

Deer Search – Finger Lakes Chapter

(585-935-5220)

Tips to help you recover your deer (Arrow hit)

(Nov 2013 update)

- **FIRST ! – Shots you should NEVER take with a Bow;**
 - Deer coming straight at you or severely quartering towards you.
 - Deer going straight away from you.
 - Deer directly under you or within 10ft of your tree stand.
 - Running Deer.

- **FYI – Hits that are almost immediately fatal (you won't need Deer Search!);**
 - Heart and solid Double lung.
 - Jugular and Femoral arteries.
 - Main arteries (going to Femorals) up against the bottom of the spine.
 - Main artery of 1 Lung.
 - Main artery in the Liver.
 - Kidneys.

- **What to do immediately after the hit;**
 - Remember the exact hit location on the Deer and the angle of the hit.
 - Remember the amount of arrow penetration.
 - Remember the deer's reaction. Did it run hard or slowly walk away with tail down ?
 - Did the Deer limp or favor 1 leg ?
 - Remember where you last saw the deer.
 - Consider what organs you may have hit.
 - Wait 30 minutes before you quietly inspect the hit site.
 - For a paralyzing spine hit, shoot the Deer again ASAP in the vitals.

- **Quietly inspect the hit site;**
 - Mark the hit site
 - Look for Blood and hair
 - Look for the arrow
 - If you find the arrow, check:
 - How much penetration / blood on arrow ?
 - Lung Blood (Bright red / pinkish with tiny bubbles) ?
 - Food particles (gut hit) – small bits of straw, grass or corn ? (looks like saw dust)
 - Thick Dark Blood (Liver hit)
 - Brown and Slimy (Intestine hit) ?
 - White hair (low hit) ?

- **The Basic rules to decide when to start tracking:**

- For Liver hits (5 to 10 inches back from the front leg) wait 6 hrs. before tracking. 8hrs if you really want to be sure.
- For Stomach/Gut hits (8 to 14 inches back from the front leg) wait 18 hrs. before tracking.
- For Intestine hits (between center of deer and back leg) wait 24 hrs before tracking.
- For hits to moving muscles (Legs, shoulder joints and hips) start tracking ASAP to keep wound open and bleeding.
- For High back hits (along spine or in the top 6 to 7 inches over front leg) recovery is very unlikely. Only muscle and Bone hit. Deer will probably survive.
- For suspected 1 lung hits. Wait 3 hours. If deer is not found within a half mile, recovery is very unlikely. Deer will likely survive for at least several days. (See “ 1 Lung Hits are the worst” – below)
- A paralyzing spine hit will not kill the deer quickly – shoot it again in the vitals ASAP.
- Most other muscle hits (except hits to arteries) will not kill a deer.

- **The Golden Rules for hits “too far back”:**

- Hits “too far back”, to the Liver, Stomach or Intestines are almost always fatal, but recovery will take time and patience. Here’s a typical successful approach to these type of hits;
 - Typically when hit, the deer may run a short way and then walk away slowly with tail down.
 - In almost all cases, this deer will bed down in 100 – 300 yards. BELIEVE IT !
 - Your only goal now is to keep this deer in this first bed until it dies.
 - Once the deer leaves this 1st bed, there will usually be no more blood trail.
 - DO NOT pursue this deer for 6 to 8 hrs. (Liver), 18 hrs. (Stomach), or 24 hrs. (Intestines) !
 - If you can see the bedded deer from your stand, stay there if you can. If you need to leave, stay as long as you can and then leave it as quietly as possible so the deer stays in its bed.
 - For this type of hit, the arrow will usually (hopefully !) pass thru the deer.
 - If the deer moves out of sight, you should wait at least 30 minutes and then carefully leave your stand and inspect the hit site and arrow. Check for thick dark blood (Liver), food particles (Stomach) or Brown Slime (Intestines) then continue to wait the appropriate time.
 - After waiting the appropriate time, start following the blood trail very carefully and quietly. Do not walk directly in the blood. If you can, mark the trail as you go. Look ahead to try and see the bedded (or dead) deer. If you see the deer still alive, back away carefully – you want it to stay in its 1st bed. If you jump the deer from this 1st bed, Stop, and again back away carefully – you want the deer to bed down again as soon as possible – probably within another 100 – 300 yds.
 - If you backed away from the deer still in its bed, you should wait at least another 4 to 6 hours before carefully picking up the trail again. Hopefully you will find your dead deer in or very near its first bed.
 - If you did jump the deer from its first bed (after the appropriate wait), now would be a good time to call Deer Search (585-935-5220). When you call, be sure to leave a message that describes the hit and the fact that it jumped

from its first bed. This is the perfect situation for our dogs to help you recover your deer. There will likely be no blood trail after the 1st bed, but there will be a good scent trail ! (even if it rained hard after the hit). Just be sure that you or your friends do not muck up the trail with your bloody boot prints. When we talk to you, we'll discuss your situation and decide how much longer to wait and when we will come with our dog to help you.

Liver and Stomach hits especially are always fatal. If you're patient and do the right thing, nearly all of these deer should be recovered.

- Coyotes can complicate the “too far back ‘ rules;

- If you're worried about Coyotes getting to your bedded deer first, you need to consider this;
 - Deer with these “too far back” types of hits will likely live for many, many hours.
 - If you push these deer, they will go a long, long way & leave a bloody scent trail as they go.
 - After the first few hundred yards, it's very likely that the blood trail, if there still is one, will be very difficult or impossible to follow. Before long the deer will stop bleeding externally.
 - Coyotes will have a much better chance of coming across a long blood & scent trail than they will of coming across the short trail (100 - 200 yds) from the hit site to the 1st bed.
 - Your best chance against coyotes, is to leave the deer undisturbed in its 1st bed until it dies.

- 1 lung hits Are the Worst!

- In general, most “1 lung” hits are very difficult / nearly impossible to recover.
- If you happen to hit the main arteries to 1 lung, recovery should be relatively easy.
- Most hits to other areas of 1 lung will be difficult or impossible to recover.
- In most cases, deer hit in non-vital areas of 1 lung will survive for days or may even fully recover.
- Likewise, deer hit thru both lungs, but near the edges (think top of the lungs under the spine or the back of the lungs) are also very likely to survive multiple days.
- Typically, if you don't find a lung hit deer within a ½ hour or ½ mile, it's very likely that you will not be able to recover it. Because deer with this type of hit can survive for days or longer, even our dogs will have little success recovering these deer. Our success rate will be less than 10% on these type of arrow hits. The deer usually lives for many days or survives.

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