

# HUNTERS

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SCI CHAPTERS IN WISCONSIN AND ILLINOIS  
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

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- Outdoor Education Successes
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# HUNTERS

Official Magazine of SCI Chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois  
September/October 2025

**On the cover:** Member Philip Brewster's son, Evan, shot this gold medal mouflon scoring 214 CIC in Austria. (Conseil de la Chasse international scoring system.) Days earlier they participated in the Wisconsin Chapter fun shoot.

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## Join today!

SCI Chapters welcome you!

New members and your families are always welcome at SCI! Visit these websites and join a chapter to start your adventure. Members enjoy great fun, meet new friends, make a difference in their community and help the future of hunting, plus you will discover new deals and opportunities that improve your hunting skill and enjoyment. We invite you to join online today.

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### SCI Region 16 Representative

**Charmaine Wargolet**

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# SCI Region 16 Report

by Charmaine Wargolet, Regional Representative

Once again it is the start of Fall in Illinois and Wisconsin! Days get shorter, air gets crisper, and hunting seasons abound! Hope everyone had a great summer. Was a little too humid for me but still made the most of the hot weather, festivals, golf resort vacation, sporting clays, and cocktails on the patio with friends! We have to make the most of our Wisconsin summers. Looking around Region 16, I know a number of my chapters have had golf outings, clays shoots, and picnics, so hoping you were able to get out and enjoy the camaraderie of your SCI friends!

Member meetings are another great way to enjoy engaging with fellow hunters and usually viewing a program of someone's hunt. Sometimes a destination you never thought you would want to go or could afford to go turns out to be very doable with tips from one of your fellow members. An example is the young man on this



issue's cover. Evan Brewster and his Dad hunted in Austria and were actually able to bring the horns and skull for a European mount back in their luggage. Saved a couple of thousand dollars and Phil was happy to explain to me how they got it through customs. Very interesting man to talk to. This is one of the advantages of being a member of this great organization.

So, go to a meeting or an event of your chapter and engage! You will be glad you did.

As always, shoot straight, be well, and God bless.

# Lake Superior Chapter Report

by Scott Olson, President

Hello SCI members! I apologize for the chapter's absence for the last spring and summer! The Lake Superior Chapter celebrated its 25th anniversary on April 3-5, 2025. We had record post-covid attendance. It seems as though we find ourselves comparing everything to the perspective of pre-covid times. We as a chapter worked hard to rebuild attendance and did some creative things to encourage new attendance.

I reached out to six of our award-winning outfitters, and they all generously donated hunts or trips for the chapter to give away to members who attended the event. We sold at least 200 memberships to both National SCI and Lake Superior SCI during the event.

Nick Hoffman of Nick's Wild Ride was our guest speaker and entertainment each night. This is our second time

having Nick at our event and he is a huge hit.

We were also fortunate to have Safari Club International CEO Laird Hamberlin and his wife Katie attend our event both nights as well. Laird spoke to our guests on Saturday evening, encouraging all of us in attendance to keep carrying on the message of SCI being first for hunters, all hunters, not just international hunters.

In celebration of our 25th anniversary, I awarded our founding member Jay Link a special award recognizing his vision and dedication for the chapter and SCI. Jay spoke about how the chapter began and how proud he is that his children all partake in the outdoor lifestyle.

The Lake Superior Chapter has a long history of supporting youth events and funding youth archery and shooting programs. While we plan to continue funding these organizations in the future, the board wanted to do more. We decided to purchase Minnesota Lifetime Small Game/Fishing licenses for all youth 17 years old and under who were in attendance at our event. Unfortunately, Wisconsin doesn't have a lifetime license program yet, so we gave Wisconsin youth in attendance each a check for \$500 after they all pinky swore to use that money for licenses. We funded 27 youth licenses in total! We plan to make this an annual event at our banquet.

The Lake Superior Chapter board is already working on our 2026 event, as everyone knows, the work really never ends. All of us at the Lake Superior Chapter wish everyone a safe and successful fall!



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# Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Dean LePoidevin, President

I am happy to report our 36th Annual Sporting Clays event, held at Wern Valley Sportsmen's Club in Waukesha, WI, was another resounding success. Close to 60 shooters walked the 10-station, 50-shot course under excellent conditions. Plaques were awarded to the top women's, men's, and youth categories, along with several valuable raffle prizes. Many thanks to Wern Valley for their help in offering another fine event for chapter members and their guests.

Many thanks to event sponsors Weldall Manufacturing and Holz Chevrolet, along with gold level

sponsors TVJ Masonry, Accurate Graphics and Better's + Associates. As any SCI member knows, chapter events and outings are made possible by the generous donations provided by sponsors.

Check [www.sciwi.org](http://www.sciwi.org) for details on upcoming member meetings, including a bourbon tasting at Revere's Well Street Tavern on Thursday evening, September 18.



Father-son team of Fred and David Spiewak came prepared.



Event Sponsor Holz Chevrolet helped make it a successful event.



Lunch was catered by Robert's Meats of Waukesha, a member favorite.



Top shooters Katie Brewster, Walker and Mike Bachmann.

The SCI WI Sporting Clays event attracted shooters of all ages.



Patrick and Rachel Whitcomb made it a family affair.



Gold sponsors included Michael Better's (left) and Matt & Sharon Yunk (right).



Dana and David Bahl, Jr. (right) led event sponsor Weldall's team.



Attentive observation ensured correct scoring.





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# Illinois & Chicago Chapter Hall of Fame

At the 53rd Annual Fundraiser & Banquet, the Illinois & Chicago Chapter was proud to announce establishment of its Hall of Fame to recognize individuals whose exceptional service and dedication to the chapter and SCI stand far above the rest.

At the Addison, Illinois spring event, members came together with supporters and conservation advocates to celebrate more than half a century of leadership in preserving and promoting hunting's heritage.

The dedicated board of directors and strong base of volunteers, including President Brett Hensley at the helm, continue the Illinois & Chicago Chapter's legacy as a driving force for SCI's mission and all shooting sports enthusiasts. The chapter's steadfast commitment to protecting outdoor



traditions and championing wildlife conservation is strong and growing stronger.

## SE WI Bow Chapter

The annual wild game dinner at Weissgerber's Golden Mast restaurant was a success August 14th, as this issue was going to press. We'll have more information and photos in an upcoming issue.

This is a busy time of year as we tune bows, fix stands, check safety gear, and prepare in other ways for the bow deer opener.

Between season prep, legislative work, and other outdoor activities, we have been busy here at the SCI Southeast Wisconsin Bowhunters Chapter.

Check out the CWD study preliminary results story later in this issue. This is research that our chapter and others helped support. And check out the Pope and Young trail cam story.

Good luck in the deer woods.



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## Badgerland Chapter Report

by Randy Mayes, President

And it's here!! The time of year we all wait for!

If all goes as planned, when you're reading this, I may literally be attempting to get within bow range of a willing, Wyoming mule deer. I love heading to all parts of the world on hunting adventures but there's just something about chasing mule deer or elk in the mountains. I may not always punch my tag, but one thing is for sure: I will enjoy trying!

My son lives in Wyoming so doing a hunt out there fills two very important needs in my life... spending much needed time with him and fulfilling my never-ending desire to hunt. This type of hunt challenges your hunting prowess but also challenges your physical abilities. I spend many days in the months prior to western hunting to try and whip my "somewhat old" and "somewhat overweight" body into "somewhat" mountain hunting shape!

I could always do more, but I really think it all helps.

Looking back at my life of hunting so far, I really feel that being an SCI member has done so much to help me as a hunter. It has opened my eyes to so many different aspects of hunting. As a much younger hunter, I would attend our monthly meetings and hear members giving presentations on their recent hunts. It showed me a multitude of adventures that are out there for the taking. Adventures I thought I would never be able to do.

If I was looking to do a hunt somewhere... anywhere... there was always someone in the organization who had been there and done that and was more than willing to share info with me. I also felt that "if they can do it, I can too!" Seeing and hearing of other members taking those trips was an inspiration for me. Being a member of SCI has opened so many doors for me I can't even begin to tell you all of them!



I hope SCI has done or will do the same for you! I also hope that you will share with others who are not members, how much they can benefit from being a part of SCI!

I wish everyone a safe, enjoyable, hunting season!





# Northeast Wisconsin Chapter Report

by Kathryn Thede, President

This time of year is my favorite; the leaves will be changing, and bow hunting will soon be upon us. To me it is a perfect reminder of the rights we are continually fighting for. Whether you are heading out west, to the duck blind, or to your deer stand, there is something special about this time of year. For our family it typically means multiple generations up at the cabin recalling hunts of yesteryear, spending time together with friends and family sharing memories and stories, enjoying the great outdoors, cutting wood, and scoping out meat for the freezer or the buck of your dreams.

I love when SCI members reach out to me with pictures and stories of their hunts. It is so nice to see the excitement and hear about their hunting journeys (whether big or small) as most of you can probably relate. The more involved I have gotten in SCI, the more people I have met with similar interests, and the friendships I have made through SCI are such a blessing.

The past few months have been active ones for our chapter. We have gotten a few bigger grant requests that we were happy to be able to fulfill. Just a few recent ones that come to mind: Shadows on the Wolf asked for a donation for a firearm for their Ruff Fish



Tournament (a major fundraiser to help support their educational center); a group that volunteers that put on Hunter Safety classes asked for some help in purchasing a gun safe; and Oconto trap team was looking for sponsorship for a trailer. By helping these groups we are able to help raise awareness of our mission of promoting hunting and wildlife conservation and what better way than to help prepare and encourage future hunters.

Behind the scenes, at our board meetings, we've already begun planning Wisconsin State Hunting and Fishing Expo and our Banquet. It is promising to be a good time and will sneak up on us before we know it! Mark your

calendars for February 27-28 & March 1 at the Resch EXPO Center in Green Bay, WI. Our banquet and auction will be held on Saturday, February 28, 2026, at Stadium View in Green Bay. Please go to [www.newisci.org](http://www.newisci.org) and follow us on Facebook for the latest updates.

I look forward to seeing you at our next member meeting (keep an eye on the mailbox for your yellow flyer)!

As always please feel free to reach out with any questions, concerns, or hunting stories to Kathryn Thede at 920-450-0765.


Wishing you all a safe and memorable hunting season filled with bountiful game, great companions, and straight shooting!



Northeast Wisconsin SCI member Mike Goza shared photos of his wildebeest, ostrich, and wild turkey. Please send your photos to [WiSCIimg@peoplepc.com](mailto:WiSCIimg@peoplepc.com).



Marc Richmond enjoyed the grandeur of this mountain range view on his Alaskan adventure. Marc is a member of the Northeast Wisconsin Chapter of SCI.



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# Illinois & Chicago Chapter Report

by Brett Hensley, President

As the crisp fall air rolls in, so does an exciting season of hunting and community for the Illinois and Chicago Chapter of SCI! With cooler weather comes even more opportunities to connect, get involved, and celebrate conservation together.

This September, our chapter proudly participated in the Illinois Learn to Hunt's Hunt Camp in Wauconda, Illinois, an incredible event designed to introduce new adult hunters to the world of conservation and ethical hunting. We brought our popular wildlife trailer, and the event continues to grow every year with more conservation organizations and even greater turnout. It's always rewarding to see the next generation of sportsmen and women getting involved.

We also hosted our annual Member Appreciation Picnic in Palatine at a beautiful private residence. This fan-favorite event featured raffles (including firearms!), outdoor games, and a mouthwatering pig roast. It was the perfect way to say thank you to our dedicated members and celebrate everything we've accomplished together this year.

Coming up this winter there are still a lot of opportunities to attend events. This year our chapter will be hosting our annual Christmas Brunch on December 7th at the Drury Lane in Oakbrook. This event is amazing every year! Attendees will have the opportunity to partake in the sportsmen's raffle, lady's raffle, and children's raffle as well as several firearms raffles. Attendees will also be able to enjoy the famous Drury Lane all you can eat buffet from home made donuts, to the meat station, to the continental breakfast station and dessert station, to the seafood station. The best part is at the end when Santa Claus comes at the end to pass out presents to all the children in attendance! More info and tickets will be available on our website sci-illinois.com.

Also, this winter, possible dates are being finalized, the chapter and some of the chapters in Wisconsin will be

partnering with MeierK9 (who has donated hunting dogs to our chapter and Wisconsin chapters to be used in our banquets) to host a youth pheasant hunting clinic near New Glarus, Wisconsin. This event will be open to any members' child ages 14-17 to learn about pheasant hunting. This will be a 3-day event in December with the first day being an intro to firearm safety, learning about safety with hunting dogs, and hitting the clay range to practice shooting with a mini-hunt later in the afternoon. The next two days will be hunting days. Firearms and ammo will be provided! Spots will be limited so please keep an eye out on your chapters' social media accounts and MeierK9's social media account!

Finally, this December will be our Board Elections for Director and Executive Committee positions. This is



a fantastic way to get involved, make your voice heard, and help protect hunting rights in Illinois while advancing conservation efforts.

We look forward to seeing you at our events this season—thank you for being a vital part of the Illinois and Chicago Chapter of SCI!



*Wildlife Research Center's Paul Landberg wasn't an employee there when he arrowed this Minnesota buck the day before the gun deer season in 2020, but he was an avid and successful user of their scent products.*

# Lake Superior Chapter News

On May 18th, our world changed forever. Our dad, Jason Sanders, suffered a devastating fall from 30 feet while helping with yard work at his parents' home—just one example of the selfless way he's always shown up for those he loves. He broke his C1 and C2 vertebrae, was airlifted to a Level 1 trauma center, and underwent emergency surgery to stabilize his neck. In addition, he broke his arm, multiple ribs, and has been battling severe pneumonia during his hospital stay.

Today, Jason is paralyzed from the neck down.

After spending 24 days in the North Memorial ICU for initial treatment, he was finally stable enough to be transferred out of state to one of the best spinal rehab centers in the world in Colorado, where he is now beginning the intense and emotional work of recovery. He is expected to remain there for several months. Our mom is living nearby in hospital family housing to be with him, and to be trained to become his full-time caregiver when they return home. This housing is costly, and our mom—who is retired due to her own life-changing injury years ago—is unable to work and has no income of her own.

Jason will never be able to return to work. As the sole provider for their household, the loss of income and health insurance is devastating. He will require 24-hour care, specialized medical equipment, and a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, all of which are immediate and overwhelming costs.

## A Little About Our Hero

Jason is one of those rare people who would drop everything to help someone else. He's a loving husband, a devoted dad to 8 kids, and a proud grandpa to 9 grandkids. He's our rock and our guide—strong, stubborn in the best way, wise, funny, and endlessly supportive.

He loves teaching the grandkids about the outdoors and wildlife, taking them on adventures, watching hunting shows or NASCAR together, strolling through the woods, and doing gymnastics in the



**Help Support Jason Sanders' Long Road to Recovery!**

living room together. He always lets the grandkids "help" make pancakes, no matter how big the mess. Of course, he's the apple of their eyes—and a "Hey Grandpa, can we?" never fails to set him in motion, because he's the most fun-loving Grandpa God ever made. He is that kind of dad and grandpa—the very best kind.

Jason has spent his life deeply committed to wildlife conservation. He's a longtime supporter of several conservation organizations, including Iowa FNAWS - Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Safari Club International (SCI), and the Friends of NRA (FNRA), and currently serves on the board for Iowa FNAWS. Jason has traveled the world hunting and sharing his respect for wildlife and the outdoors with others. He has generously contributed to conservation efforts, planted and maintained food plots to support local wildlife, and has always been eager to educate both youth and adults about the importance of conservation—instilling these values in not only his own family, but in anyone willing to listen and learn.

## Recovery Update

Despite the unimaginable challenges, Jason's spirit remains unshaken. His spark, his wit, and his stubborn strength are all still very much intact—as proven by the familiar eye-rolls he gives Mom and the humor that shines through even as he adjusts to communicating through a tracheostomy. In one recent unforgettable moment, he said the most treasured words to her, "I love you."

Why are we asking for help?

This is a long, uncertain road. Jason is fighting with everything he has to regain what he can, but the physical, emotional, and financial toll is overwhelming. Jason is facing a life forever changed, and our family is doing everything we can to support him. But we can't do it alone. We're asking for help to:

- Cover the cost of our mom's housing during rehab in Colorado;
- Provide funds for travel, food, and medical expenses;
- Help purchase a wheelchair-accessible vehicle;
- Support necessary home modifications and equipment;
- Ease the burden of lost income and insurance' and

Cover everyday household bills and mortgage payments while both of our parents are unable to work.

Your donations will help lift the enormous burden on our family and allow us to focus on what truly matters—his healing and comfort. Thank You

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for the love, support, and prayers. Our dad is the strongest man we have ever known, and with your help, he'll continue to fight to reclaim as much of his life as he possibly can.

Please consider donating, sharing this page, and helping us bring our dad home. We know he's strong, and with love, community, and hope—we believe in miracles. Thank you from Alicia (Keith), Adam (Amanda), Arron (Heather), Arissa (Jake), Megan, Andrew, Morgan, and Maren.



# Teal

## Duck season's opening salvo is approaching

by Jay Anglin, Hardcore

When Mother Nature kicks the natural air-conditioning on sometime mid-August, it's always a much welcome reprieve from sweltering summer weather. The change beckons hunters with their first real sense of what is coming only a few weeks away. They know, tiny ducks will be sweeping southward from their northern breeding grounds through the starlit sky on a light northern breeze.

The first days of September are permanently etched in the wing shooters psyche. The tradition and pageantry of the dove opener is a rite of passage for many hunters, and this perennial favorite tune-up for wing shooters is regularly squeezed in between early-season goose and teal hunts by even the most dedicated waterfowlers. But the allure of teal hunting is something some will choose over the other two options, as these hunters consider hordes of bluewings jetting around the marsh, flooding, or river bottom one of the highlights of a waterfowl season.

Blue-winged teal migrate south earlier than other species and many end up wintering in the Gulf States, Caribbean, Mexico, as well as much of the rest of Latin America – in essence anywhere summer-like conditions are prevalent during winter. Bluewings are also the last species to migrate north in the spring, and while the vast-majority nest in the Prairie Pothole Region of the northern plains of the US and the adjacent Canadian prairie, a surprising contingent nest within the lower 48 states.

Both blue-winged and green-winged teal can be found throughout North

America during the migration, but the majority of bluewings migrate through the Central and Mississippi flyways in August and September. While a decent number of green-winged teal follow the backend of this early migration, this, the smallest species of dabbling duck found in North America really gets revved-up during the early portions of the regular season and quickly become a mainstay target throughout the entire season for waterfowlers in states south of the snow and ice line.

The cinnamon teal's range is the western third of the US, and although this species is very similar to the bluewing in size and markings such as their telltale blue wing patch, as the name implies, their overall coloration is what can only be described as a stunning cinnamon red color. This makes the cinnamon teal one of the most sought-after trophy species.

Teal are plentiful, often only second to mallards in abundance. They can be challenging targets, though, and regularly appear in frenzied swarms that "ball up" over the decoys. They taste great and offer generous bag limits, and teal are small enough to fit into a small cooler on ice, if you must race to work and don't have time to field dress your bag until later.

Unlike big-production duck hunts later in the season, hunting teal is relatively easy from a gear standpoint. This includes wearing the most comfortable hunting outfit of the season – often shorts and t-shirt. And teal are rarely difficult to decoy, and flocks will often explode over the decoys within 20 yards.

And thankfully, the three primary teal species regularly mingle together, so using decoys that don't necessarily match the species you're encountering work fine. This includes the far less abundant cinnamon, which regularly ends up belly-up among bluewing and greenwing decoys.

Typically, a dozen or two bluewing decoys is enough for early season teal hunting, and it never hurts to mix in some greenwing, either, which incidentally can come in handy during regular duck seasons to beef up spreads and add realism to a mid to late season spreads, otherwise dominated by mallard decoys.

Teal are also suckers for spinning wing decoys and hunts can quickly become a point and shoot endeavor. This is a great opportunity to use sub-gauge shotguns that fire light loads through open chokes. Many veteran teal hunters use the very same

non-toxic dove loads required on public hunting areas to bag teal hanging over the decoys. The reality is, they aren't difficult to bring down and the target size is very similar to smaller game species such as quail, woodcock, grouse, and yes, dove. Standard length shells loaded with smaller shot sizes are certainly good enough for teal, plus, these loads don't cost nearly as much as the bigger offerings.

Hunters who primarily rely on September's near daily teal migration (as opposed to birds that are hanging around) may want to increase their decoy spread's size, and this is especially the case where thick vegetation is present. While teal love moist soil and flooded rice or millet so often managed specifically to attract them, they will be drawn to any kind of marshy habitat, and these areas are often heavily vegetated. Remember, teal have a habit of taking a lap or two around a given area to inspect options, and whoever has the best visibility will often win their praise.

You're not always competing with other hunters, but actual teal may already be on the water, which is why it's so important to use decoys that

possess "pop", with clean, realistic paint jobs. The further south you are hunting the more important this becomes. This is due to the simple fact that these rapid-migrating ducks may encounter hunters at any given time as they race southward. While teal may not be as prone to become as "unworkable" as stale mallards and pintails that

have repeatedly dealt with similar interactions with hunters, any resource that mitigates a duck's ability to recall being blistered by a salvo of shotgun blasts a day or two prior, never hurts.

Realism applies even when targeting the most notoriously naïve species and once again, Hardcore Waterfowl has you covered with the company's

ultra-realistic Rugged Series Blue-Winged and Green-Winged Teal Decoys. These slightly oversized, one-piece decoys show out well against the dense thatch and visual chaos of late-summer's aquatic vegetation with their true-to-life paint and feather detail. And these "blocks" are built with state-of-art FowlFlex™ technology, providing near bombproof integrity that lasts.

While the September marsh isn't exactly known for "ducky" conditions, Hardcore's Rugged Series teal decoys sport an innovative WhaleTail™ that helps mitigate this issue by allowing movement with even the slimmest of breeze and current, further swinging the advantage in the hunter's favor.





# Working with DINOSAURS

by Tommy Burr, YCC  
Delegate of the Year

In a high school ecology or biology science class you may learn about different species of plants and animal types but, as SCI members know, the amount of information you gain from those classes is nothing like the hands-on experience I got to take part in.

I was able to work with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and students from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point to tag sturgeon during their spawning run this spring. It was an experience like no other.

We traveled to three different spawning locations throughout the day, Sturgeon Trail and Pfeifer Park in New London and finally Bamboo Bend in Shiocton. We had a brief meeting before we started to discuss each person's role in the process.

There are typically two people with nets on the bank netting fish and then two people carrying the fish to

the bump board. Once there, it takes two people to measure the fish and one person to scan the fish to see if it currently has a PIT tag. A PIT tag is a Passive Integrated Transponder. It is a small electronic microchip that is implanted in the fish for identification and tracking. If there is no tag, a PIT tag is injected under the skin behind the head. We then measure the fish and determine its sex. All this data is written down and then later recorded in the WI DNR's database. The fish is then released down a long black tarp back into the river. The data that is recorded will be used if the fish is caught in future years during the spawn run or harvested. It will help determine the growth rate of the fish.

We rotated through each position throughout the day. It takes a lot of strength to net, carry and measure these large fish. We netted large fish, small fish and even one that was missing its dorsal fin. We figured it had been hit by a boat propeller.

Throughout the three locations, Sturgeon Trail had 80 fish recorded, Pfeifer Park had 19 fish recorded and Bamboo Bend had 100 fish recorded.

The largest fish that day was a massive 78-inch female. We figured it was over 180 pounds! I learned so much about sturgeon from Emily the biologist and her crew that day.

It was an amazing experience to see these massive fish and the effort they go through to spawn.

Thank you to Margaret Stadig for setting up this opportunity for me.

Thank you to the Youth Conservation Congress and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress for these great opportunities. It is something I will never forget.

My dad, Steve, also joined for the day, helping the crew with sturgeon measurements and assessments.

In the spring there are many places to see sturgeon heading upstream to spawn.

Tommy is pictured near "Stanley" the sturgeon at Bamboo Bend. This

# Burr is YCC Delegate of the Year

Tommy Burr is the first recipient of the Youth Conservation Congress (YCC) Delegate of the Year Award as part of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress' ongoing mission to acknowledge exemplary leadership and hard work of individuals committed to sustaining Wisconsin's outdoor legacy for future generations.

A high school junior in Eagle River, Burr has been involved with the YCC since 2019. He learned about it through former WCC delegate Jim Heffner and his wife, Carol Heffner (currently a WCC delegate in Oneida County). Since then, Burr has fully embraced the program's mission, participating in many YCC activities.

"The YCC has been an amazing experience. It has taught me more about Wisconsin's natural resources and how to respect and use them

wisely," said Burr. "We do so many fun events throughout the year, and it's great meeting others and seeing different activities they participate in across the state."

"Tommy truly embodies the spirit of the YCC. He's a compassionate, dedicated individual who speaks up for what he believes in," said Kyle Zenz, DNR YCC coordinator.

YCC develops future conservation leaders and offers opportunities for students, whether outdoor enthusiasts or newcomers to conservation. Although the program is aimed at high school students, younger individuals are also welcome.



location in Shiocton is an accessible place to watch these unique fish take their yearly journey. During the spawning season there are several live cameras sharing footage online. SCI members can learn more about sturgeon from the WI DNR website.



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# Ojibwa Hosts Youth Event

by Pat Scuzzin

SCI member Ben Laskowski shared a sampling of photos from the family-friendly Ojibwa Bow Hunters youth event in New Berlin, Wisconsin. Every year, young people, parents and chaperones enjoy a day at the club's beautiful, spacious grounds where volunteers and donors treat them to prizes, nature hikes, food and drinks plus introductory opportunities to shoot bows, bb guns thanks to the National Wild Turkey Federation, and atl atls, as well as try spincasting and other outdoor activities.

Youth and adults could touch also a life-size tiger and mammals of Wisconsin and North America. Outdoor Heritage Education Center nonprofit group founded by SCI Life Member Mark LaBarbera provided everyone a hands-on experience in one of its seven Touch of the Wild Sensory Safari trailers.

SCI Wisconsin Chapter and SCI Southeast Wisconsin Bowhunters Chapter were major sponsors, once again making the day possible for hundreds of kids who went home tired and full of a lifetime of memories.

Special thanks to all of the sponsors: Waukesha County Sheriff's Dept., National Wild Turkey Federation, Hanco Utilities, BK III Archery, Waukesha County Conservation Alliance, SCI Wisconsin Chapter, Outdoor Heritage Education Center Executive Director Ruth Ann Lee, Rodd Szmania, Keith & Linda Behmke, Ben Laskowski, SE WI Bowhunter Chapter, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, Greg & Karen Karch/Learn to Fish, West Town Archery, and the Women's Hunting & Sporting Association.



SCI member Ben Laskowski made cotton candy and shared it.



Kids of all ages learned to fish with spincast rod and reel combos.



Before the kids arrived, it was unusually quiet in OHEC's Touch of the Wild trailer, an annual favorite at the event.



NWTF always blows up the range in a good way with its inflatable two-lane airgun range, safe with one-on-one mentoring and completely enclosed.





# Deer Hunt Wisconsin Wins Again, Adds 2025 Sponsors

The "Deer Hunt Wisconsin" annual TV special again was honored in the Best of the Midwest Media Fest competition that includes 201 entries from nine states. Winning the equivalent of Gold or Silver medals every year or "Best of Show" has become as common place as DHWTV's long list of awards from the Outdoor Writers Association of America and the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers annual competitions, also against the biggest names in outdoor television production.

"It's easy to take for granted but this is a great way for all of us to very affordably promote a positive image of hunters and a pro-hunting, pro-conservation message," said Charmaine Wargolet, Region 16 Representative for SCI, First for Hunters.

Pledging support again this year, SCI Wisconsin and Badgerland Chapters have been strong supporters of the show, and Northeast Wisconsin SCI in recent years has contributed to the show's success. Lake Superior Chapter & Southeast Wisconsin Bowhunters Chapter historically have pitched in and may renew for 2025. Sponsoring chapters can link the show online via their websites and play them at fundraisers or other gatherings.

USA Ventures d/b/a Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show renewed for 2025 and collaborate on cross-promotions that reach out to avid hunters and anglers, plus special efforts to engage women and youth. The sports show's Stephen Buzza has already taken action on a Women's



*Wearing his familiar Stormy Kromer, host and SCI member Dan Small is one of the most trusted professionals in the outdoor community.*

Advisory Council suggested by DHWTV Co-Executive Producer Mark LaBarbera. He and partner Dan Small are longtime SCI members nationally and locally, so they are familiar and easy to work with, hence Wargolet's note about being taking for granted. Small has been hosting and executive producing the show for nearly 40 years. In recent decades he has helped the Milwaukee Sports Show coordinate youth and family activities that include West Town Archery and Daniel Boone Conservation Club BB gun ranges, Trout Unlimited fly-tying, Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructors Association (WHEIA) shooting range, and other activities, plus Touch of the Wild sensory safari trailers

owned and operated by the volunteer-based nonprofit Outdoor Heritage Education Center group. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources professionals add to the fun learning stations.

SCI chapters support many of those groups, separate from their ongoing DHWTV sponsorships.

"We're proud to be SCI members and we appreciate the support from chapter leaders and fellow members," said Small.

Small and LaBarbera said they welcome additional sponsors to be part of this award-winning production. It's not too late.

Other renewing sponsors include Wisconsin Outdoor News, Vortex, Wildlife Research Center, Stormy Kromer, Serpent Arms, Wild Eagle Lodge, and Mayville Engineering Co.

At press time, Small said he was expecting additional renewal confirmations from Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, WHEIA, and Whitetail Sanctuary Solutions.

New sponsors have signed on for 2025.

LaBarbera and Small welcomed Alex Weber of First Weber Realtors, an expert in hunting and recreation properties, and a fellow outdoorsman, who has already shared insider tips for members through SCI HUNTERS magazine.

Another new sponsor, Swift Lift, is familiar to SCI members. The innovative product came to SCI's attention at the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation auction in Washington, DC. Rudi Roeslein and his son Jason, along with Mike Umbdenstock of Roeslein & Associates are avid outdoorsmen

and humanitarians. Their main business is engineering, procurement, and construction, including working with the world's largest brewers and can companies, but they are also big into renewables and conservation. And yet they found time to support one employee's design for the Swift Lift and turn it into a source of revenue for that employee's family to cover medical bills. Great product for lifting game into your UTV or vehicle, and a great cause. Future issues of SCI HUNTERS magazine will share details plus special offers for members and banquet committees.

As this magazine was going to press, Small said that there are other potential sponsors about to decide on DHWTV 2025, including products that he and

LaBarbera discovered at various sports shows where they were volunteering at chapter or OHEC booths. Hjort Blinds is a great example, LaBarbera said, describing how founder TJ Anderson builds these metal blinds and stands to outperform the competition and overcome common problems encountered by SCI members during gun and bow seasons in Wisconsin and Illinois.

"We were introduced to Hjort Blinds by Mike Fuge who bought quite a few of them for veteran and other hunts on his Central Wisconsin property," said LaBarbera, adding, "But what impressed us beyond the long-lasting quality was TJ's ability to take an idea or suggestion and, with entrepreneurial speed, build it. A good example is the new comfortable



*Ryan Knight will share big buck tips on DHWTV.*



*OHEC E.D. Ruth Ann Lee handed out free Milwaukee sports show tickets*

and portable wheelchair adaptable Hjort blind. Fuge already bought one for the 2025 deer season."

Sponsor's names, websites, and logos are featured in DHWTV promotions. SCI members can see their chapters in the credits on public television airings and their commercials in the DHWTV airings on FanDuel Sports North in five states and FanDuel Sports Wisconsin. Previously, those popular networks were known as Fox Sports and then Bally Sports. Same great viewership; different name.

This year's show will air multiple times leading up to the November firearms deer season.

It features a wonderful mix of tips, facts, deer forecast, new rules, CWD update, a special white deer segment, and heart-warming stories that support youth, our outdoor heritage, and family traditions, while showcasing the hunter's positive role in conservation.

LaBarbera said you can direct questions to MLaBarbera57@icloud.com.



# Humbled by Lake Superior Chapter Generosity

by Andrew Parker

Growing up in Minnesota with a father who hunted and a mother who enjoyed the outdoors introduced me to camping, hunting, and fishing at an early age. Fall trips to my mother's family dairy in western South Dakota turned this love for the outdoors from a flame to an inferno while chasing game alongside my uncle and cousin. Visits to my father's family in central Wisconsin allowed my grandfather to pass his love for fly fishing and fly tying on to an eager grandson; creating another addiction. I am grateful for the good fortune of being born into a family that passed these traditions down to me.

The point is that I was truly blessed to have the exposure that I did in my youth with great role models and opportunities; something I took for granted for a large portion of my life.

I started attending banquets in my late 20's. The local Pheasants Forever, MDHA, or RMEF. These have been excellent banquets which I still attend and have been lucky to meet a bunch of great people and make several lasting relationships. One year at an RMEF banquet a friend encouraged me to attend the Lake Superior SCI banquet. That year, 2015, I booked the room and attended with a close friend and my father. The show presented prospects that I never would have imagined as a kid growing up. Meeting and talking with outfitters, learning about different hunting opportunities, visiting with likeminded people, folks from all walks of life; it was a great banquet. Fast forward 10 years and I still love attending these banquets with my friends and family. These banquets have taken on a new meaning now that my 11 year old son has also been

attending for the past 3 years. He has met these same great and generous mentors and been on adventures with more than a 20 year head start on me. SCI has also given him a voice and venue to share his experiences. Encouraged by an issue of Minnesota Adventuring Magazine, he sent in a short article about harvesting his first whitetail; a proud moment for him. SCI has meaningfully impacted my life, and while my son may not know anything different at this point, its shaping his life too.



At this year's Lake Superior Banquet (50th Anniversary) my wife, son and son's best friend were enjoying the evening festivities. Before dinner on Saturday night, Scott Olson (President of the Chapter) went up on stage and invited all kids in the audience 16 years old and under to the stage. He talked about the importance of introducing kids to the outdoors, fishing, and hunting, how important it is to strengthen our community, how the banquet used to have upwards of 900 people in attendance vs. 350. Talked about how women and youth in hunting

is so critical and our biggest chance to grow and maintain the traditions that mean so much to all of us.

He then proceeded to present every kid in attendance a "Lifetime Sportsman License" (fishing and small game) from the chapter. Over 20 kids received Lifetime Licenses, WOW! This is what it is all about! This was a complete surprise and what an amazingly generous and lasting gift from the Board and member contributions that made such an act possible. In all the years of attending various banquets I have never seen this sort of commitment from a chapter to its members and especially the youth.

Humbled by the thoughtfulness of the board, and the generosity of members. I am proud to be associated with these people, the organization, and the ability to share this with my family. Thank you, Lake Superior SCI, for illustrating one of SCI's pillars: Hunter Access and Education.

With this gesture, the chapter captured the essence of what SCI is about. While many of the kids up there (my son and his friend included) had no true appreciation for the gift in that moment, they will in time. Throughout their lives, every year, as they get their "free" fishing and small games licenses, they will be reminded. Reminded at the generosity of SCI, reminded that they are fortunate to have a community of people that support their interests. Hopefully that will also encourage them to pass along the same to someone else. The Lake Superior Chapter left a legacy with this act! All of you are helping to provide access to our sport and are instilling some critical life lessons in our youth, as well as many of the adults in attendance that night. These kids have been blessed!



Editorial:

# Trailcams & Record Book Policy

by Pope & Young Staff

Technology in hunting is ever evolving. We want to ensure technological advancements are not violating bowhunting fair chase ethics. Bowhunting is a privilege, not a right. With any privilege the ethics and perception of the activity to the greater public must be preserved.

Pope and Young is a leading voice for bowhunters not only when it comes to attacks on our passion for bowhunting, but working to draw those lines in the sand, to help ensure we are following the rules of Fair Chase, ethical bowhunting.

In the past, the policy was that if an animal had a picture captured on a camera that then transmitted the picture to the hunter, it was not eligible for the record books.

"Obviously, as technology increases, the cellular camera gained popularity," said Justin Spring, Executive Director of Pope and Young. "It got to the point where technically, if you looked at that rule, if I get a picture of a fawn, in essence, per fair chase rules as it reads, that deer is basically safe for its entire life from ever getting entered into the records book, which obviously wasn't the intention. So that started the conversation between both Pope and Young as well as Boone and Crockett, that what we are really

trying to avoid is the idea of "on-call hunting" where somebody's sitting in their basement watching cameras, sees a deer out in front of stand six, they sneak out there and shoot it."

Trail cameras are an incredible tool that can be used for gathering information about a lot of things beyond just the targeted animal. So, both organizations began to look at how to modify this wording that that still gives the animal a fair chance to elude you, while at the same time, not prohibit the use of technology



might be more of an intense breeding age, you are better able to make decisions for the betterment of the wildlife management. But we do agree, we are humans, and with any technology it can be abused. But there are also going to be guys who use the technology correctly and become a more informed hunter by gathering information on the wildlife that are on their properties."

"That is the type of stuff that the cellular camera is great for, to teach the hunter, and help them learn the species, learn the habitat, learn what else is going on," said Justin Spring. "The hunter just needs to ask themselves, am I using this as a

crutch? Am I getting a picture sent to my phone and it causes me to take an immediate action in killing that animal, or am I just using this technology to become more informed, a better hunter?"

Spring and Olis recently joined Dylan Ray on The Typical Sportsman Podcast to discuss the ethics of using cellular trail cameras, how they should be used properly, how they can be abused, the changes that Pope and Young has made to the policy, but also talk about the states that are banning the use of them, along with how and why they should be banned in those said states.

Pope & Young's website is at [www.pope-young.org](http://www.pope-young.org).



that can be quite useful if not abused. Our goal is to get hunters to consider if they are relying solely on the technology for "on call hunting," or if they are just using it as a useful tool to better understand the deer, and their movement on the land.

"The cellular technology is helping make us more informed hunters," stated Mark Olis from Moultrie Mobile. "If we are more informed, there is a conservation aspect to that. If you are aware of what mature bucks are on your property, and what upcoming bucks you have that



# 2-Year Quest *(part 1)*

by Jay Trudell

It took two years! For all of you who think hunting high fence is easy, think again. Cheri and I booked a hunt by being the winning bidder at the Safari Club Badgerland banquet. We won a three-day, two-night hunt for one hunter and one observer to hunt at

the 777 Ranch in Hondo, Texas. This was a destination that was high on our list of must-do hunting lodges. Texas has some incredible hunting destinations, and this is one of them!

The hunt did not include a trophy, just the accommodation and guiding, so I had to decide what to hunt. I

studied the extensive species and price list to decide what was in my price range and on my hit list. I'm exclusively a bow hunter with a strong emphasis on trophies. I like to study the SCI record books and try to come up with hunts that I feel I can place high in the books if I'm successful. On this hunt, I







*Cheri shot an old broken-horn Catalina goat.*

chose either a rusa or a hog deer. Not many bow hunters have these. When I set the hunt up with the 777, I got to talk with my guide, and he assured me they had excellent trophies of each species! I was excited to hear that!

We flew into San Antonio, rented a car and made the drive to Hondo, about an hour away. Fun fact: it snowed, and they don't see that very often. We pulled into a Walmart and saw kids making snowmen in the parking lot. Being from Wisconsin, we felt at home. That didn't last long and, by the time we reached the 777, we were in short sleeves.

We arrived just before lunch, and they got us settled into our own cabin. It was very nice, with a full bath and a spacious bedroom. It overlooked their pond, a very serene setting. The walk to the lodge was short, and soon we were having lunch with our guide. The plan was to go after a world class hog deer that they had been seeing. So, we went to a blind that afternoon; we saw a couple of small hog deer and, right at dark, we saw a couple big rusa bucks. It was explained to me that the rusa bucks were very nocturnal and getting one would be tough, especially with a bow!

Day two was slow until the afternoon. The same two smaller hog deer we saw the night before showed up. We watched them feed for a long time and then the big guy showed up! He was considerably bigger! I was shaken by such a small animal with that size of antlers. Sometimes you can see an animal you're not that experienced with and just know that you're looking at a giant! Game on! He was feeding right to us, facing us the whole way. He worked his way to a bush and turned behind it. Then he started his way behind our blind. My guide could see him out the back window and we all had to get turned around. We did it quietly without spooking anything, a feat in itself! We opened the back window and there he was broadside at 20 yards! I drew immediately and, to this day, I have no clue what I did wrong, but I sent the arrow right over his back! I'm not sure if he ducked it or I put the wrong pin on him. It's a shot that will always haunt me! As you can imagine, he wasn't going to be coming back. So, we decided to slip out and leave the area for the next day.

For the evening, we decided to try hunting Catalina goats with Cheri and her crossbow. We found some quickly and started stalking them. They caught on to us quickly! We'd stalk and they'd spot us and run. Luckily, they didn't run far. I think they were comfortable staying in the thick cover. We tried a few times and then decided to set Cheri up on a trail and try to drive them to her. It worked! We got a group of them to cross the trail about 25 yards in front of Cheri. The ones in the front of the group jumped off the trail fast, offering no shot. Then, at the back of the group, a big old grey Billy goat stepped out and offered her a shot. She smoked him! When we recovered him, he only had one horn, the other side had broken off. He was an old warrior with a beautiful grey coat. He made a truly stunning mount!

We tried the next morning for the hog deer for a few hours and had no luck. We then decided to change the hunt and try stalking an animal that wasn't on my list, but I didn't have one, so I was excited to try it. We decided to try for a Texas dall sheep. These are beautiful white rams with long straight hair that includes a long beard. Now

the tough part is we were late in the hunt on my last day, and we were stalking an animal with excellent eyesight!

Luckily, our guide knew where the dall sheep liked to hang out in the late mornings, so we found them quickly. The game plan was to get downwind and close as fast as we could without being seen. A quick ambush was the plan to get a close shot without spooking them. So off we went, using bushes for cover; we had to stay low. After about a half hour, we got into position. They were feeding toward us, so we just stayed hidden and waited. It wasn't long, and a shot at a nice one presented itself. I drew just as the dall cleared an opening at about 30 yards. I settled the pin and let the arrow fly. It was a good hit, and the

big dall went down in sight! He was a super animal, nice white coat, big horns, couple character marks on his face from fighting; he was just perfect! He scored well too; he earned a silver medal from SCI.

So, I went to harvest either a hog or a rusa deer, neither happened. But we were blessed to get a wonderful, big and beautiful Texas dall sheep and an old grey Catalina goat. We were super happy, and we had a wonderful time at the 777 Ranch; I highly recommend this outfitter. This story isn't over; once I decide on a trophy, I tend to keep going until I'm successful. Stay tuned for part two!



*Our cabin overlooked this pond, a serene setting.*





# CWD Update

## Southwestern Wisconsin study shares gory details, new findings, and why we don't recognize "sick" deer

by Daniel Storm, PhD., WDNR

Earlier this year, we at the Wisconsin DNR announced the Southwest Wisconsin CWD, Deer and Predator Study's primary findings at the January Natural Resources Board meeting. This study conclusively demonstrated that CWD reduces deer survival, and it corroborated what studies from other states have found, which is also occurring in Wisconsin. Of course, CWD can reduce survival by killing deer outright, aka "dying of CWD," but it can also do so by making them more vulnerable to hunters, cars, coyotes and so on. In this article, we won't cover all the various ways deer can die. Instead, we'll dive into the gory details of deer that died directly from CWD. And I do mean gory. Talking about disease and mortality and demonstrating all the evidence necessary to conclude a deer died of a specific cause unavoidably involves photos and descriptions of dead deer. So, warning: It ain't pretty! However, if

you've ever wondered to yourself, "Do deer actually die from CWD?" "How do deer die of CWD?" or "If so many deer are that sick, why don't I see them everywhere?" then this article is for you.

To explore this topic, I will show and discuss individual deer from the study. We'll start with what we knew about them at capture, then go into how long they lived, what our investigations and necropsy reports revealed, and any other interesting notes about them.

First, a quick review on how we collect this information:

- **Catch and Collar the Deer** - This includes an antemortem "before death" test for CWD, which we obtained by taking a small piece of tissue from the rectum (yes, you read that right) and sending it to the Wisconsin Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for CWD testing. We then placed GPS collars on the deer, providing high-quality information about their

movements. Finally, we weighed the deer and recorded a simple body condition index, which indicated how fat or lean each deer was.

- **Investigate Mortalities** - A feature of GPS collars is that when the collar becomes motionless (indicating deer death), we get text and email alerts, which allows us to find the deer as soon as possible. If the deer were at least mostly intact, we took the carcass to the UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, where a veterinary pathologist would conduct a complete necropsy (animal autopsy). If the carcass were too heavily consumed or rotten, we would still do as extensive a field necropsy as possible and look for evidence such as infections, bite marks, broken bones or anything else that might clue us into what happened with the deer. We always conducted what amounted to a crime-scene investigation of the surrounding area, looking for any information on how the animal died or what might have contributed to its death.

For this article, we'll focus on deer that had a necropsy report from UW-Madison because we have the most information about these deer. Okay, let's get started.

### DEER #5010

The first one is deer #5010, a doe we collared on Dec. 28, 2017, when she was about 3.5 years of age. Interestingly, at capture, she only weighed 118 pounds, much lower than the average capture weight for adult does, which is 144 pounds. Her body condition score was 0 out of 10. This basically means that the technicians could feel her backbone easily, and that she lacked body fat in this location. This is a quick-and-dirty, but effective, way to assess body condition in deer. A low

body condition score is not necessarily uncommon or indicative of imminent starvation, but it is unusual to see it in a prime-aged deer so early in winter. So this doe was not in great shape, but as we'll see, she had much further to fall. The last thing I'll note is that she in no other way appeared outwardly sick to the technicians at capture - she was not stumbling or drooling, and her head and ears were not drooping.

Fast forward almost seven weeks to Feb. 14, 2018; #5010 was dead and looked much worse for the wear. This photo shows just how emaciated she was.



Deer #5010 from the Southwest Study was extremely emaciated upon her death.

Note the hips sticking out and the sunken shoulder and rump. Here is a quote from the necropsy report: "The animal is in poor overall body condition with 0 mm of subcutaneous fat at the xiphoid and rump. There is additionally inapparent perirenal, heart, omental and retrobulbar fat."

This is all a technical way of saying the deer had no fat right under the skin (subcutaneous) and anywhere within the body cavity where they would typically expect to find fat. Further, this photo shows the bone marrow, which looks like red jelly. Usually, this would be white and chalky, full of fat. This is the last reserve of fat in the body, and what biologists check to confirm starvation - if a deer had red jelly bone marrow, it was starving. She weighed a scant 78 pounds at death, which is a 40-pound loss in just 7 weeks.

Some interesting notes:

- She had one fetus. She likely became pregnant between 2.5 and

Healthy bone marrow is typically white and chalky, full of fat. 5010's marrow lacked these fat stores.



3.5 months before her death, so her disease state at just a handful of months before her death was not so severe as to prevent her from getting

pregnant. This is another piece of evidence that CWD affects deer briefly, relative to the entire course of infection, which is thought to take 18-24 months.

- She did have food in her digestive system, which is somewhat interesting, considering that she starved. However, we don't know if her food intake was simply inadequate or if she could not digest her food properly.

• "...coat is unkempt with numerous live lice..." One of the findings from our 2022 publication "Cause of death, pathology, and chronic wasting disease status of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) mortalities in Wisconsin, USA" was that deer with CWD were more likely to have parasites like lice and ticks. This could happen because CWD-positive deer are not grooming themselves as much as normal or receive less grooming from other deer. It could also be because their immune systems are less able to fend off parasites.

- One portion of the right lung had an abscess, a localized infection, but they considered this to have "...limited overall health implications."
- They found some lungworms, but this infection was considered mild.

Additionally, the following quote, also from the necropsy report, speaks to the deer having CWD: "Emaciation and histologic lesions of neuronal vacuolation are consistent with Chronic Wasting

Disease, and CWD immunohistochemistry was positive in both the brainstem and the retropharyngeal lymph node."

"Neuronal vacuolation" is the technical term for the holes in the brain that are characteristic of CWD. "Immunohistochemistry" is the type of CWD test used, which is considered the gold standard. The bottom line with all of this, is that the deer 1.) starved, and 2.) had CWD. This is a classic end-stage chronic wasting disease death.

### DEER #7235

Next up, deer #7235 - and even by the standards of dead deer, this is a gross one. We captured him on Feb. 11, 2017, when he was 8-9 months of age. He had a body condition score of 1/10 and weighed 86 pounds at capture, which is pretty close to average for a buck this age. At the time, CWD was not detected in his biopsy sample. On Oct. 26, 2017, he dispersed about 3 miles from his initial home range. We received a mortality alert almost 20 months after capture, on Sept. 30, 2018. One of our field technicians found his carcass a few rows into a cornfield. As can be seen in the photo below, he'd been scavenged a bit and there were coyote tracks in the mud, indicating the likely culprit. So, how can we tell he was scavenged post-death and not killed by the coyotes? There are a few ways. A depredation event usually involves struggle, which would have been apparent in the form of torn-up ground, lots of knocked-over corn stalks, hair and bits of flesh strewn about. None of that is present. Instead, it appears as though the deer lay down and died, and then the coyotes came in and started feeding. Lastly, there were





no bite marks on the neck, head or any place other than where the deer was eaten, nor was there any evidence of bleeding anywhere on the body.



Deer #7235 was emaciated by the time of his death, at a time of otherwise available forage.

Despite the scavenging, we could still get a necropsy report from the UW vet school. He tested positive for CWD and exhibited "...diffuse moderate spongiosis with intraneuronal vacuoles and gliosis...". "Spongiosis" means essentially the same thing as vacuolation, the holes in the brain, and "gliosis" refers to the formation of scar tissue in the brain in response to damage. Like all end-stage CWD-infected deer, he was also emaciated. "The body is in poor nutritional condition with inapparent visceral and subcutaneous fat and moderate muscle wasting. The eyes are sunken and the skull bone prominent due to fat and muscle atrophy."

Note how this deer became emaciated at a time when food was everywhere, meaning CWD, not lack of food, caused this starvation. That's not all that was going wrong with this buck. However, he also suffered from "Severe bilateral cranioventral fibrinosuppurative bronchopneumonia." This means that both the front and the bottom portions

of both lungs were infected and filled with clots and pus. Like I said, it ain't pretty. Unlike #5010, pneumonia significantly contributed to this deer's death. It's worthwhile to pause here and consider why these end-stage deer are getting pneumonia. It is generally thought to result from inhaling saliva, water and food, which they seem to do more often in the later stages of CWD because they salivate more and have trouble swallowing. These foreign substances introduce lots of bacteria into the lungs, which sets off the pneumonia.



#7235 died in a cornfield, note the stalks near his head, where plenty of food was available.

A few additional notes of interest from the necropsy

- His antlers were notably small for a 2-year-old buck. At the time of his death which, on Sept. 30, he was shedding velvet, which is on the late side to still have antler velvet. This looks like an instance when the timing of antler development lined up with the end-stage of CWD, leading to poor antler growth.
- Like #5010, this deer also had food in his stomach.

One last note on this buck: his range in the previous two weeks of his life was about 80 acres (an eighth of a square mile). Over this same timeframe, bucks without CWD had an average

range of 345 acres (a little over half a square mile). It appears that his being in the late stages of CWD caused him to move significantly less, which makes a lot of sense; he was starving, so he had less energy, but is this drop in range size typical? In what other ways does CWD change deer movement behavior? We are currently completing an analysis that answers these questions and will have an article in the near future that lays this all out. Stay tuned!

### DEER #5006

Lastly, we'll look at deer #5006. We first captured #5006 as a 6.5-year-old doe on Jan. 9, 2017. At that time, she tested CWD-negative, weighed 165 pounds and had a body condition score of 5/10. We then captured her again about 2 years later, on Feb. 4, 2019. She hadn't changed much in terms of body weight and condition, weighing 164 pounds with a 7/10 body condition score. This time she tested CWD-positive, but by all outward appearances was still a big, healthy doe. Fifty days later, however, she was dead. She looked like this when the technicians found her lying on her side, untouched.



#5006 was also emaciated upon her death, weighing only 90 pounds.

At necropsy, her carcass weighed 90 pounds, which is a loss of 74 pounds (45% of her body weight) in just 49 days. Unsurprisingly, she had "scant to inapparent subcutaneous and visceral adipose stores and moderate muscle

wasting." Note: "adipose" means fat. She also had pneumonia, specifically "Marked multifocal to extensive necro-suppurative bronchopneumonia", which basically means pneumonia was found throughout her lungs and involved dead lung tissue and pus. Lastly, they found the holes in the brain associated with CWD "spongiform encephalopathy with intracytoplasmic neuronal vacuoles" and her post-mortem CWD test was positive. Deer #5006 presents a classic case of end-stage CWD.

These deer are just three examples, but I think they illustrate to SCI members and other hunting conservationists just how devastating CWD is on an individual level. They show that end-stage CWD always involves starvation and oftentimes other infections, like pneumonia. They also demonstrate just how fast the end-stage of CWD is, considering that it takes 18 months or more for deer to reach that end-stage once they've been infected. The speed of this decline explains why, despite high prevalence numbers, people might not be seeing many "sick" deer on the landscape.



Savannah, 15, shot this bird on opening day of youth season on public land. It had a 10" beard and 11 1/4" spurs.

## Wisconsin Tourism Shatters Records

SCI members spend money as they travel, and it helps the economy and access to public lands. Governor Tony Evers and Department of Tourism Secretary Anne Sayers announced Wisconsin's tourism industry in 2024 saw its third consecutive record-breaking year of economic impact under the Evers Administration. According to 2024 economic impact data, the tourism industry generated a record-high \$25.8 billion in total economic impact, or about \$70 million per day, surpassing the previous record of \$25 billion set in 2023, which itself was a record year.

Additionally, this year's report is a hat trick, as Wisconsin also welcomed a record-breaking 114.4 million visitors in 2024—a 1.4 million increase from the previous year and eclipsing the former record of 113.2 million visitors in 2019, and the state's tourism industry generated a record amount of state and local revenue, generating a record \$1.7 billion that goes back to local communities and essential state services.

The tourism industry also supported 182,000 part-time and full-time jobs

across sectors in 2024, growing 2.2 percent from the previous year.

The 2023-25 Biennial Budget included a \$34 million investment over the biennium for the Department of Tourism to promote Wisconsin as a premier destination for leisure, business, and group travel, amounting to the largest increase in tourism marketing and advertising funds in state history, to remain competitive with neighboring states.

The 2025-27 Executive Budget proposed several investments to continue support for this essential industry, including:

Nearly \$34 million for the Department of Tourism to continue promoting Wisconsin as a premier business, cultural, and recreational destination;

More than \$500,000 and several staff positions to make the Wisconsin Office of Outdoor Recreation, created by Gov. Evers in 2019, a permanent hub for our outdoor partners, brands, and the industry;

Creating an Office of Film and Creative Industries and providing \$10

million for incentives to bring more film productions, TV shows, and creative endeavors to Wisconsin;

\$1 million to establish a new grant program to support Wisconsin's rural creative economies; and

\$5.9 million to invest in the Wisconsin Arts Board and support nonprofit arts organizations.

It also would invest in Wisconsin's State Park System and natural resources to promote outdoor recreation, which is a more than \$11 billion industry, and reauthorizing the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program for public hunting and other uses during the next 10 years at the highest level ever, with \$1 billion, plus more than \$164 million for improvement projects at several state parks, forests, trails, and wildlife recreation areas.

To learn more about Wisconsin tourism's record-breaking year and view the 2024 economic data, including a county-by-county breakdown, visit: [industry.travelwisconsin.com/research/economic-impact](http://industry.travelwisconsin.com/research/economic-impact).



# DNR's Archery Program Welcomes You

**K**raig Richardson is an ambassador for target archery and bowhunting, and he wants to draw your support. SCI and OHEC continue as key supporters, but the programs welcome additional support as they grow.

As the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Archery Education Program Specialist, he leads successful efforts including youth and adult activities for Explore Bowhunting, National Archery in the Schools (NASP), Scholastic 3-D Archery (S3DA), Explore Bowfishing, and more.

The National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) is an introductory level program that teaches youth from 4th grade through high school about the lifetime sport of target archery and provides an opportunity to grow their interest through local, state, national and world tournaments. The program is designed to be done during school hours during the physical education class.

Aside from the primary goal of teaching the basic skills needed to learn a traditional, lifetime shooting sport, NASP aims to improve student motivation, attention, behavior and focus as well as increase their class attendance. The program helps students develop their micro- and macro-motor skills in addition to their listening and observation skills. Furthermore, NASP has excelled at improving student's overall self-esteem, promoting graduation instead of dropping out.

The goal of the Scholastic 3-D Archery (S3DA) Program is to provide archery and bowhunting opportunities

for young people in after-school settings as well as with archery-affiliated clubs and businesses in the community. We provide an effective after-school archery program, focusing on 3-D, indoor target and outdoor target archery, and the certification and tools to deliver the instruction to youth. As a result, S3DA expects to see increased participation in 3-D and target archery by youth and parent archers using compound bows and traditional archery equipment while



also helping to increase participation at local, state and national archery events. In addition, S3DA expects to help provide a basic understanding and respect for our natural resources, environment and nature, with special emphasis on modern wildlife conservation and regulated sport hunting.

Those two programs alone are more than full-time work, but Richardson also oversees the Explore Bowhunting and Explore Bowfishing education efforts.

"I was ready to quit after my first state NASP tournament," he said.

"Not enough volunteers then, but DNR staff and volunteers across the state have been stepping up. And we welcome SCI members and others to volunteer."

You can reach him at Kraig.Richardson@Wisconsin.gov.

After the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo, he shared a glimpse into the strategic direction he envisions:

1. Develop better community relationships with bowhunting groups;
2. Network and develop new relationships with individuals and organizations that care about our outdoor heritage and creating new shooting sports enthusiasts;
3. Recruit more mentors;
4. Help those looking for grants to expand their archery range, educational outreach, replace targets, etc. as we want it to be a two-way street, helping each other;
5. Add tools. I'm creating brochures and promotional materials for the different

activities that we are involved with, and I want to go to gatherings during the winter banquet season to set up a table and let the general public as well as the bow hunting and archery community know what we do, how we do it, and how they can be a bigger part of it; and

6. We will continue to focus on our shared mission as we build relationships and work together for the future of archery, bowhunting, and conservation.

# Spring Turkey Stats

**W**DNR said turkey hunters registered 50,287 birds, 14% above the five-year average,

and 3,981 birds were registered during the youth hunt, up from 3,967 in 2024. Hunters bought 228,844 of 246,068

authorizations available. Deadline to apply for 2026 spring turkey is Dec. 10.



*Amber and Troy shot these 2025 gobblers in west central Wisconsin.*



# Calin's Wish

## Cancer patient hopes to learn to hunt bear

by Jeanette Volcensek

I'm writing this on behalf of my 24-year-old son, Calin Volcensek. He has been diagnosed with terminal/incurable brain cancer. With help so far from the Northeast Wisconsin Chapter of SCI, and thanks to Mike Fuge and Mark LaBarbera of Outdoor Heritage Education Center, Calin is expected to enjoy a free Wisconsin bear hunt this fall if they can pull together at this late date all of the funding and other things needed to make it a reality, and if Calin feels up to it, health-wise.

I'll take a moment to introduce you to him. Calin is a warm-hearted, compassionate, kind, thoughtful and good-natured young man. He is the son that takes time for his mom every day. He has loved the American flag since he was a little over a year old and has been a devoted patriot all his life.



Calin has been waving the flag proudly since he was two years old.

Calin has always loved nature and wildlife. As he grew up, he began to have a deep connection to both. In September of 2012, at the age of twelve, he completed his Hunter Safety course. Thus began his journey of following his true passion. From day one he has proudly been a Conservation Patron License holder. He has become an avid and ethical hunter. While always being conservation-minded, he has also shown a real respect for all the animals he hunts.



Left to right: Calin, Uncle John and Jordan enjoyed Calin's favorite duck hunt!

He has had two major influences in his passion for hunting. His Uncle John Boone (my brother), who took the time to take Calin and his cousin Jordan to Hunter Safety class at the same time. Through the years they have been on numerous hunts together in Black River Falls, WI with their hunting group. The second influence Calin was blessed to have was our dear friend Brian Knusta. Calin spent countless hours with Brian listening to his amazing hunting stories. Brian discovered that although Calin was right-handed, he was born to shoot left-handed. Brian would take Calin to his farm in Lublin, WI to practice shooting, drive the ATVs, enjoy the land, hunt and learn life lessons. Some of those lessons included "always know where your keys and wallet are," "it's called hunting, not getting," "take the time to meet new people and give back to your community," "respect the land and animals," "always harvest the meat



Calin's 1st Turkey with Uncle John 4/26/2014

and enjoy it," and "treasure the experience and the memories."

On February 15, 2016, Brian was killed in an accident on his farm. His death left a huge hole in our lives.



Calin's message to Brian 2/2016.

Both John and Brian have been amazing role models for Calin. They taught him everything he would need to know about becoming the hunter he is today. My goal is to make as many of Calin's hopes and dreams come true as is possible.

On March 28, 2025, Calin had a medical emergency. While in the Emergency Room, a CT scan revealed that Calin had a very large, (baseball-sized) mass in the right frontal lobe of his brain. Doctors discovered that his brain was starting to herniate, and he was immediately transported by ambulance to St. Mary's Hospital in Madison. His situation was so critical that a neurosurgeon was standing by, awaiting Calin's arrival. The surgeon had to perform an emergency craniotomy to remove the mass, without the benefit of an MRI or biopsy. The surgery lasted eight hours.

On day three in the ICU, Calin said "Mom, I forgot to tell you about the dove." Right before he got out of his car and



The Dove on Calin's car 3/28/25.

collapsed, a dove landed on his car and stayed there with him. He even took a photo of the dove because it was such an unusual occurrence. I'm thankful to God for every day we have had with Calin beyond March 28, 2025. I'm thankful for his surgeon and his team of doctors, and I'm thankful for the dove God sent.

While Calin's recovery from the operation was miraculous, the pathology came back mid-April; the diagnosis was a Grade 4 Astrocytoma, a very aggressive and terminal brain cancer. For me to say this has been a devastating blow really doesn't do justice to our profound heartbreak. Calin's girlfriend of seven years, Alyssa Erboe, has been by his side every step of the way. Their very special relationship is a true treasure. They share a deep love for each other and have been helping each other through life since they met. Alyssa and I have been a strong united force together for Calin through all of this. Calin has now undergone 6 weeks of radiation, 5 days a week, and Chemo every day. Thankfully, he made it through all of this with minimal side effects, another



Calin's shot this doe in 2015.

blessing from God. He has an appointment in mid-July with his Neuro-Oncologist and will have another detailed MRI. We have been told the next step will be a much higher dose of Chemo for the next year on a 5/23 schedule, with MRIs every couple of months. Calin asked his doctor what caused this cancer, and the doctor said there is no known cause of a Grade 4 Astrocytoma. It's just really bad luck.

I wanted to include some of Calin's treasured hunting memories! I will never forget the call from Calin after shooting his first turkey. The pure joy and excitement in his voice, him retelling the story 100-plus times, and how Uncle John had called it in. It was a tom harvested on



Left to Right Mikayla, Jeanette, Calin & Alyssa 5/25/25

4/26/2014. He proudly has the fan mounted and displayed. He has since had success getting two more turkeys, both jakes, in 2019 and 2024. He has successfully hunted two deer, both in 2015, one on the youth hunt and one during the 9-day firearms season.

For many seasons they have hunted ducks and had lots of success as a group. October 24, 2016, the group got their limit of ducks. He loves to share that fact and that story. His most treasured duck hunt is his wood duck. His uncle had it mounted for him, along with several other ducks.

There are a lot more hunting stories from the group, of successes, near misses, and just being out in nature enjoying the experience and time together. Calin truly treasures every hunt he has been on.

After his craniotomy to remove the tumor, he was devastated to think he



First time voting in 2018 was meaningful to the young patriot.

would miss his turkey season. Alyssa drove him up to Black River Falls so he could be with the hunting group. Calin was not able to get into the woods very much on the trip, but he truly enjoyed being up north with everyone.

Calin was so supportive of us, when, a few years ago, his sister Mikayla and I participated in the Learn to Hunt program with the DNR. He even gave us pointers and advice he had learned along the way. He repeated the words told to him many years ago: "Just remember it's called hunting, not getting, take it all in and have fun making the memories."

Some dream hunts of Calin's are to go on a black bear hunt. Brian's story of his black bear hunt was always Calin's favorite story to listen to. Calin loved being at Brian's house and hearing the stories behind all the treasured mounts. He has continued to carry his memories of Brian with him. Other dream hunts are a snow goose hunt where the snow geese are everywhere "like in the videos" and a wild boar hunt. He would like to visit The Badlands.

His doctor has told him to live his life the best he can, do the things he loves, and make memories. We are diligently working to do what we can to make all his hopes and dreams come true. Calin is in excellent spirits, considering this devastating diagnosis. Calin said "I will not waste one second of my life being angry, depressed or sad about this. I will live my life and cherish and appreciate every moment I have." We are truly thankful, grateful and appreciative for any and all help in making his dreams come true. Thank you for taking the time to read about my precious son's journey. We'll report back after the hunt.



# Recruiting Blacks into Shooting Sports

Responsive Management recently partnered with the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, the National African American Gun Association, and JMI, a Richmond-based brand strategy and consulting firm, on a new nationwide project to develop firearm ownership and sport shooting communications for Black Americans.



Responsive Management's research explored numerous aspects of Black Americans' target shooting and firearm purchasing experiences, including initial exposure to firearms and sport shooting; the effect of the pandemic on sport shooting and firearm purchasing; motivations for sport shooting and firearm purchasing; the importance of safety as a component of participation; issues affecting the use of shooting ranges; constraints to sport shooting; incentives for sport shooting; attitudes toward mentoring; and more.

Major findings and insights from Responsive Management's research were then used by JMI to develop a range of new communications tools and resources to help agencies and organizations better engage this important

segment of participants. For example, the communications tools highlight key motivations for Black gun owners and target shooters, such as self-defense and personal protection; skills development and mental benefits; and the desire to feel prepared during times of uncertainty or unrest. The tools also address access issues and the importance of finding a shooting range where people feel welcome and comfortable.

Resources developed from the research include infographics, a social media outreach plan, social media displays, and other visual elements. The customizable design of the communications products allows agencies and organizations to include their own logos and colors and to utilize them on social media channels and in other outlets.

Funded by a Multistate Conservation Grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the project was born out of a need for customized resources that resonate with one of the fastest growing segments of sport shooters. Specifically, Responsive Management's recent biennial sport shooting participation trend survey for NSSF found that Black or African American sport shooters were the demographic group with the highest rate of new target shooters, meaning those who first began shooting in the five years prior to the survey.

Media reports around the same time corroborated the trend, underscoring the need for a study focused on the unique motivations that drive Black Americans to buy firearms and regularly engage in sport shooting.

The new research conducted by Responsive Management for the study included data mining of previous studies on Black firearm owners and target shooters; focus groups with Black firearm owners and sport shooters; and a nationwide multimodal survey of Black firearm owners and sport shooters, with results at the national and regional levels.




## SAFETY & SKILLS FOUNDATION

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### Safety Excellence



**93%** of African-American firearm owners prioritize protection and self-defense as their primary reason for firearm ownership.

Training through sport shooting equips individuals with the skills and confidence needed to respond effectively to potential threats, enhancing personal and family safety.

*"I purchased my own gun. I decided I needed to know how to protect myself."*

### Core Skill Building

**81%** of African-American participants in sport shooting pursue it to enhance fundamental skills, establishing a strong foundation in proper handling, accuracy, and technique.



Sport shooting develops essential disciplines: breath control, mental focus, and precise movement—critical skills for both recreational and protective purposes.

### Protective Readiness

**68%** of African-American sport shooters practice specifically for protection and self-defense, developing the confidence and capabilities needed for personal security.



Training builds mental preparedness alongside physical skills, creating a well-rounded capability for those prioritizing personal and family protection.

### Foundational Support

**73%** of African-American firearm owners rate initial mentorship as extremely or very important, highlighting the essential role of guided instruction in developing proper fundamentals.



Early support and instruction establish correct habits and techniques that enable long-term growth and advancement.

Data from NSSF® Developing Firearm Ownership and Sport Shooting R2 Communications for Black Americans 2024 Study

# Recurve

by Dennis Dunn

Poor Karen came down with the flu the night we arrived in Florida and was totally out of commission. When we were back home, I came down with some version of it. I did, however, get in one exciting day of hunting near Lake Okeechobee and managed to harvest two trophy critters with my Steve Gorr recurve and a Suzanne St. Charles wooden arrow.

That morning, I made a running 30-yard shot on a 208-pound wild boar, and that same night — hunting by boat with headlamps — I managed to put a fish-arrow into a BIG alligator.

The gator was an honest 11-footer! Notice in the picture that his tail is touching the ground. The line was 400# Dacron, and, after he towed our boat around the lake for the better part of an hour, we finally dragged him ashore by the tail, where I finished him off with a Howard Hill broadhead to the brain and a Zephyr-Sasquatch head to the spinal cord. The measured length of the prehistoric brute came in at 11 feet, one inch. The outfitter was Lee Lightsey of Outwest Farms.





# i Randy's Fan Club

by Mark LaBarbera

SCI members have seen plenty of photos of Randy Christensen with new hunters and big wild turkeys. In fact, one article in SCI HUNTERS magazine had the headline "Randy's Fan Club."

After the turkey season, when Randy is not working at Cabela's in Prairie du Chien, he often introduces newcomers to the joys and rewards of bowfishing.

Here are a few photos from his time on the water with friends Julie and Heather, first time bowfishers, who are part of his "Fin" Club and his "Fan Club."

This is a photo of Julie with her first ever fish shot with bow and arrow.

And Heather shot her first freshwater drum, or sheepshead, with Randy. He showed her how to remove the "lucky stones" from it. Freshwater drum grow these stones inside of their heads. The stones like Randy and Heather collected by breaking open the skull area near the eyes of the drum, are called otoliths. Like the rings of a tree, an otolith gains another layer each year and are used by the fish to hear and sense vibrations in the water and give a sense of balance.

These "lucky stones," are prized by collectors and have been used in various ways throughout history. They are composed of calcium carbonate and are found in the inner ear of the fish,

where they help with balance and sound detection. The otoliths are often ivory-like in appearance and can have a distinctive "L" or "J" shapes, which corresponds to the left and right sides of the fish, respectively. As one SCI member said, "I don't know why they're called Lucky Stones when they were not so lucky for the dead fish."



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