

BEARS UP CLOSE! HUNTING *the West*

Spring 2006



**Bear
Attack
SURVIVED!**

**TURKEY
Tactics**



**VARMINT
OPTIONS**



**California
BLACKTAILS
& BOARS!**

Display until July 18, 2006

\$5.95US \$6.95CAN

61>



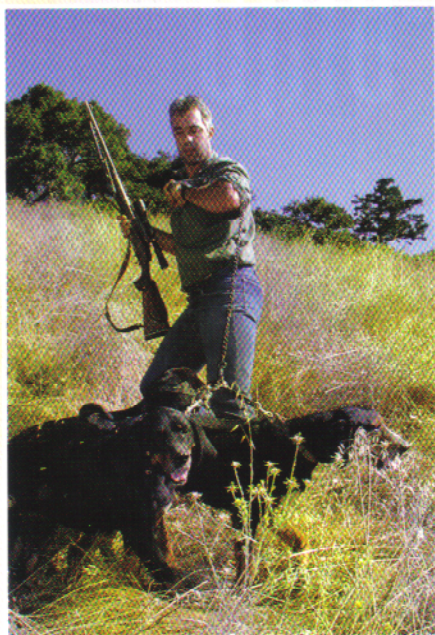
PLUS: Muleys, Moose, Quail & More!



Doggin' California Blacktails

Story and photos
By Cork Graham

Columbia blacktails can be hunted in a variety of ways, and in parts of California, dogs play a large roll in both tradition and success.



Above: Dan, III with his last-day, 2005, 4x5 coastal blacktail for 2006.

Left: Dan, III working his way down into the canyon with the black-and-tans on the last day of the 2005 season.

Family hunting traditions continue to fade with the onslaught of malls, video games, and ever-increasing lack of opportunities in California. On the second weekend of the 2005 A-zone season, in a small sliver of the Bay Area Peninsula, just over a ridge from one of the major hotbeds of anti-hunting, San Francisco, the Caughey family continues a tight family bonding activity handed down since their ancestor, John Caughey, bought a ranch at Pomponio Beach for \$3 an acre in the mid-1800s. The tradition: blacktail deer hunting with hounds.

Dan Caughey, III, 38, does his best not to be tripped or yanked by the three black-and-tan hounds on leash, as he makes his way off the steep point they've called the "Hole in the Horn" for years (Dan Sr. shot a buck in the antler there) down into a willow, tan oak, and poison oak cluttered canyon. Dotted around the rim of the canyon are hunting friends and family: Dan Jr., 60, Dan IV, Robert Caughey, 22, Ted Logothetis, 40, and Patrick Kilpatrick, 56, the actor famous for having been killed on screen by every leading man in Hollywood in the last 15 years, now on his first blacktail deer hunt.

Dan, III, needs to make his way down to the bottom of the deep canyon and then circle his way back toward the head of the canyon until one or all of the hounds catch scent of a deer. He barely makes it out of the dry-grass-and-bull-thistle-covered meadow that covers the point, and into the dark hollow, when suddenly the hounds lift their tails, sniff the air,



Dan Sr. with a coastal B&C blacktail.

and let out with a howl. Dan releases the most experienced dog. She disappears into the undergrowth.

Moving parallel to the ridge, Dan and the dogs cross another fresh trail and he let's another dog go. Another 50 yards along a well-used game trail, the last dog lets out with a loud howl, and it too is unhooked to follow another scent trail. This, time, though, Dan makes a dash for the outer edge of the brush with the hope that he, too, will get a chance at a buck the dog will have pushed ahead, or one that has doubled-back around and is sneaking its way deeper down the canyon.

Robert Caughey and his fiancé, Megan, who are waiting along the lower part of the side-ridge, don't notice the two bucks that have just sneaked up and around them only 30 yards away. Were Robert and Megan not there, Logothetis and Vivian,

Dan, III's girlfriend, who have a clear view of the two buck's escape could have easily taken a shot. But, luck is still with Logothetis and he drops a nice buck from another group of two that has appeared within a safe field of fire, further up the canyon.

Two more shots carry across the canyon and Dan's son, Daniel, IV, collects a two-by-two with his grandfather, Dan Jr. Two bucks down, one buck missed (mine), and then the hounds appear five minutes later out of the brush with Dan, III on their tail and covered in sweat, broken oak twigs and poison oak. Not bad for high noon on a hot day—an event many can legally replicate not only on private land, but also on public, in both coastal deer zones, provided an understanding of what is necessary: the proper dogs, rifles, and conditioning.



The Early Years Hunting Club: Dan Sr. and Jr. flank bluetick hound, circa 1960.

History and Legality

When most think of hunting deer with the use of dogs, images of a whitetail dashing through a Florida or Louisiana swamp to escape hounds and their 12-gauge and .30/30-armed Creole or Seminole handlers come to mind. But, long before the South had even become an idea, Spaniards had arrived in what was to be “Old California,” hunting deer and grizzly bear with dogs and cavalry lances.

While those days of bear-baiting and using dogs to run down or trap game animals are gone, the benefit of using dogs—the Department of Fish and Game has stated that only one dog per hunter is permitted in zones A and B—is evident as public

land becomes more choked in tangles of chemise, greasewood, and manzanita, with deer seasons occurring during the hottest and driest days of the year, contributing to the poor overall hunter success.

And for those inaccurately inclined to believe that the dogs actually chase down and bay the deer like dogs do bear and pigs, or that using dogs provides an unfair gauntlet for the hunter—the last person to unsuccessfully challenge the legality of this technique on such poor grounds was California State Senator Arlen Gregorio in the mid-1970s—I also add that in the five days I hunted with the Caugheys, we didn’t see bucks on three of those days: there were only fleeting glimpses of a 4X4 and two 3X3s on those days as they made their sneak deeper into the canyon, outrunning even the smartest dog.

Equipment

Shotguns and open-sighted lever action and semi-auto rifles are preferred by the Southeastern hunter; the California blacktail hunter needs a scoped rifle suited to take a buck that might jump at only 20 yards, like a quail covey, or reach out across an open field of no less than 200 yards.

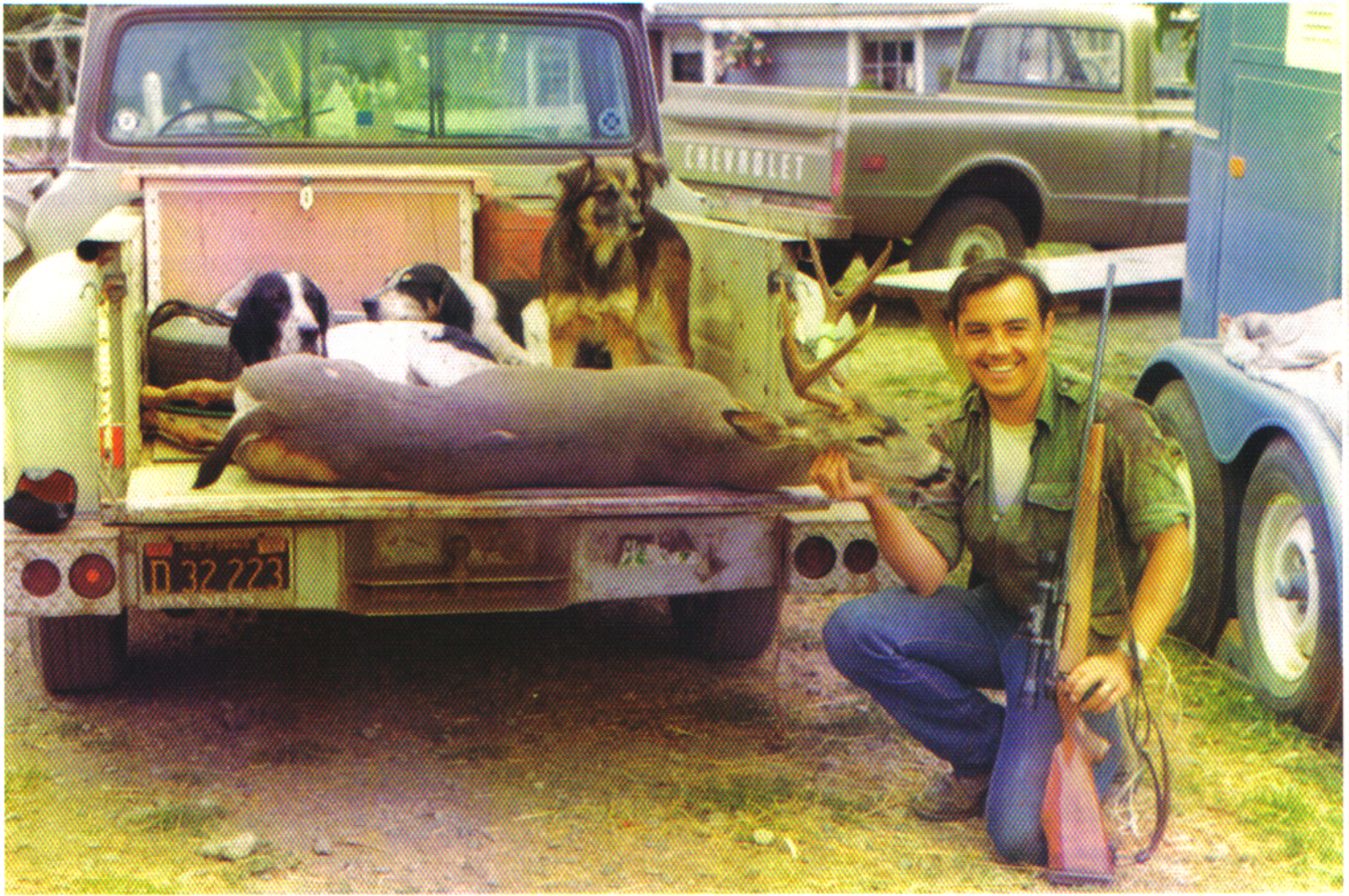
Everyone in the Caughey family uses the same rifle they use to hunt antelope, deer and elk in the rest of the western United States.

Calibers range from .243 to .308, all flat shooting

rifles. Dan Caughey, Sr., who passed away on Labor Day weekend of 1983 at the age of 73, used a .300 Winchester Magnum to take his last Boone and Crockett-recorded Columbian Blacktail. Dan, III now takes pride and joy using that heirloom for all his game: Columbian blacktail to African kudu.

Dogs and Tactics

You need to decide if you’ll be using the dog with other dogs to make a full drive to a large group of hunters on stand, which will legally permit you to have more than one dog in the pack. Or, if you will be hunting alone with a “jump dog:” remember it’s one dog per hunter. For a pack, anything more than three or four dogs for one, or even two people to walk down into a canyon is much more than most would want to handle—you’ll be the only one control-



Dan Jr. with an Australian shepherd jump dog in 1968.

ling them until they're let loose.

For a pack, most prefer to hear the romantic howl that harkens back to "Ole Yeller" and "The Yearling" and so the preferred species are hounds: redbone, blue tick, black-and-tan, and Walker. The howling, also helps to pinpoint the dog's location, but you can also put a sheep bell on your dog's collar to do the same.

Whatever choice you make, remember that all those dogs need a place to stay—howling dogs don't go over well in apartment complexes and many urban neighborhoods. If you get a pack of dogs you'll only be able to hunt the pack with a minimum of hunters equal to the number of dogs, and keeping those dogs fed can be a real eye-opener to why

everyone doesn't hunt deer with dogs.

Jump dogs are perfect for the solo hunter who comes across a small patch of willow or brambles and knows there's a deer in there because of the sign. But instead of having to try and sneak in there and bust him out of his bed, without so much as a quick shot because of the tangle, you send your jump dog down into the cover and let him run around in there. The hope is he'll come across fresh scent and hopefully run a buck out of the brush to you, offering you a shot across the canyon.

The choice for jump dog can be as specialized as an Australian sheepdog, Springer spaniel, fox/rat terrier, or blue-heeler—German

"...long before the South had even become an idea, Spaniards had arrived in what was to be "Old California," hunting deer and grizzly bear with dogs..."



2005 hunt with (left to right) Vivian Gunnerengen, Ted Logothetis, Dan, III, Dan IV, Patrick Kilpatrick, Dan Jr. and two blacktails. Cork missed his forked-horn that day.

shorthairs, wirehairs and Brittany pointers are used in Europe and would do well here, too. Your family's lapdog, in which you've noticed a good nose and hunting interest, can also get the job done. The key is to take them hunting, rewarding them when they strike a deer trail, conditioning with the associative taste of the flesh and blood when you're successful.

Aside from having the smarts to take a trail, like any bird dog would be able to do on a pheasant, the jump dog needs to be trained to return to its owner long before it's started on hunting deer. For jump dogs or a pack of hounds, put your time in training the dogs. Get them used to you running through the brambles and coming to the call

Barrel Break-In *By Tom Buller*


It's something you hear every year from guides and outfitters: "The client had a brand-new rifle and scope, but they failed to shoot it before the hunt." Of course, the results can be disastrous, but with a little time, can be remedied. The key is tending to the task before you head into the woods.

What comes with sighting-in a new gun is also breaking-in the barrel. New barrels always have oil of some type in the bore, and the first step is to clean this out. Using a patch saturated with solvent, such as Hoppes No. 9, run this down the bore to rid the oil. Always use a quality cleaning rod and cleaning rod guide, so as to protect the throat of the bore.

Once the bore is oil free, it's time to hit the range with 20 rounds of ammo, cleaning supplies and ample time. Barrel break-in is not a process to be rushed, for if done properly, the results will be impressive and long-lasting.

Fire one shot, then run a solvent-saturated patch through the bore to remove powder fouling. Follow that with a clean patch that will remove the solvent. Now, inspect for copper fouling. This can be very stubborn to get out and requires a copper solvent. Be sure to closely follow manufacturer instructions when using copper solvents, as these products can be very strong. Once all copper is removed, shoot the gun two more



or a whistle, and you'll not only be more successful, but will have that much more of an enjoyable hunt in the California coastal region. 

Editor's Note:

Writer/Director Cork Graham, author of the international bestseller, *The Bamboo Chest: An Adventure in Healing the Trauma of War* (to be turned into a movie in 2006), is also a 15-year veteran of the outdoor writing field with a passion for black bear, wild hogs, and of course Columbian blacktail deer: a book on his main passions, called Pacific Big Three, which includes work by Jim Schockey, Gen. Craig Boddington, USMC, Scott Haugen, Boyd Iverson and Dave Campbell, will be available August 2006. For more information, sign up for Cork's newsletter at www.corkgraham.com.

times and clean all powder and copper foulings again.

Next, shoot three times and clean. Shoot four more times and clean. Then shoot five more times and clean. Finally, shoot the last five shells and clean. You may find that during the break-in stages, copper foulings can be hard to get rid of. However, by the end the copper will be much easier to remove.

Once the break-in process is complete, a good rule of thumb is to thoroughly clean your rifle after every 20 shots. The entire process can take a great deal of time, especially the cleaning stages, but it will be easier to maintain a clean bore. And, of course, a clean rifle always shoots more accurately.

New Zealand Red Stag

- Airfare from LAX
- No Hidden Tag or License Fees
- No Trophy Fees!
- Free range fair chase hunt
- 6 Full Days of 2X1 Guided Hunting in New Zealand
- Accomodation & All Meals
- Beer & Wine included with Meals
- Book now for March-June 2007
- 7 nights accommodation & all meals



\$2945.00 PPDO

All Inclusive

www.sunspotsintl.com/nzhunt.php



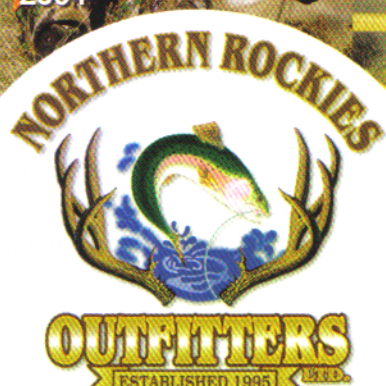
AIR NEW ZEALAND 1-800-334-5623

Hunt the BIG BUCKS of Northern Montana

Guaranteed Licenses!



- Rifle
- Archery
- Meals, lodging, guide service



MONTANA

Rich Birdsell

Licensed outfitter & guide

270 Bayou Road
Kalispell, MT 59901

www.northernrockiesoutfit.com

(406) 756-2544 or (406) 261-7424