

WESTERN HUNTING & FISHING

MAY 2026 **NEWS**



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New Jigging Rap 11 And 13 Fishing Jigging Rap Rods Are Paired For Success

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When it comes to vertical presentations on open or hardwater, or pinpoint targeting suspended fish using FFS, few, if any, baits can compare to the highly versatile Rapala® Jigging Rap®.

Now, with the addition of the new size No. 11, the legend of this go-to multi-species bait just got a little bit bigger.

With five proven profile lengths already in the family, the new size No. 11 Jigging Rap (4-3/8 inches) and weighs 1 oz, giving anglers the ability to drop a larger portion on the plates of big fish looking for a bigger feast. The super fast rate of fall can be the difference in getting these big fish to bite.

The weighted body design of the Jigging Rap makes it the perfect choice when targeting suspended fish - any fish - at any depth of the water column.

Swimming in tantalizing circles that fish just can't resist, the Jigging Rap's balanced minnow profile sinks quickly, and can also be bottom bounced with a quick snap or yo-yo'ed for unbeatable results.

When paired with FFS, the Jigging Rap's balanced design with single reverse nose and tail hooks and VMC® center treble and line tie proves just as efficient at triggering bites. This allows anglers to cover a lot of water and quickly get the bait in a fish's face when a big blip swims onto the screen.



Chrome Blue

No matter the season, no matter the species, the Jigging Rap has earned its reputation as one of the most effective multi-species baits in fishing today. The new No. 11 size takes this legendary versatility to a new level by answering the call for a bigger, heavier fish snack.

The new No. 11 Jigging Rap is available in 16 colors, including: Chrome Blue, Clown, Fruit Punch, Gold, Glow Green Tiger, Glow Hot Perch, Glow, Glow Tiger, Glow Yellow Perch, Juicy Lucy, Perch, Purpledесcent, Purple Shades, Pearl White, Silver, and Wonder Tiger.

The new No. 11 Jigging Rap weighs in at 1 oz, and has a No. 6 VMC Center Treble.



Clown



Glow Green Tiger



Glow Tiger



Perch



Pearl White

continued on page 13

2026 Spring Mack Days on Flathead Lake

Sponsored by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

Cash and Prizes-several ways to win-bonus, lottery drawings, etc. plus

(1)-\$10,000 & (3) \$5,000 & (5) \$1000 + over (9,000) \$500-\$100 tagged lake trout-
(See the rules page for changes in 30" & over tagged lake trout)



Thursday-March 12th to Saturday May 9th

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!

If total catch exceeds our budget for 2026 -we reserve the right to end the event earlier than May 9th
All it takes is one ticket (one for every lake trout under 30") to win a lottery drawing

Friday- Sunday-competitive Mack Days-lottery prizes, tagged fish, and bonuses-ends Fri-May 8th
May 9th is a separate day—see below

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 till 9PM or ½ hr. after sunset-whichever comes first-if there is no one present use the fish drop box-instructions will be posted.

20 lottery drawings **\$2,000-\$600**-all lottery drawings & prizes end Fri- May 8th-Sat separate prize day

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

Top lady anglers **\$300, \$200, \$100**-by total fish entered

Smallest lake trout **\$250**-(2 prizes) Largest lake trout-**\$500**—see rules page for changes

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

Weekend Prizes-2@**\$100** & 1@**\$200** per weekend-9 weekends-**\$3,600**

Golden Angler (70 & older)-1ST-**\$300** & 2ND-**\$200**-determined by total fish entered

Weekday Prizes (Mon-Thurs)-6-**\$250**, 2-**\$200**, & 2-**\$100** drawings

All fish are to be turned in the same day as caught

Monday-Thursday- up until ½ hr after sunset to turn in fish to staff at Blue Bay or if staff is not present-- leave them in a fish drop box with your name and # of fish -instructions will be posted.
2-**\$100**, 2-**\$200**, 6-**\$250** lottery drawings plus bonus dollars -33 days-totaled with Fri-Sun totals at the end of the event

Saturday May 9th-SEPARATE DAY ALL ENTRIES IN BY 3:00-only AT BLUE BAY

All prizes & lottery drawings will be done on Saturday morning May 9th and posted for awards ceremony at 3:00. Cash Drawings for Saturday will be-\$400, \$350, \$300- totals count for bonus awards and will be posted at the awards ceremony.

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- \$47, 31-50-\$92, 51-75-\$158, 76-100-\$221,201-225-\$615, 301-325-\$1,017 & 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 on the website (subject to change). CSKT has a special Flathead Lake fishing license for the south half of Flathead Lake
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 or email: cindy.benson@cskt.org: with your name, address, telephone #, age, male or female

Applications will be available:

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Access Strategy Standard: How To Enter And Exit Without Educating Animals

By Ted Ramirez Jr
Caribou Gear Outdoor Equipment Co.
www.caribougear.com

Good scouting can feel like progress.

You map water and feed. You run a glassing workflow. You find sign that matters.

And then you walk in wrong and teach the whole basin exactly what you are.

This is the piece most hunters underprice: access.

Entry and exit are not just hiking. They're risk management. They decide whether the country stays calm—or whether it goes quiet for all the wrong reasons.

This is the Access Strategy Standard: a repeatable system for entering and exiting without educating animals.

Why Access Is the Highest-Impact Decision You Make

Animals don't need to see you to learn from you. They learn from scent, sound, silhouettes, and pressure patterns—long before they ever show themselves.

So here's the rule: if your access is sloppy, your intel becomes expensive...

The Access Strategy Model (3 Layers)

Layer 1: Wind + Thermals (The Non-Negotiable)

- Wind is the truth serum. If you can't describe where your scent goes for the next 30 minutes, you're guessing.

- Thermals change the rules. What was safe at first light can be unsafe two hours later.

- Access standard: plan your route around the scent path, not the shortest line.

Layer 2: Terrain (The Visibility and Noise Filter)

- Use folds and edges: benches, timber lines, creek corridors, and micro-terrain keep you off the skyline.

- Avoid the billboard: ridgelines feel efficient but they advertise you.

- Move like you're being watched. Because you often are.

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Layer 3: Pressure (Don't Teach Them Your Schedule)

- Rotate routes when possible. Repetition becomes a pattern animals avoid.
- Build a Plan B and Plan C for wind changes—so you pivot fast instead of forcing it.
- Exit matters. A bad exit can ruin tomorrow's basin.

The Access SOP (Run This Every Time)

Step 1: Define your "No-Go" trigger before you leave the truck.

Pick one trigger that ends the plan immediately (examples: wind wrong, forced skyline travel, visibility compromised, lightning risk rising). Decision speed protects the day.

Step 2: Stage small essentials so you don't stop and dig

Access breaks down when you keep unpacking. Keep the small items contained and consistent:

- headlamp + spare batteries
- lens cloth + small brush
- wind checker
- minimal tape (quiet fixes)
- notes system (quick + consistent)

That's why a dedicated organizer matters: one module, same pocket, every trip.

Step 3: Create a clean staging surface when you must stop

Wet ground and grit turn "quick stops" into slow resets. A tarp gives you a clean platform for glassing breaks, layering changes, and gear staging.

Step 4: Protect the rifle during movement

Brush, dust, road grime, wet snow—rifles and optics take damage on the way in and out. Cover it during travel so you stay focused on the mission, not gear problems.

The Exit Strategy (Where Most People Blow It)

Exit is the final impression you leave in the basin.

- Don't exit through feed if you can avoid it. You'll leave scent where animals want to be tonight.
- Don't drop into the wrong thermal and paint the drainage with scent.
- Leave clean. Quiet steps, low profile, minimal disruption.

And if you're gathering spring intel, your exit should protect the area as much as your entry does.

Practical Shortcut: Read Sign Like a Business Case

When you find sign, ask one question: what does this sign tell me about access?

If the sign says "bedding nearby," your access must treat that area like a security zone, not a hiking trail.

The 3-2-1 Access Scorecard (Fast Field Audit)

- 3: Can I control wind/thermals, noise, and visibility?
- 2: Do I have two alternate routes if wind flips?
- 1: What is my no-go trigger today?

If you can't answer those in under 30 seconds, you're not running a plan—you're hoping.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I avoid spooking animals on the way in?

Control wind/thermals, stay off skylines, use terrain folds, and stop digging through your pack. Discipline beats speed.

How do I avoid ruining an area on the way out?

Exit like you're still hunting: avoid feed zones when possible, respect thermals, and keep disruption low. The exit is often what educates animals for the next day.

What's the easiest access mistake to fix?

Repetition. Run alternate routes when possible and pivot quickly when wind changes instead of forcing the original plan.

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For just shy of twenty years, we've worked with and supported the efforts of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) because both of our organizations know that hunters do more to help wildlife than any other group of people in America. Hunters literally pay for conservation through state wildlife agencies to the tune of over a half a billion annually in licensing fees alone, and they raise millions of dollars and contribute thousands of volunteer hours to wildlife conservation through their memberships in organizations like the RMEF. And both the RMEF and Kenetrek realize the critical importance of wildlife management, restoring and stewarding habitat, and opening and securing public access for all... which is what the RMEF addresses and why it exists.

When it comes to our tightly knit relationship with RMEF, we're proud of working with them as exhibitors, advertisers, sponsors and donors over the years... and super grateful to be lifetime members... which we encourage all of our customers to consider. You can also support the cause by purchasing our newest line of licensed RMEF-branded socks and gaiters, with proceeds from your purchase supporting RMEF's mission. Shop online at <https://kenetrek.com/collections/rmef-x-kenetrek-partnership>.



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Archery Hunting In Wyoming 101

Table Mountain Outfitters
<https://www.tablemountainoutfitters.com>

If you're looking to get into archery hunting but aren't sure where to start, you're not alone. Archery is one of the most rewarding ways to hunt, but it also demands preparation, quality gear, and time on the practice range. But, a solid foundation is absolutely within reach with the right guidance.

START AT A TRUE ARCHERY PRO SHOP

Your first stop should be a local archery pro shop, not a big-box retailer. While there are knowledgeable staff in those larger stores, nothing replaces the hands-on, one-on-one experience of a licensed pro shop that works directly with multiple manufacturers.

A professional tech can walk you through bow options, help you test several models, fine-tune your draw length, set up accessories, and make sure everything fits you and not just the average customer. That personal attention will save you frustration and money down the road.

FIND THE BOW THAT FITS YOU

The best bow is the one you shoot confidently and consistently. Fit, comfort, draw cycle, intended species, and your physical ability all matter.



Photos courtesy <https://www.tablemountainoutfitters.com>

We always tip our hat to our friends at Mathews, they build reliable bows suited for just about every hunter and every need. That said, we see many brands in the field each season, and hunters are successful with all of them. What matters most is confidence and familiarity with your setup.

As one wise man around here likes to say (Scott... and yes, we'll give him the credit):

"You're only as good as the confidence you have in the tools you're using."

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AIM FOR PRACTICAL, NOT FANCY

A good setup doesn't need to be complicated.

Choose a multi-pin sight or a multi-pin movable sight. One-pin sights are popular for tournaments, but in a hunting scenario, having several yardages ready to go is a huge advantage.

Use a simple clip-on release, not an advanced back-tension style. Keep it consistent and straightforward.

Don't chase high poundage. Modern bows perform extremely well at reasonable draw weights. Pulling too much weight creates problems, not success. Your state may have minimum requirements, but more is not always better, especially if you want longevity in the sport.



PRACTICE. THEN PRACTICE AGAIN

Once your setup is dialed in, practice is everything. It's disappointing to invest in a tag, travel, gear, and time, only to go home empty-handed because you didn't put in the work beforehand.

Shoot from different positions. Practice at realistic distances. Simulate the angles you'll encounter in stands, blinds, and western terrain.

Repetition is the difference between chance and confidence.

START SIMPLE WITH YOUR FIRST HUNTS

While you're practicing, begin researching the species you'd like to pursue first. For new hunters, a controlled environment, like a ground blind or tree stand, can help build confidence and allow you to focus on fundamentals.

A great first western adventure is antelope archery hunting. Most antelope hunts are conducted from a blind, and in Wyoming, multiple opportunities are common even as herds fluctuate. It's a rewarding way to learn shot execution under real pressure.

(continued on page 38)



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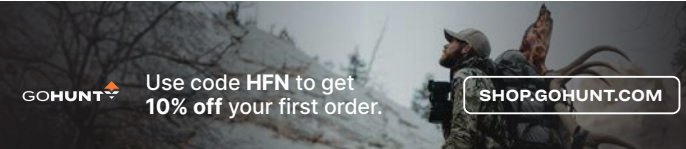
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Glassing Workflow That Finds More Animals: A Repeatable System For Big Country

By Ted Ramirez Jr
Caribou Gear Outdoor Equipment Co. www.caribougear.com

Big country doesn't reward the hurried.

It rewards the hunter who can sit still, manage comfort, and keep the mind working when the ridge gets cold, the wind starts pushing, and the easy option is to stand up and move.

This is where a lot of scouting seasons quietly fail: not because hunters can't glass, but because they don't glass long enough—or they glass without a system and miss the very thing they came to find.

Today we're building a repeatable glassing workflow—a field-ready process that increases time-on-glass, improves decision quality, and helps you spot more animals in the same terrain other hunters walk past.

The Glassing KPI That Matters: Time-On-Glass

Here's the corporate truth: your results correlate to one metric—time-on-glass. The longer you stay effective behind optics, the more movement you catch, the more patterns you identify, and the fewer “surprise animals” you bump while walking.

Step 1: Choose a Glassing Point That Buys You Angles
Don't pick a glassing point because it's the highest knob. Pick it because it lets you control three things:

- **Visibility:** you can see into folds, benches, and shadow pockets.
- **Wind discipline:** your position doesn't poison the basin with scent.
- **Angle options:** you can shift 10–30 yards and change what you can see.

Step 2: Run the Scan Sequence (Near-to-Far / Shade-to-Sun)

Most missed animals are missed because hunters start far, get impatient, and never truly clear the near terrain where animals blend in best.

Your scan order

1. **Near-to-far:** clear the first 300–600 yards slowly.
2. **Shade-to-sun:** start where contrast helps; finish where glare hurts.
3. **Grid the basin:** break the view into panels and complete each panel before moving on.

Operating rule: If you can't describe exactly what you already cleared, you didn't clear it.

Step 3: Angle Change Is a Force Multiplier

Animals hide behind micro-terrain. A shallow fold, a brush line, a bench edge—small features create big blind spots.

Before you abandon a basin: make one deliberate angle change and re-run your grid for 10 minutes. The point isn't to “move more.” The point is to unlock what one angle can't show you.

Step 4: Comfort Strategy (Because Comfort Protects Focus)

You can't glass well if you're cold, wet, or constantly standing up to fix problems. Comfort isn't a luxury. It's performance infrastructure.

Use a tarp as a dry, clean glassing platform and a quick weather-control tool when conditions change. When you can sit longer, you see more.

Step 5: Build an “Optics Support Kit” and Stage It in a Ditty Bag

Glassing sessions break down when small items are scattered: lens cloths, spare batteries, wind checker, notes, tape. Every time you dig for them, you lose focus and you lose minutes.

This is where Ditty Bags become your optics command module—one organizer, same pocket, same order, every time.

What goes in your Ditty Bag optics kit

- Lens cloth + small brush
- Spare batteries (rangefinder / headlamp)
- Wind checker
- Minimal tape (quiet fixes)
- Notes system (quick, consistent format)

Step 6: Decision Triggers (When to Sit, When to Move)

Discipline is what keeps you from “random walking.” Use triggers:

- **Stay** if you're still clearing new panels, checking new shadow lines, or working new angles.
- **Shift** when you need a 10–30 yard angle change to clear blind pockets.
- **Move** only after you've run the full grid twice and changed angle at least once.

This prevents the most expensive mistake in scouting: leaving a productive position too early.

Protect the Rifle During Travel (Because Dust and Moisture Don't Ask Permission)

Truck miles, ATVs, trailheads, wet brush—rifles and optics get punished during the transport phase. Protect the system so you're not managing issues later...

Glassing Drill (Do This Once and You'll Feel the Difference)

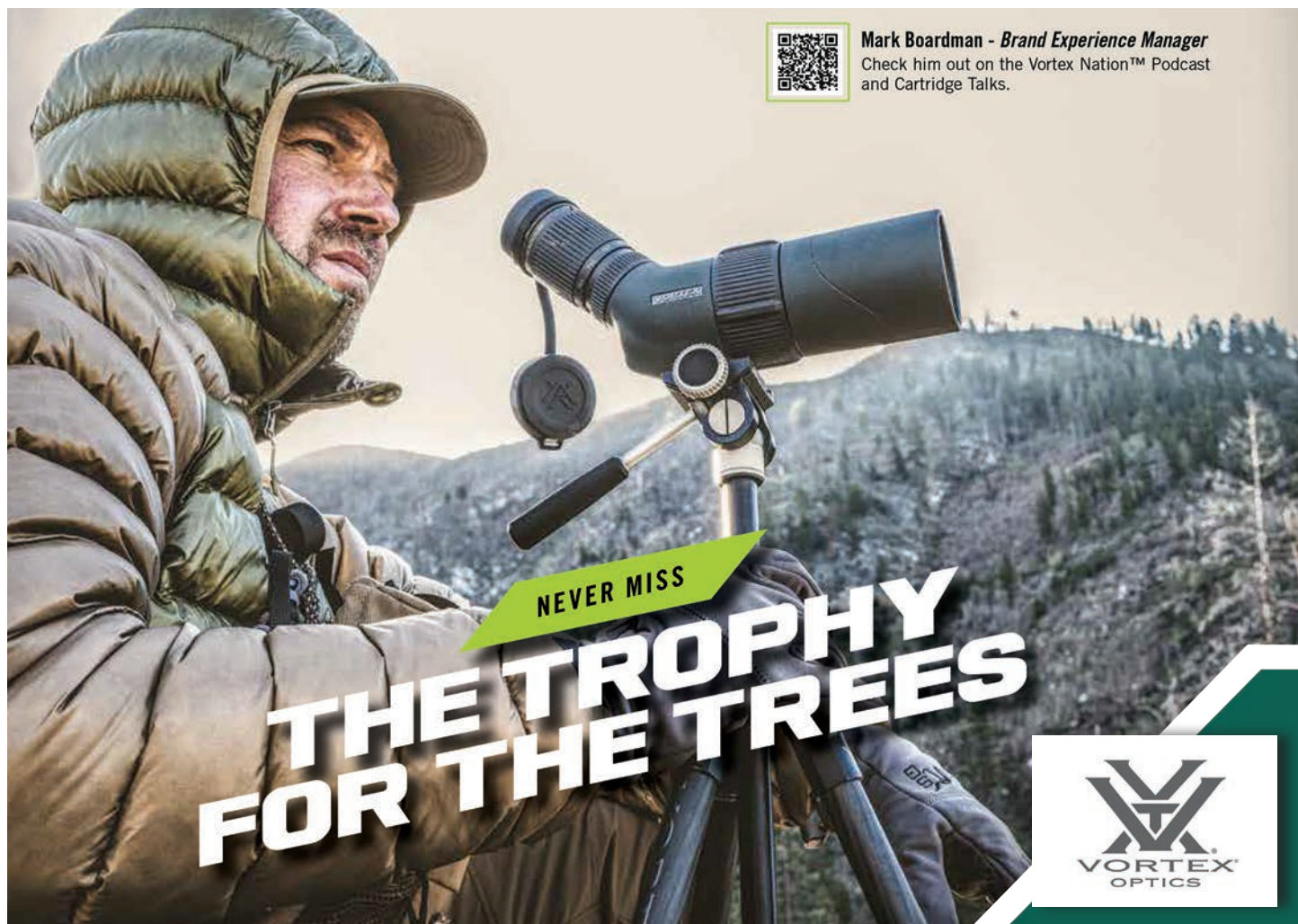
1. Set up on one basin and commit to 30 minutes.
2. Run near-to-far / shade-to-sun.
3. Grid into panels and complete each one.
4. Angle change once and re-run the most “likely” zones.
5. Write down three observations (wind, movement, sign, pressure).

It's not glamorous. It's just effective. And that's what builds results.

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Mark Boardman - Brand Experience Manager
Check him out on the Vortex Nation™ Podcast and Cartridge Talks.



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All photos credit Josh Kirchner courtesy GOHUNT.com

Things To Bear In Mind With Bear Meat

By Josh Kirchner

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

If there is one animal out there that I get the most flack for filling tags on, it's black bears. I'm not even talking about the anti-hunting community either. That is a whole different ball of wax. Many times, it is fellow hunters who are telling me things like, "What did you do with it? You can't eat a bear." Every time I hear something like this I cringe. However, once I educate these folks on how good bear meat really is, they are singing a different tune. They can't resist once I start telling them about recipes I use and how they wouldn't be able to tell the difference between bear and beef. That is something that I will stand by day and night too. When cared for and prepared in the proper way, bear meat is exceptional.

Here are some things to "bear in mind" with what I think is the most misunderstood meat.

In the field care of black bear meat

We've all heard this to some degree. The secret to good table fare doesn't start in the kitchen but in the field. Bears have a nice thick hide on them and if you don't remove it in a timely manner, you risk the well-being of that precious meat. Keep this in mind on all bear hunts, but especially during early fall hunts when it can be pretty warm out. I have made the mistake before of not getting to a downed bear soon enough. It wasn't pretty once I got the meat home. That was a hard lesson and one that I hope you never encounter. On top of getting the hide off, meat quartered and hanging, you need to take the fat off. Often, during the fall I am skinning not just hide, but fat. There can be a few inches that rest on top of that meat, leaving the meat almost invisible from the surface. Get as much of that fat off as possible in the field so you don't have to do it at home. I actually use that rule for all game meat, not just bears. Game fat is unlike that of beef or pork fat and can taint the flavor altogether.

Bear fat

A side note about bear fat. Once you separate the fat from the meat, feel free to bring some of that stuff home with you. You can render that fat down into cooking oil and use it to make all sorts of stuff. Cookies, pies, etc. I've never done this myself, but have friends who have done it with much success.

In the Kitchen

Once you get home, it's time to start processing and packaging up your bear meat. Just like when you were in the field, make sure you get all of the fat you can off of the bear at home. There always seems to be some hidden fat that I missed in the field. Spend the time removing any hard connective tissue as well.



Once you have done that, it's time to figure out what you want to do with this stuff. With venison or elk, I think most of us are going to lean heavily on our steaks. With bears, I am going to advise that you lean heavily on your roasts and grind. Bear backstraps do make for some good steaks, but you have to cook it well done, unlike venison or elk. More on that later. For this reason, I will cut my backstraps into steaks, keep big hunks for roasts, and grind the rest. You can also cube up those roasts and use them for bear stew, which is fantastic. Now, it's time to package it. To encourage longevity, I will first wrap each piece of meat in plastic wrap very tightly. The more air you can get out of there, the better. From there, I'll put that in a vacuum bag and vacuum seal it. By going through this process, I've never had meat go bad in the freezer...

As far as how to cook this meat, I will tell you that bear shines in slow-cooked dishes. These are some tough animals, which is why I advised against cutting steaks other than from the backstrap. Stuff like chili, tamales, shredded bear, burgers, tacos and stew are going to make you love bear meat more and more. As long as you don't approach it, thinking it will be similar to venison, you'll be fine. Remember: they are simply a different animal.

Trichinosis when it comes to bear meat?

Here is that scary word that a lot of you have probably heard through the grapevine when it comes to consuming bears. Trichinosis is something that we have lived in the presence of for quite some time. It is the reason that your grandma always "overcooked" that pork for the holidays. This parasite is commonly found in animals who consume other animals or carrion. It's a nasty infection that none of you should ever want any part of and is easily preventable. All you have to do is cook your meat until it is well done. A meat thermometer is going to be your best friend here. A safe rule of thumb temperature that I use is 170 degrees. Wikipedia states that trichinosis is killed at 165 degrees in about 15 seconds. I always opt on the higher side and have never had an issue.

...precisely why cooking bear in something like a crockpot makes so much sense. For instance, if you are making a shredded bear roast, that meat isn't going to shred well until it hits 200 degrees on the inside. And that's after cooking it for about eight to nine hours. You can rest assured that you aren't going to get sick like this. The bottom line? I wouldn't let the T-word scare you away from eating a bear. It didn't scare you away from eating pork, right?

To sum it all up when it comes to cooking bear meat

I hope that you now feel a bit better about going bear hunting and take advantage of the awesome protein that they offer. Not only is the meat great, bear hunting is just plain fun. It's a great opportunity to get out in the spring and stretch your legs out or head out in the fall if you haven't drawn that elk tag you've been waiting for.

I was hooked on bear hunting after the very first hunt I ever went on. Just seeing a bear was breathtaking to me. Once that happened, it was all over, and they've had my attention ever since. Watching them zigzag their way along a brush-choked hillside is entrancing. Most of the time, the country that they live in can be described in one word: epic. This brings me to my last point about bears. Adventure is always expected. I think that is something that we all need and bear hunting offers plenty of it.

Learn more or join GOHUNT at GOHUNT.com.

3 Walleye Fishing Tips For Opening Day

Northland Fishing Tackle <https://www.northlandtackle.com>

The walleye fishing opener is upon us, and finally the chance to connect with friends and family, all while catching walleye at the same time. Each year the water and air temps may dictate the willingness of walleyes to eat, but there's usually an effective pattern going on somewhere. That's true in early ice-out years as well as the late ones; you just might need a handful of walleye fishing tips up your sleeve to keep throwing at them.

With the walleye holding generally shallower, it's a good chance to drop the bow mount and fish them a bit like bass, at least to a point. Main lake shorelines, especially with twists, turns, and larger features like points can be great places to start the hunt. As are some nice flats with quality weed growth that's just starting to peek from the gradually warming lake bottom. While it's true that the sun-exposed northern shorelines tend to warm fastest, they're not the only places that hold walleyes. Think about where you were catching them during the ice season, and follow a natural path shoreward to get a hint as to where they may butt up closer to land.

(continued on page 17)



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Bang O Lure Twin Spin Masterclass

Northland Fishing Tackle <https://www.northlandtackle.com>

The Bang O Lure Twin Spin is a versatile topwater lure suitable for various fishing conditions. During the early spring, target shallow flats where bass are cruising, focusing on areas with lighter cover nearby. Cast around the open spots adjacent to cover to entice strikes. As the season progresses and weed growth becomes more prominent, shift your attention to the outer edges of weed beds in deeper water.

The lure's design mimics the movements of bluegills and panfish, making it irresistible to hungry bass. Employ a pull-and-stop retrieve technique to imitate wounded prey, pausing intermittently to attract fish along weed lines. Remember to adjust your casting locations depending on the presence of cover and the stage of the fishing season.

How to Fish:

The Bang O Lure Twin Spin from Northland Fishing Tackle is a versatile lure suitable for anglers of all skill levels. It can be effectively cast using bait casting equipment paired with either monofilament or braid lines, depending on the rod's stiffness. Monofilament is preferred for its buoyancy and ability to absorb some of the fight when hooked, while braid requires a softer rod to manage the fish's resistance. Alternatively, it performs exceptionally well with light spinning equipment, making it ideal for beginners or windy conditions. When fishing, casting into shallow areas and employing a pull-and-stop retrieve is recommended. This technique allows the lure's blades to spin and pause intermittently, mimicking wounded prey and attracting fish along weed lines. Although a straight retrieve is an option for covering larger areas, the pull-and-pause technique is favored for its effectiveness in enticing strikes.



Photo credit Northland Fishing Tackle <https://www.northlandtackle.com>

When to Fish:

The Bang O Lure Twin Spin is an excellent choice for early season bass fishing, particularly during the pre-spawn stage when fish are actively cruising shallow flats. Its design perfectly imitates the movements of bluegills and other panfish, making it irresistible to hungry bass. Even as the season progresses, this versatile lure remains effective, especially when targeting vegetation beds and slightly deeper waters around the lake. While it excels in various conditions, its true brilliance is showcased during the early stages of the season, making it a must-have in any angler's tackle box.

Where to Fish:

When fishing the Bang O Lure Twin Spin, it's essential to choose your casting spots wisely due to its three treble hooks. Early in the spring, when fish are active on shallow flats, targeting areas with lighter cover is optimal.

Look for spots with cover nearby and cast around the open areas surrounding it to entice cruising fish.

As the season progresses and weed growth becomes more prominent, shift your focus to the outer edges of weed beds in deeper waters.

Bass tend to patrol these weed lines in search of easy prey, making the Bang O Lure Twin Spin an ideal choice for tempting strikes in such locations.

Learn more and shop Northland Fishing Tackle online at: <https://www.northlandtackle.com>.

Remember to be safe on the water. Wear your PFD, and follow the rules and regulations for the particular water body you are enjoying.

Tight lines.

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@ #

New Jigging Rap 11 And 13 Fishing Jigging Rap Rods Are Paired For Success (from page 2)

Rapala's Jigging Rap is undoubtedly one of the most beloved, incomparable baits to ever exist. Anglers who swear by this lure deserve a rod of equal caliber to maximize the action of the Jigging Rap.



Chrome Blue



Fruit Punch



Gold



Glow Hot Perch



Glow



Glass Yellow Perch



Juicy Lucy



Purpledescent



Purple Shades



Silver



Wonder Tiger



That's exactly what the team at 13 Fishing® thought when they developed the new Jigging Rap Rod... To develop the perfect rod, 13 Fishing partnered with Duane Hjelm, Jigging Rap guru and four-time national walleye tour champion. "One of the biggest mistakes people make fishing with Jigging Raps is their rod," said Hjelm. "Everything we did with this rod was for a specific reason, to make it the best Jigging Rap rod available. I finally feel like we have the perfect rod specifically for jig fishing."

...The Jigging Rap Rod is available in both the Myth and Oath™ series. Its parabolic bend, combined with a fast-action tip, helps anglers impart the correct action on the bait. At 6'10", the length of the rod is the perfect length to cast from the front of the boat. The rod features a premium split-grip design for ultimate comfort, so you can stay on the water longer without getting sore hands or arms.

Shop online at www.rapala.com/us_en/rapala.

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Photos credit GOHUNT.com

Instant Pot Elk Philly Cheese Steak Pasta Recipe

By Cody Boor

Originally publishes at **GOHUNT** GOHUNT.com

...Cody Boor uses the Instant Pot to bring us an epic conglomeration of pasta, elk meat, and cheese. This hearty meal doesn't get any better than that!

Items Needed for This Recipe:

- Instant Pot
- Ground or thinly sliced elk
- 1 onion (chopped)
- 1 green bell pepper (chopped)
- Provolone cheese
- Beef broth
- Minced garlic
- 1 bag of shell pasta
- Johnny's French dip au jus
- Kerrygold butter
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Steak rub seasoning



Watch Cody's video here:
<https://youtu.be/ltTqcUjQTbw?si=gxP0EtLWK20F7P9>

Directions:

- Step 1: Turn on Insta Pot to saute.
- Step 2: Put in 1 stick of Kerrygold butter and stir.
- Step 3: Place thin slices of elk meat in Insta Pot.
- Step 4: Once Insta Pot is hot stir elk meat and butter.
- Step 5: Brown elk meat and about half-way through, season with salt and pepper.
- Step 6: Stir again.
- Step 7: Cook until elk meat is completely browned.
- Step 8: Add onion and pepper.
- Step 9: Stir well.
- Step 10: Add 1/4 cup of Johnny's French dip au jus.
- Step 11: Add about 1 tablespoon of minced garlic.
- Step 12: Mix well.
- Step 13: Add 2 cups of beef broth.
- Step 14: Stir well.
- Step 15: Add 8 ounces of shell pasta.
- Step 16: Stir well.
- Step 17: Make sure the Insta Pot lid is set to sealing.
- Step 18: Place Insta Pot lid on and set to Pressure Cook for 8 minutes.
- Step 19: When done cooking, do an instant release on the Insta Pot. Take wooden spoon and push steam release to let all of the pressure release. Be careful of the steam release.
- Step 20: When Insta Pot pressure release is down, remove lid.
- Step 21: Stir contents.
- Step 22: Place 6 slices of Provolone cheese on top of contents.
- Step 23: Replace Insta Pot lid for 1 minute to let the cheese melt.
- Step 24: Stir and serve.



Spring Chinook Fishing Set To Open...

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

Idaho Fish and Game Commission approved spring Chinook seasons to open on April 25 in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, Middle Fork Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, South Fork Clearwater River, and Lochsa River.

Bag limits and days per week open to fishing are variable by river section. See the full Spring Chinook Season and Rules information on the Chinook Fishing rules webpage:

<https://idfg.idaho.gov/fish/chinook/rules/spring-run>.

Preseason run forecasts project enough hatchery salmon to provide sport fisheries in those rivers.

The Chinook run is just starting, and as of March 24, less than 100 fish have crossed Bonneville Dam, which is the first of eight Columbia/Snake River dams the fish cross before reaching Idaho.

At its March meeting in Boise, the Commission also authorized the Fish and Game Director to make in-season adjustments to seasons – if needed – based on the actual number of Chinook that return.

The intent is to provide a quicker response if changes to the Chinook season are warranted based on the run size.

The director previously had the authority to restrict fisheries or close fishing when harvest limits had been reached, but the Commission expanded his authority to adjust seasons by increasing fishing days of the week and bag limits, when appropriate.

Chinook anglers are reminded that electronic salmon and steelhead permits are available at all vendors, or through the Go Outdoors Idaho mobile app: https://license.gooutdoorsidaho.com/Licensing/CustomerLookup.aspx?_gl=1*lt199*_ga*Mzg4N-jA5MTU0LjE3NzAzOTU1OTg.*_ga_SVSTB7KFY-D*czE3NzQ2NjMxODAKbzE2JGcxJHQxNzc0NjY1M-DUxJGo2MCRsMCRoMA..

E-tagging allows anglers to buy an electronic salmon or steelhead permit from anywhere they have internet or cell phone service and start fishing immediately.

E-tagging also allows salmon or steelhead anglers to validate their electronic permit via their smart phone. Anglers can use the app while out of cell service, in low service areas, and while the device is on airplane mode.

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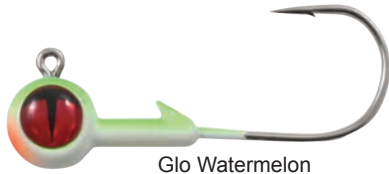


Photo courtesy Northland Fishing Tackle <https://www.northlandtackle.com>

Tungsten Jig Masterclass

Northland Fishing Tackle <https://www.northlandtackle.com>

The Northland Tackle Tungsten Jig is a versatile and effective lure for walleye fishing, ideal for rocky terrains and diverse bottom compositions. It excels in windy or current-heavy conditions, sinking quickly to the strike zone despite turbulent waters. When used with finesse techniques in clear water, its smaller profile and lifelike presentation can attract wary walleyes, making it a valuable tool for anglers seeking success in various fishing scenarios.



Northland Fishing Tackle's Tungsten Jig gives anglers a step up on traditional round ball lead jigs. Molded from Tungsten which is 70% more dense than lead, this jig has a faster fall rate and less drag in the water. This allows anglers to use a lighter tungsten jig than typically used when fishing a comparable sized lead jig. In addition, the hardness of tungsten increases sensitivity and allows anglers to feel exactly what's on the bottom. It features a premium hook and dual bait keepers that lock on soft plastics and live bait. The Tungsten Jig comes in 4 sizes 1/16, 1/8, 1/4 and 3/8. They are available 2 per card.

- Made from eco friendly heavy weight tungsten that is 70% denser than traditional lead jigs
- Tungsten's hardness allows anglers better feel for bottom contact and lite bites
- Premium Mustad Ultra Point hook and dual hook keepers lock on soft plastic and live bait
- Red "T" eyes easily distinguish tungsten

Where to Fish - Tungsten Jig:

The Northland Tackle Tungsten Jig is a must-have lure for walleye fishing, offering versatility and effectiveness in various situations. When considering where to use this jig, focus on areas with rocky terrain or diverse bottom compositions. Its dense tungsten construction allows for enhanced sensitivity, enabling anglers to feel subtle changes in structure, such as rocky to sandy transitions or weed edges.

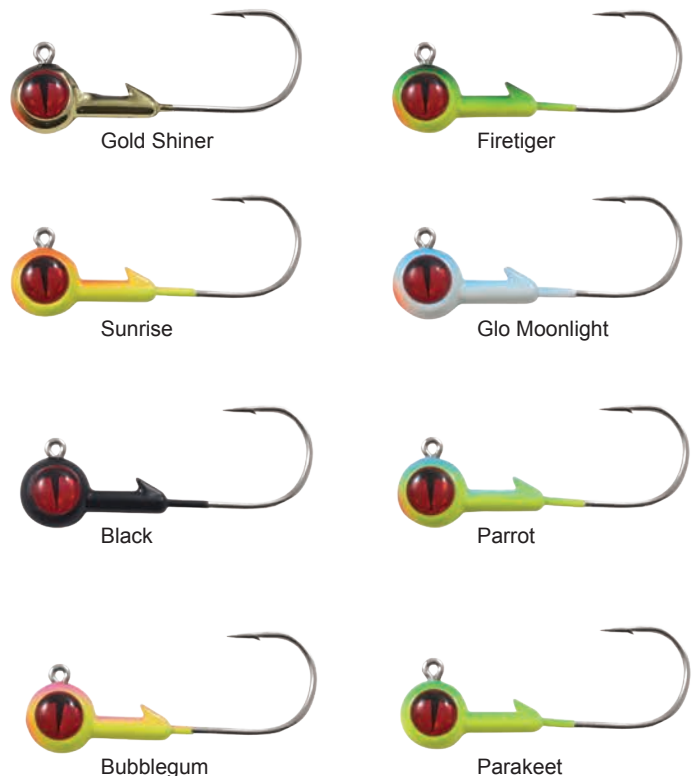
These areas are prime walleye habitat, and the tungsten jig's ability to feel the bottom with precision can lead to more successful catches, especially when targeting these elusive fish.

When to Fish - Tungsten Jig:

In terms of when to use the Northland Tackle Tungsten Jig, it truly shines in windy or current-heavy conditions. The jig's unique pill-shaped design, coupled with its increased density compared to lead, ensures faster sinking rates, even in turbulent waters. This makes it ideal for maintaining control over your presentation and reaching the strike zone quickly, despite challenging weather or water conditions. Whether you're fishing on a blustery day or in swift-moving currents, the tungsten jig's ability to get to the bottom efficiently can greatly improve your chances of hooking walleyes.

How to Fish - Tungsten Jig:

As for how to use the Northland Tackle Tungsten Jig, consider employing it with finesse techniques in clear water situations. Its smaller profile helps it blend in naturally with the surroundings, presenting a more subtle and lifelike appearance to wary walleyes. Whether you're jigging vertically along drop-offs or casting near underwater structures, focus on making subtle movements to mimic the motions of prey. Experiment with different retrieval speeds and jigging actions to find what works best for enticing strikes from walleyes in various conditions. With its versatility and effectiveness, the Northland Tackle Tungsten Jig is a valuable addition to any walleye angler's tackle box, providing opportunities for success in a wide range of fishing scenarios



Shop Northland Fishing Tackle at www.northlandtackle.com.

3 Walleye Fishing Tips For Opening Day (continued from page 11)

Depending on timing, your location, and what aggressive presentations are allowed given water temperature, here are a few walleye fishing patterns to work come opening day (or night):

Jigs – You're not surprised are you? Could there be a better bait delivery method? You can pitch and cast, hop, skip, drag, troll, and finesse your way to shallow walleye bites. If you're looking for a short-shank jig to thread on a simple fathead, the Northland Fire-Ball jig has caught more walleyes than any other. There's a convenient second tie-eye for you to clasp a stinger hook onto as well, making it a great option for short-striking fish.

Northland's Deep-Vee Jig and Deep-Vee Bucktail Jig will be winners with the southern-most walleye folks, as they'll likely be into water temps conducive to huck plastic-tipped jigs. Both the standard Deep-Vee and Bucktail versions have a keel to keep those plastics tracking straight, even if rigged improperly, all while having a great wire keeper to keep baits snug against the jig itself. Power fish the Bucktail version for reaction strikes, while doing the same or free-swimming the standard series. There's no wrong way to fish this bait provided you keep it low and in the walleye's zone.

For the classic northern shiner bite, consider the Northland Long-Shank Fire-Ball Jig. This jig gives anglers an option to thread a full shiner or other large minnows while still having a hook back toward the end. The result is more hooksets and less half-eaten, expensive bait. Of course, in turbid water, the Whistler Jig and Thumper Jigs offer some great flash and vibration when walleye need some help finding your bait. Whether tannic stain or muddy river bottoms, these jigs are welcome additions when water clarity is off.

Crankbaits – The Northland Rumble Series has two crankbaits in the lineup that will be perfect for the opener and really serve as a dual threat as casting and trolling baits alike. The first is the Rumble Shiner, which mimics adult shiners known to be in the shallows spawning during this time of the year. For covering large flats and open shallow areas, cast and make long pulls with pauses mixed in. The slowly rising balsa action makes this a tough bait to resist as walleyes roam these flats in search of large minnows.

The Rumble Shad crankbait will be another great opener lure, casting or trolling. An increasing number of anglers are fishing the evening opener, starting at midnight, to take advantage of actively feeding shallower fish. That's where thrown or pulled, this shad-style crankbait will excel. During the daytime, use it to fish the first break in more southerly locales, where walleyes have long finished spawning and are hanging just off of the first appreciable drop-off. A good wind can kick off a casting bite on this bait as well, so allow it to be the versatile crankbait it is while using it in multiple locations and scenarios.

(continued on page 38)



2026 Lund 200 Heavy Gauge (New Model For 2026)
Mercury 225XL Pro XS
Mercury 15EXLPT EFI Pro Kicker
EZ Loader Galvanized Custom Trailer
Options: Stainless Prop, Smartcraft Gauge, Kicker Tie Bar, Port/Starb In-Floor Rod Storage, 1/2 Hardtop, Net Holder- Starb Side, 6" Stern Rails w/ Downrigger Mounting Pads, Stern Cover, Smooth Moves Seat Pedestals, Bed Rails, Dual Bilge Pumps, 5 Bank On Board Charger, Hardtop LED Flood Light, LED Docking Lights, Electric Trim Tabs, Black/Chrome Raised Lund, Load Guides, Spare Tire.



2026 Lund 219 Pro V
Mercury 400 V10 Verado
Mercury 15 ELPT Pro Kicker
Boatmate Trailer
Options: Spare Tire, Smartcraft Gauge Upgrade, Suspension Pilot Chairs, Bike Seat, 6- Sporttrak Brackets w/ Ram Rod Holders, Lenco Trim Tabs, Washdown System, Sport Top w/ Walkway Curtain, Travel Cover, Humminbird Xplore 12 MSI, Minnkota Ulterra 115/MSI/WR-72", Quick Release Bracket, Fully Networked, Transom Saver, All Batteries.



2026 Vexus DVX22s
Mercury 400L Verado V10, Mercury 15ELPT Pro Kicker
Vexus Tandem Axle Custom Trailer
Options: Two Tone Deck and Hull Stripe, Reflex Flooring Throughout, DVX Victor Package (Intensive Care Livewell System w/ Oxygenator, High Density Polyethylene Pad On Center Rod Box, CoastKey Digital Ignition, Airwave Pedestals), Raw Water Wash Down, Digital Ignition Key Fob, Minnkota On Board Charger 10x5, 3-100AH Amped Trolling Motor Batteries, 1-100AH Amped House Battery, AGM Crank Battery, Humminbird Xplore 12 MSI, Humminbird Xplore 12 MSI CHO, Minnkota Ulterra 115/MSI/72" 36v, TM Plug, Quick Release Bracket, Mercury System Monitor Gauge, Bobs Hydraulic Jackplate w/ Gauge, 54" Rear Handrails, Bow Handrails, Stereo System, Auto Glide Trim Tab Upgrade, Bike Seat, Deluxe Boat Cover.

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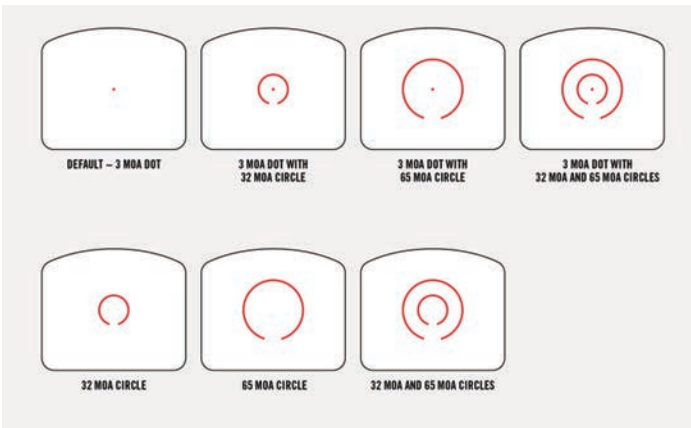


Photos courtesy Vortex Optics <https://vortexoptics.com>

Understanding Viper® Shotgun Dot's Multi-Reticle System

Vortex Optics <https://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.



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3 MOA DOT

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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.)



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.



Learn more at <https://vortexoptics.com>.

Boone And Crockett Club to Host Two Women's Skills Retreats On Montana's Rocky Mountain Front

Boone And Crockett Club <https://www.boone-crockett.org>

To support engaging more women in outdoor activities, the Boone and Crockett Club's education program will be hosting two retreats on the Rocky Mountain Front of Montana in 2026. The Outdoorswomen Skills Retreat held July 24–26, 2026 is a hands-on weekend program designed to empower women with the skills, knowledge, and community to feel confident and independent in the outdoors. Then, the inaugural Women of the Hunt Skills Retreat, a first-of-its-kind weekend program designed to equip women with the hands-on hunting skills, Fair Chase ethics, and community to pursue the hunt with confidence will be held September 4–6, 2026. Both retreats will be hosted at the Rasmuson Wildlife Conservation Center, which is part of the Club's Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Ranch, near Dupuyer, Montana.

"Learning about hunting and backcountry skills can be intimidating, especially among strangers," commented Madison Todd, conservation education programs manager for the Boone and Crockett Club.

"We've designed these retreats to provide a supportive, encouraging space where women can practice these skills side-by-side with other inspiring women. Our goal is to build women's confidence in the field, whether that is when they hunt, fish, shoot, or hike."

The Outdoorswomen Skills Retreat will include shooting sports and fly-fishing instruction; hiking and nature photography; bear safety and Montana plant identification; Leave No Trace ethics and fire building techniques; sunset yoga and nature journaling; sourdough baking and natural craft projects; information about gear, and much more. The Women of the Hunt Skills Retreat curriculum will include a mock hunt experience to learn about tracking, blood trailing, field care, butchering, and wild game cooking; shooting sports and hunting gear 101 for women; Fair Chase hunting ethics and how to plan a hunt; bear safety while hunting and reading the landscape; game animal behavior and habitats; as well as crafts, DIY projects, and sunset yoga.

The all-inclusive retreats are each priced at \$500 per participant, which covers all activities, meals, and overnight accommodations at the Club's education center. Participants must be 18 years of age or older to attend. Those 16 and older may attend if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. Registration for both retreats is now open; a \$100 deposit is due at registration to secure a spot, with the remainder due by June 15, 2026.

Register at: <https://www.boone-crockett.org/boone-and-crockett-club-host-two-women-s-skills-retreats-montana-s-rocky-mountain-front>.

For more information contact Madison Todd, Conservation Education Programs Manager, at (406) 472-3311 or rwcc@boone-crockett.org.

FREE ENTRY FEE

Thanks to a generous donation, the Boone and Crockett Club announced that the \$40 entry fee will not be charged for entries received after January 1, 2026.

SCAN TO LEARN MORE:



WWW.BOONE-CROCKETT.ORG



Wyoming Big Game Hunt Prep: What Hunters Should Be Doing Now

Table Mountain Outfitters

<https://www.tablemountainoutfitters.com>

Big game season in Wyoming is right around the corner, believe it or not, and it's time to get excited. Whether you're heading out with a bow or rifle, preparing now will set you up for success when the moment comes to make your shot count.

At Table Mountain Outfitters, our hunters enjoy exceptional success rates thanks to top-tier guides, high-quality properties, and thoughtfully prepared setups. Bring your A-game, and your chances of taking home a trophy and an unforgettable experience are incredibly high.

Here's how to get ready:

Archery Antelope Hunts

Archery antelope season kicks things off from reliable ground blind locations. That means accuracy is everything. The key to success? Pre-season practice.

- Dial in your bow and commit to shooting every day.
- Focus on consistency, particularly from sitting positions, just like in a blind.
- When that antelope buck gives you a clean broadside shot, you'll be ready.



Wyoming archery antelope hunts are a client favorite, and sure to leave you coming back for more!

Photos courtesy <https://www.tablemountainoutfitters.com>

Archery Deer & Elk Hunts

Mule deer hunts may involve a mix of spot-and-stalk and blind hunting, while elk archery hunts often include both calling and stalking strategies. No matter what, your shooting needs to be rock-solid.

- Keep practicing throughout the off-season, especially for quick shots under pressure.
- Talk to the Table Mountain team about recommended camouflage for stalking success.
- Get in shape, closing the distance on an elk or deer isn't easy, and being able to get moving quickly will pay off in the field.

Bonus tip: If you're thinking about new boots, buy them now. This gives you time to break them in and identify any issues well before your hunt.

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Your archery deer hunt may combine spot and stalk techniques, with blinds, depending on a number of factors.

Rifle Hunts

Rifle season offers outstanding shot opportunities, and then you get to make that shot count. Arrive with a sighted-in rifle and the confidence that comes from months of preparation.

- Don't stop at the bench rest. Practice prone, kneeling, off shooting sticks, and more.
- Spend time at the range regularly throughout the spring and summer.
- Know your gear, if you're using bipods or sticks, integrate them into your training so you can use them efficiently in the field.



That shot of a lifetime deserves your best performance. Show up ready.

5 Things You Can Do Right Now to Prepare:

- 1. Shoot Regularly:** Whether with a bow or rifle, consistency is key. Start a routine.
- 2. Get Your Gear in Order:** Boots, packs, layers, and optics. Don't wait until the last minute.
- 3. Start Conditioning:** Even moderate cardio and hikes can make a big difference in the field.
- 4. Talk to Your Guide:** Call us! We're happy to recommend gear, camo, and prep tips.
- 5. Visualize Success:** Mentally rehearse scenarios so you can stay calm and confident when the moment comes.

If you're planning your hunt with Table Mountain Outfitters, or even just starting to think about it, we'd love to hear from you. Browse our website at <https://www.tablemountainoutfitters.com> for more details, or get in touch anytime. We're here to help you plan a hunt you'll never forget.

Call today: (307) 632-6352.

NEW WORLD RECORD VELVET TYPICAL SITKA BLACKTAIL DEER

By Dylan Ray Pope And Young Club <https://www.pope-young.org>

On Saturday, March 21st, the Pope and Young Club (P&Y) convened a Special Panel of Judges at a location in Lakeside, AZ, for a potential P&Y World Record Velvet Typical Sitka Blacktail Deer. Bob Ameen's velvet blacktail scored an amazing 115 0/8 and is now the largest bow-harvested VELVET Typical Blacktail in North America. This amazing blacktail deer was shot in Southeast Alaska.

Judges (official measurers) present at the Special Panel were (L to R) Roy Grace, Bryan Yorksmith, David May, and Dallin Durfee, all of Arizona. With a final score of 115 0/8, Ameen's velvet typical blacktail deer was confirmed as the new P&Y World Record. This deer surpasses the previous largest velvet typical blacktail deer in the records program by 5 1/8". The Pope and Young Club allows all velvet antlered species to be eligible for World Record status within their own velvet categories.

"I have been hunting for a deer of this size for about 35 years. Hard work and determination definitely has paid off", says Ameen.



Photo credit Pope And Young Club <https://www.pope-young.org>

"Animals of this size don't come along like this very often, it shows conservation plays a major roll in hunting", says Ricky Krueger, P&Y Records Chairman...

This World Record Velvet Typical Sitka Blacktail has been entered into the 35th recording period representing entries accepted into the P&Y Records Program from January 1st, 2025, to December 31st, 2026. At the close of every biennial recording period, numerical awards and honorable mentions are awarded to the most outstanding bow-harvested animals in each species category that have been entered during this two-year recording period. New World Records are verified and proclaimed, and awards are presented to these outstanding animals during the Pope and Young Club's Biennial Convention and Awards Banquet




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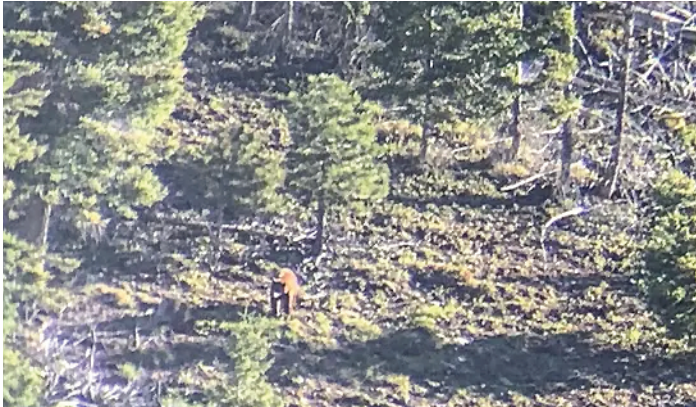
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Late Spring Black Bear Hunting — Connecting The Dots

By Scott Ergas

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com



All photos credit Scott Ergas courtesy GOHUNT at GOHUNT.com

In late May—when the scissors of spring have cut through winter’s ribbons and blue skies adorn lively hillsides—you’ll find me on high vantages observing the pulse and taking inventory of the happenings of spring black bears.

Pay Close Attention to Terrain Features

This particular drainage had a lot of positive geographical features I tend to hone in on for spring bear hunting. The natural topography serves as a game funnel with a southeast aspect and a cliffed-out, year-round creek that leaks to the valley floor below. The contours shift perfectly from an old burn to a barren bitterbrush transition zone to dark timber allowing for a nice sequence of habitat in any direction for all animals going about their business—the first time I saw it I thought, “There’s surely a bear using that terrain, I’m going to hunt it.”

We carefully caravanned up to the spot we had planned to make camp and arrived a little later than anticipated. Full of eagerness to break the seal on our own “hunter’s hibernation,” we propped our tents up and gathered firewood in quick fashion. Sunset was in its early stages, dappling the draw across from us with slivers of fading light as clouds overhead bobbed and weaved their way across the landscape. We decided to glass until dark.

I stood there, holding my 9x45 binoculars. No more than three minutes passed before I caught radiant color and movement across the canyon. It was a mature color-phased cinnamon with a swagger, sauntering by. I was mildly disappointed because it happened so quickly. The hunt had hardly begun, but it wasn’t a specimen to pass up. I hastily fetched some of my gear: rangefinder, a puffy coat for a rear rest, rifle and bipod. My gut instinct about the area gave me a quiet confidence and subtle validation after spotting the bruin. My buddy and his son were now glassing the hillside up as well, following the boar’s movements while I fumbled around and struggled to get a yardage range on him.

To my relief, the bear walked into a lone patch of trees in the middle transition area and I verified with my hunting party that no one had seen it squirt out on the other side of the pine pocket.

It was on the brink of dusk and I felt strongly that it had bedded up. The game plan was to get a good night’s rest and be glassing up that situational oasis at first light. For as giddy as I was, I managed to sleep like a rock.

Be Aware of Slope Aspect

I tucked away on a rocky glassing knob across from his patch before dawn arrived, filled with anticipation and fervor. A sneaky suspicion told me that if the boar was in there and as soon as the sun crested the mountains to the east of us, the hillside would illuminate and heat up, shaking the bear loose from its slumber. To my surprise, this turned out to be accurate as I watched it emerge from its shielded enclave and bask in the sun for a little while. In case anyone was pondering the answer to the age-old question, “Does a bear poop in the woods?” The answer is yes.

After relieving himself, he rummaged about for a short spell, disappearing into the tree patch for a half hour before starting off uphill and further away from my position. I glassed him as he tramped purposefully into the dark timber on top of the ridge and out of sight. If the bear had gone downhill towards the creek, it would have brought him into a range distance I was more comfortable with and I would have taken the shot. Alas — this wasn’t the case.

Make a Game Plan and Be Able to Adjust

I desperately wanted to know what was in that tree patch; we all did. Maybe it had a Sealy Posturepedic mattress cached under some tree boughs with some Edison bulb lights hanging overhead. A bear bachelor pad — it’s anybody’s guess. It’s fun to speculate, but I didn’t want our curiosity blowing him out by spreading human scent.

Bears can have multiple day beds that they access and utilize periodically. I felt that if this bear was on a tight program then he would be back at some point later in the day. We decided to cut the distance by about 200 to 250 yards, dropping elevation and then regaining it while boomeranging around this draw to another vantage point that I suspected would have a better line of sight to his hideout, a favorable wind and an equally desirable shooting lane. I was banking on the bear’s routine being its fatal flaw.

We made it over to the next perch by 2 p.m., ate a bite and took a nap for an hour. I was the only one with a bear tag, so this rodeo was sort of mine to ride out and I was hopeful it didn’t turn into a circus. We glassed and gridded—nary a peep. Finally, we caught movement in the form of some cow elk crossing the transition zone constantly looking uphill and on guard.

(continued on page 38)

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7 Things You Can Expect On Your First Antelope Hunt

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The American pronghorn is a completely unique species, found only in North America. They're not related to African antelope, or any American cervids like deer or elk. In fact, "antelope" as we refer to them colloquially, are the only horned animal that sheds its horns annually.

This one-of-a-kind creature is fast, has excellent vision, and is equal parts cagey and curious. Antelope are beautiful, and undoubtedly provide some of the most action-packed big game hunting anywhere in the west.

Being the unique animals they are, antelope hunting in Wyoming comes with its own set of challenges and opportunities. If you've never hunted antelope, you might be surprised at what it takes to be successful.

Here are a few things you can expect on your first antelope hunt:

1. Antelope Are Active All Day



Photos credit Table Mountain Outfitters
<https://www.tablemountainoutfitters.com>

Pronghorn do not run on the same schedule as most other big game animals. They usually bed down at night, and they remain active throughout the day.

On a pronghorn hunt, there's very little advantage to heading out before daylight. In fact, you're likely to spook antelope in the dark, doing more harm than good. On a mule deer hunt in the exact same sagebrush country, we're already out there glassing as soon as it's light enough to see. But on an antelope hunt, we usually won't begin hunting until after daylight.

Once the sun is up, antelope become much easier to see. They will occasionally bed down, but will continue feeding and moving all day. Unlike deer hunting, when the first and last hours of the day are "prime time", most antelope hunting happens between those bookends.

2. It's a Numbers Game

You can expect to see a lot of animals. Get ready to practice patience. In this open terrain, you can see for miles. And densities are high in most of Wyoming antelope country. Don't be surprised if your guide doesn't want to run off after the first buck you see.

Antelope can be very difficult trophies to judge on the hoof. Your guide may want to wait, and see a buck from multiple angles before making a decision to try and stalk. In addition to waiting for a quality buck, you might also need to be patient to locate one that's in a stalkable position.

Hunting antelope is often a numbers game. You may have to look at quite a few antelope before you find the buck you want to pursue.

3. Vision is Their Best Defense



Antelope have excellent vision. It's not unusual to see antelope a half-mile or more away go running for the opposite horizon. Whether it's a human shape breaking the skyline, or the opening of a truck door, if these animals see something they don't like, they'll boogie. And they can cover a lot of ground in a short amount of time.

When you find a buck you want to pursue, your guide may continue driving, or circle around to stop the truck somewhere out of sight to begin the stalk.

4. Antelope Are Naturally Gregarious

Even though antelope can seem extremely skittish and will run at the first sign of danger, they are also very social and curious animals. If they see something that appears to be another antelope, or if they're not sure what it is, they may actually walk toward it to find out.

5. Prepare to Stalk In Open Terrain



It probably comes as no surprise that you'll be hunting antelope in open country. But what might be surprising is just how conducive it is to stalking with a rifle.

At first glance, Wyoming antelope country might seem flat and featureless. But you'll soon realize that the terrain here has a surprising amount of topography. Sagebrush coulees, deep draws, hills and folds in the landscape make great places for game to hide – and they are also great for planning a stalk.

When you and your guide spot a buck that you're interested in, you may need to be patient in planning the stalk. You'll need to find a route that will conceal you from the antelope's line of sight until you're within range. Don't be surprised if you walk a mile to approach an antelope that's only half a mile away.

6. Antelope Are Small Targets



An antelope might seem like a small target at 300 yards. And that's because they are. Antelope are small in stature, standing little more than three feet at the shoulder and less than five feet long from chest to rump. From the top of its back to the bottom of its brisket, an antelope buck might be less than 15 inches. That means the vital area is usually less than nine inches in diameter. (continued on page 35)

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Photos credit TUO Gear <https://www.tuogear.com>

GUIDED VS. DIY HUNTING

By Jay Anglin TUO Gear <https://www.tuogear.com>

Which experience is right for you?

When it comes to elk hunting, the day you carry a bow or rifle into the wilds is merely the icing on a cake that may have taken months—or even years—to bake. There is no doubt that the planning, preparation, and implementation process can be truly daunting. Beyond being physically prepared and geared up, simply obtaining a tag is often one of the most formidable obstacles. While the expenses are real, those committed to the ultimate mountain hunt usually acknowledge from the outset that financial concerns take a backseat. In a nutshell: it usually ain't a cheap deal! There are a couple of ways to navigate these matters, and while one path may theoretically be less expensive, the devil is always in the details—which, in the case of elk hunting, are numerous.

The Big Question: Guided or DIY?

Each style offers distinct advantages, and what appeals to one hunter may not be ideal for another. Regardless of your choice, serious hunts deserve serious planning. Success is profoundly predicated on preparedness; relying on “dumb luck” simply will not cut it. This fundamental truth alone should factor heavily into your decision.



Hunters unfamiliar with the mountain of rules, regulations, applications, and point systems should consider using a consultant, or at the very least, a knowledgeable mentor to slow-walk them through the process. Nick Filler, Director of Marketing and Brand Strategy at Worldwide Trophy Adventures, represents a team that advises hunters each year on tag strategy and outfitter selection. One of the most common decisions they help navigate is guided versus DIY hunting. While the approaches differ, the objective remains the same...a successful elk hunt.

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The Appeal of DIY Hunting

The Pros:

- Independence and the freedom to hunt your own way.
- Lower upfront cost in some scenarios.
- The satisfaction of figuring it out yourself.
- Strong appeal for experienced hunters who know a specific unit.

The Cons:

- Requires a significant time investment.
- Heavy reliance on scouting and prior knowledge.
- The learning curve can be steep in new terrain.
- Lower consistency in success, especially for newer hunters.



Why Guided Hunts Consistently Deliver

Local Knowledge You Can't Replicate

Guides are in the field daily. They have a real-time understanding of animal movement, pressure, and access points, allowing them to adapt quickly as conditions change.

Higher Probability of Success

A guide puts you in the best position from Day One. You gain access to managed or less-pressured areas and benefit from strategic, in-the-moment decision-making.

Time Efficiency

A guided hunt is a strong option for those short on time. Instead of investing days in scouting and trial and error, you are stepping into a plan that is already built, allowing you to focus on the hunt itself.

Logistics and Equipment

Transportation, lodging, and meals are handled. Furthermore, guides provide support for recovery and game care—removing the massive physical burden of packing out an elk.

Better Judgment on Trophy Quality

Guides evaluate animals every day. Their ability to quickly assess a “shooter” versus a “pass” is critical for high-value or once-in-a-lifetime hunts.

When DIY Still Makes Sense

DIY is a viable path for hunters with deep knowledge of a specific unit, those who enjoy the challenge more than the outcome, or those on lower-pressure hunts where harvest success isn't the primary goal.

Choosing Wisely

There are countless outfitters and guides in business, but they are not all created equal. Some prioritize short term gain over the hunter's experience, which can lead to frustration and unmet expectations.

In the rugged Mountain West, making the wrong decision can also create unnecessary risk. Nothing trumps using a booking agency that specializes in vetting outfitters. They understand an operator's specialties and limitations, ensuring a perfect match for your specific needs.

Why Hunters Trust Worldwide Trophy Adventures

WTA removes the guesswork by qualifying outfitters and maintaining established relationships with proven operators. They act as a trusted advisor, ensuring your expectations align with reality before you ever book.

The Bottom Line

Guided hunts remove a mountain of legwork, and success rates are substantially higher. However, for many, the sweat equity is part of the draw. Ultimately, you must be realistic about your goals, your timeframe, and your skillset for trekking through rugged terrain. Worldwide Trophy Adventures aids hunters in the intricacies of applications, points, etc. through their TAGS services. TAGS is a full-service licensing program to assist hunters in drawing the very best, limited-entry, big-game tags in the country – the WTA website TAGS page even has a ticker on the masthead that scrolls through the various application deadlines.

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Maximizing And Managing Time As A Busy Hunter

By Anthony Wright

Originally published at  GOHUNT.com

To this day, the standard hours in one day equates to 24 hours. For most of us hunters who like to maintain a certain level of proficiency, we struggle to find time to keep the rust from building among our perishable skills. So how do we combat Father Time to make more time for the hobbies that we enjoy outside of work? This is a question I've been asking myself with the ebbs and flows of the seasons. At one point in the year, I'm a really good archer. Then, at another point in the year, a good rifle shooter. But what about those times where I'm not very good at either? How can I maximize my time to stay proficient and not "fall out" of tune?

Most of us are adults and, with that, comes these little things called "responsibilities." As I draft this article, I'm also wondering when I'm going to find time to vacuum the house, work out, edit some photos, shoot my bow and do some dry fire practice in the garage. Oh, and I have to figure out dinner for the wife since she will be home late from an appointment (brownie points for me). There is never a shortage of things that have to be done. There is also never a shortage of things we want to do. I don't have children (yet) and feel like I still don't have time to accomplish everything I want to throughout the day. I can only imagine adding the additional responsibilities of a couple of rugrats. If we want to take hunting more seriously, then we must sacrifice and manage our time more efficiently for the means of an end goal whether that's to become in better shape or become more accurate with a bow.

Making a plan and sticking to it is my go-to when approaching this battle against the clock. For me, I believe the most effective way is going to be writing it all down on a piece of paper and building a living document that will require some tweaking throughout the first few weeks. I will make two columns: one labeled "need" and the other labeled "want." This "need" column will include things, such as work, studying, working out and errands/chores. The second column will include "wants." Wants will be activities, such as bow or rifle practice, woodworking, truck tinkering, etc.

Putting everything on paper will give me a real idea of how much is on my plate. From there, I can dive deeper into my time allotments and will implement dashes of training into every day or every other day.

For instance, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday I will include 30 minutes or shoot approximately 100 arrows for archery release training. Every Tuesday and Thursday I will include 30 minutes of positional rifle dry fire training. Weekends I will leave as a "free for all" just because I will more than likely be hunting, hiking or adventuring with my wife. Writing it all down will make for a good baseline to begin a training regimen when I can't seem to find time in my current schedule.

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It will take a bit of adjusting and small sacrifices must be made; however, looking at the big picture: it's not so bad. The hardest part will be getting started and, most importantly, sticking to it!

Only 24 Hours in a Day

Like we touched on earlier, there is only 24 hours in a day and I don't see that changing anytime soon. Therefore, we need to be realistic in the goals we set for ourselves when making these daily plans/regiments. If you are like me, (I have four or more main hobbies and work 40 or more hours per week) then you know you need to prioritize them accordingly. Sure, there will be times where it may be more convenient for one over another, but we all have our favorites. We need to stay within reality sometimes to build these daily/weekly schedules. For now, just pick two areas of focus. For example, my personal focus areas will be archery release training and positional rifle shooting. After a couple of weeks of training, I will reassess my schedule. If I have time to implement another task, then I will do so or if I feel like I can't add another task, then I will build a rotation of my top three to make sure I'm not letting the rust build-up.

Another area where my wife and I have had the good fortune to use is asking for help. Sometimes, we get tunnel vision and think that we don't want to burden others with taking care of our dogs/kids or check in on the house when we choose to leave town. If you want to go on a hunt, camping trip, vacations, etc., then it's good to build relationships with those you trust to give you a helping hand every so often. We are fortunate to have work friends and local family to help us out when we choose to adventure. The same can be applied to your day-in and day-out training routines. Maybe not having someone watch your kids all the time, but you can ask every now and then for an evening away to shoot bows with your buddies or go for a weekend camping trip with your wife. Coordinating with your spouse or significant other will help when planning as well; don't leave them in the dark with a spur of the moment surprise and expect them to drop everything. Just remember that these are give and take trades. Paying people for their time is popular; however, keep in mind that they may also ask for your help down the road. Keep the relationships healthy — this will open up a good amount of time for you!

In Closing - The last piece of advice that I know will be tough for some people will be to limit screen time...They have their benefits; however, for the most part, there is an ample amount of time we spend on our electronics that takes away from our spare time to accomplish something more important rather than endless scrolling...

I believe most of us can agree on one thing: that life can be hectic and overwhelming. I also believe if we are going to make ourselves better hunters then we must continue positive progression in the small amount of spare time that we either have now or have to find within our schedules.

Learn more or join at GOHUNT.com.

Grays Harbor County Man Resentenced For Elk Spree Killing With Longest Big Game Jail Sentence In The Last 10 Years

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

A judge resentenced a Grays Harbor County resident for the spree-killing of at least five cow elk, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) announced today. This follows a November 2025 sentencing.

On Friday March 27, Grays Harbor Superior Court Judge Katherine Svoboda sentenced Richard Loren Pratt to serve 116 months concurrently in prison, pay \$10,000 in fines, and forfeit two firearms. Pratt, a convicted felon, had plead guilty to unlawful hunting of big game – first degree (class C felony), unlawful possession of a firearm – first degree (class B felony), and wastage of wildlife (gross misdemeanor).

Sentencing details

1. Count 1 Unlawful Hunting of Big game 1- Class C felony: 68 months
2. Count 2 Unlawful Possession of Firearms that were used in the commission of the crime 1st degree - Class B felony: 116 months
3. Count 3 Wastage – Gross Misdemeanor: 364 days

Pratt had been previously sentenced to a mental health sentencing alternative back in November 2025, which was revoked due to failure to comply with his mental health sentencing alternative provisions.

“We would like to thank Superior Court Judge Svoboda for taking swift action after Pratt violated his conditions of release,” said WDFW Captain Dan Chadwick. “This sentencing highlights the importance of our big game natural resources not only in Grays Harbor but for all of Washington state.”

In January 2023, WDFW Police received a report from a private timber company employee who observed five dead cow elk on a hillside off the Ray Anderson A-Line south of Cosmopolis. WDFW Officers responded to the scene and immediately began investigating the suspicious circumstances. Necropsies revealed the suspect used a high-powered rifle. The elk were taken within GMU 658, which was closed for harvest at the time...Ten months after the initial crime, WDFW Officer McOmber encountered Pratt near the crime scene. Pratt had cut open a gate to enter the area and was found to be in possession of two firearms. Pratt, a convicted felon, may not legally possess firearms. WDFW Police later identified one of the firearms to be the rifle Pratt used in the poaching case. While interviewing Pratt at the scene, Officer McOmber established Pratt as the suspect from the earlier poaching case. Further investigation and subsequent interviews confirmed Pratt was the person responsible for the spree killings.

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Saint Maries Man Sentenced For Unlawful Take Of Seven White-Tailed Deer In North Idaho

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

On Feb. 18, a St. Maries man was sentenced for the unlawful take of seven mature white-tailed deer bucks. The second man involved in the case is scheduled for sentencing soon.

The first man received the following sentence:

- \$17,200 in restitution
- \$525 in meat processing fees
- All associated court costs for his case
- Seven months in county jail—one month for each deer in the case
- Two years fixed and three years indeterminate incarceration for each of the two felony convictions (suspended and placed on probation)
- Five years of supervised probation
- Ten-year hunting license revocation

Details of the case

The two men were originally charged on June 27 with eight felony counts related to the unlawful killing of the deer. The investigation, conducted by Idaho Fish and Game conservation officers in the Panhandle Region, documented a total of 56 wildlife violations.

All seven deer were illegally killed in Nov. 2024. Five of the deer were taken within a single 24-hour period, and three of the bucks met Idaho's legal definition of a “trophy” white-tailed deer, which carries enhanced civil penalties under state law. All seven deer were taken outside of legal shooting hours, and meat from three of the animals was left to waste.

Fish and Game thanks the public for remaining vigilant in reporting potential wildlife crimes through the Citizens Against Poaching hotline...Anyone who observes or has information about a wildlife crime is encouraged to call Citizens Against Poaching hotline at 1-800-632-5999 or submit a report online. Monetary rewards may be available for individuals who provide credible, detailed information that significantly aids in identifying suspects and leads to charges being filed.

Mule Deer Foundation Delivers Second-Best Conservation Year On Record

Mule Deer Foundation <https://muledeer.org>

In one of the most consequential conservation years in its history, the Mule Deer Foundation (MDF) mobilized a total of \$48.3 million for mule deer and black-tailed deer in 2025. Across 153 projects in 17 states, MDF efforts benefited over 537,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat, 129 deer herds, and eliminated or converted 149 miles of hazardous fence to restore safe movement corridors for deer. MDF turned every \$1 of its own \$13.4 million investment into \$3.60 of on-the-ground conservation impact.

MDF's conservation model is engineered for maximum return. 2025 marked MDF's second-best year on record, driven by deepening federal partnerships with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management alongside record fundraising by MDF staff, chapters, and volunteers. Every dollar raised through federal stewardship agreements, competitive grants, chapter fundraisers, and philanthropic giving is strategically matched alongside partner investment and volunteer effort. The results reflect a growing coalition of partners who recognize MDF as the premier organization for translating investment into measurable conservation outcomes for deer across the West.

"Mule deer are the vanishing icon of the West as the only big game species with overall declining numbers, but they don't have to be," said Greg Sheehan, President and CEO of MDF. "With the science guiding our work, the partnerships we are strengthening, and the momentum we have earned, MDF will not stop until abundant mule deer populations are restored to the landscapes where they belong. Every supporter, sportsman, conservationist, and public lands steward who stands with us is part of making that happen."

Habitat quality is the single greatest driver of mule deer population health. Working alongside state and federal wildlife agencies, MDF identifies landscapes where targeted intervention will produce the highest biological return for deer. MDF's expertise includes active forest management, restoring native vegetation, combating invasive species, improving water sources, and upgrading wildlife crossing infrastructure.

"Every acre we restore is a direct investment in the future of mule deer," said MDF Chief Conservation Officer Steve Belinda. "The science is clear. For every acre of habitat improved, the landscape can sustain 10% more deer. Add up six years of MDF's work, and we have created the ecological capacity for 180,000 additional mule deer on western landscapes. This is the kind of conservation math that changes the trajectory of a species."...

For more information about the Mule Deer Foundation or to become a member visit www.muledeer.org.

Don't Just Drop Pins — Capture the Story With Visual Context

Photo Waypoints in GOHUNT Maps Help You Remember What Really Mattered in the Field
By GOHUNT Staff
Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

Why a photo is worth more than a pin

Hunters drop pins every day, but a pin without context tells only part of the story. The easiest way to lock in what you actually saw and why it mattered, is to add a photo. GOHUNT Maps makes this simple, letting you attach real-time images to your waypoints so every pin carries a snapshot of the moment.

Think of it as pinning a page from your field notebook directly to your map. That wallow, rub, ridge, or track? Now it's documented, time-stamped, and ready for future you to evaluate with confidence.

Why photos beat memory

After a few scouting weekends or a long season bouncing between units, memory fades. E-scouting sessions blur together, and verbal notes can only go so far. But snap a quick photo of a fresh rub, a game trail, or the exact face you glassed and you freeze that data point in time.

Return to the same location a week later, and you can instantly compare conditions. Is the wallow more active? Is that trail still being used? Visual breadcrumbs help reveal patterns that written notes often miss.

Two easy ways to add photos in the GOHUNT Maps app

1. Tag an existing waypoint

- Tap the waypoint on your map
- Hit the photo icon
- Choose "Take Photo" or "Select from Library"
- Save

Your photo is now tied to that exact GPS location. No guesswork when reviewing later.

2. Drop a new photo waypoint on the fly

- Tap the floating + button
- Select "Add Photo"
- Take a photo or choose one from your camera roll

GOHUNT Maps will place a new photo waypoint at your current location. You can then adjust the icon type, glassing spot, water source, rub, trailhead, etc. whenever you like.

Both methods work offline. When your phone reconnects, your photos sync automatically to your account and show up on the web platform as well.

Fast sorting back at camp

Back at camp or during lunch, you can quickly filter for image-based waypoints inside any hunt folder:

- Open the Content filter at the bottom of your map
- Tap Photos
- Instantly view all pins that have attached images
- Tap a pin to preview the photo on screen

This lets you refresh your memory and fine-tune your plan before the next hike.

What to photograph

- Wallows, bedding zones, or feeding areas
- Tracks, rubs, scrapes, and game sign
- Game trails or funnels
- Views from confirmed glassing spots
- Harvest sites and pack-out routes

Every image becomes a reference point. Months later, that photo may give you the edge when you need it most.

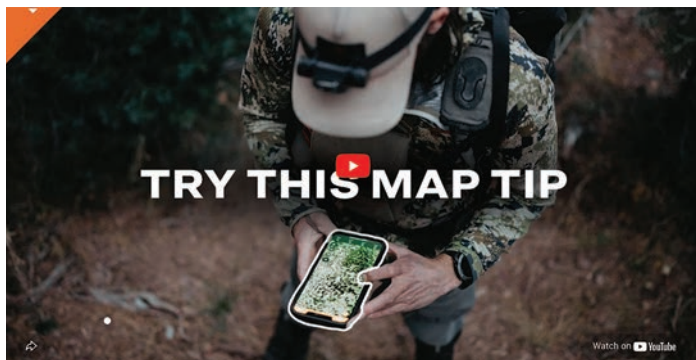
Desktop uploads for off-season planning

Working from a laptop or desktop? Just drag your scouting photos into GOHUNT Maps, select the correct waypoint, and your images attach just like in the field. It's perfect for adding digiscope stills, zoomed lens shots, or trail cam pulls saved on your hard drive.

Turn your map into a living photo journal

Next time you scout or hunt, treat your phone's camera like another essential piece of gear. Snap the shot, tag the waypoint, and start building a map that tells a complete story, not just a scatter of dots.

With photo waypoints, your e-scouting becomes smarter, your field notes more powerful, and your maps more than just digital tools. They become a record of your pursuit.



Watch a video here:

<https://youtu.be/m0kY5Jj5828?si=59sMzBz27P1ostH0>

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The heart of Montana's hunter and bowhunter education programs is the corps of dedicated volunteer instructors. They stand as examples of how each hunter should demonstrate ethics, behavior and responsibility to themselves, landowners, other hunters and the resource.

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TUO'S Handpicked Spring Turkey Kit

By Jay Anglin

TUO Gear <https://www.tuogear.com>



Photos credit TUO GEAR <https://www.tuogear.com>

Macro-disruption and layering science synthesized for North American spring dominance

When chasing spring gobblers, mobility, silence, and concealment matter. For the 2026 season, TUO® has handpicked versatile technical pieces from their lineup that perform exceptionally well in the turkey woods. From cold early mornings to active midday hunts, these layers have earned a loyal following by TUO users in the leafless timber of early spring.



Utilizing the sovereign Verse™ pattern, this vetted collection is designed to shatter the human silhouette in unforgiving, low-cover environments. This isn't just a gear list – it is a tactical system for the hunter who crawls, climbs, and out-maneuvers.

The Turkey System: Component Architecture

Kinetic Merino Hoodie System | The Foundation Next-to-skin performance is the heartbeat of the TUO system. The Kinetic Merino 250 Hoodie provides midweight, 250g thermal regulation for the freezing damp of early-season mornings, offering natural odor suppression and explosive stretch. As the thermal ceiling rises, the Kinetic Merino 150 Hoodie serves as the high-breathability foundation, managing moisture to keep the hunter focused when the season heats up.

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Kinetic Merino 250 Hoodie

Vision Hybrid Jacket | Zoned Thermal Control For early-season mornings where temperatures peak in the 40s, the Vision Hybrid Jacket is the specialized solution.

By utilizing 80 grams of zoned insulation through the core while leaving high-movement areas uninsulated, TUO eliminates the bulk that plagues traditional turkey gear.

The result is a dead-quiet, streamlined jacket that provides warmth without compromising the mechanics of the shot.

Vision Hybrid Jacket



Aptitude Windproof Series | Core Shielding Wind is the enemy of both the turkey hunter's ears and their core temperature. The Aptitude Vest is a high-authority layering piece designed to be worn over Kinetic Merino to neutralize spring gusts.

For advanced protection against damp, windy conditions, the Aptitude Jacket expands on this platform. Both pieces feature a fully windproof laminate and extreme stretch, ensuring the hunter remains mobile whether they are pinned against a hardwood or making a move on a bird.



Aptitude Vest

Clime Pant | All-Season Versatility

The Clime Pant is the definitive chassis for the mobile woodsman. Engineered for universal application, it features ventilated hip zips to dump heat during high-exertion stalks. In the early season, the anatomical cut allows for seamless layering over Kinetic Merino bottoms without sacrificing the range of motion required for crawling into position. In the turkey woods, the margin for error is nonexistent. By aggregating this specific collection, TUO has eliminated the guesswork of early-season layering, providing a system that thrives in the high-contrast, pre-foliage environments where traditional patterns fail. It is a tactical kit built for the hunter who views spring not as a casual outing, but as a technical pursuit requiring the same level of discipline and gear integrity as an alpine expedition.



Clime Pant

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Photo courtesy Caribou Gear www.caribougear.com

Water + Feed Mapping Standard: What to Mark in Spring So Your Fall Plan Writes Itself

By Ted Ramirez Jr

Caribou Gear Outdoor Equipment Co. www.caribougear.com

Spring scouting isn't only boots on the ground. It's also the season where you build the map that decides your fall.

Most hunters pin too much, too fast. A hundred "maybe" points feel productive—until September shows up and nothing is actionable.

This is a field-tested water and feed mapping standard. The objective is simple: mark fewer pins, but make them higher confidence. Build a repeatable process you can run every year, then validate what matters when you're out there.

The Water + Feed Framework (Why These Pins Matter)

Animals are not random. In every unit, every season, they solve the same three problems:

- Food
- Water
- Security (bedding cover + escape routes)

Your job in spring is to identify where those three overlap—and where pressure and wind allow you to work without blowing the area up.

Step 1: Build a Water Inventory (Perennial vs Seasonal)

Spring scouting is when water looks "everywhere." Don't get fooled. Some sources last, some disappear, and some become mud pits when heat arrives.

What to pin (in priority order)

- Perennial sources: springs, seeps, reliable creek sections, stock tanks that stay wet.
- Heat-season magnets: shaded creek bottoms, north-slope water, hidden drainages.
- Conditional sources: snowmelt trickles, puddled wallows, seasonal ponds (tag them as seasonal).

Pro move: label water pins with a confidence tag: W1 (high), W2 (medium), W3 (seasonal). That one step prevents chaos later.

Step 2: Map Feed the Way Animals Actually Use It Feed isn't just "green stuff." It's predictable nutrition, at predictable times, in terrain that allows security.

What to pin for feed

- South-facing early green-up (often a spring draw)
- Benches and meadow edges (transition zones that create travel)
- Burns and regrowth pockets (high-value when present)
- Cool-season feed near timber edges (security + food in one package)

Tagging standard: F1 (high value), F2 (situational), F3 (backup). Again—less noise, more execution.

Step 3: Add Security (Bedding Cover) to Complete the Triangle

Water and feed are public information. Security is where mature animals separate from the crowds.

In the map stage, you're looking for:

- North-slope timber pockets that stay cooler and darker
- Benches with escape routes and wind advantage
- Edge cover where animals can see out and disappear fast

Then connect the triangle: Feed → Water → Bedding. That triangle is your first "hunnable hypothesis."

Step 4: Build "Movement Lanes" Instead of Random Pins

This is where mapping becomes valuable: don't just pin locations—pin routes.

Routes show up as saddles, benches, timber edges, creek corridors, and the easiest terrain between resources.

When you identify movement lanes, you're not guessing in September—you're executing.

Step 5: Validation on the Ground (What to Confirm in Spring)

Now you take your best map hypotheses and validate them with boots on the ground. You're not hunting—you're confirming.

On-site validation checklist

- Is the water real? Flowing, pooled, usable—and likely to last?
- Is it accessible? Can you approach with wind discipline and minimal exposure?
- Is there fresh sign nearby? Tracks, droppings, and travel indicating repeat use?
- Is there a glassing solution? A point that lets you observe without educating everything?

Quick win:

when you stop to validate, create a clean workspace so you're not setting optics, phone, or notes in mud and slush.

Make It Repeatable: Your “Mapping Kit” Lives in a Ditty Bag

The easiest way to lose time is to let small essentials float around your pack: batteries, lens cloth, tape, marker, notes—items that disappear exactly when you need them.

Stage your mapping essentials in a dedicated organizer so your process is consistent every trip.

What goes in the Ditty Bag mapping kit

- Lens cloth + small brush
- Backup batteries / power bank
- Small marker + minimal tape
- Notepad (or a consistent notes format)
- Weatherproof bag for licenses/permits (if needed)

Field Utility That Pays Off (Cordage That Doesn't Disappear)

When weather turns or you need to rig a quick shelter, hang gear, or stabilize a tarp setup, cordage becomes a force multiplier.

Reflective cord is especially valuable in low light because it's easier to locate and manage when the day is done and the wind is still pushing.

Downstream Connection: Water Planning Improves Meat Care

Here's the quiet truth:

water and shade aren't just scouting assets. They're meat-care assets.

When your plan includes reliable cool zones, your post-shot workflow gets cleaner and faster.

Keep these two linked as your execution layer.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I map water sources for elk and deer?

Start with perennial sources (springs/seeps/reliable creek sections), then tag seasonal sources separately. Prioritize water that sits near security cover and feed, and validate in person in spring.

What should I pin during spring scouting?

Pin water (W1–W3), feed (F1–F3), bedding/security, and movement lanes connecting them. The goal is fewer, higher-confidence pins that become a fall plan.

How do I avoid pin overload?

Use a scoring system and only keep pins that connect resources and can be approached with wind discipline. Delete low-confidence pins after validation—ruthlessly.

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7 Things You Can Expect On Your First Antelope Hunt

(continued from page 25)

With that in mind, don't skimp on rifle practice. You want to arrive on an antelope hunt with complete confidence in your weapon and your optics. Ideally, you'll be comfortable shooting out to 300 yards and shooting consistent groups inside that small vital window.

When you practice with your rifle, make sure you spend time practicing with your bipod or any other accessories you intend to use. Once your rifle is sighted in, get off the bench rest and spend some time practicing in more realistic positions.

7. It's Excellent Wild Game Meat

Antelope is easily one of the best wild game meats in North America. Antelope tends to have a lighter pink color than venison, and a more finely grained texture. On average, it's very mild and tender. Of course rut behavior, wounding and other factors can influence meat quality. But ounce-for-ounce, we'll take antelope over just about any other wild game meat.

The only downside to eating antelope is their size. An average buck will yield 30–40 pounds of boneless meat. But at such high quality, you'll want to treat each package like bricks of gold in your freezer.

Like most wild game, antelope is very lean. Quality cuts like the backstraps and single-muscle roasts benefit from being served medium-rare. The sirloin roasts, necks, shanks, and other cuts that contain connective tissue are great for slow cooking. And antelope burger is outstanding in any of your favorite ground meat recipes.

Antelope Hunting with Table Mountain Outfitters

If you'd like to learn more about guided antelope hunting with Table Mountain Outfitters, please visit <https://www.tablemountainoutfitters.com/hunts/antelope/>. Questions? Call us at (307) 632-6352 or message <https://www.tablemountainoutfitters.com/contact-us/>. We look forward to helping you plan the ultimate Wyoming hunting adventure! Come live THE LIFE with us.

Scout For Deer While You Hunt Turkeys This Spring

By Mike Hanback
Big Deer Blog <https://bigdeerblog.com>



Photo credit Mike Hanback <https://bigdeerblog.com>

The turkey was gobbling hard two ridges over. I dropped down into a creek bottom, waded the water, marched up the next hill and came upon a big thicket I'd never seen before. I'd hunted both turkeys and deer on this property for years, but had never spent much time over here in the east end.

The shortest way to close the distance to the gobbling bird was straight through the jumble of honeysuckle and greenbrier. I spotted a deer trail and followed it in. As I ducked through the cover I noticed dozens of antler-scarred trees and saplings. I stepped over old scrapes. Lots of tracks and droppings. I made a mental note to come back later in the summer and check this spot out.

Long story short, I didn't get the turkey that day, but by stumbling upon that bedding area, I opened up some new opportunities for next deer season. I hung several stands along trails and funnels that feed into the thicket, and from those stands I continue to encounter bucks to this day.

When we scout and hunt a property for whitetails from September through December, we typically poke around and look for rubs, scrapes and tracks. But we are reluctant to walk around too much or penetrate too deeply into the woods for fear of bumping deer. That's good. But trouble is, by working only the perimeters of a hunting area, you only get a glimpse of how and where the deer, and bucks, live and travel.

But in the spring, you can walk freely in the woods and investigate every ridge, bottom and thicket for signs of deer. Why not kill two birds with one stone and combine your scouting with your turkey hunting in April and May? Go before the woods green up too much, and while the weather is perfect.

At daylight, listen for a gobbling bird and go get him if you can. Midmornings, when the turkeys go quiet, start walking. Cover every ridge, draw and creek bottom on the land. Check out every edge, thicket or swamp. You'll bump a few deer, but who cares? You won't be back to hunt them for another 5 or 6 months.

Walk and Call

As you're walking along at midmorning, pause every few hundred yards and cast a few yelps and cutts, hoping to strike a gobbler whose hens have left him for the day. If no luck with that, cut every deer trail you come across, follow it a ways and see where it goes. Trails the deer use now will be fresh and muddy, but old worn trails they used last fall and winter will still be visible. Those old trails are the ones you need to find and follow, since those are the ones a buck used back in hunting season, and the ones he'll use again this fall.

Main trails will fork into secondary trails that link more food sources and cover thickets. Walk those too, and key in on pockets of deer sign. When a trail cuts across a creek, veers around a ridge point or drops into a ditch, take note because those funneling points are great places for trail cameras and tree stands next fall.

As you hike, look for feeding areas you might have missed or never knew about—white oaks on a ridge, a patch of greenery near a swamp, persimmons, old apple trees... Same goes for small or large thickets, cutovers, weedy ditches and the like that serve as satellite or major bedding areas.

Look For Rubs and Scrapes

Rubs and even scrapes from last October and November are easy to spot in the spring woods. Look especially for "signpost" rubs—large, scarred trees that mark some section of a mature buck's core living area. Whitetail bucks are habitual, and rub in the same general areas year after year.

As you walk and turkey call, look for 2 old scraping patterns, and make a note to come back and check them again as bucks start rutting this October:

—A cluster of scrapes at the intersection of 2 or 3 trails, with big rubs nearby. This is a "rut junction" and a great spot for a trail camera.

—A heavily scraped spot on a ridge 100 yards or so off a corn or bean field. If the acorn crop is good again in the fall, bucks will stage and scrape there again.

I hope you get your gobbler, but if not all is not lost. The more you roam and learn the woods, and the more old buck sign you find, the better you'll bow hunt come this September.

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Late Spring Black Bear Hunting — Connecting The Dots

(continued from page 22)

Connecting the Dots

They slowly ventured via the side hill and were extremely leery. This made me think the bear could be very near or that they had previously been harassed by it on this hillside. Nothing came of it and the elk made their way to wherever they were going. I began to wonder if the bear had skedaddled out of our lives.

But at 5:17 p.m., I caught a flash of color barreling down diagonally at a six to seven mph clip. Head low and on a mission—it was him, no doubt.

“There he is!” I said to my pals. We all keyed in on him and I kept leading my glass ahead of his course, thinking perhaps I wasn’t seeing something or he was in the middle of a predatory pursuit, but I couldn’t make heads or tails. I witnessed him put the brakes on and flop down. This was a peculiar sequence. He was in the area behind the tree patch that we couldn’t observe in the morning. It looked as if he was gnawing on a downed log — maybe for grubs — and kept raising his head and then burying it into the end of the log. He wasn’t bedded and wasn’t standing either. Instead, he was in a trance, giving me vitals.

I set up a good rear rest armpit wedge and propped my backpack vertically in between my butterflyed legs — a shooting position I now refer to as “criss-cross special sauce.” He was in my scope for a good 15 minutes without shifting his contour, preoccupied and consistent. I knew I could slip one into him. I turned to my buddy’s son and asked him to get his ear protection on and confirmed with my pal that he was going to track my shot in his binos. Thumbs up!

My breathing was slowed to a euphoric pace as I chambered a round and clicked the safety off. The shot rang out and it felt good. I was slightly bucked out of the scope, but was able to rebalance to see the finality of movement. My buddy said, “That’s a dead bear, rolled 10 feet and hasn’t moved.” Eager to get over there and inspect the situation, we packed our gear and started the hike up the draw. Why would a bear be so eager to get back to chew on a log? Did he miss lunch while we didn’t see him for those eight hours?

After getting up to the scene, we could see what we couldn’t see from our angle. Behind the log was a fresh kill of his, meat still wet and he wasn’t gnawing on the end of the log, (by the looks of it, he might have been doing that too) but he was snout deep in a rib cage. Those elk a short while earlier were likely on guard and that bear was not going to give a meal away to any usurpers. It all made sense!

It’s a visceral and cathartic feeling to be an honorary spoke in the circle of life cog. Spring bear hunting can be a testament to the cyclical nature of everything and the importance of balance. Just as current seasons depart — and new life is breathed into the landscape — a formidable challenge awaits and adventure continually persists.

Archery Hunting In Wyoming 101

(continued from page 7)

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, ESPECIALLY IN WYOMING

If Wyoming is on your list, start planning now. Our preference point system means securing future hunts requires foresight:

- Start buying antelope points today.
- While you’re at it, pick up your deer and elk points too.
- Points will help you draw licenses years down the road, and you can never have too many.
- Other states have their own planning systems, so do your homework, or lean on a trusted outfitter to help map out your options.

KEY INGREDIENTS TO ARCHERY SUCCESS

- Proper fit with every piece of gear you’re using
- Consistent practice, even when you think you’re good enough
- Build confidence around realistic ability and be honest with your limitations
- Planning for the hunts you want, not just this season but years ahead
- Do these things, and you’ll give yourself every chance to be successful in the field!

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3 Walleye Fishing Tips For Opening Day

(continued from page 17)

Rippin’ Minnow – This bait is a great opening-day wild card. Think of the glide and action of the Puppet Minnow, with the tactile feel and finesse of a soft plastic. Just like the Rumble Series Crankbaits, the Northland Rippin’ Minnow will be a search-and-destroy type of lure to find fish fast along long breaks and other massive structures. It’s difficult to find baits that both cover water, yet still trigger inactive to neutral walleye into striking, which is why the Rippin’ Minnow will be a great ‘tweener bait to pitch around while in “hunt mode.” Find the active fish, hone in with more finesse tactics, and repeat until you’ve had a great day on the water.

So there you have it, three walleye fishing patterns to get you bit in early May no matter the conditions or water temperatures. As a general rule, if it’s ridiculously cold to dip your hands in a minnow bucket, you should likely be using them. At the same time, don’t be afraid to get aggressive and let the fish tell you if they’re not buying it. You can always scale back and slow down, but without trying the faster approaches, you may never know what you missed.

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Normal Mode: The standard mode providing the target's range with the strongest range result. Recommended for most situations.

First Mode: Displays the closest distance when ranging. Ideal for ranging a smaller target in front of other larger or more reflective objects.

Last Mode: Displays the farthest distance when ranging. Ideal for ranging a specific target behind a group of objects like brush, trees, rocks, etc.

Extended Laser Range (ELR) Mode: Ideal for ranging targets at extreme distances. A slightly longer response time allows greatly for extended range distances.

Rain/Fog Mode: Ideal for ranging in adverse conditions, such as rain, snow, fog, or dust. Helps the rangefinder return accurate readings despite poor visibility.

TRIPOD ADAPTABLE

Allowing use on a tripod or car window mount. Tripod adapter may be required.

Included in the Box

- GlassPak™ Sport Binocular Harness
- Rainguard Eyepiece Cover
- Comfort Neck Strap
- Lens Cloth
- Tethered Objective Lens Covers
- CR123 Battery



Available in 2 sizes:
10x42 and 12x50



UNLIMITED UNCONDITIONAL LIFETIME WARRANTY

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