

ON THE ICE: HARDWATER FISHING

# ADVENTURESS<sup>TM</sup>

HUNT. FISH. EXPLORE. LIVE.

WINTER 2016 | ISSUE 4

SAVE  
A LIFE  
DO-IT-YOURSELF  
ICE PICKS

OVER  
UNDER  
SHOTGUNS!

Karla  
MILLER

+ SHED  
SKILLS  
*Finders  
Keepers*

CARING  
FOR YOUR  
MOUNTS



Photos:  
Pam Grandstaff  
Kelley Bettag  
Melissa Lindsay



Check out the  
**NEW Huntress  
Series** designed for  
the female hunter!  
Smaller mouthpiece,  
same great sound!



EST. 2008

We can build you a one of a kind custom deer call. Our goal is to build you a deer call that will provide you with years of use. These make great gifts for birthdays, memorials, groomsmen gifts or any occasion.

**LET'S MAKE SOME NOISE**

**MADISONDEERCALLS.COM**

# Winter 2016 contents

## 6 Cover Girl

Meet cover girl and camerawoman  
Karla Miller

## 7 Tips

Make your own  
hunting face paint!

## 8 Share Your Photos

Join in on  
ADVENTURESS  
social media!  
Share as well as  
show your support  
for other  
outdoor women!

## 10 Winter Photo

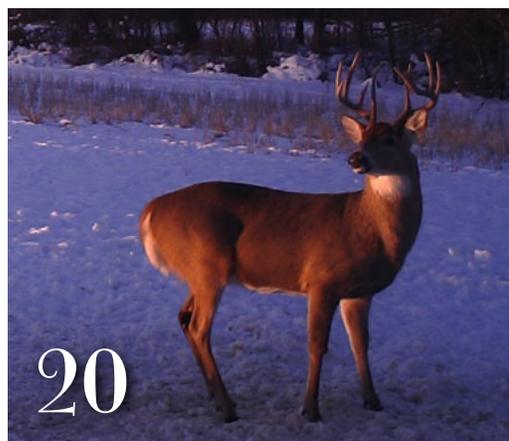
Featured  
photographer:  
Ashton Hall

## 12 Stack the Racks

Shed hunting tips  
for out West  
by Karla Miller

## 20 Trail Cameras

Using trail camera  
photos for shed  
hunting success



# editor's note

## THERE'S NEVER AN 'OFF SEASON'

Many see winter as being a 'slow' time of the year when you are cooped up for months. However, being an outdoorswoman is a year-round deal! So shake off those winter blues, and let's get outdoors!

While the big bumper is that deer seasons have closed, there's also an excitement in the air - a sneak peek of what's to come next year. Find out what bucks made it through the seasons to grow another year by using trail cameras and going shed hunting! Plus, shed hunting is GREAT for exercise and scouting since you'll need to put on the miles.



While I'll admit shed hunting can be frustrating at times, it's worth it once I find one because having a shed automatically makes me feel connected to that deer. I have a piece of him; I have history. And someday, that just might make a hunt that much more special. Last year, I (FINALLY) found my first set of shed antlers. And this fall, my husband harvested a buck we had never caught on trail camera, but low and behold, it was the buck I found the matching sheds to the year before! How cool!

Also in full-swing right now - ice fishing! What I love about ice fishing is it tends to be something you do with a partner or group, and the camaraderie just makes it that much more fun! And though it is wintertime, nicer days can be very comfortable on the ice... not cold! So just be prepared and bundle up as necessary, bring layers that you can add or shed, and get ready to surprise yourself!

While there are some days the weather is just too terrible to be outside, remember there are still lots of outdoorsy projects you can do inside, as well as visit outdoor shows. Many of these events are coming up, and it's great to check out products, get excited for future adventures and talk with others who love the outdoors just as much as you!

*Jennifer Pudenz*

## ADVENTURESS

[betheadventuress.com](http://betheadventuress.com)

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

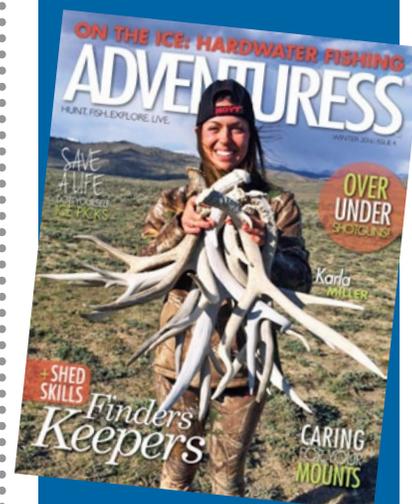
ISSUE 4  
WINTER 2016

Founder & Editor  
JENNIFER PUDENZ

FEATURED  
PHOTOGRAPHER  
Ashton Hall

CONTRIBUTORS  
Karla Miller  
Christine Cunningham  
Amanda Buer

## on the cover



Read about our  
winter cover girl,  
Karla Miller, on page 6!

# Winter 2016 contents



## 26 Your Next Gun

Reasons to choose an over/under shotgun by Christine Cunningham

## 32 Queen of the Ice

A guide to hardwater panfish by Amanda Buer

## 40 DIY: Ice Picks

Keep yourself safe on the ice!

## 42 (Early) Spring Cleaning

Caring for your taxidermy mounts

## 44 More Inspiration

Casting for Recovery program for women with breast cancer

## 45 Last Shot

Featured photographer: Ashton Hall



Cover Girl!

Meet  
**Karla  
Miller**



**Do you believe in love at first sight?** Well, it happened years ago for our winter cover girl, Karla Miller, with a cowboy as she was vacationing with family in Utah and Wyoming. That surreal moment started her on a life full of outdoor adventures with now-hubby Scott, who has been a longtime guide for Wild Country Outfitters in northern Utah. Born and raised in California, Karla had hunted a little before meeting Scott, but now resides in Utah as well, also living the mountain life of hunting, fishing and exploring.

Today, Karla is the creative director and head camerawoman for a TV show through a long-range rifle company. This job has allowed her to travel the world - including the chance to harvest an impala herself while filming in Africa! - and enjoy her passion of hunting and storytelling.

Karla and Scott are also in the process of starting a production company of their own. Best of luck to you both on all of your adventures! Find Karla on Instagram [@karlamae](#).



# + Tips

## To women hunters!

What does wine and hunting have in common? Why, face paint! Like many other women, I love a good glass of wine and have plenty of corks around, often finding themselves as decorations in a vase. Using a lighter, simply burn one end of a cork until it's blackened. Let it cool a bit and then rub it directly on your face! Ta da! Free face paint in an easy-to-apply container! Plus, smoke (regular, not cigarette) can be used as a cover scent for hunting, so you don't even have to worry about scent. Cheers! -JP



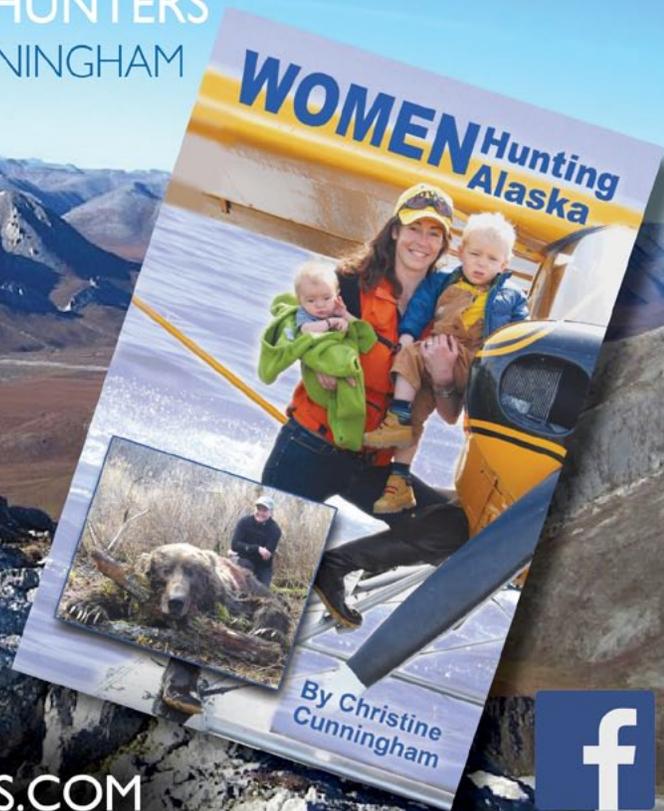
Looking for a new wine? My favorite!

# WOMEN HUNTING ALASKA

TRUE STORIES OF ALASKA'S WOMEN HUNTERS  
BY CHRISTINE CUNNINGHAM

256 pages,  
114 images!

Softcover  
\$19.95



WWW.TONYRUSS.COM



+Join in!

SHARE  
YOUR  
PHOTOS

# FACEBOOK ~ INSTAGRAM ~ TWITTER

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!

Nicole >  
Hobson

harvested this huge  
elk with her bow!



< Jacklyn Highfill

caught her  
first perch  
while ice  
fishing!

> Ashley Melofchik

sharing her love of hunting with her boys!



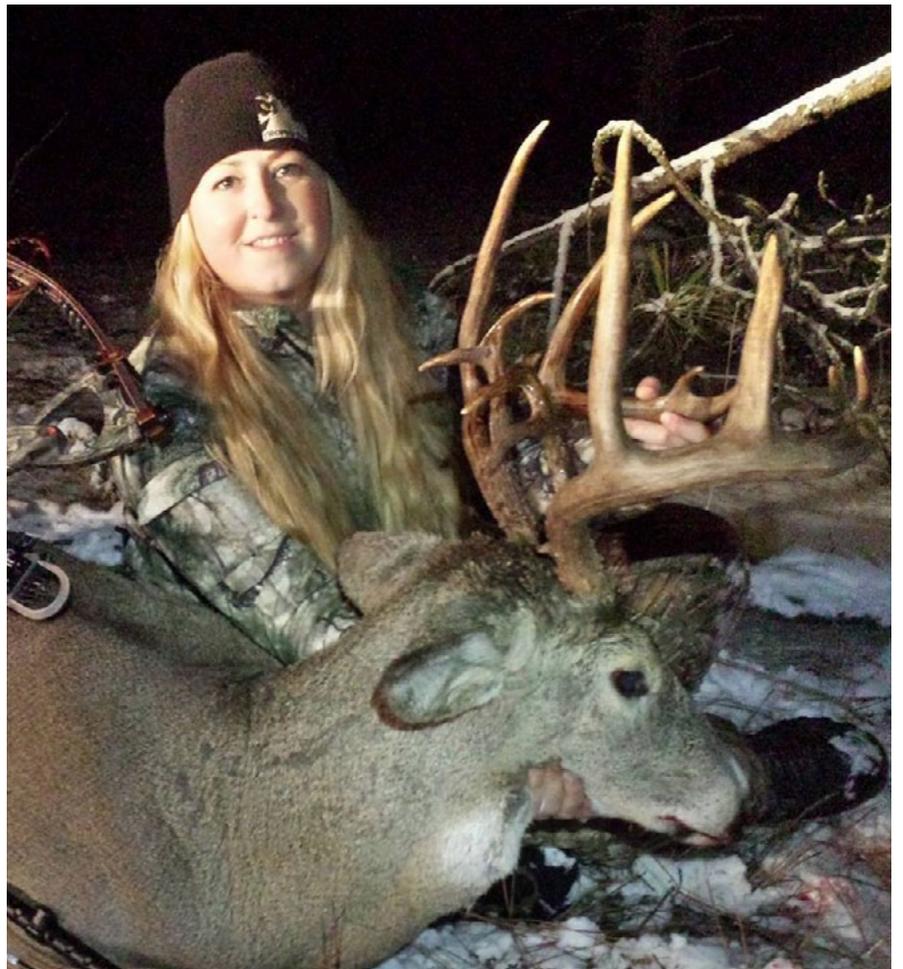
Jennifer >  
Piasecki  
Dums

harvested  
this  
awesome  
10-point  
opening  
day of  
rifle  
season!



#betheadventuress

~ Andrea Haas  
on her first duck hunt  
with her first duck!



~ Kaitlen Beal  
harvested "Grim  
Reaper" with her bow!

Tiffany  
Marie >  
enjoying  
some  
family  
time  
shooting  
bows!



~ Sadie Smith  
harvested this buck on her first hunt!

WINTER





## Ashton Hall

Featured  
photographer

### BURST OF COLOR

Taken in Nevada  
during a  
late-season  
mule deer hunt

“A bright patch  
of color after  
miles of nothing  
but white  
blankets of  
snow.”

See more of  
Ashton's photos  
on *Instagram*  
[@ashtonphall](#)

HUNT.

# STACK *the* RACKS

*By Karla Miller*



---

*Shed hunting tips for out West*

I'm never down to see hunting season come to an end. It's kind of depressing! As soon as it's over, I am seriously counting down the days until the opening of the next season! I enjoy hunting for so many reasons – the exercise, the challenge, the incredible memories made, the experiences, the amazing places we get to see and the incredible people we get to meet that all share the same love and passion.

# HUNT.

One of my favorite things to do to keep in shape and stay outside as much as possible during the off-season is to shed hunt! I didn't get into it until a few years ago when my boyfriend - now husband, Scott, took me on a shed hunting date in Utah. When he found an elk shed, I tell you what, he was like a kid on Christmas!

I didn't understand it at the time, but Scott would always tell me about the rush he would get from spotting a fresh bone on the ground and how even though he has a pile of hundreds of antlers, he remembers where each one came from and how he found it. I thought that sounded crazy, but he was so right!

The first antler I ever found I will never forget. I looked and hiked for so long, pretty much to the point of feeling defeated! But to finally spot one and wrap my fingers around the unique shape and smooth bone and to know I found it and it was mine - it's truly the coolest feeling.

## TOOL OF THE TRADE

At first it seemed like there was no strategy or plan to finding sheds. It felt like we were aimlessly wandering through the bushes to find some bones. Now that I've got a shed hunting trip or two under my belt and my own growing collection of antlers, I have learned there are some important tools and things to pay attention to if you want to grow your own stack of racks.

The absolute most important tool you can have for shed hunting is a solid set





of binoculars or spotting scope. They are crucial because when you set out on a shed hunt, sticks and branches start to look an awful lot like an antler. The binocs help pick out exactly what you are looking at from a distance so you can do a quick check behind the glass rather than walking all the way over to what you thought was an antler, wasting time and energy.

## LOCATION

The main key to shed hunting is knowing where the animals are wintering. For example, if you are looking for mule deer sheds in the West, the low foothills of the big mountains are a great start. If you are looking for moose sheds, which drop nearly two to three months earlier than mule deer, then you may want to start higher on the mountain where moose typically winter.

Each animal that sheds their antlers has a different time when they shed, and they usually winter in different locations. Knowing those details about whatever antlers you are after will help

**ABOVE:** After 6 hours of hiking, the spike on the right was all Miller had to show for on one of their shed hunting trip. As they hiked out, she glassed up one more meadow and spotted this incredible, fresh four point antler.

**HUNT.**





The goods glowing by  
Karla and Scott's fire  
after a long day  
of hiking in the  
Wyoming mountains.



ABOVE: The author on one of her first shed hunting experiences - an elk shed in the Utah mountains.



LEFT: A moose shed found in the mountains of the Alaska Range.

immensely. However, I've found fresh mule deer sheds in December, even though they typically shed in February and March, and I've found Caribou antlers in August, when they typically shed in November and December, so know it's not always a set schedule.

## THE WORK BEGINS

After you know where the animals have wintered, the rest is pretty straightforward. Get to a high vantage point and begin glassing with your binocs. This gives a good perspective to see around the terrain you will be hiking in. From there, begin hiking and always have your head on a swivel!

It's tempting to look far out with the eyes, but sometimes an antler laying only two feet away will surprise you! You never know, which is why it's important to look near and far, with the eye and the binoculars, and to always scan. It's also a good idea to check behind you every 50 to 100 yards. Sometimes sheds can be laying in the perfect hiding spot when looking from one spot, but become visible from another spot.

When you scan, be looking for the tips of antlers poking up out of the brush, or the brownish and/or white shine from the antler. You will know one when you see it! I remember wondering on my first hunt how I was going to be able to tell the difference between a branch and an antler because they so look similar at times. However, when I locked eyes on the shine of my first shed ever, a fresh two-point from a mule deer, I knew immediately what it was!

## COLLECTING

Having a growing pile of antlers in the house is pretty much the coolest. They are one of my favorite pieces to decorate with, especially since they all have such unique shapes, sizes, colors and stories to them. My incredibly creative and talented mother loves antlers just as much as I do, and after building up a pile for her, she began to have some fun with creating beautiful pieces of art with, and on, the antlers. It has now become a passion of hers.

Even cooler, Scott and I and the rest of my family have totally loved taking part in painting



Miller's mom, Hope Eberlein, showing the progress on one of her antler projects.

them and creating with them as well, so it turned into a fun thing for our families to do together, which is so special to me. Just like hunting, shed hunting evolved into so much more to me than just finding as many antlers as possible. I fell in

love with it for the time

I get to spend with my husband, the amazing places we get to see, the people we get to meet and go with, and the art and memories we create with our families.

*Karla Miller is the cover girl of this issue. Check out her bio on page 6.*



The American Woman Shooter is a lifestyle magazine that celebrates women in the firearms industry, partners with sister groups, unites women, & educates women on firearm safety.

# Get Your Subscription Today!

## TheAmericanWomanShooter.com



# WATCH & WAIT



COVERT

2015/02/07 07:55:48

19 000°C 032°F 99

*Trail camera use to know when to start shed hunting your area and following one buck through shed season*

**M**eet 'Doughboy.' With tall brows and a unique wave to his main beams, this buck is easy to identify thanks to his characteristics. Come along as we follow this buck through trail camera photos after hunting seasons and into shed season, sharing some tips for finding these precious Midwest whitetail gems.

## The Right Time

It happens every year. Someone finds one shed, posts a photo on social media and everyone races out to the woods... hold your horses! Shed hunting is not something you necessarily want to be early for, unless you're on public land. Hunting seasons have recently ended and deer are skittish, to say the least. Here in the Midwest, land is continuing to get broke up into smaller and smaller chunks. So, you if bust out into the fields and woods walking all over too early, it's a high chance you are scaring all of your deer out of your land... to drop sheds at your neighbors.

I'm sure they'll be thankful though.

This is where trail cameras play a great role. You can watch your bucks from week to week, only moving in for a search after the majority of your bucks have dropped their antlers, or if you have a huge buck that is your main target for sheds, after he's dropped. Bucks drop at a wide variety of times - some dropping while deer seasons are still going on in December and even some odd balls still holding on come spring. It can depend on many variables, but particularly the buck's health and genetics. Once one side falls on a particular buck, the other side usually drops within a few days.

## Trail Camera Choices

This time of year can be particularly harsh on trail cameras when you have extremely low temperatures. That's hard for anything to function in, whether wildlife, people or technology. Sometimes it can take some time to test what cameras work best for you in the cold temps. Your results may also depend on what batteries the trail camera takes, whether large (D's for example - a pain other times of the year, though can perform better in cold), small or a special battery (lithium, for example, is known to work great in winter).

## Frequent Visitors

The more you can hold deer to your land or keep them coming back to your land, the better your chances of finding their sheds. Food is definitely going to be important at this time. Some deer are going to be run-down from the rut, injured from fighting or shot wounds, and struggling from winter's cold wrath. On top of all this, food can be scarce. Crop fields and food plots are often picked over and bare by this time, and depending on the weather, one huge



Doughboy made it through the deer seasons and is visiting what is left of the corn pile on the crop field.



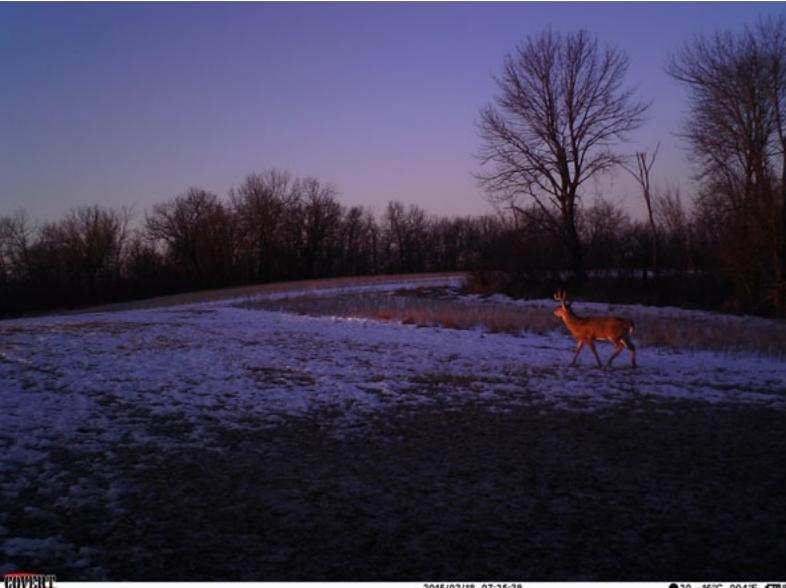
Doughboy cruising through the now-bare food plot where the other corn pile is located.



Doughboy still holding both sides mid-February.



The day after the previous photo, Doughboy shed his right side and is now on the crop field again.



Three consecutive days on trail camera - holding one side.



Knowing the other side would drop soon, a quick check resulted in the left side found on the bare food plot.

snow or ice storm that hangs on the ground for several days can be disastrous (especially for turkeys), not letting wildlife dig down to find what food may be left.

This is where I believe in providing food if you are in an area that it is not illegal and you're not at a high risk for spreading diseases. Adding some piles of corn can help wildlife through the winter, and particularly through storms until they can dig to bare ground. This also allows you to keep a better eye on your deer herd, if they are healthy or struggling, and when they are starting to lose sheds.

### Locations

If you are able to put some food out for wildlife, an existing field is ideal to set it up along with your trail camera. If you're not able to provide food, a field is still a great place to put your trail camera to catch deer trying to find food or walking through. Other areas to focus your camera can be off bedding areas and main travel corridors. When it comes time for the search, south-facing hills, grasses and cedar trees tend to be good areas for finding sheds, so think about setting up your trail camera off areas like this, but not in them, as you want to disturb deer as little as possible when just switching trail camera cards.



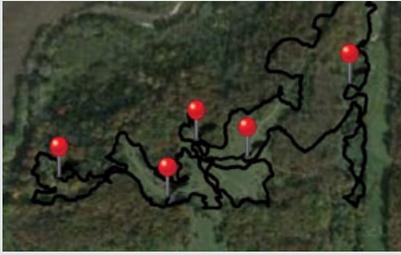
### Shed Time!

In these photos, this area had a harvested crop field and a winter-bare food plot. With a corn pile on each field, 'Doughboy' frequented both, allowing us to catch when he dropped one antler. While going to switch trail camera cards and refresh corn, we took note of the dates and shed bucks, so we did a small search for sheds

As it lays, Doughboy's left shed is found where he entered the bare food plot, soon after jumping a fence.



## Track Your Trail



I recommend tracking your shed hunts by using GPS. I don't have a GPS device myself, but I just use a GPS smartphone app and it works great (I use GPS Kit for \$9.99 - also mentioned in the **fall issue of ADVENTURESS** for hunting).

Though you do have to keep an eye on your phone battery while tracking for a long time, I love using this app. First of all, it's important in our area that it works offline even.

Second, tracking your miles and search while shed hunting is very interesting. You can view your distance, speed, time, elevation and much more. It's nice to know how far you walked each time and also use that ratio to see how well you fared in the end. I find you are doing really, really great if you are able to find an average of one shed per mile walked.

However, what I like the most about using GPS for shed hunting is you can see areas you might be missing, and you can keep this information to compare year after year. Mark where you pick up a shed and view this later. After doing this a couple years, I can look back at the maps and concentrate on areas I previously found sheds, with good odds to find more, and not waste my time on certain areas where I've never found a single shed.

## TRAIL CAMS



After watching trail cameras to know when the time was right to go in shed hunting and using her GPS maps from past years, the author had her best shed hunt, finding seven sheds in 4-1/2 miles.

around the fields and main deer trails around them. I soon found the left antler of Doughboy and another shed on the edge of the food plot not too far from the corn pile.

After coming back a later day for a more extensive search, we didn't turn up Doughboy's other shed, but with a fence line nearby, it was likely on another property. That's just how shed hunting goes though. You are not going to find them all, but that's what makes it so special when you do find one. It's not easy, but it's worth it! -JP

# revolutionary NEW TRAPPING & FIELD-DRESSING GLOVES

Youth & Women Sizes!  
XS - XXL

*Nothing better!  
Best product  
on the market!  
Don't chance  
it! Be safe!*

-Kristi Lynn Hair

26-inch gloves makes field-dressing safer & easier, perfect for field/water trapping

12-inch gloves perfect for shooting, skinning, small game, fishing, taxidermy, land trapping, gardening, canning, household cleaning

- Stay safe, stay clean
- Tough synthetic rubber, non-slip
- Reusable hunt after hunt



[www.BIGGAMEGUTGLOVE.com](http://www.BIGGAMEGUTGLOVE.com)





Writer Christine  
Cunningham of Alaska.  
PHOTOS BY  
STEVEN MEYER.

# YOUR NEXT GUN

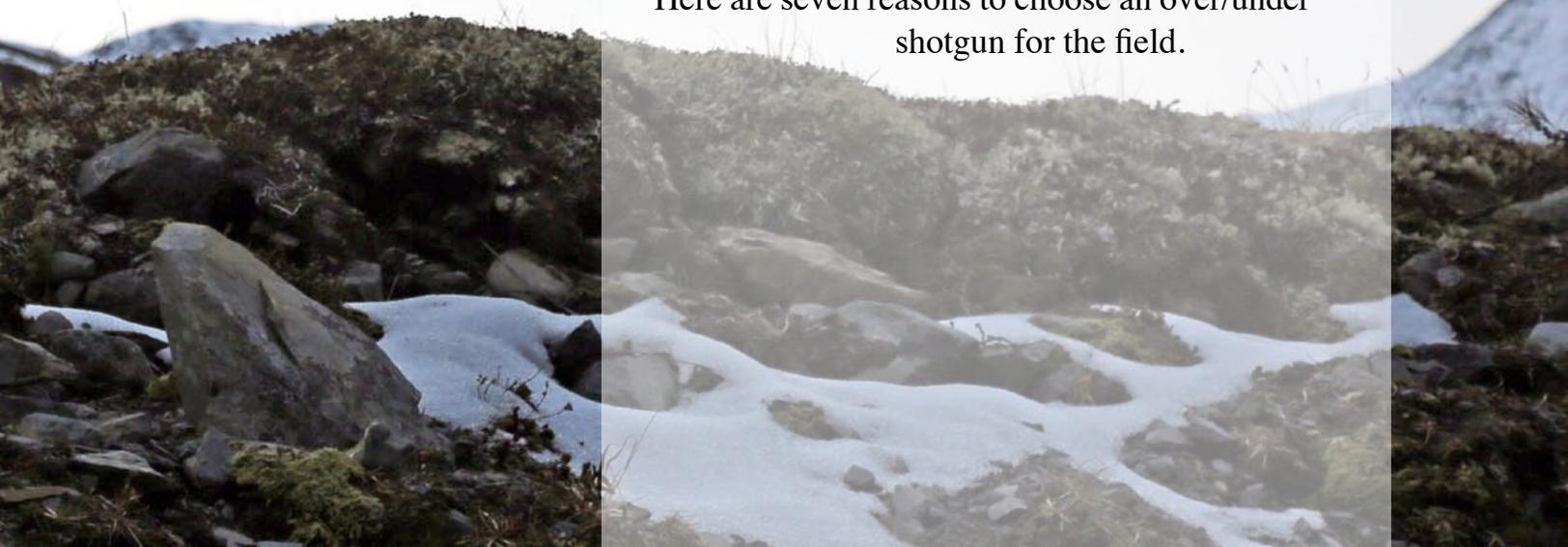
## *7 reasons to choose an over/under shotgun for wingshooting*

**By Christine Cunningham**

*As featured on The Women's Outdoor News*

**M**y love of the over/under shotgun began with a split-second decision I made while acting as master of ceremonies for a live auction and fundraising banquet. The bidding was about to close on one of the most beautiful guns I'd ever seen: a Beretta white onyx 28-gauge over/under shotgun with a 28-inch barrel, choke tubes and gold inlay engraving.

As the auctioneer placed the gun back in its custom Giugiaro case, I cleared my throat into the microphone, raising the bid. I'd never spent so much on a gun. But up to that point, I'd never seen one so beautiful. Choosing a shotgun is as much a matter of personal preference as anything, but there are practical reasons as well. Here are seven reasons to choose an over/under shotgun for the field.



## Built for Wingshooters

When John Browning designed the Browning Superposed shotgun, the first true over/under, it was with the thought that it was the last gun the government would take from the citizenry. In the history of firearms, the over/under shotgun stands alone, in that its design was not for military or law enforcement purposes—it was conceived purely for the wingshooter.

## The Perfect Double

One question I get asked in the field, especially in waterfowling, is, “Don’t you wish you had another shot?” For me, a double on game birds is as good as it gets. An over/under provides me with the two shots required without a “throw away” shot. In the fast-flush-and-flight world of wingshooting, if I had a third shot, it would likely be a Hail Mary. The perfect double is also possible with a side-by-side, but I’ve never managed it.

## Customized Shot

With two barrels, an over/under (or any double gun) provides the option to shoot two different patterns instead of just the one available for single barrels. This option works as well in clay events as it does in the field, since the second shot is usually at a bird farther away than the first. For upland hunting, the choke in my bottom barrel is improved cylinder, and my top barrel is modified. For waterfowling, my bottom barrel is modified, and the top is full choke. Using two different chokes gives me the most effective pattern at the range I will likely

be shooting. It also lets me use different loads depending on the conditions.

## Reliability

My 20-gauge over/under lie completely submerged on the duck flats this year; it didn’t miss a shot afterward. Potential reliability issues present in single-barrel repeaters simply do not exist in over/under shotguns. They don’t have the problems associated with ejection ports, shell carriers or magazines. There are just fewer little parts in an over/under. There are no gas pistons, forearm nuts or stock springs. The maintenance can be as simple as wiping it off and dabbing on some oil. I don’t want to be 6 miles into the mountains on a ptarmigan hunt with a gun problem.

**THERE ARE JUST FEWER LITTLE PARTS IN AN OVER/UNDER. THERE ARE NO GAS PISTONS, FOREARM NUTS OR STOCK SPRINGS. THE MAINTENANCE CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS WIPING IT OFF AND DABBING ON SOME OIL.**

## Handling Advantage

While the feel and handling of a gun can be subjective, there’s no arguing that a break-open gun is shorter than a repeater with the same length barrel. The difference is that an over/under doesn’t have a lengthy feeding mechanism. The handling advantage of a shorter gun of the same weight is that it swings faster. Since the shells are in the chamber and between the hands, the balance point of the gun is not shifted forward.

## Safety

The simplicity of a break-open action in determining whether the gun is safe and unable to fire makes a hunt with







Choosing a shotgun is both a matter of personal preference and practical reasons.

other shooters more enjoyable. Since safety is everyone's responsibility, being able to ascertain the safety of other shooters visually from a distance is one less thing to worry about afield. In a magazine tube, shells are hidden from view; with an over/under, if the gun is open, it is safe.

## Aesthetics

A gun is most certainly a tool, but it is also a work of art, in that it evokes the passion of wingshooting. Beauty is naturally subjective, but there are certain traits—smoothness, fine lines and the variety in wood grain—that inarguably belong to the classic double gun. The practicality of aesthetics is simply in the added joy it brings to the field. Certainly, for me, the image of a chocolate Labrador on retrieve or an English setter on point is as much a part of the hunt as the bird in hand.



*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.*

*Reprinted with permission from  
The Women's Outdoor News.*



the  
wOOn<sup>®</sup>

women's outdoor news  
womensoutdoornews.com

"Shooting,  
Hunting,  
Fishing  
and  
Adventure!"

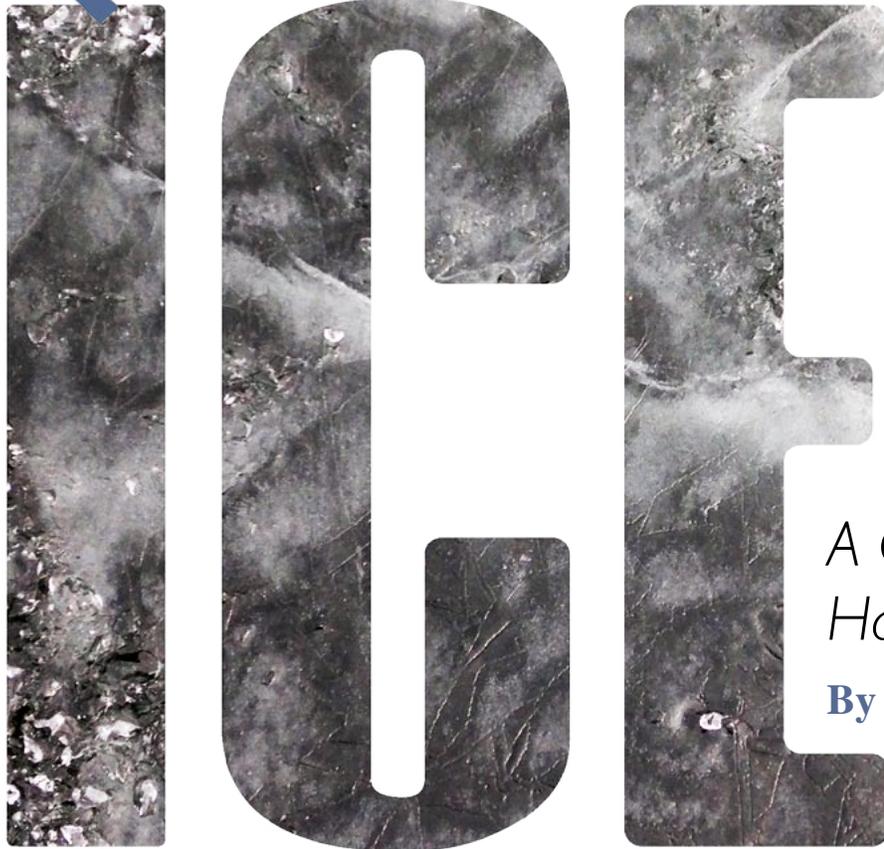
YouTube



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



# QUEEN OF THE



*A Guide to  
Hardwater Panfish*

**By Amanda Buer**

I'll admit it... sometimes I screech with excitement when I talk about panfish through the ice. Finding a school of large bluegills or a cluster of crappies may just make you scream with excitement too - trust me on this one! Locating a school of nice fish can be a challenge, but it's a challenge that is worth taking on. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced angler, the same tips and tricks apply. Let's start with what to look for and build the tricks as we go.



Amanda Buer  
with a great  
Minnesota crappie!



# FISH.



## Locations

I prefer to target smaller lakes that are off the beaten path. These lakes tend to receive less fishing pressure, which can often help to produce above-average panfish. Plus, who doesn't like having the lake to themselves?!

I typically begin by looking for areas where a large weed flat meets a deep-water basin. These types of locations will have features that can keep fish in the area all winter long, or even all yearlong. Remember that spot you found large green weeds at this summer? Return there. Chances are these fish are holding onto those weeds, if they haven't died off yet.

Bluegills and crappies love green vegetation as it produces more oxygen, a fish's lifeline, while also holding baitfish for food. These weed flats may have depths ranging from 6 to 10 feet, breaking off into deep water. Panfish will slide up and down these throughout the day to feed.

## Right Timing

We tend to see a trend of feeding fish on these flats an hour before dusk, or first light in the morning, breaking off toward deeper water during the midday period. With this said, weather can dramatically change this dynamic. Watch your local forecast as a different weather system or storm front moving in can trigger a feeding frenzy. The hours just before the weather system can be a small window you won't want to miss!

## On the Move

Mobility is key when chasing plus-sized panfish. Drill a series of holes over various depths, moving from hole to hole until you find fish. You may pluck a couple bluegills out of one hole, only to find it then suddenly shuts off. Move.

Next hole... same school of fish gliding

between weeds. Play the game of hide-and-seek and the fish will play along. By the time you've had enough of the games, you should have nice stack of panfish topside.

### Tried and True Lures

A tackle box with an arsenal of different lures to try is nice, but having a couple of your favorite go-to jigs seems to be best when hole hopping for panfish. Tied onto one ice rod, I always have a small jig, such as a **Clam** Half Ant Drop equipped with a **Makiplastic**. This is a great weapon for the shallow water bite and can turn picky panfish into biters.

Using artificial plastics allows me to hole hop without carrying live bait around. However, if you'd like live bait, wax worms are the most popular of ice fishing baits and can be carried and kept alive much easier than minnows.

My second rod tends to have something a little heavier on it, such as a 1/16 oz. **Lindy** Frostee Spoon. Actively feeding fish are often attracted to the aggressive jigging techniques of this spoon with its larger profile. Jigging spoons are also more efficient in deeper water as they allow you to get down more quickly to help you stay on top of an active school.

Find what combination works best for you and your area by testing out a handful of baits. The most important

thing is having confidence in your presentation.

### Ice Rods

Picking the right ice rod for these ultralight baits will be just as important as your lure choice. A light action rod with a high sensitivity enables you to feel the fish before the fish feels you, allowing you to set the hook before they spit the bait. I personally use a **St. Croix** Avid Glass 26" Light ice rod for most situations. While being ultra sensitive, it still has all the backbone necessary to set the hook and can easily handle larger surprise catches.





A 10-inch bluegill caught in central Minnesota on a shallow water weed flat.



# FISH.

## Your New Best Friend

Although it is not required to ice fish, one piece of equipment that will help to complete the experience is a flasher. A flasher creates a flash on the screen for the depth of the water and the depth in which fish are, letting you bounce your bait off the bottom to attract fish when you don't see any on the screen, or when they are present, bringing your bait up or down to match the level, catching fish that you would have otherwise missed.

Using a flasher also allows you to see fish come in around your jig and watch how the fish react to different jigging techniques. Aggressive jigging of your bait may either trigger the fish to bite or scare the fish off. Being able to see this reaction take place on the screen of your flasher allows you to adjust your technique to the fish's current mood.

When a fish is showing interest in your lure, slowly begin to rise above it as if you are playing a game of 'keep away.' An actively feeding fish will follow your bait up until they finally decide to gulp it. If they retreat back down to the bottom, drop back down and begin the process again.

The **Vexilar** FL-8SE is an entry-level flasher offering a great bang for your buck, retailing around \$279.99. This unit allows you to discover bottom contours and types, vegetation, structure, fish and baitfish in a multiple color display that doesn't break the bank. There are many brands and models out there, and when it comes down to it, they will all help you to catch more fish. Use what's comfortable for you. Not everyone can afford a flasher or ice fish often enough to justify purchasing one. If that's the case, simply study a structure map and hole hop until you find the perfect depth.



A flasher, such as this Vexilar FL-8SE, is a great addition to your ice fishing arsenal. Though it is not required to ice fish, most anglers will agree at the huge difference it makes to your fishing success.

## Be Safe!

All the gear in the world means nothing if you don't know your ice conditions and how to be safe. The condition of the ice is the single most important thing to consider before venturing out onto any lake. Know your body of water - the depth, the structure and the water movement. Rivers, inlets and naturally occurring springs are all things that need to be considered before walking on any lake. The current underneath the ice can create thin spots and even cause the water to remain open all year.

Most say safe ice for walking is between 2 and 4 inches; I personally won't walk on a



lake until there is at least 3 inches of good, solid clear ice. Even then, I don't go anywhere without the proper safety gear. Ice picks (learn how to make your own on the next pages) are with me from November to April in case I ever get in a bind and find myself swimming.

Another thing to consider in early ice conditions is wearing a life jacket. Insert laughter here, but in all seriousness, wet winter apparel can sink you and if you are alone this may just save your life. Late ice also tends to be dangerous as temperatures begin to temporarily warm up and fluctuate causing the ice to melt, refreeze, shift and crack. Every year, there are long-time hardwater anglers that fall through the ice; it's not just

a beginner thing. If you're nervous about the ice, don't go.

Be safe and enjoy your time on the ice making memories. Every bite can give you a new surprise, whether it's fighting a bonus walleye on your light panfish setup or wrestling with a beautiful 14-inch crappie that's 'resisting arrest.' Those are the types of surprises that make chasing hardwater panfish an adventure you won't forget. Tight lines from Minnesota!

*Amanda Buer resides in the "Land of 10,000 Lakes", and she just might fish all of them one day. As a multi-species angler, she's always ready to chase the next hot bite, no matter how deep into the woods it takes her.*



## SAVE A LIFE! SAVE YOURSELF!

### Making your own ice rescue picks

There are several how-to's on the Internet for making your own ice picks; however, I couldn't find one that stated actual details, so I made my own and included the details (you can tweak from there, if you'd like, but this gives you a great place to start). Buying the materials from the store cost \$17.40, and I was able to make five pairs of ice picks out of that for my family for \$3.48 each (with extra material that I could have squeezed out a 6th - \$2.90 each). If you aren't a do-it-yourselfer, you can buy pairs of ice picks ranging from about \$9 to \$22 each and still keep yourself safe!

#### MATERIALS:

- 2 pieces of wooden doweling cut to 4" in length (I used 1-1/8" poplar dowel that floats - you don't want material that will sink in case you drop them)
- 2 stout nails (I used 3" concrete nails)
- at least 24 inches of strong cord/rope (I used 52 inches of 1/4" diamond braid polypropylene reflective rope that is brightly colored and floats for safety)

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Drive a nail into one end of each dowel (off-center) until it sticks out 3/4" to 1-1/4". Optional: I pre-drilled a shallow hole (9/64" bit) to help keep it straight.
2. Use a file or grinder to sharpen the nail heads to a point.
3. In the same dowel ends, drill a hole (5/32" bit) alongside the nails so the other nail pick can rest in the hole, keeping both points covered and joining your handles together.
4. In the dowel ends opposite of the nails, drill a hole (5/16" bit) through the dowels. Feed your cord/rope through the hole and knot so a pick handle is on each end. Burn and tap the ends to keep knots in place.
5. Keep the picks in an easy-to-get-to pocket or around the body and over one shoulder for quick access if you or a companion does break through the ice. (Don't wear around your neck like a necklace, as this tends to come off over your head from the rush of the water when your body first plunges through the ice.)

## IF YOU BREAK THROUGH THE ICE

1. Extremely important - remain CALM.
2. Turn in the water toward the direction you came from (likely strongest ice).
3. Grab your ice claws and with a handle in each hand, dig the points of the picks into the ice while vigorously kicking your feet to help pull yourself onto the surface by sliding forward on the ice.
4. Once back on the ice, roll away from the area of weak ice to distribute your weight until you are at a safe place to stand.
5. Immediately get to shelter and heat, put on warm dry clothing and drink warm, non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks to reestablish your body temperature to normal. Call 911 and seek medical attention if you feel disoriented, have uncontrollable shivering or have any other ill effects that may be symptoms of hypothermia (life-threatening drop in the body's core temperature). -JP



Wearing ice picks over one shoulder



ADVENTURESS

ADVENTURESS



Sand, wood burn, stain or paint, if desired.

**LIVE.**

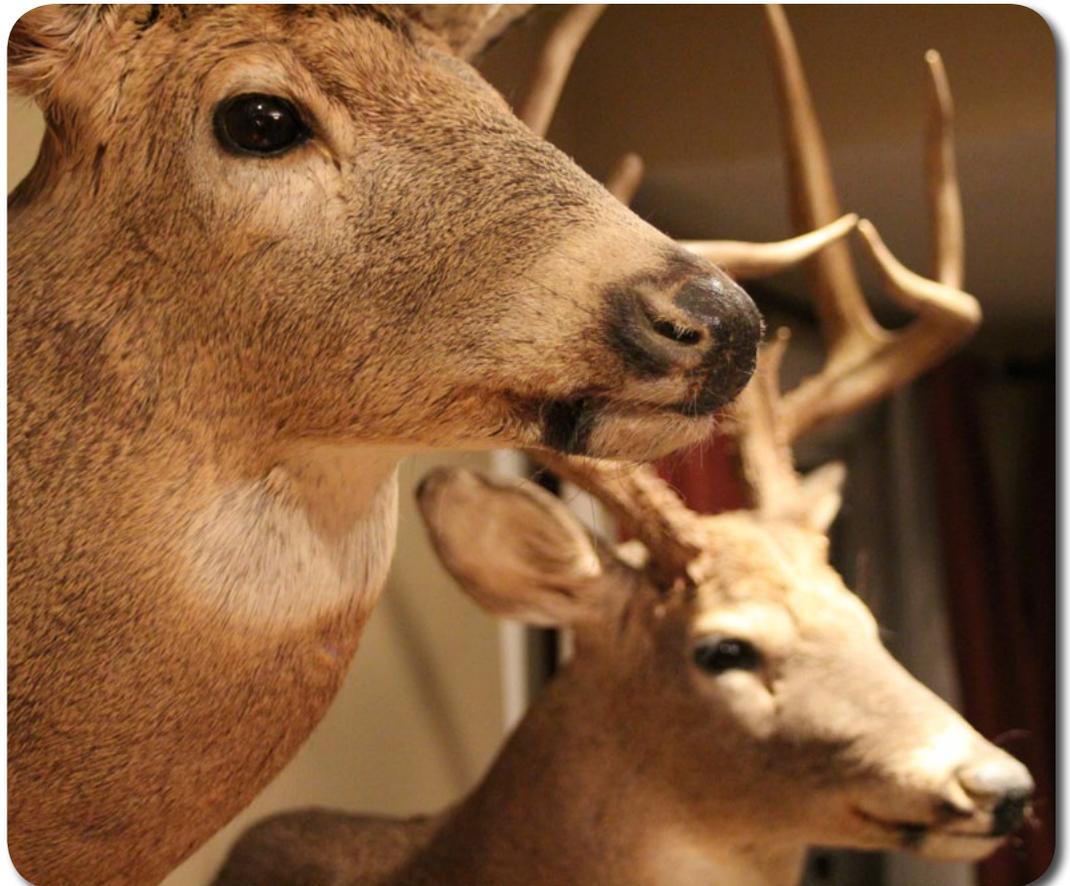
# (early) Spring CLEANING

## Caring for your taxidermy mounts

It might seem too early for spring cleaning... after all, it is only winter still. But as an outdoor enthusiast, I don't know a time I've actually wanted to clean once spring has sprung. I'd rather clean now when I'm stuck in the house from winter weather, so I can be out and about come spring! Here are some tips for caring for your taxidermy mounts. After all, you spent so much money and time to acquire them, a little upkeep will help them last and look nicer, longer.

### INSPECT

Moths, beetles and other insects can be disastrous to your mounts, whether burrowing into the mount or eating the hair. Insects can happen even in a very clean room and home, and can turn a high-dollar mount into a mangy, bald mess quickly. Inspect your mounts for bugs, looking into any cavities such as the mouth and ears, and checking the hair. If you find any insects, act fast - taking it to your taxidermist to have it fumigated or purchasing products specifically for taxidermy mounts.





## KEEP IT DUSTED

Use a feather duster or blow dryer to knock excess dust off.

## ANTLERS

Lightly spray furniture polish, such as Pledge, onto a clean rag and wipe over your antlers to clean them.



## HAIR & FEATHERS

To keep dust off the hair or feathers of your mount, also use a small amount of furniture polish on a rag, and wipe the animal down, following the grain of the hair.

## EYES

Clear eyes of dust and restore their gloss by using a Q-tip with window cleaner, such as Windex. Use as little cleaner as possible.



## NOSE

Also dab window cleaner on the nose to keep it bright and shiny.

## TA DA!

Now go outside and play! ~JP

+More inspiration

# Casting for Recovery



The mission of Casting for Recovery is to enhance the quality of life of women with breast cancer through a unique program that combines breast cancer education and peer support with the therapeutic sport of fly fishing. The retreats offer opportunities for women to find inspiration, discover renewed energy for life and experience healing connections with other women and nature. Casting for Recovery's retreats are open to breast cancer survivors of all ages, in all stages of treatment and recovery, and are free to participants.

[castingforrecovery.org](http://castingforrecovery.org)



# +last shot



## TIME ON THE MOUNTAIN

NEVADA  
ASHTON HALL

See more of Ashton's  
photos on Instagram  
[@ashtonphall](https://www.instagram.com/ashtonphall)



**#betheadventuress**  
FACEBOOK ~ INSTAGRAM ~ TWITTER

