



Deer Hunting basics

The most common form of deer hunting in Minnesota is to simply sit in an elevated stand or ground blind and wait for a deer to come to you. Yes, some hunters “still hunt,” which means they walk slowly, quietly and unrythmically and stop often in hopes of seeing a deer.

Similarly, some hunters hunt in groups that conduct “deer drives.” Deer drives typically involve splitting into groups: those who have the job of driving deer out of heavy cover and those who have the job of trying to shoot them as they elude the drivers. Deer drives work best in landscapes and habitats where escape routes are fairly predictable, such as a wooded draw between two open farm fields.

Since deer hunting is largely about sitting quietly, especially during prime deer movement times near dawn and dusk, there are some things you should be looking for when selecting a hunting site.

Deer droppings: By looking for deer droppings you can make decisions on whether you want to hunt a specific area. If you see an abundance of droppings, and fresh ones at that, you may want to set up in this area. If you see relatively few droppings or they are not fresh, perhaps you want to hunt elsewhere.

Tracks and trails: Deer leave tracks and trails. Look for these. When you discover many tracks or a defined

trail you have found an area that deer are comfortable moving through or living in. Deer trails are often found along forest or woodland edges, swamp and swale edges, farm field edges and in and out of heavy thickets or brush.

Scrapes and rubs: Bucks reveal their presence by creating scrapes and rubs as the autumn breeding season gets under way. Scrapes are bare areas of ground where a buck has cleared away leaves and other litter with its hoofs. Rubs are bare spots on small trees where a buck rubs its forehead to leave scent to mark their territory and to remove velvet from its antlers. If you find an active scrape or recent rub you know you are in the home area of a mature buck.

Advantageous sites: Advantageous sites are those that give you an edge for one reason or another. In much of Minnesota an advantageous site is where acorn-dropping oak trees are common, especially the white oak acorns that deer most prefer because they have least amount of tannic acid. Other advantageous sites include wooded areas near recently harvested grain fields, secluded ponds and areas adjacent to large vegetable gardens or apple and fruit tree groves.

Places where the wind will be in your face: Consider the prevailing wind direction when you set up a stand or blind. You don’t want your scent to blow into the area where you most expect the deer to come from. It is best to hunt with the wind in your face. Deer often detect your scent before they see you ... or you see them.

Duck hunting for beginners

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Taking aim is important and to be precise, you will have enough time to take at least three well-aimed shots before the birdie goes out of the range. Thereby, it is only rational to slow down, take your time to aim at the duck. Suppress the jerk during shotgun mounting and never rush on to shots. This will take time to get used to, but believe me once you are able to control your excitement and anxiety, the kills will follow.

Take out one birdie at a time

Getting along the previous point, another common mistake most novice duck hunters make is to shoot at the flight without taking aim at one duck. You know a flight of ducks coming in your decoy is more than 90% air. Yes, without aiming you’ll most probably be hitting the air in between the flight. Thereby, it is useless to shot the flight of ducks without specifying a target. Calm your nerves and suppress your anxiety, is the order of the duck shooting.

Hunting tip for the late season

Opening up a waterhole in frozen marshes or lakes is one seriously effective tip to shoot some birdies in late season. If the ice isn’t too thick to cut clean slices, use a net to pick up shattered ice from the surface of the hole, which doesn’t look natural.

Staying late does pay off

To take advantage of strong tailwinds, waterfowls to tend to migrate behind cold fronts. Thereby, staying late in the morning is a good idea to shoot migrating birdies looking to take some rest.

Patience has its rewards

Waterfowl hunting is a patience sport and there is no way you can rush into kills. Try to be patient and wait for the right opportunity to fire. Shooting randomly without aiming or without taking into view the group patterns of birdies will only result in more misses and more desperation.

Shoot the trailing birdie

Well, this is more logical than intuitive. When a duck flight is landing most of the hunters will aim at the lowest and closest birdies, which mean there is a greater chance of two or more hunters aiming for the same bird. Personally, I prefer shooting the highest birdie in the flight for the first shot, this not only leave my shotgun in the ideal trajectory to aim other flaring ducks for the two more shots, but gives me a sense of pride to be able to aim for a birdie, which no other hunter was daring to blow out.

Keep up with the follow through

What happens when you don’t follow-through the club after hitting the golf ball? Same is the case with the shooting. Don’t pull out of the swing after shooting, rather keep the barrel moving on its natural trajectory and you’ll be amazed at the results for sure.

Go to a shooting school

Ok, perhaps this is the best duck hunt shooting tip I can offer. There are many shooting schools with specialized courses for waterfowl hunting practice. The certified shotgun instructors in shooting academies will certainly help you analyze, sort and correct problems.



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