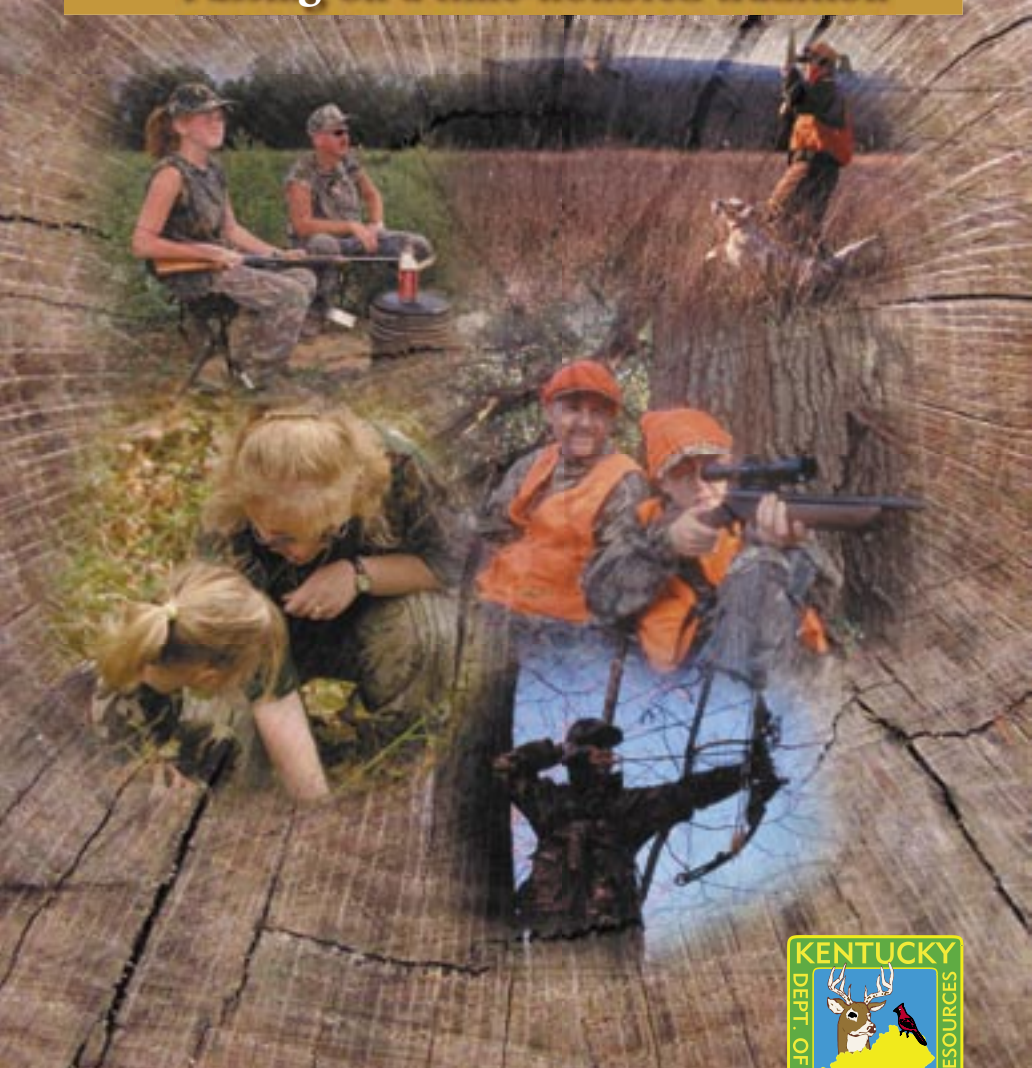


# BASIC HUNTING

Passing on a time-honored tradition



Kentucky Department of  
Fish and Wildlife Resources



From the Commissioner.

The North American Model of Wildlife Management depends on hunters. This model incorporates principles of conservation from the past 100 years and was formally adopted in 2002. Over the years the number of hunters has decreased. Fish and Wildlife agencies from across the nation view this as a major problem. Many factors contribute to this decline, including habitat loss, a growing urban population, and increased competition for leisure time. We do have one key element upon which we can rely: the people who enjoy the opportunity to step outside and enjoy shooting and hunting.

Kentucky's Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources has worked for several decades to give the shooter and hunter every possible opportunity. We have developed shooting ranges, assisted landowners in improving habitat, and enhanced the quality of the hunt for numerous species. In addition, we strive to provide Wildlife Management Areas for public use. In fact, the amount of land the department manages has more than doubled in the last 10 years.

You and your family and friends are essential to the future of hunting. Each new hunter must have consistent support to continue to grow and expand his or her interest. I think you will find this experience extremely rewarding for everyone involved. In a tribute to his father, Alan Jackson stated in a song about boating that it was "...a piece of my childhood that will never be forgotten." I feel your involvement in hunting with your friends and family will fall in that "special memory" category.



March 2005

# PREFACE

The purpose of this web site entry, to be followed by a printed version, is to stimulate families to begin or continue hunting as a time-honored family tradition.

The information presented here is intended to get a hunter started. There are many books written on how to hunt each species; a few are included as additional resources at the end of this publication. The species are presented in the order hunters would typically hunt them through the calendar year. A few hunted species are not included because of limited hunting participation.

First, we should honor those who came before us for their conservation ethic:

- Deer populations are at all time highs.
- Wild turkeys are now established in numbers that allow hunting in every county in Kentucky.
- Elk, missing from Kentucky for 150 years, have been reintroduced into southeast Kentucky, and the number of hunting permits is going up.
- Programs have been initiated to allow hunters on private lands for dove hunts.
- The habitat improvement and conservation reserve programs provide better habitat for all wildlife.
- Wetland protection has provided habitat for waterfowl and many other species.

None of this would have happened without foresight and enthusiastic support from early hunters and wildlife managers.

This publication would not have been possible without the help of the hunter education instructors or many staff members of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Particular thanks go to Dan Brewer and Lew Kornman for grouse hunting and Doug Travis for his waterfowl expertise. Tips for hunting, photos and recipes were contributed from every region of the state. I thank each contributor individually for his or her contribution.

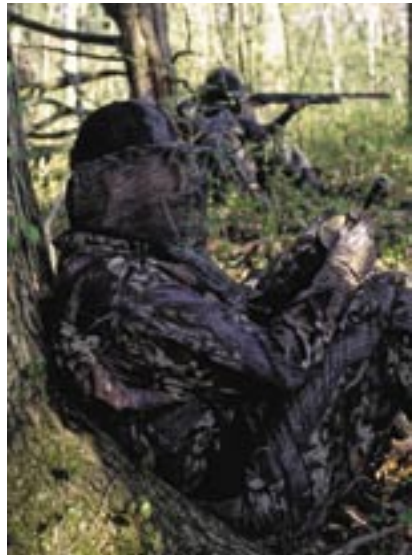
I also thank Rick Hill for his masterful artwork and John Boone for his computer assistance in preparing this document for publication.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .....	i
Introduction .....	1
Safety .....	2
Fair chase .....	2
Healthy activity .....	4
Family orientation/mentors .....	4
Multiple opportunities .....	5
Barriers .....	6
<b>TURKEY HUNTING</b> .....	8
Habitat .....	8
Tips .....	9
Cleaning .....	11
Recipes (2) .....	12
<b>SQUIRREL HUNTING</b> .....	14
Habitat .....	14
Tips.....	15
Cleaning .....	17
Recipes (2) .....	18
<b>DOVE HUNTING</b> .....	20
Habitat .....	20
Tips.....	21
Cleaning .....	22
Recipes (2) .....	24
<b>DEER HUNTING</b> .....	25
Habitat .....	25
Tips.....	26
Cleaning .....	28
Recipes (2) .....	29
<b>RABBIT HUNTING</b> .....	31
Habitat .....	31
Tips.....	32
Cleaning .....	34
Recipes (2) .....	35

<b>QUAIL HUNTING</b> .....	37
Habitat .....	37
Tips.....	38
Cleaning .....	41
Recipes (2) .....	42
 <b>GROUSE HUNTING</b> .....	 43
Habitat .....	43
Tips.....	44
Cleaning .....	46
Recipes (2) .....	47
 <b>WATERFOWL HUNTING</b> .....	 48
Habitat .....	48
Tips.....	49
Cleaning .....	53
Recipes (2) .....	54
 <b>ELK HUNTING</b> .....	 55
Habitat .....	55
Tips.....	56
Cleaning .....	57
Recipes (2) .....	58
 <b>GLOSSARY</b> .....	 59
 <b>OTHER RESOURCES</b> .....	 61
 <b>ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF HUNTING SAFELY</b> .....	 BC





*Dedicated  
to all sportsmen  
who introduce  
new hunters to  
hunting*





## INTRODUCTION

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Hunting has certainly changed in the past 50 to 100 years, some for the good and some not so good. However, the one thing that remains the same is the tradition of families hunting together. Research indicates that a child's father is the first choice for a hunting partner. This pamphlet is designed for the family to expand knowledge about several species we hunt and the preparation that goes into this special tradition.

Our society has changed to a point where most hunters no longer observe wildlife habits or practice with firearms on an every day basis. Scouting just before season, studying the latest books or internet entry, and an annual session at the firing range have replaced habits that were natural to our grandparents.

How we prepare to hunt does not change the enjoyment each hunter derives or the family values that can be transferred by hunting. Hunting today may not be what grandpa remembers; it will be what your child relates to his or her grandchildren. By working together, families, the entire hunting community and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources can maintain our hunting tradition into the future.

Cultural changes

## SAFETY

The number one reason that parents do not encourage their children to hunt is a perception that hunting is not safe. This persistent impression is often based on a memorable news report of a hunter or bystander being a victim of an incident. Kentucky averages two fatal incidents in hunting each year. On the average, only one in five of the fatalities, two every five years, involves a shooting death. Most fatalities occur when the hunter falls from a stand or cliff while hunting.

Hunter education is required in Kentucky for all hunters born after January 1, 1975. Since it has been mandatory, the number of incidents and fatalities has dramatically decreased. Most families attend the class together, and thereby lessons are learned side by side. When the family hunts together, they are actually reinforcing the safety issues identified in the course for each other.

## FAIR CHASE

Books have been written to emphasize the importance of fair chase in hunting. Four simple rules are presented here that will give hunters guidelines for appropriate behavior.

- Always receive permission to hunt on private property. To fail to do so is trespassing and is a prime reason landowners are closing their land to hunting.
- Do not take shots at running deer or elk. Animals at a full run are extremely difficult to hit in best situations. They are in constant motion in all dimensions, and as they run through



*Running deer - a joy to watch but easily missed.*



vegetation, it is difficult to pick an open area. They may also be running toward another hunter; this could result in a dangerous hunting situation.

- Shoot all game at appropriate distances. Know your own capabilities and those of your firearm. Shooting at too great a distance will scare or wound the animal(s) and no hunter will have an opportunity for an appropriate shot.
- Make every effort to retrieve all game. Leaving an animal that is later found by the landowner may result in loss of hunting privileges. After a shot, mentally mark the exact spot the animal was last seen.

For big game, wait several minutes to allow the animal to lay down and die. Search “the last spot” thoroughly for blood. Follow the trail and continue to search for blood. Mark each place where blood is found. If the trail is lost, go back to last blood sign and resume search.

When shooting upland birds, proceed immediately to “the spot” the bird was downed. The best bet is a good retriever that will retrieve the bird. However, if hunting without a dog, search the immediate area thoroughly, then take one step at a time away from “the spot” and search thoroughly in concentric circles.

## HEALTHY ACTIVITY

When we asked hunter education instructors for tips on hunting various species, nearly every list included the need to get and stay in good shape for hunting. A regular exercise program, including walks in terrain similar to what you will hunt, is important. If you travel to hunt in an area with steep terrain, you may want to plan to arrive a day or two early to get used to climbing and descending.

Food gained from hunting is very healthy for hunters and their families. Meat from wild animals is low in fat and cholesterol, high in protein. While some animals may store fat for the winter, it can either be removed during cleaning, or in the case of waterfowl, hunters can choose a method of cooking that allows fat to drain.

Hunting also develops healthy family relationships. It allows a parent to share an activity with his or her spouse and children, and it allows children to be valued as a partner in an activity. Time spent hunting together allows open communication about all subjects. Finally, the pride and self-respect each hunter gains from an ethical

hunt makes him or her special in the family circle.

One of the most common health issues involves dressing for the weather. While the results are not dramatic news, the effect on a hunter can greatly alter his or her future involvement. There are two conditions. The first is being underdressed for cold weather or getting wet. The hunter will get cold quickly, usually very cold hands, feet and face. Anyone who is cold and uncomfortable will truly question whether he or she desires to hunt again. Include some extra warm, dry clothes for your winter hunting trips to prevent these conditions.

It is also possible to have too much clothing. Dressing warmly for the morning, then forgetting to remove layers, can lead to sweating, dehydration, and an equally negative experience. Through planning, dressing in layers, removing appropriate cloths, and having water available, the hunter can avoid the “too cold, too hot” situation.

## **FAMILY ORIENTATION/MENTORS**

A report from Responsive Management in 2003 asked young people with whom they preferred to hunt. By far, the individual’s father was the first choice followed in order by a friend, a grandfather, and an uncle. This reflects the close relationship of hunting and family traditions. If your family has not traditionally been involved, you may want to find a friend from a hunting group in your community to support your family experience. The bottom line is that parents need to stay involved in hunting with their children. When they do, the family develops a life-long recreational opportunity.

Another opportunity for young adults is to reverse generations. While the person in the younger generation may not be an active hunter, he or she can provide transportation and assistance for an aging hunter in the family. Through the family association, hunting may become a part of the young person’s life as well.

Every community has some families that need mentors to get started in any activity, including hunting. Surprisingly, the survey in 2003 indicated that single-parent families that desire to hunt do not lack in adult male mentorship; however, if an adult hunter knows such a family where the youngsters desire to hunt and don’t have mentors, he or she may want to invite that family on the next hunt.

Families that include adults or children who are less than fully capable offer another opportunity for hunting mentors of all ages. Helping others overcome obstacles and demonstrating that anything



*A successful team effort*

is possible with desire and practice will give the mentor and the family of the hunter a high sense of accomplishment.

## **MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES**

Hunting, like all activities offered for families, will become an anticipated activity when there are multiple opportunities to hunt or shoot. Hunting begins with practice and everyone in the family can enjoy target-shooting opportunities. Hunting for multiple species will also provide more enthusiasm for hunting. One female hunter reported a family rule that no member can hunt deer or turkey until they have brought home a rabbit and a squirrel that he or she has harvested. This encourages skill development and the simple joy of being in the outdoors together.

Even after younger family members have advanced to deer or turkey hunting, it is important to return to small game hunting regularly. Here they can sharpen skills, introduce a friend to hunting, and renew the thrill of seeing many game animals in a short period.

While a good dinner is always a reward for hunting, time spent

hunting together as a family is the primary goal. By paying attention to potentially negative weather conditions, knowing animal habits, and practicing together to ensure proficiency, the family will enjoy hunting together as a lifetime activity.

## **BARRIERS**

Perhaps the single greatest threat to hunting in the future will be loss of habitat. In Kentucky, as across the United States, cities continue to expand into areas of traditional wildlife habitat. Proper community planning includes an opportunity to provide habitat for wildlife within developing areas. This is known as “Sustainable Development”.

The result of not planning for sustainable resources is fragmentation of private land. Animals can become isolated within a small area surrounded by development. As wildlife populations grow, they naturally expand into nearby areas causing property damage to flowers and shrubs and potentially create traffic or disease problems. Some predators may even attack pets.

Another threat to habitat is a farming practice known as “monoculture”. Here, several hundred acres are planted to one species, such as soybeans or corn. Trees and fence lines are removed to pro-



*Improper hunter ethics may lead to posted land.*



vide easy access with machinery, and water sources such as creeks or wetlands are channelized or drained.

As hunters, we can't fault the landowner as he or she is trying to make a living on the land. The crop pays the taxes and feeds the family. However, the Department of Fish and Wildlife stands ready to help provide habitat for wildlife if that option is in the landowner's management plan. In many cases, cost sharing provides an incentive for such plans.

When parents are asked why they don't hunt with their families, the most common response is, "I don't have time". This is inter-related with where we find suitable habitat and required travel. However, each parent must decide what is important for his or her family and set priorities for activities that fit into an already crowded schedule.

Hunting is one activity where a parent and child can share extended periods of time together relating the hunt, personal ethics, and individual views of the natural world. It also creates the background for stories that will last for a lifetime - the first successful hunt, the ones that got away, and great meals that resulted from the hunt.

One barrier for adults and children alike is public perception of hunting. There are several ways a hunter might resolve these negative responses to hunting:

- Education. Talk with your friends to tell them why you like the idea of hunting. Invite them to a hunter education class or provide computer access, as hunter education is available in CD or on the web.
- Ethics. Practice appropriate behavior in the field and traveling to and from the hunt. Harvested animals should be inside the vehicle, out of view.
- Explain. Hunters have a **conservation** ethic, defined as the wise use of natural resources. People who oppose hunting often exhibit a **preservation** ethic. Preserving wildlife seldom works due to a concept known as chaos in nature.

The remainder of this publication is focused on several types of hunting, where to find game, how to clean it, and how to prepare it for the table. If you have questions about the information here or other subjects, please contact the Department at (800) 858-1549 or by email [info.center@fw.gov](mailto:info.center@fw.gov).



# TURKEY HUNTING

## HABITAT

Like many animals, turkeys vary their feeding location based on time of year and availability of food. Adult birds that fed primarily on acorns in December will include fresh greens and newly sprouted plants during spring season. After young-of-the-year turkeys are hatched, they require insects, as much as 75% of the diet, for the first few weeks of their lives. However, by fall seasons, these young birds focus on food with high fat content, such as acorns, to be prepared for survival through their first winter.

While plant material is as much as 90% of the adult turkey's diet, archery hunters may find them in fall season eating grasshopp-

pers in the early morning sun. When acorns are available, turkeys will feast on them for the majority of their diet during fall gun seasons. They may also eat berries, greens, and waste grain. When considering food sources as part of the hunting plan, knowing those parts of your hunting area where a variety of food is available within a small area will improve your chances. You can also look for places the birds have been scratching in the leaves to locate feeding areas.

Turkeys require water on a daily basis. On wet spring days, this may be satisfied with standing water throughout the habitat. Between rains, seeps, springs, streams, ponds or any other water source within the turkey's home range can be used. Hunters that have not visually located birds they intend to hunt might look for tracks at water sources, as the birds will not be far from water.

The home range of a wild turkey is less than 2000 acres, with toms typically having a smaller home range than hens (remember she comes to him when he struts). Typically, a flock of birds will stay in a reasonably small area unless they are disturbed. Even when that flock leaves, if the habitat is good, more birds will move into the area, especially during the spring breeding season.

An important part of spring turkey hunting is locating that space within the tom's home range where he flies down in the morning, struts, gobbles, and courts his hens. Unless he's disturbed, boss gobbler will not go far from this area, so setting up nearby will be essential in calling him to you.

## **HUNTING TIPS**

### **Scout Daily Activity**

Turkeys are birds of habit. They will be approximately in the same area every day. The flock will roost in the same trees, gobblers use the same fields to attract hens, and the birds will feed in the same areas if they are not disturbed. By observing them daily, a hunter can plan to hunt to take advantage of these habits.

### **Dress in Complete Camouflage**

Everything should be camouflaged, from nose to toes, including the hunting equipment. Headgear is very important as the skin, hair, glasses, and teeth could each stand out to the turkey as the "tell-tale" sign of human intrusion. The gun or bow/arrow also need to be well camouflaged, as this is the equipment that must be moved for an effective hunt.







*As soon as I see your head and neck...*

### **Stay Still**

Turkeys have exceptional vision and the slightest movement will alert them. If you have a bird in sight, watch for an opportunity when it is behind some feature, such as a tree, to raise your gun or draw your bow. Even when you do not have a turkey in sight or working, be as still as possible. The bird you would have hunted may be within range to see your movement, and it will be long since gone.

### **Sit at Large Tree or in Blind**

Many hunters now recommend a blind of some kind to hunt turkeys. Blinds hide your movement somewhat, and allow limited comfort. As turkeys can not smell, you can include a cup of coffee in your blind. If you are planning to hunt without a blind, find a tree that is large enough to hide your silhouette completely. Plan to sit in the shadow (west side of tree in early morning) if possible as sunlight may glint off anything you are wearing.

### **No Stalking**

Stalking turkeys is not advisable, particularly in spring. While you believe you are the only hunter on a given property, another



hunter may be in the area, and an unsafe hunting situation could develop. In addition, as stated earlier, turkeys have extremely good eyesight. If you are moving, the odds are good that the turkey will see you before you see the turkey. Rather than trying to stalk a turkey that you see out of range, make a mental note and be prepared for future hunts.

## CLEANING

When a turkey is taken with a head/neck shot, they typically fall immediately, but may thrash their wings. This can damage feathers for your mount. You will want to get to the bird quickly to preserve the feathers or to prevent a stunned/wounded bird from escaping. If the bird is still alive, be careful to avoid its feet, as toms can cause painful wounds with their spurs. Place your foot firmly on the head and neck and hold the bird still. This will dispatch the bird that is still alive and minimize feather damage on one that is thrashing.

Field dressing your turkey is much like cleaning a chicken. Split the skin on the belly between the tip of the breast and the tail. Reach under the breast and bring out the internal organs. Don't forget to save the heart, liver and gizzard for the turkey dinner. All these parts are cleaned for cooking just like the counterparts for a chicken. If the turkey has been shot in the head and neck, as preferred, the organs should have little damage. If the intestines have been punctured, wipe any residue out of the body cavity. If you intend to save the pelt or any part for a trophy mount, you will want to have paper towels to absorb blood from the feathers. Washing the blood off is not recommended, as the feathers absorb the water.

Whether you skin or pluck your turkey depends on what you intend for a trophy and a meal. If you plan to use the skin and feathers for a trophy, talk to a taxidermist for advise before you hunt. He or she can advise you on the best methods of removing skin and feather parts you want to preserve as your mount. If you want to use the turkey as a traditional roast turkey, you may want to pluck the feathers and save the skin on the bird. This will keep the meat moist during cooking. The recipes that follow could be used whether the bird has been skinned or plucked.

Any bird that will be frozen whole should be completely wrapped, preferably in an air-tight bag. If you intend to use the breast separately as fried turkey, all parts could be cut up similar to cutting up a chicken. To minimize freezer burn, any parts that are frozen should be used within 3 – 4 months.

# RECIPES

## Fried Wild Turkey

George Wright, "Boss Gobbler", retired employee,  
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

- |                                 |                 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| ½ turkey breast cut into strips | 2 eggs          |
| 2 cups of milk                  | 2 lbs. of flour |
| 1 qt. vegetable oil             | salt            |

Remove all connective tissue when preparing breast meat. Cut into thumb sized strips, being sure to slice against the muscle grain to ensure tenderness. Beat two eggs and two cups of milk in large bowl. Salt turkey strips and soak in milk and eggs for a few minutes. Drop strips into large grocery bag containing flour and shake until strips are well coated. Heat about ½ inch of oil in a large iron skillet. Place meat into the grease and cook slowly until slightly brown, then turn. Do not overcook. Should feed four adults.

## Turkey soup

From Will Connelly, Hunter Training Officer,  
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| One turkey – remaining parts<br>after removing the breast | Onions             |
| Carrots   | Potatoes           |
| Corn or other vegetables as you choose                    | Celery             |
| Spices to your choice                                     | Large pot of water |

This is a good way to utilize all parts of the turkey. Skin and cut up the turkey like a chicken (remember how to do that). Boil the back, neck, wings, etc. until tender. Set aside to cool. Dice onions, potatoes, carrots, celery, etc.(corn also) and add to the broth and continue to boil. The amount of vegetables will depend on amount of meat and number of mouths to feed. Add any and all the spices you desire. Debone and add the turkey meat to the soup. Add noodles and or wild rice for the amount of time on the package. Enjoy! (editor's note: you can also include dumplings instead of rice or noodles with turkey soup!!)



# SQUIRREL HUNTING

## HABITAT

To hunt squirrels you need to take advantage of their diet: nuts from trees. The type of nut seems to vary from area to area or in some cases with each squirrel. The one exception is that acorns from red oak, which contains a chemical known as tannin, seem to be the last nuts eaten when squirrels have a choice. To find a good area to hunt gray squirrels, you need to be able to identify the following trees: hickory, beech, pecan, black walnut, and white oak. An area with these trees near a cornfield would be an excellent place for fox squirrels.

Squirrels are not dependent on a source of water. They can de-

rive their needs for water from their food for the most part. They will drink from standing or running water if it is available, but are not required to go to water regularly as many animals are.

A squirrel will use just enough of the tree in the forest to escape the predator at hand. When hunters enter the woods, the animal's sharp eyes and ears pick up the movement and noise. Therefore, a steady, quiet approach will allow more successful shooting opportunities.

Squirrels are prey for many natural predators, and the squirrel uses all areas of the tree to escape them. For ground restricted predators such as most canines (gray fox are limited climbers), only a few feet of the trunk is sufficient escape habitat. When hawks attack and the den is not close at hand, the squirrel is much more agile in the thick branches than these larger birds. This area of a tree would not hide the squirrel from a bobcat, but the heavier cat can not chase the squirrel into the small twigs of the branch. Finally, if escape routes of the present tree have been exhausted, a quick jump to neighboring trees offers endless shelter.

Individual squirrels will normally range over approximately 10 acres for food. They may expand their home up to 40 acres during breeding.

## TIPS

### Cuttings

The avid squirrel hunter takes a few hikes during the summer to locate areas where the squirrels are "cutting" the trees. The number of cuttings will give the hunter an idea of how concentrated the squirrels are in that area.

### Time and Weather

Squirrels may be hunted all day, but appear to be most active the first hours of daylight and late afternoon. Some research shows they feed during bright moonlight. The best days for squirrel hunting would therefore be expected after dark nights. While squirrels may be seen during drizzle or light rain, they may become more active just after a heavy storm. Squirrels are usually inactive during snowstorms, but soon after the storm passes, they will be searching for the nuts they have hidden. Their sensitive noses allow them to find these nuts through the snow.



## Still Hunting and Stalking

Most hunters sit quietly in the woods and wait for squirrel activity. By hiding in natural cover or a blind, hunters wait for the squirrels to show themselves. Stalking should be done very slowly, moving from one tree to another, listening, and carefully scanning the area for activity. Once squirrels are located, stalking hunters might consider becoming still hunters.



*I hear him, sounds like the next tree.*

## Patience is a Virtue

Whether the hunter is sitting in a favorite squirrel hangout or walking slowly through the woods, plan on being patient. First, trust yourself as a hunter. If you studied the forest and know there are squirrels there, wait them out. Second, once a squirrel is located be patient for the proper shot. If several squirrels are active, take the one that offers the best shot, then plan on being patient for the next one.

## Squirrel Dog

A squirrel dog is not a necessity for success, but may speed up

the hunting. Squirrels will often spot a hunter and play a hide and seek game. They will sneak around the base of the tree to keep track of a hunter's location and bark warnings to other squirrels. A squirrel dog circles the tree and the squirrel now tries to escape the dog. As the dog circles, he brings the squirrel into full view of the hunter for a clean shot.

### Throw a Rock

If you don't have a dog to worry the squirrel, try throwing a rock to the other side of the tree. Squirrels have good hearing, and a rock may fool this one into thinking another hunter or predator is approaching. Be ready for a quick shot, as it won't be fooled for long.

### Call the squirrel

While squirrel calls are available commercially, old time hunters used what they had. By striking a coin, references indicate a silver dollar, against the butt plate of the gun, hunters could imitate a bark. By striking two coins together, they imitated a feeding chatter. The family "squirrel calling utensils" and methods are passed when several generations hunt together.

## CLEANING AND PREPARATION

Two methods of skinning squirrels are commonly used. Either can be done in the field or at home. One is to split the skin across the back and insert two fingers into each side of the split. Now pull, removing the skin in either direction. The other method is called tail cutting. Cut the skin under the tail and cut through the bone in the tail. Stand on the squirrel's tail and pull on both hind legs briskly. With tail cutting, the skin from the hind legs can now be carefully removed creating a loop of skin from which to hang the squirrel to finish the cleaning.

In both cases work the skin over the front legs and remove the feet at the first joint above the feet and the head at the neck. Now insert the tip of the knife just forward of the hind legs into the muscles surrounding the intestines and cut forward to the ribs. Take care that the knife does not penetrate into the internal organs. The rib cage can be easily split with the knife. Return to the rear legs and split the pelvic bone so the entire intestinal track can be removed. Now discard all internal organs.

Skinning any furred animal can leave considerable hair on the

cleaned meat. This hair can be removed by first using clear tape wrapped around your fingers with the sticky side out. Lightly touch the hairs with the tape and remove them. During final preparation for freezer or cooking, look once again for resistant hair.



### Ready... Aim... Shoot

Once the squirrel is cleaned, cut off each leg and split the back just behind the ribs. As there is little meat on the ribs, they can be discarded. Soak the meat in ice cold salt water to remove blood. Carefully clean all areas where the animal was shot before freezing or cooking. For best freezing results, place in a plastic sack and cover the meat in water. Take care not to cut the plastic with broken bones and remove all air from the sack by squeezing gently until water begins to spill. Freezing in water will keep the squirrel without freezer burn for approximately 6 months.

## RECIPES

### Barbecued Squirrel

*Betty A Pugh, Falmouth, Kentucky*

2 Dressed Squirrels, cut in pieces	¾ Cup red wine
1 Cup water	2 Bay leaves
1 Large onion, chopped	2 Carrots, sliced
1½ to 2 cups barbecue sauce	Salt and pepper to taste

In a kettle, boil, then simmer the squirrel pieces in the wine and water with the onion, carrots, bay leaves, salt and pepper. Cook covered for an hour. Remove squirrel pieces, place in a baking dish and cover with the barbecue sauce. Bake in preheated oven at 300 degrees for 45 minutes or until tender.

## Squirrel Soup.

*Found in Recipes, no source, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources*

Young squirrels can be fried or broiled. This is recommended for older squirrels.

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3 Squirrels, cut in serving pieces | 1 Cup chopped onion               |
| 3 Qts of water                     | 2 Large cans of tomatoes, drained |
| ¼ Cup diced bacon                  | ¼ tsp Cayenne                     |
| 2 Cups diced potatoes              | ¼ tsp Black pepper                |
| 2 Cups lima beans, fresh or frozen |                                   |
| 2 Cups corn, fresh or frozen.      |                                   |

Place squirrel pieces in a large kettle. Add water. Bring slowly to boil, then reduce heat and simmer 1 ½ to 2 hours, or until squirrel is tender. Skim surface occasionally. Remove meat from bones and return to liquid. Add cayenne, bacon, salt, pepper, onion, tomatoes, potatoes, and lima beans. Cook 1 hour. Add corn and continue to cook ten minutes. Spoon into soup plates and serve with cornbread and cole slaw. Makes 6-8 servings



***Sound the alarm!***





# **MOURNING DOVE HUNTING**

## **HABITAT**

Most hunters concentrate on areas where the doves feed. Their diet is almost exclusively seeds. Weed and grass seeds are supplemented by waste grain from farming operations. Having feet that are designed for perching, not scratching, they look for their food on standing plants or on the surface of the soil. While some seeds may seem to be preferred at a given time, the dove is primarily a bird that takes advantage of the opportunity of the present day, and they will change their feeding location frequently.

Doves typically need to have two visits to water daily. During

wet periods, rain puddles and heavy dew may suffice, but they will go to streams or ponds for water. The best watering locations will include stretches of mud flats or sandbars where the birds can sit in the open to get water with no ambush cover for ground-based predators.

Preferred shelter for doves is the canopy of the forest. The majority of the nests will be found here. However, in some locations, they may be found as ground nesters where they are vulnerable to more predators. In the natural world, doves are the prey of many animals from hawks that catch them in flight, to snakes (primarily raiders of nests), and housecats that have gone wild.

While the mourning dove is primarily a migratory species, some individuals may be less inclined to migrate from the south during the spring or to the south in fall. Normally, they begin to gather in flocks during late summer and most of the flock departs to the south with the first cold weather. The failure to migrate south in fall creates problems during severe winters, as the birds do not have enough fat reserves to survive repeated cold days, and they can not scratch through snow to find food.

## TIPS

### Check Field for Baiting

It is the hunter's responsibility to follow the law. Review the laws on baiting and make certain the field you are hunting has not been baited. If you have questions, call the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife first, not after the hunt.

### Food Plots

Food plots, with small areas of seed producing grains and grasses, will attract doves. Many landowners cooperate with the Department to establish dove fields and open them to the public. For private land that is available for these hunts, contact the Department information center.

### Mow Field

One method that works is to mow the field in strips. Leave some plants, such as sunflowers, stand while mowing grasses, grains, etc. Doves will feed in the entire area, and downed birds are much easier to find in the mowed areas.



*A day in the field with Dad*

### **Shoot only High Birds**

Dove shoots typically have several hunters shooting over a small area. By shooting only the high birds, incidents will be avoided. These high flyers also offer the most challenging shots for the shooter.

### **Use a Retriever**

Ethical hunters strive to retrieve every bird. When the birds are flying in large flocks the hunter may be able to down more than one bird at a time. A good retriever will assist the hunter in finding crippled and dead birds. It is recommended that the birds be retrieved as soon as there is an opportunity. They can then be laid in the shade to cool, plus an accurate count toward the limit can be maintained.

## **CLEANING**

Most hunters report that they use only the breast of the dove. They simply split the skin on the breast, peel it back and cut the breast out of the bird. Some hunters prefer to pick (or pluck) the feathers off the complete bird and eat wings, legs and breasts. To remove the entrails from a picked bird, it is recommended to split



their back for easy access to the small body cavity. Birds that have been picked may either be cooked whole or in halves.

Doves do not need to be cleaned in the field, as their body heat is apparently lost due to the small size of the body. However, if you prefer to pick them, it can be done during a time when doves are not flying. Cutting out the breast or removing entrails is usually done after the shooting is complete and the gun will no longer be handled. If birds are cleaned in the field it is simple courtesy to the landowner to either bury or carry out the feathers and entrails. As with all game, carefully remove all shot before freezing or preparing your doves. To freeze them, use the same technique described in squirrel cleaning.



*Every one was a high passing shot!*



## RECIPES

Most hunters recommend wrapping dove breast in bacon, doused with different marinades and broiling them. Here are some other ideas.

### Dove Breasts Stroganoff

*Arnold Mitchell, Retired Commissioner,  
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources*

12 Dove breasts	Oregano
1 Medium onion, diced	Rosemary
1 Four ounce can of mushrooms	2 tsps kitchen bouquet
½ Cup sauterne	1 Cup sour Cream
1 can condensed cream of celery soup	

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Place breasts in large baking dish. Do not crowd them. Saute onion in skillet and add remaining ingredients to the onions except the sour cream. Mix the spiced onions and mushrooms and pour over birds in baking dish. Cover dish lightly and bake for 1 hour, turning breasts occasionally. Add sour cream and stir. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes. Serve over rice. (Brown rice or mixture of white and wild rice is especially good.) Serves 6.

### Sherry-Roasted Dove

*(Suggested in "The Mourning Dove", John Madson, Winchester Press, 1978.)*

14-16 whole birds	Salt
Pepper	Flour
½ Cup of salad oil	½ Cup chopped green onions
1½ Cup of water	1 Cup of Sherry
¼ cup of chopped parsley	

Season the doves in salt and pepper and roll them in flour. Place them in oil in a heavy roaster and bake at 400 degrees until brown. Add the onions, water and sherry. Cover and cook until tender. Baste with sherry. Add parsley to the gravy just before serving. Serves 8-12 people.



# DEER HUNTING

## HABITAT

White-tailed deer find all their life needs closely associated with the forest. As with many animals, they are known as creatures of the “edge” with a love for green plants, waste grain, and tender shoots that they often find in the edge of cultivated fields. Therefore, in early season, the knowing hunter looks for heavily used trails within 50 yards or so of the edge. Late in the season,, however, it is the forested land that provides their hiding cover, much of their food, and space for movement. Now you may want to move your stand to more secluded areas.

If you choose to hunt on the side of a ridgeline within the forest, look for trails that lead to the lowest point on the ridge. Deer moving over a ridge will typically look for that path that costs them the least amount of energy to get from one side to the other.

Deer also prefer a forest that is undergoing secondary succession to a forest that is mature. Shrubs, bushes and plants such as poison ivy provide both food sources and hiding cover. This regenerating forest is usually very thick, making it difficult for other animals to find the deer; however the deer travel through it with ease.

If hunting in such an area, a tree stand near a small clearing or on power line right-of-way might be productive.

Waterways offer another place to ambush deer. One person relates that deer use streams and valley floors like humans use interstates...to get somewhere fast. The biological need for water can be satisfied in many ways. Early in the season, daily trips to ponds or streams may be expected but late in the season a small hidden spring will give a big buck all the water he will need.

Deer normally stay within a home range of approximately 1 square mile or 640 acres. However, during the rut, all bets are off. During this breeding season, bucks travel great distances to find does that are ready to breed, and may be found several miles from where they were seen yesterday. It is the time of year when they simply don't care if hunters or cars are in the vicinity, they are only intent on breeding.

## TIPS

### Prepare and Scout

Hunters should plan several days of scouting before season starts. This is the time to discover numbers and quality of the deer in your hunting area. Heavily used trails will indicate deer numbers while the rubs show where big bucks are active. While small bucks will rub on shrubs and small trees, big bucks use larger woody material. The rub of a big buck will also be higher in the tree.

### Several Stands, Early as Possible

While you are in the woods scouting, it is a good time to set up several stands or repair those from last year. You need plenty as daily conditions change and a simple wind change may make one stand unproductive. If boards need to be replaced, doing it early will not disturb the deer as much as a day or two before season. One hunter related that he attracted a nice buck to his stand during season by sawing branches to improve his field of shooting. Unfortunately, he couldn't get an arrow loaded onto his saw.

### Sight-in and Practice

Every year and several times a year, hunters will first adjust the sights on their bow or firearm then continue to practice. Sights sometimes get bumped during transport. If you miss what you

thought was an easy shot, a trip back to the target range is preferable to more misses.

### Target Area of Shot Placement

When shooting at deer, the hunter should plan for a quick and effective kill. He or she should look for openings through the vegetation where they can place a shot into heart-lung area. The heart-lung area of a deer is reasonably large (10 inch circle). A shot here will cause massive bleeding, and the shock of the bullet will normally drop the animal within a few feet. There are other vital areas on deer, but patience will normally give you a shot at the larger area. If a killing shot is not available, enjoy watching the deer escape unharmed.

### Scent Control, Wind, Entrance Path

Deer have a very sensitive sense of smell and deer hunters practice three methods of scent control in the woods. First, bathing and laundry soap is available that does not have a scent identified with humans. Many hunters are careful about deodorant and some brands may repel deer. Finally, there are bottles of scent from animals that will mask the human smells, and in some cases attract deer.

### Plan all day Hunt, Bring Food and Water

Deer hunters report seeing deer throughout the day. Especially in peak hunting periods, other hunters may move the deer anytime. Therefore, bring plenty of water and enough food to be comfortable. Again remember the senses of deer as you plan for your food, as smells or the sound of tearing a container may alert the deer.



*Teamwork in the field*





20 Yard pin just behind the shoulder, release and follow through.

### Know Tagging and Reporting Procedures.

As in all hunting, the hunter is responsible for knowing the appropriate rules and regulations. All information is available on-line or in a hunting guide that will be sent to you for asking. Reporting all kills provides the most accurate information for the Department. With this information, biologists can continue to provide a quality deer hunting experience for all hunters.

### CLEANING

There are many books, videos and websites on how to field dress a deer. One example is the Missouri website is at this link [http://www.conservation.state.mo.us/hunt/deer/deer\\_hunting/dress.htm](http://www.conservation.state.mo.us/hunt/deer/deer_hunting/dress.htm). Rather than repeating those procedures, a few additional hints are offered:

- Relax, calm down, and take your time. Do not start field dressing until the animal is still.
- Come prepared with a sharp knife and rubber gloves.
- Many hunters cut themselves during the field dressing process; wait until you are calm, and be careful.
- Be careful not to penetrate the intestines as you remove organs.
- If you think you would like to have the head mounted, make sure you do not cut the skin forward of the ribs.
- In early seasons, either have ice available or purchase ice quickly to place in the body cavity and cool the animal from the inside.
- In warmer weather, you will want to skin and quarter your deer

quickly so it can be cooled in a cooler.

- In colder weather, skinning the animal will be much easier if done quickly rather than after the animal is cold.

When cutting up the meat, three hints are offered.

First, remove all hair, fat, muscle sheath, and bruised meat that you can. Hair clings to the meat and can be removed with a damp cloth followed by careful search. Much of the taste that people associate with deer is held in the fat. Fat and sinew can be sliced away from the muscles with the aid of a sharp fillet knife. That meat around a wound will be bruised from impact. Bloodshot tissue may have a strong taste or not be visually appealing when served.

Next, rather than cut into individual steaks or chops, cut chunks that will provide enough meat for your intended meal. For instance, if you normally feed four people, cut the steaks in 4 inch pieces. By leaving it in larger chunks, there will be less freezer burn.

When you are ready to wrap and freeze, plan to double wrap to reduce freezer burn. First wrap in clear plastic wrap that is sealed as you wrap. Next, cut pieces of freezer wrap and place the meat at one corner. Roll the meat and freezer wrap together from one corner to the other, folding in the edges. The package can now be sealed with one small piece of tape.

## RECIPES

### Venison Filets

*(Lonnie Nelson on the suggestion from a friend in Tennessee)*

This recipe works best with meat from the back strap of a deer, but my wife will not let me cook any deer steak any other way.

4 Venison Steaks

4 Slices of Bacon

Worcestershire steak sauce

Toothpicks

Cut steaks  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 inch thick. Wrap in bacon (just like a filet mignon) and douse with 6 shakes of Worcestershire steak sauce. Place all steaks on a plate, cover with aluminum foil and marinate for 4-6 hours. When ready for dinner, grill them on the barbecue just like you would cook any other steak. I prefer medium rare, and cook them no more than 5 - 6 minutes over the coals per side.

## Venison Pot Roast

*Art Boebinger, retired employee, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.*

1 Venison roast (up to 5 lbs.)	Vegetable oil
1 Celery Stalk, chopped	2 Carrots, diced
1 Medium onion, chopped	Garlic clove
Flour	Salt
1 12-Ounce can beef stock	Pepper
4 to 5 Potatoes (optional)	

Rub the roast with cut garlic clove and lightly salt and pepper the meat. Dredge in salted and peppered flour. Put two table-spoons of oil in a cast-iron dutch oven and heat over a medium-high burner. Brown meat on all sides but do not allow it to scorch. When meat is half-browned, add celery, onion and carrots. Add beef stock and an equal amount of water and bring to a boil. Add salt and pepper to taste. When the boiling point is reached, tightly cover. The roast can simmer at a low temperature on top of the stove, or it may be transferred to a 300 degree oven. In either case, plan to cook it slowly for two to three hours. Turn meat occasionally and add stock or water if needed. During the last hour, potatoes may be added to the pot to cook in the roasting juices. Serve with potatoes and red cabbage.



***Hunters need to harvest does to maintain quality populations.***



# RABBIT HUNTING

## HABITAT

Rabbits are known as an edge species. They are animals that are most comfortable when they can find food, cover and space all in a reasonably small area. By hunting in areas with corners between field and forest, fence lines, and overgrown building sites, hunters will have the best opportunities for multiple rabbits.

Rabbits use a variety of escape techniques. First they sit very still where they think they can not be seen. When they do run, they are very good at darting in and out of cover to prevent any predator from having an easy meal. When running they may include long



jumps, rapid darting motion in all directions, and varied speeds.

Rabbits typically eat as close to their hiding cover as possible. They will eat most forms of vegetation including grasses, shoots from woody plants, buds or flowers, waste grain in fields, and the bark from trees (especially in winter when other food is snow-covered).

Hunters should not plan on ambushing rabbits on their way to water. They retain water from their food very effectively and normally do not require a water source. They will, however, drink standing water when it is plentiful.

The thickest cover in the area is the place to hunt rabbits. Briars are particularly attractive because they prevent many predators from approaching. When there is abundant native grass growing in the thick cover, it is even better. The grass provides food plus the rabbit can hide between the tufts of grass. In the coldest part of the winter, rabbits will use the burrow of a ground hog or other animals that dig. This allows them to hide underground where the wind is not a factor, and rabbits can conserve their energy.

Rabbits typically live their entire life in a reasonably small space, perhaps a few acres. They apparently learn the features of their home range and will use everything within that space to their advantage for the various functions of their lives. Therefore, when you see lots of rabbits in a given area and habitat remains the same, you can be assured some will still be there the next time you hunt.

## TIPS

### Let the Dog do the Dirty Work

A good rabbit dog is worth its weight in rabbits. Cottontails tend to have a small area for escape, and will return to the same general area where first jumped. A slow working dog will allow the rabbit to slowly return while the dog's barking lets the hunter know rabbit and dog are approaching. Hunting with a dog can best be accomplished with a shotgun, as you should expect a moving target across a small shooting area.

### Retrieve Rabbit Quickly

When you shoot a rabbit being trailed by a dog, retrieve it before the dog arrives. Dogs may maul the rabbit which isn't good for your intended meal, and it is possible for the dog to receive parasites if he does eat part of the rabbit (see cleaning).

## Walking or Stalking

Without a dog, hunters may elect to either walk through cover, forcing the rabbits to run, or stalk quietly near good habitat. The walking method is good with a group of hunters, taking turns walking in the thickest cover. Communication is vital to keep track of hunter location and to alert a fellow hunter when a rabbit is running toward him. As rabbits will be running, a shotgun is usually the firearm of choice when walking.

Stalking is often practiced when hunting alone, and is very effective after snowfall. Hunters should plan to hunt the rabbit's home one step at a time. Take time to study every form and search for details such as an eye or an ear. Once a rabbit is detected, stealth is important, as it has probably been watching you for some time. Slowly bring the .22 rifle or shotgun to your shoulder and make your shot count.

## Hunt Edges

Take advantage of the rabbit's habits that allow it to escape the predators in the natural world. In all rabbit hunting situations, hunt the "edge" between heavy cover and fields offering food.

## Know Your Shooting Zone

A primary lesson in hunting is to know the zone where it is safe to shoot. Better to watch a rabbit escape without a shot than to explain to a landowner why your shot rattled the side of the barn. When a rabbit is in sight, focus on the total picture rather than the target animal.



*A great choice for the first hunt.*

## Know Other Hunter Location

You should always know where other hunters in your party are located as you hunt. If you are hunting in good habitat, there may also be other hunters in the area. Give them space for their hunt and keep track of their location. Just as you talk with your own party, speak to other hunting parties so they know where you are and where you are going.

## CLEANING

Rabbits should be field dressed, especially in warmer weather. All fresh meat begins to spoil quickly and warm temperatures held by the internal organs can enhance spoilage. Most hunters that field dress their rabbits keep plastic bags in their game pouch to prevent blood stains.

Rabbits can be completely cleaned afield or the hunter may simply want to remove the organs. Rubber gloves are always recommended, but should not be discarded in the field. To skin, slit the skin in the middle of the back, across the spine. Place fingers from both hands inside this slit and pull. Skin will come off both ends.

With a sharp knife gently split the stomach lining. Place the point of the knife just inside this lining and open the rabbit from rib cage to between the hind legs. Gently cut through the meat between the legs and split the pelvic bone. All internal organs can now be removed. Feet can be removed at the joints above the foot.

When hunting with dogs, make sure organs are hung in a tree, so the dogs can not reach them. This will prevent passage of internal parasites.

If you only removed the organs in the field, finish the job as soon as you get home. Take great care to remove all hair from the cleaned animal. Shot wounds should be carefully cleaned and badly damaged areas removed. A cut up rabbit will have four legs and two halves of the back. The back can be left whole for some recipes such as "Hasen Rucken" (back of the hare), a variation of "Hasenpfeffer".

Whether you intend to eat your rabbit immediately or freeze it, place the pieces in ice cold salt water for at least an hour. This will remove blood from the meat and wounded areas.

To freeze your rabbit, rinse each piece one last time and carefully place the pieces in a plastic bag. Broken bones can cut through the plastic and leak water into the freezer. Cover all parts with water



*I see that hunter, but I don't think she sees me.*

and squeeze the bag until water begins to leak out the top. This removes all air. Seal the top and place in the freezer. Meat should be good up to six months.

## RECIPES

### Hasenpfeffer

*Found in recipes, no source,*

*Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.*

2 Rabbits, cut in serving pieces	1 Cup vinegar
1/8 tsp pepper	2 Large onions, sliced
1 12-Ounce bottle or can of beer	1/4 Cup flour
1 Tsp mixed pickling spices	1/4 Cup vegetable oil
1 Tsp salt	1 Tsp sugar

Combine vinegar, beer, onions, pickling spices, salt and pepper in a large earthenware bowl. Add Rabbit pieces. Cover and let stand in refrigerator 1 to 2 days, turning the meat several times. Dry rabbit pieces with absorbent paper, then dip in flour. Heat vegetable oil in large skillet. Add meat and brown on all sides. Pour off excess oil. Strain marinade and add with sugar to meat. Bring liquid to boil; reduce heat, cover and simmer 40 minutes, or until rabbit is tender. If desired, thicken liquid with flour mixed with a little water. Serve meat with sauce, potato dumplings and buttered green beans. Serves 6-8 people.



## Country Fried Rabbit with Gravy

Pat Ball, "The Bullshooter Newsletter"

1 Rabbit, cut in serving pieces	¾ Cup Flour
¼ Tbsp pepper	¼ Tbsp salt
¾ Tbsp seasoned salt	¾ Cup oil
2 ½ to 3 Cups of water	½ Package, baby carrots, cooked
1 Cup rice, cooked and set aside	½ Cup red cooking wine

Mix salts, pepper and flour in a large bowl. Put oil in a separate bowl. Rub or brush all parts of rabbit pieces with oil then dredge in flour mixture. Repeat oil/flour step at least one more time. Pour remaining oil into a deep skillet and heat oil. Add rabbit pieces to oil. Brown on all sides. Add the wine and 2 cups of water; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until tender. Add water as needed to keep from sticking. Place rice on a platter or in a large bowl. Place rabbit pieces on the rice and pour the gravy over the dish. Garnish with carrots. Serve with kale greens and biscuits or garlic bread.





# QUAIL HUNTING

## HABITAT

Hunting bobwhite quail is one of the most exciting adventures in hunting. A covey explosion at your feet, even when your dog is on point, may leave you quivering, holding a full gun, no shots, no birds.

Quail populations are highly dependent on the weather. Severe winters can eliminate a high percentage of the birds. With small bodies, they can not store enough food to survive long periods of cold weather. Therefore, quail must eat to survive cold weather, and they can't scratch through snow as well as larger birds such as turkeys. This makes it very important to have food plots including plants that hold their seeds and stand in heavy snow. These heavy plants also allow the quail to eat without being exposed to predators.

Hunters can estimate the number of birds that survived the previous winter by listening for "bob-white" calls in the spring. This call, which can be heard for some distance, is one way wildlife man-

agers estimate the number of birds for the following season.

After the birds mate, frequency of spring rains becomes important. While the nest may be flooded, hens will normally attempt to nest again if their first attempt fails. However, once hatched, the chicks are reasonably small creatures and a cold rain can chill them to the point where they do not survive.

Like several other animals, quail are known as an edge species. They prefer reasonably dense cover within walking distance of food. During hunting season, the primary food for quail will be weed seed and waste grain in the field. If the landowner has planted food plots, quail may have all food and cover requirements in one convenient area. Early in the season, birds may still be including insects from the grasses, but after the first hard freeze, insects will be eliminated. With this in mind, the best areas to find a covey of birds will probably be within 25 yards of the edge between cultivated grain fields (or food plots) and weedy or grassy field.

Normally, quail get all the water they need from morning dew or small watering holes. In extremely dry weather, hunters could focus on those food plots that have continuous water such as a small creek or pond. As quail are vulnerable to predators when they are in



*Clean miss, get him with second shot.*



the open, an area having corridors of heavy cover to the water will be the area where they will concentrate.

Native grasses that allow the birds to search for food within the grassy cover are ideal cover plants for quail. These grasses can be identified easily. If you can see barren soil between tall clumps of grass, that is good quail cover. If it is a mat of grass on the soil, the birds can not move easily through the grass and food is more difficult to find.

Coveys of quail will be found in the same area year after year, if the habitat remains constant and weather conditions are good. Individual quail will leave their home range during the mating season, but one mate or the other will be in the same habitat as the previous year. During the hunting season, the covey may move from one primary location to another within a few hundred yards, but as long as the habitat is good, the birds will stay in that general area.

## **TIPS**

### **Work With Your Dog**

A good hunting dog is a great asset with quail. By preparing your dog for hunting season, the hunt will be much more enjoyable and successful. Work the dog on holding point and searching for simulated downed birds. When you get in the field, a trained dog that uses a slow approach with careful search of quail habitat will produce the most birds.

### **Shooting Skills**

Hunters also need to train themselves prior to the first covey flush. Quail are skillful flyers, and will offer only quick shots. Target shooting should include throwing targets at various angles with the gun at ready rather than shouldered. To simulate confusion of covey rise, throw multiple targets in rapid sequence.

### **Know Quail Habits**

Quail are predictable to be in the same fields nearly every day. They will eat or rest at the same time each day as well. When the hunter knows these habits, it will simplify the hunt and eliminate hunting areas where the birds are not present.

### **Be Aware of All Hunters**

Many times the birds are found in very heavy cover, tall enough





### Dead bird!

to hide other hunters. Because of this and the excitement of a covey flush, each hunter needs to know the location of other hunters and establish safe shooting lanes. Blaze orange hunting clothes will help all hunters maintain visual contact.

### Covey Rise

Flushing a covey of quail is as exciting as any activity in shooting. When you locate a covey of quail, they will typically flush from a very small area, no more than a few square feet. Take a mental note of the number of birds that flush, pick a single bird, shoot, pick a second bird, shoot, mark downed birds, and watch the flight path of the remaining birds. All this will occur in 2 to 3 seconds.

### Singles

After you retrieve downed birds, the information on number of birds and flight path becomes important. Hunters who are looking to the future will not over-harvest a covey of birds. You want approximately 7 to 8 birds from a covey to survive hunting season as brood stock for the following season. Remember they will still face many perils before spring mating. Therefore, hunting singles should be a consideration only when the covey is large enough to support additional harvest. When this is the case, allow the dogs to find individual birds in the area where the covey landed. Again, be aware of your harvest goal.

## Retrieve Downed Birds

Quail are a valuable wildlife resource, and hunters should make every attempt to find each downed bird. Don't rely on your dog to see it fall, as it may be difficult for the dog to see a downed bird in heavy cover. Mark the location of the bird and direct your dog to that spot for the best opportunity to retrieve it. If not found immediately, mark the spot with a hat or glove and proceed in slowly increasing circles. Listen for "fluttering wings" as a wounded bird that has hidden will have a few seconds of wing action as it dies.

## CLEANING

Quail are small birds and will cool quickly if you desire not to field dress them. If you are planning to be in the field all day, removing the internal organs will reduce the amount of material from the intestines that may penetrate into the meat. By simply splitting the skin between the end of the breast bone and the tail, and folding the bird open, all organs can be quickly removed.

Bobwhites can be skinned or plucked. Plucked birds will be slightly more moist when cooked as there is some fat stored in the skin. To skin them, push one finger under the skin on the breast and remove the skin and feathers from the bird. By gripping the edge of the skin after the initial split, large sections of skin and feathers can be removed. If you desire to pluck the bird, dry plucking is recommended. Be careful around shot entry holes as the skin will tend to tear as you are removing the feathers.

Quail can be cooked whole or you can cut across the back to remove the thighs and legs (which can be cooked as one piece). The breast and wing can also be split if you want them to cook faster. Cut through the back from the neck to the tip of the breast and split the breastbone. One wing and half the breast will be in each resulting piece.

As with other game, carefully clean all shot entries. Remove feathers and shot if possible. Split the meat with a fillet knife to penetrate and remove this material. Wash thoroughly and soak in iced salt water for at least an hour before cooking or freezing. They can be frozen using the same technique as rabbit or squirrel. If the birds are frozen, they should be used within a few months to preserve flavor.

## RECIPES

### Fried Quail for Breakfast

*Art Boebinger, Retired,*

*Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources*

6 Quail	6-9 Slices bacon
½ Cup of flour	1 Tsp salt
1 Tsp pepper	Gravy (optional)

Mix flour, salt and pepper and place in a bag. Split quail in half, add them to the bag and coat them in flour mixture by shaking. Fry bacon in a cast-iron skillet until crisp; transfer bacon to plate with absorbent paper (cover to keep warm). Fry quail in the bacon grease over medium-high heat until they are nice golden brown on both sides. Reduce heat and continue cooking the birds until they are just tender. Transfer to the warm platter with bacon. Serve with eggs, biscuits & gravy or new boiled potatoes & gravy.

### Quail Pie

*Preston Jolly, Retired,*

*Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources*

12 Quail	Seasoned salt
1 Can of peas	Worcestershire sauce
1 Small can pimentos	Cornstarch
1 Cup chopped celery	Butter (to saute)
2 Pie crusts	

Cook quail in water until tender. Remove and cut meat into small pieces. Save broth and add peas and pimento. Saute celery in butter and add broth mixture, and quail meat. Use salt and Worcestershire sauce to taste. Bring mixture to slow boil and add cornstarch to thicken. Place one pie crust in large pie plate. Pour mixture into pie crust and cover with top crust. Dot with butter and bake in 350 degree oven for 45 minutes.



# GROUSE HUNTING

## HABITAT

Grouse eat a variety of plant material supplemented by insects when they find them. Acorns are vital in winter because the fat gained from them increases grouse body fat and increases the breeding potential for females the following spring. However, shoots, nuts and berries are all included in diet of adult birds throughout the year. The buds from various fruit and nut bearing trees are also important. For the young of the year, insects are very important during the first few weeks of life.

Like all animals, grouse require water for their bodily functions, but it is not a consideration for locating habitat to hunt them. They will drink from standing or running water when it is available, but the requirements for water can be met by morning dew or from the plant material they eat.

Shelter is probably the best habitat feature to consider when trying to locate grouse to hunt. The best shelter feature is a forest that is in secondary succession. If mast-producing trees are within or near this shelter, the chances of finding birds will be enhanced.



Occasionally birds are found in trees but they typically hide on the ground. In heavy snow, they will create burrows into the snow to conserve body heat.

Grouse normally stay within a mile of where they are hatched. In springtime, males drum to attract females to them and therefore have a smaller home range. Females travel to the drumming male to breed, then travel again to find a suitable nesting site. Her brood typically disperses in fall with individual birds seeking suitable habitat. However, it is not unusual to find several birds using the same area due to prime habitat features.

Most people consider grouse to be a cyclic species. These cycles are not as prevalent in Kentucky as in grouse states to the north. The trend in Kentucky and other Appalachian states has been steadily down since the early 1990s. As is true with most wildlife, good habitat will consistently have grouse. A dedicated grouse hunter will support his or her dogs and alter the harvest during those periods with low grouse numbers.



*Steady...steady...*

## TIPS

### Bird Dog is Most Important Asset

A grouse hunter may spend many hours training his or her dog. Genetics play an important role in determining the success of the dog. Due to a keen sense of smell and enhanced range, a trained dog will help a hunter find more grouse. A dog is often a necessity when trying to find a bird that has been shot.

### Listen in Spring to Hunt in Fall

One of the easiest ways to prepare for fall hunting is to listen for the drumming males in the spring. By locating where adult birds are breeding and raising the broods, the hunter will know which areas are most likely to hold grouse that fall.

### Be in Good Physical Shape

The best Kentucky grouse habitat is in the hilly, forested regions of Eastern Kentucky. Hunting in this region will require climbing up and down hillsides. Several miles of hiking may be needed to locate birds during a grouse hunt, so make sure you are physically fit. Depending on your age, this often requires regular exercise during the "off" season.



*One bird is enough for today.*

## Identify Prime Habitat

When there is a major disturbance in the forest, such as “timber harvest”, fire or natural storm, the forest immediately begins to recover. The best stage for grouse is from 5-12 years after the disturbance. While hunting in the areas where this secondary succession is at its peak for grouse production, watch for other areas in your hunting range where the peak will be reached in the next few years. This way, you will be prepared for future hot spots.

## Hunt all “Hollers”

A given drainage may have several “hollers” leading to the main valley. Hunt each one intently. The area where you found birds last year may be vacant on the next hunt. Be prepared to hunt the entire area and thoroughly search with your dog.

## Second Flushes

Birds that fly uphill will not fly as far as those that go downhill. If bird numbers justify attempting second flushes, try for the uphill birds. They will be much easier for your dog to find.

## Leave Birds for Brood Stock

Always be conscious of bird numbers and do not over-harvest a given area. Hunting a different area each time out is beneficial to preserving bird numbers. Hunter judgement is especially important to maintaining bird numbers during the latter part of the season after natural mortality has already reduced the population. While harvesting a bird or two is fine, this may be the time when hunting for dog training and the flush become equally important to shooting.

## CLEANING

Grouse are small enough that they do not require field dressing. However, some people prefer to dispose of the organs in the field. To do so, split the skin below the tip of the breast bone and reach under the breast to remove all organs. By trimming down to the tail and around the anal opening, the entire intestinal tract can be removed.

Like most birds, a layer of fat is stored just beneath the skin. This keeps the flesh moist during cooking if the bird is plucked. However, it is up to the individual whether the bird is skinned or plucked. If you plan to cut it up prior to preparation, it will take less space in the freezer if you cut it up immediately. Grouse are cut up in much

the same way as a chicken, with the breast left in one piece. To freeze the bird, place them in a plastic bag with water covering all pieces. As with other game, remove the air from the bag and place in the freezer. Birds frozen this way should be well preserved for at least 6 months

## RECIPES

### Ruffed Grouse with Orange Slices

*Found in recipes, no source, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.*

4 Grouse	Salt and pepper to taste
4 slices of bacon	¼ Cup butter, melted
Grated peel of one orange	2 Tbsp orange juice
1 Tsp lemon juice	Chopped parsley
4 ¼ Inch thick orange slices, peeled and seeded	

Sprinkle grouse inside and out with salt and pepper. Cover breast of each grouse with an orange slice and a bacon slice. Fasten with string. Place grouse, breast side up, in a baking pan. Roast in preheated 350-degree oven until tender, basting frequently with combined butter, orange juice, orange peel, and lemon juice. Remove string and serve with orange slice and bacon remaining on each bird. Recommended side dishes: baked hominy and baby Brussels sprouts.

### Braised Grouse,

*Recommended by Mike Hearn, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources employee, from The Readers Digest Good Health Cookbooks-Fish and Meat, 1986.*

Before cooking, cut the bird into pieces, coat with seasoned flour and brown (in hot fat or oil) in a pan. Remove the browned game from the pan and place in a casserole dish. Rinse the pan with ½ cup of dry red wine or game stock. Add the liquid (can use a cup of dry red wine as a substitute) to the casserole, cover tightly with lid and cook in the center of pre-heated oven at 325 degrees for one hour or until the meat is tender.





# WATERFOWL HUNTING

This section will give the hunter some general information about all waterfowl. Waterfowl hunters may be hunting for one species on a given day, but they do not normally hunt for a single species all season long. However, it does happen that only one species is in season, such as late season snow geese.

## HABITAT

Water is the common denominator in habitat for these birds. As water is a primary factor in food, shelter and space for waterfowl, the biological need for water is easily satisfied. As with any other group of animals, habitat requirements vary for different waterfowl. While you may find large numbers of ducks on small creeks, geese typically will look for larger bodies of water. Whatever the size of

the waterbody, being on the water allows ducks and geese to leisurely escape most predators, find food, and rest.

The diet of geese includes a high proportion of grass and leftover grain in cultivated fields. They will eat aquatic plants, but tend to feed more on dry land. Ducks fall into two categories: divers and dabblers. Divers will dive underwater to find food in fairly deep water while dabblers simply turn their tails up and feed a few inches underwater. Both divers and dabblers eat vegetation in the water along with snails and insects that are on the plants. Ducks will also feed on leftover grain in croplands as it offers high energy food for their migration needs.

Hunters can take advantage of these feeding habits by establishing blinds in multiple locations. Goose blinds should be located on larger bodies of water. Duck blinds could be established on smaller bodies or near small wetlands. Pit blinds for ducks or geese could be dug into cornfields or near winter wheat. When grain fields are snow-covered, some hunters simply lay down under white sheets amidst their decoys.

Most waterfowl are considered migratory; however, in Kentucky, there are resident birds, particularly Canada geese. Those that migrate use large sections of the continent for various life requirements. Hunters can use this knowledge by watching the advance of major winter storms in the northern parts of the Mississippi Flyway. There will normally be large flocks of waterfowl arriving in Kentucky within a few days when the storms and cold weather grip the northern wetlands.

Resident geese in Kentucky and farther north are adapted to urban areas. Many cities offer sanctuary from hunters, food on golf courses, and water sources in parks. These birds only migrate in extreme weather conditions, and then only temporarily. In some areas, they have been noted to move several hundred miles east/west rather than south. They move just far enough to survive, then return to the protected area of residence when milder weather returns.

## TIPS

### Know the Basics

The best way to learn to hunt waterfowl is to find a trusted friend and learn from him or her. However, each hunter should prepare to be the best hunter he or she can be.

There are a host of waterfowl hunting gadgets and advertised



*Preening is my favorite time of day.*

advancements, but beginners need to start with basics. First, study the waterfowl guide so you know state and federal rules. Recommended hunting equipment will include a 12 gauge shotgun, modified choke, calls (with lots of practice) and good working decoys that are properly strung and weighted.

Clothing should

be dull colored, and waterproof, and your footwear should also be waterproof. Your hat or cap should have a bill to shade your eyes. Finally, always include a life jacket if you will spend any time on open water.

### **Know Waterfowl Species**

Each hunter should be able to identify various species and distinguish males from females (mallards) as the birds fly toward the blind. Identifying features include color, size, silhouette, and call. The flight or resting pattern can also help you identify species at a distance. Certain species may be protected in a given year or have greatly reduced harvest. By early identification, the hunter can pass up a shot on a given bird and help conserve that species for the future.

### **Practice your Calling and Shooting Before Hunting**

As with most hunting, preparation will result in higher success rates. A new waterfowl hunter should consult tapes and videos for appropriate calls at different stages of the flock's approach. The shooting practice is difficult to simulate. Waterfowl are approaching from out of range and high, while target shooting is usually prac-

ticed on targets going away. However, through practice, shooters will be not only become better at moving targets, they will also be more aware of appropriate range for an effective shot.

### Early Season versus Late Season Ducks

In the early part of the fall, wood ducks and teal are available in Kentucky. As the season progresses, these smaller birds may leave with any given cold front. The smaller ducks are fast flyers, turn quickly and take advantage of nearby cover.

The birds that arrive from the north early in the season will primarily be hens with their broods. The young of the year birds are smaller and are more drab colored.

Mallards and other large ducks that arrive from the northern nesting areas later in the season will consist mainly of drakes and hens that did not nest successfully. These late season birds will usually be the most colorful. The larger ducks tend to be slower and steadier. Every group of waterfowl offers the hunter unique challenges in wing shooting.

### Land Based Blinds

All blinds have a few things in common. They are intended to allow the hunter to hide near appropriate habitat to be in range of incoming birds. They will normally have seats and shooting windows. It is best to have an experienced hunter that can “call the shots” for the entire blind.

Land based blinds can be permanent sites that are dug into locations that provide hunting year after year or they can be quickly assembled temporary blinds. In both cases, using the available vegetation from the location, willows, oaks, high grass, or reeds, will help make the blind blend into the natural setting.

### Boat Blinds

Having a blind mounted on a boat allows the hunter to move easily. Boat blinds can be advantageous to move away from wind swept flats to more secluded areas. As they are floating, the hunters must be very patient and still to avoid boat movement and noise. Hunters in boat blinds should include face covers in their hunting cloths. Always wear a personal floatation device, as it is easy to lose your balance if you stand up to shoot.



## Sun at Your Back

Plan your blind with the birds looking into the sun as they approach. This will require different locations for morning and afternoon hunts. Using sun direction gives you, the hunter several advantages. First, you will have much better vision and be able to pick out the drakes. Second, the birds will not be able to pick up details as well looking into direct and reflected sunlight. Finally, glints of light from your gun barrel or face will be reduced with the sun shining on the back of your blind.

## Setting up the Decoys

The setting of your spread depends on wind, sun, cover and water conditions. Leave space for the birds to alight that is within shooting range of the blind. If hunting in flooded timber or on overflow water, leave an opening in the woods or light brush.

## To Call or Not to Call

When hunting waterfowl, it is important to know when to call loudly or softly. To attract a flock of birds to your spread, you need to call loudly. As they are turning toward you, a softer call is in order. As they circle the blind, a slower soft call will keep them interested. If they circle initially but appear to be leaving, return to louder calls. Don't call at all if the birds are directly over the blind. Once the birds are established on flight to the decoys, stop calling. Now is the time to pick your targets and ready yourself for the shots.

## Alter Your Spread of Decoys

Altering your spread is usually accomplished on small spreads when birds are shying from your decoys on the swing. It may be required for the day's conditions and can change hour to hour. If you are shooting over a large spread with an experienced hunter, there is normally less need to alter your spread on a day to day basis. Large decoy spreads usually take into account various weather and wind conditions.

## Size and Speed are Deceiving

If you have been hunting ducks, the first flock of geese will cause distance perception. As the birds are much larger, you will think they are in range when they are not. A good rule of thumb is if the end of the gun barrel covers half the bird, it is probably out of



*They should be coming from the lake over there.*

range. Another visual effect is rate of wing beat. While a goose wing beat is only about half that of mallards, the flight speed is approximately the same. By using the same “swing and follow through” techniques for all wing shooting, this perception is eliminated. When shooting birds that you are calling into the blind, remember to shoot them as they come in, not going away.

## **CLEANING**

Field dressing waterfowl is reasonably easy. With a sharp pocket knife, split the skin below the tip of the breast, reach inside the body cavity, and remove the internal organs. The membranes holding the intestinal tract in place at the tail can be cut afield to completely remove the intestines. Removing the insides allows the meat to cool, and wiping the body cavity to remove intestinal fluids will prevent the meat from being tainted.

If the hunter wants a roasted duck or goose, most birds can be plucked. They can be dry picked or scalded. By dipping the bird in water, heated to around 180 degrees, the feathers can be saturated and removed by rubbing. Some people who pick the feathers also cover the bird with a layer of melted wax, then remove the dried wax to remove fine feathers. Wing feathers may be pulled or the wing can be discarded. If you plan on serving only the breast, it can either be skinned or plucked.

There is a substantial layer of fat under the skin of waterfowl, and cooking with this fat attached will keep the meat moist. However,

you may want to cook in a manner that allows the fat to drain away from the bird.

As with other game, cover all parts of each bird in water and freeze them. If you plan to freeze plucked ducks or geese, plan on using the birds earlier than you would other game. The fat under the skin can become foul quicker than the meat, and can spoil the taste of the birds.

## RECIPES

### Duck Breasts in Gravy

*Vernon Anderson, Retired,  
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources*

4 – 6 Breasts	Rice
2 Cans of cream of mushroom soup	Flour
2 Cans of milk	Oil

Cut breasts into 1/8 inch strips. Roll in flour and brown in large skillet of oil. Remove breasts from skillet and break them into small pieces. Drain the oil and add mushroom soup to skillet with milk. After mixing soup, place breast meat into mixture and simmer for one hour. Serve over rice.

### Bubba's Gourmet Goose

*Mrs. Kevin L. Chaffins, Mt. Sterling, KY*

1 Large Canada goose	¼ Cup Cognac
2 Tbsp dry mustard	¼ Pound butter
Salt and pepper to taste	Dash thyme
6 Medium apples with peel, coarsely cut	Bay leaves
Fruit juice, your choice of type	

In a large bowl, mix by hand the apples, salt, pepper, and half the Cognac. Stuff the bird with ½ of this mixture. Place the bird in a pan and surround it with the remainder of the stuffing. Make a paste with butter and mustard and coat the goose. Add bay leaves, salt, pepper, and thyme. Roast in a 350 degree oven for 3 ½ hours. Check the goose frequently. If the goose becomes dry, turn it over and add fruit juice of any type. Baste regularly with remaining Cognac and equal parts water until goose is done to taste.



# ELK HUNTING

## HABITAT

When hunting most animals, the hunter is concerned with the habitat needs for individual animals or small groups. With elk, the hunter needs to think in terms of the herd. This may be one bull and four to as many as 25 cows. These are much larger animals than other game species that are hunted in Kentucky. The food and water requirements, therefore, are considerably more than those required by deer, for example.

Elk are known as a grazing animal. Most of their food will be grass, but they do include some tender shoots or forbs in their diet. To use feeding habits in hunting elk, a hunter might look for an area with several large grassy areas with heavy cover and water nearby.

A running stream or a pond will give an elk herd plenty of water. However, they will not be able to use a small source such as a spring, like individual deer may. Hunters can use this to their advantage by knowing the primary watering hole for the herd in question and waiting near that water for a shot.

When using a spotting scope to locate a bedded herd, the hunter should concentrate his or her spotting efforts in reasonably heavy cover. The animals will lay down on north facing slopes during warm days or south facing slopes on cold days. When searching for



elk, look for the light colored rump patch. This patch of hair around the tail can be visible at long distances. Early in the morning on cold days, hunters can search heavily wooded areas for clouds of steam, produced as elk exhale.

An individual herd of elk may stay within one square mile area for several weeks if undisturbed. They may also move 15 miles overnight without warning or disturbance. In Kentucky, elk have not displayed the winter migration that is seen in western states, however, individual animals have been found far from the intended area for re-introduction.

## TIPS

### Pack Horses

Elk are large animals. A field dressed bull can weigh over 600 pounds, and a cow over 400. The antlers alone, without the head, can weigh over 50 pounds. Horses are to elk hunters as the bird dog is to quail hunters. The plan would be to skin and quarter the elk, remove the head, and load all parts onto horses. If horses are not available, hunters should plan on making several trips with a device like a modified wheelbarrow. Backpacks can be used, but again the number of trips is increased.

### Spotting Scope

Elk hunting is a matter of selecting the animal you want to harvest. To be selective, a spotting scope will allow you to observe elk at a great distance and not disturb one herd if you want to seek a better bull. Once you locate the animal you want to hunt, an appropriate stalk can be planned.

### Field Judging Elk

Hunters can readily judge the trophy quality of bulls with a little practice using a spotting scope or good binoculars. First, a mature bull will have at least five points on one side of his rack. To judge the length of his antlers, compare them to the length of his face. A mature bull's face is approximately 18 inches from the tip of his nose to the base of his antlers. A trophy bull will have main beams that are about three times the length of his face or longer. The fourth tine, or the dagger, is another key. This tine on large, mature bulls is approximately equal to the length of his face or longer. Likewise, the brow tines (two tines closest to the base of the antlers) are

also equal to the length of the mature bull's face or longer.

### Heavier Loads for Sure Kill

If you are hunting elk with the same gun you use to hunt deer, you should plan to find cartridges with heavier loads. While the lighter load may kill the elk, you may be tracking the animal a greater distance. The desire is a quick and efficient kill, and a heavier bullet will do more damage at the point of impact.

### Think of Travel Routes

Elk do not migrate in Kentucky as they do in western states. However, they do have daily habit patterns and through scouting, a hunter can establish points on the travel routes where he or she can intercept the herd. The travel route will include the primary feeding location, source of water, and bedding area.

### Calling

Listening for bugling bulls in early morning and late evening hours is one of the best ways to locate bulls during the rut period. A bull elk bugles to establish and maintain his harem of cows. When you have the opportunity to observe or hunt elk during bugling season, it is indeed one of the most exciting moments you will experience. Many hunters use the aggressiveness of the bull by calling to him. The bull then attempts to find the "bugler", considering him an "invader" upon his harem. If you are well hidden, he may be "clearing out trees" within 15 yards before you get a clear shot.

Another calling option is to use a cow call. Cow elk have vocal calls throughout the year, and they are especially vocal during breeding season. Cow calls are highly effective for calling in shy bulls and cows. A combination of cow calls and bugling may prove even better. Using these calling methods is one of the best ways to bring elk into shooting range for a killing shot, particularly for archers.

## CLEANING

To field dress an elk, you will need help. It can be accomplished with one person, but moving the animal will be difficult if you do not at least have some simple tools, like a "block and tackle". As with deer, there are volumes written and many videos available to show you how to field dress an elk. In addition to the tips on deer, the haz-



**The final stage of an exciting Kentucky elk hunt.**

ards a hunter faces with elk are physical exhaustion, pulled muscles, or back problems.

Field dressing, skinning, quartering an elk, and loading it onto pack horses can take three people several hours. Depending on the time of year, you will want to get the meat cooled as quickly as possible. While most deer can be quartered and placed in a large cooler, you will need several coolers, with ice for an elk.

The same methods described for deer will work for elk if you desire to wrap and freeze it yourself. Plan time according to the amount of meat you have to work on. There is approximately three times more meat on an elk than a deer, so the time planned should be at least three times what it takes you for a deer. As with deer, that area on the body where the animal was shot can be discarded. This can be done before it is removed from the field, decreasing the amount to be transported.

## **RECIPES**

In several references, people refer to “Venison” as the meat from animals including deer and elk. Therefore, your favorite deer recipe would also work for elk.

## Ken's Woodsman Stew

*Kenneth Kirby, Danville, KY*

1½ Pound elk meat, cut in ¾ inch pieces	3 Carrots, chopped
3 Stalks chopped celery	6 Potatoes
3 Cloves garlic, chopped	2 Large onions, coarsely diced
1 Tsp oregano	1 15 ½ Ounce can yellow hominy
1 Tsp seasoned salt	1 Tsp basil
3 Cups water	1 Tsp cumin
Salt to taste	½ Tsp black pepper
¼ Tsp red pepper (optional)	1 Can beer
	1 Cup wine

In an iron pot, brown meat in 2 tablespoons of oil. When browned, drain liquid. Add all other ingredients and seasonings. Simmer 2 hours or until the elk meat is tender.

## Rex's Steamboat Elk

*Rex Burkhead, Wildlife and Boating Officer.*

10 Pound elk roast	1 Cup coarse white salt
1 Cup brown sugar	5 Tbs. black pepper
4 Tbs. red pepper	3 Tbs. minced garlic
1 Can of cola	½ Bottle (4 oz) Worcestershire sauce

Roll and tie your roast and place in a large baking dish. Mix the salt, brown sugar, both peppers, and garlic and stir or shake thoroughly. Rub this mixture into the roast for several minutes, bringing the mixture from the dish back onto the meat. The mixture that isn't absorbed in the meat should be caked onto the roast. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

Preheat the smoker or cooker to 250 degrees. Take meat out of refrigerator and place in a disposable, aluminum turkey cooker. Gently pour can of cola and Worcestershire sauce over the meat. Soak a disposable cotton towel in the juices in the pan and lay the towel over the roast. Plan to cook for 6-8 hours at 250-300 degrees. Periodically ladle the juices from the pan onto the towel. At 6 hours begin testing your meat with a meat thermometer for desired degree of cooking.



## GLOSSARY

**Aquatic** - Referring to water.

**Baiting** - Placing food in an area to attract wildlife.

**Blind** - A structure designed to hide humans in natural areas.

**Block and tackle** - A simple machine used to lift objects.

**Brood** - The group of young raised by a female bird.

**Camouflage** - Clothing or material used to blend into natural surroundings.

**Canine** - Referring to dogs.

**Canopy** - The top of the trees.

**Channelize** - To change, usually straighten, the natural waterways.

**Chaos in Nature** - Ever changing conditions which alter the natural world.

**Conservation** - In reference to wildlife, the wise use of natural resources.

**Corridor** - A natural area leading from one habitat component to another.

**Covey** - In reference to birds, a group.

**Cyclic species** - Animals that have periods when they flourish, followed by periods when there are few individuals.

**Drake** - The male duck.

**Entrails** - Internal organs

**Fair chase** - Hunting in a sporting manner.

**Forbs** - The shoots of small woody vegetation.

**Fragmentation** - In reference to habitat, leaving small areas within development.

**Habitat** - The arrangement of food, water, shelter and space needed by every animal.

**Home range** - The normal area in which an animal will live its life.

**Mast** - Nuts from nut bearing trees.

**Migratory species** - Animals that move great distances to find habitat needs.

**Muscle sheath** - The tissue around the muscles.

**Native** - A term to refer to those plants and animals that naturally occur in an area.

**Parasite** - An organism that takes its energy from another organism without killing it.

**Pelvic** - The major bone between the hips.

**Population** - The number of animals of a given species.

**Predator** - An organism that kills another organism to gain energy.

**Preservation** - A process to keep things exactly like they are today.

**Prey** - An organism that is killed by predators and used for energy.

**Rub** - A place where male deer or elk polish their antlers on trees or shrubs.

**Rut** - Refers to the breeding season.

**Succession** - Natural process of development of plants and animals.

**Seep** - A place where water trickles from the ground, very small amount.

**Sinew** - Very tough fibers found in the meat of animals.

**Spur** - A sharp piece of material on the leg of male birds.

**Stalk** - To sneak up on an animal.

**Sustainable** - A resource that will continue if not developed.

**Terrain** - The way the land is arranged.



*I think he's on point*

The original intent of the author was to have a list of five favorite web sites, books, cook books, etc. However, each person will have their own specific needs. Therefore, we recommend you use your search engine on the web to specify your individual needs. Most sites also contain a list of books, videos, and cookbooks.

For those who are reading the printed version of this booklet, we recommend you proceed to your local library. Look for books and magazine articles that focus on hunting specialties that interest you.



*Good friends - a good meal*

## **FIREARM SAFETY TIPS:**

- Properly store firearms and ammunition when they are not in use.
- Treat every firearm as if it were loaded, every time.
- When handling firearms, keep them pointed in a safe direction whether they are loaded or not.
- Point firearms only at objects that you intend to shoot. This does not include televisions.
- When hunting, know the location of all hunting partners and others in the field. This includes canine partners.

