

MEMBERS UPDATE

October 2021

HOW TO SURVIVE A HURRICANIE

Concealed Carry: Dos and Don'ts

Top 4 Lever-Action Rifles to Get You Hooked

Tried and True Methods for Finding Freshwater Fish



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Top 4 Lever-Action Rifles

We believe there's a perfect firearm for every shooter. For some, it's a modern sporting rifle. For others, it's a polymer handgun. Then again, there's another type who prefers something a little more old-school. Perhaps this applies to you.



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Fish Finding Secrets

Imagine you're going fishing in an area that's entirely unfamiliar to you, where there are no guides and no other fishermen to consult with. Would you be able to locate a productive fishing hole?



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Concealed Carry: Dos and Don'ts

Sure, there are plenty of black and white laws governing what you can and cannot legally do when it comes to concealed carry. But what about all the unwritten rules, best practices and pitfalls to avoid? Don't worry, the NSRA has your six.



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How to Survive a Hurricane

Topics like this one always seem to get attention after mother nature sends us an enormous and destructive reminder. The key, of course, is to put your plan in place before well before it's needed.



Here at the NSRA, we believe there's a gun for every type of shooter under the sun. However, all too often, the gun magazines, message boards, and YouTube celebrities glom onto whatever the hot new trend is and obsess over it as if firearms will never be the same. Then, six months later, they're all onto the next thing that's changing the world of firearms "forever" (again).

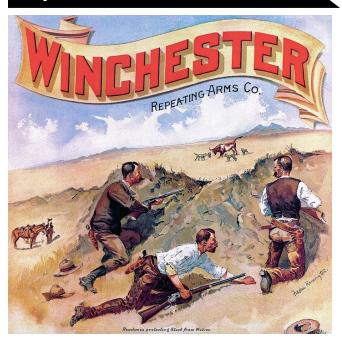
We're not saying this to be critical, exactly. Such is the way of the world. But when the whole SHOT Show world is going crazy over something you're simply not interested in, you suddenly realize how many classic firearms are getting tragically overlooked... and for no other reason besides the hype machine. Flavors of the month are great and all, but there's a pretty good chance they'll fade away as quickly as they arrive on the scene.



What we're trying to say is this: If you're tired of all the black rifles, micro subcompacts, or bull-pups... you're gonna like this article. Because in this particular article, we're going all throwback, back in time... to the 60s.

Not to the 1960s, mind you; we're turning the clock back to the golden age of the lever-action innovation, the 1860s.

Why You Need a Lever-Action Rifle



We understand that it may seem old-fashioned or esoteric to be recommending a style of rifle that some claim passed its prime before the Model T was invented. But the fact of the matter is, the lever-action rifle deserves a second look for a long list of reasons.

Not the least of these is the fact that these were the original "high capacity" rifles. Nearly 150 years before the state of California determined that 10 rounds is the absolute maximum capacity any reasonable magazine could possibly hold, Winchester and Henry were mass-producing rifles that held 15 rounds + 1 in the chamber. That fact seems noteworthy today when ignorant lawmakers try to explain what qualifies a firearm to be labeled an "assault weapon."

But another far less quantifiable reason you might want to invest in a lever-action rifle is the fact that you want the capability offered by many of the "black rifles," but you just don't particularly like the look and feel of the AR platform. After all, John Wayne didn't carry an AR-15 in the movies, did he?

It's okay; just because you don't particularly like modern sporting rifles doesn't mean that you're not a full-fledged gun nut, although it may feel like it in today's "Come and Take It" gun culture. Cowboy action competitive shooting is still alive and well. Likewise, just because the US military develops excellent firearms, that doesn't mean they're the only source for them.



Here are a few more objective reasons many hunters and target shooters love lever-action rifles: First, as we pointed out previously, is magazine capacity. Second, compared to a bolt-action rifle, a lever-action carries a lot more firepower on your hunts. Third, hog hunting and varmint hunting, in particular, are arenas where lever-action rifles shine.

Lever-action rifles are simple and compact, available in some extremely easy-to-carry "mare's leg" formats, but almost always in a carbine length. This makes them both easy to carry and versatile to shoot at a broad spectrum of ranges from near to far. They're particularly suited for targets that aren't stationary.

Another hallmark that makes these rifles unique is the standard default to the iron sights. By and large, action rifles are designed and optimized for use with open sights. And while this does limit their long-range effectiveness (as they are quite capable of long-distance accuracy), it dramatically opens up their rapid acquisition capability inside 100 yards. Lever-action rifles were designed in the age of the horseman. Thus, they were optimized for acquiring a moving target from atop a moving animal.

Lastly, the lever-action rifle's preference toward rugged efficiency means you can bang it around without losing effectiveness. The fact is that most rifles with magnified optics can only stand so much abuse in the back of a UTV or pickup before they need to be zeroed. Even MSRs mounted with 1X power red dot optics must be zeroed (and require batteries). There's just something nice about a carbine that doesn't need batteries, regular sighting checks, and, to put it bluntly, doesn't need "babying" as you go about your activities.

If this profile sounds like just what the ol' gun doctor ordered, then maybe a lever gun is going to fit your fine leather scabbard better than an MSR. And even if you lean toward semi-automatic rifles, we still highly recommend adding a lever gun to your arsenal, as there's simply no better configuration for a knock-around or "truck gun." So now, let's get into our Top 4 lever-action rifles for your arsenal.

Mossberg 464



For much of its history, Mossberg has been known best for its rugged and reliable shotguns. Over the past 15 years, however, the manufacturer began to wisely expand operations to include hunting rifles, MSRs and even handguns. Thankfully, one of Mossberg's expansion entries was this excellent and budget-friendly lever-action .30-30 rifle, based heavily on the greats produced by Winchester and Henry.

Mossberg launched the 464 in 2008 to much acclaim, especially from lever-action rifle enthusiasts. It turned out to be a prophetic move for Mossberg, given that Winchester's bankruptcy had forced them out of the lever-action rifle business.

Initially available in .22LR, the 464 is currently available in .30-30 Win or .30-30 Win. We love the .30-30 Win cartridge at the NSRA for both its performance and availability. Still, if it's chambering options you're looking for, the 464 offers you exactly one.

The 464 boasts a capacity of 6+1, right in line with a lever-action chambered in a rifle cartridge. The 20-inch barrel is standard for this class of firearms, and its 1:10 twist does a great job sending those .30 rounds down range with impressive accuracy and consistency even with a hot barrel. Expect to shoot 2MOA groups (good among lever guns) and be pleasantly surprised when you get 1.5MOA results.



The tang safety is an insult to everything old-timers love about lever-action rifles. However, those old-timers don't have to bear the burden of manufacturing firearms in the 21st Century. We say that to say this: The tang safety is well done and really beats the pants off the cross-bolt safety used by Marlin.

It weighs in at 6lbs, 12oz, and comes drilled and tapped for scope bases if you decide to go that route. Even with its top-eject receiver, the 464 was thoughtfully designed to eject brass to the shooter's right side, allowing an optic to be mounted in the standard position directly atop the receiver. In fact, the hammer is cross-drilled to install a spur that helps with cocking when the big honking scope is mounted.

All in all, the Mossberg 464 is a nearly perfect execution of the practical, reliable and no-frills attitude that a lever gun should have. It comes in either a pistol grip or straight stock configuration. The pistol grip is handy, but the straight stock has the Western movie cache. It's a lot of features and performance for such an excellent price.

Retail: \$568

Marlin Model 336



For a few dollars more (sorry, we couldn't help but use the Western movie reference), you've got the legendary accuracy of the Marlin 336 line. Now back on store shelves after a brief hiatus, Marlin was sidelined in the great Remington bankruptcy until Ruger bought them off the clearance rack and brought this firearms manufacturer, best known for lever-action rifles, back to life.

Thankfully, the Model 336 hasn't changed with all of the "corporate restructuring" going on. The 336 still sports the distinctive pistol grip, checkered walnut stock, and Microgoove barrel that is often credited by Marlin fans for the manufacturer's highly rated accuracy. In fact, the 336 is a direct descendant of Marlin Model 1893, with a few

modernized updates in 1936 (when it became the Model 36) and again in 1948 (when the Model 336 was born). As you can see, Marlin doesn't fix what ain't broke... and we appreciate the gloriously simple philosophy behind that.



The 336's side-eject receiver made it more scope-friendly than its arch-rival, the Winchester 94, which made the 336 popular with hunters looking for a lever-action big game rifle. On the other hand, the design of the 336 is a bit blocky and arguably a bit sturdier than its competitors that utilized designs that fit easily into a saddle scabbard. As a result, the 336 is a tad heavier at 7lbs, and some might argue it feels more substantial in hand.

Now, if you ask an objective shooter, the patented Microgroove barrel stuff is mostly just good marketing. Meanwhile, the 336 is definitely capable of 1.5MOA accuracy, which is quite good for a lever gun chambered in .30-30 Win with a 20-inch barrel. So we'd put it just a smidge ahead of the Mossberg, but with no noticeable difference in accuracy for most shooters.

With the Marlin, you get one heck of a lever-action rifle with a smooth action and nice finish for a great value. This is one of the most legendary hunting rifles of the 20th Century.

Retail: \$699

Henry Big Boy - .357 Mag



The Henry Big Boy line of rifles is tailor-made for shooters who want a simple, rugged, reliable throwback rifle specializing in light recoil and high magazine capacity. Named in honor of Benjamin Tyler Henry (father of the Henry Repeating Rifle), the Henry Repeating Arms may not be directly related to the Henry family in any way. Still, they've accomplished a brilliant tribute with their high-quality firearms, many of them lever-action.

Upon first glance, the most noticeable differences offered by the Big Boy are aesthetic. The polished brass receiver has a very wild west look to it. Similarly, the octagonal 20" barrel really sets the tone for this "heritage" rifle that's not actually a reproduction of a historical rifle. Instead, this is a modern rifle designed to tip its cowboy hat to wild west nostalgia.

But its unique features are more than skin deep. Breaking the .30-30 Win trend that's come to define the lever-action rifle over the past century, the Big Boy traffics in big-bore handgun cartridges such as the .44 Magnum, .45 Colt, .357 Magnum, .41 Magnum and 327 Federal Magnum. Therefore, we like the .357 Magnum for its ballistics, availability and affordable cost.



A significant point of distinction for the Big Boy is the tubular feed magazine that loads from the muzzle end, a format most common in rimfire rifles. Although some purists may balk at the lack of a side gate loading mechanism, the tubular feed magazine allows you to load a tidy 10 rounds of .357 Mag ammo just as fast as a gate load, if not faster.

The Big Boy weighs in at 8.68lbs, giving it a very hefty feel of quality when you handle it. That said, it's almost 2 pounds heavier than the Mossberg or Marlin. The sights are a tried and true combo: a fully adjustable buckhorn with a diamond insert in the rear and a brass bead in front. The rifle is drilled and tapped for optics mounting if you choose to go that route.

When it comes to accuracy, the Big Boy delivers the goods, hanging right in there with the same 1.5 MOA accuracy achievable with the .30-30 Win lever guns. Fortunately, the Henry has a way of soaking up that recoil, even with a polished brass butt plate.

If you're looking for something a bit off the beaten path with higher magazine capacity and a touch more expensive, the Big Boy is your huckleberry. It's just an exceptionally cool weapon that is fun to shoot and a looker to boot.

Retail: \$849

Rossi Arms R92 Lever-Action - .357 Mag



Let's begin with the obvious: This rifle is not made in the USA; there, we said it. However, it's still a very nice rifle with a couple of cowboy action features that make it worthy of your consideration.

For starters, we think this Winchester Model 92 replica is a very high-value homage to the cowboy carbine it's modeled after. Like the other weapons on this list, this gun is ready to work. It's not designed, built, or priced to be a museum piece. Instead, the R92 is like a lever-action should be, a dependable tool designed for easy carry and fun at the shooting range.

Another pistol caliber option on this list, the Rossi's faithful replication does indeed include a side gate for loading, just like you see in all those Hollywood Westerns. The R92 is likewise offered in a number of caliber options. But, again, we like the .357 Mag for several reasons.

For this carbine, specifically, we like the pistol caliber for magazine capacity reasons. Given the 16-inch barrel, the R92 doesn't have room to load many rifle cartridges. It does have ample space for 8 cartridges in the magazine plus one in the chamber, though, which allows plenty of rapid-fire fun.



Another note on the R92's ammunition compatibility, the R92 has a reputation for cycling .38 Special +P ammunition smoothly. That's not common with these lever-action rifles. While they will fire the .357's companion cartridge just fine, the rifle often won't eject the shells with enough force. Thus, we have another feather for this Rossi's cap. You might be able to squeeze 9 rounds in the tube AND have them cycle properly.

The R92 mated to the 16-inch barrel is a pretty lightweight package and maneuverable, weighing in at 5.75lbs. The sights are nothing out of the ordinary, with an adjustable buckhorn mated to a brass bead front sight.

Retail: \$699

Conclusion



If you're looking for a lever-action rifle to get your feet wet, carry around in a farm truck, and bushwhack through the brush, you can't go wrong with any of these value guns. And, yes, we consider all these

weapons to be in the value range, although it that range has moved higher by \$100 to \$200 of late. The pandemic and supply irregularities it has precipitated have pushed firearm prices upward, along with every other consumer good.

Even the Winchester Model 94, bare bones edition, carries an MSRP over \$1,250 these days. With that said, there's plenty of room to upgrade if you get bitten hard by the cowboy action bug. The sky is the limit when it comes to fit and finish. Heck, you can even have a gunsmith "smooth out" some of these affordable models for a reasonable fee. Or, if you just love the simple practicality of lever gun, or the joy of quick shooting with a short maneuverable rifle, these rifles will give you a lifetime of smiles.



TRIED AND TRUE METHODS FOR FINDING FRESHWATER FISH (AND OTHER EDIBLE AQUATIC CREATURES)

Finding fish is easy. You just go out on the water, and there they are, right? Wrong! Finding fish is not as simple as it sounds. There are many techniques that you can use to find the fish of your choice in a variety of fishing environments. This article will cover some tips and tricks for finding different types of fish and how to do so successfully!

HOW TO FIND FISH IN LAKES

Lakes are different than rivers, streams and ponds. However, fishing in lakes is a good start since they are great places for bass, walleye and different types of panfish to thrive.



Photo source: Luke Brugger, Unsplash

A lake also produces copious amounts of plant food and provides plenty of cover for fish to take refuge, including some deep spots with vegetation that aren't visible from the surface.

In addition, the way you find fish is going to vary, depending on whether the lake is natural or manmade. Here are some helpful tips for finding them in both.

ABOUT NATURAL LAKES

Natural lakes include everything from massive freshwater bodies of water such as Lake Michigan to smaller lakes that only cover a few acres. Many natural lakes



Photo source: Mana Nabavian, Unsplash

are situated at the headwaters of a stream or river and don't contain as much sediment as those in man-made lakes.

NATURAL LAKE FISHING TIPS

The following tips can mean the difference between bringing home a mess of fish or arriving emptyhanded when fishing in a natural lake:

- Scope out hiding spots: Fish like to hang out among vegetation, logs and brush. Look for spots along the shore that have patches of cattails, reeds or lily pads. If there's sparse to no vegetation, keep your eyes peeled for logs or piles of rock.
- Changes in type or thickness: Anywhere you notice changes in vegetation are good spots to focus on. Fish tend to stick to thick cover because it's oxygen-rich and provides ambush cover for their prey.

• Use the right fishing tools: You can use a weedless spoon lure for casting around aquatic plants to keep from getting snagged when hunting for northern pike. Also, if you are fishing around brush and rocks, use a heavier leader material that can handle structures that have rough surfaces.

ABOUT ARTIFICIAL LAKES

Artificial lakes are made using reservoirs and pits created from damming or mining activity. When you fish in them, bear in mind that their water levels can fluctuate a



Photo source: Laura Kessler, Unsplash

lot more than those do in natural lakes. Reservoirs, for instance, are usually drained down some during the last part of the year to prepare for run-off and spring showers.

MAN-MADE LAKE FISHING TIPS

Since most reservoirs are made when a dam is placed in a creek or river, the deepest areas of them will be these original creek or river beds. Therefore, artificial lake or reservoir fishing means concentrating your efforts around creek edges, ledges, and drop-offs that offer our fishy friends food, cover, and water depth.

When lake fishing in an artificial lake's pit or reservoir for largemouth bass, use lures and baits that you can work around the bottom near dropoffs and ledges. Lizards, soft-plastic worms and jerk baits are all excellent baits to use.

You can still get the occasional bite when casting along the shorelines, but you will have the best results if you concentrate on ledges and drop-offs.

HABITATS FOR LAKE FISH

You'll find species like large and smallmouth bass, lake trout, bluegill and walleye to catch when lake fishing. Below we've listed some habitat information about some of the more popular lake fish:

• **Smallmouth bass:** These fish live in the shallow parts of lakes among rocky areas of lakes. You'll

also find them in flowing river pools and among clear, gravel bottom runs in rivers. You'll also find them in cool, flowing streams and in reservoirs fed by these streams.

- Largemouth bass: Prized by anglers, largemouth bass reside in clear and vegetated lakes. You can also find them in the backwaters of creeks, rivers and pools, along with ponds and swamps. Bigmouthed bass prefer to spawn in locations with firm bottoms like mud, gravel or sand.
- Bluegill: Commonly known as "bream" or "brim," you'll often see bluegills hanging swimming in groups around tree-shaded shorelines and piers of small to medium-sized lakes. They also frequent calm streams, lagoons and ponds.
- Walleye: These fish prefer large & shallow lakes with turbid (cloudy) water. They also live in backwaters and runs of medium to large rivers.
- **Eels:** Most people's experience with eel ends with sushi or as an accompaniment to pie and mash if you live in London. You can actually fish for these snaky little guys in freshwater, and their habitat is in lakes, streams and the sea, where they spawn and then make their way back into freshwater. Eels like to hang out at the bottom of deep water, but they will swim up in search of food.

HOW TO FIND FISH IN A RIVER

Rivers are excellent spots to cast your fishing rod since there is an ample amount of oxygen supply coming from the current, along with food such as insects



Photo source: Artur D, Unsplash

that make their way into the water.

The best place in a river for finding large quantities of freshwater fish includes currents and eddies and currents that branch off from the flow of the river. These areas create underwater pockets that have greater levels of oxygen downstream.

Also, bear in mind that fish in a river will be the most active when water levels are high since the higher the levels, the more food sources are available.

WHAT FISH ARE FOUND IN RIVERS?

Fish you'll find in rivers include catfish, crappie, bream, perch, bluegill and migratory fish such as trout, salmon, alewife and striped bass. In addition, many invertebrates such as crayfish provide food for fish and live there too.

Here's where you find some of the most common river fish:

- **Bass:** Prized by anglers, bass like to hide among rocks and other objects and move like a flash to cover when predators come by. They also prefer the deep part of the river, so you will need to cast your line out far to catch them.
- Catfish: Cats are best found at the bottom of the river, where they hide underneath big rocks, logs, brush and other debris that have fallen (or are purposefully put) into the water.



Photo source: Milos Prelevic, Unsplash

• Trout: You'll find these tasty creatures near the surface of the water. They will be closer to the bank of a river and hiding among rocks, logs or other debris that have



been washed downstream.

- **Crappie:** Crappie like to hide at the bottom of rivers and lakes. The best way to catch them is by searching for them on the bottom in silty areas or under large logs, rocks other debris.
- **Salmon:** These gorgeous specimens are found in rivers and lakes, where you'll find them swimming in shallow water. What is unique about this species is its swim bladder, and it needs oxygen to regulate its

buoyancy. Because of that, you will usually see them along the banks with their head sticking out of the water, gulping air.

HOW TO FIND FISH IN DEEP WATER

When searching for fish that live in deep freshwater (more than 25 ft. below the surface), use heavy sinker weights on your line. Apply the sinker about a foot & a half above the hook.

How far do you cast out? Well, that depends on the depth. You can use a depth finder or use this trick: Cast the line approximately the same distance that a person would be able to see had the line been on dry land. For instance, in depths of 20 ft. or more, you can really only see a few inches from the water's surface. In that case, cast about 15-20 ft. below the water's surface.

HOW DO YOU FIND FISH IN PONDS?

Ponds are another prime place to find freshwater fish since they contain ample amounts of oxygen supplies. If the pond is maintained (not a cow pasture pond), passive aerators are used to circulate the oxygen. The aerator circulates enough circulation to get into the deeper parts of the pond, and fish can be found throughout the pond.

Areas you can find the most fish in the ponds are the shallow areas and near shorelines, as these areas tend to have more oxygen. You can catch bullheads, carp and catfish in ponds.

HOW DO YOU FIND FISH IN A FISH FARM POND?

A fish farm pond is a little different than a natural pond since they are man-made, and different species of fish such as tilapia are cultivated there. Aquaculturists growing fish for commercial use rely on nets, trawls and seines to harvest the fish en masse, but you can also take your rod and reel in a mess of them.

For farmed species such as salmon and trout, you'll search for them in oxygen-rich locations where the pond is shallow and along shorelines. They dwell around ledges of rock that keep them from being lunch for birds and other predators.

However, when searching for catfish, look for them in the bottom of the fish farm pond. Tilapias like to be near the bottom of the fish farm pond, too, near muck or silt—fun fact: Tilapia is the hardiest breed of fish you can farm.

SEARCHING FOR OTHER FRESHWATER CREATURES

There are other aquatic creatures you can find in rivers, lakes and ponds, including crayfish, turtles and frogs that are good eating.

Crayfish

Crayfish, sometimes called crawdads, crawfish or mudbugs, are a type of freshwater lobster. And, as anyone that's ever had them in a good crawfish



Photo source: Alvona Bogomolova, Unsplas

etouffee or low country broil can attest, they're delicious! They can be found in various habitats, including cave systems, lakes, marshes, streams and even roadside ditches.

They can also live in burrows that are far away from sources of water, earning them the name "mudbugs." In Georgia, especially in the northern part of the state, most species of crawdads dwell in streams and rivers. I've even had some pretty big ones (for a crayfish) grab earthworms when I fished on the Chattahoochee River. However, that method will only yield enough meat for an appetizer or an accompaniment for some panfish.

During the day, crawdads typically hide from predators under cover of leaves and other types of debris. It's better to search for them with a flashlight along the edge of the water on logs or rocks late at night.

Trapping Crayfish

If you have a craving for a mess of crawdads or want to keep some of them alive for use as bait later, you can save some time and effort by trapping them. All you need are some lightning-fast reflexes, a raw chicken drumstick or a cheap trap. Here's what to do:

Netting/Dipping Method

The netting/dipping method is excellent for still-water craw-fishing. You just get a nylon cord and tie a raw chicken leg to it. Then, dip the leg by the rocks, and let it soak in the water for 5-10 minutes. Crayfish are scavengers and will grab the rubbery skin of the dead flesh, thinking they've found an easy meal. Once it grabs the bait in its claws, lift it up slowly to the surface. Afterward, dip the net in the water and scoop the little guy into it. However, act fast, as a crayfish will quickly let go of the leg when it breaks the water's surface!

Trapping Method

Crawdaddy traps work by funneling the creatures into a tiny opening to feed. Bait one with raw pieces of chicken or shad, and once they're in, they will have a hard time getting back out. To keep captured crayfish from smashing your bait before more of their buddies come to feast, you can slip the food into a nylon stocking before putting it in the trap. Leave your traps overnight in shallow and still waters, slow streams, or in eddies that are in rapid flowing streams.

Turtles

In China, they treasure turtle meat as a delicacy, and Native American cultures continue to eat freshwater turtles today. At one time, it was commonly eaten in America, and Campbell's even stocked soup cans containing it in grocery stores. However, the practice is declining because so many people ate them, and some species, such as the beautiful Diamondback terrapin, were put on the endangered species list.

Some states ban capturing turtles for food, but in some states, and depending on the species, you can still grab a few for personal use; just be sure you check on the laws in your area before catching any species of turtle.

Although the popularity of turtle meat has waned, it's still consumed in the southern states, where alligator snapping turtles are used for stews and soups.

Other turtles trapped for their meat include regular snapping turtles and softshell turtles. Turtles like to hide among grasses so search for them in grassy areas close to water. Unfortunately, you can also find them in the water, where they sometimes bite the hook on your line while you are fishing or taking a bite of the fish in the water that you've strung up . Alligator snappers can tolerate brackish (mixture of fresh and sea) water.

Some of the dips in the popularity of turtle meat can also be attributed to the difficulty of cleaning them – that, and the fact that they can deliver a really nasty bite!

Additionally, turtle eggs are edible and tasty, and mothers will sometimes lay a clutch of them in logs in the shallow parts of the lake. So, if you encounter a log near the edge of a lake or pond with turtle eggs, it's definitely worth your time to transport them back to your camp and cook them!

Frogs

There are only a handful of frogs in the U.S. that are edible, and they are the American Bullfrog, Bronze Frog and the Pig Frog or lagoon frog. That said, the



Photo source: Grace Evans, Unsplash

most common one that everyone likes to eat is the American Bullfrog. So, if you've ever eaten frog legs in a restaurant, they probably came from Bull Frogs.

Bullfrogs are very common and easy to find because they often swim close to shore. You can find them in daylight hours, but you can also find them by searching for their food (bugs) in shallow ponds with a flashlight when it is dark outside.

You can chase and grab them or spear them with a gig in the grassy shallows. Alternatively, you can catch them with a rod & reel baited with a rubber lure. They go for the lure much like bass do and put up the same kind of fight. Why can't you eat other types of frogs? Some frogs and other amphibians are endangered, and it is illegal to catch them. Also, some species have potent neurotoxins like the cane toad and Colorado River toad. They can make you sick to eat them, and the cane toad, an invasive species common in Florida, can kill dogs that bite them.

ARE ALL FRESHWATER FISH HEALTHY TO EAT?

Sadly, all freshwater fish are not healthy to eat because they sometimes contain hazardous chemicals and heavy metals. It's an unfortunate fact, but human activity



Photo source: Justin Wilkins, Unsplash

is polluting the waterways more and more every day. As such, there are fish that are safer to eat than others.

Also, there is a threshold you shouldn't go over when it comes to how much, if any, that you should eat of certain types of species you fish out of the waterways.

Considering this, it's safer to eat panfish, such as bluegill, smelt, perch and stream trout, as their diet consists of insects. Because of that, it's likely that they don't build up high levels of pollutants. In addition, younger freshwater fish contain fewer pollutants than older, larger ones do.

Meanwhile, avoid eating a lot of fatty fish, such as lake trout, or bottom feeders such as carp and catfish since they are more prone to containing higher levels of toxic chemicals and heavy metals like mercury.

TIPS FOR CLEANING AND COOKING FISH

Always clean and dress fish ASAP. Remove the skin, internal organs and fat before you cook fish since these are where harmful pollutants lurk. Be sure that you remove and discard the fish's head, kidneys and liver. Fillet the fish and cut away skin and fat before cooking.

You can also cook in ways that decrease your risk of eating fish that contain harmful chemicals. Fish should always be properly prepared when baked, broiled or grilled. One main



Photo source: Jason Ippolito, Flickr

way to do this is to let the fat drain away from the fish during the cooking process. By allowing the fat drain away, you can remove pollutants stored in the fatty parts of the fish.* Other precautions you can take include:

- Decrease or completely cut out the amount of broth, gravy or fish drippings used to flavor your meals, as they may contain harmful pollutants.
- Cut down on the amount of fried and deep-fatfried freshwater fish. Frying can seal in chemical pollutants in the fish's fat into the meat you will eat.
- If you smoke fish, it is good to filet them and remove their skin prior to smoking.

Mercury, which is found throughout the fish's tissues, cannot be removed during cooking. Therefore, none of the cleaning and cooking methods discussed above will reduce levels of mercury in your fish dinners.

FIND OUT ABOUT THE SAFETY OF FISH IN YOUR AREA

You can contact your local or state health or environmental protection department to find out about the safety of eating fish in your area. You can also find links to local and national fish advisory programs on the National Fish Advisory Program website.

GRAB YOUR POLE AND GO!

We hope you enjoyed this article about finding freshwater fish and other edible aquatic creatures and found it helpful. As you can see, you don't need to be living in apocalyptic times to enjoy the sport of freshwater fishing or sitting down to some good ol' pan-fried fish and hushpuppies. However, skills such as fishing and hunting are good survival skills to develop. So, gather your fishing equipment and these tips and head toward that body of water you've been dying to try out. Don't forget to share any interesting fishing stories or tips you have with us if you feel like it too.





Carrying a concealed weapon may be a right, but it's also important to take it seriously. There are many things you should do – and shouldn't do – while you're carrying an unseen gun. Read on to learn some very important tips. These will keep you safe, and they'll also keep your weapon a secret until it's actually needed.

The Dos and Don'ts of Carrying a **Concealed Weapon**

Before you strap on a concealed weapon, take some time to familiarize yourself with the many concepts in this article. You'll become much more adept with your firearm, and you can also avoid accidents.

DO: Know Your Firearm

You must get to know your firearm before you hide it on your person. Practice pulling your firearm out of its concealed location. Also, be sure to take some time to practice at the shooting range. This is vital because if you don't know your firearm, you could 13 present a danger to yourself and other people.

DON'T: Advertise

No matter what, don't let others know that you're carrying a concealed weapon. In fact, if you break this rule, you might as well not be carrying at all. The idea behind concealed carry is that you can keep it to yourself. But as soon as others know you're carrying, you've given them a chance to disarm you.

DO: Keep it - and Yourself - Invisible

Dress normally and avoid calling attention to yourself. This may not make you actually invisible, but you're going to be off of most people's radar. Make sure you don't go into bad neighborhoods, either. The general rule of thumb is that if you wouldn't go there without your weapon, then you shouldn't go there with it, either.

DON'T: Be Impulsive

If you're the impulsive sort, then a concealed weapon isn't for you. After all, the second your gun is fired, you can't take anything back. Therefore, you must have a steady hand and understand what the point of no return means. You should only fire your gun as an absolute last resort. Even if the person is a real jerk, that doesn't give you a free license to kill them. You must be in actual physical danger before you pull your weapon.

DO: Know the Laws

You know the saying: "Ignorance of the law is no excuse." This phrase means everything. Therefore, you must know what gun laws are in place no matter where you go. Failure to adhere to the law can result in jail time. It can also cause you to lose the right to carry, whether concealed or not.

DON'T: Become Complacent

Always keep your firearm oiled and cleaned. Also, be prepared to use it. Always practicing safety is also a must. Never allow yourself to forget that you're carrying a weapon. Although it should be comfortable, it should never be out of mind.

DO: Remain Aware

If you're always alert, ready, and willing to help, then carrying a concealed weapon may be a good choice. Additionally, you must maintain a good attitude. If you're the type of person who is grouchy or gets hot under the collar quickly, wearing a concealed weapon is just not a good idea.



DON'T: Misplace Your Firearm

If you've ever seen How I Met Your Mother, then you're aware that Robin Scherbatsky is a terrible, terrible gun owner. Why? Because she's always misplacing her gun. If you can't keep a close eye on your firearm, you should never become a concealed carrier. More to the point, you probably shouldn't even own a firearm at all. Always know where your **14** gun is.

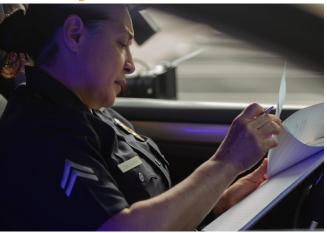
DO: Buy a Good Holster

Have you ever known someone who got a concealed carry license, was all gung-ho about it, then started leaving their weapon at home anyway? The most obvious reason for this is that they didn't take the time to buy a good holster. And to be clear, a good holster isn't necessarily the most expensive. Instead, it's the most comfortable for you. Take your time when selecting a holster. This is the best way to get it right.

DON'T: Be Overly Confident

Yes, you're carrying a gun. Does that make you a god? Of course not. Therefore, don't act like you think you're all big and bad. This will easily devolve into you having to prove it, and that's the last thing you want. Instead, carry yourself with a quiet confidence, but never show that you're overly confident.

DO: Tell Any Officer Who Pulls You Over



If a police officer pulls you over, you should let them know immediately that you're carrying a concealed weapon. Failure to do so could result in a situation that will end with you on the news. When you hand over your license and registration, be sure to also include your carry permit. The entire time you're dealing with them, keep your hands visible and on the steering wheel. That way, they won't get the feeling that your gun is a threat.

DON'T: Carry a Weapon without Proper Safety Training

We're aware that some states allow you to get and carry a weapon without any type of training. However, this doesn't mean you should do it.

Instead, you're going to want to enroll in an opencarry class so that you can learn the safest way to carry. This will give you peace of mind, and it will also make you a much better firearm owner.

DO: Be Ready to Reload

Although the odds are high that you won't need to reload, you should keep an extra clip with you just in case. Can you imagine if you get into a firefight and run out of bullets? You'll quickly turn from a good guy (or lady) with a gun to a dead guy. We assume you don't want that, so always have some extra bullets with you. Just be sure you safely store them.

DON'T: Open Carry



Before you become upset, give us a chance to explain. Yes, it's your constitutional right. So, if you must open carry, go ahead. However, if the intention of a concealed weapon is to take someone by surprise, well... you've given that up.

Whenever you open carry, everyone in your vicinity is going to be aware of it. This is good if you're at a protest march for gun rights. It's bad, though, when you're trying to remain invisible. Consider what you're carrying a weapon for before you walk out of your house with a gun strapped to your back. Another thing to consider is whether or not the police may get involved. The odds are high that someone will call them, and you never know how they're going to deal with you. Stay safe and keep it 15 concealed!

DO: Carry Consistently

What's the point in having a concealed weapon if you don't carry it with you? There may be a few places you have to take it off, but for the most part, carrying is something you should always do. That way, you have peace of mind and can pull out your gun at any time.

DON'T: Keep Checking Your Gun

Unless your holster really sucks, your gun is going to remain where you put it. In other words, stop checking to make sure it's still there. While some people may not notice if you adjust your belt line, those who are looking for it can easily pick it up. Therefore, strap it on securely and trust that it'll be there.

DO: Practice Constantly



Even the world's best holster won't do you much good if you can't withdraw your gun and shoot it in a nice, fluid motion. When you're not on the go, unload your weapon and practice pulling it out. We don't just mean a few times, either. Practice, practice, practice until muscle memory takes over. This gives you the absolute best odds of getting it right when it matters most.

DON'T: Carry While Drinking

There's always an exception to every rule, and here it is. Never, never, never carry your gun while you're drinking alcohol. If you're planning to drink, leave your gun at home. Aside from the fact that your inhibitions will be down, you're also much more likely to make a mistake. Remember: guns don't allow mistakes.

DO: Always Have Your Permit with You

This should be an easy thing to remember, but we're going to say it, anyway. Always have your concealed carry weapon permit with you. Failure to do so could result in losing your gun.

DON'T: Leave Your Gun in the Bathroom

Some people automatically look for a place to put their gun when they go into the bathroom. This can easily lead to your leaving it behind or – even worse – sitting it somewhere where it can fall and go off. The reality is that you really need to look for a holster that can comfortably stay on, with a gun in it, even when you sit down on the toilet.

DO: Understand Your Legal Responsibilities

Do you know why your state licensed you to carry a concealed weapon? For the most part, the only thing you're allowed to do with your firearm is act in self-defense. This means you should never, never, never pull your gun on someone who isn't actively threatening you. And for the record, we don't mean threatening you merely because of the color of their skin. Your legal responsibility is to act judiciously. Only pull your gun out of concealment if it's truly necessary.

DON'T: Forget Your Gun in Your Luggage

Yes, we know you'd never do this. Yet, the TSA confiscates approximately 2,500 guns per year. What this means is that some people forget that their gun is in their luggage. Don't become one of these people.

DO: Pre-Select an Attorney

No matter what, you're going to want to have an attorney or two pre-selected. The odds are high that you'll never need to call them, but you definitely don't want to end up in situation where you need an attorney and have no idea who to turn to.

DON'T: Turn a Blind Eye to Mistakes

If you're hanging out with your buddies, and one of them makes an egregious mistake with their firearm, you'd better be prepared to hold them accountable for it. This is the way that we ensure that others are able to be as safe as we are.

DO: Have Gun Insurance

There are many different types of gun insurance you could get. Whichever kind you decide on, make sure it offers some protection in case you have to shoot someone.

And now, we're going to end this article with a few more don'ts.

DON'T: Take Your Holster Off as Soon as You Get Home

Did you know that your odds of facing a home invasion are fewer than 1 in 200? That might not sound that bad, until you start to consider how many homes are in your neighborhood alone. The odds are high that at least one or two of your immediate neighbors will deal with invaders. Make sure you're ready to take them on if they pick your home instead.

DON'T: Be Uninformed About Legal Changes

The law changes frequently, so you must stay current with it. Otherwise, you could continue doing what you've always done, but suddenly find yourself in violation of the law.

DON'T: Cross State Lines without Research

Carrying your weapon as you cross state lines is a good way to end up in jail. Make sure you're aware of the other state's laws. Also, make sure they offer reciprocity for your permit. If they don't, leave your gun behind.

Final Thoughts

Carrying a concealed weapon is a right and a privilege. What this means it that although you have a general right to carry, there are several things that can take away that right. For instance, if you have a criminal background or have a history of a mental illness. Treat your weapon – and the process of concealed carry – with respect at all times. That way, you'll be able to continue carrying and just might have the opportunity to become a good guy (or lady) with a gun.

HOW TO SURVIVE A HURRICANE

Hurricane season is getting longer than ever. The good news, though, is that hurricanes are mostly predictable. In other words, the odds of you being surprised by a hurricane in your hometown are very minimal.

The bad news is that their intensity level can vary, so that might be the thing that gets you into a bind. After all, if you're expecting it to become a Category 1 or even a tropical storm before it hits, it can definitely mess up your plans if it makes landfall as a Category 2 or above.

Many people believe it makes the most sense to leave your house behind and hope that it's still there when you go back to your hometown. This is true in some situations, and you should leave if it's mandated. When it's not, though, you may choose to try to ride out the storm at home.

So, what do you do if you're at your house and the hurricane is stronger than expected? Following our tips will make you much more likely to survive.

TIPS FOR SURVIVING A HURRICANE

DETERMINE WHETHER TO STAY OR GO

This is the first critical decision you must make, especially if leaving hasn't been mandated. First off, don't stay behind simply to keep an eye on your house. Whatever's going to happen will happen, regardless of whether you're there or miles away.

At the same time, leaving before every hurricane can get expensive, especially if you don't have a lot of money. Therefore, you'll need to tune into the local weather and make the best possible decision. Assuming you decide to stay, you'll want to move on to the next lifesaving tips.

GET A PORTABLE RADIO

Anyone who lives in the path of hurricanes should own a portable radio. This will give you the ability to stay up to date about the hurricane, including any last-minute weather changes. Remember: if it's not portable, it might not work. Therefore, keep the batteries charged up and ready to go.

STAY INDOORS

Yes, we get it: a hurricane is something you want to see with your own eyes. But don't give into the temptation. Stay inside your home and away from every source of glass (windows, glass doors, skylights, etc.). Additionally, you'll want to move to the safest area of the house. This means finding a closet, interior room, or the downstairs bathroom. If none of these places work, be sure to sit by an interior wall.

No, Really - Stay Indoors

You might think the storm is over, but the odds are high that the eye of the hurricane is passing overhead. Never, ever step outside during this weather phenomenon. Instead, remain indoors in your safe spot until your radio announces that it's all clear.

KEEP YOUR REFRIGERATOR CLOSED

If the hurricane knocks out your power – and it almost certainly will – leave your refrigerator closed. This will provide you with about four hours of cold air. Meanwhile, your freezer can keep frozen items good for 24 to 48 hours, depending on how full it is.

Once the hurricane passes over your area, you may decide to get into your refrigerator to eat whatever you can. If it's been more than three hours since the power went out and there's no signs of the electric company, this can be a good idea. After all, in a couple more hours, nothing in the fridge will be any good. Surviving a hurricane also means staying safe during the aftermath, and you will need food to survive.

INSTALL A CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR

This is something you should do before there's a hurricane in your area. A carbon monoxide

detector will help protect you when you decide to use your generator. Speaking of a generator, be sure to use it safely and correctly. This means never using it indoors, including basements, in the garage, etc. Also, you shouldn't place it right outside your windows, vents, or doors.

All of these things are pretty standard, but they bear repeating. Therefore, never allow yourself to go without a portable radio. Stay indoors until professionals determine the hurricane is really gone. Keep your refrigerator and freezer doors shut, and make sure you have a carbon monoxide detector.

CLOSE EVERY DOOR

Brace and secure every external door. Additionally, close every single interior door. Another important thing to do is close all your blinds and curtains. DO NOT be fooled into opening them too early.

WHAT DO YOU NEED IN YOUR HURRICANE SURVIVAL KIT?

If hurricanes are prevalent in your area, you should always have a hurricane survival kit ready. The following items will make it much easier to survive the aftermath of the storm.

- Water You'll need a minimum of one-gallon per person, per day, for at least three days.
- **Food** Non-perishable items are the key. Be sure everyone in the house can eat for three days. Don't forget your pets!
- Flashlight A flashlight can help you see, so be sure to pack extra batteries.
- Radio We've already mentioned it, but it's that important. Having a hand-crank or battery-operated radio is critical. You'll also want to get your hands on a NOAA Weather Radio.
- **Dust Mask** It's imperative to wear a dust mask to filter out contaminated air.
- Plastic Sheeting When you're planning to shelter in place, you'll need to have duct tape and plastic sheeting. This allows you to block off dangerous areas of your home.
- Whistle Signaling for help may become very important. Keep a whistle around your neck.
- 18 · Tools You'll want to keep a pair of pliers or

a wrench on hand. This will allow you to turn off your utilities.

- Local Maps It may sound crazy, but you'll want to print out actual physical maps of the local area. This can help you find a safer place to stay, if necessary.
- Personal Sanitation Items Plastic ties, garbage bags, and moist towelettes will help you keep everything clean. Also, if there's anyone in your group who is menstruation age, be sure to keep some pads and/or tampons in your kit.

These are the absolute must-have basics for surviving during and after a hurricane. But it's not the end all, be all for your kit. As long as you have some room, you should consider adding the following items.

- Glasses and Prescription Medication If you have either of these items, be sure to put some in your kit.
- **Pet Food and Water** Your pet(s) will have the same basic needs as you. Don't forget about them!
- Diapers and Infant Formula Just like your pets, if you have an infant, you'll need to prepare for them. Be sure to keep them happy and safe with diapers and formula.
- Cash Using a credit card might not be possible for a few days. Ensuring you have cash and/or traveler's checks should help you pick up whatever's necessary in the interim.
- Blanket or Sleeping Bag Each person in your group will need some type of bedding. Pack a sleeping bag or warm blanket for everyone.
- Important Documents Put a copy of your identification, insurance policies, bank account info, etc. into a portable, waterproof container.
- Change of Clothes Pack at least one complete change of clothes per person. Make sure to include sturdy shoes, pants, and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Fire Extinguisher Fires may break out during or after the hurricane. Having an extinguisher on hand will make it much easier to put a fire out quickly. Remember: emergency personnel may not be able to reach your house.
- Mess Kits Every person will need access to plastic utensils, plates, paper cups, and paper towels.

- Can Opener This will come in handy if any of your non-perishable food items come in a can.
- Household Bleach Grab some bleach that doesn't have anything else added into it. You'll also want a medicine dropper to make the process of sanitation easier. If you need it to clean water, use 16 drops for every gallon. Alternatively, if you're using it as a disinfectant, add one part bleach to nine parts water.
- **Matches** Place some matches into a waterproof container.
- Books, Games, Puzzles It might not be the first thing on your mind, but if you get stuck in your home for three days, you're going to want something to do. Pack activities, puzzles, games, books, etc. that are age appropriate.
- Paper and Pencil You might need to write something down. Even if you don't, it's better to be prepared than to not have what you need.
- First-Aid Kit This could end up being one of the most important things in your hurricane survival kit. Keep this particular first-aid kit fully stocked.

OTHER SURVIVAL TIPS

After the hurricane passes, it's critically important not to use any food that came into contact with floodwater. Also, DO NOT drink tap water unless your local authorities have said it's okay.

If you have to go somewhere, be very careful. Make sure you DON'T drive through floodwater. Remember: it only needs to be six inches high to knock down a full-grown man.

You'll want to ensure that everything that came into contact with floodwater is either thrown out or aired out immediately. Failure to do so will introduce mold into your home.

Document everything. Your insurance company will need to know how bad the damage is. If your neighborhood looks anything like the one below, you'll also need to be patient. There are only so many insurance companies, and they'll need to send out an adjustor to view every claim.

Before the storm even hits, there are also several things you can do.

- Secure Your Property As soon as a hurricane is in the forecast, you'll want to double check your property. Permanent storm shutters are by far the best solution. If you don't have them, though, you can marine plywood to block your windows.
- Trim Trees Trees and shrubs on your property make it more likely to end up with broken branches. By trimming them beforehand, you can eliminate some of this debris.
- Install Roof Straps You'll want to make sure your roof is secured to the frame.
- Clean Gutters Unless you want to be responsible for creating a flood, make sure your downspouts and gutters are clean.
- Height Saves Things Anything that's really important to you should be stored off the ground. Ideally, these items will be on an upper level of your home. Be sure to do the same thing with any chemicals.
- ID Tags Any pets should be wearing ID tags.
- **Upload Documents** Any important documents can be uploaded and saved to the cloud.
- Fuel You may have to leave on a moment's notice. Your vehicle should be fully fueled up and ready to go.
- Emergency Shelters Know where all your local emergency shelters are. You never know when you'll need to use one.
- Water Bottles Any plastic bottles (that didn't store chemicals) can be filled with water.
- Lawn Furniture Anything that normally sits in your yard will need to be secured. Take lawn furniture, hanging plants, toys, bikes, trash barrels, grills, and gardening supplies into your garage.
- Charge Your Cellphone Give your cellphone a good charge, and then don't use it unless it's absolutely necessary.
- Moor Your Boat If you have a boat and can get to it, make sure it's moored.
- **Bathtub** Fill your bathtub with water for sanitary purposes. If nothing else, you can flush your toilet with this water.

MISCELLANEOUS TIPS

Before the storm hits, go through your house and unplug everything. Do NOT be fooled into plugging something back in before the storm is over. Do NOT use any appliances during the storm.

DON'T take a bath or shower during the hurricane. The risk might be slight, but it's not worth getting electrocuted. Remember: lightning can flow through plumbing.

The storm will likely put a big strain on phonelines. Instead of reaching out to everyone individually, put a post on social media. Also, if you must reach out to people, do it via text instead.

TORNADOES CAN FORM

As if a hurricane wasn't bad enough, they can also lead to the formation of tornadoes. How can you tell if this is going to happen?

- Funnel cloud or debris will begin floating in the air.
- Quickly moving clouds.
- Clouds moving in a rotating manner.
- After a thunderstorm ends, there will be a moment of eerie silence.
- An unusual sharp, fresh smell in the air.
- A greenish-black to swampy-greenish color to the sky.
- Hail.
- A tornado warning.
- A noise that's like a waterfall at first, but morphs into a train-like sound.

When any of these items are sighted or heard, prepare yourself for a tornado. The bad news is that tornadoes can greatly exceed the wind of a hurricane. We're talking 320 miles per hour, instead of a Category 5's approximately 156 miles per hour. The good news is that we've also written a guide to how to survive a tornado. Be sure to read that article too, so that you can protect yourself.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Some people may seem almost blasé toward hurricanes. This is especially true of Florida residents. And while yes, there are definitely hurricanes you can ride out at home, there are also those that you absolutely shouldn't attempt to ride out.

Pay attention to what's being forecast. Do they think it's going to be a Category 1? This means the winds will be between 74 and 95 miles per hour. There will be minimal damage, and the storm surge won't exceed five feet.

As soon as this moves into a Category 2, it becomes more dangerous. The winds can reach up to 110 miles per hour, and mobile homes, roofs, and small crafts will be at risk. There will also be some flooding, along with storm surges up to eight feet.

Category 3 comes with extensive damage. Small buildings could be destroyed, and low-lying roads will be cut off. Storm surges could reach 12 feet, and the wind will be between 111 and 130 miles per hour.

By the time we reach a Category 4, you should definitely evacuate. In this extreme weather, you can expect winds up to 155 miles per hour. Roofs will be destroyed, trees will fall down, roads will be cut off, and mobile homes will be destroyed. Beach homes, meanwhile, will be flooded. The storm surge could reach an astounding 18 feet.

Finally, there's a Category 5. If one of these is predicted and you don't leave, you have a high likelihood of dying. With winds exceeding 155 miles per hour, most buildings will be destroyed. Vegetation will also be destroyed. Major roads will be cut off, and the remaining homes will be flooded. With a storm surge over 18 feet, the flooding will continue for an extended period of time.

Now that you know what to expect, make sure you're ready for the next hurricane. Whether you can ride it out or have to leave, being prepared will put you several steps ahead of everyone else.



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