

The Young Hunter's Glossary

Whether you hunt with guns or bows, this sport can be exhilarating and profitable. Hunting deer, raccoons, squirrels, and other game animals is a popular hobby throughout the country. But before you take to the rural countryside with a rifle or bow in tow, plan to take a safety course to learn how to hunt safely and legally. Young hunters will need to hunt with licensed adults in most states, and this is another great way to learn about the sport. Learning some basic hunting terms should help you prepare for a successful hunting trip, too.

Antlers: The antlers are the bony growths coming out of a buck's head. Deer, elk, and moose bucks have antlers.

Bag Limit: The bag limit is the legal number of animals that hunters can shoot or kill in a day.

Beaters: Beaters are people walking in a line abreast to drive animals toward hunters.

Bed: The bed is the place where deer lie down, leaving an oval depression in the dirt, grass, or snow.

Blowing: Deer may snort loudly, which is known as blowing, to alert other deer of a threat.

Bolt: If a quarry leaves its place of refuge, it's said to have bolted. Hounds often flush out quarry for hunters.

Break: Break is another term used to describe when quarry leaves its cover or refuge.

Broadside: Hunters generally consider a broadside shot to a deer that hits its vital organs the most ethical shot.

Buck: A buck is a male deer, elk, or moose.

Busted: If the game smells or sees hunters, it will leave an area quickly, and this is known as being busted.

Doe: A doe is a female deer, elk, or moose.

Falconry: When hunters use birds of prey to hunt, this is called falconry.

Fawn: A fawn is a baby deer born in the spring of the same year. Fawns may or may not have spots.

Field Dressing: Field dressing involves removing the entrails of an animal quickly to prevent spoilage of the meat.

Flush: When an animal is flushed out, it's chased out of its hiding place. Hounds often help hunters flush out quarry so hunters can pursue it.

Funnel: A funnel area features topography that narrows to a single path, forcing game to take this route.

Gut Shot: A gut shot is not ideal because it causes a slow death and it can be hard to track and find the animal.

Harvest: Harvesting an animal involves killing or taking it. Hunters often prefer the term "hunting" to "harvesting."

Horns: Horns are a bony protrusion from antelope, cow, goat, and sheep heads.

License: Hunters need to buy a hunting license that grants the privilege to hunt for a specific species of animal.

Mature: An animal reaches maturity when it reaches a certain age. For example, a deer is considered mature when it is three and a half years old.

Possession Limit: States usually impose a possession limit, which limits the number of animals that it's legal to have in your possession at once. Possession limit is not the same as bag limit: The bag limit is how many you can kill per day, while the possession limit is often two or three times the bag limit, allowing for a two- or three- day hunt.

Rack: A rack is another name for antlers.

Rut: Deer enter the rut when they are at the peak of their breeding season.

Scope: A rifle usually has a scope, which is a magnifying lens mounted to the top that enables hunters to zero in on long-distance shots.

Scouting: Hunters often go scouting before they go hunting to find a good location.

Season: The hunting season is the time allotted to hunt a specific species. Seasons generally span a set number of days.

Sign: A sign is the evidence of their presence that animals leave behind. Signs may be beds, scrapes, rubs, or tracks.

Tag: Hunters are given a field tag, which is a slip that shows harvest data about a game animal. After shooting an animal, the hunter affixes the tag to it to validate it.