

Jacob's Deer Hunt - 2011

" Jacob, your Dad is here to pick you up" said Tom, who answered the classroom phone.

I felt a wave of joy run through my body as I strolled down the hall to the office where my Dad, an amazing hunting partner, would be waiting to take me to deer camp (located in East Montpelier.) At deer camp people can gain personality and learn about ethics. I really like going hunting because I enjoy being outdoors observing nature, I like spending time with my Dad and I love the adrenalin rush I get when I see a deer! No other animal can get me as excited as a deer does.

Once we arrived at camp there was a little more time till sunset, so we decided to go sit in a field close to camp. We had seen deer in the field earlier in the season. We sat until sunset without seeing anything. The sun light turned into a rainbow of colors as it collided with the night sky, and then disappeared as fast as it had come.

When the alarm went off at 5:30 in the morning it took a while to get myself awake and out of bed. I slipped into my bibs and parka. Then I grabbed an apple cider doughnut and my Dad and I went outside. We grabbed our guns, and headed out toward my ladder stand.

It was a little chilly as we started walking down the driveway, out through the field, and finally we entered the tall grass that led to the stand. I sat in my ladder stand while my Dad sat in his small hang-on stand (both were hung in the same tree.) Our stands were looking out toward our two food plots, planted with a mixture of greens that we hoped the deer would love. We quietly approached our stands. "Crunch, crunch, swish, swish", the leaves had a thin layer of frost on them that would quickly disappear as soon as the sun came up. My Dad attached his gun, backpack, and hot seat to our rope that was tied to my stand. He climbed up the ladder of my ladder stand, attached his safety harness and stepped over to his stand. Then he slowly pulled up all of the items attached to the rope. Once he got all of his stuff untied he threw the rope down to me so that I could tie my gun to it.

I climbed up, attached my harness, and retrieved my gun. Then the sitting began...

We had sat in the stand for a couple of hours and decided to head over to our crates (2 milk crates set on the ground next to a blowdown), which were looking out over a small brook. We got out of our stands and slowly, carefully still-hunted our way toward the crates, which were about 300yds to the north. My Dad and I were just 5 to 10yds from our crates when my Dad suddenly stopped in front of me and whispered "Jacob, deer up ahead." As soon as I heard my Dad say this, I stopped abruptly.

THUMP, THUMP. THUMP, THUMP.

My heart was racing as I peered around my dad and saw the deer. There were TWO of them, hopping across the brook, headed straight for us. They stopped and glanced at us, forcing my muscles to tighten, trying as hard as I could not to move. I noticed that they were both does. "Darn" I thought, because you can only shoot bucks during rifle season. They started to walk slowly, and altered their course slightly to my right. The lead doe kept walking, but I noticed that the doe in the back turned to look back over the brook. This could mean that they were being followed by a buck. They had no idea that we were watching, but they both knew something wasn't right. The lead doe stopped and looked in the opposite direction; she would occasionally glance at us then look in the opposite direction again. We watched them for five minutes or so, then the lead doe turned around and started running away with the other doe.

My body was shaking with adrenalin and my heart was pounding. My Dad said that his heart was pounding, too.

"That was fun!" I told him.

We sat on the crates for a bit then headed back to deer camp. Tony, my Dad's friend and hunting partner, was there and had already started cooking brunch. We ate and took quick naps so that we would be energized for the afternoon hunt...

AFTERNOON:

"You two can sit in the buddy stand if you want to", Tony had said before we headed out.

"Alright" I replied.

My Dad and I had agreed that we should go sit in the buddy stand because Tony almost always sees does from it. At least we would see some deer, we hoped.

We walked through a little strip of forest and then entered a field. My dad and I walked quietly across the field and up into Tony's stand. I have to say I've never been in Tony's stand before and let me tell you, it is not comfortable at all. First of all it is in an old scary-looking tree. Second, there was a metal bar in back of me that was just high enough to hit me square in the shoulder blade. Third, the shooting rail in front of me was way too high because when I rested my gun on it and looked through my Nikon Pro-Staff rifle scope my cross hairs were so high up in the sky that I'd have to hope that the deer could fly. My Dad and I switched places in the stand and I sat on 2 hot-seats. That helped a lot. I could now actually see the ground through my scope. By now I had convinced myself that there was no other place I'd rather be.

We had sat for about an hour and a half when my Dad suddenly said "Jacob, there's a deer over there in the far left hand corner" (the field is about one-hundred-twenty-five

yards wide, and about four-hundred yards long and full of grass and clover.) The deer was about 200yds from us at that point.

I looked over to the corner and could see the deer. It was a buck and he was trashing some brush with his antlers. My legs started shaking like crazy. Then he picked up his head and started walking straight at us. I knew that he was at least a six pointer, so there was no question that he was a legal buck (bucks must have at least 2 points on one side that are at least 1 inch long). He turned and started walking down the length of the field. I couldn't shoot because there was a tree in the way so I had to wait until he walked into a small opening in between the tree and a bush. Once he got in that opening I was to tell my Dad that I was ready and he would yell and hopefully make the deer stop.

He walked into the opening, "Okay" I whispered. "Wait" I said as he turned and started walking straight toward us again. Then he turned and walked along the field edge again. "Okay" I said as he stepped into the center of the opening.

" Maaaaaaaaaaaaa" my Dad yelled. Not loud enough ... the deer kept walking. "**MAAAAAAAAA**"!!!!!!! My Dad yelled even louder. The deer stopped and looked at us from about one-hundred yards away.

I squeezed the trigger slowly like my Dad had taught me. There was a loud **CRACK**!!!!!!!! and the deer dropped right there in his tracks. I had made a perfect shot on my first deer ever. I was shaking the whole tree stand as excitement and adrenalin took over my body. My Dad took a quick video of me. He said that he thought that it was an eight pointer, but I still thought that it was a six. I really didn't care at that point.

We climbed down the ladder and walked over to him. We then noticed that he was a TEN pointer, including matching drop tines (drop tines are points that instead of coming up from the main beam they point down and you don't see very many bucks in Vermont with them.) **MY FIRST RIFLE SEASON, MY FIRST DEER EVER, A TEN POINTER!** My Dad took lots of pictures and I got to use MY tag to tag MY deer. My Dad and I dragged the deer over to the edge of the field, gutted it, and then walked back to camp. Once Tony was back I told him that I had gotten a TEN pointer and I could see a little disbelief through his expression when I told him. He knew that I had shot at a deer because he heard the shot come from our direction, but he didn't know how big it was or even if I got it.

The three of us hopped in our truck and drove into the field to pick the deer up. That's when Tony first got to see it and he was very impressed. He'd never seen a deer with so many points come from this area. We loaded up the deer, then piled back in the truck and drove to the country store to check it in. The deer ended up having a dressed weight of 152 pounds, which is one of the heaviest ever shot at our camp. Once we were done at the country store I called my Mom and all my grandparents to share the news. Everyone was very excited. After that we went back to deer camp and ate, then stayed up sharing hunting stories, including reliving my story, of course. I must have gone outside

to look at it, flashlight in hand, at least 10 times that night. My dad and I would go home in the morning.

As soon as we got home I started getting calls from relatives about my deer. Then some people started coming over to see him and watch the video my dad took of me (it is really funny, I could hardly talk!).

Right now my deer is at the taxidermist. We are expecting it to be done by late March, which is really cool because my birthday is: March 27. I can't wait to get him back in my hands and touch those antlers again!

Jacob Crawford

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Age = 11

Location of hunt = East Montpelier, VT

