

FINDING YOUR LUCK WITH BUCKEYES ADVENTURESS

FALL 2015

MEET
Jeanette
Hall ~
TAXIDERMIST

Being 'smart' this fall -
HUNTING
APPS

RACCOONS
**IT'S A
TRAP!**

THE 7 DUCK
COMMANDMENTS



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womensoutdoornews.com

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Hunting,
Fishing
and
Adventure!"

YouTube



An ezine that features news, reviews and stories about women
who hunt, fish, shoot and live outdoor adventures.



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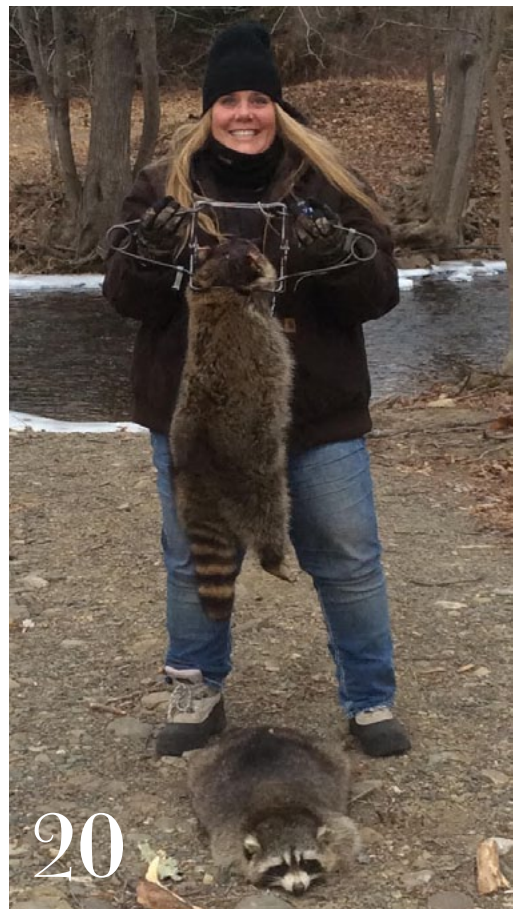
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editor's note

TRY SOMETHING NEW THIS FALL

Fall is an amazing time - besides it being stunningly beautiful with some perfect weather, so many outdoor seasons and activities are going on. This also makes the perfect time to learn something new, no matter what type of outdoor woman you are - from hunting and fishing, to farming and gardening!

My recent adventures include driving a combine for the first time during crop harvest. While I just drove it one sweep picking up the last rows of corn and my dad was watching over me like I was riding my bike for the first time as a kid again, it was exciting to do something I've never done before.



However, so many times in our lives, us women (and definitely men too) tend to get stuck in a mindset that certain activities are for males and others for females, no matter how capable we are to do them ourselves. I feel like I break that mold a lot, but even then, there's many times I've looked back and realized... "I wanted to do that, why didn't I say something?"

And sometimes, it just takes one person to break that barrier and ask you, "Do you want to try?"

Back as a 4-year-old girl, I'm glad my dad didn't overlook asking me if I wanted to shoot a bow. Today, I'm glad he continues to ask me to try things he knows I'd enjoy, not just things that are considered for a woman.

More and more women continue to break that mold, especially today, showing not only are they capable and can even excel at things such as hunting and fishing, but that they truly have a deep love for it, just as any guy can. Too many people still have the mindset that women who hunt and fish are just out there for the wrong reasons... let's prove them wrong.

Jennifer Pudenz

ADVENTURESS

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*Information and
inspiration
for the outdoor
woman and
country lifestyle*

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Featured photographer: Brook Burling



Cover Girl!

Meet Jeanette Hall

PHOTO BY: LIZA CURTISS/
ON POINT ADVENTURES

A gal that can hang with the guys, Jeanette Hall is even a host on **No Limits TV**, which is aired across Canada on WildTV. Originally from Tennessee, Jeanette started doing taxidermy in California in 2002. However, she moved to Canada when she decided on Alberta as the best spot in North America to do taxidermy because of the tremendous amount of hunters living there and visiting from all over the world.

Today, Jeanette owns a taxidermy studio, The Game Preserve Taxidermy, in Wildwood, Alberta. Jeanette also has awards to back up her taxidermy skills. In 2006, she won National Champion in the Game Head Division with a gemsbok she harvested. In 2009, Jeanette won 3rd in the world with a cape buffalo at the World Taxidermy Championships.

Jeanette has hunted all over the U.S., Mexico, Canada and Africa, and is preparing to go back to Africa next June as well as a hunting trip to Spain. We wish you luck, Jeanette! See more of her on Facebook at **Adventures in Hunting with Jeanette Hall** and her taxidermy at **The Game Preserve Taxidermy**.





Scentless Season!

Help keep yourself scentless and save money by replacing the regular hand soap in your bathrooms and kitchen with soap dispensers (can buy for less than \$3) filled with your favorite scentless body wash. This allows you to refill from larger bottles that will cost less per ounce!

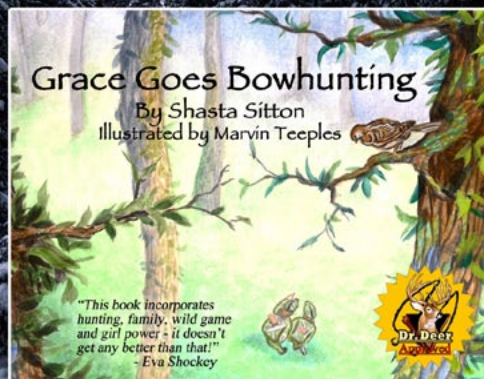


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We love seeing how you're getting outdoors! Submit your photos on the ADVENTURESS Facebook page or by using #betheadventuress on Instagram! Each of our social media pages is different from one another - so like, follow and join in with other outdoor women!

Anna >
Schneider

shark fishing in
North Carolina!



< Abby Heistad

harvested
this buck
on a
memorable
hunt with
her dad



~ April McKeeth

with her daughter's first boat ride!



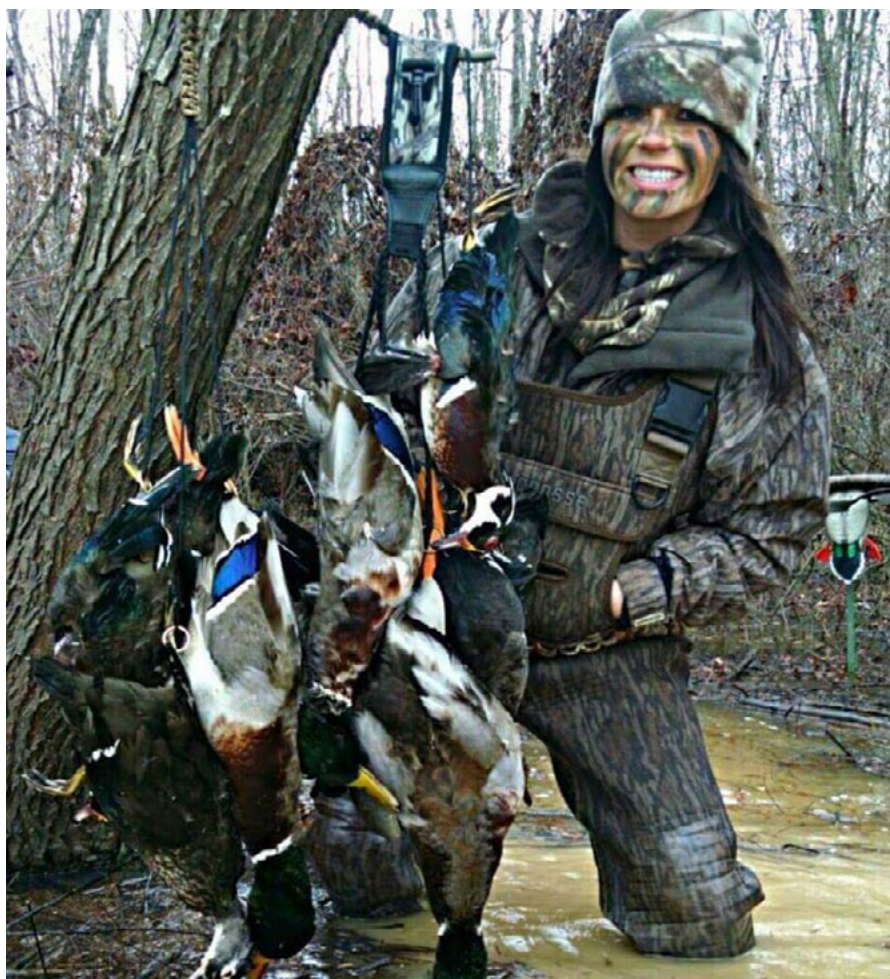
#betheadventuress

Beth >
Kincaid
Coleman

hunting
and filming
with sister,
Millie



~ Jennifer Lynch
with a monster rainbow trout
caught on 2-pound-test line



~ Kristy Ingold
on a Mississippi
duck hunt

Nicole
Vee >

harvested
this
Wisconsin
brute...
while
pregnant!



~ Angie Williams
shooting bows with her daughter

FALL





GOLDEN RAIN

PHOTOGRAPHER: BROOK BURLING

"Snapped this image of a poplar leaf in Wisconsin Rapids, WI, shortly after a rain while walking to my deer stand on a fall afternoon."

See more of Brook's photos on [Facebook](#) and [brook-burling.artistwebsites.com](#).



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HUNTING APPS

Using smart phones to aid in your hunts



HUNT.



Antler Insanity app showing a stand location with wind.

Antler Insanity

While this app has a lot of features specific to hunting, my favorite use for it is being able to mark the GPS points of treestands. You can then create a stand list, which is very helpful when trying to decide where to go for your next hunt.

I especially like that I can choose satellite viewing to see the terrain via Google and 'Wind' to see the forecasted wind direction at this stand location. You can also add notes, which are useful to go back and review when you last hunted a stand and when activity has been good or slow.

Best of all, this app is **FREE!**

GPS Kit

I wanted a GPS for years, but they were too expensive for me. This is the best of both worlds - GPS Kit app for only **\$9.99**. Plus, it works offline.

I find this particularly helpful when searching for a wounded deer. You can start tracking as you walk the trail and even leave markers where you've found key blood. This makes it easy to come right back to if you need to search again another time.

This information is also helpful to try to predict where the wounded deer could potentially be heading in case you lose blood and need to blindly search.

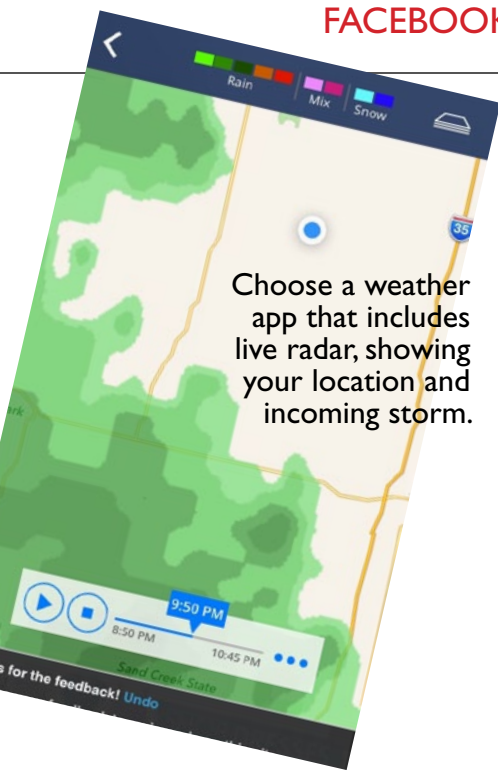
Showing the topography, elevation and the pattern of the blood trail, you might be able to determine where the deer may have gone and any holes in your searching.

A GPS Kit track of the blood trail of a wounded buck that was picked up again the following day.



Just as the world is ever evolving, so is the hunting industry and the products that change how we hunt, from the introduction of compound bows to trail cameras. Today is all about technology, and that technology continues to reach to the large market of hunters. Smartphones are a big part of this technology, and no matter what kind of adventure you have coming up, 'there's an app for that' to help you out.

There are many apps out there – find what works best for you!



The Weather Channel

Weather is of course an important thing for a hunter to pay close attention to, whether it is about dressing properly for the hunt, looking at wind changes or being safe from an upcoming storm. The more detailed your weather app - the better.

Key features to make sure your app includes:

- Sunrise and sunset times
- Temp AND feels like temp
- Wind direction AND speed
- Live radar in past and future predictions
- The Weather Channel app is **FREE**.

First Aid

Often times, hunters are out in the middle of nowhere with spotty or no cell phone reception. In case of emergencies, the American Red Cross' First Aid app is a great thing to have on your phone. Download it for **FREE** and you'll have a reference at your fingertips on how to handle bleeding, broken bones, burns, heart attack, heat stroke, hypothermia and more.

Also **FREE** is their Pet First Aid app, which is good to have if your dog ever joins you on outdoor trips, whether hunting, fishing, hiking or camping.

< Learn
Heat stroke

experiencing changes in consciousness, as well as vomiting and a high body temperature.

- 2** Call 911 as soon as possible, or get someone else to do it.
Heat stroke is life-threatening.
- 3** Remove or loosen tight clothing and begin to rapidly cool the body. Cold-water immersion is the fastest and recommended cooling method, however, cold water dousing (ie., shower) and wet ice towel rotation may be used until medical help arrives.
Watch for changes in their condition.
- 4** If they are conscious, give small amounts of cool water to drink.
Make sure they drink slowly.

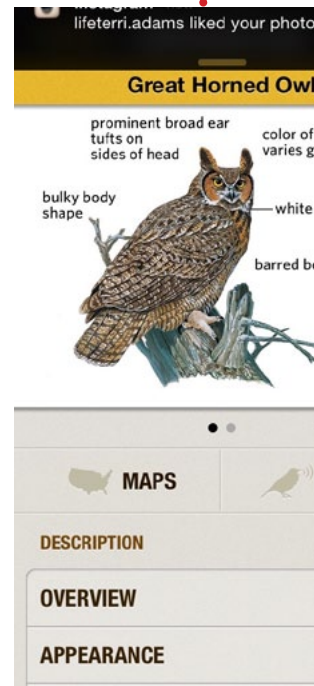
Field Guide

What's brought us to the woods in the first place is we enjoy nature, and there are lots of great apps for that.

One of my favorites to use while on a hunt is the National Geographic Birds Field Guide to North America for **\$9.99**. I see so many different birds while hunting, and this app is great to help you identify them with descriptions, maps, even recording of their calls!

Then you can add that bird to a list of your year's sightings. It's also a great way to pass the time while your hunt is slow!

Look for other great nature apps that help you identify plants, mushrooms, trees, wildflowers, butterflies, animal scat and tracks, and more! ~JP



ON THE HUNT

Trail camera strategies for fall hunting tactics

Trail camera season tends to be thought of as summertime bachelor buck groups; however, these velvet stunners will often not be the bucks potentially walking by your stand come fall. Summer patterns quickly break and deer behavior constantly changes for the following months. Run your trail cameras to try to keep up.



ON THE MOVE

There are several ways using trail cameras during season as a hunting strategy is helpful. One of them is monitoring deer movement. While it's a lot of fun to watch velvet bucks grow in the summer, we often end up harvesting bucks we have never caught on trail camera. The reason? Bucks are moving out of their core area during season and new bucks are constantly roaming into your area. It's like playing cards and all of a sudden being dealt a completely different hand. It's even more important to be on your trail camera game at this time.

One of the most interesting things we found using trail cameras during season is when all of a sudden a buck that we followed (until



he disappeared) on one property, all of a sudden shows up on a completely different property sometimes a couple miles away that we also happen to hunt. This shows that movement out of the core area, and it now lets us know where he's moved to for the time being.

This also shows if you are able to hunt multiple properties, don't put all your eggs in one basket and try to have your trail cameras spread out at each property.

Trail cameras are also great to show you when there is too much human pressure. When you've shown a good number of deer each day or night in an area, followed by a quick decline in numbers, it could be because you need to back off from hunting your area if you've been hitting it often. This can happen very quickly on fields and food plots, and can be a good idea to change up your strategy by pulling away from the field with stands that put you on trails leading to and from the field.

Any patterns you can pick up on through trail cameras are something to put to use in your hunting strategy. A major thing to pay attention to is the time of day bucks are moving. Often a buck will go nocturnal, but this can help you know when to go into an area when he all of a sudden starts showing up on trail camera during shooting light.

Also pay attention to what bucks are doing

in the photos. Are they coming or going down a trail? What are they walking to or coming back from? Are they searching, chasing, aggressive?

KNOWING YOUR BUCKS

Once you've hunted enough and had enough success that you are getting pickier about what you use your buck tag on, trail cameras can be a major help with quick decisions to shoot or not to shoot. When a buck is very small or very big, it can be easy to make a decision to pass or shoot. However, there are going to be a lot of bucks that will be in that borderline range that you really need to look them over to know.

There are a lot of bucks that can confuse you with scoring. Aging also comes into play with those practicing quality deer management (QDM). You can have a great looking buck that can be young and something you want to grow. However, when these borderline bucks come in quick only giving you a moment to decide or miss your opportunity, knowing your bucks ahead of time and determining "Shooter" and "Pass" lists can make all the difference so you don't end up kicking yourself later.

It can also be hard to remember all your bucks. This is where it is helpful to create names off some kind of characteristic

as simple as “Big 9” or creative such as “Stingray” from kicked back G2s. Check out TrailCamTrophies.com to choose from more than 1,000 buck names you can search alphabetically, by characteristics or through a random name generator.

CHOOSING A CAMERA

While certain times you might go for the best photo with a trail camera, hunting time is more about just getting the deer on camera. This is why I recommend an infrared camera, as a white-flash camera can spook some deer, especially mature bucks.

Running trail cameras during hunting season is also a prime time to catch trespassers. You’d be surprised how many you’ll see. This gives you even more reason not to let them see your camera and a white flash going off in the timber can be a ‘gimme’ for a stolen camera.

If trespassers are really a problem in your

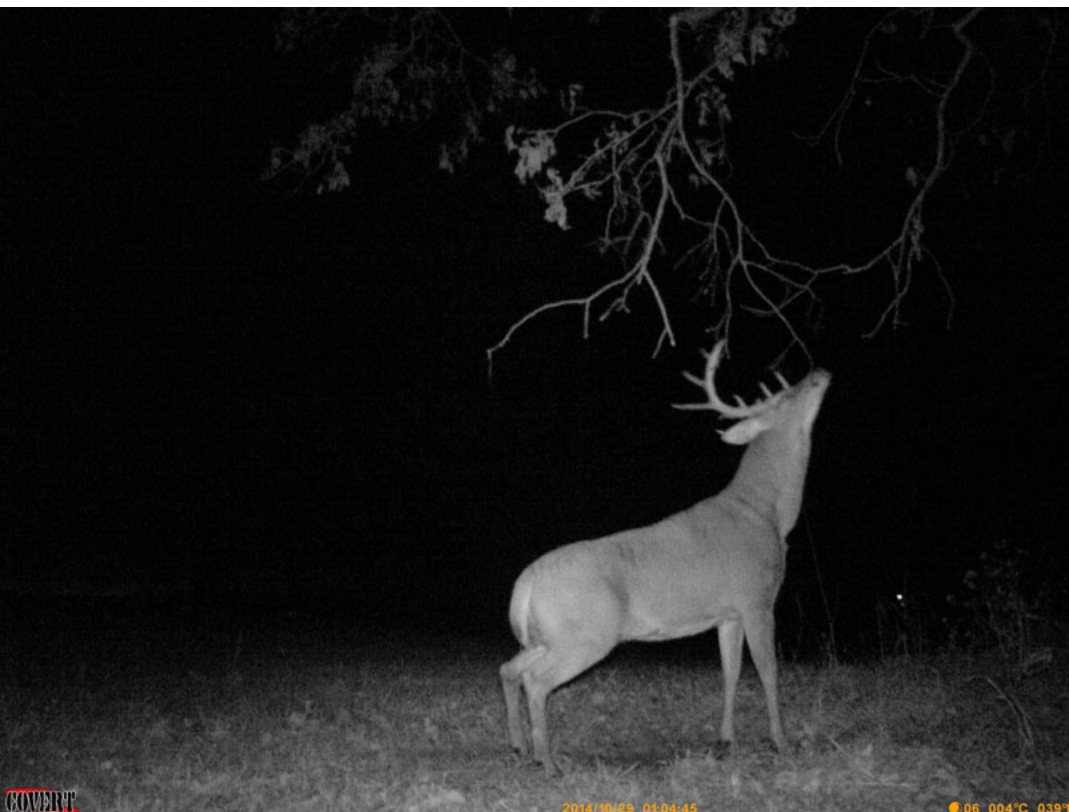
area (even more typical near rivers/creeks), you can even go a step further and ‘camouflage’ your trail camera with **Cambush Camo**.

POSITIONING

Trail cameras are often linked with the usage of bait, so first of all, make sure you are following your state laws. During deer season, we run our trail cameras with no bait (law) and concentrate on heavily used buck trails, landscape funnels and scrapes. Wherever we choose to position them, they are in easy access areas so we are not scenting up and pressuring the deer any more. These positions are near our treestands so we can use the information for hunting strategies and we can easily change the camera card or move the trail camera when hunting that stand.

My best luck has come from areas where multiple trails collide going into a thick area we don’t enter for hunting and on scrapes under licking branches.

When setting up on a trail, don’t position the camera facing directly at it. Face it at an angle so you have more area to catch deer on trail camera instead of a blur going by. On field edge scrapes, pay attention to the sun so you don’t have a lot of glare photos. Many scrapes and licking branches are visited in the evening/night, so it can help facing your trail camera toward the east so the setting sun doesn’t white out your photos. -JP



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Benefits
to trapping
raccoons

Introduction to
TRAPPING

By Laura Gidney

BAD RAP

Trapping. The word alone often elicits a strong opinion. I tend to think, in general, trapping and trappers get a bad rap. I feel that has a lot to do with a lack of understanding as to why and what we really do.

Most people probably don't realize the positive benefits trapping has on an environment or an ecosystem. Nor do I think people really think about the consequences of too many of any one animal around. Realistically if trappers didn't step in to help the Department of Environmental Conservation control animal populations, Mother Nature so to speak, would step in for us... and let's face it, Mother Nature, she can definitely be cruel.

When animal populations get too high, the habitat can't support what's living in it. When this happens, disease often takes over. When it spreads, it can wipe out a population, sometimes for good. Trappers don't want that to happen.

In general, trappers love wildlife and we love to see it healthy! We understand the delicate balance of nature and when a piece of it goes missing, it can upset a whole ecosystem.

RACCOONS

Let's just consider raccoons. Did you know at any given time there are at least a dozen different diseases and parasites that can affect any raccoon running around your neighborhood? Some of those include

rabies, distemper, leptospirosis, mange, listeriosis, tetanus, tularemia and roundworm.

Now, not all of these diseases or parasites affect humans, but think about how you feel when you are sick - at least you can see a doctor. These animals don't have that option. They are stuck running around with whatever they have and eventually these diseases or parasites often end up contributing to their death.

If it's not disease that gets them (when the population is too high) it's the lack of food, shelter or water that will do it. Don't fool yourself into thinking just because we don't see it, that it doesn't happen, because in reality, it does happen and it's not pretty.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Now, I know raccoons are cute and fuzzy, and I happen to think those little bandits are beautiful animals, but they know how to get themselves into trouble. They're omnivores, they're nocturnal and due to their adaptability, they can pretty much live anywhere. That means your not always going to find them in their usual habitat of mixed or deciduous forests.

As anyone with a garbage pail knows, once they know where food is,



they invite themselves for dinner. Of course, once they've had dinner, they're going to get into other things. This is where we as homeowners generally start to have a problem.

Do you have outdoor animals or pets? Consider that their food and water is fair game

to a coon! Leaving it out could allow the passing of a disease or parasite to your beloved animal or pet.

Or maybe you have chickens. I, unfortunately, know all too well how much coons enjoy them. And they won't stop at one. If they get into your chicken coop, they can kill an entire flock in one night, even wasting their kills.

If you enjoy watching birds and monitoring birdhouses, you probably already know the devastation raccoons can

cause to nests. Often walking fencelines looking for birdhouses on posts, raccoons commonly scratch and tear at birdhouses, killing the hatchlings or breaking the eggs of bluebirds, wrens and more.

Love getting your hands dirty and eating from the garden? So do raccoons. Too bad



TOP: A hidden #160 body gripping trap. BOTTOM: A dog proof trap with cap.



Laura Gidney in the fur shed with two raccoons she caught that day.

they don't use those little hands to leave you a thank you note after they've ransacked your produce! They especially know when to ruin a patch of sweet corn, waiting until just before it's ready, then taking a bite out of every cob down every row.

Worst of all, what happens if they find your home just as nice and cozy as you do? What if they invite their family and friends for a permanent stay? Well, if any of these situations happen, you have two choices. You can either learn to trap them yourself or your local trapper can become your best friend.

BEFORE YOU START

Let's talk about doing it yourself. I would highly suggest the novice take a trapper education class - in many states it's required.

RIGHT: Laura showing her son Zach how to skin a raccoon.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Laura's daughter, Maggie, after she skinned her first coon at youth trappers camp.

Here in New York, it's a free one-day class. This class will also give you connections with local, more experienced trappers who, more likely than not, will be happy to help you and show you the ropes!

Next, check your state laws and local town ordinances. You need to know what's legal and what's not. Once you know the laws, plan for how you are going to humanely dispatch the animal. I'm specifically saying dispatch because where I live in New York, it is illegal to transport wildlife without the proper licenses, so moving the coon to another location is not a legal option. Consider this too - why would you want to move your problem animal and give it to someone else? Be considerate of others even if the state you're in allows transport.

CHOOSING A TRAP

Your trapping class will show you different traps and how to set them. I'm going to talk about traps I would use for raccoons. One type, especially made for raccoons, is called a "foot encapsulating" trap, also known as "dog proof" or "DP."

This type of trap eliminates the chance of catching a dog or a cat, even more so if you use a fruity bait. Then if you stake it a few inches off the ground, you further eliminate the chance of catching a skunk or an opossum. (They generally won't go up on their hind legs to find food, but a raccoon will.) If you don't have to worry about other animals, a fishy-type bait or lure works very well.



Another type is the “foot hold” trap - a #1 or a #1-1/2 are both good sizes for raccoons. You use these with a dirt hole or pocket set, depending on the location. You can also make a cubby set, use a cubby box with a #160 body gripping trap or a “cage trap.” All of these methods and traps are effective - coons really aren’t picky. Now it won’t be long before you’ve got one.

Then what?

UTILIZING THE ANIMAL

Personally, I’m a firm believer in not wasting anything. After all, it was a life, so if you take it, you owe it to that animal to make wise use of it. With that being said, first thing I do is kill all the fleas and ticks in the fur using your run-of-the-mill flea and tick spray. Then I dry the fur and skin out the animal.

Next, I gut it, giving the kids a science lesson while I’m looking around to see if the animal was healthy. That decides whether or not we’re having coon for dinner. There are lots of tasty recipes on the Internet and in game recipe books.

Once that’s done, I go back to the pelt. I flesh all the fat off of it, then fur side in, I board it and pin it out to dry. Later, it will be sent out to the tannery and we will use it to make something. My kids are also into skull cleaning, so I



Laura Gidney with her first raccoon.

remove that for them.

In case you catch a male raccoon, the penis bone is used to make jewelry, so you could either use that yourself or sell it. We really try to make good use of everything.

This year, I’ve been researching how you can render the fat down to make soap and candles. I figure they will be fun and interesting

gifts for family and friends!

TRAPPING IS GOOD

When it comes down to it, there are a lot of positive aspects to trapping. Not only is it fun and educational, trapping helps you improve your outdoor skills. It’s also necessary for healthy animal populations, environments and ecosystems. Think about this too... fur is a renewable resource, and really, the only difference between “fur” and your leather shoes, purse or jacket, is just that - the fur.

Laura Gidney is a certified trapping instructor and has a nuisance wildlife license for the state of New York. She also mentors at the Pat Arnold Youth Trapping Camp.

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Writer Christine
Cunningham of Alaska.
PHOTOS BY
STEVEN MEYER.

THE 7 DUCK COMMANDMENTS

*Hunting etiquette
in the duck blind*

By Christine Cunningham

As featured on The Women's Outdoor News

The idea of duck hunting etiquette may seem like the gloved version of a gloves-off sport. But, really, it's as simple as being safe and sporting. The so-called unwritten code is nothing secret, and is basically a way of enhancing enjoyment for all involved.

Invitation Only, Means Only YOU

Being invited duck hunting is no small feat. The privilege of shooting from another's blind, scouted area or special haunt is a gift. It's best to show up early, and take your cues from the person who extended the invitation. If it's not discussed, the invitation does not include anyone else or even your dog.

Allow the host to indicate when to take the shots, and only use your call when you have learned the particular manner in which your host prefers to hunt his or her area. It's never a bad idea to bring extra food, and offer to help with expenses, setting up decoys and cleaning birds.

Since it's not your hunting spot, it's critical not to share the location, including providing details of the location socially. By no means can you bring someone else back to the same place.

An invitation to go duck hunting is like being invited into a member's only club: it's hard enough to get the invite, even harder to become the kind of member who can invite others.

Good Dress Makes Good Company

Showing up in appropriate attire ensures those in your party that you will stay as warm and dry, therefore, as pleasant as possible. Clothing and gear are dependent on the hunt details. You'll need to know if the hunt will be conducted while sitting on a bench, lying in a blind, shooting from a boat or slugging through tidal flats or flooded forests. Well-fitting clothes and good base layers are always important, but learning hunt details will help determine whether the additional weight and warmth of chest waders or wetlands camo



are necessary.

A friend recently teased me for suggesting that the women participating in a hunt bring an extra set of clothes for our after-the-hunt meal (I may have used the tease-worthy phrase “lodge clothes”). It’s fine and sometimes fun to walk into a public place wearing the badge of your bedraggled field clothes. But, it’s nothing but polite to keep the field where it belongs (in the field) and spare the car upholstery and fair-weather furniture the blood, sweat and plant life still clinging to your chest waders.

Firearms Safety Rules are the Bare Minimum

If a hunt isn’t safe, it’s less enjoyable for all involved. Firearms safety rules are often written and rewritten, but the unwritten rules are a logical extension of the four basic firearms safety rules.

One of the worst sounds in a duck blind for many duck hunters is to hear a safety click off early. The worst sight is to look down another person’s barrel. Both of these things, and many others, are a result of poor gun handling. If you are a first-time shot – someone who has



never shot a clay, never shot a bird or never shot in company – a shooting course, lesson or guided/supervised hunting venture is the best place to start.

Once in the field, shotgun safety is everyone's responsibility. The gun should always be unloaded and the action open, if the gun is being handed off, such as when climbing over a fence or tree or boarding a boat. Special care should be taken to be aware of the dog at all times.

Don't Criticize the Duck Dog

Duck dogs have a hallowed place in the

hearts of duck hunters. It doesn't matter if they ever win a field trial or even retrieve a duck without stopping to urinate or running off with it first. If they eat your bird, they're just having a bad day. If they relieve themselves in the back of your vehicle, they are just being rather humorous. If they jump up on your lodge clothes with their muddy paws, don't lose your cool.

It's ill-advised to criticize or command another person's hunting dog. If you don't like duck dogs - if you don't love the way a good dog watches the sky with its muscles

trembling and eyes fixed, or runs the direct line of sight to a marked bird, just don't say so to the person who does. Praising the dog, on the other hand, can make up for many of your personal character flaws.

Be Sporting and Don't Bust the Sky

Every hunter has his or her own rules for voluntary restraint. Many only shoot drakes, even when the law doesn't require it. Some target a particular species and avoid others. No matter what a hunter's personal value judgments are, it's important to keep things sporting.

TAKE THE QUIZ!

Is duck hunting in your blood or do you need to hone your instincts?

Take the

DUCK HUNTING "ETIQUETTE" QUIZ

beforehand what airspace belongs to which hunter. If new to duck hunting, placing the furthest decoy at the outside edge of a 40- to 45-yard shooting range can help mark the maximum shooting distance. Wounded birds must be dealt with quickly, and it's considered bad form to leave birds on the ground. A dropped bird should be retrieved as quickly as possible.

It's best to show respect for other hunting parties, especially on public land. A hunting party should not set up too close or in a manner in which they'll be shooting toward another party. Skilled shooters, who are generous

It's considered un-sporting to shoot a bird on the water (ground swatting) or to shoot at ducks out of range (sky busting). Often, hunters will work out



and allow a few birds to pass into another's airspace, are to be thanked.

We all have bad days in the field, but complaining or making excuses can ruin another's enjoyment. The best response to an off-day afield is to credit the ducks for being especially wary.

Do Your Homework

The best way to show respect for the quarry, and add enjoyment to time spent afield, is to learn as much as possible about it beforehand. Learning how to identify waterfowl, their habits and the vocalizations of each species is fundamental for duck calling and decoy setting.

Understanding the regulations pertaining to migratory birds, including duck stamps, harvest limits, shooting times, steel/non-toxic

shot, magazine capacity and conservation is a bare minimum. Bringing a timepiece and a light into the field also shows you've done your homework.

Get Dirty!

Duck hunters get dirty, no doubt. It's a good kind of dirt, though. What's really dirty is money, the remote control, cell phones, keyboards and buttons on a vending machine. The duck hunting environment includes every type of "clean" dirt and dirt-carrier imaginable – swamp, marsh muck, insects, rodents, snakes, sweat and blood. It's considered bad form to be squeamish.

A duck hunter should not hesitate to pick up a bird, wring its neck, pick it and cook it up for dinner. The more you can be at peace with

the dirty aspect of duck hunting, the more enjoyable it becomes for all involved.

There's nothing like getting to a duck blind before dawn, with the sounds of the marsh waking up all around you. The serenity quickly becomes replaced with an incomparable rush of excitement when ducks cup into your decoys. Oh, and don't shoot the decoys.

Christine Cunningham is a lifelong Alaskan, author and outdoor columnist known for her contributions to outdoor magazines and her commitment to creating opportunities for women to connect and share their stories. Her first book, "Women Hunting Alaska," profiles some of Alaska's most outstanding female hunters.

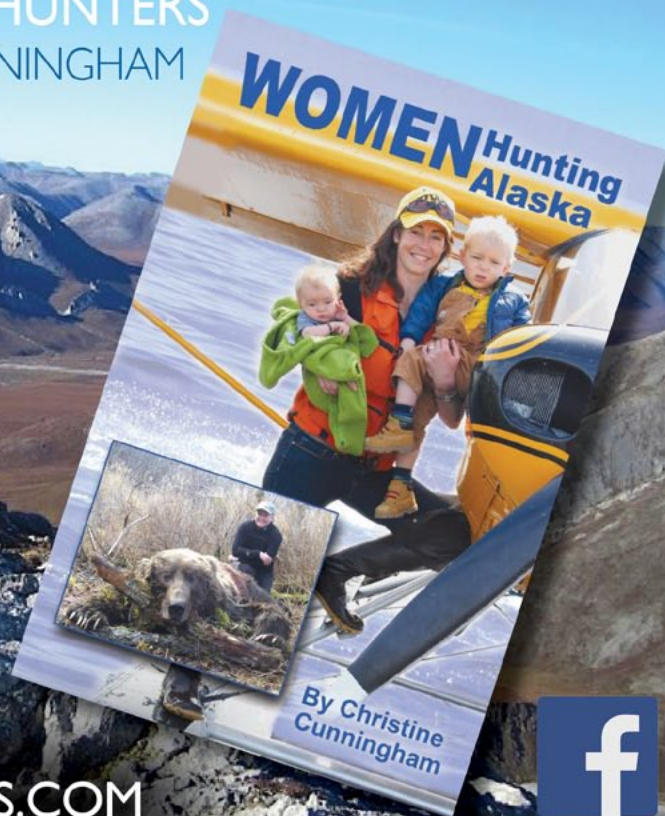
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EXPLORE.



Just go
Nuts!



Finding your luck, one buckeye at a time

I was a squirrel in another life... I'm sure of it. I'm home 20 feet up in an oak tree and I can't get enough when it comes to buckeyes - ha! I don't know what it is about these nuts, but I can't walk by one without picking it up... and I always have one in my pocket while I'm hunting.

Maybe it goes back to my childhood. Sometimes in the fall, my parents would put my brother and I in our old pickup, drive across the pasture, clear down this rough, rocky terrain, across a creek and then through the timber would emerge this beautiful open grass bottom. That ride was fun enough itself, and that view stunning, but then on the edge of this field was our destination... a lone buckeye tree. It's engraved into my mind and created an appreciation for this tree and nut that will last my lifetime.



Lucky You

Just like a rabbit's foot, horseshoe or four-leaf clover, buckeyes are thought to attract good fortune from carrying one in your pocket or rubbing your thumb along it.

Native Americans believed it looked like a male deer's eye, hence the name 'buckeye.' Each nut has its own characteristics, making them fun to collect, examine and compare. The smooth round buckeye has a beautiful gloss at first with unique rich, brown marbling. However, as the buckeye ages, it shrivels, the surface wrinkles, the gloss fades and the marbling becomes a deep, dark brown. It is said you can rub your favorite buckeye along the side of your nose



TOP LEFT: The spiny shell of a buckeye starting to crack open. ABOVE: Fresh, glossy and smooth buckeyes - it is said you can rub your favorite buckeye along the side of your nose to keep it oiled.



to keep it oiled. While I haven't tried that, you can apply lacquer to a dried buckeye to keep the gloss look.

Buckeye nuts come in a round or oblong spiny capsule and can commonly contain one, two, three, four or maybe even five buckeyes! Sometimes it's great to see how many you can find in one shell, and sometimes it's fun to hope for just one really large round one trying to find the biggest buckeye!

These spiny shells attached to the trees are very tight and hard early on, but as fall progresses, the shells start to soften, crack open and even drop to the ground.

Anytime in the fall is a good time to look for buckeyes, starting in September. It's a great activity to bring friends and family, including young kids, as you enjoy a beautiful fall walk as you search.

Buckeye trees lose their leaves first in the fall - this makes it easier to spot them. Here, the tree is leafless but still has one spiny buckeye-filled shell attached.



Look for buckeyes both on the tree and on the ground underneath the tree as they could still be attached or have fallen.



Try Your Luck

Buckeye trees are a deciduous tree of the Horse Chestnut Family and native to Midwestern and Lower Great Plain regions in the United States, extending southeast into the Nashville Basin. Preferring moist and rich organic soil and shady conditions while young, buckeye trees are an understory tree primarily found in bottom lands.

One way of locating buckeyes is looking near low-lying ground for bare understory trees without leaves, as buckeye trees are the first to lose their leaves in the fall. If you plan ahead, you can also easily spot them in the spring as they are one of the first trees to leaf out in the spring, sporting showy yellow-green flowers. Their leaves palmate out in a group of five long, broad leaflets.



Unlike Any Other Nut

Unlike most nuts, buckeyes are actually poisonous, and squirrels are known as the only animal to consume them. The leaves are also toxic. Containing tannic acid, buckeye nuts cannot be eaten unless heated and leached.

Native Americans used to extract the tannic acid for making leather and ground the nut into a coarse powder, casting it into rivers

and ponds to stun or kill fish. While none of these are practiced today, buckeyes can still be enjoyed.

Besides being just fun to find and collect, today, buckeyes are mainly dried and made into necklaces (for example, very popular for Ohio State University's sporting events since they are known as the Buckeyes). Check out the following two pages for more ways to celebrate buckeyes! ~JP



Picking up buckeyes off the ground. Notice the bare trees around that are young buckeye trees.



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RockinCK customs

Sharing your *Luck*

Making a buckeye Christmas tree ornament or decoration

I often make some of these buckeye Christmas tree ornaments to give as gifts each year. It is a great way to teach others about buckeyes as I often include a little message with them that tells about their history and meaning.



First of all, you must dry your buckeyes. If you just have a few, you won't have an issue if they are laying somewhere they can get air. However, if you have a lot, you'll need to dry them, and you'll be shocked at how much moisture will pull out of them. If you have wire racks, this works best to allow air circulation, but you can lay elsewhere - just be sure they are drying out instead of getting moldy. Lay several layers of newspaper down and then place a single layer of buckeyes on the paper. As the paper gets moist, continue to remove it and refreshen with new paper and stir your buckeyes around. Continue to do this as needed (probably every couple of days) for two weeks.

At a craft store, buy your desired string (I use a thicker one as seen in this pic) and beads. Make sure the beads have a larger hole

so you'll be able to string them.

Drill a hole through the buckeye large enough for the string you are using. A drill press works best, if possible, and is the safest way to do this.

Cut enough string so you have plenty and won't come up short. If your beads have a large enough hole, feed both ends through your beads and buckeye and double knot it at the bottom of the buckeye. I also like to create a knot at the top of the beads.

If your bead hole is not thick enough to double, feed one side of the string through the buckeye. Knot it large enough that it cannot pull back through. Then, string desired beads through the other end and knot it at the top of the beads leaving a loop to hang on your Christmas tree branch. Trim excess string.

Merry Christmas!

+Recipe

Make your own

Candy Buckeyes

Ingredients:

- 1 (16 oz.) container of creamy peanut butter (or 1-1/2 C)
- 1 stick (or 1/2 C) butter, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 4 C powdered sugar
- 1 (12 oz.) package of semi-sweet chocolate baking chips (or 2 C)
- 2 Tbsp all-vegetable shortening

Directions:

1. Combine peanut butter, butter, vanilla and salt in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer on low until blended. Add each cup of powdered sugar one at a time, beating until blended before adding the next. Shape mixture into 1-inch balls. FREEZE for 1/2-hour.

2. Place chocolate chips and shortening in microwave-safe bowl. Microwave for 30 seconds, stirring and repeating until mixture is smooth. Reheat as needed while coating peanut butter balls.

3. Insert toothpick into peanut butter ball.



Dip 3/4 of ball into chocolate, leaving top uncovered to resemble a buckeye. Place on wax paper-lined tray. Remove toothpicks. Refrigerate for 1/2-hour or until firm.

4. Once firm, dip a spoon into cold water. Using the back of the spoon, smooth it over the peanut butter 'eye' of the buckeyes to cover the toothpick holes. Wipe off the

spoon and re-dip in water as needed.

5. Enjoy!

This makes a lot of buckeyes - 60 to 95, depending on size. You can easily cut the recipe in half.

I also tested milk chocolate, though I recommend semi-sweet chocolate for this recipe. There actually wasn't much of a taste difference and the milk chocolate doesn't give you the dark brown look for the buckeyes.

+More inspiration

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RAY OF FALL

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