



INTRODUCTION TO HUNTING WITH FIREARMS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Photo: Sven Homburg

INTRODUCTION III

LESSON 1 - HUNTING IN QUÉBEC 1

Subsistence hunting 1
Commercial hunting 2
Recreational hunting 2
Hunting: A safe activity 2
Social impact 2
Economic impact 3

LESSON 2 - WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE DEVELOPMENT 4

Conservation / A concept to understand 5
Habitat / Essential needs of wildlife 5
Wildlife stakeholders / Management organizations 6
Wildlife stakeholders / The main foundations 7
Financing / The reinvestment programs 7
Hunting territories / Where to hunt in Québec 7

LESSON 3 - HUNTERS AND THE LAW 10

Legal dispositions 10
Private property 12
Game that may be hunted 12
Lesson on regulations 13

LESSON 4 - HUNTER'S ETHICS 21

A matter of responsibility 21
Code of conduct 22
Relations with landowners 23
The forest is shared by all 23

LESSON 5 - HUNTING WITH AN AIR RIFLE AND WITH A MUZZLELOADER 24

Hunting with an air rifle 24
Regulatory requirements 25
Projectiles 26
Vital areas and effective range 27
Sighting aids 27
Servicing 28
Security rules 28
Hunting with a muzzleloader 29
Safety rules 33
Servicing and storage 33

LESSON 6 - ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT / MAIN HUNTED SPECIES IN QUÉBEC 35

Ecology / Major disturbance factors 36
Management / Main hunted species 36
Moose 37
White-tailed deer 39
Black bear 41
Wild turkey 42
Small game 44
Other small game species hunted in Québec 48

LESSON 7 - HUNTING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES 51

Scouting 52
Approach / Attract / Intercept 52
Shooting big game 55

LESSON 8 - SEARCHING / WOUNDED BIG GAME 58

LESSON 9 - FIELD CARE FOR BAGGED GAME 61

LESSON 10 - FOREST SURVIVAL / PREVENTION AND FIRST AID 63

Forest survival 63
Prevention and first aid 65

LESSON 11 - BOAT SAFETY WHILE HUNTING 68

LESSON 12 - CONCLUSION / A RESPONSIBLE HUNTER 70

Hyperlinks

Click on an expression in yellow to access a website containing additional information on the subject covered.



Click on this symbol to access a video containing essential elements for the course.

Cover photography: **Den Belitsky**, iStockPhoto

Script - Still frame images from videos:

JEANBOUTIN.COM

Cover idea/concept - Graphic illustrations - Formatting:

Benoit Tremblay

INTRO

INTRODUCTION

This course, which is part of the **Programme d'éducation en sécurité et en conservation de la faune** known as **PESCOF**, is made possible through a partnership agreement between the Government of Québec and the **Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs** through its educational subsidiary **Sécurité nature**.



Québec 



SÉCURITÉ NATURE

L'action éducative de la Fédération québécoise
des chasseurs et pêcheurs

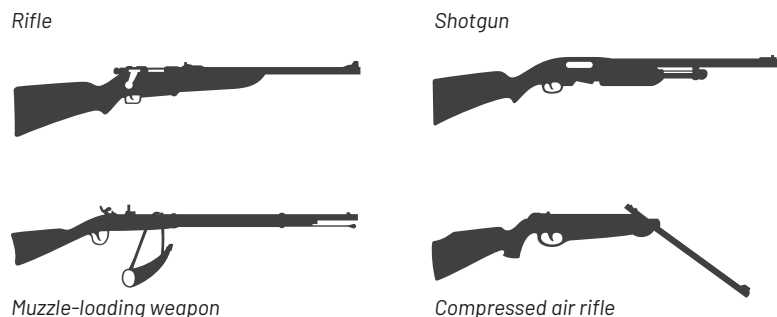
Picture 0.1 Partnership

This course is intended for aspiring hunters taking the mandatory training leading to obtaining the code "F" of the hunter's certificate.



Picture 0.2 Hunter's certificate

The code "F" allows you to hunt with a firearm such as a rifle, a shotgun, a muzzle-loading weapon and also with a compressed air rifle.



Picture 0.3 Code "F" authorized firearms

The manual is an essential complement to the online course. Also, you will always be able to review any future updates by accessing the [Fédécip website](#).

This hunting course aims to make you become a safe, responsible and respectful hunter. It will allow you to gain knowledge on wildlife and on different aspects related to hunting and hunting gear.

To obtain your certificate coded "F", you must have completed the **"Introduction to Hunting with a Firearm"** course.

For each lesson, you'll need to pass a knowledge test to access the next lesson. If you don't pass the test, you have to review the lesson and take the test again.

You have to pass the test for each lesson to obtain your hunter's certificate that you will be receiving by mail about four weeks later.

The hunter's certificate is permanent but new conditions may be applied to the codification in the future.

The certificate may be suspended or cancelled by court order if you are convicted of a major offence while hunting, under the **Act respecting the Conservation and Development of Wildlife**.

The hunter's certificate allows you to purchase the appropriate licence for the hunted species.



Picture 0.4 Moose hunting permit

This card remains the property of the Government of Québec and you are required to notify the Wildlife Department of any change of address.

You will find on the certificate the phone number of the **SOS Poaching**. It is your duty as a citizen to report a person who commits a poaching act by simply calling that number. The information collected will be treated confidentially by the game warden.



Picture 0.5 Hunter's certificate - Back

A photograph of a deer in a forest, partially obscured by a yellow diamond-shaped graphic. The deer is in the lower left, facing left, in a grassy clearing. The background is a dense forest of tall trees. A large yellow diamond with a black border is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text 'LESSON 1'.

LESSON

1

HUNTING IN QUÉBEC

The evolution of hunting in Québec is done in three phases. In the beginning, the population hunts for **subsistence** that transforms itself over time into **commercial hunting** and finally into **recreational hunting**.

SUBSISTENCE HUNTING

The first settlers are looking to find animal proteins to feed themselves. Subsequently, early European explorers have very few domestic animals and wild animals are in great abundance in the wild, around them.

The population is small, scattered and equipped with weapons that are not very efficient for an abundant harvest. The impact of this hunt does not have any major consequences for the wildlife herd.

COMMERCIAL HUNTING

Over time, settlers become sedentary, while agricultural and industrial development intensifies and the population grows. People are no longer able to procure these famous animal proteins from game themselves.

There is then, the emergence of commercial hunting carried out by professionals, equipped with more efficient weapons that allow them to harvest game in large quantities.

These hunters sell or exchange the game they hunt all year round. This puts significant pressure on Québec's wildlife populations.

Many species such as the woodland caribou, the beaver and the snow goose experienced a great decline. The Labrador duck and the passenger pigeon became extinct.

Commercial hunting then became a threat to wildlife conservation, the reason being that no catch limits were ever imposed to these hunters.

RECREATIONAL HUNTING

Following the decline of some wildlife populations some conscientious hunters sound the alarm and urging governments to take some protective measures.

The agriculture industry now completely fills the needs for animal proteins.

The concept of wildlife conservation has been progressively developed through the action of these new recreational hunters.

HUNTING: A SAFE ACTIVITY

Since 1972, in Québec, the implementation of mandatory hunting courses has significantly reduced the number of hunting accidents. As of today there are almost no more hunting accidents. In recent years, annually **less than one accident per 100,000 hunters that has been reported.**

Nowadays, hunting can undeniably be considered a very safe activity. In fact, you are less likely to be injured while hunting than you are to be injured while practising activities such as snowmobiling, soccer or football.



Picture 1.1 Hunting: A safe activity!

The hunting courses offered are useful in allowing the development of safe, responsible and respectful behaviours by hunters towards other users, landowners, wildlife and the natural environment. Since 1972, more than 1.5 million hunter certificates have been issued in Québec.

Responsible practice and compliance with regulations ensure the sustainability of hunting. **Women make up almost 30% of all the new hunters.**

SOCIAL IMPACT

Hunting is all about enjoying the great outdoors and good times with friends and family. It's a way to share a common passion and leave your worries and routine behind. It's also a great opportunity to pass on knowledge and share past adventures.

Each year, an average of 18,000 new hunters develop a special connection with nature. Hunting is a way of reconnecting with nature that teaches us the importance of preserving natural habitats and developing wildlife harvesting activities.

Through the art of hunting, we come to understand the need to develop our wildlife resources and introduce youth to this age-old tradition. Unforgettable memories encourage young people to hunt in an environmentally responsible way.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Hunting is an important economic activity in all regions of Québec. It's an industry that contributes to the collective wealth of all Quebecers. Managed responsibly, hunting is a way of developing Québec's rich wildlife resources.

Hunters spend 500 million dollars each year which supports hundreds of businesses in Québec.

Without hunters, certain wildlife populations would become overabundant. This would require costly government control measures, for example to protect certain crops or keep Québec's roads safe for driving.

Hunters also play an important role in protecting the environment. Their efforts to preserve wildlife and manage natural habitats are a big plus for Québec.

Volunteer initiatives by hunters also contribute to the wealth of many communities throughout the province. Their valuable work generates economic benefits for all Quebecers.



Before going any further, watch these videos

SOCIAL IMPACT

ECONOMIC IMPACT

LESSON

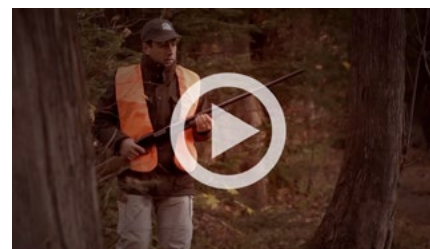
2

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND WILDLIFE DEVELOPMENT

Hunters have greatly contributed to the development of positive attitudes towards wildlife conservation and respect of the environment.

Let us not forget that wildlife in Québec is a collective resource and each generation must exercise a judicious management of this exceptional collective wealth.

Thus, the preservation of natural and viable populations of wild animals always takes priority over its exploitation.



Before going any further, watch the video
WHY HUNT - AÏSSA'S STORY

CONSERVATION / A CONCEPT TO UNDERSTAND

From a contemporary and biological point of view, wildlife conservation allows both the **protection** and **sustainable exploitation** of the wildlife resource.

WE USE IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY MANAGEMENT TOOLS SUCH AS INVENTORIES, HARVEST STATISTICS, RESEARCH PROJECTS, REGULATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE US WITH ESTABLISHING USEFUL LONG-TERM PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES.

Scientific research provides us with the basic knowledge about the targeted species, such as their habitat, their feeding habits and their reproduction.

The population monitoring indices make it possible to follow the fluctuations of certain species over time. These useful indices are based on a variety of data sources, such as **harvest statistics**, **wildlife population inventories**, and **different surveys involving hunters**.

All this gathered information is used to develop helpful **management plans** that define the objectives pursued for a specific species or group of species, as well as the means to be put in place to achieve them.

Management plans specify the conditions under which a species is harvested in order to optimize its development. They aim to offer a prized hunt.

They also include in their strategic plan, courses of action that have to be taken to respond to other issues related to wildlife, such as **disease control**, **problems of cohabitation** or the **development of the next generation of hunters**.

Applying the principle of wildlife conservation, we avoid harvesting more animals than wildlife populations produce and habitats support. Québec hunters are familiar with this principle expressed in a popular formula: **Collect only the interests, without touching the capital**. When applying this strategy, then the results will be a **balance between exploitation and protection of wildlife**.

Preservation is an extreme measure of protection of a **natural environment**, a **habitat** or of the **wildlife population**. It is a management tool that ensures the complete protection of a wildlife species, a habitat, or an ecosystem.



Picture 2.1 Measure of protection of a natural environment

HABITAT / ESSENTIAL NEEDS OF WILDLIFE

Animals need a specific habitat with sufficient quantity and good quality food, water, space and shelter to survive, reproduce and grow healthy and this throughout the year.

The carrying capacity of a habitat is generally defined as the number of individuals of a species that its habitat can maintain in a long-term sustainable way.

A habitat cannot meet the vital needs of an unlimited number of animals.

In the absence of hunting on a given territory, an animal population tends to increase until it reaches or even exceeds the carrying capacity of the habitat. When the natural regulating factors do not prevent this overpopulation. Then, there is a degradation of the ecosystem.

This situation can lead to a significant decline in herds because there is not enough food to support the needs of all the individuals especially in winter. In the case of animal overpopulation, wild animals cause extensive **damage to private land**, more **road accidents** and **great agricultural losses**.

In the presence of hunting, an animal population rarely exceeds the capacity of its habitat to support their viability.

This is why hunting is a management tool that promotes the maintenance of a balance between animal populations and their habitats.

Wildlife management policies are devised to make sure that hunting continues, while ensuring that no game is at risk of being overexploited by hunters. They help prevent overpopulation and maintain a good balance while harvesting game.

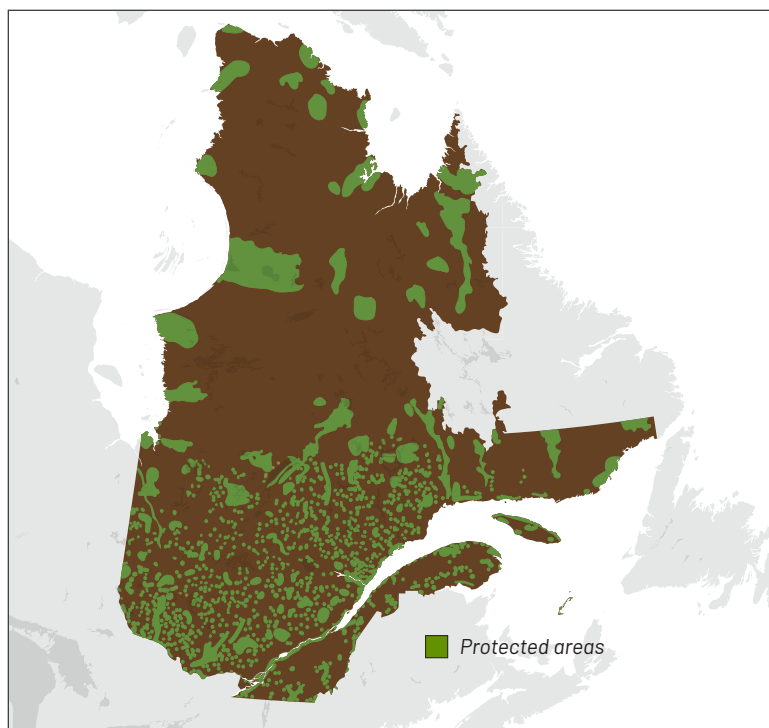
WILDLIFE STAKEHOLDERS / MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

The maintenance, improvement and exploitation of Québec's wildlife resources depend on governmental and non-governmental stakeholders grouped around the **National Wildlife Table** and the **Regional Wildlife Tables**.

Their mission is to ensure the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and its habitat, taking into account the sustainable and harmonious development of the cultural, social and economic aspects of Québec.

The Government of Québec is the primary manager of its provincial wildlife.

In 2020, Québec has a network of protected areas that encompasses close to **4,900 sites** covering nearly **11% of its provincial surface**.



Picture 2.2 Protected areas

The Québec government's Wildlife and Parks sector is pursuing two major essential mandates.

- **The Parks' main mandate** is to plan and develop the Québec National Park system, as well as to supervise their management.
- **The Wildlife sector's** main mandate is to ensure the conservation, the protection and the enhancement of wildlife and its habitats.

The primary role of **wildlife protection officers** is to protect, educate and prevent while at the same time to enforce wildlife regulations. The management of the conservation and development of wildlife and natural habitats is carried out by biologists, technicians and other professionals.

It is also possible to find on the **government website** all the available regulations as well as a large quantity of information and publications of wildlife interest.

Another government agency: **Sépaq** (Société des établissements de plein air du Québec), has the mandate to administer, operate and enhance specific public lands and tourism facilities entrusted to its management for the sake of all the outdoor users. Sépaq is also the organization responsible for managing all the draws relative to of big game exploitation in the province of Québec.

On the federal side, the government's responsibilities include the protection and management of migratory birds, species at risk and important habitats to be protected. Over the years, consultation tables have been set up to ensure the sustainability of migratory birds.

Several non-governmental organizations are part of the National Wildlife Table and the Regional Wildlife Tables.

- **Fédération québécoise des gestionnaires de zecs**
- **Fédération des pourvoiries du Québec**
- **Fédération des Trappeurs Gestionnaires du Québec**
- **Fédération québécoise pour le saumon atlantique**
- **Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs**

All these partners have an important advisory role with the Minister or his regional representatives for wildlife management.

The federal and provincial governments have the obligation to consult and accommodate Aboriginal communities, such as the **Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador Sustainable Development Institute**, on wildlife issues that affect them.

WILDLIFE STAKEHOLDERS / THE MAIN FOUNDATIONS

There are also several charitable organizations that fund projects for the improvement, the restoration and the protection of habitats conducive to beneficial wildlife development, such as:

- **Fondation de la faune du Québec**
- **Wildlife Habitat Canada**
- **Duck's unlimited Canada**
- **Héritage Faune**
(the foundation of the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs)

The **FédéCP** plays a leading role and offers a multitude of services to Québec hunters and fishermen.

FINANCING / THE REINVESTMENT PROGRAMS

All hunters, fishermen and trappers are contributing directly to the funding of certain essential wildlife programs.

Part of the money from hunting, fishing and trapping licences goes directly to the **Fondation de la faune du Québec** and the **Québec Government Wildlife Reinvestment Program**. This being the most direct contributions from the main users.

In the case of migratory bird hunting, the money from the **conservation stamps** is collected by the federal government when purchasing this specific hunting licence. This money is given to **Wildlife Habitat Canada**. It is used for habitat management and programs to promote new waterfowl hunters.

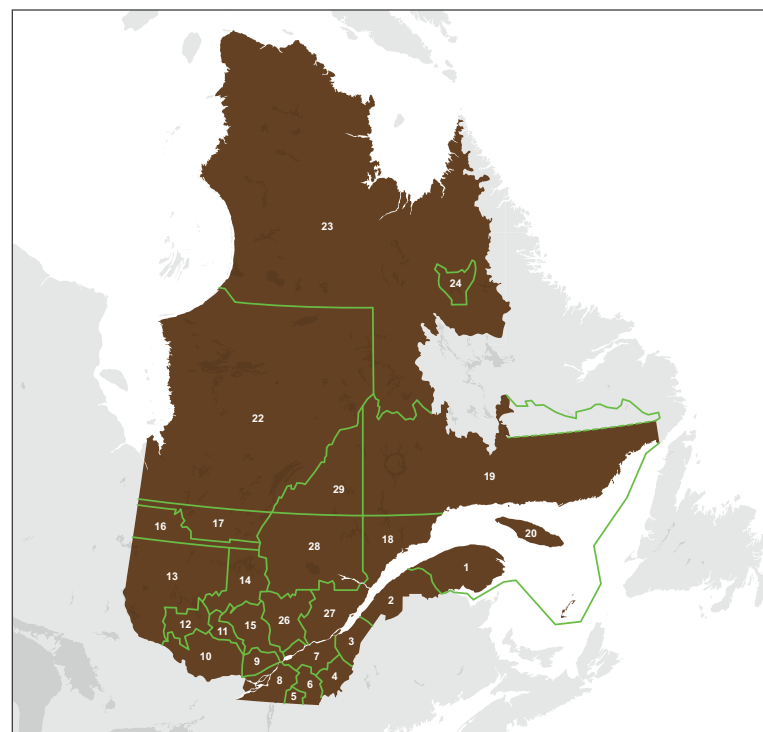
HUNTING TERRITORIES / WHERE TO HUNT IN QUÉBEC

The hunting territories are **free public land, structured wildlife territories, private lands, territory covered by agreements with the First Nations of Québec** and **federal reserves**.

They are distinguished by their management as well as their accessibility and operation. The majority of hunting takes place in **free public land**.

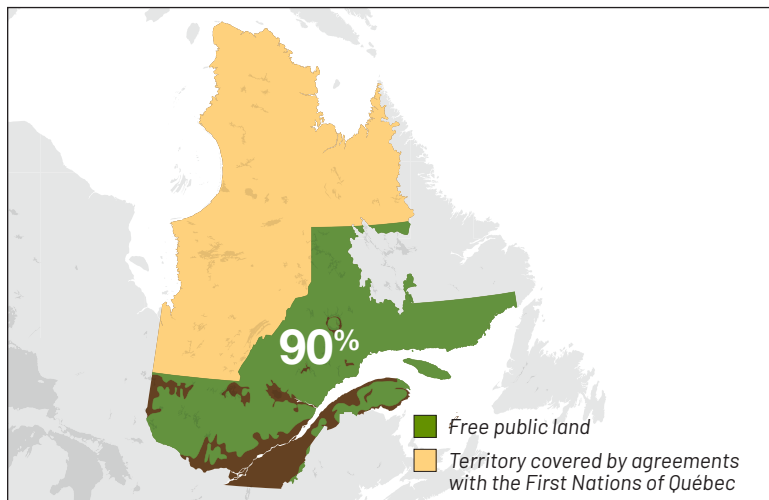
Guides and outfitters without exclusive rights may also offer their services throughout these specified territories.

The province of Québec is divided into **28 hunting zones**. Some of these zones are subdivided in order to apply specific rules according to a species.



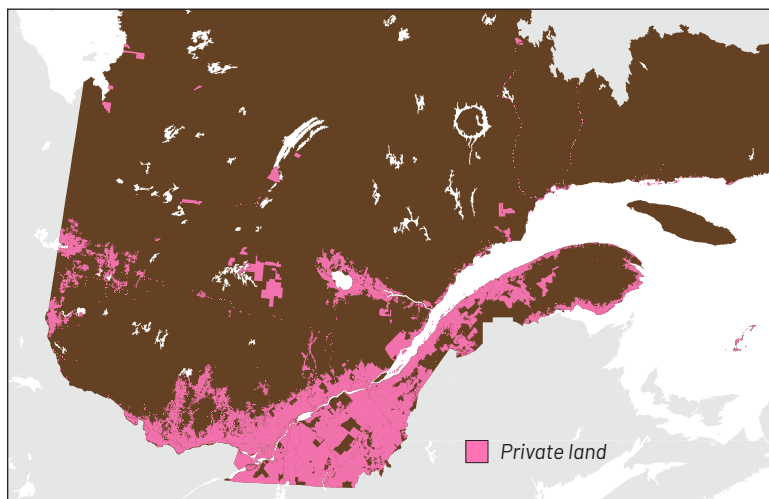
Picture 2.3 Hunting zones in Québec

90% of the land, south of the territory covered by agreements, are **free public lands** accessible to all hunters.



Picture 2.4 Free public lands

The private land surface occupies nearly 8% of the Québec territory, totalling nearly 117,000 km², located in the St. Lawrence Lowlands, the Gaspé Peninsula, the Lac Saint-Jean region and also in Abitibi.

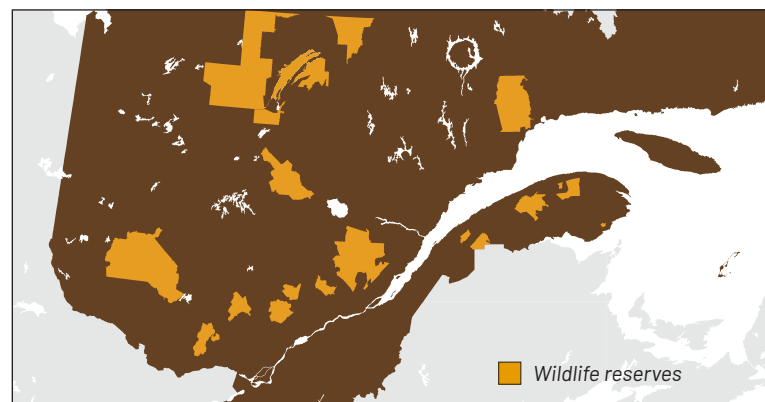


Picture 2.5 Private land

Before hunting, make sure you know what type of territory it is.

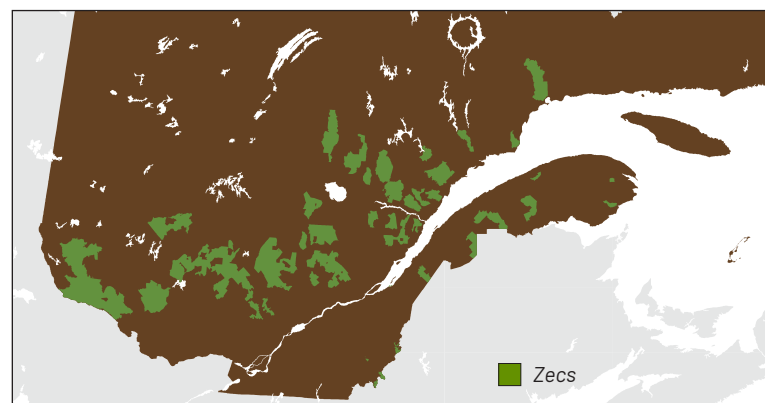
There are also **three types of structured territories** where hunting is permitted under specific conditions.

1. We find in the province of Québec, 17 hunting **wildlife reserves** totalling nearly 67,000 km² that offer activities and commercial services that are provided by the **Sepaq**.



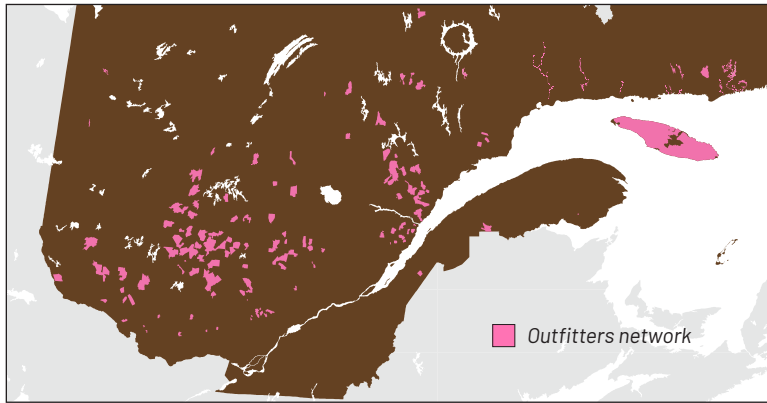
Picture 2.6 Wildlife reserves

2. There are also 64 hunting **Zecs** totalling nearly 48,000 km², including a specific one for waterfowl which is located in Montmagny. Management of the Zecs is entrusted to non-profit associations through a memorandum of understanding.



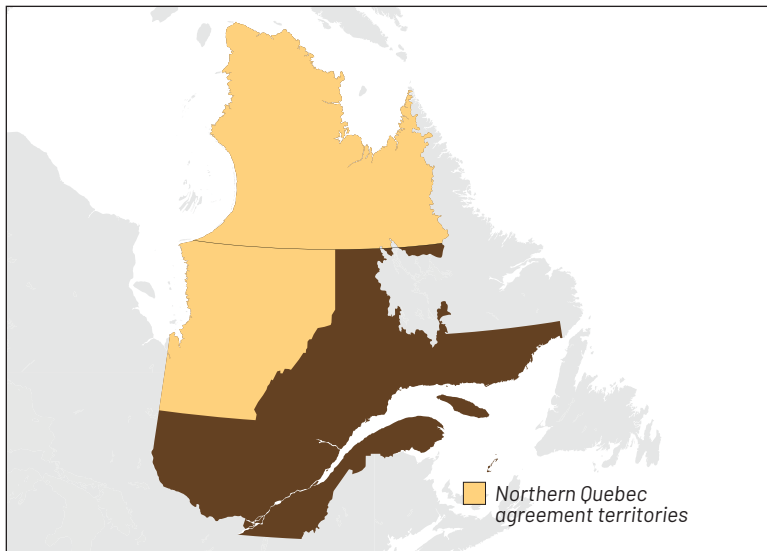
Picture 2.7 Zecs

3. The outfitters network includes more than 600 profitable companies, 30% of which are outfitters with exclusive rights totalling nearly 20,000 km² of Québec territory.



Picture 2.8 Outfitters network

Furthermore, **the northern Québec agreement territories** are subdivided into three categories, as specified in James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement signed between the government and the representatives of certain Aboriginal nations.



Picture 2.9 Northern Québec agreement territories

Hunting is permitted on Category I and II lands. In addition to the required hunting permit, authorization must be obtained from the appropriate Aboriginal authorities, namely the **Cree, Inuit** or **Naskapi** authorities.

Migratory Bird Sanctuaries and National Wildlife Areas are managed by the federal government. For example, nearby the city of Québec, supervised waterfowl hunting activities are offered in the **Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area**.



Before going any further, watch the video
BOISÉ HÉRITAGE FAUNE



LESSON

3

HUNTERS AND THE LAW

LEGAL DISPOSITIONS

In Québec, **the Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife** gives the government the power to **manage wildlife resources**.

The purpose of this Act is to ensure the sustainability of species and habitats and to promote their use. It aims to supervise harvesting activities, while allowing everyone to access wildlife in their natural habitat.

Wildlife protection officers are mandated to enforce the laws and the regulations governing the protection and use of the wildlife resource.

The Act defines the categories of territory, specifies the conditions for carrying out wildlife activities, establishes categories of permits and sets the regulatory framework.

All of this in a way that is fair to the various wildlife users. The rules are periodically revised to adjust the standards to the actual situation of wildlife species and their users, as wildlife populations and their habitats are constantly evolving in our ever-changing world.

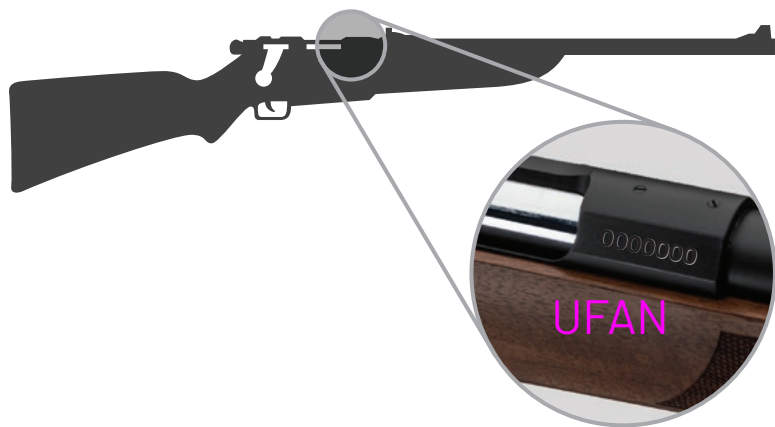
The hunter therefore has the responsibility, before undertaking an excursion, to inform himself to know the specific rules that apply to the period, the places and the hunting activity he practises.

ACCORDING TO FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL LAWS, ANY WEAPON, ANY PART OF A WEAPON, OR ANY OBJECT THAT COULD BE MODIFIED AND SUSCEPTIBLE WITH A BARREL, TO FIRE LEAD PELLETS OR NON-LEAD SHOT, BULLETS OR ANY OTHER PROJECTILE THAT COULD INFLICT SERIOUS BODILY HARM OR DEATH TO A PERSON IS CONSIDERED A FIREARM.

In addition you should take into account the fact that you have the obligation to report anyone who behaves unsafely with any type of firearm.

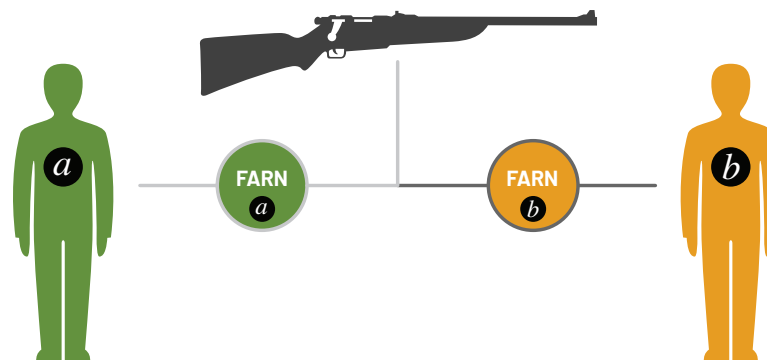
As a general rule, all non-restricted firearms must be registered through the **Québec Firearms Registration Service** (SIAF).

The **unique firearm number** (UFAN) is either the serial number of the firearm when this number is unique, or a number generated by the Québec Firearms Registration Service. The **UFAN** must be **clearly** and **indelibly** marked on the firearm.



Picture 3.1 Unique firearm number (UFAN)

The **firearm registration number** (FARN) is the only direct link between the firearm and its owner; it will change during a transfer of ownership.



Picture 3.2 Numéro d'immatriculation d'arme à feu

You must notify the Minister through the **SIAF** if you do change your address or if you change the permanent storage location of the firearms.

You must also notify the **SIAF** immediately, when transferring ownership of a firearm, whether it is a sale or a donation.

Fines of up to \$5,000 are provided for a person who does not have a unique firearm number (UFAN), has not declared a change of address or has not transferred ownership of a firearm.

Provincial law generally prohibits the possession of a firearm on the premises of a designated institution such as educational institutions or child care services. These premises include the grounds of the institution they have the use of and all of the structures that stand on these grounds.

It is also generally forbidden to carry a firearm using public transportation or school transportation, but you are allowed to use a taxi.



Picture 3.3 Public transportation

In case that you are using a chartered transportation, or that you need to take a public transportation such as a ferry, your gun must be unloaded and rendered inoperative by the use of a secure locking device or by removing the bolt.



Picture 3.4 Carrying firearms

In addition, the weapon must be stored in an opaque container that is securely locked and designed in such a way that it cannot be easily forced open. **The ammunition must be safely stored in a separate container.**

The Cities and Towns Act allows municipal officials to regulate and prevent bow shooting in accordance with the right to peace and public safety under nuisance and safety bylaws.

The hunter must therefore know and comply with the regulations at all times.

PRIVATE PROPERTY

In Québec, the owner of private land does not own the wildlife found there. He may, however, rightfully prohibit access or crossing of a person on his property. This allows him to evict any intruders and call the police to enforce his rights.

If you want to hunt on private property, you must absolutely obtain written or verbal permission from the owner before freely accessing his land.

There is also a very useful **owner-hunter agreement** form available on the **FédéCP website**.

GAME THAT MAY BE HUNTED

Several species of game may be hunted in Québec. Depending on the species of interest, different types of hunting gear are allowed.

If you hold the required permits, you can use a firearm, a bow, or a crossbow to hunt moose, white-tailed deer, black bear, wild turkey and small game.

It is permitted to hunt migratory birds with a bow or a shotgun that can hold up to a maximum of three cartridges.

*On the other hand, be advised that the use of **non-toxic or lead-free** shot is mandatory to hunt waterfowl and mourning doves and don't forget also in the case of small game if you hunt them in the national wildlife reserves.*

You may have serious penalties if you have in your possession some cartridges containing lead shot while hunting any of these types of game.

It is permitted to hunt cottontail rabbits and hares with snares.

You can also hunt the bullfrog, the green frog and the leopard frog with your bare hands, a knockout or stunner, a fence, a dart, a landing fishnet, a pit or a hook.

LESSON ON REGULATIONS



This course is part of the education program dealing with safety and wildlife conservation. It is addressed to aspiring hunters taking the courses required for obtaining the hunter's certificate.

In Québec to hunt with a firearm you need to get a **hunter's certificate**.

The code "F" on the back of the certificate gives you the right to hunt with a rifle, shotgun, muzzleloader or an air gun.



Picture 3.5 Hunter's certificate

To get the hunter's certificate, you need to take the courses **Canadian Firearms Safety** and **Introduction to Hunting with Firearms** and pass the exams.

With a hunter's certificate you can buy a licence for the species you'll be hunting. For the licence to be valid, it must be **signed** by the holder, and if there is a transport coupon **it must not be detached from the licence**.



Picture 3.6 Hunter's certificate and valid/signed transport coupon

The hunter must carry the hunting licence to be ready to show it to a wildlife protection officer or assistant upon request.

In wildlife reserves, outfitters with exclusive rights and some ZEC, it is possible to sign an agreement for sharing a big game licence. But make sure to look into it because sharing these licences is subject to certain conditions.

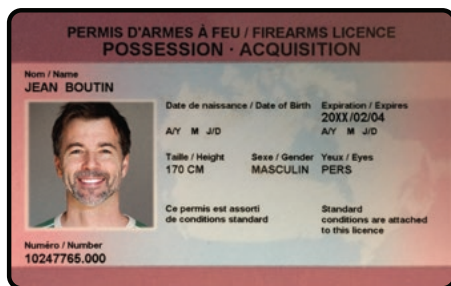
To hunt wild turkey, you must be in possession of a wild turkey hunting licence at all times.



Picture 3.7 Attestation pour la chasse au dindon sauvage

To hunt with a firearm, children from 12 to under 18 must be accompanied by an adult who has a code “F” hunter’s certificate.

Any hunters who do not hold a valid licence to own or buy a firearm must be under the direct and immediate supervision of an adult who does hold one.

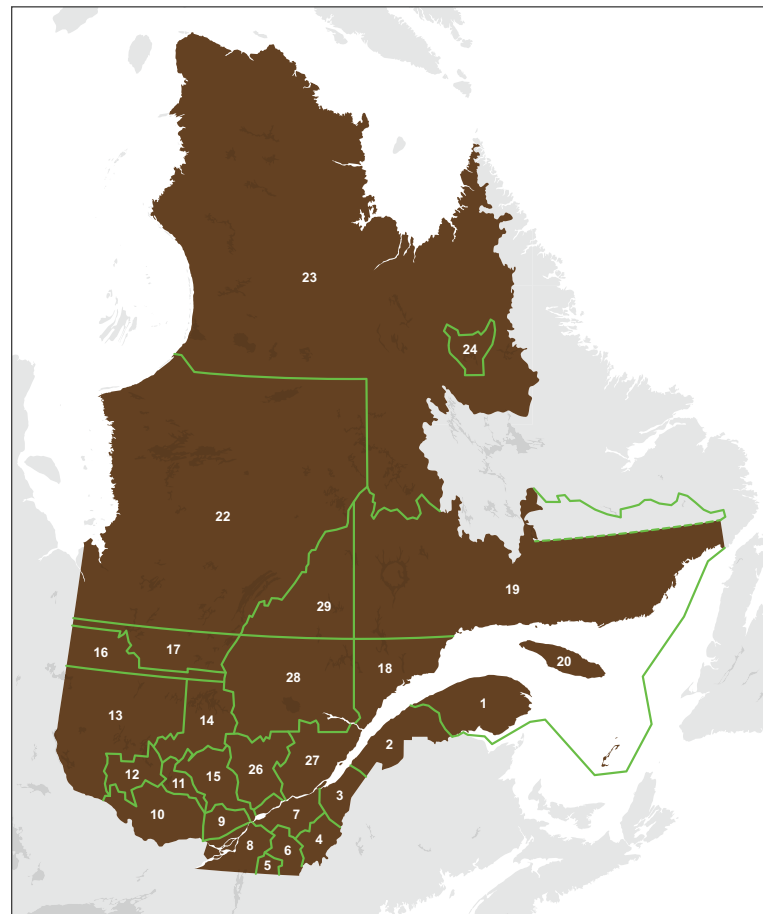


Picture 3.8 Firearms licence

Young people are allowed to hunt under the licence of an adult subject to certain restrictions. The same applies to students from 18 to 24 with a valid student card.

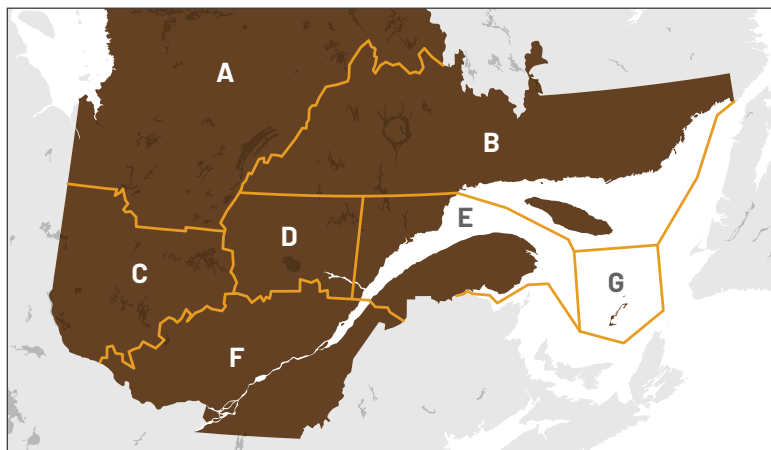
A person wishing to hunt under the licence of his or her spouse can do so only for small game hunting or snaring.

The Québec territory is divided into several hunting zones and subzones. Each zone is likely to have special rules that you'll need to know to hunt legally.



Picture 3.9 Hunting zones

Hunting migratory birds being under **federal jurisdiction**, visit the **federal government's website** to learn about the rules. But be aware that the Québec territory is divided into hunting districts for migratory birds.



Picture 3.10 Hunting districts for migratory birds

Everyone has the legal right to hunt.

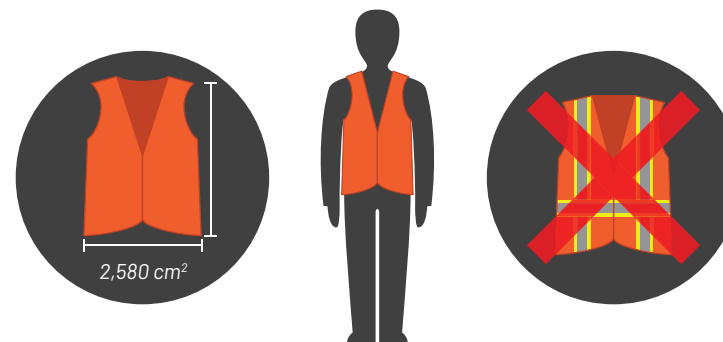
IT IS PROHIBITED TO KNOWINGLY HINDER A PERSON WHO PRACTISES A HUNTING ACTIVITY OR AN ACTIVITY IN PREPARATION FOR HUNTING.

But it's important to note that: hunting does not take precedence over other activities.

In Québec, a person is considered to be hunting if they pursue, chase, worry, stalk, mutilate, call, follow after or locate an animal or attempt to do so while in possession of an arm.

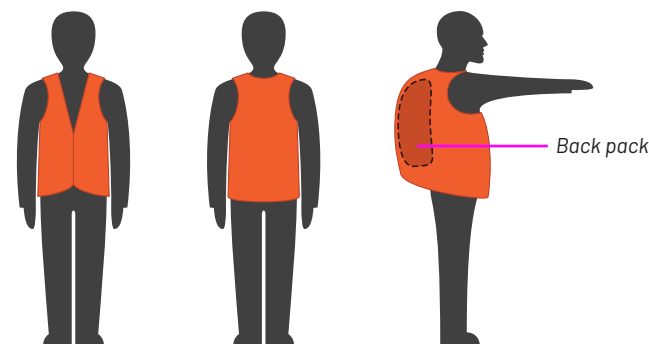
For your safety and that of others, **all hunters and anyone who accompanies them**, even if they are not hunting, must wear a fluorescent orange piece of clothing commonly called a "**safety vest**".

The hunter must make sure the vest has a continuous surface with no writing or pattern on it: **construction vests are prohibited**.



Picture 3.11 Fluorescent orange safety vest

Remember that your vest must remain visible at all times and from all angles, even when you carry a backpack.



Picture 3.12 Your vest must remain visible at all times

It is not compulsory to wear a safety vest to hunt wild turkey, American crow, rock pigeon or migratory birds. Nor is it compulsory to wear a safety vest for hunting fox, coyote or wolf from December 1 to the end of these hunting seasons.

In Québec, all mammals, birds, reptiles and wild amphibians, even exotic ones, whether free or in captivity, are regulated, so it's important to be well informed of the specific regulations in effect.

As a general rule, wearing a headset to amplify sounds is allowed. Electronic calls used to attract game are also allowed.

However, the use of electronic calls is prohibited for all migratory birds except snow geese.



Picture 3.13 Headset and electronic calls

It is also prohibited to hunt with a drone and/or to use a detection device alerting you to the presence of live game in real time. Night vision goggles are also prohibited.



Picture 3.14 Drone, live game detection device and night vision goggles

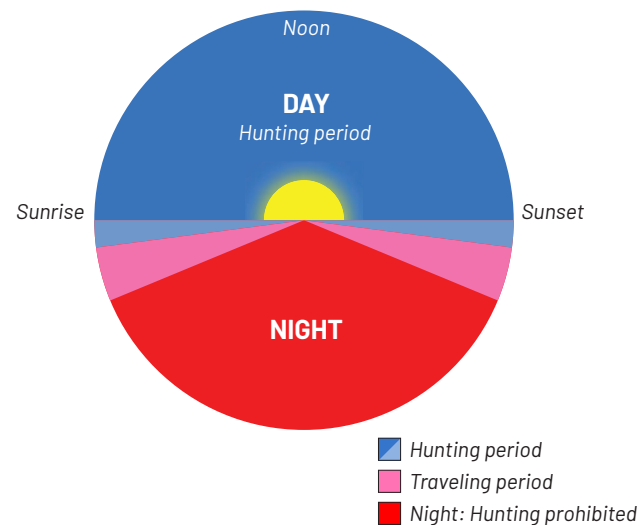
Compressed air rifles, with a velocity of at least **500 feet/second**, allowed for **small game hunting**.

However, you cannot use this type of arm for hunting coyote, wolf, woodchuck, red fox or migratory birds.

Refer to the "**Arms and hunting gear**" section of the Department's website for information on regulations specific to the type of hunting you want to do.

In Québec, you have the right to start hunting **30 minutes before sunrise** and to continue hunting until **30 minutes after sunset**.

However, you are can enter or leave your hunting area on foot with an arm that is not stored or loaded, **one hour before or after** the authorized hunting period.



Picture 3.15 Hunting period

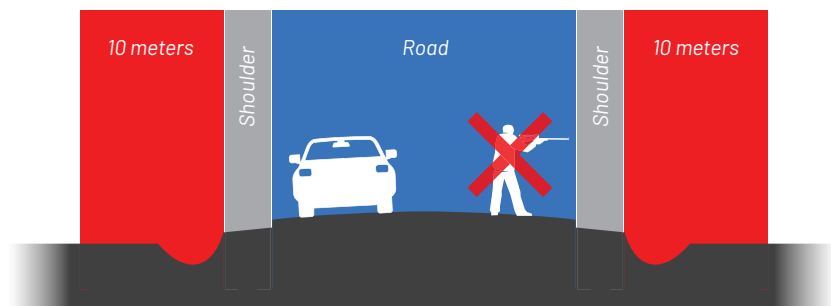
Be aware that if you travel by motor vehicles before or after the authorized hunting period, your arm must be unloaded and placed in a closed case.

Following the travelling period your arm must be stored according to the law. For example, at night if your arm is inside your vehicle, it should be stored in a closed case. It is prohibited to use a spotlight at night to detect animal presence.

At night, a person in possession of a spotlight and a firearm in a place frequented by the big game is, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, presumed to be night hunting.

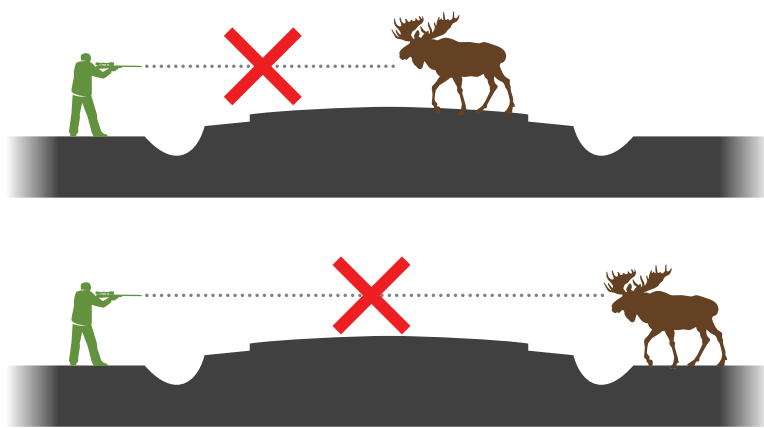
It is also prohibited to be in possession of a loaded firearm aboard a land vehicle, a trailer pulled by a vehicle or an aircraft.

In general, you are not allowed to fire at an animal from a public road, including the width of 10 metres from each outer side of the shoulder.



Picture 3.16 You are not allowed to fire at an animal from a public road

It is also prohibited to fire at an animal that is on a public road or to shoot across such a road.

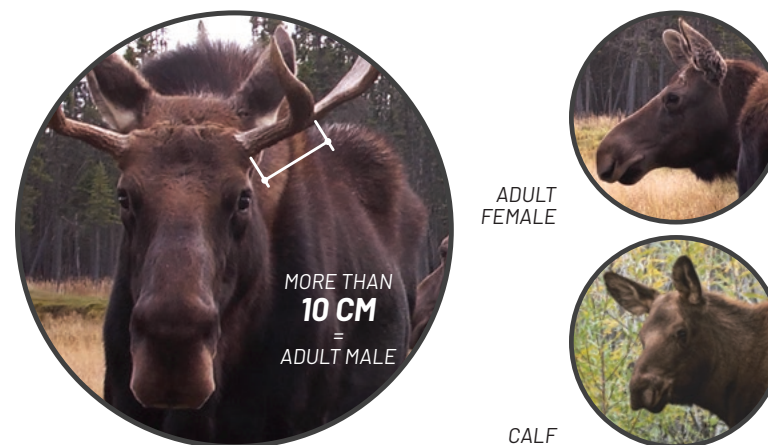


Picture 3.17 It is prohibited to fire at an animal that is on a public road

It is also prohibited to let a dog roam in a place frequented by the big game. You can, however, search for wounded or dead big game with a dog, but without carrying arms. Finally, you are allowed to hunt small game with dogs.

To hunt moose you must form an **expedition**, either a group of 2 or 3 hunters, depending on the type of territory. The hunting expedition ends when the moose is killed or when none of the people in your group have practised moose hunting for one day in this hunting area.

Antlers of **10 cm or more** is the only sure indicator that the animal is an **adult male**. If no antlers are apparent, it could be an adult female or a calf.



Picture 3.18 Reconnaître un orignal mâle adulte

Generally, the annual limit is **one moose per two hunters**, but in some ZEC, the limit may be one moose per three hunters.

For white-tailed deer, a hunter can harvest **2 deers per year**. On **Anticosti Island** (zone 20), there is no bag limit for white-tailed deer.

It is authorized to bait white-tailed deer from September 1st to November 30th; there is an exception for the use of salted substances, it is authorized year round.

In revenge, it is forbidden to use natural urine from cervids (moose urine is not included), taken from cervids in captivity or from wild cervids from Québec or from outside Québec, for hunting purposes.

For black bear, hunters are allowed to kill **2 per year**, but it is mandatory that the second be harvested in the fall. **Check which zones this is authorized in.**

A nutrient cannot be used as bait during certain periods. Get informed to know those periods.

NOTE THAT THE POSSESSION OF A BEAR GALLBLADDER DETACHED FROM THE CARCASS IS PROHIBITED AT ALL TIMES.

For wild turkey, the bag limit is **three bearded turkeys per hunter per year**.

IN SPRING

The holder of a spring hunting licence for wild turkey is authorized to harvest **two turkeys with a beard only**.

The second wild turkey has to be harvested only in the hunting zone where it is authorized, which means in the hunting zone 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

IN FALL

The holder of a fall hunting licence for wild turkey is authorized to harvest only **one specimen with a beard or without a beard** in the zone 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 (not in the zone 9).

In fall season, it is authorized to use a pointer dog or a flusher dog to hunt the wild turkey with or without a beard.

Some small game species are subject to bag and possession limits.

For ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, spruce grouse and grey partridge, the bag limit is **a total of 5 birds per day, regardless of species**. The possession limit is 15 birds.

For ptarmigan, the daily bag limit is **10 per day** and the possession limit is **30 birds**.

Before planning your hunting trip, check the rules by visiting the **Department's website**.

To learn bag and possession limits for migratory birds, check the **federal government's hunting regulations**.

Transportation coupons are directly on the licence. **As soon as the bagged animal is found, the coupon must be immediately attached to the animal.**

For moose, the same day the animal is killed, the hunter must ensure that the number of additional transportation coupons corresponding to the established limit is attached to the animal.

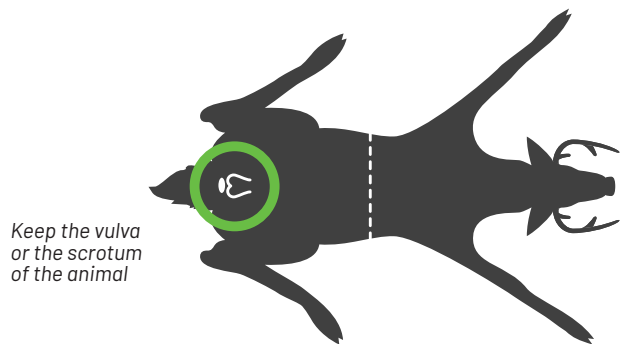


Picture 3.19 Transportation coupons

Once the big game or wild turkey is bagged, the hunter has **a maximum of 48 hours after leaving the hunting area to register the animal**. As a general rule, people register the animal whole and gutted.

When registering a moose cut in quarters, you must also present the whole head or the lower jaw, and, if the animal is male, the antlers attached to the skull or part of it.

You can register a white-tailed deer in two separate parts. For a female, the hind section must include the vulva. For a male, the hind section must include the scrotum.

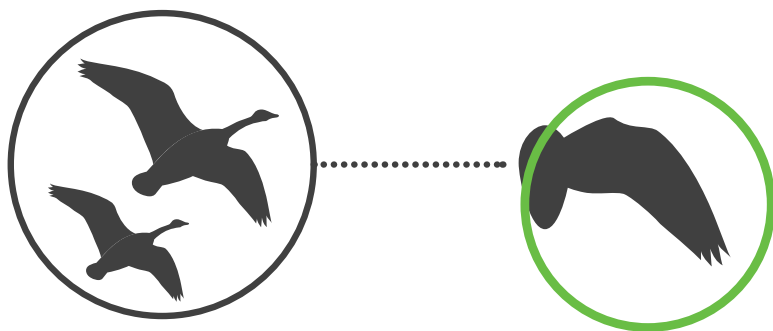


Picture 3.20 White-tailed deer in two separate parts

To register a black bear, you must present the animal's carcass or pelt.

For wild turkey, you must register it whole with all of its feathers whether gutted or not.

You do not have to register migratory birds, but during transportation, you must keep a wing intact with all of its feathers attached to the carcass of the bird to identify the species.



Picture 3.21 Transportation of migratory birds

The **list of registration stations** is available on the Department's website.

Several animals are reportable in Québec.

Birds of prey
Black bear
Bobcat
Canada lynx
Caribou
Cougar
Coyote
Grey fox

Moose
Muskox
North-American opossum
Polar bear
White-tailed deer
Wild turkey
Wolf
Wolverine

IF YOU ACCIDENTALLY FIND OR CAPTURE A REPORTABLE ANIMAL, YOU MUST IMMEDIATELY CONTACT THE SOS POACHING SERVICE AT 1 800 463-2191 TO REPORT IT TO A WILDLIFE PROTECTION OFFICER.

You are responsible for correctly identifying the animal before firing.

If you kill a big game animal inadvertently, you must immediately attach your transportation coupon to it and ensure that the meat remains edible.

You must then immediately contact the **SOS Poaching** service to return the animal to a wildlife protection officer.

Only the holder of a code "**P**" hunter's or trapping certificate can obtain a licence that authorizes catching a fur-bearing animal with traps or snares.

However, you can harvest cottontail rabbits and snowshoe hares with snares if you have a small game hunting licence or snaring licence.

The yard being the containment area used by the big game in the winter, no one may chase or disturb big game on these sites.

It is prohibited to pursue, mutilate or voluntarily kill an animal with a vehicle, aircraft or motor boat.

It is also prohibited to sell, buy or exchange any animal flesh harvested during sports hunting in Québec.

There are exceptions though, such as hare and black bear.

ANY WILDLIFE INFRACTIONS CARRY SIGNIFICANT PENALTIES.

Following an infraction, licences and certificates **may be cancelled or suspended** for a maximum of **24 months** starting from the date of conviction, in addition to fines, fees and the possible confiscation of objects.

In the event of a cancellation, the person must go through the entire certification process again, for all certificate codes.

If the hunter's certificate is cancelled, the person may not request a licence or take any courses until the 24-month cancellation period is over.

If you witness an illegal act related to wildlife or its habitats, contact **SOS Poaching**. All information will be treated confidentially.

I invite you to make sure you understand the material in your manual and to stay informed about all the regulations governing your hunting activities by calling the **Department** or visiting the **regulations section of the website**.

SOS Poaching
1 800 463-2191



LESSON

4

HUNTER'S ETHICS

A MATTER OF RESPONSIBILITY

The right to hunt implies some responsibilities.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of users roam through natural environments to simply enjoy the greatness of nature.

As a hunter, you must therefore **follow ethical rules** and **assume your obligations** to allow every citizen **to practise their activities under the best favourable conditions**.

First of all, you must be courteous, while in the same time recognizing and respecting the free accessibility of public natural environments for all other users.

You must also **be civic-minded** and **avoid any confrontation with other users** around you.

You are also required **to respect wildlife and the natural environment**, by complying with applicable laws and regulations in the territory where you hunt.

Remember that the hunter does not enjoy slaughtering an animal. It is rather a necessary act that will allow him to eat wild meat from the game he hunted.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a hunter, it is your duty **to strongly abide by a code of conduct.**

Before going on an excursion, you must take the necessary steps to know the biology and habits of the game you are hunting.

You must also know and respect your physical and mental limits and obviously **never use a weapon under the influence of alcohol or any kind of drugs.**



Picture 4.1 Code of conduct

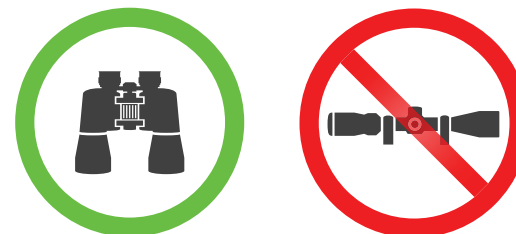
You also need to develop your shooting skills at the range and your hunting techniques to ensure that every shot fired is lethal to the game.

You must also optimize your knowledge of the care to be given to the harvested game to obtain optimal quality of your venison.

Video clips are available on the **Federation's website.**

In addition, before shooting safely at a stationary, well-placed game in an open area, you must identify it and be confident that you can recover it. The law requires you to do so.

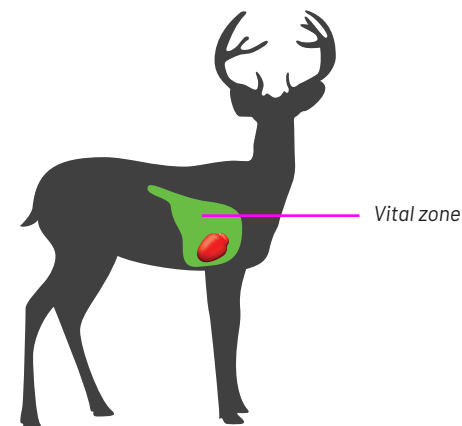
You should **always use a pair of binoculars** and not a rifle scope to identify people, animals or objects, remember that **you must never aim a weapon at anyone else.**



Picture 4.2 Always use binoculars to identify people, animals or objects

If your projectile strikes an animal's vital zone, but the game travels a certain distance and then a second hunter also hits the animal, you still have priority over the game.

On the other hand, if you only wound the animal and a second hunter reaches the vital zone, you lose your right of priority.



Picture 4.3 Vital zone

You are also required to strictly adhere and apply all safety rules in the use of any hunting gear and ammunition be safe.

You must also comply with the **regulations relating to the protection of wildlife** and be familiar with the hunting **regulations specific to the areas where you will hunt.**

The free mobile application **Zone Chasse** is the perfect tool for you to be on the lookout for all the new regulations and various services related to hunting.

If a hunting companion does not follow the rules, insist politely but firmly that he complies and don't forget that **you are required to report any act of poaching**.

As a matter of principle, to always be welcomed on a property, consider yourself a guest at all times and when you return, refrain from exhibiting your game to avoid hurting people's sensitivity.

You should also support conservation initiatives and commit to fostering the next generation to perpetuate our wildlife heritage.

In fact, a section named "**La Chasse**" on the **FédéCP website** allows new hunters to improve their knowledge.

RELATIONS WITH LANDOWNERS

In southern Québec, the majority of hunting grounds are privately owned.

It is therefore very important to establish and maintain a good relationship with landowners.

YOU MUST ALWAYS GET PERMISSION FROM THE LANDOWNER TO HUNT ON HIS LAND. PRIVATE PROPERTY IS SACRED AND YOU HAVE TO REPEAT THIS PROCEDURE EVERY TIME THAT YOU GO HUNTING ON PRIVATE LAND.

You should never hunt on private land, even if it is unfenced, without permission.

Always respect the verbal or preferably written agreements you have with the landowner. Respect the safety zones and always leave the property in the same conditions that it was when you arrived, taking care not to inflict damage upon the environment or the livestock and to make sure you have closed the fences when necessary.

It is also advisable to take the time to acknowledge your appreciation to the landowner.

THE FOREST IS SHARED BY ALL

In public territory, free access for hunting is recognized by law.

It is therefore forbidden to take over a territory and to prohibit its access to anyone, even if you are the first one to occupy the land.

On the other hand, if you hunt in private land, depending on your agreement, you can have the exclusivity of your territory.

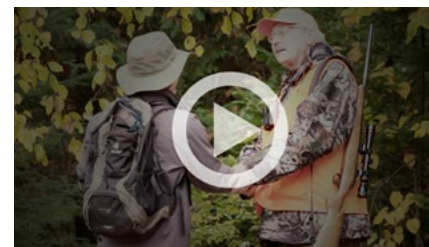
For safety reasons, if you are hunting on public land, it is strongly recommended that you put up hunting signs at the entrances to the area where you are hunting to warn anyone that there is a hunter on the lookout.

The hunting sign must stipulate the time period for which you ask other users to respect your hunt and present a way to contact you. There is also a **sign template** available on the **FédéCP website**.

For the sake of other users, you should reasonably limit your posting to a **300 meters radius** from your hunting sight. If you see this type of sign, you should moderate your movements, wear your orange fluorescent vest and remain careful. And if you plan to hunt in the same area, contact the other hunter so to establish a healthy sharing relationship for the hunting area.

You might think that the presence of activities near your hunting area could disturb you, but you are wrong, the game can simply remain indifferent to the disturbance or for your own advantage could even move in your direction.

And out of respect for others, as soon as your hunting period is over, you must remove all the signs you have posted.



Before going any further, watch the video
Security & ethics - RESPECT

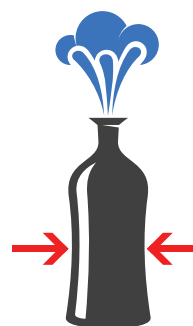
LESSON

5

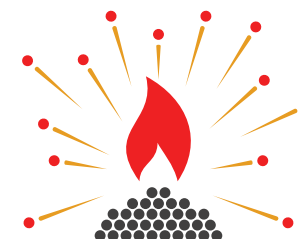
HUNTING WITH AN AIR RIFLE AND WITH A MUZZLELOADER

HUNTING WITH AN AIR RIFLE

Air rifles use the decompression of a gas to propel a projectile at a distance. In comparison, firearms propel a projectile by burning an explosive charge, which is the powder in the cartridge.



Air rifles
(decompression of a gas)



Firearms
(explosive charge)

Picture 5.1 Air rifles vs firearms

Nonetheless, air rifles can be divided into four specific groups:

- Air rifles with a refillable air tank
- Lever-pump action rifle
- Piston-type rifle
- CO₂ type rifle



Picture 5.2 Air rifles with a refillable air tank



Picture 5.3 Lever-pump action rifle



Picture 5.4 Piston-type rifle



Picture 5.5 CO₂ type rifle

Air rifles with a refillable air tank can even be shot repeatedly with a magazine containing several projectiles.

The most commonly used air rifle in Québec is the piston-type.

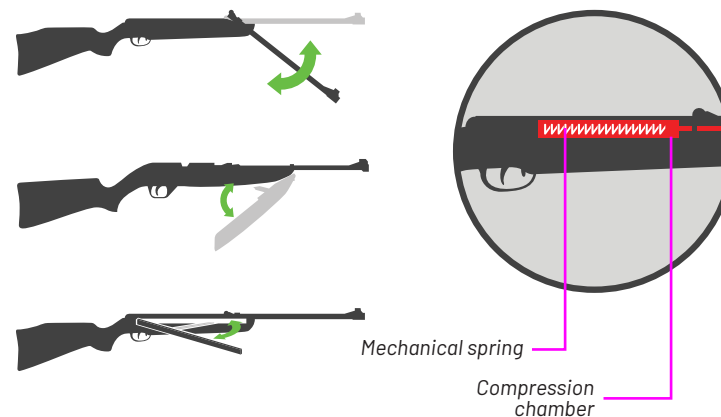
REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

At the Québec government level, under the Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife, any type of air rifle having a calibre of **.177** or above and developing a velocity of at least **152.4 m/s**, are permitted for **small game hunting**.

At the federal government level, under the Firearms Act, air guns developing a velocity of at least **152.4 m/s**, and an initial energy of **5.7 joules** are subject to the provisions of the **Act as firearms**.

The compression of spring piston-type rifles is manually operated by a cocking lever which is most of the time, the barrel itself; or an independent lever located below the barrel or even a lateral lever along the cylinder.

These rifles are equipped with a mechanical spring or nitrogen piston located inside an airtight compression chamber located at the back of the barrel chamber.



Picture 5.6 Piston-type rifle

This type of rifle is the most common in North America, it can only fire one projectile at a time.

To load this type of rifle, you must point the barrel in a safe direction, slightly tilt the barrel by tapping on it with your palm, then drop the butt on your hip and bend the barrel to the end. The barrel should then remain in the open position.



Picture 5.7 Loading of a piston-type rifle

Then, place the stock under your arm, hold the barrel and load the projectile, then raise the barrel and engage the safety catch.

Be aware to never dry fire to avoid breaking the piston.

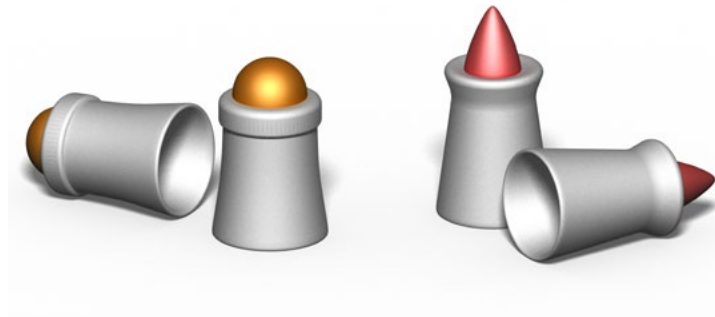
By the nature of their mechanisms, these rifles create some kind of backlash. For an accurate shot, it is important not to hold the forestock tightly when shooting. You simply have to lay the forestock on the carrying hand. **It is not recommended to use a fixed and rigid support point.**



Picture 5.8 Do not use a fixed and rigid support point

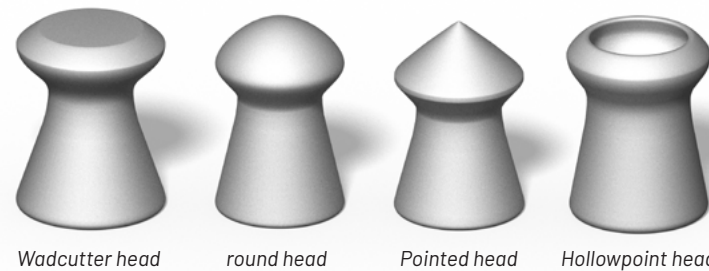
PROJECTILES

Air rifles use projectiles with skirts also called diabolo, or parachute pellets. They consist of a solid head and a flared and hollow skirt. The back or skirt is made of lead, or a lead and plastic composite.



Picture 5.9 Projectiles with skirts also called diabolo, or parachute pellets

The projectile head may be wadcutter, round, pointed or hollow point. The hollow point heads are designed to expand in the target instead of going through.



Picture 5.10 Projectile heads

When you pull the trigger, the gas pressure allows the skirt to expand and engage in the grooves of the barrel forming a seal and imparting a rotational movement. This rotation gives stability to the projectile.

The mass of the projectile is measured in grains. **15.43 grains are equivalent to one gram.**

The most frequent calibres are .177 and .22.

For hunting, it is advisable to choose the projectile with the **heavier mass** and to train at different distances, with the same ammunition.

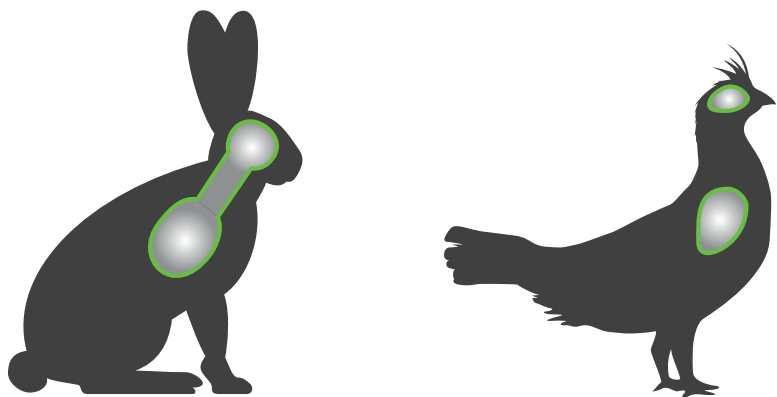
The use of an ammunition pouch that can be opened and handled with one hand can also be useful. The projectiles are then easier to take than in the original noisy box that normally has to be unscrewed with both hands.

Take note that it is recommended to wash your hands after handling lead pellets and to avoid their ingestion. The absorption of lead is harmful or even very dangerous for your health.

VITAL AREAS AND EFFECTIVE RANGE

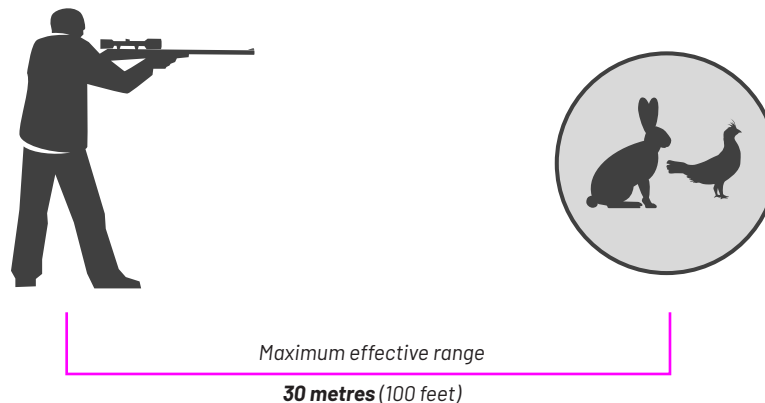
Depending on the power of your air rifle, the projectile used and the robustness of the small game targeted, the vital areas may be the head, neck, or heart-lung pair.

If your rifle is of lower powered, aim at the head between the animal's eye and ear. This part is the most fragile part of this vital area.



Picture 5.11 Small game vital areas

The maximum effective range at which you can fire a shot that results in the **rapid death** of a small game with an air rifle is **30 metres** (about 100 feet).



Picture 5.12 Maximum effective range

On the other hand, the dangerous range limit of these rifles is about 640 metres.

The actual effective range may be less than the maximum effective range, depending on the skill of the shooter.

It is therefore important to train yourself to use the same projectiles and the same rifle that you intend to use while hunting.

SIGHTING AIDS

The part of the vital area to be shot is very small and must be chosen with great care to compensate for the lack of power of the projectiles used in air rifles.

The use of a riflescope is therefore highly recommended, as it allows you to shoot with greater accuracy. The riflescope must be designed to withstand the backlash of piston air rifles.

A distance-graded crosshairs is recommended to establish the ballistic curve and thus improve accuracy.



Picture 5.13 Distance-graded crosshairs

SERVICING

It is very important to read all the user's instructions that are found in the manual that comes with the rifle. The frequency of servicing and the areas to clean and oil are also indicated.

A "**non-detergent**" oil specifically designed for these rifles must be used to prevent damaging the seals.

It is not advisable to apply oil inside the barrel unless it is stored for several months. When reusing the firearm, be sure to remove all the oil from the bore.

It is also recommended not to keep the mechanical spring of an air rifle compressed for more than 30 minutes and also never dry fire. You could damage the mechanism.

SECURITY RULES

The elementary security rules that are applied to firearms common safety are also very relevant to air rifles.

Always treat a rifle as if it were loaded. Don't forget that air rifles can cause serious bodily injuries.

In the case of piston-type rifles with a break open barrel; be careful of the barrel return, which could cause an injury to your face or even damage the rifle. You must always complete the movement to the end.

HUNTING WITH A MUZZLELOADER

The muzzleloader firearms used for hunting are divided into two large groups that are distinguished by their percussion mechanism.

- Traditional percussion
- In-line percussion

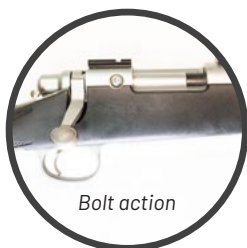
Traditional percussion muzzleloaders with a flintlock or cap lock percussion are covered in better details in the **Canadian Firearms Safety Course**.



Picture 5.14 Traditional percussion muzzleloaders

We present here the three models of in-line percussion weapons.

- Bolt action
- Straight pull action
- Break open action (hinge type)



Picture 5.15 In-line percussion weapons

The most frequently used for hunting in Québec is the **break open action**, also known as a hinge type. We will therefore use this firearm for the rest of this lesson.

The handling of a muzzleloader firearm requires that you master specific techniques to use them in a completely safe way.

In Québec, weapons authorized to hunt can only fire one shot before being reloaded from the muzzle of the barrel.

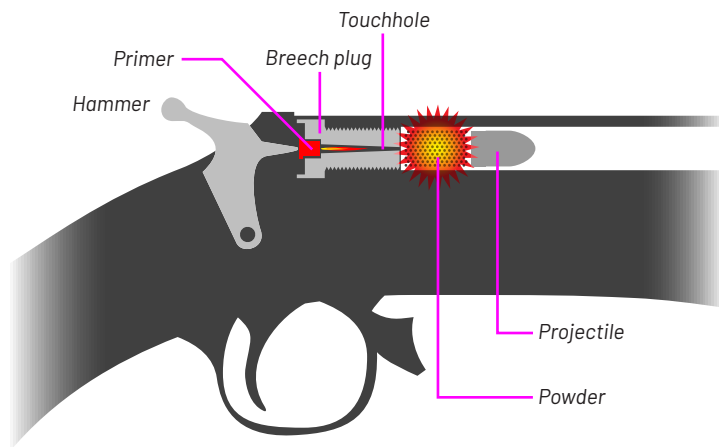
It is highly recommended to become a member of a shooting club and practice regularly to get good results. The people that are involved in these clubs will give you many tips so you may acquire the know-how necessary for the safe handling and maintenance of these weapons.

The firing of this weapon is carried out using a primer which is placed in the seating pocket located at the end of the breech plug.



Picture 5.16 Place the primer in the seating pocket of the breech plug

This seating pocket extends into a small hole called the "**touchhole**", it is used to transmit the flame from the primer to the explosive charge when the primer is struck by the firing pin.



Picture 5.17 Firing

FOR YOUR SAFETY, YOU SHOULD ALWAYS USE THE APPROPRIATE EXPLOSIVE CHARGE LISTED IN THE INSTRUCTION MANUAL OF YOUR WEAPON.

Two types of explosive powder are used in these weapons: **black powder** and its **substitutes**. Powder substitutes are less corrosive, more stable and produce less smoke.

Explosive charges in the form of 30 or 50 grain powder pellets are the most popular because they are easy to use.



Picture 5.18 Powder pellets

Bulk powders are also available on the market, but they are more complex to use. As there are several granulations, you should read the manual carefully to know which one to use with your weapon.

BE CAREFUL, IT IS CRUCIAL NEVER TO USE SMOKELESS POWDER IN A MUZZLELOADER WEAPON DESIGNED ONLY FOR BLACK POWDER. THE HIGHER PRESSURE COULD CAUSE THE BARREL TO BURST AND YOU COULD SERIOUSLY INJURE YOURSELF OR OTHERS AROUND YOU.

Black powder and their substitutes are explosives that produce a lot of smoke that could disturb other shooters or attendants.

Depending on the type of hunting or shooting you will be practising, you will have to choose the right projectiles: either **conical lead bullets**, or **bullets held in a sabot**, which are the most commonly used.



Picture 5.19 Types of projectiles

To properly and safely use a muzzleloader firearm you need to get some basic accessories.

- **Starting block**
makes it easier for you to insert the projectile into the barrel
- **Ramrod with a handle**
will also facilitate the compacting of the loads
- **Bullet puller**
to remove your projectile
- **Patch worm**
can also help you dislodge the powder from the barrel

- **Containers for pre-measured charges**

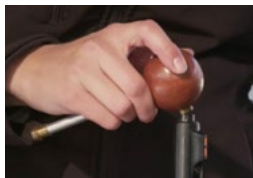
is used to prepare in advance your propellant loads that include the explosive charge and projectile, making it easier to carry. You can also put the primer in it, so you'll gain speed when you reload. Otherwise, a primer capper may also be useful in helping seating your primer

- **Cleaning kit**

is essential to service your weapon and an anti-seize grease is essential to lubricate the breech plug threads and prevent it from getting stuck in the barrel

- **Safety glasses / Ear protectors**

Also wear long sleeves and be watchful at all times while you load, unload or shoot with your firearm



Starting block



Ramrod with a handle



Bullet puller



Patch worm



Pre-measured charges container



Primer capper



Cleaning kit



Safety glasses/ear protectors

Picture 5.20 Basic accessories

As a rule, you must handle any gun in accordance with the four vital ACTS;

- **Assume every firearm is loaded**
- **Control the muzzle direction at all times**
- **Trigger finger must be kept off the trigger and out of the trigger guard**
- **See that the gun is unloaded by opening the mechanism**

You should always control your weapon so that you never have your face or hands above the muzzle of the barrel. Rest the buttstock on the ground and secure it with your feet to avoid any slip and take your ramrod.



Picture 5.21 Always control your weapon

BE CAREFUL NEVER TO PUT A PRIMER IN THE BREECH PLUG SEATING POCKET WHEN LOADING OR UNLOADING YOUR WEAPON.

Before using a muzzleloader firearm, you must **mark your ramrod**. You will then be able to determine if your weapon is loaded by pushing the rod into the barrel and checking the mark you made when it was loaded.

To properly mark your ramrod, you must first **check that there is no primer and that the barrel is empty** before screwing the breech plug into the chamber of the barrel.

Most of the time, you'll need to add a loading jag to get to the bottom of the barrel. It is therefore important to **always use the same jag to ensure that the reference marks are accurate**.

When your ramrod is set at the bottom of the barrel, **make a first mark**. This mark will tell you that the **firearm is unloaded**.

Now remove the ramrod, check that the touchhole is clear and insert the explosive charge into the bore of the barrel. Then, insert the projectile with the starting block and press the projectile firmly against the charge using the ramrod and **make a second mark**.

From now on, if you want to know if your weapon is loaded, you only have to insert the tipped ramrod and the mark will tell you if it is.



Picture 5.22 Mark your ramrod

Usually, this tipped ramrod does not fit directly under the barrel, which is why you could be easily fooled if you are not careful.

The primer should be seated at the hunting site only, or when you are ready to shoot at the shooting range.

If your weapon has a safety, engage it immediately after loading it and don't forget to wear your ear protectors and safety glasses. Set yourself up by identifying the target correctly and aim.

You must cock the hammer at the last moment before firing, as there is normally no safety on these guns. If your firearm has a safety, disengage it and pull the trigger.

If no detonation occurs, the primer is defective or not fully seated: it is a **misfire**.

You must then point the firearm in a safe direction and **wait 60 seconds** in case the gunshot fires this would be a hang fire. Once the time is up, replace the faulty primer and fire again.

If nothing happens, repeat these steps another time. If it still does not fire, you must use other primers, or you must remove the projectile and the explosive charge.

To unload your weapon, you must first point the weapon in a safe area and remove the primer.

You can then unscrew the breech plug so you may drop the explosive charge and push with your ramrod to get the projectile out through the muzzle.



Picture 5.23 Remove the projectile from the barrel

Or, you can leave the breech plug, without a primer, into the barrel and screw a bullet puller at the end of your ramrod and insert it into the barrel to screw it into the projectile, then pull the rod hard toward the muzzle. The removed bullet will no longer be usable.

If you have used a sabot with the projectile, be sure to remove it from the barrel. Turn the gun down, the explosive charge should come out, otherwise use the patch worm to clear the load.

Once the explosive charge has been removed from the barrel, you must now clear your weapon by firing one or two primers to ensure that the **touchhole is not obstructed**.

If the flame does not go through, clear the touchhole with a small wire brush so that the flame from the primer can reach the explosive charge. If nothing obstructs the flame, then you can reload your firearm if you wish.

In case the primer explodes, but the powder does not ignite, you have a **primer pop**. Just like a misfire, you must point the weapon in a safe direction and **wait at least 60 seconds** in case the gunshot fires later on.

Once the time is up, **remove the primer** and make sure there is an explosive charge and a projectile in the barrel using the marked ramrod. If you find that the firearm is not loaded, load it properly. If there is an explosive charge, put a primer back in and resume the shot.

If there is no firing, you must **wait at least 60 seconds** in case the gunshot fires with a delay. Once the time has elapsed, remove the primer, then the explosive charge and the projectile with one of the techniques already demonstrated.

Make sure the barrel is empty, fire one or two primers and thus check that the touchhole is clear before reloading again.

A misfire can be caused by a defective primer, wet powder or an obstructed touchhole.

SAFETY RULES

It is very important to read carefully and comply with the instructions in the user manual specific to your firearm. In it you will find a wealth of information, including the maximum powder loads your muzzleloader firearm can handle.

You must also always consider your weapon to be loaded and keep the barrel pointed in a safe direction at all times.

REMEMBER TO NEVER USE SMOKELESS POWDER IN A MUZZLELOADER FIREARM SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED ONLY FOR BLACK POWDER OR ITS SUBSTITUTES. THE BARREL COULD BURST AND THERE IS A SERIOUS POSSIBILITY TO INJURE YOURSELF OR OTHERS AROUND YOU.

In the presence of black powder or a substitute, stay away from any sources of heat, flames or sparks. Never smoke or allow anyone to smoke in the presence of black powder or its substitutes when loading or unloading this kind of weapon.

And for safety reasons, never load a muzzleloader firearm inside a building. Also, remember to never leave a live primer in the breech plug while loading your weapon.

Never fire with a gun that you suspect contains more than a single charge.

Always press the projectile firmly against the powder charge, making sure to respect the mark on the ramrod, which indicates that the weapon is well loaded and do not forget to remove the rod before firing.

Always treat misfires and primer pops with great caution, as the shot may still go off at any time.

Never rely completely on the safety or the hammer in the half-cocked position of a muzzleloader firearm.

Before shooting, you must make sure you identify your target, that it is clear, stationary and well placed. Only then, should you pull the trigger.

You should wait a minimum of thirty minutes and ideally one hour before you start searching for your game.

Once your game has been recovered, it is very important to clean and lubricate the gun as soon as possible to prevent corrosion from damaging the mechanism and the bore.

SERVICING AND STORAGE

Black powder and even its substitutes leave important corrosive deposits in the bore of the gun. Cleaning a muzzleloader firearm is therefore much more demanding and necessary than for a modern smokeless powder weapon. Before you start, you should read the manufacturer's manual to learn how to disassemble your muzzleloader properly.

If your gun is still loaded, you must obviously remove the primer, the explosive charge, and the projectile before cleaning it.

Be sure to wash the inside of the barrel of your muzzleloader thoroughly with warm, slightly soapy water, using a cleaning rod with a cotton mop. After a first cleaning with soapy water, rinse the barrel with very hot water to allow it to dry quickly.

When using projectiles with plastic sabots, it is also advisable to clean the lands and the grooves of the bore with a solvent designed to dissolve plastic deposits. The use of a bronze brush will remove all the residues from the powder and the plastic sabot.



Picture 5.24 Bronze brush

Subsequently, with a cotton swab wipe the inside of the barrel to remove any impurities and lubricate the bore with a suitable lubricant for this type of firearm.

After carefully cleaning the breech plug, you must also lubricate it before replacing it so that it does not seize in the barrel.

Finally, lightly oil the outside of the weapon before storing it. Thus lubricated, your weapon will avoid rusting.

But remember, you must store your firearm in accordance with the standards taught in the Canadian Firearms Safety Course, namely unloaded, cleaned, lubricated and locked.

Primers and powder should be stored separately, ideally under lock, in a separate container exclusively for ammunition. Storage containers must not be airtight, the air must be able to circulate freely.

In addition, you must store your ammunition away from any flammable material or ignition source.



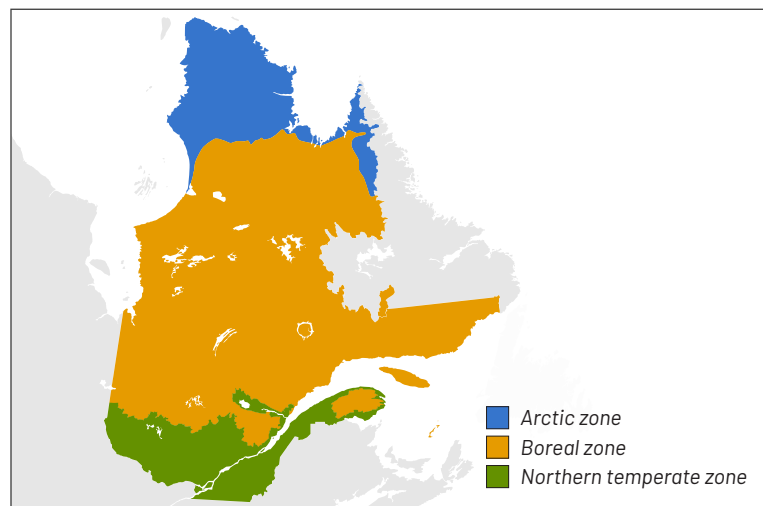
LESSON

6

ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT / MAIN HUNTED SPECIES IN QUÉBEC

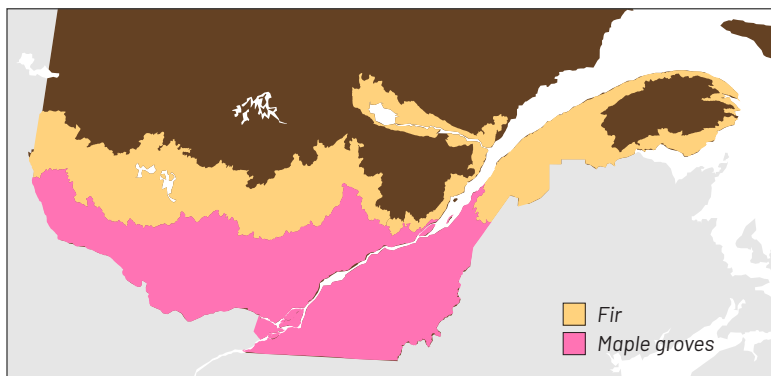
Québec is a vast territory of almost **1,700,000 km²** bordered by the sea on three sides. It has more than **one million lakes and rivers**.

Its territory is divided between **Arctic**, **boreal** and **northern temperate** vegetation zones.



Picture 6.1 Vegetation zones

The bioclimatic domains of **fir** and **maple groves** in the northern temperate vegetation zone contain the greatest diversity of ecosystems, habitats and the greatest amount of wildlife species.



Picture 6.2 Bioclimatic domains

Each ecosystem is a group formed by a community of living organisms in the interrelation with their natural environment.

In an ecosystem, each wildlife species occupies a particular environment where it finds the resources necessary for its survival and reproduction; this is its habitat.

ECOLOGY / MAJOR DISTURBANCE FACTORS

Québec is also home to more than 8.5 million people, **95%** of whom live in the **northern temperate vegetation zone**.

Especially in this area, land use and the exploitation of natural resources can present challenges of cohabitation with wildlife.

The climate change, the forestry interventions, the agriculture, the urban sprawl and the development of the road network can, among other things, alter or modify the living conditions of wild animals living in these disrupted areas.

Some wild species will be able to benefit from these transformations while others are completely disadvantaged. For the latter, the preservation of quality habitats is paramount.

MANAGEMENT / MAIN HUNTED SPECIES

In Québec, moose, white-tailed deer, black bear, wild turkey, small game and furbearers are subject to a **management plan**. Wildlife management plans are used to develop the harvesting rules, in order to ensure sustainable exploitation according to the hunting zone.

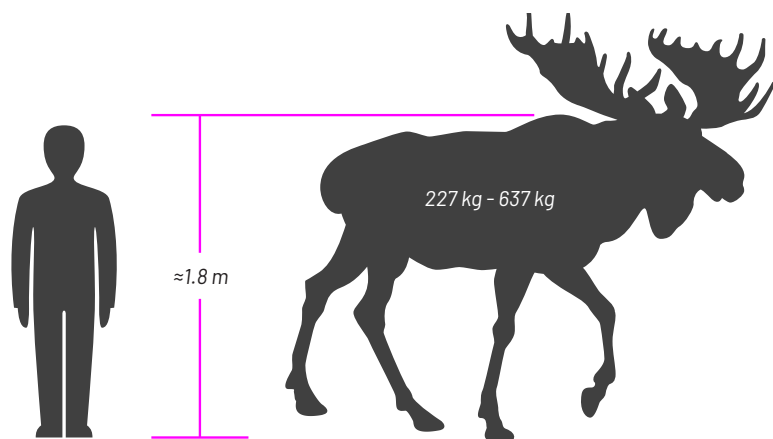
For example, by promoting the protection of moose females, herd productivity has increased significantly. We now have more moose than ever before in Québec and we now harvest more than twice as many as we did ten years ago and eight times more than we did in the mid-60s.

Wildlife management plans also help to control the overabundance of species such as snow geese. Hunting therefore makes it possible to partially limit the destruction of agricultural fields, a situation that could otherwise be very costly for the state.

Good management actually provides the right balance for wildlife and hunters. Good wildlife management even allows the population of some targeted species such as wild turkey to expand: a real success in Québec.

MOOSE

Moose is the largest cervid in the world and males can be recognized by their large palmated antlers.



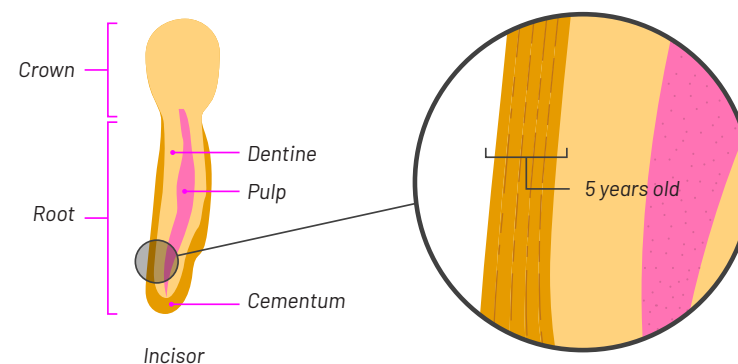
Picture 6.3 Moose

The antlers begin to grow in early April. During the growth of the antlers, the moose needs for calcium and phosphorus are very high. In an adult male, the antlers grow up to 25 mm per day.

Between the end of August and the beginning of September, the velvet dries out and comes off in large shreds. The male then rubs his antlers onto the trees and shrubs to dispose of them. The antlers will fall between December and February.

In the first autumn the fawn has no antlers. The first ones will grow near the age of one year old and form a single dagger, sometimes subdivided in points. The large characteristic palmated antlers will appear around the age of 4 or 5 years.

The size of the antlers cannot be used to determine the age of the moose. The age is rather evaluated by counting the number of layers of cementum formed annually on the roots of the incisors. The maximum longevity in nature of a moose is about fifteen years.



Picture 6.4 Determining the age of a moose

The hearing and sense of smell of the moose are well developed. His eyesight allows him to discern contrasts quite well, thus easily perceiving movements, even from far away. Like white-tailed deer, moose are likely to be able to distinguish colours and they will pay very little attention to the objects situated above them.

The mating period, which is rutting, is mainly concentrated between the third week of September and mid-October.

During this period, females brawl to attract males. The males make brief hoarse cries, rub their antlers against the trees and even will end up facing their rivals in fights. They scrape the wet soil with their hooves, urinate and wallow in these soils in order to attract females.

A male can mate with several females, who will give birth to one or two fawns each, rarely three. The young moose will stay with their mothers for one whole year.

In the winter, moose gather in small groups in what is called **moose yards**: woodlands where they find shelter and food at the same time. The rest of the year, they are rather solitary.

Generally speaking, moose spend their entire lives in the same area. It moves easily and quietly through dense forests. From one season to the next, year after year, he returns to the same places following the same roads.

Moose are found in mixed forests, particularly fir stands with white birch or yellow birch. They frequent young or disturbed by fire forests, logging areas, alder groves, lakes covered with submerged vegetation, swamps and ponds.

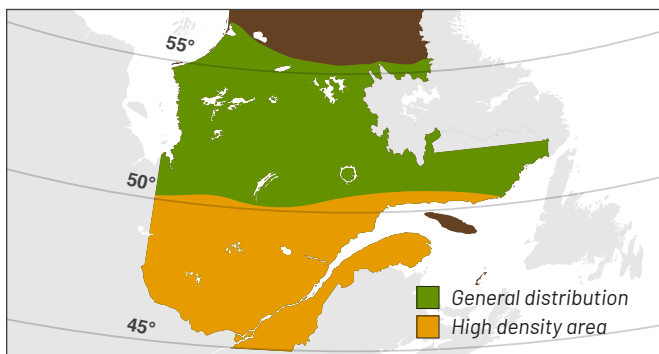
Depending on the season. Moose will feed on leaves, twigs, buds, deciduous bark and conifer needles, but prefer birch, willow and poplar. It also feeds on herbaceous and aquatic plants; it prefers water lily plants.

Wolves and black bears are the main predators of moose. Most of the moose that are victims of wolves are juveniles or weakened adults. Black bears mainly prey on newborn moose.

Moose hunting is the most popular in Québec. Moose harvested by hunters is the leading cause of death for these common cervids in the province.

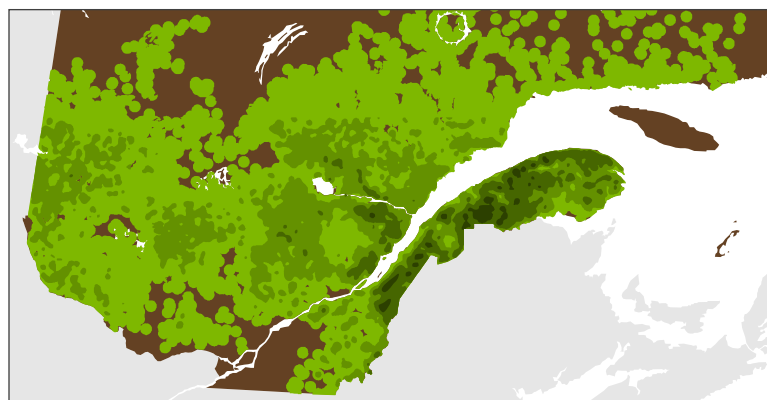
Unfortunately, road accidents involving moose also result in many involuntary deaths. Each year, more than 1,000 moose collisions with vehicles are reported.

Moose is found up to the 55th parallel north latitude in Québec, essentially at the edge of the boreal forest. The highest density of moose in Québec is found south of the 50th parallel.



Picture 6.5 Moose - Distribution area map

It is noted that the highest harvests (dark green) come mainly from the areas south and east of the urban community of Québec City, in the bioclimatic area of yellow and white birch stands.



Picture 6.6 Moose - Harvest density

The moose management plan is primarily aimed at achieving or maintaining optimal moose densities to maintain the interest of hunters, as well as maximizing economic benefits for all of Québec.

Selective hunting, which spares females in the so-called **restrictive years**, allows optimal populations to be maintained, because the females that ensure the proliferation of the species are protected.

Hunting also maintains moose density at about 60% of the habitat support capacity defined for each hunting area.

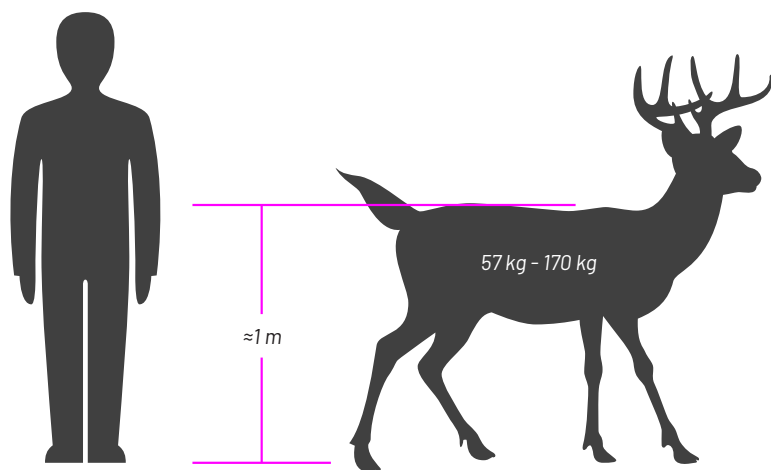
When this percentage is exceeded and moose populations are mainly limited by their food supply, hunting of antlerless animals (females or fawns) is necessary to protect the habitat.

Annually in Québec, an average of **175,000 hunters** harvest more than **25,000 moose** during **permissive years** when antlerless moose can also be harvested.

Moose harvesting is lower in restrictive years when only males with antlers and fawns are harvested.

WHITE-TAILED DEER

White-tailed deer is an opportunistic species that adapts well. It is the most widespread and abundant cervid in North America.



Picture 6.7 White-tailed deer

The antlers are carried by males, although exceptionally females can be found wearing them. On a normal antler, the tips are relatively symmetrical. But there may be abnormal or atypical antlers.



Picture 6.8 Atypical antlers

Unlike moose, the size of the antlers is directly related to the animal's build. The antlers, which fall in winter, are at their maximum size when the animal is between 5 and 7 years old.

White-tailed deer has an excellent sense of sight, hearing and smell. It can distinguish, at night and during the day, distant objects and the slightest movement in its field of view of **310 degrees**, without even moving its head.



Picture 6.9 White-tailed deer - Field of view

By moving its ears, it can also determine the direction and distance of a hazard. We also know that the deer can distinguish colours.

Its sense of smell would be **35% higher than that of the dog**; it allows him to locate his fellow deers and identify dangers. Their hooves even have cushions that allow them to detect vibrations on the ground.

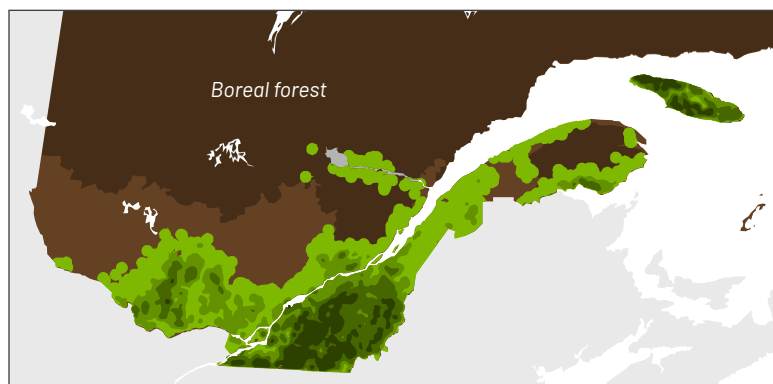
The rut period takes place in between October and November. Females give birth in the spring. They usually have one or two fawns. More rarely, females can give birth to a third fawn.

White-tailed deer are opportunistic in their alimentary diet, but prefer fleshy fruits, such as blueberries, raspberries and apples.

It also feeds on the leaves of a wide variety of trees and shrubs, cedar, fir and many plants such as clover, goldenrod, mushrooms and lichens. It can also eat up alfalfa, soybeans, corn and cereals in agricultural fields. This is why white-tailed deer can become a pest for some crops and dwarf apple tree orchards.

The modification of the natural environment by agriculture and forestry favours the white-tailed deer that now occupies all of southern Québec, as far as Abitibi and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean. Its expansion is limited to the north by the length of winter and the ground thickness of the snow.

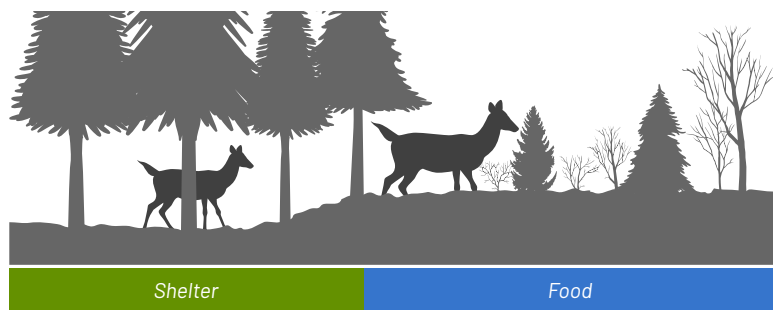
You will notice that the general distribution of white-tailed deer is limited to the north by the boreal forest, and not by the St. Lawrence River. The white-tailed deer population on Anticosti Island is the most northern in Québec. Despite the harshness of winter, there is still a high concentration of deer due to the lack of predators and low hunting pressure.



Picture 6.10 White-tailed deer - General distribution

In Québec, deer populations fluctuate mainly according to the severity of winter.

When the thickness of the snow constrains their movements, white-tailed deer concentrate on deer yards that meet their needs for shelter and food.



Picture 6.11 Deer yards

Protecting these woodlands, whether they are in public or private land is the key to maintaining the species in Québec. **During particularly harsh winters, the mortality rate can exceed 40%.**

The harshness of winters is therefore the main factor in the mortality of white-tailed deer in Québec. Coyotes, wolves and the black bears are the main predators of the species.

In Québec, is practised by nearly **140,000 hunters** who harvest around **50,000 animals a year**, for a hunting success around 33%.

The white-tailed deer management plan proposes harvesting methods adapted to the population levels of the various hunting areas.

When deer densities are getting too high, the quality of their habitat deteriorates, there could be a lack of food and deer has to move to seek its necessary food, often at the expense of crops on private land.

There are more road accidents when the population is too high. Approximately 8,000 deer collisions are recorded annually; mainly happening at sunrise and sunset.

Hunting is therefore an important management tool to control the herd population, both to protect the habitat, essential to the survival of the species, as well as to limit the nuisance caused by white-tailed deer.

The main management method recommended is to harvest a predetermined number of antlerless deer. In some areas, additional permits may also be issued to reduce wild population numbers.

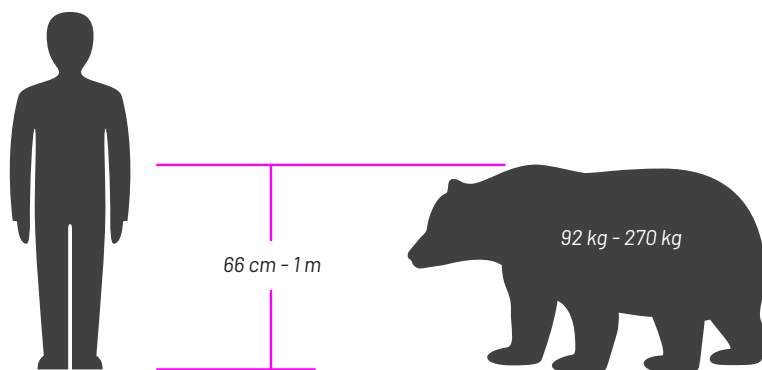
To monitor trends in white-tailed deer and moose populations, three **indicators** are used.

- **Aerial inventory**
generally carried out every 10 years in winter in most hunting zones. Essentially, the data collected make it possible to estimate the population density, the gender ratio and the number of young per female.
- **Exploitation data analyzes**
that is the number of animals harvested and the number of hunters based on the permits sold.
- **Surveys involving hunters**

In the case of white-tailed deer, these indicators are used to establish the number of permits for deer without antlers to be issued annually, in order to promote the maintenance of populations at an optimal level in each of Québec's zones.

BLACK BEAR

The black bear is present throughout the province of Québec. It rarely leaves tree cover and the cases where they attack humans are exceptional. He is usually shy and lonely. He prefers to slip away to avoid any direct contact with the human being.



Picture 6.12 Black bear

During the winter, the bear **overwinters** in a den and does not feed. **It's not hibernation**, because its body temperature stays above room temperature and because it can wake up at any time.

The bear is omnivorous. It eats everything that is edible. It accumulates fat reserves during the summer and fall by eating herbaceous plants, a large amount of berries, nuts, insects and mammals.

In years when fruits are less abundant, bears can travel to the suburbs to find alternative food sources. It can then become a nuisance or cause fear in the population.

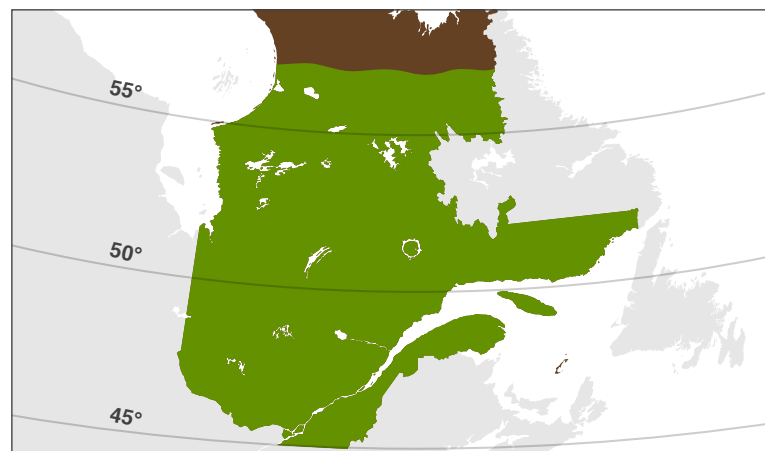
Household garbage attracts black bears. Occasionally, they are found near homes and campgrounds where food and garbage are not properly put out of their reach.

It looks heavy and clumsy, but it can swim, climb trees and even reach speeds of up to **55 km/h**.

The bear mating period runs from early June to the end of July. Female bears usually have a litter of two to three cubs during the winter. She takes care of the cubs for the first two years and could attack even a human if she feels they are threatened.

Hunting and trapping are the main causes of mortality in black bears. With the exception of humans, black bears do not really have a predator. On the other hand, adult male bears may be a threat to cubs.

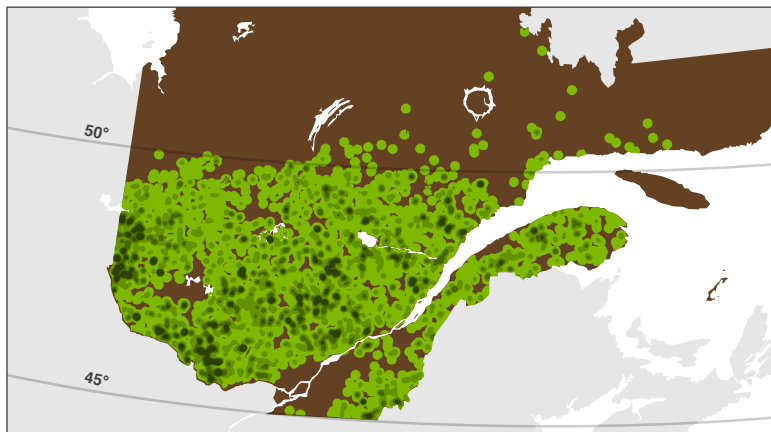
It should be noted that black bears are present throughout Québec, but are rarely found north of the 57th parallel.



Picture 6.13 Black bear - Distribution area map

Black bears frequent deciduous and softwood forests, regenerating forests and the tundra, but prefer dense forests and bushy brush.

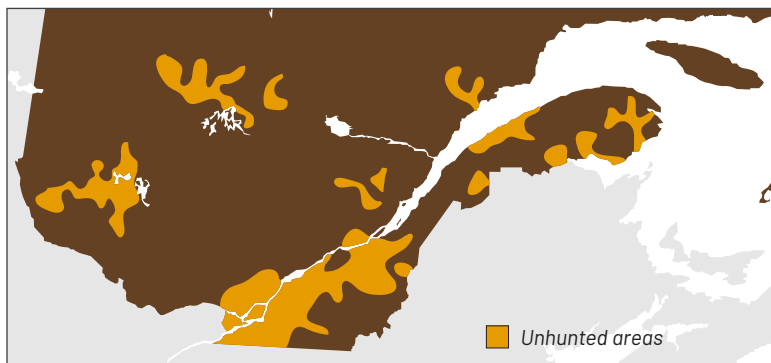
Considering the accessibility of the territory, we notice that the bulk of the harvest is done south of the 50th parallel, mainly in the bioclimatic field of yellow and white birch fir stands.



Picture 6.14 Black bear - Annual harvests

Aerial inventories used for deer cannot be applied to black bear as they overwinter in a den during this season. The management of the black bear relies mainly on the exploitation data through hunting and trapping, obtained during the registering of catches.

The main objective of the black bear management plan is to maintain their populations at a biologically and socially acceptable level. **In unhunted areas** of southern Québec with favourable habitat, density as high as **4 bears per 10 km²** is found.



Picture 6.15 Black bear - Density of population in unhunted areas

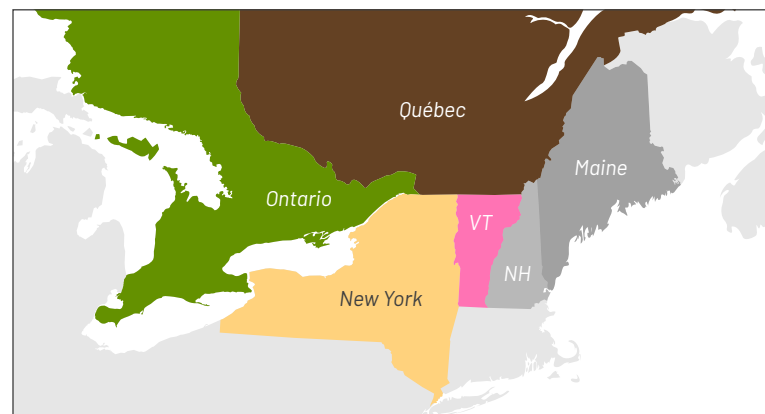
In recent years, there has been an annual harvest of about **4,000 to 5,000 bears**, for a hunting success that ranges from **25% to 30%**.

Black bears may be hunted in the spring or fall in some areas.

WILD TURKEY

Wild turkeys were first observed in Québec in 1976.

The colonization of this bird in Québec has been favoured by population growth in **Ontario, New York** and **Vermont**.

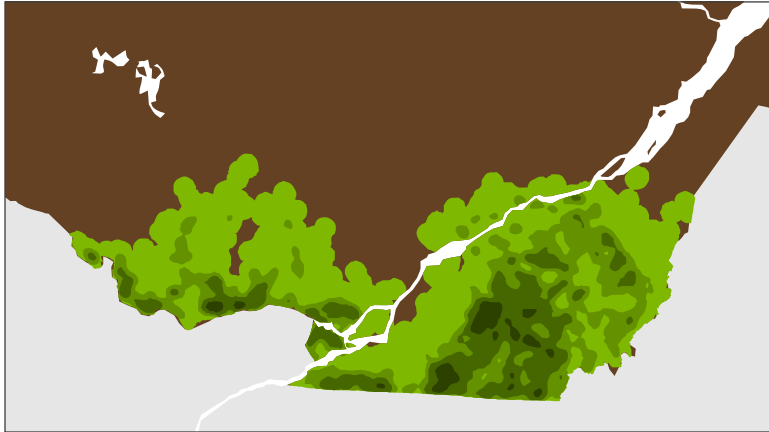


Picture 6.16 Wild turkey colonization

Various projects to introduce and relocate the species carried out by the **Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs** have also contributed to the establishment of the species in Québec.

Since 2008, this game, coveted by Québec hunters, has become abundant enough to allow hunters to harvest it without jeopardizing the survival of the species.

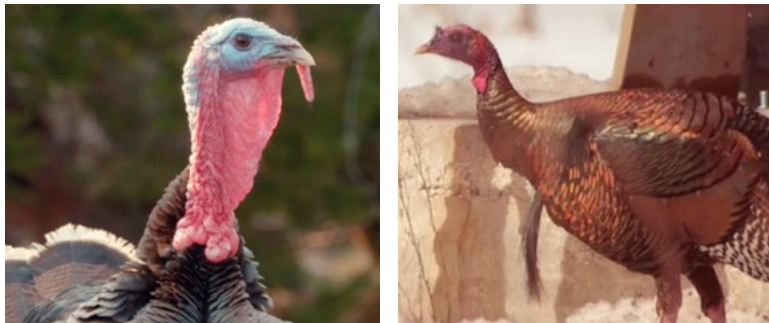
Wild turkey populations are mainly concentrated in zones 4 to 10, in southern Québec.



Picture 6.17 Wild turkey - Distribution area map

Males and females show marked physical and behavioural differences.

The male's head is blue, white and red. The male turkey also usually has a beard of up to 13 cm.



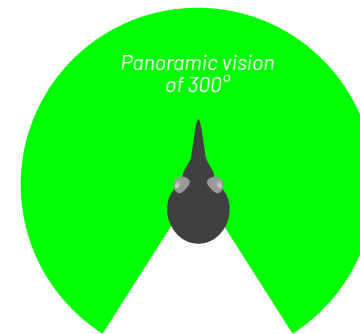
Picture 6.18 Male wild turkey

The female is smaller, her head and neck are blue-grey with small dark hairs. Its plumage is duller and of a brownish colour.



Picture 6.19 Female wild turkey

With the eyes on either side of the head, the turkey enjoys a panoramic view allowing it to see inside a **300-degree arc, without turning its head**.

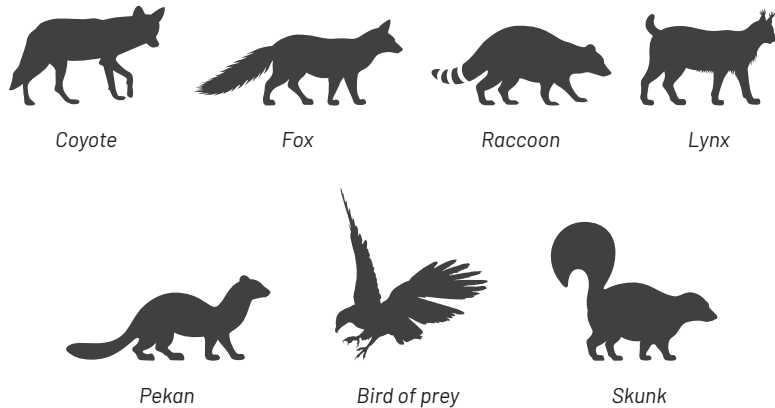


Picture 6.20 Wild turkey - Panoramic vision

His keen sense of hearing, piercing eyesight and nervous temperament make him an animal that can easily outwit its predators and hunters.

The mating period takes place in the spring. It starts in April and can continue until the end of May. A social hierarchy allows the dominant male to mate with as many females as possible. Females lay 10 to 12 eggs.

The first two weeks of life are the most critical for the chicks, as they cannot yet fly and roost in the trees in order to escape their predators. Eggs and juveniles can more easily be eaten by a number of predators that frequent the same habitats. More than half of the chicks die by predation. Winter harshness is also a major cause of mortality for the species.



Picture 6.21 Wild turkey - Main predators

Wild turkey spends most of its time on the ground feeding, moving or nesting. It looks for agroforestry environments that can provide it with abundant food.

During the summer season, its diet consists primarily of buds, twigs, fruits, seeds, nuts, a wide variety of insects and plant shoots.

In Québec during winter it feeds on crop residues, such as corn and soybeans, in the fields. Wild turkey and white-tailed deer frequent the same type of habitat.

The main objective of the wild turkey management plan is to ensure the viability of the species in areas where habitats are favourable for this bird.

The main indicators for tracking and managing the wild turkey populations are:

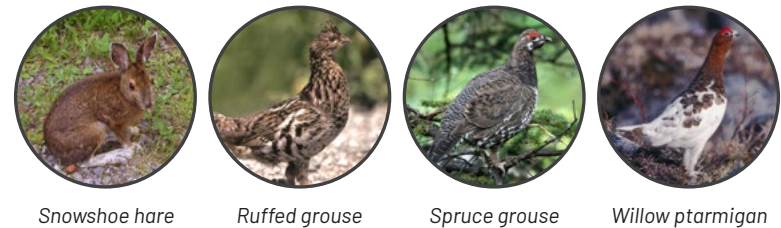
- Winter road inventories
- Hunter survey
- Monitoring of the exploitation of bearded turkeys

Spring bearded turkey hunting is an effective management tool to promote population growth. Fall hunting of males, females and juveniles are used instead to limit wild turkey populations in areas where the turkeys are abundant.

In recent years, hunting success has stabilized at around 35%.

SMALL GAME

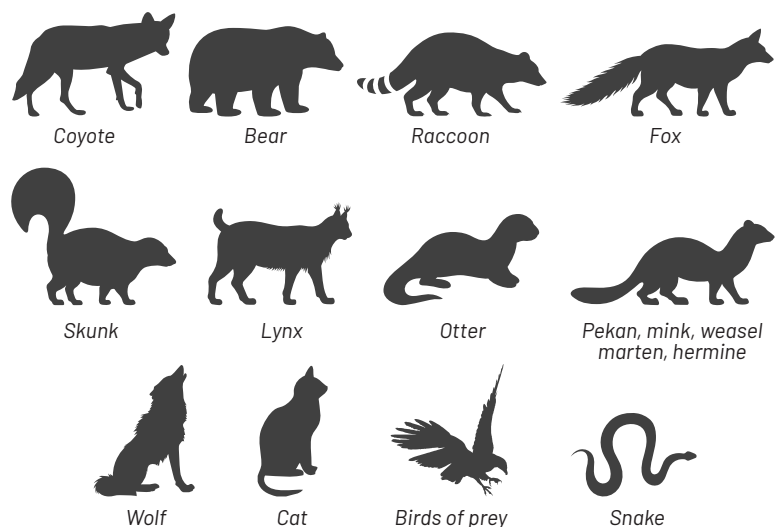
Several small game species inhabit the forests of Québec, but four species dominate the annual harvest: **snowshoe hare**, **ruffed grouse**, **spruce grouse** and **willow ptarmigan**.



Picture 6.22 Dominant small game species

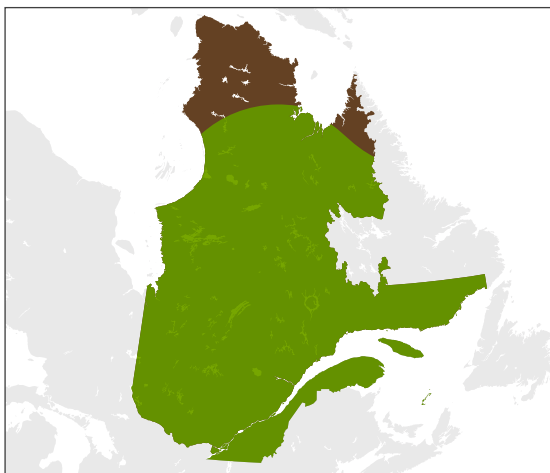
These hunted species are the subject of a management plan aimed at ensuring the survival of small game and its development.

Predation is often the leading cause of death for small game, which occupies an important link in the food chain for many animals that depend on it. You may be surprised to learn that cats are responsible for the mortality of about **200 million birds each year** in Canada.



Picture 6.23 Small game main predators

The snowshoe hare occupies the entire province except the far north, where no trees are present. It lives in forests with a dense shrub cover to protect itself from predators.



Picture 6.24 Snowshoe hare - Distribution area map

Its greyish-brown coat in summer turns white in winter, allowing it to easily camouflage itself in the snow.

More active at dawn and dusk, the hare has highly developed senses of sight and hearing that help it detect predators and the morphology of its hind legs allows it to move easily in the deep snow. The very high annual mortality rate of snowshoe hare is mainly due to predation.

The abundance of snowshoe hare varies in cycles of about 10 years and does experience dramatic fluctuations.

The hare may easily have up to four litters per year, and each one having from two to four offspring. Its ability to reproduce quickly and in large numbers allows their populations to reach **600 individuals per square kilometre**.

In summer, the snowshoe hare feeds on herbaceous plants and leaves, while in winter, the buds, twigs and bark are the main part of its alimentary diet.

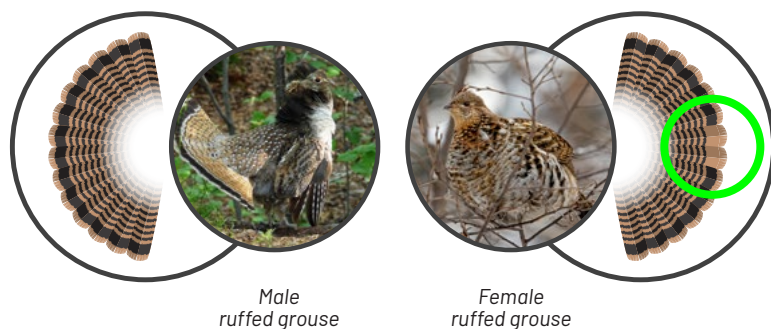
The annual harvest of snowshoe hare in Québec can be estimated between 1 million and more than 2 million individuals for a potential harvest of 11 million to 26 million hares.

The hare is less present in habitats where there are a lot of white-tailed deer since most of the shrub layer that protects and feeds hare populations is overgrazed.

The **ruffed grouse** is another very coveted small game in Québec.

The ruffed grouse has a spotted and striped plumage, whose colours range from light grey to mahogany and sometimes red, which allows it to blend into its habitat and easily hide from predators. It has small bristly feathers on its head called a hoopoe and a long, flat tail that it can fan out.

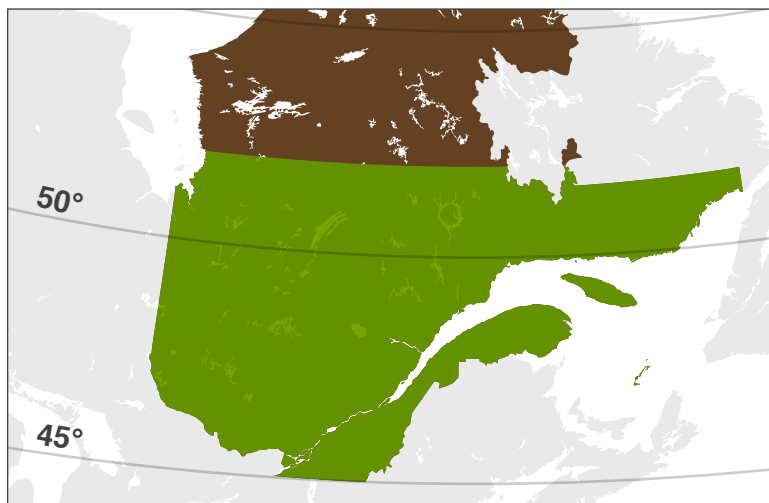
The male and female are very similar, but can be easily distinguished by looking at the dark band on the tail. The broad darker stripe is continuous in males and discontinuous in females.



Picture 6.25 Differences between male and female ruffed grouse

The ruffed grouse is active from dawn to dusk. It can make short, fast flights with very sharp turns, allowing it to easily penetrate dense cover. Because of its claws it also clings easily to all size of tree branches.

Ruffed grouse can be found throughout Québec south of the 52nd parallel in mixed or deciduous forests.



Picture 6.26 Ruffed grouse - Distribution area map

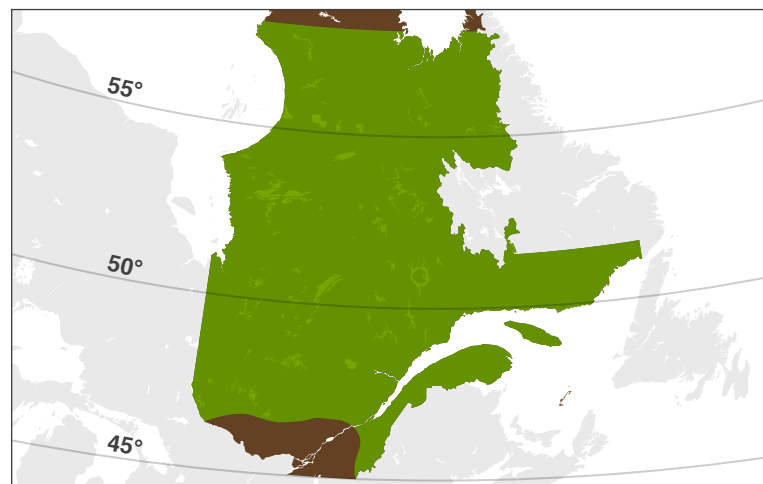
In summer, the ruffed grouse feeds on herbaceous plants, leaves, fruits and mushrooms. In winter its diet is limited to buds and small shrubby fruits.

Like the hare, the ruffed grouse shows cycles of abundance. This bird mates in spring, a time when males are frequently heard drumming as they flap their wings on their chests to attract females. Females lay an average of 10 to 14 eggs.

Many grouses do not survive winter especially when the weather is harsh and when there is a lot of freezing rain. Predation and disease can also decimate more than half of the grouse populations at an early age. Hunting has little impact on overall grouse populations in Québec.

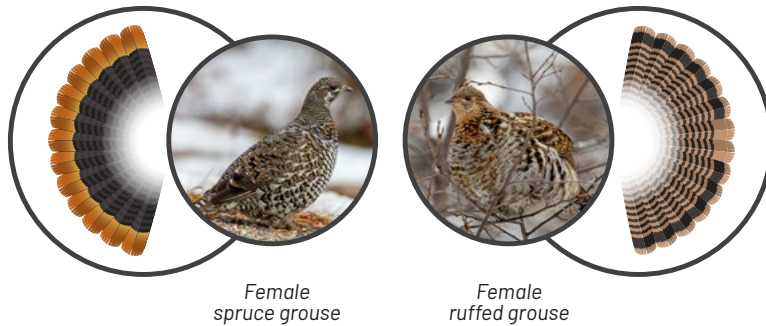
The annual harvest of ruffed grouses in the province can be estimated at **450,000 birds**, with a potential harvest of **3 million to 11 million grouses**.

The **spruce grouse** occupies most of Québec, from the extreme south of the province to the tree line. These birds frequent mature coniferous forests, boreal forest and peat bogs. This species is found almost everywhere there are conifers in Québec.



Picture 6.27 Spruce grouse - Distribution area map

The female spruce grouse resembles ruffed grouse. Its plumage, however, is more finely striped and its tail, edged with red, does not bear the dark band characteristic of the other species.



Picture 6.28 Differences between female spruce grouse and female ruffed grouse

The male grouse is distinguished by its darker colour, as well as by the characteristic presence of a red caruncle above the eye.



Picture 6.29 Male spruce grouse

This bird is particularly vulnerable to hunting because it allows itself to be approached very closely. Its strategy against predators is to stand still on the ground, or to perch itself on a branch to hide.

In summer, spruce grouse feeds on herbaceous plants, small fruit, mushrooms and insects. In winter, its diet is limited to buds and conifer needles.

Mating occurs in the spring. One can then observe the rapid and repeated flapping of wings that the male makes to display his presence and conquer the females.

Predation is the leading cause of death in this species. The incidence of hunting is marginal. The population of the spruce grouse in Québec is estimated to be between **2 million and 4 million birds**.

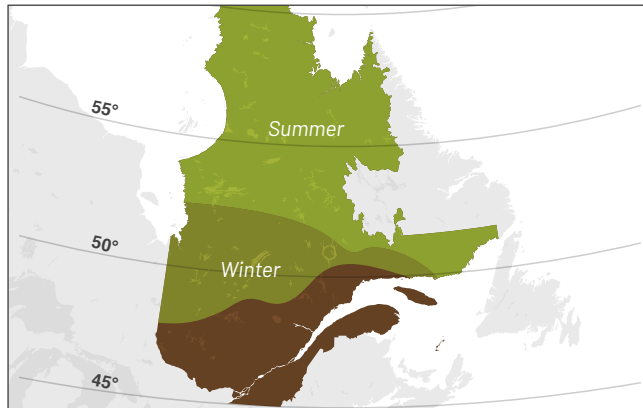
The **willow ptarmigan** is a typical species of the Arctic tundra closely associated with **dwarf willows**, hence the origin of its name.

The willow ptarmigan's body is fully covered with feathers, from nostrils to toes which limits heat loss. Like grouses, the wings of this bird are short and rounded. To better camouflage itself from its predators, the plumage of the ptarmigan varies according to the seasons. In summer it is speckled with black, brown and chamois, while in winter the plumage is white, with the exception of the tail that remains black.



Picture 6.30 The willow Ptarmigan plumage

In summer, the willow ptarmigan frequents habitats where there is moss, lichen and shrubs in the arctic tundra and feeds on leaves, flowers, fruits and seeds. In winter, this species forms groups of up to **200 individuals** that migrate further south into the taiga and even down to the 49th parallel to eat buds.



Picture 6.31 Aire de distribution du lagopède des saules

This bird slightly larger than the ruffed grouse and the spruce grouse is often hunted in open areas around forests where birch, alder and willows are abundant.

Mating takes place in the spring. The male protects the female and assists in the rearing of the chicks.

The main cause of death is predation. The incidence of hunting is marginal.

Unlike big game and wild turkey, there is no reliable and cost-effective method for assessing the small game populations in the province of Québec. Although there are bag and possession limits, the declaration of small game harvesting is not mandatory.

Exploitation monitoring is usually based on the number of individuals harvested from structured wildlife territories. Harvest statistics indicate that the small game populations studied are doing well across the province.

OTHER SMALL GAME SPECIES HUNTED IN QUÉBEC

Many other species considered as small game can also be hunted in Québec. For the benefits of all hunters.

AMERICAN CROW
ARCTIC HARE
BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD
COMMON GRACKLE
COMMON STARLING
COYOTE

GREY PARTRIDGE
GREY WOLF
GROUNDHOG
HOUSE SPARROW
RACCOON
RED FOX

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
ROCK PIGEON
ROCK PTARMIGAN
SHARP-TAILED GROUSE
WHITE-TAILED RABBIT

Picture 6.32 Species considered as small game that can be hunted in Québec

The hunting of some predators such as **coyotes**, **grey wolves**, and **red foxes** has become increasingly popular since the legalization of electronic calls.

If you want to learn more about all the species of small game that you can hunt in Québec, consult the **Zone Chasse** online application. A wealth of information is available to help you get to know them better.

Waterfowl, **woodcock** and **mourning dove** are migratory birds that are under federal jurisdiction. These game animals therefore require the **provincial small game hunting licence** and the **federal migratory game bird hunting permit**.



Picture 6.33 Waterfowl, woodcock and mourning dove

To learn more about migratory bird hunting, refer to the **Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations** which can be found on the **Canadian federal government website**.

From a biological point of view, waterfowl includes all birds of the Anatidae family, such as **ducks**, **geese** and **Canada goose**. Common characteristics are the aquatic way of life and their migrations which take place in spring and autumn in their specific flyway.

Mating takes place in the spring. In the fall, waterfowl will migrate to the South as they are no longer able to feed off the frozen ground.

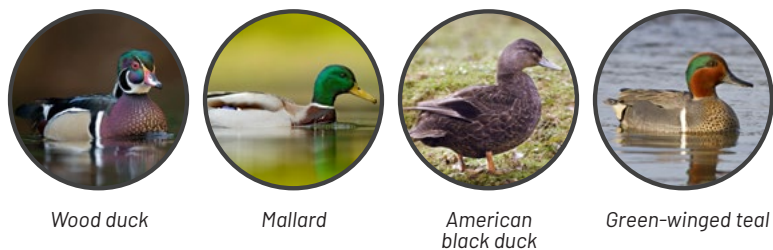
On the other hand, some of these birds become residents and overwinter on unfrozen streams. For example, Canada geese have established home around cities in summer and in winter. This causes problems of cohabitation. As hunting is prohibited in some of these municipal territories, very few factors limit the multiplication and concentration of these birds. Urban populations of so-called resident Canada geese continue to increase, and the range of this bird is overly expanding.

A spring conservation harvest of certain geese species is an effective management tool to limit the expansion of their population.

To facilitate the identification of the different varieties of ducks, they are classified into two categories: **dabblers** and **divers**.

Dabbling or surface ducks get their food without fully immersing themselves. Instead, they tip headfirst into shallow waters such as ponds, marshes, seagrass beds and peat bogs.

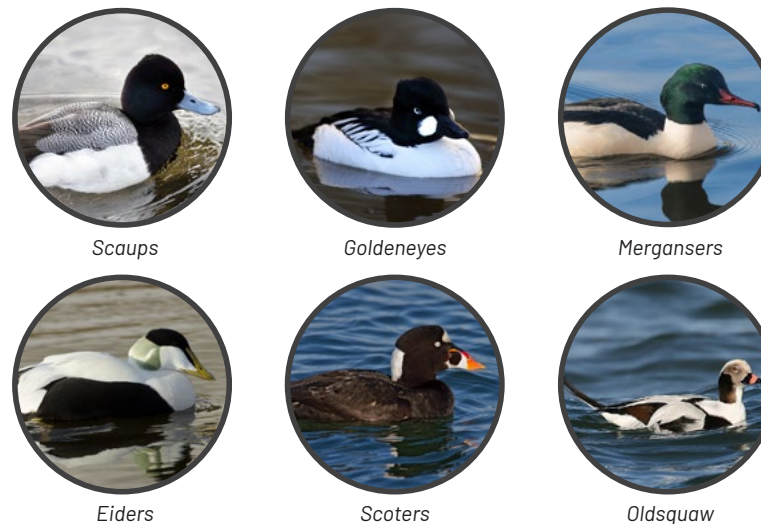
The most commons are wood duck, mallard, American black duck and green-winged teal.



Picture 6.34 Most common dabbling ducks

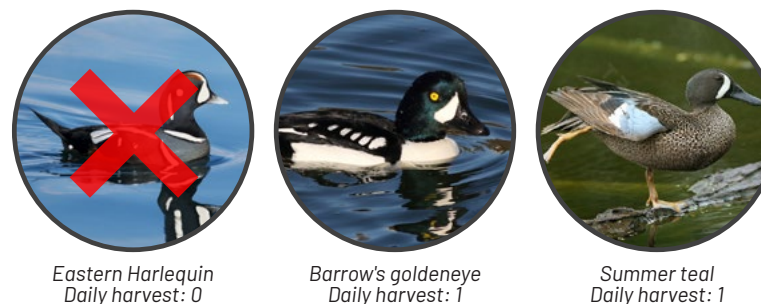
Diving ducks seek food by diving and swimming in deep water, such as at sea, in lakes and streams, or in the centre of large wetlands. Their smaller wings allow them to easily move underwater in search of food. Unfortunately, these smaller wings, force most of these diving ducks to run on the surface of the water before taking flight.

In the province of Québec, the harvest of diving ducks is mainly composed of ducks such as **scaups**, **goldeneyes**, **mergansers** and **sea ducks**. Sea ducks include **eiders**, **scoters** and **oldsquaw**.



Picture 6.35 Some of the diving ducks

It is very important to be able to differentiate between the species you can hunt because some ducks, such as the **eastern harlequin**, **Barrow's goldeneye** and **summer teal** are protected by the Species at Risk Act, which you must respect.



Picture 6.36 Protected species

As a hunter, remember that bag and possession limits vary according to the species. Do refer to the **federal government website** for regulations, or consult the **Zone Chasse** application to learn more about migratory birds.

the **American woodcock** is a type of migratory bird that is very popular among the Québec hunters.

It is a chunky bird, with a straight, elongated beak, a head with large black stripes and large, high-placed eyes. Its plumage presents a complex mixture of red, grey, black and fawn spots and lines, which constitutes an almost very effective camouflage in the forest undergrowth.



Picture 6.37 American woodcock

The American woodcock leaves Québec for the southeastern United States in early fall and returns to reproduce in early spring. It then settles mainly in the southern part of the province.

Woodcock is primarily found in young deciduous stands, wastelands, mixed forests and agroforestry environments. Using its long beak, it digs into the soil and feeds mainly on earthworms, insects and seeds.

During the spring season, at sunset and sunrise, males perform a particularly spectacular bridal parade or a display flight. To attract females, the male makes a distinctive **buzzy peent** as he flies up and then spirals down.

The federal government mainly estimates woodcock populations by assessing the inventory of these display flights. Many observers are called upon to sample the population by noting the number of male woodcocks heard on predetermined routes.

The woodcock is mainly hunted with a pointing dog, as this bird perfectly hides without moving. But the main cause of death is predation.

This is the only migratory bird that you can hunt with shot shells containing lead shot, but it is highly advisable to use steel or non-toxic shot to avoid contamination of the animal's meat.

Finally, you may be surprised to learn that you can hunt **mourning doves** since 2016 in some districts.

This brownish migratory bird has a long tail, short legs and a round body, topped by a small head. The rigid wings of the dove produce a muffled sound as it takes off and gives it a powerful flight.

The mourning dove has taken advantage of the cohabitation with the human. It frequents farms, fields, roadside, feeding mostly on the ground, on seeds in winter and on plants and insects in summer.

The vast majority of mourning doves migrate to the southeastern United States in early fall and return to breed in early spring in our province. The mourning dove is monogamous. To charm the female, the male coos, swells the feathers on his neck and noisily flaps its wings in flight.

As we have seen before, quality habitat must offer enough space, food, water and shelter in sufficient quantities that will allow game to thrive.

When an animal population becomes very abundant, it can become harmful and degrade its own habitat. Hunting is the most effective management tool for maintaining certain populations at a desirable level, thereby protecting critical habitats and ensuring the sustainable renewal of these species.

Hunting regulations, developed on the basis of these values, have allowed and still allow hunters to play an important role. Although hunting can be practised all year round in Québec, autumn remains the preferred season for this activity.

When autumn arrives, the young that were born in late winter or early summer have grown and are now more ready to survive winter. Wildlife populations are therefore at their maximum abundance level and the fur of some animals is of commercial quality.

It is also the time to harvest the game before it decreases from the rigours of winter. In fact, harvesting the surpluses by the hunters in the fall, prevents winter habitats from being overcrowded and thus protects animal populations and their food resources.

Predators also play a crucial and complementary role. Predation is often the number one killer of small game. Without predators, many animal populations would quickly become overabundant. In addition, predators usually feed on the weaker or sick individuals. Thus, allowing wildlife populations to stay healthy while keeping a good balance.



LESSON

7

HUNTING METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Hunting methods and techniques used to hunt big game, wild turkey, small game and waterfowl vary according to each species, their habitats, the hunting gear and the strategies you will be using to hunt them.

Depending on the game being hunted, you must learn to control a variety of details to overcome the animal's sense of smell, hearing and sight. Game senses are more or less developed depending on the species.

You can outwit game by using calls or decoys and wearing hunting clothing whose different camouflage, under certain circumstances, allows you to blend into the natural landscape surrounding your hunting site.

The use of comfortable clothing worn in several layers adapted to the type of hunting you practise is advisable, as this makes it easy to adapt to the ever-changing weather conditions. Ideally, the fabric should be noiseless when rubbing branches and shrubs or even when you move around so as not to alert and spook the game.

It is also essential that the clothes you choose do not cause any interference while shooting. When you practise shooting, you should also wear the same clothes that you will be using while you hunt. It is also advisable to camouflage your head and especially your face and hands.

Also wear warm, waterproof boots so you can keep up spotting for a long time without moving and being comfortable enough to allow you to walk long distances.

Using a backpack to carry your survival gear and hunting accessories is also recommended, but **don't forget to carry your orange fluorescent safety vest over the backpack.**

You must definitely keep hidden or mask your human odours. It is essential to hunt successfully. Some type of odourless clothing even absorbs human odours. Your hunting clothing can also be treated by impregnating it with the natural odours of the same plant species that are present on the hunting grounds.

And between hunting expeditions, it is recommended to keep your clothes in an airy container by placing branches of conifers or a few drops of concentrated oil with a smell of earth or other vegetable essence. To counter noxious odours, it is also recommended that you do not wash your hunting clothes with popular scented laundry soap.

If you absolutely must wash your hunting clothes, there are certain laundry soaps specially designed to eliminate odours and ultraviolet reflections. Certain game such as the white-tailed deer easily detects ultraviolet reflections.

In summary, good hunting clothing should be comfortable and suitable for various weather conditions, it should blend in with the surroundings, be extremely quiet, not interfere with your shooting, and be odourless.

DURING THE HUNTING SEASON WITH FIREARMS, WHILE HUNTING MOST GAME YOU DO HAVE TO WEAR A FLUORESCENT ORANGE VEST AT ALL TIMES.

SCOUTING

Especially for the big game, scouting the territory is essential to increase your chances of having a successful hunt.

You must learn to find and interpret the tracks left by the regular circulation of animals where the vegetation is crushed like bedding or automarking spots.

You should also look and spot for grazing or feeding traces, such as bevel-cut twigs on the ground, small branches stripped of their leaves, or torn bark from the trees.

You can also discover antler rubbing on trees or droppings characteristic for each big game that you intend to hunt.

Once you've spotted these indications, camera installation can be very useful for knowing the times of the game's comings and goings.

It is obviously more difficult to find evidence of the presence of small game in a territory, but a keen eye can spot them especially if there is snow in the territory where you intend to hunt.

APPROACH / ATTRACT / INTERCEPT

There are different hunting methods and techniques depending on the game to be pursued, that will allow you **to shoot in the vital zone** of an animal. The knowledge and ability to apply these strategies largely determine the success of the harvest during your hunting expedition.

Often a well-versed hunter will use a combination of tactics that will allow him to approach, attract and intercept game. These techniques are grouped as follows:

- Blind hunting on the ground or in a tree stand
- Stalking or still hunting
- Deer drive hunting
- Hunting with a call
- Hunting with visual or olfactory lures
- Hunting with bait
- Hunting with dogs

If you decide to hunt big game **in a ground or tree stand**, it is advisable to camouflage yourself near the place where you have discovered clues confirming the regular passage of the coveted game, so to intercept it.

But remember that the sense of smell, especially of moose, white-tailed deer and predators, is very sensitive. These games can detect you very easily from far away.

Therefore, as much as possible, you should always hunt facing the wind or upwind to avoid game being able to smell and detect you. You must always consider the direction of the prevailing winds, mostly from the west, when choosing the location to put up your blind.

You can camouflage yourself with a minimum of camo fabric or a natural screen but as a general rule, it is essential to move as little as possible if you want the game to come within range.

Pay particular attention to noises that are not natural, such as the metallic sounds that will surely scare away the game.

If you hunt on the ground, camouflaged inside a tent, then your scent is more confined to the inside of the enclosure, your movements are hidden and the noises you make are lessened. If your tent is new, take care to fully assemble it before setting it up on your hunting site to ensure it did get a good aeration and to eliminate the smell of synthetic materials from the new fabric.

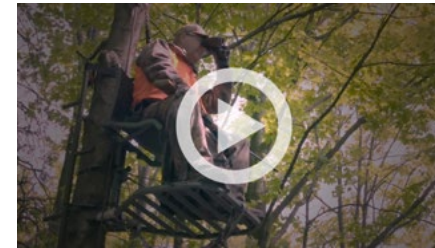
The freestanding tent with some kind of camouflage pattern material can be set up easily and blends in with the natural scenery. The ground-mounted camouflage blind can be used to intercept **moose, white-tailed deer, waterfowl** and **wild turkey**. It is not recommended for bear hunting.

When you hunt high up on a portable tree stand, you have the advantage of having a better view of the territory. It allows you to better see the arrival of the game and its direction of flight after the shot.

You are also less likely, at close range, to be seen, heard or smelled by big game. Shooting is also safer because it forces you to shoot towards the ground.

On the other hand, your position limits you to a fixed point of view and restricts some shooting angles. If the game appears at a greater distance from the stand, then you are more likely to be seen.

Nevertheless, the lookout in a tree stand remains the recommended method to intercept **moose, white-tailed deer** and especially **bear**. On the other hand, it is quite demanding to transport and install a tree stand on a hunting site and there are more risks of serious injuries or death in the event of a fall. This technique also has the disadvantage of exposing you to wind, rain or snow while hunting.



Before going any further, watch the video
TREE STAND

Still hunting is another effective method of approaching and harvesting the big game. It can be used to hunt moose or white-tailed deer. You must then walk very slowly and silently while tracking the animal. It is important to stop regularly after every few steps to observe and listen for several seconds to your environment and in this way hope to detect the game before it sees you.

Still hunting moose is mainly done in wildlife reserves or at hunting outfitters lands, due to the size of the exclusive hunting grounds for each group of hunters. Still hunting consists of roaming through the habitat frequented by wild game and walking ideally against the wind to approach, detect and harvest it. You should always walk slowly, quietly, taking frequent breaks to listen and observe.

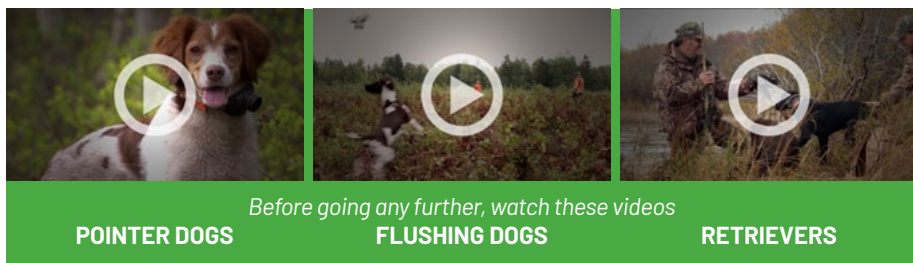
Still hunting in groups of two or three people is the most efficient method of harvesting small game, as it allows more territory to be scouted and to flush out the animals. For safety reasons, it is important to walk side by side without ever losing sight of your hunting companions.

Still hunting is the ideal technique to learn how to hunt because it requires little equipment and little preparation. It can be practised almost anywhere in Québec, but be sure to always respect private property.

You can even hunt migratory birds by **walking the banks of streams** so to make the birds fly in front of you.

Hunting with dogs is allowed for **small game** and **waterfowl**, but is prohibited for hunting white-tailed deer, moose and black bear. If you wish to hunt with a dog, you must have a complete control of the animal and thus all the time. It is advisable to attend training lessons and also to become a member of those associations that do hunt with dogs. In short, the kind of dog that you will choose will depend on the game you hunt, the way you hunt and of your shooting skills.

You will find a lot of useful information on the site of the **FédéCP**.



You can also attract game by **calling it** adequately.

There is a wide variety of calls on the market designed to imitate the different sounds made by the game you are looking for. Since a few years back, you can even find very efficient portable electronic calls.



Picture 7.1 Electronic calls

HOWEVER, IT IS PROHIBITED TO USE ELECTRONIC CALLS TO HUNT DUCKS, CANADA GEESE AND WOODCOCK.

Before using hunting calls, it is essential that you educate yourself and practice to avoid scaring away game by making inappropriate sounds. The ideal is to accompany an experienced hunter during your first outings.

The use of calls for hunting is very effective for almost all game. However, this technique is not appropriate for small game, with the exceptions being the crow and certain predators such as coyote and red fox.

Scraping white-tailed deer or moose antlers commonly known as rattling is also a very useful technique for attracting moose or white-tailed deer. It consists of clashing together two antlers to imitate a fight between two rivals during the rut period. This technique aims to attract a dominant male. Other accessories on the market can also imitate the scraping of antlers. You can also attract deer by scraping the vegetation or shrubs to imitate the rubbing of deer during rutting season.

You can also attract game by using **visual lures** also called **decoys** that mimic the targeted species.



Picture 7.2 Visual lures

In the early 1900s, hunters used live decoys to hunt waterfowl, but after they were banned in 1916, wood and other materials have been used ever since. Decoys are now also used to hunt **wild turkey, crows, coyotes, white-tailed deer** and even **moose**.

There are also **olfactory lures** on the market aimed at masking human odours or bringing in game by stimulating their appetite or sexual attraction towards the other sex.

On the market you may find commercial, synthetic or natural mare in heat urine to attract specifically white-tailed deer or moose.

IT IS PROHIBITED TO USE OLFACTORY LURES BASED ON NATURAL CERVIDS' URINE TO AVOID THE SPREAD OF THE CHRONIC DEBILITATING DISEASE.

If you are **hunting on the lookout** in stands, you can also forestall game with taste lures or commonly called food baits.

For example, salt blocks or certain minerals are regularly used to attract cervids, apples, carrots or corn for white-tailed deer, and various food surpluses are used to bait bears, crows and some other predators.

NOTE THAT IT IS FORBIDDEN TO BAIT WATERFOWL AND WILD TURKEY DURING THE HUNTING SEASON.

There are specific times to bait deer and bear depending on the zone where you hunt. You must therefore **consult the regulations** each year to ensure that you are baiting game correctly and according to the law.

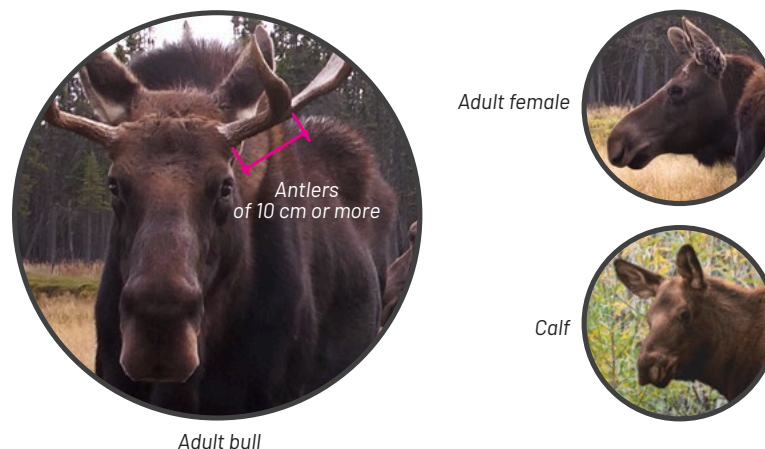
SHOOTING BIG GAME

Your hunting methods and techniques have been successful and have ultimately enabled you to be in a position to shoot the game.

For cervids, you must first identify with certainty the animal that you are authorized to shoot.

Often your hunting licence only authorizes you to harvest a buck carrying antlers. If you hunt moose, depending on the year, you may shoot a moose with or without antlers or even a calf.

Antlers of 10 centimetres or more is the only indication that the animal is an adult bull. If they are not apparent, it may be a young bull, an adult female or a calf.



Picture 7.3 Antlers of 10 centimetres or more indicates that the animal is an adult bull

The adult female usually has a triangular white vulva patch that runs from the base of the tail to the vulva.



Picture 7.4 White vulva patch

The calf is obviously smaller than the female. Its head is shorter and its snout is smaller. The head of the adult female is longer and the snout is protruding and swollen. Viewed from the front, the calf's head is triangular and its snout is quite pointed, while the female adult moose head is rather rectangular.



Picture 7.5 Differences between female and calf

The calf rarely moves alone, most of the time it stays close to its mother. Be careful not to double kill during the shooting.

The one-and-a-half-year-old female moose is much more independent, although it is sometimes seen with an older female.

It is very important to be able to differentiate a calf from a young female of a year and a half, because you could easily mix them up and shoot a young female when your licence only allows you to shoot a calf or a male.

So once you've identified the game, you have to wait for it to be placed in the shooting position. Even if most animals do not discern the colours, if you move the body, the large artificial shape of your safety vest moving could scare away the game. Stay calm and make no noise or sudden movement.

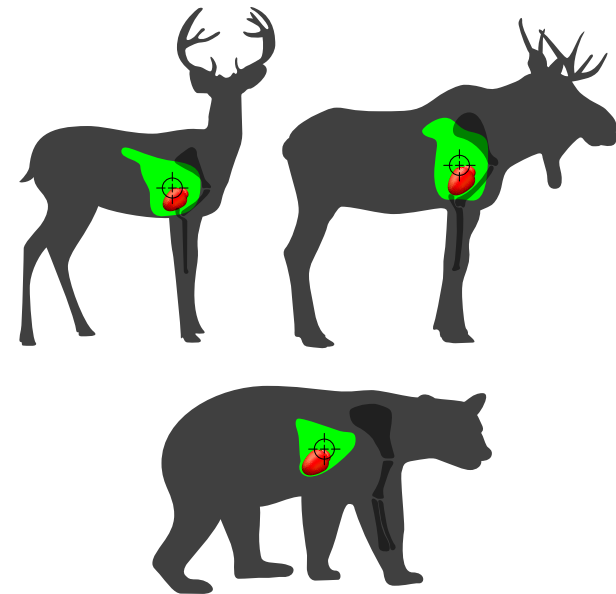
Wait that the game is at a reasonable distance taking in consideration your skill and the limits of your weapon and thus carry out a lethal shot in the animal's vital area.

Shoot only if you are deeply convinced that you will reach the vital zone.

Reaching the big game in the vital zone is essential if the animal is to die as quickly as possible. If you hit the vital area, the animal will quickly succumb near the impact site. You don't want to wound the game. In doing so you may never find the animal.

For all big game, you need to identify the precise shooting point in the centre of the vital zone, the heart-lungs group, which is immediately at the back of the front leg for the cervids and a little further back for the black bear.

Aim for the crease of the shoulder at the first third of the ribcage from the bottom. Aim the point behind the angle of the shoulder blade with the elongated leg.



Picture 7.6 Vital zones

Be patient, wait for the game to approach and ensure a safe shooting and that no obstacles are between you and the game.

If you notice that the animal has an abnormal appearance or unusual behaviour, the animal may be sick and it is advisable **not to harvest the animal**.



Picture 7.7 Abnormal appearance

Remember that you should only shoot when the game is stationary and ideally perpendicular to your shooting line.

When the animal does not see you, slowly mount your weapon and prepare to shoot by focusing on the precise point in the centre of the vital area.

Take a deep breath, exhale slightly and shoot while remaining focused on the precise point of the shot. Note the reaction of the game and its precise location.

Normally, if you hit a cervid's heart or lungs, the animal will jump and almost always run away with its head down, only to collapse a little further away.

If you hit the animal outside the vital area, the game can wait a few seconds before fleeing and even stop in its flight to observe and express its anger by hissing at you.

If the animal does not fall quickly to the ground after being hit, the game can then hide further away and succumb to its wounds much later. The reaction of the game is one of the clues that helps greatly to determine the time it takes to wait before going out in search of the game.

Observe the animal's behaviour and remember the exact place where it disappeared out of your field of view.

When you lose sight of the game, listen carefully and try to determine the direction of the animal's flight.

Stay calm, secure your weapon, record the time and place you were at the time of the shooting, then share the news with your hunting partners to avoid a double killing and ask for help in searching, eviscerating and transporting the game.

A photograph of a moose standing in a forest, looking towards the camera. The moose is brown with a lighter-colored head and neck. It is surrounded by green foliage and trees. The background is slightly blurred, showing more trees and a bright sky.

LESSON

8

SEARCHING / WOUNDED BIG GAME

After you shoot at an animal and you don't see it anymore , you have to wait a minimum of one hour before you start the search.

Remain silent. Allow some time to let the animal stop, lie down until its last breath. The time it takes for the animal to die can vary from a few minutes to several hours depending on the part of the body you have hit.

Be patient, then go silently and slowly to the impact site, taking care not to obliterate the clues near where the game was last standing. Mark the location with biodegradable tape or toilet paper and take the bearing from the animal's vanishing point.

Usually a cervid that has been hit reacts energetically. He jumps and leaves very deep footprints in the ground.

If you have hit a bear, he will also tend to react energetically by pushing his claws into the ground before leaving.

In general, deeper-than-usual footprints indicate that the animal has been hit.

Try not to disturb the scene, because if you call on a blood-tracking dog handler to search the animal, the handler must analyze all the clues you have found at the scene.

It takes a lot of experience and careful examination of the appearance of the blood to determine where the animal was hit. Blood analysis is not an exact science, but it will usually allow you to deduce whether or not you have reached the vital zone and will help you determine how long you should wait before going out to look for the game.

Usually, **when you reach the vital zone, there is little blood at the site of the impact.** Blood loss tends to increase thereafter.

On the other hand, if you hit the animal **outside the vital zone, you may find more blood at the impact site**, but less blood during your search, because the blood coagulates and the bleeding subsides.

Meticulous analysis of the blood found can help you determine if the animal has been hit with a **fatal shot in the vital zone.**

If you have reached the heart, the blood is a beautiful red colour and it can contain large bubbles. That's a good sign.

If you have reached the lungs, the blood is usually brighter, frothy, rather pinkish in colour, and may even contain pieces of lungs.

If you think you have reached the heart or the lungs, **you should still wait at least one hour** before setting out to find game.

The blood from the liver is rather dark and crimson-coloured. It is thicker and aggregates into more syrupy and grainy spots. If you find blood that looks like this, you should ideally **wait four hours before searching for the animal.**

If you have hit the game rather at the back of the vital zone, you may have touched the stomach or intestines. The blood will then have a greenish colour and will appear in fine droplets. It could also be mixed with stomach fragments or feces.

There will be very little bleeding. You must therefore wait longer to allow time for the animal to lie down and succumb to its wounds. You must also **wait at least four hours before tracking down the animal.**



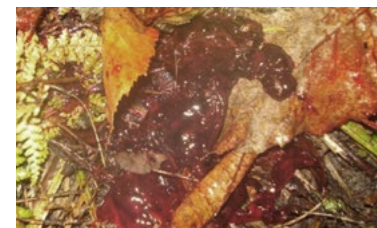
Blood from the heart



Blood from the lungs



Blood from the liver



Blood from the stomach or intestines

Picture 8.1 *Different types of blood*

Visualize the moment you took the shot and if you think that you have hit the game outside the vital zone, wait several hours before starting the search unless it is raining or snowing, then wait less time to avoid losing the traces of blood that would greatly help you find the animal.

When the time comes to go in search of game, follow the animal's tracks while moving slowly and quietly, until you reach the place where the animal went out of your field of view.

Once there, mark the location and look for clues that will show you the direction to follow so to track down the animal.

Move around very quietly. Look for clues such as tracks, broken branches, hairs and, of course, the blood trail.

To help you discern blood on reddish leaves, you can use a spray containing hydrogen peroxide. In contact with blood, hydrogen peroxide creates a chemical reaction and releases gas bubbles which will help you spot the blood when you have difficulty perceiving it.

Look closely at the blood droplets. The direction of the splashes can help you determine the direction the animal is going.



Picture 8.2 Direction of the splashes

As soon as you find a clue, mark the spot with a ribbon. Of course, it is not necessary to mark all the clues if they are close together, but make sure you never lose sight of the previous ribbon.

If you don't find any more clues, go back to the last ribbon and scour the area again, increasing the search radius, always keeping an eye on the last marker.

If you do not find the animal within 200 metres of the point of impact, or if there is no more a visible blood trail, you should wait at least a minimum of four hours before resuming the search or better contact a blood tracking dog handler to keep searching for the animal.

Let's suppose now that you have not hit the vital zone and that the injured animal lies down to rest and that it hears you tracking it. It will then rise to run away even further and thus you may find a "**bedding spot**". Look for flattening vegetation showing you where the animal lied down on the ground. Often you will find a blood patch in it, and if the animal has just gotten up, the spot may also be slightly warmer.

Beside a bedding spot, mark it with two ribbons and **wait a minimum of four hours**.

Once this time has elapsed, resume your search and if you find signs that the animal is running away again, **wait another four hours each time the animal runs away before continuing your quest**.

You must at all costs allow time for the bleeding to cause the death of the game, because if the animal is not yet dead and it hears you chase it, even if it is mortally wounded, its instinct will make it run further and further away and you may lose the animal.

It's time to rest a little, be patient, wait before resuming your search and ask for help from a blood tracking dog handler if you haven't already done so. It is recommended that you already have in your possession the names and phone numbers of some blood-tracking dog handlers around the territory where you hunt.

You can easily find that information by checking the **Zone Chasse** application with your cell phone and also online using your computer or tablet.

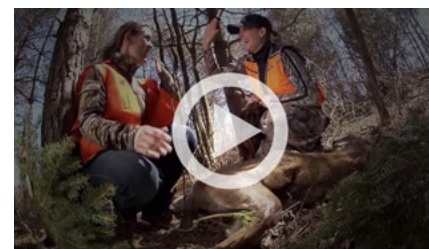
To help the tracker dog's work, it is also strongly recommended not to trample or contaminate the places where the clues are found.

A CONSCIENTIOUS HUNTER MAKES IT A POINT OF HONOUR TO RECOVER A WOUNDED ANIMAL AT ALL COSTS.

If you have mortally wounded an animal and do not retrieve it and then harvest another animal, you are simply wasting Québec's wildlife resource.

Out of respect for wildlife, you must never abandon prospecting a territory before having exhausted all possibilities of finding the animal.

Searches are made day and night, in rain or snow. Once the quest is completed, don't forget to pick up all the signs of your transit that you can find. Collect all the ribbons you have put up before you leave the premises.



Before going any further, watch the video
BLOOD TRACKING DOGS



LESSON

9

FIELD CARE FOR BAGGED GAME

In order to obtain a high-quality wild game meat, it is necessary to eviscerate the animal as soon as possible and allow the carcass to cool down, this will prevent the growth of bacteria that would make the meat unfit for human consumption.

It is also important to wear nitrile gloves to avoid contracting diseases transmissible to humans during the evisceration.

For small game and waterfowl, avoid piling the carcasses against and on top of each other to promote the fastest cooling of the wild meat.

Be especially careful when hunting snowshoe hare in case the animal behaves unusually, it could be infected with **Tularemia**. This disease can cause high fever in humans.

As a precaution, it is advisable to dampen the animal with water and wear a mask and gloves before removing the skin and eviscerating the game so as not to inhale the suspended hairs that could contaminate you.

If you see white spots on the viscera, then the animal has certainly contracted the disease.



Picture 9.1 White spots on viscera

Put the carcass in a bag, throw it in the household waste and disinfect all the equipment that you used without forgetting your hands.

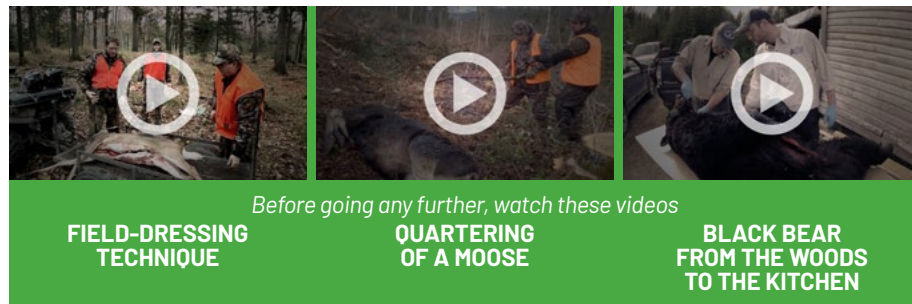
For game birds, you must remove all the internal organs. Collect the meat after removing the skin or feathers, making sure you also remove the rump. Then place the meat in the refrigerator.

If you are freezing the meat, envelop it in plastic wrap **BEFORE** you put it in a freezer bag and remove the air. Thus protected the meat will less likely dry out in contact with the cold air in the bag.

It is recommended to freeze small game meat within 24 hours of harvest if you do not wish to eat it within a short time.

Once you have finished eviscerating your game, it is important to thoroughly disinfect all the equipment that you have used to prevent the spreading of bacteria. Afterwards, dispose of the viscera and your gloves into a sealed plastic bag, throw it in your household garbage and then wash your hands. Now let's see how to eviscerate big game.

Regardless of the type of wild meat, it is strongly recommended to eat only well-cooked game meat so as to eliminate all bacteria that are harmful to humans.





LESSON 10

FOREST SURVIVAL / PREVENTION AND FIRST AID

FOREST SURVIVAL

An accident happens quickly and when you are hunting, you may find yourself in isolated and remote territory.

It is therefore essential to have basic knowledge of **survival and first aid** to get out of trouble because it doesn't just happen to others.

The few concepts that you will see here are very basic. It is recommended that you take additional training such as: forest survival, orientation and first aid before you go hunting.

Once these concepts have been understood and you are finally ready to go hunting, you must inform a reliable person of the place where you are hunting and specify the time and day of your return.

This person will then be able to arrange the rescue if you do not return on time.

But always keep in mind that you are responsible for your own safety. It is therefore strongly advised to have a reliable means of communication to be able to alert the emergency services yourself.

In remote areas, most cellular phone services do not provide coverage and distances to call for help may exceed the range of amateur radio transmitters used by hunters who hunt in groups. In this case, you must bring a portable phone linked to the satellite telephone network or carry a distress beacon to be able to alert the emergency services.



Short-range radio transmitters

Satellite phone

Distress beacon

Picture 10.1 Communication devices

When hunting, be especially vigilant and careful not to get into trouble, you must always know very precisely the exact position where you are situated in the wilderness.

It's also a very good idea to have a map and compass handy even if you have an electronic device to help you find your way, as these devices may run out of batteries or even stop working.

Note that batteries lose a lot of their performance in very cold weather. It is therefore advisable to keep all electronic devices and batteries close to your body to keep them warm.

If you unfortunately can no longer find your way back, do not trust that the rescue team could arrive rapidly. You need to organize yourself and have with you, everything that you need to survive in the forest. Your main challenge will be to cope with thirst and cold.

In addition to being well dressed to face the changing weather, you must at least have in your possession certain accessories essential to your survival:

- Map and compass
- First-aid kit
- Drinking water, water purification tablets
- Food containing a high concentration of protein
- Two fire sources
- Multi-tool pocketknife
- Flashlight
- Whistle so that the rescue team will get to you quickly
- String
- Toilet paper
- Brass wire to make snares or to attach together the structure of a shelter
- Orange plastic bags and reflective emergency blankets to use as a raincoat or to use them to make the roof of your shelter or bivouac

In addition to these indispensable accessories, it is also recommended that you carry some other accessories:

- Spare batteries for your flashlight and electronic devices
- Small metal container to boil water or aluminum foil that you will fold to make a small pot
- Chicken or beef stock cubes to warm you up and give you indispensable mineral salts
- Sweet treats or hard candies to give you energy
- Folding saw or hatchet to cut wood and build a fire or a shelter
- Mirror to signal your presence
- Candle to light you and heat your shelter
- Needles and thread
- Fishing line, hooks of different sizes, a spoon, weights and some fishing flies to allow you to fish

There are several models of survival kits on the market that you can complete as needed.

Beyond all these accessories, the best advice to survive in the forest is to keep calm. When you find yourself alone and lost, it is natural to feel fear. But acknowledging and accepting the situation is the best thing to do because the very first decisions you make are crucial for your survival.

The first thing to do is ask yourself if it's better to stay put where you are or try to find your way back to safety. If you panic and run all over the place, you may find yourself sweating, hurting yourself and wasting your vital energy.

If it's still daylight and you think that you can still get out of the woods, try to locate yourself, take a compass bearing towards an easily identifiable point and head towards it.

However, if you are at the end of the day or if you are injured, treat your wounds and prepare to stay out overnight. Remain convinced that you will be found, since you have already notified someone of where you are hunting and the time of your return.

Do not allow your imagination to invent and exaggerate threats. Normally, wild animals have an innate fear of humans and do not represent a real danger in Québec.

Build a shelter taking into account the direction of the prevailing winds which come mainly from the West, light a fire and collect enough wood to stay warm overnight.



Picture 10.2 Shelter to stay overnight

Ideally you should build your shelter near a water source because you will have to drink plenty of fluids so you don't get dehydrated. Obviously, it is recommended to purify the water with a purifying tablet or boil it before consuming it.

You can eat snow, but that will make you lose your body heat. Keep yourself warm by sheltering from rain, wind and isolate yourself from the ground by covering it with evergreen branches. Keep yourself dry, because if you get soggy, you will lose your heat 5 times faster.

To help keep yourself warm, drink hot beverages, eat high-energy food regularly and do small exercises.

Make an inventory of your food so that you can eat it gradually and don't forget to signal your presence at regular intervals with your whistle. You will be heard more than two kilometres away.

Also regularly fuel your fire with coniferous branches and green leaves to produce thick smoke that can be seen for miles around.

PREVENTION AND FIRST AID

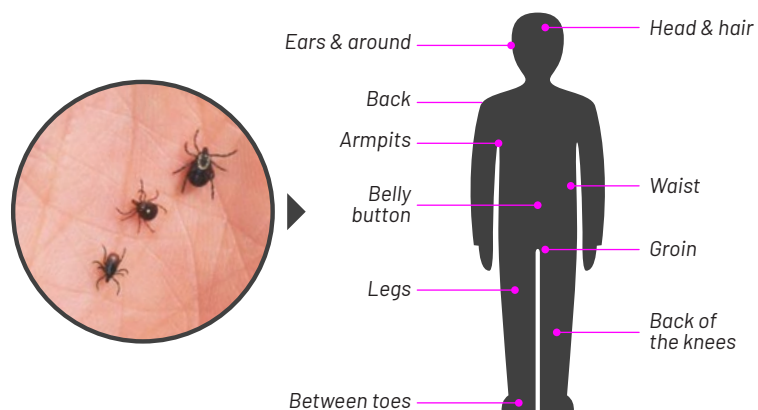
Wear long pants and a long-sleeved shirt and apply a good **DEET** or icaridin mosquito repellent to protect yourself from insect bites that could transmit you some kind of bacteria. For example, you could develop **Lyme disease** if you are bitten by a black-legged tick.



Picture 10.3 Black-legged tick

As a general rule, you must examine all parts of your body carefully when you return from an outdoor activity and ideally ask someone else to help you check areas that are hard to see by yourself, such as your scalp or your back.

Touch your skin in search of small bumps. Ticks often cling to your skin for quite a long period of time. Be very careful and visually look for small blackheads all over your skin. Depending on their stages of growth, ticks can be very small and you do not necessarily have felt their sting while being outside.



Picture 10.4 Examine all parts of your body

Do not crush the insect if it is attached to your skin because the bacteria may spread through your body. Instead, use a **tapered tweezer** or a small tool specially designed to remove ticks by grabbing the insect as close to the skin as possible. Then **gently pull the tick** to remove it and then disinfect the affected area.



Tapered tweezer



Tick remover

Picture 10.5 Tools especially designed to remove ticks

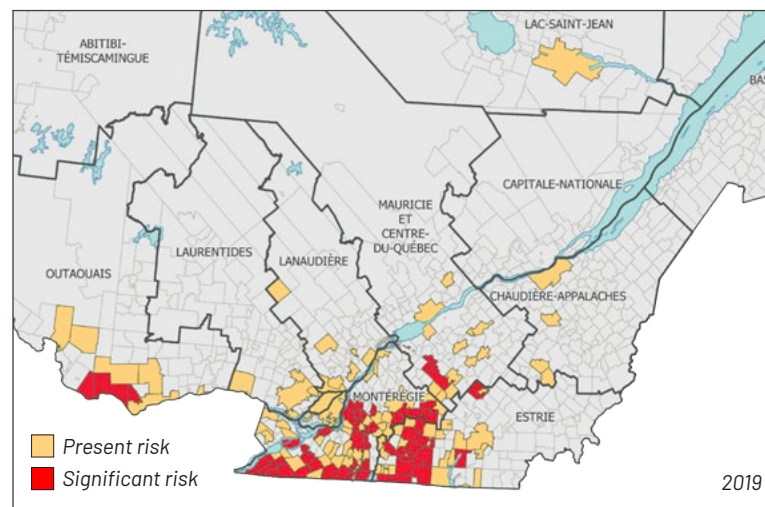
Never pour oil or liquid soap on a tick to make it withdraw on its own, as the tick will empty its stomach before pulling itself out and thus the chances of spreading the bacteria become greater.

Keep the tick in an airtight container such as a pill bottle or take a picture to be able to identify it.

You can send the photo to etick.ca so that specialists can confirm if the insect is a black-legged tick that could have transmitted the bacteria that cause Lyme disease.

Be vigilant, it is advisable to always carry a tick removing tool to collect ticks when you are in the woods, as more and more black-legged ticks carrying the bacteria are being found in Québec.

Even though **10% to 20%** of ticks carry the bacteria. If you have been bitten, especially in the Eastern Townships, Montérégie or Outaouais regions, it is best to consult and take an antibiotic as a preventive measure.



Picture 10.6 Tick distribution map

Consult a doctor if you develop increasing redness of the skin, muscle pain, headache or fever in the days following the sting.

Also, be aware that some animals, such as raccoons and fox, can be infected with rabies or other diseases that they can pass on to you. Be vigilant. If you are bitten by an animal, wash the bite immediately, call **INFO-SANTÉ-811** and follow their instructions.

Performing first aid following an accident requires specialized expertise, for you to keep calm and a well-stocked first aid kit. Your kit should be waterproof and contain the following:

- Disinfectant solutions
- Adhesive bandages
- Sterile compresses
- Different types of bandages
- Pins, scissors or eyelash tweezers

Always check before departure that it contains all the essential items in sufficient quantities. Then complete your kit according to your state of health and your personal needs.

Inform your companions of your health situation and the first aid items that you carry with you.

If an accident occurs, safely stabilize the situation and then administer first aid. Afterwards, go to the hospital or call 911 if necessary.

In case of bleeding, disinfect the wound, apply a bandage, then press lightly on the wound to stop the bleeding and overaise the limb as possible.

If the dressing is full of blood, do not remove it, instead apply another one over it and continue to apply pressure to stop the bleeding.

For internal bleeding, the injured person must be transported to the hospital quickly. You must at all costs keep the person conscious and keep the injured person on an empty stomach.

In the case of a fracture, a sprain or a dislocation, immobilize the affected limb with a splint, take care not to obstruct the blood circulation.

For a dislocation, never attempt to replace the displaced bone yourself. If the injury is to a foot, do not remove the shoe.

In the event of a burn, immerse the affected part in cold water for a few minutes to cut the air and stop the burn. Then clean the wound and apply a sterile wet compress. If there are blisters, be careful not to puncture them to prevent the burn from becoming infected.

The importance of taking a first aid and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation course cannot be overemphasized.

If you need to assist an injured person, first make sure that the manoeuvres to be performed are safe. Stay calm. Provide first aid and reassure the injured. Keep him warm, water him and check its state of consciousness regularly.

If the wounded is unconscious, check his breathing and practice artificial respiration if necessary or cardiac resuscitation if there is no pulse.

One of these scenarios could happen to you, so you need to be able to deal with that type of situation. If you plan to hunt in remote areas, it is advisable to take out an emergency air transport insurance by helicopter for your rescue.

LESSON 11

BOAT SAFETY WHILE HUNTING

If you wish to personally operate a motorboat, regardless of its length, engine type or horsepower, you must first take and pass a recognized boating safety course to obtain a mandatory competency card.

You may obtain your **Pleasure Craft Operator Card** by registering and taking your **online course** on the **Federation's website**.



Picture 11.1 Pleasure Craft Operator Card

But as a general rule, before leaving on a trip or expedition, you should plan your itinerary very carefully and notify a responsible person of the time you are expected to return.

In addition to bringing your survival and first-aid kits and a reliable means of communication, you must also wear a life jacket or personal flotation device, and also have on board the boat certain other mandatory equipment:

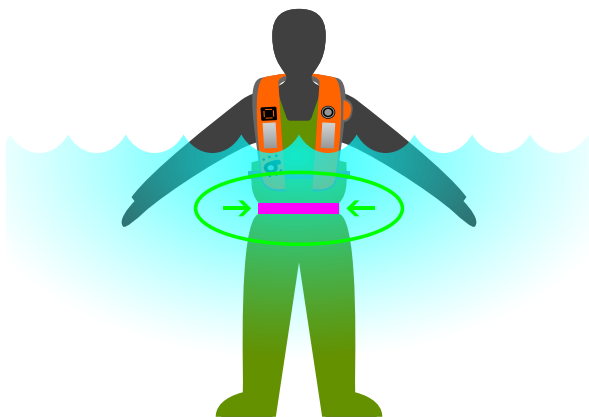
- Oars or paddles to help you out if your engine breaks down
- Anchor
- Hand bailer
- Sound signalling device
- Waterproof flashlight
- Buoyant heaving line or floating catch line so that you can rescue a person who has fallen into the water.

Plan your hunting trip carefully by consulting nautical or bathymetric charts and checking weather conditions and tide times if necessary depending on where you plan to use your craft.

Never dare the weather, always examine the boat whether motorized or not before setting out, know the boat's limits and recognize your own limitations.

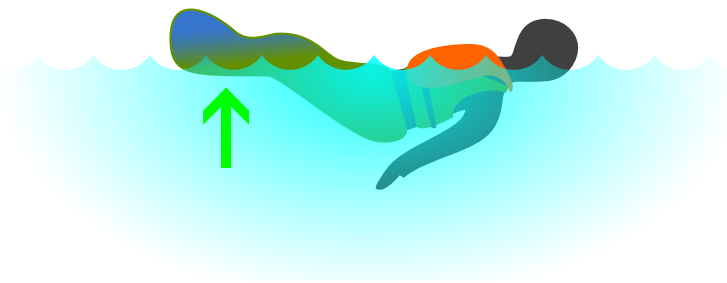
It's also a good idea to tie your equipment to the boat for easier recovery if you capsize and never carry your shooting weapon slung over your shoulder as it could drag you to the bottom if you fall into the water.

If you are wearing full-length chest waders, tighten the belt enough to prevent water from getting inside the boots if you fall into the water.



Picture 11.2 How to wear full-length chest waders

If the boots fill with water, they could drag you to the bottom. It is advisable to raise your legs as quickly as possible so that the air trapped at the end of the boots makes you float.



Picture 11.3 Use the air trapped at the end of the boots

Finally, **never overload a boat, never shoot a firearm standing up and always wear a life jacket or personal flotation device suitable for your size.**



LESSON

12

CONCLUSION / A RESPONSIBLE HUNTER

This course has allowed you to acquire the fundamental and necessary knowledge to behave in a respectful and responsible way, of course, towards wildlife and the environment, but also towards all other users of natural environments.

Remember that wildlife in Québec is a collective good and that each generation must manage this exceptional wealth judiciously to ensure the sustainability of wildlife and hunting.

Moreover, each year, the volunteer involvement of hunters helps protect wildlife populations for the benefit of all Quebecers.

Hunting is a great challenge and has great adventures waiting for you, your family and your friends. Practice, study and experience will allow you to develop your own tips and improve the methods learned.

It is also advisable to expand your training independently and to hunt, at the beginning, with an experienced hunter and by so doing, you will improve your hunting techniques.

You should also practise on a regular basis your shooting techniques and check the regulations, each year before the hunting season, to make sure you know the rules regarding the hunt you practise.

Finally, become a **member of the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs** to keep you well informed and help the entire network to carry out hundreds of interventions to protect, enhance and restore wildlife habitats in this province.

In addition to the accident insurance and a host of member-exclusive benefits, you'll have the opportunity to meet passionate people from whom you'll learn a lot.

For more information, please don't hesitate to contact the **ministry responsible for wildlife management** or the **Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs**.

Good hunting!



Photo: Carl Newton

Technical adviser - Translator

GIANFRANCO CAVALLO

Technical advisers

MARTIN SAVARD, EDITH ROSA, PIERRE CARON, PIERRE COUTURE, YVES MARTINEAU

Person in charge of training hunters and trappers

MICHEL BRAULT (MFFP)

Executive director of FédéCP

ALAIN COSSETTE

Script - Still frames
from videos

JEANBOUTIN.COM

Cover Idea/Concept -
Graphic illustrations - Formatting
benoit tremblay
COMMUNICATION

