

**The Atlatl Vol 17 No 1**  
**Atlatl Hunting at Fallow Hollow**  
**By Bob Berg**

As we entered the field at the break of day, a line of fallow deer headed for cover through dew-covered grass. The morning mist obscured our view but the sound of hooves beating the ground was unmistakable. The day promised another atlatl hunting adventure, the stories of which would likely be told over and over.

We quietly made our way into a misty pine and hardwood forest, careful not to break sticks lying on the ground, the sound of which might give away our positions. We had to be mindful not to let our darts make a clacking sound when they hit against each other as we carried them together in a bundle. Strange odors of deer in rut, mixed with those of the forest, wafted through the trees titillating our sense of smell. Fallow deer have a sense of smell much better than our own so I imagined that we hunters also left strange odors that lingered in the still calmness of the morning air, alerting the quarry to our presence.

When I got to my stand I felt like I was very vulnerable to detection because of the lack of natural cover in the area. I quietly gathered sprigs of goldenrod to bolster the cover around my blind. My blind consisted of the root ball of a fallen tree, complete with the dirt and moss that came up with it. The hole that was left where the tree had pulled out of the ground was an ample depression for me to stand in and stay hidden from about 180 degrees. The problem was that deer come in from 360 degrees so something had to be done.

I heard the sound of approaching deer. They approached my location from the wrong side but I managed to get around to the other side without detection. I stood motionless with my dart at ready until a few bucks went by. One of the deer stopped about 25 feet away with its head facing the other direction. I cast, and my dart cut a clean swath right through what would have been the deer's vitals if it hadn't suddenly moved away. .

I continued with my project of improving my cover after there was no sign of any deer coming my way. I broke away small sticks that might deflect my dart in shooting lanes out to about 15 yards. The sticks and leafy branches went into my blind. I found a long stick that I stuck into the root ball and laid the other end across the log, forming a triangle. Then I put deadfall, live branches and goldenrod against it to form a wall of debris where I would hide for the next few hours.

Deer came by from time to time but I only got one more shot from my blind. Several deer had seen me. I decided that next time I needed to find a new location. Fallow deer have good memory and seem to communicate. It seems if they once detect you they will avoid the area for quite a while, or at least check it out before chancing another encounter with a hunter.

Before leaving the area for the day I built a new and improved version of my blind near a creek in an area with natural shooting lanes and heavily trodden trails where deer would surely pass. I made this one better than before.

The next day, three deer came within about 15 yards from me, and started drinking from the creek. They had not detected me in my new digs. Some brush obscured the deer closest to me so I chose to shoot at the one in the middle, besides it was the largest of the three.

There was a branch between the deer and me but with an atlatl you can arch over obstructions. I drew an imaginary line in the air with my mind's eye just as the deer presented a nice quartering away shot. I let the dart fly with just the right amount of force to clear the top of the branch. As the dart reached its apex, the deer turned toward me. The deer had completely flipped around when the dart struck. The seven-foot ash shaft sank deeply into its flesh and protruded out the other side. The deer dashed by me with the dart obviously transfixing the vitals.

The equipment used in this hunt which occurred in 1999 was a Wyalusing Atlatl and an 8 ounce 9/16" x seven foot ash dart with an Ace broadhead. (I have a line of atlatl hunting and fishing equipment designed for the purpose and tested in the field. Check out my website. [www.thunderbirdatlatl.com](http://www.thunderbirdatlatl.com)).

