2026 Hunters Guide



Brett Massman got his first buck, which was an eight-pointer, that was harvested on his family farm south of Alma Center.



Tucker Peterson shot this turkey at his home near Shamrock.



Daxtyn Parker, 15, of Neillsville harvested this nine-point buck in Jackson County during this year's youth hunt.

Supplement to the Banner Journal, Clark County Press & The Shopper

Articles • Photos • Dining • Entertainment • Great Buys!



Submitted photo

Cooper Smith shot his first buck with a bow. This13-pointer with a 20 1/4 inch spread, was harvested in Big Slough where his Grandpa Fred Staff grew up. Pictured below behind Cooper is (l-r) Bryan Staff, Randy Staff, Luke Erickson and Alton Staff.





Submitted photo

Three generations of Gearing men, Dan, Ethan and Dillon found sheds on the same day in Merrillan in the fall of 2025.

Venison Meatball Sliders

Makes 14-16 sliders

1 pound venison meat
1/2 pound pork shoulder
2 eggs
1 shallot, minced
4 cloves garlic, minced
6 Tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup panko bread crumbs
1 Tbsp plus 11/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
1 Tbsp chopped fresh basil
1 1/2 tsp chopped fresh ore-gano
1/2 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp kosher salt
14 to 16 mini buns or rolls
Grated mozzarella cheese for garnish

Clean the venison very well, removing all fat and silver skin, then cut into large chunks. Cut the pork shoulder into large chunks as well. Toss all ingredients together (except for the rolls and cheese garnish) in a large mixing bowl and combine well. Grind all ingredients together through the smallest plate on your grinder. Mix well, then test one meatball for seasonings by quickly sauteing a small portion in a pan and tasting it; adjust the seasonings if necessary. Form the mixture into golf ball-size meatballs by rolling between your hands. Deep-fry the meat-balls for 1 minute in 350-degree oil; then remove and let the meatballs drain. Place the meatballs gently in the simmering marinara sauce (see recipe below); simmer for 15-20 minutes, until cooked through. Serve on mini buns or small rolls with an extra spoonful of marinara sauce for each one. Add a touch of grated mozzarella cheese to the top of each meatball, if desired.

Marinara Sauce

Makes 5 cups
1 yellow onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 ribs celery, chopped
3 Tbsp cup dry red wine
4 cups canned diced tomatoes with juice
2 tsp chopped fresh oregano
1 tsp chopped fresh basil
1/2 tsp chopped fresh thyme
1 tsp kosher salt
Pinch of freshly ground black pepper

In a large saucepot, saute the onion, garlic and celery in olive oil until soft. Deglaze with red wine and reduce until the pan is almost dry. Add the tomatoes, bring to a simmer for 8 minutes and then puree with a stick blender until smooth. Stir in the herbs and seasonings; simmer for an additional 3-5 minutes, then serve.

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Submitted photo

Dick Matti of Humbird shot this 14-pointer during the 2025 gun-deer season. The buck field dressed at 193 pounds and had a 17-inch spread.



Submitted photo

Rayce Opelt, 7, of Neillsville kept quiet just long enough to bag this 8-point buck while on his first youth hunt.



Submitted photo

Brody Smart, 11, harvested this buck in Jackson County Oct. 17 while on a bow mentor hunt with Grandpa Jack.

Good lunk hunters and be safe.



Submitted photo

Ashley Volovsek shows off a 27¼-inch walleye caught in June 2026 while fishing on Otter Lake near Stanley, Wisconsin.



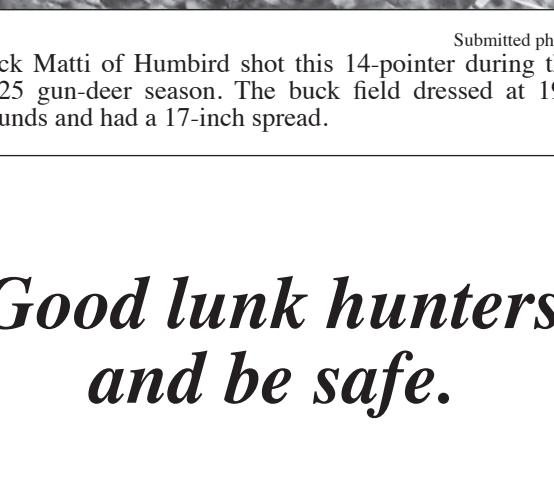
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Caiden Lien of Hixton is one happy hunter on opening day found him harvesting his first buck-an 8 pointer with three other smaller points with around a 13.5 inch inside spread. It was a one shot kill from 50 yards.

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Know your target: Don't accidentally shoot elk this hunting season

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reminds hunters to know their target and understand the difference between elk and white-tailed deer this hunting season.

Elk occasionally venture outside of Wisconsin's Northern and Central Elk Management Zones, especially during the fall breeding season. Wisconsin's Northern Elk Zone utilizes portions of Ashland, Bayfield, Price, Rusk and Sawyer counties and the Central Elk Zone includes a portion of Jackson County.

Positively identifying the target ensures the safety of other people and avoids accidental shooting of non-target animals.

How To Identify An Elk:

• Adult elk are larger than adult deer. An adult elk stands about 1-2 feet taller than an adult deer at the shoulders. An elk calf will be about the same size as an adult white-tailed doe but will display similar coloration to adult elk.

• Spot the difference in the antlers. White-tailed deer antlers curve forward, whereas elk antlers are larger and sweep back from their heads.

• Look for color markings. Elk have a tan rump patch, black legs and a dark brown mane. Deer have legs the same color as their bodies, a white throat patch and a fluffy white tail.

• Additional markers. Elk moving throughout the state may have noticeable markers, including colored ear tags or tracking collars. These collars are fixed around the neck and are typically orange in color, sometimes with a visible printed number.

See the differences between elk and white-tailed deer using the DNR's comparison guide.

Since there are still isolated incidents where hunters mistake an elk for a white-tailed deer, the DNR reminds hunters that any illegally taken elk may result in a fine and a revocation of hunting licenses.

Observations of elk outside the management zones can be reported to the DNR through the Wildlife Observation Tool.



Submitted photo

Dylan Bever, 18, of Cataract, harvested this nine-point buck during this year's bow season.



Submitted photo

Dillon Gearing harvested this buck during bow season in 2023.

Two hunters were dragging their dead deer back to their car. Another hunter approached pulling his along too. "Hey, I don't want to tell you how to do something ... but I can tell you that it's much easier if you drag the deer in the other direction. Then the ant-lers won't dig into the ground." After the third hunter left, the two d-cided to try it. A little while later one hunter said to the other, "You know, that guy was right. This is a lot easier!" "Yeah, but we're getting farther from the truck," the other added.



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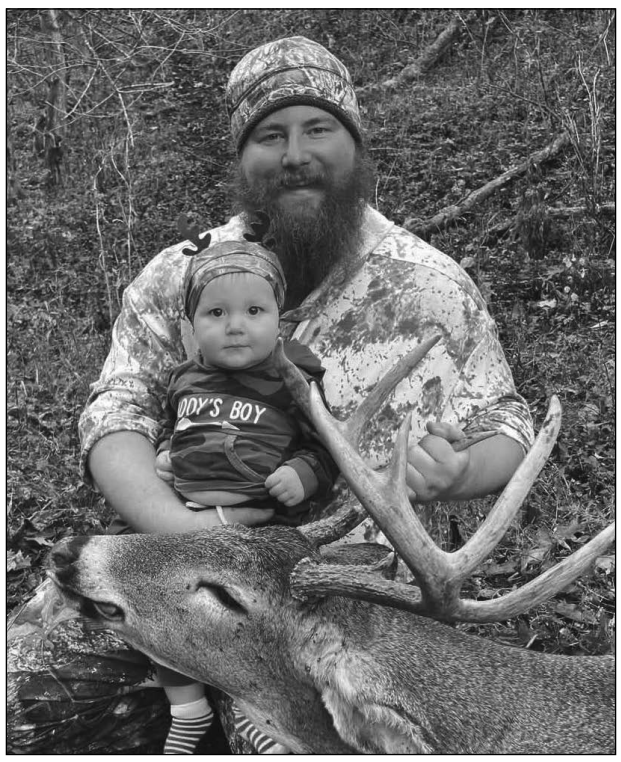


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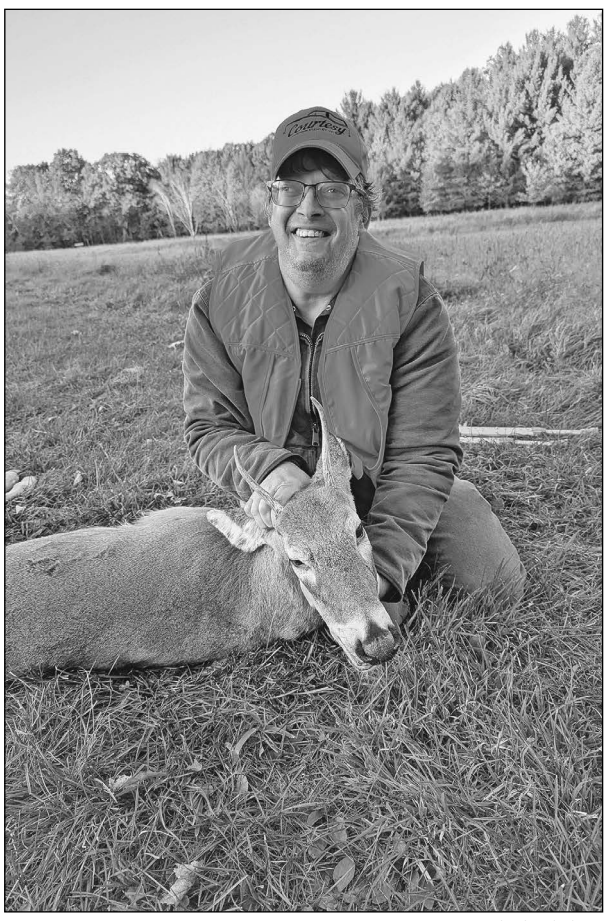
Submitted photo

Michael Smothers of Black River Falls shot this eight-point buck during the 2026 bow season.



Submitted photo

Todd Kling of Melrose poses with his first buck alongside his first child, Timothy Kling. Todd harvested the buck with a bow Oct. 19, 2026, on his property, just seconds after arriving at his stand. The timing couldn't have been better, as Todd joked he didn't think he could have held out much longer.



Submitted photo

During the first full week of October, Rock Creek Disabled Outdoors holds its annual Hunt for Hunters with Disabilities, where disabled hunters can experience a Wisconsin deer hunt with the help of a guide, provided land, two meals a day, skinning and quartering services, and any other personalized assistance they may need. During the hunt, one such hunter, Levon Weaver, harvested this buck near Willard.

Marinated Venison Steaks

1 1/2 cups extra-virgin olive oil
3/4 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup red wine vinegar
1/2 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
1 1/2 teaspoons roughly chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons dry mustard
2 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more as needed
1 teaspoon black pepper, plus more as needed
2 pounds venison loin or leg, cut into 6 steaks

Preparation: Combine all ingredients except venison in a large bowl. Submerge venison in the marinade, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 8 hours and up to 12 hours.

Heat broiler, stovetop grill pan or grill. Remove venison from marinade and season with salt and pepper. Working in batches if necessary, place steaks under the broiler or on the grilling surface and cook, flipping once, until medium-rare, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Allow venison to rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Treat every firearm as if it is loaded

Hunters should treat eve-ry firearm as if it is loaded. The muzzle should be pointed in a safe direction, and the only time a finger should be on the trigger is when one is ready to shoot. Never assume a firearm is unloaded.

Fall is prime season for hunting, and hunters and non-hunters can benefit from a refresher course in hunting safety.

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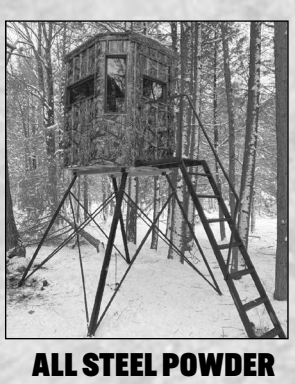
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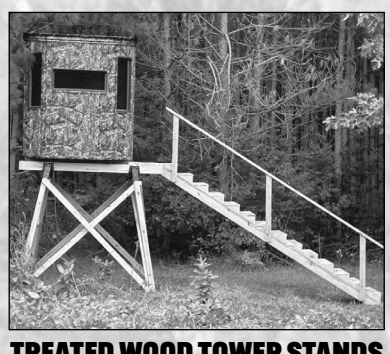
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Riley Bue-Knight, 14, shot this 8-point buck during this year's bow season. He harvested the deer in Disco. He is the son of Jeremiah Knight and Nicole Bue.



Submitted photo

Dan Gearing found this shed in Merrillan in 2025.



Submitted photo

Loretta Waughtal of Melrose caught a 29¾-inch walleye Oct. 24, 2026, while fishing on the Black River with her son, Josh.

Acknowledge your own physical limitations

Activities inherent to hunting, which include walking over rough terrain, carrying and shooting a rifle and dragging an animal carcass push the body to work harder. This may increase the risk of heart attack in people unaccustomed to strenuous exercise. Take frequent breaks, and hunters may want to go out in pairs so that someone can call for help or administer first aid or CPR, if necessary.

Dress accordingly. In addition to wearing blaze orange, hunters should be dressed for the weather to avoid frostbite and hypothermia. Layering clothing can be helpful, as layers can be taken off or added to stay comfortable.

Recognize hunting seasons and lands

Non-hunters must prac-tice safety during hunting season as well, even if they are not participating. FWS advises nature lovers to learn where and when hunt-ing is taking place and plan recreational activities based on this information. Staying out of designated hunting areas is essential. It's also important for non-hunters to choose bright clothing to be visible when in the woods. A brightly colored bandana or piece of fabric tied around a dog's neck will help to protect the animal. Sticking to trails also improves the safety of the public and will reduce the likelihood of entering designated hunting areas.

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Submitted photo

Carl Opelt went on a two-week solo trip for his 50th birthday. Opelt explaind, "I had a moose, elk and mule deer tag for Northern British Columbia. I left Neillsville Sept. 14, stopped in Eureka, MT where I tagged along on a moose hunt with a buddy for a couple days, and then traveled to Fort Fraser, BC, and met my guide. On the second day, in the rain and wind just before dark, I made a 528-yard shot with my 300 PRC—actually, three shots—[and] hit him twice. On the fourth day, I shot a nice 4x4 mule deer, which left me with only three days left to fill my elk tag, which never happened. So, I left for home on a 36-hour journey and returned home on Sept. 29. On my journey, I passed three bull moose, [saw] 16 black bears, a couple big horn sheep and multiple mule/whitetail deer. It was definitely a birthday I'll never regret. I travelled across four states and four provinces."

Lions deer hide collection underway

Black River Falls Lions Club is again collecting deer hides this year.

Hunters can drop off hides at Wood Sales & Service just off STH 54 west of Black River Falls. Hides should be dropped off onto the trailer provided.

Lions Club members will take care of treating the hides Hunters are asked to remove all body parts, including heads and legs; this has not always been the case. Hides will be collected from Oct. 20 through Jan. 5.

The money that Lions Clubs from around the state receive from selling deer hides helps run the Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt, WI. The camp began in 1956 and has been dedicated to providing a quality camping experience for young people with disabilities, primarily the deaf and blind.

The 440-acre camp is also a wildlife refuge. It is the support of Lions Clubs throughout the state that helps maintain the campground, making it possible for those with disabilities to share an experience they might not otherwise be given the opportunity to enjoy.

For any questions, contact Joe Larkin at 715-563-3663 or Ed Vlach at 715-896-2852.

Grilled Salmon with Honey Dijon Sauce

Ingredients:
4-8 ounce salmon fillets; brushed with oil
8 tb Honey
4 tb Dijon mustard
4 tb Water; warm
1 tb Olive oil
3 ts Soy sauce
1 ts Salt
1/4 ts Black pepper

Honey Dijon Sauce:

Combine honey, Dijon mustard, water, olive oil, soy sauce, salt & pepper.

Brush salmon fillets with olive oil and grill 3 to 5 minutes on one side. Turn.

While grilling on second side, brush with Honey Dijon Sauce. Grill a total of approximately 10 to 12 minutes. Serve with extra sauce on the side.

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Submitted photo

Dane Bever, 14 of Cataract shot this turkey in the Cataract area this spring.

Ensure you can be seen

Visibility is essential during hunting season. Wearing blaze orange can help minimize the chances of anyone being mistaken for game animals. Deer are not color-blind, but they lack the ability to distinguish colors like red and orange from green and brown, says the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Wearing blaze orange will not make hunters stand out to deer, but it can make them visible to other hunters.

Dress accordingly.

In addition to wearing blaze orange, hunters should be dressed for the weather to avoid frostbite and hypothermia. Layering clothing can be helpful, as layers can be taken off or added to stay comfortable.



Submitted photo

Twin brothers, Sean and Drew Stetzer of Alma Center, both harvested bucks within 10 minutes of each other opening day of the 2026 archery season on opposite sides of their grandprents farm in Jackson County. Sean's buck was a 10-point with a 19.5-inch spread. Drew's buck was an eight-point with an 18-inch spread.

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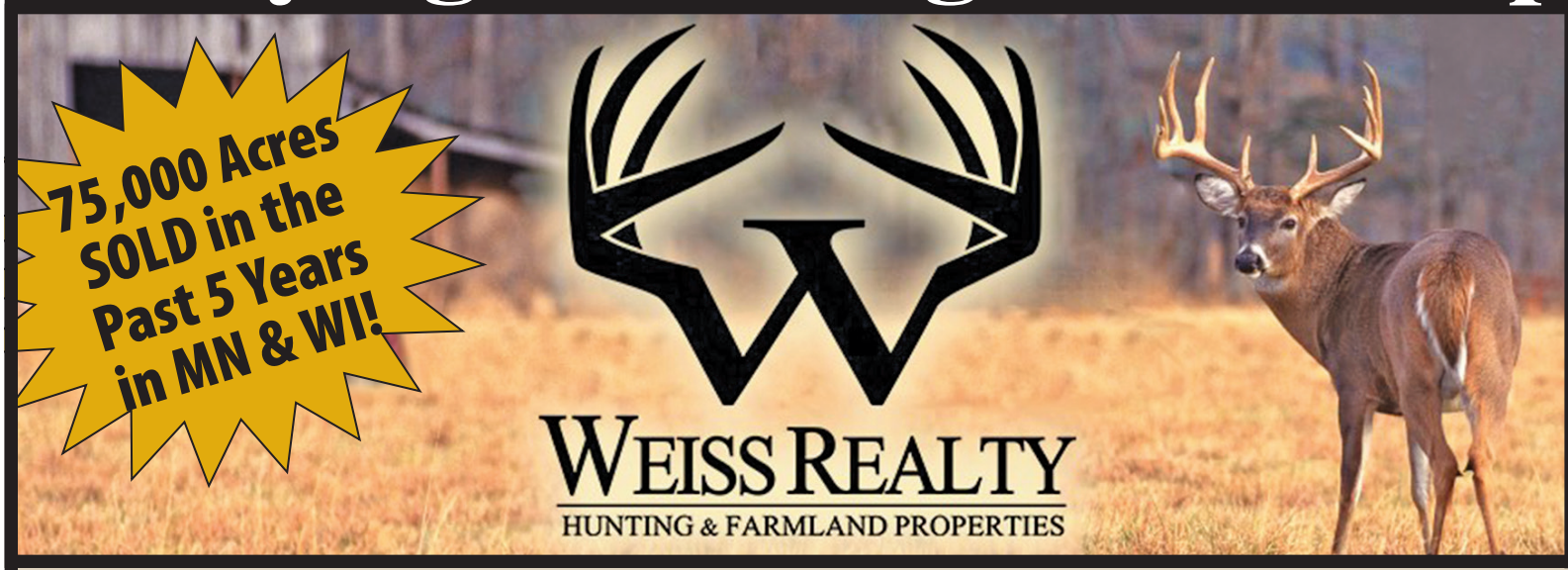
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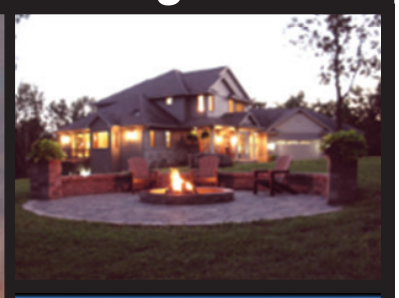
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Buffalo Co. – 83 Acres – $650,000 – Reduced
Buffalo Co. – 80 Acres – $625,000 – Reduced
Buffalo Co. – 77 Acres – $616,000 – Pending
Buffalo Co. – 55 Acres – $440,000 – Pending
Buffalo Co. – 30 Acres – $325,000 – Active
Buffalo Co. – 19 Acres – $95,000 – Sold
Buffalo Co. – 12 Acres w/Home – $375,000 – Sold
Buffalo Co. – 4 Acres w/Home – $699,900 – Pending
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Submitted photo

Brothers Braylon and Hudson sure were proud of their



Submitted photo

Jason Faulkner (right) and Rextyn Faulkner were successful on Zone C in Jackson County public land opening day of bear season, each snagging a bear. Rextyn also nabbed a buck on Oct. 11, the second day of the youth hunt.



Submitted photo

Chase Bucholz, 13, of Black River Falls harvested a 310-pound black bear in Sept.2026.

HUNTING & FISHING WORD SEARCH

F	N	G	O	Q	U	A	R	R	Y	G	B	R	A	U	T	Q	Q	N	M
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K	A	S	N	A	M	R	Y	K	F	T	I	H	C	E	B	N	B	W	V

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

ANGLER
BAG LIMIT
BAIT
BLINDS
BOBBER
CAMO
CAMOUFLAGE
CASTING
CATCH
DECOY
FLETCHING
GAME
HABITAT
HARVEST
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SCENT
SEASON
TACKLE
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WILDERNESS

Answer on page 14 .

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Two for Tuesday: Father and Daughter Find Success in Wyoming

After 12 years of building preference points, Wisconsin hunters Don Friemoth and his daughter, Nicole (Friemoth) Montgomery, finally drew Wyoming pronghorn tags, setting the stage for a hunting adventure neither would soon forget.

The pair made two trips from Wisconsin to Wyoming in 2026, beginning with archery season in mid-August. Severe drought conditions and high temperatures made hunting challenging, while the pronghorns' remarkable speed and ability to evade approaching hunters added to the difficulty.

Despite covering countless miles and making numerous stalks, neither hunter was successful during the first trip. However, the experience provided valuable lessons and memories.

In September, the father and daughter made the 16-hour journey west again for rifle season. This time, their persistence paid off on a day they now call "Two for Tuesday."

Both harvested pronghorn bucks on the same Tuesday. Nicole's successful stalk took her across exposed ridges overlooking a wide-open basin, ending with a 180-yard shot. About three hours later, the pair spotted another buck standing atop a tall butte. Using the terrain to their advantage, they closed the distance to within 60 yards, allowing Don to fill his tag.

Beyond the successful hunts, Nicole said the opportunity to spend time with her father made the adventure especially meaningful. During their long drives, Don shared stories from his younger years, including some Nicole had never heard before.

"The wide-open country, the weather conditions, the pure challenge of hunting pronghorns, and sharing the adventure with my dad made every point and every mile worth it," Nicole said. "It's a trip I'll never forget."



Submitted photo

Don Friemoth poses with his Wyoming pronghorn buck, harvested after he and his daughter stalked to within 60 yards of the animal.



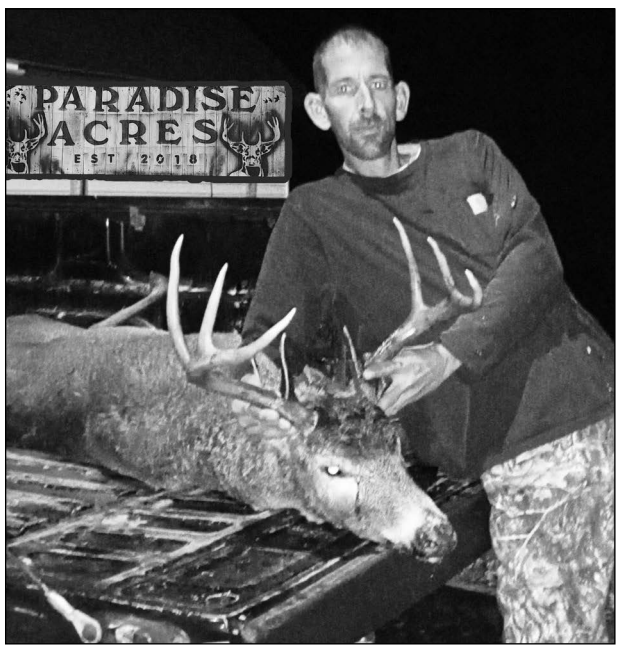
Submitted photo

Don Friemoth (left) and his daughter, Nicole (Friemoth) Montgomery, celebrate their successful Wyoming pronghorn hunt in September 2026. Both harvested bucks on the same Tuesday after traveling from Wisconsin for rifle season.



Submitted photo

Nicole (Friemoth) Montgomery poses with her Wyoming pronghorn buck, harvested with a 180-yard shot after a



Submitted photo

Bruce Oligney of Taylor shot this deer Nov. 10, 2024.

Roasted Wild Turkey

Ingredients:
1 wild turkey
1/2 cup butter
salt and pepper
Stuffing:

Rub the inside of the turkey with butter, salt and pepper, mix the following ingredients and stuff into turkey cavity.

3 cups of roasted peanuts
4 cups of dried bread crumbs
1 egg, beaten
1 onion, finely chopped
3 tsp. butter, melted
1/2 cup chicken stock
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/2 tsp. sage
1 tsp. garlic powder
6-8 strips of bacon
1/2 cup butter
1 tsp. onion powder

Directions: Place turkey in a roaster. Lay the bacon strips over the breast. Cover the breast with cheese cloth and pour butter over the turkey so the cloth is saturated. Sprinkle with onion powder, salt and pepper. Roast in the oven at 350 degrees for 20 minutes per pound, basting frequently with the juices. When the bird is about done, remove the cloth to brown it a little more if necessary



Submitted photo

Eli Edie harvested his first deer, a five-point buck, during Wisconsin's youth hunt Oct. 11, 2026, just three days before his 10th birthday. Eli took the buck with a .243-caliber rifle while hunting alongside his dad at his grandparents' farm in Taylor.

Be safe in tree stands

Perching above the landscape can give hunters a clear view of game below. Permanent tree stands are more likely to deteriorate over time due to the weath-er; hunters should use tem-porary tree stands only for the season. Falls tend to be the most common cause of injuries, notes the Mayo Clinic Health Systems. Hunters should pay atten-tion to their surroundings to avoid being startled by ani-mals while in tree stands. Also, checking equipment and using safety belts can help prevent falls. The aver-age fall from a tree stand is 15 feet.

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Deer receive 'fair warning' hunting season has begun

Each year, Badger Mining Corps (BMC) in Jackson County hold an annual early gun deer hunt for hunters with disabilities in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources. BMC has done so since 2001, marking its 25th anniversary in 2026.

Held as a special early-season gun deer hunt in October ahead of the standard Wisconsin gun deer season, hunts take place across Badger Mining's Wisconsin properties and operational locations, including Fond du Lac and Taylor counties.

For the BMC's October Hunt, six hunters participated this year. Three bucks and three does were taken, and a few were "warned that it was hunting season" (three missed opportunities).

Dave Goplin of the Merrillan area harvested a buck and a doe, Keith Pamperin of Green Bay havested a doe and missed a buck, Tim Marek of Merrillan shot a doe and missed a buck, Alan Suchla of Whitehall shot a buck, Michael Green of Black River Falls shot a buck, and David Birkett of Lancaster shot a buck that was unable to be recovered.

The weather was pleasant and all hunters had a good opportunity at harvest," Matt Hess of BMC said.

Goplin started off the hunt with a solid shot on a nice buck, dropped in his tracks, and followed it up later with a doe harvest, dropping that nearly in the same grave.

Keith followed up with a shot on a "big buck" and then, while they were waiting for the recovery team, harvested a mature doe for the freezer.

"Turns out, the buck was not recovered and it was ascertained that the shot on the buck turned out to be a clean miss," Hess said.

Birkett had an opportunity on a mature nine-point buck, despite the challenges recent blows to his health that forced him to change the way he hunted.

"With challenges already from a loss of his lower legs, added complications from a stroke left him right-eye blind, as well," Hess said.

Birkett was forced to switch his shooting from right to left-handed.

"Not as steady as normal," Hess said, "the shot on the buck connected but the animal, disappointingly, was not recovered."

Marek put a sniper shot on a doe to add to his winter freezer storage. He later had a chance at a good buck, but also turned out be a clean miss.

Green was able to harvest his best buck after "sweating it out" in the blind. Hess said the sun was hot that evening as it beat on the west-facing blind. Despite the challenge, Green made a "beautiful shot" on a beautiful eight-point buck.

Suchla was persistent in his pursuit for a trophy buck, using up as much time allotted to the hunt as possible to harvest. After failing to capitalize on a giant non-typical buck the first evening, he was able to redeem himself on a mature 11-point buck in the final two hours of the hunt.



Submitted photo

Alan Suchla of Whitehall got himself a buck in the Badger Mining Corps' annual early gun deer hunt for hunters with disabilities, held as a special early-season gun deer hunt in October ahead of the standard Wisconsin gun deer season.



Submitted photo

Dave Goplin of the Merrillan area harvested a buck and a doe while participating in the Badger Mining Corpss annual early gun deer hunt for hunters with disabilities, held in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources.

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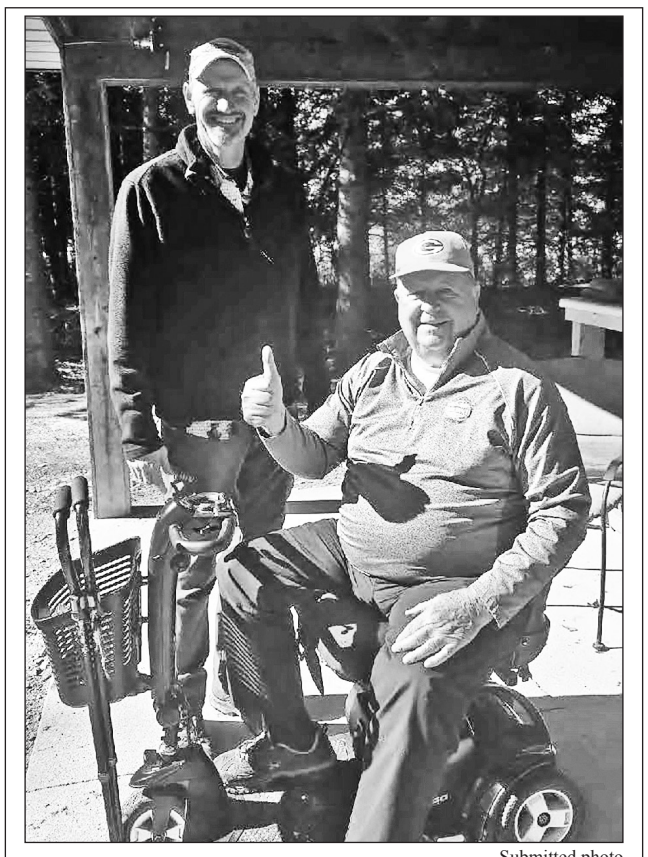
Fri., Nov. 20.....Deer Hunters Buffet 4:30-7:30 pm
Sat., Nov. 21.....Opening Day Steak Feed 4:30-7:30 pm
Sun., Nov. 22.....CLOSED
Mon., Nov. 23.....Sandwiches 11 am-1 pm
Tues., Nov. 24 & Wed. Nov. 25.....CLOSED
Closed Thurs., Nov. 26 Happy Thanksgiving!

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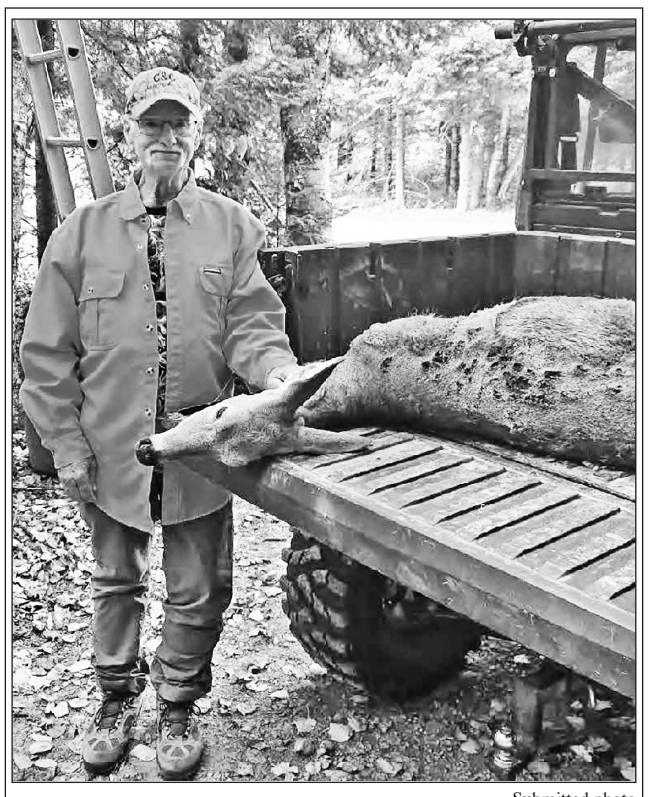
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Badger Mining, from page 12



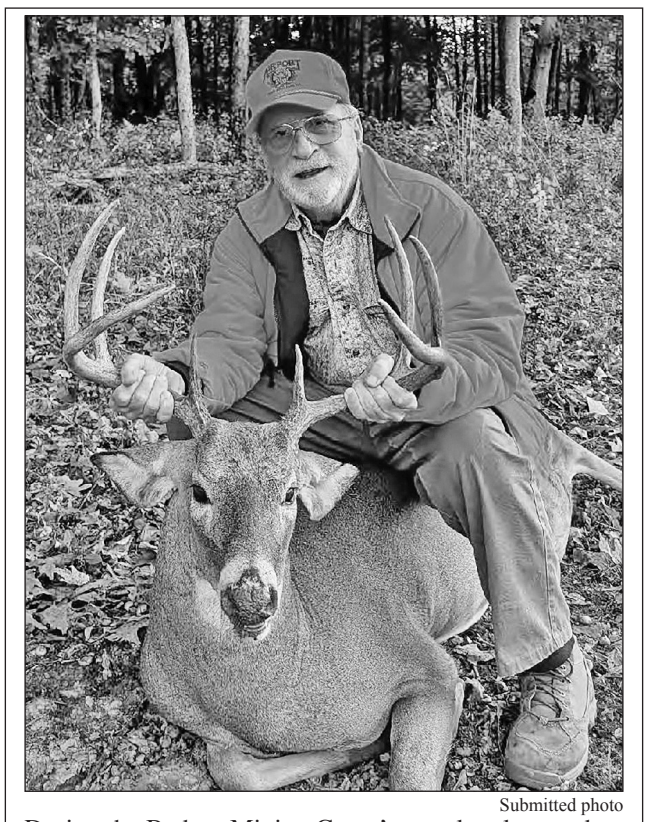
Submitted photo

Keith Pamperin of Green Bay havested a doe and missed a buck during the Badger Mining Corps' annual early gun deer hunt for hunters with disabilities.



Submitted photo

Tim Marek of Merrillan harvested a doe and missed a buck, once of six hunters participating in the Badger Mining Corps' 25th annual early gun deer hunt for hunters with disabilities begun in 2001.



Submitted photo

During the Badger Mining Corps' annual early gun deer hunt for hunters with disabilities held in October, Michael Green of Black River Falls harvested a buck.

It was Saturday morning and John, an avid hunter, woke up ready to go bag the first deer of the season. He walks down to the kitchen to get a cup of coffee, and to his surprise he finds his wife, Mary, sitting there, fully dressed in camouflage. John asks her, "What are you up to?" Mary smiles, "I'm going hunting with you!" John, though he has many reservations, reluctantly decides to take her along. They arrive at the hunting site. John sets his wife safely up in the tree stand and tells her: "If you see a deer, take careful aim on it and I'll come running back as soon as I hear the shot." John walks away with a smile on his face knowing that Mary couldn't bag an elephant -- much less a deer. But not 10 minutes pass when he is startled as he hears an array of gunshots. Quickly, John starts running back. As John gets closer to her stand, he hears Mary screaming, "Get away from my deer!" Confused, John races faster towards his screaming wife. And again he hears her yell, "Get away from my deer!" followed by another volley of gunfire. Now within sight of where he had left his wife, John is surprised to see a cowboy, with his hands high in the air. The cowboy, obviously distraught, says, "Okay, lady, okay! You can have your deer! Just let me get my saddle off it!"'



Submitted photo

Max Gearing found this shed in Merrillan, WI, in March of 2025.

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Submitted photo

After harvesting a bear during the opening of bear season, Rextyn Faulkner also got himself a buck Oct. 11, the second day of a youth hunt.



Submitted photo

Tucker Peterson and Troy Babcock each caught a Sturgeon at the Third Street landing in Black River Falls.



Submitted photo

Daxtyn Parker is pictured with his 23-pound tom turkey, sporting a 10-inch beard and 1-inch spurs. His mother, Nicole Montgomery (left), and stepfather, Chad Montgomery (right), joined him for the turkey hunt, helping with calling and setup. From spring mornings to fall evenings, the family said the memories made during Daxtyn's final youth hunts will last a lifetime.



Submitted photo

Cameron Johnson, 13, earned a Master Angler Award for catching a 30" Walleye on a Canada fishing trip with his uncle and cousins earlier this year at the Walleye Opener on Lac Seul Reservoir.

O	Q	U	A	R	R	Y	G	B	R	A	U	T	Q
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Y	A	N	U	H	A	B	I	T	A	T	L	E	G
M	D	B	P	G	Y	N	I	M	Q	I	N	I	B
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V	S	I	S	P	C	S	E	D	A	L	L	S	R
T	V	T	N	I	E	A	L	D	G	E	T	C	C
I	G	G	S	G	V	I	M	K	I	C	S	I	K
H	H	C	Y	C	W	D	P	O	A	C	H	I	N
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Mentored Hunting

It's easier than ever to introduce someone new to hunting in Wisconsin. Anyone can now obtain a mentored-only hunting license and hunt without first completing a hunter education course. They must be accompanied by a licensed hunter (mentor), hunt within arm's reach of the mentor and follow other rules. Such mentored hunts remove barriers to hunting yet still allow people to safely experience hunting in a highly controlled manner. There are other ways people can learn to hunt in Wisconsin, too.

This one-on-one mentoring opportunity gives first-time hunters a chance to try hunting and enables veteran hunters to share their passion for the outdoors and help keep Wisconsin's hunting heritage strong.

Definitions of mentee/mentor

A mentee may be either:

1. Any person under age 12, regardless of whether they have completed a required hunter education course.

2. Any other person who has not completed a required hunter education course, and is not exempt* from the hunter education requirement.

Mentor

A mentor is an individual who meets all of the following requirements.

1. Age 18 or older.

` 2. Is the mentee's parent or guardian, or has the permission of the mentee's parent or guardian. This does not apply if the mentee is age 18 or older.

3. Has completed a required hunter education course, or is otherwise exempt* from the hunter education requirement.

*The following are exempt from the hunter education requirement:

• any individual born before Jan. 1, 1973;

any individual who has successfully completed U.S. armed forces basic training and submitted evidence to DNR; or

• any individual who has successfully completed a recognized hunter education course in another state, province or country and submitted evidence to DNR.

NOTE: View your customer account at Go Wild, or contact DNR customer service to verify your compliance with the hunter education requirement.

Mentored hunting program rules

Rules for mentee:

1. Must have all required hunting approvals for the applicable season (license, permit, tag, etc).

2. Must remain within arm's reach of the mentor.

3. Must comply with all other hunting laws, including season, bag limit and weapon regulations. Youth under age 18 are not permitted to possess or use handguns for hunting.

Rules for mentor

1. Must have any valid, non-expired Wisconsin hunting approval, regardless of the type of game pursued by the mentee.

2. Must remain within arm's reach of the mentee.

3. Must ensure compliance with all other hunting laws, including season, bag limit and weapon regulations. If also hunting and/or attempting to harvest game while mentoring, has all required hunting approvals for the applicable season (license, permit, tag, etc).

4. A mentor may not use any deer harvest authorizations issued to the mentee.

5. Must only serve as a mentor for one mentee at a time.

Notes:

A hunter with any valid hunting approval who is assisting in a mentored hunting situation or assisting a person who is 17 or younger may kill an animal that has been shot and wounded by a youth or mentored hunter if:

• the youth or mentee wounded the animal while hunting with the accompanying hunter;

• the youth or mentee asks the accompanying hunter to kill the wounded animal; and

• the accompanying hunter uses a type of weapon authorized for use by the youth or mentee during the hunting season in which the youth/mentee is hunting.

• A harvested animal counts toward the bag limit of the youth or mentee who wounded the animal.

Additional information

Discounted youth licenses are available for those under age 12.

Any individual purchasing a hunting approval must have completed the required hunter education course, or otherwise, be exempt from the hunter education requirement. Completion of a hunter education course authorizes the purchase and use of all eligible hunting approvals. Completion of a bowhunter education course only authorizes the purchase and use of archer or crossbow hunting approvals. Individuals that do not meet these requirements may only purchase a hunting approval valid for use under the Mentored Hunting Program rules. These restricted licenses will indicate "mentored."

Certain youth hunts establish additional accompaniment restrictions; see the appropriate regulation pamphlet for more information.

There is no limit on the number of times that any individual can hunt as a mentee.

The Wisconsin DNR hunter education curriculum is written at a sixth-grade level (11-12-year-old); parents ultimately decide whether their child is capable of successfully meeting the requirements of a Wisconsin hunter education course.



Submitted photos

Larry and his son, Trenton, took the chance to hunt together in Montana in September. Above, Sept. 15, Trenton Klabon (r) harvested a 4x4 elk. Below, Sept. 17, Larry Klabon (r) harvested a 7x9 elk. Both hunters utilized bows and arrows during their hunts.



Bob, a hunter, went on camping trip with his wife, kids, and mother-in-law. One evening, while still deep in the forrest, the Mrs awoke to find her mother gone. Rushing to her husband, she insisted on them both trying to find her mother. Bob picked up his rifle, took a swig of whiskey, and started to look for her. In a clearing not far from the camp, they came upon a chilling sight the mother-in-law was backed up against a thick, impenetrable bush, and a large bear stood facing her. The wife cried, "What are we going to do?" "Nothing," said the hunter husband. "The bear got himself into this mess, let him get himself out of it."

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