

Safari Club International - Detroit Chapter

# Trajectory briefs



Fundraiser / Banquet Highlights  
My first Michigan Turkey by Ray Hollingsworth  
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Michigan Predator - Prey Project

Trajectory briefs, Spring/Summer 2020

# What is Trajectory briefs?

You are looking at our new Members newsletter "**Trajectory briefs**." This is a scaled down version of SCI Detroit's award winning magazine *Trajectory*. Our plan is to publish **Trajectory briefs** online, four times a year. Each issue will provide you with updates and information pertinent to the SCI Detroit Chapter, Legislative News, happenings at SCI, relevant items from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Michigan DNR (MDNR), and member hunt stories.

We would greatly appreciate your thoughts and feedback.

Steve Breuning

President  
SCI Detroit  
steve@scidetroit.com



## Upcoming Chapter Events

Below is a listing of currently scheduled SCI Detroit Chapter events. Please check the events on the SCI Detroit website for more information and any schedule changes. Also, check the website regularly as newly added events will appear there as they become scheduled.

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

Currently all Summer and Fall events are on hold pending changes in the status of Covid-19.

**SCI Detroit Annual Banquet and Fundraiser - March 5-6, 2021**  
Fern Hill Golf Club, Clinton, Michigan

**50th ANNIVERSARY OF SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL**  
**Convention - February 3-6 2021 Las Vegas, Nevada**

# SCI Detroit 2020 Banquet / Fundraiser A Huge Success

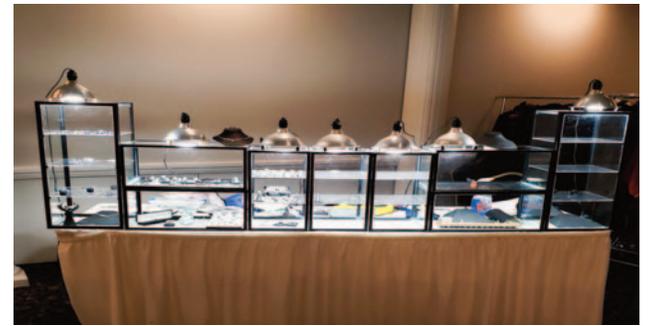
Well, we were lucky; our banquet / fundraiser was held one weekend prior to the Michigan state-wide shutdown due to the pandemic. Not only were we able to have our event, we had a phenomenal turnout and in many areas record fundraising. As a result, we will be able to continue our contributions to animal conservation, veteran's support, and children and young adult programs.

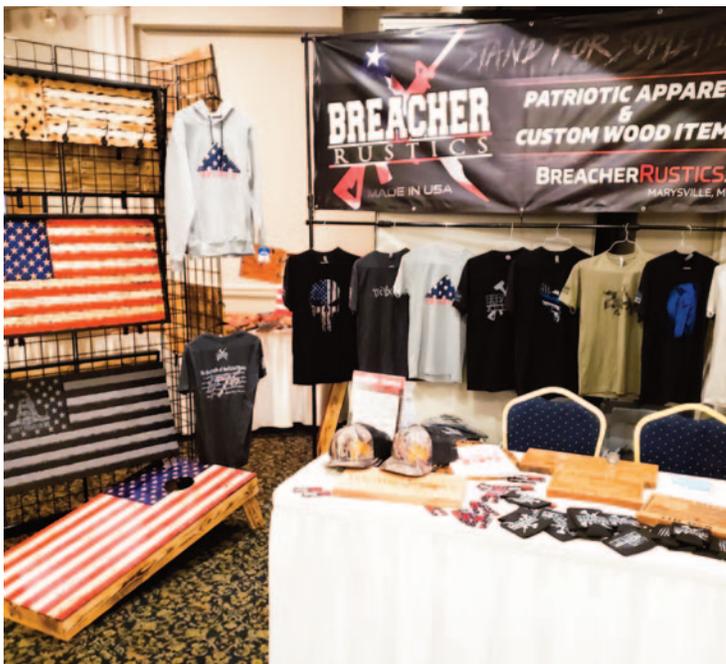
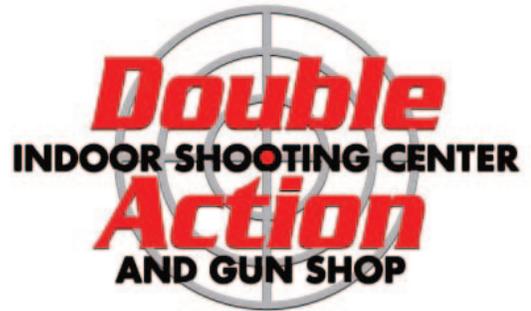
**Thank you all for making his possible.**



We want to thank all who donate to this years banquet / fundraiser with particular attention to those who also attended the event.









**The following is a list of who donated to the 2020 SCI Detroit banquet/fundraiser.  
Please support these outfitters, taxidermists, and other businesses.**

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Email: reshni@zulunyala.co  
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## Safari Club International announces two new free services for its members.



Just click on the SCI link to get all the latest news  
on COVID-19 and its current relationship to hunting.  
[www.safariclub.org](http://www.safariclub.org)



### Hunter Information Service

SCI's Hunter Information Service is designed to provide members with the information resources they need on all things hunting. The service will help you research a hunting destination, a game species, hunting operators, hunting-related services, and the latest legal requirements affecting your hunting travel.

With continually increasing regulations affecting travel with firearms, hunting in different destinations, and the export/import of trophies, it is more important than ever that hunters be as informed as possible. SCI is your best source of information, advice and resources. Think of the Hunter Information Service as a reference library that you can visit 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Telephone (domestic toll free): (800) 997-0179  
Telephone (non-toll free): (520) 798-4859  
Email Address: [HunterHotline@safariclub.org](mailto:HunterHotline@safariclub.org)

# Legislative and other Wildlife News

By Joe Konwinski

## **01/16/20 SCI POISED TO ACQUIRE TEXAS TROPHY HUNTERS ASSOCIATION:**

Safari Club International, the leader in defending the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide, is excited to announce it has entered into an agreement to purchase Texas Trophy Hunters Association. The acquisition is expected to close at the SCI Convention in Reno in February. This acquisition is part of SCI's strategic plan to enhance the organization's ability to help protect the freedom to hunt worldwide.

## **01/17/20 REWARD OFFERED IN ELK POACHING INCIDENTS IN MICHIGAN'S NORTHERN LOWER PENINSULA:**

The Safari Club International-Michigan Involvement Committee is concerned by numerous recent reports of elk being poached in Michigan's northern Lower Peninsula. As a result, the committee is offering a \$1,000 reward to anyone providing information leading to the arrest and conviction of an individual or individuals illegally killing elk in Michigan.

## **01/22/20 MICHIGAN 2019 ELK HUNTING SEASON RECAP:**

Elk hunt period 1, which targets elk outside of their traditional range, was 12 days long running Aug. 27-30, Sept. 13-16 and Sept. 27-30, during which time 96 state hunters harvested 71 elk (29 bulls, 40 cows and 2 calves). During elk hunt period 2, Dec. 14-22, another 99 state hunters harvested 89 elk (30 bulls, 54 cows and 5 calves). One of those 30 bulls was harvested by SCI Detroit Chapter member and Board of Directors member Chas Arnold. Chas's hunt was filmed by a Michigan Out of Doors crew and was shown on the January 9, 2020 regular Thursday airing of The Michigan Out of Doors TV show. Congratulations Chas! Please see Chas' article in this issue.

## **02/11/20 COURT SIDES WITH SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL IN DISMISSING LEGAL CHALLENGE TO DELISTING OF THE LOUISIANA BLACK BEAR:**

A U.S. federal district court in Washington, D. C. dismissed a case challenging the removal of the Louisiana black bear from the federal threatened and endangered species list using information submitted to the court by SCI.

## **03-09-29 FIVE WORKERS AT MICHIGAN WILDLIFE LAB GET LATENT FORM OF TUBERCULOSIS:**

Five people who worked in a Michigan wildlife disease lab have been diagnosed with a latent form of TB. The department of Natural Resources' lab processes thousands of deer heads during the annual hunting season to check for chronic wasting disease and bovine TB.

The DNR found no mistakes with the proper use of personal protection equipment, but subsequently made respirators mandatory during necropsies of all animals, reduced the number of deer tested each day, and limited the hours that staff can work on the necropsy floor.

## **03-16-20 SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL NAMES NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER:**

Safari Club International is pleased to announce that Lauren Hill of Poway, California is the new Business Development Manager for SCI National. Lauren will be responsible for new business development, including corporate sponsors and strategic partnerships. Hill has been involved with SCI on the national level where she previously served as Chapter Services Specialist.



# COVID-19 Information

Since things within the state are changing rapidly, we have chosen not to list much here. We recommend you use the DNR link to check the status of everything hunting, fishing, shooting, and otherwise outdoors related. Updates are made daily.

As many of Michigan's younger residents are currently out of school, the DNR would like to provide some fun and educational activities aimed at history and the outdoors. They have put together an extensive list of links and materials to provide kids and their caregivers with plenty to do. [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)

## Educational Resources For Home

**10 fabulous Nature lesson videos from the DNR**

**Virtual field trips, online tours, and videos**

**Easy ways to explore and engage with nature**

**Indoor nature fun, experiments and projects**

## Educational Resources for Teachers/Educators

**Professional  
Development**

**School Enrichment**

**In & Out of the  
Classroom**



## **WHO IS Safari Club International (SCI)?**

SCI is not only the leader in protecting the freedom to hunt and promoting wildlife conservation worldwide, but we also are committed to giving back to our communities with a wide range of educational and civic programs for children, veterans and homeless and disabled populations.

SCI's approximately 200 Chapters represent all 50 of the United States as well as 106 other countries. SCI's proactive leadership in a host of cooperative wildlife conservation, outdoor education and humanitarian programs, with the SCI Foundation (SCIF) and other conservation groups, research institutions and government agencies, empowers sportsmen to be contributing community members and participants in sound wildlife management and conservation.

## **WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?**

SCI members help shape and promote the image of the hunter to non-hunters through their words and actions. In addition to practicing ethical hunting while in the field and around others, members give back by participating in education, civic service and humanitarian efforts taking place across the globe.

## **HOW DO WE IMPACT COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE?**

### **Education Programs**

Some SCIF education programs include the American Wilderness Leadership School (AWLS) where educators learn to integrate conservation lessons into classroom and outdoor teaching environments; youth support programs like the SCIF/Salvation Army Outdoors partnership which develops conservation and shooting sports activities for youth in Salvation Army camps and community facilities across the country; and the latest Sensory Safari program where SCI volunteers escort children through a maze of touch displays while describing the animal's size, characteristics and habitats.

### **Civic Programs**

Civic work is also a priority among SCI members and chapters. One of the many programs is the Sportsmen Against Hunger program where members have provided tens of millions of meals in an effort to meet food banks' need for low fat, low cholesterol, preservative-free, high-protein meat. Other programs include SafariCare and the Disabled Hunter/Pathfinder Award.

### **Conservation Programs**

Additionally, SCIF and SCI Chapters join together to fulfill projects in conservation all over the world. Chapters also work hard in their own communities to cultivate an understanding and practice of conservation, the benefits of their efforts largely remaining local.

### **Legislative and Regulatory Involvement**

An ongoing project is the involvement of SCI chapters in the U.S. with state legislative and regulatory issues; with federal plans that affect management, conservation, and hunting access on public lands; as well as national legislative issues.

## North America Projects

### Since 2008, SCI Foundation has:

Invested more than \$3M in large project grants to North American conservation projects.

Worked with nearly every big game animal in North America, including 21 species in 18 U.S. states, 5 Canadian provinces, and Mexico.

Focused on predator-prey dynamics, species and habitat enhancement, wildlife disease study, and sustainable-use management.

### 23 States & Provinces



Alaska  
 Alberta  
 Arizona  
 British Columbia  
 California  
 Colorado  
 Georgia  
 Maine  
 Manitoba  
 Michigan  
 Missouri  
 Mexico  
 Montana  
 Newfoundland & Labrador  
 New Hampshire  
 New Mexico  
 Oregon  
 Texas  
 Vermont  
 Virginia  
 Washington

### 21 Species

Alligator  
 Bighorn Sheep  
 Black Bear  
 Bobcat  
 Brown Bear  
 Caribou  
 Coyote  
 Dall Sheep  
 Elk  
 Grizzly Bear  
 Lynx  
 Moose  
 Mountain Goat  
 Mountain Lion  
 Mule Deer  
 Polar Bear  
 Pronghorn  
 Turkey  
 White-tailed Deer  
 Wolf  
 Wood Bison

# My First Michigan Turkey

By Ray Hollingsworth

It is the only turkey that I have ever taken. I have been hunting since I was a kid and finally decided to try turkey hunting. Due to the “Stay Home Stay Safe” Order, I was going stir crazy and had to do something. Seeing that I usually do quite a bit of Walleye fishing during the spring, but we all know of the Governor’s order that banned motorized boat activity for a decent amount of time, I knew that I had to engage in another outing.

Living next to an old farm with access to seventy-five acres, made scouting easy. I had heard a couple of gobblers in the mornings, and had seen a group of turkeys in the field next to my house when I was leaving on one occasion. There were a few hens, three Toms, and about five Jakes.

I sat out a couple of times without much luck. The saying, “Third time’s a charm,” was proven correct on that day. My old folded up hen decoy did the job. It was a nice sunny morning, and it was one of those, right place at the right time hunts. Shooting a 10-gauge Browning with 3 ½ inch mag-

num helped seal the deal. It weighed 24 pounds and had a 9 ¾ inch beard. I am happy to say he turned out to be a fine batch of turkey jerky.

Well, now it’s time to turn my concentrations on to Michigan morels and wild asparagus hunting!



## Wild Facts about Wild Turkeys

**TURKEY FACT #1: Enough with gobble, gobble.** Turkeys also cluck and purr.

**TURKEY FACT #2: Turkey droppings tell a bird’s sex and age.** Male droppings are j-shaped; female droppings are spiral-shaped. The larger the diameter, the older the bird.

**TURKEY FACT #3: Feathers galore:** An adult turkey has 5,000 to 6,000 feathers — count them!

**TURKEY FACT #4: Tom turkeys aren’t the only ones that swagger and fan their tail feathers to woo mates and ward off rivals.** Some hens strut, too.

**TURKEY FACT #5: Young turkeys — called poults — scarf down insects like candy.** Poults develop more of a taste for plants after they’re four weeks old.

**TURKEY FACT #6: They may look off-kilter — tilting their heads and staring at the sky — yet they’re fast.** Turkeys can clock 18 miles per hour on foot and up to 50 miles per hour in flight.

**TURKEY FACT #7: Move over, American bald eagle.** Ben Franklin called the wild turkey a “bird of courage” and thought it would make a better national symbol.

**TURKEY FACT #8: In the early 1900s, wild turkeys were on the brink of extinction, with only about 200,000 left.** Through conservation efforts over the past century, with funds derived from the Pittman-Robertson Act, and thanks to sportsmen and women, there are approximately 6.5 million wild birds in the United States today, according to the National Wild Turkey Federation.

[www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)

# My Michigan Elk Hunt

By Chas Arnold

It was June 24, 2019 when I received the DNR email stating that they posted the results of the Bear and Elk drawings for 2019. With much anticipation I signed into the DNR website and drilled down to the appropriate site to check for the results. I entered my Michigan Drivers License number for the elk draw, and a response came back that said "CONGRADULATIONS" you have been chosen to participate in the December Elk Hunt of 2019.

Needless to say, I was ecstatic. I've been putting in for an Elk tag since Michigan began the limited Elk hunts back in 1984. Finally, I achieved VIP status by winning the prize, I got the gold ticket!! This day was the start of a whirlwind of activity that would finalize my hunt in December.

I received some great advice from a fellow SCI Detroit Chapter Board member who told me to contact Canada Creek Ranch. It's located about fifteen miles north of Atlanta Michigan. I called and secured a spot in their prestigious December only Elk Hunt. Now I had to wait till December to realize my dream. Along the way I contacted Jimmy Gretzinger from Michigan-out-of-Doors. I told him about my upcoming Elk hunt,

and he agreed to record my hunt as a feature for one of his upcoming shows. Again, I was elated at the prospect of being filmed on this "once in a Michiganders life time hunt."

The day finally got closer and closer. My Wife and I went to our family cabin which is only a few miles from Atlanta, Michigan. I met Jimmy Gretzinger at the DNR orientation in Johannesburg, and from there he came to our cabin for dinner. Before Jimmy left, we made plans to meet in the morning for the hunt. I was now very excited.

After a rough sleepless night full of anticipation, I awoke, showered, dressed for the event, and then drove to Canada Creek Ranch where breakfast was served (about 6:00 am). After a short talk about Ranch ground rules etc., I hooked up with my guide. Did I mention that Canada Creek Ranch also provides you with a guide! He was exceptional. We went to our first hunting spot and waited for legal shooting time to arrive. My guide drove, and his helper was riding shot-gun, while Jimmy G and I sat in the back.

My guide told me that if they see an elk, everything will happen very fast, so be prepared. Boy was I prepared!! It was now time to hunt, so we got out of

the truck, I removed my gun from the soft case and loaded 3 rounds as we started to walk up to a ridge line to see if there were any Elk on the other side.

No luck, so we got back into the truck, gun unloaded, stored in its case and started to drive. Suddenly Jimmy Gretzinger says he sees Elk about 200 yards off to our right. Sure, enough there were three. We exited the truck and I removed my gun from its case, loaded 3 rounds, walked around the truck where my guide handed me my monopod shooting stick. I lined up my shot, but the lead Elk was walking away from me. A second Elk was broadside, but I hadn't scoped it to see if it was a bull or not. As I did, I could see the white tips of his antlers move through the tree limbs and I whispered, "It's a shooter"! My guide said: "Take him where he stands." I slowly drew down on that Elk with my 30-06 Marlin bolt action, took a breath, released it, and squeezed the trigger. My rifle exploded and jerked me back, but I was still on that Bull. My guide asked me where the Elk's head was and all I could say was that he was turning to look back at me as he took two steps forward. He stopped again and swung his head the other way, and then all of a sudden, his back legs came up as he fell over his front legs. "He is down", I shouted. It was pure joy and jubilation at that moment.

My guide said to me to rack another round into the chamber. I did, and we hastily walked to the spot where I saw the Elk fall. As we got closer, I could see blood around his nose and mouth. He was dead and I was ecstatic! I shot that Bull at 8:03 am on the opener of Elk season. Six months of anticipation ended approximately 33 minutes after opening day started. However, it was well worth it.

Its now been about several months since my elk hunt and I'm still excited. I love Michigan, and I love to hunt here.



# Namibia Leopard Hunt

By Dennis Bzowka

The African Leopard is generally regarded as the most difficult and time-consuming trophy to hunt. You may see a younger leopard mid-day along a back road, but if people travel or are working a farm, the mature leopard will watch and not be seem. I have been on four leopard safaris in Namibia and Zimbabwe with two trophies harvested. On this particular hunt, I was able to stay in a new hunting house on the ranch. It was 95% solar powered. It had two large bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen with gas range and oven, dining room, and a front room with a huge leopard full mount. They had working cell phones but no towers, with the nearest city being 30 miles away.

On traditional hunts, 8 to 10 meat baits and drag blood scents are put out on the roads or dry river beds near the bait sites. If a leopard eats at your site it

may come back the next day to feed. You set up a hide, what we call a blind, made out of branches and a foot-thick cover of grass to minimize your scent and sounds. A leopard can hear your cell phone or you two football fields away, so you make no sounds and wait, sometimes 10 to 15 hours, if you want a shot at a leopard.

My August, 2019 safari in northern Namibia had many different issues that were solved by three professional guides (PH). PH. Lieb drove 20 hours from RSA to pick me up at the Windhoek airport, and then drove four hours north to Outjo, Namibia farm. PH.Aw hunted many farms in the area and set this hunt up in March at a sport show in USA. PH. Chrisjan lived on the main 12,000-acre farm we hunted on. This farm had its game fence put up on the only main road in the area just seven

years ago. If it were not for the conservation management of this ranch, it would have few wild animals and no domestic stock. That would be a barren 12,000 acres. Namibia and western RSA only had four inches of rain this year. If this ranch had its normal 15 to 20 inches of rain, it could bush/grass feed 300 cows and more than 500 large wild animals. This year, with no green leaves and all grass eaten, the ranch contained 200 goats and no cows. Six solar powered water wells supplied what water there was to the wild animals. Each water source had hundreds of fresh wild tracks from Kudu, Eland, and smaller antelope. This ranch had a large number of the rare 5 lbs. DIK-DIK antelope which some hunters will pay at least \$3000 USD to harvest.

The ranch started two pre-bait sites in



March and had four fresh active baits when I came in August of 2019. We set up dome-tent blinds covered with leaves at bait sites having fresh leopard tracks. If a leopard fed at a bait, we would move the tent to that site the next day. By the fifth day, there were eight different leopards on game cameras or tracks on the ranch. By the sixth day, leopards had killed two large antelope and two domestic cows in the area. If you can find the fresh kill of a leopard, it is the best bait of all.

Another area cattle ranch, located within a mile of the ranch house I stayed at, had feed and some cows. This rancher called us to say that one of his cows was killed by a leopard and was on a dirt road a mile off the gravel road our ranch was on. We went to the site and found half the cow eaten by the leopard, hyenas, and birds. We came back to the site two hours later to set a pop-up tent covered with branches 100 meters down from the cow. My rifle was positioned on sand bags placed on a small metal table. The barrel extended through a cut in

the tent wall. Two hours later, PH.Chrisjan tapped my leg; that was my signal a shooter leopard was moving to the bait. The leopard walked to the bait, and I followed it in my scope aiming two inches behind the middle of its front leg. The guide watched the leopard, and I released the safety. I made the perfect shot, and the leopard crashed into the brush off the road. We waited ten minutes to call our tracker to come from a mile away. Two brown hyenas started to call 100 meters away from us. The guide yelled to scare them away from the kill. Leopard will share his kill with brown hyenas which act as lookouts. The spotted hyenas will come as a pack and take the kill. The trackers found the leopard blood at the bait, but could not find the spot where the leopard jumped into the brush. After circling along the road for 20 minutes, we found the leopard 40 yards from the bait in heavy brush.

Each farm which applies to hunt a leopard only gets one permit a year. The next day the leopard was taken out of a cold storage room for pictures. About

15 people from the farm came to see it, and eight pictures were taken to be sent to the Namibia government. This year with no income from meat cattle, my leopard hunt was a big help to this ranch. Their other safaris for trophy kudu and eland are the main hunting income. There were about 150 kudu on this ranch, because every two years they have a helicopter dart a rabies shot with dye into every kudu on the ranch. Any kudu not darted will not grow as large and 75% will die in four months. Across the last five days of my hunt, we traveled 50 miles to other areas and played electronic calls where spotted hyenas and caracal cats had fresh kills. But because of the dry conditions, these animals did not stay at any farm for long, and I did not get any shots.





The day begins with a beautiful Texas sunrise!

## Aoudad, Scimitar Horned Oryx, and Gemsbok: Hunting with Nature's Plan

By Steve Breuning

*... there are no words that can tell the hidden spirit of the wilderness, that can reveal its mystery, its melancholy, and its charm.*

Theodore Roosevelt, *African Game Trails*

This was my third hunt at the Star S Ranch. The ranch is in Mason, TX and has 14,000 acres of beautiful as well as rugged land. The animals are breath taking. The ranch is the epitome of conservation with the emphasis always being on hunting big old animals past their breeding time. As much as I have loved my hunts here, I must admit there has always been some touch of "strange" that occurred, and this hunt was no exception. I was on the trip with my good friend and hunting partner Lou. I was hunting Aoudad and Scimitar Horned Oryx. Lou was hunting Gemsbok.

A giant Aoudad was something I had been after for several years. I was very fortunate to have been able to take my dad on hunts with me up until last year when he passed away at the age of 85.

He didn't pull the trigger, but he spotted and loved for us to safari style hunt any of the big Rams and Billys. An Aoudad is one of the few that we never were able to harvest.

This hunt began with a dream. I awoke for our first morning of hunting with a clear image of my father, Rudy, telling me: "Today is our day." Today began very early, 5:00 a.m. Dalton (Bannister) and I had our initial mission of finding a large Aoudad Ram and sunrise at the apex of the mountain was the place to begin. Dalton had previously set up a ground blind for me knowing that Aoudad had been seen in the area. While sunrise was not going to occur until about 7:15 am, it was a long, slow drive up the mountain in the dark and we wanted to be there at least 30 minutes before sun light started to appear.

As we nestled into our blind, we quickly began to hear animals moving all around us. This instantly brought smiles of anticipation and slightly elevated heart rates (at least mine). The sounds of movement continued, and we were gifted with a mountain top view of a magnificent Texas sunrise.

It was now 7:35 a.m. and as the sun got brighter, the noise of the movements got softer. A beautiful sunrise - and now complete silence. We never even saw what animals had been making the noise. At 7:45 a.m. Dalton said, "Let's go find them!" I couldn't believe it; I was hunting with someone who gets impatient in a blind faster than I do. This was great! We would be searching and stalking Aoudad, now I was really excited.

I had never hunted with Dalton before. Eric White the manager of the Star S Ranch and my close friend usually guided me, but today ranch duties called. I suggested that Dalton would be fine. I had actually known Dalton since he was about eight years old. We had met through his father who I knew at the Y.O. Ranch. Dalton was now 24 years old and guiding full time. And I want to say that at 24 years of age, he showed as much poise, knowledge, and field expertise as almost any guide I have ever hunted with.

We began to slowly move around the mountain when at 8:45 a.m. Dalton screeched to a halt and pointed. He said, "*We are in the right place. There, across the ridge, is a herd of Aoudad.*" I gave him a quizzical look, because all I saw was brush and specs. Then through my binoculars and range finder I saw about seven Aoudad 500 yards away. It didn't seem like a realistic distance for a crossbow shot, so I switched to a rifle (30-win mag) as we began our stalk.

At the same time, we saw the Aoudad, they definitely also saw us. While they did not run, they stayed on full alert looking right at us. Dalton and I moved behind some heavy brush to make a plan. We noticed that we were in luck. There was a dense tree line between us and the Aoudad. We thought we could slowly move behind nature's blockade, wind to our faces, undetected. It was working beautifully. We were now 330 yards away, and the Aoudad were still there and now much more relaxed. We had to make one more move. The only question remaining was could we get into a clearing and set up for the shot without alarming the Aoudad. The sun was behind me, fairly strong wind to my face. I set up my shooting sticks with my aim being just above the brush line.

Dalton described the animals, which one he thought was the oldest Ram, and current distance – now 288 yards. I was in position and didn't have to hold long. The big old Ram moved away from the group, and I took my shot. A direct shoulder hit and straight down he went. Not a long shot for some people, but a very good shot for me.



While one always wants a good shot and direct hit, it is especially handy when it would take us 45 minutes by vehicle to go down, around, and back up the mountain to get to the animal. That's one heck of a head start for an Aoudad in the heavily brushed mountainside.

As we approached the spot where the Ram went down, we were surprised that he wasn't there. Plenty of blood – but no Aoudad. Hmm? We looked in vain for about 10 minutes. Plenty of blood – but no blood trail. Hmm?

Dalton called on his tracking dog Nosler, a Wire Haired Jack Russell

Terrier, for help. Once Nosler went to work, it took him about 20 seconds to find our Ram. The Aoudad was about five feet from where we saw him drop, but he had rolled into a few feet deep crevice covered by heavy brush. We may not have found the Ram without Nosler (unless we waited to see where the buzzards came to).

Dalton did a quick measurement as we loaded the Ram into the truck. He smiled and said we had a very old, solid 35 inch Aoudad, with long full mane and full flowing chaps. What a great morning!



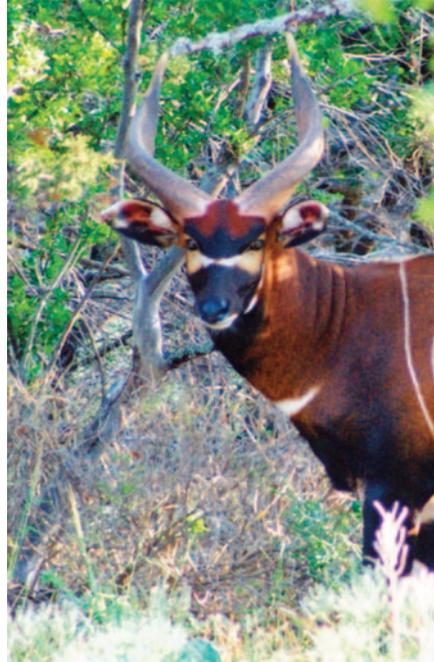
As we moved down the mountain back to the lodge, we began discussing what to hunt next or just cruise around and see what we see. I had previously mentioned a Scimitar Horned Oryx, and Dalton asked me if a Scimitar was still of interest as he pointed to a herd about 300 yards off to our left along-side a dense tree line. I said yes, but only an old Bull and only with my Crossbow. As we watched the Oryx disappear, I heard Dalton mumble something about the rifle. We noted the location of this herd and agreed to continue in to camp, have lunch, and then head back to this area to begin our pursuit. It was very interesting at lunch, because almost without exception, everyone who knew me had the same response as he/she chuckled: *"Whoa, the spirit of Rudy (my dad) was with you on this one."* I had not told them of the dream.

After we ate, I couldn't wait to get back out. This afternoon it was still clear sky, slight breeze, and 65 degrees. I knew a perfect afternoon was about to follow a perfect morning.

Oh well, that's how much I knew. Maybe that's too harsh, it was a beautiful afternoon, lots of animals milling about, great photo opportunities, just no Scimitar Horned Oryx. It may have been my imagination but many of these animals we came across seemed to be talking to us. A gorgeous Kudu leering from the brush saying, *"I am the Grey Ghost – you don't see me"*



A beautiful Bongo asking, *"Are you guys lost?"*



And a few Wildebeest clearly saying, *"Do we look like Scimitar Oryx, you idiots?"*



That night I went to bed knowing that indeed, it **had** been a great day!

I awoke early Sunday very optimistic that the day would pick up where yesterday left off, but that faded when I realized that the weather was much colder and overcast with slight sleet rain. The entire day was like this, and we saw very little animal activity all day. When we went in for dinner, we called it a day and Dalton apologized. I said, *"Nonsense, that's why God created tomorrow!"*

And what a tomorrow it was; blue sky, 40 degrees, minimal wind, and animals everywhere. For three hours we searched for Scimitar Horned Oryx. Twice we saw large herds and easily we got within 200 yards. At one-point Dalton pointed to a rifle and asked, *"Well?"* I said I was not giving up on the Crossbow – *"have faith, today we are blessed."*

After about another half-hour of looking, I asked Dalton to stop the vehicle for a minute. He asked what was wrong and I said nothing, *"We just need to know the plan."* He asked me what I had in mind and I said very seriously, *"OK, we'll travel along this tree line about 500 yards, and then when it forks we will follow it to the left. As we round the corner there will be a group of Scimitar Horned Oryx standing about 50 yards from us and not skittish. We can then move in for a shot."* Dalton chuckled and we moved on. I think he was wondering what kind of a nut case he was hunting with. As we turned the bend Dalton smiled and pointed to seven Scimitar Horned Oryx standing right in front of us. Unfortunately, there was not a big Bull in the group. Dalton said, *"Plan needs some work"* in a clearly skeptical tone.

I agreed and said I was revising the plan. I said, *"We will go around the next bend and up over the crest of the hill, and there will be a Scimitar Horned Oryx Bull alone in the middle of the open meadow, and he will have no interest in us."*

As we traveled the route and reached the crest of the hill, Dalton stopped the vehicle, looked at me, and said, *"Now this is getting weird!"* There in the meadow, 200 yards away, was a big old Scimitar Bull grazing all alone except for a few Zebra and Wildebeest at the other end of the meadow.

We weren't sure what to do since the two of us and the animals would be in the middle of a wide-open meadow. No cover at all (at least for use of a Crossbow). I told Dalton not to worry because in the plan the Scimitar Bull will pay no attention to us. Dalton responded, *"Maybe the plan could have given us some cover."* I looked at Dal-

ton and said, *"Oh ye of little faith."*

We put the truck in neutral and just began to slowly roll down the hill. We were counting down the distance as we went - 200 yards, 180, 160, 140, and 120 yards. At 120 yards we stopped and confirmed that the Scimitar Bull was not attending to us. The Wildebeest and Zebra were cautious, but the Scimitar was oblivious. We restarted our roll - 90, 80, 70, and 60 yards. At 60 yards the Scimitar pulled his head up and looked right at us. We remained motionless, and after 30-40 seconds, he turned his head away from us.

Dalton said, *"I hope you're comfortable with a 60-yard shot."* Honestly, I do not think 60 yards should be a shot generally taken with a Crossbow. Too much can happen to the flight of the arrow. But right now, I agreed it was going to be our only option. I got positioned and let it rip at 63 yards.

We could see the arrow directly on course to hit mid-body, direct above the shoulder. However, about five yards before the animal, the arrow dropped and floated left. It had reached its limit. Unbelievably, at that moment, the Scimitar put his head down, and the fading arrow put a deep cut across his throat. He was visibly stunned and bleeding heavily. He went about 40 yards and lay down. We were able to get close, and I put a second shot in him, and he rolled over. He was done. He was a very old mature Bull measuring over 40 inches long.

When we got in for lunch, Eric (White) approached us and said, *"Wow, what*

*a Bull!"* He was shocked when he realized we shot him with the Crossbow. Eric turned to Dalton and in a loud, astonished tone said, *"A 40-inch Scimitar Bull let you get within 60 yards in an open meadow?"* Dalton nonchalantly responded, *"We had a plan."*

After lunch we processed the Scimitar, and then went out looking for good photo opportunities. As we did this, we were also scouting for a Gemsbok Bull. Lou had not yet gotten a shot at a big Gemsbok Bull, so we wanted to add four more eyes to the hunt. We spotted several Gemsbok, but not in the area of Lou's ground blind. We noted the spots in case we needed the information later.

I went to bed knowing that indeed it **had** been another great day. As I laid in bed, I was thinking about joking with Dalton about having a plan and wondering who will ever believe the story.

Then I began to vividly recall fellow Psychologist and hunting historian James Swan writing about cave drawings as far back as Paleolithic times as well as more recently in France, Australia, and in North America by Native Americans. The drawings are incredibly detailed, and many believe that a large number of these drawings lay out plans for hunting game. In the past, hunting had a much stronger spiritual component. Being in the right place at the right time was known to be critical, and by drawing this out on cave walls, hides, etc. both the hunters AND the animals could be guided by the spirits to be in the proper place at the right time.

This set the stage for hunters, animals, and the guiding spirit to jointly enact Nature's plan.

Related to this, author Richard Nelson wrote:

***"A hunter should never let himself be deluded by pride or false sense of dominance. It is not through our power that we take a life in nature; it is through the power of nature that a life is given to us to take."***

Swan adds: ***"Only the modern civilized hunter scoffs and chuckles at the idea that nature has a plan and animals may be better tuned into it than us."*** \_

As I fell asleep my overriding thought was, *"Was I fortunate enough to spend a day totally tuned in to nature's plan?"* It was a pleasant thought.

I awoke the following morning very content and spiritually at a new level of peace. However, I did not yet know the nature had one last twist of fate for us.

Dalton and I headed out at our regular pre-sunrise time. This was Lou's and my final morning at the Star S Ranch. Lou had not yet seen the big old Gemsbok Bull he had been hunting so, as I did earlier, he switched from his bow and hunting from a blind to using a rifle and hunting Safari style. He thought that this change along with our help scouting would dramatically increase his odds of finding the right Gemsbok. We relayed the location of where we saw the Gemsbok yesterday afternoon, and Lou and Craig went in that direction. Dalton and I went another.

About 90 minutes into the morning we received a call from Craig that Lou had shot a nice Gemsbok Bull. They could use our help loading it onto the vehicle. As we approached, we saw Craig field dressing the animal and heard him say, *"What the hell?"*

At that point he removed a broad head from the Gemsbok that was lodged in the shoulder bone. It had pierced the lung, but the lung had closed itself





Small group of Gemsbok we had seen the day before.

while tissue had fused up around the broad head. As Craig cleaned the broad head, Eric pulled up and asked if we needed any more help. Craig said, "No, but look at this from the shoulder, dang, Gemsbok are sure one tough animal." He handed Eric the broad head and after Eric looked at it, he turned to me and said, "This is from your arrow last year when we shot at a Gemsbok and thought it missed." He said he was sure because there had been no other

crossbow hunters since that time.

**So you tell me:** What are the odds of my hunting partner shooting the same Gemsbok I had wounded a year previously when there are hundreds of Gemsbok roaming freely over 14,000 acres, and there had been dozens of hunters shooting Gemsbok during the last year? I am becoming a firm believer that some things must be meant to be!

So, a very enjoyable hunt came to a close, but not without many lingering unbelievable and unexplainable happenings. Sure adds to the fun. And, a very unique final harvest I can share with my hunting partner.

Selected readings for those interested:

Nelson, Richard, *The Gifts*. In Halpern, Daniel, *On Nature*. San Francisco, California: North Point Press, 1987.

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Lou and his Gemsbok

**I leave this with you to decide. *The dream, the plan, the throat, the broad head. Were these strange coincidences? Just a story to laugh about or scoff at? Or perhaps does nature have its plans and we give this way too little attention in our modern apathetic belief systems?***

*This is a modified version of an article that first appeared in UNIVERSAL HUNTER, Oct/Nov/Dec, 2016, Volume 5, Issue 4, pages 82-91. Reproduced with permission.*

# Update on Your SCI Detroit Money Hard at Work

We all know we have an annual banquet and fundraiser. We always have a lot of fun, strike a good deal with one of the visiting outfitters, win exciting raffle items, and get great hunting trips through the live auction. But we should never forget that the event is a fundraiser. The following is a small sample of how the fundraising dollars have been utilized.

First and foremost, a large percentage of the money goes directly to Safari Club International. Here it is used to support all SCI involvement in preserving our rights as hunters and for animal conservation – worldwide.

In addition, the following is a sampling of how SCI Detroit has used the money.

## Veterans

Goose Hunt for our Veterans (see *Trajectory, Fall/Winter 2016*)

Pheasant Hunt for our Veterans and Teens (see *Trajectory, Fall 2019*)

Purple Heart Veteran White Tail Deer Hunt (see *Trajectory briefs, (see Trajectory briefs, Winter 2020)*)

Ladies only Military & Law enforcement Fishing Trip (see *Trajectory, Fall/Winter 2017*)

## Youth

Safe Hunter Apprentice Program (see *Trajectory, Fall/Winter, 2017*)

Detroit Kids Fishing Derby

Richmond High School Trap Team

Kids .22 rimfire shoot

## Leadership Training & Education

American Wilderness Leadership School

Graduate Student Grants

## Conservation

Colorado Wolf Ballot Initiative

Michigan Elk Poaching Reward

Grizzly Bear Hunting in United States and British Columbia

Michigan United Conservation Clubs

SCI - MIC (Michigan Involvement Committee, see *Trajectory briefs, Fall, 2019*)

## Research

Deer Interactions with Northern Hardwood Regeneration Techniques (see *Trajectory briefs, Fall, 2019 and Winter, 2020*)

Michigan Predator-Prey Research Project (see article later in this issue)

# Michigan Predator-Prey Project

Hunting is part of the cultural fabric and history of Michigan, so it's no surprise that the state is a stronghold for Safari Club International – with 11 chapters scattered across the Upper and Lower Peninsulas. These chapters are a prime example of the positive impact that SCI members, along with the SCI Foundation, can have on large scale conservation efforts when they work together. These conservation efforts were recently presented as part of SCI's recent virtual world tour highlighting Michigan. SCIF's Conservation Committee Chairman, Jim Hammill, was a part of the program and provided updates on the full suite of conservation programs and projects that SCI and the MIC have been involved with across the state.

The SCI-MIC) was established in 1980 by chapter leadership in the state at the time. Their goal was to collaborate and leverage their resources to make a more positive impact on conservation by financially supporting MDNR research projects and providing grants to graduate students pursuing advanced degrees in wildlife-related fields at Michigan-based universities.



40 years later the MIC has been a resounding success, and continued collaboration by the state's SCI chapters is still an active force for conservation projects throughout the state. The MIC currently operates on a sizeable annual budget thanks to voluntary contributions from chapters, matching grants from SCIF, and other donations from the public. To maximize the impact of their budget, the MIC works closely with MDNR to support projects eligible for matching federal funding from the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through Pittman-Robertson Act funds.

For the past decade, the Michigan Predator-Prey project has been SCIF's flagship project in its North American conservation program, and a project that the MIC has been heavily involved with from the beginning. Since 2008, SCIF and the Hunter Legacy Endowment Fund have contributed more than \$400,000 in direct grants to this research, with additional support from Michigan SCI chapters. What started initially as an effort to understand what was driving the decline of the Upper Peninsula's deer herd turned into a decade-long project that has launched a statewide conservation movement. This multi-faceted research has resulted in dozens of peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, and academic theses and dissertations. The project has made considerable scientific contributions to wildlife management, especially white-tailed deer management in heavy snowfall areas and northern latitudes.

As part of the project, researchers with the MNDNR, Mississippi State University and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry equipped fe-



male deer with vaginal-transmitters capable of alerting biologists when and where those does gave birth to fawns, which allowed researchers to fit the fawns with tracking collars.

Data from these newborn fawns is critical to the research project, as their survival is a key indicator of population trend. By tracking fawn survival and cause-specific mortality, the researchers are beginning to understand the UP's predator-prey dynamics. Researchers also examined prey kill sites to determine the influence of bears, bobcats, coyotes, and wolves on the deer herd. This new information on predator-prey dynamics has directly influenced recommendations for predator management and hunter harvest in the region.

Data from the project showed that contrary to public perception about the impact of predators, winter severity was actually the factor that impacted the region's deer herd the most. Heavy snowfalls force deer herds to migrate into wintering yards where they're protected by dense thermal canopies of conifer trees. Thanks to the initial SCIF funded research and to enhance and protect vital components of wintering habitat, the Michigan Natural Resources Commission established the Upper Peninsula Habitat Workgroup (UPHWG) in 2014 to create forest management plans for deer wintering complexes. The UPHWG has since mapped out more than 50 deer wintering complexes across the Upper Peninsula and is continuing to engage with private landowners and the timber industry. Using grants from SCI Chapters, the Michigan DNR, and other sources, we are now putting real habitat improvements on the ground by encouraging private landowners to manage their forests for winter deer habitat. White-tailed deer management is far from the only legacy that the MIC has created from a conservation standpoint though.

Since the MIC's inception in 1980, the group has put together an impressive list of accomplishments including spearheading the transplants of 61 moose from Ontario to the Upper Peninsula in the 1980's. The MIC has



provided significant funding for wildlife research and conservation projects on a multitude of game and non-game-species, including duck, bear, and bobcat, among others. The MIC has also purchased substantial amounts of equipment needed by the MDNR to conduct such projects and has been active in funding anti-poaching efforts, by providing rewards that have led directly to the arrest and conviction of several very public and egregious wildlife law violators in the past. The MIC has also been an active supporter of the MDNR leadership and the development of wildlife professionals across the state.

Michigan SCI members remain some of the most engaged and conservation

mindful hunters in the country, and the tangible difference the work that the MIC has accomplished should serve as model for grassroots conservation efforts across the country. SCIF will continue to remain engaged with the MIC in order to continuing leveraging resources to ensure that Michigan's wild places and wild things remain intact for future generations to enjoy and explore.

Article courtesy of Safari Club International and SCI Foundation (SCIF).

