

GPS allows hunters to explore new territory

With fall hunting seasons just getting underway, many sportsmen are making their annual checklist of gear they need to take along.

This year, in addition to the usual items such as guns, ammunition, binoculars and clothing, many hunters are adding a good set of topographical maps, a compass and a GPS or Global Positioning System receiver to their list.

Lightweight and portable, these handy GPS devices let you record your position, the location of your hunting camp, treestands or where you parked your truck.

With these locations stored in the memory bank of your GPS, it will guide you back to these locations any time of the day or night in any kind of weather.

By using a GPS satellite navigator, hunters can now safely explore new territory and increase their odds for success by venturing

further afield.

If you're new to GPS navigation this fall, here are some tips from the experts at Magellan Systems, the leading manufacturer of GPS satellite navigation and communication equipment:

Pre-season scouting. If time still permits, take a few weekends to do some scouting ahead of time. Use your GPS to mark game trails, potential treestand sites, feed plots and bedding areas.

Also mark the location where you see any game. The GPS will keep track of the time so you can plot game activity and movement.

Keep a log of key locations. Once in the field, always remember to record the locations of your camp, trail heads, treestands, game trails and other important sites in a written log.

Better yet, write them down on your topographical map. That way

you'll never lose them, and they'll be readily at hand for future trips.

Take the best route. Sometimes the easiest way to your treestand or area you want to hunt isn't the best way to go. By avoiding active game trail and feeding areas you can increase your odds for success.

With your GPS, you can create a route that takes you in through the "back door" before day light or back home after dusk without fear of getting lost.

Make your own map. Use the plotter screen on your GPS to make your own map. By plotting the locations of ridges, saddles,

creeks and other landmarks, you can tell at a glance where you are without referring to your topo map. Because the plotter will actually draw a picture of your predetermined route and the course you're following, you'll know how far you've traveled and the distance to your destination.

After the hunt. Getting your trophy back to camp can be a chore, particularly if you take your game late in the day. After field dressing your game, mark the location and come back the next morning. A GPS will also show you the shortest, most direct route

back to camp or your vehicle.

When the hunting seasons are over, don't put away your GPS. It's ideal for a variety of winter activities such as snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

No matter how the trail twists and winds, you'll always be able to get to your starting point.

Ice fishermen have found that by plotting the hot spots during the summer, they can easily find them again under the ice.

So, no matter what your favorite fall or winter activity, a GPS satellite navigator can make your time afield more productive, enjoyable and safe.

Tips on freezing venison

Cut all the fat possible off the meat as it can turn rancid even in the freezer, and will affect the venison's taste. Bone marrow can also taint the meat during storage.

Remove all bones without cutting them as the marrow and dust can taint the meat.

Backstrap, sirloins, and other good boneless cuts should be frozen in large pieces. Small pieces

tend to dry out faster than large ones. The same goes for stew meat, burger and sausage.

A few ways to prepare for the freezer:

Butcher wrap. Put meat in center of a large piece of plastic wrap. Bring one end of the wrap over the meat and fold over sides.

Get out as much of the air as you can and roll the meat to the end

of the wrap, squeezing out air as you go. It's a good idea to double wrap all pieces and triple wrap small pieces.

Place wrapped meat on corner of a large, shiny side up, piece of freezer paper. Roll it diagonally one time and fold in one side, roll it again and fold in the other side. Continue rolling to the end. Tape it up with freezer tape.

Aluminum foil. Again, wrap meat in plastic wrap getting out as much of the air as is possible.

Using a large piece of heavy aluminum foil, wrap the meat tightly. For extra protection, put the meat in plastic bags.

Water pack. Milk cartons, plastic freezer containers or plastic bags can be used.

Put the meat in the container, fill it with water; shake the container a little to remove air bubbles from the meat and freeze.

This method is best for freezing the organs.

The "shelf life" of your venison is: venison burgers, about four months; organs, four (six if water packed); ribs, five; chunks, six; steaks, eight; and roasts, 10.

Know your deer

White-Tailed

A small deer with short ears. The tail is fairly long, broad basally and white underneath. In summer the upper parts are reddish brown, but winter turns them bright grayish fawn sprinkled with black. The face and tail usually lack blackish markings.

The underparts are white. The metatarsal gland is small and circular. All major points of the antlers come off the main beam and females are normally antlerless.

Mule

A moderately large deer with large ears. The tail usually has a black tip and white basal portion. The upper parts in winter are cinnamon buff overspread with blackish color, but more reddish in summer. The brow patch is whitish and the ears are grayish on the outside and whitish inside. The underparts are white.

The metatarsal gland is three to five inches long, narrow, and is positioned above the midpoint of the shank. The antlers are typically divided into branches and restricted almost entirely to males.



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