



# Connecticut

## Hunter Shoots Northeast's Best Buck of 2008!

Each season many monster bucks fall across the Northeastern states of NY, PA, MA, CT, RI, NH, VT and ME. In any given year, it is difficult to predict which state will produce the region's best bucks, but recently NY and PA have consistently topped the list for largest gross scoring bucks harvested by a hunter, according to the NBBC's records. However in 2008 it would be the state of CT that took that honor!

The Constitution State offers great trophy opportunities for New England's deer hunters. Extended early and late archery seasons sandwiched around a peak-rut gun season and an early December muzzleloader season make for some great hunting under a variety of conditions. Add to the mix the state's liberal bag limits and you have the makings for some great trophy hunting, especially for those hunters who can attain permission to hunt private land. In 2008 this state not only was responsible for the largest gross scoring buck killed by a hunter, but it put a total of three bucks into the top ten for the 2008 season!

### Northeast's Best of 2008

It is important to note that at the time this article was written (Summer 2009) some great bucks from the 2008 season may not have been officially scored. So what follows may not be the final tally of the best bucks from the 2008 seasons, but it certainly gives us a reasonable means of assessing the regional success. The results were very impressive, with many outstanding trophies taken from every state. **According to the Northeast Big Buck Club, the gross B&C scores for the biggest bucks taken during the 2008 season were:**

1.	191 5/8	Bow	Non-Typical 16-Point	CT	Joe Armenia
2.	185 7/8	Muzzleloader	Non-Typical 15-Point	MA	Dan Wolfe
3.	179 5/8	Bow	Non-Typical 15-Point	NY	Jon Aldrich
4.	177 5/8	Bow	Typical 11-Point	CT	Chris Belisle
5.	176 7/8	Bow	Non-Typical 16-Point	NY	Jared Reger
6.	174 5/8	Gun	Typical 11-Point	PA	David Zagorski
7.	173 6/8	Gun	Non-Typical 13-Point	CT	Robert Woodard
8.	170 3/8	Bow	Typical 10-Point	MA	Dean Porter
9.	170 3/8	Gun	Non-Typical 14-Point	NY	Curt Todd
10.	170 2/8	Gun	Typical 12-Point	MA	Steven Mann

2007 produced larger gross scoring bucks, primarily from NY and PA, as you can see from the scores on the following page. However, 2008 showed a decline in the top end bucks and fewer big bucks from NY and PA, giving MA and CT a chance to put more bucks in the top ten. Notice also that some very impressive typicals made the list in 2008. And finally, it should be noted that over the last two years bow hunters edged gun hunters for most the top entries, with muzzleloader hunters producing fewer bucks, but some of the very best!

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## Archer Arrows 190-Class Monster

by Jeff Brown

For comparison purposes, the gross B&C scores for the biggest bucks taken in the Northeast during the previous 2007 season were:

**Let's turn our focus to the region's largest gross scoring buck from last year – the Joe Armenia bow buck from Connecticut!**

1.	231 2/8	Muzzleloader	Non-Typical 22-Point	NY	Keith Levick
2.	212 6/8	Bow	Non-Typical 36-Point	PA	Gerald Simkonis
3.	201 2/8	Bow	Non-Typical 22-Point	PA	Scott Brun
4.	192 6/8	Gun	Non-Typical 18-Point	PA	Steve Butler
5.	192 6/8	Gun	Non-Typical 16-Point	NY	Ron Madison
6.	185 2/8	Gun	Non-Typical 16-Point	NY	Nick Erway
7.	184 5/8	Muzzleloader	Non-Typical 12-Point	CT	Ed Daly
8.	183 0/8	Bow	Non-Typical 22-Point	NY	Marvin Yamonaco
9.	181 2/8	Gun	Non-Typical 16-Point	PA	Bradley White
10.	179 0/8	Bow	Non-Typical 14-Point	MA	Mark Thomas



# Northeast's Best Buck of 2008: The 191 5/8" Armenia Buck

Joe had been hunting this particular piece of property since 1989. It is made up of some white oaks, beech, and mountain laurels. It is a steep and sloping terrain and the ground is scoured with runoff that dumps into a large draw. According to Joe it's a nice place to hunt, with good cover, good feed, and some elevation. He had seen this buck for about three seasons, never in the same place and always fleeting; like he was going someplace in a hurry. There was no mistaking this deer because he was so tall. Not just his antlers, but his legs seemed unusually long as well. Joe named him "Big Boy" and hunted hard for him in 2006 & 2007, but never saw him for more than a second or two at a time. Joe also found out that an adjacent landowner was also hunting the big buck. In fact he had named the buck "The Graveyard Buck" because he only saw him at night in an adjacent graveyard. Joe now knew he had competition for the elusive giant, and this guy was known to be a very good hunter. Joe felt that his odds of ever getting a whack at this buck were not good.

As 2008 unfolded Joe noticed a lot of scrapes in this one area, including a 6" cedar tree that was rubbed about four feet off the ground. "That's got to be him", Joe thought. He hunted him through October

and just like previous seasons, he never saw him. On November 1<sup>st</sup> it was unusually warm, and at about 2:30pm Joe decided to sit down on the side hill of the drainage. He cleared some laurel away so he could move for a shot if the opportunity arose. The wind blew almost straight down the drainage, which was good for the trails he was hunting. The warm weather and comfortable spot were enough to lull Joe into a nap, and an hour passed in what felt like five minutes! But he snapped to attention when he heard some rustling leaves – his brain told him, without question this was a deer. Soon two small deer came down the drainage. They were walking, but faster than a normal pace. Soon after, Joe heard more deer on the way. A small doe came down, stopping and looking back, changing direction quickly, but not going too far. This was followed by more rustling, and out stepped Big Boy!

With his lip curled and his head back, the buck looked like something from a dream. Joe had to reassure himself he wasn't still napping! Everything happened fast. The buck started chasing the does, Joe lifted his bow and, as if on autopilot, settled his pin and released the arrow. He heard the impact of the arrow, and watched Big Boy disappear into the thick laurel and down the

**W**hen Joe Armenia entered the woods of Middlesex County, CT in early November last year, he could not possibly have known that his bow hunt would produce the Northeast's largest gross-scoring buck of 2008. Although he is no novice, he certainly wasn't expecting anything spectacular to happen this day.

Joe has been hunting for about 25 years, primarily in North America for many big-game species including Whitetails, Elk, Caribou, Mule Deer, Mountain Lion, Moose, Black Bear, Grizzly Bear, and even Alligator! He also hunts Ducks, Geese, Turkey, upland game birds, well you get the picture – he hunts anything he can get a license for!

hill. It was 4:00pm, and Joe knew the next hour would pass VERY slowly!

At 4:45 he could wait no longer, and he got up to look for his arrow. He found the arrow, and on the very end of one fletching was some very dark blood. "This is good", he thought, probably a liver shot. There was a good blood trail. But in thick laurel going down hill, the blood trail was getting harder to follow and it was getting dark. He took out his blood light and pushed on, and realized the buck was headed for the river! At the edge of the river the blood trail ended. Joe circled back several times, but no blood, no tracks. Now, he was really worried that his shot was too far back on the buck's body, and that it might not have been lethal. At that moment despair gave way to hope when he noticed a water trail on the other side that went down the bank about 80 feet, then up and out. Joe waded through the water and got to the other side to follow it. The water trail soon gave way to a blood trail, across a flat piece of ground, and over another small hill. There was almost no blood now, and it was getting hard to see at all. To top it all off the batteries in his flashlight were dying. So he squatted down and shined what was left of his light about a foot or so off the ground sweeping back and forth. A yellow eye flash! That's got to be him! As he headed in that direction his light went out. Once his eyes adjusted to the darkness he could see well enough. There he was!

It didn't take long for Joe to count up the seventeen points, and once he was done jumping up and down, he field dressed the buck in the dark and started dragging. His son Jacob and good friend Gary Ponzillo helped him get the monster buck in the truck, capping off a November day Joe will never forget! This was without question the largest Northeastern whitetail he had ever taken. He had never scored any deer before this one, but thanks to a suggestion

by Joe at North East Taxidermy, he had the great buck scored by NBBC Regional Director Carl Lieser. And the rest, as they say, is history! The giant buck had 16 scorable points, grossing 191 5/8' and netting 181 4/8". Joe and the entire state of Connecticut should be proud that such a magnificent animal came from within its borders. This is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest gross-scoring buck all-time for hunter-harvested bucks from Connecticut, and also the state's #2 bowkill, according to the NBBC records!

## 2008 Summary, and the Outlook for 2009

Although top-end bucks saw a decline in overall gross score, certainly 2008 produced some great bucks across the Northeast. Whether you find yourself in New England, New York or Pennsylvania in 2009 you can be sure that big bucks are roaming the woods. We certainly expect New York and Pennsylvania to be responsible for some of the region's best bucks in 2009, but don't count out any New England state. As Connecticut showed us in 2008, the region's best buck can come from



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anywhere! To learn more about the big bucks taken in 2008 throughout New England, Pennsylvania and New York, be sure to see the special "NBBC Records Section Supplement" to this issue of Northeast Big Bucks Magazine. It is like a mini-record book for the 2008 season, with listings by state ranked by gross B&C score.

