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Cover—"Budding Grouse"—Shoffstall

One of the reasons why ruffed grouse are able to thrive in northern climes, where the snow covers most ground food during much of the winter, is that they feed extensively on the buds of various hardwood trees and shrubs. For more on this favorite New Jersey upland game bird see pages 12 and 26.

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To the Pinelands for

Deer Hunting

and what you might see

By Ulysses R. Thayer

Photographs by Harry Grosch

DID YOU EVER go deer hunting in southern New Jersey? As you might expect, there are notable differences in topography and technique from the farms and forests of the north. Why not take a ride through Ocean County with some fish and game personnel and sample what it was like on opening day last fall.

You have met photographer Harry Grosch for the ride south for a mid-morning appointment with Conservation Officer Bruce Young at a crossroad on Route 539. Finding the spot poses a slight challenge, as the scenery on this straight, well-kept road changes little over its course through the heart of the pine deer country. Nonetheless, you arrive well ahead of schedule. While you wait for Bruce, his colleague, Charlie Torluccio arrives and chats about the hunting so far. Pressure has been generally light in his area, possibly because the day is bit-

terly cold. He invites you to ride through the northern part of the county later in the day.

Bruce arrives, and you climb into his car and enter the Greenwood Wildlife Management Area. In recent years, the Bureau of Wildlife Management has done extensive clearing and development work, making this one of the most productive deer tracts in the south. Hunters can be spotted along the edge of the dirt road, similar to many of the roads which transect the pine woods in this area. At the first crossroads there are numerous cars parked, and Bruce slows down to check some of the hunters returning to them. One car, he notes, bears out-of-state license plates, and he makes a point to speak to the owner. With polite questions, Bruce elicits that the man now lives in New Jersey, but not long enough to entitle him to the resident license he is using. The young

← *George Heinze of Old Bridge bagged this buck on Opening Day*

. . . Deer Hunting

man is chagrined and accepts a ticket without demur; his two companions are longtime Garden State residents.

While Bruce writes the ticket, you and Harry talk with other hunters. Most say they have seen few deer this

a few more hunters, reminding one to sign his license, and you move on to avoid interfering with the drive.

Presently you come up behind a slow-moving pick-up truck. As Bruce motions it over, one of the occupants can be seen making rapid motions. Although the pair protest their inno-



*Conservation Officer
Bruce Young checks a
pair of hunters*

morning; one saw eight the previous day, but only one this morning. Nearly all agree it is a good area, based on past observations. Harry pictures hunters posting themselves for a drive, and soon you hear the shouts typical of this method of hunting. Bruce checks

licence, and Bruce cannot prove otherwise, he gives them a stern reminder of the hazard of carrying a loaded gun in a vehicle. This is one of the hardest violations to prove and one of the most dangerous.

Circling around the forest, you spot

*C.O. Young writes a
ticket for a license
violation*

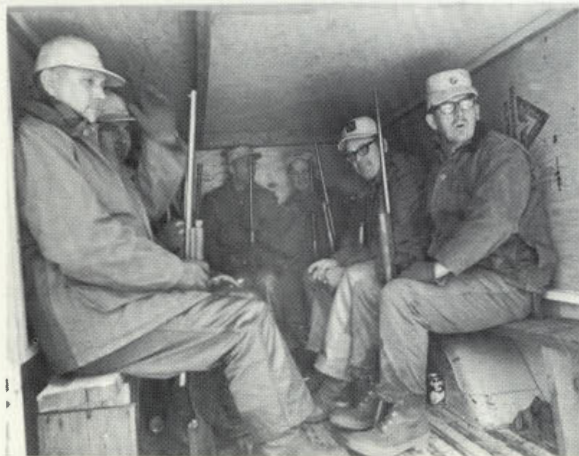




Deer hunters, above, start toward positions for a drive on the Greenwood Forest Wildlife Management Area



A typical lunch, left, at 7 Buck Deer Club



The hunters prepare to return to the woods

. . . Deer Hunting

a man bringing out a freshly-killed buck of good size. It is a moment of excitement for the hunter, and Bruce helps him fill out the tag. Harry gets pictures of the deer and of the hunter's

took pains to get topographical maps and information when he moved to Ocean County. The area is a large one, with fewer people than Bruce's previous station, a factor which he enjoys. The one discouraging problem is the heavy toll of deer hit by cars, and the



An odd find for the Missim Buck Club in this T.V. set, apparently stolen

companions starting to help clean it. Surprisingly, it had been eating corn, a rare commodity in this section, even in bait piles. This party said they heard little shooting.

Pressure is light outside Greenwood Forest, and you have a chance to hear a few of Bruce's thoughts about enforcement. He likes to get back in the woods for some patrol, rather than merely checking the roads. Newly assigned to Ocean County, he is grateful that he has some knowledgeable deputies. Harry informs you that Bruce

time taken from other duties picking them up. The area has plenty of rabbits, quail, and grouse; hunting is hard because of dense ground cover.

Word comes by radio that Charlie Torluccio is stuck in a mud hole on the Lakehurst Naval Air Station hunting area. Although it is some distance, Bruce heads that way, intending to drop off some tickets to a court clerk en route. Before reaching the court, he finds a lady whose car is out of gas and takes time to assist her. By now, Charlie is unstuck and has received

word that the Jackson police have a deer for him to pick up. Bruce drops off the tickets, and you return to meet Charlie and inspect his area.

In this case, Charlie tells you, the deer can wait, as it is at police headquarters. First he urges checking a few deer clubhouses to see if any bucks are hanging yet. There is a good likelihood of joining a club for lunch. Charlie says he has heard little shooting, but Tom Mulvey, the third Ocean County C.O., has checked a dozen bucks in another section of Greenwood Forest.

Quick visits to three clubhouses find no deer in sight. Charlie predicts more success at the 7 Buck Club, a long-established group who know the area. They report having seen only one buck, which was missed. You gladly accept their invitation to lunch, consisting of a choice of hearty soups, pea and vegetable, and sandwiches, all in unlimited

in the informal banter. As soon as lunch is over, the men jump in their truck to try another area, and you join Charlie to go pick up the deer.

Although it is a relatively light deer, its frozen condition makes it awkward to tie on Charlie's rack. Eventually, he is forced to use the back door handles to tie it on, posing an extra problem letting you out at each stop.

You visit a number of clubs. The first at which you find deer hanging is a small cabin, which the youthful group of hunters have not named. At first glance, both bucks appear to have magnificent racks, one almost disproportionate. A closer look reveals a set of large antlers tied onto the 3-inch spikes. The other is a genuine 12-pointer. The men are elated, as they had been shut out for two years.

Continuing the tour, you encounter another group of hunters along the



Picking up deer is a frequent chore for conservation officers, like Charlie Torluccio

quantity. The ladies in the kitchen have cooked for the club for many years and evidently know just what appeals to a group of men after a cold morning's hunt, as well as how to join

road, who call Charlie to stop. They have found a perfectly good television set hidden in the woods. Harry gets a picture of the group with the set, and they identify themselves as the Missim

. . . Deer Hunting

Buck Club. They depart to notify police, some distance away, as the set had evidently been stolen. Later you learn the odd aftermath of this odd episode; the set was stolen again before they got back.

At the Hightstown Rod and Gun Club, one huge buck is hanging. Harry tries a profile shot of the deer. The hunters are out, but the chef invites you to inspect the clubhouse. Harry notes a sign, "No Alcoholic Beverages during Deer Season", which you agree is a sensible precaution.

The last camp you visit is the Italian-American Sportsmen's Club, where two deer are hanging. Like most you have seen during the day, they have sizable racks.

Before departing, you encounter



This fine buck hangs in profile at the Hightstown Club

Members of the Park Rod and Gun Club, below, look at their deer





Successful hunters with 7 Buck Club pose with their deer

Tom Mulvey and Wildlife Worker Charlie Menzer. They report that utilization of Greenwood Forest appears to be up. During the morning, they saw 15 deer, and Tom apprehended one violator with a loaded gun in his car. Heading north, Harry urges you to return Friday to check subsequent success of the various clubs.

The first stop on your revisit is the Park Rod and Gun Club, where six deer are hanging, as well as one large black duck. They had had none on Monday. Most of the deer have ages marked on the tags by wildlife managers. You note that one 2½-year old has more points than a 3½-year old. You are invited in, and note the pictures of past hunts lining the walls, including one in the snow of 1958. The club has 50 members, and uses the clubhouse for family affairs during the summer. A board lists hunters who



By Friday, the Hightstown Club had two bucks

. . . Deer Hunting

have missed deer. This recalls other traditional club penalties for missing, such as cutting off the unlucky hunter's shirttail, or throwing up his hat for a target.

At the Hightstown Club, there are now two large bucks, where one had hung on Monday. You encounter a sportsman who had switched from deer to fishing, enjoying success with "pike" in Prospertown Lake. (Charlie reminds you that in the pines, pickerel are called "pike", and grouse are dubbed "pine pheasant".

You again stop at the 7 Buck Club for lunch. This time, there are six deer hanging, all with good racks up to 8 points. Being serious hunters, they are reluctant to stop for pictures before returning to the field, but Harry's suasion is successful.

The unnamed club in the woods has

the same two deer you saw Monday. The West Side Club, however, has added a buck and a red fox. Meeting Charlie Menzer, you hear that a number of clubs in southern Ocean County have scored, notably Manchester with 9, Berlin with 8, East Trenton with 6, and Prison Officers with 5.

Harry shows you pictures of some fine bucks taken in northern New Jersey, where individual hunting is the usual rule. In general, this area enjoyed more early season success, despite the cold. By contrast, many of the southern clubs picked up by persisting as the week progressed. With Monday's coldness, and the rain that was to drench you and other Saturday gunners, sending many hunters home early on both days, the overall harvest was down from 1967. Nevertheless, Garden State hunters again attained the 5,000-buck figure, which you must conclude represents plenty of venison. #



*Carl Ulmer of Newton
with an eight-point buck
he shot in Sussex County*



These pictures show success in northern New Jersey. Dale VanDerMark of Andover with his ten-pointer



The Centerville Hunt Club of Sussex County weighing a prime buck



As It Was

for the Ruffed Grouse

This glance back into history gives us some insight on the ruffed grouse that was, even then, classed as a great game bird in New Jersey about 100 years ago. The notes are based on a manuscript edited by Jacob H. Studer in the late 1800's and loaned to us by Arthur Downer.

Although this species (*Bonasa umbellus*) is generally known by the name of Ruffed Grouse, it is also called the Partridge in the New England and Middle States, and, in the Southern States it is named the Pheasant. The multiplication of names that this species has attained has caused considerable confusion, in regard to which Dr. Coues says:

"It is somewhat singular that a misapprehension should subsist, even among well-informed persons, in regard to this species. The confusion in the minds of some is, doubtless, partly due to the fact that the bird goes under different names in different parts of the country; and we are often asked, is it a Partridge, or is it a Pheasant?—to which reply may be made that it is neither, but a Grouse. "Pheasant" is a name of a variety of birds of the family *Phasianida*, indigenous to Southern Asia, and not represented in this country at all (as a native). The best known species is that one long ago introduced into England, and there thoroughly naturalized. (The nearest American representative of the Pheasants is the Wild Turkey, which is sometimes included in the family *Phasianida*.) Partridge is the name of a group of small gallinaceous birds, which, like the *Phasianida*, belong exclusively to the Old World, our American Partridges, so called, being quite a different set of birds. A poverty of our language in the matter of names of various American birds has caused them to become known by some term really belonging only to their (real or supposed) nearest European relatives. It would simplify matters much, to discard altogether the terms "Pheasant" and "Partridge," by which this species is known in, respectively, the Northern and Southern States, and call it by its proper name of "Ruffed Grouse." The bird itself is unmistakable; no other species has the conspicuous ruffle of

lengthened, broad, soft, silky feathers on the neck; and the only other species with any feathery neck-appendages is the Pinnated Grouse, where the appendages are like little wings of narrow, straight, pointed feathers. The Ruffed Grouse, may be confounded by some with the Canada Grouse or "Spruce Partridge," (*Tetrao canadensis*), but this has no lengthened feathers on the neck, and is otherwise entirely different."

Parker Gilmore's account of this species, in his "Prairie and Forest," a valuable work, descriptive of the game of North America, says:

"This worthy member of a noble family loves the woodland glades and rocky hill-sides. The verge of the prairie he may occasionally visit, but let him be disturbed, his fears excited, like arrow from bow he will wing his way direct to the friendly shelter of the forest. But all woods do not suit the fastidious taste of this beauty; for when there exists only the fat, damp, slimy, bottom-lands, that margin so many of the southwestern rivers, he is not to be found. No, rolling country and hilly spurs are his home, where, deep in the shelter of the laurel, cedar, hemlock, hazel, and birch, he can laugh at his pursuers, unless they are the very quickest and best of shots. But I allude to where he has known man, and learned to dread his presence as ominous of evil; for, where such is not the case, if flushed, they are often satisfied to settle upon the first tree in the neighborhood, regarding the intruder with looks of wonder, and remain, gratifying their excited curiosity, till the whole covey have been shot in detail. Throughout Canada West they are numerous. At the northern end of Lake Simcoe I found them very abundant; also on the hillsides that cradle in the lovely peaceful Lake Umbagog, in Oxford county, Maine; but western Maryland and Virginia are also favorite haunts; in fact, it may be found everywhere where wood, water, and hillside combine to form for it a suitable haunt, between thirty-two and fifty degrees of north latitude.

"In April, these birds pair. . . . They lay from ten to sixteen eggs; their nest, which is a very primitive one, being generally secreted in brush, or under the shelter of a fallen log. They are most affectionate parents, and use the same artifices as the Wild Duck to draw away the intruder from the vicinity of their youthful progeny. This Grouse has two distinct calls, one a soft, mellow, prolonged note, generally used in gathering after the covey has been broken up; the other, an extraordinary drumming sound, made by the cocks in the pairing season, and capable of being heard, in still weather, a great distance. The latter noise is caused by the rapid vibration of the wings when the male is perched on a fallen tree or stump. Indiscriminately, they live on a great variety of food—ants, grubs, alder-berries, wild cherries, and grain, being their favorite diet. Early in autumn, when the weather is fine, particularly in the morning and evening, they will be found in the open cultivation, more especially if there be rough ground with brush in the vicinity; but as severe weather approaches, the woods will become their constant resort. In shooting the Ruffed Grouse, great difficulty is always experienced in marking them. Their flight, as I have previously said, is wonderfully rapid, and they have a method of doubling back in the

. . . Ruffed Grouse

reverse direction to which they started; however, as they do not generally go far (about three or four hundred yards), with patience, and a selection of the nearest irregular ground which has growing timber upon it, or the densest brush that is in the neighborhood, a second opportunity will probably occur of bringing more of the family to a bag. In many portions of the United States and Canada they are known by the misnomers of Partridge and Pheasant. Frequently, when trout fishing in the wilds of the State of Maine, I have come suddenly upon them, when they would rise into the nearest tree, and remain with unconcern watching me; from evident curiosity, they would stretch their necks, and get into all kinds of grotesque attitudes; and so little would they then regard the report of a gun, that I have known pot-hunters kill quite a number of the same family by always shooting the lowest first. But when the Ruffed Grouse becomes familiar with man, he is perfectly cognizant of the danger of being in his proximity. Although before dogs they lie close, their color harmonizes so well with that of the ground, that it is next to impossible to see them before they are on the wing.

"In the undergrowth which springs up in that portion of the country where the timber has been destroyed by fire, I ever found them very abundant, it being almost impossible to wander half a mile through such openings without flushing a covey. As these generally occur in the lumber regions, where the winters are particularly long and rigorous, far exceeding in severity those of Scotland, the hardiness of this bird can not be doubted. In the Alleghanies and all the southern ranges of hills of the United States it is also abundant, where, if the winters are less severe, the heat in summer is sometimes excessive, proving that the Ruffed Grouse is capable of enduring great varieties of climate.

"The palate of the most fastidious epicure can not fail to be gratified with the appearance of this game on the table, the flesh being extremely delicate, with a strong flavor of our Red Grouse. I have eaten it cooked in every conceivable manner, and whether it be simply roasted over a camp-fire, or form a portion of an *Omnium gatherum* stew, it will be found alike acceptable. Although scarcity of food may compel this Grouse to change its beat, still it is not migratory, as stated by some naturalists. The supposition has arisen from their being found in great numbers, during summer and autumn, on the scrub barren land, which they leave as soon as the more severe weather commences, for the shelter of the dense timber. A family of these birds I acquainted with for a year. On their range there was an abundance of food and water, and during that period I could always find them, their home being a little, hilly island in the prairie, covered with timber and brush, and detached from any irregular land by several miles of grass.

"Some authorities have placed Woodcock shooting first in the list, and called it the fox-hunting of those pleasures in which the dog and gun form the chief accessories. As far as present British field-sports are concerned, I believe

they are correct; but, should the Ruffed Grouse be introduced, and Englishmen experience the suddenness of their rise, the velocity and irregularity of their flight, the uncertainty of their movements, and the beauty and size of this game when bagged, they would assuredly insert a saving clause. I doubt not many—I believe all—of the warm admirers of shooting will agree with me that there is a superior pleasure in making a mixed bag—now a Mallard, next a Woodcock, perchance thirdly a Partridge, etc.; loading your discharged barrel, scarcely knowing at what description of game it will be used; thus a reason for their introduction to England.”

This beautiful species is about eighteen inches in length, erect in form, and has a handsome chestnut brown color, dotted and penciled with gray and brown spots on the neck, breast, and back. On each side of the neck are fan-shaped tufts of glossy, dark, purple-black, velvet-looking feathers, and on the top of the head there is a slight crest. #

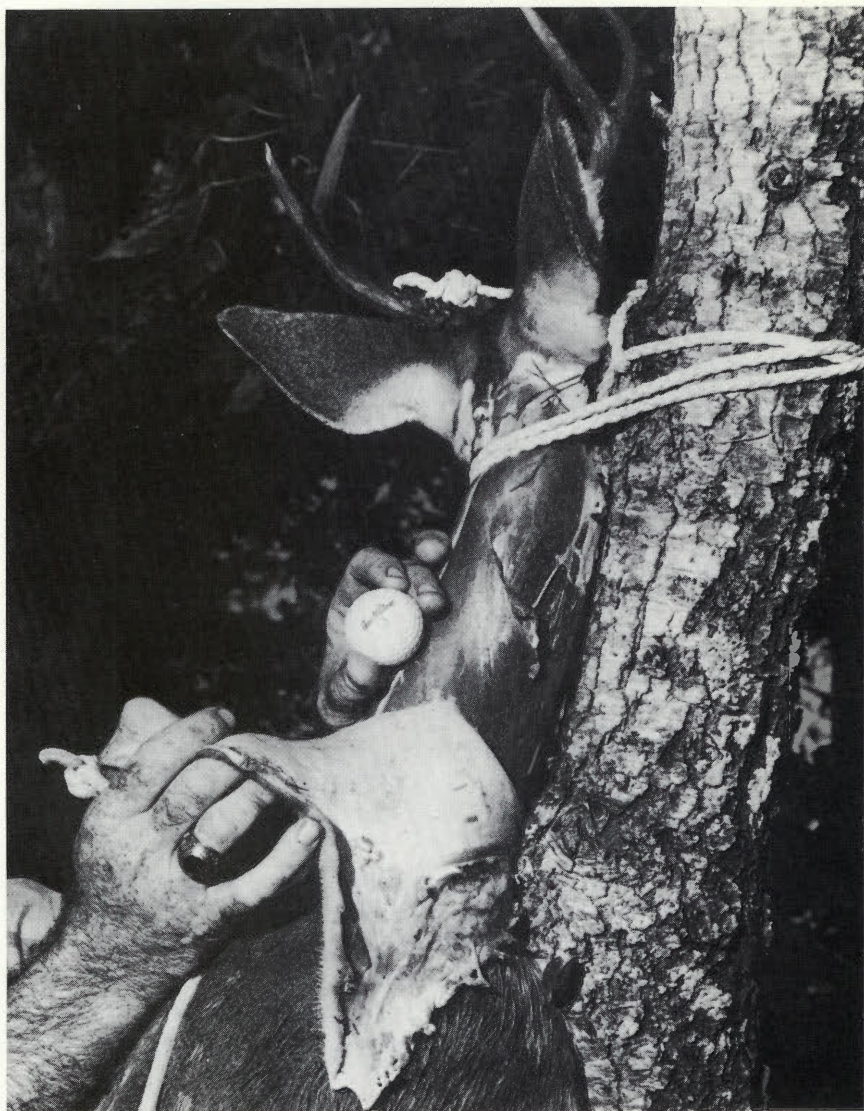
Jersey Deer Laws Explained

Trenton, N. J., Oct. 20.—In response to a request of Governor Stokes for a construction of the game laws of New Jersey, Assistant Attorney-General Duffield has submitted an opinion, holding that the killing of deer is prohibited absolutely until June 20, 1909, and that thereafter it is to be limited to Wednesdays in the month of November. In some sections of New Jersey deer have been multiplying so fast that farmers have complained of the damage to their crops, and recently reports were circulated that there was no valid law to prevent their destruction.

The confusion resulted from the carrying out of a close season policy inaugurated in 1903, when the Legislature passed an Act prohibiting killing them for two years. In 1904 the law was re-enacted with a few minor changes, so that the close season was continued until April 6, 1906, with the continued proviso that after that date the open season should only be on Wednesdays in November. The last Legislature passed a supplement to the Act of 1904, continuing the close season for a further period of three years.

This Act was approved on June 19, more than two months after the Act of 1904 had become inoperative in so far as it provided for a close season without qualification. The contention raised was that the Act of 1906 supplementing the Act of 1904 was therefore invalid, and that deer might now be shot without violating any law. The Assistant Attorney-General holds that this contention is without force, since that part of the Act prohibiting deer killing except on certain days in November was still in force when the Act of 1906 was approved.

The above news item, from an old newspaper clipping provided by Tony Bauer, speaks for itself as to the changes in New Jersey deer hunting in 60 years.



Skin him with . . .

A GOLF BALL?

By Charles M. Marshall

Adapted from *Georgia Game and Fish*

THE SHARP CRACK of a single shot had just shattered the early morning silence near my favorite deer stand.

At first, I sat there in disgust as I watched an unknown hunter move away from a large pine near "my" stand located on a large tract of land. This intruder was a small man with silver gray hair. I assumed from his weathered face that he was a veteran hunter.

My disgust quickly changed to interest as I watched his methodical actions. After carefully approaching the large buck, he expertly opened the deer, with several easy cuts with his pocket knife. He gutted the animal and placed the steaming heart and liver in a large plastic bag which he had brought for the occasion. A short piece of string provided an attachment for a deer tag.

The old pro removed a rope from around his waist and was about to tie it to the buck's antlers when I could stand it no longer. I called to the man and started walking toward him and his prize. He appeared dumbfounded that someone was near "his" stand. I introduced myself and offered him a hand in getting the buck to a logging road just over the next hill. He thanked me, picked up his gun, and we started up a well used deer trail.

We shared welcomed rest stops as we dragged his deer up the hillside. When we finally reached the road, the sun had begun to warm the woods. I started shucking garments as the old man walked up to the road to get his truck.

In about 15 minutes he rounded the curve in a beat-up 1950 model Chevy. Fenders were flapping as he turned

sharply to the left and prepared to back up to a white oak with a large low limb on one side.

I planned to help him load his deer and continue my hunt after he left and the forest sounds returned to normal. But when he asked me to share a thermos of hot black coffee, I couldn't resist the temptation.

While we were drinking the java, he confirmed what I had already surmised, this man was a meat hunter! I don't mean a violator—he was after meat for his table. He had the first step behind him. The meat was on the ground ready to be loaded on his truck and taken to his nearby home. I went to help.

The next step was to skin the deer and take it to be hung in the local meat plant. I was curious to know how he planned to skin the deer, so I asked if I might help. With a twinkle in his eye, he refused my help, but suggested that I stay and watch him. Now, I'd already skinned many a deer in my day, but since my morning hunt was shot anyway, I stayed. And I'm glad I did, because I witnessed a skinning as I've never seen before.

He quickly removed the front legs at the "knee" and the rear legs came off at the hock. The skin of each leg was split on the inside. Since he was not going to mount the head, a cut was made from the brisket to the small of the neck. He made a cut behind each ear and carefully removed the skin from about eight inches of the neck.

A strong rope was tied around the deer's neck, then the other end was tossed over a stout limb on a convenient tree and tied to the trailer hitch

. . . *Skin Him*

on his truck. As the old truck moved forward, the deer lifted from the ground and was tied in this position by a second rope.

His next series of actions beats all I've ever seen. From out of the glove compartment, he took an old practice golf ball and placed it under the eight-inch flap of the skin removed from the neck. The lifting rope then was loosened and tied to the skin-covered golf ball and pulled tight at the hitch.

All this time I sat at the base of a sweet gum anticipating each step of his procedure but still doubting that it would work, and saying to myself "this I must see to believe."

The old man grinned, crawled into his truck, and took off smoothly. In a state of acute concentration, I watched the hanging deer move toward the truck as the rope tightened. Then to my amazement the hide peeled from the carcass so fast it was hard for the eye to follow. I stood up not believing what I had seen. But there was a clean carcass swinging to and fro from the limb, and a complete hide was still tied to the stout rope on the pickup. I examined the hide and found very little meat left on it. The carcass didn't have one hair on it since no dirty hands had touched it.

The truck was backed under the carcass, where the man wrapped a clean, but patched bed sheet around his meat. He loosened the rope holding the deer and lowered it into his truck. With a couple of well placed cuts, the head was removed and the carcass prepared to be aged at the locker.

The old man had skinned, wrapped,

and loaded the carcass with no assistance from me. After we finished the last of the coffee, he bid me good-bye and wished me luck. He had his prime venison and I left with a desire to skin a deer.

Most of the time when you chance upon something like this you don't have a camera to record the occasion. This was no exception, therefore, it was necessary to wait several years before I could get all elements together and try this unique method for myself. I was amazed at how easy the hide was removed. All of you deer hunters who find it difficult to skin a deer or anyone who wants to complete the job in a hurry should consider the procedure.

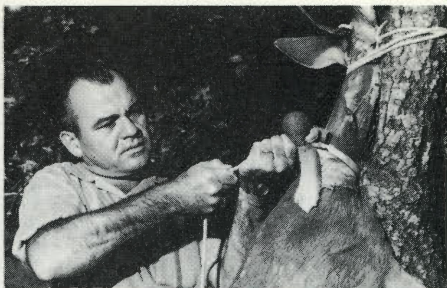
Thinking that some of you may want to try this unique method, I prepared the following short description entitled *How to Skin a Deer With a Golf Ball*.

This title reminds me of a story written by George L. Herter entitled "How to Kill a Wild Boar with a Shirt." For those of you who haven't heard this story, Mr. Herter stated that you approach the hog until it notices you, then remove your shirt and make the hog charge by waving the shirt before him. As he makes his final lunge, calmly step to one side and hit him on the neck with a very sharp axe. That's how to kill a hog with a shirt, now let's consider the golf ball deer skinning procedure.

First, kill your deer and remove the entrails by conventional methods. Remove the front legs by cutting through the "knee" joint. The rear legs are cut at the hock. Split the skin on the inside of each leg. If you are *not* going to mount the head, split the hide from the rib cage to the lower jaw. Cut the skin



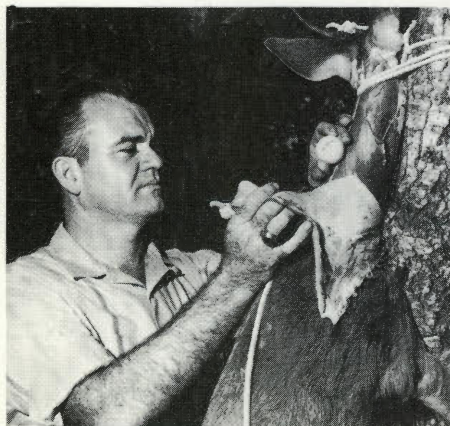
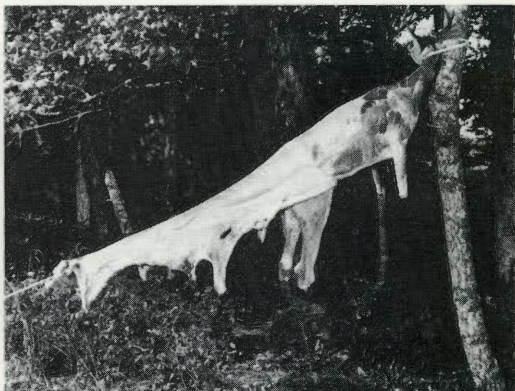
Skinning a deer like this is an easy trick— if you know the secret. Game biologist Charlie Marshall will show you how to do this in just a few simple steps



eight inches of hide from the upper neck by ordinary skinning methods. After hanging the deer, place the golf ball between the skin and flesh of the neck. Tie your rope around the skin covered ball, and attach it to your vehicle



Begin by cutting off the legs at the joints, then slitting the skin on the inside of each leg. Now cut the hide from the brisket to the lower jaw, and remove about



Upper right:
Drive away and the hide will peel quickly from the carcass

Lower right:
It's off! With no strain, no pain

. . . Skin Him

around the upper neck joint behind the ears. Carefully remove the hide from approximately eight inches of the neck. Tie a rope or chain around the deer's neck and attach to a stout limb or if you prefer not to lift the carcass this high, tie it to a nearby tree.

Now for the golf ball. Insert the golf ball, (a smooth rock will do) about four inches beneath the skin on the back of the neck. Tie one end of a stout rope around the skin-covered ball and the other end to an automobile or truck. Drive the vehicle away and the skin will rapidly separate from the carcass.

All hide and hair should be removed before taking the carcass to a commercial meat plant to be aged. Your last step, therefore, is to remove the

tail and head. A clean cloth wrapped around the meat will help keep insects and dirt off the carcass during transportation to the locker.

With this description and the accompanying photographs, anyone can do a good, fast job of skinning a deer. If you try it once, you'll be compelled to show it to another deer-hunter.

It should be pointed out that if you are going to mount your trophy, don't split the hide up the neck. Instead, make your cut just forward of the shoulder around the neck. Then proceed with the golf ball placed on top of the shoulder instead of the neck.

If you still think that both the old man and I are crazy, slip off by yourself and try it without an audience. Next time you'll want someone to roundup a crowd to see you perform the feat. #

Deer Hunting in New Jersey

The white-tailed deer is New Jersey's most important big game animal. There is presently a fall population of between 45,000 and 50,000 deer in the Garden State and hunters take an annual harvest of about 10,000 deer.

Deer hunting has not always been good in New Jersey. At the turn of the century the white-tailed deer was almost extinct except for a few animals on estates and in fenced areas.

Between 1904 and 1913 the Division of Fish and Game obtained stock from Michigan and with liberations made by estate owners, the nucleus of a new deer herd grew.

With the advent of sound game laws and protections, modern management, and aroused public interest, the buck harvest increased from 20 deer in 1901 to over 6,000 in the 1960's. In some areas deer populations became so high that special harvests of antlerless deer were required for sound management of the deer herd.

The present deer management program strives to provide the maximum deer herd which is compatible agriculturally and sociologically in a state which is rapidly losing deer range due to urbanization. #

To Net a Deer fawn

An Experimental White-tailed Deer Fawn Tagging Program

By George P. Howard, Jr.
Principal Wildlife Biologist
Deer Research Project

Photographs by Harry Grosch

AS PART OF AN OVERALL deer capture and marking program being carried out by the New Jersey Division of Fish & Game in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife,* an effort was made during the spring of 1969 to capture and mark wild, new born, white-tailed deer fawns.

The area chosen for this experiment was the dairy farming area of deer Region 2 in northwestern New Jersey. This is an area where box trapping of deer has proven to be difficult in the past and also is an area consisting of small woodlots interspersed with hay and grain fields. This condition, together with a high deer population, facilitates the location of fawn deer.

Past research has established the fact that a good percentage of the fawn births in this area take place in the hay fields and particularly along field edges. Furthermore in past years many new born fawns have been located and removed from hay fields by farmers carrying out haying operations. In

many areas farmers must maintain extreme vigilance in order not to injure fawns which lie in the path of the cutter bar on their mowers.

It was felt that a thorough search for fawns along field edges in areas of known deer concentration during the peak of the fawn drop, would permit the location and capture of a sizeable number of fawn deer. These deer when located, marked, and recaptured would provide needed information relative to the deer range, movements, wintering areas, and so forth in Deer Region 2.

An added advantage of the capture of new born fawns is the fact that each deer so tagged becomes a known-age animal at the time of recapture and the information collected as to tooth replacement and wear from these animals will greatly assist New Jersey deer biologists in refining their deer aging techniques.

During the period of May 24 to June 11, 1969 a total of 28 new born white-tailed deer fawns were captured,

*Work carried out under Federal Aid Project W-45-R-5 Pittman-Robertson Act.



. . . To Net a Fawn

*Searching for does with new-born fawns, above
Crew working hay field edges. Note hoop nets*





Throwing hoop net over fawn located along edge of hay field



Preparing to tag fawn captured in hoop net

Fawn in bed following tagging operation. Note tags in both ears



. . . To Net a Fawn

tagged, and released in the dairy farming area of Hunterdon and Morris Counties in Region 2. A total of 177 man-hours or 6.6 hours per capture were required to locate, capture, and tag these animals.

All of these animals were first located in fields, primarily hay fields, captured in a "hoop net" designed for this job, tagged with monel metal ear tags, and released. Placement of the tags (#4, National Band & Tag Co., Newport, Ky.) in the ear was the same as for adult deer with the exception that fawn tags were inserted only about one-half of their length into the ear.

Most fawns were located by a team of two men searching hay fields in areas of known deer concentrations. The bulk of the fawns located were within 30 yards of the field edges, were less than one week old, and merely hid when approached. Attempts to capture fawns which ran when approached proved to be very difficult and were soon abandoned.

In some cases project personnel checked field areas with binoculars during the period approximately three hours before dark to dark. Observations of lone does thought to have produced young were noted and the area frequented by these deer was searched. In some instances very small fawns were observed with their mothers.

The deer were approached as rapidly as possible (by car in some instances) which caused the fawn to hide and the doe to move a short distance away. These fawns were then covered with the net. As fawns became older, two

weeks or so, this technique no longer worked as fawns and does would run off together when approached.

Following the tagging operations many fawns merely remained hiding and were left in the same bed in which they were located. Some fawns ran after tagging and in many cases were immediately joined by their mothers who escorted them from the area.

It would seem that the techniques developed in 1969 to capture new born fawns in the farming areas of Northwest Jersey provide a practical method of marking substantial numbers of deer in this region. The bulk of the fawns captured this year were caught by two men utilizing only two hoop nets.

It is felt that the search for fawns should have been started at least one week earlier than was the case in 1969, and that more emphasis should have been placed upon the first portion of the fawn drop. The number of fawn captures could possibly be substantially increased by adopting some of the measures listed below:

- (1) Starting sooner and spending more time searching for fawns in mid-May.
- (2) Utilizing more personnel and equipment in the capture operation.
- (3) Using personnel on horseback or possibly in a helicopter to assist in locating fawns.
- (4) Possibly publicize the fawn tagging operation among the farmers of this region who at present are locating and removing fawns from fields during haying operations. In most cases during 1969 Project Personnel learned about fawns after they were removed from a field and released. #

Bureau of Fisheries Management—20.4% of budget

Besides the famous Charles O. Hayford State Fish Hatchery, the Bureau of Fisheries Management operates laboratories for both fresh and salt water research.

Stocking of adult trout in 1968 included: brook 100,998; brown 179,622; rainbow 330,435; Donaldson and golden rainbow 3,440; for a total of 614,495. Limited number of bass and other species are also stocked: smallmouth bass 1,626; bluegill sunfish 870; pumpkin-seed sunfish 500; for a total of 4,946.

Extensive renovations are needed to maintain the efficiency of the 50-year-old hatchery. Especially important are augmenting the water supply and replacing dirt ponds and gravel-bottomed pools with concrete raceways; these are easier to keep disease-free and use water more efficiently. Also envisioned are improved facilities for more than 100,000 visitors who come each year for sight-seeing and education.

These long-range improvements will require extensive capital. Innovations in recent years include installation of aeration pumps in critical ponds, bulk feed hoppers, and concrete pool bottoms where practical. A biologist has been assigned to disease research. Spawning dates have been advanced by selective breeding and procuring new strains.

Among trout research projects are evaluation of trout streams and stocking procedures and experiments with Donaldson and sea-run trout. Warm-weather management techniques for various lake types are being studied with especially good smallmouth bass fishing noted in Round Valley Reservoir. Management operations include recommending stocking, salvage, and weed control procedures.

Modern scientific equipment has enabled long-range pollution studies and more effective enforcement of the fisheries pollution law. Representatives on the Inter-Departmental Committee on Surface Water Quality have worked for high standards in criteria administered by the State Health Department.

Major discoveries about the life history of fluke have been made by the Marine Fisheries Laboratory. New Jersey's porgy research was extensively used by the U.S. State Department. Extensive tagging of shad and striped bass has been undertaken, as well as fluke and porgies. An extensive inventory of estuaries with regard to fish populations, physical-chemical characteristics, and recreational use will aid in preserving these valuable areas. #

One thing a hunter doesn't need in his sights is litter left by other, less considerate, sportsmen. Take your litter out of the woods with you. Good outdoor manners save lives and property.

The Ruffed Grouse

Species:

Bonasa umbellus umbellus.

General Description:

Weight from 16 to 28 ounces, the males averaging heavier than the females. Color a variety of rich browns, often tending toward gray. A triangular patch of black ruff feathers, which becomes evident with excitement, is to be found on each side of the neck. The tail consists of 18 reddish-brown tail feathers with a broad, black terminal band in males. In females, this bar is broken at the center with reddish-gray.

Range:

Though the denser populations of ruffed grouse are to be found in the northern portions of the state, the grouse occupies a number of southern counties where habitat conditions favor it.

Reproduction:

The breeding season extends from April through late July, with one male servicing several females. The presence of the cock grouse in a given area can easily be determined at this time due to the drumming activity of the male. This drumming serves as a warning to other males and aids the female in the location of a mate. From 8 to 14 eggs are laid in a deep hollow in the ground which is lined with hardwood leaves. Incubation takes about 24 days. The female takes full charge of the care of the young, leading them from the nest as soon as their down is dry. The young remain with the female until fall, when the majority of family groups break up.

Habitat Requirements:

Food—Though young grouse require large numbers of insects for growth and plumage development, the ruffed grouse is basically a vegetarian. Berries, leaves, buds, and catkins make up the bulk of the diet.

Cover—The best nesting cover consists of open, brush-free stands of mixed hardwoods and conifers. In summer, alder swales are preferred due to the presence of succulent sedges and other herbaceous vegetation. Fall and winter cover usually consists of upland mixed conifer and hardwood sites where the bird can find protection from the wind as well as food.

Water—The bird is independent of free water and satisfies its moisture requirements by the consumption of succulent foods, dew, and, on occasion, snow.

Grit—Gravel and sometimes hard seeds are necessary in the grinding of food to permit digestion.

The ruffed grouse has a patch of black ruff feathers on each side of its neck and a fan-shaped tail



Mortality Factors:

Predation—A total of 24 species are known to prey on the ruffed grouse, either directly by the killing of individual birds or indirectly by the destruction of nests and eggs. Red and gray foxes, great horned owls, and weasels are considered the most important.

Parasites—At least 25 species of parasites are known to utilize the grouse as a host. These include lice, ticks, flies, and worms.

Diseases—A minimum of six infectious diseases are known, including enteritis, hepatitis, blackhead aspergillosis, and bird pox.

Weather—Nests and young are occasionally lost through flooding, though this has never proved to be an important factor. Freezing rains infrequently may cause the food supply to become temporarily unavailable. Adult birds have been known to be trapped beneath the crusted snow.

Management:

Management practices are designed to increase both the quality and quantity of food and cover available, since these two factors are the most important in determining grouse numbers. The planting of various conifers, such as pine and spruce, in mature hardwood stands greatly increases the available ground cover. The cutting of over-mature, less desirable tree species allows for increased growth of food plants. Clear cutting of selected areas increases the available browse supply through the sprouting action of cut stumps. This type of cutting also produces more "edge" which is utilized as nesting sites. The construction of brush piles and bramble thickets within young hardwood types creates both nesting cover and escape routes.

#

Osage Orange

(*Maclura pomifera*)

The osage orange derives its name from its ball-shaped fruits that resemble oranges when they ripen. The tree is sometimes called bow-wood or mockorange.

Range:

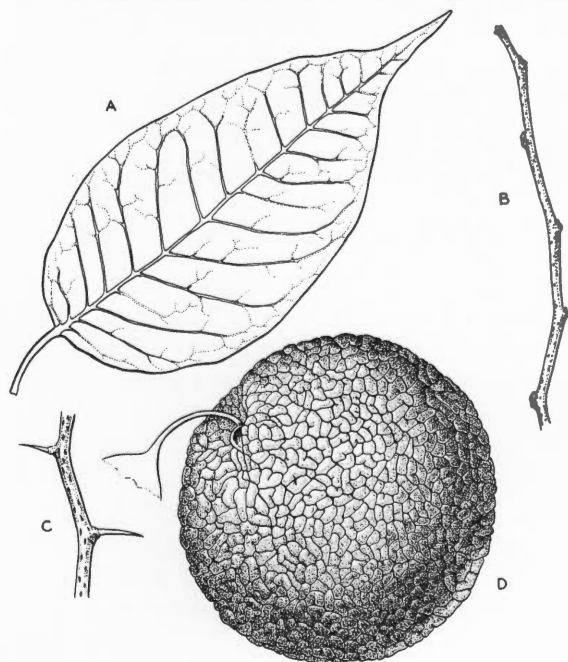
This tree, originally found in northeastern Texas, Arkansas and southern Oklahoma, has been introduced to New Jersey and other eastern states. It is adapted to this climate and is often used as a hedge plant.

Leaves:

A simple leaf, 3 to 5 inches long and 2 to 2½ inches wide. The leaves are alternate on the twig, and their margins are entire. The leaves are dark green on top and pale green on the bottom. They are oblong-lanceolate with a narrow pointed apex. (See figure A.)

Twigs:

Alternate and stout. Young twigs are greenish and slightly hairy. Later the twigs become yellowish brown. On older trunks the bark becomes dark gray and furrowed. The twigs generally have stout spines, a yellow pitch, and pale yellow lenticels. (See figures C and B.)



Osage Orange

- A. Leaf
- B. Twig, with buds
- C. Twig, with spines
- D. Fruit

Flowers:

Male flowers are borne on one tree and female flowers on another. Flowers appear when the leaves are about mature, usually during June. The pistillate flowers are in dense heads with short stalks.

Fruit:

An orange-like fruit, pale green in appearance, and 3 to 4 inches in size. (See figure D.) It is composed of many drupes arranged in a close proximity. The fruit, when ruptured, gives off a bitter milky juice that turns black on exposure. The fruit ripens in September or October and falls to the ground.

Uses:

Osage orange is a medium-sized tree. It usually grows to be 20 to 40 feet tall, but occasionally it reaches 60 feet in height and 2 to 3 feet in diameter. The chief use of this species is for hedge fences, ornamental plantings, fence posts, bow-wood, or yellow dye from the root bark. The wood is a bright orange color, hard, and durable, even when in contact with soil. #

—Austin N. Lentz, *Extension Specialist in Farm Forestry*
Rutgers—The State University
Drawings by Aline Hansens

Osage orange hedgerows make extraordinary wildlife cover.

The largest osage orange listed by the Cooperative Extension Service for New Jersey, 12 feet and 3 inches in circumference at a point 4½ feet above the ground, is located on the Scully-Bozarth Post VFW Grounds, Burlington.

Real Stumpers

The National Shooting Sports Foundation reports that it receives about 180,000 queries a year from the general public, but when it comes to the real stumpers, the Foundation says it has few to match those received recently by the U.S. Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. Some samples:

- “Is it true that wood ducks are made of wood?”
- “Please send me a small whale for classroom demonstration.”
- “Will getting bitten by a rattler help one, if it doesn’t kill one?”
- “I would like some golden bullfrogs to match my lily pond.”
- “Please send me some empty ostrich eggs.”

The Foundation says it is also stumped, except for this tip to the do-it-yourself empty-ostrich-egg-hunter: Get a pin and a soda straw. Find an ostrich. Wait. #

Council Highlights

September Meeting

The open session of the regular monthly meeting of the Fish and Game Council was held in Trenton on September 16. The Council members present included: Chairman Space, Councilmen, Alampi, Allocca, Faunce, Reid, Richardson, Schollenberger, Stabile, Toth (morning session only), and Webber.

Legality of Posters

Robert Solan, Chief of the Legal Bureau of the Department of Conservation and Economic Development, appeared before the Council to discuss the legality of posters erected on property in Warren County regarding R.S. 23:2-3, which gives the Council authority to stock lands and waters.

The matter of land in Warren County and keeping it open to hunting in 1969 was discussed further. Hunting-by-registration plans were considered and copies of a plan in use in New Jersey during the 1940's were presented and are to be sent to each member of the Council for review. Under this plan, hunting was allowed at the ratio of 1 to 20 acres with the land set up in blocks rather than in individual farms.

Chief Alpaugh advised that, according to the stocking records maintained in this office, 25,000+ acres of land in Warren County were stocked as open lands with 3,825 pheasants in 1968.

Councilman Reid made a motion that the Council go on record approving a plan that would allow hunting by registration on the property in question at the ratio of 1 to 15 acres, and that revised signs be allowed. The motion was amended by Councilman Webber to include the following stipulations:

1. Each landowner sign a statement annually opening the land to the public under the Division's regulations.
2. Require the hunter to report and identify himself to the landowner.
3. The Council will limit the number of hunters to a minimum of 1 to 15 acres on a first-come-first-served basis.
4. Post the areas with appropriate signs outlining the regulations. #

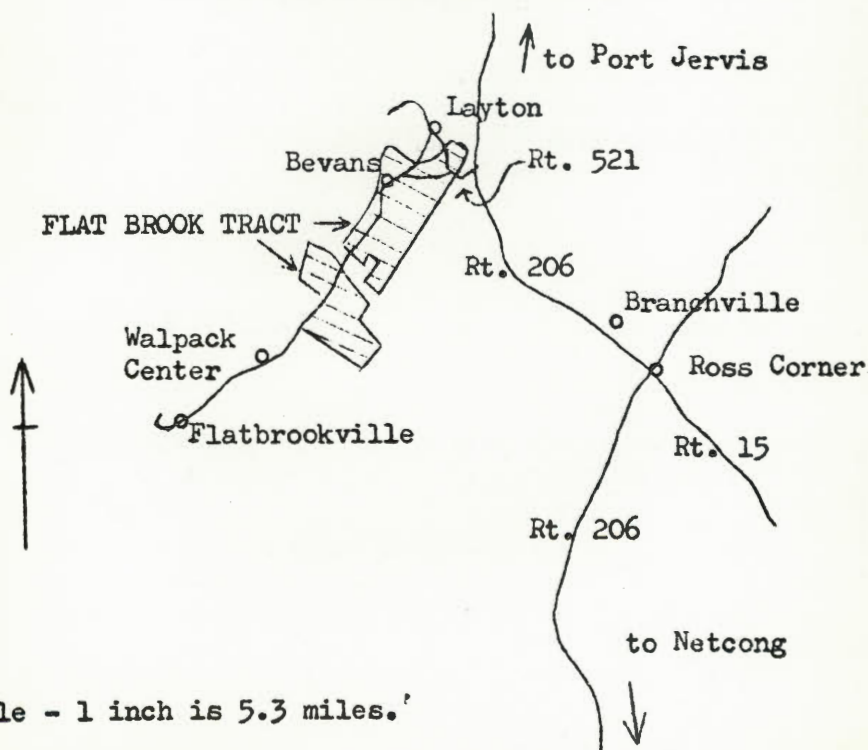
Pursuing, shooting at, or killing any bird or animal while in an automobile is unlawful. For purpose of hunting, pursuing, taking, or killing, or attempting to hunt, pursue, take, or kill any bird or animal, it is illegal to have in an automobile or vehicle of any kind any firearm loaded with any missiles. Possession of such loaded firearm in a vehicle is considered conclusive proof of pursuing or taking birds or animals.

Flat Brook Tract

The Flat Brook Fish and Wildlife Management Area contains approximately 2,000 acres and is located in western Sussex County adjacent to Stokes State Forest. The area is south of the town of Layton and the major portion of the area is situated on the east side of the Bevans-Flatbrookville Road.

This area, which is heavily utilized by sportsmen, provides excellent hunting opportunities for both upland and deer hunters. Pheasants, grouse, woodcock, rabbits, squirrels, and deer are the principal wildlife species present. The Big and Little Flat Brooks, two of New Jersey's most famous trout streams, flow through this area. Waterfowl hunting is also available on the impoundments constructed on this tract. Limited camping is permitted during the spring and summer months.

To reach the area from the south and east, take U. S. Route 206 through Newton and Branchville. Approximately six miles west of Branchville turn left on Route 521 which runs through the tract. The intersection of Route 206 and Route 521 is approximately one mile west of the Stokes State Forest office. #



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