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## COMMON ELK HUNTING MISTAKES

By J.R. Keller Hunter's Specialties [www.hunterspec.com](http://www.hunterspec.com)

*Editor's Note: J.R. Keller of Delta, Colorado, father of the Mac Daddy and an avid elk hunter, has been a member of the Hunter's Specialties' Pro Staff Team for 15 years.*

Question: What are the five most common mistakes that elk hunters make?  
Keller: They are:

**1) Setting up too tight** – I believe that one of the biggest mistakes elk hunters make when they set up in a place to take a shot is to be so concealed that they can't take a shot in any direction when the elk comes in to them. I'm an archery hunter, and nine times out of 10, I'll be hunting elk with a bow.

When I set up, I want a downed tree to the side of me and a bush in front of me. I want to be set up open so that if a bull comes in, I can draw my bow beside the downed tree or behind the bush in front of me. I don't want to be inside the treetop that's lying on the ground because if the bull comes in, I may not be able to draw my bow due to tree limbs.

You don't want to set up in cover that will prevent you from drawing your bow or getting your gun around to take the shot. Elk rarely come in on a string and walk straight to you from the direction you expect. Many times, they come from the side or another direction that you haven't anticipated, and then you'll have to turn to get the shot. When you set up to take the shot at the bull, make sure you have enough open area that you can turn without being seen and not have so much brush in front of you that when the bull comes in, your cover will prevent you from getting the shot.

**2) Hunting elk alone** – I believe that most hunters don't buddy-hunt. I've learned over the years that buddy-hunting is the most effective way to call in an elk and get the shot, especially for a bow and a gun hunter. If you're the hunter who'll be pulling the trigger, you have the best chance of taking that elk, if you have a buddy doing the calling from behind you.

The caller's responsibility is to drag that bull past you, close enough for you to get a shot. Most hunters make the mistake of trying to call the bull to them using the caller. Elk are smart animals. They know where you're calling from, and they're going to come to that spot. But, as they come, they'll be looking around that place for danger. If you have a buddy who's calling for you, the elk will come in, looking past you instead of at you. He's attempting to find the caller and won't be looking for the shooter.

If the elk doesn't come in the right way for you to get a shot, the caller can move around behind you and call the elk in that way. If the bull comes in and tries to get downwind of you to pick up your scent, the caller can simply move to the other side of your position and drag the bull back to you. I always tell hunters that I never call in the elk to me. I want to call the elk through me, which requires a buddy to do that.



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You'll take far more elk if you buddy-hunt and establish before the hunt who will be the shooter and who will be the caller. The other advantage to this style of hunting is that you get to go on two elk hunts instead of one. Once you've taken your elk, you get to go with your buddy to call in the elk that he takes. I believe that buddy hunting's the most efficient way for both hunters to take their elk.

**3) Not calling aggressively** – I don't think that most hunters call aggressive enough to take a bull. When I first started elk hunting, I'd get a bull to bugle from 500 to 600-yards away. I'd move 100 yards closer to him, set up, start to call to the bull and then have the bull walk off. I was afraid to get really close to a bull. Over the years, I've learned that to effectively call in a bull elk, you have to get inside his comfort zone where he feels he knows everything that's going on around him. When you get him close and put on pressure by calling from close to him, you have a better chance of making him come to you.

When I set up on a bull, I want to be within 100 yards or less of him before I start aggressively calling to him. I think that the tighter you can get to that bull when you're calling to him and the less distance he has to cover to come to you, the greater your odds will be for taking him.

**4) Not using scent elimination products** – People in the West aren't as accustomed to using scent-elimination products as people in the East. Whitetail hunters in the East completely understand the advantage of using scent-elimination products like Hunter's Specialties' Scent-A-Way. Even though elk have a phenomenal sense of smell, most western hunters haven't discovered the advantage of using scent-elimination products when they hunt.

Most western hunters will tell you, "If you just play the wind and hunt into it, you can get as close as you need to an animal to take him." However, I've learned from hunting out West all my life that the wind in the West blows in only one direction – the wrong way. I've noticed that as soon as I get set up on a bull to call him in, most of the time, the wind will switch directions. I do all I can to eliminate human odor by washing my clothes in Scent-A-Way Laundry Detergent, bathing with Scent-A-Way Bar Soap and spraying with Scent-A-Way Spray when I'm in the field. I use the cover Scent Wafers, including fresh earth and natural pine. I also use Cow Elk Estrus Urine.

When an elk comes in, I want him to smell a cow elk, not me. If I'm working a bull, I spray that Cow Elk Estrus Urine around me, and I'm constantly misting that urine as the bull comes in to me. Not only do I want to convince his ears with the Mac Daddy that I'm either a bull or a cow, but I want to confirm with his nose that there's a cow elk in that area. You never know when the wind's going to change directions. If you can eliminate and cover human odor and use the odor of a cow elk, even if the wind does change as the bull's coming in, you drastically increase your odds of getting that bull within shooting range, regardless of what the wind does.

**5) Moving before it's time** – Elk have very keen eyesight. The less you move as the bull comes in, the more likely you are to take him. One of the secrets to taking an elk with a bow is learning when to draw. You can't draw the bow when the bull's looking at you. The only time to draw the bow is when the bull's looking away from you, or when there's a tree or some brush in-between you and the bull-making it hard for him to see you. Any time you want to move and reposition, draw the bow or scratch your nose, make sure there's some kind of brush or other obstacle between you and the elk's eyes.

A bull can see you move just as quickly as he can smell you. Never move until you're absolutely certain that the bull can't see you move. You're better off to let the bull walk past you and then try to get a shot, than to take a shot at 15 steps if the bull can see you draw.



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## Montana FWP Joins North Dakota in Mule Deer Study <sup>MFWP</sup>

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Last year, in light of the increasing energy development overlapping with primary mule deer range in North Dakota, the North Dakota Game and Fish initiated a 5-year research project (3-year field season) to investigate the effects of energy development on mule deer space use, survival and demographics. The addition of collared mule deer in Montana to the concurrently running mule deer study in North Dakota could serve as an excellent opportunity to establish pre-energy development data on mule deer resource selection, survival, abundance and demographics and also serve as a control for the North Dakota study where energy development is already underway.

"Our collars were put in areas that have not been developed yet to serve as a control area for the study..." said Melissa Foster, Glendive area Wildlife Biologist.

The study is expected to provide valuable pre-development demographic data (reproduction, survival, abundance, and distribution), resource selection data, and any avoidance information they detect from collared deer. This information, together with the results of the larger study, will provide region-specific data to better manage mule deer through landscape changes associated with energy and natural resource development.\*

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# The Move From Good To Great

By Matt Guedes Sponsored by Bear Archery



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Over the years I have never met a serious hunter who has not dreamed of being a great hunter. Of those I have spoken with about this topic, the idea of what a great hunter is has varied widely. Most can name those that they think are great hunters but most have not defined why they consider those great (at least not beyond the fact that they shoot big animals), what has made them great and what is stopping themselves from being great.

Most of the hunters I know are serious about their hunting and want to be successful. They may define successful differently, live in different parts of the world and hunt different game but they all have the desire to excel. Most of these men and women have planned, prepared, have good equipment and want to win. Their zeal, passion and desire are there but most, when pinned down, do not consider themselves a great hunter.

The move from good to great is a move that we must understand. First, we must decide what a great hunter is and what one is not. Second, we must define what factors are in place that will take us to that goal and what factors will take us away from that goal. Lastly, we have to apply what we learn and discover.

The immediate answer to what makes a great hunter almost always comes down to shooting big animals. Whether you are a gun hunter or bow hunter, a whitetail hunter or mule deer hunter, a poor hunter or wealthy hunter, young or old, it all seems to come back to what big animals have you killed. Although harvesting large animals or record book animals can be an indicator of being a great hunter it is not always an accurate indicator, nor is it the only indicator.

Let me explain. I have met some hunters who have shot some great animals but I would not classify them as great hunters. They have been able to spend copious amounts of money to hunt places where they have been able to shoot record book animals without very much effort on their own. I am not faulting them for this however, if you can afford to hunt ranches and property with huge game and a good outfitter/guide takes you to the animal and has done the work for you, it might only mean you are a good shot. The flip-side of our current philosophy is equally out of balance. There is the new move in our industry that the only truly great hunters are those who hunt public land and do it by themselves.

In my book, great hunters are those who year in and year out consistently harvest effectively their chosen game whether hunting with outfitters or alone. They may be shooting does, they may be shooting small bucks, or they may be shooting record book animals but the key is they are shooting the game that they sought out to hunt.

I believe there are a three factors that will move one from being a good hunter to being a great hunter. Those three factors are being where the game is, being ready to effectively hunt that game and most importantly time devoted to that, afield. Let's look at these factors one by one.



You won't be successful if you don't hunt in an area that has the animals you are hunting. So be sure you know the area and the game.

(continued pg. 32)



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# Mix Up Your Gobbler Attack

By Mark Kayser



Katelyn and Mark Kayser with midmorning gobbler success. ©Mark Kayser

"I can't believe he's not going to come to our calls," I complained under my breath to my buddy also shaking his head. "I know he didn't see us. We've been sitting in the dark an hour before the dawn even broke. Tomorrow we're going to sleep in and start hunting around midmorning. That's when these turkeys like to gobble anyway."

That revelation occurred more than a decade ago and except in unique circumstances I've kept to my pledge. I start my turkey hunts after sunrise, not under the cover of darkness.

What's the reasoning? It comes from years of hunting Western Merriam's, and turkeys from coast to coast. Traditionalists scorn at ambushing turkeys without calls, lying prone during a setup and even honking a truck horn to check for gobblers on a distant roost. I'm not a traditionalist, and that's why I generally skip the early-morning setup ritual. Like you, I lead a busy life with a jammed schedule. If a turkey doesn't want to cooperate in a traditional manner, I'm not afraid to think out of the box. Midmorning hunting fits that thinking.

If you think of it in simplistic terms, turkeys don't need to come to a call straight from the roost. Their evolutionary character is to regroup the evening before and roost with a flock. At daybreak a gobbler easily ignores your pleading calls from below the roost, because he's partying with a pile of hens. Why go to another hen on the ground when you can land with a ready-to-breed crowd? But the party doesn't last all day and hence the reasoning for a midmorning start.

As the sun warms the landscape and a gobbler finishes morning breeding chores hens begin to split off. They scurry off to tend to nesting duties leaving a testosterone-charged gobbler screaming for more. That's where you step in. Find a gobbler suddenly abandoned by hens in the midmorning and noonday time periods and you'll have a high probability of calling him into a turkey trap.

Of course like all strategies factors beyond your control can come into play and debunk your plan. When Murphy's Law takes over it's time to begin rummaging through you playbook and here are a few to add for spring turkey success.

**KARAOKE A FLOCK** Practice and be proficient with several styles of calls. This will give you flexibility in trying to find a call and pitch a gobbler may respond to, plus you can sound like more than one bird. An overanxious gobbler will be more than happy to woo two ladies as compared to one.

(continued on page 32)





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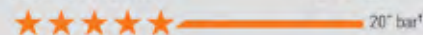
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# THE IMPORTANCE OF CROSS TRAINING

By Rebecca Francis Sponsored by Alti2ude Outdoors & HECS StealthScreen

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Everyone has their own personal reasons for wanting to stay fit. It can vary from wanting to lose weight, to toning muscles, to just being healthy. For me it is a two-fold reason. The first is simple...to hunt. I hunt year round and I know from personal experience that the hunt is much more enjoyable when I am in shape versus lagging behind and unable to catch my breath. Nearly all of my hunts entail hiking, backpacking, and some sort of physical activity that requires me to be physically fit. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate multiple forms of exercises to prepare for the hunt. My second reason for exercising, is because I just want to feel good. This is a pure reward for the hard work. Exercising releases endorphins that provide a healthy and natural way to just be happy, reduce stress, and enjoy life.



So why cross train? I'll never forget nearing the top of a ridge on a high country mule deer backpacking hunt and looking down at a friend that was struggling to make it to the top. He was a marathon runner and what I considered to be in tip top shape. I had a great deal of respect for him and his physical fitness practices. But as I watched him struggle up the ridge with a large pack on, I wondered why he was having such a hard time when he was in much better shape than me. When he reached the top he expressed that while he can run forever, he was deeply regretting not preparing himself to haul a big pack and hike in steep terrain. He made the mistake of assuming that because he was in great shape, he would be physically ready to do a high country backpacking hunt.

I am runner as well, and participate in many races each year. But I also know from experience how important it is to prepare your body for the type of hunt you are planning for. This is especially true for sheep, goat, and any other high country hunts. It doesn't matter how far or how fast you can run, if you don't take the necessary steps to strengthen the other areas of your body, you will inevitably get injured or be miserable with sore muscles. I cross

train year round simply to prevent those issues. The main reason I participate in races, is so I always have a goal I am working towards. It provides me a deadline to shoot for and it forces me to improve my performance and overall fitness.

My normal training routine is:

Monday Run 6 – 8 miles at normal pace, lift weights, abs/core.  
 Tuesday Interval runs at speed pace, P90X workout.  
 Wednesday Run 6 – 8 miles at normal pace, lift weights abs/core.  
 Thursday Hill climb or ride bike, P90X workout.  
 Friday Interval runs at speed pace, lift weights, abs/core.  
 Saturday Run 10 or more miles.  
 Sunday Rest.

\*After every workout I drink a protein drink.



In addition to my normal workouts, when I know I will be hunting at high altitude I make every effort to spend some time training at higher altitudes. This will help prevent the effects of altitude sickness, which I have seen many people suffer from. Almost every person I have guided on a high country mule deer hunt has spent the first couple of days with headaches and/or throwing up. This takes all the enjoyment and appreciation out of the experience. I live at 7000 feet elevation so I have a good start, but I hunt deer at 11,000 feet elevation. Luckily the Uinta mountains are in my backyard, so I can spend some time hiking and getting ready before the hunt.

I also participate in bike races and triathlons. In the spring I will integrate more bike riding and swimming for those races and then phase out of those activities and focus more on the hiking with packs in the summer and fall. Every summer I hike three to four big peaks for preparation. These are mostly just day hikes and I try to complete the hike as quickly as possible. Some of the peaks I have hiked for training are Mt. Timpanogos, Mt. Borah, Mt. Loafer, Mt. Shasta, Mt. Rainier, Mt. Baldy, Tetons, Gannett Peak, and Lone Peak.

These routines have worked for me because I try to focus on every part of my body throughout the week. When I head for the mountains to hunt I can wear a pack and hike hard with little or no problems. I have been exercising regularly for over 20 years, and I have grown to love it. In fact, I can't live without it. There are still days that I have to talk myself into working out, but I just have to remind myself of the reward and I'm good to go.



For more go to Alti2ude Outdoor Columns and be sure and visit Rebecca and Dave at Alti2ude Outdoors.

# Fishing The Oxbow

By Babe Winkleman

If you're one part fisherman, one part detective, and one part bushwacker, then this article is for you. Having those characteristics can put you on fish that few anglers will ever have the pleasure of battling.

Here's a story that demonstrates what I'm talking about. A few years ago there was an amazing crappie bite on a smallish lake not far from where I live. I heard about it, and of course I wanted to get in on the action. But the word had gotten out so much that everyone and their brother was out there beating up on those fish. I really didn't want to join that army.

So I did some research on the lake and saw on maps and satellite images that it had a tiny feeder creek and an outgoing flowage that spilled into a big wetland. Tracing the feeder creek up, I noted that there was a spot about 15 miles away (and in the middle of nowhere) where the creek made a sharp sweep and formed almost an oxbow lake. Not big at all. Maybe 100 yards wide and 300 yards long.

I figured: if that creek was swimmable by crappies, then surely some of them must have migrated up. And if the oxbow had enough depth, then there could be a mother load in there! Consulting a plat book, I found that the only access into that water was via private land. So I found out who the property owner was and called him up. A nice guy. He granted me permission and told me the best way to get back there, on an old cow trail that hadn't been used in years. Oh, and he also said I was "probably wasting my time" because he didn't think there were any fish in it.

The next day I pulled my truck and Aluma trailer over where the landowner had told me to park – off a dirt road next to an old rickety gate. On the other side, I could (sort of) see the cow trail that would wind back to the oxbow. He wasn't kidding about the trail being unused for years. Muddy, brushy, terrible... I wondered if I'd make it!

After unloading my 4-wheeler from the Aluma, and strapping down all my gear, I was off! It was an adventure my friends, but after getting stuck and unstuck a couple of times, I finally made it close enough to walk in the rest of the way.

Upon arriving at the water's edge, I was thrilled to find good footing on the bank. Judging by the lay of the land and how the water's depth dropped from shore, I was pretty certain this little waterway had some decent depth. To check it, I performed a simple little test: I set my slip bobber to 5 feet and made a long cast. The bobber stood up. That meant it was at least 5+ feet deep there. I reeled up and re-set it to 10 feet. It still stood up. Excellent! I kept doing this until I determined that there was roughly 14 feet of depth out at my longest cast distance.

From there I set my slip bobber to be about a foot off the bottom (13 feet) and hurled out a REAL cast with a fat waxworm on my feather jig. A few seconds later a sound caught my attention. A "swirly-water" sound to my right. I looked over to see the remnant ripples of a swirl about 15 yards down the bank. Was it a fish? A muskrat? I didn't know, but the sight of it made my confidence soar! 'Oh please let that be from a fish' I begged. When I brought my eyes back to my bobber, it wasn't there!

I slowly reeled up my slack line and set the hook. BINGO! Fish on! Right away I knew it wasn't fighting like a crappie. Nope, instead it was a jumbo perch. And I mean JUMBO! Wow, I was so excited I could barely stand it. I felt like a little kid.

As the afternoon trickled on, and without leaving my initial boot prints, I caught fish after fish after fish. Crappies? My objective? I only caught two. They were keepers. 9-10 inchers, but perfect eaters. I also caught a limit of huge bluegills! They were so plentiful that I only kept the orange-throated males. A few decent largemouth bass pounced on my jig too, along with a northern pike that went about four pounds.

But the heyday was on those big perch. Holy smokes did I clean up on perch! Fortunately I had the foresight (and hope) that I'd catch fish in that oxbow, so I brought my Yeti cooler with ice that kept my catch fresher than fresh.

When I got back to the road, and after loading all my gear back on the Aluma, I paused to look down that cow trail as I closed the owner's gate. I smiled as I thought about all those boats choked into that little lake 15 miles away – connected by a small creek to this secret oxbow. Without being part detective and part bushwacker, I would have never discovered that spot. ♦



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## Walleyes Unlimited of Montana State Meeting & Banquet May 9-11

Walleyes Unlimited of Montana

*Taylor Shannon  
12 lb. Missouri River Walleye  
Photo-Walleyes Unlimited of Montana*

### 2014 State Meeting and Banquet - Helena

The Upper Missouri River Chapter is happy to welcome all Walleye Unlimited members to Helena for the State's 30th Annual Meeting and Banquet May 9- 11, 2014.



The Friday night Social will be held at Jorgenson's at 6:30 pm. Jorgenson's will also be the venue for the state annual meeting and 2 angler workshops on Saturday prior to the banquet.

Free shuttle bus service will be provided to and from the banquet venue at the L&C County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall and Jorgenson's on Saturday evening.

A more detailed schedule of events will be available in early April.

For more information, click on the Club Info/State Tab at [www.montanawalleyesunlimited.net](http://www.montanawalleyesunlimited.net) and print off the banquet flyer for a list of events and prizes!

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## FLOAT-TIP GOBBLEERS

By Bob Humphrey

Yamaha Outdoors Tips



Photo courtesy Bob Humphrey

**Float and Gun** - Floating down a river is not just a good way to reach your hunting destination, it's a good way to hunt. Start upstream and simply float along, listening and calling until you strike a gobbler. Then disembark and start your hunt.

It's best if you can pair up with another hunter. Two bodies make easier work of what little paddling you'll do. It also allows you to leave a vehicle or Side-by-Side vehicle at your downstream pull-out. And, having someone else along is just more fun.

**D**rive, ride, walk. Those are the primary means used by 99 percent of turkey hunters to get within striking distance of their quarry. But one of the keys to consistent success is avoiding the crowds. You can do that by spending more time riding off-road than on, or more time walking than riding. Or you can be among the other 1 percent who take an entirely different approach - water. You may find it offers several advantages.

**Stealth** - You can float into an area a lot more quietly than you can drive, and sometimes even walk. And if it's after daylight it may offer your only route of concealment, especially in open habitat. Even in the most open country you'll usually find some cover along waterways. Float in close, slip out and call those open field birds your way.

**Ease** - Riding is pretty easy but eventually you'll have to get out and walk. If you have to cover a considerable distance, floating is a lot easier than walking.

**Remote Access** - It may not be the only way, but sometimes water is the easiest and possibly even the quickest way to get to a particularly birdy area. Check the topo maps for opportunities. Far fewer folks will ever think of it; so you'll have less competition, at least until the road hunters eventually make their way back. With any luck, you'll be tagged out by then.



## Grizzly Bear #179 - A Major Contributor to Bear Research for Two Decades

Mark Gocke / WGFD

Wyoming Game and Fish (WG&F)

...In managing a species, sometimes an individual animal stands out in making a significant contribution to the program. Grizzly bear 179 is one such story.

To look at her, and biologists have plenty in trapping her eight times, she's a rather typical grizzly sow – deep brown fur and about 300 pounds. As a result of that handling she's provided an important journal of information for managing and recovering the species...

179's last trapping was June 2012 in the Blackrock area east of Grand Teton National Park...

The story of this important bear started in late August 1990. Yellowstone National Park and Montana wildlife officials responded to a grizzly sow and a pair of yearling cubs raiding an apple orchard and chicken coop near Gardiner, Mont. The sow was No. 79, and was well known for leaving the park every fall for the valley's apples.

She was helicoptered to the remote Thorofare in the southeast corner of the Park. Tagged 182 and 179, the two female cubs were trucked to the Glade Creek area off the northwest corner of Grand Teton National Park. It was hoped separating the yearlings from their mother would help keep the youngsters out of trouble...

179 was part of the species' expansion east towards Togwootee Pass in the early '90s. That put her in an area of more frequent research trapping as the program inquired how bears were using the habitat...

"Bear managers have worked hard to carefully research and monitor the population, provide adequate habitat protections, and reduce conflicts and mortalities," Bjornlie said. "Bears like 179 did the rest."

## Wayne Carlton on Calling Bears

Hunter's Specialties [www.hunterspec.com](http://www.hunterspec.com)



Photo [www.hunterspec.com](http://www.hunterspec.com)

**E**ditor's Note: Wayne Carlton of Montrose, Colorado, the creator of Carlton's Calls, part of the Hunter's Specialties fine call line, is a master at calling bears.

Sometimes he calls-in a monster black bear using his Hunter's Specialties Wayne Carlton Reed Bear Call... Carlton will tell us how he's learned to call bears, and how you effectively can call bears, too.

Years ago I'd heard that some outdoorsmen in Arizona had learned how to call bears and tried to get them to teach me, but they didn't want to divulge too much information. So, I discovered how to call bears by accident. I frequently conducted a turkey-hunting course in New Mexico. One day, while Rob Keck, formerly of the National Wild Turkey Federation, and I scouted for turkeys with one of our students, we saw a bear cross the road in front of us right by a creek that was created by a spring runoff of snow. The water rushing over the rocks was extremely loud, so the bear didn't hear our vehicle or us. We got out of our truck and went up above the creek where Rob and I started squalling on our turkey diaphragm calls just like you'd squall to call-in coyotes or other predators. That calling had absolutely no effect on the bear.

I looked over at Rob and said, "I don't have anything to lose. I'm going to throw everything I can get out of this call at the bear." So, I started screaming at that bear on my turkey call. I tried to sound like I was having my arm pulled off my shoulder and my ribcage pulled out and was just about to die hoping someone would hear me. As I called, I tried to imitate those types of sounds on the turkey call.

**I gave extremely frantic calls without even a pause or a hesitation. I called continuously, and as we looked up on the side of the hill in front of us, the bear came running toward us, with his ears laid back and his hair standing straight-up.**

He was coming to whip or kill something. That was the first bear either Rob or I ever had called in to where we were. So, from this hunt, I learned that to call bears, you needed to call as frantically as you could for as long and as loudly as you could. When you stopped calling, the bears would sit down, change their minds and wander off.

To get a bear to come to you, you have to shock them with excited, terrifying and screaming calls, and they just instinctively will react. I've had bears walking off and away from me, and when I've blown the mylar Reed Bear Call, the bear has jumped-up, turned-around and come running straight toward me.

As I began to refine the bear call, I noticed some of the most effective calling occurred when I tried to sound like fighting hogs. Most southern and some northern states have large populations of wild hogs, and you often will hear hogs fighting. However, I pick-up the cadence of the call and call much faster, louder and longer than you'll hear hogs sound when they're actually fighting. I've seen bears change from a walk to a run by my simply picking-up the cadence of the call and calling faster.

When calling loudly and frantically for bears, I prefer my Reed Bear call, which is a mylar reed call inside a tube, because it gets the sound away from your ears. Then you really can bear down on it and do a lot of screaming and excited calling on it. I'll also use any of Hunter's Specialties diaphragm calls to work a bear in really close, if I'm bowhunting. Those diaphragm calls allow me to scream at the bear but keep my hands free to draw and shoot the bear when he's within bow range.

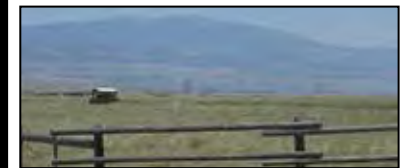
I like the Carlton Double Reed Diaphragm elk calls because they seem to be pitched slightly higher than many turkey calls are. If you really want to call bears, take all of these calls. Bear calling is a lot of fun because when there's a 200- to a 400-pound black bear running wide open and straight for you, you really understand the thrill of a hunt and find out just how much macho you do or don't have.

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### 2nd Annual Banquet

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of pressure, big bucks will only take so much human intrusion before they find somewhere else to hang out.

This time of year makes it easy to locate trails that deer often use to get from feeding to bedding grounds no matter how dense the area might be. These trails could change as the food sources change in the summer, but the trails they use to leave their bedding grounds will not change and eventually the trails to the food sources will come back around to their fall patterns.

Hanging stands near bedding areas now will yield more chances at bucks when season opens rather than hanging stands over food sources.

Not only are trails more visible but so are buck rubs. Bucks leave good sign behind as they polish their antlers and get in some practice fights with small saplings. A rub tells a lot about the bucks in the area and their routine.

Rubs are one time size does matter. The bigger the diameter of the tree the rub is on, the bigger the buck that made that rub. Big bucks will rub small trees, but small bucks do not rub big trees. When you find a tree of at least 6-inches in diameter, you can be sure a mature buck made that rub.

Bucks are known to rub trees in the same area from one year to the next. Often, bucks rub the same tree year after year. Hunters who know where rubs were located in previous seasons can use this to their advantage. As long as the buck who made the rub is still alive. Hang a stand before rubs start appearing to ambush a buck as he comes to renew his rub line.

By learning to interpret rubs, hunters will be able to tell where bucks are eating and sleeping. If the shiny side of a rub is facing a dense thicket, this is more than likely where the bucks are breeding. If the shiny side of the rub is facing a food plot, clover field or other source of food, this is probably where they spend the night eating. Set up and hunt accordingly.

Once you locate good locations for a stand or ground blind, now is the best time to get them in place. Bucks will notice anything out of place and a new stand or blind is certainly out of place, and by making these changes now to their landscape the deer will have plenty of time to grow accustomed to them.

Preparing shooting lanes is also something that should be done now. By doing this task now, deer will also have plenty of time to get used to the alterations to their cover. Creating shooting lanes is not something only archers should be concerned with. There has been more than once, I have not had a shot opportunity at a deer with my firearm, because he was in too thick of cover even though the deer was very close. Remember that the smallest twig can send a slug places other than where you want it.



Another thing that can be done this time of year is looking for shed antlers. Finding sheds will give you a good idea of what deer survived the season, as well as the harsh winter. Not only is it a good scouting tool, but also fun.

Now that deer season is over, it is the very best time to find the clues left behind by deer so you can pattern their movements, and not their summer patterns. It is also a great time to check out new ground you have never hunted before.

So get out and do some scouting when the time is right.



# START SCOUTING NOW

By Jason Houser

Deer season is over and many hunters are singing the blues as they have months to wait till deer season comes back around. Hopefully, this past season was a success, but now is the time to get a jump on next seasons hunt by beginning to scout.

Even though deer season has just come to an end, now is one of the best times to get out and scout to see what deer have been up to where you hunt. Scouting for deer now is much less disturbing to the deer than waiting till season is about to begin, and if you do happen to spook deer they have plenty of time to forget about you in the coming months.

This is particularly true when trying to pattern a big buck. Walking through the bedding grounds of a mature white-tailed buck just a few short weeks before season begins will all but guarantee that you will not see that buck while hunting. If the area you are hunting has a lot

# Dissecting The Prespawn - Migration Routes And Fish Behavior Crucial To Early Success



Berkley-fishing.com  
Photo Dick Wadsworth  
Smallmouth Bass Fishing Flathead River

Before we can delve too far into the finer points of fishing the prespawn, we need to quickly define the term. To me, it's one of the most exciting times of the year for bass fishing because this is when fish are heading toward the bank and actively feeding, when 80 percent of the fish in any given body of water will be forced into shallow water of 10 feet or less. During this time of year, we produce some of our biggest stringers of the year. But, technically, prespawn is a state and not a time of year; it defines anytime before the spawn.

Remember not all fish in a body of water spawn or fall into these prespawn patterns at the same time. The spawn begins in the backs of creeks and up the main river arms and in the most protected water that can be found on the lake. Usually, the next section to see spawning activity will be more toward the midsection of the lake in short coves. The last wave is usually your main-lake fish that spawn on tops of ridges and flats.

Prespawn fishing is a time of year when we as anglers need to become very target oriented. I like to flip and pitch with heavy line and big hooks, jigs and other big-bodied baits. My No. 1 bait for prespawn is a black Berkley PowerBait Power Lizard. Since you are fishing in heavy cover, it is important to rig the bait weedless. I like to Texas rig it with a 5/16-ounce slip sinker on 25-pound Berkley Trilene 100% Fluorocarbon with a 5/0 extra-wide gap hook. If the water has plenty of color to it, I turn to Spiderwire Stealth, anywhere from 50- to 80-pound test, depending on conditions.

With the Power Lizard, I pitch and flip it in shallow water, targeting sheltered areas on the lake back in pockets and coves, up the river arms fishing in and around targets that I can see with my eyes. Usually, these targets are boat docks, stumps, laydowns and other heavy cover. The reason for this is because the bass, when they move in to spawn, will start setting up, which is basically sunning themselves. All the big females are allowing the warmth of the sun to help incubate their eggs before they are laid. When the actual spawning ritual takes place, they will typically move to the edge of that cover. Largemouth bass, because their eggs will stick to surfaces, will spawn a lot in and around tree stumps, even in the treetops. Even if the water is deep, don't overlook submerged treetops during the prespawn and spawn, they can hold lots of big fish.

With the bass moving in shallow, look for migration routes, structure at the mouths of bays and creeks where fish are going to spawn. If I can't pinpoint bass in shallow water near these areas, I like to drag a big, pumpkinseed jig tipped with a Berkley PowerBait Chigger Craw through these ditches and channels.

When fishing for bass that have made it out of the ditches and channels and into shallow water, I've noticed that when largemouth bass are the first fish to begin the spawning ritual, you seldom see any bluegill or any other predator of the bass' eggs in the area. When these big females move into spawning areas, they go on a feeding frenzy that is unreal. They want to kill anything they perceive as a threat to their eggs. That's the reason you hear such great fishing reports during the prespawn: anglers catching bass on big spinnerbaits, big jigs, lizards, crankbaits.

Our favorite fisheries have lots of fishable water in them, but knowing where to start and what to throw will help you make the most of your time on the water. The distances these bass travel from their winter haunts to prespawn areas and into the spawning beds isn't that far. So look for the nearest migration routes from the areas you fished this winter to the areas where the fish will be spawning. Along the way, make sure you look for targets in the water that provide protection. That's where the fish will be.

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# Say Hello To Success: Where to chase the Fish this Month

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It's beginning to warm up in Big Sky Country! Ice-off the lakes and reservoirs will create a frenzy of feeding now as water temperatures begin to rise, and you know what this means, right? Yep, some of the best fishing days you can experience. Lakes and reservoirs across the state will begin to offer the sort of fishing that all anglers dream of. Ice-out triggers an inshore feeding blitz, and on warmer, calm mornings, you'll want to make sure you are close to, or on the water fishing the rivers and streams that are open. The aquatic insect activity will bring trout to the top. These waters will generally fish well for several weeks until the high country snow starts to melt. This generally will start around mid-May and into June, and cause some of these streams to "blow out" for awhile. All-in-all, you should see very good fishing conditions on these calm and cool days. Here's a look at a few spots you can count on for some good fishing.

## NOXON RESERVOIR

A worthy springtime destination. Montana's so-called "Banana Belt" where seemingly warmer temperatures around the Trout Creek area will keep anglers busy. This Clark Fork impoundment has a very good pre-spawn bass bite. Both smallmouth and largemouth can be caught in the backs of bays here that have warmed up sooner than most waters. Largemouth bass in the 5 lb. category will hold up in the deep side of ledges that lead to good nesting areas with sand banks. Big pre-spawn bass will hit on crankbaits, spinnerbaits, jigs tipped with a trailer or plastic.



Marten Creek Bay near Trout Creek is a productive area and should yield healthy numbers. Both bass and big northerns will be aggressive now, and will hit on these same baits. So be ready for the big splash and go! Expect some fine trout fishing, and an occasional perch or walleye as well.

## LAKE KOOCANUSA

Lake Koocanusa (Libby), is a hot spot for trolling up double-digit Kamloops rainbows and bull trout. Trolling with planer boards and down-riggers consistently produces some of the biggest trout around. You can troll Kokanee colored Rapalas or Lyman Lures for good hook-ups. Rainbows will average 3 to 5 lbs., but an occasional 8 pounder or bigger can strike. Catch and release on bull trout, and a bull trout catch card must be in possession if you are targeting these big fish. Kokanee fishing will be picking up here in the spring. Head on up to Rexford Bench on the north end of the lake near Eureka for a good launch point. It's world class fishing here with a few monsters floating near the bottom!

## HOLTER LAKE

You can bank on some amazing fishing this spring on Holter. This lake, just east of Helena, is known for it's fantastic rainbow and brown trout fishing. For rainbows, you can cruise the shorelines using minnow imitations, crankbaits, or by throwing a jig (egg sucking leech imitation). It works well, and is one of the trout's favorite this time of the year. Fishing around any inlet you see is a fitting ploy now, as rainbows and browns spawn most successfully near moving water. As the spawn urge grows, females become increasingly harder to catch, but males become especially aggressive and are likely to grab anything in their path. You can catch many eater-sized walleye in these waters as well. Pitch a jig flavored with a nightcrawler near the bottom for these tasty fish. If you do catch a big female, (walleye or trout), take a quick photo and slide them back in the water. This will help preserve this marvelous fishery for the future. The fishing, plus the beauty of the area makes for a special trip here.

## DEADMAN'S BASIN

Located near Harlowtown, MT. Springtime tiger muskies are at the top of the food chain here. It's one of the only spots in Montana where you can fish for muskie. Muskies were put into the lake over a decade ago to control the nuisance numbers of white suckers in the system that were out competing the managed rainbow and brown trout, as well as Kokanee salmon. All of these species have been able to co-exist, making for some very good fishing here. For the musky, target shallow bays that are warming the fastest. These big predators are hanging near weed edges in just about any pocket along the perimeter of the lake. Look for cuts that provide easy retreat to deeper water. A good place to start is near the east side of the dam. Swimbaits, spinnerbaits, shallow running crankbaits, as well as top water baits will draw these big fish to strike, and as the water temperature warms, they become even more active. You can target big brown trout in the system using white and silver Rapalas or rainbow patterned or blue spinnerbaits.

## BIG HOLE RIVER

April is prime-time to catch the trout of a life-time down on the Big Hole. As the Big Hole Valley starts to warm, the trout will start gorging themselves with dry flies. The bug hatch is spectacular along this Blue Ribbon Trout Stream, and when the conditions are just right, you'll want to be fishing these waters. One of the great things about fishing southwest Montana in the spring is that there is very little fishing pressure on the river. If you are fly fishing, "Match

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the hatch" as they say, with BWOs, Skwalas, and Nymphs this time of the year. Spin-fishers can rely on the old standbys, such as Panther Martins, Mepp's, Rapalas, Blue Foxes, or more local flavors that are available from Kit's Tackle, JDR Specialty Tackle (both from Helena), or Walleye Hunter Tackle from Townsend. All are made by local fishermen.

## OTHER HOT SPOTS

All of the lakes and reservoirs scattered throughout the state will be primed for some exceptional fishing as we begin to get into our warmer season. Whether it be rainbows and browns or walleyes and bass you are after, it's time to go fishing! There are literally dozens of still-waters to choose from, such as the Clark Fork Reservoir near Dillon, Canyon Ferry in Townsend, the Blackfeet Reservation Lakes (Browning), Ennis Lake, Ruby Reservoir (Alder), Holland Lake (Condon), Brown's Lake (Ovando), Ashley Lake (Hobson), Willow Creek or Nilan Reservoir (Augusta), Hyalite Reservoir (Bozeman), Harper's Lake (Clearwater Junction), Tiber Reservoir (Shelby),

Fort Peck Dredge Cuts or below Hauser Dam near Helena.

Some of the best and most wild fishing destinations in the lower 48 are located right here in Montana, so pack up your gear, make some time, and get out and enjoy yourself. You deserve it! And, take a kid fishing when you can.

## IDAHO REPORT

### Steelhead Anglers Find Success, Conditions Challenging IF&G

Spring is the time when hatchery steelhead concentrate in smaller rivers, making it a great time to fish. This year has been no exception.

Steelhead fishing is unique, considering it is very good anytime catch rates are lower than 20 hours per fish caught.

Recent angler surveys show catch rates vary significantly, ranging from 7 hours per fish on the upper Salmon River from the Middle Fork Salmon River upstream to North Fork, to well over 100 hours per fish in other river sections. For the latest steelhead catch rates by river

section, visit the Fish and Game website at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/fish/?getPage=126>.

With the recent rain, snowmelt and shore ice, fishing conditions along the upper Salmon River have been challenging, yet anglers continue to find success...

Anglers anxious to access and fish for steelhead in the Upper Salmon River find a way, as reported in a recent video on the Idaho Fish and Games YouTube channel at <http://youtu.be/SWeKlfuKVHE>.

The spring harvest season closed March 31 on the Salmon River from the Lake Creek Bridge to Long Tom Creek - three-quarters of a mile upstream from the Middle Fork Salmon River. Anglers can continue fishing through April 30 in most other steelhead waters, except the Little Salmon River, which stays open until May 15, and the Snake and Boise rivers, which stay open until May 31.

Other open waters include:

- Clearwater River Mainstem and Middle Fork from its mouth upstream to Clear Creek.
- North Fork Clearwater River from its mouth upstream to Dworshak Dam.

- South Fork Clearwater River from its mouth upstream to the confluence of American and Red Rivers.

Salmon River from its mouth upstream to the posted boundary 100 yards downstream of the Sawtooth Fish Hatchery near Stanley. Except the reach from the Lake Creek Bridge to Long Tom Creek, which closed March 31.

The steelhead limits for the spring 2014 season on the Snake, Boise, Salmon and Little Salmon rivers are three per day and nine in possession. The limits in the Clearwater drainage are one fish per day and two in possession. In addition, only steelhead 28 inches or less in total length may be kept in the North Fork Clearwater River and the Clearwater River downstream of the Orofino Bridge.\*



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## Twists to a Timeless Approach for Spring Walleyes

By Tom Neustrom

Northland Fishing Tackle

<http://www.northlandtackle.com>

Some states have an official "Walleye Opener". It's circled on calendars in kitchen after kitchen. In equally as many states, though, "Opener" describes the second that the ice vanishes. Either way, I believe the ties to the tradition of the "Opener" are too strong. Let me explain in an anecdote... Three generations of the Doe family get together on that hallowed weekend and cross their collective fingers that the walleyes will bite. No matter the weather. No matter what experts say about the lake. No matter nothing. They fish the same lake every year.

Not that the relatives shouldn't get together and fish. But unless your lake oozes with spring walleyes, you're better off leaving the comfort of the cabin, putting the boat on the trailer and driving to a bite.

That's not meant to be harsh. It's factual. And here are some tips for picking the right pond and putting a bend in your rod.

**Flat as a Pancake and Colored like Syrup** Our education as fisherman tells us that walleyes are fish of clear water and deep structure. That's only partially true. Yes, walleyes thrive in crisp clean northern lakes. But likewise, they can flourish in bowl-shaped lakes with more weeds than rocks and water colored like beef-bullion. In fact, they often grow faster and are more plentiful in the soupier stuff.

The point is that if your family cabin rests on a cold clear lake, consider nearby options.

**The flatter and shallower the area the faster the water warms – fact. Nothing speeds up post-spawn recovery like daytime heat. Walleyes get in gear faster, especially the males. They'll form six, eight, and ten member packs and work the flat. Simultaneously, the warming shallows load up with baitfish. The combination is lethal.**

**Big Pieces of the Same Thing** A long expansive flat looks totally boring on a map. "No structure, no fish," one might say. My guiding buddy Brian "Bro" Brosdahl sees things differently. "I look for the least contours on a lake map," says the Frabill fishing pro. "Having structure nearby is a bonus, but not a prerequisite."



### Northland Fishing Tackle Fireball Jig

The short shank of the Fire-Ball Jig marries minnow and lure to vastly improve your hook-setting percentages. The compact presentation is ideal for light biting spring walleyes. Photo courtesy of Northland Fishing Tackle [northlandtackle.com](http://northlandtackle.com)

Bro really likes large flats on the warmer, north end of the lake, where cold spring winds are fought back and the sun strikes the longest. Build in some walleye spawning structure and the campers will be even happier.

"Can't beat the pea gravel to golf ball sized rocks. Perfect spawning habitat. And a great place to rest and feed after breeding," says Bro.

Scattered rock is welcome as well. Essentially, you're looking for fat shoreline flats with hard and irregular bottoms; gravel here, sand there, rocks in between. Even though fish are working mostly flat surfaces, instinct still guides them towards available structure and edges.

Certain shoreline points also fall into this category. Not the sharp tipped point with cascading sides; maybe later this summer, but not now. You want a point that's more of a swollen section of the bottom. Compare your thumb to a kids' pinky finger. You want the point to look like your thumb, flatter and wider.

Bro further qualifies the perfect point. "My favorites will open into the main lake from a bay. Again, bigger, longer and flatter points are best. It's typical for the attached bay to contain darker, warmer, and shallower water. The bay's water conditions mix with the main lake, creating improved conditions for spring walleyes."

**Super stealthy spot:** There's a phenomenon that occurs on large sandy lakes. Wave after wave crashing against a shoreline can dig out a little trench. The back-churning water actually relocates the sand. The change in depth doesn't need to be dramatic, either. I've found walleyes in a six foot deep trough with four foot edges.

**The Soft Sell** Remember these fish are just coming off the spawn. Their attitudes are down in the dumps; probably not moving around much, either. (Note that their moods can flip like a light switch. Suddenly they'll go nuts, usually following a string of warm weather days.)

Generally speaking, early spring walleyes won't climb over each other to grab a lure. And force feeding isn't an option. As a result, I throw an old-standby – the jig and minnow – but deliver it in a slow and seductive manner.



Author Tom Neustrom can turn a Fire-Ball Jig into about anything he wants, from a fast and furious baitfish to something dragged along the bottom, barely moving. Walleyes will tell you how they want it. Photo courtesy of Northland Fishing Tackle ([www.northlandtackle.com](http://www.northlandtackle.com))

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## River Savages

By Trevor Johnson, Kit's Tackle



It is hard to believe that it has been almost a full week since we made the long trek home from the Columbia River. I will honestly admit I have left in a physical state, but am still 110% "Jiggin' the Dream" with the Glass Minnows on a breakline in the haunting waters of the big river to this very moment. So I will apologize ahead of time if you place an order through the website for fire tiger glass minnows and I ship you a spoon, toothbrush and a tire gauge. ...I actually woke up last night in a deep sweat having nightmares about the giant that broke me off at the boat. But we will get to that...a little further on...We returned late last week just in time for our annual Helena trade show and just in time for a second HUGE storm. I still owe my wife a million date nights for leaving her during the storm of the century!! Knowing my pregnant wife was stuck at home was a daunting feeling...but I had a job to do. I had to face the elements and paint the LOWRANCE black in search of the allusive, yet attainable big pre-spawn Sander Vitreus!! Dad and I metamorphosed from a couple regular ol' guys into full blown river savages ready for battlefield action. If you are going to test your angling spirits against the blunt harshness and humbleness of the Columbia River...you must turn your fishing switch to savage mode. And pack a big cooler full of patience!



Trevor's dad

Now that patience has been mentioned, the drive over the passes during the midst of winter will test every drip you have in your body. As we left for our adventure, we knew we were going to have a true beast upon us. We sailed smoothly west to Missoula and then things hit the fan...almost literally!

The roads went from decent to OH SH#T!! And although this isn't funny, I have to tell the story. As we stopped at a rest stop to do a quick breather before trudging over Lookout Pass, we overheard a gal yelling at her man to slow down in these conditions. As we left the rest area the truck came ripping by us at an insane speed for the conditions. It wasn't thirty miles down the road and his beautiful after-market Chevy truck was facing the wrong way on the highway and was destroyed from bumper to bumper. After noticing everybody was ok...I had to bite my lip not to giggle J It is actually other drivers that make the conditions so scary and dangerous! Normally, the drive from Helena to Pasco takes a conservative driver eight hours...we clocked in at just less than twelve hours of driving. Let's just say we were very tense and happy to be at the RIVER OF GIANTS. The big blue bridge that divides Pasco and Kennewick is the finish line of goose bumps. As the alarm sounded just a couple hours from shutting our eyes...I didn't know where the heck I was. Usually it takes to at least the third day to become this delirious...HIGH OCTANE COFFEE AND SAVAGE MODE FOR THE NEXT COUPLE DAYS!!

As we pulled up to the Burbank ramp we were met by friendly fellow anglers and some awesome clients of ours. The first thing I always notice is the GLORIOUS smell of the river that has a salty/sweet musky odor like no other. You are probably wondering why in the world would anyone

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be at the ramp before the Kit's boys? We actually had some awesome in store business in Kennewick in the morning. If you are ever in the Tri Cities make sure you get your licensing and everything else at RANCH AND HOME. This store is incredible from the elk sheds hanging everywhere to the most impressive fishing department I have ever seen. Make sure to ask for T.J. Hester, who is actually an awesome licensed guide on the big river. If you ever need a salmon or steelhead trip...this is your guy ([www.hesterssportfishing.com](http://www.hesterssportfishing.com)). Getting back to the salty/sweet, we headed down the Snake River and dumped into the river of dreams. This was actually an incredible morning in that we have tried to fish this stretch of river multiple times and it has always been too windy. This day was different, the fishing gods were on our side and ready to show us a good time. I don't know if I was more excited to fish or just be in the famous newer stretch of the Boise Cascade paper mill. Just writing those very words my body just exploded with tingling goose bumps...the Columbia River truly has my heart.

If things couldn't get better we searched through the armada of boats for the true RIVER SAVAGE GURU...KIMO GABRIEL. Those words also bring the goose bumps right back! This man, or superhuman I should say is the BEST walleye angler on the Columbia River. Yes, that is a big statement but a statement I don't hesitate saying. Not only is he Kit's Pro Staff, but a huge inspiration and mentor to me and my dad. He is truly a class act and has the most insane knowledge of the big river's walleye. There was actually a gentleman at the ramp that mentioned Kimo was Kit's Pro Staff and said,...he's a freakin' rockstar!!" And that about sums it up folks!...After finding his white Yar Craft we shared some great laughs with him and Jaramy. Then he gave us a tour of the river and set our bearings straight. Now it was time to kick some walleye butt! Fishing the afternoon away we hooked a big fish and got her in. The first fish of the trip was a beautiful 30" walleye. Man, how cool, how blessed we felt to be so fortunate to be "Jiggin' the Dream" on the Columbia River.



The next morning we were met again at the ramp, but not by the fellow friendly anglers like the day before; we were met by the more familiar harsh elements of the Columbia River. Cold wind and ice pellets to the face will definitely wake a guy up in a hurry...and want to crawl under the console and cry! The next few days on the river were much worse conditions, but we put in our time and fared very well in our book of pre-spawn walleye fishing. We were fishing a new stretch right below where the Snake River dumps in the mighty Columbia River. The week before we arrived, the Snake actually blew out making the water very muddy so we quickly adapted our presentation. **We were using the Glass Minnows with Berkley Gulp and Trigger X. We were actually sliding the bait up the shank of the hook so it would bulk out the material on the jig. We were killing two birds with one stone here by creating a bigger, more visual profile in the water and also mimicking a sculpin (the main walleye forage in this stretch of river). Then to make a complete smorgasbord...we added a half night crawler for scent. Any little addition that can help increase a bite from cold water walleye is a plus.**

Or like I've said a million times before...if it increases your confidence...DO IT!! Confidence is the golden skeleton key to catching fish...and of course the Glass Minnows!

(continued next page)



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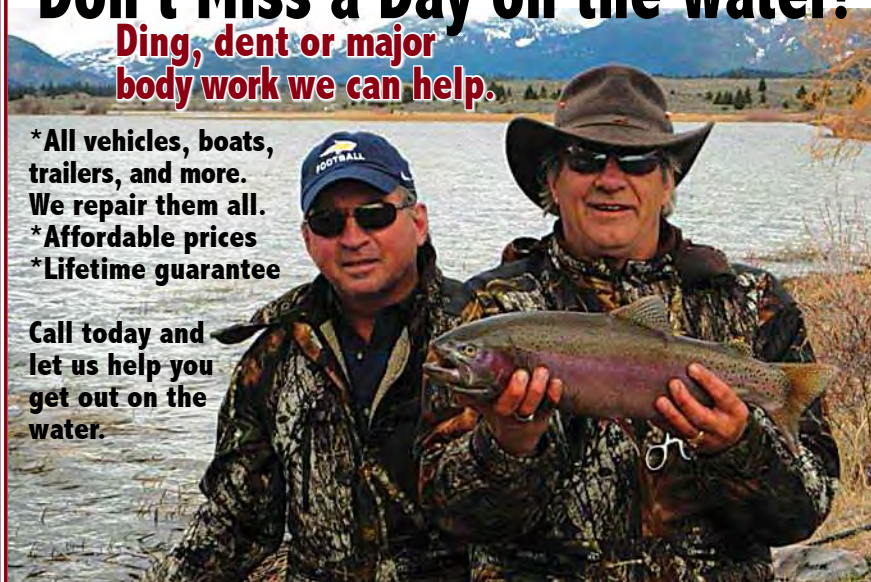
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## River Savages (continued)

I will take this segment to describe in a nutshell how we approached this intimidating river. As you all know, we are big fish freaks and that was our main objective on this trip. We won't argue with a five pound male, but the big gals were our mission's target. The biggest key to catching BIG cold water wintertime walleye on the Columbia is a VERY, VERY SLOW PRESENTATION! We do our best to keep the boat equal to the current and therefore keeping the Glass Minnows as vertical as possible making a better presentation. Keeping the boat in the strike zone is a lot of work... but very rewarding. We actually start at the top of a drift and sweep back and forth through the hole covering the water. To get technical (which I don't like to think about) you actually have to place your jig just inches in front of a big female's face in one of the biggest bodies of water in the world to get bit. If that's not bad enough, only a rare few fish will actually bite during this time of year. This is where you lift the lid on the cooler full of patience and take a couple deep breathes...and grab a caffeinated beverage! To properly jig for these majestic creatures we have what we call the 10" rule. We consistently lift our jig up and down, but never more than a couple inches off the bottom. We are trying to mimic a crippled sculpin or yellow perch scurrying across the bottom. And now the most important part...ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS LET YOUR JIG FALL ON A SLACK LINE. There are two key purposes for this:

1. By letting your jig fall on a lack line it creates a more realistic presentation with no line drag imparting on the action on the jig.
2. When a fish sucks your jig in on a slack line it will not feel you and think it just got a delicious meal...WRONG! Then when you lift back up, the jig is inside the fish's mouth and you will get better hook sets. When the jig falls on a tight line the fish will feel you and immediately spit the jig causing more missed bites.

Now, let's get back to the slimy facts of the Columbia River and our trip. After catching a few more studs and few heartbreaks with big suckers, I hooked into a very heavy fish! It was actually pretty awesome, because we were putting on a mini seminar on the water when I hooked this beast. It took at least three or four minutes to get the fish up and all the boats were saying it was going to be a twenty pound walleye. This was actually the first time I think I was shaking a little in my fishing career. Then, as I could feel the fish coming in I was scouring the depths for a glance at the beast on my line. There the fish was and it was big...big whiskers that is. It was a big ol' channel catfish and I was pumped! All the boats were saying what a hummer it was, but I was actually quite thrilled to have caught such an awesome fish. Now that we are on the subject of big fish, it wasn't a couple drifts later and I lifted my rod tip up and that magic feeling a dead weight was waiting for me on the other end. That feeling we all know, but no words in the human vocabulary can describe.



I ripped my rod up and yelled at dad, "BIG, BIG FISH ON!!" It was crazy how I could tell it was a very heavy fish but it came up faster than others, which had me confused. The fish appeared about ten feet from the boat on the surface and she was a true pig...one of the largest walleye I have ever seen. And we have caught some true giants in our time on the water. The beast started thrashing around and actually broke my fluorocarbon leader. In absolute disbelief the huge fish just sat there disoriented for a few seconds then swept back into the depths with my Glass Minnow in her mouth. Dad and I looked at each other and couldn't believe what had just happened...it was nobody's fault, but holy cow. I think the only feeling that could compare would be sending an arrow flying over the back of a 380" class bull elk!! Being so disappointed I could hardly pick my rod back up, I took a couple deep breaths and realized how lucky I have been in the past and it was due to happen eventually. And in all reality...there isn't a damn thing I could do about it...On a brighter more uplifting note, the real reason you do adventures like this is for the experience and the memories. It isn't the eighteen pound walleye that makes the trip worthwhile. It is the dream and the experiences shared while chasing your passion.

# Big Runs Of Columbia River Chinook, Coho Highlight 2014 Salmon Forecasts

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Salmon fishing in the ocean and the Columbia River this summer could be great thanks to an abundant run of hatchery coho and a potentially historic return of chinook, according to state fishery managers.

Opportunities for anglers also look good in Puget Sound, where another strong run of coho salmon is expected this year.

The forecasts - developed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and treaty Indian tribes - for chinook, coho, sockeye and chum salmon were released at a public meeting in Olympia today, marking the starting point for developing 2014 salmon-fishing seasons.

Ron Warren, fisheries policy lead for WDFW, said protecting and restoring weak wild salmon populations will continue to be the top priority as fishery managers develop salmon seasons.

"It's early in the process, but these forecasts point to an exciting summer of salmon fishing," Warren said. "We look forward to working with our tribal co-managers and constituents to establish fishing opportunities on abundant runs of hatchery salmon while ensuring we meet our conservation goals for wild fish populations."

This year's forecasts include a return of more than 1.6 million Columbia River fall chinook salmon - which would be the largest since record-keeping began in 1938. A return of nearly 1 million Columbia River coho salmon is expected back this summer as well.

"This certainly could be a banner year for summer salmon fisheries, particularly off the Washington coast and in the Columbia River," Warren said.

(continued on page 41)



Caught by John Grubenhoff of Pasco, WA, in Lake Wallula (Columbia River), Benton County, on Feb. 28, 2014

## New State Fishing Record: Walleye

Washington Department Of Fish And Wildlife

**Weight:** 20.32 lbs  
**Total Length:** 35.50 inches (90 cm)  
**Girth:** 22.75 inches (57.5 cm)

**Fishing method/gear:** Trolling in 22 feet of water upstream along a current break at 0.8 mph and using a Rapala® J-13 lure 6 feet behind a 2 oz. "bottom walker" weight.

**Conditions:** Sunny, but with a cold front coming in the next day. Water temperature: 37.2 degrees; air temperature: upper 40s.

**Species description:** Walleye are extremely popular sport fish everywhere they occur, and are known for their exquisite flavor. They are native to the Midwest United States and were first identified in Washington about 1960 in Banks Lake. They have since spread throughout the Columbia Basin and the Columbia River from Lake Roosevelt, downstream to near Longview. Washington is known nationwide for its walleye fishing.

**Previous record:** Taken Feb. 5, 2007 in Lake Wallula (Columbia River) by Mike Hepper of Richland, WA

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## Super Hunt Entries On Sale Now

Idaho Fish and Game

It's not too early to enter the first Super Hunt drawing; the deadline is May 31. With every entry in Fish and Game's Super Hunt drawings, hunters get a chance at winning the hunt of a lifetime, and their entry fee helps support hunter and angler access to and across private lands.

The first drawing in June will pick 26 lucky hunters, each of whom will win one of 25 tags - eight elk, eight deer, and eight pronghorn hunts as well as one moose hunt. One "Super Hunt Combo" entry also will be drawn that will entitle the winner to hunt for one each elk, deer, pronghorn and moose.

The second drawing will be in August when another "Super Hunt Combo" and entries for two elk, two deer, and two pronghorn hunts along with one moose hunt will be drawn. The entry period for the second drawing is June 1 through August 10.

Winners can participate in any open hunt in the state for deer, elk, pronghorn or moose, including general hunts and controlled hunts, in addition to any general season or controlled hunt tags they also hold.

Hunters who win any Super Hunt tag may still enter controlled hunts, except where other restrictions apply. All other rules of individual hunts apply.

The first Super Hunt entry will cost \$6. Each additional entry purchased at the same time will cost \$4 each. The Super Hunt Combo entries work the same way. The first one costs \$20, and each additional entry purchased at the same time will cost \$16.

Entries are available at license vendors, Fish and Game offices, or they can be ordered on the Internet at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/hunt/?getPage=22>, and on the phone at 800-554-8685.

There is no limit to the number of entries. Fill out the entry order forms and mail them to: Idaho Fish and Game License Section, P.O. Box 25, Boise, ID 83707.

Check out the Super Hunt Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/#!/pages/SuperHunt-Idaho/171792339534643](http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/SuperHunt-Idaho/171792339534643).

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**HUNTING & CONSERVATION NEWS**

**Four National Conservation Organizations Team Up for Conservation**

Pheasants Forever

Four of the nation's largest wild bird conservation organizations have joined forces to ensure that wild bird habitat conservation and our shared hunting heritage remain strong for generations to come. Ducks Unlimited (DU), the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWF), Pheasants Forever (PF) and Quail Forever (QF) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the goal of furthering sporting traditions across North America.



Photo courtesy of USFWS Mountain Prairie.

"By entering into this unique partnership, we will be able to reach more than 1 million conservation supporters throughout North America," said DU CEO Dale Hall. "This MOU is the first step to ensuring our hunting heritage remains strong. I look forward to working with each organization and I know that together we can accomplish great things." The goals of the partnership will be achieved through the support of an engaged and growing community of sportsmen and women and other outdoor enthusiasts, including the members and supporters of the partner organizations, who all share similar visions.

**"We're losing 6,000 acres of habitat every day..."**

This historic partnership also takes cooperation to an entirely new level, proving that conservation organizations aren't always competitors. Rather, this MOU shows how separate organizations can come together to achieve common goals. Combined, these organizations have helped conserve more than 30 million acres of wildlife habitat, and through this partnership, shared conservation goals will be achieved more efficiently.

"In the face of the most rapid loss of wildlife habitat in modern times, it simply makes sense for our organizations to team up wherever possible," explains Howard Vincent, President & CEO of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever. "From our local chapters holding youth mentor hunts to state land acquisition projects, our goal is to accomplish more for current and future generations of bird hunters as partners in conservation."

**Spring Turkey Season Begins April 12** MFWP

Montana's spring male turkey hunting season begins April 12 this year.

Turkey hunters can purchase a turkey license for a general area at FWP offices, license providers or online. The application deadline for western Montana's spring gobbler season permits has passed.

The 2014 spring turkey regulations with details on turkey hunting in the general area, are available at FWP offices and license providers and online at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov).

Hunters should remember when transporting a spring turkey within the state of Montana, one leg and foot must be left naturally attached for evidence of sex. Montana law requires permission for all hunting on private land.

**Spring Black Bear Hunting Season Coming Soon** MFWP

Montana's spring black bear hunting season opens April 15.

Hunters may purchase black bear hunting licenses online at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov) and at Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks license providers.

Spring black bear hunters should purchase their license by April 14. Black bear hunting licenses purchased after April 14 may not be used until 24 hours after purchase. Black bear hunters are limited to one black bear license a year.

All black bear hunters are reminded that they must successfully complete MFWP's bear identification test before purchasing a black bear license. Take the bear identification test online at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov)...The 2014 black bear regulations are available online on the FWP website at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov), at FWP region offices, and license providers.



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## Western States Continue to Advance Families Afield Legislation

U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance



A trio of Western states are moving forward with bills to create, expand, or strengthen apprentice hunting programs. Apprentice hunting, a staple of the Families Afield initiative, allows a new hunter to try hunting under the watchful eye of an experienced mentor prior to completing hunter education.

Wyoming: The Wyoming State Senate moved quickly last week to pass Senate Bill 38, expanding the state's current one-year apprentice hunter program to allow new hunters multiple opportunities to participate. The bill also includes a provision to allow a parent to supervise more than one of their children at a time under the program. The bill is now pending before the House Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Committee.

Kansas: The Kansas Senate kicked off hearings this week on a similar effort—Senate Bill 357—to expand the state's Hunter Education deferral program. The Senate Natural Resources Committee heard supporting testimony from the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism on SB 357 yesterday. This morning, the Committee passed the bill sending it to the full Senate where a vote is expected as soon as next week.

"Expanding these programs to allow for multiple year participation gives new hunters additional opportunities to become hooked on our sport," said Adam Wright, U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance (USSA) associate director of state services. "The data shows that once we hook them, they transition to Hunter Education and become fully licensed hunters."

Utah: Utah moved one step closer this week to establishing an apprentice hunting program in the state. The State Senate unanimously voted to pass Senate Bill 165 creating the Trial Hunting Permit. This program utilizes the "try-before-you-buy" concept that is a key component of the Families Afield program. The bill is now pending before the Utah House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee.

"Apprentice hunting is not only a great recruitment tool, but also incredibly safe," said Wright. "These programs are introducing the next generation of American hunters to our sport and we're pleased to see these bills moving forward." Families Afield was launched in 2005 by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the National Wild Turkey Federation and USSA. Along with the support of the NRA and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Families Afield has passed bills in 35 states, paving the way for more than 1 million new hunters to join our ranks. -

See more at:

<http://www.ussportsmen.org/families-afield-news/western-states-continue-to-advance-families-afield-legislation/#sthash.92BqumtD.dpuf>



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## CPW Seeks Information About Deer That Was Shot In The Face

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is looking for information about a deer that was found with an arrow sticking out of its head.

The injured deer was reported to Colorado Parks and Wildlife Feb. 12, and was located in a neighborhood in northwest Colorado Springs, near Foothills Elementary School. The deer was a fawn and had been shot between the eyes.

"The deer was still alive but I could tell that it was having trouble functioning," said Philip Gurule, District Wildlife Manager in Colorado Springs. The decision was made to put the animal down.

Upon investigation Gurule determined that the deer had been shot with a crossbow. Colorado Parks and Wildlife is now seeking help identifying the person responsible. Deer are not currently in season and crossbows are only allowed to be used during rifle seasons.

"This is not hunting, this is poaching," Gurule said. "We'd like to find the individual responsible and make sure they are held accountable."

Colorado Parks and Wildlife is also seeking information about another deer that was shot and killed. This deer was found Feb. 22, less than five miles away from where the first deer was discovered. It's believed the deer was shot with an arrow while it was standing on the sidewalk.

"At this time we're not sure if the two incidents are related or not, that's why we're asking for the public's help," Gurule said...

## Three Hunters Suspended After Poaching Incident

Colorado Parks & Wildlife

Three Colorado men have been temporarily banned from hunting and fishing after pleading guilty to several charges in a poaching incident in October 2012. The Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission recently handed down the suspensions after a lengthy investigation...

Colorado Parks and Wildlife officers began investigating Christopher Abeyta, Robert Abeyta and Jay Zunk after a landowner reported that the men were shooting at a coyote on his property without permission...

According to the landowner, on October 6, 2012, he saw three men shooting at a coyote in his direction. The men were inside a vehicle that was later found to belong to Robert Abeyta. The coyote ran to an adjacent property where the men shot at it again and killed it.

A thorough investigation, involving multiple CPW officers, eventually led to the three men and evidence of other poaching incidents involving big game animals including pronghorn. The three men faced multiple charges including taking wildlife without a proper and valid license, illegal possession of wildlife and use of a motor vehicle while hunting. Each individual reached a plea agreement.

# REGIONAL NEWS



## Lolo Wolf Control Action Cost Estimates Released

Idaho Fish and Game estimates that last month's wolf control action in the Lolo elk zone cost approximately \$30,000. The entire cost will be paid using license dollars paid by sportsmen and women. Fish and Game receives no state general tax dollars.

Fish and Game announced late last week that the agency, working in cooperation with the USDA Wildlife Services, had completed another wolf control action in northern Idaho's Lolo elk zone near the Idaho/Montana border to improve poor elk survival in the area.

In February, Wildlife Services agents killed 23 wolves from a helicopter. The action is consistent with Idaho's predation management plan for the Lolo elk zone, where predation is the major reason elk population numbers are considerably below management objectives.

The Lolo predation management plan is posted on the Fish and Game website: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/?getPage=325>.

This is the sixth agency control action taken in the Lolo zone during the last four years. 25 wolves were taken in the previous five actions.

Fish and Game authorizes control actions where wolves are causing conflicts with people or domestic animals, or are a significant factor in prey population declines. Such control actions are consistent with Idaho's 2002 Wolf Conservation and Management Plan approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Idaho Legislature.

Fish and Game prefers to manage wolf populations using hunters and trappers and only authorizes control actions where harvest has been insufficient to meet management goals. The Lolo zone is steep, rugged country that is difficult to access, especially in winter.

In addition to the animals killed in this control action, 17 wolves have been taken by hunters and trappers in the Lolo zone during the 2013-14 season - 7 by hunting and 10 by trapping. The trapping season ends March 31, the hunting season ends June 30.

Fish and Game estimates there were 75 -100 wolves in the Lolo zone at the start of the 2013 hunting season with additional animals crossing back and forth between Idaho and Montana and from other Idaho elk zones. Fish and Game's goal is to reduce that Lolo zone wolf population by 70 percent.

**The Lolo elk population has declined drastically from 16,000 elk in 1989 to roughly 2,100 elk in 2010, when Fish and Game last surveyed the zone.**

Restoring the Lolo elk population will require liberal bear, mountain lion, and wolf harvest through hunting and trapping (in the case of wolves), and control actions in addition to improving elk habitat. The short-term goals in Fish and Game's 2014 Elk Plan are to stabilize the elk population and begin to help it grow.

Here's a link to the new Elk Plan: <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/wildlife/?getpage=324>.

Helicopter crews are now capturing and placing radio collars on elk, moose, and wolves in the Lolo zone in order to continue monitoring to see whether prey populations increase in response to regulated wolf hunting, trapping and control actions.



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# REGIONAL NEWS



## Pathogens Threaten Southern Nevada Bighorn Sheep

The Nevada Department of Wildlife has confirmed that the same strain of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*,



the pathogen that led to a pneumonia outbreak in the River Mountain herd of desert bighorn sheep in August 2013, has been found in bighorn sheep herds living in the Eldorado, McCullough and Spring Mountain ranges.

While this information alone was bad news for state wildlife biologists, test results also confirmed that a second strain of *Mycoplasma*

*ovipneumoniae* is also present in the Spring Mountain sheep herd. The same strain that led to a deadly pneumonia outbreak among bighorn sheep in the Old Dad and Marble Mountain ranges of California. That outbreak has led to the death of bighorn sheep in those California ranges since it began in spring 2013.

"This is a worst case scenario," said Pat Cummings, wildlife biologist for NDOW. "Given the geography between the Spring Mountains and the outbreak area in California, we were concerned this might be possible, especially with the ability of bighorn rams to cover vast amounts of territory in their wanderings. There is no way to limit these animals' movements."

In addition to confirming the presence of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* in the three ranges, NDOW also positively identified one case of pneumonia. According to Dr. Peregrine Wolff, the state wildlife veterinarian, testing efforts "confirmed pneumonia in a lamb from the Eldorado Mountains. In September we also confirmed pneumonia in a lamb from the River Mountain herd."

Currently there is no means of medically treating infected animals or inoculating those that are healthy. The next steps for NDOW involve continued monitoring of the disease event's effects on the overall sheep population within the affected areas while also seeking to identify the event's geographic scope.

"As we learn more, we will also have to adjust our management activities and conservation efforts," Cummings said.

The pathogens' discovery came about through testing conducted by the Southern Nevada Bighorn Sheep Disease Investigation Project, a partnership involving NDOW, the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn and the Wild Sheep Foundation. The partnership was created to determine whether those pathogens known to cause pneumonia in bighorn sheep are present in herds beyond the River Mountains. Field observations and other available information, including the results of fall 2013 aerial population surveys, led project members to focus their efforts specifically on the Eldorado, McCullough and Spring Mountain ranges.

In November, the partnership tested a total of 33 animals, 10 each in the Eldorado and McCullough ranges and 13 in the Spring Mountains. Only one extremely sick bighorn sheep that was captured in the Eldorado Mountains was necropsied, the others all were tested using non-lethal means.

"We are very concerned the *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* could spread to other mountain ranges. The strain type is similar between the River Mountains and the additional three ranges that we tested. This likely occurred from infected sheep moving between those ranges," said Wolff.

Outdoor recreationists can help by letting NDOW know if they see sick or dead bighorn sheep during their wanderings. Wolff said it would be a big help if recreationists can take a picture and also record their location with their phone or GPS unit. "This will allow us to get back to that location," she said.



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Length: 48 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"

Circ: 7 <sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"

Points: 10

Inside Spread: 46 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"

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## Couples Who Hunt Together... By Jennifer Bickel

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There was at least one kid in everyone's gym class, the one who always took whatever sport you were playing that day way too seriously. I was that kid. You would have sworn I was trying to get a sports scholarship in elementary school gym class. It didn't stop there. All through school I always played sports and I was always competitive. Even since I was just a little one, I was always putting my heart and soul into everything that I did and have always loved competition. This competitive spirit has followed me into my adulthood. Except now I try to use it for good instead of evil. I'm no longer trying to hit a homer in 2nd grade t-ball. Instead, I'm competing with myself to be a better me, a better hunter, a better person and a better mother. I don't let my competitiveness make me a sore loser. I don't get mad if I lose, I just use it as a learning experience and strive to be better. Although, I found that when hunting with a spouse, my competitive side does have a tendency to come out. Especially when my spouse has a bit of a competitive nature as well. That's where the question comes up. Is hunting with a spouse a great bonding experience or can it cause tension in a relationship?



Dennis and Julie Pridgen hunt together

A very good friend of mine and I were talking about this today and after he posted the same question on Facebook, there was very mixed responses. Here are just a few;

- I personally love going hunting with my husband! I don't get to enough because we have 3 young children but once I get the chance again I'll be right by his side! And hopefully shooting some myself! We may be a little competitive but it's all in good fun. I enjoy seeing him get so excited about his recent kill whether it be in the woods, field or the water his happiness is mine! & to me I believe some women value that time with their husbands enjoying the same sport he does!
- Me personally, I think it creates a bond and competition both. Even though there is a competitiveness between the 2, if the other kills a bigger deer you're going to be happy for them regardless. As far as driving a wedge between the 2, I think it all depends on the people. A little competition never hurt anybody.
- Depends on the couple...many guys want to be the one "in charge" when it comes to hunting, which is perfectly awesome for most girls. For me it created a huge wedge as I like to call the shots. I believe hunting does create a bond between couples, as sometimes you need to be with someone who understands that passion or it will be a problem. But honestly every ones situation is different and different things work for different couples. It's hard to clump everyone together.
- I think it creates a bond. Why have it be a competition? You should be happy for your loved one if they get a bigger trophy. But I don't hunt for trophy. I hunt because it's what I love. And to provide meals for the family. Being out in the woods is peaceful. And if I just so happen to shoot a nice one then that's just a prize. (next page)

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Cole and Amanda Carr  
also hunt together.

-We hunt together. She kills more n bigger animals than I...but I can say. She has a GOOD guide. (Me)....

-Keep it fun and the bond will grow.

-I will caution you though.... Most of you are younger... there will come a day when your eyes won't be as sharp, your strength will fade and you will be limited in what you can achieve..... When that time comes, it won't be about the biggest or the most.... be sure you place your appreciation of all God's wonders at the top of your list at all times!

-I'm all for women who hunt! But I want a woman who's not scared to get out of truck and say 'see ya' at dark, and go her own way and have her own personal experience in the outdoors! Then meet back at truck after dark and share the hunt



Ryan and Sheila Hunt, hunt together.

In recent years, more and more women are getting into hunting. I think this is great! It is so refreshing to see more women stepping up and taking charge. I don't think there is any one right answer. I think each relationship is different and you have to find what works for you.

I'm competitive, independent and hard headed but I also know when to let go and sit back and learn. I wouldn't know a lot of what I know today about hunting if I hadn't sucked up my pride and just listened. We as hunters learn a lot through trial and error or at least I know I have. But some of our greatest lessons can be learned from observing and being a team player. Nobody likes a ball hog! Even some of the bad memories I have are memories made and what may not have been so funny back then, is hilarious now. Sometimes we need to just sit back and take it all in.

My personal opinion is hunting can really strengthen the bond in a relationship but you may need to set some boundaries. I have found that hunting together, but also hunting solo, at times can be really beneficial for a couple. Find what works for you and your relationship, no two relationships are the same. I have some memories and have experienced some things that I may never experience again while hunting with a spouse.

There were times when I just wanted to strangle the person I was hunting with or at least duct tape their mouth shut. Or maybe tie them to a tree and duct tape a call in their mouth so all they can do when they try to talk is call you in a big bull. Life is what you make it. Hunting is a positive experience, don't let it be turned into a negative one. Just remember that the patience you practice while hunting with other people will make your patience better when you're waiting on that big mule deer buck to take another couple of steps into your shooting lane.

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## The Move From Good To Great

(continued from page 7)

*Bowhunting for elk is demanding and you have to be in shape. The author was for this hunt and it paid off.*

**Being where the game is:** If you have set out to hunt a trophy book whitetail and you spend all your time where there are no trophy book whitetail you will not be successful. If you want to hunt a cow elk but there are no elk where you are hunting, you will not be a great cow hunter. I know this sounds trivial but I cannot tell you how many times I hear hunters speak of greatness, they tell me their goals and then they spend all their time hunting in places where it is nearly impossible for them to attain their goal. That means you have to be in a place where you actually can accomplish the desired results. This is the most simple of the three factors but it is broken all the time.

I live in the west where mule deer and elk are plentiful. I have several friends who love to hunt and want to hunt the west that come out each year to spend time with me and hunt the surrounding land. They come out wanting to prove or verify that they are great hunters, but here is often how it goes down. "I want to shoot a bull elk." No size requirement is given. They just want to be one of the 12-15% of successful bull hunters in our state for bull elk and that would accomplish what they set out to do and, therefore, if repeated over and over again over time we would define them as a great hunter.

So they show up out of shape, they haven't practiced shooting since they were here last and they haven't read about or watched anything on hunting elk. Yet they really believe they are going to be part of that elite group of hunters who consistently harvest game. Day one of the hunt begins and the elk are visible but they are 2 miles away and one would have to drop 2000 feet in elevation and then climb 3000 feet to get to the elk and they opt out. Better yet, they have hunted the same area for several years and know elk are regularly in that area so they sit there for one full day and when they see no elk they move to other spots only to come back to the original spot and see fresh elk tracks while they were ping ponging around the countryside. Their lack of persistence usually costs them a shot.

**Be ready to hunt:** These hunters are where the game is located but other factors prevented them from the harvest. That is the second point: being ready to effectively hunt that game. These hunters are in the right place but are not ready to take an animal.

I call this group dream hunter who dreams of hunting success, have defined what that success is but they neither have the discipline or the drive to make it happen. Therefore they must settle for living vicariously off of some other hunter who is hunting what they want to hunt and accomplishing it.

In my elk hunting example there were some simple factors that needed attention to bring about success. Any time I know a flatlander is coming out west to hunt at altitude I give them some advice that will help them be successful and may save their lives. If you are going to come out west and hunt elk you have to be in shape. This means training at home for months to increase your cardio. You are going to have to increase your cardio because just the factor of coming from sea level to 8000+ feet is going to cause you some issues. This is more than just being in shape for the hunt, it can become a life and death scenario with Acute Mountain Sickness or High Altitude Sickness. (continued on page 44)

## Mix Up Your Gobbler Attack

(continued from page 8)



Hunter using slate for subtle calls to lure gobbler.  
©Mark Kayser

A boss hen will also be less leery when moving toward what sounds like a small flock of hens as compared to a loner. I always employ a diaphragm call and a slate call on every setup.

**SHAKE A LEAF** If you have a gobbler or a flock that won't budge, give them a reason to join you. In addition to using soft yelps, purrs and clucks, take your hand and rake the leaves to imitate the sound of a flock scratching for food. This works on calm mornings and provides at least two reasons for birds to move your way. First, if they hear turkeys contentedly feeding they will have a feeling of security. Secondly, turkeys feed all day long and the sound may entice them to check out a different menu.

**INVADE A GOBBLER'S SPACE** Make it easy for a gobbler to come to your calls. Use terrain and foliage to get as close as possible to his gobbling location before calling. After he responds to a locator call shut up and make your move before firing him up with hen calls. If he still plays hard to get, creep or crawl 15 to 20 yards ahead and try again.

**BE AGGRESSIVE** Aggressive yelps, cuts and clucks can spur a gobbler into racing into a setup fast. If a gobbler doesn't respond then you can move to the next calling site and try again. Be sure to keep an ear out for distant gobblers. **Your intended target may not fire up, but aggressive calls often spark distant gobblers you may not have known were in the big Western neighborhood.**

**BE QUIET** If a gobbler doesn't make a move it may be time to clam up and make him think. If you call aggressively nonstop you may make a gobbler believe you are on the way to him. Shut up for a while and make him believe that you may have left or lost interest. He may just be desperate enough for a lady friend and stroll right into range.

**WALK AWAY** If a gobbler won't budge, and you don't like the option of sitting quietly, turn away from the gobbler and slowly start to walk away, calling as you go. Turkeys have excellent hearing and a gobbler will realize you are leaving, possibly sparking it to gobble incessantly, or to chase down the departing hen.

**CALL FROM COVER** Calling in semi-open areas presents a risk. If a turkey comes to the edge of an open area and doesn't see a turkey, he may turn and leave without giving you a shot or hold up out of range. To avoid that situation, set up in thick foliage and make the gobbler hunt you. You'll still want to sit near an opening, but choose a small opening to allow for a close shot when the gobbler sticks its head out to greet the hen.

**READY TO RUMBLE** Fights attract guys like yelps attract gobblers. But gobblers also can't resist a neighborhood brawl. Fake a fight to bring a tom into pellet-reaching distance. To mimic the best gobbler fight mix cuts and yelps with fighting purrs. For additional authenticity use a wing to create flapping noises and scratch at the leaves to replicate the sound of a turkey UFC match.

**JUST SAY NO** I hate to admit defeat, but sometimes it's best to leave a stubborn gobbler, and go looking for a more receptive candidate. If you have other areas to troll for a turned-on tom, walk away and check them out. You have nothing to lose because you can always circle back and give the stubborn gobbler another try later in the day. It's not unusual for a gobbler to have a change of heart after an hour or more of time has passed. Switch your calls and come at him from a different direction for a potentially brighter outcome.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

To keep up with Mark Kayser visit his Facebook account.  
[www.facebook.com/pages/Mark-Kayser/119789001392664?fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mark-Kayser/119789001392664?fref=ts)





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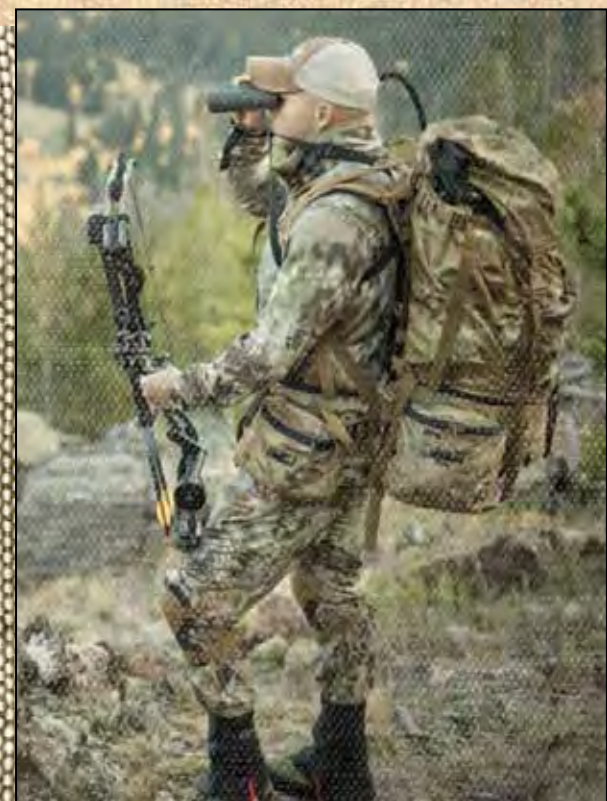
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# It's Spring Turkey Hunting Season



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## REBATE on Turkey Ammunition From Hevi-Shot

# Turkey Hunting MFWP

Selecting a call presents a bewildering problem for the beginner, especially if he asks for advice-few turkey hunters are likely to agree on a selection. This diversity is understandable, since calls differ widely in appearance and method of operation. One of the most popular and easiest to use is the large hinged-type box call. The top edges of the box are beveled and are chalked by the user. By drawing the paddle or lid very slowly and gently across either lip, the low, seductive mating yelp of a hen can be imitated. Concentrate your efforts on learning to imitate only the hen yelps and clucks. These are really the only two calls you have to learn for a successful hunt. The yelp is soft and plaintive and usually uttered in a series of threes. Visualize it as: "kee-yuk, kee-yuk, kee-yuk . . . key-yuk, key-yuk."

It must be done pleadingly with medium-pitched sounds, and with each perk ending on a rising inflection. A calling sequence should start with four or five yelps.

The rhythm of the yelping sequence is far more important than the tone, and this is what you should try to perfect when calling. Surprisingly enough, some hens will produce yelps that are really off key. When the hen is responsive to the gobbler, her call is snappy and to the point. As soon as you make some hen yelps, the tom will usually respond quickly with a gobble. Make a second call soon after the first to convince him that he really heard what he thought he did. Then, remain quiet for a while, regardless of how much he keeps gobbling. You can be sure he has zeroed in on your position and can come straight to you, if so inclined. If he is still gobbling from the same location 10-15 minutes after you last called to him, you might try a couple of clucks every 5 or 10 minutes until he comes in. If the bird is a 2-year old tom unable to gather a harem of hens, he will often move in quickly after hearing your hen yelps. But if you are working on a long-bearded old tom with a complement of hens in the vicinity, you are probably going to have a frustrating experience.

(continued on page 43)

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## YOUR BIRD DOG COULD BE A SHED DOG -----

Anthony's Antics Afield is written by Anthony Hauck, Pheasants Forever's Online Editor. Email Anthony at [AHauck@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:AHauck@pheasantsforever.org)

For upland hunters who also moonlight as deer hunters, the biggest drawback to pursuing the ungulates is the absence of perhaps the most appealing aspect of bird hunting – the dog. Enter shed hunting, an activity blending bird dogs and bucks, which may be just the ticket to get your bird dog out of its offseason training rut.

**What Bird Dog Breeds Can Be Shed Dogs?** According to Tom Dokken, legendary dog trainer and owner of Dokken's Dog Supply, current shed dogs are mainly Labrador Retrievers. "The strongest breeds are the ones that are going to pick something up," Dokken says, alluding to Labs and Golden Retrievers.

But Dokken says most bird dogs can become well suited to shed hunting. "Really any dog that likes to play fetch can be a shed dog," he says. "Even pointing breeds, especially those with natural retrieving instincts like German shorthaired pointers and German wirehaired pointers, can find success."

**Hunting Season Just Got Longer** When pheasant and quail dogs go bad, the most likely culprit is a shortage or complete lack of an offseason training regimen. "Quite frankly, a lot of people just drop the ball after hunting season," Dokken says, "Shed hunting is another way to get offseason activity, and one that's definitely different than what most bird dogs are used to."

Bird dogs can easily pick up shed hunting, and in short order, Dokken points out. "Think of it as an upland hunt, but for antlers," he says, "The dogs are using their hunting drive, their noses and working on retrieves, so it's really a way to extend the hunting season." That goes for the trainer, too. "It really feels like I'm going on a hunting trip," he said as he and his dogs prepare to head west to South Dakota in search of sheds this April.

Fortunately, quality shed hunting can be had almost anywhere these days, including suburbia, and isn't exclusive to just whitetail deer antlers – bird dogs can also retrieve mule deer, elk and moose sheds.

**Will Shed Hunting Ruin My Bird Dog?** In a word, "No," Dokken says. "Hunting for sheds doesn't mess up a bird dog, there just isn't that competition between birds and sheds," Dokken adds, "The antler can never take the place of a living, breathing, good-smelling and exciting live bird." As easily as bird dogs can pick up shed hunting, the transition back to doing what they do best, hunting birds, is just as seamless.

**Shedding Started** While places to hunt abound, the most important element is, as with all things dog training, finding the time. "It's not something you need to train your dog for years to do," Dokken says, "It's simple stuff you can do at home." While Dokken runs a 12-16 week shed dog training course ([www.dokkenoakridgekennels.com](http://www.dokkenoakridgekennels.com)), he's seen dogs pick it up in a matter of weeks.

Dokken recommends starting with a simple game of fetch, tossing the antler around the house, then the backyard, letting the dog have fun picking it up and bringing it back to you. "Take a command word and work it in, but make sure it's not a word you emphasize for other commands," he says. His preferred command is "find the bone."

To a bird dog, a hard shed antler, unlike a soft, well-scented pheasant, typically takes some warming to. Dokken, who doesn't use treats when training dogs for upland birds or waterfowl, does use them for shed training. "A treat let's the dog know it's worth picking up," he says.

One caveat as you increase the number of sheds you're hiding around the house or backyard is the scent from your own hands. "At first, dogs will key on to sheds because of the scent from your hands. You'll eventually need to eliminate that scent using rubber gloves and boots when you place the sheds."

**Fast Growing Dog Sport** Dokken has hosted the World Shed Dog Hunting championship at his Oak Ridge Kennels in Northfield, Minnesota. Of the participating dogs to date, Dokken said 80 percent were "bird dogs." The amateur and junior divisions at the first ever event were won by Lee Lakosky (from The Crush on Outdoor Channel) and his Lab, Tank...

## My Best And Worst Coyote Hunt On The Same Day



By Gerald Stewart [www.hunterspec.com](http://www.hunterspec.com)

*Editors Note: Gerald Stewart of Texas, has been calling predators for 40 years, and he helps design and develop many of Hunter's Specialties' predator calls.*

I just returned...from one of the best hunts I've ever been on, yet it was one of the worst hunts I've ever been on, and both occurred on the same day.

The reason the hunt was bad was because the wind was blowing hard, and when you've got a strong wind, calling coyotes and seeing coyotes is twice as difficult. However, what made the hunt so good was that in two days of hunting with writers and three days of filming for a video, we were able to see 30 coyotes. We only actually took about 15 coyotes.

One exciting part of coyote hunting is when the animals come in multiples. You may have two or three coyotes coming in at the same time. Although this is fun and exciting, often when you have two or three coyotes coming in at the same time you may only harvest one or two of them, and in most cases just one.

This territory we were hunting was virgin territory for two reasons; first the coyotes in this area never heard any predator calling; and second, I hadn't even scouted this region, there hadn't been any human intrusion. What that reemphasized to me on this hunt was just how critical scouting can be. **For me, scouting is not just looking for facts and scat, but also looking for a good calling site, finding elevation where you can see for long distances, and also locating shooting lanes where if you see the coyote coming into a lane, you can get ready to take the shot.**

One of the frustrating parts of this hunt was even though we could find good stand sites, in many instances we didn't have brush around us to prevent the coyotes from seeing us. On one stand site, we had three coyotes come in at the same time; on another stand site, we had four coyotes come in at the same time. Even though we had seven coyotes come in on those two stand sites, we failed to take a single coyote because the coyotes spotted us before we could get off a shot.

What I learned here was I needed to do more homework to find brushier places so that when we set up and call the coyotes in, then they couldn't see us. I think if I'd scouted more, spent more time with our guides and told them the kinds of places I needed to be where we could not only see the coyotes, but where they couldn't see us, we would have taken more coyotes.

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## RMEF Rides Momentum of Record-Setting 2013 into 2014

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation rolls into its 30th year of existence fresh off a fifth consecutive year of record membership, the unveiling of a new endowment to boost its core mission programs and having topped 6.4 million acres of land protected or enhanced.

“There’s no doubt that 2013 was an incredible year for us, perhaps one of the best ever,” said David Allen, RMEF president and CEO. “We are so grateful to our volunteers and members because their dedication and commitment to elk, elk country and conservation made it all possible.”

### 2013 highlights:

- Enhanced or protected 112,760 acres of land toward an overall lifetime mark of more than 6.4 million acres
- Opened or secured access to 62,027 acres toward an overall lifetime mark of more than 707,000 acres
- Completed 562 projects bringing lifetime number of projects to 8,651
- Unveiled \$30 million Torstenson Family Endowment to further core mission programs of permanent land protection, habitat stewardship, elk restoration and hunting heritage
- Restored a wild elk herd to Missouri
- Fueled continuing elk restoration project in Virginia
- Recorded fifth straight year of record membership, now at 203,703
- Provided 357 grants in 44 states for hunting heritage and conservation outreach, directly reaching more than 184,000 children and adults
- Maintained the highest rating of 4 stars from Charity Navigator, America’s top charity ratings service
- Announced 100 percent of revenue from national convention tags to be awarded to individual states to benefit wildlife conservation
- Topped 100,000 Facebook followers

With scores of on-the-ground conservation projects planned or already in the works across the nation, hundreds of local banquets and fundraisers scheduled in the coming months, and the unveiling of an exciting, new RMEF endeavor later this year, expectations are soaring for 2014.

“We recognize RMEF’s 30th anniversary as the ‘Year of the Volunteer’ and we’re working with a full-speed-ahead mentality to accelerate our mission like never before,” added Allen. “We also look forward to capping off 2014 at Elk Camp in early December when we unveil the new Hunter Christmas Exposition in conjunction with the National Finals Rodeo.”



## **MDF Welcomes Budget that Recommends \$900 Million for Land Conservation**

Mule Deer Foundation 3/4/14

The Mule Deer Foundation thanked the White House today for requesting full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for 2015 and beyond. If passed by Congress, the president's budget that was released today would fulfill the promise of the 50-year old fund that was supposed to dedicate \$900 million from revenues from offshore oil and gas development, not taxpayer dollars, for the conservation of lands and for outdoor recreation. Unfortunately, more than \$18 billion in funds intended for LWCF have been diverted over the years. In spite of this, the program has been extremely valuable for conserving important fish and wildlife habitat and for providing sportsmen's access to public lands.

"In mule deer country, public lands provide most of the hunting opportunity as well as protection of important winter range and migratory corridors. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been a critical tool for helping provide this access..." said Miles Moretti, president and CEO of the Mule Deer Foundation.

Enacted in 1964, LWCF was a commitment by Congress to reinvest revenues from the use of one natural resource for the conservation of our outdoor heritage. In spite of only receiving its full allocation twice in its history, LWCF has helped to fund federal, state and local conservation and recreation projects in almost every county in every state in the country...

"If you've hunted in the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge in Montana or on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in eastern Oregon or the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area in Colorado or hundreds of other public land units across the West, then you have benefited from the LWCF. That's why we appreciate the president's budget request for full LWCF funding," Moretti continued.

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## Hunting - Bear Management Unit 317<sup>MFWP</sup>

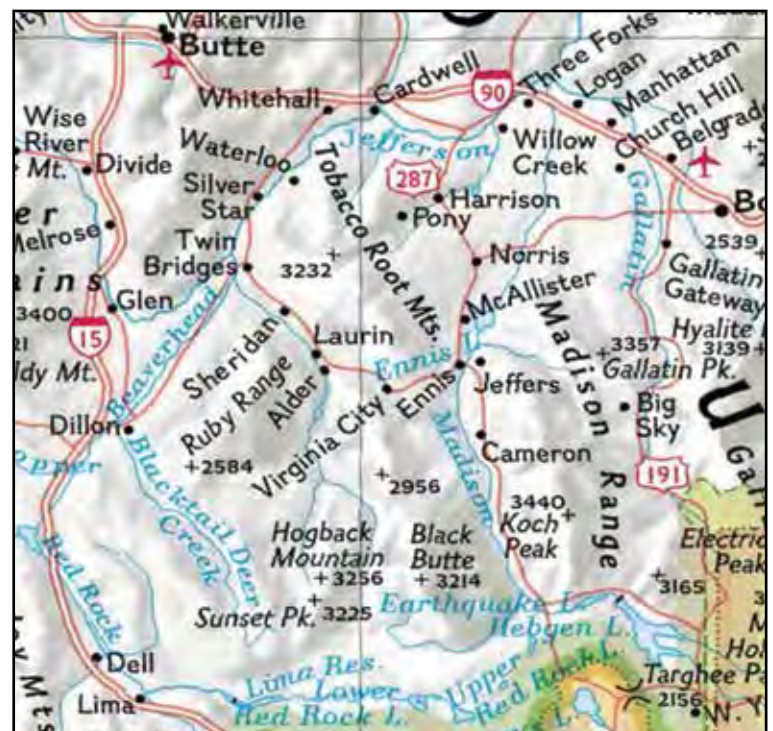
2012 Spring Harvest Report: 30 total (25 males and 5 females)

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### 2014 Black Bear Season Dates - BMU 317

- Spring April 15 - June 15
- Archery September 6 - September 14
- Fall September 15 - November 30

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Map produced using National Geographic TOPO  
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## Big Runs Of Columbia River Chinook, Coho Highlight 2014 Salmon Forecasts

(continued from page 23)

As in past years, salmon-fishing prospects in 2014 vary by area:

**Columbia River:** Of the 1.6 million fall chinook expected to return to the Columbia River this season, nearly 86 percent of those fish are "bright" stocks. Those fish, most of which are destined for areas above Bonneville Dam, are the foundation of the in-river recreational salmon fishery.

If that run comes in as forecast, the total number of brights would exceed last year's entire Columbia River run of 1.2 million chinook salmon. Additionally, the ocean abundance of Columbia River coho is forecast to be about 964,000 fish, three times as many fish as last year's actual abundance.

**Washington's ocean waters:** The strong return of Columbia River salmon should also boost fisheries in the ocean this year.

About 225,000 lower river hatchery chinook are expected back this season, 35,000 more fish than last year's return. Those salmon, known as "tules," are the backbone of the recreational ocean chinook fishery.

The abundant coho salmon return projected for the Columbia River will contribute to fisheries off the coast of Washington as well, said Doug Milward, ocean salmon fishery manager for WDFW.

"This is the first time in more than a decade we have had exceptionally strong forecasts for chinook and coho in the same year," Milward said. "That's good news for anglers because those abundant runs could result in higher catch quotas for both species this summer in the ocean."

**Puget Sound:** Summer/fall chinook salmon returns to Puget Sound are expected to total nearly 283,000 fish, slightly higher than last year's forecast. Most chinook fisheries in Puget Sound, where hatchery chinook make up the bulk of the returning fish, will be similar to last year, said Ryan Lothrop, recreational fishery manager for WDFW.

A strong run of coho salmon is expected back to Puget Sound as well. Nearly 873,000 coho are forecast to return to the Sound's streams, similar to last year's projection. Lothrop said bright spots for coho include the Nisqually, Skokomish, Skagit, Stillaguamish and Snohomish rivers, as well as Lake Washington and the marine waters of mid- and south Puget Sound.

Another bright spot is Baker Lake, where an abundant sockeye return of 35,000 salmon is expected back this year. Fishery managers will once again consider sockeye fisheries in Baker Lake and the Skagit River, Lothrop said.

Another possibility is bonus bag limits for sockeye during summer salmon fisheries in marine areas around the San Juan Islands and in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. "About 23 million sockeye salmon are forecast to return to Canada's Fraser River this year, and a portion of those fish will make their way through those marine areas," Lothrop said. ♦



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## 3rd Annual Babes N Bullets Women Only Shooting Event To Raise Money For Tough Enough To Wear Pink Of Montana

Bob Ward & Sons is proud to present the 3rd Annual Babes N Bullets shooting event, a for women only event to be held May 31st at the Deer Creek Range in Missoula. Proceeds from the shooting event will again benefit Tough Enough to Wear Pink of Montana. Bob Ward's has teamed up with the Holiday Inn Downtown, Culligan Water, Jakers, and several hunting brands to raise funds supporting breast cancer awareness. (<http://www.toughpinkmontana.org/>)

**The shoot will be held Saturday, May 31st at the Missoula Deer Creek Shooting Center. The shooting event will run from 9am – 5pm with sign in beginning at 8:15am.**

There is a \$100.00 fee which includes:

- ◇ All day shooting clinic
- ◇ Snacks water/soda and lunch
- ◇ A goody bag with lots of fun items
- ◇ After party at Holiday Inn including appetizers, drinks, raffle, and auction (5pm – 8pm)

Babes N Bullets is an opportunity for women of all skill levels to try their hand at shooting handguns, rifles, shotguns and pepper spray. Safety, proper technique, and fun are the main focus of this event. Here is a recap of past events from Tough Enough to Wear Pink of Montana's website:

"Many of the women had never held a gun, and some were pretty savvy with the hardware! The instructors were terrific - the perfect mix of experience, patience, and humor. The highlight of the day was shooting the .50 cal pistol. Who knows what the good folks at Bob Ward's might bring this year."

Registration for the event is open now, and if last year is any indication, it will fill up fast. You can register in the Missoula Bob Ward's store or online at [www.bobwards.com](http://www.bobwards.com). The \$100 registration includes: Babes n' Bullets shirt, shooting safety equipment, lunch, a full day of shooting, transportation to and from the range, and an after party. The after party is your opportunity to drink, nibble, win raffles, bid on auction items, swap stories, and pick out the gun you want to buy. Bob Ward's experienced staff, vendors and volunteers will assist everyone both at the shoot and the after party. New this year: Invite a guest to the after party for only \$20 more. The guest can be male or female.

Bob Ward's is Montana's oldest and largest sporting goods retailer with stores in Missoula, Butte, Helena, Hamilton and Bozeman, and online at [www.bobwards.com](http://www.bobwards.com). In June, the company will celebrate its 97th anniversary.

For more information, contact Ryan Corwin, Bob Ward's Advertising Manager at [rcorwin@bobwards.com](mailto:rcorwin@bobwards.com) or via phone at 406.728.3220.

# Turkey Hunting (continued from page 34)

The hens in his harem may go to him soon after he starts gobbling and your early morning efforts to lure him to you usually will be futile. A little patience and a different call may turn the tables. Under such a set of circumstances, a gobble from your box call may spell the margin of victory. Many box calls have a crisscross arrangement of rubber bands holding the lid gently to the box top. If you hold the call bottom down in the palm of your hand, handle pointed away from you, a quick shake will produce a gobble. This call often moves a hesitant tom into range because he thinks a rival gobbler is moving in on his hens. Use it with caution, however, because it also might call up another hunter.

Probably the best way to learn the yelping sequence of the hen turkey is to listen to a good caller or to a turkey-calling instructional record. If you are halfway serious about learning the basic calls, practice the yelping sequence outdoors throughout the year and don't wait until the day before the hunt to review your calling instructions and to begin practicing yelps.

## Decoys

Hens normally go to toms for breeding, so you'll have to do some good coaching to get the tom to come even a reasonable distance to you. A hen decoy can be placed in an open area within shotgun range of the caller. A young tom "jake" decoy can also be used near the hen to suggest competition for the older tom. Decoys can be purchased through large sporting goods stores, made from stuffed wild or domestic (not white) turkeys or made by yourself using foam, paper-mâché or other materials which can be easily worked and light enough to carry.

## Tagging Regulations

Immediately after killing your turkey, cut the month and date out and attach the carcass tag to the leg so that it may be easily inspected. Any bearded turkey taken in the spring season must have the beard attached while being transported. If the harvested spring gobbler is plucked or skinned for cold storage or transportation, the head and beard must remain attached.

## Sex and Age

The mature gobbler's typical head adornments and "beard" (a hair like appendage hanging from the upper breast) serve as good field marks in distinguishing the male from the female. However, up to 10 percent of the hens possess beards, and secondly, the gobbler's beard and head adornments are not readily visible until his second year. The only sure way to tell a gobbler from a hen is to examine the lower breast feathers. The tips are glossy black in males and white or buffy in females. Glassing turkeys from a distance with binoculars will readily show this difference. The outer two wing feathers will tell you whether the bird is a juvenile or an adult.

If the feathers are sharply pointed and without transverse white bars extending to the tip, the bird is a poult (bird of the year). If the outer feather tips are somewhat rounded, and the white bars extend to the tip, the bird is an adult.

## Defensive Turkey Hunting Tactics

A safe turkey hunter, like a safe driver, is defensive minded. Below are some tips you should consider.

- Select the largest stump, blow-down, tree-trunk, or rock to place your back against when calling; a hunter is more likely to spot another hunter moving to the front or side than from behind.
- Eliminate the colors white, red, black and blue from your hunting outfit; this includes handkerchiefs, socks, under-wear, etc.
- Select your calling spot in open timber rather than thick-brush; eliminating movement is a key to success, not concealment.
- In areas of high hunter concentrations, wear blaze orange when walking to and from your vehicle; this is also a good idea when carrying a bird out of the woods.
- Be discreet when imitating the sound of a gobbling turkey.
- When songbirds, crows or your turkey shuts up-look out; there's a good chance another hunter is moving in on your bird.
- Never move, wave or make turkey sounds to alert another hunter of your presence; remain still, cough or holler. A quick movement may be your last. Use common sense.

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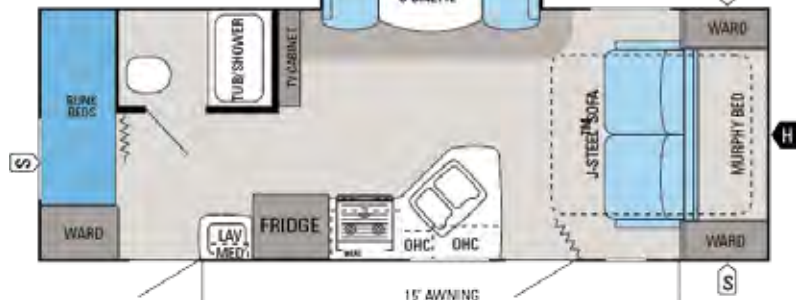
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## The Move From Good To Great

(continued from page 32)

Being in shape is very important if you are hunting public land in the west. I always suggest that anyone coming from low altitude and planning on hunting at high altitude go to [www.wildernessathlete.com](http://www.wildernessathlete.com) and buy Altitude Advantage and Hydrate and Recover. These products don't replace hard work and conditioning but will help alongside of it.

Not only do you need to physically be in shape, but you need to prepare practically through equipment preparation and training. If you are going into the back country with a 60lb pack you need to train with that pack. If you are planning at shooting at 70 yards you need to have your bow set up so it and you are capable of doing that and you need to practice excessively. I know this sounds common sense but I cannot tell you how often I encounter the exact opposite. People who have the best equipment in the world but are not trained or not efficient with it.

The most important training has to be the mental side. To be mentally ready for any hunt I read all I can on the type of hunting I am about to do. I watch videos, I read, I talk to others who have done the hunt I am pursuing. The information gathered and the confidence gained helps my mental resolve about the hunt. Some hunts are easy and some are incredibly tough. Either way my resolve comes from being properly informed and educated and then is driven by my passion. I believe most hunters who don't meet their goals fail more often because of the lack of mental fortitude even above lacking physically. The mind will fail often before the body does. I train my mind diligently so that my body will carry me on to completion.



Know your equipment and practice so you are efficient. The author is and this is more proof.

### Increase your odds.

**Spend more time in the field:** That leads me to the last point and what I believe is the bottom line most important factor that separates the good from great hunters. **Time Afield.** Although this factor cannot always be controlled due to other priorities like work, those who spend the most days afield are usually the most successful. The reason that we often view TV hunters as great hunters is because they shoot so many great animals. One of the major factors that makes them successful is that they spend the entire fall and sometimes the year in the field.

I have lived in the west for 7 years now and have been able to shoot 7 elk. Not by any means have these all been record book bulls, but everyone has been a trophy because I set out to accomplish a goal and did so. Because of my schedule, up to this past year when I took a new job, I was able to spend about 25 days on average out of a 30 day archery season in the woods. My time spent did not make me successful alone but it multiplied my opportunity to be successful because it was accompanied by being where the game was and by being properly prepared.

If I was just in the field all those days without having taken the first two steps I still would not have accomplished my goals. But when I am in the right place, and by the right place I mean where my game lives, and if I have properly trained both physically and mentally for the pursuit I am on, then and only then will I have repeated success.

The truth is that many hunters possess the skill and have the resources to be a great hunter. Most of those many do not ever become a great hunter though because they are not driven enough to do their homework which will put them where their game lives, they won't work hard enough to be properly prepared mentally, physically, and with their equipment, and they won't sacrifice all that is necessary to be in the woods long enough to get it done. If you want to become a great hunter who accomplishes what you set out to accomplish, then it is time to put these three simple steps into practice.

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**Gear You  
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Never Ride  
Without**

By Steve Hickoff  
Yamaha Outdoors Tip

It's easy to shrug off packing or wearing gear that'll keep you safe outdoors, but highly recommended for the well-prepared recreational rider.

**Helmet:** It's plain and simple – protect your head. Forget about acting cool and riding without one. Do the sensible thing; if not for you, at least for your family.

**Goggles:** Riding puts you into some trying situations. Branches on un-groomed trails and small flying rocks can do personal damage. As with the helmet, it's the right move to make.

**Protective Apparel:** Gloves, long shirt sleeves and pants, as well as protective boots – all are suggested for your trail riding and back road adventures. Lighter but still protective apparel can be worn during the warmer months. You won't even question it when it's cold.

**Maps:** Print maps or GPS generated, take your pick – maps are a smart move, especially when you're wheeling into new territory. As a Plan B, always inform friends and family where you'll be riding that day.

**First-Aid/Survival Kit:** This item is one that's easy to prepare, but hard to remember to bring along. Do it. Fill the kit with simple details such as Band-Aids and insect repellent, but also gauze, medical tape, toilet paper, and more serious items such as a space blanket, waterproof matches and a snack kit if you have to unexpectedly spend the night out there in the wild.

**Change of Clothes:** Got a duffel you rarely use? Sure you do. Fill it with clothes you can change into in the event of a soaking while fishing, or rough weather while hunting or simply riding recreationally. It'll take little time to fill this bag with socks, pants, shirts and a warm jacket and cap. Ride enough and at some point you'll use it...

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