

Northwestern Ontario

FREE

# Outdoors



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# Rifle or Bow? That is the question!

By Amanda Lynn Mayhew

As I sit here thinking about writing this article, I'm actually also trying to focus while I'm in the middle of a moose hunting trip. But I can't! Why? Because I'm already thinking about the upcoming deer hunting season as well! My deer hunting addiction; I remember how it all started.

It was the coldest day of the week and after listening to the group I was hunting with carry on about all the deer they have harvested in the prior years I was starting to think it was a hoax. As I sat on a cornfield thinking about the days gone by, knowing the deer were heavily populated in this area and spending time waiting for one, however having still not seen one. Then, a magnificent 10 point buck showed his face 85 yards away. I took aim with my shotgun and carefully squeezed off the shot. The deer lurched and I knew it was hit good. Moments later I was standing over my prize. The elation of a successful hunt is unlike any other emotion felt. I was now hooked on deer hunting.

That next season was the year I started bow hunting which was a different game all together. Scouting for the perfect spot to await your chance on a deer coming into range is a little more challenging with a bow. My chance came on the last day of the season on a blustery winter afternoon which played in my favour as I sat on the edge of a corn stubble field watching a corner of a well traveled deer run at a distance of 60 yards. I didn't have long to wait when the small gang of does popped out of the corner and started on their afternoon snack. It took me a few minutes to study how I would make this shot count with the wind, weather, distance and slope. I steadied my crossbow to make the shot and watched my Lumenok pass right through the big Doe and into the ground beyond. She kicked up and bolted a short run back into the bush to her final resting spot.

Bow hunting to me is a peaceful, extreme, challenging hunt which I prefer over the shotgun season for deer. I've since picked up the compound bow. Practicing with it year round is essential to train your body and mind to be ready for the shot. Fitness and muscle training is vital to pull back the necessary draw weight to be able to ethically make the shot and harvest your animal, so keeping those muscles trained all year is important. Maintaining your bow equipment is just as important to prevent any malfunctions when the moment arises to harvest your deer. My Bear Archery Bounty bow, with Easton Arrows matched with WASP Broadheads are the perfect tools for my bow season which begins October 1 and runs until December 31, giving me a long hunting season, experiencing the change of the seasons and learning how the deer adapt with them.

To be a successful bow hunter for deer, I am learning that you must have patience, a detailed knowledge of your surround hunting area. Mostly you need to study and scout the habits of the deer and their movements and patterns. Becoming a bow hunter has taught me that these things are so much more critical to get into close range of the deer I intend to hunt for.

I love my firearms, my rifle and shotguns, but I'll save them for my bear and moose seasons. I'm hooked on whitetails and bow hunting for them now! Take care and be safe out there this fall people!

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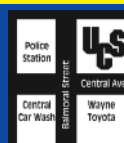
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# King of the Forest

## Scouting for the ultimate prize

*By Richard Brochu*

Moose are the largest extant species in the deer family. They typically inhabit boreal forests and temperate broadleaf and mixed forests of the Northern Hemisphere in temperate to subarctic climates. Majestic in size, moose can make a hunter’s heart skip a beat. The most common moose predators are the grey wolf, black bears and us - humans. They are creatures of habit and will roam their forest homes habitually re-visiting areas that offer feed, shelter and safety. Their sense of smell is their greatest defense against predation.

Scouting for these ungulates is one of my favourite pastimes. I start looking for moose sign as soon as spring starts to awaken the forest. Moose look for new growth whether aquatic or leafy. Water sources are a huge part of moose habitat and a good place to start. Ponds, rivers and lakes with forest cover hold moose and a little research can help you find them. Looking for well beaten paths that moose frequent, browse and good aquatic vegetation they like will help you pattern them. Setting up game trail cameras in these areas will help you see who is visiting them. I’ll continue to check these areas periodically throughout the summer to see the changes taking place. I find this as exciting as hunting itself.

Berry picking in mid-august is another time scouting for moose comes in handy. Having scouted from early spring to August, I’ve usually noticed little change in moose habits. They frequent the same ponds, rivers and lakes. Looking for berries helps me find new areas as well as leafy treats they can’t refuse. The only downside to this are the areas depleted of the moose’s important food source by aerial spraying done the previous year. Good for the forest industry bad for our moose herd. These areas have moose moving out due to a lack of leafy greens and the berries are non-existent. Moose will cross these areas but in most cases just pass through. The areas hot with moose usually have the young poplar and leafy tag alder’s they love.

Once early September roles in the moose can still be found in the same areas they have spent much of their summer. The change in the weather brings on the mating season and moose slowly change some of their habits. Early fall finds them near lakes and water sources. As the breeding season moves on moose will travel to mate or challenge other males. Mid to late September will increase the amount of sign found in the forest. Tracks will be spotted in all areas that moose call home. Look for broken trees, fresh tracks and fighting areas where the ground has been torn up from moose wrestling for the chance to breed.

Once mid to late October hits I find moose will slowly start to migrate closer to wintering areas with good food sources. As the water starts to freeze they need the buds of the young poplar and dogwood trees to sustain them and replenish the calories they have lost over the mating season. Food becomes the number one priority. Knowing these areas through previous scouting will help you locate these incredible beasts. Look for older cuts five to seven years old. If the area was chemically sprayed, chances are the moose population will be minimal. Find the areas that have not been sprayed and look for old and new tracks that are present. These cuts are harder to hunt but moose will be found there. Trails and corridors are excellent areas to post as others walk the edge of the cut.

Scouting for moose throughout spring, summer and fall can be very exciting. It can help you find out what the moose are doing and where they spend their time. Get out and enjoy our rich resources. We are very lucky to call northern Ontario our home.



# Introducing Hunting and Taking Your Little One for Small Game

By ... Boyce

I was introduced to Hunting as soon as Fall time arrived during the first year I was born. Although I was too young to remember now, my father would pack up the car seat and bottles and hit the dirt road looking for Partridge. Growing up, I had spent a large majority of the Fall "tagging along" beside my Father on each of his hunting trips. He instilled in me a love for the outdoors that would eventually shape the person I am today. Its an amazing thing to get outdoors and be able to provide for your family.

I am fortunate enough that I can share everything I have learned as me and my fiancé raise our son (18months) who has already come to love the outdoors. If you hunt and love the outdoors, what better way to do it than to take your little one with you.

Heres a few tips that we've learned along the way

## ***Safety is #1***

At this age, my son is too young to go hunting for big game, but he loves to tag along with us bird hunting or on scouting adventures. Safety is obviously my number one priority. Take the time to teach them everything you can about safety and set an example by your own safe habits and behaviours. Know the laws before you head out. Bring extra warm clothing. Wear your blaze Orange; D&R Sports sells a variety of Youth Vests & Hats, which is where we purchased our sons. Make sure you pick a day where the weather will be decent enough to head out.

## ***Snacks!***

Pack everything. Pack your whole fridge. Just kidding, but they WILL be hungry so make sure you have all of your little ones favourite snacks with you and always pack extra.

## ***Have A Schedule***

Don't go too early. Plan your trip to suit their schedule. I like heading out right before his afternoon Nap or right after. He will usually nap along the way which makes for a well rested and happy little one AND also a happy Mom & Dad as well.

## ***Take A Few Breaks***

Bring their favourite toys. Let them Explore and Play. During his younger months, we used a backpack carrier and a front carrier for those long walks. He loved this method and being able to watch everything around us.

## ***Don't Push It!***

Remember its not always going to be about hunting when your little buddy is in tow. Don't expect to come home with limits and pull off a whole day of Hunting. Keep safety and your childs happiness first. All that matters is if your little one is learning & truly enjoying being out there with you.

Everytime you head out probably wont be a guaranteed success and there will be bumps

along the way, but remember that each time you spend outdoors with your child hunting or not, it will produce some of your most cherished memories and maybe create a passion that will be passed along for generations to come.



***Mason Boyce is proud to show off a grouse after hunting with Mom and Dad.***

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THIS  
MONTH'S  
NEWS

## Ontario Wildlife Management Strategy: Where is Ontario really going with this initiative?

By John Kaplanis, Executive Director/NOSA

Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry recently held what they called a "Stakeholder Engagement Session" that saw numerous stakeholder groups invited to downtown Toronto to discuss the prospect of how to develop a "Wildlife Management Strategy" for the province. Why after so many years the province is taking on this initiative is somewhat of a mystery. What will this new "strategy" actually accomplish? Who were the groups invited to participate? All valid questions that should be asked by hunters, trappers and outfitting and tourism elements that will no doubt be affected by this policy document. Getting answers to these questions may not be so easy.

At the table during the "stakeholder engagement" sessions were familiar faces of key stakeholder groups such as North-western Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance (NOSA), Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), Ducks Unlimited, Ontario Fur Manager's Federation (OFMF), Northern Ontario Tourism Outfitters (NOTO) and the like. These are groups who "use" wildlife consumptively and sustainably because our heritage activities and in many cases our livelihoods depend on wise and sustainable use of wildlife in its various forms. Makes good sense to have these people at the table.

But here's where things get a bit shady. Groups also present at this session included, Animal Alliance of Canada(Liz White specifically), Humane Society of Canada, Earth-roots(advocates for wolf protectionism in Ontario), Ontario Nature and some other animal welfare type group reps that were invited by OMNRF to this session. By and large this group of stakeholders could be referred to as the non-consumptive user/protection-ist crowd. Little argument there.

So does anyone see the problem with this? Do water and oil mix well? Personally I went into the session with an open mind, willing to hear the "other side" to see if they actually cared about wildlife management being carried out for the benefit of a wide range of user types all across Ontario. I regretfully, cannot say that I heard this message at all from that side. In fact if anything there was a very strong overture of "don't use wildlife at all" and "don't allow hunting or trapping to continue" in Ontario. This sentiment was repeated enough times for it to be clear at least to me that the merits and the socio-economic value of hunting and trapping are not at all, nor will they ever be appreciated by certain groups. None of this should surprise any of us.

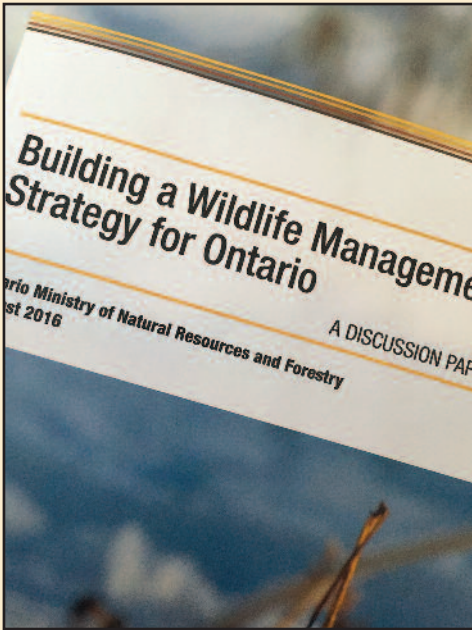
First Nations representation was also invited but there no representative from NAN was in attendance in this group meeting. This isn't surprising, since at so many of these types of forums First Nation's reps chose not to attend. Read that correctly; they choose to stay out of the discussions. Why? This is a major problem that they themselves can fix, if they commit to participating alongside other stakeholder groups, many of which are actively engaged in conservation efforts meant to ensure long term sustainability of wildlife resources that provide for "rights based harvest". In many ways this is the "elephant in the room" and the discussion needs to start and they need to become an accountable player in wildlife management and conservation.

What is OMNRF attempting to do with this initiative? We need to be wary here, and I say this not out of paranoia but rather recent history has shown that the role and the value of the contributions of hunters and trappers in Ontario is arguably not being given the credit they deserve for being Ontario's first line of environmentalists. After all, we recognize that with balanced wildlife populations, all Ontario residents, both consumptive and non-consumptive users, will benefit by having stable and balanced wildlife populations for us all to hunt, trap, view, photograph and simply enjoy on the landscape.

What can you do? OMNRF has quietly posted a request for public input on the proposal by posting it on the Environmental Registry. Basically OMNRF is asking for comments about what a Wildlife Management Strategy should entail. Hunters and trappers and all "consumptive" users must strongly make their views known. Deadline for submissions is November 17, 2016 so please go to [www.ebr.gov.on.ca](http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca) and in the search window type in ER#012-8249 to submit your comments. You can help us by pointing out the following in your submission:

- wildlife and game populations should be managed for optimum population health to ensure a variety of intrinsic and socio-economic benefits by all Ontarians.
- the Government of Ontario must ensure sufficient funding for wildlife conservation work, research and monitoring to continue at a high level of reliability and confidence in the data collected to ensure the greatest benefit to wildlife population health.
- the Government of Ontario must recognize the important and critical role of providing opportunity to hunt and trap in Ontario because the economic benefit of these opportunities directly influence wildlife program funding, therefore more opportunity to participate in hunting and trapping must be explored and offered to Ontario residents and also to non-resident tourists.
- the Government of Ontario through the OMNRF should promote the values of hunting and trapping through website marketing and also through providing educational tools and programs for schools, to tell the story about Ontario's rich conservation history and how hunters and trappers have positively contributed to it.

A Wildlife Management Strategy for Ontario must be designed to keep and promote hands on conservation methods that ensure abundant and healthy wildlife populations. Hunting and trapping are the primary tools of conservation. When we manage for stable and healthy populations of all species of wildlife that interact with one another, then we ensure a healthy wildlife resource will exist in Ontario for future generations to enjoy.







## THIS MONTH'S NEWS

# NOSA Slams Environmental Report on Moose Management



A recently released report by Ontario's Environmental Commissioner Dianne Saxe, titled "Small Steps Forward" is being harshly criticized by the Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance (NOSA) as not going nearly far enough to hold OMNRF's feet to the fire on moose management specifically. The annual report is essentially a "state of the resource" report on the environment and wildlife management matters as undertaken by OMNRF. However it is well known that the Commissioner's position is by appointment by the Liberal Government so it should be of little surprise that this report merely glosses over or completely misses the mark on many important moose management topics.

Of specific concern to NOSA is the fact that although the Commissioner highlights the importance of moose habitat, she gives OMNRF no direct mandate to address the detailed concerns relating to ensuring moose habitat is managed diligently on the landscape. Her recommendation is that OMNRF "examine and publicly report on whether habitat-related issues are playing a role in moose declines" is vague and just barely acknowledges the fact that quality habitat is absolutely critical when conducting forestry operations, cutting, and reforestation/regenerating the habitat to take into account the full suite of habitat needs that moose require for optimum population health. This is a very complex matter and the many complexities of quality moose habitat are not specifically outlined in Saxe's report and NOSA fears that this will simply allow OMNRF to continue to do what they have been doing for too many years now.

And what has OMNRF been doing? OMNRF at almost every bureaucratic level dealing with public stakeholders are on public record stating that they believe moose habitat is being managed well in Ontario. In fact NOSA's representatives and Local Citizens Committee(LCC) reps have sat in such sessions on many occasions listening to OMNRF bureaucrats and forestry staff proclaim that moose habitat values are given as high a priority as they can, however the one constant that has remained through each of these forums is that OMNRF has not once been able to demonstrate or display any collection of data or long term moose habitat inventory documentation of any kind to show that the relationship between moose population health and quality moose habitat is being maintained at a level that will benefit the moose population rather than hinder it as it remains in decline. If anything, it would appear that a "seat of the pants" approach is being taken in the mere hope that in northern Ontario's vast timbered woodland, the habitat problem will just take care of itself. It is NOSA's contention that nothing can be further from the truth.

The Commissioner's report does not direct OMNRF to honestly address the impact of cutting a mixed forest (which is good for moose) and then spraying it to kill off any new regeneration in order to prep it for plantation type conifer based reforestation (usually in the form of Jack Pine which is not a preferred species for moose

at all). The report does not specifically address the need to plan for sufficient patches of heavy winter cover that takes into account nearby regeneration in newly logged cuts to therefore limit the distance moose must travel between cover and prime browse in late winter. The report does not address the need to maintain heavy conifer in the form of black spruce near summer aquatic feeding areas to ensure the proper level of thermal protection during warm periods where moose must seek shade to maintain a lower body temperature. All of these little details matter now more than ever before, yet it seems OMNRF has just not been willing to address them.

Predation issues as they relate to the affects on moose population decline, seems to be a major topic that has been hi-jacked by environmental and animal rights groups in southern Ontario. The issue of predation is real. Wolf populations are at an all time high in northern Ontario and the political will to protect wolves instead of moose seems to be driven by southern Ontario Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). But the Commissioner's report actually praises the Ontario Government for pulling back on a plan to more actively manage wolves as part of the moose management plan. So while the Commissioner criticizes OMNRF's moose policies, she completely misses key parts of it that are missing or she condones parts of it that continue to be failing altogether ie. predator and habitat management.

Not surprisingly, the Commissioner gives OMNRF a pass on managing hunting. It seems that hunting in Ontario is once again becoming the convenient target of a political and bureaucratic system that seems intent on tweaking and tinkering with regulations to reduce or eliminate hunting opportunity altogether, meanwhile they fiddle, while our moose population "burns" to the ground.

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**THIS  
MONTH'S  
NEWS**

## **A Letter of Thanks from Conservative MP Robert Sopuck**



*Dear friends,*

As you likely know by now, our efforts to defeat C-246 have been successful, as Parliament voted by a margin of 198-84 to stop this terribly flawed legislation from moving forward. This legislation would have opened the door to animals rights, and threatened legitimate and accepted animal use such as medical research, fishing, livestock farming, hunting, and trapping.

Defeating this legislation was truly a team effort, and I want to thank you very much for playing such a major role in our success. This is a perfect example of what can be done when likeminded groups step up to the plate and work together to protect a way of life.

But we must never forget that the animal rights zealots will stop and nothing to destroy our very way of life. We must be eternally vigilant.

I am proud of the work that has been done on this particular file, and I look forward to continuing to work together to promote and protect traditional outdoor activities such as hunting, angling and trapping, and to ensure the continued success of our farming and ranching industries in Canada.

*Thank you,*

**Robert Sopuck, MP**

**Dauphin-Swan River-Neepawa(Manitoba)**

**Critic for Fish and Wildlife Conservation and Parks Canada**

## **How Did Northern MPs Vote on C-246**

Bill C-246 or the Animal Rights Bill would have legally changed the way that various forms of animal use and consumption are handled. The private members Bill was flawed in so many legal ways. Depending on how the legislation would have been interpreted, would have assuredly resulted in a plethora of court battles that would pit farmer, hunter, trapper or sport angler against the court system and a judge's interpretation of the new law.

That is why it had to get voted down. While MPs like Conservative Bob Sopuck from Manitoba took the lead on this fight in Ottawa, it is important to note that the Liberal MP who introduced this private member's Bill did not receive a lot of support by even his own party! So, who did support the Bill? You need to know this.

Upon researching how the vote played out on C-246 it has been determined that except for only one NDP MP, the entire NDP federal caucus voted in favour of it! All except one! So now you know where the NDP stands on any future proposals which threaten to take your "consumptive" outdoor use to the court room to challenge you on the basis of animal cruelty.

How did our northern area MPs vote? Specifically from Thunder Bay? MP Patty Hajdu and MP Don Rusnak did not vote in favour of C-246. This is an important indication that these MPs listened to their constituents who live in the heart of hunting, fishing and trapping heaven. They should be commended for supporting their constituents and using common sense when they weighed in on 246. Although as one might expect, the Liberal support was highly polarized and split on the vote, the majority of Liberals also did not support the Bill. So for now it is dead. But don't think we have heard the last of this attempt by animal rights groups who basically have one goal - which is to give animals equivalent rights to humans.





Photo By John Kaplanis

# Return to Moose Country!

By John Kaplanis



It's been three years since our party of moose hunters was fortunate enough to get an adult moose tag in the Ontario moose lottery. Being successful this year, we immediately started making plans to capitalize on this increasingly rare opportunity. With the moose population in decline in WMU 13 we elected to move to another unit in hopes of better hunting opportunity. We would not be disappointed with the change.

By doing a bit of research to find out where tag availability and relative moose densities might provide with a better chance to harvest a bull during the early archery season, we were able to narrow down some viable options. The move away from WMU 13 was a reluctant one for our group but the chance to explore new areas was also enticing. So our plans to hunt elsewhere took us west. It was an area where multiple WMU's sort of converged together and in these individual WMU's the moose population was still managing to hang on, so at least we had confidence that we might actually see something!

The move to the new area involved booking with a resort that was centrally located and could conveniently offer us a base camp that provided us proximity within an hour's drive to our hunting destinations. We selected Lake Kashabowie Lodge for this purpose and lodge owner and proprietor Leo Hockenhull did not disappoint us with his accommodations and hospitality at the lodge. Having hunted out of tent spike camps and Spartan type cabin accommodations in the past, this resort was more than we could ask for. It was good to be able to have hot water, showers, toilets and fully equipped kitchen, not to mention a warm dry bed to come back to after a long day of hunting.

I did a bit of scouting of the general area, along with some map research to narrow down the search for viable hunting spots within the unit. While scouting on the ground, the evidence of moose was well distributed so it came down to selecting which specific sites I wanted to direct our hunting efforts on. Things looked really good. By the time we got settled into the resort and headed out for our first evening hunt, I was pumped to say the least! My son was joining me on this hunt for his one available overnighter to spend with us at the lodge so he and I had plans to hunt about 2km's away from our two other party members.

We did some calling in a beautiful freshly cutover piece of bush that faded off into several side ravines. It was a perfect set up and the wind was calm. The call carried it seemed for miles that night. At dark we quietly slipped out of the area and planned to return early the next morning.

I could hardly get a wink of sleep that night. We were up and at it early, making camp coffee and getting our gear ready. We made it to our hunting spot while it was still dark, and we waited a bit until legal light to begin slowly walking back into the cutover, calling as we moved along every 100 yds or so. After about an hour of daylight I began to hear the gentle moaning and whines of a cow moose down in one of the ravines adjacent to the cut hill top. We made it to the top of the cutover hill where we set up our ambush plan. I was hoping the cow near us had also drawn some bulls into the area with her. I really wanted to get a shot at a moose for my son so I worked the call and tried to entice a bull to us.

Then off to my left against the treeline near the ravine, I noticed movement as a small bull began working along the edge 100 yards away. I watched him through the binoculars as he moved away from us. Glassing ahead of him I could see why. Another larger bull, only his antlers could be spotted and he was standing beside a cow moose. It was at this moment that I saw something magical. The larger bull "mounted" the cow in an attempt to breed her. This was a moment rarely seen by humans so I felt very lucky to witness nature in it's glory. The game was on.

Eventually the cow and larger bull disappeared from our sight, however my calling finally lured the smaller bull in our direction. I tried to position ourselves to be able to get a shot at the young bull but when it broke the cover of the alders it stopped and picked me off standing in the open cut 65yds away. I was busted. My only hope was to try to convince the bull that I was still a moose! I moved away and grunted and swayed back and forth in hope that the bull would follow right past my son who was ready and waiting.

At this same time, I noticed the larger bull and the cow on the other side of a hill I had just gone over the top of! We were covered up in moose! So the game plan changed as I signalled to my son that I was going to try to stalk within range of the bigger bull. I managed to get to within around 60yds which is a comfortable shot for me on an archery range, however even with the bull standing slightly quartering away from me, I elected to pass on this shot. The thought of wounding and not finding this beautiful animal was enough for me to wait and as luck would have it, that bull walked out of my life forever!

After a week of bow hunting in this unit, my faith was restored in the prospect of our moose population rebounding. Our group saw at least 15 moose and we heard many others in the bush. My son's one morning of bow hunting with me will go down as one of the best hunting experiences we've ever shared.

The stay at Lake Kashabowie Lodge made the week off from work seem like a real vacation for me, one that was much needed and won't ever be forgotten. I can't wait to return next year. If we draw a tag that is!



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# Members In The Field



*Remi Thurier loves the Team NIOSA wear!*



*Leslie Fonso and her two kids Jackson and Carly share in goose hunting success*



*Katryn Saunders with her first crossbow buck!*



*Carter Ukrainec proud to show off his grouse hunting trophy after a hunt with grampa Dennis*



*Brady Fisher with a hard earned grouse*



*Courtney Cavicchiolo shows the boys how grouse hunting is done!*



*John Phyllis with his first archery season moose!*



*Kaplanis kids are always smiling on the hunt: Athen and cousins Anthony Jr. and Lexi!*