

The

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“Too long have I hunted mammoth alone!” Rich McWhorter

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Hunting Small Game in Missouri

By Ray Madden

A funny thing happened on the way to the mailbox. We live about 200 yd. down a gravel lane from our mailbox and it is my practice to carry something on the walk in case an opportunity presents itself. It's a bow when deer season is open but otherwise, a blowgun, sling shot, or atlatl is chosen for small game, or just practice. One deer, and several rabbits, and squirrels have been harvested this way in the past. On opening day of squirrel season this year I decided to take the atlatl, since this is the first year it has been a legal method for hunting small game here in Missouri. Almost to the mailbox, this squirrel came off the ground and up a fence post then into a small tree and settled on a limb about head high with a "last years " walnut in his mouth. The throw was only about 30ft and I don't know which of us was the most surprised. His luck was as bad as mine was good.

The dart was an old Chris Oberg style carbon that had the tip broken off and had been replaced with a shell casing and a 00-buck shot (for weight). The atlatl was just a mulberry branch with a mixed hook carved into one end, and a few grooves forming a slip resistant grip on the other.

I fully expect to miss 40 or 50 times before another such hit, but even the misses are fun. Since this was a gray squirrel, and old to boot, it got boiled with homemade dumplings for a tasty treat.

