

I had the best hunting season ever!!

My 2014 hunting season started when I got my alligator helpers license and went alligator hunting with my Mom and Dad on Indian Bayou WMA. I could not believe it when we pulled the line up and had a huge alligator on the other end. I took my time, lined up the sights, took a deep breath and made a great shot. For some reason I wasn't even nervous! The gator was 13 ft long! I could tell my Mom and Dad were pretty proud of me and to be honest I was pretty proud of myself too. To make it even better the big gator has been mounted and is on display at The Swamp Shop in Grosse Tete, Louisiana with a plaque that has my name on it. I can go by with my family and friends to see the gator and relive the exciting day.

Next, at the end of September, my Dad and I went to Sherburne WMA on the youth squirrel hunt. My Dad said that I battled the mosquitos like a trooper and I bagged my first squirrel! We saw a couple right after we got there but could not sneak up close enough before they saw us and hid. Finally on the way back to the truck we saw another squirrel just off the trail we were walking on. We snuck closer and watched as the squirrel went far out on a limb to get an acorn. I aimed the gun and bam! I lost sight of where it went but my Dad saw it fall. I was pretty excited when I walked up and saw the squirrel lying in the leaves. The best part of this hunt was that I used my Grandfather's 16 gauge shotgun that he has had since he was a kid.

In November I went deer hunting with my Mom and Dad in St Francisville, Louisiana. It was a cold morning but fun because I was with my parents. About an hour after daylight my Mom leaned over and said, "There's a deer!". I looked out of the window of the stand and saw a deer standing at the edge of the woods. Dad got the gun pointed out of the window and I looked through the scope. This time I was nervous! My heart was beating fast and I couldn't get the gun to stay still. I am so glad that the deer stood there for a while because I could not stop shaking! Finally I remembered what my Dad taught me about taking a deep breath and relaxing. I took a deep breath, aimed right behind the deer's shoulder and shot. My Dad said great shot! I was so exciting when we walked to where the deer had been standing and saw the deer laying in the grass. It was my first deer and a five point buck!

The next great hunt was in early January when my Dad and I went to Dewey Wills WMA for a lottery youth deer hunt that I got picked for. We arrived the night before the hunt and spent the night at the WMA's bunkhouse. I got to meet other kids that got picked for the hunt. The next day Dad and I got to hunt from a really nice box stand. We did not see any deer from our stand but four of the other kids got a deer. It was really fun to see how excited they were and to hear them tell the story of getting their deer. The men that took us to our stand were so nice and it was fun to spend time with the other kids.

The last hunt was at the end of January. I got picked for the Lake Ophelia NWR youth deer hunt. The morning of the hunt Dad and I drove to the barn where we met our guide, Mr Larry and the other men that work at the NWR. We also got to

meet the other parents and kids that got drawn for the hunt. Everyone was so nice. Mr Larry drove my dad and I to the stand before daylight. It was still dark but sitting in the stand I could hear something that sounded funny. Dad said it was ducks. The ducks were so loud! Right after daylight we started to see deer. It was so exciting! The deer were far away but one of them started walking toward us. I could see the horns so I knew it was a buck. He got closer and closer. Finally he stopped in a clearing out in front of the stand. I took a deep breath and aimed right behind the shoulder. The buck ran a few steps and fell in the tall grass. Mr Larry and Dad were very excited for me. After hugs and congratulations we decided to stay in the stand since we could still see deer off in the distance. After a little while some of them started moving towards the stand. The deer got within range and a big doe separated from the rest. I aimed right behind the shoulder and after the shot she disappeared down into the tall grass she was standing in. Dad hollered out "good shot Mya". We all hugged and high fived. We walked out to see my deer. It was a six point and a big doe! After lots of pictures I thanked Dad and Mr Larry for everything that they had done to make the day so awesome. When we got back to the barn it was fun to tell everyone the story of getting my deer and hear their story. It was a great day!

The 2014 hunting season was really special because I got to spend time with my family, I got a huge alligator and I got three deer with three shots. My Dad helped me practice with my new gun. He taught me to never shoot until I felt totally sure that I was steady and holding the crosshairs right where I wanted and to always be safe. I passed up two bucks during the season that I never could hold the crosshairs steady on. Dad said he was proud of me for not taking an iffy shot. That made me happy to know that he was proud of me. I also got to hunt with my cousin Sam. I wanted her to get her first deer so bad but she never got a chance. That just makes me even more excited about next season. I just know Sam will get her first deer and I can celebrate with her!

Thanks for reading about my awesome hunting season,

Mya Gravois