

Writer aims to have successful hunt, too



BILL PARKER

The firearms deer season is in full swing. While I'm not in the office this week (for obvious reasons), I fully expect to have a full slate of successful hunter reports waiting for me when I return. If you or your hunting partner lagged a deer this season, give me a call at (810) 901-2573 or fax the information to me at (810) 644-1314. Please be sure to include your phone number so I can call back if I have any questions. Successful archery and firearms reports will appear in upcoming issues of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

Waterfowl success

Speaking of success, the word is the waterfowl season got off to a bang of a start (pun intended). Opening day bag checks by Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division staff at some 32 different sites around

the state revealed a 40-percent increase over last year.

"The marshes on the east side of Saginaw Bay were especially good on opening day," said DNR waterfowl specialist Jerry Martz. "In general, many small wetlands in the inland portions of the state were without water due to our very dry summer and fall and ducks were concentrated in the coastal Great Lakes marshes."

Dennis Patchakos, of Plymouth, had a phenomenal opener in the eastern Upper Peninsula. Patchakos' party of three had a limit by 10 a.m. on opening morning, then limited out again on day two.

"At 4:30 a.m. we were on the water making the long trek down the river to the big bay," Patchakos explained. "Even in the dark, the majestic beauty of the big water bay that is being swallowed by marsh grass is a sight to see."

At age 32, with 18 years of duck hunting experience under his belt, Patchakos admits he still gets a thrill out of the hunt.

"The same feeling overwhelms me each time a group of ducks comes into the decoys," he said.

With a slight greeting call, fol-

lowed by a series of feeding calls, Patchakos worked a flight into the decoys just minutes before legal shooting light.

"At legal shooting time we waited to shoot because there were several flights working over us," Patchakos explained. "We worked another five birds into the stool and decided it was time to make our presence known."

The retrievers were quickly dispatched and returned to the blind with three drake mallard, one pintail and one green-winged teal. By 10 a.m. the trio had bagged two blacks, five mallards, three teal and one pintail.

The following morning the trio shot a limit of divers including bluebills, redheads, canvasbacks, buffleheads and ring-necked.

"For the past several weeks we have followed the opener all the way down to the southeastern Michigan marshes and have experienced some terrific hunts," Patchakos said. "There is nothing like the camaraderie, watching the dogs, the conversation and laughter, the majestic outdoors and of course, the fast action of duck hunting."

Economou on the water

Chuck Economou was back in

action in the BASSMASTER Tournament Trail. The Lake Orion resident recently competed in the BASSMASTER Arkansas Central Invitational on the Arkansas River in Pine Bluff.

Economou found the fishing to be tough and managed to land just three keepers over the three-day tournament. He finished with a total weight of 8-pounds, 3-ounces and ended up in 195th place in the 313-man field.

The next stop on the BASSMASTER Tournament Trail is the BASSMASTER Georgia Eastern Invitational, Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 on Lake Lanier near Atlanta.

Lucky elk hunters

Fourteen area hunters were among the 165 Michigan resi-

dents randomly selected to participate in the Dec. 12-19 elk hunt. The 165 successful individuals were drawn by computer from 37,194 applicants.

Timothy Dorr (Rochester Hills), Earlington Gambrell (Troy), William Gentner (Livonia), Anita Gray (Auburn Hills), Palle Hansen (Livonia), Lawrence Konyha (Livonia) and Mark Wadkins (Livonia) were among the 65 individuals who received a hunters choice permit, which entitles the holder to shoot either an antlered or antlerless elk.

Benjamin Dehart (Westland), Joseph Kovatch (Farmington Hills), Juanita Perez (Garden City), Matthew Pawlowski (Redford), Kenneth Rutz (Commerce), Duane Shewmaker (Westland)

and Edward Sultin (Rochester) each received an antlerless only license.

I urge all these lucky elk hunters to call after their hunt and fill me in on the details. In my book, receiving an elk permit is second only to hitting the lottery. I'm sure other hunters feel the same, and are interested in hearing how the hunt went for those among us who were fortunate enough to receive a permit.

Hunters and anglers are urged to report their success. Questions and comments are also encouraged. Send information to Outdoor, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Fax information to (810) 644-1314 or call Bill Parker evenings at (810) 901-2573.

'Calling all cars, be on lookout'

Michigan drivers should be on the lookout for deer while traveling in the state, particularly between now and the end of November.

Last year, a record 66,666 car/deer accidents — resulting in five human fatalities and 2,040 injuries — occurred in Michigan, an increase of 19 percent over the 467,813 accidents reported in 1993. With the state's whitetail deer population approaching 2 million animals this year that number could continue to rise in 1995.

Whitetail breeding activity peaks during the month of November, which means both bucks and does are very active and on the move, especially around dusk and dawn. Feeding activity also increases in the fall as whitetails load up on food in preparation for

the approaching winter months.

Surprisingly, car/deer accidents were reported in every county last year and made up 14-percent of the total car accidents in the state. Kent County recorded the most car/deer accidents at 1,805, followed by Jackson County with 1,695, Calhoun County with 1,553, Kalamazoo County with 1,336 and Oakland County with 1,297. There were 302 reported car/deer accidents in Wayne County. Surprisingly, the fewest number of accidents was recorded in the Upper Peninsula's Keweenaw County.

You can reduce the risk of being involved in a car/deer accident by following a few safety tips provided by the AAA Michigan Auto Club.

■ Be on the lookout for deer when traveling in rural areas. Look well

down the road and off to both sides.

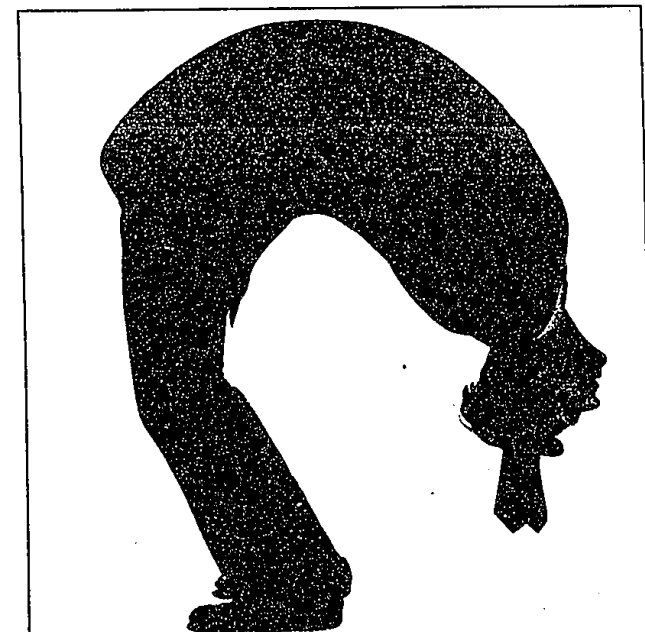
■ Use extra caution when traveling during the hours before dawn and after dusk.

■ If you see a deer, slow down and watch for other deer following the first one.

■ Watch for shining eyes while traveling at night. If you see any, flash your headlights on and off well in advance of the deer.

■ If a deer does dart into your path, don't take unsafe evasive action such as swerving. It's usually safer to hit a deer than to lose control of your car and hit a tree or another vehicle.

If you do hit a deer, report the accident to the local or county police department and to your insurance company. If you choose to keep the deer you will need a permit from the police or the Department of Natural Resources.



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