

**EXPLORE**  
BOWHUNTING

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**

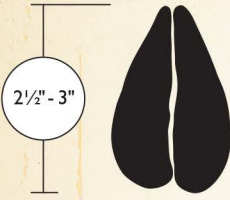


**ARCHERY**  
TRADE ASSOCIATION

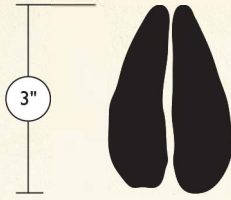


WILD TURKEY

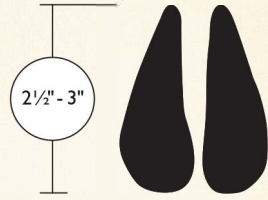
# TRACKING QUICK GUIDE



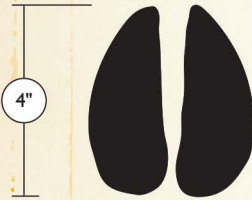
**WHITE-TAILED DEER**  
● *Odocoileus virginianus*



**MULE DEER**  
● *Odocoileus hemionus*



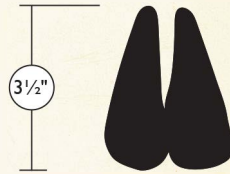
**BLACK-TAILED DEER**  
● *Odocoileus hemionus*



**ELK**  
*Cervus elaphus*



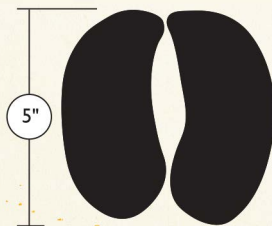
**MOOSE**  
*Alces alces*



**BIGHORN SHEEP**  
● *ovis spp.*



**MOUNTAIN GOAT**  
● *Oreamnos americanus*



**AMERICAN BISON**  
*Bison bison*

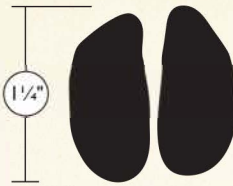


**PRONGHORN**  
*Antilocapra americana*

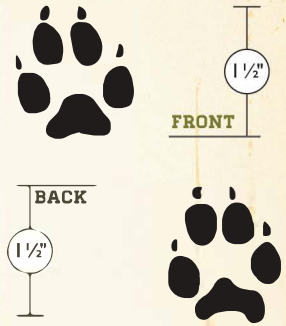
# TRACKING QUICK GUIDE



**FERAL HOG**  
*Sus scrofa*



**JAVELINA**  
*Tayassu tajacu*



**GRAY FOX**  
*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*



**RED FOX**  
*Vulpes vulpes*



**COYOTE**  
*Canis latrans*



**GRAY WOLF**  
*Canis lupus*



**BOBCAT**  
*Felis rufus*



**LYNX**  
*Lynx canadensis*



**COUGAR**  
*Felis concolor*



# PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE

To prepare for your hunt, practice these shots to make sure you're ready:



**HOLD** YOUR BOW AT FULL DRAW FOR **30 SECONDS** BEFORE TAKING THE SHOT.



**RUN** IN PLACE FOR 3 MINUTES AND TAKE A SHOT WITHIN 1 MINUTE TO PRACTICE SHOOTING WHEN YOUR HEART IS BEATING FASTER.

**PRACTICE WEARING YOUR HUNTING CLOTHES.**



**SHOOT** FROM A SITTING POSITION.



**SHOOT FROM A KNEELING POSITION.**

You should be able to shoot for 30 minutes or more without your arms becoming tired. If your arms get tired after 15-20 shots, then your draw weight may be too heavy.

# GROUND BLINDS

Getting close to wildlife is exciting! In order to get close to wildlife, many people use ground blinds, a structure that hides people who want to get close to wildlife.

## HOW TO BUILD A GROUND BLIND

- 1 Find a tree with forked branches about four to six feet above the ground.
- 2 Lean a fallen limb into the fork to serve as the anchor post. Make sure it's long enough to allow at least one person to sit under it comfortably.
- 3 Lean as many short limbs as you can find against the anchor limb, angling the limbs to create a triangular lean-to. Make sure the limbs are placed close together and extend far enough to the sides, leaving enough room for a seated or kneeling person. For bowhunting, ground and tree blinds must have space for the bowhunter to sit, kneel or stand comfortably, and enough space to hold, draw and shoot a bow and arrow.



- 4 Pile leaves, twigs and other debris on top and against the structure. Limbs with leaves attached or evergreen branches can be cut in 6- to 8-foot lengths and used to lean against the sides of the blind. This will help hide a bowhunter inside.

# STRIDE WORKSHEET

TRIAL ONE

$$\frac{300 \text{ feet}}{\square \text{ steps}} = \text{_____} \text{ feet per step (stride)}$$

TRIAL TWO

$$\frac{300 \text{ feet}}{\square \text{ steps}} = \text{_____} \text{ feet per step (stride)}$$

## AVERAGE STRIDE

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Trial 1 Stride \_\_\_\_\_ + Trial 2 Stride \_\_\_\_\_ / 2 = \_\_\_\_\_ feet per step

## CONVERT TO YARDS

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TRIAL ONE

$$\frac{100 \text{ yards}}{\square \text{ steps}} = \text{_____} \text{ yards per step (stride)}$$

TRIAL TWO

$$\frac{100 \text{ yards}}{\square \text{ steps}} = \text{_____} \text{ yards per step (stride)}$$

## AVERAGE STRIDE

---

Trial 1 Stride \_\_\_\_\_ + Trial 2 Stride \_\_\_\_\_ / 2 = \_\_\_\_\_ yards per step

# SPOT-AND-STALK

You glass the hillside and see a bull elk moving slowly to the east about a quarter mile away. The wind is in your face, blowing your scent away from your target. It rained hard last night, making the ground soft and quiet for your approach. Your heart pounds as you realize these are perfect conditions for a spot-and-stalk hunt.

“Glassing” is when you use binoculars or a spotting scope to find game animals from a distance. The goal of spot-and-stalk hunting is to see the animal before it sees you, and craft an approach plan for a good shot opportunity. This technique is used most often in Western prairie and mountainous regions for bowhunting elk, pronghorns and mule deer.

## TIPS FOR SPOT-AND-STALK HUNTING:

- 1 FIND AN ELEVATED VANTAGE POINT**, such as trees, rocks or hilly terrain. Check the area thoroughly. If you see nothing, move to another vantage point and check the next area.
- 2 LOOK FOR FRESH TRACKS AND SIGN**, moving slowly, walking a few steps at a time, and stopping often to scan and study the surroundings. Always be ready because a shot might suddenly present itself.
- 3 KNOW YOUR WIND DIRECTION** to avoid an animal catching your scent as you approach. Stay downwind of the animal (the wind is in your face) to avoid being detected.
- 4 WALK QUIETLY THROUGH THE TERRAIN**. Avoid stepping on sticks and other debris that could make noise and alert animals to your presence. Wet or damp conditions create better stalking conditions because the terrain becomes quieter when leaves, pine cones and other woodland debris are wet, soggy and less brittle.

# WILD TURKEY

*Meleagris gallopavo*



## DESCRIPTION

The wild turkey is the largest of North America's game birds. The head and neck are bare and the skin can range from blue to bright red. Adult males, known as toms or gobblers weigh between 16 and 24 pounds and can stand 4 feet tall at maturity. Toms grow a beard which is a cluster of long, hair like feathers from the center of its chest. Toms have iridescent red, green, copper, bronze and gold feathers. They use these bright colors to attract females during the breeding season. Females, known as hens, are smaller than males and weigh between 8 and 12 pounds. Hens have drab, brown or gray feathers.

Wild turkeys, especially young turkeys called poults, are preyed upon by foxes, coyotes, cougars, owls, and eagles. Predators such as snakes, skunks, crows, opossums, raccoons, dogs, coyotes, and even rodents are always on the lookout for an easy lunch and will raid a turkey nest and its eggs when it can. Only about half of the turkey nests make it to hatching.

Wild turkeys usually feed in the early morning and in the afternoon. Turkeys have excellent vision during the day but don't see as well at night. Turkeys can run at speeds up to 25 mph, and they can fly up to 55 mph. Average life span in the wild is only 1.3 to 1.6 years.

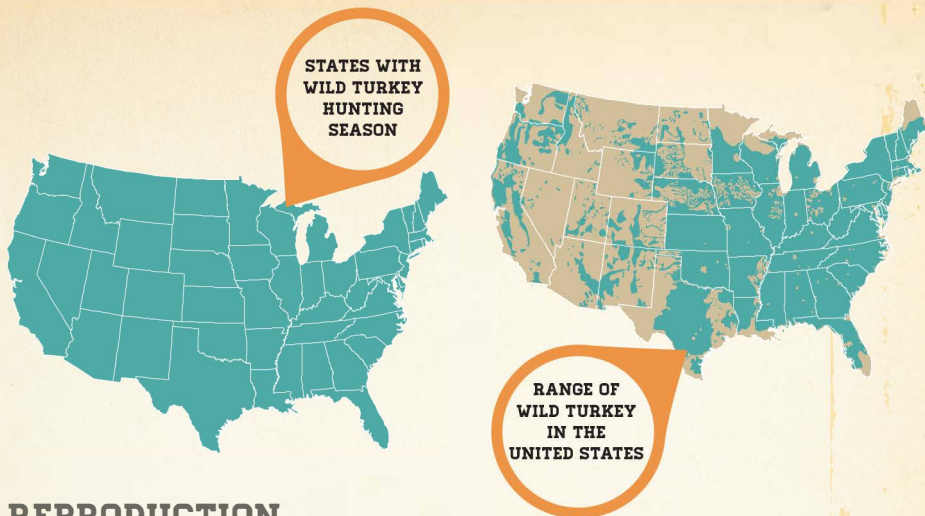
## HABITAT

Wild Turkeys are found in many different habitats, including oak hardwood forest, swamps, pastures, open fields, chaparral and ponderosa pine forests. Wild turkeys like open areas for feeding and mating. They use forested areas as cover from predators and for roosting in trees at night. A varied habitat of both open and covered area is essential for survival.

## FOOD: OMNIVORES

Wild Turkeys are omnivores, which means they feed on both animals and plants. Acorns form a major portion of their diet, but wild turkeys also feed on seeds, nuts, fruits, insects, buds, fern fronds and, surprisingly, salamanders.





## REPRODUCTION

Males (Toms) and females (hens) reach sexual maturity at about 10 months of age. Turkeys mate in early spring. One male will mate with multiple females. Hens will lay 8 to 12 eggs over a period of two weeks. The hen incubates the eggs for about 28 days. Newly hatched poults grow rapidly but are flightless until 2 weeks of age. Wild turkeys usually have only one brood per mating season.

# WILD TURKEY THROUGH THE SEASONS

## WINTER: SURVIVAL

The day is spent in search of food and conserving energy. Nights are spent in above-ground roosts trying to keep warm. South-facing forested areas and seeps (areas where water is coming out of the ground) are preferred in winter. Toms and hens flock according to their gender.

## SPRING: MATING

Wild Turkeys mate in spring. Toms fan their tails, gobble and strut to attract several females. The hens scratch out a nest, forming a shallow depression surrounded by vegetation to help hide it.

## SUMMER: REARING

Poults spend the summer with their mother. She will fend off predators and roost with them at night. By mid-summer two or more hens and their

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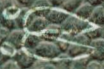
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WHITE-TAILED DEER