

# The News Journal

## *The decade's 10 (or more) best advances in technology*

The decade of the 2000s brought about significant innovations in hunting-related technology and products.

While intriguing advances were made in just about all areas of hunting in the last decade, I (with some input from the online hunting community) managed to narrow the list down to the top 10 innovations that enabled us to hunt safer, improve our chances of harvesting game, enhance the quality of our hunts and protect the environment.



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**10. Improved, Easier-to-Use Muzzleloaders** Recent designs in inline muzzleloading technology give hunters an easier, more modern approach to muzzleloading. Simpler ignition systems,

pre-measured powder pellets, modern bullets, and cleaner burning powders have led to improved performance and accuracy, decreased loading and reloading times, and less barrel fouling.

**9. Adjustable Full-Body Safety Harnesses** While full-body safety harnesses have been securing window washers, loggers, and similar workers for years, they have only recently been adopted by the hunting community. Newer, adjustable full-body harnesses provide hunters of all sizes with added comfort and security when hunting from elevated stands.

**8. Animated Bird Decoys** Arguments exist both for and against the use of spinning-wing and other types of animated decoys for hunting waterfowl, doves, and other game birds, but the simple fact is that these types of decoys are effective. Although spinning-wing decoys came to market in 1998, advanced models of animated decoys became more popular in the 2000s.

**7. More Effective Non-Toxic Shot** Ever since lead shot was banned for U.S. waterfowl hunting in 1991, hunters have been looking for a more effective alternative to the steel shot of the 1990s. With waterfowl shells introduced during the 2000s using bismuth, tungsten-matrix, tungsten-iron, or tungsten-nickel-

iron rather than steel, the effective range of shotguns has dramatically improved.

**6. Scent-Eliminating Clothing** Hunters were introduced to a plethora of scent-eliminating (or scent-concealing) products throughout the 2000s. Pants, shirts, jackets, hats, boots, and even clothing storage bags can now be purchased with scent-eliminating technology. While I don't believe the clothing eliminates all human scent, I do believe it conceals enough to increase a hunter's chances of success.

**5. Portable, Affordable and Feature-Rich Digital Range Finders** Bowhunters and long-range rifle shooters welcomed the advances in digital range finding technology that came to market. Smaller sizes, lower prices, and advanced features, such as angle range compensation, ballistics consideration, and weather condition allocation give hunters the data needed to make more accurate shots.

**4. Portable GPS Units and PLBs** Perhaps the greatest safety innovations that were introduced to hunters over the past decade were handheld global positioning system units and personal locator beacons. Affordable, compact GPS units provide hunters with turn-by-turn directions, topographic maps, compasses, and advanced features like best hunting time charts, altimeters, barometers, lunar tables, and cameras. When activated, personal locator beacons take a hunter's positioning information and relay it to a worldwide network of search and rescue satellites, increasing chances of survival during an emergency.

**3. Trail Cameras** Without a doubt, trail cameras have become the best way to scout deer and other game. With their widespread introduction to hunters over the past 10 years, the cameras have enabled hunters to monitor hunting spots year-round without frequently disturbing the game. With digital photo and video, infrared, and even wireless e-mail capabilities, trail cameras give hunters a significant advantage over traditional scouting methods.

**2. Smart Phones** While the direct verbal communication with hunting buddies is great, today's smart phones provide

hunters with a toolbox of hunting-related products, services, and data in the palms of their hands. Assuming adequate connectivity, a smart phone can provide silent communication (in the form of text messaging and e-mail), GPS features, access to emergency services, maps, a digital camera, weather information, sun and moon tables, ballistics data, tide tables, reading material, games and just about whatever else software developers dream up.

**1. The Ever-Evolving Internet** Yup. The Internet. I know many traditionalists shy away from the power of the Web, but its constant evolution truly has made the greatest impact on hunting in the 2000s. Think about it: Without the Internet, many of the smart phone features don't exist. Plus, the wealth of knowledge presented via the Web to hunters across the globe is priceless. Rather than making phone calls, sending letters, visiting libraries, and waiting for face-to-face reports, hunters can now instantly follow hunting stories via blogs and forums, track migrations via live video and social media postings, and get current harvest numbers via various sites. What's more, hunters can research in-state and out-of-state hunting seasons, purchase licenses, attend safety classes, obtain maps, join conservation groups, research and book hunting trips, and more.

Among other innovations that deserve consideration:

- New camouflage patterns came to market in the last decade and most beat their predecessors in providing more effective concealment.

- Photorealistic waterfowl, big game, turkey and predator decoys also deserve honorable mention. Advances over the past ten years have led to more life-like decoys, which led to more successful hunts.

- Finally, odorless, insect-resistant clothing is a wonderful innovation. Nothing can spoil a hunt quicker than the smell of aerosol bug repellent.

Steven Kendus' *Hunter's Journal* appears bi-monthly in *The News Journal*. Kendus is the author of *Hunting The First State: A Guide to Delaware Hunting*. Follow his blog and podcast at [www.HuntingTheFirstState.com](http://www.HuntingTheFirstState.com). Contact him at [skendus@HuntingTheFirstState.com](mailto:skendus@HuntingTheFirstState.com).