



THE River Buck

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANDY STANFORD

The hunt started beside a harvested corn field, by an old road bed. The road bed at one time crossed the river. The bridge had rotted and had been torn down, but the old road bed remained. The road bed served as a great travel route for bucks, who would skirt the edges of the field to make their scrape lines. The rain was heavy during the afternoon before the hunt. I was in my Loc-On at the opposite side of the corn field when I spotted movement. Low and behold, a 170" class buck arose out of the road bed to observe the field for

does. I tried every trick in the book, but the old giant calmly turned and went right back into the road bed.

The next day at lunch, I went and set up another loc-on stand in the road bed. I was pumped! That afternoon, I was in the new stand and a mid 130" eight point came out at around fifteen yards, but I opted to let him walk. About an hour before dark, I heard something bellow like a bull from a jungle of thicket which was across the river. It bellowed again and I heard splashing in the river which had a draw running parallel to the old road

bed. To my amazement, the noise was headed towards me! I was paying close attention to the river, which was swollen from two days of continuous rain. The giant buck was swimming my way. As soon as he hit dry ground, he let out a bellow that could be heard for miles. As soon as the bellow was finished, he ran straight for the tree I was in! Once he got to my tree, he immediately did a 360 degree turn and headed straight back across the river. I had already come back to full draw with my bow and yelled at the giant buck but he never missed a stride. I



where he had been coming into the river at. When I reached the river's edge, the eight point that I saw earlier was listening to the giant buck coming back down the river like an enraged bull! The brute was running towards me but I knew I had to wait for him to jump in the river to get a good shot on him. He hit the water at full speed and flew up in the air like a Labrador leaving a duck blind! He slammed into the running water which made him submerge in it for a second but let out a bellow once he got above the surface like I had never heard before. At this point, I came to full draw and placed my thirty-yard pin right below the surface of the water where his vitals were. As soon as I touched the release I knew it was the shot of a lifetime! The arrow penetrated right through the vital area and the buck tried to fight

the current but was defeated. Once he drifted to the other side, I stripped down and swam to the buck in the frigid river and retrieved my trophy. The wound I had seen on him earlier that day was from an expandable broad head under the backbone. I could stick my hand all of the way through the deer's body. I guess the cold water was easing the pain, that's why he was running through it like a bull on steroids.

The buck gross scored at 151" and weighed 225 pounds. The buck sported fourteen points that scored. The arrow I shot entered the buck under the water behind the left shoulder and through the right side. The arrow popped out the deer's body and floated to the top of the water like a cork. This way truly a hunt to remember and pass down to others.

thought he was gone for sure this time. But after about five minutes, he came right back across the river making those same loud bellows like before. The buck did this same repetition about three times but I wasn't able to get a shot on him even at around five yards. I did notice a large wound close to the top of his back, but I didn't pay it any attention.

Darkness was closing in and I knew that the only way that I was going to tag this buck was to crawl down out of my loc-on and get to where the bridge had been torn down because that is

