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CONTENTS

46

FEATURES

16 Fishing, Camping and Hiking Gear

Hunters are also anglers, campers and avid hikers, and you can sell them gear for all those outdoor pursuits.
By Ace Luciano

22 Keys to Handling Sponsorship Requests

Constantly getting hit up for donations? Here's how to handle it.
By Michael D. Faw

26 Learning the Alphabet Soup of Retirement Plans

If you haven't already, the time to start saving for retirement is now.
By Judy Kneiszel

34 Turkey Ammo Then and Now

Today's turkey options are killer, but the old-school stuff still gets the job done, too.
By Mark Chesnut



22



16



34 Coyote Control

With predator populations out of control, coyote hunting is on everyone's mind.
By Alan Clemons

40 Gear Roundup:

Treestands and Blinds
By Gordy Krahn

26



44 NSSF: Consider Offering Gun-Cleaning Classes

Every gun owner needs to know how to care for their firearm, but YouTube is a sea of misinformation. Teach customers the right way.
By David Maccar

46 New Products

Here are a few new products to keep your eye on this year.

DEPARTMENTS

4 In the News

A roundup of relevant and noteworthy industry updates

6 Informed Associate: Learn to Be More Productive

It's not about working harder. It's about prioritizing and organizing.
By Ken Wysocky

8 Up Close: Trail Cameras

Prices and features on today's trail cameras vary widely. Check out these three options customers will love.
By Mark Chesnut

10 Gear Guru: Pitching Tents, Sleeping Bags and More

Your camping customers will be interested in these options that make camp a little more comfortable.
By Kevin Reese

48 Counter Culture: Increasing Participation

Do you know how many people complete a hunter's safety course and never go on to buy a hunting license?
By Bob Robb

10





EDITORIAL

Editor in Chief / Hilary Dyer
Product Editor / Gordy Krahn
Digital Editor / Tim Dobbins

CREATIVE

Art Director / Mark Kingsbury

ADMINISTRATION

Circulation / Holly Gensler
 holly.gensler@colepublishing.com

ADVERTISING

President/Publisher GVO / Derrick Nawrocki
 derrick.nawrocki@grandviewoutdoors.com

Regional Sales Manager / Mike Kizzire
 mike.kizzire@grandviewoutdoors.com

Regional Sales Manager / Patrick Boyle
 patrick.boyle@grandviewoutdoors.com

Account Executive / Brad Bisnette
 brad.bisnette@colepublishing.com

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EMAIL Holly.Gensler@colepublishing.com. Please include both old and new addresses.

ADVERTISING

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**GRAND VIEW
 OUTDOORS**



Easton Celebrates 100 Years of American Made Greatness

Easton, the longest-standing archery company in the United States, is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Easton's inception began with a family name, and today is still a family-owned company focused on its legacy and the future of archery.

Since its beginnings in 1922, Easton Archery has focused on offering innovative, high-quality products that enhance the end-user's sporting experience. Easton revolutionized the sport of archery by introducing straight, consistent aluminum arrows in the 1940s,

and has been the world's leading archery innovator ever since. Easton shafts are used by more bowhunters, crossbowmen, 3D competitors, target shooters and Olympic archery competitors than all other brands combined.

It was founded in 1922 by Doug Easton, who began crafting his own bows and making arrows out of cedar and pine. In 1929, Doug moved to Los Angeles, opening Easton's Archery Shop, where he would hit the sport full force with a host of wood-arrow innovations — the first screw-in

point system that would become the world standard, then in 1949, with the production of the world's first aluminum arrow, the 24SRT-X. Archery would never be the same.

Doug Easton was laid to rest in December 1972. But his legacy lived on with his son, Jim, and his grandson, Greg Easton, who help pioneer major advancements in arrow technology to this day.

Of all the honors and achievements, archers are what keep Easton looking down-range, since 1922 to the next 100 years and beyond.



GSM Outdoors Acquires SOG Specialty Knives Inc.

GSM Outdoors, a multi-brand manufacturer and technology innovator of specialized hunting and shooting sport accessories, announces the acquisition of SOG Specialty Knives, Inc.

"Since 1986, SOG has been synonymous with austere-duty knives intended to meet the needs of defense professionals," said Eddie Castro, CEO of GSM Outdoors. "The name is instantly recognized by military, first responders and blade enthusiasts for their high-quality craftsmanship and reliable performance. Our acquisition of SOG represents an important

expansion of the GSM family of brands, and we look forward to taking the brand to that next level of consumer support and product innovation."

Originally hailed for the company's combat-inspired fixed-blade knives, SOG has since expanded its knives and specialty tools to include folders, multi-tools, and gear intended for professional use, outdoor recreation and everyday carry.

To see the full line of SOG Specialty Knives & Tools for work, recreation, and everyday applications, visit SOGKnives.com.

Trijicon Selects John Trull as Vice President of Sales and Marketing

Trijicon, Inc., global provider of innovative aiming solutions for the hunting, shooting, military and law enforcement markets, is pleased to announce John Trull as Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

With a proven industry track record of over twenty years, Trull brings a wealth of experience to the Trijicon team. He served over 14 years with Remington Arms Company in a spectrum of capacities including product manager, direc-



↑ John Trull

tor of marketing, vice president of product management and marketing, and senior vice president and general manager of firearms. John then moved on to serve as chief executive officer of Hunter's Specialties, Inc., executive vice president of Davidson's and, most recently, vice president of product management-ammunition, Vista Outdoor Inc.

"John's extensive industry experience and history of leadership is

quite impressive," said Stephen Bindon, President and CEO, Trijicon. "His unique perspective on product development, brand management and operations will be a tremendous asset to Trijicon as we continue to expand our market share within the industry."

Trull will have oversight responsibilities of the commercial sales and marketing organizations as well as the business development team which serves domestic military organizations, government agencies, international military/LE agencies and international commercial sales. **HR**





CLASSIC FIREARMS WITH A MODERN TWIST

Taylor's & Company, the world's leading marketers and importers of state-of-the-art historical firearms utilizing the latest innovative designs, is pleased to announce the addition of the "TC86 Takedown" rifle to their Lifestyle Series.

The TC86 Takedown is a hunting rifle where style meets functionality. It's made for the ultimate expedition while maintaining a finish that's fit for a classic design. The TC86 becomes a versatile companion for any hunt, hike, or to just go plinking at the range. The TC86 features a color case receiver and checkered pistol grip on a walnut stock. A rubber butt plate absorbs recoil, and the wide lever size allows for ease of use in all conditions. Also included is a weaver rail sight with a skinner peep sight on it.

Taylor's & Company brings to the gun enthusiast classic firearms that made cowboys, lawmen and outlaws famous, but with a modern twist. All Taylor's premium firearms are made using the latest in precision machinery and high-quality materials with one goal in mind; to create reliable and accurate reproductions of Civil War, Old West, hunting and tactical guns from the 19th century. The TC86 Takedown is a perfect example of this.

SPECIFICATIONS:

Length: 16.5" | Caliber: .45-70

MSRP: \$1839.86

Taylor's & Company has been in business for over 30 years. They are pleased to share their heritage products with serious collectors and modern sportsmen and women alike. Customers have made Taylor's their first choice for historically correct reproduction firearms, parts, and accessories for more than three decades. Taylor's continues to add products to their line with new inventions and improvements for the modern shooter. The Taylor's product line has expanded to include some modern firearms, as well as the classics with a twist, to offer even more of a selection for our customers. Their continued pledge to their customers is that every firearm they sell is hand-checked before being shipped out. Taylor's high level of quality control ensures that customers receive only the finest products for their collection or shooting sport.

In addition to quality, Taylor's is committed to customer service. They especially enjoy hearing from loyal customers who may be looking for historical firearms or spare parts not listed in their catalog. They appreciate every opportunity to help you 'Keep the Legend Alive.'

To learn more about the TC86 Takedown and the complete product offerings from Taylor's & Company, please visit www.taylorsfirearms.com or follow us socially @taylorsfirearms.



Learn to Be More Productive

You can better manage the daily barrage of tasks by decluttering your brainpan.

BY KEN WYSOCKY

If you've ever felt overwhelmed by the never-ending onslaught of tasks and to-dos that accumulate with mind-numbing frequency every day, Steve Willis has some advice: Free your overtaxed brain by embracing the principles of *Getting Things Done*.

The GTD productivity approach stems from a book written by productivity consultant David Allen and published in 2001. Called *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity*, the book outlines a time management system in which adherents literally get tasks off their minds and break them down into actionable items, ranked according to their importance.

VitalSmarts partnered with Allen a few years ago to develop a GTD curriculum that could be taught

and replicated at companies, Willis explains. He's the vice president of professional services for VitalSmarts, a corporate-training company that focuses on behavioral changes that can reshape company cultures.

"David Allen says that minds are for having ideas, not holding them," Willis says. "If you think about it, we often use our minds to track all of our obligations and commitments, and the brain tries to hold on to all those things, which leaves us overwhelmed."

"We feel pulled in so many directions — stretched so thin that there's never enough time to focus on what matters most. And most of this happens because of how we interact with all those inputs. You keep holding all those things in

your head, but your mind is an awful office space."

The CCORE of the issue

To make the GTD strategy work, it's essential to understand its five basic components: Capture, Clarify, Organize, and Reflect and Engage.

- Capture — This step focuses on getting tasks out of your head and putting them in a convenient place, so your brain no longer needs to hold on to them. Research from the 1950s showed that the average memory can only handle about seven things at a time, which is why phone numbers have seven digits (not including area codes), Willis says.

But more recent studies show that number actually is closer to three or four.



“That’s why when you make a mental list of things to get at a grocery store, you tend to forget one or two items,” he says. “So you can help the brain do its job better by putting things in a place (think sticky notes, a notebook or an electronic device), which then frees up the mind to be more creative, present and productive.”

• **Clarify** — This next step requires you to ask what action is required of each task. This includes dividing them into actionable and nonactionable items. Nonactionable items include things that must be filed away and those that need attention in the future. “This helps you get to the doing part,” Willis says.

Actionable items get a similar treatment. Under GTD principles, you should file them under three categories: things to delegate, things to do now and things to do soon.

“As you clarify, you may come across items that can be done in two minutes or less,” Willis says. “You should do those right away because it helps eliminate some of the clutter and puts you in a good frame of mind to keep getting things done.”

• **Organize** — A natural extension of the clarify step, this involves breaking down the larger, overall to-do list of actionable items into smaller lists with different demands, such as phone calls to answer, projects to work on, etc.

“You’re effectively setting up an external brain to keep track of things,” Willis says, noting he keeps his lists in a small notebook. “But it requires a weekly review because new inputs always are coming in. So you need to take a half-hour and assess the new captures, clarify the things that haven’t already been clarified and reorganize the smaller lists accordingly.”

• **Reflect and Engage** — After you’re properly organized, this final step becomes easier. Reflect centers on examining your lists in order to set priorities, which in turns helps you engage (or execute) tasks more effectively, Willis says.

“Most people let their emails prioritize their days when they start work,” he says. “Instead, reflect on appointments, work and other priorities.”

This all may sound like a lot to digest. But Willis says it helps to start out by focusing on small behavioral changes and gradually work GTD strategies into your everyday work routine. After you can consistently use one new skill for two weeks, move on to the next step, he recommends.

“Even just small shifts in behavior can change your overall experience,” he notes. “You have to keep chipping away

“Most people let their emails prioritize their day when they start work. Instead, reflect on appointments, work and other priorities.”



at it and build momentum as you start to see results.”

GTD is time-consuming to learn and implement, Willis says. But if you don’t take the time to follow the basic principles, the lack of prioritization and organization sucks up even more time in the long run through lost productivity and inefficiency.

GTD works because it relies on changes in behavior to increase productivity, rather than on technology. Willis says he’s tried electronic devices designed to make him more productive, but all of them ultimately failed because they don’t change how people approach work.

“People assume that to be more productive, you have to put your head down and do more work. We step on that productivity treadmill every time we come to work, turn up the speed and keep staying on it longer,” he says. “But if you prioritize your work and obligations, you can be better at deciding which tasks need your attention now instead of being driven only by the latest and loudest demands on your time, which gets exhausting.

“Thanks to GTD, I’ve found over the years that the ability to get things done doesn’t depend on the number of things you do or the number of hours in a day, but how you interact with all those things. The GTD skill sets help you interact with those things more effectively — help you be present when it matters most.” **HR**

↑ Productivity isn't about just working harder. It's about prioritizing tasks and tackling them in a structured, organized fashion.

Trail Cameras

Once a fringe product, trail cameras are a must-have for many hunters these days. Features vary widely, as do prices, but check out these three options customers will appreciate.



BY MARK CHESNUT

Like most other technologies, trail cameras for monitoring deer and other wildlife have come a long way in the past 30 or 40 years. Back in the 1980s when I first began using such technology to gain a little extra insight into the whitetail population on my hunting areas, shutter speeds were so slow and triggers so inefficient that many times we'd rush home from the film processor only to have mostly pictures of nothing, with a few blurry, black-and-white photos of deer butts as the animals walked out of the frame. And that was only if the batteries in the cameras hadn't run out of juice before a deer walked by and we had set up the complicated devices correctly. Many times, on a trail rife with deer signs, my cameras hadn't taken a single picture.

Fast forward to the present, and some of the photos taken by modern trail cams are absolutely stunning. Not only are many very high-resolution, but high-definition video is also a common feature of many newer models. Of course, you don't have to process the film — just download the

images to your laptop or an SD card reader. And increasingly, newer models allow you to have images sent directly to your computer or smartphone without even having to set foot in the woods and spook your quarry. Of course, that's a little more expensive, but some hunters are more than willing to pay for the convenience of real-time surveillance of their favorite hunting spots.

Such high quality and efficiency has led to trail cams being used for much more than just hunting and scouting purposes. Many people used them for home surveillance, to watch property they are not close enough to in order to monitor in person on a regular basis, or even to figure out what kind of varmint has been raiding their henhouse.

Fact is, nowadays just about anybody walking into your retail establishment could be a potential trail camera customer. That said, let's take a look at a few good models that could give you a leg up in hunting sales this year.



CUDDEBACK CUDELINK CELL

Cuddeback is a premier name in trail cameras, and the company has been offering some of the best-quality trail cams since 1989. So, it should come as little surprise that the company's latest cellular-enabled trail cams are among the best on the market today.

The CuddeLink Cell is one of the company's most advanced trail cams. It features LTE service, .25-second trigger time, a very long battery life and high-resolution, 20mp images. Cell service starts at a very reasonable price for real-time images. Plus, the CuddeLink Cell utilizes CuddeLink technology to allow up to 24 cameras to share one cell plan. Note that CuddeLink is not cell service or Wi-Fi. Rather, it is a proprietary wireless mesh network that allows trail cameras to communicate with each other. CuddeLink transmits images from remote cameras to a home image collection camera.

Cuddeback's patented Power House technology uses super capacitors to store energy, allowing the camera to deliver three times the power to the LEDs. The result is more range, better image quality and less blurred motion. Along with the aforementioned 1/4-second trigger speed, super-fast recovery speed assures the trail cam is ready for the next picture within one second of taking the first. Plus, each picture is imprinted with date, time, moon phase and camera ID. Multiple use modes range from simple setup and use in EZ mode to advanced modes that give the user more control over the camera's settings.

Cell service from either AT&T or Verizon is required. Plans start at about \$10 a month for up to 750 pictures, going up to about \$30 a month for unlimited images. Note that the Cuddeback CuddeLink Cell is available individually or in multi-camera starter kits, which come complete with high-gain antennas, mounting brackets and straps.



BUSHNELL BY PRIMOS PRIME LOW GLOW

This little trail camera is the definition of simplicity, yet it yields some really great results for those wanting to keep an eye on their favorite feeder or trail. Adjustable settings allow the user to capture one to three images per trigger, or anywhere from five to 60 seconds of HD video. The trigger easily adjusts from one second to 60 minutes to give users flexibility on how many photos they want to take at a given time.

Don't confuse this camera with some of the slow budget-minded models on the market. It features a 0.3-second trigger speed with a quick one-second recovery rate. Plus, its 80-foot flash range will reach out to get pictures of animals that are not within range of many cameras.

The camera gives users full-color, high-resolution images settings of 3mp, 12mp and 24mp. Plus, it puts the date, time and temperature on every image. It is also very easy to operate, and settings can be changed without removing it from the tree or wherever else it is mounted.

The 24mp resolution and automatic day/night sensor deliver crisp, vivid images in daylight or dark. Plus, this unit operates on six AA batteries (included), and the package even contains a 16GB SD card, so it's ready to head to the woods right out of the box. The premium nylon strap with steel buckle will withstand years of use.

Of course, this model won't send photos and videos right to a hunter's phone or computer like some will. But it's an overall solid performer at a very competitive price, with no add-on costs like cell service, which is required for many.

BROWNING DEFENDER RIDGELINE

It's easy for hunters to keep an eye on their remote hunting plot with the Browning Defender Ridgeline Wireless Cellular Trail Camera. Transmitting HD images and video clips over a nationwide 4G LTE network from hunting spots right to the user's laptop or mobile device using the Strike Force Wireless Management System, this trail camera boasts an 80-foot detection range and 90-foot flash range. When triggered, it snaps crisp 20mp images and 1080p videos ranging in length from five seconds to two minutes.

The Defender's multi-shot and burst modes fire off up to eight shots with an adjustable one-second to 60-minute delay. The ultrafast trigger speed is easily adjustable from .135 seconds to .7 seconds and includes three modes – power save, long range (120-foot low-glow IR illumination mode) and invisible flash (80-foot invisible IR illumination mode) infrared flash modes for increased reliability. It is powered by 16 AA batteries or a 12-volt solar power source, and the camera accepts up to 512GB memory cards for plenty of onboard data storage.

Other interesting features include the ability to automatically upload thumbnails, HD images and video clips to the user's cell phone or computer via LTE networks. Plus, a security mode uploads images and videos, then sends alerts to the user.

Browning offers Status, Basic, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Parked data plans, so users can easily customize their multi-camera plan to meet their needs. Plans, available for both AT&T and Verizon, range from about \$12.99 to \$49.99 a month, so are very affordable for many who want to keep a close eye on their hunting location, horse barn, hunting cabin or vacation property without leaving home. **HR**





Camping Products: Pitching Tents, Sleeping Bags and More

Don't forget that hunters are campers, too.

BY KEVIN REESE

Who doesn't like camping? With scores of "glamping" nights, Marine Corps style, under my belt, I have come to appreciate today's more refined camping nice-to-have offerings. With respect to hunting, camping is central to many outdoor pursuits — the reason terms like deer camp, elk camp and hunting camp exist — and the products consumers choose should fit their comfort (or necessity), purposes and environments. Of course, from sea to shining sea, our landscape and weather are as diverse as the amazing people sharing our hunter ranks. Even so, meeting the wants and needs of most hunters can be accomplished by offering products in line with this short roundup of camping gear. Moreover, this roundup should also serve as a resource to help you determine which products or product types best fit your individual regions.





BROWNING BIG HORN 2-ROOM, 8-PERSON TENT

As a 10-year owner of a Browning Black Canyon two-room tent, I continue to be a fan. While my model was discontinued years ago, the similarities between it and Browning's current offering, the Big Horn 2-Room Tent, coupled with my personal quality and reliability experiences, make the Big Horn easy to recommend. The Big Horn 2-Room Tent boasts 150 square feet of floor space, in a 10x15-foot layout, designed to be used as an open space or as two separate rooms. Height, often a point of contention for comfortable camping, is an impressive 7 feet 3 inches. Six screened windows and two roomy door openings optimize ventilation and make access easy, even for big guys like me, while straight sidewalls optimize the usability of the Big Horn's floor space. For weather, the Big Horn Tent's 75D polyester walls and ceiling, coated 150D polyester floor, 75D 185T rain fly and factory-sealed seams throughout keep campers dry, even in unforgiving ranches www.browningcamping.com



BIG AGNES DOG HOUSE 6 TENT

With one of the best reputations in extreme outdoor adventure, from hunting to mountaineering, Big Agnes tents are highly sought after, but they can be expensive. Fortunately, the company has found some middle ground without compromising the quality and reliability users have come to expect with the Dog House 6. As its name implies, the Dog House 6 indeed can house up to six hunters, again depending on the gear they bring along. The floor dimensions are 8 feet 4 inches x 9 feet 10 inches, and the center height is 6 feet 8 inches. The Dog House 6 weighs in at 13 pounds. Additional Dog House 6 features include 1500mm polyurethane-coated polyester-construction taped polyurethane seams, DAC DA17 aluminum pole set, large dry-entry door, airflow vents and an oversized back window. www.bigagnes.com



COLEMAN SKYDOME 2-PERSON TENT

If you have never heard of Coleman, do you really even camp? Coleman is one of the most recognized names in the camping world, most notably for lanterns, camping stoves and, yes, tents. While the Skydome is touted as a compact, lightweight, yet roomy tent, it also sets up in under five minutes. Even better, for a two-person tent, it's actually pretty roomy! Like the Browning Big Horn, the Skydome's vertical walls increase floor space, as well as 20 percent more height (4 feet at the center). The Coleman Skydome 2-Person Tent features a 7 feet x 5 feet footprint, UVGuard material for enhanced protection from sunlight, extra-wide door, mesh pockets for storage and a built-in, dimmable 450-lumen LED light. The tent also boasts Coleman's WeatherTec system, including tub-like flooring, welded corners and inverted seams. For durability, the Skydome's frame is rated to handle up to 35 mph wind. www.coleman.com



ALPS MOUNTAINEERING TAURUS 4-PERSON TENT

ALPS Mountaineering is respected among hunters and outdoor enthusiasts in general for its diverse array of camping and hunting products, from hunting chairs and backpacks to tents of virtually every size – individual to outfitter grade. A popular tent in ALPS Mountaineering's lineup, whether hunting, hiking or just camping for the weekend, is the Taurus 4-Person tent. Like with most tent capacities, suggest your customers take those sleep numbers lightly. As the example, this Taurus tent can definitely sleep four with a footprint of 64 square feet, but it's not likely to fit that many hunters with all of their camping gear unless they are traveling light. The Taurus' dimensions are 7 feet 6 inches x 8 feet 6 inches and 52 inches high at the center. The tent features 75D polyester wall and ceiling fabric; a 75D 185T poly taffeta, 2000mm-coated floor; 75D 185T 1500mm-coated rain fly; factory-sealed seams; two large doors with zippered mesh windows and large zippers. The Taurus weighs just 10 pounds 8 ounces and assembles quickly with two fiberglass poles. www.alpsmountaineering.com



TETON OUTFITTER XXL -35-DEGREE SLEEPING BAG

Headquartered in Cedar Hills, Utah, and founded in 2005, Teton's mission is simple: "To help — help all kinds of people from different backgrounds get outdoors and enjoy life." While Teton offers backpacks, cots, pads, tents and other camping accessories, the company's sleeping bags are wildly popular, especially its flagship cold-weather Outfitter XXL -35-Degree model. The Outfitter XL -35-Degree Sleeping Bag is not only pillowy soft, but also incredibly rugged, and Teton backs up the claim with an industry-leading lifetime warranty. This all-season sleeping bag includes a mummy hood, thick-weave canvas exterior, removable cotton flannel liner, Super Loft Elite hollow fiberfill, shoulder draft tubes and a two-way zipper. The Teton Outfitter XL measures 92 inches x 39 inches, weighs 20 pounds and stows quickly and easily in an included duffel bag.

www.tetonsports.com



BROWNING VORTEX 0-DEGREE SLEEPING BAG

Cold can kill. Hypothermia takes roughly 20,000 lives annually, yet it's usually preventable with the right gear — sleeping bags included. Since not-warm-enough is a deal breaker, I prefer a warmer sleeping bag, especially when camping in an area capable of extreme temperature drops. For many low-country hunters, a zero-degree-rated sleeping bag like the Browning Vortex is more than enough. Even in mild temperatures, unzipping the Vortex Sleeping Bag enough for ventilation can result in superbly comfortable rest. The Browning Vortex 0-Degree Sleeping Bag features hybrid insulation composed of RDS-certified, 600-fill hydrophobic down and TechLoft Micro multiple-denier, siliconized fiber. The Vortex also includes an insulated chest and zipper baffle, rugged polyester ripstop shell and No. 8 zippers.

www.browningcamping.com



KODIAK CANVAS Z TOP SLEEPING BAG

One of these is not like the others. Favorite features of mine, and surely the most noticeable for your customers, are the Z Top's head-rest and pillow pocket. The pocket can accommodate a small pillow or garments. The wider head area is a great creature comfort, and together with the body and wedged footbox, snoozers can really stretch out. While Z Top sleeping bags are available with 0- and 20-degree ratings, Kodiak Canvas' compatible Booster Quilt, a great add-on, can enhance the temperature rating by an additional 20 degrees! The Z Top Sleeping bag features large, locking YKK zippers, anti-snap zipper strips, full-length zipper baffle, offset seams, an additional footbox zipper for enhanced ventilation, a tech pocket and dual-layer construction. The Z Top includes compression straps with snap buckles, as well as a canvas duffel-style bag for quick, easy stowage.

www.kodiakcanvas.com



KELTY CATENA 30 SLEEPING BAG

A mild-weather sleeping bag just might be the perfect sleeping solution for your mild-mannered customers. In areas where warmer temperatures are more often the norm, your hunting enthusiasts are less concerned with temperature ratings and more concerned with comfort, as well as breathability — in a nutshell, versatility. While the Kelty Catena sleeping bag boasts CloudLoft insulation, it doesn't go overboard. While the Catena is rated for 30-degree weather, it also features lightweight shell and liner construction and unzips to be used as a blanket. The box-style sleeping bag design not only enhances versatility, like the ability to zip two sleeping bags together, but it also comfortably accommodates those who like to stretch out and move in their sleep.

www.kelty.com



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tremendously."

— Alan Tiller, Owner
Tiller & Lanier Guns

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CAMP CHEF PORTABLE FLAT TOP GRILL 600

While tents and sleeping bags are great, food is the way to many hunters' hearts, mine included. Coming from a background of lackluster meals-ready-to-eat, inhaled with an it'll-do mindset, it's nice to settle in for an evening in camp with a bit more palatable sustenance. For those driving or riding into camp who prefer a more significant cooking source, the Camp Chef Portable Flat Top Grill 600 is a campground cooking must-have. Truly the best of all camp-cooking worlds, flat-top grills are great for everything from sunrise omelets, bacon and pancakes to late-night mixed veggies, burgers and steaks – honestly, very few things can't be cooked on a flat-top grill. Among hunting and outdoor enthusiasts, Camp Chef has maintained its position on the leading edge of the camp cooking/outdoor kitchen industry for years, and the Portable Flat Top Grill 600 is a fitting example.

The Flat Top 600 features folding legs for compact transport and easier carry into your campsite; 600 square inches of cold-rolled steel, flat-top griddle with a True Seasoned, non-stick surface; four 12,000 BTU/hour burners; adjustable leg levelers; folding shelves; matchless ignition; grease management system; a propane tank holder and yes, my favorite, a bottle opener. Not for the lighthearted backpacker, the Flat Top Grill 600 weighs 100 pounds and measures 62 inches x 32 inches x 36 inches www.campchef.com

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Some customers are bound to be more mobile and on the hunt for something a bit lighter and more compact than a flat-top grill, yet they still appreciate a warm meal. On the far end of the camp cooking spectrum, the Primus Classic Trail Backpacking Stove is a single-burner, propane-gas powered stove. Simply add a personal propane canister, pot and grub and cook to perfection. The wide burner is designed to efficiently heat larger pots with a 10,000-BTU flame while a static four-point pot support enhances stability. When not in use, the burner can stow in the included storage bag. www.primus.us HR



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Fishing, Camping and Hiking Gear

Most hunters also camp, fish, hike and participate in other outdoor recreational activities. All of that requires extra gear you should be selling.

BY ACE LUCIANO

Let me know if you've heard this one before.

A hunter, target shooter, camper, hiker, kayaker, skier and photographer all walk into a bar.

The bartender looks over and says, "What can I get you, buddy?"

If you've been in business for any significant length of time, you've likely come to the realization that there are only three ways for you to

make more money.

You can sell more to your existing customers, you can gain new customers and sell products and services to them, or, you can keep everything the same and raise your existing prices.

That's it.

Of the three, the easiest method of increasing your revenue is, of course, to sell more to your existing customers who have shown

that they already have a preference (regardless of if that was a single- or multiple-purchase customer) for buying from you and your business. Sure, you can sell an extra gun case, coat, shirt, magazine, box of ammunition, set of arrows, pocketknife, etc. to those customers — but how many times can you do that? One of the easiest ways to increase your spend per customer is to broaden the selection of products that you offer.





Hunters Do It All

Of all of the outdoor-related activities, hunters are likely the most diverse, especially when it comes to equipment. Think, for a moment, about all of the gear and equipment that is used for the average Western big game hunt.

First, every hunter needs a weapon — this is almost always a bow, crossbow or a firearm.

They also likely need accessories for that weapon, whether that be some sort of sight, scope, sling, carrier, etc. If they are hiking in, they will need a pack that can be used for carrying their equipment, food, and, possibly, the game they harvest. They need good, comfortable, sturdy boots that can take the abuse of days in the wilderness.

They need lightweight cooking gear. They need some sort of shelter or tent. These days, they are likely to use trekking poles. They need binoculars and a rangefinder. They need technical clothing that dries easily and can cover a multitude of climates — sometimes from below freezing to rain, to snow, to sunny days in the 80s. Now, more than ever, hunters use ATVs or UTVs to access remote areas and haul their camps, gear and game. Are you taking advantage of this new market?

And and on, and that's just to hunt — and just for one trip.

Fishing

While there are certainly many fishermen that do not hunt, it is a fair assessment that most hunters you know also do a bit of fishing.

According to the 2016 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services National Survey of Fishing Hunting and Wildlife Associated Recreation, approximately 58 percent of big-game-related expenditures were on equipment, which totaled \$8.7 billion dollars. Hunting equipment — including firearms, ammunition, and bows and arrows — accounted for \$4.3 billion or 50 percent of all equipment. Purchases of auxiliary equipment, such as tents and binoculars, totaled \$1.1 billion.

That's real money.



When surveyed, 67% of hunters said they also fish. Conversely, only 21% of anglers in the survey responded that they also hunt. That means hunting-related retailers have the opportunity to sell two-thirds of their customers something they are already buying anyway — but from someone else.

It also means that you, a reader of *Hunting Retailer*, have the greatest opportunity for broadening the amount and number of products that you can deliver to your happy customers. After all, they're going to buy it from somewhere. Why not you?

Determining What Products to Carry

If you have a customer management software program, you can easily send out a survey or questionnaire to your customers that can isolate the perfect market for you to expand into. If not, have your staff ask people when they check out what other activities they participate in. Give three or four options and offer a small discount or prize drawing for a gift card to participate.

Another way to choose new products is to contact companies that you wish to do business with and ask for an appointment with their local representative, or contact representative groups in that market space for a strategy and planning meeting.

It is, literally, their job to help you choose the right and right numbers for product assortment!

The Pawn Shop Example

If you've ever walked inside a pawn shop, you know that they are masters of diversity.

Pawn shops typically buy and sell things of value — all kinds of things. They now almost always sell firearms, but also have hunting optics, jewelry, power tools and high-end electronics. Some have antiques. Though they usually have a specialty, it is the diversity of

→ Simple watercraft will appeal to hunters, anglers and outdoor enthusiasts.



← Fishing gear is a natural addition to your shop.

products that draws a wide range of customers. The key to not having an overflowing retail space, though, is in knowing your customers, understanding what they want, and knowing how much of it they are willing to buy.



↑ Hiking boots — not just those made for hunting — will sell well to shoppers who enjoy the woods in all sorts of ways.

“Lightly Used Gear”

For many of the newest brands of high-end, technical hunting equipment, some coats and boots can cost as much as a gun or a bow! Take advantage of that value and operate a gear exchange, consignment sale, or used product area in your store. More and more there are not just used firearms and archery equipment on the racks at the local outdoors store, but also technical apparel, hiking boots, and, yes, even high-end long underwear! Ideally, you want to offer store credit for



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these items, as that allows you to double-dip on the sale. You sell the used gear at a profit, then you sell the customer new gear at a profit. They are happy because they get a discount. You're happy because they continue to buy with you. This can also set you apart from the competition, especially the big-box types, who tend to have a more transactional relationship with their customers (though, for the smart ones, this is already changing).

Product Suggestions

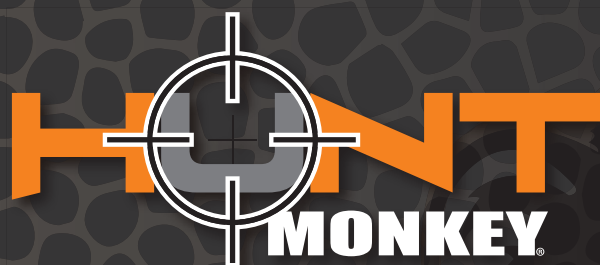
If you are slightly overwhelmed by the idea of crossing the lines between hunting and other outdoor activities, here are some basic product ideas for you to explore

→ Dog gear, UTVs, trailers, coolers, and all sorts of accessories will sell to hunters as well as nonconsumptive outdoor enthusiasts.



that are guaranteed to be of interest to your hunting clientele. You should tailor your assortment to your area. For example, if you have a hunting-related store in Missoula, Montana, you probably won't sell a lot of saltwater or big-game fishing gear — but you sure will in Mobile, Alabama, or Tampa, Florida.

- Fishing: Fly rods, fly reels, pack rods, spinning reels, bait-casting reels, fly line, fishing line, terminal tackle
- Footwear: Mountain boots, hunting boots, hiking boots, socks, insoles
- Camping: Tents, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, camp stoves, lanterns, lights, rope, backpacks
- Paddlesports: Canoes, kayaks, paddles, life jackets, fish finders, vehicle racks
- Bicycles: Mountain bikes, electric bikes, bicycle racks, trailers



PERFORMANCE HUNTING GLOVES

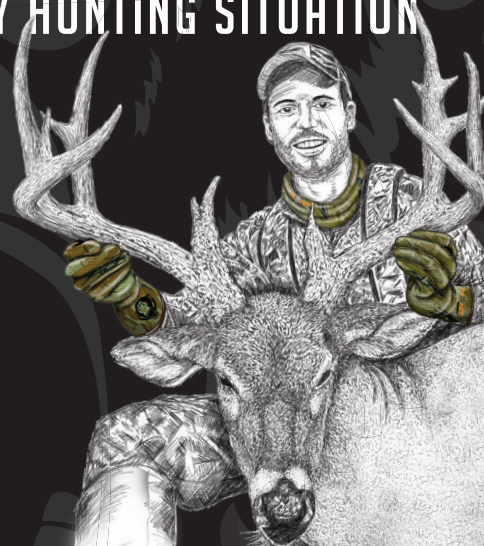
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Accounting for Space

Space is finite. If you are an online-only retailer, you might have a lot of room in your warehouse. If you only have a brick-and-mortar location and you continue to add to your inventory without expanding, you'll eventually fill the store. The keys to solving this issue are to:

1. Choose only a few of the highest margin products that take little space.
2. Inventory a single item in several lines and offer a "deliver to your door" option for anything they want to purchase. This also allows you to have a special demo sale every year, giving people yet another reason to visit your store.
3. Utilize a distributor of products in this space or work with compa-

"When surveyed, 67% of hunters said they also fish. Conversely, only 21% of anglers in the survey responded that they also hunt. That means hunting-related retailers have the opportunity to sell two-thirds of their customers something they are already buying anyway."



nies that offer ship-to-store or similar services.

For example, canoes and kayaks take up a lot of space. Service providers like Gearfire allow you to sell from thousands of different inventories on the web, some of which now is a touchless transaction. Old Town addresses the space issue by offering the ability to purchase their products online and ship to a local dealer at no cost to the customer.

The possibilities for your expansion are endless, so make sure you have a plan for growth in products, customers and sales. **HR**

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Keys to Handling Sponsorship/Donation Requests

Constantly getting hit up by charities, event planners and Little League teams? Here's how to get a grip on your donations.

BY MICHAEL D. FAW

Any business is a key part of the community and region they serve and are located in. The good of the community is also good for the business. As a community member, your business more than likely gets numerous requests to donate goods, services, or money and to sponsorship events, ball teams, race cars, 5K runs, hunting nonprofits or other causes. Requests for a donation cover a wide range of community events and public causes. Do you have a well-planned response for requests for donations and sponsorships? Do you have a plan to guide you in who gets what, and how much?

The sad news is that in some regions and communities, businesses are overrun with such donation requests. If you meet all of those requests with a donation, whether it be goods, services or dollars, you would soon be out of business — with your dollars donated away. Donation requests can drain a business. Make plans and stick to them before requests become major drains.





Make Plans, Guidelines and a Budget

Nearly all requests that come into your hunting retail business should be viewed as an opportunity. Look at the request as a cost, and in return you should get something of value for the cash, services or good rendered. At a minimum would be your business' name and contact information in a brochure handed to all attendees at an event, or included in advertising and sponsorship lists and signs. Be certain you ask for and see examples of what will be provided in exchange for the amount of goods and donations given. When possible, get this information in writing. Promises are sometimes hollow words just to get something.

company start giving away donations. Yeah, it sounds like a good cause. Then, down the road, it is discovered that several causes received goods or dollars, and in some cases two or more representatives from the same cause came calling and received donations. This type of random and uncontrolled donating can wreck any budget and happens more often than you realize.

What Will the Donation Do?

A key step to good-decision-donation success is also to ask for and receive proof of what your money/goods/services will accomplish. New uniforms for a Little League team or items for a fundraising banquet by a nonprofit conservation



↑ Donating a shooting lesson can help the organization, the winner, and you – you just might develop a new shooter who will shop at your store in the future.

Next, plan ahead for donation requests. Establish guidelines about who can authorize or provide donations in your business, and let any employees know the guidelines — and that they are expected to follow them. Create an annual budget for meeting donation requests. You can base this on past history and what you expect in the future. Look at donations as advertising and goodwill, but remember there is an associated cost.

A pitfall for some businesses, especially in small towns where everyone knows everyone, is that too many employees or persons within the

organization's local chapter should all help you earn at least something for your time and associated costs of the donation. Learn the details so you can judge output, recognition and costs against promised results.

Donations can also be seen as community goodwill and help you earn regional or local recognition, but unfortunately, some requestors are not good at fulfilling their promises. Be prepared to ask for extras before donating, because all things are negotiable. When increasing your annual donation budget or making a substantial gift, let the requestor know you possibly want top billing in any handouts, table placards or other onsite signage. When possible, ask to also do business for the cause, such as handling the event's fire-arms transfers or possibly providing T-shirts for



↑ Local fundraising banquets and dinners can be good donation opportunities, but be sure you're getting some sort of promotion in exchange for whatever you donate.

the youth league team. This can bring customers to your shop — and put dollars in your pocket.

Be specific if you want a banner on the wall during an event or the opportunity to speak during the event about your donation, or if you want a supper table so you can come and bring some friends. Just handing over cash is not the best strategy in donating — expect to receive something in return. All things are negotiable, so ask for an extra that makes you get noticed before or during any community event. Don't accept the standard placement or comment that there are guidelines and donation levels.

Follow your budget and guidelines you have created, and let any employees know the rules on donations.

Donor Beware

An issue around donations must be addressed here: scammers. You can often weed out the scammers because they call every month with a new cause, such as supporting local law enforcement, then a fire department, then a school resource officer whose home burned, and on and on. Before you donate to any cause, discover the details and take the time to make calls and get verification. If the requestor says the donation helps a fire department, find out which fire department and make calls to see if the request is valid before you donate. The sad news is there are folks out



there who make a living scamming in the name of community donations. If the requestor offers to trade something of value for your donation, it's a red flag. Also, a good strategy is to ask for an address and search the location online while the requestor continues their pitch. If the address is a home, that's another red flag. Valid fire and LE departments generally use their headquarters as the location where donations can be sent.

A good rule is to follow up any donation request over the phone with a request for something mailed to you in writing. Again, check addresses and names and make calls to see if requests are valid before sending anything. Scammers can use photocopiers and printers, and those who fail to



↑ You don't have to get too elaborate with this, but make sure you get donation requests and proposals in writing. It will save you headaches down the road.

validate requests can be taken for a costly ride. Dig into the details before you drop any donation.

Take a Number

While it does take time to speak with requestors, you should always pause about donations to a new source. Never say "no" but do take requests in writing and look closely at the details without the pressure of someone standing before you with their hand out. At a minimum, the requestor should be able to provide a request letter with the name and contact information from the president or committee head of the group requesting a donation. Also, ask for past examples of donations, any dates and timelines, and possible buy-in levels. The requestor should be able to provide attendance numbers from last year if a fundraising banquet or ball game is the focus point and may be able to provide those same numbers from the

past five years. Things change, and fundraising banquets from charities and nonprofits have been known to cease altogether or begin shrinking significantly due to numerous reasons.

When considering the options, think back to whether your customers have ever mentioned the

event or charity. Do your customers attend this event or support this group, and have you ever heard of the group, event or cause? All questions deserve answers before you donate.

In the donation category for something other than dollars or services, think about your donation. While it is tempting to clean out your business' damaged goods bin, remember if this donation has your company's name on it, the donation indicates to your community how you conduct business. The dark side of donations is to be prepared, because once you donate to area nonprofits and groups, they sometimes share lists, or the attendees at one banquet take notes of who donated because they are having or working for a banquet to be held in the coming months. One donation leads to a barrage of requests, and other solicitors will be on your doorstep asking for more donations. It's a vicious cycle in some cities, unfortunately.

Measuring Results

A great rule of thumb is to always ask for results from your donation. At a minimum, the requestor

↑ Donations don't have to be in the form of goods. Services are also popular – you could give away a training course, range time, or a certificate for a gun cleaning.

should be certain you get a brochure from any event or program that shows your business name in print and in the category you donated at if there are levels. Many great causes return to thank you and give a framed plaque for your business wall or recognition as an annual member or donor. Nonprofit groups in the hunting and conservation communities are often professional in returning with recognition and thanks.

If you donate and never hear anything after the event or date, make a note. The requestor's failure to follow up, especially when promised, should be a red flag that you may not be getting top bang for your donation dollars. If your donation requires the winner or buyer/bidder to come to your business for a service or to transfer an item, listen carefully to any comments about the event or the organization you supported with your donation. Negative comments such as too many intoxicated patrons or a fight should also be a red flag to be considered in future requests. Unfortunately, some banquets let the liquor flow to help guests loosen their wallets, and situations have occurred. Donor beware.

Finally, donations can work in your favor and earn a lot of goodwill and build your brand or business recognition. Just be certain to consider requests carefully and donate wisely. **HR**



Learning the Alphabet Soup of Retirement Plans

So many account options may be confusing, but no matter your age, the time to start saving for retirement is now.

BY JUDY KNEISZEL

The website www.manta.com conducted a survey of 1,960 small-business owners in 2017, and 34 percent of those surveyed said they don't have a retirement savings plan. Of those respondents who do not have retirement savings, 37 percent said they don't make enough profit to save for retirement and 21 percent said they used their previous retirement savings to invest in their business.

Eighteen percent of those without a plan said their business was their retirement, meaning they hope proceeds from selling the business will be enough to retire on. That's what financial experts call putting all of your eggs in one basket, and it's risky because if the business fails, your retirement savings vanish.

In that same survey, 12 percent of those without a retirement savings plan said they didn't see any need to save for retirement, and another 12 percent said they don't have any plans to retire. People in those two groups hope to have a huge inheritance coming from a long-lost relative or they plan to work themselves to death.

If you are in any of these no-plan scenarios, it might be time to learn your letters and numbers. No, not the Sesame Street ones, but rather the confusing stew of letter and number combinations that make up the variety of retirement plan options for small-business owners.

If you do have a retirement savings plan for yourself, you may be interested in starting plans for your employees as well. It's a benefit that can

set you apart from competing employers and help you keep good employees. A job offer that includes a retirement plan is more attractive than one from a company without that benefit. Likewise, it makes more sense for an employee to stay with a company until he or she is vested than to quit. For example, employees may not be fully vested for five years so leaving after two or three years would mean only a percentage of the money contributed to a retirement account by the company is theirs.


Here are some features of the most common retirement savings plan options:

1. SEP IRA. The simplified employee pension, or SEP, IRA is available to companies filing taxes as sole proprietors, partnerships, C corporations, and S corporations and can be used by self-employed individuals or small-business owners, including those with employees. A SEP is easy to set up and maintain, and there are typically low or no setup fees or annual charges.

A SEP IRA can cover employees, but it is completely employer funded — employees do not make contributions. An employer can contribute up to a certain percent of an employee's compensation up to a certain dollar amount limit. For business owners with employees, it's important to note that while you are not required to make a contribution every year, you must contribute the same percentage for employees that you contribute for yourself.

As for access to the funds, withdrawals are allowed at any time, but a 10 percent penalty may apply before the plan owner reaches 59 1/2.





2. SIMPLE IRA. A savings incentive match plan, or SIMPLE, IRA is available for self-employed individuals and also allows businesses with 100 or fewer employees to establish an account for employees. The SIMPLE IRA is available for companies filing taxes as sole proprietors, partnerships, C corporations or S corporations.

Employees are allowed to make salary-deferral contributions of up to \$14,000 in 2022. Employees over age 50 can make an additional catch-up contribution. The employer can either match employee contributions up to 3 percent of compensation or contribute 2 percent of compensation if the employee does not contribute.

Fees for this type of plan vary by administrator, but are usually pretty low at about \$25 per participant or a few hundred dollars per plan. Money may be withdrawn at any time with a 10 percent penalty before age 59 1/2. If a withdrawal is taken within the first two years one participates in the plan, however, that penalty is 25 percent.

3. Self-employed or solo 401(k). This type of plan is available for self-employed individuals or business owners with no employees other than a spouse. It is available to sole proprietors, partnerships, C corporations or S corporations. It is a good choice for a self-employed individual who needs to play catch-up when it comes to retirement savings

Retirement



because, depending on your age and income, it allows a person to save as much as \$61,000 a year.

Some people like that it can be self-directed, allowing the account holder to allocate money to the stocks, bonds or other investments of their choosing. Another feature some business owners like is that they can borrow against a solo 401(k). Withdrawals cannot be taken from the plan until age 59 1/2, except in cases of disability or plan termination.

4. Simple 401(k). For companies with fewer than 100 employees, the Simple 401(k) is sometimes preferred because it's easier to administer than a standard 401(k). Employees can elect to contribute, and the employer is obligated to make a matching contribution. The employer must file a form 5500 but does not have to perform the nondiscrimination testing required by the IRS with a regular 401(k). The

simple 401(k) is not the best type of plan to offer if your motivation is employee retention, however, because this type of account vests immediately.

5. 401(k). The 401(k) most people are familiar with is most appropriate for companies with 20 or more employees. Startup and

ceed \$61,000 annually, and the IRS conducts nondiscrimination tests to make sure plans do not favor highly compensated employees. Early hardship withdrawals may be available, but penalties usually apply before age 59 1/2.

6. ROTH IRA. Taxes are paid on money before it goes into a

you one tax advantage now and one later. Eligibility for a ROTH is based on modified adjusted gross income or MAGI. For single filers in 2022, if your MAGI is higher than \$129,000, your contribution limit is reduced. It is eliminated completely at \$144,000. For married taxpayers who file jointly, contributions begin decreasing when income hits \$204,000 and are phased out completely at \$214,000.

The 2022 contribution limit for a Roth IRA is \$6,000 per person.

New Tax Laws

One of the incentives for investing in a retirement savings plan besides having a nest egg when you retire is that there are tax benefits. Talk to your accountant or financial planner for details on how to set up a retirement savings plan and how contributions will affect your 2022 tax picture. **HR**

“A job offer that includes a retirement plan is more attractive than one from a company without that benefit.”

maintenance fees vary by plan. It is funded by employee deferrals and employer contributions. Employers may make matching contributions up to 25 percent of an employee's compensation up to a total maximum of \$61,000. Total employer and employee contributions cannot ex-

ceed \$61,000 annually, and the IRS conducts nondiscrimination tests to make sure plans do not favor highly compensated employees. Early hardship withdrawals may be available, but penalties usually apply before age 59 1/2. An advantage of the ROTH IRA is that if you meet IRS income restrictions, you can contribute to your company's SEP or SIMPLE IRA, as well as a ROTH. That gives

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Turkey Ammo Then And Now

If your customers are still killing turkeys with the same box of lead shotshells they bought years ago, it's time to introduce them to some of today's high-tech, high-dollar loads.





BY MARK CHESNUT

Americans have been killing turkeys for longer than shotguns have existed, but over the past 50 years, hunting the wily longbeard has become a passion for many, and even an obsession for some. Fact is, some of your customers practically live for turkey hunting, biding their time in fall with other “trivial” pursuits like deer and upland game hunting just waiting for the spring gobbler season to roll around.

This passion has led to some of the most incredible advances in guns, chokes and ammunition the firearms industry has seen. Gone are the 36-inch “long tom” shotguns with a fixed full choke shooting the same standard No. 5 shot a hunter might normally use for pheasants or prairie grouse. Now you see purpose-designed turkey guns with changeable turkey super-full chokes shooting shells loaded with tungsten shot protected by high-tech wads. The results are devastating, allowing turkey hunters to kill gobblers at longer distances than ever before.

Even with the new guns and chokes, it’s possible that turkey shotshells have ascended even further up the evolutionary ladder than the guns and gear. Fact is, today’s turkey shell isn’t your grandfather’s gobbler getter — not by a long shot!

Let’s take a look at modern turkey ammo and how it can help you bolster your bottom line.

All About Turkey Shells

Fifty years ago, there weren't really many shotshells made specifically for hunting turkeys. Now, a person just getting into turkey hunting has so many choices it's nearly impossible to make a decision on what to use.

From the original gobbler loads with No. 4, 5 or 6 lead shot, technological advancement after

patterns and more deadly payloads.

Then came copper-plated lead shot, and lethality increased another significant leap. The copper-plated shot tends to deform even less in its trip down the barrel, making better patterns possible. Throw in some buffering, and turkey hunters thought they'd reached the pinnacle in innovation.



advancement has brought us into a whole new era. In those days, a 30-yard shot on a longbeard was considered to be long range by most. Nowadays, a 30-yard shot is a chip shot for many serious gobbler chasers.

Hardened lead shot led the way in these advancements, making turkey shells a little more deadly. This shot patterned a little better and flew a little straighter, putting big smiles on turkey hunters' faces and big tail fans on the wall. Buffering of this better lead shot made patterns even more consistent, helping them hold tighter to longer distances, especially with the new purpose-designed turkey chokes on the market. Next came higher-quality shot cups or wads, which protected the shot better in the barrel, leading to even better

Then came duplex shot, which combined two or even three different shot sizes in a single shotshell. With these loads, the smaller shot helps produce a fuller, more even pattern, while the larger pellets hit their target harder with more energy than their smaller counterparts. The combination makes for a better overall terminal performance. Would gobblers even have a chance anymore?

That brings us to the latest innovation — Tungsten Super Shot (TSS). While quite expensive, tungsten shot is about 60 percent denser than lead. What that means to a turkey hunter, and to an unsuspecting gobbler, is that a typical No. 5 tungsten pellet at 60 percent heavier than lead is going to hit the target with substantially more energy.

Interestingly, because of the increased mass, hunters can use much smaller shot size than before. Consequently, throwing 2 ounces of No. 7 tungsten shot will hold a fuller, denser pattern than 2 ounces of No. 5 lead shot, with very nearly the same amount of energy delivered to the target.

Now, let's take a look at some top turkey loads that you might consider carrying in your inventory.

New-School Loads

TSS loads now make up some of the most popular — and most expensive — turkey loads on the market. And many hunters won't shoot anything else. Here are a few to consider.

Federal Premium

Federal Ammunition sits atop the premium turkey load mountain and continues to expand its TSS offerings. The Federal Premium Heavyweight TSS line is a real turkey killer when combined with the right gun and choke — even in gauges smaller than 12.

Federal says their shot's tungsten-alloy material has 22 percent higher density than standard tungsten and 56 percent more than lead. The result is the most energy and highest velocities at extreme range. Also, the ammo's rear-braking Flitecontrol Flex wad yields great performance through ported and standard turkey chokes.

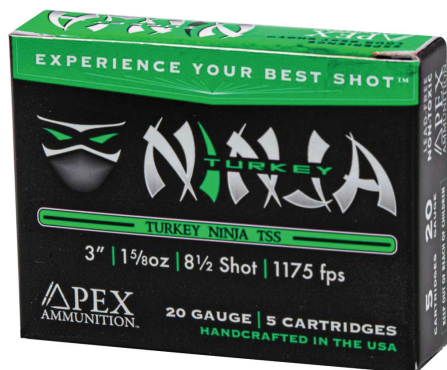
These modern loads are available in 12 and 20 gauge, along with .410 bore. The latest 12-gauge load, introduced in 2021, features 2 ounces of mixed No. 7 and 9 shot. But fair warning: These things don't come cheap. A box of five has an MSRP of \$67.99!

Apex

While not a household name among turkey hunters, Apex likely will be soon, and the company's Turkey Ninja load is one reason why. This veteran-owned small business located in Mississippi has a lot going for it, including its top-quality turkey shells.

Interestingly, the w is offered in 28 gauge — a rarity among turkey loads — along with 12 and 20 gauge and .410 bore. The loads use a highly polished No. 8 1/2 tungsten shot, which the company says combines the knockdown power of 8s with the pattern density of 9s, thereby creating the best of both worlds.





Available loads include 2.25- and 2.5-ounce 12-gauge, 1.625-ounce 20-gauge, 1.375-ounce 28-gauge and .875-ounce .410 loads. While slightly less expensive than the Federal offering, these are still high-dollar shells, with a five-pack of 12-gauge shells coming in at about \$65.

Browning

This maker of high-quality shotshells has also jumped into the tungsten game with both feet. Browning's line of TSS Tungsten Turkey loads use the high-density tungsten shot that is 60 percent denser than lead and offer it in duplex loads. Additionally, they load the shot into a buffered loading that yields both consistently tight patterns and maximum downrange energy.



The line includes two 3.5-inch 12-gauge offerings with 2.25 ounces of shot, two 3-inch 12-gauge offerings featuring 1.75 ounces of shot, two 20-gauge options with 1.75 ounces of shot and a .410 bore load featuring .82 ounces of tungsten shot.

MSRP is similar to the other tungsten loads. But for some turkey hunters, who are likely to only shoot a shell or two a season, that's a small price to pay for the performance boost.

Old-School Loads

All that's not to say that you can't kill a turkey stone-cold dead with a non-tungsten load. Two years ago, because of poor planning, I unexpectedly found myself heading into the spring turkey season with no newer, high-tech loads on hand. Digging deep in my hunting cabinet, I found a

couple of boxes of 3-inch, 12-gauge No. 5 lead loads that were at least 25 years old. The yellowed price tags read \$4.95 on one 10-round box and \$5.25 on the other, making them about 4 percent the price of new tungsten loads! Taking them to the range, I found them to pattern quite well out to 40 yards, which was good enough for me. That season, I killed two gobblers with those shells, and my son also killed a tom. The next year I killed another nice longbeard with one. And I still have enough left to hunt for another season or two!

The point is, hunters don't have to spend half their turkey-hunting budget on one five-round box of shotshells. For hunters who don't want to fork over \$12 to \$13 per round, here are some good loads that are still in high demand by hunters and could make a nice addition to your inventory.



Remington

Remington's Premier Magnum Turkey's magnum-grade copper-plated shot is protected by the storied company's Power Piston wad, which yields great patterns when matched with the right shotgun and choke. The shells are also buffered to make patterns even better.

These shells are available in 12 and 20 gauge with No. 4, 5 or 6 shot. They've killed plenty of turkeys over the years, despite being considered "outdated" by some hunters. Best of all, they set the hunter back about \$2 to \$3 per shell — a fraction of what the tungsten loads cost.

Winchester

I've killed a lot of birds with Winchester's Double-X High Velocity Turkey shells over the years. These super-fast loads feature copper-plated lead shot in No. 4, 5 or 6 utilizing the company's older but proven Grex buffering.

The three available 12-gauge 3-inch loads feature 1.75 ounces of shot leaving the barrel at about 1,300 feet per second (fps), and a 3 1/2-inch load with 2 ounces of shot fired at the same velocity. The 20-gauge load is a 3-inch shell firing 1.3 ounces of shot at a muzzle velocity of 1,200 fps. A 10-gauge load is also available.



Prices run about \$2 per round for 20- and 12-gauge loads, and about \$3 a round for the 10-gauge offering.

Federal Premium

This company's Grand Slam load has also accounted for a number of gobblers over my long turkey-hunting career. Utilizing Federal's very effective FliteControl Flex wad, these loads contain buffered, copper-plated shot. These Flex wads work well in both standard and ported turkey chokes, and they open from the rear for a controlled release of the payload and extremely consistent patterns.

Available loads include a 3 1/2-inch 10-gauge shell, 3- and 3 1/2-inch 12-gauge rounds and 3-inch 20-gauge offerings. The 10-gauge and 3 1/2-inch 12-gauge loads send 2 ounces of shot downrange at about 1,200 fps.



One other really cool thing about these shells is that a portion of the sales proceeds goes to the National Wild Turkey Federation. Price is about \$25 per 10-round box, putting it on par with other premium, copper-plated lead turkey ammo offerings.

If you're not profiting from turkey season, considering putting some of these offerings on your shelves this spring. Turkey hunting is really a big deal to many hunters, and they're not shy about putting some of their hard-earned income toward chasing the wily gobbler wherever the hunt might lead. **HR**





Coyote Control

With predator populations out of control, trapping and hunting coyotes and other varmints are on every hunter's mind.

BY ALAN CLEMONS

Predator hunting is popular in the United States, with trapping's popularity ticking up a few notches in the last decade as well. Why? One reason is the ample availability of coyotes, raccoons and other animals — especially coyotes, which have migrated into every state in the last few decades. Another is relatively lax state regulations on these animals, unlike the big-money species such as deer, elk, moose, turkeys and waterfowl. A third reason is younger hunters can get into the predator, varmint and trapping game fairly easily.

Predator and varmint seasons

typically are liberal, with some form of hunting available year-round. Feral pigs are tossed into the predator group in some instances, so that's another possibility for hunters. Trapping seasons often are most popular in autumn and winter months, although predator-control trapping in summer is available in many states. Hunters who believe their trapping efforts help deer, turkey and upland bird populations may employ a year-round program to keep predators at bay. The options almost are limitless for hunters, which is something that retailers can capitalize on as well.



What Do Hunters Need?

Typically when I hit the road for a trip I'll have a bag of hunting items stashed somewhere in my truck. This includes camo pants, facemask and lightweight pullover, Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun or Rock River Arms rifle in .223 with ammo, Bog Deathgrip tripod, squealing cottontail rabbit mouth calls and a rubber-bulb Primos mouse squeaker. That's my "just in case" stuff, if I happen to be able to sneak in a hunt or if I'm on a deer, turkey or waterfowl hunt and happen to get some free time. For a predator-specific trip, I'll add a Primos electronic caller and low-slung chair.

That's fairly minimal, which is my usual method. Trappers are the same way — as minimal and realistic as possible, with nothing fancy. And some predator hunters like to carry more items, such as different diaphragm or squealer mouth calls, electronic calls, decoys or other items. They may have a backpack or tote bag with their gear that they can sling over a shoulder along with a seat or cushion, and they're off.

In short, predator hunters don't need much. In talking with some over-the-top hunters over the years, I've found they seem to take the same tack: go minimal, be adaptable, stay mobile and pay attention. Twenty to 30 minutes in a spot is typical before moving; some hunters move after just 15 or 20 minutes. When you don't have a lot of gear and aren't trying to be Stevie Statue in hopes of the MonsterWhopper Buck coming within range, you can cover more ground, call more predators and often have more fun.

With that in mind, retailers can hit the high-lights for predator hunters with a nice selection of products in an area of the store. Personally, I like to see products tied together on display. Rack pegs with calls could be paired with gloves to spur easy sales. Rifle and shotgun ammunition maybe could be placed nearby. A display of electronic calls, too, adds to the eye-appeal. Electronic calls are great to have on the shelf and to show off. Encourage your customers to learn to make a couple of common sounds like a screaming cottontail or squawking blue jay. ICOTec offers a strong value-priced line of calls, from the Sabre with 280 sounds to the Gen 2 GC300 with a dozen. Price points range from \$50 to \$420 MAP, and ICOTec has inventory available.



I don't know whether predator hunters are keen on being all camoed up in the same pattern. Some are, wanting everything from the same brand.

I opt for the most comfortable, season-specific clothing, boots and gloves and hat. In warm months, that will be thinner, breathable clothes that dry quickly along with Lacrosse 4xAlpha snake boots. In colder months I'll be wrapped in a mix of Icebreaker wool undergarments and Sitka outerwear, including the Fanatic bib and jacket for longer sits. I want the warmest or coolest and most comfortable clothes and boots I can get, but

I also want to blend into my surroundings. That means drab browns in winter, green in spring and summer. Your customers likely will have similar ideas.

Ammo, Guns and Optics

Optics definitely are a must for predator hunters, both on top of the rifle and for rangefinding. Some might pooh-pooh the latter, but I think rangefinders are critical for shorter shots if you need to dial down a scope

↑ Electronic calls are excellent tools, but even a simple mouse squeaker (like the one below) can be effective in luring coyotes into range.

or are using a shotgun with buckshot. Similar to turkey hunting, you don't want to guess a 40-yard mark and miss a target. A rangefinder will help establish specific distances.



I usually have an 8x32 binocular with me, too. Consider the Passion ED line from German Precision Optics as a good midrange offering. The 8x32 size is perfect, I think, for glassing over shorter to mid-range distances. The 10x42 models might be a good suggestion for hunters in wide open spaces, as well as the 10x50 if they're out West and don't mind carrying something heavier.

For riflescopes, take a look at the Trijicon illuminated lineup for traditional bolt-action and modern sporting rifles. I've been hunting with the



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AccuPoint 4x16-50 scope for several months, and it's a super crossover for predators and big game. Hogs and coyotes don't stand a chance, and deer fall if I do my job. Your customers may not want to put something at that price point on a predator rifle, so be sure to offer a range of scopes after finding out their budget ideas and where or how they plan to hunt.

Hunting with AR-style rifles for predators is a blast. I've done it in several states and love the smaller calibers such as the .223, Federal's .224 Valkyrie and the iconic .243. Coyotes and other smaller predators don't stand a chance with those, and feral pigs aren't keen on them, either. Multiple-round magazines offer quick follow-up shots, where legal. In close-range settings such as a Southeast swamp or mesquite-brush Texas flat, a 12-gauge shotgun with buckshot delivers a hay-maker. Traditional bolt-action rifles in the family of 20-caliber offerings will get a look from predator hunters, too. Your customers may be all over the board on what they want for chasing coyotes, bobcats, hogs and other predators.

Air Rifles

Air rifles are seeing a slight uptick thanks to



↑ Purpose-built rifles, such as this Sig Sauer Tread Predator model, will be popular with die-hard coyote hunters.

better products, more options and harder-hitting capabilities that will put down predators and varmints. AirForce Airguns, for example, offers the Texan, Texan SS and Talon P, among other models, in a variety of calibers. Pellets, optics, pumps and other accessories make these a consideration for your shelves if you're having customers ask about them. The knockdown power is enough to put down coyotes, small hogs and other game, and some hunters are going after larger animals such as whitetail deer. Don't overlook this possibility.

For varmints, Gamo hit a home run with its Swarm Magnum 10X Gen 2 rifle. It's a break-open rifle like previous models, but the 10X Gen 2 has a 10-shot magazine. Break open the action to cock it, close, aim and shoot. Varmint hunters and plinkers should love this rifle. It's a heck of a lot of fun to shoot. The rifle comes with a scope,



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two-stage trigger, Whisper Fusion noise damping system and other features. Be sure to sell additional magazines, because customers will want to load them and be ready to change quickly for more shooting.

Don't Forget About Trapping

Trapping is enjoying a resurgence despite wildly fluctuating fur prices and interest in fur clothing. Still, state wildlife agencies a handful of years

ago began offering trapping classes and interest has been strong and growing for those. During the 2020 shutdown, many people turned to trapping as an outdoors outlet since they had spare time. And more landowners with deer, turkey, upland birds, songbirds and other wildlife are seeing the benefits of trapping to reduce the impacts of

coyotes and nest-robbers such as raccoons, opossums, foxes, skunks and others.

Dog-proof traps such as the ones from Duke, Sterling or Freedom are an easy product to sell. These are proven winners for raccoons but won't snag a dog. Be sure to have steel cables or spikes for securing the trap. If you're interested in diving deeper into the trapping world, options abound for products from leghold traps, tools and hardware to bait, scents, wax, fur processing tools and more. Trapping is niche, but it's an in-depth and serious silo. Trappers aren't halfway about it; they're either all in with both feet or they give it a try and move on. Given the interest in trapping, though, and if you know your area's outdoorsmen, adding trapping supplies to your shop might be a good move.

One other item that could help predator hunters and trappers is game cameras, specifically the cellular models that send images to a phone. These are great to keep watch on an area for predator activity. Models such as the Spypoint Link-S Dark and Moultrie Delta give users solid, high-resolution images or video 24/7. This can give them a leg up on a successful predator hunt and help your register ring. **HR**

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TREESTANDS AND GROUND BLINDS

Whether it's hunting from high places or hiding out at eye level, creating an effective ambush has never been easier.

BY GORDY KRAHN

For those who prefer to let the hunt come to them, having a comfortable, concealed hiding place is essential for success. For ambush artists who like to hunt from high places, treestands are just the ticket and come in a variety of models — hang-ons, ladders and climbers — designed for a wide array of hunting styles and skills and personal preferences. But all have a common purpose — to keep their occupants safe, secure, quiet and hidden while they wait for that buck or bull of a lifetime to pass by the well-worn trail they are perched over like a bird of prey. For those who prefer to stay grounded, pop-ups and semi-permanent box blinds — run-and-gun hunters preferring the former and sit-and-wait hunters the latter — provide that needed edge. These, like treestands, come in a variety of models and price points. The key here is clear. With such a wide range of hunting preferences, physical limitations and personal inclinations, it behooves savvy retailers to have a wide assortment of stands and blinds available to suit every customer's wants and needs. Here are some gems designed for setting up the perfect ambush.





AMBUSH BLINDS STALKER

The Stalker from Ambush Hunting Blinds (\$4,499) is octagon shaped and has a unique window configuration that provides multiple shot opportunities when hunting with a bow or rifle. The Stalker was the company's first blind to utilize its unique Dura-bond Panel System that provides a strong, quiet, warm, scent-contained blind – and its black stealth walls and tinted windows ensure optimal concealment. The Stalker measures 6x6 feet and is ready to customize with Ambush's hunting blind accessories. In addition, it is equipped with four leg brackets that accept 4x4-inch posts for added elevation. www.ambushhuntingblinds.com

FAMILY TRADITION TREESTANDS DOUBLE TRIPOD

Hunters looking for a stand that's more stable and durable than a treestand and more mobile than a conventional box blind need look no further than Family Tradition Treestands' Double Tripod hunting stand (\$1,500/with roof accessory). Built with galvanized tubular steel for added structural integrity and rust resistance, it has an extra-durable textured baked-on powder-coated finish to stand up to the elements. Features include 360-degree swiveling welded chairs with air rests, padded shooting rail, swivel plates with nylon self-lubricating bearings and an expanded foot platform that measures 48 inches deep by 78 inches wide. The Double Tripod measures 12 feet to the foot platform and a roof dome accessory and custom fit camo skirt are available as add-ons. www.familytraditiontreestands.com

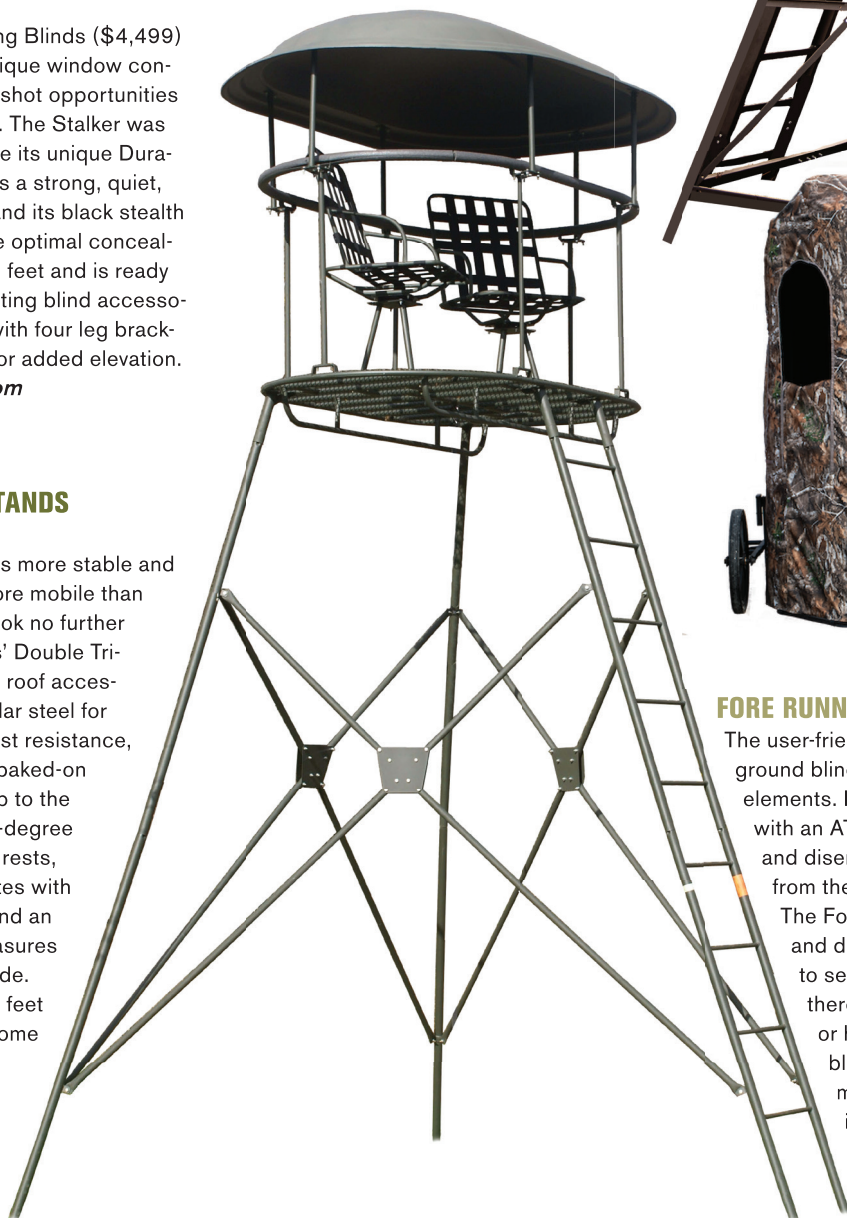
BANKS OUTDOORS STUMP 4 LIMITED EDITION 360°

For hunters, the view just got better – 360 degrees better. The Limited Edition Stump 4 360° blind from Banks Outdoors (\$3,499) has eight silent-swinging framed windows that create a panoramic view and 360-degree hunting experience that's ideal for bow and gun hunters alike. Its seamless polyethylene construction provides extreme durability and protection from the elements, while the spacious interior provides maximum comfort. This blind is available as a full accessory-equipped Pro Hunter or standard Stump 4 model and can be elevated with wood or steel legs. With over 30 square feet of room inside, the Stump 4 is family friendly, and with visibility in every direction, it is a great option for filming hunts. www.banksoutdoors.com



FORE RUNNER SOFT-SIDED GROUND BLIND

The user-friendly Fore Runner portable soft-sided ground blind (\$1,199) was designed to hold up to the elements. It has an integrated hitch system for towing with an ATV or UTV, with wheels that easily engage and disengage in a matter of minutes – just unhook from the ground blind and raise the wheels up. The Fore Runner has a rugged aluminum frame and doesn't require tent stakes and tie-downs to secure it. When it's time to move the blind, there is no need to worry about fiberglass rods or hubs to collapse. The Fore Runner ground blind window configuration was designed to maximize shooting opportunities, and there is plenty of room to accommodate three to four people. www.forerunnerblinds.com





HAWK RIVAL MICRO HANG-ON

Hawk developed the Rival Micro hang-on stand (\$249.99) to be exceptionally lightweight, highly compact and easy to secure to a backpack for trouble-free transport to remote hunting locations. It is based on a minimized 20.5x17.5-inch platform and features a nylon web flip-up seat. The assembly folds flat for easy, unobtrusive transport and its simple and lightweight design make it easy to attach to a tree with the two included ratchet tree straps. The Rival Micro weighs 10.1 pounds and has a weight rating of 300 pounds. For added safety, it comes with a full-body safety harness.

www.hawkhunting.com



SUMMIT TREESTANDS VIPER LEVEL PRO SD

The Viper Level Pro SD climbing treestand from Summit (\$529.99) features EasyLevel dials on both the top and bottom platforms that allow for adjustments to keep the platforms perfectly level – all while attached to the tree. Weighing in at 26 pounds and rated for up to 300 pounds, it features a 27x37.5-inch seat frame and 25x36-inch platform frame. The Viper Level includes Pro SD FasTrack and redesigned Quick Draw Pro cable systems, as well as SummitLokt, RapidClimb, Dead Metal technologies and a wraparound arm pad.

www.summitstands.com



MILLENNIUM M150 MONSTER HANG-ON

A great solution for hunters who want portability and comfort, the Millennium M150 Monster hang-on treestand (\$289.99) weighs just 16.5 pounds and features 100 percent aluminum construction and a durable powder-coat finish. Despite its generous size, the M150 folds flat for easy transport using the included backpack straps. It sports a full backrest and offers 3 inches of height adjustability to ensure a custom fit, and the seat bottom folds up and out of the way to allow non-crowded standing shots. The stand also features Millennium's Interlock Leveling System, which allows the seat and platform to level out individually to fit a multitude of tree angles. When it's time to hang the stand, the included CamLOCK receiver locks it into position in seconds. www.millenniumstands.com

PRIMAL VISION 270 DELUXE BLIND

Made from heavy-duty 300D fabric, the Primal Vision 270 Deluxe blind has three full-width, horizontal windows that feature Silent Slides to allow hunters to quietly prepare for the shot. A great choice for turkey and big-game hunting, all of the Vision 270's window coverings use an advanced, one-way, see-through durable mesh that allows hunters to see out of the blind but remained hidden with a blackout, water resistant interior to conceal movement. The blind comes with brush loops to completely camouflage the blind so it blends in with the environment. Designed for comfort, the 270 Deluxe blind has a 58x58-inch footprint and a 67-inch ceiling height and weighs only 16 pounds. Pack size is 8x8x42 inches. MSRP: \$250.

www.primaltreestands.com



RHINO 180 SEE THROUGH BLIND

The Rhino 180 see through hunting blind (\$249.99) features a unique two-way mesh system that prevents wild game from seeing into the blind, while the hunter has a crystal-clear view without any obstructions. It blends in seamlessly with almost any environment using included brush-in straps



around the top and bottom of the blind. Like all hub-style Rhino blinds, the R180 features an oversized zipper-less door, and hunters can easily adjust the shooting window with Rhino's silent-slide window technology. This blind can comfortably hold up to three people, and reinforced stress points with triple-stitched corners and reinforcements prevent rods from popping through the fabric. All Rhino blinds are treated with a durable water repellent and an antimicrobial to help prevent mold and mildew. www.rhinoblinds.com





SHADOW HUNTER MARKSMAN

The latest and largest in the Shadow Hunter Marksman ground blind series, the 6x8-foot Octagon (\$3,499.99) is incredibly versatile. It can comfortably accommodate up to four people, and shelves, hooks and a built-in weapon holder provide plenty of room for gear, while 10 windows and five shooting rails offer visibility and shot opportunities from every angle. An enhanced structural floor support beam provides added strength. A ShadowTech multilayer wall system provides insulation, and a ShadowMesh floor keeps critters out. Easy-adjust ShadowView windows offer silent operation and blackout shields for an extra layer of concealment. www.shadowhunterblinds.com



GHOSTBLIND PREDATOR GROUND BLIND KIT

For run-and-gun hunters who want to blend into their surroundings, the GhostBlind predator-hunting ground blind ultimate bundle kit (\$349.99) includes everything they need for a stealthy hunt – the GhostBlind Predator ground blind, Predator carry pack, two sets of extenders (four extenders), Ghostblind logo hat, tie-downs, stakes, shoulder strap and bungees. Weighing just 12 pounds, the GhostBlind is 102 inches wide and 46 inches high, making it a portable solution for hunters to want to be able to move often and set up quickly.

www.shadowhunterblinds.com

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Why You Should Consider Offering Gun-Cleaning Classes

Every gun owner needs to know how to clean their firearm, but YouTube is an overwhelming sea of good and bad instruction.

BY DAVID MACCAR

If new gun owners search for gun-cleaning videos online, they will literally find thousands of clips to watch, presenting them with a hundred different methods for cleaning a handgun, rifle or shotgun. For these folks, or, say a lifelong shotgun hunter who just bought their first semi-auto handgun, it can get kind of confusing really quickly. Some may find it downright overwhelming. And when it comes down to it, some of the gun-cleaning methods taught in YouTube videos are just plain wrong.

Like most things, you can explain to customers how to clean the gun being purchased at the counter as they're filling out their 4473 and other forms, or while showing them the ins-and-outs of the cleaning kit they're taking home with their first gun, but they won't absorb much. The NSSF projects there were nearly 8.4 million Americans who potentially found themselves in this situation last year as they became first-time gun owners. While it's certainly not the only way, the best way for someone to learn how to clean a firearm is by actually doing it while someone shows them how.

Granted, these days online videos can be used to learn how to do all kinds of complicated things, but the instruction is only as good as the maker of the video. Plus, while videos are a great teaching tool for many, lots have a hard time learning this way, especially when it involves a tactile task they have to perform.

For retailers and ranges that have



NSSF The Firearm Industry Trade Association

the space, it could be extremely valuable to your customers and their repeat business for you to host a simple class that teaches them how to clean common firearms, like "How to Clean a Glock," or perhaps a "How to Field Strip and Clean an AR-15." Of course, a general pistol-cleaning class in which the instructor shows attendees how to clean a semi-auto and a revolver from start to finish is just as valuable, as would

be a shotgun-cleaning class or a general rifle cleaning class.

These classes could be open to the public for a fee and discounted or gratis for recent customers who have purchased a firearm. Perhaps attendees could use and take home a Hoppe's BoreSnake or a small bottle of your best-selling lubricant or solvent as part of the deal.

By offering such classes and putting these events on your business's calendar, you're not just spreading good and accurate gun-care knowledge, but you're also creating a confidence in your new-gun-owner customers.

Plus, during these strange times

when inventory is endlessly tight, these classes can serve as a revenue source that doesn't rely on a steady supply of ammunition or highly sought-after firearms. Both stand-alone retailers and shooting ranges can offer this type of training to engage with their current customers and gain new ones.

Confidence is an extremely important thing. It inspires newbies to practice more often, which, in turn, makes them better shooters and inspires them to try different types of shooting more regularly. They are also more likely to explore the firearm training options available to them, especially if you offer those



as well. It all serves to help make new gun owners more able to defend themselves if circumstances should require them to do so, and it makes them better and more responsible gun owners who feel confident that they're safely disassembling, cleaning and reassembling their new firearm correctly.

At the same time, you're also demonstrating to all of your customers that your business is not just a place to buy guns and ammunition or to pick up transfers bought online, but a place they can go for quality gun knowledge, instruction and to access a part of the community of gun owners.

Starting From Scratch

Seasoned gun owners, hunters and shooters may not realize this, but just because people decide to buy a firearm for home defense, or for whatever reason, that doesn't mean they know the first thing about what they're doing, and that's natural. If people weren't raised around firearms or hunting and never really had anyone in their life who exposed them to shooting and gun maintenance, they're literally starting from scratch. Even if they've been on a number of range trips with friends or family, that doesn't mean they've been around for the cleaning chores afterward.

These people want to defend themselves, start hunting, pick up a new hobby, or all of the above. They take the plunge, which may simply involve a trip to the local gun store or a weeks- or months-long process, depending on the state they live in.

They bring their new gun home and look at it way too much. They learn how to field strip it from a couple of videos, maybe screw up reassembling it once, resulting in the gun sitting in pieces for a day or two, the mere sight of it sending a jolt of anxiety through the new gun owner until they figure out what they did wrong and get it back together.

The next weekend, they take it to the range with the two boxes of target ammo they have and do the

best they can at paper targets 10 feet away after wondering if there's something wrong with the magazine, and if not, why they're so difficult to load. They break the gun down at home, open the cleaning kit they bought with it and do what they hope is a good job before slowly getting it put back together with too much lube everywhere. They load it, put it in a bedside single-gun safe, and there it sits, possibly for years. This is not, overall, a good experience.

Nothing Is Trivial

A gun-cleaning class may seem trivial or too basic — and granted, the striker-fired polymer-framed pistols that are the handguns most in demand are typically quite easy to break down and clean compared to older designs — but learning how to clean a gun the right way from someone who knows what they're doing and is standing right in front of them, ready to answer questions, is actually extremely valuable and often necessary.

It allows someone to form a natural intimacy with the workings of their new firearm, and no, not everyone instinctively does this on their own. Some people like taking stuff apart to figure out how it works — others are very content not knowing how the machine runs, only that it does, and that they know how to operate it externally. People treat automobiles this way all the time. There are those who prefer to change their own oil, brake pads, spark plugs, fuses and other regular maintenance tasks — and those who don't know transmission fluid from washer fluid, and they don't want to know. Both types of folks are all driving on the same roads.

Unfortunately, there is no AAA for gun owners. When a gun jams up or is otherwise not behaving as it should, it's up to the operator to safely address the issue at the range, working with live ammunition around other target shooters.

Knowing how a firearm works, intimately, is part of being a responsible gun owner for this very reason.

Even those who don't think of themselves as being mechanically inclined simply have to get over that hurdle and get into the guts of their gun. Teaching them how to deep clean it is a great way to do this.

Gun-cleaning classes also provide you with a chance to showcase a bunch of gun cleaning products in your inventory to groups of regular

accomplish.

As an added benefit, new gun owners will get to see and possibly handle several different types of firearms they may not have encountered yet. Everyone knows once that first gun purchase has been made, the itch begins to make the second. Something like a gun-cleaning class can provide an accessible familiar-



↑ You can include the cleaning items customers use in the class as part of the fee and let them take the supplies home.

customers. They don't have to be long — 15 to 20 minutes should be plenty for a Glock-cleaning class — but in that time, you can bust out a quality cleaning mat, cleaning solutions as you prefer, cleaning kits and tools like cotton patches, non-marring brushes and even a basic set of brass punches for deep cleaning sessions. And you're not trying to convince people that they need these items, you're showing them, and letting them feel, upfront, exactly how each one is used and what they

ity with a variety of gun types and hopefully propel first-time gun-buyers toward that all important second purchase, which truly gets them involved in the shooting sports and the advocacy that comes with firearm ownership.

This will result in sales, if not right after the class, then soon after. It also will result in confident new customers who, hopefully, will become regulars coming around to your shop to purchase their 20th firearm someday. Offering services like gun cleaning classes will also help your business become more than just a place to transfer firearms, but as a vital institution in the local gun community. **HR**

BY GORDY KRAHN

HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS



APEX AMMUNITION UPLAND BIRD TSS LOADS

Apex Ammunition's new Upland Bird ultra-high-density Tungsten Super Shot (TSS) shotshells are meticulously handloaded to deliver exceptional performance in a non-toxic round. Whether it's hunting grouse, quail or late-season roosters, Apex TSS helps put more birds in hand. At 18.1 g/cc density, Apex TSS is denser than lead (11.34 g/cc), bismuth (9.8g/cc), copper (8.8g/cc) and steel (7.84 g/cc), allowing the use of smaller-sized pellets and more of them per payload. It features clean-burning powder and a one-piece tungsten-grade wad system engineered to deliver the tightest patterns possible and maximum barrel protection. Apex Upland Bird is available in 3-inch 12- and 20-gauge loads. Upland 28-gauge 2.75-inch and .410 bore 2.5- and 3-inch loads are available upon request. MSRP: \$49.99-\$65.99/10-round box www.apexmunition.com/upland

BLACK GOLD DUAL TRAC BOW SIGHT

Built on the company's Pro Sight platform, the Dual Trac bow sight incorporates Black Gold's Pro Pin, providing a more defined aiming point and less target obstruction. Now in a single-pin configuration, it features a second Pro Pin that provides an additional quick aiming point without the need to move the dial. This Dual Indicator System reduces time and movement by providing a pin for shorter yardages combined with a second pin for longer-range shooting. Both pins are independently adjustable to fine-tune specific bow setups. Additionally, the Dual Trac bow sight features micro adjust first and third axis as well as a non-micro adjust second axis, ensuring the sight is square to the bow. MSRP: \$389.95 www.blackgoldsights.com

CANCOOKER CONVERSION GRIDDLE

Featuring 100 square inches of BPA-free non-stick cooking surface, Can-Cooker's Conversion Griddle instantly converts the Multi-Fuel or Portable Cooktop into a griddle for convenient outdoor cooking. Built-in grooves allow grease and oil to flow away from food for healthy meals, and even heat distribution guarantees perfectly prepared meat, veggies and more. The Conversion Griddle is dishwasher-safe and requires no tools to attach to the Multi-Fuel or Portable Cooktop. From a full camp-side breakfast to a surf-and-turf feast, the Conversion Griddle can cook it all. Retail: \$24.99 www.cancooker.com



CROSMAN 362 AIR RIFLE

Welcome to the next level of air power with the Crosman 362. This versatile air rifle is a fresh take on the classic variable pump-controlled platform and is a great choice for those transitioning into hunting small game, target shooting and critter control. This single-shot, bolt-action air rifle features a compact and rugged frame and a fully adjustable rear sight and delivers .22-caliber alloy pellets at up to 875 fps and lead pellets at up to 700 fps. The Crosman 362 combines a durable and rugged water-resistant synthetic frame with an easy pumping action and has an overall length of 36 inches. It weighs 5 pounds. It features a single-action trigger and rifled-bore barrel. MSRP: \$109.99 www.crosman.com

MONTANA DECoy ULTIMATE FULL-STRUT GOBBLER

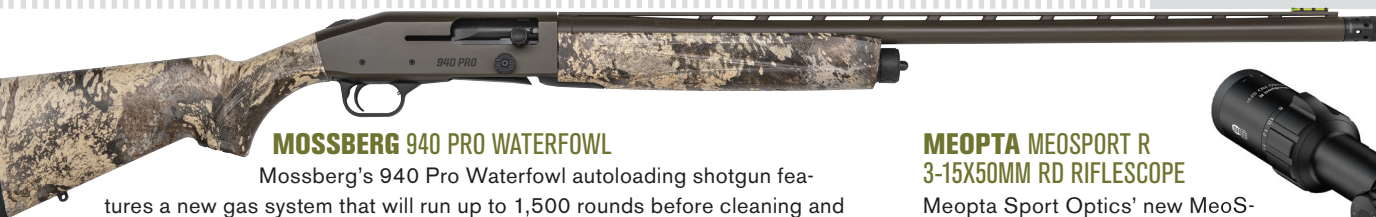
Just like Montana Decoy's original Wiley Tom, the new 3D Ultimate Full-Strut Gobbler decoy allows hunters to deploy it using the included lifelike printed fabric fan or by adding their own real turkey feathers, which can be added individually when damaged without the need to replace the entire fan. The decoy folds for transport with or without the feathers and its special trifold panels help protect the decoy and feathers when transported in a vest or backpack. Double-sided printing means users can face the decoy directly at or away from an approaching gobbler. A folding handle for hands-on use and a peep hole allow users to adapt the decoy to any turkey-hunting style. Retail: \$129.99 www.montanadecoy.com



BUSHNELL CELLUCORE 20 SOLAR CELLULAR TRAIL CAMERA

Bushnell has added a new solar model to its CelluCORE lineup: the CelluCORE 20 solar cellular trail camera – combining the reliability and image quality of the CelluCORE 20 with an integrated solar panel to dramatically increase battery life. This camera includes a rechargeable lithium-ion battery and can maintain a full charge for up to 70 images per day with four to six hours of direct sunlight. High-output IR LEDs on the camera increase night range as well as battery life and the CelluCORE 20 Solar also features a 0.2-second trigger speed and 1080p, 30 fps video with audio. Video can be transmitted straight from the camera to Bushnell's Trail Camera app. MSRP: \$179.99 www.bushnell.com





MOSSBERG 940 PRO WATERFOWL

Mossberg's 940 Pro Waterfowl autoloading shotgun features a new gas system that will run up to 1,500 rounds before cleaning and will reliably cycle any type of quality commercial factory manufactured 2.75- or 3-inch ammunition. This 12-gauge workhorse comes ready to hunt regardless of weather conditions, with its 28-inch vent rib barrel equipped with a HIVIZ TriComp fiber-optic front sight (with interchangeable triangular and round LitePipes) and AccuChoke-compatible X-Factor ported choke tube. Metal surfaces of the receiver and barrel wear a durable Cerakote finish in Patriot Brown, complementing the TrueTimber Prairie-camouflaged stock and forend. Completing this performance-driven package is aggressive Mossberg signature texturing on the forend and stock, sling swivel studs, five-round capacity, drilled and tapped receiver and ambidextrous safety. MSRP: \$1,050 www.mossberg.com



IRISH SETTER TERRAIN HUNTING BOOTS

Featuring a proprietary sole platform with aggressive, multi-directional lugs that contour to uneven surfaces to provide extra traction and stability, hunters can count on Irish Setter Terrain boots to get them to their outback destinations. Lightweight, high rebound EVA in the EnerG midsole provides underfoot cushioning and comfort and a PU foam foot-bed adds another layer for all-day comfort. Polyurethane impregnated leather and fabric panels create a durable upper featuring UltraDry waterproofing, and ScentBan scent control eliminates odors within the boot. Insulation keeps feet comfortable with 400g, 800g and 1,200g insulation options. A non-insulated model is also available. MSRP: Starts at \$164.99 www.irishsetterboots.com

MILLENNIUM Q-250 SOLO BUCK HUT

The Q-250 Solo Buck Hut, an elevated tripod shooting enclosure from Millennium, is a great fit for crossbow and compound bow hunters. Long windows allow vertical bow hunters to shoot with ease and each of the blind's numerous windows can be configured for hunting with a crossbow. The shooting house framework, platform and ladder are made from heavy-duty powder-coated steel using Millennium's SteelTOUGH construction and its rugged exterior shell is made of heavy-duty water-resistant fabric. The Q-250 incorporates Millennium's SilentHUNT design to keep it quiet, and its sturdy steel ladder features non-slip steps and steel rail handles. The Solo Buck Hut enclosure dimensions measure 7x4x4 feet – its 7-foot interior height providing plenty of room for a standing shot. MSRP: \$699.99 www.millennium-outdoors.com

MEOPTA MEOSPORT R 3-15X50MM RD RIFLESCOPE

Meopta Sport Optics' new MeoSport R 3-15x50mm RD riflescope with illuminated 4C reticle features a 30mm main tube with European-quality optics that perform well in low-light situations. Reliable, accurate and rugged, this 5X zoom scope with MeoBright lens coating delivers bright, crisp and clear images, even in inclement weather thanks to Meopta's MeoDrop hydrophobic lens coating that aggressively repels rain. The riflescope features a side focus that adjusts from 10 yards to infinity, exposed 0.1 mil windage and elevation adjustments with locking zero-reset turrets. The MeoSport's light, sleek design incorporates a low-profile power ring that is easy to adjust, even when wearing gloves, and it is nitrogen purged, shockproof and fully sealed for fogproof and waterproof performance. Retail: \$449.99 www.meoptasportsoptics.com



HAWK RIVAL LITE TREESTAND

The Rival Lite hang-on treestand from Hawk features an integrated seat that folds exceptionally thin and flat so hunters can easily carry it into the tree. Once in the tree, the stand's silent-folding lounge-style mesh seat offers exceptional bottom and lower back support to ensure all-day comfort and promote easy positioning for taking seated shots. The seat elevation can be adjusted to four different heights to accommodate a broad range of hunters. The Rival Lite's lightweight aluminum construction and trim dimensions help reduce carry weight to only 15 pounds. Integrated backpack-style straps permit hands-free carry, and two included ratchet tree straps secure the stand quickly onto any suitable tree. To promote hunter safety, the Rival Lite comes with a full-body safety harness. MSRP: \$429.99 www.hawkhunting.com



GPO RANGEGUIDE BINOCULARS

German Precision Optics' (GPO) compact laser rangefinding binocular, the RangeGuide, boasts exceptional edge-to-edge clarity and can accurately range targets out to 3,062 yards while tipping the scales at 24.3 ounces. It features an eye-safe Class 1 laser with a 0.25-second response time and True-range angle compensation technology. Scan mode provides three readings per second via its orange OLED. The RangeGuide even measures ambient temperature in Fahrenheit and Celsius, humidity and air pressure to help with shot placement on long-range shots. Coupled with GPObright high-transmission lens coatings, its double-HD laminated 32mm objective lenses are exceptionally beneficial for transmitting light during the twilight hours. MSRP: \$1,099.99/8x32mm; \$1,149.99/10x32mm www.gpo-usa.com



Increasing Hunter Participation

Understanding who takes a hunter safety course and then goes on to buy a hunting license — or not — is a complicated but important subject.

BY BOB ROBB

The future of hunting in America depends upon replacing aging Boomers with younger sportsmen and women. Until now, one way youth and young adults have been exposed to hunting has been to require them to take an accredited hunter safety course prior to purchasing a hunting license. The assumption has always been that those who pass the class will become committed hunters. However, a 2021 report prepared by Southwick & Associates on behalf of the Sportsman's Alliance Foundation and International Hunter Safety Association tells a different story. According to this report, while only 5 percent of hunter education graduates did not intend to hunt prior to taking the course, 39% of hunter education graduates do not purchase a license in the seven years after graduation.

Think about that. This means that 34% of all students who pass the course intend to hunt, but never purchase a hunting license. Why? And what do we do about that?

The study rightly points out that not all students who take a hunter education course have the same motivations for doing so, and that treating all hunter ed students the same means that instructors will connect with some students while overlooking others. To help better understand what students want from hunter education, the study segmented graduates into four unique personas based on their motivations. These groups were termed Locavores, Legacy Hunters, Curious Students and Reactivators.

The study found that Locavores — those who want to be self-reliant and harvest sustainable, often local, organic meat — made up 38% of the group. Legacy hunters — students

from hunting families or communities that take the course to satisfy legal requirements — made up 30%. Curious Students were 19% of the group and defined as those that were the least interested in hunting, taking the course more out of curiosity than an immediate desire to hunt. These students often included parents and others wanting to accompany a student through the program. Finally, Reactivators — people with prior hunting experience who need to take the course to begin hunting again — made up 19% of the group.

Locavores are the low-hanging fruit for the hunting community. They are attracted to hunting to secure their own meat, and they are less likely to see hunting as a tradition and/or lifestyle. Their top motivations included spending time outdoors (79%), securing their own meat (72%) and spending time with family/friends (70%). They want to learn more about their harvest, pick up basic woodcraft skills, and learn specific hunting techniques. However, only two-thirds of them ever buy a hunting license.

More than any other segment, the Legacy Hunter comes from a hunting family and community, and they need less support than the other segments to become a lifelong hunter. They typically take the course as a teenager because they need it to be able to buy a license; only 9% never buy a hunting license. They hunt to spend time outdoors and spend time with family and friends.

Curious Students have the lowest

post-graduation engagement and the least interest in hunting. Their top motivations include spending more time with family/friends and outdoors (77% and 76%) and securing their own meat (64%). They want to learn how to care for their meat (39%), spend more time at a shooting range, and learn about firearms safety (24 and 23%). An important note about this group: They often provide the means and support for other new hunters and can become hunting's public champions, even if they do not hunt themselves.

With 92% buying licenses, Reactivators — the most experienced prior to taking hunter education, with 69% having hunted or accompanied hunters in the field at some point — are the most engaged in hunting post-graduation. They take hunter education to earn points in big game lotteries, to learn more about hunting, and to support family members. Their top motivations for hunting include securing their own meat (90%), spending time outdoors (86%) and spending time with family/friends (77%).

After passing their course class, students said three of the top five support items they needed to help them become hunters involved introduction, including being introduced to mentors or instructors; organizations that could contact the graduate regarding mentored hunts; and other new hunters. The desire for mentors has been identified in other recent research as well, showing that potential new hunters desire

some “graduate school” advanced instruction. In fact, “additional classes/modules for advanced training” was a common desire among non-hunters. These modules can be made evergreen and not impose a long-term burden on instructors. The desire for mentored hunts also shows that while the hunter education course can give them skills, it cannot provide them with a place to hunt. Connecting with other hunters falls in line with today's younger generations' desires to stay in touch with like-minded people, which they often do via social media.

If you or your staff are volunteer hunter education instructors — what a great way to introduce potential new customers to your business — this study shows that follow-ups with students after their course completion can go a long way to bringing them into the fold. It can also serve as a way to make these new hunters comfortable with you and your staff, encouraging them to come to your business when they have questions and seek more information from “expert” sources. Or you might be able to refer them to a local sportsman's club that can give them advanced information and skills training.

What's your take on hunter education classes and how they can affect hunter recruitment and retention? Are you or any of your staff volunteer hunter education instructors? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com. I'd love to hear your thoughts. **HR**

PRO STAFF

Bob Robb has been a full-time outdoor writer since 1978. He's a former staff editor for *Peterson's Hunting magazine*, as well as the former editor of *Western Outdoor News*, *Peterson's Bowhunting*, *Inside Archery*, *Whitetail Journal*, *Predator Xtreme* and *Waterfowl & Retriever* magazines. He's hunted on five continents with both rifles and archery equipment and lived in Alaska for 15 years, where for a time he held an assistant hunting guide's license.





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