

From the ARCHIVES

BY JEFF BROWN



# Three Friends, Three Monster NJ Bucks!



*Reliving some of the greatest stories, about some of the biggest bucks ever recorded from the Northeast!*

**S**OMETIMES FATE, LUCK, AND CO-INCIDENCE INTERTWINE to weave a story that seems, well, unbelievable. This is one of those stories.

In the seven year span from 1995-2002, three of New Jersey's biggest bucks of all time were killed by three different hunters, with three different weapons (bow, muzzleloader, and shotgun). Would you believe that all three men knew each other? That they hunted together? That they had a hand in each other's successful hunts? In fact, when the third of these monster bucks was taken, all three hunters were there to share in the hunt! Heck, they even had their deer all mounted by the same taxidermist! What are the odds that three friends would kill three of the biggest deer to ever come from this state, in that short period of time? I have no idea what the odds are, but I know one thing for sure – this story needs to be told...

Let's go back in time and relive those great stories, about these fantastic Garden State monster bucks!

## COVER BUCK



*Scott Borden*

### **The Scott Borden Archery Buck:**

With one well-placed arrow, Scott Borden got our story started in 1995. He arrowed a giant 12-pointer in Monmouth County that, even twenty years later, is the NBBC's #1 typical bow buck from the state. And he did it on public land!

Scott was no novice at the time, having taken more than 50 deer by 1995, with 15 of them bucks. He had been hunting for 16 years, and had many mentors and hunting partners. Among them, a man he knew his entire life, named Bill Brown. Remember that name, because Bill will be the subject of our third profiled hunt.

On the morning of his record breaking hunt, Scott had been grunting sporadically. Around 8:00 a.m. a doe started coming right to him. He stopped grunting as the doe came to within 18 yards. He didn't see a buck, but he figured one had to be there. And Scott was right, because just moments later he saw him coming. He took a couple of steps and just started rubbing trees. Scott was a little nervous and noticed the steam coming out of his own mouth, as his breath became heavy. The buck again disappeared from view, but Scott figured the big buck would not leave that doe. And he was right – the buck came up behind her about 35 yards away, rubbing trees. Then the doe cut away and the buck followed her. So Scott grunted again, and that got the buck's attention. The huge buck picked up its massive set of antlers and moved closer to the hunter. Scott grunted one more time

as the big buck continued to look around, as if he was looking for someone challenging him. The buck took a couple of steps, and began thrashing a sapling.

It was show time, with the buck's attention on the doe, now just a little over 20 yards away. Scott decided to put his call inside his overalls to get it out of the way, but it rubbed against the zipper, and that got the buck's attention. Fortunately for Scott that caused the buck to pick up his head and look around. With the buck pre-occupied and standing broadside, Scott readied his Hoyt bow and came to full draw. He put the 20-yard pin on the buck's shoulder and let it rip. The arrow found its' mark with a "whack" and Scott could hear that it was a hard hit. The surprised buck turned and ran dead away with his tail between his legs, plowing forward.

Deciding not to wait in his stand, Scott immediately climbed down. He left all of his equipment on the ground and left the area as quietly as he could, heading towards his dad's stand. His dad wasn't there, so Scott ran to the truck and found his dad (Charles Borden) and friend Bill Brown warming themselves in the cab. When Scott got to the truck he couldn't contain himself, and blurted out that he just shot a giant buck! The two older hunters congratulated him, and asked him for all the important details. They all waited for what seemed the longest 25 minutes of Scott's life. It was long enough for Scott to begin having second thoughts about the quality of the hit. He thought it was a good hit, and he thought the buck looked mortally wounded as it plowed through the brush. But with every passing moment, Scott's confidence waned.

Finally, it was time to head back to the scene of the hit. Upon arriving back at the stand, the hunters found the broken arrow shaft pretty close to where Scott had shot the buck. They inspected the arrow, and the pink blood told the hunters it was a lung hit. Within the first twenty feet of tracking, Scott looked forward and saw antlers ahead. He was so excited he shouted out, "There he is!" The three hunters were shocked at the massive set of antlers, and immediately thought it must be some kind of record. They celebrated and admired the great buck, and then field dressed it and dragged it to the truck.

From the moment they got the giant buck to the checking station, there was a buzz about Borden's trophy. After sharing it with family and friends, he took the cape and antlers to Carl Osterlund's All-Game Taxidermy shop in Neptune. As word spread, the taxidermy shop's phone began ringing off the hook as other hunters called to hear about the giant buck. Scott felt blessed to have crossed paths with such a giant buck. He later had it officially scored, after the 60-day drying period, and the results surprised even him.

### **Scores & Stats – The Borden Buck**

The Garden State trophy scored 196 5/8" gross and 189 4/8" net typical, making it the NBBC's #1 typical bow buck from the state. It has 12 typical points, and 1 small abnormal point on the left G-2. Main beams of roughly 25" each frame an inside spread of



*Ed Eloë*

20". With four tines measuring between 11" and 13", the rack has an incredibly impressive look. Compared to all other typical bow bucks that are listed in the NBBC's record book from the entire Northeast region (including all of New England, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey) Borden's buck also easily ranks #1 for typical bow bucks, outscoring Jim Colburn's 190 5/8" 11-Point from Massachusetts in 2012. What a great bow buck!

### **The Ed Eloë Muzzleloader Buck**

On Nov. 27, 2000, Ed Eloë rested his sites on a wide-racked 23-point buck that was roaming on public land in Ocean County. He knew the buck was big, but he could not have known that it would later be crowned as the biggest non-typical muzzleloader buck ever taken in New Jersey!

Prior to that fateful day some 15 years ago, Ed was an avid hunter who had some success, but never killed a big buck. He had taken 16 deer in his 18 years of hunting to that point in time, and his best buck was a 4 point. He was about to make a pretty big jump in terms of "his personal best!"

Like Scott Borden, Ed knew Bill Brown. He met him back in 1987 when he bought a Trans Am from him, and the two bonded over cars and deer hunting. They kept in touch, and then in 1997 Bill convinced Ed to buy the new TC Black Diamond inline muzzleloader. And guess which gun he used to kill his state record? You guessed it, the one Bill recommended.... Bill also introduced Ed to Scott, and two men hunted together a few times prior to

Ed's 2000 hunt. Now, back to Ed's 2000 encounter with the state record.

His 2000 season began with a lot of pre-season scouting in July and August. He got his first deer of the season on opening day of the bow season, and hunted hard that year, getting out five or six days a week, even if it was only a morning or afternoon hunt. He took several more deer during the bow season, doing his part to reduce the deer population in this overpopulated zone. Between the bow and muzzleloader seasons, Ed relocated his stand, to provide for a more open field of view, allowing for a longer shot, and getting closer to where he had seen quite a bit of deer activity during bow season.

Although Ed had not seen any big bucks before his record-book-breaking encounter, he was pretty confident that big bucks were using the area. He had seen plenty of buck sign, scrapes and rubs. November 27th began at 4 a.m. for Ed as he prepared for a hunt with his muzzleloader. The morning sky was clear, and the temperature was a little warm at 45 degrees. Ed walked to his stand under the cover of darkness, wearing doe urine cover scent on his boots and walking as quietly as he could. By the time he got into his tree stand, he had started sweating, so he took off his camo jacket and hung it on a branch to cool off. By now it was 6 a.m., and Ed was getting mentally ready to hunt. He began hearing noises a short while later, and they seemed to be coming from his right. But when the wind stopped, he realized they were coming from his left. He noticed a deer 35 yards away, and it was broadside. As he looked more intently he realized there was a doe and a buck. And as the deer came into view he realized it was a BIG buck.

The wide racked monster came through one clearing but did not provide a good shot. So Ed waited for the deer to pass through the next opening. He shouldered his TC, sling wrapped around his arm for extra stability, exhaled slowly, and squeezed the trigger. At first he could see nothing but smoke, so he listened for the sound of running deer. Instead, he heard absolutely nothing. As the smoke cleared he realized that the buck had gone right down! He could not believe it...

The confused doe departed as Ed made his way down the tree. He walked right up to the huge buck and was shocked at the size of the rack. He remembers thinking to himself that the buck must have at least 20 points, and it turns out his guess was low. The giant buck had 23 points! As amazed as he was at the time, he did not know he had just dropped a buck that would be a state record.

### **Scores and Stats: The Eloë Buck**

The Eloë buck scores a whopping 191 7/8" gross and 188 7/8" net, making it the NBBC's #1 non-typical muzzleloader buck from New Jersey! The rack has 13 points on the right, and 10 on the left, with an inside spread of 18 5/8". But the greatest spread on this rack is a whopping 26", thanks to the sticker points that grow outward from various points on the rack. The buck sports more than 40" of abnormal growth, giving it a freakishly wide

and impressive look! Compared to all other non-typical muzzleloader bucks that are listed in the NBBC's record book from the entire Northeast region (including all of New England, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey) Eloë's buck ranks #5 behind bucks from NY, MA, CT and ME.

Carl Osterlund of All-Game Taxidermy in Neptune mounted Eloë's state-record muzzleloader buck. Osterlund has also mounted Scott Borden's state-record typical bow kill. And two years later he would mount another giant...

## The Bill Brown Shotgun Buck

On December 9, 2002, the first day of shot gun season, Bill Brown followed in the footsteps of Ed Eloë and Scott Borden, dropping a buck I that would shock the state's hunting community. And both Ed and Scott would be there to share the experience...

You may remember that Scott Borden considered Bill one of the hunting mentors who shaped his hunting skills, and that Bill was with Scott and his dad the day Scott took his state record bow buck. So we know Bill was revered for his hunting skills. At 59 years old heading into the 2002 season, the retired police officer spent most of his time hunting or fishing. He loved anything related to the outdoors. He considers himself more of a traditional hunter who doesn't get tied up in buying all the new gadgets and technology. But he certainly avails himself of every opportunity to get into the woods, hunting all three seasons – bow, shotgun and muzzleloader. When you combine his love of the outdoors with his love of venison, you can understand why he is in the woods every chance he gets.

On that fateful day, Bill met up with a group of his hunting buddies, including Ed, Scott and Scott's dad Charles. Around 10 a.m. the group made plans for a push through a small private farm in Monmouth County they had permission to hunt. Bill would be one of several hunters who took positions along the edge of a field, while the others worked their way through some known bedding and feeding areas. Bill had his trusty circa 1910 Ansley Fox double barrel shotgun and was ready for some action. About ten minutes into the hunt, he heard a shot (later he found out that was Ed doing a little coyote control for the farmer). A few minutes after the shot, Bill heard something running in his direction. He caught sight of a deer in the thick cover, and could tell it was a good buck, but could not see the rack clearly. He could tell it was angling towards him, and raised his "Fox" with his sights set on an opening about 45 yards away, where the buck should appear. Sure enough, the big buck hit the opening, and Bill let fly the first shot of buck shot from one barrel of his trusty old shotgun. Thinking he missed, Bill pulled the trigger again and unloaded the second barrel. The buck heading into a laurel thicket, but did not come out the other side. So Bill hoped he was down.

Scott and the other hunts headed in Bill's direction, and together they found the buck. And it was a GIANT! It turned out that both of Bill's shots had struck the deer, proving the old gun (and the experienced hunter) could still get the job done on a running buck! The group celebrated their amazing fortune, but



*Bill Brown*

had some anxious moments first when a neighbor called police thinking the group might be trespassers on the property. But after a conversation with local authorities, the drama was over, and the celebration was back on! It was fitting that Scott had been there for Bill's big day, since Bill had been with Scott seven years earlier when he dropped his giant bow buck. And as if that wasn't fitting enough, everyone assumes that Ed's shot at the coyote just minutes before Bill saw the buck, was the catalyst that caused the buck to run in Bill's direction. Wow!

## Scores & Stats – The Brown Buck

Brown's shotgun trophy grossed 198 1/8" and nets out at 191 1/8" non-typical, making it the NBBC's #1 non-typical shotgun buck from the state. It has 18 scorable points (9 on each side), and 26 5/8" of total abnormal growth. Main beams of 26 5/8" and 26 1/8" frame an inside spread of 25 7/8". With that great inside spread, and the very long brow tines, the rack looks every bit as impressive as its' score! Brown's buck was the 4th largest gun non-typical from the entire Northeast in 2002, and ranks in the top 25 All-Time in the Northeast as a whole.

And of course, as you may have guessed, the buck was mounted by the same taxidermist who mounted Scott's and Ed's bucks.

It is difficult to imagine the crazy odds against three hunters, whose lives were so deeply intertwined, taking three of the state's best bucks of all time. And it is fitting that all three were together the day last buck fell!

*New Jersey offers a variety of hunting opportunities and conditions. The state has plenty of deer, and densities can rival those of any other state in the Northeast or Mid-Atlantic regions!*



*Our three hunters, plus Nelson Roque from Jersey's Big Bucks*

## The NJ Big Buck Trend Continues

Don't think for a moment that New Jersey's big buck producing days have waned. In fact, last year Jim Bills took a giant 207 4/8" 22-Point non-typical with his crossbow, establishing the current NBBC non-typical crossbow record for the state. This great buck was also from Monmouth County! It was the Northeast's largest cross scoring buck of 2014, from any state!

This state offers a variety of hunting opportunities and conditions. The state has plenty of deer, and densities can rival those of any other state in the Northeast or Mid-Atlantic regions. Deer hunting options range from heavily-populated suburban hunts to vast farm land, and some large tracts of timber. In addition to private land and plenty of farms, sportsmen have lots of public land to hunt as well, with over 500,000 acres divided among 65 wildlife management areas, 35 state parks, 11 state forests. This

public access is both a blessing and a curse, and can result in heavily-pressured public hunting areas. But savvy local hunters, like those profiled in this story, know that some tracts of public land hold absolute giant bucks. So despite the fact that most hunters would not think of New Jersey as a "big buck destination," I guess we should not be surprised that this state keeps producing giant bucks. And we can expect more to come in the 2015 season!

Special thanks to good friend Nelson Roque of Jersey's Big Bucks ([www.facebook.com/NJBigBucks](http://www.facebook.com/NJBigBucks)) for showing off many of the great bucks taken in this state, and for helping to get us connected with these guys, and suggesting this story!

For more information about the Northeast Big Buck Club, visit their website at [www.bigbuckclub.com](http://www.bigbuckclub.com).

**JERSEY'S  
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