



HUNTING GUIDE



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Common Mistakes

We all make mistakes. It is recognizing when we make them, and adjusting course, that makes us better hunters — but first, we have to understand them.

Here are 10 mistakes inexperienced hunters frequently make when hunting deer.

1. Neglecting small public parcels. Don't follow the crowd. Larger parcels also tend to get the most pressure — and mature bucks know it.

2. Hunting your best areas too soon. You want to save your best areas for the perfect conditions. Don't put too much pressure on them too soon.

3. Hunting the wrong times. Most hunters are out in the early mornings or evenings. It is a rookie mistake to dismiss midday hours. In fact, more mature deer are killed between

10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

4. Forgetting to buckle up. Yes, this point is all about safety. Never go up or down a tree without a climbing belt. Tree-stand falls are one of the leading causes of injuries to hunters.

5. Waiting too long to shoot. Take the first good, clear shot you have after a buck walks into range. If the buck gets too close, things can get messy quickly.

6. Aiming too high. At least 80 percent of misses are high. Most deer are closer than you

think they are.

7. Ignoring secondary food sources. Mature bucks are bright. They are more wary of popular food sources during primetime. Consider hunting near greenbrier, honeysuckle and blackberry.

8. Depending too heavily on gadgets. There have been great advancements in technology that have produced some amazing gadgets and hunting aids. But depending on them can make any hunter lazy. Remember, gadgets enhance your hunt, they don't

create it. You can't afford a shortage of skill.

9. Being too friendly. If you own or lease hunting ground, be careful not to say "yes" to every friend who asks and let him or her hunt wherever they want. This is one of the quickest ways to overpressure deer.

10. Saying too much. This is a tale as old as time. When you find a big buck, you're best served to keep quiet. Don't tell a friend how and where you've been hunting it, because your friend might just "happen upon it" before you do.

Record Flooding in Ozarks

The Missouri Ozarks, which cover a substantial portion of southern Missouri and extend northeast into the suburbs of St. Louis, are a popular destination for outdoor activities.

Sadly, the spring of 2017 brought record-breaking flooding to the Missouri Ozarks, resulting in a big impact to the wildlife and hunters.

The Ozarks are not the only region affected by massive flooding. If you tune into the news at all, you've probably seen many photos of entire areas submerged.

According to The Weather Channel, record flooding was observed in 14 locations from this spring event:

- Illinois River near Watts, Okla. (previous record: Dec. 28, 2015)
- Big Piney at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo. (previous record: March 19, 2008)
- Black River at Pocahontas, Ark. (previous record: April 28, 2011)
- Current River at Doniphan, Mo. (previous record: March 1, 1904)
- Current River at Van Buren, Mo. (previous record: March 26, 1904)
- Gasconade River near Hazelgreen, Mo. (previous record: March 19, 2008)
 - Gasconade River at Jerome, Mo. (previous record: Dec. 30, 2015)
 - Gasconade River near Rich Fountain, Mo. (previous record: Dec. 30, 2015)
 - Jacks Fork at Eminence, Mo. (previous record: Nov. 15, 1993)
 - Meramec River near Steelville, Mo. (previous record: July 27, 1998)
 - Meramec River near Sullivan, Mo. (previous record: Aug. 1, 1915)
 - Meramec River near Eureka, Mo. (previous record: Dec. 30, 2015)
 - North Fork White River



near Tecumseh, Mo. (previous record: Aug. 1, 1915)

- St. Francis River at Patterson, Mo. (previous record: Dec. 3, 1982)

While entire towns are drowning, many of the affected areas consist of densely populated wildlife landscapes. This leaves enthusiasts of all outdoor activities—including hunters—asking, “What are the consequences of so much flooding?”

FLOODING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In short, flooding displaces the environment. While a healthy dose of rainwater is key to maintaining biodiversi-

ty and other functions in an ecosystem—recharging groundwater systems and moving sediments and nutrients around the landscape—massive flooding creates erosion, and can eliminate vegetation and degrade entire ecosystems.

Habitats are washed away, weed species are dispersed, and fish production decreases dramatically. Too much sediment and nutrients entering a waterway can have negative impacts downstream.

FLOODING AND WILD GAME

While wildlife might not be our first thought at the onset

of massive flooding, fawns are severely affected by floodwaters. They are at high risk of being swept away or getting displaced to areas with too many deer.

In fact, research out of the Mississippi State University Deer Lab shows that when major rivers and lakes flood, deer leave their home ranges by up to 15 miles—which can dramatically affect hunting, depending on the season and timing.

While the full effects of the Ozarks flooding have yet to be determined, there will be some game, such as turkeys, whose numbers will take years to recover.



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Tactics and Decoys

The right turkey decoy spread can mean the difference between a miss and a kill. While turkeys aren't the smartest creatures, they will think twice about entering a spread that feels unconvincing.

Creating an attractive spread requires proper prepa-

ration, research and the right decoys.

SETTING THE SCENE

Know the "seasons." A well-positioned jake over a laying hen is a very attractive position to real turkeys — in the first few weeks of the season. Paying attention to how turkeys, especially mature toms, react to this "lover's position" will help you on your hunt.

It is also good to recognize how real flocks behave, and set decoys accordingly. Turkeys tend to move together

in the same direction. When you set up your decoys, be sure to face them the same way.

Be cognizant of how far you stake your decoys in the ground. Turkeys have short legs and understand how tall they are: Turkeys will spot a decoy immediately if your fake friend is too tall.

TURKEY DECOYS

With decoys of any kind, it is well-known the more realistic it is, the better. Remember, the point is to dupe as many gobblers as possible. Form,

paint and pose all play an important role when choosing a turkey decoy.

Consider adding the following models to your decoy collection:

Banded Laydown Hen

Cost: \$70

This decoy position is a staple in any decoy collection, and the GreenHead Gear model offers realistic features at an affordable price.

Jekyll & Hyde

Cost: \$100

Another GHG model, this

decoy does more than provide double visibility, it attracts all personalities — from reticent toms to more aggressive challengers.

MAD Spin-N-Strut

Cost: \$150

Don't underestimate how important movement is when trying to dupe turkeys into range. This model by Flambeau Outdoors provides the hunter unparalleled control, with 90-degree rotation at the pull of a string and a fan tail that raises and lowers — with a 30-second setup time.

Hunting Dogs



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If you're a hunter, your dog is an investment — and people do invest.

In fact, according to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, hunters in the United States spend more than \$600 million each year on hunting dogs.

But how do you go about choosing a breed? If you are a hunter looking to add a companion to your sport, consider the following dog breeds.

All breeds have their strengths, depending on the type of game you hunt, so it is important to remember

that this list is neither comprehensive nor in any particular order.

LABRADOR RETRIEVER

Retrievers are great breeds for waterfowl hunting, but the Labrador stands above the rest. They are known for being full of energy and having thick cold-weather coats — which make long, chilly days outside no problem. They also are eager to please and will go to great lengths to retrieve your kills.

COONHOUND

Comfortable in all terrain and hunting conditions, the coonhound makes

for an extremely versatile hunting dog. Smaller game (such as their namesake) are their strength, and they are notorious for "tracking and treeing" their prey.

AMERICAN FOXHOUND

These dogs were specifically bred for the purpose of hunting foxes, so at this task they rarely disappoint. Since these dogs are avid runners, many deer hunters have co-opted the breed for their sport.

BEAGLE

Beagles are persistent and eager for a chase. What they lack in long legs,

they make up for in energy. This gives them a leg up on small-game hunting.

POINTER

Pointers have thinner coats, so staying outside for long periods in colder months and big-game hunting in northern regions are not its strong suit. However, if you are looking for a solid bird dog, look no further.

BLOODHOUND

Bloodhounds are known for their strong noses and tracking capabilities. They were originally bred to track people in the Middle Ages, but have since been used to track deer and wild boar.

There's an App for That

Hunting has gone hi-tech. While the thrill of the hunt is a primitive pleasure, advancements in technology allow for better precision and efficiency.

If you are looking to enhance your hunt but don't have the budget for big-ticket gadgetry, look no further than your own smartphone — the newest must-have hunting device.

Here are six smartphone applications that will enhance any hunt. All are available on both Apple and Android phones. You don't need all the apps, so consider how you would like to develop your hunt before choosing.

SCOUTLOOK HUNTING

Cost: Free but has in-app purchases

ScoutLook is a standard navigational app with weather features and a scent tracking system. Weather forecast details include temperature, cloud cover, barometric pressure and wind activity. And the Scentcone Wind Map feature lets you see where your scent will blow hour by hour.

SHOOTING HOURS

Cost: \$0.99

This app performs a very basic function extremely well: calculating the times of sunrise and sunset

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using your GPS location — allowing you to always shoot legally.

POWDERHOOK

Cost: Free

Need a place to hunt? This app will help you find one. The app includes free maps of public lands in all 50 states, with thousands of depth contours for lakes and rivers. It also populates listings of outdoor events near you.

DEER CALLS & TACTICS

Cost: \$1.99

This is one of the best and most comprehensive resources for learning and interpreting deer tactics and calls. The app provides tips on how and when to use each of the deer calls to maximize your chance of a successful hunt.

WHITETAIL FREAKS PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Cost: \$2.99

One of the best organizational hunting tools available from your phone, the app allows you to mark your property and pin the locations of your tree stands, trail cameras and food plots. You can even attach notes to each pin.

SAS SURVIVAL GUIDE

Cost: \$5.99

You know what they say: Safety first. This application provides essential information to survive any situation. The app includes photo galleries of plants that are edible, medicinal and poisonous, knots and animal tracks. The first aid section is comprehensive and user-friendly.



Your Own Land

So, you've been dreaming of owning your own parcel? Maybe you've even considered building a lodge on the land or leasing it out — give the land a chance to pay for itself.

This dream might be easier than you think to achieve. Take these necessary steps when it comes time to search, purchase and prep your hunting parcel.

PICKING A PIECE OF PROPERTY

1. Meet your potential neighbors.

When scouting potential properties, take the time to stop by neighboring landowners. Do owners of neighboring property allow hunting on their land? Are they farmers? How many neighbors would you have? The answers to all of these questions will determine the viability of the land you are considering.

2. Take a little walk. If you're able, walk the property. This will allow you to get the authentic "wildlife" perspective. Are there sufficient food and water sources? Viable shelter? Are there plenty of good stand trees? Some of these things you can add to the land — but will require a heavy financial investment.

3. Shop around. For funding, that is. Remember that banks are not objective institutions, and a loan officer that also hunts and fishes might be more inclined to approve your loan.

PREPPING THE HUNT

Once you own your own hunting parcel, there are



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things you can do to make it more attractive to game.

1. Plot the land. Get to know your land before planning any major changes, such as investing in perennial food plots. In the meantime, stick with

planting a few small annual openings and roadbeds.

2. Take inventory. Position several trail cameras to take an inventory of potential shooter bucks that live in the region. Placing your trail cameras in

mineral licks is the quickest method of achieving a solid count.

3. Promote good growth. This includes both cuts and burns. You will want to down any trees that are pulling

resources away from good species, as well as initiate small burns to promote quick new growth of desirable vegetation. Added bonus: You will create great natural cover by felling trees in strategic places.

Hunting by the Numbers

Being outdoors makes us happy. In fact, the National Academy of Sciences found that people who spend time outside, especially in nature, for just an hour and a half report reduced feelings of negativity and loneliness.

Spending time outside is one of America's favorite pastimes. The most recent National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation illustrates how much people in the United States appreciate our country's natural resources and beauty.

- In 2011, 38 percent of the American population 16 years and older — 90.1 million people — enjoyed some form of fishing, hunting or wildlife-associated recreation.

- Hunting and fishing is a large contributor to the U.S. economy. Consumers who participated in one or both sports spent \$43.2 billion on equipment, \$32.2 billion on trips and \$14.6 billion on licenses and fees, membership dues and contributions, land leasing and ownership.

- 27.1 million anglers spent more than 400 million days freshwater fishing.

- This doesn't include fishing in the Great Lakes, which garnered 1.7 million anglers.

- Saltwater fishing garnered 8.9 million anglers.

- Six percent of the population 16 years and older — 13.7 million people — went hunting in 2011.

- Hunters in the U.S. spent an average of 21 days pursuing wild game.

- Big game such as elk, deer and wild turkey attracted 11.6



million hunters, who spent 212 million days in the fields.

- More than 4.5 million pursued small game, such as

squirrels, rabbits and quails on 51 million days.

- Migratory birds — geese, ducks and doves — attracted

2.6 million hunters who spent 23 million days hunting.

- Hunting for other animals, including raccoons,

coyotes and groundhogs, attracted 2.2 million hunters for more than 34 million days.