

Hunters vote for favorites, results posted

All hunters have an opinion about their favorite new hunting gear. But Game & Fish/Sportsman compiled the votes of nearly 5,400 hardcore hunters to report the surprising findings in the fourth annual Readers' Choice Awards.

Two products — the YETI Tundra 65 cooler and the Ruger American Rimfire — dominated their categories. But in the Centerfire category, it was too close to call.

YETI's Tundra 65 was one of the products that drew high approvals from readers. The cooler company, which burst into the hunting scene just a few years ago, got an astounding 68.7 percent of the vote in the Cooler category.

"It's amazing to see the strong brand loyalty our readers have with YETI, a product in a category that was seemingly overlooked until just a few years ago," said John Geiger, Game & Fish/Sportsman senior editor. "Nearly seven out of 10 voters chose the YETI 60-quart over other quality products."

Complete results of the voting are in the July-August issue of Game & Fish/Sportsman magazines, on newsstands now, and online at gafmag.com/rca-2015-hunting. Award trophies will be presented to winners at the 2016 SHOT Show in Las Vegas.

Readers voted for the most popular hunting tools in 12 categories, from guns and bows to apps and coolers. The survey also offered readers a chance to comment on their decisions. That gives Game & Fish/Sportsman deep insight into hunters' thoughts about the latest gear. Literally thousands of comments are recorded.

For example, John McClain of Alabama was typical of other voters when he noted YETI's quality. "I have this cooler and it is worth every penny," said McClain. "It's very well built. I have owned cheaper coolers, and they seem to tear up within a year."

Second place in the cooler category went to Pelican's ProGear Elite, while Canyon Cooler's Outfitter won third.

The other product that ruled its category was the Ruger American, which pulled in 53.1 percent of the vote to win the Rimfire category.

"I have owned several rimfires over the years," said reader-voter Warren Short of Wisconsin. "But Ruger is the best all-around I've ever owned."

Savage's ultra-new A17 won second and Winchester's remake of the classic Model 1885 took third.

"Our Readers' Choice Awards keep growing every year and are a fascinating study of what gear works in the field," said Geiger, who noted other results from the survey that draw a profile of the reader-voters.

When asked how many days they hunted last year, nearly half of the reader-voters said at least 21, and nearly two in 10 said 61 days.

"That's impressive and speaks to the depth of experience our readers have with hunting gear," said the senior editor.

With 5,350 votes, for a margin of error of plus or minus 1.2 percent of votes, the Centerfire duel between Ruger's American Centerfire and Remington's 783 was too close to call.

Winners in all 12 categories include:

Centerfire Category (Tie)

Ruger American, 24.9% and Remington 783, 24.2%; Runners-Up: Browning XPR, 19.8%, Kimber Mountain Ascent, 10.8%

AR Rifle

Smith & Wesson M&P-10, 51.3%; Runners-Up: Remington R-25 GII, 18.6%, Ambush 6.8 SPCII, 12.0%

Auto-loading Shotgun

Browning A5, 35.1%; Runners-Up: Benelli Ethos, 31.1%, Remington V3 Field, 26.4%

Bow

Mathews No Cam HTR, 34.4%; Runners-Up: Hoyt Carbon Spyder ZT 30, 22.8%, PSE Dream Season Decree, 19.2%

Crossbow

TenPoint Stealth FX4, 26.5%; Runners-Up: Barnett Raptor FX, 26.0%, Excalibur Micro, 16.2%

Rifle Scope

Bushnell Elite 10x42mm, 34.9%;

Runners-Up: Swarovski EL Range, 26.4%, Steiner Predator 10x42mm, 15.4%

ATV

Honda Foreman Rubicon, 33.7%; Runners-Up: Yamaha Grizzly 700 EPS, 32.5%, Polaris Ace, 24.4%

Side by Side

Polaris Ranger XP 900 EPS, 50.0%; Runners-Up: Can-Am Commander MAX 1000, 14.6%, Kubota RTV X1100C, 13.7%

APP

HUNT, 36.1%; Runners-Up: ScoutLook, 34.0%, iHUNT, 16.6%

Airgun

Benjamin Marauder, 32.1%; Runners-Up: Stoeger ATAC, 24.1%, Umarex Octane, 23.6%

Cooler

YETI Tundra 65, 68.7%; Runners-Up: Pelican ProGear Elite 80-Quart, 22.2%, Canyon 75-Quart, 4.8%



First of the Season! This is the first photo turned in for the 2015 Hunting season. Billy Bohannon of Midland brought this nice 9 point down at the beginning of bow season this year on his family's ranch west of Robert Lee.

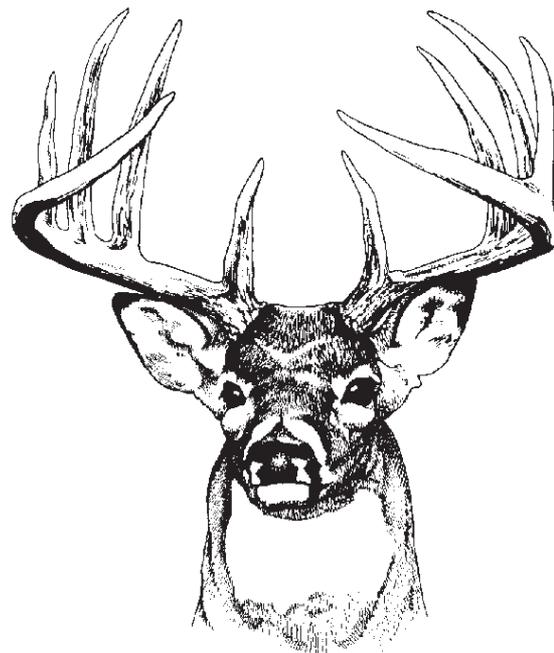
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