



Involvement + education: the responsible hunter. [Supplement, Vol. 5, No. 6] [November-December 1981]

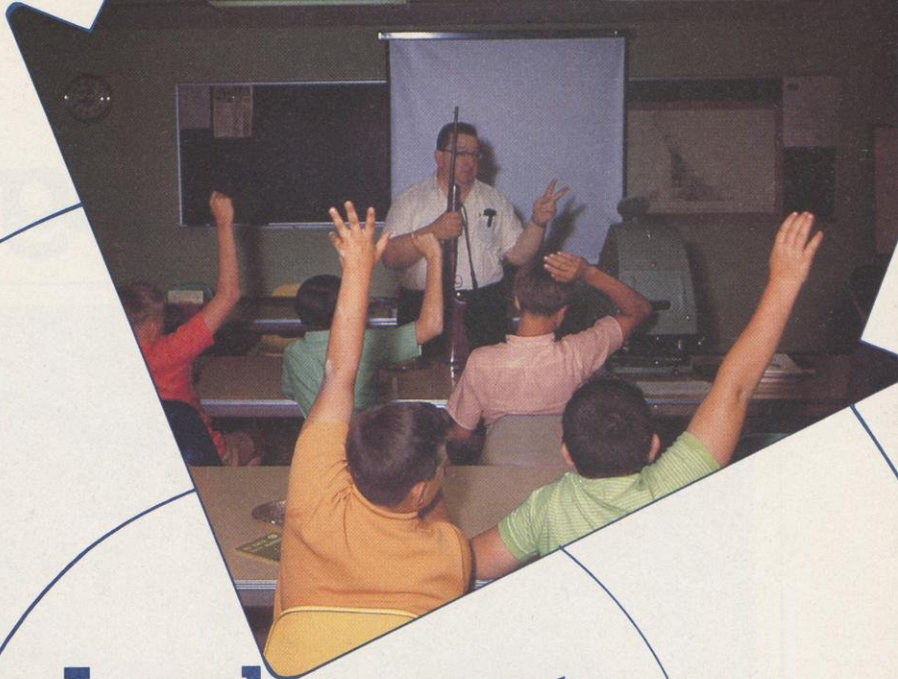
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Involvement + Education

The Responsible Hunter



Our hunting heritage



Courtesy of UW-Extension

JOHN MADSON, Outdoor Writer

Hunting came late to North America.

It was only yesterday, by Old World standards, that men followed the great migrations of game across the Bering land bridge into the New World. This may have been only 12,000 years ago, and no more than 30,000 years at most. No one is sure. But there's little doubt that the newcomers were mighty men with their weapons of bone, wood, and stone, hunting even the largest Ice Age animals with great success.

For thousands of years Neolithic men spread through the Americas. Some cleared fields and planted squash and corn; others built mighty temples, learned to work gold and copper, and even developed basic astronomy. Most of them, though, were hunters and gatherers with no domestic animals but dogs, and no herds but wild ones. Until late in

the 15th Century the New World cultures were fixed in the New Stone Age — and those cultures began to crumble with the coming of western man.

Into the ancient hunting heritage of the North American Indian came a clumsy, inexperienced race of amateurs. These early colonists brought no real hunting tradition of

"A good hunter's activity is more than a diversion. A good hunter's way of hunting is a hard job. It demands fitness, a willingness to accept fatigue, cold, discomfort and danger."

From "Meditations on Hunting," by Philosopher Jose Ortega Y Gasset.

their own. They came from places where common men had long been forbidden to hunt, and where an untitled man killing game might be hanged with his own bowstring. They had no knowledge at all of the New World's wildlife, lands, and native hunting methods and traditions. They brought nothing but ignorance, faith, a grim determination to survive — and gunpowder.

The first hunting by these colonists was as crude as their guns. Most of them never did become much good at it. But others took hunting seriously from the first, and learned swiftly from the Indian. To some of these, hunting became a

way of life — a sort of whole new inner world within the new outer world. They set about adapting their equipment and their thinking to new needs. The long rifle appeared in Pennsylvania and went on to the Dark and Bloody Ground of Kentucky with a new breed of men. The Kentucky rifle evolved into the plains rifles which were carried west by the mountain men — sons of the Kentucky long hunters. The powerful single-shot breechloaders appeared, and with them came the buffalo runners of the plains. The lever-action repeating Henry was succeeded by the first Winchester, and the West was won. Each new rifle had been marked by a new breed of hunter and by sharper skills in dealing with new places.

Step by step, an American hunting tradition was being shaped. It began with the native American. Some of us still hunt from canoes, and millions of us wear moccasin-style boots. For war or hunting, we use camouflage and the concealment skills that Indians taught us. Nowhere else in the world are waterfowl decoys used as we know them — another lesson from the native American. Some of our most durable folk heroes are white men who learned from the Indian and refined that lore into a remarkable body of knowledge. Much of our hunting tradition comes from these “white Indians”: Leather-stockings, Dan’l Boone, Jed Smith and Jim Bridger.

Down through the years, other flavors were added. In parts of the East there is a British accent to some hunting, ranging all the way from fox hunting with horses to those birdshooters who use only double-barreled shotguns and favor tweed jackets for shooting. Farther west, hunting has

A peculiar virtue in wildlife ethics is that the hunter ordinarily has no gallery to applaud or disapprove of his conduct. Whatever his acts, they are dictated by his own conscience, rather than by a mob of onlookers. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this fact.

Aldo Leopold

cowboy overtones that include packstrings of horses, and pick-up trucks with rifle racks. There are a hundred subcultures in American hunting today, with sharp regional variations in the kinds of game hunted and the ways of hunting them. But with all those little differences, a single strong tradition underlies all of our hunting heritage.

Wildlife in North America is public property. No free-ranging wildlife belongs to any landowner. It is in the public trust. A game bird or animal becomes private property only when it is lawfully reduced to possession; and even then, its disposal may be controlled by law.

Furthermore, hunting is not limited to a privileged few. There are many restrictions on hunting but none restrict the hunter because of his rank or class. Our hunting must be done within a framework of regulations. But even so, it is an exercise of personal freedom in environments good enough to support quality wildlife — which means that those are very good environments, indeed. The most cherished part of our hunting heritage is freedom to hunt in places that are worth being free in.

Our hunting is a special expression of personal freedom. Some other nations have the same basic civil freedoms that we enjoy. But nowhere else in the world today are there environments like ours in North America, with such abundant and varied wildlife and freedom to hunt it. Nowhere else do so many people hunt so much for so many kinds of game.

This is unique in the modern world — and so is the system of management that makes it possible. For a while

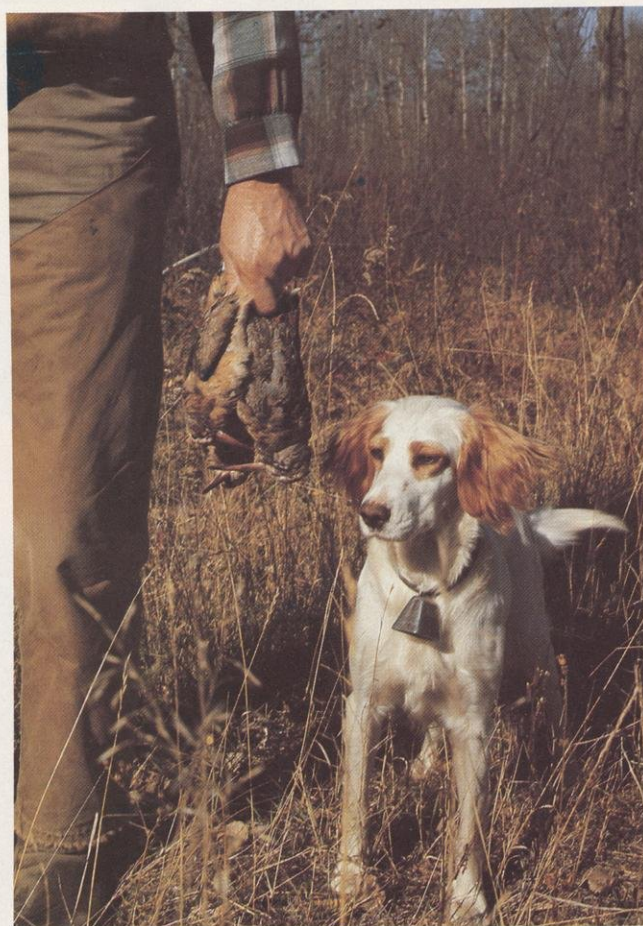


Photo by Dean Tvedt

there, a few generations back, our hunting heritage was a lot richer in tradition than in game supplies. We were in danger of inheriting nothing but the fleshless legends of bygone time. It was a close thing. American hunting was saved by a way of thinking, by the idea of achieving a biological balance in which hunting harvests no more than the annual surplus of a game population. Figuring out what that surplus is, and how to increase and sustain it, is what scientific game management is all about.

Such management is the newest part of our hunting heritage, and the most important. Maybe it isn’t as colorful as the old buckskin traditions we grew up with — but without it there’ll be no buckskin in the years ahead, and no place for the traditions of free hunters.

FRONT COVER

Top right:
Hunter safety education classes...

Top left:
...reduce tragic hunting accidents...

Bottom left:
...by teaching young hunters to handle firearms proficiently...

Bottom right:
...responsibly and safely.

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FRANKOWIAK

I shot my best friend

The story you are about to read is true. It is an example of how we see what our emotions want us to see, and in that peak emotional moment of excitement, make irreversible decisions, sometimes with tragic consequences.

ANONYMOUS

It was a dark, cloudy day. A day that warned of an oncoming storm. Jerry and I had been hunting deer all day, along with my dad and his older cousin.

Jerry and I were both nineteen and had graduated from high school last spring. We grew up as neighbors on dairy farms, and had hunted together frequently since we were twelve.

The day was slipping past, and daylight seemed to be already fading away at three o'clock.

Jerry had just hit a big buck. He said it was at least a ten-pointer. And he had hit it good, right in the chest, he thought.

We all talked it over and decided to try to track the buck. We still had about an hour or so of daylight, and if it snowed, tomorrow would be too late.

Jerry took the track on the light dusting of snow. The rest of us flanked him. I was on his right, uphill from the direction the track went.

I saw Jerry following the track into thick brush across the valley from me. His red sweatshirt disappeared into the twilight and brush, but I saw his blond hair for a short time longer, then he was gone. I waited for awhile, then moved around some dense pines to get a better view of the hillside below and opposite my location.

Then I heard the wounded buck coming up a deep gully that angled toward the head of the valley. I knew it was the buck. It had to be, I could hear it in the leaves, walking a few steps, stopping, then walking again. It walked and stopped, walked and stopped, closer each step.

Then I saw its antlers! They just cleared the top of the ditch, and disappeared as quickly as they appeared. I eased the safety off my 12 gauge pump, ready to put a slug into the big ten-pointer.

The buck was coming closer, only 40 yards away. My heart pounded so hard I could hear it in my ears. It seemed like I wasn't breathing.

Then I saw antlers again, closer. The buck was coming up out of the gully, right in front of me! I strained to see him clearly. I raised my slug gun, ready to drop him as soon as he appeared.

Suddenly he was there, rising abruptly from the deep, dry wash, right in front of me! I pulled down on him, I fired, he dropped.

My mind raced with excitement. "I got him!" I said out loud, reassuring myself that it was really true. I ran to where I saw the buck drop, expecting to see the trophy of a lifetime. My trophy!

I looked down at the still form. I gasped. Something was wrong. What was that red cloth doing on my buck? And those blue jeans? And the curly blonde hair?

With the shock of a bolt of lightning, reality penetrated my mind and I cried out in anguish, "My God, I shot someone!"

I must have gone into shock. I vaguely remember a lot of yelling, sirens coming closer, an ambulance, some deputies and the game warden. Only fleeting sketches remain of all the warden's questions: Where was I standing? What had I seen? Which way had the buck been moving? How old was I? Did I take the state hunter safety course?

Then there was the tearful and torturous waiting at the hospital, and the agonizingly final, numbing statement from the doctor that Jerry had died. They had done their best, but he was gone. Dead! My best friend was dead! And I did it. It just *had* to be a nightmare.

But it wasn't, and I live with burning regret and with gnawing feelings of helplessness. I wake up from restless sleep, wet with sweat and fraught with anguish.

How *could* I mistake my best friend, or any human being, for a deer? Did my mind go insane? Why did I *see* that buck? I *did* see it, and I can *still* visualize the antlers and white throat as the buck climbed out of that gully. I *saw* it!

But why? It *couldn't* have been there. How could I see what wasn't there? Was Jerry's rifle slung on his shoulder the buck's antlers? Was his long blond hair the white throat of the deer? Was I a victim of "buck fever?" Did I have hallucinations?

Or is it possible that the game warden was right when he said "over-anxiousness to bag a deer can cause a person to see a deer where none exists, and to do rash and unsafe things." He said I had failed to control my emotions, and let my mind create what I *wanted* to see, and *not* what was actually there.

All I know is that I shot my best friend. I thought he was a deer. I *knew* he was a buck. He *had* to be a buck. But he wasn't. Oh, God forgive me, he wasn't.

A non-hunter talks about hunting

J. BAIRD CALLICOTT, Professor of Philosophy
UW-Stevens Point

A distinction should be drawn between the non-hunter and the anti-hunter: The anti-hunter is against hunting in any form under any circumstances for one or several moral or religious imperatives. The non-hunter evaluates hunting objectively on its merits depending upon its methods and consequences.

In this era of environmental and ecological consciousness, the consequences of hunting upon the biotic community, the economy of nature are of primary importance. Our first criterion for the evaluation of nonessential consumptive uses of living natural resources, in other words, should be their impact, as Aldo Leopold said, upon the "integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community." To the extent that hunting is a valuable wildlife management tool and positively contributes to the balance of nature, as, for example, deer hunting clearly does in the lake states, then disciplined and regulated hunting should be encouraged. On the other hand, in those cases where a previously plentiful game species is diminishing in numbers, for whatever reason, then hunting pressure should be eliminated as a factor in its survival equation, even if long-standing hunting tradition must be sacrificed. The wolf is a good example.

Intimately connected with this dawning ecological awareness is the requirement that hunters demonstrate respect for private property, for property owners and for the rights of bird watchers, back-packers and mushroom pickers. Not only that, they must also respect Nature as a whole, wildlife in general and most importantly the individual game animals which they seek. Much of anti-hunting

sentiment arises from the arrogance of a certain element in the hunting fraternity. This arrogance is evident in the disrespect shown toward rights of other people, but it is also more subtly evident in the disrespect shown toward wildlife. Aldo Leopold, once again, remarked that conservation is what a man thinks about while he is chopping down a tree. I suggest that the dignity of hunting rests upon what goes on in the mind and heart of a person as he or she pursues and kills a wild animal. A hunter's purpose may be

"Every good hunter dedicates part of his life, deliberately and untransferably to the pursuits of hunting."

From "Meditations on Hunting," by Philosopher Jose Ortega Y Gasset.

merely competitive, to prove prowess or win status. Even worse, the purpose may be to take out aggression and hostility on an innocent animal victim or, worse still, to show those animals who is conqueror and master of Nature. If these are the purposes then hunting deserves all the abuse it receives from the anti-hunting faction.

On the other hand, hunting can be the means by which a hunter discovers and affirms his or her evolutionary and ecological relationship to the biological system of Nature. In other words it can be a way to discover kinship with animal beings and the continuity of Nature and man through the transfer of energy and materials from one body to another, through killing and eating. In doing so, the hunter affirms himself further as partner and member in our

Courtesy of Time-Life, Inc.



primordial web of biological interdependency. If hunting does this, then it is one of the most valuable institutions in our society today.

One of the principal justifications for hunting is that as recently as 10,000 years ago man lived exclusively by hunting and gathering. To hunt is, therefore, in our blood as an ancient precivilized vocation and calling. Primitive hunters, as archeological and ethnological evidence overwhelmingly indicates, regarded game animals as fully equal players in life's drama. Hunting was more than an economic activity and more than sport; it was a religious sacrament, a "holy occupation." The animals hunted were not only respected, they were revered. The best hunters knew that they succeeded not only because of their skill, but because of the animal's willingness to give itself. This happened because the hunter venerated the animal and had a special relationship with it which he carefully cultivated. If today we hunt because our ancestors hunted, it is fair and appropriate that we emulate the spirit in which they hunted. That spirit was not egoistic and competitive. Above all it was a state of mind which deeply appreciated the reciprocal interdependency of man and his animal relatives — bound together not only by external economic relations but in spiritual communion as well.

From the non-hunter's point of view, hunting is not a God-given right but a privilege which should be earned. In prehistoric times it was earned through an arduous discipline and rites of initiation. Today, similarly, hunters should have to demonstrate their qualifications by submitting to a

"Every good hunter is uneasy in the depths of his conscience when faced with the death he is about to inflict."

From "Meditations on Hunting," by Philosopher Jose Ortega Y Gasset.

licensing examination. One must be examined before being permitted to drive an automobile and one *should* be examined before being permitted to hunt. The hunting license examination should test an applicant on his or her knowledge of the laws and regulations applying to hunting, knowledge of game species, and knowledge of hunter safety procedures, plus vision and marksmanship tests.

Such a requirement is the first step toward solving the worst problems surrounding sport hunting today. It would weed out the slob hunters and thus improve the hunter's image in the non-hunting community. It would cut down hunter density and therefore improve quality for those who qualify. It would reduce accidental shootings of both people and protected animals. And it would reduce the cost of law enforcement by keeping out of the field those most likely to commit violations.

Any hunter who opposes a licensing examination is in effect confessing that he or she would not qualify and thus is not a true sportsperson. Hunter support for licensing examinations would demonstrate in action that hunters are serious and responsible participants in their sport.

ARE YOU A RESPONSIBLE HUNTER?

Do You:

- Treat every firearm as though it were loaded?
- Always point your firearm in a safe direction?
- Make sure of your target — and beyond?
- Ask permission to hunt on private lands?
- Respect the landowner, his land and property?
- Study wildlife, habitat and hunting?
- Wear "safety" — fluorescent hunter orange?
- Study and obey hunting regulations?
- Help the landowners and share your game with them?
- Practice with your firearm until you are proficient?
- Plan your hunt — then hunt your plan?
- Select safe and responsible hunting partners?
- Properly prepare and utilize all game harvested?
- Support hunter education and research programs?
- Always set an excellent example for young hunters?
- Support sound wildlife management programs and projects?

Remember, every time you pick up a firearm, you pick up a responsibility.

NOT SURE ?



DONT SHOOT !

Artwork by Bob Frankowiak

Go count the signs

JUSTIN ISHERWOOD, Farmer, R 1, Plover

The relationship between the landowner and the hunter is inherently biased. It is an ancient bias, based on custom and philosophical mismatch.

The sense of landholding, the sense of property, is a major component of western civilization. How we sense land, how we people and possess it, is a very real and active root for us.

Since Greco Roman times, to be free meant also to be a property owner. Many of the major documents in the evolution of western civilization arbitrate the relationships and rights between men and land. The Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the Koran, even the India-Christian Bible admonish believers that possession of personal wealth divides you from heaven, yet to steal from the possessor and so increase his eternal chances is forbidden.

Much of what makes people different, that separates them into cultures, indeed that makes them enemies or friends, is based on how they view property. Property is a basic tenet of our moral and civil law; it is, I think, the muscle of our western religions.

I am a farmer. When it comes to the annual harvest hunts of the autumn season, I am neither offended nor particularly dismayed. What links me to the hunter is a natural faith in the harvest. Farmer and hunter are both reapers. At that point the similarities begin; and at that point they also end. And that is the major desertion between landowner and hunter.

Let me carry the farmer's view a little more deeply into the visage of the hunter. Essentially, the hunter is represented by the couple weekends in September, the 10 days in November, the flash in the pan of opening day for pheasants, for squirrels, for waterfowl and for deer.

I will guess that 75% of those who participate in any one game season do so only during the first couple days of the season. The ire of the farmer begins with the sheer numbers. The ire continues.

The farmer is confronted by strangers, the majority of whom he has never met before, carrying a weapon of war. The hunter, on the other hand, is experiencing a sensation he evolved from *Field & Stream* or *Gun Digest* stories of the hunter and the beast written from a 19th-century perspective.

The visage of the hunter pretty much describes the allegiances. It is a matter of costume and theatre. It's the

L.L. Bean Sorrel hunting boots, it's the Eddie Bauer down hunting coat, the matching Orvis chamois cloth shirt, the Weatherby 357, the Remington, Winchester, Colt, Ithaca, or Smith & Wesson. The allegiance is to the tools and costume and not to the hunt, not to the creature, not to the land.

Let's go back to the word and concept of harvest. The farmer experiences the harvest as a circle. The harvest does not exist by itself. Inherent are the planting, indeed the rock picking, fence mending, weeding, fertilizer bills, droughts, hail, rain, seed, bugs, and blight. The farmer experiences the harvest as an entity, feels it in his bones: the harvest is earned.

I do not think most farmers can comprehend the sportsman, who comes only on the day of harvest. It is somehow cheating.

"An innumerable host of actions and attitudes, comprising perhaps the bulk of all land relations, is determined by the land-user's tastes and predilections, rather than by his purse. The bulk of all land relations hinges on investments of time, forethought, skill, and faith rather than on investments of cash. As a land-user thinketh, so is he."

Aldo Leopold

The nerve is strained, too, because the farmer has witnessed the whole of it, the whole of the deer. When the hunter isn't there, he sees the creature, sees new spotted fawn in the woodlot, notes the tracks by the pond, by the rye field, notes the growth; he is part-parent, he sees them at the salt lick with the cows, sees them feed at the corn field. Gladly he pays his dues, gladly he sees the grace in the jump of fence, notes the communion between when he leaves an apple on the fence post. The deer is part of him.

Then comes the harvest, again he understands, a thousand times he understands; he has killed the calf with brain fever, killed the favorite cow, chopped chickens. But the hunter harvest is something alien. There are the CB radios, the four-wheel drives, the semi-automatic rifles, the scopes, the clothes, the wild shots.

It's the warfare of it that makes him say never, and he goes to the hardware store and spoils a twenty dollar bill on yellow "no trespassing" signs.

If you don't believe me, go count the signs.

**NO
TRESPASSING**
ON THIS PROPERTY

THE OWNER
WISCONSIN

**PRIVATE
PROPERTY**

**PROJECT
RESPECT**
LANDOWNER
SPORTSMAN
COOPERATION
**PERMIT
HUNTING
ONLY**
OWNER _____
SIGNATURE _____ ADDRESS _____

**NO TRESPASSING
HUNTING OR FISHING**
VIOLATORS PROSECUTED
UNDER PENALTY OF LAW
15/ A. Landowner

**No HUNTING or
TRESPASSING**

ON T
HERS GIVE
IN STATU

**NO
HUNTING**



How the anti-hunter sees the hunter. Cartoon by Virgil Beck, Box 1548, Wausau, WI 54401

HUNTING BEHAVIOR

In Wisconsin, a multi-year study of waterfowl and deer hunters that included field observations, post-hunt interviews and comprehensive follow-up interviews, revealed hunter behavior as it really exists.

Here's what was found:

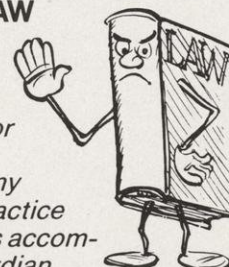
- 1) 70% of waterfowl hunters cited behavior of other hunters as their most dissatisfying experience.
- 2) 54% said hunters have become less responsible over time.
- 3) 57% of landowners said they observed one or more hunters violate during one deer season.
- 4) 10% of hunters interviewed (1,500) saw a violation on the day they were interviewed.
- 5) 20% of all waterfowl hunters were observed violating (of those, 30% were "accidental," for example: two 100 point ducks with one shot)
- 6) During in-home interviews, 85% admitted having violated at some time.
- 7) 15% said they **never** violate. (But 11% of them were **observed** violating.)
- 8) In one season, 44% of deer hunters saw a dead illegal deer and 37% saw a violation. However, only 4% had ever turned in a violator.

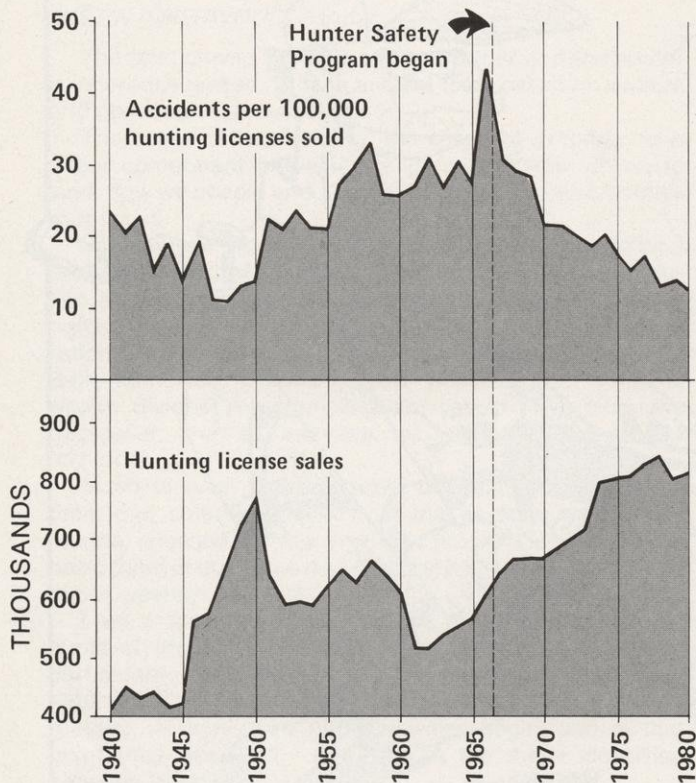
THE LAW

- It is against state law for anyone under the age of 16 to carry a firearm of any kind for hunting, target practice or any other purpose unless accompanied by a parent or guardian.

- Anyone 14 to 16 years old who has a hunter safety certificate from Wisconsin or another state or province is exempt from the age requirement.

- Anyone 12 to 13 years old may earn a certificate but must still hunt with a parent or guardian. No one under 12 can be issued a certificate.





SOME HUNTER EDUCATION FACTS

- The Wisconsin Hunter Education Program began in 1967. Since that time, over 200,000 graduates of the basic course in safety and responsibility have been certified by approximately 2,000 volunteer instructors.

- The hunting accident rate in the past five years has declined 44% from the 20-year average tallied before the course was given. (Hunting accident rate is the number per 100,000 hunting licenses sold.)

- Last year (1980) was the safest since 1951. There were 109 accidents, including nine fatalities. The lowest prior year was 1978, with 119 accidents.

- 51% of all students are trained in the three months of August, September and October.

- 96% of all instructors favor requiring hunter education certification for first-time hunters.

- 81% think bowhunter education should be required for first-time bowhunters.

- 97% said they would continue to instruct if the Wisconsin hunter education course were required for first-time hunters.

Get involved: be a better hunter

BOB JACKSON

University of Wisconsin, La Crosse

"Keep them a little bit broke! That's the surest and best way to keep a hunting club strong and active."

The speaker was the leader of a successful hunter's association. He explained that "being broke" was usually a symptom of two important conditions: First, if a club is spending all its money, it's probably active and has purpose. Second, being broke demands that all members work hard if the club is to survive and achieve its goals. In short, members have to be actively *involved* in club activities. If they are, both individual members and the group as a whole are rewarded with a sense of group identity, a feeling of solidarity, and the satisfaction of real achievement and accomplishment.

Getting involved is the secret to success and to a healthy future for hunting. I've discovered the truth of this again and again during seven years of research on hunting and hunters in Wisconsin. The research, the Wisconsin Hunter Performance Study, was funded by DNR to help educators and managers better understand hunters and why they act as they do. It studied the ethics and actions of waterfowl, deer-gun and deer-bow hunters. Results of the study will be used to improve the educational methods, curriculum

"Hunting is a confrontation between two systems of instincts, both of which must be free to function fully, not pressed beyond natural limits."

From "Meditations on Hunting," by Philosopher Jose Ortega Y Gasset.

and evaluation procedures in Wisconsin's Hunter Education program. Certain key concepts cropped up over and over in these studies. One of the most important of these is involvement.

To illustrate: Last Christmas my family had trouble deciding which of 15,000 hand-planted evergreens would be cut and decorated for the up-coming holiday season. After a heated debate about which trees should *not* be cut, one son declared that he cared too much for every last one of those 15,000 trees to cut even one of the culls. This sense of stewardship developed because he had been *involved* in preparing the site, planting the trees, carrying water in dry years, pruning and other careful nurturing. Soon the whole family admitted that they each would be a little "hurt" by cutting any one of those precious trees.

In one way or another, sportsmen often tell us the same thing. They too "hurt" a little each time they successfully crop the resource, whether the quarry is a bluegill, a muskie, a squirrel or a trophy buck. Hunters develop a sense of responsibility and stewardship when they become



Getting involved with the resource

deeply *involved* with wildlife through hunting and related activities. Hunting becomes less a means to take game and more a way to communicate with and be close to nature.

For instance, hunters and landowners in the southern half of Wisconsin sometimes have a greater sense of responsibility and stewardship than those in the north. Apparently where game, habitat, and hunting privileges are plentiful and often public, these resources are taken for granted and often exploited. Where resources are scarce they become precious. In these areas individuals and clubs often become actively *involved* in protecting and expanding that resource.

Conversely, wardens and wildlife managers say southern Wisconsin hunters and landowners can be casual and unconcerned where wildlife is so plentiful that it sometimes becomes a pest (deer in central Wisconsin or geese around Horicon). But they get actively concerned and protective where the resource is scarcer (geese in central Wisconsin or deer around Horicon). It is no accident that the strongest bow and gun hunting clubs develop in areas where environment and circumstances almost dictate and demand a need for activism and *involvement* to improve landowner relations, purchase habitat and the like.

But *involvement* is not only an important factor in understanding today's hunter. It's also the key to effectively educating tomorrow's hunter. Historically, sermonizing, moralizing or merely providing information doesn't work. (Studies show those who violate waterfowl hunting regulations and ethics can better identify ducks than those who don't violate.) To *effectively* change values and behavior in the field, hunter education has to involve students in the learning process. Generations of teachers know the rule: "Tell me and I'll forget; show me and I'll remember; but *involve* me and I'll understand."

One noted authority says values are arrived at through a process of choosing freely, choosing from alternatives, and choosing after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative. The final steps include

affirming the choice, acting upon it, and then repeating it as a pattern in life.

Both young and old hunters need an opportunity to explore and share alternatives and probable consequences of their own hunting behavior. This is education not by lecture, but by discovery. Learners can find their own answers, right answers, if their teachers, their assignments and their own experiences allow them to do so.

Over the last four years, Wisconsin hunter education workshops have tested and incorporated education by involvement. After watching one group taught this way, an instructor-observer asked a young student in the group how the class knew so much information, had so much insight about hunting responsibility. The 12-year-old, master of his world, shrugged his shoulders and offered, "Oh, it's just common sense."

Young learners do think, can analyze, and are able to make important discoveries without prompting and preaching from an instructor. When young adolescents can "walk through" the very situations they will meet in hunting, they may respond either responsibly or irresponsibly. But if they themselves are given the chance to determine how and why they will react and behave in the field, most young or advanced hunters will carefully study and evaluate the options, and choose the right course of action.

There is a message in all of this. There is a challenge to find new and creative ways for sportsmen to become *involved*. Clubs can and should raise pheasant and waterfowl or participate in other projects. Professionals may do some things easier and faster, but the final product will be stronger when all participate, a product broader than the particular project itself.

And, if sportsmen or clubs are looking for a place to get *involved*, there's no better one than hunter education. *Getting involved* is the key to the future of hunter education. *Staying involved* is the key to the future of hunting.

Group ethics

HOBSON BRYAN, US Forest Service

Environmental values seem to relate to people's length of involvement in (and commitment to) their sport. Sportsmen tend to move into more advanced and ethical stages of activity over time.

Young, novice hunters move from plinking at cans with a BB gun to shooting rabbits with a .22. From bringing home pheasants off the back forty with a .410 to bringing down whitetails in the northwoods with a .30-.30.

Along with these changes in location and equipment go changes in the way the novice feels about game, natural resources and the environment. There is a progression of experiences and involvement, and outdoor ethics evolve during this progression.

As the individual becomes more involved or specialized, he or she becomes more environmentally aware, more sensitive to the setting in which the sport is practiced.

Eventually, some people become so involved they join members of what sociologists term "leisure social worlds." These are subcultures of people with similar values and standards who are involved in a particular recreational

"The hunter is never sure his actions are completely correct, yet he is never sure they are completely wrong either."

From "Meditations on Hunting," by Philosopher Jose Ortega Y Gasset.

activity or cluster of activities. The Izaak Walton League, Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, Sierra Club, and B.A.S.S. (Bass Anglers Sportsmen Society) are examples of such leisure social worlds.

Members of these groups find their activities a primary source of identity and reward. Similar groups are bridge players, sports car enthusiasts, skiers, and other outdoor and indoor recreationists. They have similar attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, and behavior, a sense of group identification, and similar ethics. These groups and the organizations representing them effectively pass on group values. The more involved one becomes in an outdoor activity the more one becomes aware of the need for ethical standards of conduct and sound environmental policy.

There is little mystery about how ethical behavior develops. It develops like any other behavior. We model ourselves after people we admire. We learn through rewards and punishments what is expected of us. And we

learn through experience. But the point is that in this contemporary society of ours many people have little appreciation of the outdoors, respect for the environment, or knowledge about what constitutes ethical behavior.

Equipment manufacturers spend vast sums on advertising to promote new outdoor products. They even offer seminars and training sessions to teach users the outdoor skill to use their products. But the people who take this formal training, the shooting and fly-fishing schools, often have not grown up in the outdoors and do not know what constitutes good, ethical outdoor conduct.

I think there is a better way. For one thing, we can bring the outdoors to the urban dweller. We can teach urban kids to fish and hunt and at the same time teach them standards of conduct, and outdoor appreciation.

And there is another way. Leisure social world groups can help shape an environmental ethic. Novice recreationists often take their cue from and pattern their behavior after those they consider experts. Social groups often have the experts and the ethic. They should be encouraged and applauded and novices should be urged to join.



B.A.S.S.

**NATIONAL
AUDUBON
SOCIETY**



THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
People Working Together For a Better Environment!



HUNTERS LOSING GROUND; A SURVEY

A nationwide survey last year by the Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, New Jersey revealed the following:

Participation in hunting by Americans (people who report having ever hunted) declined by more than one-fourth over the past 15 years. The lowest level of hunting among men is for those in their 20's, only 51% as compared with 56% of men 30 to 45 and 60% of men 45 to 59 years old.

Eight Americans in 10 personally know someone who hunts. This network of personal contacts can be useful in maintaining or improving the public's understanding of hunters and hunting. Particularly among teenagers, of whom only one in five hunts. Over half say that some of their closest friends are hunters, while a fourth know someone who hunts, although not closely.

Females are the main opponents of hunting. Three-quarters of men and teenage boys are either for hunting or have ambivalent feelings toward it. Thirty percent of women say they are against hunting, and only 20% say they are for the sport.

Opposition to hunting in general is stronger in the Northeast and in built-up areas of the US than in the rural South and West. Landowners of 100 acres or more display little opposition (8%) to hunting, while game wardens display none at all.

Love of nature has emerged as the most important satisfaction of hunting, in the testimony of hunters. Game meat is mentioned more frequently by hunters today than fifteen years ago. In general, the recreational



"No Hunting" by artist Earl Gustaveson, courtesy Northwoods Craftsman, 8955 Bo-Di-Lac Drive, Lac Du Flambeau, WI 54538

aspects of hunting receive more emphasis than do the competitive aspects, such as skill, using a gun, thrill of success.



Cartoon by Oscar Warbach

Adjectives which Americans select from a lengthy list to best describe the average hunter reveal a steady decline of favorable words (good sport, respects laws, careful, kind, likeable or intelligent) since the Sixties and doubling of unfavorable words (tough, careless, cruel, inconsiderate, doesn't like animals, irresponsible, unfair, poor sport or stupid).

Lack of common courtesy, causing damage and not being safe are seen by landowners as the major

problems with hunters today. Breaking down fences, leaving gates open, tearing up property or vegetation with vehicles, littering, spooking cattle and domestic animals are specific examples of the kinds of hunter behavior that landowners find objectionable. Game wardens agree with landowners on these points to some extent, but are even more emphatic about hunters' disregard for rules and breaking of laws which are the major problems they encounter.

Wisconsin's hunter education program



DESCRIPTION

The hunter education course is designed to teach sportsmen of all ages to be safe, ethical and responsible hunters. Parents are urged to attend and take the course with their sons or daughters. A minimum of 10 hours of instruction is required; however, some instructors may teach more.

Fee for the course is \$3.00.

As part of the studies, students learn how to treat the land, private and public, and discover ways to improve sportsman/landowner relationships. They are taught to respect wildlife, natural resources and their fellow hunters. The growing sentiment against hunting and hunters and the causes of it are explored. Participants find out that they can correct

and improve much of the bad image by becoming responsible hunters.

The course is administered by the DNR Bureau of Law Enforcement and taught by certified, volunteer instructors.

Students learn to handle different types of firearms under supervision. They learn correct shooting techniques and positions. With the instructor's permission, the student may bring a personal firearm to class to train with. At no time are students allowed to bring any type of ammunition. However, live firing exercises are to be conducted in some classes under supervision of the instructor.

Students take a written test at the end of the course. Each one who passes receives a wallet-sized identification card. This certificate also serves as a one-year small game hunting license.

The instructor makes the final decision in determining whether a student is qualified to receive the certificate. Those who fail to attend for the required number of hours, fail to display basic knowledge of firearm and archery safety, or to learn about hunter responsibility are not issued certificates. Other parts of the course include:

- Basic principles of wildlife management, purpose of wildlife laws and regulations and the hunter's role in them.
- Basics on firearms, ammunition and ballistics. Archery tackle is also studied.
- Instruction in the proper way to carry, handle and care for firearms, muzzle loaders and archery equipment.
- Basic woodsmanship, what to do when lost, survival tactics and first aid.
- Field care of game.

Classes are held throughout the year. Many are taught within the local school district. Prospective students and parents of students should watch for public announcements.

Additional information on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources hunter education programs may be obtained by writing to:

Homer E. Moe,
Hunter Education Coordinator
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707
608/266-0831

PURPOSE OF HUNTER EDUCATION

1. To promote responsible, ethical hunter conduct.
2. To emphasize the importance of wildlife management, laws, and regulations.
3. To learn safe handling of hunting equipment and reduce hunting casualties.

The hunter safety course has not been designed to replace parental responsibility. Parents are encouraged to augment the formal training to help insure good hunting habits.

WHO'S INVOLVED

HOMER E. MOE

Hunter Education Coordinator, Madison

I'm responsible for planning, organizing, coordinating and evaluating the hunter education program. Some of my duties are mundane — ordering supplies and training aids, or updating instructor's manuals and student's handbooks. Some are fun — training volunteer instructors or conducting surveys and studies. Others are exciting, such as analyzing, evaluating and adjusting today's courses to meet the needs of today's hunters and determining needs and priorities for tomorrow's hunters.

But all my duties are fulfilling, because I think hunter education is the most important thing we can do to assure the future of hunting. The 2,000 dedicated volunteer instructors have made it work and I'm proud of them.

Today, hunting is much safer than many other outdoor recreational pursuits. Teamwork and tenacity from our



volunteers are the reason. Next on the agenda is improving hunter behavior and responsibility. That challenge will require even more involvement and dedication by volunteer instructors. It's my bet our team will come out on top again.

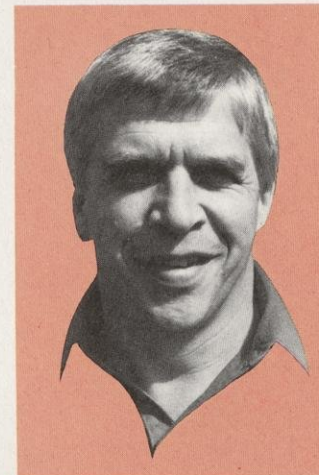
THE TEACHER

LARRY BENNETT

Volunteer Instructor, Eau Claire

The key to successful hunter education is the instructor. No amount of elaborate teaching aids, etc., will ever replace a good instructor.

What is a quality instructor? He's a person who has a real and genuine interest in hunter education, plus a love for the out-of-doors. He knows that education is necessary to insure the future of hunting. He takes the time to thoroughly and carefully prepare each session. As classes progress, a good instructor varies the subject matter according to the backgrounds, experiences and interests of the students. He projects the "I'm learning with you," attitude rather than giving the impression of having all the answers. He's enthusiastic about hunter education and passes his excitement to every class member.



THE STUDENT

DALE FRANK, Madison

Hunter Safety Student

With anti-gun and anti-hunting sentiment growing, with the number of gun and hunting laws increasing, it might be easier just to give up.

But last year, after completing my hunter safety course, I had my first hunting season with a gun. I had tagged along with my dad many times before, but this was different.

The game I brought home was almost nothing, but the memories have started to fill the "library" in my head. Dad says there will be many more, and I can't wait to get a shelf-full like he has.

I can still hear the air whistling through the wings of ducks as we sit in the blind, when it's too dark to shoot. There's the sight of our dog on steady point, only to find out he was interested in hunting mice at that particular minute. Or my most vivid memory — a nice 6-point buck trotting up to my buck lure. I got nervous, my heart pounded and my legs were shaking. I think I had a bad case of buck fever.



These and many, many more memories are already being stored. Without the sport of hunting I might never have had the opportunity to feel and experience all the different emotions connected with hunting.

If I ever get married and have kids, I would sure want them to enjoy and have the same opportunity to fill their "library" like I'm filling mine.

The four A's

1. AWARENESS

Know that you can become a victim of high emotion when you spot game. It's natural to become excited but be aware of your emotions. You *can* and *must* control them to control your actions. As a hunter you must be aware of the limits of your ability to control your emotions.

Be aware of your responsibilities — to landowners, the environment, wildlife, other hunters, other outdoor users and nonhunting citizens. They are in the majority and in their hands lies the future of hunting. Awareness of wildlife and habitat gives a hunter credibility. Know the regulations, the reasons for them and their impact on wildlife. Know your own personal limitations as well as your abilities, hunting skills and physical endurance. Be aware of the limits of your firearms and other hunting equipment.

2. ATTITUDE

Hunt for the sake of *hunting*, not simply *bagging*. Concentrate on developing attitudes of courtesy, safety and responsibility. The reward of hunting is far more than simply killing game. View hunting as a learning endeavor, a sharing experience and an ecological-awareness undertaking, with bagged game an extra bonus.

Courtesy will be rewarded with friendliness and concern. Safety consciousness will prevent mishaps and tragedy. Sharing will guarantee more hunting opportunities and lasting relationships. A law-abiding attitude is essential to personal pride and to the future of hunting.

3. ACTION

Emotional awareness plus proper attitude put you on the track toward positive action. Restrain the urge to shoot before you're sure, . . .

- assume every sound and movement in the woods is another *human being* until you positively identify it as wild game.

- check for other hunters and a safebackstop *before* you raise your firearm.

- double-check to make sure the game is legal before you shoot.

- have safe shooting zones in mind at all times and *stick to them*.

- control your emotions to control your firearm.

Hunters can take positive action to make hunting more satisfying. Study and learn all you can about wildlife, both in books and in the field. Always ask permission. Everybody likes invited guests, few like uninvited ones.

Act to plan, organize and prepare equipment, firearms, vehicles and clothing for a hunt. It satisfies anticipation nervousness and fulfills the urge to be afield.

Sharpen observation and marksmanship skills during the off-season. Share game with landowners, friends and family.

Act to report violators.

4. ACHIEVEMENT

Realistic expectations lead to feelings of greater achievement and personal satisfaction. Unrealistic ones result in frustration and disappointment. They also cause over-anxiousness to kill game and can result in a tragic hunting accident.

Concentrate on safety and accident prevention. When you achieve safe, responsible behavior, you take a major step toward assuring the future of hunting.

Awareness, attitude, action and achievement are the tools. Pledge now to become a 4A hunter.

