

Topic Page: [Hunting](#)

Definition: **hunting** from *Collins English Dictionary*

n

1 a the pursuit and killing or capture of game and wild animals, regarded as a sport **b** (*as modifier*): *hunting boots*; *hunting lodge*. Related adjective: **venatic**



Image from: [A German Shorthaired Pointer explores the Great... in Encyclopedia of Environment and Society](#)

Summary Article: **hunting**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

act of seeking, following, and killing wild animals for consumption or display. It differs from fishing in that it involves only land animals. Hunting was a necessary activity of early humans. Through the Paleolithic period it was their chief means of obtaining food and clothing. In the Neolithic period, when agriculture developed, killing game was still important. Hunting was popular among the ancients and became a sport in medieval Europe, where it was reserved, as far as possible, for the privileged classes by game laws. Falconry and foxhunting became increasingly popular in England in the Middle Ages, and the use of hunting dogs—hounds, setters, pointers, spaniels, and the like—

became widespread in this period. Hunting can be divided into three branches, each of which is defined by the type of instrument used by the hunter. Hunting with weapons (now primarily firearms, formerly bow and arrow, boomerang, spear, or sling) is probably the most popular, especially in the United States. Trapping and snaring with deceptive implements is popular in northern areas. In coursing (with dogs) and falconry (with hawks) hunters enlist the aid of trained animals. Coursing is especially popular in Britain and Western Europe. Types of hunting are also distinguished by the size of the animal being sought. Big-game hunting is the most glamorous and often the most dangerous. It became a popular sport among Western colonialists in Africa and India during the 19th cent., and even today the big-game safari survives. Big-game animals include, or have included, the moose, caribou, bear, and elk of North America; the reindeer, elk, and wolf of Europe; the tiger, leopard, elephant, and wild goat of Asia; and the antelope, gazelle, zebra, leopard, lion, giraffe, rhinoceros, and elephant of Africa. Small-game hunting, known as “shooting” in Great Britain, focuses on birds such as the quail, partridge, grouse, pheasant, and goose, as well as on such animals as the hare, rabbit, woodchuck, raccoon, and squirrel. Extensive hunting, both commercial and recreational, has made many species of game animals extinct (the passenger pigeon) or nearly extinct (the American bison). Game laws and wildlife refuges in the United States have been designed to save game animals and birds from extinction. Many African nations have also instituted such measures, but illegal poaching for furs, skins, ivory, internal organs, and the like remains a problem both there and in other areas of the world.

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