

# HUNTERS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SCI CHAPTERS  
IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS  
MAY/JUNE 2026

## Yenchesky's First Turkey

- Members' Adventures
- Chapter News & Events
- Humanitarian Update:  
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- Education: Patzer &  
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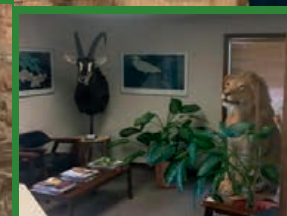
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# SCI

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Editor/Publishers: Mark & Coni LaBarbera

HUNTERS is a bimonthly publication for members of SCI chapters in Illinois and Wisconsin, plus bonus electronic circulation, which includes some of the world's most avid and affluent conservationists who enjoy hunting here and around the world. They have earned a reputation of leadership on natural resources issues and giving to protect and support the future of hunting and conservation here and abroad. To share your message with them, send ads and editorial submissions to Mark LaBarbera at [mlabarbera57@icloud.com](mailto:mlabarbera57@icloud.com).

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# HUNTERS

Official Magazine of SCI Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois  
May/June 2026

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## Join today!

SCI Chapters welcome you!

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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**Charmaine Wargolet**

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# SCI Region 16 Report

by Charmaine Wargolet,  
Regional Representative

SCI is doing amazing! I am sure by now you have heard that at the end of March, membership exceeded 50,000 members! The last time we did that was in 2012 and it was 50,200 something, but this year was 50,624. New chapters are starting up all over the world and SCI remains the most powerful voice for hunting rights and wildlife conservation. Thanks to all of you for being a part of this great organization. Together we achieve so much!

A big part of SCI's success in the hunter's rights arena is our annual Washington D.C. lobby day. When I first got involved in lobby day for SCI, I thought to myself, this isn't going to amount to anything. These people will barely listen and then forget about us. But over the years I have witnessed firsthand what a difference we can make. Encouraging our representatives to co-sign bills and vote for our stand or making them aware of issues coming down the line. It is actually quite exciting! So, I would encourage you to support your chapter president to attend this event which includes the national board meeting. It takes some chapter funds but take my word for it, it is good for these congressmen and senators to hear from their constituents from around the state instead of just one chapter in the greater Milwaukee area. I know Marla and Dale Rimkus usually attend and even though it is a tough battle in Illinois, they are in there trying!

I attended a number of fundraisers this season, Bowhunters, NE WI, Wisconsin, and as of this writing will be going to the Illinois/Chicago chapter this coming Saturday. I could not attend the Badgerland event because it was the same weekend as my home chapter, Wisconsin. But that is going to change as of next year as Wisconsin Chapter is moving to March 5-6, so all of Region 16 banquets will be on different dates. Yay!

As always, the fundraisers were great. So many volunteers working hard for SCI! They all went so well and raised lots of money for SCI and for all the programs and projects here at home. The Bowhunters have given all of their proceeds to the Tom Tiffany for Governor campaign. Congressman Tiffany has been amazing for us as sportsmen and women in D.C., but, as Governor he would make a world of difference for Wisconsin! We have met with him every year in D.C. in May and he has been so supportive and gracious. I even asked all of the Reg. Reps on our monthly call to keep their fingers crossed and pray for us in Wisconsin.

It is always awesome when I see all of the different events that your chapters hold for member participation. Monthly meetings and programs, golf outings, sporting clays shoots, a hunters happy hour in Illinois, Christmas parties and more! Support your chapters and enjoy the camaraderie of your fellow hunters with your attendance!

And as always, shoot straight, be well, and God Bless!

# SE WI Bowhunters Chapter Report

by Dan Trawicki, President

On March 20th The southeast Wisconsin bow chapter of SCI had our 26th annual banquet. As usual the event was a complete sellout with over 180 attending. Our host, the Golden Mast restaurant in Okauchee, once again put on an incredible event. From the buffet meal, servers and staff, everything went without a hitch. Golden Mast has been our host for many years, and I don't see that changing anytime soon. We signed up quite a few new members, with many renewals as well.

This was the first year we had an online auction. I am certainly aware the majority of chapters use online services, but it was a first for us. John Miller coordinated that part of the auction, and it went very smoothly. Although only two items sold online, the online bidders drove up the price of most items. Tim and Heidi Miller were our auctioneers, and not only kept everyone entertained, but they also made the most possible money for the chapter.

We made a point throughout the night to remind bidders that the conduit fund was going to be spending a lot on the upcoming WI Governor's race, and the funding was critical to this election cycle. We need to have a Governor in place that supports our hunting

heritage, something we have been missing for quite a while. The bidders definitely responded and we were able to raise a lot of money!

The banquet committee did a great job to put on such a successful event. We also had a lot of outfitters and

donors that gave huge donations to support the cause. It's nice to see such an outpouring when they know where the money is going. Our wild game dinner is scheduled for Wednesday August 5th, and we would be pleased to have you join us!



## WWF Honors Manitowoc County Association

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation April 11 named SCI partner Manitowoc County Fish and Game Protective Association as its Local Conservation Organization of the Year.

Founded in 1907, the association is among the oldest conservation groups in the United States, and has been a pillar of conservation, advocacy, and community engagement in Wisconsin. Its mission: "Conservation and Education Today for Tomorrows Sportsman."

With 23 affiliated clubs, it wields a strong, unified voice. Whether advocating for sound policy, protecting access, or investing in habitat and education, Manitowoc County Fish and Game has helped develop and maintain public access to 19 county lakes and Lake Michigan, improved piers and accessibility, supported habitat and lake improvement projects, and purchased nearly 450 acres of land for conservation and outdoor recreation. Its support of hunter education, scholarships, shooting sports, archery, and

fishing ensures our outdoor heritage continues to thrive. Their support also extends to local schools, colleges, and statewide initiatives like the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo and Touch of the Wild sensory safari trailers, alongside significant funding for public conservation projects.



# SCI WI Chapter Hosts Grand Banquet - Part 2

by Mark LaBarbera

Just when you think it can't get any better, the SCI Wisconsin Chapter's Annual Grand Banquet exceeded expectations.

SCI events like this are fun to share with others and they make us proud to be First for Hunters. Chapter President Dean LePoidevin, Vice President Monte Whitaker, and the event planning team can be proud of the Grand Banquet's success once again at the Brookfield Conference Center. All SCI members, friends, and guests who pitched in to raise funds for SCI's mission can also be proud.

In this issue, we are sharing more photos from the event, but as we've said in the past, they don't do justice to it. There's nothing like experiencing it firsthand.

If you are not a regular attendee at SCI chapter banquets and events, I recommend you register for future ones and see for yourself how good they make you feel as a hunter,

conservationist, and engaged U.S. citizen. Meanwhile, please enjoy the

photos and join all of us in thanking the chapter leaders, volunteers, and donors behind SCI's success.



# Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Dean LePoidevin, President

The 49th Annual SCI Wisconsin Banquet & Fundraiser was sure a crowd pleaser as more than 850 hunters and conservationists filled the halls during the two-day event. As you can see in the accompanying photographs, attendees had a great time speaking with outfitters.

With another successful SCI WI Banquet behind us it's time to turn our attention to spring membership meetings and two popular summer outings. Mark your calendars for the March 19, April 16 and May 21 monthly membership meetings as we have entertaining speakers, savory food and plenty of informative conversations on tap for all attendees. And while you're at it, add Monday, June 1 and Saturday July 11 to your calendar as we once again host our annual golf outing at the Legend of

Brandybrook in Waukesha, and our 37th annual sporting clays event at the Wern Valley Sportsmen's Club. Be sure to look for details in upcoming SCI WI newsletters, our website at [www.sciwi.org](http://www.sciwi.org), and on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SCIwisconsin>.

If you could not attend this year's banquet you missed a chance to renew or purchase a new chapter membership there at special prices. For information and

pricing on SCI membership see <https://sciwi.org/membership>



# Badgerland Chapter Report

by Randy Mayes, President

When I write these messages, I am doing it six weeks or so before the magazine comes out. You have to put your mind in a different time frame because of that. You have to "think ahead." As I write this, the snow is blowing sideways. We just got over 20 inches and it's still coming down. In 40+ years of owning my own business, there have been maybe a few days I've missed because of weather. Today is one of those days!

One of the things you have to think ahead to is food plots. You have to plan well in advance just what and when you are going to plant. I also find it best to do soil samples well in advance of planting to know how much and what type of fertilizer to put down. I am trying a few new things this year... milo and giant miscanthus. Milo for food and cover and giant miscanthus for screening around the plots.

For me, food plots are a labor of love. I am glad I don't have to plant stuff for a living! I spend WAY too much time for just a few total acres of food plots.

We also must think of the future when it comes to hunting. Not long after this issue comes out, the MOHEE (Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo) events will take place. They will be May 6th and 7th at MacKenzie Center in Poynette and May 13th at Havenwoods State Forest in Milwaukee. The Badgerland chapter, as well as many other chapters and organizations, support this in a big way. With these events, THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS of kids will have an opportunity to be exposed to our great outdoors including hunting, fishing, trapping and shooting!

I am so grateful to the Outdoor Heritage Education Center organization and all of the volunteers who organize this event! It is so important to expose our youth to what we know and love so much. We often take it for granted. Some kids, however, would otherwise never have the opportunity to see what



it's all about. Just another great reason to be a part of SCI!

Another great reason to be a part of SCI is our May board meeting in Washington D.C. At this meeting, representatives from SCI chapters across the nation come together to meet with representatives in our nation's Capitol to discuss upcoming hunting-related legislation. You are hard pressed to find an organization that does more for hunting than SCI! They are always thinking ahead!

# Illinois & Chicago Chapter Report

by Dale Rimkus, President

Our chapter had an outstanding 54th Annual Fundraiser Banquet in April, and I want to thank everyone who attended, supported and worked to make it a great success! Your generosity, energy and commitment continue to drive everything we do! Our banquet and our first Hunters Happy Hour in March are powerful reminders of what a great community of hunters and conservationists we have. Because of all of you, we are able to continue funding conservation programs, youth outdoors education, humanitarian projects, and efforts to protect our rights and outdoor traditions.

As America approaches its 250th anniversary, we are reminded that our nation was built by individuals who relied on the land, respected its resources, and embraced the enduring values of self-reliance, stewardship, and freedom. Hunting has been woven into that story from the very beginning—not only as a means of survival, but as a tradition that fosters responsibility, conservation, and a deep connection to the outdoors. Generations of hunters have carried forward these principles, helping to preserve wildlife habitats, support conservation efforts, and protect the natural heritage that defines our country.

Our forefathers started the American revolution 250 years ago with their hunting rifles and then beat the greatest army in the world. They explored and tamed the West. They established farms and cities. They defeated Axis tyranny in WWII. They went to the moon, and now we are going back! Hunting remains a powerful link to our past and a vital part of our future, reminding us of who we are and the values that unite us. As we look ahead, we stand committed to preserving this heritage for the next generation, ensuring that the spirit of conservation, fellowship, and outdoor freedom continues to thrive for years to come.

# Lake Superior Chapter Report

by Scott Olson, President

The Lake Superior Chapter held its annual banquet and fundraiser at the Grand Casino in Hinckley, MN on March 26-28th. We had an amazing event with many activities to keep the guests entertained. We hosted an Outfitter Appreciation Dinner at a nearby north-woods tavern on Thursday evening after setting up vendors. Much fun, great food and conversation in a casual atmosphere before the busy show started.

Friday morning, we hosted a sporting clays shoot at Wings North, a nearby hunt club in Pine City, MN. We had great participation despite the 30o weather and 20mph winds. Trophies for the top man, woman, and youth were given out Friday evening during our program. We have promoted women and youth so we had great participation amongst the ladies and youth again this year. A bourbon tasting followed the clays shoot. The bourbon tasting featured about 12 bourbons from around the country and several from MN. While the bourbon tasting was being held, we also had a custom cowboy hat vendor creating customized hats for the ladies.

Friday afternoon, our doors officially opened at 3pm. We had several fun raffles along with the vendor booths. We had a 3 carat diamond raffle with a glass of champagne that quickly sold out. It's always fun to try a new raffle!

Doors to the banquet hall opened at our evening program that started off with the Chapter's Membership Secretary, Jenni Vitek, singing the national anthem the best we have ever had performed in front of our audience. Chapter awards for International, North American, Estate and Fishing Outfitter of the Year awards were given out. I recognized past leaders of our chapter including long time board members and our chapter's second President Dave Benson and his lovely wife Karin. After an amazing buffet dinner, our guest speaker, Melissa Bachman spoke. Melissa entertained our audience with stories of her career and how hunting is her passion. What a treat! Following Melissa Bachman, we had a great live auction.

Saturday started out with our annual Veterans/Member Breakfast. Seminars included an Advanced Squirrel Hunting Seminar by SHITT charter members Brett and Kari Friesen as well as Tim Cyr of Nootka Lodge. Next was a Long Range Hunting/Shooting seminar hosted by Brandon Boe of Gunwerks, Joe Cavallaro of Swarovski/Kahles Optics and me. Scheduled for one hour, we spent 2 ½ hours in a great round table discussion about what it takes to make ethical shots at longer distances. Melissa Bachman entertained guests with a fun seminar telling her journey in the hunting industry. Danie Van Jaarsveld of Western Cape Game along

with board members Ed and Cindy Schabert and Lisa Gingerich-Olson of Coppersmith Logistics/HuntingTrophy.com hosted a Know Before You Go seminar.

Lisa again hosted our Sables Wine, Women and Cheese event Saturday afternoon. A sell-out crowd of ladies enjoyed raffles and wine from Irv Geary of Chateau St. Croix Winery.

We held our Youth Raffle Saturday afternoon, giving each youth in attendance a blaze orange backpack, and a headlamp. We also gave away nine youth whitetail doe hunts underwritten by members of the chapter and donated by Chase and Sheli Fornengo of Chasin Dream Whitetails of Danbury, WI as well as a 2-person Showshoe Hare hunt donated by Jay Link of Link's Wild Safaris.

Saturday's evening program was a big success. Melissa Bachman as our guest speaker, held the audience in awe with her stories and videos. Following Melissa's presentation, we had all youth come up to the front of the stage for a photo with Melissa and award all the youth a MN lifetime small game/fishing license. 13 youth left with licenses and they are our future!

The chapter had a great live auction and a wonderful time after visiting with members. We gave away almost 100 firearms.

Next year's event is April 2-3, 2027. Please make plans to attend!

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# Know the Law on Turkey Rigs

by Mark LaBarbera

I was looking for a way to add motion to my turkey decoys and discovered that it is illegal to use remote controlled electronic turkey decoys in Wisconsin. I didn't know that you can use mechanical motion devices in most states but not necessarily remote controlled electronic ones even though you can buy them through most major outdoor cataloguers.

Wary gobblers can be fooled with good decoys, and some of the modern decoys are so life-like, but motionless decoys got me thinking. When the wind moved my hens and jake or tom decoys, it seemed to breathe life into the spread. A little motion, I believe, makes them more convincing, even to the wariest of silent gobblers that sneak in quietly for a closer look.

I've tried attaching fishing line to homemade rigs that I could pull from where I was sitting to mechanically add life to one of my decoys, but it was awkward and flawed. Then recently I came across Jeff Luedeke, an avid bird hunter and engineer, in the Shotshell Hunting booth next to our Outdoor Heritage Education Center exhibit at the Open Seasons Sportsman's Expo at the Kalahari Resort.

When we were setting up and later when crowds thinned out later in the next few days, Jeff explained how he overcame the challenge of motionless decoys by inventing the patent pending Original Turkey Rig motion system without the hassle of fancy electronics or batteries. When he's not working at his full-time engineering job, he's 3-D printing and assembling this simple and effective rig. He sold out at the show and is busy filling orders for me, my friends, and others who are impressed by the innovative system.

People flocked to his booth as he and his wife demonstrated the rig, which simply stakes to the ground. You add any decoy you already own, and you sit 25 yards or so away with the handy pull cord to pull against the spring-loaded system for smooth action and life-like motion.

Attach your decoy to the rig using the included stake or your original stake, run the line back to your blind or tree, and watch the results," he said. "It's simple, and it works!"

You can use his rig legally in any state. Each rig comes with the following:

- Decoy motion base
- Pull handle with 25 yards of cord
- 4X ground stakes
- Universal decoy stake
- Canvas Travel bag

You can even run more than one decoy off a single pull cord. If you buy two rigs they will throw in an extension kit. See for yourself at [www.ShotshellHunting.com](http://www.ShotshellHunting.com), at watch online videos.



Jeff Luedeke sold out his Original Turkey Rig motion system at this year's expo in the Dells. Photo by Mark LaBarbera



# New Archery World Record Elk

Bowhunter Casey Brooks 478 2/8" bull from Washington is the new Pope and Young Club (P&Y) World Record Non-Typical American Elk. A panel of measurers was convened by P&Y and Boone and Crockett Club (B&C) in Lacey, Washington on October 13, 2025, the first ever joint panel convened by the clubs for verifying a potential World Record for both organizations.

On December 31, 2024, Casey Brooks shot this record-breaking bull in Kittitas County, Washington. It surpassed the previous P&Y World Record by 28 6/8". It is less than half an inch from the B&C World Record, which would be the largest bull ever taken or found in North America.

Casey pursued this bull for two years before finally getting him within bow range.

"From a scoring and verification standpoint, this bull was remarkable in every way," said Roy Grace, P&Y Records Chair. "The mass, tine length, and overall configuration made it... something special. It's a true testament to the conservation success of bowhunting and wildlife management."

## NEW WORLD RECORD

### NON TYPICAL AMERICAN ELK



HUNTER: CASEY BROOKS  
SCORE: 478 2/8"  
LOCATION: KITTITAS, WA  
DATE: 12/31/2024

OFFICIAL

[WWW.POPE-YOUNG.ORG](http://WWW.POPE-YOUNG.ORG)



# Tiny 10 (-1) & Mr. Bad Attitude

by Mike & Stacy Davis

We planned our trip to Africa in January '24 with Hunters Creek Safaris. We have hunted with Mac and Madelein on three previous trips. The goal being for Stacy to finish the Tiny 10.

To increase her chances for success, we worked with Mac to arrange a 10-day safari in Mozambique with Marromeu Safaris, followed by a few days in the Eastern Cape. Having previously taken a Damar Dik-Dik, Klipspringer, Common Duiker and Sharpes Grysbok the remaining species for this trip were Red and Blue Duiker, Oribi, Suni, Cape Grysbok, and supposedly the easiest of the tiny's a Steinbok. With the possibility of a Vaal Rhebok in the Eastern Cape.

A couple of days prior to leaving, we (I should say Stacy) received a message from Madelein. We have a problem Hippo on a farm next to one of our

concessions. Upon receipt of this message Stacy promptly called me. With as much excitement in her voice as that of a toddler asking or begging for a new toy. "Did you see the message!?" Yes, I did. "Well!? What do you think?" I think I'm in a losing position.

We arrived at Johannesburg in late May. This being our first trip without firearms made the trip out of the airport a little easier.

We spent the night at the City Lodge in Jo-burg airport. The next morning, we boarded a plane to Nelspruit/Kruger. Mac was there to meet us and start the hippo hunt.

We hunted this area two years ago, the familiarity was welcomed. Stacy took a few practice shots at the range with the suppressed 300 WSM. From there we drove to a pond containing a couple of well-mannered hippos. Mac worked with Stacy to review shot placement, frontal, side, etc. The thought

being the problem hippo will be in water and those will likely be the only shots offered. As Mac thoroughly reviewed with her, "you must be comfortable with the shot. I can't tell you when to shoot." Once Stacy was feeling comfortable, we departed for the last known location of Mr. Bad Attitude.

Wanting the sun at our back, we waited before approaching the last known location. As we drove down the incline to the pond, it didn't take long for him to raise his eyes above the water line to investigate us. We drove to the best vantage point. Stacy took position on top of the truck. After a few minutes of trying to get comfortable, she said, "Can I just do this off the sticks?" Yes! We moved her to ground level and set up the conventional three-legged sticks to her liking.

The entire time this is happening, the problem hippo was watching, only rising far enough to get his eyes out of the

water. We were all standing together watching him from the bank about 70 yards away. Mac decided to walk toward the truck, I started to walk toward the other side of a bush to get a better angle to video.

As Mac and I were walking - KA-BOOM!

We both spun to look. I turned in time to see the hippo head disappear under the water, no splashing, no motion other than straight down. Mac and I feeling dumbfounded, asked what just happened?

"It raised its head to watch you walking," Stacy said, "I had the cross-hairs between the eyes, just like you said. So, I squeezed the trigger."

After confirming the story about 10 times and waiting for what seemed like three days, a short hour and 25 minutes later the hippo was floating. Once the

work was done to retrieve him from the water, inspecting the skull revealed perfect shot placement.

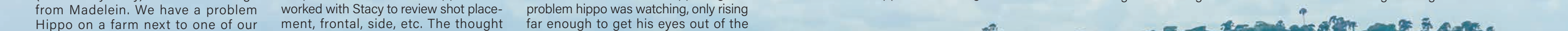
Pictures were taken and field processing of the big boy began. The farm owner and his family came out to see the hippo and share their appreciation for it being removed. The farm the hippo was hunted on is boarded by Kruger Park. It is thought the hippo lost his harem to a younger bull and decided to make the farm his new home.

Unfortunately, in addition to it causing problems for the workers it was also destroying large portions of the sugar cane fields each night.

We flew from Jo-burg to Beira and then chartered a flight from Beira to camp. This being our first charter flight, I had thoughts of it being as luxurious as

the private jets we've all seen on TV. It wasn't quite there. Crawling into the plane, getting one leg in front of me and the other wrapped around the back of my head, I was ready for take-off; spacious it was not. However, we did get to camp safely, saw some amazing images, and took pictures along the way. All in all, a fine experience.

The first day of hunting started with a 3-hour rain delay... then we were off. Stacy had hunted Duiker in 2023, so we were familiar with the process. Find a Duiker looking area, sit, start calling, see what comes in. The first day we had a Red, a Blue and a Suni come into the calls, offer a two-second look, and disappear (very typical). It was also typical for Nyala to investigate the calls, which I thought was great.



The game in Moz was much more plentiful than SA, and I would say the tracker/caller Domingo with Marromeu Safaris is amazing (checkout YouTube).

The Duikers, being some of the smallest antelopes, make them always alert. They don't offer more than a few seconds to attempt a shot.

The second day we traveled to the flood plains. WOW! There are no words to describe the vastness, the amount of game, the beauty. The plains go on and on, the quantity of Waterbuck is easily in the thousands. This is from our limited view riding in an Argo. Stacy was able to make a great shot on an Oribi. Must mention the preferred foot attire for the floodplains, barefoot is best.

The following day we traveled to the various islands in pursuit of Duiker. The verb island when used in Moz describes islands of forest in the plains. It was a long day, about 21,000 steps and numerous hours on the Argos. On the way back to camp we had the spotlights out, and Stacy was able to make a good shot on a Red Duiker.

The next day we traveled to the white sands of Coutada 11 (another ~ 770-square-mile parcel) for a Suni. The trip there and back was all off-road. I imagine it was similar to how the early settlers traveled (albeit via horseback or

covered wagon as opposed to Land Cruiser). It was two-and-a-half hours each way, again on trails though forest, open plains and swampy areas. A truly unique experience. Driving past a village gave me great appreciation for how tough and ingenious these people are.

Hunting Suni consists of riding on the tailgate of the cruiser while the driver and tracker are watching for animals. The vehicle is driving slowly, once a Suni is spotted the hunter and PH literally jump off the truck. The PH determines if the Suni is trophy worthy. It takes a few times to synchronize the tailgate jump, as the goal is to stay in formation. Stacy was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to take a Suni on the third tailgate jump.

Back on Coutada 10 later that day, the Blue Duiker happened quickly. Our first stop of the evening for calling. On the way into the forest, Fabo (the second tracker), gave the STOP gesture, pointing to his left. Albert looked through his binos and gave Stacy the shoot command. She had to drop to a

knee to line up the shot. BAM – the Russian-made Yar-Yar shotgun rang out. The Duiker was down. Fabo and Albert ran over to it to ensure a clean recovery. After a few hugs and celebratory handshakes, I opened the double-barrel shotgun to see both shells had been fired. I assure you it was a single trigger gun and there was only a single blast. How both fired simultaneously, is unclear to me. However, the amount of shot in the trees around where the duiker was standing and the duiker only having a couple of pellets in him – I'm glad both fired!

Returning to the plains the next day, we came across a very unique Sable. Mac said, "look at the one on the right." I said yeah, it's nice and very dark. He said "No! the far right. His horns are turned out." When I got it into the binos, it was looking sideways. After it turned and looked straight – I said, "Holy sugar!" Which was quickly followed by "How far is it? What is the range?" All while asking Stacy to get out the

rifle and Fabo to get the sticks. After convincing Mac that yes, I did want to take it, he said 250 yards. I leveled the

.270, took a few breaths to relax and squeezed the trigger. BAM, followed by the tell-tale WHAP!

He went for a few yards and was done. Pictures were taken and the trackers field dressed him. It is remarkable the amount of the animal that is used. The stomach as an example is emptied, then turned inside out and rinsed out. The locals consider this a delicacy, along with other organs.

After Stacy was fortunate enough to harvest her desired game, we spent more time in the

plains looking for the game I was hoping to take. Back to the Argos! Coutada 10's area is in excess of 1,000 square miles. For reference Dane County, Wisconsin is ~1,200 square miles. The only way to hunt the open areas of the plains is to travel. Based on the water, Argos are the vehicle of choice.

On Day 8 of the safari, while traveling through the flood plains, we came across a large Bush Pig. Things happened quickly, from spotting it to pulling up the rifle, finding it in the scope, and making a clean shot to harvest the animal.

Pictures were taken and field dressing occurred. Similar to the other animals taken, the innards were carefully cleaned and removed for use by the locals.

After having a great bush lunch on the plains and a short nap, we resumed hunting. A very nice Common Reedbuck was spotted. We donned the appropriate footwear (barefoot) and began the stalk. Getting to 190 yards was as close as we thought possible. The sticks were setup and a good shot was placed.

Day 9 we returned to the flood plains in search of a Lichtenstein's Hartebeest. We saw a number of them but continued looking for the "right" one. After a few hours, we came upon a small herd that looked to have a good bull. We stalked to 200 yards and, similar to the Reedbuck, the sticks went up and a clean shot was placed.

Day 10 we were complete with our desired game. It was mentioned a helicopter tour could be arranged (a "flip" as it is referred to as there). We were fortunate to have Mark Haldane and his wife be our tour guides for the flip. While the area looked massive from the ground, seeing it from the air provided an entirely new perspective. We were able to see elephants, hippo, buffalo, and a lioness with two cubs. A truly amazing experience! Some back story on Mark, he is one of the primary reasons lions were reintroduced in the area. He is a true conservationist. Reference



“Bringing Back the Lions” by Mike Arnold. Another book I wish I had read prior to the trip was “The Last Ivory Hunter: The Saga of Wally Johnson” by Peter Hathaway Capstick. It offers history of Mozambique.

**Eastern Cape:**

We arrived in camp Sunday evening. After a great dinner, we headed out to look for Cape Grysbok. The weather was not great; a cold front was upon us along with a steady drizzle. Several of them were found. After inspection through binos for a few seconds, the tracker would say “oykie” – which we quickly learned meant female. Drive some, spot a Grysbok, get excited, “oykie”, ugh! . . . keep moving. After five of these occurrences, another Grysbok was spotted and was in the open just long enough to determine it was not an oykie – and then quickly disappeared, double ugh! Keep moving, a few more ‘oykies’ were spotted. After an hour of looking, a male was spotted and provided enough time for a clean shot. Made it back to camp about 1:30AM

Monday, it was a long night, however was definitely worth the effort.

The next day the weather was about the same, cold and rainy. We went out in the morning looking for a Steinbok. Spotted some Impala, Hartebeest, Springbok and Zebra. No Steinbok to be found. Returned to the field that afternoon and evening. The afternoon hunt while interesting as you never know what you will see, did not reveal a Steinbok. During the evening hunt a few Steinbok were found, unfortunately they did not offer a shot. Again, the weather was cold and rainy, the animals were hunkered down.

The next day we headed toward the higher elevations near Richmond, in search of a Vaal Rhebok. I mentioned the weather and the cold front. . . this equated to snow in these higher elevations. Along with the sideways sleet and rain, it was not a welcome sight, but we don’t get to choose the conditions we hunt in. We were very fortunate to have

an experienced tracker with us. His ability to spot game was nothing short of amazing.

After a few hours of looking our tracker spotted a group of Vaals about 600 yards off. We drove to about 400 yards, and Mac determined a good male was with them. We got to about 370 yards. With the wind blowing right to left, it took a few shots to connect perfectly behind the front shoulder. The Vaal was down.

That evening we went back out looking for Steinbok. The weather was the same cold and rain that kept the animals hunkered down. After four hours of looking a few were spotted, none provided an opportunity for a shot. This being our last night of the trip, the Steinbok (you know ‘the easiest’ of the tiny 10, or so everyone has told Stacy) will have to wait until next time.

All in all, an amazing trip. Looking forward to the next safari!



# SCI's Tiny Ten

SCI Tiny 10 is a prestigious, niche list of the smallest, most elusive antelope species in Africa, requiring significant skill, patience, and specialized, often nighttime, hunting tactics to track them in dense, rugged, or forest environments. While the exact composition can vary, the commonly recognized “South African Tiny Ten” includes:

1. **Blue Duiker:** The smallest (3.5-9 kg), found in dense, coastal forests.
2. **Red Duiker (Natal Red Duiker):** Shy forest dweller, found in KwaZulu-Natal and Mozambique.
3. **Common Duiker (Grey Duiker):** Widespread in savanna and woodlands.
4. **Steenbok:** Known for hiding in grass before fleeing, found in scrub/savanna.
5. **Klipspringer:** «Rock jumper» that thrives on high, steep rocky outcrops.

6. **Cape Grysbok:** Rare, nocturnal species found in the Western/Eastern Cape.
7. **Sharpe's Grysbok:** Found in rocky hill country in northern South Africa/Zimbabwe.
8. **Suni:** A very small, elusive antelope living in dense underbrush.
9. **Oribi:** Graceful species found in open grasslands.

10. **Damara Dik-dik:** Small antelope common in Namibia and arid regions.

**Key Aspects of the Tiny 10**

**Challenges:** The animals are small, shy, and often nocturnal, making them nearly impossible to spot, demanding high-skill, close-range, and often small-caliber or shotgun hunting.

**Location:** While most can be hunted in South Africa (especially the Eastern Cape), completing the full set often requires traveling to Namibia or Mozambique.

**Scientific Recognition:** The SCI maintains records for these species based on horn length and base circumference.

**Conservation:** Ethical, regulated hunting of these species supports rural economies and encourages habitat preservation on private land.



# Beast of a Buck

by Terri Roehrig

Persistence and patience finally paid off. It had been 11 years since I harvested a deer with my bow, not for lack of skill, but because I'm committed to clean, ethical shots and won't release an arrow unless everything feels right. Maybe that's the hunter safety instructor in me. Other years, I simply never had the right opportunity. And with my bow set at 42 pounds, confidence has always required careful decision-making.

Nine years ago, I bought my own property in Buffalo County after two decades of hunting in the area. This

buck is the very first I've taken off my land, which made the moment even more meaningful.

I've poured countless hours into improving the property: logging, regeneration management, food plots, CRP and pollinator plantings, and battling invasives like buckthorn, honeysuckle, and box elder. For me, this work is about more than growing big bucks, it's about improving habitat, supporting diverse wildlife, and doing my part as a responsible, conservation-minded land steward. I study the land through trail systems, movement patterns, and cameras.

Each season begins long before the first sit. Summer means shooting my bow several times a day, then shifting into stand prep, access routes, and dialing in scent control. I'm obsessive about that, scent-locked clothing, showers before each hunt, and minimizing any intrusion into the woods. Once deer movement picked up in the third week of October, everything intensified. I hunted whenever work allowed: early mornings, evening sits, and full days once my vacation rolled around. I still balanced it with caring for my German Shorthaired Pointer rescue pups and avoiding

heavy rain, though this year I even broke my own rule and hunted through a few downpours.

On Thursday, November 6, everything aligned. I had a feeling I'd shoot a buck that day, maybe intuition, maybe the excitement of my parents visiting, hoping I'd have one to show them. I slipped into a stand I'd been hunting every morning for more than a week. The activity had been nonstop.

At about 8 a.m., a lone doe appeared. I watched her pass through and silently asked, "Where's your boyfriend?"

Ten or 15 minutes later, I heard movement behind me. When I turned and saw him, my heart jumped, he was a beast.

I grabbed my bow as he followed the doe's scent trail and offered a perfect shot at eight yards.

The arrow hit, and he bolted. I saw part of it fall out as he ran, and after about 100 yards he stopped, tail flicking oddly. Then I saw his belly and realized he'd gone down. The adrenaline hit me like a wave, I shook so hard I thought I might fall out of the tree.

Then I lost the white belly in the brush. Then the doubt crept in: Did he crawl off? Was he hit forward? Did I shoot low?

I remembered the advice my friend Pauly gave me 11 years ago: wait one hour before climbing down. It was the longest hour of my life.

When I finally climbed down, I nocked another arrow and eased along the logging road toward where I last saw him.

I took only a few steps into the woods before I spotted him lying there. Relief, pride, and excitement hit all at once. I knelt beside him for a selfie and immediately texted friends and family. This buck was the largest I've ever taken—215 pounds live, 194 pounds field dressed. A true Buffalo County brute.

Now I've got venison in the freezer again, trimmings at the processor for bacon, and a dehydrated liver stash for the GSP rescue dogs, who appreciate the harvest as much as I do.

There is nothing I look forward to more than Fall in Wisconsin—the sights, the sounds, the shifting colors, and the anticipation of the hunting seasons. After 11 years, 2025 became a season I'll never forget.



# ELK

by Kevin Casey

SCI members may have read Life Member Mark LaBarbera's story last year about our waterfowl and bear hunting success. He mentioned that we heard elk bugling as we helped

morning, I had started preparing mentally for the potential of not filling my tag, even though I was hoping to get a shot.

That final morning, we got out of the truck and heard a bull bugle extremely

About a half-hour later, someone started up a chainsaw nearby and, initially, Tyson said, "Well that's gonna kind of mess up the morning," and I said, "Well, you know the same guy was cutting wood a couple days ago but about 20 or 30 minutes after he started sawing wood the cows broke out of the timber followed by a large bull." So, we stayed and moved up a little bit to where we could hear a bull smashing his antlers up against a tree.

At that point, Tyson said we're probably only about 50 yards from that bull.

Shortly after that, a lone cow came out, stood there, then took off. Just about that fast we had 11 more cows come out, and I knew in all likelihood there would be a bull following. Sure enough, soon an extremely nice bull came out running.

Tyson cow-called. The bull stopped. I shot and could tell I hit the bull, but it took off and was running. I took another shot that took the bull down.

My son Sean had the whole thing on video. Having him there made it extremely exciting and so rewarding. It was just so much fun having him on the hunt with me.

loud. Tyson mentioned that he knew exactly where that bull was, and that it was in there to protect his cows. Our enthusiasm swelled immediately.

set up decoys and the field blind. I returned in Fall of 2025 to answer the call of those elk, but this time my buddy Mike Austin and I had elk tags in our pockets. We hunted with Droptine Outfitters, which was previously known as Alberta Bush Adventures.

Mark provided a sneak peek at these photos in the last issue and asked for details. Here's the story behind the elk.

Joel Deslauriers and his dad, Richard, showed us a number of elk, deer and bear, and treated us to great food and home-like comfortable housing near McLennan, Alberta.

Mike shot an extremely nice bull on the third night with guide Tyson Benoit. In fact, he shot the largest of two bulls he had in front of him.

Tyson then took me and my adult son Sean who was just going along for the experience. On the very last

The author with his Alberta elk and son Sean.



Mike Austin and his guide had reason to smile.



## All in the Family

Stan Patzer shared these photos and memories. He retired from farming, moved, and now lives on Big Stone Lake so he can hunt and fish as a resident in South Dakota. His son Tim owns and operates with his family Faulk County Outfitters south of Aberdeen.

Tim's son Davis shot this beautiful buck, which got Stan reminiscing about Davis being with him on a Kansas whitetail hunt.

"Davis shot his first Kansas buck when he was seven," said Stan, sharing their photo with his grandson's 10-pointer. "Kansas does not have an age restriction. They leave that up to the parents to decide."

Stan pulled up a photo of nine-year-old Davis with grandpa and Stan's wide-racked Kansas buck from 2015.

"This buck will go down as my most memorable," Stan said. "It is mounted and, after my last days, it will go to Davis. He was by my side during this hunt and for that reason I want Davis to have it!"



Stan Patzer took grandson Davis on Kansas hunts at an early age.



Stan's son Tim, third from left, owns Faulk County Outfitters and runs it with family.



Tim's son Davis shot this beautiful buck.

Stan's black Lab retrieved his South Dakota rooster.



Tim and son Davis hosted Major League Baseball Hall of Famer Jack Morris, who pitched 13 years for the Detroit Tigers before playing with MN Twins, Toronto Blue Jays, and Cleveland Indians.

# SCI NE Wisconsin Expo Shines



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27<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SCI  
HUNTER'S BANQUET  
AND  
LIVE AUCTION



# Northeast Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Kathryn Thede, President

**W**e are already approaching summer. It is the time of year when traveling to foreign hunting destinations are in their prime and if you are staying stateside, it is time to get food plots ready, start scouting the big boys, and sight in the bow/guns. In the hunting life, there is really is never a dull moment!!

The world of hunting isn't just about the next big trip or those memories you are going to make in the upcoming seasons. It is also about preserving our way of life for future generations to enjoy, with that being said we have a big election coming up in November in the state of Wisconsin. While I am not going

to tell you how to vote, I am going to encourage you to start researching the candidates for Wisconsin State Governor. Please take the time to see where the candidates stand on the issues and come November take/make the time to get out and let your voice be heard, future generations of hunters may be directly impacted by your Constitutional obligation to vote. In a somewhat recent poll done by the NRA (in the North American Hunter, August 2024 issue) over 10 MILLION gun owners and hunters nationwide are not registered to vote. Given those numbers it is probably a safe assumption that many in Wisconsin are also not registered. I feel that by doing the research and maybe

inviting a neighbor or friend to the polls, we have the ability to help Wisconsin do amazing things for the hunting world and for those future generations of sportsmen (and women.)

Our summer hopes to be filled will several little getaways, including a pigeon hunt in western Wisconsin with some fellow SCI members. SCI has provided so many opportunities to meet people and make friends who enjoy and have the same mindset as us. I pray whatever adventures these next few months hold for you, that you are able to create memories with those you love and doing what you enjoy! As always, if there is anything I can help with please do not hesitate to reach out.

*NE WI Chapter member Brythe Thede shot Louisiana hogs during spring break with an SCI banquet gun he won. In Texas, Crew Yenchsky, 10, shot his "first trophy of his life" and later that day shot his second, while his dad Chad shot his first Rio Grande turkey,*



WI SCI HUNTERS - May/June 2026

# Family Afield

**B**rothers Jacob and Jerome Sindberg have continued to hunt together whenever possible since their dad died years ago. John Sindberg was a retired Greenfield fireman.

Last gun deer season, they hunted with Jacob's father-in-law Mike Decorah in Monroe County. Jacob shared these photos and details.

"We had a pretty successful year at my in-laws about 10 miles South of Tomah. I made it out for bow hunting in early November for only my second year. I had two days open between work and family. On the morning of the second day, I let my first arrow fly at a nice eight-point buck. Never got it, but it made me pretty excited to get back out for gun season."

Jacob said, "During the gun season I took a break for lunch about 11:30 a.m. on Saturday and Cherise's dad got this nice eight-pointer near my stand. Then Sunday morning, brother Jerome got a pretty good sized doe. After helping Jerome, I got back to my stand and kicked up a buck that looked pretty big, but I did not get a shot. Monday was

slow and, walking out to my stand Tuesday at about 7:30 a.m., of course, I kicked another buck up! I was thinking it wasn't my year."

Luckily, Jacob didn't give up. "I stuck it out," he said, "and Tuesday was my last day to hunt before heading home to fulfill Thanksgiving family obligations that started on Wednesday. So, I sat in the rain for about three hours, and at 3:45 p.m. this big buck came behind me. I was lucky enough to bring him down."

The buck was trailing a doe.

"I could barely see him through my scope with the rain and condensation," Jacob said. "I first saw him at 150 yards in the thick woods. The doe he was trailing was coming closer. Soon

the buck was only 60 yards out but it was a tougher shot than expected because of the weather and thick woods. I pulled the trigger and this photo tells the rest of the story. What a great feeling in the end, but this season was a roller coaster of emotions."



WI SCI HUNTERS - May/June 2026



# Serving Others

**A veteran's lesson in customer service is a good reminder for mentors, chapter officers, and volunteer leaders.**

by Jeff Buchanan  
with Mark LaBarbera

When I retired from the Army in 2019, I had a great opportunity to help in my transition. Having just spent the last 37 years in the Army (and much of that was in high pressure/high stress situations), I really needed to decompress. My childhood best buddy stepped up and gave me an opportunity to do just that. Greg Sutter captains a charter fishing boat operating out of Homer, Alaska, the halibut fishing capitol of the world. Greg has been a captain for more than 50 years and he is arguably the best skipper in Homer (captgreg.com). His deck hand was headed back to college in late summer, and Greg asked me to come and fill in. We'd take clients out on the ocean every day to fish for halibut and salmon, and as a real benefit to me, the cell phone did not work out on the water. I had a chance to decompress, learn some new skills, and have a great time all packaged together in one month-long transition period.

I had a lot to learn. I've always been skilled at eating fish, but not very good at catching them. I learned to prep and clean the boat, give a safety brief, tie knots, bait the hooks, and teach people how to catch the fish we were targeting. I taught our clients how to play a salmon without losing it and how to reel in a big halibut without breaking themselves. I'd help get big fish into the boat with a ga? or a net. I learned how to drive and maintain the boat and navigate using charts instead of maps. I can filet a salmon on the back of a moving boat in about 45 seconds. Halibut take a little longer, but I got to be pretty good with a knife and did not cut myself every day.

The biggest thing I needed to learn about was customer service. The only experience I had in business relationships was as a customer, and I had never invested much thought in providing quality service. I was clueless, to say the least. The best example I can give is related to hooking a halibut. The technique we used to hook these big fish was foreign to the experience of most of our clients. The hooks we use for halibut are called "circle hooks" and were developed

by long-liners. Halibut are voracious predators and will eat octopus, salmon heads, and just about everything in between. If you want to catch a halibut on a circle hook, you need to "let the fish eat." Given the chance to do so, most halibut will hook themselves. Our clients generally had experience fishing with "J hooks" for trout, bass, or catfish. When the fish bites, they would jerk the line to set the hook. If they did so with a circle hook and a halibut, they'd just jerk the bait out of the fish's mouth. I taught our clients to be patient and wait until they felt the weight of the fish on the line. They could then start reeling it up to the boat, keeping tension in the line.

It seems like there is always one guy who knows better (and yes, it's always a man). One afternoon I was getting frustrated with a client because he would not listen to me. A big fish would bite his bait, and he'd invariably jerk the bait out of his mouth. He kept losing a chance to land a 50- or 100-pound halibut because he would not let the fish eat and hook itself. I didn't say anything but I'm sure that my body language communicated my frustration and impatience. Finally, Greg pulled me aside. He said: "You don't get it. You're still trying to knock down targets. They did not come here to kill fish; they're paying us to have fun." His admonition caused me to re-orient on the client experience, and it was a great lesson for me about customer service. People were paying us to have fun. My core job was to help them do so: if they just wanted to pay for meat they could do it at a supermarket. Similarly, working with volunteers or mentoring students should begin with getting to know why they came to spend time with you and what they want out of the experience.

I have gone back to help Greg out every summer since I retired. Sometimes I work as his deckhand and sometimes I am just there to help when needed. Last year, I mentored a new deck hand for a couple of weeks to help her learn for the business. And I taught her about customer service.



Jeff Buchanan retired as a Lieutenant General from the Army in 2019. He had four combat deployments, led military forces supporting FEMA in Puerto Rico, and commanded more than 6,000 troops in support of the Border Patrol.

If you are an SCI professional hunter or outfitter and hire a new guide, you might want to discuss customer service. If you are an SCI chapter officer, you may want to discuss membership services and donor relations with fellow volunteers and committee chairs. And if you are organizing a fundraising shoot or learn to hunt event, you may want to remind your team to do the extra things that leave positive impressions on patrons and students; which can be as simple as presenting the new hunter with their first pheasant instead of taking it from the retriever and putting it in your game pouch.

In fact, my cluelessness and subsequent lesson may help you regardless of your line of work or your volunteer duties. I have been a better deck hand since that admonition from Captain Greg. He still chews my ass every day we are out on the water, but it's not about customer service and besides, that's what buddies are for. I'll be working for Greg the last couple of weeks of August this year. If you go out with us for a great day of fishing on the Tomahawk II, I will bait your hooks, ga? your fish, filet them for you, and we'll get you back safely to the dock at the end of the day. And I will remember that you are paying us to have one of the best days of your life, not to kill fish.

## Conservation:

# New Study: What Deer See

by Mark LaBarbera

A new study by the University of Georgia reveals that deer see a glow from secretions on rubs and scrapes. SCI members and other hunters don't see it without the aid of ultraviolet lights.

SCI friends at the National Deer Association provided photo-illustrations and the following information from NDA Chief Communications Officer Lindsay Thomas, Jr.

"In the light of day, our eyes see the pale yellow or white wood exposed by a buck that has shredded the bark off a small tree. But in twilight woods, deer eyes likely see a blue or purple light emanating from fresh rubs like glow sticks drawing them to a hub of social information about their deer neighbors. According to brand new science, rub lines appear to deer like a line of illuminated trail markers guiding them along an avenue of breeding opportunity," according to Thomas.

"We've known for a while through studying the anatomy of deer eyes that their vision is more sensitive than ours to the blue end of the spectrum. Where we have the visual receptors or "cones" for interpreting red, blue and green hues, deer lack red cones altogether. Instead, they are especially sensitive to the deepest blues and purples of the ultraviolet range, where our eyes can't follow. Why might deer need to see ultraviolet light that our eyes can't receive?" he said.

"Previous research revealed that many animals produce a "photoluminescent" glow visible to other animals with UV sensitivity, but the University of Georgia Deer Lab recently conducted the first-ever study of environmental photoluminescence used for communication in animals. They looked for a glow coming from rubs and scrapes, and they couldn't believe their eyes."



Another fresh rub on a winged elm seen in a flashlight (left), 365 nm UV light (center) and 395 nm UV light. Note that these photos were taken with Daniel's cell-phone camera and do not necessarily represent what deer see. However, a spectrometer measured photoluminescence in a deer's wavelength sensitivity with both light sources.

**Conservation:**

# New Report Sheds Light on Deer Activity

Earlier this year, Dr. Marie Gilbertson, a scientist specializing in wildlife disease ecology at UW-Madison, was lead author on a paper titled "White-tailed deer habitat use and implications for chronic wasting disease transmission." The paper looked at movement data for 596 white-tailed deer that were GPS-collared between 2017 and 2020 for the WI DNR's Southwest Wisconsin CWD, Deer and Predator Study. Primarily, Gilbertson was looking to see how the activity patterns of deer from the study varied seasonally, including when, where and why deer might be most likely to encounter each other. Having this information allows researchers and managers to better understand when the likelihood of disease transmission, such as CWD, is highest, and to adjust management strategies accordingly.

Before diving into results, it's important to make a quick note about deer behavior. White-tailed deer are social animals and with a few exceptions, such as fawning and breeding season, tend to live and travel within their respective social groups. For does, these groups typically consist of related females and their young, whereas males can join up in "bachelor" groups during the winter and spring but typically prefer to fly solo during the ever-competitive breeding season. It is understood that CWD transmission is occurring within these groups through frequent, direct contact, such as when deer groom one another. However, the disease is also being transmitted between different deer groups that rarely if ever directly contact one another, and it's important to understand how and when. Let's take a look at Gilbertson's key findings, season by season, starting with spring.

## Spring

For this publication, spring refers to the general fawning season for white-tailed deer, May 1-June 30. In this spring season, does have the most noticeable behavior shift as they tend to isolate with their newly born fawns, favoring the protection of forest cover and reducing

the size of their range. For this reason, direct transmission of CWD between deer groups is likely lower in spring than in other seasons.

However, one thing that Gilbertson found in her research is that does also tend to return to the same areas with their fawns year after year. Because of this, the continuous shedding of CWD prions (misfolded proteins which cause the disease) by infected does may create small but risky infectious pockets within the environment.

## Summer

Summer here refers to deer behavior post-fawning, July 1-Oct. 14. In summer, does and their fawns will begin to venture further from forest cover and into spaces like crop fields and pastures in search of food. And while deer social groups still mostly avoid one other during this time, popular forage spaces may be shared by different groups. In this way, though direct contact between the groups is still relatively low, buildup of prions at food sources could provide a common transmission pathway. "One of the big questions here," Gilbertson said, "is how important this kind of environmental transmission really is, relative to all the direct transmission we know is happening at other times of the year. We don't know exactly how long CWD prions are infectious in the environment or how much we need to worry about



this kind of transmission, so it's a big focus of a lot of CWD research right now."

## Fall

Fall, defined here as Oct. 15-Dec. 14, encompasses the main breeding season for white-tailed deer and includes major changes to food availability as crops are harvested and green vegetation dies. During breeding season, dominant disease transmission pathways expand to include more between-group social interactions. As a result, direct transmission of CWD is likely highest during this time. These social interactions include transmission specifically through mating events but may also include indirect interactions through scrape sites.

In the fall, buck movement noticeably increases, and scrape sites serve as a kind of communication hub. To create a scrape site, deer will paw at, rub or urinate on certain spots within their range. This territorial marking alerts does and other bucks within the area to their presence for mating purposes.

## SCI-Supported Study Honored

The Wildlife Society honored the Southwest Wisconsin CWD, Deer and Predator Study with its 2025 Wildlife Restoration Award. The award recognizes outstanding projects supported by Wildlife

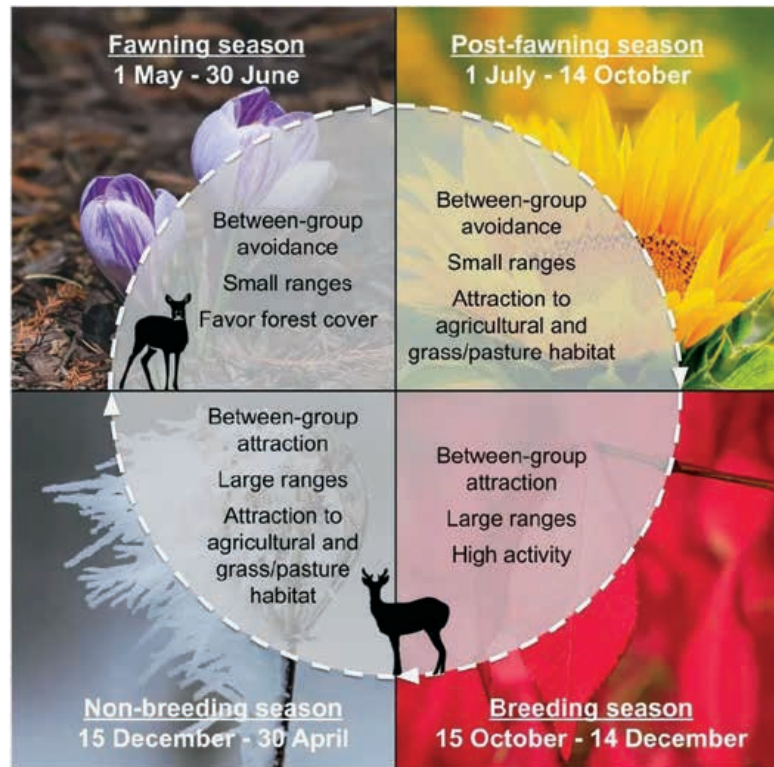
Restoration (also known as Pittman-Robertson) funds. SCI Chapters in Wisconsin have contributed to this long-term study by the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources.

*Gilbertson et al., 2025*

Because multiple deer from different social groups might use and reuse the same scrape sites, they may become a hub for deer traffic as well as CWD transmission.

## Winter

Winter refers to the non-breeding season, defined as Dec. 15-April 30 in the paper. During this time, deer tend to broaden their range as they search for more dependable food sources. Like the fall breeding season, this often leads to more interactions between groups as forage is relatively limited and deer will often congregate where it's available. You may have even seen something like this for yourself, a large group of deer in a harvested corn or soybean field on a wintry day. Unfortunately, their sustained congregation at these feeding sites may mean



disease transmission is happening both between the deer groups directly and through the environment itself.

throughout the year and could have implications for future efforts to reduce CWD on the landscape.

In summary, these findings suggest that the main seasonal drivers of between-group disease transmission in white-tailed deer boil down to:

**Spring and summer:** restricted ranges and relative isolation from other deer make direct CWD transmission less likely during this time. However, indirect transmission due to prions in the environment can still occur.

**Fall:** primarily during breeding activity.

**Winter:** primarily when deer congregate at limited forage sites.

Identifying these factors allows researchers and managers to better understand how disease transmission might be changing

# Elephant Conservation Success Goes Too Far

by Conservation Frontlines

In South-East Zimbabwe, elephant populations have soared to more than 100,000 – an increase of 17,000 in just the past decade. But with that growth has come devastation. In Zimbabwe's Sango Conservancy – home to roughly 950 elephants within 231 square mile--elephants are consuming 300 pounds of vegetation a day, stripping bark from thousand-year-old baobabs and tearing up the last of the grasslands. Now, to preserve both the land and the species, conservationists are facing a painful reality: too many elephants can destroy the very wilderness that defines Africa.

"It's heartbreaking," says conservancy owner Willy Pabst, "But elephants are imperiling their own survival. The biggest threat to the elephant is the elephant itself." Pabst has launched a large-scale cull to restore balance before the land, and its wildlife, reach a breaking point.

Zimbabwe's decision to resume culling after a 35-year pause has divided conservationists. Some call it

cruel; others call it ecological necessity. In Sango Conservancy– overpopulation has pushed the ecosystem to collapse.

Alternative methods have failed: aerial contraceptive darting proved unreliable, and relocation efforts led to high mortality rates from stress – eight out of fourteen collared matriarchs died after a previous translocation. For now, carefully managed population control is seen by Zimbabwean ecologists as the only way to prevent total habitat collapse.

Meat from the culls doesn't go to waste. In villages nearby, where nearly half of Zimbabwe's population faces acute food shortages, elephant meat provides a rare source of protein. For communities who've lost crops – and in some cases, family members – to marauding elephants (which killed 31 people last year), the culls bring both safety and sustenance. "We're scared

of them," one villager said. "But now our children can eat."

The Sango cull is not an easy sight, nor an easy story to tell – but it reveals a truth often lost in the noise. Conservation isn't about emotion; it's about equilibrium. When elephant populations exceed the carrying capacity of their land, they destroy not only trees and grasslands, but also the survival prospects of countless other species. True conservation demands balance – sometimes through difficult choices.



# Lynx

The Canada lynx is like a gray ghost of the North—elusive, evading human contact, according to National Wildlife Federation, which cited U of Michigan Museum of Zoology. It's about 20 inches at the shoulder and weighs about 20 pounds. It is recognized by long, black ear tufts; short, black-tipped tail; and large, rounded feet with furry pads for walking on snow.

Although lynx were never abundant in the U.S., they probably did occur in most northern states and western mountainous areas as far south as Colorado. Today, while tens of thousands remain in Canada and Alaska, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service confirms stable lynx populations only in Maine, Montana, Washington, and Colorado.

In the northern part of its range, the lynx serves as one-half of a classic predator-prey relationship, feeding almost exclusively on snowshoe hares. Their populations fluctuate in almost perfect synchrony. The lynx kills an average of one hare every two or three days. It kills grouse, rodents, and more if hares are scarce.

Hare populations follow cycles, changing about every 10 years from many to few and back. Adult lynx usually survive periods of hare scarcity, but their kittens often do not. So, lynx follow a

similar pattern, with peaks and valleys lagging one to two years behind hares.

The diet of lynx in southern areas is more varied than northern ones. This makes southern lynx populations especially vulnerable to human activities that affect the abundance of the lynx's prey, or that may cause lynx to avoid areas of otherwise acceptable habitat.

Lynx are more active at night and so well adapted that they can spot prey in darkness from 250 feet away.

Female lynx raise one litter each year. Mating occurs from February to April. Females give birth in 8-10 weeks in logs, stumps, clumps of timber, roots and branches. Litters usually have two or three kittens, though there may be as many as eight. Lynx weigh about seven ounces at birth and consume mom's milk for about five months, and some meat as early as one month.

Young remain with mom until the following winter's mating season, and



Photo by Ryan Pennesi/U.S. Forest Service

siblings may stay together longer. Females reach sexual maturity at 21 months and males at 33 months. In the wild, lynx can live up to 14 years. In captivity, lifespans of 26 years have been recorded.

In March 2000, USFWS listed lynx as Threatened in the lower 48 under the Endangered Species Act. It's U.S. survival is primarily jeopardized by habitat destruction and fragmentation. Recent attempts to reintroduce lynx from Canada into New York's Adirondack Mountains failed, primarily because the cats were hit by cars and trucks.



Photo by John Seals, USFWS

Federation, several populations in the United States faced severe declines due to habitat destruction, unregulated hunting and trapping, and misplaced fear that they're dangerous to communities.

The Federation said that this species is still here because people who care about wildlife and wild places came together to save them with expert-led, science-based conservation efforts.

Some people mistakenly believe that bobcats are dangerous to children and pets, and don't realize that bobcats play an essential role in keeping our ecosystems healthy

and safe from diseases. The erosion of science-based wildlife policies and education makes it easier for misinformation like this to spread and puts even more species at risk, the Federation said, adding that bobcats don't deserve a scary reputation.

Like at SCI, community outreach, science education, habitat recovery, and human-wildlife conflict resolution are all part of what the Federation does, along with partners and affiliates here and across the United States.

# Fulfilled & Overflowing

Choked up, Calin Volcensek struggled to find the words to fully express his gratitude. The 25-year-old's smile spoke volumes as his gaze fell upon his life-size black bear mount in Troy Piotrowski's New Life Taxidermy shop.

Memories came flooding back for "one-shot Calin" as guide Mike Fuge joined him at Troy's studio in Amherst, Wisconsin. Emotions stirred also in Fuge, President of the Izaak Walton League of America's Wisconsin State Division and a valuable volunteer for the Outdoor Heritage Education Center nonprofit group that helped organize Calin's dream hunt. Seeing the life-like bear brought back great memories of mentoring Calin when that same bear walked by the accessible, Wisconsin-made Hjort Hunting Blind. Fuge had been moved then as Calin dropped the bear, and similar feelings were re-kindled now as Calin gazed at the beautiful mount.

It was another high point for the young cancer patient undergoing experimental gene therapy treatments to prolong his life. They leave him weak, but on the last Friday of February he had strength and energy, fueled in part by anticipation of reuniting with his bear. No longer a dead animal, Calin's Wish



Mike Fuge, Troy Piotrowski, Amanda Bestul and Calin Volcensek. Amanda Bestul and Joe McGrath worked on Calin's bear.

bear will forever be a living memory for the Volcensek family.

Special thanks to everyone who helped fulfill Calin's wish and left him overflowing with gratitude: New Life Taxidermy, SCI WI Chapter and Big AI's Fund supporters, SCI NE WI Chapter, Pete Papageorge & SE WI Pheasants Forever, IWLA & Life Members Mike and Angela Fuge, Mark LaBarbera, OHEC, NWTF Tri-State Chapter, and IWLA Bill Cook Chapter member Randy Schubert's Northwoods Flowage View near



Joe McGrath.

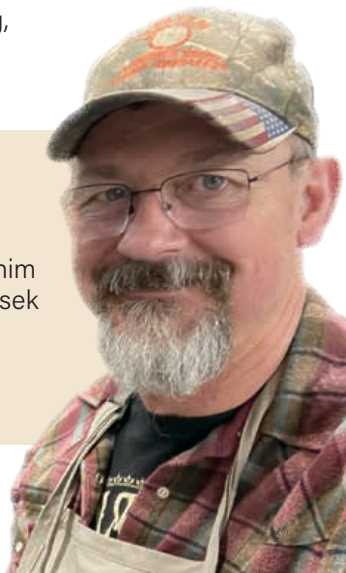
Butternut, and Balsam Ridge Lodging, Mercer.

## Thank Troy, New Life

Troy Piotrowski's New Life Taxidermy, Amherst, did not charge for the hours of work and record fast turn-around time on Calin's bear. He also negotiated a

special McKenzie Taxidermy Supply discount for the form. Troy, Amanda Bestul and Joe McGrath help breathe new life into every client's mount, but Calin's bear was especially

meaningful for him and the Volcensek family.



# Chasing Iowa Roosters

by Terri Roehrig

For more than 25 years, chasing rooster pheasants in Iowa has been a tradition my father passed down to me. He had spent a dozen years hunting there with his father, brothers, and a few friends before I joined in 1998. At our peak, we had a crew of 12 to 15 hunters making the annual trip. Today, it's just me and my German Shorthaired Pointers, but I still return every year, carrying on the traditions, the stories, and the updates for those who can no longer walk the fields.

For us, the trip has always been about more than birds; it's about honoring the land, supporting healthy habitat, and doing our part as conservation-minded hunters.

I used to hunt opening weekend, but once I became serious about bowhunting during prime rut in Wisconsin, priorities shifted. Now I head out for Iowa's second weekend; fewer hunters, less pressure, and the same thrill that never fades. Hunting wild roosters requires everything: quiet truck

doors, calm dogs before legal shooting time, and understanding how pressure pushes birds after opening weekend.

The 2025 season felt different.

Along with my regular GSP rescue hunting dogs, I brought a nine-month-old rescue GSP I'd taken in this spring through Wisconsin German Shorthaired Pointer Rescue (WGSPR). I've been involved with the organization for years serving as Vice President from 2012-14, President through 2019, and now a member of the board of directors. I also support intakes, home assessments, transports, and being a foster home and trainer. In April, I evaluated four GSPs from the same home: two adult males and two nine-month-old male pups. Their condition told me everything. Even though my senior female had surgery scheduled the next day, and I wasn't planning to foster, I knew I couldn't leave those pups behind. One of the younger males came home to me. He needed everything: confidence, structure, socialization, to gain weight, and a fresh start. But he had

potential, and potential I saw in him in his frail, fearful state.

Through spring and summer, we trained steadily. I worked him through gun conditioning, introduced him to wings and dummies, and gradually built his drive and understanding. He took to each step with enthusiasm. By late summer we added a GPS collar and tone work, and again he impressed me with how quickly he learned. On Wisconsin's opener, he worked the field beautifully, even though no birds fell for us. Then came Iowa.

Running him alongside my seasoned nine-year-old female GSP rescue was pure joy. We had points, missed shots (yes, that's on me!), retrieves, honors, and a level of teamwork I couldn't have dreamed of six months earlier. Watching the two of them quarter a field, freeze into point, or explode into motion when a rooster flushed reminded me why I love this tradition so much. I need a hat cam next year, so many moments I wish I could replay and now only in my mind.

Another highlight came from a relationship I built last year after helping a farmer with some escaped cattle. He offered to let me hunt his private land, something rare and appreciated. When I reached out again this year, he welcomed me back. The dogs had bird after bird pinned on that property, and although my shooting didn't quite match their pointing, the experience was unforgettable.

I'll head back to Iowa a couple more times before the season ends. Whether we fill the limit or not, the true reward is watching these dogs, especially a rescue pup who started their life in an unfair situation, run with purpose, lock onto scent, hold point, and live the life they were born for. For me, that's what keeps this tradition alive. And every time I go in the field or woods, I repeat the words my uncle always said, "To the hunt!"



# Tanner's Mom Would Be Proud

by Mark LaBarbera

**M**other's Day is in May, but Tanner Grunwald feels his mother's presence throughout the year. Ten years ago, she passed away on May 4. Mark Grunwald said his late wife

would have been proud seeing this photo of Tanner and his first deer published in SCI HUNTERS magazine.

We met at the Northeast Wisconsin SCI Chapter banquet this year and shared a lot of stories and hunting

photos, but none as meaningful as this image of a proud young hunter with his first hunt, knowing that his heavenly mother continues to watch over him as he puts healthy food on the family's table.



## WHEN GOOD ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH

**Northwoods Taxidermy is proud to announce a new, expanded facility coming in 2026!**

Before year's end, we will be opening the doors to our brand-new facility — designed from the ground up to better serve serious hunters and anglers who expect quality, detail, and professionalism.

**Our new building isn't just bigger — it's built with purpose:**

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This expansion represents our commitment to doing things the right way — investing back into our craft and into the hunters and anglers who trust us with their memories.

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