

SUMMER 2011



# SPIKES

MAGAZINE

Small  
Game,  
Big Fun

PLUS...

You Can  
Catch the  
Big Ones



# Q&A



## Is too many deer a bad thing?

*Jimmy T.*

Too much of anything can be bad, and that's true with deer as well. Today there are over 20 million deer in the United States, and the deer are now considered 'overpopulated' in many parts of the country. The deer's food sources are more abundant than ever and the deer's natural predators have largely been eliminated. In short, there is not a good natural balance.

Out of control deer populations harm the ecosystem. Deer consumption of tree seedlings prevents forest regeneration and significantly reduces small game and songbird populations by destroying foliage and ground cover. Without the vegetation, these species have no protection from predators or the environment, and they must either flee or die.

Also, once the deer eat all the vegetation in an area, disease and starvation set in, causing many deer to suffer agonizing health problems and death.

The best and most humane course of action is a well-managed hunting program that limits deer populations to numbers the land can support. These programs have been proven and supported by wildlife agencies across North America, the Audubon Society, conservationists, biologists and many other groups. It's the best way to ensure the greatest variety of species in a wildlife area live healthier, longer lives.

## What is the biggest fish in America?

*Hannah D.*

Looking like the cross between an alligator, a fish and a dinosaur, the alligator gar is the largest freshwater fish in America. In February 2011, Kenny Williams of Vicksburgh, Miss., caught an alligator gar that set a new record — measuring 8 feet, 5 inches long, weighing 327 pounds, and was 48 inches around.

**Hey Kids!** Email your questions about wildlife, habitat and hunting to **SPIKES** at [spikes@deerwildlifealliance.org](mailto:spikes@deerwildlifealliance.org), or mail them to ADWA, P.O. Box 10, Liberty Hill, TX 78642. Please include your name, age and the city and state where you live.

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With your order, ADWF will custom print the front cover with your logo and give you the back cover for self-promotion or as a sales opportunity.

For more information on how to provide SPIKES Magazine to your members or customers, please call ADWF at 512.778.6292.



**SPIKES MAGAZINE** is published by the **American Deer & Wildlife Foundation**

SPIKES MAGAZINE is an educational publication of the American Deer & Wildlife Foundation (ADWF), a non-profit organization dedicated to growing the deer and wildlife industries through leadership, education and public awareness, and to increasing outdoor participation among children and young adults.

SPIKES Magazine is a youth publication designed to encourage youth toward outdoor activities, educate them on conservation issues which are important to the deer and wildlife industry.

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Article submissions, photography, readers' letters, story ideas and other correspondence should be sent to:

American Deer & Wildlife Foundation  
P.O. Box 10  
Liberty Hill, TX 78642 512.778.6292

# SPIKES

## MAGAZINE



### SMALL GAME, BIG FUN



### FISHIN' FEVER

## DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Q&A
- 4 Wildlife & Widgets
- 10 Spikes Stories
- 11 Brain Booster

ON THE COVER: Found throughout North America, squirrels and other small game animals, such as rabbits, offer great opportunities for young sportsmen to learn and enjoy our American outdoor traditions.

## SPIKES Fun Fact

**What is the fastest growing animal tissue in the world?**

(peacock feather, deer antler, cat claws, shark teeth)

Answer on page 11.

# WILDLIFE & WIDGETS

Hey Kids, check with your parent or guardian before visiting any web site.



## Whata-Walleye

The walleye is one fun fish. Even a five-, 10-, or even 15+ pound Walleye provides more excitement and fun than any other fish in that weight class.

The largest member of the perch family, Walleyes eat mostly minnows, but leeches, small bullheads, nightcrawlers and various small plugs, cast or trolled, are favorite baits. Their large, unusual eyes are designed to help them easily find their prey. They can grow to lengths over 37 inches and weigh up to 25 pounds. Most catches are 14-17 inches and weigh about two pounds. Walleyes are easily distinguished by their golden color, and by the black triangle on the back portion of the dorsal fin. The lower half of the tail fin also has a white tip. Walleye are schooling fish and can be found along the shorelines and in shallow bays looking for small fish to eat. Dawn, dusk, and dark are the best fishing times for this light sensitive fish.

If you want fish for Walleye, join a fishing club or check with your local sporting goods store.

## Silver Stag Knives

Made from shed North American deer or elk antlers, Silver Stag Knives™ offer one-of-a-kind looks and rugged functionality. This exclusive ADWA Silver Stag knife is a free gift with any \$200 donation to ADWA. [www.silverstag.com](http://www.silverstag.com)



## Darkwoods Blind

When Mother Nature makes your hunt challenging and your hunt is on the line, this trailer-mounted Double FX blind by Darkwoods Blind can make all the difference. [www.darkwoodsblind.com](http://www.darkwoodsblind.com)

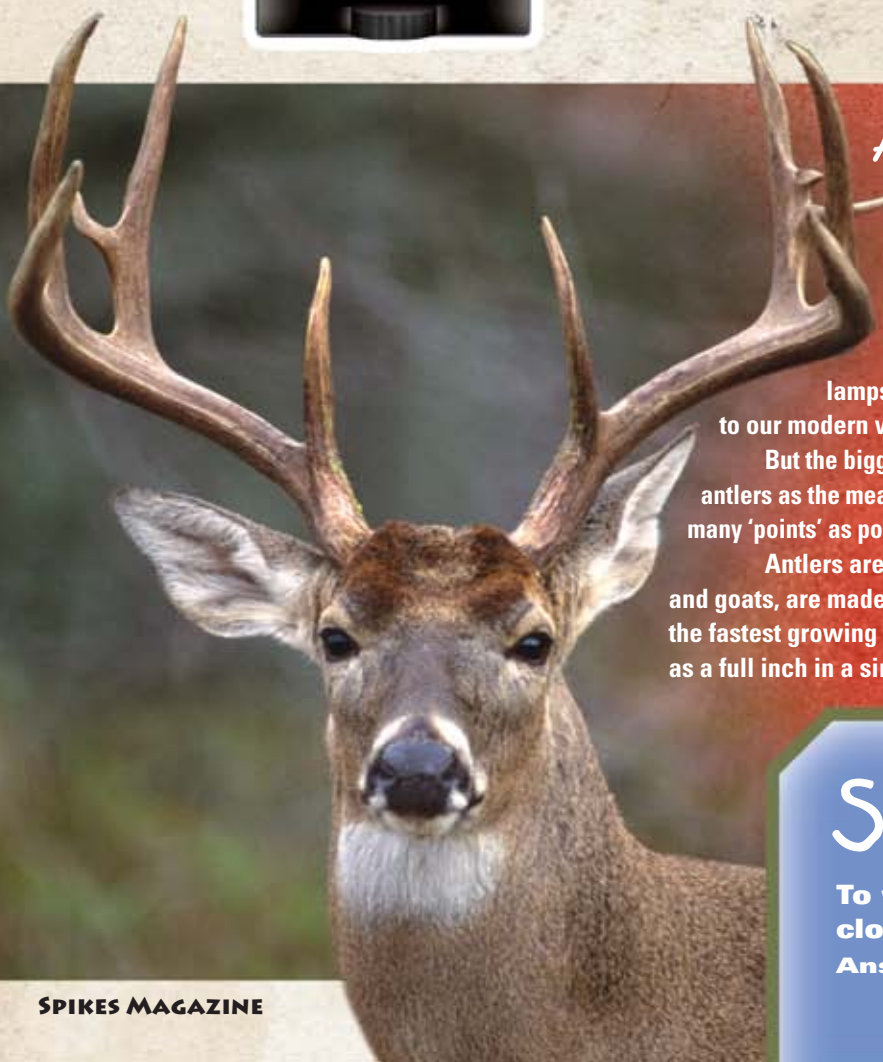
## Pro Diablo Slingshot

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## Conquest Scent Sticks

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## Antler Mania

Deer antlers have fascinated people for ages. For the early Native Americans, deer were an important resource from which they fashioned clothing from the skins and tools and weapons from the antlers. Today, antlers are used for all sorts of decorations. From chandeliers and lamps to knife handles, deer antlers bring a touch of wilderness to our modern world.


But the biggest demand for deer antlers come from hunters who prize antlers as the measure of a real trophy buck. Every one wants a buck with as many 'points' as possible, and it's an annual quest every fall to seek a big trophy.

Antlers are not horns as some people think. Horns, which are on cattle and goats, are made of fibrous protein. Deer antlers are made of bone and are the fastest growing living tissue in the world. They sometimes grow as much as a full inch in a single day.

## SPIKES Fun Fact

To what other small animal are squirrels closely related? (rat, cat, mongoose, chupacabra)  
Answer on page 11.

# Small Game. Big Fun.

A close-up photograph of a squirrel climbing a tree trunk. The squirrel is positioned vertically, with its front paws gripping the bark on the left and its back legs pushing off. It has a white belly and brownish-grey fur on its back and head. Its eyes are wide and looking towards the right. The background is a dark, out-of-focus green.

You don't have to  
hunt big game to have  
a big time hunting.

*The brave men and women who established the original American Colonies depended on small game hunting for their survival. Almost daily, they would hunt for rabbits or squirrels to put meat on the dinner table.*

*Today, hunting small game animals such as squirrels is still just as rewarding and it's lots of fun.*

Squirrels belong to the rodent family which means a squirrel is not much more than a rat with a furry tail. Yet, that furry tail seems to make a big difference in how people react to them. People don't throw nuts to rats and, if they had rats running across their yard — like they do squirrels — you can bet they would be calling for an exterminator. For squirrels, being 'cute' has its advantages.

In United States and Canada, the most common types of squirrels are the Fox Squirrel, the Western Gray Squirrel; the Douglas Squirrel; the American Red Squirrel; and the Eastern Grey Squirrel, of which the 'Black Squirrel' is a variant. Other than color and some variations in size, there is not much difference between them. The prairie dog, marmot, woodchuck, chipmunk are also part of the squirrel family.

But while most squirrels are similar, the rules for hunting them are very different. Be sure to check with your local government to learn the rules and get a permit.

Squirrel hunting provides great training for the beginning hunter. In fact, squirrels are probably the No. 1 game animal with which most hunters begin. Few game animals are so widely available and offer so much action with weapons as simple as pellet guns or airguns.

If you live in the city, you might think that finding a squirrel is easy. They are in the parks and neighborhoods, but squirrel hunting is illegal in most cities, so don't do it. City squirrels have learned to co-exist with people, and it's not uncommon to see a squirrel take a nut right

out of a person's hand. Wild squirrels, on the other hand, rarely see people and, like other wild animals, are extremely cautious.

Squirrel hunting is not complicated and does not require expensive or fancy equipment. To get started, all you need is usually a hunting license, a hunter safety course certificate, some drab or camouflage clothing, and a weapon — most often a .22 rifle, shotgun, pellet or airgun.

The best 'squirrel gun' depends on the time of year. When there are lots of leaves on the trees, it is more difficult to get a clear shot, so a shotgun might be preferred. However, a shotgun sprays pellets which means more of the animal's meat will be damaged.

For this reason, some hunters prefer using a .22 rifle or airgun. Since squirrels are generally a small 'target', the use of a rifle is more challenging. But a rifle allows for a cleaner and surer kill.

Whichever gun you use, keep in mind that the squirrel's vital organs are located in the upper body and head, so always aim for this area. This could mean the difference between a clean kill and a wounded animal and no responsible hunter wants is to leave an animal wounded.

As with most animals, a great way to find squirrels is to locate an area which is plentiful in food they like to eat. For squirrels, look for trees, such as walnut, oak, or hickory, that produce acorns and nuts.

When walking in the woods, you can be sure that the squirrels will see you long before you see them. Typically, they will scurry up a tree and stay on the side which is opposite of you.

When this happens, you can either sit quietly and wait for them to think all danger has passed, or you can apply a little trickery by tossing a stone or stick to the opposite side of the tree. The noise may scare them back to your side of the tree.

Squirrel hunting can be exciting, challenging, inexpensive and lots of fun for young and old alike.



# Fishin' Fever



**S**pring is considered a good time to go fishing, but summer is the time when kids have the most time. So, it's automatically a great time for bass fishing.

But to be successful and really catch the big ones, you need the right bait. Here are a few tips on how to lure a big fish to your hook:

## **Crankbait**

Using a crankbait is an easy way to fish that does not require a lot of skill.

Fishing mostly with crankbaits can give teach you a lot of the fishing basics and give you good experience.

Throwing and retrieving your bait can get boring, so play with the crankbait in the water by changing its speed and depth by reeling faster or by moving your the pole up and down. In calm clear water, bass prefer a steady, regular retrieval with no jerky movements, but in rough, murky water, they love an irregular fast and slow retrieve. Try both and see what happens.



Bass seem to like colorful lures. Some fishermen think these lures bother the fish so much that they attack them. So repeatedly casting a colorful lure into an area with bass may just provoke an attack and a big catch. Also, try using brighter colored lures in muddy water.

When fishing with crankbaits, try to make them look like they are swimming. While this might be a bit frustrating in the beginning, once you get the hang of it, you will catch bigger fish.

## **Spinnerbait**

The spinnerbait is another good fish catcher, but it requires a bit more skill to use. Some beginners might loose fish that hit the lure's blades and not the part of the lure with the hook.

There is a huge variety of spinnerbaits but you will have better luck using brighter colored ones. Fish sometimes spit out the lure when they realize it's not another fish, so be sure to set the hook as soon as the fish hits the lure. Again, these are more difficult to use, but they are a good option when you are more experienced.

## **Plastic Worm**

The plastic worm is another good lure, but it takes patience.

When fishing with plastic worms, make the worm move and jiggle in the water. The wilder the worm goes, the more the bass seem to like it. Buthere's the tricky part — once the fish takes the worm, don't strike!



Let him swim away with it and then strike. This is a difficult thing to do because when he takes the line, you are anxious and you automatically want to catch him. But patience is best.

Fishing is a learning sport and no one knows it all. Ask questions . Try all techniques and experiment with things. You will find something that works for you and maybe you can help someone else.

Go fishing often and you will learn.



*Hey Kids! Send pictures of your fishing and hunting adventures to Spikes Magazine. We'll be glad to share your pictures in the next Spikes magazine. Email your pictures to: [Spikes@deerwildlifealliance.org](mailto:Spikes@deerwildlifealliance.org)*



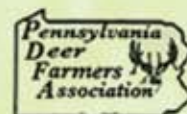
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WHITETAILS OF OKLAHOMA



# spikes STORIES

## More ADWA Kids at Kamp!

Learning about the outdoors is fun at ADWA Youth Safari Camp. Recently, a group of young sportsmen gathered for a day of activities that included identifying animal tracks, field dressing, following a blood trail, and a dog retrieving demonstration.



## Swift Justice

Not every teenager gets a chance to hunt exotics, but Utah youth James Justice make quick work of this great addax during a recent trip to the Kyle Ranch in Bandera, Texas. A native of the Sahara Desert in Africa, addax antelope have adapted well to the Texas Hill Country and you don't have to travel to Africa to get one.

## Hog Wild

Talk about going hog wild. Not only did Hannah Cate win the free Spikes Club Youth Hunt for 2011 but she also brought home the bacon at the 3rd Annual ADWA Pigapalooza Hog Hunt, sponsored by the American Deer & Wildlife Alliance. The event brought out a dozen young sportsmen and their parents for a day of outdoor education, pork sandwiches and an evening hunt for 'Texas grizzlies.'



# Antlers & Horns

There's a big difference between antlers and horns. Let's see if you know which animals have which.

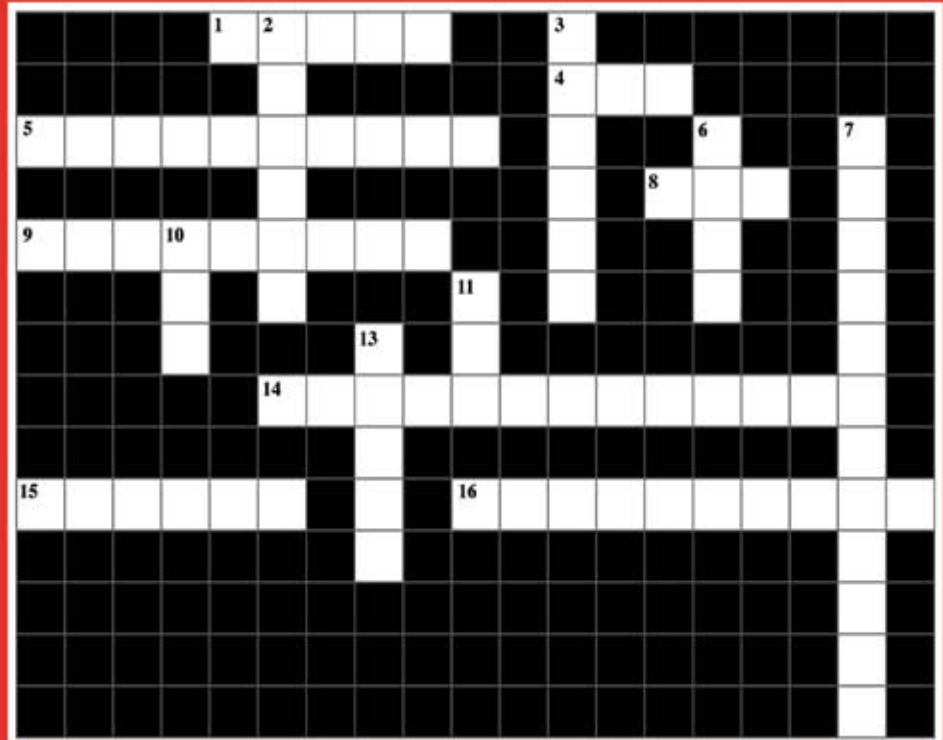
## ACROSS

1. Youngster with two points
4. Nicknamed wapiti
5. World's most popular moose
8. Happy Meal resource
9. Top factor in antler growth
14. Most popular antlered one in North America (2 words)
15. Common horn shape
16. 'Wild' African herder

## DOWN

2. Antler tips
3. Fuzzy covering for antlers
6. Small milk giver
7. Mountain top head-butter (2 words)
10. Has curled ones
11. No antlers for her
13. An American original

# BRAIN BOOSTER



# Spikes SOLUTIONS

ANSWERS from Brain Booster, above



## ANSWERS from Spikes Fun Facts

What is the fastest growing animal tissue in the world?  
Answer: deer antler

To what other small animal are squirrels closely relate?  
Answer: rat

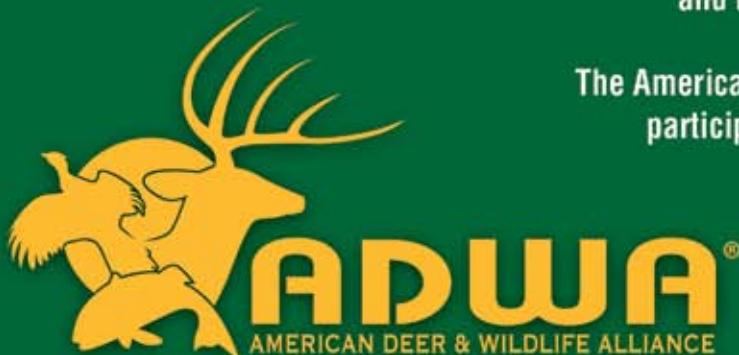


# Are You Close to Wildlife?

More children are disconnected from nature than ever before in history, and many of our American outdoor traditions are threatened.

The American Deer & Wildlife Alliance is working to increase hunter participation and to educate our youth to wildlife management.

Join the ADWA and let's get children close to wildlife again.



[www.DeerWildlifeAlliance.org](http://www.DeerWildlifeAlliance.org)