

VIRUS ALERT

MICE HAVE ALWAYS been a nuisance at hunting camps, but now they may be more of a problem than ever. Hantavirus, discovered in 1993, seems to be spread by the droppings, urine, and nesting materials of wild rodents. The virus enters the lungs through contaminated dust, and can cause a potentially fatal disease called hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, which causes the lungs to fill with fluid. So far, about 185 people have died from the virus, and just as many have become ill. The disease was first discovered in the south-

west-

ern United States, but people in other regions should be on the lookout—hantavirus claimed the lives of two Pennsylvania residents last year.

"There is cause to be careful, but not panicked," says Gary San Julian, professor of wildlife at Penn State University. So next time you're opening or cleaning your hunting or fishing camp, follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendations below. And watch for symptoms, including fever, fatigue, muscle aches, headaches, dizziness, chills, and abdominal problems. Four to ten days after exposure, a person may experience



coughing and shortness of breath. If you notice any of these symptoms, see a doctor immediately rather than assume it's just a cold. Also:

- ⊗ Exclude rodents from cabins and camps by blocking holes and filling cracks.

- ⊗ Wash all dishes and utensils with hot soapy water and store food in rodent-proof containers.

- ⊗ Air out buildings at least 30 minutes before you start cleaning, and wear rubber gloves. Spray all materials or surfaces (wet thoroughly) where droppings and urine are suspected with a general

purpose disinfectant. For large areas, use a 10 percent household laundry bleach solution (1½ cups bleach per gallon of water). Pick up the wet material with a damp towel, then mop or wipe the area with disinfectant.

- ⊗ When finished cleaning, bury, burn, or dispose of cleaning materials in a proper manner. Disinfect your gloves before removing them and then wash your hands with soap and warm water.

For more information, contact the CDC at 800-532-9929 or visit its Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hanta/hps/>.

—JACQUELINE L. ROSS

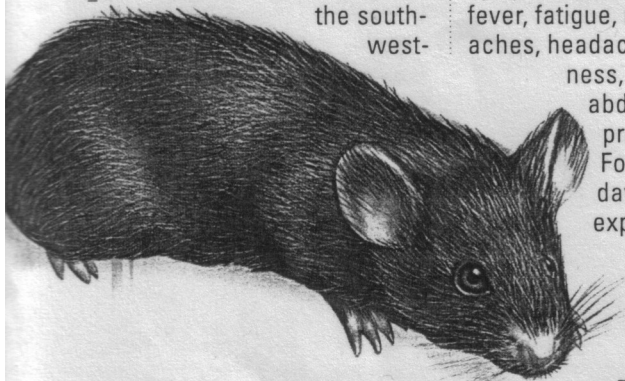


ILLUSTRATION BY FRANCESCO SANTA LUCIA

BACKLASH

Virtually 100 percent of the letters we received on the June 1998 Backlash article, "**A True Measure of a Buck**," agreed with author Doug Pike that the number of points your animal sports should not be the sole measure of success.

➤ If the day ever comes when I pass up a buck because he won't score as well as my last, I hope somebody slaps me.

—GREG SPRADLEY, *Mt. Juliet, TN*

➤ By teaching a young hunter that all that matters are the size of the deer's horns, they are going to miss out on what hunting is all about.—S. CARNE, *via Internet*

➤ Nothing beats a good venison steak with a classic French brown sauce. I have never developed a taste for antlers. Maybe I just don't know how to prepare them properly.

—W. DONALD MORGAN, JR., *Columbus, GA*

The debate on "**Technology vs. Fair Chase**" (Backlash, July) was evenly split for and against the use of Jeff Zernov's Aqua-Vu underwater camera. Those who wrote us opposing the idea were concerned that the sport was becoming too high-tech, and that using the camera was akin to cheating. Proponents of Aqua-Vu saw it as simply a glorified fish finder and, some said, no more useful than one.

➤ At what point will fishermen realize that fishing is an art and not a science, wherein the quality of the occasion has a more lasting effect than the quantity of fish?—HAL SHYMKUS, *Es-panola, NM*

➤ Just because you can see a fish on the screen doesn't mean it is going to bite your hook, so who cares how you try to catch the fish?—JOSH PETREE, *Bellefourche, SD*