

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation  
**Hunter Education Manual**

Set Your Sights on Safety



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## WADE FREE

INTERIM DIRECTOR - OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Many sportsmen and sportswomen are first introduced to the Wildlife Department in a hunter education class. I vividly remember the hunter education class that I attended in Ponca City as a junior high kid. It was there, through my contacts with Wildlife Department game rangers (now game wardens) where I became intrigued by the Wildlife Department and these larger-than-life men, that I knew I was forever hooked on the outdoors and would one day work for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Retired game warden, Delbert Foltz, who is still an active outdoorsman at 97 years young and the late game warden John Streich were the men that influenced me through that hunter education class.

Many of you have been in a deer or turkey blind with your mom or dad or been fishing with a neighbor, went to deer camp with your grandpa or had some other experience with hunting, fishing or just enjoying being outdoors. You've had a chance to appreciate the outdoors and what it has to offer without realizing that there are hundreds of Wildlife Department employees out there managing fish and wildlife, enforcing laws and providing those outdoor opportunities and training, to keep you safe and educated on all things outdoors.

You are welcome here. You've found a group of likeminded people who you can share with and learn from. In this hunter education class, you'll learn firearm safety, wildlife conservation and management, tree stand safety, hunter responsibility, survival, game care, wildlife laws, and many other skills that will help you be a safer and better hunter. This is just the beginning! This course is designed to make you a safe and ethical hunter, but it's just a launching pad for what will be to many of you, a lifelong hunger for the great outdoors. One day you will look back and say "Wow, that hunter ed class had a big impact on my life!"

One thing that is true of all hunters is that you will continue to learn your entire life afield. The key is to make sure you're learning from trusted sources. Our website, [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) is the go-to place for things such as season dates, bag limits, wildlife laws, and anything you need to know to stay educated, informed and legal. It also includes information on our Wildlife Management Areas, hunting tips for spe-

cific species, how to reach game warden and biologists and other things to help make your adventures more enjoyable. You can also pick up a copy of the printed hunting regulations. The printed regulations are also packed full information on public places to hunt, fish, backpack, hike, boat, trap, shoot or just get outdoors.

There are lots of other ways to learn. You can visit with other hunters, read magazine articles, watch videos found on the internet and more. Use this class as a measuring stick for what you hear from other sources. Revisit our website, call a game warden, reach out to your hunter education instructor or contact any Wildlife Department employee and they will eagerly help keep you informed, safe, ethical and legal and provide tips on the great outdoors.

Another thing you can do to get the most out of your hunting experience is to go with friends. If you have an opportunity in the great outdoors be sure to make it even more rewarding by sharing your experience. Making dinner at the campfire is always more fun with friends and family. If you are a deer hunter your buddies can help you drag your deer out of the woods! Hunters pay for conservation and wildlife law enforcement. We care about our passions and our hunting licenses are the funding source that makes conservation possible.

So, pay attention in this class, learn your safety rules and use that knowledge every time you go to the field. Be safe, be responsible and be respectful. You represent all hunters and shooters, and your actions reflect on all of us. Oklahoma is an outdoor paradise! With the completion of this course, you will be equipped to safely enjoy every part of the great outdoors you so choose. The outdoor life is there for everyone.

Best of luck!

Wade Free



## NATHAN ERDMAN

LAW ENFORCEMENT CHIEF

Over the course of my career I have always enjoyed teaching Hunter Education classes. Not only does it help ensure the safety of those in the outdoors, it is also an excellent opportunity to get to know and interact with the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts in Oklahoma. I would like to encourage those attending the classes to take the time to get acquainted with the game wardens and Department personnel who are teaching these classes. You will find they have a wealth of information about the fish and wildlife of Oklahoma.

The Department's main goal through the hunter education program is to give students the knowledge and skills they need to be safe and ethical hunters. Before completing a course, students must prove they have mastered that knowledge, but even then, it is up to each individual hunter to be responsible and safe and apply that knowledge while afield.

Each time a hunter steps into the woods, there are many decisions that must be made. Where to hunt or choice of clothing are easy decisions, but there are bigger and more important decisions that truly make hunters safe and ethical. Where are other hunters in relation to my location? Are the other members of my hunting party behaving in a safe and ethical manner? What is my target, and what is beyond it? Should I unload my firearm before crossing this fence? Can I violate a game law this time because I think I will not get caught?

These choices are up to each person who has entered Oklahoma's outdoors. Staying safe, staying legal and staying ethical is up to you. It is your choice. And hunter education is something that teaches and implores students to make the right choice.



## BILL DINKINES

WILDLIFE DIVISION CHIEF

Working for the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is a dream job and a special place to work. What makes it a special place to work is the passion that the employees have for their job. For me, the spark for that passion started at a young age hunting with my father. He loved to quail hunt and every weekend of the season, we would load up the bird dogs and head west. Those days we spent together chasing coveys are priceless and not only strengthened our relationship but built the foundation for my desire to understand what wildlife conservation is really all about, and the passion to keep it going for future generations.

Most hunters I know have that same passion, maybe not to pursue a career with the Wildlife Department, but for spending time outdoors enjoying all that nature has to offer. That passion is important because hunters play a major role in wildlife conservation, especially in Oklahoma. We are blessed to live in a state where hunting is still a strong tradition and time-honored pastime. Hunters, through the purchase of licenses, permits, guns, ammunition, and various other supplies help fund wildlife conservation in Oklahoma either directly or indirectly through federal grants. This funding has allowed the Wildlife Department to manage and protect wildlife across the state. The con-

servation success stories are many including white-tailed deer, elk, and wild turkey hunting offered statewide and our first black bear season was opened in southeast Oklahoma in 2009. While the funding piece of the puzzle that hunters provide is critical, what sometimes gets lost is the fact that hunters also play a critical role in population management. For example, white-tailed deer are plentiful in Oklahoma and hunting is essential, especially antlerless deer, to keep the balance of the deer herd with the available habitat and within the limits that society will allow.

We all still have work to do. Hunter numbers are decreasing across the nation, a trend that luckily has not hit Oklahoma as hard as some states. Every one of us needs to do our part by taking a friend or family member, as well as introducing and encouraging others such as the youth, women and minorities to participate. Hopefully you can create the spark that will ignite the passion for wildlife conservation that will carry on so the next generation can enjoy the same opportunities that we have today. We are all in this together, and we still have work to do.

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# INTRODUCTION

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### WELCOME TO HUNTER EDUCATION

#### OBJECTIVE 1

Welcome to Oklahoma's Hunter Education program. This training program provides both beginning and veteran hunters an understanding of the responsibilities involved in the sport of hunting. It will help develop an understanding of sound safety practices, serve as a foundation for responsible and ethical decision making, and start hunters on the path to fully experience all aspects of the hunting tradition and pass this heritage to the next generation.

Hunter education is important because it improves hunter behavior and reduces hunting-related injuries. *Over the past 30 years, hunting related accidents and fatalities have declined by more than 70 percent in Oklahoma.* Mandatory hunter education courses have not only reduced accidents within Oklahoma, but also in every state and Canadian province with similar programs.

Hunter education is not just a firearms safety course. It provides sound guidelines for becoming responsible, ethical hunters and provides a comprehensive guide to Oklahoma wildlife. It also helps increase awareness of the importance of wildlife conservation and management efforts in Oklahoma. And finally, hunter education is a method of protecting the future of hunting in Oklahoma.

The history of wildlife conservation and management in Oklahoma is rich with commitment to the land and the wildlife that live on it. With management techniques that help conserve valuable wildlife and habitat, and with the help of both hunters and the non-hunting public, the future of Oklahoma hunting is bright. It is up to you to be a safe, legal and responsible hunter and thereby help ensure Oklahoma's hunting heritage.

Hunter education covers a variety of topics including hunter responsibility, wildlife conservation and management, firearm safety, wildlife identification, archery, muzzleloading and turkey hunting.

#### Words to Know

**RESPONSIBLE** – Being fully accountable for your actions.

**ETHICAL BEHAVIOR** – Acting in a manner that is respectful of people, land and wildlife.

**RIGHTS** – Benefits you legally have, or actions you can legally take.

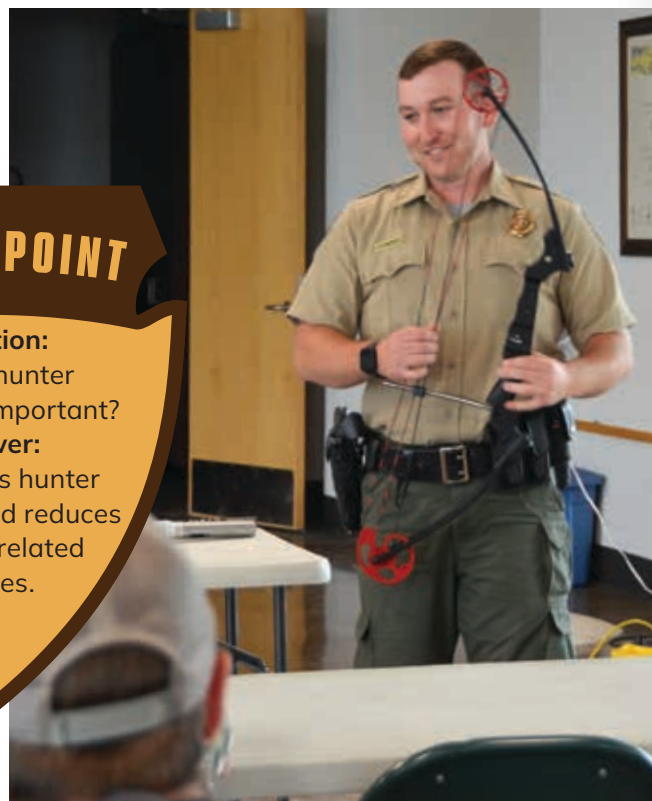
**PRIVILEGES** – Benefits that can be taken away.

**TRESPASSING** – Hunting or otherwise intruding on private and some public property without permission.

#### TO THE POINT

**Question:**  
Why is hunter education important?

**Answer:**  
It improves hunter behavior and reduces hunting-related injuries.



JENNIFER BEUGE

# INTRODUCTION

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### HISTORY OF THE OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

#### OBJECTIVE 2

Oklahoma's relationship with wildlife has gone through many changes throughout the years, from the early days of unregulated market hunting to the beginning of conservation and continuing with a string of conservation success stories.

- 1907 – Oklahoma statehood established.
- 1909 – Wildlife Department created. First game ranger appointed.
- 1933 – First deer season.
- 1945 – Oklahoma Game and Fish News (Outdoor Oklahoma) began publication.
- 1954 – First statewide deer gun season (5 days); 1,487 bucks harvested.
- 1955 – First gun safety program initiated in Oklahoma by National Rifle Association.
- 1956 – A vote of the people of Oklahoma makes the Wildlife Department constitutionally independent.
- 1962 – First elk hunt results in 42 harvested. First antlerless deer season.
- 1964 – First spring turkey season. Trout stocking program started.
- 1966 – First antelope season. Department moved into a new building.
- 1969 – First lifetime combination license sold for \$150.
- 1976 – Outdoor Oklahoma television show began.
- 1979 – Operation Game Thief established.
- 1990 – Statewide deer population estimated at 250,000, total harvest 44,070.



- 1996 – First watchable wildlife area established at Byron Hatchery.
- 1998 – Hunter education offered as home study.
- 2003 – Hunting and fishing licenses first offered online.
- 2004 – Archery in the Schools program started. Statewide deer population estimated at 475,000, total harvest 94,689.
- 2005 – First Wildlife Expo.
- 2008 – Wildlife Dept. adds 6,832 acres of public hunting land with the addition of Cimarron Bluff and Cimarron Hills wildlife management areas.
- 2009 – First bear season.
- 2010 – Wildlife Dept. adds 5,952 acres of public hunting land to Beaver River Wildlife Management Area.
- 2012 – Youth deer gun season expanded to allow hunters to harvest two antlerless deer or one antlered and one non-antlered. Unfilled youth deer gun licenses can be filled during the regular deer season.
- 2013 – E-check system made available online at wildlifedepartment.com as a way to check game more accurately and conveniently.
- 2015 – New state records set for pronghorn, mule deer, typical elk and black bear.
- 2017 – Wildlife Department's Oklahoma Land Access Program (OLAP). The program uses federal grant money to increase public hunting and fishing opportunities in exchange for incentive payments to private landowners.
- 2018 – Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Foundation is formed as a private non-profit fundraising organization to support impactful ODWC projects. ODWC Headquarters renovations at 1801 N. Lincoln are completed.
- 2019 – New GoOutdoorsOklahoma license system launches. Cy Curtis State-Record Elk emerges from the March Rack Madness event.
- 2020 – Extra waterfowl hunting day set for youths, veterans, and active military.
- 2024 – License Modernization passed by Oklahoma Legislature, including the addition of the Youth Super License covering every hunting season and bag limit that requires a license with a once annual purchase.



## WHAT IS A RESPONSIBLE HUNTER?

### OBJECTIVE 1

A responsible hunter is fully accountable for their actions.

Enjoying the Oklahoma outdoors is one of the great pleasures in life, but along with that comes the duty to protect and conserve our country's wild lands and the animals that inhabit them.

A responsible hunter:

- Always thinks of safety first.
- Follows laws and regulations and insists that his or her companions do as well.

- Values the land and treats it with respect.
- Ensures the safety of themselves and their companions by (1) wearing hunter orange when required; (2) adhering to hunting seasons and hours; and (3) clearly identifying the target before taking the shot.
- Develops a personal code of ethics and follows it unflinchingly.
- Protects wildlife by supporting conservation efforts as well as following all regulations pertaining to limits and hunting practices.
- Respects others by displaying kind and courteous behavior to other hunters, landowners and the general public.
- Displays restraint and does not abuse privileges.
- Takes full responsibility for his or her actions, including mistakes, and does whatever necessary to correct those mistakes.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION

## Be Safe, Be Legal and Be Responsible!

One of the main reasons some people oppose hunting is because of the bad behavior of some hunters. Irresponsible hunters can quickly damage or erode public support.

## TO THE POINT

**Question:**

What is one of the main reasons some people oppose hunting?

**Answer:**

The bad behavior of some hunters.

**Question:**

What is a responsible hunter fully accountable for?

**Answer:**

His or her actions.

# HUNTER RESPONSIBILITY

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION



JENNIFER BENCE

Harvesting an animal is a serious action, and how the public views that behavior can influence the future of hunting in Oklahoma.

Do your part:  
Always be fair, ethical and responsible  
in all your actions!

In Oklahoma and the United States, most of the land where wildlife can be found is privately owned. Therefore, hunters should always act as guests on other people's property. There are certain "good neighbor" behaviors you should practice:

- **Always get permission** before going on private property. Trespassing is illegal and unethical.
- **Leave the land exactly the way you found it.** Careless hunters who leave trash around campsites, destroy vegetation when putting up deer stands, tear down fences, shoot signs, leave gates open and drive ATV's in fragile environments damage the reputation of all hunters.

- **Get to know the landowner.** Always thank the landowner for the use of his or her property for hunting. Offer some of the game meat when you hunt or offer to do some work for them.
- **Know the layout and boundaries of the area** in order to protect property and lives and avoid trespassing.
- **Do not poach.** Poaching is taking game illegally and is punishable by fines and the loss of your hunting license, vehicle and hunting gear.
- **Report poaching.** Call Operation Game Thief at 1-800-522-8039, or call your local game warden. Game warden phone numbers can be found in the regulations guide or online at [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).

### TO THE POINT

**Question:**  
Poaching game is defined as what?

**Answer:**  
Poaching game is taking game illegally.







REBEY ADAMS

## Hunter Pride

Hunters have many things on which to pride themselves. They have been instrumental in improving wildlife habitat, relocating species and even bringing species back from the edge of extinction. It is a long and rich heritage that brings rewards in a variety of forms — not the least of which is passing the sport on to the next generation.

## Rights

Rights cannot be taken away from you except under extreme conditions. Examples of rights are the right to vote and the right to free speech.

## Privileges

Privileges can be taken away if you fail to follow the conditions of a privilege. Examples of privileges include obtaining a driver's license, membership in a club, getting your hunting license and hunter education certificate. Hunting should always be treated as a privilege. It can be taken away from you if you abuse the privilege with poor behavior.

## Responsible Hunters DO NOT

**POACH** – Taking game illegally is punishable by fines and the loss of your hunting license, vehicle and hunting gear.

**TRESPASS** – It's illegal to go on private and some public property without permission.

**BECOME GREEDY** – Taking more game than the legal limit or pushing to achieve a full limit by using unsafe actions.

**NEGLECT SAFETY** – Safety is always the most important thing you should think about while hunting.



# HUNTER RESPONSIBILITY

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### DEVELOPING A PERSONAL CODE OF HUNTING ETHICS

#### OBJECTIVE 2

Responsible hunters develop a personal hunting code of ethics that governs the way they hunt. It is the way they act when the time comes to make a hunting decision. Responsible hunters follow their personal code of hunting ethics.

**What is your personal code of hunting ethics?**

#### Example: Personal Code of Hunting Ethics

I will respect all wildlife and the land where I hunt. When I hunt, I will do so responsibly.

I will consider myself an invited guest of the landowner, seeking their permission, and conducting myself so that I may be welcome in the future.

I will obey the rules of safe gun handling and will courteously but firmly insist that others who hunt with me do the same.

I will obey all game laws and regulations, and will insist that my companions do likewise.

I will do my best to acquire marksmanship and hunting skills.

I will support conservation efforts that can assure good hunting for future generations of Americans.

I will pass along to younger hunters the attitudes and skills essential to a true outdoor sportsman.



## Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact

**Oklahoma is a member of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact.**

Most states are now Compact members. Violations in any member state can result in the loss of hunting or fishing privileges in all the member states. Read more at <https://www.wildlifedepartment.com/law/iwvc>

JOE ALEXANDER



# HUNTER RESPONSIBILITY

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

# 2

### THE PROGRESSION OF A HUNTER

#### OBJECTIVE 3

As hunters age and gain experience they find satisfaction in different aspects of the hunt. For beginning hunters, it's often getting a lot of shooting in or reaching their bag limits.

As they continue hunting, they will likely become interested in special methods of taking game such as

bowhunting or muzzleloading. They may even become trophy hunters, interested in taking the largest tom or buck possible while passing up smaller animals.

Most hunters reach the point where their main interest is passing on the hunting tradition and spending time in the field with friends and family.



# HUNTER RESPONSIBILITY

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### PREPARING FOR A SUCCESSFUL HUNT

#### OBJECTIVE 4

A successful hunt is not dependent upon achieving your limit or even bagging a trophy animal. A successful hunt is much more than that. It takes preparation; not just physically but mentally as well. Successful hunters prepare in advance. They:

- Plan the hunt in detail.
- Learn the area of the hunt by scouting in advance.
- Use wildlife identification guides to learn the habitat, food choices and behavior of the wildlife they are hunting.
- Maintain firearms and hunting equipment in good condition and use the appropriate ammunition or accessories for the game they are hunting.
- Practice shooting with their firearm or bow often; not just the day before the season opens.
- Get in shape physically before they go hunting.
- Become familiar with all of the laws that govern the area they will hunt.
- Acquire the required licenses.

Wise hunters improve public opinion of hunters and protect the future of hunting by being:

- Courteous
- Thoughtful
- Respectful
- Responsible



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JERRY HAND



## MANAGING RESOURCES

### OBJECTIVE 1

The resources Oklahoma wildlife depend upon are renewable. That means important and critical elements such as food, water and shelter are replenished naturally by the environment. These resources are not infinite. They will not support an unlimited number of animals, especially when man is competing for the same resources. This is why conservation and management are so important. They are necessary for the continued survival of wildlife. Good wildlife management benefits wildlife and the people of Oklahoma.

Wildlife belongs to the people of Oklahoma.  
Conservation requires wise use of wildlife resources.

### Habitat

Most of the land in Oklahoma where wildlife can be found is privately owned. People value wildlife not only as part of their quality of life, but for the contribution it makes to Oklahoma tourism, recreation, hunting and fishing. In order for a species to thrive, it must have good habitat available. Habitat consists of food, water, cover, space and arrangement to support wildlife. If there is not enough food, water or cover in an environment for a species, or if the quality of the habitat is poor, then the numbers of that animal will decrease. The most important thing we can do to ensure that we have wildlife in the future is to increase and to manage wildlife habitat.

## TO THE POINT

### Question:

Who owns the wildlife in the state of Oklahoma?

### Answer:

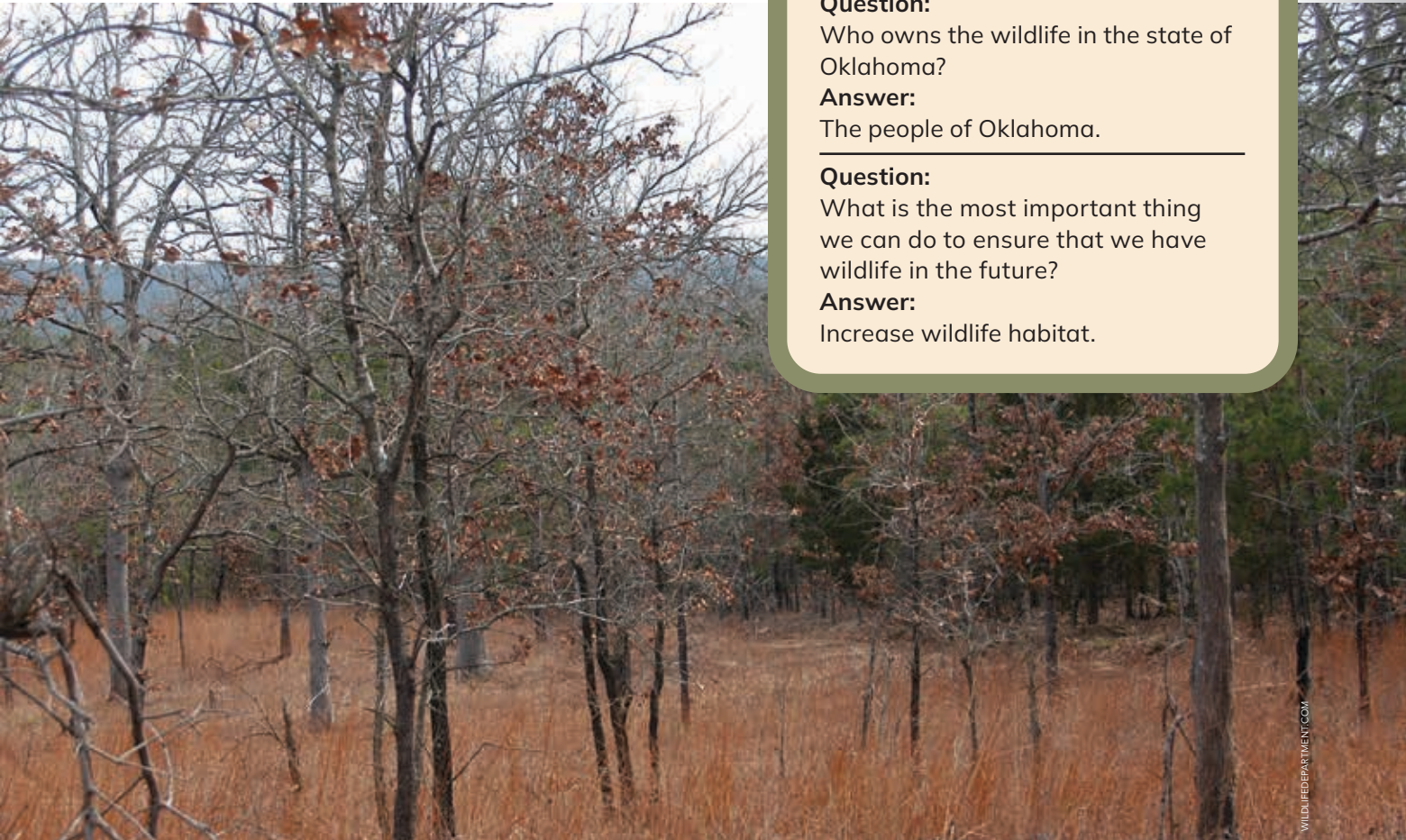
The people of Oklahoma.

### Question:

What is the most important thing we can do to ensure that we have wildlife in the future?

### Answer:

Increase wildlife habitat.



# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### FIVE IMPORTANT PARTS OF A SOUND HABITAT

#### OBJECTIVE 2

#### Food

All wildlife rely on either plants or other animals for food. Without proper nutrition, animals will starve and die, get diseases, or fail to reproduce. The availability of food can vary depending on changes in the weather or seasons. It is also changed by man's actions including livestock stocking rates, planting crops, new housing developments or other activities.

#### Water

Water is necessary for everything to live. A species will quickly die without water. The amount of rainfall can affect the quality of the vegetation and therefore the population numbers of a species.

#### Cover

Shelter is important for protecting and providing refuge for animals to reproduce, sleep, eat and hide from predators. Depending on the animal, shelter can be in the form of trees, bushes, rocks, ground cover, burrows and other features of the environment.

#### Space

Without enough space, wildlife cannot find enough food and shelter causing them to fail to reproduce. The number of animals drops and even the animal's behavior can be changed. This results in less wildlife.

#### Words to Know

**HABITAT** – Consists of cover, food, water, space and arrangement.

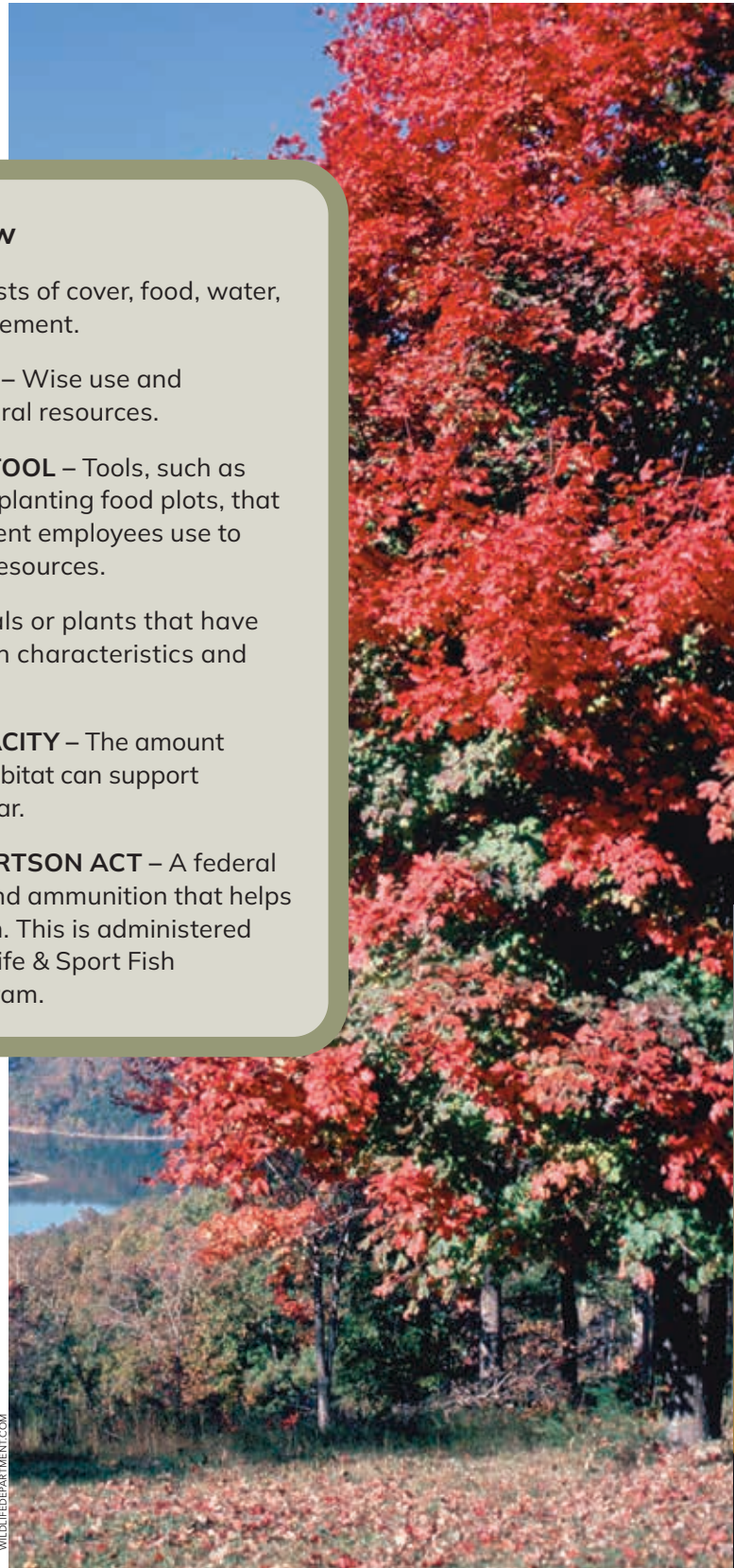
**CONSERVATION** – Wise use and protection of natural resources.

**MANAGEMENT TOOL** – Tools, such as prescribed fire or planting food plots, that Wildlife Department employees use to manage wildlife resources.

**SPECIES** – Animals or plants that have the same common characteristics and can interbreed.

**CARRYING CAPACITY** – The amount of wildlife each habitat can support throughout the year.

**PITTMAN-ROBERTSON ACT** – A federal tax on firearms and ammunition that helps fund conservation. This is administered through the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program.



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### Arrangement

The distance and obstacles between the four other parts of habitat is arrangement. Some animals may need to have all of these parts closer to each other than other animals. The white-footed mouse only travels half an acre to find all of these parts, while a white tail deer can travel a square mile or more to find these parts. An animal's home range needs to have several sources of each part of habitat. If one factor is too far away for an animal to safely travel, or if there is an obstacle, like a highway, the animal may abandon that habitat for a more suitable area.

MICAH HOLMES



Factors that limit the amount of wildlife:

- |                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Disease/parasites</b> | <b>Starvation</b> |
| <b>Predators</b>         | <b>Pollution</b>  |
| <b>Accidents</b>         | <b>Water</b>      |
| <b>Conservation</b>      | <b>Food</b>       |

### CARRYING CAPACITY

#### OBJECTIVE 3

Carrying capacity is the amount of wildlife a habitat can support throughout the year. If there is enough food, water, space and cover for all members of the population to survive, reproduce and do well then the number of animals is below or at the carrying capacity of the environment.

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# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

However, if animals are starving, do not reproduce or are generally diseased, then the number is above the carrying capacity of the environment. It's all a matter of balance!

Species reproduce annually or more often, replenishing their numbers or population. If a species reproduces so much that the number of animals is greater than the ability of the land to supply water, food, space and cover, the result can be disease and death. When the number of wildlife is greater than the carrying capacity, then wildlife begin to compete for food, water, space and cover. This can damage the habitat and drops the carrying capacity even farther. This is where hunting and trapping can help maintain nature's balance.

## THE NORTH AMERICAN MODEL OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

### OBJECTIVE 4

Oklahoma and all other 49 states manage wildlife based on The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. There are two main principles: fish and wildlife belong to the people of North America and they should be managed in a way that their populations can be maintained forever. It is the world's most successful method, no other continent has as many of its native wildlife species still living. While other countries struggle to conserve the few species they have left, we enjoy great abundance and diversity of native wildlife. This is mainly because of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which strives to sustain wildlife species and habitats through sound science and active management.

Hunting and angling make the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation work. These activities have generated more than \$10 billion toward wildlife conservation since 1937. The conservation efforts that hunters and anglers fund also benefits non-hunted species. Protecting wetlands for ducks, forests for deer and grasslands for pronghorn have saved countless non-hunted species from peril. Even people who don't

hunt or fish need to understand the conservation role sportsmen play.

Hunters and anglers actively support wildlife conservation by buying licenses and paying taxes on hunting and fishing equipment. Why are hunters and anglers so willing to support conservation through their pocketbooks? Because people value and are willing to pay for what they can use. In many states there aren't as many hunting and fishing licenses sold as there were 20 years ago. In Oklahoma and a few other states, the number of hunting and fishing licenses sold has remained stable. But given the rate of population growth, the percentage of people participating in hunting and fishing is actually decreasing. There is no alternative funding system in place to replace the potential lost funds for conservation. If hunting ends, funding for wildlife conservation is in peril.

## WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT TOOLS

### OBJECTIVE 5

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is the state agency responsible for managing wildlife in Oklahoma.

The first tool Oklahoma wildlife managers use to keep wildlife at the carrying capacity of the land or environment is a sound management plan. Without proper wildlife management plans, many species and/or populations of wildlife in Oklahoma would be in danger. These plans change when the environment changes.

Managing the way people interact with wildlife is one of the most important tools wildlife managers use. When wildlife populations are high, hunters often have increased opportunities to harvest game. When populations are low or the environment has been damaged, then hunters harvest less. Research and harvest surveys are also used as Wildlife Management tools. Managers keep data on numbers of species and the quality of the habitat each year in order to develop the best plans. Studying wildlife and researching such things



## TO THE POINT

**Question:**

What does good wildlife management benefit?

**Answer:**

Most of the plants and animals in a habitat – not just one species.

as where wildlife live, what they eat, and how and where they reproduce are all things that wildlife biologists study in order to have a good understanding of wildlife species. Surveys are conducted every year to see:

- How many animals can be harvested from a population.
- The condition of the environment.
- Trends in population numbers and habitat conditions.
- Basic information on sex and age of animals harvested.
- Social impact of wildlife and of hunting.

Transplanting, protecting and conserving are management tools that have brought many species back from the edge of extinction. Without good management plans and the support of hunters and of the public, many species would no longer be found in Oklahoma.

Law enforcement is an essential part of Oklahoma wildlife management as it helps to ensure that everyone obeys game laws such as bag limits and season dates. One of the primary purposes of wildlife laws is to protect game animals from being over-harvested. Laws are enforced by full time and reserve game wardens. However, individual sportsmen are a crucial part of this effort. They should study and observe all game laws and report hunters who refuse to do so.

### What Is Good Wildlife Management?

Good wildlife management:

- Is based on sound biological information.
- Includes the management of human activities that affect wildlife. Managing people is possibly one of the most important tools in a management plan.
- Has wildlife numbers that are just right — not too many and not too few. The number of animals are balanced with the resources of the habitat (food, water, shelter, space and arrangement).



*In Oklahoma, the story of the whitetail deer is an excellent example of the positive results of wildlife management. In the early 1900s, there were only 500 whitetails in Oklahoma, primarily in the Kiamichi mountain range. By using protection, restocking, and other management tools, the whitetail population thrives today.*

# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION



WILDLIFEDEPARTMENT.COM

*Prescribed burning is an important management tool.*

### TO THE POINT

## HUNTERS PAY FOR WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN OKLAHOMA

### OBJECTIVE 6

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is the state agency responsible for managing fish and wildlife. Managing wildlife costs money. The Wildlife Department receives no general state tax appropriations.

Licensed hunters pay for wildlife conservation in Oklahoma. Money from the sale of hunting licenses goes toward the management of both game and nongame species.

Another source of funding is the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program, funded partially by the Pittman-Robertson Act passed by Congress in 1937. This act established a special tax the federal government collects on all gun, ammunition and archery purchases to help wildlife. Third, specific groups interested in wildlife raise money and work cooperatively with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation to conserve and protect wildlife and habitat.

#### Question:

What is one of the primary purposes of wildlife laws?

#### Answer:

To protect game animals from being over-harvested.

#### Question:

Who pays the most for wildlife conservation?

#### Answer:

Licensed hunters.

## Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission

- The Wildlife Conservation Commission is the eight-member governing board of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.
- Commissioners serve eight-year terms and are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oklahoma Senate.
- The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is a constitutionally mandated and independent state agency that regulates, manages and conserves the state's fish and wildlife resources.

### Department Organization

The Department is organized into five major divisions: Administration, Fisheries, Communication and Education, Law Enforcement and Wildlife.

### Education

An important management tool of wildlife biologists is education. Education helps hunters be safe and helps them understand how taking care of wildlife affects their sport. The more the public understands wildlife management, the more likely they are to support management tools. Oklahoma education programs provide new, inexperienced and even experienced people with the information, knowledge and skills necessary for conserving wildlife.



### Department Funding

The Wildlife Department remains a non-appropriated, user-pay/user-benefit agency that is funded either directly or indirectly by hunting and fishing license sales. In the fiscal year 2024 the Department operated with an estimated \$61.08 million in revenue.

### Impact of Hunters and Anglers on Oklahoma's Economy

Anglers, hunters and wildlife viewers spend dollars that, in turn, benefit many other industries throughout the state. The resulting economic benefits reach every corner of the state and its economy. Every resident and tourist of Oklahoma benefits from fish and wildlife recreation spending.

### By the Numbers

<b>Hunters</b> .....	<b>515,000</b>
Average days per hunter .....	11
Total expenditures .....	\$1.3 billion
Average per hunter .....	\$2,330
Average trip expenditure per day .....	\$146
<b>Anglers</b> .....	<b>1.1 million</b>
Average days per angler .....	17
Total expenditures .....	\$2.5 billion
Average per angler .....	\$2,273
Average trip expenditure per day .....	\$134

*\* Information gathered from the 2016 "50-State Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Related Recreation - Oklahoma", produced by The Rockville Institute under the support of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*

# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### HUNTERS IN THE KNOW

Hunters are urged to take advantage of the state's more liberal bag limits and more open days for antlerless harvest. There are several benefits to additional antlerless harvest, and the most notable is a more even buck-to-doe ratio. Healthier deer, better hunting and better antler development all begin with a more even buck-to-doe ratio.

Too many does will lead to a prolonged rutting period, which is extremely stressful on bucks, often leading to death by exhaustion as well as a spread out fawning season, which leaves late-born fawns more susceptible to predation and malnutrition. Hunters are deer managers. Every time a hunter decides to shoot or not shoot a deer they are making a management decision about the future of the deer population.



©COURTNEY BERG



BEN BUCKERSTAFF

In addition to increased opportunities for antlerless hunting, the Wildlife Department's Deer Management Program (DMP) helps landowners intensively manage deer herds on private land. It is designed to give cooperators — whether landowners, hunt clubs or lease operators — extra assistance in managing deer. Under the program, cooperators set their own management goals ranging from producing maximum numbers of harvestable deer to producing trophy bucks. Because it is very difficult to manage deer and achieve realistic goals on small parcels of land, a minimum of 1,000 acres is required. Potential applicants with less than 1,000 acres may combine lands with adjoining landowners to meet the required minimum. For more information visit [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).

## IDENTIFYING ANTLERLESS DEER

### High Alert

The mature does in a group usually will be the most cautious deer, monitoring their surroundings by looking, rotating their ears to gather sound, and check the wind.



### Tell-Tale Behavior

Adult does will often display aggression toward one another by lunging with ears folded back or even standing on their hind legs and flailing with hooves. The “winner” of these confrontations is usually older and more dominant. Meanwhile, juvenile deer in the group will appear playful, naive, inquisitive and unconcerned with these pecking order disputes.



### Beware of Lone Antlerless Deer

A lone antlerless deer in a food plot or other opening is very often a button buck. Less wary than adults, and usually more outgoing and aggressive than doe fawns, button bucks often wander ahead of their groups. Always wait for a second, third or more deer so that body size can be compared and behaviors observed.

### Be Careful

Short antlered spikes can present a field judging challenge. They have the bodies of adult does and small antlers that are easily missed, especially at a distance. In early fall, they may also be traveling in mixed groups of does and fawns. Good optics and a careful study of dominance behaviors will help. Over the long haul, improved nutrition and proper herd management can reduce the number of short antlered spikes.



### Quick Tips

- Never harvest a lone antlerless deer. Often these are buck fawn. Wait until several antlerless deer are present before making a harvest decision.
- Never harvest antlerless deer in low light or at long distances.
- Fulfill your doe harvest goals as early in the hunting season as possible. In most areas, the difference in body size between fawns and adult does is greatest early in the fall, making it easier to avoid harvesting buck fawns.
- Always use high quality binoculars when judging sex and age of antlerless deer.
- Always give the animal the benefit of the doubt if you are uncertain.

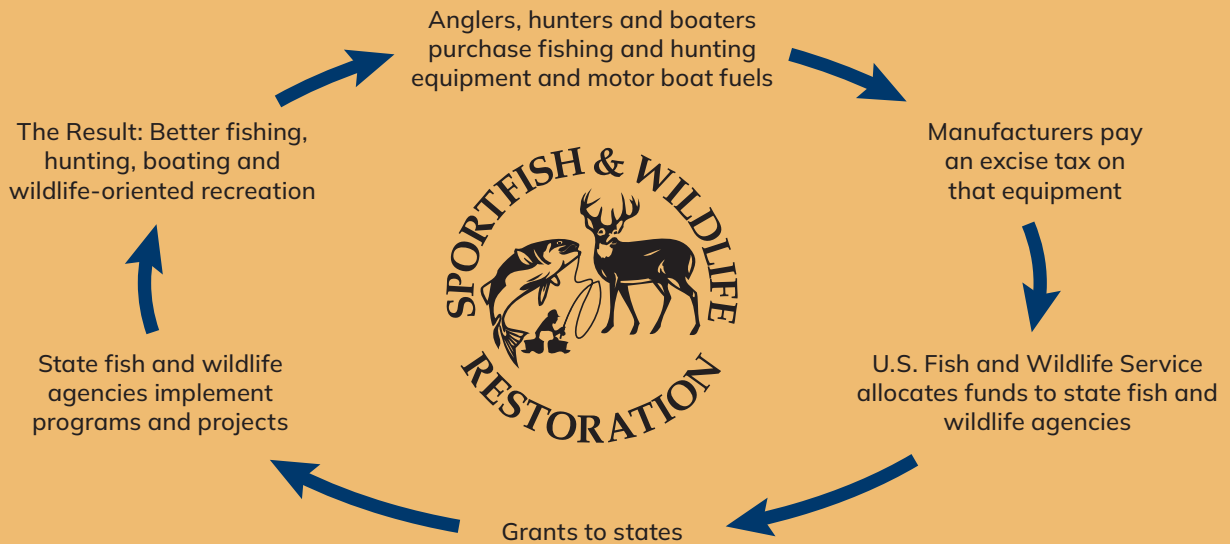


Text provided by National Deer Association (NDA). For more information and more visit <https://deerassociation.com/>.

# WILDLIFE CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### Cycle of Success for Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs



#### Lifetime License Trust Account

- When a lifetime license is sold, the money goes in the lifetime license trust fund. The principal cannot be spent but the interest investment income can be used for operations.
- First lifetime combination license was sold in 1969 for \$150.
- Since 1969, over 250,000 lifetime licenses have been sold.

#### Did you know?

- The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation is the state agency responsible for managing wildlife.
- One of every three Oklahoma residents hunt or fish.
- The 28,142 jobs supported by hunting, fishing and wildlife-viewing in Oklahoma are greater than the state's third largest employer, Tinker Air Force Base, with 26,000 employees.

#### TO THE POINT

##### Question:

In Oklahoma, what state agency is responsible for managing wildlife?

##### Answer:

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation



SHAWN GEE

### The Future of Oklahoma Wildlife

Wildlife in Oklahoma belongs to the people of Oklahoma. The future of wildlife and hunting doesn't just depend on wildlife managers. It depends on hunters, trappers, wildlife enthusiasts and the public who:

- Support programs that improve the habitat on both public and private lands.
- Educate the public about the importance of hunting and trapping as a management tool.
- Use only the highest ethical behavior when hunting and trapping so as not to damage public support.
- Contribute time and money to help wildlife.
- Realize that hunting and trapping are important management tools that benefit wildlife populations and their habitat.
- Take someone hunting.

### Review

- Food, water, space, cover and arrangement are the five components that animals must have in an environment in order to survive.
- Carrying capacity is the amount of wildlife a habitat can support each year. When the amount of wildlife is greater than the carrying capacity, then wildlife begins to compete for food, water, and cover. This can damage the habitat and drop the carrying capacity even lower.
- A sound management plan, research and harvest studies, transplanting, protecting and conserving and law enforcement are all management tools used by wildlife managers.
- The sale of hunting and trapping licenses, money from the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program and money from private sources are the three main funding sources of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.
- The Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program provides a tax on firearms and ammunition in order to help fund state wildlife agencies.





## FERAL HOGS IN OKLAHOMA

Despised by most, but prized by others, the feral hog presents a unique set of challenges to Oklahoma and the ODWC. In a perfect environment, feral hogs would not exist in Oklahoma. They are not native and threaten existing native species by competing for and causing significant damage to habitat and resources. They also prey on native species and spread disease. They are a nuisance species by all accounts.

However, eradication of feral hogs is not a realistic goal. They have never been successfully eradicated from states in which they have become firmly established. The fact that control efforts are sporadic, and that landowners have different objectives for feral hogs limits the success of eradication efforts and goals. A more realistic goal, therefore, is to slow the spread of hogs and to reduce the densities in areas where they are present.

Most studies show that the average feral hog's diet is 90 percent plant-based, and studies show a wide variation in home range size.

Feral hogs have tremendous reproductive potential. They start breeding at 6-12 months of age, when the female

reaches 70 pounds. Biologically capable of producing two litters per year, low nutritional status and stress from disease and parasites usually limits reproduction to one litter per year. But with a gestation period of just 120 days, and an average litter of five to six offspring, one can see how this non-native nuisance species can quickly become a problem for native wildlife and landowners.

Additionally, human movement of live feral hogs is a contributing factor in the spread and increase in feral hog numbers. Studies show that the natural expansion of feral hog populations is quite slow. In Oklahoma, feral hogs were present in the southeastern part of the state for decades with little range expansion. The increased popularity of feral hog hunting has led to human movement of feral hogs throughout the state.

Research shows that 65 percent of the feral hog population must be removed annually to prevent population growth. Research also shows that hunting, with or without dogs, is ineffective for long-term population reduction of feral hog populations. These methods also have a high cost-per-hog killed. The most effective ways to control feral hog populations have proven to be trapping and aerial gunning. Other forms of control are largely ineffective and can actually reduce the



effectiveness of trapping. Trapping efforts should strive to catch the entire family group (known as a sounder) at one time. Without removing the whole sounder, adult sows become very difficult to trap and can quickly repopulate the area.

ODWC supports the Department of Agriculture in the “hog free zone” designation for portions of northwest Oklahoma, and their rules to require accountability for all live hog transports in the state. These rules are in place to help reduce the human spread of feral hogs. Details for these rules can be found on the Department of Agriculture website at <https://ag.ok.gov>.

A secondary, less effective option is night shooting of feral swine, which Wildlife Department biologists say should be a method of last resort because of the safety issues it creates. For Wildlife Department procedures on existing feral-swine night laws and regulations, log on to [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com).



### Diseases of Wild Hogs

Feral hogs spread disease. Three main diseases spread by feral hogs include pseudorabies, swine brucellosis and leptospirosis:

- **Pseudorabies:** Affects dogs, cats, cattle and many wild mammals. Commonly results in death of affected animal.
- **Swine brucellosis:** Creates reduced reproductive rates, and flu-like symptoms. Transmissible to humans, most commonly through infected blood during field dressing.
- **Leptospirosis:** A bacteria spread through the infected animal's urine and usually transmitted through infected water sources. Can infect most mammals, including humans. Can cause reproductive failure, kidney failure and liver failure.



DARIN HILL

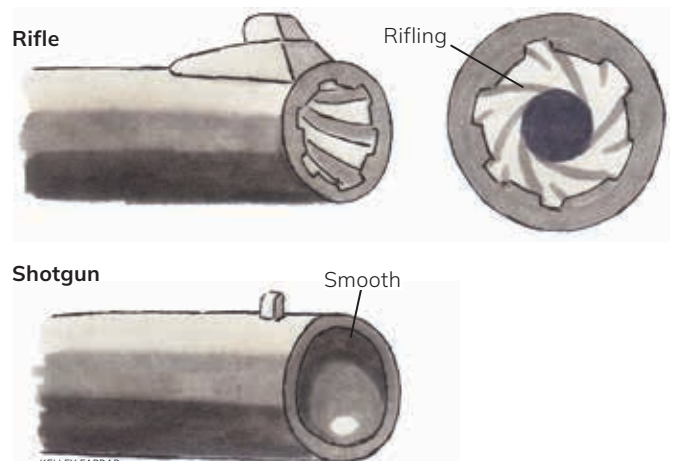
## FIREARMS: RIFLES AND SHOTGUNS

### OBJECTIVE 1

While rifles and shotguns may have similarities and often look alike, the difference is the purpose and the barrel. Rifles are primarily designed to shoot single bullets which strike a single, usually stationary target, while shotguns are designed to fire a spread of shot or pellets in order to hit a moving target.

All rifles and shotguns have three main parts; the stock, action and barrel. The action is the part that loads, fires, and ejects a shell. The barrel is the tube the bullet or pellets pass through. The stock is the wood, metal or plastic frame that holds the barrel and action.

The main difference between rifles and shotguns is the inside of the barrel. Rifles are grooved in a spiral pattern while the inside of most shotgun barrels are smooth.



### Words to Know

**Rifle** – A firearm whose barrel has small spiraling grooves causing the bullet to spin and fly straighter.

**Shotgun** – A firearm that fires multiple pellets.

**Action** – The part of a firearm that loads, fires, and ejects the cartridge or shell.

**Barrel** – The part of the firearm through which the bullet or pellets travel when fired.

**Stock** – The wood, metal or plastic frame that holds the action and barrel

**Rifling** – Grooves inside a rifle barrel that cause the bullet to spin.

**Choke** – The narrowing at the end of a shotgun barrel that determines the pattern of the pellets as they leave the gun.

**Non-Toxic Shot** – Any shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for hunting waterfowl or in designated waterfowl areas.

**Range** – How far shot or bullets travel after exiting the barrel of the firearm.

**Muzzle** – The end of the barrel where the bullet comes out.

### What is a Safety?

A safety is the most important part of the gun. Its purpose is to prevent the trigger, or the firing pin, from moving and thereby preventing the gun from firing. A careful hunter always knows where the safety is located on the gun before loading and firing.

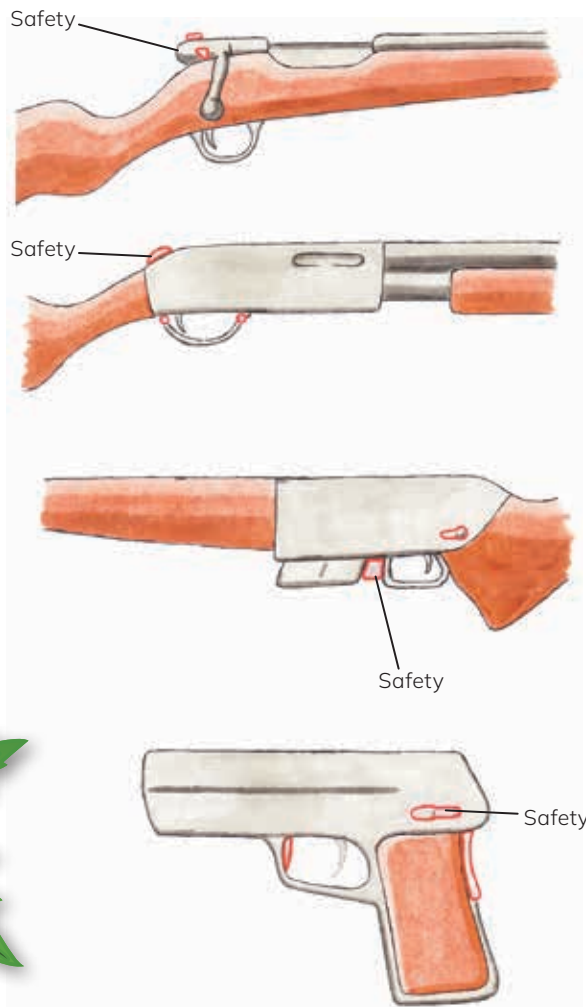
**However, a safety is a mechanical device.**

**It can fail!** Just because you have the safety on doesn't mean the gun won't fire. Safeties should never be used as a substitute for safe gun handling and the observance of all gun safety rules.

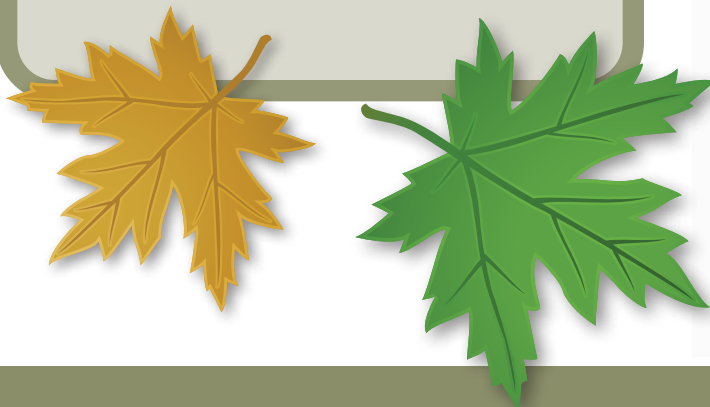
### TO THE POINT

**Question:**  
What is the safety on a firearm?

**Answer:**  
It is a mechanical device that can fail!



CALEB IRWIN



## FIREARMS: RIFLES &amp; SHOTGUNS

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

## RIFLES

## OBJECTIVE 2

## Parts of a Rifle



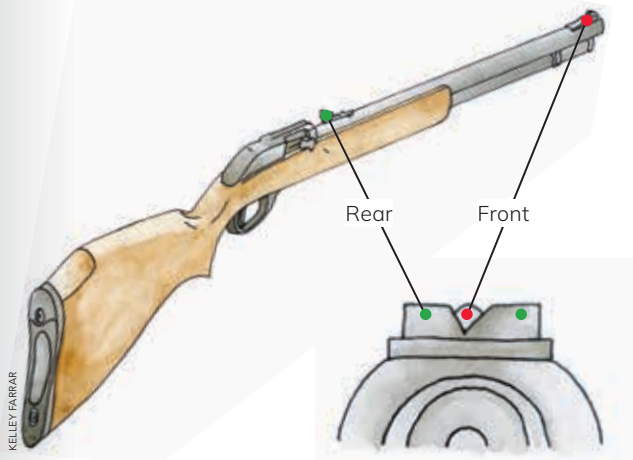
**Rifles** are designed to accurately hit a precise point. They are long-barreled firearms with grooves cut into the barrel of the rifle. These grooves are called rifling and give rifles their name. The rifling makes the bullet spin as it leaves the muzzle, making the projectile much more accurate and stable in flight. Make sure the ammunition you use matches the caliber that is stamped on the side of the barrel. You can find the caliber of the ammunition printed on the box.

There are three main types of sights for rifles – open, aperture and telescopic.

## Open sights

Open sights are composed of a post or bead at the muzzle end of the barrel and a blade with a V shape near the action.

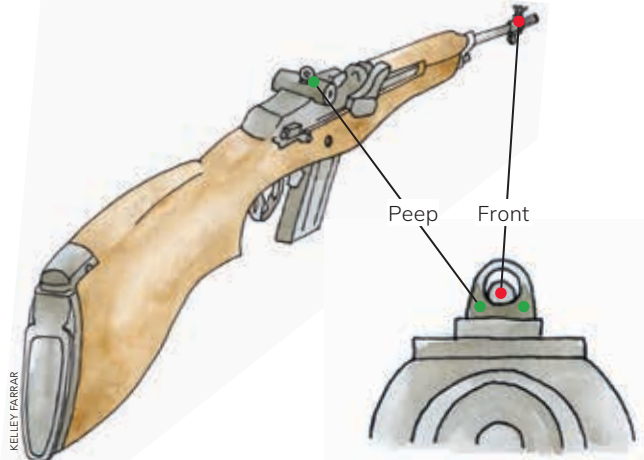
The spot you want to hit on the target should be lined up so that it appears to sit on top of the post. The post should be lined up with the top of the V notch.



## Aperture sights

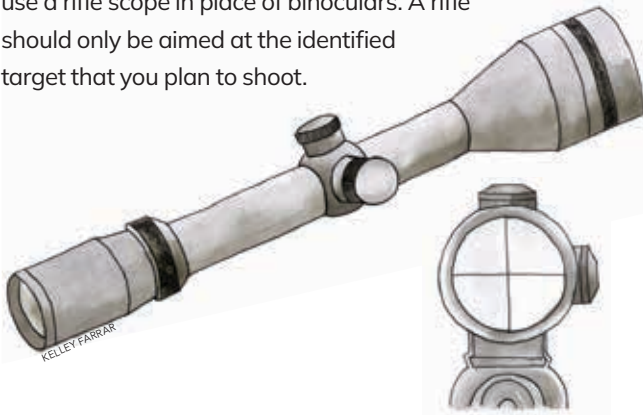
Aperture sights are also known as peep sights. Guns with aperture sights will have a post at the muzzle end of the barrel and an aperture or hole as the rear sight.

The spot you want to hit on the target should be lined up so that it appears to sit on top of the post. The top of the post should appear to be in the middle of the hole.



### Telescopic

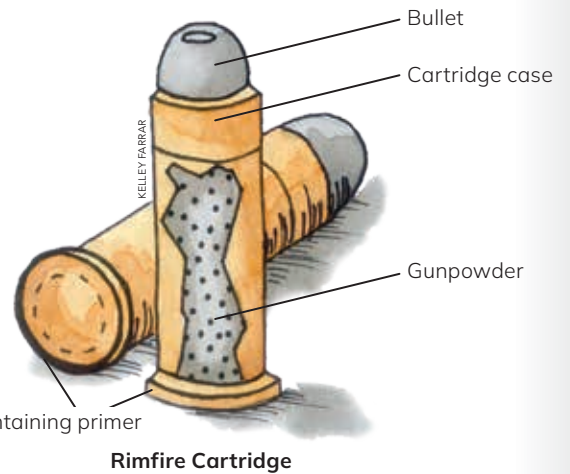
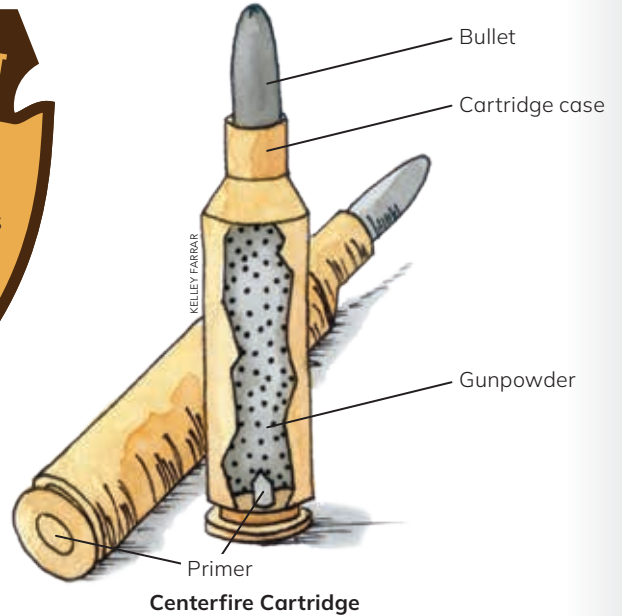
Telescopic sights are also known as scopes. Scopes come in many styles, but the most common has crosshairs that are lined up with the target. The main advantage of telescopic sights is that they make your sights and target appear on the same level. This means that you can keep both the target and crosshairs in focus. Using scopes does not mean you do not need to spend time practicing with your firearm. Never use a rifle scope in place of binoculars. A rifle should only be aimed at the identified target that you plan to shoot.



**TO THE POINT**

**Question:**  
When can a rifle scope be used as binoculars?

**Answer:**  
Never.



## THE RIFLE CARTRIDGE

### OBJECTIVE 3

Cartridges are small explosive devices that have a primer at the bottom. When the primer is hit or compressed, it ignites a spark, which makes the gun powder rapidly ignite, causing the cartridge to fire. As the bullet travels down the barrel, the rifling makes the bullet spin.

For quick, clean shots, a bullet must penetrate sufficiently deep to reach vital organs. Cartridges are among the least expensive items for the hunt; get the best available for your quarry, and make every shot count. Always strive to cleanly harvest the animal with one shot.

### Centerfire vs. Rimfire Cartridges

The difference between a rimfire and centerfire cartridge is the location of the primer. Centerfire cartridges have

the primer in the center of the bottom of the cartridge. These cartridges are usually more powerful than rimfire cartridges and are used in larger caliber firearms. Rimfire cartridges have the primer material “spun” into the edges of the rim of the cartridge and are usually used in smaller caliber firearms.

### Trajectory

The trajectory of a bullet is the path the bullet takes from the muzzle of the gun to the target. It is not a straight line. The bullet begins to drop the second it emerges from the barrel because of the force of gravity and air resistance. Some bullets can travel a mile or more.

## SHOTGUNS

## OBJECTIVE 4

## Parts of a Shotgun

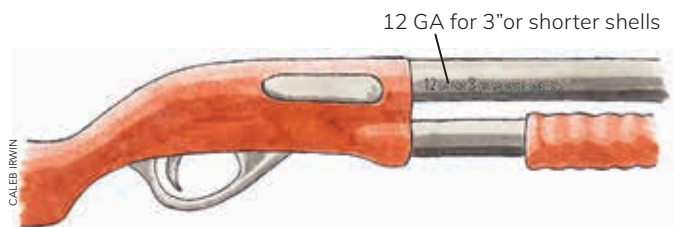


Shotguns typically shoot a spread of small projectiles instead of a rifle's single bullet. This increases the chances of hitting a moving target. They also have a smooth barrel inside. Shotgun styles allow a wide variety of choices including the gauge, the type of choke and the type of action. Shotguns can also fire a single projectile, called a slug, which is similar to a rifle bullet.

## Gauge

Gauge is a measurement that has to do with the size of the barrel. Common shotguns are 10 gauge, 12 gauge, 16 gauge, 20 gauge and 28 gauge. The only shotgun that is not measured by gauge is the .410-caliber shotgun which means it has a .41 inch barrel diameter.

Shotgun gauge size is marked on the barrel of the shotgun and on the box of ammunition. Make sure the ammunition matches what is stamped on the gun barrel.



## TO THE POINT

**Question:**

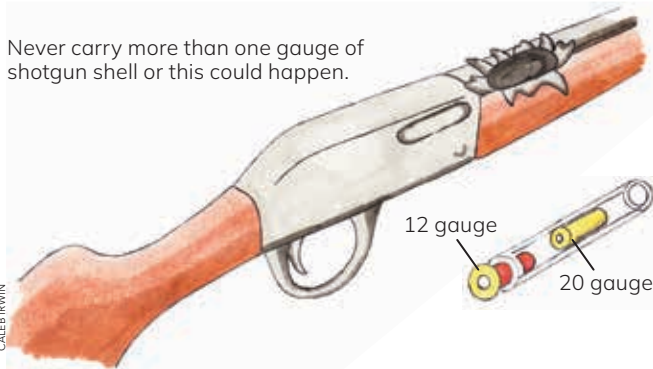
How do you determine the correct size of ammunition for your firearm?

**Answer:**

Find the gauge or caliber stamped on the outside of the barrel.



Never carry more than one gauge of shotgun shell or this could happen.



### Choke

The choke is a taper in the barrel that determines the pattern of the shot. As pellets leave the barrel they spread or disperse. A tight choke keeps pellets together as they leave the barrel so they travel farther before dispersing. An open choke allows the pellets to start dispersing as soon as they leave the barrel.

The effective range of a shot shell and choke combination will vary. As a rule of thumb, the improved cylinder choke is effective 20-30 yards, the modified choke 30-40 yards and the full choke 40-50 yards.

To find out the best shot shell and choke combination to use at different distances it's necessary to pattern your shotgun. It isn't a complicated process, but it does take some time and effort. Patterning your shotgun will keep you from wounding or crippling game and will reduce the number of shots needed to harvest your game.

## THE SHOTGUN SHELL

### OBJECTIVE 5

There are five main parts of a shotgun shell: the case, primer, powder, wad and shot. The case is the outer part that holds everything together. The primer, found at the bottom of the shell, explodes when hit by the firing pin. This ignites the powder, which is just above the primer. The burning powder pushes the wad and shot out the barrel and towards the target. The wad holds the shot together until it leaves the barrel. The shot is many ball-shaped pieces of lead or lead substitute that spread out after they leave the barrel.

### Shotgun Shell Size

The shotgun shell size is given in inches and determined by the length of the empty case.

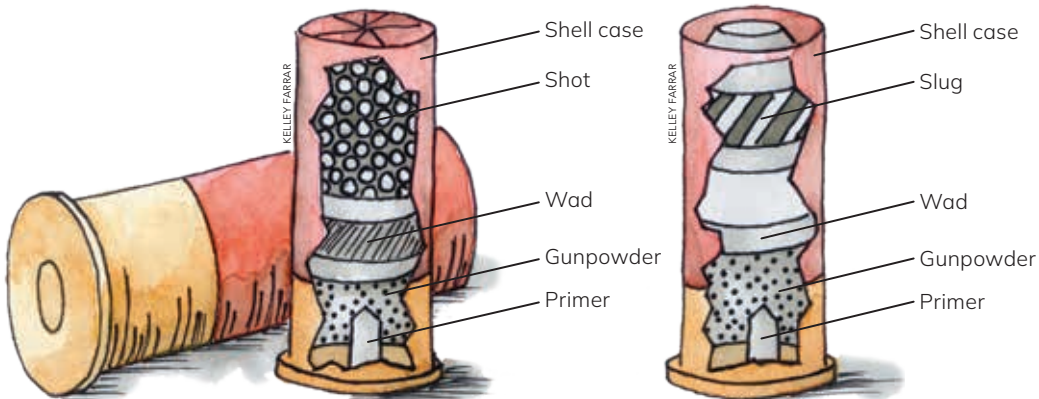
### Shot Size

Shot comes in a variety of sizes from very small (size #12) to very large (size #000). Choose the shot size that fits the wildlife you are hunting.

### Non-Toxic Shot

Historically, shot was made from lead pellets. However, because waterfowl eat lead shot and develop lead poisoning, the use of lead shot has been banned for all waterfowl and some upland game bird hunting.

Today's non-toxic shot is made from a variety of substances, the most popular and affordable of which is steel. Again, it is extremely important to pattern the ammo you plan to use.



## FIREARM ACTIONS

### OBJECTIVE 6

The firearm action loads, fires and ejects the cartridge or shell. The action can be:

- Bolt Action
- Break Action
- Pump Action
- Lever Action
- Semi-Auto Action

### Bolt Action



The bolt action is most often seen in rifles. Bolt action firearms are common and simple to use. Opening a bolt action firearm is as simple as pivoting the bolt upwards and pulling it backwards, using the handle on the bolt.

Bolt action rifles are known for their accuracy and reliability. Jamming is extremely rare in bolt-action firearms.



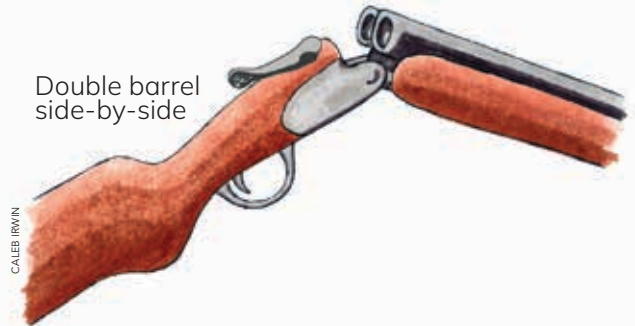
### Break Action

One of the simplest firearm actions is the break action.

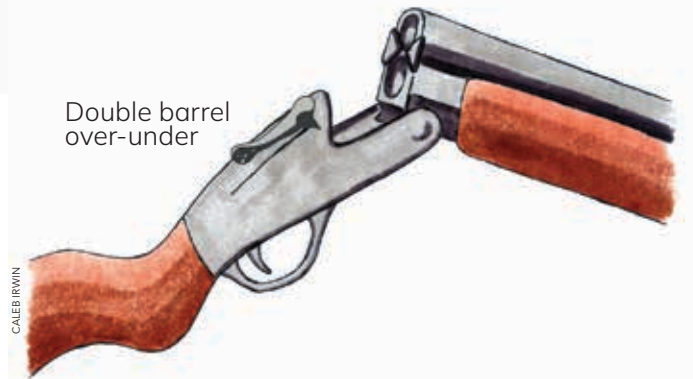
#### Single-shot



#### Double barrel side-by-side



#### Double barrel over-under



The action release on a break action firearm is usually on the top of the firearm behind the chamber.

To load a break action firearm, simply open the action using the action release, insert the ammunition into the chamber, and close the action. After firing the firearm, open the action using the action release and remove the spent ammunition manually.



### Pump Action



The pump action is more commonly seen in shotguns than in any other type of firearm. It is a very reliable action, and an experienced shooter can go through the pumping actions very quickly, and instinctively. Sliding the front grip back and then forward ejects the spent shell, loads another shell and cocks the hammer.

### Semi-Automatic Action

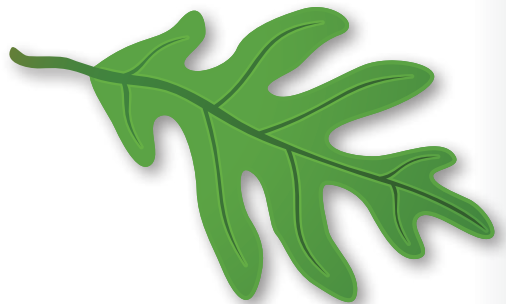


The semi-automatic action is very popular in both rifles and shotguns. A semi-automatic fires a bullet, ejects the spent cartridge and chambers a fresh cartridge each time the trigger is pulled.

### Lever Action



Lever-action uses a lever located around the trigger guard area, often including the trigger guard itself, to load, fire and eject cartridges. The lever action is most commonly seen in rifles. Lever actions firearms are known for their accuracy and reliability. They are popular for short- and medium-range hunting in heavily covered areas.



# FIREARMS: RIFLES & SHOTGUNS

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### CLEANING AND STORING YOUR FIREARM

#### OBJECTIVE 7

Dirt and debris can easily collect in any firearm. You should clean your firearm after every use in order to ensure safe and efficient functioning. Every hunter should own a fully stocked cleaning kit and use it regularly.

#### Components of a Cleaning Kit

Cleaning kits should include:

- Bristle brushes for each caliber and gauge firearm you own
- Cleaning rods of varying lengths for rifles, shotguns and handguns

- Cleaning patches sized to fit down the bore of each different firearm
- Patch holders that screw into the ends of the cleaning rods
- A stiff toothbrush
- Bore solvent
- Gun oil

The procedure for cleaning all firearms is essentially the same:

- Make sure the firearm is unloaded
- Check for obstructions in the barrel and malfunctions
- Run a patch or bristle brush soaked in bore solvent down the barrel
- Run dry follow-up patches to dry the barrel and check for traces of rust
- Once clean, run a patch with a light coat of gun oil down the barrel
- Clean all exposed parts of the action
- Clean and oil all exterior metal parts

#### TO THE POINT

**Question:**  
What should you do before cleaning a firearm?

**Answer:**  
Always make sure it is unloaded.



## TRANSPORTING FIREARMS

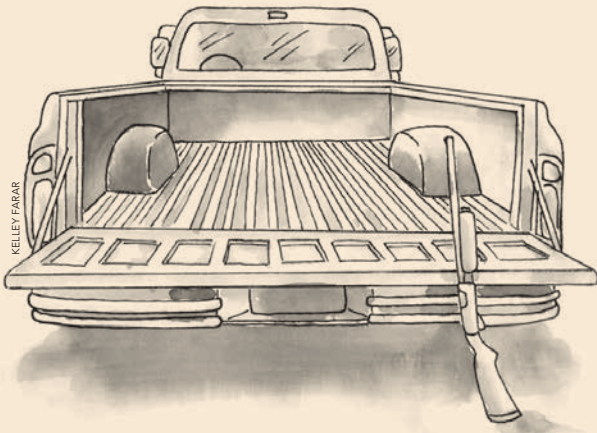
### OBJECTIVE 8

There are certain safety rules and laws that govern transporting firearms in a motorized vehicle of any type. It is illegal and unsafe to transport a loaded firearm.

Guns should always be unloaded and cased before being placed in a vehicle.

A gun should never be leaned up against a tailgate, other part of a vehicle or any other object. The gun could easily slide and hit the ground, causing it to fire.

## TO THE POINT



**Question:**

In the picture above, is this safe?

**Answer:**

No.

## MARKSMANSHIP

### OBJECTIVE 9

### Shooting Positions: The Prone Position



The prone position is by far the most stable firing position and the most accurate firing position.

### The Sitting Position



A more stable firing position than the standing firing position is the sitting position. The sitting firing position generates much less sway in the muzzle than the standing position. Using a bipod will make this position even more stable.

# FIREARMS: RIFLES & SHOTGUNS

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### The Kneeling Position



The kneeling firing position is more stable than the standing firing position. Using a bipod will make this position even more stable.

### The Standing Position



The standing position is easy to adopt quickly upon spotting game. However, the standing position is unstable, making it the least accurate shooting position.

### Shotgun Shooting Position



Shooter stands with feet shoulder-width apart, with slightly more weight placed on the front leg.

#### Review

- One of the main differences between a rifle and a shotgun is that rifles shoot a single bullet and shotguns shoot many pellets.
- Be able to locate and describe the parts of rifles and shotguns.
- Clean your firearm after every use in order to ensure safe and efficient functioning.
- The most common firing positions are sitting, standing, kneeling, prone and shotgun shooting positions.



## FIREARM SAFETY

### OBJECTIVE 1

The person holding the gun is responsible for the safe handling of the firearm. The International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) emphasizes four basic rules of firearm safety.

- A**ssume that every gun is loaded.
- C**ontrol the direction of the muzzle – point the gun in a safe direction.
- T**rigger Finger — keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.
- T**arget — be certain of your target and of what’s behind it.

## TO THE POINT

**Question:**  
What do you do when hunting with someone who refuses to follow the rules for proper firearm safety?

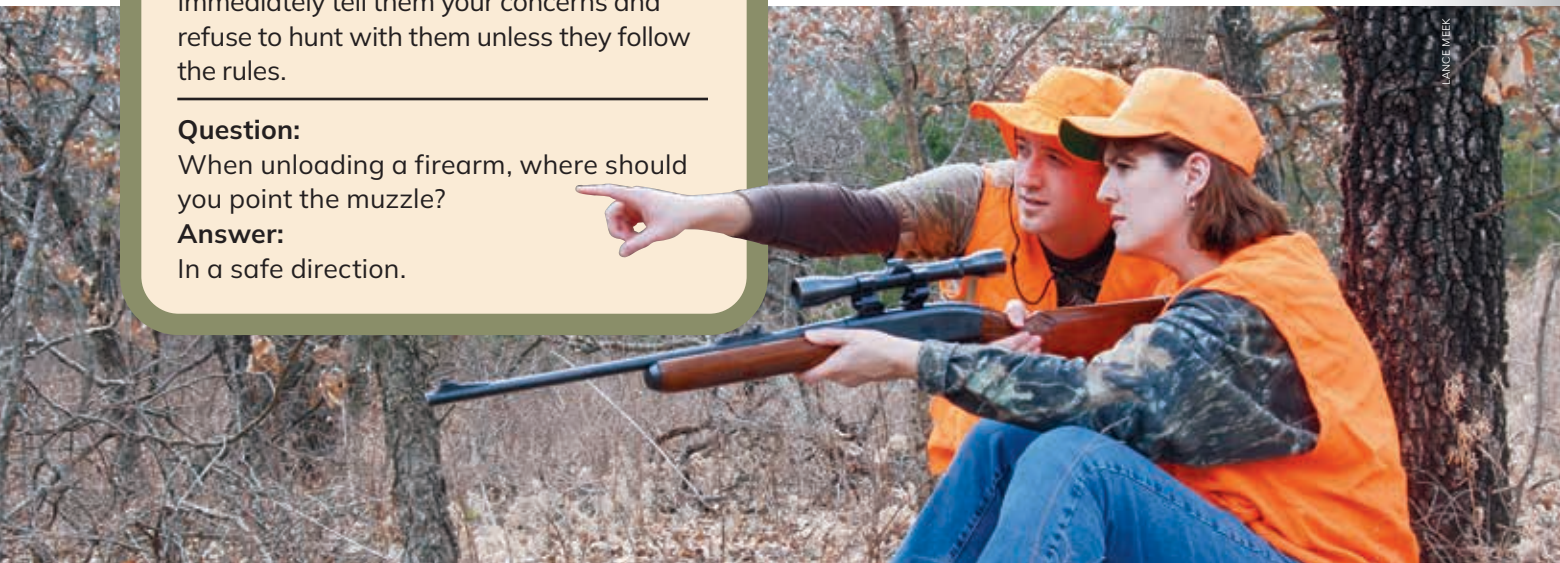
**Answer:**  
Immediately tell them your concerns and refuse to hunt with them unless they follow the rules.

**Question:**  
When unloading a firearm, where should you point the muzzle?

**Answer:**  
In a safe direction.

### Safety Tips

- Always determine if a firearm is unloaded before picking up or accepting it from another person.
- When carrying a gun, the most important thing to do is to keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Never point a firearm at yourself or others.
- The natural instinct when picking up a firearm is to put your finger in the trigger guard. **DON'T!** This could cause an accidental discharge if the gun is loaded.
- Never take a shot unless you are aware of your target and what is behind it. Never point your firearm at something you do not intend to shoot.
- Don't use telescopic sights as a substitute for binoculars.
- If a friend refuses to follow safe gun handling rules while hunting with you, immediately tell them your concerns, and don't continue to hunt with them unless they follow the rules.
- Always unload your firearm and examine the barrel after a fall to be sure there is no snow, mud, or dirt in the barrel. If there is, clean it out before firing.
- Never use drugs or alcohol before or during shooting.
- Make sure you have the correct ammunition for the firearm you are using.
- Don't shoot at water or hard objects such as rock or metal.



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## LOADING AND UNLOADING FIREARMS

### OBJECTIVE 2

Firearms should be kept unloaded unless they are in use. Be sure you are familiar with the way your firearm is loaded and unloaded. When loading and unloading a firearm make sure the muzzle is pointed in a safe direction. Have someone who is familiar with the way your firearm works show you the proper methods of loading and unloading ammunition.

- Always check for yourself whether or not a gun is loaded. Don't rely on someone else's say-so.
- Practice using "dummy" ammunition until you can efficiently load and unload your firearm.
- Keep your finger out of the trigger guard when loading and unloading ammunition.
- Even if you just unloaded it, always treat a firearm as if it were loaded.

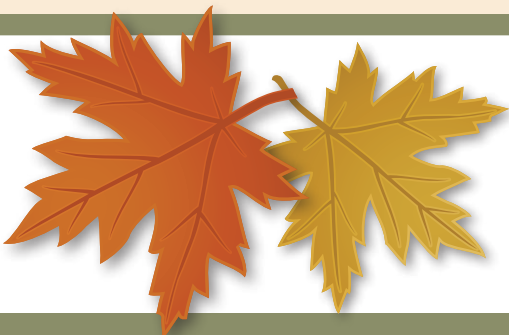
## TO THE POINT

### Question:

What is the most important thing to do when carrying a gun?

### Answer:

Keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times.



## TO THE POINT

### Question:

The more you hunt, the more likely you are to have an accidental discharge. How do you make sure it doesn't kill or injure someone?

### Answer:

Always point your firearm in a safe direction.

### Question:

What should you assume about every gun?

### Answer:

Assume that every gun is loaded.

### Question:

When handling a firearm, you should always control what?

### Answer:

The direction of the muzzle.

### Question:

Who is responsible for safe handling of the firearm?

### Answer:

The person holding the gun.

### Question:

You should never take a shot until you are certain of what?

### Answer:

Don't take a shot until you are certain of your target and what is behind it.

### Question:

Is it OK to use drugs or alcohol before or during shooting?

### Answer:

No. It is dangerous. Never do it.

### Question:

What should you do after a fall?

### Answer:

You should examine the barrel of your firearm to make sure there is no snow, dirt or mud in it.

## CROSSING FENCES, WATERWAYS AND OTHER OBSTACLES

### OBJECTIVE 3

A common cause of accidents is when hunters cross fences or other obstacles and forget basic rules of safety. It is easy to lose your footing or your balance and slip when climbing over a log, down into a ravine or wading through a stream. A loaded firearm in these situations can be extremely dangerous.

Always unload your firearm. When picking up, or accepting a firearm from another person, always make sure that it is unloaded.



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If hunting alone, point the muzzle of the gun away from you and place the gun on the ground on the other side of the barrier.

If two people are hunting together and come to an obstacle, they both unload their guns and one person holds both guns while the other person crosses. Then the guns are handed across, muzzle pointed up, over the obstacle to the second person and the first person crosses.

## TO THE POINT

### Question:

When do you know that a firearm is pointed in a safe direction?

### Answer:

If it went off, no one would get injured.

### Question:

When should you treat a firearm as if it were loaded?

### Answer:

Always, even if you just unloaded it.

### Question:

Before crossing a fence or other obstacle what should you do?

### Answer:

Always unload your firearm.

### Question:

What should you do when picking up or accepting a firearm from another person?

### Answer:

You should always make sure that it is unloaded.

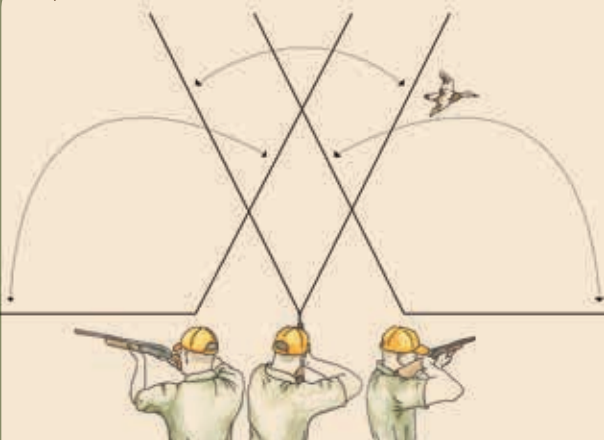
## SAFE ZONES OF FIRE

### OBJECTIVE 4

The area into which a hunter may shoot safely is referred to as a “zone of fire.” When hunting alone, your safe zone of fire will be determined by your field of view, the presence of trees, rocks, water or other obstacles and the range of your firearm.

Upland gamebird and waterfowl hunters often use zones of fire that are triangle shaped. Hunters walk or sit in a straight line, in sight of each other when hunting. No one runs ahead or lags behind the line. The area behind the hunters is off limits—no one turns to shoot behind. The middle hunter or hunters have the narrowest zone of fire—about 45 degrees. Hunters to the left and right ends have a broader zone of fire since they can swing to the outside edges. No one shoots at game that is directly between each hunter.

## TO THE POINT



### Safe Zones of Fire

#### Question:

Who can safely shoot at this bird?

#### Answer:

The hunter on the right.

## AMMUNITION SAFETY

### OBJECTIVE 5

It is extremely important to know the correct methods for handling ammunition. Following a few rules can keep you and your hunting partners safe.

- Carry only the correct size of ammunition for your firearm.
- If ammunition appears dented or in any way defective, don't use it!
- Store ammunition in its original box. Do not mix different types of ammunition in a generic container.
- Keep ammunition away from heat or from being hit.
- Keep your ammunition locked in a separate container from your firearms.

## The 10 Commandments of Firearm Safety

1. Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction.
2. Firearms should be unloaded when not actually in use.
3. Don't rely on your gun's "Safety."
4. Be sure of your target and what's beyond it.
5. Use correct ammunition.
6. If your gun fails to fire when the trigger is pulled, handle with care!
7. Always wear eye and ear protection when shooting.
8. Be sure the barrel is clear of obstructions before shooting.
9. Don't alter or modify your gun, and have guns serviced regularly.
10. Learn the mechanical and handling characteristics of the firearm you are using.



## HUNTER ORANGE

### OBJECTIVE 6

In Oklahoma, individuals hunting deer, elk, bear or antelope with any type of firearm must conspicuously wear both a head covering and an outer garment above the waistline both consisting of hunter orange color totaling at least 400 square inches. The safest color to wear while hunting is solid hunter orange.



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All other hunters, except those hunting waterfowl, crow or crane, or while hunting furbearing animals at night, must wear either a head covering or upper garment of hunter orange clothing while hunting during any antelope, bear, deer, or elk firearms (muzzleloader or gun) season.

While hunters hunting in other seasons are not required to, hunter orange is still the safest color to wear. Upland game bird hunters (quail, pheasant, etc.) should wear at least a hunter orange vest or head covering. Turkey hunters should wear at least a hunter orange vest or head covering while moving through their hunting areas.

## SAFELY CARRYING YOUR FIREARM WHILE HUNTING

### OBJECTIVE 7

There are several safe methods of carrying your rifle or shotgun when you are hunting. The method you choose will depend upon the type of animal you are hunting and the conditions of the environment. Always be conservative and choose the safest method possible.

All hunting situations are different and most of them could easily change at any given time. For example, the cradle carry with the muzzle of your firearm pointed to the left is a very safe carry if you are the furthest left person in a group of pheasant hunters. However, if another hunter joins your group to your left, you will need to adjust your carry. You must remember, when carrying a gun the most important thing is to keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction at all times. If a firearm is pointed in a safe direction and it went off, no one would get injured.

### TO THE POINT

**Question:**  
What is the safest color to wear while hunting?

**Answer:**  
Solid hunter orange.



Remember that other hunters cannot see your hunter orange when you are in your blind. Attach a piece of hunter orange material to the outside of the blind.



### Two-handed Carry

Hold the grip in one hand and the gun's forearm in the other hand. This carry provides the best muzzle control.



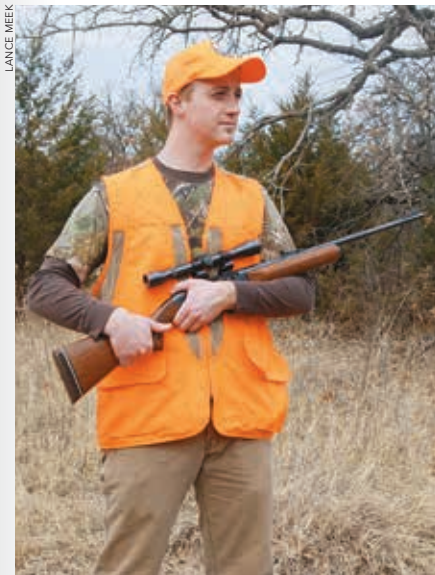
### Trail Carry

Hold the stock with one hand, and make sure the muzzle is pointed at the ground.



### Shoulder Carry

Rest the forearm on the top of your shoulder by holding the grip.



### Cradle Carry

Cradle the gun's forearm in the bend of one arm. Hunting situations change often. You should always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. This can change depending on the location of other members of your party.



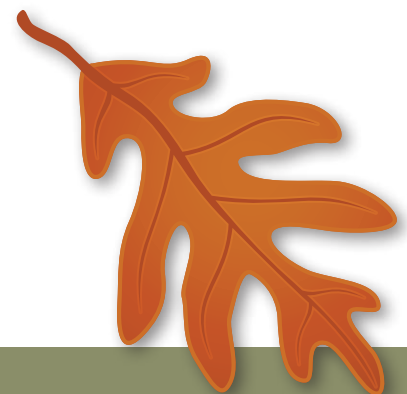
### Elbow Carry

Hold the grip of the gun over your elbow, let the stock rest against the back of your upper arm. The muzzle of the gun should be pointing down. Using this carry gives the handler the least control.

## TO THE POINT

**Question:**  
What carry provides the best muzzle control?

**Answer:**  
The two-handed carry.



## TURKEY HUNTING SAFETY

### OBJECTIVE 8

Turkey behave differently from other game species, and hunters use different techniques to hunt them. Therefore you should observe some special safety rules while hunting them.

Never stalk a turkey. The chance of getting close enough for a shot is slim, and the chances of becoming mistaken for a turkey and involved in a hunting accident are increased.

Don't wear red, white or blue. Red is the color most hunters count on to differentiate a gobbler's head from the hen's blue-colored head. Never move, wave, or make turkey sounds to alert another hunter to your presence. A quick movement may draw fire. Yell in a loud voice and remain hidden. Be particularly careful when using a gobbler call. The sound and motion may attract other hunters. When selecting your calling position, don't try to hide so well that you cannot see what is happening around you.

The best calling position provides a background as wide as your shoulders, and will completely protect you from the top of your head down. Small trees will not hide slight movements of your hands or shoulders which might look like a turkey to another hunter who could be unwisely stalking your calls.

Never shoot at a sound or movement. Be 100 percent certain of your target before you pull the trigger. Don't ever shoot at a "piece" of a turkey. You must see the whole bird to determine whether it is safe or legal to shoot. A good

rule of thumb is to not shoot until you can clearly see the gobbler's eye. That way, the bird will be in range and you will be sure it is a turkey. When turkey hunting, assume that every sound you hear is made by another hunter.

### Turkey Hunting Safety

- Never assume that you are alone in the woods — even if you are the only one with permission to hunt.
- Never assume that other hunters are acting responsibly.
- Use a flashlight when walking in the dark.
- Make sure your head-net does not obscure your vision.
- Be aware of what is beyond your target before you shoot.
- Keep your gun unloaded until you are set up in the field. Keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
- Keep your decoy covered until ready to set it up. After harvesting a turkey, cover it until you are out of the woods.
- Wear orange when moving through the woods.

## TO THE POINT

### Question:

What should you avoid wearing while turkey hunting?

### Answer:

Don't wear red, white or blue.



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## FIREARM SAFETY IN THE HOME

### OBJECTIVE 9

Safe storage of your firearms is your responsibility.

Firearms should be loaded only when in the field or on the range. At all other times, during travel and especially in the home, they should be kept unloaded.

Never handle or show guns without first carefully checking to be sure they are unloaded. Open the action and keep it open until the gun is again ready for storage. Never assume that a firearm is unloaded, even if it was checked only a few minutes earlier. Don't trust the safety to compensate for unsafe gun handling. Like all mechanical devices, safeties can malfunction, and in any case, they are only intended to supplement human care and intelligence.

The best method for storing firearms and ammunition in the home is locked separately in a cabinet or safe. If it's not possible, seek the next best solution. That is locked together in a safe or cabinet.



Finally, if the proper storage facilities are not available, trigger locks should be purchased.

On the practical side, guns should be stored in a reasonably dry environment but away from exposure to heat. Dampness causes rust and heat can bake the wood of stocks and grips to the point of cracking or splitting.

When handling firearms, always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Avoid horseplay at all times — guns are not toys and they must be handled with respect. Common sense must be used in choosing the safest direction to point the muzzle. “Down” is not always the safest direction and neither is “up.”

### Firearm Education

Safety in general is largely a matter of education, and home firearms safety is certainly no exception. All family members must learn safe gun handling. Without proper education, preventive measures are nearly useless.

Children are never too young to begin the lessons of safety. Teaching can begin long before children are old enough to understand detailed instruction. Start by setting a proper and consistent example. If parents treat guns with care and respect, children will likely follow their lead.

Children should learn that firearms are not toys. Having noticed adult interest in guns, children will naturally develop a healthy curiosity about their use and operation. In addition, children tend to have an entirely unrealistic idea of what guns are all about because of exposure to modern realistic toys and to the fantasies of television.

## TO THE POINT

### Question:

What is the best method for storing firearms and ammunition in the home?

### Answer:

Locked separately in a cabinet or safe.

The quickest and surest way to show children the power of firearms is by demonstration. Take them to the local range, fire a few rounds of high velocity ammunition at closed gallon cans of water, and show them the results.

It is a serious mistake to assume that keeping children ignorant will prevent accidents. Nothing could be further from the truth. Where firearms are concerned, there is no such thing as blissful ignorance. Keeping children in the dark only ensures that they will not understand the potential danger and increases the likelihood that they will seek to satisfy their curiosity without proper supervision. Also, the hazards that the parent wishes to eliminate are greatly increased if the child does not know how firearms function.

A good rule for children is hands off until they are old enough to be taught safe gun handling, and then only in the presence of an adult – never while playing with other children. As they progress, they need to know that the more they hunt the more likely it is that their firearm will fire on accident. The way to make sure it doesn't kill or injure someone is to always point the gun in a safe direction.

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## TREESTAND SAFETY

### OBJECTIVE 10

What are treestands and how are they used for hunting?

A tree stand is simply a perch in a tree that provides a place to sit or stand. It gives the hunter the advantage of height and silence; big advantages when hunting with bows. It keeps the hunter's scent from drifting as easily to wildlife. It does have some drawbacks. Once you are in a treestand you can't move around to get a better shot.

The biggest hazard of a treestand is an accidental fall. Hunters have to climb a tree to get into their stand. They also have to get their firearm or archery equipment up the tree. Once there, they have to perch on a narrow seat or ledge. These are all situations that can get hunters into trouble if they are not careful. Hunters have slipped and fallen, strangled on gun slings, landed on arrows or triggered a firearm unintentionally. Even a fall from a short distance can result in broken bones, paralysis or death.

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*Set up your treestand at ground level the first time you use it so that you'll know how to install it before you climb a tree.*



## Treestand Safety Rules

**ALWAYS** wear a full body harness meeting Treestand Manufacturers Association standards even during ascent and descent. Do not rely on belt or chest harnesses. Failure to use a full body harness could result in serious injury or death.

**ALWAYS** read and understand the manufacturer's warnings and instructions before using the treestand each season. Practice with the treestand at ground level prior to using at elevated positions.

Keep the manufacturer's warnings and instructions for later review as needed, for instructions on usage to anyone borrowing your stand, or to pass on when selling the treestand. Use all safety devices provided with your treestand.

**NEVER** exceed the weight limit specified by the manufacturer. If you have any questions after reviewing the warnings and instructions, please contact the manufacturer. Always wear a safety harness!

**ALWAYS** inspect the treestand for signs of wear or damage before each use. Contact the manufacturer for replacement parts. Destroy all products that cannot be repaired by the manufacturer and/or exceed the recommended expiration date, or if the manufacturer no longer exists. The full body harness should be discarded and replaced after a fall has occurred.

**ALWAYS** practice in your full body harness in the presence of a responsible adult, learning what it feels like to hang suspended in it at ground level.

**ALWAYS** attach your full body harness in the manner and method described by the manufacturer. There should be no slack in the tether when seated. Failure to do so may result in suspension without the ability to recover into your treestand. Be aware of the hazards (suspension trauma) associated with full body harnesses and the fact that prolonged suspension in a harness may be fatal. Have a plan in place for rescue, including the use of cell phones or signal devices that may be easily reached and used while suspended. If rescue personnel cannot be notified, you must have a plan for recovery or escape. If you have to hang suspended for a period of time before help arrives, exercise your legs by pushing against the tree or doing any other form of continuous motion. Failure to recover in a timely manner could result in serious injury or death. If you do not have the ability to recover/escape, hunt from the ground.

**ALWAYS** hunt with a plan and if possible a buddy. Before you leave home, let others know your exact hunting location, when you plan to return and who is with you.

**ALWAYS** carry emergency signal devices such as a cell phone, walkie-talkie, whistle, signal flare, personal locator device and flashlight on your person at all times and within reach even while you are suspended in your full body harness. Watch for changing weather conditions. In the event of an accident, remain calm and seek help immediately.

**ALWAYS** select the proper tree for use with your treestand. Select a live straight tree that fits within the size limits recommended in your treestand's instructions. Do not climb or place a treestand against a leaning tree.

**Never** leave a treestand installed for more than two weeks since it could be damaged from changing weather conditions and/or from other factors not obvious with a visual inspection.

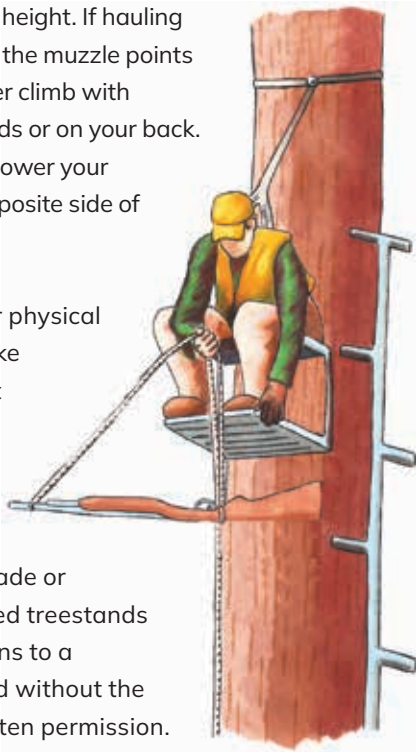
**ALWAYS** use a haul line to pull up your gear and unloaded firearm or bow to your treestand once you have reached

your desired hunting height. If hauling up a firearm, be sure the muzzle points away from you. Never climb with anything in your hands or on your back. Prior to descending, lower your equipment on the opposite side of the tree.

**ALWAYS** know your physical limitations. Don't take chances. If you start thinking about how high you are, don't go any higher.

**NEVER** use homemade or permanently elevated treestands or make modifications to a purchased treestand without the manufacturer's written permission. Only purchase and use treestands and full-body harnesses meeting or exceeding Treestand Manufacturers Association (TMA) standards. For a detailed list of certified products, contact the TMA office or refer to the TMA website [www.TMAstands.com](http://www.TMAstands.com).

**NEVER** hurry! Accidents can happen when climbing into and out of a treestand. While climbing with a treestand, make slow, even movements of no more than 10 to 12 inches at a time. Make sure you have proper contact with the tree and/or treestand every time you move. On ladder-type treestands, maintain three points of contact with each step. On hanging treestands always check the steps to make sure they are securely fastened.



## TO THE POINT

**Question:**

When should treestands and full body harnesses be checked for wear and damage?

**Answer:**

They should be checked before each use.

**Question:**

What two things should you do before using a treestand?

**Answer:**

Always inspect trees and check the steps to make sure they are securely fastened.

**Question:**

What should you wear when installing, removing or using a treestand?

**Answer:**

Use a full body harness from the time you leave the ground until you are back down.

**Question:**

What should you always wear when hunting from a treestand?

**Answer:**

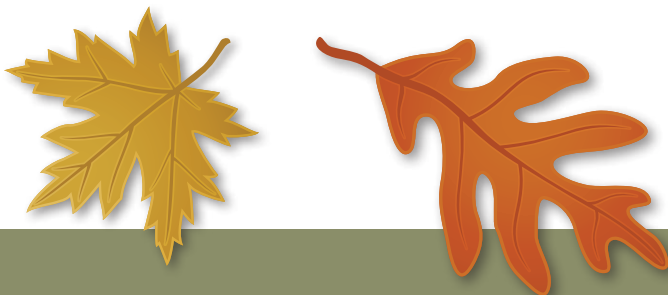
A full-body harness.

**Question:**

What should be used to get your bow or firearm into and out of your treestand?

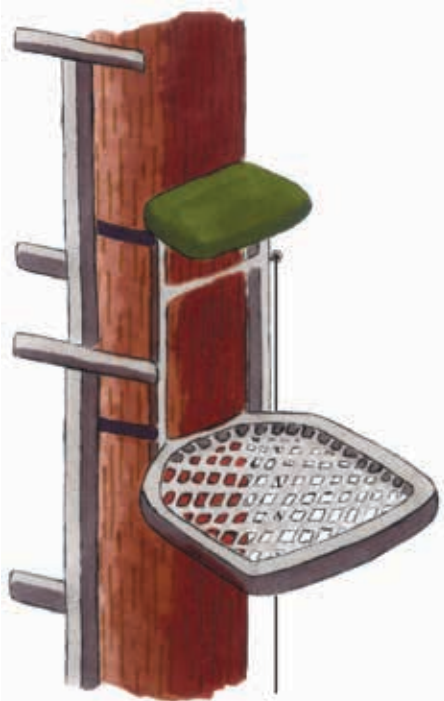
**Answer:**

A haul line.



## TYPES OF ELEVATED STANDS AND CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

There are five common types of elevated stands:

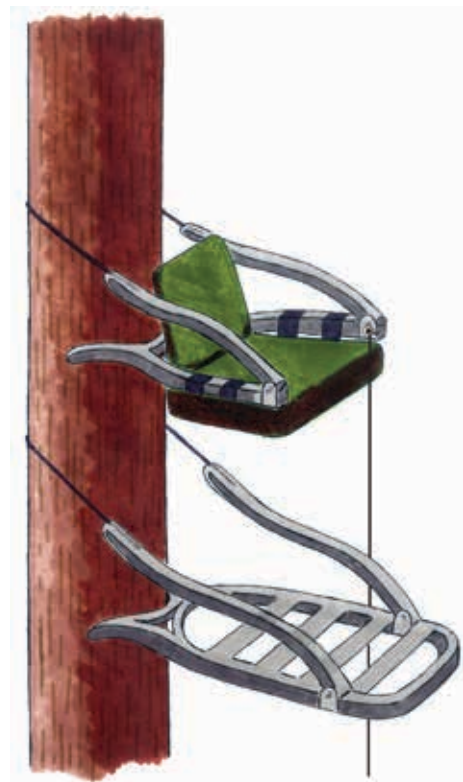


**Hang-on Stands** — Chained or strapped to trees. Inexpensive and light weight. May be difficult to place in a tree and a ladder may be required. Last step of climbing aid should be installed above platform.

**NO MATTER what type of stand you use, you need to CHECK IT FOR WEAR AND TEAR, such as broken welds, cracked boards, weak spots in the expanded metal, or frayed cables, etc. every time you get into the stand!!! Any kind of stand can be dangerous depending on how it's built, how it's maintained and how well you inspect it.**



**Ladder Stands** — Stands that use a ladder to reach the perch. These are often heavy and require at least two to three people to install or remove.



**Climbing Stands** — Moves up and down the tree with a series of stand up/sitdown motions. Can only be used on trees that are straight and have no lower branches.





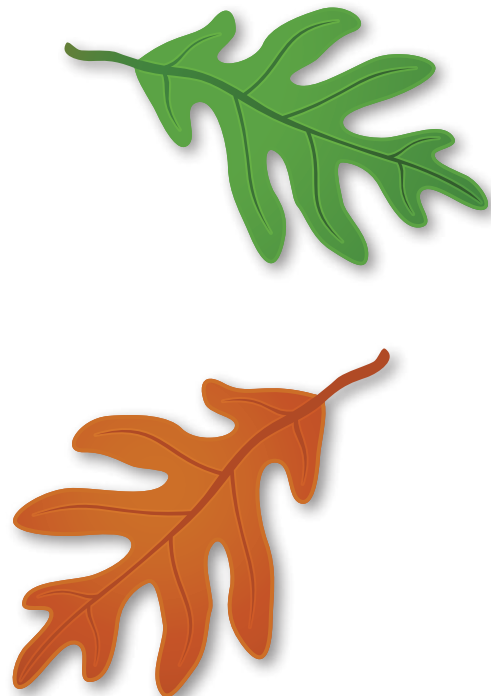
**Self-supporting Stands (Tripod Stands)** — Used when no trees are available. Needs to be erected on level ground.



**Homemade Permanent Stands in Trees** — Should never be used. Wood rots, trees grow and changing weather conditions can cause damage to the stand not seen by visual inspection. Permanent stands and screw-in steps are illegal on wildlife management areas.

### About Climbing Aids

Climbing aids are often used to reach a stand. There are many types; regular ladders attach with straps, chains or ropes, hang-on steps hang from the bottom or side of a stand, climbing “sticks” are portable ladders; and screw-in steps attach with screws into the wood of the tree. All climbing aids should be used with extreme care. A full body safety harness with climbing belt should **ALWAYS** be used when installing and climbing any type of ladder. Be sure you have the landowner’s permission to install a treestand, especially if you are using screw-in steps or treestand that may damage the tree. Carefully inspect the treestand and climbing aid before each use. What may have been safe from the last hunt may not be safe today.





U.S. COAST GUARD PHOTO

*Always wear a Personal Flotation Device while you are in a boat.*

## WATER SAFETY

### OBJECTIVE 11

#### Boating

Hunters that use boats often think of boating and boat safety as secondary to their primary pursuit. You should keep in mind that safety starts long before you start hunting when boats are involved.

- Do not overload your boat.
- Keep the center of gravity low.
- Always wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD) while you are in the boat.
- Stay with your vessel if it capsizes.
- Carry dry clothes in a waterproof sack.
- Take a boating safety course.
- Follow boating laws.

#### Hypothermia

Hypothermia is one of the biggest dangers to hunters during bad weather or near water. Hypothermia occurs when you get too cold for too long and your body's internal temperature drops. A person does not have to fall completely into water to get hypothermia. Just getting sweaty dampens clothing enough to allow the body to chill.

#### Hypothermia symptoms include:

- Shivering (although, at extremely low body temperatures, shivering may stop).
- Weakness and loss of coordination.
- Confusion.
- Pale skin.
- Drowsiness — especially in more severe stages.
- Slowed breathing or heart rate.

#### Hypothermia can even be fatal.

- Treat mild hypothermia by getting into a warm and dry area and away from wind and wet conditions as soon as possible. If you do get wet,
- Change wet clothing for windproof, waterproof gear.
- Add heat – if safe, start a fire.
- Increase exercise, if possible.
- Get into a pre-warmed sleeping bag or blanket.
- Drink hot drinks, followed by candy or other high-sugar foods.
- Apply heat to neck, armpits and groin.

#### Dress

- To avoid hypothermia do not wear cotton.
- Wear layers of wool or synthetic clothing.
- Wear a windproof/waterproof outershell.

## Personal Flotation Devices (PFD)

Every hunter who is on the water should wear a personal flotation device regardless whether he or she knows how to swim. Children and non-swimmers should always wear them when near water.

If you do fall into the water while hunting, conserve your body heat by keeping your arms as tight to your chest as possible. Your legs should also be together and as near your torso as you can get them. If you fall into the water with another hunter huddle together to conserve heat. Even the best swimmer can chill quickly and develop hypothermia in cold water.



Remember, victims of mild to moderate hypothermia may be suffering from impaired judgment and may not be making rational decisions. They might be more prone to accidents. If you are a victim of mild to moderate hypothermia, be extra cautious! Don't make a bad situation worse!

Hunters should also be mindful of weather forecasts and consider the needs and safety of all members of their hunting party, including both people and hunting dogs.

## TO THE POINT

### Question:

What should you wear to avoid hypothermia?

### Answer:

You should wear layers of clothing.

## Review

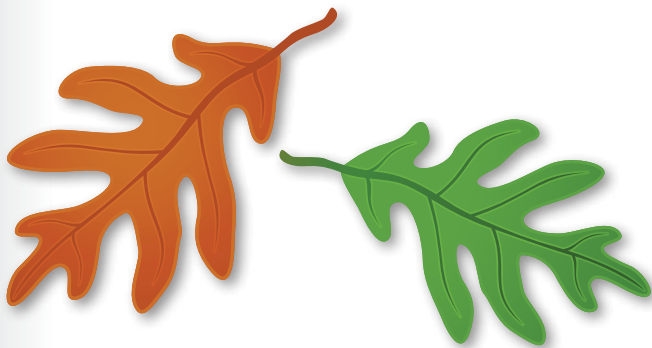
- Safely load and unload a firearm. Firearms should be kept unloaded unless they are in use.
- Five methods of carrying firearms: two-handed, cradle, elbows/side, trail, shoulder carry.
- When two hunters need to cross a fence, both hunters unload their firearms and one hunter holds the firearms while the other hunter crosses the fence. Then the firearms are handed over the fence.
- The area into which a hunter may shoot safely is referred to as a “zone of fire.” When three hunters are hunting in a line and a gamebird flies up behind them — NO ONE SHOOTS IT!
- The biggest safety hazard when using tree stands is falling. You should always:
  1. Wear a full-body harness
  2. Follow manufacturer's instructions
  3. Inspect treestands and fall-arrest systems for signs of wear.
- Hypothermia occurs when you get too cold for too long and your body's internal temperature drops. The first symptom of hypothermia is shivering.



# FIELD GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE

## IDENTIFYING OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE

Not properly identifying an animal before you shoot it can result in not only hunting fines or the suspension of your license but can also severely damage public support for hunting. A hunter who isn't cautious about what he or she shoots is a dangerous hunter and an unethical one.



## TO THE POINT



**Question:**

What is this a picture of?

**Answer:**

A whitetail deer.

## LARGE MAMMALS



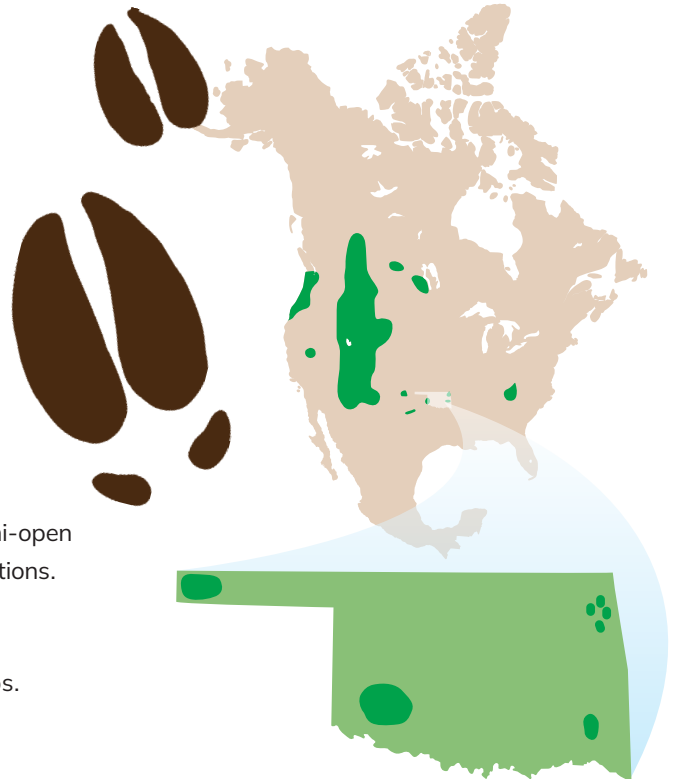
### Elk

**Habitat**

Mountainous areas ranging from dense coastal forest to semi-open interior forest. In spring and summer they prefer higher elevations.

**Size**

4 to 5 ft. high at the shoulder. Males weigh 580 to 1,000 lbs. Females are smaller at 420 to 600 lbs.



WILDLIFEDEPARTMENT.COM



## Whitetail Deer

### Habitat

Found across most of North America, except in northern Canada and far west United States. Prefers forests, valley bottoms and farmland. Often found along streams and rivers.

### Size

About 3 ft. high at shoulder. Weighs 150 to 225 lbs. Generally smaller than mule deer and bigger than black-tailed deer.



JEREMIAH ZURENDA



## Mule Deer

### Habitat

Lives in a wide variety of areas such as coniferous forests, desert shrubland, grassland with shrubs and the mixed boreal forests of the north. Favors openings in these areas, browsing on shrubs and twigs (and grass and herbs at times).

### Size

3 ft. high at shoulder. Bucks (males) weigh up to 405 lbs.; does (females) up to 160 lbs.



# FIELD GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE

JEREMIAH ZURENDA



## Pronghorn Antelope

### Habitat

Grasslands; also grassy brushlands; and bunchgrass-sagebrush areas.

### Size

3 ft. high at shoulder. Males weigh up to 140 lbs.; females weigh up to 105 lbs.



DESIREE BRANSON CLINE/READERS' PHOTO SHOWCASE 2021



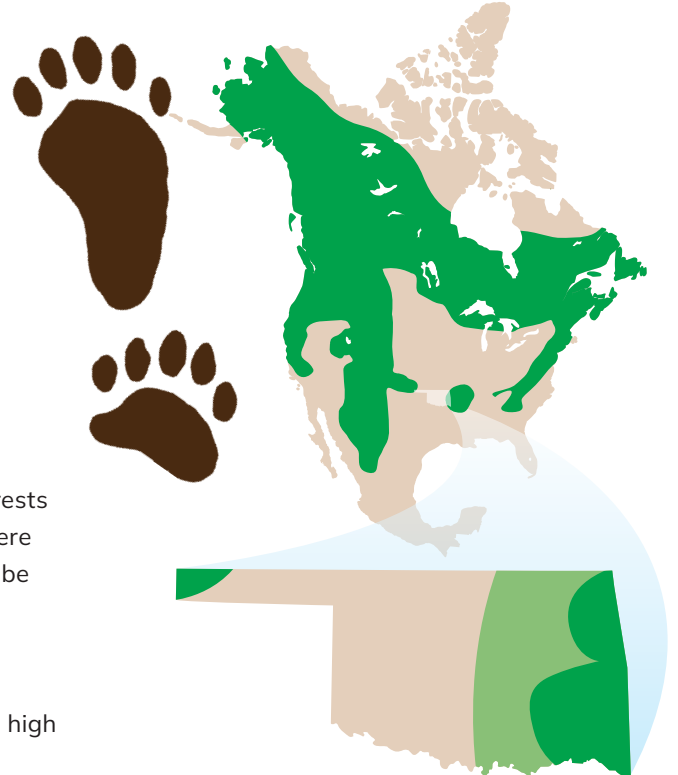
## Black Bear

### Habitat

From coastal beaches and estuaries to dry grasslands, forests and sub-alpine and alpine areas. Prefers open forests where dense thickets of timber provide cover and seclusion. May be found in or near suburban areas.

### Size

5 to 6 ft. high when standing on its hind legs. 2 to 3-1/2 ft. high at the shoulder. Weighs 200 to 475 lbs. or more.



WARREN WILLIAMS



## Mountain Lion

### Habitat

Prefers mature and second-growth forests in rocky and mountainous terrain.

### Size

26 to 30 in. high at shoulder. About 6 to 7 ft. long (including 3 ft. tail). Weighs 100 to 200 lbs. Females are smaller than males.



## MEDIUM TO SMALL MAMMALS

DAVID STROZDAS/READERS PHOTO SHOWCASE 2019



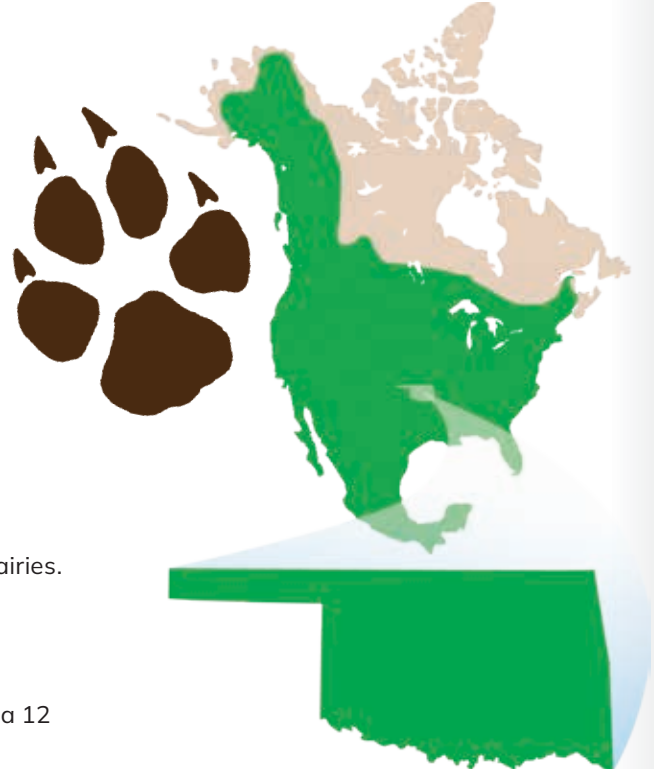
## Coyote

### Habitat

Mountainous areas ranging from dense coastal forest to prairies. In spring and summer they prefer higher elevations.

### Size

23 to 26 in. high at the shoulder. 39 to 55 in. long, including a 12 to 18 in. tail. Weighs 20 to 50 lbs.



FIELD GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING  
OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE

DWAYNE KEAR/READERS PHOTO SHOWCASE 2018



## Bobcat

**Habitat**

Prefers open brushland or semi-wooded country. Inhabits from valley bottoms to timberline, though generally found in mixed cover at lower elevations.

**Size**

Up to 22 in. high at the shoulder. 25 to 30 in. long not including tail. Tail length is approximately 5 in. Weighs 15 to 35 lbs.



SHEWAN L. BARR/READERS PHOTO SHOWCASE 2017



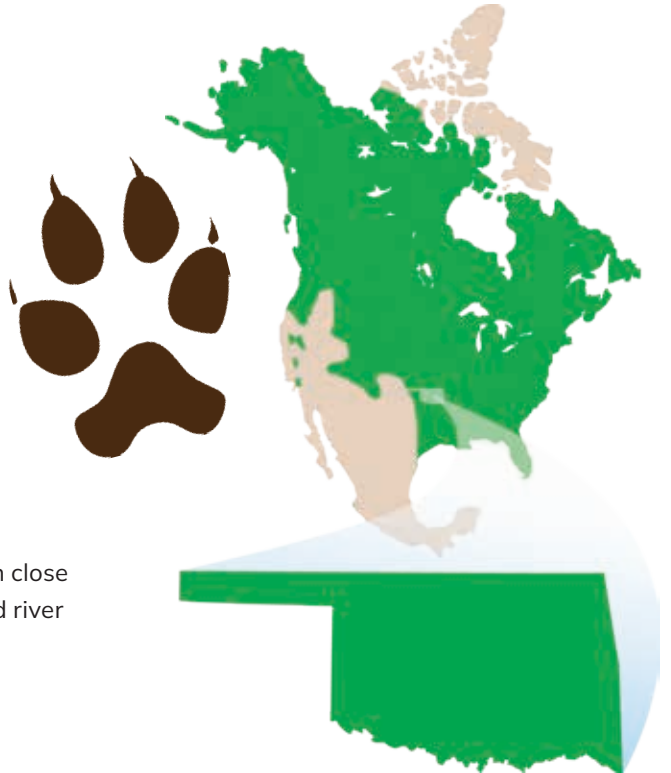
## Red Fox

**Habitat**

Very adaptable to living in almost any environment — even close to humans. Often inhabits the edges of parklands, lake and river shores, logged areas and farmland.

**Size**

15 to 16 in. high at the shoulder. Weighs 7 to 15 lbs.





TERRY BRUNHOLTZ/READERS PHOTO SHOWCASE 2018



## Gray Fox

### Habitat

Varied, more often in wooded and brushy habitats than red fox.

### Size

15 to 16 in. high at the shoulder. Weighs 8 to 15 lbs.



DEANNA CAGLE/READERS PHOTO SHOWCASE 2015



## Raccoon

### Habitat

Along waterways near forests or rocky banks. Nocturnal and omnivorous. Frequently dunks food in water before eating. Dens in hollows of trees, logs or ground burrows and rock crevices.

### Size

18 to 28 in. long not including tail. Tail length is up to 12 in.  
Weighs 11 to 35 lbs.



# FIELD GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE

## UPLAND GAME BIRDS



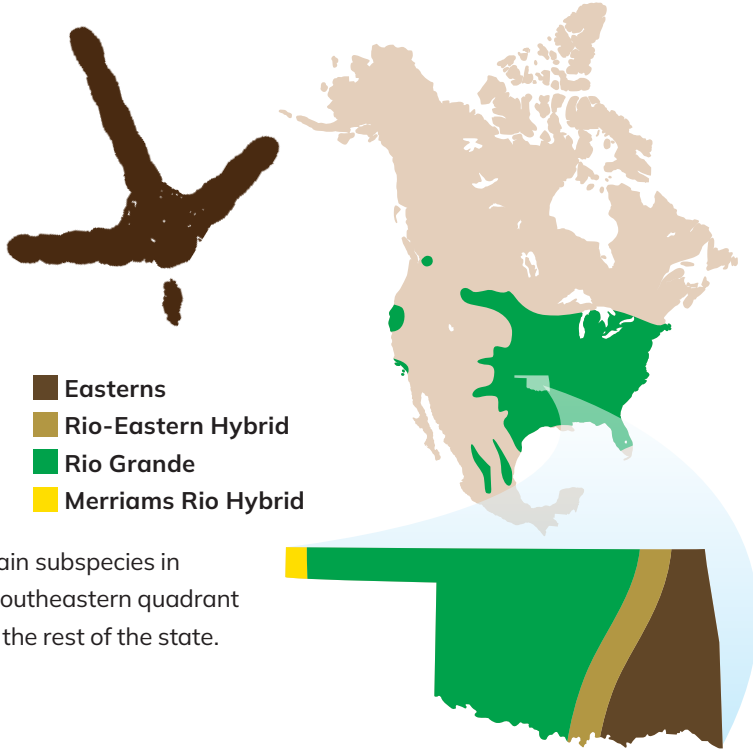
### Wild Turkey

#### Habitat

Oak woodlands, pine-oak forests. The two main subspecies in Oklahoma are the Eastern wild turkey in the southeastern quadrant of the state and the Rio Grande wild turkey in the rest of the state.

#### Size

37 to 46 in. high. Weighs 17 to 28 lbs.



### Scaled Quail

#### Habitat

Dry grasslands and brushy deserts.

#### Size

10 to 12 in. long. Weighs 6 to 8 oz.



JEREMIAH ZURENDA



## Bobwhite Quail

### Habitat

Farmland areas, open brushy country, roadsides and forest edge. Prefers open forests, grasslands, pastures, meadows and shrub cover.

### Size

8.5 to 10.5 in. high. Weighs 6 to 8 oz.



DAVE AND STEVE MASLOWSKI



## Ring-necked Pheasant

### Habitat

Farmlands, pastures, and grassy woodland edges. Although successful in most grassland habitats, this species is most commonly found in the central plains.

### Size

Male 33 in. high; female 21 in. high. Weighs 2 to 3 lbs.



# FIELD GUIDE TO IDENTIFYING OKLAHOMA WILDLIFE

## MIGRATORY BIRDS

JOHN THORNTON/READERS' PHOTO SHOWCASE 2015



### Mourning Dove

#### Habitat

Open lands including prairies and open forest as well as suburban areas.

#### Size

10 to 12 in. high. Weighs 4 to 6 oz.



One of the main concerns of new and experienced waterfowl hunters alike is correct identification. While it might seem like a hard skill to develop, there are a few simple things you can do to improve your identification skills. Go with an experienced waterfowl hunter, study a waterfowl I.D. guide or practice by watching waterfowl when not hunting.

TOM MARTINEAU / WWW.THEBRAWNSPIRIT.COM



### Canada Goose

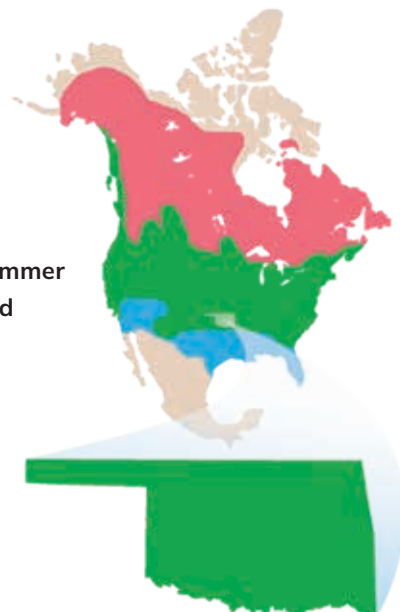
#### Habitat

Near water, grassy fields, and grain fields.

#### Size

30 to 44 in. long. Weighs 7 to 20 lbs.

■ Spring/Summer  
■ Year-round  
■ Winter



TOM MARTINEAU / WWW.THEKAWSPRINT.COM

Male



Female



## Mallard

### Habitat

Grasslands areas around a pond or small lake with lots of reeds or marshy areas.

### Size

24 to 28 in. long. Weighs 2.5 to 3 lbs.

## Sandhill Crane

Large, wading bird with long black legs, long neck and black, chisel-shaped beak.

### Habitat

The lesser sandhill crane subspecies is migratory and can be found during winter in the south-central United States and Mexico.

### Size

4 ft. tall. Wingspan 6 ft. Weighs 8-11 lbs.



MIKE ENDRES



## Whooping Crane

Large crane with red markings on its face and crown and black feathers on the end of each wing. Whooping cranes are a protected species, and it is illegal to hunt or shoot them.

### Habitat

Whooping cranes most commonly migrate through the western half of the state.

### Size

5 ft. tall. Wingspan 7.5 ft. Weighs 15 lbs.

# GAME CARE

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

BLAKE PODCHAJSKY



## FIELD DRESSING AND THE CARE OF GAME

Ethical and responsible hunters:

- Know the laws and use legal and ethical methods of hunting.
- Never waste game and properly care for game meat.
- Tag and check in game if required.

## THE HUNT: ONE SHOT HARVESTS

The hunter is responsible for proper care and use of a harvested game animal. Proper care starts with the first shot. Responsible hunters strive for clean, one-shot harvests.

How you hunt an animal and how you immediately care for it affects the taste of the meat. An animal that is shot while resting will not have a gamey taste while an animal that is chased for a distance will secrete waste products into the muscles that affect the taste of the meat.

### Words to Know

**Game Care** – The process of taking care of the meat immediately after an animal has been harvested.

**Field Dressing** – A method of cleaning a dead animal to preserve the meat.

**Carcass** – Body of a dead animal.

**Entrails** – Waste products left over from field dressing.

**Agging Meat** – A method of tenderizing meat.



# GAME CARE

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### AFTER THE HARVEST

#### OBJECTIVE 1



Once a deer, elk, antelope, bear or turkey has been harvested, you must tag it immediately with name, customer ID number, and date and time of harvest. You should also make sure that evidence of sex and species of animal is clearly attached and evident. Game wardens will want to know the species and sex of both birds and animals that you shoot.

Once you've tagged the animal, you need to do two things quickly to prevent the meat from spoiling – field dress it and cool the meat.

Field dressing is simply removing the entrails. It prevents the meat from absorbing waste products from the body cavity organs. Three environmental factors affect the taste of your meat: temperature, dirt and moisture. Meat that has been kept cool, dry and clean tastes better than meat that has been allowed to get warm, wet and tainted with dirt.

### CARE OF THE CARCASS

#### OBJECTIVE 2

Meat should be kept cool by:

- Keeping it in the shade.
- Keeping it in moving air or a breeze.
- Hanging it from a tree or post.

Never transport carcasses of large animals on the hood of a vehicle. The heat will spoil the meat. Hunters need support from the public. An animal's carcass in plain view can offend non-hunters. Cover it with canvas or place it in a closed area inside the vehicle. Always be responsible and thoughtful of the opinions of others.

Meat should be kept dry by:

- Immediate field dressing.
- Wiping off excess blood or fluids.

Meat should be kept clean by:

- Not allowing meat to be dragged through dirt.
- Covering with a cheesecloth.

## TO THE POINT

#### Question:

Who is responsible for the proper care and use of a harvested game animal?

#### Answer:

The hunter who harvested it.

#### Question:

When should deer, elk, antelope, bear and turkey be tagged?

#### Answer:

Immediately after being harvested.

# GAME CARE

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### FIELD DRESSING

#### OBJECTIVE 3

Field dress wildlife immediately. The extra time spent taking care of the meat will pay off when it comes time to make a meal from that meat. Field dressing can be messy so remove any heavy coats and roll up your sleeves.

Disposable vinyl or latex gloves lessen the chances of catching infectious diseases and make hand cleaning easier.

Blood and digestive juices from organs possibly penetrated by the shot must be removed from the body cavity quickly. Organs deteriorate rapidly so remove them quickly. The faster they are removed, the faster the meat will cool and the better it will be preserved. Field dressing will eliminate quite a bit of weight so it is better to field dress the animal before you transport it.

Remember that it is important to keep dirt and foreign objects away from the exposed body cavity. Removing the scent glands is not considered necessary but if you wish to do so, be careful as they can taint the meat if broken or smeared on the carcass.



JERRY SHAW

### Basic Field Dressing Tools

Perhaps the most important tools you can carry for field dressing are a sharp knife and a good sharpener. These will be the primary implements you use for skinning and cleaning carcasses. Other tools you might include in your field dressing bag are:

- A small axe or saw for cutting through bone.
- Rope for tying the carcass together or dragging it.
- Latex or rubber gloves.

### Steps in Field Dressing

Roll the deer carcass over on its back with the rump lower than the shoulders and spread the hind legs. Make a cut along the center line of belly from breastbone to base of tail. First cut through the hide, then through belly muscle. Avoid cutting into the paunch and intestines by holding them away from the knife with the free hand, while guiding the knife with the other.

Unless the deer head will be mounted, the cut should pass through the sternum and extend up the neck to the chin to allow removal of as much of the windpipe as possible.



JERRY SHAW



# GAME CARE

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION



With a small sharp knife, cut around the anus and draw it into the body cavity, so it comes free with the complete intestines. In doing this, avoid cutting or breaking the bladder. Loosen and roll out the stomach and intestines. Split the pelvic bone to hasten cooling.



Cut around the edge of the diaphragm, which separates the chest and stomach cavities, and split the breastbone. Then, reach forward to cut the windpipe and gullet ahead of the lungs. This should allow you to pull the lungs and heart from the chest cavity. Drain excess blood from the body cavity by turning the body belly down or hanging animal head down. Prop the body cavity open with a stick to allow better air circulation and faster cooling.

A clean cloth may be useful to clean your hands. If you puncture the entrails with a bullet or your knife, wipe the body cavity as clean as possible or flush with water and dry with a cloth. Don't use water to wash out the body cavity unless the paunch or intestines are badly damaged.

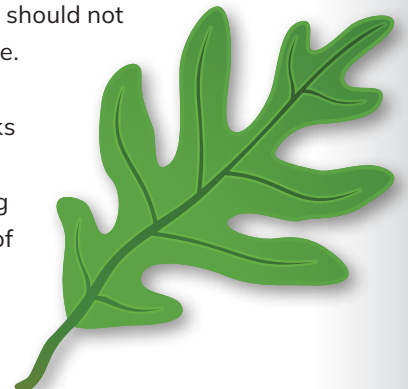
Part of the satisfaction of the hunt comes with making a clean kill and in doing a neat job of field dressing your deer. Veteran hunters may have variations in the steps of field dressing. The important points are to remove the internal organs immediately without contaminating the body cavity with dirt, hair, or contents of the digestive tract and to drain all excess blood from the body cavity.

All parts damaged by gunshot should be trimmed away. If the weather is warm or if the deer is to be left in the field for a day or more, it may be skinned, except for the head, and washed clean of dirt and hair. It should be placed in a shroud sack or wrapped with porous cloth to cool (cheesecloth is ideal). The cloth covering should be porous enough to allow air circulation but firmly woven enough to give good protection from insects and dirt. Adequate cooling may take six hours or more, depending on weather conditions.

## AGING THE MEAT

Age the deer carcass in a cool, dry place. Aging of a well-cared-for carcass at correct temperatures yields better flavored, more tender meat. Best results are obtained in a near-constant temperature, preferably from 34 to 36 degrees Fahrenheit. Since it is rarely that cold in Oklahoma, hunters should not age their carcasses outside.

Aging for one to two weeks is about right for the best quality venison, depending on the age and condition of the animal.



# GAME CARE

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION



COLIN BERG

## DISPOSAL OF ENTRAILS AND CARCASSES

### OBJECTIVE 4

The Oklahoma carcass disposal regulation is: No person may dump the carcass of any dead animal in any well, spring, pond or stream of water or leave it within 1/4 mile of any occupied dwelling or public highway without burying the carcass in an appropriate manner where it is not liable to become exposed through erosion of the soil or where such land is subject to overflow.

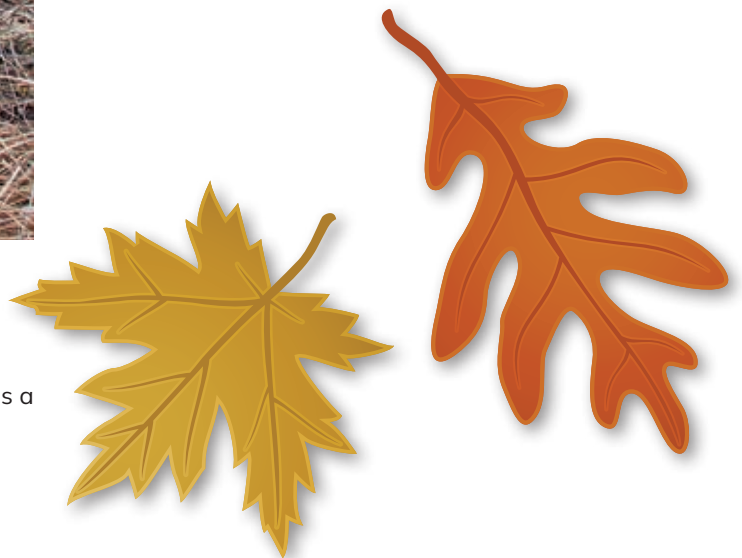
Other states may have different laws about how you should dispose of the unused parts of a game animal. Never leave the waste remains out where other people may see them. Remember that the land you hunt is often used for other purposes. Many people will be offended if they find the unused parts of a game animal.

Careless behaviors such as this can result in poor public opinion of hunting and end up damaging the sport and hurting your opportunities to participate in the future. Be aware of your actions, how they affect others, and how they affect the sport.

## APPRECIATE THE GIFT!

Never forget to appreciate the gift! Hunting an animal is a great privilege that can be immensely rewarding.

A responsible hunter never forgets to give back when opportunities arise.



# GAME CARE

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### Review:

- Tag your deer, elk, antelope, bear or turkey immediately with name, license number, date and time of harvest.
- A sharp knife and a good sharpener are perhaps the most important tools for field dressing. Rope, gloves and a game bag are handy to have in the field.
- Prevent the meat from spoiling by immediately field dressing the animal and keeping the meat cool and dry.
- Field dressing a carcass immediately helps preserve the meat. Organs deteriorate rapidly so remove them quickly. The faster they are removed, the faster the meat will cool and the better it will be preserved.
- Dispose of animal carcasses in a manner consistent with state law. Never leave waste remains out where other people can see them.



RUSSELL A. GRAVES

## BOWHUNTING

### OBJECTIVE 1

Bowhunting is one of the oldest hunting methods. It was the main form of hunting until firearms were invented in the 14th century. Bowhunting is growing in popularity in Oklahoma.

Bowhunting requires concentration and patience. It is not a method of hunting that you can learn in a day or two. Making accurate shots with a bow takes much practice. In fact, practice is perhaps one of the main things you need to do to be a successful bowhunter. There are both classes and groups that offer instruction in the proper methods of bowhunting and a wise hunter will take advantage of all the instruction he or she can receive.

### Why Do People Bowhunt?

People bowhunt for several reasons. It gives them a sense of history. After all, it is one of the oldest hunting methods. It also can be a personal challenge to master the skills of a good bowhunter.

### What Do You Need To Bowhunt?

A good pro shop that specializes in bow hunting will set you up with equipment that is right for you. You must feel comfortable with your bow, how it feels in your hand and how it draws. Remember, no matter how good your equipment, it's only as good as you are so practice, practice, practice.

### Judging Distance

To become a good archer you must practice and develop the skill of judging distance. In order to place an arrow within the kill zone of Oklahoma's big game animals, you must judge the distance accurately.

The easiest way to judge distance is to carry a rangefinder with you while bowhunting. Otherwise it requires a lot of time and practice. You can develop your range finding skills by either joining a 3D archery club or working with a friend who will place 3D targets for you and let you practice judging their distance. Knowing your hunting area and the distance of different landmarks from your stand also helps.

### Words to Know

#### Bow

**Longbow** – One of the first bows invented. It's little more than a slim stick with a string.

**Recurve** – A shorter bow with recurved limbs that allow it to shoot as powerfully as a long bow.

**Crossbow** – A recurve or compound bow mounted on a rifle stock. String is held back by the bow requiring less movement when game approaches.

**Compound** – A modern bow designed to allow an archer to hold their bow at full draw with less force.

#### Arrow

**Field tips** – Narrow arrow tips used for target shooting and hunting small game.

**Broadheads** – Wide, razor sharp tips used for hunting large game and turkey.

**Covered quiver** – A case that safely holds and carries arrows.

Tip

Shaft



### Equipment needed:

- A good bow
- Arrows and razor sharp broadheads
- Finger protection and/or release equipment
- A covered quiver to keep broadheads from cutting the hunter



### Matching Equipment

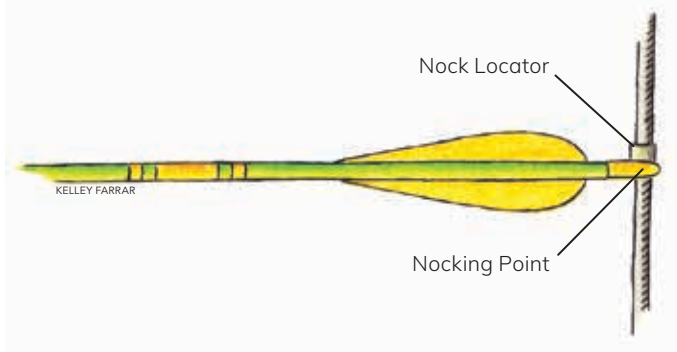
Equipment must be matched to the needs of the hunter. A bow should match the drawing ability of the hunter as well as the game being hunted.

You should have an experienced bowhunting specialist help you pick the bow that best meets your skill and strength.

### Matching Arrows

Arrows should be matched to the bow and the hunter in stiffness (spine) and length.

Arrows should match each other. Not all arrows fly the same or have the same range in flight.



## TO THE POINT

### Question:

What piece of equipment protects the hunter and other people from contact with broadheads?

### Answer:

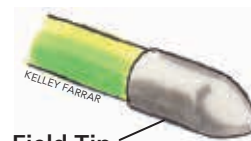
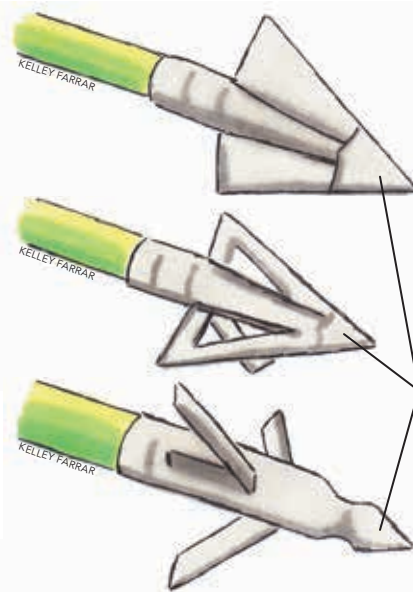
A covered quiver.

### Question:

What is one of the skills should you develop to become a good archer?

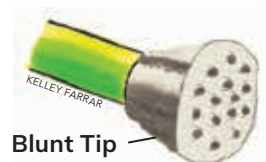
### Answer:

Judging distance.



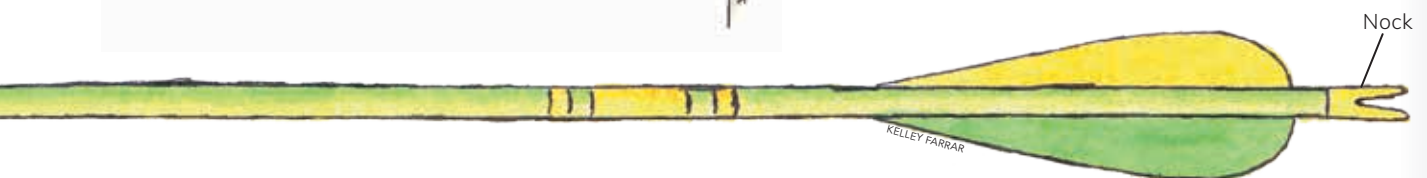
### Field Tip

used for target practice and small game.



### Blunt Tip

used for hunting small game.



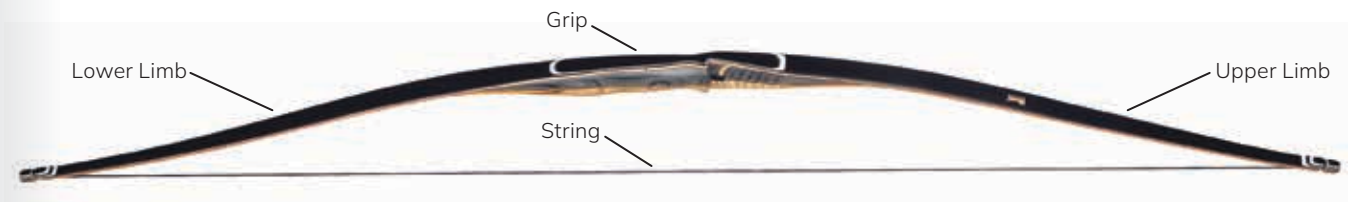
## FOUR MAIN TYPES OF BOWS

### OBJECTIVE 2

In modern times, the recurve and compound bows dominate for sport and hunting practices. Newer materials, including flexible plastics, fiberglass, and carbon fibers, have led to increases in range and projectile velocity.

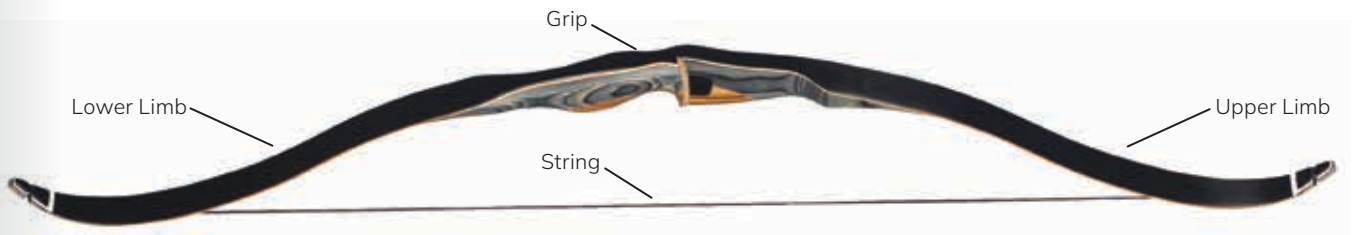
### Long Bow

Sometimes called a “Stick Bow” — the traditional bow. Usually straight until the string is attached. The bow curve and power is dependent on how far the string is pulled.



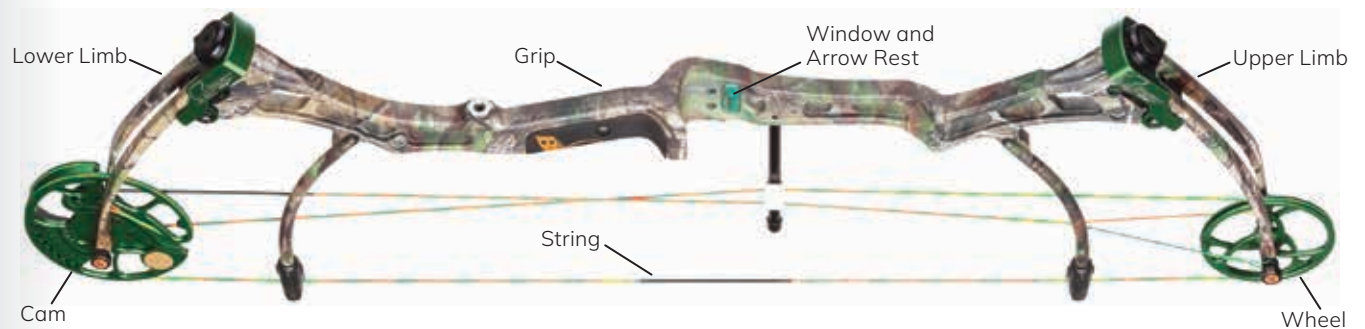
### Recurve

A stick bow that curves at the ends. Smooth and quiet when shooting, a recurve has more power and is shorter than a long bow.



### Compound

Most popular bow for hunting. Uses cables and pulleys to provide more power with less effort than pulling a long bow.



### Crossbow

Short, compound or stick bows mounted on a stock so they can be aimed, cocked and fired.



#### Crossbow Safety Tips

- Always carry a crossbow in the uncocked position to prevent unintentional firing.
- Always hold a crossbow with a two-handed carry and pointed in a safe direction.
- Always keep your fingers below the rail.
- Always treat a crossbow the same as you would a loaded firearm, making sure to keep it pointed in a safe direction. In most cases, the only way to uncock a crossbow is to fire the loaded bolt.
- Always engage the safety, and keep your finger off of the trigger until you are ready to pull the trigger.
- Never aim at something you don't intend to shoot.
- Never pull the trigger without a properly loaded bolt, This can cause a dry fire that can damage the crossbow and/or injure the archer.

#### Review

- Blunts, field tips and broadheads are three types of points commonly used in the field.
- Arrows should be matched to the bow and to the hunter. They should also be matched to each other.
- Recurve and compound bows are most popular for sport and hunting.
- The long bow, recurve, compound and crossbow are the four types of bows.

# HUNTING WITH MUZZLELOADERS

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION

### MUZZLELOADERS

Hunting with equipment other than modern firearms can be both exciting and challenging. A hunter can find that a special style of hunting game provides a sense of personal satisfaction.

Muzzleloaders were originally developed in the 14th century. Over the years they became more refined but they were finally replaced by the modern firearm.

Muzzleloaders are loaded directly through the muzzle of the firearm. Their range is less than a modern rifle, so making a clean shot with a muzzleloader is a challenge to the hunter. He or she must get close enough to hit a vital area.

People like the challenge of hunting with a muzzleloader as well as the sense of heritage that comes with using such a specialized, historical firearm. However, special precautions must be taken with both the firearm and the powder to ensure that the muzzleloader is safe to fire and to store.

### SAFETY COMES FIRST!

#### OBJECTIVE 1

Mastering hunting with a muzzleloader can be both exciting and challenging. Many hunters want to use historic guns in the field. However, old metal may not be strong enough to withstand the rigors of black powder explosions. Always consult a gunsmith before using any historic firearm.

Remember that black powder is an explosive. If not handled responsibly, it can be dangerous. Do not expose black powder to an open flame or store it anywhere there is a possibility of a spark.

### BLACK POWDER

#### OBJECTIVE 2

Smokeless powder is not safe to use in most muzzleloaders on the market. Check your owner's manual to find out which powder is safe to use in your muzzleloader. Most muzzleloaders use black powder or a synthetic powder. Both can be ignited from sparks, heat, impact, static electricity and even sunlight. When ignited, they burn hot and fast. They will not ignite when damp or wet. All gun powders need to be stored and handled safely. Store in correctly labeled original manufacturer's containers to prevent accidental ignition.

Black or synthetic powder is highly corrosive and will damage your muzzleloader if not cleaned with soap and water after every use.

These powders are ignited by using percussion caps that are coated on the inside with an explosive substance. These should be stored separately from gun powder.

#### Words to Know

**Muzzleloader** – Firearm that uses black powder and loads through the barrel.

**Black powder** – Combustible powder for firing a muzzleloader.

**Black powder substitute** – Replacement for black powder that is less sensitive, cleaner and more efficient.

**Percussion Caps** – Ignites black powder

**Ramrod** – Stiff rod used to load a muzzleloader.



## LOADING A MUZZLELOADER

### OBJECTIVE 3

Loading a muzzleloader should be done with great care. Black powder is an explosive. Always follow your owner's manual for the correct loading procedure.

The first thing you must do is to prove that the muzzleloader is unloaded. Check the barrel by inserting a marked ramrod. If empty, point the firearm in a safe direction and fire a cap. This will remove oil from the barrel and clear the flash point.

### Making the Marked Ramrod

You should always use a marked ramrod to prevent double loading and to make sure the bullet is firmly seated against the powder charge. To make a marked

ramrod, you should first determine the optimum powder charge and bullet for your muzzleloader. Consult your owner's manual for this step.

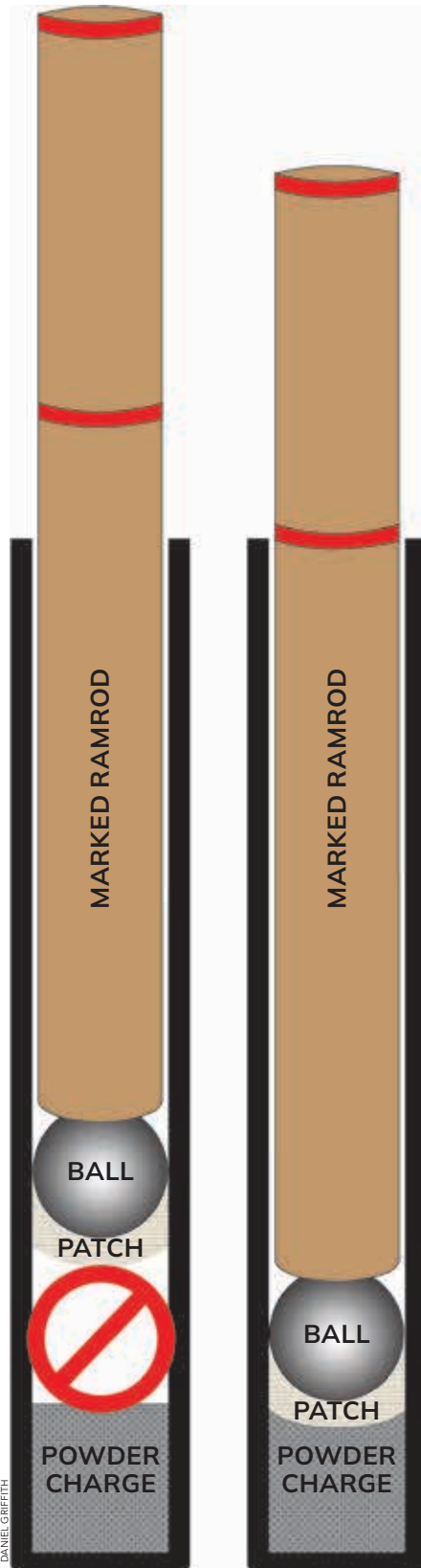
- Be certain the muzzleloader is unloaded.
- Put your ramrod down the barrel.
- Make a mark all the way around the ramrod where it comes out of the barrel.
- With your muzzleloader loaded, put your ramrod down the barrel.
- Make a mark all the way around the ramrod where it comes out of the barrel.
- Use the marked ramrod to determine whether or not the muzzleloader is loaded before loading.
- When loading, use the marked ramrod to make sure there is no air space between the bullet or shot and the powder.



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# HUNTING WITH MUZZLELOADERS

## OKLAHOMA HUNTER EDUCATION



### TO THE POINT

**Question:**

What should you use to find out if a muzzleloader is loaded?

**Answer:**

The marked ramrod.

**Question:**

Where should the bullet and patch be when a muzzleloader is properly loaded?

**Answer:**

Firmly seated against the powder.

#### Review

- Follow manufacturer's procedures and get help from a qualified instructor. Loading a muzzleloader should be done with great care. Always follow your owner's manual for the correct loading.
- Use a marked ramrod to find out if a muzzleloader is unloaded.
- Use a marked ramrod to make sure there is no air space between the bullet or shot and powder.
- Always consult a gunsmith before using any historic firearm.
- Do not expose gun powder to an open flame or store it anywhere there is a possibility of a spark.
- The two types of powder most commonly used in muzzleloaders are black powder and synthetic.

## SURVIVING BEING LOST

### OBJECTIVE 1

Enjoying the outdoors is one of the primary reasons why hunters love their sport. As with any sport, however, there are certain skills a person must know in order to be safe. One of these is how to survive if you get lost or are injured while hunting. While you may think you know the area you are hunting in, it's often very easy to get turned around or confused about your location. This can be dangerous if you aren't prepared.

### I'm Lost! Now What?

The most important thing to do when lost is to stop, don't panic and think before you act. As darkness nears, it is much more important to make a plan for staying warm and alive overnight than to try to find a way home. You must make a conscious decision to ignore your other obligations such as making it home in time for dinner or to work in the morning. Since Oklahoma has few remote wilderness areas, you will likely be found the next day.

When you are lost all you have to save yourself is what's in your survival kit and the clothes on your back. Therefore, survival starts before you go afield. You should bring a survival kit every time you go afield. The best survival kit will do you no good if it's left in your vehicle. It is also very important that you tell someone where you are going and when you will return. If you don't return at the right time, they can contact the authorities and launch a search party.

A person's attitude and emotional state can make all the difference in finding a way out of difficult situations. Stop, think and do not wander around. That is dangerous and can lead to disorientation and confusion. Lastly, plan on what to do next!

A rule of thumb is that a person can survive three minutes without air, three hours without shelter in severe weather, three days without water and three weeks without food.

Assuming you have not been injured and can breathe, you have time to plan how to get out of your situation.

You require more food and water when you use lots of energy. Also, tired people don't think as well. So, relax and think about your situation before you react.

As with any problem, the best way to solve it is to not have it happen in the first place. There are several things you can do to prevent yourself from getting lost.

The first thing is to know how to use a compass and map. A good topographic map shows all details of a terrain. It shows roads, rivers, hills, elevation, and even trees and bushes. You can obtain topographic maps of the area you are hunting in from several sources including the website [wildlifedepartment.com](http://wildlifedepartment.com) as well as bookstores. A map and a good compass can tell you exactly where you are.

### Survival Kit

A survival kit is a personal item that should be adjusted for your needs, the time of year and the activity in which you will engage. You should build, and carry, your own. There are some basic rules and items you should be aware of when putting one together. They should be lightweight and compact, while including the equipment you need to survive a night or two in the outdoors. Finally, the equipment must be reliable and in working order, and you must carry it each time you go afield.

#### Basic survival kits should contain:

- Shelter material
- Large, heavy duty, orange, plastic bag
- Parachute line

#### Fire Starting Materials

- Matches contained in a waterproof case
- Cigarette lighter
- Metal match with a scraper
- Vaseline saturated cotton balls in a waterproof container

**Signaling equipment**

- Whistle with a lanyard
- Glass, or good plastic, signal mirror with a lanyard
- Fluorescent plastic surveyors tape

**In addition to the basic three categories of equipment also consider the following equipment:**

- Additional clothing for warmth and protection from wind and wet
- Sturdy fixed or folding blade knife
- First Aid Kit
- Metal cup
- Flashlight with a headband and spare bulbs/batteries
- Food bars high in carbohydrate
- Water purification tablets
- Folding saw
- Compass
- Tube tent
- Plastic water bag

\* This survival kit is available for purchase from [outdoorsafe.com](http://outdoorsafe.com). See directions for use below. This suggested survival kit is reprinted with permission from [outdoorsafe.com](http://outdoorsafe.com).

Emergency blankets are not recommended because they can tear easily, are almost impossible to use if you are injured and they do not completely cover the user. We recommend instead carrying a large, heavy duty orange plastic bag.

**Directions for preparing and using a plastic bag as emergency shelter.**

1. Before going afield, cut a face-sized hole in the corner of the bag near the top seam.
2. To use, unfold bag and pull it over your body like a poncho.
3. Pull it completely around your body and with the opening around your face.

\* See illustration to the right.

**TO THE POINT****Question:**

What is the first thing you should do when you think you are lost?

**Answer:**

Stop, don't panic and think before you act.

**Question:**

What is the first symptom of hypothermia?

**Answer:**

Shivering.

**Review**

- When you think you are lost, stop, don't panic and think before you act.
- Survival starts before you go afield.
- Before going afield tell someone where you are going.
- Learn to use a map and compass.

**Seam**

Cut Here

**Opening**

## THE PITTMAN-ROBERTSON ACT

America is the home of large numbers and varieties of wild creatures. Yet, only a few decades ago, wildlife's survival was very much in doubt. Early settlers harvested an abundance of wildlife, wiping out some species and reducing others to just a fraction of their original numbers.

Because of this, congress passed the act known as the Pittman-Robertson Act. It was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on September 2, 1937. This act is now administered through the Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFRP).

Since then, numerous species have rebuilt their populations and extended their ranges far beyond what they were in the 1930's. Among them are the wild turkey, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, wood duck, beaver, black bear, giant Canada goose, American elk, desert bighorn sheep, bobcat, mountain lion and several species of predatory birds.

Federal Funding from the Office of Conservation Investment pays for up to 75 percent of project costs, with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation putting up at least 25 percent. A steady source of funding lets the ODWC make a lasting impact on species populations.

WSFRP funds are used to buy, develop, maintain and operate wildlife management areas. The ODWC manages more than a million acres for wildlife.

WSFRP has greatly aided in a nationwide effort to enlist science in the cause of wildlife conservation. About 26 percent of WSFRP funding to the States is used for surveys and research.

Surveys provide solid information on the numbers and activities of species, which helps biologists make management decisions. This includes season dates, bag limits, controlled burns, etc.

Research findings have enabled managers to keep wild creatures in balance with their environments and to permit more people to enjoy the wildlife without endangering the future of any species.

Although WSFRP is financed wholly by the sale of firearms, ammunition and archery equipment, its benefits cover a much larger number of people who never hunt but do enjoy such wildlife pastimes as birdwatching, nature photography, painting and sketching and a wide variety of other outdoor pursuits. Almost all the land in Oklahoma purchased with WSFRP money is managed both for wildlife production and other public uses.

Numerous non-game species enjoy WSFRP benefits, too. Ground cover for game birds is also used by all sorts of other birds and small animals. Bald eagles benefit significantly under careful management of forested areas where they typically nest. Fortunately, the WSFRP does not restrict use of funds to game species, but instead allows their use for any species of wild bird or mammal.

The ODWC began using WSFRP funds to run its hunter education program in 1973.



## TO THE POINT

**Question:**

The federal Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program which, along with hunting license fees, helps fund Wildlife Conservation in Oklahoma, is wholly financed by?

**Answer:**

Taxes on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment.



## OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The Wildlife Department is leading the way in education programs offered in schools across the state and directly to the public. Here's a look at our programs.

### Oklahoma National Archery in the Schools

Schools across the state are discovering an exciting program that hits the bullseye. Through the Oklahoma National Archery in the Schools (OKNASP) Program, students have the chance to excel today, tomorrow and throughout a lifetime in the unique sport of archery. Designed for 4th-12th graders, the curriculum covers archery history, safety, techniques, equipment, mental concentration and self-improvement. Over 700 Oklahoma schools are offering the OKNASP program as part of their regular classroom curriculum.

For more information contact:  
Kelly Boyer, [kelly.boyer@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:kelly.boyer@odwc.ok.gov) or (405) 919-1623

### Oklahoma Varsity Archery:

Oklahoma Varsity Archery is the newest program offered by the ODWC. Varsity Archery started in 2019 and

is a high school only (grades 9-12) advanced archery program designed to further young archer's knowledge of opportunities, skill set, and experiences in the sport of archery. By learning archery with more advanced equipment, Varsity Archery students will develop the proficiency and know how that will help to propel them towards becoming lifelong archers. To date Varsity Archery is offered in over 70 Oklahoma high schools and growing.

For more information contact: Kelly Boyer,  
[kelly.boyer@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:kelly.boyer@odwc.ok.gov) or (405) 919-1623

### Hunter Education

Hunter education covers a variety of topics including firearms safety, wildlife identification, wildlife conservation and management, survival, archery, muzzle loading and hunter responsibility. Hunter education certification is available to students 10 years of age or older as an in-person or online course. There are well over 350 Oklahoma schools offering hunter education as part of their in-school curriculum.

For more information contact: Lance Meek,  
[lance.meek@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:lance.meek@odwc.ok.gov) or (405) 919-2817

## Fishing in the Schools

The Department has operated an Aquatic Resources Education Program for over 25 years. The Department has also launched a program within Oklahoma Schools called Oklahoma Fishing in the Schools (OKFITS). Schools that are involved with the OKNASP program are eligible to receive training and a fishing equipment kit free of charge from the Department. Over 350 schools are now involved with the OKFITS program.

For more information contact:  
Shawn Gee, [shawn.gee@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:shawn.gee@odwc.ok.gov) or (918) 497-0189

## Explore Bowhunting

Explore Bowhunting is an educational program designed to teach students ages 11-17 the basic skills of bowhunting. The Archery Trade Association created this program. Through hands-on experiences students gain confidence interacting with the natural environment and strengthen their appreciation for wildlife and the woods. In 2013 Explore Bowfishing curriculum was added to the program. Nearly 350 Oklahoma schools that offer OKNASP and HE are also offering this very exciting program.

For more information contact:  
Kelly Boyer, [kelly.boyer@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:kelly.boyer@odwc.ok.gov) or (405) 919-1623

## Explore Bowfishing

In 2013 the Archery Trade Association's Explore Bowfishing curriculum was added to the suite of education programs offered to Oklahoma schools by the ODWC. Using both hands on and classroom based lessons, Explore Bowfishing covers a variety of topics that encompass the sport of bowfishing. Nearly 300 schools that offer OKNASP, OKFITS and Hunter Education also are offering this very exciting program.

For more information contact: Shawn Gee,  
[shawn.gee@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:shawn.gee@odwc.ok.gov) or (918) 497-0189

## Oklahoma Scholastic Shooting Sports Program (OKSSSP)

The ODWC recognizes that today's youth will be tomorrow's sportsmen. The OKSSSP is a High School trap-based shotgun program that is focused on providing a fun, safe environment for participating in shooting sports and reconnecting kids with the joy of being outdoors. The OKSSSP will raise awareness of conservation-related sports, promote safety and responsibility, and raise self-esteem. We conduct teacher trainings that teach basic shooting skills, trap-shooting basics, gun safety, how to get the kids started, etc. Over 200 schools are now involved with the OKSSSP program.

For more information contact: Damon Springer,  
[damon.springer@odwc.ok.gov](mailto:damon.springer@odwc.ok.gov) or (405) 317-6316



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