

# HUNTING GUIDE



FALL / WINTER 2019

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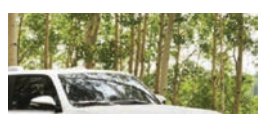


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Hunting is tough and should be. Somewhere lies the invisible line between too much stuff and not enough ethics.

# Legal hunting doesn't always mean ethical hunting

Archery season has arrived and with it the outdoor catalogs and sporting goods stores are full of the latest gadgets, gizmos and gee-gaws.



**BRUCE  
AUCHLY**

Technology. How much is enough? How much is too much? If you are looking for help in deciding what is legal, the law may be of some value. If

you're looking for help with the ethics of it all, talk to a higher power.

Montana game laws state the legal length and weight of an arrow, and describe in detail what constitutes a broadhead.

But no law says to the archer, thou shalt not shoot at an elk walking 75 yards away. Only the knowledge that such a shot will likely

result in a wounded animal that may go off and die and not be found by the would-be marksman.

The problem as seen from this corner of space is the latest technology on the market would lead an archer to believe that 75-yard shots are the rule and result in easy meat in the freezer.

Seventy-five yards shots are not the rule, should not be taken and rarely result in easy meat in the freezer.

We have every technological advantage when it comes to hunting: GPS units, rangefinders, trail cameras and bowsights that glow in dim light. And that does not even touch the no-scent, lightweight, waterproof and windproof clothing for sale.

Let's be clear. Advances in gear, archery equipment and clothing are wonderful. They are also not the culprit. The problem is not technology but what it does to us. It can

lead us to believe that in our hurried lives, the modern convenience takes the place of practice.

Just a few arrows into the hay bale in the backyard and we're good to go.

Perhaps an invisible line is crossed when we no longer use mechanical aids but are used by them.

More than 65 years ago, Aldo Leopold, the founder of the science of wildlife management, decried the gadgeteer: "He has draped the American outdoorsman with an infinity of contraptions, all offered as aids to self-reliance, hardihood, woodcraft or marksmanship, but too often functioning as substitutes for them."

Do you have so many gadgets that your next yard sale might compete with the local sporting goods store?

I'm no help, nor judge, as I have more factory-made trinkets than necessary.

Yet there has to be a limit, as Leopold states, "beyond which money-bought aids to sport destroy the cultural value of sport!"

Perhaps the answer to right and wrong lies in our morning mirror. After all, hunting is the one activity which has no judge, jury, referee or umpire.

The archer who takes the 75-yard shot at an elk, wounds the animal then makes little attempt to find it, does so without a witness. The archer can walk away, legally, and do it all over again the next day. Legally he is a hunter, morally not so much.

Hunting is tough and should be. Somewhere lies the invisible line between too much stuff and not enough ethics. Try to find it without too much gadgetry.

*Bruce Auchly is the Region 4 information officer for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.*



NRCS Montana

A bull elk feeds in a meadow.

## Cold snap took its toll, but adult deer and elk fare well

**TOM KUGLIN**

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There is nothing like fall in Montana.

The early mornings tying on boots and loading up the backpack. Setting foot outside the truck for the first time with a rifle or bow in hand. Hearing that first bugle of the year or catching the flash of hide or antlers through the trees.

With hunting season making its annual return, hunters young and old will head to Montana's wildlands in search of elk and deer. West-central and southwest Montana is opportunity rich with many general elk and deer license districts, plentiful antlerless tags and even a few special permits for

trophy bulls.

For the Butte, Helena and Townsend areas, last year brought a mix of unseasonably warm fall and early winter weather, followed by one of the coldest and snowiest Arctic blasts in recent years.

### **BUTTE AREA**

"In general, the herds are pretty healthy," said Vanna Boccadori, Butte-area biologist with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. "I did have some winter kill when I did my flight in the middle of that intense winter period."

Hunting harvest was poor for much of Boccadori's area during a warm and dry season. Then the winter blast hit and took with it a number of elk calves and deer fawns.

Hunters will likely not

notice a big change this hunting season in terms of animals. But the following year could be down, as that's when many of the animals lost during the winter would have started to mature, including this year's spike bulls that would become legal.

The variable weather of last fall and winter may have helped the game herds once the cold and snow came, Boccadori said, as they were spread out more than usual and not concentrated on the resources of winter range.

### **HELENA AREA**

Elk counts looked good in the Helena area, said biologist Jenny Sika.

Hunters had some decent luck last season. For the special either-sex permit in

Hunting District 339, 50% of hunters successfully harvested an elk, which is in line with previous seasons. A new combined permit for antlerless elk in districts 343 and 339 also saw good success and about average numbers of cow elk taken from each district as in prior years.

"We had some good success in the first week when we had some weather that encouraged elk to be down low, then they really retreated," she said.

Bull harvest was down in district 343, but harvest tends to bounce around, Sika said. The same was true for antlerless harvest in district 318, but bull harvest was good, she added.

The cold snap of late February and early March did



Photo Courtesy of Gregory Nickerson/Wyoming Migration Initiative, University of Wyoming

A mule deer buck in the snow.

hit the deer herds, but elk numbers were in line with previous years during population counts.

“I’m not seeing as much impact on elk as deer. Recruitment was down for deer,” Sika said.

As a result, some antlerless deer tags were cut from several districts.

### TOWNSEND AREA

The variable weather made counting the elk in the Townsend area a challenge this year, said biologist Adam Grove.

“Unfortunately we didn’t get good counts this year – I didn’t feel like the survey results were reflective of the population trends,” he said.

The survey flights did not take place until after the cold snap and that pushed many of the animals out of Grove’s area. On the western edge of



Photo Courtesy of Tom Koerner/USFWS

A mule deer buck is silhouetted by the skyline.

the Elkhorns, for example, many of the elk pushed closer to Helena than normal, and the bulls that remained took to the timber and remained largely out of sight.

During game checks last hunting season Grove saw a marked drop in success.

“I think harvest last year with the warm weather was down about 30% to 40%, and

we did have some shoulder seasons, but the elk really didn’t start moving until a lot of hunters had given up,” he said.

While the cold snap did cause some elk calves and mule deer fawns to not make it to spring, Grove does not suspect it had a major impact on healthy adult animals.

“I didn’t see impacts on

adult mortality, except in older animals, but there were some impacts on calf and fawn recruitment,” he said. “Elk calf and mule deer fawn recruitment were both below long-term averages, but it wasn’t horrid.”

Reporter Tom Kuglin can be reached at 447-4076 @ IR\_TomKuglin



THOM BRIDGE, *Independent Record*

A goose hunter shoots at a flock of Canada geese from a layout blind.

# Outlook bright again for waterfowl hunters

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After record or near-record duck numbers in Montana the past couple of years, waterfowl hunters should enjoy yet another banner year.

“Ducks have been doing great, at or near all-time highs in Montana,” said John Vore, game management bureau chief for Montana

Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

“Canada is the breeding ground for many of the ducks that come through Montana. Numbers up there have been pretty darn good for the past few years, and this year look like more of the same” in both Central and Pacific flyways, Vore said.

He said Montana has been growing its resident population of Canada geese, and “light geese” — snow geese

and Ross geese — are also doing well.

Vore said that the big duck numbers are great, but that doesn’t guarantee hunting success.

“You have to be in the right place at the right time,” he said. “Good numbers don’t necessarily mean your favorite hunting spot is going to be good.”

Vore pointed hunters to this year’s updated waterfowl and

webless migratory bird regulations, available online at <http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/regulations>. Hard copies will be available shortly at license providing outlets.

Bag limits and limits for individual species have changed slightly, he said, the biggest change being the daily pintail bag limit has dropped from two to one.

In the Pacific Flyway, a split season for both ducks



Photo Courtesy of Michael Kuhn

A drake mallard in flight.

and geese, with dates of Sep. 28-Jan. 5 and Jan. 11-15, will allow an additional weekend of hunting

In the Central Flyway, for Zone 2 (Big Horn, Carbon, Custer, Prairie, Rosebud, Treasure and Yellowstone counties), duck season dates will be Sep. 28-Oct. 6 and Oct. 19-Jan. 4. Goose dates are the same, except the second part of the hunt extends to Jan. 22. Zone 1 (the remainder of the Central Flyway) will have a Sep. 28-Jan. 2 duck season and goose dates of Sep. 28-Jan. 5 and Jan. 11-15. Details of other species dates are in the regulations.

Also, youth 10 to 15 may participate in a special

statewide two-day early hunt for waterfowl Sep. 21-22. This is a great time to get kids out. They are the only ones who can shoot. And you can give your retriever a tune-up as well.

Vore pointed out that the number of migratory bird hunting dates are controlled in part by a 5-country treaty including the United States, Canada, Mexico, Russia and Japan. "We're at the maximum allowed under the treaty," Vore said.

According to a Fish, Wildlife and Parks release, hunters should check the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website, <http://fws.gov/birds> for the waterfowl status report based

on May breeding duck surveys, giving the overall duck estimates and estimates by species. Survey results will also be found on the Ducks

Unlimited and Delta Waterfowl websites. These surveys, always anticipated by duck hunters, will be used in setting regulations for next year.



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MEL HOLLOWAY

Although its body and tail are camouflaged, the bright red plumage on ring-necked pheasant males is difficult to hide.

# Upland birds stage comeback after down years

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This year's upland bird season should be the most productive in several years for Montana hunters, experts say.

Warm, relatively dry weather in June and July

means better survival rates for upland broods, particularly sage grouse. And this year's conditions are the most favorable in several years, according to John Vore, game management bureau chief for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

"If we get a cold, rainy

week or two in there it can really knock them back," Vore said. "Across the state, this year was better than we've had for quite a while."

"I had a phone call earlier today with our game manager in Great Falls, and he said they're seeing good-sized broods of blue grouse

(dusky grouse) also," he said.

Sage grouse researchers in central Montana, around Lewistown, are reporting good survival rates for chicks there.

Vore said he expects the good news to extend to Hungarian partridge as well.

"Huns are very productive





Photo courtesy of David Mitchell

A ruffed grouse perches in a tree.

and they can bounce back real quickly” from bad years, he said.

But despite the good weather year, conditions can vary greatly on a local level. “The word we use a lot is ‘spotty,’” he said. “Hunters can go look for Huns and not find a darn thing, but move a few miles down the road and

have a pretty decent hunt.”

Vore said that sharp-tail grouse populations have taken a real hit in recent years, and the species is a little slower to recover than others. “They’re just so far down over the past few years it’s going to take awhile for them to come back,” he said.

Vore also hasn’t heard

much talk from around the state of better pheasant numbers this year.

Meanwhile, the state’s wild turkey population is spreading. Even with a couple of not-so-kind winters, turkey populations are at least stable and probably increasing. Fall turkey hunts should be productive

this year.

Vore offered one other cautionary note to upland bird hunters, particularly in central and eastern Montana: It’s a banner year for sweet clover. “The stuff can get two or three feet high and it makes it real difficult to get around,” he said. “It makes it tough on dogs too.”

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# YOUR SHOTS

## Montana hunters share their photos

Courtesy photo

LEFT: Plentywood hunter John Kemp Jr. shot this bull elk in the Missouri Breaks on Nov. 11, 2018, with the help of his 7-year-old grandson, Brayden Kemp, of Columbus. Kemp hunted three weekends with his sons, grandson, and brother-in-law. The bull green scored 410 4/8 nontypical. It will be the eighth largest taken in Montana if approved.



Jim Schott

Helena resident Isabella Brooke, 17, shot this four-point whitetail buck in the Bitterroot Valley this past hunting season on Thanksgiving Day.



Krista Blomquist

RIGHT: Tristan Blomquist, 12, of Billings, shot his first buck north of Hardin on Nov. 23.



Pat Hughes

Ten-year-old Landon Hughes, of Billings, successfully tagged his first deer near Absarokee last year. He was participating in the apprentice program and was hunting with his father, Pat Hughes. Landon killed the muley buck with one shot from his 6.5 Creedmoor rifle.



Brian Ponto

Billings hunter Magdalen Ponto, 11, used one shot from her .223 rifle to topple this 5x5 mule deer buck at 187 yards. She was hunting on Nov. 21 near Nye with her uncle Brian Ponto.



Wesley Dunn

Houston Dunn, a 12-year-old Livingston hunter, shot this buck at 325 yards with a .30-06 rifle while hunting with his father, Wesley, in the Ashland area on Thanksgiving morning. He also shot his first cow elk this past season.



**Kirk Schultz**

Gary Schultz poses with his grandsons after shooting a bull elk on Nov. 11, 2018, in the Bull Mountains. Boone & Crockett scored it 404 3/8.



**Clay Counts photo**

Laurel resident Tyler Ostwalt, at right, poses with father Warren Ostwalt and the 1/2-year-old mountain goat Tyler shot on the west side of the Crazy Mountains in September 2018.



**Dan Durglo**

Nick Durglo, a junior at Montana State University, shot his first elk northwest of Polson on Nov. 23, 2018. Nick lives in Charlo.




**Kevin Winterholler**

Grant Geiser, 27, of Lovell, Wyoming, shot his first archery bull on his first archery elk tag on Sept. 22, 2018, in the Big Horn Mountains. The bull green scored 350.

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Christine Peterson, *Star-Tribune*

A taxidermist works on a pronghorn mount.

# DO'S AND DON'TS of prepping for the taxidermist

## TOM KUGLIN

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The art of taxidermy can bring out the beauty of an animal for a lifetime of preservation and display.

Anaconda taxidermist Don Capp, owner of Capp's Taxidermy Studio, has spent the last 40 years mounting

wildlife from across the globe. During that time he has seen pelts and capes come into his shop in all manner of conditions, as hunters often make a lot of mistakes when handling their trophies in the field. Capes can be valuable as well, so even if hunters do not plan to mount their animals, taxidermists are

often interested in purchasing them.

Here are some do's and don'ts for taking care of an animal for the taxidermist:

### Do's

#### **Get some air on the cape:**

For bigger animals such as elk and moose, Capp recommends a dorsal cut splitting

the skin down the back to the ribs where the cape starts and then letting the air naturally cool it. "You've really got to open stuff up, get it off the concrete on some saw horses, get it off the cardboard because it can't breathe," he said.

**Get the cape in the freezer:** "If in doubt, always

freeze it if it'll fit in the freezer," Capp said. Freezing a cape in hot weather will preserve it until a hunter can get it to the taxidermist. But once an unfinished cape is frozen, it only has about six months before areas like the ears become freezer burned.

**Watch YouTube:** Capp is a big proponent in watching YouTube videos to learn about where and how to make proper cuts on various game animals. Whether it's a dorsal cut for an elk or tube cut for a predator, teaching videos are available.

**Learn to skin the face off the skull:** Capp is amazed at the stories of hunters skinning up to the skull and then backpacking the cape still attached for miles. Learn to carefully take the skin off, cut the antlers and save the extra weight, he says.

**Don'ts**

**Don't cut the cape short:** One of the biggest mistakes Capp sees is cutting the cape too short on shoulder mounts, leaving the taxidermist with few options. Cut vertically from at least midway down the ribcage and work forward to ensure there is plenty to work with, and when in doubt, more is always better.

**To salt or not to salt:** Trying to get the flesh off a hide once it has been salted is like trying to remove layers of plywood, Capp says. He recommends hunters stay away from salt altogether, but do cut away flesh to prevent spoilage.

**Don't cut the throat:** Capp notes that there is an old tale about cutting the neck on a freshly harvested animal to help drain blood. The practice not only ruins most capes but is unnecessary, he said.



Thom Bridge, Independent Record

Taxidermy is all about the details, and getting a pelt or cape to a taxidermist before it spoils is essential for a good mount.

Reporter Tom Kuglin can be reached at 447-4076 @IR\_TomKuglin

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Hunters pack out two elk quarters during Montana's 2016 big game season.

Thom Bridge, *Independent Record*

# Five tips for proper field care of meat

**THOMAS PLANK**

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As any experienced big-game hunter will tell you, after the shot is when the real work begins. If you do it right, you'll have tasty meat to enjoy for a very long time.

Ryan Schmaltz, a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks educator, recently led a class at Capital Sports in Helena about some of the best ways to take care of your protein once you have an animal down in the field.

Here is the advice he shared:

■ Moisture, dirt, precipitation and heat are your worst enemies. Schmaltz is a stickler about making sure the animal stays clean and cool during both the pack-out and the drive home. He keeps coolers that are packed with dry ice or frozen milk jugs of water and lays the meat on top so he can tend to it over a period of days.

■ Use the gutless quartering method for a quick and easy way to pack out an big animal. The gutless method has gained popularity in recent years, and for many Montana hunters who down an animal deep in the back-country, it's the best way

to bring out the important parts of the hunt. If you want the organs, you'll have to open the animal up all the way and gut it.

■ Make sure you're using the right tools. A very sharp knife, electrical tape, cam straps, stretch tape, a first aid kit, a tape measure and flagging tape are all part of Schmaltz's gutting and skinning kit. He uses a Havalon replaceable-blade knife but warns anyone using it to be careful. "It'll cut right through," Schmaltz said.

■ Keep your gear visible! Losing a dollar's worth of electrical tape in the tall

grass is annoying, but losing a knife in the tall grass is brutal. One of the tricks Schmaltz uses when he's out hunting is to bring along a towel to set his equipment on when he's taking apart an animal in the tall grass to keep everything visible.

■ Use a game bag, towel or the animal's hide to keep the meat clean and fresh. The inside of the hide is a clean space to lay meat while working on the rest of the animal, Schmaltz said. And use the outside of game bags to prep another clean space to set the meat if you can't immediately place it in the bag itself.

# 30 things I learned from my first hunting season

**THOMAS PLANK**

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Since I took hunter's education last year, I've spent a lot of time looking at very expensive pieces of equipment that seemed to have a purpose, but not an immediately discernible one.

Understanding how that guitar-pick is really a cow call or why a DDPAT style of camouflage is worse or better than a Rorshach's test of another pattern is something that will come with time. What I did learn over the past year could fill a book, and I haven't even been close enough to take a shot yet.

Normally I find that lists are a crutch in writing. But to sketch something as vast as the hunting experience in the American West, a list can work wonders.

1. An alarm clock set for 5 a.m. sounds much different than any other alarm clock. In fact, it's scientifically proven to be *much* louder.

2. No matter how much slipping, sliding, climbing or general boot leather destruction occurs, it is impossible to feel tired when an animal shows up in the binoculars and the wind is right.

3. In the early morning under the Big Sky, the moon looks completely different than it did the night before.

4. Knowing a deer is some place and actually seeing a deer in that place are two very different things.

5. "Hiking" is not "hiking while hunting!"

6. Ever cracked a branch in the forest or stepped on a really crisp leaf in the fall and

thought, "Wow, that sound reminds me of fall?" Well, if you do the same when you're hunting, the first thought is "#\$%#@#!"

7. Bad weather = good hunting. Good weather = bad hunting. Generally speaking, a nice mild winter with late snowfall is a nice respite from Montana's normal early start to the cold months! I've never been so disappointed in the lack of snow and freezing cold than I have been in the past year.

8. Whitetails are ninjas.

9. Mule deer will always stop and look back to see if you're still chasing them. Whitetails will show the white flag and then run into the next county.

10. Just because there are a lot of tracks does not mean you will see any of the living creatures that made those tracks.

11. Wind checking dust is a must have.

12. Never come over a ridge breathing hard. You might have to take a shot as you crest it.

13. I need to spend more time in the



**THOM BRIDGE**, *Independent Record*

Thomas Plank poses for a photograph in his hunting gear.

Montana outdoors.

14. Carrying a rifle for six hours without a sling is a very, very bad idea. I spent the next two days wondering if the outside of my forearm was ever going to un-knot itself.

15. The sky can look like sandstone during a Montana sunrise.

16. A rutting deer is not a very smart deer.

17. A chest pack for binoculars is a wise investment. (*THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP THUMP.*)

18. Elk are enormous.

19. Like, holy cow, they are so big.

20. It's like a horse!

21. An antelope is not an antelope, but is rather closer to a goat.

22. Antelope jerky is good.

23. High Country Jerky Mix is the best flavor.

24. Don't tell anyone where

you've been hunting. More importantly, don't ask where anyone else has been hunting. Just say you were up near Great Falls, or around Billings, or south of the Canadian border but north of the Wyoming border.

25. Like onions, hunters have layers.

26. Drinking coffee in a warm truck cabin before going into the cold is the most calming experience imaginable.

27. Don't touch the electric fence.

28. Hopping any kind of fence is a studied meditation on balance and avoiding a face plant.

29. Seriously, don't touch the electric fence.

30. There is nothing as beautiful as Montana when the sun slowly rises and reveals the wonders of this impossible state.

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SEAN SPERRY, Bozeman Daily Chronicle via AP

An elk bugles in this photograph.

# Emotion and versatility key to calling in elk

## TOM KUGLIN

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Put some emotion in your calling and make sure you understand the situation before letting a bugle rip through the woods.

Rocky Jacobson, owner of Rocky Mountain Hunting Calls, recently held a calling seminar in Helena covering the many sounds elk make and how hunters can do

their best to mimic them. He started the company in 1992, developing the “palate plate” diaphragm call that is now the No. 1 selling design on the market.

When regulations in Idaho changed to bull-only, Jacobson says hunters needed to adapt.

“We had to learn how to call a bull in and we learned that all on our own,” he said. “I made many, many, many

mistakes to learn how to make it work, and I still make many, many mistakes and I still have to figure out how to get them in all the time.”

Through hundreds of days watching elk, Jacobson has learned plenty about elk behavior, and when certain calls work and when they do not.

“You watch videos and it looks easy to call an elk in, but sometimes it takes 30

days hunting every day for nine minutes of footage,” he said. “Don’t expect every time you call an elk they’ll come running to you.”

Jacobson does not believe increased hunting pressure had made elk “call wise” but rather that low bull-to-cow ratios in many general tag areas mean less competition and a tendency for bulls to run. Even so, hitting an elk with the right call at the right



time can still bring them in, and it is important to know what elk are doing and when certain calls may be effective.

The pre-rut starts around Aug. 15 (earlier than Montana's archery opener) and is generally when bigger bulls start to come off the mountain in search of cows. From Aug. 20 to Sept. 5 some of the older cows may come into their 24-hour fertility cycle, and Jacobson counts that time period among best opportunities to call in larger bulls.

The peak rut starts around Sept. 15 and runs for roughly three weeks until about Oct. 10. It is the time when the majority of cows come into cycle and the hardest rutting displays.

After Oct. 10, the post-rut starts, older bulls peel off the herds to recover and although a few bulls continue to bugle, cow calling is Jacobson's primary technique.

Whenever a hunter calls, Jacobson recommends putting variability into calls.

"To be variable in different calling techniques is very important," he said. "You don't want to be out there in the woods making the same sound every time you bugle."

Repetition in the woods is unnatural, Jacobson says, so when the same bugle or cow call is made time and again elk do not necessarily become leery, but do tend to become accustomed to it and ignore it. That is why some popular calls designed to produce the same sound every time may work for a few years but then fall on deaf ears, he said.

"The more sounds you can throw at an elk the more they get confused, the more curious they get and they want to come in and see what the heck is going on," he said. "Plus, you become realistic sounding to them."

Emotion is also key to calling. Jacobson detailed the different bugles bulls will make, which also dictates which calls he uses.



Christine Peterson, Star-Tribune

A bow hunter carrying multiple calls looks for elk during the hunting season.

A location bugle is long and high-pitched, and without much urgency.

A display bugle is used by nearly every bull in the woods depending on the time of year, with more growl and aggression.

A challenge bugle is very high-pitched and aggressive. And when a hunter hears it, get ready because that bull is coming in.

"It's very important to let these animals know there's some emotions in your calls because that's what they play off is emotions, they're playing off the rut period," he said. "There are days and times when they're wore out and tired from being in the rut and they don't want to do anything. There's times when they're aggressive and slept good and really chipper and they really bugle a lot."

Reporter Tom Kuglin can be reached at 447-4076 @ IR\_TomKuglin

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# GAME for GAME?

## Two takes on a Rocky Mountain meat

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
THOM BRIDGE**  
*Independent Record*

According to Hank Shaw, author of “*Hunt, Gather, Cook: Finding the Forgotten Feast*,” “Venison may or may not be the most popular game meat, but it is definitely the most abused. I can’t tell you how many people I have served

venison to who have had to overcome some prior bad experience with it.” Shaw makes a good point here. A lot of people I have come in contact with have only had game prepared in a few varieties, some not as appetizing as others.

Yes, our mothers’ venison recipe with butter and onions is a top-notch meal capable of perking the appetite of

any being within close proximity with a functioning nose. But why not take the yearly fall harvest a step further, into a realm of more dynamic flavor and skip a couple trips to the local meat counter?

Here are two of my go-to venison dishes. One with slight elegance and another down-home classic sure to keep thoughts of hunger at bay.



The blackened coffee tenderloin plated with a corn and rosemary quinoa salad, garnished with a basil top.



Hunter's Pie is a quick and versatile recipe resulting in a delicious, hearty meal with just as delicious leftovers. The beauty is, it only requires one skillet, so the dirty dishes are kept to a minimum.

### Blackened Coffee Tenderloin

Here's a quick steak recipe that's best with tenderloin or backstrap but will work with other steak cuts also.

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons coffee, French press ground
- 1/4 lemon, squeezed
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1/2 bulb of garlic, crushed

It's just as simple as adding all the ingredients into a bowl and dunking your meat into that flavorful bath. I let it marinate for only a couple of hours, so as not to break down the outside tissue of the steak too much. After all, the marinade is only soaking into the surface of the meat and coating the exterior, so why tenderize the already most tender cut of the animal?

Finally, throw that cut on a hot grill, sear for 6 or 7 minutes on each side, let rest a couple of minutes off the grill, slice, plate and enjoy. (Keep an eye on that grill though, with all that olive oil you may need to put out spot fires with a squirt bottle of water.)

### Hunter's Pie

This is a quick and versatile recipe resulting in a delicious heavy meal with just as delicious leftovers. The beauty is, it only requires one skillet, so the dirty dishes are kept to a minimum.

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 pound ground venison
- 2 small onions, chopped
- 3-4 whole carrots, chopped
- 8 ounces frozen peas
- 3-4 stalks of celery, chopped
- 3 cups beef stock
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 can refrigerated biscuits

To start, brown the meat and set aside. Then add the butter and vegetables to the same cast iron skillet and saute until softer. (You will want to use cast iron or any other oven-safe skillet for this.)

Once you have the vegetables cooked to your desired softness, add

the meat back in and reduce your heat to low. Slowly mix in the flour and stock, experimenting with each to get your desired thickness. Some people like it more saucy and some like it thicker like gravy; this ratio is somewhere in the middle of those.

Evenly distribute the biscuits on top of the pie base and throw it in the oven. Bake at 375 degrees for 15-20 minutes or until the biscuits are golden.

I say this recipe is versatile for a couple of reasons. The meat can be replaced with duck, goose, pheasant or grouse. The stock can easily be replaced with chicken stock. The vegetables can be switched with in-season vegetables or whatever is in your pantry.

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