

Tis the Season – Deer Season

By Shane Stigler

November is an exhilarating time of year for sportsman as we feverishly gather all our gadgets and gear for our very beloved deer season. We make our lists and certainly check them twice.

Sprinkled throughout the land, our sacred and admittedly rugged Deer Camps harmoniously bring a sense of gritty pride and unparalleled solitude for those of us highly anticipating Opening Day (a well-recognized holiday in Wisconsin acknowledged by most employers and schools) 11 months out of the year. Deer Camp also facilitates the discovery of new family memories, priceless camaraderie, and enables us the opportunity to enjoy the pristine outdoors and hopefully bag that buck of a lifetime.

As most of us know, during the precious fall season, testosterone levels of the whitetail buck increase tremendously. Coincidentally, so does the desire of the “Buck-Fevered” hunter to harvest a mossy-horned whitetail monarch. Being a bow and gun deer hunting aficionado for over 19 years, my 2005 northern Wisconsin gun deer hunt stands out above the rest.

The date was 11-19-05, I remember the morning vividly. Conditions were favorable, six inches of fresh snow blanketed the calm deer woods - all indicators were leading the way to a successful hunt. Peacefully perched in a new stand location, I was very excited to hunt this deer mecca that we worked hard to pinpoint.

The brilliant snow and moon light eventually gave way to a beautiful sunrise. First light treated me to deer working through my area. As legal shooting light finally crept in, I unleashed my new M.A.D. call purchased just days before. Methodically working my deer calling sequences 15 minutes apart, I soon had a trophy 10 point buck nestled in my Leupold® crosshairs. Sporting a large chocolate rack and a very thick yet long chassis, I knew this old bruiser was a shooter. A broadside position allowed me to make a clean shot and the animal quickly expired within 40 yards after I unleashed the 180 grains of Federal Premium fury thrust by my trusty .300 Winchester Magnum.

Thankfully, my nearby cousin Jacob was able to help me with the long drag back to camp, literally over the river and through a whole lot of woods. The would-be back busting deer drag was transformed into an entire morning of priceless family memories while my cousin and I took our time with the deer drag, shared stories, and managed to successfully heave my biggest buck to date back to camp.

This misty November morning had proved to be very successful, but to add to the Deer Camp excitement, unbeknownst to me, my Dad also had a dandy 10-point hanging on our meat pole.

I can now calmly revisit this hunting experience, but when in the heat of the moment, bearing down on that deer, trying to maintain a steady rest, I thought my heart was going to go through my chest. I guess I am just another one of those “Buck-Fevered” hunters come every November that can’t wait to come back for more heart-thumping, deer hunting euphoria.

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