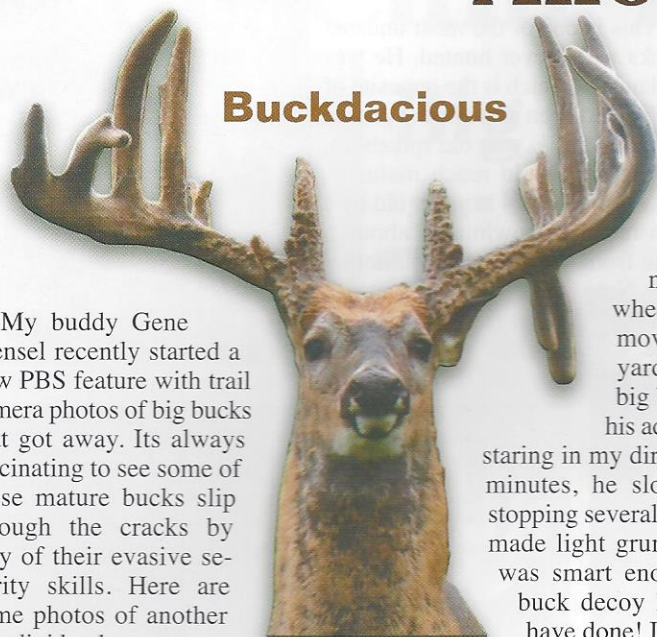


Trail Cam Tidbits... Another Big One That Got Away!

Buckdacious



My buddy Gene Wensel recently started a new PBS feature with trail camera photos of big bucks that got away. It's always fascinating to see some of these mature bucks slip through the cracks by way of their evasive security skills. Here are some photos of another Houdini buck.

Late in 2011, a patient of mine brought me a photo of an enormous whitetail that showed up on a security camera he had monitoring his property. Tom knew I was a serious deer hunter so he figured I would be interested in seeing the photo. As soon as I saw the photo, I made a deal with him. If he would grant me permission to bowhunt his property, I would cut down and remove all the dead ash trees killed by the Emerald Ash Bore Beetles that caused a huge problem in the Great Lakes area. Since I happen to heat my home with wood, it was a win-win situation for me.

During the summer of 2012, I set out several camera traps covering staging areas near food sources, creek crossings, travel corridors and licking branches laced with preorbital gland lure. I named this buck "Buckdacious" after the famous bull Bodacious. Sporting 18 points on a 190" 6x6 typical frame, he would have no problem whipping Barry Wensel's "Hurley" buck and would give Gene's "Woody" a decent fight. A split drop tine and several other goodies would push his score well over 200 inches. If his left antler flared out the same as his right, he would have an inside spread pushing 28 inches.

Tom's property was small but it butted up against a much larger parcel that I didn't have permission to hunt. My plan was to burn my entire season trying to get a crack at this great old buck. I hoped he might move through my hunting area chasing a doe or maybe I could call him in if he cruised by out of range across the fence.

On Halloween Day of 2012, it rained all morning and afternoon. That evening, I saw

By Mark Mitten

the huge buck running a doe on the neighboring property. A wheeze got his attention, moving him within forty yards of my stand until a big blowdown stalled his advancement. After staring in my direction for several minutes, he slowly moved off, stopping several times whenever I made light grunt calls. If only I was smart enough to set up a buck decoy like Gene would have done! I never saw Buckdacious again while hunting.

In the summer of 2013, photos indicated the big buck was on a decline. His mass increased but his main beams, spread and tine lengths all decreased. As soon as he shed his velvet, he became nocturnal. I never got a photo during daylight after he shed his 2013 velvet. The winter of 2014 proved to be the harshest we had in 35 years. That winter, I found a giant buck that had died after he had shed his antlers. I'm not saying it was definitely him, but I never got another

trail camera photo of Buckdacious.

I truly enjoyed documenting part of this great buck's life by way of my photo gallery. And, once again to Mike Mitten and John Schneider Jr., remember, I'm still "Top Dog." Nicely sweet! #

