

Winter 2017



Alberta Hunter Education
Instructors' Association

Conservation Education

The Voice of Conservation Education in Alberta

Magazine



AHEIA's Mission is to Make Wildlife and Fish Part of the Value System of Every Albertan

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Merry Christmas

and all the very best for a
happy and healthy New Year

from the

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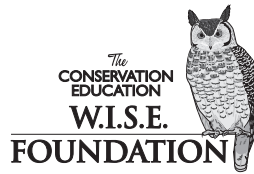
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Matt Shaw
Camp Manager
Alford Lake Centre
Caroline, AB



W.I.S.E. Award Nominations

Recognize Conservation Excellence

Nominations for the 2018 W.I.S.E. Awards are now being accepted.

Initiated 15 years ago, the W.I.S.E. Awards recognize outstanding achievement and commitment in the area of Conservation Education and Resource Management.

The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association and the Conservation Education W.I.S.E. Foundation created the W.I.S.E. Awards. Both of these charitable foundations exist solely for the purpose of helping Albertans learn about Alberta's wildlife and the contribution that wildlife makes to the quality of our lives in Alberta. The goal is to make wildlife and fish part of the value system of all Albertans.

W.I.S.E. Award recipients can be chosen from one of the following four categories:

- W.I.S.E. Public Service Conservation Award
- W.I.S.E. Industry Conservation Award
- W.I.S.E. Volunteer Instructor Conservation Award
- W.I.S.E. Alva Bair Memorial Award

The awards will be presented at the AHEIA banquet and fundraising auction held February 10, 2018, in the BMO Centre, Palomino Room, Stampede Park, Calgary, Alberta.

Please have your W.I.S.E. Award Nominations in as soon as possible for consideration.

For more W.I.S.E. Conservation Awards information and nomination forms visit the AHEIA website at www.aheia.com or call 1-866-852-4342.

Conservation Awards Nomination Form

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Service Conservation Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry Conservation Award |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Instructor Conservation Award | <input type="checkbox"/> Alva Bair Memorial Award |

Include with your nomination, details as to why your nominee should be selected, based on the general criteria listed for each award description.

Name of Nominee: _____

P.O. or Street Address: _____

Town or City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone Number: _____

Nominated By: _____ Signature: _____

Phone Number: _____ Date: _____

Please submit completed nomination form to:
Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association (AHEIA)
911 Sylvester Crescent S.W., Calgary, AB T2W 0R8
(403) 252-8474 or 1-866-852-4342
Email: info@aheia.com

Submissions may be forwarded by mail or email, or you may access this form electronically by visiting our website. Be sure to include all supporting materials.

Recognizing Conservation Excellence



The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association

Our Mission:

*To Make Wildlife and Fish Part of the
Value System of Every Albertan.*



Working Principles & Elements of AHEIA's Conservation Education Programs:

- Wildlife is part of the value system of every Albertan.
- Wildlife contributes to the quality of the lives of Albertans.
- Human activity impacts wildlife.
- The behaviour of each person is important to the future of wildlife.
- Conservation Education is people helping other people to understand the needs and value of wildlife.
- Conservation Education is people enjoying wildlife and introducing other people to wildlife related activities.
- Conservation Education is people involved in wildlife education programs in formal and non-formal settings.
- Conservation Education is people advocating wildlife values to their communities.
- Conservation Education is people developing and sharing wildlife related skills.
- Conservation Education is people watching wildlife.



President's Message

“ Our students are excited to learn that they are more than just hunters, they are stewards ... ”

By Robert A. Gruszecki



Robert A. Gruszecki
President - AHEIA

The 53rd year of Conservation Education in Alberta is drawing to a close. As we look back at all AHEIA has accomplished this year, we can't help but be thankful for the blessings that are our volunteers, members, and supporters. Thank you for all that you do; without your commitment to this worthwhile cause, Albertan men, women, and children would miss out on the opportunities and education that, with your aid, we are able to provide.

This year we've been able to make wildlife and fish a part of the value system of more Albertans than ever—in fact, about 2,000,000 Albertans! Yes, 2017 saw AHEIA's 2,000,000th student graduate from our conservation education programs, and we couldn't be more proud. This isn't altogether surprising, with attendance at classes, camps, seminars, and workshops at an all-time high. Stay tuned for more information about how we are celebrating this amazing accomplishment.

The National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) continues to exceed expectations as it is embraced by school after school in every corner of the province. Tournament attendance is rising annually, as is the number of students involved in the program at a local level. The NASP program is another example of conservation education being about more than just hunting. Students as young as eight are taught the safe use of archery equipment by AHEIA trained teachers. They then develop focus and concentration, learn how to persevere as they build their skills, experience the thrill of hitting the targets when skills are in place, and build lifelong friendships as they work together in teams. The next time someone tells you that kids today are missing out on a “real” childhood, you can ease their minds by telling them about the NASP program and our many other interactive programs.

Despite an unfortunate combination of ignorance and the desire to sell newspapers, “hunting” is still not a bad word here in Alberta. The demand for hunter education remains high as Western Canadians enjoy connecting with their cultural traditions and human heritage. Our students are excited to learn that they are more than just hunters, they are stewards of the natural gifts we all enjoy. Thank you to the many instructors of the Alberta Conservation and Hunter Education program, for your hard work to engender in your students a sense of responsibility and commitment to conservation. You are truly making a difference in the world.

Our friends at Alberta Environment and Parks are working with us to ensure this critical programming is accessible to all. Minister Shannon Phillips is a firm advocate of our current and proposed work, and a champion of conservation education. If our work is important to you, you can tell Minister Phillips and thank her for her support at aep.minister@gov.ab.ca.

Since the end of firearms challenges, the Canadian Firearms Safety Course graduate numbers have decreased minimally. At the time of this writing, over 24,000 people have graduated from this legally mandated course that AHEIA is charged with delivering in Alberta. By the end of the year, we anticipate over 35,000 as the final number in 2017. Albertans show year over year that safe firearms use is a valuable skill that we wish to possess, and that the ability to use firearms is not something we are prepared to give up. It remains AHEIA's pleasure and honour to offer this program in Alberta.


The Calgary Firearms Centre (CFC) is enjoying a very successful year. Added to the usual lineup of registered and private trap and skeet shoots, various leagues and special event days like the Provincial Hunting Day activities this fall, the CFC was again host to the 2017 Alberta Provincial Trapshooting Championships in July. In 2018, we will hold the first Manning/Fuller Memorial Shoot in honour of Deane Manning and Dave Fuller, shooters we have recently lost. I hope you will join us as we start a new tradition in memory

of their contributions to the shooting sports. The property has experienced a facelift in the form of some professional painting and some landscaping, and we're not done yet! Our reputation as a friendly and welcoming club seems to have spread as new shooters, and those entirely new to the sport, arrive almost daily. Also increasing are private “fun” events, such as team building events, bachelor/bachelorette parties, and fundraisers. AHEIA was proud to host the Brian Burke's Targets for Kids fundraising shoot again this year, in support of KidSport and the Flames' Even Strength Program, both very worthy causes and closely aligned with our own goals. If you or your group are looking for a location to host a fun event, call us at 403-256-0665; we would love to have you!

We have been busy at Alford Lake this year! The Youth camps and seminar were full of bright, enthusiastic kids eager to learn new things. The Outdoor Women's Program had its best year yet, and already has a healthy list of women interested in next year's OWP. A long-anticipated addition has been completed on the range, greatly increasing the accommodations we have on offer, and we are hard at work securing financing for a major upgrade to the main hall as well. Alford Lake is a facility that gets year round use from numerous groups and individuals, in addition to the many camps, workshops, seminars and events organized by AHEIA. This past year, over 10,000 students experienced Alford Lake and we expect this to be even higher in 2018.

AHEIA's newest program, Pleasure Craft Operator Training or “PCOT”, has gotten off to a great start and is only getting better. We have over 60 certified instructors teaching this program already, and the online course will be ready to launch soon. This program has been in the planning stages for a number of years, and we have hit the ground running in 2017. We expect that with the addition of online Boating Safety, this course will quickly grow as we reach out to an ever-expanding audience. Up next will be a new

Continued ➤

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Instructors' Association
**Conservation
Education**
Magazine

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Front Cover Photo:

Courtesy Don Kesler Nature Photography

President's Message *cont.*

Waterfowl Identification app, a Sheep Essentials online course, and a totally new and improved Fishing Education course. We will be announcing these and other exciting updates very soon.

On February 10, 2018, the Conservation Education WISE Foundation will celebrate its 16th Annual Awards and Banquet at the BMO Centre, Stampede Park. Your patronage of this special anniversary event is so important to the organization, and lends crucial support for the work of the WISE Foundation and AHEIA. We look forward to seeing you there, enjoying yourselves and helping us to honour great Albertans who have dedicated their lives to Conservation Education. The AHEIA Annual General Meeting will be held on January 21st at 2:00pm at the Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence, 911 Sylvester Crescent SW, Calgary. Please note the change of date and venue. All are welcome to join us for a discussion of the year's accomplishments as well as our future plans.

Just as we ask you to give back to your community, AHEIA is always looking for ways to give back to our members, volunteers, and supporters. One of the ways we do this is by partnering with local businesses to provide our membership with valuable discounts. The following list details our current partners and their discount programs. Don't forget to carry your up-to-date

AHEIA membership card to reap the benefits of our association!

- **Mark's** (formerly Mark's Work Wearhouse) will give our members a 10% discount when they show their Mark's card in store. Some exclusions apply.
- **Camper's Village** is also offering a 10% discount on regular priced merchandise when you show your valid AHEIA membership card.
- New this year, **Temple Fork Outfitters Canada** will give our members a 10% discount for online purchases. Discount procedures have been posted on our social media and website.

If you know of a company willing to offer discounts to the hardest working volunteers around, please let us know!

An AHEIA membership also gives our members access to a wide variety of useful resources in the "Members Only" section of our website. Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for up to date information on programs, events, and contests.

With the economy beginning to turn around, life is beginning to improve for the citizens of this great province. This is a slow process, and while it may mean that there are more jobs than in recent years, it doesn't mean that there is more

disposable income. Charities are still hurting and will for a while yet. We appreciate whatever supporters are able to give: donations of equipment or clothing for the mentorship program; labour or materials for renovations and improvements; patience and expertise in instructing students; time and effort while assisting in administrative or other areas; or simply funds to use as needed. Thank you for your enduring support and steadfast friendship; never doubt that your engagement in these endeavours has a deep impact.

On behalf of AHEIA, I wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and safe travels this holiday season. We look forward to seeing you at the WISE Foundation Awards and Banquet, or one of the many other programs offered through your organization.

On behalf of us all here at AHEIA, I wish you all the best in your endeavours in 2018.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Gruszecki
President



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1.888.479.2267

Calgary
7208 Macleod Trail SE
1.888.231.4753



Firearms Education Report

“ Due to a letter from AHEIA ... It is now permissible to have a registered proctor assist in the program. ”

By Glenn McKay



Glenn McKay
Firearms Education
Coordinator
AHEIA

In June 2016, the delivery of the Canadian Firearms Program was changed from the original overhead transparency method to the newer PowerPoint method. Part of transition to this new program also required a new set of contracts to sign off on. The new contract indicated that no one other than a qualified instructor could assist

in the classroom portion of a class. This was a source of irritation to many of the instructors, who were using a “helper” who was aiding with the marking of exams, watching over students writing the examination, as well as helping with the set-up portion of the class. Due to a letter from AHEIA to the Chief Firearms Officer, a change in this policy has occurred. It is now permissible to have a registered proctor assist in the program.

To have a person recognized as a proctor, the instructor can contact Erin Honeyman of the Firearms Office in Edmonton, or John Morrissey from AHEIA, and a form will be sent to the instructor. This form is signed by the instructor and the new proctor candidate. The instructor will be given a new contract to sign and return to the Firearms Office. The proctor candidate will then be given a volunteer form, as well as a letter, to take to the local police service to obtain

a Vulnerable Sector Check. This will ensure that all persons within the firearms program delivery will have the same clearance. Once this is completed, the Firearms Office will be contacted, and the new proctor will be given an identification number, which will then be noted on the class record sheets.

This does not change the current one instructor to 12 student ratio, nor does it mean that the proctor can answer questions about a wrong answer or assist in the practical testing portion. This is spelled out in the new contract. Instructors are advised to keep a copy of the new agreement so there is no confusion as to what the proctor can or cannot do.

To contact John Morrissey simply call the Calgary AHEIA office at 403-252-8474 or via email john@aheia.com. Erin Honeyman can be reached at 1-800-731-4000, extension 9026.

Now that the program is well over a year old, a second letter was sent to the program instructors which outlined the concerns about the four hour versus six hour restricted firearms course. The original intent was to have a student, who was upgrading his PAL, review the non-restricted material before taking the four hour restricted firearms course. The problem with this is that the teaching material is the same. Without the ability to add more information into the course, it becomes a challenge to keep the students interested in the material. The upside is that it will give the instructor more opportunity to add handling into each course. We are of the firm belief that the instructors will teach until such time as

they feel each student is comfortable with the written material and the handling of the firearms. As a result of the inquiry made here, this item will be reviewed at some point in the future.

Class Record Sheets

The class record sheet (yellow sheets sent with your kit purchase) is still an area of concern in that some instructors are using it as a sign-in sheet. This sheet is to be used by the instructor to document the students in their class. By taking the information from a course report and writing it onto the class sheet, the reports, when they arrive, should be in order and legible. Some of the instructors have put this onto their own computer and this makes the data entry so much easier and accurate. For that I thank those who are doing it this way. My handwriting is not the best, but I know it is being read by someone also, so I do try to put more effort into this last portion of the course.

I would like to thank all the instructors who continue to teach the Firearms Program. Without your continued efforts, Albertans would be left high and dry as it relates to the correct firearms information. Have a safe and happy holiday season and I hope to see all of you in the New Year!

Contact Glenn at the Calgary office,
403-319-2282 (direct line) or
via email at bgm@aheia.com.



Mark Your Calendar!

Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association
Annual General Meeting
Sunday, January 21, 2018 • 2:00 pm
Calgary Conservation Education Centre for Excellence

We hope to see you there!

“This expansion will allow us to accommodate more groups at the camp...”

Alford Lake Expansion

By Matt Shaw



Matt Shaw
Camp Manager
Alford Lake

This past summer, we managed to complete most of a major upgrade to the facilities at Alford Lake. This expansion will allow us to accommodate more groups at the camp and will make everyone more comfortable during some of our marquee events, by taking some pressure off the main lodge facilities.

The expansion involved the installation of six ATCO trailers on the shooting range, which join together to form a fully self-contained camp that will include a kitchen, washrooms, shower facilities, dining rooms, and sleeps 15 to 20 people.

The project took a little longer to get out of the starting blocks than intended, but after receiving the necessary permits from the county, we were able to move ahead. A well was drilled, allowing us to have running water over on the range, which is a great addition. We then had a donation of equipment and manpower from Duster Transport, located in Sundre, who came and assembled the trailers to form the building. After the camp was assembled, we installed a very large septic tank, as we do not have space for a septic field. We then proceeded to have the transformer on the range upgraded to allow us to handle the increased demands from the camp, and an electrician was brought in to rewire and hook the camp into the new transformer.

This was as far as we were able to get before hosting our two biggest events of the year, the Outdoor Women's Program and the Outdoor Youth Seminar.

Once we completed the summer programs, we were able to have a plumber out to the camp, who was able to tie the newly installed pressure system to the well that was dug in June. We also brought in a 1000 lb. propane tank, to heat the facility and allow us to use it in the winter, if we need to.

The project will be completed this upcoming spring and summer. The remaining items that we need to complete include some renovations to the kitchen and dining areas of the camp that did not survive the transport from Athabasca to Alford Lake, as well as redoing the exterior of the camp with new metal siding so that the new camp has a new weatherproof skin.





**We are always
striving to improve
the facilities
at Alford Lake
and we have
other upgrades
planned
for the future,
as funding permits.**



Save this date:

FEBRUARY 10, 2018



For the 16th Annual

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**RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE IN
CONSERVATION EDUCATION**

Photo Credit: Greg Schechter

Stettler Pheasant Festival

By Joy Wielenga



Joy Wielenga
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

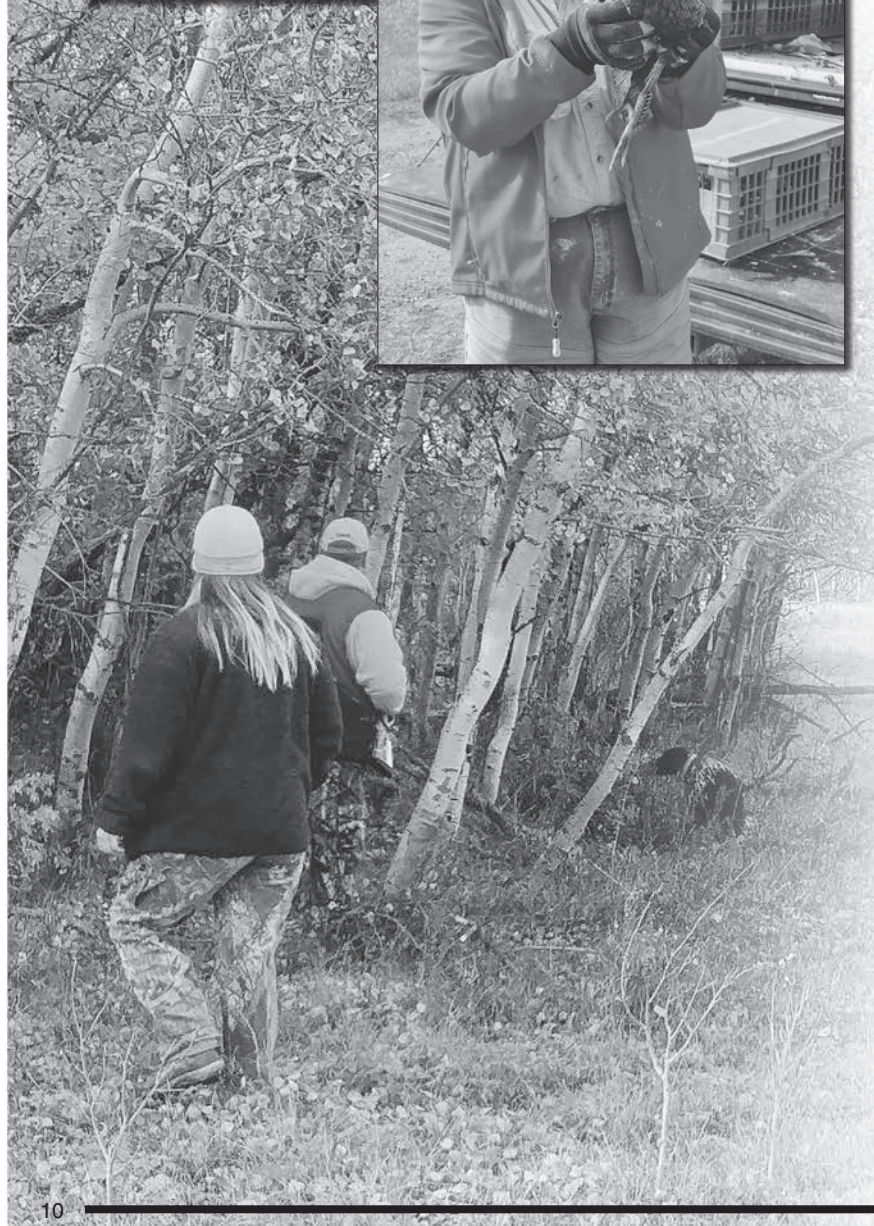
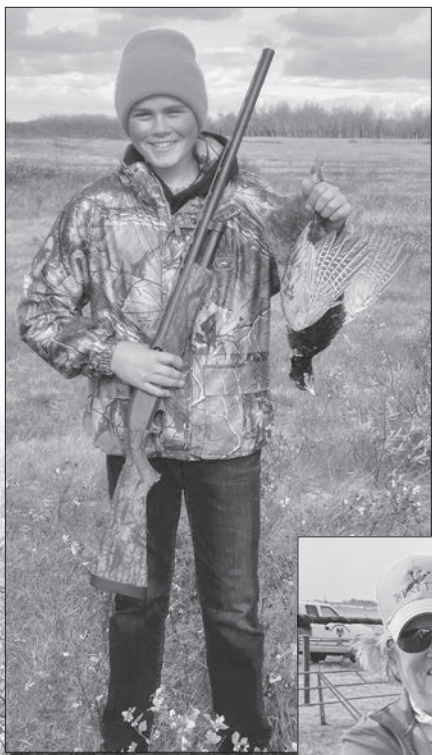
The Stettler Pheasant Festival was created four years ago through the collaboration of the Stettler Regional Board of Trade and Community Development, the Canadian Badlands Tourism, and a group of devoted volunteers. I was fortunate enough to be invited to join in on the Stettler Pheasant Festival in October 2017, as a coach for the participants representing AHEIA. AHEIA's role in the Stettler Pheasant Festival was to aid the participants in safe firearm handling and shooting practices. This was my first time hearing about the Festival, so I was excited to see what it had to offer.

Upon arriving in the early morning hours on the day of the hunt, I met Bob and his associate, who were there as the dog handlers. I later met Bob's wife, Susan, who arrived to guide the afternoon group of hunters. I learned that Bob and Susan were acting on behalf of Prairie Vista North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association (NAVHDA) as hosts for the beginner hunts. The festival was split into half day hunts, one hunt running in the morning and the other running in the afternoon. We started the participants off by shooting clays and perfecting shooting practices. Once this was completed, the participants were ready to head out into the field.

It was amazing to watch the dogs perform their job so dutifully. Watching the dogs track scent and flush pheasant gave me a new-found respect for all the work that goes into training pointer dogs. We were taught to recognize when the dog had found a pheasant, which was very educational. We were able to successfully harvest a pheasant for almost each participant and teach them how to properly field dress the bird. Out of every experience that day, the most rewarding aspect of all was the reactions from the novice hunters when they harvested their pheasant. Many laughed and cheered, while some could be seen with a small tear of appreciation in the corner of their eye. Having had the opportunity to help provide them with an experience such as this was quite amazing and profound.

Susan explained that NAVHDA also offers dog training for future hunting dogs, using techniques that they have found the most successful. Additionally, the Stettler Pheasant Fest offers cooking courses, private hunts and an all-around great experience. If you ever have the chance to get involved with the Stettler Pheasant Festival, I would highly recommend it.

<http://www.stettlerpheasantfestival.com/>





Edmonton Report

“ This is the time of year when one's thoughts start turning to hunting. ”

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

Time just flies by these days and things continue to be busy around the Edmonton office. This is the time of year when one's thoughts start turning to hunting. We tend to get a big push with individuals looking to get their Hunter Education course, as well as their firearms (PAL) course, in anticipation of being able to get out.

If you missed our 2017 Youth Hunter Education camp, you can get ready for the 2018 camps.

Simply call our Edmonton office at 780-466-6682 or 1-866-282-4342 toll free, or email us at edmontoninfo@aheia.com, and we will place you on our Notification List for 2018. Don't miss out.

Our 2018 Outdoor Seminar will run August 24-26 and will be held at the Alford Lake facility. Just as with the Youth Hunter Education camp, you can be placed on our Notification List by contacting us at the Edmonton office.

We continue to look for volunteer assistance. If assisting at our camps and other events is not something you are interested in but you still wish to volunteer, we can provide many other options. We continue to look for help at the office with our regular daily routines. If you or any of your friends wish to become part of something big-

ger, please let us know. Paying it forward has great personal rewards. Give me a call if you are able to lend a hand and I will get the ball rolling.

Once again I would like to thank everyone who continues to help out by volunteering. Your selfless dedication is very much appreciated, indeed! Volunteers are the backbone of everything we do.

It is still a little ways off, but I want you to keep our 2018 Spring Fling Banquet in mind. The date and venue have already been confirmed, and the banquet will be held on Thursday, June 7, 2018 at the Palace Banquet in Edmonton (same spot as last year). Watch for more details coming soon.



Significant Donation to Conservation Education Wildlife Museum

By David Dolph



David Dolph
Executive Director
AHEIA

This fall, AHEIA's Conservation Education Wildlife Museum was very fortunate to receive a significant contribution of 75+ mounted birds and mammals from the life-long collection of Ed Anderson, of Calgary.

Ed was raised as an only child on a farm north of Grand Prairie, where he developed a keen interest in the animals that were living all around him. His prized possession was a "Birds of Canada" book given to him by his mother. At age 11, Ed was given a collection of "J.W. Elwood - Northwestern School of Taxidermy" books and soon developed the skills and desire to preserve the animals that lived around him. Ed found that people who visited his farm

were interested in the species he had on display and he soon began to continue his hobby in earnest.

When Ed finished school, he donated his collection of owls to the Dawson Creek, BC museum where they are still on display today. For over 60 years, Ed has accumulated a large collection of native Alberta wildlife, as well as exotic and rare birds. Ed notes that he has seen the decline of numerous wildlife species in Alberta, and he hopes his collection of wildlife specimens will educate and inform future generations about the importance of conservation. As Ed says, "Preservation is Education."

AHEIA would like to thank Ed for his lifelong dedication and commitment to educating Albertans about their natural resources and the importance of conservation. Ed's specimens have been painstakingly and beautifully mounted, and we invite all to come and view them.





The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association
invites you to our

2017 Christmas Open Houses

Thursday
December 7, 2017
2:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Calgary
Conservation Education
Centre for Excellence

911 Sylvester Crescent SW, Calgary, AB
Phone 403.252.8474
1.866.852.4342
info@aheia.com

Tuesday
December 12, 2017
12:00 noon - 4:00 pm

Edmonton
Conservation Education
Centre for Excellence

#88, 4003 - 98 Street, Edmonton, AB
Phone 780.466.6682
1.866.282.4342
edmontoninfo@aheia.com

We hope to see you there!

Please kindly RSVP



Women's & Youth Leagues

All abilities welcome, including those who have never held a gun before!

Spring 2018 Session

May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, June 6

Summer 2018 Session

July 4, 11, 18, 25, August 1, 8

Fall 2018 Session

September 5, 12, 19, 26

Cost is \$60.00 per session.

Firearms, eye and ear protection included.
An AHEIA membership is required
and can be purchased onsite.

Sessions held at the Calgary Firearms Centre,
242 Avenue and 32 Street SW, DeWinton, AB
www.AHEIA.com/calgaryfirearmscentre

To register or for more information
contact Allan Orr at 403.252.8474
or email allan@aheia.com





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The Alberta Hunter Education Instructors' Association

would like to thank

Wildlife Habitat Canada



**The Outdoor Youth Camps & Seminar
The Outdoor Bound Mentorship Program
The Outdoor Women's Program**
projects were undertaken with the financial support of:
Ce projet a été entrepris avec l'appui financier de:



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Since 1985, Wildlife Habitat Canada, a national, non-profit, charitable conservation organization, has invested over \$50 million to support hundreds of conservation projects on private and public lands across Canada, through its granting program. Wildlife Habitat Canada works through partnerships with communities, landowners, governments, non-government organizations, and industry to conserve, enhance, and restore wildlife habitat. To learn more about the projects that Wildlife Habitat Canada has funded or to see our annual report, please visit www.whc.org.

Without habitat ... there is no wildlife. It's that simple!

**Making Wildlife and Fish Part of the
Value System of all Albertans.**

Pleasure Craft Operator Training

Update

To All PCOT Instructors:

On November 2, 2017, Transport Canada announced the following:

Following much consideration, Transport Canada is pleased to advise all course providers that beginning January 01, 2018, open-book testing will be permitted in the classroom. This will be available for a one-year trial period. Transport Canada will re-evaluate open-book testing in late 2018 and make a decision on whether or not to continue with open-book testing in the classroom at that time.

As a partner with Transport Canada in delivering the Pleasure Craft Operator Training (PCOT) course, AHEIA instructors are being given the option of offering the PCOT test in an open-book format. The following are conditions laid out by Transport Canada:

Any candidate who has completed a minimum of a four-hour classroom course may write, in person, an open-book boating safety test for the purpose of obtaining a PCOC. During the test, the candidate may refer to his/her boating safety course manual and notes taken during the boating safety course. This excludes in-person tests where a person challenges a test (e.g. at a boat show; as a walk-in at the end of a boating safety course, etc.) or after test briefing and/or review sessions.

All requirements of a Test Protocol still apply for open-book testing following a boating safety course with the exception of the following:

- 1. The maximum time for the open-book test is 75 minutes, or one hour and 15 minutes, and:*
- 2. A candidate may have documentation (such as) the course manual, course notes and other reference material, in addition to the test and test instructions.*

Please note that open-book testing is optional and at the discretion of the individual instructor. This program is being monitored by Transport Canada and will be evaluated after the 2018 calendar year. Once a final decision is rendered, AHEIA will inform our instructors.

As well, the three test sheets currently in use will continue to be used until further notice. They were originally scheduled to be replaced following the 2017 calendar year. All instructors are required to continue to use the current three final tests.

If you have any comments, questions or concerns regarding this notice, please contact:

Bob Gruszecki - President, AHEIA
robert_gruszecki@ezpost.com

or Allan Orr - PCOT Coordinator, AHEIA
allan@iheia.com



AHEIA, 911 Sylvester Cres. SW, Calgary, Alberta T2W 0R8
Telephone 403-252-8474



2017 Outdoor Youth Seminar

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

Once again our Outdoor Youth Seminar proved to be a very popular program. Interest in the outdoors and hunting related activities remains extremely popular with adults and youth alike. More and more we find that parents are looking for something that their children can connect to and that gets them away from all the modern technology that bombards them on a regular basis. Getting back in touch with nature is just what the doctor ordered.

This year we had 105 individuals attend the Seminar. Ages ranged from 7-65. Some of you might not be aware of what our Outdoor Youth Seminar entails. The Seminar was designed to allow parents and guardians to participate, along with their children or grandkids, in a variety of fun-filled activities. This year's sessions included: Intermediate Centerfire Rifle Shooting, Black Powder Shooting, Archery, Crossbow Basics, Fly Fishing Basics,

Practical Rimfire Shooting, Beginner and Intermediate Shotgun, Survival Walk, Waterfowl Hunting 101, Surviving the Wild Part 1 and Part 2, and Whitetail Techniques.

Attendees were also able to participate in a few special Saturday evening sessions. This year featured: Game Calling, Making Moose Calls, Making Rattling Antlers, Rope Making the Old Fashioned Way, and Building a Personal Survival Kit.

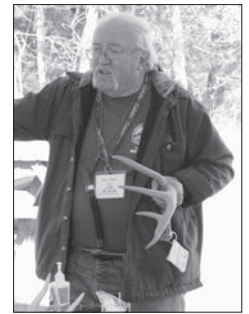
One of the highlights to the event is our pig roast with all the trimmings on Saturday evening. Every year participants line up to take pictures of the guest of honour, namely the pig, and this year there were two of them. Some attendees tell me it is worth being there just for the supper.

Our 2018 Outdoor Youth Seminar will be held August 24-26 at the Alford Lake facility. Worried about missing out? To put your mind at ease, please call us at 780-466-6682 or email edmon-toninfo@aheia.com and we will be pleased to place you on our Notification List. As soon as the registration forms are ready they will be emailed to you.

A very special thanks to everyone who volunteered at the Seminar. Without your tireless dedication and effort, this event would not be possible.

I hope to see you at next year's Seminar!





“ More and more we find that parents are looking for something that their children can connect to and that gets them away from all the modern technology that bombards them on a regular basis. ”



Hunting the Blind:

My First Hunting Experience!



Glen Pickering
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - South

A mentored hunt can take a lot of time and effort by both the mentor and the hunter to get ready for this memorable experience. Completing both the Hunter Education Course and obtaining your PAL is only the beginning. Once the tag has been issued, there is a rapid learning curve which takes place to prepare for the hunt. Creating an Alberta RELM account and learning how to purchase the proper licence with the associated tag is the first challenge. Sighting-in and practicing with your firearm, learning how to adjust your sights, and determining your maximum shooting distance are always a challenge for a first-time hunter, and you can guarantee many questions will need to be answered. After a few calls and texts from Jacob and his dad, here is his story of a great day in the field.

Glen Pickering

By Jacob Turgeon

Hi! My name is Jacob Turgeon and I just turned 13 years old in October. I have been wanting to hunt since I was nine. At the beginning, I hunted squirrels and pocket gophers on our acreage near Cochrane. I could not wait to take my firearm and hunter education courses so I could start hunting bigger animals. That moment finally arrived this past summer when my dad and I took those courses together. I really enjoyed them and the instructor Glen Pickering.

My grandpa, who is 90 years old, does not hunt anymore, and last year he gave me his 308 calibre rifle. Following Glen's advice, my dad and I went out and approached some farmers to see if they would let us hunt on their land. We got lucky and a farmer whose land is just 15 minutes away from our house agreed to give us permission. So, before the start of hunting season my dad and I went many times to his land to walk around and get to know it well.

It turns out it's a pretty good spot to hunt. Every time we went there we saw many deer, which we had tags for. We also saw a big cow moose. The land is mostly field, but there is a coulee in the middle with lots of aspen trees and a spring running through it which never freezes. We saw lots of deer droppings and bedding places in the grass. There's also a forested hill just outside the farmer's field. It did not take long for us to notice a pattern in the deer's habits, especially lately since the temperature dipped well below zero. Every day around four o'clock, the deer come out of the forest to feed on the farmer's field.

So, on the first Saturday of the hunting season my dad and I went out hunting in late afternoon. As expected, the deer were all out eating the grass. So, we approached slowly toward them from behind a small patch of bushes, but it did not take long for the deer to notice us and scamper away. My dad and I were wondering how we would ever get within range to shoot them.

We thought about it and called Glen to ask for advice. We thought that perhaps we could try using a blind and set it up before the deer come out to the field. Glen thought it was a good idea. So, on the Sunday, our second day of the hunting season, we went back out, this time with our brand new two-man hunting blind. We got there early, before the deer came out, to set up our blind. It's impressive how easy and fast those things can be set up. There we sat comfortably in our chairs, protected from the cold northern wind, with all the blind's little windows open, facing the field.

Within minutes I saw a deer! I was really tempted to shoot, but my dad advised me to wait as it was out of range. He said, if you miss this one you may scare the others and our hunt will be over for the day. Plus, we still had another two hours or so of daylight to hunt.

Meanwhile, on top of the ridge, we watched the big cow moose through our binoculars. It was the same moose we had seen many times before during our previous visits. Then, on the west side of the hill, just above the shrubs in the forest, we saw a bunch of deer jumping up. A few minutes later, we could see they had arrived on the edge of the field. We could only see the top of their backs in the tall grass as they bent down to eat. They kept coming closer.

Again, I wanted to shoot right away, but my dad, who was watching them with the binoculars, kept telling me to wait as they were getting closer and closer. Finally, they were about 100 yards away and I was ready! There were four whitetail deer with one slightly ahead of the others. I thought to myself that's the one I was going to shoot!

The first three bullets did not even touch it! OK! I was a bit nervous! But I was also shaking because I was really getting cold as the day wore on. But the last bullet was a clean shoulder shot. The deer fell down within a couple of metres. We had only been hunting for an hour! How lucky!

It was one of the best days of my life.



**“I developed a great appreciation for the outdoors
and I now strive to get the most out of every trip.”**

Getting the Most Out of Your Hunting Experience

By Brett Feser



Brett Feser

Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

Hunting, to most, is about going out into the woods and harvesting an animal, but most don't take the time to appreciate all the other experiences that hunting can provide. Personally, I don't measure the success of a hunt by harvesting an animal. To me, every hunt is successful. The overall experience of the hunt is the most rewarding thing—from good times with friends and family, to the one-on-one interaction with the wild.

When I first started hunting, I would come home from a hunt empty-handed and upset that things didn't work. I would get frustrated and wonder why I even bothered going to sit in one spot for hours on end in the hopes that I would have an opportunity to make a harvest. I never took the time to really appreciate what the wilderness had to offer until one night of pre-season elk scouting.

I was perched on top of a hill in one small patch of shrubs, waiting to see what the night would bring. Shortly after getting all set up, a spike bull elk and a cow and calf pair emerged from the timbers. I sat there quietly taking pictures and filming, when all of sudden, a group of coyotes started howling from the hill, roughly 200 yards behind me. Midway through the lull of a coyote serenade, I heard the crashing and banging of animals in the adjacent tree line. A cow and calf pair darted from the trees, followed by a bull elk hot on their heels. The elk rounded the pond and started in my direction. I tucked back into the shrub and left the camera running because I did not want to get busted. Through a small gap in the bush, I could see the cow and calf walking towards the first group of elk, but I could not see either of the two bulls. I sat there quietly listening, when all of sudden, I heard the screech of a terrified elk. I looked through the bush and saw the spike bull being chased by the bigger more aggressive bull, and they were headed directly at me. The only thing that went through my mind was, “I'm going to get run over!”

I tucked as close to the fence as I could possibly get, in hopes that their hooves would miss me. The spike bull got to the fence line and took a hard left, but the bigger bull hit the brakes about three yards from me and continued to stare at the camera that I left running. I sat cuddled to the fence and watched the aggressive bull decide what he was going to do next. After what felt like forever, the aggressive bull turned and went after the spike bull again. I gathered my thoughts, grabbed the camera, and turned around to film the two bulls, when all of a sudden, a second spike bull came running over the hill from my right side. This bull saw me, screamed, and sent elk running in all directions. After all the elk disappeared into the timbers, I stood there, knees still shaking and thinking, “Wow! That was the most amazing experience ever!”

This experience was a game changer for me. I developed a greater appreciation for the outdoors and I now strive to get the most out of every trip. I've spent hours sitting in the bush watching black bears roll around and play with dead beavers. I've watched five bull elk come back to protect a lone calf from the teeth of a hungry pack of coyotes, and spent countless hours listening to the songs of the forest. Just being there is reward enough for me.

You will see some of the coolest things and make lasting memories that you can share and look back on. Whether it's watching the world wake up from a duck blind, or tucking up close to a barbed wire fence to avoid the pounding hooves of two bull elk chasing each other, the wilderness will never cease to amaze and surprise you. Taking the time to enjoy every minute out hunting will not only help you develop better skills and tactics, but will allow you to experience hunting in its fullest capacity.

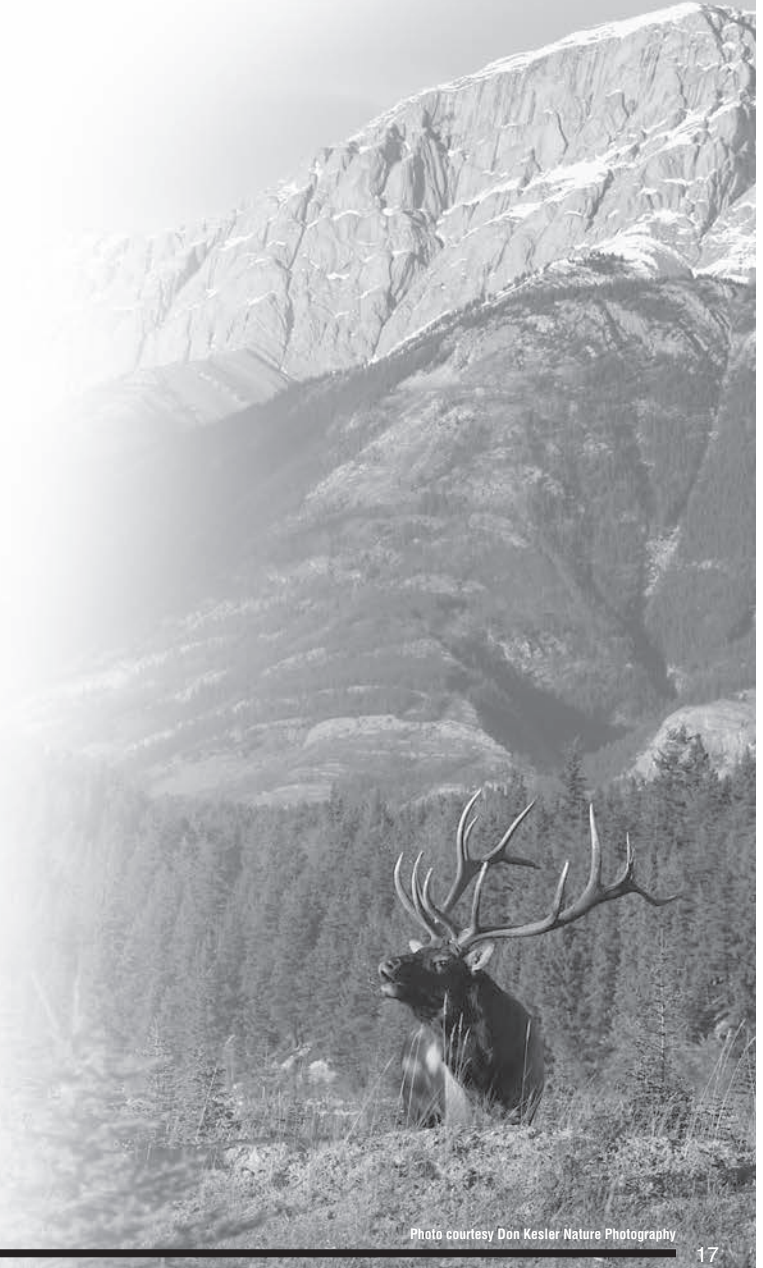


Photo courtesy Don Kesler Nature Photography

SURVIVAL IS IN OUR CROSSHAIRS



CON CAPIT

DID YOU KNOW:

- that it takes an annual operating budget of approximately \$4.3 million to deliver all facets of Conservation Education to approximately 100,000 Albertans annually?
- that every cent of every dollar that is donated goes into Conservation Education program delivery?
- that the annual printing budget of AHEIA for all program areas, including manuals, tests, certificates, etc. represents in excess of \$400,000?
- the annual premiums to secure liability insurance of \$5,000,000 and all other necessary insurance for equipment, facilities and vehicles for AHEIA and every instructor and participant exceeds \$150,000.
- the annual cost of correspondence to members of AHEIA is approximately \$150,000.
- the annual cost for the purchase and repair of training aids and equipment is approximately \$400,000.
- the cost of the one week long Outdoor Women's Program, including three meals and one snack per day, is approximately \$130,000 or \$550 per participant.
- the cost of running one of our Youth Seminars for 150 youths exceeds \$70,000.
- the cost of running one of our Youth Camps for 50 youths for five days, including three meals and one snack per day, is approximately \$1000 per participant or \$50,000.
- the cost of running a one day Outdoor Wildlife Learning (O.W.L. Days) program for 150 youths is approximately \$120 per child or \$18,000.
- the cost of one instructional techniques workshop for 20 instructors for 20 hours is approximately \$1,500 per participant or \$30,000.
- AHEIA does not charge fees on a cost recovery basis for their programs, and survives by donations!

PLEASE CONSIDER

CONSERVATION EDUCATION FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

FACT:

Our programs survive by donation.

FACT:

Economic woes affect us all, especially the charities.

FACT:

Incomes are down nearly 50%
and operating costs are increasing.

FACT:

Our goal is to continue excellent program delivery,
not to cut services or courses.

FACT:

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

In 2016 our programs will reach over 100,000 men, women, and children
of all ages and our projections for 2017 are to reach an even larger audience.

Our fundraising efforts are being supplemented with a new
fundraising campaign to appeal to those we serve.

DONATIONS OF \$25-100

will receive an AHEIA gun sleeve.



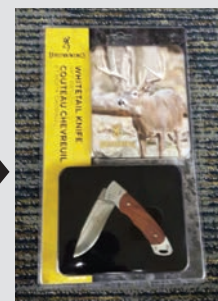
DONATIONS OF \$101-999

will receive an
AHEIA hitch cover
and license plate holder.



DONATIONS OVER \$1000

will receive
an AHEIA logo'd
Browning pocket knife.



A voucher for each of the above award levels will be mailed
along with the tax receipt to the donor who can then make
arrangements to pick up the prize, minimizing costs to our
Association which ultimately allows AHEIA to utilize the ma-
jority of funds for program delivery.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Amount of Donation: _____

☐ Check here if you prefer not to receive a funding incen-
tive, and would prefer we allocated all proceeds of your
donation to necessary program delivery.

Please mail this complete donation form to:
AHEIA, 911 Sylvester Cr. SW, Calgary, AB T2W 0R8
or contact our office in Calgary and we can process
your credit card donation over the phone:
Telephone 403.252.8474 or Toll Free 1.866.852.4342

A FULLY TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO OUR CAUSE.



Great Meals

from the

Harvest

with Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - North

Ginger Glazed Cod

4 - 6 ounce skinless cod fillets	3 tablespoons liquid honey
2 teaspoons canola oil	3 tablespoons soy sauce
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes	1/4 cup parsley, minced
1 teaspoon fresh ginger, grated	Salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon canola oil	1/2 teaspoon sesame seeds
3 tablespoons good quality balsamic vinegar	

In a shallow glass casserole dish, combine honey, soy sauce, vinegar, ginger, garlic, 2 teaspoons canola oil, red pepper flakes and ginger, and blend well. Season fillets with the salt and pepper on both sides and place them in the marinade, making sure they are completely coated. Cover with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for 20-30 minutes.

Heat the remaining canola oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Remove the fillets from the marinade and reserve it. Fry the fish in the skillet for approximately 4 minutes per side or until the fish flakes easily. Remove fillets and reserve on to a platter and cover with foil to keep warm.

Pour the reserved marinade into the skillet and cook over medium heat until the mixture reduces to the consistency of a glaze. Spoon over the fillets, sprinkle with parsley and sesame seeds and serve. *(Rice and asparagus make a great accompaniment. You can also substitute halibut or salmon for cod.)*

Goose and Wild Rice Soup

1 pound cooked boneless, skinless goose breast, cubed	
1/2 cup unsalted butter	1 medium onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup celery, finely chopped	1/2 cup carrots, sliced
1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced	3/4 cup flour
6 cups chicken stock	2 cups cooked wild rice
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt	1/2 teaspoon curry powder
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard powder	1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
1/2 teaspoon fresh ground pepper	1 cup slivered almonds, toasted
3 tablespoons dry sherry	2 cups half and half
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder	1 bay leaf

In a large saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Stir in onion, celery and carrots and sauté for 5 minutes. Add the fresh mushrooms and sauté for another 2 minutes. Next, add the flour and stir well to form a roux. Gradually pour in the warmed chicken stock, whisking constantly to avoid lumping. Bring to a boil and immediately adjust heat to low and simmer, stirring often.

Next add the rice, goose, salt, curry powder, garlic powder, bay leaf, mustard powder, parsley, ground black pepper, almonds and sherry. Allow to heat through on low, stirring often. Pour in the half and half and mix well. Allow to simmer for about 60 minutes. Do not allow to boil or your mixture might break. A low, slow simmer is the key.

Add some hearty bread or buns and you are good to go! Enjoy!



Conservation Education Points of Contact

Calgary Conservation Education Centre For Excellence

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Calgary, AB T2W 0R8
Phone: 403-252-8474
1-866-852-4342
Fax: 403-252-3770
info@aheia.com

Edmonton Conservation Education Centre For Excellence

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Edmonton, AB T6E 6M8
Phone: 780-466-6682
1-866-282-4342
Fax: 780-431-2871
edmontoninfo@aheia.com

Alford Lake Conservation Education Centre For Excellence

Box 369
Caroline, AB T0M 0M0
Phone: 403-722-2423
Fax: 403-722-2445
alfordlake@xplornet.com

A.H.E.I.A. Calgary Firearms Centre

242 Avenue & 32 Street SW
DeWinton, AB T0L 0X0
Phone: 403-256-0665

www.aheia.com

Conservation Education Programs

Alberta Conservation & Hunter Education
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Home Study Program
Canadian Firearms Safety Course
Outdoor Camp Programs
Outdoor Women's Seminar
Outdoor Youth Seminar
Wildlife Seminars
Fishing Seminars
Pleasure Craft Operator Training

Creating Memories for Life

By Glen Pickering



Glen Pickering
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - South

Technology has come a long way, and is a great tool to be able to gain knowledge through the internet, social media, computers, and cell phones, but the only things missing are the hands-on, real life experiences. The mentored hunt program gives youth and adults the opportunity to gain experience in the outdoors and develop a connection with nature. To become involved, you first need to complete the Hunter Education Course and be a first-time hunter. This program relies on volunteers to take novice hunters into the field and provide a safe, quality experience. The demand for mentors is always high, so if you have some time to shape the future generation of hunters and help promote the sport, please contact me by email gpickering@aheia.com.

The program is not only a benefit for the novice hunter, but for landowners as well. AHEIA has access to some unique properties where wildlife populations can exceed carrying capacity and landowners can see a lot of damage to crops,

fences and hay stacks. First time hunters have the opportunity to take what they have learned in the class, and observe first-hand what is actually going on in the field. The chance of harvesting an animal can be higher, but more importantly, new hunters learn the important role they can play in managing and conserving wildlife populations and helping ranchers protect valuable food supplies for their livestock.



On a recent mentored hunt, Luke and his older brother Russell Nottveit gained valuable experience in the tradition and heritage of hunting. Luke took the Hunter Education Course last year

as an 11 year old and was patiently awaiting the opportunity to gain some hands-on experience. Russell was unsure if he wanted to hunt and just came along for the experience. Our intent was to set up a plastic barrel in a round bale stack to be used as a rest, and wait for the deer to come out off the fields. Due to a deep snow fall and cold temperatures, the deer were already feeding on the hay stack at first light, and the boys did a great job trying to sneak up carrying a 45 gallon plastic drum. As the deer started to filter out of the hay stack, the boys put the barrel down and Luke used it to steady his shot. A little "buck fever" took over and the first shot was a clean miss. His second shot was a perfect hit, putting the deer down instantly, which was one of his concerns that we discussed on the drive down.

As they boys walked up to the downed deer there was a little apprehension, which is normal after harvesting your first animal. As the pride and respect took over after removing a deer from an excessive population, Russell decided he wanted to become a hunter, and then both boys did a great job field dressing the deer. The deer was now ready to load into the truck. Luke looked up and told me, "This is how people used to get their food." Technology at its finest.



Father and Son Mentored Waterfowl Hunt

By an AHEIA Member

In early October, AHEIA Mentor Jack Hole took my son and I out for our first hunt ever. It was an amazing experience.

For the last couple of years, my 17-year-old son has been talking about going hunting. I've never hunted before, but it was a chance to take up a new hobby and spend some quality time with my son. So I signed us up for Hunter Education with AHEIA.

We learned a lot during the course, but I didn't know how to get started because I didn't know anybody who could take us out. That's when the instructor Chuck Strong told me about the AHEIA Mentor Program. Within a few days, Chuck introduced me to our mentor Jack Hole, who walked us through the basics for duck hunting — equipment, clothing and licenses.

A few weeks later, we met Jack and his dog Trigger west of Edmonton on an early Sunday morning. I could tell my son was excited because he didn't complain about getting up in the wee hours! We brought ourselves and lunch, but Jack supplied everything else — the shotguns, the ammo, the decoys, and most importantly, his knowledge and passion. I could tell that Jack loved hunting and was keen to introduce it to newbies like us. He took us in his boat to a little island in the middle of the lake, set up the decoys, and we took up our positions. It was a beautiful fall morning.

We didn't have to wait long. My son shot his first duck within the hour, and they kept coming. Within a few hours, Trigger had retrieved sixteen ducks between the three of us. I'm not too proud to say that my son totally out-shot me, but his reflexes have been honed by video games over the years.

He smiled a lot that morning!

Jack showed us how to breast out the ducks. The next day, I barbecued them up and we enjoyed a delicious dinner. My son and I are already planning our next outing.

We couldn't have asked for a better introduction to hunting. Thanks to Jack and the AHEIA Mentor Program for making our first hunt such a great experience. It's amazing to meet mentors who are willing to volunteer the time to share their love of hunting with beginners.



"I think that that was one of the best days of my life."

A Successful Mentored Hunt:

Lars' First Big Game Hunt

By Lars den Boer

I recently was privileged to take a young lad, Lars, on an AHEIA first-time mentored hunt. It's a tremendous program AHEIA leads, offering me coaching and the principles of mentoring, oversight into the ways of background checks and personal reference checks, and access to special licences in the areas the first-time hunters wish to hunt. This young man lives in Hays, Alberta, WMU 128 and wished to hunt close to the family farm. AHEIA provided us with all we needed.

The support of AHEIA staff was exceptional and the two of us had a great day.

After the hunt, I asked Lars if he was willing to tell his story, so I could pass it on to those who made his hunt possible at AHEIA. He took his hunter education from AHEIA and was enthusiastic about telling his story. He sent it to me the next day.

Lars has been in Canada only two years, and was unable to speak English when he went to his first day of hunter education classes. His story is written in his second language and reflects this. Lars has told me that he is comfortable with me sharing and editing as much as I wish.

I am sure Lars would appreciate it if Bob, and his team at AHEIA, knew how appreciative he is of all they have made possible for him.

His story is attached exactly as he wrote it. His parents know I have his story and that I intend to share it.

Dr. Tedd R.P. Walcott D.C.



It all began about a half year ago it was about mid June. It was a nice day to fish. we could fish at a lake full of rainbow trout. It was organized by ACA (kids can catch) and then we met Mr. Walcott. He showed us the best way to catch rainbow trout; because I only had experience with pickle. Then we started talking and I do not know how we got to the subject of hunting. Anyway I told him I would like to shoot a deer this season. He told me that he would take me out hunting this year. When we got closer to hunting season I asked my mom are she wanted to contact Mr. Walcott and ask him what we all had to do to get a tag. He told me I needed my hunting licence. By that time there were four weeks left to get a tag. My parents bought me my hunting course and I got to it; it took me a week and a half and then I were finished my course and then I did my test and got 86%. I got my tag for a mule deer, and then I had to wait until I could go hunting, I couldn't wait until I could get out there and shoot was going to be my first hunt for big game. Then finally the day came November 10-2017, my first big game hunt. I couldn't sleep at all the night before, I did not sleep well that night that is how excited I were. When I finally got up and did my chores and had breakfast; then Mr. Walcott picked me up around 7 am. We arrived at the hunting grounds where we planned to hunt at 7:27 am. It was a nasty morning it was snowing and blowing and cold so not a really nice day to hunt but what ever we went anyway. When we got out of the truck and got ready and walked for about 40 yards I saw three mule bucks. When we got to close for their likes they started running and about 10 doe's, and on the other side of that small piece a herd of 20 started running to. That was really exciting. We started walking around a bit and then we saw the herd that we spocked before, right in front of us! We went around and got pretty close to them. Setted up my rifle got ready to shoot, and, they started moving again. It was the wind that went against us by blowing from behind which at that point of time I thought sacked pretty bad because I were not able to shoot that mule, but after all it was for my own good. We walked around for about two hours but were not able to find that herd again. We did see a mule buck which jumped up right in front of us in a coulee and saw a couple coyotes and some grouse (which I never had seen

before) and some other birds, but no mule deer. But Mr. Walcott did learn me a lot of different stuff on the walk. After we went back to the truck drove for about 10 minutes to the area where we thought the one herd went. When we got there it was about 10 am. At that time the weather cleared up or at least it was not snowing anymore. We walked down a coulee and we saw a lot of tracks but did not see any. Then the coulee split in two, is there maybe just maybe mule deer in there? Well let's go and look; when we were able to see half way into the coulee we saw two mule deer doe's one fawn and one older one. We went back a bit and went up the coulee and I were only able to see the one fawn but there were about 10 others, I had the chance to shoot the young fawn. I didn't first of all it is really small and second it is so young yet let it live at least another year. It was kind of disappointed that I weren't able to scope in on another doe, but again it was for my own good. On another coulee 300 yards from us we saw another herd going up and down again. We did not spocke that herd but we did spocke the herd with the fawn in there for the second time. We had to watch them go. Then we saw the herd again where we were going for the first time at I would say 700 to 800 yards away. We went to follow the tracks of the herd that we saw go over the coulee right in front of us. We walked past the fence and we saw tracks of a mule buck which was must've been running really fast because it took of 3-4 yards in front of the fence and landed 3-4 yards on the other side of the fence, I thought that was pretty cool. At that time of the day it warmed up again I didn't even need my hats and gloves anymore. Then we went on again and we followed those tracks for a while but did not find them. Then we were on top of a ridge and saw a herd at about a mile away, that was the herd where we were going for the first time, and four more mule's. We made the decision to try to get closer to those four mule deer. That was another thing I liked a lot that Mr. Walcott told me what he would do or that I had a different idea and latter on he asked me first and we made the decisions to getter. I learnt a lot that way and I learnt from the mistakes we made. We walked towards the river for quite awhile. then we saw something white in the brush down by the riverside. It was a mule deer. For the first while we thought that it was a doe. We got a little closer to it, but then once again it took off. After

that we thought it was a young buck because it was all alone. We walked along the river bed because that was the lowest spot and the least chance of being seen or smelled or heard. We walked along the river bed for about half a mile and then we got to a dip we could not see in it so we went and looked real careful, because we thought if those four mule's aren't in the brush where we walked along by the riverside they must be in that dip. Guess what, nothing; again! Right close to that dip there as an old train bridge and there are really big concrete pillars under the steel frame. We took cover behind the pillars and we saw two herds one way in the distance and on at 450 to 600 yards. We watched them for awhile and then they started moving slowly out of there own will. So we went back and went up the side of the hill where the train bridge ended it was really steep, but we both made it up. We saw 4 more mule deer standing about half mile away from us. We decided to try to get one of those deer, but ones we got down of the hill that was the end of the old train bridge we saw that they were looking at us!! No good!! We walked shoulder to shoulder for about 500 yards through deep snow sometimes the snow would be up to our knees. We had to stop at the middle because it was tiring. When we were three fourths up the coulee we were out of sight. Ones we were up the coulee we saw mule deer at 300 yards so we got down a bit real quick. We had to go down a bunch and then through another coulee go back up again. We were ready to set up and shoot rydaway. I got really excited because there was a herd of mule deer right ahead of as there were about 15 to a 20 of them I scoped in, and, they started moving again and didn't stop. But then from another coulee another herd of mule deer come up I picked one scoped in they stopped!! Finally! I shot, at that time I thought I mist; but I didn't. I reloaded and scoped in on the same doe and shot again, again I thought I mist but I didn't. We looked for the empty shells and we runt up to the fence that was about 40 yards away from us. I gut my rifle ready to shoot because there were still four mule does at 210 yards. What is that? There is a big brown thing on the ground, is it maybe the doe I shot at twice? Yes it definitely is. So we went over the fence and walked up to it; it was already dead. How come we didn't see it drop down? Probably because we were looking for the empty shells. I were really happy, my first deer! I shot it at about 250 yards for sure and hit it in the lungs twice! Mr. Walcott said, that I good a 10 out of 10 on the shooting! We made our pictures and we gutted it and cleaned it the best we could without water. We only had to drag it for 20 yards because there was an oil road where we drove the truck on so that was really lucky. At that time it was 2 pm and I shot it at 1 pm exact, so it took us about an hour to get to the deer and clean it and drag it to the oil road which is not too bad, I would say. We got the truck and got the deer in the truck and hit the road home. It was a twenty minute drive until we got to our place. We cleaned it and hanged it, Mr. Walcott showed us how to cut the different pieces of mead up. And the rest of the mead we will cut up a bit later in the day. That is my first big game hunting experience and I think that it was a great one!

I think that that was one of the best days of my life. I had a lot of fun. I learnt a whole lot, because Mr. Walcott let me make decisions or he would tell me how he would of done it; and some times we had the same Ideas which was funny. The thing I enjoyed most was probably just walking around in the nature and see more wildlife and how they interact with nature. Another thing I really liked was scoping on on the deer which I didn't get a chance on shooting or didn't take

the chase because I thought that the fawn had to live a little longer, I think that it was beautiful to see those mule deer in my scope. After all I was for my own good that I didn't shoot the first to mule doe's because the first one we were only half hour into the day, if I would of shoot one of the two I wouldn't of learned close to what I know now because the day was way longer and had more learning opportunities. That was my hunting experience.

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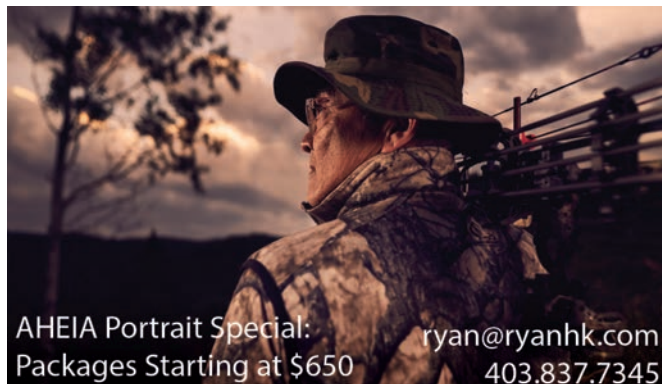
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The Great Debate:

Wild Game: To Age or Not to Age

By Bob Gruszecki



Bob Gruszecki
President - AHEIA

If you go into the woods to do your grocery shopping, chances are you have harvested a deer and are wondering what the best way to deal with it is. Once you have eviscerated and cleaned the carcass, what do you do with the meat? Do you hang it to age or do you butcher it and freeze it as soon as possible? Hunters engage in heated opinionated debates about the proper method of dealing with their harvest. It isn't my intent to settle this once and for all, and I doubt that is possible ... but I do believe the bottom line is that each of us should experiment and then do whatever makes YOU happy with the product! One thing is certain: You have a responsibility to ensure that your harvest doesn't go to waste and that you honour the animal by treating it respectfully and using every possible part of it. Remember, this animal ultimately gave everything it had to allow you to feed yourself and your family and friends.

So much of what to do once the wild game harvest is back at home is rooted in tradition. This tradition is far too deeply rooted to allow me with this article to change minds! Having said that, I have been harvesting and processing my own deer, and deer for my hunting buddies, for over four decades. I'd say I have easily processed over 300 members of the deer family — White-tailed Deer, Mule Deer, Elk, Moose and Caribou. I have read and researched, listened, watched, heeded advice of my mentors and elders, debated and listened to heated debates on the subject. I am not a biologist, but my minor is biology and I have eaten most of what I have harvested. Some of you would say that is all too obvious! I share this not to qualify myself, but to illustrate that I too probably suffer from bias. I leave it to you to sort through what follows and determine for yourself what works best for you.

Finally, after all the above, I base my opinion and subsequent practice on my own experience. In my opinion, there is no question that deer benefit from hanging (or refrigerator aging) for sev-

eral days before butchering. These days I pretty much process my harvest so that the packages are boneless, and I try my best to remove all the "silverskin" I possibly can. I believe I can tell a difference in how much the silver skin has broken down and how much easier it pulls away from the meat after even a week of hanging. The meat tissue itself is also less firm after a week of hanging, which translates into tenderness on the plate.

Generally, if the meat is to go into steaks and roasts, I tend to hang it for longer periods. If it is to be ground, then a shorter aging (somewhere in the vicinity of three days) will suffice, since in my experience aging meat for grinding is simply for texture, as the longer it ages it will just turn to mush in the grinder. I have found that deer are much easier to butcher once they have been aged by hanging for a few days in the correct temperature. Temperature is key here though—more on that shortly. If the venison has been aged by hanging for a few days, the slimy membranes dry up or are at least easier to remove, and the meat tends to be easier to slice up. It is important to note that despite its different taste and lower levels of fat, venison is very similar to beef. It contains the same basic enzymes, particularly lactic acid, and goes through similar changes after the animal dies.

Factors Affecting Flavour:

More on aging shortly, but it's important to identify some important steps that affect flavour and tenderness at this point.

- **Diet:** An animal that fed on corn will taste considerably different than an animal that has been feeding on silver berry, willow branches or prairie grasses.
- **Behaviour/Manner of Death:** What did the animal do before its death? Was it rutting? Was it chased all day by a Buck intent on breeding it? As a result of any sort of stress it was under, such as running from predators or chased from willow patch to willow patch by hunters in pursuit, this only fills the muscles full of hormones and lactic acid which has a direct correlation with taste and tenderness.
- **Speed of Expiry:** Did it have a quick clean death?

- **Clean/Temperature:** Was it eviscerated cleanly, skinned and cooled quickly? Was it transported cool or was it buried in the back of the truck under loads of gear preventing the heat from escaping the carcass?
- **Aging:** Was it butchered virtually upon harvest (sometimes there is no choice) or was it allowed to age?
- **Proper Preparation/Cooking:** Some people can make poor quality cuts of venison into very well disguised flavourful bounty! Others produce a lump of meat that just gets larger in your mouth with each bite and just won't go down! There is a third group and that's the group who are treated to a succulent flavour and gastronomical extravaganza that is a tremendous reward for any hunter and his/her family ... it's our goal to be in this group!

While aging is one of my short list of the six important factors that affect the taste of your harvest, if you get five or six of these correct and have done a good job on them, then aging may be less important. Improper temperature is meat's worst enemy, and clearly the three most important factors for a great culinary experience with your harvest are: 1) Keep it clean for the entire process, 2) Keep it clean for the entire process, and 3) Keep it clean for the entire process!

Important Considerations

As mentioned earlier, there are many opinions on aging the harvest. The old timers among us seem to recognize the importance of properly aging meat to enhance the inherent quality. Unfortunately, this step is often rushed or skipped altogether by some people, all in the name of efficiency.

Aging:

Do I age my venison? Yes. I have tried both ways and have had better luck with aging wild game—especially venison—than the few times I have butchered it as soon as possible. I think of it this way ... I probably wouldn't eat grapes right off the vine and expect them to provide the flavour or "buzz" that a fine aged wine would deliver. I have never thrown a tomato at a plate of pasta and expected it to mash up and taste like the fine marinara my mother or grandmother toiled over for days. As it pertains to wild game, mak-



Keep it clean for the entire process.



ing good tablefare is a process! There are some important exceptions that I will elaborate on. But, first you must understand what happens to a carcass upon expiry.

Rigor Mortis:

During the first 72 hours, a chemical change occurs in the flesh that causes Rigor Mortis. Rigor is a shrinking or contracting of the muscles that results in an extremely tough and chewy meal! Also, if the meat is frozen before rigor has passed through the animal, I have found that it is also not great to eat. I have noted a distinct lack of tenderness and the meat itself is less flavourful. Generally, by day four rigor has passed, the muscles have relaxed, and enzymes begin to do their work of breaking down the proteins in the flesh, and the process of becoming more tender

begins. It is this important enzyme action, when combined with other factors such as the animal's age, type or breed, sex, the stress level at death, fat content and, as mentioned above, diet, that determines what the meat will taste like. You may call it "Beefy" or perhaps "Gamey", but this all culminates in how the meat gets its flavour. In my opinion, time plays the biggest role here because all these processes take time. The aging can and will take place as long as the meat is not frozen.

In dry aging, the moisture in the meat evaporates, which further concentrates the developing flavours and gives an even richer meaty taste. If the meat is cryovaced—wet aged—the enzyme action still takes place, but there is no evaporation or concentration of the flavour. Wet aging is most often used where possible because there



Removing the hide assists greatly in rapid cooling of the carcass.

is little weight loss as the meat ages and therefore makes more money. I recall as a young boy accompanying my father into packing plant kill floors and refrigeration units (my father worked as a refrigeration mechanic and was responsible for ensuring packing plants, etc. had appropriate cooling plants and refrigeration processes) and seeing the domestic beef hanging in the walk-in coolers covered in wet shrouds. This was to ensure that the meat didn't lose weight during the important cooling process. Yes, meat from beef is not necessarily the same as venison, but the same biological principles apply. Safety concerns about the meat—be it beef or venison—force us to ensure that all these changes I have referred to take place under 40° F.

It isn't always possible to maintain your harvest under 40° F at every deer camp or in hot parts of the country that have warm temperatures during deer season. So, food safety is your primary concern and safety should come first. In this instance, you should process your harvest shortly after its death; just try to avoid letting the carcass freeze for a week or so for more flavour and tenderer meat.

"Green Meat":

No, it doesn't mean it has turned colour and gone bad. I am referring to the instances where meat freezes before the muscles come out of rigor, the muscles contract very tightly and the freezing sets them in this state. You end up with really tough meat and there really isn't much you can do about it other than cook it by braising or stewing.

Continued ➤

Temperature:

The longer wild game meat ages between 35 and 40° F, the more enzymatic action tenderizes it, but it must, at a minimum, be kept from freezing for 24-36 hours to avoid this “Green Meat” issue.

As a rule of thumb, I try to hang my deer three days per 100 pounds in 35-40° F temperature controlled conditions. I became convinced of the value of aging my harvest many years ago, so I invested in and built a walk-in cooler in my shop. With the cooler, I can keep the temperature steady wherever I want it. If you can't do this, then I would say butcher it before it has a chance to spoil. But it can easily be done on a budget as well. I have a buddy who puts blocks of ice in a few large coolers, breaks the carcass down into large chunks and places the meat on top of the ice. He then drains the blood and water out every morning and evening, and he has had tremendous luck with ensuring savoury tableware.

If it is hung properly while cooling, then the blood will settle out of the meat. If it is badly blood-stained, as it would be around an entrance or exit wound, then trim the flesh back to good meat and discard the severely blood-soaked area.

Remember, aging your wild game is a luxury, not a requirement. If temperatures are ideal, aging will take your meat to the next level. However, if the meat is in danger of spoiling, it's best to process



Carcass in walk-in cooler.

it within 24 hours. Regardless of your personal choice to age or not to age your harvest, I hope you enjoy this great food. As hunters, we have access to the most cage-free, organic, chemical-free, natural food in the world. May all your wilderness experiences be both safe and rewarding!



Various cuts ready for packaging after being aged in a temperature controlled environment.

Further Reading and Helpful Links

- If you haven't yet checked out the AHEIA Field Techniques App, you should. It contains post mortem field dressing demonstration videos and advice for care of wild game in the field. Available at the Apps Store.
- Check out the *Harvest Your Own* site for advice on Free Range / Low Fat / Great Tasting pursuit of protein. Great advice and current comments from a bevy of contributors on Facebook. See what others are doing and join in the pursuit.
- Clemson University produces a great one pager titled *Safe Handling of Wild Game Meats* (HGIC3516).
- www.wildeats.com/recipes.html by Chef John McGannon. I attended many of his presentations at seminars he offered at the big National Conventions in the USA. Worthwhile.

Glossary

Collagen

Young deer don't have much. Causes most meat toughness. The main structural protein found in animal connective tissue.

Hormones

These are the regulatory substances produced in deer flesh and transported in tissue fluids such as blood to stimulate specific cells or tissues into action.

Enzymes

These accelerate chemical reactions. Enzymes are responsible for a lot of the work that is going on in cells. They act as catalysts to help produce and speed up chemical reactions. When a cell needs to get something done, it almost always uses an enzyme to speed things along.

Silverskin

A white and silvery coloured connective tissue attached to various pieces of the meat. It's extremely chewy and difficult for our teeth to break it down. Generally, the silverskin will be noticeable on ribs and tenderloins and other masses of meat on a deer. It is a common practice to remove this part from the meat, since it doesn't add any benefit to the cooking or eating of the meat.

Lactic Acid

A colourless, syrupy, organic acid produced in the muscle tissues during strenuous exercise. Deer that have run long distances will have a massive buildup of lactic acid in their tissues.

Venison

The meat of a deer. Venison can be used to refer to any part of the deer, so long as it can be consumed, including the flesh and internal organs.

Rigor Mortis

Which translates from Latin as “stiffness of death”. Sets in quickly and usually ends three or four days after death. The condition results from a lack of certain chemicals in the muscles; it may be affected by muscular activity before death as well as the external temperature.

“Puppies are Their Own Kind of Fun”:

Dolly

By Rob Kerr

Recently I sat in a ground blind in a cornfield east of Brooks watching with amazement as flight after flight of Canada geese flooded in around me. Finally, it was time, as the opportunity presented itself no further than 20 yards away. I did not miss, and my new partner clearly knew it, as her kennel covered in burlap and corn stocks was shaking. I got up and opened the front door and she was gone like a shot. Geese were still circling above as my teammate galloped straight out in front of us. In her haste, she ran right by my success, but instincts kicked in and quickly she backtracked and picked up the prize.

It was clear that she was ecstatic to be working, and while fundamentally did everything right, my friend was not quite ready to give up the goose. A few seconds ticked off the clock, and then she quickly regained her composure and dumped the bird at my feet. It was now time for me to take over this part of the hunt.

In fairness, I've gotten ahead of myself again. Since purchasing Dolly at the AHEIA banquet this past February 2017, I seem to tell my tales out of order. Mostly that is because of the pride I have in my nearly one-year-old American Black Lab from Dark Timber Kennels in Texas.

I have to admit that there is no question that I have come to upland bird and waterfowl hunting a little late in life. Like many who discover a love this late in life, I have thrown myself all in. Those who are helping me learn about my new passion are all hunting dog owners.

Last year at this time, I began to think about saving my money for a few years and getting a real working dog. Then the timeline changed. A few weeks before the annual fundraising dinner for AHEIA, I became aware that there was going to be a puppy from a well-known gun dog breeder in the live auction. I dove in headfirst, doing my homework and talking to as many people as I could. Most importantly, I talked to my family about this commitment. I had been around dogs all my life, but not a working dog, and not a dog that needed to be trained.

The night of the gala came and I had a budget and I had a plan. By sheer luck, the most important piece of my gun dog puzzle was sitting at my table, but I will explain that in a moment. I am lucky that I have been able to do and see a lot in life, but nothing prepared me for the anxiety I felt as I bid on an 8½-week-old puppy. When I won out, I was in a state of shock, and I won't lie, there was a bit of panic too. I mentioned that I was fortunate that another guest at my table was there and, to this day, it really felt like he was there as some form of divine intervention.

Harold Fukuda was a person I knew and had some dealings with, but thank God, he was sitting at our table that February night. In my research, I had come across a number of different books on how to train a dog, and all of the people I interviewed each had their favourite method too. Right from the get-go, Harold gave me nothing but common sense advice and he delivered it in a calm, measured manner. Harold seemed less concerned about specific drills or training and told me to just enjoy a young puppy.

That puppy got a name, as I decided for some reason she was a “Dolly”, and soon the two of us were driving out to Harold's place northeast of Brooks on a regular basis. The biggest thing I learned from Mr. Fukuda was patience and having the correct expectations. I spent hundreds of dollars on books, and to be honest, I really only got one good piece of advice, and that was to think of your dog as an athlete and to coach them.

Our first couple of visits to Harold's set some of the fundamentals for both me and Dolly. She learned to come back on command, and groundwork for healing was set in place. I learned that she was still a pup and that she, like any child, has a limited attention span. Every time I went home, I had a couple of commands or drills to work on. Twice a day we were outside in nearby Fish Creek Park. Retrieving a bumper, working in and around water, or going for a short run. Every month we would visit the farm and Harold exposed Dolly to more and more of the work of a gun dog. I am proud to say that my dog, at the age of 5½ months, hunted, flushed, and retrieved her first pheasant.

I am a bit of a nervous fella and it seemed like every time I visited Harold with Dolly I was worried one of us might not be doing something right. Every time I left one of our visits I went home even a little more proud of my dog and confident that I was not messing up the training.

By the time waterfowl season had opened, Dolly had been on at least a dozen chukers and pheasants, and now I was about to find out how she would do with ducks and geese. It did not take long before we got on some geese on a lake south of Vulcan. I brought down a goose and it splashed about 30 yards off shore. I won't lie, it took four trips out to the downed bird before it was brought back to shore, but when it did it was dropped right at my feet. Later that weekend it was our first ducks together, and that was slightly more efficient.

Since then we have had a handful of successful hunts together. She remains a puppy and is full of energy, and at the best of times is very restless. On one hand I can't wait till she is a little more patient in the field, but as Harold reminds me all the time, puppies are their own kind of fun.



“In most cases, you will have most everything you need in your regular tackle box.”

Give Ice Fishing a Try

By Len Gransch



Len Gransch
Program Coordinator
AHEIA
Red Deer - North

If you are like me, you are always looking for any excuse to spend more time outdoors. With winter fast approaching, many of you will be tired of being house-bound and want some type of outdoor adventure.

Why not try ice fishing? The pursuit of fishing through the ice allows you to extend your season considerably.

You do not require a boat or other such floating devices, or necessarily any specialized equipment, although high tech options are available to you. In most cases, you will have most everything you need in your regular tackle box. You will still need to purchase or borrow a few other items.

Firstly, you will need to acquire an ice auger, unless you wish to use an axe or ice chisel to make the hole. I don't recommend using them unless you are in prime shape or are looking for an extreme workout.



When it comes to augers, there are many options available to you. The first and least expensive style is your basic hand crank version. They have come a long way over the past number of years. Quality and efficiency have really improved, but it is still a hands-on process. These augers range in price from \$60-\$150 and are available from Rapala, Ardisam, HT Industries, and Cabela's, to name a few.

If you are not interested in working up a sweat with these manual crank styles, then you should definitely consider one that has an engine of some kind. The selection of power augers has increased dramatically over the last few years. They are available with motors powered by gasoline, propane and electricity. This will allow you to cover much more of the lake without getting tired out. Be prepared to become everyone's new best friend if you buy a power auger.

A basic gas motor version will run you \$360-\$900, depending on size and options. Units are available from Rapala, Jiffy, Eskimo and Strike Master. Propane units run about \$700 and are available from Eskimo and Jiffy. They utilize 16 ounce disposable propane cylinders, which sell in the \$5-\$7 range. The new kid on the block is



the electric style. You will find offerings from Jiffy, Strike Master and Ion, with units ranging in price from \$700-\$1,000. Ion seems to offer the most popular units, that claim you can drill over 1,600 inches of ice on one charge. Spare batteries start at \$220 and are well worth the investment.

Some other basic equipment you may wish to add to your collection are an ice skimmer, toboggan, lures for the species of fish you are pursuing, and safety equipment. Ice fishing is like any other pursuit. The manufacturers will tempt you with all the new shiny, colourful equipment that you must have and, of course, you know they are right. There are GPS and sonar units, underwater cameras, shelters, heaters and much more. Drop by your local store for the cornucopia of goodies.



Once you have gathered the proper equipment for your adventure, you need to put it to good use. Where is a good place to go? Most good tackle shops and sporting goods stores will have a listing and be on top of how their local lakes are fishing, and even recommend which tackle is "hot". You have decided where to go, picked up some maggots, the recommended lures, lunch, hot chocolate, packed the kids in the vehicle, and set off for your new adventure. Notice I said take the kids.

You have now arrived at the lake and are preparing to head out on the ice. Is there anything else you need to be aware of? I would be remiss if I did not spend some time talking about ice safety. Before going out on the ice you must be aware of ice conditions. Some of this information can be obtained from local people or district Fish and Wildlife offices, but in the end you are responsible for your own safety. Always assume the ice is unsafe until you prove otherwise. Using an axe or hatchet will allow you to test ice thickness at the point you enter onto the lake. If it is less than 4" (10 cm), STAY OFF!

Minimum ice thickness recommendations (for stationary loads parked on clear, good quality ice for more than two hours, but less than seven days):*

- <4" (10cm), keep off ice!
- 6" (15cm), person ice fishing/standing.
- 10" (25cm), snowmobiles/ATVs (<500kg, with rider).
- 16" (41cm), mid-size cars and small trucks (1,000-2,000kg).
- 18" (46cm), mid-size trucks (2,000-3,000kg).
- 21.5" (55cm), ³/₄ ton 4x4 trucks (<5,000kg).

There are some other safety considerations to think about. Tell someone where you are going and when you will return. Wear appropriate clothing for the weather. Dress in layers. Carry hand ice spikes/picks to assist climbing out should you break through the ice. A 100' rope with a throw device attached will keep you out of danger should you need to retrieve someone. A basic survival kit may save lives. If you have youngsters along, you may consider a Personal Floatation Device (PFD), but never wear one in a vehicle while driving on ice. Stay away from areas of moving water, creeks and springs. Never park in groups, as this will weaken the ice.

What are you waiting for? Take the family ice fishing and enjoy the day together.

* Best Practice for Building and Working Safely on Ice Covers in Alberta. 2013, Alberta Government.





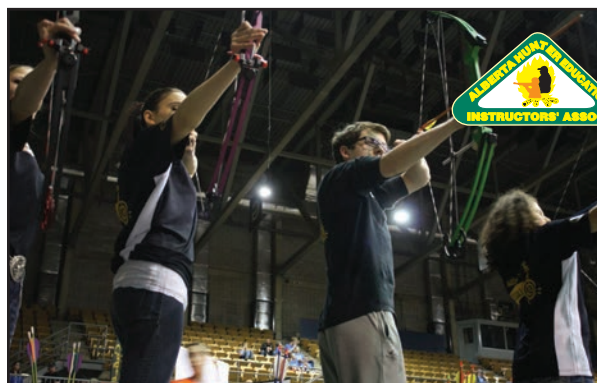

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“This is the time of year when drivers must be most aware of the road conditions, their personal driving habits and the capability of their vehicle.”

Winter Driving Conditions

By Allan Orr



Allan Orr
Assistant Conservation
Education Coordinator
AHEIA Red Deer - South

Many outdoors enthusiasts are out and about in all four of our seasons. With hunting, fishing, camping and exploring happening all year, many Albertans are exposed to a wide variety of driving conditions. Although conditions change somewhat during the spring, summer and fall seasons, the most dramatic changes

occur during the winter months. This is the time of year when drivers must be most aware of the road conditions, their personal driving habits and the capability of their vehicle.

Let's look at each of these factors:

Road Conditions

A vehicle can only perform three physical functions. It can go, it can stop, and it can turn. Each of these manoeuvres requires friction between the vehicle's tires and the road. We commonly refer to this as traction. The greater the amount of friction between the tires and the road, the better the vehicle is able to perform its three functions. Conversely, poor traction results in poor performance of that vehicle due to a loss of that same friction. Several factors contribute to a vehicle's traction with the road surface under various conditions, but one that drivers should be acutely aware of is road conditions.

The most critical aspect of monitoring road conditions is the ability of the driver to detect any change in road conditions. As temperature and relative humidity change, the road conditions change as well, affecting the vehicle's ability to cling to the road surface. Many people will be surprised to hit "black ice" following a freezing rain episode. Others may be caught off-guard when frost on a highway leads them to lose control and hit the ditch. Still others will find they lack steering control when the road is covered in rainwater resulting in the vehicle hydroplaning.

Roads offer the most traction when they are warm and dry. Moisture and/or cold temperatures diminish a road surface's ability to offer adherence to a tire. This is most evident when cold temperatures and moisture combine in a single weather event. The result is a rapid change in road conditions that can lead to loss of traction and an eventual collision.



In order to mitigate the effects of rapid weather change, drivers should always be aware of the road conditions and the anticipated weather conditions. Understand that changing conditions can affect how your vehicle handles, particularly if hauling a trailer or a boat. On a slippery road, all actions (stop, go, turn) take more time and space than normal. Give yourself more time to perform these actions by slowing down if/when road conditions change. Give yourself more space by staying farther behind other traffic and by slowing down for stop lights, etc. much sooner than normal. Again, if you are hauling a trailer or boat, give yourself even more space and time. You can check the slipperiness of a road by gently engaging your brakes (while travelling fairly slowly) to see if the vehicle will stop or slide. Adjust your driving accordingly.

Personal Driving Habits

To remain safe during winter driving conditions, a good driver will adjust his/her driving habits and techniques to compensate for the changing road conditions. Earlier, I mentioned doing a brake check for icy road conditions, but there are several more things a driver can do to ensure safety.

The first and most important thing a driver can do when travelling on slippery roads is to slow down. Simply slowing down increases your chances of surviving a collision, whether it be with the ditch or with another vehicle. Your vehicle's dynamics have changed and slowing down will give you back the time and space you gave up to the icy road. Stops and turns will be much better and safer at lower speeds. Even acceleration will be better if you accelerate slowly rather than "jack-rabbiting" off the line.

Give yourself more room. This is particularly true when following another vehicle. You do not know the driver's ability to stop under icy conditions, so you need to give them more room in the event that they need to stop and can do so more quickly than you can. There are several factors that contribute to stopping distance and you do not know how the other driver is affected by those factors.

Of course, as sportspeople we love to be out and about during all seasons. Winter affords us the unique ability to drive on water. Frozen water of course, but water nonetheless. Here are some tips for driving on ice covered water:

1. Minimum ice thickness recommendations (for stationary loads parked on clear, good quality ice for more than two hours, but less than seven days):*
 - **<4" (10cm)**, keep off ice!
 - **6" (15cm)**, person ice fishing/standing.
 - **10" (25cm)**, snowmobiles/ATVs (<500kg, with rider).
 - **16" (41cm)**, mid-size cars and small trucks (1,000-2,000kg).
 - **18" (46cm)**, mid-size trucks (2,000-3,000kg).
 - **21.5" (55cm)**, ³/₄ ton 4x4 trucks (<5,000kg).
2. Our friends at the Canadian Red Cross recommend the following guidelines for judging the safeness of ice:
 - Clear blue ice is strongest.
 - White opaque or snow ice is half as strong as blue ice. Opaque ice is formed by wet snow freezing on the ice.

- Grey ice is unsafe. The grayness indicates the presence of water.
3. Be aware of moving water under the ice. Moving water will decrease ice thickness and also the ice's ability to carry the weight it could over still water. Avoid river mouths or deltas, narrows and other areas where water may be moving underneath the ice.
 4. Leave space between vehicles. Unless you are absolutely sure of the ice thickness in a particular place, do not park two or more vehicles within about 20 or so metres of each other. Once you have had a chance to check ice thickness in that area, you might decide it's safe to park closer to other vehicles. Until then, maintain a safe distance.
 5. Seatbelts off. What??? Do your research and decide for yourself whether you should follow the law and wear your seatbelt or whether you feel that you will gain valuable escape time by not wearing one on ice covered water. I know my preference, but I can't counsel you to break the law.
 6. Carry ice picks. Whether in a vehicle or on foot, a good set of ice picks can save your life. These are inexpensive and easy to carry around. Should you fall through the ice, getting yourself out without ice picks is very difficult.



“ With hunting, fishing, camping and exploring happening all year, many Albertans are exposed to a wide variety of driving conditions. ”



Vehicle Capability

You can change how your vehicle handles during the winter by following a few simple tips. The first and most beneficial one is to **INSTALL WINTER TIRES!** This does not mean all-seasons, or all-weather, or all-terrains. I mean true winter tires that are designed to provide maximum traction on ice. No tire can do all things well. So when considering an all-season for example that will run for 100,000km, consider that these tires have a hard rubber compound that gets stiffer in cold weather. The stiffer and less pliable a tire is, the less is its ability to gain traction on ice. Stopping, going and turning are much more difficult on a hard compound tire.

As well, only true winter tires have an abundance of sipes. Sipes are the small lines you see cut into the tread surface of winter tires. These open to grip the ice surface like nothing else. Having big lugs on your tires is great for mud, sand and even snow, but when things get icy ... think sipes.

Sometimes sipes are not enough. Thinking back to our discussion on ice travel, I can tell you from experience that there is nothing that beats a good set of chains to get traction on ice. If you need to get off the ice in a hurry, you have the best chance with a set of chains on your vehicle. Tire chains are available at most automotive and outdoor stores and are a good investment if you are going to be travelling on ice covered water.

I discovered that putting chains on the **FRONT** wheels of my four-wheel drive increased the traction even more. Now, having said that, there may be some potential damage that I am unaware of, but having them on the front tires sure worked for me! And while we are discussing four-wheel drive, let me point out to you that four-wheel drive only increases a vehicle's ability to move under conditions of poor traction. It does not help you stop or turn. Too many people feel invincible in their four-wheel drive vehicles after a snowfall. Sure you can take off from a light faster than most, but your ability to stop or turn is no better, and may even be worse if you don't have winter tires installed.

Lastly, while travelling during the winter season, make sure you have sufficient survival gear at your disposal. A shovel and some traction aids will get you out of most snowbanks. Plenty of warm clothing and blankets will help you survive an extended, unplanned stay in your vehicle, and of course plenty of snacks and water will see you through what could be a long difficult time. Candles, matches, booster cables, a flashlight and a roadside emergency kit should also have a permanent place in your vehicle during the winter months.

Keep aware of the items discussed in this article and you could stay safe and warm this winter.

* Best Practice for Building and Working Safely on Ice Covers in Alberta. 2013, Alberta Government.



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Drawn August 13, 2017 at Alford Lake. Licence #441903.



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Eckville, Alberta



Prize #2:

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Allan N.

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Benelli Vinci Super Sport
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