

*Rabbit From Page 6*

bank and heading my way. Before I knew it the rabbit was behind me. Two quick shots from my vintage Winchester Model 59 semi-automatic revealed that I was just as proficient at missing an erratically hopping rabbit as Matt and Ryan.

We decided one last push was in order through the final acre and a half patch we hadn't covered up to that point. We were within 20 yards of finishing up for the day when the dogs bawled "bunny" over in front of Matt. Within seconds I saw the rabbit sneaking my way through the thigh-high raspberry tangle. When he paused only 15 yards away to look back, I took the shot. While Arnie and Phantom continued to work their way through the thicket deciphering the rabbit's escape route, I had the rabbit in hand. Their snorting breaths of fresh cottontail essence and periodic guttural howls persisted until they reached me and saw their dispatched quarry, first-hand. Ryan, Matt, and I were pleased we were able to finish up with one rabbit after an exciting morning's hunt, filled with beagle crooning over eight different rabbit runs of various du-

While many hunters have already put away their firearms, clothing, and gear for the season, rabbits remain legal quarry in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia through the end of February. With 2016 being a leap year, cottontail enthusiasts have until February 29th to head afield. (2016 marks the first year the PA late season for rabbits will remain open throughout the entire month of February.) February marks a time of year when few hunters are willing to head outdoors, so you'll often find you'll have the fields and woods to yourself. It may also be the only time of the year when you're willing to venture into your "limited access" deer coverts for bunnies, since whitetails and cottontails frequent the same impenetrable cover.

When it comes to late season rabbits, there are many potential hunting tactics. Running bunnies with beagles remains a preferred option, and I hope to get out with Ryan Lombardo and his "boys": Arnie and Phantom an additional time or two in February. However, it is not the only successful method since hunters can also push thickets, brush piles, and heavy cover to kick cottontails out with-

## Walleye Madness Tournament Slate Set

PENINSULA, OH — Walleye Madness Tournaments (WMT) have announced its 2016 tournament schedule with four Ohio events scheduled. Registration for the events are now open. WMT is operated by their officially sanctioned Walleye Federation club - Walleye Team 6 (WT6).

The 2016 WMT schedule includes four Hot Bite events: April 24 at Mosquito Lake (South State Ramp); May 8 at Berlin Lake (Bonner Road Ramp); May 28 at Lake Erie, Lorain (Black River Ramp) blow day, May 29 and June 25 at Lake Erie, Geneva (Geneva State Ramp), blow day June 26. Inland events will have a 40-boat maximum limit and Lake Erie events will have 50-boat limit. Organizers expect all events to sell out.

after a snow fall in anticipation of catching them sitting motionless in concealed locations.

Regardless of how you plan on hunting late season rabbits, it can be an excit-

Entry fee is \$150. Visit their website: [www.walleyemadness.net](http://www.walleyemadness.net) for entry deadlines and registration forms or contact WT6 at: [info@walleyeteamsix.com](mailto:info@walleyeteamsix.com) or call club president Adam Momirov at: 330-904-6446.

WT6 is the largest Walleye Federation Club in Ohio. Membership to the club is now open. Members get a lot of perks, including discounted tackle and gear.

The title sponsors of Walleye Madness Tournaments are: Lund Boats, Mercury Marine and Buckeye Sports Center. Events will feature \$700 in contingency bonuses: \$200 No Pay Buckeye Sports Center Big Fish; \$300 Lund Boats bonus and \$200 Mercury Marine bonus.

All WMT tournaments are National Team Championship Side Pot events.

hunting heritage for generations and they continue to be prized as a hard-earned quarry and excellent table fare by all who chase them. One last excursion for hopping cottontails can be a great