

# WESTERN HUNTING & FISHING

MAY 2025 NEWS



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# What Makes A Kayak A Fishing Kayak?

## (Main Features and Considerations)

By Alex Marshall  
Outdoor Empire  
www.outdoorempire.com



Despite the many types of watercrafts available today, the humble kayak has emerged as a favorite fishing platform. They are light, versatile, and relatively cheap.

However, with the proliferation of kayaks on the market, it is essential to know what to look for to differentiate a recreational kayak from a fishing kayak.

**There are, in general, four key things that make a kayak a fishing kayak. It should:**

- be a sit on top model
- be sufficiently stable
- be equipped to hold multiple rods
- have sufficient storage to hold lots of fishing gear and all the fish you will catch

There are some technical elements that facilitate these features and some other things to consider that we will talk about near the end.

### 4 MAIN FEATURES OF A FISHING KAYAK

When comparing a fishing kayak vs. a regular kayak, there are four main features that, when combined, make the difference.

#### Sit on Top

Kayaks come in two general form factors. The first, and more traditional type, is the sit-inside kayak. The second is the sit-on-top kayak. Fishing kayaks are sit-on-top style.



On a sit-inside kayak, the top deck of the kayak extends over the front and back of the kayak with only a small hole in the top for the person to slide inside. A spray deck, made of neoprene or nylon, can be used like a gasket to cover the gap between the hole and your body, making the inside watertight.

Think of it as wearing the kayak with only your abdomen and upper body sticking out the top. This is good for maneuverability but makes it hard to fish.

The second type of kayak is the sit-on-top. As the name implies, you sit on top of the deck. The high center of gravity makes it a little more top-heavy and tippy. However, the open deck allows freedom of movement and access to the equipment needed for effective and efficient fishing.

#### Stability

To be a good fishing platform, the kayak needs to be stable. There is nothing worse than to find out that your perfect cast caused you to lose your balance and capsize your craft, scattering your precious and expensive fishing gear across the bottom of the lake or river.

To compensate for being top-heavy, a fishing kayak is wider and shorter than a recreational kayak. This shape sacrifices speed and tracking ability, but it is worth it to keep your gear on the dry side.

Generally, a fishing kayak should be between 30 and 42 inches across at the widest part.

#### Rod Holders

Probably the biggest difference between a recreational and fishing kayak is the ability to hold fishing rods.

There are two different ways to secure a rod to the kayak, and both need to be present.

First, the kayak should have a way to hold multiple

rods secured horizontally against the deck for easy transport and storage when not being used.

The second way of securing a rod to the kayak is in a vertical mount. Multiple vertical mounts can be useful depending on the type of fishing you want to do.

#### Storage

Fishing can be a gear-intensive sport, and a fishing kayak needs to accommodate all of that gear.

Additional storage can also come in handy if, you know, you actually catch fish and want to keep them for a tasty treat later on.

Storage comes in two types – on top of the deck or below the deck.

(continued on page 4)

# 2025 Spring Mack Days on Flathead Lake

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**Monday-Thursday**- 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM deadline to turn in fish at Blue Bay - 4-\$50, 2-\$100, 4-\$250 lottery drawings plus bonus dollars -33 days-totaled with Fri-Sun totals at the end of the event

**Saturday May 10<sup>th</sup>** -SEPARATE DAY ALL ENTRIES IN BY 3:00-only AT BLUE BAY

All prizes & lottery drawings will be done on Saturday morning May 10<sup>th</sup> and posted for awards ceremony at 3:00. Cash Drawings for Saturday will be-\$400, \$350, \$300, \$200, \$150, \$100-Captains \$200, Ladies-\$100, 70 & Over \$100, Siberian Cooler, Largest lake trout under 30" \$100-1<sup>st</sup> \$75-2<sup>nd</sup> & \$50-3<sup>rd</sup> totals count for bonus awards

All it takes is one ticket (one for every lake trout under 30") to win a lottery drawing

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## What Makes A Kayak A Fishing Kayak?

(continued from page 2)

On top of the deck, storage can be easily accessed but may get wet throughout the course of a day on the water. Fishing gear can be expensive, so make sure that any deck storage has multiple tie-down points to keep it secured.

The second type of storage is below deck storage. These come in waterproof compartments built into the deck and are accessed through watertight hatches. While convenient for holding gear that needs to stay dry, these compartments are often difficult to access while on the water.



Photos courtesy Alex Marshall and [www.outdoorempire.com](http://www.outdoorempire.com)

### Bonus Features of Premium Fishing Kayaks

Here are some other things to look for, usually found in high-end fishing kayaks. Keep in mind, though, that while these things might come in handy, they are not deal-breakers. Some can even be added on later.

1. A way to secure the paddle to the deck when not in use.
2. Some fishing kayaks come with pedals that manually drive a propeller. This is a handy way to maneuver the kayak while keeping a rod in your hand so you can keep fishing.
3. An anchor can also add convenience, allowing you to stop and fish a honey hole without drifting with the current.

### Things To Consider When Shopping For A Fishing Kayak

Cost, weight, portability, and comfort need to be considered when you are looking to buy a fishing kayak.

#### Budget for Good Quality

Kayaks come in a wide range of prices depending on features and manufacturers.

In my opinion, it is easier and cheaper, in the long run, to pay for quality and what you want upfront.

Buying a cheap imitation fishing kayak might feel like a good idea until it breaks after the first season. And there's a good chance you'll find it uncomfortable or lacking the features you want or need. Then, you end up buying a second kayak, the one that you wanted all along.

At least, that's the argument I use with my wife.

#### Weight Determines Portability

Weight and portability will also be important. A light kayak is crucial if you plan on carrying it a ways to the water's edge or having to portage. Lightweight kayaks will sometimes lack features, but those features will seem extravagant when carrying it any distance.

On the other hand, if you can back the kayak into the lake or river straight from a vehicle, then the weight won't be as big of a deal.

The tradeoffs are for you to make, but before you put money down, make sure that you can lift the kayak onto your truck or trailer...

#### Test for All-day Comfort

The kayak should also be comfortable to sit in for long days on the water. This will be different from one person to the next.

The only real way to know if a kayak is comfortable is to try it out. For that reason, it is crucial to try out as many kayaks as you can before putting your hard-earned money on the table.

One way to try out a large assortment of kayaks is to attend an on-water expo and demo. There you can try out different types of boats and talk to experts about the different types of features.

Another way is to borrow your buddies' boat if he will let you. Or perhaps you can find one to rent for a day first.

Either way, having hands-on experience with as many kayaks as you can before you buy one is the best.

### FISHING KAYAK FAQs

#### Can you fish from a non-fishing kayak?

While it's true that you can fish from anything that floats, having a kayak designed especially for the task can make the experience better. Being more efficient should lead to more fish on the hook.

You can fish from a non-fishing kayak, but you might struggle to stow your gear, secure your rods, and stay upright.

### Are fishing kayaks slower?

Fishing kayaks can be slower than other types of kayaks because they have a wider hull, the bottom of which is typically flatter than other kayaks. This favors stability over-speed or agility.

Kayaks built for speed are generally longer with a more narrow, v-shaped hull, making them track straighter and faster.

### Is a fishing kayak worth it?

Whether a fishing kayak is worth it to you will depend primarily on how much you expect to use it and whether you need it to be multi-purpose.

For infrequent anglers, a more multi-purpose kayak that works for fishing without the bells and whistles or even an entirely different type of boat might make more sense.

For someone who is going to fish from a kayak more than 5 times per year, you're most likely to get your money's worth over the life of the kayak.



### CONCLUSION

Fishing from a boat has been going on for thousands of years. It offers unique advantages not found by our earth-bound fishing brethren.

A fishing kayak allows access to water that you cannot achieve on land. It enables the fisherman to move easily from one area to the next. It's also quiet, allowing you to sneak up on unsuspecting fish.

Over the last several years, the kayak has emerged as a light, efficient, and effective fishing platform. Choose a kayak with the features you need, and you will be blissfully catching fish for years to come.

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Photo credit jill@ghostbear.org | depositphotos.com

# Five Gear Essentials For Spring Bear Hunting

By Lane Colyer

Originally published at **GOHUNT** GOHUNT.com

## Gear essentials for spring bear hunting that will make your hunt that much better

The spring thaw has begun, and that's got us thinking about lacing up the boots and getting outside. Across the West, spring black bear tags are relatively easy to get and present opportunities to get out and have a great adventure. A lot of hunters use bear season to get out and test new gear, put their glass to work and enjoy the sights and sounds of springtime. Deer and elk can often be spotted out feeding on open hillsides, making for eventful days glassing. Most of the same gear you use during fall big game hunts can be used during spring bear hunts, but make sure you've got a few of these key pieces to let you stay out longer and be more comfortable.

### 1. Solid Colored Clothing



Photos credit Lane Colyer and GOHUNT.com

When the weather warms up and the snow starts to melt, bears aren't the only animal that wakes up and starts moving. Ticks are commonly found during springtime activities sitting on the tops of the grass. While moving across hillsides or down logging roads, bear hunters often will pick up ticks on their boots and pant legs. For this reason alone, we recommend wearing solid-colored clothing so ticks can easily be spotted and pulled off your clothing. Since bears rely on their noses much more than their eyes, camouflage clothing is not necessary.

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### 2. Binocular Attachment and Tripod

Finding bears is a waiting game. Many successful bear hunters will tell you to find a good looking spot and stay there.

Glassing for bears is generally done with binoculars because they provide the widest field of view so you can spot movement as they move through the vegetation.

The combination of time spent glassing and the need for stability makes a binocular adapter and tripod a gamechanger for finding bears. We're particularly excited about the Tricer Bino Adapter as a 2 oz. Arca-Swiss compatible option that fits most binos. Other options include the quick release Vortex bino adapter as well as the Aziak bino clamp for rangefinding binoculars without a thread in the front.

### 3. Glassing Stool or Glassing Pad



Long days of glassing for bears can wear your back out quickly. That, combined with the aforementioned challenge of keeping ticks off you, warrant a lightweight stool or at least a glassing pad.

Sitting up off the ground makes for easier glassing with a tripod and allows hunters to stay out longer and be more comfortable.

The Hillsound BTR Stool (12.6 oz) and Big Agnes Skyline UL Stool (1 lb 2 oz.) are both lightweight options that you'll barely notice in your pack, but will be glad to have them. These stools also pack down small enough to take up minimal space in your pack.



Photo credit jill@ghostbear.org | depositphotos.com

#### 4. Rechargeable Headlamp and Power Bank



Many bear hunters find success in the evenings with bears being most active in the early morning and right before dark.

This rule has its exceptions, but with a lot of bears getting shot before it gets dark, it's important to be able to safely recover a bear and get back to your truck.

We recommend always carrying a lightweight power bank that holds enough power to recharge your phone and headlamp.

An iPhone requires roughly 3,000 milliamp hours (mAh) while most rechargeable headlamps take about 3,000 mAh to fully charge.

A power bank like the Goal Zero Flip 24 weighs in at only 4.6 oz. and backs 6,700 mAh of power. Around the GOHUNT office, we've been using the PEAX Backcountry Duo Headlamp, which has a brightness of a whopping 1,000 lumens while also being able to run for up to 69 hours at a decreased brightness.

Rechargeable headlamps are not required, but if you're using a headlamp that runs on AAA batteries, we recommend putting in fresh batteries before heading out and packing at least one set of replacement batteries.

#### 5. Trekking Poles For Hunting



Bear hunting can be rather leisurely up until it's time to recover and pack out a bear — especially early in the season when the steep, south facing slopes are the first areas on the mountain where snow melts off and green chutes of grass begin to show. The steep areas may be an easy spot to find and get a cross canyon shot off on a bear, but can be challenging to recover and pack bears out of. Factor in inclement weather or snowmelt

running off these hillsides and you'll see a need for something to help keep you upright. Trekking poles are often overlooked by bear hunters using trails or logging roads to navigate, but should be in your pack to help get a bear out of a steep and deep canyon and back to level ground.

To learn more about GOHUNT visit [GOHUNT.com](http://GOHUNT.com).

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# Strategies For Tough Spring Toms

By Jake Horton

Originally published at  GOHUNT.com

If you have been out turkey hunting in the western United States, there is no doubt that you have encountered some downright stubborn or wise tom turkeys. A western turkey has to deal with some of the most potent natural elements like deep snow, strong winds and numerous predators that turkeys in other states do not have to contend with. This is why some birds that survive a few seasons out West seem impossible to get within range.

Here are a few strategies that might tip the scales back in your direction and help you harvest that wise bird that keeps making fools of your morning hunts.

## Your Calling Matters



Photo credit Brady Miller courtesy GOHUNT.com

Turkeys are one of the most vocal animals you can hunt and they can be a blast to communicate with during your hunt. However, there are often times when you call in an area with known bird activity and they simply do not respond or respond, but go in the opposite direction. When this happens, you can change the game up and help you take home a bird. The first option to change the game is simply to change the call you are using. For whatever reason, some calls just get a turkey fired up; others, the bird simply ignores. The ones that are liked or ignored are always different from day to day.

I often try calling a bird with my mouth call to have him hammer back, but when I use my slate call, I get silence. The next time I am in the woods, I use the mouth call and get no response, but the slate call gets the bird going. The reason behind this is unclear to me; however, one thing is certain: if a bird is not responding or not doing what you would like, feel free to reach into your pack and try a different call. After all, sounding like multiple birds might just be enough to get that tom to turn your way. Along this same notion, I always make sure to vary my cadence, volume and speed of calls until I find something that works. If you can get a bird fired up, keep using that call and try to work him into your position.

## Do Not Be Afraid to Move

Though turkeys have excellent eyesight — and most turkey hunters will tell you not to move — there are times when it is crucial, especially when dealing with a tough bird that doesn't want to come in.

You can move in three ways when dealing with a bird hanging up out of sight or not wanting to play the game.

The first way is to move in closer to the bird. When the terrain allows it — and I hear a gobble from a bird interested in my calling — I often quickly cover as much ground as possible to get closer to the bird before letting out another call. This shows the bird that I have covered ground to get to him, reduces the chance of another hen coming in and stealing the gobbler's attention on the way to you and reduces the possibility that there is some terrain or barrier in between you and the tom. The second way that I move when turkey hunting is parallel to the tom turkey's direction of travel. This will show the tom that you are moving, making your calling setup seem more realistic and providing enough realism to draw the bird into your setup.



Using GOHUNT Maps in 3D for turkey hunting is another great way to see the terrain you're about to hunt.

The final way I move is to back out of an unresponsive tom to circle and get ahead of him. This works when a tom doesn't want to come into your current position due to a barrier or when he has a spot that he goes to daily to strut and attract hens. This also puts you in a good position if a tom were to breed a hen and lose the rest of the flock. This is a time during the late morning when they are

more susceptible to calling as they are alone and trying to reconnect with their flock. Of course, if you see the bird, it is not a good time to move; however, if you cannot see the bird and he is not cooperative, do not be afraid to change it up on a stubborn bird. Don't forget to mark all the information you encounter in the turkey woods on your maps to develop a solid plan on your hunt and remember, GOHUNT even has turkey waypoints!

Learn more about GOHUNT Maps here:

[https://gohunt.com/learn/maps?\\_gl=1\\*xbm5wn\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTkwODc3MzAyNS4xNzM5MDU1MzYw\\*\\_ga\\*N-TAxNTIyOTczLjE3MzkwNTUzNjA.\\*\\_ga\\_KYDEQGS-9GD\\*MTc0Mjc2NTIxNS4yNy4xLjE3NDI3NjYwMzE-uNTQuMC4w](https://gohunt.com/learn/maps?_gl=1*xbm5wn*_gcl_au*MTkwODc3MzAyNS4xNzM5MDU1MzYw*_ga*N-TAxNTIyOTczLjE3MzkwNTUzNjA.*_ga_KYDEQGS-9GD*MTc0Mjc2NTIxNS4yNy4xLjE3NDI3NjYwMzE-uNTQuMC4w)



## Pattern Your Bird

Though it is not a regular topic of conversation, patterning a tom can be done with some time in the woods, watching and listening to your bird. Unless predators, hunters or other hens disrupt his behavior, a tom and its flock will follow the same pattern daily. This means that even if a turkey is not willing to be called in, you may find a pinch point, a small field or a logging road that the turkey frequents at a particular time of day. If you are there before him, you may be able to harvest that stubborn bird. Often, if I use this technique to harvest a bird, I will only call if I have to. I want to keep the situation as realistic as yesterday and not give the bird any reason not to continue along its same pattern.

## Decoy Usage

Last, but not least is the thought between using a decoy or not. While everyone is different, here is my rule for using decoys when turkey hunting: if I am hunting in thick cover where a bird might not be able to see me until it's in shotgun range, I do not use a decoy; however, if I am hunting an open side hill, field or pasture where a bird may emerge more than shotgun range and look in my direction, I always use a decoy. The decoys do not have to be the expensive, 100-dollar version of a turkey, but they do have to look like a turkey. It is important to note that decoy motion never hurts, so I like to use a foam decoy that twists in the breeze. **Note:** you 100% do not need to use a decoy to kill a bird and most of the time, not using a decoy can make for a more enjoyable hunt as you work in a bird with just calls.



Making a plan for some birds. Photo credit: Chris Neville

## In Conclusion

Hunting turkeys in the spring is a great experience and a great time of year to be in the mountains. If you are local, it is often a hunt that you can do before work and be back in time for breakfast. If you are from out-of-state and wish to chase turkeys in the West, endless opportunities and affordable tags are available in most states. Some states even have multiple bird limits that will allow you to maximize your hunt time and harvest numerous birds. If you are chasing stubborn, wise toms that are making it difficult for you, consider using the tips mentioned above to seal the deal and harvest a mature bird this fall.

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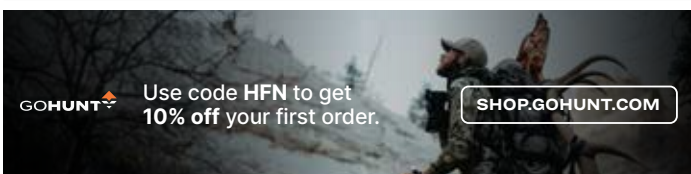
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# Now Is Time To Look For New Hunting Land

By Mike Hanback Big Deer Blog [www.bigdeerblog.com](http://www.bigdeerblog.com)

If you're satisfied with the public or private ground you hunted last year, great. But did you lose permission to a farm, or lose a lease, or get tired of the pressure and lack of deer on a WMA near home? If so, start looking for new ground now.

I could write a book on how to search for good hunting opportunities on the vast array of public lands across the U.S., but here I offer my best piece of advice. Think small. Most small to mid-size and out-of-the-way WMAs or state forests in rural areas have much less pressure than larger public spots near cities.

When you're investigating larger national forests or BLM lands, with tens or even hundreds of thousands of acres to roam, search for remote pockets of ground that are miles off the beaten path and hardest to access via back roads and trails. These hidden gems have less people and pressure. Check state DNR websites and hunting apps for info and maps.

Jump on Google Earth or an app like onX Hunt, and investigate private property boundaries and terrains that look to be in prime deer country. Then ask around work, and knock on doors; you might get lucky and nab permission on a small piece of private dirt where deer are eating a farmer's crops or a homeowner's shrubbery. If you find a great opportunity, think about paying a lease fee to lock up and hunt that ground.

Whether you go the public or private route, I can't emphasize how important it is to start looking now.



Photo credit Mike Hanback [www.bigdeerblog.com](http://www.bigdeerblog.com)

# Fishing Tackle – When To Use Baits Or Lures

Northland Fishing Tackle [www.northlandtackle.com](http://www.northlandtackle.com)

It's one of fishing's most common questions – what's the best choice: real bait or fishing tackle, such as artificial lures? In reality, there's no one-size-fits-all answer to this timeless dilemma. Each approach to catching fish has its particular strengths and weaknesses, and each one is better suited to different conditions, environments, target species, and levels of angler competence. Let's look at the pros and cons of real bait versus counterfeit offerings!

Looking at fishing magazines, books, videos, and TV shows, it's easy to assume that lure fishing is the dominant style of recreational angling around the world. Certainly, lure fishing receives the lion's share of media coverage. However, this perception is far from reality.

Day in and day out, many more fishers use natural baits than artificial lures. The angling media's heavy bias toward lure and fly fishing is a clear reflection of the personal preferences of most writers and presenters, not to mention a tacit acknowledgment of the lure and fly fishing's tendency to generate far more in the way of advertising revenue than "humble" bait fishing.

There's also a widely held belief that obtaining fishing "wisdom" follows an upward evolutionary trajectory, in which many beginners start out with bait, moving on to lures and perhaps even flies later in their angling careers as their skill levels grow. Implicit in this picture is an almost inevitable value judgment concerning the relative worth or merit of each fishing style. Under angling's informal but historically entrenched hierarchical class system, fly fishing is typically seen as the pinnacle of the sport and as somewhat superior to lure fishing, with bait fishing languishing at the bottom of the pile. In Great Britain, this angling snobbery is further reinforced via the use of value-laden descriptions such as "game" and "coarse" fishing to describe different disciplines.

In reality, there's nothing to be gained from imposing such an archaic class system on the world of fishing. Each style of angling has its strengths and weaknesses, and expertise in any form requires dedication and skill. We should celebrate them all!

Having said that, there's no question that the very best, most consistently successful anglers are almost always those who cut their fishing teeth using natural baits. Bait fishing teaches new chums the absolute basics of the sport, including what food items fish prefer to eat, where fish expect to find those food items, and how and when fish prey upon them. (continued next page)



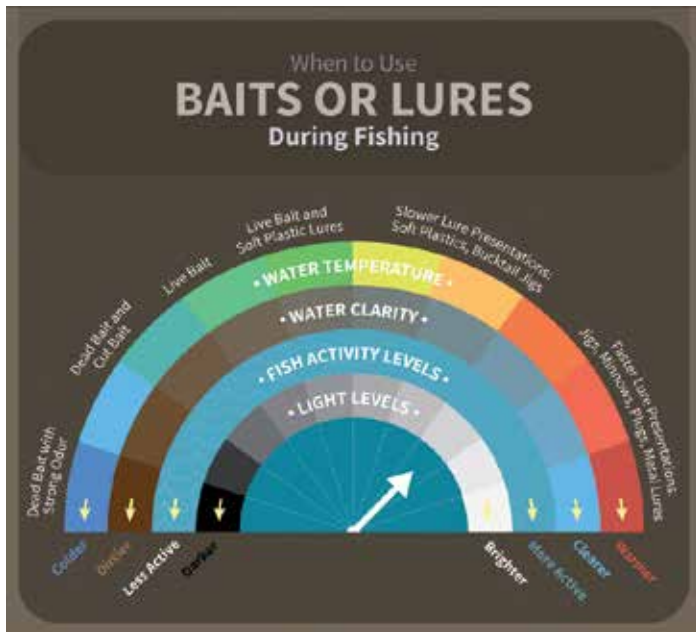
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# Fishing Tackle – When To Use Baits Or Lures

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Images courtesy Northland Fishing Tackle [www.northlandtackle.com](http://www.northlandtackle.com)

Whether you remain a dedicated bait fisher for life or go on to try lures or even fly fishing, understanding these fundamental basics of the sport will stand you in great stead.

Better still, finding, gathering, or catching your own bait rather than buying it from a shop magnifies all these important lessons. Bait collecting teaches an angler a great deal about where the food items fish prey upon live, how they behave, and what they look like. If you ever move on to try lure or fly fishing, these lessons will prove to be invaluable...and even if you don't, catching your own bait will definitely save you lots of money!

## Hunting Versus Trapping

In many ways, fishing with lures is akin to hunting, while bait fishing is more like trapping. In other words, the bait fisher sets out his or her "traps" (baited hooks) and waits for the prey to stumble upon them. In contrast, a lure fisher can cover more water in less time. Like a hunter using a rifle or bow, the lure caster or troller actively seeks out the prey, and his or her lures are effectively bullets and arrows.

Clearly, these two subtly different approaches will have varying levels of appeal for different anglers and comparative strengths and weaknesses under changing conditions. There's no overall "best" method, simply better choices on the day.

## When Using Bait is Best:

- At night
- When instructing new chums or kids
- When the water is muddy or discolored
- When it's very cold (especially while ice fishing!)
- When targeting vegetarian and omnivorous species
- When catching a meal is absolutely paramount!

- In most catch-and-release fisheries
- Where undersized and non-target “nuisance fish” are abundant
- In clearer water
- In warmer weather
- For aggressive, predatory fish

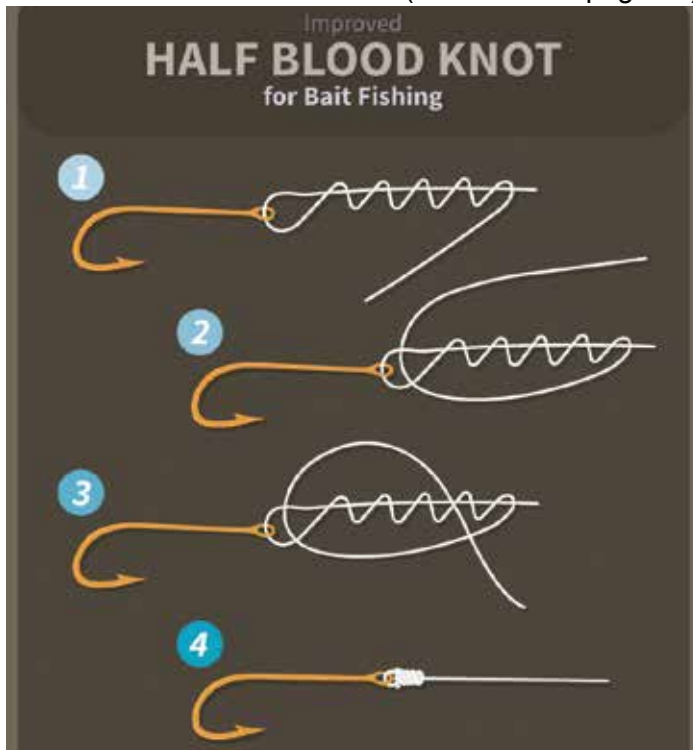
### The Best Features of Bait

- Bait is extremely effective at fooling most fish.
- Bait is usually cheap (free if you catch your own!).
- You can cast out a bait, set your rod down, and wait for the fish to come to you!
- Leftover bait can be returned to its natural environment or taken home and frozen for future use.
- Many fish hook themselves when they eat bait; thus, knowing exactly when to strike is less critical.
- Bait appeals to an extraordinary range of fish species in most aquatic environments, and you will nearly always catch something on bait!

### The Downfalls of Using Bait

- Most bait needs refrigeration or a water-circulating live well to maintain freshness.
- Finding and catching bait can be a dirty, difficult, and even potentially hazardous task.
- Most bait smells! Your hands, clothes, and gear will also become smelly when you go bait fishing.
- Bait is non-discriminatory; it often attracts under-sized fish and non-target species.
- Bait fishing is less spontaneous, and it usually requires at least some planning.
- Using bait often results in deeply hooked fish that can't be easily released with a high chance of survival.

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When bait fishing, use a simple, strong connection such as the Improved Half Blood Knot shown here to attach your hook to the end of your line or leader. The same knot can be used to incorporate swivels, rings or other items of terminal tackle into the rig, as needed. Source: Fishandfly.co.uk Courtesy Northland Fishing Tackle www.northlandtackle.com



### 2025 Lund 1875 Impact XS (New Design For 2025)

Mercury 150XL Pro XS

Mercury 9.9ELPT EFI Pro Kicker

Shoreland'r Tandem Axle Custom Bunk Trailer

Options: Stainless Prop, Hydraulic Steering w/ Tilt Helm, Smartcraft Gauges, Drotto, Airride Upgrade, Premium Edition Graphics w/ Black Lund, 4- Sporttrak Brackets w/ Ram Rod Holders, Fire Ext., Top Hider, Lund Ruler, Under Console Drawers, Wireless Phone Charger, Rockford Stereo Upgrade w/ 4 Speakers, Luxury Package (Airride Upgrade, Ski Tow, Steering Wheel Upgrade, 3 Bank On Board Charger, Travel Cover, Sport Top w/ Walkway Curtain, Humminbird Helix 9 MSI, Humminbird Helix 9 MDI CHO, Minnkota Terrova 80/MDI/WR-60", All Batteries, Transom Saver.



### 2025 Lund 1975 Tye

Mercury 225XL Pro XS DTS

Mercury 15ELPT EFI Pro Kicker

Shoreland'r Custom Tandem Axle Bunk Trailer

Options: Stainless Prop, Hydraulic Steering w/ Tilt, Smartcraft Gauges, Drotto, Suspension Pilot Chairs Port/Starb, Silver/Chrome Raised Lund, 4- Sporttrak Brackets w/ Ram Rod Holders, Washdown System, Wireless Phone Charger, Lund Ruler, Rockford Stereo Upgrade w/ 4 Speakers, Ski Package (Ski Tow, Bow Cushions/Bolster), Port Rod Tubes, 4 Bank On Board Charger, Travel Cover, Complete Sport Top, Humminbird Helix 9 MSI, Humminbird Helix 9 MDI CHO, Minnkota Terrova 112/MDI/WR-72", Fully Networked, 36V Upgrade, All Batteries, Transom Saver.



### 2025 Lund 1975 Pro V Sport

Mercury 225XL Pro XS DTS

Mercury 15ELPT EFI Pro Kicker

Shoreland'r Custom Tandem Axle Bunk Trailer

Options: Stainless Prop, Smartcraft Gauges, Bike Seat w/Airride Pedestal, Suspension Pilot Chairs w/ Sliders Starb/Port., Sport Top w/ Walkway Curtain, Travel Cover, Black/Chrome Raised Lund, 6- Sporttrak Brackets w/ Ram Rod Holders, Wireless Phone Charger Port/Starb., Bow Bait Cooler, Padded Bow Casting Deck, Ski Pole Upgrade, Washdown System, 5 Bank On Board Charger, Humminbird Xplore 10 MSI, Humminbird Xplore 10 MSI CHO, Minnkota Terrova 112/MDI/WR-72", Fully Networked, Transom Saver, All Batteries.

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# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

**We love to see kids enjoying the outdoors and family that encourages them.**

“This is my grandson, Trevor Hemphill, who is seven years old. He absolutely loves to fish and can tell you all about all the lures and fish. So I went ahead and sent a picture of him fishing as well. But this is also the picture I was talking about that is of him shooting his first squirrel.” Karen Fanning



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Photo courtesy Idaho Fish And Game <https://idfg.idaho.gov>

## F&G Commission Sets Spring Chinook Seasons For April 26

Idaho Fish And Game <https://idfg.idaho.gov>

**D**uring its March meeting, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission set the spring Chinook seasons to open on April 26 in the Clearwater, Snake, and Salmon River drainages.

The set seasons and bag limits are as follows. (**Note:** These are partial spring Chinook seasons and rules; the full seasons and rules will be published prior to the season opener on the Chinook fishing webpage <https://idfg.idaho.gov/fish/chinook/rules/spring-run>).

The following areas open to fishing for Chinook salmon on April 26, 2025:

### **Clearwater River Drainage**

Mainstem Clearwater River - From the Camas Prairie Railroad Bridge at Lewiston upstream to the South Fork Clearwater River (see Special Restrictions for closure areas).

North Fork Clearwater River - From its mouth upstream to Dworshak Dam (see Special Restrictions for closure areas).

South Fork Clearwater River - From its mouth upstream to the confluence of American and Red rivers (see Special Restrictions).

Middle Fork Clearwater River - From the South Fork Clearwater River upstream to the confluence of the Lochsa and Selway rivers.

### **Salmon River Drainage**

Lower Salmon River - From the Rice Creek Bridge upstream to Shorts Creek (see Special Restrictions regarding fishing from watercraft).

Little Salmon River - From the mouth upstream to the US Highway 95 Bridge near Pollock Road, approximately 1.2 miles upstream from the mouth of Rapid River (see Special Restrictions regarding fishing from watercraft).

### **Snake River Drainage**

Snake River - From Dug Bar Boat Ramp to Hells Canyon Dam.

### **Closing dates**

Areas will be closed by Closure Order signed by the Director of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game or Aug. 10, 2025, whichever comes first.

### **Fishing days**

#### **Clearwater River Drainage**

Fishing for Chinook salmon will be open four (4) days per week, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in the mainstem Clearwater, North Fork Clearwater, Middle Fork Clearwater, and South Fork Clearwater rivers.

#### **Lower Salmon and Little Salmon rivers**

Fishing for Chinook salmon will be open four (4) days per week, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

#### **Snake River**

Fishing for Chinook salmon will be open seven (7) days per week.

### **Daily and possession limits**

#### **Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, Middle Fork Clearwater River, and South Fork Clearwater River**

Daily = Four (4) Chinook salmon, only one (1) may be an adult

Possession = Twelve (12) Chinook salmon, only three (3) may be adults

#### **Lower Salmon and Little Salmon rivers**

Daily = Four (4) Chinook salmon, only one (1) may be an adult

Possession = Twelve (12) Chinook salmon, only three (3) may be adults

#### **Snake River**

Daily = Four (4) Chinook salmon, only two (2) may be adults

Possession = Twelve (12) Chinook salmon, only six (6) may be adults

### **Don't forget about E-tagging**

Idaho Fish and Game's new electronic salmon and steelhead permits are available at all vendors, or through the Go Outdoors Idaho mobile app. Remember, if you buy a paper tag, you're ineligible for e-tagging so ask for it when you buy from a license vendor.

E-tagging allows salmon or steelhead anglers to validate their permits electronically. Anglers can use the app while out of cell service, in low service areas, and while the device is on airplane mode. E-tagging also allows anglers to buy an electronic salmon or steelhead permit and start fishing immediately instead of waiting for a paper tag to arrive in the mail.

For a full, in-depth look at Idaho's new e-tagging system, how it works and frequently asked questions (FAQs), visit Fish and Game's E-tagging webpage <https://idfg.idaho.gov/licenses/e-tagging> or listen to Episode #36 of Idaho Fish and Game's official podcast, the Hook and Bulletin <https://idfg.podbean.com>.

# Get On Target Fast And Stable

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## The Top Four Shooting Positions Every Hunter Should Know

Hunting is a dynamic endeavor. Terrain and vegetation change with every step, potentially affecting your shooting opportunity. When a shot presents itself, your ability to read the landscape and quickly transition to the best shooting position is critical for success. Learn and practice these fundamental techniques for the most stable, accurate and ethical shots on game.

### General Rules:

- The further the rifle from the ground, the less stable the shot.
- Get a rest. An auxiliary rest will increase stability for enhanced accuracy.
- If you have a sling on the rifle, wrapping your arm through and twisting, creating a “hasting sling,” will snug the system up for your shot.



Photos courtesy Vortex Optics at [www.vortexoptics.com](http://www.vortexoptics.com)

**Prone:** Landscape permitting, getting prone is your ticket to stability and long-range success. With most of your body contacting the ground, there are less variables influencing the shot. Longer shots require increased precision. Take time to find a spot to get prone if a longer shot is required.

### To Execute:

- Lay down on your stomach.
- Snug the butt of the rifle into your shoulder pocket with your support arm elbow contacting the ground just left of the rifle's forend (right-hand shooters).
- Square your body directly behind the rifle with your toes facing out. Ideally, you'll be positioned directly in line with your target. This is easily accomplished on flat ground without obstructions. In the field, torso and leg position will likely be modified in some capacity due to conflicts with hill slope, brush, rocks, and other environmental factors.
- Press face firmly into the comb of the stock, maintaining a solid cheek-weld, and look directly down the sight.

**Modified Prone:** Use a bipod, backpack, or natural-terrain feature like a log, stump, or rock to assist with support of your rifle's forend. Jackets or other substantial items in your pack can serve as rear support for the buttstock.



**Sitting:** Sitting cross-legged with knees elevated, heels touching with knees elevated, or legs straight away from the body and bent, you will gain a more elevated shooting position (compared to prone), steady the shot, and maintain a low profile to stay hidden from game. Many hunting situations like ground hunting for deer, turkeys, and predators may start and finish in these handy variants of the sitting position. Short- to moderate-ranges best suit the sitting position.

### To Execute:

- Pick the sitting position to best fit you and the situation.
- Snug the rifle into your shoulder pocket with your support arm hand under the forend of the firearm.
- Tuck your elbows inside of their corresponding leg just below or at the knee.
- Press outward slightly with elbows while squeezing your legs together. This creates tension and helps eliminate movement.
- Press face firmly into the comb of the stock maintaining a solid cheek-weld and look directly down the sight.

**Modified Sitting:** Add shooting sticks or a full-size pack positioned vertically as a rest for the rifle's forend for increased stability.



**Kneeling:** Mitigate prayer-shots by taking a knee. That's right, the good old knee connected to your body makes a handy rest, provides more stability compared to shooting offhand and will get your sights over obtrusive brush, grass, and other groundcover. And it's fast to get in and out of, a benefit when time is of the essence. Kneeling can conceal you better as well. A person standing on two legs exposes more of their profile and looks, well, like a person – not what you want when trying to stay hidden from game.

(continued on page 37)



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# 6 Ways To Build Shooting Skills For An Elk Hunt

By Bob Terwilliger

Budge's Wilderness Lodge [www.budgeslodge.com](http://www.budgeslodge.com)



Most hunters have read about the need to prepare physically for a western elk hunt, knowing that high altitude and rugged country will present a serious challenge.

However, the way you practice shooting and building your marksmanship skills is equally important. There's no doubt that putting in the work with your rifle or bow will increase your chances for elk hunting success!

## Prepare Your Shooting Skills for an Elk Hunt

Skills preparation in terms of shooting and being "field ready" is often under-estimated! It is astounding and disappointing the number of hunters who believe if they go sight-in their rifle once a year at 100 yards, they are ready to go hunting.

With archery, it can be a similar situation with some guys. For example, they go and shoot for a couple of weeks at known / even distances (i.e. 20, 30, 40 yards exactly) and think the same.

No doubt, poor skills preparation can result in wounded, never recovered game which is unacceptable. As hunters, we owe it to the game we hunt, to harvest them as quickly and cleanly as possible.

Here are some sound tips on how to prepare for an elk hunt:

### 1. Shooting Ability

As a guide, I tell clients that the recommended shooting skill ability for rifle hunters is out to 300 yards and for archery out to at least 40 yards. To be specific, for rifle hunters they should be able to consistently shoot a 2" group at 300 yards and for archery, hunters should be able to shoot a 4" group at 40 yards.

In general, most will agree the size of the "kill zone" on an elk is about a 12-inch pie plate. But as responsible hunters, we still must refine our skills to help eliminate the risk of poor shot placement. Additionally, it's important to remember that elk are rarely standing perfectly broadside - shot angles can make this kill zone smaller!

Hunters need to be honest with themselves about their skill limits, and be disciplined about only shooting within their ability!

### 2. Shooting Positions

Once you have your weapon sighted in properly at desired shooting distances, it's time to move on with your practice, and simulate "in field positions".

For rifle hunters, this means sitting, prone, kneeling, and even off-hand for shooting in close situations if necessary.

Archery hunters should also practice "in field positions". This should include standing, kneeling and sitting.

Both archery and rifle hunters should practice with the hunting gear they plan to use, including with your pack on, with your binocular harness, quiver, etc. Frankly, I never take my quiver off when hunting elk, as most times I am on the move.

### 3. Focusing on Fundamentals

When working to improve your shooting skills, it is critical to focus on the fundamentals! Some core fundamental examples are breathing, relaxation, trigger control (steady, slow pressure vs "jerking the trigger"), practicing "follow through" (i.e. don't drop your rifle or bow to see where you hit the target), consistent anchor point for archers and a consistent sight picture (including level) for rifle hunters.

### 4. Shoot Odd Distances

Once your bow or rifle is sighted in, shoot odd distances. Elk don't stand at exactly 100 or 200 yards like at the range. Know where you bow or rifle shoots at those in-between distances!

### 5. Practice Guessing the Distance



Photos courtesy Budge's Wilderness Lodge [www.budgeslodge.com](http://www.budgeslodge.com)

Range finders are great and should be used whenever possible (ideally ranging objects in shooting lanes when you first set up). However, building your skills at guessing distance can be the difference between success or failure, especially with archery. What happens when an elk shows up unexpectedly and you don't have time to use a rangefinder?

When in doubt of the distance, don't shoot! Archery hunters also have the luxury of going into the field to simulate hunting conditions with shooting stumps and portable targets. Lastly, 3D courses are also great practice for the archery hunters, as they can replicate hunting-like terrain when shooting up and down hill, and at odd distances.

## 6. Mental Preparation for Elk Hunt Marksmanship

“Mental Preparation” for an elk hunt often can mean the difference between harvesting a bull or not. It is my experience, and one that ALL my peer guides over the years would agree, where many hunters can fall short.

For example, how will you react when that big bull steps into a shooting lane screaming with steam coming out of his nose at close-range? Or if a bull steps out across the park into the clear and you have mere seconds to set up for a clean shot?

One thing is certain with elk hunting – opportunities can arise quickly and just as quickly be gone! Therefore, being mentally prepared is critical to taking advantage of a shooting opportunity!

**Here are a few tips that can help you with being mentally prepared for what might be one of the most exciting events of your life:**

**Create a “Mental Checklist” as part of your shooting practice. Some examples are:**

1. Archery - consistent anchor points, bow square / level, proper pin, focus / pick an “aim spot” on the target (3D targets are great for “picking” a spot on game-like situations).
2. Rifle - scope adjusted to the proper power, round chambered, solid rest, safety off, crosshairs square to target, double check aim point on elk, steady trigger finger pressure, fire!
3. Simulate “real shooting opportunities” in your mind when practicing. This is a great game to play with yourself on your first shot of a practice session. Was your first shot a “kill shot”? After all, in the field you don’t get a warm-up / practice shot on an elk!
4. Practice “shot opportunity thinking” when in the field so it becomes habit. Think about getting in position for the shot so you limit movement when the elk is in sight range (or moving when he’s looking down or away). Identify shooting lanes / obstacles and range distances when you first set up.
5. When you see game in the field think about shot placement (or no shot) factoring in good ethics (i.e. think through shot trajectory based on how game is standing and terrain (uphill / downhill). Are other elk in the line of fire?
6. Think about controlling breathing and excitement – watch hunting videos paying attention to how successful hunters handle shot preparation and execution. Taking a deep breath and focusing on the shot will help. Try not to focus on how big the elk is or the size of his antlers. Once you know you want to take him, key in on where, when you will shoot and the execution of the shot (including exact shot placement).



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7. Build “safety first” into all mental preparation exercises! With arrows and bullets, there are no second chances!

8. Be prepared not only physically (by being in the best shape you can be for your hunt) but also mentally for pushing yourself through the physical challenges of an elk hunt!

## Closing Comments

In closing, your attention to detail with your practice and preparation, can make all the difference in the world on your upcoming elk hunt! Too many times, hunters get shot opportunities only to have them slip away.

Therefore, get started now in support of your next hunt. Become better prepared by honing your physical and mental skills for the opportunity you have been waiting for and dreaming about.

While many hunters will take time to buy all kinds of new gear for their next hunt, not enough hunters will take the time to assess and improve their skills in areas that can really make a difference!

Visit <https://www.budgeslodge.com/elk-hunts> to learn more about our elk hunts at Budge’s Wilderness Lodge.

If you have questions or would like to inquire about availability, please contact us anytime by email at [howdy@budgeslodge.com](mailto:howdy@budgeslodge.com) or email contact form at <https://www.budgeslodge.com/contact-budges> or call or text (970) 536-1341 or call the Lodge (Satellite) at (970) 422-1311 (Jul-Oct).

About Bob Terwilliger:

Bob is a lead guide with Budge’s Wilderness Lodge on fly fishing and elk hunting adventures. With decades of experience hunting and fly fishing in the Flat Tops Wilderness, Bob is an expert guide and a great teacher. We are blessed to have him as part of our team!



Photo credit Ryan McSparran courtesy [www.caribougear.com](http://www.caribougear.com)

## Critical Pre-Season Prep: Bows, Boots & Other Essentials

By Ryan McSparran

Caribou Gear Outdoor Equipment Co. [www.caribougear.com](http://www.caribougear.com)

In order to give yourself the highest possible confidence going into a hunting trip, it helps to have confidence in your equipment. Feeling prepared with your weapon should be at the top of that priority list. Then, things like boots and layering systems require forethought. Spend time well in advance of the season to get these things dialed. That way, in the days and weeks leading up to the season, you can stay focused on locating animals and finding success on your hunt.

### PRE SEASON PREP FOR BOW HUNTING

Bow hunters get first crack at the woods in most states and early archery seasons are just around the corner. Procrastinating through the spring and summer is all too easy and a lack of preparation leads to reduced confidence and accuracy in the field. Get busy and stay ahead of the curve. You won't regret the early efforts when opening day arrives.

### Work Over Your Bow

Before anything happens, your bow should be set up for practice with the same sights, rests, string and accessories that will be used during the hunt. Take this time to consider changes, maintenance and options for the bow itself. Make sure the string has plenty of life left because it must endure a few months of shooting before jumping into the hunt. If you plan on changing to a new string, now is the time. You will have plenty of opportunity to break in the material before the season arrives.

Also, match your practice arrows to field arrows and use field points with a weight that matches the broadheads in your hunting quiver. Just before the season, you should shoot with a few broadheads and arrows that match the hunting specifications to ensure the bow is sighted perfectly for the hunt.

### Mix Up the Targets

Leading into bow season, shooting on a near daily basis is essential. Practice like crazy but avoid setting a routine that lacks variety. During a hunt, shooting from different angles and positions is not uncommon.

Practice shooting off a knee, at variable distances and from angles that resemble a tree stand and setup targets in areas with trees and breaks in the landscape. Shooting on a level surface is still great for daily repetitions but utilizing breaks in the landscape shifts the perspective and requires your eyes to focus on the target in an organic environment.

Shoot block targets but also incorporate realistic targets to focus tight groupings on vital organs. If you utilize ground blinds and tree stands in the field, practice shooting from the same positions. Setup your stands and blinds and use them during practice to ensure everything is functioning properly and ready for the season.

### Scout and Prepare

It's never too early to start scouting and preparing. Setup game cameras, clear treestand sites of limbs and debris to create clean shooting lanes and watch from a good distance to pinpoint the perfect hunting locations. In the west, that means glassing the big country that elk call home and in the whitetail river bottoms that means glassing fields, looking for funnels and building a strategy to intercept animals. It doesn't matter what species you are after, early season scouting can pay off big time when the season opens.

### BOOTS AND OTHER ESSENTIALS

Investing in high quality gear is important and modern equipment can make a serious difference in terms of comfort and performance in the field. Simply making the purchase however falls far short of being field ready. Testing and breaking in boots, packs, clothing ahead of the season is a critical step that will prevent blisters, failures, and general breakdowns when that gear should be helping you push harder on hunts.

Beyond your weapon, here are a few things to consider in advance of the hunting season...

### Break In Your Boots

Hunting boots are your lifeline in the field and a pair that fails can ruin the entire trip. An ill-fitting pair of boots will discourage you from pushing over that next ridge and ultimately limits your range and hiking capabilities. Anytime you purchase a new pair of boots, get them out on hikes throughout the summer to help along the break-in period. Even wearing the boots around town will help them conform to your feet.

Using new boots is obvious but what about that favorite pair of hunting boots that performed well over the previous season? Materials contract and boots that once fit perfectly can still require a few hikes before they feel just right again. In some cases, it's as much a matter of training your feet to work in the boots again. Work your favorite pair of hunting boots into a summer hiking routine that will ensure they are ready for opening day.

Don't forget that great boots will never live up to their full potential with sub-par socks. Never wear cotton in the field. Instead, get a few pairs of merino wool or a merino-synthetic blend socks that are designed for hiking. We personally use Kenetrek boots and socks.

## Test New Clothing

New clothing might fit perfectly off the shelf. But that does not immediately translate into all-day field comfort. Every individual has a slightly different body type. Wearing pants, shirts, socks and jackets on a few long pre-season hikes will ensure everything fits and feels great.

The base layers are especially important because they make constant contact with your skin. A base layer that doesn't fit quite right can form hotspots and cause discomfort on a long hunt. Test everything thoroughly, wash and test again. Also, don't forget to shoot your bow and practice shouldering your rifle while wearing your layering system and your bino harness. Make sure that nothing interferes with your draw motion or shooting routine...

## Wear Your New Pack

Hunting backpacks might be easy to overlook when it comes to pre-season testing. But finding the right fit and adjustments are critical. You don't want to waste time messing with your pack when you should be glassing or covering ground. This proves especially true on multi-day backcountry hunts that require full days of walking with a loaded backpack. An ill-fitted pack will quickly cause discomfort at the shoulder strap contact points and on the chest and waist strap regions.

Take a few summer hiking trips or ideally, backpacking trips. These trips serve a double purpose by testing the pack while creating an opportunity to play with weight distribution and hunting gear. Anything that proves as dead weight can be removed to lighten the load come hunting season.

If there is rubbing at the shoulder harness or waist belt, make adjustments to the torso length or other areas to ensure your hips are absorbing some of the load. The straps themselves are rarely the problem and training hikes are the perfect opportunity to find the sweet spot while conditioning your body to function with the pack.

## Don't Procrastinate

Don't wait until the last minute. Start your hunting gear prep now to avoid stress right before the season. If you need suggestions, check out the gear we carry here in the Caribou Gear store. We carry items that we personally use in the field. Our store is fully stocked with Caribou Gear Game Bags, Jet Boil stoves, lightweight backcountry meals from Peak Refuel and Mountain House, Kenetrek boots, knives and more

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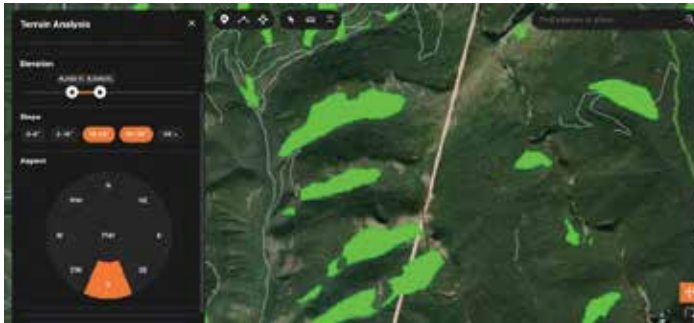
# Five Map Tips For Finding Spring Bears

By Lane Colyer

Originally published at [GOHUNT](https://gohunt.com)  GOHUNT.com

**B**ear hunting in the spring can be an action-packed way to spend a spring day in the woods. Tags are easy to get and bears can be somewhat predictable if you know where to look and what to look for. We've put together a few mapping tips to help you cut down your e-scouting time and find where bears will be on the mountain.

## Terrain Analysis



Photos courtesy Lane Colyer and GOHUNT.com

We built the Terrain Analysis Tool on GOHUNT Maps to allow hunters to input the elevation, slope and aspect they're looking for so we can show them everywhere that meets these criteria. This is probably the most useful e-scouting tool for bear hunting because if you know what you're looking for, this can make finding bears much easier.

Access the Terrain Analysis tool here:  
<https://gohunt.com/maps#/>

In the northern hemisphere, south facing slopes are the first to melt off and green up and are often the best areas to start looking for bears. South facing slopes generally have less timber than other areas of the mountain, too, so bears can be easier to locate.

The next selection is your slope angle or the steepness of the terrain you want to highlight. While it's possible to find bears at any point on the mountain, they're most easily hunted on angles between 15 and 35 degrees. The reason these slope angles are important is due to the combination of vegetation, forage and visibility to the hunter. There has to be enough green grass to hunt bears while enough slope angle to see bears through the undergrowth.

The last selection on the Terrain Analysis tool is the elevation band you'd like highlighted. Hunters should use the current snowline as the upper-bound elevation and concentrate their efforts in the 500' to 1,000' below the snowline. If you can see a south-facing slope before heading out, use that to estimate the elevation of the snowline.

Learn more about the Terrain Analysis tool here:  
<https://gohunt.com/browse/tips-and-tricks/maps/new-gohunt-maps-tool-released-terrain-analysis>

## Find the Timber Cuts

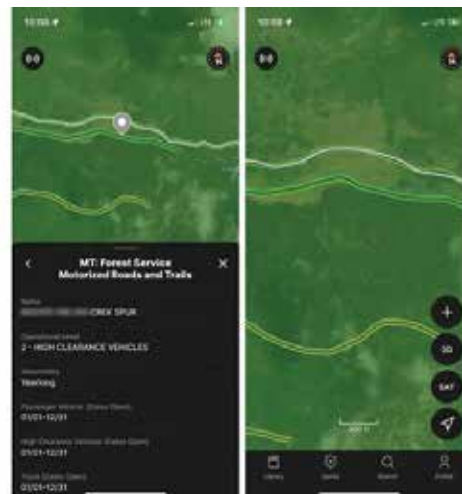


Like all animals, bears need food, water and cover to survive. Logging in a lot of western states has created prime country to find and hunt bears and usually also results in closed roads that hunters can travel up and down while glassing. The Timber Cuts layer can be enabled in the Land Usage folder of GOHUNT Maps for your state and shows areas where timber has been harvested in the last 30 years, making bears more easily visible than in mature forests. We recommend turning the transparency slider all the way to the right to highlight timber cuts and then making the layer more transparent as you look at the topography and aerial imagery of each individual cut. Overlaying timber cuts and the previously mentioned Terrain Analysis layer can pinpoint the most likely areas to find a bear on the mountain.

**Pro tip:** Tap on the timber cut to learn more about the acreage, year and type of timber harvest conducted in that area. If a timber cut was conducted 15 or more years ago, chances are there is significant regrowth and could be challenging to hunt.

## Roads

Roads are not only pivotal to planning motorized transportation to your spot, but many areas in the West will have gated logging roads that allow for easy travel by foot, horseback or bicycle into a bear hunting zone. One of the unique features about GOHUNT Maps is the road styling with green meaning it is open and yellow meaning it is in a seasonal closure. There is nothing worse than showing up to an area that you thought would be open only to find out it is closed when you get there. A proper travel plan is paramount to making sure you're not putting in miles on foot that you didn't account for beforehand.



(continued page 38)

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Photo credit A 12 Gauge Girl www.huntingandcooking.com

## Apricot Bear Chili Recipe

By A 12 Gauge Girl www.huntingandcooking.com

Yield: 6 - Prep Time: 10 Min - Cook Time: 1 H & 15 M  
Total Time: 1 H & 25 M

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 and ½ pounds ground meat
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 large bell peppers, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 2 teaspoons allspice
- 1 tablespoon ground coffee
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 12 oz. apricot-flavored beer
- 15 oz. apricot puree
- 2 cans kidney beans (15 oz. each)
- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, plus an extra scoop of sauce

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add one tablespoon of oil to a large, heavy bottomed pot over medium heat. Once oil is slightly heated, after two or three minutes, add the chopped onion. Stir to prevent from sticking, and let onion soften for five minutes.
2. Add the bell peppers to the pot and cook an additional three minutes. I prefer to use a variety of colors for the bell peppers, but any bell pepper is suitable.
3. Add garlic to the pot and cook an additional two minutes, taking care to not let the garlic brown.
4. Add the ground meat to the pot. I used bear meat for this recipe, but any wild game meat would taste fantastic, especially pronghorn, elk, or deer.
5. Let the meat brown for a few minutes.
6. Season the pot with chili powder, cumin, allspice, ground coffee, and salt. Stir everything to fully coat.
7. Add the beer and apricot pulp to the pot. Stir.
8. Add kidney beans, diced sweet potatoes, and minced chipotle peppers. To intensify the heat of the chili, add more chipotle peppers or some of the sauce from the can.
9. Bring pot to a simmer and cover. Cook the chili for one hour, which will allow the flavors to fully develop.
10. Taste to see if more salt is needed. Chili can be garnished with fresh onion, cheese, sour cream, and cilantro; for even more heat, add pickled or fresh jalapeños.
11. Enjoy!

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# Your Summer Hunting Reading List

Vortex Optics [www.vortexoptics.com](http://www.vortexoptics.com)

We know what you're thinking: "Nobody said anything about having to read books! This is high school all over again. Thanks a lot, Vortex." Relax! Imagine if instead of Romeo and Juliet, you got to read books about bagging Elk and surviving in the wilderness. Now that's the kind of summer reading we can all get behind.

To help get you through the dog days before next hunting season, we put together some of our favorite hunting books. (And don't worry: There's no quiz at the end.)

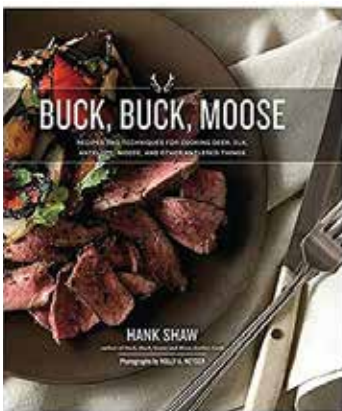


**THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO ELK HUNTING**  
By Bob Robb and Gerald Bethge. (Yes, that is Bethge)

Who will like this book: New hunters, or those new to elk hunting.

This book was very helpful for me as I started hunting elk. It provides really good information about elk habitat, behavior, how to hunt them, calling strategies, and caring for meat in the field.

It's a great tool to learn how elk behavior changes over seasons and what needs they are trying to fulfill and when. This is a great read for anyone looking to get into elk hunting and will provide you with all the information you need to get started.

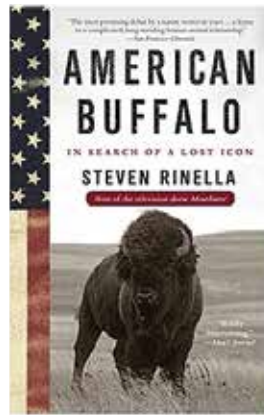


**BUCK, BUCK, MOOSE**  
By Hank Shaw

Who will like this book: Field-to-Table hunters; conservation-minded hunters.

For those not satisfied with only using the four quarters, backstraps, and tenderloins. If your desire is to use every part of the animal—and I mean every part—Hank Shaw's Buck, Buck, Moose is for you.

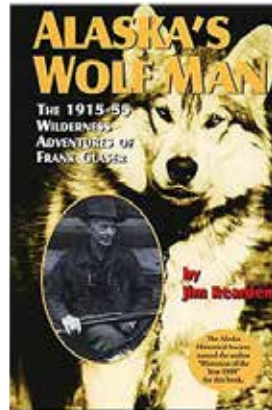
While mostly a cookbook, you'll also gain valuable information about how to process your game in the field and how to utilize even the "wobbly bits" as Shaw calls them. There are also a lot of recipes for different kinds of cuisine to keep you experimenting with your game meat instead of using all of it for the same old recipes. Buck, Buck, Moose will give you a new appreciation for your wild game and the deliciousness it will provide you and your family!



**AMERICAN BUFFALO: IN SEARCH OF A LOST ICON**

By Steven Rinella  
Who will like this book: Conservationists, hunters, those curious about hunting.

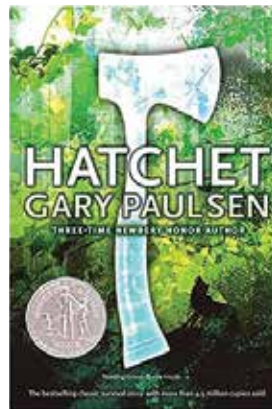
Easily my favorite hunting book, this one was a major springboard for Steve's career. It weaves together a wonderful combination of the saga of the American buffalo, adventure hunting, human history, and a little bit of cooking info. My only gripe is that if you're at all like me, you'll practically read this book in a single sitting.



**ALASKA'S WOLF MAN – THE 1915-55 WILDERNESS ADVENTURES OF FRANK GLASER**

By Jim Rearden  
Who will like this book: Outdoorsmen and history buffs.

Just a warning, don't read this book if you think you're a tough, wilderness savvy hunter! Compared to Frank, you're just a babe in the woods. Not purely a hunting book, but enough to make this list. Some may object to the wolf hunting theme, but remember the times were different.

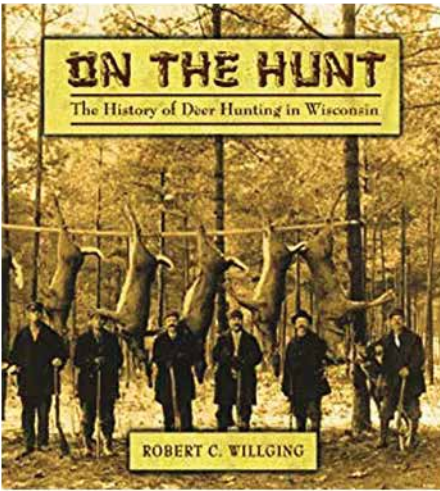


**HATCHET**

By Gary Paulsen  
Who will like this book: Get your kids excited with hunting and the outdoors.

Reading a book from cover to cover was a painstaking process for me, until a required reading assignment in grade school introduced me to Hatchet. I was 12 years old and, after years of anticipation, finally received my hunter's safety certification and got my first hunting license. A work of fiction, Hatchet documents what happens after a 13-year old boy survives a tragic plane accident that leaves him stranded in the Canadian wilderness. I became entranced with the story, imagining myself alone in the woods, trying to survive.

After school, I'd wander into the large tract of public land across the street from my parent's house to chase rabbits and squirrels with my single-shot .410. Hatchet helped my imagination run wild, which played a significant role in developing a love for hunting and simply being alone in nature at a young age, which still fuels me today.



**ON THE HUNT: THE HISTORY OF DEER HUNTING IN WISCONSIN**

By Robert C. Willging  
Who will like this book:  
White tail fans and history buffs.

Rewinds the clock through the deep-rooted history of the deer camps that make Wisconsin a destination for whitetail deer. If you want to reminisce about north woods deer camp and the camaraderie of sharing camp with friends, this is a must-read.



**MODERN HUNTSMAN (VOLUMES 1-3)**

Who will like this book:  
Conservation-minded hunters, those curious about hunting, anyone looking to live vicariously through gorgeous photography.

There's been a noticeable push among hunters lately to take a step back and look at how we share our hunting experiences with the rest of the world (most of whom do not hunt). Is a grip and grin photo the best way to share the experience? How much of your story is focused on only the final step (aka the kill)?

These are all very interesting questions and I chose Modern Huntsman because I think they take a fresh approach to storytelling through the lens of an outdoor lifestyle. Engaging, high quality photos and a focus on the "whole story" versus the end result allows MH to reach potential new hunters and/or advocates for the sport. It's a great coffee table book with a meaningful message. It also looks cool.

(continued on page 37)

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Photo credit Matt Ashley

## Why You Should Be Chasing Whitetails In The West

By Jake Horton

Originally published at **GOHUNT**  GOHUNT.com

**H**unting out West is about big game and big views; however, one animal is often overlooked by western hunters even though it carries a large rack and has lots of good meat. Whitetail deer occupy nearly all western states in some capacity and can be a blast and a challenge to hunt. Unlike mule deer, which are the more commonly chased western deer, whitetails typically live in lower elevations near thicker cover and river bottoms. They rely heavily on their wary and skeptical behaviors to survive and even live in overabundance in many states. Often, eastern hunters do not think about chasing whitetails out West, but they should.

Dive into whitetail research on Insider here:  
<https://www.gohunt.com/learn/insider>

**There are some big bucks and a good number of whitetail deer on public and private land and permission can be gained.**

Here are some facts about whitetails in the West and a reason it should be an add-on hunt for your next western adventure.

**Differences between whitetail deer and mule deer**  
When it comes to whitetail deer and mule deer, there are several important physical differences. For starters, a mule deer's face is more white, the ears are much bigger and its back end has a lighter color while a whitetail has a darker rear end with the underside of its tail appearing bleach white, hence the name. Typically, though not always, mule deer have larger bodies and very short brow tines — even on a large buck; however, whitetails can grow large racks and can gain both incredible mass and an incredible number of points. Even after all of the physical differences, the biggest difference is in the deer's behavior towards hunting pressure and towards other bucks. Whitetail deer do not stick around when feeling hunting pressure and quickly become skittish and easily spookable. Mule deer are often too curious for their

own good and may run out a few yards and stop, giving a hunter the time to draw or aim and shoot. A mature whitetail in the same situation will be in the next county by this point. Whitetails are also more aggressive and will often run towards the sound of grunting and rattling in hopes to win the fight and take the doe from the fighting bucks. On the contrary, you rarely see western mountain hunters carrying a set of rattling antlers. Though they may look very similar, mule deer and whitetails are very different, but both can be hunted differently with good success.

### The skills

The number one reason that I feel that western hunters — especially ones from the East Coast — should chase whitetails is that you know what you are doing. In any hunting situation, for any game, there is a learning curve. Some hunters may be successful in their first year hunting a new species, but that is not the norm nor should it be the expectation. Once a hunter has experience in both successes and failures, their new rate of success typically goes up. This is why an eastern hunter who is experienced in whitetail hunting should be set up for success coming out West. When a hunter finds a spot that looks good along trails between bedding and feed or along a pinch point during the rut or, even, during a highly pressurized season, then they will already know where to set up and how to play the hunt. If they are patient and do what they would do at home, there is a really good chance that a hunter can be successful during year one even in a brand new spot.

### Permission

The second reason that western hunters should chase whitetails out West has to do with private landowner permission. In my experience, western landowners do not revere whitetail deer with the same clout as elk or mule deer. This is mostly due to the crop damage that whitetails cause landowners and also due to the limited number of people asking for permission to chase them. If hunting private land out West doesn't get you excited enough, then think about the only agriculture field around with hundreds of whitetail deer in it. I have seen this myself several times out West. Permission to hunt animals on private land is difficult to obtain; however, if you do some scouting and use landowner details from your e-scouting maps, you may be able to get permission. And remember, utilizing GOHUNT Maps is the starting point to your success in mapping out western whitetails! If you are willing, there are also some very reasonable trespass-free style hunts that keep others from hunting and may give you even less pressure.

Learn more about GOHUNT Maps here:  
<https://www.gohunt.com/learn/insider>

### The numbers and flexibility

As mentioned, most western hunters prefer to chase mule deer or do not think about chasing whitetails in the western states even though they are very prevalent. There are several spots in Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Idaho and more where I have seen whitetails in the hundreds out feeding hours before dark.

(continued page 38)

# Trail Camera Tactics

Tuo Gear [www.tuogear.com](http://www.tuogear.com)

There are few things better this time of year than having a buck show up on your trail camera. Trail cams are awesome – you get to monitor a little section of the woods all the time. It's fun to see what's going on when you're not around, and extremely useful when you're trying to pinpoint a buck's location.

Trail camera technology has been around for a while and are invaluable scouting tool. But if you've never used one before, where do you start? There are tons of options on the market, and it can be hard to choose. Should you have more than one? Where do you put them?

## Here's a quick guide to help you get started:

### Know the Products

Every brand has its flagship camera and other less expensive products. Start by determining your budget, then decide if you want a traditional camera or a cellular camera.

**Traditional Cameras:** These cameras store photos on an SD card, which you must retrieve manually. They are ideal for areas close to home or places where you can easily sneak in and out to check the footage.

**Cellular Cameras:** These cameras send photos directly to your cell phone via partner cellular networks, usually through a free or paid subscription plan. They're perfect for hunting areas far from home.

Once you've chosen a style, consider specifications like shutter speed, motion detection, battery life, etc. I've found it best to test different settings out yourself – it's usually a tradeoff between performance and battery life.

### Key Locations to Place Your Cameras

If you're scouting a specific property, consider looking into these locations:

**High Traffic Areas:** Find a main deer trail and place a camera there. Simple as that. Lots of sign means lots of deer. I'll use these to get a sense of how/when deer move and to get a better sense of the local herd in general.

**Remote Locations:** Get creative and go deep. Look for a remote group of trees in a swamp or a pinch point only accessible by water. Places that are hard to access and also funnel deer into smaller areas are money. These spots can offer the best chance of capturing a big buck on camera.

**Actual Hunting Tree:** While this isn't necessarily my strategy, some hunters place trail cameras on/around the very tree where their stand is located. This gives them a real-time look at what's passing by their stand and might even deter potential stand thieves.

## Installing Your Cameras

Now that you have a few spots in mind, here are a few tips for setting your cameras out.

**Rainy Days:** I find it useful to install cameras on rainy days or just before rain. It allows you to sneak into your location quietly, and the rain helps with scent control. Rain creates ions that trap scents, much like ozone generators used by treestand hunters.

**Elevation:** Hang your camera higher than usual, angled slightly downward. This provides a better field of view and helps hide it from thieves. I carry a climbing stick when hanging cameras for this reason.

**Orientation:** Position the camera facing north to minimize sun glares.



Photo courtesy Tuo Gear at [www.tuogear.com](http://www.tuogear.com)

(continued page 31)

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Photo credit Brady Miller courtesy GOHUNT.com

## Four Tips To Consider When Hunting Antelope This Year

By Jake Horton

Originally published at [GOHUNT](https://www.gohunt.com)  GOHUNT.com

**A**ntelope hunting is one of my favorite hunts to go on year after year for three main reasons.

The first reason is that antelope habitat is typically flat or low rolling elevations. After months of hiking up and down steep mountains, it is a much needed break for my feet and legs.

Secondly, antelope hunting is a hunt with long-range visibility, which translates to seeing antelope throughout the day, keeping morale up.

Finally, antelope hunting often yields the highest success rates for my hunting partners and me, which makes for a fun camp.

For these reasons, I always schedule and plan at least one or two antelope hunts a year. Though it is one of our highest successful hunts, antelope hunting is not a walk in the park and requires some skills and preparation prior to it.

These four tips will help you be prepared and find success the next time you choose to chase the fastest animal in North America.

### **A Well-planned Stalk Is Crucial**

Though a hunter might be able to see antelope all day long during their hunt, getting within range is difficult. This is why a well-planned stalk is crucial. When you see a buck or doe that you desire to try and harvest, look at the direction they are headed, seek out terrain breaks or cover that may help you get there undetected.

Your goal should be to stay out of site as long as possible to get within range. Antelope can run over 55 mph, but they can walk fast, too. Try to be where they will be instead of hiking to their current location. Remember: they rely heavily on their eyes, but seem to have trouble determining your distance from them, especially at a long distance. If possible, stay in a straight line facing the antelope until you get to the cover you will use for the stalk.

### **A Long Shot Is Probable**

Though hunters across the West hunt antelope with bows and muzzleloaders, it is vital to understand that a long shot should be the expectation, depending on the terrain and cover available—the less terrain differences and cover, the longer the shot expectations. Typically, most of the antelope I shoot with a rifle are 300 to 400 yards out. This means that you not only need to be proficient with your rifle, but you also need to have equipment that allows you to range the antelope. Antelope can be extremely difficult to range without a ton of cover and terrain differences. Try to use a bipod for ranging to get the most steady and accurate results. When it comes to bowhunting, you might see shots around that 50-60 yard mark if you're spot and stalk hunting, obviously much closer if you're using a ground blind over a water source.

### **Earlier in the Season, the Better**

Though antelope are very wary critters, I always find my best luck earlier in the season. This is true in that early-season antelope have experienced less pressure, especially from rifle hunters, and will often let you get within gun range without spooking. As they receive more pressure and hear more gunshots, they will be less likely to allow you to get into rifle range, often spooking at 800 to 900 yards, making an open country stalk impossible. When this happens, you may need to change your strategies if you wish to succeed. Sometimes, this means waiting in one place for antelope to come into range and, other times, you must stay low and out of sight to avoid spooking your quarry.

### **When in Doubt, Stay Put**

Whenever you see antelope throughout the day, but struggle to get them into range, staying in one location may be worth your time. Antelope are fast movers, especially during rifle season when hunting pressure is high. Find a pinch point near a fence opening, a water hole or a crossing that allows you to wait for the buck to come to you.

Most antelope hunters spot from the road and then make a plan, so if you can use GOHUNT Maps to locate the farthest areas from the roads, you may find antelope heading to you instead of you having to stalk them. Remember to bring some snacks and drinks to help you stay put for longer. If you are not seeing any antelope in a day hunt, move to a different area in your hunting unit and try again.

Antelope hunting is one of my favorite hunts each year and could be yours, too. They are a blast to chase with any weapon, but my favorite is rifle season. You will not regret it if you can carve out some time in your western hunting schedule to chase these fast and wary critters. You can hunt them all day long and should see several groups a day if you are in a good area. Use these tips to get you close enough for a shot, but make sure you are proficient with your weapon and you will have an excellent chance to harvest an antelope this fall.

Learn more, join and shop at [GOHUNT.com](https://www.gohunt.com).

# Trail Camera Tactics

(continued from page 29)

## How Many Cameras Should You Use?

This question often sparks debate. Some hunters swear by them, while others don't use them at all. Some use a few, others dozens. It really depends on your situation and your style. If you're hunting a large property, multiple cameras make sense. But 20+ cameras on 10 acres is overkill. Find a balance that works for you.

## Bait Sites and Mock Scrapes

Bait sites and mock scrapes are helpful in condensing deer movement into a smaller area in front of your camera. They'll draw deer that might pass around, directly in front of its field of view.

**Baiting:** If legal in your area, using food plots and mineral licks can attract deer and improve their health. They'll also keep deer in one spot for longer, allowing for better footage.

**Mock Scrapes:** I have had great success using a mock scrape paired with a licking branch. The setup is really easy: find a tree with a low-hanging branch (like 4 feet off the ground), along a deer trail. Find a thinner branch and snap it slightly so it hangs down but doesn't break off. This is where deer will rub the scent glands on their face, communicating with other deer that pass through. Underneath, scrape away the leaves and churn up the dirt with your boot in an oval shape. I'll typically put some sort of scent on both the branch and the scrape – I'll either spray deer pee or my own.

## A Couple Final Tips

**Cleaning:** Don't forget to clean your equipment. It gets dirtier than you think, which does impact performance. Start with the inside of the camera. Clean out dirt, debris, and corrosion, then move to the outside. Follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions carefully.

**Organizing Photos:** Don't let your photos get scattered across your hard drive. Name your cameras and set geo-locations to keep your gallery organized. In the offseason, save the ones you want in named folders. It's easy to lose track of this stuff.

**Checking Batteries:** Don't forget to replace the batteries (lithium are best) and clear the SD card before setting out your camera. Mark your cameras for "readiness" with colored tape over the latch, so you know they're good to go.

**Don't Rely on Trail Cams:** Trail cams are amazing scouting tools but they're only part of the puzzle. Simply throwing one out without spending time in the woods won't equate to consistent success. You can only get a good picture of the woods you're hunting by spending time in it.

**Have Fun:** Hunting is meant to be fun and trail cams can greatly enhance that fun. I love seeing big bucks on my cameras but I also love seeing bobcats, bears, coyotes, and whatever else passes by. It's fun seeing what animals are doing when no one is around. Use them to enhance the experience – they shouldn't be a source of stress, marital strain, or jealousy. Enjoy!



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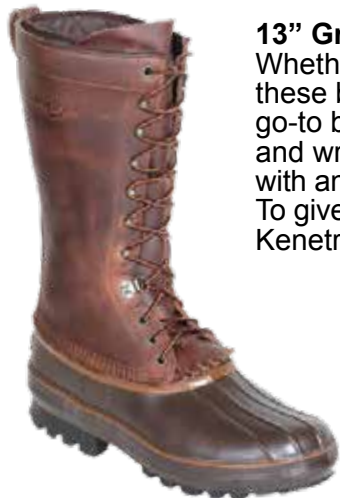
- Lace-to-the-toe, super-light leather and nylon uppers cushioned for all-day comfort
- Kenetrek Supportive Footbeds provide foundational arch support and a pronounced heel pocket
- Superior abrasion resistance
- Windtex® waterproof, breathable, flexible membrane (Bridger High)
- Weight-bearing, full length nylon midsoles atop high traction Kenetrek KT-Light™ outsole



### Sliderock Hiker

These boots define "light on your feet" with hard-gripping Grapon™ outsoles to keep you steady on any terrain. The lace-to-the-toe all leather uppers handle the rigors of cross country scrambling rain or shine. The sandwiched-in waterproof, breathable, flexible membrane keeps you all-day dry while our reinforced rubber toe and heel guard protects you at every turn. Light, agile, tough and only 3.6 lbs.

- 7" tall all-leather uppers with ankle support and comfort padding
- 5mm nylon midsoles for support in rugged terrain
- Reinforced rubber toe and heel guards for extra abrasion resistance
- Windtex® waterproof breathable flexible membrane
- Lightweight Grapon™ outsoles for excellent traction



### 13" Grizzly Pac Boot

Whether you're trying to keep up with the big bull or you're splitting and stacking wood, these boots are all-day workhorses. We Montanans choose them as our everyday winter go-to boots because they fit like an all leather boot, take all the punishment we dish out, and wrap us in total warmth. The Grizzly features Kenetrek's famous K-Talon™ outsole with an open tread pattern, deep relief and specialized "K" lugs for multidimensional traction. To give you complete support, durability and comfort for the most demanding hunts or tasks, Kenetrek handcrafted the highest tech components available. Only 5.6 lbs.

- Super thick 6 ounce leather uppers are contoured to fit your leg precisely for incredible support and comfort.
- Snut-Fit lacing system with stud hooks and Power D-Ring lace anchors for the ultimate in ankle support.
- Hand-made rubber outsoles are vulcanized for durability and feature steel shanks with double thick midsoles.
- Removable 6 mm thick three part liner quilted from a wicking durable synthetic, 400 gram Thinsulate™ Ultra Insulation, and finally 3 mm of wool felt to insulate even when damp.
- Custom Kenetrek K-Talon™ Outsole design has a deep and open tread design for serious grip and traction.

## The Legendary Kenetrek Mountain Extreme

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### MOUNTAIN EXTREME 400

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- 10" tall leather uppers made with 2.8mm premium full grain leather that utilize a one piece vamp construction with no seams down the tongue for abrasion resistance and waterproofness
- Reinforced double and triple stitching in high wear areas
- 7mm nylon midsoles provide extra support with heavy pack loads



# Kenetrek Elevates Support With New RMEF-Branded Products

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation [www.rmeff.org](http://www.rmeff.org)

**K**enetrek Boots deepened its nearly two-decade commitment to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation by unveiling a new line of licensed RMEF-branded products.

“Kenetrek is widely recognized across the outdoor industry as a leader in producing quality boots and other apparel,” said Robb Latrielle, RMEF managing director of marketing and partnerships. “We greatly appreciate their longtime support as a partner that helps us ensure the future of big game including elk, other wildlife, conservation and hunting.”

The newly created Kenetrek products are RMEF Hunting gaiters, RMEF Yellowstone Socks and RMEF Monarch Socks. Proceeds from the sale of each of the offerings benefit RMEF’s mission.

“As a long-time, active supporter of the RMEF, I share the same passion and vision of conserving elk and their habitat and lands. I believe the world is a much better place with a balanced, beautiful ecosystem where we humans can witness the elk and their natural environment thrive,” said Kenetrek President Jim Winjum.

Winjum is a life member who joined RMEF in 1990. Dating back to 2006, Kenetrek actively contributed to RMEF event fundraising as a donor, exhibitor, advertiser and sponsor.

## About Kenetrek Boots:

Kenetrek Boots were born out of their passion for hunting and their desire to find a pair of boots that wouldn’t leave our feet beat up and screaming in pain when we strap on a heavy pack, pick up a rifle or bow and head into the woods for a week of chasing game in rough weather. And since then, we’ve continued to design, test in the field, modify and repeat. . . regularly. We weren’t surprised that hunters of all kinds, backpackers and hikers were just as passionate about what they do, so we’ve set out to give them all comfortable, lightweight and super supportive boots that never let you down.

## About the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation:

Now in its fifth decade of conservation accomplishment and fueled by hunters, RMEF has conserved more than 9.1 million acres for elk and other wildlife. RMEF also works to open and improve public access, fund and advocate for science-based resource management, and ensure the future of America’s hunting heritage. Discover why “Hunting Is Conservation” ® at [rmeff.org](http://rmeff.org) or 800-CALL ELK.



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# Frequently Asked Questions About Hunting Burns

By Ryan McSparran  
Caribou Gear Outdoor Equipment Co. [www.caribougear.com](http://www.caribougear.com)

**H**ere's some of what we've experienced when it comes to hunting burns:

### How Soon Can You Hunt a Burn?

With recent fires, hunters often wonder how long it takes before animals will move back into that area. Can you hunt a one-year-old burn? Or does it take longer?

The regenerative growth after a fire will vary from one fire to the next.

Some fires burn extremely hot. After an intense fire, it may take years or even decades for the forest to recover. However, some fires may only burn the understory, leaving standing trees intact.

A few years ago, I was hunting elk in New Mexico near the end of September. A part of the unit had burned in June, only three months before our arrival. To our surprise, there were already green shoots growing throughout the burn – and the elk were taking advantage of it!

### Hunting a Burn Area

Here in Colorado, one of my favorite spots to hunt is a much older burn. I don't even know when this area burned, but I'm guessing it may have been 20 years ago. Now, the area is covered in tall grass and littered with old deadfall. The downed trees make travel through the burn difficult and the elk love it.

No matter when the burn occurred, don't count it out.

The best way to find out if the hunting will be productive, is to do some scouting.

If grass, aspen shoots or young oak brush have begun to spring up, you're in business.

### How Should I Hunt A Burn?

In areas with large burns or where the burn was very intense, there may be a lack of cover for wildlife. In these giant open areas, your best bet might be to hunt the perimeters. If this is the case, focus your efforts on those edges where open grassy terrain meets the protection of standing timber. Elk may be found feeding in the burn in the mornings or evenings, while retreating to the timber during the day.

In these large and expansive burns, glassing can be a very effective way to locate animals. Look for vantage points that allow you to see long stretches of the burn's edge. If you see animals feeding out into the burn, you'll know where you ought to set up for the next morning or evening hunt. Just make sure that you're downwind from where those animals appeared.

In areas where you find small burns, or where the fire only burned the understory, don't hesitate to use the entire burn area to your advantage. In these areas, there's no need to stick to the perimeters.

Just recently, I was elk hunting an area that had burned three years prior. However, the fire had left the ponderosas standing and had only cleared the thick oak brush below. With new grass and young oaks coming up, the interior of this burn was loaded with elk.

Again, the best way to find out what's going on in any particular burn area is to do some scouting. If the aerial imagery is recent enough, you can get your information from Google Earth. However, if the burn is more recent you may need to visit the area in person before you decide how to hunt it.

### Scout it and Make a Plan

If there are burns in your hunt area, use all the tools at your disposal to scout the area and make an effective plan. We highly recommend OnX Hunt for scouting and planning. The fire layer will show burns in your area and when the fire occurred.

In many cases, old burn areas won't show up on the map layer. Likewise, very small spot fires may not register. With that in mind, be sure and use the satellite view in your OnX map to find these unmarked burns. Likewise, Google Earth is a great tool for finding old burns or small spot fires.

Just this September, we hunted an area with a small spot fire. Perhaps caused by lightning, this little burn was only 200 yards across. Thanks to satellite imagery and e-scouting efforts, we knew this little burn was up on the ridge – and we found elk there on the first day of our archery hunt!

Ryan is an outdoor writer based in Colorado, and is proud to be a part of the team at Caribou Gear Outdoor Equipment Co. and owner of Budge's Wilderness Lodge.

Shop Caribou Gear Outdoor Equipment Company at [www.caribougear.com](http://www.caribougear.com).

# Fishing Tackle – When To Use Baits Or Lures

(continued from page 13)

## The Best Features of Lures

- Lures are simply fun to use! Catching a fish on a lure always seems especially satisfying.
- Lure fishing is an active, engaging pursuit, and you can cover a lot more water with a lure.
- Lures tend to catch slightly larger fish on average and attract less unwanted by-catch.
- Lures nearly always hook fish in the jaws, lips, or mouth, a safer catch and release.
- Lure collecting can become at least as addictive (and pleasurable) as lure fishing!
- Most good lures are expensive, and some are very expensive!
- Many lures are easily snagged on obstacles such as rocks, trees, or strands of water weed.
- Lure fishing demands constant motion, such as casting and retrieving or trolling from a moving boat.
- Many species of fish are much less responsive to lures than they are to bait.
- Some species like walleye and crappie are caught using a combination of livebait and lures.
- Walleye fishing requires anglers to have a mix of fishing tackle, geared towards both using livebait and fishing lures.
- Bass fishing is predominately a sport of anglers using fishing lures.
- Lure fishing generally demands better-quality fishing tackle and a higher degree of skill than bait fishing.

## And the Winner Is...

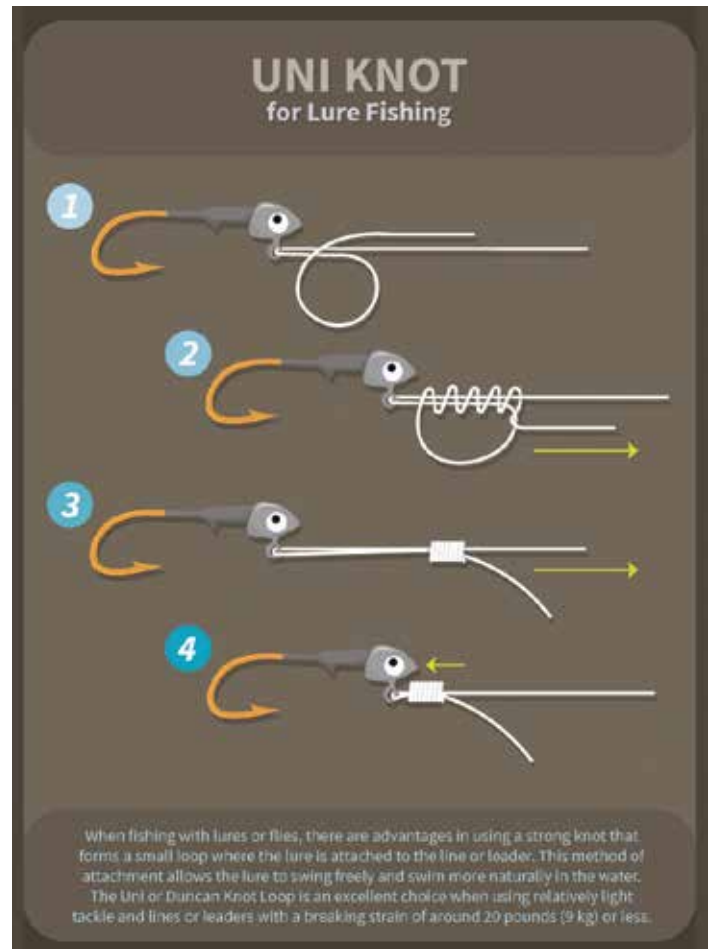
In the final analysis, there can be no overall winner in the bait-versus-lures contest.

Each approach has its strengths and weaknesses, and each will dominate under certain conditions or on a particular day.

Smart (and successful) anglers will strive to be adept at both forms of fishing!

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# Get On Target Fast And Stable

(continued from page 16)

For the sake of this discussion, we will cover the “**High Kneeling**” position. This version (There are several formal kneeling shooting positions) is the most used and most versatile for hunters. It is impossible to eliminate a degree of wobble, so kneeling is best for short- to medium-range shots.

## To execute:

- Drop your right knee to the ground (right hand shooter). Your left knee will naturally come up and provide a rest for the elbow of your support arm. Getting your elbow to a spot where it extends just beyond the knee is best. Avoid placing the point of your elbow directly on the knee.

- Snug the rifle into your shoulder pocket with your support arm hand under the forend of the firearm.

- Press face firmly into the comb of the stock, maintaining a solid cheek-weld, and look directly down the sight.

**Modified Kneeling:** Substituting shooting sticks, a full-size pack positioned vertically, downed log, or other terrain feature as a rest for your knee increases stability. If using auxiliary forend support, bring your right knee up (right hand shooters) to support the buttstock. This provides front and rear support.



**Standing Offhand:** The most difficult from an accuracy standpoint, least practiced, and often needed, the offhand shot is one to be comfortable with. A quick opportunity or the need to use height to your advantage may make an offhand shot your best or only option. The least stable, reserve offhand shots for shorter ranges.

## To Execute:

- Building your base with an athletic stance (feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent).

- With your left foot forward (right-hand shooters), angle your body toward the target. Your position should feel natural when bringing the gun up and getting on target.

- Press face firmly into the comb of the stock maintaining a solid cheek-weld and look directly down the sight.

- Experiment with support arm position on the forend. Move it fore and aft, finding the optimal position for stability when looking through the optic. Of note, a rearward support-hand position can provide the ability to suck your elbow into your body, creating an additional contact point for increased steadiness.

- Looking through the optic, the reticle will be moving. It will take practice to manage that movement. Ideally, the reticle will appear to have a rhythmic element to its motion - rhythm you can time and use to your advantage. Begin your trigger press prior to the reticle crossing where you want it when the gun goes off, timing the shot so it breaks on target. Familiarity with your trigger and how it breaks is extremely important. If you have an acceptable sight picture - meaning you are confident the bullet will hit within a margin of error to be an effective shot - you are good to go.

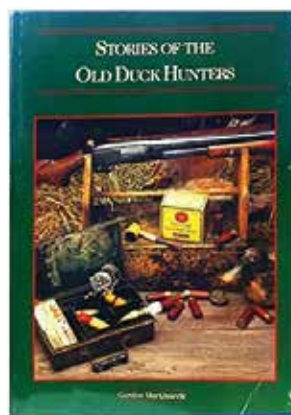
**Modified Offhand:** Use standing-height shooting sticks (or a field-procured standing-height stick suitable to serve as a shooting stick). Leaning into an adjacent tree/boulder - or resting the rifle on an available fencepost - can greatly aid stability.

**Final Thought:** Regardless of shooting position, practicing, and learning to “call your shot” will make you better. Calling your shot means analyzing and mentally cataloging your mechanics and sight picture the moment the gun goes off. Were the crosshairs low left? High right? Dead on? Make that call before evaluating the target. You may be surprised what you can predict, information you gather, and things you identify for future refinement being intentional with every shot. No shot taken at game will be the same. Infinite variables are at play. Make time to practice the different shooting positions at the range, and if possible, in-field conditions. You will become a more effective hunter.

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## Your Summer Hunting Reading List

(continued from page 27)



STORIES OF THE OLD DUCK HUNTERS

By Gordon MacQuarrie  
Who will like this book:  
Old-school waterfowlers,  
those curious about how  
hunting used to be, those  
looking for a laugh.

Gordon MacQuarrie is the true OG outdoor writer. And, he's from Wisconsin. Case closed. Go read some of his stuff, even if you're not into waterfowl hunting.

# Five Map Tips For Finding Spring Bears

(continued from page 22)

**Pro tip:** Click on any road in GOHUNT Maps to find out the vehicle clearance level (high clearance, passenger vehicles, etc.) and open/close dates of that road.

## 3D Measurement Tool



In the spots bears are generally located by hunters, often, hunters can be faced with long cross-canyon shots on bears. It is important to understand your effective range with your rifle and plan your hunt accordingly. It doesn't do much good to get into a bear hunting area where all of the shots are beyond the range you're comfortable with so we developed a tool to help plan areas you should be keying in on so you can get a shot off. The 3D Measurement Tool shows the line-of-sight distance, elevation gain/loss and distance as the crow flies. Using this tool in 3D mode is an incredibly useful tool when determining where your glassing points are and where you're counting on seeing bears.

## Rangefinder Tool



Bears are often shot in the hour before dark, making recovery tricky. Bears tend to go down in brushy areas they were feeding in and don't have antlers sticking up to give themselves away.

Mix those factors with a steep climb to the bear and the sun going down and recoveries can be difficult and sometimes dangerous. Using the GOHUNT Maps app, our rangefinder tool allows you to drop a waypoint exactly where the bear rolled to. To get started, press the "+" sign and select rangefinder. After you range the bear, simply point your phone in the direction of the bear, type in the range and hit the waypoint icon on the right hand side. This saves a waypoint in the exact direction you're facing at the precise horizontal (not line-of-sight) distance from you. This makes zeroing in on a bear that much easier during recovery or while putting the final stalk on your target.

If you're not a current Insider or Explorer member, now is the perfect time to join to get access to the best maps for hunters. With application season here as well, I personally use GOHUNT Maps all the time when researching what unit to apply for.

Learn more about GOHUNT Maps here:

[https://gohunt.com/learn/maps?\\_gl=1\\*f7fi8r\\*\\_gcl\\_au\\*MTkwODc3MzAyNS4xNzU5MDU1MzYw\\*\\_ga\\*N-TAxNTIyOTczLjE3MzkwNTUzNjA.\\*\\_ga\\_KYDEQGS-9GD\\*MTC0MjC0ODUwMy4yNS4xLjE3NDI3NDg1MzIuMzEuMC4w](https://gohunt.com/learn/maps?_gl=1*f7fi8r*_gcl_au*MTkwODc3MzAyNS4xNzU5MDU1MzYw*_ga*N-TAxNTIyOTczLjE3MzkwNTUzNjA.*_ga_KYDEQGS-9GD*MTC0MjC0ODUwMy4yNS4xLjE3NDI3NDg1MzIuMzEuMC4w)

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# Why You Should Be Chasing Whitetails In The West

(continued from page 28)

There is also some flexibility in a lot of states that allow hunters with a "deer" tag to hunt either whitetail or mule deer. This means that if you are getting worn out chasing mule deer in the mountains, you can go sit in a blind on the edge of agriculture with the same tag in hand. This can be the perfect idea if an older hunter wishes to join your camp but can't handle the mountains like they used to.

Though whitetails are not often the topic of many western game hunter conversations, they are in western states and in good numbers.

To hunt whitetails, a hunter must have a lot more patience and give up some of the big mountain views; however, they can still make memories of a lifetime.

You probably already are an expert whitetail hunter in your home state, so now all you need to do is gain permission or find public land near agriculture, get a tag and get out West! Use the skills that you already have and chase whitetails from a tree or blind this fall in some of our western states.

Use GOHUNT's Filtering to help you narrow down where you should find good numbers and add it to your western hunt or make a separate trip this fall instead of chasing mule deer.

To join GOHUNT and become an Insider go to <https://www.gohunt.com/learn/insider>.



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Billings	J&M Tire	406-969-2075	Missoula	Big Sky Tire	406-251-5988
Billings	Lisac's of Billings	406-656-7502	Plains	Gary's Glass & Auto Body	406-826-4279
Bozeman	Eagle Tire	406-587-5414	Polson	Beacon Tire	406-883-6258
Butte	Lisac's Tire	406-782-4294	Ronan	Arnie's Gas & Tire Center	406-676-0400
Butte	American Car Care	406-494-4450	Shelby	Mark's Tire & Alignment	406-434-5118
Darby	Automotive Solutions, Inc.	406-821-3440	St. Ignatius	Stuart's Hometown Auto	406-745-2190
Ennis	D&D Tire Supply	406-682-4234	Thompson Falls	Easy Street Auto & Tire	406-827-3808
Eureka	Big Sky Tire	406-297-2623	Three Forks	Three Forks Motor Supply	406-285-3212
Gardiner	Yellowstone Dino Lube	406-848-9401	Victor	Grenfell Garage	406-961-2424
Glasgow	Arch's Tire	406-228-2258	Whitehall	Full Circle Tire	406-287-5682
Great Falls	Falls Tire Service	406-453-1418	Williston, ND	OK Tire Store	701-774-0233
Helena	Eagle Tire	406-443-5910	Ashton, ID	Tri-State Tire	208-652-3344
Helena	Kolar Tire 3213 Euclid Ave.	406-459-3135	Rexburg, ID	Tri-State Tire	208-356-9069
Helena	Kolar Tire Hwy 12. E	406-465-2442	Victor, ID	All American Tire & Brake	208-787-8473

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- Dual-zone automatic climate control

There's also a suite of available active safety features like Blind-Spot Detection<sup>2</sup> and Rear Cross-Traffic Alert<sup>2</sup>, as well as the connected services of available SUBARU STARLINK® Safety and Security<sup>3</sup>. Choose from 5 Crosstrek trims.



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