

2023-24 EDITION

# HUNTERS EXPERIENCE

M A G A Z I N E ★ IHEA USA ★



## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

Safe Gun Handling  
Get Pumped!  
Treestand Safety  
Choosing Modern Ammo  
Picking the Right Pack  
Technology for Success





Hello Graduate –

Congratulations and thank you for joining our community of more than 15 million active hunters in the United States! Did you know that over half a million people graduate hunter education every year? Your decision to complete hunter education puts you on the path to making a positive impact on wildlife. In the United States, the sale of hunting licenses remains the primary source of funding that pays for wildlife conservation.

You and your class of graduates are the next generation of wildlife stewards. Responsible hunting maintains healthy wildlife populations, lessens the chances of wildlife disease conflicts, supplies you, your friends, and your family with organic sustainable meat, and offers an appreciation for nature not found from other outdoor activities.

Hunting can be an amazing adventure every time you head into the field. The Conservation Industry is very dedicated to helping you gain the skills you need to feel confident on the hunt. If you do not feel fully prepared yet for a solo experience, seek out a mentor or Learn-to-Hunt program to help you on your journey. There are many opportunities offered through your state wildlife agency and partner non-profit organizations such as the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA-USA). There are also membership groups you can join, and additional online courses available if you prefer.

We're happy you decided to join our growing community, and we hope you make wonderful memories in the years to come. Stay safe, have fun, and we'll see you in the field!

Curt Melcher

President, Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA)



INTERNATIONAL  
HUNTER EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION U.S.A.

Hello Hunter Ed Graduate -

Congratulations on completing your beginner hunter education. Many graduates understand that they are now able to purchase hunting licenses and apply for special permits available in their home state, but there may be much more opportunity available than you realize. Your hunter education certificate is your passport to hunting around the world! Canada, Mexico, Australia, South Africa, and other countries around the globe will accept your hunter education certificate as proof of your safety training.

You are now part of an *international* sporting community of safe, responsible, and ethical conservationists. Your IHEA-USA is here to help you on your journey as you identify which hunting types and game types you prefer. Any new experience can be challenging, and whether you know exactly what you'll do next or if you are still filled with questions, your new community is here to help. The best part is that you have already completed one of the toughest steps in earning your hunter ed certificate! Hold onto your hunter ed number since you will need it when you go to purchase your hunting license.

There are advanced educational opportunities for you both online and in-person through your state agency and many industry nonprofits. If you are over age 18, you can check out [www.LearnHunting.org](http://www.LearnHunting.org) for access to instructors and mentors who can help answer your questions and maybe even take you to the range or on your first hunting experience to help get you started!

Have fun and Safe Hunting!

Alex Baer  
IHEA-USA, Executive Director





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*Hunters Experience Magazine* is published annually by the IHEA-USA for State Hunter Education Instructor use.





★ IHEA USA ★

# HUNTERS MAKE HUNTERS...

Don't feel equipped to hunt yet? We can help. If you are 18 years or older and would like to get an official IHEA-USA mentor to help you get into the field, head over to [Learnhunting.org](https://www.learnhunting.org).

We have hundreds of vetted, safe, volunteer mentors waiting to help you out with anything from sighting in your rifle, learning to shoot better, field dressing, or actually accompanying you on your first hunting experience.

Head over to [learnhunting.org](https://www.learnhunting.org) today and get paired with an experienced hunter today. We want you to have a confident, successful first hunting experience so you can pass it on.

**LEARN**HUNTING.ORG





# BUYING YOUR FIRST GUN



Firearm ownership is a right enjoyed by many Americans, and with that right comes the responsibility to safely handle and store firearms. The National Shooting Sports Foundation® and Project ChildSafe® remind new gun owners in particular of the many firearm safety materials they make available to help prevent accidents, theft and misuse.

Visit [ProjectChildSafe.org](https://ProjectChildSafe.org) for the interactive version

## GIVE YOUR PURCHASE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION

Talk to family members about your reasons for purchasing; consult a firearm retailer about choosing the right firearm for your budget and intended use. Learn about gun laws.

- [Find a Retailer](#)
- [Road to Responsibility](#)
- [Paths to Gun Safety](#)

## SAFELY HANDLE AND STORE YOUR FIREARMS

Know the basic rules of gun safety. Understand safe storage options available to you. Talk to your children about gun safety.

- [Safe Storage Options](#)
- [Gun Safety Video](#)
- [Kids Gun Safety Videos](#)

## KEEPING A GUN FOR HOME PROTECTION

A lock box is a good choice to provide ready access to you but prevent access by children and others.

- [Gun Safety Video](#)
- [Safe Storage Video](#)

## IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS

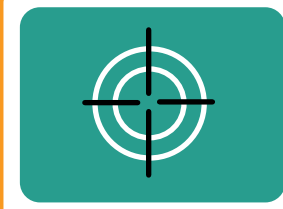
Take a course with a certified instructor. Understand how your gun works. Practice to improve safe handling and marksmanship skills.

- [NSSF YouTube Channel](#)
- [Range Safety & Etiquette Video](#)

## ENJOY THE SHOOTING SPORTS

Target shooting is a fun, social activity. Join a shooting league or organization. Hunting might be for you.

- [LetsGoShooting.org](#)
- [LetsGoHunting.org](#)



[NSSF.ORG](https://NSSF.ORG)

[PROJECTCHILDSAFE.ORG](https://PROJECTCHILDSAFE.ORG)

# GUN STORAGE FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

As a gun owner, you can choose from multiple options for safely storing and protecting your firearms when they're not in use.

Use this guide to determine which mechanism best suits your lifestyle, priorities and environment.

A RANGE OF OPTIONS



### CABLE LOCK

Price Range: \$10–\$50

A cable lock can be used on most firearms, allows for quick access in an emergency and offers security from theft. The cable runs through the barrel or action of a firearm to prevent it from being accidentally fired, requiring either a key or combination to unlock it.

- [AFFORDABLE](#)
- [ACCESSIBLE](#)
- [THEFT DETERRENT](#)



### GUN CASE

Price Range: \$10–\$150

For those looking to conceal, protect or legally transport a registered firearm, a gun case is an affordable solution available in a variety of materials including plastic, fabric or metal. Be sure to lock it with an external device for added security.

- [AFFORDABLE](#)
- [PORTABLE](#)
- [PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE](#)



### LOCK BOX

Price Range: \$25–\$350

With integrated locks, storage boxes provide reliable protection for firearms, and allow gun owners to legally transport them outside of their home.

- [PORTABLE](#)
- [ACCESSIBLE](#)
- [PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE](#)



### ELECTRONIC LOCK BOX

Price Range: \$50–\$350

Electronic lock boxes are an effective way to store or legally transport firearms, and they also prevent theft since only the person with the code can access the contents. Some electronic lock boxes are specially designed for quick access to stored firearms.

- [PORTABLE](#)
- [THEFT DETERRENT](#)
- [PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE](#)



### FULL SIZE AND BIOMETRIC GUN SAFES

Price Range: \$200–\$2,500

A gun safe protects its contents from the elements and allows owners to safely store multiple firearms in one place. Gun safes of all sizes are now available with biometric options to ensure only certain people have access.

- [THEFT DETERRENT](#)
- [PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE](#)

## VEHICLE STORAGE



### CONSOLE STORAGE

Price Range: \$250 - \$300

A solution for those who need a truly secure place to store their firearm in a vehicle. These custom-fitted devices provide concealment to deter prying eyes and would-be thieves. Various access options are available, including biometric.

- [THEFT DETERRENT](#)
- [ACCESSIBLE](#)
- [PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE](#)



### CARGO AREA STORAGE

Price Range: \$500 - \$1,500

Effective for transporting firearms to the range or field, cargo area storage models are available for sedans, SUVs and trucks. These devices allow for locked storage, concealment and protection from bumps and jostling.

- [THEFT DETERRENT](#)
- [ACCESSIBLE](#)
- [PROTECTS FROM DAMAGE](#)

## SECURE STORAGE ACCESSORIES



### WIRELESS GUN SAFE MONITOR

Price Range: \$150 - \$200

An electronic monitor can provide awareness and alert you if anyone is accessing your storage device or handling your firearm without your authorization. Some sound an audible alarm, others can be connected to your smartphone.

- [THEFT DETERRENT](#)
- [REMOTE MONITORING](#)



### ELECTRONIC HOLSTERS

Price Range: \$200 - \$300

Electronic holsters are a new type of secure storage device that enable fast access along with security to prevent unauthorized access. Holsters can be mounted or used independent of a mounting system and feature a programmable finger or thumbprint scan.

- [PORTABLE](#)
- [ACCESSIBLE](#)
- [THEFT DETERRENT](#)

PLEASE HELP PREVENT ACCIDENTS. STORE FIREARMS RESPONSIBLY.

These are just a few of the storage options available to firearms owners. For the greatest level of security, consider using a combination of safety mechanisms and educate family members about handling firearms properly.

To learn more about firearms safety, visit [ProjectChildSafe.org](https://ProjectChildSafe.org)



Project ChildSafe is a program of the National Shooting Sports Foundation®





# HOW WILDLIFE IS THRIVING BECAUSE OF GUNS & HUNTING

## HOW IT WORKS

- Hunters and target shooters purchase guns and ammunition.
- Manufacturers pay federal excise taxes on guns and ammunition.
- Revenue from these excise taxes is distributed to state wildlife agencies.
- State wildlife agencies use these funds to purchase land for wildlife habitat and to manage wildlife populations.
- In turn, millions of acres of important habitat have been set aside to help ensure future wildlife abundance.

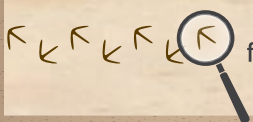
This System Has Provided **MORE THAN \$15 Billion** For Conservation So Far

### Where the Money Goes

Buy, develop, maintain and operate wildlife management areas



Research projects focused on wildlife conservation



Hunter safety and education programs



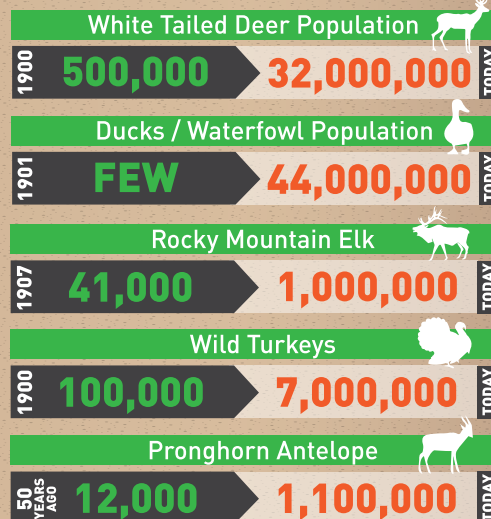
Construction and maintenance of public target shooting ranges

### Quick History

- Early 1900s**  
As many wildlife species are dwindling in numbers or disappearing, firearms industry steps forward and asks Congress to redirect excise tax on sale of guns and ammo to help fund wildlife conservation.
- 1937**  
Congress passes and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act into law.
- 1938 to today:**  
Revenue from this act has purchased millions of acres of prime habitat that is maintained by state wildlife agencies. These lands, where game and non-game species flourish, are purchased with sportsmen's dollars but used by all Americans.

Since the late 1930s, hunters, target shooters and the firearms industry have been the nation's **LARGEST** contributors to **conservation**, paying for programs that benefit America's wildlife and all who love the outdoors.

## THEN & NOW



## OTHER WAYS SPORTSMEN CONTRIBUTE

Excise taxes combined with revenue from hunting and fishing license sales fund the majority of state wildlife agency budgets.



**\$81 Million** CONTRIBUTED ANNUALLY

Duck stamp proceeds are used by the government to buy or lease wetland habitat for ducks, geese and hundreds of non-game birds and animals.

### SOME HEROES OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL CONSERVATION MODEL IN THE WORLD ARE:

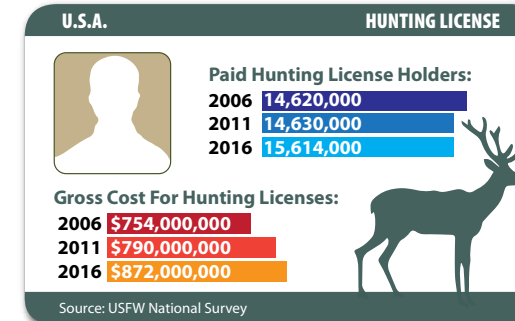
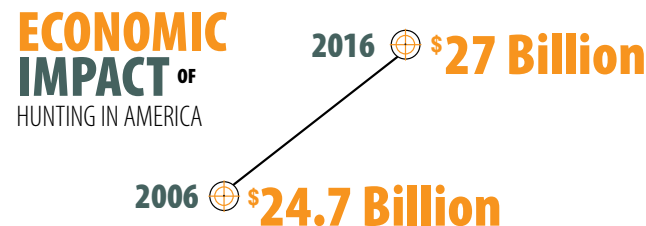


# HUNTING IN AMERICA



## Big Bucks, Big Impact on the Economy

HUNTING SUPPORTS MORE THAN **525,000 AMERICAN JOBS**



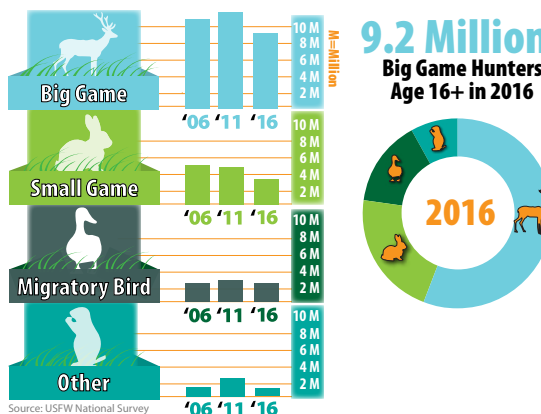
Revenue generated from hunting license sales helps fund state department fish and wildlife agencies and helps maintain healthy wildlife populations and habitat.

The **\$27 billion** economic impact for hunting in 2016 would rank it as the **104th** largest company on the Fortune 500 list

Source: NSSF & Southwick Associates Hunting in America Report

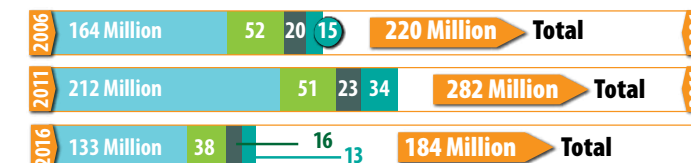
## HUNTERS

Age 16+ by type



## HUNTING IS A GREAT WAY TO GET OUTDOORS

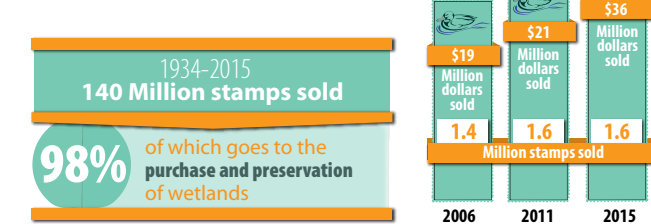
Total days afield of hunters age 16+



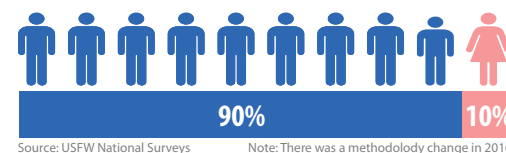
## MORE PEOPLE HUNT Each year than play



## DUCK STAMP SALES



## GENDER of Hunters 2016



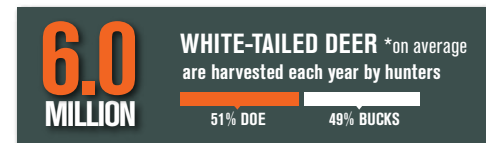
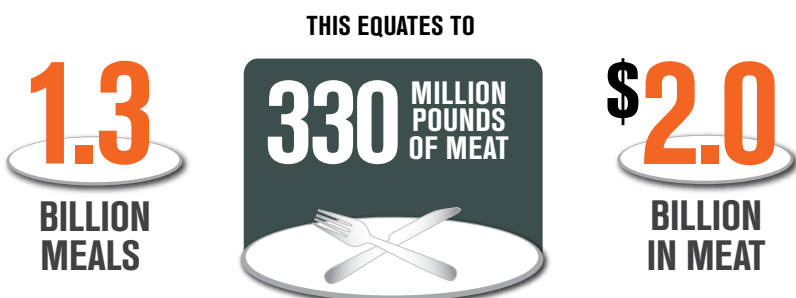
LEARN MORE ABOUT HUNTING

LETSGOHUNTING.ORG



# HUNTERS FEED THOSE IN NEED

WHEN YOU'RE GATHERING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS  
HERE'S A STORY TO TELL  
ONE THAT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT  
THE THOUGHTFULNESS AND GENEROSITY OF HUNTERS.



**BENEFITS OF GAME MEAT**

LOCAL, FREE-RANGE, ORGANIC, SUSTAINABLE  
NO HORMONES, LOW CALORIE, HIGH PROTEIN

## TOP 5 STATES FOR VENISON DONATIONS

- VIRGINIA 405,000 LBS
- IOWA 312,000 LBS
- MISSOURI 237,000 LBS
- TEXAS 214,000 LBS
- OHIO 180,000 LBS

## VENISON DONATIONS BY REGION

| MIDWEST   | NORTHEAST                                  | WEST   | SOUTH   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <b>46%</b> of total donations                             | <b>8%</b> of total donations               | <b>*1%</b> of total donations                                  | <b>45%</b> of total donations   |
| <b>1,300,000 lbs</b>                                      | <b>200,000 lbs</b>                         | <b>28,000 lbs</b>  | <b>1,250,000 lbs</b>  |
| <b>5,200,000 meals</b>                                    | <b>800,000 meals</b>                       | <b>110,000 meals</b>   | <b>5,000,000 meals</b>  |
| IA - IL - IN - KS - MI - MO - MN - ND - NE - OH - SD - WI | CT - MA - ME - NH - NJ - NY - PA - RI - VT | AK - AZ - CA - CO - HI - ID - MT - NM - NV - OR - UT - WA - WY | AL - AR - DE - FL - GA - KY - LA - MD - MS - NC - OK - SC - TN - TX - VA - WV |

\* May be under-reported, limited data sources available for the west

In addition to white-tailed deer, hunters donate many other types of game meat during hunting seasons. These include: bear, feral pig, rabbit, elk, moose, antelope, pheasant, turkey and waterfowl.

## IMPORTANT GAME - MEAT DONATION ORGANIZATIONS



LEARN MORE ABOUT HUNTING

LETSGOHUNTING.ORG

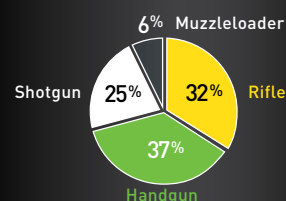


# TARGET SHOOTING IN AMERICA

Millions of Shooters, Billions of Dollars



## TOTAL SPENDING BY TYPE OF FIREARM



## TARGET SHOOTING SUPPORTS MORE THAN 329,000 JOBS

REMEMBER to bring a newbie THIS YEAR

LEARN MORE ABOUT TARGET SHOOTING

LETSGOSHOOTING.ORG

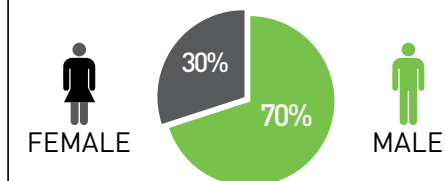


NEARLY \$**5.1** BILLION IN ANNUAL STATE, LOCAL & FEDERAL TAXES CONTRIBUTED BY TARGET SHOOTING

MORE PEOPLE TARGET SHOOT THAN:



TARGET SHOOTING IN AMERICA HAS A TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MORE THAN **\$27.8** BILLION



TARGET SHOOTING PARTICIPATION

## 4 PRIMARY RULES FOR GUN SAFETY

- Always keep gun pointed in a safe direction
- Treat guns as though they are always loaded
- Keep your finger off of the trigger until your sights are on your intended target
- Always be sure of your target and what's behind it

Sources:  
a NSSF® Report: Target Shooting in America 2018  
b National Sporting Goods Association: Sports Participation Reports

THOUSANDS OF PLACES TO TARGET SHOOT LISTED @ **WHERETOSHOOT.ORG**  
DOWNLOAD OUR FREE MOBILE APP





# Safe Gun Handling Practices

Presented by Muzstik

**O**wning your first gun is a significant responsibility, and as firearms owners, we all have the shared responsibility to learn and apply safe gun handling techniques. It begins with the basics of gun safety:

## 1. WE TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS IF IT'S LOADED

That means that we never assume a firearm is unloaded. Even if we think a firearm is unloaded, if touching it, we always visually look and feel to ensure that there is not a round in the chamber.

## 2. WE ALWAYS POINT THE FIREARM IN A SAFE DIRECTION

A safe direction is a direction where the bullet will travel and harm no one in the event of an unwanted discharge.

## 3. WE ARE ALWAYS CERTAIN OF OUR TARGET AND WHAT LIES BEYOND IT

We don't even think about pulling the trigger until we are confident that not

only are we shooting at our target but also that no one is beyond the target, and we have a proper backstop behind the target. That means not shooting at an animal silhouetted against the sky. You can't see what is on the other side.

## 4. WE KEEP OUR FINGERS OUTSIDE THE TRIGGER GUARD UNTIL WE ARE READY TO SHOOT

Keeping our fingers away from the trigger prevents unwanted discharge when moving with loaded firearms or accidents in the field if we stumble.

There are also additional layers of safety that you can employ as a firearms owner, such as keeping your firearms secured and locked safely away at all times when not in use and storing your ammunition and your firearms separately. Brightly colored chamber flags can also offer an added safety measure because they allow you to visually identify the status of your firearm when storing,

transporting, and using firearms on a firing line. Although chamber flags clearly offer a visual identifier that the firearm is unloaded, if handling the firearm, again, you should always follow the 4 Basic Rules of Firearms Safety and always physically check the firearm to ensure that it is unloaded.

Additionally, novices or inexperienced persons to firearms handling may not begin to know how to check if a firearm is loaded or unloaded. Using chamber flags can help. They allow for quick and easy visual identification.

Chamber flags are a staple for you to have at your local gun range. They force you to take an extra step to use them as you leave the range helping ensure that yes, your gun is empty. When the range is cold (no one is allowed to shoot or have a loaded gun on the line), they allow your range safety officer to look down the line and clearly see that, yes, you have in fact emptied your firearm, and it is clear. Additionally, chamber flags are not just

popular with range safety officers. In some situations, like private gun ranges or shooting competitions, chamber flags are a requirement.

### HOW IT WORKS:

- ALWAYS assume the firearm is loaded
- Remove the magazine from the firearm and clear the chamber
- Lock open the slide if lockable
- Insert Muzstik Chamber Flag
- Close chamber or bolt on chamber flag
- Safely lock away and store your firearm

Firearms safety is no joke, and chamber flags offer an additional layer of visual identification for you and the people around you in the home or on the range. That being said, they are no substitute for consistently executing the basic rules of firearms safety and ensuring that you double or even triple-check firearms to ensure that you know their loaded or unloaded status.

MUZSTIK.COM





# The Versatile Bolt Action Rifle



By Mark Gurney

Planning a hunting trip and selecting appropriate gear can be a lot of fun, but also can be overwhelming given the choices available. Selecting an appropriate rifle can be among the most important of those choices, but there are many good options from which to choose. Your task, which should be an enjoyable one, will be figuring out which rifle is best for you.

Hunting rifles will generally fall into three basic types: Single-shot, manual repeater, and semi-automatic. Although some single-shot rifles can be remarkably elegant, most are simple and inexpensive. Whatever they cost, single-shot rifles all have one fundamental drawback: A second or third “follow-up” shot cannot be

accomplished very quickly. While one can argue that a follow-up shot should not be relied upon for hunting success, no one regrets being able to take a second shot should it be needed.

On the other end of the spectrum of complexity and cost is the autoloading rifle. While modern autoloaders are usually quite reliable, autoloaders are mechanically more complex, can be a little heavier, and tend to be a little more pricey than comparable manually repeating rifles. Autoloaders sometimes have limitations on the calibers or the types of ammunition with which they can be effectively paired.

This leaves us with the manually repeating rifle, including the pump action,

the lever action, and the very popular bolt-action rifle. Bolt-actions are easy to understand how to use and they are fundamentally strong and reliable. They offer a wide range of calibers in which they can be chambered, suitable for target practice, plinking, and hunting the smallest game to the biggest animals that walk the earth. Bolt-action rifles can be found in the simplest configurations at modest prices, or can be specifically appointed to a hunter’s tastes – and be priced accordingly.

The operation of a bolt-action rifle is simple in concept and how it works is easy to understand, allowing for a fast learning curve in handling the gun safely. To open the action, the bolt

handle is lifted up, and pulled rearward, exposing the magazine (where cartridges are stored) and the chamber (where the cartridge is placed in the barrel). Pushing the bolt forward will guide a cartridge from the magazine into the chamber. Once all the way forward, the bolt handle is pushed down, locking the cartridge into the chamber and it is ready to fire. The safety is then engaged, and the safety is removed just before firing. After firing, the bolt is cycled the same way, opening the action, ejecting the fired case as the bolt is pulled rearward, guiding a new cartridge into the chamber as the bolt is returned forward, ready to fire again.

Ruger® Firearms offers a variety of bolt-action rifles – let’s take a look.

The Ruger American® Rifle is an enormously popular bolt-action rifle with both novice and experienced hunters, and for a good reason. It offers features and accuracy on par with guns that cost hundreds (if not thousands) of dollars more, and is available in a variety of configurations and calibers that can meet most any hunting need.

The Ruger American Rifle with GO Wild® camo is available in a variety of calibers, suitable for medium to large size game like whitetail deer. The Ruger American Rifle Predator, chambered in .223 Remington, is perfect for smaller game and predators like coyote. The Ruger American® Ranch Rifle is great for bigger or tougher animals like black bear or wild hog. The muzzle break at the end of the barrel helps reduce felt recoil.

Ruger also offers a line of bolt-action Hawkeye® Rifles, classic rifles that are usually supplied in a stock of fine hardwood like American Walnut, or

stocks made of durable and attractive laminate wood. If you’re looking to hunt the most dangerous game in the world, look no further than The Ruger Guide



Gun. Built in durable laminate wood and rust-resistant stainless steel, this example is chambered in .375 Ruger. The Ruger Hawkeye Compact is a short, light, easy to carry gun, suitable for hunting outings that involve lots of hiking and climbing.

Quiet patience in the woods is often rewarded with heart-thumping excitement

as your quarry suddenly appears out of nowhere. The best way to be prepared for this event is to practice, practice, practice! Target shooting with bolt-action rifles, chambered in low cost rimfire calibers like .22 Long Rifle, can provide familiarity or “muscle memory” that will directly apply to your larger caliber hunting rifle. In addition to enjoyable time at the range, there are usually small game opportunities for hunting with a rimfire rifle outside the larger game seasons that can help keep you on top of your game, and be a lot of fun, too.

The Ruger American Rimfire is a line of rifles chambered in .22 LR, .22 WMR (“.22 Magnum”) and .17 HMR. Most Ruger American Rimfires are supplied with interchangeable stock modules that allow the length pull (length of the stock) and the comb height to be modified for smaller or larger shooters and the type of sights or optics in use on the rifle.

The Ruger American Rimfire in GO Wild Camo has a long and tall stock module, ideal for a full-statured shooter, using a telescopic sight. In contrast, the Ruger American Rimfire Compact chambered in .22 LR has a short and low stock module, making it ideal for a smaller-statured shooter, using the supplied iron sights.

Bolt-actions as a whole can serve you well as a novice hunter, and continue to serve you as you become more experienced. You can ask relatives or friends who hunt for their opinions on which bolt-action rifle might be best for you, or your local firearms retailer can be great resource of information and guidance. Best of luck to you as you head out into the field!





# Set Yourself Up for Success by Choosing Modern Rifle Ammunition

Presented by Federal Ammunition

This is your moment...your chance to hunt deer, elk, antelope, or any other 4-legged animal you harness a tag for. You'll want your first shot hunting to be as accurate and as powerful as possible, eliminating having an animal suffer or losing your trophy altogether due to a miss or a lack of terminal performance with your ammunition. Confidence is also crucial. You will want to be confident that the ammunition you choose will do the job regardless of the range between you and your game.

It may surprise you to hear this, but not all rifle ammunition is created equal. Modern technology has allowed ammunition to adapt to levels of accuracy and stopping power never seen before.

Let us help you take the time to understand how modern rifle ammunition gives you an edge for an ethical, confident first hunt.

## SHORT-RANGE CHALLENGES

With the growing popularity of long-range big game hunting, it's easy to find ammunition claiming to offer the accuracy and downrange terminal performance to do the job. However, to even come close to filling this tall order, these options are often built like varmint bullets, with thin jackets to encourage expansion at the low velocities experienced at longer ranges.

Unfortunately, when the bull or buck of a lifetime steps out of the brush at 20

yards, such single-purpose projectiles can completely blow apart under the high velocities of close-range impact, resulting in shallow penetration, low weight retention, and poor terminal performance...which means you did not harvest your animal.

## LONG-RANGE CHALLENGES

Deadly terminal performance has to penetrate through its target and transfer energy along the way. Sometimes on longer shots, many rifle rounds don't allow for that energy transfer and lethal expansion because they've lost their steam on the way to the target. But, lethal expansion doesn't always look the same at every range, and a large

expanded diameter is not always required for a bullet to make a clean kill. Bullets accomplish terminal performance not through sheer expansion but by opening the nose consistently and creating a uniform frontal surface. Most bullets don't do this at extreme long range, however. As a result, a typical bullet will fail to expand symmetrically, causing it to veer off target within the animal or tumble. The distance at which it begins to tumble is very unpredictable. Sometimes it will travel a great distance before it does, and sometimes it will tumble immediately.



Prototype Terminal Ascent bullet upsets taken at a velocity of 2,757 feet-per-second.



Prototype Terminal Ascent bullet upsets taken at a velocity of 1,350 feet-per-second.

The Federal Terminal Ascent rifle ammunition doesn't make short or long range shooting sacrifices.

Designed for flawless expansion at a wide range of velocities, from blistering speeds at the muzzle out to extreme ranges where velocity falls off, the Terminal Ascent round reliably expands within the first couple of inches of entering the target. It punches deep or straight through, dumping devastating amounts of energy.

## Terminal Ascent Innovative Design Elements

Key elements that make up its superior overall design:

### 1. SOLID-SHANKED AND BONDED CONSTRUCTION

A bonded bullet has a lead core bonded to the copper jacket around that core. A solid shank means the bullet has a thick, solid copper base at the bottom of the bullet to support the lead core. This combination retains weight for deep penetration and energy dump, delivering extremely effective wound channels and terminal performance. A large hollow cavity in the bullet nose, along with exterior jacket skiving, further aid expansion and penetration.



### 2. ACCUCHANNEL GROOVING

Terminal Ascent features improved contour grooving (AccuChannel) along the shank for superior performance across a range of rifles while decreasing barrel wear and fouling. No other bullet has this grooving technology.

### 3. SLIPSTREAM HEAT-RESISTANT POLYMER TIP

The Slipstream Tip features patent-pending hollow-core technology. A small cavity runs the length of the shank up to just below the point itself. That point breaks free upon impact, allowing fluid to enter the hollow core, generating pressure and easy expansion, even at low velocities. The Slipstream Tip's hollow core sets it apart from all other polymer tips on the market—but it's also unique in its high resistance to the elevated temperatures a bullet experiences during flight.

The result of all these design elements is both close-range (higher velocity) and long-range (lower velocity) terminal performance with accuracy and reliability, plus great looks. This means that no matter the range of your first animal, you can rest assured that you have enough stopping power to bring it down and home. You've been waiting your entire life for this hunting moment. Make it happen on your hunt with this modern rifle round's reliability, accuracy, and power.

Learn more about Terminal Ascent ammunition at [www.federalpremium.com](http://www.federalpremium.com).



FEDERAL







# Choosing the Best Magnification for Your Upcoming Hunt

Presented by Bushnell

When selecting an optic for your rifle, and looking at the many magnification ranges offered, you may be wondering, what magnification range is best for my upcoming hunt? There are four important factors to consider:

1. Species of Animal
2. Terrain You're Hunting
3. Particular Firearm You'll Be Using
4. Effective Range of Your Firearm

These are all questions, that once answered, should help you narrow down the search.

Before diving into specific optics, we want to cover what the numbers mean

when considering a scopes magnification. For example, in a 4x-16x Scope, the 4 means four-power or the target viewed through a 4x scope will appear four times closer than it actually is. This means that target at 400 yards will appear as if it is 100 yards away.

A 1-4x magnification range gives you the speed of iron sights when the magnification is turned down. But it also gives you the ability to stretch your range when cranked all the way up. This type of optic is ideal for thick terrain, close shots, or anywhere a speed shot is required. Mount it on your shotgun for turkey season or your deer rifle when hunting those up-close, monster, brush-bucks.

Next, let's look at a little more diverse

optic that will suit the average hunter. The 2.5-10x still gives you that wide field of view, but now is equipped with enough magnification for those further distances. Whether your shot is at 50 yards in the timber or 200 yards on the edge of a cornfield, the 2.5-10x has you covered. Ideal for most whitetail hunters and anyone wanting to stretch out to a few hundred yards.

Take what is far and bring it in the near with a 4-16x scope. A 4-16x scope is a great choice for anyone hunting mule deer or elk hunt out west, or anyone with a longer effective range. This 16x offering is extremely beneficial when hunting those wide-open spaces, big valleys, or steep mountains. If you are looking at

an upcoming hunt, where a longer shot may be needed, the 4-16x will suit you perfectly. If you have an understanding of ballistics, most scopes in this magnification range do have turrets for dialing elevation and windage to help with those extended range shots.

Keep in mind, though, as you increase magnification ranges, you also increase the overall size and weight of the optic.

Now, in the world of hunting scopes, there is an overwhelming amount of choices out there. These are just a few basic offerings that get the job done wherever your next hunt takes you. We hope that this column has helped you figure out which scope is best for you based on species, terrain, your rifle, and its effective range. Happy Hunting!

The Bushnell Elite 4500 series of optics offers all three of these magnification powers at a price that won't break the bank.







# Hunting Blinds Provide Close-Up, Shared Hunting Experiences

By Joe Aterburn

Ever since pre-historic hunters first ambushed their supper from a screen of brush, hunting blinds have been a game changer. Over the many millennia, blinds have evolved into being much more convenient, effective and comfortable, allowing hunters comfortable camaraderie in the field.

The most important and obvious benefit of a blind is concealment, allowing hunters to be in prime hunting locations while decreasing the chance of detection by game. And that concealment has far-ranging benefits for hunters of all

categories and all levels of experience.

Unlike the caveman's makeshift blind, which exposed him to weather, modern solid roto-molded one-piece blinds provide excellent protection from the elements while waiting for the perfect shot. Blinds offer shelter from wind, rain, snow, and cold (Even heat, if you're a warm-weather hunter.), essentially negating adverse effects of weather so hunters can stay out longer and hunt harder. Avid hunters understand the chance for success goes up with more time and effort put in the field.

Of particular importance, the comfort and protection afforded by a blind can make a difference to young hunters hoping for a chance at their first deer. You don't have to look far to find stories of cold, weary young hunters forced out of the field by inhospitable conditions. Nothing is more discouraging than shivering in cold, wet weather, wondering if any wildlife will ever appear.

Blinds, on the other hand, provide a comfortable place for young hunters to sit, fully concealed, without worry about

weather or if movement at the wrong time will cause deer to spook; in short, a great learning environment with parent/mentor allowing a close-up view to wildlife in their natural habitat.

The same holds true for the other end of the age spectrum. Consider an older person, either a veteran or novice hunter, who can thoroughly enjoy the

hunting experience in comfort rather than suffering or being driven inside by adverse weather. In fact, a blind can bring together generations to share memorable experiences in combinations as varied as any family, a parent hunting with a child, a grandparent with a grandchild, or any combination of family or friends.

Let's look at what makes Grizzly Blinds

unique to these tasks. First, Grizzly hunting blinds, which are forklift ready for easy placement in prime hunting locations, are octagonal, providing full field-of-view shooting opportunities from three large horizontal windows and five vertical windows that allow optimal shooting angles for bowhunters. And, importantly, the window friction-hinge system is noiseless and easily operated with one hand, so there's no fumbling or tell-tale squeaking at the moment of truth. All windows are double gasket-sealed to keep the weather out and scent and noise in.

Concealment options include Shadow shades, which keep hunters' silhouettes obscured, yet allow unobstructed viewing, and attach with a simple loop attachment for silent one-hand operation. Or the total-concealment Blackout shades with a middle peep window and easy-to-operate magnetic flaps for silent, one-handed opening and closing.

As mentioned, double window gaskets seal out weather but also help keep hunters' scent inside, away from game animals' sensitive noses. If you prefer open windows, scent-eliminating ozone devices, such as Ozonics and ScentLok, can be installed in up to four factory- or self-installed ozone ports.

Other options are BlindMAT HD high-density foam rubber flooring that deadens sound and BlindBARRIER Insulation Kit, quilted anti-microbial fabric that adds warmth, as well as added scent and sound barrier.

The optional Hunting Blind Shelf System, a two-tier metal shelf with a rubber surface to prevent clatter, can be mounted on the customizable BlindTRAX system to keep gear accessible.

Check out Grizzly Hunting Blinds at [grizzlycoolers.com](http://grizzlycoolers.com).







# Savage AccuTrigger

## Triggering Safety For 20 Years

By Joe Aterburn

**T**wenty years ago almost all rifles had the same problem. Their triggers were stiff; it took a heavy pull to “break,” releasing the sear to start the firing process. This was a built-in safety design to prevent accidental firing from a rifle being dropped or jarred. Safe and functional, yes, but stiff triggers worked against accuracy.

Activating the trigger is one of the human variables affecting accuracy. A crisp, light trigger pull minimizes the negative effect a shooter has on accuracy. When the trigger breaks

cleanly and consistently at light pressure, the shooter’s interface is clean and consistent, and accuracy is the result. Conversely, the more a shooter tugs on a stiff trigger, the more accuracy is adversely affected.

In 2003, Savage Arms introduced the AccuTrigger which addressed safety, performance, reliability and accuracy for their line of production rifles. Savage’s first goal was to produce a trigger with a crisp, clean break and no creep. Creep, or travel, is the slack felt when pulling some triggers before the sear is engaged. With

Step 1 accomplished, Savage set out to make it user-adjustable. Previously, lightening trigger pull typically involved disassembling the trigger and polishing the surface of the sear and/or trigger to create a smoother break; usually by a gunsmith. AccuTrigger is easily adjustable, without complicated disassembly.

Importantly, Step 3 was to create a new level of safe operation to minimize, if not eliminate, accidental discharge from dropping, jarring or similar incidents. Preventing accidental

discharge had previously been the job of the safety mechanism. The quandary was a light trigger pull improved accuracy but made it easier for jarring to release the sear causing accidental discharge but heavier trigger pull affected accuracy, and still doesn’t guarantee accidental discharge prevention.



Enter AccuRelease, a unique safety mechanism that sets AccuTrigger apart. AccuRelease, in simple terms, is a physical block in the path of the sear; think of it as a seesaw mechanism. A blade through the trigger shoe acts much like a two-stage trigger; it must first be depressed which lowers the seesaw block out of the way of the sear before the trigger is pulled. Even if the trigger is hit from the side, for instance when you

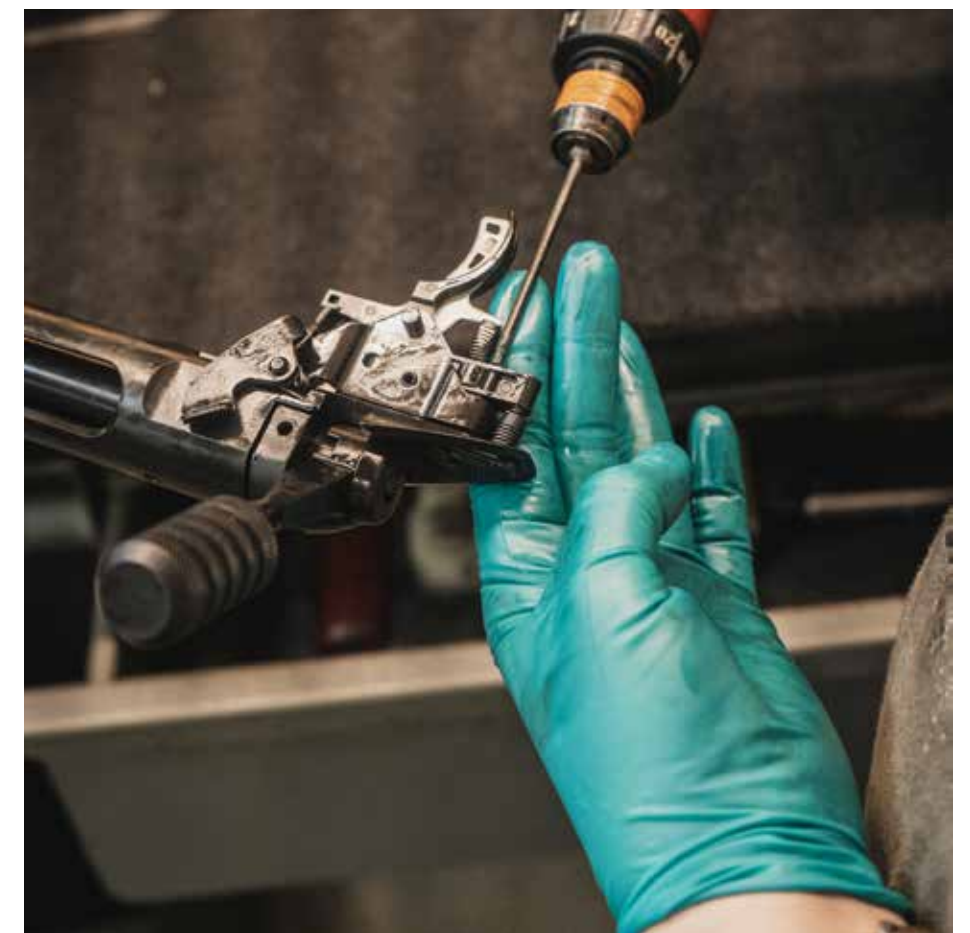


reach a finger into the trigger guard, the sear can’t fall when the blade is extended and the seesaw is up in blocking position. The trigger blade, which engages naturally in the triggering motion, must be depressed for the sear to fall.

Even when the safety is in the “fire” position, AccuRelease prevents accidental discharge by blocking the sear, even if the rifle is dropped or jarred. Again, the tang-mounted safety is the first level of safety; AccuRelease adds a reliable and important next level.

From a performance and accuracy standpoint, AccuTrigger can be adjusted with a simple key to as low as 1.5 pounds of trigger pull to a stout six pounds. With practice at the range, you can determine what setting is best for your hunting or shooting application. Some stock designs allow adjustments without removing the barreled action, but even those requiring removal are easily accomplished without a gunsmith. It’s as simple as inserting the key and twisting gently, clockwise to increase pull weight, counterclockwise to lessen it. And don’t worry, you can’t over-adjust, dismantle or damage the system by turning it too far.

So 20 years after introducing AccuTrigger, the revolutionary design still sets the standard for what shooters expect from their rifle trigger: safety, performance, reliability and accuracy. Look-alike triggers have followed and from the outside appear similar but inside where it really matters, they don’t provide the sear-blocking safety features of AccuTrigger.







# How Modern Hunting Rifles Have Evolved

By Joe Arterburn

A rifle is one of the hunter's most important pieces of gear and it's vitally important to choose a quality rifle. Fortunately, we have progressed from early flintlock designs to our modern rifle systems that help us be more successful in the field.

Even with early firearms being prevalent in the mid-1800s, for hunters they still lacked effectiveness. Hunters using low-velocity lead balls fired in smooth-bore rifles experienced a lack of range, accuracy, and lethality. An archer could send a follow up shot in

less time than it took to reload a flintlock. However, the invention of a percussion cap, essentially the first primer, sparked rapid innovation in firearms. Within only a few years, firearms and cartridges had progressed to designs that are still prevalent today.

In the U.S., the invention of self-contained metallic cartridges allowed for repeating rifles, and lever-actions to be developed. These rifles were very effective and harvested untold numbers of game. However, while lever actions won the West, Peter Paul Mauser created

the '98 Mauser rifle in Europe. The 98 Mauser was the first popular bolt-action, push feed repeating rifle and gained widespread popularity. It was the primary rifle for the German military and many other militaries followed suit with similar bolt action designs of their own. This platform became popular with sportsmen for its ability to fire more accurate and powerful cartridges than other firearm designs. It was reliable, easy to use, and more effective. The bolt action rifle gave sportsmen the opportunity to take game at extended ranges with confidence.



Because of these characteristics, the bolt-action was the perfect platform to develop our modern hunting rifle on. The receiver could accommodate a variety of cartridge sizes and precisely threading the barrel into it allowed for excellent accuracy. Accuracy and reliability have

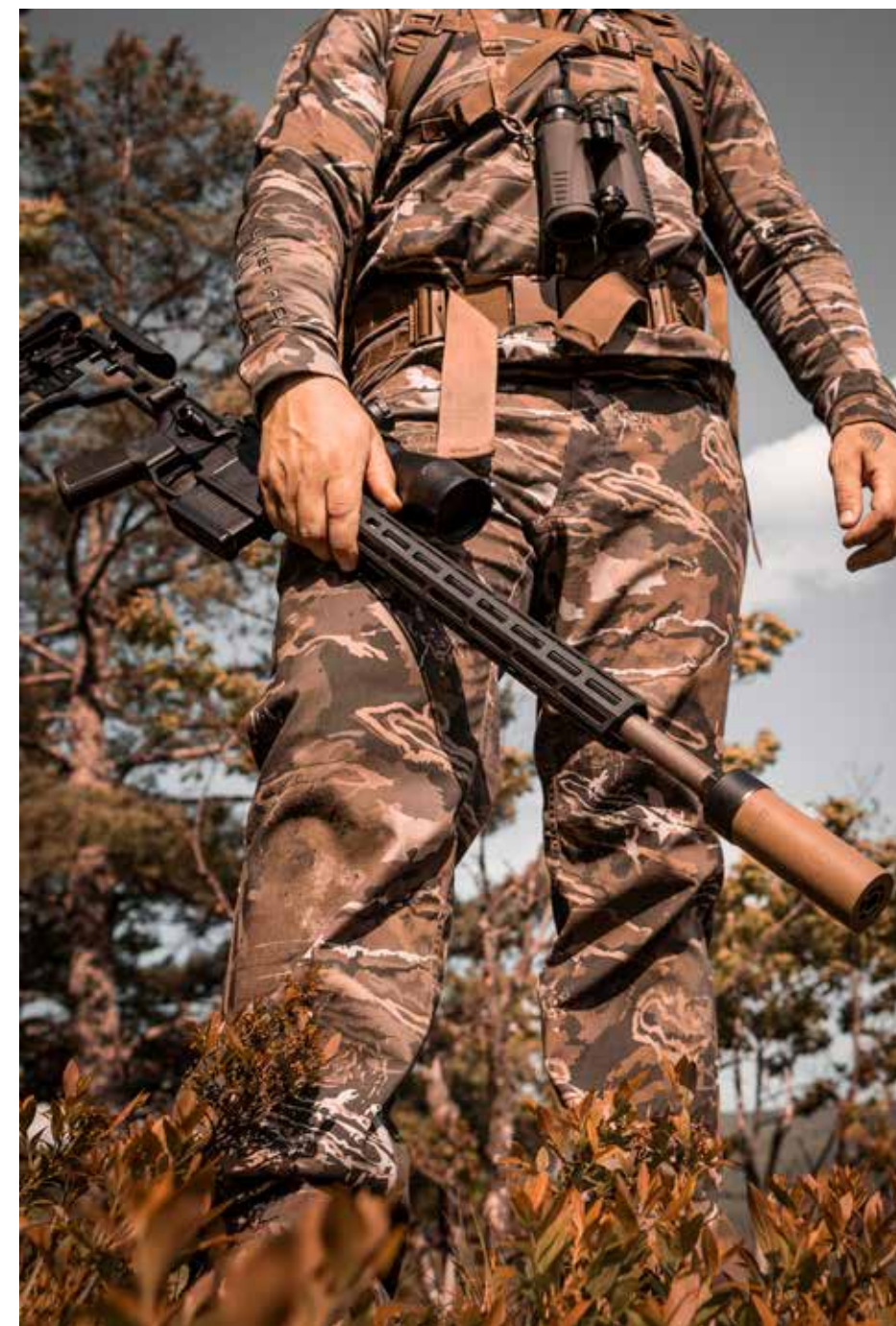
always been the two driving factors in perfecting a hunting rifle, and bolt action rifles have come a long way since the Mauser.

Compare the 98 Mauser to one of the most modern rifles on the market, the SIG Cross. Obviously, this rifle

has some major visual differences from the others, despite it still being bolt-action. First, the wood stock has been traded for an aluminum chassis. Chassis give rifles complete modularity to fit a variety of shooters by adjusting length of pull, cheek weld height, grip, and more. Adjustability means the rifle can transform to properly fit many shooters, making it a great fit for the family. It also gives hunters the option for many different attachments on the forend of the rifle. You could attach a bipod, clip into a tripod, and even connect weights if you needed to reduce recoil. This buttstock also folds, so this rifle can reduce to a mere 25 inches to easily fit in a pack. It's also extremely lightweight allowing a much greater degree of comfort for long treks into the field seeking game.

Moving on to the receiver. Normally the action to stock or chassis is a two-piece design. Not here. The receiver is one piece, top to bottom. This means the rifle is more rigid, improving accuracy. It's stronger, and therefore safer. The action design also allows for barrels to be interchanged easily by the user with no gunsmith required. This means that you get to choose your caliber for the hunting application that day! Finally, the barrel comes threaded and ready for your muzzle device of choice.

The modern hunting rifle has come a long way from the original flintlocks. Today you can purchase one rifle that is accurate and reliable, is compatible with any attachment, fits anyone in your family, and has multiple cartridge options. It truly is an evolution in rifle technology.



# SIG SAUER





# Get Pumped!

*Why the Pump-Action Shotgun is a Great Choice for New Shooters*

By Brandon May

The pump-action shotgun. The most recognizable shotgun on the market. Loaded with the best balance of simplicity, reliability, affordability and versatility, this type of shotgun is equally perfect for those just getting into the shooting sports world and those with lifelong experience.

## HISTORY OF THE PUMP-ACTION

The pump-action shotgun was initially engineered and patented by Christopher Spencer in 1882. In 1885, Francis Bannerman bought the rights to the Spencer shotgun design. Eleven years

later, Winchester launched its successful Model 93, designed by American firearm innovator John M. Browning. Slicker, smoother and more shooter friendly than its predecessor, the Model 93 was the pump-action that changed the shotgun industry.

## BASIC OPERATION

The manual operation of the pump-action shotgun is simple for a beginner to learn, allowing shooters to become more familiar with other aspects of the firearm's operation. When the shotgun is fired, the spent shell is ejected by simply sliding the forearm to the rear. When the

forearm is returned forward, a fresh shell loads from the magazine and into the chamber to be fired.

Pump-action shotguns are simple to load and unload by two different methods: Loading the magazine keeping the firing chamber empty or manually loading the chamber from the magazine. Before loading the shotgun, point the muzzle in a safe direction and feed the shells into the magazine until the magazine is full. Once full, the action is cycled to load a shell from the magazine into the chamber to be fired. Another way shooters can load their shotgun is by adding a shell directly into the chamber

and then loading shells into the magazine tube. When shooting is no longer imminent, unloading the shotgun is just as simple and can be done by cycling the action or, depending on the shotgun, by removing the shells directly from the magazine tube.

Maintaining a pump-action shotgun is straightforward and will keep it running smoothly for years. Cleaning is easy because of the simplicity of the operation compared to autoloading shotguns. The owner's manual describes step-by-step instructions on how to properly clean and maintain your firearm. To help prevent corrosion, wipe it down after every day of shooting and clean it thoroughly after being exposed to inclement weather.

Remember before handling any firearm, it is important to read the owner's manual and understand how the action works and other important information.

## VERSATILITY

Often regarded as the best shotgun for beginners, the versatility and adaptability of the pump shotgun makes it perfect for hunting, clay target sports and protection. Because of the manual operation, the gun can reliably cycle a wide range of ammunition, from the lightest target loads to heavy buckshot loads, as long as they are the proper



*Winchester Repeating Arms builds the Super X Pump Field in three sizes to fit a wide variety of shooters.*

gauge and length. Before purchasing your firearm, know the shotgun's gauge and chamber to understand which ammunition your shotgun can fire.

Because pumps are often considered to be entry-level models, manufacturers often produce them in multiple sizes such as standard, compact and micro, each with varying dimensions in order to fit users of different sizes. With a few tools and accessory items, many shotguns can also be re-configured to adjust the length of pull, allowing the gun to adapt to fit as the shooter grows.

Pump-actions also have a reduced rate of fire compared to autoloaders and that can help beginners focus on developing good shooting habits while conserving ammunition.

Whether you're out calling turkeys or headed to the skeet ranges, most shotguns will adapt by way of an

interchangeable choke system that best suits your needs. The choke tubes can easily be interchanged in the field or at the range. Understanding choke tubes and their shot patterns will help your shotgun reach its full potential. Although choke tubes are "interchangeable," they are not meant to fit all brands of guns or models. Before installing a choke tube in your shotgun, read the owner's manual to verify what choke tube system fits your firearm.

## AFFORDABILITY

Since most shotgun manufacturers produce a pump-action, finding the right one can be easily done at most gun stores. Great quality pumps are available from multiple manufacturers for under \$500. Winchester Repeating Arms offers a wide selection of Super X® Pump (SXP) models within this price range in several sizes to fit different shooters and in 12- and 20-gauge versions to meet the needs of aspiring target shooters, bird and even deer hunters. Additionally, the SXP uses an inertia-assisted action that makes the pump-action operation easier for new and experienced users alike.

As many new firearm owners enter the shooting sports world, the pump-action is a great way to learn shooting skills and the importance of gun safety.

These shotguns are every bit as rugged and reliable as autoloaders on the market, adapting to any load, target or bird you are after while lasting a lifetime if properly maintained.







# Red-Dot Sights Bring Confidence to Turkey Hunting

By Joe Arterburn

Three blue, white and red turkey heads periscoped over the rise in the corn-stubble field in front of us. After a few encouraging soft clucks, we silently watched the show from beneath elm trees lining the field. Marching fully into view, pausing now and then to fan and puff up in full display, sending morning-shattering gobbles, they came as though reeled by a string from the hen and jake decoys.

The boss gobbler, with ground-dragging beard, brought up the back,

letting the anxious, less experienced long-bearded toms move ahead. I wanted the boss gobbler bad but it was about to get western, as they say, and I didn't want to blow this perfect set-up by being greedy.

I lifted my shotgun, shifting it slightly left to align with the lead tom, centering the red-dot on the base of his neck. Puffing air through my closed lips, I made "poit" sound, causing the tom to stop mid-stride, raise and pivot his head toward me. I fired, and he dropped in his tracks.

After years of hunting turkeys with open sights, aligning the bead just so in the rear notched sight, I made the switch to a red-dot reflex sight and now I wonder what took me so long.

What I like about red-dot sights is the quick, sure target acquisition and the precise aiming point. Plus, they remind you to anchor your cheek on the stock and look through the screen, eliminating the all-to-common turkey-missing practice of involuntarily raising your head to get a better view above open sights

before or as you squeeze the trigger.

Red-dot sights are a confidence builder, giving you that I-can-hit-it feeling that grows with every shot as you pattern your shotgun. And confidence building is a good thing for all turkey hunters, those new to the heart-pounding experience of a gobbler strutting in and veteran turkey hunters for whom the thrill never gets old.

Turkeys don't always come in the way you expect, and that may be the winner of an understatement-of-the-year contest. More times than not it's more accurate to say turkeys never come in the way you expect. And when that tom approaches from an unexpected angle or direction, more likely than not on your offside, the red-dot sight will point you to the same point of impact, no matter how awkward your hold on the shotgun, no matter the head-to-stock angle. There are plenty of post-hunt stories about having to switch to the offhand and/or shoot from an awkward angle. Your red-dot doesn't care if you're aiming with your right or left eye, your dominant or non-dominant eye; it puts you on target anyway.

Also, the screen helps focus your attention without limiting your view of the target, meaning you get a full-screen view of the gobbler strutting in all the way up to the moment of truth. Conversely, open sights block your view of the lower part of the bird/target, a leading cause of shooters lifting their heads to see the full picture.

Thanks to rapidly improving technology, manufacturers are able to pack a lot of features in red-dot sights, even with unobtrusive low-profile designs that barely protrude and aren't likely to catch every branch, twig or other obstacle as you sneak into position. Better models offer a choice of red dot size; variable brightness settings to match lighting conditions; long battery life and battery-saving options, such as motion-activated off and on. And, even in the unlikely event of the battery croaking at the moment of truth, you can still sight through the lens and use your shotgun's front sight to close the deal.



Red-dot reflex sights are hot items with savvy turkey hunters seeking every advantage – such as fast target acquisition and pinpoint aiming – when their hearts are pounding and adrenaline is pumping as wary toms strut into range. But not all red-dot reflex sights are created equal and when a huge boss gobbler is in full fanning display near your decoys is not the time to find that out.

Sig Sauer's ROMEO3XL open reflex sight is designed for rifles, carbines, handguns and shotguns; shotguns being what turkey hunters want to hear.

## FEATURES:

- 3 MOA or 6 MOA dot
- Multiple intensity settings (Ten daytime and two night-vision settings.) to adapt to a wide range of lighting conditions, from bright sun-lit snowy days to low-light situations at dawn or dusk.
- Wide unobstructed field of view
- Waterproof and fog proof. Features the battery-saving MOTAC (Motion-Activated Illumination System) that powers up when it senses motion, like you picking up your shotgun or moving it into shooting position, but then powers down after motion has ceased for about two minutes
- Comes with a low-profile Picatinny mount

# SIG SAUER



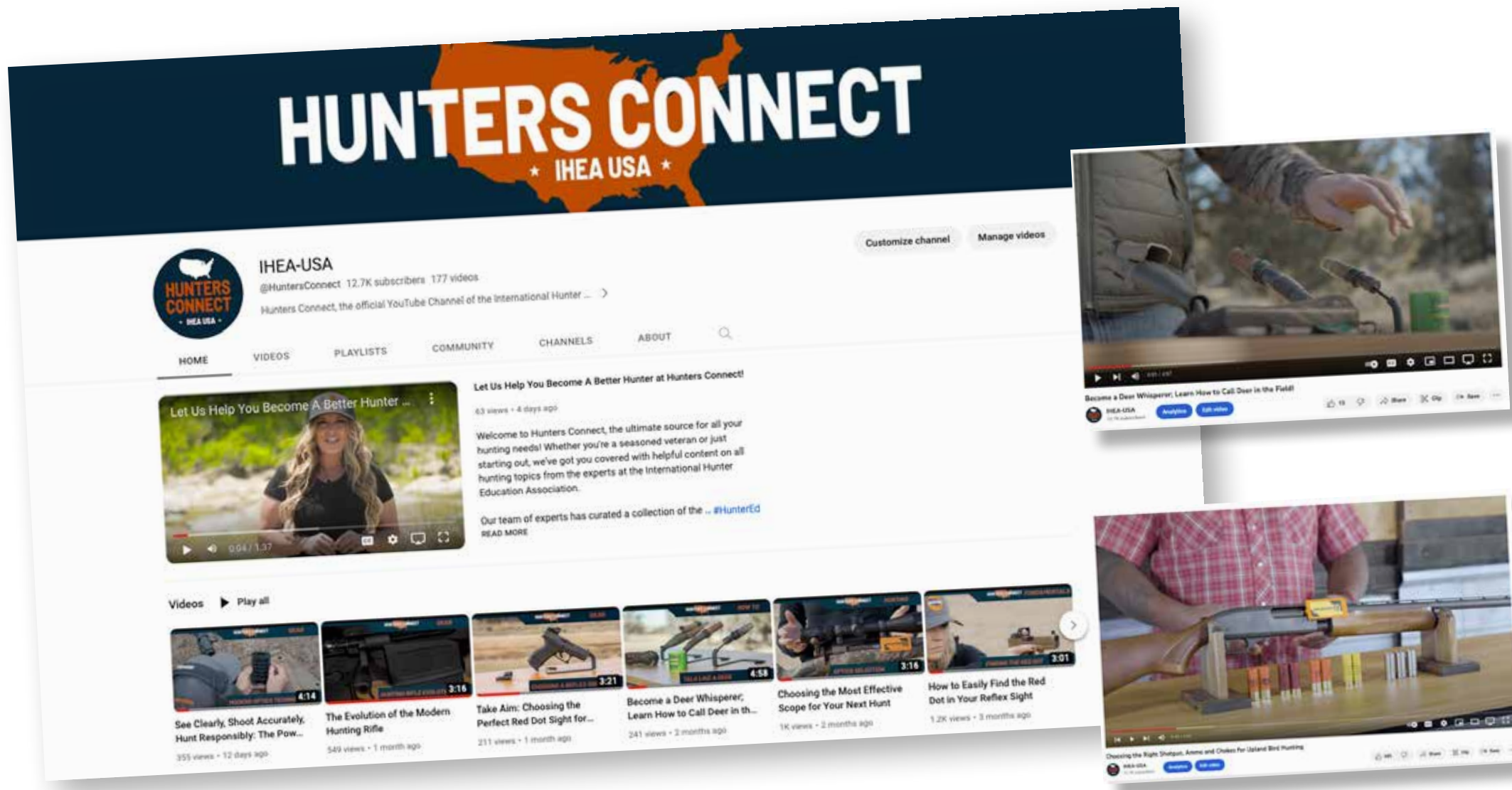
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# Advantages of a Replacement Stock for Your Hunting Rifle

By Joe Arterburn

Let's start with the assumption your rifle has a stock, and it's probably the stock that was on it when you bought it or when it was given to you. Unless you're the proud owner of a custom rifle, you're probably like the majority of rifle owners; your rifle has a standard stock that was likely made as an afterthought to work with the action and barrel.

You may have chosen the caliber, style, barrel, barrel length and made other choices, but the stock was whatever was installed on your rifle. Maybe you looked at thumbhole stocks, or handled stocks, or other styles that let you get the feel of the grip and forearm. It probably seemed like a good fit and felt about right. Shooters are highly adaptable, and they

can generally pick up any rifle and feel fairly comfortable handling it.

The stock is important because it provides the platform for how you interact with your rifle. Most rifles have stocks that are, at best, serviceable. They're also functional, in the sense that they do the job, providing a grip for your trigger hand, a steadying platform for your forearm, and a comb, or cheekpiece, that lets you align your cheek with the scope or sights. In other words, it provides stability, allowing you to line up shots in a comfortable fashion.

But what if you could improve the stock, or more specifically, your relationship with the stock? Or more specifically still, your accuracy with the rifle? That is where after-market

stocks come into play. After-market stocks come in many variations. Some are one-piece, offering lighter weight, a solid foundation, and even colors or camouflage patterns to suit your purpose and personality. Others offer all of that, plus individually adjustable components that let you customize the fit to your personal, or changing, size or need. As a result, the after-market stock improves your interface--and your relationship--with your rifle.

One of the primary measurements of determining a rifle's fit is length of pull, or LOP. That's the distance from the recoil pad or butt plate where it meets the shoulder to the trigger. To fit properly, length of pull should comfortably match the proper length of your arm, hand,

and finger in their natural shooting posture. Obviously, not everyone has the same personal measurements, so individualizing your rifle lets you build a natural extension of yourself instead of having an abrupt end of human and beginning of your rifle. That's not to say most shooters couldn't pick up a standard rifle and naturally adapt to the LOP. However, the best replacement stocks allow adjustment of LOP to make it fit comfortably and ergonomically. Along with LOP, the height of the comb is another important feature to align to your human physiology. The comb is the part of the stock you anchor your cheek to, and comb height is the overall height above the natural top portion of the stock, where the shooter rests his or her cheek while shooting. Customizing both adjustments can improve shooting comfort and provide consistent eye/sight/riflescope alignment, providing consistent

shot placement, which means consistent accuracy.

Adjustable stocks also can be lengthened to account for growth, so a shooter won't outgrow a favorite rifle. Also, most replacement stocks boast enhanced ergonomics, providing a more natural fit and feel, improving that all-important shooter-to-rifle interface.

Replacement stocks are made of all sorts of materials, wood, laminates, synthetics. Though wood and laminates have appeal in performance and appearance, synthetics are the most popular because of their versatility, light weight, strength, imperviousness to weather (and rough handling) and ease in the manufacturing process. Synthetics can be molded into virtually any shape or configuration, meaning they can fit your rifle's action, trigger and barrel assembly fairly precisely.

The knock on replacement stocks is

that action/trigger/barrel fit sometimes doesn't precisely mesh, requiring additional work, such as bedding by a gunsmith, to get a solid, accurate fit. Some replacement stock manufacturers, such as Magpul, with its Hunter Stock line for Savage 110s, Remington 700s, and Ruger Americans, took that idea to heart. They incorporate engineered bedding blocks that precisely fit a specific rifled action, meaning no additional bedding is required, allowing simple "drop-in" installation that is little more than fitting the stock to the action/barrel assembly and tightening screws. The end result can be improved individual fit, improved comfort, and a more stable shooting platform. All of which lead to increased repeatability, which then leads to improved accuracy and success in the field or on the range.





# Keep Your Hands Sharp With The Right Hunting Knife



Presented by W.R. Case

The knife is literally one of man's very first tools and they helped sustain humanity through thousands of years. Today, the ever-growing appetite for knives means our ability to cut things with a sharp tool remains an essential skill.

## HUNTING KNIVES, DEFINED

Even the most seasoned experts would agree that the sport of hunting can present some of the biggest challenges in the outdoors that you'll ever face. So, you'll want to be sure you have the right equipment for the job at hand before you head into the woods.

One of the most important equipment choices you'll make centers around your hunting knife. But as easy a task as it may sound to be, choosing the right hunting knife can be a daunting challenge.

While many hunters opt for a traditional fixed blade on their belt when



they venture into the field, others may prefer a folding type that they can slip into their pocket. Many carry both a fixed blade and another folding knife to use in different cutting situations and environments, and to have a backup

blade in case one gets damaged and can't be used safely.

## FIXED VS FOLDING

There are pros and cons for both traditional fixed blades and folding knives:



### FIXED BLADES

- Lack of moving parts make the knife very strong, stable, and easy to wipe clean
- Larger handle area provides a surer grip and handling
- Knife sizes and blade shapes according to type of game you're hunting
- Sheaths come in a variety of styles and materials to suit your own carrying and draw preferences

- Larger size means your knife is less likely to get left behind when you exit the woods
- Fewer steel choices available



### FOLDING KNIVES

- Easy to carry; most can easily fit into your pant pocket without weighing you down
- One blade or multiple (differing blade shapes for more specific tasking)
- Many sizes to accommodate a range of hand sizes
- Locking and non-locking blades according to your own preferences
- Easier to lose
- More steel and handle material choices

## HUNTING & KNIVES GO TOGETHER

Many hunters will tell you, "When the hunt is over, the real work begins." While there are probably hundreds of tasks that could include the use of a knife to cut something, using a knife after the hunt is a given. Here's a beginner's guide to knives and some of their more common uses from field to table:



### Gutting:

One of the first things you need to do is to establish an exit point for the extraction and removal of the animal's inedible parts. To accomplish this task, you can use a fixed blade knife that has a gut hook blade feature (a short, curved tip at its end). After carefully puncturing a small hole into one end of the animal's belly, you carefully insert the blade hook into the hole and then apply a firm grip to the knife handle and pull the curved edge across the length of the belly to expose the body cavity.



### Skinning:

Carefully cutting away the animal's skin without tearing the surrounding muscles or tissues. This helps prevent the skin and hair from getting stuck on the meat and saves on cleanup later.



**Deboning:** Separating the meat from joints and bone.



**Butchering:** Cutting meat up into meal-sized portions.



**Caping:** Removing the skin from the head and neck area of an animal to prepare it for use as a hunting trophy. A floor rug can be made from separating the animal's pelt from its back and torso areas.

## SIZE WISE

In today's marketplace, there are an endless array of knives of all sizes to choose from, each with a different fit and feel that can perform to your expectations.

Most fixed blades today generally come with a blade that measures from 2 1/2 to 5" or more. Larger blades (4-5+ inches) can help you tackle larger jobs more easily and quickly, while smaller blades (up to 4 inches) give you more control and maneuverability.

Our hands and fingers are all a little different in size and shape, so the knife you ultimately choose should depend on your comfort level when the knife is in your own hand. The best way to try out different knives is to visit a retailer in person.

## SHIP SHAPE BLADES

Blade shapes have developed over time to be more specialized for different uses and application. While there are many variations in blade choices across the knife industry, we'll focus on three most popular blade shapes and their benefits:

**Clip Blade:** This all-purpose, slender design is a popular choice among hunters, fishers, campers, explorers and everyday taskers who need a handy tool around the home, garage, workshop or garden. The blade edge gives you reliable performance when cutting and slicing, and the well-defined, pointy tip makes easy work of puncturing through material.

**Drop Point Blade:** The Drop Point blade has a larger belly from spine to edge; the sharpened edge extends further horizontally from handle to tip than most other blade shapes. This design gives the blade a bit more strength while providing good overall control, with the added ability of making longer cuts with a single pass. The point, while not as "pointy" as that found on a Clip blade, is still quite functional for puncturing and digging. This blade design is a good choice for use in the outdoors or at camp.

**Skinner Blade:** The Skinner, with a curvier edge, is also a popular blade choice. Its accentuated swept edge and pointed tip allows for more all-purpose cutting tasks, making it an especially good choice for post-hunt caping, skinning, gutting and quartering of game.

Choosing the right knife for your outdoor adventures may seem like a tough task. But now that you know more about hunting knives, choosing your own knife can be simple, especially if you visit a retailer or two to try on a few. There are more than 3,000 Case Authorized knife dealers across the USA. Find those nearest you at [www.caseknives.com/dealer](http://www.caseknives.com/dealer). Once you find the right knife for you, feel free to order direct from Case and receive 10% off and free shipping as a first-time hunter with code IHEAStudent at checkout! Keep your hands sharp!







# Treestand Safety: No Excuses

Presented by Hunter Safety Systems

**H**unt long enough, and you'll come to realize that excuses are a key part of most every hunting mishap. Whether it's missed shots, failed attempts, or near-death experiences – excuses can be found somewhere in the story. Excuses can cover a wide range of mistakes for the hunter. However, when it comes to treestand safety, there's no place for excuses. The stories come every year - *I forgot my harness - my foot slipped - the treestand broke - he was only 6 feet off the ground* – these are the stories

of friends and family that were carried out of the woods following a treestand accident.

Fortunately, today's treestand safety equipment was designed to help change the story. The use of a treestand harness and Lifeline eliminate the excuses. These tools allow a hunter a safe and solid connection from the moment their feet leave the ground, until they return again.

Sadly, well over half the hunters headed to the woods this fall will go without these lifesaving tools. In fact, a

study conducted by the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission says that 66% of all hunters do not use safety harnesses. Studies also show that nearly 40% of all deer hunters will experience a treestand accident at some point in their life.

Hunters should consider the treestand harness and Lifeline as standard equipment for the deer hunter. These are must-have tools, not optional items that are left in the truck.

Harnesses like Hunter Safety System's

Pro Series harness deliver all-season protection in a lightweight option with a comfortable fit in a low-profile design. It's built with bino/range finder straps and 8 pockets strategically placed to keep your hunting essentials within easy reach.



But remember, the harness alone won't save you. The majority of treestand falls occur when hunters are climbing in and out of the treestand. Hunters should always have their harness connected to the Lifeline before their feet leave the ground. The Lifeline is truly the answer to eliminating all excuses when it comes to treestand accidents.

Stay safe this season! Use a harness and Lifeline on every treestand hunt. No excuses!



## BUILDING BLOCKS OF TREE STAND SAFETY



**A** ALWAYS REMOVE AND INSPECT ALL YOUR EQUIPMENT BEFORE USING

35% of falls involved inspection elements.  
Source: 10 State Multi-Year Study; Mayhew, G. 2017



**B** BUCKLE YOUR HARNESS SECURELY

86% of fall victims didn't wear a harness.  
Source: 10 State Multi-Year Study; Mayhew, G. 2017



**C** CONNECT BEFORE YOUR FEET LEAVE THE GROUND

99% of fall victims were not attached.  
Source: 10 State Multi-Year Study; Mayhew, G. 2017



**D** DESTINATION—SHARE YOUR STAND LOCATION FOR EACH HUNT.

In an emergency, every minute counts.



**LEARN MORE!**

VIEW VIDEOS AND CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA. USE YOUR CAMERA PHONE TO SCAN NOW!





# Experience Bowhunting

**B**owhunting is one of the most unique hunting experiences. It allows you to get closer, see and smell more and feel the excitement of watching animals up close. Bowhunting is special because it is, by its very nature, more challenging. However, the additional challenge bowhunters face is what makes a successful hunt all the sweeter.

Often times, new hunters overlook beginning their hunting journey using a bow and arrow, not realizing all the skills and opportunities that come with it. Almost all bowhunters will develop skills such as patience, attention to detail, and the opportunity to challenge themselves. Bowhunting also offers the regimen of consistent practice as you carefully consider shot placement and range. It's an extremely intimate and challenging sport on all levels.

Top bowhunters are also excellent woodsmen, a skill gained not through reading books or watching videos, but by clocking a lot of time in the outdoors. Bowhunters also learn to be skilled bow

mechanics, something that is learned by doing, not watching.

As a bowhunter you get in the field well ahead of rifle hunters. In virtually every state in America, states offer archery-only seasons for deer, elk and other big game, giving these hunters a much longer season than gun-only hunters. That means as a bowhunter you have the opportunity to spend weeks and weeks afield, giving you more opportunities to enhance your knowledge in the great outdoors.

Before becoming a skilled bowhunter, the first step is becoming a skilled archer. This begins with choosing the right compound bow, something that is unique to every archer. As you begin your adventure to choose one, there are a couple of key things to keep in mind.

The first seems simple yet is applicable whether shooting archery or firearms, and that is knowing which eye is your dominant eye. Your bow should be fitted specifically for you based off your dominant eye. It is highly recommended

that you work with your local archery shop when choosing and setting up a bow. Their pros can help you determine your exact draw length and weight. Incorrect draw lengths and weights can lead to frustration and can even lead to people walking away from this outdoor sport. Most bad experiences occur when people try to pull a bow that is too long or heavy for them. Which is why again, it is recommended you get fitted by an archery pro shop worker.

Since the muscles you use when shooting are not ones you typically use, they take some time to develop. For this reason, we encourage you to consider an adjustable bow – both in terms of draw length and weight so that as you grow and get stronger; your bow grows with you.

Today, many bow manufacturers make high-quality entry-level hunting bows that give beginner archers the opportunity to get set up and make adjustments as they grow with the sport. The leader among these companies – especially with regard



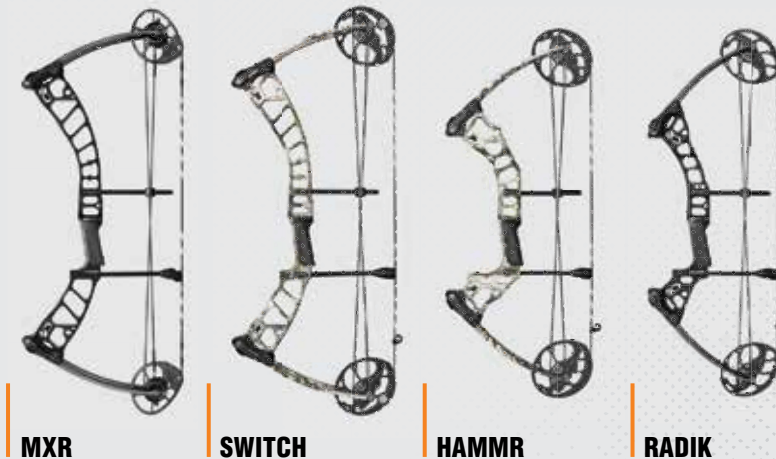
## Choosing Your First Bow

New archers looking to purchase their first bow will have lots of questions they need answered before they can make an informed decision. And while there is all sorts of information available from your friends, the Internet, and books and magazines, by far the best place to learn about all things archery and to get the right product for you is a Mission Authorized Retailer. Here you'll find highly-skilled experts with years of experience in assisting beginners to sort through the often confusing array of different bows, accessories and gear. In most cases a pro shop will have indoor and/or outdoor shooting ranges where beginners can test before they buy, practice with their new bow and even join archery leagues.

### Careful Considerations When Choosing Your Bow:

- Physical weight
- Draw weight (*the amount of pull it takes to draw the bowstring back*)
- Exact draw length
- Eye dominance

The pro you work with can also help with choosing arrows, tuning the bow and arrow setup.



To check out the MXR, Switch, Hammr or Radik, find an authorized Mission retailer at [www.missionarchery.com](http://www.missionarchery.com)

to adjustable bows – is Mission Archery. They are the designer and manufacturer of high-quality bows specifically for those new to the sport. Mission bows are affordable, and their adjustability factor is key, helping prevent bad first-time experiences. They are also American made; a rarity when it comes to considering a beginner bow. Mission bows even offer a lifetime warranty! Four of Mission's most popular bows are the **MXR**, **Switch**, **Hammr** and **Radik**. These bows allow you to adjust both the draw length and draw weight to fit you exactly as needed. And again, because their draw lengths are highly adjustable, as you grow stronger and taller you can easily adjust the draw length and draw weight to keep up with your physical needs as you grow with the outdoor sport.

Simply stated, all beginner archers should start with a well-fitted adjustable bow for their first bow. This choice equals comfort, accuracy and ultimately success.

**MISSION**  
BY MATHEWS

[MISSIONARCHERY.COM](http://MISSIONARCHERY.COM)





# Picking the Right Pack Pays

By Joe Arterburn

**T**he hardest part of a backcountry hunt is not getting deep into remote areas where you're more likely to find solitude and unharried game animals, it's getting out while loaded down with your meat and trophy.

Having pack failure in those conditions can be a nightmare, which is why picking a quality backpack – frame and bag – is of maximum importance. Quality bags are made of incredibly strong materials, heavy-duty straps, heavier-duty stitching and high-quality components like zippers, buckles and fasteners. As they say, a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, so a failure of any aspect in material, construction or design can lead to

catastrophic failure and a miserable experience packing out.

Look at it this way, you've honed your gear to a minimum to keep down weight and bulk so you have room – and physical fortitude – to pack out your meat and trophy. A pack failure could derail your best-laid plans, making it impossible for you to pack out all your meat, let alone the trophy. Multiple trips with a compromised pack doesn't have much appeal.

Ironically, pack failures, such as disintegrating seams, ill-fitting frames and downright painful carrying discomfort, led to the creation of Kifaru packs, which incorporate the reliability

and durability of mountaineering packs with hunter-designed functional and comfort features.

Kifaru has all types of packs – Bombproof and custom fit to you, as they say. – for all types of purposes, from daypacks to multi-day to expedition packs. For what we're talking about here, packing out your meat and trophy from a backcountry hunt, let's look at a couple Kifaru packs, starting with the Hellbender, which came about from their "usual development system" of listening to customers. More carrying capacity, customers said.

So Kifaru added 350 cubic inches to their popular Stryker XL pack, for a total

of 2,250 cubic inches of packable space, plus it has a flexible front pouch on the front to store wet or extra gear and an EXPAC load sling, which is easy to clean after you've packed out from a successful hunt. Amazingly, it weighs only just over three pounds. And it has all the features you'd expect, dual water-bottle side pockets (which also work in conjunction with compression straps to secure a tripod or other lengthy gear); secure zippered pocket with internal key hook; compression straps to squeeze contents (and prevent jostling noise); a web matrix for attaching a belt pouch and webbing tracks on the bottom for attaching gear or additional pockets. And, inside there's a pocket and sleeve for a water bladder.

Now let's talk even bigger. Designed to cut weight at every corner, Kifaru's Gnargali pack has a voluminous 5,090

cubic inches of packing space, yet weighs only 2.8 pounds. Features include two stretchy large-capacity water bottle (or gear; think tripod, fly-rod tube, etc.) pockets; a water bladder pocket; a web matrix that allows attachment of up to three pouches; a load shelf on the back of the bag; double-lined bottom; and an integrated snow lid to ward off inclement weather. It's a no-nonsense, simple, quick, top-loading pack designed to get you there and back.

Kifaru began in 1997 with the idea of producing American-made backcountry hunting gear – extreme hunting products, they call it. They use the toughest technical fabrics and components to avert system failure. The experts at Kifaru are dedicated backpack hunters. They know what works and, from painful experience, they know what doesn't work.

Nothing incentivizes like failure, which is why Kifaru has designed failure out of the equation. Failure is not only not an option, it's not a possibility.

Deep in the backcountry with a heavy load from a successful hunt is not the time to wish you had opted for a quality pack. Check out [kifaru.net](http://kifaru.net) to prevent that from happening.







# Get the Edge on Game Processing

By Joe Arterburn

If you want hunting advice that comes from experience, ask an outfitter who works day in and day out to make sure clients have a successful, safe hunt. Outfitters pore over every detail of each hunt so they are prepared for every contingency, and one thing they are always prepared for is success. I've never met an outfitter who wasn't optimistic and planning for the best outcome; the best outcome being a successful hunt, meaning they are prepared for not only the hunt itself, but also meat and trophy care.

Meat and trophy care requires a variety of tools in order to do it right, and a fully loaded game processing kit is the best

way to tackle this chore. Game processing kits have every tool a hunter needs to get a game animal from the field to the freezer and, ultimately, your table. One thing to ask yourself as you consider a game processing kit is, "How can I make this daunting task easy?" Getting a kit with all the tools you need in one easy-access place is critical, and you know that's important if you've ever ended up in the field without a key tool, or wasted time digging through a pack for a misplaced item. So, kudos to Outdoor Edge for packaging so much in a snap-closed, easy-to-pack Game Processing Kit in a carrying case.

Selecting a kit that has blaze orange

and rubberized handles on the knives and saws is also helpful. The rubber handle material provides a sure, non-slip grip, even when wet – and they'll get wet with blood and/or during cleaning, so it is important. Just as important to me is the highly visible bright orange color. Field-dressing is an involved task and the more organized you are going from one tool to the next, the more smoothly it will go. With bright orange handles, you can quickly go from tool to tool; and they are easy to spot laying on the ground. If you've ever searched a field-dressing site for a missing knife, you know what I'm talking about. (I can't recall ever seeing an outfitter or experienced hunter carry

field-dressing knives with camouflaged handles, and Earth-tone colors have the same propensity for getting lost.)

Third, choose a well-thought-out set that includes the three styles of knives you're likely to need. You'll use the gut-hook on the skinner blade to zip open the hide and open the body cavity without puncturing intestines, then the 4-inch drop-point skinner blade to finish field dressing. Actually, I also like an easy-handling caping knife for some field-

dressing chores. The 2.5-inch blade has a finger choil just ahead of the handle so you can get a steady grip for controlled detailed cutting. (Caping, for which it is designed, requires detailed cutting to remove the hide from the head.)

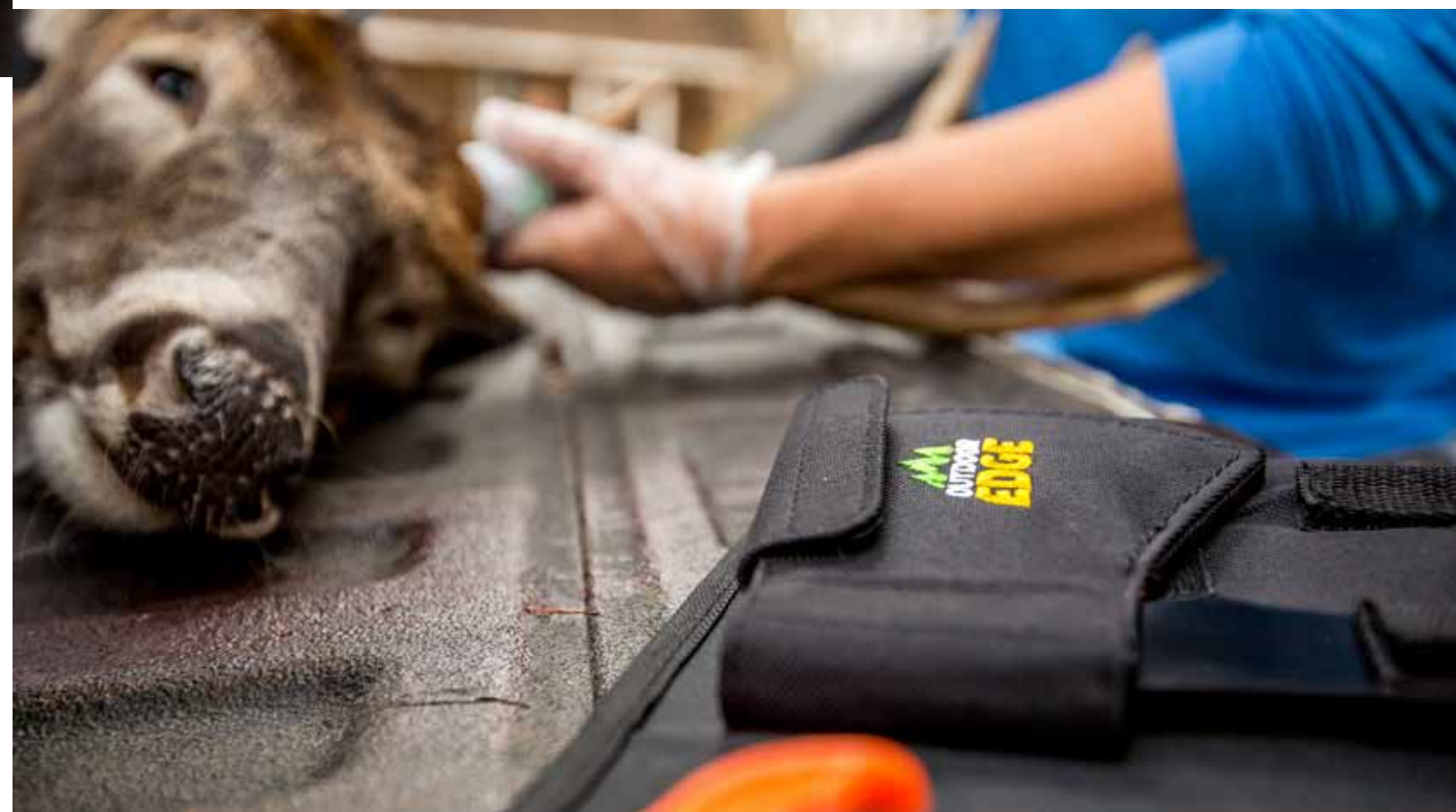
A boning knife, with flexible 5-inch blade, comes into play when processing the meat, removing it from bones and carving particular cuts. I like the flexible blade for removing backstraps, choice meat you want to remove neatly and

completely, without losing a morsel.

A bone/wood saw, with 6-inch blade, is for that—cutting bone to break down an animal, if necessary, or even for any wood-cutting tasks that may come up in the field or camp. The 10-inch ax is likewise handy for chopping chores. The ribcage spreader is handy to prop open the body cavity to promote faster cooling of the meat. It's a lot handier than trying to find and cut a stout enough stick to do the job.

All knives in the Outdoor Edge Game Processing Kit feature stainless steel blades, heat-treated to hold an edge longer but there is a ceramic/carbide sharpener to touch up edges as you work. And though all the tools fit in the handy case, also included are sheaths so you can carry the knives and ax separately.

You can check out the Outfitter Hunting Game Processing Kit at [outdooredge.com](http://outdooredge.com).





## MAP LAYERS

HuntWise helps you find public and private boundaries, trails, and more.



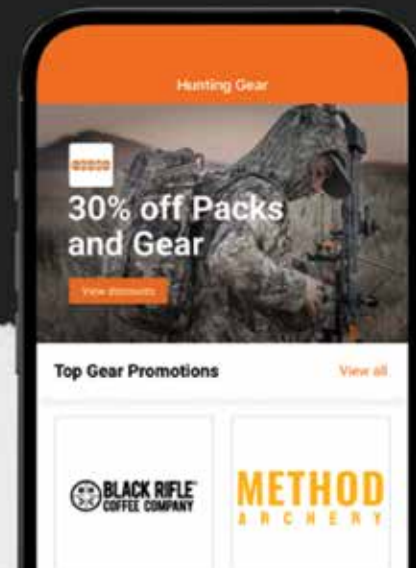
## HUNTCAST

Understand the best days and times to hunt, allowing you to optimize your time.



## GEAR

Save big as a HuntWise member on treestands, trail cameras, camo, and more!



# Technology Can Help You Experience Hunting Success

NEW HUNTER EXCLUSIVE

### 90-DAYS FREE

SCAN AND GET STARTED



Get access to property boundary lines, map layers, discounts on gear, HuntCast predictions, and more! It's good for 90 Days before it starts a full membership to Pro or Elite!

LIMITED OFFER! HUNTWISE.COM

Presented by HuntWise

Preparing for your hunt has come a long way over the years. Imagine how difficult it was to prepare for a hunt at the turn of the century...no radio, no television, no maps, and primitive gear. Today's hunter can choose from a variety of equipment including cutting edge bullet technology, the latest in optics, scent elimination tools, and so much more. In fact, now hunters can plan their hunts with amazing hunting app technology at their fingertips.

Having a great hunting app gives you the ultimate digital guide in your pocket and is designed to enhance your hunting experience. Built with tools for hunters, the HuntWise app offers a solution to some of the most common challenges faced in the field. From locating new hunting grounds and scouting animal habitats to gaining permission for private lands and effectively tracking game that strays beyond property boundaries, it has you covered. It empowers you to

make informed decisions about the best day and time to hunt based on weather conditions, and gives you the confidence in the field to fill that tag. With HuntWise at your fingertips, you'll have the essential tools to maximize your success and make the most out of every hunting trip:

- Plan your hunts: Use the mapping feature to identify potential hunting spots and contact landowners for permission to hunt on private property.

- Check the weather: Use the weather feature to plan your hunts around the best weather conditions.

- Consider the wind direction: Use the WindCast feature to choose the best location to hunt based on the wind direction. This will help reduce the times your hunts get blown.

- Take advantage of discounts: Use the Gear section to save money on hunting gear! These codes will help you save money and get access to top gear and brands.

Having solid information from this valuable tool helps hunters of all experience levels. It can help you find new hunting grounds, scout animal habitats, and optimize your time to find the best time to hunt. It also provides weather forecasts, wind direction updates, and exclusive discounts on hunting gear. Get more prepared for your next hunting trip with HuntWise.

### Here are some additional details about Huntwise features:

- **Mapping:** The mapping feature uses satellite imagery and topographical data to show you the lay of the land. This can help you identify potential hunting spots, such as areas with thick vegetation or water sources. You can also use the mapping feature to find private property and contact landowners for permission to hunt.

- **Weather:** The weather feature provides accurate forecasts for your hunting location. This information can help you plan your hunts around the best weather conditions. For example, if you're hunting deer, you'll want to avoid hunting during windy or rainy weather.

- **WindCast:** The WindCast feature helps you choose the best location to hunt based on the wind direction. Deer are more likely to be active when the wind is blowing in their direction. By using the WindCast feature, you can choose a location where the wind will carry your scent away from the deer.

- **Gear:** As a new hunter, you may be looking for ways to save money on top-quality gear and brands to get yourself started. The HuntWise app has got you covered! It offers exclusive discounts on popular hunting brands, making it easier and more affordable for you to get the gear you need. Whether you're in search of hunting apparel, accessories, or equipment, the app's gear section provides a wide range of options to choose from. Saving money on gear means you can invest in the best equipment while staying within your budget.

HUNTWISE

# BE MORE PREPARED

FOR YOUR NEXT HUNTING TRIP

"HUNTWISE IS YOUR KEY TO SUCCESS IN THE FIELD"



JOHN DUDLEY





# ★ IHEA USA ★



## HUNTERS MAKE HUNTERS...

Don't feel equipped to hunt yet? We can help. If you are 18 years or older and would like to get an official IHEA-USA mentor to help you get into the field, head over to [Learnhunting.org](https://www.learnhunting.org).

We have hundreds of vetted, safe, volunteer mentors waiting to help you out with anything from sighting in your rifle, learning to shoot better, field dressing, or actually accompanying you on your first hunting experience.

Head over to [learnhunting.org](https://www.learnhunting.org) today and get paired with an experienced hunter today. We want you to have a confident, successful first hunting experience so you can pass it on.

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