

Hunting Guide



Hunting the Right Way

Don't be that person who tarnishes the reputation of all hunters by being disrespectful in the field.

Certain principles hold true for everyone, whether they're just starting out or a hunter with years of experience.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

A key practice recommended by the National Wild Turkey Federation is to prioritize practicing your shot. Dedicate lots of time at the range to improve your accuracy. At the same time, make sure that your weapon is operating safely and reliably. Pick partners who share the same commitment to honing their skills.

YOUR BEST SHOT

Efficient shots are the key to ethical hunting — and that can be difficult in the heat of the moment for those who aren't adequately prepared. Avoid getting overly excited and firing a shot that will only wound the animal. Taking wildlife swiftly and with minimal pain is the goal. If you fail to do so, you may spend the rest of the day tracking an injured animal, after causing unnecessary suffering.

CARING FOR THE LAND

Always get permission from landowners before hunting on



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private property. Failing to do so is unethical and might put you at risk of legal consequences. Show respect for the environment by cleaning up after yourself. Bring garbage bags to properly dispose of things like snack wrappers and water bottles, leaving the area just as you found it.

BE COURTEOUS

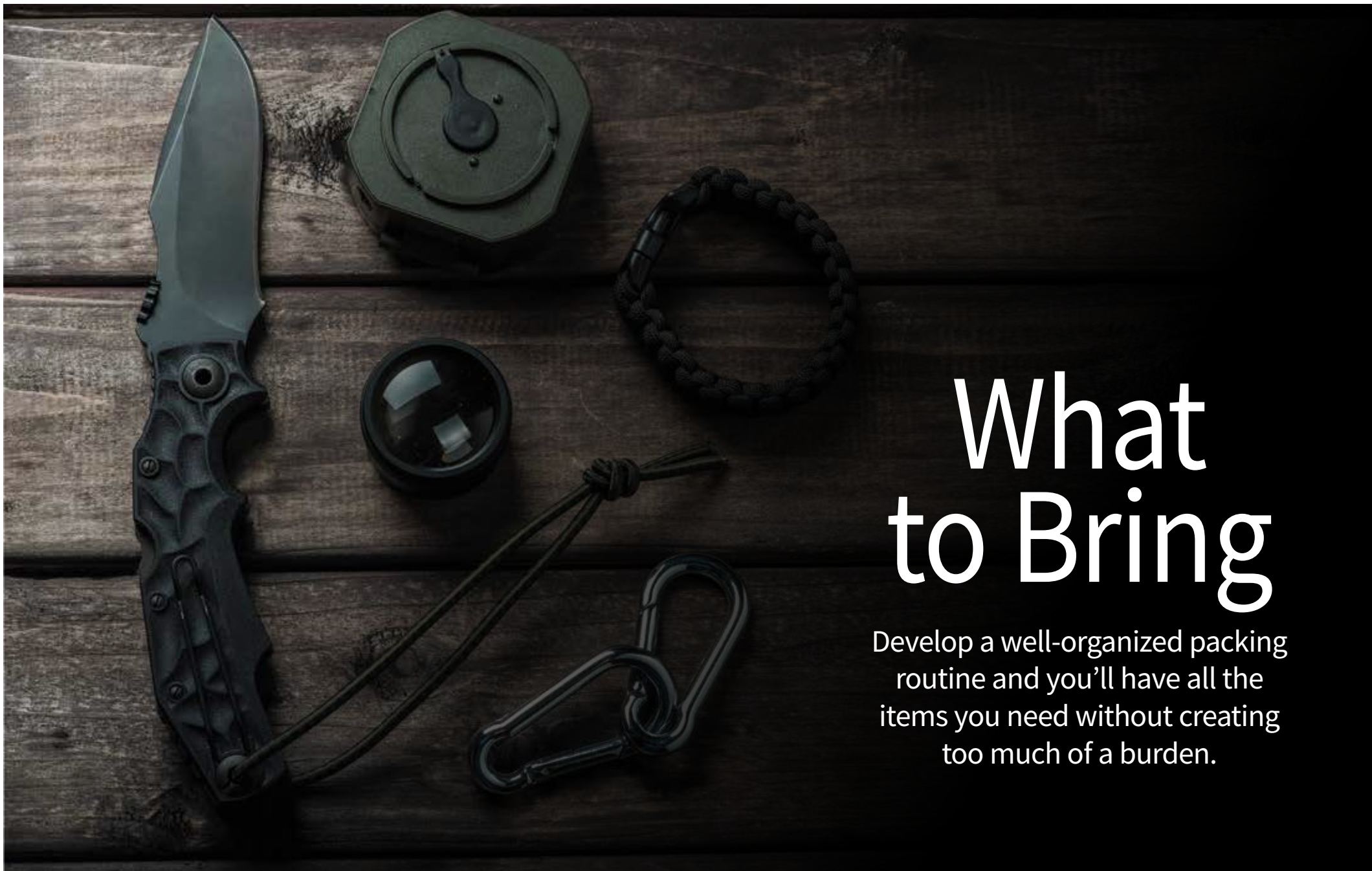
When hunting on private property, consider expressing your gratitude by sharing a portion of your hunting catch with the owner. While outdoors, you may encounter others who are participating in recreational activities. Be courteous and cautious when

interacting with these fellow outdoor enthusiasts. Always investigate before firing a shot if you hear unfamiliar sounds.

SHOWING RESPECT

Respecting animals is important during the hunt and through the harvesting process. Use all parts of the

animal, while properly disposing of the remains. Taking pictures with a downed trophy is acceptable, but make sure they are respectful. Hunters who share tasteless photos of their kills on social media or other internet platforms cast a negative light on the sport at large.



What to Bring

Develop a well-organized packing routine and you'll have all the items you need without creating too much of a burden.

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This is especially important if you're taking a hiking expedition to a hunting site to avoid startling nearby wildlife with a noisy utility vehicle. Here's what to bring.

FOCUS ON SAFETY

Always begin the packing process by focusing on essential safety items. Every hunter or fisherman should carry a first aid kit containing bandages, gauze, disinfectant and ointments needed to address scrapes or cuts.

Bring a harness and safety belt if you plan to climb into an elevated stand. Being aware of your location

is critically important, whether you're on land or water. Some rely on traditional maps and compasses, while others opt for modern GPS systems. Either way, don't put yourself at risk of getting lost. The consequences could be dire. Tell your hunting partner if you plan to venture out on your own.

LAYERED APPROACH

Put your most frequently used items in easily accessible areas of the backpack, either in dedicated outer pockets or on the top. Keep any specialized equipment or tools in these pockets as well, as you may

need them at a moment's notice.

OTHER KEY ITEMS

Well-prepared hunters and fishermen will bring along key items like game carriers, scent eliminators or attractors, sunscreen and odorless insect repellent. Make sure it's all readily accessible, too. Consider bringing extra clothing that matches the weather conditions. Other essential items to pack include a hydration bladder or water bottle, game calls, decoys and other sport-specific gear. You may need snacks or meals. If you plan to stay overnight, pack a flashlight,

stove, camp chair, lantern, mess kit, bathroom items, and garbage bags.

GONE FISHING?

Fishermen have their own unique requirements, such as extra socks (in case they get wet), a hat, waders and a windbreaker. Carry a backup rod and reel just in case of a mishap. Bring multiple spools of fishing line and make sure the extra reel is untangled. Snags can occur very unexpectedly. By being well-prepared, you won't have to cut your fishing trip short because you don't have these basic tools of the trade.

Licensing and You

Hunting regulations vary by location, with licenses being a common necessity.

They may seem like a mere annoyance. But failure to produce proper credentials to a local game warden or hunting out of season can result in severe consequences for hunters. At the same time, fees from licensing support conservation initiatives for local wildlife and public lands.

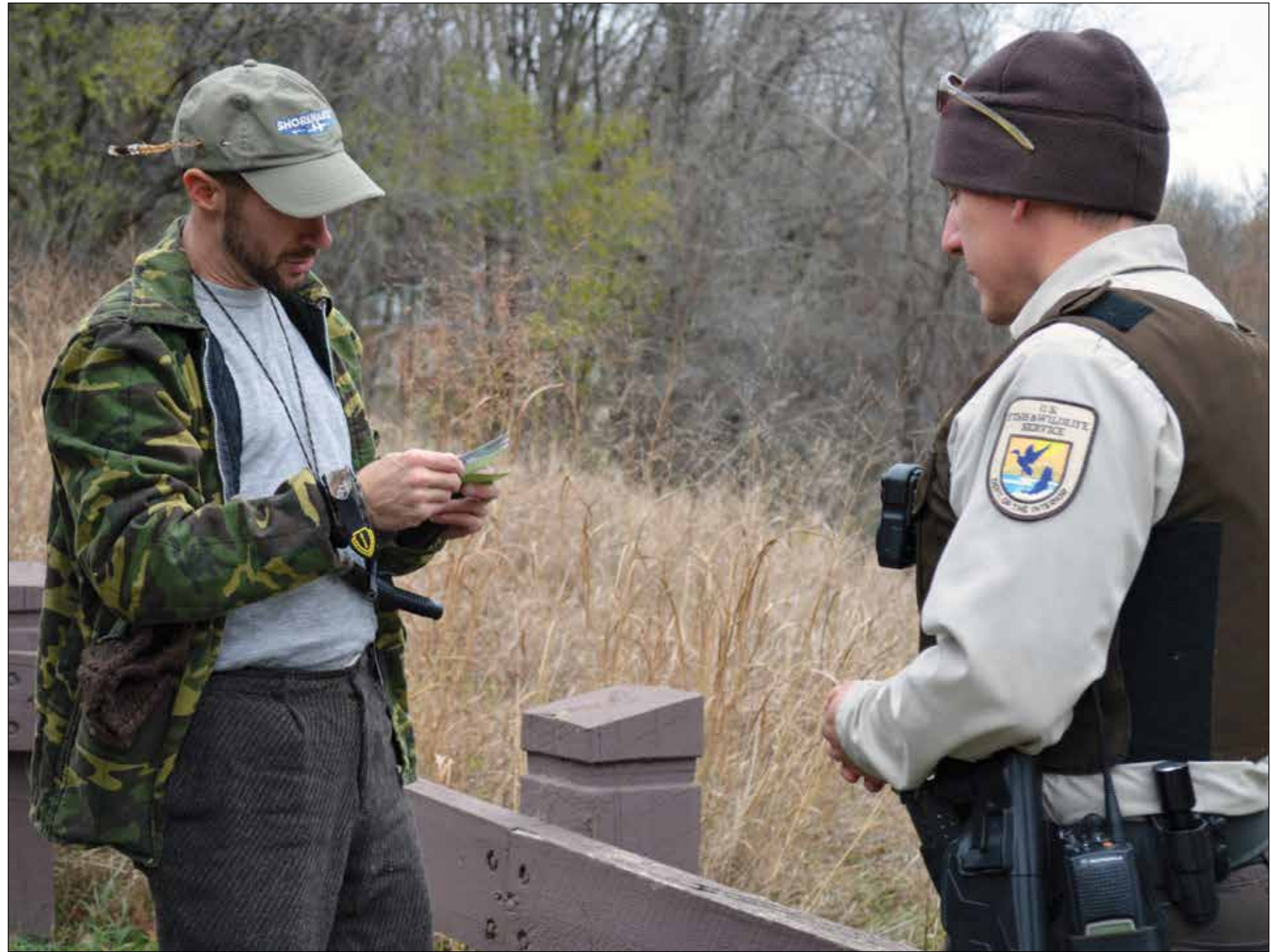
GETTING REGISTERED

Consult your local authorities and relevant state agencies to determine which specific licenses you need. The type of game being pursued may play a role in what's required. In many instances, acquiring a license is as simple as visiting a retailer that specializes in hunting and fishing gear. You can obtain the necessary documentation while purchasing any needed additional equipment.

Registration for licenses is typically available on the official website of your state's Wildlife and Fisheries Department. You will likely need to specify the type of certification and complete a form before getting these legal permits. Some states may offer phone registration options.

VARIED LICENSING

There are various licenses available for different activities. Specific requirements are in place for fishing, hunting



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or trapping in coastal or inland waterways. Some states charge higher fees for non-residents. National wildlife refuges have their own permits and user fees. In some cases, hunter safety courses may be mandatory – especially for youth or first-time hunters. Depending on local regulations, you may

have the option to purchase a combination of hunting and fishing packages, as well as lifetime licenses.

IF YOU DON'T COMPLY

Comply with all local regulations, since failure to do so might lead to issues with game wardens during the hunting season. There are

serious consequences for hunting without a license, depending on your location. Common penalties include fines, attorney fees and court costs. Conduct research to understand more about the specific penalties for non-compliance in your area. They are sometimes quite stiff. For instance, conviction

of game-related offenses may lead to the loss of your ability to hunt. Taking game out of season can result in significant financial penalties and potential revocation of hunting privileges. These fines are then typically redirected to support programs focused on preserving natural habitats and wildlife.

Picking Your Game

Newer hunters might not know which game they want to pursue. Long-time enthusiasts might be looking for a new challenge.

These choices largely depend on the wildlife and topography in your area, so traveling even a short distance might present whole new options.

If you're going to hunt in a different state, familiarize yourself with local laws and regulations. Neglecting to do so can expose you to the risk of expensive fines – not to mention travel expenses associated with court hearings. Familiarize yourself with their specific licensing requirements and hunting seasons, which may take place over different dates. You don't want to get in trouble with hunting enforcement.

Once you've nailed down all these details, consider these different types of game:

DEER

Whitetail deer are highly sought-after game because of the lean meat they offer – and they're usually quite abundant. Your choice of weapon may play a role in this decision: In most parts of the United States, bowhunting season lasts longer than the firearm season. To locate deer, search for signs of their

presence like “rubs” or depressions in grass, pine needles and leaves.

FOWL

Bird hunting is popular because it's typically undertaken by groups of friends. There's a great sense of camaraderie to be found. For this game, however, pay close

attention to changing seasons since it may only be legal to hunt certain birds at certain times of the year. Check the local Wildlife and Fisheries Department website, which typically provides a helpful calendar. Dress appropriately as you may find yourself in water or an open field while waiting for flocks to fly over

your location.

ELK

If you're considering elk, it's best to team up with a professional guide for your initial outing. It is also smart to prepare for more aggressive wildlife when embarking on an elk-hunting expedition, as bears and wolves are

commonly found in the same regions of the western United States.

This sport requires hunters to seamlessly blend into their surroundings with camouflage inside blinds. As with many other kinds of game, the ability to skillfully imitate their specific call with a specialized device will be a plus.



Hunting Safely

Hunting connects people with nature, one another, wildlife and deep family history. But there's an inherent danger in this time-honored tradition. Here's how to keep yourself safe.

Hunting can be both enjoyable and very risky. It's important to stay vigilant while taking the necessary precautions to prevent injury or death. Unfortunately, careless hunters continue to lose their lives each year; hundreds more get injured. That's why prioritizing gun safety is so crucial. Lots of injuries occur during everyday activities associated with this sport, such as climbing up and down to a stand.

Being outdoors can present its own set of risks and challenges. Beware of the dangerous wildlife you may encounter when on a hunt. To ensure your safety, follow all safety precautions associated with your chosen weapon.

Refrain from consuming alcohol or any other intoxicating substances. Being alert and clear-headed is critically important when handling firearms – or operating a boat.

Inform someone about your plans, including your location, expected arrival time and the duration of your trip. Whenever possible, have a hunting or fishing partner accompany



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you. Wearing bright orange clothing will make you easily recognizable to other hunters. Don't overpack since hunters carrying heavy backpacks may find it challenging to navigate through the woods.

Stay updated on the weather conditions before and during your trip to ensure you are adequately prepared. If there

are strong storms forecasted, it may be wise to reconsider your plans and stay home. The National Weather Service reports that lightning claims the lives of around 50 Americans annually, with hundreds more suffering serious injuries. Boating in heavy rain increases the risk of collisions.

Hikers, campers and other

outdoorsy types should be mindful of the various hunting seasons so they can be prepared. Non-hunters are encouraged to wear bright clothing. Keep dogs on a leash so they won't be mistaken for wildlife. If you find yourself feeling uneasy, consider switching to a national park where hunting is not allowed.

Beginners should start with a hunter safety course. Depending on your location, these classes may be mandatory. To find out more about course schedules, locations and fees, check online or consult local fisheries and wildlife officials. Staff at sporting goods stores may also be helpful.

If You Hire a Guide

Every season presents its own set of challenges, not least of which are game population and weather patterns.

Guides can help you address some of these factors, particularly for those who are hunting in unfamiliar places. A professional guide will be aware of game movement, unique topography and conditions on the ground that could have a huge effect on your day.

Seek advice from friends who have previously been on guided hunts to gain insight into their experiences. They'll help you gather ideas for questions you can present to prospective guides. With all these things addressed before booking a hunt, you're more likely to be satisfied with the outcome — whether someone in your group ends up achieving a trophy kill or not.

SAFETY

Safety should always be the top priority. Pick a guide who will make responsible decisions to prevent any potential injuries, while prioritizing your well-being. If you're traveling with a group, make sure your potential guide will be checking whether everyone is physically fit and proficient with their weapon. A guide should adequately prepare their clients for the challenges of the hunt. Ask about specific precautions, and how you'll



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get to and from the hunting area.

EXPERIENCE

Ensure that any prospective guide has extensive knowledge about the hunting property and the specific animals being hunted. Ask about years of experience, certifications and references. After all, you're

paying for a high level of expertise and experience. Check online reviews.

SCOUTING

Prior scouting of your targeted game is of critical importance if you're hoping for a successful guided hunt. Determine what you'd like to pursue, then seek out guides

who've spent years honing their skills in hunting that particular animal within the specified area. Their local knowledge will become an invaluable asset out in the field.

PERSONAL STYLE

Finally, make sure you connect with the guide. All guides

have their own unique approach. You'll be spending a lot of time together, so personal style will have a huge effect. The best guides treat these trips like an educational experience. If this learning process is presented in an entertaining and informative way, you'll have a great time no matter the outcome.

Beginner's Tips

Whether you're a fresh-faced young entrant or an older person who's trying something new, hunting can be an exciting and rewarding new pastime. Here's how to get started.

BE READY TO COMMIT

Hunting can take up substantial time, so determine whether you're willing to make that commitment. Learning to shoot can take a while. Beyond this critical training, you'll also have to become familiar with any sport-specific equipment. Next, you'll need to scout the specific hunting grounds and become familiar with game movement and topography. The act of hunting itself can take up an entire day, or several of them. Then there's time spent traveling to and from the hunt. Other interests may need to take a backseat.

FIND A MENTOR

Seek guidance from more experienced hunters who can serve as mentors. Their knowledge is often hard-earned. Learn from their experiences, good and bad, and you'll find success much faster. Consider hiring a guide to learn still more.

SELECT A HUNT

It's best for beginners to



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narrow their choice of game. Besides helping focus your preparations and activity, you'll set a specific hunting timeframe since game seasons are tightly regulated. Once you've mastered one form of hunting, then move on to the next. This incremental learning curve will ensure you don't feel overwhelmed by the

amount of information to learn.

CHOOSE A WEAPON

The choice of weapon used for hunting significantly affects the overall hunting experience. It's not just handling their different sizes. Some weapons have specific seasons. The type of weapon

determines how close you must be to the animals you're hunting. Those using a bow and arrow, for instance, must be much closer compared to someone using a rifle. All take a long time to master, particularly the bow.

BE PREPARED

Hunting can take place in

very challenging environments. The conditions on stands and in hunting blinds may not be ideal, whether because it's cold, hot, isolated or wet. Be honest with yourself about the conditions you'll face based on the type of hunting you plan to do, and make sure you are fully prepared for what lies ahead.