

# 2011 HUNTING SEASON PART 3

**DEER OPENS 11/05/11**

## DON'T MISS



**WATERFOWL TIP:**  
KNOWING YOUR DUCK CALLS SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES YOUR CHANCE AT BAGGING A BIRD. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO MASTER THE CALL, TRY A WHISTLE. THEY WON'T LET YOU DOWN.

**PHEASANT TIP:**  
FLUSH PHEASANTS TOWARD AN UPHILL SLOPE OR RIDGE WHERE FELLOW HUNTERS LYING IN WAIT WILL AMBUSH THEM WHEN THEY TAKE TO THE SKY.



**DEER TIP:**  
LOOK TO THICK COVER AS BUCKS LOVE TO HIDE IN IT. SCAVENGE THESE THICK HIDEOUTS FOR SHED ANTLERS, AS THEY ARE PROOF THAT THE COVER HAS BEEN USED.

**SEASON OPENERS: DEER HUNT (ARCHERY SEASON) 9.17-12.31 GROUSE, GRAY PARTRIDGE 9.17.11-1.1.12 • FALL TURKEY SEASON 10.01-10.30**

**FALL TURKEY SEASON 10.01-10.30 • PR AIRIE CHICKEN SEASON 10.22-10.26 • DEER HUNT(FIREARM SEASON) 11.05-11.27**

### BILL RYAN – from page 9B

I'd have gotten to know guys," Ryan added. "I've got his address. We're gonna call each other on Veteran's Day"

According to organizer Ron Welle, the camaraderie of hunting is one of the main goals of the five-year-old Midwest Outdoors Unlimited, which helped Ryan attend the special hunt in Michigan. Helping disabled or elderly folks to enjoy nature through hunting or fishing – Welle is also the chapter president of Let's Go Fishing – is maybe a third about the activity and two-thirds about the camaraderie. "It's so important for the youth, too," said Welle of disabled youth being able to do an activity. "It's not the hunting itself."

The volunteers and donors (of land, time, money, or skills) of Midwest Outdoors Unlimited (www.midwestoutdoorsunlimited.com) simply help get disabled or elderly hunters into the field, said Welle. "With our equipment, we can get them from Point A to Point B."

The ranch owner's friend was killed on his 127th day in Vietnam. "He decided he wanted to do something for Purple Heart recipients," said Ryan, so he hosts the hunt on his 3,000-acre private ranch, located in the Manistree National Forest about 150 hours south of the Mackinac Bridge. Ryan and Welle, as well as another Minnesota hunter (Al Holten of Red Wing) and another volunteer (Dave Valtinson of Grand Rapids), left Minnesota on Wednesday, Aug. 31, spent Thursday and Friday, Sept. 1-2, at the ranch, and came home on Saturday, Sept. 3.

It took 18 hours to drive to Legends Ranch, and they were greeted by a welcome party and top-notch service. "When we got there, they would not let us touch our suitcases," said Welle. "If you

needed to fill your coffee cup, you got scolded," added Ryan. "Someone said: 'Let me do that. You're here to relax.'"

On Thursday, they were up at 4 a.m., ate a continental breakfast, went hunting, ate a 'real' breakfast at 9:30 a.m., toured the ranch, ate supper at 3 p.m., then went hunting again at 5 p.m. until sunset, and finally enjoyed hors d'oeuvres before bed.

They sat in an elevated deer stand with plexiglass windows, heat, and an overhanging roof. "So you didn't get sun in your eyes," joked Ryan.

"It's the Ritz of deer hunting," he added. "It can't get any better."

After getting skunked on Thursday morning, Ryan got his 11-point buck, weighing 214 pounds, in less than an hour on Thursday evening.

"All eight of us went out in the morning, and no one took a shot. Then they took us out in the evening, and seven of us got deer. Then, on Friday morning, the eighth person got his deer."

The terrain was swamp, grass, and trees, like Northern Minnesota. "He came out of the woods, into an opening," said Ryan, accompanied by a six-point buck.

Each group had a guide/spotter, who judged the value of the deer before the Purple Heart hunters could shoot. (Paying hunters at the ranch might pay \$25,000 to shoot a trophy buck.)

Originally, the Purple Heart hunters were told that they would have to shoot a buck with eight points or less. The deer they harvested, though, were all eight points or more. "They're our trophy bucks, but not what they consider a trophy buck," Welle said.

When Ryan's buck, with full velvet antlers, was in the clearing, his spotter, the owner's brother-in-law, told him: "Bill, I want to thank you for your service to our country. If



Submitted photos

Bill Ryan (front left) shot an 11-point buck in Michigan in September as part of a Purple Heart hunt. Al Holten of Red Wing (front right) also hunted. In back (left to right) are Ron Welle of Spring Hill, guide Dave Cudd of Texas, ranch owners Skipper and Glenna Bettis, and Dave Valtinson of Grand Rapids, Minn.

that buck will satisfy you, go ahead and shoot it."

He dropped the deer with one shot from his .243 rifle at 95 yards. (Actually, shooting the deer was easier than sighting in his rifle, at 30 yards and 100 yards...with 30 people watching. "It's like teeing off on the first tee with everybody

watching," said Ryan.) On Friday, they went back out, just to watch the deer.

Ryan, who has been hunting "since I was a kid," is having his trophy rack mounted to join his hunting memorabilia in his tool shed. (Tom Flannigan, a local taxidermist, is donating the mount.)

Through Midwest Outdoor Unlimited, Ryan has gone turkey hunting (both spring and fall), deer hunting at Camp Ripley, and on special hunts sponsored by the DNR and the St. Cloud VA/Disabled American Veterans. In June in Canada, he caught a 42-inch Northern Pike and shot a

black bear, spending 33 minutes in the woods before that successful hunt.

Legends Ranch also hosts a disabled youth hunt, and Welle has a candidate for that trip next year.

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