

My son Austin and I wanted to tell everybody thanks for all the hard work and effort that went into this event. The weather did present a few challenges, as well as create a few opportunities. On Friday, we were able to sit in on the Game & Fish class on javelina. This gave us great insight to habits of these critters. We followed this up with the presentation on optics and the secrets of glassing. After helping to roll up the remnants of several canopies on Saturday morning; we proceeded to head out with Steve (the mentor from ABA) Although the rainy weather, which soon turned to snow, never did give us a break . Steve still proceeded to take us to a sweet little valley with some great glassing vantage points. My son and I eagerly listened to the guidance he offered as we sat there through the beginning of a major winter storm. My 11 yr old, now soaked to the bone after several hours of watching a motionless hillside finally decided to throw in the towel. We thanked Steve and headed home for some warm grub and dry cloths. After running a couple of loads of wet camo through the dryer, we slipped back out that afternoon in time to catch a glimpse of a javelina just off the main road. Notice I said glimpse not (SHOT).oops

Now into day 3 of our hunt we hiked back into the sweet spot Steve had guided us into the day prior. Needless to say the sun never did show itself. With the snow mounting up we once again called it a day on what we thought was our last chance to get out. What was to be a no school holiday Monday also turned out to be a no work day for dad ... due to the bad weather. Once again, we were off. With a good foot of snow on the ground now, the sweet spot no longer seemed so sweet. Remembering one of the many helpful hints the Wildlife Managers had provided, we headed out to explore new areas. We soon found a location that matched what was described as a ideal to glass. Two hours into the morning we were rewarded with a glimpse of 13 mule deer just 500 yards away. At this point the idea of glassing was really starting to sink in. With midday approaching, Austin and I decided to change our vantage point by a few hundred feet. We worked our way across the slope and started our glassing pattern all over again. Using our newly acquired skills we were soon rewarded with a brief glimpse of 5 javelina. At this point every last thing we learned this weekend came to instant memory. We proceeded out on what we hoped would be an intercept course on these elusive little creatures. Finding a new vantage point, Austin made a make-shift rest out of a rock outcropping and his backpack. And there we sat..... the minutes ticked away painfully... As I watched a lifeless hill , Austin had all he could do to hold back a scream of joy as I heard him say "DAD, I SEE ONE AND IT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF US!!!!!" I asked him if he had a shot? He replied yes! Not knowing the right in front of us meant a mere 100 yards away and a football fields distance to the left it took me a little bit to pick out the javelina from the vast landscape in front of us. My only reply (TAKE THE SHOT) was heard over and over again as Austin patiently waited for just the right one. The distinct report of his Remington 243 was the last thing I heard. I watched anxiously as the javelina fell over dead in it's own tracks as if it were a range target.

OK so maybe I got a little windy.... Without all of the help of so many involved; this weekend would have been a great hiking trip instead of a lifetime filled with memories of all the selfless individuals that shared so much for a 11 yr old little boy.

Thank You Tim & Austin Bowman !!!!!!!!!!!