

Vermont Sporting Journal

Volume VI, Issue 14 * November 2022



Dakotah Badger
8 Point 160 lb Buck

We return a portion of pre-tax profits as follows:

2% Hunting and Fishing Education * 2% Habitat Improvement * 2% Preservation of the Second Amendment

Bats Are on the Move, With a Reputation to Improve

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The onset of fall sends Vermont's bats into motion, which makes it an important time for conservation-minded Vermonters to learn about, and help conserve, our nine native bat species.

If you have noticed bats roosting in your attic, barn, or office over the summer, fall is the perfect time to safely evict these uninvited guests from your property. This is because summer groups of bats that roost in buildings begin to scatter in the fall, in preparation for migration or hibernation. You can learn how to safely evict bats from your building at the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's [best management practices](#) page.

You can also help bat conservation efforts by [reporting large colonies of bats living in structures to the department's website](#). Locations with rare colonies of endangered [little brown bats](#) are eligible for free bat houses from Vermont Fish and Wildlife.

Bat houses provide an alternative location for safely evicted bats to remain in your yard and continue eating huge quantities of insects that may be forest, agricultural, or

human pests. Bat houses can be put up any time of year but do require some simple maintenance. Late fall or winter is the time to look up inside your bat house and make sure all the bats have left before cleaning out any abandoned wasp nests and planning any needed caulking or repainting.

"Fall also means Halloween, and scary images of bats, but this presents an opportunity to bring positive attention to bats as well," said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Small Mammals Biologist Alyssa Bennett. "So, we celebrate 'Bat Week' in the days leading up to Halloween."



Bat houses are a great alternative for bats you need to evict from your home, but they do require some maintenance in the late fall or winter to clean out abandoned wasp nests and repair any leaks.

VTF&W photo

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Bats Are on the Move 1
- Additional Details Released on November 2 Bear Attach. 3
- Vt F&W's 2023 Calendar Is Available 4
- Vt's Regular Deer Season Starts Saturday, Nov 12. 5
- Hunters Urged to Wear Orange 6
- VT F&W Urges Hunters to Help Keep Deer Healthy 7
- F&W Asks Deer Hunters to Report Wildlife Sightings 7
- Fall Foods Less Abundant for Wildlife 8
- Hunters Asked to Collect Deer Teeth 8
- Losing Friends 9
- Unallocated Antlerless Permits Available 10
- Give Goose a Try! 11
- Shots of the Season 13 & 14
- Trapline Talk 16
- The Shots You Don't Take 17
- Road Improvement Project Begins at Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area 19
- My Favorite Time 21
- Squirrel Pot Pie Recipe 22

The Vermont Sporting Journal

is published bimonth

Advertising, editorial and circulation mailing address is:

The Vermont Sporting Journal 29 Strong Road * Orange, Vermont 05641
or email us at: vermontsportingjournal@gmail.com

Letters, manuscripts and photographs should be mail to the above address.

If you would like submitted materials returned, please enclose a SASE.

Bennett added that learning about the importance of bats in our ecosystems does not mean the public should overlook the department's guidance on safety in cases of contact with wild animals.

"We ask the public let wildlife be wild and not handle bats, even though the incidence of rabies is less than 1% in the natural population," said Bennett. "If you are bitten or scratched by a bat, you find one in a room with a sleeping person or an unattended child, or your pet has had direct contact with a bat, please call the Rabies Hotline at 1-800-4-RABIES to find out if the bat should be tested."

Bat Week takes place October 24-31 and aims to raise awareness about the vital ecological function of bats and to dispel the many myths and misinformation about them.

This year, Bennett will be giving a public talk about Vermont's nine native bat species at the Hannaford Career Center in Middlebury on Wednesday, Oct 26, from 6-7:00 pm. You can register for the talk on the [department's events page](#).

Anyone interested in learning more can visit the official [Bat Week website here](#), or email alyssa.bennett@vermont.gov.



[gov](#) for more information about what they can do right here in Vermont to promote bat conservation.

"Vermont is home to several species of threatened and endangered bats that we are working to conserve and recover—we hope Vermonters will support these efforts and come to enjoy seeing bats in their natural environment," said Bennett. "Bats are a very important part of our natural world and now, more than ever, they need our help."

www.LambGraphicDesigns.com

Lamb Graphic Designs
Your dreams, our best quality



T-shirts,
Custom logos, merchandise,
apparel, decals, desktop publishing, etc.

Additional Details Released on November 2 Bear Attack

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department game wardens and biologists have released additional details on the bear attack on November 2 in Winhall, Vermont. A preliminary release on this incident incorrectly identified the town where the attack took place as Stratton.

Sarah Dietl of Winhall, 43, reported that she was attacked by a bear in the yard of her condominium complex near Stratton Mountain Resort after letting her and her partner's dog into the yard that evening.

Dietl described that the dog, a Shih Tzu, treed a bear cub in the yard immediately upon leaving the house. She described that the cub's mother subsequently charged her, knocked her to the ground, and began to maul her.

Dietl's partner reported that he heard Dietl yell for help and intervened. He was able to separate Dietl from the bear and bring her inside the condominium.

When the couple attempted to open the door for their dog, they described that the bear charged the door but that they were able to prevent it from entering. The couple then called 911. Winhall Police and Rescue responded first to the scene and game wardens from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department arrived at 10:05 pm.

Dietl was transported to Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington late on November 2. She was treated for non-life-threatening injuries to her head, hand, and side, and discharged in stable condition on November 3.

Game wardens searched the neighborhood for the bear, its cubs, and the couple's dog after arriving at the scene. They concluded their initial search at 1:20 am on November 3 without success.

"Before letting pets out at night, I would urge Vermonters to light their yards and make plenty of noise to allow wildlife in the area time to move on," said Game Warden Kyle Isherwood. "Along with securing food that could attract wildlife into a developed area, steps like this are important for the safety of people and wildlife."

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department game wardens and biologists returned to the scene at 10:00 am on November 3 to continue the investigation. They learned that a bird feeder had been present outside the condominium complex until mid-October, that a bear-proof dumpster on the property was damaged and not being used properly, and that a female bear with cubs had been seen regularly in the area throughout the summer and fall. They also found multiple decorative pumpkins outside of the complex that showed signs of having been fed on by bears.

"Bear attacks in Vermont are rare, but it is absolutely critical that Vermonters take every step to secure food sources that might attract bears into close proximity with people," said Wildlife Biologist and Black Bear Project Leader Jaclyn Comeau. "Increasingly bold and high-risk behavior from bears is due to Vermonters' failure to take the proactive steps needed for safely coexisting alongside a healthy black bear population. This failure puts both people and bears in danger."

The couple's dog was found uninjured. Attempts by game wardens and biologists to locate the bear are ongoing.



Vermont Fish and Wildlife's 2023 Calendar Is Available

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Vermont Fish and Wildlife's colorful 2023 calendar is now available.

The calendar is filled with stunning photos of Vermont native species ranging from a rugged white-tailed deer buck to the endangered rue anemone wildflower.

The calendar features art by both well-known and emerging nature photographers, including Josh Blouin, Jessica Boone, Kiley Briggs, Roger Irwin, Caleb Kenna, Dan Lovell, Meg Madden, Kent McFarland, Emanuel Soza-Foias, and Kyle Tansley.

"Vermont's wildlife, habitats, and people are interconnected—this calendar celebrates that," said Commissioner Christopher Herrick. "It showcases

pollinators and amphibians alongside game species and furbearers, and commemorates the contributions and leadership of hunters and anglers as well as community scientists, private landowners, and dedicated volunteers in conserving these species and their habitats for all Vermonters."

The calendar includes hunting, fishing and trapping season dates for each month along with beautiful photography, making it the perfect gift for any outdoor recreationist.

The calendar is available for \$15 from Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department website, www.vtfishandwildlife.com, using the online shopping cart function or by downloading a printable free-shipping mail-in form.



The cover of the 2023 calendar features a photograph of a snowshoe hare sitting on a bed of fallen leaves and twigs. The hare is white with dark markings on its ears and face. The background is a soft-focus forest floor. The calendar cover includes the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department logo and the text: "Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department Calendar 2023" and "Conserving Fish, Wildlife, Plants and Their Habitats for the People of Vermont".

The cover photo of the '23 calendar features a snowshoe hare nestled among dense young conifers, the hare's preferred cover. This widespread but elusive species benefits from the department's active management of state lands to the maintain the young forest habitat on which it and many other species depend, work that is supported by federal Pittman-Robertson funds derived from the excise tax on firearms and other sporting equipment.

VTF&W photo

Vermont's Regular Deer Season Starts Saturday, Nov. 12

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Hunters are gearing up for the start of Vermont's traditionally popular 16-day regular deer season that begins Saturday, November 12 and ends Sunday, November 27.

A hunter may take one legal buck during this season if they did not already take one during the archery deer season. The definition of a legal buck depends on the Wildlife Management Unit (WMU). A [map of the WMUs](#) is on pages 22 and 23 of the 2022 VERMONT HUNTING & TRAPPING GUIDE available from license agents statewide.

In WMUs C, D1, D2, E1, E2, G, I, L, M, P, and Q a legal buck is any deer with at least one antler three inches or more in length.

In WMUs A, B, F1, F2, H, J1, J2, K, N, and O a legal buck is any deer with at least one antler with two or more antler points one inch in length or longer.

"The greatest numbers of deer continue to be in western regions of the state and other valley areas," said Vermont Fish and Wildlife's deer biologist Nick Fortin. "The

Green Mountains and Northeast Kingdom offer more of a big woods experience with fewer, but often larger, deer."

Vermont hunting licenses include a buck tag for this season and a late season bear tag (for Nov. 12-20), cost \$28 for residents and \$102 for nonresidents. Hunters under 18 years of age get a break at \$8 for residents and \$25 for nonresidents. Licenses are available on Fish and Wildlife's website and from license agents statewide.

"I am urging all hunters to wear a fluorescent orange hat and vest to help maintain Vermont's very good hunting season safety record," said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick.

A [2022 Deer Season Hunting Guide](#) can be downloaded from the department's website at www.vtfishandwildlife.com. The guide includes a map of the Wildlife Management Units (WMUs), season dates, regulations, and other helpful information.

Hunters are required to report deer in person at a big game reporting station during the regular season. Online reporting will not be available. This requirement allows biologists to collect important information from as many deer as possible.

Hunters who get a deer on November 12 or 13 can help Vermont's deer management program by reporting their deer at one of the biological check stations listed below that will be staffed from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., unless the store closes earlier:

- Buck Stop Mini Mart – Bennington
- Keith's Country Store – Pittsford
- R&L Archery – Barre
- Putney Sunoco – Putney
- West Enosburg Country Store – Enosburg Falls
- Rack N Reel – New Haven
- Bob's Quick Stop – Irasburg
- Lead & Tackle – Lyndonville
- Village Grocery & Deli – Waitsfield
- Singleton's Store - Proctorsville



Hunters who get a deer on opening weekend of the Nov. 12-27 deer season can help Vermont's deer management program by reporting their deer at a biological check station.

VTF&W photos by John Hall

Hunters who do not go to a biological reporting station are asked to provide a tooth from their deer. Obtain a tooth envelope from your regular reporting agent. Remove one of the middle incisor teeth, being careful to include the root. Place the tooth in the envelope and give it to the reporting agent. Each tooth will be cross sectioned to accurately determine the deer's age, and the results will be posted on the Fish and Wildlife website next spring.



Hunters Urged to Wear Orange

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

Vermont Fish and Wildlife is reminding hunters to wear fluorescent hunter orange.

“Hunting is one of the safest outdoor activities, thanks to advances in education as well as science,” said Vermont Hunter Education Program Coordinator Nicole Meier. “Our volunteer hunter education instructors stress that wearing orange during hunting season is important, and studies prove that wearing fluorescent hunter orange keeps hunters visible to other people in the woods, but it keeps them relatively invisible to deer.”

“Every year we should strive to be the safest we can

be by wearing at least a hunter orange hat and vest,” she added.

The time that deer are most active, during the dawn and dusk hours, are times of especially low visibility. You can improve your chances of being seen by other hunters by wearing hunter orange, which can be seen even in low-light situations.

“While it isn’t recommended to wear orange during waterfowl and turkey seasons, we certainly still recommend hunter orange when you are going to and from your blind, treestand or calling spot,” said Meier.

While some hunters might be concerned that deer are scared by hunter orange, in fact deer have been shown to be unaffected by the color. A deer’s vision is based on movement, patterns and color variations. Unlike humans, deer do not have multiple color receptors in their eyes. They can see color, but their spectrum is limited. This means deer must rely heavily on their ability to detect movement over the ability to interpret color variations and patterns.

Hunting in Vermont continues to be a safe recreational pursuit and hunters can help keep it that way by choosing to wear hunter orange. This video shows how much more visible hunters are when wearing orange: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kjsI79ss9I>

Hunt smart. Hunt safe. Wear orange.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife urges wearing a fluorescent “hunter orange” hat and vest while hunting.
VTF&W photo

VT F&W Urges Hunters to Help Keep Deer Healthy

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is reminding hunters of a regulation designed to help keep Vermont deer healthy by banning the use of any deer lure containing deer urine or other deer bodily fluids.

The infectious agent of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal disease of deer, is a mutant protein or “prion” that can be passed in urine. This mutant protein can bind to soils and remain infectious for many years. Nearly all urine-based lures are produced in captive deer facilities, where CWD is most likely to occur. There is no way to test live animals, and infected animals can spread CWD for years before showing any symptoms. No amount of testing or special certification program can eliminate the risk of spreading CWD through urine lures.

CWD is 100 percent fatal to deer and moose. It causes irreversible popula-

tion declines and has been impossible to eliminate once it becomes established in a population. CWD has not been detected in Vermont.

“No single buck is worth risking the health of Vermont’s entire deer herd,” said Nick Fortin, Vermont’s deer biologist. “If someone feels they must use a lure, there are legal, synthetic alternatives that are just as effective.”

“If CWD is ever detected in Vermont, local deer numbers would have to be greatly reduced to attempt to remove the disease before it becomes established,” said Vermont Director of Wildlife Mark Scott. “This reduction would have to be done for at least five years.”

More information about Chronic Wasting Disease can be found at www.cwd-info.org and by typing CWD in the “Search” section at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.



Vermont Fish & Wildlife reminds hunters that the use of any deer lure containing deer urine or other deer bodily fluids is prohibited.

Photo by Wyoming Game and Fish Dept.

Fish & Wildlife Asks Deer Hunters to Report Wildlife Sightings

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is asking hunters to participate in its annual deer hunter effort and sighting survey.

The survey asks hunters to record how many hours they hunted and how many deer, moose, bears, or other wildlife they saw each day they hunted. This information helps the department evaluate how hunting pressure and the number of these animals varies around the state.

The easiest way to complete the survey is to use the Deer Hunting Log feature in the Vermont Outdoors mobile app. The app allows hunters to track their effort and wildlife sightings each day during any of the 2022 deer hunting seasons. It also includes useful features like a check station locator tool and lots of hunting and fishing related information. Vermont Outdoors is available through the App Store or Google Play.

A web-based version of the survey

will also be available on Fish and Wildlife’s website www.vtfishandwildlife.com after the start of the regular season on November 12.

“This survey is a great opportunity for hunters to let us know what they saw and to help inform management of deer and other wildlife,” said Nick Fortin, Fish and Wildlife’s deer and moose project leader. “If we hear from more hunters, our population estimates will be more reliable, and our management will be more effective.”

Fall Foods Less Abundant for Wildlife

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is reporting that several important fall foods for wildlife are less abundant this year, following the bountiful 2021 fall season.

Fish and Wildlife biologists survey oak and beech stands around the state each fall season to assess how plentiful these important foods are for wildlife. Last year both acorns and beechnuts were plentiful across much of Vermont.

Results for this year found both acorns and beechnuts are less abundant. Surveyed beech stands had complete crop failures and acorn surveys showed the lowest counts in 10 years. Without abundant acorns and beechnuts many of Vermont's wildlife species will be on the move looking for alternative food options before winter strikes.

The last time Vermont saw poor production of acorns and beechnuts in the same year was 2018. Without these important wild foods many

bears will enter winter dens early this year, and those that remain active will be searching for alternative food sources.

“With acorns and beechnuts scarce and bears searching for other food sources, it is important that Vermonters remain diligent about securely storing common bear attractants such as garbage and birdseed until winter conditions arrive and bears enter their dens,” said wildlife biologist Jaclyn Comeau, who is the department's Black Bear Project Leader.

Hunters Asked to Help Collect Deer Teeth

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is asking hunters for help gathering biological data on the state's deer population. Hunters who get a deer during the November 12-27 regular deer season are asked to provide an incisor tooth from their deer. Tooth envelopes are available at all deer reporting stations.

Biologists are collecting middle incisor teeth from all regular season bucks to evaluate regional differences in ages and antler characteristics as well as to help estimate population size, growth

rate, health, and mortality rates. Each tooth will be cross sectioned to accurately determine the deer's age, and the results will be posted on the Fish and Wildlife website next spring.

“Knowing the ages of harvested deer is critically important, and more information allows us to make better management decisions,” said Nick Fortin, Vermont Fish and Wildlife's deer project leader. “To accurately estimate deer numbers, and to better assess our current management strategies, we really need to get teeth from as many bucks as possible.”



Hunters who get a deer during the November 12-27 regular deer season are asked to provide an incisor tooth from their deer.

VTF&W photo

Losing Friends

by Ken Jones

Losing friends reminds us of how fragile life really is. The recent passing of one of my oldest and best friends ever is what fuels this story. It is also a reminder of how our closest friends are often the ones that drive us to succeed.

The year was 1995 or 96. I was working a second shift job, so I was missing evening hunts but getting my mornings in. One night I got a call at work early in the evening from my great pal Skinny. I've always been a driven guy when it comes to hunting. When a season is in, I'm all in. Hunting every single day even if it's only for an hour. So, I get this call from my man Skinny. Now Skinny had a track record for being that guy that would get maximum results from minimal efforts, and it usually had a story to it. So, this night, he tells me of the nice spike buck he'd killed with his bow that evening. It seems he left his stand early, was making his way to the vehicle and came upon this young buck caught up in feeding and not keeping his guard up. Well, Skinny put an arrow in his boiler room and he proceeded to run down and pile up practically in the back of the car!!!

Having the competitive nature I and most hunters have, I was happy for my buddy but at the same time I was a bit miffed that he'd fallen into another one and here I am, hunting like crazy with an empty sack.

The next morning found me in the tree hoping to at least see something. Around 8:00 I sprayed a little buck urine on the tree above my head mostly for cover scent. Within minutes a plump little doe came prancing in nose stretched obviously looking for the other deer her nose was telling her was there. As she walked past the stand, I settled my pin and made one of the worst shots of my life!!! Right through the paunch. She acted like most gut shot deer and simply took a few quick steps and walked out of sight.

Knowing where the hit was, I knew it was fatal but she would need time to expire. I checked my watch and decided I'd stay in the tree for a solid hour before climbing

down. Then the idea would be to find some sign, mark it and back out and come back several hours later.

The hour past slower than molasses in January. I got down and crept through the little draw she'd gone through looking for sign. I'd found a few drops and established a line of direction and she had headed towards a swamp I noticed a different looking log about 75 yards below me and upon inspection with my binos, this log had ears and was in fact, that plump little doe I'd paunched just an hour ago!!! There she laid, dead as a stone.

Skinny's dumb luck was once again forgiven and we loaded the two of em in my blazer and took them to the cut up shop.

Like many of us, I seem to be losing friends at an alarming rate. Best man at my wedding and buddies for close to 50 years. I sure will miss his crazy success to drive me to mine.

In loving memory of my buddy .

Scott Lapoint

6/3/64 - 9/10/22

The author and his buddy with the two deer from this story.



Unallocated Antlerless Permits Available

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department held its annual permit lottery for muzzleloader antlerless deer permits in September and says it now has unallocated muzzleloader antlerless deer permits available for use in the antlerless-only October 27-30 season and the regular December 3-11 muzzleloader season.

The unallocated permits are available because not enough people applied for them in the lottery.

These permits can be purchased for \$10 on a first come, first served basis, on the department's website: www.vtfishandwildlife.com

The following Wildlife Management Units have muzzleloader antlerless permits available as of October 4: A, F1, F2, K and N.

A person who won a permit in the lottery may not purchase a second permit unless they take a deer with their first permit and then only if they have not reached their four-deer annual limit.



Give Goose a Try!!



By Brett Ladeau

I've always had an interest in waterfowl hunting but never really took the time to go. There is only so much time and money for my hobbies and I spend most of it chasing turkey and deer. Mostly turkey really, but I still pretend to be a deer hunter too.

However, I have a good friend, James Gonyaw, that loves working with his black lab, Arson, and waterfowl hunting. Ironically, we met through turkey hunting. Regardless, he invited me on my first goose hunt last fall in the late season. Unfortunately, the limit was one goose per hunter, and James had done such a good job scouting that we didn't take long to both fill our limit. It was still an exciting and I got to experience my first waterfowl hunt. Both James and Arson were on point and were fun to share the field with. James' knowledge runs deep with geese, and I learned a lot from the hunt.

He promised to invite me on an early goose hunt this year and mid-September I got a late evening text/call from James asking me if I was available to hunt the next morning. I had plans to deer hunt in NH but quickly changed them. I scrambled around the house finding the right shotgun, ammo, and calls to get ready for the morning hunt. I met with James and a couple of his friends' a few hours before daylight. The word was that there was a giant flock of geese seen in the field we would be hunting the night before. Typically, geese

tend to visit this field shortly after daylight and were at a local pond just around the bend. We got our laydown blinds situated and camouflaged in well before daylight and waited. As we laid there, we could hear the geese on the pond not too far away. Hearing them built the excitement level for me and had the adrenaline flowing.

As daylight broke, their honking increased and a few times we thought they were airborne and headed our way. After a few false alarms, we finally spotted the first group headed our way. Not necessarily the way we had anticipated but they were coming into the decoy spread, nonetheless. With lots of shooting we had a couple of geese down. Arson quickly made the retrieve and we settled back in for round two. A short while later a second flock approached our set up and with similar results, we were able to get a couple more geese. If we were keeping score, we might have been hitting about .200 on our shooting opportunities. Not great but I guess that is par for the course.

I am not sure how many more flocks came in that morning, but we ended up with close to a two-person limit (15 geese). There were lots of laughs, plenty of empty shells, and a couple of new friends made along the way too. This was definitely a different experience than our one goose limit hunt from last fall, and something I could see doing more of next September.

With that said, I've really enjoyed my goose hunts, but I am trying to avoid another hunting addiction, so I am tempering my excitement a little. I can see why people love it though. You get to share the field with friends, a well-trained dog, and if you are lucky, a few geese for the table.

We will see what next September brings but you might catch me in a goose field even if I am trying not to get addicted to it. Good hunting to everyone this fall no matter your pursuit, and if you get an invite by some friend with expertise for a type of hunt your not experienced with I would suggest taking them up on their offer. I've hunted rabbit and geese with some very experienced hunters and have enjoyed learning from them. Be safe, have fun, and shoot straight if given an opportunity.



shots of the season



Shots of the Season





HENRY
TOP 100 DEALER

Parro's is more than a gun shop!



Full line gun shop & Vermont's only commercial indoor shooting range, featuring:
Try before you buy, NFA Rentals, classes, walk ins welcome, 2,000 firearms in stock!
Open 7 days a week.

Parro's Gun Shop & Indoor Range • 601 U.S. Route 2, Waterbury, VT 05676
Phone: (802) 244-8401 • Fax: (802) 244-5256

www.parros.com



PARROSCUNRANCE

@parrosgunshop

Trapline Talk

By Randy Barrows



As I write this there are 21 days left to trapping season. I hope everyone is ready to go. The shop has been very busy. Trapping is alive and well in Vermont. The Vermont Trappers Association just held their annual Rendezvous in Barton. It was fun to be there and see all the folks you only see once a year. People were happy the season was almost here. Sales were excellent and Diane and I want to say thanks to all who stopped by.

There is certainly a abundant amount of critters roaming around. My phone rings daily for skunks, coon, beaver etc. Just the amount of road kill tells a story. I just got back from picking apples in the islands and counted 15 coons just on the causeway.

Coons have been the big topic all summer. The sad part is with over population comes the disease. I pick up dead coon for the USDA every year. I just found out that two in the Burlington area have tested positive for rabies. So be careful handling these carcasses. The other problem with coon is once the sweet corn starts to ripen the damage begins.

Yup the coon prices are still down but do not give up. The national fur markets are in tough shape when it comes to coon. I just got the new copy of the trappers post and in the pages are several outfits who want all of your hides. Top prices paid. I do not know the prices but do not do it for the money. Do it for the wildlife. We do not need a sick bunch of critters running around , despite what the antis say.

Oh did I just say antis? Yes we still have them, but not as many. I put a message on my website advising trappers to stay alert to possible changes coming up concerning trapping and traps. The pinball wizard who runs this failing organization wrote to Fish and Wildlife requesting I be removed from my teaching duties in hunter and trapping because I oppose any changes. No where, I repeat no where did I say I opposed any changes. If you go to my site you can see it. Everyone who read it is kind of

scratching their heads trying to figure out how someone who tries to sell herself as being intelligent can do a word porrage and end up looking so confused. I almost feel bad for her. The word is out that her followers are dropping like flies.

I will spend next weekend distributing my traps around where I going to set them. It makes life a whole lot easier when I decide to start. Bucket , bedding and bait is all I have to carry. This year again my targets will be any critter that eats small game. We have seen a major uptick in bobcats up this way and the turkey population has plummeted.

Getting permission should be very easy this year with all the nuisance game around. Do not forget to be courteous whether permission is granted or not. I leave a card with land owners with my name , number and type of vehicle I will be using. Landowners are on site every day and are a wealth of information. If their corn got destroyed this year you are in like flint.

Do not forget about blue fur. Starting to early when animals are not prime is a waste of time.

Have a good season and make it fun. Do not forget to take a kid with you . I am mentoring a couple teen agers and having the time of my life!!!

Tight chains to all.



The Shots You Don't Take

By Brad Roy

Cramped in a discount blind I purchased last year at a big box store, the two of us sat on the edge of a lush grass field overlooking mountains ripe with fall colors. My wife and I, having spent the past few months overcoming a Covid hospitalization followed by the birth of our first child, had finally mustered up enough courage to leave our new son at home with his grandmother while we spent a few hours back outdoors doing what we love. Archery season has always been a passion of ours, and despite enjoying leaves from work to stay home and care for our new child, free time had been at a premium since we returned from the hospital. As if a few hours in a deer blind on a peaceful and sunny fall afternoon isn't precious enough, the chance to do it this year was held with even more reverence.

The plan was simple: We both would sit in the blind I had set up just the day before, located where a group of deer were spotted recently. My original plan to spend a day a month over the summer scouting and prepping for the season got turned upside down the minute the second line showed up on the pregnancy test just a few months prior. With our hectic new life, preparations for this season were at an all-time low.

With the doctors' orders for her to lift no more than ten pounds for at least six weeks, my job was to hold onto the crossbow until something came near the blind. At that point I was prepared to carefully lift the crossbow up onto the shooting rest to relieve the weight and give her an opportunity for a shot. If any game were to come around the back side of us, I would be the one to turn around and attempt a shot through the opening I had cleared in the dense hedgerow. This was a less likely scenario for success, but considering I wasn't the one who had birthed a nine-and-a-half-pound baby just three weeks prior, I was happy to relinquish the best odds of success to the now mother of my child!

We settled into tight quarters, realizing we had a pretty good system set up. It's always nice when a plan comes together out in the woods, particularly because of how rarely they actually seem to. Only having one weapon in the blind meant room for a little extra gear to remain comfortable, as well as the opportunity to have one person running binoculars or a range finder while the other

prepared for a shot should it arise. After three peppermint lifesavers, which equals somewhere between 45 and 65 minutes in my mouth, the first head popped up above a hump in the field a few hundred yards away.

"DEER!" She whispered aggressively, quickly drawing my attention forward at the young spikehorn quickly closing the distance between himself and our field side dwelling. As I reached for the range finder, I am abruptly informed that another is closing the distance just behind the first, though this one was a legal buck! I quickly got the crossbow up onto the shooting rest for her and made sure she was comfortable and ready for what seemed like an impending opportunity. Both deer closed the distance fast, with me ranging them every few steps. "100 yards", I whisper calmly. "93...82..." my voice gaining small notes of trepid anticipation for an opportunity that seemed imminent at this point. "65 yards, get ready they're almost in range... 59 yards, just a few more steps and we will be golden..."

It was at precisely that moment that both deer confidently and swiftly altered course and hopped into the hedgerow, crossing through it and reappearing on the back side of the blind in our 8 O'clock position or so. They calmly began munching on green grass, seeming to know they were well within range, yet cloaked by a thick wall of shrubs and vines that obscured a shot opportunity. However, the deer being on my side now, I relieved my wife of the burden of holding the crossbow, and made a quick maneuver to turn around and position myself for a shot through the lane I had cleared just 24 hours ago. The wind was right, and as I settled into shooting position, I noticed a third deer had joined the two young bucks, this one a much larger buck with at least four hefty points to its name, maybe more. This buck was heavy-bodied and dark, and began grazing at a location through the hedgerow a mere 15 yards or so away.

I held steady on him, looking for some chance, any opportunity at all to thread a bolt through the dense growth and into his bulky, broadside shoulder. As I waited, I began to think of the Wayne Gretzky quote "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Now, those who know me know just how little affection I have for professional sports. In

fact, I care so little about them that I had to double check with a quick google search just what sport Mr. Gretzky actually played (Hockey, for those in the same boat as myself). That being said, I have always looked on most professional sports with a lack of understanding of the attraction they have to so many people. I am certain that if they come with the depth and introspection that accompanies the outdoor pursuits that I am so accustomed to, I haven't been able to figure out how. In any order, my case is further made when comparing the idea not scoring in a game of hockey versus making a poor shot on a whitetail.

I watched the buck feed up the hedgerow slowly, glimpses of a possible shooting lane appearing here and there, but never fully opening up. As my opportunity slipped away, the dense vines that stood between me and my trophy began to seem smaller and farther apart. "Maybe I could just try it? This crossbow ought to be able to shoot through some vines. He's so close! I'm sure it would work out. What's the worst that could happen, I won't know if I don't try it..." Ideas like these swirled around my head, attempting to chase out the logical decision to hold back from firing like a beagle working a brush pile for snowshoe hare. Ultimately, the buck stopped, turned, and began to feed his way toward the other deer, leaving behind my clear shooting lane by merely steps. With no better shot ever presenting itself, we sat in silence until well after dark. The three deer continued to feed well within 35 yards of us, seemingly never disturbed by our presence on the other side of the biological fortress they had separated themselves from us with. Quietly, we exited the blind and made our way across the large field to the truck, confident those deer were still meandering around within bow range. Although they were never spooked, it was still difficult to spend the drive home not feeling like failures. Having quality deer so close for such a lengthy amount of time and not taking a shot; we had to have done something wrong, right?

I will be the first to admit that it's a very easy thing to suggest not taking a shot at an animal from the comfort of my keyboard. If hindsight is 20-20, foresight must show an even clearer image on account of how easy it is to THINK we know what we would do in any given situation. I have no pride in admitting that I have taken shots like these in the past, shots where I wasn't confident and was too

invested in hoping it would work than knowing it would work. Although each shot is unique and different, the end result is almost always the same; the gut-wrenching experience of losing an animal I have wounded because of a poor decision in the heat of the moment. I will stand firm in my belief that the biggest failure possible in the world of hunting is not coming home empty handed, but rather having to leave a wounded animal to suffer after failing to quickly and humanely dispatch it. Merely hitting an animal is not success in any regard, and I will forever give a hundred times the praise to the hunter who harvests a small yearling quickly and humanely than one who harvests a trophy buck with a shot they know they shouldn't have taken in the first place. Having experienced losing wounded deer in the past after making such a brutal mistake, the decision not to shoot this time was an easy one to make.

Although it may be true that we miss 100% of the shots we don't take, I will advocate that when it comes to hunting, a miss will always be better than a bad hit. We owe it to the sport, to ourselves, and most of all to the animals to be steadfast in our confidence in successfully harvesting game as quickly and humanely as possible. So good luck to everyone this season, and remember when you have game in your crosshairs that sometimes the best shot to take is none at all.

WRITERS WANTED



Have you always wanted to write
for an outdoor publication?
Now is your chance.

Contact
vermontsportingjournal@gmail.com

Road Improvement Project Begins at Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area

VERMONT FISH & WILDLIFE - Press Release

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department will be completing a significant road improvement project on [Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area](#) (WMA) in Holland and Norton, from October through early November.

The project will be carried out with one-time funds from the legislature awarded to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources under the 2021 [Act 9, An Act Related to COVID-19 Relief](#), to improve infrastructure and support increased access on state lands arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Approximately five miles of roads on the Bill Sladyk WMA will be resurfaced with gravel. Culverts will be installed and replaced along with installation of broad-based dips and parking lots. The work will occur primarily on the road system located north of Ben Cole Clearing with some work on portions of the Hurricane Road.

The WMA as a whole will remain open to the public during construction. Most affected sections of roadway will remain open as well, but drivers should use caution and may be delayed at times.

Most of the construction activity is planned to

be completed by the start of the regular November deer rifle season. Information about the status of the road construction activities will be available on the department website at <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/node/162>.

“Although the access project may cause short term inconvenience or disruption for some activities this fall, the long-term benefits of improved road access, parking and maintaining safe infrastructure supported by these funds will benefit everyone who uses the Bill Sladyk WMA for many years into the future,” said Wildlife Biologist Timothy Appleton, who manages the WMA.

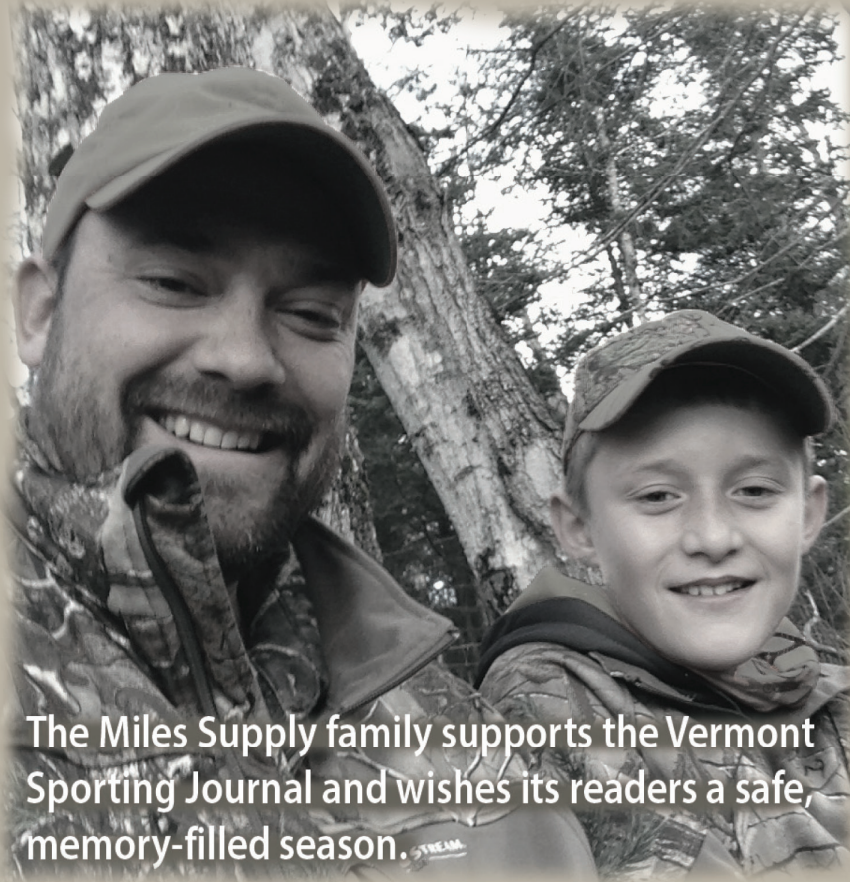


A woods road on the Bill Sladyk Wildlife Management Area.

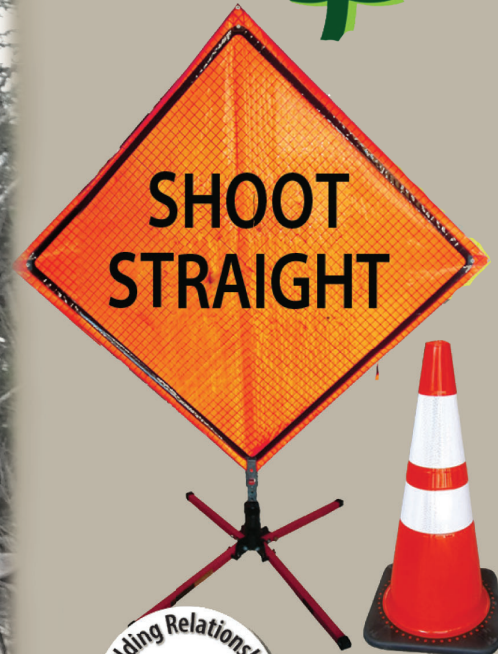
VTF&W Photo

Miles Supply

milessupply.com



The Miles Supply family supports the Vermont Sporting Journal and wishes its readers a safe, memory-filled season.



My Favorite Time

by Randy Barrows

Happy fall everyone. My favorite time of year has finally arrived. If I had my way fall would be year round. I do not like the hot humid weather and prefer days that start in the fifties, get up to the low 70s, like fall weather does.

November is the month to give thanks so here goes. I first want to thank my parents for introducing me to the outside way of life. Born in the fifties life was so much different. After breakfast as a kid you were expected to go outside and stay there until lunch. When lunch was done, back outside until supper. And then back OUTSIDE UNTIL DARK!! Seven days a week year round.

Dad was an avid deer hunter. Every year he would pack up for camp and leave me home. Being pissed was a understatement. I soon learned that I had to earn my rites to passage. At age seven I was finally allowed to tag along.

I was in heaven. In my Johnson wools and away we went. I was even allowed to carry my own Daisy Red Rider B B gun. I was on my way. I would tip it skyward and listen to the B Bs race down the barrell, tip it down and listen to them race back down. Dad kept telling me to knock it off as I was scaring the deer. I watched in total horror when he grabbed the gun, screwed the end of it off and dumped dozens of golden B Bs on the forest floor. Lesson learned!!

Fast forward 20 years. Sitting in my stand with my daughter Crystal, same B B gun doing the same thing!! Toss on a bag full of candy and crunching wrappers and we saw few deer. Funny how things come

back to haunt you.

Fast forward another 5 years and in the stand with my son Trevor. Yup you guessed it, same B B gun. Same scenario. But I was not going to give up.

Crystal entered the make up years and decided she no longer wanted to hunt. I was crushed. Long talks ensued and I lost. Then came the boys, the little @#\$(*&. I gave up.

Trevor on the other hand planned his life perfectly. He had girlfriends. Girlfriends that he made it crystal clear to that when hunting season came they were on their own. He turned into a full fledged hunter. All game every season.

The morning his radio cracked and he explained to me he had just harvested his first deer alone I dropped to my knees and cried like a baby. I was the proudest Dad on the planet that day. He has harvested more deer over the years than I have fingers and toes to count with and I swell up with every one.

Crystal got married to a hunter(thank God). She decided she wanted to get back into hunting but was only interested in muzzleloader hunting. I helped where I could and she announced she wanted to hunt with me and Trevor. The poor girl spent hours in the woods and could never shoot a deer. I brought her to places where there was a guarantee to see deer and nothing. She was down in the dumps and I feared she would quit again. We had to act and fast.

We have this one patch of woods that hold deer every year. The plan was hatched to put her on the gate way and we would walk the woods towards her. Ten minutes into the drive I

“If I had my way fall would be year round.”

“I was even allowed to carry my own Daisy Red Rider B B gun.”

heard a shot and immediately over the radio that she had just dropped “that B&^#@!!”. Ya you guessed it, back on the knees and blatting again.

To me there is no better feeling in life than seeing your kids excel at something you are passionate about. The kids getting the deer, the story telling, the rides to the check station with everyones guessed weight of the deer. Then back home, my wife Diane who is always ready with the cameras for albums full of pictures .We process our own game so that’s always a hoot too!

Trevors son has knotted the belt a few times on great bucks. My brother Dwight has tipped many over over the

years. Logan and Brandon are still waiting on the first one.

But here is my prediction for this fall. I predict that when my grand daughter Shaley kills her first deer, 9 years old and sitting on stand as I write this , that I will again drop and blatt!!

I hope everyone has a great fall and successful season. I am out as much as possible. If you see me out and looking up and do not wave its not because I am snooty. I am either watching a flock of geese or again thanking Mom and Dad for a proper upbringing.

Squirrel Pot Pie

If you or someone you know hunts squirrel, this recipe will become a go-to when cooking up the results.

Prep Time 1 hour, Cook Time 1 hour, Total Time 2 hours, Servings 4, Calories 362kcal, Author Stacey Lyn

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds squirrel meat
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons oil plus more as needed
- 1 large onion
- 3 stalks celery
- 2 carrots
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 5 cloves garlic
- 2 cups beef broth
- 2 cups Guinness beer
- 1 can 16-ounce chopped tomatoes
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 handful about 1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 1 pie crust for a 9-inch pie
- 1 large egg optional



Instructions

1. Heat an oven to 400°F. Cut the squirrel meat into 1/2-inch pieces. Put them in a medium bowl, sprinkle with the flour, and toss to coat evenly and thoroughly.
2. In a large Dutch oven or other heavy-bottomed pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat until it’s almost smoking (you want to use a pot with sides to keep splattering to a minimum). Working in batches, brown the meat on all sides until lightly browned and allow it to drain on a paper towel. Add more oil to the pan as you need it for optimal browning.
3. While the meat browns, peel and finely chop the onion, peel and finely chop the carrot, and finely chop the celery.
4. When the meat is all browned and out of the pot, add the chopped vegetables to the pot, sprinkle with the salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until they’re translucent and soft, about 5 minutes. While they cook, peel and mince the garlic. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant and just starting to turn golden, about 2 minutes more. Return the meat to the pan, add the broth, Guinness, and tomatoes to the pot. Scrape the bottom of the pan to loosen any browned bits stuck to it. Bring the mixture to a boil.
5. Meanwhile, chop the rosemary, thyme, and parsley. Once the mixture is boiling, add the herbs and the pepper. Reduce the heat to maintain a steady simmer. Cook, uncovered, until the mixture thickens, about 1 hour.
6. Pour the squirrel mixture into a 9-inch pie dish and allow to cool completely. Gently place the pie shell over the mixture, pinching the edges to seal. Crack the egg into a small bowl and beat with 1 tablespoon water. Brush the egg and water mixture over the pie crust to enhance browning. Cut three 1/2-inch vents at the center of the crust. Transfer the pie into the oven and bake until the crust is baked through and browned and the filling is bubbling at the edges and at the vents, 30 to 40 minutes. ■

WORK OR PLAY

Lenny's has you covered!



 LACROSSE

Still Family.
Still Local.



Shop Online
LennyShoe.com

Free Shipping on Orders \$49+

Lenny's Shoe & Apparel: Williston | St. Albans | Barre | Plattsburgh

Open: Monday-Friday 10-6pm, Saturday 10-5pm, Closed Sunday