

# Bowhunters enjoy lots of time to hunt

By **Aubrey Spencer**

*Colby Free Press  
colby.society@nwkansas.com*

"It's not only about the kill, but also everything you get to see while you're out there on the hunt."

That's how one local hunter described the sport of bow hunting.

Tony Butts of Colby has been bow hunting for over 20 years. He also enjoys rifle hunting but said he prefers bow and arrow for the challenge, the time it takes and for the longer season.

Rifle deer season typically last about 10 days, Butts said. With a bow, hunters have a three-month season, starting Oct. 1 and lasting until Jan. 1, he said.

"With bow, your max shot is about 40 yards," Butts said. "It's a little tougher. With rifle you have 200-300 yards, and it's a fairly easy kill."

Distance is an advantage with rifles. With bow hunting, the hunter has to be close to the game. The bow hunter has to know a lot more, worry about scent control, and pay attention to wind and movements Butts said.

"It's time-consuming," he said. "You really have to do your homework and know where the

deer are traveling. Bucks rub their antlers on the trees, so you try to follow that. And, you have to be close."

Butts said he uses his bow to hunt turkey, white-tail and mule deer. He most often hunts in an area north of Rexford, but said one advantage of bow hunting is that you don't have to choose a specific unit to hunt in, like you do with rifle hunting. With bow and arrow, a hunter can hunt the whole state of Kansas if they want to, he said.

Bow hunters can be found using tree stands, ground blinds or the spot-and-stalk method. With tree stands—basically a platform mounted up in a tree—you are out in the elements and have to really watch the movements of the deer, Butts said. Ground blinds are basically camouflaged tents with shoot-through screens. Butts said the older he gets, the more he prefers the ground blinds. They are warmer in the winter, he said.

Spot-and-stalk is where hunters sneak up on the deer and have to get very close for the shot. A deer's eyesight is incredible, Butts said, and the closeness will allow them to smell your scent even if you use cover up, which makes stalking more challenging.



Tony Butts and son Hunter examine a deer Butts shot while bow hunting.

Butts said his wife Michelle is not a hunter, but their 13-year-old son Hunter is. Butts said he's taken Hunter with him for the last 10 years, and even though Michelle does not hunt, she has always been very supportive of the time the two

guys spend together.

"It's our father-son time," Butts said. "One of the things I like most about bow hunting is the time I get to spend with Hunter. We have a great time doing it."

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Hunters can take advantage of antelope hunting in three management units in Kansas. About 170 firearm and muzzle loader permits are issued each year and

about 200 for archery. Antelope often travel in groups like this one.

- Photo by Christie Anderson/The Norton Telegram

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