



**BLIZZARD:** More snows mean more eyes to fool.

GEAR GUIDE

# Doctor Your Dekes

Get more snows by making your decoys glow  
BY LAWRENCE PYNE

**SNOW GEESE ARE** notorious for spotting the slightest problem in a decoy spread, but it may be what's missing from your spread that's causing them to flare: ultraviolet light. Real feathers reflect it; most decoys don't. All you need to make your spread shine is some special paint and a little time. Sprucing up your dekes with UV-reflective paint—such as Bird Vision (reelwings.com) and UVision (decoypaint.com)—can bring in the birds.

Why? White feathers and plain white paint look very different to birds, which, unlike humans, can see UV light. Feathers bounce UV rays back at incoming geese, whereas the regular paint absorbs them, according to UVision co-developer Todd Pringle. "Snows associate this difference with a threat," he says. "Even the best full-body decoys look unnatural to them." (For more information about the science behind UV-reflective paint, visit decoypaint.com.)

The bad news is that coating several hundred decoys with special UV paint is expensive and time consuming. A quart costs \$24 to \$35 and covers just a few dozen dekes. The good news is that it can give you a cutting-edge advantage, making even small decoy spreads surprisingly effective. Here's how to make the most of your paint job.



**PAINT THEM ALL:** If you can, coat all of the decoys thoroughly before using them. A big nonreflective spot in your spread could scatter the geese.

**PLACE THEM DOWNWIND:** If you're doing only a few dekes, set the doctored ones on the downwind edge of your spread, where they'll draw the most scrutiny from approaching birds.

**POSITION YOURSELF PROPERLY:** Put your blinds far enough downwind so the birds stay focused on the spread, not you. Don't take shortcuts. You still need to do everything else right.

THE 1-MINUTE NATURALIST

## PORCUPINE TIME

**PORCUPINE** breeding season has just ended—and it's a strange affair. For starters, male porkies sport internal hardware that won't drag on rough tree bark. Females have a specialized flap to cover their privates as they hustle up and down the pines. Then there's the courtship: An interested male squirts jets of urine over the female. If the gal is ready for mating, she hangs around. This is also the time of year when deer hunters and porkies cross paths. Porcupines gnaw on anything salty to balance out their low-sodium vegetarian diets. That anything includes tree stands and cabins made from plywood that contains sodium nitrate glues. Place a salt block nearby (check local regs first) to keep them from chewing your property.—T. EDWARD NICKENS



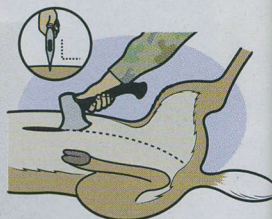
CLASSIC SKILLS

## THE HUNTER'S AXE

How to butcher a deer with this classic tool BY TOM KEER

**OLD-TIME NORTH COUNTRY** hunters used a hunter's axe with a rounded poll to dis-mantle a moose. You ought to be able to use one on a deer. Here's how:

Grip underneath the axe head with your thumb on the handle's shoulder. To open the deer's body cavity for field dressing, draw the blade down its belly. Use the same grip to cut off its tail.



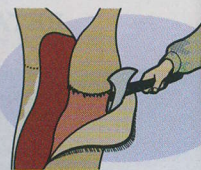
Raise the axe above your head, as you would for splitting logs, to sever the deer's legs at the knee.



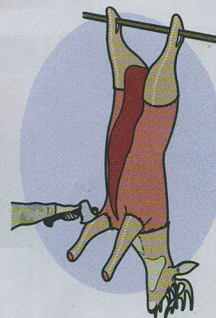
Hang the deer from its upper hind legs or head, if possible. Grip the axe shoulder; with the blade perpendicular to the hide, cut around the deer's neck and around each leg.



Pull the hide 90 degrees from the body. Place the axe head between the hide and meat, resting the poll on the connective tissue at a 45-degree angle (the blade will face out, so be careful). Push steadily until the hide is free.



Skin the legs by cutting from the body to the knee. Pull on the hide and use the poll to skin as before.



GEESE: DONALD M. JONES; PORCUPINE: MARIAN