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HUNTING RETAILER

HUNTING RETAILER® is published nine times a year in January/February, March, April, May, June, July/August, September, October, and November/December by COLE Publishing, Inc. Published and owned by COLE Publishing, Inc., 1720 Maple Lake Dam Rd., Three Lakes, WI 54562.

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COLE Publishing is not responsible for researching or investigating the accuracy of the contents of stories published in this magazine.

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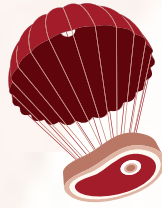
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SHOT Show Reports Record Number of Exhibitors

The 42nd Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show at the Sands Expo Center in Las Vegas attracted a record 2,600 companies exhibiting products related to target shooting, hunting, outdoor recreation and law enforcement.

The SHOT Show attracts about 60,000 professionals representing 113 countries from the firearms and outdoor industry. It has been held in Las Vegas 22 times and has been at the Sands Expo continuously the last 11 years.

The show pumps more than \$88 million in non-gaming revenue into the state and local economy. The record 2,600 exhibiting companies occupy

more than 692,000 net square feet of exhibit space, completely filling the Sands Expo. To satisfy a huge waiting list of companies seeking to be part of the show, SHOT Show will expand in 2021 into exhibit space at the new Caesars Forum.

Industry Day at the Range, held at the Boulder City Rifle & Pistol Club the day before the show opens, includes more than 200 exhibitors offering hands-on experience with hundreds of firearms, ammunition, optics and vehicles to more than 1,600 invited outdoor media members and buyers. NSSF is the title sponsor of the event. More than 2,400 members of the trade press cover SHOT Show.

Blaser USA Transitions to Blaser Group



Blaser USA, the official U.S. importer for Blaser, Mauser, Sauer, Rigby and Minox, is now operating under the new name of Blaser Group. The name change is a key component in the global branding strategy of the portfolio of companies in the L&O Hunting Group.

“The transition from Blaser USA to Blaser Group reflects a significant milestone in establishing consistent branding around the world. In all key markets, Blaser Group will represent our fine German and English brands,” said Jason Evans, CEO of Blaser Group (USA division). “All U.S. consumer brand strategies and business operations will remain unchanged.”

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The Blaser Group is the official U.S. importer for iconic German firearms brands Blaser, Mauser and J.P. Sauer; English gunmaker John Rigby & Co.; and Minox optics. Established in 2006, the company, which is based in San Antonio, Texas, works with more than 200 authorized Blaser Group dealers across all North American states. www.blaser-group.com.

Sig Sauer Germany and Legacy Sports International Sign Agreement for Exclusive Authorized Import Rights

A new agreement with Legacy Sports International authorizes the exclusive import of Sig Sauer German-made firearms into the USA through the Legacy Sports Headquarters based out of Reno, Nevada.

“We are happy to know our products for the U.S. market are finally back in the hands of a strong and focused importer and supplier. We are looking forward to all of the new opportunities this relationship will bring to Sig Sauer of Germany and to the U.S. market,” said Tim Castagne, President of Sig Sauer Germany.

U.S. dealers and consumers can expect to see a variety of the popular German-made Sig Sauer products, including, but not limited to, such items as the

P210 Legend and the P226 X-Line (only available from Sig Germany).

“It is a great honor for us to be chosen as the exclusive U.S. importer of one of the oldest, largest and most prestigious small arms producers in the world — Sig Sauer Germany. We stand ready to deliver a center of excellence equal to the craftsmanship and attention to detail displayed in each and every firearm manufactured by Sig Sauer Germany,” said Rick Hanke, President and CEO of Legacy Sports International.

Initial shipments of the Sig Sauer German products will be available through select distribution outlets by April. www.legacysports.com.

Retailers Invited to Join EOTech Program

Retailers are invited to apply to join L3Harris Technologies' EOTech Authorized Retailer Program (EARP).

The EARP is designed for companies interested in stocking EOTech products and providing related services to its customers. Qualifying businesses will gain access to EOTech's genuine products, selling tools, product training materials and special promotions.

EOTech Authorized Retailers have the option of acquiring product through an authorized distributor or factory-direct, pending approval. In order to be considered, retailers must maintain a commercial walk-in location open to the public at least 35 business hours per week (residential addresses are not permitted) and have a customer support staff.

If approved, retailers will enjoy benefits that come with being an EOTech Authorized Retailer, including special dealer/retailer-level pricing and exclusive rebate and promotional opportunities. Additionally, EOTech Authorized Retailers receive in-store point-of-purchase promotional materials, cooperative advertising support on factory-direct purchases, discounts for employee purchases, and access to educational seminars and special dealer events. Approved businesses will be listed on EOTech's Dealer Locator.

Interested retailers should call 888-368-4656.

Zanders Launches Range-Retailer Program

Distributor Zanders Sporting Goods has launched its fully updated, exclusive Range-Retailer Program, allowing ranges to take advantage of multiple incentives to diversify the selection of firearms offered to patrons.

“With regular range programs, dealers have to invest a large amount of money into one manufacturer's products in order to take advantage of their range promotion,” said Stefanie Zanders, President and Chief Operating Officer for Zanders Sporting Goods. “With our exclusive Range-Retailer Program, dealers are able to diversify their capital into a variety of products to carry at their range. We feel that for a range to be able to invest in a variety of guns, it allows their customers to experience shooting different models that they may not be as familiar with. We believe that this will lead to a higher turn rate for their inventory as well as increased income from range rentals.”

In addition to the increased flexibility, Zanders has included CZ-USA, Girsan, Kahr Arms, SGCY, North American Arms, Canik, Heckler & Koch, Eagle Imports, Chiappa, Auto-Ordnance, Armscor/Rock Island, Hi-Point, EAA and Magnum Research.

For more information on this Zanders exclusive program, dealers are encouraged to contact their sales representative or visit shop2.zanders.com.

Everest Launches Customer-Centric Marketplace

Everest, the shooting sports and outdoor gear industry's first customer-centric, community-driven, multi-merchant marketplace, plans to officially hard launch to consumers on March 1, 2020. Everest is a non-discriminatory platform for hunters, shooting sports enthusiasts, anglers, campers and hikers across the country, linking consumers and retailers with a robust marketplace where they can interact, contribute, learn, transact and give back.



As a significant amount of merchants make a mass exodus from other online marketplaces, Everest is creating a community for outdoorsmen and women. At time of launch, the Everest marketplace will offer shoppers options to shop from 500+ merchants offering more than 500,000 outdoor and shooting sports products. It is estimated by the end of 2020, Everest will offer more than 1,000,000 products from retailers and manufacturers from around the globe. The product inventory and merchant options will continue to grow years as more retailers, distributors and manufac-

turers join the Everest community. The company plans to consistently enhance the "Everest experience" with fresh outdoor content such as how-to videos, product reviews, gear articles and much more.

"At our core, we believe in passing down the great outdoor legacies that were passed to us," says Bill Voss, CEO/Founder of Everest. "Our mission is to create a one-of-a-kind marketplace where merchants can sell free of the noise of those other sites. We are committed to surpassing all customer expectations by providing unparalleled service, exceptional quality and ultimate value with every interaction."

In addition, Everest will give back to philanthropic programs and outdoor industry initiatives that reflect the issues important to the Everest community such as conservation, veterans service organizations, cancer support and firearms safety. www.everest.com.

GSM Outdoors Acquires Hunters Specialties

Multi-brand shooting and hunting manufacturer GSM Outdoors announced that the company has completed the acquisition of leading outdoor accessory and gear manufacturer Hunters Specialties.

"For over 40 years, Hunters Specialties has been a mainstay in the hunting accessories category," said GSM Outdoors President and CEO Eddie Castro. "Hunters Specialties has grown from being a manufacturer of camo tape and face paint to producing many of the 'support essentials' relied on by the modern hunter. Bringing Hunters Specialties into the GSM Outdoors family of brands is a big deal for us and for the hunting industry at large."

Hunters Specialties says it "made its mark on the hunting world by providing solutions to common hunting needs." From camo makeup and scent delivery systems to treestand gear and its popular line of HS Strut turkey calls and accessories, Hunters Specialties has been a go-to brand for generations



of hunters.

Hunters Specialties eventually incorporated some of the biggest names in game calls into its portfolio, such as Johnny Stewart predator calls and Carlton's Calls elk calls. Other hallmark brands include Scent-A-Way scent management products,

Buck Bomb attractant scents, and Fish-A-Way odor elimination solutions.

"The acquisition of Hunters Specialties helps bridge many of our current hunting product categories," said GSM Outdoors VP of Sales and Marketing Ben Smith. "Whether you're a dedicated predator hunter, whitetail hunter, turkey hunter, or a western big game hunter, Hunters Specialties and its associated brands complement our current portfolio to give hunters of all persuasions one-stop accessory shopping within the GSM family of brands." www.gsmoutdoors.com.



New *Bait & Tackle Business* Website and Magazine

Grand View Outdoors, publishers of *Hunting Retailer* magazine, announce the introduce of a new print title and website: *Bait & Tackle Business*.

If you operate a bait shop, a huge tackle retail outlet or something in between, you're sure to find something to help create a more successful business at www.baitandtacklebiz.com. The website is now live, offering the latest in fishing industry news, the hottest new products and hands-on reviews, as well as business management articles written by our stable of well-respected contributors.

In addition to the online exclusive content, *Bait & Tackle Business* magazine will publish six issues annually. Subscribing is free and easy if you qualify. Visit www.baitandtacklebiz.com/order/subscription to make sure you receive the information you need to help your business grow, delivered right to your home or business. You can also subscribe to the Bait & Tackle Business newsletter with hand-picked stories from our editors, sent right to your inbox. HR



TURKEY VESTS

Turkey hunters need a place to hold all that gear they haul around. Sell them one of these vests!

BY MARK CHESNUT

→ The ALPS Outdoorz Impact is loaded with features, including a stadium-style seat.

When it comes to hunting excitement, few things rival a thunderous gobble by a tom turkey that has snuck up right behind you without your knowledge. To say your heart leaps into your throat is an understatement.

Spring turkey hunting is unique in many ways, and one notable one is that it is open during the off season for most other wild game hunting. Consequently, selling turkey gear can lead to

increased hunting sales during an otherwise typically slow time for hunting retailers.

For some hunters, the spring turkey season is their passion — something they wait for all year long. For others, it's simply an extra opportunity to get into the woods between the end of one deer season and the beginning of the next.

Regardless of the reason, turkey hunters need lots of different gear, and they need a way to carry that gear. To be successful and comfortable, turkey hunters need a turkey vest. Trying to hunt gobblers without a vest is inconvenient and can be frustrating, making the purchase of a vest a no-brainer for anyone who has ever chased turkeys without one.

A good turkey hunting vest has several attributes. Of course, it needs to be camouflaged, as turkeys have excellent eyesight. It also needs to be comfortable, even when loaded with gear. It must have lots of storage pockets of different shapes and sizes, and they must be easily closable with a snap or zipper. It should have a reinforced back so hunters can lean against a tree to call birds without the bark sticking them uncomfortably in the back. And, lastly, it's handy if it has a comfortable seat incorporated into the vest so when a hunter hears a gobbler, he can take a seat on rough ground and even rocks and be comfortable doing so.

Many companies make turkey vests in a wide range of prices with a variety of features. Let's take a look at three options from major vest makers that you might consider carrying for your turkey-hunting customers.

ALPS OutdoorZ

ALPS OutdoorZ has been in the business of designing affordable, performance-driven hunting gear since 2007, and you can certainly tell the company's level of turkey-hunting knowledge when looking at the new NWTF OutdoorZ Impact Vest. The vest is loaded with important features to make turkey hunters more comfortable and successful in their endeavors, including some features most other vests don't offer.

One of the most impressive is its stadium-type seating, for lack of a better phrase. Here's why that's important. A typical turkey-hunting scenario sees a hunter walking through the woods in a likely area, occasionally stopping to call to see if he or she can get a gobbler to respond. If a turkey gobbles, the hunter immediately finds a tree to lean



“Turkey hunters need lots of different gear, and they need a way to carry that gear.”

back against and try to call the turkey into shotgun range. But if there's not a suitable tree handy, it creates a problem. Sure, a hunter can just sit on the ground with nothing to lean up against, but the recoil of a heavy turkey load could tip him or her completely over if a shot presents itself.

The Impact vest stadium-type seat gives hunters a backrest anywhere, along with a soft cushion for sitting. Best of all, the seat conveniently folds away or completely detaches when not in use.

But comfort isn't the only thing this vest offers. For one thing, at less than 4 pounds, it is quite lightweight. Its soft, brushed tricot fabric is available in Mossy Oak Obsession or Mossy Oak Bottomland.

Other cool features of the Impact vest include a variety of pockets for slates, strikers, box calls and mouth calls; five shell loops and a game bag. MSRP is \$109; www.Alpsoutdoor.com.

Primos

Primos has been making top-quality hunting calls and other equipment for nearly 30 years, and it specializes in turkey-hunting gear. The company touts its new Gobbler Gen 2 Turkey Vest as “the perfect vest for turkey hunters who want it all when it comes to comfortable concealment, smart storage and durable construction.”

The Gen 2 is the follow-up to the company's extremely popular Gobbler turkey vest. And one thing's for sure about this vest — you won't have to pick just a few calls you want and leave the rest at home! This vest has a multitude of pockets, mostly specialized ones, including two molded pot call pockets that can hold two calls each.

Other pockets include two mouth call purse pockets on the chest that are easily accessible but secure. The vest also features a padded box call pocket designed to keep the call quiet when walking and a pocket for decoy stakes, which seem to always be a nuisance unless you have a specific place to store them in your vest. The pockets are also zippered, so hunters don't lose any items when sitting down and getting up.

The padding on the back has been updated from the earlier version, making it more comfortable when leaning against a tree to call a gobbler. The padded seat offers plenty of padding for comfort on rough ground, and the vest even includes accessory straps for attaching your Thermo-cell when chasing turkeys in mosquito-rich environments.

The Gobbler Gen 2 Vest is available in Mossy Oak Greenleaf or Realtree Xtra Green camouflages. With an MSRP of \$89.99; www.Primos.com.

Tenzing

Tenzing's motto is “Go Further. Hunt Longer.” It's obvious that motto was on the minds of the designers when they designed the company's latest model. Tenzing's TV18 Turkey Hunting Vest is a little more expensive than the first two

→ Specialized pockets are a hallmark of the Primos Gobbler Gen 2, giving users the space to carry all the turkey calls they think they might need.



vests discussed, but it has some outstanding features that just might make it worth the extra money to your customers.

At only 3 pounds, the Tenzing fits more like a pack, largely due to the fact that the company specializes in making packs. Its fully adjustable, pack-style shoulder straps ensure a comfortable fit for any hunter, taking the pain out of lugging gear. The vest's design helps it keep its form, while gear stays organized, silent and readily accessible in a network of specialized pockets, including dedicated pockets and compartments for box calls, pots, strikers, diaphragm calls, shells and more.

→ Tenzing's TV18 comes in at a higher price than many other vests, but complete adjustability, a dual-layer foam seat and a multitude of bonus features will make it an attractive option for customers.

The fold-down dual-layer foam seat on the Tenzing is very thick and comfortable, making it handy for long sits in rocky areas or those strewn with limbs and other debris. The seat cushion deploys and stows quickly and reliably using integral straps and HDPE quick-release hardware. The TV18 even has a pair of perfectly positioned handwarmer pockets to keep hunters' hands warm on chilly spring mornings! And last but not least, the extra-large turkey compartment with easy-access opening allows hunters to carefully insert their bird and carry it without damage to feathers.

All these features do come at a slight cost: At 5 pounds, the TV18 is a little heavier than some vests.

Note also that this vest, available in Realtree Edge or Mossy Oak Obsession, tends to run somewhat large, so customers should try one on before making a purchase. Its \$129.99 MSRP seems reasonable for the array of features this vest offers; www.tenzingoutdoors.com. **HR**



PRO STAFF

Mark Chesnut is a freelance writer and editor who has been a professional journalist for more than 35 years. An avid hunter and bird dog lover, he is also owner and editorial director at Red Setter Communications.



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That's Not My Job!

Nothing says "I'm never getting promoted" like telling the boss "That's not my department."

BY PATRICK MEITIN

Any business operation with more than, say, three full-time employees becomes a hive of daily activity — and, unfortunately, inevitable human conflicts. To keep the machine operating smoothly and assuring that daily, weekly or monthly goals are met and necessary tasks are accomplished efficiently, specific employees are often assigned particular tasks, some based on seniority and/or experience, others based on specific skill sets or simply determined by an individual's strengths and weaknesses as perceived by an owner or manager.

For instance, when I started at a billboard company as a teen without a driving permit, I was relegated to sweeping

floors, emptying trash, unloading vehicles, sorting parts into respective bins and pulling nails from salvageable lumber when crews returned from the field — essentially doing my best to ensure skilled workers weren't bogged down attending to time-consuming menial labor. The following summer I became a field helper, while still expected to sweep floors and clean up after the guys when necessary. After earning my driver's license, I became a painter, was given my own charge account and began working in the field without supervision. During the summer between junior year and high-school graduation, I was put on a building crew and became responsible for ensuring billboards went up and were completed within

↑ Empty or disorganized shelves are everyone's concern, regardless of department or job title.



PRO STAFF

Patrick Meitin worked in various bow shops off and on while in high school and college. More recently he worked as a low-level manager in a regional sporting-goods chain as a salesman, employee scheduler and mechanize specialist. He has been heavily immersed in the archery and firearms trade for more than 30 years.



© Bill Konway

“When I entered the ranks of manager, I frequently found myself unclogging or cleaning toilets, emptying trash or mopping up messes.”

a specified deadline. Each promotion came with a small bump in pay, and I was no longer required to sweep floors, sort parts or pull nails. Though I was only a teen, seniority had its perks.

During my initial college years, working full-time while also attending night school for two years, I went through a similar progression at a large dealership’s auto-body shop: from trash-can-emptier and workplace sweeper to car washer and detailer to body-technician assistant to post-paint-shop “trimmer” (reinstalling extraneous ornamental parts) and finally quality-control inspector and conducting estimates. I was no longer required to empty trash cans or sweep accumulating Bondo dust and metal filings from service bays. That became someone else’s job — someone with far fewer responsibilities.

That said, there were certainly days well after gaining seniority when I did sweep floors, empty trash cans, pull nails from lumber, unload trucks or wash a rubbing-compound-flecked vehicle, though those tasks certainly weren’t within my job description. When I entered the ranks of manager during my stint in retail sporting goods, I frequently found myself unclogging or cleaning toilets, emptying trash or mopping up messes. These tasks were decidedly out of my job purview. It was simply how I was raised — if you observed something that needed doing, you took responsibility for it, or that chore might very well become permanently yours as an enforced life lesson.

Instilling this general attitude in entry-level employees today can prove a bit more frustrating. When I was working sporting goods retail, each associate was assigned a specific department: footwear, clothing, fishing, camping/backpacking, general hunting, guns/ammo, etc. Each department associate was responsible for their respective area — keeping shelves/racks/pegs filled and well organized according to established SKUs, cleaning up resulting messes (whether cus-

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**“Want to get ahead in your job?
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smile and a ‘Got it!’ response.”**

tomers spills and disrespectful “digging” or restocking effluvia) and so forth. After each promotion, my area of concern was naturally expanded, and I came to loathe all-too-frequent replies to requests occasionally made, usually because my hands were full at the moment.

Let me first set the scene: I might notice a customer had changed their mind about a purchase and dumped two dozen assorted trout spinners into a footwear-department sock bin. Perhaps 15 pocketknife boxes have been emptied onto the display counter and left there. Wet, sand-filled boot tracks might begin to accumulate at the front door after a snowy night. Or, all too often it would seem, someone had clogged the men’s toilet, again. It so happens the footwear girl is busy fitting an entire family with snow boots, or the general hunting associate is out to lunch, or things are just slow at the moment and someone is standing idly (itching to check their text messages). As a low-level manager with a lot on my plate, I casually ask someone to see that those fishing lures find their way back onto the correct pegs, or that the pocketknives are re-boxed and put back beneath the counter to discourage theft, or that someone grab a mop to deal with the wet floor or a plunger to address the plugged toilet. And I am told, “That’s



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not my job/department!" or "Why do I have to do that?"

As my stepfather, Captain Meitin, used to say regarding the latter response (if I should be so brave), "Because I just told you to!" That's only a start. There is no better way to infuriate an owner/manager than the "That's not my job!" retort.

When I became a manager, I made the decision to divvy up toilet/bathroom cleaning duties (a job no one wanted to tackle) on a rotating basis, so everyone received an opportunity to experience that character-building task. Should you pull the "That's not my job!" bit, you were immediately awarded double bathroom duty and not allowed to clock out until I had done a quick inspection.

As an associate with aspirations of climbing the company ladder, such responses are also duly noted by owners/managers, filed under "bad attitude." Want a favor when you wish to leave an hour early to catch your kid's baseball game, or switch days off to entertain visiting relatives, or just catch a break for arriving late after your alarm failed to sound? More importantly, want to get ahead in your job? Jump on such opportunities with a smile and a "Got it!" response.

Better yet, look for opportunities to tackle such tasks before you are even asked. "Sure," you might say, "no one will even notice." Maybe not the first time, or the second or third, but get into the habit of being a team player and it will be duly noted who is willing to jump in and take charge of the small things, which translates into the kind of initiative store owners and managers are always on the lookout for when opportunities arise for department transfers or promotions. **HR**

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← As cameras get smaller and more affordable and offer more features than ever, customers are running multiple cameras on a single piece of property, and most are willing to upgrade every few years.

Great Trail Cameras to Capture Retail Traffic

Trail camera technology is ever-changing, and these devices have become must-have scouting equipment for many hunters. Are you stocking the latest and greatest?

BY KEVIN REESE

Outdoor photographer and U.S. Representative George Shiras III published the first trail camera photo with *National Geographic* in 1906, taken with a contraption he called a “trap camera.” The 74-photo montage caught the attention of then President Theodore Roosevelt, who suggested Shiras publish a book of his works. Shiras complied nearly 30 years later by publishing *Hunting Wild Life with Camera and Flashlight: A Record of 65 Years’ Visits to the Woods and Waters of North America*, which included more than 950 trap camera photos in two volumes.

Shiras understood the important role cameras could play

in understanding wildlife activity when no one was looking. What he may not have realized was the magnitude of change he created in the way we scout, plan and hunt in 2019, more than 70 years after his death. While his early trap camera was primitive, blinding and loud and only took one photo, by the 1950s, trap cameras had evolved into 35mm cameras capable of capturing up to 36 images in a single setting. Of course, by the late ’80s, motion sensors were becoming the standard, and soon after, digital image storage compromised film’s future. By 2000, infrared (IR) technology was quickly replacing traditional flash, and



PRO STAFF

Kevin is an award-winning outdoor writer, Marine Corps veteran and avid hunter. His favorite pursuits include feral hogs with a bow or with a thermal scope and AR-style rifle in his home state of Texas. Of course, he also loves deer, elk, turkey, duck and dove hunting – and the list continues to grow.

“As the name implies, the Link-Micro-S-LTE combines the best features of Spypoint’s Link-S and Link-Micro into a compact, feature-rich LTE cellular camera system.”

35mm models were finding their way into clearance bins and garage sales.

Through the first decade of the 2000s, further IR improvements, standardized image storage, trigger speed and increased image resolution were front-runners of trail camera innovation. Over the past decade, while some focus remains on those areas, features like 1080+ HD video resolution, enhanced stealth IR illumination, solar power, remote access and even more compact designs have become major focal points for trail cameras, making them perfect (and still affordable) multi-tasking tools for scouting, security and more — quite a boon for consumers and retailers alike. As examples, here are nine buzzworthy trail cameras well worth a little retail space.



Spypoint Link-Micro-S-LTE (New for 2020)

By many accounts, Spypoint has spent the past 11 years revolutionizing trail and security camera technology. Sure, the IR-B was a solid camera, but the Tiny W’s wireless image transfer to a remote black box hidden nearby, followed

→ Moultrie Mobile X-Series 6000



← Spypoint Link-Micro-S-LTE

by true, reliable, 3G and soon after, 4G connectivity, sure kicked the industry’s wireless camera tires. For 2020, Spypoint’s new Link-Micro-S-LTE sends a clear message — they have no plans to slow their innovation roll.

As the name implies, the Link-Micro-S-LTE combines the best features of Spypoint’s Link-S and Link-Micro into a compact LTE cellular camera system ready to provide reliable service well beyond 4G. The Link-Micro-S-LTE features a 0.4 second trigger speed and utilizes four power LEDs to extend flash range to match detection range at 80 feet. The single motion sensor covers five detection zones.

The Link-Micro-S-LTE also boasts an integrated solar panel and a rechargeable lithium battery. The solar panel, battery and advanced cellular service combination effectively puts an end to camera site visits. Additional features include 10-megapixel photo resolution, 720 HD video with audio, two-photo multi-shot mode, time-lapse and Buck Tracker antler recognition technology.

www.spypoint.com

Moultrie Mobile X-Series 6000 (New for 2020)

Moultrie has amassed a decades-long reputation for producing reliable, high quality and affordable trail cameras, and its 2020 X-Series 6000 models represent the brand exceptionally well. It’s offered in two models, the XV-6000 (Verizon 4G) and the VA-6000 (AT&T 4G), and both provide premium features and rock-solid reliability without a big price tag — perfect for your cost-conscious customers.



“Used as a security camera, Moultrie X-Series 6000 cameras can notify you immediately if people or cars are identified.”

Moultrie X-Series 6000 cameras feature 70-foot motion and IR-flash ranges, high-resolution 16-megapixel photos and a rapid, sub-1-second trigger time. Nighttime images are bright and crisp thanks to Moultrie’s advanced IL-LUMNI-NIGHT sensor, and the X-Series’ recognition software can automatically sort through buck photos; of course, used as a security camera, X-Series 6000 cameras can notify you immediately if people or cars are identified. While XA- and XV-6000 models can be used as stand-alone trail cameras, users can manage photos stored at the Moultrie Mobile app remotely via cellular service.

www.moultriefeeders.com

Cuddeback Dual Cell and CuddeLink Gen 2 (New for 2019-2020)

For as long as I can remember, Cuddeback has been a performance leader in trail camera technology, especially with respect to lightning-fast trigger times. In 2020, Cuddeback remains comfortably amid top performers with a trigger speed of sub .25-second, their Dual Cell cameras (Models K-5680 and K-5789) as top-shelf examples. While the more expensive K-5680 is an “open” model capable of operating as a stand-alone camera or with cellular service, model K-5789 is specifically designed to operate on a cellular plan.

Both cameras boast up to 20-megapixel day and night image resolution, up to 100-foot flash range and dual IR flash technology: no-glow black and long-range low-glow with 56 onboard IR LEDs (28 dedicated to each mode). Additional Dual Cell features include burst mode up to five photos, time-lapse with different setting options for day or night, versatile delay settings and 10- to 30-second video clips. In addition to these key Dual Cell features, Cuddeback’s recovery speed of just 1 to 2 seconds is quite the game-changer. Honestly, while other cameras are busy resetting, the Cuddeback Dual Cell has already reset and taken another photo.

Of course, for 2020, the most impressive Cuddeback trail camera innovation is CuddeLink Gen 2 networking management. With CuddeLink Gen 2, users can manage virtually all aspects of up to 24 CuddeLink compatible Cuddeback cameras like the Dual Cell K-5789. Imagine controlling camera settings and managing photos remotely from a network of 24 trail cameras from a smartphone, tablet or computer — and it gets better. CuddeLink Gen 2 accomplishes these image transfer and management tasks 50 percent faster and accommodates 50 percent more photo transfers per day, up to 1,500 daily. With the introduction of CuddeLink Gen 2, Cuddeback is careful to point out that all CuddeLink cameras are compatible with the Gen 2 management system after firmware has been updated to version 8.0.0.

www.cuddeback.com



← CuddeBack Dual Cell K-5789

Covert Code Black 20 LTE and Blackhawk 20 LTE (New for 2019-2020)

Launched in 2019, Covert Scouting Cameras' Code Black 20 and Blackhawk 20 essentially are the same cameras — the Code Black 20 is purposed specifically for AT&T clients, while the Blackhawk 20 is designed for Verizon users. True to their names, both cameras offer crisp 20-megapixel daytime-color and nighttime IR imaging. Both cameras also transfer images instantly to the Covert app and allow sending quick 5-second videos with audio. They are motion and heat activated or time-lapse triggered.

Code Black and Blackhawk cameras also feature GPS function so users always know where their cameras are (even when they turn up missing; unfortunately an all-too-frequent problem with trail cameras these days), quick .65-second trigger speed with Maximum Silence Image Capture, 2-inch color viewer, 60 No Glow IR LEDs

with invisible flash technology and 100-foot flash range, and information stamping, including time, date, temperature and moon phase. They also include a 1- 10 turbo shot burst and boast a 58-degree field of view.

For 2020, Covert Scouting Cameras has expanded and improved its cellular service plan offerings to fit any budget and meet the needs of any outdoor enthusiasts, from individual hunters to commercial hunting and wildlife operations. Covert's plans are divided into monthly, quarterly and yearly options with fees ranging from just \$4.99 per month with 100 image downloads up to \$849.99 per year with 1 million total downloads. Monthly, quarterly and yearly unlimited plans also are available. Customers can add cameras to limited plans for additional fees; however, unlimited plans are priced per camera.

www.covertscoutingcameras.com

↔ The Covert Code Black 20 LTE (left) and Blackhawk 20 LTE (right).





“Cuddeback’s recovery speed of just 1 to 2 seconds is quite the game-changer.”

Stealth Cam DS4KMax (2019)

2019 was a banner year for advanced trail camera technology, and Stealth Cam created quite a buzz with the DS4KMax, a scouting camera system dressed to impress with a Reflex .4-second trigger, 42 No Glo IR LEDs, 32-megapixel photos and yes, ultra-high-definition (UHD) 4K video resolution.

The Stealth Cam DS4KMax just might epitomize the trail camera definition of feature-rich. The DS4Kmax includes dual image sensors, an adjustable PIR sensor, retina low-light sensitivity, simultaneous image and video capture, 1- to 9-image burst mode, 16:9 wide image ratio, manual shot capability and Geo-Tag GPS tagging. The DS4Kmax is powered by 12 AA batteries and also includes an external jack for 12v power, as well as video and USB output ports.

www.stealthcam.com

Wildgame Innovations Shadow Micro Cam Lights Out (2019)

If small means better, the Wildgame Innovations Shadow Micro Cam Lights Out just might be the best. Trying to comprehend how WGI packed as much as they have into the 3x3x2-inch camera body is a bit of a mystery — but they



← Stealth Cam DS4KMax

↓ Wildgame Innovations Shadow Micro Cam Lights Out



did, and it works exceptionally well.

The Shadow Micro Cam Lights Out boasts 42 stealth IR LEDs, 16-megapixel still images, 720p video resolution, sub-.5-second trigger speed and a flash range of 75 feet — a remarkable distance considering the Shadow Micro’s compact size. Mount options are also quite versatile. The back of the camera includes slots designed to accommodate a web strap. The Shadow Micro Cam also includes a HuntStand magnetic ball-mounting platform with slots to mount the HuntStand to a tree or post via the web strap. The camera-side mounting adapter features a rather strong magnet. When attached to the ball-head, the camera can be precisely positioned for perfect images. While it seems that using the HuntStand begs for a camera to be stolen since only a magnet holds it in place, a vertical hole running through the camera body is designed to accommodate a cable lock.

www.wildgameinnovations.com

Reconyx HF2X Hyperfire 2 Covert IR (2019)

While the Hyperfire 2 might not be brand spanning new, Reconyx’s commitment to enhancing performance definitely means the HF2X Covert IR iteration is well worth retail space. Like others in this roundup, big features come in a compact package. While the Hyperfire 2 measures just 4.5 inches (W) x 5.5 inches (H) x 2.5 inches (D), Reconyx’s No-Glow Gen 3 HO Infrared system stretches illumination out to a jaw-dropping range of 150 feet.



← Reconyx HF2X Hyperfire 2 Covert IR



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→ Browning Defender Wireless

← Snyper Commander 4G LTE



The 2019 Reconyx Hyperfire 2 features a blistering fast .25-second trigger speed, 1080p wide-screen or 3-mp standard aspect ratio, 720p HD video resolution, dynamic video mode, up to 512-gigabyte SD card compatibility, BuckView software and Code-Loc anti-theft pass code. Like all Reconyx cameras, the Hyperfire 2 is made in the USA; this latest generation also boasts a 5-year warranty. The Hyperfire 2 is powered by 12 AA lithium or NiMH batteries and battery life is up to two years or 40,000 images.

www.reconyx.com

Snyper Commander 4G LTE (2019)

Relative newcomer Snyper Hunting Products has made big waves in the trail camera arena in just a few short years of production, and 2019, with the unveiling of the Commander 4G LTE, was their best year yet. The good news for consumers is real top-tier trail camera competition for long-standing producers — the Commander 4G LTE offers more than enough to make consumers (and other brands) take notice.

So, what does the Commander 4G LTE offer? The condensed list includes cellular service, GPS, integrated cell booster, 12-megapixel still images, HD video, 3-shot burst mode, 2-inch color viewer, time lapse, time delay and a fast .4-second trigger speed. 56 invisible, high-intensity IR LEDs produce an impressive flash range of 120 feet. Snyper even thought of cellular providers — not everybody uses AT&T or Verizon. Snyper offers a SimHERO card compatible with over 400 networks and plans starting at just \$7 per month. AT&T also offers a plan for \$10 per month with unlimited photos.

True to Snyper Hunting Products' drive to compete with the top camera manufacturers in the industry, the company also offers innovative products like the Snyper Hunting app with AI animal recognition, single and dual cam tree mounts, solar panel system and more.

www.snyperhuntingproducts.com

Browning Defender Wireless (2019)

Browning's Buckmark logo symbolizes more than 140 years of legacy-driven quality, innovation and service. From legendary firearms to knives, ground blinds, apparel and, yes, trail cameras, Browning's Buckmark suggests those products are "the best there is." Of course, often "what's best" is subjective, but there's no arguing Browning products are expected to surpass performance expectations, and often they do. Cases in point, Browning Trail Cameras.

One of Browning's most recent cameras epitomizes the brand's determination to produce the best there is — the Defender Wireless. Unveiled in 2019, the Defender Wireless is a step up from the previously released Defender 850 and 940

models. The Browning Defender Wireless camera boasts 20-megapixel photos, 1920x1080 full HD video with audio, 0.3-0.7 adjustable trigger speed, 0.6-second recovery time, 80-foot detection range, 80-foot invisible IR flash, 120-foot long-range IR flash, Illuma-Smart self-adjusting IR flash, 2-inch color viewing screen, battery meter, Rapid Fire imaging, multi-shot mode, programmable picture delay and more. The Defender Wireless is compatible with up to 512-gigabyte SD cards, it's powered by 16 AA batteries and it

includes a 12-volt external power pack.

Cellular packages for nationwide 4G LTE service are available via AT&T and Verizon. Cellular service includes an easy-to-use app, scheduled and immediate uploads, GPS tagging and mapping. Users can select contract-free, month-to-month data plans, ranging from \$12.99 to \$49.99 per month, that accommodate standard and HD image and video uploads, email and texting of images and videos, and file management.

www.browningtrailcameras.com **HR**





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Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls Expands Its Niche

The future looks bright at this growing game call company.

BY MATT CRAWFORD

In 1992, in the garage of his home in northwestern Idaho, Rockie Jacobsen began crafting elk calls as a way to make a few extra dollars. Jacobsen had been playing with an idea for a new style of diaphragm call that wouldn't make the user gag. With a touch of resourcefulness and the help of a retired tool and die maker, he developed the Palate Plate diaphragm call and sold \$3,000 worth of the new calls at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation annual convention in Portland, Oregon.

Will Primos of Primos Hunting bought the Palate Plate patent from Jacobsen in 1994, and Jacobsen continued to innovate on his own. By 1997, the small call company was Jacobsen's full-time job, and by the year 2000, dealers started taking notice of the company.

Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls continued to grow and now offers turkey, predator, deer, moose, wolf and elk calls. RMCH's Volume Enhanced Tone Technology (V.E.T.T) offers better volume and tone control and has gained fans across the country.

Hunting Retailer had the chance to talk with Mike Mattly, sales and marketing director at Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls. Mattly has been in the hunting industry for nearly a quarter of a century. He started with Knight Rifles in 1994 and worked in public relations for PRADCO hunting brands for seven years. Now, his efforts go into growing RMHC sales, and he's exceedingly optimistic about what 2020 will bring.

HR: What's going to be new from RMHC for 2020?

Mattly: We have developed a new Sure Fire Bugle adaptor that will attach to our V.E.T.T. system on most of our bugle tubes. The Sure Fire adaptor has a built-in reed, so hunters who can't use a diaphragm can still bugle. We also created 10 new



PRO STAFF

Matt Crawford lives, writes, fishes and hunts from his home base in northern Vermont. He is the former editor of *The Burlington Free Press* and *Upland Almanac*. Currently, he works in a communications firm where he represents a number of brands in the outdoor industry.





↑ Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls are all assembled in Idaho and are inspected by hand before packaging.

→ The company's Elk 101 Signature Series is a popular seller and is available in a multi-pack.

← Mike Mattly, RMHC sales and marketing director.

→ While elk calls remain the company's bread and butter, it is branching out into predator and turkey calls, with deer calls a potential future area of growth.

predator calls. The Atomic 13 series of aluminum distress calls look great and sound even better.

HR: What sets Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls apart from some of the larger call companies?

Mattly: The product development really sets us apart. We don't have red tape that many big companies do. If one of us has a good idea, we talk about the basics, then everyone adds their input. Within a couple days we have a prototype to proceed with. Also, the calls are assembled by hand and touched by multiple people, so we have several sets of eyes inspecting each product before it goes out the door.

HR: Where do you make your calls and who tunes them?

Mattly: Our calls are all assembled in Kamiah, Idaho. We have a great team of men and women that specialize in the different processes.



“We are getting to a point where dealers call us and request a pro staffer by name to help at their events. That means a lot.”

HR: Where does your company see potential for growth? How about non-growth? Is there part of the industry that's shrinking?

Mattly: We're branching out into predator and turkey more this year. Deer is an area that we need to focus on in the future.

HR: Are there new technological changes coming in the call world?

Mattly: We are always looking into new materials to build

our calls from that will give even more lifelike sounds. It is interesting how the Western states are more restrictive than the Midwest and Southeast. Heck, trail cameras and lighted nocks are illegal in some Western states.

HR: What's the best-selling call you guys have and why?

Mattly: The ELK101 series of calls do phenomenal for us for a few reasons. Corey Jacobsen is the reigning World Elk Calling Champion, and these are his signature series. Corey is a huge marketing machine with

ELK101.com, his podcast with Randy Newberg, his e-newsletters, etc. He is the best elk caller in the world, and people listen to what he says and buy his calls.

HR: How has the decades-long slide in the number of Americans now hunting affected business?

Mattly: Actually, our business has been fortunate to have continued growth. There doesn't appear to be as much of a decline in elk hunters compared to small game and deer.

HR: How do you leverage your pro staff and/or social media influencers? Are they important to sales?

Mattly: We have a great team of pro staff members and are working at doing a better job with influencers. Rockie Jacobsen, founder of RMHC, is in charge of the pro staff, and he won't let just anyone on our team. They have to know how to call, how to talk to potential customers and how to hunt, and they must represent us in a professional manner. We are getting to a point where dealers call us and request a pro staffer by name to help at their events. That means a lot.

HR: What do you expect across your segment of the hunting industry in 2020?

Mattly: We expect modest growth in predator and turkey. Hunters now are learning that we make more than just elk calls.

HR





© Hilary Dyer

WATERFOWL CALLS 101

With hundreds of duck and goose calls offered by manufacturers, which ones should you carry to meet your customers' needs?

BY MARK CHESNUT

While the number of waterfowl hunters has trended downward in recent years — as with most other types of hunting, incidentally — latest figures show there are about 1 million Americans that killed about 11.6 million ducks and 3.27 million geese last year.

Of note to retailers dealing in waterfowl hunting equipment is that these hunters are spread throughout the nation. In

2018, about 227,000 hunters in the Atlantic flyway harvested 1.6 million ducks and 754,000 geese, some 434,000 hunters in the Mississippi flyway shot 2.43 million ducks and nearly 1.2 million geese, about 223,000 waterfowlers in the Central flyway killed 2.43 million ducks and 912,000 geese, and another 152,000 hunters along the Pacific flyway harvested 2.55 million ducks and about 414,000 geese.



PRO STAFF

Mark Chesnut is a freelance writer and editor who has been a professional journalist for more than 35 years. An avid hunter and bird dog lover, he is also owner and editorial director at Red Setter Communications.

← About one million Americans hunt waterfowl. While those aren't deer-hunting numbers, it's still a sizeable market.

If you're in the business of selling hunting equipment, those hunter numbers are nothing to sneeze at, and ignoring this segment of hunters in such a gear-intensive sport could hurt your bottom line.

Also of note to retailers is that the vast majority of waterfowl hunting is done by hunters using duck and goose calls to attract birds to within shotgun range. Consequently, there's money to be made in selling duck and goose calls, as well as other waterfowl hunting accessories. Yet, just as a prospective duck hunter can stand in the call aisle at his or her local big box store and wonder what's special about each call, a retailer can have difficult time trying to determine what calls to carry in his or her inventory.

To make your job of stocking what customers are likely to buy a little easier, let's take a quick dive into the ocean of duck call knowledge.

All About Duck Calls

One important consideration when choosing a duck call — whether to use it or stock it in your shop — is the material from which it is made. Wooden calls are the old standard classic, and

“There's money to be made in selling duck and goose calls, as well as other waterfowl hunting accessories.”

many hunters still prefer them today. They are often used for close-range calling, since they are generally somewhat quieter than calls made from other materials. In general, calls made from soft woods are quieter, while those made from harder woods can be used to make louder sounds.

The next type, polycarbonate/plastic calls, are made of very dense materials and have great acoustic quality. They tend to be pretty loud — certainly louder than wood calls — and are nearly indestructible due to the durable material. They are also very low-maintenance calls and are usually sold at a fairly low price point, making them good for beginners and seasoned duck hunters.

Acrylic duck calls are usually the most expensive duck calls and are often favored by those who have enough duck hunting

↓ Material, configuration (number of reeds) and price will all be factors in a customer's decision about which duck call to buy. Be sure to stock a variety in all categories.



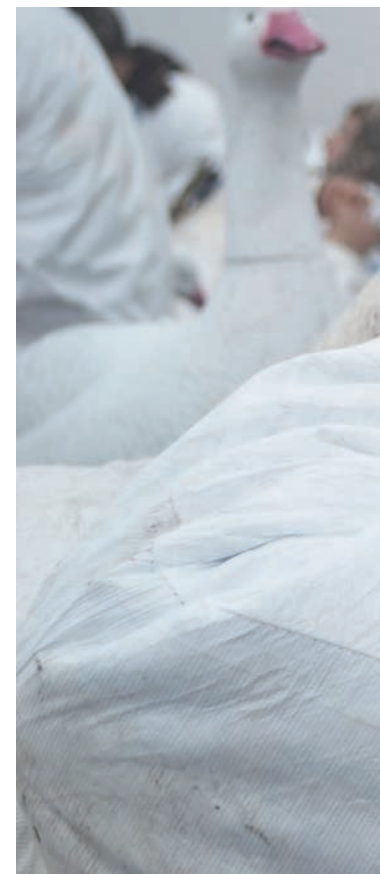
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← Single-reed calls are louder but much more difficult to master than double-reed calls. Unless you sell in an extremely cold region where double-reed calls tend to freeze up, you'll likely find that most hunters are looking for double-reed or even triple-reed calls.

↓ In snow goose calling, volume is the name of the game. Plastic and acrylic will be popular, and if spring conservation season is a big deal in your area, consider stocking electronic calls as well (where legal).



experience to appreciate their qualities. The most durable of all the call types, acrylic calls are also the loudest, so they can be successfully used to call to ducks at long distances. Since the material they are made from comes in a variety of colors and can be easily polished, they often look more like a work of art than a simple piece of hunting gear. Many have been hand-tuned for perfect sound right out of the box, making them even more expensive.

Another important factor for retailers to consider when deciding on which calls to stock is reed configuration. Single-reed calls are, like they sound, made with just one reed. A single-reed call will allow users to produce louder calls that will carry much farther, but that comes at the price of them being more difficult to use than other reed configurations. That's because making good duck sounds with a single-reed call requires greater breath control and precise tongue placement, which takes a while to master.

Made with a more forgiving configuration, double-reed calls produce accurate duck sounds and are much easier to blow than single-reed calls. Consequently, double-reed calls are ideal for hunters of all skill levels, as well as for rank newbies to use when first learning to call. While not quite as loud as single-reed calls, they sound great and are often very effective at getting ducks to make a deadly decision.

Some companies also make and market triple-reed calls. They are similar to double-reed calls but often even a little quieter and raspier. Note that both double-reed and triple-reed calls can be somewhat problematic in very cold weather since the wet reeds can freeze together when not in use.

While there are some regional differences in duck calls

“Acrylic duck calls are usually the most expensive and are often favored by those who have enough duck hunting experience to appreciate their qualities.”

used, more often differences are due to the habitat types being hunted. Hunting on a large bay on the East Coast is going to require a very loud call that can reach way out and attract sea ducks at a great distance. Same for hunting on large reservoirs throughout the Midwest. Field hunting can be the same, depending on what kind of country you're hunting. If hunters are likely to see ducks a mile away and want to get their attention, a loud call is going to serve them better.

For more confined environments like ponds, secluded lakes and the famous standing timber in Arkansas, an extremely loud call is not needed. Hunters pursuing ducks in those kinds of areas need a more subtle call, not one that will knock their socks off. Note that most experienced hunters carry multiple calls and choose which one to use depending on the area they are hunting and the situation.

Price ranges for duck calls run the gamut from as low as \$10 to well into the hundreds of dollars. As the material used, quality of manufacturing and quality of sound they produce increases, so does the price. Since you'll be trying to sell duck calls to hunters of all experience levels, carrying a range of dif-

3 Great Duck Calls

There are so many great duck calls on the market that it's hard to pick just a few. But these three popular calls from well-known manufacturers should attract plenty of buyers.

The Duck Commander Triple Threat is designed to replicate the mallard hen in her quack, feed call and hail call. Made by the famous “Duck Dynasty” stars, the Triple Threat is a triple-reed call made of tough polycarbonate material. Duckcommander.com



Rich-n-Tone's Microhen is a great little call that is only 3.75 inches tall – tiny by duck call standards. But the sound it produces is anything but tiny. The single-reed call is available in Granadillo wood, Bocote wood, bourbon acrylic and smoke acrylic. Antcalls.com



The Buck Gardner Double Nasty is a double-reed call and one of the best-selling duck calls of all time. Every Double Nasty polycarbonate call is hand tuned and tested before being shipped. Buckgardner.com



© Hilary Dyer





← Wooden calls, like the Sure Shot Yentzen shown here, are a classic, and in most cases, they are a little quieter than calls made from other materials.

→ Waterfowling is a wet, muddy affair by nature, making durability a priority for many hunters looking to buy a new call.

↓ Waterfowlers are a dedicated bunch and are willing to spend serious money on their passion.

“Double-reed calls are ideal for hunters of all skill levels, as well as for rank newbies to use when first learning to call.”

ferent materials, reed options and prices is a wise strategy to meet more customers’ needs.

When stocking duck calls, don’t overlook duck whistles. Many species of ducks make whistling sounds, including teal, wigeons and even mallard and pintail drakes. A whistling call used with regular duck calls will often give whistling ducks — and even those that don’t whistle — enough confidence to come to a hunter’s decoys. While ducks make a variety of different whistles, most can be made with the whistling calls offered by several different manufacturers, including Buck Gardner Calls, Duck Commander and Echo Championship Calls.

In some areas of the United States, wood duck hunting is quite popular. Wood ducks make a sound unlike any other duck and aren’t easily deceived by typical duck calls. Fortunately, several companies make calls that closely imitate the sound wood ducks make. If wood duck hunting is popular in your area, it might be worth adding a few of these calls to your inventory.

Calling All Geese

Retailers catering to waterfowl hunters shouldn’t overlook goose hunters and the calls they use to get their quarry in close. Like duck calls, there are different types of goose calls, and





© Hilary Dyer



© Hilary Dyer

different goose species require calls that make quite different sounds.

Most goose calls are made of wood or plastic. Since Canada geese make a distinctly different sound than snow geese or white-fronted geese (specklebellies), hunters going specifically after Canadas typically use calls that make that species' well-known honking sound.

As with duck calls, wooden goose calls are the classic version and typically make a somewhat softer sound, though many exactly mimic a goose. However, they are more susceptible to problems when hunting in moist conditions, since wood is known to swell when wet and shrink when it dries.

Plastic calls are tougher and can be blown louder because of the harder material. And as with duck calls, acrylic goose calls tend to be at the top of the line, both in quality and price.

Most manufacturers make calls that have a variety of pitches ranging from high to low. Carrying a good selection gives customers a better choice of the tone and pitch they prefer.

Snow goose calls have similar qualities but make a different, more high-pitched sound. For snow geese, volume is often the most important factor, so stocking calls that can be blown very loudly is a good way to cater to snow goose hunters.

For hunting snow geese during the spring conservation season, which was created about a decade ago to help keep burgeoning population numbers in check, hunters are allowed to use electronic calls. That is helpful because spring snow geese often travel in very high numbers — flocks of 5,000 or more are not uncommon — and it's really hard to blow a mouth call loud enough to get their attention.

Electronic snow goose calls range from small units to extravagant sound systems with remote speakers and other cool features. If you are located in one of the Central flyway states that see a lot of spring snow goose hunting — like Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Nebraska, and North and South Dakota — it might be prudent to stock an electronic call or two for customers looking to get involved in that aspect of waterfowl hunting. **HR**

3 Great Decoys

If catering to waterfowl hunters is your goal, decoys are another big-ticket item used by most duck and goose hunters. Here are three good duck decoys that are proven sellers.



The Avian-X Topflight Mallard decoys are so lifelike that they are hard to tell from a real mallard from a distance. They feature the company's weight-forward swim keel design for natural motion in current or even just a small breeze. They measure 14.5 inches from breast to tail.

Avian-x.com



The Mallard Floater decoys from Dakota Decoys are made of a soft plastic to withstand the abuse of daily hunting and are touted by the company as being virtually indestructible. The one-piece, weighted-keel design features a very realistic paint job. They measure 17 inches long.

Dakotadecoys.com



The Baby Mojo Mallard is an electronic decoy that adds motion to hunters' spreads, increasing the chances of drawing in decoy-wise ducks that have been hunted hard. The Baby Mojo is like Mojo's bigger motion decoys but about three-quarter size. Check local regulations, though, as using motion decoys is not legal in all locations. *Mojooutdoors.com*





Selling Access to Adventure

The rockstar of the paddlesports world — kayaks — take up a lot of room in stores. But they promise hunting success to sportsmen and give you a prime opportunity to upsell.

BY MARK CHESNUT



PRO STAFF

John Geiger is an outdoor writer who is based in northwest Georgia. He is an avid hunter and angler who defends our North American Conservation Model and Second Amendment rights.

Paddlesports popularity is soaring. In the most recent survey, participation increased 7 percent in four years. Now, 21 million American use some kind of paddling boat — canoe, kayak or paddleboard. At the top of the heap are kayaks. More than 13 million Americans kayaked in 2014, the latest research available.

Fishing is the most popular outdoor activity, with 35 percent participation. In the Outdoor Foundation's Outdoor Participation Report, less than 20 percent of kayakers are now using them to hunt. But according to retailers, the number of sportsmen and women using a kayak for hunting is growing. Why? It's all about access. Hunters want to get to where others cannot and find their own adventures off the beaten path.

If you're not carrying kayaks in your store, are you missing out on solid margin? Some in the industry say kayaks represent a 30 to 40 percent margin. If you do offer them to customers, are you displaying them correctly and upselling new propulsion technology?

We talked to a number of people in the industry — from retailers to manufacturers and kayakers — in order to help you decide if there is an opportunity here for your business. Maybe 2020 is the year to increase store sales by bringing in kayaks, the rockstar of the paddlesports space.

“You’ll have to make room for a handful of 14-foot-long, 100-plus-pound kayaks in your store. Or will you?”

Access Is the Selling Point

Access is the main reason why small paddlesport boats have been so popular among hunters. As a public-land hunter myself, I am always trying to outsmart other hunters as well as the deer and ducks. A kayak is quiet and helps me get into shallow creeks and marshes where few others can go.

“If stores pitch kayaks in that light, they’ll be successful,” said Damon Bungard of Jackson Kayaks.

Bungard is also a hunter, and he uses his Jackson Kayak Kilroy HD to get deep into the outback in his home state of Tennessee. He found there are many places across the country where a kayak would give a hunter an edge. And what hunter isn’t looking for an edge?

Bungard recently went duck hunting with a friend in Vermont. They launched at a ramp and quietly pedaled into a back-bay slough off Lake Champlain. They had a limit by noon and paddled back.

“We got to the ramp, and there were a whole lot of guys amazed that we got our limit so soon,” said Bungard. “They said, ‘Where were you guys?’ We said, ‘Where you weren’t.’”

Morgan Promnitz, Hobie’s senior brand manager, said Ho-

bie sees the access issue as the driver of future profits for his company and for retailers.

“We think that access to different hunting ground is a very appealing thing about getting a kayak,” he said. “They’re silent, stealthy, lightweight and inexpensive. Plus, you can portage them, and that opens a whole world to hunters and fishermen. As a company, we feel that is the strongest marketing angle and has a potential for strong growth in the near future.”

Floor-Space Challenges

But there’s an 800-pound gorilla in the room. You’ll have to make room for a handful of 14-foot-long, 100-plus-pound kayaks in your store. Or will you?

Each retailer we spoke to had a different way to inventory or display their kayaks as well as boats and canoes. And each had advice for other retailers. They said that displaying outside has advantages and disadvantages.

The advantage is, they look great from the road. A kayak or two, fully rigged as a fishing or hunting tool, will attract customers to the store, especially if you are on a busy highway and you need to get sportsmen to pull into your drive. They’re like magnets.

The downside is that weather will take its toll pretty quickly, and then you may have a harder time selling it. It’s true that good quality kayaks all have UV inhibitors in the plastic, but dust and leaves will diminish the brand-new quality of the boat, and it will be less appealing and more like a scuffed floor model in no time. Some retailers recommended

↑ More than 13 million Americans kayaked in 2014, and numbers have only gone up from there.

→ If you’re considering dedicating serious space to stocking a few kayaks, call some manufacturers and find out what models tend to sell best in your geographic region.



4 Popular Options

If you decide to carry kayaks or other small craft, you'll have a lot of options to consider, and, of course, that's a good thing. Here are four that give a customer various options of style, propulsion and cost.

Old Town Topwater 120 PDL

This kayak is a sit-on-top model that comes with Old Town's PDL pedal drive, which is one of the best in the business. You can maneuver this 12-footer without hands, which makes it great for drift-hunting or any fishing. The hull has a 500-pound capacity, so you may want to bone out any deer you want to transport, depending on the total weight in the craft. The kayak is narrow but quite stable.

- Weight: 106 pounds
- Capacity: 500 pounds
- Length: 12 feet
- Width: 36 inches
- Hull construction: Polyethylene
- Colors: Four colors, including a camo-style
- Manufacturer location: Old Town, Maine
- Price: \$2,149



Hobie Mirage Pro Angler 14

The Mirage part of its name refers to the propulsion. Hobie's Mirage 180 drive is an industry trend-setter, and this year, has been upgraded to "kick up" when you're in shallow water and you hit a log or other obstruction. With Hobie, you get a proven sporting kayak. Features include a non-skid deck, H-Rails, which is Hobie's proprietary accessories attachment system, plus a large amount of storage for shells, decoys, trail cams, lunch and whatever else you'd like to bring to or home from your hunt. This photo shows a kayak ghillie



- Weight: 120 pounds fitted hull weight; 144 pounds, fully rigged
- Capacity: 600 pounds
- Length: 13 feet, 8 inches
- Width: 38 inches
- Hull construction: Polyethylene
- Colors: Three colors, including a camo option
- Manufacturer location: Oceanside, California
- Price: \$3,889; \$4,089 in camo

Jackson Kayak Kilroy HD

If your customer needs a price break, then a paddle kayak, like the Jackson Kilroy HD, might be right for him or her. It's a sit-inside kayak that was recently redesigned for more storage and stability. A large bow deck is a great place to tie down gear or game. Jackson's solution to keep the paddle out of the way but handy is a keeper on the bow that secures the blade until you're ready to grab the paddle and get moving.

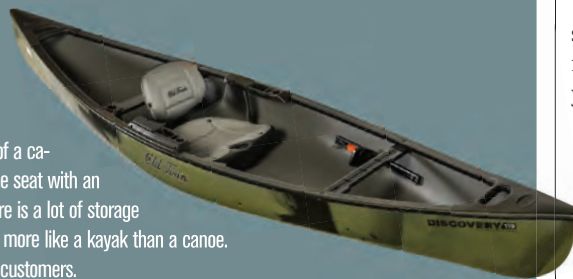
- Weight: 93 pounds
- Capacity: 450 pounds
- Length: 12 feet, 10 inches
- Width: 36 inches
- Hull construction: Polyethylene
- Colors: Four, including two camo options
- Manufacturer location: Rock Island, Tennessee
- Price: \$1,599



Old Town Discovery 119 SoloSportsman

Here's a hybrid craft that has some of the best parts of a canoe and a kayak. The seat is a comfortable kayak-style seat with an adjustable backrest. And from the canoe tradition, there is a lot of storage space in this craft. The Sportsman also handles much more like a kayak than a canoe. But it might be the price that turns the heads of your customers.

- Weight: 56 pounds
- Capacity: 345 pounds
- Length: 11 feet, 9 inches
- Width: 32.5 inches
- Hull construction: Three-layer Polyethylene
- Colors: Three, two of which area. Camo style
- Manufacturer location: Old Town, Maine
- Price: \$899



bringing them out only for special promotions and otherwise storing them inside or at least under a roof.

Some retailers have enough floor space to show them inside. Again, a fully rigged model — with rods, coolers and lure boxes if it's for fishing or a gun-holder, ammo box and camo netting — is about as sexy of a product as you could produce from any aisle of your store. What's nice about this is that you can put a gun or fishing rod in the kayak and, unlike being outside, people with sticky fingers would have a hard time walking off with them.

Again, floorspace is usually a premium in most smaller and mid-sized retailers across the country, so this beautiful display style might not be right for you. While some retailers display one or two outside or rig one up inside, they almost all display others vertically, lined up along any wall, railing or anywhere there's room (one retailer in Illinois stands them up in his bow range, "but in a way no arrow would hit them," he said). In this configuration, customers can still touch them and see the accessory rail system. Many larger retailers address the display issue by having just one in the store and then warehousing other options on-site or off-site nearby.

“Any retailer looking to carry kayaks or boats should first determine where they'll be getting their supply from and calculate in shipping costs. They might surprise you.”

The Shape of Shipping

Shipping costs are another obstacle that retailers point to when considering offering boats and kayaks. One retailer in Utah mitigates that by working with a local company — Lifetime Kayaks.

“For my customers, price is important, so I have to keep all costs down,” said Mike Vause of Smith & Edwards in Ogden, Utah. Vause looked around for a close supplier and found that Lifetime Kayaks was just 20 miles down I-15 from their store.

“We go down and pick up a few kayaks whenever we need to,” said Vause. Otherwise, when he orders from other companies, especially manufacturers back East, shipping costs get high quickly. Depending on the size of the kayaks, which run from about 6 feet to 17, it only takes 20 to about 45 to fill up a whole truck.

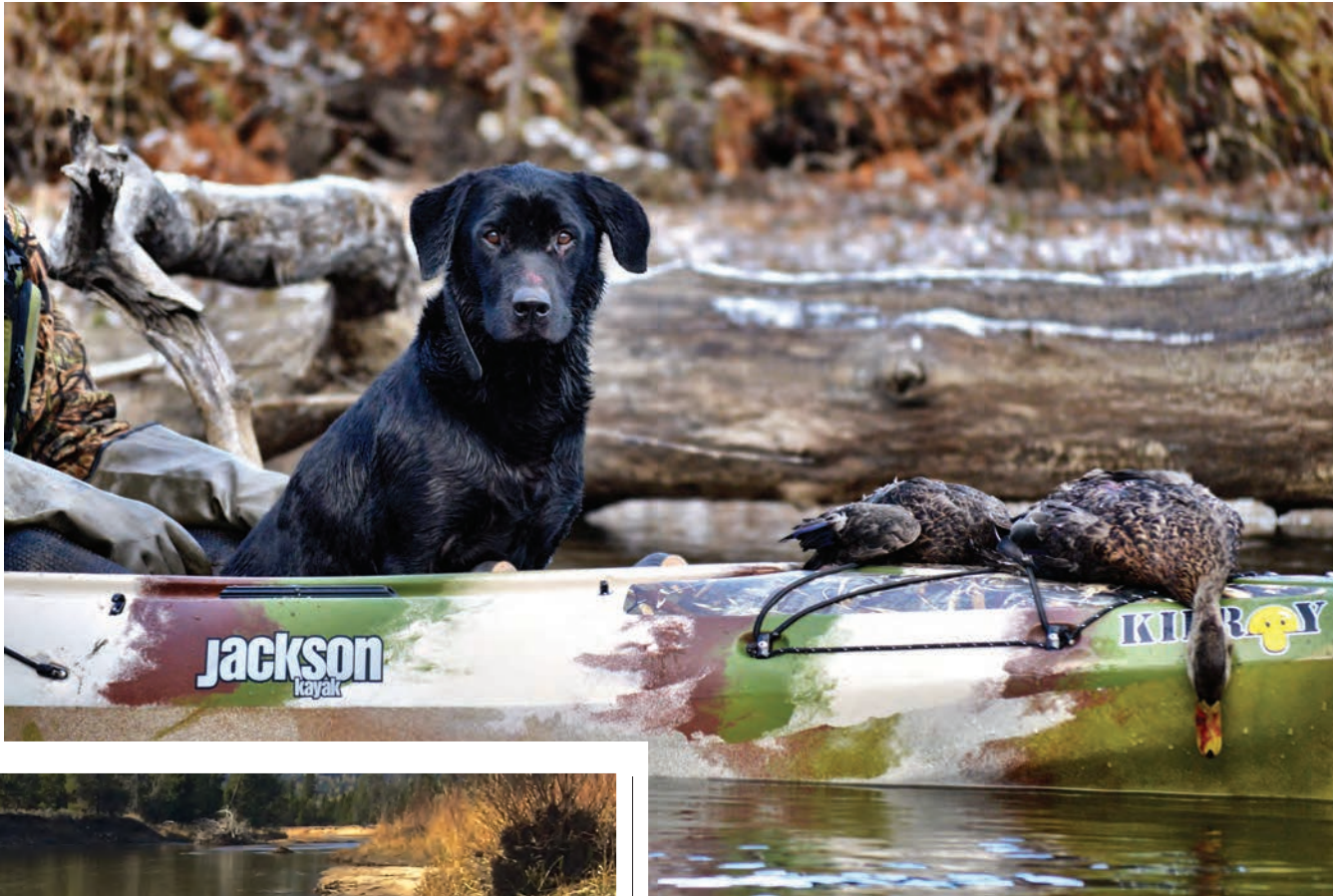
Said Vause: “Any retailer looking to carry kayaks or boats should first determine where they'll be getting their supply from and calculate in shipping costs. They might surprise you.”

Every retailer has to deal with shipping costs. Promnitz of Hobie said he sees some reaching out to others, even competitors, to share shipping costs.

“Many dealers work together and share costs when they can,” said Promnitz. “And it's in their best interest not to undercut another business for a short-term gain. If a customer calls four different stores and they are all around the same price, then the stores will have a good margin.”

→ Not all hunters will want a model specifically built for hunting, but camo options will definitely grab their attention and potentially open a customer's mind to uses for his kayak that he might not have considered.

↓ This Jackson kayak is all set up for hunting.



Models and Colors

Once you have a plan to control shipping costs, then it's time to figure out what make, model, propulsion and colors to order. Most kayak companies are producing kayaks not necessarily for hunting, but for sportsmen's use, and they are letting the accessories companies build items to fit on their rails and modular fittings. That's fine for 99 percent of hunting with a kayak, but it's the companies that are looking specifically at hunting with a kayak that are excelling at making a user-friendly, practical craft for hunting. For example, Bungard and his development team at Jackson realized that the Kilroy had a lot of good storage for duck hunting and big-game hunting. But when strapping a treestand to the bow deck, the convex forward area made it tough to securely strap down. Similarly, when they harvested a buck or doe, the rounded deck made it tough to tie the carcass down for the paddle home. In their next iteration of the model, the deck will be concave.

From Hobie, their Pro Angler makes a good crossover for the big-game hunter. The model has been around for years, but it can now carry 600 pounds of cargo and has large cargo areas.

"You can easily put a deer or a hog in there," said Promnitz. "I have a friend in Florida who just killed her second alligator, and she hauls them back in her kayak."

Modifications like these that evolve over a few models make all the difference to the hard-core sportsman who have to live with the purchase for many seasons.

But will even the best hunting kayak sell? It all depends on what's going on in your region and if you're buying the





← Their relatively light weight makes kayaks easy to transport, and they tend to be easier to use than canoes.

↓ Kayaks offer a key to access out-of-the-way hunting locations, which is why they have taken off in popularity among hunters of waterfowl as well as big and small game.

right model for your area. Of course, any manufacturer you call should be able to tell you what model is doing well in your neck of the woods. For example, along the ocean and Gulf coasts, sit-on-top kayaks are the most popular. Inland, sit-insides do better. Beyond that, you'll need to choose length (longer, narrower kayaks for open water and when sportsman have to paddle long distances), weight (many kayaks now have a wheel built in, which mitigates weight), propulsion (paddles, pedal-drive or electric) and color. Regarding color, generally kayaks that are earth tones or camo sell best in early fall through winter. Bright colors kayaks are best for sales spring through summer, said Ryan Lilly of Johnson Outdoors, owners of Old Town Canoes and Ocean Kayaks.

"For retailers who are tentative about bringing in a full range of canoes or kayaks, I always suggest they choose a couple and firsthand test whether or not their customer base is receptive," said Lilly.

"But will even the best hunting kayak sell? It all depends on what's going on in your region and if you're buying the right model for your area."

Upsells

When it comes to accessories, kayaks are a lot like archery-hunting tackle. Bowhunters don't just buy a bow and go hunting. They also buy arrows, broadheads, a rest and a sight. They get the setup tuned and are much more likely to return several times during season as compared to rifle hunters.

Vause of the Odgen store said that when the new buyers have success with their kayak, like if they harvest an animal or





↑ Accessories are an upsell opportunity to your kayak customers. Offer them some aftermarket motor options and many will take the bait.

maybe enter a kayak bass-fishing series event and do well, then they're hooked: "They upgrade quickly and go from oars to pedal drive to electric drives. It becomes a rabbit hole for them."

Propulsion is a major upgrade opportunity for retailers. Advances in technology have given kayakers the option of pedal drives, like Hobie's MirageDrive, or electric propulsion, like MinnKota's Motor. The larger kayak companies have proprietary motors, but there are many aftermarket motors. Bevy's Jet Drive can be used on any kayak with a rudder.

For the purposes of hunters, a few drives stand out. Hobie's latest pedal-drive, Mirage 180, now has a kick-up feature that will really help you keep moving in shallow water when you hit a submerged log or rock. Sold with the Pro Angler, the package is about \$3,900.

MinnKota Motor is a battery-operated prop that's at the bottom of a drop-in box. It fits only two models of Old Town Predators (XL and MK) right now, but there's hope that future models will all be compatible with this modular motor. Sold with the Predator, the package is about \$3,000.

Other popular options include the Torqeedo Ultralight at less than 20 pounds with batteries and a retail of about \$1,800. One of the latest options, the Bixpy Thruster, is rechargeable and weighs only 9 pounds. It's about \$1,100 and includes the power pack.

Dollars and Sense

Paddlesports popularity is soaring, and it's expected to continue to rise. Perhaps more people are seeking out their own adventures so they can post cool backwater photos on Instagram. Others are bringing home meat to put on the family dinner table. Whatever the reason, customers have more kayak and accessory options than ever before. With research into your local market, the larger margins could make a lot of dollars and sense. **HR**





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2020 SHOW
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE / MARCH 9-10

2020 HUNTING RETAILER SHOW EDUCATION LINEUP

MONDAY, MARCH 9TH

8:00AM - 9:00AM

**TOPIC: MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUR
FEMALE CUSTOMERS**

SPEAKER: WHITNEY JOHNSON

9:30AM - 10:30AM

**TOPIC: TRADEMARK LAW AND ISSUES FOR
HUNTING RETAILERS**

SPEAKER: GARY LAMBERT

11:00AM - 12:00PM

**TOPIC: BUILD, MANAGE AND ENGAGE YOUR
CUSTOMERS DATABASE TO DRIVE
MEASURABLE SALES**

SPEAKER: TIM GLOMB

1:30PM - 2:30PM

**TOPIC: MIGRATING TO AN INTEGRATED POINT
OF SALE (POS), EBOUND, ENICS
AND E4473 SYSTEM**

SPEAKER: JON RYDBERG

TUESDAY, MARCH 10TH

8:00AM - 9:00AM

**TOPIC: BEAT SOCIAL MEDIA ALGORITHMS
BY BUILDING A TRIBE**

SPEAKER: COLLIN COTTRELL

9:30AM - 10:30AM

TOPIC: OPERATION SECURE STORE

SPEAKER: WILLIAM NAPIER

11:00AM - 12:00PM

**TOPIC: MARKETING AND SALES STRATEGIES
TO MAXIMIZE EXHIBITING AT
CONSUMER SHOWS**

SPEAKER: CHRIS O'HARA

1:30PM - 2:30PM

**TOPIC: THE RISE OF WORLD CLASS
MANUFACTURING IN THE FIREARMS
AND MUNITIONS INDUSTRY**

SPEAKER: NATHAN DUDNEY

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FEATURED EXHIBITORS

[AS OF JANUARY 30, 2020]

AIR VENTURI

ALASKA GUIDE CREATIONS

ALPINE INNOVATIONS, LLC

AMERICAN TECHNOLOGIES NETWORK (ATN)

BUCKNBEAR KNIVES

CAMO FACE PAINT

CAPCO SPORTSWEAR

CELERANT TECHNOLOGY CORP

COREWARE, LLC

DAVIDSONS INC.

EO TECH INC.

ESTWING MANUFACTURING CO.

FORT SCOTT MUNITIONS

GRAND VIEW OUTDOORS

HUNTER'S BLEND COFFEE

JTS GROUP / XISICO USA INC.

KENETREK BOOTS

KLYMIT

KOLPIN OUTDOORS, INC.

L&Q TACTICAL

MCMILLAN GROUP INTERNATIONAL

MOUNTAIN LAKES INC.

MTR CUSTOM LEATHER

OSPREY GLOBAL, LLC

POCKET SHOT, LLC

RUGID

SEAL I, LLC

SELLMARK CORPORATION

SHEFFIELD KNIVES

SPORTEAR BY AXIL

SPORTS SOUTH, LLC

SPOT-HOGG ARCHERY PRODUCTS

T-BIRD ARCHERY

TIMBER CREEK OUTDOORS

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The Specific Needs of Bear Hunters

A growing number of hunters are targeting the growing numbers of black bears. Make sure you have what they need.

BY BERNIE BARRINGER

It's no secret to anyone reading this that the whitetail deer is the number one big game animal in North America, but it might come as a surprise to you that the second-place big game animal is the black bear. Particularly among archery enthusiasts, when a hunter looks around for a second big game animal to target, the black bear pulls them in more than any other species; more than elk, more than antelope, more than

mule deer.

That's good news for hunting retailers in the know, because bear hunters have specific needs. But there's more good news: The black bear is expanding its numbers and range across the U.S.; bears are being seen in what were once marginal areas, and several states are increasing the numbers of tags in these areas. Take Minnesota, for example. The state's traditional

↑ Spot-and-stalk bear hunters need good glass. Spotting scopes, rifle scopes, binoculars and rangefinder sales provide opportunity for retailers.



PRO STAFF

Bernie Barringer has hunted black bears all across North America using every legal method. He provides bear hunting content to several magazines and websites, plus has produced the book, *Bear Baiter's Manual* and the DVD, *How to Bait Big Bears*. His YouTube channel *Bowhunting Road* is loaded with bear hunting content. He can be reached through his website bernieoutdoors.com.



← Baiting is the most common method of bear hunting, but be sure you know the local laws. It is not legal everywhere, and in places where baiting is illegal, you should know if attractants and scents are considered bait or not before you stock them.

↓ Understanding the needs and quirks of bear hunters who use bait can go a long way toward building solid, long-lasting and profitable relationships.

“Bear hunters tend to prefer camouflage with some green in it rather than the drab browns of fall deer hunters.”

bear habitat areas are divided up into 15 bear management units where it can take from two to six years of accumulating preference points to draw a tag — but the area outside the primary bear’s range is “no quota,” which means tags are available over the counter. The number of bears harvested in the no-quota zone has been steadily growing.

Five states have added bear hunting seasons in the past 10 years. Baiting is the most common method state game departments use to reach harvest objectives, but there are four primary methods used, of which baiting is only one. Two others are spot-and-stalk hunting, which is prevalent in the open areas of the West, and hound hunting, which is popular in the states where it is legal. Finally, hunters in the eastern U.S. (where bears inhabit mixed farm country) use drives and hunting over natural food sources to collect their bears —





← Is hunting with hounds legal in your state? Hound hunters are fiercely loyal to the retailers who understand their specific needs.

→ Bear baiters go through a lot of attractant sprays, which have good margins and are easy sellers.



← You likely already stock scent control for deer hunters. Bear hunters will wear it while checking and refilling bait as well as when hunting.



endeavors which have very low success rates, which leads to abundant black bear tags.

There are 16 states in which baiting is legal, and contrary to the beliefs of people who don't know much about it, bringing mature bears to a bait during legal shooting hours can be a difficult task. Success rates on baited bears runs around 30 percent in most states. Bear baiters are hungry for information, especially those who have waited multiple years for a license to kill one. They want to get their bear, and they'll gobble up any information that can increase their odds, so if you are going to get serious about meeting their needs, you need someone on staff with experience.

“Retailers should familiarize themselves with the ballistics bear hunters prefer.”

I've encountered many people, even hunters, who scoff at baiting bears because they don't know the intricacies and difficulties in harvesting bears in environments where no other method can create enough of the necessary opportunities hunters need to keep predator populations in check. Any shop owner who says a negative word about it will turn hunters against them in a hurry and stamp themselves with the label of ignorance.

Bear hunting over bait or natural food sources means long hours on stand. While most deer hunters might sit in a tree for a couple hours after work, normal sits for bear hunters can be six to eight hours. Most bear hunting takes place in May, June, August and September when the daylight hours are long. Comfortable treestands, such as those with mesh seats that allow a hunter to lounge comfortably without fidgeting, will attract the most buyers.

On both spring and fall hunts, thick green cover surrounds the hunters, so bear hunters tend to prefer camouflage with some green in it rather than the browns of fall deer hunters.

Lightweight camo clothing that can be layered meets this need. A lightweight, stuffable rain coat is another item the bruin enthusiast will be looking for.

Bear baiting is tailor-made for bowhunters. It features close shots at an apex predator, so it's adrenaline-packed in addition to being labor intensive. Being a predator, black bears do not react the same way a deer does when shot. He won't run full-out until he falls over — he's much more likely to head for thick brush and lie down. Thick fur and a layer of fat can make blood trails difficult. A low exit wound is paramount in recovering an arrowed bear; deer hunters may rave about a big entrance wound, but savvy bear hunters know that two small holes is much preferred over one big hole. This is an important aspect of choosing arrows and broadheads.

Some hunters choose an attempt to drop the bear in its tracks. This can often be accomplished with a shotgun loaded with slugs or a rifle. A high-shoulder shot with a firearm that packs a heavy punch is preferred. Retailers should familiarize themselves with the ballistics bear hunters prefer. Many close shots at bears are taken by hunters firing a 12- or 20-gauge shotgun topped with a 2X or 4X scope. Whether the bear hunter is carrying a rifle or a shotgun, scopes that gather a lot



Things Every Hunter Should Leave Your Shop With

Spot-and-Stalk Hunters

Archery or firearm, every hunter needs a rangefinder. The often-steep terrain calls for a unit with an angle compensator. The Vortex Ranger 1300 fits the need perfectly. Its reflective range is 1,300 yards, but on an animal the size of a bear, about 600 yards is realistic. It features 6X magnification and compensation of up to 60 degrees. Quality glass for about \$400.



Bait Hunters

Northwoods Bear Products are proven attractors that make the bait site smell delicious. More than a dozen different choices in sprays and powders are available, from blueberry and cherry to beaver castor, bacon and anise. You get the idea. Their product Gold Rush is the top seller; it's a highly concentrated scent that's added to used fryer oil. It makes the entire area smell like Werther's candy. Not kidding.

Just one ounce of this potent stuff spikes



5 gallons of fryer oil. It's \$26 for an 8-ounce bottle, which juices up to 40 gallons of oil.

Hound Hunters

Technology has come to bear hunting in a big way with the advent of GPS dog tracking. Garmin is the leader with the Alpha 100. Put a collar on your dog and watch him on the colored screen as he travels over hill and dale on the topography maps. It even shows when the dogs have treed. This unit is a significant investment at \$800 for the handheld and one collar, but the unit can track up to 20 dogs/collars at once. It tracks them up to 9 miles away and updates every 2.5 seconds. Every serious hound hunter knows the value of his dogs and the value in keeping them safe in addition to finding them when they have a bear bayed.



Every Bear Hunter

All bear hunters need trail cameras. For baiters, the applications are obvious; they'll know what bears are visiting the baits and at what time. Baiters know to strike when the opportunity to shoot a bear during daylight presents itself. Hunters can choose when to make their moves at the most opportune moments. Same goes for those hunting over natural food sources. Hound hunters often start their dogs on baits, or use cameras to locate bears and turn their dogs loose at the location.

Spot-and-stalk hunters can use cameras on logging cuts and bear feeding areas such as crop fields or berry patches. Everyone needs scouting cameras. The Covert Black Maverick is a top value in a camera that takes quality 1080p video and up to 20 megapixel photos with invisible "black flash" for \$160. Then sell them a steel "bear safe" to protect the cameras from the teeth of curious bears.



© Tess Rousey

of light are best for those big males that tend to materialize at a bait site during the last moments of legal shooting light.

I hunted with an outfitter in Manitoba who recommended that his hunters carry a .270 and shoot the bears in the head. This is not the norm, but he simply didn't like to trail bears in the dark. A surprising number of his hunters did as he asked.

Spot-and-stalk hunters in the mountainous West and on the coastal plains of the Carolinas need a flat-shooting rifle that delivers knockdown power when it arrives at the bear. Shots averaged 300 yards, sometimes farther. Hunters tend to opt for the larger 7mm to .30 caliber cartridges, such as 7mm magnums, .30-06, or .300 magnums. Rifles should be topped with high-power variable scopes, like 3-18X, 4.5-14X, or 6.5-20X. Boattail bullets from 160 to 190 grains are perfect for this type of bear hunting.

This type of hunting is characterized by putting on the miles, so boots and clothing for long walks are an opportunity for sales, as are spotting scopes, binoculars and rangefinders.

Some archers love the challenge of spot-and-stalk hunting as well. This type of hunting is a low-percentage deal, but it's so rewarding when a bowhunter can pull it off. I've killed a lot of bears over bait, a couple over hounds and one on a spot-and-stalk hunt in British Columbia in which I finally arrowed the 43rd bear I saw during the trip.

Hound hunters are their own breed; they are, first of all, dog lovers, and they tend to value the chase above the kill. Carrying the things they need takes a significant commitment and investment in addition to a detailed understanding of how they carry out their hunts. If you're going to cater to hound hunters, you'd better go on some hound hunts to see how it's done so you can speak the language and understand their specific needs. I've been on successful hound hunts in Idaho and

↑ Consider local hunting methods when recommending guns and ammo to bear hunters. Slug guns and bows are popular with bait hunters, and so are the larger, flat-shooting center-fire cartridges that spot-and-stalk hunters will be looking for.



→ The author Bernie Barringer with a couple of the bears he has shot; bear hunting is a growing sport, and savvy retailers will get out in front of the trend.



“Things like clothing and boots are important, but none of them should ever leave the store without a ThermaCELL and a can of bear spray.”

Maine, and the two hunts could have hardly been more different. Footwear is a prime example: Climbing hills in Idaho is much different than chasing dogs through swampy lowlands in Maine.

Large numbers of hunters leave their home to travel to Canada to bear hunt each year. They’re paying from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for a bear hunt, which is a significant commitment for most for them, and the hunt is a significant event rather than an annual trek for most. When they walk in the store, they understand the need to have the right gear. Things like clothing and boots are important, but none of them should ever leave the store without a ThermaCELL and a can of bear spray (it’s

illegal to carry a sidearm in Canada).

Bear populations are growing across the U.S., and the number of hunters is growing as well. Bear hunters in some units of Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota are applying for up to 10 years between tags. As popularity grows, state game departments will need to adjust. All three of these states have added hunting zones in the past few years, and they’re carefully watching the expansion of the black bear’s range. Hunting retailers who have their finger on the pulse of bear hunting will be in position to capitalize on this growth. **HR**





Photos courtesy of the NSSF

SHOT Show 2020: What You Missed

SHOT Show 2020 was a smashing success, and according to the NSSF, the venue will be that much more impressive in 2021. Here's a peek at what you missed if you didn't make it to Vegas.

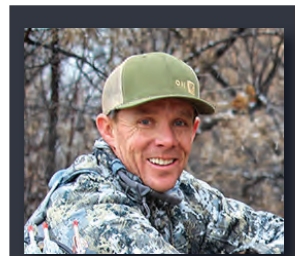
BY JACE BAUSERMAN

The spacious Sands Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada, was once again the site of the nation's largest trade show for the outdoor industry. From January 21-24, exhibitors, buyers and media prowled the show's multiple floors in search of all things new and exciting in the worlds of shooting, hunting, outdoor accessories and military/law enforcement equipment.

According to Chris Dolnack, NSSF Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, the 2020 SHOT Show was an overwhelming success.

"Over the show's four days, a total of 55,149 buyers, exhibitors and media walked through the doors," Dolnack said. "Overall, our attendance was slightly down, but that was to be expected. We do our due diligence, and research showed

↑ In typical SHOT Show fashion, the aisles were full, and the crowds were excited.



PRO STAFF

Jace Bauserman is a former magazine editor and well-known freelance writer in the outdoor space. Bauserman lives in Colorado with his wife, Amy, and their three children, Hunter, Abbey and Brody. To date, Bauserman has hunted 16 different states along with a pair of Canadian provinces.

that most retail accounts that typically brought four people, brought three. Those that usually brought two, brought one. We are also continuing with our audit program. Each year we select 20 percent of attendees and conduct a basic audit. We find some people really have no business being at the show, and we simply deny attendance the following year. Exhibitors, for the past two years, have noted the quality of attendance has gone way up. That's something we love to hear."

From the time I've spent with Dolnack in person and on the phone, I can testify to the fact that he is a glass-half-full guy, and his positive attitude is contagious.

"I saw lots of optimism at the show this year," he continued. "Our country is experiencing a 50-year high when it comes to employment, and consumer confidence is up. There is also a lot of optimism about the upcoming election. Range Day was great, and we are also very excited about the NSSF +1 Mentorship Initiative. We continue to drive forward; constantly looking for ways to help the show grow."

Range Day

The day before the official opening of SHOT Show is like Christmas for many. Why? Simple. Industry Day at the

"For 2021, along with the Sands, we will be expanding into the Forum at Caesars."

— Chris Dolnack, NSSF

Range is the largest one-day shooting event in the hunting and shooting industry. If you're eligible and you've never attended Range Day, you're missing out, and it needs to get added to your must-do-in-2021 list.

This year marked 15 years of Range Day success, and more than 1,800 media members and buyers gathered at the Boulder Rifle and Pistol Club to test the latest and greatest gun manufacturers have to offer. It's truly a sight to behold.

"It's great for us, the manufacturer," said Browning's Rafe Nielson. "Buyers as well as media personnel get a chance to actually shoot our firearms. Yes, we can do a lot of talking on the show floor, but the performance of our firearms speak for themselves, and we love seeing people get on the bench and give our new models a run."

↓ Attendance was down slightly, but attendees could barely tell, as crowds were still elbow-to-elbow.





↑ As usual, celebrity sightings caused backups in the aisles. This year, Chuck Norris and Lou Ferrigno could be seen on the show floor.

HAVA/NSSF 6th Annual Golf Tournament

The pre-Show HAVA/NSSF Golf Tournament, according to Dolnack, has raised over \$350,000 during its six-year time-frame. The goal of the tournament is to support disabled veterans as they progress through the healing process and ease into civilian life by way of guided hunts, target shooting events and more.

This year, the event was held on January 19 at the Bear's Best in Las Vegas, and 146 professionals from the industry tested their skills on this designed-by-Jack-Nicklaus course. Awards were presented to both team and individual winners.

NSSF Launches +1 Mentorship Initiative

A massive study conducted by the NSSF showed that millions of people want to know more about hunting and target shooting. The +1 Mentorship Initiative is all about these people. Many simply lack the basic knowledge of the hunting and shooting pastimes, and that's something the NSSF wants to remedy. The initiative is supported by NSSF's recently launched *LetsGoShooting.org* and *LetsGoHunting.org* websites, where anyone seeking information about hunting and shooting, with only a few simple mouse clicks, can be exposed to articles and videos from subject-matter experts. In addition, the NSSF is working with mentors to help get new hunters/shooters out in the woods and on the range.

Retail Seminars and SHOT University

The NSSF devotes piles of man hours in an effort to better serve the industry. Each year, inquiries and feedback from



the SHOT masses are analyzed to provide show goers with a number of new informative retail seminars. The seminars run throughout the first three days of the show at various times, making planning your busy day all the easier.

SHOT University, always a well-attended event, is a one-day conference that provides an in-depth review of the many challenges retail business and range operations face. Lessons are put on during the conference from respected industry leaders, and many who've attended SHOT University leave with a plethora of new ideas to help them overcome challenges and grow their bottom line. Enrollment fees for NSSF members are \$265. Non-members pay \$525.

SHOT Show NEXT

I walked past the NEXT Pavilion, located just outside the Press Room and Member's Lounge on level three, a number of times and was very impressed. Often, it was difficult to weave through the masses just to gain entrance to the Press Room. Here, attendees can discover new manufacturers and suppliers who've made their first trip to the SHOT Show. With more than 100 first-time exhibitors, this area is a must-visit for those looking to find innovative, sales-generating products that you'll likely want on your shelves.

So Much Intel

The size of SHOT Show and the number of people that attend can be very intimidating. Each year, I find myself giving directions or walking a new-to-the-show attendee to a booth. The biggest tip I can give, and Dolnack agrees, is to visit



↑ The New Product Center earned lots of attention. Cases filled with numerous new-for-2020 products grabbed the attention of show goers.

→ The SHOT Show NEXT Pavilion was located on the third floor near the Membership Lounge and Press Room. It was abuzz with traffic.

www.shotshow.org months before the show begins and start planning.

“Our site is very informative,” said Dolnack. “We have specific tabs set for attendees, exhibitors, media and the like. We have tabs about education and travel as well. Use these resources to better plan your 2021 event. A must-do is to download the SHOT Mobile app on your smart device. This little app allows you to bookmark exhibitors and find the quickest routes to their booths. In addition, you can get up-to-the-minute information and personalize your schedules. It’s really a handy tool, and if you take the time to play with it and familiarize yourself with it, the app will prevent wasted time.”

2021 Announcement

The goal of the NSSF is to grow the industry. Period. Innovative minds within the group are constantly looking for ways to do so, and Dolnack provided a big announcement that points to major expansion.

“The event will still be at the Sands,” Dolnack noted. “The Sands has been so good to us, and with 670,000 square feet of space, it’s a venue we are very thankful to have. However, for 2021, along with the Sands, we will be expanding into the Forum at Caesars. This is going to give us an additional 150,000 square feet of space, and we already have a couple of exhibitors — Ruger and LWRCI — that plan to place their 2021 boots in the Forum. Exhibitors seem excited about the plan. This will free up some space and give them more room to expand their booths. It’s going to be great — not to mention the fact that this will help us with our waitlist. Currently, we have 1,000 exhibitors on our waitlist. We want to see them exhibiting at SHOT, and this added venue will help greatly with that.”

If SHOT Show 2021 isn’t on your radar, it should be. The event is simply magical and an experience you will never forget. Dates for the 2021 Show (Jan. 19-22) have already been set. Don’t wait. Make your plans now. **HR**

“I saw lots of optimism at the show this year...”

— Chris Dolnack, NSSF





Turkey Guns and Ammo

Turkey guns are tricked-out specialty rigs these days, with loads of hunter-friendly options for customization. Here's what you should consider when stocking the shelves.

BY BRIAN LOVETT

Years ago, before the nationwide spring gobbler boom took hold, the idea of a turkey shotgun was straightforward. Typically, it was a worn 12-gauge pump that doubled as a duck, pheasant, small-game and, with Foster-style slugs, deer gun.

That concept has faded. Nowadays, gobbler hunters insist on using turkey-specific shotguns designed and ac-

cessorized solely for the spring game. Manufacturers and retailers have responded, offering uncountable models intended for one function: to put beards and spurs on the wall and turkey breasts in the fryer.

Cynical observers contend that multi-purpose shotguns performed admirably for turkey hunting, and that worn pump would work just as well today as it did when your

↑ Most turkey guns are purpose-built gobbler getters – fewer hunters are still following the one-shotgun-for-everything plan.



PRO STAFF

Brian Lovett has written about turkeys and turkey hunting for 27 years. He's chased gobblers in 20 states, taking several Grand Slams and a Royal Slam. He hails from Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

granddad shot his first longbeard. But let's admit that several tweaks can turn that all-around gun into a more refined and effective gobbler slayer. Here's a look at some firearm features and accessories modern turkey hunters demand.

Aftermarket Chokes

With the advent of heavy-payload turkey-specific loads (see the sidebar), hunters want high-performance choke tubes

that produce optimum patterning performance. That makes sense, as turkey nuts obsess about putting the maximum number of pellets in a 10-inch circle or a turkey's head and neck at previously unheard-of ranges. Hunters who want to turn multi-purpose shotguns into high-functioning turkey slayers can usually do so just by upgrading a gun's choke.

Many factory tubes produce good patterns, but CNC-machined aftermarket models typically perform better. Popular



→ From chokes to optics to slings and more, turkey guns are ripe for upgrading and accessorizing.



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↑ Nearly all turkey hunters will want a sighting system on their gun – fiber-optic beads are a minimum, but red dots and other electronic sights are increasingly popular.

“Turkey nuts obsess about putting the maximum number of pellets in a 10-inch circle or a turkey’s head and neck at previously unheard-of ranges.”

designs typically have extremely tight constrictions, such as .655 for lead shot in 12-gauges or somewhat looser models (say .675) for heavier-than-lead 12-gauge loads. Ultra-tight aftermarket chokes, combined with many heavier-than-lead shotshell offerings, have also spawned new interest in

shooting sub-gauges — even .410s — for turkeys.

The tight-choke trend has created a Catch-22 in tube selection. Often, customers assume any tight choke will mesh perfectly with their gun and load. That’s not always true. A choke that’s too tight for a gun and ammo can produce inconsistent patterns with many holes and flyers. One that’s too loose won’t optimize patterns.

Finding the right choke depends on many factors, including ammunition, a gun’s bore (some 12-gauges have larger bores, such as .745, instead of the standard .729 constriction, for example) and the intangibles involved in matching a specific gun, ammunition and choke into a pattern-crushing team. Unfortunately for consumers, the only way to

discover the best combination is to test several chokes and loads with a gun. Generally, tighter chokes work best with smaller shot, such as No. 6 lead, and looser models perform better with larger shot, such as No. 4s. Heavier-than-lead shot often calls for somewhat looser constrictions.

Hunters also wonder whether they should buy ported or non-ported tubes. Ported tubes reduce muzzle jump and separate the wad from the shot faster, often improving patterns. Still, the only true determinant is how a choke performs with a specific gun and load. Customers should experiment with ported and non-ported tubes to see what best fits their setup.

“Ultimately, hunting style and a hunter’s love of gadgetry determine how many accessories they demand on a turkey gun.”

Sights

Firing ultra-tight patterns from a scattergun is more like shooting a rifle than a standard shotgun. Centering the payload on a gobbler’s vitals demands precision, which often requires a sight. Initially, turkey hunters outfitted guns with scopes or iron-type sights. Today, most prefer red-dots or other electronic aids.

These can run the gamut, from relatively inexpensive dot-style models to high-performance devices that can break the bank. The bottom line is that any electronic sight must be reliable and durable. It should mount firmly to the gun — using a rail is often wise — so it doesn’t get knocked off center when dragged through brush or mud. A hood or similar shield helps protect the sight from rain and grime.

Further, an electronic sight should have long battery life. Adjustable brightness and dot size also prove handy. You don’t need a red-dot glowing at full power in the dim early morning light. Conversely, you’re at a disadvantage with a dull, small aim point during bright sunlight.

Above all, a hunter must be comfortable shooting with a specific sight. As with chokes, they can only establish that by checking out several models and identifying one they like.

Sling

Turkey hunters realized early that a sling makes long days afield easier. Toting a shotgun by hand across hardwood ridges or endless mesquite flats can wear you out.

Many sling styles work. Simple models that wrap around a gun’s barrel and grip can temporarily turn a multi-purpose gun into a comfortable spring setup. Many dedicated turkey shotguns feature sling swivels attachments for permanent attachment.

Sling preference is personal, but many turkey guys like padded models that lesson perceived weight on your shoulder. Also, slings that grip your shoulder well and won’t slip make for easier and safer gun transportation. And of course,

What’s Hot in Turkey Ammo

Once known only to a few reloading geeks, Tungsten Super Shot now dominates the turkey ammo scene.

It’s easy to see why. With a density of 18 grams per cubic centimeter, TSS is almost twice as dense as lead (11 grams per cubic

centimeter) and also tops other tungsten-based nontoxics. The super-heavy pellets let shell-makers create pellet-packed loads of tiny shot that produce the same energy as much larger shot but considerably boost pattern density. For example, No. 9 TSS shot carries about the same downrange energy and penetration as No. 4 lead shot fired at the same muzzle velocity. However, because the 9s are much smaller than 5s, the TSS load will have a far higher pellet count than the lead shell. One ounce of TSS has about 360 pellets, compared to about 135 pellets in 1 ounce of No. 4 lead. A 2-ounce 12-gauge load of No. 9 TSS holds about 450 more pellets than a 2-ounce load of lead No. 4s.

Further, because of the performance even relatively small loads of the shot provide, TSS has prompted new interest in sub-gauge turkey hunting, with many folks using 28-gauge and even .410-bore guns.

Manufacturers have taken notice. Federal offers several 12-gauge, 20-gauge and .410 TSS turkey loads, including some with blended loads that combine Nos. 7 and 9 or 8 and 10 TSS shot. Likewise, Browning has several 12- and 20-gauge TSS loads of Nos. 7 and 9 shot, plus .410 bore in No. 9 shot. Remington offers Premier TSS shotshells in 12-gauge, 20-gauge and .410, and Apex Ammunition produces several TSS loads in many gauges.



many folks want camouflaged slings that match their shotguns or apparel.

Camo or Dull Finish

With apologies to the many great modern camo patterns, turkey guns really don’t need a custom camouflage finish. At a minimum, parkerized or black-matte-finished models reduce glare and perform well afield. However, many turkey nuts want guns with baked-on camo finishes that match hunting clothing or make a fashion statement. Manufacturers offer many such models, and all modern patterns look great. Customers should at least choose camouflage guns that best match their hunting backgrounds — dark, muted tones for timber, or lighter grass- or leaf-highlighted patterns for open spaces.

Short Barrels

Years ago, someone determined that shorter shotgun barrels let hunters move through the woods easier and adjust their guns more seamlessly without catching on undergrowth or bumping against trees. Such barrels also reduce weight





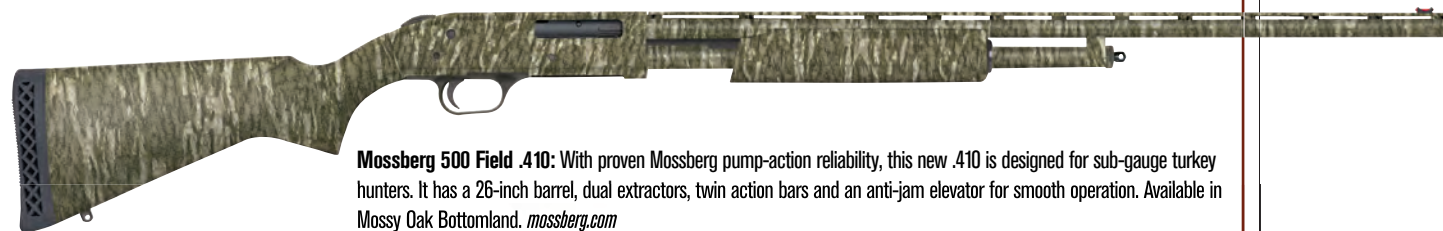
Five Must-Stock Turkey Guns



Benelli Performance Shop M2 Turkey: This 20-gauge has a lengthened forcing cone, enlarged bolt handle and custom bolt-release lever for easy operation. It's fitted with a ComforTech buttstock, with AirTouch checkering on the buttstock and forend for a sure grip. Plus, it features Benelli's Inertia Driven operating system. benelli.com



Browning BPS NWTF: This 12-gauge combines BPS reliability with durable Hi-Vis 4-in-1 sights and three Invector-Plus choke tubes. Sporting a 24-inch barrel, the shotgun comes in Mossy Oak Break-Up Country with an NWTF buttstock decal. browning.com



Mossberg 500 Field .410: With proven Mossberg pump-action reliability, this new .410 is designed for sub-gauge turkey hunters. It has a 26-inch barrel, dual extractors, twin action bars and an anti-jam elevator for smooth operation. Available in Mossy Oak Bottomland. mossberg.com



Remington V3 Turkey Pro: Featuring Remington's Versa Port gas system, this shotgun combines reliability with soft recoil into a sleek platform. It comes with a Truglo Headbanger choke tube and a 40-yard factory-bore-sighted Truglo optic and is adorned in Realtree Timber. Remington.com



Weatherby SA-459 Turkey Xtra Green: The 459's 22-inch barrel and rubberized pistol grip let turkey hunters get on target quickly. A green fiber-optic bead provides steady aim, and an extra-full fluted choke tube delivers tight, consistent patterns. The gun also features a dual valve gas system and chrome-lined bore. Weatherby.com



↑ Ammo selection is a huge deal to turkey hunters. There's no cheap and easy way to find out what a particular gun/choke combo likes – hunters will have to shoot a variety to find their gun's favorite load. Be sure to remind customers of this so they aren't surprised if the first box of ammo doesn't pattern well out of the gun you just sold them.

“Nowadays, gobbler hunters insist on using turkey-specific shotguns designed and accessorized solely for the spring game. Manufacturers and retailers have responded, offering uncountable models intended for one function: To put beards and spurs on the wall and turkey breasts in the fryer.”

somewhat for folks who love to run and gun.

Turkey-gun barrel length boils down to comfort. Many hunters prefer common 24-inch turkey-specific barrels. Some go shorter, and others are content with 26-inch mod-

els. The only shooting consideration involves how a barrel performs with a shotgun, choke and load, and again, experimentation determines that.

Recoil Reduction

Light turkey guns and heavy loads demand recoil-reducing features. Often, hunters are comfortable with stout recoil pads, including slip-on models for all-around guns. Other folks prefer more expensive higher-tech recoil-softening designs available from some manufacturers. The choice depends on your chosen load and recoil tolerance.

The Best Turkey Gun

Ultimately, hunting style and a hunter's love of gadgetry determine how many accessories they demand on a turkey gun. However, the features mentioned here can turn almost any shotgun into a high-performance turkey-styled model. Having multiple options available can help customers make informed choices and let you become a turkey hunter's No. 1 retail option. **HR**





Should You Offer e-Bikes In Your Store?

Capitalize on the profits of a trending transportation medium.

BY DARRON MCDUGAL



PRO STAFF - Darron McDougal has been part of the hunting industry for 17 years, first as a salesman and bow technician at a family-owned archery pro shop, then as an outdoor and trade writer/editor. McDougal is a passionate DIY hunter and travels extensively each year to hunt turkeys, hogs and big game across the states.

The age-old method of reaching hunting locations is to put one foot in front of the other. Although it's arguably the surest way to access your hunting area quietly, it can also present a few dilemmas. First, walking can be time-consuming, which could make you late to the show in some instances. Secondly, you can't always dress appropriately for the weather until you reach your stand or blind. If you do, you risk sweating and causing odor that could reverse your scent-eliminating efforts. Still, walking is undeniably a tried-and-true way to access your hunting areas.

However, there is a better mouse trap that's creating tons of buzz in the hunting world. Electric bikes (aka e-bikes) are trending now and causing many hunters to rethink their approaches. E-bikes employ large lithium-ion batteries that power them for numerous miles between charging. Models tailored for hunting also feature fat tires ideal for off-road travel.

To that end, let's discuss several reasons why e-bikes are becoming increasingly popular

among the hunting community. We'll also discuss why selling them in your store makes solid business sense along with some factors to consider as you attempt to sell them to your customers.

Little Noise, No Fumes

Gas-fueled ATVs and UTVs have long served as fast alternatives to walking. However, the cons usually outweigh the pros.

First, gas-fueled engines produce noise that game can hear from great distances — no sneaking within 100 yards of a gobbling turkey or unsuspecting



→ QuietKat offers a trailer for its e-bikes, making hauling game out of the woods a simpler ordeal.

← Unlike ATVs, e-bikes give off no fumes and make very little game-spooking noise, allowing hunters to get much closer to their stand or to a bedded animal than a gas-powered vehicle would.



bedded mule deer. Second, they emit lots of exhaust that can quickly contaminate a hunting area and the rider's apparel. Third, there are usually restrictions with using them on public lands, and in many cases, they're illegal to drive beyond the gated parking area.

Of course, e-bikes like the QuietKat RidgeRunner (see sidebar) solve most of these dilemmas. Powered by lithium batteries, e-bikes operate very quietly. The only noises you'll hear are the tires rolling through leaves or over small rocks — comparable to walking, but with more get-up-and-go. Further, e-bikes have no emissions. That means your hunting area and apparel won't become contaminated with odors. Knowing that, with a little wind for coverage, I wouldn't hesitate to drive my QuietKat Predator 750 to within 100 yards or less of a bedded mule deer or antelope (out of sight, of course), then finishing my stalk on foot.

Save Some Sweat

While hard work is a notable trait that most accomplished hunters share, there's merit to working smarter rather than harder in select instances. An e-bike can get you from point A to point B very quickly. Not only will you save time, but you'll save some sweat, too. Let's expand on that thought.

When hunting during cold conditions, you must dress appropriately in order to maximize your time on stand. However, this presents an irrefutable dilemma for the walker. If you dress in all of your cold-weather apparel and then walk to your stand a mile away, you'll sweat. This produces more odor, and the sweat can soak into your layers. Then, shortly after climbing into your stand, you'll start getting shivery and risk cutting your hunt short.

On the other hand, wearing only your base layers to access your stand can be equally troublesome when walking. Not only is it possible you'll get cold while accessing your stand, but you'll deal with the added cumber and ruckus of packing your warm clothing — along with other gear such as a backpack, rattling antlers and bow, crossbow or firearm — through the field or timber. Then, when you reach your stationary ambush, you must finish dressing, which is difficult to do in the dark. Plus, the more time you spend at the base of your tree (if you're treestand hunting), the more scent and commotion you'll disperse.

An e-bike crushes these worries. Since peddling isn't required (more on that later), operating an e-bike requires little physical involvement. So, simply dress as you must in order to stay warm in the elements and let the e-bike get you to your hunting location with virtually no effort. It simplifies everything and saves so much time and sweat.

“We can't ignore the downside: \$2,000 to \$5,000 is a lot to spend for transportation to and from a hunting area.”

Choose Your Pace

Certain situations call for certain travel speeds. For example, you'll want to approach a stand hung in a food plot bordering a bedding area gingerly. In contrast, cutting off an antelope





↑ Whether you're in charge of buying merchandise for a large retailer or you own a small hunting-supply store, chances are that offering e-bikes is a good move that will help you provide more solutions for your customers and capitalize on profits, too.

“Check with your insurance provider first, and if all is clear, offer a test drive of the e-bike in your parking lot.”

heading briskly for a prairie saddle requires speed and vigor. In other words, get there now or miss your shot opportunity.

In either circumstance — not to mention everything in between — an e-bike is the perfect transportation medium since you can choose your pace. My e-bike, for example, can carry

my 190-pound frame from just a couple of miles per hour all the way up to nearly 30 mph. What's more, traveling at the higher rate of speed obviously does nothing to my heart rate. If I were to charge full steam ahead on foot to cut off an antelope, my heart rate would go through the roof, impeding my ability to execute a quality shot once I get positioned. Understand?

My QuietKat Predator 750 has five different speed modes, each increasing the e-bike's speed rate when pegging the accelerator. However, it can also be used as a conventional peddle bike or even as a hybrid (using peddling to assist the battery power). Considering those points, let me also mention that the Predator 750 can cruise for 20 miles (more or less, depending upon load and terrain severity) on a single charge. That impresses me.



Capitalize on Accessory Sales

When you offer and sell e-bikes, each sale comes with the possibility that the customer will want to accessorize their new ride. As an example, a QuietKat e-bike can be outfitted with a hard bow case, pannier bags and rack, additional batteries, fenders and even a trailer perfect for hauling a deer or elk quarters. These and many more compatible products give your customer the ability to accessorize his or her QuietKat e-bike, plus you'll get the added benefit of more profits, too. Everyone wins.

e-Bike Top Picks

QuietKat RidgeRunner

QuietKat introduced the RidgeRunner in 2018, and it generated incredible responses. Outdoor enthusiasts found it perfect for exploring the backcountry, conquering rugged terrain and accessing hunting grounds quietly and scent-free. Naturally, QuietKat built upon that success and introduced the new fat-tire RidgeRunner. The company took the advanced fire-link, 4-bar suspension platform and built it into a fat-tire version to create the ultimate electric mountain bike. Featuring 26x4.5-inch tires and 150mm of suspension travel, a wide-range 9-speed drivetrain and 1,000- or 750-watt motors, the new RidgeRunner is designed to negotiate rugged places. Whatever adventure is calling, you can do it all quietly and efficiently with the new fat-tire RidgeRunner. Compatible with both of QuietKat's trailers, the RidgeRunner can tow all of your gear for a backcountry adventure, an overnight expedition or a multi-day bikepacking adventure. For more information, visit www.quietkat.com.



BAKCOU Mule

BAKCOU (formerly BackCountry eBikes) has updated its popular Mule. With performance-driven features, it climbs higher and goes farther. Built to pack like a "mule," it has the suspension and gearing to get you there fast. The unparalleled performance of Bafang's M620 ULTRA mid-drive motor is at the heart of the bike's design. Available in 750- and 1,000-watt configurations, this premium motor delivers unbelievable torque and a dual-speed sensor. Premium Shimano Alivio Hill-Climbing 9-speed components shift seamlessly, while a rear de-railer guard protects your chain and components. The Max Drive System gives the rider more control, and despite its tremendous power output and maximum torque of more than 160 N m, the motor operates in virtual silence. The 66-pound Mule is one of the market's lightest hunting-style e-bikes. Designed around a user-friendly and ultra-durable, high-grade 6061 aluminum frame, the Mule's geometry makes mounting and dismounting hassle-free. Front and rear mud fenders, a pannier rack capable of carrying over 70-pound loads and an ultra-bright performance headlight complete the ensemble. For more information, visit www.bakcou.com.



Rogue Ridge Ridge Warrior RB1000

The result of more than two years of research and development, Rogue Ridge's Ridge Warrior affordably delivers advanced features. At just 63 pounds, the Ridge Warrior is lightweight, but the tech-welded 6061 aluminum alloy construction can withstand a payload – rider and gear – up to 300 pounds. A color digital display provides a speedometer and trip data along with remaining battery life. The Bafang G320.1000 motor combines power and stealth so you can get where you're going quietly. A Mozo fork with dropout 135mm hydraulic shocks makes rugged trails feel smoother to the rider. A high-quality Panasonic 48V13AH battery ensures long-lasting power, while Kenda 26x 4.0-inch fat tires provide positive traction for dicey conditions. For more information, visit www.rogueridge.com.



Rambo R1000XPS Carbon

Rambo delivered on customer demands by introducing the R1000XPS Carbon fat-tire e-bike. The aluminum-alloy frame is carbon-dipped to flaunt an attention-getting tactical flavor. Whether accessing elk habitat via steep grades or simply closing the distance on a gobbler, the R1000XPS Carbon can provide a smooth ride with its RST Renegade Suspension. Get all the power you need with a 1000-watt extreme-performance motor. Increased ground clearance is another benefit the R1000XPS delivers. At 69 pounds, the e-bike is highly maneuverable but sacrifices no strength and offers all high-end components. A Panasonic 48V 14.5AH battery provides a generous 20-mile range (without peddling). Maxxis Minion FBF FBR 26x 4.8-inch tires round out the R1000XPS Carbon. For more information, visit www.rambobikes.com.





↑ E-bikes are increasing in popularity among the hunting community. Not only are they great for accessing stands, but they can help your customers scout and check trail cameras efficiently and with much less disturbance than ATVs and UTVs.

← While e-bikes from the companies mentioned in this article are targeted toward hunters, they're great for off-season pursuits as well – a major selling point.

Promoting e-Bikes for Other Recreational Uses

One more tidbit to pack in your selling arsenal is that e-bikes are great for uses far beyond the hunt. Whether it's picking blackberries away from easily accessible roadways, reaching a deep-woods trout hole or even checking trail cameras, an e-bike can help you get places others don't and in an efficient manner. That means buying an e-bike isn't merely a hunting investment. It's a multi-purpose tool that can provide great transportation for many uses. If that isn't a selling point, I don't know what is.

“If your store is small, start out small. Bring in one or two e-bikes and see how things unravel.”

→ E-bikes can be particularly beneficial for traveling bowhunters who hunt on public lands. Users can sift through lots of ground in short order to identify the productive parcels and pockets – a definitive benefit to use in your sales pitch.

Sell the Benefits and Provide a Test Drive

Now that I've presented the attributes of e-bikes and how they translate into user benefits, you're armed with information to educate your customers. But we can't ignore the downside: \$2,000 to \$5,000 is a lot to spend for transportation to and from a hunting area. However, many hunters spend that and more for ATVs and UTVs; it isn't out of the realm of possibility for your customers to purchase e-bikes despite the hefty price tags.

Before you launch yourself into a sales pitch for a multi-thousand-dollar item, though, I'd encourage you to re-read the attributes and benefits I presented previously. Why? Because you can expect some objections to arise anytime you're selling something expensive, and you must be prepared to articulate the solutions an e-bike can provide.

Even then, many customers will not cave and buy. For them, a test drive could possibly seal the deal or at least get them thinking. Check with your insurance provider first, and if all is clear, offer a test drive of the e-bike in your parking lot or (empty) shooting range.

Explain all of the fundamentals needed to operate the bike correctly, and then let the customer begin the test drive. Expect jaws to drop and eyes to widen, because

that's exactly what happened when I took my first e-bike test drive at a small Wyoming archery shop two years ago.

Take the Next Step

If you aren't currently offering an e-bike line in your store, I hope this article helps you to consider it. I'm not suggesting that you should order up 12 high-end models and expect them to sell out within a couple of months. Perhaps that's possible in some markets, but I'm not forgetting the small mom-and-pop sporting goods stores found throughout our great nation.

If your store is small, start out small. Bring in one or two e-bikes and see how things unravel. I've taken the liberty of outlining a few top makes/models in the sidebar following this article, which should help you decide what line is right for you.

No matter what e-bike line you bring into your store, capitalize on every opportunity to educate your customers about it, and allow them to test drive an e-bike, even if they aren't shopping for one. Chances are they'll tell their friends about the experience, and perhaps one of them will show up to test it and then order one. Let word of mouth go to work, and also pump a few promos across your social media pages occasionally to spark more buzz.

Once your customers understand the concept and see how it can make their hunting program more tactical and effective, I'm sure you'll start selling e-bikes here and there, thus reaping the profits involved and providing your customers with definitive solutions to a necessary step in hunting: transportation. **HR**





HUNTING RETAILER

GEAR ROUNDUP:

TURKEY CALLS & DECOYS

BY GORDY KRAHN

1 ZINK CALLS | Power Hen Box Call

The Power Hen from Zink Calls is a hybrid-style box call made from quality cherry and maple wood. Its traditional design combines modern technology and custom, hand-built construction for a versatile and effective call capable of producing a wide variety of seductive hen vocalizations. The Power Hen box call produces desirable high-pitched front end tones that smoothly transition into a gnarly backside rasp, and its double-sided design makes it easy to produce different tones to mimic the sounds of multiple hens – attracting tom turkeys with every stroke of the paddle. MSRP: \$79.99.

www.zinkcalls.com



2 HS STRUT | Slingblade Box Call

Mimicking the vocalizations of wild turkeys on a box call takes technique development and practice. Everything from positioning, rhythm and cadence can impact the effectiveness of the sounds produced. That's why HS Strut developed the Slingblade, an easy-to-use box call that produces excellent tone and sound quality – even in the hands of a novice caller. The single-sided Slingblade is constructed from a solid billet of American walnut with an exotic purple heart lid. With only one striking side, its open-close operation is fool proof. The off-side of the call is taller, which stops the paddle in the same place with every stroke. Rhythm and cadence is all that's needed to master the call. MSRP: \$34.99.

www.hunterspec.com



3 WOODHAVEN | Mini Red Wasp Diaphragm Call

WoodHaven's Mini Red Wasp small frame diaphragm call is designed after one of its best-selling mouth calls, the Red Wasp. But the Mini Red Wasp was made specifically for youth and adult hunters with smaller palates. The Mini Red Wasp is a three-reed V-cut call made with a red latex top reed and two straight prophylactic reeds. It produces sharp, crisp cutts and cackles as well as raspy yelps that mimic an ol' boss hen. When soft calling, hunters can produce very realistic clucks and purrs as well as early morning tree yelps. MSRP: \$12.99.

www.woodhavencustomcalls.com



4 PRIMOS | Foggy Bottom Snuff Tube Call

Primos recently reintroduced the old school Snuff Tube turkey call in one of its favorite old school camo patterns, Mossy Oak Original Bottomland. The Snuff Tube turkey call is one of the most versatile of all turkey calls – capable of producing realistic clucks, cutts, yelps and even gobbles. The call's molded tube body ensures a perfect reed fit and tension for making all of those seductive hen sounds and territorial gobbles that drive tom turkeys crazy. Each Snuff Tube call comes with an extra reed. MSRP: \$15.99.

www.primos.com



5 STRUT COMMANDER | Spring Fever Kit

When spring is in the air and tom turkeys are gobbling their heads off – grab a Spring Fever Kit from Strut Commander and get to the woods – quick! This pack of high-quality calls has everything a turkey hunter needs to coax those shy gobblers into lethal shotgun or bow range. Used by rookies, weekend warriors and seasoned pros alike, the kit includes two diaphragm calls (Cut 'EM and Bearded Hen), the Pallbearer Dugout box call and the Scarecrow locator call. The combination of these calls and a steady aim will help turn the tables on those stubborn tom turkeys. MSRP: \$29.99.

www.strutcommander.com





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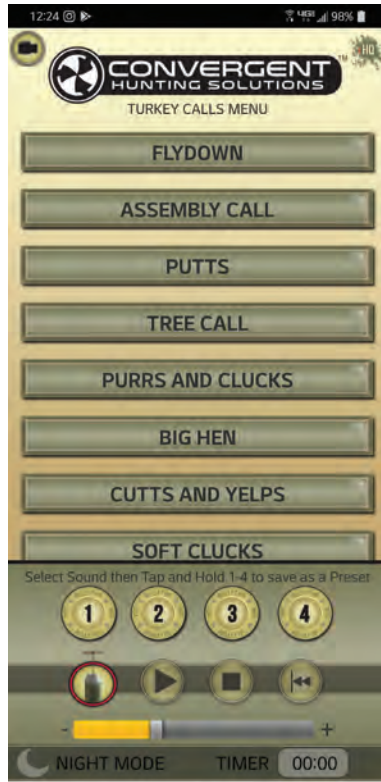


6 CONVERGENT HUNTING |

Wild Turkey Pro App

The Wild Turkey Pro App from Convergent Hunting is designed to work in conjunction with a special-purpose Bluetooth controlled speaker (Bullet HP) to produce realistic turkey sounds. And now hunters can video their hunts and control the calls at the same time. Transparent video controls overlay provides easy access to the presets and call controls while recording video. All turkey hunting sounds packaged in Convergent Hunting's Wild Turkey Pro Calling App have been recorded in high definition and are digitally mastered to provide sounds that will elicit responses from even the most stubborn tom turkeys. MSRP: \$3.99/App; \$289.95/Bullet HP; \$339.95/App, Bullet HP, Picatinny phone mount and carry bag.

www.convergenthunting.com



8 SMITH GAME CALLS |

T-12 Ceramic Turkey Call

The Smith Game Calls T-12 TM Ceramic turkey call from Pete Rickard is a unique compact call with a wooden striker on a lanyard that conveniently stows away inside the call. Handmade from cedar with a ceramic top, this call produces light, subtle turkey sounds for close-and-personal calling. Yelps, clucks, purrs, whines, kee-kees and cutts are easily produced using the T-12 Ceramic turkey call. And it's so easy to use novice hunters will feel like a pro in the turkey woods. This is an original Jim Smith design – made in the USA. MSRP: \$21.



www.peterickard.com



10 LUCKY | HD Collapsible Hen Decoy

The Lucky HD Collapsible Hen is a multi-purpose turkey decoy that can be deployed as an upright hen or converted to a breeding hen when partially collapsed. Molded from flexible, crack-resistant 100 percent EVA plastic, it has exceptional detail and weighs only 1 pound. Great for run-and-gun hunters, the Lucky HD Hen collapses down to fit in a hunting vest or backpack and can be easily and quickly deployed when it's time to hunt. It also comes with an easy-to-pack two-piece folding metal stake that makes setup a breeze. MSRP: \$49.99.

www.luckyduck.com

7 FOXPRO | Honey Pot Call

FoxPro's Honey Pot striker call is a great addition to any serious turkey hunter's arsenal. Capable of rendering superior sound quality, volume and realism, it is made from honey locust wood, comes with a one-piece lpe wood striker and is available in crystal, slate and copper calling surface options. The Honey Pot features a glass tone board underneath the calling surface enabling it to produce soft and subtle purrs and tree yelps, yet still delivers incredible volume for cutts, clucks and loud yelps for locating gobblers. The Honey Pot also features sound ports on the back for increased volume and sound projection and a laser etched design on the back of the call. MSRP: \$59.95-\$64.95.

www.gofoxpro.com



9 ROCKY MOUNTAIN

HUNTING CALLS |

Diaphragm Trio

Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls has added three new turkey calls to its Captain Hook diaphragm lineup: One-eyed Tweet, Sharp Tooth Jack and Black Max. The easy-to-blow One-eyed Tweet is a triple-reed call made from premium latex, with a top layer Split-V cut. It is classified as a Novice Level call. Sharp Tooth Jack is an Intermediate Level call, made from premium latex with a top layer Shipwreck cut. This call can create the whole gamut of turkey sounds. The Black Max was designed for the Advanced Level caller. Its Batwing cut creates unbelievable turkey talk when used by experienced callers. The Black Max is made from three layers of premium latex. MSRP: \$8.95/per call.

www.rockymountainhuntingcalls.com



11 MONTANA DECOY | Wiley Tom

Montana Decoy brings realism, portability and flexibility to the turkey woods with its Wiley Tom reaping decoy. Never before has a decoy combined so many features to produce such an authentic imitation of *Meleagris gallopavo*. Built using Montana Decoy's life-like HD photo process, this decoy is a standout in the looks department. Hunters can use the realistic printed fabric or add their own feathers. Individual feather sleeves allow easy replacement of damaged feathers without needing an entirely new fan. Known for its lightweight, realistic and ease of carry design, Montana Decoy brings true innovation to the turkey woods. MSRP: \$89.99.

www.montanadecoy.com





12 FLAMBEAU KING | Strutter Decoy

Modeled after a design by award-winning master carver Dave Constantine, Flambeau's King Strutter decoy will enrage lurking gobblers with anatomical accuracy that is missing only a heartbeat – an evolution in turkey decoy innovation and realism. A keyhole stake plate accommodates a fixed position or a natural side-to-side full strut rotation of 60 degrees in a breeze. When fitted with either Flambeau's high-definition synthetic tail fan or a real tail fan, the realism becomes so alive that dominant toms respond with fury – right into the gun or bow sights. The King Strutter includes a heavy-duty powder-coated steel stake, high-definition synthetic tail fan, synthetic beard and carry bag. Rule the roost this spring with realism that gets results. MSRP: \$149.99.



www.flambeaoutdoors.com

13 DAVE SMITH |

Jake Strutter Decoy

The new Jake Strutter decoy from Dave Smith features the same ultra-realistic attention-grabbing look of its original Strutter decoy in a more portable, less intimidating package. What separates the Jake Strutter from the original Strutter is that its wings and beard are incorporated into its body. Simply add a tail fan (not included) and it's ready for battle! Like all Dave Smith turkey decoys, the Jake Strutter is built to take a beating, and since there's no inflation required, its rugged body will always hold its natural shape. In fact, the Jake Strutter is so tough, it can even withstand an accidental shotgun blast or broadhead through the body with only minimal damage. MSRP: \$199.95.

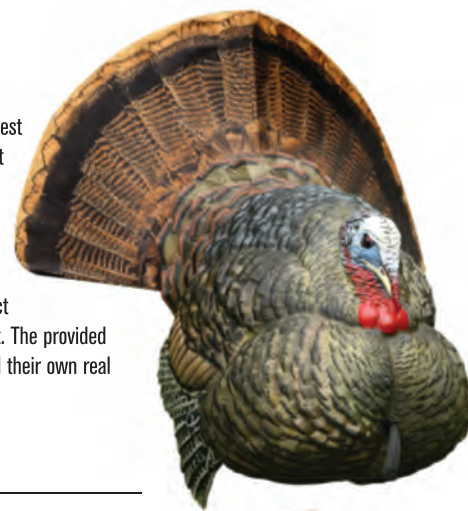


www.davesmithdecoys.com

14 AVIAN-X | LCD Strutter

This is as in-your-face as tomfoolery action gets. Even the wariest old gobbler won't be able to ignore the LCD Strutter's dominant strutting posture. From posture to paint, this level of detail and realism gives hunters a decided edge in the turkey woods. The AvianX Lifelike Collapsible Decoy (LCD) folds into a compact, lightweight package for travel and storage. Keep it handy in a backpack or turkey vest and then simply blow it up and connect it to its collapsible carbon stake for quick and easy deployment. The provided synthetic tail fan adds the finishing touch – or hunters can add their own real tail fan for an extra dose of realism. MSRP: \$119.99.

www.avian-x.com



15 MOJO | Fatal Fan

During certain phases of the spring breeding cycle, gobblers won't tolerate an invasion of their space, and savvy turkey hunters can take full advantage of their crabby disposition. The MOJO Fatal Fan is a lifelike artificial fan with a photo-realistic head mounted on a hinge that allows the fan to be laid back in an aggressive posture that drives tom turkeys wild. And both fan and stake fold to fit in a vest or coat to accommodate fleet of foot hunters. The Fatal Fan provides the most convenient way to enjoy the wildly popular scoot-and-shoot style of hunting but can also serve double duty as a standard decoy. MSRP: \$39.99.

www.mojooutdoors.com



16 KILLER GEAR | JakeFan Decoy

The JakeFan decoy from Killer Gear is tailor made for the proactive "fanning method" style of spring turkey hunting. It is designed to trigger an aggressive territorial response from a dominant tom, greatly increasing the odds of a successful hunt by mimicking the movements of a jake going in and out of strut, luring gobblers in up close and personal – taking the hunt from a game of yards to a game of inches. It can also be effectively used as a stationary decoy. MSRP: \$139.99.

www.killergear.com





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Photos courtesy of the ATA

The 2020 ATA Show: That's a Wrap

New programs and products gave the 2020 Archery Trade Association Show a positive vibe.

BY JACE BAUSERMAN

The largest and most inclusive show in the world of archery, the annual Archery Trade Association Show, is a candy store for the stick-and-string masses. What makes the show so special? Nowhere else, for a period of three days, can manufacturers, retailers and media assemble under one roof and chew the archery fat.

This year, that roof was the Indiana Convention Center in Indianapolis, Indiana, and the dates were January 9-11. For the first time in the show's storied tenure, media presence was denied on the show's first day. Driven by the desire to promote commerce within the archery and bowhunting industry, the

ATA wanted to provide a day for retailers to visit manufacturers with limited interruptions. How did that work? After visiting with multiple manufacturers, I can testify to the fact that the jury was split. While many manufacturers loved the idea, others were a tad bummed with the one-day media suspension.

"It's such a great event," said one manufacturer. "While our primary purpose is to meet with our dealers, we love having bloggers, magazine writers and the like pushing our upcoming products out to the public."

"It was a bit refreshing," said another. "We love working with the media, but over the years we've seen the event turn

↑ A shooter takes aim at the fun and entertaining Marky Sparky booth.



PRO STAFF

Jace Bauserman is a former magazine editor and well-known freelance writer in the outdoor space. Bauserman lives in Colorado with his wife, Amy, and their three children, Hunter, Abbey and Brody. To date, Bauserman has hunted 16 different states along with a pair of Canadian provinces.

more into a media event than a buying show. We want to work with our customers, and we want to devote our time to preparing them for the upcoming selling season.”

Though the reasons people attend the ATA Show are many, manufacturers appreciate it from a selling and relationship standpoint.

“We love getting the chance to sit down and talk with our dealers face to face,” said QAD’s Kevin Fry. “They can sit down in our booth and get the rundown on new products. They can make their order for the year while they’re at the booth. Plus, it gives us a chance to develop new relationships with those new to the retail world. We want to get our products out in front of them, develop a relationship and foster that relationship.”

Of course, dealers love the show for the same reasons, and they enjoy getting a hands-on look at the new products.

“Yes, we see a lot of this stuff online before the show,” said one Missouri shop owner. “However, there are typically some launches that happen at the show, and we don’t want to miss those. It’s great catching up with the manufacturers and seeing what’s new. We also really love the shooting lanes. I want to shoot the bows I plan to bring into my shop.”

In typical ATA fashion, there was no shortage of goings-

“For the first time in the show’s storied tenure, media presence was denied on the show’s first day.”

on at the show. Annual events like the A.R.R.O Hot Show, NABA Super Show, Outtech Innovations XXII, Badlands Film Festival and Target The Heart Breakfast, to name a few, were a hit. Also creating some serious cheers were ATA’s Coffee Talk, the Best In Show Awards and a very well attended workshop on social media.

When it comes to product innovation and archery trends, several grabbed the attention of show attendees. While bow design continues to change and improve, the big story this year was centered on a single theme: Adjustability. I’ve never seen so many vertical bow manufacturers offer adjustable-without-a-bow-press cam systems. Dealers were thrilled. When the draw length of a bow can be altered without a bow press, customer setup is quick and easy. The dealer doesn’t have to worry about carrying a number of cam-specific bow models or various cams that need to be switched out. Things

↓ T.R.U. Ball/Axcel was awarded the prestigious 2020 ATA Impact Award.

Photos courtesy of the ATA





Photos courtesy of the ATA

↑ Exhibitors, buyers and media personnel stand ready for the doors to open on the show's second day.

get simplified. Of course, a number of new horizontal bows that shoot faster, further and more accurate than ever before excited the crowds.

Another room rumble was created by Hoyt's addition of the Integrate Mounting System to its 2020 flagship models. In 2019, this system was announced in a partnership between drop-away rest kingpin QAD and Mathews Archery. In short, for the first time in archery's history, the Berger hole located on the bow's riser can be eliminated. The Integrate Mounting System, via a dovetail on the riser's face and not the side, accepts the double-lock mount of QAD's Integrate MX rest. This system prevents unwanted rest movement, ensures precise leveling/tuning and cuts down on overall rest weight.

PSE dropped a bomb when the company announced the launch of its John Dudley Bow Series. Dudley, a champion archer and longtime outdoor television personality renowned for his bow-tuning wisdom and incredible shooting, noted the switch (from his previous company, Hoyt) came after spending time with PSE founder Pete Shepley and his wife, Laura. Dudley mentioned Shepley's passion for wanting to grow archery and get young people involved in the sport for his reason to leave Hoyt and join PSE. Dudley noted Shepley's pas-

"We really love the shooting lanes. I want to shoot the bows I plan to bring into my shop."



Photos courtesy of the ATA

sion and energy for archery were contagious.

Another announcement that was inspiring and hard to ignore came from the Scent Crusher booth when longtime outdoor television personalities Mark and Terry Drury, after 30 years of filming hunts, gave away a farm. Yes, you read that correctly. This pair of whitetail gurus, as a thank-you to their faithful following, gave away a manicured-with-food-plots 60-acre northern Missouri property. The booth was abuzz with life as members of Team Drury as well as those from the Scent Crusher crew tossed prizes and the like to the cheering crowd.

After visiting with a number of manufacturers, dealers and media personnel, the general consensus of the 2020 ATA vibe was a positive one.

"I thought it was great," said a Georgia pro shop owner. "The last couple of years, the vibe was very doom and gloom. I didn't feel that this year, and that was refreshing. We have such a great industry, and while it may not be as strong as it once was, we can't get negative."

"I'm not sure about the attendance," said the Pope & Young Club's Rick Mowery. "The aisles weren't very crowded, but I thought the overall mood of the show was very upbeat. People were having a great time, and that was awesome to see. The sport of archery and bowhunting has such a rich heritage, and we need organizations committed to maintaining and promoting that heritage."

"It was good," said Badlands' Blake VanTussenbrook. "Dealers were upbeat and were writing orders. Our all-new Pyre line of cold-weather gear was very well received. I was



← The New Product Launch was appreciated by show goers and created a daily buzz.

↓ ATA's Coffee Talk allows presenters to create a discussion around a certain topic. Attendees are then encouraged to participate in the discussion.

really happy with the overall vibe of the show.”

According to ATA's Maria Lewis, overall attendance for the 2020 show pushed the counter over the 8,500 mark, and that number included individuals from more than 31 countries.

“We introduced many new features at the 2020 ATA Show,” Lewis said. “It seemed that every one of those new features were well-received.”

“We had a buyer-only day,” Lewis continued. “On day one of the show, only retailers and exhibitors/sales reps were allowed on the show floor. This was done so each could focus on uninterrupted order writing, business planning and new product evaluations. Other events like the Best In Show Awards, New Product Launch Showcase, ATA Happy Hour, Social Media Workshop and on-the-show-floor manufacturer product demonstrations were also favored by show goers.”

One particular event, Connections: An ATA Happy Hour, provided a \$5,000-per-day cash giveaway to retailers who wrote \$5,000 in orders. The event was no doubt a great idea, and retailers seemed very satisfied with it.

For more information about the 2021 ATA Show or to become a certified ATA Member, visit www.archerytrade.org. **HR**

“While bow design continues to change and improve, the big story this year was centered on a single theme: Adjustability.”

ATA COFFEE TALK



Photos courtesy of the ATA





HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS

BY GORDY KRAHN



TOOTH OF THE ARROW BROADHEADS

Tooth of the Arrow offers a full line of American-made broadheads turned and machined from single, solid piece of high-carbon steel and heat-treated for superior durability – resulting in a true one-piece broadhead. Its four-blade design increases the total cutting surface, and its compressed length improves accuracy. Tooth of the Arrow will provide a single-pack sample broadhead to any new customer for only \$1.99. Details on this offer and additional information on its entire line of broadheads can be found on its website. MSRP per three-pack: \$39.99/1-inch series; \$44.99/1 1/4-inch series. www.toothofthearrowbroadheads.com

ALPS OUTDOORZ SHOOT LIKE A GIRL ALLURE PACK

The ALPS OutdoorZ Allure Shoot Like a Girl pack in Mossy Oak Break-Up Country camo was designed with women in mind and features shoulder straps, a waist belt and frame to accommodate a woman's figure. Its innovative self-standing L-shape frame allows the pack to sit on any flat surface. The Allure also features a padded back panel with vented channels and a drop-down weapon pocket that will securely carry most compound bows or rifles. With 34 liters of space, the Allure will accommodate a lot of essential equipment, but it also includes lashing straps so additional gear can be strapped on if needed. A mesh pocket on the side of the pack keeps a water bottle handy. MSRP: \$112. www.shootlikeagirl.com



RUGID BIG STONE BINOCULAR HARNES

The RUGID Big Stone binocular harness is constructed from fully waterproof, military-grade materials and features an impermeable outer shell to repel the most extreme weather. Its heavy-duty magnetic cover flap provides silent, easy access without compromising protection from dust or precipitation. The Big Stone harness' removable interior padding makes for trouble-free cleaning and provides protection from drops or falls. It accommodates most 8X and 10X binoculars and comes equipped with a sturdy tether that allows the binocular to hang outside the case for easy glassing in the field. It also includes top, front and back storage pockets for essential gear and comes equipped with an elastic sleeve and bungee tether to securely hold a rangefinder. MSRP: \$69.99. www.rugidgear.com



CROSMAN R1 BB AIR RIFLE

The Crosman full-auto R1 BB air rifle maximizes backyard fun, fueled by two 12-gram CO2 cartridges and a 25-round drop-out magazine, compatible with traditional 4.5mm steel BBs. The R1 features a full-size genuine feel, familiar controls and an intense 1,400 round per minute rate of fire – at velocities up to 430 fps. It has a six-position adjustable stock for a custom fit, AR-compatible buttstock/pistol grip and a Picatinny rail that provides endless accessory mounting opportunities. Included is a rail-mounted red-dot sight and speedloader. The Crosman R1 is great for skill development, training and backyard fun. MSRP: \$199.99. www.crosman.com

HARRIS BIPODS KRYPTERK HIGHLANDER CAMOUFLAGED BIPODS

Harris Bipods is now offering a Permodized Kryptek Highlander camo finish on select models of its bipods in addition to its standard all-black anodized versions. Available in the 1A2-25C and (S) series 25C, they have the same durable all-weather finish as the original models. The 25C series has a solid base and the 25-S series has a swivel base. Harris bipods clamp to most QD stud equipped bolt-action rifles and have a sling attachment provision. Spring-loaded folding legs are adjustable for height. They are manufactured with heat treated steel and hard alloys and come in a variety of sizes for use in any shooting position. Hinged bases feature tension adjustment to eliminate unwanted movement. MSRP: \$161.47 to \$205.06. www.harrisbipods.com



MATHEWS VXR COMPOUND BOW

The all new 2020 VXR from Mathews Inc. features a new, extended six-bridge riser and enhanced limb geometry to create a fast, stable and accurate shooting platform. Offered in two axle-to-axle lengths (28 and 31.5 inches), the VXR is powered by Mathew's Crosscentric Cam system, producing speeds up to 344 fps. Its Switch-Weight technology allows shooters to change peak draw length and draw weight in 5-pound increments via the cam's module instead of changing limbs and is available in 60-, 65-, 70- and 75-pound peak weights, in 80 percent or 85 percent let-off. The VXR also features the Engage Grip interface, designed to ensure consistent hand placement, reducing torque and increasing accuracy. MSRP: \$999.99. www.mathewsinc.com





BELL AND CARLSON TIKKA T3/X SPORTER STYLE RIFLE STOCK

Bell and Carlson's sleek, lightweight Tikka T3/x sporter-style rifle stock is designed as a drop-in fit for Tikka Hunter, Hunter SS Lite, Lite SS, Camo SS and Laminated SS rifles. It's also a fit for Tikka T3/x long, short and WSM actions with standard factory contour barrels in .204 Ruger to .338 Win. Mag. Its full aluminum bedding block extends from the grip to the front swivel stud and its bedding block recoil lug eliminates the factory recoil lug, which is a weak link, especially in larger calibers, according to the Bell and Carlson. It incorporates a 1-inch Pachmayr Decelerator recoil pad, and standard length of pull is set at 13.75 inches. MSRP: \$285. www.bellandcarlson.com

STARLINE .270 WIN. BRASS

Starline Brass has added the .270 Winchester to its growing lineup of high-quality brass. The .270 Win. has been around nearly a century and is chambered by almost every major firearm manufacturer with a hunting rifle in its lineup. In fact, it was a favorite cartridge of Starline Brass founder Frank Snow for elk hunting. It also performs well as a varmint caliber when loaded with lighter 90- to 110-grain bullets. At Starline, multiple hand and machine inspections ensure cosmetic and dimensional characteristics meet the highest level of exacting standards. All Starline cases are contained between each step of the manufacturing process to maintain superior quality and consistency. MSRP: \$108/for 250; \$200/for 500; \$376/for 1,000. www.starlinebrass.com



REDDING TYPE S ELITE DIE SET

Redding's Type S Elite die set is comprised of a Type S bushing full die, a Type S bushing neck die and the Redding Competition seating die. The Type-S dies use an interchangeable bushing to control neck diameter and tension to an increment of 0.001-inch. This allows the handloader complete control and precision when setting the appropriate neck tension without fear of overworking the brass in the case neck. The final die in the set is the Redding Competition seating die with its micrometer depth adjustment and unique sliding sleeve coupled with a free-floating seat stem, which provides a very high degree of concentricity, enhancing control of the case and bullet during the seating process. MSRP: \$366.25. www.redding-reloading.com

SAVAGE ARMS MINIMALIST RIMFIRE RIFLE

Modern shooters want rifles with modern ergonomics and the new Minimalist from Savage Arms combines the classic look of a laminate stock with modern aesthetics to achieve a lightweight rimfire rifle with improved usability in the field. With its button-rifled barrel and user-adjustable AccuTrigger, the Minimalist – offered in .22 LR, .22 WMR and .17 HMR – delivers accuracy for backyard plinking or hunting varmints and small game. Weighing in at just 5.68 pounds, the Minimalist is a great gun for hunters on the go. For convenience, Weaver-style bases are pre-installed above the rifle's carbon steel barreled action. Included is a 10-round detachable magazine. MSRP: \$359. www.savagearms.com



BOWTECH REVOLT AND REVOLT X

Bowtech's DeadLock Cam System in its new-for-2020 Revolt and Revolt X bows enables hunters to spend less time tuning their bow thanks to a precise, two-step tuning process. The simple turn of a screw adjusts the string path of the bow by moving the cam left or right on its axle, centering the energy of the shot directly behind the arrow. A second screw locks the cam in place, ensuring permanent, dead-on accuracy every time an arrow is released. The Revolt's DeadLock cams are optimized for a super-smooth draw cycle and strategically weighted to cancel vibration, minimize shot noise and propel arrows at 335 fps. The Revolt measures 30 inches axle-to-axle and the Revolt X 33 inches. MSRP: \$1,199. www.bowtecharchery.com



BRUSHY BOTTOM TRINITY 3-D CAMOUFLAGE

Brushy Bottom's first camouflage pattern, Trinity 3-D, is available on an entirely new line of garments designed for optimal balance and proportionally corrected images to disrupt and disturb any outline or hard surface found in nature. Hunters will blend into their surroundings effortlessly with the ghost shadowing, high-definition images, true ratio specifications and projected 3-D imagery used within the pattern. Oak leaves are used extensively in Trinity 3-D so hunters can blend in better when hunting this natural food source, and all elements are in correctly proportioned ratios in respect to their placement through the pattern. This depth emulates a true 30-yard perspective, allowing the perception of looking "through" the pattern. MSRP: Varies by garment. www.brushybottomcamo.com



Where Ad Dollars Are Going

Are you spending your limited advertising dollars wisely?

BY BOB ROBB

Advertising and promotion are big parts of any small business's success. We all know that. Whether your business is large or small, spending ad dollars wisely is so very important. That means intimately knowing your market, keeping your finger on the pulse of changing market trends both nationally and locally, and targeting your ad spend so you get the most for the least.

Here are some advertising trends, both nationally and locally, that should offer food for the grist mill.

In 2019, U.S. spending on digital advertising surpassed traditional ad spending for the first time ever, according to eMarketer (www.emarketer.com). Mobile advertising accounted for nearly two-thirds of all digital advertising. The advertising industry watchdog group predicts that, by 2023, digital advertising will surpass two-thirds of total U.S. media spending. eMarketer reported that total U.S. media ad spending reached almost \$215 billion in 2018, and predicts it will grow to \$251.92 billion by 2021.

In what should be no surprise to anybody, Google and Facebook by far collect the most digital advertising revenue — although for the first time, in 2019 the combined share of Google and Facebook actually fell a bit, even as their overall revenues continued to grow — with Amazon a distant third. At the same time, Amazon's ad business grew more than 50 percent. The 2019 numbers: Google, 37.2 percent; Facebook, 22.1 percent; Amazon, 8.8 percent; Microsoft (and LinkedIn), 3.8 percent; Verizon, 2.9 percent.

Locally, however, there's a bit of a different picture. According to BIA/Kelsey (www.biakelsey.com), a company that assists traditional and digital media, brands and agencies, and technology companies in local advertising marketplaces, local ad spending continued to grow in 2018 to \$151.2 billion, a 5.2 percent increase over 2017. The bulk of those funds were spent on traditional media, with

64.7 percent of expenditures dedicated to legacy media channels like TV and newspapers, with the rest going toward digital channels. The firm reported that direct mail accounted for 25.4 percent of the 2018 local advertising spend, with \$38.5 billion spent. Direct mail remains the most popular type of local advertising thanks to response rates of between 3 and 5 percent. Local TV accounted for 13.8 percent of the local ad spend at \$20.8 billion, followed by mobile advertising, which garnered \$19.0 billion, or 12.6 percent of revenues.

Social media is another digital media channel where platforms have improved ad offerings. "Social channels such as Snapchat and Instagram have evolved their mobile native ad models to include new targeting and reporting features," said Mark Fratrick, chief economist and senior vice president at BIA/Kelsey, in an interview with eMarketer. And, of course, Facebook and Instagram both continue to be strong local promotional platforms.

A report from Borrell Associates (www.borrellassociates.com), a consulting company offering in-

sights on what local ad spenders are doing, said that U.S. local digital advertising climbed 9.2 percent to \$77 billion, which accounted for 63 percent of all U.S. local advertising. The largest percentage of this digital ad spending — \$57.1 billion — came from what's called "pure play" digital media companies like Facebook and

Google, with the remaining from companies like Autotrader, Craigslist, Zillow, Yelp and other digital

media companies. Traditional media companies captured \$10.3 billion.

In 2018, Borrell reported that, when it comes to local advertising, digital media pulled in \$67.4 billion, print media \$27.8 billion, broadcast media (TV, radio) and cable, \$24.0 billion, and outdoor, \$7.6 billion. However, they report that growth in local digital advertising is expected to have risen 9.2 percent in 2019 and to rise 4.9 percent in 2020, 0.3 percent in 2021, and 0.1 percent in 2022. Borrell's database includes 10,555 local online operations in the U.S. and Canada. This includes 1,012 daily newspapers and 762 weeklies, 894 local TV stations, 699 multi-station radio market clusters encompassing 3,121 local stations, 2,608 yellow-page directories grouped in 649 multibook market clusters, 182 local cable systems, 1,890 local internet pure-play sites, and 86 other local entities.

Where's the local digital money coming from? According to Borrell, it's shifted from directories like Yellow Pages, which were down some 19 percent in 2019, and traditional print outlets — magazines and newspapers — with a drop of nearly 18 percent. Overall, Borrell reports that traditional media advertising spending fell 45.8 percent in 2019, after a 51.4 percent drop in 2018.

What's all this mean for you? The trends show where marketers see sales growth potential on a macro level — and that's with people that are increasingly turning to the internet and mobile devices to research products, services and pricing. When I lived in Tucson, Arizona, several local gun and hunting shops advertised a lot on local talk radio stations, as well as occasionally in local newspapers.

In the small Pacific Northwest town I currently live in, however, the largest gun and hunting shop still advertises regularly in the local newspapers. What I call indirect marketing also works — that is, being active in the community, supporting charity groups and clubs, sponsoring youth teams, that sort of thing. Building a reputation for over-

“Building a reputation for over-the-top service and doing whatever it takes (within reason, of course) to satisfy the consumer's needs, which generates positive word-of-mouth promotion, remains the best and cheapest advertising of all.”

the-top service and doing whatever it takes (within reason, of course) to satisfy the consumer's needs, which generates positive word-of-mouth promotion, remains the best and cheapest advertising of all.

Do these ad spending trends affect you? Do you monitor such statistics? How do you effectively promote your own business? What have you found that works well for you, and what have you found to be a waste of time and money? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com — I'd love to hear from you and share your thoughts with our readers. **HR**



PRO STAFF - Bob Robb has been a full-time outdoor writer since 1978. He's a former staff editor for *Peterson's Hunting* magazine, as well as the former editor of *Western Outdoor News*, *Peterson's Bowhunting*, *Inside Archery*, *Whitetail Journal*, *Predator Xtreme* and *Waterfowl & Retriever* magazines. He's hunted on five continents with both rifles and archery equipment and lived in Alaska for 15 years, where for a time he held an assistant hunting guide's license.



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