

HUNTING FOR KNOWLEDGE

WORKSHOPS FOR BEGINNER SPORTSMEN

By Patricia Handy



Shooting instruction



Classroom session



Target practice



Deer Hunting 101



Deer Hunting 101

DNR Photos

For many hunters, the connection to the land is strong: the crunch of dry leaves under foot, the chill of the air, the silence of the woods or marsh, the sense of adventure, the tingle of anticipation.

Some hunters may have learned the sport at a young age, taught by relatives, a tradition passed down through generations.

Other hunters, who may be the first in their families or circle of friends to take up the sport, have to teach themselves. For those new to hunting, knowing where to start is the hardest step.

To meet this need, DNR started a series of Hunting 101 Workshops last summer.

These workshops are open to everyone and teach beginning hunters and shooters how to hunt safely and successfully.

Learning the basics

A typical session begins in a classroom setting, where instructors and experts go through the history, background, history and management of various game species, including deer, turkey, dove and waterfowl. The classroom section concludes with hunting and gun safety tips.

Next, participants head to the shooting range to sharpen their skills under the guidance of certified instructors. Safety is always the number one priority. All materials, including guns and ammunition, are provided.

These mini-workshops — which last three to four hours — are designed to be as hands-on as possible, giving participants the confidence they need to hunt on their own.

Positive beginnings

Between July and December 2014, DNR offered nine of these introductory workshops and received positive feedback from participants.

“I didn’t grow up in a family of hunters, so this is all new to me,” says one participant. “To have a resource where I can start getting my feet wet and feel like I’m not just wondering around the woods aimlessly will be of great value. Thanks again.”

Other participants commented that they not only learned a lot, but also enjoyed the workshop and appreciated the State providing this opportunity.

Those sentiments reinforce DNR’s objective: to give participants a thorough education in safe hunting practices, an

appreciation of nature and spending time outdoors, as well as respect for wildlife seasons and limits.

Expanding opportunities

For the Maryland Wildlife and Heritage Service to effectively conserve the State’s diverse native wildlife, plants and natural communities, the next generation must understand the role hunting plays in wildlife management and conservation. This program reinforces that mission.

DNR is scheduling additional Hunting 101 Workshops for the 2015 season. Several other programs specifically geared toward women, youth and families are also offered.

More information can be found on the wildlife section of the website. ■



Kids practicing bird calls



Dove Hunting 101

To learn more about Hunting 101 or to sign-up for the *Shooting & Hunting Sports* e-newsletter, which includes notification of upcoming workshops, please contact Patricia Handy at patricia.handy@maryland.gov.

dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife

Patricia Handy is the Information and Education Program Manager with DNR’s Wildlife & Heritage Service.