

WESTERN HUNTING & FISHING

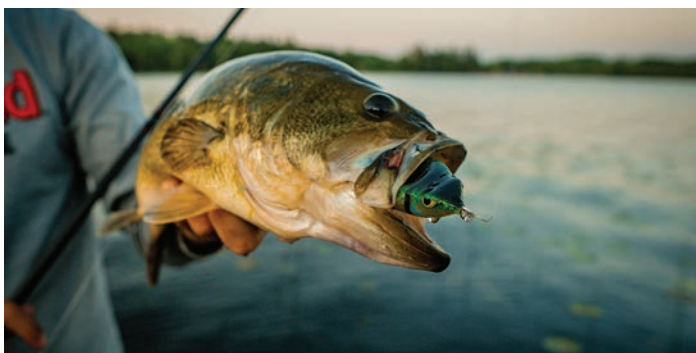
JUNE 2025

NEWS



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





Photos courtesy Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com

Topwater Frog Fishing Tips

By Glenn Walker

Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com

As the summer temperatures continue to climb, and the vegetation continues to grow, and gets matted out, it is time to head to the shallows and toss around a topwater frog for big summertime largemouth...and maybe even a smallmouth.

To help increase your success throwing a topwater frog, like the Reed-Runner Walking Frog or Reed-Runner Popping Frog, here are some helpful tips to keep in mind.



Reed-Runner Walking Frog (Lab Rat)



Reed-Runner Popping Frog (Perch)

A popular spot for anglers to fish a topwater frog is around lily pads. When you are looking for bass in lily pads, be sure to listen very closely to the noises coming from those lily pads. What you want to be listening for is the sound of bluegills or other sunfish popping those lily pads; this means there is food there for the bass to eat. Another sound you want to be listening for, is there bullfrogs croaking up near shore. Any time I'm fishing lily pad fields, I like to run my HydroWave unit from on the Active Pad mode, this helps emulate those noises.

Regardless of how often you fish a topwater hollow bodied frog, every angler in the back of their head always has that nagging question, "when should I set the hook when fishing a frog?"

Many anglers when first are being taught to fish topwater frogs by another angler, the common rule that is taught is to count to two or three, then set the hook. I feel that for the first-time frog fisherman this rule is both good and bad. It is good, because it does work, but it is bad on the other hand because it instills this rule in that angler's head and there are sometimes down the road in that angler's frog fishing future that abiding by this rule will cost them fish.

I feel that the two or three count method does well when you are fishing your frog over a thick mat of vegetation. This is because waiting this long does allow the bass to eat your frog and get it down in his mouth.

But if you are fishing scattered vegetation or get a strike on your frog in open water, waiting this long will sometimes have your frog already been in and out of that bass's mouth. In these situations, you'll want to set the hook when you feel the pressure of the bass on your line.

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

Another variable that anglers need to think about when frog fishing and more specifically on when they should be setting the hook, is how the bass are eating the bait today. Sometimes bass won't be engulfing your topwater frog, so you'll need to give them some more time to get the bait into their mouth, other times they are hammering it and if you wait too long, your frog could be so far down the bass's throat, it may have an unfortunate result.

So, the next time you are targeting bass with Northland Reed-Runner Frogs, and having a hard time hooking a bass, think about when you have been setting the hook and what you can change up. More than likely a simple change to your hook setting approach will yield more bass in your boat!

(continued on page 11)

Creature Comforts: 7 Things To Make Hunting Camp Comfortable

By Zach Lazzari Kawdy Outfitters www.kawdyoutfitters.com

Riding horses and hiking all day will leave you tired and ready for the comforts at hunting camp. You won't need to bring along a giant pile of gear but having a few luxuries is always nice. These are a few of the ways to get comfortable and wind down before you wake up and hit the mountain again.

1. Fresh Socks and Underwear - Keep a dedicated set of socks and underwear that are clean, comfortable and ready to slip on when it's time to relax at camp. While we advise that you should never wear cotton clothing in the backcountry, some soft cotton underwear and socks can feel great after wearing synthetic or merino wool hunting gear all day. Ideally, go with something breathable and soft so your blisters and sore spots can recover.

2. Crocs and Mesh Shorts-In addition to wrapping up your feet in fresh socks, bring along a pair of Crocs to let them breathe. Taking off your hiking boots after a long day feels great and wearing Crocs with a pair of mesh shorts while lounging around is surprisingly rewarding. Bring your most comfortable lounging outfit and enjoy the evenings at camp.

3. Favorite Snacks-Chocolate bars, fruit snacks and any other cravings that you would normally resist at home are nice to have at hunting camp. Your elevated level of calorie burn, combined with the need for energy, makes it possible to have a guilt-free candy bar or treat. Eat a few snacks in camp and take some on the mountain as well.

4. Warm Drinks-Cool, rainy days wear you down physically and mentally. Coming home to a hot cup of tea, hot chocolate, or broth is restorative. It warms you from the inside out and just feels right. I like mint tea with honey after a really long, cold day. The calories and warmth tend to revive you quickly.

5. Balms and Salves-These are as much necessities as they are camp comforts. Bring along ointments, balms and salves to treat sore muscles, aches and pains. If you get saddle sore, they are especially nice to keep your skin from blistering. Bring the stuff you use at home to treat sore muscles and sleep well each night.

6. Portable Hammock-There are plenty of comfortable places to lounge at Kawdy Outfitters hunting camps but portable hammocks pack down to the size of a fist and are nice to have for camping and hunt camps in general. The slow midday is a nice time to nap and swing in a hammock between the early morning and late evening grind.

7. Entertainment-When the sun sets, you might have an hour or two to kill before bed. Bring along a deck of cards, cribbage board or anything portable and packable that will keep you and the other folks at camp entertained. It's always nice to kill some time playing cards and swapping stories around a campfire.

Learn More About Our Hunts-To learn more about hunting trips with Kawdy Outfitters in northern British Columbia, please explore our website at www.kawdyoutfitters.com.

Zach is an outdoor writer, a hunting and fly fishing guide, and very proud to be a part of the Kawdy Outfitters team. You can follow Zach's adventures at bustedoarlock.com.



BRIDGER TENT

14' X 14' WITH 5' WALLS AND 10' PEAK
ALL IN ONE 83 LBS. DUFFLE BAG

**NEW FOR
2025**



\$1,499.99

WALL TENTS



**WE BUILD IT
HOW YOU WANT IT**

1-800-235-6518

**DESIGNED, BUILT, ASSEMBLED, CUT,
SEWN, MANUFACTURED, MADE
IN MONTANA, USA SINCE 1982**





Glassing for antelope on top of a tank. Photo credit Cody Boor.

Three Challenges Hunting Public Land Antelope And How To Overcome Them

By Jake Horton

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

When driving across the western states of America, one animal is the most prevalent, especially in states that occupy the eastern portion of the Rockies. That animal is the American pronghorn, otherwise known as antelope. With as many antelopes as you see from the road, a hunter may inaccurately conclude that harvesting an antelope is easy; however, this is a misconception. Antelope are cunning, wary, and fast animals that have eluded hunters for hundreds of years and will continue to evade hunters and their freezers for years to come, especially on public land.

Below are three challenges I encountered over the year chasing public land antelope, how to overcome them, and how to be more successful in the future.

Terrain

Typical western hunting terrain can be challenging due to the steepness and rockiness of the mountains that most western big game calls home. This is not the case for antelope that often live in some of the flattest and unforested portions of our country. It is common to spot an antelope from the road or a high point — only to find out that its location is multiple miles from your current position. The terrain will sometimes have undulation; however, many places I hunt have 2" to 3" of grass and cacti and very little elevation change. This makes it hard to judge an animal's distance, but also hard to stalk within a gun, let alone bow, range. To combat the lack of terrain differences, it is important to utilize what is in the area to the fullest on your stalk. Using a small ditch or coolie to move in closer is a great way to stay undetected. When you have no other options, I always have good luck keeping myself and my hunting partners in a straight line, crouched, but moving directly at the antelope. They tend to struggle to tell distance or have confidence in their ability to escape at more than 55 mph. I have also used pop-up dairy cows or antelope decoys to move in on a herd of antelope, especially in situations where I have no other options.

Though the terrain may not be steep, it poses its own challenges for a western hunter due to the lack of places to hide for you and your prey.

Hunting pressure

Like other seasons, hunting any animal, including antelope, on public land will not be without its fair share of pressure. Combining numerous hunters with open flat terrain, I have often seen more hunters than antelopes on an opening day hunt. Most hunters who chase antelope rarely leave their rig until they find a group of antelope to pursue, so positioning yourself deep in a parcel of public land surrounded by roads will often allow "road hunters" to chase the game in your direction. Without drawing a limited entry tag or hunting a unit with low success, you should expect to see and feel hunting pressure. Understanding different ways to utilize this pressure will increase your success rates.



Photo credit Logan Summers

Wary animals

Hunting in the western states on public land typically means that you are hunting some of the same animals that others are chasing. This usually translates to more wary and spooky game animals.

Combine that

with an animal that relies on its binocular vision for defense and you may struggle to get within shooting distance of antelope after a few days of the season. To overcome this obstacle, it is important to remember to stay patient and hunt the animals near a place that gives you an advantage. Sometimes this is a water hole that the antelope frequents or an opening in a fence line that they may use to cross and sometimes this means sitting near a ditch or terrain break that you can use to navigate closer to the antelope.

Thinking about different ways to harvest these animals as they get more easily spooked will help you find success despite the challenge of hunting antelope on public land.

Though hunting antelope on public land can provide challenges to the most seasoned hunters, it is still a high success hunt compared to most western hunts. Understanding the challenges you will face on an antelope hunt will allow you to be mentally prepared and have the correct gear that you will need to increase your success rates. Though antelope are prevalent in the West's open country, they are still challenging to harvest. They should not be considered so, especially if you want to be a consistent antelope killer instead of a sporadic one.

Good luck this fall, and remember to overcome the obstacles that will keep you from harvesting.

To learn more about GOHUNT or join visit GOHUNT.com.



RAZOR® HD LHT™ RIFLESCOPE

Western hunting demands an optic built for long range and the long haul, and the Razor® HD LHT™ 4.5-22x50 FFP delivers. You still get the core of the Razor® HD LHT™, including a stunning HD optical system and rugged build in a hunting scope that's among the lightest in its class. Where the Razor® HD LHT™ 4.5-22x50 FFP distances itself is in offering more magnification, and a first focal plane reticle featuring the XLR-2 reticle system, which is intuitive, easy to use, and illuminated. You also get our RevStop™ Zero System for a reliable return to zero after dialing in the field, and a locking elevation turret keeps your zero safe.



Available in:
4.5-22X50 FFP (shown)
XLR-2 (MOA) Reticle

3-15X50
G4i BDC (MRAD) Reticle

3-15X42
HSR-5i (MOA) Reticle

Custom Turrets Available On All



INCLUDED IN THE BOX

- Sunshade (All)
- Tethered Lens Covers (4.5-22X50 FFP)
- Lens Covers (3-15X50) and (3-15X42)
- Lens Cloth (All)
- CR2032 battery (All)
- Rev Stop Zero Ring (4.5-22X50 FFP) and (3-15X50)
- Free Custom Ballistic Strip Coupon (3-15X50) and (3-15x42)



**UNLIMITED
UNCONDITIONAL
LIFETIME WARRANTY**

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

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

FULL CURL MFG

www.fullcurlmanufacturing.com

MURDOCH'S

www.murdochs.com

NORTH 40 OUTFITTERS

www.north40.com

OWENHOUSE ACE

www.owenhouse.com

SHEDHORN SPORTS

www.shedhorn.com

SHIPTON'S BIG R

www.shiptonsbigr.com

SPORTSMAN & SKI HAUS

www.sportsmanskihaus.com

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

JOIN THE VORTEX NATION



www.vortexoptics.com

10 Deer-Hunting Myths Debunked

By Mike Hanback Big Deer Blog www.bigdeerblog.com

A talking head on Outdoor Channel puffs out his chest and declares, “Man, the full moon is the worst time to hunt!” Sounds pretty good, and you buy it. Your Daddy told you to never over hunt a spot, and you never doubt Pops. Stands to reason that if another hunter tromps too close to your tree stand, your day is ruined, right? Uh, no to both of the above. Let’s change your thinking on some misguided beliefs about big deer and how to hunt them.

Big bucks always move best at dawn and dusk.

Whitetail deer are crepuscular animals, so yes, bucks move most often at dawn and dusk.

But not always.

A few years ago in Canada, I shot one of my best bucks ever, a 300-pound giant with a 183-inch rack, at 3:00 p.m. A good 75 minutes before dark one December day in Iowa, I slugged a 165-inch buck in a strip of standing soybeans.

It’s not just me. Hunters from all over the country are killing 160- to 190-inch deer during the “off” hours of 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

If you have always hunted the first 2 hours and the last 2 hours of daylight, you need to put in more stand time. One old saying is still true: You can’t shoot a buck back at camp. Stay on post later in the mornings, until 11:00. Go in early in the afternoons and get settled by 2:00 pm latest.

The cooler the weather the better, so definitely maximize your time on stand on chilly days anytime of season. Deer linger longer around food sources and in nearby funnels in the mornings, and they’ll often move earlier in the afternoons. And this goes without saying: During the first 15 days of November, stay out all day, you might kill a giant anytime.

Never ever over-hunt your best stand.

One day years ago, way before his Bone Collector days, Michael Waddell dragged a P&Y 8-pointer into our camp on Montana’s Milk River and announced with his customary flair, “The alfalfa stand is hot ya’ll!”

The next afternoon I climbed into the same lock-on in the cottonwood tree and drilled a 135-inch 9-pointer.

When whitetails are still on summer pattern and locked into a bed-to-feed routine in early bow season, don’t hesitate to hunt your best stand 2, 3 or maybe even 4 days in a row as long as a favorable wind holds. Though more unpredictable, this can also work when it’s cold and snowy in December, and run-down bucks are drawn to one of the last best food sources.

If and when you hunt a stand for multiple days, be as quick, quiet and scent-free as you can on the walk in and out. The less intrusive you are, the better your chances of striking before the deer patterns change and the spot goes cold.

If some guy tromps close to your stand, that spot is ruined for the day.

One November morning Indiana hunter Chris Thomas went to his ladder stand and got a shock—some slime bag had ripped it off! Chris was royally bummed, and didn’t know what to do. He plopped down beside the tree to think, and just after sunrise a gang of pumpkin-colored hunters marched by on a deer drive. What the heck else could go wrong?

Chris had nothing better to do, so he sat tight. Two hours later he looked up bug-eyed as a huge buck raced down the ridge with some does. He aimed his shotgun and the buck tumbled over. Chris’ tenacity rewarded him with a 198-inch non-typical giant.

It clearly happens on public ground, and can occur on private land. When another hunter walks under your tree stand, or roars by your blind on an ATV, you’re naturally going to think he spooked every deer within a mile. You’ll get mad, flustered and want to move to a new spot, or go home.

Don’t. As long as the intruder hikes or drives on and gets gone in a hurry, sit tight. A buck might have been

YOUR HOMETOWN MARKET & BUTCHERY

Meat that's raised better tastes better!

Market - Meat Subscription - Domestic Meat Processing
Wild Game Processing

Stop in at our Market and shop for fresh meats, groceries, seasonal and holiday specials.
Mon-Fri: 9am - 6pm Saturday: 10am-2pm Sunday: Closed

TIZER MEAT BUNDLE - IT'S SIMPLE.

1. CHOOSE YOUR BUNDLE: Pick from our curated butcher's choice boxes. Breakfast Meat, Meat Variety, Pork, or Beef Bundles Available.
2. CHOOSE YOUR DATE: Get your bundle every month.
3. PICK UP YOUR BUNDLE: Let us know when you're coming and we'll walk it right out to you, curbside!

Get FREE Sausage Links For Life

WILD GAME PROCESSING HOURS:
Check-in at the market for hours.

Shop online at tizermeats.com

MARKET:	WILD GAME SHOP:
2805 York Road	3558 Tizer Dr
Helena, MT 59602	Helena, MT 59602
(406) 422-4822	(406) 442-3096

150 yards away, standing stock-still and hidden in thick cover until the intruder passed. Or a 10-pointer might have been a half-mile away and was never aware of the guy's disturbance. Either way, a shooter buck might stroll into sight 20 minutes or 3 hours later and turn a miserable start into an epic hunt.

Stay out of your best spots until the wind and rut conditions are just right, then move in and hunt a buck.

Generally, that's not a bad way to think. But if there's one thing I've learned over the past 30 years it is that sometimes you gotta say to hell with it and hunt your target buck right now, especially on public land. If you don't risk it another person will move in and hunt "your" deer. Or a food source will change from clover to acorns, or a doe three-quarters of a mile away will come into heat and pull all the deer over there. While you sit home and wait for the right wind and the stars to align, "your" buck leaves the area or somebody else spooks or kills him.

Be smart, but don't be afraid to spray down with scent-killer and hunt a buck on an iffy wind every once in a while.

The more land you hunt the better your chances at a big deer.

Dieter Herbert is a 27-year-old New York City carpenter who bowhunts the suburbs near his home on Long Island.

Most of the tracts that Dieter hunts are 20 acres tops—big enough to hide a big deer, and small enough for one man to scout and hunt effectively.

In November 2019 a huge buck with a split G-4 popped up on one of his trail cameras. Dieter scouted and tracked the beast for a year, and last Halloween he shot him. The giant net-scored 197 4/8, the new state record typical bow kill.

It's human nature to think that the bigger the farm or woods you hunt, the better your chances of killing big deer. No, just the opposite in many cases.

When you hunt a public area or a private farm or wood of 200 to 2,000 acres, you'll have to share the land with a few to an army of other hunters. People will roam and drive all over the place and hang tree stands. To a mature buck, pressure changes everything, and it takes only a few days of that fracas for him to deep dive for cover and go nocturnal.

Think about those small and likely un-hunted woodlots and thickets near home that you drive past every day. If you can get sole permission to hunt 10 to 40 acres in just the right spot, you'll be able to scout it and hunt it the way you want to, like Dieter Herbert does in the New York suburbs. I doubt you'll shoot the next state record, but putting an arrow into a 130- to 150-inch buck is very doable.

(continued on page 31)



SIBERIAN COOLERS

"BE THE ALPHA...OWN THE ALPHA"

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

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

SIBERIANCOOLERS.COM | 844.782.COLD (2653) |

Instagram, Email, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube icons

70th Annual Original Missoula Gun & Antique Show



MONTANA'S LARGEST, BIGGEST & OLDEST SHOW!
500 Tables \$70./ea.

Admission \$10
under 12 free w/adult

Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center
Aug 1 (10am-6pm), Aug 2 (9am-6pm), Aug 3 (9am-3pm)
Contact: Hayes Otoupalik 406-549-4817
hayesotoupalik@aol.com
Sponsored by the Weapons Collector Society of Montana

Skinner® Sights LLC
MACHINED FROM SOLID BARSTOCK



STURDY SIGHTS
Rifle cases & more
for your rifles

PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

WWW.SKINNERSIGHTS.COM
P.O. Box 1810, St. Ignatius, MT. 59865

NSSF Praises Montana Gov. Gianforte For Signing Firearm Industry Protections Into Law

NSSF www.nssf.org

Montana's Gov. Greg Gianforte is giving firearm industry members more reason to consider the Big Sky State as a home from which to do business.

Gov. Gianforte just signed legislation revising the state's public nuisance law and adding protections to keep gun control activists from enacting "lawfare" against firearm and ammunition businesses.

Gov. Gianforte signed HB 791 into law on May 8.

The law clarifies that the design, manufacturing, selling, labelling or marketing of firearms, firearm accessories or ammunition or its components, are not considered a public nuisance. Additionally, state law preempts local municipal laws and ordinances from overriding state law.

Gov. Gianforte's signature on this law will prevent the attempts to skirt the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) that has been witnessed in other states.

"Governor Gianforte, and Montana's lawmakers, are sending a clear message that gun control lawfare targeted against our industry, which is critical to Montana's economy and the nation's heritage of Second Amendment freedoms, will not be tolerated," said Nephi Cole, NSSF Director of Government Relations – State Affairs.

"The firearm industry is grateful for state Representative Anthony Nicastro for shepherding this bill through the legislature and for Governor Gianforte's leadership in signing this important protection into law."

Gov. Gianforte has a proven track record of protecting Montana's firearm and ammunition industry. He is a regular SHOT Show® attendee and participant in NSSF's Governors' Forum.

Gov. Gianforte recently posted a call to Colorado firearm and ammunition businesses to consider Montana for a new place to do business following Colorado Gov. Jared Polis signing SB3, a law that bans the manufacturing, distributing, transferring, selling or purchasing of Modern Sporting Rifles (MSRs), unless a gun purchaser first obtains a permit-to-purchase the rifle.

Recent years have brought big moves – and big economic returns – to Montana with Gov. Gianforte playing an active role.

Ultimate Defense Technologies moved from Arizona to Billings, Montana after meeting Gov. Gianforte at SHOT Show 2023 and opened their new firearm safety systems solutions headquarters in September 2024. Olympus Arms celebrated production expansion in Helena, Montana after the company announced an investment of \$50 million with plans to add jobs for 60 employees. Brixtel Defense, an ammunition manufacturer, announced their relocation from Virginia to Dawson County in Montana, adding a \$125 million investment in and bringing 125 jobs, with plans for a total of 350 jobs. Alpha Loading Systems, an ammunition loading and primer machinery manufacturer, announced in 2023 it was expanding its footprint in western Montana and tripling its workforce. Shield Arms announced an expansion and move into a new \$5 million 36,000 square foot headquarters and manufacturing facility in Bigfork that will also bring 30 new jobs to its existing 40 employee footprint.

About NSSF

NSSF is the trade association for the firearm industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. Formed in 1961, NSSF has a membership of thousands of manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, sportsmen's organizations and publishers nationwide. For more information, visit nssf.org.



Photo credit Jared Pierce courtesy GOHUNT at GOHUNT.com

Cheese-Stuffed Mule Deer Meatloaf Recipe

By Jared Pierce

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

Smoked Stuffed Meatloaf

I've never been a big fan of meatloaf but I love smoking anything and everything on my pellet smoker, so when I saw a recipe for Smoked Stuffed meatloaf we had to try it and it quickly became a family favorite. It's a super easy recipe with a fairly short smoke time and the reward is a juicy, smoky, cheesy meatloaf that everyone in my family loves. For this recipe, I used ground mule deer from my... Colorado deer hunt, but you can use any ground meat. It only took 2.5-3 hours to prepare and cook. I usually make my own BBQ sauce but to make the video a bit simpler I just used store-bought BBQ sauce. If you have the time I'd highly recommend making your own, in my opinion, it tastes a little better.

Items Needed

- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
- 1/2 medium red onion (grated)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced)
- 2 eggs (lightly beaten)
- 1 Tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tablespoon homemade steak rub
- 1/4 cup milk
- 6 oz pepper jack cheese (cut into strips)
- Homemade BBQ sauce
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 Tablespoon homemade steak rub
- 2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes



Watch a video here on how to prepare:
<https://youtu.be/M0Feuo93Nos?si=hxpmXfl3ZRijlmf7>







Lodge Like Atmosphere With Resort Amenities

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

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

Like us on

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

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

HUNTING & FISHING NEWS

Have it delivered FREE to your inbox.

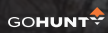
Just go to www.huntingfishingnews.net

NEVER MISS AN ISSUE!

DOWNLOAD
READ
PRINT
SHARE



The entire contents is © 2025, all rights reserved. May not be reproduced without prior consent. The material and information printed is from various sources from which there can be no warranty or responsibility by Big Sky Outdoor News & Adventure, Inc. Nor does this material necessarily express the views of Big Sky Outdoor News & Adventure, Inc. All photo & editorial submissions become the property of Big Sky Outdoor News & Adventure, Inc. to use or not use at their discretion. Volume 22, Issue 6. Cover photo: jill@ghostbear.org | depositphotos.com



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

SHOP.GOHUNT.COM

Three Summertime Fishing Tips

Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com

Top guides reveal three tricks for tagging fish at the plate

Every guide worth his salt has one. You know, that sneaky trick up his sleeve that always keeps his clients' rods bent. Cold fronts, breathless firecracker days, July blizzards (it could happen)—the conditions are almost beside the point. These slick tricks simply catch fish, atmospheric conditions losing their bark and bite. Ask any guide: when times get tough in mid to late summer, it's really nice to know you've got that ace bait awaiting deployment.

In my own guiding days, the golden ticket was a Gopher Bait Spin tipped with a minnow. Throw these simple contraptions behind the boat, start driving around the weed edge, and pretty soon, we'd have all kinds of fish hooked up—everything from bass and pike to walleyes and crappies. Another client's fish fry was delivered. The photos would tell the story—big grins on everyone's faces. Curiously, today lures like the Bait Spin remains overlooked and underutilized. So simple in design, but oh so appealing to fish, which pretty much describes the three patterns that follow: basic, fundamentally great baits that simply catch lots and lots of fish.

Sneakin' through the Weeds

Early in my guiding career, I still recall a particular blazing-hot August day. It had been a challenging one, to say the least. I was falling all over myself apologizing to my clients for the tough bite when who should roll into the dock but the legendary Marv Koep, possibly the most-recognized fishing guide in the North Country. Of course, Marv had fish (he always did)—a beautiful mixed bag of walleyes, pike, crappies, and even a deep-bodied smallmouth for someone's wall.

Days later, I caught up with Marv, who graciously shared his secret. "Weed Weasels tipped with minnows," he said simply, flashing his characteristic sunshine smile.

As I gradually discovered in the years that followed, Northland Weed Weasels were a secret of many top guides. Slick pointed nose, tapered head, light Y-weed-guard, bait-keeper, Mustad Ultra-Point hook—the combination proven deadly for everything with fins. Mostly, though, the boys kept the 'Sneak' secret under their hat, so word never spread much beyond a handful of local sharpies. Still, I quickly learned to add these amazingly weedless jigs to my own bag of tricks. On any given summer day, I always had an array of rods rigged with Weed Weasels. Slowly we'd move along the edge of the spacious weed bar, peppering casts up into the vegetation, and swimming the combo back through the cover. Within a cast or two, rods would bend. The trick never failed to produce action. And I mean never.

Sometimes, we'd tip the jig with a three-inch grub for extra buoyancy, color, and action, but live bait was the thing. Wild redbait chubs, small suckers, and golden shiners—you absolutely knew something was going to take a bite. In the world of guiding, that level of confidence is a beautiful thing. The Weed Weasel fished through weeds so well, so clean, that anyone could catch fish with it.

Throw the bait out, count it down, and start slowly reeling it back. Then as now, it's just that simple. When summer's heat sends fish deep into vegetation, many of the best Northwoods guides still reach for their classic Weed Weasels. Ask their clients. These jigs just plain catch fish.

A Rockin' Bite

While everybody and their uncle's out backtrolling the rocks, sand, and mud, guide Tim Anderson likes to cast weeds. Nothing crazy about that. Nothing, that is, except the walleyes, muskies, pike, and bass he's extracting from these jungles. Anderson operates Central Minnesota's Big Fish Hunt Guide Service, chasing the hottest predator bites going. This year, he discovered a deadly new lure that's out-fished everything from crankbaits to spinnerbaits and jigs to jerkbaits.

For Anderson, that lure is the Northland Rock-R-Minnow—a super-realistic soft plastic paddletail swimbait. Among insiders, the Rock-R-Minnow is on the fast track to "classic" status, a lure that's always kept rigged and ready in the boat, even though said insiders aren't themselves spilling the beans (sound familiar?). Anderson likes the bait for its lively, yet easygoing stature. "If you can cast and reel, you can catch fish with this bait," he says.

And he's right. Rigged with a simple 3/8- to 1/2-ounce jig-head or the weighted Lipstick Swimbait hook included in the package, the 5-inch Rock-R-Minnow casts like a bullet, sinks fast, and slithers through the grass like a snake. Reel, reel, then pause a second. Reel-reel-reel-pause again. Rip a weed or two. Whack! That's all there is to it.

On recent trips to a famous walleye lake, Anderson and I boated fifteen to twenty big walleyes each day, as well as several bonus pike and bass. We filled the Frabill net with a constant procession of heavyweights, all while dancing around bored jiggers and riggers.

Roach's World Spins

"If I simply want to catch fish in summer, I'm pulling my little spinner rigs," says veteran guide Tony Roach. Growing up with a family of mega-talented anglers, Roach learned early that if he wanted to catch more than sloppy seconds, he'd have to get sneaky with his own set of tricks. Chief among them was a small spinner rig tipped with live bait. More often than not, Roach's approach delivers the goods—a fact to which I can readily attest.

"In summer, I like to tie my own multi-species rigs," Roach states. "Start with a three to six-foot leader of 6-pound test mono. Snell on a single #6 Super-Glo Attractor Hook." (continued on page 37)

Topwater Frog Fishing Tips

(continued from page 2)

All bass anglers know and have experienced that when fishing a frog, a bass will at times miss your frog and you will need to have a follow up lure ready to go.

Depending on the time of year and density of the vegetation that your frog is being brought over a bass will have two motives for hitting your frog; either to A. to eat it, or B. injure it for an easy meal. The second option here is when a follow up lure comes in handy. The other time when a follow up lure is needed is when a bass can't hit the frog properly or if you don't get a solid hook up the first time.

Many times, after a bass hits your topwater frog, there is a nice open pocket for you to pitch your bait into that "blow hole." I chose a Texas-rigged soft plastic creature because of its compact presentation, rigged on a 5/0 Lazer TroKar TK133 Pro V Flippin' hook with a 1/2 to 1 oz tungsten weight in front of it.

The other way I like to follow up a missed strike on a frog is to throw my Reed-Runner Frog just beyond the area where I had my hit and slowly drag it across that area again. I will then deadstick in the hole and edges where that strike occurred. Many times, a bass will think that this is the injured bait that it hit originally and is now wounded.



With both tactics I rely on my Minn Kota Raptor's as these shallow water anchors will keep me in that exact spot. This will increase your time fishing in the key area and limit the need to use your trolling motor.

When should you dig into that frog box of yours and tie on a new frog? There are two scenarios in which I'll rig up a new frog. The first being when the vegetation that I'm fishing has changed significantly, meaning if it goes from lily pads to heavy matted vegetation. The other being that if the bass that are hitting my frog are short striking it. In both situations, a simple change of frog color, such as going from a white Reed-Runner Frog to a more natural colored brown/yellow one, can garner more bites. Or a change in style from the standard Reed-Runner Frog to the Popping Frog can quickly turn the tides and keep the frogging action going, if the cover in front of you has changed.

MONTANA PIKE MASTERS
BELLINGS CHAPTER INC.

PUBLIC FISHING TOURNAMENT
24TH ANNUAL

JUNE 28TH & 29TH

Rock Creek Marina • Fort Peck, MT • 7:00 am - 3:00 pm

FOR AN APPLICATION  www.montanapikemasters.com
or call Eugene at 406-690-4044



Photos courtesy Budge's Wilderness Lodge www.budgeslodge.com

4 Tips For Fishing Streamers On Wilderness Creeks

By Zach Lazzari

Budge's Wilderness Lodge www.budgeslodge.com

When we trek into the wilderness for wild and unpressured trout, streamers are rarely on the mind. Thoughts of eager fish that will rise to attractor dry flies is usually the name of the game. After years of guiding and fishing in these environments, I've come to really enjoy fishing streamers in smaller waters.

Most streams are hiding a few fish that are outliers in terms of age class and size. These slightly larger specimens exist in small numbers and are difficult to locate as the small to mid-range class of fish are quicker to strike your dry fly. If a particular stretch of water feels like it has the depth and structure to hold a bigger fish, I often cover it with a dry fly first, let it rest, then I return with a streamer to probe for larger fish.

Here are several tips you can use to build a simple strategy for fishing streamers on wilderness creeks with big results...



1. Fishing Unweighted vs Weighted Flies

I carry a mix of weighted and unweighted flies. It doesn't take much weight to punch below the surface and you really only need a few feet of depth to cover a small stream thoroughly. When a deeper hole does appear, simply allow the fly to sink a bit longer. When fishing unweighted flies, adding split shot roughly 6-inches above the fly will help to reach depth while allowing the fly to swim and move with a ton of action.

Weighted flies save the hassle of adding split shot and a simple bead head, cone head or dumbbell eye fly pattern is a great option for any small stream. The only time this becomes an issue is when you want to fish through shallow sections of the stream. Move the fly quickly in these situations to avoid snagging bottom.

2. Choosing the Right Size

Fly size and profile is important because small fish will also chase down your streamer. You can increase hookup rates by fishing flies in the 8-14 size range. They border on the micro-streamer category and do a great job of imitating small baitfish. There's no need for the big articulated streamers you might fish in larger rivers and lakes.

Many fish will charge the fly in a territorial response, nipping at the tail. For this reason, shorter hook shanks and flies with short tails or trailing hooks will increase hookup rates. The aggressive nature of fish in these situations makes for some serious fun.



3. Fishing Strategies

The best thing about streamer fishing a small stream is the ability to cover everything with ease. A dry fly tends to drift through a lane and while fish often move to eat the fly, it's not swiping across every inch of holding water. These two simple approaches will cover 90% percent of the habitat, giving you an opportunity at nearly every fish in the area:

Upstream Sink and Strip - Casting up and across while methodically working upstream means that you aren't kicking rocks, casting shadows and spooking fish. It's the best approach when fish are a little edgy and spooky. It's also ideal for deeper runs where you want to get deep while staying back and away from the run itself.

Cast directly up or up and across. Line control is critical as you strip to maintain tension while the fly sinks. When it feels like you are in the zone, use long strips followed by short pauses to regain depth. Work from the taylor to the head of the run and hold on tight as this technique can move the biggest trout in any stream or river.

Across or Down and Across - Controlling line and maintaining speed on the strip is difficult on the upstream presentation. Sometimes, fishing across or down and across is the absolute best approach. It's efficient and you can use the current to swing the fly. Ideally, stay near the bank or even on the bank to avoid spooking fish. Be mindful of your shadow and simply cast and retrieve, hitting every likely holding area while slowly moving downstream.

4. Favorite Patterns

Simple flies that move well without being too bulky are the best bet. You only need a few patterns in different color schemes. Olive, black and purple, brown and natural colors with a little flash will catch trout anywhere.

Slump Buster - The size, darting motion and color schemes in Olive/Red or Black/Purple make this an incredible option. I fished these in small creeks in Alaska and the trout went crazy for them, hooking far more fish than the typical mouse or flesh fly. For creeks, the Slump Buster is a must-carry fly pattern.



Rubber Leg Buggers - Buggers are my go-to streamer. The classic pattern is simple, easy to tie and it performs well in moving and stillwaters. You can dead drift, retrieve or swing with success. For small creeks, I tie short tails to avoid missing the tail strikes. Olive or brown/yellow with rubber legs are my personal favorites.

Muddler Minnow - The design and performance of this classic pattern is fantastic. It's also versatile with the option to fish as a dry or wet fly. Add some floatant and you have a hopper pattern. Swing just below the surface as a streamer or add a small split shot to really get deep.

Clouser Minnow - This pattern is a treasured saltwater and bass fly but it crosses over to trout really well. Tie them small with light dumbbell eyes for best results. The materials are sparse and they leave the hook exposed for better hook sets.

Sculpzilla - An all-time favorite for trout, the trailing hook design makes this a winner in the backcountry. Expect more hookups as fish nip at the tail of the fly. White with red is my favorite color, although any of the commercial color schemes are very natural and effective.

Have questions about our wilderness fishing expeditions here in Colorado? Please call or send us a text message at 970-536-1341. You can find details and pricing on our fishing trips at <https://www.budgeslodge.com/fly-fishing>.

TRAILHEAD RIVER SPORTS
Missoula, Montana

Moving at the Speed of Life

2505 S. Garfield St., Missoula, MT | 406.543.6966 | TrailHeadRiverSports.com



Photos courtesy Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com

Eye-Candy Walleye Fishing Leeches

Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com

Eye-Candy Walleye Fishing Leeches: Better Than the Real Thing?

Northland Fishing Tackle's new Eye-Candy™ Jiggin' & Riggin' Leeches made from Super TPE Material fish like the real thing without the expense, hassle, and transport issues.

Leeches have been a walleye fishing mainstay since the early 1960s. Prior to that, only a handful of savvy anglers trapped and used them.

Just ask longtime Northland guide and angler, Dick "Griz" Gryzwinski, who was fishing leeches in the 1950s, but kept their walleye magic close to the vest.

Over the years, leech prices have inflated – especially for larges and jumbos – the bait currently fetching \$50/pound or more—if you can find them. And if you're a slip bobber or rigging angler, you know that you can go through a lot of leeches, sorting panfish and other species from walleyes. Of course, that's not a bad thing for the table, but you can burn through a lot of bait.

Have there been other bait companies who have tried to mimic the unique look, texture, feel, and action of fishing leeches? Absolutely.

But until now, most have been crude, lifeless pieces of plastic. That's where Northland's Eye-Candy Jiggin' Leech and Eye-Candy Riggin' Leech differ. Molded of a highly-buoyant and scent-absorbing TPE plastic, they nearly float on a dropshot, jig, or rig hook, making them move just like the real thing with subtle rod actions, boat speed, or underwater currents, even at a standstill.

We talked with a few guides to get the skinny on these fat walleye-catchers, catching up with Brian "Bro" Brosdahl (northern MN), Donnie O'Bert (Rainy Lake), and Brad Hawthorne (Mille Lacs).



Eye-Candy Jiggin' Leech (Natural Core)



Eye-Candy Riggin' Leech (Natural Core)

The Eye-Candy Story

The shapes, sizes, and colors were designed and chosen based on real-world walleye fishing experience of Northland team members.

The goal was to create something entirely new, different, and effective. There was a lot of "if you could design the ultimate walleye plastic, what would it look like and how would it move?"

But there's even more to Northland's new Eye-Candy than the striking new shapes with fish-attracting movements. Like Eye-Candy's unique composition—a deviation from the typical PVC-type soft plastics—Northland chose a Super TPE material that's ultra-stretchy, beyond tough, ultra-buoyant, absorbent, and incredibly long-lasting.

An addendum to TPE's durability is its sponginess and ability to hold scent, a big deal with professional walleye tournament anglers like Northland Pro Staffer Tom Huynh, known to smear his baits with secret sauce.

Bro Knows Leeches

"The new Jiggin' and Riggin' Leeches are ideal summer walleye baits," says Bro.

"The Jiggin' Leech is the perfect size and works great on a long-shank, short-shank, or stand-up jig.

They're really as effective as the real thing without the fuss of live bait. Another thing: For going into Canada or places where live bait is restricted, they're the perfect solution."

Bro continues: "I've been fishing a lot of the black and darker-colored leeches, but on guide trips I will have clients experiment with different colors based on water clarity. Bright colors on bright days and darker colors on dark days holds true."

Both baits, Bro says, catch walleyes. "Fish recognize the size, shape, and movement and come over right away to eat it, which is super cool for a plastic bait. They have a real swimming motion, and rigged on a jig, rig, or dropshot, it's pretty close to the real thing because of the TPE plastic which has a lot of buoyancy and will also absorb scent to kick it up a notch—like adding some Pro Cure."

Lastly, Bro adds that now through fall, the Riggin' Leech is going to be a dynamite solution for spinner harnesses—either drifted or trolled.



O'Bert Talks Tactics

Up on Minnesota's Rainy Lake, guide Donnie O'Bert says the walleye fishing has been "epic," thanks in large to the new Northland Jiggin' & Rigg'in' Leeches.

"Don't get me wrong, we always catch fish up here on leeches, but these baits have made my life as a guide so much easier. I don't have to worry about buying, carrying, and having to take care of live bait, plus they stay on the hook, and you can catch multiple fish on one bait, which you can't do with live leeches. That means you spend more time with your line in the water, so you naturally catch more fish," volunteers O'Bert.

For O'Bert, pitching a Jiggin' Leech on a Tungsten Short Shank Jig or a Rigg'in' Leech on a two-hook Northland harness have been producing fish, either slow-trolled or on the drift.

O'Bert concludes: "These things just flat out catch fish. I like live bait and there's a place for it, but these are incredibly close to the real thing. I think where they're different than some of the soft plastic leeches in the past is the buoyancy and how they wiggle like the real thing, whether you're jigging, rigging, pitching, drifting, or trolling. That TPE plastic gives the bait a nice loft in the water."

(continued on page 38)



Eye-Candy Jiggin' Leech Color Selection



Townsend Marine

2025 Inventory Arriving Weekly!



2025 Lund Predator 1870 Center Console
(Tunnel Option New For 2025)
Mercury 115/80 ELPT
Karavan Bunk Trailer

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

HUGE SAVINGS ON THIS NEW 2024!



NEW 2024 Lund 189 Tye Sport
Mercury 200XL Pro XS DTS
Custom Tandem Axle Bunk Trailer

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

Enjoy Life On The Water!



2025 Lund 1775 Impact (Redesigned for 2025)
Mercury 115EXLPT Pro XS
Shoreland'r Single Axle Trailer

Options: Stainless Prop, Analog Gauges, Airride Pedestal Upgrade, Silver/Chrome Raised Lund, 4- Sporttrak Brackets w/ Ram Rod Holders, Top Hider, Lund Ruler, Under Console Drawers, Fire Ext., Wireless Phone Charger, Rockford Stereo Upgrade, Bow Cargo Nets, 3 Bank On Board Charger, Travel Cover, Sport Top w/ Walkway Curtain, Humminbird Xplore 9 MSI, Minnkota Terrova 80/DSC/WR-60", Transom Saver, All Batteries.

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

Townsend Marine

7809 Hwy. 287 S., Townsend
406-266-5700
www.townsendmarine.com

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



Photos Mad Scientist Tackle courtesy Traditions Media

What Do Fish Actually See?

Mad Scientist Tackle taps experienced PR team to educate the fishing masses about the science of light and what fish actually see.

By Jim Edlund Traditions Media jim@traditionsmedia.com

Anyone who's been on the water long enough knows that when it comes to catching fish, the devil is in the details. Like a sound understanding of weather, water, fish species, forage, and all the intricacies each presents to the total equation. And, as the Lindner family published years ago:

$F(\text{Fish}) + L(\text{Location}) + P(\text{Presentation}) = S(\text{Success})$.

Speaking to the "P" part of the historical fishing equation, the industry is rife with tackle to meet every application an angler could possibly encounter. There are racks, pegs, and aisles of the stuff in every tackle shop and big box across the country. And it's been that way for decades.

So, what makes a standout fish-catching bait like the Daredevil or first Rapalas or Mepps? Action, sure. It behaves like something fish want to eat. The proof is in the pudding when it comes to lures.

Something like a Bassmaster Classic Win can propel a start-up tackle tinkerer into a multi-million-dollar enterprise. And there are cults of anglers who discover something and try to keep it tight to the vest. Of course, the secrecy never lasts long.

Such is the situation with Traditions Media discovering a small Minnesota-based tackle manufacturer based out of the old municipal liquor store and firehall in Finlayson, Minnesota. Aptly named Mad Scientist Tackle, it's the brainchild of Navy veteran and optics engineer, Norm Kester, a passionate angler and hunter.

What Kester has developed are novel bait coatings unlike the fishing industry has ever seen. Formed through extensive research in eyewear and optics within the field of fish physiology and behavior, Kester and crew created a process for optimizing what fish see not only in the Ultra-Violet spectrum but infrared as well.

"An industry professional we trust came to us and showed us what Mad Scientist Tackle was up to and started sharing stories of angler successes with Mad Scientist Tackle's innovative bait patterns,

and we were instantly intrigued," said Traditions Media CEO and cofounder, Noel Vick.

"After all, we've been writing and communicating about glow and UV since they first appeared in ice fishing and open water some 20 years ago, so our interest has always been in innovations that put more fish top-side. I immediately saw Mad Scientist's light science as a potential paradigm shifter in fishing and wanted to learn more."

Meetings commenced and Traditions met with Mad Scientist, learning about the science and the elaborate manufacturing process that goes into coating everything from ice baits to jigs to jerkbaits, rattlebaits, crankbaits, topwaters, and more.

"We've been looking for a communications partner to help us bring our proprietary bait coating science to the industry and everyday anglers," said company founder, Norm Kester.

"We met with Traditions Media several times, even on the water where they experienced first-hand how our designs can outperform what's currently available and they instantly became believers—just like us," continued Kester.



"What we do is quantum leaps beyond custom paintjobs. Mad Scientist Tackle is based on science and developing baits that mimic forage as closely as possible from the visual sense in all spectrums. Look at our bait from one angle and you'll notice colors; rotate it and other colors will appear. Go even further exposing it to infrared and you'll see exactly what fish see – and we can offer these coatings in a variety of patterns to get the bites any angler is looking for, from walleye to bass to salmon and saltwater species."

Both companies built of passionate anglers, the union of Traditions Media was a solid fit and they are proud to report that they will begin working together as of May 1, 2025.

Mad Scientist Tackle Sales Director, Patrick Kalmerton said, "From the original baits we offer to opportunities for other manufacturers to create unique runs of SKUs with our proprietary coatings, the sky is really the limit with this new technology. We think it's really going to take off and Traditions will be there to make that happen."

Mad Scientist Tackle is proud to be based in rural America and veteran owned and operated.

Training Your Legs For A Mountain Hunt

By Zach Lazzari

Kawdy Outfitters www.kawdyoutfitters.com



Photo courtesy Kawdy Outfitters www.kawdyoutfitters.com

Hunting steep terrain requires training to prepare your legs. A marathon runner on flat pavement would even find a mountain goat hunt difficult. It requires a completely different set of muscle groups. Getting in shape for a mountain hunt is fun and the training will pay off when a herd of mountain caribou is waiting just over the ridge!

Here are a few ideas to ramp up your spring training this year:

1. Get Vertical

It's the up and down nature of a mountain hunt that makes it physically unique. Your calves are often stretched and your ankles and knees see plenty of action that requires pressure and flexibility to maneuver on steep terrain. You will hike straight up, straight down and across side-hill in awkward positions that will challenge your balance. The ground is not always stable and your ability to react and change directions is important.

Adjust your training to reflect the vertical nature of a hunt. Even when using a gym for training, adjust the incline and decline on the treadmill or precor machine. Elongate your strides to force your quads and calves to push through long, difficult motions. Focus on balance exercises as well to prepare for loose rock and scree slopes. Single leg squats and balancing on an exercise ball will really help.

Take advantage of any chance to get in the field and go hiking. Choose some rough, off-trail terrain and slowly move across the landscape.

The core is also critical for changing direction and maintaining balance. Planks, situps and torso exercises will improve overall stability. Take advantage of gym time or do these exercises at home.

(continued on page 19)

2025 Honda CRF lineup.



The trail to success. With Honda's dynamic lineup of Trail bikes, you're guaranteed to discover the ideal companion for you and your family's specific demands and desires, whether it's trail riding, fun on the farm, or anything in between.



SEE WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU AT

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

Powersports.honda.com. CRF/FS ARE INTENDED FOR OFF-ROAD OPERATION ONLY. PARENTS NEED TO CONSIDER A RIDER'S AGE, SIZE, ABILITY AND MATURITY BEFORE ALLOWING THEM TO RIDE. ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET, EYE PROTECTION AND PROTECTIVE CLOTHING, AND PLEASE RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT. OBEY THE LAW AND READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL THOROUGHLY. Always stay on established trails in approved riding areas. Showa® is a registered trademark of Showa Mfg., Inc. CRF® is a registered trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. ©2025 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

Portable Power Where You Want It, When You Want It

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



EU2200i

2200 watt 120V inverter generator with CO-MINDER™

- Ideal for TV, DVD, satellite, fridge, coffee pot & more
- Super quiet & lightweight
- Inverter - stable power
- Honda My Generator app + Bluetooth® capability
- CO-MINDER: advanced carbon monoxide detection system



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

SEE WHAT'S IN STORE FOR YOU AT

LewistownHonda.com
302 TRUCK BY-PASS, LEWISTOWN, MT
406-538-9435

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

3 Essential Summer Preparations For Bowhunters

TUO Gear www.tuogear.com



Photos credit TUO Gear www.tuogear.com

The days are growing longer and hotter. Summer is just getting started and there is work to be done. Most bowhunters know that success in fall starts in the summer. The next few hot months offer ample opportunity to refine skills, scout locations, and ensure your gear is ready to go. Here are the three critical things all bowhunters should focus on this summer.



1. Practice, Practice, Practice

One of the most fun things about bowhunting is how challenging it is. It's extremely difficult to get within bow range of a monster whitetail buck. It's also tough to pull off an accurate shot. Being proficient with a bow doesn't happen automatically – you must practice.

Summer provides an excellent opportunity to perfect your shot.

Here's how to make the most of your practice sessions:

Simulate Real Conditions:

Practice in a bunch of different weather conditions and at different times of the day. Get used to what it feels like to shoot in the rain or the wind. Know how your pins look in low light and high light. You'll be building adaptability and confidence for when that buck of a lifetime steps out in front of you.

Vary Your Shots:

Incorporate different shooting positions, such as kneeling, standing, and shooting from elevated positions like tree saddles. This variety prepares you for the unpredictability of real hunting situations and informs you about how your body and bow respond to different angles.

Use Broadheads Occasionally:

Most of my summer is spent shooting field points but I do spend a bit of time making sure my broadheads fly well. Most broadheads don't shoot the same way your field points do without a little extra work.

Make sure your bow is broadhead tuned and practice with the broadheads you plan to use during the season.

Remember: regular practice right now can mean better form and strong muscle memory. This is the stuff confidence is made of. Shoot your bow!

2. Scout Your Hunting Grounds

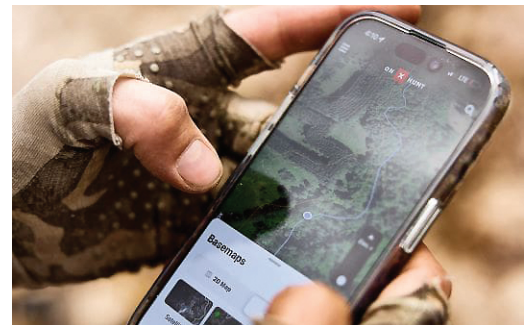
Scouting is probably the most important thing you can do this summer to increase your odds of shooting a mature buck.

Time spent in the woods directly correlates with success in the field. Use these next few months to explore and gather as much information about your hunting areas as possible.

Here are some tips for effective scouting:

Identify Feeding and Bedding Areas:

It's simple but all good whitetail strategies are based off of this information. Understanding where deer spend their time sleeping and eating helps you determine the best places to intercept them and put a buck on the ground.



Look for Trails and Sign:

Look for trails between bedding and feed. Pay attention to tracks, community scrapes, and old rubs. These sorts of things will give you great insight into where deer move (and usually when).

Use Trail Cameras:

Place trail cameras in strategic locations to monitor deer activity over time. Often, bowhunters wait too long before putting out cameras. These little devices are fantastic for getting a sense of the type of deer in your area earlier in the summer. Later on, they'll help you understand movement patterns as well.

Put in the sweat equity this summer. Get to know your hunting areas as well as possible – the habitat, the deer population, other animals in the area, etc. You'll develop a better understanding of deer behavior and movement, and your success rate will go up.

3. Gear Maintenance and Preparation

Proficiency with a bow and a sound understanding of your hunt area has the biggest impact on your success this fall but don't sleep on proper gear prep. You don't always need the latest and greatest but having quality gear in good working order will pay dividends this fall. Use the summer months to ensure everything is in top condition:

Inspect Your Bow and Arrows:

Check for signs of wear or tear. Replace worn-out strings, cables, or other parts of your bow. Fix fletchings, sharpen broadheads and make sure your arrows are in good shape.

Tune Your Bow:

Make sure to double-check the tune of your bow. Sitting in the garage all winter takes its toll on your bow. You'll be more accurate and deadly in the field.

Prepare Your Clothing and Equipment: Clothing is essential, as it'll often have a huge impact on how long you can stay in the field and alert. Summer is an ideal time to inspect and prepare your hunting clothes – did anything wear out? Were there any holes in your system?

TUO Gear provides great options for every layer a bowhunter needs. Their advanced patterns and moisture-wicking fabrics keep you concealed and comfortable, no matter what the weather is like.

Extra note: check your climbing sticks, platforms, tree stands, and other equipment for stability and safety. A quick checkover can greatly reduce the risk of gear failure in the field.

Conclusion

Lay the groundwork for success this fall right now. Over the next few summer months, focus on three critical areas: practice your shooting, go scouting, and maintain your gear. You'll be well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities that only bowhunting can provide.

BOOK YOUR STAY TODAY FOR MOUNTAIN FUN IN LINCOLN MONTANA

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

Nestled in the heart of some of Montana's most pristine wilderness. All rooms have cable TV, microwave, refrigerators, coffee pot.

- Kitchenettes • Laundry room
- Sauna • Free WiFi



**LEEPER'S
PONDEROSA
MOTEL**

Reasonable rates

110 1st Ave., Lincoln, MT

(406) 362-4333

Pets welcome

Training Your Legs For A Mountain Hunt

(continued from page 17)

2. Elevate Your Heart Rate

Hunting in steep country will quickly elevate your heart rate. Learning to control your breathing is especially important for shooting scenarios.

Invest some time in your training that combines hard hiking with shooting to work on stabilizing the shot. If you don't have a local mountain for this, simply run a few wind sprints to get your heart rate elevated then take an empty rifle and practice setups for the shot. Get into a shooting position, find your rest and slow down the breathing to focus on a target.

Functioning when your legs are tired and your heart is racing will make you a better mountain hunter.

3. Deep Stretching Routines

Consistent stretching will increase recovery time, reduce soreness and improve your performance in the field. A long, 10-day hunt can take a toll on your muscles. Start your stretching routine now and keep it up – even during the hunt. When you're back at camp, take a few minutes to stretch while your guide is taking care of the horses or preparing a meal.

Waking up with stiff muscles will slow you down but a stretching routine can combat that stiffness and increase multi-day endurance. Make stretching a normal part of your pre and post workout routine and spend a half hour stretching out before and after each day of hunting as well.

Contact Us With Questions

Want to learn more about our mountain hunts in British Columbia? Please take a few minutes to explore our website at www.kawdyoutfitters.com. If you'd like details or have questions, please feel free to contact us at

1-250-306-8624 (Oct 15 – July 1)

1-250-540-1179 (Oct 15 – July 1)

1-250-651-1189 (July 1 – Oct 15)

We'd love to help you plan your next hunting adventure!

How To Summer Mule Deer Scout For Late Fall Hunting Success...

By Brady Miller

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

Can you effectively scout for mule deer in late July through the end of August when your hunt isn't until October or early November? The answer to that might surprise you.

Let's face it, summer scouting for velvet bucks in the mountains is amazing! High country bucks are lounging around and are very patternable during the lazy days of summer. For the most part, with a little knowledge on habitats, buck behavior and some sweat equity, you sit pretty while glassing up velvet bucks. However, the typical summer scouting for these velvet bucks might not benefit you if you have a late October or early November hunt because those bucks could be miles away when your hunt finally starts—or worse—completely migrated out. That typical summer scouting in the alpine could be worthless...unless you flip your tactics on how you're actually scouting, which is what this article will dive into.

What exactly is summer scouting for fall hunts? What I want out of my summer scouting is to know exactly where to be on the first day of my hunt that will put me in a prime position to start learning what the bucks are doing and, if I'm lucky, take a buck.

Summer scouting for fall hunts means you are not eating up precious "hunting time" in the fall trying to learn a new unit. Let's face it: once September rolls around, getting any time to slip away for a scouting trip is extremely limited as that is valuable time for certain hunts and the time to stack on work at home before a busy hunting schedule.

When scouting for my fall hunts, I'd rather burn summer days than burn hunting/scouting days in the fall trying to learn the unit I've never stepped foot in. Plus, when you're "burning" these precious hunting days trying to quickly learn a unit while you hunt it, you're not only letting hunting days slip by, but you're also beating up your body and mind. Trying to guess things and learn a unit while you hunt it greatly increases the chance that you will get burned out.

If you know the general layout of the unit from your summer scouting efforts—or knew of the locations of a few bucks—you could focus your time and energy there instead of scrambling during the limited number of hunting days that you have to hunt.

It doesn't take a lot of time to effectively scout for fall hunts during the summer; it just takes having the right approach to your summer scouting efforts. Showing up blind and not knowing the trail system, roads, and access points will only hurt you during a hunt, burning away precious hunting days while you try to quickly learn about your unit.

So, can you effectively scout in the summer for fall hunts?

Here's where we will return to the original question: can you effectively scout for mule deer in late July or through the end of August when your hunt isn't until late fall? My answer to that is a resolute yes! What can you do in the summer months to put you leaps and bounds ahead of other hunters on a fall hunt? It all lies in the fundamentals of learning a unit and getting down to the basics of mule deer's needs of feed, security, knowing movements during the time of the year and transitional zones. When it comes to habitats, the core components of mule deer habitat during any time of the year are consistent: water, food, and cover. More on this in the second part of this series.

How I summer scout for fall hunts

1 - E-scouting research from my computer

What looks great on the computer can be vastly different than in the field, I'll be the first to admit that. However, all of my pre-scouting research starts at the computer. I mark anything and everything on GOHUNT Maps before I even step foot in a unit. I have to first lay down a solid foundation of pre-in-the-field-scouting before strapping my boots on and hitting the hills. I start by taking an in-depth look at public land maps, narrowing down several areas that I feel look very "bucky." Then, I move onto marking all the access roads throughout the unit. To save some space in this article, I'll touch on this further on a pre-scouting research article at a later date.

I know a lot of people call this e-scouting, but for the majority of us with limited time, this type of research is actual scouting and this level of work is a tremendous undertaking when you get down to it. As much as I would love to just drive across the West and run through the mountains to put boots on the ground and scout, I need to have a well thought out plan of attack. And I don't skimp in this area.

2 - Drive as much of the unit as possible

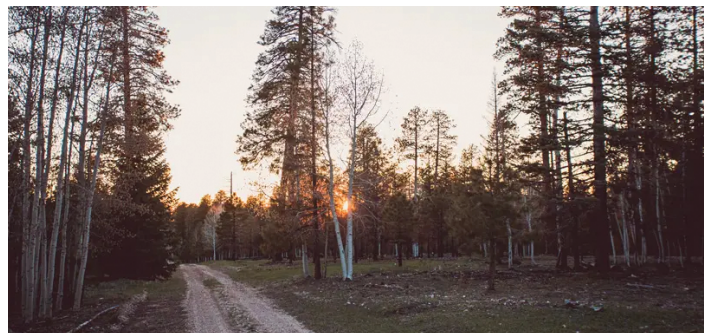


Photo credit Brady Miller

Nothing beats actual scouting intel that you collect from a unit and the quickest way to do that is from a vehicle. As much as I love hiking and carrying my entire camp on my back, if I only have a weekend to scout an out-of-state unit, I need to cover some ground and assess the lay of the land. When starting this "vehicle" scouting session, I like to drive down a bunch of the roads and check out the terrain of the mountains surrounding me.

I'm not looking at the terrain close to the road. Rather, I'm assessing the terrain that could be miles away from the road. I want to see what the unit actually looks like after pouring over maps during the offseason.

It's best to take a sample of the road situations throughout your unit. Obviously, it's impossible to check them all out depending on what your unit looks like.

Summer scouting for fall hunts is all about learning how to navigate and hunt the unit. I feel a lot of my time is best spent looking over lots of country from several different angles. This way I'm not going in blind, but now I have a giant head start once I start hunting.

While driving the unit, you'll quickly start to notice certain pockets or areas that you missed during your scouting efforts behind the computer. This is why you can never leave all your research to sitting behind a computer. I'm the first to admit that type of scouting is important, but it doesn't show you everything.

When I find new areas that look promising, I always take a photo of what the terrain looks like from my vantage point. Then, after taking the photo, I'll write down the file name, time taken and date into a notepad. Or, if I take that photo with my cell phone, I'll move it into a scouting album and mark on my mapping service that I took a photo from here and will call it "Photo 1" or whatever number of photo I've taken from that trip so I know how to cross reference it later.

This not only helps me reference what caught my eye, but it also helps me see why I missed this spot during my at-home computer scouting sessions on GOHUNT Maps. I can now take a look at the computer and compare my photos to cross reference the terrain to other areas of the unit with similar terrain. This is also a great tip to utilize when you are on your actual hunts. That information could be used for future hunts, even if they are in different states.



While driving the unit, don't be afraid to bust out your spotting scope and throw it on a window mount to assess the terrain from a long distance away.

Another thing to keep an eye out for is closed logging roads. These can be gold mines of good luck come late-season hunts. They not only allow you to quickly hike to different vantage points, but they also pose a barrier to entry to anyone who strictly "has to" hunt from an ATV or vehicle. (continued on next page)

2025 POLARIS **Ranger XP 1000 NorthStar Ultimate**

Delivers more power for task-to-trail performance along with fully-enclosed cab for all-season comfort.

STANDARD FEATURES:

- Factory-Installed Heating & Air Conditioning System
- Pro Shield Cab System
- 29", 8-Ply Pro Armor X-Terrain Tires with 14" Ground Clearance
- Polaris HD 4,500-Lb. Winch with Synthetic Rope, Autostop & Wireless Remote
- 82 HP ProStar Engine
- USB Charge Port & Battery Charge Port
- 2,500-Lb. Towing Capacity & 1,000-Lb. Box Capacity

ULTIMATE TRIM INCLUDES:

- In-dash, glove-compatible infotainment system
- Premium JBL audio



**SEE WHAT'S
IN STORE
FOR YOU AT**

LewistownPolaris.com

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

Warning: Polaris off-road vehicles can be hazardous to operate and are not intended for on-road use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers, if permitted, must be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and protective clothing. Always use seat belts and cab nets or doors (as equipped). Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-342-3764 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails. ©2025 Polaris Industries Inc.

POLARIS

How To Summer Mule Deer Scout For Late Fall Hunting Success...

(continued from page 21)

2.1 - Jotting down travel time



Photo credit Brady Miller

Another great thing to do when scouting from your vehicle is to jot down how long that gravel road takes you to drive up once you leave the pavement to the point where you put that backpack on (seems silly, but when you only have five days of vacation for a fall hunt every minute you can actually spend hunting is precious time). Also, it can be a good idea to mark how long it takes you to get from one spot where you park your truck to your Plan B access point with your vehicle.

This way, if your Plan A spot doesn't pan out and you have to move to a new hunting area, you'll know how much time you have to allow to drive so you can make sure you have enough time to reach your new evening glassing point.

I've used this to my advantage several times after I decided to try out a spot one more morning. After the morning hunt was unproductive, I knew I had to be back at the truck by 1 p.m. so I could make the drive to my Plan B area and allow myself ample time to hike in to my new evening glassing point.

2.2 - Figure out true road access

Nothing is worse than showing up for your hunt and noticing that a road that you thought you could access with your truck was actually an ATV only trail (even when several mapping services didn't mention that it was a restricted access trail). This exact situation happened to my brother on an Idaho elk and mule deer hunt a few years ago. They drove from Minnesota to Idaho and the spot they had picked out to drive up to access some spots further into the mountains turned out to be an ATV only trail. They battled a few days of hiking this trail, but, soon, enough was enough. As crazy as it sounds, they jumped on Craigslist and purchased an ATV from someone in a small town nearby to hunt off of the rest of the week. When they returned to Minnesota after the hunt, they sold the ATV and made some money off it.

Another key part of this: what if, while hunting, you spot a buck a great way off in the distance that you want to take a closer look at? What can you do to quickly get closer? This brings us back to the point we were talking about earlier on finding out quick ways to loop around the spot we are hunting and then park your truck and start the hike in again. As crazy as it may seem, when it comes down to a lot of these later season hunts, a vehicle or ATV could be a great tool to utilize.

During the summer, if you know you've found a solid looking late season spot, but you see a small two-track off in the distance, it might be worth your time to see if you could get your vehicle around to that road in case you need to relocate and hike in on a buck. This not only saves precious hunting time, but it also gives you more options when it comes to glassing an area at different angles in thick aspen or dark timber type terrain. Glassing from multiple angles is always huge for locating an old mule deer!

Here are a few other key things I like to note while driving the unit:

Campsites

- If I'm driving a unit in the summer or even during a hunt for that matter, I will mark on my GPS areas where it looks like people might have camped. Sure, some of these campsites might not be from hunters, but it's still nice to get an assessment of the popularity of a certain area.

- Big hunting camps are easy to spot; meat poles hung up, large fire rings, etc.

Dead end roads

- Can be good to hunt from as it eliminates vehicle and ATV traffic at that point.

- Will this road be accessible during late October or early November?

3 - Locate multiple ways to access the same country

I fully believe that to be a successful mule deer hunter you need to have backup plans. And, by backup plans, I mean backup plan on top of backup plan. I can't begin to express how many times I've been on a hunt only to have something change at the last minute. For example, my Plan A spot wasn't producing, so I quickly had to change course and move on to my Plan B location and, then, eventually, I killed a great mule deer on my Plan D spot. And, by switching up plans, your backup spot might have finally meant hiking back to the truck and relocating to a totally different area.

If you don't have the knowledge of these different access points from your summer scouting, you might be stuck sitting around at your unproductive area trying to put together a plan by staring at the maps on your phone or GPS. That time, once again, is valuable!

Why is locating backup access to the same areas important?

This is not to say that your Plan A spot was bad. Rather, the weather conditions might have changed and pushed deer lower or a group of elk hunters might have made camp in your spot two days before the opener, etc.

You need to have all the potential backup access points nailed down ahead of time. So, figure out all the different parts of the unit that you could use to access potential hunting areas.

Again, nothing is worse than scrambling to find a way to access some Forest Service land when the clock is ticking on your coveted hunt. This is especially important if certain roads that you thought you could drive down and access turned out to stop with a gate across the road and no trespassing signs everywhere on what is a public road. I encountered several of these on a second season Colorado mule deer hunt a few years back and it was very frustrating that driving up that road that I had never been down before cost us two hours of daylight hunting time.

This problem could have easily been solved in the summer when I wasn't burning up my precious hunting time.

Another good source of information for your fall hunt is checking out agency websites for motor vehicle use maps. They will not only highlight all of the roads in the area and the number/name of the road, but they will also mention if they have a hard closure date. Once you dive into those maps, you can also find road status maps that show the status of the road (muddy, travel impassable, etc). These are updated randomly, but can be a great thing to check out right before your hunt so you know if you can access your hunting area or if you have to access it from a backup plan. I take things one step further and grab a file of the motor vehicle use map that I can overlay on Google Earth.

This importance of having several backup plans and several different ways to access the same country paid off big-time in 2018. After trying to find bucks in a certain area in early November and determining that they had moved out, luckily I knew how to access my Plan A spot from another angle, which should be where the bucks had moved to that I knew about from previous scouting trips. The next morning, we were able to get off the mountain, relocate and then hike back up to where I had originally wanted to hunt (but accessed from a better route, which ultimately meant we had to backpack hunt at a not so typical elevation for that time of year). I ended up killing my best buck to date and the hunt was saved because I knew multiple ways to access the same country.

(continued on page 38)



© KENETREK LLC 2025

Kenetrek®
Boots
FOR THE TRAIL LESS TRAVELED®

**WILDLAND
FIRE**

YOU ASKED, WE DELIVERED...

Built to keep firefighters on their feet through brutal conditions, all while never having to worry about boot failure.

- ▶ Independent laboratory tested to meet NFPA 1977 Standard Requirements
- ▶ Safely supports and protects at half the weight of traditional fire boots
- ▶ Fire resistant, full grain 10" leather uppers increase durability and mold precisely to your foot
- ▶ Hot Zone Kevlar stitching and laces ensure fireproof performance in the field





VISIT US ON SOCIAL



WWW.KENETREK.COM
800-232-6064



Photo credit Brady Miller

Antelope: A Western Hunt For All

By Jake Horton

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

Antelope are often called the fast food of the West and can reach speeds of up to 60 mph. Their oversized eyes can see over 300 degrees and they easily spot movements multiple miles away. Their home range spans from southern Canada to Texas and from California to a portion of the Midwest.

Both bucks and does thrive in habitats consisting of grasslands, sagebrush, agricultural land and, really, any other open terrain that allows them to use their speed to obtain a quick escape from hunters and other predators. A lot of times antelope share their home range with cattle and are commonly seen ducking under fences to move from pasture to pasture. In many western states, populations are relatively stable and hunting them can be a blast for hunters of any age and skill level. Rifle antelope hunting is a hunt for every age, every strategy and every skill level, and is a welcome adventure after a brutal September of archery elk hunting.



Photo credit Brady Miller

Typically, most states have an archery season, muzzleloader season and rifle season for antelope. During the earlier seasons when you need to be within a hundred yards or less for a shot, sitting on travel corridors, using terrain for stalks, using decoys to stalk or sitting on a frequented water source may be your best option. During rifle season when you need to get within 300 to 400 yards to make a shot, you have a lot more options and should be seeing antelope anytime throughout the day.

Many of the older and youth hunters choose a drive and spot type hunt, which allows them to cover miles and miles of backcountry roadways. Driving either a highway vehicle or all-terrain vehicle (when permitted) can be a great way to see lots of bucks and doe daily; however, they will still likely be a ways off and require a stalk to get close. Overall, many hunters are successful this way. Yet, it is not my preferred method of hunting, especially not on opening weekend when most people out there are dressed in orange and doing the same thing.

Instead of driving around and trying to spot antelope, I prefer to use those hunters to my advantage. To do this successfully, you just need to find a spot that is at least one to two miles off any road, hike back and practice patience. Eventually, other hunters will bump antelope your direction and, if terrain or vegetation allows it, stalking within rifle range is a lot of fun. During the opening weekend of rifle season, most antelope are deep in the rut and have not been overly pressured, especially not from a weapon that can shoot hundreds of yards. They seem to know that they are the fastest animal out there and let you get within a few hundred yards without getting too nervous -- at least some of the time. Once you get to a distance you are comfortable with, then it's important to get within a good range and make your shot count. If the terrain doesn't allow good stalking, then a more patient technique may be your best bet.

If you are a hunter who is capable of hiking and willing to get off the road, then your success during rifle season will go up tremendously — even in the flattest of terrains. Hunting opening weekend of antelope season can be a hunter's best opportunity — if they are willing to get off the roads. Since so many people seem to choose to hunt near roads, heading to a deeper section of the public land will prove to be your best bet. Set up near fence line intersections and wait for other hunters to push the bucks near you. Be sure to bring enough water and snacks because the sun can be brutally dehydrating and snacks never hurt. Patience can definitely pay off with a rifle and did so for me this year.



Photo credit Jake Horton

...In Colorado, I was blessed to go antelope hunting along with some good friends, Jared and Tyler. Hunting in pairs allowed us to be near each other, but not on top of each other and still have the comradery of hanging out. (continued on page 37)

HSM AMMUNITION



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

FOR ALL OF YOUR SHOOTING NEEDS

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

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



www.hsmammunition.com

Manufactured in Stevensville, MT.



Catering To Your Core



TUO's new Molten Heated Vest puts the power of heat control at the tip of your finger.

The solid core of planet earth is slightly smaller than the moon and is estimated to be 10,000-degrees Fahrenheit. The liquid iron and nickel outer core produce about the same amount of heat. On a personal level, a healthy human's core is 98.6-degrees Fahrenheit, and when operating outdoors, the goal is to keep it there. Layered and insulated apparel endeavor to maintain that temperature, but, sometimes, they struggle to hold the line.

TUO has a solution... Its name inspired by the earth's hot liquid core, TUO's new Molten Heated Vest bolsters your core temperature so you can overcome a cold outside climate.

"Think of those cold mornings before the sun comes up," said TUO Marketing Director, Steve Allie, hinting at an optimal time to wear the Molten Heated Vest. "Now, you can boost your core temperature, and likewise, reduce the heat once it gets warmer and you're more active."

Packable, the new TUO Molten Heated Vest features advanced heating elements in all the right places: chest, upper back, and the kidney area. This extensively tested zone heating warms the key zones, which subsequently radiate to your extremities. To that, by donning the TUO Molten Heated Vest you can go with fewer bulky layers.

Heating power is under your control, too. The vest features three heating levels: LOW (100° F), MEDIUM (113° F), and HIGH (131° F). Once activated, the light will cycle colors, and just press the button until the desired color setting is shown. The TUO Molten Heated Vest is powered by a sophisticated 7.4V battery – the next level in battery technology.

The stylish and comfortable TUO Molten Heated Vest is constructed with a 100% 20D nylon shell and features a perfectly portioned 80g of lightweight and breathable Paralite™ insulation. A three-pocket design yields ample space for smaller items like keys and a smartphone. For added convenience, an internal zipper inside the left lower pocket converts the vest into a compact stuff sack, making it easy to pack, carry, and store.

Take control of your individual heating requirements with the new TUO Molten Heated Vest.



FEATURES:

- 100% 20D nylon shell
 - 80g Paralite™ lightweight and breathable insulation
 - Built-in heating system with 3 different outputs for the perfect amount of warmth in any situation
 - Easy one-button design activates the 5 heating pads with a DC power cable in the right pocket
 - The button is strategically placed on the inside chest of the vest to stay concealed
 - Three pocket design for securing all your gear
 - Internal zipper inside left lower pocket converts to a stuff sack for easy packing, carrying and storage
 - *7.4V/2.4A power bank sold separate
- COLORS: Deadfall and Storm
SIZES: MD – 3XL
MSRP \$199.99

Now available at
<https://www.tuogear.com/products/molten-heated-vest/>





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

How To Approach A Dead Deer

By Mike Hanback Big Deer Blog www.bigdeerblog.com

One December day a few years back, a hunter named Rob shot a 10-pointer just before dark. He hiked back to his truck, put up his rifle and called a buddy to help with the drag. When the boys went back 30 minutes later, the buck was gone. They swept their flashlights around and shined the deer hunkering down in a nearby thicket, eyes glowing and still alive.

No rifle, what now? Rob and his friend drew their knives and sneaked into the brush. They jumped on the buck, wrestled it and held it down while one guy stabbed its neck. The buck went ballistic, pounding the hunters with hooves and tossing them aside like rags dolls before bolting. The crazed animal turned back toward the hunters, who dove for cover.

The wounded buck just missed them and vanished into the black night, never to be seen again. Our local paper caught wind of the bizarre incident and interviewed Rob, who said, "Buck dang near killed us! There are more than a few good discussion items here for a hunter-ed course."

Definitely! To that end, here are some tips on "Approaching Downed Game" straight from the official Hunter Ed manual:

- If the (deer) appears to be dead, wait a short distance away for a few minutes. Watch for any rise and fall of the chest cavity.
- Notice whether the eyes are closed—the eyes of a dead animal are usually open. You can be certain that the animal is dead if the eye doesn't blink when touched with a stick.
- If the (deer) is still alive, it should be finished with a quick shot to the base of the ear. If you wish to mount the head, place your shot in the heart-lung area. For bowhunters, the only option is placing an arrow in the heart-lung area.
- Once the animal is dead, follow the state regulations for reporting or recording a kill. Some states require you to tag the animal immediately and indicate the date of the kill. Then begin field dressing.

Let me add a couple of things. First, never leave your gun or bow out of reach until you confirm a deer is stone dead. Always be ready for a finisher shot if necessary.

And by all means, no Rambo stuff. In the free-for-all with Rob's "dead" buck that I told you about, one of those guys could have stabbed his buddy or himself, severing an artery, slicing off a finger, putting out an eye... You get the not so pretty picture.

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



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

Thank you for your continued support!

www.boone-crockett.org





Photo credit Anthony Wright courtesy GOHUNT at GOHUNT.com

Food Options In The Field

By Anthony Wright

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

Longevity on any multi-day hunt is paramount. In order to spend days living out of your pack, you must replenish your body daily with nutrients it has used. More than likely on the hunt there will be a fair amount of uphill along with a healthy amount of downhill. In order to keep your body fueled for high output activity some thought must be put into which items you eat throughout the hunt. Through my time in mountain trail running, high endurance workouts and the military, I have found some foods very beneficial to help supplement an exerting mountain hunting diet. I prefer a “keep it simple” food menu; it’s not elegant, but it gets the job done. Some of the following items you may have seen before as well as some that may be new to you. Hopefully, some will fit into your field rations on your next outdoor endeavor.

Breakfast

Like the old saying goes, “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day,” this still holds true. I personally like to keep it straightforward with instant oatmeal and protein powder or breakfast bars. I don’t like to boil water unless needed, so, luckily, neither of these NEED hot water. Sure, oatmeal tastes better warm, but when conserving stove fuel it’s not so bad cold or lukewarm. I will typically take two oatmeal packets per day of hunting. Adding a half or full scoop of your favorite protein powder to each packet will aid in feeding and rebuilding sore muscles from the day before, stoking your body’s fuel tank of quality carbs and proteins. The easier morning meal though is breakfast bars. Be sure the bars you choose are dense in macros such as protein, carbs and fats (I prefer the M.R.E. or Breakfast at the Ready Bars from RedCon1).

Lunch

Tuna packets with small tortillas are my go-to. Not a whole lot of prep required for this little meal, but two packets of tuna in your favorite flavor and three tortillas is enough to keep me going. I don’t like my lunch to become overly filling, just satisfying. I packed the tuna and tortilla combo everyday in my go-bag on my recent deployment in the event we didn’t get a meal while on mission. Another dense option that could be used for both breakfast and lunch is a ProBar Meal-on-the-Go.

These bars offer a good amount of calories to keep your body in the fight during the day.

Dinner

I learned from a buddy, Charlie, last season about the ramen noodles with tuna added as a replacement from the more expensive, dehydrated prepared meals. With the ramen, you get a lot of carbs and replace sodium you have lost from sweating throughout the day.



The tuna gives you a lean source of protein. **Just be sure to add it to the noodles AFTER the noodles are ready; tuna turns to a nasty paste if cooked in boiled water (ask me how I know).** Dehydrated meals are an easy, yet more expensive option with a lot of options for each individual’s taste and also fulfilling. If going stoveless, then a Meal Replacement Shake or Greenbelly Meal bar may be a more fitting option. The Greenbelly bar packs around 650 calories of high quality energy in all macronutrient aspects. These are great if trying to use less water and stay lightweight, yet be fueled back up at the end of a long day. I have also prepared bagel sandwiches the day before leaving and then wrapped them in tinfoil so they can be ready when hungry or reheated by fireside.

Snacks

Trail mixes, Stinger Waffles, Larabars, jerky and nut butters are all options I use as snacks throughout the day or to help supplement my lunch or dinner depending on how hungry I am. Trail mixes and nut butter packets are great since they supplement a fair amount of healthy fat back into your system as well as give sustaining energy opposed to quick shot. Jerky adds protein with minimal fat. The Stinger Waffles and Larabars are popular choices not only for taste, but they also pack a lot of needed nutrition.

Energy

Shot blocks/energy gels, candy bars, gummy bears and Strike Force Energy round out this area. While learning trail running tactics, I was introduced to energy gels and energy gummy blocks. There are a multitude of options in the energy block and energy gels categories so research which ones best fit your kit or food sensitivities. Candy bars/gummy bears or worms are fast burning, cheap and can deliver a helpful energy kick through, essentially, a sugar rush.



...I was introduced to Strike Force Energy drink mix. Strike force comes in to-go concentrated liquid single-serve packets for 16 oz of water. You just mix completely until clear. They have zero calories, zero sugar and 160 mg of caffeine (more than

enough to crank out some vert!). They come in four flavors; my favorite is original. Overseas, these performed great when getting tired and exhausted in the Middle East, which is why they will be added into my diet come hunting season.

Fruit

Dehydrated fruit, That's It bars, fruit leathers and dates are what I use to supplement my fruit intake. As much as I would like to enjoy a crispy apple while in the field on a ridgeline glassing elk, you won't find me packing in whole apples, so these options will suffice. My favorite would have to be the That's It bars, which come in a few flavors of compacted fruit in a small bar form. Vitamins from fruit are a staple for me personally. The healthy carbs and natural sugars they provide ensures a clean burn when demanding the most of yourself. Fruit leathers are also a lightweight option for those looking for their fruit fix.

Coffee

Coffee is not required but it's a nice creature comfort in the morning. I really enjoy a nice hot cup when preparing for the day. Dark Timber Instant Packs are perfect when it comes to that warm cup of joe in the morning or when the weather turns nasty. They have a few options. The Gravity packs have a single-serve, biodegradable cup attached pour over filter system, so, once finished, you can simply bury it and it will naturally compost. The Mt. Baker blend tastes like a mixture of hot cocoa and quality roasted coffee. The Vapor instant packs are extremely convenient. Just heat some water, then enjoy a gourmet cup of coffee while basking in the great outdoors.

In Conclusion

I'm a firm believer that you get out what you put in. In this case, it's your body. Testing out foods that fit your individual body needs will make you not only feel better but also perform better. By testing food before you go hunting, you will find what your body prefers and what doesn't agree with it. Be sure to try some kind of food/calorie tracker to help gauge your current daily caloric and macronutrient intake like the MyFitnessPal App. This app is handy due to the plethora of foods already in their library, the option to UPC scan items and also add in your own home recipes. There are other apps out there that do this same task, but this is the one I am most familiar with.

Hopefully, I mentioned some items that will help you with some new additions for your next hunt/adventure...



THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT, MONTANA!

TOGETHER, WE'RE BETTER.

BLACKBUTTECOPPER.COM | 406.547.3466 | INFO@SANDFIREAMERICA.COM



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

Zortman Motel & Garage

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

Book your stay today.

Call 406.673.3160

Zortman76@mtintouch.net

Food, Cover And Water For Deer

By Mike Hanback Big Deer Blog www.bigdeerblog.com

Here's how to evaluate new ground and zero in on places where bucks hang out.

The more feed on a property, the more family groups of does that live there. It's that simple. And here's the kicker. Bucks will follow the gals to the food sources during the early-fall "fattening-up period," and the horny guys will keep prowling around them later in the rut.

If a place has a couple of soybean, corn or alfalfa fields—or better yet a mix of crops—that's great. But one or even two major food sources aren't enough. Suppose there's a drought? What if in early fall a farmer picks clean his grain? Well, the does gotta eat several times a day. They'll quickly expand their home ranges, moving a couple miles or more to feed and carrying bucks off a property.

Ideally, a tract will have crops and a variety of other food sources to sustain deer throughout autumn and early winter, the times when you are out there with bow or gun. Check an aerial photograph for timbered ridges and bottoms that rim fields. Then go and scout those terrains for mast trees. Look for a blend of oaks, the lifeline of whitetails in many areas. White-oak acorns mature annually while red-oak nuts make every couple of years. That's how nature puts some mast on the ground every fall.

Get serious and look for what I call "buck trees." They are the healthiest oaks on a property, generally 10 inches or so in diameter and sometimes clustered together. The trees grow a couple hundred yards off a crop field or food plot, and right now they're laden with green acorns. When those nuts start dropping in September or October, some bucks will quit the grain and gorge on the high-fat treats in the cover of the woods. They are perfect spots for an archery ambush. You might want to go ahead and hang a couple of tree stands nearby right now.

Crops and acorns are the key ingredients on many lands, but keep on scouting. Down south deer eat pecans; up north they crunch beechnuts. Whitetails love persimmons, locust pods, crabapples, wild cherries and other soft mast.

Browse like sumac, dogwood and honeysuckle are staples, especially late in the season.

If you hit pay dirt and find a smorgasbord you know the soils on a property are good. Minerals from the earth and the nutritious foods help bucks grow heavy racks.

Gimme Shelter

For a buck to live at least 3 ½ years and grow thick antlers he needs cover and lots of it. Some biologists say the ideal habitat is comprised of about 30 percent brush and edge.

Check an aerial for gray blocks and slivers that show recently thinned or cutover woods, regenerating burns, overgrown fields, CRP strips...you get the picture. Deer are fringe animals. They love to travel edges, lingering here and there to browse greenery and snack on the soft mast that grows there.

Look for does to bed in the big covers. Then expect mature, crotchety bucks to hole up in "satellite thickets" nearby. Small cattail swamps, cedar patches, tangled fencerows and especially ridge thickets...The more satellites you find near spots where does feed and bed the better. When the rut and hunting pressure heat up, old bucks cruise from cover to cover, utilizing several core-bedding areas.

The Water Factor

A hotspot beyond compare will be laced with creeks or maybe a river. Deer drink of the free water, especially when running during the rut and especially in a hot, dry fall. But moreover, a water source with its rich soils, diverse plant life and brushy edges provides the key ingredients of food and cover. Studies show that wherever possible whitetails gravitate to and reside in fertile drainages.

Study an aerial, do a little pre-season scouting and try to hang a stand in a creek thicket or on a riverside flat. That just might be your breakthrough spot, the place where you finally nail a buck that scores 130 inches or better this fall.

Other Factors

Food, cover and water are the key elements of a hotspot. The following terrains will make a habitat more diverse and better.

Openings: Biologists say a prime habitat has about 10 percent open space. Say you lease a 200-acre woodland. Try to plant a couple of food plots and maybe bush-hog strips in an overgrown pasture. Those 20 cleared acres will provide deer with food and edge. The openings will also act stages where does and bucks commingle in late summer and later during the rut.

Rights-of-way: Bucks love to rub and scrape in old logging roads. Does and bucks browse, bed and travel in brushy power-line or gas-line cuts.

Funnels: Check an aerial photo for hollows, ridge saddles, strips of timber between fields, brushy fencerows, necked-down creek crossings...you get the idea. Hang stands in those funnels because that is where the big boys travel and chase does.

10 Deer-Hunting Myths Debunked

(continued from page 7)

A full moon is the worst time to hunt big bucks.

Old-timers have preached it for years: “Them deer can see so good in the big moon, they stay up all night eating and don’t move a-tall in the day.” It’s bewildering to me that millions of hunters still think that way.

Numerous studies of whitetails have established historical rut curves that document one indisputable fact: In any year, from Virginia to Kansas to Canada, 90 percent of adult does will come into estrous and be bred from November 5-20, regardless of moon phase.

I get that and I don’t contend that the full moon determines the timing of the rut. But based on 30 years of observing and hunting whitetails for a living across North America, I do believe—no, I know—that the 5 or 6 days during and around the “rutting” moon in November can be a great time to hunt.

In a study conducted a few years ago at North Carolina State, researchers tracked GPS-collared deer throughout the 4 moon phases, and analyzed text messages sent from the collars to determine when and how the animals moved. Summing up their findings, a scientist said, “A common misconception is that deer can see better at night because it’s brighter when the moon is full. But according to our data they actually move less on average at night during a full moon and more during the middle of the day, and also earlier in the evenings.”

Bingo. Over the last 3 decades I cannot tell you how many mature bucks I have seen on their feet from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm during full-moon days in November. I add that early-morning deer movement has been light to non-existent on these days.

Hang your bow stand at least 25 to 30 feet high.

Granted, at 25 feet or higher a buck will not see or smell you. But if you’re like me and most other people who are a little to very leery of heights, admit it, you’re uncomfortable climbing and posting that high on a small platform. Standing and drawing your bow is awkward to nerve-racking. Plus, the higher you hunt, the narrower the target of a deer’s lung vitals, and the tougher the shot.

After hanging and hunting from too many tree stands to count over the years, I firmly believe that anywhere from 17 to 21 feet is the perfect height for a stand. High enough so that if you play the wind right, sit still and make all the right moves, a buck won’t bust you. Low enough that the stand feels solid, safe and comfortable under your boots. When a buck comes in broadside within 40 yards, you have a killer sight picture and shooting angle to his vitals.

Miss a buck and the jig is up.

Hmm, not always. Sail an arrow over a deer’s back and it will flinch, jump and run off a little way. But if the animal didn’t see or smell you, it didn’t know what happened. Maybe a stick cracked or a limb fell, deer hear those sounds all the time.

There are many stories of bowhunters missing a buck, only to have the animal settle down and circle back within range, only to get missed again or killed this time. Keep your wits, watch the jittery buck you just missed and be ready to atone. It’s a long shot, but a second shot can happen.

Okay, but what about a booming rifle miss?

One day I fired my .270 and sailed a 150-grain bullet over the back of a 150-inch whitetail standing about 150 yards away on the Wyoming plains. The buck got confused, looked around and took off like a shot—straight at me! I dropped him at 70 yards and was happy, even though my shooting sucked.

Don’t get flustered and give up after a miss. Keep your wits, watch the buck and be ready to atone.

If a buck stamps and head bobs, he’s fixing to blow out of there, shoot!

A doe or buck stamps its foot and head bobs when it sees a strange object it can’t make out, like you huddled on the ground or up in a tree stand. It is nervous body language yes, but it does not necessarily indicate quick flight. No need to take a quick and poor bow shot at a buck on high alert, he’ll duck the arrow and whirl for sure.

Instead, freeze and don’t move a muscle. Don’t make direct eye contact with a stamping, bobbing deer if it is super close (sounds strange I know, but try it). More times than not, so long as a buck doesn’t smell you, it will settle down, lose interest and start to walk off. Now you might have a better and easier shot at a calm deer.

Hunt a buck on his scrape line between feed and bed.

I cannot honestly say I have ever shot a buck on his scrape line. I might have, I just don’t know. I’m not even sure scrape lines exist. The more I hunt whitetails in different terrains across the country, the more I believe that scraping is more random and scattered than on some particular line of travel.

I don’t scout for scrape lines anymore. From Halloween through November 15 or so, I look for a ridge, draw or creek bottom pocked with a dozen or so dark, stinky scrapes, along with shiny rubs. I set a stand or blind and sit there a few days. If I don’t spot much, I scout for new scrapes close by.

In a study on the rut behavior of wild, hunted bucks, University of Georgia researchers found that while some scrapes go cold overnight, multiple bucks might eagerly paw new scrapes only 100 to 200 yards away. That goes to my theory that scraping is random, sign of bucks checking various areas for does while venting pen-up sexual energy.

Stay flexible and mobile, on the lookout for the next cluster of fresh scrapes. Your odds are much better this way, rather than trying to hunt a buck on a line of scrapes that may or may not exist.



Photo credit blfink | depositphotos.com

Why Should You Hunt The Elk Pre-Rut?

By Jake Horton

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

For some states, elk hunting starts in the middle of August and, for others, at the beginning of September. This means that all states start their elk hunting seasons well before the rut — some even before the pre-rut. During these early days, elk may still be in bachelor groups or just separated, bulls will not have sought out and found cows yet and, typically, September archery strategies may not be effective yet. The days are long and hot, elk activity may seem stagnant and bulls are not yet vocal. Though this sounds like a lot of reasons not to hunt these early days — including the pre-rut — there are a few reasons you should and some strategies to do so.

Why Hunt Pre-rut?

Before we dive into some strategies and techniques to be successful prior to the pre-rut and during the pre-rut, let's talk about why these are some great days to be afield.

The first reason is the lack of pressure. Most hunters do not want to hunt the pre-rut. Instead, they save their vacation days for the peak bugling and breeding days surrounding the fall equinox. This means that most bulls haven't changed their regular behavior and you might find bulls entirely to yourself still in their summer pattern. There are also fewer eyes. Since the bulls have not started gathering cows yet, they are typically in smaller bachelor groups or solo during this time of year.

If anyone has ever tried stalking a herd of elk, you know that many eyes are looking out for danger. It is super difficult to move within bow range while numerous cows and satellite bulls scan their horizon for predators. When it's just one bull or two, you have a better chance of getting close. Early season is also excellent because bulls are still in their summer patterns. Though elk often change their activity daily, based upon wind, you can find them generally doing the same thing day after day during the early season. An ambush or stalk on a patterned bull can be effective once you know what he wants to do day after day. The final, but not least reason to hunt early season, is because the camping weather is the best. Warm days and cool nights may make for some more challenging elk hunts, but some great camping days.

Strategy 1: Water

During a rut hunt, elk typically want food, water, cover, and breeding; however, during a pre-rut hunt, elk only want food, water and cover.

Since there is one less need for a bull, there is a better chance you will get him to come to water. Combine an elk's natural need for water and hot days and you will find that most elk will get up and get a drink mid-day. This is why finding a good water source and being patient can really pay off early on. To find a good water source, consider that elk do not want to travel too far from their bed and would rather stay in cover than go out into the open, especially during a hot day.



Photo credit twildlife | depositphotos.com

This means that any high elevation spring, pond, creek or stock tank near or in thick timber may be a perfect spot to set up. If you find a water source that seems to look good, look for fresh sign. If there is no new sign, then the chance of a bull using it midday is low and you should continue your search. Some signs to look for include tracks, scat or muddied water. Once you find a good source with fresh sign, set up a blind, build a blind or find a place to wait downwind of the elk's bed, elk's travel path and the watering hole. Even the thirstiest bull will not come in if he smells you near his drinking spot.

Strategy 2: Spot and Stalk

As previously mentioned, early pre-rut activity often means that bulls are by themselves or in small bachelor groups. Finding these bulls might require some time behind the glass at first and last light, which is where pre-season scouting can pay off. Once you find bulls, you can ambush them by setting up along their travel path or spot and stalk bulls.

I prefer to spot and stalk bulls as they travel, essentially trying to get to an intersection point just before they do, always keeping the wind in my face or at least away from the bull.

Some hunters prefer to stalk elk in their beds. This requires an extremely slow pace and a great deal of patience; only moving closer under perfect conditions. Elk, especially big bulls, tend to bed in some dense timber where every step you take cracks a branch or two.

However, spot and stalk can be successful since fewer elk are on the lookout. A day with a solid prevailing wind can definitely help stalking success rates.

Strategy 3: Hunt Their Bedding Areas

Since early season bulls have been pressured less, are typically moving solo or in small groups and are only concerned with eating, drinking, and bedding in cover, you can find success by hunting their bedding areas. A lot of times — unless conditions drastically change — bulls want to bed in the same general area — if not the same beds. This is especially true if they have been unpressured for months and living in the same basin or timber patch.

If you can play the wind right and slip into their bedding areas well before light, you can find success by patiently waiting for a bull to come into his bedroom.

Once a bull makes it to bed, you will already be close with a favorable wind and be able to move in and take a shot or even try coaxing the bull the last few yards to you. Patience goes a long way when hunting in tight quarters; however, be aware that swirling winds can also end a hunt before it even begins.



Photo credit radekchuran | depositphotos.com

Though hunting the opening weeks and pre-rut might not be everyone's favorite time to be afield, you can be successful early on.

Bulls are typically in bachelor groups or solo. They are generally patternable and need water every day. Hunting pressure usually is less and the camping weather is the best.

If you are out hunting, consider hunting over water, spot and stalking bulls or hunting their bedding areas.

No, this will not be a bugle-fest type of hunt, but if you come home with a rack in the back and a freezer full of meat, I do not think you will care.

Consider chasing bulls in the early season this fall to be successful before the rest of the hunters even pack their bags to go hunting.

Join GOHUNT and get research tools to help you find your best hunt, maps built specifically for hunters, a rewards program that puts gear in your hands for less, and the most rewarding loyalty program in hunting that lets subscribers save on GOHUNT's selection of expert-curated gear. Visit GOHUNT.com.

An advertisement for GOHUNT. It features a hunter in camouflage gear and a cap, carrying a large elk head on his backpack. The GOHUNT logo is at the top. Text on the right says "FIELD TESTED BY HUNTERS FOR HUNTERS". At the bottom, it says "Use code HFN to get 10% off your first order." and "SHOP.GOHUNT.COM". A small disclaimer at the very bottom says "Exclusions apply on select brands and discontinued items."/>

GOHUNT

FIELD TESTED
BY HUNTERS
FOR HUNTERS

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

SHOP.GOHUNT.COM

Exclusions apply on select brands and discontinued items.



Photos courtesy GOHUNT at GOHUNT.com

7 Tips For Summer Scouting

By Lorenzo Sartini

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

Boots on the ground now will pay off during your fall hunts

1. In June, set up your trail cameras. Avoid white flash cameras, since most game become nocturnal during hot summer days. Earlier starts mean that your animal — whether deer, elk or antelope — will be used to these additions to their landscape instead of getting spooked when they appear. You will also have more time to pattern and hone in on likely bucks for the fall.

2. Learn the lay of the land. Google Earth and hunter map programs are essential to plan out your scouting trips. Drew a tag for a competitive location? Reach out to past hunters for their take on the unit's terrain and game patterning. Digital scouting can also pay off via message boards and hunter forums.

AVOID: Leaving your mark. Tread lightly even when summer scouting. That old buck did not get to be his age without being wary of even small changes. Walk to water sources with the wind in your face, not at your back. Minimize your scent traces by packing out all food and leaving the area as natural as possible.

3. Pick the right time for the right tasks. The first and last hour of daylight are the best time to glass in hot summer months. Use the middle of the day to find sign and learn new country; you are less likely to disturb game patterns when they're resting through the heat. Midday is also a smart time to set up new trail cameras and investigate water sources.

AVOID: Construction projects. Hunting season and hammers don't mix. If you set up your blind or treestand the first day of hunting season you'll likely disrupt all the patterning you have learned. Instead, set up days or weeks in advance (if possible).

4. Look down whenever possible. Glass up terrain as well as game from a point that gives you a good overview of the area. The summer coats of animals will be easy to spot against the summer greenery. Be aware of how rolling heat waves can affect your view.

AVOID: Exclusively relying on summer patterns. If you're in a rut hunt, find the does about two weeks before the season starts. That is where the bucks will be sniffing around. However, your July scouting missions won't help in November's rifle season. Knowing migratory patterns and water sources at the right altitudes will help you adapt as bucks strike out on their own after they become hard horned. That stream at 12,000 feet in Colorado is not going to help you in October, but the one at lower elevation is likely to still be populated.

5. Be guided by antlers. By the third week of July, most bucks' antlers will still be in velvet but have good growth. Now is the time to start looking for those trophy deer or elk you will want to track. Shed antler hunting in the spring or early summer can also indicate a particular buck's post season habits and projected antler size. If you are lucky enough to find shed antlers from multiple seasons, it is likely the same buck will return there this year. Keep in mind that finding a shed antler in the spring does not mean that the buck will be in the same area during the fall.



6. Take pictures and the right tools for the job. Digiscoping, video and still shots of prospective game are invaluable, particularly to accurately remember that promising buck. Bring in small posts to set up trail cameras in open areas, your binoculars and optics for glassing, and plenty of water to avoid dehydration as temperatures rise.

7. Know the MVDs (Most Valuable Days) to scout. These scouting days are right before your hunt. Make the most of the two, three, four days before your hunt starts to find out what those deer, elk, antelope or sheep are doing right now. If you roll in the night before, your first days will be spent scouting with weapon in hand instead of locating that animal you have been dreaming of.

Learn more and join at GOHUNT.com



***GO THE DISTANCE.
THEN RANGE IT.***

RAZOR® HD 4000 LASER RANGEFINDER **HCD Corrected Shoot-To Range Reticle**

When the game comes down to inches the window of opportunity is small, the Razor® HD 4000 delivers the ranging data you need to make your first shot count. Its advanced modes adapt to any field conditions, providing consistent, repeatable performance when you can't afford to miss. Compact and rugged. Capable of ranging reflective targets out to 4,000 yards. It's designed for serious hunters and shooters who demand performance that will never let them down.

- HD Optical System
- Red Backlit LCD Display
- Tripod Adaptable
- Max Reflective Range: Up to 4,000 Yards
- Tree Range: Up to 2,500 Yards
- Deer Range: Up to 2,200 Yards

Included in the Box

- Carrying Case
- Hex Wrench
- Lens Cloth
- CR2 Battery



**UNLIMITED
UNCONDITIONAL
LIFETIME WARRANTY**

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

BOB WARD'S
bobwards.com SPORTS & OUTDOORS
MISSOULA | BOZEMAN | HELENA | HAMILTON

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

JOIN THE VORTEX NATION



www.vortexoptics.com

THE [MIS-] ADVENTURES OF LEO

By Tom Cooper

At this early point in my hunting life (1970), I was a June graduate from the University of Montana in Missoula. In addition, following 4 years of “ROTC” courses, I had received my lieutenant commission in the US Air Force. I knew this might well be my final Western Montana hunting season for years to come. Since I was scheduled for aircraft maintenance officer training at Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois, in late-Oct, I wanted to hunt the early part of the season before departing.

Who is Leo?

Leo and I had known each other for years. His dad owned a service station on the south side of Missoula. My dad and his were friends, hunting together frequently. On this occasion, Leo called looking for hunting company; he wanted to hunt west of Missoula. I told him I was available. In addition, my Grandpa had made one of his annual trips to Montana during our hunting season, and of course he would hunt with anybody, any time. We frequently used Leo’s dad’s truck, a blue Jeep pickup.



Photo courtesy Tom Cooper

Over the years, we named the pickup “Old Blue”. While Old Blue was reliable enough, it had an issue. The gas gauge did not work. Leo’s dad filled the tank whenever we planned to hunt with Old Blue. After all, he owned a service station.

It’s Empty

We drove to Lolo, headed west, and after several miles turned north at Bear Creek. Then we climbed for several miles on a mountain road to a ridge running east to west. We continued west toward a mountain named Telephone Butte. A mile or so from Telephone Butte, Old Blue quit. It would not restart even though the starter was obviously working. Naturally, after we raised the hood, all three of us looked, but there was nothing to see. One of us asked Leo if he filled the tank. No was the answer, but he was sure his dad filled it the night before, because “he always did”. I crawled under the truck with a small hatchet to tap on the tank. After a few tap, taps, there was no doubt, it was empty.

There weren’t any cell phones in 1970; so, we didn’t have a choice. Someone had to walk for help. Since Grandpa was in his mid-70’s and my confidence in Leo was not very positive right then, that left me. When I suggested Grandpa and Leo sit in the truck and maybe take a nap, Grandpa responded “there would be no naps”. Even though it was a mild morning, they would build a fire and gather wood until I returned. With that I headed down the road.

A Telephone Would Help

Turns out it’s 7.5 miles from Old Blue to the highway, US 12. I started down the edge of the pavement, using my thumb to let drivers know I wanted a ride. After a quarter mile, a pickup pulled over. I hopped in and told the gentleman my story. He asked if a phone call would help. Surprised, I said “I guess, sure”. He pointed to the glove compartment. There was a phone! Exactly how it worked in 1970 using radio signals to connect to telephone lines, I wasn’t sure. But, it did. I dialed Leo’s dad’s number, and we agreed I would wait for him in Lolo. Then we would rescue the boys. Yes, I thanked the pickup driver multiple times.

When Leo’s dad arrived (in a friend’s 4-wheel drive with 2 five gallon cans of gas), I climbed in and we headed west. It was late afternoon when we reached Old Blue. We could see the fire a hundred yards away. Grandpa built it in the middle of the road “so nobody could just drive by.” Since the road was all dirt and rock, it was his giant fire pit. Leo had been encouraged to gather enough wood for the winter. Eight years later when I next hunted the area, Leo’s wood pile was still 4 feet tall. With both vehicles running, we headed back to town.

Where is Leo?

Another Leo adventure occurred in November, 1969. We were using Old Blue to hunt high above Deep Creek, west of Missoula. Leo and I were with Jack, a mutual college friend. We hunted all morning but didn’t find any elk or deer. Shortly after noon, we started back to Deep Creek. I dropped Jack and Leo to hunt a ridgeline where they would lose several hundred feet, and then return to the road at a lower elevation. I left Old Blue for them where they were supposed to reconnect with the road. I hunted out a ridge and dropped into a canyon that would take me back to the road, where Leo, Jack and Old Blue should pick me up.

Plan was not Foolproof

The plan seemed pretty foolproof until I returned to the road, and did not find Old Blue. I waited 45 minutes, then walked down the road to an area used for hunting camps, thinking they must be ahead of me. That was wrong. I waited an hour before walking back up the road. After 30 minutes, I met Jack driving Old Blue, without Leo. They had completed their hunt as planned, found the truck, and drove to where I expected to return to the road. Not finding me (or my tracks in the snow), they drove to the camping area. Next, they drove back to where I had left the truck for them, and waited for 30 minutes.

They returned to where I was supposed to hike out to the road. Still not finding me there, they drove to where I left Old Blue for them. Now, Leo decided to follow my tracks and Jack would continue to drive the road. So, Jack and I drove back to where I walked out to the road, still no Leo. The only tracks were mine.

We decided not to split up, expecting Leo to appear any moment. We returned to the camping area and waited an hour, but no Leo. Since it was mid-November, by late-afternoon we could tell dark was close. We drove the road once more, no Leo. We honked the horn and fired a couple rounds, 2-3 times, no Leo. We returned to the camping area and built a fire. At 6:00 pm, we decided both of us would stay until seven, then Jack would remain by the fire and I would head for Leo's parent's house in Missoula, and alert Search and Rescue. I would be the bearer of bad news. At 6:45 pm, I walked away from the fire to shoot again. When I worked my bolt, a voice said "I hope you aren't planning to shoot me". Leo!

The Explanation

Leo had followed my tracks to a huge deadfall, on a very steep hillside. He saw my tracks approach the tree where I looked over the trunk which was covered with 2-3 inches of slick snow. Plus it was a 4 foot drop to the ground on the downhill side of the tree. He could see my tracks, along the trunk, as I walked around the low end of the tree, then proceeded down the canyon. But, Leo wanted to save a few steps and climbed over the tree. He slipped, hit his head on the trunk, and lay in the snow until almost 6:00 pm when he woke up and followed my tracks to the road with a flashlight. We drove to Leo's home and explained what happened. Since his mother was a nurse; she would look after the bump and watch for any sign of concussion. It was time for Jack and me to go home.

Lessons Learned

What did I learn from these early adventures? First, a vehicle is part of your gear, make sure it's as ready as your rifle, water bottle, or secret little bag of snacks. It does not matter if you are using someone else's vehicle. Ask the right questions (I didn't) to make sure all gear is ready. If folks don't follow directions for preparing gear, and you suspect they might not in the future, consider not including them next time. Better yet, hunt with them again, repeat your point of view, and maybe they'll truly understand why every hunter in a party has responsibilities.

Second, I found out hunting plans aren't foolproof, ever. The more people involved, the messier it gets. Whenever you plan an outing and recognize one or more of those involved is not familiar with the territory you intend to hunt, match them with a hunter who is. These days, the world is loaded with communication devices. Use whatever works for group safety: two-way radios, cell phones, satellite phones, smoke signals, petroglyphs on rocks, carrier pigeons, etc. Make sure your communications devices work before you need to use them. Talk about what to do if there is an injury or a member of your group (or some stranger) is lost or not responding. Compared to individual safety and/or group welfare, hunting has to be the second priority.

Antelope: A Western Hunt For All

(continued from page 24)

We ended up finding a deep open travel corridor nearly three miles from the nearest road that allowed rutting herds to move between the fields and away from hunters all day long. I shot my antelope at about 200 yards around noon on opening morning as he moved through the corridor. While we were butchering it, a group of eight more came through the same path and Jared made it count on a nice buck at 130 yards. Waiting for antelope to come by you instead of trying to stalk definitely can work— especially on opening weekend when every rifle hunter and their cousin seems to be driving the roads in search of an easy harvest. This also may be your only technique if the terrain or vegetation is not conducive to stalks. 2020 was very successful and we all ended up tagging out by 2 p.m. on opening day after being into antelope all day long.

In Closing

Overall, rifle antelope season is a blast and a higher success hunt in most areas. I highly suggest using this season as a time to take a new hunter afield. Have a solid rifle, get off the roads and be patient; you will have a good chance for it all to come together. Nothing is more fun than hiking flat miles, hanging out with some good friends and seeing animals all day long. If you are unable or unwilling to hike, you can also have moderate success by driving around and spotting bucks, then making stalks or being patient and waiting for the buck to come your way.

Start Planning Your Next Antelope Hunt Now

Using the research tools on INSIDER makes finding an antelope hunt extremely easy. When you combine Draw Odds with Filtering 2.0 and GOHUNT's 3D maps you have a big leg up to planning out a hunt that meets your needs and points.

Three Summertime Fishing Tips

(continued from page 10)

Slide on three or four 4mm beads, a clevis, and a #2 Baithfish-Image Colorado blade. In dirty water, I like Northland's Golden Shiner pattern. For clear lakes, the Yellow Perch pattern is a winner."

In weeds, Roach runs a bullet sinker. Over clean bottom, he prefers a Northland Slip-Bouncer, which lets him troll faster without losing the ability to feed line to biting fish. He tips the rig with a medium leech and simply starts cruising along the structure using his bow-mount electric motor. When the leech needs replacing, a Frabill Leech Tote is always at hand and quickly coughs up a volunteer.

Roach's multi-species spinners account for a dazzling array of catches. The #2 blade weeds out little panfish, and selects for the biggest bluegills in the lake. If the spot holds crappies, walleyes, perch, or bass, the rig takes them as well. "It's what I call my vacuum rig," Roach quips. "If you pull this thing through fish, it's going to get bit."...

Eye-Candy Walleye Fishing Leeches

(continued from page 15)

JIGGIN' LEECH Details:

A small juicy leech is like a dessert for fish – no matter their mood, it's hard to pass up. The new 3.25" Eye-Candy Jiggin' Leech imitates just that kind of snack. The bite-sized profile features a semi-flat worm body, making it super easy to rig with any jig. In the back it sports a super-thin leech shape that looks, swims, and acts like the real thing, giving anglers a step up when it comes to finesse fishing. Available in 10 eye catching colors. MSRP \$7.99 (5 per pack)



Hawthorne: Mille Lacs Mayhem

"I helped prototype the new leeches and couldn't be happier with the result, which has been knocking the socks off Mille Lacs walleyes all season," says the 20-year Mille Lacs Lake fishing guide veteran.

"For the Jiggin' Leech, it's like fishing a real leech or 'crawler chunk," says Hawthorne. "I like it on a Nedster Jig or Tungsten Short-Shank. If I'm swimming the Jiggin' Leech, I like the long-shank Tungsten Jig in 1/16 or 1/8 ounce. That's the deal. You whip that jig out behind them, drag it in front of them, and they suck it right in."

For Mille Lacs, Hawthorne likes the 4.25-inch Rigg'in' Leech on a dropshot. "I use a 1/2-ounce tungsten weight, a dropshot hook, and a four-foot leader with the Rigg'in' Leech, and Mille Lacs walleyes whack the snot out of it. While I've been fishing primarily black and green pumpkin, there's something magic about the reddish, translucent color called 'Blood Sucker'."

Hawthorne concludes: "All I can say is that after 20 years of guiding on Mille Lacs and going through countless pounds of leeches each season, the proof is in the pudding. These baits will go head-to-head with live bait—and without the worry that goes along with changing water every day on your leeches—or wondering if you're going to be able to buy any later in the season when trapping ends. Get yourself a few packages of these and you're good to go."

RIGGIN' LEECH Details:

The unique characteristics of TPE allows Northland to explore shapes never seen before. The new 4.5" Eye-Candy Rigg'in' Leech is just that. Its ultra-thin leech profile looks, acts, and swims like the real thing. Eye-Candy's durability allows anglers to rig this ultra-thin bait like live bait. Whether fixed on a jig, spinner rig or harness, this bait's lifelike action is sure to bring more fish topside. The Eye-Candy Rigg'in' comes in 10 eye-catching colors. MSRP \$7.99 (5 per pack)

Shop at www.northlandtackle.com.

How To Summer Mule Deer Scout For Late Fall Hunting Success...

(continued from page 23)

4 - Give up the notion that you must lay eyes on deer

Summer scouting for fall mule deer hunts means you need to give up on the idea that actually laying eyes on bucks is the most essential part. Sure, seeing a great buck in your unit is very motivating, but will that buck be there in October or early November? The answer to that depends on a lot of factors, but locating a big buck doesn't have to be priority number one.

If you do find a giant buck in mid to late August, that buck could still be there through mid- to late October if the conditions are right.

For the most part, hunting later in the fall means you're either hunting timbered up bucks in their transition zones or you're hunting migration corridors.

That buck could take so many different paths off the mountain that it might be hard to predict where he could be during the fall.

Scouting out a great buck deep in the high country will not do you much good unless you can scout that buck constantly.

For most of us traveling from out of state, we don't need to be concerned with actually spotting a giant right now.

However, we do need to find these transition zones or migration corridors, which is why if you only have limited scouting time in the summer, it really doesn't pay to go deep into the mountains to locate bucks when you most likely will not be hunting them that high in the fall.

Why put all your eggs into one basket to just lay eyes on a deer in one or two basins that you most likely won't be hunting during the fall or likely even see again?

If you really want to lay eyes on deer, you can still do some long distance glassing from lower elevations by utilizing road systems or while hiking around.

Again, don't be afraid to bust out the spotting scope and mount it on the window of your truck.

As crazy as it sounds, your scouting time is actually better spent looking over the unit in a bigger picture view and trying to note any potential areas where bucks and does might move into come October or early November.

For more or to join visit GOHUNT.com.



CONFIDENT DRIVING And DURABILITY ON ROAD & OFF



Dynapro HT2

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

NEW!

ION evo AS

Charge less. Cruise more.

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

Dynapro AT2 Xtreme

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

Dynapro XT

Ruggedness Meets Comfort. Built to perform in rugged terrains.

Dynapro MT2

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



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

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

GO TO WWW.TIRESUPPLYSC.COM FOR SPECIAL OFFERS

Love is out there. Find it in a Crosstrek.



2025 Subaru Crosstrek®

Reasons to love Crosstrek.

- Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive
- Standard EyeSight® Driver Assist Technology¹
- 8.7 inches of ground clearance
- STARLINK Multimedia with Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™ integration
- 17-inch dark gray-finish alloy wheels
- Dual-zone automatic climate control

There's also a suite of available active safety features like Blind-Spot Detection² and Rear Cross-Traffic Alert², as well as the connected services of available SUBARU STARLINK® Safety and Security³. Choose from 5 Crosstrek trims.



SUBARU.

PLACER SUBARU

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

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

See our full line of Subaru vehicles

1515 EUCLID AVENUE, HELENA, MT. 59601

Subaru, Crosstrek, EyeSight, STARLINK and Apple CarPlay are registered trademarks. Android is a trademark of Google Inc. ¹EyeSight is a driver-assist system that may not operate optimally under all driving conditions. The driver is always responsible for safe and attentive driving. System effectiveness depends on many factors, such as vehicle maintenance, weather, and road conditions. See Owner's Manual for complete details on system operation and limitations. Requires automatic transmission. ²Blind-Spot Detection, Lane Change Assist and Rear Cross-Traffic Alert are systems designed to assist the driver by monitoring the rear and side areas of the vehicle during a lane change or reversing and are not a substitute for safe and attentive driving. ³Activation with subscription required. Includes a three-year trial subscription to Safety Plus services and a six-month trial subscription to Safety and Security Plus services. The Concierge plan can be purchased annually or monthly. A credit card on file will be required for specific packages and for renewal purposes. Features and availability vary by vehicle and trim level. May not be available in all states. See Retailer for details.

2025 Crosstrek Wilderness Crystal White Pearl shown with optional accessories. Take a video tour here: <https://www.subaru.com/vehicles/crosstrek/gallery.html>