## ACCURACY RESULTS

The .44 Magnum is first and foremost a handgun cartridge. In a carbine it makes a wonderful close-range deer caliber, and our experience indicates that it kills better than its paper ballistics suggest. However, it is a 100-yard cartridge at best.

If accuracy were better, that range might be extended by 25 to 50 yards, but as the table indicates, neither of these guns will ever be seen in the winner's circle at a benchrest match. The truth is that many handguns of the same caliber will shoot as well or better. We have a Winchester Model 94 (from those chambered in .44 Remington Magnum during the early 1970s) and a Ruger .44 semi-auto carbine that both exhibit the same poor accuracy.

We believe much of this inaccuracy can be attributed to the barrels' twist rate. Carbines have traditionally had a 1-in-38 inch twist when most handguns use a 1-in-20 twist. This is particularly perplexing today with the preponderance of heavy bullets for the .44 Remington Magnum appearing on the market. In a carbine, the 300-grain bullet's 1,400 fps is sufficient to make it a viable woods-range hunting bullet. It may even be the the best choice for this work since it will give good expansion and penetration on deer-size game. The 1-in-38 rifling, however, is too slow to stabilize them well. This was particularly noticeable in the Marlin, where all of the 300-grain bullets tested made oblong holes in the targets, indicating that the bullets were yawing on their axes. The Ruger's 1-in-20-inch twist showed significantly better accuracy with the heavier bullets. The entire rifling design is based on that used for .44 Remington Magnum handguns. This means that the Ruger is likely to shoot cast bullets pretty well. However, the magazine is short and most will need to be crimped over the front shoulder to fit. The new Federal cast bullet loads are not yet available to test, but handloaders can build their own. If you don't cast, the BPR has some excellent bullets.

The Barnes Ballistics Computer program indicates the following minimum rifling twist rates for the bullets tested. Federal 180 grain, 1-in-48; Winchester 210 grain, 1-in-42.2; Remington 240 grain, 1-in-39.4; Black Hills 300 grain, 1-in-36.3. Obviously the rifling twist for the Marlin carbine falls within the minimum standards for all but the heaviest bullet, but we question if the gun would be more accurate with all bullets if a faster twist were chosen. We are certain that the 300-grain and heavier bullets would shoot better with a faster twist rate.

| MARLIN 1894 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ammunition | Group No. 1 | Group No. 2 | Group No. 3 | Average Group | Velocity |
| Winchester 210-grain STHP | 9.4 in. | 5.8 in. | N/A* | 7.6 in. | 1,549 fps |
| Remington 240-grain SP | 3.6 in. | 5.3 in. | 5.5 in. | 4.8 in. | 1,713 fps |
| Black Hills 300-grain HP | 9.8 in. | 2.6 in. | N/A* | 6.2 in. | 1,300 fps |
| Federal 180-grain Classic | 2.4 in. | 3.0 in. | 5.0 in. | 3.5 in. | 2,190 fps |
| Speer 270-grain GDSP | 2.1 in. | 2.7 in. | 4.5 in. | 3.1 in. | 1,578 fps |
| | | | | 5.0 in. | 1,666 fps |
| RUGER MODEL 96 | | | | | |
| Winchester 210-grain STHP | 8.0 in. | 5.2 in. | 2.9 in. | 5.4 in. | 1,524 fps |
| Remington 240-grain SP | 6.4 in. | 4.5 in. | 4.7 in. | 5.2 in. | 1,684 fps |
| Black Hills 300-grain HP | 3.2 in. | 3.5 in. | 5.5 in. | 4.0 in. | 1,322 fps |
| Federal 180-grain Classic | 2.3 in. | 2.7 in. | 1.1 in. | 2.0 in. | 2,107 fps |
| Speer 270-grain GDSP | 4.3 in. | 3.3 in. | 2.8 in. | 3.5 in. | 1,557 fps |
| Rifle Averages | | | | 4.0 in. | 1,639 fps |

*Indicates a flyer round is missing from group.
All velocities were measured with an Oehler 35-P chronograph at 15 feet from the muzzle. All groups are three shots and were fired at 100 yards.