

## Mock Scrapes Can Fool Big Bucks

By Todd Amenrud

Using a buck's scrapes as a focal point to get close enough for a shot is a great tactic from October through December. However without the use of a scouting camera or an Ultimate Scrape-Dripper® it might be difficult to determine when the scrape is being hit. A good number of scrapes are made and seldom freshened again, and a good majority of scrapes are made nocturnally.

Mock scrapes are a great way to entice bucks into an area. My best luck comes from making a series of mock scrapes and using Ultimate Scrape-Drippers® over them. My own little fake "scrape-



line" so to say. The Ultimate Scrape-Drippers® are heat activated so they drip during daylight hours. This conditions bucks into showing up during legal shooting light and staying in the area longer. This method has produced several P&Y qualifiers for me.

By using data collected from scouting cameras that I've set up both at mock scrapes and existing scrapes without drippers, there's no question that your odds are significantly better at scrapes, or scrape areas, that have drippers. This wasn't conducted as a scientific study, but I would say your odds are *at least* five times greater when using a dripper(s).

Targeting the right area is important. You can't just go out to any overhanging branch and expect to create a successful mock scrape. I tend to pay less attention to

scrapes made on field perimeters and concentrate on ones closer to bedding and secure areas. You want to target an area that a buck is claiming as his. Move in and make it look and smell like there's a rival buck moving in on his turf. Look for the areas with the largest scrapes, spots that contain numerous scrapes or clusters of scrapes, and scrapes that you know have been freshened again and again.



Once I find the area, I search out the same type of tree with the same height overhanging branch (licking branch or interaction branch) that the buck originally approved of. The interaction branch is usually about five to six feet off of the ground. Try to duplicate the variables that the specific buck that you're after preferred.

You can actually use the buck's existing scrapes. In the whitetail world the same scrape may be utilized by many different bucks.

However, more often than not I'll make my own, trying to copy the specifics found with the buck's existing scrapes.

The actual mock scrape is best created with a sturdy stick found in the area. Try to make the scrape on flat ground if possible and make sure it is free from all debris.

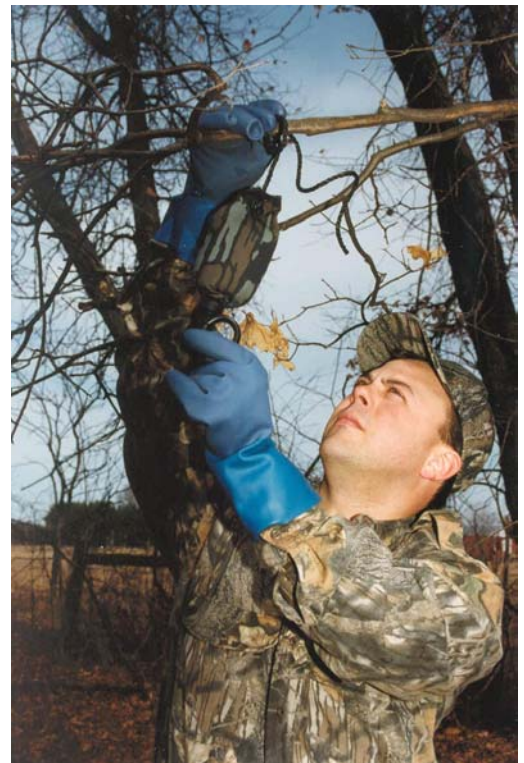
I usually will use numerous drippers and possibly vary the scent used in each. I believe with more than one "mock" you're increasing your chances that something's going to be right with at least one of them that will draw a response. I've used as many as six drippers and created as many as a dozen mock scrapes in an area about the size of an

acre. My two favorite scents are Active Scrape®, and Trail's End® #30®7 used in the dripper. However, you can use any liquid scent as long as it will flow through the dripper.

Consistent with just about every successful mock scrape set-up that I have are mock rubs that I also produce. With a pruner or wood-rasp I rake-up as many two to six inch saplings as possible. A real intruder buck would typically also mark the territory in this way. On the rubs, and in various other places around the set-up, I use a scent called Mega-Tarsal Plus®. It's a territorial intrusion scent. The illusion I want to create is that a foreign buck has moved in on his breeding territory. Select Buck Urine® is also placed out at several key places in the area.

Timing is also important for mock scrapes to work. In the Midwest I seem to have my best luck from the second week of October through the first week of November, then again after Thanksgiving into the first part of December. When the bucks are actively chasing and breeding, mock scrapes are probably not your best tactic. You want the bucks to be in "claiming and protecting breeding territory mode".

When setting up a mock scrape, or using a buck's already existing scrape, you must be cautious of scent transfer. Rubber gloves should be worn to avoid leaving smells on the overhanging branch. I actually like to hang my drippers on a higher branch above the interaction branch. This keeps them from getting a good whiff of any foreign odors that may have permeated the dripper's cloth cover.



Don't expect your exact mock scrape(s) to necessarily get hit. Sometimes they may "cream" the actual mock scrape. But, my goal is simply to draw them to the area during legal shooting light and hold them there for a longer period of time.

A hunter should use all other aids and information in conjunction with scrapes. Know where the does are bedding, what the preferred food sources are at that time, where your target buck is bedding, and where he may have other hot scrape areas. Take in the "big picture" of the whole area and use all of the scrapes in relationship with other factors before making your set-up.