

# FRONT SIGHT



Mid-Michigan Chapter Safari Club International

April - June 2022, Issue 58



Photographs by  
*Pieter Viviers, Marupa Safaris*



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## Standing Committees

Chairmen are listed first

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The **Front Sight** is the official publication of the Mid-Michigan Chapter of Safari Club International, keeping club members informed about local club activities, and encouraging and defining good sportsmanship. The **Front Sight** Magazine is published quarterly: January, April, July and October. Distribution 400+.

Check [www.midmichigansci.org](http://www.midmichigansci.org) for copies of the **Front Sight**, listing of events, and fundraiser auction items.

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**Members of Mid-Michigan SCI or Isabella County Sportsman's Club may use the shooting range located at 2872 W. Millbrook Road just east of Winn Road. In order to receive the lock combination you will need to contact Lance Norris at either (989) 621-2794 or [ruter11b@cmich.edu](mailto:ruter11b@cmich.edu) to take a safety training/orientation to familiarize yourself with the club. When visiting the Sportsman's Club please carry membership identification on you.**



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## President's Message

We just completed our Chapter's 43rd Annual Hunters' Convention! There was a great crowd with plenty of excitement. The Witte Award winner was "Butch" Kreuger for his support of hunting and conservation. Our emcee Dan Catlin and our auctioneer Ridge did an excellent job presenting our Humanitarian efforts to the attendees. We had an excellent response raising \$16,000 for 2022 focus on taking combat disabled veterans hunting to help with their recovery. We will rotate our annual focus in succeeding years to others such as disabled youths and first responders. We will report in more detail in the next issue of the Front Sight.

The 50th SCI Annual Convention was in Las Vegas for January 19th to 22nd, 2022. It was exciting with plenty of interesting people. The show floor had a plethora of outfitters and vendors. I always see many interesting items and had good discussions. There was an electric bike test area, and it was fun to compare some various models. I am trying out a new broadhead that piqued my interest. It was a great chance to reconnect with friends and share knowledge.

I attended the SCI Board of Directors meeting and several committee and training session meetings during the Convention. SCI and SCIF are always working on improving internal operations and external outreach and interactions. You will see more on this in the Front Sight and the SCI publications in the future. The next three years will see the Convention in our neighborhood in Nashville. Travel will be easier, and the location will offer different and unique local amenities.

We will have six member meetings in 2022 in the months of April, May, June, August, September, and October. The Annual Chapter Awards presentations will be held during the Members Meeting at the Comfort Inn on April 11th. Please don't miss it! We will continue to present great speakers and have some fun discussions. The youth raffle will be continuing this year as well. Please bring those kids out! Please send us suggestions on presentation you would like to see.

It will be time for Board of Directors nominations shortly after you receive this. Nominate others or yourself for Directors' terms starting July 1st! We will provide forms to ease the process.

How about sending in an ice or spear fishing story. We would like to hear a good one! Please share any stories and recipes with Josh Christensen for the Front Sight. Please let us know what you would like to see in this publication and do as a Chapter.

*Jon Zieman*  
Jon Zieman

President  
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## Editor's Message

Spring is right around the corner and with it there are great hunting opportunities for those of us who enjoy taking to the woods for turkey. If you are one of the legend of turkey hunters good luck! If turkey hunting isn't your thing I recommend you try it, but be warned it is addicting.

Our 43rd annual convention has come and gone, and what a show it was! It was great to see so many familiar faces and meet many more who are joining our chapter. During the course of the weekend I was lucky enough to visit with many of you and many of our conversations went towards where we started in life, how we started hunting and how/why we came to join SCI. The conversations truly interested me and helped inspire our next "What do you think?" question. See page 30.

You will also notice we have another article from our "Blast from the past" series. I have had many people comment they enjoy reading through these stories from years ago. As I have mentioned before, these stories might be from a while ago, but they never get old.

While reading through old Front Sight issues I also realized every editor of those magazines have helped our magazine become what it is today. Without the time and effort these members put in we might not have our publication. In an upcoming issue I would like to recognize these individuals for their efforts, but I will need your help in doing so. Through my readings of our collection of older Front Sight magazines I was able to identify our editors from 1995 through today, but before 1995 I am in the dark. If you happen to know who was editing our magazine from the start through 1995 please reach out to me and let me know.

I would also like to thank everyone who has taken the time to put pen to paper, or took to their computer to type to supply us with the valuable articles we publish in each issue. Without you we do not have a magazine. Please consider contributing to our publication by sharing your adventures through a written story, journal or pictorial essay.

Happy Hunting!

*Josh Christensen*

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Editor  
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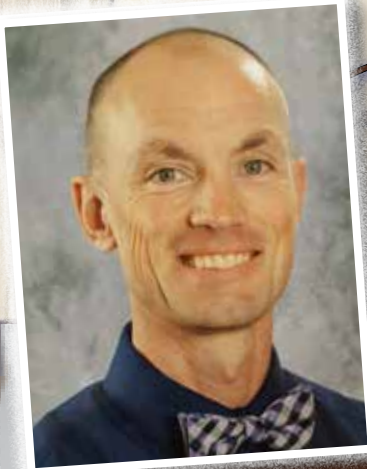
*My wife Sara and I at our annual fundraiser.*

## SCI Mid-Michigan Chapter Meeting Schedule

\* SUBJECT TO CHANGE

| Date           | Meeting Type                      | Time | Location                  |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|------|---------------------------|
| April 11, 2022 | Board/Membership Meeting/Awards   | 6:00 | Comfort Inn               |
| May 2, 2022    | Board/Membership Meeting          | 6:00 | Comfort Inn               |
| June 6, 2022   | Board/Election/Membership Meeting | 6:00 | Comfort Inn               |
| Aug 1, 2022    | Board/Membership Meeting          | 6:00 | Comfort Inn               |
| Aug 9, 2022    | Golf Outing                       | TBA  | Mt. Pleasant Country Club |
| Sept 12, 2022  | Board/Membership Meeting          | 6:00 | Comfort Inn               |

All board meetings are open to our membership. Reservations required.  
Please call and leave a message at 989-560-1061 or email Suzette Howard at [suzettejhoward@yahoo.com](mailto:suzettejhoward@yahoo.com)



# Book Review

by Josh Christensen

Title: ZERO PERCENT CHANCE

Author: MAJOR JON AND SAMANTHA TURNBULL

Publisher: WestBow Press

Copyright: 2021

List Price: \$19.95

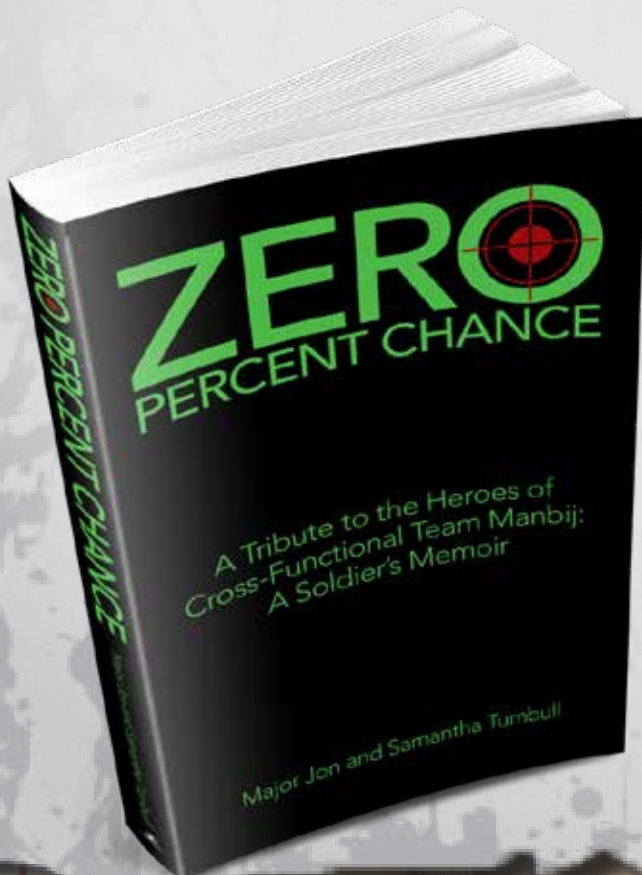
*Zero Percent Chance* is an account of Major Jon Turbull and his time in the Middle East fighting to win the war on terror through nontraditional methods. One way Turbull and his team used was getting girls back into the classroom. Turbull's team was the driving force in getting the people of Syria on the side of freedom and help eradicate ISIS by getting girls back into the classroom, which ISIS had made illegal when they took power.

Turbull and his team looked for other ways to help the people of Syria and in doing so gained the trust of the people to combat the terrorizing ISIS forces. Some of these included restoring electricity to many communities in Syria, fixing a failing sewer system in Manbij (the city where Turbull and his team were located), finding equipment for an operating room at a local hospital, and finding classrooms to get kids back in school and off the streets so they were less likely to be recruited by ISIS.

The story then turns as a suicide bomber tries to take Turbull and his team out. With great detail we are introduced to the reason this book is called "Zero Percent Chance" as Jon and his wife Samantha are continually told he has a zero percent chance of surviving. As Jon points out through his recovery and miracles it was only God who could have saved him. Turbull recounts during his long recovery one of the first doctors to work on him commented to Jon that he, the doctor, wasn't a believer, but after Jon surviving, he now knows there has to be a God.

This is a heartfelt inspirational story of a United States Army Veteran and his journey to recovery.

This book gets 10 out of 10 bullseyes



# BUY, SELL, or TRADE

The following are the terms and conditions for the Buy, Sell or Trade section of our magazine.

- It is **FREE** to all members of our Mid-Michigan SCI Chapter.
- One photo per item will be used in this section. This photo will be displayed in a small size (about 2"x2").
- You may have up to four ads per issue. (You must renew each ad each issue.)
- Beyond the description of the item, each ad will need your name, e-mail and/or phone number
- Each ad should be limited to 25 words plus your name and e-mail and/or phone number unless otherwise discussed with the editor.
- **The Mid-Michigan Chapter is not responsible for items sold.**

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# 50<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL Convention LAS VEGAS







Several of our members made the trip to Las Vegas to attend the 50th annual Safari Club International show. They all reported having a good time and recommend if you ever get the opportunity you should attend a National show in the future. It just so happens the National show will be held in Tennessee next year. It might be time to start planning your trip now.





By Lori Card - Wild Card Outdoor Adventures

Get bit! This is something you do not usually hear any hunter or angler say, unless they are catfish noodling. What is catfish noodling? It is where you are in the water fishing for catfish by sticking your hands into underwater holes, hoping they bite you. Then you pull the catfish out of the hole with your hands. Yes, this sounds a little crazy to most. However, once you have done it the adrenaline rush is addicting. This was my second time going noodling. I was able to have six ladies from other states join me. Only one of the other ladies and myself had been noodling before.

Imagine the excitement, fear and adrenaline of five ladies who were strangers looking to get bit. We arrived August 8th at the condo we were all going to share. Once everyone arrived, we went to dinner and shared stories, getting to know one another. That evening after dinner the nerves started to set in about the mornings adventure. Kasey (the other gal who had been noodling before) and myself answered the questions the others had. We both recalled how anxious we were our first time. One of the gals said she was so nervous that she thought she was going to get sick.

The morning had come, it was time to get bit! We all got up made breakfast and packed our sack lunches. Our guides met us at the condo, and we followed them to the boat launch on Rend Lake in Illinois. We took two boats out for this adventure. As the guides were making their way around the lake looking for the holes, that important question got asked, "Who is going to go first?" Now, let me tell you this was not a clear lake where you could see



the bottom. This lake was like standing in chocolate milk, even if you were to open your eyes underneath you couldn't see anything.

We arrived at the first hole; everyone looked at each other to see who was going to jump up to go first. The guide checked the hole and there was a catfish. We had our first brave gal that jumped into the water to try her hand at noodling. The guides were amazing guys that told us step by step what to do as well as what to expect. They were in the water the entire time with each of us. I should mention that these holes can be anywhere from a foot deep to six feet deep in the water. Most of the holes we had on our event were about four feet deep. Now, keep in mind you have to get your entire body down that deep, find the hole and stick your arm in there all while holding your breath. This was not an easy task for most, remember you cannot see what you are doing, it is all based on feeling your way around.

The determination of each of these gals was unexplainable. Once they were in the water the fear seemed to vanish to the victory of getting bit.





# Noodling

This was not an easy task by any means, there were several attempts made, a few lost catfish but these gals stayed with it. Watching them pull that catfish up out of the water and the smile on their face while doing it was so exciting. One by one we cheered each other on throughout the day.

I'm sure by now you are wondering if this was really safe, or you might just think there is no way in the world you would be sticking your hand into a hole not knowing what is in there. Let me explain, the guides that we went with were doing their part for conservation. These holes are man-made so that the females have a safe place to go and lay their eggs. There were several times that there were two catfish in the holes, male and female. Once the female lays her eggs, the male pushes her out and protects the eggs until they hatch. These catfish are also flatheads and not channel cats so they do not have the barbs that could cut you. Another interesting fact is that there are no air pockets in these holes. This means that there is not going to be a turtle or

snake in them, they need the air pockets to breath. Side note: if we would have come to a hole that had eggs, we would have put the male back into that hole.

As we all caught our catfish, we took pictures of the adventure. Then the guides would take it and notch their dorsal fin. They did this to not only keep track of how many times each catfish has been caught but also for aging them. If a catfish has not had any notches, it is called a "virgin", all the catfish on this trip had never been caught before.

At the end of the day, we headed into the shallow part of the lake for our group pictures with our catfish. Catfish are not scaly fish, they are soft, smooth and beautiful. Once we were done with our photos, we release all the catfish. During this time, we got to play with them in the water until they just swim away. It's almost a sad feeling as you have created a bond with that creature, but you know they will be returning to a hole and there is always next year.



Not only were there bonds created with the catfish, all of the ladies arrived as strangers and left as friends. Getting bit is addicting, we are all looking forward to doing this again next year.

Photo credits:  
Kacey Blunk

# BIG BUCK NIGHT 2022

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22ND



# FRONT SIGHT





# My Success Story

## 1998

by Mary Harter

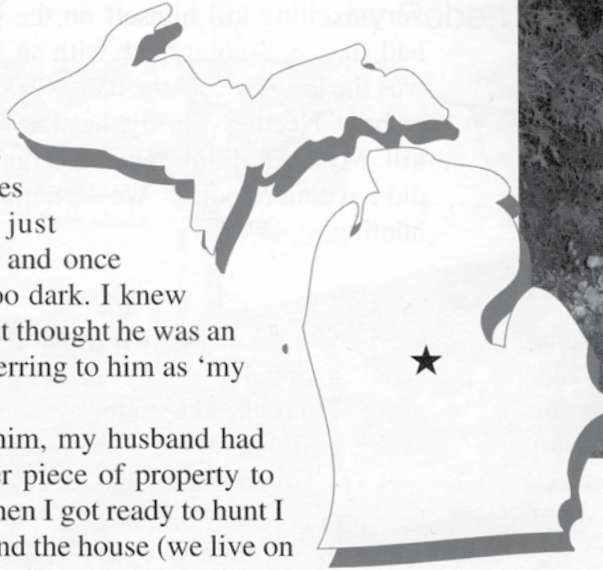
I had seen this big buck several times while hunting but just through thick brush and once after it had gotten too dark. I knew he was a big buck but thought he was an 8-point. I started referring to him as 'my buck'.

The day I shot him, my husband had gone over to another piece of property to do some work, so when I got ready to hunt I just walked out behind the house (we live on Coldwater Lake, Isabella County) to the tree stand where I had seen this big buck. The wind was wrong, blowing directly where the deer should come out of the woods, but I was wearing Browning Scent Sorb clothing and didn't worry too much. I also had just rejuvenated both our outfits by running them in the dryer for 30 minutes. Someone on the lake was burning leaves and the air was full of a smoky smell which I thought might bother the deer.

Anyway, four fawns came out to feed. Soon the spike I had seen every time I had gone out came to feed. He chased the fawns away several times but they always came back to feed. Two of the fawns were button bucks.

Eventually, a doe came out but was nervous and didn't feed. Two of the fawns were hers and went to her. She lifted her hind quarters right off the ground wiggling their tails as they nursed. She soon sidestepped them and they went off to feed again. The doe just stood there several feet in the woods, but near me, and stomped her feet.

I grunted softly a couple of times on a grunt tube hoping the buck would hear and would think the doe was nervous because another buck was around. It worked! Soon this big buck came through the woods and out to the doe. He was the one I was after. The brush was too thick to shoot. Both ran back deeper into the woods together. I was delighted to just have seen this buck again and thought what an enjoyable evening of hunting. It is a lot more fun hunting knowing a big buck lives in the area.



A few minutes passed and I couldn't hear the two deer in the woods anymore. The four fawns and the spike were still feeding. I decided to grunt again so the buck might think another buck was in his territory. I grunted three short, soft grunts. It worked! The big buck came out of the woods a little further away from me but in plain view and proceeded to march right up to the spike. The fawns scattered and the spike looked up as if to say, "It wasn't me! I didn't grunt!" The big buck was quartering away from me and broadside. I pulled back my bow. Neither deer noticed me at all. They were busy accusing/defending themselves. I kept my eyes on the kill zone and released the arrow. Everything felt perfect. I could hear the arrow hit the buck. Thud! He whirled and ran in front of me out a ways from my stand. He ran about 50 yards slipping and falling once right in front of me. He then turned and ran right back towards me about 20 yards and dropped. I could see the arrow still in him and in the right spot! He raised his head once and I could see the rack. My 8-point was dying or dead! I could see the white on his tail and the white on one ear. He just laid there in the weeds a little unnaturally and didn't move.

I got tired of standing and leaning to see the deer so I finally sat on the bottom of my tree stand and rested with my feet on the top rung of the ladder. Once when I had shot a 7-point I had gotten down too quickly to see if he was dead and he got up and ran. We had to wait until the next day to find him. This time I sat there until it was almost dark. I didn't want to take any chances. I didn't want to lose this buck.



When it was starting to get dark, the doe came in prancing around looking for the buck. She stomped her feet again and walked through under me. The buck didn't move. I finally got down and slowly walked towards him. I shone my flashlight on him and his eyes were glassed over and not blinking so I went close enough to see his rack. Was I ever pleased and surprised. He had ten points!!! I walked home thinking how luck I was not only to shoot this buck but to just be able to see one this large and anxiously waited for my husband to come home. Oh boy, oh boy!!!

When Don got home he asked me if I had seen anything. I said yes. He said the wind was wrong and had he been home when I went out he would have encouraged me to sit elsewhere. He asked if I had seen the big buck I was after. I said yes. He asked if I had gotten a shot. I said yes. He asked if we were going to track him. I said no, just get the tractor. On the way out to the deer, Don asked, "Oh by the way, how big is he?" I wouldn't tell him. I wanted to surprise him. I said he

would just have to wait and see but that he probably wasn't 'King on the Hill' anymore. He had just had a very exciting kill himself on the previous Sunday. He had shot an 8-point buck with an 18 1/4 inch spread. It was the biggest buck he had ever shot with either a rifle or bow. Needless to say, he was very pleased with my kill. My buck didn't have as large a body as Don's but did have more points. We've both had a great year bow hunting.

FYI:

I shoot a Lady Hawk II. Blue Mountain compound bow drawing 37#, with 2112 X 7 Easton arrows with 85 grain Thunderhead broadheads and a release. The arrow broke a rib entering the deer, pierced both lungs, and broke a rib on the opposite side but didn't pierce the skin beyond the second rib.

Both of our bucks shot in 1998 scored enough to qualify for Commemorative Bucks of Michigan.



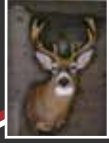
## Michigan: Eleventh Hour Buck

By Roger Froling

I guess you just have to be in the right spot at the perfect time. On the last day of the gun season I was sitting in my blind and here come three does through the snow. It was very cold and we had about two feet of snow, so the deer showed up really nice on the white snow. I watched the three does as they dug through the snow and ate the alfalfa below. It was almost dark when the does looked back to the woods at another approaching deer. It stayed close to the edge of the field as it slowly moved ahead toward the does. Finally it stopped and it looked as though it might retreat to the safety of the woods. I centered the cross hairs on its chest and squeezed off the trigger. The twelve gauge deer slayer hit its mark and even though I had to take care of my eight point buck in the dusk, I was really thrilled to have lucked out with this fine deer. I got my snowmobile and hauled my trophy back to the barn. It was a good way to end the deer season. I'm looking forward to next deer season already.



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"It's hard to beat a person who never gives up." - Babe Ruth



# ***BOW HUNTING IN SOUTH AFRICA***

*A Pictorial Essay by Ron Gower*

The main focus of this trip was to attempt to harvest a lioness with my bow. I enjoy bow hunting more than any other method of hunting and have traveled to multiple destinations with a bow in hand. With that being said I am also realistic and if, after multiple attempts, I am unable to close the gap on an animal to bow range I will swop out my bow for a rifle. For this trip, my third trip to Africa, I decided to book with Pieter Viviers of Marupa Safaris. Back in 2017 a group of friends and I booked with Pieter. My primary target on that hunt was also a lioness with my bow. Unfortunately, importing of lions stopped and instead

of hunting for a lioness I turned my focus to a variety of plains game animals. Well, in 2021 I decided to retire and gift myself that lioness bow hunt I missed out on in 2017. I traveled to South Africa in May of 2021 and was the first client Marupa had in over a year. My hunt took place in the Northern Cape and was a trip that will live with me until I take my last breath. To say I had a great time would be an understatement.

The following are pictures with descriptions to tell the story of my adventure.



## **Beautiful Lodge at Northern Cape & Sunset over Northern Cape**

Here is a picture of the lodge I stayed at in the Northern Cape. This lodge was constructed in 2019 and has great accommodations including a pool. The sunsets from the outside sitting area were breath taking.



## **Black Impala**

Although the black impala wasn't on my mind when I flew to South Africa when the opportunity arose I decided to seize the day and was able to connect on this nice ram.

## Copper Springbok, Black Springbok, & White Springbok

When I booked my trip back to South Africa I knew I wanted to complete my Springbok slam. I was lucky enough to do so with these nice animals. Notice the uniqueness of the color of the horns on the White Springbok. Pieter told me horns like this are not very common, with most springbok having black horns.



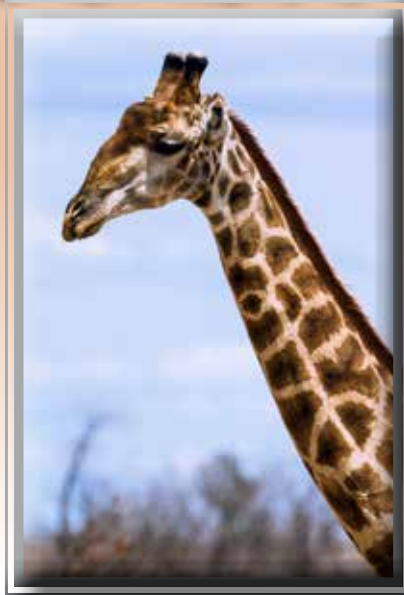
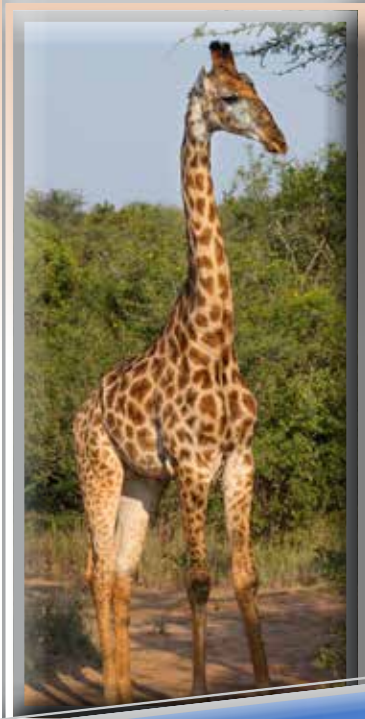
## Lioness & Thick Stuff

Five years in the making. This was the most exhilarating hunt I have been on. Pieter was able to get me to within 17 yards of this big lioness. The vegetation the lions liked to hang out in was very thick. This added to overall experience of the hunt. You may notice in the picture to the left Pieter is standing where the lioness was when I shot my arrow. Definitely a hunt I will always enjoy reliving in my mind. If you want a truly heart pumping, hair raising hunt try archery hunting for lion.



## Giraffes

Nothing quite says Africa like giraffes. We encountered giraffes multiple times throughout our time at Marupa's Northern Cape lodge.



## Ron with Pieter and entire family & Red Hartebeest

Pieter and I were driving around his property one evening prior to my hunting golden wildebeest. The sun was about an hour from setting and as we were passing by one of the open areas Pieter spotted a group of four golden wildebeest about 300 yards away, near a group of trees. As the sun bounced off the tuft of hair on their backs it literally looked like they were glowing. It was absolutely beautiful. I told Pieter I wouldn't mind hunting one of those magnificent animals someday as it would complete my wildebeest slam. When we got back to the lodge, Pieter asked if I would want to hunt one on this trip and since you only retire

once I said, "YES!" and we made a plan to do so the next day.

The following morning we set off in search of the golden wildebeest. We spotted a group of red hartebeest and I was able to take a nice mature bull at 100 yards with the 6.5 Creedmoor rifle Pieter let me use. After harvesting the hartebeest we set out in search of the golden wildebeest again. An hour later, we located the same group of four we had seen the previous evening. We set off on foot through the bush and after a short stalk were able to close the distance to around 200 yards, where I was able to make a clean kill shot.

I didn't realize how special of an animal this was to Pieter and his family until after my animal was on the ground. Pieter called his Dad and not only did his dad come out to join us but also other members of Pieter's family. His Mother, Sister, two daughters, nieces and nephews all come to celebrate. It was truly a special moment to be able to share this successful hunt with all of them.



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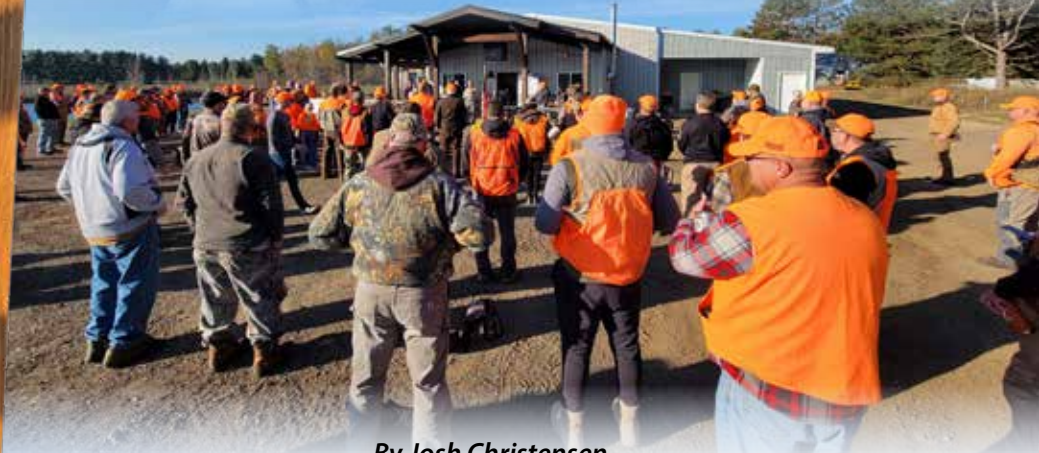
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"People who wonder if the glass is half empty or full miss the point. The glass is refillable." - Unknown



# 6th Annual VETERANS HUNT

*at Crooked Foot  
Upland Bird & Game Hunting Club*



*By Josh Christensen*

"Here comes one! Get ready!" I could hear the excitement in Jeff's voice as I raised my shotgun and focused on the rooster pheasant flying towards us in our blind. It was like Jeff and I were one as we both took proper aim and shot. Only one shot could be heard as we shot in unison. The results were instantly observed as the rooster folded and dropped not ten feet from where we stood.

This was one of the many exciting events that occurred at Crooked Foot Hunt Club on November 7th. On this Sunday, Crooked Foot hosted over 80 veterans from every branch of the military in their annual veteran's hunt. This was my first year attending the event along with my cousin Jeff.

To start the day every veteran checked in at the lodge where donuts and coffee were provided. This was followed by a prayer and a safety briefing and a short five stand shooting clays competition where one member from each branch of the military were selected at random to represent their branch. This gave all of the veterans in attendance a good chance to razz the other branches about who is the best. Jeff is a Navy vet and I am an Army vet, so of course there was a little trash talk between us, but in the end the representative from the Coast Guard came away with the victory taking bragging rights from both of us.

After the competition the veterans were split into three groups to do a tower stand hunt. This is something I had never experienced before and wasn't quite sure what to expect. Our group went to the back of the property and two by two began to fill the ground blinds that formed a circle. In the center of the circle was a tower about twenty to thirty feet high. When the signal was given (a loud horn blast), a person from inside the tower started to





release pheasants from the tower. As the birds took flight the people in the stands took aim and shot at the birds flying toward their stand. Each stand was roughly 50 to 100 yards apart and 100 to 200 yards from the tower in the middle. After three to five minutes, another signal would be given (two loud horn blasts) and everyone rotated to the next stand. This process happened over and over until we made a full circle around the tower (around 20 blinds).

This was a fast paced and exciting way to shoot birds. There were several times Jeff and I had a bird fly right over us without a shot going off because we were both reloading and there were other times neither of us fired a round because none of the pheasants flew our way. Our synchronized shot mentioned before was taken from one of the blinds on the tower hunt.

Once the tower stand shoot was over our group did a walk behind hunt. This was where we used flushing dogs to follow up on the pheasants that weren't shot in the tower stand shoot. We spent around an hour walking through two fields and shooting at birds as the dogs flushed them. Jeff and I both shot several more pheasants...and missed some too, but none-the-less had a great time.

To finish our day at Crooked Foot, we were served an excellent lunch of pork, mashed potatoes, pheasant poppers, corn, gravy, salad and a role. As Jeff and I sat outside enjoying our meal while talking about our experience with



other veterans we both decided we should try this again sometime.

**Editor's note: Hunts like this are provided to veterans through donations from organizations like our Mid-Michigan Chapter of SCI.**

***See you again next year!***

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# A Shot in the Dark

By Major Jonathan Turnbull, US Army

“Breathing, sight alignment, and trigger squeeze.” Those three areas are taught as the fundamentals of shooting in the US Army. Since medically leaving the Army two months before, I struggle still with finding purpose and happiness in my current situation. Three years ago, I was a Team Leader for one of the greatest Special Operations elements in the greatest country in the world. My team was fighting to remove the control that ISIS held over the people of northeast Syria in a town called Manbij. Our success in the fight against ISIS ended when a suicide bomber detonated his vest close to my team. The explosion that killed four American heroes left me alone and in the dark.

As one of the only survivors of the explosion I lost my eyesight along with my teammates. As outlined in my book *Zero Percent Chance*, I had 22 surgeries over two years to return my body to the condition I had been in prior to the explosion; however, without a cure for blindness, I was left in the dark. I learned quickly that I had a choice in everything: I could accept that I couldn't do something, or I could find a way to do it. The first thought was to remain a Soldier, and my commander said he supported me if I could prove that I was value added. He gave me a task to demonstrate my limitations, and that was to shoot my rifle accurately and safely. Three years later, and now separating from the Army, I had not given up. I focused on the fundamentals of shooting that I learned from repetition in the Army.

I could not see, but that did not stop me from accepting any challenge. This challenge is one of the greatest I had been given in the past couple years. While recovering after a nasty surgery at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, in Bethesda MD, my dad informed me that one of his friends wanted to thank me for my service and sacrifice. This friend wanted to send me on a moose hunt in Maine in the fall. I remembered the many hunts I went on with my dad and agreed on the hunt if my dad could attend, not only as my blind guide, but also as my spotter, and friend. This hunt was special.

Many people reached out to me thanking me for my service and asking me if there was anything they could do for me. My dad's friend, Mike, demonstrated his gratitude by taking it a step further. He rallied support for us and did all the coordination on his own. He reflected my Army unit's motto: 'Actions, not Words!' Mike's display of thanks helped me with my recovery. He showed me that everything I went through and would yet go through was worth it because there are Americans who will go the extra mile and support our Soldiers. It was on that moose hunt that I found myself. I shrugged off all the questions people asked me to doubt my ability to place a .308 bullet in a tiny target to successfully kill a grown moose. “How can you do that? Is it safe for you to shoot a rifle? Why even try with your

*Jon, Ray Howell of  
Kicking Bear Camps, and  
Dave Hentosh of Smoldering  
Lake Outfitters.*





handicap?” Listening to my father next to me I smiled, “Right, stop. Up a little, no... that is too far, down. Stop.” I heard an audible sigh as he used his phone to spot for me. When he dialed me onto the tiny spot behind the moose’s shoulder, he said the words I was waiting for. “Fire!” I let out my breath and at the natural pause before inhaling, I squeezed the trigger like I had thousands of times before.

My M1A1 bucked off the tripod I was using to stabilize the shot, but I settled down the system quickly. Our guide, Dave, shouted to hit her again that she was still standing. I prepared for another shot. My dad talked me back onto target using his phone connected by

Bluetooth with the Accufire Noctis V2 scope. After our adjustments I made another shot as the 800 lb. cow moose ran into the woods. After some hand shaking and congratulations, we picked up our equipment and walked to begin tracking the beautiful animal. I counted my steps and noted that the cow was a little over 200 yards from our position. We found her quickly and had to shoot her one last time before we could safely walk up to her. A close friend that was there with us prayed as we thanked the moose for her sacrifice.



**Mike Turnbull (Jon’s Dad), Major Jon Turnbull, Dave Hentosh**

It was the hunt of a lifetime and allowed me to prove to myself and everyone around me that I am not limited by my handicap. We made a 200-yard shot on a moose while it was moving. For me it was a shot in the dark, and without the help of people around me, it would have been impossible. I pray that God blesses everyone involved with this and that they know how grateful I am that this was made possible. It is through “random acts of kindness,” that people show others love. These random acts of kindness are what the world needs, especially now with all the craziness in the world. What started with an explosion in Syria ended with filling a freezer full of moose meat.

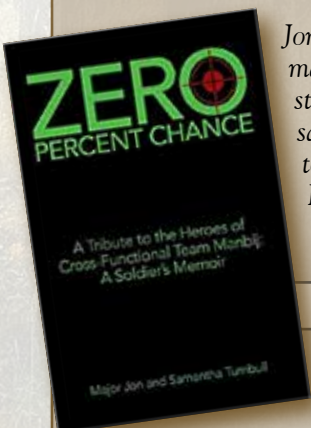
A note from Michael Ritchie, the man responsible for coordinating this hunt and gathering donations from chapters like ours to give disabled veterans an experience of a lifetime.

*Jon looks forward to the future and accepts all challenges at his feet. His encouragement is to everyone, no matter what their handicap, “Stand tall and face every challenge saying, challenge accepted!” Jon’s inspiring story (Zero Percent Chance) is available at amazon.com, and he thanks SCI Mid-Michigan, and all involved saying that “Your support showed me grace and helped me accomplish something that many people saw to be impossible.” He remains strong and knows his faith will help him in any task. He often reflects on Philippians 4:13 which says, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.”*

*~ Michael Ritchie*

**Jon can be reached at [jon.m.turnbull.com](http://jon.m.turnbull.com) or go to [www.tbullstrong.com](http://www.tbullstrong.com) to learn more about him.**

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# Conservation Affairs

Compiled and submitted by Autumn Gonda



## CONSERVATION CORNER

### Monitoring Great Lakes Salmon and Trout Populations

**Want to report a trout or salmon with a missing adipose fin? It could have a Coded Wire Tag so there are special instructions you should follow! You can find those instructions below:**

- Marking programs are implemented for a variety of reasons, including estimating fish growth, mortality, exploitation, and movement. Your cooperation is an essential component of these programs, and successful fish marking programs will result in more abundant and healthier fish for the sport fishery.

Methods of externally marking fish include branding, tattooing, and optical pattern recognition. Internal tags or marks include both artificial and natural marks. Artificial marks include implanted wire tags, dyes on otoliths ("ear bones") or other hard parts, visible implants, and radio and ultrasonic implants. Natural internal marks include genetic marks, chemical / elemental marks, and biological marks (e.g., unique parasites, others). All of these various methods are used extensively, and each has unique advantages that are dependent on the goals of the marking program.



#### Coded Wire Tags poster



#### Coded Wire Tag in fish



#### • Instructions:

- You can help in the monitoring of Great Lakes salmon and trout populations. Many of these fish have been marked with a small coded-wire tag, which is implanted in the head of the fish, but invisible to the naked eye.

If you catch a fish that is missing only the adipose fin (see photo, below), it is possible that it has had a coded-wire tag implanted into its snout. Please use the coded wire tag recovery form (found on <http://www.michigan.gov/dnr>) to record the following information: date caught, location caught, species, length, weight, sex (if possible) and fin clip. Remove and freeze the fish's snout (part of head from behind the eyes forward), and drop off the snout along with data sheet at a drop off location, or call 517-284-5830 for a list of local sites. Please do not put in the mail!

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From: Jeff Jensen

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# BLACK BEAR

## THE HUNT OF MY DREAMS AT HEPBURN LAKE LODGE



Arlee & Darlene Thideman's camp at La Ronge, Saskatchewan

**By Brenda Lindquist**

I grew up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula and it has been my dream to take a big, old black bear, since I first started hunting with my dad, many years ago.

In 2016 Rod Merchant and I accompanied Roger and Margo Card on a fly-in fishing trip at Hepburn Lake Lodge. Over meals, drinks and camp fires, Arlee and Darlene entertained us with amazing bear hunting tales. My cooler was full of beautiful fish fillets when we left and, with aspirations and fantasies rekindled, I now knew the place and people I wanted to help me fulfill my life long goal.

Five years later, I got my bidder's number at the 2021 spring fundraiser. With nervous anticipation I opened the auction item book, hoping the Thideman's had donated a hunt. There it was, right up front—page 3—item 12!! Trying to be casual, I brought it to Rod's attention. He smiled and said, "Let's see how it goes." After all, I had

dropped quite a few hints throughout the last few years. Probably no one at the fundraiser noticed but I had the first bid and never took my hand down. Rod says I even bid against myself a couple times. I won the trip and was going bear hunting with Arlee and Darlene at Hepburn Lake Lodge. Dreams can come true!

Getting into Canada in September of 2021 was a real struggle because of the pandemic but we accomplished everything required and made the trip without incident. Originally we wanted to fly but there were problems with the airlines so we ended up enjoying the trip of more than thirty hours by motorhome.

Our destination was the tiny village of Missinipe, Saskatchewan. Once there, we checked in with Osprey Air for the short plane ride out to camp. As the plane gently touched down on Hepburn Lake we saw our friends, the



Thidemans, standing on the dock, waving and smiling. It had been a long trip but I was ready for the adventure to begin.

We settled in with our gear and Arlee got right on with my orientation. We talked of how big bears walk different, look different and have characteristics that can help in selecting a good one. I knew about the things he was telling me but it was so much better coming from him.

Rod soon threw some gear in a boat and took off fishing. Arlee and I weren't far behind, heading out for my first hunt. I couldn't believe it was finally happening!

I was able to scope a couple bears and went through my check list, confirming they were not the shooters I was looking for. It also gave me the opportunity to put crosshairs on the bear and talk myself through the shot.

That night over supper Darlene said there had been a good bear on a trail cam hitting a bait at a completely

different location. It had been missing for a few days and her intuition told her, "Tomorrow's the day!" Arlee smiled and rolled his eyes, but we changed location after only one hunt. Were we actually leaving a stand that was very active for one that had been left alone for a while? The first bear I saw at Darlene's location was huge! It walked pigeon toed, had a huge big head, small ears, crease in hairline on the forehead, ears far apart and it's back was taller than the mark Arlee had put on the tree. This bear checked all the boxes and I was perfectly calm as I put the cross hairs behind the shoulders, slipped off the safety and squeezed the trigger. The old bruiser never left the bait pile. We had the well-earned camp celebration that afternoon and evening, then spent the rest of our week enjoying some fantastic fishing.

Big and fat, the bear scaled out well over four hundred pounds, the skull measured 18.5 inches and the cape was flawless. We can't wait to see it made into a rug! Thank you so much, Arlee and Darlene, for donating that hunt to our chapter and making my lifetime dream come true!



# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

## Reponses to: Where is your favorite place to hunt and why?

☛ My current favorite cover to hunt we call the “160.” Besides being a great grouse cover, it was once owned by my great grandfather’s brother who lost the property in the early 1900’s and it since reverted back to state land. Walking amongst the old barn and home crumbling foundations overgrown with aspen stirs up a lot of memories and connection to that patch of land. – **Chad Donahue**

☛ Traveling out of country can be intimidating if you’ve never done it before, however it is a lot easier than I thought it would be. I’ve enjoyed every trip and just made sure to do my homework on what is needed and where I need to be. It does help if you go with someone who has already made the trip but not necessary. Personally, I’ve done it both ways and have had no problems. I’ve traveled all the way to Mozambique and over to the mountains in Montana, 100% worth it. Michigan has some real good hunting but I really enjoy pushing myself to new areas and new species. My favorite place to hunt and visit has to be South Africa, I have two trips booked this year alone with Steele Game Safaris and the countdown has begun. If you have questions on what to do, where to go, what you need, paperwork for your guns, or whatever the question is please call me. I would love to help you. 231-580-5753 – **Brandon Jurries**

☛ I would have to say my favorite place to hunt is on our property. I like harvesting animals off of our land that can be used to provide meals for our family, and it is always great to come back into the house with my husband and boys there to share the status of my successful or unsuccessful hunt. – **Sara Christensen**

☛ My favorite place to hunt is anyplace that I am with family or great friends. I enjoy a variety of hunting pursuits, but the best memories are from times that I have been blessed to share the field or a blind with family or close friends. The bag limit is never the goal, but rather the pleasure of good conversation and sharing a sunrise or sunset with quality people with the same passions that I have. – **Paul Avery**

☛ As most of you know, we have hunted on every huntable continent, in all different conditions from sweltering hot to snowmobiles and dog sleds, but my favorite place to hunt is in my blind on what we call the “Hilly Field”. Recently we had a pond dug just off the east end of this field and some of the excess soil was spread in “my” field but the deer like this area even more now.

We have owned this piece of property since 1980, originally purchased to grow Christmas trees which we did for many years. Don has also had lots of time to develop food plots and erect blinds for hunting. We have spent many hours on this property both with a bow, shotgun, and rifle.

We spent many hours in blinds with our children when they were growing up and finally could hunt on their own. Then we spent many hours with our grandchildren hunting in our blinds but now they can hunt on their own. Each of our grandchildren’s first deer were taken from my blind, with my rifle, so that makes this blind even more special.

I have hunted in most of the blinds on this piece of property and others but the “Hilly Field” is my favorite because the field is only about 100 yards across and seems to be a place where deer and turkeys like to cross. Don made the blind so it has a carpeted shelf and floor, plexiglass windows that slide up to open, and no dividers between the windows. I do not like to sit in a blind with dividers. I feel I sit still when I don’t have to look around the dividers most boughten blinds have. And, it has a heater! Don usually has some luscious crop planted out front. He has planted purple top turnips, wheat, rye, corn, soy beans, buckwheat, clover, alfalfa, sorghum, and mixtures of these.

I have watched turkeys take their “bubble” baths in sandy spots, squirrels run through, sandhill cranes light, many, many deer sparring, nursing, and just running around, and birds of all kinds. I have no idea how many deer and turkeys have been harvested from this blind.

While out hunting, Don and I keep texting each other telling what we are seeing. This past season I texted Don that I hadn’t seen my big buck yet but that I knew he was just back in the woods and on his way. Not a half hour later, an 8-pointer stepped out. Of course, he is now in our freezer!! – **Mary Harter**



If you are reading this magazine then more than likely you are a member of SCI. I often hear from friends and family, “What is SCI?” or “What does SCI do?” or “Why did you join SCI?” In responding to these questions, I feel like I get an opportunity to explain my reasons, but when I hear other SCI members answer these same questions I often learn new things about this organization I have been a part of for the past 18 years. I think we would all be interested to know...

### *Why did you join SCI?*

Write in and let us know. Submit your answer to [jchappyfish@gmail.com](mailto:jchappyfish@gmail.com) and look for it in our next issue of the Front Sight magazine.



# WHAT DO YOU THINK?

☛ My father introduced me to hunting when I was very young. I grew up on a dairy farm in Tuscola County. Our farm had many woodlots that were filled with small game. Rabbits, pheasants and squirrels. Every Sunday, after church, dad would take me hunting or fishing in the creek on our farm. I was dad's "rabbit dog" and "caddie" for pheasants. I began to hunt about age twelve or fourteen and would borrow my grandfather's shotgun. I harvested my share of game. The excitement of getting something created a long lasting memory and I enjoyed every minute in the field.

In 1972 I purchased private land in Isabella County. Named the Pine Hill Club, it is a game rich property. Having spent 50 years hunting deer and small game has increased my love of nature and the out-of-doors.

I have hunted the same deer blind for nearly 50 years. It is quiet, safe and highly successful. My blind is named the Chapel and I tell my friends I pray quietly for the monster buck. This is my spot and I watch the tamarack trees change from green to golden every fall. I am blessed to own this game rich area. At age 82 I have harvested many bucks and turkeys from this blind. It is my "little corner of the world." I have a heater, swivel chair and bench for coffee and snacks and a good book. What more can a hunter want? This is my special place every fall. Peace, serenity and success abound there. I look forward, each year, to hunt my "corner of the world." The excitement of shooting a big buck gets stronger each year with memories of past hunts etched in my mind. – **Robert C. Mills, Owner-Pine Hill Club**

☛ My 2 favorite places to hunt are Africa and Vassar. The African animals are so beautiful and of course are good eating too. The sensation of harvesting those animals is very exciting and rewarding. I enjoy hunting in Vassar in October because there really hasn't been any pressure put on the deer that early in the season so they are moving around. I've hunted there for 3 years and was successful each year. – **Autumn Gonda**

☛ Although I don't really do much hunting, I have 2 memorable experiences. The first was a mule deer Hunt in Montana. The scenery was beautiful, the weather was bone chilling cold and it took us several days to find the right animal. When the time came though, I was ready and made a great shot! A great experience for a novice hunter.

The second experience was alligator hunting in the swamps of Louisiana. Although it seemed a bit daunting at the beginning, after one day of getting the routine down of searching for the alligators, learning how to bait them, and then actually watching how to shoot them, it was an exhilarating experience. I would recommend this hunt to anyone who might like a change of pace hunting experience! – **Abbe Mulders**

☛ My favorite place that I've hunted is South Africa, because I loved how different it was from hunting in Michigan. The terrain, the temperature, the variety and number of animals, it was all entirely different from Michigan, and I enjoyed the change. – **Elijah Christensen**

☛ When I posed the question of "Where is your favorite place to hunt and why?" I thought my answer would be easy. However, the more I thought about it the more other places came into my mind. So where is my favorite place to hunt?

Is my favorite place to hunt my grandparent's farm in mid-Michigan where I was able to spend many fall days hunting with my uncles and cousins? Could it be the tundra of Quebec where I took my first international hunt and was able to collect two caribou on a do it yourself hunt? Maybe it is the country of New Zealand where my wife Sara and I took our first hunting trip together and Sara harvested her first big game animal. Or is it the Eastern Cape of South Africa where I first saw Africa and the animals it had to offer? The Outback of Australia could take the prize as I was able to watch kangaroos bounce their way through the landscape where I dreamt to visit as a kid. Of course, our own property in northern Michigan could be the answer as it was the place both of my sons harvested meat for our family's dinner table for the first time.

But when it comes down to it, my answer is the same place I initially thought of when I posed the question. My favorite place to hunt is Scotland. The trip Sara and I took to Scotland was like no other! We toured northern Scotland before our hunt, had a great adventure hunting the diminutive roe deer on different estates, including the Queen's estate, and we finished our trip with stops in London and Paris before coming home. – **Josh Christensen**

☛ It's almost impossible for me to choose one favorite place to hunt, but if I did it would have to be New Zealand. The biggest reason for this would be the mountains and the views that it provides. Any level of physical ability can hunt the mountains of NZ and the sky is the limit to how back country you want to take your hunt. Additionally, NZ was the only international hunt that I was able to take my daughters with us hunting so it will forever be a special place in my heart! – **Dan Catlin**

☛ This was a tough question to answer, because I have had the opportunity to hunt in many amazing places that are all so different. From the mountains of Wyoming, to the southern coast of Alaska, and in Argentina, South Africa and New Zealand.

I think that New Zealand holds a special place in my heart - it was my first hunt other than whitetail deer, and it was my first international hunt. On top of that, the country of New Zealand, although small in area, holds some very diverse geography and climate. It is a place that I definitely want to go back to - and we spent 5 weeks there the first time we visited!!

I will definitely be going back to New Zealand again to hunt and further explore this amazing country! – **Janis Ransom**

### In An Upcoming Issue



**MY FAVORITE PLACE TO HUNT**  
by Ken Lehman



**HIKING PICTURED ROCKS  
NATIONAL LAKESHORE**  
by Josh Christensen



**BLUE BAGS IN SOUTH AFRICA**  
by Janis Ramson



**50 YEARS AND 1,000 WHITETAILS;  
MISTAKES MADE, LESSONS LEARNED**  
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