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# RUBS & SCRAPES AND

*The Official Publication of the*

**MARYLAND BOWHUNTERS SOCIETY**



*Spring* **2024**

*Reginald L. Butler*  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEE BOSTIC





# 2024 MARYLAND BOWHUNTERS' SOCIETY BANQUET

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

### Maryland Bowhunters Society

Reporting Date  
12/31/2023

#### SUMMARY TOTALS

Starting Balance ..... \$33,257.87

Income ..... \$1,027.76

Expenses ..... \$1,181.67

BALANCE 12/31/2023 \$33,103.96

12/31/2023 GAIN/LOSS -\$153.91

#### INCOME

2024 Banquet Income ..... \$577.59

Membership Income ..... \$450.17

TOTAL INCOME \$1,027.76

#### FUNDS NOT INCLUDED IN BALANCE

(Cash Box) ..... \$300.00

#### RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

Lee Bostic  
Treasurer, MBS

#### SPECIAL FUNDS INCLUDED IN BALANCE

MD NASP ..... \$3,500.00

LAC ..... \$2,500.00

EDUCATION ..... \$3,000.00

#### EXPENSES

Bank Service Charges ..... \$0.00

Operational Expenses ..... \$114.90

Rubs and Scrapes

2024 Banquet Expenses ..... \$1,066.77

TOTAL EXPENSES \$1,181.67

#### DONATIONS

TOTAL DONATIONS \$0.00

#### TOTAL EXPENSES

\$1,181.67



### MBS Updates

Treasurer's Report ..... 3  
By Lee Bostic

### MBS Features

President's Message ..... 4  
By Lou Compton

#45 ..... 6  
By Eric Bonner

Doug's Story: Sika Stag Slam ..... 10  
By Maribeth Kulynycz in  
collaboration with Doug Wigfield

A Drone Recovery ..... 15  
By Maribeth Kulynycz

Just Enough Time for Success ..... 19  
By Maribeth Kulynycz

Go West Young Man ..... 25  
By Vincent Bowles

High 9 ..... 30  
By Rob Hurd

Coyote ..... 33  
By Maribeth Kulynycz

On the **COVER**  
"Sikaville Sunset"

Photo by  
Lee Bostic

The Story of 'Hops' ..... 35  
By Tanner Jameson

Maryland's Traditional  
Archery Rendezvous ..... 38  
By Andrew Gray

### MBS OFFICERS

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Vice President – TJ Jenkins  
Executive Secretary – Maribeth Kulynycz  
Membership Secretary – Sherrill Neese  
Treasurer – Lee Bostic

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Gloria Bostic  
Maribeth Kulynycz

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Upper Eastern Shore Chapter – Paul Burrows  
Eastern Shore Chapter – James Gurney  
Central Chapter – Walt Allensworth  
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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**H**ello to all – I hope your spring has gone well and that many of you were able to enjoy some success in the spring Turkey season. Maryland Turkey hunters harvested a record 5,536 gobblers this past season with almost every county seeing record harvests. Right on the heels of turkey season comes spring fishing season. We had a rather mild spring with plenty of good opportunities to get out and chase those fish.

While many of you were focusing on the gobblers and the spring fishing though, a handful of dedicated MBS members and officers were busy monitoring and either advocating for or defending against proposed legislative measures that would affect future hunting seasons. These individuals donated numerous hours of their time as they networked with other sportsman's and outdoor groups to peel back the many layers of proposed legislation to best safeguard and advance your hunting heritage. This type of volunteer effort is probably the most thankless and also the most frustrating at times. Having been involved with the effort myself for several years, I can attest to that personally.

We would all hope that hunting would be one area of our lives that politics stay out of, but the truth is hunting regulations are driven as much by politics as they are by science-based input from professional wildlife managers from our MD DNR, Wildlife & Heritage Service. Adding even more frustration to the mix is that most elected officials here in MD do not hunt nor have they ever hunted. They are easily swayed by passionate activists from all sides of the issue thus creating potentially anti-hunting legislative efforts.

It takes dedicated pro-hunting volunteers to stay on top of potential problems and then to work with the few pro-hunting elected officials who serve in MD, along with our Wildlife & Heritage Service folks to ensure that our hunting privileges remain intact and that wildlife populations continue to be managed properly.

Now that the legislative season is over, we all can breathe a bit easier at least until next January when the madness starts all over again. So, when your deer hunting is drawing to a close next January, consider getting involved by joining those other volunteers who stand in the gap protecting your hunting heritage.

Thank you for your membership, and I look forward to seeing many of you at a future MBS function or maybe even in the legislative halls of Annapolis one day.

Lou Compton,  
MBS President

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# #45

BY ERIC BONNER



It's the first day of Maryland's gun season, and I am sitting up on a hillside in Western Maryland off Rabbit Hollow Road. Never been here before. Myself and 3 friends, Rob, Joe, and John, walked up a tram-road and broke off to the left one by one. I was the first. I walked up the hill with a flashlight completely blind to the woods I was walking in. I got to the top and flashed my light around to find a comfortable place to sit against a tree and wait for the sunrise. I saw a few flashlights below me walking in on that trail. Luckily nobody else walked up the hill towards me. This was my hill this morning. Long story short, about an hour or two after sunrise, a spike buck walked broadside to me about seventy-five yards downhill. My heart was pumpin'. I laid my 300 Win. Mag. on my knees and aimed at his chest with my cross hairs and hastily squeezed. Holey Moley, I just shot my 1st deer. That happened on November 24th, 1990.

I went thirteen years from my first season without shooting a deer. My first hunting season was in 1977. I was twelve. There were many notable things that happened in 1977. Elvis Presley died, and the movies Slap Shot, Saturday Night Fever, Smokie and the Bandit,

and Star Wars were released in theaters. We also went to Canada and fished lake Nippasing for a week where I caught my first Northern Pike. Right after we came home, the Johnstown Flood happened. (I lived there by the way), Apple II computers went on sale, and the Space Shuttle made its first free flight from the back of a 747. What a year! Oh, and more importantly my wife graduated from Winston Churchill, and last but not least, the MBS was formed. Sorry, I got sidetracked. Back to 1990.

So, two days after my first deer kill, I was hunting with my Dad in Pennsylvania again. November 26th, 1990—We walked in at low light, how he always did. That was how my Dad hunted back then. We walked in during sunrise and walked out at sunset with low light. Well, first off, God love my Dad, that's not how I do it now. Anyway, I broke off to the right from the creek up a hill and found my spot at the crest. Not long after sunrise I shot my second deer. A small three-point buck. Wow, two bucks in three days after nothing in thirteen years. I was one happy young hunter.

The following season I wacked my first bow kill. A nice four-point. It was just your average four-point, but I was pretty proud of myself killing it with a bow. Later in the '91 season I shot a half-rack with five points on his left side



back off Rabbit Hollow Rd. again with my rifle. It was a big bodied deer. I was slowly creeping up the "Rack" ladder. By the '92 bow season I was getting deep into my hard-core archery obsession. The '92 season was only a week in when I arrowed a beautiful eleven-point. He was a main frame eight with three stickers on one side. Bingo, I hit paydirt. My Dad died the following year, but he got to see the finished mount a week before he passed.

Dickey Paul in Easton mounted it for me. I wonder if anybody remembers him. He was a big guy with a big heart. He is long gone now, but I'll never forget him giving me the riot act for putting my drag rope around his neck. Early season bucks have that short hair and its hard on the taxidermist to hide the damage. He did a good job though. My good friend Captain Greg from Crisfield was with me in the woods that day and was friends with Dickey so he turned me onto him. That was a \$195ish bill. Pretty cheap.

From there my buck kill stories go on and on and on. I have been blessed with opportunities and have a wall to prove it. I have been very fortunate to have had private properties to hunt over the years. Some days it was hard to decide which property I wanted to hunt. I mean, I hunted almost every single day.

Well, the older I get, the less aggressively I hunt, and unfortunately, I started losing those properties. We all have friends from back in the day that were huge hunters, and

you bump into them at 7/11 and chat. "Hey bud, how's it going? You still huntin'?" "Nah, I lost that property I had, I don't hunt anymore." That always bummed me out to hear that. So here I am in that same scenario. As of today, I only have one private property left to hunt. It was always my last go-to spot, just to break things up a few years ago. Last season (21/22) I only shot two small does. I actually picked up a fresh roadkill deer right by my house to help fill my freezer. But that's another story.

So, the 22/23 season commences, and I didn't hunt until the first Saturday at the farm. Boom, I wacked a doe that morning. I took it home and had a blast cutting it up for the freezer. The following Saturday I hunted again in the same tree, my second hunt. Again, I was gifted the opportunity on a doe and connected. So now I am two for two. I don't think I have ever done that before.

Coming into that season I had forty-four bucks on my resume, that I can recall. The last buck I killed was in 2019. My standards have dropped a bit, but I still let the smaller bucks walk, or maybe I missed? Anyway, a few



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years ago, a buddy of mine (I'll call him Tony) shot a spike. We were talking and he had shot a spike the past season so I made some comment about shootin' spikes, and he says, "I can't let a spike walk". And this dude shoots some nice deer. We laughed and kept talking. But for some reason that conversation has stuck with me for the last ten years. The best part of shooting deer to me lately is the after party and the butchering process. It is extremely rewarding to me. So, shooting a spike just gives me another opportunity to have some fun. Gradually I started getting a hankering to shoot a spike. After all, I haven't shot a spike since my first buck. I have had a few opportunities, but never quite saw the right one or had it play out.

So along comes the third Saturday, and I am sitting in the same tree again for my third hunt of the season. It starts getting light, and the birds start chirping. Squirrels are shaking tree limbs and scratching bark as they chase each other. I see a few deer far off on the next property over, and it just feels great to be in the woods. It got full light so I pulled my phone out to see what time it was, and I heard something above me. Here comes a deer at a slow jog. I shoved my phone back in my pocket and raised my bow to ready. I see horns, and then see that it's a spike. I raise my bow up, draw, and give an uurrppp. He stops at about fifteen yards, and my brain says SHOOT. It was a good shot. I watched him run down out of the woods, and into the field. I lost sight, but I heard him crash into the hedgerow below. Tracking was no problem, but he made it through the hedgerow and about twenty-five yards into the neighboring property's yard. I drug him back into the hedgerow out of the sun to field dress him, took a few pictures, stopped, and started thinking about where I was and what just happened.

As always, I started thinking of my dad. I haven't hunted with him since 1992 or so. He was only fifty-three when he died, and I have outlived him by five years now. Then I started getting these weird morbid thoughts. My first buck was a spike. I just shot my second spike, thirty-two years later. Buck number forty-five as it turns out. I started getting emotional. What if these spikes are the bookends to my hunting career? What if I never shoot another buck? I've had a hell of a run so I'm OK with it I guess. What if I never shoot another doe? Anyway, I did shoot one more doe on the last Saturday of the season.

So, here's to hunting with ghosts, more blood trails, new stories, and just maybe that ten-point Buck which has eluded me all these years.



## In Memory Of

Unfortunately, this was the last article Eric will write for the magazine. We lost Eric on February 6, 2024.

We also lost another great supporter of MBS on January 5, 2024, Earl McSorley (Bowdeadly).

Condolences to family and friends.

*Father, when my last hunt is over  
and I leave this world behind,*

*I would like to ask a favor if  
you would be so kind.*

*That when I enter the pearly gates  
and come into your glory land*

*Instead of the mansion you promised me Lord,  
How about an old tree stand?*



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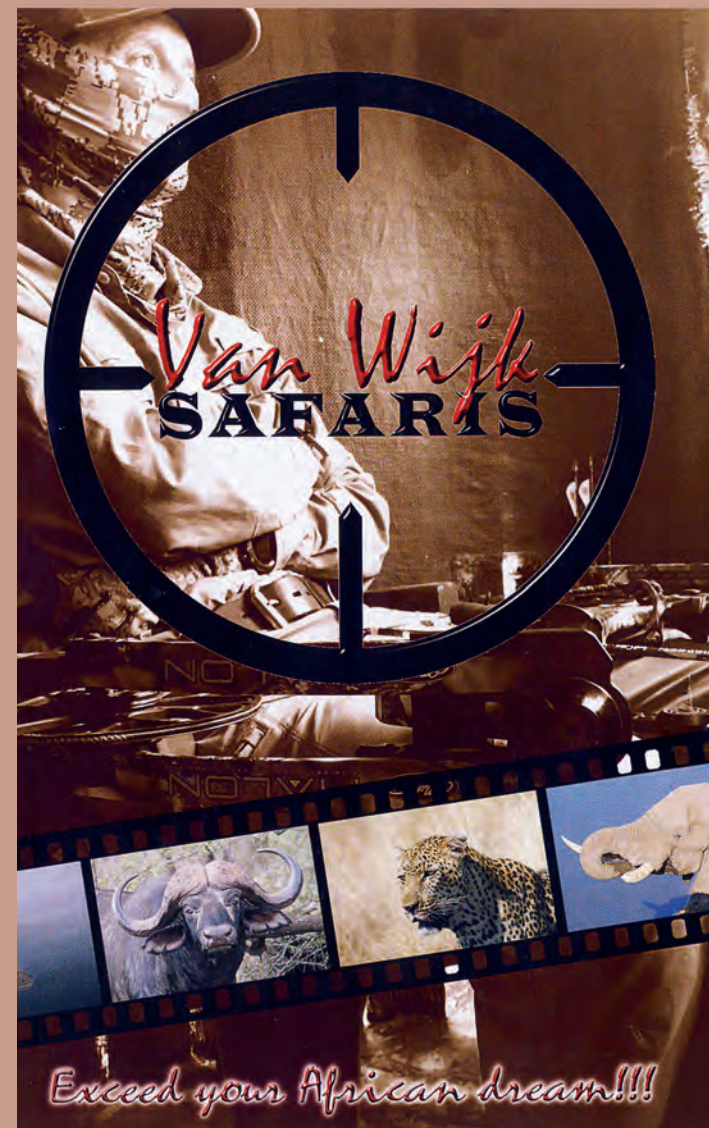
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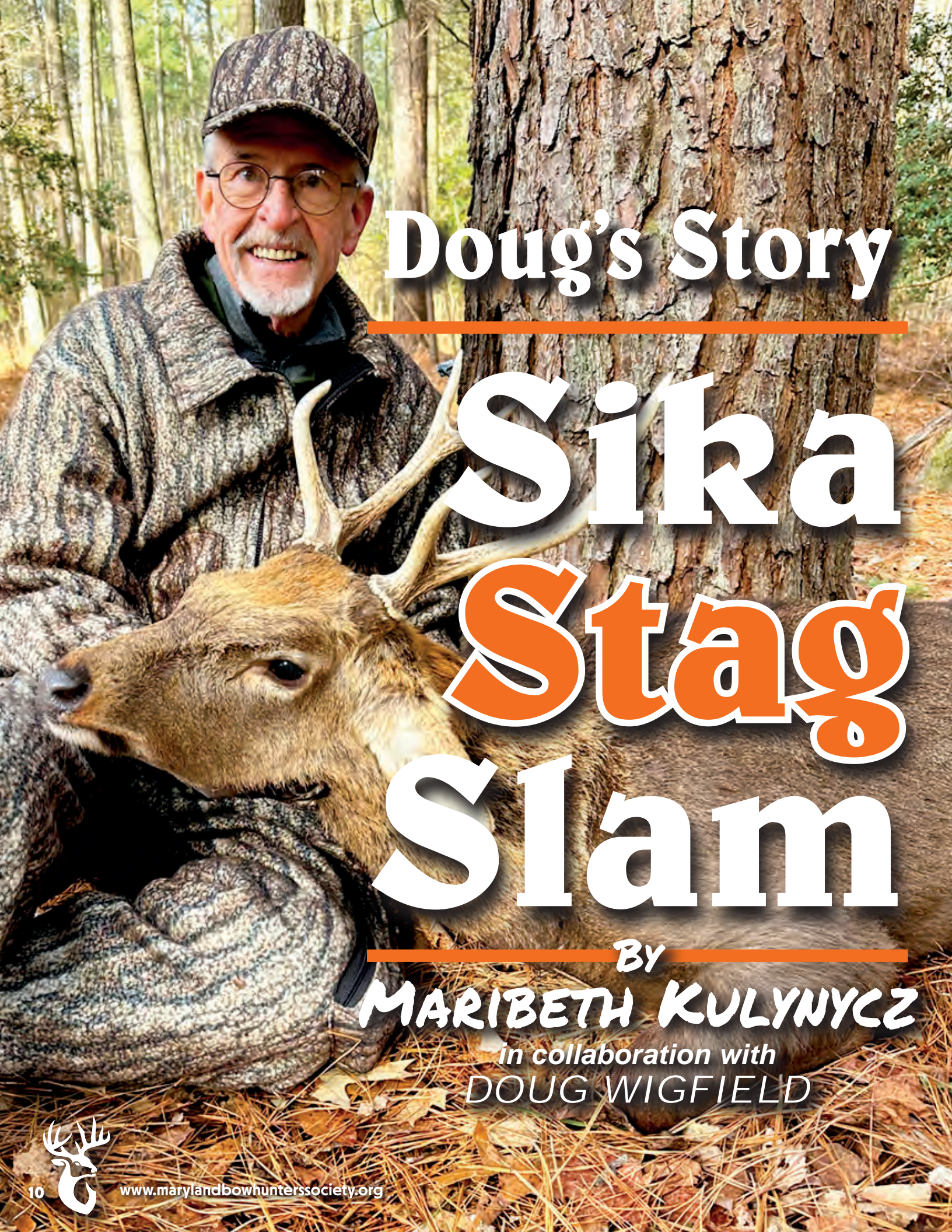
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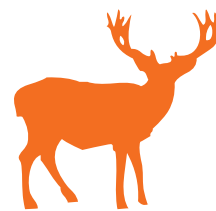




## Doug's Story

# Sika Stag Slam

BY  
**MARIBETH KULYNYCZ**  
in collaboration with  
**DOUG WIGFIELD**



**B**eing out in the woods is always a blessing, one that we often take for granted, but what would you do if you got news that rocked your whole world? Like hearing your doctor say the word cancer. You've only got two choices, give up, or fight with all you have, making memories along the way. And fight is exactly what Doug Wigfield chose to do.

Doug was born and raised in Hagerstown. He left there in 1970 and headed to Eastern Kentucky University where he got a BS in Wildlife Management. He went on to serve in the Army and National Guard for nine years. His love for the outdoors began in 1962 hunting turkeys, deer, squirrels & pheasants. His bow hunting career began in 1974, and in the same year a good friend by the name of Bob introduced him to traditional archery.

Doug spent thirty-four and a half years as a Wildlife Biologist with Maryland DNR. As the Eastern Region Manager for Wildlife and Heritage. Although he was passionate about all the wildlife projects he was a part of, he found sika deer particularly fascinating. He was part of a unique project where DNR captured and tagged 258 sika deer from 1988-1993. This study yielded information, about dispersal and movement, that was desired about this exotic species from Japan. This left him with a strong desire to study, understand, and pursue these amazing animals.

In his final four to five years with DNR he served as the NASP Coordinator, helping to instill a love of archery in the hearts of so many young people across the state. Doug's passion for archery and the outdoors is contagious and led him to be inducted into the Maryland Bowhunters Society Archery Hall of Fame. If you've had the chance to hear his stories or delve into his vast library of outdoor knowledge you can consider yourself lucky.

In all his time learning about sika deer, their vocalizations really intrigued him. He created the first ever sika call on the market, the "Sika Seducer" which is still being used by hunters all across the United States and Europe.

Doug was diagnosed in September of 2022 with a rare small bowel cancer, and in that moment, he prayed for God to allow him the opportunity to just sit in the woods again for his 60th turkey season. He didn't care if he killed a gobbler, he just longed for the healing power of nature. He never could have imagined what was in store for him. He not only made his way into the woods, but during the next week he killed two Maryland long beards and a Virginia bird as well. He thanked the Lord his prayers had been answered and counted his blessings as the 2023 deer season approached.

Again, he prayed just to make it afield. The neuropathy in his hands and feet had become nearly unbearable. After losing 70 lbs. and significant muscle mass, he was no longer comfortable climbing into a tree stand. It all seemed daunting, but then he got a phone call from Bob.



The very Bob who had helped put that recurve in his hand 50 years ago.

Their friendship had stood the test of time and now with Doug facing one of the most difficult times of his life, Bob was honored to step up and help Doug get into the woods. He set up ground blinds and even raked trails to them so he could sneak in and out. But he wanted to take it one step further, he set a goal for Doug to go for the Stag Grand Slam, a stag with each weapon. It seemed like an impossible task, his time in the woods would be limited but he vowed to make each sit count and capitalize if the opportunity came.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 12







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Doug gathered his strength and headed to his set up with his Thompson Center Encore handgun, in 7mm-08 caliber. He has always been an avid gun hunter and one heck of a shot but using the handgun added another level to his challenge. That morning as he sat taking in the beauty of the sunrise and thanking God for another hunt, he was suddenly jolted to reality when a beautiful stag showed up. He was a fighter. They recalled seeing him on camera just days before with his full 6 point frame, but Doug realized he had broken one beam nearly clean off. Still, he didn't hesitate. He took the shot and watched with pure joy as the stag fell not thirty-five yards from the shot.

It was a moment full of emotion that he will never forget. And although he would have been thrilled to call it a successful season right there, Bob pushed him to come back for muzzleloader season; part two of the slam.

Once again Doug pushed the worries and constant pain aside and headed into the woods. This time with his Thompson Center Encore muzzleloader handgun in 50 cal. He couldn't believe his eyes when a mature, 6 point stag stuck his head out of the thick vegetation and meandered out into the open. He waited for a quartering away shot, squeezed the trigger,

and shattered the silence. 70 grains of triple 7 powder delivered a 250 grain Shockwave bullet through the lungs. Two stags. He cried, tears of joy yet again, so thankful for the opportunity to hunt with his friend and take yet another amazing stag.

It seemed as if the elusive Stag Grand Slam was in reach, but nothing is guaranteed in the hunting world. With it being late season, the deer were flightier and Doug realized he could not pull back his recurve or compound, so he opted for the crossbow.

His hopes were high that morning as several hinds wandered through at first light. Then suddenly he saw a dark figure, it was a small stag, followed by another small stag. His heart was racing as he realized there was another deer bringing up the rear, a mature stag. He had to be patient and wait for the right opportunity and in a flash the shot was taken and the illuminatednock on the bolt disappeared into the kill zone.

Bob was waiting close by and the two picked up the track. At times things looked hopeful and then the blood trail became sparser and they found themselves making circles in the woods praying to find a drop. They had to believe the stag would try to make it back to the marsh but after 2 hours of searching they were both feeling defeated and

exhausted. The brain fog that often accompanies chemo had set in and Doug was dehydrated, they knew they had to call it. Bob decided to head back to high ground and check a nearby trail camera while Doug desperately took one more look. But the trail was nowhere to be found. It seemed as if his dream season had slipped right through his hands.

Meanwhile, Bob was walking to check the camera with his head hung low. He was so disappointed they hadn't been able to recover this special stag for his friend. When suddenly something caught his eye, the stag was laying there right by the camera. It had taken a hard turn and went to high ground rather than the marsh. He was elated but realized he had the opportunity to play a little trick on his good friend.

He walked back to find Doug without a word and they jumped up in the truck commiserating and discussing what could have possibly gone wrong. Bob pulled up next to the trail camera at a nearby set up and asked Doug to describe what the stag looked like. Bob asked, "Did he look like that?" It took Doug a minute to grasp what Bob was saying, as he looked out the passenger's side window and saw his stag, the emotions washed over him. He had done it. The Lord had not only allowed him to hunt once more but showered blessings on him in the form of not only three turkeys and three stags but also a priceless friendship.

When this cancer battle began, Doug often felt alone: people don't know what to say, they are hesitant to call, and with a compromised immune system one has to spend a lot of time in isolation. But friendship and family have been the biggest comfort and support. You realize when you go through something like this just how many people actually care and how far your loved ones will go to put a smile on your face and help your dreams come true. Not only a rare triple sika slam but to do it with two handguns and a crossbow added an extra special twist to his dream season.

Doug will face the next steps of his journey with renewed strength. He says the Lord has been blessing him in 3's and perhaps that means three more seasons?! He laughed as he said it, but I told him I hope it means three more decades of sharing his experience and love for the outdoors and making many more memories like this season produced.

*"I've been battling cancer for nearly a year and half - the biggest challenge of my seventy-four-year life. God is with me on this cancer journey and has the ultimate plan for my life. Thanks to all, especially the MBS members, who have supported me by thoughts and prayers during this most difficult time. Thank you, Bob, for helping me to enjoy the most important sika season of my life."*

Doug Wigfield

*"Hard to put into words how happy we are for [Bucks, Bears, and Stags] team member and veteran sika deer hunter Doug Wigfield on putting a tag on his third stag of the season. [...] This story shows the value of having a great friend. One that stepped up to help a lifelong hunting buddy have another run at the fun he first experienced many, many years ago. From conversations I've had with*

*Doug, I know he would do anything to help this man too... a strong mutual friendship. You are a true inspiration to all of us to get out there and get it done Doug! Your courage and faith are amazing, and I believe that rewarded you with this success."*

Bobby Newton  
friend and fellow BBS measurer





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# A DRONE RECOVERY

BY MARIBETH KULYNYCZ



It's a bow hunter's nightmare, you've shot the deer of your dreams and lost blood during the track. It's a sickening feeling and in that moment you would do just about anything to recover your deer, but you don't want to head in with uncertainty and risk pushing it any farther. We now have access to a new tool that can help you get eyes on your deer without ever stepping foot in the area.

Drone recovery has the potential to drastically increase recovery rates, meaning less meat wasted and less sleep lost. I sat down with Tyler Richards of SkyHound Drone recovery to see what it's been like being one of the first people to enter this field. The technology has only been available in the last few years and operators must go through training and hold a commercial license. It's been a big investment but Tyler is passionate about helping people recover their deer and has plans to expand his operations in coming years.

When he arrives at a call they head to last blood and he sends the drone up to do a thermal grid search. The thermal

imaging picks up different heat signatures, once the animal is located, he switches to infrared imaging. If conditions are right, he can see enough detail to see exactly where the animal is hit, if it has expired, and what the best course of action is.

So how much time do you have? The sooner, the better. The heat signature changes once the animal has expired. If he can begin the search within 48 hours you have a very good chance. After that, the body breakdown releases its own heat signature which can still be detected days after expiration. The biggest factor in the recovery of an expired animal is to get the Skyhound team on sight as soon as possible. In this past season they were significantly more likely to recover the animal if hunters had not already pushed the deer.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 16







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There are certain conditions when this type of recovery is ideal. Late season when the leaves have fallen from the trees it becomes easier to scan the woods. Overcast days are best so the heat of the sun does not interfere. He also has to consider wind conditions and thermals. He must carefully choose the best flight time when chances of locating the animal are highest.

Many are hesitant when it comes to technological advances in the outdoors world. But one area people will pull out all the stops is deer recovery. As ethical hunters we must use every means within our grasp to recover the animals we pursue. It is important to understand that this tool is not going to give hunters any upper hand when it comes to the actual hunt, but when you're at your wits end with a dwindling blood trail before you, it just may be the tool that saves your hunting story.

Tyler Richards is located in Leesburg, VA and offers services across Maryland and Virginia. For more information, check out social media @skyhounddeerrecovry or visit the website [www.sky-hound.com](http://www.sky-hound.com)



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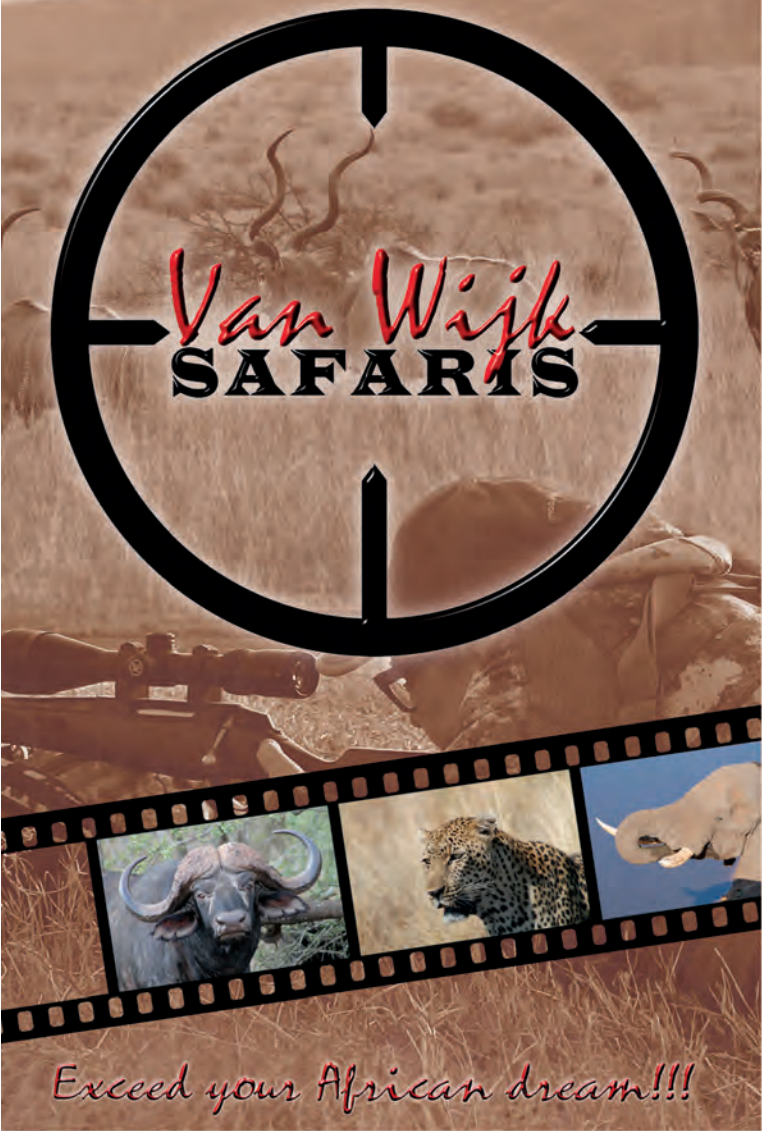


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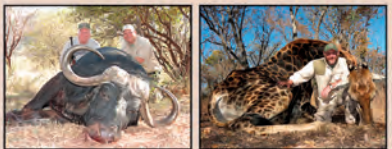
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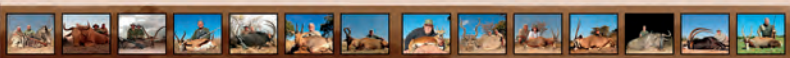
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# JUST ENOUGH TIME FOR SUCCESS



BY MARIBETH KULYNYCZ



**T**here have been seasons where I spent so much time in a tree it felt like I was losing it. I would put so much pressure on myself and then when I'd screw up, or not see anything, I would be devastated. I left many of those seasons feeling purely defeated.

But now looking back I realize those were the moments that helped build my patience, my strength, skills, and character as a hunter. As the 2023 season approached, I wasn't able to embrace it as I always had. For the first time in many years, I wasn't in a tree for opening day. Commitments at work and my niece playing her senior year of volleyball pulled me away from my perch. And I felt the impact, especially when my brother connected with a beautiful velvet buck on opening day.

I realized that I wouldn't be able to commit the amount of time that I had in seasons past and I felt in my heart it would be the worst season of my life. A little over a week into the season I was finally able to get in a tree. My brother had sat there the night before and watched a nice 8 come under a tree we had an old stand in. I wasn't sure if the shooting lanes would be clear but I had to go for it.

My brother sat about 70 yards from me, if that deer came out in the same area one of us should be able to get a shot. The wind was swirling, and before long I was greeted with the sound of snorts echoing through the woods behind me. I almost climbed down. What was the point when every deer in the area knew I was there? But right before sunset a little fawn walked in



CONTINUED ON PAGE 20







right in my wind and began grazing on acorns. I watched him for a good while, thinking maybe there was some hope after all.

I looked out over the setting sun, listening to the little fawn munching, when I heard a different sound. I turned to see a nice 8 pointer coming through the woods headed my way. But he was already close, almost too close. He chased the little fawn off and got even closer, almost right under my tree. I knew I had to take the shot before he caught my ground scent.

It was probably the closest shot I've ever taken, and I knew from mistakes past, with that angle I needed to hit high. But when the arrow flew, it looked too high. Too much arrow was sticking out and my heart sank, it looked like a straight up tenderloin shot. I hung my head and gave my brother a thumbs down.



As I climbed down to meet him, I told him I had messed it up, and we would never find that deer. But he held out hope and said let's just take a quick look. And sure enough, right near the shot sight we saw a little spray of blood. That was interesting, in years past I have tried to track high shots with no exit and typically there is no blood. We pulled out to go get Dad, but I was still very doubtful of the outcome.

Dad was shaking his head but he said there is a small chance you've hit the artery that runs down the tenderloin. I didn't think my luck was that good but off we went. As soon as we got to the woods edge, we could see my lighted nock. I thought, well good at least I'll get my arrow back.

As we weaved our way through the darkness, I thought the angle of the arrow looked strange for an arrow that should be laying on the ground. I could not believe my eyes, there he was. I don't think I could speak for several minutes.

I had not allowed myself to even dream that I would recover that deer.

Sure enough, I had hit the artery, the arrow had lodged in where the ribs and spine meet, but it did the trick. I took that bit of lucky success and used it to keep me warm as the season progressed and my stand time was still limited.

Every year after Christmas my brother and I head down to Texas for the end of their deer season. And you talk about bad luck, I was able to connect my very first deer hunt down there and it has been four very long years since then. Texas deer had destroyed my confidence so heading down I was just looking forward to getting some time away from the world. The separation from people and technology creates a magical place down there where all I had to worry about was what stand to hunt that day.

The trip started like many other Texas deer trips, lots of snorts, getting busted, and leaving the stand frustrated. But that Thursday afternoon something felt different. I have always had a curse when it came to 10 pointers, in all my years of hunting I have screwed up on every single one I encountered. But before the hunt I told my brother, this was the day the curse would be broken. He laughed at me, called me crazy, and said to get out of the truck.

I'm not sure I put any stock in what I said either but I was willing to try anything. I had hoped to set up a ground blind on the periphery of the set up to try and catch them circling. Texas deer always circle. When I got in sight, I began to look for a spot and found the perfect location, and to my shock a stand was already in the tree! Someone else had the same idea so I happily shimmied up the tree and began my wait.

In the stand that evening I decided to take a moment to reflect. I had a lot of guardian angels watching over me now and for some reason they seem to do their best work when I'm out in nature. So, I took a moment to speak to my most recent guardian angel, my friend John.

He was one of the reasons I fell in love with that land. He shared his vision and hope with me and we formed such a special friendship sitting together looking over the lake telling stories. I spoke to him in that moment, thanked him and said my goodbyes, and this next part sounds crazy but it's all true.

I asked my friend John to send me a sign if he was still with me and could hear me. I got specific and asked him to send me a big ol' buck. And I laughed out loud and said I know that's a little unreasonable so at least send a bird to land in the tree with me and let me know.

Time ticked on, no birds, no deer, it seemed as if my voice had been lost to the wind. With overcast skies it began to get dark early. I almost packed up my things and left but there was still ten minutes left, then I heard that distinct sound. Footsteps in the fallen leaves crunching my way. And there he was. Light was too low to see real detail of his rack but I knew he was a shooter. He was completely oblivious to my side set up and walked right to me. I tried to stop him

with a meep, but no sound came out!! I had to take the shot before he got into the brush.

With no lighted nock I couldn't tell a thing about penetration or shot placement, but something about it felt like the best shot of my life. I was shaking as I climbed down, I found one speck of blood and ran back to the lane where my brother would pick me up. He was in absolute disbelief when I told him the story. One of my brothers-in-law was along for his first Texas journey, and although they were hesitant to believe any parts of my story, they followed me in to take up the trail.

Blood was scarce, my heart was racing as coyotes started singing close by. I prayed they hadn't found him before me. I took a few more steps over a little hill and there he lay. The most perfect 10 pointer had fallen to a double lung shot. It truly was one of the best arrows I have ever sent. And the next sit, I had a woodpecker land in the tree with me and over twenty cardinals surround me. Perhaps it was just good timing? Maybe just a coincidence? But it sure felt like a gift from above when I finally got to hold my first 10 pointer in my hands.

This season is likely the least I've ever hunted. But in a twist, I had one of the most successful seasons of my life. If you had told me during those years I hunted 6-7 days a week and grinded until the wheels fell off, that I would hunt so little and emerge with two bucks, I would have never believed you. And on top of that my dad, brother, and even my little nephew took bucks this year too. What looked like a bleak season turned into one we will never forget.

Just maybe all those lessons learned in the slow seasons are the very reason I was successful. It just goes to show that even when everything is trying to keep you from the woods, if you make the most of the time you've got, the season will always be a success.







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I stared south over the slight berm surrounding the waterhole. The late August Colorado sun shone lazily in a partially clouded western sky. My watch read 1400. If today was like any of the others before it, the early afternoon hours seemed to be the time-of-day antelope were most active in the area. To the north I could see the outfitters truck rising above the hill. I looked around at my blind set up. The plywood box had adjustable windows on all sides. My prior knowledge from hunting whitetails in ground blinds and our outfitters adamant advice showed to keep the windows opened as minimally as possible. A task easier said than done for an east coast native who wanted to stare upon the big country of the southern Colorado plains. As I adjusted the windows slightly, I caught a glimpse of two black posts silhouetting above the southern berm. After nearly thirty hours logged in the blind without seeing a legal antelope it took me several moments for my mind to process what was occurring. As the antelope came into full view it was no longer a time to process. I spun across my milk crate seat and slid my hand to my bows old wooden grip. Months of planning, preparing, two days of travel, and thirty hours in a ground blind were coming down to this.

I am not sure where I first heard the expression “go west young man,” but it always sat heavily with me. Perhaps it was born with the mountain man movies I watched as a child. As the years ticked by, I progressed from playing frontiersman to becoming a bowhunter. Hunting magazines added to the western allure.

Photographs of elk, bighorn sheep, giant mule deer, and other western species dotted their pages and were imprinted in my mind. I always knew I had to bow hunt the west. It was always a distant fantasy. Something I would pursue “one day.” As I crossed the threshold of my mid-twenties, I realized that “one day” need no longer be such a distant time. The problem to me was I didn’t know anyone who had done it before. The details and minutia of planning such a trip seemed as endless as the vastness of the fabled western sky. Despite the seeming impossibility for someone who had never seen the other side of West Virginia, I knew this had all been done before. I simply had to uncover how.

I am blessed to live in Maryland where we have no shortage of whitetail deer. I even get to make my annual forays to hunt the exotic Sika deer which inhabit our eastern shore. But the west, now the west had real big game species. Elk the size of horses, mule deer which dwarfed our whitetails, and bears which blurred the lines between predator and prey. But where to begin and what to pursue? Elk seemed to be the gold standard of a western adventure. The price of an elk tag seemed to also flirt dangerously close to the price of gold in my mind. Success rates were not good for most public land, do it yourself, first timer elk hunts. But it was possible. After all, it had all been done before. As I enlightened my father to my plans, he became interested in western hunting as well. A lifelong hunter, he had

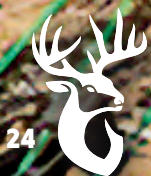
really gotten into bowhunting in the previous decade. With two sets of steel rods in his back from a lifetime of masonry work, he was not so keen on a do-it-yourself, sleep in the back of the truck sort of trip. I began to explore the guided option. I scanned the back pages of magazines and internet search engines looking at guided trips.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

# GO WEST YOUNG MAN

BY VINCENT BOWLES







CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

### Dad's Antelope



Although the opportunities were plentiful, elk fell off the table. There was high variability in success rates of elk, even on multi thousand dollar guided outfits. Not that success was a necessity of the trip itself, but when it came to doling out several years of savings, we wanted a realistic chance at bringing meat home. Mule deer was more reasonable, but tag deadlines become complex and the physical variability of success seemed daunting. One species which had not originally crossed my mind kept coming into focus- Antelope.

The quick overview revealed antelope tags and guided antelope hunts were generally more affordable. Better yet, success rates seemed much more reasonable. The style of antelope hunts also seemed conducive. Many outfits offered hunting out of ground blinds over waterholes. This would mesh well with our familiarity with stand hunting whitetails. It would also be conducive to my dad's back and not require extensive hiking with a heavy pack. The season dates were also a benefit. Maryland's archery season opens the Friday after Labor Day while many antelope seasons begin earlier in August. This would allow us to not only enjoy extended hunting time but afford us the opportunity to hunt without interrupting any of our usual at home hunting plans. Antelope rapidly became my focus.

With the species decided, where became my next focus. I immediately narrowed my focus of all the major western states down to those that offered over the counter tags. Next became travel. With no major airline experience of my own, and after hearing enough horror stories of damaged bows and lost gear on airlines, I elected to drive. Aside from the perceived ease to me in transporting gear and hopefully meat, this would allow me to see the

country firsthand. Being born and raised on the tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay, I had never gone farther west than West Virginia. With driving the chosen transportation, I began to look at the states which were physically closer to me. The shorter the drive, the more vacation days could be spent on hunting than travel. This brought me to three major options. South Dakota, Nebraska, and Colorado.

I began to scour the internet and made a list of outfitters to contact in these states. Quickly it became apparent I needed some more guided questioning to approach these prospective services with. The first and most basic became availability of hunt openings in late August. Even though it was still winter, many places were already booked for the coming year. As I spoke with more outfitters, I realized I needed to reach a much more specific level of questioning. I came up with the following list: Hunt availability, method of hunting (ground blind or spot and stalk), success rates, and price. The hunt availability was a given and the method of hunting needed to suit my dad's limitations and our general hunting style. Success rates were not drastically important. However, I learned that most outfits that were experienced had enough data to provide success rates. While many, even if they had the most modern advertising, did not have success rates because they lacked multiple years of experience with guiding archery antelope hunts. As my questioning continued another important topic came up- average shot distance. Being a primarily top pin whitetail hunter, I had heard western hunting consisted of primarily farther shot distances. However, I was not expecting to hear it put so frankly as one outfitter did as saying, "if you aren't comfortable at 70 yards don't waste your time". Now I enjoy practicing at those

distances and am rather efficient, but I was not expecting to be told I needed to expect that shot or do not come. My search continued.

In my mind I had already committed to a major step. I was going western hunting. I was ready to take the time, take the time off work, and spend the money. However, I found myself getting disheartened. Many outfitters I reached out to never responded back. Many did not have openings, were drastically out of my price range, or had little to no experience guiding antelope hunters themselves. I began to realize many of the experienced successful outfitters were already booked for the following season even though it was still eight months away. I began to ask the outfitters which were already full if they recommended anyone to contact. Finally, it was as if the stars aligned. It quickly became apparent I'd found my match. The outfitter and guides were experienced, they had openings in late August, average shot distances were reasonable, and their success and opportunity rates were relatively high. Opportunity rates were not something I had thought of before. Opportunity meaning the client took a shot at an antelope and missed. The price matched our budget, and I liked the idea that a deposit was paid up front. This meant instead of parting with the cost of the trip at once we could pay up front and again upon arrival. Not that it meant it cost any less, but it at least is perceived to be not as painful on our wallets. With the trip booked I felt a giant weight off my shoulders. We were going hunting. Now, it was time to do our part.

The whole opportunity rate sat squarely on my mind. Nearly as many people seemed to shoot at antelope as actually killed them. We wanted to fall into the latter group. As I read more on antelope and spoke to more people who had done it before, it seemed that unfamiliarity with shooting out of a ground blind was the primary problem. I fabricated an inexpensive ground blind in my yard and began practicing. Most people seemed to shoot from their knees out of the blind. I practiced this extensively and was proficient enough, but I was never as comfortable as I was sitting. My own experience in blinds told me that most chairs are slightly too tall for blind window configurations. However, a simple milk crate was the perfect height. I could shoot slightly better off a crate than I could kneeling and the lack of arm rests or a back rest meant I could swivel in any direction. I was certain to make sure I brought a pair of crates along. My father got in on the practice and was shooting more than he had ever prepared before for a season. Two months before our trip, disaster struck. A slight accident landed my dad with a broken rib, cutting his practice time short. After these months of planning would the trip end before it began?

With the grace of God, my dad was able to heal fast enough to begin shooting again just before our departure. I still found myself full of worry for him. He was starting this trip short to begin with considering the steel rods in his back. Toss in a broken rib and I did not want to see his first hunting trip of a lifetime end unsuccessful due to physical problems. I put it out of my mind. He was certainly confident in his abilities

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and that confidence showed time and again that that was important in and of itself.

In my mind, equal mental preparation needed to go into the trip as physical preparations. With that I am referring to gaining a basic knowledge of the area and species. I did not want to be some interloping visitor who merely came upon a strange land, to shoot a strange animal, and hang it on my wall. I wanted a deeper understanding of the species. I wanted to know more about the land and what had occupied it before. I was able to find a plethora of used books online ranging from basic antelope history and biology as well as the history of the great plains and the antelope's role on the landscape. It is questionable as to whether this knowledge played an actual role in helping my odds for success. Nonetheless, in my mind it was my own notion to pay homage to a foreign land and species and my way of paying appropriate respects to what lay ahead.

As I set out in the predawn darkness, I did not have to feign excitement to see my vehicles compass pointing west. The prospects of a 28-hour drive does not seem encouraging to most people. To me however, it was a primary function of the trip. I had never seen the other side of West Virginia before. So, despite the desire to get to camp and get to



CONTINUED ON PAGE 28







hunting, I had to make myself slow down and enjoy the ride. From the rolling hills of southern Ohio, to the mighty Missouri river, to the unending plains of Kansas it was a beautiful trip. When dawn rose on the second day, we found ourselves entering the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. I was overwhelmed. This was it. The Rocky Mountains. Great expanses of meadows and rock covered peaks. I had never seen anything quite like it. At the same time though, A strange feeling continued to develop in my left ear. As we made it to our outfitter and met the other clients hunting that week. The feeling continued to envelop me. Try as I might, I could not get my ears to pop. This continued to grit into my jaw to the point of making it difficult to function. I knew I could not fight the inevitable. After months of planning and two days of travel, I had to find a hospital.

After heading to the next town and two hours in an emergency room I had my answer. We were not at incredible elevation. I was sure to ask that before I booked the trip. We hunted around 6000 feet and slept around 7000. What I did not know, was I had fluid behind my left ear drum. Fluid that did not bother me at the whopping 8 feet above sea level where my home is. The change in elevation, and present fluid would not allow for my ears to pop. By time I was released from the hospital and found a pharmacy, my dad and I had missed the first morning of our hunt. It was not the start I wanted but despite all the planning, some aspects of a hunting trip will always remain out of our control. What I could control was my mindset. We were halfway across the country, in an area we had researched, with a guide we had researched. More practiced and prepared than we had been for any hunt of our lives. I could not control a medical problem, but I could control my positive attitude going forward.

Our outfitter and guides were more than accommodating to get us out on a late afternoon hunt. The blind was a square plywood structure with the interior painted black. I was sitting overlooking a natural pond with one end being five yards from the blind and the far end being forty. The pond extended outward to around 25 yards on each side of me. A berm rose above the pond to the south which impeded my view in seeing that direction. Otherwise, I could see seemingly endlessly all around me. Where I sat was pastureland with grass approximately knee height. I could watch the plains roll west across the highway to where they jutted upwards towards the beginning of the mountains. The view was as much as I could hope for. I even had two antelope does come into my blind at 40 yards at last light. Despite the rocky start what an amazing ending to the day. My dad saw a few antelope as well but none that came to drink at the waterhole I sat.

0400 came early the following morning. What many may not realize who have never been to Colorado in late August is the temperature swing. When I left home it was 90 degrees with high humidity. Daytime

temperatures in Colorado were similar in that they reached into the mid-eighties but lacked the humidity. With the cabin we stayed at being in the mountains I was shocked to have the nighttime temperatures in the 40's. I downed coffee while I loaded my gear for an all-day sit in the antelope blind. While hunting waterholes for antelope is far from physically demanding, how you prepare yourself for 14 hours in a ground blind could make all the difference for your success. I ended up with my regular hunting backpack loaded with water, a coffee thermos, energy drinks, my basic hunting essentials, two books, and a portable cell phone charger. I also had my regular work lunch box packed with multiple sandwiches and snacks. Instead of filling the cooler with ice, I froze water bottles. This doubled to keep my food cold, but I could also drink them as they melted. The blinds had comfortable folding chairs in them, but I also brought a milk crate to sit on. Not only had I spent considerable time practicing shooting from that seat, but I also found it generally comfortable and easy to move about.

The morning dawned calm and clear. Almost immediately I began seeing antelope, but not immediately in my vicinity. Throughout the day multiple antelope does and fawns filtered through the waterhole, none of which were legal at the time. Just before sunset I got a call from my dad. He was only 500 yards from me in his blind. He had taken his first antelope with a bow! His antelope did not come to water but skirted his blind at 35 yards. He made a great kneeling shot and watched the antelope drop in sight. His summer of practice had paid off. Not only did he have two steel rods in his back, but he also broke a rib several weeks before the trip. Nonetheless he found success. It felt good. Knowing all the time, the money, the journey, the physical and mental investment had paid off for dad. Not that the sole definition of success on a hunting trip is the killing of an animal, but it was a good feeling to know Dad was not going home with an empty cooler.

The morning of day three dawned crisp and cool. Something about coffee at 0430 in the mountains. It just tasted crisper. I wore a light rain jacket for this as I settled in overlooking the waterhole. As the sun stretched across the sky and temperatures began to rise, I was surprised by the first buck of the trip. Not fifteen yards to my south a young buck had crept in quietly. He was busily drinking. I could hear him chugging water as I strained to study his horns. They almost stretched to the top of his ears. A legal buck had to have horns five inches in length. The primary key to judging this seemed to be if the horns were as tall as their ears. I stared and stared. Even at only fifteen yards I could not decide if his horns were or were not as tall as his ears. I elected to pass. I was interested in a lot of things on this trip, but a ticket from Colorado Parks and Wildlife was not one of them.

I thoroughly enjoyed the day. I casually saw antelope and random intervals with most being much too far away. The entire experience was enjoyable regardless. Leaning

against the blind while reading a good book, breathing in the mountain air, staring at the seemingly endless sky was therapeutic. It was as if I grew to enjoy the experience more than the simple goal of killing an antelope.

Leaning forward in the blind, enjoying this trance like state, I found myself thrust back into the beginning of this story. As I watched the antelope's horns dog back and forth above the berm, I could not fully predict which direction he was going to go. It was possible for him to skirt behind the blind and forgo the water. I had seen other antelope do this. I was situated to shoot out of the east and south windows of the blind without having to move. In order to shoot behind me to the west would require substantial movement. I decided to wait. I held my bow in my left hand with my release on the string. I sat hunched forward trying to predict the buck's path. He angled behind me. As I began to lower to my knees and open the rear windows of the blind, the buck veered back to my south. As he crossed the first window opening, I slowly drew my bow. The buck approached the water at 20 yards but did not drink. He bobbed his head, showed me his hind quarters, and began to skirt the southern edge of the waterhole. From the habit of stopping so many whitetail deer for shots over the years, I grunted twice with my mouth. The effect was the same. The antelope stopped and raised his head. Before he became completely motionless, I could already see the arrows white helical feathers spiraling his way.

The arrow struck where I was looking, but I found myself with instant concern. I could see a large portion of my arrow still sticking out of the antelope. As he spun and ran, I watched the crested end of my arrow fall and settled at the top of the southern berm. The antelope was over the berm and out of sight. Did I blow it? Did the arrow penetrate enough? As the outfitter pulled up to my blind my fears were settled. The antelope had gone fifty yards over the blind and settled in plain view to everyone, just slightly out of view of my blind. As we approached the buck, I was speechless. I took this journey so far from home for the experience. I wanted to hunt the west. I wanted to see the mountains. To sit beneath the vast sky. To take in the smells of the great plains. I would have been fine without killing an antelope. I would have been fine killing any antelope. The outfitter and guides assured me that this was easily a pope and young caliber antelope. As I knelt beside the buck, I tried my best to take in the moment.

It was a moment that began months before. The planning, the questioning, the studying, and the practice led to this freshly notched tag. But I guess in a more surreal sense it began much longer ago than that. It began from childhood. The dreams of seeing the great plains, the Rocky Mountains, and the western sky. I always knew I had to see it. Like a deep calling more so than a recent ambition. I am still not sure who coined the saying "go west young man," but they were right.

This hunt took place a whopping six years ago in 2017. The original outfitter, Four J's Outfitters of Aguilar Colorado, closed down during the covid era. As I write and read back through this story, I find myself drawn back. Not as young as I was then, perhaps I need to plan another trip to head west.

Doe Antelope From Dad's Blind



Antelope Herd From Dad's Blind

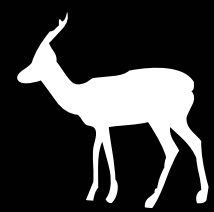






# HIGH 9

BY ROB HURD



**T**his story began the season before (2019) at a new public land area near me. I saw him a few times in the early season from a distance and knew he was pretty decent. Then on November 15th I had a close encounter with him at thirty yards following a Doe but had a bad quartering to shoot and decided to pass on the shot ... I never saw him again. I thought someone may have gotten him during the Gun or Muzzle season and was really bummed, but Hunting public land you learn to move on and hope for the best.

Fast forward to September 2020. I saw him again and was so excited that he had made it through! I had two more encounters in early October but no shot. He disappeared again. I figured he was shot during the early muzzle season but still hunted hard for him the first 3 weeks of November Rut on vacation from work.

It was a slow Rut on public land... nothing really moving in daylight hours. I was down to my two last days of vacation and the Grind was wearing me down, so I slept in the morning of 11/18 and went to the outside of where I thought he was bedding that afternoon (2pm). I found Fresh scrapes in the area and even though no decent tree downwind (tall and no cover) I climbed up. It was in the perfect spot and I was stoked.

After sitting a while, I was questioning my decision and figuring where I would hunt tomorrow (my last day off). Feeling kind of defeated with this season's rut, at about 4:30 p.m. suddenly, I heard leaves crunching, and there he was, heading straight to the scrapes and would walk by me at twenty-two yards! Just before he came in, all in one motion I stood up, drew my bow, and put my pin just behind his shoulder. I grunt stopped him and let the Arrow go.

It all happened so fast I couldn't believe it! Your whole season changes in an instant. I watched as my arrow hit its mark, and he spun around and took off straight towards the bedding. The recovery was cool as my arrow lodged in his opposite shoulder so no exit or blood trail for a long way, but I knew where he was going. I marked everything and direction on my phone app HuntStand and quickly packed everything up and raced out of the woods to my truck. I hauled butt down the road to the area, and as I pulled off the road, two of Maryland's finest DNR Police pulled up and asked what I was doing.

I explained, and they wanted to help me with the recovery. I said sure, and we walked in the woods. I pulled the coordinates up on my phone, and we found him rather quickly. They took



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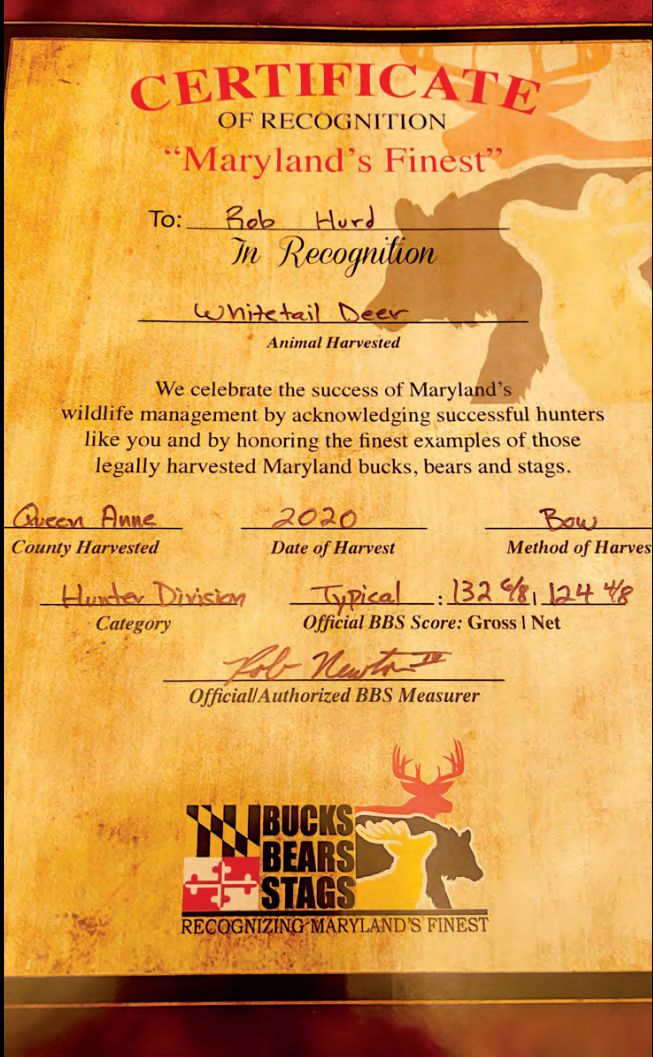




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some pictures and helped drag him out (all 179 lbs dressed of him). It would have taken me forever to get him out on my own. Those guys were awesome! Later, I posted him up on the Maryland Bowhunters group on FB and one guy messaged me about where I killed him (location). Come to find out, he was hunting the farm next to the public land and was hunting the same buck. He sent me the trail cam pictures he had of him. I thought that was awesome and a very nice thing to do. I took my mount of him to the MBS Banquet in '21 to have him scored by Bucks Bears and Stags, and he made the book. 132 6/8" gross, 124 4/8" net. — just missing P&Y. I green scored him at 125 1/8" but I guess he shrunk a little, so close but I don't care. Nets are for fishing, LOL!

I just love this sport, the highs, the lows, and how in an instant your whole season can change.



BY  
MARIBETH  
KULYNYCZ

# COYOTE



Imagine sitting in your stand as the last light fades from the sky. Another hunt has ended, but a chill goes down your spine as you hear the announcement that another predator is in the area. The howl of coyotes rises from the woods around you and makes the walk out a bit more daunting.

Maryland and Delaware are the last states in the continental US to be occupied by coyotes. They were first documented in Maryland in 1972 and the numbers have climbed steadily since. As much as we hate to admit it, it seems like they are here to stay.

These highly adaptable predators now live across the entire state and every ecosystem. What does this mean for the future of our native species and hunters? Especially rabbits, ground nesting birds, and deer. And although they tend to prey more on small mammals and birds they also will go after deer, especially newborn fawns.

The debate on population control is a heated one. Many out there enjoy these animals from afar and love hearing their songs in the morning and evening. But most agree that when it hits too close to home, and pets like cats and dogs become part of their menu, they want action taken.

Maryland is in an interesting position as we are watching in real time the effect that coyotes have on our environment and other animal populations. Not only prey animals, but other predators like foxes are



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being affected as well. Coyotes will often push foxes out of their normal habitat and steal their food sources forcing them to seek haven in suburban areas. Fox and raccoon numbers have exploded in the past few years with the changes in the fur industry. If you spend much time in the woods, you have seen first-hand the effects. Rabbit and turkey populations are struggling, and other ground nesting birds are all but nonexistent. Now, with coyote numbers and ranges expanding, many are worried what the future holds.

In 1995 coyotes were officially classified as “fur-bearing mammals” giving hunters and trappers a chance to try and control the expanding population, but if you’ve encountered them or seen them on your trail cameras you know how difficult that can be. They are highly intelligent making it difficult to trap and hunt them. They also tend to stay on the move. By the time

you realize you have one on your property, they have often taken their fill and moved on.

Although it would seem that taking them out on sight is the best option, recent studies have shown that may be counter intuitive. Packs do a roll call of sorts every day, and if one member of the pack is missing, it makes them want to reproduce to create new members. With females giving birth to litters of five or more at a time you can imagine how quickly the numbers can grow.

All of it leaves us hunters feeling a bit helpless. We want to do all we can to limit growth and protect our pets and the native species that we love, but are our methods just signaling coyote populations to keep expanding? There may not be a definitive answer to this growing problem. We have to start thinking outside the box, or eventually we will have to learn to coexist and accept the fact that we are not the only predators in the woods. We’re on the cusp of a new way of life, and only time will tell what the future looks like.



# The Story of ‘HOPS’



I spent the 2022-2023 hunting season watching a beautiful nine-pointer with my dad. After seeing this deer all season long on camera, winter rolled around and the nine-point had vanished. We thought he had been killed during Maryland firearms season; little did we know what was in store. Fast forward to August 2023 after a long family vacation, my Pop Pop went out and checked his trail camera on his garden. While scrolling through his pictures one of them revealed a giant buck standing there eating the hops. He quickly sent the photos over to us. My dad, my brother, and I knew exactly who it was. The nine-point from the year prior had shown back up and was now a giant twelve-point. Had it not been for my Pop Pop checking his trail camera, we would probably not be telling this story. With that in mind we felt that it was only fitting to give this buck the nickname Hops!

The next day we headed up to our family farm in Aquasco, MD, to prepare for the 2023-24 hunting season. Within days, we had Hops on camera, and he was coming very regularly in daylight. I was counting down the days until hunting season. However, on September 4th after shedding his velvet, Hops disappeared. We thought he had moved on again for good to his winter location.

Opening day was finally here! With Hops not showing up for four days, I had to convince my dad that we still



needed to go hunting, and he finally agreed. I headed off to school and counted down the hours for my parents to pick me up. Late that afternoon, my dad and I headed to the ground blind. Within minutes of being there my dad told me to get ready because he could see a deer coming. I stood up, got on my Ravin crossbow waiting to see what deer it was, and when the deer stepped out into the shooting lane, I said “omg dad, that’s him!” My dad whispered back “Yeah buddy that’s him. Get ready!”

I made a perfect shot, and we could hear the deer crashing down the hill 50 yards away. I was in tears of joy knowing that the deer was down. I had killed my first buck, and I was fortunate enough that it was Hops! I then called my mom and my brother. They thought we were joking because it had happened so fast. My brother then ran down into the woods from my grandparents to meet up with us. We started down the blood trail and just like that we found him at the bottom of the hill. Hops was dead and I had killed a buck of a lifetime. This is a memory I will never forget.

I am so happy I got to share it with all of my family!

**Tanner Jameson**

Age 5, from  
Leonardtwn, MD  
Ravin R29x Crossbow  
QAD exodus  
100gr Broadheads





# AFRICA SAFARI LIVE AUCTION



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USA Address: 10412 Georgetown Rd, Berlin, Maryland, 21811  
hunt@vanwicksafaris.com | vanwicksafaris.com

### DONATION DETAILS

ORGANIZATION NAME:	MARYLAND BOWHUNTERS SOCIETY
DATE:	09 MARCH 2024
DONATION:	10 DAY PLAINS GAME HUNT FOR 1 HUNTER AND 1 OBSERVER
CREDIT INCLUDED:	1x BLUE WILDEBEEST AND 1x COMMON BLESBUCK <u>OR</u> 1x IMPALA
DONATION VALUE:	\$ 8 550.00
LOCATION:	LIMPOPO PROVINCE, MAIN CAMP VAALWATER, SOUTH AFRICA
WEAPON:	RIFLE, BOW, MUZZLELOADER OR HANDGUN
DATES:	TO BE CONFIRMED WITH \$1000 DEPOSIT PAID TO OUTFITTER
ALTERNATE YEARS:	2024 OR 2025
LICENSES:	EXCLUDED WHERE NEEDED
AIRPORT TRANSFER:	NOT INCLUDED. \$400 PER TRIP (\$800 TOTAL)
DONOR:	VAN WIJK SAFARIS
MINIMUM BID:	\$2250.00
SPLIT:	70% ORGANIZATION & 30% OUTFITTER
TAX:	15% VAT ON ANIMALS WOUNDED AND NOT RECOVERED
ADDITIONAL HUNTER:	CAN BE ADDED AT REGULAR RATES
ADDITIONAL OBSERVER:	CAN BE ADDED AT REGULAR RATES

ANDRIES VAN WIJK

CERTIFICATE ISSUE DATE: 14 JANUARY 2024

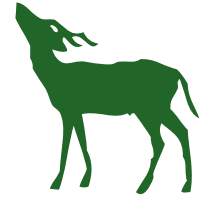
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# MARYLAND'S TRADITIONAL ARCHERY RENDEZVOUS



Most of us have shot 3D at some point in our lives knowing practice will help make us better archers/hunters. Many of us have also shot traditional archery equipment (recurves and longbows).

Outside of Maryland, thousands of traditional archers flock to Ski Sawmill, located in upstate Pennsylvania, every year to the Eastern Traditional Archery Rendezvous (ETAR) or the Compton Traditional Rendezvous in Michigan. But did you know that Maryland has one of the largest traditional archery shoots in the United States? A shoot that attracts archers from as far away as Alaska and the United Kingdom!



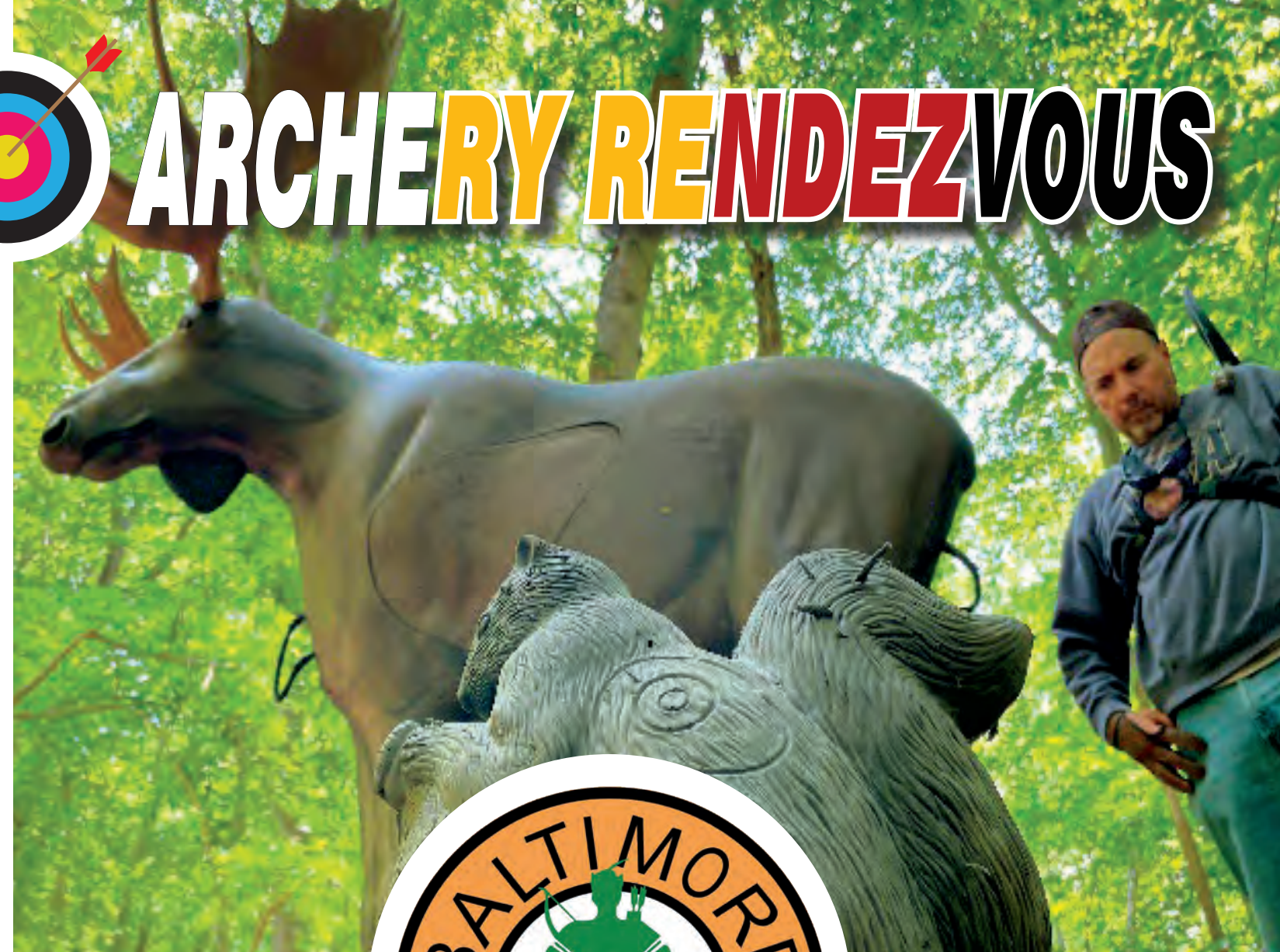
Photos from ETAR, 2023



Every year, Baltimore Bowmen (Club) hosts the Baltimore Bowmen Traditional Classic (Classic). This is the only shoot at the Club, during the year, that is exclusively for traditional archery equipment only. All other Club shoots, during the year, are open to compound and traditional archery equipment. The Classic is a four-day event (Thursday through Sunday) and is held the third weekend in May. The Club is located less than 2.5 miles outside the Baltimore Beltway (I-695), on Harford Road (MD 147).



Photo of Upper Camping Area at the Classic



During the Classic, the Club sets-up three (3) 3-D archery ranges that are each roughly 1 mile in length. In total, over 100 3D targets are carefully arranged throughout these three archery ranges that each have their own unique topography. A wide variety of targets are set including some larger targets such as elk, bison, caribou, and Sasquatch. There is also a kids only range, for the youngest archers, where children can shoot at a variety of dinosaurs, goblins, and groundhogs.

For those that wish to practice before heading out onto the ranges, there are 12 practice 2D field targets and many practice 3D targets.

In addition to the shooting aspects of the Classic, there are a wide array of traditional archery and other vendors present. Please see the Club website, below, for more

information on vendors that attend the Classic. What is helpful for archers is that many of the vendors will let you try out a bow, at the practice range, so you can see if you like it before you purchase it.

In case you are looking to sell or trade some of your equipment, there is a blanket swap Friday and Saturday evenings, attended by many.

Many people also take advantage of the free camping on-site where they socialize about their favorite archery and/or hunting memories before falling asleep. The problem is that sometimes it is hard to stay awake, since you are so exhausted from all the fun during the day.



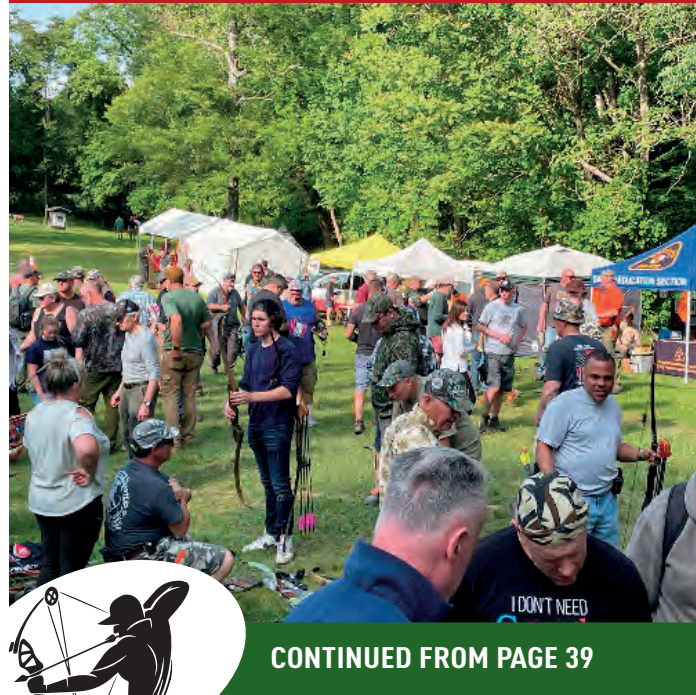
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## Blanket Swap at the Classic

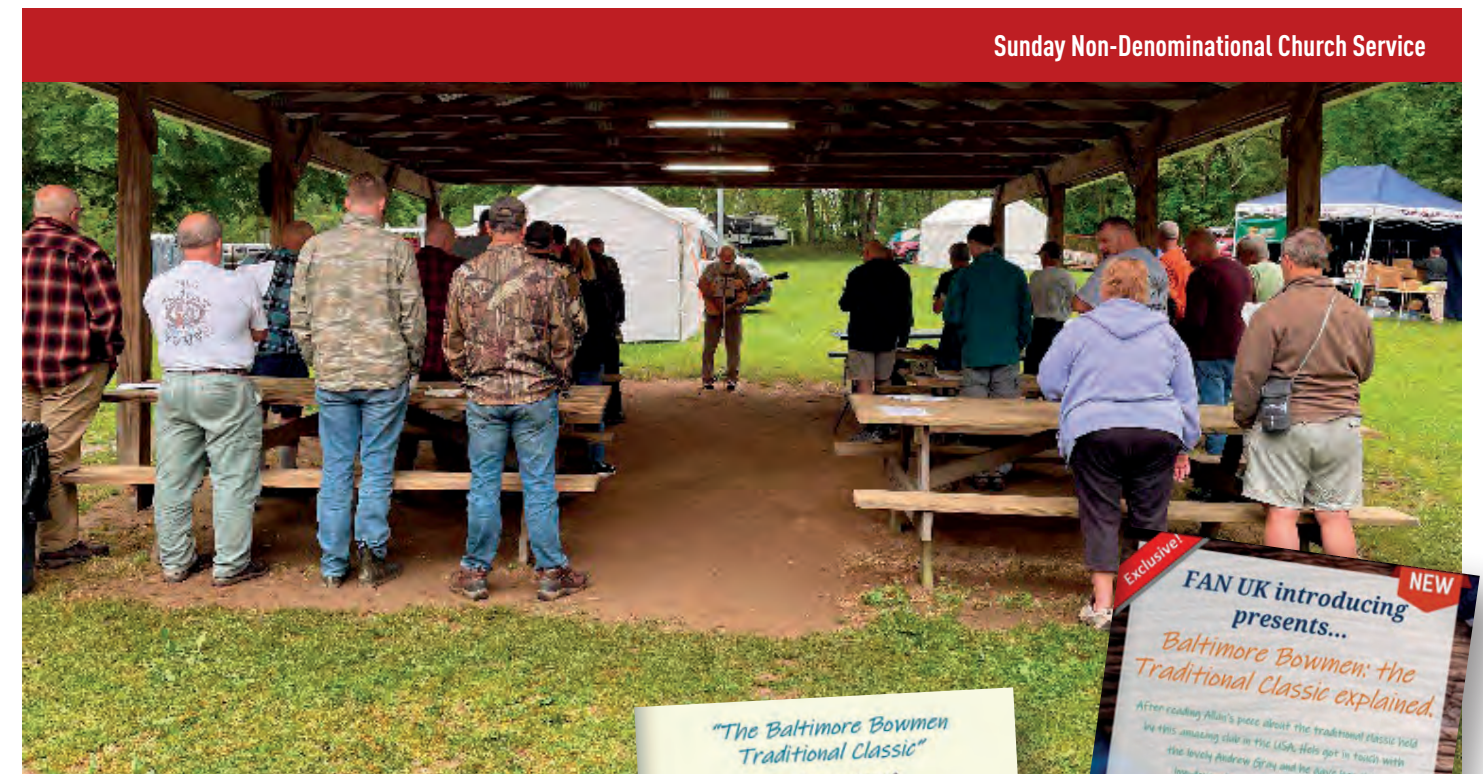


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To break up the four days of shooting, socializing, and shopping, the Club has numerous novelty shoots scheduled throughout the Classic such as:

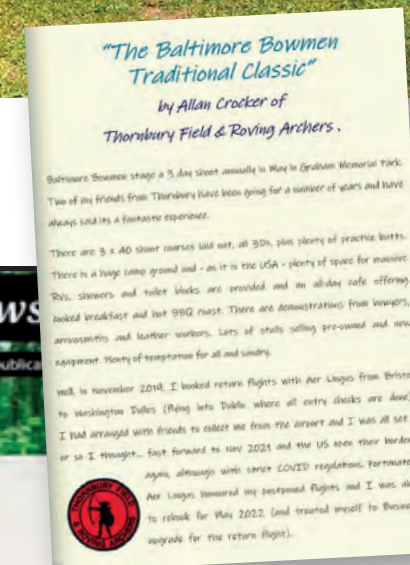
1. The "Wand Shoot" where archers (one by one) test their skills to see if they can hit a small wand at an undetermined distance (60+ yards), while a hundred plus people watch. No pressure .
2. The "Running Rabbit". For this event, participants stand about 15 yards from the location where sporting clays race across the ground to see if they can hit the small moving target.
3. The "Night Raccoon Shoot" tests archers night shooting skills. This event requires archers to carry a flashlight with them to illuminate the bright eyes embedded in the 2D raccoon targets eyes. The archer has to guess what side of the eyes to aim, in order to hit the raccoon target. Even though the shoot takes place at night, it is hard to lose an arrow since the targets are located on large target structures.

## Collecting Arrows at the Wand Shoot



## Sunday Non-Denominational Church Service

Since the shoot is also held Sunday, there is a Sunday Non-Denominational Church Service, where people gather to hear the words of God.



This shoot is so popular, that hundreds of people attend the Classic each year and have come from all over the world. In fact, the Classic had received international attention this past year by being featured in the February-March 2023 edition of Field Archery News UK.

In one article (by Allan Crocker of Thornbury Field and Roving Archers) Allan writes about his experience flying to the United States of America to attend the Classic.

In the second article, I provide detailed information on the Classic.

The February-March 2023 magazine issue can be found at the following link - <https://online.pubhtml5.com/tecw/nhmq/#p=18>

The magazine website can be found here - <https://fieldarcherynewsuk.wixsite.com/fanuk>



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Why write about the Classic? Two reasons:

1. Get the word out about Maryland's largest traditional archery event that 600+ people enjoy every year.
2. Remind people about the fun of being around like-minded people enjoying the sport of archery.

All of us in the Maryland Bowhunters Society (MBS) joined the state bowhunting organization to be associated with like-minded individuals who care about the future of archery and bowhunting in our great State. How many people have you met that became a friend from time spent

during MBS activities? When you join a local archery club, you meet more like-minded people where additional lasting relationships form.

I hope many of you will get out of your house and join a local archery club where you not only practice to become a better archer/hunter but also make lasting friendships. There are many archery clubs located throughout our state. Look to find the one that best suits you! In a society where more people are increasingly on their phone or computer, stop, get outside, and enjoy the great outdoors no matter what type of bow you shoot!

The Classic Webpage can be found at the following link - <https://www.baltimorebowmen.com/traditional-classic>

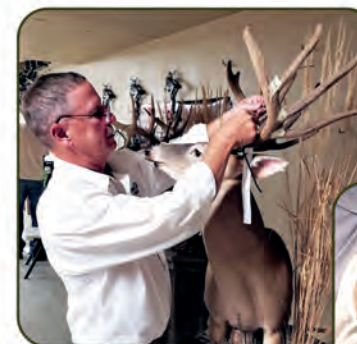


[www.marylandbowhunterssociety.org](http://www.marylandbowhunterssociety.org)

**HUNTERS...** Be Sure to Attend the MBS 2024 Banquet on March 9, 2024  
BUCKS-BEARS-STAGS Measurers will be on hand at the Banquet to measure your  
**Whitetail Bucks, Black Bears and Sika Stags!**

**Bring your antlers or your mounted whitetail buck, bear skull or Sika deer stag**  
from any season (Bow, ML or Firearms) to be measured.  
Entry Fee reduced to \$20, Youth \$10 waived

If you qualify, your entry will be published in the  
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**Maryland Bowhunters Society 2024 Banquet**  
March 9, 2024

Martin's West  
6817 Dogwood Road  
Baltimore, MD 21244

For Info and to order tickets  
[www.marylandbowhunterssociety.org](http://www.marylandbowhunterssociety.org)

\*MBS is a Platinum Sponsor of Bucks-Bears-Stags