

# HUNTING TOPICS & SUPPLIES

## Useful Hunting Topics



*The Viral Monsters*

## Table of Contents

A History Of Hunting  
Basic Firearm Safety For Hunters  
Explore the Dangers of Bear Hunting  
The Fine Art Of Bow Hunting  
Choosing The Perfect Gun For Turkey  
The Joy Of Duck Hunting  
First Aid For Hunting Safety  
Hemmingway On Safari  
How To Skin A Deer  
Hunting Dogs  
Hunting Rabbits  
Picking The Best Rifle  
Quail Hunting  
The Nature-Friendly Hunting  
Turkey Hunting  
Conclusion  
Shop For Hunting Supplies

## **A History Of Hunting**

Hunting game for food, clothing and shelter is a big part of the story of the human race. It predates the human civilization we know today in many ways. There are many discoveries that are being made that confirm that notion. An Asian fossilized spearhead discovered recently was dated at over 16,000 years old, for example. There is also evidence that we used larger animals for food almost two million years ago.

The earliest form of hunting involved, as far as the experts can tell, involved weapons like spears or bow and arrows shot from a distance. Believe it or not, our ancestors caught their food using the same method we use to catch the bus to work when we're late. We ran after it. Before he learned to use long range weapons, early man had no other way of catching his dinner than being persistent and wearing it down over a long trek, sometimes even in the oppressive midday heat. Some early hunters would chase antelope over 20 miles in heat over 100 degrees. Persistence hunting would be the order of the day. African hunters would chase a Kudu, which is an early version of the antelope, by startling the animal so it ran away. They would chase the beast at a fast pace, and, while the faster Kudu would always be further ahead, the hunters would catch up to it when it took time to rest in the shade. The hunter would eventually finish the animal off with a spear, but not until he was at close range. This type of hunting is still practiced in Southern Africa.

With changes in human society, hunting evolved. As we began to grow our own food and keep animals, hunting became a specialized task. Not just the traditional masculine endeavour anymore, hunting became a specific duty with tradesmen acquiring precise training. The other trend was hunting becoming the sport and leisure domain of the upper classes. It was here that the English word "game" became common.

Hunting has had other effects on our modern society as well. Various animals have been used to aid the hunter, but none has become as important to us as the dog. The use of the ancestors of the wolf to retrieve prey and be our loyal companions has set the dog apart. Its domestication, which took thousands of years, is considered a remarkable accomplishment. The tie between hunting man and dog goes so far back that the very word for hunting in ancient Greek is derived from the word dog.

Perhaps the most famous type of hunting is the safari, which was popularized by the American author Ernest Hemingway. The word itself is from the Swahili, meaning long journey, and the most common type of safari occurs in Africa. It was frequently several days or weeks of camping while stalking or hunting big game, but in a more modern sense, it also encompassed trips through African national parks to hunt or watch the big game. Unlike their predecessors who ran their prey down years before, the modern African hunter often acquires a special license and enlists the aid of local professionals. There is even a type of modern safari where no animals are killed. The photo-safari is exactly what its name implies and a Polish photographer first used the term "bloodless hunt".

## **Basic Firearm Safety For Hunters**

Every year, hundreds of hunting accidents occur across America; just ask Vice President Cheney. Many of these accidents could have been avoided by practicing a few basic gun safety techniques.

### **Know your weapon**

If your weapon came with an owner's manual, read it from cover to cover. Practice taking apart your weapon and inspecting it thoroughly. If you know what your weapon looks like normally, you will be quick to recognize any abnormalities of the weapon in the field. If you drop your weapon or fall while carrying it, take it apart and inspect it for damage. Make sure that the slide operates smoothly. If you are in doubt about the integrity of your rifle, don't fire it.

Educate yourself about the ammunition that you choose to use. A .22 caliber bullet fired from a rifle can travel over two and a half miles. This knowledge is necessary to line up a safe shot.

### **Transporting the weapon**

Always keep your weapon unloaded until you are ready to fire. If you are going to hike to a new location, unload before starting out. Store the rifle and ammunition separately and, if possible, keep the storage container locked. Never carry a loaded rifle in your vehicle or on an ATV.

### **Sighting your prey**

When sighting up your intended shot, there are many things to consider before pulling the trigger. Never shoot at a partially obscured target. Identify your prey fully before even raising your weapon to take a shot. If you are in doubt about what is moving, control your excitement and wait until the target can be fully visualized. Never hunt after dusk or before daybreak.

Know what is in front of and behind your target before shooting. Do not shoot animals that appear on hilltops and near the tops of ridges as you cannot identify what may be behind your target. If your game is near water, rocks, or buildings, keep in mind that bullets can ricochet off hard surfaces. Do not use the gun's scope to sight your game. Use your binoculars first, and then if the shot is clear, switch to the scope.

### **Treat your weapon as if it is loaded at all times**

Never look down the barrel of a weapon for any reason. Keep your muzzle pointed away from yourself and others at all times. Learn and use various safe carrying positions for transporting your rifle in the field.

### **Keep a clear head**

Never go hunting or handle a weapon if you have had any alcohol or medication that may impair your judgment. Even a sleeping pill the night before can affect your reflexes during the day. Get plenty of rest the night before your trip and go home early if you find yourself becoming drowsy.

Sighting a big buck or a fat bird can be exciting. It's important to keep a level head at all times and not

let your emotions cloud your judgment. Don't allow yourself to act without thinking through the action to determine if it's safe first.

Wear your safety gear

Bring along hearing and eye protection and wear them before shooting. Include safety orange in your choice of head gear and upper body clothing. This helps other hunters in the area distinguish you from the prey.

## Exploring the Dangers of Bear Hunting

For some reason, people seem interested in the notion of tracking down a bear through the wilderness and killing it. While it may seem strange, there is a small cult of people that follow bear hunting considerably and make it an active part of their lives. These people tend to find generalized hunting a little too “tame” for their tastes and instead lurk after the lumbering bears of the forest. Often seen as an attempt to prove their manhood, bear hunting is a dangerous and largely unnecessary sport that typically challenges all notions of natural balance and order. Instead, most bear hunting aspects lead to dangerous outcomes or to the possibility of extinction.

Bear hunting, while seemingly unnecessary to the average person, is actually a legal and monitored part of the hunting regulations in North America. Alaska is one of the largest places for hunting bears. Several times a year, Alaska can be found swarming with hunters trying to bag the big one and those just curious to watch the bear hunts. The danger and general excitement of the hunt is enough to draw on the very basic components of human nature and create a buzz around bear hunting. Unfortunately for the bears and for some innocent bystanders, bear hunting creates a chaotic and unfortunate scene.

It is argued by hunters that the bear population is quickly recharging and regenerating itself, leading to the moral validity of bear hunting. In other words, there are enough bears in the world and, furthermore, without bear hunting the population of bears in certain areas would be overwrought. While this notion may be partially true, it is also important to consider that bear hunters typically are not properly educated in the matter. Some bear hunters are not hunting for purposes of thinning out a particular species to maintain some sense of animal control in the area. This leads to many bear hunters callously shooting at anything that moves and taking down anything that looks like a bear, paying no mind to the species or importance of the bear.

For this reason, bear hunting is best left to the professionals. There are many within the wildlife community that are given the task of taking down the bear population by statistically represented and supported numerical values. These wildlife officials know what bears to look for and have identified the bears that are older and weaker, leaving the decision of hunting bears down to an actual representation of the bear community in a particular area and to actual natural law.

In that respect, bear hunting appears to be the domain of the testosterone-driven hunters. The hunters looking for the best possible kill are typically adrenaline junkies that are looking for danger and excitement. As many examples over time have proven, bear hunting can provide that danger and excitement in more than ample amounts. This leads to fatalities or injuries that are often results of people getting too close to bears or people getting too involved in the bear's natural habitat. In short, people simply do not know when to leave well enough alone.

With all of this rhetoric around bear hunting, one would think that the very notion of how dangerous the sport is would be enough of a repellent. However, every season more hunters are flocking to alleged hunting sites and every season more needless waste is being done to the beautiful natural backdrop that bears and other animals call home. The amount of human-led damage to the forests and natural setting of Alaska because of bear hunting is staggering.

Regardless of any moral convictions, it is important to maintain a factual focus when discussing hunting of any kind. Whether we live in an age in which hunting is a necessity at all anymore is certainly up for dispute. Many argue for the sport aspect of it, but a more logical approach might

suggest that the arguments for the sporting aspect of bear hunting are better left behind.

## **The Fine Art of Bow Hunting**

Bow hunting is often seen as one of those “manly” sports, but there is a small contingent of women that partake in bow hunting and take the sport to new levels. With bow hunting, people are getting in touch with the control of the hunt and are learning all sorts of new things about getting in tune with themselves and using their own bodily power to get in touch with the hunting aspect. Without the use of a firearm, people find that there is less to hide behind with a bow and find that the psychological aspect of bow hunting can be somewhat intimidating.

With bow hunting quickly becoming a new favorite in those seeking old-fashioned adventure, there are many new additions to the sport that people interested in it should get to know. One important aspect about bow hunting is the breaking of the “safety zone”. This must be done to get a clean shot at the prey. While traditional firearms hunters can stay at a relatively safe distance from their prey, a bow hunter must creep up on the prey and get inside a danger zone with the animal. This means that the animal could charge or attack at any moment within the danger zone. The hunter should be aware at all times because of this.

With some of the new additions in bow hunting, however, some of the guesswork from the hunt is being removed. While many bow hunting traditionalists may be against such new additions as GPS sensors and night-vision, others welcome any ally that they can muster in this fight for survival and adventure. There tends to be two different schools of hunters, but all hunters have the same goal in mind whether they are traditionalists or “new school” hunters. The ultimate goal of bow hunting is, of course, to bring down the ultimate prey.

There are several types of hunts that people go on. Big game hunts are popular and include elk, wolves, mountain goats, caribou and mountain lions. Other more dangerous hunters tend to go bow hunting after bears. There is a lot of demand for bear hunting these days, especially archery related hunts. This is because the danger involved with bear hunting delivers more of a rush than elk or caribou hunting. Like running with the bulls, bear hunting brings a sort of insane glee to the hunter and delivers certain thrills that they are not likely to get anywhere else.

Many people book bow hunting trips or excursions with a variety of trip-leading companies. These companies typically take a group of hunters into a particular area that is noted for having a great deal of the animals they are seeking. The hunting company trips come equipped with a guide that monitors the action from a position of expertise and offers tips to the hunters in the party. Hunting trips are often very reliant on the seasonal aspect of hunting, so those seeking a bow hunting excursion should make sure they are paying attention to the top seasons of hunting.

Much of bow hunting is reliant on the baiting or trapping aspect. The aforementioned hunting trips typically supply bait to the hunting party. This includes a knowledge from the hunting guide of placing the bait and finding a spot to wait for the prey. As hunting guides are professionals, their advice should always be heeded.

Typically, a hunting guide will take his or her party to a location in which the density of the hunted animal is known to be highest. They will then set up a camp or “base” and begin to look for baiting locations. Once the bait has been placed in a variety of locations, a hunting area will be designated for the bow hunters. As the hunters set up shop, the guide will typically go through a few of the ground rules and safety techniques. After a short period of time, the animals tend to appear and the hunt is on.



## Choosing The Perfect Gun For Turkey

Now that the spring turkey-hunting season is nearly upon us, you should find the right shotgun. As turkey hunting has become increasingly popular, more and more manufacturers have developed shotguns that have more features. There are a few things you need to keep in mind as you search for the perfect shotgun.

You need to buy a shotgun that fits you. The only sure way to find a shotgun that properly fits you is to make an appointment with a firearms expert. Pull the gun to your shoulder. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction. See if the gun swings into place without extra effort. Pay attention to the weight of the gun - is it comfortable? Next, adjust the placement of your forward hand. Check to see if you are able to hold the shotgun steady for a set amount of time. Also, see if you are able to comfortably carry the shotgun for long distances. If you answer "yes" to each of these questions, you may have found the right shotgun.

Remember that when it comes to turkey hunting, a bigger shotgun is not always better. 20-gauge shotguns are growing in popularity, mainly due to their high-powered turkey loads and available chokes. You are better off buying a shotgun that perfectly fits you than you are choosing one that has the largest gauge or load size.

Give yourself an opportunity to see how your shotgun performs under different circumstances. Shoot it with different loads and shot sizes whenever possible. Most shotguns offer several choke options. A shotgun that shows success in increasing pattern performance is your ideal gun. As with all of your hunting equipment, you want to use only the highest quality gear that performs well when you need it most.

You must take the time necessary to discover the limitations of your firearm. You can do several things to find out how well your gun will work at the moment when you need it to perform. Pattern, experiment with different loads and chokes, and practice real hunting situations on the range. These actions will help you learn when to shoot and when to hold back. Certain shots are risky, and you are better off holding your fire.

If you are using a 20-gauge shotgun, you must be within 25 yards of your target for your ideal shot. Very young hunters, or those hunters who lack experience, should follow the same distance. Knowing your limitations as a hunter is as important as knowing how well your shotgun will perform. This knowledge is the difference between success and disappointment.

Finding the right shotgun for your spring turkey hunting will take a fair amount of experimentation and practice. Your goal will be to determine the best choke constriction, load, shot size, and distance. You want a gun that is comfortable. You want a gun that fits your body size. Do not always go for the largest gun, as a bigger shotgun does not always equal a better shotgun. The best way to discover the shotgun that best fits you is to practice with different ones. There is a perfect shotgun out there with your name on it. Simply take the time to find it. Once you have discovered your ideal shotgun, you will be able to kick off a safe and rewarding turkey season.

## The Joy of Duck Hunting

Duck hunting is one of the most popular hunting sports in the world. It is as much a social calling as it is a hunt, in fact, representing a whole set of cultural standards and etiquette rules that many people do not even consider. It has a whole culture all its own, from a proper dress code to duck hunting dogs and assistants. The world of duck hunting is ripe with cultural significance, but is also has a dark side and represents a less than desirable aspect of human nature. Regardless of the point of view, there is something to be learned about duck hunting that may shed some light on either side of the ethical quandary.

Duck hunting is mainly a sporting activity around the world now, as commercial duck hunting has since been banned in most of the developed countries. Duck hunting is, in fact, as old as time itself. There are early indications that ducks and geese were somehow hunted during the Ice Age. Cave drawings indicate that duck hunting was a sound practice early on in human existence, giving way to ducks and swans appearing on cave paintings in Ice Age Europe. There is also evidence of duck hunting in Egypt, as a mural on the tomb of Khum-Hotpe displays a man capturing ducks in a stream. Ducks were also likely hunted by early man in the Americas, as early Peruvian art indicates.

With this international history, duck hunting enjoys a popularity that spreads around the world. It is especially popular in North America, where the largest number of localized ducks can be located. Most ducks use the Mississippi River as a migratory guide, so many duck hunts take place along the river to use it as a guide for finding ducks. Arkansas is a major hotbed of duck hunting, with Stuttgart being considered the “duck hunting capital of the world”.

Duck hunting is often considered popular because of its simplicity. The tools of the trade are simplistic enough, from a decoy set to a shotgun and duck call. The essence of duck hunting is based around the trickery of using the decoy and the duck call in tandem to lure the ducks out and into the air towards the decoy. After this takes place, the ducks are in open range for the hunt and the firing begins. These hunts take place around rivers, streams, lakes and any other bodies of water where ducks can be found.

There are many aspects that stand in contrast to duck hunting, of course. Most waterfowl conservation experts agree that the hunting of any type of waterfowl does little to help any situation. In fact, most marsh and wetland areas are shrinking at tremendous rates, giving rise to the criticism that duck hunting effectively diminishes an already diminishing habitat. There are several organizations that constantly spar with duck hunters over this reality.

One organization is the popular Ducks Unlimited. Ducks Unlimited is an international organization that stands as the leader in non-profit marshland protection and the protection of waterfowl. Ducks Unlimited sometimes works with hunters to protect the marshlands and protect the hunter's way of life. The main goal of Ducks Unlimited is the conservation of localized habitats where ducks can be found, enabling hunters to continue protected and logical hunts of ducks and enabling the survival of more ducks by creating better places for them to live.

Still, some hunters ignore this philosophy and have no interest in any protection of habitats. They, instead, pillage the duck areas and hunt ducks that should not be hunted. Duck hunting remains a controversial sport because of this aspect, unfortunately, and will continue to have a dark side as long as hunters remain blissfully ignorant as to the realities of organizations such as Ducks Unlimited. Without the cooperation of hunters and marshland protectors, duck hunts may be a thing of the past.

## **First Aid For Hunting Safety**

Hunting can provide opportunities for many types of injuries. Being prepared is your best defense against disabling injuries or even life-threatening accidents. Knowing some basic first aid and using common sense when in the wild can save both life and limb.

### **CPR**

If you don't know CPR, learn it. Call your local hospital, EMS, or fire department to find out when and where you can attend a community CPR class. You never know when you may need to perform CPR on a friend, family member, or even a stranger. A few hours of your time could save a life someday.

Many CPR classes offer basic first aid classes as well. Check with your local provider to see if this option is available before registering for a class.

### **Safety Rules during A Crisis**

The first rule of safety during a crisis may sound selfish but it is important. Take care of yourself first. Check the scene of an accident for unsafe conditions. Make the area safe for yourself and bystanders before beginning first aid. The reasoning behind this rule is that if you become injured or incapacitated, you can't help anyone else. If you become injured, rescue workers arriving on the scene will then have you as an added victim to care for. Seconds make a difference in a crisis, but take a few beforehand to ensure that you will be able to provide the help that is needed.

### **Basic First Aid**

Healthcare personnel are taught the ABC's of first aid: Airway, Breathing, and Circulation. Your first concern is whether the accident victim has a clear airway. If the mouth or throat is blocked by blood, water, or objects, tend to this matter first. Next, see if the victim is breathing or is in danger of ceasing to breathe. The brain and vital organs cannot last long without oxygen. Provide rescue breathing if necessary.

Then, check for a heart beat and any injuries that may be seeping blood. Apply pressure to any areas that are bleeding with a clean cloth if possible. Don't be afraid to press hard! If there are others present who are able to assist you, ask for their help in applying pressure to a wound. If the bleeding is profuse and the wound is located on an arm or leg, you can use your belt or a section of rope to wrap around the limb and secure tightly to restrict blood flow to the injured area and slow the bleeding. This is called a tourniquet.

Call for help! After you have controlled breathing and provided an initial round of CPR, call for help and then continue CPR until rescue workers arrive. Performing CPR can be exhausting. If others are available to help, perform two-person CPR or trade off tasks frequently to prevent rescuer exhaustion.

If you or another hunter falls from a tree stand or other elevated area, do NOT move until you are sure there have been no spinal injuries. Moving a person who has spinal injuries can cause shattered bone to cut through the spinal cord and result in paralysis. Ask the fall victim to move their fingers and toes only. If they are unable to, they have injured their spinal column and need special care in moving. If they are breathing and not bleeding profusely, leave them in the position they are in and get help.

If they are able to move fingers and toes, gently turn them over onto their back if they are not already positioned so. Try to turn them as if they were a log; keep the head, legs and torso aligned and stiff as you roll them. This will prevent any compression on the spinal cord should the vertebra protecting the cord be compromised.

Some falls and spinal injuries that affect the neck area can result in a person not being able to breathe on their own. If this happens, you must provide rescue breathing for them until help arrives.

Using firearm safety and common sense like avoiding aggressive animals can go a long way to prevent hunting accidents. Educate yourself, hunt with others, and always tell someone where you will be hunting and when you will return. Keeping safe in the woods is everyone's responsibility. Be sure to do your part.

## Hemingway On Safari

In one way or another, we have all had contact with the work or read about the life of the famous American writer Ernest Hemingway. We certainly don't associate Hemingway with hunting expeditions or wilderness. Those who know a bit about the man have read of swashbuckling tales of drinking, bull fighting and hard living. We knew him as an avid sportsman who even penned one of his great books, *The Sun Also Rises*, around the annual running of the bulls in Spain. However, what the average person might not know is that Hemingway travelled to Africa to hunt twice in his lifetime and wrote several short stories and novels about the experience. Hemingway is even credited with bringing the Swahili word "safari" to the English language. Although he was not considered one of the greatest hunters, his love of the experience propelled him to an understanding of the Kenyan people, a feat that was unheard of for his time.

His first visit to the continent was in 1933 with his second wife, Pauline. Together they visited both Kenya and Tanzania. During this time, and even before he went on his first African hunt, Hemingway became sick with dysentery. For several weeks, he was laid up in a hospital in Nairobi, where he met other adventure-seeking men from America and Europe. After mending and continuing with the safari, Hemingway returned home to write *The Green Hills of Africa*. The book's poor sales depressed him, but the two shorter works he penned on the trip, *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber* and *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, are considered classics about African hunters.

In 1954, the great writer set out on another African safari with his fourth wife, Mary. By this time, Hemingway was drinking far too much, but his love of the safari called him to travel once again. It was a dangerous time, as Kenya's Mau Mau was rebelling against British colonists. Still, it was not the violent rebellion that almost cost the Hemingways their lives. The Hemingways were involved in two serious plane crashes that almost killed them and the injuries Hemingway suffered plagued him for the rest of his life. He wrote about this second safari and his relationship with a young African girl in *True at First Light*, a book that is written as fiction but generally considered autobiographical.

Many modern companies have sought to emulate the Hemingway safaris. Various packages are available for African and especially Kenyan tours, mostly for the enjoyment of taking pictures or observing the wildlife. Many of these modern tours involve high quality lodges rather than the camping experience of Pappa's day. While expensive, many of these modern safaris boast fine lodges and private guides to take tourists through the Dark Continent. Most of these new wildlife safaris have private itineraries that can be changed at a moment's notice and private trail cars and guides. While they're still connected to the beauty of the African landscape, they offer controlled environments that often tours through preserves and national parks. Some of the more famous of these tours bring back memories of Hemingway's more famous works, but most are not cheap. One company offers a 14-day experience called the Kilimanjaro tour that costs over three thousand dollars. Others offer excursions to places like Uganda to view gorillas.

## How to Skin a Deer

While it may not be the most exciting job in the world, skinning a deer is important when returning from a hunt or when still actually on the hunt. If you have taken down the deer, elk, antelope or goat of your dreams in a glorious hunting adventure, you will need to know how to skin the deer and how to get the most out of your kill. If you are just learning about hunting, this information will also be incredible handy for that remarkable day on which you will finally be able to skin a deer.

Essentially, the act of skinning a deer is thought of to be quite simple. The basic fundamental guideline behind it is to follow the built-in guidelines of the body of the deer and work from that standpoint. The skin and muscle tissues of the deer are naturally separate from one another because of the protective membranes, making the process of skinning a lot more like following a built-in blueprint than like trying to lift a rug in the dark. The skin should easily peel from the meat because of these membranes, creating little risk of tearing the skin or tearing the meat.

The most important aspect in skinning a deer is the use of your hands and the pull of your own body weight. With these two integral tools, the aspect of skinning a deer becomes incredibly simple. In fact, skinning a deer can typically be completed in about ten to fifteen minutes without any serious complications.

You should first hang the deer. This makes it easier for you to use your body weight in the skinning process and creates a greater leverage point for skinning the deer. This also ensures that the meat will stay clean. Whether you hang the deer from the neck or from the legs, there is no particular difference. It is important to try to skin the deer within an hour or two of the deer's death, making the skinning process a whole lot easier.

Your knife should be especially sharp. Supposing the deer is hung by the legs, find the large tendon connecting the lower leg segment to the rest of the deer's leg. You should poke a hole with your knife in between the tendon and the bone there, then use your fingers to feel the lump that is created by the deer's double-jointed bone. Once you have found that lump, sever the lower leg at the lower end of the two parts of the double joint. Cut the skin and the tendons here and then snap the deer's leg over your own leg, using your body's leverage to break it.

After you have broken the deer's legs in this fashion, make several incisions around and near the tendon areas. There should be a hole between the tendon and the bone of the lower leg, as well as several incisions near the front legs. You will then sever and snap the front legs as well, making the skinning process easier. After you have made the initial incisions, you will begin the process of undressing the deer of its skin. Use your finger tips and thumbs to get inside the skin near the lower leg incisions and begin to pull the skin off.

Essentially, the pulling of the deer's skin should work a lot like pulling a tight jacket or pair of blue jeans off. It may be a little bit awkward, but the layer of meat revealed below the skin should be a more than ample reward. After the skin is pulled off, you will notice the meat is ready to go and the separation of the meat thanks to the deer's membrane has made the whole process a lot simpler than you ever thought possible.

Skinning a deer, while not particularly romantic, is a process that should take around ten to fifteen minutes and relies almost entirely on your own body weight and strength to pull the skin off of the

deer's body. It really is that simple.

## Hunting Dogs

Hunting dogs are certainly the best possible ally of the hunter, as they sniff and scavenge for prey in the deepest and darkest brush of the forest. There are many different possibilities for a hunting dog type that you can take on your next trip. The type of dog you should take on your hunting trip should be directly related to the type of hunting you are planning on. If you are planning on hunting fur-bearing animals, for example, you would be more satisfied with a hound than you would be with a terrier. Regardless of what dog you choose to take with you on your next hunting trip, you can be sure that you will have made a new friend by the end of the journey.

The most common main category of hunting dogs is the hound. Hounds are actually divided into two categories from there: the sight hound and the scent hound. As their names imply, each sub-category of dog type refers to a certain skill that the dog tends to be more proficient in. Sight hounds, like the Whippet, are adapted to hunting because of their visual acumen. They practice a method that is known as coursing, referring to the notion of spotting the prey from a long distance and following it in a quick pursuit. Scent hounds, like the Coonhound, work by scent rather than sight. They tend to pick up on a trace of the prey from the ground and follow that scent, hopefully to the prey. Scent hounds often work in packs and are regarded as having some of the most sensitive noses of all other dog types.

The next classification of dogs used for hunting is the gun dog. These dogs are used mostly by short range hunters using shotguns. There are three sub-categories of gun dogs: flushing spaniels, pointing breeds and retrievers. Again, their names are reflective of the particular skill that the dog has to offer the hunter. The retrievers, once known as water spaniels, are great for finding and getting shot or killed game for the hunter. If the hunter kills a duck, the retriever heads over to pick it up and brings it back to the hunter. The pointing breed, such as an English setter, tend to “point out” the prey by pointing at upland birds or other upland animals being hunted. The pointing breed of dogs sometimes also help flush the prey out from their hiding spot. The flushing spaniels, such as the English Cocker spaniel, are used to locate and spring the prey for the hunter. They are trained to remain close to the hunter, ensuring an easy kill.

Still another popular type of hunting dog is the terrier. Terriers are used to hunt mammals, for the most part. These animals, such as the Lakeland terrier, are used to locate the actual den of the animal and spring or capture the animal. Some terriers are bred to kill the animal at the animal's den. A large number of terriers are used to hunt what are known as “pest species”. The pest species refer to groundhogs, hunted by the Jack Russel terriers, or the badger or fox, hunted by the Fell terrier. The legality of some of these hunts is in question, so you may want to check your local regulations before you set upon and hunt a fox.

There are many particulars that make using hunting dogs a popular option for hunting. Whether you choose a sighthound or a scent hound, you can be assured that your companion hound will be working for you at finding your prey. Using a gun dog can not only provide great companionship, but it can bring prey right to your doorstep and literally take the hunt out of hunting. Terriers not only make a vigorous hunting companion, but they also make for a nice domesticated animal. Make sure that you consider the hunting dog type before you go out on the hunt so that you can bring the best possible breed with you and land the best possible kill for this hunting season.



## Hunting Rabbits

For many people, hunting rabbits is cruel and unusual punishment. For others, however, hunting rabbits is an age old sport that requires patience and skill. This article will speak to the latter while paying no mind to the former, realizing that the rabbit hunt is as old a tradition in America as hunting other animals and acknowledging that, while hunting may not be necessary in any modern context, it is a heck of a lot of fun.

Most people choose to hunt rabbits with a dog. This is because using a dog can help bring the rabbit out into the open or can help draw the hunter towards the area in which the rabbits are more prolific. A dog can also serve as a great companion to hunting, enabling the hunter to actually have someone to talk to instead of the cold steel of the Remington rifle. Still, some people choose to hunt without a furry friend, making for a different hunting experience.

When people hunt for rabbits without a dog, it is important to learn the traits and factors involved with rabbits. The hunter must virtually become the rabbit; learning the rabbits pathways and food stops are vitally important to a successful rabbit hunt, so thinking like a rabbit is integral to the success of the hunt. Of course, thinking like a rabbit may tell you that killing these furry little friends for sport isn't such a great idea. If that happens, ignore those facts and focus in on your goal of bagging a fluffy bunny.

An ideal time to hunt bunnies is in the first warm days of spring. Here, bunnies will likely be soaking up the sun and having a great time in open fields. This is a great time to break out your rifle and start bagging some rabbits. The time is ideal because, in relation to the winter, the rabbits you seek will be more out in the open and more prone to be visible to the naked eye. In winter, rabbits tend to smartly utilize brush cover and brambles to cover their tracks from nosy bloodhounds.

It is important to realize that rabbits tend to run from side to side. This, of course, does not mean that you should not actively watch the rabbit while firing madly into the open field. What it does mean is that a hunter can actively track the path of the rabbit by watching for repeated steps in terms of the tracking. A rabbit will only run in a short line for a short time, changing pace and darting back and forth in jagged hops until it reaches its safe cover. Knowing this, follow the rabbit with your tracking skills and nail it before it hops down the rabbit hole and back to Wonderland.

Many hunters make the mistake of moving too quickly and making too much noise when hunting rabbits. Just ask Elmer Fudd about the best options for hunting rabbits and he will tell you that the best technique for hunting “wabbits” is to slowly stalk the prey before firing off shot after shot from your alarmingly huge elephant gun. The honest truth about hunting bunnies is that the technique must fall somewhere in the middle. Charging into the middle of a known rabbit field with your guns blazing will likely not catch you any rabbits, but you do need to be somewhat assertive to bag a bunny.

The overall best technique for hunting rabbits is what is known as the “stop and go” technique. This technique is exactly what it sounds like; the essence of the stop and go technique is in utilizing tip-toe style movements and stalking the rabbit through watching it, moving towards it and moving further towards it. As you can pattern the rabbits' movements, you can eventually squeeze off a shot and throw poor Cottontail in the trunk to impress all of your friends. If you miss, however, be careful. Some rabbits actually bite.

## Picking the Best Rifle

Picking the right rifle for the big hunt is vitally important because it can make or break the hunt itself. You never know what problems may arise from having the wrong rifle at the hunt, so ensure that you have taken the time to pick the best rifle for the job. There are a number of criteria points that should be explored as you determine the best rifle for hunting, too. As you grow as a hunter and learn more, you will be able to make your own decisions in terms of picking a rifle for the hunt. For now, however, it is likely best that you consider a bit of expert opinion.

There are many types of hunting rifles. Bolt-action, lever-action, semi-automatic and pump-action rifles are just a few of the different types of guns that hunters utilize in the big hunt. Within these types, there is also a selection of different caliber types. Solving the great mystery of picking the best rifle, then, means answering a few questions about the type of hunt you will be on.

You will first need to consider your location. If you will be hunting in thick brush, you will probably need a faster-loading gun that you can operate rather quickly in tight spaces. With limited visibility on your hunt, you will likely want a light gun that you can work with rather quickly. If you have a longer distance to cover, you will probably want a rifle that offers you a great deal of more control. Bolt-action rifles can give you that control, but they are hard to work with in small quarters of space because of the mechanics of operation. While some hunters may say that they have done so, it can be extremely complicated to load a gun with a bolt-action loading mechanism while crouching behind a bush. The movement alone could lose the prey.

You will also need to consider your type of prey. Most rifles are suitable for killing deer of any kind. Again, the discussion ventures back to the location distinction on this account. If you are killing smaller animals, however, you may want a rifle that you can hold at a more “still” pace. This means that you do not want to spend your time controlling the gun when you are trying to control the shot. For this reason, many recommend going with a smaller semi-automatic for hunting animals like rabbits or badgers. The skittish nature of the animal can be offset by squeezing off a quick shot from a semi-automatic.

After you have determined your prey and your location, it may be time to pick a rifle. Of course, there are many popular brand names within each subset of gun type, but the reality is that you will need to find a gun that you find to be most comfortable. You will look for strength and accuracy out of a bolt-action gun, for example, which may lead you around to several gun stores before you find the right one. You should also look for little extras on the gun, such as adjustable triggers and thumb safety switches. Features like these will make your gun a lot safer and a lot more user friendly.

After you have purchased your gun, you should get to know your gun. Take it apart and put it back together again. Learn the ins and outs of your gun so that you can be as safe as possible with it. You will need to know what ammunition it is that your gun shoots. Find out the best way to maintain and store your gun, too. Gun safety is of utter importance, so ensure that your new rifle is locked away and stored in a safe place away from children or other family members that may be curious about it. Always keep it unloaded when you are not using it and never point it at another person.

## Quail Hunting

Quail hunting is one of the top sports for those on the upper crust of society. It is considered the top game or hunt of the aristocracy and is practiced by vice presidents and world leaders to this day. Quail hunting is typically considered this way because it demands a lot less of the hunter in comparison to other hunts. It does not take place in the morning, for example, or in the shivering cold. Instead, quail hunting can be done in relative comfort and can actually be quite stylish. For this reason, many people in the upper class of society try quail hunting.

Quail hunting typically involves two hunters and a pair of dogs, typically called bird dogs. These dogs chase down the quail and retrieve the bird after the kill has been made. Often times, quail hunts are attended by spectators and watchers. There can be large crowds at quail hunts, gathering to watch the majesty of the sport unfold before their very eyes. There is something surreal and beautiful about quail hunting and watching the bird dogs do their work, making it one of the most interesting human experiences to be had.

Proper gear is recommended when quail hunting. This includes having the proper boots for the fields and the marshlands. The right pants are also required, preferably pants that are called "brush pants" because they are of a color that matches the color of the brush. These pants also work to prevent thorns and briars from penetrating the pants, which is a common downfall to hunting quail in the brushes of North America. It is also recommended that the hunter wears a proper vest or a coat so that ammunition and other immediate supplies can be stored in it. The best option is something of a bright color so that the hunters will be obvious in the field and not confused with the quail.

There is a certain formation and strategy to quail hunting that is very important. First, the dogs are sent to flush out the birds. As this is happening, the hunters are preparing their guns to be mounted on their shoulders. The safety of the gun should be kept on at all times until the gun is ready to be fired and mounted on the shoulder of the hunter. The gun barrels should be pointed to the sky, towards the prey, and away from any other hunter or from the ground. The two hunters should then follow the line of the dogs and maintain a straight line themselves, one hunter after the other. This formation is very important because of safety issues. The reasoning behind the straight line formation is to keep the hunters away from firing unpredictably upon one another's personal space.

Each hunter should have a mental note of where the other hunter is. The dogs should also be noted. This is to identify locations as to where the hunter should not point or swing his or her firearm. This should be also a way to divide the field up into sides. One side belongs to one hunter and so on. Once the sides are determined, the dogs will flush the quail into the air and the shooting begins. Hunters should stick to firing on their side of the range, so as to avoid danger and poor form.

It should also be noted that low flying quail should be avoided at all costs. This is not only dangerous, but it has led to the unfortunate demise of many bird dogs because of the low shots. Keeping the guns high during a quail hunt is of vital importance so as to protect all of those involved in the hunt.

With these safety precautions and gun etiquette tips in mind, quail hunting should be a remarkable and fun sporting event to take in. Bring some friends and get set for a lovely day in a field with the dogs. Quail hunting can be a peaceful time as well, leading to plenty of reflection and quiet in the middle of America's most beautiful marshlands.

## **The Nature-Friendly Hunter**

The nature-friendly hunter's motto is: Leave the woods the same as when you came. Well, minus an animal or two of course. If you are going to be camping overnight, try to disturb as little of the environment as possible. Don't clear brush unnecessarily. Try to envision your trip as an overnight stay at someone's home. You are a guest in the habitat of many animals and some you aren't even aware of.

Always bury your campfire to ensure that it will not reignite and cause a full-blown blaze in the wilderness. Check your fire several times before leaving the area. Forest fires can be devastating to natural areas for years afterwards. If left to spread out of control, a forest fire not only endangers the lives of animals but the lives of citizens and firefighters as well.

Bodily functions are an unavoidable part of life. When relieving yourself, bury your fluids and excrement with dirt to prevent disturbing territorial boundaries of animals.

If you pack it in, pack it out. Do not leave trash lying on the ground. Return your campsite as close to its original condition as possible before leaving. Double check your gear before hiking out so that you don't unintentionally leave anything behind. Pack your food in airtight containers to avoid attracting any hungry neighbors.

If you are installing a tree stand, choose a mature, healthy tree. Smaller trees may be permanently damaged by the combined weight of your gear and your body. Consider tying back stray branches instead of cutting them. Choosing a mature tree will provide you with more choices in large branches to fasten your safety cord to as well.

### **A few safety tips**

Be aware of your surroundings. Watch for bad weather and leave tree stands at the first signs of high winds to avoid injuring yourself and the tree. Keep your eyes and ears open for flash floods. Dress appropriately for the predicted weather in your area. Dressing in layers is helpful. Don't forget your safety orange clothing to alert other hunters in our area of your presence.

Be on the lookout for stow-aways in your bedding or gear like snakes, scorpions, or spiders. Shake out all bedding and clothing, including your boots, before putting them on or packing them away for the day. You wouldn't want to pack an unwanted visitor and bring him home with you.

Bears, badgers, or other aggressive animals may be encountered when hunting. Keep your eyes open and attempt to avoid any confrontations with any animal that you are not stalking. Keep in mind that this is the animal's home and you are the guest. Try to back quietly away from an animal without disturbing it. If an animal attacks you, cover your head with your arms and roll into a tight ball to protect your head and torso from injury.

Teach your children to respect nature and the environment when hunting together. The best way to teach is by modeling respectful behavior while showing your children the basics of successful hunting. This ensures that the joys of hunting can continue for generations to come.

## Turkey Hunting

One of the most popular ways to hunt turkeys is with a bow and arrow. It is a tradition in North America, apparently, that relies on turkey calling and making the perfect shot. There are many agencies and organizations in place to both put a stop to turkey hunting and to support the tradition of turkey hunting. Like most warring factions, these two groups will stop at nothing to try to prevent the overtaking of their ideals. One cannot typically pick a side on an issue, however, without knowing the issue itself. It is important, therefore, to get as much of a foundation in the information on turkey hunting as possible to guide an informed decision.

Turkey hunting is all about luring the birds out into the open and plugging them with a bow and arrow or with a shotgun shell. Many people prefer the bow and arrow because it adds a great deal of tradition to the hunt, almost justifying it. The first notion of turkey hunting is finding a turkey roost. These are generally easy to find, though, because the roost is within a controlled environment in North America for the most part. Wild turkeys are also quite easy to find because they gather together in large groups. The idea is to not get too close to the roost of the turkey. It is recommended that the hunter stays about one hundred to two hundred yards away from the roost, leaving ample room to fire and to get set when the turkeys come running.

The next focus of the turkey hunt is to get the turkeys out of the roost, of course. For this, the hunter must begin a series of embarrassing but effective turkey calls. These consist of an array of clucks, clicks, whistles and hoots. It is important not to confuse the call of an owl or of another bird with a turkey call, lest the hunter is set upon by various predatory birds and the hunt becomes a lot less enjoyable. When turkey calling from a location, start with a series of clucks and yelps. If there is no return cluck or yelp from a live turkey, increase the sound volume and get more aggressive. This will make turkeys think that a turkey nearby is either aggressively approaching or is challenging territory. Eventually, a turkey should come out of the roost.

When this happens, it is a good idea to set the sight of the shotgun or the bow and arrow on the target. Prepare and continue calling the turkey, as this will draw them closer to the range of fire. If the turkey will not approach a suitable range, try to use very soft purrs or clucks. As always, watch out for the other predatory birds or cats that may latch on to the use of this sound. The clucks and purrs should, theoretically, entice the bird out and closer to the range of fire for the hunter. Turkeys can be stubborn at times and incredibly stupid at other times. They really do not have much of a distinction between knowing human calls and knowing actual turkey calls.

Nonetheless, the shot must be taken when the bird is close in range. The hunter should release the intellectual grasp on the clucking and purring for long enough to release an arrow or squeeze off a shot. The follow-through is important as the sound will likely send more turkeys scattering away or in all sorts of directions. The birds quickly will become disoriented, so it is important to remember to spot the kill and mark it before continuing. Resist the temptation to try to pick off another one of the scattering birds, as this may lead to a never-ending cycle of killing running turkeys without the freezer space to accommodate.

A turkey hunt typically results in a bird for Thanksgiving or Christmas. There are many countries and states, however, that do not allow wild turkey hunting anymore. The hunter is responsible for checking on local regulations before participating in any turkey hunt and learning the laws of the land in which they are prepared to cluck and purr.

## **Conclusion**

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