

Bow & Youth Hunting Guide



NOV



New Media • Friday, September 13, 2024

Dedicated to the Community for Generations



Twig's Beverage

920 S. Franklin St. Shawano, WI • 715-526-5031



Bottle House Antiques

701 S. Main Street • Shawano, WI • (715) 853-8722



Tatted Dad Co.

113 N. Main Street, Shawano, WI



The Blend

111 N. Main Street, Shawano, WI



A New Lease

152 N. Main Street, Shawano, WI



Young guns: Find ideal hunting bows, crossbows, firearms for youth hunters

BY ROSS BIELEMA
Correspondent

Brock Smejkal still remembers the sting of the 20-gauge single-shot shotgun he used to fire the slug that killed his first deer.

"I was afraid of recoil when I was a kid, too," Smejkal said.

He later switched to a .243 rifle after Wisconsin deer hunting laws changed to legalize centerfire rifles in all counties, and that bolt-action didn't pack quite the same wallop.

Now he's 21 and co-manager (along with Jesse Ketterhorn) of Butch's Archery and Outdoor Sports in Embarrass, helping youths and adults alike find just the right firearms, bows and crossbows to fit their bodies and needs.

On Sept. 3 and with less than two weeks to go before the Sept. 14 archery and crossbow deer opener, both staffers were helping a steady stream of customers and replacing strings, cables and other equipment on bows and crossbows.

Up at Lena Swamp Archery in Oconto Falls, owner Wade Jeske and his son, sales manager James Jeske, were doing the same thing.

Both Jeskes shared their expertise on finding the ideal hunting tools for young hunters. Many youth compound bows are also ideal for some women, who also have shorter arms (and therefore draw lengths) and less strength (so less draw weight).

Butch's also carries a wide selection of firearms and ammunition, including youth guns. Lena Swamp Archery does not carry firearms.

When it comes to a mild recoil (more commonly called "kick"), the .243, 7mm-08 and .350 Legend are top choices for youngsters, Smejkal said.

Several gun makers offer low-cost, bolt-action rifles with stock spacers that

can be removed or added as the child grows, accommodating arms of different lengths. Most youth guns are also suited to more petite women. Smejkal showed off a Winchester XPR bolt-action youth gun in the straightwall .350 Legend, a relatively new cartridge recently allowed in some states (like Iowa and Illinois) that previously only allowed shotguns.

Savage offers Axis 2 and 110 Models with removable stock spacers, and includes a scope for \$650. Many makers are offering such value-priced "package" guns with a scope for those on a tight budget.

If Dad or Grandpa wants to hand down a time-worn .270 or 30-06, there's the option of reduced-recoil ammo. Several ammunition manufacturers offer these softer loads that won't beat up the delicate shoulders of a child. Just make sure the length of pull — the distance from the trigger to the buttplate of the stock — fits the young shooter well. A stock that's too long won't allow the user to get a firm fit in the pocket of the shoulder, and that leads to painful recoil.

Children and some women who are recoil-sensitive have another option, too. With the statewide legalization of crossbows for all ages in 2014, pro shops have seen a huge increase in crossbow sales. In most cases, archery shops are selling more crossbows than compound bows. The compact crossbow is a perfect choice for anyone who doesn't like the noise and kick of a rifle, Smejkal said.

Wade Jeske said the crossbow is also perfect for young or female bowhunters who are struggling to shoot more than 35 or 40 pounds of draw weight, which could lead to more wounded deer. Most crossbows, even the compact ones, are shooting faster than 300 feet per second,



Brock Smejkal, co-manager of Butch's Archery and Outdoor Sports in Embarrass, shows off two options for young hunters: a Savage rifle with an adjustable stock and a Bear Royale compound bow that can be adjusted from five to 50 pounds of draw weight and reduced-recoil ammunition for less kick in the shoulder. Smejkal and co-manager Jesse Ketterhoven are busy getting bows and crossbows ready for the Sept. 14 archery deer opener. ROSS BIELEMA

which typically will shoot all the way through a deer's chest and create a quickly fatal hole.

Young archers have never had a bigger selection of compound bows than now. Ever-advancing technology has seen compact marvels that are as short as 27 inches axle to axle (compound bows use cams and cables to create a reduced hold weight similar to a pulley). Leading the way among youth bows is Bear Archery, one of the oldest bow brands that was founded by Fred Bear in 1933.

YOUTH, CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Good Luck Bow Hunters

Suring Auto & Hardware

Heasley Street in Suring

INGEL PROCESSING LLC

W9262 COUNTY ROAD A | SHAWANO, WI 54166

CALL OR
TEXT US! (715) 851-8281

DEER PROCESSING \$125.00

FEE INCLUDES SKIN, CUT, GRIND, VAC-SEAL,
AND SHARP FREEZE.

- ✓ After-Hours Drop-off Available
- ✓ 15+ Product Options
- ✓ Online Appointment Scheduling
- ✓ Professional

SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION!



Est. 1947

www.rewmotorsinc.com

N2960 Hwy 45 Antigo, WI
Ph. 715-627-7124

N9705 Hwy 45 Birnamood, WI
Ph. 715-449-2524

0% OR LOW RATE FINANCING AVAILABLE



SIDEKICK

**GREAT
SELECTION
IN STOCK**

**GOOD LUCK
HUNTERS**

Dawn or dusk. It's ready no matter what.

Hunting season is here. The Sidekick utility vehicle gets you from the driver's seat to the tree stand in a hurry with a top speed of 40 mph and the strength to haul a half-ton and tow a full ton.

Visit your Kubota dealer today for a demo!

KubotaUSA.com



Kubota

2 YEARS / 1000 HOURS



Est. 1947

www.rewmotorsinc.com

*Excludes California models. © Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2024. Your Kubota Limited warranty gives you specific legal rights. You may have other rights which vary from state to state. Kubota Tractor Corporation does not authorize any person to create for KTC any obligation or liability other than that stated in the limited warranty. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, disclaimer, safety and product and incentive offer information, consult your local Kubota dealer and the Owner's Warranty Information Guide for the Kubota limited warranty on all products. Visit KubotaUSA.com/disclaimers for more information.



Enroll in hunter education and get ready for fall hunting in Wisconsin.

WISCONSIN DNR

Are young hunters ready for hunter ed class?

By ROSS BIELEMA
Correspondent

When is your son, daughter, grandson or granddaughter ready take a hunter safety class so they can carry a firearm, bow or crossbow on their own?

This is a simple question that often has no easy answers, but patience and empathy are the keys.

I've taught hunter education classes since the mid-1980s, first in Iowa and then in Wisconsin, with more than 20 years

in Iola and Waupaca.

I've had the privilege of working with one of the largest volunteer instructor groups in the state, led by the capable and award-winning chief instructor, Paul Piencikowski.

I sought out the expert advice of Pienckowski and our Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources outdoor skills trainer, Kayla Sasse of the Green Bay office, who coordinates the paperwork and equipment needed for our Waupaca Hunter Safety Group to

field train and test as many as 120 students at a time.

Piencikowski, now in his 15th year as a volunteer instructor, has coordinated more than 100 classes with more than 4,800 students. His group has won Hunter Education Group of the Year honors several times, and the class draws students from as far away as Illinois and Michigan because of its reputation (hunter ed classes have reciprocity in all 50 states).

CLASS, CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

CONVENIENT • TRUSTED LOCALLY OWNED

Pig Stop Fuel Center - Crystal Clean Car Wash

Iverson's

piggly wiggly



BEST OF
OCONTO COUNTY
TIMES HERALD

2023

409 E. HIGHLAND DR,
OCONTO FALLS
920-846-2805

BEST OF
OCONTO COUNTY
TIMES HERALD

2023

CLASS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

When I first taught Wisconsin traditional classes in Iola, our group there was under the false impression that we couldn't fail any student, so we didn't. If a youngster had clear attention problems or otherwise did something wrong, we'd tell the parent about it but then send him or her on their way with a passing grade. This was not only a disservice to the child and family, but also a potential safety issue as this immature or inattentive charge now went afiel with a loaded firearm.

Piencikowski's group, which teaches the internet field course, typically fails about 10% of their students. There is a minimum grade on the written test, but the most likely culprit for failing is either sweeping someone with the muzzle of a gun or putting their finger on the trigger. TAB-K is drummed into students' heads throughout the day, and is a simple way to remember four fundamental gun safety rules that would prevent most mishaps if obeyed.

The internet field course is the hands-on portion of the DNR's online hunter ed course, available to anyone for free on their website. The \$10 field course teaches safe fence crossings, zones of fire, types of firearms actions, loading and unloading, tree stand safety and overall safe gun handling under the watchful eye of many instructors.



Paul Piencikowski, chief instructor of a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource volunteer hunter education group that has taught more than 4,800 students, leads a class at the First Assembly of God Church in Waupaca. Maturity, not age, is a key factor in determining if your child is ready for a hunter safety class, he advised.

ROSS BIELEMA

The students then test one-on-one to prove what they've learned.

Piencikowski became an instructor shortly after taking a traditional course with his daughter in 2009.

"During one of the teaching sessions, the instructor placed an overhead on the projector and said, 'You can't see this, but if you could ...' These were the exact words I heard nearly 30 years earlier when I had attended hunter education," he said. "I felt that there had to be a more effective way to instruct."

The internet course alone is enough to obtain a hunter safety certificate for those age 18 and up, but it's recommended that everyone takes a field

course. During COVID, the state briefly allowed even youngsters to take the online course alone, and Piencikowski's group rallied in Madison to argue against what they felt was an irresponsible and unsafe practice.

Although there's no minimum age limit to take a class, "Curriculum is written at a sixth grade level, and your student will need to be able to comprehend the material and read and pass a written exam," Sasse noted.

Piencikowski puts it this way: "Students under the age of 12 have huge challenges to overcome as the program is designed for the comprehension and physical capabilities of a 12-year old. However, safety is not

a factor of age but rather responsibility. Students must understand the magnitude of the responsibility it takes to handle a firearm safely under all circumstances from the moment they pick it up until they set it down."

It's not just about pulling the trigger, he added. "They need constant awareness of what is in their hands, where their hands are and where the muzzle is pointed at all times," he said. "The moment a person loses focus, they create an unsafe situation."

Mentor hunting — hunting with an adult hunter safety graduate — is an option for anyone who is both too young and immature for a class or even

for an adult who hasn't yet learned the safety basics, Sasse noted.

"You can still hunt with your young kid even if they haven't taken hunter safety," she said. "They're required to be on a mentor license until they turn 12 anyway, so there's no need to rush it. And even at 12 and 13 years old, they need to be accompanied within sight and voice distance, so they can't go out truly on their own until they're 14."

This explains the mentor hunting program in detail: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/OutdoorSkills/mentor>.

Parents or other adults can start their youngsters well before an official class to learn TAB-K and carry a BB or toy gun.

"It's never too early to start working on firearm safety at home. Have them start memorizing TAB-K and make them recite it every time you do any shooting," Sasse said. "Practice not only target shooting with a BB gun (or toy gun), but also walking around 'hunting' with it, reinforcing how to keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times."

Parents sometimes force their kids to take a class before they are ready, and this contributes to the failure rate, Piencikowski noted.

"This results in myself personally guiding students and parents through the unsuccessful experi-

- DID YOU KNOW?
- TAB-K stands for
 - Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
 - Always point your muzzle (end of the barrel) in a safe direction.
 - Be sure of your target and what's in front of and behind it.
 - Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.

ence," he said. "At best, it is emotionally devastating for the student. At worst, the student is turned off to anything relating to firearms. We do not experience joy in failing any student, but if we have to make a choice between keeping people happy and keeping people safe, we will default to safety every time. Parents, if your child fails, please do not take it as a personal attack on you. Rather, recognize that instructors want to keep you and the public safe."

The failed test can become a positive "teachable moment" that a parent can use to work on until the next class.

If your child is constantly misplacing things or has difficulty staying focused on tasks for long periods, they may not be ready for a class, or the more important responsibility of carrying a loaded firearm, he advised.

Start here to find a hunter ed class: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/Education/OutdoorSkills/safetyEducation>.

Ross@wolfiverccw.com



Go big with a land loan!

Wisconsin's great outdoors has a lot to offer, and with a land loan from GreenStone you can enjoy it to the fullest. With affordable terms on unlimited acres, it's never been easier to hunt, camp or just get out there on your very own land.

Contact any of our five Wisconsin locations today.

800-444-3276





Pond-Hill Processing



Eat Pork

BEEF by the 1/2,
1/4 or whole

PORK by the 1/2
or whole

Custom butchering and smoking

W16257 COUNTY RD. Q, WITTENBERG, WI 54499

(715) 253-2491

PONDHILLPROCESSING.COM
PONDHILLPROC@GMAIL.COM



Avoid tree stand tragedies with safety tips

Tree stand accidents are a leading cause of hunting-related injuries, with 300-500 fatalities annually in the U.S., according to the International Hunter Education Association. As archery and cross-bow deer hunting season begins this fall, prioritizing safety is essential.

“You’re much more likely to get injured from a fall than a gunshot wound,” said Dr. Michael Clark, EMS medical director with Aspirus MedEvac. “It’s a concern that we should definitely take precautions to avoid.”

Falls from tree stands can lead to severe injuries, including fractures and potentially life-threatening conditions.

“Many of these injuries are orthopedic, including wrist, ankle and femur fractures,” Clark said, while also emphasizing the risk of head, neck, chest and abdominal injuries. “The higher up you go, the more likely you are to sustain a significant injury.”

Falls from heights of more than 10 feet, which is common with most tree stands, tend to result in more severe injuries.

To ensure a safe hunting experience, Clark and Joseph Mulrooney, a recreation warden with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR),



Joseph Mulrooney, a recreation warden with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), said the best ways to prevent tree stand falls is to stay connected to the tree with a tree strap and to wear a safety harness.

provide the following tree stand safety practices:

- Stay connected. “Every year, we have dozens of people falling out of trees, which is why we highly recommend staying connected to the tree with a tree strap,” said Mulrooney. A tree strap will provide stability while climbing to prevent falls.
- Wear safety harness-

es. Wearing a safety harness is critical when using a tree stand. “Not wearing a safety harness is one of the most common reasons we see people falling out of tree stands,” Mulrooney said.

- Inspect gear. Inspect your tree stands and related equipment before the season for any wear or damage. “I highly recom-

mend people go out in August or September to make sure your straps are in good shape,” said Mulrooney, noting that straps can develop tears or bites from rodents in the off-season. “Straps are cheap. A broken leg isn’t.”

- Use haul lines. Avoid carrying gear while climbing. Instead, use haul lines to lift equipment safely.

- Know your location. Using a GPS app can provide precise coordinates if needed in an emergency.

They also offer these emergency preparedness tips:

- Develop a safety plan. “Make sure your family knows where you are and when you plan to be back so if something were to happen and you don’t re-

turn, they know where to look for you,” said Clark, stressing the importance of having a clear safety plan before heading out to hunt.

- Prepare for communication. Keep your cell phone fully charged and be familiar with key landmarks. “Many times a text message can go through when a regular phone call can’t,” Clark said. Text someone and have them make the 911 call for you.

- Bring a first aid kit. Equip yourself with a comprehensive first aid kit, including essentials like a tourniquet and wound-packing materials.

• Assess your situation. If you find yourself injured and alone, Clark advises performing “a quick head-to-toe assessment of yourself.” Understanding the severity of your injuries can help you communicate your condition effectively to rescuers.

- Stay in place. In the event of an injury, remaining in place may be your safest option. Conserve energy and avoid worsening your condition while waiting for help to arrive.

By following these safety guidelines and expert recommendations, hunters can significantly reduce the risk of injury and ensure a safe hunting season.



Your Hunting Headquarters!

We Carry A Full Line Of Hunting Supplies and Also LP Gas For Your Hunting Needs.



GRESHAM HARDWARE

“Your Hometown Store”

715-787-3288

750 Commerce Way
Gresham, WI 54128

gresham.hardware.wi@gmail.com

GOOD LUCK BOW HUNTERS!

OCONTO FALLS AUTO SUPPLY

Formerly Kozak's

CARQUEST AUTO PARTS

“WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU IN ALL YOUR AUTOMOTIVE NEEDS!”



BEST OF Oconto County 2023

110 E. HIGHLAND DRIVE,
OCONTO FALLS, WI
920-846-2803

Over 100 Years of Experience

KROPF'S MEATS

Custom Butchering - Smoking

Processing of Beef & Pork

715-793-4675

YOUTH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

“Fred Bear (Archery) is in a league by themselves,” Jeske said, referring to their extensive youth bow offerings.

One way to determine an archer's draw length is to measure the "wing-span" from outstretched fingertip to fingertip, then cut that distance in half. Jeske noted that for every two inches of vertical growth, a child typically gains one inch of draw length. A pro shop will use a calibrated arrow for an exact measurement.

Both Jeske and Smejkal recommend the Bear Royale for younger kids (ages 5-7 or so) and the Bear Legit for kids a bit older. Both bows are extremely adjustable (the Royale has draw lengths from 12-27 inches and five to 50 pounds of draw weight, while the Legit boasts 14-30 inches of draw and 10-70 pounds of draw weight). Both could easily be used by adults for deer hunting.

Both models represent great value because their low price (the 27-inch Royale is about \$300 and the 30-inch Legit is about \$400) includes an arrow rest, sight, stabilizer and quiver, which all are often extra on adult bows.

The elder Jeske also noted that these youth bows hold their value, because they fit so many shooters and are top-sellers with his female



Wade Jeske, right, owner of Lena Swamp Archery in Oconto Falls, and his son, sales manager James Jeske, are fans of Bear Archery compound bows for young hunters because of their wide range of adjustments and low cost. Their shop received a top 100 dealer award from Bear Archery last year.

customers, too.

Other good choices for youngsters include the Diamond Pro 305 (a pro shop only model), Elite Ember, Mathews Image and Prima, and Bow Tech, Smejkal said. The latter brand is among the easiest to adjust, too, he noted.

Youth models typically have cams (wheels) designed for smooth shooting, with slightly less speed than more expen-

sive adult models, Smejkal added. But set to higher weights, they can still shoot an arrow around 300 feet per second or more.

Both shops have indoor ranges for fine-tuning a bow. The elder Jeske said he's catered to youth archers since his shop opened in 1998, with free shooting for kids up to age 18 indoors and a nearby outdoor range with two el-

evated platforms. His shop has more than 400 kids enjoying April and May leagues, and he supports archery programs for Boy Scouts, middle and high school kids in Oconto Falls, the Shawano County 4-H Shooting Sports program and special needs youths.

"You've got to keep them shooting," he said.

ross@wolfriverccw.com

Some fall hunting seasons already open with more to follow

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds hunters to prepare for the opening of several hunting seasons in September. Hunters can once again head to Wisconsin's wild spaces as these seasons open across the state.

There are six dates throughout September when seasons open. Hunters are encouraged to double-check season dates and that they have acquired all necessary licenses and stamps before going out for a hunt.

Already open as of Sept. 1 are seasons for the common gallinule, early Canada goose, early teal, mourning dove, rail and snipe.

Bear season opened
Sept. 4.

Coming up and set to open Sept. 14 are seasons for cottontail rabbit (Northern Zone), deer (archery and crossbow), ruffed grouse (Zone A), squirrels, turkey and you waterfowl.

Regular goose season
opens Sept. 16.

Seasons for duck in the Northern Zone and woodcock open Sept. 21, while duck season in the Southern Zone will open

Sept. 28.

The DNR also reminds hunters of mobile-friendly online resources — including hunting regulations, season dates, hunting hours and more — available on the DNR's hunting webpage.

Hunters can find information on species population levels and hunting opportunities on the DNR's fall hunting forecasts.

A list of public lands open to hunting is available using the public access lands webpage. This web resource lets hunters plan their next adventure from the comfort of their home.

The fields and forest lands interactive game bird hunting tool provides hunters information on managed dove fields, as well as habitat for hunting ruffed grouse and woodcock.

Anyone born on or after Jan. 1, 1973, must have a hunter education certification to purchase a hunting license unless hunting under the Mentored Hunting Law.

Learn more about safe hunting in Wisconsin and register to take a hunter education course on the DNR website.

LARK COUNTRY STORE

W5431 Lark Road, Shawano • 715-758-7579

M-F: 8-5
Sat: 8-4:30

WE FILL L.P. CYLINDERS

from 5 to 100# Forklift & RV Tanks!

New & Used Tanks Available

**Lowest
Propane Prices
in the Area!**

- LP Cylinder Inspection & Repair
- Custom Rubber Hoses
- Stocked Regulators & Parts

**Lambright
Country
Chimes**

**Raw,
Fresh
Local
Honey**

**Bulk Foods • Candies
Snacks Gifts**

**Hand Loomed Rugs
Beautiful Placemats**

Bulk Popcorn • Puzzles

Kitchenware

RADA Cutlery

Rhythm Motion Clocks

Preserves & So Much More!

**Everything for
Baking**

**Books &
Cookbooks**

**Canning
Supplies**

Bulk Spices

Starting in Early Spring

we take orders for Fresh

Blueberries,

Cherries,

Peaches, Pears,

& Concord Grapes

Fresh fruits will be
received as they
come into season.

Charlie's County Market



Charlie's is Home for
all your Bow Hunting
Grocery Needs!



South Main
Produce Co.

Fresh Cut Steaks,
Homemade Deli Treats
Fresh Baked Bread
Awesome Bottle Shop



Mum's
BAKERY



BC's
bottle shop

Charlie's
County
Market
corner
deli



521 S. Main, Shawano
715-524-2523
charliescountymarket.com