

BET by the Antler



By Jeff "The Shedhead" Waschbusch

Jeff "The Shedhead" Waschbusch with some of the tremendous whitetail sheds he has picked up and collected over the years.

I have always been an outdoor enthusiast when it comes to fishing, and hunting waterfowl and pheasants. I can never seem to get enough of it and go out every chance I get. Being from Illinois, I live right in the middle of some great hunting and fishing territory and am fairly spoiled in having good luck. I always feel more at home when I am outdoors. Now that my area is much more developed, it requires some travel to get to those places I enjoy. Amidst my adventures, I always noticed big whitetail deer running around and thought it was great but never paid a whole lot of attention to them. I was more concerned about hitting one while out on my Harley.

Years ago, I met a guy through a friend who was a very successful deer hunter in the area, and we hit it off as most hunters do when you have a lot in common. Knowing Robert was a big fan of whitetail deer, I told him stories of some of the monster bucks I had been seeing over the years. He suggested, "Hey, we will have to go shed hunting together sometime."

I was a little confused. What's a shed, and how do you hunt one? Is that some kind of funky upland game bird I don't know about? Being a greenhorn in the way of whitetail deer, he had to explain to me that deer grow and shed their antlers every year and then regrow them. It was exciting to find something like that out for the first time as it had never crossed my mind.

We made plans and went hiking in an area where I had always seen lots of deer. After hiking for a couple hours, I saw a shed a few feet off a horse trail in the woods. I almost got a head rush from the excitement as I leaned over to pick it up. You would have thought I just won the lottery; I was bit by the antler right there. As I handed it to Bob, he said, "Oh, that's a drop-tined shed!" He had to explain the whole drop-tine thing to me because I didn't even know what a tine was, let alone a drop-tine. The shed was a small four-point with a nine-inch dropper. It could have been an old weathered forkhorn and I would have been just as excited.

So that's how I came to be bit by the antler, and I have been hiking all over North America for almost 12 years now. I have found and bought and sold just about every type of shed antler possible. The greatest thing about my travels is that I have met some of the nicest people and made some wonderful friends. I do over half of my hiking up in Canada and have to spend at least a couple of days talking myself into coming home. I usually step into the woods as the sun is coming up and leave when it's dark. Sometimes I'm holding a trophy set of sheds, sometimes I hike 30 miles and come out with nothing but aching calf muscles, but it is always worth it to me just to be outside and enjoying the wildlife. I can't imagine a better hobby. Special thanks to Robert Frye for getting me bit by the antler. I don't know whether to shake his hand or strangle him! Thanks, Bob.

EDITOR'S NOTE: There really are some truly enormous shed antlers in the photo that Jeff sent us. The pair he is holding has tremendous mass and would score very high. A number of the other sheds pictured are high-scoring in the non-typical category. You would have to agree that Jeff is one serious "shedhead." ☺



Mom and the kid.
Garry Donald photo.

Josh Seniuk of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, shows us a gigantic whitetail shed found by his dad a couple of years ago. The Seniiks have picked up many whopper-sized sheds the last few springs. The chunk of bone scores 92 inches.
Garry Donald photo.

