

Fishing & Hunting

Journal



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- MERRY CHRISTMAS TO OUR LOYAL CUSTOMERS AND READERS!
- ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY'S PLACES A BOUNTY ON DEER
- A CHRISTMAS TRADITION

FREE



Josh Pickerall with a nice 8 pointer he shot on youth hunt with his Pop Pop Calvin.



Robert "Bubba" Strannahan bagged this nice 9 pt Buck on youth day in Caroline County MD.

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December 2020/January 2021

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BY INSPIRATION MINISTRIES

Joy for All People

It was Christmas Eve in 1944. World War II raged all around the German military hospital in Attornborn. Private First Class Bernard Macay of B Company in the American Army was in a POW ward with multiple shrapnel wounds.

When darkness fell, Macay and other prisoners heard festivities elsewhere in the hospital. At first, the sounds of Christmas made them homesick. Their mood changed when, to their surprise, a nurse walked into their ward and invited them to join in the celebration.

These Americans were asked to sing "Silent Night" in English. The Germans answered by singing Stille Nacht in the original German. Then together, they sang other carols in German and English. Macay recalled how "the war seemed to have vanished if only for a moment."

As this anecdote illustrates, the Christmas story can soften even the most hardened heart. It can unite enemies and remind us of something (and Someone) more important than all the military and economic power of this world with its rewards and pleasures.

Joseph Mohr, the composer of "Silent Night," concluded his simple chorus with these words: "With the angels let us sing, alleluia to our King; Christ the Savior is born!" Today, pause to think about the Savior whom we celebrate during this Christmas season. He is the King of all nations. Men and women everywhere, sing alleluia to our King!

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“Tackle Box Tim”

Learn Things

It has long been my mission in life to find out the who, the what, the why, and the how of things. I guess that is why I am drawn to cop shows on television. One character, Agent Dwayne Pride on NCIS New Orleans, often instructs his subordinate agents to, “Go, learn things”. In life and in fishing, these words ring very true. If we are not drawing something from each fishing trip – good ones and bad ones – we are not going to solve the case for the next time we encounter the same conditions.

Sharing what you learned makes other fishermen better. There are some things you may want to keep to yourself or within your tight group of fishing friends. Offering techniques and observations on current conditions can help a friend, and reinforce things to yourself. Fish are teaching us things even as we get older: color preference, tidal activity, choice of prey, etc. Putting the pieces together will help solve the problem.

I have learned a few things this year that I am willing to share. First is a general observation. The waters of the upper Chesapeake have been clearer than I have ever seen it. The Gunpowder and Bush Rivers, and the Susquehanna River and flats had great water clarity that allowed for a great understanding of the environment. Not only could you see cover within grass beds and well away from the bank; you could also see the fish

swimming in the area. Bream species and perch species would often follow a spinnerbait or chatter bait meant for bass. This gives a clue as to what color patterns you should be casting for the bass.

This spring gave a lesson in extreme finesse fishing. There aren't many techniques slower than using a drop shot rig. It is a game of patience and feel. The rig is much like a single-hook bottom rig for bait fishing. However, largemouth and smallmouth bass to not routinely peck at a dropshot worm like a perch or a spot pecks at bloodworms and nightcrawlers. You have to feel the rod tip get heavy. The drop shot technique entails learning the proper knot to use when tying your hook to the line. You also need the current rod, reel, and line combinations. A light rod with a fast tip, and reel spooled with razor thin 8-pound-test braided line is a start. From there it's 10 to 20-foot (angler preference) top shot of 8 to 10-pound-test fluorocarbon leader. And let us not forget the proper, light drag setting.

The longer I fish, the more I become aware of tidal influence on fish. Common theory is that fish feed better on a falling tide, as baitfish are pulled away from shallow water to the waiting predators. In most cases, this is true. Yet, when drilling down on smallmouth bass patterns this spring; Randy Yarnall and I found

more activity from smallies on a rising tide. We did get some bites as the tide would ebb, but our numbers were better on the flood. Leave it to smallies to be contrarians. There aren't many places where you can find them in tidal waters and they are not always there. I guess the other fish haven't told them the routine.

Fall striper fishing taught me the importance of all aspects of the tide. It's not just the times for high or low tides, but how high it rises or how low it falls. The duration of the tide also comes into play. Most days we have two cycles of high to low tide and back. A lot of times in fall we have stronger tides in in the early morning and late evening. The case in point: Pond Point on November 7, the tide dropped 1.6 feet over night on the low tide at 6:19 a.m. The high tide topped out at 0.9 feet at 11:01 a.m. The tidal current was not strong and did not provide sufficient enough height for bait and stripers to move on to shallow cover. It also did not last an equal 6-hour swing.

The lesson here is finding where the fish are when they are not on the cover you expect them to be. The solution was to look at the next closest fish holding cover or structure. When shallow cover was too shallow, we moved to the first depth change nearby. Out from the shoreline rocks, the depth changed

from 3 ½ to 5+ feet along a break line 150 yards long. This gave rockfish the advantage over baitfish. Here, we caught our limit and released several more.

I learned that all tackle is not created the same ... even if it is the same make and model. I gave my nephews Eli and Ezra identical medium power spinning rods to use for striper fishing. Their mother bought them identical reels and we filled them with 12-pound-test line from the same spool. We went to the Gunpowder River where they cast the same model rattle trap. For whatever reason, Eli was not getting the casting distance that Ezra was. Ezra and I had already caught a keeper striper and Eli needed his. I clipped the rattle trap off of his rod and tied it on to one of my spinning rods. His first cast went noticeably farther, and he set the hook into his keeper.

While having veteran angler status, I still want to take in all I can about fishing. We will never know all there is about the fish we pursue, the environment they live in, and the techniques it takes to catch them. There will always be the what, where, and how questions to be answered. It's not just the lessons learned, but it's how we apply them on future fishing trips. The next time out don't just cast a line. Go, learn things!



Eli Johnston shows a striper from the Gunpowder River.

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Max Peery with his first deer taken with his 350 Legend. Photo courtesy of Molly's Sporting Goods.



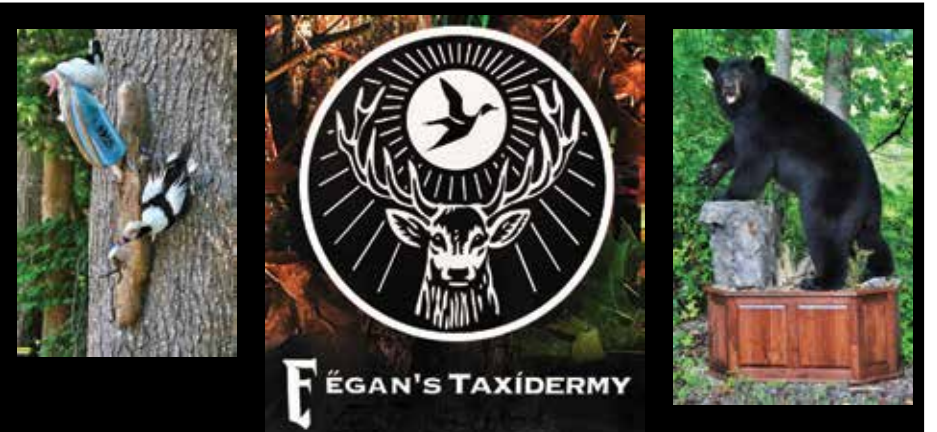
On her Last Youth Day hunt, Sophia Kolobow took this nice Kent Island 9 pointer. Photo courtesy of Chesapeake Outdoors.



Ryan Buckel and Tina Inchalik tagged teamed this buck on Doc Buckel's farm.



Hayden Gibbons-Neff bagged this buck on Maryland's Eastern Shore.



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Mike Deville with his Eastern Shore beauty. Photo courtesy of Shore Sportsman.



Declans first Coyote taken with .243 at 153 yards. Photo courtesy of Fegans Taxidermy.

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Mike Simonds with his Southern Md Buck



“Tuna The Tide”

A Christmas Tradition

By Captain Mark Galasso

I'm not sure how many times an event has to be before it is considered tradition but I think we started a family tradition of waterfowl hunting Christmas morning. It was perfect. My father and younger brother as well as myself had the day off.

We always got together for dinner anyway and while most people spent the morning unwrapping presents that were only wrapped the night before we pretty much had the ducks and Geese to ourselves. So on one particular Christmas eve while everyone else in the family was drinking egg nog and socializing the three of us were glued to the television watching the weather reports for Christmas day.

The weatherman on channel thirteen was wearing a scarf and winter jacket as props while he spelled out the weather forecast. Don't be fooled by the balmy weather outside today he said. A massive cold front would be drop-



ping down from the Northwest on Christmas Day.

Temperatures were going to plummet as strong Arctic winds achieve gale force by mid morning on Christmas day. Small craft advisory will be in effect on the Chesapeake Bay for the next few days. The three of us looked at each other and commented in unison. Wye Island here we come. We loaded up the truck with our hunting gear. Made our excuses as to why we had to hit the sack early and went off to bed.

At 4am I awoke to the smell of coffee. Pop already was up and had a pot brewing. We filled our mugs and walked out to the truck. It was still pretty balmy, probably 60 degrees or so. We piled into the truck. Max, my brothers Black Lab jumped in first to get a good seat. And off to Wye Island we went.

Our club had rented a small farm on the southern most point of Wye Island, partly on the Wye River east

and partly on Shaw Bay. The farm had five or six water blinds and a couple of field pits. We decided to hunt a water blind on the Shaw Bay side in case the wind shifted to the Northwest.

There was a tall bank behind us and we'd have some protection. The geese and ducks we hoped would have the same thoughts. The water in front of the blind was deep, perhaps 10 feet or more so we had to use a small skiff to deploy the spread, a mixture of Goose full bodies and V boards as well as a few duck full bodies. As the sun started to come up we adjusted the spread a bit. Perfect. All that was left was to wait.

We sipped coffee and talked about past hunting and fishing trips. Max was snoring in one corner of the blind. Nothing. It was an eerie feeling. No one was around and we didn't hear a single shot. Around mid morning the weather changed. The Phragmites behind the blind started to dance. The tassels were being blown apart with seeds raining down into the blind. Max was now on high alert. Shaw Bay was now coming to life with whitecaps as far as the eye could see.

The temperature was dropping rapidly. The decoys close to shore were bobbing gently but the ones on the outside of the spread just a few yards away were jerking violently from side to side. A few were starting to flip over but the weights were holding. Clothes that we shed a few hours ago were being brought back into service. It wasn't enough. We huddled down into the blind to escape the biting wind. Nothing was flying.

And then it happened. Max heard them first. He went on point. Then we heard it. Quack. Quack Quack. I peered over the blind to see six fat Mallards swimming in circles a mere 20 yards in front of us. I sat down in slow motion. Pointed in the direction of the ducks and told my Dad and Brother. Six at twenty yards. Straight out front.

We popped up in unison and

let them have it. When the chaos ended there were six sets of orange feet air paddling in the center of the decoys. We went to work. My brother ran down the shoreline and got the boat. I started retrieving with Max. Max got two and my brother got two with the boat. The other two started drifting out with the wind. My brother tried to start the small motor. No dice. He started paddling. The paddle broke in half. He tried paddling with half a paddle. No good.

My Dad and I watched helplessly as he drifted across Shaw Bay. Max was racing up and down the shoreline barking. After about thirty minutes we could see with binoculars my brother get out of the boat and walk into shore somewhere around Tunis Mills we thought. He had to be soaked.

The two of us and Max ran for the truck and left everything where it was. By now it was well below freezing and we were worried my brother would have hypothermia or worse by the time we found him.

One of the interesting attributes we see here on the Eastern Shore of Maryland is just because somewhere is close as the Crow flies it's not always close as the Car flies. Though we could see my brother arrive a couple miles away on the opposite Shore it's over an hour to drive there. When we finally got there my brother was relaxing in a truck with some hunters who saw the whole incident unfold from their blind. Thank God they had the same tradition we did.

There is probably a morel to this story, but considering we have had “adventures” after this one we really didn't learn any lessons from it. My takeaway would be always be prepared for the worse and don't panic. As an afterwords we went back to retrieve everything the next day. Our decoys were locked in the ice and everything else was as we left it, guns and all. Mother Nature was just letting us know she still is the boss and don't take her lightly.

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Brett Schrader and his better half with a nice Eastern Shore Buck.



Bill Sabo with a November Eastern Bay Striper.



Debbie Hedler Carden bagged this impressive buck in Cecil County, MD.



Bobby Cantelli with a wide 12 pt. Photo courtesy of John's Butcher shop.



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Todd Riggs and his after Thanksgiving Rockfish.



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Brody Pierce, Jamie Plummer, Buddy Welch, Ben Usilton, Josh Tyer with a nice day on the Sea Ducks. Photo of courtesy of Chester River Seafood.



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“Montana Grant”



By Grant Soukup

OLD HUNTERS NEVER DIE, BUT...

Being outdoors never gets Old! Waking up early and heading afield is special. Watching a lifetime of sunrises and sunsets is also wonderful. As we age, each hunting season becomes one less. Familiar forests, marshes, fields, and prairies are comforting.

Hunters understand their senses. We feel, see, hear, smell, and are most comfortable outdoors. As we age, we slow down and lose some skills. Dragging a big buck, loading a boat onto the trailer, rowing a drift boat, or disrupting a daily routine becomes harder. Fortunately, technology and new gear and garments helps. A 4-wheeler, Gore Tex, compression underwear, liner socks, and modern accessories are just a few.

Back in the day, I carried a pair of foil wrapped baked potatoes to keep my hands warm. These spud warmers later became lunch. Next came liquid fuel hand warmers that leaked and stank of lighter fluid. Solid fuel sticks were next. Today we use a shake and bake style disposable warmer.

Punkin Balls might have hit a pie plate at 50 yards in the early years. Now a proper sabot shotgun slug is accurate to 300 yards and more. Recurve bows could shoot an arrow at less than 200 fps. Now compound bows can hit a target further and faster. Times have changed. It is easier and more comfortable to hunt today than ever before, even as we age.

Walking in an Oak Woods feels like home to me. As an Appalachian born boy, acorns and nuts forests were always special. Turkeys, deer,

trout, squirrels, and grouse never had a chance. The forest was comfortable, peaceful, and relaxing. It is where I went when life got tough or sad. In Montana, I only smell pine and sage, no acorns. Still a fairly good smell, but not home. The outdoors makes us stronger and happier.

Hunters evolve as they age. At first, we are driven to harvest a critter. Without a filled tag we feel unfulfilled. No meat meant a wasted trip. As we age that changes. Just the opportunity to hunt becomes more important. Any filled tags are just a bonus.

The greatest trophies from hunting are not the antlers and feathers on the wall. These are certainly special but are more like memorials and memories. The greatest trophies are the friends and companions that we shared them with. That is our legacy.

We all began our hunting careers thanks to a Mentor. They may have been a man, woman, family member, or just a friend. Someone took you out and showed you how. Hunting is not a do it yourself sport. If you do hunt alone, then you, like a lone wolf, are lonely and alone.

I have an old Winchester 30/30 lever action rifle. It is topped off with a side mount 4 power Bushnell scope. Not expensive or fancy. This was the rifle that I used to harvest my first buck. Since then, 17 other newbie hunters tagged their first deer with this same rifle. Now that is Mentoring. Sadly, no one has needed this lucky rifle, or me, in a while. Maybe my Grandson will become a hunter.

When my son Kyle nailed his first buck he screamed, “that is the most exciting thing I have ever done!” The 6-point whitetail was chasing does on an island in the Madison River. We had practiced with a Daisy 30/30 look alike BB gun, just as I had. Watching him tag his first buck was better than so many of my harvests. We used the old standard round point ammo. Today the Levevolution rubber tipped bullets drastically improve accuracy and range. The next new hunter will have a new advantage with my old rifle. Hunting with my son was awesome but now he works all the time.

My Dad never took me deer hunting. He had hunted deer as a young man but... Instead, I found other Mentors. One of my first Mentors was Doug. He had an arsenal of guns and even more stories. We hunted and fished together. He was aging and had time to teach a young buck some lessons. I learned to still hunt with him in the mountains of Pennsylvania. Once I learned how to deer hunt, I took my Dad.

We have also had shallow friends just because they were after our hunting spots. Their camo was good, the friendships were one sided and we seldom got an exchange of the gifts. After the lease or permission dried up so did the friendships.

An old Korean War Vet named Gino taught me how to shoot. My single shot Ruger became a special and accurate weapon after his instruction. My friend Keith taught me how to really shoot, hunt, and cook. We spent hours on his range, and kitchen, in Garrett County, MD., honing our skills. I have had many friends that shared and showed me the right path. I remember them all. Sadly, most of them are at the end of their trail or gone. Their wonderful legacy lives on!

Times have changed. Our world is smaller. More development, more outfitters, and private land closures, more non hunters. Sadly, the end of hunting sooner than later. If meat is not in a foam tray covered in plastic, from the store, it is not meat. Most folks that eat meat today are so removed from what they eat that they simply

have no clue where it comes from. It comes from the store.

What saddens me the most, is how so many of the hunters and fishermen that I mentored have forgotten me. They are busy, focused, and have their own families now. Time is limited and they only can afford so many friends. They remember and appreciate their mentors but assume that these sportsmen have more buddies than they need.

The truth is quite different. The Older Mentors had plenty of friends. Now they are old, sick, dead, crippled, or simply exhausted. After age 60, many hunters are on a wing and a prayer. The phone rarely rings. Many older buddies would if they could but...

I do not understand or accept it. It would seem that the gifts of enjoying the outdoors would be so important that the students would want to reach out. Most do not. I wish it were different. Hunting as an older man or woman is harder. One fall, or accident could mean the worst. So how do you haul that big critter, hunt the dark forest, or venture back into the wilderness? As young men or women, we never looked back. Nothing was too hard. The gifts that we gave simply do not get returned.

Old Hunters also regret hunting with great friends. Our students live far away or have families. My friend Pete is a wonderful companion and I hope we hunt together again soon, before I get too old. I know that he would if he could. His father Don always has a special place in my heart.

As Old Hunters, we do our best. Many of our aged brethren know of what I am saying. We may be a bit slower and not as graceful, but our experience and knowledge make up for our declining health and energy. At some point, maybe we just need to fish.

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Ethan Lippa age 11 from Centreville taken youth day in Talbot County bagged 5 minutes apart.



Macie Cannon with her first buck. Photo courtesy of John's Butcher Shop.



Coastal Report

By Capt. Mark Sampson

Mention the term “bird watcher” and an image that unfortunately pops into a lot of people’s minds is that of the stereo-typed “dweeb” in a kaki vest, funny hat, with a notebook in one hand, a Petersons Field Guide in the other, a gigantic pair of binoculars hanging around their neck crawling through brush and hoping to catch a glimpse of some kind of “rare yellow-footed weed warbler.” Of course it goes without saying that this is not at all a fair description of a typical bird watcher or “birder.” After all, if one hand were grasping a notebook and the other a field guide, how-ever would they be able to hold on to their steaming cup of spiced Indonesian herbal tea? It just doesn’t make sense!

Actually, before myself or any other sportsman pokes fun at bird watchers I guess we had better face the realization that we too spend a heck of a lot of time looking to the skies and trying to identify and eventually get close to certain species. Whether we’re trying to distinguish mergansers from pintails as they circle our spread of decoys, wild turkeys from turkey vultures poking around the corner of a distant field, or doves from sparrow hawks darting

lookout for birds and most have at least some ability to identify certain species. For thousands of years, birds and their activities have directed fishermen to fish probably more accurately than any electronic gizmo that has, or will ever be, invented. I’m convinced that the more anglers know about the feathered “fish finders” flying above them, the better success they’ll have hooking the fish that swim below.

This all came to mind last week as I watched a bunch of gannets dive-bombing a school of baitfish a few miles offshore. Gannets are not only a sure sign of the cold weather season; they also signify that some good fish might be in the area. But aside from indicating a likely place to catch bluefish, stripped bass or mackerel, gannets can and should be appreciated as pretty darn interesting critters.

Gannets are members in the family of birds know as “boobies.” There are a few species of gannets, all are pelagic in that they wander the oceans of the world and only go ashore to nest and breed. The largest of the gannets is the “northern gannet” (morus bassanus) and that just happens to be the one most often seen flying around these parts. And when I say “big” I mean a wingspan of almost six feet – that’s big! This size makes gannets the largest seabirds that breed in North America. Nesting is done in the warmer months on steep cliffs on Canada’s east coast. In the winter they’ll travel as far south as Florida.

Adult gannets are mostly white but have a yellowish wash on their head, black outer wings, gray feet, and a long pointed gray beak. But it takes four years for a gannet to attain its mature plumage. Younger birds are mostly brown and attain a little more white with each passing year.

Gannets feed on all types of fish and aquatic invertebrates, but prey heavily on herring and mackerel which is why they’re such good indicators as to where one might find a bunch of hungry stripers or bluefish. Their method of obtaining food is one trait that sets them apart from other seabirds and also what makes

birds to catch their prey at depths of over 60-feet below the surface.

Gannets have particularly hard and strong skulls that help to protect their noggins from damage when they whack the water from very high dives. They also have air sacs under the skin to help absorb the shock. (Maybe that’s where the term “bubble-headed booby” comes from.) Gannets also have the ability to close their nostrils and thus keep seawater from power-washing their brains each time they impact.

Even though they’re expert divers, gannets seldom score a perfect “10” on their entries, and it’s often easier to locate these birds by looking for the big splash they make on the water than it is to see them in the air and anglers know that a bunch of gannets dive-bombing one area is always a good indicator that there’s some kind of fish action below.

Since they’re seldom seen in the warm weather months, most summer tourists will miss the opportunity to witness these high diving birds in action. But most anyone who pushes their boat outside of the inlet or even walks the beach this time of the year should easily catch a glimpse of these really cool birds. And if you have any trouble seeing them, just look for someone wearing a kaki vest, they’ll probably have a big set of binoculars you can borrow!



across a field of sunflowers in September, we may not carry the notebook, but we always have a need to stay sharp on our birding skills. “Yes” my sporting friends – we are all bird watchers!

Experienced anglers know to be constantly on the

them so intriguing. Gannets are one of the highest-diving birds that fly over the ocean. Like a spear falling from the sky, gannets will sometimes drop straight down from as much as 130-feet in the air. One study indicates that these dives may allow the



Roy Collison and his 14 point stud. Photo courtesy of Gun Shack.

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Audrey with her youth day buck. Photo courtesy of Schraders Outdoors

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“The Last Word”

Anne Arundel County's Places A Bounty on Deer

By Steve Huettner

Just when I thought 2020 couldn't get any more bizarre, Anne Arundel County Executive Stuart Pittman has stepped back in time and is funding a bounty program on whitetail deer. Anne Arundel County has decided to use roughly \$125,000 of federal CARES money to pay hunters \$50 for every deer they donate.

Just to be clear this is not paying a butcher for his services for processing a deer, this is giving money to hunters for killing deer and bringing them in for donation. The thought paying a hunter \$50 for killing a deer and donating it leaves me speechless. A program like this goes against all that the sporting community stands for, and harkens back to the bounty / market hunting days of the past.

Once the program was announced, concerned individuals in the hunting community contacted the Maryland Department of Natural Resources regarding the legality of the program. After conferring with the Attorney General's office, an opinion was issued that the program violated the annotated code and the Secretary of DNR informed Anne Arundel County that it was in violation.

The statute reads as follows:

Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection or § 10-512(a) (2)(ii) of this title, a person may not sell, offer for sale, barter, or exchange, at any time within the State any game bird or game mammal taken from the wild, in the State or in another state, territory, or country.

The response from Anne Arundel County was that that the Attorney General, Maryland DNR, and certain elected officials were wrong and they

were going to continue the program. Realize that federal tax dollars are being used for an illegal program to pay for the removal of a public resource.

County Executive Pittman went so far as asking Governor Hogan to have Secretary of DNR Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio to stop interfering in the program. Hunters could be participating in a program that is deemed to be violating Maryland code, and the person in charge of overseeing Maryland Natural Resources should just step aside and not do anything?

According to an Attorney for Anne Arundel County the \$50 is to reimburse hunters for their time and effort. If they are using that rationale to determine a reimbursement rate they are way low. Perhaps they should check with hunters and see what they pay for a bow, arrows, broadheads and all the other associated gear that goes along with deer hunting.

Donating deer for use at food banks and soup kitchens is a fantastic program that both hunters and non-hunters can agree on. We are blessed in Maryland with liberal bag limits and a season that runs from September to early February. Hunters only have so much freezer space. Donating deer is win situation for everyone. Hunters like knowing deer are being used, farmers have deer removed, and service providers are happy to receive healthy meat for those in of need assistance.

Maryland is fortunate enough to have Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry here in Maryland. Why not work with the organization to ensure that butchers are fully compensated to receive donated deer

year-round, especially with deer killed out of season on crop damage permits? Perhaps work with the local farm bureau to increase access for hunters willing to kill antlerless deer. Has Anne Arundel county opened more archery hunting opportunities on public lands? What about increasing managed hunts on county owned properties with all deer going toward food banks and soup kitchens?

Anytime we've attached a direct monetary number to an animal, it can cause people to engage in questionable behavior. Our past history in the United States shows that it's wild life that loses when dollars are attached to their killing.

I hope that Anne Arundel started this program with the intention of trying to get food to people during these difficult and turbulent times. I don't think you will find anyone to fault the cause. How they are continuing to do so after being told it's illegal, makes me pause and question if they have underlying reasons for the continuance of the program. If Anne Arundel is allowed to ignore the Attorney General's Office and Maryland Department of Natural Resources, I fear for what the future holds for Maryland's wildlife.



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GRILLED VENISON TENDERLOIN

Properly grilled venison tenderloin, or backstrap, is one of the great rewards of deer hunting, and it is one of the basic skills any deer hunter needs to know.

Grilling meats in general can be tricky, but this is especially true with venison, because it is so lean you have little leeway between perfect and overdone — and overcooked venison is gray, dry and livery. Blech.

By the way, everything I say here for this venison tenderloin recipe also works for elk or antelope, or a fillet mignon of beef, moose or bison.

You can grill any venison steak, but backstrap or loin is a better cut for fast grilling. And here's your first tip: Keep the venison backstrap whole. Don't cut it into medallions. Yes, you can grill venison medallions, but they are far harder to grill successfully without drying them out.

Besides, you would be grilling the cut sides of the medallion, leaving the sides pinkish. Not so pretty.

With a whole loin, you grill the sides and then, when you cut into it, you get to see that pink perfection.

So start with a piece of backstrap that's at least 10 inches long, which is usually about 1 pound. Depending on how wide it is, that will feed 2 to 4 people, depending on how much else you have on the plate. Coat it in olive oil and salt it really well.

Grill over high heat, but with the grill cover open. This is important. You can grill-heat a venison loin, but it will overcook way faster — heat under the grill cover will cook the top of the loin almost as fast as the part that is closest to the fire. I rarely do this, preferring instead to take my time and let the fire do the cooking.

This also lets you baste the meat with your favorite sauce. I often skip this, but I do happen to like my Jack Daniels-based BBQ sauce when I am in the mood for BBQ sauce. A lot of times I will just let fire, salt and smoke flavor the venison, with maybe a splash of lemon at the table.

How do you know it's done? Use the finger test, which gives you a good idea about the doneness of the center of a piece of meat by touching it with your finger.

Lastly, let your grilled venison rest, tented with foil, for at least 5 to 10 minutes before cutting into it. You can wait up to 15 minutes before losing too much heat if your backstrap is very thick. I cannot stress how important this is. Really. If you learn nothing else from this venison tenderloin recipe, remember to rest your meat!

You will thank me later.

Ingredients

1 to 2 pounds venison loin, ideally in one piece- Olive oil

Salt and pepper - Your favorite BBQ sauce

Instructions

Coat the venison backstrap in oil and salt well. Set aside for 20 minutes at room temperature.

Get your grill hot, clean the grates and lay the venison on the grill. Paint with the BBQ sauce. Keep the grill cover open. Let this cook 5 to 8 minutes without moving, depending on how hot your grill is and how thick your venison loin is. You want a good sear, with good grill marks, on that side of the meat. Flip and repeat on the other side, painting that side with more BBQ sauce.

Do the finger test to check for doneness. If the venison needs some more time, turn it to sides that have not had direct exposure to the grill and cook for 2 to 3 more minutes, checking all the way. Paint those sides with BBQ sauce, too.

When the meat has been cooked to your liking, take it off the fire and let it rest, tented with foil, for 10 minutes. Serve with BBQ sauce on the side.

Notes

If you use a barbecue sauce with this recipe, serve the venison with a side salad like potato, macaroni or bean salad, plus maybe some tomatoes and basil, corn on the cob, dinner rolls --- you get the idea. Nothing overly fancy.



Book of the Month

MASTER COYOTE HUNTING

by Michael Huff

Both veterans and novices will become better coyote hunters after reading this book written by the award-winning author and expert coyote hunting guide, Michael Huff. This is the most detailed and comprehensive coyote hunting book ever written, its chapters include everything needed to master the difficult art of locating and luring coyotes to a gun or camera. Included is information on how to find and gain access to productive properties, select the ideal caliber and firearm, effective use of field shooting supports, successful techniques to use electronic and mouth calls, proper operation of lights for night hunting, organizing a vehicle, creating perfect setups to bring in coyotes, advanced hunting strategies and techniques, making long-range shots, selling pelts for profit, field care and taxidermy. The expertise shared by this award-winning author, speaker and popular professional guide will shave years off your learning curve. This is the author's second book and further authenticates his well-earned reputation as a coyote expert, a reputation formed from years of pursuing scholarly research and hunting and guiding for coyotes across the United States of America. His first book is the award winning, "Understanding Coyotes: The Comprehensive Guide for Hunters, Photographers, and Wildlife Observers."

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Isla Bohle caught her first fish with proud dad Rich at 2 years old. Photo courtesy of Clyde's Sport Shop.

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Here's Why an Eight-Wheeled Chevy Silverado Monster Truck Went Sailing Into a South Florida Bay



YouTuber WhistlinDiesel embodies truck culture in ways we're not quite interested in exploring. However, his latest stunt—like pretty much all of his others—makes you wonder, "Why?" Although a video of it hasn't been posted on his channel quite yet, a series of social media posts shows the internet personality drove a two-axle, eight-wheeled Chevy Silverado near the Gulf of Mexico between Longboat Key and Bradenton Beach, Florida.

Floating seemingly thanks to the immense amount of air in its tires, the truck made it into the water before local authorities arrived. No, it doesn't have a propeller—he just drove it into the water before getting pulled back by a boat, surrounded by the Coast Guard, sheriff's office and Department of Natural Resources, according to an Instagram post. It's hard to imagine the DNR is too happy about a diesel truck driving in a protected body of water, but hey.



Jeremiah Collins with his beautiful Speckled Trout caught last month in Virginia. Jeremiah released the fish after the photo.

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