

The Maine Bowhunter



WINTER 2020
Official Newsletter of the Maine Bowhunters Association



A Season Can Change in Seconds

with David Baker

In this edition:

President's Request for Volunteers

DIY CoolBot Walk-In Coolers

Dedicated to the

Preservation of Bowhunting
for over **50** years!



President's Report

with **SCOTT ABBOTT**

Our archery season has come to a close for 2019. I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable season, and was fortunate enough to have harvested some critters for the table.

VOLUNTEERING IN 2020

The season for the volunteers on our Board of Directors for the MBA is hitting our busy time of year. Sportsman's Show season is gearing up. This is the hardest time of year for the MBA, as we are an all-volunteer group. That being said, we need some help. There are on an average 12,700 licensed bowhunters in the state of Maine each year, I would like to see more help from the archery hunters in the state.

Why volunteer? The biggest reason I can think of is to protect the sport that we all care so much about. The sport of Archery is a very special group of sportsmen and women. We have a great reputation within the outdoor community as well as with non-hunters as hardworking people who take pride in ethical archery hunting.

Expanded Archery Season is very important for archery hunters in Maine — and without the help of the Maine Bowhunters Association, we wouldn't have that season. I would personally like to thank **Thomas Robinson** of the Maine Expanded Archery Page on Facebook for joining the MBA and helping us out with donations.

How you can help the MBA:

- Join the MBA.
- Get your friends to join.
- Sportsman's Shows – Help at the booth, help with the youth archery shooting.
- Attend our Annual Banquet- it's a great place to meet some great people who love the sport of archery.
- Attend some of our meetings.

If you would like to help, please contact me directly at **207.356.6523** or email me at **redhillhunt@yahoo.com**.

Thank you for your membership,
Scott Abbott
President, MBA



Passing on your archery skills can be a gift for a lifetime.

The season is over and I hope you had a safe and successful one. I'm sure you are or were busy putting away and washing hunting clothes. I just finished grinding and packing meat on 12.16.19.

Back in August 1975 Scott Paper Co. was being built in Skowhegan. There were not enough rooms in town to accommodate all the construction workers. My parents rented out two rooms at the farm house. One of the renters was named Jake — he was from Massachusetts. He had a bale of hay on the lawn with a paper plate behind the bale twine. Jake was shooting a Bear Recurve. He showed me how to shoot his bow. The next day I drove to Waterville Kmart and bought a Bear Grizzly (\$59.00 plus tax!) like Jake's and we shot together often through the summer.

This past summer I was going through some items of my fathers and mothers, and I found an old address book of my father's. I was looking through it and found Jake's name, address, and phone number in it. I had my daughter check on facebook to see if he still lived in MA. She looked him up and found that everything was the same — even the same phone number. Photos of him and family were all there on his page. I called and spoke with Jake, I think he said he was 82 years old, he said he still stays very active, We spoke for about 15 minutes and I gave him a long overdue thank you for getting me into archery. Jake sounded very happy to hear from me. I told him I was very active in the MBA and often helped people get into archery. What comes around, goes around, I say. If you have someone to thank, just do it.

See you at the Banquet!

Please write some stories for our newsletter!

Brad Magoon



A Season Can Change in Seconds

with David Baker

It had started out to be a very disappointing archery season.

Shortly before expanded archery's opening day, I went to check a property that I've hunted since 2003. A foundation had been poured for the first of many homes planned for a new development and hunting was no longer an option as a road and power lines now replaced the hedgerow and pastures where my treestand once stood. It was a location that had filled many tags through the years and the only expanded area that I've hunted for a better part of 15 years. Time was not on my side to secure another expanded property, let alone scout it out and put up stands. I decided to forego the expanded hunt for this year and really prep the area around my general hunting blind for a great fall season. My son, Aaron, and I spent a few afternoon hours clearing shooting lanes and removing the previous winter's deadfall that choked up many of the abandoned tote roads where the local deer often travel. A prime trail camera I had left out to monitor activity since the end of last November only contained 680 pictures and many showed deer followed up by a nearly equal number of coyotes. Early spring pictures revealed a few doe's with a couple sets of twins and last year's button buck now sprouting an odd-shaped set of spikes. We did find it strange that, of all the pictures, we saw none of the bucks we knew were in the area last fall.

In the early light of opening day of regular archery season, I watched as two large deer walked thru an opening in the woods about 80 yards from my blind. It was not light enough to identify them as buck or doe. For the next two weeks, all I saw was an occasional lone doe traveling towards the local food sources in the waning hours of daylight. Midway through October, the lone doe casually grazed her way past my blind inside 15 yards and stopped to watch my landowner friend cooking

on the grill on his back patio. I found it funny and sent a picture of her to my son who was sitting in his stand across the street. He reminded me that we didn't draw doe tags for the upcoming gun season — and with all the deer we **weren't** seeing, I might regret not filling my tag with her. He was right — the season was half over and if we wanted fresh venison in the freezer, this lonely doe was an ideal candidate as she had no fawns. I saw her two more times over the next four nights of hunting but she always seemed to stay just out of range.

On Saturday morning, (youth day — 10/26) I was in my tent well before sun up. At 6:43am, I heard a gunshot in the distance and I looked at my phone to check the time as a fair amount of darkness still surrounded my tent. As my eyes adjusted to daylight around 7am, I picked up my Extinguisher deer call and puffed out a couple soft doe bleats followed up by a longer fawn bleat a few minutes later. I honestly have never had much faith in deer calls but I've read so many stories of success with this particular call last fall, I had to give it a try. To my surprise, within five minutes, I could see a deer coming up the hill from the cedar swamp below — nose down and in my direction. I watched closely as it crossed directly under my tree stand that I'd decided was too cool to sit in that morning and was about 35 yards from my blind when I could clearly see a rack. It's a buck!!! My mind was racing as he continued in my direction. WOW! Where did he come from? How do I not have pictures of him on my trail cams? All the while, I nocked an arrow and drew the yarn I'd set up to raise the screen over my shooting window. He stopped briefly behind an oak tree which gave me opportunity to come to full draw. I was thinking, the whole moment, is this really happening? He slowly eased his way into the meadow before me, looking cautiously in the direction of my blind. Luckily, his focus changed quickly to the sea of acorns at his feet. As he looked up to check his surroundings between acorns, he gave me a nearly perfect broadside shot. I let the arrow fly and watched as it passed partially thru his body right behind his shoulder blade. He launched himself into the air and retreated in the direction from which he came. I held my breath and listened. Within seconds I heard him crash.

Had I not heard the crash, I would have waited a few minutes before exiting my tent — but I knew in my heart this was a good shot. I nocked a second arrow in the event he wasn't dead and walked to the spot where I hit him and didn't see any blood. I stepped into the path where he ran and within five yards I found a blood trail in the wet leaves that would not be hard to follow. I paused for a moment to look ahead and saw that he had already expired about thirty yards from where I'd shot him. It appeared that he had tried to jump over a pile of brush but instead, crashed right into it.

It was a brief encounter with a buck that I did not know was in the area. Now, it was going to provide another year worth of venison for my family and memory of a lifetime for me. I admit, I might have broken the morning silence with a couple fist pumps as I thanked the good Lord above for this blessing. My tag is filled, my season is over. My son joined me to help dress and drag this big boy out of the woods as the dreadful thought of the real work that we were about to begin, settled into my mind. Yup — that good old "Honey do list" that had only been getting attention on Sunday's for the past month, was about to take over Saturdays again too. Yes Dear, I'll be right there...

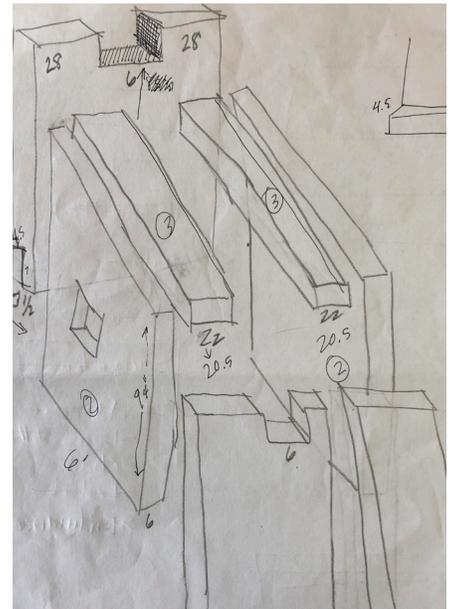
Shot on October 26th with my Mission Venture and Rage broadhead. Dressed at 160 lbs.

David A Baker



A CoolBot Walk-In Cooler: Your Next DIY Project For the Off Season

with **Randy Gaetano**



For a coastal Maine bowhunter, a personal walk-in cooler will be very useful. Here are the stages of my project so far — I'll be ready for next season!

It was getting late in the afternoon of opening day in New Hampshire — about 70 degrees and I didn't expect to see a thing. I almost didn't go until I got a last minute text from a friend asking if I was out and how he was just getting settled into his stand. That was all it took and I grabbed my gear and quickly got on the road trying to cram a 30 minute drive over the border into 20. Little did I know, the buck I wrote about last season with the split ear and split G2's would appear out of thin air at sunset and walk 23 yards from my stand.

Luck was with me that night and before it was even close to dark, I had an enormous deer on the ground. But the mosquitoes were annihilating my back, I had a long drag through a field of chest-high hay ahead of me while the clock ticked, and the temperature barely cooled. Hunting the expanded season has provided a number of these experiences of the years, this one was the hardest. With the butcher asleep, my best option with a deer this size was to go to a friend's and lay the deer over his small open-faced chest freezer with a blanket over the deer. When we hoisted it over the freezer, it barely fit half the backstraps. Though comical and a bit stressful, it worked out.



Dressed at 192 lbs. with an estimated age of 6.5-7.5 years.

As someone who enjoys bowhunting the early season and also loves the process of butchering game, having a place to age venison in the warmer months has long been a dream of mine. I've followed the CoolBot method for a while now and love the DIY independence of it. In case you haven't heard, a CoolBot is a digital temperature controller that connects to a standard AC unit, monitors the temperature of your storage space, and controls the AC to chill the space to a desired temperature. For a small investment of materials, AC, and the CoolBot controller, you can build an affordable cooler and take complete control of your harvest from field to table. A brewer friend who uses a CoolBot to power his beer cooler/storage room first told me about it years ago and I've schemed and planned since. After this buck, I knew I needed to make it happen for myself and after searching Craigslist for foam panels and AC units, it turned out a friend was getting rid of some homemade SIP panels. These provided 6" inch walls of structural insulation and lowered my costs, but also offered a fun challenge of figuring out how to make them fit around my garage header.

At this stage, the structure is built, the AC and CoolBot units are in place and wired, and everything is pretty air-tight. A couple last steps like wiring up a light inside and putting up a utility rod for the meat hooks to hang and slide on are all that's left. More to come in the next installment of this article in the next newsletter. I highly recommend this project if you have some time in the off season, and I'm happy to answer any questions about my build. For anyone interested, learn more at www.storeitcold.com. I've reached out to the company and they are offering **\$20 off a CoolBot unit** for any MBA member with this code: <https://storeitcold.referralrock.com/l/E3D8EUMU/>

Randy Gaetano



Winter Trail Cameras with Bud Utecht



23°F



11/12/2019

03:47PM

GCA

Want to know what's in your woods?

Come winter, most of you have packed up the tree stands and game cameras to hibernate until next fall. I'm with you on the tree stand but the cameras, not a chance. While some animals will hibernate with your tree stand, others rough the winter in the most abysmal conditions one could encounter.

Winter is the perfect time to capture great pictures while learning interesting things about the wildlife in your area. Travel patterns become very obvious with bedding areas and feeding routes easy to monitor. Many of these pictures can be leveraged in planning out next year's stand sites. Also, there will be predator activity which clearly stands out in the winter. Often, it may seem like there is an abundance of coyotes in an area, but trail cams may show the few out there who are routinely travelling their territory. You will be able to distinguish the alpha dogs from the subordinates. Seeing how deer move on different trails in order to throw off predators is very interesting. I often get coyotes tracking deer a few days late as they try to close the gap.



10:51AM

01/03/19

12F



Winter Trail Cameras continued...

Many other wildlife species will show up more frequently in the winter with thick winter coats as they forage for food. Fox, fisher, bobcats, and marten will be hunting and covering more ground than earlier in the year. Try putting a camera on a stream or beaver dam, this should put your camera in motion. Beaver, mink, and otter will also frequent these areas.

These tactics, without doubt, will give you an idea of what wildlife travels your area, and sometimes, more importantly, what wildlife is missing. I mention this because wildlife attracts wildlife. If there is food for squirrels and hare, then there is likely food for deer and turkey. If these animals are present, then most predators will be in the area as well.

Some years there will be very few to no acorns in an area. A camera in a sparse acorn year will get a few pass-through animals, but not much action. Add a banner year of acorns, and presto, you'll find wildlife everywhere. If you are a novice with game cameras, I recommend targeting food or water locations. Next steps are to fine tune and adjust. You may need to heighten or lower the positions depending on the depth of snow cover. Use these strategies and soon you will know "what's in your woods".

Bud Utecht is a register Maine Guide, avid wildlife enthusiast, and trail camera consultant. His trail cameras are strategically placed throughout the Maine Woods. Feel free to email him at

MBA Member Article Winner

CONGRATS to Dave Baker!
He won \$50 for his article
submitted for this newsletter.

*** Send us your story for a chance
to win \$50 in a future newsletter!**

Sportsman's Show Schedule

- > Orono: March 13-14-15th**
- > Presque Isle: March 21-22nd**
- > Augusta: March 27-28-29th**

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Brian Smith 240-2961

Northern:

Julie Johnston, 731-7070, Deanna Page 270-3400,
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www.mainebowhunters.org

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We're looking for more articles so we can grow this newsletter. News and story submissions will be entered into a drawing each issue. The selected article will go to print and the winning author will receive a \$50 gift certificate to their Maine bow shop of choice.



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Membership Dues: **Family/household \$30** **Affiliate Club/business \$95**

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*To all our Armed Forces: **THANK YOU!***
From everyone at the Maine Bowhunters Association

Maine Bowhunters Association
PO Box 5026
Augusta, ME 04332