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SUMMER 2015

5 TIPS
FOR YOUR
BOW

ASHLEY RAE WITH

TOPWATER
BASS

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GAINING
POPULARITY
FOR WOMEN

SCOUTING
VELVET BUCKS

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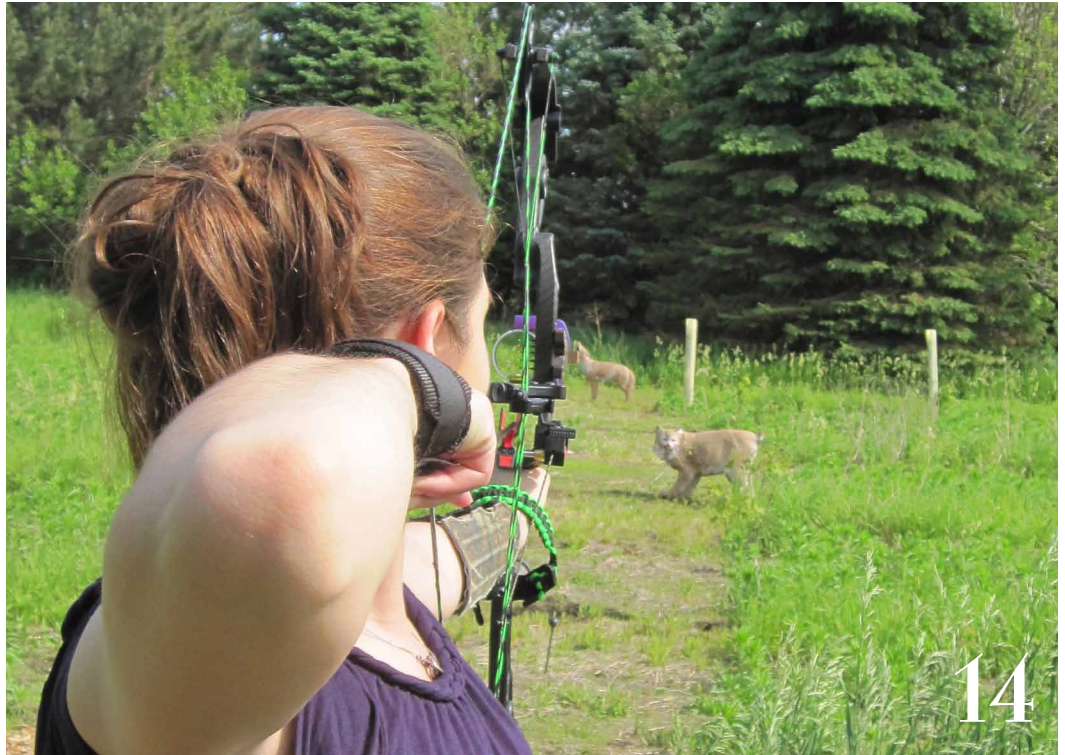
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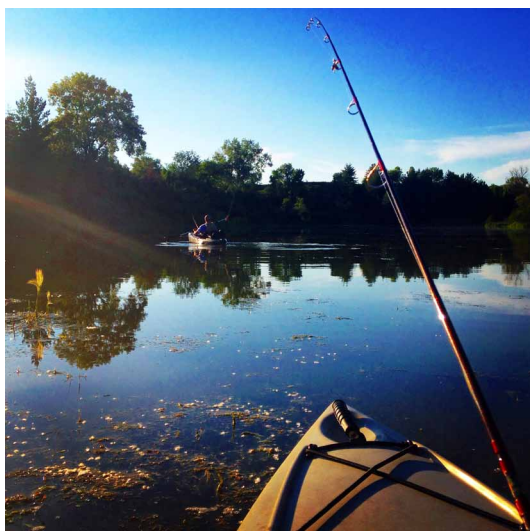
ESCAPING TO THE OUTDOORS

I didn't realize it until recently that the outdoors is not just something I love, but also how I cope with things throughout life. It was this time last year that I went through my hardest time so far. I decided that I was going to start kayaking once a week, renting for an hour each time, and I held that vow to myself through the rest of summer. I called it my 'water therapy.'

However, I soon found I didn't have to be alone in my so-called therapy sessions. Though I didn't seek people out, it would come up in conversations, and it shocked me how amazed people were by kayaking, that they had never gone before and wanted to join

me! I ended up having a kayak partner nearly every week! It was amazing and added to the experience to have a friend along.

It wasn't long before I started to get tired of the inconvenience of renting and was already talking with my husband about buying one. And if I was buying my own kayak, well... it might as well be a fishing one at that.



Again, I was surprised that I didn't have to be alone.

"You're not going to go without me, are you?" he asked.

My heart smiled at my husband. So soon, we were looking for two fishing kayaks for Christmas presents to each other.

While I admit kayak fishing was harder than I had expected, this summer I have fallen in love with this new outdoor passion that challenges me every time, but cleanses my spirit and mind while at it on the water. This adventure started from something negative and grew into something unexpected and amazing. I'm proud I've now helped more than 10 people kayak for their first time. I can't help but be in awe at the power of the outdoors. Believe in it and share it when you can. :)

Jennifer Pudenz

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for the outdoor
woman and
country lifestyle*

VOLUME I
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Founder & Editor
JENNIFER PUDENZ

CONTRIBUTORS

Ashley Rae
Katie Gilbert

on the cover



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For the love of gardening.





Meet Ashley Rae

Fishing season... this one's a gimme! Meet our summer cover girl - Ashley Rae! With a slew of big name sponsors such as Alumacraft Boats, Yamaha Motors, Rapala Canada, Humminbird, Minn Kota and more, Ashley is making waves for women in the fishing industry!

Despite having parents who didn't fish, a spark for fishing caught on at a young age, and the love of fishing has driven her throughout life, including quitting her 9-5 lifestyle to pursue it. The best - her love of sharing fishing with others. When Ashley is not on the water, she's often writing or speaking about fishing as a blogger, freelance writer and seminar speaker. See more of Ashley on her website, SheLovesToFish.com or Facebook pages [Ashley Rae](#) and [She Loves To Fish](#).



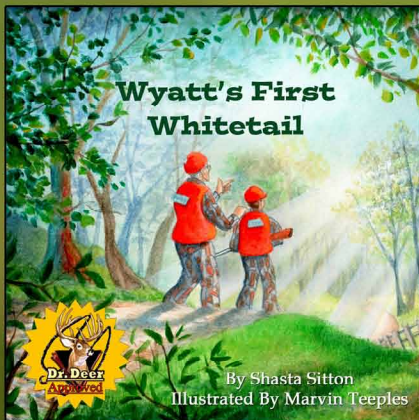
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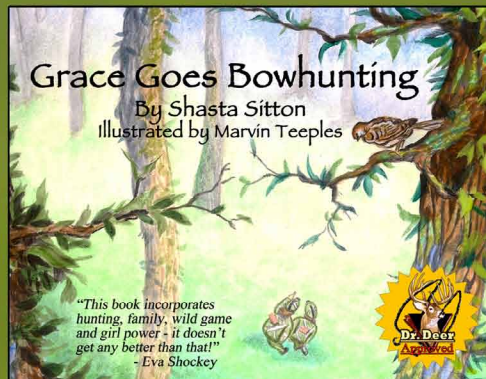
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Ashley Rae



SheLovesToFish.com

Ashley has a passion for year-round fishing and promoting the outdoor lifestyle.

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More inspiration!



A NEW WAY FOR OUTDOOR WOMEN TO CONNECT

There have been online forums and outdoor forums for years, but not quite like this one. Check out Prima at primaoutdoor.com to connect with other women just like you! Prima is an online community of women to share, educate, inspire and forge friendships all circling around the great outdoors! Create your own member login for free and introduce yourself, ask questions and help others on threads in the forums. You can also browse events, blog articles, photos and more! And while posting on social media, use #WeArePrima to be featured in their social media gallery!

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HUNT.

PRE-SEASON BOW TIPS

5 ways to become more accurate before fall

Many archers like to be constantly researching, analyzing and experimenting in hopes to continue improving their success rate in the field. We spend hours upon hours, if not days or weeks, in the stand and when that moment of truth comes... we all want to deliver.

However, sometimes in our quest for the next best thing out of the market, we complicate shooting or lose what simply works. The result of slipping accuracy or no improvement can just add to more frustration and lost confidence, and we all know confidence is key in archery. The following are five simple ways you can improve your shooting before fall deer season.

1. String-Loop

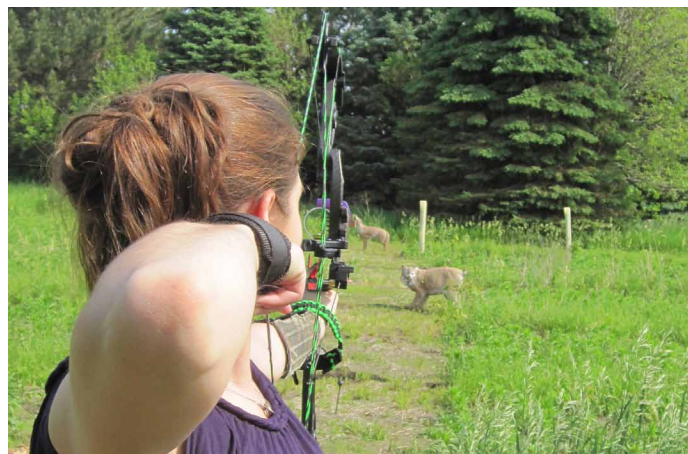
This little piece of string can help in three ways compared to hooking your release directly on the bowstring. First of all, string-loops are more forgiving of minor imperfections in your release. A loop also prevents an arrow from sliding up and down during a shot. And last, string-loops protect your string and serving from common wear and tear.

2. Round Pin Housing

Aligning a round pin housing sight with a round peep sight is just another “anchor point” to result in better aiming and consistency from shot to shot. Although some bowhunters like to center the pins, matching up the circles instead tends to make for faster aligning and keeps the same anchor regardless of what pin you use. This can also allow you to use a larger peep sight, meaning more light can pass through so you’ll have more visibility in low-light conditions.

3. Bubble Up!

If you are a beginning archer, ignore this step. Otherwise, to improve your shooting,



Outdoor 3-D archery shoots are an excellent way to prepare for season. If you are struggling to pull your bow back by the end, lower your poundage.



start paying attention to the level on your sight and centering the bubble (many have them already, and if not, you can buy levels for bows with a self-adhesive backing to stick to your sight). You’d be amazed how far off you can be when you pull back and THINK you have your bow vertically level! And you’d be amazed at how much this can make you shoot left or right. This can help you while 3-D shooting different terrain and especially while bowhunting at different angles.

4. Draw Weight +/-

When pulling back your bow, you should be concentrating only on aiming, not on struggling to pull it back. Don’t have your poundage too high, especially if you’ll be hunting in cold temps. Plus, the smoother and slower you can draw your bow, the less you are likely to spook quarry during the draw

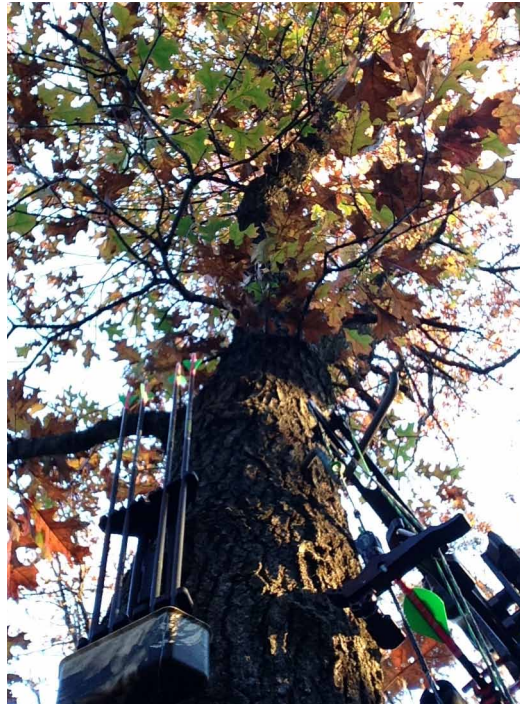
cycle. Also, unfortunately many guys like to max their bows because they can. However, their shoulders are ruined once at an older age. With today's bow, there is no need to have "Safari poundage" for whitetail hunting.

On the flip side, having enough draw weight is a struggle for many women. When shooting less than 50 pounds, adding just a few pounds can make a world of difference, especially with fast-reacting deer. During the summer, work to increase your poundage by just adding two or three pounds at a time until you are completely comfortable with shooting.

5. Quiver OFF!

While there are some circumstances in which you might want to shoot with a quiver on, tree stand hunting (or shooting from a blind) is not one of them. It always surprises me to see hunters shooting with their quivers on, whether they are at a 3-D archery shoot or pictured in a tree stand. But I understand completely where someone might think they should have their quiver on... advertising.

Every time you flip through an outdoor gear catalog or hunting magazine, you see photos of hunters poised ready in the stand with a quiver on their bow. However, this is because they are trying to sell you a product instead of actually shooting a deer.



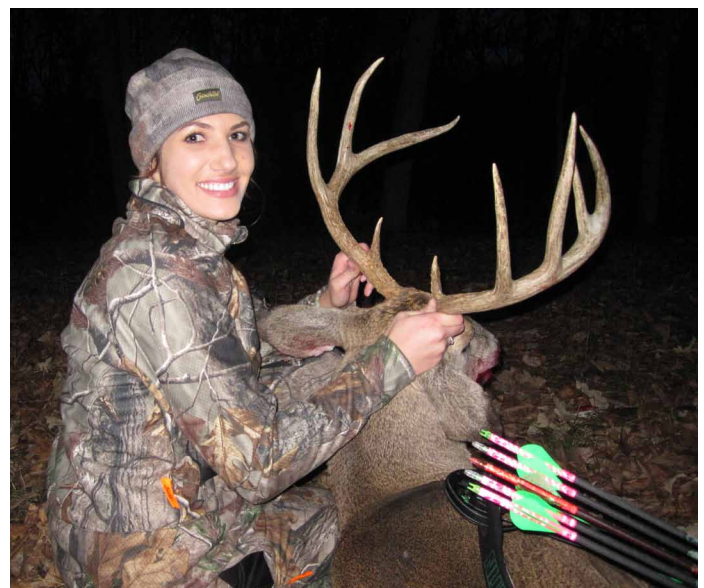
A tree screw for your quiver is an excellent tool to not only get the uneven weight of a quiver off your bow, but have your arrows out of the way yet ready within reach. I hang mine at a level so it is above me while sitting, but at my height when I'll be standing for a shot.

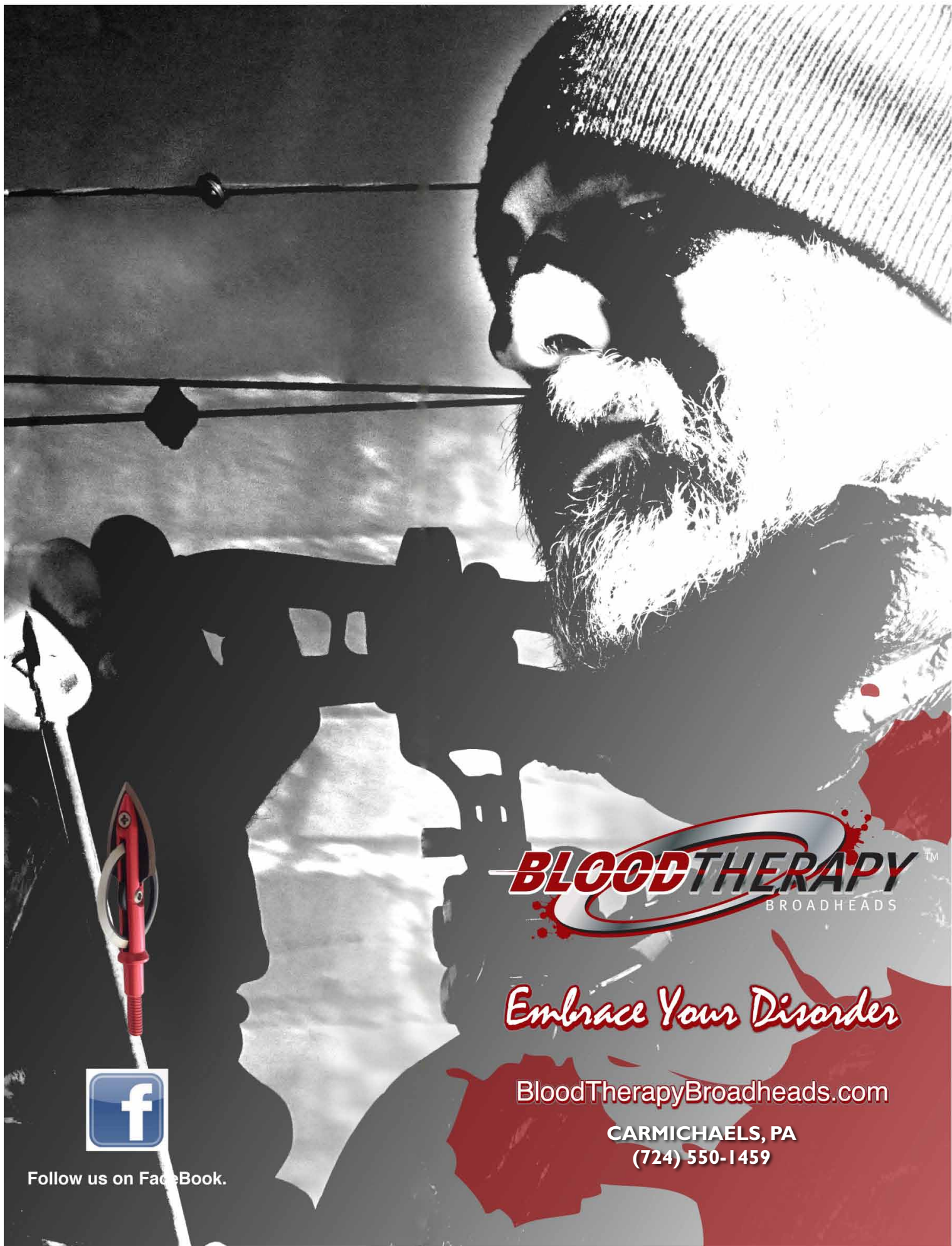
A quiver adds weight to one side of your bow, plus, the weight will change as you have more or fewer arrows in it. This pull of weight will affect your shooting, so shoot with your quiver off. I like to travel to and from the tree stand with my quiver on for easy carrying while using a bow sling. Once I get up in the tree, I have a tree screw for my brand of quiver that allows me to hang it on the tree right next to me for easy reach.

Good luck this fall!

Now is the time to do any last updates to your bow and practice before deer season.

These five tips are common practices, but will improve your shooting come hunting season if you currently don't take advantage of them. Best of luck to you all! #YouGoGirl ;) -JP





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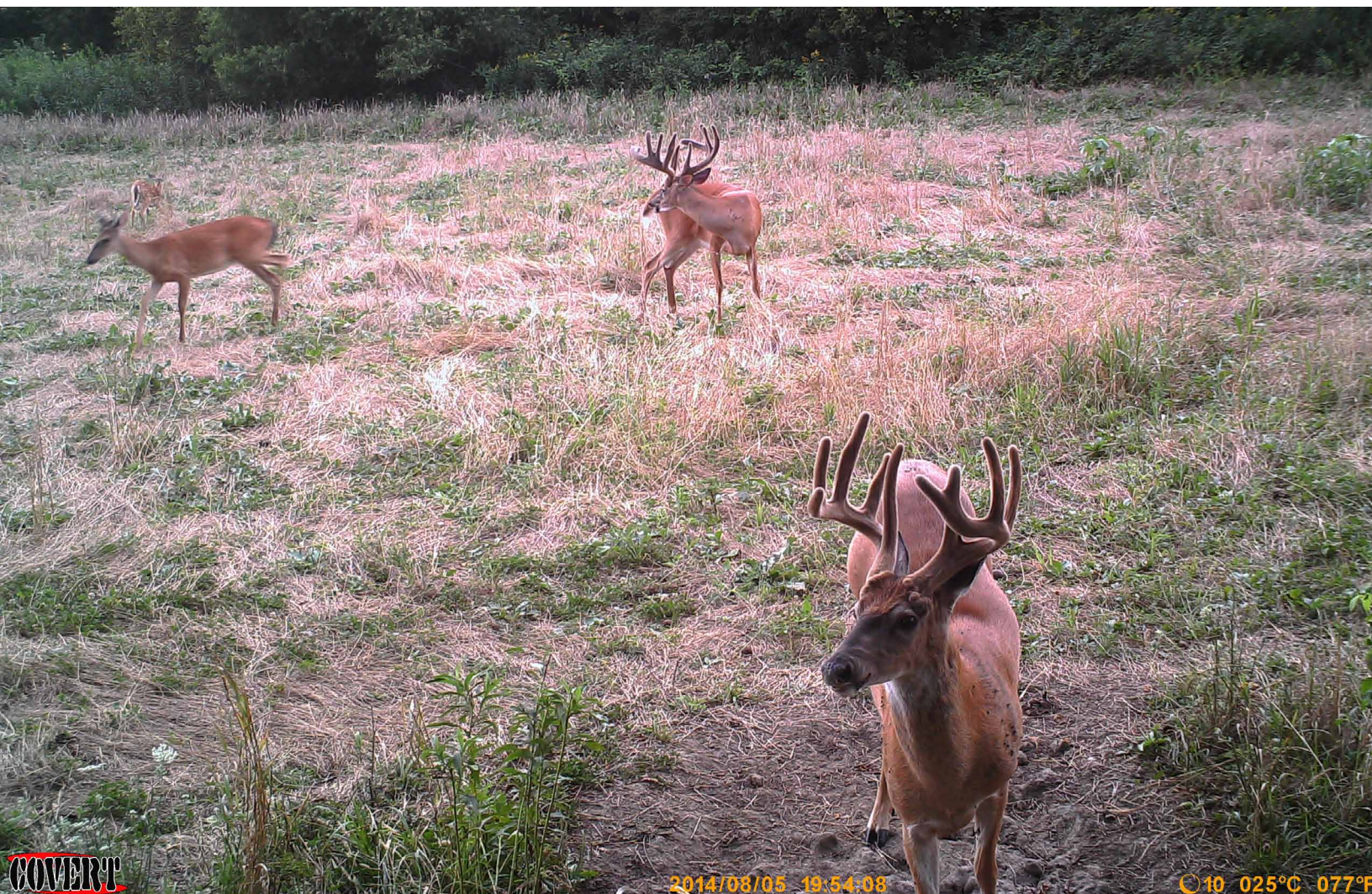


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The Real **BACHELORS**

Scouting velvet bucks during the dog days *of Summer*

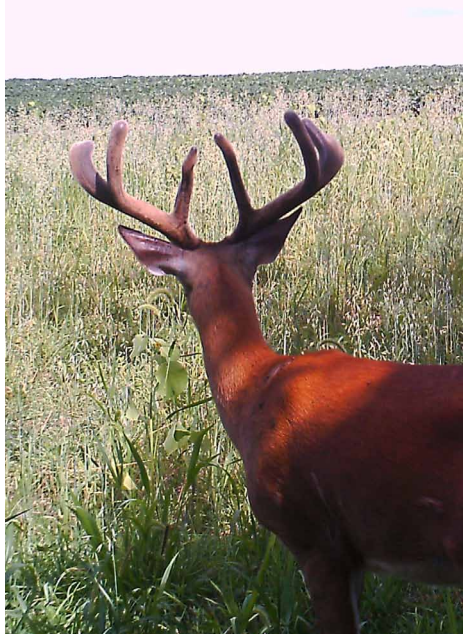
It's a phenomenon worthy of its status among serious deer hunters... the transformation a buck goes through during the antler-growing season. Within the deer family are the only animals with antlers, and antlers are the fastest growing tissue on earth. Growing up to a 1/2-inch per day, watching these velvet summer beauties is major preparation and excitement for cooler days ahead. Trail cameras are one of the best ways to accomplish this.



Monitoring the Deer

During the summer, bucks are in their most relaxed, social mode. When you find one buck, you often find several as they hang out in bachelor groups. Even though they are so relaxed, just like during hunting time, it's important not to tromp on their territory too much. Be 'invisible' to them as much as you can. Check your trail camera no more than every two weeks. I've heard of some people checking their cards every day or every few days. While someone might get lucky on a decent buck, it's not about the bucks you get on camera... it's about the bucks you don't get on camera. A mature buck is not going to stand for the pressure and will scare and move out into areas of less pressure.

The same goes for your camera. A white-flash trail camera is controversial when it comes to dealing with whitetails. While many still swear by it because they get plenty of deer on trail camera, again, it's not about the ones you get, it's about the ones you don't. Most of your mature bucks will scare and possibly turn nocturnal, never being seen again. When it comes to deer, use an infrared trail camera so you don't have the bright white flash. When you are using a trail camera for scouting deer to hunt, it's not always about getting the best photo, it's about getting photos of bucks without them knowing you are there, for the most part, and keeping them around.



Monitoring bucks during the summer is one of the best ways to learn about some of the bucks in your area and also be able to recognize them come hunting seasons so you know if you want to take a shot or not.

Location

Luckily, during this time of year it's easy to avoid the deeper deer territory and still monitor your bucks. Instead of scouting in timber or bedding areas, many bucks can be found in open fields, often feeding in the evening. This allows you to set your trail cameras at locations away from the timber or only at timber edges, so you have easier access and do not put pressure on the deer before hunting season.

Beans are the most common source to find bachelor groups; however, hayfields, especially alfalfa, are also popular. If you've

had a dry spell of weather with extreme heat,



Bean fields are one of the best locations to see bachelor groups of bucks. Look for heavy deer trails going in and out of the field edges and areas of short beans from heavy deer feeding when setting up your trail camera.

a watering hole is also an excellent choice. When you can find a location near food, water and shelter, hang your trail camera in this 'hot spot' as it covers all the deer's needs, drawing bachelor groups.

Mineral is another important factor of summer. During this time, bucks are growing their antlers and those nutrients are being pulled out of their bodies. They desperately need additional nutrients and by providing mineral, you can not only help them, but also help yourself locate them. Does also need the mineral after giving birth and nursing to fawns, and it can benefit a young deer's structure and growth as well. When in a large field, setting up your trail camera on a mineral site will help draw the deer to your camera.

Camera Setup

Before setting up a trail camera on a field, walk the edge to find your best trails and deer sign to help pinpoint movement. Also think about your background. Since the bucks travel in groups, you'll often have more than one deer in the lens. Point the camera toward your best chance of catching more deer that are also in the field, and if in a bean field, it can help to have the camera set to 'skyline' your bucks so you can still see their racks clearly even in dark evening photos.

When checking your trail camera, do so at 'off' times, such as the middle of the day. In the heat of summer, it may be less fun for you, but you won't be scaring the deer away. The deer are also trying to beat the heat, so they'll be visiting the fields during the morning or evening hours when it's cooler.

Hopefully these tips help you find your lucky bachelor this summer! -JP



Providing mineral supplies important nutrients for all deer from young to nursing mothers to growing bucks. The mineral spots soon become holes, which also create a small watering hole at times.



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FISH.

EXPLOSIVE

Topwater Bass

Targeting bass for a great summer battle

By Ashley Rae

Residing in southeastern Ontario, I keep myself busy fishing year-round for a variety of species, but largemouth and smallmouth bass are my main focus throughout summer months following into autumn (during our open season). What I love most about fishing for bass is, of course, the battle these fish put forth, but also the variety of techniques that can be used to pursue them. The learning never stops, and each year I find myself adding new favorites to the ever-growing list of techniques.

Striking a Frog

Even with so many options for catching bass, my absolute favorite way is a topwater presentation. Nothing beats witnessing the explosion of a largemouth crashing up through lily pads or floating mats to inhale a plastic frog! Talk about adrenaline! However, patience is required with this type of fishing, especially in the heat of the moment when a fish strikes.

Topwater hits can be one of the hardest styles to adapt to initially, as our natural instinct is to set the hook when we feel or see anything, like most other techniques. It becomes a reflex and it is something you will have to practice if topwater is new for you. By reacting quickly to a topwater strike, setting the hook too soon can result in pulling the bait away and missing the fish entirely.

The key is to wait until the fish has pulled the frog under and you can either feel or see the line tightening as the fish is swimming off with your offering. The moment you're certain that fish has your frog, you'll have to set the hook as if your life depended on it since there are often weeds surrounding the line between you and the fish. Without a good hook set, the fish can unpin itself swimming through cover.

Equipment

Another key factor to successful frog fishing, like any style of fishing, is having the proper equipment. During the summer months, especially on those warm sunny days, largemouth are often tucked away in heavy cover. It is unbelievable the nasty, thick stuff these fish will hide out in, and when hooked, they can really make it a challenge to yank them out if you aren't geared up for it.

On a baitcast setup, I use 65-pound test



Topwater fishing requires patience in the heat of the moment when a fish strikes. This can be hard to adapt to initially, but will be worth it in the end!

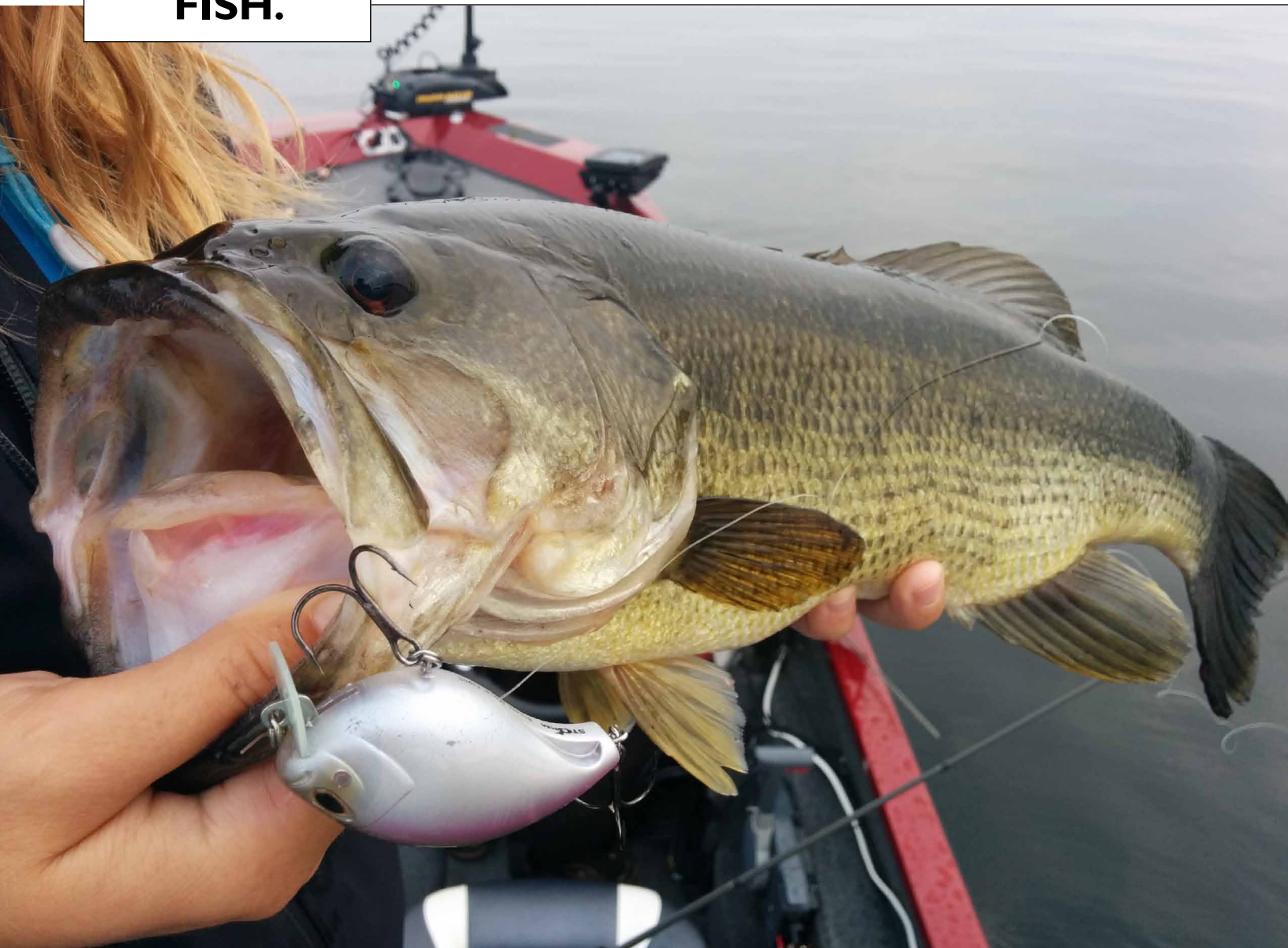
braided line (or higher) for frog fishing. Baitcaster reels are designed for accuracy and to handle heavier line with ease. A reel with a high gear ratio also comes in handy for a few reasons: skipping a fish across the surface so it doesn't bury itself down in the weeds, buzzing a frog back quickly after missing a strike to get it back in the zone or just skipping past the less likely strike zones.

Along with the heavy line, use a heavy rod to provide the power needed to pull these fish through the thickest of cover. Rod length is preference with 7'3" to 7'6" being common lengths. A rod that is too short can make it difficult to cast farther, and a rod that is too long can make it harder to 'walk the frog' using a tip-down retrieve.

Crankbaits

A new lure I added to my collection last year is the Storm Arashi Waking Crank, and

FISH.



The Storm Arashi Waking Crank causes a lot of commotion on the surface, perfect for grabbing a bass' attention.

it has quickly become a favorite of mine. This bait causes a lot of commotion on the surface with the wobbling side-to-side wake and loud rattle. This type of crankbait also requires a delayed reaction hook-set after a strike similar to a topwater frog. Due to the treble hooks, this lure isn't ideal in thick surface cover, as it will most likely get caught up, but it works great along weedlines, above weeds that aren't quite touching the surface and in open water. Crankbaits can be used on a spinning or baitcast setup.

With these moving baits, line stretch is crucial to provide the pause needed to allow the fish to grab on. Monofilament line works best with these types of crankbaits over braided line and fluorocarbon. Braided line has little to no stretch and fluorocarbon sinks, whereas monofilament floats. An effective hook-set on a crankbait doesn't need to be nearly as aggressive as that of a topwater frog, and should be more along the lines of simply reeling down on the fish and loading up the rod. Take your time with any fish hooked on



<< Start looking for summertime bass in structure where baitfish tend to hang out, such as weedy shorelines, weed beds, lily pads, stumps or docks.

treble hooks, as they can often shake free if you try to power them in too quickly.

Two of my other surface lures include the X-Rap Pop and the X-Rap Prop. Although the names are very similar, these lures are quite different. The X-Rap Pop has a cupped lip, which deflects water making a ‘popping splash’ with each snap of the rod. This one works best when you snap and pause in various rhythms that bass can’t resist. The X-Rap Prop has a longer slender shape with nose and tail propellers creating the noisy splashing and gurgling surface activity that grabs the attention of bass and fires up their instincts.

Locating

When searching for summertime bass, structure is a great place to start. Bass follow baitfish and baitfish tend to be found relating to structure as a means of food (feeding on small bugs and plankton) and to hide out in cover from predators. Shorelines with weedlines, stumps or docks tend to hold fish as well as offshore weed beds, lily pads and

slop. Healthy and lively weeds will hold small insects, plankton and crustaceans cueing the food chain.

If you haven’t tried topwater, I encourage you to give it a try this summer! The results can be explosive!

Ashley Rae is a freelance writer, seminar speaker and sponsored angler from Ontario, Canada. She has a passion for year-round fishing and promoting the outdoor lifestyle. Find her at SheLovesToFish.com.

Click to watch!



Check out Ashley Rae’s inspiring boating story filmed by Discover Boating!

EXPLORE.

Stand Up Paddling

That's what SUP!

The simplicity of
SUP brings many
women to enjoy the
water in a new way

By Katie Gilbert





Stand up paddling has dominated as one of the fastest growing sports worldwide over the last five years. What is stand up paddling, or SUP, as it is also known? It is as simple as paddling on an overgrown surfboard while standing up!

Although relatively new to the mainland, native islanders have been standing while paddling for centuries; it was only natural that SUP would eventually catch on all around the world. Catch on it has! It seems you cannot drive past your local lake without seeing stand up paddlers out on the water. If you were to ask one of those local paddlers why they love this sport, you may hear words like simplicity, versatility, total body workout and just plain fun!

EXPLORE.

A Calling for Women


The simplicity of SUP is due to the activity only requiring a board, lifejacket, paddle and leash. This is an element that has made women a major force in the sport. Women as competent paddlers is nothing new, as we have always been water lovers, yet some ladies have experienced discontent with the size and weight of canoes and kayaks. Problem solved with SUP!

A good board weighs between 25 to 35 pounds, making it very easy to carry a board to and from the water. Also, you do not need a special, expensive rack on your car to transport your board. This convenience is opening up paddling to a whole new group of women.

Endless Possibilities

The versatility of SUP derives from the unlimited ways you can participate in the sport. Paddle while standing, sit on the board or lay down and work on your tan. Put your life-vested toddler or dog on the front of your board and let them enjoy a day on the water with you.

Although many think of surfing when they think of stand up paddling, SUP can be done on any body of water. Ponds, lakes, rivers, oceans... you name it and someone has SUPed it! Use your board as a platform to swim, fish or bowfish. I have even seen people duck hunt from their SUP board (yes, they make them in camo)!



Stand up paddling has simple needs and is a lighter-weight option compared to canoes and kayaks, making it a big draw to women.



Many stand up paddling classes are available for beginners and fitness.

Looking for a fun workout? Stand up paddle may just be what you are looking for. SUP is primarily a core workout, but it sure doesn't miss the opportunity to hit your legs and arms. Not to mention that you can take your yoga practice and fitness routine onto your board. SUP Yoga and SUP Fit classes are selling out all over the country. Who doesn't want to have fun and forget you are working out?

Where to Begin

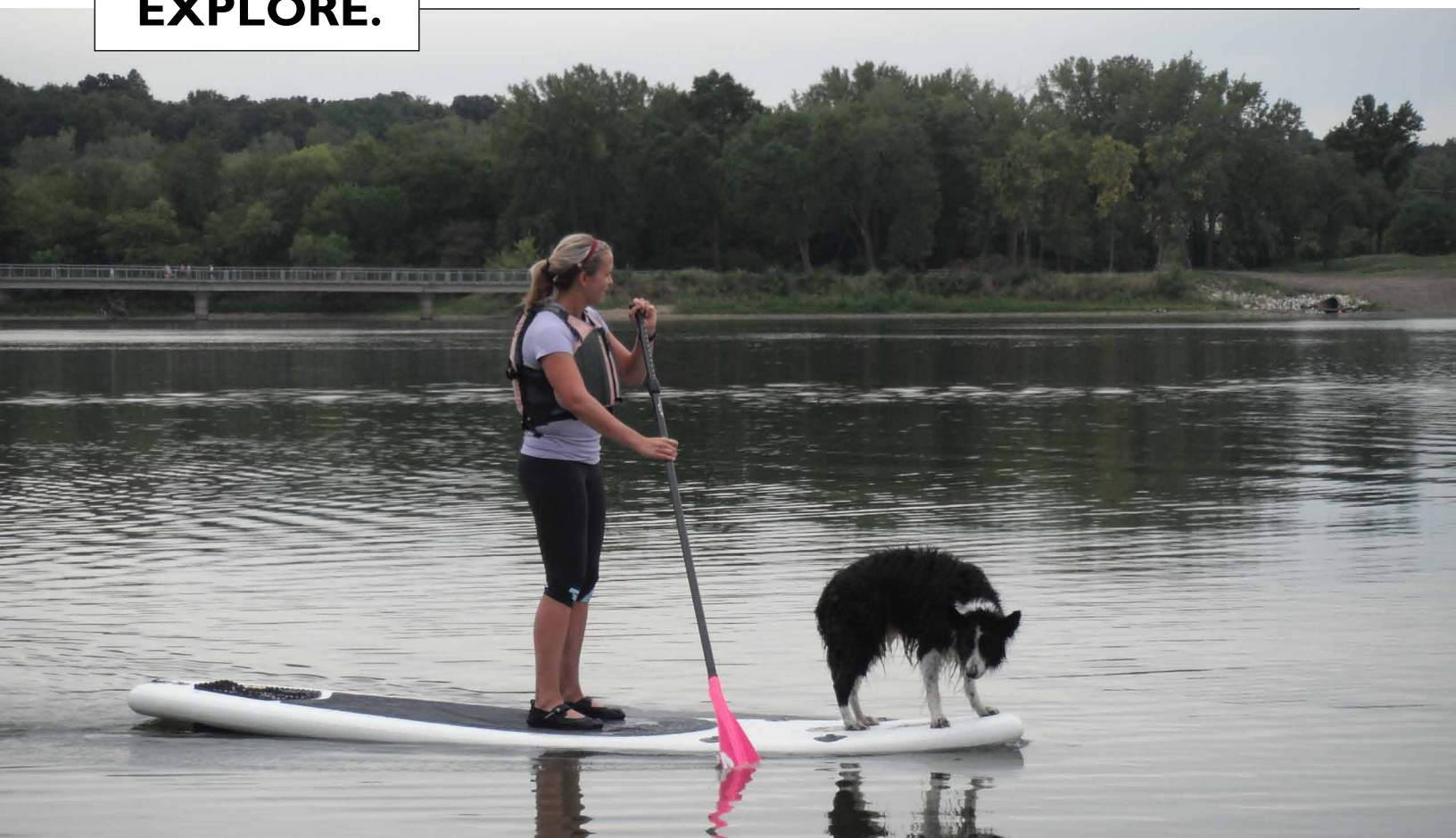
How do you get started in stand up paddling? Buying your own board and paddle can be pricey, but what's great is you don't necessarily need your own board and paddle. Many community lakes around the country are now offering stand up paddleboard rentals by the hour or for the day. Try doing a quick Internet search of your local area.

Although a lesson is not 100 percent necessary, it is always a good idea if you're new to SUP. With a beginner lesson, you will learn the essentials to help you enjoy your time on the water, not to mention learning the safety aspects of the sport, which is always a great idea. A good certified instructor should be able to prepare you and your family for a lifetime of stand up paddling enjoyment!

Paddleboarding Tips:

- Use a leash for your own safety and safety of others
- Fin(s) in the back of the board is the right way
- Paddle with your core, not your arms to tire less, more power
- Head up, look at the horizon, weight over your toes
- If you fall, fall away from the board so you don't get hurt





Looking the Part

Now that you are ready to tackle a class or rent a board, what do you wear? I personally love to SUP barefoot, but some conditions require water shoes or sandals. If your local water hole is filled with rocks instead of being blessed with white sandy beaches, you are going to want your water shoes!

Getting wet while paddling is always a possibility, so try to wear fast drying sports clothes or your swimsuit. Most importantly, remember that the sun is always hotter out on the water, so please don't forget sunscreen and your water bottle! It is also a good idea to bring along a towel and change of clothes so you will be comfortable on your drive home.

To put it simply, SUP is just good, healthy fun! It is an activity you can use to steal away some much-needed time for yourself.

Sneaking away into nature to restore your sanity and find some solace.

If you are more of the social type, use SUP as a way to have a blast with a group of friends or family. Lawn chairs, coolers and a bonfire on the beach, while everyone plays on the boards, is what summer is all about! If you are anything like me, this summer will include a little bit of both.

That is what makes stand up paddling so great; it molds to fit your lifestyle. Take that step and try SUP today - you will love it!

Katie Gilbert of Iowa is a wife, mom and the owner of No Coast Stand Up LLC. She is a certified Water Safety and SUP Instructor with the World Paddle Association. Katie loves the outdoors and believes that watersports are a great way to get your family outside. NoCoastStandUp.com



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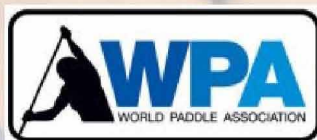
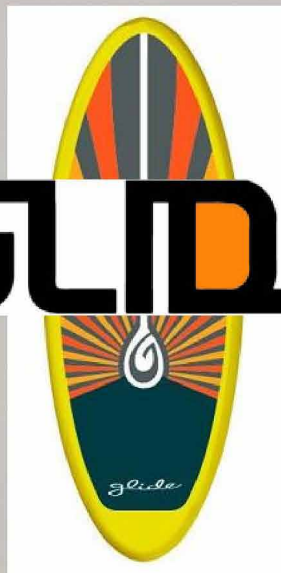
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EXPLORE.

Tips to **TAKE GREAT** outdoor **PHOTOS**

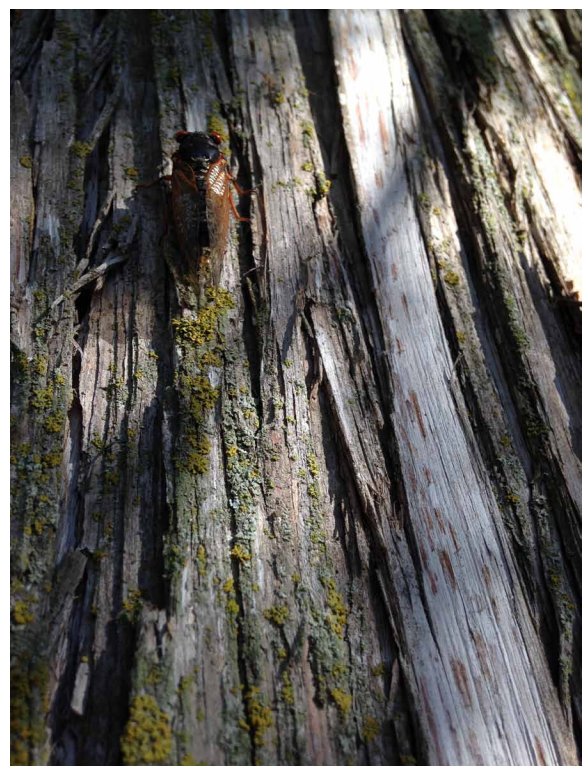


It's amazing how instant everything is nowadays... that includes photography. Thanks to technology, you don't have to have a huge, expensive camera to take remarkable photos and you don't have to wait to see or edit them. You can capture beauty at its finest with something as simple as a phone and share it with the world seconds later. Anyone can be an amazing photographer - here are some tips!



“Feel” it

Think about textures when taking a photo. These details really pull the viewer in like they are seeing it in real life and can almost feel it for themselves.



Not afraid to look like a fool

The shot of this red-spotted purple butterfly was from running around in a field for about a half-hour. I later read how fast they are... I know I looked like an idiot, but it was worth it! If you watch a good photographer, they are always moving. Standing up on a chair, laying down on the ground and moving here and there to get that perfect shot.



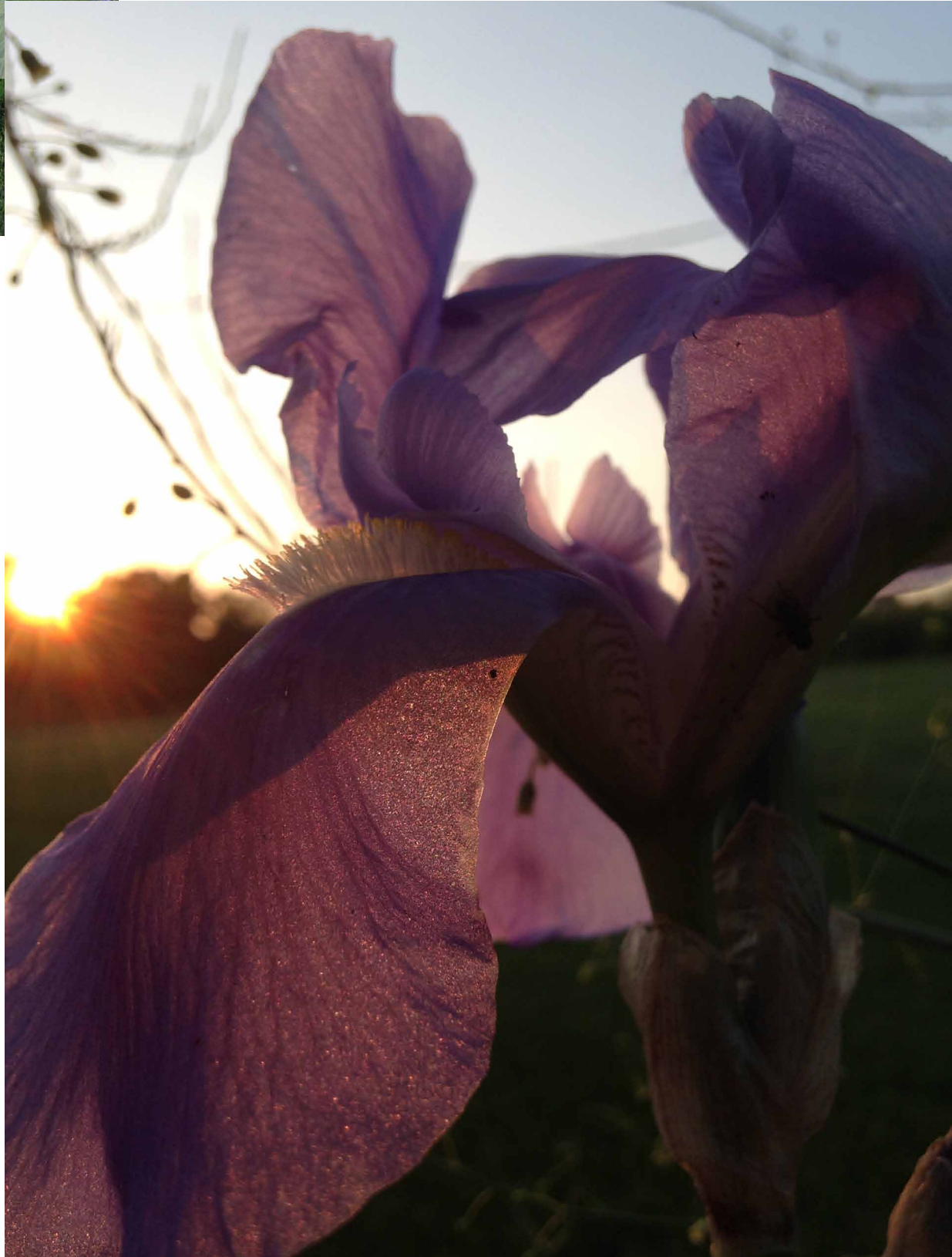
Find the beauty

These two photos are from the same set - the difference between a 'nothing' photo and an amazing photo is often just getting close enough to the subject and finding the right angle. Here, you can choose what you want, or want to avoid, in your background to create the right shot.

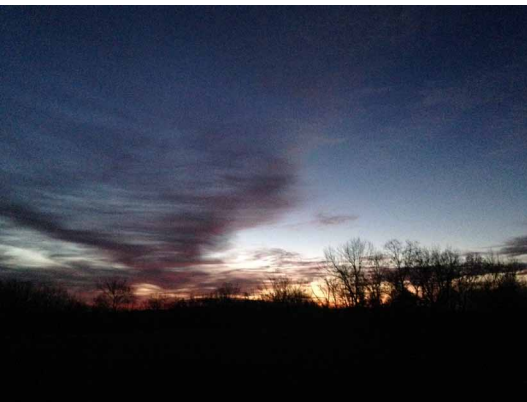
Contrast

Great light and darkneses in a photo automatically tend to catch our eyes.

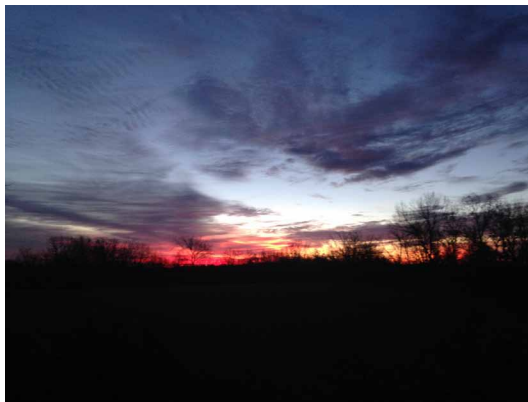
And it creates really beautiful moments. These are often from playing with light whether from a sunrise, sunset or somewhere in between with sunlight and shadows during the day.



6:22:39 AM



6:34:23 AM



6:42:35 AM



Timing is everything

Timing really is everything when it comes to getting the right photo, so take a lot of photos. In this sunset, I was bowhunting during deer season on the edge of an open field. As it started to lighten up a bit, I could already tell this was going to be a sunset I'd never forget. I started taking photos every couple minutes, and as the climax of the sunrise got closer, I started shooting more and more. Looking back on the photos and times, one second made the difference. The next second the peak color had already started to decrease.

6:45:47 AM



EXPLORE.



Showing enjoyment

Capture moments of people enjoying the great outdoors. The bridge, sky and water in the photo above was already beautiful, but it meant so much more to me capturing the neat act of kayakers tapping the bridge as they passed under it. On the left, this photo was during a boat ride back to camp after an afternoon of fishing. I looked over to see my niece, Madyson, eyes closed and feeling the wind on her face. I don't know how many times I've felt like that myself and seeing this photo takes me back to it every time.



Photo editing

All of the photo examples so far have been without editing; however, sometimes you are never going to get the perfect photo naturally. For example, this photo taken in the middle of the day had harsh lighting. This is when to use Photoshop or Instagram filters to correct your photo.




Knowing when to leave it be

And sometimes the best photo comes from knowing when to do absolutely nothing but just point, click and then admire mother nature's true beauty exactly how it is. -JP

LIVE.

Light it up!

Building the perfect campfire



I'm not sure how building a fire became a 'man's thing.' A little finesse goes a long ways, and that's why I think it's the perfect skill for women! From my observations, men tend to throw big logs together, stuff with campsite garbage and douse with lighter fluid. Hmm... do you want to eat something off that? Well, you can actually build the perfect campfire in just a few minutes. Put down the lighter fluid and think layers.



Newspaper

Large logs

Small logs

Twigs



1

First, lay large logs on the bottom for a long-lasting base.



2

Pile your twigs on top of the logs.



3

Stack your smaller, longer logs around the base forming a teepee.

Crumple individual pieces of newspaper and stuff them around the circle in the twigs. I use five wads.



4

Light each wad of newspaper with a lighter and watch it go!



5

Three minutes later. The wads of newspaper start the twigs that catch the small logs that burn the large logs! ~PJ



Ta da!



LIVE.

PLANT A TREE. EAT A PIE.

This is not about making the perfect pie. This is about trying something new, finding something delicious and planning for the future.

Last year, I had a blast picking away at my mom's cherry tree. I soon realized - what the heck am I going to do with ALL of these beautiful cherries!

I honestly never expected to make a pie, or at least for 20 more years. But, after looking around in my parent's house, I found some pre-made pie crusts in the fridge. I had always assumed pies were these tricky things best left up to grandmas,

but the idea had been sparked. I wondered... so I googled how to make a cherry pie. To my amazement, there was a recipe that took very little ingredients, all of which we already had in the house! I thought, "Why not?!" It'll be a baking adventure!

I couldn't believe how easy it was to make! Sugar, cornstarch and water/juice magically turn into amazing gel! It wasn't a pretty pie, I didn't research technique or take my time, but dang, in the eye of this beholder - it looked awesome! But, I couldn't believe it when we tasted it! I loved the pie and so did all my family!

I felt so special making it start to finish and wanted to share the enjoyment... and the secret grandmas don't want you to know... pies are not hard! Sure, some are difficult and can be made so decorated they are more art than pie, but there are many out there that are surprisingly simple and you just have to be willing to give them a try.

Since then, I've tackled several others such as strawberry pie and my favorite, lemon meringue pie, with the same great results from simple recipes. I'm not a baker and I don't spend much time in the kitchen (I'd rather be outside), but this simple act of picking cherries really opened a new world and interest to me. Just like with hunting, fishing, gardening and farming, I was so proud and felt connected to the food. If you've never made a pie, I hope you'll try this because you'll surprise yourself! And it inspired me to plant my own tree for many years of cherry pies to come! Here's how to do it!

PLANT A TREE

Sweet cherries are the ones most often found in markets. However, it's sour/tart cherries that are widely used for pies, preserves and other cooking uses. Common varieties for sour cherry trees include: 'Early Richmond' (early), 'Montmorency' (midseason) and 'Meteor' (late).

There are standard-size trees and dwarf trees as well as self-pollinating trees. If you do not have a self-pollinating tree, you'll need at least two or three cherry trees so they can pollinate each other (make sure the varieties will work together). It is said a standard-size tree can start bearing fruit their fourth year, producing 30 to 50 quarts of cherries each year.

The tree we selected is a Montmorency SR Semi-Dwarf Cherry (\$69.99 6.5gal) that is self-pollinating so you don't have to have multiple trees. It blooms in the spring, and then produces large, red cherries that ripen around June 30. They are tart cherries perfect for pies and preserves. Since this is a semi-dwarf tree, it will grow

to approximately 12 to 15 feet tall by 12 feet wide. Keep the roots moist until well-established, covering with three to four inches of mulch.

PICKING/PITTING

With a little tug, cherries pop off the stem on the tree so easy - then refrigerate them. However, they should be used or froze as soon as possible (no more than a week). Before baking or freezing, you'll need to pit and rinse them first. If freezing, once pitted and rinsed,



Newly planted tart cherry tree.

LIVE.

pat with a paper towel and place your desired amount in a freezer Ziploc storage bag. The quart size works well for the four cups needed for a pie.

HOMEMADE CHERRY PIE

Ingredients:

4 C fresh or frozen tart cherries
1 to 1-1/2 C granulated sugar
4 T cornstarch
1/4 tsp. almond extract
Pastry for double-crust pie (9-inches)
Sprinkle of sugar

Directions:

Place cherries in medium saucepan and place over medium heat. Cover. After the cherries lose considerable juice, which may take a few minutes, remove from heat. In a small bowl, mix sugar and cornstarch together (make sure to mix, if not, the cornstarch can clump in the next step). Pour this mixture into the hot cherries and mix well. Mix in the almond extract (if you do not have, you can go without the almond extract). Return mixture to the stove and bring to a boil, stirring frequently. The mixture will become cloudy and then turn into gel after boiling. Cook and stir gel for 2 minutes or until thickened.

Remove
from heat
and



let cool. If the filling is too thick, add a little water, too thin, add a little more cornstarch.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Place one crust in the bottom of an 8- to 9-inch pie pan. Trim bottom crust along pan edge. Pour cooled cherry mixture into the crust. Moisten the edge of the bottom crust. Place top crust over filling and wrap excess top crust under bottom crust edge. Press edges together to seal; flute. Cut slits in center of top crust for steam to escape. Sprinkle with sugar.

Bake for about 50 minutes, covering the crust edges loosely with strips of foil after the first 20 minutes (so the crust doesn't harden/darken too much). Remove from oven and place on rack to cool. Let cool for at least one hour, if not a couple hours, before serving or the pie can be extremely runny.

Enjoy! ~JP



Thick, beautifully red filling.



+last shot



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