



## Field Dressing a Deer

(Fold and place in your backtag holder)



**Before you start field dressing your deer unload your firearm and fill out your tag!**

The key to ensuring quality venison includes removing all the insides of a deer, keeping the body cavity clean and the carcass cool.

**Tools:** Sharp 3-4" knife-folding models should have a locking blade, long rubber gloves, string, one gallon plastic bags, dark dry cloth-avoid light colors for safety reasons.

**Caution:** When field dressing archery-killed deer, beware of **arrow or broadhead parts that may still be present** when you reach in the cavity of the deer.

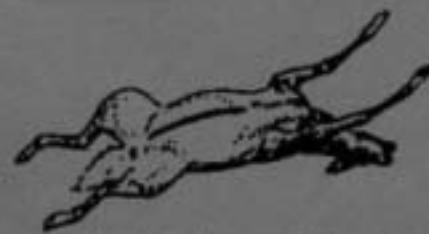
♦ **Lay the deer on its back** with its head slightly uphill. Large stones or tree limbs set along side the deer may be used to steady the deer carcass.

♦ **Make a one inch deep cut around the outside of the anus.** Pull the anus out far enough so you can tie it off with a string to prevent feces from falling out and contaminating the meat. On female deer cut around the opening of the vagina as you did the anus. Be sure these parts are cut free so that they will pull out later with the intestines.

♦ **Grab some of the belly skin just below the breast bone,** pull it up and cut a slit big enough for your fingers to fit in. Hold the knife between your first two fingers with the blade pointed **outward.** Insert the first two fingers to push the intestines down and away from the knife blade.



♦ **While pushing the knife away from you make a cut** along the centerline of the belly from the breastbone to about 6 inches from the anus. **Do not cut too deeply** or you will nick the stomach or intestines.



♦ **Cut around the diaphragm** (thin muscular wall at the rib line) that separates the heart and lungs from the stomach and intestines. Reach all the way up into the chest cavity and feel for the windpipe and esophagus. Grasp both tubes with one hand and cut them above this hand with your knife. **Use extreme care here** since you cannot see where your hands and knife are located.

♦ **Remove all internal organs at once with a gentle pull.** Turn the deer on its side and roll all the internal parts out of the body cavity. If you prefer, save the heart and liver in separate bags. With a few small cuts, pull the large intestine and the tied off anus out of the lower body cavity.

♦ **The bladder must be removed separately.** This pear-shaped translucent sac is located low in the abdomen just underneath the pelvic bone. Spillage of urine can taint the meat effecting its taste. Very carefully pinch the tubes at the end of the bladder and move the bladder away from any meat before cutting it and discarding the sac.

♦ **Wipe away any remaining blood from the cavity with a dry cloth or dry leaves.** Avoid using water or snow, which can promote bacterial growth, to wash out the body cavity unless the paunch or intestines are badly shot.

♦ **Attach your tag** when the deer is back at your vehicle or camp. Be sure to transport the deer away from heat sources such as the engine and tailpipe. Do not wrap the deer in plastic as this may hinder the cooling process.

♦ **Split the chest and prop it open with a stick** unless you plan on mounting the head. Hang the deer, head or tail up, and keep the cavity open so it stays cool and body fluids drain.

♦ **Have the deer butchered immediately.** Meat rapidly spoils when the air temperature gets above 40°F.