

# Deer Hunting



*Whitetail Deer Hunting Basics and More*

by Robert Waters

## ***Table Of Contents***

	page
FOREWORD . . . . .	4
AUTHOR'S PREFACE . . . . .	5
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	7
Chapters	
I. COMMON WEAPONS USED IN HUNTING DEER. . . . .	10
II. MAJOR EQUIPMENT AND CLOTHING . . . . .	12
The "right" firearm	
Clothing, Stands, Scents	
Miscellaneous Equipment	
III. SAFETY . . . . .	23
IV. BECOMING SKILLED IN WEAPON USE . . . . .	30
Modern Weapons	
Archery	
Black Powder	
V. WHERE TO HUNT . . . . .	50
VI. WHEN TO HUNT . . . . .	53
VII. COMMON METHODS OF HUNTING . . . . .	57
Hunting from stand	
Still-hunting and Stalking	
Dogs	
Drives Without dogs	
Rattling	

VIII. FAVORITE FOODS OF DEER . . . . .	69
IX. BEING AT THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME . . . . .	73
X. SCOUTING . . . . .	75
XI. BAGGING THE DEER . . . . .	82
XII. TRACKING WOUNDED DEER . . . . .	88
XIII. GETTING THE DEER OUT . . . . .	90
XIV. PREPARATION OF THE MEAT FOR THE TABLE . . . . .	94
Field Dressing, Butchering, Aging, Special Preparation of the Meat - Favorite recipe	

## APPENDIXES

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY/INDEX . . . . .	99
MISCELLANEOUS TIPS . . . . .	107
Reminisces by Jerry Franklin . . . . .	112
Meat by J.L.F. . . . .	113
Venison Recipes - J.L.F. . . . .	114
Resources: recommended reading, outfitters, tapes, etc. . . . .	117
Hunter's Check List . . . . .	121
How To Build A Portable Tree Stand. . . . .	123

## **Foreword**

When Bob told me he was writing a book on whitetail deer hunting basics, and asked me to edit it, I thought, "Why is there need for another book on deer hunting? There must be at least a blue million already in print." But as I began to read his words I realized again what I already knew, that Bob is an avid outdoorsman, an accomplished hunter, and a deadly shot with rifle, shotgun, handgun, and bow. Because of a lifetime of varied experiences, he has a lot to say. And the reason there is need for yet another book on deer hunting, is because Bob is saying it, adding fresh insights to old ideas, giving new color and slants to proven concepts and methods. We are reminded that basic truths that enhance knowledge, which brings greater pleasure and happiness are always worthwhile. The reader will find excellent guidelines and sound advice in this book. Whether they are just beginning to experience the joys of the out of doors and hunting, or are veterans of past years and numerous camps, many golden nuggets of practical advice will be gleaned from this book that will embellish the quality of the hunting experience, and add much to the safety, pleasure, and success of the outing.

Jerry L. Franklin

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The aim of this book is to help the beginning hunter learn the basics of whitetail deer hunting and to develop the skill necessary for successful seasons year after year. While special attention has been given to basic fundamentals, the reader will find this book thorough enough to give a beginner, a sometimes successful hunter, or an unsuccessful hunter, the knowledge and confidence that he needs to bring home the venison and put it on the table as a delicious meal.

Those who have become proficient in the art of deer hunting are usually individuals who have constantly endeavored to learn more about the whitetail and how to outwit this wily creature. This book has some ideas for such a person as well. It is also intended to encourage sportsmanship and to discourage the practices that cause some to look with disdain upon the sport of deer hunting.

I am indebted to Jerry L. Franklin who has helped with the proofreading rewording etc. involved in the writing of this book. Jerry has also written the “forward” and contributed some interesting items included in the Appendix.

One of Mr. Franklin's greatest contributions to this book is in the area of firearms. Although he did not do the writing, he served as my firearms consultant, and his qualifications give the reader assurance of sound advice where statements are made concerning firearms. Mr. Franklin served in the **U.S. Army** for two years, starting in 1958. During this period of time he was on the Fort Lewis Sixth Army and All Army rifle teams. He won three “excellence in competition” (leg) medals during this time. He fired over 30,000 rounds with M1 Garands while in the military, and

thousands of rounds in small bore competition. Because of his exceptional marksmanship ability he was awarded the honor of **Distinguished Rifleman**. He has instructed marksmanship both with small and big bore rifles and shotguns for many years, in and out of the military. Jerry continued to shoot after leaving the military, and uses his shooting skills in pursuit of the whitetail and other wild game.

R.W.

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## **Introduction**

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Whitetail deer hunting is the most popular big game hunting sport in America! This has continued to be a fact over the years for many reasons. Whitetail deer are plentiful throughout America. Despite the fact that they are heavily hunted, whitetail deer continue to produce more offspring than are harvested. In fact, they are becoming a nuisance in many areas because of over-population.

The whitetail deer is a challenge to hunt. They can see, hear and smell better than human beings. Hunters find it challenging to go into the deer's territory and attempt to outwit them. A successful hunt means meat on the table, and if properly cared for, deer meat (venison) is healthy food with a delightful taste.

Almost anyone who hunts can be fortunate enough to bag a deer occasionally. However, a consistently successful hunter is a sportsman who can bring home legally taken venison year after year. The more successful hunters are those who spend fewer *man-hours* bagging a deer. But of course many hunters take great pleasure in just being in the great outdoors. Their hunt is a success regardless of whether they bag a deer or not. Another measure of success is the size, length, and/or number of points the antlers have. Generally speaking, it takes a great deal more skill and patience to take an old, smart buck than a younger deer. Therefore, some hunters prefer to pass up nontrophy deer in their pursuit of a trophy. The definition of a trophy may greatly differ

from one person to the next, and from one part of the country to the next. On the other hand, some hunters aren't interested in trophies, and hunt strictly for fun and for meat.

Poachers are people who kill deer illegally. Poachers need to realize that most people, especially true sportsmen, do not admire or respect a poacher. Killing deer illegally is nothing to brag about, and those who do it are likely to eventually get caught. When one poaches deer, he is actually cheating his fellow sportsmen. Aside from the threat of being caught by the authorities and being looked upon as an outlaw, the poacher should realize there will be occasions when he could have killed a large buck if he had avoided disturbing the illegal deer. During the rut, bucks often trail does, but if a hunter shoots the doe he will never know the size of the buck that may have been trailing her. Those who give in to the temptation to take an illegal deer are not true sportsmen, and they contribute to the bad opinion many non-hunters have about true sportsmen.

One of the greatest threats to the sport of whitetail deer hunting is the hunter himself. Unsportsmanlike habits displayed by some hunters are all too common. Spotlighting, carelessness, trespassing, leaving trash, damaging property, etc. leaves landowners with no alternative except to *post* or restrict the use of their land. A true sportsman will ask permission to hunt on private property and will show his appreciation in various ways if the landowner gives permission to hunt.

There are those who do not approve of humans killing deer under any circumstances, and not all of them are vegetarians. If they had their way there would be no harvest of any deer by human beings. The result would be an overpopulation of deer. Starvation and disease, which kill in massive numbers, often follow overpopulation. Due to diminishing natural habitat and the popu-

lation explosion of humans, predators that once kept the deer herds in balance are either gone or have been drastically reduced. This fact alone does not justify the slaughter of deer, but does justify thinning the herds. Killing for the sake of killing is behavior exhibited by immature individuals. Nevertheless, meat is and has always been an accepted natural source of food. The true sportsman appreciates, respects and enjoys the forests and other areas populated by deer, and attempts to harvest an animal from these areas only when he is confident of a quick, clean kill.

Learning about whitetail deer hunting is like studying any of the sciences; it is a continual learning experience. Sources for learning include: books, magazines, other hunters, videos, and actual experience. Deer are often unpredictable. However, as you gain knowledge regarding their habits and needs, and of the techniques of hunting, you will become more confident in your hunting ability, and more confident that you can have a successful hunt.

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## **Chapter One**

### **Common Weapons Used In Hunting Deer**

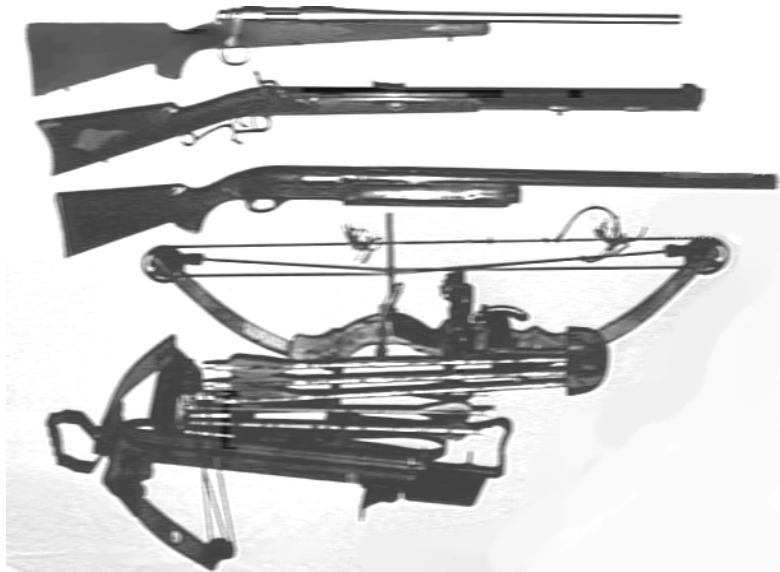
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The centerfire rifle is the most widely used weapon for deer hunting. It is the most reliable, offers the most versatility, and is the most accurate. Shotguns with slugs are next in reliability, however, the length of time in which the law allows the use of these modern weapons is limited. Therefore, primitive weapon hunting has increased in popularity.

Archery hunting has become increasingly popular in the last 30 years. This is due mainly to the longer seasons offered for bow hunting and the uncrowded conditions during times when hunting with firearms is prohibited. Some hunters enjoy archery hunting so much they have completely given up hunting with other weapons. The challenge of taking deer with any type of bow and arrow is much greater than with firearms. Each year, bow hunters see dozens of deer they could have easily taken with a rifle or shotgun, which they will not attempt to shoot with a bow.

Another category of weapons referred to as primitive weapons, are the muzzleloaders. Black powder and/or *pyrodex* propellants are used in these weapons. The traditional means of igniting the powder is either with a cap placed on the nipple, or by a flint

attached to the hammer which upon striking metal causes a spark in the flash pan. The latter type of muzzleloaders are seldom used for hunting, except by the purist.



The major types of weapons used in hunting deer are pictured above: centerfire rifle; muzzleloading black powder rifle; shotgun; compound bow; and crossbow.

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## **Chapter Two**

### **Major Equipment and Clothing**

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#### **The "Right" Firearm**

Every sportsman wants to use the right firearm. However, there is no firearm that is "best" for deer hunting in all situations. In fact some hunters have more than one weapon and make their choice based upon the situations they expect to encounter on a given day. Large caliber weapons and shotguns with slugs are good choices where a shot less than 100 yards is likely.

In choosing the right weapon, one should consider his or her reaction to recoil. Recoil can cause flinching, or jerking of the trigger, resulting in poor shooting. Therefore, lighter calibers are ordinarily fired more accurately by most hunters. A .22 caliber rimfire, though light in recoil is not an appropriate deer cartridge, and neither are some of the larger calibers that are light in power. Most of the felt recoil can be eliminated from a highpowered rifle by having a muzzle break and/or a special butt pad installed. The favorite weapons of a growing number of hunters are the 6 millimeters and .25 calibers. These cartridges are considered too small by some hunters, however, if used with premium bullets they are highly effective, especially on smaller deer. Factory loads with Nosler Partition bullets are marketed professionally,

as are the Barnes X Bullets. The Barnes X Bullet is a solid piece of copper with an expansion cavity, and is highly recommended for light calibers. (This is because some bullets in the smaller, light calibers will not hold together and pass completely through a deer.) This is usually because they are made with light jackets designed for varmint hunting where longer shots are made. When this occurs, a blood trail may be nonexistent and the deer may be difficult to trail. If a weapon such as the **.243 Winchester** or smaller is used, more care should be given to bullet placement. This is not to say that bullet placement is not important when using larger calibers.

Because of higher velocity, the *magnum* rifles usually spoil more meat than necessary, but they are particularly useful when hunting where a deer would be difficult to trail or to retrieve, such as in thick brush or tall weeds, or where hunters are numerous. A quick kill might keep the deer from crossing a body of water or from traveling down a steep incline where it would be difficult to retrieve. A magnum might also keep the deer from running by another hunter who might shoot at, and claim it for himself.

There are several types of rifles commonly used in hunting deer: semiautomatic; bolt action; lever action; pump action; and the single shot. The venerable lever action **Winchester 30-30** has certainly left its mark in deer hunting history. However, semiautomatic and bolt action rifles are now more popular, primarily because of the ballistic limitations of the 30-30. Bolt action rifles are ordinarily more accurate than semiautomatics, more reliable, and the trigger is usually adjustable for weight of pull to suit one's preference. An important aspect of the semiautomatic is that it allows the shooter to get off more shots at a moving deer before it gets out of sight or range. Also, gas or blow back operated rifles and shotguns have less felt recoil. Thus, they will be more enjoyable to shoot and will likely be shot more accurately

in most situations. However, because of the fact that the hunter often only get one shot, many hunters prefer the accuracy and reliability of bolt action rifles.



Pictured above are some of the modern weapons used in hunting deer. From top to bottom: semiautomatic rifle; bolt action rifle; lever action rifle; semiautomatic shotgun; and pump action shotgun. Single shot and double barrel not pictured.

Some of the most popular and recommended calibers are included in the list that follows: **.243 Winchester**; **Rem. .25-06**; **.270 Winchester**; **7mm-08**; **.280 Remington**; **.308 Winchester**; **.30-06 Springfield**; and the **7mm Remington Magnum**. Ballistics charts are furnished free of charge by ammunition companies. To compare the ballistics of the above with the **30-30 Winchester**, note the chart on the following page. ("FB" stands for flat base bullet.)

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**Long Range Trajectory Of Some Popular Calibers  
(Using BOATTAIL Bullets)**

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	Bullet	100	150	200	250	300	400	500
Cartridge	wt.	yds.	yds.	yds.	yds.	yds.	yds.	yds.
.243 Win	100	1.9	1.6	0.0	-3.0	-7.6	-22.0	-44.8
.25-06 Rem.	100	1.9	1.6	0.0	-2.7	-6.9	-20.5	-42.7
.270 Win	140	1.8	1.5	0.0	-2.9	-7.2	-20.6	-41.3
7mm-08 Rem.	140	2.1	1.7	0.0	-3.2	-8.1	-23.5	-47.7
.280 Rem.	150	2.1	1.7	0.0	-3.3	-8.3	-24.2	-49.7
.30-30 Win FB	150	3.9	3.2	0.0	-6.2	-16.1	-49.4	-105.2
.308 Win.	150	2.2	1.8	0.0	-3.5	-8.7	-25.5	-52.3
.30-06	165	2.1	1.8	0.0	-3.3	-8.2	-23.4	-47.0
7mm Rem. Mag	139	1.6	1.3	0.0	-2.5	-6.3	-18.3	-36.6

## **The Hunting Knife**

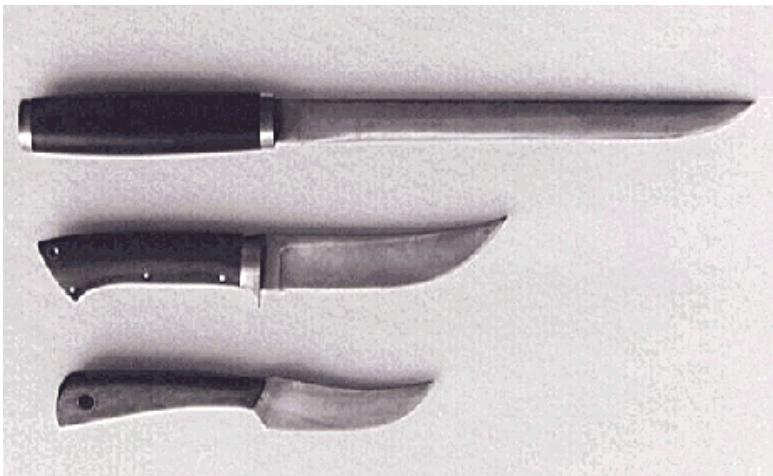
A knife is an essential piece of equipment for the deer hunter. For wilderness hunts, most experts would recommend a small, lightweight knife with a 4 inch blade. It can be a sheath knife, or a pocket knife. Large heavy knives such as the Bowie Knife are not practical for carrying on wilderness hunts, or hunts near home.

Each hunter must make the choice of what is most practical on a given hunt. Over the past thirty three years of hunting I have carried pocket knives, single blade folding knives, and sheath skinning knives. Most of my hunting has been near home, in which case deer were immediately loaded onto a vehicle and transported to a location for skinning and butchering. Also, for the last ten years the bow and arrow has been my preferred choice of weapon. Thus, a more versatile tool has been needed.

The type of knife I have used on occasions over several years would be considered too long by most experts. Nevertheless, it is capable of doing the job of several tools. It will do some things that a hatchet or saw cannot do, and many things that cannot be done with a small knife.

One cannot expect a knife to do more than it was designed to do. There is no knife that is best for every situation, or that will do everything well. Carrying more than one knife, and even a saw and hatchet is not practical. What if a knife could be designed which is reasonably light, stout, capable of being used in the place of a hatchet or saw, suitable for field dressing, butchering deer, and capable of cutting small limbs with one stroke. Some would have no interest in this type of knife because the only use

they have for a hunting knife is to field dress their deer and then maybe use the same knife for skinning when they get home. Nevertheless, the knife I have built (pictured on the following page) does all the things mentioned above. I built it from a used planer blade that was given to me at a sawmill. The blade is 9" long, 3/4" wide, 1/8" thick and has an overall length of 14 inches. (Pictured at the top in the illustration below.)



**With a knife similar to the longer one pictured above, one can cut a 3" limb or bush with only a few strokes by first bending it to one side. All of these knives were made by the author and each has their own purpose.**

A skinning knife is essential for tough jobs such as skinning fur bearing animals (especially beaver), and is even helpful for skinning deer. But, considering the fact that after a few simple cuts the skin can be pulled off, the need for a skinning knife (especially to carry when hunting) is not that great. If a skinning knife is used there is no need for a long blade - a four inch blade is long enough. For skinning, I use one of two knives (pictured

above): 1) a short light skinning knife; or 2) a medium size, *hollow ground* knife used for delicate work.

There are many fine knives on the market to choose from. In the event you cannot find one to fit your needs, you can make one yourself or have one made to your specifications.

## CLOTHING

Wearing proper clothing is a key factor that may affect the success of your hunt. If you become chilled when on a stand, you will not be able to remain patient and still. On the other hand, if you get too warm you will perspire. Deer are able to smell up to 100 yards or more if air currents are unfavorable and you can be assured they will not come closer to identify the source of the odor.

Woolen garments have long been used by the military because of their comfort under all conditions. Even when wet, wool still offers some protection from the cold. *Down* is probably the warmest, however it offers little or no protection from the cold when wet and should therefore be used with a rain-proof garment. The popularity of new synthetic insulating materials is due to the fact that they dry more quickly than down, and continue to insulate even if they become wet. New synthetics and wool are generally far less expensive than *down*. Nevertheless, down is still the warmest and, if used with a rainproof garment, is an excellent choice for extremely cold conditions.

Sometimes it is necessary to walk long distances to the hunting site. In such cases, it might be advisable to start out light and

carry additional clothing. If you wear enough clothing when walking to ensure warmth while being still, you are certain to get excessively warm and perspire. You can use a backpack to carry additional clothing for use when needed. The idea is to stay warm and dry, but not too warm.

It is not always practical to carry rain gear because of the extra weight and bulk. An inexpensive, lightweight substitute is a large trash bag. Cut holes for your head and arms and you are ready for a possible thundershower. It will also serve as an effective windbreaker in emergencies.

Although it's not essential, camouflage clothing will decrease your chances of being detected by deer. Even though they are thought to be color blind, whitetail deer can easily see white. In fact, their alarm signal is the flash of their white tail. Without camouflage, the hands and face are most likely to be noticed, especially if you have a light complexion. Do not wear light colored clothing unless there is snow or sleet on the ground!

## STANDS

A *stand* is a place where the hunter positions himself to wait for deer. At this location, he may sit on a stump, log, build a blind on the ground, build or take a stand in a tree (or climb into a tree), or use some kind of commercially built apparatus for getting above the ground. This section deals with the word *stand* particularly as it relates to equipment. *Stands* as a method of hunting, is dealt with in a later chapter.

Many hunters build some kind of permanent stand in a tree, or use portable climbing or ladder type stands. To build a permanent stand is to advertise your spot. Some portable stands are ex-

pensive, noisy to move around, and are susceptible to theft and vandalism if left in the woods or field.

It is a common practice for hunters to use "screw in steps" to get up into a tree. A light portable stand is pulled up into the tree with a rope and then secured. The steps are removed while not in use, and are reinserted when needed.

One method of constructing a seat in a tree (where the situation will allow) is to use a strap approximately 2"x14', to make a seat. This is accomplished by tying and wrapping the strap around two limbs that come out in a fork that also has a limb underneath on which to place the feet. You can sit on the strap and lean back against the trunk of the tree. It is not as difficult as you might think to locate a suitable tree, especially in fields and at the edge of woods. The biggest problem is getting to the first limbs. Climbing steps can be used for this purpose.

This size strap can be rolled compactly and will fit into your coat pocket. It is inexpensive, light, noiseless and surprisingly comfortable to sit on, and is very handy when necessary to drag a deer. Various sizes can usually be found at any Army Surplus store.

## **Scents**

Deer have a keen sense of smell, and it would seem logical that the hunter could easily fool them by using sex and food scents.

Sents can be used effectively, but deer are intelligent and the scent used must be effective. Food scent must be food with which deer are acquainted, otherwise it may only alarm them. Urine or "doe in rut" scents have proved to be helpful for attracting deer, and for helping to mask the odor of humans. Although it is possible for such scents to keep the hunter from bagging the big one. For this reason, some hunters believe that, "no scent is the best scent." Their efforts are directed toward holding down the odor on their body and clothing. This is a good practice even if scents are used.

Many hunters claim successful results from using various types of cover scents. The most common includes skunk, fox urine, and natural scents from plants. Where livestock are present, some hunters intentionally step in livestock manure. Obvious arguments could be made against coverscents, nevertheless they are often effective.

## **Miscellaneous Equipment**

For most of us, the amount and quality of equipment used is limited by interest, income and financial commitments. Even though a firearm or bow and arrow, and a knife are the only essential pieces of equipment, there are many items that contribute to comfort and aid in outwitting the elusive whitetail. Due to new technology, hunting equipment is almost unlimited. The following is a partial list of items readily available and useful: rubber boots, hunter orange garments (when mandatory), gloves, flashlights, backpacks, binoculars (or monocular), range finders, saws, canteens, lighters, compasses, cords or straps, deer calls, antlers for rattling, decoys, timer clocks, cameras to be triggered by deer, scent bombs, long range hearing devices and even hand

held blinds used for stalking. These, and other items can be ordered from outfitters. See appendix for outfitters.

If the hunter is planning to camp or stay for an extended period of time, the list goes on. (See the check lists in the Appendix.)

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## **Chapter Three**

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### **Safety**

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Anyone who hunts must realize that there is the possibility of being injured in an unpredictable situation or by another hunter. However, if safety precautions are observed the chances of being injured in a car accident are greater than being injured while hunting. The mandatory use of international orange during hunts where firearms are being used has almost eliminated accidental shootings where hunters are mistaken for deer. In fact, firearms accidents are on the decline and have been for many years. A great deal of credit for this can be attributed to the many safety programs implemented by the **National Rifle Association**.

Proper handling of firearms, hunting safety, and sportsmanlike measures are being taught to young hunters in most states as a prerequisite to hunting without adult supervision, and to getting a hunting license. Some basic information on safety is to know your weapon. Know where the safety is and how to use it, and always know whether the weapon is loaded or unloaded. You and others who observe can see at a glance that it is unloaded or safe if the *action* is open. When around other people, treat all firearms as if they are loaded even when you know they are not. Never point a firearm of any kind in the direction of another person. Extreme care should be taken when loading and unloading a firearm because this is when an accidental discharge is most

likely. From the first time a person picks up a firearm to the day he retires to the rocking chair, he should make proper use of the weapon's safety. When you raise the firearm to discharge the round, the safety is taken off: when the firearm is lowered, the safety should be put back on. This should become as automatic as breathing. Checking the safety periodically is a good practice. It will eventually become a conditioned reflex and will require little conscious effort.

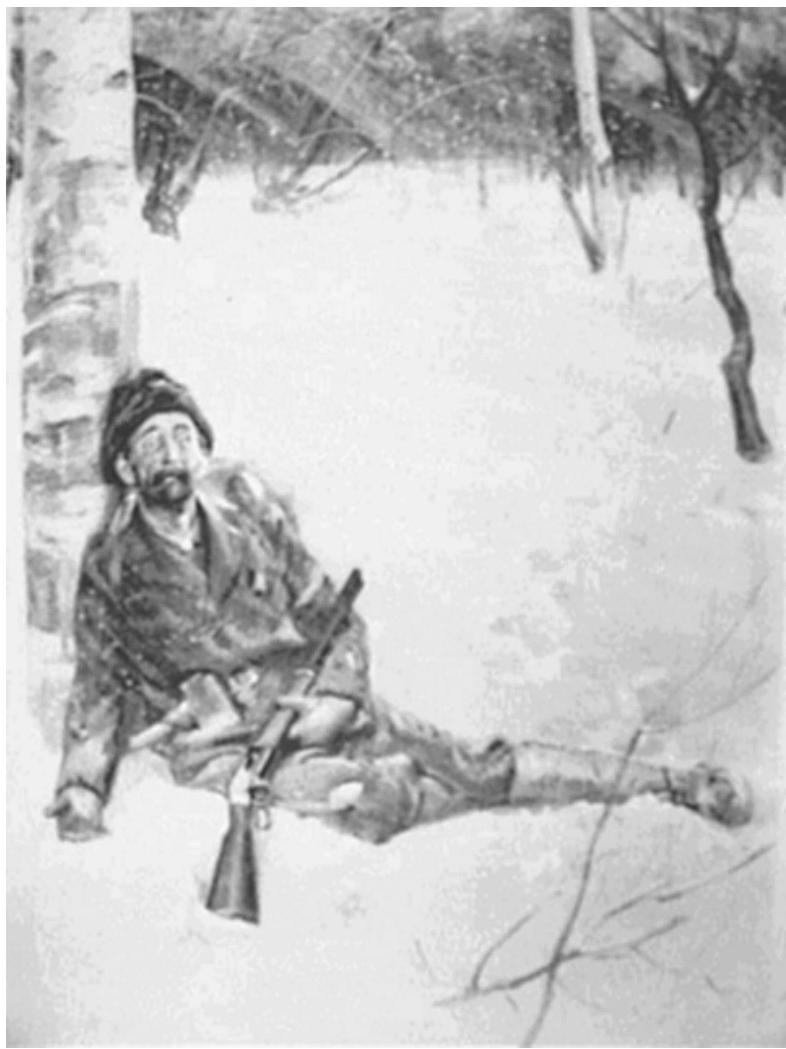
Before loading a firearm, be certain the barrel is unobstructed. Also, be certain you have the correct ammunition. For example, a **.308 Winchester** cartridge will fit into the chamber of a **.270 Winchester**. Since the **.308** bullet is larger, firing it would almost certainly damage the weapon and would present extreme danger to the shooter.

A danger that must not be overlooked is the possibility of the hunter suffering from frost bite or hypothermia (heat loss from the body). Hypothermia causes the greatest loss of life to the outdoorsman. When hunting in remote areas, extra precautions against hypothermia are needed. Matches, rain clothing, wind screens, and a compass are items that should be carried along. If it is cold, do not take chances like walking on a log over a stream. Be extremely careful along bluffs where there is water. Wet, mossy rocks can be as slick as ice. If you get lost or injured, do not panic. Seek or build a shelter, build a fire and wait for help.

If you get cold, do something to warm up. You can walk, return to camp or the vehicle, or perhaps build a fire. If available, drink hot liquids. Never allow yourself to stay chilled for long. Probably the greatest danger of becoming chilled is when you are fatigued or when you get wet from unexpected precipitation. An overhanging bluff will offer protection from rain. A large tree, which leans to one direction will give some shelter from rain.

Avoid sitting on a rock because under cold conditions it can reduce your body temperature rapidly. (See the wind-chill factor chart below.)

Air temp. (°F.)	Wind speed in miles per hour									
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	
<b>Equivalent wind chill temperatures</b>										
35°	35	32	22	16	12	8	6	4	3	
30°	30	27	16	9	4	1	-2	-4	-5	
25°	25	22	10	2	-3	-7	-10	-12	-13	
20°	20	16	3	-5	-10	-15	-18	-20	-21	
15°	15	11	-3	-11	-17	-22	-25	-27	-29	
10°	10	6	-9	-18	-24	-29	-33	-35	-37	
5°	5	0	-15	-25	-31	-36	-41	-43	-45	
0°	0	-5	-22	-31	-39	-44	-49	-52	-53	
-5°	-5	-10	-27	-38	-46	-51	-56	-58	-60	
-10°	-10	-15	-34	-45	-53	-59	-64	-67	-69	
-15°	-15	-21	-40	-51	-60	-66	-71	-74	-76	
-20°	-20	-26	-46	-58	-67	-74	-79	-82	-84	
-25°	-25	-31	-52	-65	-74	-81	-86	-89	-92	



**"Lost In The Snow"**

If you hunt alone, always leave a note or tell someone where you are going, and when they can expect you to be home or back at camp.

Hunting from trees is an effective method to take a deer, but one must use extra caution because of the danger of falling. Never grab or step on a dead limb without first checking it. Bump the limb hard with your hand or foot away from the trunk. If it feels solid, it will be safe to use if you step or grab it near the trunk. To avoid slipping and falling, get a firm hold on a second limb before you turn loose of the first or step to another. I would recommend safety straps for extra precaution.

Jumping from a tree when your feet are cold could result in busted blood vessels causing severe pain, and may result in sprained ankles or broken bones. Avoid jumping from trees if possible!

Ticks are known to carry diseases; therefore preventing these pesky critters from getting on you is another safety precaution that must not be overlooked. There are many good repellents available, but when hunting, avoid insect repellents with an odor.

Hornets are a danger to hunters. Their nests are usually found in trees and may be close to the ground. I have had several close encounters with hornets and was stung many times by bumblebees on one occasion.



The small hornet's nest pictured above was only about five feet above the ground. Hornets present a danger to hunters in warm weather. This particular nest was either abandoned or the hornets were killed by frost.

Climbing over fences can cause damage to the fence, so be considerate of the land owners' property. Always climb under or through the fence. Never climb over a fence with a loaded firearm! If alone, unload the firearm, place it on the other side of the fence, and then climb through. If hunting with a partner, your partner may hold the weapons while you cross the fence and vice versa.

Before shooting, be certain of your target and consider your backstop. No deer is worth chancing a shot that might endanger human life, livestock, or a dwelling. If there is no opportunity for a safe shot, do not shoot. If you are not hunting you should never have a cartridge in the chamber. If you want to have good memories of your hunting experiences, always be careful and safe.

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## **Chapter 4**

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### **Become Skilled In Use Of Your Weapon**

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#### **Modern Weapons**

Whatever weapon you choose, it is vitally important that you practice shooting it. Practice shooting from different distances and positions. Cans, rocks, and other targets are fun to shoot and are good practice, but paper targets are best for determining accuracy. The important thing is that you know your limitations, and this cannot be accomplished unless you practice.

The expense of highpower ammunition may inhibit many hunters from practicing as much as they would like. Therefore, in order to afford the amount of practice needed to become a skilled shooter, .22 rimfire ammunition can be used. The techniques of shooting can be learned by practicing with the light .22 caliber, however it is essential to practice some of the time with the highpowered rifle used for hunting. Many hunters reload their own ammunition. Reloading offers the advantage of custom loads matched to a particular rifle for greater accuracy or specific circumstances, and it offers cheaper shooting.

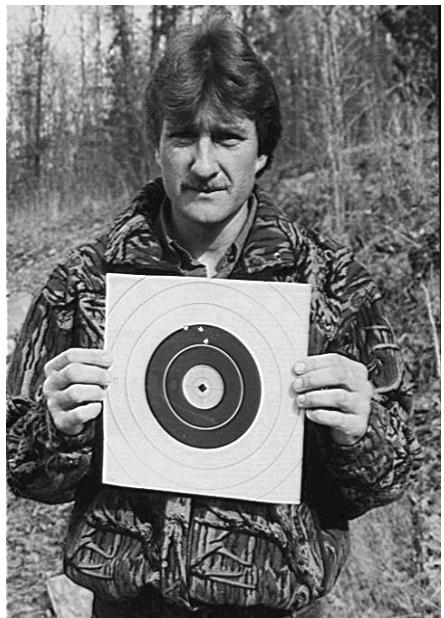
The shooter must learn to squeeze the trigger and fire rounds without flinching (or jerking of the trigger). Jerking can result in erratic shooting or complete misses.

Some gun owners cringe at the thought of *dry firing* their weapons, but it does not damage a highpower rifle to *dry fire* it. (Hammer type guns may be an exception.) *Dry firing* has long been practiced by the military and can help to improve your shooting ability. Practice aiming and *dry firing* at targets just as you would with live ammunition. If you have a rifle with a scope, place it firmly on a sandbag rest. Position yourself as if you were going to fire the weapon, then squeeze the trigger until it snaps. Observe the movement of the reticle (cross hairs, post, dot, etc.) on the target as the hammer strikes the firing pin. Using this method, deviations in your aim can be detected. Once you become satisfied with your performance while *dry firing*, you can test your readiness for the noise and recoil by having someone else load your rifle for you while you have your back turned. During a series of shots, your friend will leave the chamber empty without your being aware. Each time you squeeze the trigger you will not know whether the chamber is loaded or unloaded. If under these conditions there is no observable flinching when dry firing on an empty chamber, you can conclude that your rifle does not have too much recoil for you, or that you have not developed a flinch. This will give you confidence in the accuracy of your weapon.

The best measure of your shooting ability and of the accuracy of your rifle is the size of three or five shot groups at 100 yards from a sandbag rest. (See the example of a 3 shot group on the next page.) While 3 inch groups are acceptable, one inch and under is a confidence building goal. There are a number of factors that affect accuracy, the quality of the weapon and ammunition being the most noteworthy. To consistently shoot small groups,

the scope or sights must be of good quality and must be firmly secured, and you must exercise a high degree of trigger control.

**Chuck Burton holds a target shot by the author. The target was shot with a Remington 6MM, Model 742, at 100 yards. The group (at 12:00) measures a little over an inch and is all one could expect with a semiautomatic.**



Sighting-in a rifle is a difficult task for some, but many consider this "chore" a pleasure. Letting someone else sight-in your weapon might not be a bad idea for a beginning shooter, but why let someone else enjoy the shooting when you are paying for the ammunition. Once you have learned the techniques of accurate shooting, you can align a scope with as few as three shots. If you purchase a scope for your rifle, obtain a quality screwdriver that perfectly fits the screws. While the screws are only finger tight, position the scope. Use "lock tight" (or fingernail polish if not available) on the threads of the base screws, and tighten the screws until snug. If you are using a bolt action rifle, bore sighting will ensure that your first shot will be in the target area or at least on the paper. This is accomplished by taking out the bolt and looking through the barrel at a six to eight inch *bull's-eye* (the black portion of the target) at 25 yards.

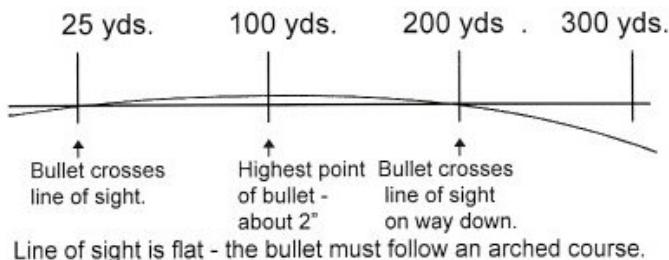
While the rifle is resting on a sandbag, look through the barrel and position the weapon until the target is centered in the bore. Then, without moving the rifle, simply move the reticle to the

center of the target. If using a firearm other than a bolt action, a culminater (bore sighter) is effective.

After shooting glasses and hearing protection are in place, you are ready for the first shot at the sight-in target at 25 yards. You should have a solid table or bench and sit with both feet planted firmly on the ground. Place the rifle on a sandbag at the center of the forearm. A block or additional sandbags may be necessary to bring the weapon to a comfortable height. Place another sandbag under the butt of the rifle. Work the rifle into the sandbags until it is solid and you are lined up on the target. With both elbows on the table, take a deep breath, exhale half the air, continually squeeze the trigger until it fires. Again, position the rifle firmly on the sand bags and place the reticle on the center of the target. While firmly holding the rifle in this position, have a friend turn the adjustments on the scope until the reticle is superimposed on the hole that was just shot. If the weapon does not move during this process, your next shot will be near the aiming point. Next, fire your second shot just as you did your first. If you are one inch to the right and each click or mark on your scope represents  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch at 100 yards, you will need to turn the windage adjustment screw to the left 16 clicks or marks. If the bullet hole is  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch high, you will need to turn the elevation screw (on the top of the scope) four clicks downward. Provided you were on target when you squeezed off the second round, you can expect that your third round will be zeroed (hitting the aiming point) at this distance. For some highpowered rifles, the 25 yard sight-in will be correct because this is where the bullet crosses the line of sight in its trajectory route to around the 200 yard mark. (See the trajectory illustration below.) If the *parallax* for your deer rifle scope is set for 100 yards (which is typical), you can't expect great accuracy at 25 yards. Also, if you prefer a sight-in distance other than 200 yards the you will need to verify where the bullet first crosses the line of sight.

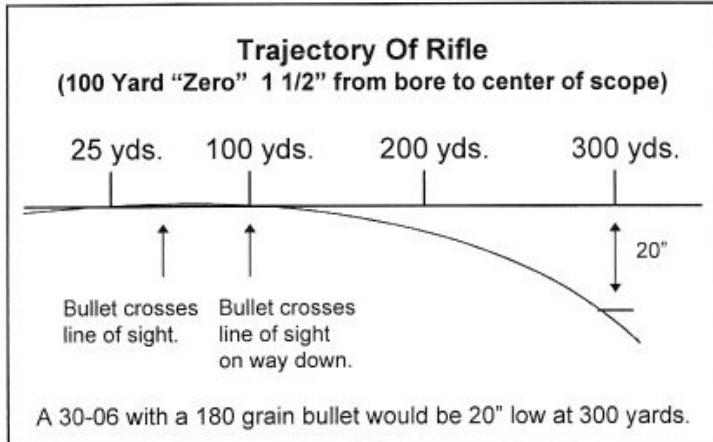
### Trajectory Of Rifle

(200 Yard "Zero" - 1 1/2" from bore to center of scope)



A proper understanding of your rifle's trajectory will improve accuracy and build confidence. (See the ballistics chart on page 15)

Depending on the weapon and the distance from which you expect to shoot your game, the final sighting-in should be done at one to three hundred yards. For flat shooting rifles such as the **.243** and **.270 Winchester**, it is recommended that you sight in at 100 yards but adjust the sights or scope so the shot group is 2 - 3 inches high. This will allow you to be directly on target at about 25 yards and again at about 200 yards. If the shooter zeroes directly on at one hundred yards, he will have to hold over (aim high) considerably at 200 yards. (This is illustrated on the next page. Compare to the illustration above.) Failure to hold over could result in a clean miss. If the shooter (with the **.243 Winchester** for example) sights-in and shoots three inch high groups at 100 yards, he will be able to make deadly shots on a deer size target anywhere under 200 yards and up to 300 yards by aiming directly at the body of the deer which he wishes to shoot.



The best time to sight in a rifle is when there is little or no wind. Since the position of the sun can significantly affect the placements of shot groups, many shooters sight in at noon or during overcast skies. It might be helpful to sight in during the time of day you plan to hunt. If you are likely to shoot in a particular direction, sight in by shooting in that direction. If you are planning a hunt where there is a significant difference in elevation, it is important that you test your zero when you arrive. If conditions change, a three inch difference in shot placement at one hundred yards is possible.

Once you have your rifle sighted-in and are getting acceptable shot groups, you are ready to enjoy practicing from different positions: sitting, kneeling, standing, and prone. You should also practice shooting with the opposite hand. With practice, you will develop an understanding of your limitation. These steps will help you save ammunition, avoid crippling deer, and avoid mishaps caused by unnecessary and erratic shooting.



**Jerry Franklin is pictured above shooting from the bench rest.  
Below, David Waters is shooting from the kneeling position.**





The *prone* position can be shot with greater accuracy than using the *standing*, *off hand* or the *kneeling* position. The sandbags are not allowed in NRA competition.

## Archery

Before the invention of bow sights, string peeps, string releases, etc., many hours of practice were essential for an archer to become proficient with the bow and arrow. Now, after learning the techniques, constant practice is not as critical as it once was. However, it is essential for every archer to practice before and during the season. This is necessary for discovering limitations, and it is important to only take shots within those limitations.

The biggest problem for most archers is judging distances. Some hunters use colored ribbons to indicate various distances when the same stand is used repeatedly. Range finders are also helpful

in judging distances, however, they are difficult to use when hunting deer because they require movement that may be seen by the deer. Range finders can be used to judge distances to various landmarks when first arriving at the stand or when the movement is not likely to be detected by deer. Memorizing landmarks and the distances to them makes the range finder a profitable tool.

In areas where there are many bow hunters, there is likely to be an archery dealer. Certainly, the dealer will be happy to assist you in determining the proper bow strength (weight of pull), arrow length, arrow *spine*, and other things that will assist you in shooting accurately. Most dealers are eager to show new customers how to shoot and sight-in a bow. The thing to remember about sighting-in a bow is to "*follow your arrow.*" In other words, if the arrow is high, raise the pin, if it is to the left, move the pin to the left, etc.

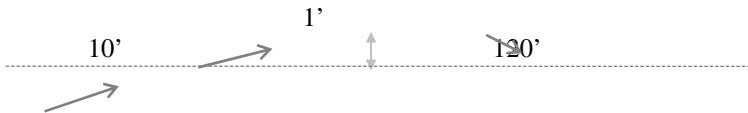
Many archers who shoot *three dimensional* (3-D) competition use only two pins. When using the first pin the archer will shoot two to three inches high at 20 yards. With this pin, many archers are able to make deadly shots on deer out to 35 yards. The second pin can then be zeroed at forty yards and can be used to shoot targets at distances from 35 to 45 yards. The fewer pins the archer has, the less likely he is to choose the wrong pin. I prefer to use a one-pin adjustable sight. With this system the archer judges the distance and then sets the sight to this distance. He can then place the pin or crosshair exactly where he wants to hit. Such systems are becoming more and more popular among 3-D shooters and hunters.

If you hunt in brushy areas and expect your shots to be less than 20 yards, you might wish to have a *close shot* pin. The archer needs to aim low when the deer appears to be nervous. This is because of a deer's ability to "*jump the string*" (actually duck it

as they bolt). Therefore, a "close pin" would be helpful for precise placement.

Practice with field points that weigh the same as your broadheads. Since broadheads sometimes fly significantly different from field points, use those that will strike the target near where your field points strike it. Usually, if a broadhead and field point weighs the same they can be expected to fly in a similar manner

An excellent arrow stop (butt) can be made by compressing cardboard sheets. Stack the cardboard sheets with the ends of the cardboard with the holes pointed in the direction in which the arrow will stick them. Some archers build a stationary *butt* with poles and use *allthread* to tighten the cardboard. The example on the following page shows a portable *butt* which uses jacks to compress the cardboard. (See the illustration on the following page.)



If an archer with a typical compound bow uses his 40 yard pin (or setting) the arrow will cross the line of sight at about ten feet. The arrow will rise approximately one foot above the line of sight at about 30 yards.



The author constructed the portable *butt* pictured above. It has stopped thousands of arrows yet shows little indication of wear.

Another good "arrow stop" which can be used out of doors is compressed and tied cardboard bales. Cardboard bales are generally made by grocery or retail stores for easy shipping or recycling of cardboard boxes.

If practice is to be done with broadheads, you should use styrofoam or a commercial backstop designed for the purpose of stopping broadheads. Where money is a limiting factor, feed sacks filled with dirt will do reasonably well, however the edges of your blades will be dulled and should be resharpened or replaced before hunting.

Three-dimensional targets made of synthetic rubber make wonderful field practice, but only field points should be used because broadheads cause more damage to the target than field points.



**The archer pictured above is retrieving a well placed arrow from a 3-D whitetail deer.**

A common mistake made by bow hunters is to have their *draw weight* too heavy. Everyone wants flatter trajectory and some think that going to a heavier weight bow is the answer. However, if this course is taken accuracy may suffer greatly. *Overdraws* and lighter arrows are the answer to obtaining flatter trajectory. If you must raise your bow higher than a level position to draw it, or if you cannot slowly draw straight back and hold it comfortably for at least 15 seconds your draw weight is too heavy. It

is important to be able to draw the bow straight back. Elevating the bow is unnecessary movement and is likely to attract an animal's attention.

Broadheads must be razor sharp. Taking the arrow out of the quiver and putting it back in several times will dull the razor edges. Therefore, buying the best blades available will be money well spent. Once a broadhead has been shot it is a good practice to replace the blades.

A light broadhead will result in flatter trajectory than a heavy one using the same arrow. Without question, the heavier, wider blades are capable of doing more damage to an animal in most cases. But, no matter how deadly the broadhead, you must hit the deer in a vital area. When using heavier blades, the distance in which a confident shot can be taken will be shortened. One solution to the problem of choosing the right broadhead is to carry two different weights with you. The heavier weighted broadhead can be used where there is little or no chance of a shot other than at close range. At fifteen yards, there should be little difference in any two broadheads shot from a powerful compound, but, you should shoot them to see how much difference there is. I prefer a narrow broadhead over the wider ones for several reasons: they are less likely to be deflected by a limb or twig when hunting in brushy areas; they are more likely to pass completely through the deer; and they are more accurate.

Orange arrows (shafts) and fletchings are easy to find. It might be slightly advantageous to use camouflage arrows, but the expense will probably be greater due to lost arrows. Bright colored fletchings are essential if the shaft is camouflaged. White fletchings are highly visible and some hunters use them because it is easier to see the point of impact or shot placement on a deer. However, a high speed bow with proper broadheads should send

an arrow completely through a deer. In this case, having white fletchings would not be much of an asset. White shafts and/or fletchings would more likely be noticed by deer than bright orange or green, which would appear gray when viewed in black and white. Because of this, I do not use white when hunting. Some hunters use a string attached to the bow and to the arrow when hunting deer. The string (a commercial product) enables the hunter to locate the arrow, and more importantly, if it hits a deer, the hunter can easily follow the string and increase his likelihood of finding the deer.

While most bow hunters use a compound bow, there is a trend toward the use of the longbow and the recurve. With a traditional bow the level of difficulty is much greater, but so is the challenge.

## **Black Powder (Muzzleloader)**

The sport of black powder hunting, like archery, has grown dramatically in the last few decades. More and more hunters are finding they can successfully take deer using these primitive weapons.

However, there are certain safety precautions specific to black powder hunting. Be careful to use the proper amount and type of propellant. Under no circumstances use any other powder than what is intended for these weapons! Smokeless powder will destroy a firearm designed for black powder, and the shooter could be injured as well.

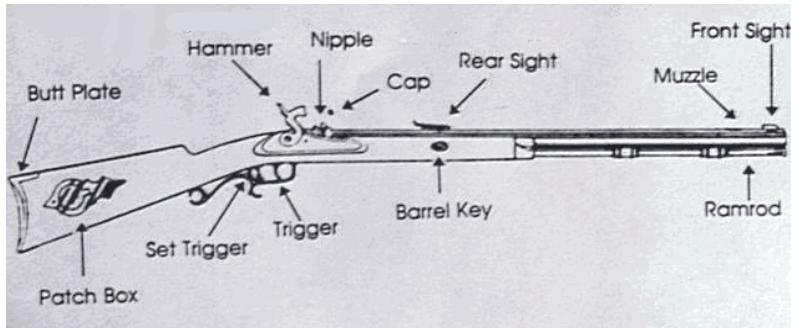


**Pictured above are three types of muzzle loading rifles. These primitive weapons are accurate enough to easily take deer at 100 yards.**

*Pyrodex* is a commonly used propellant. In comparison to black powder, it is easier to find, less fouling, and requires 25 percent less volume than black powder. Nevertheless, GOEX black powder still outsells Pyrodex.

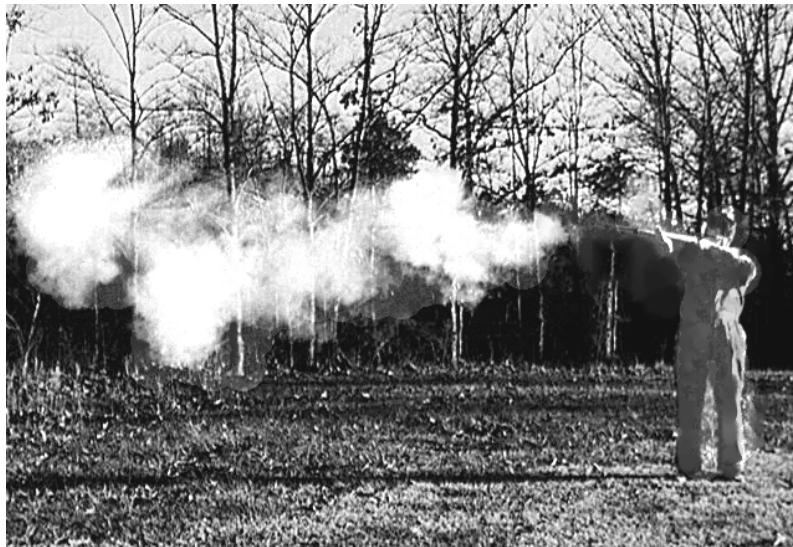
Experiment with different amounts of propellant and different types of projectiles until you find what works best for your weapon. Zero your weapon from 50 to 100 yards depending on the obtainable accuracy.

A *percussion cap* is a small explosive device that fits on the nipple of a blackpowder firearm and is used to detonate the powder. It is important to use high quality caps such as **CCI**. Some of the in-line muzzleloaders now use primers intended for modern weapons. These are hotter and may result in increased accuracy and dependability. Some caps are light in explosive material, and some do not fit the nipple well. There are different sizes, no. 11 being the most common. If the cap fits loose you might avoid having it slip off by slightly crimping the cap with your fingers so it will fit tightly.



Because delayed firing (*hang-fire*) is a possibility with black powder firearms, it may be advisable to hold on your target after the cap has ignited. When a hang-fire occurs it is usually due to improper priming or loading. This problem (often caused by oil residue left from cleaning), seldom occurs with experienced black powder shooters.

The use of optical sights to magnify the target is prohibited in some states. It may be desirable to install a peep sight, electronic sight, or a scope without magnification, all of which are better than sights that come on most factory built, primitive firearms.



Notice the amount of smoke produced by the black powder weapon above. Often it is impossible to see the target until the smoke clears.

The picture  
to the right  
is basic  
black pow-  
der para-  
phernalia.

Sometimes deer are not frightened by the sound of black powder being discharged. A hunter may



fire an erratic shot and the deer may still be standing in the same spot when the smoke clears. Then, the hunter is challenged to prime the weapon, take aim, and fire before the deer walks or runs away. Deer at close range are sometimes frightened by the *click* of the hammer as it is pulled back. The click can be avoided in some weapons by holding down the trigger when you pull back the hammer. After the hammer is back, let up on the trigger. Practice this with the weapon unloaded. Also, if sitting on a stand, you may keep the hammer back with cap in hand until you are ready to fire.

One of the biggest challenges for the black powder hunter is to ensure the weapon will discharge accurately under all conditions. Black powder weapons require more maintenance than any other weapon used in hunting deer. The weapon should be protected from rust and corrosion by using only a small amount of light oil or rust preventative in the barrel. If too much oil is used, the powder may become contaminated and fail to ignite.

After cleaning and before reloading, run a dry patch through the barrel. Also, ignite one or two caps to ensure the passageway to the powder is clear. Pour the proper amount of propellant into the muzzle, and then gently bump the butt of the weapon on a hard surface to ensure the propellant makes its way into the breech. Firmly seat the projectile using the ramrod (or cleaning rod) with the proper tip attached. After pushing the projectile as far as possible, some shooters then throw the rod straight down into the barrel onto the projectile until it bounces. It is argued that this ensures the projectile is properly seated. However, there are cases on file where black powder has been detonated by a sharp blow. This should be considered when seating a projectile. Also, throwing the rod onto the projectile could deform it, resulting in less accuracy. To ensure that the projectile is properly seated in succeeding shots, place a mark on the ramrod. Then, as long as

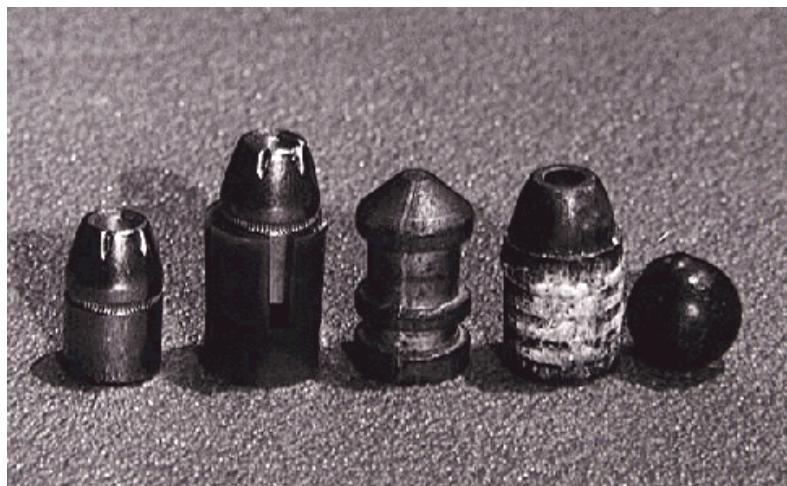
the same amount of powder is used, the projectile should be pushed down until the mark on the ramrod is even with the muzzle.

There was a time when only a few shots could be fired accurately without cleaning the barrel. However, there are lubricants now that allow many shots between cleanings. If such a quality lube is unavailable, it is advisable to wet a patch with powder solvent or soapy water and swab the bore between shots, following with a dry patch before reloading. Even when using a quality lube that allows up to a hundred shots before swabbing, more frequent swabbing certainly will not hurt anything.

Before storage, use hot soapy water to thoroughly clean the barrel. Remove the barrel (if the weapon is so designed) and the nipple. Place a patch on the cleaning rod and push it into the barrel. Add additional patches as needed to make the cleaning rod tip fit tightly in the barrel. With the nipple end of the barrel in the hot soapy water, slowly pull the rod to the end of the muzzle. This will create a partial vacuum and the water will be pulled into the barrel. Push the rod back down as far as it will go. Change the water as needed. Continue this until the soapy water comes out clear. Quickly run a dry patch or two down the barrel to remove the bulk of the moisture. The rest will evaporate since the barrel is warm from the hot soapy water. For long storage, make sure the barrel is well treated, inside and out, with a good gun oil or rust preventative.

When the hunter becomes proficient in the use of black powder weaponry, bagging a deer with a black powder rifle will become easier than when using a bow and arrow. These weapons are more accurate than most people realize. Deadly shots are often made up to 100 yards.

Round balls with a greased or lubricated patch are found to be cheap and very accurate. However, if the weapon is a 50 caliber or smaller the use of hollow point bullets designed for deer hunting, or pistol bullets with sabots are advisable. A 45 caliber hollow point pistol bullet (with sabot) is often used in a 50 caliber muzzle-loading weapon. Even though they are more expensive than round balls and might sacrifice accuracy in some weapons, use of such bullets are likely to result in a quicker and more humane harvest of your deer.



**From left to right: hollow point pistol bullet without sabot; pistol bullet with sabot; maxi ball, buffalo bullet, and round ball.**

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## **Chapter 5**

### **Where To Hunt**

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The whitetail deer has become adapted to a wide variety of environmental conditions and can be found almost anywhere food and cover exists. Every season deer are taken in woodlands, meadows, orchards, prairies, cropland, and pastures. However, woodlands with thick underbrush seem to be where the highest concentrations of deer are found.

**Wildlife Management Areas** (WMA's) are maintained by state governments and offer limited hunting to the public. Many of our **National Forests** provide excellent deer hunting. Hunting magazines may provide you with valuable information regarding where to hunt, and the **Game and Fish Commission** will generally be happy to assist you in locating the hot spots. However, **private land** continues to be the number one source of quality hunting because it is not as heavily hunted as public land.

Mail carriers on rural routes can be a good source of information about where deer have been seen, and game wardens will often be willing to provide information about where the area of highest concentrations of deer are in their county or jurisdiction.

*Aerial photography* and *topographic maps* can be of assistance in locating specific habitat or terrain and will help you locate *bottlenecks* where deer are most likely to pass. Photographs and maps can be obtained from **the U.S. Department of Agriculture**. *Plat books* are county maps that show ownership of land and can be obtained from the **Natural Resources Conservation Service**, and other sources such as outdoor retail stores.



**Aerial photographs (above) and topographic maps (see page 89) can be helpful to hunters. They assist in scouting for likely hunting locations, learning the terrain and in keeping one from becoming lost.**

One of the most difficult decisions a hunter has to make is where he will hunt on a given day. It is a good idea to have several stands, hunting the stand that allows you the greatest advantage at a given time. When winds are calm and leaves are dry, wooded areas would be a good choice if your hearing is good. When it is windy or leaves are wet, you can make the best use of your eyesight by hunting open areas where you can see for long distances. In making your choice of where to hunt, consider the type of weapon you will use and your abilities or limitations. For example, if you are capable of making a 200 yard shot with a rifle a stand where such a shot is a possibility would be a good choice. If using a rifle, you can position yourself far enough away from travel areas to assure you will not be scented.

In choosing where to hunt with bow and arrow, you can improve your chances of getting a good shot by positioning your stand within your shooting range of funnels, such as a fence, bluff, trails, etc. (More is said about choosing a stand under the chapter on Methods of Hunting.)

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## **Chapter 6**

### **When To Hunt**

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To be most productive, you should spend time hunting when deer are most active. Deer are often bedded down during daylight hours. When deer are not moving, the hunter's chance of seeing a deer and getting a good shot is small. The chance of a successful hunt is much greater if the hunter can wait until moon and weather related conditions which affect deer movement are more favorable.

In many states, bow hunting season opens long before the rut begins. Bow hunters who are only after bucks should consider taking their vacation to coincide with the rut since few mature bucks are taken before the rut begins.

If you are hunting a scrape line for a mature buck, avoid hunting a particular stand when conditions (especially wind) are not good. Otherwise, you may diminish future chances.

Some hunting experts believe that the feeding habits of deer are greatly affected by the moon. Moon charts show the "excellent," "good" and "poor" times for hunting and fishing, and are seen as worthwhile tools by many hunters (see the Appendix). However, the habits of deer can be disrupted by weather related factors.

Deer generally do not feed at night if it is cloudy or moonless, and are more likely to feed during the morning hours. Deer are usually active on cool, still mornings. Excellent times to hunt include the morning following a stormy night, or on a still, sunny day following a long period with wet, cloudy conditions.

Many deer hunters enjoy the opportunity to hunt on snow covered ground. But, because deer often "lay up" the first few days after the first heavy snow, it might pay to not be too anxious. However, the first light snow may prove to be prime-time hunting. The best time to hunt is when the sun comes out after snow or ice has covered the ground and the sky has been cloudy for several days. Such an opportunity during open hunting season for firearms does not happen often in the South, but if and when it does, you will not want to miss it.

Generally speaking, mornings and evenings are the best times of the day to hunt, but you should consider some disadvantages of these times. Early mornings are usually cold and can be somewhat uncomfortable. There will also be more hunters in the woods during the early hours. A deer shot just before dark which would likely have been found in the daylight may be lost, resulting in spoiled meat. Bow hunters who hunt evenings should have some quality lights, and be prepared to do some tracking after nightfall. Midday hunting (10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.) is not practiced by many hunters. However, many of the larger bucks have been taken during this time. Most hunters have left or are on their way out of the woods by 10:30 a.m., and deer are often aware of hunters and may stay hidden until hunters leave the woods. Also, during the rut bucks get up from their beds and search for does during midday hours.

After hunting pressure has declined in late winter, deer are often seen feeding in the daylight hours. This may be because deer prefer to be out in daylight or it may be that they do it to conserve energy.

The time of day you take your deer is irrelevant as long as you get a deer. Unless you have a great amount of time to devote to hunting, it is important that you get your deer in as little time as possible. If you are really serious about not wasting time, plan to hunt when conditions are good. If the day is devoted to hunting, such as when camping, stay all day. Remember, few deer are killed at camp.



## Venison for Supper

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## **Chapter 7**

### **Common Methods Of Hunting**

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#### **Hunting from a Stand**

Stand hunting is one of the most popular methods of hunting. The hunter simply waits in a particular location for the deer to come to him. The hunter may sit, stand, climb up in a tree, or use some type of blind. Hunters who use dogs usually place other hunters at various locations on a stand. (Hunting with dogs is discussed in a later section.)

Two things of utmost importance when hunting from a stand are to be alert and watchful, and be as still as possible. The hunter can get away with more movement if he uses camouflage (whether clothing or a blind). If you are not alert, a deer is likely to pass you by or spot you and slip away. Deer are not going to announce their presence. When the leaves are wet or it is windy, the hunter might not be able to hear sounds made by deer when walking. Therefore, the first indication of deer presence will likely be visual contact.

After determining the general and immediate area to hunt, study the location well before placing the stand. Stand positioning is especially important for bow hunters. Consider the usual

wind direction and what is behind you. Do not *silhouette* yourself by having the sky as your only background.



**Even without a head net or face camo, this hunter would not likely be spotted by a deer from this angle.**

**This hunter's silhouette in the sky background would be easy to spot by an educated whitetail.**

Situate yourself where you can turn and operate your weapon in the most likely direction for deer to approach. If you climb into a tree, a few minutes thinking about the variables and possibilities will be time well spent. Certain things are more important when using a bow than when using a firearm. Be sure you can draw your bow in directions deer are most likely to approach. You should not place your stand in the middle of the deer trail because deer will be more likely to smell or see you. And, even if you can draw the bow without being detected, it will likely be a difficult shot. Rather, place your stand fifteen to twenty yards from the trail where a broadside shot can be expected. Many deer have left the scene of a hunter's ambush unharmed because the

hunter had not properly studied the situation and was unable to shoot in the direction the deer approached. Shooting lanes can be cleared if brush is heavy, so be sure there is at least one clear lane from you to where the deer is likely to travel. This is especially helpful for bow hunters because the smallest twig can deflect an arrow.

Hunting from a tree will give you an advantage, but do not get the idea that deer have tunnel vision. Deer scan the ground ahead of them looking for movement as they move through the woods. The tree hunter may not be noticed from a distance even when moving because of limbs and underbrush obstructing the deer's vision. However, as the deer approaches the stand, the hunter must realize scent, sound, or movement might cause the deer to look up. If there is not sufficient camouflage, even though the hunter has not moved, some deer will spot the hunter and exit the area. Clearing too many limbs and bushes around the stand may leave your exposed. To prevent being spotted, it helps significantly to have a solid background such as the trunk of a tree.

The recommended height for a stand is usually around 15 feet, however, the stand height will vary depending on the circumstances. If there are low tree limbs in the area, there might be no choice but to place the stand below 15 feet. Because of the danger of injury from falling from high points, most hunters do not venture above 20 feet. Nevertheless, the higher you are the less likely you are to be seen, heard, or smelled.

Often, deer will be driven away from an area when the hunter approaches the stand. If possible, try to make your way to the stand without being detected. If deer are not feeding at night in the area of the ambush, go to the stand before daylight. If you must use a flashlight, keep the beam directed downward.

Voices carry farther than you might think. If you must communicate, use a whisper or sign language. Do not underestimate the intelligence of the whitetail deer. If they see you approaching, they will either watch you until you leave, or they will exit the area and will not likely return that day.

Another good way to get to your stand without alarming the deer is to stand on the bumper of a pickup and have someone drive slowly by the area. Step off the pickup onto the ground and remain motionless until the vehicle is several feet away. The deer will be watching the automobile and likely not notice you.

Always walk as quietly as possible, choosing every step carefully. A person's feet hitting the ground with over 100 pounds of force all at once can make a lot of racket. Learn to put the weight on your feet gradually. Avoid stepping on dead branches and twigs. Sounds that are not natural to the habitat will alarm deer within hearing distance. Unless there are dry leaves that make it impossible to walk quietly, you should learn to travel so quietly that you can barely hear yourself.

The type of footwear you choose is important. Clean, rubber boots will not leave a scent trail like that left by leather. Rubber boots are almost essential for bow hunters. Tight fitting, soft, rubber boots will make less noise than loose fitting ones. Thick spongy socks inside your boots will help you walk quieter, especially on hard ground.

Dry "wet weather" stream beds filled with large rocks allow quiet entrance into the woods when leaves are dry. Logging roads, four-wheeler (ATV) trails, etc. which have compacted leaves will also allow quieter movement into the woods. Walk slowly into the wind, or at least with a crosswind, and look carefully ahead as you walk. If you alarm the deer going to your

stand, your chances of seeing it again the same day are poor. However, a young deer frightened off its bed might return and might be worth hiding and waiting for. I am aware of some success stories where this strategy was used. Also, when food is limited and a deer is frightened away from a good source of food, the deer might return after a few minutes.

Considering the amount of time that one may spend at his or her stand, the importance of getting to the stand undetected cannot be overemphasized.

The best places for a stand are at *runs*, *trails* (especially trail intersections), *scrapes*, feeding areas, *bottle necks*, *funnels*, *edges* and fields where deer have been known to feed or cross. (See definitions in the appendix.)

If you hunt a stand for two days without seeing anything, deer may be aware of your location and you should consider relocating your stand.

Before exiting a tree stand, look carefully around the area for deer. They will be sure to see your movement as you exit the stand. Also, don't let go of the rope used for lowering your weapon to the ground. If you do, climb down without hesitation. Seeing a huge buck within range and not being able to get to your weapon can upset your day!

## **Still-hunting and Stalking**

Some hunters believe that *still hunting* and *stalking* are one in the same. Dictionaries are of little help because they give definitions for the word "stalk" that would fit either term. Nevertheless, there is a clear difference between these terms, and I will attempt to define and distinguish their differences.

*Still-hunting* is the quiet pursuit of deer through an area, usually wooded, as the hunter slowly walks, looks and listens and stops frequently. When the hunter spots an animal that is not within range, he then *stalks* the animal to within range for a confident shot.

*Stalking* is the pursuing of one or more deer that have been seen and usually continue to be visible. This involves keeping a low profile, and keeping objects between you and the game while closing in for a closer shot.

*Stalking*, is something that may or may not become necessary while *still-hunting*. On the other hand, one could be hunting from a stand and find it necessary to stalk a deer that has been seen at a distance. Now, let's address some matters that pertain to still-hunting and or stalking.

Deer can hear considerably better than the average person. If you are walking on a still day and can hear yourself walking, deer can hear you over 30 yards away. Deer can smell far better than humans - actually there is no comparison. Deer can detect human odors at over 100 yards.

Humans have the same senses as deer, although all their senses, unless it be the eyes of an older deer, are better than ours. Man's

greatest asset is his eyesight. Man's second greatest asset is his hearing. Besides what medical science can do to enhance eyesight and hearing, the hunter can train himself to recognize sounds, and to see deer. When looking for deer, scan an area with your eyes, as you look for parts of a deer. Often, deer will stand off at a distance in the woods and watch while the hunter passes. Trained eyes can often spot a deer that would be missed by many.

Movement of the body, hands, or feet is easily detected. However, if the deer is moving away, especially with its tail up, it is likely that it has spotted the hunter and is making its getaway. The objective is to see the deer while it is motionless and get a clear shot. A horizontal shape, such as the back of a deer, should attract the eye's attention. Study it, looking for other deer parts until you recognize what it is. Occasionally, you will see just the head, leg, or tail. Parts of the deer are what you should look for when still-hunting because a part may be all that is visible.

When still-hunting, it is almost impossible to walk too slowly. In fact, it is best to walk very slowly for only a few yards and then stand motionless for a few minutes, constantly listening and looking. When possible, move your eyes rather than your head. Also, when you stop, do so in the shadows, and behind or in front of cover. When feeding, deer are always on guard. Generally, they will not move far before they stop, look for movement, and listen. Deer look for movement. If you see the deer first and it is looking in your direction, but has not seen you move, it likely will not detect your presence if you remain motionless. If the deer sees you and is suspicious it might try to fool you into moving, so keep still until it has determined that the object it is trying to identify (you) is no threat. By observing the tail, the position of the head, and the ears, you can tell if the deer is calm, alert, or alarmed. If the ears are forward the deer is alert. If a deer

has its ears forward and tail up, it is an indication that it is alarmed and about to flee.

Deer tend to watch for hunters in the direction they have seen them approach at other times. Therefore, try approaching from different directions.

Some hunters say deer have a short memory span of only a few minutes. While deer might not be alarmed by, nor long remember a sound that could have been made by a squirrel, they do not soon forget seeing a man, or the sounds and odors associated with man.

If you see fresh deer tracks, it is obvious that deer have been there recently and may still be in the area. It may even be watching you, so look around.

Backtracking over a previously traveled path may seem like a poor tactic, but deer often hide as you pass by, only to walk out into the road or trail after you've passed by. If you backtrack, be alert, you might get caught off guard.

*Still-hunting* requires more skill than most other methods of hunting. It requires good eyes and ears, the ability to walk quietly, quick reflexes and the ability to hit a rapidly moving target if necessary.

*Stalking* is difficult, but not impossible. A hunter who has spotted a deer can get closer to it if conditions are favorable. You might be able to take advantage of reoccurring sounds that will drown out the sounds you make while walking. Loud trucks, trains, jets, thunder, wind gusts, etc., might be just the advantage you need in order to approach within range. While approaching,

the hunter should look for other deer in the area that might sound the alarm.

Some hunters have experienced success using stalking shields. A stalking shield is a device which is held by hand or attached to a bow and is used to camouflage, or break the silhouette of the hunter as he carefully approaches a deer.

Still-hunting is not for everyone and under some conditions, such as dry leaves on a calm day, it may not be a wise choice for anyone. However, still-hunting has its place, and many find it not only challenging, but also enjoyable, and sometimes productive.

## **Hunting With Dogs**

Most hunters will agree that deer hunting with dogs is the most successful method, but there are a lot of pros and cons to consider. When hunting with dogs, deer do not have to be active. Dogs can be taken to the deer's bedding place, or wherever deer might be found. When the dogs *jump* a deer, the race is on and hunters merely need to wait in hopes that a deer will come their way. Dog hunters enjoy listening to the race even if they don't get a shot at a deer. For some, this is the only way to hunt, but for others there is too much expense, too much hassle, and too much frustration. Some hunters do not consider hunting with dogs very sportsmanlike, and will argue that venison taken in this manner might have a bad taste because of being frightened and exhausted from running.

The first step in hunting with dogs (unless you go with friends who have them) is to obtain one or more quality beagles or hounds. Second, you need to have several dependable associates. If they will not stay on the stand, be still and quiet, or cannot shoot well, there will be limited success.

In mountainous areas, deer are fairly predictable when pursued by dogs, and will often use the same escape routes. In the foothills, an experienced hunter can visually determine deer runs with some success. However, the only sure way to determine these runs (travel routes), is by observation or by learning about the locations from another hunter. In a few minutes an "old timer" can tell you more about the best deer runs or crossings than you can learn in two seasons of trial and error.

Hunting with dogs is generally more practical for local hunters than for outsiders because they know where the most productive areas are, where to run the dogs, and where to place standers. And, since local hunters are more familiar with the territory and will generally know land owners in the area, lost dogs are more likely to be recovered.

When dogs are coming in your direction, it is difficult to be still because of the excitement, but the more you move, the more likely you will be seen and avoided. The deer may be as much as fifteen minutes ahead of the dogs, so do not look for the deer immediately in front of the dogs. If the *poster* or *stander* is spotted, the deer will sometimes make a half circle around the hunter. If the hunter realizes he has been seen, he might still be able to get a shot as it passes to his left or right.

Do not leave your stand when someone fires their weapon or when the dogs stop! Someone may have fired and missed, there might be more than one deer in the area, and the dogs might strike up again. You will be disappointed if the deer comes

through your stand after you leave. Your buddies might or might not find this amusing.

Keeping dogs is expensive and a lot of trouble. Those who hunt with dog owners should keep this in mind and offer them a portion (customarily one half) of any deer that they kill in front of their dogs.

## **Drives without Dogs**

Another common method of hunting is for one or more hunters to make drives through a chosen area, moving deer out to other hunters stationed in likely places for a good shot. It sounds like a great idea, but deer are smart and might not fall for the trick. Deer will often remain hidden, allowing the drivers to pass, or they will circle behind them.

Another type of drive can be successfully performed by two hunters. It can be advantageous for two hunters to walk through the woods just far enough apart to see each other. While trying to flee from or avoid one hunter, the deer might present himself to the other. Therefore, both hunters are at a greater advantage than if they hunt alone. Making drives with friends is somewhat dangerous, so each hunter must always know where the other hunters are, and exercise extreme caution. In order to be constantly aware of each other's position, a natural animal sound can be used such as a crow, hawk, or quail call.

## Rattling

The art of rattling is new to many areas of the country. I have experienced some success, and know a few people who have reported success attracting, or getting deer to show themselves using this method. Many hunters do not believe in making unnecessary noise and have never tried rattling. Unless done properly, it should not be attempted because deer will quickly spot or scent the hunter and exit the area.

An ideal situation for rattling is for two persons to work together. One hunter should be on the ground with the antlers, with the other hunter (the shooter) in a tree watching. The person on the ground should be well camouflaged and concealed by brush or a blind. The object is to make the sounds of fighting bucks. When bucks are fighting, they stomp and thrash around in the brush and bang and rattle their antlers together. They might stop for a moment and then continue. Mimicking these sounds will work under the proper circumstances. There must be deer within hearing distance, it must be near the peak of the rut, the person doing the rattling must not be seen or smelled, and the shooter must be in a concealed position where he can see and get a shot at the deer before it realizes it has been fooled.

Even under the proper conditions, if there are more than three does for each buck the bucks in the area are likely to not respond to rattling.

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## **Chapter 8**

### **Favorite Foods of the Whitetail**

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Deer will eat a wide variety of foods, however, they have preferences and will seek foods that taste best and are high in nutrition. Probably no two experts would agree upon a list of foods, in order of preference, that deer. Many circumstances or factors effect what and when a deer might eat. Nevertheless, it is helpful to have an idea of the foods most desired by deer. The following list of foods was compiled after consulting with game biologists, game wardens and other hunters:

- 1. Acorns** - While deer will eat many varieties of acorns, black oak, post oak, and white oak acorns are among their favorite. While deer might prefer clover or other such foods over some varieties of acorns, most foods will be passed over when the choice oaks produce a crop. White oaks are easy to identify, and when acorns are falling, a large whiteoak provides an excellent location to wait for a deer.

During a drought, look for acorns on north slopes. When acorns are limited because of an early freeze, look for them on south slopes.

**2. Grain** - Field crops such as corn, soybeans, grain sorghum, etc. are high in food value, and are preferred by deer over many other foods. However, since these foods are located in the field where there is little natural cover, deer will generally wait until late evening or night time to feed on these foods. Even if deer feed at night in grain fields, during the day they are likely to consume some of a less desirable food where there is cover. Ordinarily, unless farmers deliberately leave a portion for the deer, grain is harvested before some deer seasons begin.

**3. Fruits** - Deer enjoy eating fruits such as persimmons, pears, apples, grapes, and goose berries. However, unless there are large orchards in the area most fruits are in limited supply. Fruit harvest generally comes before the hunting season opens, although pear and persimmon trees keep their fruits longer.

**4. Pasture Crops** - Deer will eat just about any kind of foliage, but their favorite type seems to be among the legume family. Legumes include alfalfa, clover, kudzu and lespedeza. As in the case with field crops, deer may prefer a pasture crop over other available foods, but will often avoid them during daylight hours where there is hunting pressure. Kudzu, although rarely used for pasture, is often found in wooded areas and provides excellent habitat.

**5. Greenbriar leaves** - When acorns fail to mature or become scarce, deer can be found foraging on greenbriar leaves. Thickets where this food is abundant can be an excellent place to hunt once deer have started eating this plant.

**6. Honeysuckle** - This is a viny plant that grows on or close to the ground. It remains green during the winter, and is often found around old house places, wooded areas and drainage ditches. It is

dense and usually covers small areas, maybe a few hundred square feet or less. A patch of honeysuckle could be a hot spot when other foods are not available.



**7. Sumac** - This is a bush or shrub generally found in old pastures or roadsides, which produces fruit resembling grain sorghum. It is usually one of the last foods deer will eat, but once deer start feeding on this plant they will continue to bite off the fruit until it is gone. If a more desirable food becomes available, sumac will be abandoned.



**Once deer have started to eat on sumac it might be a prime location to hunt.**

**8. Browse** - Although this is last on the list, it is not least in importance to deer. Deer will browse (eat leaves, twigs or buds of brush) even when more desirable foods are available. a strict diet of fruit or grass, deer need browse for filler. Therefore, brushy areas are needed to sustain a large and healthy population of deer.

After the first of the year, warm, sunshiny days cause trees and brush to bud. Even if there are no other foods available, deer can survive by eating the buds on brush or small trees.

When deer are feeding on browse hunting often becomes difficult due to the vast area of dense cover.

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## **Chapter 9**

### **Being At The Right Place At The Right Time**

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Some people have hunted deer many years and have failed to bag one, while others kill several deer each year. Certainly luck can be involved in taking a deer, but when a hunter "tags out" every year there is more to it than luck. Successful hunters play the odds. Unless deer are highly populated, the chances of the average hunter seeing a deer on a given day are not good, even when conditions are favorable. Nevertheless, who has the greater chance of seeing deer; one who wears strong cologne and walks *with* the wind, or one who takes measures to control his odor and walks *into* the wind? Again, who has the greater chance of seeing a deer; one who hunts in an unfamiliar area or one who is familiar with the terrain and has information about deer movement.

Repeated success is not all luck! By knowledge gained from various sources, you can increase your chances of being at the right place at the right time. A particular effort may not result in bagging a deer, but if the right efforts are repeated enough times you will eventually get a shot at a deer.

Make a decision about the sex and size animal you will attempt to take, before you go hunting. Some hunters are willing to settle

for anything legal, others go after a trophy buck that has only been seen occasionally. When more than one deer is allowed, the choice of many deer hunters is to first bring home legal meat, and then perhaps spend some time trying to outwit the big one that continues to elude hunters year after year.

In 1984, the **Arkansas Game and Fish Commission** started a new program that has helped many hunters determine their goals for hunting deer. **The Triple Trophy Award** is given to recognize hunters who harvest deer by three methods - archery/crossbow, muzzleloader, and modern gun. A requirement for receiving the award is that a doe must be harvested. Imagine the difficulty of receiving this award year after year, and what a hunter might have to pass up. In 1994, the Commission reported that the program was 10 years old and only three persons had received the award each of the 10 years.

Scouting is important in helping the hunter be in the right place at the right time, and will be discussed in the following chapter.

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## **Chapter 10**

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### **Scouting**

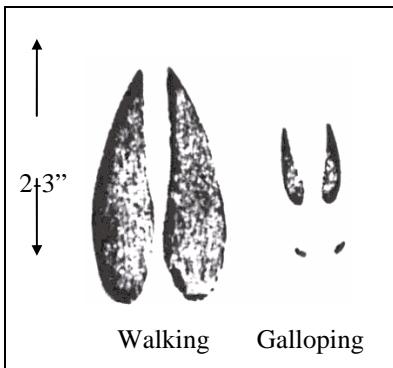
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Many areas produce deer year after year, however some are more heavily populated with deer, and some stands are better than others. The only way to determine the best locations to hunt or place a stand is to visit and evaluate each one. In your evaluation, rate locations based on the probability of success. Each location should be categorized according to the time(s) when they are most likely to be productive. Naturally you will want to choose the best location for any given day, but the time of day should also be considered. For example, one area might be more productive in the evenings, while another would be best in the mornings. One area might be best to consider the first day or two of the season, while another might be chosen for later in the season. Scouting will help increase your chances of being in the right place at the right time.

Deer may become extremely cautious and almost unhuntable if too much scouting is done prior to opening day, therefore, pre-season scouting should be held to a minimum. During the season scouting should be done as you *still-hunt*.

When scouting, there are several things to look for. *Hot* areas will abound with what is called *sign*.

*Tracks* are evidence that deer have been moving around, or through an area. The hunter needs to be able to differentiate between old and fresh tracks. Old tracks do not guarantee deer will be in the area tomorrow. An experienced tracker can accurately estimate the age of tracks. To do so, he must have knowledge of past weather conditions, and be a good judge of the length of time it takes to make observable changes in the appearance of the tracks. Generally speaking, large tracks are made by large animals. Some argue that large tracks simply indicate large footed deer. You can be certain large deer will leave deeper tracks because of their heavier weight. Some say they can determine the sex of a deer by the footprints, others deny it can be done. Most hunters look for other sign to accurately determine the sex of a deer.



*Droppings* are feces excreted from deer. In areas where tracks are difficult to see, such as woods and grassy fields, droppings are sometimes the first noticeable sign of deer activity. Droppings are generally more scattered by bucks than by does, probably because bucks walk as they excrete feces, while does stand still. If you see a lot of droppings you can expect many deer are using the area.



**The shape, color and form of deer droppings vary depending on the food source. The droppings pictured above are typical of those found in winter and are from an average size deer feeding on acorns and browse.**

A *bed* is a place in the leaves or grass used by deer for rest and cover during inactivity. Deer carefully choose where they bed down. The bed will generally be where they can see in all directions, and where a quick exit can be made in at least two directions. Deer sometimes return to the same bed, and some hunters believe it is worthwhile to wait at such a site for deer to return. Most hunters prefer to set up an ambush between beds and feeding areas.

Many times bucks rub their antlers against a bush or small tree, removing the bark. This is called a *rub*. Biologists theorize that a *rub* is a territorial mark which gives warning to other bucks to keep away. These marks are often placed in areas where deer frequently travel on their way to feeding areas, but a young buck

may rub just about anywhere. Therefore, a site where a rub is found may not necessarily be the best place to locate a stand, however, rubs are evidence of buck activity in the area.



**Rubs are usually made in the same general areas year after year. Generally, one can determine the approximate size of the buck by the size of the bush or tree, and especially the height of the rub.**

When hunting for a buck, the most important sign is what is referred to as a *scrape*. This is where a buck has raked or scraped out a circle on the ground with its hoof or antlers. The circle might range from one to five feet in diameter. A scrape is usually located under an overhanging limb which is referred to as a *lick branch*. The buck's purpose for making scrapes is sexual in nature, and will only be found during the *rut*. The rut, by definition, is the breeding period for deer, and is the time when bucks are the most active and the most careless. Bucks will often place a footprint in the scrape where it can be seen by a doe, which he hopes to encounter and breed. The breeding period of a doe is only a few days, therefore, bucks know the importance of being there when she is ready. Bucks generally visit their scrapes at least once in a twenty-four hour period and may or may not do more scraping. He might just linger there for a while, or continue his run. Nevertheless, during the rut, your chance of seeing a buck at one of his scrapes might be greater than at any other location. Late morning and midday seem to be the most productive times to watch a scrape.

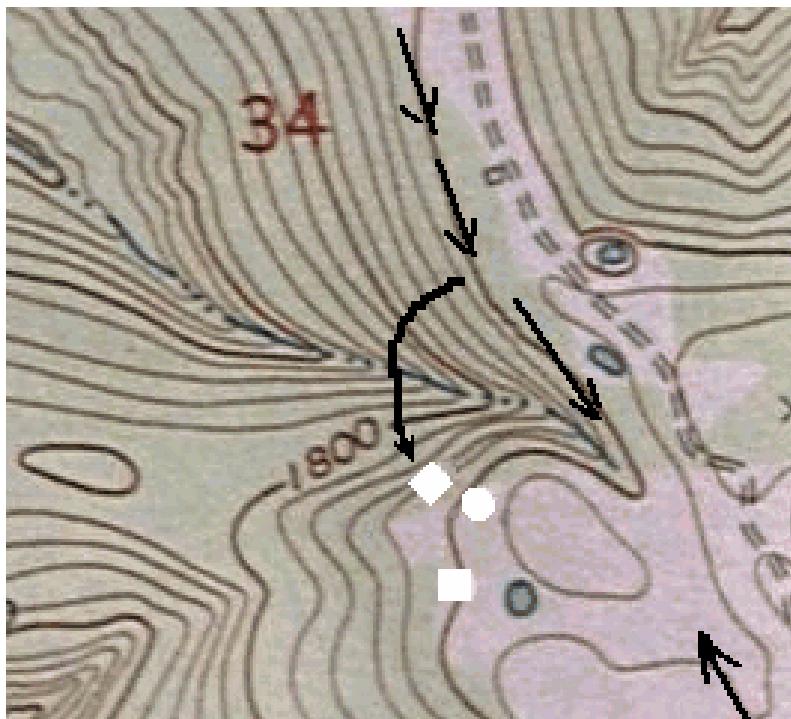
The biggest drawback to scrape watching is that bucks may become *nocturnal* during the rut. If a buck develops this habit, it will not likely be seen by a hunter who is scrape watching and must be pursued by other means. By covering the scrape with leaves or marking out the deer's tracks late in the evening, the hunter can visit it just before daylight and possibly determine if the deer is visiting the scrape at night. There are devices designed to take pictures of deer automatically which show the time of day (or night). Few hunters use this device, probably because of the expense involved, and the possibility of theft.



**If a buck has a heavy mass of antlers, such as the one pictured above, he may use them in making his scrape.**

Although there may be little visual evidence, bucks continue to visit scrapes later in the season than you might think. Perhaps deer don't freshen their scrape because they know does are already aware of the location of the scrape, or because of hunting pressure.

Some hunters, including myself, have had success in taking a buck after making a *mock scrape*. It may be best to make the scrape near a genuine scrape. Apply a squirt of *doe in heat* buck lure and a squirt of dominate buck urine to the scrape. A footprint of a deer would be helpful as well, but it is not essential. It is essential to wear rubber boots when making the scrape to help eliminate the chance of leaving human scent. When the buck finds the planted evidence he is likely to become protective of his territory, improving your chances of seeing him.



Three days before opening season a mock scrape was placed at the point indicated by the white square, and a drip bottle containing Tinks # 69 was placed overhead on a branch. There were two usual means of hunter entry as indicated by the straight arrows pointing north and south. The author crossed the deep gully from the north and set up at the elevated location indicated by the diamond. An aggressive grunt call was made. Approximately ten minutes later a 13 point buck appeared and was taken at the point indicated by the white circle thirty-five yards away.

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## **Chapter 11**

### **Bagging the Deer**

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A hunter can master all the techniques and get numerous opportunities, but if he doesn't bag a deer, he has failed. This is not to say that he did not have fun - just that his goal of attaining some meat, or bagging a trophy was not accomplished. When a hunter misses a deer, or fails to take an easy shot, it might be due to a phenomenon known as *buck fever*. This is a term used by deer hunters to describe the excitement that often leads to missed opportunities. Missing a deer may result from reacting without thought or from failing to do anything because of the excitement of the moment. Many novice hunters, and even some experienced hunters feel the affects of buck fever, especially when a large buck is involved. Buck fever may be avoided by mentally rehearsing what to do under a wide variety of circumstances. For example, as a deer approaches take several deep breaths to help yourself relax. Tell yourself, "Wait, he isn't in a good position yet." or, "I'm going to raise my weapon when the deer's head is behind a tree." or, "Keep cool. Be calm. Don't do anything without thinking twice." An inexperienced hunter may think all this isn't necessary. But anyone who has experienced a pounding heart and the rush of adrenaline as a large buck approaches can verify the need for doing something to maintain control. This excitement is a large part of the pleasure in deer hunting.

The more you practice using your weapon, the more you will know your limitations. Even though you may have a semiautomatic firearm, plan on making the first shot count because it will usually be your best, and quite possibly your only shot. As a deer approaches you must decide when to take the shot. When you are confident the deer is in the best possible position, aim at a spot and take the shot. If you let the deer get too close, something might go wrong. The deer might smell you or detect your movement as you raise your weapon.

When its head is behind a tree or some object that obstructs its vision, raise your weapon slowly and quietly. You may want to consider raising your weapon before the deer gets close. If using a bow, do not draw it until ready to shoot. Holding the bow at full draw for too long will cause fatigue, making a smooth, confident release of the arrow impossible. Be careful about your line of sight. If your nocking point is well below eye level, an object below the line of sight a few feet in front of you might interfere with arrow flight. On longer shots, remember that the arrow must fly above your line of sight. If you wish to shoot at a target about 10 feet away, your forty yard pin will be a better selection than your 20 yard pin. This is because the arrow crosses the line of sight at about 10 feet on its way up in the trajectory of a forty yard shot. (See the illustration on page 39.)

Stopping a running deer in order to get a better shot can often be accomplished by making an unusual noise. If you haven't been detected and the deer is moving in your direction or parallel to you, whistling or *bleating* like a goat will usually stop him immediately. However, if dogs are in close pursuit (200 hundred feet or less) such noises will probably not be effective. If the deer stops, it has probably heard you, may have an idea of your location, and will likely stop with its vital area (heart and lungs) protected by a tree. At this time you must make a decision to wait for the deer to move, or to take the best shot. In making the de-

cision you should consider the distance to the deer, the caliber of your weapon if a body shot is to be taken, and your marksmanship ability if a head or neck shot is presented. With bow and arrow, only lung shots should be taken, therefore, wait for a broadside shot and aim just behind the shoulder. (See the illustrations on the next two pages.)



**This shot would present no problem with a firearm, however it is far from ideal for archery tackle.**

An area exists between the lungs and backbone that is referred to by archers as *no man's land*. Archers have had close distance, broadside shots, but after releasing the arrow and seeing the deer run away they find the arrow has hair and traces of meet, but no trace of blood. A slow motion replay of the incident would likely reveal the animal reacting to the sound of the bow or the arrow. The common reaction to unnatural, sudden noises is to run. When deer bolt from a motionless position their body drops several inches, often just enough for the archer to experience an unbelievable and humiliating clean miss. Or, the archer might have expected the deer to drop, but did not aim low enough to make an ideal hit. There is little use spending a great deal of time looking for a deer if it is suspected that the arrow passed through "no

man's land." The wound will not likely be severe and the animal will probably recover completely.



The number "1" indicates the optimum place to aim using a firearm. The number "2" indicates the point where archers desire to place their arrow. The number "3" shows where to aim with bow and arrow when the deer is calm. Because of a deer's ability to "duck the arrow" it might be necessary to aim even lower if the deer has been called in or is alarmed.

A common mistake often made by inexperienced hunters is to assume a deer was missed because it ran away after being shot at. Few deer are "dropped in their tracks" unless hit in the head

or spine. Sometimes a wounded deer will run away without showing any indication of being hit, only to die a few yards from where they were shot.

If a head or spine shot knocks the deer to the ground it will generally not get up. Sometimes deer "go down" when they are not hit, especially in tall cover (grass, weeds or brush) where they sometimes drop to their knees and crawl when being shot at. This has led some hunters to falsely conclude they hit the deer. If you think you knocked a deer down but find no blood or hair, it is possible you simply missed.

Plan on making the first shot count. It is best not to shoot unless you are confident in your ability to make a quick kill. You can often tell by a deer's actions if it has been hit. The tail of a white-tail deer is white, highly visible, and will generally be pointed straight up as it runs under complete control. However, if the deer has been hit, it will usually drop its tail and lose much of its control as it runs. A wounded deer will often crash through and run over brush and other obstacles.

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## **Chapter 12**

### **Tracking Wounded Deer**

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If you have mortally wounded a deer, be responsible and find it! This may be difficult if a poor shot was made. Occasionally, you may shoot a deer that does not bleed externally. A confident shot will encourage the hunter to continue the search until the animal is found.

After discharging your weapon, carefully observe the direction of departure. Usually a deer will begin bleeding immediately after being hit, so find the location where the deer was when you took your shot and look for blood. If using a bow and arrow, it is good if the arrow passes completely through the deer. Finding the arrow will often reveal what kind of hit was made, or if the deer was hit at all. No hair, flesh or blood means you made a clean miss. If there is only flesh and hair on the arrow, it probably means you hit a nonvital area. If the arrow is covered with blood, it probably means you hit an artery or a vital organ. If the blood is frothy, you probably made a lung shot. If there is no blood trail, but the arrow indicates a vital organ was hit, wait at least an hour before pursuing the animal. This will give it time to lie down and weaken, or die from internal bleeding. Immediate pursuit will likely result in the deer running a much greater distance before lying down, making retrieval more unlikely.

If there is no blood, you might be able to track the deer by locating leaves, displaced foliage, stones, etc., that were disturbed as the deer ran away. Do not get in a hurry and be sure to make a mental notation of landmarks as you track your deer. If the trail is difficult to follow, you might even wish to place markers where blood or tracks were last found. If necessary, walk in a zigzag pattern in the likely area of travel. Wounded deer will usually go downhill because it is easier and faster, and will often instinctively seek water in which to lay down to stop the bleeding.

Certain times of the year and at some locations, dogs may not be allowed for hunting but may be allowed for tracking purposes if kept on a leash. A good *tracker* dog can track a wounded deer hours after the shot was taken. By using a deer foot to make a sent trail, you might be able to train just about any dog to trail deer.

While tracking, walk slowly and look carefully for the smallest signs of blood. If tracking must be done at night, a gas or fluorescent lantern works better than a flashlight.

When you see the deer, be certain it is dead before approaching. If dead, it will most likely be lying on its side with its eyes open and its legs pointing in the direction it traveled from. The white on the underside of the deer will make it easy to spot. However, if the deer's legs are underneath it, it will likely jump and run when you approach. If the deer is in this position, a careful shot in the upper part of the neck will finish the job quickly and spoil only a small amount of meat.

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## **Chapter 13**

### **Getting the Deer Out**

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Getting the deer from the point of kill to the place for processing without spoilage is as important as bagging the deer. In fact, if the deer cannot be brought out in a reasonable length of time (depending on the temperature), it should not be harvested.

There are several factors that determine the degree of difficulty in getting the deer home in a timely manner. Whether you are alone or with a companion, and your size and strength are factors to consider, because you may have to move the deer by hand for some distance. Landscape or terrain, type of transportation, the size of the deer, and the distance from your kill to your transportation should all be considered before taking a deer.

The easiest way to move a deer of average size by hand is to drag it by the head. You can hang onto the antlers if they are large enough. A two inch strap makes dragging less difficult. If it is an antlerless deer and you do not have a strap, you can cut a strong stick, run it through the tendons near the rear feet, and pull it tail first.

If there are two or more hunters and dragging a deer is not practical, it can be carried on a pole. Tie the feet of the deer over the pole and carry the pole over your shoulders.

Deer are very difficult to carry or drag up a steep incline; therefore, it might be wise to go downhill even though it may be much farther to the pick up point. If you have not scouted the area and do not know the territory, topographic maps and aerial photographs will be a great help.

The type of transportation available may determine how far you have to carry or drag a deer. A jeep or four-wheel drive vehicle will go on almost any road. All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's), commonly called four-wheelers, are used extensively for "hauling out" deer, and horses or mules are used quite often in mountainous areas. A deer can be moved with a motorcycle by using skid poles. Also, commercial hauling devises with spoke wheels are available.

Since some non-hunters are offended by the sight of a dead deer, be considerate and cover the deer with some material if you will be traveling on public roads, and you must transport the deer on the hood of an automobile or in an open trailer. If no cover is available, at least turn the bloody, open area in the direction that is less likely to be seen.



The author transported this nice buck (taken with bow and arrow) on the hood of his Toyota Landcruiser. Because of the heat from the engine, this is not the most desirable means of transporting a deer for long distances.



The author is pictured above with a fine 11 point buck with a 22 inch spread, taken with bow and arrow in 1983 near Mountain View Arkansas. Tying this deer onto the back of the station wagon for a short haul was less messy and easier than putting it inside.

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## **Chapter 14**

### **Preparation of the Meat For the Table**

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Many people have tried venison one time and decided they didn't care for its taste. In most cases, it is likely that the animal was not properly cared for by the hunter or butcher, resulting in a "wild" or rancid taste. To prevent the meat from having a strong taste, the animal should be field dressed (remove entrails) as soon as possible. Field dressing is best accomplished if the animal is hanging by its head. When hunting alone and the animal is large, hanging a deer by the head may be difficult. In this case, try to get the upper part of the body as high as possible so it will drain when you remove the entrails.

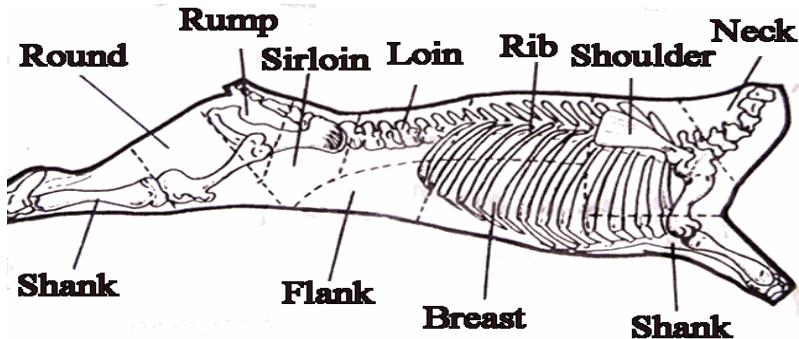
When cutting the deer open, be careful not to cut into the stomach which contains matter that would contaminant the meat. You can avoid making such a mistake if you use a *guthook* knife. If the animal is not going to be mounted, cut from the top of the throat to the anus. If you wish to save the cape for mounting you should consult a taxidermist. A heavy knife or saw will help you chop or cut through the pelvis bone. Cut around the anus (external part of the large intestine), pull it to the inside of the deer, and remove it with the entrails. This can be accomplished with-

out severing the pelvis bone. Also, cut around the genitals and the tube leading to them, and remove them along with the bladder. In order to remove the entrails, some cutting inside the rib cage will be necessary. It will be helpful to cut up through the middle of the rib cage, but this is difficult unless you have a large sharp knife, hatchet, or saw. After cutting through the breast bone, sever the windpipe at the throat and grasp hold of it. Pull it down the throat and through the chest cavity. The windpipe will serve as a handle for removing the entrails.

Because of the possibility of contracting diseases, it is advisable to use rubber gloves when field dressing deer, especially if you have a cut on your hands. If rubber gloves are not available, be sure to clean the blood off your hands after the entrails are removed. If water is not available, wiping your hands with leaves will remove most of the blood.

If possible, get the deer to water and rinse its insides. This will cool the meat and help prevent spoilage. When processing cannot be done immediately, a bag of ice placed inside the rib cage will chill the deer and help prevent spoilage.

If the air temperature is above 40° F the deer should be skinned and processed as soon as possible, however, below this temperature there is no need to hurry. It is advisable to ask for help or to watch someone who is experienced before attempting to process a deer for the first time. The cuts of a deer are basically the same as that for other four legged animals.



Before butchering, you must first pull the skin off the carcass. This is easier to do if the carcass is hanging. The usual method is to hang the carcass by the tendons in the hind legs, cut around the lower part of the shank, and pull the hide down. Some hunters and butchers prefer to hang the deer by the head and start by cutting around the neck.

A relatively new and fast method of skinning is to hang the deer by the head, place a golf ball or rock of similar size inside the skin at the top of the neck, tie a rope around it, and after making cuts around and up the legs, use a vehicle or pulling device to pull the skin off the carcass. If this method is used, be certain the beam or limb to which the head is tied will withstand the pull. The rope should also be tied tightly, and be capable of withstanding the pull of twice the weight of the carcass. (Suggested references for learning to process deer are given in the Appendix.)

*Aging* a carcass serves to make the meat tender and more palatable. For best results, the carcass should be left hanging at temperatures between 36 and 38 degrees Fahrenheit for up to two weeks. So, a proper storage facility is essential.

Rather than cut across the backbone to make chops, most hunters remove the loins (backstrap) with a knife. The loin is a very desirable cut of meat extending from the neck to the hind quarters. Another prime cut of meat, the tenderloin, is a small pair of muscles located toward the hind quarters and below the backbone. It is a mistake to mix or grind this up with the less desirable cuts.

The hind legs are not as tender as the loin, but can be prepared many ways. The shoulders and other less desirable cuts can be deboned and cut up for soup or stew meat, or ground for hamburger or sausage. Addition of beef or pork fat will improve the flavor and texture of ground venison.

There are many good recipes for cooking venison; however, probably the most favorite is to simply fry the more tender parts, such as loin and hind quarters. Cut the meat into small pieces (across the grain approximately 1/4 inch thick) and wash thoroughly. With a pair of sharp scissors or sharp knife, remove all fat, skin and gristle. Place it in a large bowl, add salt water solution of 1 tsp. salt per quart of water, and place in the refrigerator for several hours. Rinse, add new water, and sprinkle with salt. Continue this process until the meat is almost completely white. If you like, add a dash or more of seasoning (soy, Allegro, or Worcestershire sauce.) Mix the seasoning with plenty of water to keep the meat moist. If desired, add a teaspoon of lemon juice, lime juice, or a tablespoon of vinegar to the marinade. Cover with a plate or some type of wrap. The meat can remain in the refrigerator for up to one week. Remove the meat and rinse it in hot tap water to remove any remaining blood. Freeze any portion not to be cooked immediately. Place biscuit mix or flour in a large ziplock bag and add pepper, garlic powder, onion flakes, or other seasonings to taste. Close the bag, leaving plenty of air inside, and shake vigorously.

Place the meat in the bag, close, and shake. Remove and allow to set for a few minutes, allowing the meat to wet the flour. This will ensure the flour will cling to the meat while being cooked. Fry in a skillet of hot vegetable oil until golden brown. For more tender meat, use a lid on the skillet.

\* \* \* \* \*

*A taste of quality venison will motivate almost any hunter to learn more about the elusive whitetail deer, and to become a more skillful hunter.*

## Final Words

If you apply the basics presented in this book and are persistent, you will be successful. Be careful, courteous, ethical and enjoy the outdoors.

# APPENDIXES

## GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY/INDEX

**ACTION:** The mechanism of a firearm located directly behind the barrel, by which a gun is loaded, locked, fired, unlocked, extracted and ejected. 27

**ARCHERY:** The art or sport of shooting with a bow and arrow, either crossbow or longbow. 14, 42- 48



**ARROW:** A missile weapon shot from a bow and usually having a slender shaft, a pointed head, and feathers at the butt. 43

**BACK STOP:** Anything placed behind the intended target that stops the flight of a bullet or arrow (see butt). 44, 45

**BAITING:** The practice of putting out minerals or food to attract game, with the intention of hunting near the location after game get used to visiting the location. 116

**BALLISTICS:** The study of what happens to moving projectiles in flight - trajectory, force, impact, and penetration. 19

**BLACK POWDER:** Substance used as a propellant in primitive firearms. 14, 15, 48-54

**BLEAT:** A sound made by a deer, sometimes used by hunters in calling deer or in effort to get them to stop. 91

**BLIND:** A place of concealment: AMBUSH. 24, 26



**BROADHEAD:** A sharp pointed cutting device which attaches to the front of an arrow, designed to penetrate and cut as it passes through an animal. 44-48

**BULLET:** A small metal projectile, part of a cartridge, for firing from small arms. 17, 19, 28, 38, 54

**BUTT:** The rear end of a firearm that is placed against the shoulder. Also, a backstop for arrows - made from various materials. 46, 50

**CALIBER:** The diameter of a projectile, or the bore of a firearm. 16, 17, 19, 34, 54, 91

**CAMOUFLAGE:** To change or modify in order to prevent recognition. Materials used are nets, cloth, paint, and tape. 23, 47, 62, 64, 70, 74

**CAP:** A small device made from light metal containing an explosive and used to ignite the powder in primitive weapons equipped with a nipple. 15, 49, 50

**CARTRIDGE:** The complete set of components; case, bullet, powder, and primer. 16, 17, 28, 33



**CASE:** The portion of a cartridge (usually brass) which is not spent upon firing and is reloadable except in rimfire ammunition.

**CENTERFIRE:** A cartridge having the detonator in the center of the head, as opposed to rimfire cartridges. 14-15



**CHAMBER:** The larger portion of the barrel of a firearm in which the cartridge (or shotshell) is placed.

**CLIP:** A detachable magazine for a firearm.

**COCK:** To place the hammer of a weapon, such as a muzzle loader, in a position to fire. 52

**COMPOUND:** A bow that has wheels and cables (or pulleys) and which the draw weight decreases before full draw. The term may apply to a crossbow as well as a longbow, however, it is usually used when referring to the latter. 15, 44, 47



**CROSSBOW:** A mechanical weapon consisting of a bow fixed crosswise on a "gunlike" stock, capable of projecting a "bolt" (short arrow) or arrow. 15

**DRIVE:** The practice of moving deer out of an area of cover. 73

**DRY FIRE:** The practice of releasing the firing pin on an empty chamber of a firearm, or releasing the string of a bow without an arrow properly nocked. This practice is damaging to some firearms and to all bows. 35

**ELEVATION:** The degree of adjustment on the rear sight, or the reticle of a scope, necessary to cause the bullet to strike higher or lower on the target.

**FLAG:** The white tail of a deer.

**FLINCH:** An involuntarily reaction experienced by those who anticipate recoil, noise, or have fear of shooting a weapon. 35

**FLETCHING:** Feathers, or plastic vanes, attached to the rear end of an arrow that serves to true the flight. 47

**GROUP:** A series of bullet holes shot in paper while aiming at one point, usually 3 - 5 in number. The size of a group is measured from the center of the two bullet holes farthest apart. (See page 36)

**GRUNT:** A sound produced by male or female deer, often duplicated by hunters to attract deer. 118

**GUTHOOK:** A special knife made for cutting open a deer without cutting into the entrails. 102

**HABITAT:** The natural environment of an animal or plant. 13,

**HANG-FIRE:** The delay in firing of a weapon after the primer or percussion cap has been struck. 50

**HYPOTHERMIA:** The lowering of the body's core temperature to the point that illness and death can result. 28

**JUMP:** 1) The action of getting deer up off their bed. 2) The beginning of the race. 71, 97

**KICK:** Felt recoil of a firearm (see recoil).

**LONGBOW:** Originally referred only to a straight bow. The straight bow is still used in competition and in hunting by some. Since the invention of the recurve and the compound, and the common use of the crossbow in hunting, the term might be used to indicate that the weapon was a "compound" as opposed to a crossbow (see compound).

**MAGAZINE:** The assembly or space holding several cartridges or shells. May be in the arm or a separate removable component.

**MAGNUM:** 1) A cartridge or shell that has greater power than normal.

**MUZZLE:** The discharging end of a firearm. 13-15, 48, 51-53

**MUZZLELOADER:** A firearm that is loaded through the muzzle. 52-53

**NOCKING POINT:** The location on the string of a bow where the arrow is placed for shooting.

**NOCTURNAL:** Being active at night. 86

**PARALLAX:** The displacement of an object viewed from two different positions. For example, when using a telescopic sight, the apparent movement of the reticle in relation to the target when the eye is moved up or down, left or right. 38

**PLAT BOOK:** A book that shows land ownership. 56

**POACH:** To take game out of season or by illegal means. 12

**POST:** 1. An act by a landowner that restricts the use of his land. The restriction may be limited to "no hunting," or may prohibit entry. It may be expressed by any or all of the following: paint, signs and advertisements in local papers. A sign may say, "Posted, No Trespassing", or "No Hunting". 2. Placing of a person on a stand when drives are planned. 3. A type of reticle of a scope. 35

**PRIME:** The process of loading a muzzle loading weapon. 52

**PRIMER:** The round device in the face of centerfire cartridges that ignites the powder when struck by the firing pin.

**PRIMITIVE WEAPON:** Any of the weapons that shoot an arrow or which use black powder and loads from the muzzle. 14, 48

**PROPELLANT:** An explosive charge used to provide thrust for a projectile. 15, 48, 49 52

**PYRODEX:** A propellant used in muzzle loading firearms. 15, 49

**RACK:** The antlers of a buck.

**RATTLE:** The practice of clanging antlers together and making other noises which deer would make when fighting, in effort to fool deer into coming within range for a shot. 73

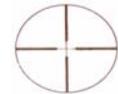
**RECOIL:** The backward force of a firearm, measured in foot pounds, caused by expansion of powder gases which also impels the bullet out of the barrel. (see kick) 18, 35



**RECURVE:** A bow with curves on the end that point away from the archer when the bow is not strung.

**RELEASE:** 1) The act of letting go of an arrow when a bow is drawn. 2) A mechanical device designed to aid in drawing the bow and releasing the string. 42, 90

**RETICLE:** A grid or pattern in the eye piece of an optical instrument used to establish scale or position 35, 37



**RIFLE:** A shoulder weapon with a rifled bore.

**RIMFIRE:** A cartridge in which the priming compound is contained in the rim at the base of the cartridge. 16, 34

**ROUND:** A unit of ammunition consisting of the parts necessary to fire one shot.

**RUNS:** Escape routes used by deer when pursued. (See trail). 66, 71

**RUT:** The breeding period of deer. 12, 58, 60, 74, 86

**SABOT:** A thrust-transmitting carrier that positions a projectile in a tube - usually made of plastic and used in muzzle loading weapons. 54

**SAFETY:** A device on a weapon that prevents or allows the trigger to be pulled. 27, 28

**SCENT:** A substance used to either attract an animal or to mask or cover the odor of man. 25

**SCOPE:** An optical instrument that usually magnifies the image.  
35-39, 50

**SCORE:** 1) The number of cumulative points needed for inclusion in a record book. 2) A measure of the size of a trophy buck.

**SCOUT:** To explore a hunting area carefully in order to obtain information.  
81-82

**SEMITOMATIC:** A weapon that, upon firing, loads another cartridge but which fires only once each time the trigger is pulled. 17-19,90

**SIGN:** Physical evidence that a deer has been in the area. 82

**SHELL:** Encasing used in a shotgun. Shotshell.

**SILHOUETTE:** 1. Metallic animals (made from plate steel or cast) used for target shooting or competition. 2. The positioning of oneself in such a way

that the outline of the body is easily recognizable. Also called "sky lining".  
63, 70

**SNORT:** A loud blow made by a deer.

**SLUG:** A lead projectile used in shotguns. 16

**SPIKE:** A buck having only straight antlers.

**SPINE:** Indicates the stiffness of an arrow. For safety and accuracy, arrow spine must be matched with draw length and weight of pull of the bow. 43

**SPREAD:** The width of the antlers of a buck.

**SPORTSMAN:** One who follows the game laws and hunter ethics.  
12, 13

**STALK:** An effort to slip to within shooting range of a deer that has been seen.. 67-70

**STAND:** 1) A place to wait on deer. 2) Device used to hunt from a tree. 22-24, 43, 57

**STILL-HUNT:** The quiet pursuit of deer through an area, usually wooded, as the hunter slowly walks, looks and listens. 67-70

**THREE-DIMENSIONAL TARGET (3-D):** Actual reproductions of animals using synthetic materials and used for target practice - especially archery. 43, 45

**TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP:** Map that shows the elevation of land.  
56, 99

**TRACKS:** A visible sign or mark of the passage of someone or something. Footprints. 69, 82

**TRAIL:** (Noun) Evidence of passage left along a course that was followed by one or more animals. (Verb) The act of following an animal by smell, as in the case with dogs, or by following sign left by an animal such as blood, turned up leaves, or footprints. 57, 64, 66

**TRAJECTORY:** The path a projectile travels from muzzle to impact.  
38, 46, 47

**TURNED AROUND:** A condition in which one is confused about his directions. This condition commonly happens to persons who are familiar with the territory but become disoriented, such as in darkness or heavy snow.

**VENISON:** The flesh of the deer family. 11, 71, 102, 105

**WINDAGE:** The lateral drift of a projectile in flight caused by wind. 38

**ZERO:** Sight adjustment so the bullet will strike the target at the point of aim.  
38, 40, 43

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## **Miscellaneous Tips**

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- ✿ Other animals in the deer woods can be a benefit as well as a nuisance. If you hear an excited squirrel and you know it was not excited by you, it is possible a deer is nearby. After the original excitement, a squirrel will often continue in a soft, low chatter if a deer lays down or stands nearby. Therefore, a squirrel may give a hunter an idea of the deer's location or alert him that a deer is approaching. On the other hand, an excited squirrel can serve to alert deer in the area. It is often impossible to distinguish the difference between the sounds a squirrel makes on the ground and the sounds deer sometimes make when feeding on acorns. All such sounds should be assumed to be a deer until you determine the source.
- ✿ If you want high quality, good tasting meat, strive to take only deer that have not been alarmed. For example, deer chased by dogs sometimes have a rancid taste. Also, a quick kill obtained by a shot into a vital area is recommended. Never shoot a deer in the stomach!
- ✿ If you are in a tree and a deer is alarmed by an accidental noise you may fool the deer by barking like a squirrel. The deer may recognize the sound and return unalarmed.
- ✿ The odor of a deer is similar to that of a goat. If winds are favorable, you might be able to smell them.

- ✿ Deer often bed in brush piles or tree tops left by loggers. However, to get even a decent running shot, two people are needed.
- ✿ When deer are abruptly disturbed, they sometimes run a few yards, stop, and look back.
- ✿ Occasionally a hunter may be able to run to where he can ambush a moving deer. Rapid relocation is often practiced by hunters using dogs and vehicles. However, *road hunting* is illegal! Also, noise from vehicles sometimes alerts the deer to the hunter's location.
- ✿ If you get lost or lose direction and do not have a compass, listen for the sounds of vehicles on a highway. A large truck can often be heard for miles, helping you regain direction.
- ✿ Baiting is legal in some states. The use of minerals, hay, corn, etc. will certainly improve your chances of bagging a deer. However, it might decrease your chances of seeing a smart buck, especially later in the season.
- ✿ Decisions and preparations are best made before the day of the hunt. Make a list of necessary items and have everything ready the night before the hunt. Knowing where you will hunt and having everything out and ready for departure the next morning will ensure a better nights sleep. Setting an alarm clock adds confidence that you won't oversleep, so you are less likely to be restless or wake up several times during the night.
- ✿ If you are crossing streams by foot, carry a couple of bread bags or similar size plastic bags with you. Cut the bottoms out of the bags and slip them over your boots. Wrap your boot laces

around the plastic and tie them tightly. Then, pull the bag up your leg as far as possible and tie it tightly with a band or string. If you cross the stream quickly your feet and legs will remain dryer, even if the stream is deeper than your boot tops.

- ✿ If you feel the urge to cough, swallow hard and take a deep breath. This might prevent coughing which would otherwise reveal your presence.
- ✿ Carry ziplock bags for bagging the liver and heart. Cool the meet as soon as possible to avoid spoilage. Many people consider the liver to be a delicacy. There are even a few heart lovers out there. If you do not use the heart or liver, someone will be glad to receive them. Others say the brains are excellent scrambled with eggs, and that the tongue is delicious, especially pickled. You might want to try these. Personally, I'll take their word for it.
- ✿ Carry a small glass bottle in which to collect the urine. A bottle of urine will cost about \$7.00 at the store and you can be certain of the quality when you collect it yourself. Urine taken from a doe in *heat* will be of greater value because it can be used as a sexual attractant.
- ✿ If you want to be successful at hunting, work at it! Patience can be one of your greatest assets, whereas impatience can be your greatest liability.
- ✿ Grunt calls work well in an area for awhile. However, like the old, smart gobbler who was fooled once or twice, deer learn caution and may avoid you when you use the call. It is extremely difficult to call a deer in with a grunt and get a shot with a bow and arrow if you are on the ground. Deer are able to pinpoint your exact location and will sneak in at full alert. Never use a

grunt call while walking. Deer will associate the sound with humans and might become unhuntable with such calls. When a call brings in a deer, you can be sure it will be on the alert and will more likely react to the sound of a bow and arrow. (See the illustration on page 93)

- ✿ If your family and friends will allow you to look shabby, do not cut your hair before and during hunting season. A beard will serve as camouflage and extra hair on the head will help keep you warm in cold weather.
- ✿ To help avoid perspiration when walking is necessary, start in the higher elevation and work down, avoid hot drinks, walk slowly, and stop for breathers.
- ✿ If your enthusiasm to hunt needs a boost, rent a good hunting tape and watch it. A good batch of cooked venison might do the trick as well.
- ✿ Deer crossing signs may be an indication of an excellent place to hunt.
- ✿ If you want to practice getting on target quickly when using a scope, adjust to high power and practice aiming at passing birds.
- ✿ For practice on a moving target, rig up a target inside an old tire. From a safe angle, have a friend roll the tire down a hill.
- ✿ To determine wind direction, "flick your bic." Even a slight breeze will bend the flame of a butane lighter. Also, strip light leaves or seeds from a weed and pitch them into the air.



- ✿ There are times when a legal deer comes within shooting range but is not the trophy you are looking for. If the deer remains calm and you decide to take the shot, wait a few minutes. The deer will serve as a decoy and a real trophy may soon appear.
- ✿ When packaging meat, use freezer paper or trash bags. If foil is used the meat is likely to be damaged by freezer burn.

## **Reminisces**

Once again the feel of autumn is in the air. Nature, the greatest artist of all, will paint the hills with colors so vivid and beautiful, no human hand can match or duplicate them. The poignant cries of wild geese flying south will awaken us from our sleep, and awaken the wanderlust in our hearts. Thoughts might again surface, that our lives could have been different. Faces of old friends, some now gone, will arouse a sense of loss and pain in our thoughts. Maybe something we said or did, or didn't say or do, will bring a sting of regret. Memories of past deeds and old camps might cross our mind. The smell of early morning coffee, bacon, or thoughts of long cold campfires, might bring a feeling of remorse, or bring back thoughts of joy. The companionship of evening meals, tales of the big one that got away. Maybe an old mossy horn hanging in camp for all to see. The feeling of strength and completeness that we felt, when we were put to the test, and managed to succeed. The love and confidence we had for and in each other brings to mind the old adage, "new friends are silver, old friends are gold." Once again the crisp frosty morning will arouse feelings of anticipation, gladden our hearts and turn our thoughts to new camps, where we can again relish old pleasures. The anticipation and excitement of young faces, with their boundless energy, will be a source of inspiration, and will ignite a spark of desire and readiness once again. The thoughts of wilderness treks, the excitement of planning a hunt, the endless talk of how it will be, gathering and preparing gear and equipment, is almost as much pleasure as the hunt itself. Sturdy new boots, warm sleeping bag, shining hunting knife. The prized rifle, which brings joy just to look at. Some of these are thoughts and deeds that nonoutdoorsman don't understand or appreciate, and more is the pity probably never will. But those of us who have seen the elephant and heard the owl, even though some have long since crossed the great divide to meet the red gods of the mountains, knew and know that old saw, "Learn to ride, shoot straight and speak the truth, and you will be a man, my son."

Jerry Franklin

## **Meat**

There is a saying that all meat is grass. This is literally true. The carnivore live on the herbivore. Man subsists on both. History proves that man can exist quite well on a straight meat diet which will provide every nutrient required for good health.

Vilhjalmur Stefanson, the eminent arctic explorer, lived in the North for more than five years subsisting on meat alone. Later in New York City, under medical supervision, he demonstrated the sufficiency of an all meat diet for a minutely observed and thoroughly tested year eating the same food as our remote ancestors, and primitive hunters of today, completing the test in perfect health.

J.L.F

## **Additional Recipes For Venison**

**by Jerry Franklin**

### **Venison And Beans**

6 slices bacon - chopped  
1 1\2 lbs ground venison  
1 medium onion - chopped  
1 can pork and beans (16oz)  
1 can kidney beans (16oz) - drained  
1 can butter beans or great northern (16oz) - drained  
1/3 cup packed brown sugar  
1 cup catsup  
2 tbs., vinegar  
1 tbs. Worcestershire sauce  
1\2 tsp. salt  
1\4 tsp. prepared mustard

Heat oven to 350 degrees. In Dutch oven, cook bacon over medium-low heat until crisp. Remove and set aside, drain all but one tbs. bacon fat from Dutch oven. Add meat and onion. Cook over medium heat until meat is no longer pink and onion is tender. Add the bacon and remaining ingredients. Mix well. Cover and bake for about 45 minutes.

## **Venison steak**

4-5 onions        3-4 lb. steaks 1 1\2 to 2" thick  
3 green peppers  
18 to 20 mushrooms    4 garlic cloves - smashed  
salt and pepper      2 bay leaves  
1/4 lb. butter

Dice onions, green peppers, and mushrooms. Use a cast iron fry pan and fry these in the butter with the bay leaves. Then take the steak and rub salt, pepper, and smashed garlic cloves into the meat on both sides. Fry with onions and peppers. Do not over cook the meat, as this will make it tough. Serve with mashed potatoes, and/or mixed vegetables.

## **Venison Liver**

2 1\2 lb. venison liver slices 1\2" thick, 1\2 cup flour, salt and pepper. 6 table spoons butter 2 table spoons lemon juice.

Dip the liver in flour, salt, and pepper and sauté over a medium high heat in the butter. Turn it once (it is best rare). Cook about 4 min. on a side. Remove liver, stir in the lemon juice in the pan, and pour the lemon butter over the liver. Cover with sautéed onions, if you prefer.

## **Oven Cured Jerky**

Cut meat into thin pieces (1/4" - 3/8"). The width and length do not matter. Wash thoroughly with warm salt water until you cannot squeeze out additional blood. Marinate over night (Lawry's or Allegro is recommended). Sprinkle jerk cure onto both sides of each piece. Additional seasoning can be added. Place the pieces in the refrigerator overnight.

Place a large pan on the lowest rack in your oven. Take out the remaining racks. Place meat directly on the racks. Preheat oven (from bottom burner) to 185 degrees (an oven thermometer will be needed). Insert the racks and leave for 30 minutes. Empty the pan containing the moisture. Lower the temperature to 125 degrees, with knife in top of the door, until desired dryness is reached. The higher temperature takes out over 90 percent of the moisture and much of the fat, and kills all bacteria. (Jerky cure can be obtained from, **The Sportsman's Guide**, phone 1-800-888-3006.)

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## **Resources**

### **Books\Magazines\Catalogs\Etc.**

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#### **BOOKS**

**If a book is not in a library that is available to you or in a bookstore or sporting goods store, your library can probably get it for a small fee. Books can also be ordered from the publisher if still in print. Out of print books can often be found.**

#### **The Hunter's Guide**

National Rifle Association  
1600 Rhode Island Ave., N.W.,  
Washington, D.C. 20036

**Outdoor Life's  
Deer Hunting Book**  
Editor - Chet Fish

#### **Hunting For The Pot**

**Fishing For The Pan**  
by Byron W. Dalrymple

**After Your Deer is Down:**  
Care and Handling of Big Game  
Winchester, 1981 137 pp

**The Original Tree Stand Hand-book**  
Sportsman's Studios, 1982 152 pp  
**Whitetail Autumn**

by John Ozoga  
Outlook Publishing  
Minocqua, WI

#### **Outdoor Life Skill Book**

**Hunting The Whitetail Deer** - by  
Russell Tinsley

#### **The Still-Hunter**

by Theodore S. Van Dyke  
Macmillan, 1923 389 pp.

#### **More Than a Trophy**

Stackpole Books  
Field dressing, skinning, butchering, cooking etc.

#### **Deer & Deer Hunting**

by Robert Wegner  
Stackpole Books  
P.O. Box 1831,  
Harrisburg, PA 17105  
Contains an exhaustive list of books  
with comments.

#### **Deer Hunting**

Tactics and Guns For Hunting All  
North American Deer - by Norman  
Strung

**The Complete Guide To Game  
Care and Cookery** by Sam Fadala

- DBI Books, Inc., 4092 Commercial Avenue, North Brook, IL 60062

**Deer & Deer Fixings Cookbook**

Night Hawk Publications

P.O. Drawer 375

Fairfield, AL 35064

Contains information on field and home care of venison as well as more than 100 proven venison recipes.

**Masters' Secrets of Deer Hunting**

Larsen's Outdoor Publishing, 2640

Elizabeth Place, Lakeland, FL

33813

**Archer's Digest**

Edited by Roger Combs

DBI Books Inc.

4029 Commercial Avenue

Northbrook, Illinois 60062

**Crossbows** - Edited by Roger Combs

DBI Books Inc.

**Secrets of Bowhunting Deer**

by Jim Crumley

Trebark Camouflage

3434 Buck Mountain Rd.

Roanoke, VA 24014

**BOWHUNTER'S DIGEST** by

Chuck Adams. DBI Books

**HUNTING TROPHY WHITE-**

**TAILS** by David Morris

Venture Press, P.O. Box 1689, Bigfork, MT 59911

**THE BEST OF DICK IDOL'S WHITETAIL WORLD - Hunting the four periods of the rut.**

**GREAT WHITETAIL HUNTS AND THE LESSON THEY TAUGHT.**

The above books in this column can be ordered from Whitetail University, P.O. Box 741, Marietta, Georgia 30061

Phone 1-800-953-9227

**Black Powder Hunting**

By Sam Fadala

DBI Books Inc.

**The Beginning Bowhunter**

by Tony Kinton

ICS Books Inc.

1000 E 80th Place

Merrillville, IN

**Wilderness Medicine**

by William W. Forgey, M.D.

ICS Books, Inc.

"...a clear, concise guide to treating the gamut of outdoor mishaps, from insect bites and fishhook removal to more serious problems such as broken bones and heatstroke." Sports Afield 11/84

**HYPOTHERMIA** - Death by exposure by William W. Forgey.

ICS Books, Inc.

Dr. Forgey explores the causes, methods of prevention, advances in clothing, field treatments, hospital

care, and the basics of physiology and physics of hypothermia in terms everyone can understand. 172 pp.

**The Book of Shooting For Sport and Skill**

Edited by Frederic Wilkinson

**How To Shoot** - by Larry Koller

**A Natural History of Trees of Eastern and Central North America**

by Donald Culross Peattie

**Trees and Shrubs** - by George A.

Petrides

**MAGAZINES**

**Buckmasters Whitetail Magazine**

P.O. Box 235006  
Montgomery, AL 36123-5006

**PETERSON'S HUNTING**

P.O. Box 56295  
Boulder, CO 80322-6295  
**BOWHUNTER**  
P.O. Box 350  
Mt. Morris, IL 61054

**North American Whitetail**

P.O Box 741  
Mairetta, Georgia 30061

**American HUNTER**

National Rifle Association. Membership inquiries (800) 368-5714

**CATALOGS**

**BOWHUNTER'S Discount Ware-House, Inc.**

1045 Zeigler Road, P.O. Box 158  
Wellsville, PA 17365

**SPORTSMAN'S GUIDE**

411 Farwell Avenue  
So St Paul, MN 55075-0239

**GANDER MOUNTAIN**

Box 248 HWY W  
Wilmot, WI 53192

**MIDSOUTH SHOOTERS SUPPLY COMPANY**

1925 North Highway 92  
New Market, TN 37820

**Bass Pro Shops**

1935 S. Campbell  
Springfield, MO 65898

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**HANNON'S MOON TIMES** for fishing & hunting. Tells you the best time of day and best days of the month to hunt. Send \$6.75 to Moon Clock

P.O. Box 723070  
Atlanta, GA 31139

**Prime Times  
For Fish & Game Activity**  
by Rick Taylor (continued)

**Jer-Ben Publications**  
326 NW Stratford Dept. HH  
Ankeny, IA 50021  
Wall Calendar with FREE "Pocket  
Calendar" \$9.95

**Venison Processing the  
E-Z Way** (VCR Tape)  
by Bud Grant and Joel Raygor  
Raygor Distributors  
Box 539, RR 1  
Stewartville, MN 55976

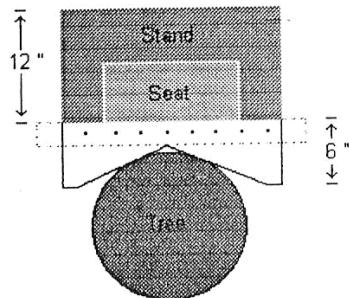
## Hunter's Check List

You may make copies of this check list (two pages). Mark out the items you do not wish to take on a given hunt, and check off the remainder as you get them loaded into the transportation vehicle. (Take what you need, but keep it simple where possible.)

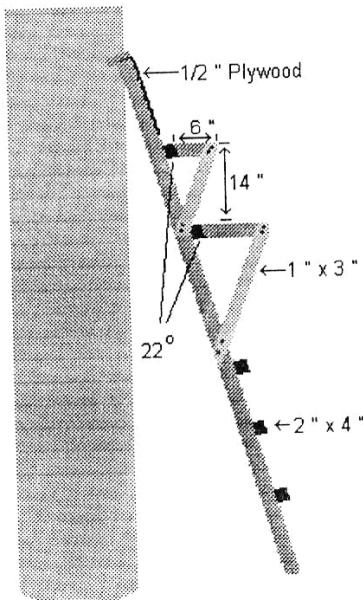
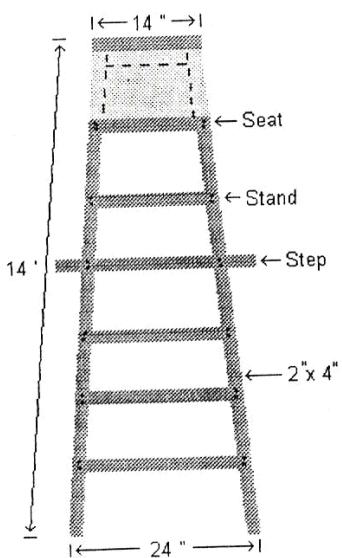
<u>Archery</u>	Modern Gun	Primitive Weapon
Bow and arrows	Weapon & Case	Weapon
Release or Glove	Ammunition	Sling
Extra Inserts	Sling	Case
Quiver	Knife	Knife
Knife	License	Possible Bag
Deer Call	Deer Call	Bullets
Scents	Rope or Strap	Caps
Armgard	Stand	Powder Measure
Hunting License	Screw Hooks	Powder
Stands	Fluorescent	Patches
Rope or Strap	Clothing	Cleaner
Screw Hooks	Saw	Fluorescent
Head Net	Binoculars	Clothing
Compass	Plastic Bag	Binoculars
Saw	Map	Rope or Strap
Flashlight	Spotting Scope	Saw
Map	Compass	Compass
Backpack	Backpack	Plastic Bags
Decoy	Paper Targets	Toilet Paper
Plastic Bags	Toilet Paper	Backpack
Binoculars	Rattling Antlers	Map
Whetstone	Flashlight	Flashlight
Gloves	Matches - lighter	Matches - lighter
Toilet Paper		
Field Points		
Butt		



## How To Make A Portable Tree Stand For Under \$15.00



Find a house under construction. Ask the contractor or owner for scraps under 3' long. You will have to buy the two main pieces. For safety's sake, pick out some that do not have knots. Use 16 penny box coated nails (smaller on the 1x3 pieces). Paint the entire stand gray and spot it with flat black spray.



"Getting started right can make or break a newcomer's entry into any sport. Robert Waters' book, DEER HUNTING – WHITE TAIL HUNTING BASICS and MORE is just that, the basics, plus some. It deals with the three major types of harvesting tools: modern rifles, muzzle loaders, and archery tackle, plus hunting methods, the nature of the white-tail, its habitat and habits, plus, as promised, more. More is in the nature of windchill factors, advice about "staying found," deer populations, a checklist for important hunting gear, proper clothing for the whitetail hunter, and -- you guessed it -- more, such as how to make a tree stand, dryfiring for practice, sighting in properly, as well as important information of safety, not only in the treestand, but a gun safety as well. Waters is a sportsman. His disdain for poacher and unfair play stand out, which is vital to teaching new-comers not only the hows and whys of whitetail hunting, but the admirable way to go about it. Yes, getting started right is important, and that's what this book is about." -- Sam Fadala

[Sam Fadala is author of numerous hunting books and has written for several top hunting magazines and held numerous staff positions]