

# Hunting

GUIDE



# New Hunting Technology

Hunting and technology have a complicated relationship. While it's only natural that new technologies are eventually applied to hunting, there comes a point at which the concept of a fair hunt is challenged.

“Where do we draw the line?” asks Outsider.com. “When does technology make hunting unethical?” Weapons such as advanced powder “capsules” used in muzzle-loaders and crossbows with automatic loading have blurred the lines between ethical sportsmanship and an unfair hunt.

Each sportsmen must make up his own mind about where the line is drawn. “I believe there certainly is a point where technology surpasses what certain hunting seasons were meant to be,” writes Tyler Freel for OutdoorLife.com.

If you're comfortable with a bit of technology in your hunt, here are some of the latest products to come on the market.

**Pnuma Iconx Heated Core Vest.** This lightweight vest, worn as a base layer, has electronically heated carbon-fiber elements to keep you warm on a cold morning. It has



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three heat settings, and an additional battery and charger are available.

**Trophy Scan.** Visit a location of Texas-based outfitter Los Cazadores, where they will scan your trophy kill using 3-D technology. Then use the data to make mementos such as jewelry, 3-D-printed replicas, quarter-size mounts and bronze replicas. Los Cazadores, will keep your scan file in storage,

so you can recreate your prized game anytime.

**Spartan GoLive Camera.** Billed by the manufacturer as a “next-generation cellular scouting camera,” the Spartan GoLive Camera allows you to live stream at the touch of a button. You can take HD photos remotely, schedule filming times, take motion-triggered and time-lapse videos. It also has a GPS anti-theft feature that functions even when the

batteries are removed.

**Wildgame Innovations ZeroTrace PUREION Field Generator.** Intended to safely reduce human scent to help hunters get closer to their game, this product uses a flow of ion molecules to bind to odor molecules and neutralize them.

**HuntStand App.** “The HuntStand hunting and land management mobile device app combines advanced map-

ping tools with powerful map layers to allow users to create and share the best hunting maps possible,” writes DeerandDeerHunting.com. Its 3-D mode helps you get a more accurate lay of the land, and you can make your own custom maps with boundaries, landmarks and other data. An offline mode even lets you access your map data when you're out of cell range and even GPS.

# A Beginner's Guide to Hunting

You don't have to be the son of a family of hunters to be a hunter. Picking the sport up in adulthood is doable. OutsideOnline.com provides a few tips.

## CARVE OUT A LOT OF TIME

Hunting requires a big time commitment, so you'll need to decide if you're up for such an investment. Each hunting season is set by a government entity. Hunts such as big game bow hunting on public land can be time-consuming. You'll also need to spend considerable time preparing for hunting, including practicing and familiarizing yourself with your weapon, and getting to know the area where you'll be hunting.

Consider the fact that other hobbies will likely need to go on the back burner.

## ASK YOURSELF IF YOU'RE READY TO SUFFER

Hunting can take you into some pretty inhospitable territory. The conditions in hunting stands and blinds can be less than stellar, whether hot, cold, wet or secluded. Consider the kind of hunting you'll be doing and what the conditions will actually be like, and be sure you know what you're getting into.



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## PICK YOUR ANIMAL

Harvest rates vary widely by species and state, but in many states the percentage ratio of harvested animals to total hunters are in the teens, writes OutsideOnline.com. That means you'll spend a relatively small amount of time actually making a kill and harvesting meat. Choose an

animal whose habitat you can see yourself spending a lot of time in, even if you don't make a kill.

## CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

The type of weapon you hunt with will have a major impact on your hunting experience.

Your weapon will determine

how close you need to get to the animal you're hunting. You need to be much closer when hunting with a bow and arrow than a rifle. That kind of hunting requires years of experience.

## FIND A MENTOR

As with any new endeavor, you'll serve yourself well to

find an experienced hunter to take you under his wing. "Hunting knowledge is often hard-won and kept close to the chest," writes OutsideOnline.com. "Always ask questions, but be humble and grateful when you're given keys to the kingdom or even little breadcrumbs of knowledge."

# Invest in a Hunter Safety Course

Even for an experienced hunter, a hunter safety course is always good preparation for the season.

Regulations change every year, and it's never a bad idea to brush up on firearms and ammunition handling, safety tips, hunting techniques, field dressing, wildlife identification, basic first-aid and more.

You can take a class in person or online. If you think you might have questions and want to discuss course material with the instructor, opt for an in-person class. If you're looking for a come-as-you-are dress code and convenience to take the course on your own schedule, look into online options.

## WHAT IS COVERED?

A hunter safety course will cover everything you need to know to hunt safely. This includes not just the basics of weapon safety but things like first aid, ethics, habitat conservation, hunting laws and regulations, wilderness survival skills, shot placement, field dressing of animal and more.

## FIREARMS SAFETY

The most important reason to take a hunter's safety course is firearms safety. The incident rate is on a steady decline. In 1988, when the course became mandatory,



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the incident rate was reduced by almost half and the fatality rate was reduced by almost 75%, according to ApprovedCourse.com. The website offers these four rules to remember;

- Always point your muzzle

in a safe direction.

- Always treat every gun as if it's loaded and check the chamber first.
- Always be sure of your target and what is beyond it. Avoid rocks and metal, which could cause a ricochet.

- Always keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire. Your finger should be outside the trigger guard unless you're firing.

## PLAY BY THE RULES

Know the legal hunting

requirements for the type, gender and number of animals you may take and at what times, according to your local authorities. Also, know the paperwork you'll need to hunt legally, such as a valid hunting license and tags.

# A Surge in New Hunters

The number of people hunting in the U.S has been declining for years, leaving wildlife officials and conservationists grappling with the dropoff. COVID might have changed that, according to Pew Trusts.

In many states, the pandemic brought a surge in hunting licenses, suggesting the outdoors was the only outlet for many.

## GROWING NUMBERS

Pew reports that many states saw a dramatic rise in residents taking hunter safety classes for the first time. Young, female and first-time hunters saw growth in numbers. These demographics have been targeted by hunting advocates for years to help expand the sport. Gun sales also saw a dramatic spike in 2020, with industry leaders citing both hunting and concerns about social unrest as the reasons, according to Pew.

For example, in Michigan, there was a 67% hike in new hunting license buyers in 2020 compared with 2019, a 15% increase in female hunters and moderate growth in many younger age brackets, Pew reports. The state also sold 46% more apprentice licenses, a discounted option that



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allows new hunters to give the sport a try under the supervision of a mentor.

“The groups that we’ve been wanting to get engaged with hunting for years and years are the groups we’re seeing now,” Dustin Isenhoff, marketing specialist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, told Pew. “We have over 100,000 new hunting customers this year. That’s a big

opportunity for us to work with those folks to keep them involved.”

## THE ALARMING FOOD CHAIN INTERRUPTIONS

As supply chain issues hit retailers during the pandemic, combined with a growing interest in local food sourcing and financial hardships, more people are interested in hunting for their own food.

Many states signed off on online-only hunting safety courses to get new hunters in the field during COVID-related shutdowns. The convenience of online training might have drawn in some new hunters, according to Pew.

“COVID-19 has shown us that there are more people aside from that traditional hunter who want to get involved,” Ashley Sanchez, a

public information officer with the Nevada Department of Wildlife, told Pew.

Pew also notes that new, non-traditional hunters are interested in modern issues such as conservation and obtaining ethically sourced protein, writing, “Advocates want to do more to make hunting accessible and culturally relevant to broader populations.”

# 5 Things Hunters Expect from a Guide

Reasonable hunters know that hunts will be different from year to year, due to weather, timing, population numbers and more.

A guide has limited control over these particulars, but hunters do expect their guides to be experts.

Ask a lot of questions before you book a guided hunt, so you know exactly what you will get. Talk to friends who have gone on guided hunts about what the experience was like, and to get an idea for the questions you should ask your guide. The more preparation you do before booking a hunt, the more satisfied you will likely be with the outcome, whether or not you score a trophy kill.

Here are five things hunters expect from their guides every time, according to GuideFitter.com.

## **SAFETY**

Safety first — especially when it comes to hunting. Hunters expect their guides to keep them relatively safe and make responsible decisions to avoid injuries.

## **KNOW THE COUNTRY**

The guide should know the hunting property and the animals you're hunting very well. That's the kind of experience and knowledge hunters pay for.

## **SHOW YOU GAME**

Scouting game head of time is crucial to the guided hunt experience. Great guides have years of experience hunting for a certain animal in a certain area, and have

the local knowledge to show for it.

## **DON'T PUSH A CLIENT PAST HIS OR HER LIMITS**

A guide should prepare his clients for the demands of the

hunt. This could include being in good physical shape and being proficient with a weapon.

## **BE A TEACHER**

Everyone has a different style, "so I try to tuck as much

as I can learn from each of them in my back pocket to help me become a better elk hunter as the years pass," one guide told GuideFitter.com "Most clients are eager to learn the ropes."



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# Hunting by the Numbers

Hunting is still big business even if the industry has witnessed a decline in hunters in recent years.

Hunters in the U.S. numbered 17 million in 1980, but by 2016 that number had fallen to 11.5 million, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There is good news, perhaps the best news of 2020. Those declining numbers saw a reverse. COVID and food supply shortages might have done the trick in getting younger people out from behind their electronic gadgets. Here are some other numbers about hunting.

67% hike in new hunting license buyers in Michigan in 2020 compared with 2019. That includes more than 100,000 new hunting customers, according to state officials.

90% of hunters are male, according to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The same survey found that 97% are white and most are 45 and older and a sign that future funding losses could be steep as more hunters age out of the sport and the country becomes more racially diverse.

14,000 deer harvested in New Hampshire in 2018, a 14% increase from 2017 and 26% above the 20-year average, according to the Fish and Game Department. That's the state's highest harvest the past



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nine years and second highest on record (since 1922). The agency also estimated 587 bears killed during the 2017 season, a 23% decrease from the previous five-year average.

375,000 harvested deer in Pennsylvania during the 2018-19 hunting season, according to the Pennsylvania

Game Commission, the best harvest in almost 15 years. Bowhunters generated a third of the state's deer harvest.

838,000 whitetails harvested in Texas during the 2017-18 hunting season, according to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, most in the U.S. The agency also reported about 44,000 mule deer and

51,000 javelina killed.

1.1 million paid hunting license holders in Texas in 2020, the most in the U.S. Pennsylvania was next with 930,00 followed by Wisconsin with 680,000.

15.5 million paid hunting license holders in the U.S. in 2017.

12.5% of Americans regu-

larly hunted and fished in 2019.

15.1 million Americans who were hunting participants in 2017.

2.1 million hunting participants aged 18-24 in 2017.

\$60 billion economic impact of the U.S. sporting arms and ammunition industry in 2019.

# Best Rifles of 2021

Field and Stream examined 2021's best new lightweight rifles.

Here is a selected summary of what they found in lightweight and long-range rifles.

## **BROWNING X-BOLT MOUNTAIN PRO**

A new carbon-fiber stock, spiral-fluted bolt, and spiral-fluted, lapped sporter-contour barrel keeps the rifle under 6 pounds, and Browning added its new Recoil Hawg muzzle brake, which reduces recoil up to 77% to take the sting out of shooting high-power rounds in such a lightweight rifle. Starts at \$2,399.

## **NOSLER M48 MOUNTAIN CARBON RIFLE IN 6.5 PRC AND .280 ACKLEY IMPROVED**

For 2021, the company has added two new chamberings for the rifle: the 6.5 PRC and .280 Ackley Improved. Mountain Carbon rifles are built around Nosler's Model 48 Action and feature a 24-inch Light Sendero Contour, carbon-fiber-wrapped, cut-rifled barrel that is glass and aluminum pillar bedded into a carbon-fiber aramid-reinforced Mountain Hunter Stock. This goes for \$3,235.

## **J.P. SAUER S404 SYNCHRO XTC CAMO GREEN CARBON FIBER RIFLE**

J. P. Sauer & Sohn, Germany's



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oldest manufacturer of hunting firearms, updates its flagship series with the introduction of the S404 Synchro XTC Carbon Fiber rifle in camouflage-green. The hand-laid carbon-fiber stock has a thumbhole grip, adjustable comb, and a new finish that helps it disappear into the landscape. You can have it for a little more than \$8,100.

## **SAVAGE 110 ULTRALIGHT**

One Savage's several stand-

outs in 2021 is the new 110 Ultralight, which combines a carbon-wrapped, stainless-steel Proof Research barrel to a skeletonized, blueprinted 110 receiver with spiral-fluted bolt. The result is a mountain rifle that weighs about 6 pounds, depending on the model.

Like all 110s, the Ultralight has the user-adjustable AccuTrigger and AccuStock with adjustable comb pieces and length-of-pull shims.

Retails for \$1,599.

## **BROWNING X-BOLT WESTERN HUNTER LONG RANGE**

To build the new Western Hunter Long Range, Browning attached a heavy sporter-contour barrel to the tried-and-true X-Bolt action. The free-floating barrel is bedded at the front and rear of the action for stability and to help maintain barrel-to-stock spacing for consistent accuracy. It's

more than manageable at only 7.7 pounds. Cost is \$1,099.99.

## **SPRINGFIELD ARMORY MODEL 2020 WAYPOINT**

This is a custom-quality bolt-action hunting rifle with a .75-MOA accuracy guarantee. There are many options in the Waypoint series, starting with the barrel. You can choose from an all-steel version, or one that wraps the fluted 416 stainless-steel tube in a carbon-fiber jacket. It retails for \$1,699.