounds. Multiply this by four and add in the back straps, antlers, heart, liver, etc. and you are going to be carrying a lot of weight over multiple trips. Without building proper strength, you will be at risk of injury while carrying that load.

Muscular endurance is necessary because you may potentially be carrying the weight for a very long distance without a break. Proper endurance training will help your body maintain the stamina it will need for this task.

Lastly, flexibility is crucial to prevent injury from muscle strain. When you are carrying extra weight on uneven, unstable terrain, your muscles, ligaments and tendons are working overtime to stabilize your body. If you are not limber, excess soreness and muscle strain will occur.

4 | Hunting & Fishing News

Building Muscle Strength

Before you can build muscle strength, you need to know what muscles are primarily involved in carrying a pack. The posterior chain is the series of muscles that run along the backside of the lower half of your body. They include all of the major muscles and stabilizer muscles in your lower back, glutes, hamstrings and calves. These muscles bear the brunt of the load when carrying extra weight on your back; however, your upper back, shoulders and traps also carry a significant burden, too. You have to be sure that you are training all of these muscles.

This does not mean that you should do any old leg and back exercises you feel like doing. No, you need to focus on exercises that train your posterior chain.

These exercises will simulate the kind of load you will be carrying in order to activate the necessary muscular response and include:

- Deadlift
- Barbell squat
- Side lunges
- Dumbbell step-ups
- Stiff-Legged deadlift
- Walking lunges

These moves all simulate the muscle activity involved in carrying a heavy load on your back. When doing these moves, it is important to remain slow and controlled. You are not training for speed; you are training for strength and injury prevention. This means that you should be doing 10 to 12 reps with each rep taking three to four seconds to complete the entire move. Strength-oriented lifts should be accompanied with 90 seconds to two minutes of rest in between sets.

Muscle Endurance

Muscular endurance is achieved by lifting weights using high volume reps and isometric techniques.

High volume means completing 15 to 20 repetitions per set with minimal rest between sets (30 to 60 seconds). Isometric training involves focusing on the contracted portion of the move, holding the contraction for an extended period of time and/or focusing on going very slow on the negative (lowering) portion of the move.

Isometric training should be used in conjunction with lightweight or body weight exercises to reduce the risk of injury. These techniques will simulate the extended time under tension that is involved in packing out an elk and will help your body adapt to the prolonged stress so it does not fatigue so quickly.

Additionally, exercises that simulate uneven, unstable terrain are essential for training properly. Using techniques and equipment to simulate this kind of terrain (like a bosu ball or step platforms) will engage stabilizer muscles very effectively, leading to increased endurance and reduced risk of injury.

Exercises for muscle endurance include those listed above plus:

- Jump squats
- Wall squats with 30 to 60 second hold
- Bosu squat
- Standing calf raise
- Kettlebell swing
- Goblet squat
- Overhead barbell squat
- Barbell shrugs
- Farmer's carry

Flexibility

Stretching might be boring, but it is absolutely crucial for proper training. Stretching increases blood flow to your muscles, which provides necessary nutrients and increased oxygen, aiding in faster recovery and reducing soreness. It also lengthens the muscle fibers and improves tendon and ligament function, allowing you to have increased mobility and range of motion, which is the primary ingredient in injury prevention. No, it is not sexy, but it is very, very important. Imagine you are carrying your first load in your pack out and you strain your hamstring because you never took the time to stretch and improve your flexibility. Well, that means your pack out is going to take much, much longer (if you can even do it anymore). Flexibility is a key component to your training.

When stretching, be sure to only extend the range of motion to the point where you feel a slight strain; if it hurts, back off. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds per side, being sure to take slow, deep breathes throughout. This will help get more oxygen to your muscles and aid in the stretching process...

Make sure to stretch each major muscle group from different angles. Take special care to stretch all of the muscles in your posterior chain — especially as these are the muscles that will take the greatest beating in your training and your pack out. You should utilize enough movements in your stretching regimen that it takes at least 10 minutes to stretch when holding each position for 30 seconds per side.

Train, Train, Train

If you are like me, you take elk hunting very seriously. Some people will go years without drawing a tag. You need to be sure to be in the best possible shape when your hunt finally comes around because it may not come around for another five to 10 years. Even if you hunt every year, you still need to train and not take it for granted. There are few worse feelings when hunting than putting in all of the work necessary to harvest an elk and then realizing that you cannot complete the job because you were not prepared for the work involved. If you focus on improving your cardiovascular fitness... as well as increasing your strength, muscular endurance and flexibility, you will find that the entire process of harvesting and packing out your elk will be easier and more enjoyable...



Kenetrek
Boots
FOR THE TRAIL LESS TRAVELED®

BRIDGER HIKERS

You know that feeling... when your feet barely touch the ground as you glide over uneven terrain... and whether you're racing across trails or running errands, super-light and exceptionally tough gets you there without a care in the world. With bedrock support in a feather weight platform, the waterproof High or the easy breathing Low will be your best friend every day.

VISIT US ON SOCIAL

 WWW.KENETREK.COM
800-232-6064

©KENETREK, LLC 2015



Photos credit Dan Wilde courtesy GOHUNT.com

5 Tips For Glassing Up More Bears This Spring

By Dan Wilde

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

1. Start with Google Earth

Google Earth is a great place to begin your scouting for a lot of hunts, but I've found that to be especially true with spring bear hunting. Mine is littered with little yellow pins all over western Montana with a simple title: PGS. This stands for "potential glassing spot."

First, you want to find general areas or mountain ranges that you might be interested in hunting. Then, from there, start picking apart the area, looking for south or east facing slopes. These are the first places for the snow to melt in the spring and, in turn, start growing green grass that bears will likely feed on. Other good pieces of topography to look for are cliffs that have ledges on it and avalanche chutes. Snowpack will be minimal on the cliffs due to the steepness, which means that bears will frequent these ledges, especially early in the season. In steep chutes, an avalanche will clear off a lot of the snowpack and, as Steven Rinella writes in his book on big game hunting, "Locate one of these productive slopes, and you might see multiple bears per day while other hunters are sitting at home because 'it's still too early' to chase bears." Finding areas with clear cuts and closed logging roads can also be a great place to look. You can walk the logging roads, which often grow grass along the edges and simultaneously glass opposing clear cuts and openings.

Second, now that you've found a potential area that might hold bears, you need to find the best vantage point from which to glass them. When hunting steep canyons, you can often find a rocky outcropping or scree slide on the opposing (north-facing) side to post up at. Using the ground level view tool is invaluable here. It will give you a pretty good idea of what you will be able to see from the potential glassing location.

6 | Hunting & Fishing News

You need to take trees and other obstructions into consideration that don't necessarily show up on Google Earth. Overall, this tool will give you a good idea of whether a spot is worth your time or not. Make sure to mark these areas on your GPS because, when you are hiking in the bottom of the canyon, it's often so thick that you won't be able to see these spots from the trail.

2. Research food sources for your area

Knowing what a bear feeds on in the spring in your area is going to be extremely important. I've hiked hours back into a spot that looked great from Google Earth, but, once I got there, the slopes that I thought were going to be luscious green grass where actually shrubs or a more undesirable plant like beargrass. It pays to have some knowledge of what these bears are looking for food-wise.

While it's common knowledge that they love berries in the fall, in my experience, you are going to find them in completely different places in the spring because they are in need of a ripe food source. Where I hunt in western Montana, bears mostly feed on grasses, glacier lilies or skunk cabbage.

Another potential opportunity is to post up on a winter kill. If you find a dead elk, moose or deer in a bear dense area, there is a good chance a bear is going to catch wind of it and come in to claim a free meal. Keep in mind, though, that if you shoot a bear that has been feeding on a rotting carcass for days, the meat is likely going to reflect that. While a bear feeding on green vegetation can taste quite good, one feeding on that kill might not.

3. Hike higher



This one may only apply to certain hunting areas, but the higher you are willing to hike, the more bears you are going to see. This is due to the simple fact that you are going to be able to see significantly more with each few hundred feet of elevation you gain. Of course, there needs to be a good perch up higher where you can glass from; otherwise, you're wasting your time or energy.

In the past, I would usually hike 1,000 feet up or so on the opposing ridge. However, after talking with a local bear hunting guide who hunts similar areas that I do, I'm convinced I need to go even higher. In the same canyon where I saw two bears the whole spring, he glassed up eleven in one evening.

He was willing to hike thousands of feet up the opposing ridge where he could glass for miles down the canyon.

Granted, if you find a bear that far off, you're likely not going to be able to get to it that same night if you have to descend thousands of feet first. Regardless, it is going to help you focus in on where exactly the bears are located and, then, you can move in closer the following day.

4. Find bear scat

Now, this tip likely doesn't apply as much to the steep and deep canyons as it does to the gradual slope areas with closed logging roads. While I prefer to hunt the steep country for bears, areas with closed logging roads and clear cuts can be extremely productive as well. Often, while walking these roads, you will find spots that are absolutely covered in multiple piles of bear scat. If you find a spot like this—with scat that is both fresh and old—you can almost guarantee that a bear will be back. If you can find a spot nearby to watch that area there is a great chance you will glass up a bear. The only problem is that these logging roads are often in such thick areas that it can be hard to find a good place to glass it from.

5. Get comfy and be patient

Lastly, do your best to get comfortable and be patient. Bear hunting can be a lot of hard work, punctuated by a lot of time spent sitting behind your glass with boredom creeping in. When I key in on a great glassing spot,



I will sit in the exact spot for an entire day—if not multiple days. It can be tempting to feel like you are being lazy and need to hike, but glassing from a spot where you can see a lot of good country is absolutely going to be the most efficient way to find a bear.

In order to be able to sit that long, do anything you can to make it enjoyable and comfortable. Bring a glassing pad to make those long sits more bearable. Also, mounting your binoculars on a tripod is going to make glassing for extended periods of time extremely more comfortable and help reduce fatigue. Bring snacks, dress warm, and take shifts napping with your hunting buddy. Do anything you can to help yourself be patient enough to stick with it because if you can stay focused and glass good bear country for an extended period of time, you will glass up more bears. And, once you do that, it's time to make a stalk.

SIBERIAN COOLERS

"BE THE ALPHA...OWN THE ALPHA"

CAM LATCH SITS FLUSH TO THE BODY FACE ALLOWING THE COOLER TO BE TIGHTLY PACKED WITH OTHER GEAR & KEEPS FLY LINES FREE.

FREE ACCESSORIES | LIFETIME WARRANTY
IGBC CERTIFIED BEAR RESISTANT
REVERSIBLE EZ SLIDE - NON-SLIP RUBBER FEET
WHITE | GRANITE | SAHARA TAN
FREE SHIPPING WITHIN THE CONTINENTAL USA

SIBERIANCOOLERS.COM | 844.782.COLD (2653)

IGBC CERTIFIED BEAR RESISTANT GRIZZLY BEAR

ALPHA SERIES

Jana Miller

Instagram, Email, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube



Photo credit depositphotos.com

Tips For A Successful Mule Deer Hunt During Any Season

By Jake Horton

Originally published at [GOHUNT](https://www.gohunt.com)  GOHUNT.com

It doesn't matter whether you are planning on hunting mule deer in the sagebrush hills of Wyoming or the alpine peaks of Colorado or if you are chasing them during the last days of summer or the peak of the rut — some general tips and tricks can help you notch your tag on a bruiser buck in any state during any season. Mature mule deer bucks can be hard to find and harder to harvest, which is why we are here to help. Capitalizing on our hunting experience and other experienced hunters will allow you to succeed in your first year out West.

Find the Correct Habitat

The perfect habitat for mule deer depends 100% on the region. In some spots in of a state, mule deer live in the wide-open, hiding in coolies to get a break from the sun. In other parts of that same state, mule deer call the peaks and draws above 10,000' their home. Regardless of where they live, they all need three main things: food, water and cover. Food for a mule deer can vary; however, they tend to prefer greenery to sage hillsides. Water can be scarce in the West, so if an area lacks any water source, it will most likely hold no animals. And remember that cover can be anything: anywhere from a steep ditch that gets shade from the sun to a thick timber patch filled with deadfall. Keep an open mind when seeking out cover. Overall, if you have all three of these things and are a reasonable distance from the road and trailhead, the area has the potential to hold mule deer.

A Vantage Point Is Key

Whenever you are hunting mule deer, the hardest part is finding them. This is why I say that a good vantage point is a key to success when chasing mule deer, especially mature bucks. If possible, I like to position myself in a glassing location where I can see multiple basins at a time. This will increase my chances of finding mule deer and, hopefully, it means finding a couple of bucks and getting to decide which one I would like to go after. Remember to pay attention to the wind direction, sun direction and have a plan for movement. If you are glassing a meadow a few hundred yards away, but you are sitting in the wide open,

what will happen if a good buck pops out? Will you be able to move in without spooking him or will he pick you out? This is why I always look for cover for myself. When I have cover, my playbook gets opened up significantly and my chance of success increases.

Hunt All-day

Besides finding suitable habitat and a good vantage point, the next thing that will increase your success rate is hunting all day. This means being at the glassing location before dawn and staying until you can no longer glass anymore. The more time you can spend behind your binoculars or spotting scope, the better the chance that you harvest an animal. Mature bucks are primarily only active at dusk, dawn and mid-day when they stand up to move a few feet or stretch their legs. If you are not there ready for them, then you might miss the opportunity to see and get to harvest a buck.

Slow down

Once you have found suitable mule deer habitat and an excellent glassing point, your patience is about to be tested. Hours and hours behind the glass, searching over hillsides, basins, shaded spots, other nooks and crannies will strain your eyes and your hope. Then, all of a sudden, you will spot a buck and you will switch into "go mode." This is when I find myself making mistakes and rushing the opportunity. Instead of rushing, the next time you find a buck, stop and slow down. See what he is doing, where he is heading, what his behavior is like and then plan a stalk or get ready for the shot. If you have picked a good glassing location, there should be no reason that you cannot get a shot off at the deer eventually. The last thing you want to do is rush it and ruin the opportunity.

Do Not Get Hung up on Scouting

When it comes to preseason scouting for mule deer, there is only one season that I usually find worthwhile, which is the earliest opening season. In most states, archery is the first season of the year and I usually only plan on doing extensive boots on the ground scouting before this season. This is because mule deer are migratory animals even if they are only heading down the mountain to the valley. Early on, bucks are in their summer patterns; however, after a few weeks of pressure, they change their location and behavior. They change again during the rut and, then, post-rut happens when they change their location and behavior again. Since they are constantly changing elevations, locations and movement, it is safe to say that every year will have to be treated differently and hunted as if you do not know where the bucks are. If you can do this, you will increase your success.

Overall, mule deer hunting for mature bucks can be a challenge on the body and mind. I love chasing these bucks, but they wear me out climbing up to alpine level, blowing stalks and losing track of solid bucks. Though hunting mature mule deer is difficult, it can be one of the most rewarding animals to hunt. They truly can live in any habitat, have strong survival instincts and are constantly on the move. Hunt hard and follow these basic tips and you will be into more bucks this fall than ever before.

Get Prepared For Spring Turkey Hunting Season With These Helpful Tips

Idaho Fish & Game <https://idfg.idaho.gov>



Photos courtesy IDFG <https://idfg.idaho.gov>

Are you thinking about turkey hunting this spring? Not quite sure how to go about it? Outsmarting a gobbler is an enjoyable way to spend a beautiful spring day. Here are some tips to get you started on your turkey hunting adventure...

To find out where go to the 2024-2025 Upland Game, Furbearer and Turkey Seasons and Rules booklet at <https://idfg.idaho.gov/rules/upland>.

- Diverse habitat is important. Turkeys can be found in many habitats around the state. They prefer to roost at night in large trees close to clearings with low brush and other ground cover. Gobblers like clearings where they can strut for interested hens.

- Scout before your hunt. You can't harvest a bird if you don't know where to find them. Ask a fellow hunter where they have gone turkey hunting in the past and look for turkey sign.

- Tracks are large, measuring 3 3/4 to 5 inches long and 4 to 5 1/4 inches wide.

- Scat is very distinctive. Gobblers have J-shaped, large droppings up to 3 inches long. Hens have droppings that are less than an inch and look like a twisted lump.

- Locate roosting trees. Once you have an idea of turkey locations, visit the area in late afternoon to locate roosting trees. Be still, quiet and listen for birds. Turkeys will often call as they approach a roosting tree. Mark the location on a map or GPS mapping program. Sit quietly until darkness falls then slip back to camp.

- Before daybreak the day of your hunt, sneak in close to the roosting tree, find a large tree to sit against and wait for the birds to fly down.

- Head to toe camouflage is recommended and blinds or camo netting can be handy. Turkeys have keen eyesight, excellent hearing and a paranoid nature, making them an enjoyable challenge to hunt. You should avoid wearing red, white, blue or orange. Not only will turkeys see you but so will other hunters looking for colorful turkey heads. You do not want to be the unintended target of another hunter.

(continued on page 19)





Lodge Like Atmosphere With Resort Amenities

- Spacious & Comfortable Rooms • Free Hot Breakfast
 - Large Indoor Pools & Jacuzzis - All Hotels
 - Business Meeting Facilities
- High Speed Internet Access • Exercise & Game Rooms
- Refrigerators, Microwaves, Coffee Makers In Every Room
 - 50" or Larger Flat Screen TV In Every Room

BILLINGS - 800-655-1170
 BOZEMAN - 866-782-2717
 MISSOULA - 888-989-5569
www.cmoninn.com

Like us on

<https://www.facebook.com/HuntingFishingNews>

Contests, photos, hunting and fishing news, recipes & more

HUNTING & FISHING NEWS


Have it delivered FREE to your inbox.


Just go to www.huntingfishingnews.net

NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!
 DOWNLOAD
 READ
 PRINT
 SHARE



The entire contents is © 2025, all rights reserved. May not be reproduced without prior consent. The material and information printed is from various sources from which there can be no warranty or responsibility by Big Sky Outdoor News & Adventure, Inc. Nor does this material necessarily express the views of Big Sky Outdoor News & Adventure, Inc. All photo & editorial submissions become the property of Big Sky Outdoor News & Adventure, Inc. to use or not use at their discretion. Volume 22, Issue 4. Cover photo: jill@ghostbear.org | depositphotos.com





Use code HFN to get
10% off your first order.

SHOP.GOHUNT.COM



Photo credit Brady Miller courtesy GOHUNT.com

Antlerless Hunts - How To Easily Find These Opportunity Hunts And Draw Odds Information

By Brady Miller
Originally published at [GOHUNT](https://www.gohunt.com)  GOHUNT.com

Looking to fill the freezer with meat and just hunt? Don't overlook how incredible an antlerless hunt can be. The most underrated hunt in the West and here's how to find those antlerless hunt opportunities.

How to quickly and easily find antlerless hunts on GOHUNT

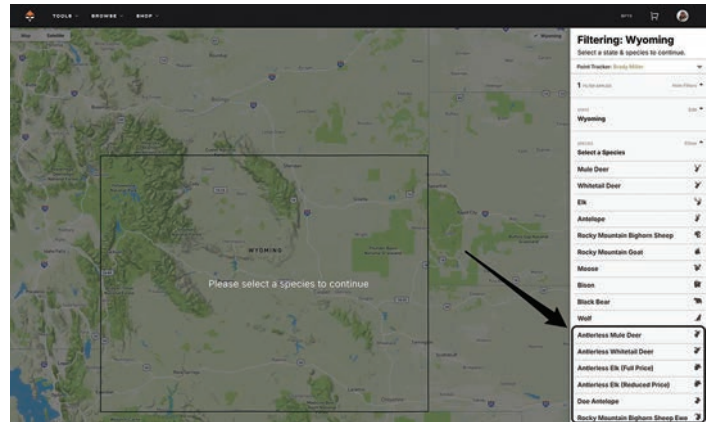
Antlerless hunts are a great way to add to your season and are also a phenomenal way to fill up your freezer.

Finding these opportunity-type hunts on GOHUNT Insider is a very easy process. You can find antlerless hunts on our Filtering research tool as well as on our standalone Draw Odds page.

Back in 2018, we launched antlerless draw odds on Insider. This opened the door to figure out what antlerless hunts you can draw. Then, in 2021, we expanded this offering to showcase all antlerless hunts!

A lot of people probably skip or don't notice that we have full antlerless hunt research on GOHUNT because they see "elk" or "mule deer" and instantly start there, but if you scroll further on the species list on both Filtering and Draw Odds, you'll see our antlerless species selection.

How to find antlerless hunting opportunities on Filtering

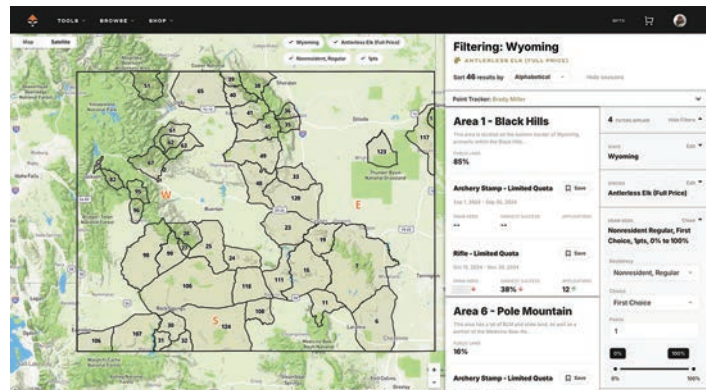


You can quickly access all antlerless hunting opportunities in each state in our Filtering tool at the bottom of the species list. Photos courtesy GOHUNT.com

Accessing antlerless hunts on Filtering is super easy, and this can be accomplished on the web side of Insider or on our mobile app.

Accessing antlerless hunting opportunities on the web version of Insider

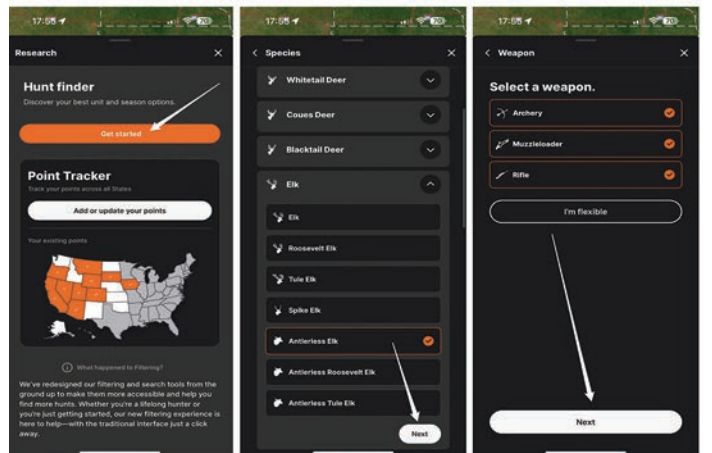
Start by hovering your mouse over "Tools" in the top navigation bar and then click on "Filtering." Next, select your state and then finally scroll down the list of species to the bottom and tap on an antlerless species.



Once you click on an antlerless hunt, you can access all the unit-by-unit data, plus draw odds.

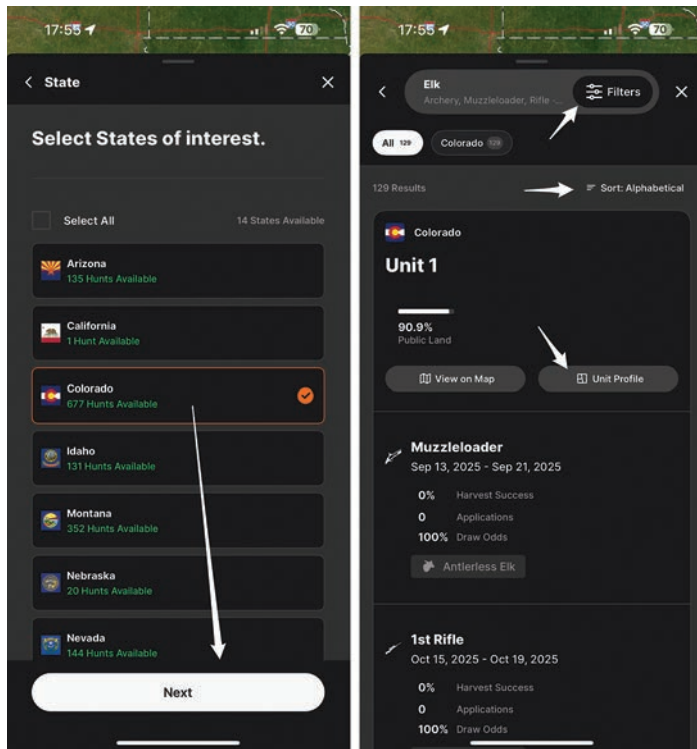
Now you'll have the same Filtering flow that you're familiar with when researching for antlered hunts.

Accessing antlerless hunting opportunities on the GOHUNT mobile app



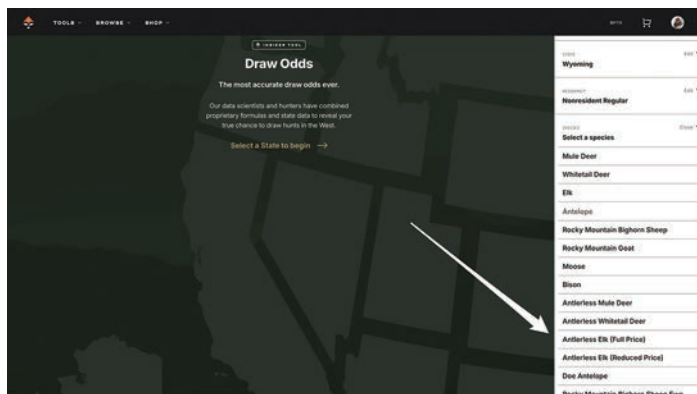
Using the GOHUNT mobile app, finding an antlerless hunting opportunity is super simple.

In seconds, you can research antlerless hunts on our mobile app. To access antlerless hunting research tools on the GOHUNT mobile app, open the app, tap on Research, select the section under Hunt finder, and then tap a species and then select the antlerless option from that species list. Finally, select a weapon, then select one or many states that you'd want to research for a cow elk hunt.



From there, you can narrow down your filters, adjust your sort settings, scroll through all the units to see the data or jump into a Unit Profile to find out more information about that unit.

How to find draw odds for antlerless hunts



Antlerless draw odds are located at the bottom part of the “species” list on our standalone Draw Odds page under each state.

Antlerless draw odds are located at the bottom part of the “species” list on our standalone Draw Odds page.

You can access antlerless/female draw odds on the web by hovering your mouse over “Tools” in the top navigation bar, but don’t click anything yet. Then you should see a drop-down section and you’ll need to scroll down and click on “Draw Odds.” After those steps, you will end up on our standalone Draw Odds page.



From there, you’ll select a state and then residency. It will show you all the antlerless options if you scroll down on the right-hand side under the “Species” section...Then, just click on one of them to see draw odds in each unit. Now you have the same tools you would find if you were looking for antlered draw odds where you can enter your points, season, filtering by draw odds percentage, etc.

We cover everything from antlerless elk to antlerless whitetail, mule deer, blacktail, and doe antelope, all the way up to bighorn sheep ewe and cow moose, plus many more. If it is an antlerless hunt that runs under a draw, we cover it on GOHUNT Insider!

In the video below, Trail Kreitzer goes over how you can make the most of your hunting season by picking up an antlerless tag, and he shows where you can find antlerless draw odds within GOHUNT Insider.



<https://youtu.be/qWjTDu2mbms?si=5wlquT4oNL1jwdOJ>

The best part about Trail’s video is that he will show you exactly how to find a cow elk hunt that you can draw and hunt this year, even if you don’t have any points built up!...

Your main opportunities for adding one of these hunts are cow elk, doe deer species, and doe antelope, but keep in mind that some states have antlerless moose, ewe bighorn sheep, etc.

If you want to go hunting more, dive in and find an antlerless opportunity today using our standalone Draw Odds page and Filtering set of research tools.

Learn more at GOHUNT.com

Sound, Sight, and Smell

By Tom Cooper

Whether hunters have years of hunting under their belts or just a couple seasons, most of us have experienced a walk back to the truck that included a sudden explosion in nearby brush from the very animals the hunter intended to harvest. Typically, we are simply disappointed in ourselves for not “hunting” all the way back to our vehicle. My hope is that by providing three examples (sense of sound, sight and smell) some will expand their definition of “hunting” to specifically include all three senses. Of course, that also means the bull elk did not randomly explode from the brush. Rather, because the elk was paying more attention to its three senses than the hunter, it simply left, first. When an elk pays more attention to their three senses than the hunter, elk win every time.

Sense of Sound, Sight, and Smell

For our opening day hunt (sometime in the late-90s), brother Bill and I planned to hunt district 435, above the old mining town of Rimini. Bill drew a cow tag and I carried an over-the-counter bull tag. We drove to a large meadow we referred to as “Moose Meadow” because a few years earlier, we saw seven moose feeding across the swampy ground. We continued on a road trace east of the meadow; a mile up the canyon, I left Bill in the dark, 30 minutes before legal shooting light. I returned to a parking spot a quarter of a mile above the meadow, and climbed two hundred yards along a timbered ridge. Bill would hunt north toward me, and I would hunt south toward him. We spotted each other 2 hours later, and once together, we compared notes. Both of us had seen elk tracks in the fresh snow, but no elk. In fact both of us smelled elk as we talked. Our little discussion lasted over 10 minutes; it didn’t occur to us until later, but we whispered the entire time.

I was facing uphill in front of Bill. I saw the brush move and focused on the spot while he talked about what we might do next. It was a full minute before I realized some of the evergreen brush was rusty red, not green.



It's too late, her sense of sound is locked in on you. Photos credit Tom Cooper

As I was quietly explaining there were elk behind him, maybe 60 yards away, a cow stepped clear of the brush. Bill had started to turn to his left, when I whispered “turn the other way”; he did. Bill’s cow dropped at his off-hand shot. The bullet entered the lower chest just behind the shoulder (both lungs). We had an opening day elk! The important point here is although we had ignored the elk “odor” (sense of smell), we did not raise our voices. We were whispering (sense of sound) 60 yards from elk and they weren’t spooked. Finally we reacted to the elk color (sense of sight). All three senses played a role in this one.

Sense of Sight

In the early 2000s, Bill and I hunted most of the morning in a two mile-long canyon in the south end of the Elkhorn Mountains. Neither of us had seen an elk or any really fresh sign. Our plan B was to drive a mountain road following a major power line. We had several choices for short hunts, most were canyons, ½ to 1 mile in length and generally timbered. After working two such canyons without success, we decided on one final hunt for the day, although we would not get home until late. We worked a ridgeline instead of a canyon and stayed together because we wanted to arrive back at our vehicle at the same time.

We were 200 yards above the truck on a steep hillside beginning to understand why we generally did not hunt this late. Between deep breaths, we talked about whether to proceed or not. Before we could decide, Bill who was using his binoculars, whispered “What are those”? I looked where he was pointing. He exclaimed “Holly cow (possibly, he didn’t say cow), it’s elk”.

The elk were 250-300 yards away, down toward our vehicle, across a brushy draw, on a sage-covered knob. We had hoped to see elk above us, but had continued to scan the entire area (360 degrees) as we climbed. These elk were feeding (heads were down). We both had cow tags, however Bill practiced shooting at 200-plus yards more than I did. So he found a rest, steadied himself and shot. We saw her drop, but the remainder of the elk milled around just enough to hide our cow.



There is no doubt, her sense of sight is better than yours.

When they walked away, we couldn't see her on the ground. As the Sun went down, we knew it would be well after dark before heading home. Although a little concerned, we found her easily, right where she dropped. Then we butchered her on the ground using the no-gut process. In two trips, we had both hams, shoulders, backstraps and tenderloins in cloth bags in the truck. Between trips, we left a flashlight on the carcass, as a beacon, to find our way back in the dark for a second load. The point of this adventure is we not only stayed in the field all day, but focused on the sense of sight for the day's final hunt.

Sense of Sound and Sight

It was elk season in 2008, or maybe it was '09, or even '10. After a tiring morning hunt, we decided to eat our lunch of bread, cheese and my homemade summer sausage. We drove toward the thriving metropolis of Elkhorn, Montana (ok, it is not a metropolis now; it was once). Two miles from where we parked at daylight, the road crossed a small, open ridge. Years earlier, we met an old-timer (Bill's age now) who told us about seeing two bucks when he crossed that ridge. Thereafter, we called the open area "Two Bucks Park". Of course we never saw the two bucks. However, our plan was for me to hunt from Two Bucks downhill, toward a creek crossing, but stay well above the road. Bill would drive to the creek crossing, park there, then slowly climb and hunt the thick timber back toward me and Two Bucks.

The timber was thick and the hillside steep, but there were obvious game trails. I climbed to gain more elevation before finding a good trail. As game trails go this one was well-traveled, so as usual, I was going too fast when I heard the sound of hooves hitting rocks. It seemed to be getting louder (closer), and was behind me.

I stopped, stepped to a tree for a rest, and waited. Within 3-4 seconds, I saw several elk trotting above me and definitely closing fast. The first elk was a cow, and I had a cow tag. She stopped, then looked at me around a tree. At 40 yards, I shot her in the neck. She dropped and did not move.

On this day, Bill and I were carrying two-way radios, so I called and advised I had filled my tag.

About to park, his response was "How"?

Recognizing sometimes I need to explain things a bit more, I responded with "Shot her".

The point is despite moving too fast, the sound of hooves on rocks alerted me. However, had I failed to recognize that sound for another 3 seconds, it would have been too late. The elk would have already reacted by leaving the county. The sense of sound made our day.



When already running, you know her sense of smell has won the round.

Re-define Hunting?

So hunters, what is your definition of hunting now? Hopefully my examples show how using the sense of sound, sight, and smell directly impacts your hunt.

If hunters are still in the woods, they should always talk quietly, listen for sounds, look for unusual color and shapes, and pay attention to what your nose tells you, because all three might indicate animals are in close proximity.

Staying in the field obviously provides more opportunity to find big game animals. However if hunters don't focus on sounds, sights, and smells, opportunity alone doesn't mean much. Unless you are already carrying harvested game, or if you are late for the doubleheader NFL football game, hunters should stay focused on hunting. That means use your senses; it seems like common sense to me.



This is your goal. These elk have not heard you, seen you, or smelled you.



Photos courtesy Idaho Fish And Game <https://idfg.idaho.gov>

Yes, You Can Actually Tie Flies Using Leftover Wild Game Materials. Here's How

Idaho Fish And Game <https://idfg.idaho.gov>

Many species of Idaho wildlife can provide raw materials for fly tying.

Already, you might be thinking: Why on Earth would I want to try tying my own flies when I can go down to my local fly shop and pick up a dozen for pennies on the dollar? Hey, you're not wrong. After-all, pretty much any sporting goods store or mom-and-pop tackle shop are going to have more flies than a county landfill.

But, that's not the point of this story.

While rummaging through the trays and trays of pre-tied midges, caddis, wooly buggers, and stimulators might be a stress-free way to fill your fly box and maximize your time on the water, I want to explore alternative ways to source our flies,...and perhaps become a keener fly angler.



Quality-ish, not quantity

First things first. Your first attempts probably won't be pretty. Fly tying is a true art-form, and it takes time and practice to become proficient, so simply skimming this article and maybe a YouTube video isn't going to help you cut in that line.

Second, before you start filling up your Amazon cart or cutting up your bear rug for tying materials, I want to be clear. We're not going to tie award-winning elk hair caddis today, or take out a second mortgage buying every fly-tying tool known to man. The point is simply to have fun, dabble in a new hobby, and (if we're lucky) catch a few fish.

Our flies may be ugly. Our patience, maybe thin. Our eyes, squinty and clouded. But, at the end of the day, there will be one fly—maybe even more than one fly—nestled in our fly box, made using leftover wild game materials, that we can be proud of.

Here's what you'll need

Now that we got that out of the way, it's time to put together a modest shopping list. Emphasis on modest. Like most art forms, fly tying can be as simple or extravagant as you want to make it and can lead you down an overwhelming road. For the sake of tying a couple homely flies made from the scraps of hunting season, let's take baby steps.

First and foremost, you will need a vise (and probably, advice). As the name implies, a vise clamps the hook while you wrap it with material. Vises can come in a variety of styles, including C-clamp and pedestal-mounted vises, but all pretty much do the same thing. Once you have a suitable space picked out at home, like a desk or well-lit table, make the call on a vise that best fits that space and doesn't break the bank.



Next up, you'll need a few tools:

- A quality pair of scissors made for fly tying
- A bobbin—which holds the thread while you wrap the hook
- A hair stacker—a small device that quickly aligns the tips of hair, such as deer and elk
- And a whip finisher—which will help you “finish” off the fly by tying the final knot

You can also spring for a starter kit for fly tying with all the basic tools and some tying materials for about \$50. With your toolbelt metaphorically tied around your waist, it's time to shop around for materials to lay the foundation for your first fly.

Just like with regular old bait and reel fishing, hooks come in a plethora of options. Our flies are going to be simple, so the hooks should be, too. For the sake of these bare bones, wild game flies, pick up several nymph hooks (size 16), dry fly hooks (size 14), and a couple streamer hooks (size 4 or 6) for that wooly bugger.

Thread is also going to be a must-have for your beginner fly tying station. If nothing else, a hook wrapped in some colorful yarn, wire, or thread stands a pretty good chance of attaching itself to a curious fish's lip. Thread is by far the cheapest option on this list, which gives you all the reason you need to pick out a dozen or so colors if you so choose. Chances are, they'll get used eventually.

However, if you want to continue the theme of keeping this endeavor close to the ground, it's recommended to have common colors including black, red, brown, olive green, whites and grays, and tan in stock.

Last but not least, you may want to scoop up a couple of bead heads, especially for those chunky woolies. Bead heads are weighted little spheres that slip over the point of the hook and sit behind the eye. Bead heads give the fly a little added heft to get the fly down in the water column and can add some flash to attract a strike.

Last year's hunt, this year's fly

It's that point in the training video where we finally get to do the thing we've been talking about doing—tying flies. And there's no better feeling than catching a fish on a homemade fly made from some animal you harvested back in the day. And if a couple of buddies are around to see you do it, even sweeter.

And let's get real for a moment. Those beautifully tied dry flies or streamers that look like feathered sculptures are certainly eye-catching to the angler; however, many fish are caught on sparse, drab, simple flies that resemble a bug enough to whet their appetites and trigger a strike.

Even the most beginner of fly anglers will have heard of such classic flies as a hare's ear or the elk hair caddis or the pheasant tail nymph. They are tried and true, have fooled millions of fish, and have long, rich histories being crafted from the same critters that give them their names.

Elk hair, for instance, is sturdy and durable and doesn't flair out like lighter materials such as feathers or deer hair. The thick hair makes great tails and wings on certain flies, particularly caddis and mayflies.

Pheasants, on the other hand, are like the rodeo clowns of the upland bird rodeo. They're some of the most colorful game birds found in Idaho, giving a fly-tier a broad palette to choose from.

The first pheasant tail nymphs were tied back in the 1950s to imitate mayflies found commonly in English streams. The version we've all come to love here in the States stemmed from a Montana man named Al Troth, who also happened to be renowned for his elk hair caddis.

Three flies you can tie at home



Elk hair caddis

Elk hair caddis, pheasant tail nymph, and the classic wooly bugger are three flies you can tie at home. The classic wooly bugger is a great fly to experiment substituting in other materials, like black bear hair.

For some of you, sourcing deer or elk hair, pheasant or chukar feathers, or duck and goose down might be the sticking point. There are plenty of anglers out there who don't hunt, and that's perfectly okay. Talk to your buddies that do hunt and see if they have any tanned hides or feathers left over or have been holding on to for years, unable to make do with them.

Now, describing to someone who's never tied a fly every minute step via written story would be as monotonous as John Roebling describing how he built the Brooklyn Bridge. And considering the author of this story has never once tied a fly a day in his life, it would be selling you, the reader, a bill of goods.

The good news is we live in an age where activities like fly tying are widely accessible and have a wide network. Online diagrams and videos, dusty old library books, and even classes hosted by your local fly shop can all be valuable resources available in a moment's time. Anyone who's ever enrolled in the University of YouTube knows this to be true. Even a quick Google search yields dozens, if not hundreds, of webpages dedicated to tying EHCs and pheasant tails—you might have to do a little more digging, though, to find black bear wooly buggers.

Tying your own flies doesn't just have to be that thing you'll maybe try in retirement. In a modern world that seems to be spinning faster than we'd like it to at times, sitting down at the fly desk to tie a few meticulous little bugs of thread and hair might be just what the doctor ordered, too.

Again, not to sound like a broken record here, just have fun with it. And start easy. Remember, we don't jack knife into a prime fishing hole; we tip-toe out into the shallows at first. Then, if all seems right, we throw some flies.

Maybe even some ugly, homemade ones.

SIBERIAN COOLERS
PROVEN BEYOND
SIBERIANCOOLERS.COM | 844.782.COLD (2653)
FREE SHIPPING WITHIN CONTINENTAL USA
CAM LATCH SITS FLUSH TO THE BODY FACE. KEEPS FLY LINES FREE AND ENABLES YOU TO PACK THE COOLER TIGHT WITH OTHER GEAR.
REVERSIBLE EZ SLIDE-NON-SLIP RUBBER FEET
IGBC CERTIFIED BEAR RESISTANT
WHITE | GRANITE | SAHARA TAN
FREE ACCESSORIES
LIFETIME WARRANTY
"BE THE ALPHA... OWN THE ALPHA"
@siberiancoolers #siberiancoolers
GRIZZLY BEAR



Photos credit Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com

Walleye Hair Jig Tactics

Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com

Walleye Hair Jig Tactics: Hair Today, Tinsel Tomorrow

Northland Fishing Tackle's refined and retuned a blast from the past that boats tons of fish.

Although new walleye fishing techniques are being developed all the time, savvy anglers are keen on digging through the past, rediscovering effective baits and methods that may have fallen out of the limelight.

Like hair and tinsel jigs. Going back to World War II, a hair jig was included in most military survival kits. Why? They catch fish when you'd need it most, stranded and starving, waiting for rescue. That says a lot.



Hair – either bucktail, marabou, or other fluff – has been used for decades upon decades of walleye runs, too. Same thing for tinsel.

And guess what? They still catch fish today, something Northland Fishing Tackle wants to share with the walleye fishing public. Yes, everything old is new again – in the case of the Northland Deep-Vee Hair Jig and Deep-Vee Flashtail Jig – refined and retuned to catch even more fish than antique versions.

We talked with some serious walleye sticks, and here are their thoughts on hair and flash for spring walleyes.

Veteran Minnesota fishing guide, Brian “Bro” Brosdahl, offers: “Going way back, I’ve always been a fan of both hair and tinsel and have been catching a lot of fish in both clear and dirty water on the...Northland jigs. They have a slow fall and pull walleyes away from cover. Talking tinsel, I typically pitch the Deep-Vee Flashtail and work it on a slow retrieve with subtle twitches to create little flashes in different directions that look like minnows reflecting light.”

Bro: How To Work A Hair Jig

“The whole thing is the fall with hair and tinsel jigs,” says Bro. “There’s bulk to the bait so fish know it’s there, and the hairs and tinsel spread out in the water, and draw the fish in.”

On rivers, Bro says, you want to carry some 3/8, 1/2, and even heavier jigs to deal with the current. “Cast out and hit the edge of a current seam and pull it in slowly. Upstream at 45 degrees gives you a great drop and drift down and then the swing around downstream is a lot of times where you get bit.”

Bro also likes to pitch shallower river rip-rap with lighter jigs, catching walleyes anywhere from right next to the bank to six feet of water.

“I really like fishing the Northland Deep-Vee Hair Jig and Deep-Vee Flashtail around wing dams, too,” says Bro. “A 1/4- to 3/8-oz. is typical, and I’m focusing on odd structure where barges may have hit it or ice moved rock around. They’re walleye magnets. It’s not just the wing dam tip. You can catch them on top, the corners near shore, the tip, really all over. My Side Imaging and 360 really help dial them in.”

In terms of cadence around wing-dams, Bro lets the jig fall, then makes short reel handle cranks, moving the rod only slightly. “After it hits bottom I give it a little pop, then reel and pause. Wing dam walleyes will hit it super hard. Works anytime walleyes are relating to wing dams.”

Bro also likes to work both river and lake shorelines with the new jigs, orienting his boat parallel to the shore, and pitching up and down with the shoreline edge, distancing the jig at different depths – from right up close to deeper water nearby.

“Again, I make an initial pop after the jig hits bottom, then work it upstream in the river. You can also slip the current instead of spot-locking or using Talons/ Raptors. The deal there is to get the hairs swimming and pulsing. Walleyes love willowcats which are clumsy swimmers; they kind of move and flip side to side.”

...Bro doesn’t always fish a plain Tungsten Jig and minnow. “A Deep-Vee Hair Jig or Flashtail tipped with a fathead or rainbow can be really great for working flats and covering water around opener. Or an Eye-Candy Minnow or Paddle Shad. And you can pitch it right up on shore and around those spawn and shiner run areas with current and catch a ton of fish. Gravel and weed transitions, too, as those fish are dispersing toward the first breakline.”

Hair Jig Color

Does hair jig color matter? Some say yes, others say no. But know this: walleye vision is superb with their eyes containing retinal cells called tapetum lucidum that are optimized for telling them 'is this something I want to eat?' – even in low-light situations.

So, depending on how quickly you're fishing a bait, color may indeed come into play. Obviously, matching predominant forage is always a good idea, but sometimes the silhouette created by a black, purple, or dark-colored hair jig is the ticket, too – not to mention darker colors can replicate willowcats, bullheads, and other bottom-dwellers walleyes eat. And combinations of colors, too, are always good which provide contrast, just like real minnows and young-of-the-year walleyes (yes, they're cannibals), perch, etc.

"I like to try different colors to see what works," says Brodahl. "I've always been kind of a blue & white, green & white, and parrot kind of guy, but I'm loving purple, too. With zebra mussels we have a lot of clear lakes now – and for whatever reason, purple has been hot. Sunrise, too."

BRO'S SET-UP

- Croix AVID Walleye 7' Medium Power, Extra Fast Action
- 2500 Size SEVIN Spinning Reel
- 10-pound Sunline Braid
- 10-pound Sunline FC Sniper Fluoro Leader

JASON MITCHELL: HAIR AND FLASH



"I'm a big fan of the Northland Deep-Vee Hair Jig, especially in spring," says JMO Host and Northland Pro, Jason Mitchell.

"Where a lot of people go wrong in cold water is fishing hair too fast. I use a slower retrieve."

But he's also been fishing the Northland Deep-Vee Flashtail Jig over the past year or so and says there are times when that produces really well, too.

"Don't limit yourself to fishing bucktail or tinsel; switch 'em up and let the walleyes tell you what they want. If you're around fish, go from the Deep-Vee Hair Jig with an Eye-Candy Minnow or Paddle Shad trailer to soft plastic and tinsel. The fish will decide for you. That's the best advice I can give anybody."

Mitchell—like Bro—says the magic is in how hair and tinsel pulses, as well as the combination in the hair jig reflecting light, too.

Mitchell continues: "On Devils Lake white can be good but you'll get eaten up by pike. Purple is good, stuff with green, whatever. I'm not as particular about color in North Dakota." (continued on page 37)



2025 Lund 1975 Pro V Sport

Mercury 225XL Pro XS DTS

Mercury 15ELPT EFI Pro Kicker

Shoreland'r Custom Tandem Axle Bunk Trailer

Options: Stainless Prop, Smartcraft Gauges, Bike Seat w/Airride Pedestal, Suspension Pilot Chairs w/ Sliders Starb/Port., Sport Top w/ Walkway Curtain, Travel Cover, Black/Chrome Raised Lund, 6- Sporttrak Brackets w/ Ram Rod Holders, Wireless Phone Charger Port/Starb., Bow Bait Cooler, Padded Bow Casting Deck, Ski Pole Upgrade, Washdown System, 5 Bank On Board Charger, Humminbird Xplore 10 MSI, Humminbird Xplore 10 MSI CHO, Minnkota Terrova 112/MDI/WR-72", Fully Networked, Transom Saver, All Batteries.



2024 Lund 189 Tye Sport

Mercury 200XL Pro XS DTS

Custom Tandem Axle Bunk Trailer

Options: Smartcraft Gauge Upgrade, Suspension Pilot Chairs Port/Starb, Ski Pole, Bow Cushions, Sport Top w/ Walkway Curtain, Travel Cover, 4 Qwik-Clip Sporttrak Brackets w/ Rod Holders, Transom Saver, 3 Bank On Board Charger, Humminbird Helix 9 MSI, Minnkota Terrova 80/DSC/60" 24V, All Batteries.



2025 Lund Predator 1870 CC (Tunnel Option New For 2025)

Mercury 115/80 ELPT

Karavan Bunk Trailer

Options: Spare Tire, Load Guides, Ratchet Transom Tie Downs, 2- Fish Seats, Welded On Transducer Bracket, Optional Tunnel Hull, Sponson Pods, Console Mounted Rod Holder, Battery.

**THE BEST PRICES ON THE BEST BOATS
BIGGEST LUND DEALER IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST**

Townsend Marine

7809 Hwy. 287 S., Townsend

406-266-5700

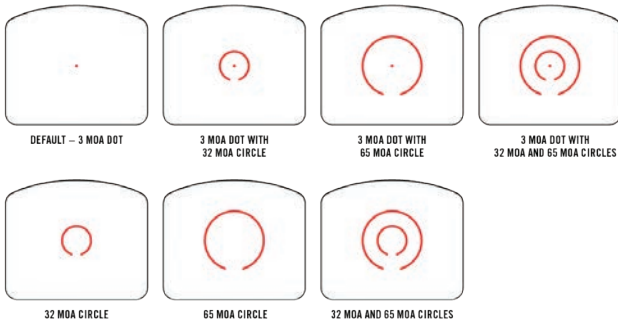
www.townsendmarine.com

See us for our large selection of Boats, ATVs & Accessories.

Understanding Viper® Shotgun Dot's Multi-Reticle System

Vortex Optics www.vortexoptics.com

Purpose-built for the fast pace of turkey hunting and wing shooting, the Viper® Shotgun Enclosed Micro Red Dot's Multi-Reticle System offers seven reticle options to quickly adapt to diverse shooting situations. Here's how each option can help you bag more game.



BAG MORE GAME WITH THE MULTI-RETICLE SYSTEM

As your most precise point of aim, this setting is ideal for any application that uses tight-patterning shotgun and load combinations. Its simplicity and uncluttered view are perfect for turkey hunting, or any other slow to stationary target.



32 MOA CIRCLE + 3 MOA DOT

The 32 MOA circle opens up your point of aim, simplifying shots on slower moving game like pheasant. (The 32 MOA circle roughly corresponds to a full choke's pattern.)



Photos credit Vortex Optics www.vortexoptics.com

65 MOA CIRCLE + 3 MOA DOT

With the bigger circle, you get a better shot at fast-moving, closer-range game like passing ducks. Perfect for fast-shooting scenarios 65 MOA places those wider patterns at shorter ranges. (The 65 MOA circle roughly corresponds to a modified choke's pattern.)



32 MOA CIRCLE + 65 MOA CIRCLE + 3 MOA DOT

Put all the options together and you get a point of aim with all the versatility to drop running rabbits and other small game that changes directions and speeds quickly. Adaptability and versatility are the name of the game with this combination, letting you both place a precise shot when needed, and place those wider patterns on moving game in a hurry.



Want the low down on why you should put a red dot on your turkey gun? Check out this blog: <https://vortexoptics.com/blog/thinking-of-putting-a-red-dot-on-your-turkey-gun-do-it.html>...

Learn more at www.vortexoptics.com.

Can Orthotic Inserts Make You a Better Hunter?

By Zach Lazzari Kawdy Outfitters www.kawdyoutfitters.com

Are your feet extra sore and difficult to recover after a hard day on the mountain? For many hunters, the average insole just isn't enough to support the rigors of a mountain hunt. Adding extra cushion and a better fit process can help you push harder in the backcountry.

Inserts come in a variety of brands with various sizes and shapes designed to meet specific needs. They can make a massive difference in performance and recovery and just might be the most overlooked piece of equipment for a hard hunt.

Finding the right insert for your foot can deliver the following benefits:

- Align and optimize foot function
- Add cushion against hard surfaces
- Assist with hiking post-injury
- Increase arch support
- Muscle support and reduced fatigue

Form Fit Your Foot

You can find great insoles that are sold over the counter, but you'll want to know what your foot really needs. They come in high and low arch supports, wide fits and more. Each model will offer a sizing guide to help find the right fit.

I've used a few pairs and the second fit a bit better than the first but both were a major improvement over the normal insole on my hunting boots. Just know it might require a few tries to find the absolute perfect size.

The other option involves a form fit. Custom orthotics of this nature ensure your foot has a molded fit to cover any irregularities in your foot shape.

Reduce Impact and Joint Stress

The biggest upside to using inserts for me has been less stress on my joints. They seem to take pressure off the feet and knees in a way that aids recovery after each day of hiking. Less stiffness and pressure also makes it easier to pack out heavy loads. The padding is also great for hard slopes with sharp rocks. Goat and sheep hunts with scree slopes and hard terrain can bruise your feet. A nice set of inserts are the answer to reduce bruising.

Find Your Support System

Superfeet and SheepFeet are two top brands but there are plenty of others to consider. The prices range from 20 bucks to over 100 depending on the brand and over-the-counter versus custom options. It's worth considering a custom mold for unique feet. Otherwise, a standard size will likely fit while improving your stride and overall comfort on the trail. If you've never tried adding a new insert to your boots, give it a try. You might never go back to the stock insoles.

BOOK YOUR STAY TODAY FOR MOUNTAIN FUN IN LINCOLN MONTANA

Make us your basecamp for hunting, fishing, hiking, off-trail riding and more.

Nestled in the heart of some of Montana's most pristine wilderness.

All rooms have cable TV, microwave, refrigerators, coffee pot.

- Kitchenettes • Laundry room
- Sauna • Free WiFi



Reasonable rates

**LEEPER'S
PONDEROSA
MOTEL**

110 1st Ave., Lincoln, MT

(406) 362-4333

Pets welcome

Get Prepared For Spring Turkey Hunting Season With These Helpful Tips

(continued from page 9)

- Learn some basic turkey calls. The cluck is a single note with 2 to 3 seconds between each note. Hens cluck when they are relaxed or content. The yelp is 3 to 8 notes long that turkeys make to locate other turkeys. Both calls are helpful to locate turkeys and bring them closer to your location. Stores sell many different types of calls. Mouth or diaphragm calls are often preferred because they are inexpensive, realistic and are hands-free so shotguns can be kept at the ready.
- Owl or crow calls are helpful in determining if turkeys are roosting in a particular tree. Toms often gobble when startled. Use locator calls sparingly. Turkeys can become desensitized if they hear a call too often.
- Choose a well-fitting shotgun with a full or extra-full choke. A shorter barrel can make it easier to maneuver through brush.
- Practice shooting your weapon before your hunt. Try out different loads for the tightest pattern. A minimum of 15 pellets in the head at 40 yards is generally a good tight pattern.



.308 For Elk Hunting: Pros, Cons, & What to Consider

By Andrew Jackson
Outdoor Empire
www.outdoorempire.com



Elk are large, majestic animals. They can fill your freezer for months. But only if you do your part by selecting the right gun, using proper ammo, and placing your shot properly.

.308 Winchester is known to be a good deer hunting round for both whitetail and mule deer species. It's also a very common round, already owned by many sports shooters. However, is it wise to use .308 for elk?

With the right hunting load, .308 Winchester is powerful enough to harvest both cow and bull elk. You may want to keep your shots within 300 to 400 yards max, though, and be sure to choose the right ammunition.

Let's go through why .308 is good enough for elk and how to choose the right load. Then we'll cover potential disadvantages and other cartridges you may want to select instead.

IS .308 GOOD FOR ELK?

First, let's look at the questions you should ask when choosing any hunting caliber for any animal:

Can the bullet penetrate deep enough through the animal to damage both lungs with a broadside shot? Will the cartridge propel the bullet at a velocity sufficient to fulfill the above need at the ranges at which you're willing to take a shot at the animal?

If the answer to those two questions is "yes" then the round is suitable for the animal you're hunting.

Now, let's see if .308 Winchester meets these criteria when it comes to elk.

The rule of thumb when taking down an elk, whether it's a bull or cow, is that you need a minimum of 1,500 foot-pounds of kinetic energy when the bullet hits. Otherwise, the bullet may not adequately penetrate the vital zone.

You'll wound the elk, not kill it, and we don't want that!

Load that .308 case with a 165-grain bullet, fire it with a muzzle velocity of almost 2,700 fps, and it'll have more than 1,600 ft-lbs of kinetic energy at 350 yards. I'd say that's more than good enough for most elk hunters.

My experience with hunting guides has been that, though they prefer .30 caliber magnum cartridges, but more elk have been dropped with the .308 Winchester than any other single cartridge.

HOW FAR CAN YOU TAKE AN ELK WITH .308?

.308 has less initial velocity than a .30 cal magnum and will bleed velocity more quickly than a more-aerodynamic slimmer caliber, such as .270. This makes .308 less than ideal for long-range elk hunting.

The general consensus is that a skilled hunter firing a good .308 bullet can take down an elk at ranges up to 400 yards. 165 gr or 168 gr bullets are preferred for these long-range shots.

180gr pills will hit the above-mentioned 1,500 ft-lb minimum at 350 yards. 200 gr bullets will bleed too much velocity to even get that far.

If you plan on hunting elk at long ranges, I'd spend some time at your local long-distance shooting range getting familiar with wind drift and bullet drop.

I'd also plan to only shoot out to 350 yards, which will give you some wiggle room when you find a tempting bull elk walking 375 yards away. That's a shot I would take. But not at a bull 425 yards away.

BEST .308 AMMO FOR ELK

As already mentioned above, the sweet spot for elk hunting is to use a bullet in the 165-168 gr weight range. There's not a large difference in the ballistics between the two weights.

However, you do need to ensure you're picking a hunting bullet, not a match bullet, as those won't deliver devastating hits.

Soft points are older technology and are an echo of the age when .308 was considered marginal for elk. Stick to modern hunting technology unless you will only take close-in shots.

Nosler AccuBond is my go-to choice for elk hunting. You can find a 165 gr AccuBond bullet in ammunition loaded by Federal, Underwood, or Nosler themselves. And it'll always serve you well against elk.

168gr Barnes TTSX bullets are popular amongst reloaders who want to reliably take elk.

Also well-regarded are Hornady ELD-X precision hunting ammunition, though these will be a bit heavier at 178 grains. Still good enough for a 350-yard shot!

PROS OF .308 FOR ELK HUNTING

.308 Winchester has several advantages, reasons why hunters go for this round instead of something with more oomph.

The first of these pros is that .308 is a very common round. Many hunters own .308 rifles and use those rifles on a large variety of targets.

This means that .308 has a lot of attention from all the ammunition companies. It's common on store shelves so you can find hunting ammo wherever you go.

Plus, a lot of research & development has been made by those companies to encourage hunters to choose their ammo. This means .308 stays on the cutting edge of ballistic technology.

However, .308 has another advantage that draws many hunters: it's a short-action round.

If you don't know what this means, there are two standard rifle receiver (or action) lengths for full-sized rifle cartridges: long-action and short-action.

Long-action cartridges are similar in length to .30-06 Springfield.

However, .308 Winchester is shorter than .30-06, so rifle manufacturers took the same guns, made them slightly shorter, and called it "short-action."

These short-action rifles are stiffer and lighter than their long-action counterparts. This means you get slightly better accuracy while saving weight.

Some hunters will start with a .30 cal magnum rifle, ruck it through the woods, then decide they want to carry a rifle that weighs less and is easier to handle without sacrificing the ability to put down an elk.

This means .308, often with a short barrel. Well, short for a hunting rifle. It's rare to see a .308 hunting rifle with a barrel shorter than 18".

CONS OF .308 FOR ELK HUNTING

The main disadvantage .308 has compared with other cartridges that are commonly used to hunt elk is range. That's been covered above, and it won't come into play until you want to take down an elk that's 300 yards away or more.

It's also a bit on the weaker side of elk-hunting cartridges, so you have to pay more attention to bullet selection than you would have to with, say, .300 Win Mag. Just about any .300 Win Mag load will be good for elk.

But if you pick up a box of Federal "blue box special" .308, well, that budget soft-point ammo will limit your range.


Neither of these are serious disadvantages, however.

ALTERNATIVES TO .308 FOR ELK

While .308 Winchester is a popular cartridge for hunting elk, many hunters choose to carry a different rifle.

For example, .270 Winchester may be a better choice. It's a versatile cartridge that can be used at a surprisingly long range. It's powerful and flat-shooting but can be tamed with a lighter bullet.

(continued page 23)



2025 POLARIS SPORTSMAN XP 1000 HUNT EDITION

PERFORMANCE WITHOUT LIMITS

XP 1000 STANDARD FEATURES:

- 90 Horsepower ProStar Engine
- On-Demand All-Wheel Drive
- High Output LED Pod & Headlights
- Multi-Select Electronic Power Steering (EPS)
- 1,500 Lb. Towing Capacity
- 12" Ground Clearance
- Integrated 6 Gal. Storage
- 6 Moveable Tie-Down Points
- Sealed High Clearance Arched Dual A-Arms
- Premium Cut & Sew Seat

HUNT EDITION INCLUDES:

- 26" PXT Tires & 14" Aluminum Wheels
- 3,500 Lb. Polaris HD Winch with Synthetic Rope
- Front & Rear Ultimate Series Bumper
- Kolpin Mount, Gun Boot, & Rhino Grips
- Hand & Thumb Warmers
- LED Rear Work Light
- Front and Rear Steel Rack Extenders

Shown in Pursuit Camo

SEE WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU AT

LewistownPolaris.com

302 TRUCK BY-PASS, LEWISTOWN, MT 406-538-9435

Warning: Polaris off-road vehicles can be hazardous to operate and are not intended for on-road use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers, if permitted, must be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and protective clothing. Always use seat belts and cab nets or doors (as equipped). Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-342-3764 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails.
©2024 Polaris Industries Inc.

POLARIS



Located in the heart of some of the best deer hunting in Montana.

Zortman Motel & Garage

- RV Park
- Laundromat
- Kitchenettes
- WiFi
- Conference Rooms
- Recreational Gold Panning Claims

Book your stay today.

Call 406.673.3160

Zortman76@mtintouch.net

Northeast Montana Chronic Wasting Disease On The Rise

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks <https://fwp.mt.gov>

GLASGOW – Chronic wasting disease (CWD) prevalence is increasing in most of northeast Montana, as is the spread of the disease across the landscape.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks recently tallied results of CWD samples taken during the 2024 big game season.

CWD was first detected in northeast Montana in 2018. Annual sampling of hunter-harvested animals, show the prevalence continues to increase, especially in mule deer.

“Region-wide, CWD prevalence in adult mule deer has increased from around 3 percent of the 2018-19 samples to almost 18 percent of 2024 samples,” said Scott Hemmer, Havre-area biologist, who helps keep tabs on CWD in the region. “Prevalence is more pronounced for mule deer in the northern hunting districts that border Canada.”

CWD likely first reached northern Montana from deer populations in Saskatchewan and Alberta, which have had CWD for more than a decade.

Following the latest sampling efforts in 2024, northern hunting district (HD) 600 has an annual prevalence rate of 28 percent for adult mule deer. HD 670, in the north-central area of the region, shows an annual prevalence of 34 percent, and HD 640, on the eastern end of the region, has overall annual prevalence rates in mule deer of 30 percent. Prevalence in mule deer bucks is even higher.

“This increase is rather concerning, as we had early management objectives to keep prevalence rates below 5 percent in the population,” Hemmer said. “Other western states have reported deer population declines correlated with CWD prevalence surpassing 20 to 40 percent in a population.”

CWD in whitetail deer in northeast Montana hasn’t been as high as in mule deer, but whitetails also show prevalence increasing across the region in most districts.

“In adult whitetail deer, the CWD prevalence trend has been slower and more sporadic, from 0 percent in 2018-2019 samples in the region, to around 4 percent in 2024,” Hemmer said. “The lower prevalence rate in whitetails could be due to a variety of factors, but one that may contribute is that whitetails are more common along the Milk and Missouri Rivers, which are 40 to 50 miles from the Canadian border.”

Detection of CWD in Region 6 continues to spread as well.

This hunting season, CWD was detected for the first time in HD 620 in central Phillips County, with two positive cases. Every year, FWP staff see CWD spread both to new hunting districts and to new areas within hunting districts in northeast Montana.

In addition, for the first time, CWD was detected in a whitetail deer in HD 650, which is in McCone County.

Only two hunting districts in northeast Montana have yet to have a CWD detection: HD 621, which is in southern Phillips County, and HD 652, which is a permit-only area for mule deer buck hunting in McCone County along Fort Peck Reservoir. The absence of a detection doesn’t mean that CWD is not in these hunting districts, as fewer samples have come from these areas.

Managing CWD in the future

Hunting is the primary tool for monitoring and managing the spread of CWD. Hunter-harvested samples are the primary way FWP monitors the disease. These samples are critical to FWP’s efforts to manage CWD.

For the latest information on CWD, including detection maps, disease information and information on how to get your animal sampled please go to fwp.mt.gov/cwd.

What is CWD?

CWD is a contagious neurological disease that infects members of the deer family, including elk, moose, mule deer, and whitetail deer. It is always fatal to the infected animal, and there is no known cure. CWD was first detected in Montana’s wild herds in 2017.

There is no known transmission of CWD to humans. However, the Centers for Disease Control recommends that hunters harvesting deer, elk or moose from an area where CWD is known to exist have their animal tested prior to consuming the meat and do not consume the meat if the animal tests positive.

.308 For Elk Hunting: Pros, Cons, & What to Consider

(continued from page 21)

Combine the .270 with the .308 and you get the 7mm-08 Remington, which is ballistically superior to .308 but keeps much of the oomph that can get lost if you go much smaller in diameter.

A classic choice for elk hunting is nearly any .30 caliber magnum cartridge. All will be more than powerful enough to knock down a bull elk. Good choices are .300 Winchester Magnum, .300 Winchester Short Magnum, and .300 Weatherby.

If you want to take a lever-action rifle with you elk hunting then the .45-70 Government would be my choice. With modern loads, this venerable cartridge can take down an elk up to 200 yards away.

The cartridges mentioned above are not the end of the list, though.

Many cartridges are lethal against elk, such as .30-06 Springfield, 7mm Remington Magnum, .338 Marlin Express, .338 Win Mag, and many others.

SHOULD YOU USE A .308 FOR ELK HUNTING?

With modern bullet design, cartridge selection has become less important than in years past.

The main consideration you need to keep in mind when hunting with .308 is to use a good hunting bullet. With the right load, .308 is more than enough to one-shot a bull elk.

Just keep calm, make a good shot, and you'll have a successful hunt!

FAQ

What Is the Best .308 Bullet for Elk Hunting?

165-grain Nosler AccuBond bullets are often regarded as the best bullet to use when hunting elk with a .308 rifle. You can load your own or buy commercial ammo with this bullet from Nosler, Federal, or Underwood.

What Is the Maximum Effective Range of .308 on Elk?

With the right load and under good conditions, .308 Winchester is effective against elk out to 400 yards.

What Is the Best Bullet Weight for Elk Hunting with .308?

When hunting elk, you want to use a bullet weight that's medium for the caliber. With .308, that means 165/168 grains.

Portable Power Where You Want It, When You Want It

For Use At Home, Camping, On The Jobsite Or More.

HONDA



EU2200i

2200 watt 120V inverter generator with CO-MINDER™

-Ideal for TV, DVD, satellite, fridge, coffee pot & more

-Super quiet & lightweight

-Inverter - stable power

-Honda My Generator app + Bluetooth® capability

-CO-MINDER: advanced carbon monoxide detection system



We stock a wide variety of Honda generators to meet your needs.

SEE WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU AT

LewistownHonda.com

302 TRUCK BY-PASS, LEWISTOWN, MT

406-538-9435

Please read the owner's manual before operating your Honda Power Equipment and never use in a closed or partly enclosed area where you could be exposed to odorless, poisonous carbon monoxide. Connection of a generator to house power requires a transfer device to avoid possible injury to power company personnel. Consult a qualified electrician.

Unleash the power of versatility. Designed for adventurous trail riding and tough work.

2025 Honda ForeTrax Foreman 4x4



HONDA

SEE WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU AT

LewistownHonda.com

302 TRUCK BY-PASS, LEWISTOWN, MT | 406-538-9435

UTILITY ATVS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR RIDERS 16 YEARS AND OLDER. ATVS CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO OPERATE. FOR YOUR SAFETY, BE RESPONSIBLE. READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL. ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET, EYE PROTECTION AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING. BE CAREFUL ON DIFFICULT TERRAIN. NEVER RIDE AFTER CONSUMING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL, ON PAVED SURFACES, ON PUBLIC ROADS, WITH PASSENGERS, OR AT EXCESSIVE SPEEDS. NO STUNT RIDING. RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT WHEN RIDING. FourTrax®, Foreman®, HondaCare®, Protection Plan, TraxLok® are registered trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. ©2025 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

The Truth About Spring Bear Hunting

By Jake Horton

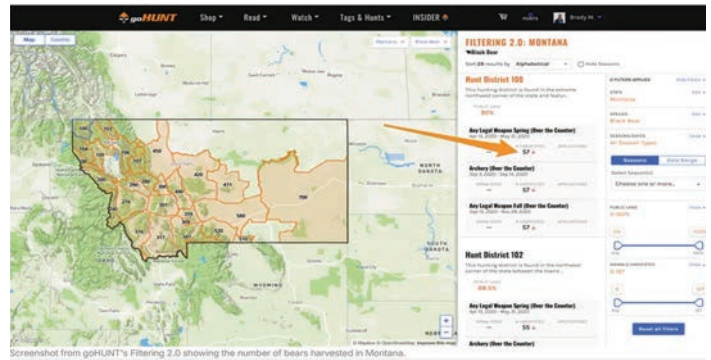
Originally published at [GOHUNT](https://www.gohunt.com)  GOHUNT.com

You know it's springtime when the weather finally breaks and the sportsmen and women can finally get outside to enjoy hunting and fishing again. Whether we're shed hunting for elk or deer antlers, chasing those early morning gobblers, or fishing for wild trout in the icy cold mountain waters, we are still enjoying the great outdoors and everything Mother Nature has to offer. There is one hunting season that seems to get easily overlooked by hunters for a variety of reasons but is every bit as exciting as those sheds, gobblers or brook trout. What season am I talking about? Well, spring bear season, of course. Until recently, spring bear season seemed overly complicated with the chances of getting a bear nearly impossible; however, the truth is that the chances for success during your first year are really high. You can figure out excellent spots and see bears nearly every day. You can do this hunt on a limited budget and this hunt is my most enjoyable and stress-free hunt of the year. With some preparation, time off, and a good long-range rifle, spring bear season can be something you look forward to every year.

In my opinion, the best states to hunt for spring black bears are Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. Yes, there are a lot more western states that allow you to hunt black bears in the spring, but, let's face it: you have a limited amount of time, so why not go where the bear numbers are highest. You may be wondering why bear numbers are so high in these states. Well, that's because these states have some of the nastiest, steepest, thickest country that exists in the United States and bears thrive in this environment. Idaho, Montana and Wyoming have over-the-counter (OTC) bear tags for specific units. Wyoming is the only one out of these states with a specific quota of bears that can be harvested in each specific unit and this information is available daily. Hunters can strategically use goHUNT to see what units offer OTC spring bear tags and how many bears are harvested annually. Honestly, if you go bear hunting in any of these areas and hunt hard you will have a good opportunity of seeing a bear and getting close enough for a shot during a five-day hunt.

Once you pick a state, get an INSIDER membership and cut some major time out of your scouting. Most people are very familiar with the benefits of using goHUNT's INSIDER platform for determining where to spend their mule deer or elk points; however, the information compiled on other species like black bears is top-notch.

On the GOHUNT INSIDER platform on Filtering, you can simply search Idaho, Montana, Wyoming or any other state by OTC Spring Back Bear Season, then search by number of bears killed and you'll see the top bear harvest units.



This information coupled with the amount of public land can allow you to pick a unit where you find bears and have a chance at killing one — usually within less than 10 minutes of research on GOHUNT's site. It honestly doesn't get any easier than that and as an INSIDER member myself, I would highly recommend it...

Once you have a unit or two picked out in the state of your choice, you should make some calls to the local forest service rangers, game wardens, and other local officials to determine when the bears typically come out of hibernation, what roads will be open during the spring season due to snow closures, and confirm that there are good bear numbers there. Typically, these local officials are very aware of the bear density in their area because of camper, hiker and backpacker reports. If they say there are a lot of bear sightings and the GOHUNT harvest numbers are good, then it is time to start some online satellite scouting.

Online Scouting

Before we get into the nitty-gritty of where, when and how, it's important to talk about bears' spring behavior. In the springtime, bears naturally come out of hibernation between March and June, depending on the snow line and weather. Every year will be different; however, you can bet that the lower in elevation a bear is hibernating, then the sooner they will typically awake. As soon as a bear wakes up from their winter slumber, they immediately seek out food. The easiest food for these omnivorous mammals to get are new blossoms, flowers, berries, tree buds, bugs, grubs and anything in between. Bears tend to live and hibernate in the dense forest, but usually after waking from their hibernation, they are drawn to any open hillside facing south. These southern hillsides typically have the snow melted off by the time a bear wakes and has already turned green and lush with small plants and buzzing with bug activity. Surprisingly, at high elevations, plant life tends to sprout and bloom at an increased speed compared to lower elevation plant life, which actually leads to a greater amount of protein for a bear to consume. Keeping all of this in mind, it is time to begin your online scouting and plan out some spots to sit for your hunt.

Online scouting can be super beneficial during spring bear season in order to drastically increase your odds of spotting and harvesting a bear.

HSM AMMUNITION

Pick up a box or more at your local sporting goods store or one of our online retailers.



FOR ALL OF YOUR SHOOTING NEEDS

RIFLE-BEAR LOAD- DANGEROUS GAME-HANDGUN-LEAD FREE-REDUCED-RICOCHET-COWBOY ACTION
RELOADING COMPONENTS-CLEANING SUPPLIES-FIREARMS-LAW ENFORCEMENT AMMUNITIONS

A portion of each sale of our Bear Load ammunition goes to support events for our Veterans.



www.hsmammunition.com

Manufactured in Stevensville, MT.



Photo Credit Jeremiah Doughty courtesy Vortex Optics www.vortexoptics.com

Black Bear & Fresh Berry BBQ Sauce Sandwiches

By Jeremiah Doughty
Vortex Optics www.vortexoptics.com

INGREDIENTS: PULLED BEAR

- 2 pounds black bear
- 1 can favorite beer
- 1 cup venison or beef broth
- 1 white onion, rough cut
- 6 cloves garlic, smashed
- 3 tbsp Worcestershire
- 1 tbsp cracked pepper
- 1 tsp sea salt
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp cumin

INGREDIENTS: BERRY BBQ SAUCE

- 2 cups fresh/frozen berries (Like huckleberry, blueberries or black berries.)
- 3/4 cup ketchup or tomato sauce
- 1 tsp liquid smoke
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 tbsp molasses
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp corn starch

DIRECTIONS: BERRY BBQ SAUCE

In the saucepan, add huckleberries and cook over low until the berries break down and release all the juice.

Bring to a boil and reduce heat and simmer 3-5 minutes.

Remove from heat and strain berries through a wire/mesh strainer, mashing through the strainer.

Toss out mash and save the delicious juice.

In saucepan combine juice and remaining ingredients, bring to a boil, constantly whisking so as not to burn.

Reduce heat and simmer 5-10 minutes until sauce is the right consistency.

You should be able to dip a soup spoon into the sauce and have it be covered when you remove it.

DIRECTIONS: BLACK BEAR

In slow cooker or Dutch oven, add you bear meat and top with remaining ingredients.

Cook on low for 6-8 hours, or high for 4-6 hours.

Make sure your meat is covered by the liquid, if not flip meat half-way through, or better yet, add another beer.

Cook until bear meat easily shreds with a fork.

Remove bear, continue to shred.

Add 1 cup of cooking liquid to shredded meat, to keep it moist for service.

Add mayo, potato crisps, and homemade BBQ sauce to a toasted potato bun and enjoy.

COOKING BEAR MEAT - Temps And Trichinosis

Cooking Temps: Studies show that Trich dies around 137° - 150°F. The only problem is that every iota of that meat must hit that temp, so cooking meat at a medium rare will not guarantee that every ounce has reached that internal safe eating temp. For this reason, myself and many others suggest cooking the meat till at least 165-170 degrees to be safe. You can reach these temps by slow cooking, pan cooking, grilling, or sous vide. Sous vide is a great way to cook those steaks and still get a nice pink center. But cooking the meat at 145° for 8 hours you've guaranteed every ounce of that meat has reached temp...

I love to slow cook and shred my bear meats...

For more mouthwatering recipes, connect with Jeremiah on Instagram at: <https://www.instagram.com/fromfieldtoplate/?hl=en>



Turns Mountains of Solitude

INTO PEAKS OF ADRENALINE

RAZOR® UHD 8x32 (shown)

For those who know unforgettable moments don't happen by chance, Razor® UHD stands at the peak of the Vortex® optics technology—delivering the unmatched clarity and low-light performance once-in-a-lifetime hunts demand.

Rugged construction.

Smooth ergonomic controls.

Spectacular glass that delivers superior brightness and all-around image quality. From dense, river-bottom bucks, to rams above the timberline, early dawn to the depths of dusk

Razor® UHD reveals opportunity otherwise hidden in shadow, giving you incredible viewing power every thrilling second of shooting light.



Available in 7 sizes
10x32 10x50
8x32 10x42
18x56 8x42
12x50

Included in the Box

- GlassPak™ Pro Binocular Harness
- Objective Lens Covers
- Comfort Neck Strap
- Ocular Lens Covers
- Rangefinder Pouch
- Lens cloth



UNLIMITED UNCONDITIONAL LIFETIME WARRANTY

**BINOCULARS - RANGEFINDERS - RIFLESCOPES - SPOTTING SCOPES
MONOCULARS - TRIPODS - APPAREL - GEAR**



NEW! TRY OPTICS FINDER To Find The Right Optic For You
Go To: <https://opticsfinder.vortexoptics.com/preprod/categories>

JOIN THE VORTEX NATION



www.vortexoptics.com



Photos credit Vortex Optics www.vortexoptics.com

VORTEX® RAZOR® HD 4000 GB BALLISTIC SUPERIORITY

Vortex Optics www.vortexoptics.com

The bear appeared in a small opening on the brushy hillside across the valley. I got a range of 472 yards, looked down to check the dope card taped to my rifle stock, dialed my turret and began to settle in for the shot. “Wait, did I look at the right line?” I thought to myself. This was day five, the first bear we’d seen, and my last day on the mountain. Not wanting to blow the opportunity by dialing the wrong correction on my elevation turret, I looked down to confirm. It was indeed what I first recalled from the visually-crowded, spreadsheet-like data card. The problem now – the precious seconds wasted allowed the bear to move back into thick cover and out of my life.

By taking extra time to not screw up my one and only opportunity, I screwed up my one and only opportunity.

Now, imagine a handheld rangefinder that gives an accurate range along with customized elevation and windage corrections cleanly displayed in the field of view. Corrections that account for real-time atmospheric, wind speed, and wind direction.

Well, you don’t have to imagine, because this incredible capability is reality – and available in the Vortex® Razor® HD 4000 GB.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

The Razor® designation denotes it’s Vortex’s highest level of quality and performance, 4000 indicates the max reflective target ranging capability, and the GB component of its nomenclature stands for GeoBallistics®.

Every Razor® HD 4000 GB is equipped with an on-board GeoBallistics® Solver and comes with a subscription to the Pro version of the GeoBallistics® app. A notable feature of the app, its comprehensive, continually updated, bullet library.

28 | Hunting & Fishing News

FEATURES AND SETUP:

The rangefinder connects to the app via Bluetooth®.

Three preloaded ballistic profiles (.308, 6.5 Creedmoor, and 5.56.) will get folks running those cartridges started, but the real magic happens when you use the app to enter and transfer customized data (bullet weight, ballistic coefficient, zero distance, optic height over bore, etc.), for the specific load you are pushing through your rifle to the rangefinder. If your bullet is in the bullet library – which it likely is – pertinent attributes will autofill their respective cell in the app. Very handy, and a timesaver compared to manually looking the information up.

One input of particular importance, an accurately measured muzzle velocity using a reliable chronograph.

No access to a chronograph – no problem. Start with the box-posted velocity, shoot a group at a distance you anticipate significant drop while maintaining high confidence in your equipment and ability, measure how high or low your impacts are compared to what the unit is telling you, and adjust your velocity up or down accordingly.

The Razor® GB's on-board environmental sensors measure temperature, humidity, and pressure at your shooting location for increased precision of the ballistic solution when not connected to the app. When connected to the app, you have the option to pull weather data from local weather stations. Two wind modes (Full Crosswind and patented Wind Bearing Capture mode) accurately calculate wind holds for the manually entered wind speed. Unit also pairs with Kestrel® wind meters when connected to the app. Once set, the unit can operate independent of your phone. Setup is straightforward and intuitive – incredibly refreshing for a device with this much tech.

The One that Didn't Get Away: Since we opened with a sob story of the one that got away, let's end with one that didn't. Using the Razor® 4000 GB on a frigid November deer hunt was a dream this fall. It's super-fast and the precision of the corrections it spits out is nothing short of impressive.

On the fringe of mule deer habitat, we encountered a nice whitetail buck bedded with doe he was obviously locked on for the foreseeable future. Our approach due to terrain and wind direction dictated we get to a spot where we could see the doe, but not the buck bedded below her over the crest of the hill. Banking he would eventually join her, we settled in. Four toe-numbing hours later he got up and walked our way. A final range of 278 yards, a quick dial, and a single shot led to a late-night dinner of buck tenderloins.

The Razor® 4000 GB is the exact handheld laser rangefinder I've been looking for to round out my rifle kit on open-landscape hunts. It will be with me from now on. I firmly believe any hunter looking to maximize their effective range will feel the same.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT,
MONTANA!**

TOGETHER, WE'RE BETTER.

BLACKBUTTECOPPER.COM | 406.547.3466 | INFO@SANDFIREAMERICA.COM

Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Available In The State Of Washington

Washington Department Of Fish & Wildlife <https://wdfw.wa.gov>

2025 Wild Turkey Spring Season

Three subspecies of wild turkey reside in Washington: the Merriam's, Rio Grande, and Eastern.

- **Merriam's** subspecies occupies portions of Spokane, Pend Oreille, Stevens, Ferry, Okanogan, Chelan, Kittitas, Yakima, Klickitat, and Skamania counties.
- **Rio Grande** subspecies can be found in Asotin, Garfield, Columbia, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Lincoln counties.
- **Eastern** subspecies can be found west of the Cascades in Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Pacific, Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston and Lewis counties.

2025 Spring Season

SEASON AND AREA	DATES OPEN	HUNTING HOURS	RESTRICTIONS	LEGAL BIRD AND LIMIT
Youth – statewide	April 1-7	Hunting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset during spring seasons.	Male turkeys and turkeys with visible beards only	Spring season limit is 3 turkeys total statewide, with the following restrictions: Eastern Washington*: 2 turkeys, except a third may be killed only in Spokane County. Only one turkey may be killed in Kittitas and Yakima counties each. Western Washington*: 1 turkey. Klickitat County: 2 turkeys. * Kills in Klickitat County do not count towards the eastern or western Washington limits.
General – statewide	April 15 - May 31, 2025			

ADDITIONAL TURKEY TAGS MAY BE PURCHASED AT ANY TIME. IN APPROPRIATE AREAS, THREE TURKEYS CAN BE HARVESTED IN ONE DAY.

Youth Turkey Season

- Youth license holders may hunt during a special youth-only spring turkey season on April 1-7, 2025.
- The youth season is open statewide.
- Must be accompanied by an adult, 18 years or older.
- Standard hunting methods and all other turkey hunting regulations apply to the youth season. (The combined youth/spring season bag limit is the same as listed for spring season above.)

Weapons

It is illegal to hunt turkeys with a weapon other than the following:

- Crossbow or bow and arrow;
- Shotgun or muzzleloading shotgun shooting #4 or smaller shot (0.13 inch diameter or smaller);
- Legal modern handgun designed for hunting, shooting #4 or smaller shot, and not capable of holding more than three shells. Handgun barrel length must be a minimum of 10 inches, inclusive of choke tube. Modern handguns must shoot a minimum three inch shotshell of .410 caliber or larger;
- Legal muzzleloading handgun designed for hunting and shooting #4 or smaller shot. Handgun barrel length must be a minimum of 10 inches. Muzzleloading handguns must be .45 caliber or larger.

It is illegal to hunt turkeys with a shotgun capable of holding more than three shells.

Special Regulations

- A valid hunting license and an unaltered, un-notched turkey transport tag are required for hunting turkey.
- Immediately after killing a turkey, hunters must validate their own tag by completely removing notches for month and day of kill and securely attach tag to carcass.
- It is unlawful to use dogs, live birds, electronic calls or electronic decoys to hunt turkeys.
- Baiting game birds is illegal.
- Turkey hunters must report hunting activity (see page 3).
- It is illegal to possess in the field or transport wild turkey unless the fully feathered head and beard, if present at harvest, are left attached to the carcass.
- Spring turkey hunting is open statewide except for areas closed to bird hunting. See WAC 220-413-180 (<https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=220-413-180>) or the Big Game Regulations for more information on hunting closures.

WAC Summary Information

This pamphlet is a summary of the hunting regulations and seasons (chapters 220-400 through 220-416 of the Washington Administrative Code) adopted by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission. This pamphlet does not contain all department regulations. Regulations specific to the hunting seasons described in this pamphlet are found in section 220-416-010 of the Washington Administrative Code.

Advisory on Emergency Regulations

Caution: Emergency regulation changes may occur while the seasons described in this pamphlet are in effect and will supersede information contained herein. Area news media will be informed of changes as they occur.

2025 Spring Turkey Season Hunting Hours

½ hour before sunrise to sunset

DATE	EASTERN WASHINGTON		WESTERN WASHINGTON	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
April 1-7	6:00	7:30	6:10	7:45
April 15-21	5:30	7:50	5:45	8:05
April 22-28	5:20	8:00	5:30	8:15
April 29 - May 5	5:10	8:10	5:20	8:25
May 6-12	5:00	8:20	5:10	8:35
May 13-19	4:50	8:30	5:00	8:40
May 20-26	4:40	8:35	4:50	8:50
May 27-31	4:35	8:40	4:45	8:55

Wild Turkey License and Tag Fees

LICENSE OR TAG	RESIDENT	NON-RESIDENT	YOUTH*	RESIDENT DISABLED***
Small game license	\$40.50	\$183.50	\$18.50	\$18.50
Small game, with combined purchase of big game license**	\$22.00	\$96.80	\$8.80	\$8.80
Three-day small game	n/a	\$68.00	n/a	n/a
First turkey tag	\$15.90	\$44.50	\$0.50	\$15.90
Additional turkey transport tags	\$15.90	\$66.50	\$11.50	\$15.90

WDFW will charge a 2.9% processing fee for credit card transactions made online or by phone, starting January, 2025.

* Youth hunters are defined as under 16 when they buy a license.

** License needs to be purchased at the same time as any big game license.

*** Refer to Big Game or Game Bird and Small Game Regulations for requirements.

LOW PROFILE. RUGGED. SHOTGUN READY.



NEW!
VIPER[®]
SHOTGUN ENCLOSED MICRO RED DOT

VIPER[®] SHOTGUN ENCLOSED MICRO RED DOT

Purpose-built for the fast pace of turkey hunting and wingshooting, the Viper[®] Shotgun Enclosed Micro Red Dot delivers an ultra-low-profile design and wide field of view for intuitive shooting and superior recoil control. It's enclosed design and integrated universal mount ensures seamless operation and maximum protection against the elements.

Available in 3 MOA Dot and Multi-Reticle

3 MOA Dot - Provides a precise point of aim with 12 brightness settings suited for stationary or slow targets.

MULTI-RETICLE - Offers seven reticle options and 12 brightness settings to quickly adapt to diverse shooting situations.

3 MOA DOT - Precise point of aim suited for stationary or slow targets.

32 MOA CIRCLE - Designed to roughly match the pattern of a full choke. Suited for targets at distance.

65 MOA CIRCLE - Designed to roughly match the pattern of a modified choke. Suited for targets at a closer range.



INCLUDED IN THE BOX

- Rubber Cover
- Custom Tool
- CR2032 Battery
- Lens cloth
- Most Common Mounting Screw Sets



UNLIMITED UNCONDITIONAL LIFETIME WARRANTY

NEW! TRY OPTICS FINDER To Find The Right Optic For You
Go To: <https://opticsfinder.vortexoptics.com/preprod/categories>

- VISIT ONE OF THESE DEALERS FOR YOUR NEXT VORTEX PURCHASE -

FULL CURL MFG

www.fullcurlmanufacturing.com

MURDOCH'S

www.murdochs.com

NORTH 40 OUTFITTERS

www.north40.com

OWENHOUSE ACE

www.owenhouse.com

SHEDHORN SPORTS

www.shedhorn.com

SHIPTON'S BIG R

www.shiptonsbigr.com

SPORTSMAN & SKI HAUS

www.sportsmanskihaus.com

RIFLESCOPES • BINOCULARS • SPOTTING SCOPES • RANGEFINDERS • RED DOTS • MONOCULARS • TRIPODS • GEAR

JOIN THE VORTEX NATION



www.vortexoptics.com



Photos courtesy Bryan Campos and GOHUNT.com

An Unforgettable OTC Colorado Bull Elk Hunt

By Bryan Campos

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

Colorado public land over-the-counter (OTC) elk hunts can be just as crazy as the stories you hear about them. Lots of orange, lots of camps and very few animals. But they can also be extremely rewarding and unforgettable...

I had the last minute opportunity to go try my hand at an OTC elk hunt in the fall of 2019. I was accompanied by Jared Pierce, Gear Expert & Buyer for GOHUNT. This was my first elk hunt where I had a tag. I was more than excited to go on this out-of-state hunting adventure after a ton of planning and research on Filtering 2.0 to find a unit to try out.

I prepared by fine-tuning my loads for my Browning Hell's Canyon Speed 7mm-08. I ended up using 150 grain Hornady ELD-X bullets, which grouped well with 43.5 grains of Hodgdon H4350 power.

As we entered the Colorado mountains, we started seeing orange, lots of orange. There were big elk camps — probably 20+ — and most of those camps had four to five trucks. We saw a lot of road hunters in orange cruising the roads, too. It was just as I had envisioned it. Now I understood why so many people told me to shoot anything that was legal. I started to get the feeling that this was going to be a competitive hunt. It was a little discouraging, but I was hungry for success and was ready to put in the work to find elk.

Opening Morning



Our opening morning started early and we were the first to cut tracks in the fresh snow.

As we drove by elk camps, we could see smoke coming out some chimneys with faint lighting inside while other camps were completely dark. We made it to high ground far away from any elk camp and we hit the trail. It was a great feeling to be the first to the trailhead with fresh snow on the ground. I hadn't been to this area before and I didn't know what to expect when the sun came up, but I was eager.

As the sun began to rise, we started to see how beautiful the area was with the big pockets of dark timber, open fields and aspens. It was new country for me and I loved glassing it, trying to find elk. We ended up finding one elk on day one, but we couldn't determine if it was a bull or cow, but we were excited to at least find an elk. We cut some fresh elk tracks during our hike back up the mountain and followed them for a while, but no other elk were spotted on that day.

Day Two



Day two started cold at 19 degrees at camp and we knew it would be even colder in the high country we were headed to. Another hunter from Tennessee ending up going up the same trail we were on and we hiked up to the summit with him. We hiked to the same spot we saw the elk the day before, but it was snowing so hard that we couldn't glass much at all. We made a fire and started to wait out the snow. We kept the fire stoked for about three hours while the snow kept coming down. Finally, the snow eased up and we started our ascent back up the mountain to try to find some elk.

As we made our way through dark timber, we were high and we could see a lot of country. It was great country, but everything we could glass was so far away. It was almost tempting not to glass because I knew it would be so much work to get off our mountain and over to another mountain range, but we glassed it anyway.

I spotted a dark silhouette that looked like a bull's head at first glance. We got out the spotter and, indeed, it was a bull! He was small, but he was legal and, instantly, I was ready to go in for him. There were cows feeding around him, but the bull was bedded. We made the plan to have Jared watch the bull through the spotter while I went in after the bull. He was 1,300 yards straight across from us, but I had to come off the top of my mountain down to cross a big open field and then work my way up another mountain to get to the elk.

I took pictures and video before I started off the mountain so I could reference them to navigate and find the bull once I got there because I knew everything would look different when stalking in from a different angle.

As expected, everything looked different when I got to the new mountain, but I tried to stay pointed in the right direction and made progress to close the gap between me and the elk. I was excited, but tried to stay focused on making progress to get closer.

Not long after that, I saw dark fur in through the trees with my naked eye. I lifted my binos and confirmed it was a bull! I could only see his neck and his 5th and 6th points. You could tell he was big, but I didn't really know how big he was — just that he was legal and that I wanted to shoot him.

I had very little space between all of the trees for a shooting lane. I could have taken a neck shot from where I was, but the animal had no idea I was there. I didn't want to rush a shot, so I stalked in closer to get lined up with him for a better and cleaner shot. The shooting lane was narrow and gave me about 2' of room to shoot through. I dropped down to one knee and ranged just beyond him at 140 yards. I propped up against a tree with my trekking pole supporting the base of my rifle. I finally had him in my cross hairs, but I never saw his face since he was feeding and all I could see was a portion of his neck and some of his antlers in that small 2' window. His vitals were blocked by the trees the whole time I was watching him. I just focused on my breathing routine so I could be steady and ready once he took a step.

Game Time

After about a minute of watching the bull, he finally took a step and his vitals were exposed. I audibly said, "Game time," and executed a shot. I saw the bull get hit and quickly he was out of my view. I couldn't believe what had just happened. I radioed Jared and let him know I hit the bull. He asked if it was the little one or the big one and I said, "It was the big one!" Jared shouted with joy! Not long after that, Jared saw the bull go down and he worked his way off the mountain and towards me.

As we approached the bull, we both realized the bull was a lot bigger than we expected. He was wide, he had mass and he was symmetrical.

His body was huge. Picking up his head the first time was incredible. The bull went about 30 yards from where I had shot him. The shot placement was good and I couldn't have been happier.

It took us many hours to process the elk and get ready for the heavy pack-out ahead of us. Fortunately, Jeremy, Jared's friend, came out to help us for the pack-out. At 11:30 p.m., they both helped me stand up for the first time with the bull head and cape on my pack and it was at that moment, I knew this was going to be the hardest physical event of my life.

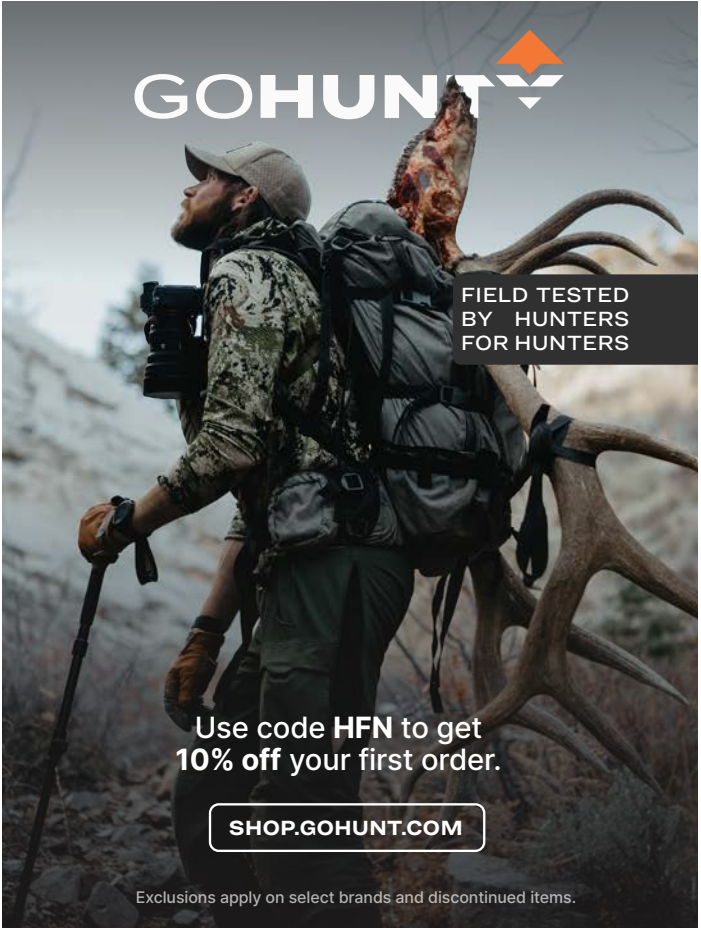
There were big round slick rocks all over covered in snow. It wasn't overly steep, but it was slick and somewhat dangerous. I only fell on my face once. Another time I started to fall and I wrapped my arms around a tree; the weight of the head swung me around the other side of the tree like I was a piece of rope.

As the night wore on, I could only go 15 to 20 steps before I had to collapse and rest. I had trained hard for the mountain prior to the hunt, but my body was breaking down and muscles were failing. Jeremy had offered to take the load a couple times, but I wanted to keep going so I did. At about 1:30 a.m., he offered to take the load again and I tapped out and said, "Yes, I'll take the help!"

In Closing

It was such a relief mentally and physically to pack just a front shoulder the rest of the way versus the heavy head and cape. Both Jeremy and Jared took turns and helped on the final stretch to get to the trailhead. We got to the vehicles a little after 2 a.m. with 16° weather keeping us cool. Both Jared and Jeremy said that it was the heaviest pack out of their lives. It was by far my heaviest pack out I've ever experienced. It felt amazing to sit and ride back down to camp. We ended up getting to bed around 4 a.m. and slept in before going back out the next day to hike out and pack the rest in.

The hunt and experience were incredible. I couldn't have done it without Jared's and Jeremy's help...



GOHUNT

FIELD TESTED BY HUNTERS FOR HUNTERS

Use code **HFN** to get **10% off** your first order.

[SHOP.GOHUNT.COM](https://shop.gohunt.com)

Exclusions apply on select brands and discontinued items.



How To Choose The Best Taxidermist

By Mike Hanback
Big Deer Blog
www.bigdeerblog.com

Photo credit Mike Hanback
Big Deer Blog www.bigdeerblog.com

My hope is you'll shoot a giant 10-pointer this fall and holler to your buddies, "Men, I'm putting this big boy on the wall!"

Depending on where you live, expect to pay \$600 to \$800 or even more for a shoulder mount.

To help you get the best return on your investment, here are some tips for choosing the right taxidermist.

Check with Local Hunters

You probably know some of the best hunters in your area, or at least know of the locals who kill a good buck most every year. Ask around, call them up and find out which taxidermist they use. If possible, visit their man caves, check out their mounts and see the work for yourself. You can't beat good word of mouth and solid recommendations from locals.

Visit Taxidermy Shops

You've got good references, and now in the off-season is a great time to visit those shops.

A quality taxidermist will be hard at work on bucks his clients shot last season. Don't call ahead, but drop in announced during normal business hours. Your first impression is important. A studio should appear clean, bright and well-organized.

Taxidermists are busy right now, but a good one will be willing to give you, a potential new customer, a few minutes of his time. (If not that's a red flag.)

Ask a few questions: How many mounts do you do a year? (A large, full-time studio that does dozens or even hundreds of heads can be fine, but then so can a part-timer who mounts only 10 bucks a season.) The eye and hand of the artist and the quality of the work are all that matters.

Ask if they tan hides in house, or send them to a tannery? Either method is okay, but it will affect how long it takes to finish your job.

How long will it take to get my buck back? Ten to 12 months start to finish for a super-looking mount is reasonable.

Examine the Mounted Bucks

Let the taxidermist get back to work, and then spend some time examining the nearly finished and complete mounts on the shop's wall.

Check 3 things closely to get a good idea of the quality of the work.

Eyes: Should be a nice blend of brown/black and set naturally apart. Tear ducts with fine detail indicate top-notch work.

Ears: Should look the right size and positioned naturally, either up and alert or laid out and slightly back depending on the mount.

Nose: Tip should be a black with pimples and a slightly wet appearance. Look for well-defined and deep nostrils.



Examine those features closely, but remember something a good hunter with a dozen 150-class bucks on his wall told me years ago. "The buck should look as alive as he did the moment you shot it." I've had dozens of bucks mounted since then, and when I look at them now and remember the hunts, it's clear that's the best advice I ever got.

You Get What You Pay For

By design we've come this far without talking about money.

Don't go looking for a deal, but rather search for a taxidermist who will do top-quality work and charge you a reasonable price for it.

Working today's stubborn inflation into the equation, \$600-\$800 should get you a great-looking mount.

But prices vary. One time I gladly paid a world-class artist with many blue ribbons to his credit more than \$1,200 for a left-turn mount. The 209-inch buck still looks magnificent on my wall. I also know a guy here in Virginia who works part-time in a shed at home and mounts 6 to 10 bucks a year for \$500 apiece. I've inspected those mounts and his work is amazing.

Deals like that are out there. Do your homework and hire a taxidermist that will make your mounted buck look as alive as the moment you shot him.

Bighorn Sheep License Quotas Reduced In HD 622 Due To Population Concerns

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks <https://fwp.mt.gov>

GLASGOW – Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has reduced the bighorn sheep license quota in hunting district (HD) 622 for the upcoming license year. Both the either-sex and ewe license have been reduced to one for the 2025 season. This proactive decision is based on population decline, which may be linked to a disease outbreak.

The changes to sheep licenses for HD 622 are reflected in the 2025 hunting regulations. FWP staff can make quota adjustments to licenses and permits if they are within the quota range approved by the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission. FWP biologists are working this spring to assess populations numbers of several species and may make more in-range quota adjustments as necessary.

Hunters first reported unhealthy sheep in HD 622 in September of 2024, and the five 2024 ram license holders reported seeing 80 percent fewer sheep than sheep hunters have reported in the past. In addition, other observations by area landowners and FWP staff have also noted fewer sheep.

Bighorn sheep in the Missouri Breaks HD 622 have had a history of being healthy and in good condition and are considered a coveted license in Montana.

In 2017-2018, 40 live bighorn sheep were sampled to look for the presence of important sheep pathogens. Test results indicated the herd was relatively healthy, and notably lacked presence of *Mycoplasma Ovipneumoniae* and *Mannheimia Haemolytica*, which are often associated with respiratory disease in sheep.

From 2018-2023, sheep numbers declined to levels below objective, and FWP responded by reducing both ram and ewe licenses. Samples provided by hunters from harvested sheep during that period did not indicate presence of any additional respiratory pathogens.

During the 2024 hunting season, FWP collected samples from several hunter-harvested sheep, and lungs of two of those sheep showed signs of respiratory disease and heavy loads of lungworm. However, FWP veterinary staff have still not detected any new respiratory pathogens. Additional samples are currently pending. If people see sick bighorn sheep or sheep that have recently died, they can report them to area biologists Thomas Sutton (Malta) at 406-417-1270 or Aaron O’Harra (Glasgow) at 406-594-9918. FWP will look to sample dead or sick sheep for indications of disease.

FWP biologists plan to conduct aerial surveys as soon as conditions allow to further assess the bighorn sheep population in HD 622 and will report those findings as soon as they are available.

The application deadline for bighorn sheep is May 1.

GET THE B&C PLATE AND SUPPORT YOUR HUNTING HERITAGE!



Select Boone and Crockett Club's license plate the next time you register or renew a vehicle in Montana and help us preserve your hunting heritage for future generations, maintain big-game records, promote hunting ethics, and continue our youth conservation and hunting education programs on Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. B&C receives a \$20 sponsor fee for each plate.

Thank you for your continued support!

www.boone-crockett.org

Flathead Lake Fishing Guide

(continued from page 2)

D. Downriggers Downriggers will cost \$100-\$500 but they allow you to fish at precise depths and into very deep water. They also allow you to fish with fairly light gear since the line releases from the heavy downrigger cable and ball when a fish hits. Used with a good fish finder you can target concentrations of fish and prime locations and precisely place your lure. The most common downrigger lure is a squid and dodger or flasher although a variety of lures can be used. Generally, place the squid 2 1/2 dodger lengths behind the dodger and drop the lures 10-50 feet behind the downrigger release. Use an 8" or larger dodger. Silver and chartreuse are popular dodger colors and white, chartreuse, blue, and glow are popular squid colors. Scent or a piece of cut fish on the squid can help. Generally fish near the bottom but don't be afraid to fish mid depths, particularly near the thermocline (40'-60') in summer, or wherever you see the fish on the finder. If you're not catching fish vary the boat speed and vary the distance back from the downrigger release.

E. Steel Line This method requires a heavier rod with a roller tip, and a large reel such as a Penn 49L with 1,000 feet or more of single strand or braided steel line in 20-40 lb. test. With this method you drag a lure (usually a Flatfish or Kwifish) along the bottom. It takes 800 feet or more of line to reach bottom in 100 feet of water. This used to be the main method to fish for lake trout and its still one of the best ways to catch big trout but it's physically demanding and requires some expertise. T-50 Flatfish are the most popular although the smaller M-2's also work. Popular colors are blue/white, red/white, perch finish, or frog. Use similar sizes and colors in Kwifish. To work, the lure has to be skipping on the bottom. Expect to hang up occasionally. These heavy rigs don't give fish under 10 pounds much chance to fight. Usually look for mud/sand/small cobble bottom flats near slope changes or points. The Mid-lake Bar from Angel Point to Cedar Island, Mac Alley south of Wildhorse, and flats near any major points can be good spots...

SHORE FISHING Lake trout can be readily caught from shore in May-June and October-November when the water is cool and they're in shallow to look for food (spring) or to spawn (fall). Generally look for steep to moderately sloping bottoms with lots of rubble. Good spots in the fall have been Wayfarers and West Shore State Parks, Polson City Docks, and the bridge in Polson. You can stillfish cutbait (fish) or worms on the bottom or cast 1/4 oz. to 1 oz. lures or jigs. Count down before starting your retrieve so the lure is near bottom. Use silver/red or gold/red lures. You'll lose lures so use inexpensive ones. Most lakereels will be 2-4 pounds but you may catch a larger one, particularly in fall.

CAUTION: Be sure to study identifying characteristics of lake trout and bull trout. For a short course on trout identification and biology, log on to <https://fwp.mt.gov/fish/regulations/bull-trout...> All bull trout caught on Flathead Lake must be immediately released...All cutthroat trout caught in Flathead Lake must be immediately released.

FISHING FOR LAKE WHITEFISH

Lake whitefish have grown greatly in popularity in recent years as anglers have discovered how to catch these tasty, hard-fighting fish. Try them and find they're very different from their cousins, the mountain whitefish. Whitefish usually hit as the lure/jig is dropping or right as it hits the end of the line or bottom. It is important to fish within inches of the bottom, occasionally bumping bottom. We recommend a light action rod and 4-6 pound test line to detect the subtle hits and get the most sport out of these hard fighters. Everyone is still learning about the fishery so don't be afraid to experiment on times, locations, and techniques.

Lake whitefish are hard fighting fish with white, mild-tasting meat. They average about 2 1/2 lbs. but can run over 5 lbs. They eat zooplankton, snails, aquatic insects, and small fish. They are the most abundant gamefish in the lake although no one has figured out how to catch them consistently. They are found throughout the lake, usually near bottom in 30'-150' of water. In Flathead Lake, look for whitefish in 20'-60' of water over sand and gravel bars and off points. They can be caught in 100'-150' of water but it's trickier. In general, you'll need to be anchored or drifting very slowly. The most popular lures are a Kastmaster spoon or a leadhead jig with a 1 1/2"-2" Mr. Twister or Fuzzygrub body. Other popular lures are Crippled Herring, Swedish Pimple, Rattlesnake, Krocodile Trilobite, and Leadagator. Start with 1/4 ounce lures and go to larger sizes as needed. The best colors imitate yellow perch. Chartreuse is the most popular color and green, silver, yellow, and gold can also work. Usually plain lures will work but occasionally a scent or a few maggots will help. A new method is a lure at the end of the line with a red or whitefish fly (Lake Mary Ronan Special) tipped with maggots tied 18" above. Short jigging motions are the best. The whitefish usually hit when the lure hits the end of the line. Be alert for a single, soft tap. Experiment. Try jigging continuously to a few second pause and bumping the bottom occasionally to bouncing it on the bottom. Early morning hours are generally the best.

River Mouth Delta: April, May, July, August.

Main Lake: February, March, July, August, October, November. Popular spots are Woods Bay, Gravel Bay, Finley Point, the Narrows, Big Arm Bay, Wildhorse Island, and Peaceful Bay.

Polson Bridge: October, November...

Flathead River: The whitefish run starts mid-September, peaks mid-October to mid-November, and lasts into January. Good numbers of fish are found from the Stillwater River to Blankenship Bridge with the Old Steel Bridge and Highway 35 Bridge at Kalispell and the U.S. 2 Bridge at Columbia Falls the most popular holes. Look for fish in side eddies with little or no current, 6'-15' of water and a sand or fine gravel bottom. The standard lure is a 1/4 ounce jighead with a 1 1/2"-2" chartreuse Mr. Twister or 1" Berkely Microcraw. It is critical that you hop the jig across the bottom and lift (jig) the instant the lure hits the bottom. You'll feel a very light tap or the fish will just be there when you jig...

Walleye Hair Jig Tactics

(continued from page 17)

A lot of times it's about having confidence and just keeping your bait in the water. When I was guiding I'd have three people plus myself trying different colors and it was always a head-scratcher. Like the guy or gal catching way more fish on the only brown and orange bait we had in the boat. Nothing makes sense with walleyes. Just look at Wonderbread."

And another key bit of wisdom with hair or tinsel jigs? If fish are short biting, add a stinger hook—the Northland kind with the red rubber tab. "A lot of times you'll catch fish on that small treble hook that you wouldn't have boated otherwise."

As far as how he fishes the jigs, Mitchell gives the reel a couple cranks, lets it drop, then repeats. "It's really simple to fish, also part of its appeal. Anybody can learn to fish a hair jig. And you know when they thump it, that's for sure. Not much finesse involved."

Again, not as big on color as Bro, Mitchell does pay attention to jig weight for certain depths, especially on rivers. "If there's no current, I fish a ¼-ounce from 10 to 13 feet pretty comfortably. If there's more current, I'll switch to 3/8 oz. If the cadence requires a drop, crank, and a pop and twitch cadence I will lean on the heavier side for a lot of different depths, too. You need to find bottom; that's where the walleyes are most of the time."

In terms of rigging, Mitchell skips a tiny swivel and ties his braid direct to the fluoro leader with an Alberto Knot.

MITCHELL'S GEAR

- Scheels Jason Mitchell 7' Medium Power, Extra Fast Action Rod
- Scheels 2500 Size Scheels Spinning Reel
- 10-pound Braid
- 10-pound Fluoro Leader

Wisconsin Hair Metal

Tyler and Sara Trampe of Wisconsin's The Sportsman's Journal TV and avid Northland Fishing Tackle users, are pretty excited about the bites they've experienced on hair and tinsel—and what's to come soon during the rest of the open-water season.

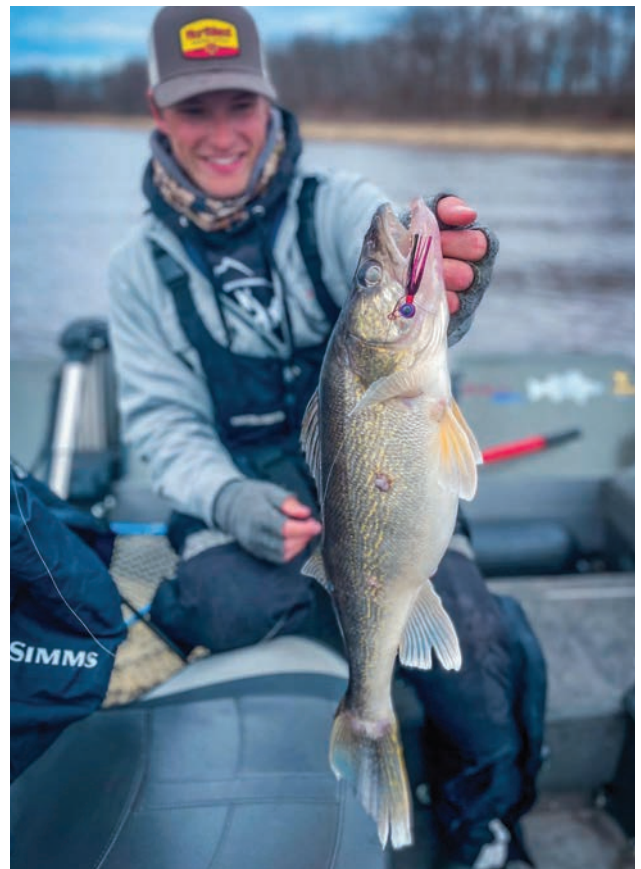
"The Northland Deep-Vee Bucktail is a classic," says Tyler. "It's especially deadly for early-season walleyes from ice out up to 50-degree water temps..."

The darting action is perfect for triggering active fish and the subtle movement of the hair is key in getting stubborn walleyes to chew. Sara and I love using it tipped with a stinger hook when fishing Green Bay walleyes; helps get hooks in fish that pin it to the bottom! The hair also is great for holding scent attractants for dirty water situations like river fish during the spawning run. Love the color selections Northland offers along with the oversized eye on the Deep Vee jig head."

As far as the Deep-Vee Flashtail Jig goes, Sara is a big fan, more for its fish-catching than Christmas-like bling.

"I absolutely love this jig for all species. We especially use it for walleyes and it produces all year 'round. But when that water temp is a little warmer low 50s to 60s this is our go-to. I fish it tipped with an Eye-Candy Minnow which helps slow the fall down and adds a little bulk to the profile in stained water."

Tyler adds: "It's perfect for snap jigging flats and we find it most effective fishing it around down wood for walleyes in clear water lakes. With the added plastic, we are able to slow the fall enough for bringing it over limbs and dropping it right in the zone! Plus, the extra flash this bait produces is perfect for calling fish in. I think the flash signals baitfish to walleyes. And, again, the Deep-Vee head is perfect for fish to key in on with the oversized eye. I can't stress that enough in the Deep Vee series: Big walleyes do target the head of their prey so the eye is a deal maker."



Learn more and shop at Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com.

The Truth About Spring Bear Hunting

(continued from page 24)

Start by finding a reliable satellite imagery website with up-to-date images within the last five years. Google Earth or maps provided on state websites are excellent resources. Then, search within dense forest a mile or two from trails and roads and mark any open parks, two to five-year-old burns, avalanche shoots, controlled logging areas or obvious logging roads that are grown up and green.

The next step is to see if there is a place to spot and shoot from within a decent distance from the bear feeding habitat. These potential shooting points can be either across, above or below the location where a bear may appear while hunting. If there is not a shooting area within my rifle's range, then the spot is not a good one.

Personally, I determine this by using Google Earth and using the measurement tool to see how far the potential shot would be. With practice and good ammo, an average rifle today can shoot out to 400 yards give or take. A long-range rifle can shoot much farther — even up to 600 to 700 yards for a skilled marksman. However, while scouting and hunting, it is important to be honest with yourself about your rifle and your skill. It does you no good to hike back off the trail multiple miles and see a bear that is 2,000 yards away across a valley and not be able to take the shot or get any closer. It is equally as bad to attempt to take a shot that is too far for you or your rifle and end up wounding one of these animals.

In my experience scouting, for every 20 perfect bear spots, I find in a unit only one has an opening to shoot from that I can make with my rifle. Keeping that in mind, if a spot is not perfect, move on and find another. Places like Idaho, Montana and Wyoming seem to have endless open south facing areas if you look closely. It's also important to note the elevation of the spots you are scouting and planning to hunt. I like to pick multiple hunting spots for every 1,000' in elevation change from 7,000' to 12,000'. Depending on when you are hunting and what the winter was like that year, bears can come out of hibernation at different times of the spring, putting them in open areas at different times. The last thing you want is to come out to Idaho and plan to hunt bears at 10,000' to find out that they are all under 3' of snow still in the middle of May.

Bear Hunting

After you have found some good spots and entered them into your GPS, take some days off of work and go after some bears. Bears are typically out and about at first and last light so you need to be at your shooting point for the first few hours of the morning and the last few hours of the day. Other than that, the rest of the day is yours to plan, which is why I feel that bear hunting is way less stressful than other hunts that keep you on your feet and pushing all day long.

Plan for a morning and evening hunt and maybe some fishing during the middle of the day. If you are deep in bivy camping, days can be long so bring a hunting buddy or two along to help pass the time and to help you pack out when you finally pull the trigger.

During the spring, bears can habitually feed in the same area for a few days to weeks in a row so I would typically give a specific spot one to two sits before moving on to a different hunting spot.

This also keeps your morale up and allows you to see more beautiful spring country. If you are successful and harvest a bear, make sure to have a plan to get it out. Though sometimes it gets a bad reputation, bear meat is actually quite good, especially if made into some sausage.

Bear Safety

It should go without saying; however, it is important to note that bears are predators and can be very dangerous to any humans entering their habitat.

By themselves, black bears typically will run away from humans at their first smell or confirmed sighting of us, but that is not always the case. If you startle a bear or come across one with cubs, they can easily have a fight mentality.

When it comes to black bears, the National Park Service recommends you DO NOT PLAY DEAD. They recommend that you fight the bear back by kicking or punching the bear in the muzzle. Once the bear backs off and goes out of sight, vacate the area immediately.

Many of the prime bear hunting areas in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming also have grizzly bears. Though the grizzly numbers are fewer than black bears, they are less likely to run away from you as they feel they are the dominant predator.

If attacked by a grizzly bear, the National Parks Service recommends you leave. Do not drop your hiking pack in order to protect your back, then lay on your stomach and spread your arms and legs to prevent the bear from flipping you off your back and PLAY DEAD. Hopefully, the grizzly bear will lose interest and leave; however, if the attack continues and the bear is not losing interest, fight back as hard as you can and hit the bear with anything you have.

In general, bear attacks are rare; however, they do happen so don't be afraid to talk out loud on your way in to your morning spot until you get close, carry bear spray, firearms or a quick access knife. When camping, store your food away from your camp suspended in the air between two trees. Bears can climb trees so putting it up in the air, leaning on a tree will only delay the inevitable. Pack in food that doesn't smell through the packaging and clean up after you eat. Bears are incredible animals and hunting them can be the biggest excitement of your year, but be sure to do it safely...

Good luck this spring!



CONFIDENT DRIVING And DURABILITY ON ROAD & OFF



Dynapro HT2

All-season tire. Sure to take you further, with even tread wear and enhanced mileage.

NEW!

ION evo AS

Charge less. Cruise more.

For electric vehicles. Designed to spread the ground pressure evenly, providing longer usage and less replacement.

Dynapro AT2 Xtreme

Tough in all terrains on road and off road. Multi-directional grooves & sipes provide better traction in any direction.

Dynapro XT

Ruggedness Meets Comfort. Built to perform in rugged terrains.

Dynapro MT2

Optimal wild-terrain off-road traction. Best grip for off-road environments. Durability in harsh off-road conditions.



TOTAL TIRE PROTECTION
PACKAGE

TIRE SUPPLY
SERVICE CENTERS
www.tiresupplysc.com

REPAIR WARRANTY
COMPLETE NATIONWIDE

VISIT ONE OF THESE DEALERS FOR TIRES, BATTERIES, CHAINS, WINDSHIELD WIPER BLADES & MORE!

Anaconda	Lisac's of Anaconda	406-563-6110	Kalispell	M&C Tire	406-752-9662
Billings	J&M Tire	406-969-2075	Missoula	Big Sky Tire	406-251-5988
Billings	Lisac's of Billings	406-656-7502	Plains	Gary's Glass & Auto Body	406-826-4279
Bozeman	Eagle Tire	406-587-5414	Polson	Beacon Tire	406-883-6258
Butte	Lisac's Tire	406-782-4294	Ronan	Arnie's Gas & Tire Center	406-676-0400
Butte	American Car Care	406-494-4450	Shelby	Mark's Tire & Alignment	406-434-5118
Darby	Automotive Solutions, Inc.	406-821-3440	St. Ignatius	Stuart's Hometown Auto	406-745-2190
Ennis	D&D Tire Supply	406-682-4234	Thompson Falls	Easy Street Auto & Tire	406-827-3808
Eureka	Big Sky Tire	406-297-2623	Three Forks	Three Forks Motor Supply	406-285-3212
Gardiner	Yellowstone Dino Lube	406-848-9401	Victor	Grenfell Garage	406-961-2424
Glasgow	Arch's Tire	406-228-2258	Whitehall	Full Circle Tire	406-287-5682
Great Falls	Falls Tire Service	406-453-1418	Williston, ND	OK Tire Store	701-774-0233
Helena	Eagle Tire	406-443-5910	Ashton, ID	Tri-State Tire	208-652-3344
Helena	Kolar Tire 3213 Euclid Ave.	406-459-3135	Rexburg, ID	Tri-State Tire	208-356-9069
Helena	Kolar Tire Hwy 12. E	406-465-2442	Victor, ID	All American Tire & Brake	208-787-8473

GO TO WWW.TIRESUPPLYSC.COM FOR SPECIAL OFFERS

An All-Wheel Drive SUV Built on Love and Trust



2025 SUBARU FORESTER SPORT

- 19-inch bronze-finish alloy wheels
- Bronze-finish exterior accents
- Dual-function X-MODE® with Hill Descent Control
- Blind-Spot Detection³ / Rear Cross-Traffic Alert³
- EyeSight® Driver Assist Technology⁴
- SI-DRIVE® engine management system for an enhanced throttle response and an even more engaging drive
- StarTex® upholstery
- Available features like SUBARU STARLINK® 11.6-inch Multimedia Plus¹ and SUBARU STARLINK® Safety and Security², plus foot-activated, hands-free Power Rear Gate⁵



PLACER SUBARU

More than a Car Company. Come See Our New Showroom. 80 years family owned and operated.

1515 EUCLID AVENUE, HELENA, MT. 59601

406-442-2603 | 1-888-433-0119

Subaru, X-MODE, EyeSight, SI-DRIVE, STARLINK and StarTex are registered trademarks of Subaru Corporation. Forester is a registered trademark of Subaru of America, Inc. Apple CarPlay is a registered trademark. Android is a trademark of Google Inc. ¹SUBARU STARLINK Dual 11.6-inch Multimedia Plus system with high-resolution LCD touchscreen multi-touch gesture displays, Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™ integration. Compatible smartphone and application required. For applications to operate, latest version of each application required. Data provided by smartphone is displayed on head unit screen. Some state laws prohibit the operation of handheld electronic devices while operating a vehicle. Smartphone apps should only be launched when vehicle is safely parked. Your wireless carrier's rates may apply. SiriusXM® and SiriusXM® Travel Link® services require a subscription, sold separately by SiriusXM after the trial period. Your SiriusXM service will automatically stop at the end of your trial unless you decide to subscribe. If you decide to continue service, the subscription plan chosen will automatically renew and be charged according to your chosen payment method at the then-current rates. Fees and taxes apply. See the SiriusXM Customer Agreement & Privacy Policy at www.siriusxm.com for full terms and how to cancel, which includes online methods or calling 1-866-635-2349. Available in the 48 contiguous United States, D.C., and Puerto Rico (with coverage limits and capable receiver). Visit <http://www.siriusxm.com/FAQS> for most current service area information. Availability of some services and features is subject to device capabilities and location restrictions. All fees, content and features are subject to change. SiriusXM, Pandora and all related logos are trademarks of Sirius XM Radio Inc. and its respective subsidiaries. ²Activation with subscription required. Includes a three-year trial subscription to Safety Plus services and a six-month trial subscription to Safety and Security Plus services. The Concierge plan can be purchased annually or monthly. A credit card on file will be required for specific packages and for renewal purposes. Features and availability vary by vehicle and trim level. May not be available in all states. See Retailer for details. ³Blind-Spot Detection, Lane Change Assist and Rear Cross-Traffic Alert are systems designed to assist the driver by monitoring the rear and side areas of the vehicle during a lane change or reversing and are not a substitute for safe and attentive driving. ⁴EyeSight is a driver-assist system that may not operate optimally under all driving conditions. The driver is always responsible for safe and attentive driving. System effectiveness depends on many factors, such as vehicle maintenance, weather, and road conditions. See Owner's Manual for complete details on system operation and limitations. ⁵Foot activation function is not operable when equipped with accessory tow hitch. See your Subaru retailer for details. Choose from 5 Forester trims. 2025 Subaru Forester Sport Crystal White Pearl shown with optional accessories. Take a video tour here: <https://www.subaru.com/vehicles/forester/gallery.html>.