PART 1

The Many Faces Of The Whitetail

In this era of "bigger is better," many hunters have become consumed with taking high-scoring bucks. But in the process, are they failing to appreciate the unique qualities of other deer?

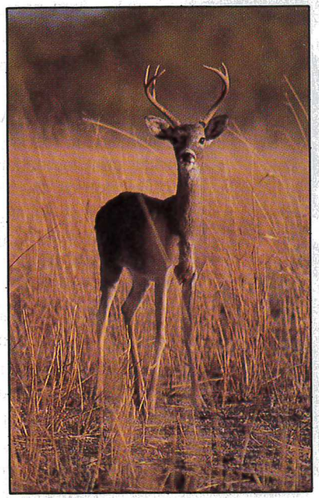
by Dr. James C. Kroll

I was sitting at my booth at an Eastern outdoors show when I spotted a young fellow coming into the hall with his trophy deer mount. He had two friends with him, and they obviously were quite proud of their buddy's accomplishment. But the young trophy owner scarcely had entered the building when he was confronted by a truly awesome display of whitetail antlers. Before him were some of the finest heads ever seen by anyone in the world — each head positioned carefully in front of a dark-green curtain and highlighted by its own spotlight.

Instantly, the hunter's spirits dropped. Instead of continuing to carry his mount high, for all to see, he lowered it to "half mast" as he passed the monster heads. His two buddies looked slack-jawed at the heads, glanced quickly at his deer head and then dropped back away from him. Pride suddenly had turned to dissatisfaction.

This wasn't the first time I'd witnessed such a sad event at a show. The young hunter and his buddies were comparing a local trophy buck to those from a hand-picked collection of giants from regions with inherently larger deer, and it simply wasn't fair. It not only reduced the guy's pride in his achievement but also caused him to believe that the only "big" bucks are those large enough to make the cover of ***North American WHITETAIL***!

Even biologists can fall prey to putting down some geographic areas.



Which deer is "better" — the slender Texas buck above or Charles Hemphill's Illinois buck at right? Actually, each animal is well-suited to its habitat, so the answer isn't easy. Photo above by Mark J. Walter; photo at right by Tom Evans.

"Well, our hunters just have to live with the fact that they never will harvest a trophy buck here!" chided one well-known biologist, whose area doesn't produce world-class racks. With the growing interest in trophy whitetails, are we not also seeing some unhealthy attitudes permeating the dogma of the hunter? In this two-part series, I hope to make you better acquainted with the marvelous traits of whitetails across their range and perhaps interest you in starting a quest that makes much more sense than simply seeking the "world record."

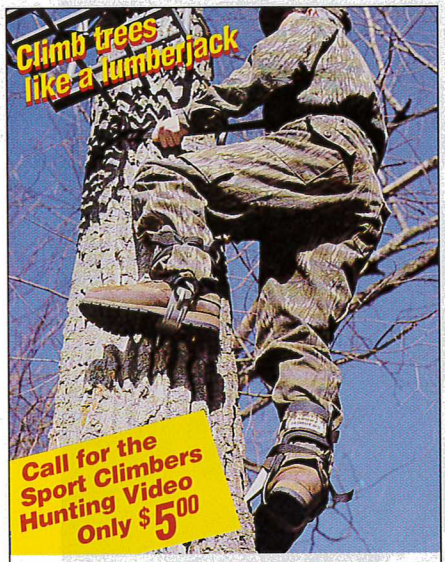
THE WHITETAIL'S RANGE

When Columbus arrived in this hemisphere, there were many races of whitetails, extending from the taiga (boreal forests) of Canada to the steamy tropics of Central and South America. The American Indian had thrived largely due to the presence of these animals, depending on them for food, clothing, shelter and religious purposes. Estimates are that when Columbus arrived, the human population density of North America was equal to or greater than that of Europe at the same time. These peoples had completely altered the landscape of North America over their 15,000 to 20,000 years on the continent, primarily using fire to produce good deer habitat.

Western man set about making his own distinctive changes to the land, plying his trade with rifle and axe. By the turn of this past century, estimates of whitetail populations ranged somewhere between 300,000 and 500,000 animals. What the rifle and market-hunting could not do, land clearing easily accomplished. It was a sad tale for whitetails by the 1930s, as populations had dropped even further.

Then came the sportsman. Several wildlife programs, including the United States' Pittman-Robertson





Sport Climbers™
Tree Climbing Spikes
...the fastest, easiest way to climb to your tree stand



- Strap onto your hunting boots
- Give you unmatched maneuverability
- Make hanging your tree stand easy
- Minimize the chance that others will use or steal your tree stand
- Use Sport Climbers with optional safety-belt/lanyard



"Sport Climbers work great. They make climbing trees so much easier."
Jeff Lien
Madison, Wisconsin

If not available at your dealer, call to order
1-800-877-7025
Ask for a free catalog

FIELD TESTED RECOMMENDED TO MEMBERS

SPORT CLIMBERS™
2926 75th Street, Kenosha, WI 53143

Act, quickly were enacted to protect and restore game species such as whitetails, elk, pronghorn antelope and many other species of mammals and birds. The P-R Fund, as it came to be called, was used to support restocking efforts. In about 50 years, state game agencies stocked whitetails in at least 25 states. Stockings by private landowners also occurred, but no one knows the extent of these releases.

So, by the '60s whitetails had been restocked over most of their original range, as well as in some areas where they were *not* native. But where did these animals originate? It is now believed there were some 30 original races (subspecies) of whitetails in 1492. We feel that many of these had been extirpated by the time of the early stockings in this century, leaving remnant populations in the Great Lakes states, Texas, Mexico and some remote islands and swamps in the United States, Caribbean and southern Canada.

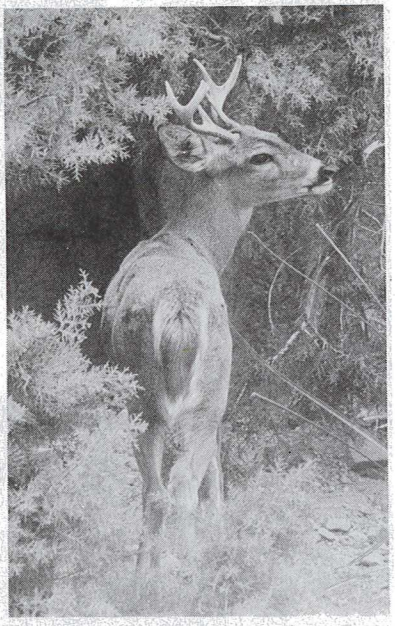
Animals for stockings were scarce, so game agencies had to make do with whatever deer were available. The South received the greatest "hodgepodge" of animals. Some Southern states received whitetails from Wisconsin, South Texas, Mexico and certain islands along the eastern coast of the United States.

Hence, by 1970 the whitetails living in many Southern states carried a unique mixture of traits from several genetic sources. There is research evidence today that most Southern herds today are the result of one of two scenarios.

First, the deer can be a genetic mixture of individuals that "won the race" to repopulate an area where native animals had been completely eliminated. For example, there are counties in Georgia that were stocked with Texas deer, Wisconsin deer and island deer. Evidence now suggests the Texas deer did not do well, leaving a mixture of island and Wisconsin traits.

Second, animals stocked could have served only as "place holders" for the small remnant population of animals that somehow had escaped market-hunting and other problems. With protection, these native animals, which obviously were better adapted to local conditions, outcompeted their immigrant cousins and re-established the local population.

Scientists disagree on which of these two scenarios actually happened. My personal opinion is that *both* occurred, depending on the geographic region considered. For example, I firmly believe the Northern deer stocked in South Florida did not survive. The rut there, believe it or not, is in mid-July to late August! A Wisconsin whitetail, with a breeding date in mid-November, would produce offspring too late in the spring for good fawn survival in this region, due to poor forage conditions and thus low milk production. So, the animals living there today probably are descended from the original stock.



The Coues whitetail of the Southwest is the only subspecies with its own category in the B&C and P&Y record books. Photo by Richard P. Smith.

We now feel there's a good chance that some of the original 30 races no longer exist. However, there are distinct whitetail niches even today, with several of the original 30 races remaining "pure." What does all this mean when considering the idea of a grand slam for whitetails? Plenty — especially when we consider the next important point.

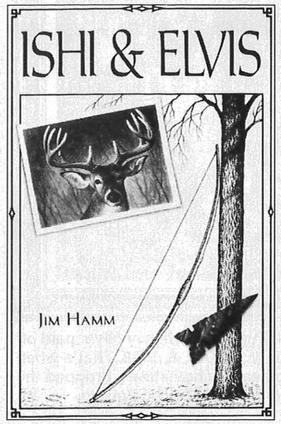
GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

Not only are the deer living in many areas of their original range unique, but so are the habitats and conditions in which they live. Who

Continued on page 72

READ THIS BOOK!

THEN LOAN IT TO A NON-HUNTING FRIEND OR RELATIVE



With a keen eye for the natural world and a sweeping sense of the history which shaped modern bowhunting, Jim Hamm tells the story of a tremendous whitetailed buck called Elvis, "because he creates such commotion whenever he's spotted." The archer's quest for Elvis encompasses Medieval warriors, Comanches, Senõr Rattlesnake, Ishi — the "last Stone Age Indian," — who became the grandfather of archery in this country, and, most importantly, the modern conservation ethic of bowhunters.

Help a non-hunter discover *Ishi & Elvis,* and transform them into lifelong hunting supporters.

Hardcover, illustrated by Steve Allely $19.95 postpaid

·BOIS· d'ARC PRESS

Bois d'Arc Press 4
PO Box 233
Azle, TX 76098
817/237-0829

VISA MasterCard

Send long SASE for a free catalog of our archery titles.

HARTER PLANTATION



SOUTHERN HUNTING-N-HOSPITALITY

The 1994 season averaged 85% on buck kills. Weekend and Daily Hunts available for the 1995/96 season. These hunts are over food plots in comfortable permanent stands. For the past 8 years, food plots and feeders have been put out year-round for the deer.

*Lodging, Food, and Guided Hunts
$200.00 a day
*Longest running whitetail season
*Whitetail Trophy Deer
*Turkey & Quail
*Aug. 15-Jan. 1 **Deer Season**

AFFORDABLE DEER HUNTING
Call or Write: Harter Plantation, 1-800-420-7883
P.O. Box 248, Fairfax SC 29827

ANTLERS UNLIMITED



THE LARGEST SELECTION OF:

TROPHY BUCKS including Boone & Crockett Heads (Whitetail, Mule Deer, Elk, Moose & Caribou)

REAL RATTLING ANTLERS fresh Whitetail or Mule Deer (Small, Medium, Large & XLarge)

TROPHY DEER COLLECTOR CARDS
5 sets Trophy Mule Deer & 6 sets Trophy Whitetails — some of the largest Mule Deer & Whitetails ever taken

RECORD BOOKS (Boone & Crockett and many State Record Books) (Just released 1993 Pope & Young Archery Records of North America)

ALSO BUYING ANTLERS FROM SHED HORNS AND TROPHY RACKS

DON SCHAUFLER
OPEN MON.-SAT. 9-5 (MST)
P.O. Box 897, ENNIS, MT 59729
406-682-7153 OR FAX/406-682-7656

can argue against the idea that what a whitetail faces annually in northern Alberta is quite different from the conditions endured by one in Mexico? Each race is uniquely adapted to both climatic and site conditions.

You probably have heard of Bergmann's Rule, which states: The farther from the equator you go, the larger the individuals within a species. Presumably, this allows animals to conserve heat in extremely cold conditions. In general, Bergmann's Rule prevails, but there are some notable exceptions. For example, there are areas in northern Mexico (hot climate) in which it is not unusual to find 270-pound bucks!

Body size also is determined by the amount of available nutrients. The high-quality forage growing in South Texas and Mexico allows for much heavier body weights than one would expect in these climates. So, as with everything else in biology, Bergmann's Rule remains a "rule" and not a "law."

Actually, soils probably have more to do with the size of deer than any other factor. Dr. Harry Jacobson of Mississippi State University has determined that soil phosphorus levels have a great deal to do with the size of deer in any geographic area. My research has supported his claim. The abundant rainfall of the South, coupled with higher temperatures, tends to reduce the availability of phosphorus in many places. Nitrogen, so important to protein synthesis, also is lacking in such areas.

So, in many situations the climate and soils combine to limit the size of deer, and along with this reduction in body size come smaller antlers. But does this mean these animals are inferior to their bulkier cousins? Hardly! They are every bit as well-adapted to the world in which they live.

What this all boils down to is that a South Florida buck scoring 90 points on the B&C system is every bit as much a "trophy" as a 150-point buck in Saskatchewan. It was no less difficult for the Florida buck to grow his rack than for the Canadian buck to grow his. Now that we have established that point, let's take a look at ways in which we can appreciate these differences.

I have had the privilege of working with whitetails for most of my adult life, covering most of the species' range in the process. I also have enjoyed the recent whitetail hunting boom. ***WHITETAIL*** magazine was a significant motivation in all of this. Only a short 20 years ago, most hunters were unaware of the Jordan buck or any of the other legendary bucks from yesteryear. In fact, many hunters didn't even know there *was* a record book for whitetails. The average guy was just happy to put some venison into the freezer! After all, whitetails had only been available to most hunters for about 20 years at that point. Deer hunting was still very regionalized. Bucks taken within a small geographic region, whether large or small, were considered "normal" for that area. Hunters were happy enough.

Some Southern states received whitetails from Wisconsin, South Texas, Mexico and certain islands along the eastern coast of the United States.

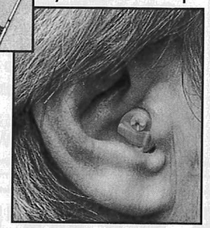
The first issues of ***WHITETAIL*** and such regional magazines as the *Journal Of The Texas Trophy Hunters* brought huge bucks to the public's attention for the first time ever. There was a whole new world out there, and many hunters with the time and/or means to do so began searching for bigger and bigger bucks. Texas, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Montana became *the* trophy hotspots.

As deer herds recovered in various regions, new hotspots were added to the list. The discovery of a new world-record non-typical in Missouri focused attention on the Midwest. Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and several similar states achieved prominence. As bigger and bigger bucks came to light, we began to wonder how far the envelope could be pushed. Could the Jordan buck from 1914 be bested as the world's top typical? The answer came with a shot from Milo Hanson's .308 near Biggar, Saskatchewan. The world record, standing for almost 90 years, had

GOBBLER'S
The Sound Amplification System that can Save Your Hearing



With COMFORT-EZE Synthetic Rubber Tips



For the ***HUNTER***
For the ***SHOOTER***

HEAR the sounds you ***NEED***... ***NOT*** the sounds that ***HURT***!

GOBBLER'S • Comfortable units fit within ear, out of the way. • Dramatically increase your hearing so you can hear game coming. • Comfortable Hearing Protectors that automatically cut off loud sounds above 95 decibles (shotgun registers 155 decibles) • Comes with two units, two COMFORT-EZE ear tips, cleaning brush, storage pouch, tie-off loops & two batteries. • 90 Day Warranty- 15 Day Money Back Guarentee (10% restocking fee).

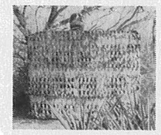
ONLY $219.95 + $4.50 S/H
To Order Send Certified Check or Money Order to;
BRACKLYNN™
ARCHERY PRODUCTS
4400 Stillman Blvd, Suite C • Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
VISA/MC Orders Call 1-800-247-2955

SOUTH TEXAS TRIPODS & FEEDERS INC.

TRIPODS
High Quality Steel Construction Designed for the Trophy Hunter
STEEL MODELS 10'/12'/15'/17'
LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINUM LEGS 10'/12'/14'
Removable Bowhunters Shooting Rails.
FROM $199.00



AUTOMATIC FEEDER
Designed for year-round use to attract and hold game. 24 hour easy-to-set quartz clock or optional time-proven photo cell model.
FROM $239.00

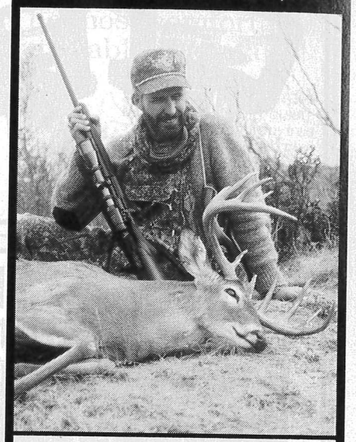


HORN RATTLING BLIND
Lightweight
Portable
Weighs 10 lbs.
$46.50

ALSO AVAILABLE
Kits • Solar Chargers • House & Tree Stands
1888 Econo Feeder • Swarovski Optics

100% GUARANTEED!
WRITE OR CALL FOR OUR BROCHURE
SOUTH TEXAS TRIPOD & FEEDERS INC.
23019 #1, I-45, Dept. NW
Spring, TX 77389-4211
VISA **(713) 288-4422**
(800) 593-4422 MasterCard

MAXIMUM ATTRACTION



Oats has always been the preferred winter forage for whitetails. Now there is a brand (BUCK FORAGE) that is preferred over other varieties and also stands up to colder temperatures.

Dr. James C. Kroll, "Dr. Deer"

BUCK FORAGE OATS ATTRACT DEER DURING FALL, (HUNTING SEASON), BETTER THAN ANY OTHER FOOD PLOT.

Repeat customers rate winter hardy BUCK FORAGE OATS as the best possible lure. Better than scents, urine, and even corn while providing needed protein and energy.

How To Plant and Hunt Food Plots
FREE Video for $5.00 S & H

10 lb. Buck Forage Oats & *How To Plant and Hunt Food Plots* Video
$8.95 plus $5.00 for S & H

New video teaches you how to plant and hunt deer food plots. It features BUCK FORAGE OATS.

SPECIAL OFFER - BUCK FORAGE OAT seed to plant a 4,000 sq. ft. plot, new video, Dr. Kroll's Food Plot Manual, and Dr. Kroll's video, *Food Plot and Supplemental Feeding,* **ALL FOR ONLY $44.95 plus $5.00 S & H.**

OATS Only - 10 lb. Bag - $7.95 plus $4.00 S & H

OATS Only - 50 lb. Bag - $27.95 plus $6.00 S & H

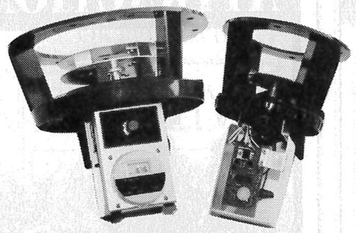
Dr. Kroll's book *"A Practical Guide To Producing and Harvesting White-Tailed Deer"*
$39.95 plus $3.00 S & H

FOR ORDERS OR INFORMATION CALL:
1-800-299-6287
Distributor Dealer Programs Available

Name_____
Address_____
City_____
State_____ Zip Code_____
_____ Check _____ Money Order
_____ Visa _____ Master Card
MC/Visa #_____ Exp. Date_____
Signature_____

Mail to:
BUCK FORAGE - Dept. W
P.O. Box 43, Hwy. 79W
Stuttgart, Arkansas 72160
Phone: (501) 673-2706

AUTOMATIC GAME FEEDERS
COMPUFEED EZ FEED
Starting at (Limited Time) $39.99 +tax, S&H



To Order Factory Direct
Or for Product Brochure
CALL: (210) 651-5280
Sesame Sporting Products
P.O. Box 252 - Spring Branch, TX 78070
WE SERVICE ALL BRANDS
Dealer Inquiries Welcome

WILDLIFE PLACE
TROPHY WHITETAIL HUNTING



Jim Burson, 182 B&C, Oct. 26, 1993



Gustavo Romero, 181 B&C, Nov. 12, 1993

SEE 50-100 BUCKS PER DAY
ELK HUNTING, ONE OF THE LARGEST HERDS IN EASTERN U.S.
2022 W. 14 MILE ROAD, BITELY, MICHIGAN 49309
PH. 616-745-8000 FAX 616-745-9000

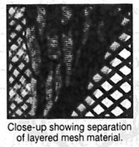
Shannon's
Bug Tamer™
"America's finest and most effective insect protection"
"SATISFACTION GUARANTEED"



Revolutionary New Lite-Weight Camouflaged Air Flow Apparel
- Unique patented double-mesh net guard.
- This is not a repellent-charged garment Never have to buy smelly insect repellants again.
- 100% protection from the top of your boots to the top of your head. Parka and pull-on pants available.
- Get close to game without odor of repellants. Worry-no-more about mosquitoes, gnats or flies.

"I consider the BUG TAMER jacket the most important piece of hunting equipment I own."
David Collis, Officer
North American Deer Foundation
June 22, 1989

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BUG TAMER DEALER OR CALL DIRECT
Dealer inquiries invited



Close-up showing separation of layered mesh material.

Artist rendering depicting how layered mesh protects wearer.

FIELD TESTED RECOMMENDED TO MEMBERS
U.S. Pat. #471-6594
Canadian Pat. #1,279,953

Shannon Outdoors, Inc., Rt. 3, Box 77, Winnsboro, SC 29180 • (803) 635-3482—1-800-852-8058

been broken.

Remember, all of this has happened in only 20 years! We have gone from a hunter just wanting to kill a buck to a quest for larger and larger trophies. It has been a rapid evolution, to say the least. But now, it's time to take a critical look at where we are going.

I'm seeing a new type of person coming to my seminars across the United States. He is between 25 and 35 years of age and has only recently become seriously interested in deer hunting. Dad hunted, but the son did not have the same opportunity to grow up in the outdoors. Besides, there was a career to develop. Now, he is seeking a return to what Dad enjoyed, and hunting ranks high on the list.

But this fellow is a bit different from his dad. He is environmentally astute; he wants to hunt, but he also wants to be sure he's doing what's right for the environment. He wants to give something back, not just "mine" the resource. That's where management comes into the picture.

Management came onto the scene in the '70s. As interest in trophy bucks grew, some folks began questioning why such monsters could not be produced in their areas. Through proper management, many hunters quickly saw that impressive bucks could be produced. Trophies no longer had to be sought out in faraway places; they could be attained in your own back yard! And management allowed folks to do something for the deer.

The rapid evolution of deer hunting and management has us heading toward appreciating the whitetail as a unique species, one keenly adapted to a variety of conditions and geographic areas. Additionally, hunting techniques and traditions change from one area to the next, making whitetail hunting one of the most varied of outdoor activities.

By placing emphasis on geographically unique races of deer, their habitat and hunting techniques and traditions, hunters can greatly enhance the enjoyment of the sport. A personal quest for a whitetail grand slam can fill the bill. But the idea of such a slam can carry with it images of the abuses we have seen with other species, such as the various sheep. The price of hunting bighorns has escalated beyond the hopes of most hunters. Why, then, develop such a concept for whitetails? Won't this create the same problems?

I don't think so. First of all, the sheep grand slam, although fraught with abuses, has done a great deal to help sheep management. It has focused attention on geographic races and their problems. The Desert bighorn, for example, was on the way to extinction before interest in hunting for a grand slam came along.

Secondly, the whitetail is very different from the bighorn sheep. There now are an estimated 26 million whitetails, probably more than when Columbus arrived. The high prices paid for hunting bighorns result primarily from their rareness, not the grand-slam concept itself.

Actually, soils probably have more to do with the size of deer than any other factor.

A whitetail grand slam would focus attention on geographic races, which today either are ignored or maligned by serious hunters. Unfortunately, success too often is measured in B&C score, not the difficulty of the chase, the maturity of the buck or the quality of the hunting experience. In our book, *The Art and Science of Patterning Whitetails*, Gordon Whittington and I defined "big" as a *mature* buck. Using this definition, a "big" buck can be attained almost anywhere. Is a 5 1/2-year-old buck in the Appalachians easier to kill than one of the same age in Montana? No. So, even if his score is lower, he's still every bit a "trophy."

If we are to develop a whitetail grand slam, it will have to be geographically based — focusing on races that still are pretty much intact in spite of years of stocking deer, and offering a variety of experiences in a variety of habitats. Every race in the slam would carry the same weight, whether it be the diminutive South Florida whitetail or an Alberta monster.

Next month, in the finale of this series, I will discuss each of the races we feel should be included in a grand-slam quest, and why.

BASIC INSTINCT
GET A BUCK SUPREME



Human Odor Killer
Whitetail Lure
NATURE'S FORMULA
100% PURE
WHITETAIL DEER SCENT
The Great Whitetail, Inc.
Route 3, Box 198 • Garrison, Texas 75946
(409) 564-4479 • FAX (409) 564-5108

Discover The Power Of Night Vision
Starting as low as $289!
6 Reasons Why You Should Buy From Hitek International



1. HI is the leading importer of night vision equipment in the U.S.
2. HI offers many innovative options and modifications unavailable from the original manufacturers.
3. HI provides in-house enhancement of imported units for trouble-free performance.
4. HI is the only importer offering a growing line of products designed by and manufactured exclusively for HI.
5. HI has the most comprehensive product warranty, return, upgrade, and trade-in programs.
6. HI has by far the best product back-up through our extensive in-house service department.

WEAPON SIGHTS



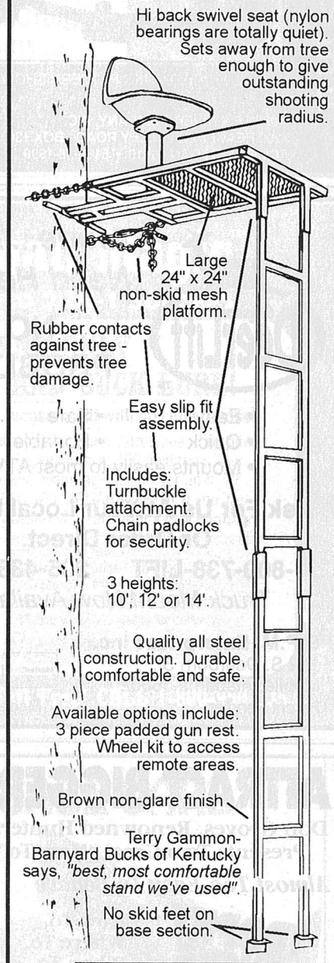
BINOCULARS



GOGGLES

Call now toll-free for a technical consultation, full color brochure, and price quote:
1-800-54-NIGHT
(1-800-546-4448)
2 YEAR WARRANTY
10 DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE!
30-DAY EXCHANGES/UPGRADES
Visa, MC, AMEX, Discover
HITEK INTERNATIONAL

Convert-A-Stand™
The most comfortable, movable tree stand!



Video available.
$189 plus shipping & handling. Ships UPS.
Available factory direct only!
AR.inc.™
American Products for Recreation, Inc.
1-800-439-0766
8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. CST
1020 W. Walnut, Enid, OK 73703
1-405-242-0083
VISA MC Discover cards accepted
Call today