



Summertime Blues and Bowhunters

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PHIL FANCHER

If you have a real hunter's heart, the hot days of summer are pretty tough on you. We can't wait for the first breath of a cool hunter's breeze. Sixty years ago at the age of nine or ten, I learned to cherish the fall. The changing of the leaves, the acorns and other mast falling was unexplainably exciting to me. As a try country boy, the coming of a new hunting season was truly a highpoint of my life. There was no such thing as a posted sign and no one cared if you hunted. My bicycle was my transportation with the little Stevens .22 on my back. Oh, how things change! The word of God says in the book of James 4:14 that "Life is like a vapour that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." How true!

We as bowhunters need something to keep our shooting and hunting fire going. For us to be sustained through simple backyard shooting is, at best, very difficult. Sure, we can check stands, work our food plots, fight mosquitos and ticks, or we can take up 3D archery. Simply shooting day after day at dots in the yard just doesn't cut it. The sad thing for me is that 3D archery may be the only true outlet that helps us become a better and more effective bowhunter and it is ignored. 3D archery is simply the most overlooked yet enjoyable, helpful and exciting tool for us as bowhunters. The sport itself has ridden peaks and valleys through the years. Thirty-five years ago you needed a dozen arrows to get through a 3D course. Now the ranges are clean walking and clean shooting. The animal targets are so realistic that it is wonderful practice for hunters. I would say that 80-90% of 3D archers started shooting for one reason, to become a better and more deadly bowhunter. In your yard you simply cannot duplicate the adrenaline rush and excitement you feel when drawing your bow on a live animal. But a foam one with your buddies watching gets pretty close. The added pressure of having to judge the distance, calm your nerves, and pick your spot ranks very close to the real thing. If you shoot the known classes, it really helps you in the use of your range finder time after time. Over and over I've had first time shooters say I am not interested in that 12 ring. I just want to shoot to kill my target. Therein lies the major benefit of 3D.

Another great benefit is that you

begin to work on your shooting equipment. I have bowhunting friends that never touch their bows until two weeks before season opens. And I am sure you do too. For thirty years I would ask my traveling and hunting buddy, you shooting much? His reply would be my bow is still in the case from last September. He loved the trips to elk country but was not a bow junkie like we 3D shooters. Working on your 3D bow will also make you a better and more efficient hunter.

As I said, to become a better hunter we need to become a better archer. To accomplish that, we need pressured shots that emulate the stress of shots

we hope to make while hunting. 3D archery is the closest you can get to that situation. There is simply nothing that will build your confidence in shooting like it. This self-confidence may be, in my opinion, the most important thing for us when crunch time comes. I'm reminded of a big Alaskan Barren Ground Caribou bull. He was totally alone and about a half a mile away when I first saw him. The fact that he was alone was a

great benefit but there were only one or two trees between us for a mile. I put one between myself and him and hustled that way. Soon I was there. As I peered around the little tree, he was still feeding calmly. 3D experience took over. At 56 yards I drew my bow and had "complete confidence" in how far away he was, which pin to

use and that I was going to kill this bull. Ironically, as I found him in the sight I remember thinking he looks just like a McKenzie 3D Caribou. He was a great bull for a Mississippi country boy, double shovels and tall tops.

Give 3D a try, it



Phil Fancher

will help you with the summertime blues as a bowhunter. See you on the course.

Until next time, Phil.

P.S. Our President is really trying to gather new members or stimulate old members. Please help if you can. If you know of someone who might be interested in the Mississippi Bowhunters Association, please make an effort to encourage them to join our organization. We all need to help!