

My name is Seth Pietryka. I'm 16 years old and I live in Ira, Vermont. I want to share my successes with you from the 2008 hunting seasons. It was a year that most hunters would dream of.

First, I would like to explain why I enjoy and love hunting, fishing, and the outdoors. My late grandfather built a camp in Ira in 1962 and taught my father and uncles how to hunt and fish, who then taught me everything that they learned from him. Naturally, they exposed me to the outdoors at a very young age. I was spending overnights at camp when I was two years old and to this day I still love spending many overnights there talking hunting and fishing with my dad and uncles. Hunting and fishing allows me to get away from everything like school and other responsibilities and I enjoy that freedom.

Hunting to me is the most exciting thing there is. It gives me a thrill, to challenge game where they live and to try and figure out their habits and where, why, and how they move around during the year. I love to see how they act and change their habits and activities with the various seasons. It's exciting to watch the animals grow and change through the seasons and years.

I spend all summer and most of the entire year practicing with my bow. I practice and compete around 16 hours each week during the summer preparing for the season. I also spend a lot of time in the woods from the beginning of April, when the animals are getting more active coming out of winter, until the snow starts piling up and the animals are settling down for winter. Whether it is studying and scouting the animals or hunting them, I love every second of it.

Now for my year hunting. On the second Saturday of spring turkey season I was hunting with my uncles and I was fortunate to locate and call in two jakes. They got hung up and wouldn't come in for a while but I kept calling to them with my mouth call and I was finally able to get them to 20 yards where I had a nice clean open shot which I took. I had bagged a nice 14 pound Jake with a four inch beard. I was off to a good start. I then spent my summer practicing with my bow, scouting for deer sign and trails and spotting deer every evening. I also caught many trout in nearby brooks and streams.

The fall hunting seasons had arrived and I started out by bagging a few squirrels and a partridge with my .22 caliber rifle. Finally, bow season arrived. Although I was seeing many deer and had them close enough to shoot they were either too small or spike-horns. On the last Friday of the bow season I spotted turkeys a ways down the hill and I had my call so I set up and started to call to them. I was able to call away one of the birds from the group using my mouth call. I called it into 22 yards where I was able to draw back on it while it walked behind a tree and I made a perfect killing shot on the turkey with my bow. I recovered the bird, a 12 pound Jake with a 2 inch beard. I was two for two. The next day the weather was warm, windy, and wet. Late on Saturday afternoon during a rain storm I spotted an antler less deer. I was able to get a clean broadside shot from 25 yards. The shot was a direct hit. The deer ran about 70 yards and died. I now had a 106 pound antler less deer. It took me until the final Saturday of bow hunting, but I was now three for three. Since my turkey tag was filled, I spent the next couple of weeks scouting for the rifle season. The first day of rifle hunting started and I was seeing too many hunters where I was hunting, so I decided to move to another area. I saw a legal buck but I was unable to get a good shot so I passed it up. However, the next day I was right back there. An hour into the hunt I spotted a deer. At first glance I thought it was a doe, but as it got closer I could see that it was a legal buck. It was on a quick trot so I grunted with my own voice and stopped the buck at about 50 yards. I made a clean killing shot again and I had harvested a 114 pound three point buck on the first Sunday of the season. I was four for four and wondered if it was possible for me to get

another deer with my muzzleloader. This would make a spring turkey, fall turkey with a bow, and three deer with three different weapons.

Saturday December 6 arrived and I got to my spot at 7:05 am. A few minutes later my uncle, who was hunting partridge, moved some deer passed me. After three doe went by I spotted a nice legal buck on the move. I grunted with my own voice and stopped the buck, but it wasn't a clean shot. When the buck moved I grunted again and this time I had a clean shot. Although it was a long shot, it was clean and I took it. I thought I hit the deer hard, but with the muzzleloader smoke blowing back at me I couldn't be sure. My father and uncles caught up to me and we went to look for blood to see if my perfect season might be on track. Sure enough we found blood and we began to track my deer. As we were on the blood trail we came upon two hunters who had a beautiful three point buck lying dead next to them, I thought my deer might be claimed by them. I want to say what good hunters these two men were. They showed good ethics and sportsmanship that all hunters should have. The first thing they said to us, is that it was my deer and congratulated me. My perfect season had ended with a 120 pound 3 pointer.

My year was complete. My dad and uncles congratulated me and told me to appreciate what I had accomplished, since it was a rare feat and something that may never happen to me again. Maybe, but come the first day of May, I will be out there trying to repeat, and I'm sure my late grandfather will be cheering me on.

