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OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SCI CHAPTERS IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2025

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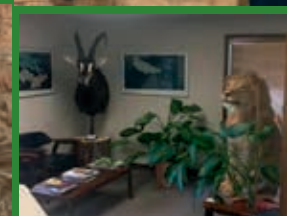
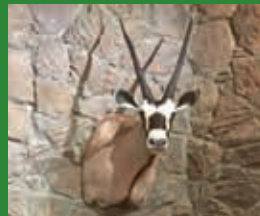
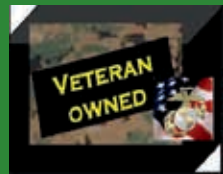
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Editor/Publishers: Mark & Coni LaBarbera

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January/February	November 20
March/April	January 20
May/June	March 20
July/August	May 20
September/October	July 20
November/December	September 20

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HUNTERS

Official Magazine of SCI Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois
January/February 2025

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New members and your families are always welcome at SCI. Visit these websites and join a chapter to start your adventure. Members enjoy great fun, meet new friends, make a difference in their community and help the future of hunting; plus you will discover new deals and opportunities that improve your hunting skill and enjoyment. We invite you to join online today.

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SCI Region 16 Representative

Charmaine Wargolet

charmainew@ameritech.net

SCI Region 16 Report

by **Charmaine Wargolet**,
Regional Representative

So, the holidays are over, and we have a brand new year ahead of us to fill with memories, fun, and new adventures! Make the most of it, my friends!

I hope you will indulge me to tell you a story.

Our niece and nephew-in-law have twin girls who have been fishing since the age of three and have shot a .22 over the last couple of years. This year one of them asked to come deer hunting with Pa and needed a couple of pieces of clothing and boots. I was so excited to be able to help with that as this young man is doing everything possible to create young hunters!

After their hunt, I "interviewed" this young lady, and I want to print it word for word for you.

ME: What is your name, hon?

REAGAN: Reagan

ME: And how old are you, Reagan?

REAGAN: Eight

ME: And did you go on your first deer hunt with your Pa this year?

REAGAN: Yes

ME: Were you excited? (affirmative nod from Reagan) How excited were you?

REAGAN: (one hand, palm up as low as she could go and the other hand palm down, as high as she could reach)

ME: That much! Cool! And I know you have a little story to tell. (nod) Ok, so tell me your story of your first hunt with Pa.

REAGAN: So, we tried to go to our stand for quite a few hours, but we saw nothing. Then the next day we went to our friend's stand, and we saw three does and a buck.



ME: And who saw the buck first? (a smiling "me"). You did, that's what I heard, and you had to tell your Pa that it was there? (smiling nod) And then he shot it, right? (nod). And how big was the buck?

REAGAN: A eight-pointer

ME: An eight pointer? He was really pretty, huh? (smiling nod) So, what did you like best about going with Pa on a deer hunt?

REAGAN: (screwed up her face for five seconds while she thought) I think just spending time with him.



Proper clothing adds to comfort and enjoyment for young hunters too. And if Great Aunt Charmaine is buying, get the best gear!



Reagan said the best part of the hunt was spending time with dad.

This my friends, is what mentoring means to a young child! The time spent with a son or daughter, niece or nephew, grandson or granddaughter, whether it be hunting, fishing, a walk in the woods or whatever outdoor activity you choose, it is precious time for you and even more for that child.

This little girl was not coached. She said what it truly meant to her; it was so heartfelt. Imagine you took your little kids hunting with you even though it slowed you down. And then 30 years later they are taking you hunting with them, even though it is slowing them down.

So, my friends, as always, be safe, be well, and God Bless.

Crane Legislative Study Report

Following a series of meetings over the last five months, the Legislative Council Study Committee on Sandhill Cranes approved a proposed bill that creates some relief for farmers and offers the opportunity for a Wisconsin hunting season on sandhill cranes.

The committee was composed of a bi-partisan group of legislators, farmers, along with hunting and non-hunting conservation organizations. Wisconsin Waterfowl Association Vice President Todd Schaller served as a public member of the committee.

Chaired by Representative Paul Tittl (R - Manitowoc), the committee voted 8-4 to recommend legislation that would provide aid for corn growers experiencing damage from sandhill cranes by providing reimbursement for using the seed treatment Avipel. The recommended legislation would also

require the Wisconsin DNR to seek approval and establish a framework for a sandhill crane hunting season in the state.

Potato growers and other farmers have no prevention option like Avipel provides for corn. So, by incorporating a crane hunting season, potato and other producers will be able to access Wisconsin's hunter-funded wildlife damage account to offset crane damage.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is responsible for using science and data to manage the population health of these migratory birds. Since the early 1900's the population has rebounded sufficiently to warrant hunting seasons in 18 other states and 3 provinces. USFWS is the final authority and determines whether an individual state can hold a sandhill crane hunting season.

During the committee proceedings, WWA Vice President (and former WI DNR Chief Warden) "I've been in conservation for 30 years as a career. If, at any point, I thought that having a season would jeopardize sandhill crane populations, I would not have been a part of this committee."

This proposed legislation will next be reviewed for introduction by the Joint Legislative Council sometime in 2025. Once introduced, it must still be approved by the full legislature and Governor to become law.

"For the last 40 years, WWA has been a strong voice for waterfowlers and hunters in Wisconsin. We will continue that in 2025 and will be working to educate our elected officials about the science, facts and realities surrounding an ethical and sustainable sandhill crane hunt in Wisconsin," said WWA Executive Director Bruce Ross.

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Badgerland Chapter Report

by Randy Mayes, President

Now that most of the "regular" hunting seasons are coming to a close, what's a hunter to do?? Plan for next year and the year after of course! As anyone who has gone on a few guided hunts knows, many outfitters book at least a year and sometimes two or three years out. There's no time like the present to start the process!

Being an active member of SCI is a great advantage to starting this process! Whether you are heading to the national convention in Nashville or any of the upcoming Wisconsin or Illinois chapter conventions, you can often talk face to face with outfitters you are considering booking with. In my opinion, this is so much more effective than emailing and waiting for a response. You may be ready to book a hunt with them or maybe you are considering purchasing their hunt on auction. Either way, this is one of the huge benefits of attending these events. Of course, winning guns or

other merchandise and just having a great time with friends are just a few of the other great reasons to attend!

Many of the outfitters who exhibit and/or donate at our Badgerland Hunter's Expo have been doing so for many years. Therefore, you can often talk to members who have hunted with them to get what I think is one of the best references... someone you know or who is at least a member of our chapter. I often feel much more comfortable booking with an outfitter when I know someone who has hunted with them. We have some outfitters who have been coming to our event for over 20 years. There are some outfitters who might have more than a dozen people who are actually at the Expo who have hunted with them. If these outfitters keep coming back, you can bet they must have a lot of satisfied clients!



All of this should give you much more confidence when it comes to planning sometimes years in advance and paying out what might clean out your proverbial "hunting piggy bank". Hunting trips don't come cheap these days. Therefore, the more you can do to stack the odds in your favor to have a successful, enjoyable adventure, the better off you are!

DON'T FORGET! The Badgerland Hunter's Expo is February 14 & 15 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells! See you there!

Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Dean LePoidevin, President

By now many of us have had the pleasure of walking the woods and valleys of our wonderful state. As we begin another fine year in this great state of ours, I would like to thank the many loyal people that make the SCI Wisconsin Chapter extra special. First, allow me to thank the hundreds of members that make up our ranks, including many active lifetime members and those who have contributed to our success for many, many years. As this issue of HUNTERS magazine marks my first six months as chapter president, I must admit my responsibilities have been made more productive and enjoyable due to the SCI WI board members who faithfully serve chapter members. Lastly, I wish to thank my fellow officers and regional representative for their dedication, guidance and hard work.

I hope all of you who ventured into the woods and waters of Wisconsin this past fall have enjoyed widespread success. As you extend your pursuits into the New Year, please be safe and best wishes for continued success.

Back by popular demand, Joel Kleefisch will be our featured speaker at the January 16 meeting at Thunder Bay Grille in Pewaukee. He has offered to detail his latest venture to the European continent in the pursuit of game, including trips to Spain and Austria. It is not too late to sign up, so please consult the SCI WI website or contact Sarah Ingle to register.



Wales, WI. Last year's outing was exceptional as more than 70 golfers vied for hole prizes, door prizes, and of course, bragging rights for the lowest scores. Put your foursomes together and be sure to block off June 2, 2025, on your calendar.

We will also be returning to Wern Valley for yet another Sporting Clays Outing mid-summer. Continue to consult www.sciwi.org for details on this and other future events.



Joel Kleefisch

If you haven't already, be sure to secure your spot at our 48th Annual Banquet and Fundraiser at the Brookfield Conference Center, February 14-15, 2025. Our team has put together another exciting event with more local and international outfitters, live and silent auctions, special guest Melissa Bachman. Do not miss this opportunity to visit with like-minded outdoor enthusiasts. Details are now available via the SCI WI website at www.sciwi.org.

As we all reflect on the many memories of the past year it's time to plan for the coming 12 months of SCI WI activities, including our second annual golf outing at the Legend at Brandybrook in

Hope to see you all at the 48th Annual Banquet and Fundraiser!



Melissa Bachmann

Lake Superior Chapter Report

by Scott Olson, President

Greetings from the Lake Superior Chapter. I hope everyone had a safe and successful fall hunting season here in the Midwest. In typical fashion, I avoided shooting anything at the family deer camp thanks to wolves continuing to decimate our deer population. This makes four years without a deer sighting on opening weekend! It is so frustrating that our state agencies won't manage the wildlife species using science at real world information.

December is synonymous with the start of serious banquet planning for the Lake Superior Chapter. The Lake Superior Chapter's board has been busy over the fall contacting donors and securing items for the April 4-5,



2025 banquet. It is the Lake Superior Chapter's 25th anniversary this year and we have some big plans in the works. We have secured 6 trips from past recipients of the chapter's Outfitter of the Year Award that we will be giving away to members before our live auction Saturday evening, April 5th. The only requirement to be a winner is

that you're in attendance and both your national and chapter memberships are current. These raffles will be in addition to our usual 100 or so auction items.

I look forward to attending as many of the area banquets as possible. It is great to support other chapters and exchange ideas as well. See you all in Nashville!



The Wisconsin Chapter has purchased a limited supply of commemorative paving bricks to be placed at the SCI Hunter's Embassy in Washington, DC. There is still time to show your support of SCI WI and SCI International by purchasing a limited-edition brick, inscribed with your family or business name. Contact Sarah Ingle at office@sciwi.org for details.

Northeast Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Kathryn Thede, President

The fall is always such a busy time of year. A mixture of new adventures and favorite traditions quickly fill up what is to me the greatest time of year.

This year we tried a new adventure. We met Jake, with The Fowl Drake, this past summer at Wisconsin Waterfowl Association Expo in Oshkosh. In October we tried out duck hunting for the first time. Jake and his crew were very informative; explaining the steps, equipment, and different kind of ducks. The sunrise was beautiful and experiencing the first duck down was AMAZING (each one that followed was equally exciting!) It was definitely something different, but I am game for going again.

Some of our favorite traditions happen in the fall. From quiet nights at the cabin, shooting bow, watching deer and turkeys, to snuggle dates with Paisley (my pup) in the deer stand, watching VHS movies with Brythe and our Trio, Friday fish fries "up north," and the whole family being together for the entire week of gun hunting. The food, the smells, the nostalgic movies, the "ting" of the woodstove, the family time, and the memories that are created during this time, makes it easily my favorite time of year.

Another new adventure will be our travels to the Texas panhandle to



Duck hunting 2024 Brythe and Kathryn Thede

hopefully get our shot at Sandhill Cranes (some pun intended). We have been practicing shooting sporting clays all spring, summer, and fall in preparation. This is a hunt we booked with Drake Dawson of Safari Unlimited LLC. He is always such a huge supporter of SCI and an all-around good guy. We look forward to this hunt and in this chapter of life we have begun traveling by camper and taking our dogs (Paisley, Maverick, and Heston), making the journey as much of the adventure as the destination.

I hope that each of you had a hunting season filled with memories and that your family had a great Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and the very best of the Holiday Seasons!

Our chapter of SCI is in the finishing stages of getting ready for our banquet

and Expo. We hope to see you all there. Expo dates are February 21-23, 2025, in Green Bay, WI, at the Resch Expo Center in conjunction with the Wisconsin State Hunting and Fishing Expo. Our dinner, banquet, and auction will once again be at Stadium View in Green Bay on Saturday, February 22, 2025. For the most up to date information and auction listings please visit our website at www.newisci.org.

Thank you for your continued support of this organization. Together we are protecting and promoting hunter's rights locally and worldwide (remember 70% of what our chapter earns stays right here in Wisconsin!) Feel free to reach out with any questions and/or concerns.

Also check us out on Facebook Northeast Wisconsin Chapter of SCI.

Legislative Update:

Leading The Way For Conservation

by Dan Trawicki, SCI Lobbyist

On December 3rd and 4th, members of the DNR's black bear advisory committee met to discuss the 2024 harvest and set harvest goals for 2025.

The 2024 harvest was considerably better than the 2023 harvest which was affected by a higher than normal acorn crop.

In 2023, for example, the harvest was 2,922 bears compared to 4,009 bears the previous year. The 2024 harvest was 4,285 bears which was not only significantly higher than the previous year, but 11% over the projected goal harvest. There were many reasons discussed for this above goal harvest. Weather, abundance of bears from the previous year that were not harvested, and normal fall crops all added to the increase.

We had the opportunity to hear from a variety of DNR staff members. There were presentations on

population models for each zone, complaints of bear damage and conflicts, methods of decreasing conflicts, bear trapping and relocation among other topics. Wisconsin continues to be one of best bear hunting destinations in the United States, with an estimated bear population of more than 24,000 animals. The success rate in 2024 was 37% compared to 31% the previous year. The success rate has been fairly static over the past 10 years, most years being in that 30-35% success range. Hunter satisfaction which is also tracked continues to be high.

The main purpose of the meeting is not only to review the previous year's hunt but set the harvest goal and number of permits for the next year. Our committee makes the recommendations, that gets sent to the Natural Resources Board for final approval. There is always a spirited discussion about harvest goals, but a consensus is always reached.

The 2025 harvest goals and permits recommended are as follows:

Zone	Harvest Goal	Licenses Issued
A	1075	1600
B	900	1610
C	750	3750
D	1100	3570
E	200	2000
F	50	500

Zone A and B are still the most difficult tags to draw with 10-12 preference points needed. The other units are easier tags to draw with 1-3 preference points needed.

Overall, the meetings were a great success. I would also like to add that Randy Johnson the large carnivore specialist for the DNR does a good job. While Randy and I don't always agree on some issues, in fact are at complete odds over some, I like his approach and professionalism.

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 Cordially invites you to our **"26th Annual SCI
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Our **"26th Annual SCI Hunter's Banquet"** will be held Saturday February 22th at the "Stadium View Bar & Grill" in Green Bay, WI. Enjoy an evening of fine dining with friends and family, followed by our Famous Live Auction, along with Firearms and Merchandise Raffles.

Join us Friday Night at "D2 Sports Pub Stadium District" for our **"Outfitter's Meet-and-Greet"**. Visit with SCI Donors and start your bidding strategy for that trip you have always wanted to take.



Saturday Night Banquet Tickets are only \$75.00 per person and include free admission to the Wisconsin State Hunting and Fishing Expo.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
WWW.SCIHUNTEREXPO.COM.**

Or CALL or TEXT ZACH at 920-659-1265 or JODI at 920-422-3117

First **FOR HUNTERS' RIGHTS**

Our **"Saturday Night Live Auction"** will feature Hunts, Trips and Adventures from Wisconsin to Africa, South America to Europe, Art Work and More.

"Bucket Raffles" to include firearms from, Ruger, Smith & Wesson, Tikka, Winchester, Browning, Savage, Kimber, Glock, Colt, Springfield, Kimber and Optics from Vortex just to mention a few.

"Hunter Expo 2025" will be held in conjunction with **"The Wisconsin State Hunting and Fishing Expo"** at the Resch Expo in Green Bay, WI.

Visit with over 175 Outfitters, Professional Hunters, Retailers, Lodge Owners and Taxidermists from around the world.

Bring in your Trophies and have them scored by **"Official SCI Scorers"**, then enter them into our Trophy Competition. First and second place plaques will be awarded for all categories. The **"SCI President's Award"** will be judged on "The One-Shot Rule" and only SCI Members are eligible for this Trophy.

For the kids we have the SCI Laser Shot, Kid's Archery Game, the Wisconsin Hunter's Ed air gun range, and the **"Touch of the Wild Trailer"**.

Remember that over 70% of all the money raised at this banquet stays right here in Wisconsin to help protect your hunting rights, educate our teachers and youth, and conduct conservation and humanitarian projects.

Safari Club International
Northeast Wisconsin Chapter
26th Annual SCI Hunter's Banquet
 Saturday February 22, 2025
 at the "Stadium View Bar & Grill" in Green Bay, WI
 Ticket Reservation Form



SEATING IS LIMITED – MAKE YOUR RESERVATION EARLY!
SATURDAY NIGHT DINNER WILL BE ASSIGNED SEATING.

Item	Quantity	Cost	Total Amount
Friday Night Outfitter's Meet-and-Greet		\$20.00	
Saturday Night Dinner Ticket plus 1 pass to the Wisconsin State Hunting and Fishing Expo (\$85 Total Value)		\$75.00	
Saturday Night Dinner Table - 8 Dinner Tickets plus 8 passes to the Wisconsin State Hunting and Fishing Expo (\$680 Total Value)		\$600.00	
I am unable to attend this event but would like to donate to assist you in protecting our Hunting Rights.			
GRAND TOTAL			

Banquet Guest Names if Available:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____ 8. _____

Must register at Stadium Bar & Grill to receive your WI State Hunting and Fishing Expo Pass. Saturday Night Dinner Tables must be paid with 1 check.

*Dinner Tickets and Expo Passes will be available for pickup @ the Registration Booth.
 Raffle Ticket Packages and Chapter Rifle Tickets will be available at the event!!!*

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**Call or text Zach at 920-659-1265 or Jodi at 920-422-3117
 or visit www.scihunterexpo.com for more information.**

SCI is FIRST FOR HUNTERS!

Wisconsin Gun Deer Season Report

The 2024 nine-day gun deer hunt, which kicked off the holiday season in Wisconsin with opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, harvest food for the table and create memories with family and friends, has concluded. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) shared preliminary license sales, harvest registration and hunting incident numbers with SCI and others.

Preliminary License Sales Data

Preliminary figures indicate the number of deer hunters in Wisconsin slightly increased compared to 2023. As of 11:59 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 1, sales for deer hunting privileges (which include gun, archery, crossbow, conservation patron and sports licenses) reached 791,023, up from 788,697 for the same time period last year. Of those, 553,652 were for gun privileges only, up from 553,479 in 2023.

Deer hunting license and harvest authorization sales will continue throughout the remaining deer hunting seasons. Final license sales figures will be available in January, when DNR staff will perform a thorough analysis and interpretation.

Preliminary Harvest Totals

Preliminary figures show hunters registered 189,622 deer during the 2024 gun deer season, including 89,787 antlered and 99,835 antlerless deer. Compared to 2023, the gun season harvest total is up 5.2%

Preliminary 2024 Gun Deer Season Harvest Totals			
Deer Management Zone	2024 Gun Deer Harvested	Change From 2023	Five-Year Average Comparison
Northern Forest Zone	Antlered: 17,591	-1.8%	-7.9%
	Antlerless: 11,909	8.7%	-7.2%
Central Forest Zone	Antlered: 3,947	8.7%	11.1%
	Antlerless: 3,042	6.0%	9.9%
Central Farmland Zone	Antlered: 49,326	9.1%	8.2%
	Antlerless: 61,685	9.2%	1.9%
Southern Farmland Zone	Antlered: 18,923	-5.0%	-1.2%
	Antlerless: 23,199	-0.6%	-2.7%
Total Preliminary Harvest Registrations	Antlered: 89,797	3.6%	2.7%
	Antlerless: 99,835	6.6%	-0.2%
	Total: 189,622	5.2%	1.2%

statewide, with the antlered harvest up 3.6% and the antlerless harvest up 6.6%.

Since the opening of the bow and crossbow seasons, Wisconsin hunters have registered 289,361 deer. This harvest is 8.7% ahead of the same time last year.

Adams County in the Central Farmland Zone led the state with 12.4 deer registered per square mile. Vernon County led the Southern Farmland Zone with 7 deer registered per square mile. Adams County also led the Central Forest Zone registering 4.2 deer per square mile. Finally, Florence County led the Northern Forest Zone with 2.9 deer registered per square mile.

The regional harvest breakdown by deer management zone compared to

the five-year average was as shown in the chart above:

The DNR's Wisconsin Deer Harvest Summary webpage contains more information regarding preliminary harvest registration totals, including county-level numbers.

The regular gun deer season ran from Nov. 23 through Dec. 1 and is followed by the statewide muzzleloader season (Dec. 2-Dec. 11), the statewide antlerless-only four-day hunt (Dec. 12-Dec. 15) and the antlerless-only holiday hunt in select farmland zone counties (Dec. 24-Jan. 1, 2025).

First Harvest Certificates Available

Hunters of all ages who harvested their first deer are encouraged to highlight this significant occasion with a first harvest certificate.

Deer Season Hunting Incidents

At the publication time of this news release, the DNR reports only one nonfatal firearm-related hunting incident during the 2024 gun deer season. Vernon County, Wheatland Township: On Nov. 29, 2024, at approximately 4 p.m., a 14-year-old male was sitting in an enclosed tower stand with his father, hunting on private property. The victim's father heard what sounded like a gunshot in the distance. Shortly after, the victim felt pain in his feet and found that he was shot through both the left and right foot. The victim was transported privately to the hospital and received medical treatment for his injuries. The shooter has been identified, and an investigation is pending.

Deer Collision Statistics

by Mark LaBarbera

Odds of drivers hitting deer or any animal this year are 1 in 128, according to State Farm Insurance, the largest car insurer in the United States. Last year was 1 in 127.

In 2022, 184 motorists died in collisions with an animal, compared to 223 in 2007, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The upward trend in deaths from vehicle collisions with animals from 1975 through 2007 has leveled off.

Drivers in West Virginia are most at risk with odds of 1 in 40. Montana ranks second at 1 in 54, followed by Michigan (1 in 59), Pennsylvania (1 in

61) and Wisconsin (1 in 63). Illinois and Minnesota did not make the top five.

State Farm reported more than 1.8 million auto insurance claims involving animal collisions were filed with all insurers from July 2023 through June 2024, which is down from 1.9 million during the prior year.

Photo courtesy Advantage News



Paul Braun used his Serpent Arms (www.serpentarms.com) airgun in 2024, the first year it was legal for Wisconsin big game.





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The Badgerland Chapter of SCI would like to invite you, your friends, and family to our 2025 Hunter's Expo! This two-day event will be held at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

Doors open at 4pm on Friday, February 14th and runs until all auctions and raffles are completed. We'll be open again at 10am on Saturday. Both nights feature a great Chula Vista dinner at 7pm with an auction at approximately 8pm. Remember to arrive early enough to talk with the outfitters, without them, we would not be able to raise the money that we do. We will be offering online auctioning for our hunts & trips to those unable to attend our event.

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Outdoor Heritage: Pass It On

by Mark LaBarbera

Today, the average American child spends about four to seven minutes—yes, minutes—per day playing outside. They spend seven hours—yes, hours—per day in front of a screen.

Researchers report that “Kids who play outside are happier, better at paying attention, and less anxious than kids who spend more time indoors.”

It's not easy to break from the highly structured lives of work, school, extra-curricular activities, day-care, practice schedules, games, meetings, and events. And when there is “free” time, it can seem easier to simply plop down and turn on the screen instead of the campfire.

And for parents bombarded with constant newscasts, online alerts, and warnings, it's easy to become over-cautious about potential risks of stepping outside of the home, from disease to bites and stings to stranger danger.

Actually, the unstructured nature of time outdoors adds to its benefits for mind, body, soul, and society. Whether they play in a fenced back yard or garden, or they explore the local woods or vacant land, youngsters get exercise, gain confidence, appreciate life, and learn responsibility. Whether they water plants or plant pumpkins, they discover

that they are in control of their actions and that those actions have consequences as well as positive outcomes.

Time outdoors makes them think and, in a way, escape and relax. They wander and wonder.

Here is a selection of photos from the most recent deer and fishing seasons as

a tribute to these new hunters and anglers, and to the parents and mentors who made these lifelong memories possible as they passed along their outdoor heritage to those who will carry on these important traditions.

Don Schumann's 13-year-old daughter McKenna shot this deer.



Greyson Rydquist and Uncle Travis Mayer in Dodge County where twin brother Eli shot this nice doe that guarantees many healthy meals for the family dinner table.



Molly Rollins' friend Emma Seippel shot this Grant County buck and is generating hunting interest among her friends and basketball teammates.



Aubry Mullikin shot her buck on a mentored hunt with Uncle Shawn.



Dawn Ziolecki arrowed this buck near Viola.



Jeff Wittkopp started hunting with his boys early and now high school senior Grant Wittkopp has solo success, plus got dad into waterfowling.



Adam Payne's daughter Rachel shot this opening day buck while 84-year-old Uncle Glenn Payne filled his tag the next morning. Adam and son Forrest doubled on Montana public land mule deer in Fall 2024.



Keith Bagley and grandson Tristan caught December perch on the Mississippi River.

Illinois Tic-Tac-Doe, 5-yr.-old Barrett's First Deer

by Mark LaBarbera

Ben-ton's Ryan Kern is first to say each parent should decide when their child is ready to begin bowhunting, target shooting, or gun hunting with adult supervision, and always within arm's reach. Safety is the top concern.

Kern's son Barrett is an early starter and quick learner who probably could have hunted last year but dad wanted him to earn the privilege instead of having everything done for him. He put his boy to work at their hunting property, helping put up stands, mow, clean, and plant, plus invest dozens of hours target shooting at 80 yards with a .22 that fit him properly. Later, he practiced with the Savage 110 Tactical rifle in .350 Legend.

By the time the 2024 youth deer season opened in Illinois, five-year-old Barrett had earned his spot in the comfortable elevated box blind overlooking a food plot he helped create.

"We were sitting in the box blind playing tic-tac-toe to stay busy," Ryan Kern said, "and the deer came out." Barrett spotted the deer, and the game turned to tic-tac-doe!

"As soon as it came out, he got really excited," Kern said. "I got him set up in a chair with his rifle on the tripod. It has an adjustable stock. We had to wait for the deer to come around a tree. I had the window open, and he started laughing, so I shut the window, got him calmed down, and opened the window a second time."

Was Barrett nervous?
"He was shaking so bad that I had to shut it again,"

Kern said. "When I opened it the third time, he was excited, giggling, shaking, so I shut the window. Before I opened it the fourth time, I told him that he's going to have to shoot."

Anyone's first deer can make you shiver. Heck, even seasoned hunters still get the shakes. Did Barrett have enough self-control to make the shot?

"So, I opened the window for the 4th time, and he actually pulled the trigger," Kern said, "but the gun misfired!"

He continued, "I reset the bolt by lifting the handle up and back down

tightly. The doe had us made but she stood there long enough for him to shoot. He pulled the trigger. This time it fired, he killed the doe, and he put food on the family table."

Excited, Barrett hurried from the stand to the deer.

"He went right behind her and grabbed the ear and posed," said Kern. "On the way home, we must have called 10 people and my 'shy' boy enthusiastically told everybody the story, and then wouldn't shut up for about two days. It was great."



Hunt Report: England

MUNTJAC & FOX

by Paul Baker

I recently visited my homeland of England to see family and friends in late September. While there, my friend Jim Westrip kindly offered to take me out for a little hunting, as he put it, to see if we can call in a fox. Never being one to pass on an offer like this I gladly accepted. I had no hunting clothes on this trip, so I had to borrow a pair of hiking boots from my sister's partner Dave, and as the weather forecast called for a chance of rain, I also borrowed a rain jacket and pants.



Jim arranged to pick me up on a Monday afternoon at 4 o'clock. The farm we were to hunt was a short 20-minute drive from my sister's house. This was all taking place in the county of Essex near the small village of Margaretting. On arriving at the farm Jim handed me his rifle; a very nice Merkel RX Helix straight pull in .308 complete with an A-TEC sound moderator and Nikon 3x12x56 scope. Ammo would be Hornady Superformance 150 grain ST. I was told the rifle was sighted in one inch high at 200 yards.

Jim explained we're to try for a red fox, but we could also take a deer if a shot was presented. Our first set up was in the corner of two hedgerows on an overgrown farm track. Out to our left front was an overgrown orchard. With the wind to our backs, I was really not expecting to see anything, however I was setup on the shooting sticks and ready just in case.

Jim started to call on a predator call for several seconds then stopped for a while before repeating the call. This went on for about 20 minutes or so when suddenly a fox walked out from the hedge to our right at about 200 yards and crossed the track and into the orchard, catching me completely by surprise. There was no time for a shot.

Jim gave me a look and said "You don't get much time. You have to be ready." No kidding!

The calling started again as Jim thought the fox may come back for another look. I wasn't so sure, yet after another 10 minutes or so the fox appeared again. This time, out of the orchard at just under 100 yards. Jim stopped him in his tracks with a shout. Now was my moment, and get this, I couldn't get the safety off. I was pushing forward when I should have been pushing up. I was dying! Here was a golden opportunity at a fox less than 100 yards away and I'm like a total newbie with an unfamiliar firearm.

After several lifetimes I had the safety off and to my disbelief the fox was still there. I managed a very hurried shot, finally, and let's just say I blew it. I was so disappointed thinking this would be my one and only chance.

We decided to move to a new location on the 250-acre farm. This set up was almost the same as the first, wind to our backs, not ideal, and looking between rows of trees in a cobnut orchard, which is basically cultivated hazelnuts. After some calling yet another fox appeared but well over 200 yards away. Far too far for me to attempt a shot. Jim told me to wait. A little more calling was needed and after a short while the fox stepped out in between the rows of trees at about 80 yards. I was ready, steady on the sticks, safety off, fox broadside, a perfect set up, only I shot right over its back. I could not believe it! Jim was the perfect gentleman.

He never gave me a hard time. He never pulled my leg. He just said the truth, "That's a clean miss." I wasn't happy, to say the least, and he knew it. We all have days when things just do not go right, but that doesn't make it any easier.

We took another walk looking down each row between the trees until we reached the end of the field. Time was getting on; we didn't have much more daylight time when suddenly a muntjac buck stepped out from the hedge and looked at us from less than 100 yards away. My heart was pounding, I couldn't get on the sticks fast enough.

I placed the crosshairs low on the shoulder and fired.



To my great relief the tiny buck collapsed. As we walked up to the buck, we realized that it was quite a nice one. I knew it was a buck right away when I first saw it as they have a dark V-shape on their face. I was delighted! I guess it was a case of third time lucky. I think Jim was thinking it was about bloody time.

After taking some photos and field dressing the deer we walked back to the truck. It was almost dark by the time we arrived. On leaving and driving back to my sister's house we saw two foxes and a muntjac doe in the headlights. The same two fox I wondered. No.

So, this was to be my first British deer. I was born and raised in England, on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent, although I hunted there, there were no deer on the island just gamebirds and small game.

As a side note, muntjac, or Barking deer as they are sometimes called, are not native to the UK. They were introduced by the Duke of Bedford to Woburn Abbey from China in the early 1900's and later escaped to form wild populations. These tiny deer stand about 20 inches high and weigh around 40 lbs. They are considered a pest and can be hunted year-round. Muntjac are just one of what are referred to as the British Six, the others being Red, Roe, Fallow, Sika and Chinese Water Deer or CWD for short. Only the first two of the list are truly indigenous to Britain, the others being introduced at intervals throughout history.

Jim later gave me a muntjac haunch to eat. It was cooked and served the following Saturday as part of lunch at my family gathering. The meat was delicious and tasted rather like lamb.

I would like to give a big thank you to Jim Westrip for taking me out and lighting the fire in me to hunt other members of the British six. Thanks, mate.

Governor Appoints Dr. Karen Hyun new DNR Secretary

On December 23 Governor Tony Evers appointed Dr. Karen Hyun to serve as Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources effective January 27, 2025. The job has been vacant since Adam Payne left more than a year earlier.

Hyun has extensive experience working on natural resources, stewardship, and conservation issues. Hyun has most recently served as the chief of staff of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) since 2021. She also has more than a decade of experience in policy and environmental work.

"I'm honored to accept this appointment from Gov. Evers to lead the DNR," said Hyun. "Wisconsin is known for its abundance of natural resources, wildlife, and outdoor recreation opportunities, and I have spent much of my life dedicated to understanding, conserving, and promoting the natural resources and spaces that we all know and love. I look forward to working alongside the dedicated DNR staff to ensure that Wisconsin's ecosystems, wildlife, natural spaces, and resources remain accessible, safe, and available for generations of Wisconsinites to come."

Hyun began her career in 2009, staffing the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Natural Resources. In 2012, Hyun served as a senior policy advisor for the U.S. Department of Commerce Office of the Secretary and also the chief of staff position for the Department's Office of the Deputy Secretary in 2013. Hyun then became the senior advisor for NOAA in June 2014 before becoming the deputy assistant secretary for fish, wildlife, and parks at the Department of the Interior in 2015. Additionally, she led and coordinated initiatives focused on coastal resilience, Gulf of Mexico restoration, marine conservation, and coastal stewardship at the National Audubon Society, serving as the director of water and



coastal policy before becoming the vice president of coastal conservation in 2018.

Hyun earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in Earth Systems from Stanford University in California and a doctorate in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island. Hyun lives with her husband and children in Madison.

"Dr. Hyun's extensive science background and expertise working in fish

and wildlife, shoreline restoration, and coastal management and resilience will make her a great asset to the Department of Natural Resources and to our administration," said Gov. Evers. "Having spent most of her career working in environmental policy, Dr. Hyun brings a wealth of experience navigating many of the issues the department is charged with managing every day, and I'm so excited for her to get started."

Two Trails Lead to Black River Elk Zone Success

by Mark LaBarbera

All four hunters who drew a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hunt elk in the Black River Elk Zone of Central Wisconsin were successful in October. Two of them, Dryden Watry from Green Lake Township and Daniel "DJ" Tolliffe of Wisconsin Rapids were among the 7,750 applicants for that zone, but they followed different paths to private and public land success.

"I work night shift," recalled Watry, a welder at Apache Stainless Equipment Co. in Beaver Dam, "and I saw I missed a phone call from the DNR's Christina Kizewski whose message just said she wanted to get a hold of me. I was curious why she wanted to get a hold of me. I don't think I did anything wrong. So, I looked her up online and saw she is the elk biologist. My heart raced! I called her back twice and she didn't answer. I was excited and nervous. I went to my Go Wild account and saw

the elk drawing had been done and under my applications it showed success and a note that someone would be in touch."

Kizewski returned his call and confirmed he was drawn for the first central forest season since elk were reintroduced there.

"I didn't know the area and never hunted elk, so I started looking online," Watry said. "Videos from the area had huge bulls that hadn't been hunted."

He began visiting the area, especially around Potter Rd. and Starlight Rd. where people suggested he'd find elk. Joined often by his father, Charlie, who was scheduled for back surgery, yet still wanted to be part of the scouting, Watry spent every other week from June through August exploring the Zone. They focused on public lands.

"Our trail cameras kept bringing us back to certain areas where we saw bulls," Watry said. He began visiting

multiple times each week, put 7,000 miles on his vehicle, and scouted many miles on foot, plus ran 11 trail cameras, non-cellular.

"I told my wife, Kayla, that it's like an Easter egg hunt," he said. "Friday, there were a couple of bulls on my trail camera in my preferred spot, and that confirmed where I would be the next day."

He recalled, "Opening day, October 12, I woke up at 1:30 in the morning. I drove all the way to a gate and sat in the truck until five-ish, and then walked in. My dad and friend Aaron stayed near the main road to let people know that I was hunting there. It's public land, so you can't stop people, but we could ask them to please not disturb my hunt. Even hunters, honored the request."

He said, "At first light, I began calling. Elk replied from private land pasture behind me. I saw a big 5x5 or small 6x6 that came right to the property line but



didn't come onto public land. My .300 Win. Mag. was ready, but the bull turned and walked away."

It was the only bull he saw that day. "Sunday, again I woke up early and left at 2 a.m. to slip into that same



area," Watry said. "It started raining in the dark. The wind picked up. It got cold. But I sat dark to dark. No action."

On the way out, he checked photos from a trail camera he had left undisturbed that last week for fear of spooking elk right before the opener. Photos showed a 6x7 frequenting this same area as recently as Friday. It reaffirmed his plan to hunt the same spot the next morning.

Monday, Watry's dad had to head to Madison for back surgery pre-op.

"I said goodbye at 2 a.m. when I left to make sure no one was going to beat me to the spot," he explained.

"About 40 minutes before light a big silhouette moved past me at about 15 yards as I waited to load my gun at legal shooting time," he said. "Another bull bugled. Then the one that walked past me bugled out of sight."

Watry said, "When the clock on my phone said it was time I cow called and those two bulls bugled again. Just hearing them gave me the shakes."

Two minutes after opening, Watry saw a spike bull and was tempted to shoot.

"Then a bigger bull came over the ridge at 80 yards," he said. "I quickly wiped fog off my scope and shot. The bull buckled. I knew I hit him, but he didn't drop. I racked another round and shot. He dropped, and then I was over the moon jumping up and down."

Watry called his dad and headed to the bull.

"We were talking on the phone almost 10 minutes after I shot," Watry said. "I put the phone on speaker and in my pocket. When I got near the spot, my bull stood up! I shot again but missed. He stopped. I racked the last round and shot. He dropped for the last time."

Watry's dad was still on the phone. "Dad was yelling 'What's going on?' and I told him what happened. It was kind of cool he got to share the excitement," Watry said.

The DNR biologist was registering and sampling another hunter's bull nearby and she got to Watry quickly. It was a 3 1/2-year-old, no tag or collar, born in the Central Forest.

Another successful hunter focused on private land nearby and only used one trail camera.

"I was on my way to Michigan when I saw DNR come up on my phone," said trucker DJ Jolliffe. "I was puzzled but took the call and it was Christina, the elk biologist saying I was awarded a Black River Elk Zone tag. Well, that just changed my summer and fall plans!"

Jolliffe had never hunted elk, so he started watching videos online and talking to an elk hunting friend.

"I knew nothing about elk hunting. I've never seen a live elk," he said. "Not even in a zoo. But my buddy Mark hunted them successfully out West. So we got a map and DNR elk info and drove the entire 50-mile-or-so perimeter of the elk zone."

They also stopped at bars to ask about elk.

"We got a quick education from locals who were either for or against elk," Jolliffe said. "There was no middle ground. But we also learned there was a guy leasing private land for elk hunting."

Down the road they saw the guy's sign and called the phone number on it.

"He shot me a hope-you're-sitting-down price," Jolliffe said, "and I told him we'd think about it. But he kept talking about how elk, including big bulls, eat and sleep on his land. And he offered to show us the land. So we pulled in and he loaned us his four-wheeler to tour his 125-acre property that includes one of the highest points in Jackson County."

Jolliffe was impressed by it, and his buddy Mark explained that the big ridges and deep ravines, along with woods and open areas, are good for elk. And then they saw a log of big elk scat. They were sold.

"We did the deal in early July and I started going there almost every weekend," Jolliffe said. "I put out a trail camera and scouted in person. Saw my first bull there in August. It was September when cows and more bulls started showing up regularly."

Elk were also seen and heard on private land across the road.

"Near the end of September I talked to the neighbor who agree to lease about 50 acres," Jolliffe said. "I actually

saw a 6x7 where I now had exclusive permission to hunt."

Friday night, two bulls and 20 cows were feeding on that landowner's soybeans, so Jolliffe was there at 5 a.m. Opening Day.

"We sat until 8:39 a.m. but couldn't sit anymore," he said, "so we went out for breakfast, goofed around for part of the day, went back to the hotel in Black River Falls and took a two-hour nap, figuring the elk aren't moving during the day, and then got back hunting about 4:30 Saturday afternoon."

They saw deer but no elk.

Sunday, Jolliffe hunted in cold rain and high winds.

"I took Monday morning off like a fool," he said, "and then I got a phone call from my neighbor who said the elk guide he knows in the area just called and said I missed my opportunity and I should get out there because the herd and big bulls moved onto the leased land and I would have got one at 6:30 that morning had I been out there. Talk about the emotions!"

Some Photos by Aidan Duneman



Jordy Ryan's 2024 Bull

by Mark LaBarbera

Ten-year-old Jordy Ryan became the youngest person in modern history to harvest a Wisconsin elk when he shot this beautiful bull in northern Wisconsin on October 14, 2024, with his dad, Andy, and Jake Nelson of Flambeau Forest Outfitters based in Phillips.

Andy Ryan had been applying for an elk tag for himself and 14-year-old son Nolan for a couple of years but this time he also helped his son Jordy apply.

Andy said, "I honestly never thought that there was a chance of drawing, but for ten bucks to go toward helping create a larger and healthy herd, what the heck, right?"

Then he got the call from the DNR that Jordy, not dad, was drawn. Call it "Beginner's Luck."

Hunt Report:

Alberta Bear & Waterfowl

by Mark LaBarbera

The dog came over the hill from the field we were scouting. He grabbed a branch and started shaking his head back and forth.

"What is he trying to tell us?" I asked Richard from Alberta Bush Adventures.

"There's more ducks and geese there than you can shake a stick at!" he said.

Or so the joke goes. But the number of waterfowl we saw near McLennan, Alberta was no joke. Same for bears. Within a day of arrival, our group knew it was worth the trip from Wisconsin.

My buddy Kevin Casey, the retired funeral director from Cuba City, for years had been sharing success photos from his bear, elk, and moose adventures here, and he had seen waterfowl hunters fill their coolers with ducks, Canada geese, speckle bellies, and other birds. He is an unpaid evangelist for the outfitter and the area near the Peace River. I finally had a chance in 2024 to experience it firsthand with Kevin and his nephew Adam Krempges.



You can fly to larger cities in Alberta, but we chose to drive to hunting camp, which is a heated cabin with electricity in the yard of Alberta Bush Adventures owners Richard & Diane Deslauriers. Hunters use the home's bathroom and

shower, and delicious home-cooked meals are served in the family's kitchen area. Their son Joel and partners will be booking future waterfowl and possibly other hunts as DropTine Outfitters.

McLennan is also a birder's Mecca. Shorebirds, waterfowl, and other winged residents and migrating visitors far outnumber McLennan's human population of about 700 people.

This northern Alberta destination has big lakes, big forests, big game and big fields. Flocks of waterfowl leave the water each day to feed in canola and wheat fields, sometimes while farmers are still harvesting the field. Whittails, wolves, bear, elk and moose roam freely. One morning as we were setting up decoys, a bull elk bugled nearby. And on the way into one of many bear stands, it's not unusual to see deer, elk, or moose.

You can thank Ukrainian immigrants from the early 1890's, their heirs, and others for clearing forests to create the large farm fields. They survived on fresh produce, crops, and wild game from this hunter's paradise. Our hunting



camp meals included fresh produce from Diane's garden.

Kevin and Adam hunted waterfowl in the morning and evening, while I joined them before daylight but then spent my afternoons hunting black bear. You can take two bears here, which is no problem. I watched multiple bears come to baits each day and shot one pushing 300 pounds but held off on other opportunities while waiting to fill the second tag with one of the monsters seen on trail cameras at those same bait stations. I ran out of time.

As for waterfowling, daily scouting kept us current on where the most birds were landing. The Deslauriers family members spent their lives in the area and are trusted by local landowners who provide exclusive access to prime land, so they have plenty of options in the area as birds move to recently harvested fields.

The pre-dawn routine involves a breakfast snack, drive to the field, help set up rolled mat blinds around t-posts, and hand-drilling holes in the ground to insert willows for camouflage. About the time the blinds and decoys are in place and vehicles and trailers are driven from the field, sunlight's golden glow peaks over the horizon and birds leave the big water.

The Top Gun Award went to Andy. Doubles were not uncommon. He was handicapped though as guides

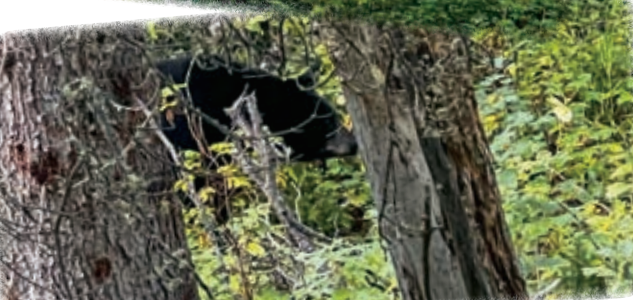
and fellow hunters wanted to try his new Benelli Ethos 12 gauge. So, he used a variety of guns during the week and seemed to connect no matter who's gun he was shooting as they borrowed his.

Kevin earned the Most Colorful Shooter Honors. Blood thinners and a lot of shooting resulted in bruising that spread the entire length of his arm. Yet he kept hunting. His drive for hunting of all kinds is well-known among his friends. A photo of his colorful arm is included with dozens of others on these pages so fellow SCI members can see some of what to expect if you book at www.albertabu-shadventures.com.



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Band Number	1271290	Band	479267
Species	WOODCOCK	Sex	MALE
Age of Bird	ADULT IMMATURE		
Location	NEAR MACKENZIE, 25 KM SOUTH OF CHEROKEE AREA, ALBERTA		
Bandholder	ANDY KREMGES		
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APPEARING BOTH DAYS

Melissa Bachman - is an American hunter, producer, and host of hunting television programs, currently of the cable television program Winchester Deadly Passion on the Sportsman Channel, Pursuit Channel, and Wild TV.





Learn to Hunt Events Recruit Local and International Students

by Pat Scuzzin

SCI members and chapters have helped partners recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts to carry on our outdoor heritage. This is a report from one of those reliable longstanding partners, Outdoor Heritage Education Center, who relies on SCI support to continue having an impact on the future of hunting.

SCI Life Member and OHEC founder Mark LaBarbera once again helped fulfill SCI's shared R3 vision of connecting youth and adults to natural resources and the sportsman's positive role in conservation.

Bloomington Area Sportsman's Club and local landowners hosted Grant County Outdoor Sports Alliance's Learn to Hunt Pheasants event October 20 with 22 youth and adult students, including nine UW-Madison international students from continents like Asia, Africa and South America. GCOSA volunteer mentors the next weekend also hosted a Learn to Hunt Squirrels event at Stitzer Sportsmen Club with some of the same students.

With additional support from Cabela's, WI DNR, WI Conservation Wardens Assoc., Friends of Poynette

Game Farm, and Outdoor Heritage Education Center of Hazel Green, GCOSA President Chuck Horn of Livingston said these were their best events ever. Randy Christensen of Prairie du Chien Cabela's delivered free orange hats and pheasant vests. The FPGF/OHEC Mobile Closet was there to supply any additional boots, clothing, and gear. OHEC now coordinates and schedules three Mobile Closets.

Like SCI family members who pass on our outdoor heritage, local youth who came with parents who hunt seemed to have their own guns and gear. GCOSA welcomed them and appreciated their families' interest in passing the outdoor heritage torch to a new generation. They were typical of Learn to Hunt events in rural Wisconsin, but it was the international students who drew questions about their home countries and their newfound interest in hunting.

"Some of these students came from countries that don't allow private gun ownership," he said. "We had meaningful discussions about establishing recreational hunting in their countries.

We mentioned they should talk to their government leaders about how it's a source of protein that would be available for poor people, and that it would cut down on poaching. If they were to offer a license which, as we have with the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, it would support habitat, too."

The majority of the full day event was teaching firearms safety and game bird biology in the classroom, safe zones and clay target practice at the range, and wingshooting in the field.

More than a dozen hunters volunteered as instructors and helpers. Local landowners, the Breuer and Rodgers families, granted free access to their neighboring properties near Patch Grove.

Horn said, "If my count serves me right, we harvested and recovered 14 birds and hit but didn't recover 6-8 more which would account for about half the birds provided free by the State Game Farm in Poynette. The Breuers and the Rodgers should have some unique wildlife viewing in the next couple of months!"





He added, "We had one of the best learn to hunt events our group has ever sponsored, many of the international students come from countries where gun ownership is prohibited, so shooting was a new experience for them. The parents of some of the local students helped out where they could, and I think we recruited some new mentors. All in all, a wonderful day!"

Horn said 22 students was "...pretty much what we set as the maximum, participating, and this is the first time in the history of our events that I've had to turn folks away. Hate doing that, but we have to keep things manageable. The 22 included nine international graduate students who are wildlife professionals in their home countries and are interested in learning more about American hunting traditions and techniques. They all are fluent in English, and it was an interesting

experience for all of us, including local youth learning to hunt!"

SCI friend and DNR Hunting & Shooting Sports Program Specialist Emily lehl, as part of her job to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and target shooters, generated interest among the international students when she spoke at UW-Madison.

Most of them had never shot a firearm.

One student who had never handled a hunting firearm before, Jyotish Ranjan Deka of India, said recreational hunting is not allowed in his home country. It does not offer learn to hunts, but fishing is popular among the general population near water. So, what other methods of wildlife population control are used there? Deka said, "We do not have any established method, but most recently one suggestion came up about immune-contraception drugs."

Xuan Le of Vietnam had used only a non-lethal firearm during a military training course in school.

"This will be my first time hunting," she shared before the Learn to Hunts. "I hope to learn the principles of hunting and how hunting connects to wildlife conservation."

After participating in both the pheasant and squirrel hunts, she said, "Thank you again for welcoming us to the Learn to Hunt events. It was such a positive learning experience, especially for those of us who have never used a hunting gun before!"

Camila Pascual of Chile said before the events, "I hope learn more about the traditions of hunting and the process." Chuck Horn and his team fulfilled those hopes.

PhD student Daniela Linero explained that recreational hunting is not allowed in her home country,

Colombia, "For subsistence and traditional practices, people hunt collared peccary, lowland paca, capybara and agouties." Those species are basically pigs and rodents.

Linero, who has handled a hunting firearm previously but did not hunt before the GCOSA events, explained what other methods of wildlife population control are used, "Mainly for invasive species, the government allows lethal control, plus sterilization and contraceptive methods.

One of the international students asked not to be included in photos and media coverage because, although he had previously handled firearms, he also now works for a non-profit organization that saves wildlife. Horn and GCOSA welcomed him to the pheasant hunt. The student said he appreciates the role of hunters in his country and that his father worked with hunters.





"My organization relies on wealthy donors in San Francisco and other places where they do not support hunting," he said. "I hope to learn from this event the process and culture of hunting in the USA."

His open-minded nature and willingness to participate contributed to the quality of the GCOSA events.

"I would like to learn how to hunt other things," he said. "I am not an experienced hunter, so I came to learn general hunting techniques and methods for these species."

New squirrel hunter Colin Cooksey from Madison said he simply wanted to pick up new skills.

"Skinning an animal, field care, local regulations and laws were most useful," the research assistant said. "I've handled hunting firearms before, but I didn't hunt."

Philipp Maleko said he simply wanted to have success hunting squirrels.

"I am not an international student," he explained. "I moved to the USA when I was 6 and have dual American-Russian citizenship. I do however maintain a close connection with Russia, its people and its wildlife traditions."

Maleko, who had hunting experience, said, "I am planning on purchasing a .22 or perhaps an over/under .22/20 gauge, and start hunting

squirrels more." He added that it would be good for Learn to Hunts to also talk about resources for finding and accessing private and public hunting lands.

Megan Dudenhoeffer of Madison, who works full-time and is not a UW student, was a Learn to Hunt Pheasants

student, and then mentored on the squirrel hunt. She helped GCOSA teach five participants in that hunt at Stitzer. It was successful, and students went home with cleaned squirrel meat in Zip-loc bags, plus the knowledge on how to do it again on their own.



Similarly, Ting Yuan Zeng of China said, "I want to learn everything the Learn to Hunts have to teach me." She does not hunt but has handled a rifle."

One graduate student from UW, Rudi Boerschoten has hunted deer in his home state of North Carolina and grouse in Wisconsin.



Whitetail Sanctuary Solutions Tip:

Late Season Hunting for Trophy Bucks!

by Michael Murphy

It's January and late season bow hunts can often be a great time of the year to harvest a trophy buck. This time of year, the competition from other hunters and recreational users in the woods drastically drops off allowing deer to return to more of their "normal behavior."

The number one thing most trophy bucks are looking for this time of year is food! It is very important with winter coming for mature bucks to replenish those fat reserves they burned off during the rut. So, look for stands near late season food sources that the bucks will certainly be visiting.

- Food Plots/Agricultural Fields—look for areas where the snow depth is very low which gives deer easy access to these food sources. For small food plots and edges of fields near stands don't be afraid to shovel off the snow so they may get to the food source(s).
- Oak Trees and Fruit Trees—acorns and fruit are a great food source for deer all year long.
- Trout Streams—due to constant water temperatures from the springs feeding these streams; green foliage (watercress) often lives on the edges of these streams throughout the entire hunting season.
- Cedar Swamps

So now you are ready to do some late season Trophy Buck hunting. What's next?

- Scout your area and place stands near available food sources.
- Look for where deer are bedding. Think like a deer...in this cold time of year look at sheltered areas that are out of the wind such as:
 - White Pine Groves (Thermal Protection)
 - South-facing areas to pick up that warm sunshine
 - Valleys
- Hunt at the right time, keep a close eye on the weather. Pay attention to the barometric pressure changes, cold fronts that are

moving in, and winter storms. All three of these result in an increase in deer movement.

- In addition to watching the weather patterns, pay attention to your walking trails to your stands. If you have cold temperatures, frozen leaves and/or ice-covered snow on your trails this will make you sound like a tank coming through the woods. Take time to remove these well before your hunting date.
- Also, remember with most of the foliage gone in the woods the sound will travel farther.
- You must wear layers. Do not overdress walking to your stand. If you do, your chances of leaving early because of being cold just went up exponentially. Have additional layers of clothing in your backpack that you can put on after you have cooled down from your walk to your stand and you will remain warm all day.
- Don't be afraid to get those old blinds out. Allowing yourself to get out of the wind can make a huge difference in comfort and allow you



to hunt all day. This will also increase your safety by eliminating climbing those ice-covered tree-stand ladders or steps. Much Safer.

- You must practice shooting with the gear you will be wearing during your hunt. I knew someone who never practiced with his bow once the season began. Well, on one late December morning it was very cold, he learned why that was not a good formula for success. The now 180-class buck (which he had been watching for a few years) came in at 30 yards broadside. As he released his arrow, yep, it hit his bulky clothing, and he missed the trophy he was watching for 3+ years! Practice the way you hunt!

So, if you haven't experienced late season deer hunting, give it a try! It's a great opportunity for you to land that trophy buck!

I would be happy to provide an individualized plan of your property to attract and retain trophy bucks on your property! Happy and safe hunting from your SCI fellow member at whitetail-sanctuarysolutions.com.

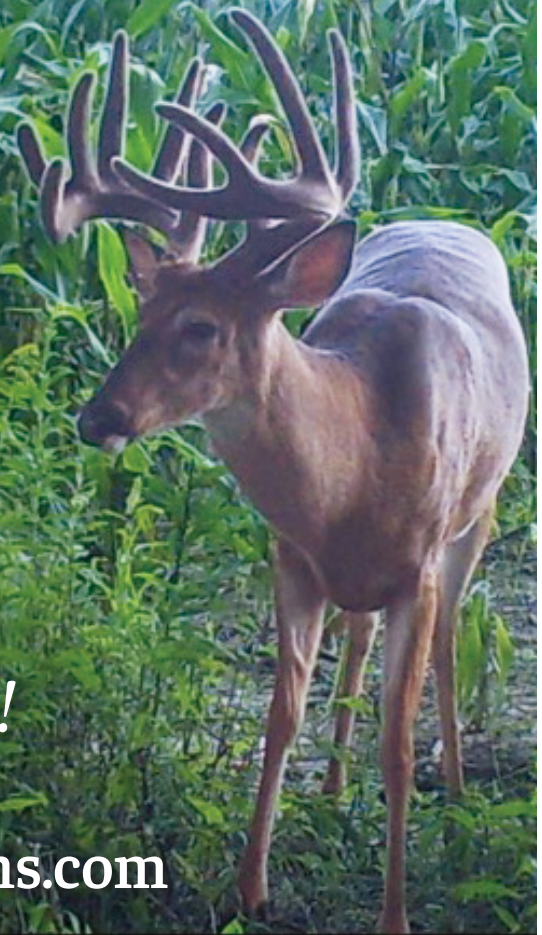
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