

2015 HUNTING GUIDE | OUTFITTING

# Which weapon to use?

Depending on where you're hunting, the weapon of choice can vary greatly. Hunters find different success levels with bows and rifles, and certain areas seem to be better suited for certain weapons.

Findings from the latest QDMA Whitetail Report identified the states with the highest percentage of deer harvests with bows, rifle/shotguns and muzzle-loaders. To boil it down simply: Rifles and shotguns are more popular in the South, while bow hunting remains a very popular alternative in the Northeast. Looking at nationwide statistics, firearm (rifle/shotgun) hunters took 65 percent of all deer, bows took 21 percent and muzzleloader hunters took 12 percent of the total deer harvest.

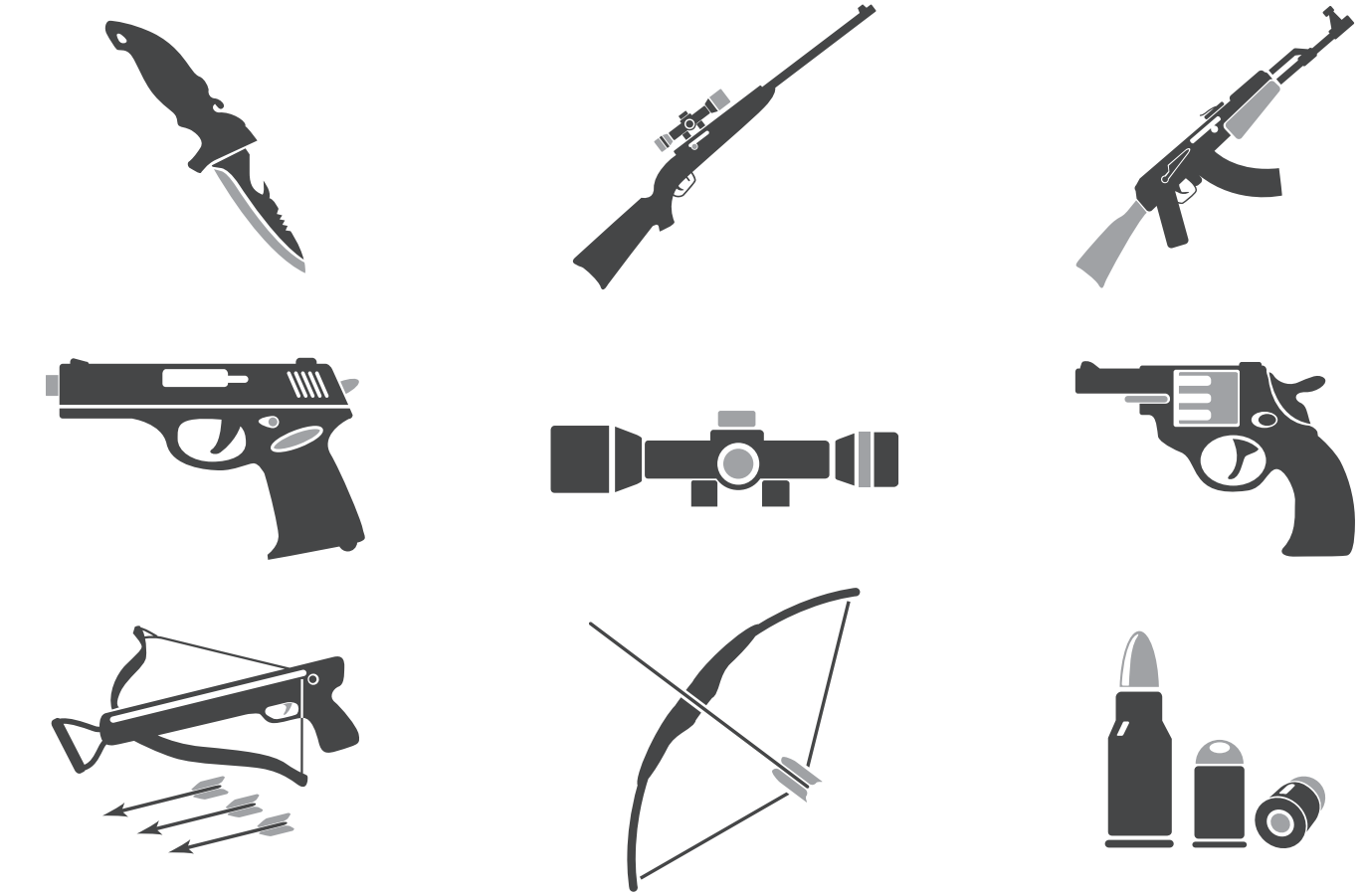
"More hunters take advantage of bows and muzzleloaders today, and that's great for the future of hunting. More seasons to go afield helps even 'occasional' hunters stay engaged, and it greatly enhances the opportunities to mentor youth and new hunters," the report notes. "Finally, expanded opportunities help retain aging hunters, and every hunter is critically important to our wildlife management system."

**RIFLE/SHOTGUNS**

According to the report, the top five states for rifle/shotgun hunting based on percentage of harvest is South Carolina (89 percent), Maine (87 percent), Alabama (86 percent), Minnesota (85 percent) and South Dakota (85 percent). Firearms obviously remain the prevalent weapon of choice for hunters, but other options are gaining ground.

**BOW HUNTERS**

For bow hunters, the northeast



proved the most popular hunting grounds. The top states for bow hunting success include New Jersey (56 percent), Ohio (45 percent), Massachusetts (43 percent), Illinois (39 percent) and Rhode Island (37 percent).

It's interesting to note bow hunters

in New Jersey actually outnumbered the percentage of hunters with firearms, the only nation in the state that can make that claim.

**MUZZLELOADERS**

Data surrounding interest and suc-

cess in using muzzleloaders varied across the nation, making for an interesting mix. The report found Rhode Island (39 percent) led the top five, followed by Tennessee (24 percent), Massachusetts (22 percent), Mississippi (22 percent) and Pennsylvania (22 percent).

## GFP News - September 10, 2015

**HUNTERS, ANGLERS AND TRAPPERS CAN NOW CARRY LICENSES ON THEIR SMARTPHONE DEVICES**

PIERRE, S.D. - Hunters, anglers and trappers in South Dakota will notice now when logging into their account through the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks' (GFP) online licensing system that their small game, fishing or trapping license has a bar code in the upper right hand corner. This bar code allows GFP conservation officers to electronically scan the license on smartphone devices (Android, iPhone, etc.) while in the field in lieu of a paper copy.

Before heading into the field this fall, hunters, anglers and trappers can

log into their GFP account from their device to view their small game, fishing or trapping license and take a picture or screenshot of it with their device (Android, iPhone, etc.).

This electronic version is an acceptable method of carrying a small game, fishing or trapping license. If hunter, anglers or trappers choose to print and carry a paper copy of their small game, fishing or trapping license, that continues to be an allowed practice.

This does not apply to federal waterfowl stamps, tags and licenses mailed

from the GFP licensing office.

As technology evolves, GFP is committed to actively engaging with hunters, anglers and trappers across the state to provide them with the digital services that make it easier to do business with us.

For more information, please visit <http://gfp.sd.gov/licenses/general-hunt-fish/digitallicense.aspx>. - See more at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/news/news/september/10.aspx#sthash.Wv7dKia2.dpuf>

**2015 PHEASANT BROOD SURVEY IN-**

**DICATES PHEASANT NUMBERS ARE UP 42 PERCENT**

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has completed the annual pheasant brood survey and the results show a 42 percent increase in the statewide pheasants-per-mile (PPM) index from 2014.

The 2015 statewide PPM index of 3.80 is up from 2.68 last year and 1.52 in 2013. The statewide PPM index is similar to 2011 when hunters harvested 1.56 million roosters.

"The favorable winter and spring weather conditions

for the second consecutive year contributed strongly to another large increase in pheasants-per-mile," stated Kelly Hepler, GFP Secretary. "This year's population index is more than double the 2013 level when hunters harvested just under one million pheasants. Although the index continues to lag behind the 10-year average due to the extremely high counts from 2005 through 2010, a second straight year of substantial gains in the index is great news for our hunting community."

From late July through mid-August, GFP surveyed 109, thirty-mile routes across the state to estimate pheasant production and calculate the PPM index. The survey is not a population estimate, but rather compares the number of pheasants observed on the routes and establishes trend information. Survey routes are grouped into 13 areas, based on a local city, and the index value of each local city

area is then compared to index values of the previous year and the 10-year average.

Survey results indicate that pheasant numbers will again be highest along the Missouri River corridor in the broad regions around Winner, Chamberlain, Pierre and Mobridge. Great pheasant abundance also exists in the James River Valley in the regions near Mitchell, Huron and Aberdeen. Fewer pheasants will be available farther east in the I-29 corridor, but ample opportunity for quality hunts still exist. Great populations of pheasants occur in western South Dakota where favorable habitat exists.

"Habitat continues to be at the forefront of the conversation and is a crucial factor in pheasant numbers," stated Hepler. "Bird numbers are higher in parts of the state where quality habitat conditions still ex-

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