

FOR YOUR DOG

- ❑ Our dogs often get short shrift when it comes to so-called "luxuries," but think about how much better he'd perform if he was safe, well-nourished, warm, dry, and rested.
- ❑ Bring a high-fat, low-volume supplement for quick in-field energy. Dogs process fat like we do simple carbohydrates. A burst of energy is best fueled by corn oil (not corn syrup), butter, hamburger, or a commercial concoction containing similar ingredients. A full gut not only impedes performance; it brings some risk of bloat and stomach twist. Carry something that delivers a lot of fat calories and little bulk. I like a tube of "Nutri-Cal" from the Drs. Foster & Smith catalog.
- ❑ Tie-out stakes give dogs a change of scenery and a chance to safely stretch their legs at lunch stops or final destinations. Put clips at both ends of the chain so you can attach to a truck bumper or fence post if you can't drive a stake in the ground.
- ❑ A big envelope contains a "Lost Dog" kit including records of his microchip number, photo, license number and flyers to post in the area with your cell phone number prominent (add a home or local number where cell service is spotty). A dedicated dog towel or chamois (real or synthetic) keeps your truck a bit cleaner and your hunting partner warmer. Stow an extra collar with ID tags just in case.
- ❑ You bring one for yourself, so why not carry a little "survival kit?" Distilled water in a squirt bottle cleans wounds and washes eyes; hydrogen peroxide brings up most of the yucky stuff he swallows; antihistamine reduces tissue swelling in the windpipe caused by snakebite and insect stings; a hemostat pulls porcupine quills. EMT Gel and that hemostatic gauze could stem bleeding and save his life. Duct tape is the cheapest dog boot you'll find. Keep it compact or you won't put it in your hunting vest.
- ❑ Spend five minutes compiling a list of veterinarians in the area you hunt, with emergency numbers—your dog would do the same for you! Your human hunting partners will be ever grateful if you brought "Nature's Miracle," a liquid skunk-odor eliminator that requires no mixing.
- ❑ I take a favorite chew toy, retrieving bumper or ball, throw in some poop-scoop bags and my four-footed hunting buddies are good to go. Now, let's get serious



CAMP

- ❑ You may as well rough it smoothly. Folding lawn chairs make campfires more comfortable. Ditto for a small folding table. A vapor barrier under your tent floor adds ten degrees of warmth by preventing moisture from seeping into your aging bones—handy when the temperature plummets to 12 below on the Nevada desert.
- ❑ Zip-style plastic bags hold dog snacks, cleaned birds, choke tubes and those wild strawberries you found along that grouse ridge. Still use white-gas lanterns? Tape extra mantles to the bottom of the fuel tank.
- ❑ Your pillow from home ensures a better night's sleep. If you hunt from a recreational vehicle, don't forget spare keys, leveling blocks, wheel chocks and a water hose. (Fill up near your destination and you'll get an extra mile or two per gallon in fuel savings).

YOUR OWN KIT

- ❑ You'll be the envy of bird camp when you break out a boot dryer. Don't forget vitamins and pain reliever (ensuring a better night's sleep and well-rested hunt). Brush chaps are handy when you need them and easy to stow when you don't.
- ❑ A real bandanna of silk or rayon (from a western or ranch store) performs as a neck warmer, pot holder, sling, bandage, and sweatband. "Town shoes" are like wearing pillows on your feet after a day in the hills, and add a touch of panache to your big night out.

THE ULTIMATE UPLAND CHECKLIST

BY SCOTT LINDEN

You're excited for the hunt, we know; just remember to pack accordingly.

“Don't leave home without it” was a popular advertising catch phrase a couple decades ago. While originally referring to a credit card, as a bird hunter's maxim it still holds true. Over the years, I've forgotten shotguns, sleeping bags and on a particularly hectic day I almost left a dog in the front yard. Starting on the long drive following one of those debacles, and then over the years on my blog with help from my television show's fans (thanks, everyone!), I created what is now the “Ultimate Upland Checklist.”

I offer a copy of this list at my seminars, and there's always one participant who tells me the only thing not on the list is the semi-truck required to haul all the gear, gadgets and gewgaws on it. He's probably right, but everyone (including the comedian) ends up finding something on the list that they now simply can't live without.

If you've ever left your ammo

linguishing on the porch or your beer in the fridge, this list is dedicated to you. NASA doesn't launch a space flight without a checklist; neither should you start a hunt without the confidence that comes from knowing you have all the necessary gear.

So get out your wallet, find an extra duffle bag, and start shopping for a new truck. Everything on this

list has been added due to my—or my fans'—hard-won and sometimes brutal experience. When the nearest town is 50 miles away and your dog is bleeding, I hope you will see the wisdom in this document.

A free download of the whole list is available at www.gundogmag.com. In the meantime, here is some of the gear you might not have thought to bring...but should.

Desolate country like this punishes the unprepared.

ON TO THE HUNT

- ❑ If you've ever been 200 miles from home with a broken firing pin, you know to pack a spare shotgun. Don't forget choke tubes and a wrench just in case birds are flushing farther or closer. A soft gun case or sock protects my shooter when I'm too lazy to break it down for stowage in a hard case.
- ❑ If you're not carrying a GPS, it's only a matter of time before (as mountain man Jim Bridger once said) you'll be "mighty bewildered" for an uncomfortable amount of time. Many states require a hunter's education certificate—even for adults—before selling you a hunting license, so make sure you've done your homework.
- ❑ If you don't carry two-way radios in your vests, you might still be looking for your hunting buddy, who could be on the next ridge...or not. For the record, everyone should be carrying the "ten essentials": duct tape, paracord, map and compass, waterproof matches and alternate fire starter, space blanket, aluminum foil, water purification tabs or filter plus container, whistle and multi-tool.
- ❑ Stash a spare truck key somewhere on the vehicle and a partner. Score points with landowners, camp neighbors and helpful biologists by packing small, non-perishable gifts. A headlamp trumps hand-held flashlights while plucking, cooking and answering Nature's call in the wee small hours (pardon the pun).
- ❑ Find a spot in the truck for chargers, 12-volt adapters and user manuals for all your electronics. No explanation required, right? Add reading glasses if you're over forty.

YOUR VEHICLE

- ❑ Your rig will get you there and back again if you pack a spare serpentine belt, tire-sealant gunk in a can, and box of fuses. The newest generation of rechargeable jump-starters will fit in a glove compartment. Last season, I learned the hard way that even the most up-to-date GPS may not have your destination in its database, so pack paper maps.
- ❑ A recovery or "jerk" strap takes you from zero to hero when someone else's truck is stuck in a ditch. A come-along will save your own bacon when it's your turn to slide off the muddy road. My credit cards (and credit rating) are in bad enough shape without having to use them as windshield ice scrapers—stow a real one under your driver's seat.

WHY NOT BRING IT?

You may not need all of this gear, maybe not even most of it. But when I'm not making television shows, I often hunt the darkest spot on a nighttime satellite photo of the continental U.S. It is an unforgiving landscape, where everything scratches, bites or stings you, and a false step could be your last. In that desolate place, you are farther from a hospital (and a Starbucks) than anywhere in the lower 48. I'd rather bring it and not use it than limp, shiver or bleed while wishing I had.

I've driven hundreds of grueling miles to fetch forgotten wallets, vests, ammo, and dog food. I've bought replacements of so much gear I could outfit my clone, complete with dog. That's plenty of windshield time and wasted money...and a lousy way to embark on a hunting trip that is supposed to be fun.

So download the list, customize it to meet your needs, and the next time we pass on the highway, we'll both be headed toward a birdy covert rather than home again to grab those gosh-darned tent poles. *

For a complete upland checklist, go to gundogmag.com/ultimate-upland-checklist

