

Hunting News

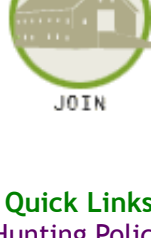
Grafton Land Trust

Preserving Grafton's open spaces since 1958

January 2016



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Submit Your Pics!

Got a cool photo from a recent hunting trip in Grafton? Send it to hunting@grafftonland.org and we'll publish it in the "Photo of the month" section of *Hunting News*.

We are a member supported organization that relies on you -

hunters - as well as hikers, equestrians and other recreational users to manage our lands. Please [become a member](#) today!

Dear Hunter,

A Big Hunt in a Small Package

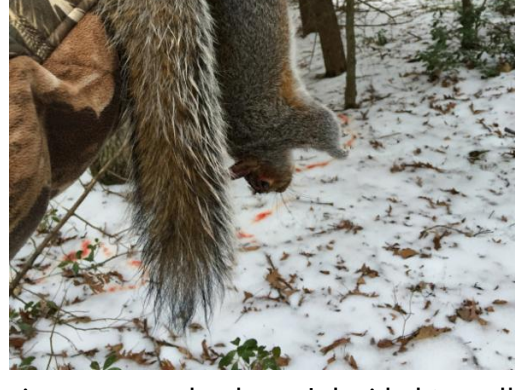
Thirty minutes had passed since I turned and saw a fat gray squirrel standing only a few feet away on his hind legs, with his head cocked sideways and his beady eyes peering deep into my soul. A thin ice crust on the snow had silenced his approach. I flinched, and he leapt to a nearby tree, spiraled up the trunk, and disappeared from view. *The hunt was on!*

It may seem simple to hit a treed squirrel with a modern scoped .22 rifle, but this was no Boston Common, peanut-eating squirrel. Deep woods squirrels like this particular gray, escape and evade predators on a daily basis. This fur ball wasn't going to drop into the stew pot without a fight! Gray ghosts can stick to a tree like bark, and have an uncanny ability to remain hidden from view, even as an anxious squirrel hunter circles the forest floor below them. After a few minutes of scanning the limbs above with my rifle's crosshairs, it became clear that this squirrel would test both my patience and shooting ability.



Three well placed shots dropped three bushytails from a single tree during a mid-October hunt. Gray squirrels, which are overlooked by many hunters, are a challenging quarry that can provide action-packed hunts, again and again. (Photo by Troy Gipps)

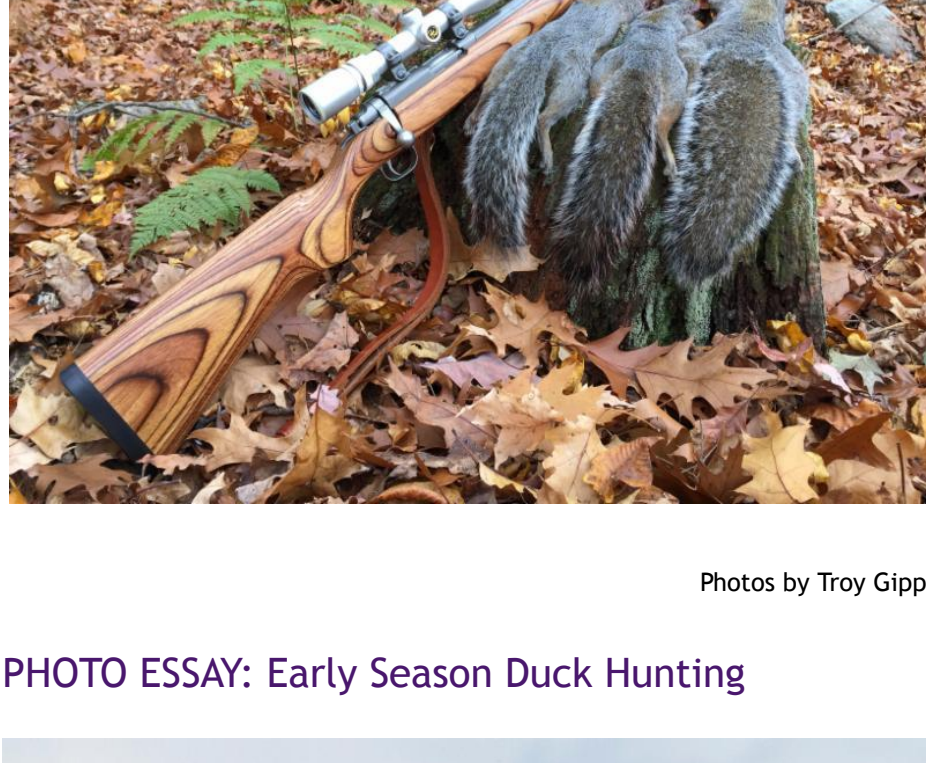
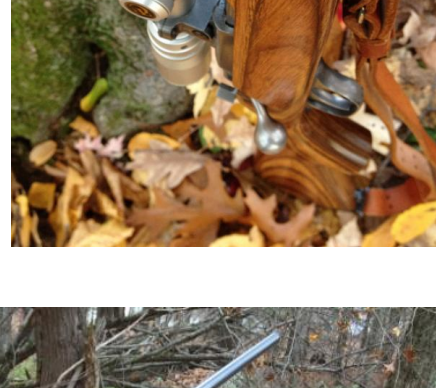
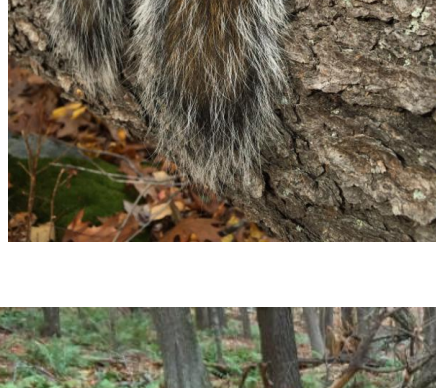
To find a treed squirrel operating in full survival mode, a hunter must not look for the squirrel, but instead for a small part of the squirrel. Gone is the loud chatter that often starts a spot-and-stalk squirrel hunt, and don't plan on seeing the squirrel balled-up on a limb wrapped in his fluffy tail. *Nope* ... at this point in the hunt, the gray is either holed up, or glued to the backside of a limb, with his tail outstretched against the bark as he listens intently for any movement below.



Once I had ruled out the possibility that he had scurried into a hole in the tree (if that happens you are usually in for a very long wait), it was time to slowly circle the tree in the hope that a different vantage point might reveal my target. I moved to the base of the tree first and pointed my rifle in a near vertical position. While carefully stepping around the trunk, I methodically searched the limbs above for any irregularities ... I saw none. I moved downhill slightly and took up another steady shooting position. Again, I searched each limb from trunk to tip, but saw nothing. I began to think the squirrel had jumped to nearby tree, but I hadn't seen the telltale limb shake that typically gives away such a leap. I decided to walk uphill about 20 yards away from the tree in search of an elevated shooting position. Slipping behind three evergreens that provided excellent concealment, I found a steady support for my rifle. While scanning the limbs with my crosshairs, searching for anything that looked out of place, a different texture caught my eye. It was gray like the leafless limbs, but without a defined edge. *Yes, fur ... tail fur!* There he was, lying flat against the backside of one of the highest limbs on the tree; a limb no wider than his body. Only a small tuft of tail fur, his right ear, and about a quarter of an inch of the top of his head were visible. It was a very challenging shot, but after a thirty-minute stalk, I finally had my chance. I pulled the rifle into my shoulder, settled the crosshairs at the base of his ear, exhaled, and squeezed ... *BANG!* The tiny bullet rocketed skyward and hit its mark. A perfect head shot. The gray dropped like a stone to the snow covered ground below. I had harvested my final squirrel of the season and had clearly proven that big hunts often come in small packages.

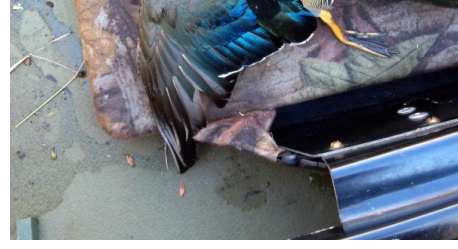
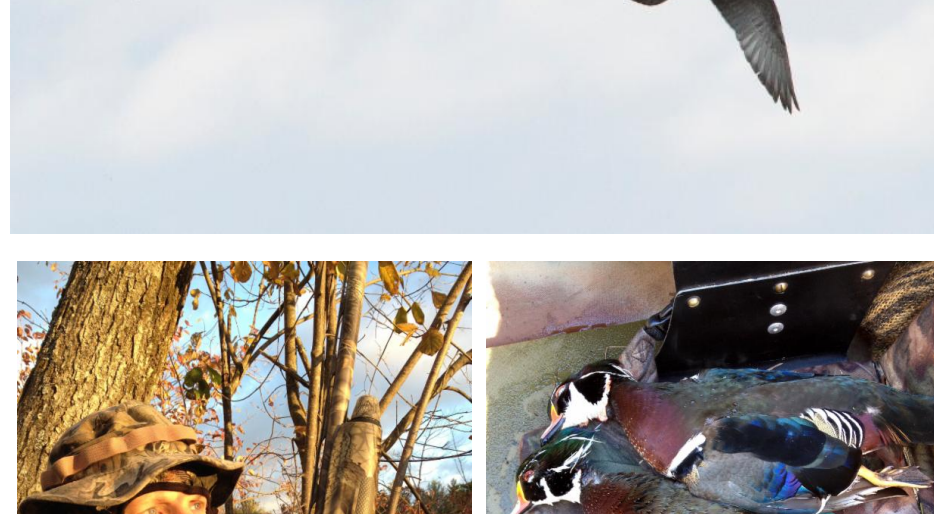
See you in the field.

Troy Gipp
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Photos by Troy Gipp

PHOTO ESSAY: Early Season Duck Hunting

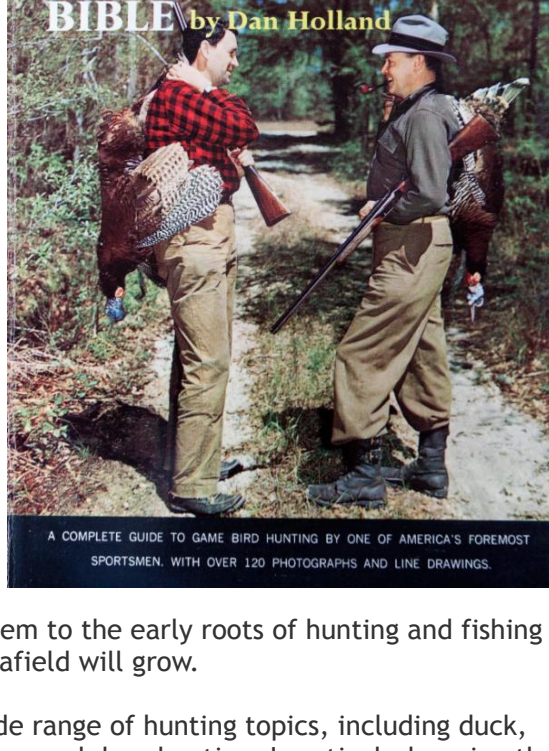


Photos by Troy Gipp

"Hunting & Fishing Bibles" stand the test of time

If you would like to expand your hunting and fishing knowledge this winter, and enjoy some excellent reading in the process, hop on eBay or AbeBooks and search for "Hunting Bible."

Published in the 1960s by Doubleday & Company, Garden City, New York, the bibles are packed with tactics, techniques, and fish and game information that will transport you back to an earlier time. The books will enhance your appreciation of our long-standing sporting traditions, and improve your chances for future success. They also make excellent gifts if you are introducing a young person to hunting and fishing. Reaching back to these bibles, will introduce them to the early roots of hunting and fishing from which their experiences afiel will grow.



Books in the series cover a wide range of hunting topics, including duck, varmint and crow, upland game, and deer hunting. I particularly enjoy the "Freelancing for Ducks" chapter in the Duck Hunter's Bible. Fishing bibles cover general fresh-water and salt-water fishing, and more specifically, bass and trout fishing. The Camper's Bible and Outdoor Cook's Bible are also favorites that will help you bring a retro feel to your next outing. Best of all, individual volumes, and even multi-volume sets, can often be purchased for under ten or twenty dollars.



The full series of "Hunting & Fishing Bibles" makes an excellent addition to any sportsman's library. (Photos by Troy Gipp)

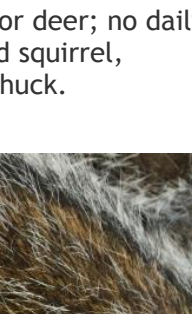
Photo of the month



GLT hunting permit holder Dean Cerrati poses with wood ducks that he and GLT Hunting Program Coordinator Troy Gipp harvested while jumpshooting at a local river. Jumpshooting woodies from a canoe is incredibly challenging, but the pay off can be great if you shoot straight! (Photo by Troy Gipp)

What's in season this month?

Cottontail Rabbit ... Jan. 1 - Feb. 29
 Snowshoe Hare ... Jan. 1 - Feb. 5
 Coyote ... Jan. 1 - Mar. 8
 Fox (red or gray) ... Jan. 1 - Feb. 29
 Bobcat (Zones 1-8 only) ... Jan. 1 - Mar. 8
 Raccoon ... Jan. 1 - Jan. 30
 Opossum ... Jan. 1 - Jan. 30
 Late Canada Goose (Central Zone) ... Jan. 16 - Feb. 6
 Snapping Turtle ... Jan. 1 - Apr. 31



Open Season (year-round, except during shotgun season for deer; no daily or seasonal bag limit): English sparrow, flying squirrel, red squirrel, chipmunk, porcupine, skunk, starling, weasel, and woodchuck.



The Grafton Land Trust is a private, non-profit, member-supported organization that preserves, maintains, and advocates for open space in Grafton, and promotes environmental education and stewardship.

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