



HOW - T O G U I D E L O C A L G U N C L U B F I R S T H U N T E V E N T

For anyone without family or friends who hunt, getting started can feel intimidating, expensive, and confusing. Your Delta chapter can help by organizing a First Hunt event using your Waterfowl Heritage Fund dollars. A surprising but excellent source of new hunters? Your local gun club!

Many trap, skeet, and sporting clays shooters have never been waterfowl hunting, even though they already have safe firearm training and good shooting skills. They just need an invitation to give duck hunting a try.



GET STARTED:

1. Connect with gun clubs in your area:

- Search online or on social media for shooting ranges in your area offering trap, skeet, 5-stand, or sporting clays.
- Visit the range to meet shooters and get a feel for the atmosphere.
- Ask the range manager if there's interest in co-hosting a Delta "First Hunt" day.

2. Make the invitation:

- Use Delta's fill-in-the-blank posters and promotional video to attract participants.
- Personally invite shooters who are new to hunting—these are your ideal participants.
- Provide a phone number for interested participants to call or text with questions.
- Create a short FAQ sheet and simple application form you can email or text to anyone interested.
- Verify that the participants have completed their hunter education course.
- Encourage participants to purchase their hunting license or to confirm their commitment.

Plan the details:

- Work with the range to choose a date and an alternate in case of bad weather.
- Keep the event small and manageable—five committed participants is a great success.
- Recruit instructors and mentors from your Delta chapter or local R3/wildlife resources staff.



PRE-HUNT PREPARATION AND SHOOTING SKILLS:

1. Pre-Hunt Preparation:

- Focus on the essentials: licensing, HIP survey, and shotshells for waterfowling.
- Provide a checklist of gear and inexpensive acquisition options or offer to loan gear.
- Help participants purchase the appropriate licenses online.

2. On the Range:

- Confirm that their firearms are suitable for hunting: 3-inch shells, proper chokes, plugged to hold only 3 shells (2 in the magazine, 1 in the chamber)
- Confirm shotgun has a working safety. Insist it is used between shots. In the field, make sure it's on until the gun is shouldered. Trap guns without a safety will not be permitted.
- Practice from the same blind style they'll use on the hunt (layout, A-frame, or boat).
- Review safe shooting zones and handling protocols, especially if a retriever will be present.
- Check with your state/provincial conservation department and/or local conservation officers to learn if they have personnel, equipment, and/or facilities to assist.

3. Mentorship Approach:

- Pair each two participants with one mentor who will also guide them while hunting.
- Emphasize safety, comfort, and enjoyment throughout.

4. Gearing Up:

- If applicable, break up the sessions with gear fitting (waders, jackets, etc.).



IN THE FIELD (HUNT DAY):

1. Mentor's Role:

- Prioritize safety, comfort, and enjoyment for the participants.
- Mentors should assist in spotting birds, calling the shots, and identifying birds.
- Mentors do not shoot during the event; focus solely on enjoyment of participants.

2. Post-Hunt:

- Ensure birds are correctly assigned to hunters.
- Properly prepare birds for transport and/or the table and send home a proven recipe or two for cooking the harvest. (<https://deltawaterfowl.org/whats-new/recipes/>)
- Encourage participants to share photos and videos, tagging Delta.

FINAL NOTES:

- Safety, Comfort, and Enjoyment are the overarching theme of every phase of the event.
- Leverage Delta's extensive support network to ensure the event runs smoothly and answers any unforeseen challenges.