

OCTOBER 25, 2017

# FALL OUTDOOR HUNTING GUIDE

**Whitetail Trophy  
Deer in Missouri**

**2017 Fall Turkey  
Harvest Summary**

**MDC Agents use DNA  
Evidence to Solve  
Wildlife Crimes**

GASCONADE  
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**Republican**

# A best kept local hunting secret— Northern Whitetail Trophy Deer in Missouri



**BY ROXIE MURPHY**  
**REPUBLICAN STAFF WRITER**  
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For those hunters interested in exploring big-game fall trips, don't forget about Oak Creek Ranch Whitetail Deer farm near Bland.

Oak Creek is a high fence, 1,500 acre hunting facility that specializes in some of the largest whitetail deer in the country, according to owner Donald Hill. While the facility has been in business since 1992, the Hills purchased the ranch in 2007.

"We artificially inseminate the doe to bring in new genetics," Hill explained of his large, record setting flock. "That's how we keep the genes fresh."

Stock was originally ordered from Canada. The ranch mainly breeds for typical bucks, meaning the horns are mostly symmetrical and grow from the same rack. However, they also breed specifically for certain kinds of non typical bucks.

"We hold the national record for 33 of 35 typical and 30 of 35 non-typical," Hill said.

Deer are bred and raised on the ranch, where the owners take additional steps to manage the herd, such as selective harvesting and advanced food plots, that results in larger animals.

"We call it the deer-asic park of the deer industry," Hill said.

High fence hunting that the ranch specializes in is controversial for many hunters. However, Hill claims the high fence strategy makes the deer smarter than the native deer. The average Missouri deer is killed at 18 months-old and the average whitetail killed at Oak Creek is 3 years-old. Hill attributes the mortality age of his deer to be correlated with the high fence and the deer experiencing the pressures of hunting.

"We are more intensely managed than anybody," Hill said. "With high fence, you get to experience good, mature deer, learn

See **Oak Creek** page 3B

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## Oak Creek • from page 2B

about their posture and body language.”

Both experienced and non-experienced hunters are welcome at the ranch, which boasts two lodges. The main lodge, at 9,000 square feet has 10 rooms. Many hunters will also bring their families. Rooms are set up hotel style with two queen size beds, a restroom, dresser and t.v. A second 3,000 square foot lodge has four rooms and is usually rented to a large group. While the facility may accommodate up to 22 hunters at a time, they typically host six if they don't know each other.

Hill said their customers are not usually Missourians.

“We don't do a lot of advertising in Missouri,” Hill said. “Customers are usually from Canada, England, Spain, Louisiana, Texas, New York and similar locations.”

Groups typically come in Sunday afternoon and leave Wednesday morning, and the second group comes in Wednesday afternoon and leaves Saturday. This week, a group from Texas are in residence. Chris Allen, a third time customer from Dallas, Tx. brought his employees to the facility this year.

“I come here for two reasons,” Allen said. “The quality of the animals and the quality of the hospitality. Both are outstanding.”

The hospitality Allen refers to is in the friendliness of the staff, service and chef that is available on site.

“We found out about Oak Creek at a Dallas Safari in Texas,” Allen said. “Don doesn't do show specials. The fact that we went with Oak Creek says a lot about the professionalism of their staff.”

Allen's first trip was a guys trip.

“The first year we came, my guide and I went to the field, we walked to the stand and I shot my deer within 20 minutes of a three day hunt,” Allen said.

Allen was hunting in the 190 to 210 inch range. His buck was 218 inches.

“I wasn't up-charged; eight inches was an acceptable error,” Allen said. “Don's philosophy is he would rather you shoot a larger than a little smaller.”



He spent the rest of his trip “fine dining on good food” and “observing others in their hunts.”

The second year, Allen brought his family. He hunted up until the last minute on day three and shot a 190 inch and his wife Pam shot her first deer.

“She is hunting again this year,” Allen said. “It is a great opportunity to introduce people to hunting.”

Ty and Cathy Underwood are also part of Allen's group. Ty Underwood came the first time with Allen on the “guys” trip. His wife and kids also came on the second trip and this year he and his wife returned as part of the couples only trip.

“Last year, we brought our three boys, Jake, Garrett, and Luke,” Cathy Underwood said. “This is my second year, Ty's third.”

Ty Underwood, like the Allens, has hunted all over the world, including Africa.

“I have been around a lot of people, some places you can go to, and know what's more family oriented,” Cathy Underwood said. “Last year, Don took us with the kids and showed us the breeding process.”

Luke, who was 10 at the time, also shot his first doe.

“I think there is a perspective to being out

See **Oak Creek** page 4B

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**KELLY TIRES**

## Oak Creek • from page 3B

here; seeing all the pictures of the animals and the stories the guys come back with," Cathy Underwood said.

Allen also noted the high fence hunting does give more opportunity, but the degree of experience in the animal is different.

"This place holds every national record available," Allen noted. "A place with that quality holds more opportunity, but that doesn't make it easier."

Another advantage to hunting at the ranch is the extended season, allowing purchased hunts between August and December. Additionally, hunters may chose their weapon.

"I'll be hunting with a muzzle loader; my wife, Pam, with a bolt action hunting rifle, and Ty (Underwood) with a bow and arrow," Allen said.

Ty Underwood shot his buck with two arrows Monday morning, and the guides were leaving with trail dogs to find it.

"I would recommend this place to anybody," Allen said. "You are here for 24 hours, but only hunting from six to eight. My opinion, hospitality is the reason for a lot of disappointed hunters and I would not expose my family, customers or clients to less value."

Hill said 90 percent of his customers are



return visitors and Allen said he has already booked their trip for next year.

"We have never had a visit here where we left disappointed," Hill said.

Hill said the popular misconception about high fence hunting is that it is expensive. However he tries to price his hunts for the average guy.

"For the average guy, there is no where in

the world you can go for a hunt like this for \$4,900," Hill said. "Even if your family has private land, you are paying more in taxes."

While Oak Creek Ranch is another one of those best kept local secrets, Hill and his family continue to push for excellence. The ranch boasts more than 50 cameras to keep track of the herd; and deer populations are averaged one doe to every four bucks. Guides

patrol the grounds armed in case poachers or trespassers are on the grounds. It is a federal offense to poach on the property.

"This is my job," Hill said. "This is all I do."

For more information about Oak Creek Ranch, hunts and prices, visit [www.Oak-CreekWhitetailRanch.com](http://www.Oak-CreekWhitetailRanch.com).

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## Low oxygen levels affecting Taneycomo trout

BY FRANCIS SKALICKY  
MISSOURI DEPT. OF  
CONSERVATION

BRANSON, Mo. – Fall can be a great time to go fishing, but anglers who pursue trout at Lake Taneycomo need to be mindful that current water-quality conditions make this a stressful time of year for the reservoir's premier sportfish.

The main cause of stress to the trout is low levels of dissolved oxygen (DO) in Taneycomo's water. Cooler temperatures will remedy this situation. In the meantime, anglers who fish Taneycomo and plan to release trout they catch can reduce stress to the fish by minimizing the time they take to reel in and release fish. Land trout as quickly as possible. Extended fights stress fish at any time of year, but can be lethal during times of low DO. Also, minimize the time spent netting and unhooking fish. Finally, when the fish is unhooked, gently hold it under water until it can swim off on its own.

Anglers might also notice trout in Lake Taneycomo are more lethargic and less likely to take a lure at this time of year. Anglers shouldn't worry; fishing will improve as DO levels improve.

Cold water released into Taneycomo from the depths of Table Rock allows trout to thrive in the upper end of Taneycomo during most of the year. However, beginning in late summer and continuing through fall in most years, cold water coming into

Taneycomo from Table Rock routinely diminishes DO levels due in an annual process known as stratification that occurs over summer in Table Rock. Warm water that's less dense with adequate DO near the surface does not mix with denser, cooler water deeper in the lake. This depletes DO in the deep layer of the lake.

This low-DO water gets released into Taneycomo. Some autumn trout mortality occurs at Taneycomo each year as a result of this process, but this mortality can be reduced by anglers practicing good catch-and-release methods.

As temperatures become colder, the upper oxygenated layer of water in Table Rock cools, become denser, and sinks. Once the surface water temperature reaches the same temperature as on the bottom, Table Rock Lake will turn over, resulting in a more even distribution of dissolved oxygen throughout all layers of the lake. The release of this water into Taneycomo will help solve that reservoir's low DO problems and help fishing return to normal.

In Missouri, from both a participant and economic perspective, trout fishing is significant. Trout fishing activity in the state generates retail sales of \$104 million and has an annual economic impact of \$187 million. Trout fishing also supports more than 2,300 jobs.

More information about trout and about other fishing opportunities in Missouri can be found at [www.mdc.mo.gov/fishing](http://www.mdc.mo.gov/fishing).



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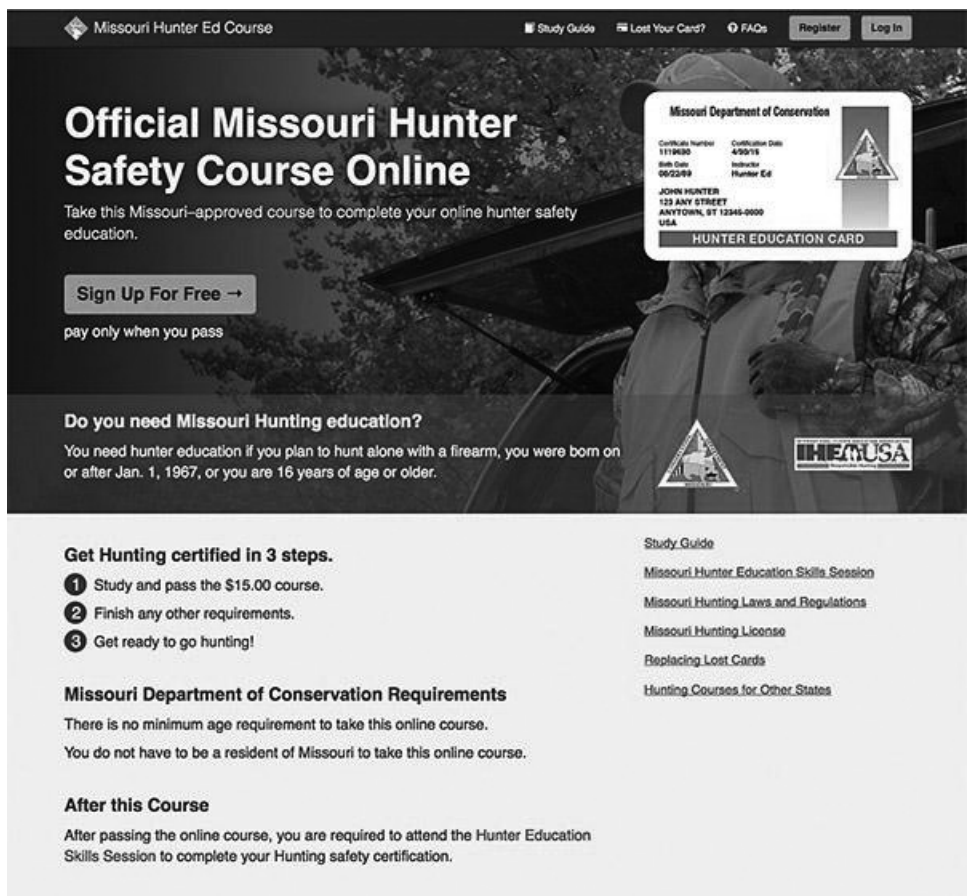


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**Study Guide**

- Missouri Hunter Education Skills Session
- Missouri Hunting Laws and Regulations
- Missouri Hunting License
- Replacing Lost Cards
- Hunting Courses for Other States

## MDC reminds hunters of new online option for hunter education

BY LUCAS BOND  
MISSOURI DEPT. OF CONSERVATION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) offers an all-online hunter-education course for Missouri residents 16 years or older to provide a more flexible and convenient option to become hunter-education certified. The all-online course includes videos and animation to teach hunter safety, firearm safety, ethics, regulations, and wildlife management.

“The way adults are learning is ever changing. More individuals are utilizing mobile applications and online tools to educate themselves,” MDC Hunter Education Coordinator Kyle Lairmore said. “This option provides individuals the flexibility to learn at their own pace and at a time they choose.”

Students will receive a temporary hunter-education certificate once they complete and pass the 60-question final exam with an 80% or higher. Individuals 15 years or younger are still required to complete the blended hunter education course requiring both a knowledge portion and in-person skills session to receive certification.

Missouri’s hunter education course is required for any hunter born on or after Jan. 1, 1967. Hunters who plan to hunt during a Missouri firearms season or are acting as an adult mentor must first complete an approved hunter-education certification program and provide proof of completion unless:

15 years of age or younger and will be hunting with a properly permitted adult mentor 18 or older.

Born before Jan. 1, 1967.

Disability exemption from MDC’s Protection Division.

16 years of age or older and have purchased an apprentice hunter authorization and will be hunting with a property permitted adult mentor 18 or older.

Landowner or lessee hunting on self-owned land or land of residence.

Learn more about MDC’s hunter education program, including the online option at [on.mo.gov/2suc7sc](http://on.mo.gov/2suc7sc). For more information about hunting seasons, go to: [on.mo.gov/1YYbxMZ](http://on.mo.gov/1YYbxMZ).

**“The only man who never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything.” — Theodore Roosevelt**

## TIPS FOR HUNTING DEER

### BE SAFE

Safety is your first priority. Nothing matters more than firearm and tree-stand safety.

Always identify your target as a legal deer before putting your finger on the trigger. Never shoot at sounds in the brush.

Never climb into a tree with a loaded gun. Always wear a safety belt or harness while in a tree stand.

### SPOTTING DEER

Patience is mandatory.

Talk to landowners about deer patterns as they are likely to know where deer gather and travel.

Deer are active throughout the day during the breeding season (usually late October through November). Otherwise, morning and evening are the best times to spot deer.

Deer are often found at the edges of fields or clearings in the woods.

Snow-covered ground reveals a deer's tracks and makes moving deer more visible.

### POSITION AND AIM

A deer's nose is its best defense; try to position yourself upwind of a deer trail.

If you spot an approaching deer, try to remain motionless. Deer have keen eyes and ears.

Aim for the "kill zone," an area 4 to 6 inches behind the left elbow of the front leg. You are more likely to hit the deer's heart, cause less trauma to the deer, and achieve a clean kill.

If you are archery hunting consider the following information:

### TECHNIQUE

Adjust your range to 10 and 60 yards.

Carefully study deer patterns and tendencies where you plan to hunt, then set your stand accordingly. Most deer kills are within 30 yards of an archer's stand.

Hide your scent and read the wind direction before you begin hunting.

You must be able to pull back the bow without straining or undue motion or sound.

Most hunting bows are adjusted to 50 to 70 pounds of pull, meaning the amount (in pounds) to pull the string back 28 inches. Less than a 50-pound pull is not recommended.

Missouri bowhunters are not required to wear hunter orange. Because you must get close enough to your target to hit the kill zone, wear clothing (camouflage) that allows you to blend into the natural landscape.

### SAFETY

Never climb into a tree stand with an arrow in the ready or nocked position.

Do not travel to any hunting spot with your arrow ready to shoot. Bowhunters have been severely injured or bled to death after falling and landing on a broadhead.

### PRACTICE

Use practice arrows with the same weight and length as your hunting arrows.

Practice with targets set at varying distances until you can place several arrows

within 6 inches of one another in a bull's eye. A shot to the kill zone is more important with bowhunting than with firearms hunting.

There are archery targets on the market that allow arrows, with both field tips and hunting broadheads, to be retrieved and

re-used.

Seek out experienced bowhunters for their input and encouragement.

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# Firearm Safety

With fall firearms season approaching, now is an ideal time to spend some time with your hunting weapons at the rifle range getting reacquainted with them.

Now is also the appropriate time to stress firearm safety and range etiquette. When handling firearms always remember the

## 10 Commandments of Gun Safety:

1. Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
2. Firearms should be unloaded when not in use.
3. Don't rely on your guns "safety". Treat every gun as though it can fire at any time, regardless of pressure on the trigger.
4. Be sure of your target and what is beyond it.
5. Always used correct ammunition.
6. If your gun fails to fire when the trigger is pulled, handle with care.
7. Always wear eye and ear protection when shooting.
8. Be sure the barrel is clear of obstructions before shooting.
9. Don't alter or modify your gun. Have it serviced regularly by a qualified gunsmith.
10. Learn the mechanical and handling characteristics of the firearm you are using before going afield with it. Not all guns are the same.

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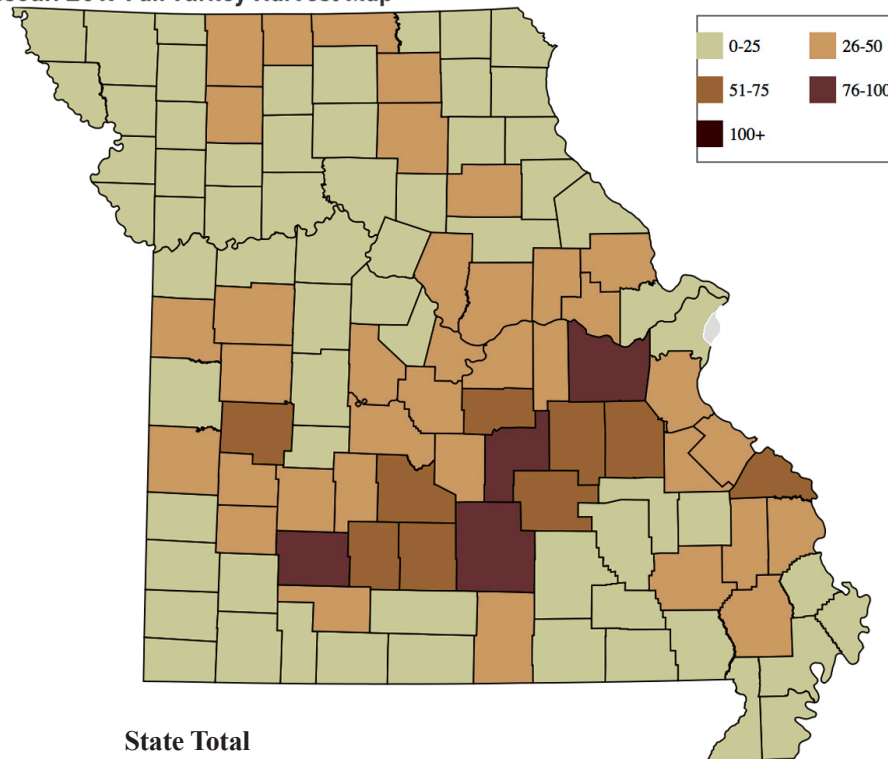
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## 2017 statewide fall turkey harvest summary

Missouri 2017 Fall Turkey Harvest Map



#### State Total

Total Turkey: 3091  
Total Adult Gobblers: 758  
Total Juvenile Gobblers: 373  
Total Adult Hens: 920  
Total Juvenile Hens: 1040  
Top County: Greene County (89 turkey)

#### Gasconade County

Total Turkey: 44  
Total Adult Gobblers: 13  
Total Juvenile Gobblers: 4  
Total Adult Hens: 11  
Total Juvenile Hens: 16

#### Maries County

Total Turkey: 56  
Total Adult Gobblers: 10  
Total Juvenile Gobblers: 6  
Total Adult Hens: 14  
Total Juvenile Hens: 26

#### Osage County

Total Turkey: 33  
Total Adult Gobblers: 4  
Total Juvenile Gobblers: 2  
Total Adult Hens: 19  
Total Juvenile Hens: 8

#### Franklin County

Total Turkey: 84  
Total Adult Gobblers: 12  
Total Juvenile Gobblers: 14  
Total Adult Hens: 25  
Total Juvenile Hens: 33

The above numbers are as of Tuesday, Oct. 24.

## MDC to offer deer processing workshop at Runge Nature Center Nov. 4

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Once hunters harvest deer, they need to know how to skin them, process the meat, and store it for future meals. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) will offer a free "Field-to-Freezer" deer processing class at Runge Conservation Nature Center, 330 Commerce Drive in Jefferson City, Nov. 4 from 1 – 4 p.m.

Participants will receive simple, step-by-step instructions on how to skin and

butcher deer meat themselves, with minimal equipment. MDC staff and volunteers will demonstrate how to process venison into steaks, roasts, and ground meat. The class will also cover safe knife handling, and other tools needed to correctly prepare venison for the freezer, as well as proper packaging techniques.

Participants must be at least 6 years old,

See **Deer Processing** page 9B





## Conservation commission gives initial approval on MDC changes to smallmouth and rock bass regulations

BY JOE JEREK  
MISSOURI DEPT. OF CONSERVATION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – At its Aug. 26 meeting in Columbia, the Missouri Conservation Commission gave initial approval of proposed regulation changes by the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) related to smallmouth bass and rock bass, also called goggle-eye.

The proposed regulation changes create a standard 15-inch minimum length limit for smallmouth bass and a daily limit of one for all Smallmouth Bass Special Management areas. They also expand these areas on the Big Piney, Jacks Fork, Big, and Meramec rivers.

The existing minimum length limit for smallmouth bass of 12 inches and daily limit of six fish remain for Missouri streams other than those of Smallmouth Bass Special Management areas.

The proposed regulation changes also set a statewide length limit of seven inches for rock bass (also called goggle-eye, warmouth, Ozark bass, and shadow bass) and remove the Osage Fork of the Gasconade River from the Rock Bass Special Management areas.

The proposed regulation changes are based on extensive scientific research related to bass populations and harvest and consideration of public input received during nine public meetings held by the Department.

The next step in the process for these proposed regulation changes is a 30-day public comment period beginning in October after publication in the Missouri Register. Anyone may file a statement in support of or in opposition to these proposed regulation changes during this time with the Regulations Committee Chairman, Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0180, or through the Department's website at [short.mdc.mo.gov/Z49](http://short.mdc.mo.gov/Z49).

For more information on bass fishing, visit [huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/fishing/species](http://huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/fishing/species). Buy fishing permits online at [mdc.mo.gov/buypermits](http://mdc.mo.gov/buypermits).

### Deer Processing • from page 8B

and children must be accompanied by an adult. Participants must preregister by calling the nature center at (573) 526-5544.

Conservation makes Missouri a great place to hunt, and MDC remains committed to providing free educational programs to help enable all Missourians to safely enjoy the outdoors.

Find more information about deer and deer hunting in Missouri at [mdc.mo.gov/hunting](http://mdc.mo.gov/hunting)

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## Fall Outdoors

WED., OCT. 25, 2017 ■ PAGE 10B

GASCONADE COUNTY **Republican**



**CONSERVATION AGENT** Chris Horn looks for evidence on a landowner's property. Photograph by Cliff White.

## MDC agents use DNA evidence to solve wildlife crimes

**BY CANDICE DAVIS AND GERALD SMITH  
MISSOURI DEPT. OF CONSERVATION**

Many popular police dramas begin with a uniformed officer arriving at the scene of a crime. The officer calls in a detective who surveys the scene and calls in a crime scene investigation (CSI) unit. When a crime occurs in nature, no one expects a CSI team to converge on the scene.

These scenes usually begin when a landowner reports hearing a gunshot in the night and finding a wounded deer in the morning. Landowners and poachers are often surprised to learn that local conservation agents are fully equipped to process a crime scene, much like an urban homicide team. Comparable to a homicide detective, the agent will look for footprints, tire tracks, or perhaps a bullet in the carcass. The crime scene is photographed and documented, and the agent interviews neighbors in the hopes of finding a witness. In many wildlife cases, there are no witnesses, and it's up to the conservation agent to get as much information from the main source of evidence — the animal remains.

### Science Can Make the Case

Missouri conservation agents are thankful for advances in DNA technology to help

solve wildlife crimes.

"Although the Conservation Department's primary use of DNA technology is for research and management purposes, it can also be used to aid in wildlife law enforcement," said Conservation Agent Paul Veatch of Oregon County.

MDC's Resource Science and Protection divisions entered into an agreement in 2009 with the Center for the Conservation of Biological Resources/WestCore at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota, to develop a DNA library for Missouri's elk herd, black bears, furbearer species, and white-tailed deer. The deer library enables researchers to determine what level of variation exists among Missouri white-tailed deer DNA profiles. WestCore used DNA samples from 767 deer across Missouri and sequenced DNA unique to the state's deer at seven specific sites along the DNA molecule. Their findings indicated that, given a population of about 1.3 million deer, the chance of finding two deer with the same DNA "fingerprint" is about 1 in 3 trillion.

This means if a poacher leaves a portion of the carcass of a deer behind — even drops of blood — and puts the venison in the freezer, that meat can be matched to the

See **Wildlife crimes** page 11B



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## Wildlife crimes • from page 10B

crime scene using DNA evidence.

Veatch put that technology to work for the first time on a late December night in 2010 on a deer poaching case in Oregon County. A landowner reported hearing a rifle shot near his home and observing the headlights of a pickup truck driving from the direction of the shot. A short time later, he saw what he believed was the same truck returning where the shot had occurred. The vehicle stopped in the roadway, and the headlights were turned on. This prompted the landowner to drive out to where the truck stopped and get the truck's license plate number before it drove off. He then called to report what he had witnessed.

"After making an initial survey of the scene, I interviewed the landowner and laid in wait for over an hour before a car approached the residence," Veatch said. "The car passed the residence, and the driver turned on the headlights, and then stopped at the same location where the landowner had observed the pickup truck."

When Veatch approached the driver, he learned the person was also the listed owner of the truck reported earlier. The driver denied shooting a deer, there were no remains in the car, no sign of a deer having been in it, and Veatch saw nothing to indicate there

was anyone with the man. However, based on years of law enforcement experience, Veatch suspected the driver knew more than he'd shared.

"I suspected the driver may have let someone out of the vehicle, so I requested backup from the sheriff's office to help secure the area and further investigate," Veatch said.

MDC Regional Supervisor Gerald Smith and Howell County Conservation Agent Matt Franks responded. While Veatch and the driver waited for agents Smith and Franks, another person approached Veatch, emerging from a wooded area. He echoed the driver's denial of any poaching activity.

"The arrival of backup officers can suddenly change a situation," Veatch said.

When sheriff's deputies arrived, Veatch, Smith, and Franks searched the area and found a blood trail near the location of the rifle shot. This led directly to a small button buck, buried in leaves. The agents confronted the men with the new evidence, but they still denied any involvement.

In court, these facts are considered circumstantial evidence. The agents can improve their case with physical evidence that ties the suspect to the crime. So when Veatch noticed small spots of blood on one of the men's boots, he seized them for analysis.

The men continued to argue that the blood was from a deer legally taken and checked. Veatch issued both men court citations for "... illegally possessing or transporting deer or parts thereof" before releasing them from custody. The agents secured samples from the illegally taken button buck and followed strict guidelines for evidence collection to keep from cross-contaminating the samples from the deer and the boots. They submitted the samples to WestCore for DNA analysis, which could provide support for the men's

story, or prove that they were responsible for killing the button buck illegally.

Fifty-three days later, WestCore reported that the DNA samples from the boots and the button buck originated from the same animal. They also determined the likelihood of another animal having the same DNA was less than 1 in 3.6 quintillion.

Thanks to these CSI techniques, the case never went to trial. The defendants changed

See **Wildlife crimes** page 12B

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## Wildlife crimes • from page 11B

their plea to guilty and the judge fined them \$439.50 each, and \$650 in restitution. In Missouri, money collected from wildlife violation fines issued by conservation agents is donated to schools located in the county.

For Veatch, this is a victory that may never have been won without the use of DNA technology.

### Science Can Prove Innocence

Sometimes, though, the victory comes when the same technology proves innocence, such as with a case at the end of the 2016 firearms deer season.

On the last Monday of the year, a Texas County landowner was working on his property just a short distance from a county road when he heard a gunshot. He then saw a pickup truck stopped across from his neighbor's property and a couple of men standing near the tailgate.

"He decided to see what was going on, and as he walked up to the driver's side of the pickup, he saw what he thought was two deer in the back," said Brad Hadley, a Shannon County conservation agent who responded to the call. "He confronted the driver about shooting from a county road, and the driver promptly denied having done so and quickly left the area."

The landowner got the license number of the vehicle as it was leaving and turned to go back to his property when he noticed his neighbor standing in the county road. He asked his neighbor if he'd heard the shot, and if he knew the driver of vehicle or if anyone had permission to hunt there. The neighbor said he'd heard the shot, but he didn't know the driver or vehicle, and hadn't given anyone permission to hunt. That's when Agent Hadley was called.

"I quickly noted blood-spattered rocks on the county road and bloody drag marks coming off the neighbor's property," Hadley said of his initial investigation.

Hadley collected samples from both locations of blood, retrieved written statements from both the man who made the report and his neighbor, and checked the license plate on the reported pickup truck. The license number gave him a person of interest, so he set out to locate and interview that person.

"He immediately admitted to having been in the area and having a confrontation with the man who called in the incident," Hadley said. "He also denied having killed a deer at the scene, instead saying the deer in the back of his pickup was one he killed that morning, but on his own property a couple



**CONSERVATION AGENT** Paul Veatch put DNA technology to work in a 2010 deer poaching case. Photo courtesy of the MDC.

of miles away."

Hadley took samples from the deer and the blood in the back of the man's pickup, but the witness reports and the man's own account weren't matching up. The man insisted on his innocence and gave the conservation agent specific directions to the

location where he said he'd killed the deer.

Hadley visited the site where the hunter said he'd taken the deer, but he found no evidence to support the story.

At this point, Hadley had written state-  
See **Wildlife crimes** page 13B

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**CONCLUSIONS:**

Items #859-01 and #859-02 originated from the same white-tailed deer and resulted in Genotype A. Based on a local database of white-tailed deer DNA the likelihood that another white-tailed deer would randomly result in Genotype A is less than 1 in 3.6 quintillion.

**Wildlife crimes • from page 12B**

ments from two witnesses who both heard a gunshot they determined came from the county road. One of those witnesses saw people outside a truck at a location with blood-spattered rocks in the road and bloody drag marks leading to the truck's location. That witness thought he saw two deer in the back of the pickup, but the second witness statement did not verify the number of deer. The driver of the pickup admitted to having killed a deer that morning and having been at the incident scene with that deer in the back of his pickup, but claimed the deer came from his own property. No physical evidence could be found to support that claim.

Hadley said this is what is commonly referred to as a circumstantial case. All the circumstances of the incident would support allegations of taking a deer from a motor vehicle and roadway and trespassing to retrieve the illegally taken deer. In any

See **Wildlife crimes** page 13B

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## OUTDOORS IN THE OZARKS

### Fishing for “wipers,” created in hatcheries

I am going to hunt and fish hard this week, going after those big hybrids gathering in the rivers that feed Truman Lake. They whipped me pretty bad a couple of weeks ago when they broke off five big lures in swift water because I didn't have the line strength I needed. Now I have taken out the strong stuff and intend to jerk the jaws right off of some of them fish which range generally from five or six pounds to ten or twelve pounds and sometimes all the way up to fifteen pounds. Lots of folks call them wipers, fish that are created in hatcheries, crossing white bass and stripers. Where I find them this time of year, they come to a current above the lake. If you land a couple of big ones, and you know how to remove the red meat from the filets, you produce enough white, tasty meat to feed quite a crew.

When it starts getting cold later in the week, I will go hunting with the crossbow I bought last year. But I may not hunt deer much; I likely will try to kill a turkey with it. It is much easier to hunt turkey with a crossbow than a regular bow because you can aim that arrow, or 'bolt' like you aim a

shotgun. I cannot believe the accuracy of the crossbow at 40 yards, because of that little scope that is used, with the green dot to center on the target.

I loved to hunt with a bow, years ago, but that ended when I got something a doctor called a 'frozen shoulder'. I can't figure out how I froze it, for cryin' out loud... it was in the middle of the summer! It finally went away after a few months, but then the right one got out of whack while it was waiting for the left one to come around, and I couldn't pull my bow with either one.

I had to finally accept the fact that even though I am smarter than I ever was, I just ain't physically what I was 30 years ago. The smartness amounts to coming to the realization that you can't run more than 30 yards anymore, and the realization that you don't have to, because walking will eventually get you where you need to go. The patience I have never had in my younger times, is still not one of my strong suits, but you can sit down against a tree and be more patient when you are darn near worn out. The urge to see the other side of the mountain subsides when both legs tell you

they want to stay where the rest of you has set.

My ancestry, a good part of it, came from Canada, the French long-boat people who made their living trapping and hunting and fishing. One of my great grandmothers was said to be a Cree Indian. In Canada, they no longer refer to the Ojibway and Cree, most of them living on reserves scattered here and there, as "Indians". They are called "indigenous" people, more of the political correctness crap we have to live with today while civilization spirals toward the gutter. What good has that new name ever done any of them.

Since I have that fraction of my blood with Cree Indian red and white cells, I feel like maybe I can speak up about what I see happening up in northwest Ontario. First of all, the Canadian government, in an attempt to make life better for the Indians, is allowing them to do about anything they want. And that is about to destroy the fishing in many of the best Canadian waters.



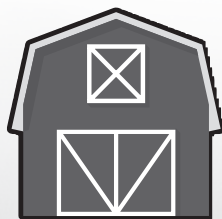
by **LARRY DABLEMONT**

The Indians are granted permission to set gill nets in any number, anywhere, and keep all the fish they want, to eat or sell, of any size. And you can see what a tremendous blow it is to walleye, bass, northern, crappie and muskie fishing all over Ontario. The places on Lake of the Woods which once were great places to catch big walleye and bass and crappie in October, are now depleted of fish that are of any size whatsoever. Where I once caught perhaps walleye from 20 to 25 inches in length, we have been unable to land a fifteen incher for two years, and where we once caught

See **Dablemont**, Page 15B

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## Dablemont • from page 14B

40 or 50 crappie a day, we now are lucky to boat a half dozen. Big northern pike seem to have disappeared.

I talked to a few of the local guides at Kenora, who say they still can find great fishing, but it has to be where the Indian gill netters do not go. I will never ever return to the Lake of the Woods in October to fish, but there are fly-in lakes and even remote places of Lake of the Woods where good-sized fish remain.

The Canadian government cut limits for U.S. fishermen drastically, and ignore the Indian problem. They feel they have to allow Indians to do anything they want. If they choose to trap, to hunt moose or bear or ducks, they can take all they want, any time they want. They have not made life better for the Ojibway and Cree. Those people, once proud and dignified people, are now given most everything the government can give them, including free health care and regular entitlement checks. Amongst them, there is a tremendous alcohol problem.

I recall fishing and hunting bluebills on Lake of the Woods with an Ojibway guide probably 35 years ago, and he was a delight to fish with and be around. One of the local fishermen said we should not pay him at the end of one day, but rather after we were finished hunting and fishing. We ignored him, and paid our guide after one

evening because he said he needed it. The next morning he was so drunk he couldn't even get in the boat.

Liberal governments, and Canada's is about as left wing as any can get, destroy people with entitlement programs, but you would hope the Ojibway and Cree would try to ensure that fish and wildlife are not impacted by their existence. Pride seems to be gone with many of them. In the reserves that I see, they live in little houses that often are about the size of a large shed.

There are plenty of good people from both tribes who have tried to change things, to no avail. The Indians are poor politicians. The Canadian government won't help them much, just hand them a regular, insufficient check to buy whiskey with, and watch them slaughter fish and wildlife at their will, and watch them die young from alcoholism problems.

If you want to get one of my books or a copy of my 96-page, full-color outdoor magazine, just call Ms. Wiggins, the executive secretary at the executive offices of Lightnin' Ridge Publishing Co. and ask for me. That number is 417-777-5227. Ms. Wiggins has been away from her desk for awhile as her mother got shingles and she said she needed to help her put them on her roof before it rains.

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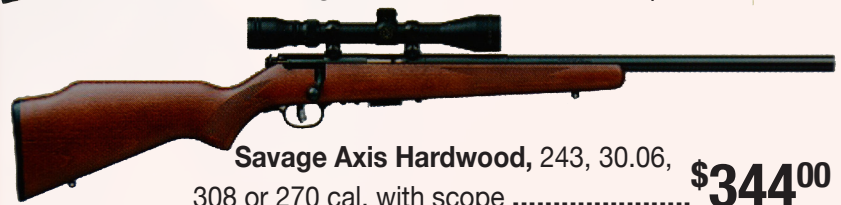
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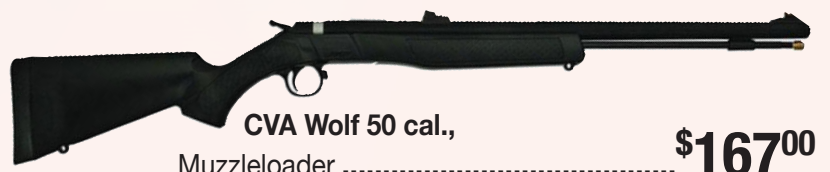
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## Wildlife crimes • from page 13B

circumstantial case, the officer may use discretion at the time of the incident and not issue citations pending further investigation. This is what Hadley did, choosing to rely on DNA analysis as a forensic tool to help solve the case. In this case, the physical evidence and the DNA in the blood samples collected did not support the circumstantial evidence and the person of interest was cleared.

## Science Helps Agents Enforce the Code

These are just two examples of the many routine Wildlife Code of Missouri violations conservation agents work to solve daily. Many of these incidents are profoundly similar, yet each has its own, unique circumstances that guide the agent's decision-making process.

"Not every Wildlife Code violation situation warrants sending DNA to a lab, because this type of forensic analysis is relatively expensive," Hadley said. "But in contested

cases or when conservation agents only have circumstantial evidence, DNA analysis may be used to either aid in prosecution or establish innocence."

Veatch, Hadley, and other Missouri conservation agents continue to use DNA analysis techniques when investigating wildlife violations. CSI Conservation may not be the focus of a high-rated television show anytime soon, but it's likely currently playing out in real life at a poaching scene in any number of Missouri counties.



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