

URBAN BOW



WHEN MOST PEOPLE THINK OF DEER HUNTING, VISIONS OF deer camp, stands, gun blinds, or a trail in the woods come to mind. When I think of deer hunting, I think of neighborhood streets and nicely manicured lawns.

I have two pop up hunting blinds that I affectionately call my “city deer blinds” which I hunt each season. One stand sits on a 20 acre woodlot behind two houses and my other urban hunting set up sits directly

behind a house against a greenbelt and an old creek that runs through central Texas.

This area looks like it’s in the middle of the city by the landscape around it, but the property sits just outside of the city limits.

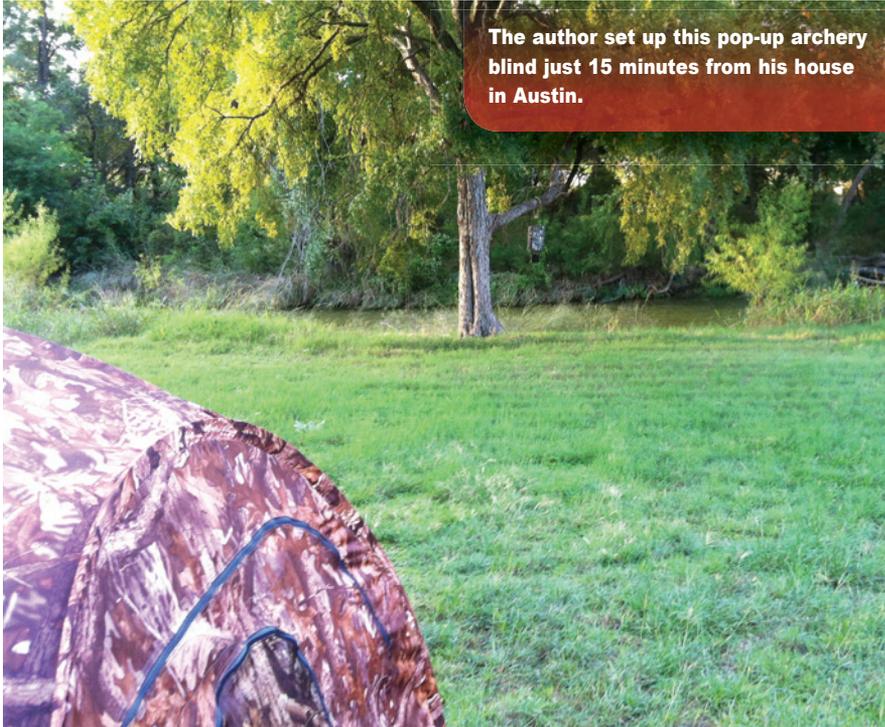
A regional city park is across from the creek less than 100 yards away where the sounds of people running on the hike and bike trail or kids playing on the ball fields can be heard.

HUNTING

A photograph of a city skyline, likely Dallas, Texas, featuring several prominent skyscrapers. In the foreground, a dark silhouette of a deer with large antlers is positioned on the right side, facing left. The background shows a clear blue sky and a green field in the lower portion of the image.

Bagging Backyard Backstraps

BY DUSTIN VAUGHN WARNCKE



The author set up this pop-up archery blind just 15 minutes from his house in Austin.

Urban bowhunting for deer has been made popular through hunting shows and even some reality TV shows on major TV networks.

I have embraced this unconventional style of hunting for many years. The reason? Hunting in urban areas is a healthy way to control low-pressure deer populations and fill the freezer with meat.

Many urban areas, such as large acreage subdivisions, are over-populated with deer; and landowners are happy to have respectful hunters take some deer off their property. Add to that the fact that many homeowners consider deer a pest as they graze on expensive landscaping, and you have a great combination. As a hunter, you are participating as the dominant predator in the ecosystem while also ensuring the health of the deer herd in that area.

Many people ask me how I can hunt an area so close to civilization. One of the reasons is convenience. Both of my urban deer stands are less than 15 minutes away from my house in the northwest suburbs of Austin.

Deer season tends to be one of the busiest times of the year for my day job, so being close to my family and not leaving my wife as a “deer widow” for a weekend or more is important since I don’t see her much during the week during deer hunting season.

Another good reason to hunt urban areas that is often overlooked by many die-hard hunters is that some of the best opportunities

for putting the hammer down on a trophy buck are not far away from home. Some of the best deer I have taken in the last few years have come from one of my urban hunting spots and the hunting pressure on most deer in urban areas is relatively low.

Finding Areas to Hunt

Before you start prospecting areas to hunt, check with your local game warden to make sure that hunting is legal in the area. Some homeowners associations may also have issues with hunting in the area so check that out as well.

Start by driving around areas with large acreages and low fences. These are prime urban hunting areas. You want to make sure deer can access you and you can easily track deer so I target five-acre or larger parcels of land. Sometimes you can get away with smaller properties, but the fewer landowners you have to involve in hunting and tracking your deer after the shot, the better.

Do a little scouting and press the flesh with some homeowners in the area after you find a prime spot. If you don’t know anyone in the area, plan a Saturday sometime before deer season and knock on a few doors.

What you are simply asking is whether homeowners would mind if you set up a small pop-up blind on their property and hunt a few months out of the year. In return, offer some of the meat from your deer, or

bring some processed meat in trade. Or, if they do not care for venison, offer to make a meat donation to a charitable organization such as Hunters for the Hungry.

For this approach, I always dress in my Sunday’s best clothes instead of my normal camouflage hunting gear, and drive my SUV instead of the hunting truck. You want to put your best foot forward when meeting people and present yourself as professionally and respectfully as possible.

The key to hunting in urban areas is to make friends with neighboring landowners after you have found your spot to hunt. This approach is similar. Just make sure you have the blessing of neighboring landowners to access their land if and when you need to retrieve a downed deer from their property.

Essential Hunting Gear

If you’re a bowhunter, chances are you have everything you need for a successful urban hunting adventure. A gun hunter will want to invest in a crossbow if he doesn’t already own one. They are usually easy to use and you can become proficient with one in a short amount of time.

I personally prefer crossbows for urban hunting since the pop-up blinds I hunt out of are small. I prefer to use a trail camera to pattern deer, so I know the prime times to hunt. For instance, my creek stand blind has deer coming by it like clockwork every evening and my other stand is better for morning hunts.

Set up your blind about 20 yards from your feeder or other food source such as a small food plot so you can make the best shot possible.

It’s important to make every shot count in an urban hunting situation. I prefer to use a three-blade mechanical broadhead with a large 1 ½-inch to 2-inch cut radius such as the ones made by Grim Reaper Broadheads. Most all of the deer I have taken in my urban areas have dropped within 100 yards.

A nice benefit of urban deer hunting is that the cost to hunt is much cheaper than traditional hunting ranches or seasonal leases, and the benefits to your freezer and homeowners are great.

To see some of my urban hunts, visit my website at www.dustinsprojects.com.

Hunt hard and have fun.

