INTRODUCTION TO HUNTING SMALL GAME

FISH & WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

The Division of Wildlife funds conservation with **license sales and an excise tax** on firearms, archery, and hunting equipment.

ABOUT SMALL GAME

- Focus: **squirrel** and **rabbit**
- **Squirrel:** forest settings
  - Feed on acorns, nuts
  - Breed twice per year
  - Legal species to hunt in OH include fox, gray, black, and red squirrels
- **Rabbit:** thick habitat
  - Feed on seasonal vegetation
  - Breed from February thru September

HUNTING RULES & REGULATIONS

- Published annually
- Protects animal populations
- Covers small game hunting-specific information

BEFORE THE HUNT

- Obtain written permission for private property
- Practice with your preferred hunting implement
- Be sure to purchase your hunting license
- For squirrel: Scout woodlands with good mast-producing trees such as oak, hickory, and beech
  - Look for stumps with cracked nut shells, disturbed leaves, leafy nests, tree cavities with chew marks
- For rabbit: Scout areas where two habitat types come together with thick cover
  - Look for scat in the thickets- it can be easier to see scat and tracks with snow on the ground

NEEDED EQUIPMENT

- Shotgun with modified choke and 5 or 6 shot shotgun shells is most popular for both squirrel and rabbit
- Rifles are popular for squirrels, can also be used for rabbit
  - Archery equipment is also legal, not commonly used for small game
- For squirrel: camo or earth-toned colors
- For rabbit: brush pants and an orange vest with game pouch



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SHOT PLACEMENT

The best shot to take on small game is either in the head or heart and lungs for an ethical harvest.



EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Shotgun: ideal for moving game
- Shooting hundreds of small BBs

Rifle or archery: ideal for stationary game
- Shooting one projectile

WHERE TO HUNT

Wildlife areas and private property

For squirrel: woodlots with good squirrel sign

For rabbit: thickets, overgrown pastures, briar patches, thick river bottoms, edges of woodlots where trees have fallen

HUNTING STRATEGIES

- For squirrel: sit and wait for squirrels to come out
  - Slowly walk through woodlots, or allow dogs to locate and tree squirrels
- For rabbit: walk through thickets
  - Stomp brush piles to flush rabbits or allow dogs, typically beagles, to flush rabbits

PREPARING

- Once you have harvested game, it needs to be field dressed
  - Removing organs to cool meat, done as soon as possible
- Then it will need to be processed
  - Preparing the meat for the fridge or freezer in desired cuts

HUNTING LICENSE

- License required to hunt any species, regardless of age
  - Options available based on age, residency, if hunter education has been completed
  - Apprentice license for those without hunter education
- Download the HuntFish app to purchase and display hunting licenses

INTERESTED IN TAKING THE NEXT STEP?

- The Wild Ohio Harvest Community offers in-person learning opportunities that build on the content in this module
- Find other learning modules, resources, and more!