



# FISHING FOR LIFE

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## *THE DEPTH FINDER*

Luke 5:4—"Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." - Jesus directs us if we listen.

VOLUME 7, NOV

**A Communication for Deep C's Members**

Nov 7, 2021

### **DEEP C'S DIRECTOR - STEVE CRUIKSHANK**

Hello all,

A lot of us will be out in the wood's deer hunting the next few weeks. Wherever that special spot is I pray God will keep you safe and that your relationship with Him will increase. While you're out there in the woods look around at all the nature God has placed in front of you. For me, God knows I love to see all the wild animals, so He gives me many opportunities to watch them. One of the best places is out in my tree stand. I thank God every time I see an animal in the wild. I believe that is how my relationship with Him will increase as well.

November is the month of Thanksgiving. There have been a lot of people, places, and things I have been thankful for over the 62 years of my life. None-more than my dad. He never said much but when he did you had better listen because it was going to be important. I am thankful for my wife Jan and sons Jon & Ryan. I have always enjoyed going out in the wild. I love to watch animals in nature. I have always enjoyed fishing in the early morning when the water is as smooth as glass. All these things are good, and God wants us to enjoy and be thankful for them because he provides them for us. So, I have concluded that I will be thankful daily for God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and everything else in my life will fall into place.

Colossians 3:15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body: and be thankful.

2 Corinthians 6:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

**Your brother in Christ,  
Steve**



### **Save these Dates**

Christmas Party Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Holes 4 Heroes – Feb 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Banquet-April 9<sup>th</sup> 2022

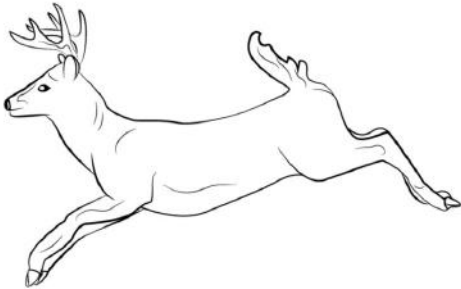
Deep C's Winter Retreat Feb 24<sup>th</sup>-27, 2022

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Men's Deep C's November:

This month Brent Fox will speak at all 4 chapters about being prepared for anything.

- West - Nov 9 - Cabela's Rogers
- South - Nov 11 - Home of Wes Wheatley  
9943 Harriet Ave, Bloomington
- East - Nov 23 - Fractional Toys
- North - Nov 18 - Insurance Brokers  
3351 Round Lk Blvd, Anoka



Fishing For Life, founded in 2004, is a tax exempt charitable organization whose mission is to inspire a love of fishing and outdoor activities through Christ-centered programming.

Within Fishing For Life, there is a Christian ministry called Deep C's. There are five chapters active - West, South, East, North, and women's - each meeting once / month. The Deep C's meetings all begin at 6pm with a free supper. All are welcome .

### 2021 Theme

#### **"Launch Out"**

Luke 5:4, when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Cost for membership is \$20/ year collected in February.



Deep C's Leaders & Volunteers	
Deep C's Director	Steve Cruikshank
Depth Finder Editor	Daryle Hamlin
West Chapter - Rogers - 2nd Tuesday	
Spiritual Leader	Vaughn Blackburn
Chapter Coordinators	Kent Lillehaugen & Ron Buster
Food Coordinator	
South Chapter -Burnsville-2nd Thursday	
Spiritual Leader	Wes Wheatley
Chapter Coordinators	Andrew Vanhoozer Pat Adams
Food Coordinator	
East Chapter - Oakdale - 4th Tuesday	
Spiritual Leader	Dan Pilla
Chapter Coordinators	Randy Markey & Troy Sonnenfeld
Food Coordinator	Randy Markey
North Chapter - Blaine - 4th Thursday	
Spiritual Leader	Dan Pilla
Chapter Coordinators	Travis Busch & Ken Stahn
Food Coordinator	

*Deep C's is a Christian group that regularly gathers together to share in their knowledge of and love for the outdoors, and, most importantly, to fellowship with one another through faith in Jesus Christ. We desire to deepen our relationships with Him and with each other. There are currently five active groups across the Twin Cities. Four for men and one for women. All are welcome!*

Depth Finder is a monthly publication for our Deep C's groups. Submissions should be emailed to the editor. All articles, testimonies, informational items, pictures, recipes, and items for sale or wanted are welcomed and encouraged. Please make submissions to Steve or editor - Daryle Hamlin dbhamlin@gmail.com.





Almost every day of my life, I get people asking me how to cook venison. Hunters, yes, but also the legion of people who've been given deer meat and have only a rough idea about how to cook it.

What follows is a comprehensive overview geared toward beginners, but with enough tips and tricks to help even long-time wild game cooks.

Let's start with some basics. What is venison, anyway? As funny as it might sound to some of you, it's a legit question I get asked a lot.

**"Venison"** is a centuries-old term that used to mean all wild game, but it has evolved nowadays to mean the meat from cervids and wild bovids: So that's all species of deer, elk, caribou, moose, and the exotics like nilgai, blackbuck and oryx.

Pronghorn antelope, which is neither a cervid nor a bovid, also falls under the term venison. So do wild sheep and goats. Bison, wild or not, tends to not be lumped in there by some, and there aren't enough people who've eaten musk ox to really put it in either box — but personally I'd call it venison.

So, one thing you will notice about all these animals is that venison is red meat. Obvious to any hunter, but if you'd never actually seen venison, you might not know.

## Venison and Food Safety

One cool thing about venison is that yes, you can eat it not only rare, but raw. While researching my venison cookbook [Buck, Buck, Moose](#), I did an extensive search of food poisoning studies looking for cases involving venison, and I found very few over the past several decades.

It is not impossible to get a food-borne illness from raw or undercooked venison, but it is very rare. There have been a few isolated cases of listeria, likely involving poor han-

dling of the meat, and a few of *e. coli* poisoning, which were linked to contact between the deer's feces and meat that was subsequently undercooked.

Most serious but even rarer are [the very few cases](#) where eaters of raw or undercooked venison contracted toxoplasmosis. Solution? Freeze before eating rare or raw. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [freezing kills toxoplasmosis](#).

So once your deer meat has been frozen, you are free to make dishes like [venison tartare](#) or any [backstrap recipe](#) where you cook the meat rare.

**Is Venison Healthy?** Short version: Yes.

Deer meat and other forms of venison are naturally low in fat, and the fat that is there is high in omega-3 fatty acids. I wrote [a full article on deer fat here](#), so I won't go into the details too much here.

Exact nutrition details on wild foods is a fraught affair, since you have variation in species, size and diet. So any charts or graphs you see on other sites should be taken with a grain of salt.

Because venison is so low in fat, and because it is in general denser than farmed analogs like beef or lamb — deer, elk and such are athletes living by their wits, unlike most farm animals — venison will have more vitamins, protein, and minerals than an equal weight of, say, beef.

Other than nutritional information, you should know about Chronic Wasting Disease, which can affect all cervids, so that means deer, elk, moose, caribou. Pronghorn are unaffected. I wrote a survey of the state of the [research on CWD and humans](#) in 2019, and it holds up pretty well today.

Short version: Chronic wasting disease does not affect humans. But similar prion maladies *have* jumped species barriers in the past, and no one wants to be Patient Zero.

## How to Cook Venison: Basics

OK, let's look at cooking venison now.

**Number one rule, the Prime Directive:** *You can always cook venison more. It is impossible to uncook something.* This of course holds true for all things. To that end, know that because venison has so little fat — and no internal marbling — it gets hot and cools down much faster than fatty beef. Or even lean beef.

Fat is an insurance policy against inexpert cooking. Venison leaves you without that safety net, to mix metaphors. This is why it's vital to err by cooking too little, if you are going to err. It's also why you almost always want to start with room temperature meat.

**Second rule, or rather observation:** Inexperienced cooks cook the tender parts of venison (tenderloin, backstrap, [flat iron steak](#), etc.) too much, and the tough parts too little.

Third rule, which has exceptions: *The front of the animal is tougher than the back end of the animal. Let me unpack that a bit.*

## Like the Recipe? Buy the Book!

You'll find everything you need to know to master venison in Hank Shaw's cookbook *Buck, Buck, Moose*.

The front of a deer or similar creature features the shoul-

ders, front shanks, neck, head and tongue. With the exception of the aforementioned flat iron steak, and the “whistlers” on a large animal like an elk or moose or bison (these are the long, skinny muscles that cover the animal’s trachea) every part of this requires long, slow cooking.

Even the front part of the backstrap isn’t the best part. But it will still be fairly tender. Now the hind end has the hind legs, obviously, most of the backstrap, the tenderloins and the hind shanks.

Only the hind shanks are tough and gnarly. The hind leg, separated into single muscle roasts, can be served medium-rare, and is an excellent candidate for [smoking like a roast beef](#) or tri-tip.

### Venison Cuts

OK, this one can get weird, since butchering a deer is a very personal act, as idiosyncratic as it gets. **Bottom line:** *You butcher a deer or elk or whatever based on how you are going to eat it.* Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise.

I go into serious detail [on how to butcher a deer in my book](#), and you’ll have to get a copy to get those details. (Hey, I got to make a living somehow!)

That said, let me start with the venison cuts most people get back from a processor or butcher. Those cuts range from useful to an abomination.

Actually, most processors cut venison poorly... if it’s even your deer you get back. Yes, that can happen. Most processors are slammed with tons of animals all at the same time, especially in the Midwest where deer seasons are short and a zillion people are out hunting all at the same time. Looking’ at you, Pennsylvania and Michigan. And the \$100 to process your deer isn’t very much.

So, they have their way. Not a fan. Here’s why.

Medallions of backstrap. Not inherently terrible, but way harder to cook perfectly, compared to cooking *lengths* of backstrap, which you then slice into medallions once cooked. That method is prettier, too, since you get to see the lovely pink interior.

Photo by Holly A. Heyser

Shoulder “roasts.” Um, not roasts unless you want to make [venison pot roast](#), which is perfectly great. But don’t open up the packet thinking you can cook this medium-rare.

The Dreaded Leg “Steak.” I hate this cut with the heat of 10,000 suns. It should be outlawed. If you’re not familiar, you get this abomination when some dude with a band saw blasts through your deer’s hind leg crosswise, bone and all.

What results might at first glance look like a steak, but it’s really a half-dozen muscle groups, sliced against the grain, with a bone in the center. Those muscle groups are often just barely held together by connective tissue. So, when you cook this war crime of a cut, two things happen: The weak connective tissue separates, so your “steak” falls apart, and the strong connective silver skin contracts, warping each segment of the so-called steak horribly.



### My Venison Cuts

Clearly you can see I prefer doing things myself. Here’s a rundown on the venison cuts I normally do. Again, diagrams and photos galore are in my book.

Short version: I do what’s called seam butchery. The seams are the connective tissues between muscles. All you need to do is disassemble the animal the way God assembled it. I use a pocketknife. A sharp pocketknife, but a pocketknife, nonetheless.

I tell you this because many people will try to sell you weirdly specialized or incredibly expensive knives. They are not needed. You do however need whatever knife you have to be sharp. I have [a whole article on deer processing tools here](#), if you want to get into detail.

Quarters come off first, often in the field. On small deer and pronghorn, I leave the bone-in the neck roast unless I am in a CWD area, in which case I debone it. Larger animal necks I always debone.

I keep the tongue, heart (unless I blasted it, which happens), kidneys and, on young animals, the liver. I do not keep the livers of old animals, because even though they have probably not abused theirs like I have mine, they are still very, very strong tasting.

If I am around a ranch, I use a saw and saw off ribs, especially on bovids like nilgai, bison or oryx, their fat is tasty, not waxy, so “beef” short ribs with these animals is mad crazy delicious.

I almost always remove the backstrap and tenderloin, as opposed to cutting chops. That one’s on me. Just my own idiosyncrasies. But, if you do cut chops, cut them thick,



like two ribs on a deer — or cut a pretty rack. Single-bone chops should only be from large animals. No one likes a tiny chop. This is America.

All shanks get removed whole. I section large ones for [ossobuco](#). A Sawzall introduces a certain [Goodfellas](#) fun to the party but isn't strictly needed.

Hind legs get separated muscle by muscle. You can do most of this with your fingers after [removing the femur](#), which you can crosscut for marrow bones.

Shoulder gets kept whole on little deer for things like [braised shoulder](#), and on large animals I will [cut a flat iron steak](#), then use the rest for things like [venison barba-coa](#).

### Venison Cooking Methods

I am racking my brain trying to find a method for cooking venison that I don't like...

...OK, found one: Poaching. The idea of a venison steak or really any red meat gently poached in wine or water is pretty revolting. But then I know the difference between poaching and braising.

I tell you this because yeah, you can pretty much do anything to cook venison cuts: Roasting, frying, grilling, smoking, braising, stewing, even, as we've already covered, raw.

### Some more tips:

- Thin cuts you want to remain pink should begin cooking very cold. I will actually bread my chicken-fried venison, let it set in the fridge a while, then even freeze it for 20 minutes before cooking. That keeps the center pink while you get that golden brown. Trippy, eh? But it works.
- Like smoke rings? And who doesn't? *Start smoking venison cold*. This is because a smoke rings stop developing at around 140°F, so the longer the meat takes to get there, the better the ring.
- Thick cuts and lengths of backstrap *must* start at room temperature, unless you are reverse searing. This promotes even cooking and prevents the weird black-and-blue effect that, inexplicably, some people like.
- *It Will Submit*. I don't care how old your moose was, it will get tender. Eventually. I've had bull elk pot roasts take 5 hours, but they eventually did get tender. Time is your friend. When in doubt, make a pot roast or braise the day before you need to impress someone.

- Seasonings (except salt) hate high heat. I can't tell you how many times I've eaten someone's "special spice rub" that tasted like an ashtray because he (and it's always a he) put it on the grill over a raging fire. Paprika gets especially bitter when burnt. So please, cook your backstrap with only salt and fire. Then, the moment it comes off the heat, roll it in your rub and let it rest. You're welcome. All venison Wobbly Bits taste good grilled over a smoky fire, chopped, then served in a tortilla with salsa. Period. This is a great way to introduce people to offal. Know that if you are going to make [tongue tacos](#), they do need to be braised tender before they hit the fire

A word on venison marinades. I use them, but in a limited way because they don't penetrate to the center of all but the thinnest cuts. But I do use them for this, and I have [a variety of venison marinades here](#). My all-time favorite dish that uses them? Venison [arrachera tacos](#) — yep, that's skirt steak.

### Final Words

A few final thoughts on how to cook venison. It's a journey. I've been seriously cooking deer and other types of venison for more than 20 years, and I still learn things each season. Don't beat yourself up if you mess something up.

To that end, I'll leave you with some ideas to fix mistakes, or make use of botched attempts. First, I'll reiterate that you can always cook something more. So, most of my fixes are for overcooked things.

You made a venison sausage that didn't bind, so when you eat it the meat crumbles? Keep it in links for now, but use it out of the casings for [venison chili](#), or [venison lasagna](#), or a venison Ragu. All of these are good uses for ground venison with no added fat.

You overcooked the backstrap? Chop it small, toss it with salsa, reheat gently and put it in tacos. Or the aforementioned chili, etc.

The roast was too tough? Keep cooking it until it falls apart. *But it's too dry!* Aha! Now shred this hammered roast. Add pork lard or some other fat that makes you smile in a frying pan, let it get hot, then spread the shredded roast meat out and sear it on one side. It's amazing over rice, in a tortilla, or in a sandwich.

I could go on, but you get the point. I hope this helps you at least a little. Leave a comment if you have other questions.

## November Special Needs Column

Hello everyone, I hope October was good to you. Did you know about the Minnesota DNR program called Fishing in the neighborhood or FiN for short? If you did that's awesome! But if not let's learn about it. According to the website <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/fishing/fin/index.html> Fishing in the Neighborhood (FiN) is a DNR program aimed at increasing angling opportunities, public awareness and environmental stewardship within the seven-county metro region. As the state's population has become increasingly urbanized, it has become evident that there is a growing need for easily accessible fishing opportunities close to where people live.

FiN builds on existing urban fisheries management activities such as stocking, aeration and enhancement of shore-fishing and pier-fishing opportunities. By reaching out to a wider variety of interests, such as local parks departments, lake associations and schools, FiN promotes a greater awareness of aquatic habitat needs and the importance of good stewardship. By getting more people involved in angling, FiN will assure that this family-oriented activity continues to be one of Minnesota's most popular pastimes!

More info on FIN. <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/recreation/fishing/fin/fin-guide.pdf>

Contact FIN <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/fishing/fin/contacts.html>

FIN Ponds [http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/recreation/fishing/fin/a-z\\_fin\\_ponds.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/recreation/fishing/fin/a-z_fin_ponds.pdf)

Thanks for viewing have a great month.

[mn\\_bugger@yahoo.com](mailto:mn_bugger@yahoo.com)



Call or text me at 612-500-7005 I look forward to hearing from you.

Director, Tyler Pinor



# Archie's Funnies

## ADAM'S RIB

In Sunday School, they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week, his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and said;

'Johnny what is the matter'?

Little Johnny responded

'I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife.'



## Pro Fishing Tips November 2021

by Dwight Nelson

### The Amazing Fish Wheel

Alyssum loves fishing. If you were to ask her how she fishes for salmon she would respond “we use a fish wheel!” That might take a little explaining. She and her brother grew up on the famed Copper River in Alaska. As part of subsistence fishing, their family was allowed to use what has been for hundred years called a “fish wheel”.



Fish wheels are truly amazing machines. Used heavily in the gold rush in the last few years of the 1800s, fish wheels became a highly effective way of harvesting fish from Alaska’s turbid and silt ridden waters. In fact, fish wheels are so effective, they were banned on the Columbia River in Oregon in the early 1900s.

A fish wheel is a fixed rotating device used for catching fish. They essentially rotate and scoop fish out of the river, depositing them in a tank.



There is no need for power as the rotating mechanism is powered by the river current hitting several paddles on the unit. Two opposing baskets scoop fish out of the water. As the baskets keep rotating, the fish fall out of the basket and onto a tray placed at an angle on the basket. From there they slide into the holding tank which is either in the water or on a dock. Every 10 hours or less, the owner of the fish wheel has to attend to the wheel and remove any fish caught.



Emptying the tank

For decades, collecting fish in this manner has been the key to survival for many Alaskan families, Native and otherwise. Fish wheels are often shared. In a 4-7 day period you may only get 3-4 fish. Other times you might get 100. It all depends on

when the salmon move through. The community shares though and helps those who only get a few fish.

### An Amazing Fish Tale

While fishing the other day I snagged what felt like a small weed. Pulling it in it turned out to be broken off line. Being a Good Samaritan I decided to pull in the rest of the line to get it out of the water. Hand over hand, yard by yard I pulled it in. As I pulled it seemed to get heavier and heavier. I started thinking “hey I might get a lure out of this deal!” I reached one broken end but still had more to go.



Then I felt a “head shake” and realized there was a fish on the other end. I ended up pulling in an 18” sauger that was still very much alive and kicking! All with no rod or reel!



18" Sauger found on broken line!

Like I say, sometimes it’s better to be lucky than good! Oh yeah, if that was your jig, let me know and I’ll get it back to you! Looks like it worked pretty good.

### Mille Lacs Night Walleye Fishing Update

Night fishing on Mille Lacs was off and on earlier but lately has been good. One trip out netted a dozen walleye in 3 hours. Pictured are a couple of 22” keepers. From 9/16/21 through Sun, 2/27/22, 1 walleye between 21-23” or 1 fish longer than 28” can be kept. All other walleye must be immediately released. Open 6am to 12pm.



Continue to look for walleye in the shallows between 5 (or less) feet to 10 FOW. Now is the time to use BIG lures like #9 Shallow Shad Raps, big Smithwicks, Bomber Long As or even Rapala Original Floaters (like F13s or F18s). Change up colors often if you are not hitting fish as they seem to be picky this year. Troll slow going as low as 1 or 1.5MPH. Use planer boards to get even closer to shore. Remember as it gets colder, the fish will move deeper.

Blessings and Tight Lines!

Dwight Nelson ([dpnelson50m@gmail.com](mailto:dpnelson50m@gmail.com))

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Several color patterns and styles to choose from. To order, visit:

<https://moveu.us/stores/fishingforlife>

You can also get a Deep Cs logo embroidered on a shirt of your choice - ask Steve.

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(dbhamlin@gmail.com)



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Deep C's hats available at all Deep C's meetings for \$10. Each chapter has their own color hat.



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