

BOW HUNTING

Off Season Opportunities

BY BARRY BRIGGS

This year's rising river waters, reaching flood stage back in May, brought new challenges to us bowhunters trying to hunt the MS Delta River Bottoms. On one such occasion, a friend and I, went to the hunting club to see if we could put a stalk on some hogs that have been roaming the lease. Little did we know what we were getting ourselves into.

It all started with a phone call and next thing I knew, I was hooking up to my boat that night getting ready for the next morning. After meeting up with Bob, we were on our way. Arriving at the club, with daylight breaking, we realized just what the mighty Mississippi had in store for us. Water! And a lot of it, with plenty of current to boot. But without hesitation, we got the boat put in and in no time, we were motoring down a club road where we normally drive our trucks. Looking at the bows laying on the front deck, I couldn't help but think they were going to have a rough day and us too.

After a few minutes running the big motor, we came to some dry land and it was time to leave the boat behind. I looked down at the waders I had brought laying there in the bottom of the boat, thought about the long walk and wading ahead of me, and stepped out of the boat with blue jeans and tennis shoes on. I noticed Ol' Bob had done the same thing. After emptying our pockets of cell phones, range finders, binoculars, wallets and anything else that water might damage, we grabbed our bows and took off. Well that ridge didn't last long and next thing we knew we were wading water chest deep with our bows over our head. I was thinking, "Man we must be crazy." I looked over at Bob and said, "you know we're the only two fools out here." Ha-ha

Coming out of the water, at the next ridge, we spotted several pigs rooting just ahead of us. The stalk was on. We inched forward through the water a little at a time, getting closer and closer with arrows nocked, and as close as we dared to get for fear of spooking the only hog that remained visible from the group, it was now or never. I drew my PSE Carbon Air, thinking "he's forty yards," remember no range finder, I looked over at Bob and whispered, "How far?" Bob whispered back, "thirty-five yards." Well he sounded pretty sure of himself, so I put my sight pin on that hog and let her fly. And shot right up under that dang hog. I looked over at Bob and said, "How you kill all them Pope and Youngs?" Ha-ha so off we went, wading once more, looking for another group of pigs.

We didn't have to walk far. Coming up to the edge of the next block of woods we could see eight or ten pigs rooting around in front of us. The only problem was, at our feet was a big ditch, wide and deep, with current moving through it at a pretty good clip. I had been to this spot before, minus the water, so I knew how deep this ditch was. Bob whispered, "we got to get across this ditch." I said, "Bob, this ditch is every bit of 10 feet deep," not to mention at least that wide. We looked for a log to cross on but none were found, so now we're thinking about swimming across. I was about ten yards down from Bob when I heard him go in the water. Well, it's now or never I thought, so I throw my very expensive bow across the ditch. It lands in the reeds on the other side, but my bow being a carbon bow, is very light and I watched the reeds push my bow back into the ditch were it immediately started sinking in the water. I jump in the ditch, kick off on a tree and push myself across to where my bow sank. As my feet came down I felt my tennis shoe tangle in between the strings and riser of my bow. I raised my foot and grabbed my bow and heaved it up the bank while holding onto reeds to keep from getting taken downstream.



Thinking again, "I must be crazy." Pulling myself up on the bank, I hear Bob say, "I roppe my bow, what am I going to o?" I replied, "you're going to swim own an get it." Which I thought was funny by the way. His bow ha gotten tangle in a vine as he swam across the itch an ha starte to pull him un'er. Bob ha to turn loose of his bow. Well, I was busy looking for the pigs, trying to see if we ha spooke them with all the commotion, when I realize I wasn't hearing anything from Bob. Worrie, I calle out, "Bob?" No answer. "Bob?" A little louder this time. Still no answer. Now I'm about to panic thinking he's one rowne an starte to hea his way. One last time, "Bob?" He answers with a "Hey," an I see his hea sticking out of the water in those rees. He ha went own three of four times to the bottom of that itch before he foun his bow.

Back on semi solid ground, after an equipment check, we take out after those hogs. They are on the next ridge over. We split up and Bob wades through the slough straight at them while I try to get in front of them. He's waist deep in water when he shoots and the pig squealed like you stuck a branding iron on him. All the pigs head out on a dead run, across water and ridges, and more water.

After losing their trail in the water, we found ourselves back at that ditch, that was between us and the boat. But that is another story, along with the snakes and the fire ants and the spiders and everything else floating on those flood waters. But I would do it again tomorrow, because its true what they say, "A day in the woods beats a day in the office any day of the week."