

**DEER HUNTING'S LIKE APPLE PIE
NONE'S BAD, SOME'S JUST BETTER
November 25, 2003**

The big day finally arrived and I could no longer procrastinate. It was time to fish or cut bait. We were well along into the deer-hunting season and I had yet to make a serious effort to hunt.

Hunting Southern Tier deer is a lot less strenuous than their cousins here in the Adirondacks. For years I had shunned the sport as not being challenging enough. Instead I opted to hunt the more remote areas of the Adirondacks where you and the deer were the only factors involved. Although I participated in a great many hunts where a group of hunters moved the deer toward a waiting group of hunters on watch, I never enjoyed the action as much as still hunting.

There are few places in the Southern Tier where one can safely still hunt. There are just too many trigger-happy clowns in the woods. I call them clowns because it's just what they look like in their blaze orange suits. These are the guys that talk about sound shots or mowing into a bunch of deer with a repeating shotgun or rifle.

My type of hunting was where traversing the terrain and finding your way back to camp was as challenging as bagging the quarry. One had to be a woodsman first and a hunter second. In short, when the game was killed the fun was over. Transporting a 125 to 200 pound animal out of the woods is all part of the game that one faces when hunting the way I prefer.

I have decided that like apple pie there is no such thing as a bad pie, only that some is better than others. With that thought in mind and through the auspices of newfound friend Wally Ifflander, I have returned to hunting the Southern Tier.

Wally has 210 acres of excellent deer habitat in Allegany County with a hunting camp. This is the third season my son-in-law Jim Williams and I have been his guests. This year my oldest grandson, David, experienced his first deer hunt with us.

The season opened on Monday, the 17th of November and we arrived at camp the day before. Our hunting activity is confined to the relative safety of Wally's posted property. Taking a watch or stand and waiting for the deer to pass by is generally the way we hunt. The morning start found us in fog and rain and dampened the spirits of all, including other hunters. A large turnout of hunters helps move the deer and increase one's chances of seeing deer. We all saw deer but Wally was the only one to score. He killed a nice buck with a nine-point rack, which I dressed out to show David how to do his when he finally scores. Better yet, Wally generously gave the deer to us so we will be enjoying some excellent venison.

I may have given the impression that it is fairly easy to bag a Southern Tier deer. It is not. Deer are very wary and aware of the danger they face. The cover is heavy and dense. They have much better senses of sight and smell than the hunter. You hunt them on their home ground on their terms. Remember, it's harder to beat a rooster on its own dunghill.