



Principles of Hunting and Outdoorsmanship

Introduction

Enjoying the outdoors is a favorite pastime of millions of people who hunt, fish, bird-watch, photograph wild things, hike, and camp. To fully enjoy these activities, an understanding of some basic biological principles and practices is important.

Hunting was first used as a means of survival, but now, for most people, it is a recreational activity. Hunting is a vital part of wildlife management as well as a major cultural and social influence in the development of this nation.

This manual is an introduction to the sport of hunting. It includes discussion of related outdoor activities to help the leader prepare responsible, ethical citizens who can enjoy, conserve, and manage the natural heritage of Mississippi.

Objectives

- 1) *To understand the roles of hunting in wildlife conservation and management.*
- 2) *To understand the hunter's responsibilities toward landowners, other hunters, themselves, and the natural resources.*
- 3) *To understand and appreciate hunting and conservation rules and regulations.*
- 4) *To understand the social and economic values of hunting.*
- 5) *To understand hunting opportunities and techniques available.*
- 6) *To understand skills and activities related to ethical sportsmanship and outdoorsmanship.*

Presentation

Hunting And Wildlife Management

History Of Hunting

Man hunted for survival. Early man went from using kills by other predators to making his own. Early weapons were rocks and sticks, followed by the use of spears and bows and arrows, which increased range, speed, and accuracy. Firearms are a more modern tool (16th century) that improved man's hunting ability.

With changes in food gathering came some changes in society as well. Man has moved from scavenger to hunter-gatherer to agrarian to a technological-industrial society. Animals were for food, clothing, and tools. The wild animal meant survival.

We do not interact directly with the resources that provide for our survival. This has caused misconceptions and mismanagement of America's renewable natural resources.

In North America, wildlife was considered public property, unlike the policy in Europe, where wildlife was the property of the Crown.

Some people made a living hunting and trapping to supply meat, fur, bones, and feathers to a ready market. These "market gunners" or "market hunters" (using sound economics) decimated the American bison and several other species. This unregulated exploitation of wild populations and a concurrent habitat loss caused alarm among sportsmen. Today's conservation movement began with Theodore Roosevelt, and wildlife management was born under the influence of men such as Aldo Leopold.

Laws were enacted to prohibit market hunting and the sale of game. State wildlife and fishery agencies, along with bag limits and seasons, were established.

Excise taxes were placed on the sale of sporting arms and ammunition. The money from these taxes was used in wildlife management and enhancement. The original Pittman-Robertson Act passed in 1937 has provided millions of dollars for wildlife management and enhancement. The Duck Stamp Act has also provided funds for waterfowl refuges and protected wetlands. Money for management of nongame wildlife is innovatively funded through taxes, license plates, and deposits. Hunters in this country have provided for management, conservation, and preservation of habitats, game, and other wild animals.

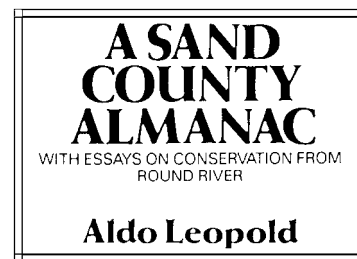
Biological Basis For Hunting

Is there a biological reason to hunt? Habitat has a limited capacity to support plant and animal life; this is called "carrying capacity." The number of animals is limited by one of the components of habitat such as food, water, cover, or space. These "limiting factors" change seasonally and

Application

- *Discuss early hunting methods and evolution.*
- *Show rocks and sticks, spears, bow and arrows, and firearms.*
- *Discuss changes in society.*
- *Discuss early food types.*
- *Discuss sources of a meal. Go to ultimate, that is, sun, soil, and water.*
- *Show pictures or examples of animal skins, clothes, tools, tents.*
- *Show decline of bison, deer, and turkeys as a result of market hunting.*

- *Read "A Sand County Almanac."*



- *What if nothing died?*
- *What do dead things do for the living?*
- *Illustrate with a bucket of sand or water. It only holds so much.*
- *Carrying capacity changes seasonally.*

from year to year. Biological systems are dynamic and the habitat is always in a state of change. When populations exceed the carrying capacity, animals must move or die.

For a biological system to be stable, each breeding adult must replace itself during its lifetime. Some animals such as deer and bear are long-lived and have only one or two young at a time; others only live for a short time and have several young, for example, rabbits and quail.

Usually more animals are produced than the habitat can support, and the excess population dies. When seasonal supplies of food, water, and cover are high, most young reach adulthood. Some animals die from catastrophes and accidents, while others die from parasites, diseases, or starvation. Still others are killed by predators.

Hunting is a form of predation. Controlled or managed hunting is used by wildlife managers to keep some populations of animals (such as deer) from becoming too abundant and consequently deteriorating habitat and increasing losses to disease and starvation. Hunting and trapping also are used to keep populations at a low level and to prevent damages to crops or livestock or the spread of disease.

Hunting has little effect on populations of species such as rabbits and quail, many of which die before they are one year old. Hunting merely redirects the mortality; it does not increase it.

Management also includes complete protection such as that for threatened and endangered species. Without protection and habitat management, some species would become extinct.

Wildlife Law And Ethics

Laws regulating the harvest of wildlife were one of the first tools used in game management. Closed seasons on deer were enacted as early as 1718 in Massachusetts. The first hunting license was required by New York in 1864. The first bag limit appeared in 1878 in Iowa where only 25 prairie chickens could be taken per day. These laws—limiting seasons, bag limits, and who can hunt—are means of regulating the harvest and ensuring the conservation of wildlife. **No species has ever become extinct from regulated sport hunting.**

Additional wildlife laws are safety laws to protect people and property. Laws are designed to allow people equitable opportunity and to prohibit waste of game. The manner in which a person acts in relation to the wildlife laws determines whether that person is a sportsman or an unethical hunter. Each person subscribes to a code of ethics, and the person who respects the game laws, other people's property, the resource, and himself or herself is a sportsman.

Hunting is one activity where the individual is acting alone and actions must be dictated. One's philosophy and personal ethics may change over the years, and it is usual for a hunter to go through five behavioral stages that include the following stages:

- *How many seeds does an oak produce?—Many.*
- *How many are needed for a stable population?—One.*
- *Illustrate—Start with 1 pair of rabbits. They have 4 litters each year, with 6 young per litter (3 males and 3 females). Also assume breeding first year by first litter. 2 adults = 4 litters x 6 young = 24. 3 litters (by first litter) = 18 + 24 = 42. Only 2 need to survive to maintain a stable population; thus, a surplus of 40 is produced.*

- *Give examples of wildlife diseases: rabies, tularemia, distemper.*
- *Conduct a Carmaleta hunt.*
- *Habitat loss, contamination, exploitation, and competition from exotics. Explain that all these categories are reasons some plants and animals are in trouble.*
- *Discuss endangered species.*
- *Discuss extinction.*

- *Distribute digest of laws.*
- *Have a conservation officer discuss:*
 - a) *Bag limits.*
 - b) *Seasons.*
 - c) *Who needs a license.*
 - d) *Trespassing.*
 - e) *Road hunting.*
 - f) *Hunter orange.*
 - g) *Mandatory hunter education.*

1. Shooter—When shooting firearms is of primary interest.
2. Limiting-out—When the hunter wants to bag the legal limit of game he or she is hunting.
3. Trophy—The hunter is selective, primarily seeking trophy animals of a particular species.
4. Technique—The emphasis is on how he or she hunts rather than what he or she hunts.
5. Mellowing—Enjoyment derived from the total hunting experience—the hunt, the companionship of other hunters, and an appreciation of the outdoors. When a hunter reaches this stage of development, bagging game is more symbolic than essential for his or her satisfaction.

The hunter's personal code of ethics changes as he or she passes through each of these five stages, often becoming more strict and imposing more constraints on his or her behavior and actions when hunting. Self-imposed restrictions add to the enjoyment of the hunting experience; for the ethical hunter is the hunter who can most appreciate the privilege of hunting.

“Slobs” who shoot up the countryside, vandalize property, and disregard the rights of landowners and citizens will lose the privilege to hunt on private and public lands. If an increasing number of hunters, however, follow the honorable traditions of their sport and practice a personal code of hunting ethics that meets public expectations, the future of sport hunting is assured.

Basics Of Hunting


Some people seem to be consistently “lucky hunters.” They have more opportunities, bag more game, or take better trophies than do their peers. Luck, however, has little to do with their successes. Knowledge and acquired skills give them something extra, and it is that beginning of knowledge and skill that forms the basics of hunting.

More than 100 species of game animals are hunted in North America. Each species, and often each local population, has characteristics that aid the hunter in locating and identifying them. Conservation laws often require that the hunter be able to distinguish not only the species but the sex of the animal as well.

A thorough understanding of the animal's habitat preferences, its food habits, and its behavior can also be valuable data to the hunter. Knowledge can help determine where, when, and how to hunt for the species of interest.


Good hunters understand their equipment and recognize personal limitations. Similarly, they choose their equipment carefully and recognize the limitations of that equipment. The new hunter can benefit from others—from experienced hunters and written recommendations such as those published by ammunition manufacturers. As experience is gained,

- *Permission cards.*
- *Dilemma method.*



I, _____
in return for the privilege of
hunting on private property,
agree to:

- Respect the landowner's property, hunting, fishing, trapping, or otherwise using only when and where the landowner approves
- Accept full liability for my actions and person while on the property
- Take every precaution against littering and fire
- Respect and obey game, fish, and firearms laws
- Respect fellow outdoorsmen, observing all safety precautions and the traditions of good sportsmanship



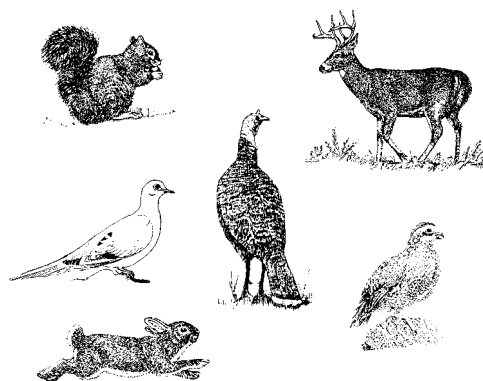
TO REPORT
HUNTING/FISHING
VIOLATIONS
CALL

1-800-BE-SMART

I hereby grant the person named on the reverse side, who has pledged to adhere to principles of ethical conduct, permission to hunt on my property on the following dates:

Signed _____
Landowner

- *Show species hunted in Mississippi.*



- *Show and discuss hunting equipment.*



one will develop personal preferences (in equipment) to fit the techniques and conditions faced. In every instance, the combination of equipment and personal limitations should be reasonable and adequate for the game sought. Using inadequate equipment is unethical and irresponsible.

The hunter must be thoroughly grounded in and continuously aware of firearms and archery safety. Safe zones of fire must be adhered to strictly, including the entire flight path of the projectile. Strict attention to full, complete, and absolute identification of every target is essential. Controlling the muzzle of the firearm ensures that only desired targets are the target.

Proper maintenance of equipment and attention to proper use of equipment must be practiced. Matching proper ammunition with the firearm being used and avoiding bore obstructions are of particular concern.

Adequate shooting ability can be developed by practicing the fundamentals of good marksmanship. The use of rests, slings, and similar aids to rifle marksmanship should be encouraged. The objective is to make a clean kill. Timing is often the secret to making good shots, and only experience can teach that sense of timing.

Preparation for hunting goes beyond the development of wildlife observation and shooting skills. A well-prepared hunter must know how to care for the game in the field so that it yields high-quality food. Wasting game meat is illegal.

Hunting Methods

Although there are as many techniques for hunting any given species of game as there are hunters, several techniques can be described. Following are discussions of those techniques, simplified to include hunting from stands, still hunting, stalking, and driving.

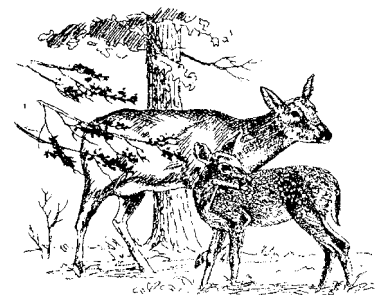
Hunting From Stands

Many kinds of hunting can be included under this hunting method. Sitting quietly on a fallen log waiting for squirrels, hunting diving ducks from a lay-out boat or box blind, calling turkeys from a place of concealment, or waiting for deer from a tree stand are examples of this type of hunting. Careful selection of the site for your stand is important. Success depends on waiting where the game is more likely to be seen. Holding still until exactly the right moment is a second key to success—that moment is learned by experience.

Successful stand hunters make good use of their knowledge of wildlife habits. Ducks, for example, almost always approach a decoy rig into the wind when preparing to land. By setting the decoys with careful consideration of the wind, the hunter can place birds for the best shot. This is particularly important to hunters who must shoot from a sitting position, like those in lay-out boats or shallow goose pits, since they can swing toward their off shoulder much more easily than away from it or toward their dominant side.

- *What kind of hunting waits for game to come to the hunter?*

- *What animals rely on scent to detect predators?*



Wind direction is important when the game being hunted uses scent as a major defense against predators; most mammals fall into this category. Usually a stand hunter has several alternative locations that can be used as the wind direction dictates. The hunter's approach to the stand should be made so that no warning scent trails are laid where the quarry crosses before reaching the stand location. This factor is much more important when few hunters are in an area than when the entire hunting area is saturated with human scent.

For animals that use their eyes as a primary defense against predators, concealment is a major concern. Light intensity and direction have an influence, and when conditions permit, the hunter should keep his back to the sun. When patterns of sun and shadow are present, the hunter is better concealed and able to see better if the stand is placed in the shade.

Color and pattern also influence concealment. Many game animals, particularly birds, have color vision. Bright clothing used for good visibility to other hunters is inappropriate for concealment situations where the close approach of the animal is necessary. Archery deer hunters, waterfowl hunters, and turkey hunters are excellent examples of hunters who need to use camouflage or blinds or a combination of the two. Camouflaged clothing (and skin creams) serve two major functions: to disrupt the human shape and to aid the hunter in blending into the surrounding cover. Sharp contrasts in the pattern of the material help in disrupting the human shape. The color and the shape of the pattern influence the degree to which the hunter blends with the cover in the area being hunted.

Commercial camouflage is available in several colors and patterns. Select something that fits your local conditions.

Blinds are another type of concealment. They should be big enough to do the job and be as inconspicuous as possible. Using native materials and early placement of blinds to let the wildlife get used to any obvious structures help to keep the blind acceptable. Most hunters tend to make blinds larger than are necessary. Frequently a hunter sitting still with a minimum of screening material will do better than one in a big, new, and obvious blind.

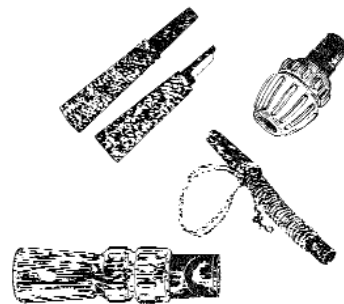
Calls are frequently used by hunters who want the animal to come to them. Predators, waterfowl, turkeys, squirrels, and deer can be brought into range by properly used calls. Instructional tapes or videos as well as manufacturer's directions can help you learn to call, but a good, local caller is more useful. Off-season practice and careful observation help you to become a first-rate game caller.

To be successful, the stand hunter needs to be in the right place at the right time. The hunter must hold still and be reasonably well-concealed. The ability to use calls properly can be a significant help, but intimate knowledge of the quarry's habits is more important. This form of hunting brings moving game to a stationary hunter. The other forms put the hunter in motion.

- *Show and discuss camouflage patterns and colors.*



- *Demonstrate use of game calls.*



- *Ask participants to compare the walking rhythms of people and four-legged animals. How will animals react to normal vs. "stalking predator" sound patterns?*

Still Hunting

Still hunting is actually a misnomer. A still hunter is one who moves through the hunting area, stopping periodically to wait or watch for game. It is really an attempt to move “without motion,” that is, hunting an area with a minimum of motion to prevent giving away your presence. The same precautions for stand hunters with respect to scent and motion apply to still hunters. Sound is an additional consideration. The amount of noise and the pattern of sounds produced by the hunter have an impact on success. Slow, steady movement or short moves with long pauses between them seem to be relatively good sound patterns for approaching game. Noise usually should be avoided. When noisy conditions are present, a fairly fast, nonchalant stroll through the hunting area may produce better results than an attempt at being stealthy.

The hunter must be constantly alert, using all available cues to locate the game before being detected. Thus, still hunting can be extremely challenging. Look for pieces (eyes, ears, legs, or tails) of the quarry. When deer hunting, look for horizontal shapes in a vertical framework. Look and listen more than you walk.

Jump shooting ducks, upland bird hunting, and small game hunting are forms of still hunting. The hunter moves as quietly as possible through likely holding cover until game is sighted or until likely spots are reached. Often **pauses** in such localities bring flushes from stalking game animals. Wise hunters time their pauses so they will be in position to shoot if game is flushed.

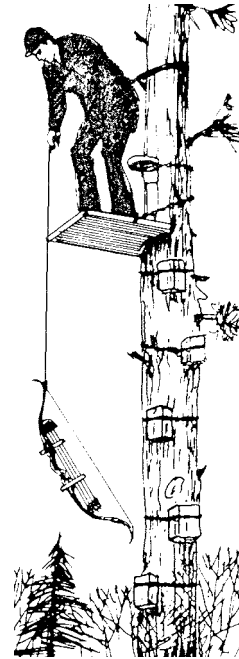
Still hunters at all times must be aware of the locations of any other hunters in the area. Often, **jump shooting** is more effective when two or three well-organized companions cooperate in a hunt. When cover is dense, safety demands highly visible clothes and enough contact, perhaps using a special whistled note or call, to keep all other companions located.

Still hunting demands knowledge of the game animals, the hunting area, and your abilities. Careful attention to detail, strong self-discipline, and patience are keys to success. The good hunter profits from mistakes, perfecting techniques by self-criticism.

Stalking

Stalking is a specialized form of still hunting. Usually game is sighted before a stalk begins. A stalking hunter may take a stand or still hunt until game is sighted, then begin to stalk into position for a shot. **Tracking** is a specialized type of stalk in which signs of the quarry are used to follow its movements until a shot can be made. Like a still hunter, the stalker must be able to dissect the terrain with the eyes, trying to spot the game movement without being detected.

The stalker must be aware of the quarry’s senses. When stalking birds (feeding geese or ducks sighted on a pond), scent is of little importance. The tendency of the birds to flush into the wind can be significant. Sight and sound are the primary warning systems in birds. Mammals usually



- *Stalking.*
- *Concealment.*

depend upon scent, sound, and sight to alert them to danger. Hunter concealment may be as complex as a moving blind or as simple as stopping each time the animal looks up.

Stalking requires an anticipation of the animal's movement and actions. Based upon observation of the game, the hunter attempts to intercept the animal without being detected. Because every movement carries a risk of being spotted, it is often wise to take the first good shot that is offered. Good shots are those that are likely to produce instantly fatal hits. "No shot" is preferable to a poor shot.

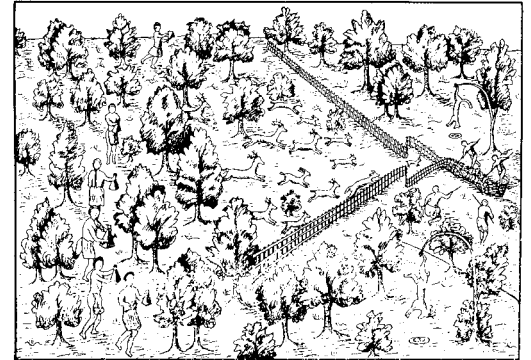
Stalking is usually associated with big-game hunting, but the technique is more widely used than that. Some small-game hunters "stalk" likely holding areas, trying to catch game unaware. Hunters who jump geese or previously sighted ducks from fields or ponds are stalking. Scull boats or drift boats represent special forms of stalking used on waterfowl. In this form of hunting, the hunter sights and selects the game before the moving part of the hunt begins. Some hunters find stalking to be the most rewarding type of hunting.

Driving

Driving involves pushing the game past a waiting hunter. Hunting with hounds is really a form of driving. The hound follows the animal, letting the hunter follow by ear the progress of the chase. The hunter either waits until the animal is brought to bay or waits in a likely spot for the game to come within range. The dog acts as a driver and the hunter is the "watcher" or "stander."

People may be drivers as well. This technique is used in some small-game or upland bird situations but is primarily a big-game technique. Drivers, either making noise or still hunting (this is often more effective), walk toward a line of hunters watching likely travel lanes. **Driving** can be quite effective if properly used, but caution is extremely important. Having clear zones of fire, showing the location of all the other hunters, and being certain that the entire flight path of the projectile is clear are never more important than in drives where drivers are approaching watchers with the game between them.

The lone hunter can often use other hunters as unwitting drivers. As hunters move into a particular piece of cover, the animals react as those being driven. Hunters that guard well-traveled areas may have dozens of "drivers" sending game their way. When hunting pressure is heavy, the most likely movements are early, late, and in the middle of the day, but action could come at almost any time. A hunter who understands game but does not know escape trails in a new hunting area can often locate likely spots using a topographic map.



Dogs

No discussion of hunting is complete without mention of dogs, hunting companions of humans for many centuries. Specialized breeds have been developed to do specific kinds of hunting. Some specialists have become nonworking breeds over time. For simplicity, **hunting dogs** may be classified as hounds, pointers, flushers, and retrievers. Some breeds do several tasks well; others are specialists.

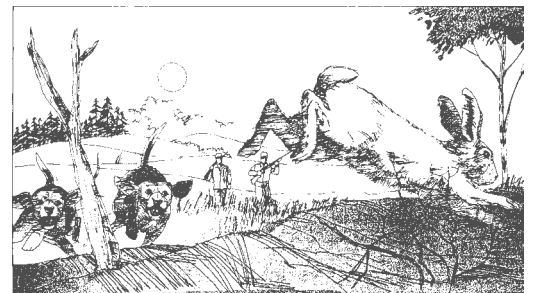
Hounds are ground-tracking specialists. They usually “tongue” or give voice while trailing their quarry. The hound follows the game animal until it comes to bay, goes to ground, or is shot by the hunter. The hunter must figure the probable route of the game to intercept it as it moves ahead of the dog. Hounds range from 13-inch beagles to Irish setters and similar-sized big-game dogs. They can be taught to trail almost anything that walks. Some may learn to point game briefly before flushing it, and some even learn to retrieve downed game. Their major strength is in following ground scent trails with their superior scenting ability.

Pointing dogs are used primarily to hunt upland birds. They are trained to locate, approach, and hold the gamebird in position by pointing (standing motionless). Pointing dogs use ground scent to some degree, but they are at their best working into the wind where airborne scents can be found and followed. Most pointing breeds can do a good job of recovering downed game if properly trained. Their major task, however, is to locate game and let the hunter flush the birds for close-range shooting. Besides the traditional pointing breeds like the Brittany spaniel, English setter, English pointer, and Irish setter, this group contains the continental breeders like the German short-haired pointer, weimaraner, and vizsla. These latter animals were bred to hunt everything from big game to waterfowl, but American hunters use them mostly as pointers.

Flushing dogs, like the springer spaniel and the cocker spaniel, are trained to work air scent, to work close to the gun, and to flush game within range of the hunter. Many hunters prefer these dogs for hunting pheasants and woodcock. Most flushing dogs also do a good job of retrieving downed game. Springers, in particular, have a good reputation as retrievers, on both land and water.

Retrievers are recovery specialists. They have excellent eyesight and an outstanding sense of smell. Their forte is retrieving downed game, and many retrievers double as flushing dogs. Some breeds, particularly Labrador retrievers, can be trained to point as well. These animals are specialists at recovering downed game over water, and their partially webbed feet and somewhat waterproof coats are tools of the trade. The more popular retrieving dog breeds include Labrador retrievers, Chesapeake Bay retrievers, and golden retrievers.

In selecting a dog, consider what you want the dog to do. After that decision is made, it is easier to select a breed that is bred to perform to expectations. Training is frustrating and time-consuming but rewarding. Hunting with a dog you trained yourself can enrich the hunting experiences.



Care And Use Of Game

Many game animals have valuable pelts, but the major use of animals bagged by hunters is as human food. The use of wild meat makes good sense ecologically and nutritionally.

Wild meat is generally derived from a system that humans do not normally exploit as food sources. Very few of us can subsist on maple twigs and red oak acorns, but deer do. These systems are more robust and less energy intensive than are the rations fed to domestic-meat animals. The human hunter acts as a top-level carnivore in a complex ecosystem when wildlife is consumed as a protein source.

Good-tasting meat starts with the shot. Good shot placement kills the animal quickly and cleanly. Prompt cleaning and cooking the carcass are the next steps to ensure a good meal. Clean the animal immediately, particularly if the intestines have been perforated. Cooling the carcass can be an important step to help preserve meat quality. Aging meat in a cooler (particularly with large animals like deer) can produce better tasting meat. Age at a temperature slightly above freezing.

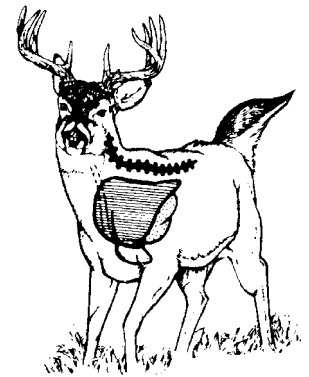
Skinning can be accomplished quickly and simply if the animal is warm. Small game can be skinned by removing the head, feet, and tail, slitting the skin across the back, and pulling the skin off both ends. Furbearers can be skinned by pulling the skin off like an inverted glove, starting with the tail and hind legs and working to the nose.

Most game birds taste better and remain moist if they are plucked rather than skinned. The fur, feathers, wings, and tail of game birds and mammals are useful by-products; flytiers and lure manufacturers are eager to get these materials. Down from waterfowl can also be saved and used in pillows, clothing, or sleeping bags.

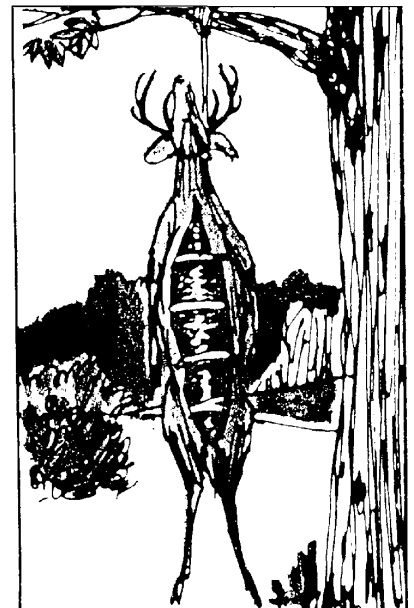
If the animal is to be used at home, hunter's need to prepare it for cooking by cutting it into serving or cooking pieces. Be sure you have trimmed away bloodshot areas, cleaned any hair and debris from the meat, and made it as attractive as possible.

Proper cooking of game is essential. Game meats tend to be dry, so moist-cooking methods are a good idea. Older game animals can be tougher than domestic meats; so slow, tenderizing methods like stewing or roasting can be used on older animals. Most game has an excellent and delicate flavor. It is often best when either rare or well done, but only if well done and moist. Excellent wild-game cookbooks are available, and most game can be used as substitutes for domestic meat in other dishes.

- *Refer to Extension Information Sheets 327 and 328, on dressing and cooking.*



Hanging to cool.



Survival And Orientating

When an outdoorsman goes into the woods, he or she must be prepared for emergencies. An important part of enjoying the outdoors is knowing that you can eat, build a fire, administer first aid, and do many of the other skills necessary for survival.

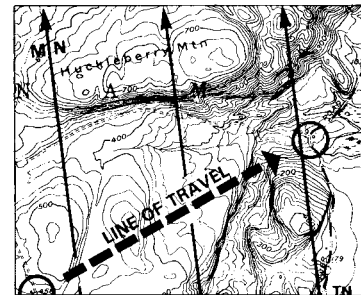
One “must” for all outdoorsmen is to have a map, flashlight, and compass. They may not be needed for hunting on the “back 40” that has been explored since you were old enough to walk, but they are needed when you go into large public areas where there are few roads. Knowledge of map and compass skills could save hours or even days of anxiety.

Maps—Maps are useful tools. They tell the reader the description, details, directions, distances, and designations. From these the hunter has a good “picture” of the area.

Compass—The compass is an outdoorsman’s ally. It can help you find a deer stand, where a deer went down after dark, or your way home. The compass always points north. With this in mind, you can use it to guide you.

Flashlight—If you are out after dark, maps and compasses may be useless without a flashlight.

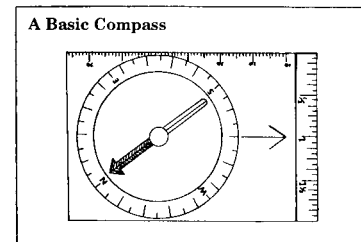
- *Show topographic map and indicate 5 D’s.*
- *Compass and types.*
- *Declination.*
- *Determine step.*



Conclusion

The sport of hunting is capsuled from safety and motivation to technique and cookery. Classroom lessons cannot make a hunter—only experience can do that. These lessons can help place experiences in perspective and possibly aid your development as a hunter, from shooter to aesthetic hunter.

Why do people hunt? People hunt for a lot of reasons, but perhaps the most common one is the enjoyment of being a natural predator in a natural system. We hunt for the sight of dawn, the smell of the swamp, frosty apples, autumn leaves, and the thrill of hearing and seeing wild animals. We hunt to recreate, to reestablish, and to confirm our relationships to the natural world in which we live.





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