

Interested in Becoming a Hunter?

Be Proactive and use a “three-step” approach!

- 1) Getting a Hunting Mentor!
- 2) Getting Hunter Education Certified!
- 3) Getting Started Hunting!

1) Getting a Hunting Mentor!

For someone interested in hunting that has never hunted before, locating a hunting mentor is a great start. The majority of all hunters began hunting because someone (*a hunting mentor*) took the time to introduce them to the activity. Although entirely possible, individuals rarely begin hunting without the support and guidance of a hunting mentor.

You can begin the process of finding a hunting mentor by asking a friend or family member that hunts, seek out someone in your neighborhood that hunts, or visit a local hunting or shooting club in your area.

Nearly everyone, perhaps with the exception of those living in large urban areas, has seen hunters during the hunting seasons. We are a very obvious bunch when we practice our craft and do so by dressing in very noticeable attire. Hunter orange and camouflage are our favorite colors and often, but not always, we drive pick-up trucks or Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV's).

Research has indicated that when hunters were asked the question, “*why did you take someone hunting?*” the overwhelming response was because some showed an interest and asked the hunter to take them hunting. Nothing happens in life unless we make it happen! If you want to hunt, make it known! So, what are you waiting for....ASK a hunter!!!!

Another great way to meet hunters is by scheduling a FREE hunter education course! Many folks that volunteer as hunter education instructors are also very avid hunters! Even if an individual instructor is unable to provide mentoring opportunities themselves they may be willing to provide insight and information for getting started hunting on your own. Don't wait, make it happen, be proactive!

If provided the opportunity to go hunting with someone, keep the following in mind.

- **Be prepared:** Although becoming a new hunter can be somewhat overwhelming, a little research into the activity prior to the first outing is recommended. Doing your “homework” prior to a hunting or shooting activity displays your level of interest and may be greatly appreciated by the mentor. Much can be discovered about hunting and hunting opportunities by visiting the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission on-line at www.ncwildlife.org
- **Be safe, legal, and sure:** Even a newcomer should understand some basic firearm and tree stand safety, the significance of reviewing hunting regulations prior to the

season, and the importance of properly identifying the target before pulling the trigger or releasing a bow string.

- **Be on time:** Hunting involves a distinct timeline, and although not always critical, should be adhered to. Avoid making your mentor wait for you due to lack of preparedness.
- **Be polite:** Show your hunting mentor your interest by listening, learning, and remaining respectful. It could mean the difference between gaining a new hunting companion and a one-time only outing.
- **Be appreciative:** Keep in mind that mentoring is the ultimate outdoor gift. Showing appreciation for it is welcomed and appreciated. If you can afford it, offer to buy breakfast, lunch, or contribute to fuel costs. Even a simple thank you is always appreciated by the mentor that provides a hunting opportunity.
- **Be proactive:** Some of the greatest hunting rewards and accomplishments come through spending time learning about the habitat and species being hunted. Satisfaction from hunting does not come solely from pulling the trigger or releasing a bow string and no one, no matter how long they've hunted, knows everything about hunting. Becoming a successful hunter is a learning process that never ends.
- **Be ethical:** Responsible hunters abide by two sets of laws. One set is established by government for the protection of resources, people, and property. The other set is based on our moral behavior. Always set an example for other hunters by being law-abiding and ethical both in and out of the field. The future of hunting depends on it.

2) **Getting Hunter Education Certified!**

****North Carolina Hunting License Requirements****

It is important to note that beginning age 16, individuals are required to successfully complete a hunter education course prior to obtaining a hunting license in North Carolina There is no minimum age requirement to take the hunter education course.

To schedule a FREE hunter education course or for information regarding exemptions to having a hunting license in North Carolina access the following link:

<http://www.ncwildlife.org/Hunting/LearnResources/HunterEducation.aspx>

Additional information regarding license exemptions can be viewed via a copy of the *North Carolina Inland Fishing, Hunting, and Trapping Regulations Digest*. The following link will allow you to access a copy of the current regulations digest:

<http://www.ncwildlife.org/Licensing/Regulations.aspx>

3) Getting Started Hunting!

Fortunately, you can begin gaining valuable information about getting started by visiting “*Getting Started Hunting*” provided by the Hunting Heritage Program of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

Getting Started Hunting was designed for new or experienced hunters and contains information about basic equipment needs and hunting methods for a variety of North Carolina game species. Information on wild game recovery, field dressing, transporting, preparing game for the table, and recipe information is also included. Whether under the guidance of a hunting mentor or not, Getting Started Hunting is intended to provide insight and guidance for those interested in hunting and can be accessed through the following link: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/Portals/0/Hunting/Documents/GettingStartedHunting.pdf>

