



# TEN TIPS FOR TAKING BETTER HARVESTED GAME PHOTOS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DR. JOE BUMGARDNER

The following article below originally appeared 14 years ago in *Mississippi Woods & Water*. Paul T. Brown, wildlife photographer extraordinaire of Brandon, MS, shared his top ten photo tips with *Mississippi Woods & Water*. Keep these hints in mind when you harvest your next trophy.

I have taken the liberty of including some MBA images demonstrating the fine “TIPS” that Paul has shared with us.

(1) Watch your background. Choose a natural background. Keep it simple. Busy, distracting backgrounds can ruin a picture. Simple backgrounds will focus attention on your subject. Watch for objects “growing” out of the subject’s head. Never shoot hero pictures in the driveway, back of a truck or on a meat pole or skinning rack.

(2) Keep your camera handy. How many times have



you said, “If only I had my camera...?” You never know when you or someone you know will take a beautiful trophy buck.

(3) Have the hunter look at the photographer’s shoulder. The hunter should look slightly off to one side and not directly into the camera.

Here is a typical example of viewing from the side of the hunter and his trophy.



(4) Look for good lighting. A cloudy, overcast day makes for better hero shots. Bright sun causes people to squint and creates harsh shadows. If photographing in bright light, place the sun behind you, shining on your subject. Here are some squinting bowhunters having to look directly into the bright sun! Notice the shadows below the cap bills.

(5) Clean up the animal. No blood or tongues hanging out! Make sure the entire area in the frame is blood free. Make your animal look alive. Here is a ‘clean’ buck example.





(6) Pay attention to the hunter's appearance. Clothing should be clean and blood free. Include the weapon in the photo. Make sure it is in a safe position. Above are examples.

(7) Move in close. Don't include a lot of empty space. This is probably the biggest mistake photographers make—setting up too far away. If you are photographing a hunter and his deer, include just that—the two of them. Tighter images make powerful pictures!

The four previous listed images are typical of close-up shots.

(8) Shoot both horizontal and vertical formats. Most people tend to only shoot horizontals.



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(9) Consider using a flash. A flash will soften harsh light, fill in shadows and brighten color, especially in bright sunlight. Shoot your harvested game both with and without the flash.

(10) Choose the right digital camera settings. The lowest ISO setting on a digital camera normally give the best quality image. Lower ISOs work for most situations and yield sharper images and rich color.

(11) I would like to add one additional tip consideration to Paul's classic 10 tips above. When taking photos of your trophy animal, demonstrate full respect for your animal and refrain from 'sitting on' or 'mounting' your trophy. (The upper image is certainly preferred over the lower image.)



#### EDITOR'S

**NOTE:** Paul T. Brown is a nationally acclaimed, award-winning photographer from Brandon, Mississippi. His photography skills have taken him all over the country in pursuit of that perfect shot. You can learn more about Paul Brown and his photographs at [www.trueexposures.com](http://www.trueexposures.com).

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