

2009 MBA Hog and Deer Hunt
By George Fielder

The 2009 MBA Hog and Deer Hunt at Hillside National Wildlife Refuge, was scheduled a few weeks earlier in the season than in past years, so I was concerned about the turnout. We knew mosquitoes and snakes would still be active, but so would the deer and hogs. Once again, the base camp for the hunt was Camp Swayze which is home to the Yazoo Bowhunters range and clubhouse. I was very fortunate to have the opportunity at a very nice buck during the hunt, which was an added bonus to the great food and fellowship shared by everyone in attendance. By the way, the attendance was very good despite poor weather conditions. Following is a recount of my hunt. On Saturday afternoon, October 10, 2009, Todd Macko and I were looking for a new place to hunt because my honey-hole had gone dry. I told Todd that I knew of a place where a coworker of mine normally hunted. He had killed a few does there the prior year, so I thought we should check it out. When we arrived, Dr. Joe Bumgardner and J.J. Brock were already set up to hunt the spot. The area was large enough that Todd and I felt we could move down a little ways and find another good spot without disturbing the other two. Since Todd was my guest, I told him to let me know when he found a spot where he wanted to hunt. He soon found a trail coming out of a new cutover that was wide, but didn't seem to have a lot of fresh tracks in it. Todd decided he would set up there. I went on down a little farther and found a lot of fresh hog sign and a few deer tracks. The water had been high in there and had washed all the acorns away. I left the edge of the cutover and walked into the woods. I immediately started seeing a few new acorns on the ground and some sign where hogs had been eating them. I decided this was the spot, so I attached my new Millennium climber on a nearby tree and scooted up to about 20-25 feet. As I got everything settled, I looked at my phone and it was 4:24 PM. I turned off the phone and waited. After only about 15 minutes, a doe came by at 19 yards. I stood up to get ready for a shot, then realized I would have to squat a little to shoot under a tree limb. I released my arrow and watched as my arrow struck the broadside doe perfectly. She ran only a short distance; then slowed to a walk as she went out of sight. "Dead deer" I thought to myself. I could see my arrow sticking in the ground where the deer had been standing, so I checked it out using my binoculars. I couldn't believe what I saw; there was no blood on it at all. I thought I had seen the arrow strike the deer but apparently not. Oh well, I thought. Around 15 to 20 minutes later, I heard something else moving toward me in the leaves. At first I could see feet, then a nose, and then parts of antlers. I grabbed my binoculars to get a better look and quickly decided this buck looked pretty good. I ranged him at 31 yards as I took my time to keep from getting too nervous. Before I could get in position for a shot, the buck turned to go back the way he had come in. He stopped, I shot, but my string hit my arm causing the arrow to miss badly. As the buck began to run, I pulled out my Primos Can call and let out three bleats. The buck turned around and started back my way. I quickly get another arrow ready. Having shot at pop-up 3D targets many times before, I was well prepared for this situation. As the buck steps into an opening 25 yard away, he turns broadside. He doesn't stop, but slows to a walk. My next shot resulted in a double-handful of hair sliced from the bucks back. Not really knowing what had just happened, the buck ran a short distance then stopped to look back. Once again, I nocked another arrow, drew and aimed, all in one motion. This time my GoldTip arrow tipped with a Rage 3-blade broad head hit exactly where I intended. The buck took off running. Immediately, I could hear pigs squealing and water splashing making it really hard to tell which way my deer had gone. I climbed down to retrieve my arrows, all four of them! The last one was the only one with any blood on it. I had shot four arrows in one afternoon. You can't kill them if you don't shoot at them, right? What an exciting hunt. I walked back to where Todd was hunting and messed up the last few minutes of his hunt. Since I was not real sure which way the buck had gone, and since this was an unfamiliar area, we decided to wait until the next morning before taking up the trail. The following morning, I returned and started making big circles looking for a blood trail. I found him about 100 yards from where I shot him. He had headed back the way he came in. The buck has 9 points, a 15 ½ inch inside spread, and was 3 ½ years old. My arrow had entered the buck's chest at the third rib resulting in a quick kill. I would like to thank Dr. Joe Bumgardner and JJ for helping me drag him 0.7 mile to my truck.

On the way back to camp, we ran into Steve Welch who had shot a big hog that morning. I sure wish I had known Steve had a game cart before we drug my buck!