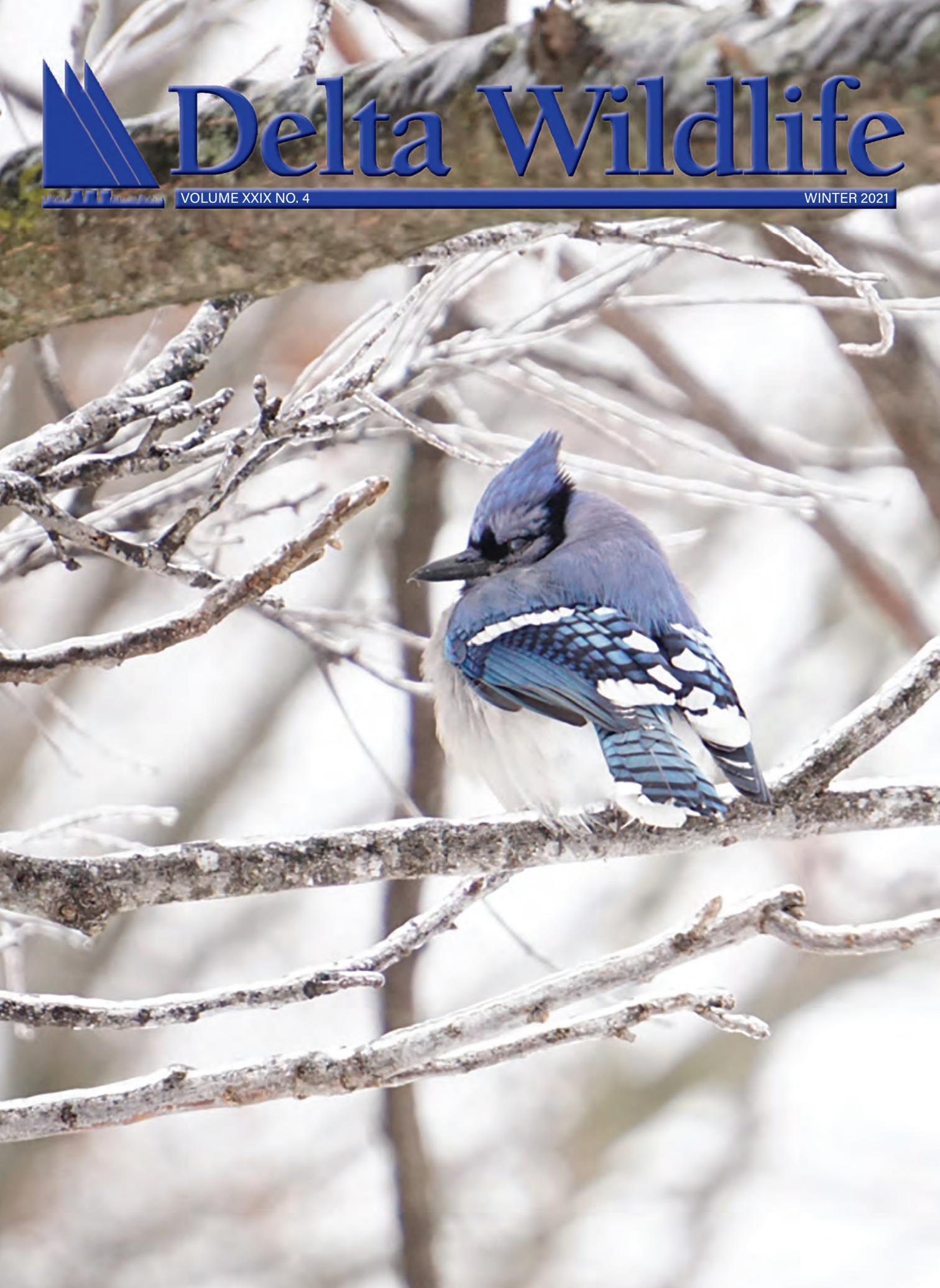




Delta Wildlife

VOLUME XXIX NO. 4

WINTER 2021





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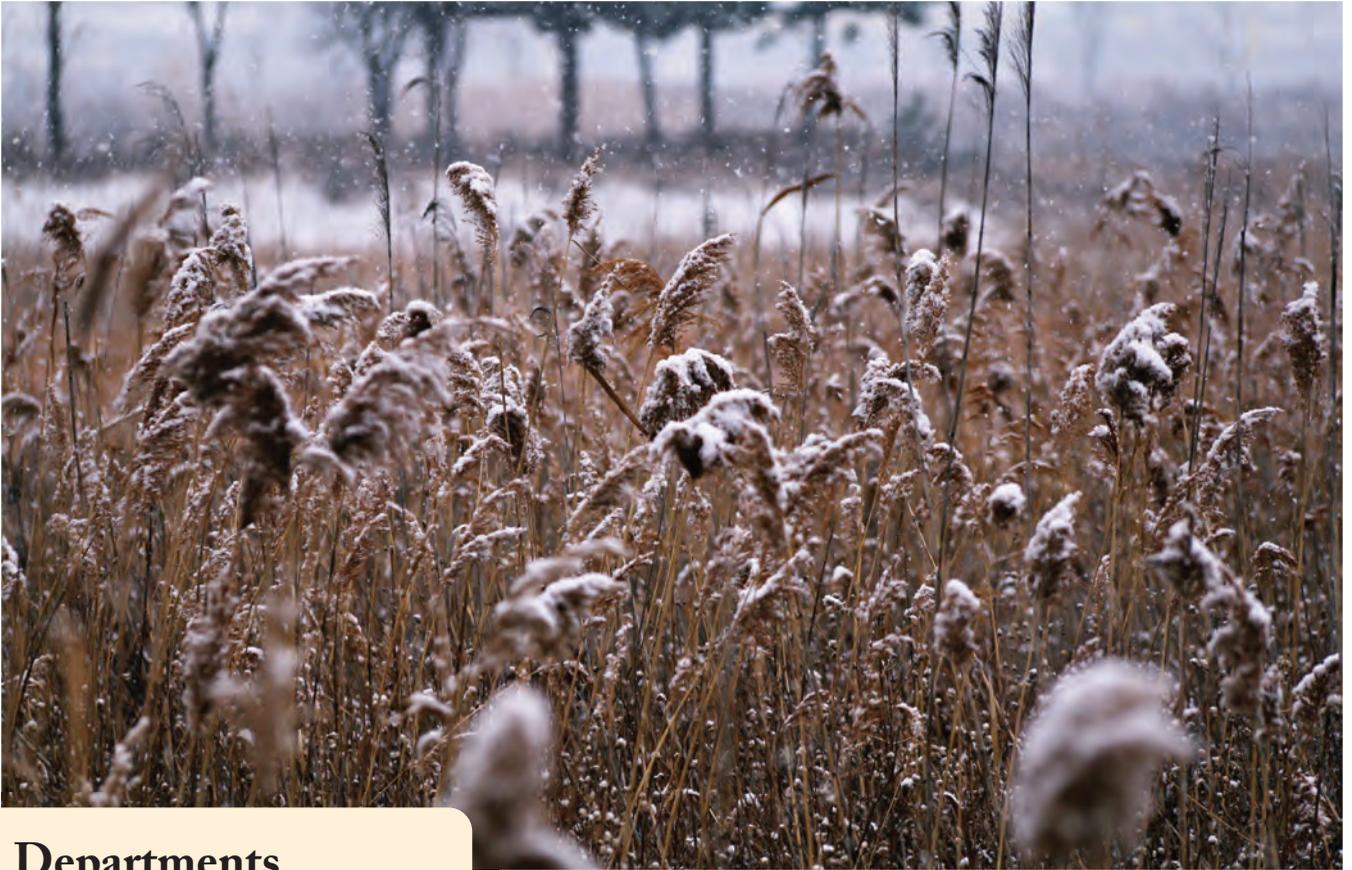
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Departments

4 President's Message

Delta Wildlife News

18 Feral Swine Eradication Project Round II
38 Mississippi Timber Price Report

Delta Fauna

10 Invasive Apple Snails
13 Post Rut Whitetail Behavior
36 Small Game Hunting

Delta Flora

28 Nitrogen Fixation vs. Nitrogen Scavenging

Delta Conservationist

6 Delta Wildlife Member Highlight: John Taylor
12 Delta Wildlife Board Member Highlight: John Murry Greenlee

Delta Flavor

16 Chef Lee Hurley's SEARies

Delta Sportsmen

12 A Sportsman's Journey Book Review
22 The Bigger Picture
34 CWD Regulations and Best Practices

Features

23 Greener Pastures

Offering the premier Farm-to-Table experience, Home Place Pastures in Como is committed to stewardship of the land, the ethical treatment of animals, and the health of the community.

30 How Wardens Get the Guilty to Confess

Meat Eater writer Patrick Durkin joins Delta Wildlife again to talk to us about the illusive and frightening all-mighty game warden. If a conservation warden rings your doorbell and asks to talk... it's probably time to come clean.

About the Cover: Delta Wildlife posted a call for entries for the cover image of the Winter 2021 edition of Delta Wildlife Magazine. Josephine Harrell's image of a blue bird was chosen by the committee as the winning image. Josephine captured the image during the February 2021 winter storm. "I can still hear the silence. No birds were singing, trying to conserve all the calories."

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Message from the President

BY TOMMY GOODWIN



Delta Wildlife is committed to enhancing, restoring and conserving the native wildlife habitats of the Mississippi Delta. We're also committed to doing that job in the most efficient ways possible. Our board and staff know how lucky we are to have such committed donors and partners. Our goal is to steward membership and partner dollars toward projects and resources that provide maximum benefit to our wildlife resources and the people who live and recreate in the Mississippi Delta.

Delta Wildlife's staff has been as busy as ever in 2021. Our small but dedicated team has worked on 17 Wetland Reserve Easements and been on nearly 50 private site visits to consult with landowners. We have assisted Delta catfish farmers with cormorant surveys, provided GIS and mapping services to almost 40 private landowners and removed over 1,000 feral swine from private lands.

Delta Wildlife secured an additional \$1.5 million for feral swine control in nine Mississippi counties, along with \$750,000 to help with management activities on several Delta Wildlife Management Areas. Delta Wildlife has partnered with the Farm Service Agency to provide detailed timber reports to CRP landowners on over 5,000 individual parcels in Mississippi and the adjoining states. In addition, with the support of the Natural Resource Conservation Service, WRE/WRP landowners were paid \$300,000 for management activities on their properties to improve habitat for waterfowl and wading birds. These are just a handful of the many things going on at Delta Wildlife.

As we move into the new year, we hope you will continue to support Delta Wildlife and use our staff and services to improve the native habitats of the Mississippi Delta that we all enjoy so much.

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Delta Wildlife Member Highlight:

John Taylor

BY AMY TAYLOR

Like most Delta boys, Yazoo City native John Taylor spent his childhood hunting and fishing and enjoying the outdoors. John's first recollections include making many special memories hunting mostly deer and squirrels with his granddad, J.C. Lampkin, at Steele Bayou in Issaquena County.

Later, while in high school, John's best friend's dad, Dr. Jack Harrison, invited him on his first duck hunt. "Although I still enjoy a little deer and turkey hunting, I became hooked on duck hunting from that very first hunt, and it's still my passion today." He explains, "I suppose I like the art of duck hunting, actually having to bring them to you. It's also a little more social than deer hunting, and you can harvest more than one!" He adds, "Whatever type of hunting, we're blessed with an abundance of natural resources here in Mississippi where it's more like a club than a state. Hunting is like a fraternity here; it's part of our heritage, a rite of passage."

John still hunts in Yazoo County today, where he takes great interest in proper land management, wildlife preservation and enhancement practices—from deer food plots to water resources. His family loves to gather at their camp often for quality time together. "There's always a project year-round, whether setting up blinds or food plots or cameras for deer. We really enjoy our family time there—working, hunting, cooking and just being together!"

As the current Board Chairman for the Mississippi Wildlife Fisheries and Parks Foundation, John has had the opportunity to work closely with the Delta Wildlife team. "Delta Wildlife is beneficial to our area in numerous ways. Along with Delta Council, they play a huge role in representing the Delta on a state level and national level. Sportsmen in the Delta need a voice, and Delta Wildlife serves that role. They keep us informed legislatively, keeping us abreast of decisions being made in Congress." John adds, "They seem to have a finger on the pulse of landowners in the Delta, and I'm proud to be a part of such a reputable conservation organization, one that has a tremendous amount of influence."

John is a 1975 graduate of Mississippi State University with a degree in Plant Pathology and Weed Science. While at MSU, he held leadership positions in Kappa Alpha, student government and many other campus organizations. He was also a cheerleader for the Bulldogs for three years and head cheerleader his last year. It was there he met fellow cheerleader and future wife, Kay Biglane, of Natchez. John and Kay currently reside in Natchez and are the parents of

three children: Presley Taylor Jennings (John) Jackson Hole, Wyo.; J. Hunter Taylor (Sarah Austin) Cleveland, Miss.; and Pepper Taylor Self (Wesley) Germantown, Tenn. All followed in their parents' footsteps as MSU graduates. They also recently welcomed their first grandchild, Nora Katherine and are expecting their second granddaughter in late November and another grandchild due in April.

John has worked in the agriculture pesticide industry for most of his career, which centered around Terra Industries where he started as a salesman in 1976. He later moved through the positions of Location Manager, Regional Manager, Sales Manager and ending Divisional Vice President in 1997.

Currently, John is a licensed Agriculture Weed Scientist, Plant Pathologist and Entomologist Consultant. He also holds licenses in Horticulture Weed Control, Horticulture Pest Control, Agriculture Weed Control, Mosquito and Biting Fly Control and Demonstration and Research Pesticide License.

Past President of Montgomery Island Timber Company, Horseshoe Lake Land Company, Yazoo Country Club as well as former member of Manchester Academy School Board,

John currently serves as a Nature Conservancy Trustee for the State of Mississippi, Board Chairman for the Mississippi Wildlife Fisheries and Parks Foundation and CEO of Ag Trading, LLC. A member of AgSaver LLC, a post-patent pesticide company, John also owns and operates Yard D Fence, a fire ant and outdoor pest control application business for commercial property and homeowners.

It was in April 2019 and a few weeks into turkey season, John went in for a routine heart surgery. However, unforeseen complications arose. He explains, "After 78 days, one day after my 66th birthday, I was finally able to leave the hospital after learning how to walk again. For a guy who died twice during that time, I am doing well. My doctors, therapists and medical staff considered me a poster boy for each of their areas; but what I am is a poster boy for the power of prayer. So, please do not ever doubt the power of prayer. If you have in your life someone who needs help, pray to God for that person. If you have a problem, pray. I never knew how powerful prayer is until going through my ordeal." He continues, "Medically, I'm not supposed to be here, but the Lord did not take me in 2019. People have constantly and graciously told me, 'He has kept you here for a special reason and purpose' and I believe it. Take every day as a blessing as the Lord has blessed me to be able to see all my children married and my first grandchild and to know that two more are on the way."



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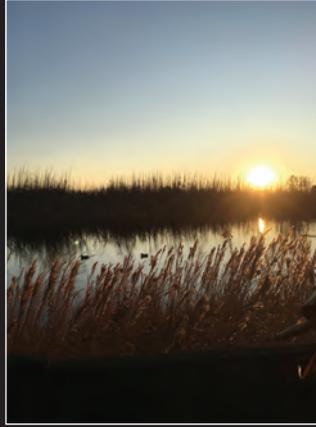


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WINTER COVER SUBMISSIONS



WINTER COVER SUBMISSIONS



Thank you to all who submitted images for the 2021 Delta Wildlife Winter Magazine cover contest. Delta Wildlife posted a call for entries on social media. Josephine Harrell's image of blue bird was chosen by the committee as the winning image. Josephine captured the image during the February 2021 winter storm. "I can still hear the silence. No birds were singing, trying to conserve all their calories."



Invasive Apple Snails

BY WILL PREVOST

Delta Wildlife Staff

The giant apple snail is native to South America and was introduced to the United States through the aquarium trade in the 1990s. They have since become established in many southeastern states including Mississippi and Louisiana. As voracious feeders on aquatic vegetation, these snails have become major pests in many waterbodies and some farming operations.

Pomacea maculata (giant apple snail) are non-native, invasive snails that have heavy yellow to dark brown shells that can be up to six inches tall. They live in shallow parts of slow-moving fresh water and aggressively feed on many types of submersed, emergent and floating aquatic vegetation. With the ability to reproduce rapidly, they can quickly reach high population densities, depleting food and habitat for fish, aquatic invertebrates and waterfowl. While the majority of an apple snail's life is spent underwater, females lay their eggs above the water line in bright pink clusters that can contain up to 700 eggs. Adult females can lay new egg clusters every 5 to 14 days. The eggs are easily noticeable, and are laid on trees, emergent vegetation just above the water line and even boats. This is typically the first visible sign of an infestation.

Since their introduction to the US, apple snails have spread throughout much of south Mississippi, south and central portions of Louisiana and are continually spreading further past their current range. Where populations are dense, bright pink egg masses litter the emergent vegetation in astonishing numbers. High densities of apple snails can degrade habitat for native aquatic organisms and hinder wetland resto-

ration efforts. In addition, crawfish production in Louisiana has been affected by snails filling crawfish traps, reducing number of crawfish harvested and creating extra work to sort the snails out. While apple snails have become a major pest to rice production in other countries, damage to US production has thus far been minimal. Apple snails can also pose a health risk to humans since they serve as an intermediate host for rat lungworm, a parasite that can infect mammals.

Limited Control Options

Management options for apple snails are very limited. There is currently no selective pesticide that will eradicate them without affecting other organisms in the waterbody. Physically removing the snails or knocking the egg masses into the water can help to slow the spread since inundated eggs will not hatch. The eggs contain a neurotoxin that irritates skin and eyes so care should be taken to avoid touching them. To have any chance of eradication it is vital to catch the problem in early stages of an infestation.

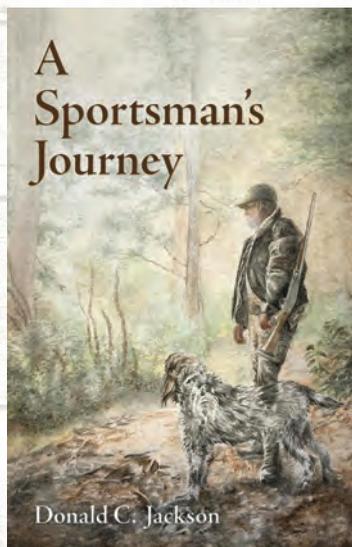
While severe infestations in Mississippi are currently limited to southern portions of the state, further range expansion is anticipated. It is important to be aware of these pests and to prevent introduction to new waterbodies since there is no effective control method once a population becomes established. If you happen to notice the bright pink egg masses, carefully knock them into the water and continue to monitor the situation. As always, boaters should check their boats for aquatic hitchhikers to prevent spreading invasive species between waterbodies.

Set your sights on the ideal gift for the outdoorsman

BY AMY TAYLOR

Arthfully and vividly penned, master storyteller Donald Jackson's *A Sportsman's Journey* captures a lifetime of outdoor escapades filled to the brim with emotional depth, humor and thoughtful notions. His vignettes are authentic and relatable, not only to the hunter, but also to those of us who share his southern upbringing and spiritual connection to the land. Whether diving into the mystery of *Once I Met a Mountain Man*, exploring the journey in *Old Trucks Keep Us Connected* or laughing at the honesty of *Crickets Tell the Truth*, each of the 28 short stories in this collection envelopes and transports the reader into a time and place we may have also experienced or one we wish we had.

A Sportsman's Journey should be kept on your nightstand on the eve of opening day when excitement hampers your sleep or when outdoor elements only allow for curling up beside a roaring fire with a good book. Settle into the pages of Jackson's well-worded memories and find yourself completely immersed in southern sporting culture. Delight your mind's eye with rich, vibrant settings and familiar backdrops—places you've been, places you'll recognize. Explore legends, experience adventure and journey with the author in his old truck rambling through the lesser traveled backroads of Mississippi and Arkansas where you're sure to laugh a little, cry a little, be inspired and above all, be entertained.



A Sportsman's Journey

By Donald C. Jackson

A Sportsman's Journey (November 2021) features expressive reminders of the power and spiritual pull of the natural world. In the book, author Donald C. Jackson explores the rhythms of hunting and fishing, particularly in America's Deep South. Ultimately, it reveals how all of us depend on the natural world and share very personal interactions with it and with each other.

Donald C. Jackson is Sharp Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Fisheries at Mississippi State University. He served as a US Peace Corps volunteer in Malaysia, attended Lexington Theological Seminary and was pastor of New Liberty Christian Church, Disciples of Christ. He is a past president of the Mississippi Wildlife Federation and the American Fisheries Society. An avid duck hunter and fisherman, Jackson is author of *Deeper Currents*, *Tracks and Wilder Ways*, all published by University Press of Mississippi.

Delta Wildlife Board Member:

John Murry Greenlee

BY AMY TAYLOR

Growing up in the midst of some of the finest natural resources available, John Murry Greenlee seized the opportunity to explore the best the Delta has to offer. “Most of my friends were also from farming or farm-related families, so we definitely took advantage of that down-time in winter to enjoy honing our hunting skills,” he says.

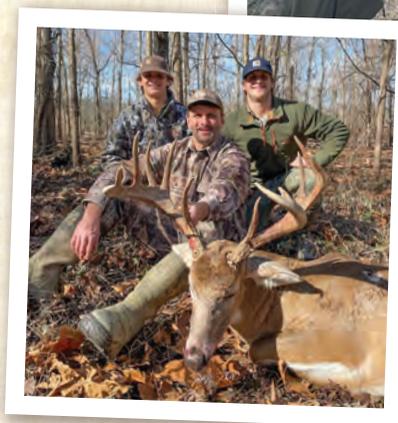
“Dad introduced me to deer hunting at an early age. It was while hunting on our family land behind the levee that I killed my first deer,” he reflects. “Later, we enjoyed hunting at Refuge Hunting Club when it was a lease club, and those days were filled with my first ‘camp-life’ experiences.”

When John Murry was in high school, his dad, Thomas Greenlee, had the opportunity to join Cooper’s Hunting Club, an Anderson-Tully property. “At Cooper’s, Johnny Eddleman introduced me to duck hunting. Later, Dad and his good friend Pat Sullivan leased Archer Island and formed a club there. It was at Archer that my uncle, Frank Greenlee, introduced me to turkey hunting. Amanda and I bought a share there after we were married, and we enjoyed a lot of good years at Archer.”

When yet another opportunity arose, John Murry and a group of his friends bought into Henderson Island Hunting Club, formerly known as Willow Point South, adjacent to Eagle Lake. Additionally, he hunts at Barefoot, Amanda’s family’s land on the Big Black River in Benton, and at Delta Wildlife and Forestry as a stockholder and member of Greasy Bayou. He adds, “Outside of these properties, we hunt other various family properties around Yazoo, Humphreys and Washington Counties, most of which are row crop farms that we have also incorporated deer and duck hunting into with the help of Delta Wildlife.”

A father of three, John Murry comments, “Because I was raised hunting, I’ve always been very passionate about also teaching my kids the sport of hunting. I introduced them all at a very young age; Link killed his first deer at age five! I’ve just always believed it’s another activity, a sport that gives them something to focus on and stay out of trouble. All three of our children (sons Link and Staten, both Mississippi State University students, and daughter Lexie, a 10th grader at Manchester Academy) are avid hunters.”

John Murry joined Delta Wildlife years ago after reading several articles urging hunters to get their kids involved at an early age. “I took an immediate interest as those articles resonated in me,” he says. More and more, he realized the value of the organization, one that makes a difference in helping landowners and outdoorsmen with land and wildlife management. He adds, “The Delta Wildlife team is not just talk; they take a hands-on, boots-on-the-ground approach in helping their members.”



Later, as President of Delta Wildlife, John Murry had the opportunity to work with Daniel Ulmer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith. “We invited Daniel to a dinner meeting and explained the need to extend duck season through the last day of January. I believe this was the first bill that Senator Hyde-Smith wrote and passed in the legislature. So, it was great seeing an idea that started with just a small dinner at Barefoot being voted into law on a national level.”

Upon graduation from Mississippi State University with a degree in Agricultural Business,

John Murry farmed on his family farm for a few years before working for Delta and Pine Land Company for two years. He then was hired by BankPlus in Yazoo City in 2000 as a Vice President/Loan Officer. Also a graduate of the Mississippi School of Banking at the University of Mississippi and the School of Banking at Louisiana State University, in 2021 John Murry was named President of BankPlus in Yazoo City. In his community, he has previously served as President of the Yazoo City Rotary Club, President of the Manchester Academy School Board, Treasurer and Scholarship Chairman of the Yazoo County MSU Alumni Association, Deacon of First Presbyterian Church of Yazoo City and serves on the Yazoo Port Commission Board of Directors. As an Eagle Scout, he spent years in the Yazoo County Boy Scouts of America as Fundraising Chair. Former President of Delta Wildlife, he received Delta Council’s Achievement Award as Yazoo County Membership Chairman.

“I’ve always believed that we should make improvements to the land, leaving it better than we received it. Being a member of Delta Wildlife has not only been an extremely beneficial resource in land and wildlife management but has also provided many connections and even opened doors in my banking career.” John Murry continues, “I would encourage everyone to join and get involved in Delta Wildlife; you’ll definitely get a huge return on your investment.”

Post Rut Whitetail Behavior and Tactics

BY STEELE HENDERSON

Delta Wildlife Staff

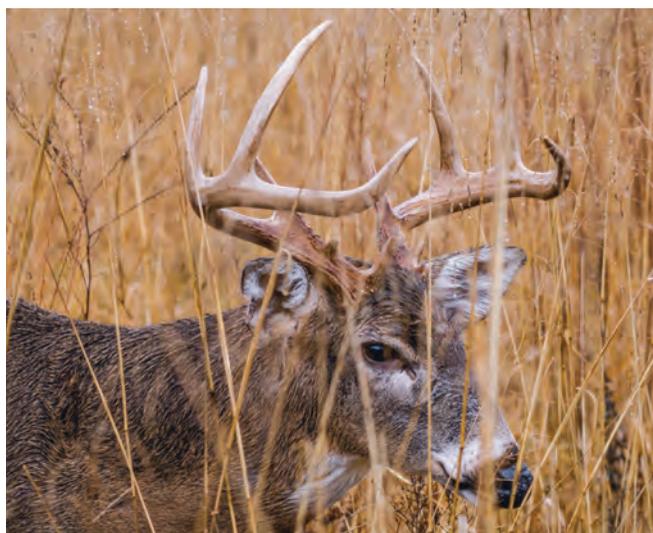
In Mississippi, it is no secret that the peak rut for whitetail deer is something that hunters look forward to all year. Many people go as far as planning vacation time around the middle of December, and I cannot blame them. It is one of the most exciting times to be in the woods chasing mature whitetails as their minds are focused on chasing does in estrous, allowing for a higher opportunity at harvesting one. Although the opportunity is much higher, it is anything but guaranteed. So, what does one do when they find themselves empty handed at the end of the rut? The short answer to this is to change tactics, stay optimistic and prepare yourself to hunt post rut whitetails. The post rut will come with a whole new set of challenges. Many hunters who have figured out what works during this time of year look forward to it, as they enjoy the challenge.

Understanding the Deer

To be successful hunting deer in the post rut, you must first understand what they just went through during the peak rut. The peak rut for whitetail deer is a very strenuous, energy-depleting time for both bucks and does. More so for bucks, though, as they travel great distances fighting, chasing and breeding, which depletes much of their energy reserves. Both does and bucks handle the harsh conditions differently during the transition into the post rut. Does tend to seclude themselves from the rest of the herd once they have been bred in efforts to build back lost energy reserves to prepare for the harsh weather in January and February. Doing so will ensure she is in optimal health come spring.

Mature bucks will continue to roam in search of the last doe in estrous that they can find. Occasionally, what is known as “the second rut” is sparked by does that come into estrous late. This is a great time to be in the woods to catch a mature buck slipping after the end of the peak rut. It is important to be mindful of the deer that you are hunting this time of year as the second rut can come and go before you even know it happened. Aside from the second rut, a vast majority of bucks during the post rut are just completely worn down as they have spent the past few weeks roaming, rutting, fighting and breeding. Some bucks will have lost 20 percent of their body weight, so their focus during the transition from peak rut to post rut is replenishing lost body reserves. As a result, providing high quality food sources can be your ticket to success during this time of year.

If you are planning on chasing these post rut bucks, you may be wondering where to hunt? Where and how to set up? You should take into consideration the points mentioned earlier, the deer are worn down and are focusing on food to refill depleted body reserves. This will be some valuable information for you to narrow down areas the bucks will most likely be. Although there are many variables that play into this, and many people have their own opin-



ion. There are two areas that are basically universally successful across all regions.

Major Trails Near Bedding Areas and Food

Finding a trail from a bedding area to a nearby food source can lead to success during this time of year, especially. If you think about it, the bucks are going to use as little energy as possible to get the most in return. This means they are going to bed down in an area that is near the highest quality food source such as standing beans or turnip plots, which will give them the most in return to refill all of the depleted protein and carbohydrate reserves. Although these bucks will tend to be solitary, they are not likely to be as sneaky as they normally would. They will use the easiest route from bedding to food to allow for the least amount of energy expended.

To be successful in these areas you must take everything into consideration. First and foremost, your entry and exit close to bedding areas needs to be as quiet as possible with the least amount of resistance. Secondly, always, ALWAYS, play the wind - do not go hunt an area with the wrong wind because you want to go hunting and you think it will not matter. This will lead to failure. Once you spook a post rut buck from his bedding area, it will be difficult finding him again as he will move and shrink his range even smaller making finding him again before the season is over next to impossible. The second area to focus on is obviously food. Any high-quality food source this time of year near bedding is a great spot to hunt.

Good luck, happy hunting, and don't forget to send a snap of your shot to info@deltawildlife.org!

A man wearing a blue hard hat with a white sunburst logo, safety glasses, and a dark jacket is looking down at a tablet computer. The background is a blurred blue sky.

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Sear-ies

BY CHEF LEE HURLEY



Chef Lee Hurley began working in kitchens over 15 years ago as a table busser. It didn't take long for him to move up to the line where he found his love for cooking. Lee graduated from Mississippi University for Women with a B.S. in Culinary Arts & Sciences and a minor in Entrepreneurship. Lee has worked in and opened many kitchens across the Mississippi Delta and Jackson, Miss. It was first at Parlor Market that Lee discovered his passion for charcuterie and realized the value of providing farm-to-table meals.

Lee is now the Farm Store Manager and Head Chef at Home Place Pastures in Como, Mississippi.

Lee and his wife, Tiffani, have one beautiful daughter and three spoiled dogs. If Lee isn't in the kitchen, he is probably at the lake or in the woods.

I must admit, I am the world's worst when it comes to following instructions. From looking at Lego instructions, to following my wife's directions when trying to find a location, I am helpless. And especially when it comes to following recipes. To my wife's dismay, I will manipulate the recipe until it hardly resembles the expected dish. I should be the last one to explain how to perform a task, but I believe this to be a Public Service Announcement.

Grass fed beef is "top shelf" of the protein world, as it should be. The care and work that goes into true grass fed programs are a passion.

To cook a grass fed beef product, the same love and passion it took in raising the beef should be present when preparing it. This is why I have created these steps of how to properly cook a grass fed steak.

1. Meat prep — Meat by nature is moist. You may think that's great, but not in the raw stage. For a great sear the meat **MUST** be dry. To achieve this just pat the meat with a towel on both sides.

***Thaw out for 24 hours if product is frozen. Remember-Prior planning prevents poor performance.**

2. Pan size — If you are cooking indoors, using a cast iron skillet, make sure you have the correct pan size for your meat. You want about 1" separation between your cuts to achieve the best sear. If they are bunched up, you will only steam the meat and it will become tough and rubbery with no sear.

3. Correct temperature —

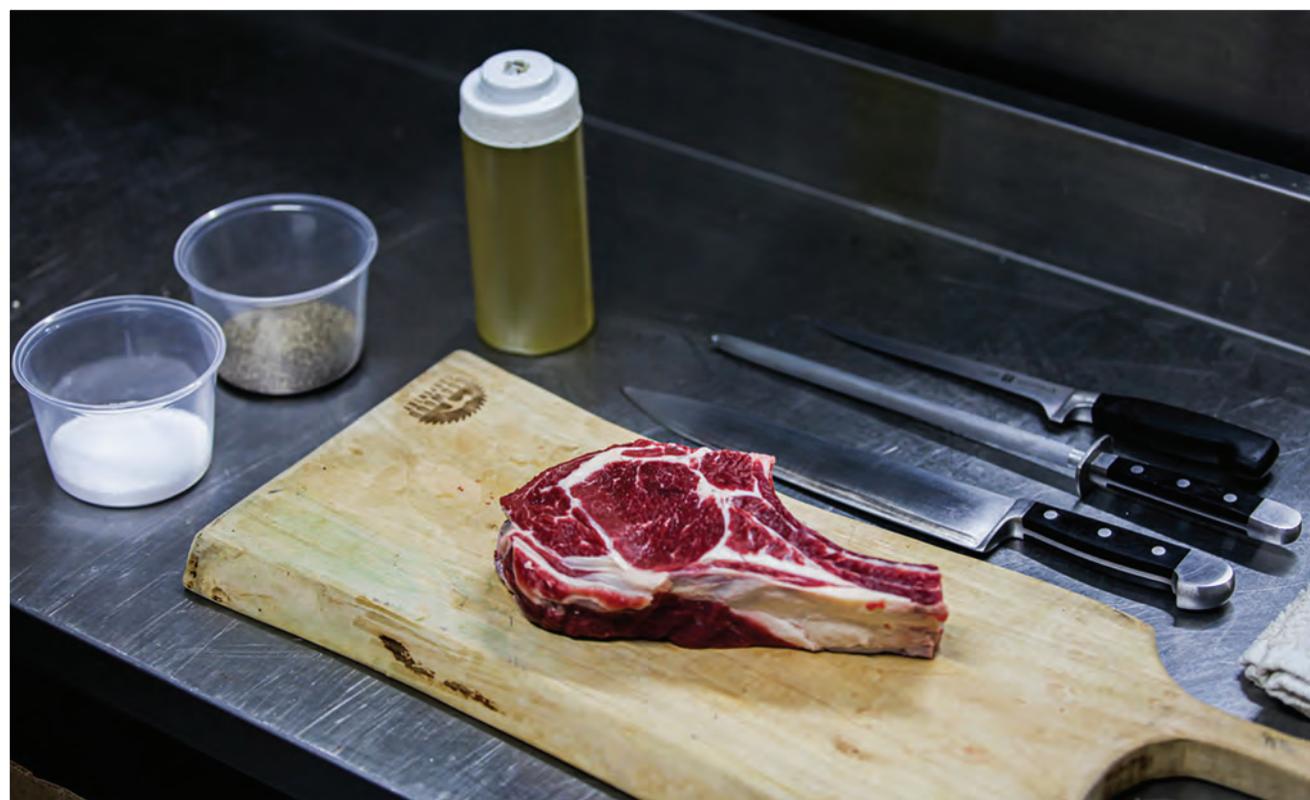
a. **Grill** - Whether you are using good old charcoal or gas, the prerequisite is the same. Your grill must be hot. The easiest way for you to know if your grill is hot enough for a beautiful sear is remembering rule of 4. Put your hand 4 inches above your grate. If you can keep it there for more than 4 seconds, it is not ready. Anything less than 4 seconds you're good to sear!

b. **Skillet** - Turn your skillet on med-high heat. When you see wisps of smoke rising up, add some fat/olive oil to the pan to ensure sear.

4. Seasoning — The only seasoning that grass fed steaks need are salt, pepper and olive oil. Fresh herbs are encouraged, but not dried. They will burn and turn to ash on your steak. Salt, pepper then olive oil. There is no reason for outlandish spices covering a steak. It is an insult to the cow.

5. Wrong cooking temperatures — The initial sear should be hot and fast.

a. **Grill** - For initial sear, place the steak near the hottest place on the grill. No more than 2 minutes on each side. Remove from hot side and place near the cooler side of the grill to finish to desired temperature.



b. **Skillet** - Place steak into the hot pan, and sear for no more than 2 minutes per side. After initial sear, place into preheated oven (300 F) for 5-7 minutes per pound.

6. According to the USDA, the minimum internal cooking temperature for beef is 145 degrees Fahrenheit. With the practices of true grass fed beef farms, the risk of foodborne illnesses are less of a concern than that of commodity beef. With that understanding, we can safely consume grass fed beef at 120 degrees Fahrenheit for a rare doneness, and 140 degrees Fahrenheit is considered well done with grass fed. Anything higher will make it rubbery and lose that precious grass fed flavor we all love.

7. Rest your meat! After following all these steps you may be eager and want to cut into your perfectly cooked steak immediately after removing from the grill. **THIS IS A MISTAKE.**

If you cut in too early, you will lose all those juices you tried so hard to keep inside the steak. Let it rest for two minutes after removing from the heat. This will keep in the juicy goodness you worked so hard for.

8. Marinating beef is great with the correct cut. You would not want to marinate a premium cut of grass fed beef. There is no point as it is already tender, and you would mask the flavor you paid for. Instead, marinate lower end cuts such as sirloin, skirt steak or even flank. These cuts have more connective tissue that will keep them together through the cooking and marinating process.



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Feral Swine Control Project – Round II

BY JODY ACOSTA
Delta Wildlife Staff

Delta Wildlife, along with our state partners The Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce and Mississippi State University, are pleased to announce the Mississippi Delta Feral Swine Abatement Expansion Project will be available for sign up online beginning Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021, at 3pm CST.

This project is implemented jointly by NRCS and USDA's Animal and Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS). Total funding for the program is \$75 million over the life of the 2018 Farm Bill. In the first round of funding, NRCS obligated more than \$16.7 million for 20 feral swine pilot projects in 10 states. APHIS and NRCS limited the first round of pilot projects to select areas of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. Round 1 projects are currently ongoing and are a collaborative effort between APHIS, NRCS and the selected partners.

A second round of funding and projects has already been selected. Round II funding includes expected projects in Alabama, Hawaii, Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas.

NRCS and APHIS are working with Delta Wildlife, Inc., on the two pilot projects in Mississippi to deliver NRCS-funded assistance to producers for eradication and control activities. Collaboration in the pilot area will provide outreach, training opportunities, trap distribution and management, monitoring and evaluation.

Activities will also allow efforts to focus on eradication and control of feral swine by educating landowners and providing tools/equipment that can be used after the project has ended.

NRCS, APHIS and the Mississippi State Technical Agriculture Committee worked together to define the critical areas to be considered for projects within the state. The first round Mississippi pilot project runs from 2020 to 2023. Participating counties consist of Issaquena, Sharkey, Warren and Yazoo.

The second round known as the "Mississippi Delta Expansion Project" is slated to run from 2021-2024. Participating counties will consist of the original four counties plus Claiborne, Holmes, Humphreys, Jefferson and Washington.

Combined, there will be 36 smart traps deployed across the nine counties that are managed by Delta Wildlife staff offering landowners the most effective means of whole sounder removal at no expense or effort to the landowner. Delta Wildlife staff is responsible for operation of the trap from start to finish. Delta Wildlife is enthusiastic to work with our state and federal partners to get this project going and expand the footprint of smart trapping that is currently taking place in the Mississippi Delta.

Private landowners seeking assistance can request services by visiting <https://www.deltawildlife.org/feralswine.html> to submit an online application beginning on 12/1/21. Site visits and assessments will be completed by MSWCC on a first come, first served basis, then active management/trapping will be prioritized and scheduled using a damage assessment ranking tool by Delta Wildlife Staff.





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COUNTY / ACREAGE

Coahoma 99.70 Ac
 Marshall 540 Ac w/Cabin
 Amite 135 Ac w/Home
 Tallahatchie 17 Ac
 Grenada 135 Ac w/Cabin
 Lincoln 20.69 Ac
 Madison 16 Ac
 Copiah 158.3 Ac w/Home
 Issaquena 354.6 Ac
 Newton 214 Ac
 Clay 80 Ac
 Lafayette 31.23 Ac w/Home
 Madison 33.9 Ac
 Yazoo 99 Ac w/Cabin
 Marshall 73 Ac
 Quitman 8 Ac
 Lafayette 138.56 Ac
 Yalobusha 39 Ac
 Holmes 82.3 Ac
 Washington 8 Ac
 Lafayette 57.20 Ac
 Holmes 280 Ac w/Cabin
 Madison 172.3 Ac
 Holmes 295 Ac w/Cabin
 Humphreys 93.5 Ac
 Leflore 87 Ac
 Leake 97 Ac
 Hinds 16.73 Ac
 Sunflower 810.71 Ac
 Yazoo 502 Ac
 Panola 74.3 Ac
 Montgomery 116 Ac
 Tallahatchie 50 Ac
 Simpson 43.6 Ac
 Carroll 157.12 Ac
 Lafayette 4.5 Ac
 Madison 26.67 Ac w/Cabin
 Montgomery 52.6 Ac
 Panola 160 Ac
 Rankin 40 Ac
 Tishomingo 26.2 Ac
 Calhoun 197.97 Ac
 Yazoo 2.32 Ac w/Cabin
 Tallahatchie 140 Ac
 Simpson 70.33 Ac
 Madison 5 Ac
 Leflore 40 Ac
 Calhoun 96 Ac
 Hinds 147.18 Ac
 Holmes 38.5 Ac
 Humphreys 40.89 Ac

COUNTY / ACREAGE

Madison 196.82 Ac
 Lafayette 160.5 Ac
 Bolivar 62.49 Ac
 Montgomery 155 Ac w/Cabin
 Panola 55 Ac w/Home
 Leflore 320 Ac
 Hinds 11.64 Ac
 Quitman 86.39 Ac
 Simpson 80 Ac
 Leflore 625 Ac w/Cabin
 Lafayette 54.13 Ac
 Yazoo 20 Ac
 Bolivar 738 Ac
 Quitman 71 Ac
 Madison 19.27 Ac w/Home
 Tallahatchie 239.07 Ac
 Yazoo 29 Ac
 Marshall 174.42 Ac
 Issaquena 788 Ac w/Cabin
 Hinds 114.2 Ac
 Panola 204.4 Ac
 Tallahatchie 160 Ac w/Cabin
 Holmes 38.5 Ac
 Madison 3 Ac w/Home
 Hinds 35 Ac
 Madison 20 w/Cabin
 Carroll 79.9 w/Cabin
 Issaquena 31 Ac
 Lafayette 88 Ac w/Home
 Scott 67.8 Ac
 Panola 27.12 Ac
 Rankin 68.5 Ac
 Lafayette 54.13 Ac
 Holmes 111.4 Ac w/Cabin
 Bolivar 50 Ac
 Hinds 66 Ac
 Tunica 140 Ac
 Yalobusha 70 Ac
 Madison 72.9 Ac
 Humphreys 19 Ac
 Lafayette 9.29 Ac
 Yalobusha 240 Ac
 Madison 9.73 Ac
 Carroll 1.2 Ac w/Cabin
 Rankin 40 Ac
 Choctaw 16 Ac
 Lafayette 165.4 Ac w/Home
 Sunflower 244.5 Ac
 Grenada 72 Ac
 Madison 355.1 Ac
 Humphreys 95 Ac

COUNTY / ACREAGE

Simpson 249 Ac
 Attala 100 Ac w/Cabin
 Claiborne 224 Ac
 Yazoo 34.23 Ac
 Hinds 114.2 Ac
 Panola 185 Ac w/Cabin
 Calhoun 240 Ac
 Bolivar 243 Ac
 Holmes 38.5 Ac
 Lafayette 150 Ac
 Copiah 600 Ac w/Home
 Yazoo 130.15 Ac
 Lafayette 169.16 Ac
 Rankin 76 Ac w/Home
 Yalobusha 65.4 Ac w/Cabin
 Yazoo 71.5 Ac w/Home
 Panola 83.5 Ac w/Cabin
 Noxubee 259 Ac
 Yalobusha 111 Ac
 Leake 70 Ac
 Craighead 115.12 Ac
 Choctaw 250.3 Ac
 Grenada 172.2 Ac
 Hinds 174 Ac w/Home
 Madison 55.3 Ac
 Holmes 135 Ac w/Cabin
 Montgomery 122 Ac w/Home
 Leflore 65 Ac
 Issaquena/Sharkey 2161.8 Ac
 Holmes 44.65 Ac
 Lafayette 91 Ac w/Cabin
 Madison 239 Ac
 Humphreys 2.70 Ac w/Cabin
 Lafayette 30 Ac
 Hinds 55.70 Ac w/Home
 Newton 131 Ac
 Panola 11 Ac w/Cabin
 Rankin 45 Ac
 Calhoun 16.78 Ac w/Cabin
 Franklin 89.44 Ac w/Cabin
 Yazoo 149 Ac
 Rankin 30.01 Ac
 Madison 27.06 Ac
 Panola 106.6 Ac
 Lee 53 Ac
 Montgomery 264.5 Ac
 Madison 19.27
 Lafayette 40 Ac w/Home
 Yazoo 217.83 Ac
 Holmes 39 Ac
 Madison 15 Ac

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 Merigold w/Cabin
 Ward Lake
 Burkes
 Wild Wings
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 Beulah Island
 Backwater Brake
 Smith Point
 Concordia w/Cabin
 9-Mile Lake
 Backwater Brake
 27 Break
 Montgomery Island
 Lone Cypress
 Hardin Point
 Concordia w/Cabin
 Miller Point
 Black Bayou
 Merigold
 Montgomery Island
 Miller Point
 Concordia Rod & Gun
 27 Break w/Cabin
 Miller Point
 Montgomery Island
 Float Road
 27 Break
 Concordia Rod & Gun

COUNTY / ACREAGE

Sunflower 34.45 Ac
 Lafayette 20 Ac
 Madison 10 Ac
 Tallahatchie 504.4 Ac
 Lamar 82.10 Ac
 Holmes 41 Ac
 Rankin 74.5 Ac
 Carroll 103.6 Ac
 Madison 103.9 Ac
 Rankin 63 Ac
 Marshall 217.25 Ac
 Lafayette 130 Ac
 Webster 191 Ac
 Attala 195 Ac
 Humphreys 74.5 Ac

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The Bigger Picture

BY SAM FRANKLIN

Delta Wildlife Staff

What do deer eat in the winter? How can they survive with no food in the woods? There are certain times of the year, mid to late winter being one of them, where deer go through a bottle neck of food availability. As the fall progresses and winter sets in, the natural progression of die-back happens. This process obviously limits the availability of food reserves for deer, but they have coping mechanisms they've developed for eons.

Luckily in Mississippi and across most of the southeast, frost doesn't normally come until late November/December. Fat reserves help carry the deer through this time until food reserves truly go sparse. The late frost allows plant species to continue to produce into the fall or first part of winter, like the Smilax briar species (commonly referred to as greenbrier). In addition to the greenbrier species, acorns are also a great sustainable food source, but the longevity of the acorn production is significant. How long will acorns carry the deer before they either disappear or rot on the ground?

Deer eat many things other than acorns through the winter, though. Thankfully, our deer aren't as pressured as populations up north that have to suffer through hard winters. Wintertime food resources can include items such as twigs, stems, grasses and other plants, even mushrooms. This is the point where food plots (whatever they may be in regards to species of plant) come into the management picture to help facilitate deer harvest — which is a great tool. Food plots are used to address lean food availability and are only one part of an overall, and much bigger, management program.

Carrying Capacity

There is a concept in wildlife and range management commonly referred to as carrying capacity. Your property is only going support X amount of animals. As you get closer to that cap, your critter quality will diminish in addition to the habitat because they are competing for resources. This is why there are so many aspects that go into a properly balanced management program.

Deer are the subject of this article, but the same principle applies no matter the species. What is a balanced management scenario for a property? Every property is a little different, but all have the same basic components — food, water and shelter. It's that simple. How you encompass those necessary requirements is key, and depending on what you have to work with will dictate what habitat practices, harvests and supplemental programs you implement.

A predominate pine plantation is managed differently for deer than a multiple age class hardwood bottom. Properly timed and managed pine timber harvest will generate choice plants that deer relish along with other species, and the additional created openings could be converted into warm and cool season food plots. In that scenario you converted timberland into a more productive (in regard to food generation) acre by growing more consumable biomass (wheat, turnips, whatever) per acre than was previously there.

Now let's look at a hardwood stand. A thinning of undesirable and non-mast bearing trees would do several things. It would generate additional forage and browse, converting acreage into more biomass per



acre. That management tool would also open the canopy for younger mast-bearing trees to grow and in the long term produce more. Now let's look at the animal-per-acre side of the equation through data. How many deer are you shooting per acre? What's their body weight compared to the regional average? What's their lactation rate? How's the body conditioning of your deer going into the fall and winter? All of those numbers and/or indexes point to where your property and your deer herd are on the carrying capacity scale.

Deer Management Strategies

Successful deer management is like any business. You need to know what your numbers are so decisions can be made on sound metrics. A general rule is to harvest one doe per 100 acres and one buck per 150 acres on very intensively managed properties. All of these aspects of management from the timber harvest, food plot program, harvest strategy, to habitat quality and feeding are vital ingredients in the deer management recipe.

So, back to our original question — what do deer eat during the winter? The simple answer is buds, twigs, some grasses, browse that hasn't senesced yet, mushrooms, lichen, acorns and probably some household plants. But the bigger picture is, what have you as a property owner created for them to eat? Just a wheat food plot or a feeder? Or did you really set the plate with warm and cool season food plots, periodic timber harvest (if you hunt in timber) to generate browse throughout the year, watching your biological numbers as they come in and working with a professional that can guide you in the direction you want to go. Really sit down and discuss with your family or camp members how you would like to see your property and your herd grow in the future. Once you get a vision mapped out, give the Delta Wildlife office a call at 662-686-3370, and let us assist you in your short-term and long-term goals for your property.



Greener Pastures

Offering the premier Farm-to-Table experience, Home Place Pastures in Como is committed to stewardship of the land, the ethical treatment of animals and the health of the community.

BY AMY TAYLOR

Nestled in the rolling hills just east of the Delta beams yet another gem about which Mississippi can boast. Established in 1871, the Bartlett family's Home Place encompasses 1,700 acres of row crop, pasture and forest land, and has enjoyed a rich history and reputation of being a beautiful, welcoming and innovative farm over the past 150 years. Recently, it has undergone a renewal and transformation, which promises to carry this tradition well into the future.

Raised on his family's Como farm, 5th generation Marshall Bartlett journeyed a bit of a circuitous path before settling back home at Home Place. After graduating from Dartmouth College with a degree in Environmental Studies and Anthropology, he spent time in Montana before locating in New Orleans where he worked for AmeriCorps rebuilding houses that had been devastated by Hurricane Katrina. After completing his

AmeriCorps term, he went to work for a local food start up and began forming his business plan for the future of his family's farm. At age 24, Marshall headed home with a fresh and innovative concept to take his Home Place in a whole new direction.

"I always knew that someday I would return here to carry on the tradition. I had four great years at college in rural New Hampshire, where my love of agriculture, ecology and the natural world gained me a new academic and global perspective. After college, I was craving a southern city experience and naturally landed in New Orleans. While enjoying the city, perhaps a little too much, I decided some service work would be a good way to use some of my skills to give back to that amazing city, so I took a position with AmeriCorps rebuilding houses for a year," he comments. "After the AmeriCorps term ended, I was fired up to find a way to help my own community by taking the

Home Place in a new direction. I stayed in NOLA for another year and worked as the Chief of Operations for a local startup, selling lamb and beef to New Orleans chefs. After gaining some marketing experience, I was ready to move home and start raising pork and beef on the Home Place.” Thus, Home Place Pastures was born.

A Family Affair

It’s been seven years since Marshall returned home to launch and build upon his dream along with the support of his parents and siblings. He comments, “It’s definitely a family affair; my dad is my greatest supporter and critic, having farmed the Home Place for the past 50 years. My sister and brother aren’t here with me on the ground running things, but they also share a passion and interest in the farm and take an active role in the operation.” He continues, “We’ve worked hard to implement changes, but only in the past two years did I really get the full picture of what Home Place Pastures could become. Essentially, we are on a long journey to convert the entire Home Place from row crops to a regenerative, animal focused, food producing farm for our region. To do that, we now employ 19 people, most of whom live within a 10-mile radius of our farm. We like to talk about three main benefits of farming the way we do: the ethical treatment of our animals,



the environmental benefits of regenerative agriculture and the revitalization of our rural economy.” Marshall adds, “On the farming side, our decisions are based on what’s best for our soils and animals. Animal impact and biological diversity are our tools for enhancing water retention, sequestering carbon and building soil nutrients—and in the process, we raise some damn good meat!”



Farm Management Strategy

Marshall's regenerative agriculture efforts include overseeding row crop acreage with cool season, forage-based cover crops, giving year-round production from land that remains in row crop production during the summer. The cover crops sequester carbon back into the soil through the fall, winter and spring, prevent erosion and enhance water retention, while the legumes naturally fix nitrogen. The impact of the cattle keeps the grasses productive and promote biological activity in the soil; the grazing also makes this system financially viable for Marshall, allowing him to convert forages to grass fed beef. He comments, "On row crop ground we've taken in year-round, we've seen a dramatic increase in soil organic matter and



have discontinued the use of synthetic fertilizer. We've also seen significantly less erosion on cover cropped fields. We catch more water, which makes us more drought resilient. We also broadcast and drill annual seed and avoid discing in almost every scenario." He adds, "In addition to building soil health, preventing erosion and improving our water shed, we've also seen an increase in insect and wildlife activity. Regenerative agriculture, like a natural ecosystem, promotes a diversity of life within the soil and above it."

In the area of animal management, Marshall has done extensive research on managing cattle and hogs on different forage types year-round. He emphasizes that nutrition, genetics and low stress management are the holy trinity for excellent meat quality. "You've got to have the right forages in healthy soil, the right type of cattle and the right timing to have satisfactory results with grass finishing." He continues, "We operate our own USDA inspected slaughter and processing facility on site where the meat is packaged and sent to the end consumer, the restaurant or the meat market. The plant is the critical connecting point between our farming practices and our customers. It's challenging to operate, but with it we are controlling every part of our process, making sure our principals of ethical treatment and quality are maintained throughout."

Marshall is the first to admit the many challenges involved since beginning this venture. He explains, "In addition to complying with onerous federal food safety regulations, maintaining consistent supply and running a multifaceted farming operation, there are also huge distribution challenges that go hand-in-hand with small scale production of a fresh, local product with a very short shelf life." He adds, "Then came March 2020, when we lost our entire wholesale





business, 90 percent of our revenue at that time, in two days due to COVID 19; but because we run our own plant, we were able to quickly transition from processing our products for restaurants to cutting and packing directly for consumers. It was a tough time, but we were overwhelmed by the support of our community and proud to be able to provide food for them when the meat industry was unable to do so.”

In addition to row crop farming and beef and pork production, Home Place Pastures is open to the public and houses an on-farm

restaurant and butcher shop in a restored farmhouse, wedding and event venues in an idyllic setting, camping grounds and offers tours for a firsthand farm experience. Providing the finest meats, wholesale or retail, Home Place Pastures also features a wide array of products and gift boxes.

Marshall concludes, “It’s all about preserving the land for the next generation and leaving it for them better than we received it. We believe that by emphasizing land and animal stewardship, we can create a market for sustainably raised animals that will have sweeping economic benefits for the rural south. Through our producer program, we can scale our efforts to support regional farmers and provide a financial incentive to put more acreage into regenerative management. We share this vision with many talented farmers, chefs, conservationists, entrepreneurs and food lovers across the South, and we draw inspiration from these folks every day.”

Home Place Pastures was named “Best Farm in Mississippi” and the “Best Mail-Order Food Gift in Mississippi” by Food & Wine Magazine. For more information, visit their website: homeplacepastures.com.

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Nitrogen Fixation vs. Nitrogen Scavenging

BY PARKER FREW
Delta Wildlife Staff

Each and every day it seems that there are more people implementing cover crops into their farming system. By now it's a no brainer that cover crops can help most every farming system in some sort of way. All kinds of problems we face in today's agricultural industry can benefit in some way, shape or form from cover crops. While we know cover crops have an immeasurable amount of possible benefits, there is one in particular that a lot of producers are starting to take notice of: Nitrogen fixation. The slightest thought of being able to produce one's own nutrients for a crop will peak just about anyone's interest. In today's world we are faced with absolute record-breaking fertilizer prices that are continuing to climb each month. Not only are we faced with a steady increase in price, we are also faced with a shortage. In October 2021, the average price for urea was over \$600 a ton.

How long does it take for legumes to affectively produce N?

The N fixation process is a chemical reaction facilitated by Rhizobia bacteria in root nodules that convert atmospheric N (N₂) to ammonia (NH₃). Using the N in ammonium and the carbohydrates from photosynthesis as energy, plant proteins are formed and become



part of legume plants. Legume plants are commonly mixed in with grasses and broadleaves to create a cover crop blend. However, there are things to consider when designing or creating a blend with nitrogen fixation in mind. Nitrogen fixation is a timely process. Winter-annual legumes, while established in the fall, usually produce most of their biomass and N in spring. Winter-annual legumes must be planted earlier than cereal crops in order to survive the winter in most regions.

Depending on the climate, spring management of legumes will often involve balancing early planting of the cash crop with waiting for the legume to produce adequate biomass. On average, it takes at least six weeks for the process to begin. Legumes behave much like grasses. Therefore when soil N is available, they will use that before fixing any additional N. Legumes are generally lower in carbon and higher in nitrogen than grasses. This lower C:N ratio results in a faster breakdown of legume residues. Therefore, the N and other nutrients contained in legume residues are usually released faster than grasses. Weed control by legume residues may not last as long as for an equivalent amount of grass residue. Legumes do not increase soil organic



matter as much as grasses. A general rule of thumb when it comes to getting the most out of a legume is not to terminate until at least 30 percent of the legumes are flowering. This is when you will have the most plant available nitrogen in the soil. This is a very important factor to consider when creating a cover crop blend for a system. Some crops may not allow enough time before planting for a legume to create and release N.

How much N can legumes fix?

The amount of N legumes fix can range from as little as 20 lbs. per acre to more than 300 lbs. The amount released will depend primarily on the concentration of N in the legume biomass and the amount of biomass produced. Winter annual legumes, such as clover and the vetches are often around 3 percent N. For example, if a legume such as clover produces 1000 lbs. of biomass, its N potential is around 30 lbs. Knowing this, we know that in order to maximize the benefits, legumes need to be planted early and allowed to continue growing well into the spring months. With the threshold of N potential being so low in most species, it is important to put the more emphasis on the implementation of the legume itself rather than just the selection. This being said, it is very evident that in order to have high amounts of fixed N, you must have a high legume yield.

Should cover crop legumes come before or after corn?

Much like a traditional soybean-corn rotation, it is never a bad idea to have a legume planted before corn. Many years of research and implementation have shown that soybeans before corn helps to increase amounts of available N for the corn plant. To somewhat recreate this scenario with a legume cover crop you must once again have plenty of time for the legume to grow and affectively produce enough N to show a benefit for the following crop. In certain parts of the south



this timeframe may not be long enough for enough N to be produced. Traditionally corn is planted fairly early in the Mississippi Delta compared to a lot of the country. Since the timeframe is much shorter it may be more beneficial to plant a scavenger following soybeans before corn to capture and hold as much N as possible rather than a producer that would not have enough time to affectively do its job. A great scenario for a legume after corn would be when cotton follows corn the next year. Corn is harvested much earlier than other crops allowing for a much wider window to plant and establish a legume. In that same essence, cotton is planted much later than corn allowing the cover crop growth window to broaden even more throughout crucial parts of spring.

Are there any sacrifices when planting a nitrogen scavenger instead of nitrogen producer?

Other than the obvious difference of N production, there are no sacrifices or lost benefits when planting a scavenger species such as a grass or broadleaf. In a lot of cases the scavenger can have a wider selection of benefits compared to the legume. Cover crop species such as oats or rye provide high levels of biomass therefore providing exceptional weed suppression, increasing organic matter, increasing pore space, etc. all while capturing and storing any leftover N in the soil. If high fertility levels are already present, cover crops can be used as a preventative to combat nutrients leaving the soil during the winter months. Protection of N can be just as important as the production of it. At the end of it all, cover crops are a tool that can be used to fine tune a system focused on increasing soil health. Preparation and understanding of the whole process can be more important than any other part.

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Rice makes shrimp better... and not just on your plate.

Mississippi rice farmers are doing their part to ensure that Gulf shrimp populations are healthy and plentiful. How might you ask? Mississippi rice producers are working to reduce the amount of nutrients that leave their fields. This ultimately helps to reduce Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico, creating a healthier and more productive fishery.



How Wardens Get The Guilty To Confess

BY PATRICK DURKIN

Originally published on themeateater.com

If a conservation warden rings your doorbell and asks to talk, and you know why the officer is there, it's probably time to come clean. Likewise, if a warden pulls in behind your truck after your morning hunt, checks your license, asks some questions, pauses thoughtfully after your final answer, and offers you a seat on the tailgate, it's likely time to fess up.

Rule of Thumb

When wardens make special visits or spend more than five minutes with you in the field, they're not lost or lonely. You're probably about to enter the "truck of truth," that neutral place where wrongdoers confess their sins. And it's probably your last chance at minimal fines, humiliation and minor degradation of your reputation.

If you decline the warden's "invitation" and drive off with a smart-assed "Good luck with your little investigation," one thing is certain: You'll meet again. The only question is when. But on that fateful day, you'll probably be in far worse trouble and deeper social mud than if you had confessed when given the chance.

"When a warden comes knocking or hangs around after the routine license check, it's not a fishing expedition," said Ed McCann, a 21-year law-enforcement veteran with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. McCann supervises the Department of Natural Resources training program for new conservation wardens, and previously served a decade as an investigator.

"I don't have time to interview just anyone who might know

something," McCann said. "I know what my cards are, and I can make an informed guess on the hand you're holding. You probably know why I'm there, and you should assume I know something you don't know I know. I don't want to catch you in a lie. I want you to tell the truth. You'll save everyone, including yourself, a lot of time and lost sleep. But if you make me leave, and you think it's finished, I guarantee it's only the beginning."

Simple Screw-Ups

Conservation wardens try to avoid such challenges because they know most hunters, anglers and trappers are everyday folks who simply screwed up. Sure, wardens might jokingly say, "A violator is a sportsman without opportunity," but they do their best not to become cynical. They don't want good citizens to turn minor offenses into expensive, ridiculous, long-running problems.

"Everyone makes mistakes, but few people commit murders," said Sam Lawry, who spent 23 years in law enforcement with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Lawry recently shared many memorable cases in his book "Stories of the Past (1984-2004): An Arizona Game Ranger Remembering the Outlaws." Lawry read one of those stories, "The Mud Puddle," for MeatEater's best-selling "Campfire Stories" audiobook. "When I interviewed people, I kept an open mind and tried to be sympathetic," Lawry said. "Hunters and fishermen can get excited. They'll do something they'd normally



never do. I'd remind them they didn't kill anyone. I'd tell them: 'We'll get through this. Just tell me what happened.' You build a relationship so they want to talk to you. I did my best to treat them fairly; the way I'd want to be treated."

Tom Krsnich spent 36 years enforcing fish, wildlife and environmental laws for the Wisconsin DNR. Fellow wardens who worked with Krsnich praise this highly successful investigator for his interviewing skills. Like Lawry and McCann, Krsnich credits his success to fairness.

"I tried to empathize with their situation," Krsnich said. "It's not about tricking people or deceiving them into making confessions. Even people who are doing nothing wrong get nervous when a warden pulls up in a truck or boat. I tried to defuse that. Most people don't want to lie. If I suspected something was going on, I'd lower the tailgate and take a seat. I'd establish rapport by asking about their hunt and learning something about them.

"If you show interest in them as people, it's easier for them to tell the truth. They'll admit they did something stupid when seeing the buck of a lifetime. Or they'll admit they hadn't caught many fish in a long time, and just couldn't put down their rod when they had their limit. I'm a hunter and fisherman, too, so I get that. But my empathy didn't change my job requirements. When I handed them the citation, I hoped they felt I treated them with respect."

Burrowing-In Invariably

Some violators lie and force wardens to try different approaches. "If I get a complaint that someone was keeping trout in a catch-and-release stream, and I saw your vehicle there at the time, if you say you weren't there I assume there's a deeper deception," McCann said. "Why are you being deceptive in the heart of the moment? Now I have cause to ask more questions. I need to learn why you're not telling the truth." McCann also said today's technology makes fact-checking faster than ever. "With the connectivity of the internet, I can pick up the phone and text a guy in Idaho while interviewing someone in Wisconsin. You can verify a lie so fast today that you can use it in your follow-up question."

Krsnich said violators typically work up a cover story by the time a warden arrives, and he was always eager to hear it. "Some crime-interview experts say you shouldn't let people lie to you," Krsnich said. "They recommend interrupting the lie, but you have to be open-minded. It's possible you misinterpreted something you saw or heard. So, put your ego in check, and trust the facts to support or discredit the story. I let people talk, even if it had nothing to do with the dead ducks or deer I was looking at. Most stories didn't line up with the evidence on the ground or what I witnessed. I stayed patient, listened and took notes. If the facts revealed he was lying, I refuted his story step by step. There's always multiple opinions and perspectives, but only one set of facts. The more facts you know, the harder it is for someone to keep lying."

Lawry took much the same approach. “I’d let them hang themselves as high as they wanted,” he said. “I wouldn’t react to anything they told me. Their story kept building and building, and I let them keep adding mud until I’d heard enough to start tearing it down.”

McCann recalled investigating a complaint involving a bowhunter who killed a big buck and had his brother-in-law tag it. When he interviewed the men, they stuck to their story, even though it was horribly crafted.

“The guy who tagged the buck stood 5-foot-8 and showed me his bow, which looked like it belonged to someone much taller than him,” McCann said. “In fact, it looked like it would fit his brother-in-law, who stood 6-foot-4. I also noticed it was a right-handed bow, and the shorter guy who tagged the buck was left-handed. There’s no way that guy shot that bow or killed that buck. They both ended up paying thousands in legal fees to fight a \$300 citation, which they ended up paying anyway.”

Tricks of the Trade?

Lawry said violators often accuse wardens of deception and dirty tricks, but he thinks it’s more about cleverly gathering evidence and piecing together facts. While investigating a bear poaching case he describes in his book, Lawry recovered several empty shell casings from a .30-30 rifle and 9mm and .38-caliber handguns. He soon zeroed in on two suspects but did not reveal he was investigating a poaching case when pulling them over for littering. Lawry told them he’d let the littering ride with just a warning, and then casually admired the Sig Sauer 9mm handgun that one suspect carried on his hip.

“That’s how wardens like a case to end. The guy says ‘you got me,’ and maybe he pays a heavy fine, but you leave after shaking hands.”

SAM LAWRY

“I told him our department was considering semi-autos, but I liked my .357,” Lawry said. “I asked if I could shoot his gun to see if I liked it. He was real proud of it, and said it was the smoothest shooting gun he’s ever owned. He grabbed an empty beer can from their truck bed and told me to put it on a stump 20 yards away. I fired three shots and didn’t touch the can. He said, ‘Let me show you how it’s done,’ and shot the can three times. I watched to see where the casings landed. After they left, I picked up the can and found four of the casings. The crime lab matched them with those I found by the poached bear, and I started making my case.”

Lawry drove to the man’s house and asked to visit with him on the porch about a bear poaching case. “I said: ‘Remember when I shot your gun? I didn’t need to see how it shot. I needed a shell casing to match those I found by the poached bear. I think you know the results.’ He stood up and said, ‘Why you coyote [SOB]! You coyote [SOB]!’ From that time on, people said to be careful and to watch me because I’d B.S. them,” Lawry continued. “Well, I might pull a trick on a suspect, but I never made a promise I didn’t honor. If I told someone I’d put in a good word with the DA and judge if they cooperated, I stood by it.”

Portrait of a Crime

Krsnich also draws a line between trickery and deceit. “I like a little trickery to coax information out of people, but I didn’t lie or deceive anyone, even if they were liars to the core,” he said. “I remember a repeat violator whose main joy in life was getting things over on me.

You know that Hank Williams Jr. song ‘A Country Boy Can Survive’? That’s him. ‘I got a shotgun, a rifle and a four-wheel drive.’ He was good in the woods and on the river, but he thought society’s rules didn’t apply to him.”

Krsnich eventually prevailed when called to a sturgeon-poaching scene where the “country boy” and an accomplice got into a fight with a conservation warden. They injured the warden, so Krsnich knew the case would involve criminal charges. He also knew the “country boy” wouldn’t cooperate once Krsnich read him his Miranda rights against self-incrimination. “I did a bit of Columbo on him by drawing a diagram of the scene, and saying I just needed him to help me better understand what happened. I said, ‘Your buddy was here, the warden found the sturgeon here, you were somewhere else, the fight started here, and ...’ Well, he took the paper and drew a more accurate diagram. He told the whole story in several drawings that looked like cartoons. I asked if he would write it all up so the DA could understand it better, but he refused to put anything in writing. When we prosecuted the case, we used those diagrams and his oral statements to fill in the blanks. I have to say, I fairly enjoyed that one.”

Anyone Will Lie

Lawry said the best way to get people to quit lying is to learn what kept them from telling the truth. “Given sufficient motive, anyone will lie,” he said. “I used to teach state and federal agents how to identify deception and other aspects of being a human lie-detector. But where do you go if they stick with their lie? You have to figure out why they’re lying, their motive. It usually comes down to something they fear. Once you identify and remove that fear, you unravel the truth.”

Lawry said people typically lie because they fear having their gun, bow, truck, boat or other gear confiscated. They also fear losing their job or being disgraced in their family, community or church. He assured violators that if news of their violation spread, it wasn’t because of him. “In most cases, if things got out there, it was because of them or someone close to them telling people,” Lawry said. “It didn’t come from me.” Given Lawry’s assurances and understanding, the violators often relented. “They’d take that deep breath and say, ‘What’s going to happen to me?’ That’s when I knew I had them,” Lawry said. “Then you knew they felt remorse and were ready to talk.”

In another case from his book, Lawry couldn’t get a man to admit he and his teenage son had killed five bucks, and then put tags from his non-hunting wife and two younger sons on three of the deer. No matter how many facts Lawry shared with the man, and no matter how hard he tried to learn the man’s fears, Lawry couldn’t get him to confess that he and his son killed the deer illegally. “I finally told him I was there to work with him, and I didn’t want to pull his wife and kids any further into it,” Lawry said. “Where do you work, Mr. R.? Is that what’s holding you up?” Blouks! The man said he was a pastor at the White Mountain Christian Church. Still, he hesitated to say anything more. “That’s when I played the God card,” Lawry said. “I told him I’m lied to all the time and kind of expect it. But as a God-fearing man myself, I expected a clergyman to set aside mortal fears and let his religious virtues guide him to the truth.”

Conclusion: The man finally confessed, took the citation, and watched Lawry drive off with the five deer, which went to the Love Kitchen, a local charity.

“That’s how wardens like a case to end,” Lawry said. “The guy says ‘you got me,’ and maybe he pays a heavy fine, but you leave after shaking hands.”

McCann holds a similar view. “The thing we stress with new wardens is that most people don’t go out on the water or into the woods hoping to break the law,” he said. “They’re basically good people, but then something happens. They get greedy and impulsive and take advantage of a situation. They might tell their kids that ‘honesty is the best policy,’ but they don’t truly believe it or practice it until they’ve tried everything else and can’t avoid the consequences.”

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CWD

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE Regulations and Best Management Practices

2021/22 DEER HUNTING SEASON

Addressing conservation challenges, such as CWD, requires active involvement of those with a passion for our rich natural resources. A primary goal of CWD response and management efforts is to determine the geographic extent and prevalence of the disease. MDWFP asks hunters to aid in this effort by submitting deer for testing during the 2021–2022 white-tailed deer hunting season. The test used to determine the presence of CWD requires a portion of the deer’s brainstem or lymph nodes. Harvested animals should remain cool or be frozen until testing to reduce decomposition and provide accurate results.

Further, hunters and landowners can help monitor for CWD by actively looking for and reporting potential diseased or sick deer. For more information, visit MDWFP.com/cwd.

CWD Best Management Practices

The following Best Management Practices (BMP) are recommended for minimizing potential environmental and human exposure to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) while handling carcasses and processing the meat from white-tailed deer. These BMPs are established on a foundation of abundant caution given the many unknowns regarding CWD. For more information about CWD, please visit mdwfp.com/cwd.

Supplemental Feeding and Carcass Transportation Ban

- **Supplemental feeding is banned in any CWD Management Zone (salt licks, mineral licks, and feeders).**

Direct contact with prions is the most effective means of transmitting CWD. Research indicates saliva may have the highest concentration of prions. Thus, to minimize concentration of deer and potential spread of CWD, supplemental feeding is banned within any CWD Management Zone.

- **Carcasses may not be transported outside of any CWD Management Zone.**

Research has shown that decomposed carcasses of infected animals can also contribute to transmission when prions bind to soil and plant material. Thus, movement of carcasses may introduce CWD into previously uninfected areas. Only the below products may leave the CWD Management Zone:

- Cut/wrapped meat (commercially or privately)
- Deboned meat
- Hides with no head attached
- Bone-in leg quarters
- Finished taxidermy
- Antlers with no tissue attached
- Cleaned skulls or skull plates (no brain tissue)
- Hunters may transport a deer head to a permitted taxidermist participating in the CWD collection program. A CWD sample number must be obtained from the participating taxidermist prior to transporting the deer head outside of the MDWFP-defined CWD Management Zone.

General Precautions

- Inspect body condition of each deer at the time of harvest. Do not consume any part of animals exhibiting clinical symptoms of CWD, including extreme weight loss, excessive salivation, or erratic behavior.
- Please report any deer that appears to be diseased by completing a diseased deer report on the MDWFP app, at mdwfp.com/cwd or call 1-800-BE-SMART.
- Avoid using natural deer urine attractants, as they may carry prions from infected deer. Hunters who prefer to use lures or attractants may wish to select an artificial or food based scent.
- To minimize direct contact with infectious prions, it is recommended to not establish feeders, bait sites, mineral sites, or otherwise cause unnatural concentration of deer.

Cleaning and Processing a Harvested Deer

Field Dressing:

- Wear rubber or latex gloves when handling carcasses.
- When field dressing an animal, leave internal organs and inedible parts at the site of harvest.
- Avoid sawing through bone, spinal cord, brain, lymph nodes, or spleen.
- Store all portions of the animal to be transported in a container such as a cooler, bin, or bag that will not leak bodily fluids into the environment.

CWD-POSITIVE DEER BY COUNTY, SINCE 2018



Meat Processing:

- Do not process a deer that appears to be diseased.
- Process all deer individually, package separately, and label uniquely.
- Debone meat from deer and remove all fat, connective tissue, and lymph nodes.
- Avoid sawing through bone, spinal cord, brain, lymph nodes, or spleen.
- Avoid eating/handling the eyes, brain, spinal cord, spleen, and lymph nodes.
- Limit the amount of bodily fluids going to an area, such as a floor drain, that cannot be properly sanitized after use.

Disposal:

- Deer parts should not be rendered for use in feed for other animals, or used as

compost.

- Recommended disposal methods for unwanted portions of carcasses (bones, organs, etc.) are:
 - Leave at the harvest site;
 - Double-bag and send to an approved, lined landfill; or
 - Deep burial (8 feet or deeper).

Equipment Cleaning:

- Clean processing equipment between each deer.
- Thoroughly sanitize all equipment and work-stations with a 50:50 solution of bleach and water.
- Soak tools for one hour in the bleach solution, and then rinse thoroughly with hot water.



Chronic Wasting Disease Management

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was first detected in Mississippi in February 2018 and is recognized as the primary threat to wildlife in the state. The CWD Management Plan establishes a framework for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks to implement management strategies to prevent and mitigate the spread and transmission of CWD in Mississippi. Current management strategies are based on the best available science and with input from a variety of subject matter experts. The nature of CWD mandates a long-term, adaptable approach to management. To that end, below are changes for the 2021–2022 hunting season:

CWD MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The updated Mississippi Chronic Wasting Disease Management Plan was approved by the Commission on Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks during April 2021. Important changes include:

Following a confirmed CWD positive within an existing positive county or a new county, all counties within 10 miles of the positive, including the county containing the positive, will be placed in a CWD-MZ for a minimum of 3 years.



CWD-POSITIVE DETECTION Management Zone (CWD-MZ)

Delineated using county boundaries.



Ban supplemental feeding of wildlife.



Only bone-in leg quarters*, deboned meat, antlers, cleaned skull or skull plates, finished taxidermy, cleaned teeth, hides and tanned products may leave the CWD-MZs.

*Change from 2020–2021 hunting season.

Small Game Hunting

BY MATTHEW DZIAMNISKI

Delta Wildlife Staff

With hunting season in full swing, small game hunters across the state are in chase of various game animals. Primarily, hunters are after the eastern gray squirrel, eastern fox squirrel, cottontail rabbit and swamp rabbits. Small game hunting over the years has declined, but there is no better way to introduce a young kid or new hunter than by going on a squirrel or rabbit hunt. Both are very low cost and offer a very generous bag limit of eight squirrels and eight rabbits per hunter.

As an avid squirrel and rabbit hunter, I find no better way to spend a day in the woods than by chasing small game. The eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and the eastern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*) are both plentiful across the Delta region and have very similar ecology. They typically inhabit mature hardwoods filled with oaks, hickories and various shrubs and vines. This gives them plenty of hard mass such as acorns and nuts, while also providing fruits and berries like muscadines and mulberries. They both breed twice a year consisting of usually three young and with quality habitat, they will flourish.

Squirrels

Differentiating the two species is easily done based upon size and coloration. The eastern gray squirrel weighs in around one pound and is grey with a tail consisting of grey, white and black coloration. The eastern fox squirrel weighs in around two pounds with a grey back and reddish-brown underside and tail. Both species can exhibit a black color phase, but this is most commonly found in the Delta fox squirrel (*S. n. subauratus*). The Delta fox squirrel is exclusively found in the Delta region and is highly sought after by hunters.

Hunting for squirrels presents a challenge but is a great way to spend time in the woods. Hunters will usually opt for a 12-gauge shotgun, but a .22 caliber rifle allows for longer shots and no pellets in your meat. The best time to target squirrels is in the early and mid-morning hours. I treat every squirrel hunt no different than a white-tailed deer hunt. Get into the woods before daylight, full camo, a padded cushion and patience will often yield great results. Targeting mature stands of hardwoods along creeks and rivers seemingly always hold gray squirrels, while hardwoods along agricultural fields or timber cutovers yield more fox squirrels. Great squirrel hunting opportunities are plentiful on the thousands of acres of public land across the state.

Rabbits

The eastern cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus floridanus*) and swamp rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*) are the two species of rabbit to target here in Mississippi. Cottontails are found in upland areas while swamp rabbits inhabit lower lying areas, but both species in their specific habitats can be found in thick grassy openings with small shrubs. Distinguishing the two species is most easily accomplished by size, ear shape and coloration.

Cottontails are smaller in size at around two pounds, the ears are more elongated, and their feet are light brown. Swamp rabbits weigh in at around five pounds, the ears are rounded, and their feet are much darker in color to better blend into their swamp habitat.



Rabbits will eat a wide variety of foliage and berries and will also, if available, feed on row crops. Rabbits have a small home range of typically less than seven acres, so it is imperative that their habitat is diverse with a wide variety of plants.

Breeding takes place nine months out of the year and only excludes the winter months. It is not unheard of for a female to have five litters a year and each litter to have 4-5 young. Their populations go through boom-and-bust cycles, but their prolific breeding allows them to recover quickly. Due to current land management practices, we have seen a decline in rabbits in many areas. Mowing, lack of soil disturbance and the introduction of many nonnative grasses are a few of the reasons behind their decline. Actions such as strip disking, prescribed fire and planting of native grasses all go a long way in helping rabbits recover.

Most often, hunters will use a shotgun as it will make shooting a fleeing rabbit much easier. To start off, working along a field edge is a great way to kick up any rabbits hiding within the thick grass. Have a friend work a zig zag pattern through the field and others posted alongside the field edge with guns at the ready. Another technique is to have a push through the woods, have hunters spaced equally apart and begin moving forward in sync. Kick and shake any and all shrubs and wood piles, rabbits will be resting under these so be at the ready always for them to come running out.

Rabbit hunting, like squirrel hunting, is a great way to get into the outdoors and is best when you have a few friends to tag along if you do not have access to a pack of rabbit dogs. Before all else, it is crucial when rabbit hunting to wear hunter's orange because vision becomes impaired when moving through dense cover.

Small game hunting is a challenging and rewarding sport that allows you to enjoy the outdoors with those who matter most. The Mississippi Delta offers endless opportunities for squirrel and rabbit hunting so get out there and enjoy what the woods have to offer.

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Mississippi Timber Price Report

3RD QUARTER 2021

The Mississippi Timber Price Report provides a picture of timber market activity showing regional and statewide stumpage prices for common forest products. This report should only be used as a guide to help individuals monitor timber market trends. The average price should not be applied as fair market value for a specific timber sale because many variables influence actual prices each landowner will receive. This report and historical timber prices are available by contacting your local county Extension office or at www.extension.ms-state.edu/forestry/forest-economics/timber-prices.

How are prices obtained? This report used data from 79 timber sales conducted and reported across Mississippi during 3rd quarter 2021. Reporters include forest product companies, logging contractors, consulting foresters, landowners and other natural resource professionals.

Are you interested in becoming a cooperative price reporter or do you want more information about the Mississippi Timber Price Report? Please contact Marc Measells at mkm2@ms-state.edu or at 662-325-3550 for more information.

PRICE TRENDS

► Mississippi saw above normal rainfall during the quarter, leading to price increases for many areas. Landowners with land that could be harvested during the wet weather benefited. The 3rd quarter statewide stumpage prices for pine

products are in Table 1 and hardwood products are in Table 2. Figures reflect 10-year statewide average price trends.

► Compared to the 2nd quarter, statewide average prices changed (-2.8% to 27.9%) during the 3rd quarter with pine poles and oak sawtimber prices declining. Prices varied for some product classes across regions. Prices for dimensional lumber peaked in May with steady declines through mid-August. However, our abundant oversupply of standing timber continues to be the main contributor to our depressed stumpage prices. The good news, mills are making progress on the announced expansions and new mill construction. Many will begin production during 4Q 2021 and into next year. This added production capacity will benefit many landowners within the procurement radius of those mills.

► Housing starts peaked in December 2020 and have fluctuated since. New housing permits declined because of record lumber prices. The unemployment rate has continued declining. As unemployment rates and the overall economy continue to improve, timber markets should recover. Most economic forecasters still expect the recovery to continue well into 2022. Prices during the 4th quarter should see slight increases due to wetter weather and as these new mill expansions and openings start accepting wood deliveries. Keep in mind, even though new mills and mill expansion will put more demand on our standing trees, Mississippi still has an overabundant supply of standing timber which will keep prices from increasing dramatically.

Mississippi Timber Price Report Regions

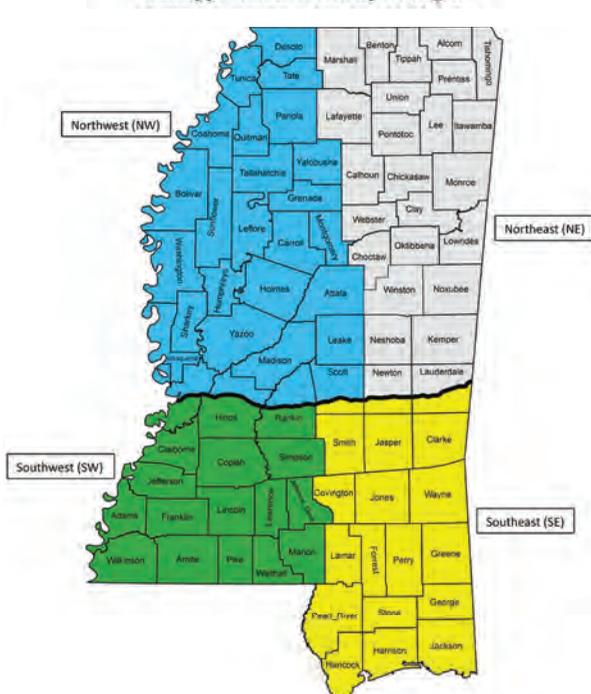
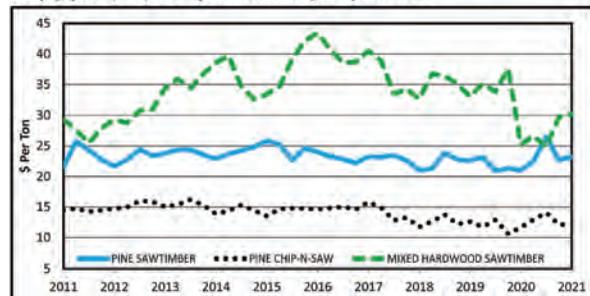
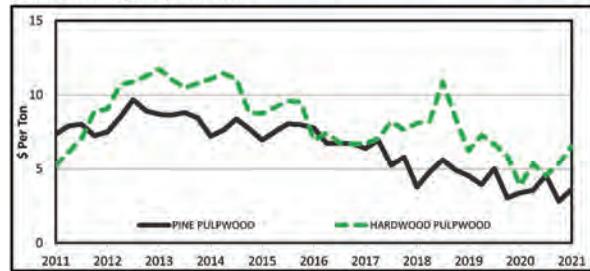


Figure 1: Average Mississippi pine sawtimber, pine chip-n-saw, and mixed hardwood sawtimber stumpage prices (\$/ton) for 3rd quarter 2011 through 3rd quarter 2021.^a



^aPrices from 2011-2017 are from Timber Mart-South. 2018-current prices are from Mississippi State University Extension.

Figure 2: Average Mississippi pine and hardwood pulpwood stumpage prices (\$/ton) for 3rd quarter 2011 through 3rd quarter 2021.^a



^aPrices from 2011-2017 are from Timber Mart-South. 2018-current prices are from Mississippi State University Extension.

^aTimber-Mart South (TMS), Inc. has more detailed data available by subscription that contains values for other timber products not included in this report. TMS is compiled and produced at the Center for Forest Business, Warnell School of Forest Resources, University of Georgia, under contract with the Frank W. Sauer Foundation, a non-profit corporation serving the forest products industry. See <http://WWW.TIMBERMARTSOUTH.COM> for information on subscriptions.



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