

FIGHT to the DEATH

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #206 —

This farm consists of over 1,300 acres, more woods than open fields, and has a decent sized creek running through the woods on the north end; then defining most of the eastern boundary. It has a long history of producing nice whitetails. There have been no shootings or reported sightings of Boone and Crockett bucks, just nice respectable deer that always wind up on someone's wall. Turkey season is also an eagerly anticipated event in spring, with many mature toms taken each year.

It was a pleasant day in early December, between the various deer seasons, when these remains were found in an old, worn out farm pond — surrounded by brush.

From the condition of the bodies, the heavy stain on the antlers, and the lack of fresh predator tracks around the scene, it appears these bucks fought and died the previous fall. Pity, they were both nice shooters for most of the deer hunters I know.

As humans, we enjoy the benefits of modern medicine — with ambulances and paramedics just a phone call away — should we have an accident while in the field. But

in the world of whitetail deer, run-ins with automobiles and fences take a heavy toll each year, and fighting during the rut can be equally serious and sometimes leads to death.

In Missouri, deer antlers grow from early spring until late summer then harden up for the rut, which starts in early November. For whitetail bucks, antlers are their primary weapon to challenge or defend the breeding rights to the



Presumably they fought into the water, then fell and drowned in the pond. If not, likely they laid next to the water until they died of thirst.

does. Serious fights between mature bucks can erupt at any time during the rut; those fights are often quite vicious and are designed to determine the biggest and strongest buck. Often there are injuries to one or both animals and once in a great while the horns get hopelessly locked together and both bucks suffer what surely must be an agonizing death.

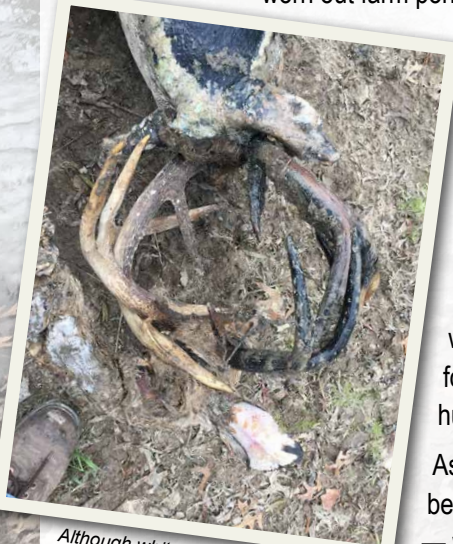
Since no one witnessed this event, we don't know how these bucks got

"...fights between mature bucks can erupt at any time during the rut..."

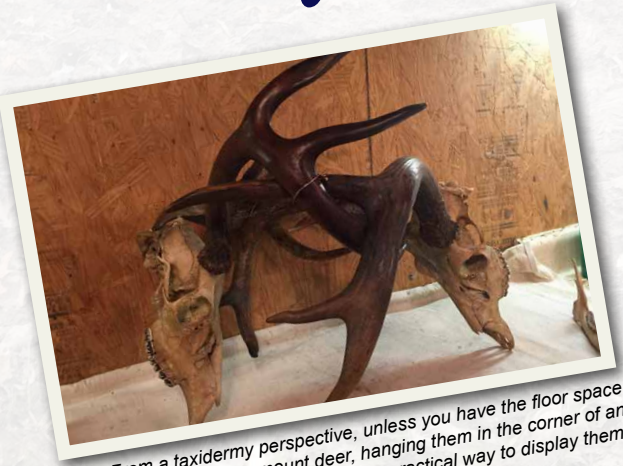
locked up, how long they fought beforehand, and whether they drowned in the pond or laid beside the water for days before dying of thirst. Likely, since the bones were all intact, they fell in the water and drowned within a few minutes. Whatever the circumstances, it was a sad event that two mature whitetail bucks met their end in this fashion.



Larry Potterfield
Callahan Creek Farm
Boone County, Missouri
11 December 2016



Although whitetail are the most common animals to lock horns, mule deer and elk also get locked up.



From a taxidermy perspective, unless you have the floor space for two full-body mount deer, hanging them in the corner of an office might be the most practical way to display them.