

# Picture Perfect



The author's wife, Jodi, arrowed "The Barbed-Wire Buck" on Dec. 19, 2003. DeerCam photos of the buck showed he'd been carrying the wire since at least December 1.



In November 2003, Jodi missed this buck with an arrow but got him with a Cuddeback digital camera. She killed the buck in November 2004.



ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT my job as managing editor of *North American Hunter* is having the chance to try some of the newest outdoor gear and then reporting my findings to NAHC members. And according to my wife, Jodi, who also loves to hunt, one of the best things about being married to a managing editor is helping to field-test this same gear.

Faithful readers of this magazine might remember an article I wrote in the June/July 2004, issue called "The Barbed-Wire Buck," which told the true-life tale of a mature whitetail that had become tangled in a fence. The buck still had a great amount of wire wrapped around his left antler when Jodi arrowed him in mid-December, and as one of our 35mm DeerCam scouting cameras revealed, the buck had been

carrying the wire for at least the 2 previous weeks.

Fast-forward to 2006 and we'd replaced our two 35mm film cameras with three digital models: the Cuddeback NoFlash and EXcite, and a PixController DigitalEye. Through past experience we'd discovered the best funnels and scrape locations for capturing buck images, and as we placed the scouting cameras in the field in early September, our hopes were high for more whitetail encounters.

## Scouting 24/7

Our first chance to bowhunt our South Dakota property during the 2006 season was Sept. 29-Oct. 1, but that 3-day weekend ended without either of us getting a shot. It was still a success, however, because our scouting cameras indicated they'd shot more than 100 images during the previous month. And with what has now become a Sunday night ritual, our family

was gathered around our home computer as we placed the three memory cards from the scouting cameras into a card reader to see photos of bucks, does, fawns and even wild turkeys, fox and coyotes.

As the weeks and months of the 2006 deer season passed, we began to recognize various river-bottom bucks based on antler size/shape, as well as other physical characteristics. Quite often when we saw a buck while bowhunting, we'd already had the pleasure of seeing his photo on our computer. Some of the bucks that we saw regularly on our scouting cameras never showed themselves while we were hunting, and a couple bucks appeared on camera only during the middle of the night. I suspect these animals were distant travelers that bedded on properties more than a mile away from our land and were simply passing through under the cover of darkness looking for a doe-in-heat.