

Learn an Ohio Pro's Surprise Attack on Early Bucks

by Mark Hicks

The old saw that “You can’t kill a buck unless you’re in the woods” prevents a lot of hunters from ever tagging the whitetail of their dreams, according to Dan Perez of Whitetail Properties, who has taken 49 P&Y bucks. “Of course you have to hit the woods eventually, but I’ve found that it’s better to stay out of the area where your target buck lives until you can be fairly certain of a shooting opportunity.” Here’s Perez’s five-step plan for executing the perfect surprise attack on a monster whitetail.

#1 - Keep Out

Depressurize your hunting area before the season to prevent bucks from becoming nocturnal. “This means minimal human intrusion,” Perez says. “No dogs, no hiking, no 3-D archery. Use ATVs only when necessary to hang stands or check cameras.”

#2 - Hang Early

Set up multiple stands well before the season begins to take advantage of any wind direction. “Don’t make the mistake of putting this off. Hanging stands a few days before you hunt is a great way to help your neighbor kill a big buck.”

#3 - Stay Back

Scout from a distance with binoculars and a spotting scope. Begin hunting from an observation stand outside the buck’s core area. Put trail cams where pulling the memory card will be the least intrusive, and check them infrequently.

#4 - Wait

No matter how much you want to hunt your key stands, don’t do so until you’ve got your trophy patterned—or he’ll soon pattern you. “Every time you hunt a stand, you leave a trail of scent that is obvious to a whitetail buck,” Perez says.

#5 - Move In

When you have the buck’s routine nailed down, wait for a good wind and move in. “If the wind shifts in the buck’s favor while you’re on stand, leave immediately,” Perez says. Otherwise, stay ready and make the shot count.

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