



# Hunting

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## 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 practised 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".

## 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 trial 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.

## Hunting Safety:

Hunting has survived the modernization of civilization. In fact, it has flourished into one of the most popular pastimes and hobbies in the world. Unfortunately, one of the world's favourite past times can also be one of its most dangerous. Every hunter should know some basic things before heading out into the fields.

The most important aspect of hunting concerns how to walk and carry a gun. It is important to make sure that the muzzle always points away from the hunter and any companions. There are many ways to do this. One option is the side carry, which is

effectively carrying the gun with one hand and tucking the stock between the elbow and the body. It is not recommended to use the side carry when the hunter is walking through dense brush or with other companions walking in front, however.

Another option is the ready carry. With the ready carry, the gun is held with two hands and the muzzle is pointed upwards and towards the front of the hunter. The trigger finger should be rested on the proper guard.

The sling carry involves both hands of the hunter being free. A sling is used to carry the gun over the hunter's shoulder, giving clear range for the hunter to move however he or she wants.

Others prefer the shoulder carry method of carrying a gun. Using this technique involves the muzzle of the gun resting skyward. It is probably not a good idea to use this technique of carrying a gun with companions behind.

Finally, the trail carry involves the gun held at a point between the action and the trigger. If someone is walking ahead of the hunter, it is not a good idea to use the trail carry because the muzzle is pointing down but forward.

Once the hunter has established a safe and comfortable way to carry his or her weapon, it is very important to plan next what to do when encountering the game. Before encountering the target, all hunters should establish a "zone of fire" where each will shoot and track when game appears. It is very important that one hunter never encroach on another's zone.

When hunting from a boat, there are general safety precautions that should be considered. First, make sure the weapon to be used by the hunter who will be sitting in the bow of the boat is unloaded. His or her gun must be placed facing the bow. The next hunter places his or her unloaded gun in the stern with its muzzle pointing to the rear. Hunters should always remember to anchor the boat before shooting and to fire in opposite directions.

To keep their skills sharp, hunters often practise on ranges. These controlled shooting areas also have a set of commands geared for the safe enjoyment of all the participants. If a hunter says, "the range is hot", for example, it means that the range is open for shooting and that there are no live objects, such as people, on the range. If a hunter says, "cease fire", it means to stop all firing immediately. Another command on the firing range is "ready". This is the last precaution taken by shooters before the "range is hot" command. Each shooter repeats the phrase "ready" from right to left to ensure the firing line is clear and safe.

## Hunting Safely:

The thrill of chasing down a twelve-point buck or bagging a prize-winning turkey sends millions of hunters into the woods every year in search of that prize kill. Hunting is exciting, but it can also be dangerous and even deadly if hunters are not educated and religiously exercise good hunting safety techniques.

### The Basics

Before leaving on your hunting trip, prepare yourself well. Never go to an unplanned location or take off on a spontaneous hunting trip. Let others know where you are

planning to hunt and when you will be returning. If necessary, leave detailed directions to your hunting grounds with friends or family that will be staying home in case an emergency arises and they need to direct medical personnel to your location. Try to return home as close to your planned time as possible. If you are late checking in, your contact person can then know to set out using your directions to see if you need assistance.

Take the time to prepare your weapon. If using a rifle or shotgun, clean and inspect the weapon after every use and after any time the weapon has spent in storage. Prepare a small first aid kit to carry with you while you are hunting. Consider bringing your cell phone. You can always keep it turned off while you are hunting, and a phone can be the difference between life and death in a medical emergency. Always be prepared to give detailed directions to your exact location as you move through the woods.

### In The Woods

Once arriving at your chosen hunting spot, be sure to don your safety gear along with orange-colored clothing on your head and/or chest to help other hunters in the area determine you from the game. While camouflaged gear is great to help you remain undetected by the animals, it can also confuse other hunters if they see movement from a distance without recognizing the orange color. If you are hunting in a group, try to keep the location of those around you in your mind as you change positions to help avoid accidents.

If you are using a decoy such as a doe decoy, be sure to use orange safety tape around the perimeter of the area you will be in, to help other hunters recognize your decoy. You can also observe the area from an elevated position to further protect yourself from any stray shots directed at your decoy.

### During The Hunt

If you are hunting deer and find yourself tracking a wounded animal, always use extreme caution. Other animals in the area may become panicked at the smell of one of their own running wounded near them. An injured animal is very unpredictable and may likely be desperate to get away if it senses that you are pursuing. Never approach a wounded animal head-on. Never allow yourself to be cornered between a solid object and a wounded animal. Always have a way of escape in mind should the animal attack. If attacked, try to protect your head and chest as much as possible to limit damage to your vital organs and increase your chance of survival.

It is also important to be aware of and on the lookout for other animals like bears and snakes that may be encountered while hunting. Being aware of your surroundings is an important step in staying safe while hunting. Use some caution and common sense to ensure many more years of happy hunting yet to come.

## 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.

## Gun Safety for Hunters:

There are many reasons that a hunter would get seriously injured, but the leading cause is improper gun handling. Unfortunately, too many hunters ignore vital safety precautions when hunting and do not take good care of their weapon. Hunting injuries or fatalities are becoming all too common in the world of hunting and many people do not seem too concerned about the fatal realities of these incidents. The logical hunter, however, takes careful note of all of the safety precautions involving his or her weapon and learns the basics of gun safety for hunters.

One of the first fundamental laws of hunting safety is to always treat the gun as if it is loaded. This is a universal guideline for gun safety as it does not refer to any actual type of gun. In terms of having a gun in general, one should never assume that it is unloaded. One should never be flippant with a gun or wave it around, point it at others or work carelessly with it. There is always the off chance that something could occur as a result of any gun powder residue or other possibilities, giving the odds of a dangerous incident more ground than necessary. Instead, simply treat the gun as if it is always loaded and err on the side of caution.

In relationship to the aforementioned law of gun safety, it is important to be responsible and keep the gun unloaded until it is ready for use on the hunting grounds. This avoids any injury or death due to the gun accidentally going off due to careless use or due to improper storage. Many a story has been told about gun injuries relating to guns going off in truck compartments and shooting through truck seating, relating to the notion that the gun was not only properly stored but that the improperly stored gun was loaded. For reasons such as these, always store the gun as unloaded.

When on the hunting field, it is important to remember hunting safety techniques. Always keep the fingers in indexed positions until ready to fire. This avoids any accidental firing which can obviously result in serious injury. Instead, the fingers should be somewhat folded and away from the trigger if possible. If the fingers are more apt to be near the gun's trigger, keep them folded and away from any notches until the prey is well within scope range. One false move with a finger too close to the trigger could result in accidental firing resulting in injury or death.

Keep the gun pointed in a safe direction. This, of course, means that the gun should never be pointed at another person. Many a story has been told of guns pointed at hunting companions in jest, only for the gun to accidentally go off and injure or kill the unfortunate companion. For this reason and for reasons involving common sense, keep the gun pointed somewhere safe and away from yourself and people at all times. This rule applies whether the gun is loaded or not.

Never look down the barrel of the gun to see if it is loaded. This is simply something that should not be done under any circumstances. As a reference to the aforementioned rules, one of the fundamental foundations of gun safety is expecting the unexpected. If one is looking down the gun barrel, there is no predictable way to ensure that the gun will not accidentally fire from powder residue or any other elements that could be lodged in the gun. Keep the face away from the gun barrel at all times.



Make sure that the gun is never dropped. This can result in accidental firing, which can send a bullet or powder in a very chaotic and unpredictable direction. Instead, always hold the gun with both hands and treat it as carefully as possible.

Never let a person who is intoxicated in any way handle a gun. Alcohol and drugs slow the reason factor on people, resulting in a lapse of reason and better judgment. An intoxicated person may improperly operate a firearm, leading to injury or possible death.

All in all, these fundamental rules should be followed if one wants to ensure a safe and happy hunting trip. Without paying attention to safety regulations, the risk factor of the average hunting trip more than doubles and injury is almost inevitable. Be safe when hunting or handling a gun of any kind.

## 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.

## Survival Tips for The Hunter:

The essentials for your survival kit.

Sometimes it's easy to lose your way in an unfamiliar wood. Carrying a compass and maps of the general area that you will be hunting in can help in the event that you get lost. Carry a flashlight with extra batteries in case you get caught out after dark. There are also flashlights on the market now that operate by just a shake, eliminating the need for batteries. Matches in a waterproof case are essential and a sharp knife is good to have as well. A traditional Bowie or a Swiss Army knife both serves the purpose.

Some granola, candy bars, or dried fruit are a good idea to bring along if you are not skilled at finding food in the wild. Never eat any plants or berries unless you are familiar with what types are poisonous. If you are unsure of the safety of a plant or its fruit, don't eat it. Risking an illness while stranded in the wild is not preferable to an empty stomach. A bottle or two of drinking water is necessary also. Humans can survive for weeks without food but only three days without water. You will not want to drink any water found on the land without boiling it for several minutes first to kill off any bacteria or parasites.

It is recommended that you carry a needle and thread in your survival kit. These materials can be used to repair torn clothing. You can also stitch up a wound to stop heavy bleeding in case an injury occurs and you cannot get medical attention right away.

Most hunters carry a six to eight-foot length of rope to help drag their game back to the truck or haul equipment up into a tree stand. This rope can be used in many ways if you are stranded in the woods for an extended period of time. You can use a rope for first aid purposes, to help build a shelter, or to secure equipment during your hike. You can even string up a makeshift clothesline to dry wet clothing should you fall into standing water. Be sure to keep your rope with you and not in the truck.

It is also a good idea to wear a belt when out hunting. A belt can be used as a tourniquet in an emergency, as well to help secure a splint to a limb if necessary. A belt is one first aid item that you don't have to cart around either.

#### Fire safety when stranded

It's important to follow usual camp safety guidelines when starting a fire under any conditions in the wild. Always triple check to make sure a fire is completely out before leaving the area to prevent flare ups and a potential forest fire. Choose an area away from trees and shrubs, and line your pit with small boulders or stones to help contain the embers.

Gather larger logs and sticks and stack them in a teepee fashion. Then gather small twigs and scraps of paper to use as kindling at the base of your teepee. Blowing gently on your kindling will help your flames catch hold. You can use pine boughs to shield your fire from wind if necessary. You can also use boughs to stand or sit on if snow is present. This will help insulate your feet from the cold while warming yourself near the fire.

## 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.

## 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.

## How to pick the perfect gun for shooting turkeys:

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.

## How to have a successful turkey hunting season:

You can hunt turkeys in the spring and in the fall. You always need a permit if you are going to hunt turkeys. The spring and fall permits, however, are different. The spring permit allows you to hunt in a specific area during one of the 5-day turkey hunting periods. In the fall, your permit will enable you to hunt any day during the season, as long as it is within the zone listed on the permit. Once you have obtained your turkey hunting permit, there are a number of things you can do to have a successful outing.

Be prepared to practice patience. Turkey hunting takes a lot of patience. Spring turkey hunting involves less patience, as you make hen turkey sounds to try to get a gobbler to come to you. Turkeys do not mate in the fall, though, so you will have to patiently engage in stand hunting. Stand hunting involves finding a spot and then waiting for the turkey to come to you.

Since you will at some point be hunting turkeys in the spring, you must become familiar with the several devices used to make a turkey sound. There are two main types. One is called a friction call, which is produced by rubbing two surfaces together. The other is a mouth call. This occurs when air is either inhaled or exhaled.

A third type of caller, a shaker, creates a "gobble" noise when you shake it in a rapid motion.

Regardless of which type of call you will be using, you must practice the call diligently. You will also learn a lot by listening to the turkeys themselves. They are the best examples to follow. Listen to live turkeys or a calling recording. You can also get help by contacting an experienced turkey hunter. Turkeys are capable of making more than two dozen different calls. Most hunters, however, can only notice about 10. Their sounds include the yelp, the cluck, the purr, the cackle, and the most familiar sound of them all, the gobble. Make yourself familiar with each of these turkey calls.

The most important thing you will do to ensure a pleasurable turkey hunting experience is to practice safety. Turkey hunting, as with all forms of hunting, poses a threat to those who do not use caution and wisdom in the field. Use gobble calls only when you are locating a tom. Do not use it to attract one. This will cause another hunter to think that you are a turkey. You run the risk of being shot if this happens. Keep your hands and head camouflaged when you make turkey calls.

There are other things you can do to ensure your safety and the safety of others. Never stalk a turkey. Do not get closer than 100 yards to a gobbler. Choose a calling site that allows you to see at least 40 yards in all directions. Do not move an uncovered decoy. Wear an orange cap or gloves while walking, as your camouflaged clothing can be mistaken for a turkey by other hunters. Most shooting accidents happen because one hunter mistakes another hunter as game. Finally, remember the three basic rules of hunting:

1. Treat each and every gun as if it is loaded.
2. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction, away from others.
3. Be 100% sure of your target.

Following these rules and guidelines will allow you to have a successful turkey-hunting season, be it spring or fall. As with all forms of hunting, safety is always your highest priority. Keep this in mind, and you are ready for the upcoming season. Have as much fun as you can while practicing as much safety as you can.

## 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.

## How to choose the right bow for hunting:

As a bow hunter, you know the importance of choosing the right bow. It is always a personal choice. There are a number of bows on the market. There are also plenty of accessories that go with them. When the time comes for you to pick the right bow, consider the same things that you would if you were going to purchase a pair of hunting boots. You want to find a bow that is adequately fit, durable, and easy to use. As with all other hunting equipment, nothing beats quality when choosing a bow.

Due to the sheer number of bows available on the market, you should try as many bows as possible. You want to find a bow that feels good in your hands. You also want a bow that is the proper size for your body type. Finally, you want to purchase a bow that will match your shooting style. These factors will affect your level of accuracy and comfort while shooting the bow. Consider your bow an investment that will either benefit you or cause you a great deal of frustration while in the field.

There are many things to consider when buying a bow. One of the most important is eye dominance. Eye dominance should play an important role as you search for the right bow. You should know your eye dominance so that you can pick a left-hand or right-hand bow. Most often, a person who is right handed will have a dominant right eye. The same applies to someone who is left handed.

The most effective way to figure out which eye is your dominant eye is to point to a distant object with both eyes open. Close your left eye. If your finger is still pointing directly at the target, your right eye is dominant. If you notice that your finger is no longer pointing at the target, you are likely left-eye dominant. If your right eye is your dominant eye, buy a right-handed bow. Do the opposite if you are left-eye dominant. Taking the time to do this will benefit your accuracy with the bow.

Other things to consider while shopping for a bow are draw length, draw weight, axle-to-axle length (ATA), and brace height. The most important thing, however, is to make sure that you choose a bow that has been made by a highly reputable company. Find a company that will always stand behind their product. They should also offer a high level of customer service. You will benefit by purchasing a bow that comes with a guarantee. Most companies that deal with higher-end bows will automatically offer an unlimited lifetime warranty.

You need to make sure that you choose the right bow as you prepare for the bow hunting season. There are a number of options on today's market, so take the time to research all of them. Several factors will determine what kind of bow you purchase. Decide if your right or left eye is dominant, and then select your bow accordingly. This will help you as you attempt to improve your accuracy in the field. Deal only with highly reputable companies that offer customer service and that guarantee your bow. You will be able to thoroughly enjoy the hunting season once you have found the right bow.

## 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 whole 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.

## The Adventure of an African Hunting Safari:

Many people love the notion of going on an African hunting safari and feeling the cool African air as they cruise through the jungle. The thought of it is enough to create vacation dreams for many North Americans, yet translating those dreams to reality can be a little bit complicated. Regardless, that does not stop people from dreaming away about riding on the back of an elephant and enjoying the company of some locals before watching a lion chomp down on its prey. The adventure and majesty of Africa certainly comes alive during a wonderful safari trip.

The term "safari" simply refers to an overland journey. This term has been used to typically refer to visitors in Africa, although it has no actual geographical connotation. There is also a certain thematic element attached to the term, drawing upon visions of khaki clothing and a certain type of hat. Regardless of the stereotypical connotations of the term "safari", the term still calls upon some adventurous notions that many people desire to discover for themselves.

The original term was a reference to the early big game hunters that frequented African. Men, typically of European descent, would head to Africa to bask in its glory

and to partake in the lay of the land. During this trip, the men would gather in hunting parties and hunt down various rare animals. They would take trophies for themselves and display them on walls back home, as was the custom. It became a variable rite of passage for many men in the higher echelon of European culture, maintaining a status grip over those people for quite a few years before hunting became unfashionable.

These times often represent a brutal passage of time in the history of Africa. The notion was that Africa was a piece of property that belonged to Europe and, therefore, the animals on it also belonged to Europe. The historical significance of these safaris often carried deep-seeded notions of control and power to the extent of slavery over the continent, enabling Europeans to virtually rape and pillage the land at their leisure. To this day, that history plagues many Africans.

Now, the term “safari” refers to taking a photo safari. Instead of shooting animals with bullets and keeping the heads mounted on the hearth, people are taking pictures and putting together various photo displays of the magical animals they have seen while on safari in the beautiful continent. These photo safaris are becoming incredibly popular with people of all ages that wish to have the experience of a lifetime taking in the wilderness and grandeur of the incredible continent of Africa.

Safari parks are rather common in North America to draw upon the distinction of the African safari. This is a zoo-like tourist attraction that creates an environment where people can observe all sorts of exotic animals from a safe vantage point. The safari park is usually walked through or ridden through in a vehicle that would be driven by a guide. The guide describes the animals that are seen and offers a historical context for the park, giving tourists and guests a complete tour of the park and engaging them in knowledgeable conversation.

The game reserves in Africa tend to be a lot larger than a safari park, though. For this reason, most people still wish to head to Africa to see the magic of nature for themselves in as natural a setting as possible. Within the confines of a game reserve or a safari park, people are engaged with the pure wonder of seeing such incredible animals such as the lion or giraffe. As long as such areas are able to protect some of these animals, people will be able to participate in photo safaris for many years to come. The love of animals, exotic and domestic, may well be the greatest ally to the protection of various species threatened with extinction.

## The Problem with Canned Hunting:

Canned hunting is effectively trophy hunting. A canned hunt is a type of hunt that involves the hunter being essentially promised a kill by a hunting agency or governing body. The activity basically takes place on the grounds that the host of the hunt, whether a hunting agency or private party, captures an animal and releases it in a generally enclosed area to be hunted by the hunter. The enclosed area tends to be a small fenced in area so that the kill comes rather easily to the hunter.

Naturally, there have been all sorts of ethical issues involving canned hunting. Through the years, the controversy and criticism of canned hunting has reached a fever pitch. Rightly so, as the issue with canned hunting is one more directed towards animal cruelty than any other type of hunt. The animal is captured and “canned”, giving it no original chance for survival. This type of simplistic approach to hunting is

often polarizing to many within the hunting community, some of which appreciate the delicate balance of nature in its own right.

The United States actually has a set line of legislation regarding canned hunting because of the criticism. In the Sportsman Hunting Act of 2005, the United States proclaimed that anyone who transports an exotic animal for the purposes of canned hunting shall be fined or put in prison for no longer than one year. While the penalties are not all that tough, the sentiment is still resounding. The United States government does not particularly qualify what constitutes an "exotic animal", however, and this has led to some confusion among canned hunters.

The critique involving canned hunting is rather obvious. Animal rights groups claim that it is cruelty to animals and, while they protest all types of hunting, their position is somewhat more compelling when it is amplified by other hunting groups. Certain hunting groups claim that canned hunting takes away from the element of the "fair chase" or the "fair catch". In other words, hunting groups typically claim that part of the adventure of the hunt is, of course, the hunt. Without the hunt, hunting is left to barbaric slaughter. These hunting groups claim that canned hunting simply strips away any of the elements of survival in terms of hunting and brings it down to its most animalistic classification.

Naturally, another opponent of canned hunting is the North American Humane Society. They claim that canned hunting represents cruel activity towards animals and exists to promote brutality towards animals. The hunted animal, according to the Humane Society, has literally no chance to escape and is essentially a victim of terrorism by the hunter and the hunting party. The animal is captive and is nearly tortured by the psychological implications of being in captivity and then being hunted while in such captivity.

There are several incidents in current events which reflect canned hunting. The United States Vice President Dick Cheney is said to be a fan of canned hunting, once apparently bagging around seventy ringneck pheasants on a hunt in which the pheasants were captured and then released in a specific area upon Cheney's request. Of course, the most famous Dick Cheney canned hunting incident likely involved the shooting of Harry Whittington. It is not known if Cheney has any objections to canned hunting on a moral level, however, as the Vice President tends to be known for a certain level of ambiguity.

Canned hunting represents a great deal of controversy and criticism in America. It is not looked at favorably at all and, instead, is rather shamed even within the hunting community. As the community of hunters tends to progress and allow for nature to operate on its own constraints within their boundaries, canned hunting tends to represent all that is wrong with human interference on its most brutal and basic level. Canned hunting is not hunting at all; it is simply a deadly game of capture and kill that gives the animal no chance to run.

## 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 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 it 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## Using 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 sighthound 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. Sighthounds, 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.