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CHAPTER 1: ONTARIO'S HUNTER EDUCATION COURSE

About Hunter Education

Hunting is an important activity for millions of people around the world. For many, it is an important method of food gathering. For others, hunting is a recreational activity that provides an opportunity to further friendships and camaraderie, to experience nature and relax in the outdoors and to make an important contribution to conservation.

Responsible hunters support the many rules that have been established to ensure that our wildlife populations are sustained, and that hunting remains a safe activity. Ontario became the first Canadian province to establish a hunter safety training course back in 1957.

The Ontario Hunter Education Course will assist you to become a knowledgeable and responsible hunter. The course will provide you with introductory information about:

- **Wildlife Management**
- **Hunter Responsibilities**
- **Hunting Laws and Regulations**
- **Hunting Safety and Equipment**
- **Hunting Techniques**
- **Wildlife Identification**

Welcome to Ontario's Hunter Education Course!

Is Hunting Safe?

Strict laws regulate when, where, what and how a person can hunt. In Ontario each hunter must pass the Ontario Hunter Education Course and exam. In addition, every hunter wanting to hunt with a gun must pass the Canadian Firearms Safety Course. These important education programs, regulations and rules contribute to a recreational activity with one of the lowest injury rates across North America.

Does Legal Hunting Endanger Wildlife Populations?

Legal hunting does not endanger wildlife populations. Those species that are hunted are managed sustainably through long-term monitoring and management programs. The pressures on our wildlife populations today are varied and include habitat destruction and pollution.

How is Hunting Important?

Hunters contribute financially and through a variety of volunteer programs, to the maintenance and enhancement of wildlife populations and their habitat. In Ontario, the money from hunter licence fees contributes towards monitoring and protecting wildlife. The funds raised with the Waterfowl Stamp on the federal Migratory Bird Hunting Permit are used to support habitat protection programs that benefit all wildlife that live in and adjacent to wetlands.

Recreational hunting supports thousands of jobs and represents an important economic contribution to Ontario's economy.

CHAPTER 2: RESPONSIBLE HUNTING

In addition to the legal rules, when hunting, we all have a set of principles and standards that we choose to follow.

Surveys indicate that the non-hunting public generally accepts hunting. However, the public does become concerned about hunting if there is a perception that a species is being overharvested or endangered. This is a biological concern, and wildlife managers can easily demonstrate that managed hunting is not a threat to sustainable wildlife populations.

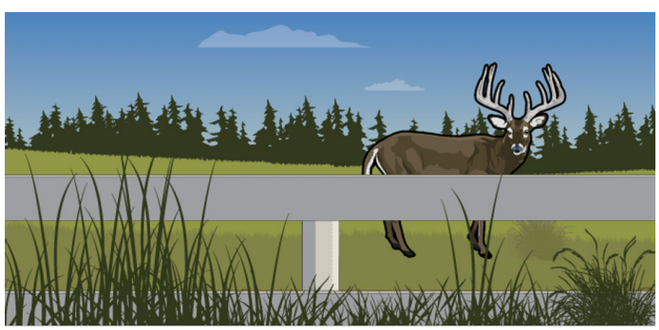
Public concern can also be raised about hunting if it is perceived as “unfair,” with the animal having no chance to escape, or if killing is inhumane, resulting in unnecessary suffering. Hunters should also be aware of projecting a bad image to the non-hunting public, such as through posts to social media being interpreted or taken the wrong way, and how they act in public.

Hunters are faced with a wide variety of new technology, including scents, sounds, tools, and decoys. Hunters need to come to terms with their own hunting values and objectives when determining what they will or will not add to their hunting activities.

Being An Ethical Hunter

Imagine you have permission to deer hunt on a piece of property owned by one of your friends. They tell you they do not want you to shoot the antlered deer (bucks) just the does. You have a tag that is good for either a buck or a doe making both legal to harvest. After sitting in the woods for hours, you hear a loud noise. You look over your shoulder and see the biggest antlered deer you have ever seen! What would you do? It comes down to a matter of ethics - between what a hunter is allowed to do, and what a hunter should do. The way we think about or judge the right thing to do comes from our surroundings and the people we associate with.

Our individual ethics shape who we are and what we will do...when no one is watching us. It forms our character and defines us as a group of individuals called safe and ethical hunters. Our individual and cultural ethics involving hunting define us - positively or negatively - to other hunters and to the general public who are non-hunters.



Others judge your ethics through your attitude and behavior.

The Four R's of Ethical Hunters

1. Respect for Self

- Learn everything you can about the game you are hunting.
- Know and understand why bag limits are set and adhere to the daily bag limits. Know and respect the legal seasons of the game animals being hunted.
- Practice marksmanship long before the hunting season to ensure a clean, swift harvest of game animals.
- Plan and prepare before going on a hunt.
- Do not drink alcohol or do drugs while firearms are being handled or when hunting.
- Follow all the safe firearms handling rules.
- Understand that the enjoyment of the hunt is more important than the quantity of game harvested.

2. Respect for Others

- Do not intentionally interfere with another hunter's hunt or set up blinds, watches or decoys too close to other hunters. It's unsafe and disrespectful.
- Teach others about hunting and share your knowledge.
- Do not use foul language or crude behavior.
- Do not openly display harvested game animals where it might offend a non-hunter.
- Dispose of the entrails and hide of game animals in a way that is mindful of the general public.
- Always ask for permission to hunt on private land before the hunting season begins.
- Get to know the landowner long before the hunting season starts. Obey a landowner's wishes on where to hunt and take care of the land as if it were your own.
- Leave any gates and fences as you found them, unless directed otherwise by the landowner.
- Be considerate of how your activity may impact standing crops and ask the landowner if you are unsure if you should cross a field that is planted.
- Do not litter. Pick up empty shotgun/rifle shells and plastic shotgun shell wads that you encounter.
- Offer the landowner a part of the game harvested.
- Help the landowner with chores from fixing fences to wood cutting.

3. Responsibility for Actions

- Do not ignore law-breaking or illegal acts by others. Report any violations. Call NDMNRF TIPS line at 1-877-847-7667 or to remain anonymous call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)
- Work and cooperate with conservation officers and other law enforcement officials.
- Understand that your actions reflect directly on how others view you as a hunter and hunting in general.

The Four R's of Ethical Hunters - Continued

- Admit when you have done something wrong.
- Understand that you can and will be held accountable for your actions.
- Ensure harvested game animals are properly field dressed so no meat is wasted.

4. Respect for Resource

- Only take shots you are comfortable with and within your effective range. Know the distance to your target.
- No shooting game in hard times (stuck in snow, crossing water, etc.).
- Pass up a shot if the shot will not produce a clean and swift harvest of the game animal.
- Select an individual bird, or the vital spot on an individual big game animal, and shoot at that specific target.

Ethical Behaviour

The Public is More Critical of Hunter Behavior than of Hunting

When members of the public see hunters behaving in an unethical or offensive manner that reflects badly on everyone who engages in hunting. Ethical and safe hunters understand that our behavior sets us apart from non-ethical hunters.

The way we dress and act is important. You would not go into a store or a restaurant with dirt and blood all over your clothes. Ethical hunters bring an extra set of clothes with them, so if they need to go to town or to a public place, they will not offend others.

The way we talk is important. When we are in public, we have to be careful not to say or relate stories in a manner that might offend the public. Using words and phrases to describe an exciting story of a hunt might be acceptable in the hunting camp, but when you are out in public it might be offensive. Using the word "harvest" instead of "kill" is a good example of how to take others into consideration when in public. Safe and ethical hunters have to always act in a safe and responsible manner while out in public as well as while hunting. We must also be aware of the unethical display of slogans on t-shirts, clothing or bumper stickers, such as; "If It Flies, It Dies!" or "Happiness Is a Gut Pile!

After reading this chapter on attitudes and behaviors, reconsider the scenario about deer hunting on your friend's property. Would you have shot the antlered deer that was walking towards the fence line? Your behavior and the future of hunting depend on whether you measure up to being an ethical and safe hunter. ***How do you measure up?***

CHAPTER 3: WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Hunting allows active participation in the natural food chain – the most fundamental process in life. That direct participation brings with it an important responsibility for hunters to understand their role and the effects of their actions.

Knowledgeable hunters understand that they, and the animals they hunt, are only small parts of the much larger natural world. They also understand that those parts are directly or indirectly connected to all the other parts. The natural world could be described as a giant spider web; when one strand is moved, the entire structure is affected.

Knowledgeable hunters are more successful, and an understanding of the natural world contributes to the overall enjoyment of hunting.

Ecosystems

Ecosystems are specific communities of living things, interacting with one another and with the environment. An ecosystem can be a northern spruce forest, a marsh or a hardwood ridge. A beaver pond is a smaller ecosystem within the spruce forest. Specific ecosystems or combinations of them contain the "homes" of wild animals, including those that are hunted.

Habitat

Habitat is the "home" a species of wildlife lives in that provides everything it needs to survive – places to eat, drink, rest and live. Understanding the daily and seasonal habitat needs of the animal you are hunting can help you be more successful.

The essential components of good habitat include the following.

Food

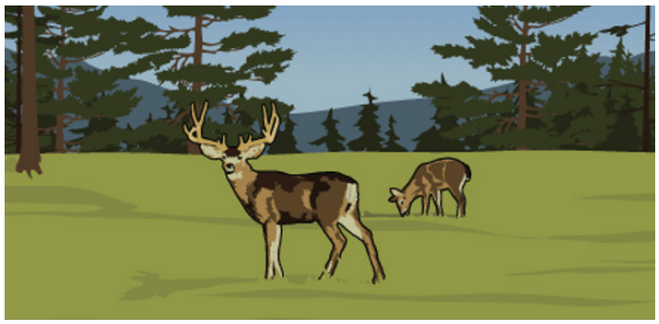
Food is a critical wildlife habitat requirement. No food means no wildlife. Different wildlife species seek out the food that best meets their nutritional needs. Food needs generally change with the seasons and seasonal availability. For example, white-tailed deer will feed on new grasses, emerging green plants, wildflowers and acorns in the summer to fall period, but shift entirely to woody buds and conifer, such as cedar, in the winter. They select the most nutritious, abundant and easily obtainable food.

Water

As with food, the availability of water is an important factor for survival. The edges and shorelines of ponds, creeks, marshes and swamps are some of the best wildlife habitats because food, cover and water all come together in one location.

Cover

Wildlife need cover or shelter to hide from predators and to get out of nasty weather. Often this means trees and shrubs with lots of leaves, but it can also be as simple as a rock or brush pile, depending on the animal's needs.

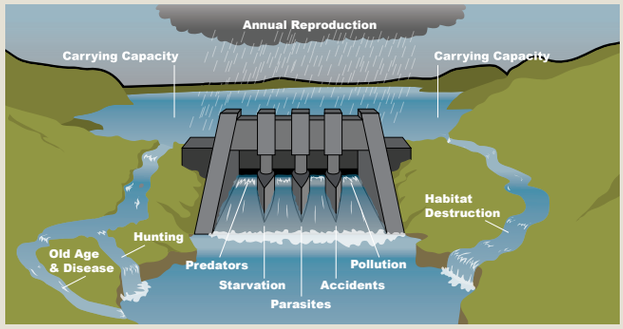


Space

Wildlife need space to survive – some more than others. Overcrowding leads to excess competition, starvation and disease. Many animals are territorial, and this helps to ensure the necessary space is maintained.

If all of the habitat needs are met, you should see wildlife.

CARRYING CAPACITY



Carrying capacity is the number of animals an area of habitat can support throughout the year.

As in the illustration above, imagine the carrying capacity as a lake – wildlife (the rain) is a renewable natural resource, it naturally replenishes itself. However, the habitat only has enough food and cover to support a given number of animals. When all the food and cover is used, any additional animals must move or die. The number of animals that are born and die each year is directly related to an area's carrying capacity.

Now imagine, the runoff from the dam indicates the different factors that can influence wildlife populations (e.g. disease, hunting).

Factors that Influence Wildlife Populations

Even with good habitat, which means adequate food, cover and water, wildlife populations are still vulnerable to many different stresses. Some of these include the following:

Predation

A predator is any animal that eats other animals. The animals that get eaten are called prey. Animals such as raccoons can be both predators and prey. They eat crayfish but are eaten themselves by wolves. Herbivores – animals that eat only plants – have evolved as the natural prey of meat-eating predators.

Predator numbers are usually dependent on the abundance of their specific prey. For example, as snowshoe hare numbers decrease so does the lynx population; when hare populations increase so do lynx populations. Predators can shift to different prey species. For example, when beaver are not available as a prey species, wolves may shift to a diet of moose or deer.

Climate

Climate and weather are major factors that influence wildlife population health, distribution and numbers. Ontario has very dramatic seasonal changes from cool wet springs and hot, dry summers to cold winters with deep snow. For example, cold, wet spring weather can increase the mortality of young ruffed grouse chicks and other ground-nesting birds. Prolonged periods of deep snow and cold weather can cause winter starvation in white-tailed deer. Weather changes can increase or decrease the survival of insects, the rate of plant growth and the availability of seeds and fruits, all of which eventually influence the survival of animals that depend on them for food.

The resulting effects of weather can usually be related to the amount of cover and food available to wildlife. Populations with good cover and food will be less affected than those in poorer habitats.

Disease and Parasites

Wild animals are susceptible to sickness, disease and parasites. The severity of their impact can often be related to overpopulation, crowding and availability of suitable habitat. Mange is one of the more commonly seen wildlife diseases, caused by a small parasite, a mite (related to ticks). Mange causes skunks, foxes, coyotes and wolves to lose their hair.

Other diseases and parasites are less visible but still present in wildlife populations.

Starvation

In Ontario, winter is usually the time when food availability becomes a problem for wildlife. Deep snow covers plant foods and makes travel difficult. The energy spent finding food may be greater than the energy gained when the food is eaten. As winter progresses, animals become dependent on their own fat reserves built up during the summer and fall. There are fewer young prey species available for predators, and they are more difficult to catch. The buds and plants that are available as food are not as nutritious as spring and summer growth. Cold weather and winter winds require animals to use more energy to generate body heat in order to stay warm.

All these factors make food a problem for most animal species during the winter and starvation may result, especially for younger animals that are not as experienced at finding food, or big enough to fight for their share of what is available.

Human Activities

Habitat is the single most important element in the health and survival of wildlife populations, and humans often influence and change habitat. The cities, towns and farms where we live were once homes for wildlife.

Cottages occupy shorelines that used to be wildlife habitat. If not carefully planned, golf courses, hydro-electric and highway corridors, subdivisions and industrial expansion all alter, and can destroy wildlife habitat.

Regulated hunting can affect wildlife populations. The removal of animals in excess of the habitat carrying capacity can reduce crowding and disease, resulting in healthier populations. On the other hand, an overharvest of animals can lead to a population decrease.

Birth and Death Rate

If the birth rate is greater than the death rate, population numbers will increase. If the death rate is greater than the birth rate, population numbers will decrease. Stable populations have birth and death rates that are relatively equal.

Wildlife Management and Sustainable Use

Renewable natural resources can be managed so that humans can benefit from them now and forever, if used at a level that does not jeopardize their future production and availability. This is called sustainable management and use. As long as allowable harvest levels are carefully determined and the balance between birth rate and death rate is maintained, hunters and non-hunters can enjoy Ontario's wildlife for generations into the future.

Why Manage Wildlife?

Humans have wildlife-related interests that include economic, recreational, artistic and spiritual uses. As a result, both those who hunt and those who choose not to will continue to affect wildlife in one way or another.

We have a responsibility to understand and maintain wildlife populations. We also have a responsibility to ensure the use of wildlife is sustainable.

Who Manages Wildlife?

In Canada, migratory birds, such as ducks, geese and woodcock, are managed under the Migratory Birds Convention Act. The federal government, through the Canadian Wildlife Service, administers the act in Canada.

In Ontario, the provincial government, through the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, manages all other wildlife except for migratory birds. The main legislation that controls the protection and management of wildlife in Ontario is the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. The ministry also has authority to enforce the Migratory Birds Convention Act as it applies to the province.

Hunters play an important role in protecting and managing wildlife resources.

Hunters have been key players when it comes to the protection of wildlife habitat. Hunters and their organizations have raised millions of dollars to protect and manage wildlife habitats.

Hunters contribute information to the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry which is used for wildlife management and enforcement programs. For example, hunters are required to complete a mandatory hunter report if they purchase certain licences. Hunters must complete these mandatory reports even if they didn't participate in the hunt or harvest an animal.

Hunters also contribute to wildlife management by reporting infractions, identifying threats to habitat and raising conservation concerns.

Hunters are often directly involved in wildlife management. Many maintain their own private property for the benefit of wildlife. They band waterfowl, create and maintain wetlands and work as Hunter Education Instructors.

Wildlife Management Tools

Wildlife managers use a variety of research, inventory and legal tools to manage wildlife populations. These include:

Biological Research

Wildlife managers need to understand the life history and biology of the animals they are managing. They study the effect of weather on birth rates and death rates, the effect of predators, diseases, and numerous other questions. Research programs to obtain answers for these and other questions are ongoing. Hunters are occasionally asked to provide information, fill in survey forms, or submit samples from harvested animals to support research.

Inventory

Different species of game can have different inventory techniques. It is important for wildlife managers to have a reliable estimate of the size of a wildlife population in order to manage certain species. Knowing the exact number of individuals in a population is not necessary or practical to successfully manage the population. For example, finding and counting every animal in a moose population would be costly and nearly impossible. However, with a series of reliable estimates of the size of the population, managers can determine whether the population is growing, stable or decreasing.

The information that hunters provide through their mandatory hunter reports is important and can help wildlife managers estimate the sizes of wildlife populations where actual counts would be costly and difficult. For example, deer seen per day of hunting effort provides valuable information on deer population trends.

Some species are managed using trend information gained over very long periods of time. This is a common technique used for small game. For example, managers have learned that if the habitat remains stable, hunting harvest does not have a serious impact on the sustainability of ruffed grouse or rabbit populations.

An assessment of the habitat, together with the population estimate, allows managers to determine the carrying capacity of a given area.

Habitat Management

Habitat, the place where animals live, is the key to maintaining wildlife populations. An area with many different habitat types supports many different types of wildlife. Habitat maintenance and management is a critically important tool used by wildlife managers. Cover, food and water are the three main ingredients of habitat.

Changes in habitat are constantly occurring. Plant cover and food used by wildlife will regenerate, grow, mature and be replaced by other plants. Each stage in the series or succession of changes creates a different kind of habitat and a change in the wildlife that use it.

Wildlife Management Units (WMU)

As a tool to assist in wildlife management, the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry has divided Ontario into a series of Wildlife Management Units (WMUs). These areas are generally based on ecosystems, geography and human population. WMUs allow wildlife managers to develop management objectives, plans and inventories for specific areas that share similar biological and human interests. They are used as a geographic basis for creating a wide range of management options, such as determining hunting seasons and establishing tag quotas and bag limits. WMUs provide the geographic basis for many population surveys. When hunting, it is important to know which WMU you are in and know the rules that have been established for that unit.

Seasons, Tag Quotas and Bag Limits

Information from population surveys, mandatory hunter reports, habitat analysis and other considerations are used to establish hunting seasons, tag quotas and bag limits.

Hunting seasons traditionally occur in the fall when young of the year are no longer dependent on their mother for survival. Animals are generally in good physical condition as they get ready to enter winter. Waterfowl are migrating between their summer and winter habitat. The days are cool, and the meat of harvested animals is less likely to spoil when it is being transported.

Tag quotas and bag limits, which determine the number of individuals of a particular species that a hunter may take in a day or season, are based on an estimate of the population, the probable hunter success, sustainability of the species and the wildlife manager's long-term objectives for that species in that WMU. Tags are used for the management of big game, wolves/coyotes in certain WMUs, and for wild turkeys. Each tag is valid for the harvest of a single animal, whereas most small game species have bag limits allowing the harvest of multiple animals per day. For white-tailed deer, a certain number of antlerless deer validations are made available to hunters in order to maintain the desired population size in the WMU.

Species Reintroduction

Some wildlife species have been lost, or populations severely decreased, because of a combination of natural and human influences. Wildlife managers can develop programs to restore species that have been lost. This involves returning a species to an ecosystem it once occupied.

For example, wild turkeys disappeared from Ontario, around 1900 or shortly thereafter, because of habitat destruction and unregulated hunting. Between 1984 and 1987, two hundred and seventy-four wild turkeys were live-trapped and released in Ontario. The program was extremely successful, and wild turkey populations are now established across southern Ontario.

Hunting Regulations

The objective of wildlife management is to protect and maintain wildlife populations, and to allow the sustainable use of wildlife. Hunting, when conducted within the law, is considered a sustainable activity that provides recreational, social, economic and cultural benefits. Hunting regulations or rules may change from year to year, so it is important to read the annual Hunting Regulations Summary.

Public Education

An essential part of all wildlife management programs is public education. When members of the public understand basic principles of habitat and population dynamics, they can make educated decisions with respect to supporting conservation initiatives and, in some cases, managing their own property.

Sometimes, hunters are not fully informed of the complexities of wildlife management and the rationale for the many decisions associated with protecting and managing wildlife. Knowledgeable hunters are better hunters; they understand and can explain the reasons why hunters must abide by the rules that are set.

Social and Economic Research

Ontario's wildlife is a public resource. The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry is responsible for protecting and managing wildlife on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Surveys are conducted to determine the public's views with respect to wildlife. They also provide information on the benefits that natural resources provide to society. For example, wildlife-related activities help support numerous tourism and retail businesses associated with wildlife viewing, photography, hunting, and other activities. Wildlife managers understand and consider social and economic realities when setting wildlife management objectives.

Wildlife managers are required to balance various interests, to ensure a fair distribution of wildlife uses and benefits. While the determination of wildlife populations is based on biology, the use or non-use will be influenced by recreational, economic and social needs.

CHAPTER 4: WILDLIFE LAWS

Wildlife laws are important management tools that support a variety of wildlife management and social objectives. Laws that apply to hunters have different objectives and can be grouped into a number of general categories.

Biological laws direct or limit hunter activity in a manner that supports managing wildlife populations sustainably. These laws include regulating the timing and length of hunting seasons.

Allocation laws attempt to fairly distribute the available resource among hunters and others. An example is daily bag and possession limits.

Revenue-related laws ensure that fees are collected. These fees, as well as other government revenues, help pay for wildlife management activities. An example is the requirement to purchase a deer or small game licence.

Behavioral laws deal with hunter behaviour and include provisions to prevent the wastage of game meat, the shooting of swimming big game and trespassing on private property.

Support laws help enforcement officers to be more efficient. An example is the requirement to leave a wing on waterfowl for identification purposes.

Laws designed to ensure a quick kill control the methods used to kill game. An example is requiring minimum firearm requirements, minimum draw lengths and bow weights for hunting various big game.

Hunter management laws establish the areas where and when game may or may not be taken. Examples of these laws include the closure of game preserves and some provincial parks to hunting.

Safety laws relate to the personal safety of hunters and the non-hunting public. Examples include the requirement to wear hunter orange and to not shoot across or down a roadway.

Conservation Officers

Conservation officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with hunting, fishing and other natural resource laws in Ontario. They have powers of inspection, arrest, search and seizure under the various laws they enforce, including the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, the Migratory Birds Convention Act and the Fisheries Act.

When carrying out their duties or investigating an offence, a conservation officer may:

- Stop and inspect a vehicle, boat, aircraft
- Inspect firearms, ammunition, wildlife or fish
- Ask questions relevant to the inspection
- Inspect buildings or other places
- Enter and cross-over private property
- Search with a warrant
- Search without a warrant in circumstances requiring immediate action
- Seize items related to the offence
- Arrest anyone the conservation officer believes has committed, is committing, or is about to commit an offence.

Who Makes the Laws?

The federal and provincial governments create wildlife laws in Canada. A federal law that hunters must follow is the Migratory Birds Convention Act, which deals with ducks, geese and other migratory birds. This legislation is enforced by game officers, which includes Ontario conservation officers.

The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry is responsible for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, which covers the management of native wildlife species, other than migratory birds, found within Ontario. This legislation is also enforced by conservation officers.

Municipal governments may pass by-laws, which they enforce, regarding the discharge of firearms as it relates to public safety. When planning to hunt in an area, it is the hunter's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any municipal by-laws in place related to hunting and the use of firearms.

Other important acts and regulations that hunters should be familiar with include the Endangered Species Act, 2007 (Ontario), the Occupiers Liability Act (Ontario), the Trespass to Property Act (Ontario), and the Public Lands Act (Ontario). These laws can be found online at ***Ontario.ca/laws***

Annual Hunting Regulations Summary

The annual Hunting Regulations Summary is a summarized version of the important provincial laws that pertain to hunting in Ontario. It shows the boundaries of Wildlife Management Units and provides specific information on seasons, bag limits and other laws relating to the hunting of game species managed by Ontario.

Hunting laws can change from year to year. It is important that hunters read the annual Hunting Regulations Summary every year.

The summary also provides information about hunting licence requirements and general hunting regulations. In addition, each game wildlife species or group of game species has a section in this summary. Each species section covers basic regulations on hunting the species.

Hunters should also obtain a copy of the summarized migratory bird laws, which is provided by the federal government when a migratory bird-hunting licence is purchased.

IMPORTANT! It is a hunter's responsibility to purchase any required hunting license and tags before going on the hunt. Be aware of local hunting laws and regulations. Remember, those laws and regulations can change from year to year!

Wildlife Management Units

The province of Ontario is subdivided into wildlife management units (WMUs). Some WMUs are split into sub-units. Each WMU has customized hunting regulations for:

- game you can hunt
- open season dates
- permitted methods of hunting

It is your responsibility to know which WMU you are hunting in and to follow the hunting regulations for that WMU. Maps of WMUs can be found in the Hunting Regulations Summary as well as online at Ontario.ca/hunting.

Hunting in Ontario

Before you can hunt in Ontario, you will generally need:

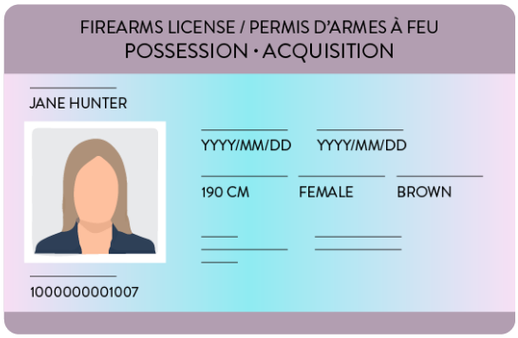
- an Outdoors Card (plastic card issued by the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry)
- hunter accreditation (proof of completing the hunter education course)
- federal firearms accreditation if you are hunting with a gun
- any required licences and tags for the game species you wish to hunt

Firearms Licencing

In order to hunt with a gun in Ontario, you must also carry proof of your firearms accreditation under the Firearms Act (Canada). Every gun hunter must carry one of the following:

- a valid possession and acquisition licence
- a valid minor's licence
- a stamped copy of a Canadian Firearms Safety Course (CFSC) student report (generally for apprentice hunters who have not yet obtained their minor's licence)

You are required to produce this documentation if requested by a conservation officer.



Licence Summary

A Licence Summary is a document that lists all of your valid hunting and fishing licence products You will be issued an updated Licence Summary every time you purchase a new licence product.

A Licence Summary can be carried as a paper copy or as a PDF download on a mobile device (or both). The PDF carried on a mobile device must be the one provided by the licencing service, not a photograph or screenshot.

You are responsible for keeping your Licence Summary protected and ensuring it remains intact and readable at all times. There are products available to help ensure your licence is protected from damages such as commercially available tag holders or resealable plastic bags.

Tags

In order to hunt some species, a tag is required in addition to the hunting licence listed on your licence summary. The tag allows the holder to hunt the species of game specified on the tag subject to any conditions. Only one animal may be harvested per tag and the tag must be carried in a paper format (it cannot be carried on your mobile device).

It is illegal to have multiple copies of a tag, or to alter, modify or counterfeit a tag. It is your responsibility to ensure paper tags are protected from the weather or other types of damage and that they remain intact and readable. There are products available to help ensure your tag is protected from damage (e.g. commercially available tag holders or resealable plastic bags). Specific tagging instructions will be provided with your tag, including when, how and where on the animal to attach your tag. Make sure you carefully read and follow the tagging instructions that accompany your tag. A summary of the tagging requirements is also provided in the Hunting Regulations Summary.

Notching your Tag

Notching: You must invalidate your tag by notching the day, month and time immediately after the kill, at the site of the kill and before moving the animal.

Identifying features: For some species you must keep relevant sex and age identifying features on the animal while the animal is transported to the site of processing. The instructions provided with your tag will specify what identifying features must remain with the animal while it is being transported. The relevant sex and age identifying features must remain with the animal regardless of whether you have attached the tag, or you are accompanying the animal without the tag attached.

Attaching your Tag

You must attach the tag if you are not immediately accompanying the animal or immediately available to produce the tag for inspection. The tag holder must attach the tag if they leave the harvested animal at any time, including:

- transporting the animal in one vehicle while the tag holder is in another vehicle
- leaving the animal at camp while the tag holder goes out party hunting
- leaving the animal at a butcher for processing

You are not required to attach the tag to the animal if you are immediately accompanying the animal and immediately available to produce the tag for inspection. For example, the tag holder may carry the notched/invalidated tag in a pocket while bringing the harvested animal out of the bush provided that the tag holder remains with the animal while it is being moved. The instructions provided with your tag will specify where you must attach the tag to the animal. Your tag should be accessible and visible for inspection purposes when the tag is attached to the harvested animal. The tag must remain attached to the animal or on your person, until the animal is being processed and prepared for long-term storage.

IMPORTANT! If you are unsure about whether or not to attach your tag, you should attach it.

Mandatory Hunter Reporting

Hunters that purchase certain licences or that are issued a tag must complete a hunter report. A hunter report must be completed even if you did not participate in the hunt or harvest an animal.

Reports are generally due within 14 days following the end of the last hunting season for that species. All hunters are encouraged to provide their report as soon as possible once they know their hunt is completed. However, hunters should not report until they know they are done hunting as they will not be able to amend their report. Timely submission of reports when a hunt is complete helps to ensure accurate data to support wildlife managers with future harvest planning.

Reports can be completed online or by phone. See the Hunting Regulations Summary for more information.

General Definitions

Hunting: includes lying in wait for, searching for, being on the trail of, pursuing, chasing or shooting at wildlife, whether or not the wildlife is killed, injured, captured or harassed. You need a valid hunting licence to do any of these things, except where the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act states otherwise.

Firearms: under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, firearms include:

- rifles
- shotguns
- muzzle-loading guns
- air or pellet guns
- bows (including longbows, crossbows, compound bows and recurve bows)

Firearms

Hunters are responsible for ensuring the safe and responsible handling and discharge of firearms. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act prohibits a person from handling or discharging a firearm without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for people or property.

When a firearm is considered to be loaded can depend on the type of firearm. For example, a gun is loaded if it has an unfired shell or cartridge in the chamber or in a magazine that is attached to the gun. A crossbow is loaded if the bow is cocked and there is a bolt in the crossbow. These definitions, and definitions for when other firearms are considered to be loaded, can be found in the Hunting Regulations Summary.

A shotgun must be plugged so that it cannot hold more than a total of three shells in the chamber and magazine combined.

There are rules for what type of firearm can be used for different species and seasons. For example, you cannot use a rifle to hunt wild turkey. Hunters should check the relevant species sections in the Hunting Regulations Summary to identify different season types and dates restricting certain types of firearms.

Hunting Times

Before hunting, check local sunrise-sunset times. Lawful hunting hours in Ontario are from half an hour before sunrise to half an hour after sunset with a few exceptions such as night raccoon hunting and spring wild turkey hunting season.

If you are in an area usually inhabited by wildlife during the period from half an hour after sunset to half an hour before sunrise you must unload and encase any firearms in your possession.

To be considered encased, firearms must be enclosed on all sides.

Roads

It is illegal to discharge a firearm from or across a right of way for public vehicular traffic anywhere in Ontario.

In certain parts of the province it is illegal to have a loaded firearm in a right of way for public vehicular traffic. Check the Hunting Regulations Summary for information specific to the area you will be hunting in.

These rules do not apply to an unmaintained right of way unless the regulations provide otherwise.

Generally, you are not allowed to have a loaded firearm between the fences, or if no fences, within eight metres from the edge of the travelled portion of a right of way for public vehicular traffic in parts of Ontario as listed in the Regulations. These regulations apply year-round in most of Ontario south of the French-Mattawa river system (however, in some areas of southern Ontario, they only apply during the gun season for deer and elk).

Hunter Orange

Wearing hunter orange maximizes hunter safety without negatively impacting hunting success. All hunters, including bow hunters, falconers and bear hunters who are hunting during a gun season for deer, elk or moose, are required to wear hunter orange. This requirement does not apply to persons who are hunting double-crested cormorants or migratory game birds, except woodcock.

In addition, all licensed bear hunters hunting during the open season for black bear, that is not a gun season for deer, elk or moose, are required to wear hunter orange except when in a tree stand.

When wearing hunter orange is required, both a hunter orange garment and head cover must be worn. The hunter orange garment must cover a minimum of 2,580 square centimetres (or 400 square inches) above the waist and be visible from all sides. A vest made up of only a front and rear panel may not be visible from all sides. The hunter orange garment must be solid, and cannot contain open mesh or camouflage orange. The hunter orange on the head cover must not contain a camouflage pattern. Further information about hunter orange requirements can be found in the Hunting Regulations Summary.

Even where hunter orange is not required, it is still a good safety practice to wear hunter orange while in an area where persons may be hunting.

Migratory Game Birds

In order to hunt migratory game birds (e.g., waterfowl, common snipe, woodcock and mourning dove) in Ontario, you must have:

- a federal Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit and a Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp
- an Outdoors Card
- a small game licence.

You can buy a Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp at any post office or online through the Government of Canada website. For more information on migratory game bird hunting visit https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting.html

Party Hunting

A person can hunt moose, deer or black bear in a group of two or more people, known as a party. Each person in the party must hold a licence to hunt that species even if the person already invalidated their tag for that species. At least one member of the party must hold a tag that has not yet been invalidated. In general, the group must also comply with the following conditions:

- the total number and type of animals killed by the party must not exceed the total number of tags held by the members of the party
- all members of the party must hunt together in the same Wildlife Management Unit for which the tag is valid
- each member of the party must hunt within 5 kilometres of the person who holds the valid tag
- each member of the party must be able to reliably and immediately communicate with other members of the party
- all members of the party, including the tag holder, must actively participate in the hunt and hunt co-operatively

Persons may party hunt for elk subject to additional requirements. Refer to Ontario's Hunting Regulation Summary for more information.

The person who kills the animal while hunting in a party must immediately notify all other members of the party that the animal has been killed. If the tag holder is not the person who kills the animal, the tag holder must immediately go to the kill site and invalidate (notch) their tag.

Vehicles, Boats, Drones and Aircraft

You cannot use an aircraft to hunt. This includes drones. Vehicles such as cars, trucks or snowmobiles may not be used to chase, pursue, harass, capture, injure or kill wildlife.

It is illegal to have a loaded firearm in or on, or discharge a firearm from, an aircraft, vehicle (including snowmobile and all terrain vehicle) or motorboat or anything towed by the boat. A loaded firearm may be carried in, and discharged from, a canoe or boat that is being paddled, with no motor attached.

There is an exception to the prohibition on loaded firearms in a motorboat if you are hunting double-

crested cormorants in accordance with the regulations or waterfowl in accordance with the Migratory Birds Convention Act.

Some flexibility is provided for certain mobility impaired hunters. Refer to Ontario's Hunting Regulation Summary for more information.

Where Can I Hunt?

In Ontario, hunting on Crown lands and waters is generally free and access is unrestricted. However, some Crown lands may have restricted access for forest fire prevention and forest industry activity or be posted against hunting and possession of firearms to protect forest workers or other resources users. Hunters can refer to the ministry's Crown Land Use Policy Atlas interactive mapping tool to identify Crown land areas and what activities are permitted (https://www.ontario.ca/page/crown-land-use-policy-atlas).

Municipal by-laws apply on Crown land. Municipalities may have by-laws restricting hunting activities, such as discharge of firearms or hunting with dogs. It is the hunter's responsibility to understand and comply with all municipal by-laws for the areas they are hunting in.

On private lands a hunter is required to have landowner permission to legally hunt.

Trespass

It is the hunter's responsibility to understand who owns the land they are hunting on, and to obtain landowner permission prior to hunting on private land. Positive landowner and hunter relationships are important to the future of hunting in Ontario.

Always ask for permission to hunt on private land and obey posted signs.

Notice of no trespassing can be given in a number of ways including:

- verbally
- signs
- symbols or coloured markings such as a red circle 4 inches in diameter
- fences
- lands under cultivation

Not all land is signed. Unsigned lands may be private land as well. It is your responsibility to find out who owns the land you wish to hunt on and to determine if entry is prohibited or certain activities like hunting are prohibited. If unsure, stay out. If a wounded animal runs onto private property where notice has been given that entry is prohibited or certain activities like hunting have been prohibited, you must seek permission to retrieve the animal.

Violations of the Law

Here are some of the common violations committed by hunters:

1. **Tag Violations:** Hunters may fail to notch the time and date on their tag immediately after the kill. Be sure to review the detailed tagging instructions printed on each tag that are also outlined in the annual hunting regulations summary. Violations also include unlawful transfer to another hunter.

2. **Failure to Maintain Identifying Features:** When a tag specifies the sex of animal, such as adult bull or cow moose, the sex organs must be kept with the carcass until the animal has been transported to the site of processing and is being prepared for long-term storage. Hunters transporting harvested migratory birds must leave one fully feathered wing attached to the carcass.

3. **Failure to Carry Licence on Person:** Don't leave your licence at home, in the car or at the camp.

4. **Shooting from a Public Road:** It is illegal to shoot from, down or across a public road. It is also irresponsible and extremely dangerous.

5. **Possessing a Loaded Firearm on a Roadway:** In certain parts of the province it is illegal to have a loaded firearm in a right of way for public vehicular traffic.

6. **Hunting in Wrong WMU:** This may be an issue, for example, if you cross into a WMU that is closed when hunting in a WMU with an open season, or into an area where there is a controlled hunt, and you do not have the required validation tag listed on your licence summary.

7. **Trespass:** Hunters must have permission to be on private land, even if the hunter's intent is just to cross over the private land to reach Crown land. It is important to maintain hunter relationships with landowners.

8. **Loaded Firearm in a Vehicle or Motorboat:** It is generally illegal to have a loaded firearm in or on a vehicle. This includes firearms carried in the box of a pickup or a firearm laid in or on a vehicle.

9. **Firearms at Night:** A firearm must be both unloaded and encased, from a half-hour after sunset until a half-hour before sunrise, in an area inhabited by game. Encased means totally enclosed on all sides.

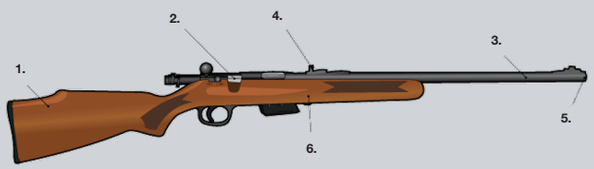
10. **Failure to Wear Hunter Orange:** For safety purposes it is the law that hunters must visibly wear either a hunter orange vest or coat, and hat, while hunting in an area where a big game gun season is open.

If in doubt, consult the Hunting Regulations Summary and/or contact your local NDMNRF office.

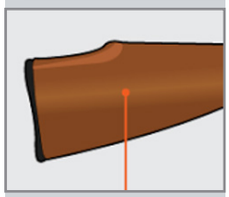
CHAPTER 5: RIFLES, SHOTGUNS AND MUZZLELOADERS

It is every hunter's responsibility to understand and follow all the gun safety rules and guidelines, and to ensure that everyone around them follows these rules as well. Following safe gun handling rules and guidelines every time you handle a gun (even a gun you think is unloaded) is critical for your safety and the safety of everyone around you.

Rifle and Shotgun Parts

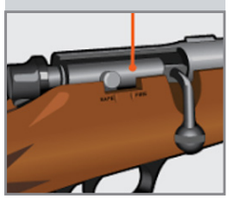


The three main parts of any rifle or shotgun are the barrel, stock and action. Both rifles and shotguns feature a long barrel and each is usually braced against the hunter's shoulder when fired.



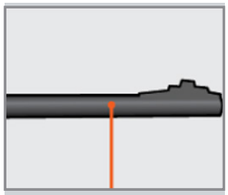
1. Stock

Supports the action and the barrel of a firearm and is made out of either wood or synthetic material. The stock may be a single piece or two pieces, depending on the manufacturer.



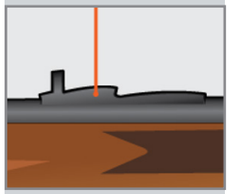
2. Action

Consists of a series of parts that load, fire and eject a cartridge or shot shell from a firearm.



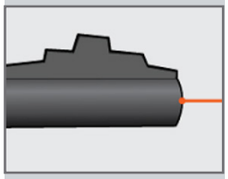
3. Barrel

The barrel is the tube-shaped part of a firearm through which ammunition is fired. The inside of the barrel is called the bore.



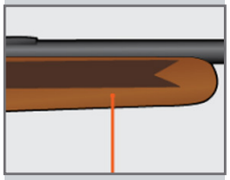
4. Sight

An alignment device to help aim a firearm. In the image above the rifle uses an open sight. Other types of sights include shotgun bead, peep or aperture and telescopic.



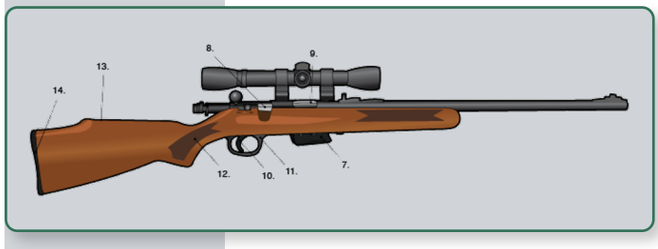
5. Muzzle

The muzzle is the opening at the end of the barrel this is where the projectile exits after it has been fired down the barrel.



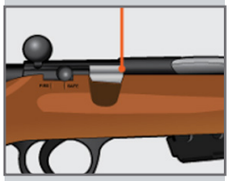
6. Forestock

The forestock is the part of the stock in front of the trigger that supports the barrel



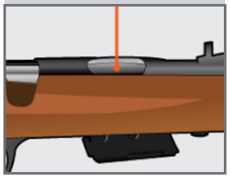
7. Magazine

Acts as a storage device for cartridges or shot shells. The magazine can be either tubular (tube that runs underneath the barrel) or a detachable box-type (shown above).



8. Breech

The end of the barrel, opposite to the muzzle.



9. Chamber

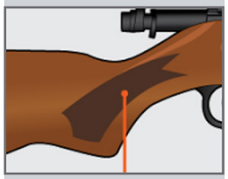
The part inside the barrel where the ammunition is loaded and ready to be fired.

10. Trigger

When pulled, the trigger releases the firing pin that hits the primer on the cartridge.

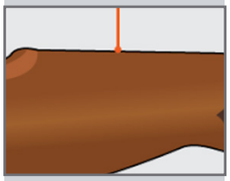
11. Trigger Guard

Helps protect the trigger from being accidentally pulled.



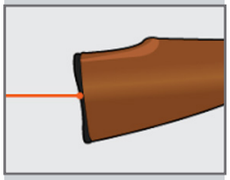
12. Grip

The part of the stock that is held by the shooting hand when the hunter is positioned to fire.



13. Comb

This is the top most side of the stock. In some cases, the comb might be raised from the stock, and is known as a cheekpiece as it rests against the cheek while aiming to fire the gun.



14. Butt

The end of the stock that is braced against the shooter's shoulder when taking a shot. The butt can be made of wood, plastic, or various other materials designed to reduce the amount of recoil felt by the shooter when the gun is fired.

Modern Break Action Muzzleloader

The use of muzzleloading firearms in hunting is a time-honoured tradition in North America. Check the Hunting Regulations Summary for information on when you can use this firearm. Compared with other firearms, it can require considerable skill to load, since each charge is loaded at the muzzle end of the barrel. It also requires much skill when using one to shoot game because, with the exception of double-barrel versions, there is only a single shot at relatively close range. Thats why many are attracted to the challenge of this firearm. Should you choose to purchase one, be sure to go to a shooting range with someone who has experience using a muzzleloader and have them teach you how to use it properly.

Muzzleloading firearm parts vary according to style. In this chapter, we will look at the four most common ones: modern break action, inline percussion, caplock or percussion caplock, and flintlock.

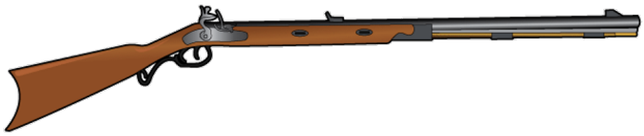
Types of Muzzleloaders

The modern break action muzzleloader works a lot like most other break action firearms and is very popular today. The break action muzzleloader is loaded in the same manner as all other

muzzleloaders, but with its break action feature, it allows the shooter to access the breech and insert the primer much easier.

The modern inline muzzleloader looks like most modern firearms, and it is very popular today. Some are equipped with a safety, and a telescopic sight can be attached to certain models. Some inline muzzleloaders are also equipped with an electronic ignition, where a tiny spark is produced in the breech, and ignites the gunpowder more rapidly than a percussion cap would. In an inline muzzleloader, the cap is in-line with the hammer and the barrel. The inline has the nipple attached to the barrel at the breech and accessed by a bolt or break action. Also, the inline model has a removable breech plug, to help with cleaning.

The percussion or caplock muzzleloader has the nipple mounted on the outside of the barrel at the breech end. It uses a small percussion cap that has an explosive compound, which is used to ignite a gunpowder charge.



The flintlock style of muzzleloader dates back to the 17th century and features a flintlock mechanism that produces sparks when a piece of flint strikes a piece of steel called the frizzen.

Gun Safety

ACTS and PROVE

Assume every firearm is loaded.

- Regard any firearm as potential danger.

Control the muzzle direction at all times.

- Identify the safest available muzzle direction.
- Keep the firearm pointed in the safest available direction.
- The muzzle of a firearm should not be pointed towards yourself or any other person.

Trigger finger must be kept off the trigger and out of the trigger guard.

- Resist the temptation to put your finger on the trigger or inside the trigger guard when you pick up a firearm.

- Accidental discharge is far more likely to occur if your finger is on the trigger or inside the trigger guard.

See that the firearm is unloaded - PROVE it safe.

- Do not handle the firearm unless you can PROVE it safely.
- Check to see that both chamber and magazine are empty. Do this every time you handle a firearm, for any reason.
- Pass or accept only open and unloaded firearms. This is an important habit to develop.

PROVE it safe:

Point the firearm in the safest available direction.

Remove all cartridges.

Observe the chamber.

Verify the feeding path.

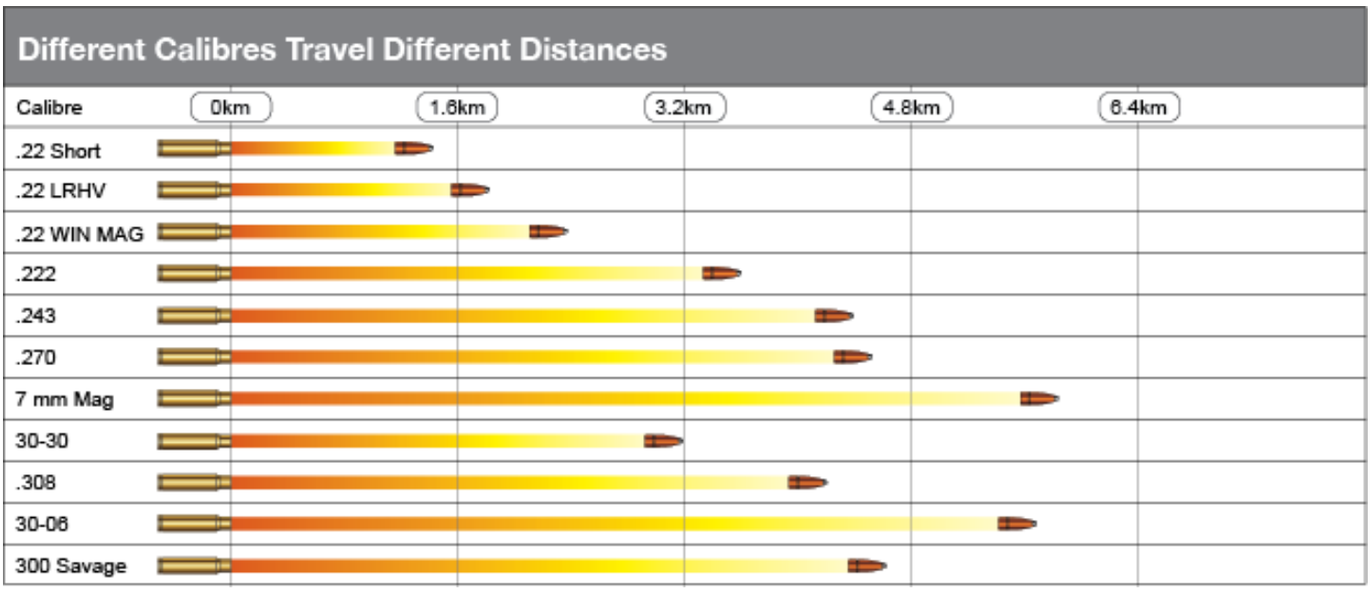
Examine the bore for obstructions.

Safety First! When loading any firearm, always engage the safety and keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. To check if your firearm is unloaded, do so only by looking into the chamber.

Understanding Distance

Bullets travel far! **Always make sure of your target and beyond.** If you miss the target, the bullet can travel a great distance before it hits something or runs out of momentum. The chart on the next page shows how far a bullet can potentially travel.

Important! As a responsible and ethical hunter, you should only take a shot when at a distance that you are confident to make a one-shot kill.



Safe Firearm Handling in the Field

The terrain and the number of hunters that are with you will determine how you carry your firearm in the field.

Shoulder Carry

A useful carry when using a break action firearm. One hand is placed on the barrel, while the action is open and rested on your shoulder. This carry allows for good muzzle control while walking longer distances. A different type of shoulder carry is used with rifles - where one hand is holding the firearm's grip, barrel resting on your shoulder and the muzzle is pointed behind you. Only use this type of carry if you are absolutely certain that no one is behind you.

Two-Hand Carry

Provides the best control of the firearm. One hand holds the firearm's grip and the other is on the forearm of the firearm. This is sometimes referred to as the ready carry. It gives the hunter the best control of the muzzle, and the firearm can be shouldered quickly to fire a shot.

Trail Carry

Use this carry only when no one is in front of you. Grasp the stock with one hand, just in front of the action. Ensure the muzzle is pointed away and in front of you. This positions the muzzle toward the ground but does not offer good control of the firearm. Be careful that the muzzle does not hit the ground - if it does, you have to check the barrel for an obstruction.

Cradle Carry

Placing the firearm across your chest, rest its action in the bend of your arm. Next, grasp the butt of the firearm with your other hand or cover the trigger guard. It's a very comfortable position. If there is another hunter walking beside you, make sure that each muzzle is pointed in a safe direction.

Sling Carry

This takes advantage of the sling attachments on your firearm. Attach a sling, making sure it fits, and place the rifle over your shoulder while grasping the sling with your hand. This is a great carry when traveling over long distances. If you bend over to pick up an object, remember that the muzzle is now pointed in front of you.

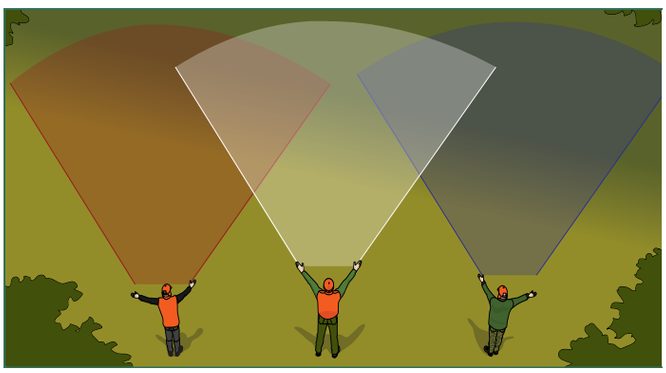
Side Carry

Avoid using this carry if you're walking behind someone. For safety's sake, use the two-handed or cradle carry (muzzle pointed to the left or right).

Zones of Fire

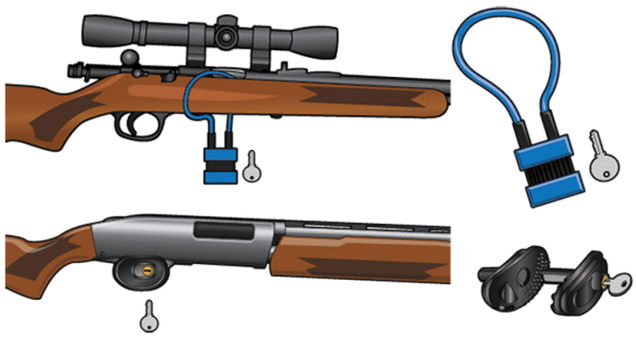
While hunting, there might be times when you will find yourself with other hunters to the right and left of you. Let's look at how to practice safe hunting in that kind of situation.

Hold your arms out in front of you at a 45-degree angle. As you look in front of you, the area in front of you starts out small and gets progressively larger into the distance. Your safe zone of fire is the space between your outstretched arms. It is important that you never swing the muzzle out of this zone of fire. If you do, there's a chance you will be pointing the muzzle of your firearm at another hunter.



Safety First! Remember that when hunting in groups of three, the hunter in the middle has people on both sides of them and must be extremely careful not to swing out of the zone of fire.

Storing a Gun



If you have guns in your home, protect your family and friends by ensuring that both your guns and ammunition are legally and safely stored at all times. A gun safe is like a mini version of a bank safe - some are even fireproof. It is the best storage option. Not only does it protect guns from being stolen, it keeps them out of the hands of careless adults and children alike. It also keeps them safe in the event of a break in; if your guns fall into the wrong hands, you may be held responsible!

All guns should be stored unloaded, in a locked compartment. Ammunition should be stored separately, but also in a locked compartment.

Transporting Guns

Whether your gun is being carried in a car, boat, ATV, snowmobile, or in any other motorized vehicle, the following rules of safe gun handling must be observed:

1. Guns must be unloaded when being transported in or on a motorized vehicle or vessel.

2. If unattended, a firearm must be secured in a locked trunk or vehicle. The gun must be out of sight.

3. Guns must be encased a half hour after sunset to a half hour before sunrise in areas inhabited by wildlife.

Causes of Gun Incidents

Most hunting-related incidents occur when a hunter either forgets the basic rules of firearm safety or behaves in a careless manner. Common incidents involving hunters involve one or more of the following mistakes:

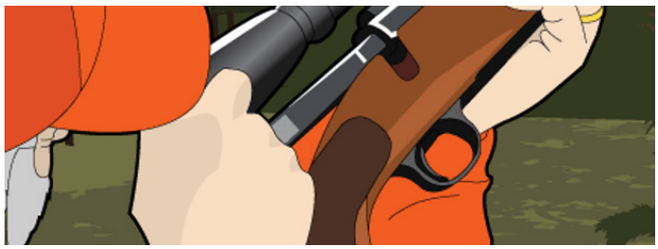
- Pointing the muzzle of a firearm at someone.
- Not identifying target carefully and what lies beyond it.
- Not keeping finger out of the trigger guard and off the trigger until ready to shoot.
- Assuming that a firearm is unloaded and not handling it safely.
- Stumbling or falling while carrying a loaded firearm.
- Falling while climbing into/out of position.
- Assuming that a firearm is unloaded when crossing a fence.
- Jumping over a ditch or creek with a loaded firearm.
- Transporting a loaded firearm in a motorized vehicle.
- Swinging out of a safe zone of fire into another hunter's zone.

Avoid making those kinds of mistakes by observing the following rules of safe firearm handling.

Safety First! 80% of all firearm accidents happen within 10 meters of the muzzle! Always unload firearms when not in use.

The Ten Basic Rules of Hunter Safety

1. Treat every firearm as if it were a loaded firearm.



This is often considered the primary and perhaps most important rule for firearm handlers to follow.

- Respect firearms at all times.
- Never "play" with firearms.
- Never be caught in a position where you have to say, "I didn't know it was loaded!"

2. Be sure of your target before you squeeze the trigger.

The hunter should positively identify the target as legal game and ensure that there is a safe backstop before shooting.

- Positively identify your target before you fire.
- Check to be sure the area beyond your target is clear of people, livestock, roads, buildings, etc.
- The hunter must be even more careful in hilly areas. Another person may walk over a hill behind your target and into your line of fire.

3. Never point a firearm at anything you do not want to shoot.

• Never use a telescopic scope sight for identifying distant hunters, or as a substitute for binoculars.

4. Always carry your firearm so that the muzzle is under control.

With safe carrying techniques, the hunter controls the muzzle even if they stumble or fall.

• Keep the muzzle of the barrel pointed in the safest possible direction.

• Never point a firearm at a person.

• Insist that your hunting and shooting companions do the same.

• Never discharge a firearm near someone's ear. The shock from a muzzle blast can cause permanent hearing loss.

5. Firearms must always be unloaded when carried into camp or when not in use.

Actions should be opened, or firearms taken down when you have completed the hunt. Re-check firearms before entering a building or a vehicle.

• Always check a firearm yourself.

• Never take anyone else's word or assume a firearm is unloaded.

• Never assume a firearm is unloaded,

PROVE it SAFE:

• **P**oint it in the safest possible direction.

• **R**emove all ammunition.

• **O**bserve the chamber to ensure it is empty.

• **V**erify the "feeding" path has no ammunition in it.

• **E**xamine the bore to ensure there are no obstructions in the barrel.

6. Make sure that the barrel and action are clear of obstructions.

If the muzzle of a firearm touches the ground or snow, always check the barrel immediately after unloading. Failing to remove dirt or snow from the barrel can result in serious injury to the hunter when the firearm is fired, and damage to the firearm. Remove oil and grease from the bore before firing.

- If you fall while carrying a firearm, or suspect anything might have lodged in the barrel, PROVE it safe and reload before carrying on.

7. Unattended firearms must be unloaded and stored securely.

Refer to the federal legislation governing the storage and transportation of non-restricted firearms.

- Always store firearms under lock and key, beyond the reach of children.
- When not in use, a firearm must be unloaded with the action open.
- Use a gun case to transport a firearm to and from the shooting area.

8. Never climb a fence or jump a ditch with a loaded firearm.

Place the unloaded firearm on the other side of the fence, then climb the fence at a place well away from the muzzle. Never pull a firearm toward you by the muzzle.

- When crossing a fence alone, open the action of your firearm and place it under the fence with the muzzle pointed in a safe direction before you cross the fence.
- When with a partner, first open the action of both firearms. One person then holds both unloaded firearms while the other crosses the fence. Once across the fence, both firearms are then passed over the fence from one person to another.
- Never hurry when crossing fences or other obstacles.

• Always open the action before crossing any difficult obstacle.

More detail on crossing a fence is provided on page 47 in Chapter 8 - Hunting Safety.

9. Never shoot at flat or hard objects, or the surface of the water.

No one can control the direction of a ricochet, which occurs when a projectile skips off water or other flat surface. Be sure of your backstop.

• Rifle bullets will ricochet off of water or hard, flat surfaces and travel for some distance.

• Be sure you have an adequate backstop or clear line of fire at all times.

• The shooter has no control over the direction of a ricocheting bullet.

10. Avoid alcohol and drugs while hunting.

Drinking or taking drugs before or during the hunt may dull vision, distort aim and impair judgment.

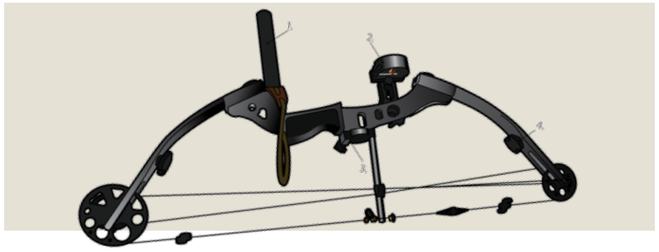
• Alcohol and drugs should never be used before or during a hunt.

CHAPTER 6: BOWHUNTING

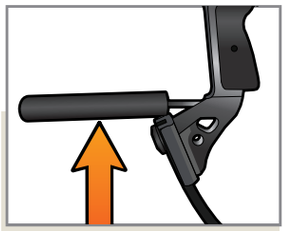
Humans have hunted with the bow and arrow for thousands of years. Bowhunting has become very popular for modern day hunting. A properly placed arrow can be just as effective as a rifle bullet if bowhunters operate within the limitations of their equipment and skill.

Types of Bows

Compound Bow

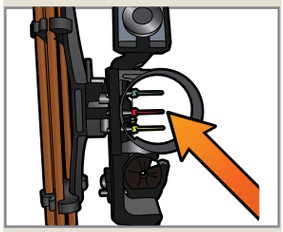


This is a popular choice for many bowhunters. Using wheels and cams, it allows the hunter to hold the bow at full draw for a longer period of time for the best shot - a significant advantage over other types of bows (e.g. recurve and long bows). As the hunter begins to draw the bow, the string starts to turn the wheel and cam that is attached to the bow limbs. The hunter pulls the full draw weight until the cam turns over, letting off the full draw weight. When the cam turns over, the draw weight is decreased by 50 to 80%. This decrease in draw weight, achieved by the cam turning over, allows the hunter to hold less draw weight at full draw. There are add-ons to help reduce the effects of vibration - a common drawback of this style of bow which can affect shot accuracy.



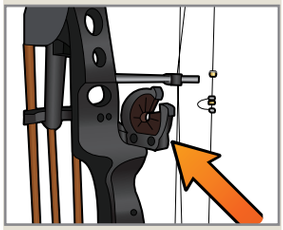
1. Stabilizer

Adding a stabilizer adds forward weight, to balance the bow and absorb the vibrations when the string is released.



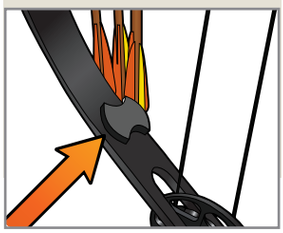
2. Sight

A mechanical device to help the bowhunter to place a shot.



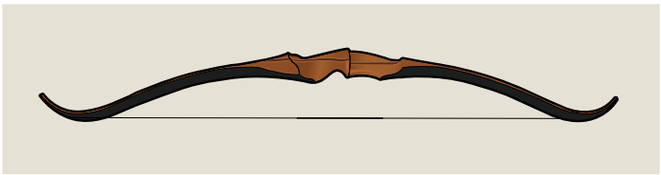
3. Arrow Rest

A device that holds the arrow above the arrow shelf.



4. Vibration Dampener

Will help absorb vibration caused when firing the bow. Will also help reduce shock and excess noise.

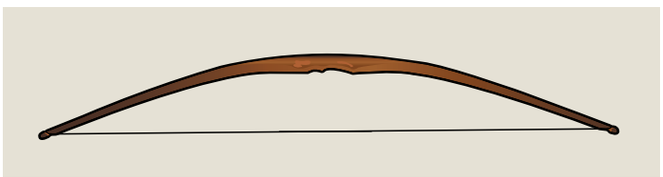


Recurve Bow

This bow features limbs that sweep back and then forward at the tips toward both the bow string and the grip. It is easier for the novice bowhunter to use,

since its curved limbs give it more potential energy. When pulling back a recurve to a full draw, a hunter experiences less hand shock and vibration than with a long bow. However, unlike the compound bow, this bow does not have a “let off point” meaning that the hunter will still feel the total draw weight of the bow throughout the entire draw. When the string is released, the limbs and string move in a forward direction. The stored energy in both parts of the limb is released very quickly, propelling the arrow to the target at high speed.

Long Bow



This is a large, powerful, lightweight bow. For a beginner bowhunter, it is more difficult to use than other bow styles. Not all long bows have an arrow shelf for an arrow rest. Nor do they shoot as fast as the recurve or compound bow. It also does not have a “let-off point”. This means the hunter feels the total draw weight of the bow through the entire draw. When the string is drawn back, energy is stored in the limbs until the hunter releases the bow string, propelling the arrow to the target at high speed.

Compared to hunting with other types of bows, hunting with a recurve or a long bow is considered a more traditional hunting method because these types of bows do not have many accessories or additional parts that can be added on to improve accuracy and reduce noise, increasing the hunting challenge.

Whichever bow you choose to use, remember to always follow manufacturer’s instructions for safe handling and use of your bow.

Parts of a Bow

Grip

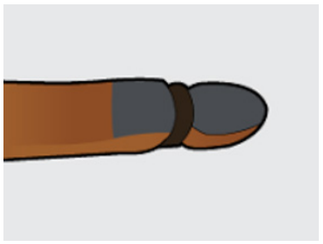
Allows the hunter to hold the bow in a vertical position while shooting. For bows with a wrist strap, the proper way to grip is with a relaxed hand-grip. For other bows, fingertips are curled resting lightly on the front of the grip. The force of the bow, at full draw, holds the grip in the palm of the hunter’s hand. If the hunter grips the bow too tightly, it tends to throw the arrow left or right or up and down when the arrow is released.

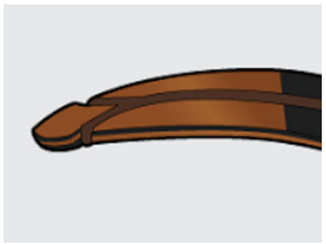
Limbs

The upper or lower part of the bow that bends when the string is drawn back. The limbs store the energy when the bow is held at full draw. Never release a bow string without an arrow nocked in place. This is called “dry firing” a bow. Doing so can cause serious damage to the bow and/or injury to the shooter and bystanders.

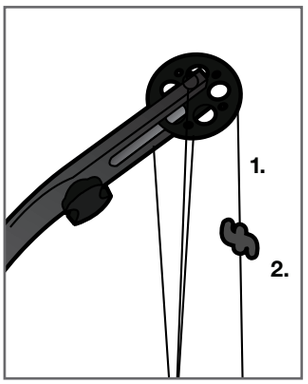
String Groove

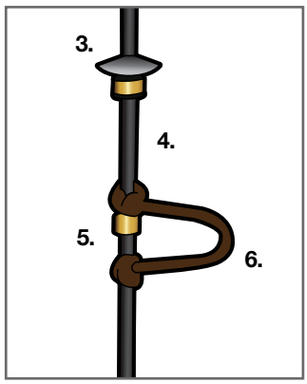
Found on the limb tip of long bows and recurve bows. The groove keeps the bow string in place.





Parts of a Bow String





1. Bow String

Attaches to the limbs of a long bow or recurve bow. Attaches to the cable for a compound bow. Has a center nock locator for nocking (positioning) an arrow.

2. String Silencer

An elastic material to dampen the vibrations in the string, resulting in a reduction in string noise and vibration. A string silencer is not used on a long bow.

3. Kisser Button

A small plastic button that attaches to the bow string. At full draw it will touch the bowhunter’s lips to provide another point of reference for the anchor position.

4. Serving

The wrapping of material in the center of the string to protect the string from wear. The nock locator attaches to the serving.

5. Nock Locator

The mark or device that indicates where the arrow is to be placed on the string. It is located on the serving area of the string.

6. Release Aid Loop

A release aid can be used in combination with a mechanical release for a more accurate shot.

Releases

With the heavy draw weight of today's bows, most people choose to use some sort of release to protect their fingers and increase accuracy.

1

2

1. Mechanical Release

Functions like the trigger on a gun to ensure a decisive, frictionless release of the string for greater accuracy.

2. Shooting Glove

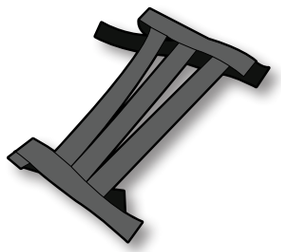
A glove like attachment for the shooter's hand that can support a smooth release of the string while protecting your fingers.

Arm Guards

Arm guards are available in various shapes, sizes and designs. They are used on whichever arm is holding the bow to help keep loose clothing tucked away, and to help prevent "burning" from the friction of the bow string rubbing against the arm when it is released. A proper stance or position by the shooter will also help prevent the released bow string from "burning" the arm holding the bow.

1

2



1. Large Surface Arm Guard

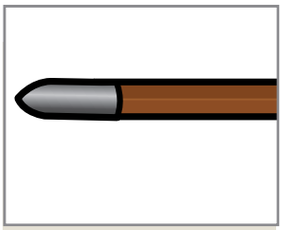
Will help keep clothing tucked away.

2. Light Weight Arm Guard

The design allows ventilation when hunting in warm weather.

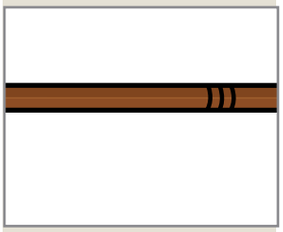
Parts of an Arrow

Arrows can be made from wood, fiberglass, aluminum or carbon. All arrows share the following five parts:



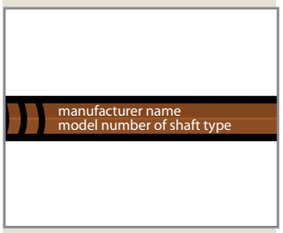
1. Arrow Point

This is the point or tip of the arrow. The particular arrow point you choose is determined by the game species you will be hunting.



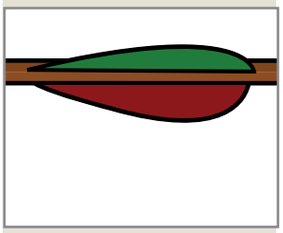
2. Arrow Shaft

Main structural component of the arrow, to which all other parts are attached. The stiffness of the shaft is called the spine. Make sure the arrow is matched to your bow's poundage and your draw length.



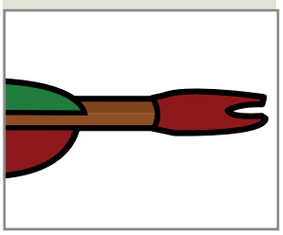
3. Crest

Markings indicating the manufacturer of the arrow, the model number of the arrow shaft and in some cases the specific arrow measurements for the diameter and thickness.



4. Fletching

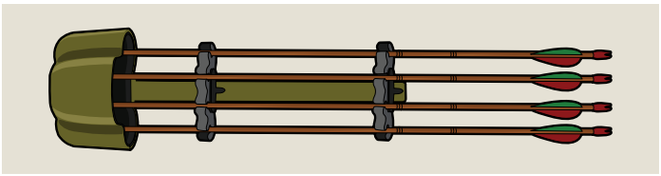
Constructed either of plastic or real feathers, it provides stability for the arrow when in flight. The fletching is made up of three or four vanes per arrow.



5. Nock

Generally constructed from plastic, featuring a notch in one end to attach the arrow to the string.

Covered Quiver



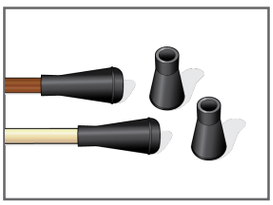
All arrows should be carried safely in a covered quiver. Covered quivers are a convenient and easy way to carry your arrows, giving you quick access while protecting the broadheads and preventing injury. Certain types of quivers can also protect both the arrows and fletching from damage.

Before hunting, ensure that all your equipment is in good working condition. Cracked arrows should be destroyed first and then discarded. Check for frayed bowstrings and replace any bows that have cracked or twisted limbs.

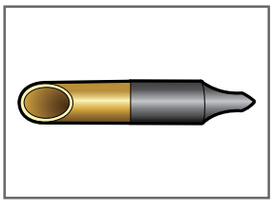
IMPORTANT! A wooden arrow cannot handle the extreme pressure of a compound bow. It could shatter, causing damage to the bow and possibly injuring someone.

Arrow Points

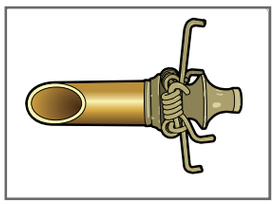
Let's review the various types of arrow points available.



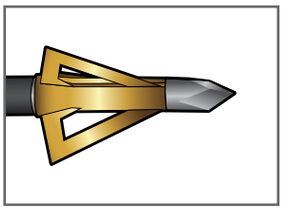
Blunt points are used for small game and are made of metal or rubber.



Field points are used for target practice and small game hunting.



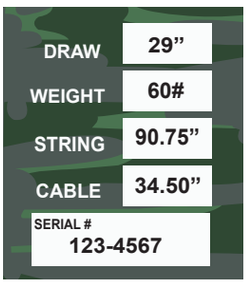
Judo points are used mostly in grassy areas for small game.



Broadhead points are used for big game and generally have interchangeable blades that can either be in a fixed position or a mechanical type, which opens only on impact.

SAFETY FIRST! Always use a broadhead wrench when adding or removing a broadhead point. Careful! The points are very sharp!

Selecting a Bow and Arrows



A bow must fit the individual who shoots it. Likewise, arrows must be sized for the bow. Before attempting to shoot a bow and arrow, get familiar with the bow's draw weight and draw length.

Draw Weight

Draw weight describes the maximum amount of weight needed to pull a bow string completely back. The draw weight is measured in pounds or kilograms. When purchasing a bow, be sure you can pull it back comfortably. The bow string should be pulled back in a smooth motion to full draw. If you have to struggle, the draw weight is too high and will result in poor shot placement.

Safety First! Drawing back a bow that has too much draw weight may result in pulled muscles in your chest and shoulder areas or other damage to your shoulder.

Draw Length

Draw length describes the distance between the bow string and the grip at full draw. Bows come in different draw lengths, the most common being 26 inches, 27 inches, 28 inches and 29 inches. When purchasing a bow, it is very important to have it properly fitted by a reputable dealer. Every bow has a label describing how the bow is set up, with the string and cable length. It is usually located on the inside of the lower limb.

Important! Drawing a bow back that does not fit your draw length may result in damage to your bow.

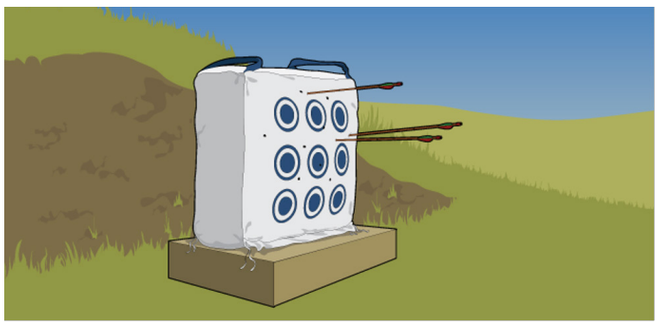
Proper Technique

Anchor Point

An anchor point is a spot that is touched by the draw hand or string when the bow is fully drawn and ready to shoot, usually a point on the hunter's mouth, chin, jaw or nose.

By continuously using the same anchor point or points, the bowhunter has a better chance of reproducing the same shot each and every time.

Shooting a Bow and Arrow



Before shooting, make sure the target is placed in a safe spot. Check behind the target for a suitable backstop such as a hill or dirt pile.

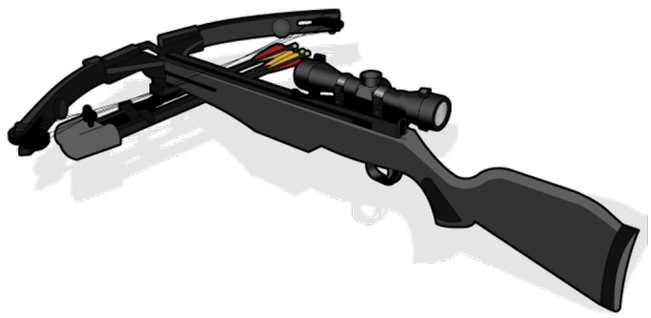
Grasp an arrow just in front of the fletching and place it on the arrow rest. Line up the slot of the nock, ensuring the fletching is in the correct position for your arrow rest. Gently push the nock onto the string under the nock locator until you hear a click. This is called "nocking the arrow". Assume a shooting position, looking at the target. You can aim either by choosing your target instinctively or by attaching a mechanical sight to the bow for reference.

Pull smoothly at the bow string to a full draw, anchoring the string to your anchor point(s). In a smooth motion while keeping your bow arm steady, release the string and hold your shooting position until the arrow hits the target.

Bowhunters should practice on a regular basis to maintain a high level of skill shooting their bow. They should also practice in conditions similar to those likely to be experienced in the field including practicing with target arrows and also with the particular kind of arrow point they tend to use for hunting, for example, the broadhead for hunting larger game, like deer.

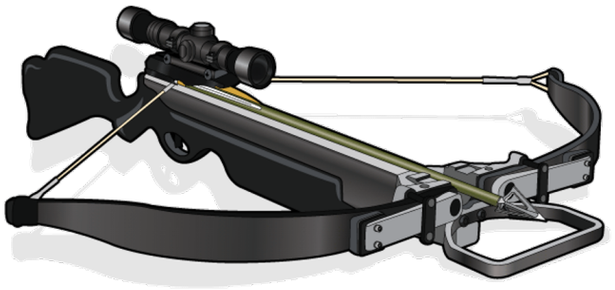
Crossbow

Compound Crossbow



Though it works on the same principle as a compound bow with wheels and cams, the compound crossbow has a unique design. It features a trigger mechanism that holds the string in place until the hunter releases its projectile, known as the bolt. A crossbow frame resembles a rifle stock and features a top rail for attaching a telescopic sight. The bolt rests on the rail and is held in place by a retention spring. The limbs function similar to a compound bow but are much shorter. Before using, read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Recurve Crossbow



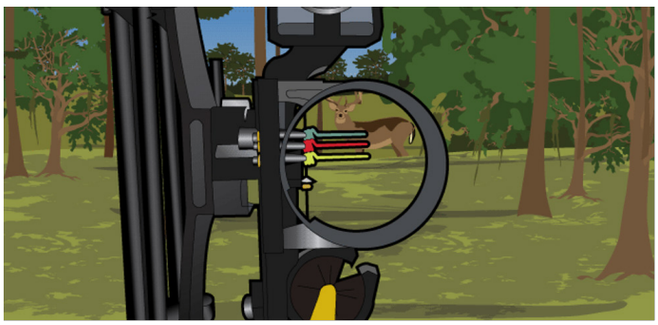
The recurve is another popular style of crossbow. Similar to the recurve bow, it features limbs that sweep back and forward at the tips. There are no wheels or cams to break and no cables and cable savers to change. Recurve crossbows are also generally lighter than compound crossbows. This style also uses a bolt which is held in place by a retention spring. Before using, read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Important! Consult the Hunting Regulations Summary on the use of bows for hunting.

Bowhunting Safety Rules

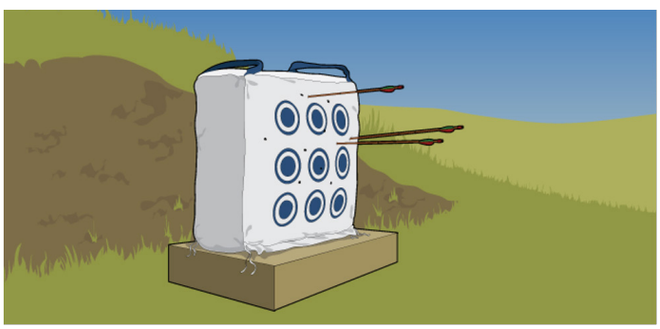
Bowhunting requires taking precautions to ensure safety just like when hunting with a gun. As such, bowhunters need to follow the rules of hunting safety. Bowhunting incidents could be greatly reduced if bowhunters followed these safety rules every time they handle a bow and arrow, including crossbows.

Always be sure of your target and beyond.



Arrows do not travel as far as bullets, but they can still have a fair effective range. Do not attempt a shot if the path to the target is obstructed, or if there is someone beyond that target.

Always have an appropriate backstop.



A dirt mound, free of rocks and debris, is a safe backstop to have. As with gun hunting, never fire at an animal that is located at the top of a hill, and avoid shooting an arrow toward rocks that could send the arrow in an unexpected direction.

Do not shoot straight up into the air.

If you do this, the arrow will come down point-first, and with enough force to seriously injure a person.

Do not nock an arrow until ready to fire.

Do not nock an arrow until you are approaching your game or getting ready to shoot. Also, never draw back an arrow until you have identified your target as being a legal and ethical shot. NEVER dry-fire a bow or crossbow. It will cause damage to your bow and can also cause serious injury.

CHAPTER 7: SHOOTING SKILLS & MARKSMANSHIP

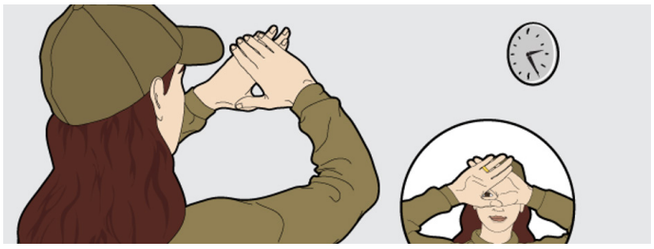
Marksmanship is a word that describes how good a person is at firing a firearm. To become an accomplished marksman, you must first learn and then practice the fundamentals of shooting - skills that are developed over a hunter's lifetime.

Fundamentals of Safe Shooting

Observe safe firearm handling rules.

- Learn how to properly adjust sights on a rifle.
- Learn different shooting positions.
- Learn how to pattern a shotgun.
- Learn how to point and shoot a shotgun.
- Understand that practice is one of the keys to safe shooting.

Dominant Eye



Knowing which eye is dominant is an important factor in shooting performance. The dominant eye is the one that looks directly at an object. The non-dominant eye looks at the same object at a slight angle. The result is depth perception.

The small angular difference between the dominant eye and the non-dominant eye is what allows a hunter to judge the distance to a target or game animal. A firearm should always be shouldered on the side of the hunter's dominant eye. However, being right or left-handed does not always determine if you are right or left-eye dominant.

Find Your Dominant Eye

Step 1. Make a small triangle with your hands, overlapping your thumbs and the top half of your fingers.

Step 2. Extend your arms to the target.

Step 3. Look through the triangle at the target.

Step 4. Keep both eyes open.

Step 5. Move your hands back to your face while looking at the target through the triangle you made with your hands.

Step 6. Whichever eye your hand moves to is your dominant eye.

Important! If you are a beginner, you should shoot on the same side as your dominant eye even if your dominant hand is on the other side.

Sight Picture

Sight picture is the rear sight, front sight and the target all in perfect alignment. Once a hunter masters the sight alignment and the sight picture, it is time to go to a range and sight-in the firearm.

Telescopic Sight **Aperture or Peep Sight** **Open Sight**

Important! To ensure a "one-shot kill", you must properly sight in your equipment and practice shooting before the hunt.

Practice until you know exactly what your limits are and stay within those limits when in the field. These types of actions show respect for the animals you are hunting.

Shooting

While shooting at the range or in the field, remember these fundamentals of shooting:

- Always follow firearm safety rules.
- Always wear eye and ear protection.
- Using a steady rest will increase the accuracy of the shot. When in the field, a steady rest could be a stump, log or even your coat.
- Obtain the sight picture and hold it.
- Control your breathing. Take a deep breath, and exhale about half-way.
- Squeeze the trigger with a steady pressure. Jerking the trigger will change the sight picture, which will cause the bullet to miss the center of the target.
- After the shot is fired, continue to squeeze the trigger. If you lift your head or jerk the rifle, the shot may be thrown off-target by the movement of the rifle. This waiting period is called the follow through.

Shooting Positions

Prone Position

This is the steadiest of all positions because it supports both the firearm and the hunter's upper body. The hunter's hips and legs provide a stable platform. This position is very comfortable and should be used to practice the fundamentals of good shooting.

Sitting Position

This is the next-best position for steadiness. With legs crossed at the ankles, the hunter's knee gives support to the arms. But a hunter's legs will start to shake if this position is held for a lengthy period.

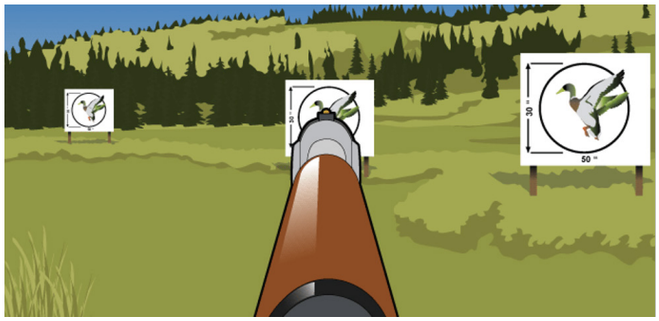
Standing Position

In this position, the hunter's arms are not supported, making it difficult to take an accurate shot.
With this position, there can be more movement of the barrel. Some hunters will use a tree, large stone or a "shooting stick" as a prop to help steady your shot to improve accuracy.

Kneeling Position

This is an adaptation of the standing position, in which the hunter uses a rest to steady the firearm. The hunter will experience less barrel movement - a key to accurate shot placement.

Sight Alignment of a Shotgun



Shotguns do not usually have rear sights. Most have a bead at the muzzle end, and a ventilated rib on top of the barrel leading up to the bead. When pointing a shotgun at a target, the rib and front bead should be aligned so that you are looking straight down the barrel, to properly hit the target. If the bead appears to be higher or lower than the rib, then you are not looking straight down the barrel, and the shot will not hit the intended target.

Shotgun Stance

A hunter's shotgun stance is similar to that of a boxer - in a standing position with feet apart at shoulder width. For right-eye dominant shooters, the left leg will be slightly forward and the left foot pointed toward the anticipated target. For left-eye dominant shooters, the right leg will be slightly forward and the right foot will be turned slightly. The hunter bends forward at the waist. The forward leg of the hunter is bent slightly, not locked.

The hunter raises the shotgun to the cheek under the dominant eye first and then back to the shoulder. The positioning of the shotgun on the cheek is critical. If the shotgun is not placed correctly against the cheek, the shot will either be high or low.

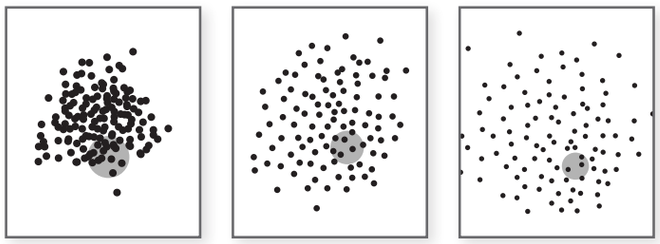
A general rule to follow is that the stock be held comfortably - not too tight or too loose - against the cheek, just under the cheekbone. The hunter's head has to be held straight, not canted to the left or right.

Have someone check the fit before you purchase a shotgun. Some shotguns have shims or adjustable stocks to help with this alignment.

Targeting and Patterning with a Shotgun

There are differences in targeting shotguns and rifles. While shotguns are pointed at a target, rifles are aimed. The trigger pull on a shotgun is quick - often described as "slapping" the trigger. It is important to know your dominant eye when using a shotgun, because you will have both eyes open when taking a shot.

It is important to pattern your shotgun prior to hunting to ensure you have the right combination of choke and shot size to put the maximum number of pellets in the target area. Try different loads, brands, and chokes at varying distances to determine the best pattern from your shotgun. This will help you know the effective range for the combination of choke and shot size/type you will shoot in a hunting situation increasing your ability for a quick and clean harvest.



Shotgun Pattern at 10 Yards

Shotgun Pattern at 25 Yards

Shotgun Pattern at 40 Yards

Leading and the Shotgun

To be able to hit a moving target, a hunter must learn several firing methods - and with each one, the hunter sees a target, shoots ahead of it and follows through with the shotgun in constant motion. Leading means shooting in front of a moving target. There are three commonly used methods of leading. Let's start by looking at the swing-through method. When using this method you must consider several factors:

- From clay pigeons (targets) to live game, your target has a particular speed.
- It will take time to find the moving target in your field of vision, and set up for the shot.
- When the shot leaves the barrel, it takes time for it to travel to a target. The farther away a target is, from the hunter, the longer it takes for the shot to hit it.

- It is very important to continue swinging your shotgun after the shot. This process is called the follow-through.

In order to practice this technique, take the following steps:

Step 1

Hunter sees target. Starts to swing.

Step 2

Swings through target, pulls the trigger, and continues the swing, spreading shot in front of target.

Step 3

Target and shot come together as the hunter follows through.

Snap Shooting

When using the snap shooting technique, there is no barrel swing when the shotgun is fired. The barrel of the shotgun is instead pointed at a fixed position ahead of the intended target and fired as the target moves into range.

Important! This is not a recommended method of shotgun shooting because you need to judge both the distance to the target and the target speed.

CHAPTER 8: HUNTING SAFETY

A safe hunter takes time to prepare and to practice using all gear before going out into the woods with a firearm. In this chapter we are going to discuss safety skills for handling a firearm in the field, as well as how to be safe when hunting near or on water.

We'll also examine general safety guidelines for all types of hunting.

Important! It is a hunter's responsibility to purchase any required hunting license and tags before going on the hunt. Be aware of local hunting laws and regulations. Remember, those laws and regulations can change from year to year so be sure to consult the Ontario Hunting Regulations Summary annually!

Big Game Hunter

Using hunter orange clothing and gear is an excellent safety measure. It is clearly visible in both bright sunlight and in poor lighting conditions.

Upland Bird Hunter

Often hunting in fields and in groups, hunter orange is necessary to indicate your presence and where others are located. Chaps will help protect your legs when walking through thick brush.

Turkey Hunter

Both turkeys and waterfowl have great eyesight. The smallest movement can spook them. Facemasks are often used to cover any bare skin. Use a camouflage that blends with the habitat where you are hunting.

Crossing a Fence Alone

BEFORE CROSSING

Safe hunters always unload their firearms before crossing an obstacle, then they reload after the obstacle has been safely crossed.

Step 1

If you are crossing a fence by yourself, unload your firearm first.

Step 2

While protecting the muzzle from debris, place your firearm on the ground with the muzzle pointed in a safe direction away from where you plan to cross the fence.

Step 3

Cross the fence away from the muzzle, retrieve your firearm, check the barrel for obstructions, load, engage the safety and continue your hunt.

Crossing a Fence with Another Person

Step 1

If you are crossing a fence or other obstacle with another hunter, unload all firearms first. Pass your firearm to the other hunter with the action open and visible.

Step 2

Once the second hunter is safely holding both firearms, the first hunter may cross the fence.

Step 3

Once safely across, the unloaded firearms are handed to the hunter who has crossed the fence. The muzzle should always be pointed in a safe direction.

Step 4

With the muzzles still pointing in a safe direction, the second hunter can now cross the fence.

AFTER CROSSING

Now that you've crossed safely, check the barrel for obstructions, load your firearm, engage the safety and continue your hunt.

Safety Rules for Hunting with Dogs

Dogs are used in many areas for hunting. There are many breeds of hunting dogs, and the type of game animal you are hunting will determine what type of dog to use. When hunting with a dog, everyone in the hunting party must treat the dog as a fellow hunter. Always be aware of where the dog is, and adhere to both vertical and horizontal zones of fire as well as identification of the target, and what lies in front of, and beyond, that target.

A hunting dog should always wear a collar, which includes information such as the dog's name, and the owner's phone number. Hunter orange vests made out of cloth and neoprene can be purchased for the hunting dog to wear, which will help other hunters see the dog, and can also help keep the dog warm and protect them from injury.

For big and small game animals, beagles and hounds are breeds commonly used to run game animals in the direction of a hunter.

When released, the dog travels through the cover and moves the game towards the hunter or hunters staged at certain locations. This technique works well in thick cover or a swamp that a hunter cannot walk through.

Important! Always check the hunting regulations before using dogs for a hunt.

Pointers are commonly used for upland bird hunting (e.g. grouse and woodcock). As the name implies, when a pointer smells and locates a bird, the dog will set up and point in the general direction of the bird. When the pointer is set up, a hunter can get in range and set up for a shot. Pointing breeds cover a large range, pointing the game when located, allowing the hunter to approach and flush the game. Flushing breeds such as Spaniels and Setters seem to have a natural ability to locate, point and flush game birds.

Retrievers are used in waterfowl (e.g. duck or geese) hunting, as well as other hunting situations. A retriever gets its name from its ability to retrieve game birds that have been harvested by a hunter. The retriever sits and waits patiently for the hunter to give the command to retrieve the bird after the shot is fired. It swims to and retrieves the game bird, bringing it back to the hunter.

It is the hunter's responsibility to look after and care for the hunting dog. Dogs should be trained long before hunting season begins, and be kept in good physical condition throughout the year. While on a hunt, make sure you can provide your dogs with clean water to drink. Inspect the pads on their feet for any signs of cuts or thorns that might hurt them. Also, check their coats for scratches or cuts from briers and be on the look out for ticks as they can cause Lyme disease in animals and humans. Hunting dogs can experience hypothermia and overheating, just like humans. In hot conditions, give dogs a break under shade and provide clean water. In cold and wet locations, keep the dogs warm and dry. If a dog starts to shiver, that means it is cold and needs to be warmed up. If a dog suffers a serious injury, seek emergency care by a veterinarian as soon as possible.

Safety First! Since most waterfowl hunting is done in cold weather, it is important that the retriever stays warm and dry.

Water Safety

Hunting for ducks and other kinds of waterfowl often involves being near or in various bodies of water - with or without the help of watercraft. Safe hunting requires that you plan and prepare for these special conditions.

These are the most common causes of hunting-related incidents that involve watercraft:

- Not following proper firearm safety and handling rules
- Standing in watercraft while shooting
- Not wearing an approved personal flotation device
- Slipping or falling when entering or exiting watercraft
- Not knowing the safety rules for safe watercraft handling

Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs)

There is always the possibility that a watercraft used for hunting could capsize. This is why it is legally required to have a PFD for everyone in the boat. It is highly recommended that everyone wear their PFD as wearing one could also save your life! There are many styles on the market today.

Coldwater Immersion

Many drownings and boating related deaths are a result of falling into coldwater and becoming immersed. When a person falls into cold water their body experiences a number of physiological responses, which are affected by both the temperature of the water and the amount of time a person is in the water.

Prevention

Vessel capsizing and people falling overboard are the leading causes of cold water immersion. Capsizing is most often caused by overloading, poorly secured loads, improper boat handling and anchoring or loss of power resulting in loss of steering.

In order to prevent cold water immersion, be sure not to overload vessels and always take weather and water conditions into consideration when operating. Falls overboard can be avoided by remaining seated and limiting how much you move around in a boat when it is moving.

Step 1 - Initial Immersion - Cold Water "Shock"

If a person falls into cold water - their body's initial reaction is a 'gasp reflex' which can include hyperventilation and muscle spasms. This initial reaction can result in water inhalation as well as significant changes in heart rate and blood pressure. These initial effects are present for the first two or three minutes of immersion.

Step 2 - Short-Term Immersion - Impaired Function

In cold water, you may begin to experience the loss of motor skills after a few minutes. Between three and thirty minutes after immersion a person's hands quickly lose strength and sensation and subsequently even strong swimmers loose their ability to swim. In cold water immersion cases, boaters often drown as a result of swimming failure before hypothermia has the chance to set in.

Step 3 - Longer Term Immersion - Immersion Hypothermia

Following 30 or more minutes of immersion, hypothermia (a drop in body temperature below the normal level) will begin to set in. The person's overall body temperature will continue to drop until it reaches the same temperature of the water. As the body's core temperature falls, a person will eventually lapse into unconsciousness.

Step 4 - Post Rescue Collapse

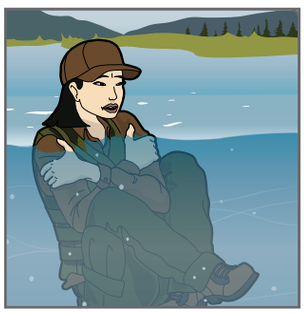
A drop in blood pressure which may lead a person to become unconscious or to stop breathing at the point of rescue or up to several hours afterward.

Surviving Coldwater

Your number one priority is to get yourself out of the water as soon as possible. You can do this either by climbing onto your capsized boat or any other floating objects, or if it is within reach by swimming to shore. The sooner you can get your body out of the water the greater your chances of survival will be.

If you manage to make it to shore, be careful not to try and stand up if the current is too strong. Doing so can result in a shallow-water drowning - where a person's feet get caught in rocks or sand on the bottom, and the strong current forces their upper body underwater, causing the person to drown.

If rescue is imminent - you should conserve energy and body heat. You may extend your survival time by wearing your lifejacket.



H.E.L.P. – 'Heat Escape Lessening Posture.' You want to keep as much body heat as possible from escaping. If you are alone, cross your arms tightly against the chest and bring your knees up close to the chest.

If other passengers are in the water as well, use the **'Huddle'** technique to maintain body heat. Get the sides of everyone's chest close together with arms around the back and legs intertwined.

Additional Cold Water Protection

- Floater suit - a full nose-to-toes PFD.
- An anti-exposure work suit - a PFD with a thermal protection rating.
- A dry suit - used in conjunction with a PFD and a thermal liner.
- A wet suit - traps and heats water against your body.
- An immersion suit - used in extreme conditions (usually off-shore).

Safety Tips for Walking on Ice

If you are hunting during winter months, you might find yourself in a situation where you might need to cross a frozen lake, pond, river, or other body of water to continue your hunt or to reach your destination. Crossing over ice is very dangerous and should be avoided if at all possible. However, if you do have to cross the ice, here are a few safety tips you can follow:

- Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return.

- Travel with a companion who can help rescue you or get help if an emergency occurs.
- Check the weather forecast. Do not go on the ice on warm days or if there is the possibility of a storm.
- Check conditions before stepping on the ice. Local landowners, law enforcement personnel, or snowmobile clubs can inform you on ice conditions. It is recommended to have at least 8 to 10 cm of clear ice before a person should walk on it.
- Survey before heading out. If the ice looks spotty, or if there are areas of slush it might not be safe.
- When walking on the ice, spread out from your companions to reduce the amount of weight in one area.
- Always carry an ice staff, rope, and a cell phone or other emergency signalling device in case of emergency.
- Never walk on the ice with a loaded firearm. It is best to carry the firearm in a protective case that is strapped to your pack. This way your hands will be free.

Safety First! If you suddenly feel that the ice is not safe, you could be right even if there are no outward signs, so don't keep going! Instead, turn back and find another way.

All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety

All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) can be extremely useful to hunters as they are designed for use on rough unpaved trails, and allow hunters to go places that are inaccessible with many other vehicles. However, ATVs can be extremely dangerous and require proper training. These are some other considerations when riding an ATV:

Use Proper Safety Equipment
A person is not protected when riding an ATV. It is particularly important to always wear an adequate helmet designed for ATV use, and to have appropriate footwear, as well as hand and eye protection.

Only Use Designated Trails
ATVs can cause environmental damage. As such, many public trails are closed to ATVs or will limit their access. Before heading out, check local regulations to ensure that you are only using legal trails. If you are traveling through private property, always get the landowner's permission, and follow their instructions. Do not veer off marked trails, or cut through crops or fields. Keep off paved roads and roads with heavy traffic.

Maintain a Safe Speed
Riding on rough uneven terrain can be challenging. Be sure to always travel at a speed that will allow you to react in time to avoid obstacles such as rocks, trees, ditches, sharp turns, etc.

Check Local Regulations
Before heading out on your ATV, check with local authorities on specific ATV regulations, equipment requirements, and to ensure you have the proper permits if required.

Wild Turkey Hunting Safety

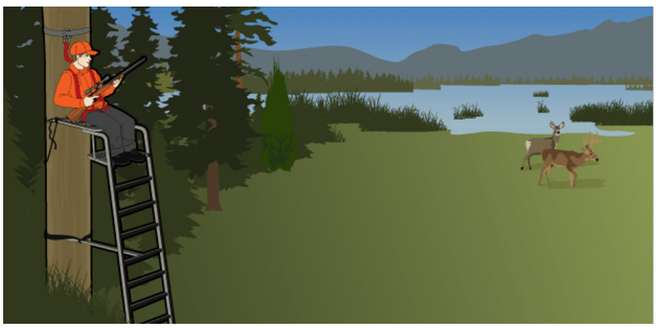
Wild turkey hunting can require some special considerations when it comes to hunting safety. Hunters are often hunting with a firearm while wearing camouflage and making sounds to attract birds.

Most turkey hunting accidents occur when a shooter does not properly identify their target, fires at movements or sounds, or fires when stalking another hunter who is calling turkeys. These incidents would be greatly reduced if hunters would properly identify their target first.

All hunters should follow these simple steps for safe turkey hunting:

- Do not wear red, white, or blue as these colours are key features found on male turkeys.
- Tom and jake decoys could be mistaken by another hunter for legal birds. Conceal your decoys when carrying them to and from your hunting location.
- Do not place decoys where you may be in the line of fire of another hunter.
- Select a background that is wider than your shoulders and taller than the top of your head to help ensure your safety.
- The use of pop up blinds can compromise your safety. Consider marking your blind on all sides with hunter orange.
- Never stalk a turkey. Call them to you.
- When another hunter approaches, do not move. Shout out loudly to identify yourself.
- Carry your turkey out of the woods in a bag and consider having hunter orange on your bag.
- Check the Ontario Hunting Regulations Summary on the use of equipment and seasons for hunting wild turkey.

CHAPTER 9: TREESTAND SAFETY



While in the woods, have you ever watched a red-tailed hawk hunt? You'll notice that it perches high in the branches of trees, scanning the woods below for mice and small game. When it spots one, it takes flight, flaring its wings, and glides swiftly, silently to snatch its quarry from the ground. Using a treestand, a hunter can gain the same bird's-eye-view advantage enjoyed by a hawk in its treetop perch. But doing so requires great care. Unlike the hawk, hunters don't have wings or tail feathers to control their descent if they slip. And a falling hunter in the woods is dangerous and anything but graceful.

Advantages and Disadvantages for Using a Treestand

Advantages

- Gives a hunter a longer range of visibility, which allows more time to prepare for a safe shot.
- A hunter's scent remains in the canopy of the trees, instead of on the ground where it can give away a position to nearby animals.
- Game animals can detect even slight movements. In a treestand, the hunter can move without being easily detected.
- Hunter orange can be seen at greater distances in a treestand than on the ground, where the hunter's colour(s) might be blocked by brush and debris.
- Shots taken by a hunter from a treestand are at a downward angle, so the bullet or arrow will go into the ground. This is especially important when hunting near homes and farm buildings.

Disadvantages

- A hunter has no protection from the wind unless the treestand has a skirt around its platform.
- Some treestands are quite heavy to carry into or out of the woods.
- In rainy or snowy weather, a hunter might lose his or her footing when climbing up to or getting out of the treestand.
- It is difficult to change positions or move around in some treestands.
- Setting up and taking down a treestand can be very noisy.

- A hunter might fall asleep in the treestand, and this could result in an incident (accident resulting in injury).
- Many hunting incidents occur when a hunter is getting into or out of a treestand.

Important! When using a treestand for hunting on private land, always obtain permission from the landowner first.

Using a Fall Arrest System / Full Body Harness

The majority of hunting-related incidents involving treestands occur because a hunter either wasn't using a Fall Arrest System (FAS) / Full Body Harness (FBH) or used it in an unsafe manner. If every hunter wore a FAS/FBH and used it properly, the incident and injury rate would be reduced dramatically.
The Fall Arrest System consists of a strap that is attached to the tree and a Full Body Harness that is worn by the hunter.

Vest-Type Harness

One of the safest, most reliable harness a hunter can use. It is very easy for any hunter to use - simply slip it on, adjust the straps and fasten the clips. Unlike the simple belt or chest harness, it is strapped around the shoulders, waist and legs so that in the event of a fall from a treestand, pressure is distributed across a larger area of the hunter's body, helping to ensure a quick recovery with less chance of injury.

Parachute or Full-Body Harness

This harness is just as safe and offers the same type of protection as the Vest-harness when used properly, however there are many straps and buckles involved. Always check and re-check your harness to ensure that it is properly secured, before you start climbing up into the treestand.

Single Strap Harness

Single strap harnesses should not be considered as a safe harness. These kinds of harnesses cause severe restriction in the chest area, making it difficult to breathe or move.

Chest Harness

Chest harnesses should not be considered as a safe harness either. These harnesses cause severe restriction in the chest area, making it difficult to breathe or move.

Do not leave the ground unless you are wearing a FAS/FBH that is properly attached to the tree! A FAS/FBH should be worn and properly attached to the tree from the time you leave the ground until you're back down.

Tether (Safety) Strap for Tree

The second component to the Fall Arrest System (FAS) is the tether strap that attaches to the tree. This is the anchor point for the safety harness. When the hunter is standing on the treestand platform this safety strap should be attached to the tree at eye level or above. There should be NO slack in the tether when sitting. Having no slack in the tether will prevent the hunter from falling more than a few inches. It is much better to fall a few inches than several feet.

A third component of the FAS/FBH is the Suspension Relief Device. Always have your suspension relief aid handy and ready to use if you do fall. Remember to always follow the manufacturer's instructions and practice using your FAS/FBH at ground level with a responsible adult before using it in a tree.

Additionally, there are several optional, commercially available self-recovery or self-extraction devices. These optional devices enable the user to be safely lowered to the ground automatically, or under the control of the user. One of the devices can be considered for use as an additional safety precaution against prolonged suspension trauma.

Types of Treestands

Homemade or Permanent Treestand

Homemade or permanent treestands made of wood are NOT recommended because over time they can deteriorate and become unsafe. Rain, snow and ice can collect on the stand, and moss can collect in spots, making the platform slick. Also, a permanent stand can damage the tree to which it's attached and the nails you use to fasten it can cause serious damage to equipment or people later on, if the tree is harvested.

Fixed or Hang-on Treestand

A fixed or hang-on type stand can be attached to a tree at any height. It consists of a seat and a platform, along with straps and/or chains to attach the stand to the tree. A hunter's movement in this stand is very limited, and it requires a ladder or steps for access. Make sure the attaching straps or chains are tight and secure or the stand could slip when weight is applied to the platform.

Safety Tips for Fixed / Hang-on Stands:

- ALWAYS use a climbing/lineman's belt when installing or removing a fixed position stand and also while ascending or descending the tree.
- NEVER support your weight with a tree limb. Tree limbs can break causing you to fall.
- Always test the stand to be sure it is secure before climbing into it
- Never use wood steps attached to the tree with nails or spikes.
- Avoid using screw-in steps, as they can be more dangerous than other climbing aides.
- If the stand is left in the same spot for more than one hunting season examine the straps and replace if necessary. Sunlight and weather can weaken straps over time.

Self-Climbing Stand

The self-climbing stand is highly portable and is available in many styles. It can be carried like a backpack into the woods on the day of the hunt and used in different locations, depending on the hunting conditions. To install it in a tree, a hunter uses a push-down, pull-up method. It requires practice to become good with how this stand

operates, so it's wise to practice at ground level before hunting season begins. A safety strap is required when climbing with this stand, so select a tree that does not have loose or peeling bark.

The hunter stands on the bottom platform and pulls the seat section up to waist level. He or she then sits on the seat and raises the bottom platform up to the bottom of the seat section. The hunter then stands on the bottom platform and pulls the seat section up to waist level. This action is repeated until the hunter reaches the desired height.

Safety Tips for Self-Climbing Stands:

- Attach your FAS/FBH to the tree before leaving the ground.
- Attach the seating and standing platforms in a slightly upward direction to compensate for the narrowing of the tree trunk as you go up.
- Connect both the seating and standing platforms together to prevent the platforms from separating, leaving you stranded.
- As you climb up or down, move the safety strap with you. Never hurry. Move short distances at a time.

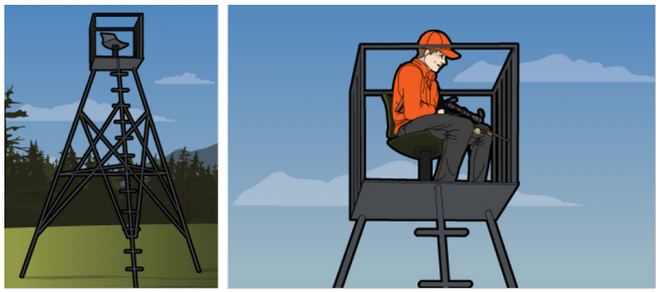
Ladder Stand

This stand is safer to enter and exit thanks to the ladder, but it may require three people to install and secure it properly to a tree. Ranging between 12 and 16 feet in height, it is ideal when hunting on well-established game trails. Some ladder stands have a small seat and platform for one hunter. Others feature a larger seat and platform for two hunters. A skirt can also be purchased, which will conceal the hunter's movements. Some ladder stands feature a bar that can be used as a gun rest.

Safety Tips for Ladder Stands:

- Ladder stands should include criss-cross straps, standoff brackets or other means of securing the ladder to the tree before climbing to the platform.
- Ladder sections must be securely held together with retainer pins, clips, or some other device to prevent the ladder sections from coming apart unexpectedly.
- Ladder stands can require up to 3 persons to install or remove correctly. Don't risk your safety or the safety of others by attempting to install or remove it yourself. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- ALWAYS lean forward and maintain three points of contact while climbing the ladder. Example: Two hands, one foot.
- As you approach the top of the ladder, attach the FAS/FBH tether to the tree as soon as possible.
- If the stand is left in the same spot for more than one hunting season examine the straps and replace if necessary. Sunlight and weather can weaken straps over time.

Tower Stand



This is a freestanding stand, featuring either three or four legs, depending on the manufacturer. A ladder is included with this stand to access the top platform, where the seat is attached. The tower stand is best suited for the edge of a field or in open country. It requires a strong, level, firm base and needs to be secured to the ground.

ALWAYS lean forward and maintain three points of contact while climbing the ladder. Example: Two hands, one foot.

Using a Haul Line

Once you are in the stand and have secured your FAS/FBH to the tree, use a haul line to raise your bow, backpack, firearm, or other equipment to the stand. Firearms should be unloaded with the action open and muzzle pointing downward. Prior to descending, lower your equipment on the opposite side of the tree.

If You Fall

If you fall from a treestand and you are properly using a FAS/FBH, remember your 3 R's - Rescue, Relief and Recover.

Optimally, you should hunt with a buddy so they can help you in an emergency situation. If you are hunting alone and need to be rescued, someone will need to know where you are and how to find you. Before you go hunting, you should always let others know your exact hunting location, where your treestand is located, when you plan to return, and who is with you.

You should always carry an emergency signaling device on your person at all times in case of emergency so that you can contact someone to get rescued. Emergency signaling devices can be any of the following:

- Two-Way Radio
- Cell phone
- Personal locator device
- Whistle

If you have to hang suspended from a FAS/FBH for an extended amount of time before help arrives, seek suspension relief immediately by exercising your legs by pushing against the tree or doing any other form of continuous motion. This will help with suspension trauma (blood pooling in the legs).

Failure to recover in a timely manner could result in serious injury or death. If you do not have the ability to recover or escape, hunt from the ground!

Remember! If you fall, don't panic. Stay calm and think out the situation. Remember to practice your 3 R's - Rescue, Relief and Recover.

CHAPTER 10: EQUIPMENT, SURVIVAL & FIRST AID

Hunters don't intentionally head into the woods to get lost. But every year, we hear on the news of a search party of local law enforcement officers and volunteers who have to scour the woods in search of a lost hunter. It's an all-too-common occurrence. And it can be prevented. Hunting is a safe activity, and by following some simple guidelines outlined in this chapter, you can reduce the chance of getting lost in the great outdoors. And if that does happen, the information in this chapter might also save your life.

When a person gets lost, a change takes place both mentally and physically. Mentally, the first feeling is panic, then fear. Fear is not a bad thing and can motivate a person. But sometimes the hunter wanders around the woods in circles, getting frustrated at the thought of being in the woods overnight. Physically, the changes that take place include increased heart rate and faster breathing. A hunter can get confused easily. And that's why the best thing to do is to stop, sit down and think about the situation.

When you're lost, what matters is not that you have the latest gadgets and gizmos - the most powerful tool you have is your brain. Having a positive mental attitude will save your life!

Being Prepared

1. Build a Pack

The survival kit is a constant companion of any experienced wilderness traveller and should be carried by hunters. You may wish to add other things to your survival kit, but the following are standard items:

- Waterproof matches are the most important part of your kit.
- A metal, waterproof carrying case.
- A candle or waxed string.
- Snare wire or twine.
- Fishing line and hooks.
- First aid supplies.
- A small mirror.
- High energy, high protein foods.
- A whistle.
- A two-day extra supply of prescription medicine (if required).

2. Make a Plan

Making a plan is simple. Write down the location where you will be hunting, the names of your hunting partners, contact numbers, what route you will be taking, when you leave and when you expect to return. Leave this plan with a family member or friend and keep a copy in your vehicle.

Before walking into the bush, a hunter should note the following:

- the location of the sun
- wind direction
- direction of roads, trails or creeks in the area

These are all factors that will help you prepare for the hunt. This preparation occurs long before the firearms are packed into the hunting vehicle.

3. Be in Good Physical Shape

Physical conditioning is very important. Outdoor experiences can require more physical exertion than a hunter gets in everyday life. Prepare for the hunt long before the season begins. Start by:

- Hiking similar terrains that you will be hunting in.
- Wearing your loaded pack to get used to the weight.
- Wearing clothes and boots similar to what you wear while hunting.

Every hunter should know their physical limits, and respect those limits while out in the field. A hunter with a medical condition such as allergies, asthma, or heart conditions, should be very cautious, always have prescription medication on-hand, and especially inform all other members of the hunting party about their condition.

4. Wear Appropriate Clothing

The clothing you wear when hunting depends on the weather conditions. Be sure to wear something that is suitable for the season in which you're hunting.

Clothing should be planned in layers from the skin out. The first layer should allow moisture to escape from the skin. Polypropylene and capilene are good choices for this first layer, followed by fleece and wool as the outer layers.

Adequate head covering is necessary to keep body heat from escaping.

Your hands need protection not only from the cold, but also from briars, rocks and rope burn.

Socks should be selected with care and should be layered. The best system is to wear polypropylene against the skin and wool outer socks. Keep your feet dry!

Foot protection is extremely important for both warmth and comfort. You must be able to walk comfortably for long distances without getting blisters, tripping or getting your feet wet.

IMPORTANT! Wool is the best for all-around warmth. Wool, even when wet, retains its insulation properties. Don't wear cotton! Cotton absorbs water quickly and dries slowly, giving it poor insulation properties.

Extractive Survival

Sometimes hunters get lost despite their most careful precautions. But if they are adequately prepared, the misadventure will not last very long.

The first action the hunter must take is to stop and sit down.

The word **STOP** is an acronym used in survival. It means:

S - Stop and sit down. Keep a positive mental attitude.

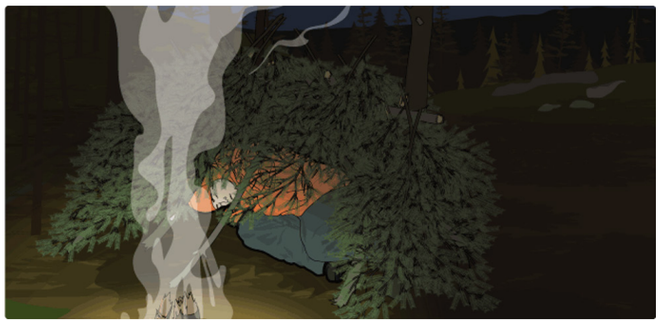
T - Think about your surroundings. Could you find your way out, or are you going to spend the night?

O - Observe what is around you. Can you hear cars? Can you hear farm animals or farm machinery? Can you see radio towers or old logging roads? Can you smell smoke from a wood stove? Use your senses to find out where you are.

P - Plan what you do. The time of day and the weather will influence how the plan will be set in motion and what you will do first.

The Big Three of Survival

For hunters who get lost in the woods, the big three of survival are shelter, fire and signal. Water and food are important, but not as important as these top three needs. Let's review each right now.



Shelter

This will protect a hunter from the elements. Natural shelters can be rock overhangs or thick evergreen trees (e.g., cedar, pine, spruce or hemlock). Specifically, blowdowns can make for very convenient natural shelters - just be sure not to disturb any of the branches that support the fallen tree.

A man-made shelter can be as simple as a garbage bag, poncho or space blanket, or more elaborate, such as a debris hut or a lean-to.

Depending on the shelter you build, make sure it is clearly marked with hunter orange or a colour not normally found in the woods. To mark a shelter you can use orange flagging tape, a hunter orange vest or some article of clothing that is brightly coloured. Rescuers will see the colour and check out the site.

Fire

In a survival situation, fire is your friend. You can use it to boil and purify water, to keep warm and calm, or to signal. To build a warming fire, collect some tinder, small wood and larger pieces of dry wood. Once you think you have collected enough wood, go back and collect some more.

Place the tinder and small wood in a small pile and surround it with larger pieces in the shape of a teepee. Clear a three-foot-wide area around your fire for safety. Carry waterproof matches, a lighter, or a magnesium fire starter in your pack to always have a way of starting a fire. For signaling with fire, add green plant material to your flame - this will produce a lot of smoke.

Signal

All rescuers are trained to recognize that a distress call can be any series of three signals: three blasts of a plastic whistle, flashes with a reflective device (e.g., mirror or old CD), flashes from a flashlight,

rocks hit together three times, or fires arranged in a circle, triangle or a line. A rescuer who hears or sees these signs will head to that location. When signalling, it is important to stay where you are. As rescuers get closer, they will respond with two blasts from a whistle or other signalling device. The sound of a whistle will carry farther than the sound of your voice.

Other Survival Needs

Water

If you are lost and in a survival situation, you need to find water within two to three days. But take note that most water today carries the risk of some type of contamination, either from rain or runoff from livestock or crop fields. That is why it's important to ensure the water you drink is purified first. Two major risks are the giardia and cryptosporidium parasites - ingesting either of these can make you very sick.

Water purification tablets are available, but some people are sensitive to the chemicals.

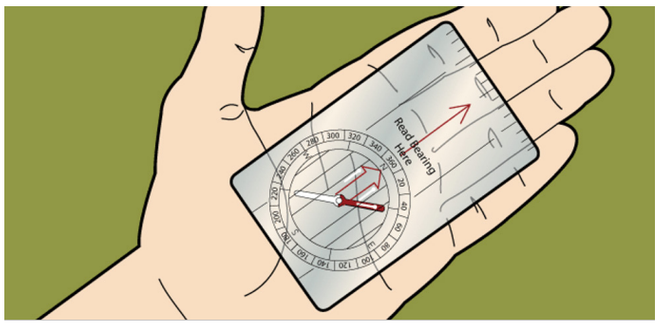
Small portable water purifiers work well and can be carried in a pack. This technology has become so advanced that the portable water purifier will remove 99.9% of waterborne contaminants.

Humans require a minimum of 8 to 16 cups of water per day to survive. Boiling water is the safest method of purifying water. Bring the water to a rolling boil, let it cool before you drink it, and then start boiling some more.

Food

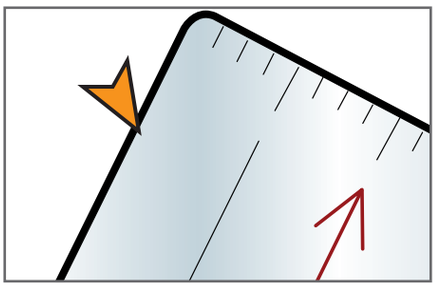
Most individuals can go without food for two to three weeks. Packing some high-energy power bars or trail mix in your pack for emergency situations is a good idea. If you have harvested game, start a fire. You will eat well! But it is not a good idea to eat vegetation from the woods unless you can identify the plants as being safe for human consumption.

Orienteering: Using a Compass



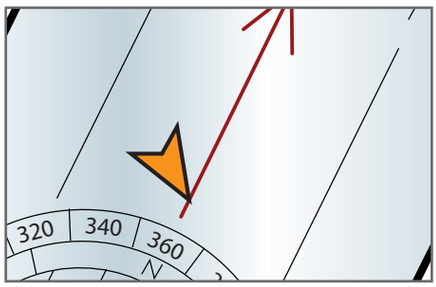
With today's navigation technology such as handheld compasses and global positioning systems (GPS) getting lost is much harder than it used to be, but it still does happen. Don't wait until you're lost to use your compass or GPS. Before you head out for a hunt, take a bearing of where you plan to hunt, to help find your way back if necessary. If you are not familiar with a compass, we have provided an easy and simple explanation of the parts and how to use it. Let's look at the parts of this kind of compass:

Baseplate



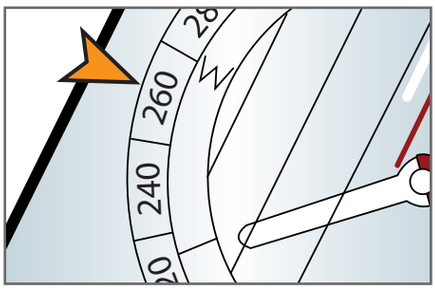
It is clear and has a ruler for measuring on one side.

Index Line



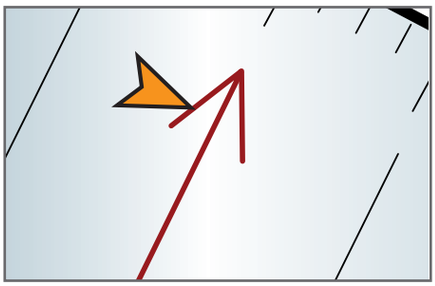
A mark on the compass base for accurate reading of the bearing or direction to an object.

Compass Housing or Bezel



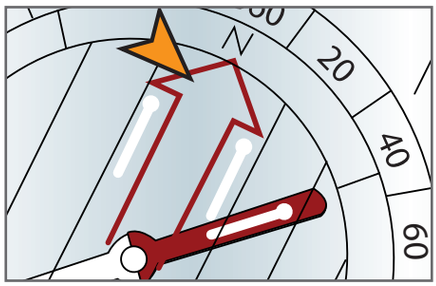
The bezel can be rotated and features degree markings on it from 0 through 360 degrees. The degree markers are usually in two-degree increments.

Direction-of-Travel



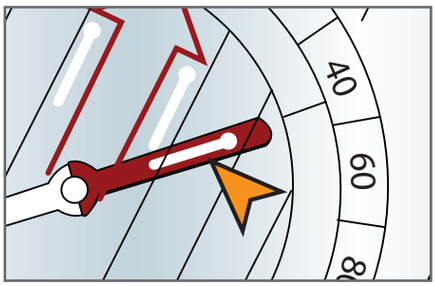
An arrow that is used to point in the direction of your travel

Orienting Arrow



Used in conjunction with a viewed object or topographical map to determine bearing to an object or place.

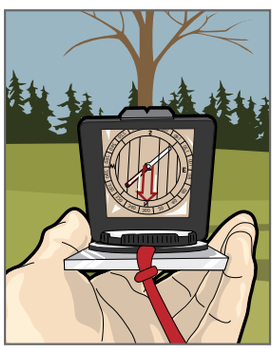
Magnetic North Needle



The needle pivots in a 360-degree circle and points to magnetic north. It is usually coloured red, to indicate the north end of the needle, and white to indicate the south end of the needle.

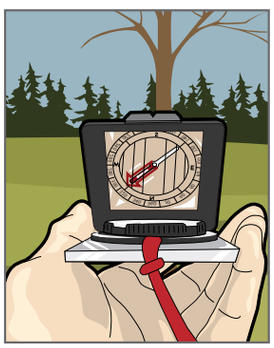
Calculating a Bearing to an Object

Step 1



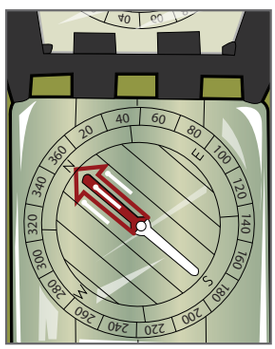
Point to the object you want to travel to. In this example, the tree is the object you are traveling to. Notice that the magnetic north arrow and the orienting arrow are not lined up.

Step 2



While looking at the object in the mirror, turn the bezel until the orienting arrow and the magnetic north needle are lined up and are on top of each other.

Step 3



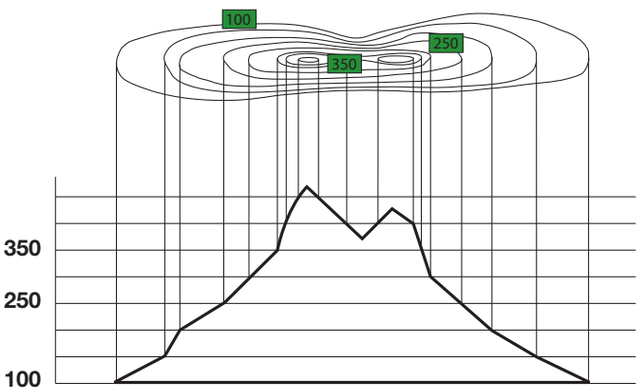
Read the bearing to the object at the index line of the compass. The bearing to the object is 46 degrees. You can now walk to the tree on a bearing of 46 degrees.

Topographic Maps

Topographic maps give a bird's-eye view of the land. They show the following:

- A graphic representation of the Earth's surface.
- Land as seen from above.
- Detailed information concerning water, vegetation and man-made features of an area.
- Contour lines.

Contour Lines



Contour lines give a hunter important information about ground elevation, including how steep the ground is. You read this information in order to travel safely when hunting in the woods. A contour line is a continuous line of the same elevation (or height) around the edge of a feature. For example, contour lines close together signify a steep slope. Contour lines farther apart, signify a gently rising slope.

Basic First Aid

The majority of hunters will, at one time or another, get scratched or cut from briars or fences, and may nick themselves while using a knife. Most of the time, these injuries are not life threatening and can be treated at the camp or in the field. For minor cuts and abrasions, a good first aid kit is an essential part of a hunter's equipment. A cell phone - when there is a good signal - is great for calling medical help if needed. These are the items that should be in a first aid kit:

- Two pairs of latex gloves (or other sterile gloves if you are allergic to latex).
- Sterile dressings to stop bleeding.
- Cleansing agent or soap and antibiotic towelettes to disinfect.
- Antibiotic ointment to prevent infection.
- Adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes.
- An elastic bandage.
- Tweezers and a needle.
- Aspirin and non-aspirin pain relievers.
- Prescription medications you take every day (check expiration dates on medications).
- Eye-wash solution to flush the eyes or as a general decontaminant.
- First Aid handbook or guide.

Treating Minor Cuts and Abrasions

Follow these three steps when treating minor cuts and abrasions:

1. Clean wound with soap and water.
2. Apply antibacterial ointment.
3. Apply a sterile dressing.

Safety First! If a cut or wound continues to bleed, use a pressure point and transport the person to a hospital or call for medical help.

Medical Emergencies in the Field

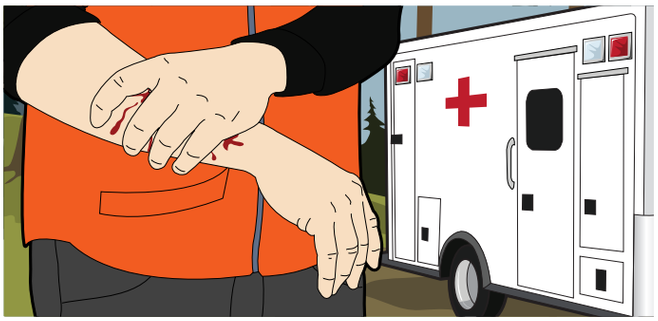
Hunters should know how to deal with the following medical emergencies should they occur while in the field.

Shock

Shock is a state of profound depression of the vital functions of the body. It can be caused by any serious injury. A person experiencing shock will be pale and have cool, clammy skin. Their pulse will be weak and rapid, and they may exhibit confused behavior, anxiety or excitedness. You can do any or all of the following to help the person in a state of shock, but most of all, seek medical help as quickly as possible.

- Check for all injuries and conditions.
- Have the person lie down.
- Maintain their body temperature.
- Elevate their feet.
- Seek medical help.

Bleeding Wounds



Apply direct pressure to a wound to stop it from bleeding. Place a sterile dressing over the cut and press on the dressing with the palm of your hand. If the wound continues to bleed, keep putting direct pressure on it. Elevating the location of the wound can also help stop the bleeding.

Fractures & Joint Injuries

Bone fractures or joint injuries can be identified by swelling, discoloration, possible deformity in the area of the injury, and pain when the affected area is moved. If you suspect a broken bone, immobilize the limb as much as possible with a splint or other device that will help limit movement. In the case of a sprain, apply an elastic bandage and cold compress to the area. In either case, avoid putting direct pressure on the affected area, and seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Heart Attack

Heart attacks in the field can occur as a result of physical exertion or stress. If you have a diagnosed heart condition, you should have prescription medication on-hand, and inform all members of your hunting party of your condition before heading out into the field. There are many symptoms that indicate the onset of a heart attack. The more obvious symptoms are chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness or fainting, and shooting pains extending into the shoulders, neck or arms. If you suspect a heart attack, take immediate action - call for emergency medical assistance as soon as possible. If such services are not available in your area, have someone transport the person to the nearest medical facility.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion occurs when the body is unable to cool itself off. An individual who is experiencing heat exhaustion will exhibit an increased body temperature, faintness, rapid heartbeat; an ashen or grayish appearance; cold, clammy skin and nausea. You can do any or all of the following to help the person experiencing heat exhaustion, but most of all, seek medical help as quickly as possible.

- Move the person to a shady or air-conditioned location.
- Have the person lie down and elevate their feet slightly.
- Loosen or remove their clothing.
- Use a fan to help cool the person down.
- Seek medical help.

Stings and Insect Bites

If you are allergic to certain insect bites or stings, be sure to bring along whatever medicine you require. Talk to your doctor about allergic reactions that you have experienced. Your doctor can prescribe medicine to help you with the discomfort. For common stings and bites, relieve the discomfort by applying something cool, such as a wrapped cold pack, to affected area. This will also help reduce inflammation. Cold packs should be wrapped in a towel and placed directly on the affected area.

In the case of more severe stings and bites, it is also beneficial to keep an extractor kit handy to help you deal with the injury. The kit will contain an extractor pump to remove poisons or stingers, as well as other materials to help relieve discomfort. For effectiveness, the extractor kit must be used relatively quickly. Follow the directions indicated on the kit. If you are not feeling well after an insect sting or bite, call for medical help as soon as possible.

Eye Injuries

If someone has a wound close to their eye, you should treat it as any other cut or abrasion, however take care that the eye does not come into contact with sanitizing lotion or antibacterial ointment, since these may cause further irritation. If there is a foreign object in a person's eye, have them blink a few times to try and remove the object, flush out the eye with clean water, and seek medical attention if the object is not removed. In the case of an impaling eye injury, do not remove the object yourself. Instead, contact emergency medical services as soon as possible.

Frostbite

Frostbite occurs in extreme cold when your body tissue freezes, and blood can no longer reach the tissue. This occurs most commonly on extremities - fingers and toes - as well as the nose and ears. You can help prevent frostbite by wearing warm and layered clothing, including a face mask when riding in cold conditions.

Initial symptoms include off-white coloured skin, tingling in the affected area, sudden sharp pain in the affected area, and then numbness in the affected area. If these occur, take the following steps:

- Never rub the affected area. Instead, apply direct body heat to the area.
- Cover the area with clothing or blankets that are warm and dry. Do not use hot water or other substances that can burn the affected tissue.
- Drink hot liquids, but avoid alcoholic beverages.
- Seek medical help as soon as possible.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a condition where the body loses heat faster than it creates it. During hunting, it occurs when a hunter is not dressed properly or does not dry off quickly after getting wet. The symptoms of hypothermia are uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, slow rate of breathing, loss of coordination, and skin that is cold and pale. When this happens, immediate action must be taken. You can do any or all of the following to help the person get warm, but most of all, seek medical help as quickly as possible.

- Keep the person warm with a blanket or coat.
- Build a fire to keep the person warm.
- Give them warm liquids to drink.
- Remove their wet clothing.
- Seek medical help.

CHAPTER 11: HUNTING TECHNIQUES

Not every hunting technique will be effective in all situations. You will need to adapt to your surroundings and the particular game that you are hunting. Some techniques are more suited for hunting alone, while some are used when hunting with a group.

Still Hunting

This is a technique in which a hunter moves slowly through a hunting area looking for game animals. By moving slowly and stopping frequently to look and listen, there's a greater chance of spotting game. It works very well on windy or rainy days. A hunter must take great care with every step. Game animals are alerted quickly by unfamiliar sounds and could run away if they sense danger.

Hunters take advantage of all trees, blow downs, thickets and undergrowth to hide movement and to break up their outline in the woods. They are also mindful of wind direction. Remember the old saying about keeping the wind on your face. It's true. Because if the wind is blowing against you, your scent will be behind you rather than in the path of the game you wish to spot and harvest.

Stalking

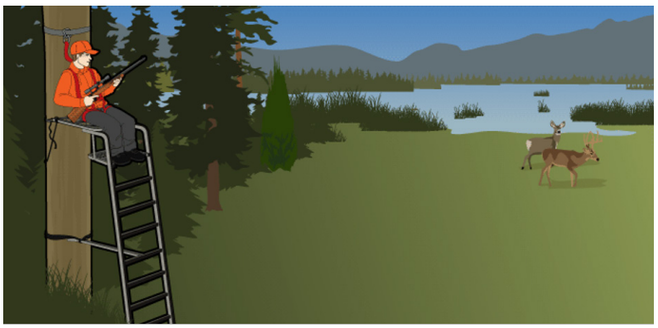
Unlike still hunting, stalking is used when a hunter is following signs such as fresh tracks in the dirt, or has seen game in the distance. If a hunter spots game animals in the distance, the stalking technique helps them to move closer and set up for a safe shot. Stalking requires the same approach used by still hunting. A hunter moves very slowly, facing the wind and being mindful of footing to avoid breaking twigs or slipping.

Some waterfowl hunters use a version of stalking by quietly drifting, paddling or wading along marsh edges and creeks hoping to get close enough to ducks so they flush within range for a shot. This is called "jump shooting."

Hunting from a Ground Blind

These are temporary structures that a hunter sets up before hunting season begins. Ranging in size from a single-person blind to a miniature shed-like structure for multiple hunters. The advantage of a ground blind is that a hunter can sit inside it and be hidden from the sight of game animals. They are very effective when set up in areas of known game travel lanes and on the edges of crop fields and overgrown areas. Pop-up or manufactured ground blinds that are enclosed with a roof are good anytime. If it rains or is windy, a hunter is protected from the elements. The disadvantage of a ground blind is if the game animals cannot see the hunter, neither can other hunters. For your safety, it is important that any ground blind be clearly marked with hunter orange to let others know that someone is inside or around the ground blind.

Hunting from a Tree Stand



Hunting from tree stands is a popular hunting technique. Tree stands offer the best concealment of motion because the hunter is above the normal line of sight of a big game animal. They also offer the added advantage of keeping the hunter's scent off the ground, making it more difficult for an animal to detect.

Drives

A drive involves pushing an animal towards another hunter. In this technique, a party of hunters generally split into two groups. One group lines up along the edge or opening of the field or woods - they're called the watchers, and they don't move from their assigned positions. The other group are the drivers. They position themselves on the opposite side of the area being pushed and walk toward the watchers. While walking through the cover, the drivers flush out game animals to the watchers. If the drivers move slowly, the animals will also move slowly out of the cover.

The drive is effective but can also be dangerous as the drivers are moving ever closer to the watchers who are expecting to see game. Each of the watchers must clearly identify their target, and the area behind any game at which they might shoot before shouldering their firearm. A driver could be close behind and in the line of fire. The watchers have to be careful and know their zone of fire and the drivers also need to be aware of their surroundings and where the watchers are.

It's important to wear visible hunter orange when participating in a drive.

CHAPTER 12: SHOT PLACEMENT AND GAME CARE

Knowing When to Shoot

You've been in your tree stand all day and haven't seen a single bear come by. It's getting late, you're thinking about calling it a day when you suddenly see a black bear in the distance. It's a little far away but you think you might be able to get a clear shot. Should you shoot?

All hunters must ask themselves that question every time they are about to take a shot - "Should I shoot?" This split-second decision is the mark of a responsible and safe hunter. When asking yourself that question, you need to consider many factors.

- Do you have the appropriate licence or tag?
- Is the animal within range?
- Is the animal within your safe zone of fire?
- Are you sure there is nothing and no one in front of and beyond the target?
- Do you have a clear, unobstructed view of the target area?
- Is this an ethical shot?
- Is the animal aware of your presence? If so, does it look like it is about to run?

Also consider the weather and time of day. If it looks like bad weather, you might have a hard time finding the downed animal if it starts to rain. Also, it can get dark very quickly in the bush, making it difficult to locate a downed animal. If you hesitate on these points, it is best to refrain from taking the shot.

Shot Placement

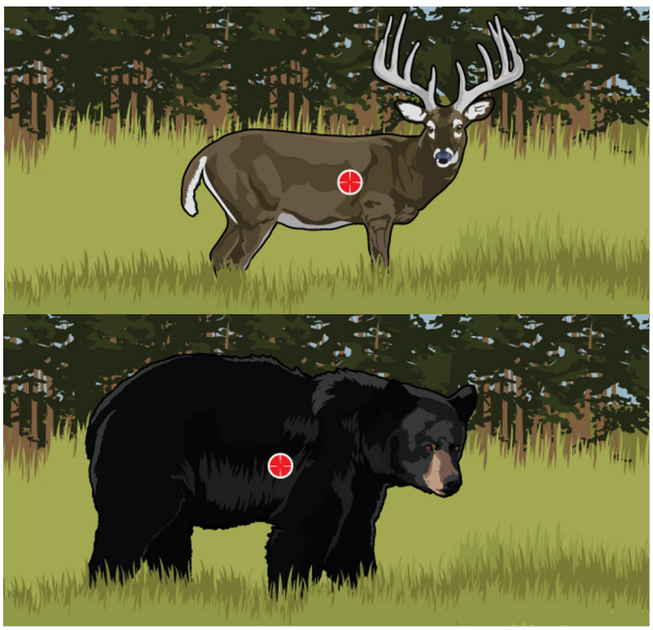
Shot placement is important to achieving a quick, clean harvest of game animals. Since hunters do not want to wound a game animal and have it run away and not be found, it is every hunter's responsibility to first practice at a shooting range to ensure they can place a shot successfully. Consistency is key. Do not take a shot unless you are certain you can hit the vital area to achieve a quick and clean harvest. If you are unsure, don't take the shot.

A responsible hunter must know when it is appropriate to take a shot, to hit the vital areas for a quick, clean harvest. When shooting at a game animal, the hunter should always aim for the area just behind the front shoulder. This area contains the heart and lungs. The amount of area on the animal that exposes the heart-lungs area changes depending on the position of the animal relative to the hunter. In some positions, none of the target area is visible and the hunter must wait until the animal moves to expose it.

Here are some different positions and shots a hunter might encounter while hunting big game.

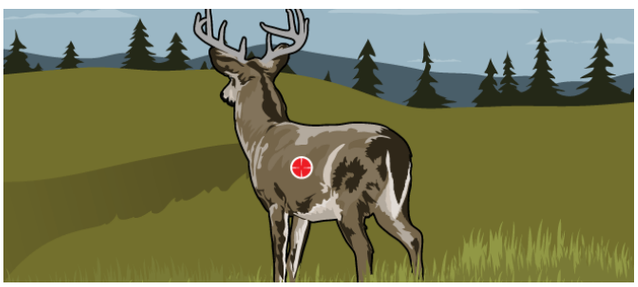
Broadside

In the broadside shot, the bullet or arrow can easily pass through the rib cage to hit the heart and lung area, and the hunter has a wider target at which to aim. A properly placed shot will lead to a quick and clean harvest, without wasting much meat. This is often considered the best shot for gun and archery hunters alike.



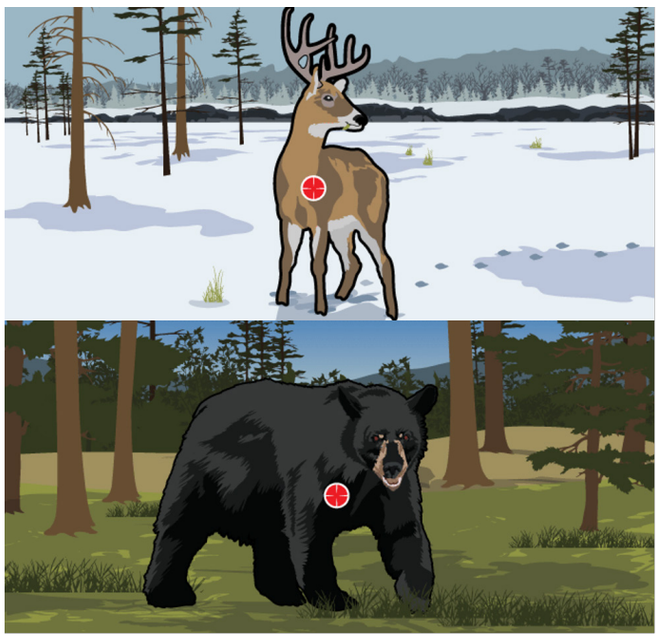
Quartering-Away

The quartering-away shot offers a clear path to the heart and lungs; and if it is on the right side, will travel through the liver as well. This will result in a very quick harvest of the animal. Though the aiming point at this angle is less than a broadside shot, this is still a good shot for a firearm or bow hunter.



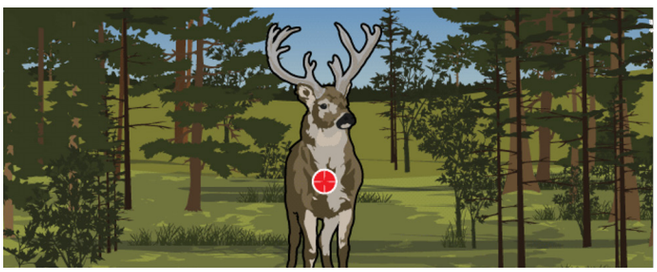
Quartering-Toward

The quartering-toward shot offers an ethical dilemma. The vital organs are vulnerable at this angle and if the hunter gets off a good shot the animal will expire quickly, however this shot can ruin the front quarter of the animal and a good amount of meat. ***Gun hunters should wait for a better shot. Bowhunters should not attempt this shot.***



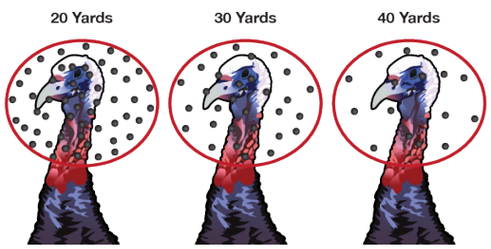
Front Shot

It is very difficult to hit the animal's vital area in an up-front shot, since the hunter has a very small area at which to aim, and the bullet has to travel through bones to reach the vital organs. Missing the aiming point even slightly once again means ruining a good amount of meat in a front quarter. ***Gun hunters should wait for a better shot. Bow hunters should always pass on this shot.***

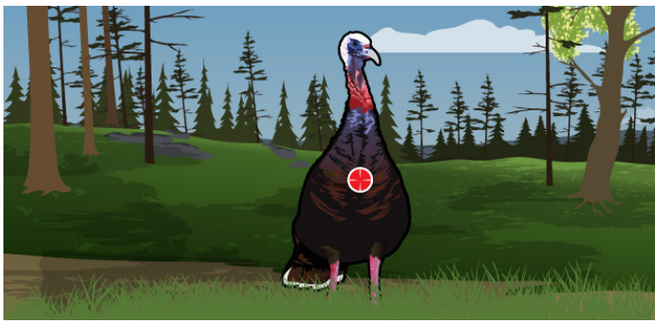


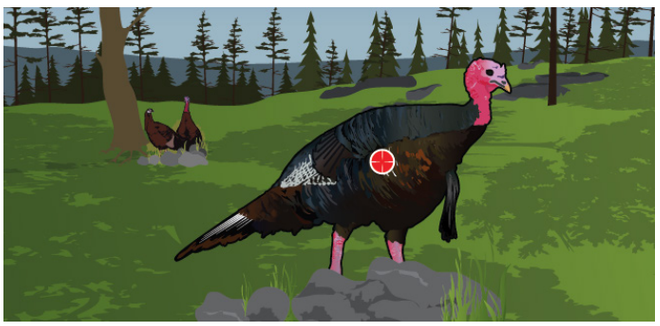
Shot Placement - Wild Turkey

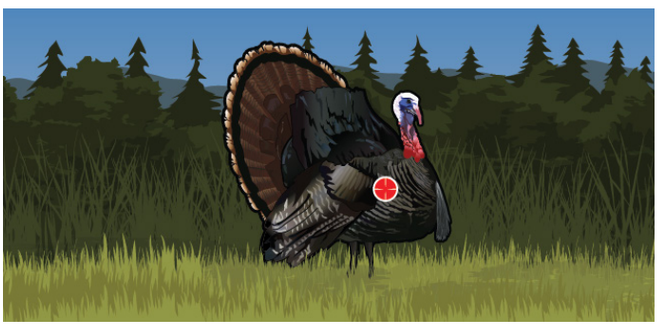
The location to aim for on a wild turkey is different than that of big game. It is also different depending on if you are using a shotgun or a bow. Shotgun hunters should aim for the mid-point between where the neck meets the body, and the head. Use a target that shows a turkey's head and take shots at different distances. You should be getting a minimum of 5 to 7 pellets in the vital area to have an effective pattern.



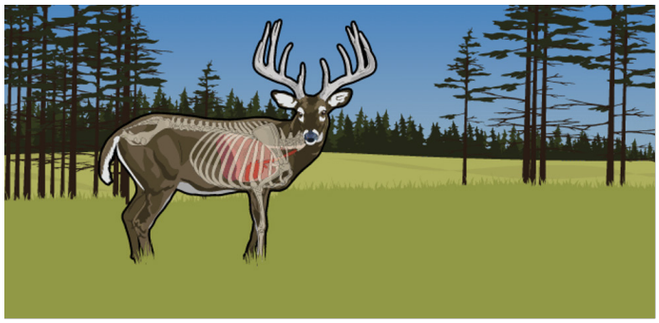
The heart and lungs are considered the vitals for bow hunters. It is important to practice with your bow to ensure you reach a level of competency to consistently hit the vital area.







After the Shot



After taking a shot, watch for the reaction of the animal. It is always a good strategy to wait before looking for the game animal. The amount of time you wait depends upon many factors including the type of game, the method of hunting (gun or bow), the time of day, and weather conditions. For example, if it is raining and a blood trail may be washed away, or if it is getting dark you may want to look for the downed animal sooner. Remember that if the game animal does not drop immediately after the shot, it may run a short distance and try to hide. It is every hunter's responsibility to find any game they shot. This can sometimes take hours if it was a poorly placed shot, but it is your duty not to give up. If the animal runs onto private property, contact the landowner and get permission to go find the animal.

After waiting, the hunter can start to track and find the game animal. When tracking the game animal, look for signs that it was shot - drops of blood on the ground or on plants are good signs. Take time to observe everything in the immediate area. You might find some hair or feathers on the ground or see a trail in the direction that the game animal ran. It is a good idea to carry some flagging tape with you to mark the blood trail. This will show the general direction in which the animal ran. Be sure to remove any flagging tape when you are finished your hunt. If the blood trail runs out, return to the last clear indication of blood, and try again, moving in increasing circles.

Tracking and Blood Trailing

After taking a shot, it is important to be patient, and if possible wait at least 30 minutes before starting to look for the animal. If the animal does not die immediately and you start to track it, it will try to flee and will be much more difficult to find.

This is the time to start blood trailing and looking for signs that indicate where the animal went after it was shot. Look for blood, bone fragments, hair and fluids on the ground or on leaves to get an idea of the direction the animal went. Most animals that do not die right away will try to make their way toward a water source.

Take your time and be patient - not all trails will be straight or obvious. Depending on where the animal was shot, the trail might be difficult to follow. If the animal was shot in the heart or liver, you will see large pools of blood. If it was shot in the lungs, there will likely be bright red, frothy blood. In either case, the animal will die very quickly and should not be too far away.

If the animal was shot in the gut, however, blood drops will be farther apart, and will likely be mixed with clear or yellowish fluid. In this case, the animal will take longer to die - it is therefore a good idea to wait longer before you start to follow the blood trail.

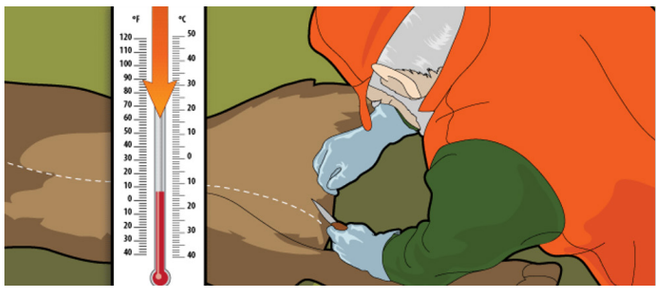
Flag your blood trail with orange surveyor's/flagging tape. If you lose the trail, go back to the last clear indication, and search in increasing circles until you find the next blood drop. It is your responsibility as an ethical hunter to make every effort possible in order to recover the animal.

Tracking can be effective when done in teams of two or three hunters. This can also be a dangerous activity as there is much anticipation by the trackers that the next thing they see moving will be the wounded animal. Trackers should remain calm and careful to avoid making poor judgements, always being sure of their target and beyond before taking a shot.

Approaching a Downed Animal

Once you find the game animal, be sure the animal is dead before getting too close to it. Avoid approaching from the head or legs side of the animal, or you could be kicked or trampled if it moves. If the downed game animal is still alive when you find it, dispatch it quickly with a carefully placed shot. Most game animals will have their eyes open when they are dead. If a tag is required for the animal you are hunting, you must invalidate your tag by notching the day, month and time immediately after the kill, at the site of the kill and before moving the animal.

Field Dressing



Field dressing, or gutting, is the process of removing the entrails (internal organs) from the animal to promote cooling which will prevent the meat from spoiling. When field dressing any animal, take great care not to cut through the intestines, bladder or stomach area, as urine and other sources of bacteria can cause meat contamination. Be careful with knives - a good field-dressing knife is very sharp.

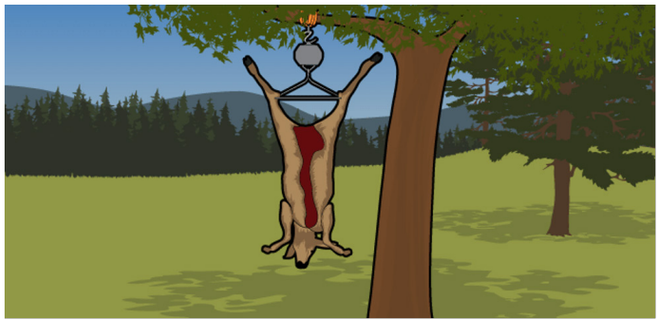
Factors that Spoil Meat

- **Heat** - Bacteria may start to grow if the meat is not cooled. Start the cooling process by field dressing the game animal as quickly as possible. The warmer the weather, the sooner this has to be done.
- **Dirt** - When dragging or moving the game animal to a pickup point or a vehicle, keep it as clean as possible. If you are hunting in an area that has livestock, ensure the game animal is not dragged over manure in the field. Avoid getting dirt or vegetation inside the cleaned-out body cavity.
- **Water** - Water on exposed meat breeds bacteria. Carry the game animal over small streams or creeks. Use paper towels or a clean rag to dry the body cavity if it gets wet. Protect your harvested game from rain, snow and ice when transporting it.

Field Dressing Big Game

To field dress big game, such as deer, you will need to make a cut in the skin starting just above the anus and going right up to the breast bone or the base of the animal's jaw so the internal organs can be removed from the body cavity. Once the initial cut is made, take your time cutting the entrails from the backbone. When done properly, the entrails should come out as one large mass.

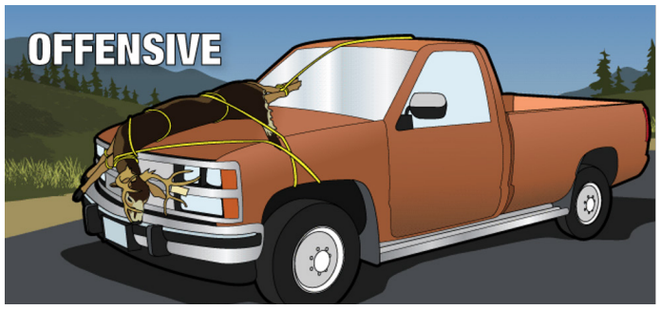
Most big game animals have scent glands on their hind legs. The glands excrete a penetrating odor or musk. Avoid touching exposed meat if you touch these areas. Leave the glands on, they can be removed when the hide is skinned off the animal later on.



Prop the body cavity open and hang the game animal from a tree or a specially designed rack as soon as possible. This allows the air to circulate, cooling the meat quicker. It also helps you to skin the animal. The best place to hang the game animal is a shed or refrigerator box that is kept at an optimum temperature. If the game animal is to be hung outside, it can be wrapped in a game bag or cheese cloth to keep insects from landing on the meat.

Dispose of the entrails in a way that will not offend others. Place them in a shallow depression and cover with leaves, or in a trash bag for later disposal. Once the animal is skinned, wash any dirt or blood from the meat. Next, dry the meat with paper towels or clean, dry rags. Let it air dry thoroughly. If a game animal is quartered, the meat can be placed in waterproof bags and placed in ice coolers. During hunting seasons, there are some butchers that will skin and process game animals for you - all you need to do is field dress and transport it to their shop. This option reduces the chance of dirt getting into the meat prior to arriving at the butcher.

Make sure you wear some type of latex or rubber gloves when handling a downed game animal. This not only keeps your hands cleaner, but also protects you from getting scratched and helps reduce the risk of contracting infections. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), Lyme disease, and Rabies are three examples of infections that can potentially be transmitted to humans. Avoid harvesting an animal that appears sick. When field dressing, skinning or quartering the animal, do not cut through bones, brain tissue or the spinal cord. Always wash your hands, and any instrument used for field dressing.



When transporting a game animal, place it in the back of a truck or on a vehicle rack with a cover over it to protect it from dirt and debris. Do not strap the game animal to the hood of a vehicle. Not only is it offensive to others and disrespectful to the game animal, the heat from the vehicle's engine will spoil the meat.

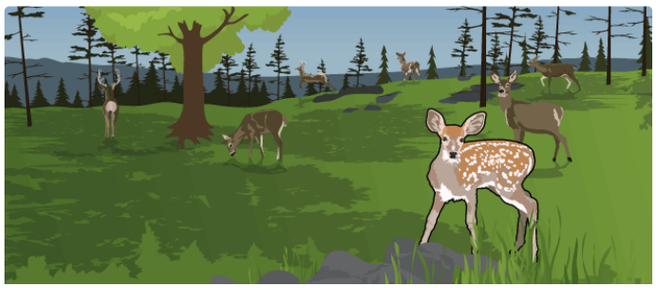
Field Dressing Small Game

Field dressing of small game is a similar process. The initial cut is made from above the anus right to the breastbone. With one hand holding the animal, use your free hand to take out the internal organs from the body cavity. Once the animal is field dressed, allow the meat to cool in a well-ventilated area.

Field dressing a game bird takes a different first step. Before making the initial cut, you will need to pluck the feathers from the bird's belly to expose the skin. The cut is made below the breastbone - you may then pull out the internal organs with your hands. Once the bird is field dressed, allow the meat to cool in a well-ventilated area.

Important! Always consult the Hunting Regulations Summary on requirements for tagging, field dressing and transporting game animals.

CHAPTER 13: WILDLIFE IDENTIFICATION



Hunters must be able to accurately identify wildlife species. Some species are protected and cannot be hunted. Others are classified as game animals or game birds and can be hunted in areas that have legal seasons. The annual Ontario Hunting Regulations Summary lists open seasons and bag limits for each game species within various Wildlife Management Units (WMU).

Some of the larger species, such as white-tailed deer and moose are relatively easy to identify. However, hunters also need to be able to identify the different sexes and, for moose, be able to distinguish calves from adult animals.

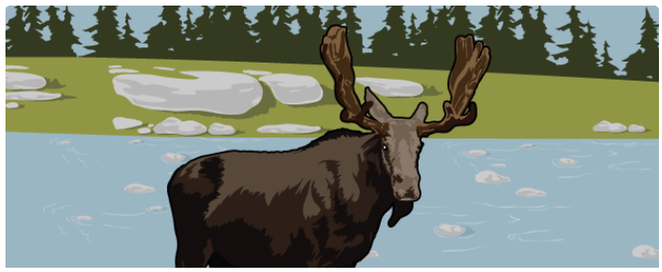
Hunting wild turkeys requires you to be able to tell a non-bearded bird, usually a hen or female bird, from a tom or jake (male bird). Waterfowl can be a challenge because they are often flying. You need to be able to identify species “on the wing” because different species have different bag limits.

If a loon or a grebe flies over your decoys, you must be able to distinguish these species from waterfowl that are legal to hunt.

The more you practice, the better you will become. The bonus is that animal and bird identification is interesting and fun. It gives you a great opportunity to visit the woods and marshes year round to practice your skills.

A good set of binoculars is essential for animal and bird identification. It will be used in all types of weather and be carried around in backpacks, canoes and vehicles.

Deer Family



Having antlers or not, as well as their shape can be a key identification feature. Antlers are bone structures that grow up from short stubs on the top of the animal’s skull. During growth, a hairy skin called “velvet” covers the antlers. Antlers grow during the spring and summer and are fully developed by fall. As growth stops, the antlers become hard and bony. By rubbing its antlers against vegetation, the animal is able to remove the dead skin and polish the bony surface.

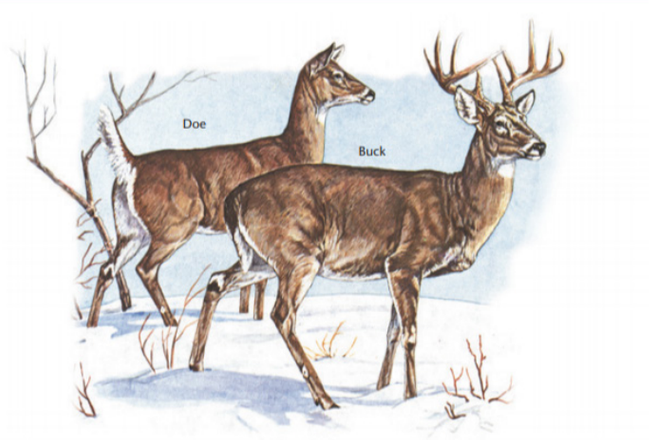
Antlers are used as a warning to other males as bucks compete for females. Sometimes fights occur between males.

Antlers are shed or dropped in late December or early January. Shedding is caused by an internal body change that weakens the base supporting the antlers. Shed antlers can often be found early in the spring if they have not been eaten by mice, squirrels and porcupines.

Many hunters keep the antlers from harvested bucks and bulls. It reminds them of the hunt and honours the animal. Large antlers usually indicate a large, mature and wary animal.

The illustrations accompanying the text show the main identifying features of each animal as they appear in the fall.

White-Tailed Deer



As the name indicates, the main identifying feature of the white-tailed deer is its white tail. The underside of the tail is white and highly visible. The animal raises and flashes its tail when disturbed or running. The body colour changes with the seasons from a grayish brown in winter to a reddish brown in summer.

Antlers normally grow up and forward with spikes, or tines, projecting up from a main beam.

An adult white-tailed buck may weigh from 45 to 136 kg (100 to 300 lb.), while adult does weigh between 39 and 60 kg (85 and 130 lb.).

The diet of a white-tailed deer changes with the seasons. Grasses, wildflowers, herbs and the emerging leaves of many shrubs and trees are consumed during the spring, summer and fall. Buds and twigs of birch, maple, dogwood and aspen are browsed during the winter, as well as white cedar boughs. Acorns and various agricultural crops, including corn, apples and grains are consumed when available.

In Ontario's snowbelt regions, deer congregate in traditional winter "deer yards" that have a preferred mixture of cover and food. Deer prefer areas with sunlight and new growth adjacent to thick cover. They can be found around the edges of fields, marshes and forest openings in early morning or late afternoon. At other times, they prefer the safety of thick cover. Deer mate in the fall. Bucks set up territories marked by scratching up small patches of bare earth and urinating in them. These are called scrapes. Often there is a tree branch hanging over the scrape where the buck rubs a scent gland found on his head. These scrapes are maintained as attractions for does that may be ready to breed, and as a warning to other bucks.

Elk

Elk are generally a brownish yellow colour with a distinctive light, cream-coloured rump patch. The antlers of the bull are large, sweeping back and upward. A mature bull will have five to seven tines, or points, projecting from each main branch. Bulls can weigh up to 450 kg (1000 lb.), while cows are smaller and weigh between 225 to 270 kg (500 and 600 lb.). **Adult elk are more than twice the size of an adult white-tailed deer, but smaller than a moose.**

Elk are primarily grazers but do well on mixed diets, which include browse (shrub and tree buds and twigs). When available, they will graze on plants, grasses and new growth. When ground vegetation is not available during winter, they browse on a wide variety of species, including willow, maple, birch, white cedar, beaked hazel and red maple.

Elk mate in early fall. After shedding their antler velvet, bull elk compete to gather together small herds or harems of adult cow elk. Bulls challenge one another with high-pitched bugling sounds, unique to the species. Cows make a low whistling or mewing sound.

The type of habitat preferred by elk includes open fields, meadows, and forest openings that are adjacent to conifer cover.

Once native to Ontario, elk disappeared in the late 1800s as a result of uncontrolled hunting and the loss of habitat due to human activities. A restoration program was initiated in 1998 when elk from Alberta were released in a variety of suitable sites across central and northern Ontario. Restored elk populations have reached self-sustaining levels in some parts of the province. The first modern-day elk hunt was implemented in Ontario in 2011. There is a limited open season for elk in some wildlife management units in south-central Ontario.

Elk may also be encountered while hunting white-tailed deer and moose in other parts of Ontario, so hunters must be able to distinguish one from the other.

Moose

The moose is the largest member of the deer family. It is dark brown to nearly black in colour. Its large size, humped shoulders and large nose make it easy to identify. Adult bull, or male, moose have large, heavy antlers. The antlers are wide, flat and rise slightly up and backwards. Hanging under the chin of both bulls and cows, or females, is a piece of skin called a bell. Both sexes have small tails, which are difficult to see at a distance.

A mature bull may weigh 454 kg (1000 lb.) or more, and cows can average 363 to 408 kg (800 to 900 lb.). Moose are considerably larger than an elk, and adult moose are often three or more times larger than an adult white-tailed deer.

While moose are primarily browsers, their diet changes with the seasons. In the spring they consume large quantities of aquatic plants, often completely submerging their heads underwater to get at them. As summer progresses, they consume new plants and leaf growth on trees. In the fall and winter, they shift to a diet of buds and woody stems from birch, poplar, maple and various shrubs, such as dogwood, mountain and striped maple. Good moose habitat always includes lots of ponds, lakes, streams and other wetland habitat.

Moose prefer areas where sunlight makes new growth adjacent to cover and water. Forest openings created by wildfire and logging and adjacent to conifer cover are preferred habitat. In the summer months, moose prefer deep, often wet and dark evergreen forests to escape the heat of day.

Cow moose are solitary animals during the spring when calves are being born. Bulls are growing their new antlers and tend to remain alone. As the summer progresses, cows can be seen with their calves, and often yearling animals will travel in groups. As the fall mating season progresses, the bulls and cows start calling and gather in small concentrations of animals. This could include a bull and one or more cows. During the winter months, small groups of bulls and cows, from two to five animals, may be observed feeding and traveling together.

As the breeding season approaches the bulls rub their antlers free of velvet. Normally quiet and solitary, they now become noisy and aggressive. Bulls will create “wallows,” shallow pits rooted up in swampy areas where they will sprawl and urinate. Hunters finding “a wallow,” often by smell, know a bull is in the area. Both bulls and cows call during this period and use short grunts and drawn out moans to actively seek one another. Hunters often imitate these calls to attract moose.

Black Bear

Black bear have black hair with some individuals showing a patch of white on their chest or throat. Occasionally, colour variations of cinnamon or brown are encountered. In Ontario, adult males weigh 114 to 272 kg (250 to 600 lb.) while females weigh 45 to 181 kg (100 to 400 lb.).

Bears accumulate large fat reserves in the fall in preparation for their coming winter hibernation. A bear ready for hibernation may weigh 60 per cent more than it did in the summer, and will have lost most of that weight by the time it comes out of hibernation in the spring.

Black bears are extremely adaptable and are found in most forest regions. A mixed forest with a variety of tree and shrub species of different ages provide the best habitat. Black bears are opportunists and are attracted to any available food source such as berries, insects, dead fish and other animals they can find.

Females give birth to their cubs while in the hibernation den, usually in January. Cubs stay with the mother throughout the following year and will share the den with her the following winter.

Black bears have a high tolerance for human activity and are attracted to any available food source so have established populations adjacent to farms and communities.

Gray (Black) and Fox Squirrels

the squirrels and are found only in southwestern Ontario. They are not present in large numbers. Gray and black coloured squirrels are colour phases of the same species. They are an abundant species and can be found throughout southern and central Ontario. Red squirrels are classified as a furbearer and can only be taken by a licensed trapper. They may not be hunted in Ontario.

Cottontail Rabbit

The cottontail is a small rabbit. The body coat colour is brown or gray with a cottony-white tail.

The cottontail rabbit can be found throughout southern Ontario, and its habitat includes any place with cover to hide and available food. Cottontails can be found in heavy brush, forest openings, swamp and marsh edges, ravines, overgrown fields and rocky foothills.

European Hare (Jackrabbit)

The European hare is an introduced species to Ontario. It is more than twice the size of a cottontail rabbit with long ears, long front feet and a slender body. Its coat is gray-brown with a white belly. It sheds fur twice a year but does not turn white in the winter.

The European hare requires open fields adjacent to brushy hedgerows and fence lines, gullies, ravines and overgrown fields.

Snowshoe Hare

The snowshoe hare, also called the varying hare, has brown fur in the summer and white fur in the winter.

It is larger than the cottontail rabbit but smaller than the European hare.

The snowshoe hare is found in central and northern Ontario. It lives in thick swamps, forests, and thickets. A nocturnal animal, the snowshoe remains quiet during the day, concealed among brush and trees.

Wolf

Ontario is home to two wolf species, the Gray wolf and the Algonquin wolf. Gray wolves have a broad distribution, being found across the boreal and tundra regions of northern Ontario. Their distribution also extends southward, where it overlaps with that of the Algonquin wolf. Most Algonquin wolves in Ontario are found in and around Algonquin Park, but pockets can also be found from Killarney Provincial Park through to the Pembroke area in the east, and as far south as the Kawartha Highlands. There are no breeding populations of either wolf species south of the Canadian Shield in Ontario. Southern Ontario is occupied only by the eastern coyote.

Both wolf species have long dense fur with variable colour, but most often gray or tawny with black frosting from the upper side of the neck and over the back. Gray wolves can also vary from pure black to almost white in the Far North of the province. Colour phases among Algonquin wolves are generally more reddish than in gray wolves, with reddish colouration on the lateral surface of their legs, behind their ears, and on their heads.

Gray wolves are larger than Algonquin wolves and typically have longer legs and larger feet. An average adult male gray wolf weighs about 35 kg (77 lb.) but some may weigh more than 50 kg. (110 lb.), whereas the female gray wolf's weight averages 26 to 32 kg (55 to 70 lb.). Adult male Algonquin wolves weigh an average 27.5 to 30 kg (60 to 66 lb.), with females averaging 22-25 kg (48 to 55 lbs). Algonquin wolves hybridize (breed) with Eastern coyotes so it can be difficult to tell them apart in the field.

Wolves feed primarily on such prey as moose and white-tailed deer. Beaver can also be a common prey of wolves as well as other small mammals and even fruit. The number of wolves in an area typically varies from year to year depending on the abundance of prey.

Coyote

The coyote is a smaller relative of the wolf, with a slender body and a narrow face with pointed ears and a pointed nose. Coyotes weigh about 9 to 16 kg (20 to 35 lb.).

Coyotes are generally a tawny-gray colour with lighter, yellowish legs, paws and muzzle and often reddish-brown ears.

The coyote is found throughout southern and central Ontario, and increasingly in areas of northern Ontario. It is an extremely adaptable animal and is very comfortable living adjacent to humans and human activities.

Coyotes diet consists of mice, groundhogs, birds, frogs, insects, snakes, fish and anything they can scavenge, including road-killed animals. Occasionally, they can prey on deer and on domestic stock like sheep and calves.

Red Fox

The red fox is dog-like in appearance. It has a slim body shape with a narrow face and pointed muzzle. Its coat is red, darkest on the back and blending to a light yellow or white on the belly. The large, bushy tail is red and tipped with white. The legs, feet and ears are black.

A mature red fox weighs 3.5 to 7 kg (10 to 15 lb.).The red fox ranges over most of Ontario. It prefers a mixture of forest, marsh and swamp edges, brushy hedgerows and open fields.

The red fox is most active during the night, early morning and late evening. Its food is made up of prey animals ranging from insects to snowshoe hares. Berries and fruits may also be part of the animal's diet.

Virginia Opossum

Opossums have white fur with black markings, a pointed, fleshy pink snout, and a long hairless tail. They have long, delicate fingers, with opposable thumbs on the hind feet.

The opossum feeds on a variety of vegetation as well as insects, small mammals, birds, eggs and carrion, or dead flesh.

Opossums are marsupials – they rear their young in a body pouch similar to a kangaroo. In Ontario, the opossum's range is determined by the climate. Mild winters allow them to move northward and severe winters reduce their range. They are most common throughout agricultural southern Ontario.

Raccoon

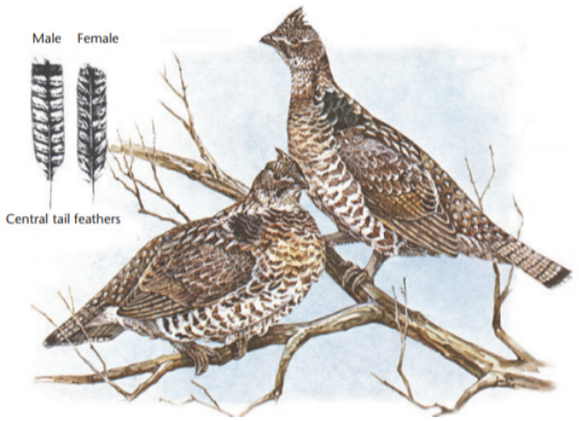
The raccoon is a medium-sized, stocky mammal with a prominent black mask around its eyes. It has a heavily furred, ringed tail about half the length of the head and body. The back of the adults is grizzled brown and black mixed with yellow. The belly is yellow brown.

Raccoons require mixed forests adjacent to stream and lake borders. They are extremely adaptable and in southern Ontario will take up residence in abandoned buildings, ravines, and wooded areas adjacent to food sources such as agricultural crops.

Raccoons are expert climbers and swimmers. Both plant and small animals are eaten depending on what is available.

Upland Game Birds

Ruffed Grouse



The ruffed grouse gets its name from the umbrella-like ruff of dark feathers on each side of its neck.

The ruff is more obvious on the cock, or male, than the hen, or female. The bird's colour varies from gray to reddish brown. Tail feathers range in colour from reddish brown to dark gray with a narrow black bar near the end. The tail is like a fan and, when opened, the black band near the end of the feathers is a good distinguishing feature.

Ruffed grouse are found throughout most of Ontario. They require sunlight and young forest, such as areas of forest opening or field edges, adjacent to coniferous cover and water. Common foods include the buds and small leaves of aspen and birch, most berries and seeds, fruit and a wide variety of insects.

A familiar spring sound in Ontario is the "drumming" of the ruffed grouse. As part of the mating ritual, the cock stands on a "drumming log" and beats his wings, increasing the speed to make a sound like a sputtering lawnmower that can be heard for up to half a mile. Mating occurs in late April to May.

Spruce Grouse

Spruce grouse males have a black breast with white spots on the sides. The hen is a dark, rusty brown. Both sexes have black and white barring on the breast and a tail tipped with pale brown.

Spruce grouse are found throughout most of the black spruce and jack pine forests of northern Ontario. In spring and summer, they feed on the ground and eat insects, leaves and berries. In fall and winter, they feed almost exclusively on conifer needles.

Sharp-Tailed Grouse

Sharp-tailed grouse are a pale-brown colour with a black back. The sides and belly are speckled with black and white. In flight, the short pointed white tail distinguishes this bird from the ruffed grouse.

The cock has a yellow comb over the eyes. Two centre tail feathers extend beyond the rest of the short tail. These tail feathers give the sharp-tailed grouse its name.

The sharp-tail is primarily a bird of the Far North in Ontario, though it is also found in the Sault Ste. Marie and Manitoulin areas. It prefers open areas associated with logging cutovers, open brush flats, muskeg and agricultural fields, grasslands and shrublands.

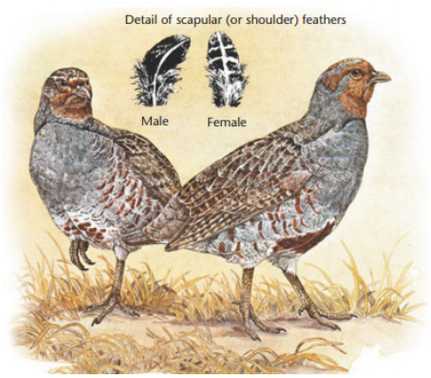
In early fall, the birds are found in small family groups. By late fall, they have merged into large flocks containing as many as 100 birds.

The sharp-tailed grouse may often be seen feeding in grain or stubble fields in early morning. Later in the day, they commonly roost in trees. On cold, frosty mornings, they often sit motionless in tall trees or bushes. When flushed, the birds usually make a “clucking” sound as they fly away.

Courtship and mating is an impressive activity. Traditional “dancing grounds,” or display areas, are used by males to dance and preen for the females.

Sharp-tails eat seeds, berries and leaves of new plants, aspen, pin cherry, birch, dogwood, alder, raspberries and blueberries.

Gray (Hungarian) Partridge



The Hungarian partridge is often called the "hun." The bird is not native to Ontario and was released in many locations in the United States and Ontario during the early 1900s.

It is a brownish-gray colour. Male birds have a solid brown horseshoe marking on their lower breast. Females and juveniles have a similar mark but it is broken and less distinct. The tail consists of short brown tail feathers that are distinctive when viewed in flight.

Hungarian partridge became established in agricultural areas where small grains provided food and where hedgerows, gullies and low brush provide cover. They can be found in areas of southwestern and southeastern Ontario.

They feed on grain, grass seeds, young plants and berries associated with agricultural areas.
Birds are generally in coveys of six to 15 birds.

Willow Ptarmigan

In winter, both male and female ptarmigan are totally white in colour, except for a black tail, beak and eyes. During the summer months, the male has a brown head, neck and breast with a white body, while the female's entire body is a mottled yellowish brown.

Willow ptarmigan are found in the northern parts of Canada and Alaska. In Ontario, they are found in the lowlands of James and Hudson Bay. Birds gather in large flocks in fall and winter. They feed primarily on willow buds, although they will also eat alder, birch buds and twigs, and the seeds, fruits and flowers of many other tundra plants.

Ring-Necked Pheasant

The ring-necked pheasant is not native to Ontario but was introduced in the 1800s, and has thrived in the more southern parts of the province.

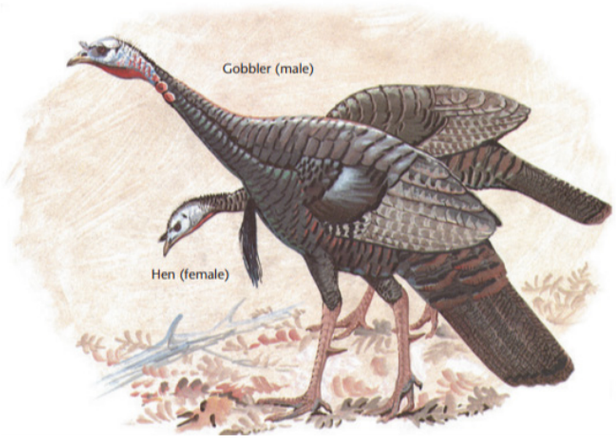
The male ring-necked pheasant, known as a cock, or rooster, has a distinctive red eyepatch on an iridescent purple head and a mahogany, brown body. It has a long, tapered tail. Cocks are also distinguished by the presence of pointed spurs on the back of each leg.

The female, or hen pheasant, is a drab pale brown and gray colour.

Pheasants require open brushy areas, croplands, field and marsh edges. They feed on a wide variety of seeds, buds, berries, young plant leaves and shoots and insects.

In late April and May, male birds start “crowing”– a loud repeated squawk. The crowing establishes the male’s territory and entices hens. Males will mate with numerous hens.

Eastern Wild Turkey



The eastern wild turkey is Ontario’s largest game bird. An adult typically weighs between 4 to 10 kg (10 to 22 lbs.). Adult males, or toms, are roughly twice as big as an adult female, or hen. Young males, called jakes, are normally 5 to 8 kg (12 to 17 lb.). Jenny is the term used for young females.

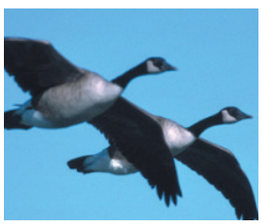
Plumage of the wild turkey differs between the sexes of the bird. Male birds are a mix of dark brown, bronze and black with an often bright red, white and blue head. Male birds have black tipped breast feathers which add to their dark colouring. Hens are normally much lighter in colour than males. Their breast feathers are brown or buff tipped, while a hen’s head is typically blueish gray with purple hues. Male turkey usually have leg spurs. These are small nubs on jakes, while a tom’s may be up to 4 cm (1.5 in.) in length. Most males have a beard, a tuft of hair-like feathers that hang from the centre of the breast. Beards range in length from 7 to 25 cm (3 to 10 in.) and are sometimes longer on older bigger toms. A small percentage of hens also have a beard.

Habitat preferred by wild turkey includes mixed hardwood forests with scattered openings, farm woodlots and wooded stream and river valleys.

The diet of the wild turkey consists mostly of nuts, berries, seeds, tubers and insects.

Males establish their dominance and territories starting in late winter. Gobbling, a loud rattling call, is used by the males to warn off other males and to attract females to them. The gobbling sound is why many hunters refer to the birds as "gobblers."

Migratory Game Birds



Migratory game birds migrate to northern breeding areas in the spring and southern wintering areas in the fall. They include ducks, geese, woodcock and snipe. This section covers the migratory birds most commonly hunted in Ontario. Information on all legal species can be obtained by reviewing the hunting summary obtained when you purchase a Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit.

Migratory birds are a large and important group of game birds, which include the wild ducks and geese that occur in Ontario. When hunting waterfowl, it is essential that hunters be able to accurately identify and recognize each species.

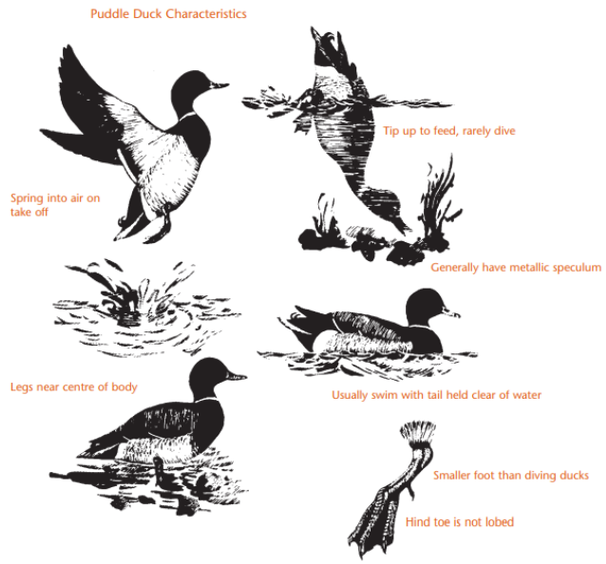
Each species of waterfowl usually has special habitat requirements. Dabbling ducks like mallards prefer shallow marshes and small potholes. Diving ducks, such as the canvasback, prefer larger, deeper bodies of water.

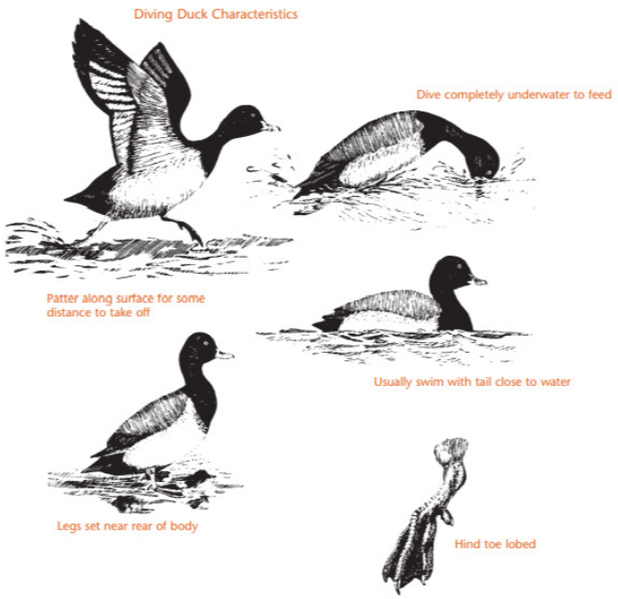
Wing beat and flocking behaviour are useful identification characteristics. Flying mallards and pintails form "V's" or clusters and have a slow wing beat characteristic of pond or dabbling ducks. Canvasbacks fly in shifting, waving lines and have a fast wing beat common to diving ducks. Teal are fast flyers and flash by in small bunches.

Waterfowl profiles and colours vary.

When identifying waterfowl, the sound of their voice and the noise made by their wings can both be used as aids. Goldeneye wings make a whistling noise, while those of most other ducks do not. Not all ducks quack. Many whistle or squeal, and males may make a distinctively different sound than the hen of the same species. Experience can help you to identify waterfowl from their sounds, and audiotapes of bird calls and information available on the internet will also help you learn the different sounds.

Puddle Ducks and Divers





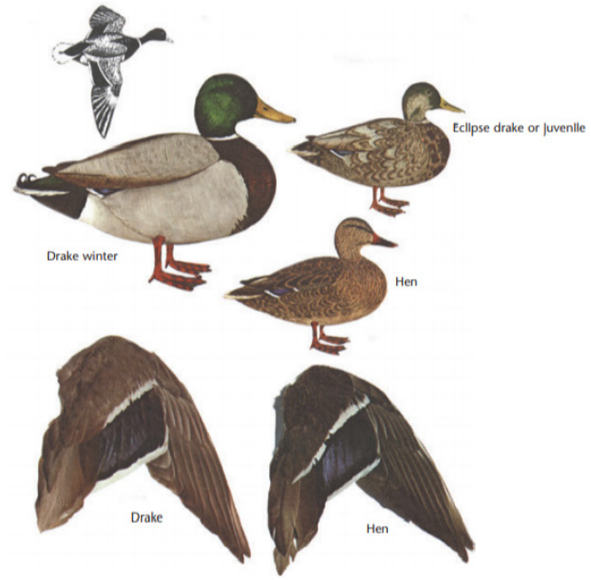
Based on their habitats, ducks are commonly separated into two broad groups: puddle ducks, sometimes referred to as “dabbling ducks,” and diving ducks.

Puddle ducks generally inhabit marshes, cattail swamps, weedy bays on large waterbodies, flooded woodlands and shallow water creeks and rivers. They feed by dabbling or dunking their heads under water to reach submerged vegetation. They ride high on the water and jump directly upward when taking off.

The coloured wing patch, called the speculum or wing bar, is normally iridescent (colours that seem to change when looked at from different angles) and bright. Ducks feeding on croplands are usually puddle ducks because they can walk and run on land. Their diet is primarily aquatic vegetation supplemented by agricultural grains and insects.

Diving ducks generally inhabit large waterbodies with moderately deep water. They dive completely underwater, often to a depth of several metres, in order to feed. Their legs are located far back on the body, which enhances their ability to dive and swim underwater, but makes them awkward on land. On takeoff, they do not leap straight up into the air like puddle ducks but rather run and flap a short distance across the water surface before becoming airborne.

Mallard

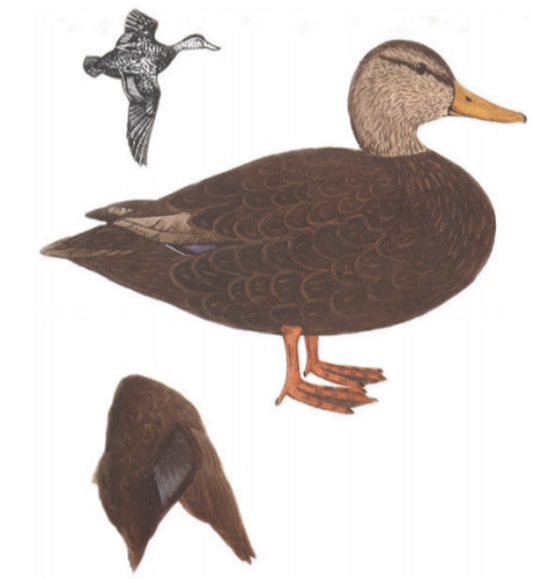


Mallards are among the largest puddle ducks in Ontario. They are also the most numerous. They are often called “greenheads” because of the shiny green head of the mature drake.

A mallard can be identified by the iridescent blue wing speculum bordered by two white horizontal bars.

Mallards are among the last ducks to migrate south in the fall.

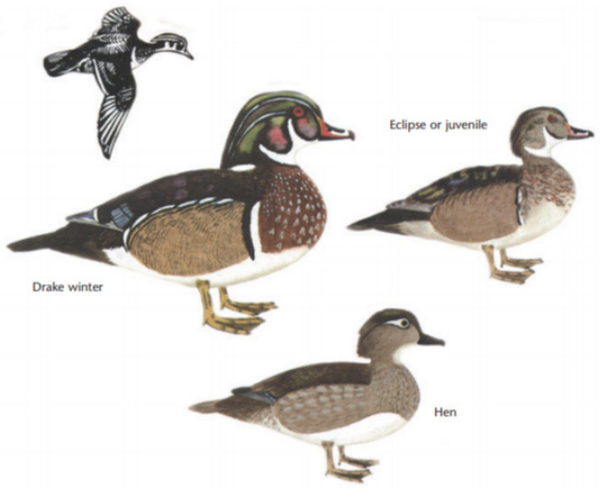
Black Duck



The black duck has a dark, sooty appearance with a lighter head. Its feet are an orange colour. The black duck has a purplish blue speculum. From below, the underside of the wings is white, in contrast to the very dark body plumage. It is a close relative of the mallard and often mates with mallards, producing “hybrids.”

Mallards and black ducks are very similar in size and shape and often occupy the same areas. Black ducks often have different bag limits from mallards, so it is important that hunters are able to distinguish between these two species when they are flying.

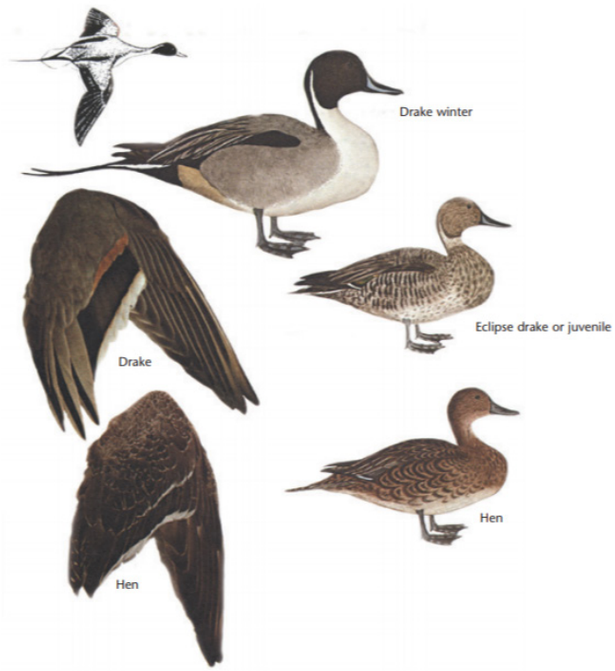
Wood Duck



The male wood duck has dark cinnamon coloured iridescent plumage on the chest, with white flecking. The sides are tan and the belly is white. The male has distinct white stripes on its head crest. The eyes are red, the bill is short and multicoloured, and the feet are a dull gold colour. The female is a drab gray-brown with a white teardrop around the eye. The speculum is blue with a narrow white band on the end of the feathers.

The wood duck frequents wooded streams and ponds, and nests in natural tree cavities. It can fly through thick timber with speed and ease. It feeds on acorns, berries and grapes. In flight, wood ducks make a rustling, swishing sound with their wings. The call is a high-pitched squeal.

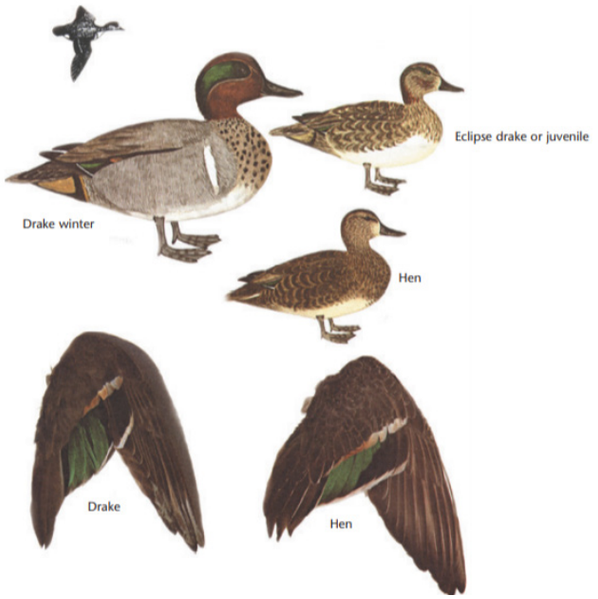
Pintail



The male has a brown back, white belly, distinctive pointed tail and brown head. In breeding plumage, a line of white feathers goes up the neck to the back of the head. Females are a drab gray-brown on the back and head, with a whitish gray belly.

The speculum is dull green with a grayish-tan bar on the top and a white bar on the bottom.

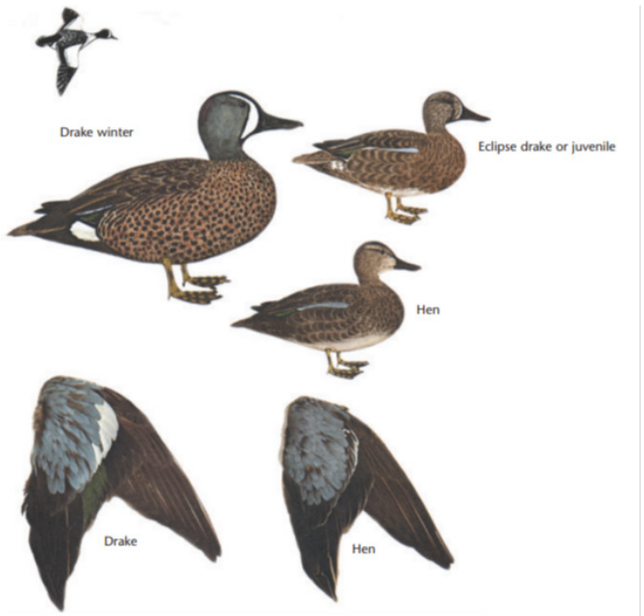
Green-Winged Teal



The green-winged teal is the smallest duck in Ontario. Males have a reddish head with a green mask that runs from the eyes to the back of the neck. The body is gray on the back and white on the belly, with a yellowish chest spotted with black. Females are a drab gray-brown with a white belly.

The speculum is split between green and brown feathers with a tan brown top bar and a white bar on the bottom.

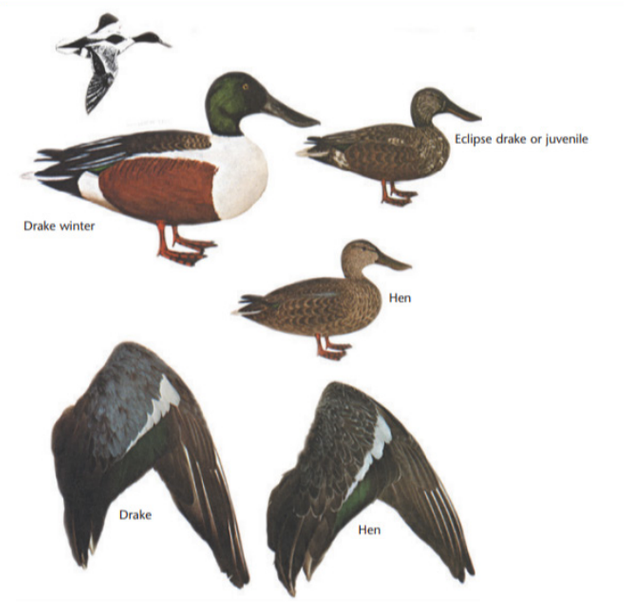
Blue-Winged Teal



The male blue-winged teal has a gray-brown body and head with a distinctive white crescent between the eye and the bill. The female has a similar coloured body but not a white face crescent.

The speculum is light to dark green. The area above the speculum is blue. The male has a distinctive white band between the blue area and the green speculum. The female has a gray band between the blue area and the speculum.

Shoveler

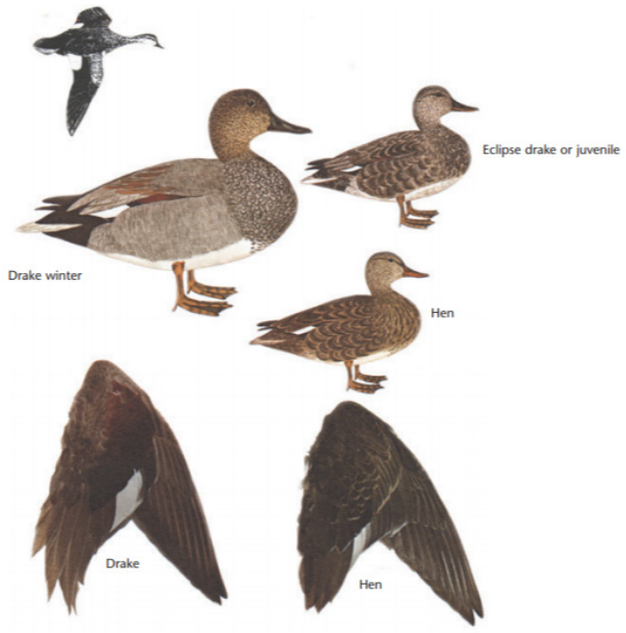


The large spoon-shaped bill of the shoveler or "spoonbill" is a distinctive feature. The male has a greenish head, white neck and chest, and a mahogany brown body. The female is a drab brownish colour.

The speculum is green with a patch of blue feathers on the wing above it, very similar to the green-winged teal. The male has a white bar between the blue and green and the female has a gray bar.

However, the spoon-like bill makes it easy to distinguish the shoveler from the blue-wing teal.

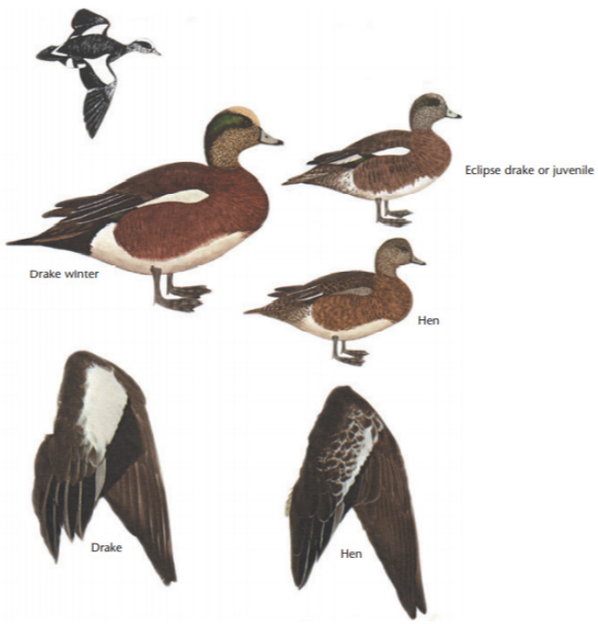
Gadwall



The male gadwall has a grayish-brown head, a gray body and a whitish belly. The female has similar colours.

The speculum is gray with a few white feathers next to the body. The feathers above the speculum are a rusty colour on the male and gray on the female.

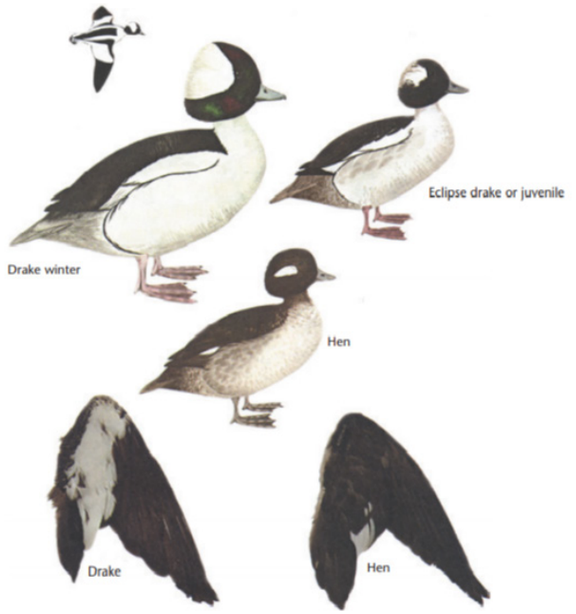
American Widgeon



The widgeon is also called the ”baldpate” because of the white crown on the head of the breeding male. The male has a light brown head flecked with black feathers. It has a brownish-green eye patch that curves to the back of the neck. The top of the head is white. The body is dark on the back with a reddish-brown chest and sides, and a white belly. The female has a brownish head, flecked with black. The body is brownish with a white belly.

The speculum is a greenish-black colour. On the male, the feathers above the speculum are a blue white colour. On the female, the feathers above the speculum are a gray colour.

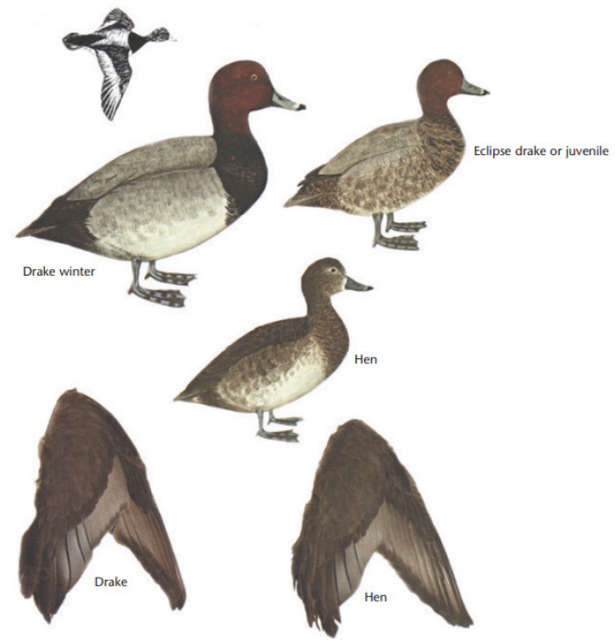
Bufflehead



The male bufflehead has a large, fan-shaped white patch behind the eye, extending to the side and back of a black head. The female has a similar but much smaller patch.

The speculum is white. The male has white feathers above the white speculum patch, while the female has dark feathers.

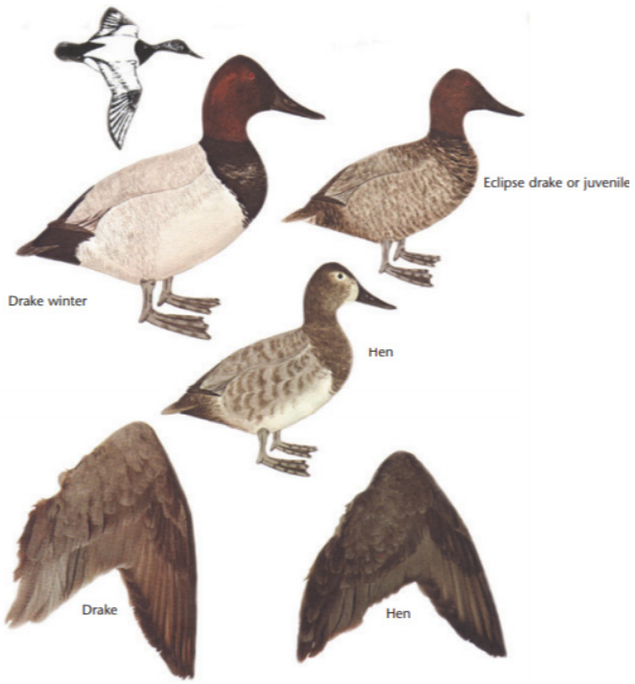
Redhead



The redhead male has a reddish head, black neck and chest, and a gray body. The female is a brownish colour with a grayish white belly.

The speculum is gray with a darker gray lower bar.

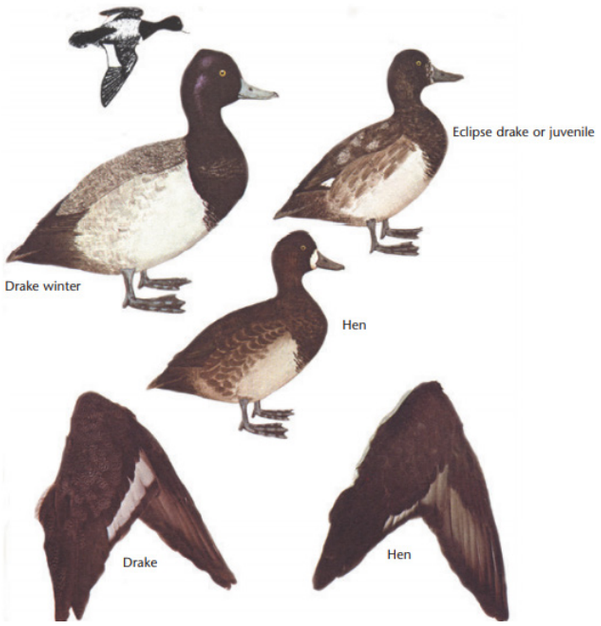
Canvasback



The canvasback has a large head with an obvious sloped profile. The male has a dark red head, and a black neck and chest, with a light gray body. The female has a light brown head, neck and chest, with a whitish gray body.

The speculum is whitish-gray in colour. The sloped bill is the main identifying feature.

Greater and Lesser Scaup

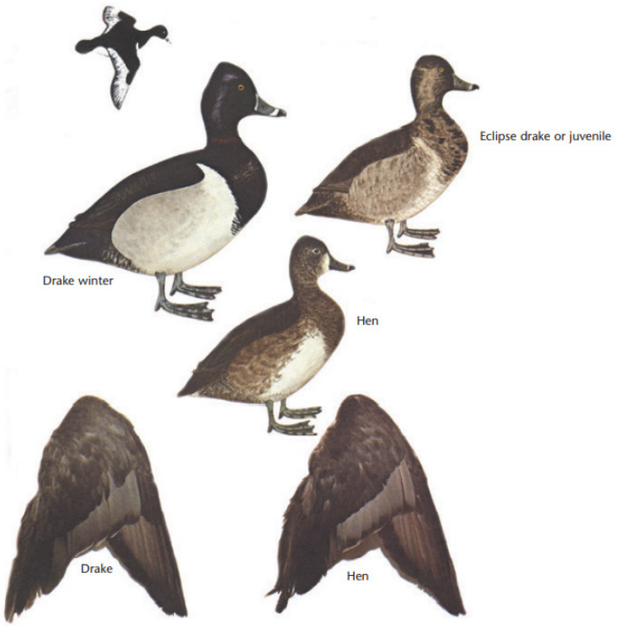


These two species are very similar in appearance, with the larger size of the greater scaup being the main distinguishing feature.

Both species have a bluish-coloured bill and are often called “bluebills.” The males have a purplish-green head, and dark neck and chest, with a white belly. Females have a distinctive ring of white feathers at the base of the bill.

The speculum is white with a dark gray band at the bottom. On the greater scaup, the white colour of the speculum extends out into the primary feathers.

Ring-Necked Duck

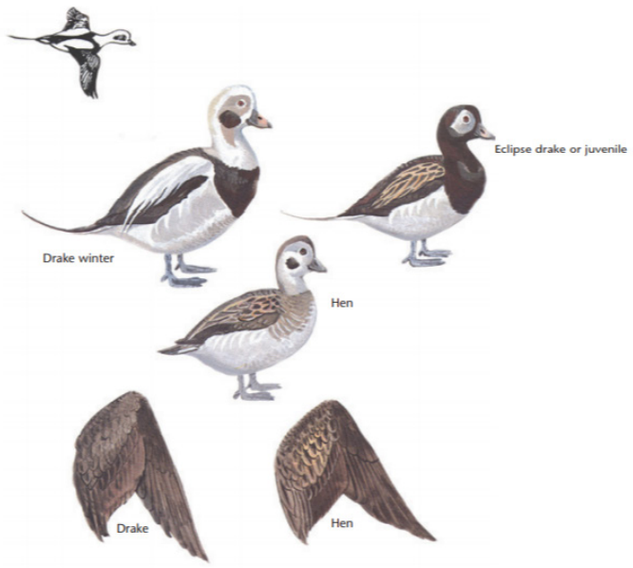


The ring-neck has a distinctive white ring near the front of the bill just behind the black tip.

The male has a purplish-black head, neck and chest, a dark back and white belly. The female has a grayish body with white belly.

The speculum is a solid gray colour with a darker coloured gray band on the bottom bar.

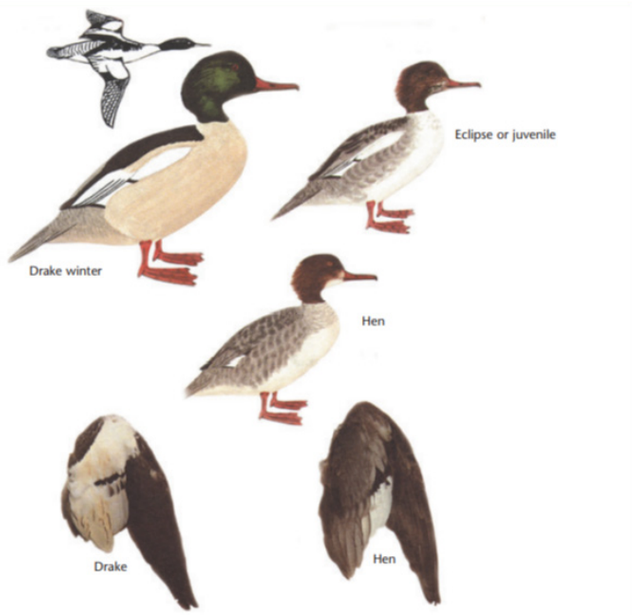
Long-Tailed Duck



The plumage of the drake is black and white. The chest, back and wings are black, and the sides, belly and lower tail are white. The head is white with a large brownish-black patch extending from the cheek down the side of the neck. The female has a similar colour pattern, only grayer in colour.

The wings are black with no discernible speculum.

Common Merganser



Mergansers have a distinctive narrow, reddish bill. The drake merganser has a greenish-black head, white neck, and white belly. The female has a reddish head and a light gray body.

The speculum is white. The bill of the merganser distinguishes it from other waterfowl species. The large size distinguishes the common merganser from other merganser species.

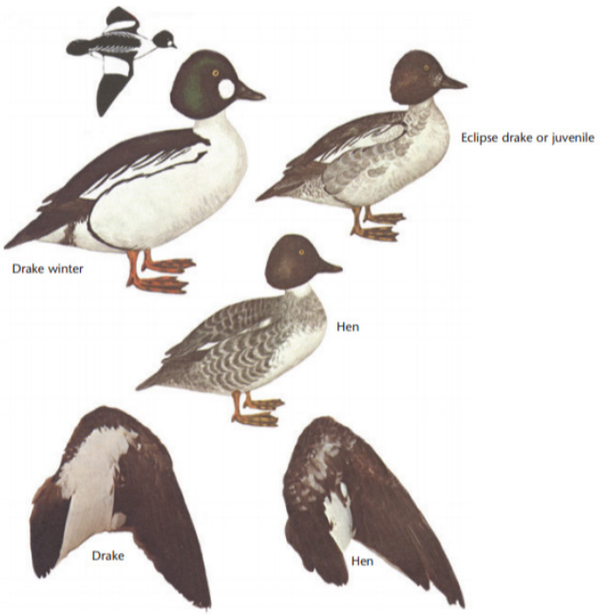
Hooded Merganser

The hooded merganser or “hoodie” is the smallest merganser. The male has a black back with two prominent black bars between its chest and sides. The belly plumage is white, and the sides are tan. The drake also has a dark, greenish-black head with a distinct hood and fan-shaped white area. Its eyes are yellow, and the bill is black, narrow and serrated, or saw-toothed.

The female has a reddish head and a drab gray body.

The speculum consists of black feathers edged in white.

Common Goldeneye



Goldeneye wings make a distinctive whistling sound in flight, and many hunters refer to the species as “whistlers.”

The male has a distinctive white patch between the eye and bill. The head is large and a greenish black colour. The back is black and the neck, chest and belly are white. The female has a brown head without a white patch, a brownish body and a white belly.

The speculum is white. The wing feathers above the speculum are white on the male and a mixture of white and black on the female.

Canada Goose

A number of sub-species of Canada geese occur in Ontario. All are similar in appearance but vary considerably in size. The sexes look alike. They have a dark head and neck with distinctive white chin markings.

Snow Goose

There are two colour phases in snow goose populations: a dark or blue phase and a white phase. Adults of the white phase are all-white with black wing tips. The sexes are similar in appearance, but juveniles are more gray than white. Head and neck feathers are usually stained with rusty orange.

Care must be taken not to confuse snow geese with protected species like whooping cranes, pelicans or trumpeter swans. Trumpeter swans lack the black wing tip, and cranes trail their legs and feet in flight.

American Woodcock

The woodcock is a migratory bird managed under the Migratory Birds Convention Act. However, it inhabits much of the same habitat as "upland game" birds, often in association with ruffed grouse.

The woodcock, or "timber doodle," is a stocky, brown bird with short, rounded wings. It has dark bands on the top of its head, short legs, large eyes set high and far back on the side of the head, and a long slender bill. The long flexible bill is used for probing the soil for earthworms and grubs.

The main diet of the woodcock is earthworms, supplemented with insect larvae and some plants. The woodcock is a migratory bird, nesting in northern regions and wintering in the south. It prefers young-forested areas of alder, aspen or birch trees, in moist soils, bordering fields or recently logged areas.

In late April, male woodcock select a "singing ground," usually an open grassy area in a field or woodland clearing. Just at dark, the male starts making a nasal "peent" call while standing in the middle of the singing ground. Then he flies straight up in a spiral fashion high above the ground. He then swoops one way and the other, flying back down to the centre of his singing ground. He keeps repeating this performance to warn off other males and attract females.

Common Snipe

Similar to woodcock, the common snipe is a migratory bird.

The snipe is a brown colour, with a streaked back and brown-white striped head. The legs and feet are greenish-gray to yellow-green.

The snipe inhabits marshes, moist meadows, bogs and the edge of swamps.

Breeding takes place in early spring. Nests are concealed on the ground in thick vegetation near water. The snipe's diet consists of a wide variety of insects, earthworms and some seeds and plant matter.

Mourning Dove

The mourning dove is a streamlined bird with a small head and long pointed tail. Adult birds measure about 27.9-33 cm (11-13 inches) in length. The plumage is grayish blue to grayish brown with black spots on the wing and behind the eye. The legs are reddish pink in colour in adult birds. Its flight is direct and rapid and its wings produce a noticeable whistle when the bird is in flight.

The mourning dove is one of the most abundant birds in North America. General habitat of the mourning dove consists of woodlands, farm fields and residential areas. Mourning doves feed primarily on small grains and seeds.