

H O M E

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B O Y S



Throughout the years of sportsmen chasing white-tailed deer, conversations have routinely focused on where big bucks live, how much they travel, and if it's a big risk to pass a future bruiser in hopes of him getting bigger. We've all said, if I don't shoot him my neighbor will, or he could be gone tomorrow, but research and my own observations right here in the magnolia state suggests otherwise.

The first buck I had "history" with occurred in 2005 on a property in Tallahatchie Co. The buck was a wide 10 point with a huge frame. I was a guest of a friend but he was gracious enough to allow me to sort of, do what I wanted on the property. It was a great place to deer hunt with tremendous genetics and all the food a white tailed buck could gobble down! At this time in the progression of game cameras they were unreliable and only took a limited number of pictures unlike the proficient endless photos we expect today. With limited game camera pics it wasn't "expected" to capture every buck on the property and there was not a single picture of the wide 10 we knew was in the camp. It was a crisp December morning when I looked up the bean field to see a huge frame deer chasing a doe. This particular morning I was rifle hunting in a shooting house but the buck was only 200 yards to my west. I glassed him for almost 5 minutes and decided to pass him thinking he was only 3 ½ years old and we really were striving to shoot 4 ½ or older bucks. He was an 18" 10 point that would score in the mid 130's by my estimation. A nice buck but man what would he be

next year. For 2005 that was the only verified sighting of the wide 10 but I knew where he went to with the doe and it was an area of the farm with very little traffic so I was pretty sure where he was living. Spring of 2006 found me scouting a spot to kill the wide 10 with my bow. It was a lot of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) grass and thicket that headed up to a tree line and was bordered by a swamp. At the head was a little grove of trees that would hold a loc-on tree stand and the area around the grove would make a perfect little food plot. This would be the perfect ambush if the wide 10 lived there like I thought. Over the summer I hatched the plan and cleared the spot

for the food plot and had to do lots of chain saw work to create shooting lanes but by the middle of September the food plot was up, stand was hung, and everything was ready, almost. My plan was to not go back in that area again but rather wait for a south west wind in December when the pre rut was starting hopefully the wide 10 would be comfortable as a fat man in his easy chair on Sunday evening! The access was all that need to be established, I planned to boat through the swamp, approximately 500 yards with a pirogue, get out and walk 20 yards to get in the stand. So I placed my little wooden boat on the edge of the swamp and it was dry as a bone.

One would question how all of these pieces could possibly come together, but stay tuned.

First week of December 2006 found my buddy sitting in that same shooting house with his son and who do you think blows out of the thicket? Ol wide 10 right behind a doe running her like a walker hound during dog season! The young hunter couldn't get a shot but they both disappeared in the thicket, same thicket my ambush was situated in. That intel was all I needed, with my swamp full of water all I was waiting for was a south west wind and I knew where I was going. Only a couple days later I was at work and saw we had that wind I needed





and here I go, I'm taking off. As I crept across the swamp I couldn't help but be full of anticipation. It was like Christmas Eve for a 6 year old. When I reached the bank I eased up to the edge and could see the food plot, this was the first time I'd seen it since I planted it in mid September. It was green and pretty, only further fueled my excitement. I climbed up in my stand and just waited. As soon as the sun hit the horizon I looked up the narrow grass field and saw a buck. He was a nice mature 9 point. A shooter but not the wide 10. I would have shot him but he just walked directly to the swamp edge and stayed

75 yards away. I grunted a few times but he didn't turn. I did notice he kept looking back. About 5 minutes later I see what he was looking at. All I can see are the antlers of the wide 10. He's standing motionless on the tree line. He stood there for a few minutes then started walking directly toward the tree as if he had done it every day for a month. Slowly he headed directly toward me. Finally he got to the food plot and walked in at 30 yards and just put his head down and fed. Without a care in the world he just grazed like a hungry cow. As he fed I became more and more anxious. As all bowhunters know, the more time he hangs around,

the more time for something to go wrong. Finally he moved into 27 yards, turned broadside and I was ready. With a well placed arrow the wide 10 expired within 75 yards. At 22 inches wide and a score of 148, he was awesome but the coolest aspect of the hunt was the journey to that point. That buck lived there and I was just lucky enough to get enough clues to put it together.

The next most notable buck that was a "Home Boy" was the high brow tine buck. The property was in Oktibbeha co, which is not known for big toad bucks like Tallahatchie County. This story starts in 2012 with

a new property to scout and set up. By now, game cameras are reliable and I'm using them extensively. Right out of the gate, first set of pics on this property was the high brow buck. He was cool, tall brow tines, kicker off the G2, and mid 130's. That season I didn't see him a single time but photographs of him appeared on the camera like clock work. He lived on 90 acres and although I wasn't fortunate enough to take this particular buck, I was awarded a beautiful 145" 9 point that I had no picture of during the month of December. He just came out of the ground, or so I thought. We soon discovered this buck lived very close as my hunting buddy's dad found both sides of his shed antlers from the previous year within 1/2 mile of where I killed him. It was becoming clear you

can have a mature buck living close enough to be seen all the time or just far enough to never be seen. I thought the high brow buck was 4 1/2 years old in 2012 and was really looking forward to seeing what he turned into. August 2013, when I ran my first game camera pics, didn't disappoint. He had blown up, all the tines were long and he was a regular customer. Still living right there on a 90 acre property. He was regularly visiting a clover patch that I'd planted the previous year. Another observation to note, it seems that when most bucks reach a certain age they become more careless and less nocturnal in their habits. I was getting pictures of him in the food plot in daylight. October 13, 2013, right at dark, look who shows up! The high brow buck strolls right out into the

food plot and with a great shot at 37 yards, he's down! After hundreds of photos of this buck it's all over and I was ecstatic. The buck was a main frame 9 point with the tell tell sticker off his G2 gross scoring 148 inches.

These two stories are great successes in my bowhunting career but they are meant to illustrate the local nature of mature whitetail bucks. Included are lots of pictures of bucks that friends and myself have been able to chronicle over multiple years in the same area. They are not all trophies by score but anytime you are fortunate to match wits with a mature buck, regardless of score, you have your hands full. This season don't feel like you have to kill a buck, with a little luck he will be right there next year, only bigger and better!

