

## CAMOUFLAGE

# C-U-Later... Maybe Never

By Taylor Wilson

*And That's A Good Thing For  
Hunters, By The Way...*

### CONCEALMENT. HIDING. UNDETECTED.

This is what camouflage is all about.

**M**other Nature is a master. Many living things wear disguise patterns that help them to survive as predator and/or prey.

A bobcat needs to match the brush to get close enough to spring on a rabbit.

A female mallard needs to do likewise to hide herself and her eggs from a hungry raccoon.

And hey, have you ever tried to find a bobwhite quail you shot without the help of a dog? Even when you know where it fell, its feather pattern can conceal the bird. I am always amazed at overlooking the obvious, thanks to camo.

So yes, Nature certainly wears camo, and we hunters need it, too.

There's no doubt that mankind's first hunters learned quickly the importance being able to blend in. Early hunters did so by using the lay of the land, rocks, trees, bushes, etc. They also eventually used the skins of other animals to create an illusion of "all is well."

And of course, the military has long used camouflage to its advantage. You may have even read about its use in primitive forms in English class. In William

Shakespeare's play, Macbeth, an entire army disguises itself with tree branches so that when it approaches a castle, it looks like the forest is "moving" and their numbers are concealed.

Soldiers were also among the first to wear camo patterns on their clothing, from the standard leopard-spot, blotch-leaf patterns to "tiger stripes"

Modern hunters soon took to wearing camouflage clothing and today companies like Realtree take it to an entirely different level.

"Camouflage is crucial to being visually concealed from your quarry," said Nolen Sweet with Realtree, a company known the world over for its camo patterns.

"Our goal with the Realtree and Advantage patterns is to design a camouflage that will effectively blend into you into your surroundings. Realtree and Advantage do a great job at matching with the surrounding colors and shades to effectively hide you from all game, deer, turkey, elk and others.

"Our four newest patterns are Realtree All Purpose High Definition, Realtree All Purpose Green, Advantage Max-1, and Advantage Max-4."

How detailed can camouflages get? Very.

### SOMETIMES SAFETY COMES IN A CAMO PATTERN

**I**f you look at old photos of hunters, you might see them with NO camouflage.

This is primarily because the camouflage revolution had yet to take place. Patterns like those developed by Realtree were simply not available, or considered.

I can especially remember pictures of old turkey hunters wearing denim bib overalls and toting toms they have shot. They were successful without camo.

This is all well and good, too. For me it indicates/stresses that above all else, being still, and moving only when appropriate is the most important things when it comes to concealment and hunting success.

That said, I also know being camouflaged helps. Heck, it can even help hide your movements now and then.

But another consideration, especially with turkey hunting, is that camouflage can provide an element

of safety.

Red, white and blue are known no-no's to wear when turkey hunting. These colors are found on the tom turkey's head and wearing them afield could result in you being mistaken for a turkey.

Along that line of thought, camouflaged everything — from gloves, to socks, to handkerchiefs, undershirts can actually help you be safer when in the turkey woods.

Sweet said, Advantage Max-4 is considered the number 1 waterfowl pattern. Max-4 is designed to maximize four seasons it is perfect for open fields, marshes, reeds and flooded timber. This pattern is great for the waterfowl and even for four-legged game in open areas.

Max-1 was designed for out West where the typical limbs and leaf patterns are not quite as effective. Max-1 combines the perfect balance of neutral earth tones, prairie grasses, brush, rock, sage and open zones — with just a hint of shadow detail for added depth and realism.

"Our two newest patterns AP and APG have taken the camo world by storm. These patterns were designed to be lightened up and be very open. AP is neutral, open, 'contrasty' and realistic — all the things necessary to make a camo pattern versatile and effective. Perhaps more important are the improvements we've made to our already advanced high definition printing process.

"Long story short, we've considered the effects of Mother Nature and washing machines and printed the pattern to hold its contrast through real-life conditions. New Realtree AP — the AP means All-Purpose. We're certain you'll agree that it lives up to its name. Like AP, Realtree APG is lighter, more open, more neutral-toned and more contrasty than the competition. And with the addition of olive green accents, Realtree APG offers even more concealment options in early fall and spring — whether you're drawing back on the buck of a lifetime or closing the distance on a love-struck longbeard.

"And Realtree APG is printed with our industry leading high definition imaging process, allowing it to melt into hardwoods, pine thickets, prairies, river bottoms and other environments. So no matter where or when you hunt, trust Realtree APG to deliver the kind of 'season and region' versatility you demand," Sweet said.

### BLIND-SIDED BY CAMO

"Brushing a blind" is a term often used among outdoorsmen to describe the task of putting limbs, leaves or "brush" on a blind for concealment.

These days, when it comes to camo, hunters are much more fortunate. Today's blinds come already brushed.

For example Realtree works with companies that build both hard and soft blinds that "wear" its patterns basically out-of-the-box.

"Using a blind is a great way to conceal yourself. It not only blends you into your surroundings, but will also cover any movements you make. Even the best camouflage cannot keep you from being spotted if you're moving around. Shooting houses work extremely well when you are hunting with someone or hunting open areas," Sweet said.

"Cloth blinds are great for adding that additional concealment when you are on the ground or in a tree stand. The blind hides you when you have to move to get into position or to draw back your bow. We also work with companies who build blinds or covers for your

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boats or ATV/UTVs. You also need to think about covering your vehicle when you take it into the woods. You don't want to spook your game by leaving your ATV or boat exposed, so it is always a good idea to cover it up."

### EVERYTHING CAMO

Of course, clothing is not all that can be camouflaged to help you get an edge. Other items you take to and from the field can likewise be concealed these days.

"It's effective to have certain hunting related items in camouflage," Sweet said.

"Items like guns and bows are things that probably should be camouflaged. Wood grain guns are beautiful to look at but are notorious for reflecting light and in turn giving away your location.

"When you finally have that monster bull elk or buck, flock of greenheads or that fat tom turkey commit to coming in, you don't want to give these elusive animals the chance to be spooked by a glimmer of light reflected off your equipment."

Of course, not everything camo is specifically made for hunting these days either.

Realtree licenses over 2,000 products to wear its patterns — from camo clothes for infants, to trucks (real and toy), razors (when you start shaving), tuxedos, and even camo coffins. (They really do have you covered in camo from one end of life to the other.)

### WHEN NOT TO HIDE

**A**s great as today's advancements in camouflage are, remember: there is still a need for your whereabouts to be known when sharing the field with fellow hunters.

For safety's sake, if another hunter approaches your hunting area, call out and let them know where you are. If you are moving about in low light, use your flashlight. Yes, it helps you see, but it also helps others see and recognize you as a hunter.

Many states require fluorescent orange when hunting various types of game. Often this calls for a cap and vest.

Required or not, wearing or using something (like a flashlight) that makes you more visible to others is common sense safety, much in the same manner as life jackets in a boat or seatbelts in a car.

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