

from the disease. Lockwood said there is no telling how many deer have died from CWD, but so far the incidence rate is low. If it climbs to 13- to 15-% in a localized herd the impact could be devastating. What could be helping is that DNA results from sampling over the years has shown Texas’ deer herd is healthy based on the A&M research.

While hunters taking deer within CWD zones (<https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/cwd/#checkMap>) are required to participate in testing, there are things hunters in the remainder of the state can do to reduce the spread. The most important of which is properly disposing of carcasses, heads and hides and not just throwing them away on the landscape.

Why the .308 Winchester will never die

By Michael Dickerson
Not long after the 6.5 Creedmoor arrived on the scene, some observers called it the “.308 Win. killer.” Things haven’t quite gone that way. The 6.5 Creedmoor has become immensely popular, and rightly so, but any notion that it would cause the demise of the .308 Winchester was untrue then and is untrue today. The .308 Win. remains a highly popular cartridge globally, and it likely will be for as long as centerfire rifle cartridges are made.

But even so, it’s easy to neglect the old .308 for more interesting options. There was a stretch of time when I didn’t shoot .308 Winchester very often because I was busy testing all the flashy new cartridges that have been introduced recently. The .308 Win. is neither flashy nor new, and I suppose I had come to view the cartridge as being, well, somewhat boring. It

was like an old plow horse that just kept plodding up and down the field, doing its job with monotonous reliability. With the wisdom of years, I have come to view that as a virtue.

That’s one reason I set out to rediscover the .308 this year by testing more rifles chambered for the cartridge and hunting with it more often. First, while hunting in northern Alberta with a Mossberg Patriot rifle chambered in .308 Winchester, I shot the biggest black bear of my life—that’s noteworthy considering I already had one in the record book. Thirty minutes after shooting that bear, which measured 7 feet, 4 inches from nose to tail, I shot an even bigger bear that measured 7 feet, 7 inches. Each bear dropped to one shot using Hornady’s American Whitetail load with a 150-grain InterLock bullet.

More recently, I shot a beautiful

200-pound fallow deer in Texas using the new Benelli BE.S.T. Lupo rifle and Federal’s 175-grain Terminal Ascent .308 Win. load. I shot the buck quartering on, and the bullet smashed through the big shoulder bones and penetrated 30 inches before coming to rest, intact and perfectly mushroomed, in the offside hide. The buck ran 12 yards and dropped. Such impressive performance is common with .308 Winchester, especially when loaded with newer premium bullets that deliver great terminal performance near and far.

I’m not alone in my affection for the .308 Win., and it turns out a quiet majority of hunters still use and love the cartridge despite its oldness. Here are nine reasons the .308 isn’t going away anytime soon.

Military Roots Ensured Success

The military version of the .308 Win, the 7.62X51mm NATO, was developed in the 1950s and used with the M14

rifle, M60 machine gun and many other U.S. and allied-nation weapons. The M14 was replaced by the M16 during the Vietnam War, but the rifle continued to see service long afterward. I had experience with the M14 while serving in the Navy off Vietnam during the closing days of the war. We still had M14s aboard, and it was the first military rifle I learned to shoot. It left a lasting impression.

While the 7.62X51mm NATO continues to see military service, Winchester long ago saw a commercial market for the cartridge and introduced it to hunters as the .308 Win. in 1952, two years before NATO’s adoption of the 7.62X51. Chambered for the popular Model 70 rifle and others, the cartridge quickly gained a global following. Name the job – hunting, target shooting, or military and police sniping – and you’ll find the .308 Win. gainfully employed.

Just as the .30-06 Springfield was used as a military cartridge

and enjoyed great success as a hunting round, so, too, has the .308 Win. There’s a certain poetic symmetry in this because the .308 Win. is, for all practical purposes, a shortened .30-06. The .30-06 can launch bullets a little faster, but the 308 Winchester can do just about everything the .30-06 can do in the field, using less powder and producing less recoil, while conveying the benefits of a cartridge that fits in a short action. It is, in some ways, a more efficient cartridge, and that’s just one of many attributes that helped make the .308 so popular.

Sales Remain High

Year after year, the .308 Win. has consistently ranked among the top-selling rifle cartridges. Ammo makers aren’t always keen to share precise sales figures, but Federal Ammunition and Hornady say .308 Win. consistently ranks among their top five best-sellers, and Winchester also confirms that .308 Win. continues to be one of their top-selling rounds.

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