

ON THE TRAIL OF AN APEX PREDATOR

ADVENTURE JOURNAL

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WINTER 2017 | ISSUE 8

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editor's note

CONNECTIONS

When I started ADVENTURESS, I was excited about connecting with and supporting other outdoor women. However, what I honestly didn't expect was how much I would connect with advertisers. I cherish these relationships because I realize many are fellow outdoorswomen like me. They see a need and have the passion to bring something new to the table even though it is a long, tough journey.



I feel so blessed to have the opportunity to get to know these women, see some of their hard work, quality products and problem solving ideas myself. This is so powerful, and a win-win for outdoor women.

I am excited to see what connections ADVENTURESS already has grow further. For starters, Pretty Hunter's owner Tricia Auten has been

an amazing supporter and truly is a wonderful woman looking to help other women feel good about themselves and be who they are. I'm very happy Pretty Hunter and ADVENTURESS have partnered together to help each other with reaching more outdoor women.

I am also looking forward to new connections in 2017, including Saint Hugh's Emily Degan. Emily's new business developed from the problem that a lot of hunting clothing is expensive, so she wanted a way to get more use out of it. Rethinking camouflage, she created her own herringbone print that's functional as camouflage in the field, but also stylish enough for street wear - brilliant!

I'm so proud to be able to support fellow women business owners, women photographers, women writers and, of course, the women who read and follow ADVENTURESS on social media.

And I can't leave out the guys! Each of us has the support of some special guys, including ADVENTURESS. Two of the biggest supporters have been Big Game Gut Glove's Fred Wozniak and Madison Game Calls' Rodd Madison who make sure to include women for their products. It truly means a lot to have them show support for outdoor women when they don't have to. Cheers to 2017, connecting through passions and chasing dreams!

Jennifer Pudenz

ADVENTURESS

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

ISSUE 8
WINTER 2017

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on the cover



Cover featuring Kelly
Granrud. Photographer:
Brett McComas.

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Featured photographer: Hannah Stonehouse Hudson



Cover Girl!



Meet
**Katchin'
Kelly!**

Our Winter 2017 Cover Girl is **Katchin' Kelly Granrud!** Kelly grew up in International Falls, Minnesota, with a love for hunting and fishing. Today, you'll often see her in promotional material for Clam Outdoors and Vexilar Inc., and you might also recognize her last name as Kelly is the wife of Chris Granrud, well-known angler and guide in the fishing industry. Together, they own and operate the widely popular **Rainydaze Guide Service** in International Falls.

Both Chris and Kelly spend much time helping promote the sport of fishing far beyond the guide life. They can be found doing seminars at sport shows and attending writer events, in which they share their combined love and passion for the outdoors with some of the most talented photographers and writers in the business. It is their combined aspirations to continue to bring a positive influence to the sport of fishing and transfer their passion as a couple enjoying the woods and waters to others.

Follow **Kelly** and **Rainydaze Guide Service** on Facebook.



+Past Issues



<< Lots of great information in last year's winter issue of ADVENTURESS magazine - shed hunting, shotguns, ice fishing, cleaning mounts and more!

Did you miss the last issue of ADVENTURESS magazine?! Check it out! >>



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LEAH EHRET



MANDY LIND

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WENDY LOVING



ASHLEE LUNDVALL



JENNIFER JAMES



TAYLOR THORKILSON



HEIDI MANLEY



HALEY HERNANDEZ

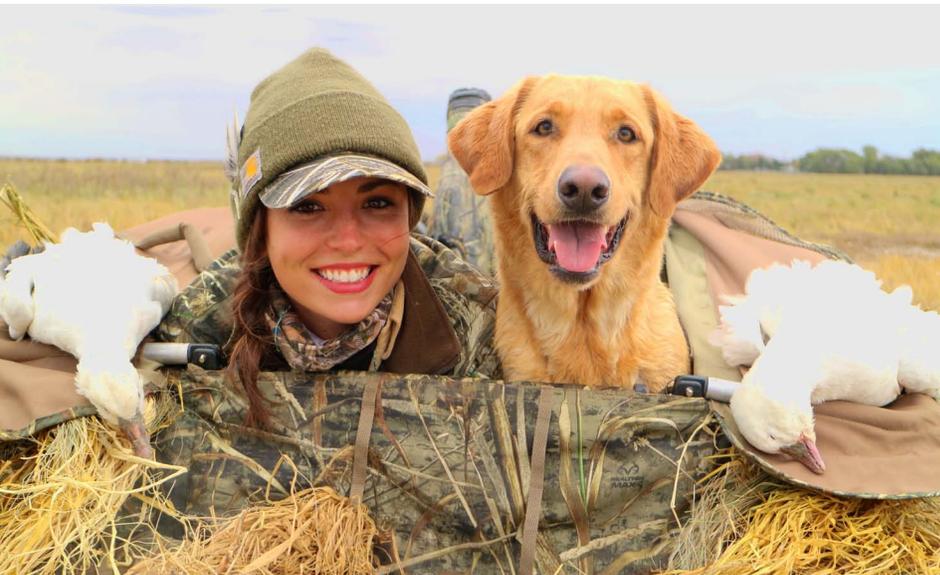


MELANIE FITZGERALD



EMILY ALBRIGHT

Renee McKeehen is the 2016 ADVENTURESS OF THE YEAR



Meet the 2016 ADVENTURESS of the YEAR - **Renee McKeehen**! You can just plain tell this 24-year-old truly lives an outdoor lifestyle. She grew up in the Minnesota outdoors deer hunting with her dad and, to this day, not missing a duck opener with him. Many of her adventures are with her longtime boyfriend she married this June. Now living in North Dakota, they take advantage of all the great outdoors both states offer, and even document some of their adventures with their own YouTube channel called **Bobb and Nay**.

Very much a bird hunter often after waterfowl, pheasants and doves, she's also hunted management animals such as coyotes and hogs. She's done a wide assortment of fishing, including ice fishing, spearing and bowfishing. From the woods, exploring for deer sheds, morel mushrooms and chicken of the woods to the farm, planting food plots, bailing hay and having a garden – Renee can hunt, fish, gather and grow her own groceries and is most definitely up for about any adventure! She even has a degree in wildlife management! She represents what ADVENTURESS is all about!

2016 ADVENTURESS of the YEAR - CONTEST RESULTS!

Individual category winners!



HUNT.

MEGAN RADTKE
Wisconsin



FISH.

CARISSA JENKINS
Montana



EXPLORE.

JENNIFER DUMS
Wisconsin



LIVE.

LAUREL MONAGHAN
Montana

ADVENTURESS of the YEAR finalists!



ALLISON STEGMANN
Iowa



BROOKE WRIGHT
Colorado



JENNIFER DUMS
Wisconsin



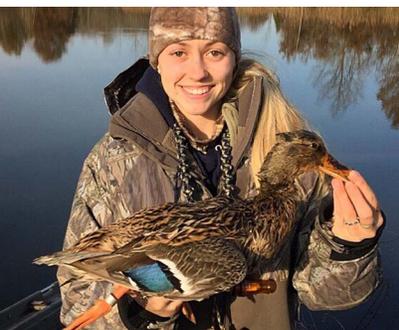
WHITNEY VAU
California



MORGAN DOBSON
Washington



CHANDA GEBHARDT
Minnesota



MEGAN JACKSON
Indiana



NANCY RODRIGUEZ
California



KIRSTI HARRIS
Ontario, Canada

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WINTER





Hannah Stonehouse Hudson

Featured
photographer

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National
Lakeshore
Ice Caves

Bayfield, Wisconsin

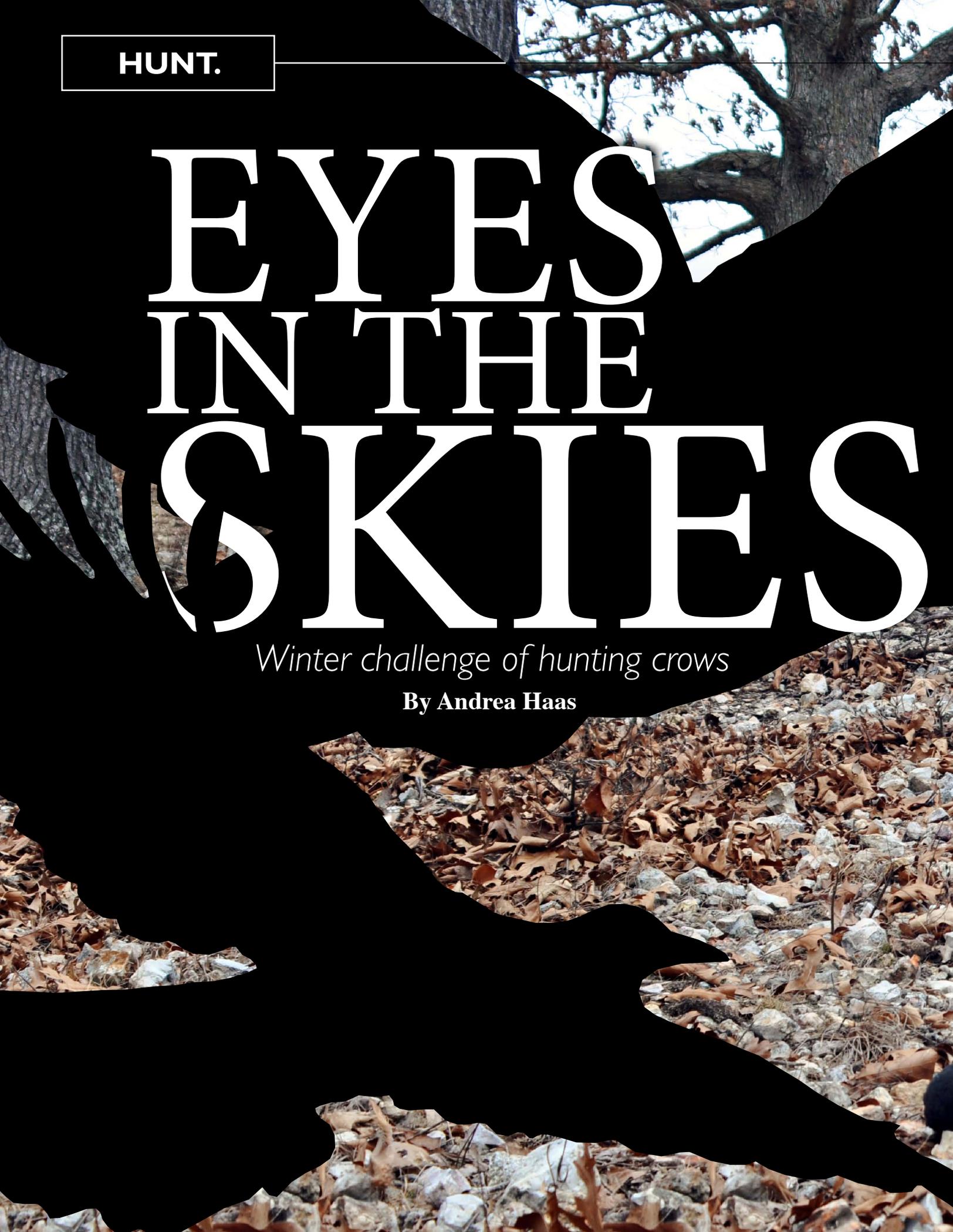
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on **Facebook**
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her website at:
**www.
stonehouse
photo.com**

HUNT.

EYES IN THE SKIES

Winter challenge of hunting crows

By Andrea Haas





HUNT.



Andrea Haas extending her hunting season with winter crows.

Late winter is often seen as “down time” and the end of most hunting seasons; however, there’s one bird often overlooked that you should add to your lineup - crows. While crows are listed as a nongame bird since they are hunted as a nuisance animal instead of for consumption, don’t underestimate this very intelligent and challenging bird to hunt.

I have been hunting crows for about four years now, but I admit when I first heard there was such a thing as “crow hunting,” I thought it just sounded like the craziest thing to do. My opinion changed when I shot my first crow. Now crow season is something I look forward to every year, and is actually one of my favorite hunting seasons that my home state of Missouri has to offer.

Why Crow Hunt?

In regards to crow hunting, it seems that most people are how I was initially. They find it to be a little weird and wonder what the purpose of it is. Aside from it being a blast, crow hunting can be beneficial from a conservation standpoint.

Crows have been known to break open and eat

waterfowl eggs, attack ducklings and destroy upland bird nests. Crows can also be highly destructive to crops! There are often hundreds to even thousands of crows (depending on the area) that congregate near crops and farming areas, so you can see how easily that many crows could become a nuisance and cause significant crop damage.



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HUNT.

'Tis The Season

While you can hunt crows during the fall in most states, crow season often extends as late as February or March. Some states offer one continuous season and others are split into two different seasons. Fall is such a busy time of the year for most people, and as a hunter, there are so many options that our time is usually spread thin! That's why crow season extending so late is great - an option when most other hunting seasons have closed.

Check your local regulations as each state varies. Most states will probably only require you to have a small game permit, which is usually pretty cheap. Often there is no daily or possession limits on crows.

Right Time, Right Place

Morning hunts are best, when the crows are feeding. I have noticed we don't get much action past about 10 in the morning. Start by scouting for a good location of crow feeding areas near crops or cattle feeders.



Crows can be called into shooting range with an electronic caller. Start with low volume and raise it as your hunt progresses.

Also scout for multiple hunting areas. If you have a good shoot at one location, I'd wait at least a few weeks before hunting that same location again. Crows have a very good memory and you don't want to educate them too much and burn out a spot.

If you don't have places to hunt, ask some of the farmers in your area if you can hunt on their place. I'm sure some would be more than happy to let you, and you never know if that could turn into other hunting opportunities in the future as well.

Camo

Crows have very good eyesight. You'll want to make sure you are wearing camouflage that matches your surroundings and for the time of year. A camouflage gun also helps, but isn't a must if you have the right setup.

<< Spread decoys on the ground as well as placing a "scout" or "lookout" crow in a nearby tree.





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HUNT.

Game Plan

Set up along fencerows or tree lines near the feeding areas. You can make a blind out of surrounding trees and shrubs, but this will need to be done ahead of time. I also like to set up where the crows will be flying over from behind me instead of flying toward me so I'm less likely to be spotted.

Decoys

You'll want about a dozen stationary crow decoys. While a decoy with movement like a MOJO crow decoy is not required, it really helps give the crows something to focus on when flying over other than you, and will be more likely to bring more crows into shooting range.

Spread the decoys out on the ground about 40 yards from your setup. If there are trees next to your setup, place one in a tree as well to simulate a "scout" or "lookout" crow.

Calling

An electronic call like the Primos Alpha Dogg works great for crow hunting. Crow frenzy and crow pair calls work great at the feeding sites we hunt. And make sure you have plenty of batteries!

Crows can be called into shooting range pretty easily with an electronic caller and a good decoy spread. Face the

caller in the same area as your decoy spread with the speakers pointing in the direction you think the crows will be coming from.

Start calling with the volume a little lower at first. As the hunt progresses and it seems like less crows are coming in, you can then turn the volume up to reach crows that are farther away and may not have heard you previously calling. You can also try a predator call toward the end of your hunt, like a distressed rabbit, to call in more crows.

Shooting

I prefer an auto-loading 12-gauge shotgun, like my Browning Maxus. A modified choke for your shotgun works well.

If you aren't hunting over decoys, then the crows will probably be flying farther away and you may want to consider a full choke for that scenario.

Crows are tough birds and seem to have nine

<< Crows can have unique variations just as any other animal or bird, such as this one with white in its wings.



SAINT HUGH

lives, so I use the same loads for crows as I do for pheasant hunting, usually a 6 shot. These have worked well for me while crow hunting and I usually don't have to shoot the same crow multiple times.

Don't shoulder your gun until you are ready to shoot. Crows have very good eyesight and will often spot you raising your gun and fly off in the opposite direction faster than you can shoot. Try to wait until the last possible second to raise your gun and shoot.

You'll need to lead the crows a little bit, but not too much. Crows actually fly a lot slower than you would think. And watch the crows on the ground. They seem to come back to life sometimes, so if you see one hopping around, stop your hunt and go shoot it. Otherwise you will never see it again.

Crows will send out a "scout," which is usually a single crow that flies over your decoy spread to check things out and let the others know it's safe to fly in. If you shoot at the scout, you better get it!

I know there are mixed opinions on whether or not shooting the scout effects

your hunt. From what we have seen, if you shoot at the scout and miss, it becomes educated and you are less likely to get the other crows to come into your setup.

~~~

Because crows are often considered a nuisance, I feel they may have a reputation as being an unintelligent bird. I have learned from hunting crows over the years that they are a very challenging bird to hunt and possibly one of the most intelligent birds I have hunted. They are smart, alert and have a memory like no other.

Each crow hunt has to be planned and executed almost perfectly in order to be successful. If you've never crow hunted before, use these tips and give it a try this year! I think you will be pleasantly surprised at how enjoyable it is and you may even be humbled by the experience.

*Andrea Haas is from the Ozark Mountains of southern Missouri. She is the founder of **Huntress View**, a blog designed to encourage women to get involved in hunting, shooting and the outdoors. She is pro staff for Browning Trail Cameras and HuntVault.*

## APPAREL FOR FIELD



## AND FUN.





ON THE TRAIL OF AN

# APEX PREDATOR

By Jana Waller

*Previously published in Bowhunting World Extreme*

**H**is eyes glared in my direction as if to warn me of his wrath. Standing a mere 10 yards below, my eyes were locked on his, feeling his presence as a top predator in the Montana mountains.



Top left: Stumbling upon a fresh mountain lion kill, Jana Waller and Ben Wohlers pose with what is left of a young elk.

Perched high above in the snow-covered ponderosa, the cat warned us, with numerous fierce snarls, that we were intruding on his turf. The hounds feverously barked below as the cat's eyes moved from mine down to the dogs and back again. Staring into the eyes of a large, male mountain lion is nothing shy of bone chilling.

I am blessed to live among some of our country's most spectacular wildlife in the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana. From elk and mule deer to grizzlies and wolves, the plethora of animals found under the big sky of Montana is nothing short of a North American safari.

The mountain lion, one of the most misunderstood apex predators, is a mysterious creature of beauty and brawn that roams the Bitterroot Valley in abundance. Lions are reclusive, solitary and generally nocturnal predators. Many people will never lay their eyes on a mountain lion in the wild and therefore presume their numbers are sparse - but that couldn't be farther from the truth.

According to Montana's Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), the mountain lion populations on my home turf are plentiful. So much, in fact, that the FWP set a goal in 2012 of "reducing mountain lion abundance by approximately 30 percent over a three-year period." (Lion Progress Report <http://fwp.mt.gov>). One of the main goals of getting the lion population under control is to reduce elk calf mortality, and thus, enhance elk populations. It's simple - when there are too many predators, the

ungulate populations suffer.

One person who has spent countless hours observing mountain lion behavior and their effect on the environment is our good friend and outfitter Ben Wohlers, owner of Painted Rock Outfitters. Ben has been cat hunting since 1995 and has treed more than 300 lions throughout his hunting career. His hounds are proven detectives, finding lions on even the oldest of clues.

**AN APEX PREDATOR  
IS A PREDATOR  
RESIDING AT THE  
TOP OF THE  
FOOD CHAIN UPON  
WHICH NO OTHER  
CREATURES PREY.**

Ben has one pawn in this game, other than his hounds, that fuels his success with catching cats... the "Catmobile," as I like to call it. His 1997 Jeep Cherokee has been personally modified to the specs of a Sherman Tank. Well, not exactly, but this decked out Catmobile can literally climb mountain switchbacks in three feet of snow, which allows Ben to cut more tracks and find more cats.

Jim Kinsey, *Skull Bound TV's* executive producer and cameraman, and I planned to



Painted Rock Outfitters owner Ben Wohler and his "Catmobile."

head into the hills to look for a cat with Ben when our schedules aligned in early February. With fresh snow in the forecast, I knew we could get a call at any moment. That call came at 3 a.m. sharp as my phone's ringer broke the morning silence. We stumbled around to get dressed and head out the door to meet up with Ben and his hounds down in the valley.

A fresh snowfall is preferably the best time to hunt lions. These hungry carnivores are always on the move in search of a meal, crossing logging roads and highways as they prowl for their next dinner, leaving a trail of scent for the hounds to follow.

The Jeep's headlights led the way into the canyons, but visibility was limited with the deluge of snow that was continuing to cover Montana. Every so often, Ben would slow

down to a stop, lean his head out the window and direct his handheld spotlight on a set of tracks.

"What do you have?" I asked, straining my head from the passenger seat.

More often than not, Ben responded with "a deer" or "coyote." Once the snow starts to fill in the track, it can be tough to tell without closer inspection.

After a couple of hours of driving up the thick, powdered roads, Ben got out of the Jeep to inspect a set of tracks crossing down over the rocky ridge.

"It's definitely a mountain lion track, but it's a young one, small in size," he explained.

The dogs rustled in their boxes in the cab, anticipating the exciting chase. Since Montana regulations state you can't release the hounds

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until daylight, we decided to continue looking for other tracks until sunrise.

The 35-inch tires plowed through the thick snow as we continued to look for any signs of a cat. Huge lodgepole pines lined the road, their limbs blanketed in white. The sky began to brighten with the morning sun bouncing off the glittering trees.

Suddenly, a flash of movement from 30 yards off the road caught our attention. Ben stopped the Jeep, and we got out to investigate. As we trudged off the road, it became apparent we stumbled upon a fresh kill.

The dirty, matted-down snow was covered with fur, and a half-buried leg bone revealed the victim to be a young elk. Jimmy was rolling his video camera to capture this concrete example of predation. The flash we had seen was the attacker.

“A big tom, according to these tracks,” Ben said. “Let’s collar the dogs, and go find him!”

All four dogs are collared with a GPS tracker, allowing Ben to determine not only the direction of the cat, but also how far the dogs have gone and when the cat is treed or bayed in the rocks. Like greyhounds taking off from the gate, the collared hounds raced off down the drainage until they were out of sight, their barks echoing off the canyon walls. We jumped back in the Jeep and followed the GPS back down the logging road.

“They should be just around this corner,” Ben exclaimed, watching the blips on the Garmin.

Unlike most mountain lion hunts, the dogs had actually treed the lion a mere 20 yards from the road! I’ve been on other hunts where the cats go into the most steep, treacherous spots that can take hours to climb. This was a piece of cake... or so we thought.



Jana Waller and her cameraman Jim Kinsey take in the beauty of Montana’s Bitterroot Valley.

The hounds jumped at the base of the ponderosa pine, barking profusely at their would-be chew toy that was perched 50 feet above. We could see the large cat standing on two limbs, his enormous belly bulging with elk. He was fixated on the dogs until I moved up the slope to get a better view.

That’s when our eyes met. There are few things in this world that compare to staring

into the gaze of an alluring mountain lion. It's one of the few moments in a hunting situation where you can slow down and appreciate the beauty of the animal close up. If you're lucky enough to get that close to other animals in the wild, it's rarely an eye-to-eye encounter. His stare was menacing and almost hypnotic.

The video camera continued to record, capturing some incredible footage as Jimmy set up two point-of-view cameras on the ground. Like having houseguests for a week, the cat apparently had enough of the chaos and leapt from the tree, landing on all fours in a pillow

of fresh snow approximately 30 yards from where I stood.

With a good head start, he darted off through the jagged rocks with the hounds quickly trailing. It wasn't long before the cat was back in another pine perched high on an icy ridge with the dogs standing guard below.

We dug our boots into the ice-covered ridge, exhilarated and exhausted with every step. Inch by inch, we crept up the hillside, my Mathews Jewel strapped to my backpack so I could use both hands to climb. Ben reached the tree and began to tie up the baying hounds.

**MANY BIOLOGISTS  
BELIEVE CATS THAT  
LIVE PAST THE AGE OF  
EIGHT MAY KILL WELL  
OVER 200 DEER AND  
ELK IN THEIR LIFETIME.**



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This time the lion was much closer to the ground, a mere 10 yards above my head, sitting in the ‘V’ of the tree. I took a moment to calm my breathing and slow my heart rate down while unstrapping my bow. The low growl from the cat conveyed his returned disdain for the dogs and our presence, making this second encounter all the more intense.

After nocking an arrow and clipping on my release, I steadied my feet in the snow. With a verbal, “Ready when you are” command from cameraman Jimmy, I drew back my bow and centered my pin on the lion. The arrow flew true, and the big tom let out his last snarl, slumping out of the tree and into the snow below.

I stood there in amazement, soaking in the compelling emotions of an exhilarating hunt and a sense of deep appreciation for this apex predator. From his sharp claws to his deadly canines, I couldn’t help but examine every inch of him. I wrapped my arms around his waist to lift him for the classic cat pose, feeling nothing but sheer respect.

There’s no denying mountain lions are a beautiful, majestic creature that have a special place in our ecosystem. But like all predators, when they are overpopulated, other species will suffer. That night we dined on lion steaks fresh off the mountain and toasted with a clink of our glasses, “To an amazing, successful hunt and to the future of healthy elk herds in Montana.”

*Jana Waller of Montana is host of **Skull Bound TV**, a hunting and fishing adventure show on Sportsman Channel that ties in to her painted and beaded skull business. Teaming up with leaders in conservation, Skull Bound TV is “Bound To Make A Difference” in showing viewers that hunters are true conservationists.*



Big tom down! After a wild “cat” chase, Jana gets to pose with her trophy cat.



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FISH.

# EXPEDITIONS *across the* ICE

*Safety tips for long-distance ice fishing adventures*

**By Jody Anderson**



Photo by  
Hannah  
Stonehouse  
Hudson  
featuring  
Barb Carey.



**W**hat do you envision when someone mentions ice fishing to you? Sitting on a bucket on a lake near home? A portable shelter? A permanent ice shack with satellite TV? A fancy resort shanty? A buddy's Ice Castle? The great thing about ice fishing is there is a style for everyone. If you are an adventurer, you may even picture dogsledding or skiing into a hidden lake to ice fish.

My personal style has changed considerably over the years. Years ago, I started out small with both my husband and I packed into a one-man suitcase-style house on a lake near home. We then graduated to a two-man shelter and kept upgrading from there – larger, thermal lined, etc. We also began to travel farther away every year. On occasion, we spent weekends at resorts in heated houses complete with transportation that delivered us to the door. We have made numerous ice fishing memories. More recently, it has become our passion to go on ice fishing expeditions on snowmobile.

A few years ago, we spent our honeymoon on Lake of the Woods in the Northwest Angle (located at the top of the continental United States). We traveled the 40+ miles

from Baudette, Minnesota, across the lake in a heated Bombardier to the resort we stayed at. We spent four nights in a condo complete with steak and shrimp dinners. Transportation was provided each day to and from our heated house. Hot meals were delivered to us at lunch. The guides even cleaned our fish. It was really one of the easiest trips we had ever been on, and I highly recommend this style if you want to experience ice fishing, but don't want to invest in a lot of gear. It was on that trip my husband pitched his crazy idea to me.

"I am going to buy a snowmobile," he said. "We are going to start snowmobiling here."

To be honest, I didn't think he was serious, but that summer he placed the order, and in September a Yamaha RS Viking was delivered.

# FISH.



Jody Anderson with her and her husband's snowmobile they use for their ice fishing adventures.

We are now going on our third year of fishing the Northwest Angle, which offers not only great fishing, but also incredible scenery. It holds an abundance of remote areas to explore. Bordering Canada, it allows for day trips into Ontario by snowmobile for trophy crappies and walleyes. Being able to stay mobile has been key to experiencing some phenomenal fishing.

Traveling into Canada is relatively easy since Canadian licenses can be purchased at resorts in the Northwest Angle. If you have a passport, calling into the Canadian authorities is how you legally enter the country to fish. It

is the planning and preparing beforehand that will take the most effort to make sure you will have a safe and fun trip.

Following basic safety procedures is important any time you are on the ice, but you need to do a little more extensive planning if you are traveling to remote areas and traveling long distances. Ice fishing is a relatively safe activity. However, it can be risky for those not familiar with the terrain, the ice conditions or are not prepared. The first rule is to remember there is never such a thing as perfectly safe ice. Here are some tips:

## Transportation Tips

Make sure your snowmobile is serviced and reliable. Breaking down 20 to 30 miles out in the middle of the lake or remote area is not what you want. Perform an inspection and check your fluids. Make sure you have an extra drive belt, spark plugs and injection oil, if it is a two-stroke engine. You should also have a tow strap. Before heading out each day, make sure your fuel tank is topped off, in case you get lost.

When it comes to your personal luggage, pack light. Dry bags are helpful as snow often makes its way into the sled. Expensive rods should be in a hard rod case to protect them. It is common for things to fall out of your sled when traveling over rough terrain. Check that your load is secure and strapped down.

## Ice Conditions

Before your trip, check with locals and resorts for current ice conditions before heading out. We check the satellite images of Lake of the Woods online. Keep in mind there are areas that have current and you need to

educate yourself about them prior to traveling. Make sure you have an area snowmobile trail map.

## Travel with a Partner

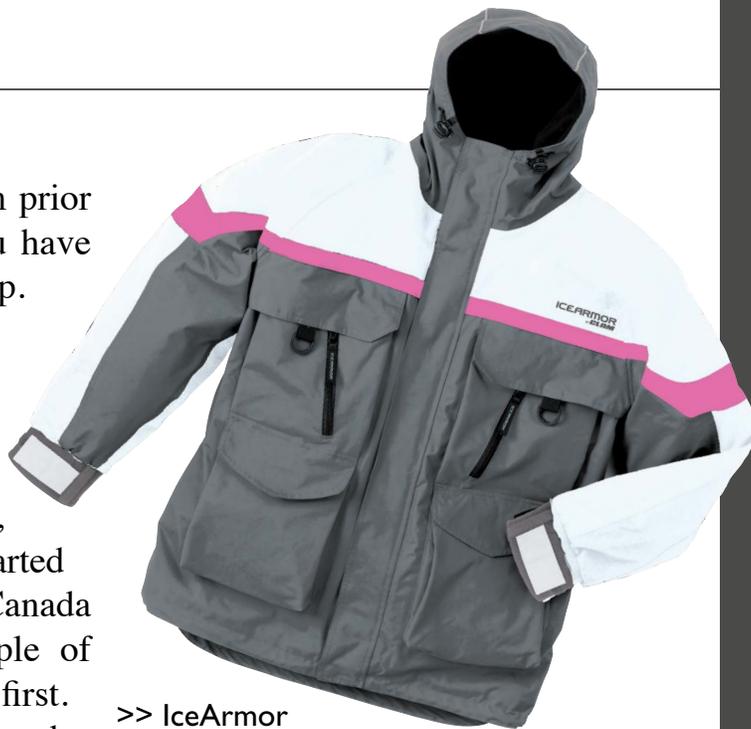
Always travel with a partner or a group of people, if possible. When we first started out, we did not venture into Canada alone. We went on a couple of guided trips to learn the area first. Guide service is available through the resorts. On occasion, we have teamed up with other groups, especially when traveling into Canada. We have traveled dozens of miles into new territory and there is added safety in numbers.

## Cold Weather Gear

In a place where temperatures are commonly below zero, you need to have proper gear. Today you can purchase top-of-the-line gear, which is worth the investment if you plan on becoming an avid ice angler. You can even buy suits that not only



<< Striker Ice Women's Prism Jacket



>> IceArmor By Clam Women's LIFT Parka

help keep you warm, but also offer an additional piece of mind with a lining that provides buoyancy in the case of an emergency.

Under your outerwear, wearing quality thermal base layers is necessary. Wearing denim is not recommended because fleece offers greater warmth. A good pair of wool socks and warm boots will help keep your feet warm. I never go out without hand warmers and toe warmers. I regret the years I didn't think they were necessary.

Facemasks or balaclavas are absolute musts. Wearing a helmet is necessary not only for safety, but to keep your head warm. Life jackets can be worn to provide additional protection, especially if it's early or late ice.

## GPS (Global Positioning System)

Extreme cold can zap a phone battery and phone service is often

## Women's Ice Fishing Suit:

~ IceArmor By Clam Extreme Women's Parka (\$229.99) and Bib (\$229.99)

## Women's Floating Ice Fishing Suits:

~ IceArmor By Clam Women's LIFT Parka (\$269.99) and Bib (\$259.99) with Lift Lining

~ Striker Ice Women's Prism Jacket (\$199.99) and Bib (\$199.99) with Sureflote Flotation Assist

~ Striker Ice Women's Climate Jacket (\$269.99) and Bib (\$259.99) with Sureflote Flotation Assist Liner in Shell



Photo by Hannah Stonehouse Hudson featuring Rikki Pardun, Barb Carey and Shelly Holland.





Photo by  
Hannah  
Stonehouse  
Hudson  
featuring  
Rikki Pardun.

*Ice fishing video with ADVENTURESS founder:*





Photo by Hannah Stonehouse Hudson.

limited or not available at all, so make sure you have a good GPS as well. It has come in handy for us when we have run into bad weather. Oftentimes, visibility is limited. A GPS is helpful in emergency situations since it provides your exact location.

## **Nebulus**

A Nebulus is an emergency flotation device. It is a small, compact tool that can be attached to a snowmobile or ATV to use in ice and water rescue situations. It inflates in seconds and can support up to three adults and a submerged snowmobile or ATV. [nebulusflotation.com](http://nebulusflotation.com)

## **Emergency Supplies**

Be prepared for whiteouts, breakdowns or getting lost. When traveling, we have propane heaters that can be used in an emergency. We can set up our ice fishing shelter to protect ourselves from the elements. We always carry food and water with us. It is also a good idea to carry maps, a compass, flashlight, first aid kit, emergency blankets (space blankets), plus matches and lighters. Keep some matches in a

waterproof container in your jacket.

We have been caught in whiteouts on Lake of the Woods. Once our one-hour trip turned into a three-hour trip. Although nothing serious happened, I did experience vertigo for the first time. Know where shelters are along the way. Lake of the Woods has a shelter on Garden Island that is along our traveling route from Baudette to the Northwest Angle.

## **Safety Equipment**

Ice picks should always be carried, worn around your neck and over one shoulder in the case of an emergency. Should you fall in, remain as calm as possible and focus on jamming the pointed ends into the ice to anchor you, while kicking your legs to pull your body up and out of the water. Have an emergency throw rope readily available and hang it on your snowmobile where it is accessible.

Some may wonder, “What is the point of ice fishing?” Spending hour after hour sitting on the frozen surface of water in the middle of nowhere, often times with nothing to see for miles except vast white space. The temperatures

often well below zero, and with what seems at times like hurricane force winds. Sitting above a drilled hole waiting for the next bite, which could take hours or never happen at all. How do you explain the love affair?

For me, it is the simple raw beauty of the frozen tundra that surrounds it all. It is almost meditative. It is also about battling the extreme arctic-like conditions that accompanies it, which is exciting and all part of the adventure. Catching fish is a bonus.

This winter, keep these safety tips in mind, whether you are traveling near or far. If you are looking to ice fish with some added adventure, plan an expedition across the ice!

*Jody Rae Anderson of Minnesota is an avid angler, adventurer and writer. She loves to share stories and interviews related to the outdoors in her column, The Long Line ([hometownfocus.us](http://hometownfocus.us)). Jody is also a promotional angler for Clam Outdoors, JT Outdoor Products and Women Fish Too.*

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EXPLORE.

CHAGA  
CHAGA  
CHAGA



*Packed with health benefits, this unique mushroom has become a sought-after winter gem*

**By Chanda Gebhardt**

**A**s a family of the outdoors, we are always looking for things to do on the way out to the woods! That's where winter mushroom hunting comes into play for us Minnesotans. Mushrooms and winter? Yes. This is one of the benefits to living in the northern tundra, the availability of chaga.

Chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*) is a mushroom that typically grows on birch trees in colder climates across the Northern Hemisphere. It should only be harvested after 60 days of freezing temperatures when the tree is fully



Chanda Gebhardt with a fresh piece of chaga.

## EXPLORE.



Harvest chaga from mature birch trees only after trees are fully dormant.

dormant. This is because late winter is when chaga is at its peak for stored nutrients. Once sap starts flowing again in the spring, nutrients get flushed out of the chaga.

Chaga is a highly concentrated black mass of mycelium that protrudes from birch trees infected with this non-toxic-fungi. It has a dark, hard and cracked exterior, which often appears like burnt charcoal, with a rusty, yellow-brown colored interior.

### Health

Chaga is one of the weirdest mushrooms you may ever see - actually, it doesn't even look like a mushroom at all and it doesn't look very appealing! However, appearances can be deceiving, as chaga is known as the "King of Medicinal Mushrooms" and one of the most powerful superfoods on the planet.

Chaga has been used for many different purposes for centuries, and most typically consumed as tea. Many of the health benefits can be attributed to its immune-boosting ingredients and antioxidants.

Chaga has an abundance of Beta-D-Glucans, which help balance the response of the body's immune system. This means chaga helps boost the immune system when necessary, but slows it down when it's overactive.

Research has also shown chaga activates immune cells responsible for combating cancer initiation. Research is still ongoing as more studies are needed to determine chaga's full role in cancer, but chaga has proven effective in supporting standard cancer approaches, such as chemotherapy, by compensating for the program's negative side effects.

Chaga may also help nutritional support,

reduce inflammation, anti-aging and skin, ulcers and gastritis, as well as support normal cholesterol levels and blood pressure. I have personally found it to help alleviate some of my arthritic symptoms since having children in my 30s.

## Harvest

When it comes to harvesting chaga, you need to be very selective. It's best to take pieces five pounds or larger, and they must be on a living tree. So this means you need to look for mature, birch trees to find them. And you need to be a steward of the land and try not to over harvest.

Use a very sharp, small ax to cut, and leave at least one to two inches of the mushroom behind protruding from the tree. It is a renewable resource, but will take a very long time to grow back. By leaving some behind, you will be allowing for the natural regeneration and not cutting into the tree's natural boundaries. By being mindful of this, we have seen great growth of our chaga.

It has become popular to look for natural ways to live off the land. Plus, as a mother of two little boys, I am always looking for anything to help us not get sick in the winter months. I find that about 20 pounds of chaga will get our family of four through the year. There is tons of information out there, so if interested, you can just search around on the Internet - including finding chaga to buy if you don't live near it naturally.

I hope this inspires you to learn more about the great things nature supplies us! Foraging for natural treasure is truly rewarding!

>> Photos by Staci Warren of breaking up and processing chaga.



# +Recipe: Processing Chaga

## Remove Moisture

Drying chaga is key, and chaga will mold if not properly dried and stored after its collection. Place chunks on a rack, pan, sheet, tarp or other surface near a dry, mild heat source (do not place in the oven) and allow to air dry. I wait about two weeks to allow adequate drying time on bigger chunks.

I then break up the chaga into two-inch pieces before I steep it in a large kettle. Some people think to remove the dark exterior, but you want to process both this exterior and the rust-colored interior as both contain nutrients. Chaga is so hard that it is difficult to break up. I usually use a big hammer with the chaga wrapped in a pillowcase. This allows all chunks to fall inside.

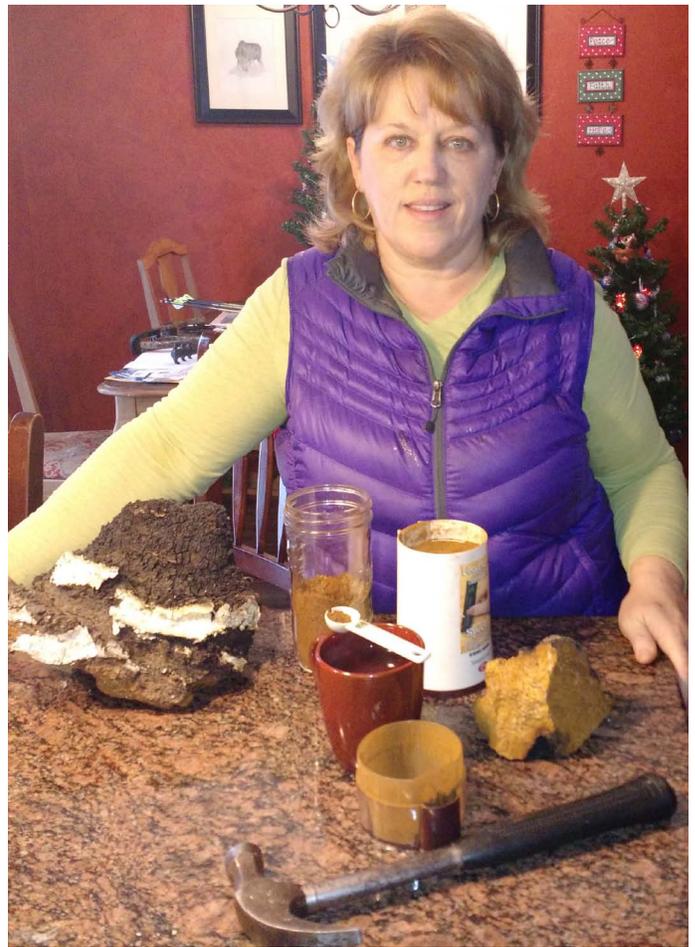
## Steeping

Teas can be made in different ways. I opt for an easy way of adding the chunks to a non-stainless steel pot, steeping it on the stove for two days. As it steeps, I will skim off the top and fill sterilized mason jars. I will repeat this process until the tea starts to look lighter. Do not let your tea steep over 160 degrees, as that will harm the medicinal properties.

I usually can steep about four cups of chunks to make 15 to 20 quarts (in one steeping) in two days. At first, it only takes an hour to fill three 1-quart jars. By the end of the second day, I may let it steep four to six hours, depending on how clear it looks. As you steep, you can always break up the larger chunks and open them up. This will also allow the chaga to release more from inside the chunks.

## Grinding

Another option is grinding the chaga chunks in a coffee grinder. This will turn it into a fine



Staci Warren processing chaga for tea.

powder you can use in tea mesh balls or bags. You can portion out 1 Tbsp. for individual use. Chaga can be enjoyed like any other tea or coffee. It can be served hot or iced and black or with sweet or cream additives.

## Tincture

Another way to prepare chaga is by making a tincture. A tincture is an alcoholic derivative of a plant, mushroom or herb. Tinctures are more effective in extracting the medicinal components and preserving them for longer periods of time. Tinctures are also useful because they're simple to use, quickly absorbed and easily added to recipes, drinks, etc.

*Chanda Gebhardt is owner of Fairview Gardens and North County Outdoors in Minnesota. Many of her recipes can be found on Facebook at Field to Fork Minnesota Style.*

+Recipe

Learn more about chaga  
in this video  
by SuperfoodEvolution:



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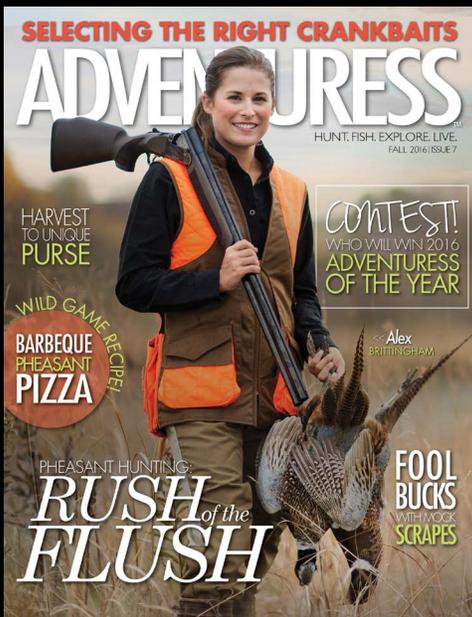


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