



Richard Covington Bags Double Drop Tine Buck

By Reagan Grisham

Every hunter at some point would like to harvest a 14-pointer or a drop tine, but what about a 14-pointer and a double drop tine? One hunter in Mills County did such a thing.

Richard Covington had been watching the same buck for years. "That deer caught my attention when he was a 2-year old when he was a basic 8-point. He was heavy, so I thought that was impressive for a 2-year old," Covington said.

He continued to watch this buck for years. When the buck was 3, 4, and 5 years old Covington found its sheds. It was not until the buck was 6 years old that he finally harvested it. "At the third year he had the same 8-point frame, but he had one kicker that made him a 9-point. I was fortunate enough to find both of his sheds after the third year.

The fourth year I watched this deer and he was even larger. At five he was a huge 9-point and he kept gaining mass, but his antlers stayed the same.

The sixth year he exploded. That year was proof that with age and nutrition he went from the main frame 8 with two drop tines which made him a 10-point and he had four kickers which actually made him a 14-point. From the age of 5 to 6 he went up in points," Covington said of the buck.

Covington was able to identify this buck year after year by his features. The buck was also in a high fenced ranch, so Covington knew that the buck wasn't going anywhere and that no one else was going to harvest him.

"I knew that he was at his peak. In the prior years we had a similar deer that was a double drop tine and we left that deer to breed his genetics into the herd and the next year he came around and he was just a main frame 10-point with no drop tine.

"Since then I read an article that said that it is a proven fact that a lot of native deer have the drop tine trait and if they should ever put on that drop tine the odds of them ever coming back as a drop tine is rare." With the right nutrition and genetic makeup a deer can put on a drop tine," Covington said.

Covington thought that the buck that they let go years prior would always have a drop tine, but



that was not true.

"[Because of that] I knew that when this deer came back we only had a certain amount of time to harvest," Covington said.

Covington shot the deer with a rifle the first morning of the regular season in 2016 and has it mounted on a shoulder mount.

When asked if Mills County would ever see another double drop tine Covington said, "We have those genetics in certain parts of the county, but this ranch is on 183. Our neighbors occasionally they take a drop tine with just one.

"I have been here for 60 years and I have been hunting for 50 of them and this ranch is the only place I have seen a double drop tine."

The ranch that Covington shot the deer on be-

longs to some friends of his and prior to last season, he had never shot a deer on their property.

"I have been taking care of the ranch for 21 years and in 21 years I have never shot a deer on their ranch. Everyone was aware that this deer was on the ranch.

"One day we were having lunch prior to the season and the father and the sons were talking about who was going to shoot the drop tine and they started to argue about who would shoot it, so the father said, 'I'll solve this problem. I want Richard to shoot it. He raised it, let's let him shoot it.' At first the sons were somber and still wanted to shoot it, but in the end they were supportive and happy for me. It was a once in a lifetime hunt for me," Covington said.