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HUNTING & FISHING GUIDE



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Avoid These Common Errors

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Even the most experienced hunter might suffer a stumble or two.

Recognizing your mistakes and learning from them is the important part. It's how we all become better hunters. Here's a look at some of the most common errors made while on a hunt:

Timing

Avoid choosing the wrong hunting times. Many focus on early mornings and evenings, to the exclusion of midday hunts. However, a significant number of mature deer are harvested between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Don't delay your shot. You should take a clear shot at the first opportunity as a buck comes within range. You're more likely to miss by allowing the deer to approach too closely. Research indicates that approximately 80 percent of missed shots are aimed too high.



TOMASZ ZAJDA – STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Location

Avoid hunting prime locations too early. Reserve your best spots for optimal conditions to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on them prematurely. Avoid following the crowd and don't overlook smaller

public parcels. Larger areas typically attract the most hunters, and mature bucks are quick to evade them. If you own or lease hunting land, exercise caution when agreeing to allow friends to hunt on your property. This can quickly lead to deer

overpressure.

Don't share too much information. When you encounter that big buck, it's often best to maintain discretion regarding your location and methods. Telling others about your discovery could result in others bagging the

deer in your spot before you have the chance to return. Consider alternative food sources. Mature bucks can be quite cunning. They tend to be more cautious around commonly sought food sources during prime hunting hours. Instead, consider focusing your efforts near areas rich in honeysuckle, greenbriar and blackberry.

Safety

Always wear a safety harness. Safety is paramount when hunting, so secure yourself with a climbing belt when climbing up or down a tree. Falls from tree stands are a leading cause of injuries among hunters.

While advancements in technology have led to the development of remarkable tools for hunting, an over-reliance on these gadgets can lead to complacency.

Remember that this equipment can aid and enhance your experience, but it's no substitute for essential hunting skills.

Hunting 101

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Hunting can be an exciting and rewarding pastime, even if you don't come from a long line of outdoorsy types.

Many people take up the hobby as adults. Just keep in mind that there are key considerations before you do, including the inherent difficulties associated with rugged terrain and weather conditions.

Expect Adversity

Hunting can lead you into challenging and even uncomfortable places. The conditions you may encounter while in hunting stands, blinds or boats can vary widely, from extreme temperatures to wind and rain. Consider the type of hunting you're interested in and the particular conditions

you'll face before jumping in. The more well-informed you are about what to expect, the better prepared you'll be for whatever adversity comes your way.

Big Time Commitment

Hunting tends to demand a substantial time investment. Part of taking up hunting is being prepared to commit to long trips and longer hours – and sometimes you'll still return empty-handed. Activities like big game bow hunting on public lands can be particularly time-intensive. You'll have to spend time getting your licensing in order with governmental authorities. Beginners should schedule ample time for preparation, including practicing with your weapon and familiarizing yourself with the

hunting area.

Game And Weapons

Harvest rates can vary significantly depending on the species and the state where you live. If hunters significantly outnumber deer, for instance, you might spend a considerable amount of time in fruitless pursuit of an animal. Experts often recommend selecting an animal whose habitat you find particularly engaging, so you can reconnect with nature even if you don't have a successful hunt.

The choice of weapon profoundly influences every hunting experience. It dictates how close you must be to the animal. Bow and arrows require hunters to be far nearer to an animal than a rifle.

Find A Mentor

If you take up bow hunting, it will require years of practice and expertise. That's typical of a pastime where it's always smart for the inexperienced to have a mentor. Look to those with more

time in the outdoors to guide you into this hobby. There's a lot of hard-won knowledge shared when talking about best practices and best places, but these lessons also come with treasured memories and lots of camaraderie.



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Becoming a Better Tracker

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Before you go, you'll need to know where the wildlife is. Begin with thorough research about the game you're hunting, focusing on their behavior, diet and habitat.

Once you've learned all of this, you'll be on your way to becoming a better tracker. Soon, dinner will be served!

Look For Signs

Wildlife typically move around in lightly wooded areas and open fields, and they often leave behind noticeable signs of their presence. One reliable method for identifying areas with significant animal activity is simply to look for foot or hoof prints. Familiarize yourself with images of the species you plan to hunt so you can accurately gauge their size. Your focus is on adult animals. Follow the tracks safely and you'll often find their habitat.

Learning to identify animals by their feces can also be useful. Analyze droppings for insights into how recently an animal has been in the vicinity, and figure out the number that may be present. This aspect of research is certainly not



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glamorous, but it often serves as a critical factor in whether you have a productive hunt or not.

If you typically frequent the same hunting grounds, consider investing in a few trail cameras. Reviewing the footage prior to the hunting will equip you with valuable knowledge about when and where their activity is taking place.

Tracking A Target

Consider equipping yourself with lights designed to improve visibility in shady or low-light times of the day. If you bring along a trained hunting dog, the chances of successfully locating your game are significantly increased. A well-prepared canine can easily track the scent, all while guiding a

hunter along.

Unfortunately, getting a clean kill with a single shot is not always possible. A wounded animal may move over a considerable distance, and the direction is often influenced by the location of the shot. To uphold ethical hunting practices, it's important to track down the wounded animal and complete the harvest.

The primary method for locating a target after impact is to follow the blood trail. Take note of the animal's trajectory immediately after the shot, then follow its escape route. You may be walking over longer distances, so identify the precise impact site before you leave. That will help guide you back to the starting point in the recovery process.

Focus on Safety

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Hunting provides a unique opportunity to build connections with others, engage with nature and connect with the hobby's rich history. But it does come with certain risks.

Be aware of key safety measures to ensure everyone's well-being. Every year, careless hunting practices needlessly result in injury or even death.

Paramount to all these guidelines are firearm safety. But many injuries are associated with routine activities, including climbing to and from deer

stands. Then there are potential encounters with hazardous wildlife.

You can navigate these unique risks and challenges by strictly following a generally agreed-upon set of safety protocols.

Safety Courses

Hunter safety courses are available for beginners. In some cases, they may be mandated depending on where you live. For detailed information regarding course schedules, fees and locations, check out online resources or reach out to local fisheries and wildlife officials. Staff

members at sporting goods stores may be able to provide valuable assistance.

Dressing Right

Wear high-visibility orange clothing to ensure you are easily identifiable to other hunters. Avoid overpacking. Carrying a heavy backpack can complicate your walk through the rough or uneven terrain, as well as the climb to your stand.

Stay informed about weather conditions before and throughout your trip. This will affect what you wear; it might also require a change in plans. If strong

storms are anticipated, you may need to remain indoors. Lightning fatalities average around 50 per year in America, with hundreds more experiencing serious injuries.

Stay Alert

Avoid consuming alcohol or any intoxicating substances before or during your hunt. Remaining alert and clear-headed is vital when handling firearms. Before you leave, tell a trusted individual about your plans, detailing where you're going, when you expect to get back and any other important details

about your trip. When possible, take a buddy or two. Companionship will add to the experience, and they'll be there if something goes wrong.

For hikers, campers, and others who enjoy the outdoors, be aware of hunting seasons so you're prepared. Non-hunters are also advised to wear bright clothing to help with their visibility. Keep dogs on a leash so they're not misidentified as wildlife. Remember that hunting is prohibited in most national parks. Only 76 out of 400 allow it.

Hunting on a Budget

BY GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Opting to hunt for your own food certainly can help cut down on big grocery bills, but remember, there are costs involved in hunting.

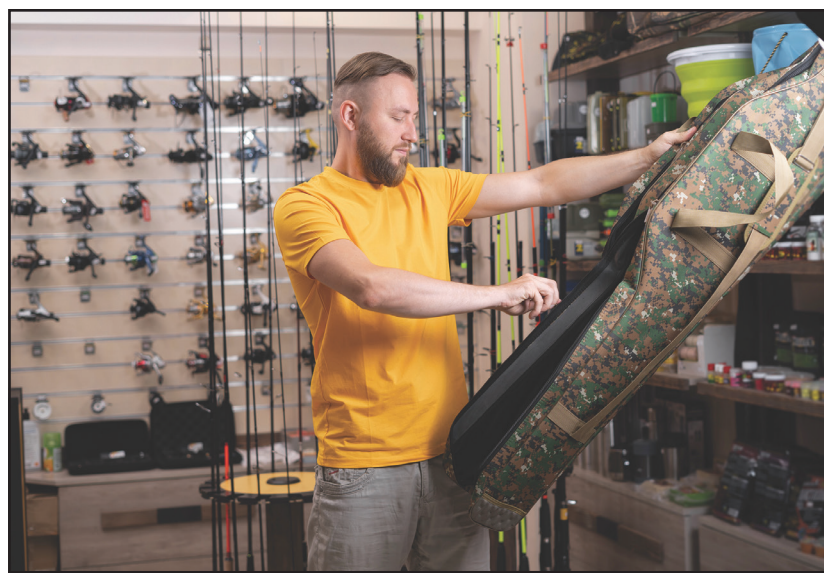
Before starting this rewarding hobby, create a budget to help guard against overspending. Experienced hunters can maximize their savings at the supermarket by harvesting their own food. Budget-friendly options while on the hunt can also improve the experience without emptying your bank account.

Sharing The Experience

You can split many of the built-in costs when you hunt with a friend. You'll only pay half of the cost when buying things like material for stands, trail cameras and cell cam plans. If you take turns when taking aim at nearby game, you'll save on ammunition – and you can always share the results, too. Either way, there's a sense of camaraderie built in when hunting with someone else.

Second-Hand Gear

If you are looking to buy



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new equipment to enhance your experience, consider second-hand options. Talk to fellow hunters in your local community, hunting club or on social media platforms about purchasing equipment after they've upgraded. You'll be saving money while promoting sustain-

able practices within the hunting community. They may even agree to let you use an item on a trial basis, allowing you to get comfortable with it before committing to the purchase.

When you're ready to buy new, the temptation is to go all out

on state-of-the-art camouflage. Cheaper brands are available at sporting goods stores and some big-box retailers. Stick with these low-cost options, particularly at first, as long as they keep you warm and dry.

Cost-Saving Options

Most states require hunters to have appropriate licenses, depending on the season or type of game they're pursuing.

These individual permits are usually affordable, but there may be opportunities for savings by purchasing all necessary licenses for the year in a single transaction. Before getting certification for one season or species, check whether your state provides bundled options to build savings.

Look for public land where hunting is available for no additional cost. There's no need to join a pricey hunting club or pay for access to private lands, especially if you are a newer, less experienced hunter. You can save hundreds of dollars each season, if not thousands.



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Indiana April 2025 – March 2026

HUNTING & TRAPPING SEASONS



FURBEARERS	HUNTING DATES	TRAPPING DATES
Red & Gray Fox	Oct. 15, 2025 – Feb. 28, 2026	Oct. 15, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026
Coyote & Striped Skunk	Oct. 15, 2025 – March 15, 2026	Oct. 15, 2025 – March 15, 2026
Raccoon & Opossum	Nov. 8, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026	Nov. 8, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026
Dog Running (Raccoon, Opossum) Chasing season only-no hunting	Feb. 1, 2025 – Oct. 25, 2025	----- (no trapping) -----
Beaver	Nov. 15, 2025 – March 15, 2026	Nov. 15, 2025 – March 15, 2026
Mink, Muskrat & Long-Tailed Weasel	Nov. 15, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026	Nov. 15, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026
River Otter	----- (no hunting) -----	Nov. 15, 2025 – March 15, 2026*
Bobcat	----- (no hunting) -----	Nov. 8, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026**
*There is a seasonal bag limit of 2 river otters per person. Season may close earlier if statewide quota is reached. ** There is a seasonal bag limit of 1 bobcat per person. See the Hunting & Trapping Guide for counties open to bobcat trapping. Season may close earlier if statewide quota is reached.		
WOODLAND BIG GAME	HUNTING DATES	BAG LIMIT*
Wild Turkey		
Youth	April 19 & 20, 2025	1 bearded or male turkey per hunter in youth/spring season
Spring	April 23 – May 11, 2025	
Fall-Archery*	Oct.1 – 26, 2025 Dec. 6, 2025 – Jan. 4, 2026	1 bird of either sex per hunter each fall
Fall-Firearms*	Oct. 15 – 26, 2025	
Turkey hunting hours: ½ hour before sunrise to sunset. * See Hunting and Trapping Guide for counties open to fall turkey hunting. No more than one bird of either sex may be taken in the fall turkey season, regardless of equipment. A separate turkey license is needed for the spring and fall turkey season.		
Deer		
Reduction Zone*	Sept. 15, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026	See current Hunting & Trapping Guide for deer season bag limits or visit wildlife.IN.gov
Youth	Sept. 27 & 28, 2025	
Archery	Oct. 1, 2025 – Jan. 4, 2026	
Firearms	Nov. 15, 2025 – Nov. 30, 2025	
Muzzleloader	Dec. 6 – 21, 2025	
Deer hunting hours: ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset. *Deer Reduction Zones, previously called Urban Zones, are in designated locations only.		
WOODLAND SMALL GAME	HUNTING DATES	DAILY LIMIT*
Gray & Fox Squirrel	Aug. 15, 2025 – Jan. 31, 2026	5
Ruffed Grouse	Suspended	
UPLAND GAME	HUNTING DATES	DAILY LIMIT*
Pheasant (statewide-cock only)	Nov. 1 – Dec. 15, 2025	2
Quail (North of I-74)**	Nov. 1 – Dec. 15, 2025	4
Quail (South of I-74)**	Nov. 1, 2025 – Jan. 10, 2026	8
Rabbit	Nov. 1, 2025 – Feb. 28, 2026	5
MISCELLANEOUS GAME	HUNTING/TRAPPING DATES	DAILY LIMIT*
Crow	July 1 – Aug.15, 2025 Dec.13, 2025 – March 1, 2026	No limit
Green Frog & Bullfrog	June 15, 2025 – April 30, 2026	25
Eastern Snapping Turtle, Smooth & Spiny Softshell Turtles	July 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026	4***
* The possession limit on pheasants, quail, rabbits, squirrels, frogs, and turtles is two times the daily bag limit. ** Quail bag limits vary on some DNR properties (see Hunting & Trapping Guide). ***Limit is singly or in aggregate. These species of turtles must have a carapace length of at least 12 inches.		

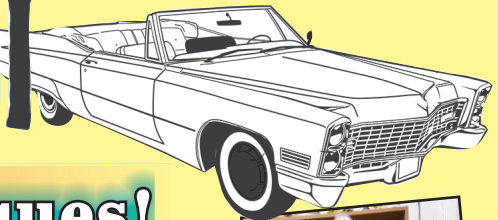
Indiana Sept. 2025 – Feb. 2026

HUNTING & TRAPPING SEASONS



MIGRATORY BIRDS	HUNTING DATES	BAG LIMIT
Mourning Dove	Sept. 1 – Oct. 19, 2025 Nov. 1 – 30, 2025 Dec. 20 – 30, 2025	15*
Snipe	Sept. 1 – Dec.16, 2025	8
Woodcock	Oct. 15 – Nov. 28, 2025	3
Sora Rail	Sept. 1 – Nov. 9, 2025	25
Early Teal	Sept. 6 – 14, 2025	6
Migratory bird hunting hours: 1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset * The daily bag and possession limits are for mourning doves and white-winged doves in aggregate.		
WATERFOWL	HUNTING DATES	DAILY LIMIT
NORTH ZONE		
Ducks, Coots, Mergansers	Oct. 18 – Dec. 7, 2025 Dec. 20 – 28, 2025	*
Canada geese, Light geese, & Brant	Sept. 1 – 10, 2025 Oct. 18 – 26, 2025 Nov. 22, 2025 – Feb. 15, 2026	**
White-fronted geese	Nov. 22, 2025 – Feb. 15, 2026	2***
Youth & Veteran	Oct. 11 – 12, 2025	Same as regular season****
CENTRAL ZONE		
Ducks, Coots, Mergansers	Nov. 1 – 9, 2025 Nov. 22, 2025 – Jan. 11, 2026	*
Canada geese, Light geese, & Brant	Sept. 1 – 10, 2025 Nov. 1 – 9, 2025 Nov. 22, 2025 – Feb. 15, 2026	**
White-fronted geese	Nov. 22, 2025 – Feb. 15, 2026	***
Youth & Veteran	Oct. 25 – 26, 2025	Same as regular season****
SOUTH ZONE		
Ducks, Coots, Mergansers	Nov. 8 – 9, 2025 Nov. 29, 2025 – Jan. 25, 2026	*
Canada geese, Light geese, & Brant	Sept. 1 – 14, 2025 Nov. 8 – 12, 2025 Nov. 22, 2025 – Feb. 15, 2026	**
White-fronted geese	Nov. 22, 2025 – Feb. 15, 2026	2***
Youth & Veteran	Nov. 1 – 2, 2025	Same as regular season***
Waterfowl hunting hours: ½ hour before sunrise to sunset. * The daily bag limit for coots is 15. The daily bag limit for mergansers is 5, which may include no more than 2 hooded mergansers. The daily bag limit for ducks is 6, which may include no more than 4 mallards (2 of which may be hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 canvasbacks, 3 pintail, 2 redheads, 2 black ducks, 1 mottled duck, and 1 or 2 scaup. The daily bag limit may include only 1 scaup before Nov. 2 in the North Zone, Nov. 28 in the Central Zone, and Dec. 12 in the South Zone. The daily bag limit may include 2 scaup on or after those dates. The possession limit is 3 times the daily bag limit. ** The daily bag limit for Canada geese and brant is 5 in the aggregate. The possession limit for Canada geese and brant is 3 times the daily bag limit. The daily bag limit for light geese (snow, blue, Ross) is 20. There is no possession limit for light geese. *** The daily bag limit is 2. The possession limit is 6 **** For youth and veteran hunting dates, the daily bag for scaup is 1 per day.		

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