

GET LOST?

NOT A CHANCE IF YOU'RE WELL EQUIPPED. WE TOOK 4 GPS UNITS FOR A HANDS-ON DAY IN THE FIELD TO GET YOU THE LOWDOWN.

BY MANAGING EDITOR RAY BLADES AND ASSISTANT EDITOR STEVE GALEA

Ask any outdoors enthusiast about their hand-held GPS and chances are you'll get what sounds like a sales pitch. You'll hear how these units can guide you to a tree stand in the predawn darkness, to a truck after sundown, or the hottest walleye shoal on the rainiest of days. You'll learn that they routinely lead hunters through river fog to distant duck blinds, or over unknown country to lakes whose coordinates were lifted off an on-screen map.

It's true, modern GPS units are simply marvellous. And, like all electronic technology, they just keep getting more precise and user-friendly.

Managing Editor Ray Blades and Assistant Editor Steve Galea rediscovered this after testing four modern GPS units and a compass for comparison. Here are their thoughts.



EASE OF USE

Lowrance Endura Safari
www.lowrance.com

This advanced GPS has a plethora of navigational features in one intuitive package.

Its generously-sized, colour touch screen has a 6-page sequence that covers all basic GPS functions in an easy to understand way. The elevation screen is particularly impressive. So too is its upload capabilities: GPX files, MP3 music files, video and photos — all that and extreme pinpoint accuracy, too. It doesn't take long to cozy up to this unit.

MSRP: \$299
Dimensions: 5.1" (H) x 2.4" (W) x 1.2" (D)
Screen: 2.7-inch colour touch screen display
Basemap: Yes
Add Maps: Yes

Memory: MicroSD card slot for up to 32 GB
Waterproof: Yes
Battery Type: 2 AA
Battery Life: 15 hours
Weight: 5.8 oz.



MULTI-USER

Garmin Rino 610
www.garmin.com

Rino GPS units are excellent alone but truly shine when in a group. Rino's claim to fame is their ability to communicate with and keep track of other Rino users on the map screen. Range is within three kilometres in most situations, farther depending on terrain and line of sight. They're ideal for hunters working together in drives.

Users communicate via text messages or 2-way radio. A touch screen provides access to straightforward functions.

MSRP: \$349
Dimensions: 7.5" (H) x 2.4" (W) x 2.2" (D)
Screen: 1.43" x 2.15" Transflective, 65-K colour TFT
Basemap: Yes
Add Maps: No

Memory: Built-in 1.7 GB, USB 2.0 compatible
Waterproof: Yes
Battery Type: 4 AA, optional rechargeable lithium-ion pack
Battery Life: 18 hours
Weight: 12.2 oz.



ERGONOMIC

Magellan eXplorist 350H
www.magellangps.com

This GPS is purpose-designed for hunters, hence the H. Among its hunt-friendly features are 30 icons that represent animal tracks, tree stand locations, and more, to attach to waypoints.

The unit is waterproof and rugged. The screens take some getting used to as they are unique to Magellan.

Each unit comes with a year's subscription to Digital Globe, for unlimited downloads of high-resolution satellite images. Accurate to within 3 to 5 metres.

- MSRP:** \$249
- Dimensions:** 4.4"(H) x 2.2"(W) x 1.4"(D)
- Screen:** 2.2" Transmissive, colour
- Preloaded Maps:** North America detail only
- Basemap:** Yes
- Add Maps:** Yes
- Memory:** Built-in 2GB
- Waterproof:** Yes
- Battery Type:** 2 AA
- Battery Life:** 18 hours
- Weight:** 5.2 oz.

WALLET-FRIENDLY

Bushnell HuntTrack
www.bushnell.com

If you're looking for more than a compass, but less than a complex GPS, this unit fits the bill. The HuntTrack is relatively inexpensive, compact, and lightweight.

This little GPS unit doesn't hold maps, but you can save 25 waypoints with icons, and provides time, sunrise, sunset, moon phase, barometric pressure, distance, speed to waypoints, and compass and route screens. Data is downloadable, too.

- MSRP:** \$110
- Dimensions:** 4"(H) x 3"(W) x 7/8"(D)
- Screen:** 1.625" x 1.625" greyscale LCD
- Preloaded maps:** No
- Add Maps:** Can export and overlay waypoints
- onto maps on computer
- Memory:** built-in for waypoints
- Waterproof:** Weather-resistant
- Battery Type:** 3 AAA,
- Battery Life:** 18-20 hrs.
- Weight:** 4 oz.

OLD-SCHOOL

Silva Ranger CL
www.silvacompass.com

Ok, so technically, it's not a GPS. But, a compass is inexpensive, compact, lightweight, and doesn't rely on batteries, electronics, or satellite signals — so it's zombie-apocalypse proof.

The Ranger is Silva's legendary orienteering compass. The CL version has a clinometer to measure angles of inclination. All Rangers have set screws for regional declination adjustments (to account for the difference between true and magnetic north) and a mirror and sight for shooting precise bearings.

- MSRP:** \$44.99
- Dimensions:** 4"(H) x 2.5"(W)
- Weight:** 2.4 oz.