

# **Family Survival and Preparedness**

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## Intro: Family Survival and Preparedness

When the Shit really hits the fan, and I mean really hits it hard, I want a plan that my family can follow to ensure we are safe and able to survive. This can be a plan that can cover as many or as few different scenarios, from natural disasters like hurricanes to human caused mass panic situations, as you want to be prepared for. For this plsn, I will go over basic skills, ideas and survival tips. This plan is not meant to scare, antagonize, belittle or upset anyone. I hope and pray we are never put into a situation where my family may be in grave danger, but if we are I want to be prepared. So let's begin!



### Image Notes

1. My Bug Out Rig (BOR)



### Image Notes

1. Spares are always a good idea!



### Image Notes

1. Bug Out Box #1
2. Bug Out Box #2



**Image Notes**

1. Cooking gear, water making, fire making and food goes in here.



**Image Notes**

1. Camping supplies in here, sleeping bags, chairs, additional tents, etc.



**Image Notes**

1. Some of the gear



**Image Notes**

1. Got to have my bike



#### Image Notes

1. Mounting the bike holders this way allows you to have 2 bikes facing out and without using up the entire bed.



#### Image Notes

1. Fully rigged for a cross country trip.

## Step 1: Do Your Homework and Learn from Survivors

Knowledge is key, never stop learning! The more you know, the more you are able to adapt and overcome situations you and your family may face. There are many books out there that are full of information on how to survive nearly anything, and these are great to read. Just be aware that some of the underlying knowledge is not there so do not rely solely on these types of books. Educational books that teach you real skills such as hunting, trapping, tracking, leather making, identifying and using medicinal plants, mushroom harvesting, carpentry etc. are another great way to add more depth to your survival knowledge. These are also a great way to learn more about our history and to stay in touch with our roots. There are many periodicals out there that cover living off the grid or shed light on real/current situations people have faced and how they survived. Printed materials are great to have but make sure you actually read them and learn from them before you are placed in a real survival situation. Natural disasters will not patiently wait nearby while you take the time to read them in emergency situations!

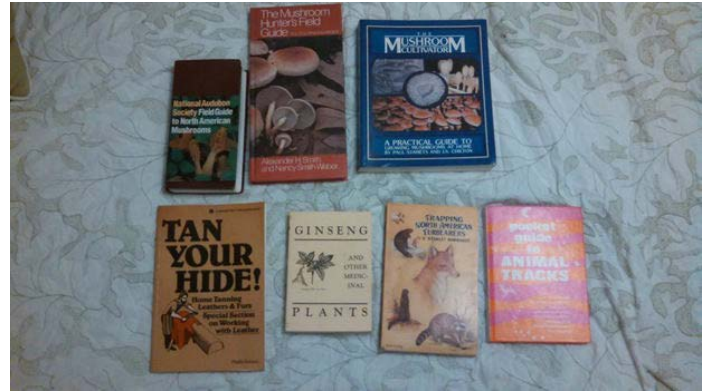
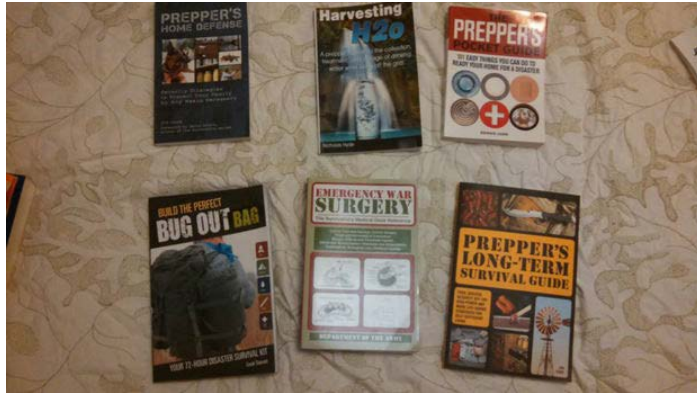
Another invaluable resource to have are your friends or family who have lived through some sort of disaster, war, accident or any other life changing event where their ability to survive kept them alive. My grandfather was the greatest

true survivor I knew. He truly had to survive the Great Depression, WWII and after returning from the war he raised a family of six children with my grandmother. Having grown up in western Kentucky during the depression, he became well versed in surviving off the land and making due with the limited resources available. As a kid, he would hunt and trap with his brothers and provide food for the family. Nothing would be wasted off of the animals they harvested; this is a lifestyle that he heavily ingrained in my Father and I. He was also extremely knowledgeable in gathering edible insects, mushrooms and medicinal plants from the woods. I can remember going on walks with him through the woods as a kid where he would show me what was edible and what was not. I have eaten my fair share of bugs, roots and plants! I sometimes used to hate it as a kid, but he was from another generation who really experienced hard times. I am really appreciative now that he took the time to pass down his skills to my Father and I, and I wish to pass on these skills to my children and (much later!) my own grandchildren. Most of us today have no idea of the hardships that the survivors of the Great Depression and World Wars went through. Reading about it in a book, hearing stories or seeing a film is one thing, truly experiencing it changes you and your perspective on life forever.

I can go on for hours about my grandfather and how he and my father taught me how to truly survive off the land, but for this plan I will stick to the basics. The key life lessons my grandfather and father taught to me are:

1. Situational awareness- you should always be aware of events taking place around you at all times
2. Waste nothing
3. Never stop learning
4. Be prepared
5. Protect your family
6. Don't take handouts, make it on your own
7. and last but not least "Do Good"





## Step 2: Be Aware of the Natural Threats in Your Area

In just about every area of the world, there is some sort of natural disaster that could strike at any given moment. That being said, you should familiarize yourself with that type of disaster and have a plan for you and your family to follow when it does occur. My family and I currently live in Florida and one our biggest natural threats is a hurricane. In case of a potential hurricane making landfall in our area, we have two options, we can wait out the storm and bunker down or we can pack up the vehicles and head further inland. If the decision to bunker down is made, it must be made understanding all the risks, and we must be prepared beforehand with ample amounts of tools and supplies at the ready. Below is a list of required materials needed if we stay:

At least 20 gallons of bottled water and the ability to make more

Non perishable goods (canned food, dry food)

Flash lights and head lamps (at least one for each person) with spare batteries

Kerosene fuel for cooking (2 gallons)

Kerosene stoves

Chain saw, sharpener and fuel

Hand tools (ax, shovel, saw, machete, rope, hammer and chains)

Tool box (socket and wrench set, screwdrivers, allen wrenches, screws and nails)

Dry bags with clothes and toiletries

Generator capable of running the fridge and freezer

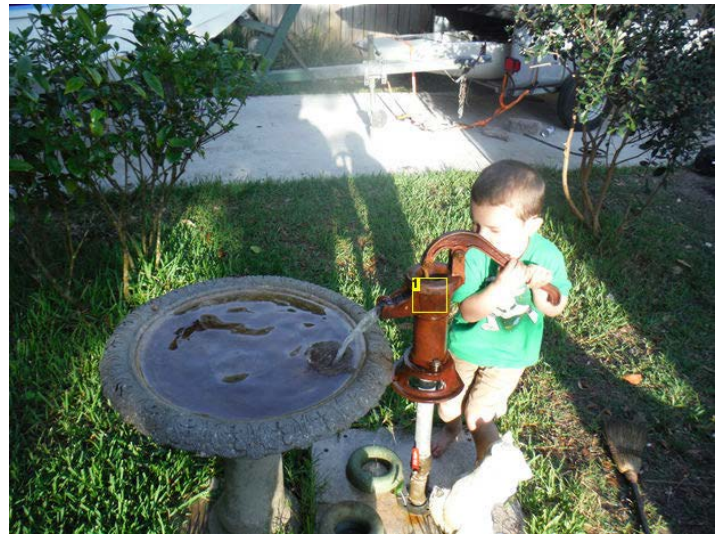
Fuel for the generator (at least 45 gallons)

Handheld storm radio

Knives (at least one for every member of the family)

First aid kits

If the hurricane is predicted to have massive storm surges and is a category 2 or greater, it is safe to say that we will pack up our vehicles and bug out trailer to take my family inland to a safer location. In the next step, I will give an overview on my custom built bug out trailer.



**Image Notes**

1. One of the 3 wells on our property, this one is an old hand pump. My son loves to fill the bird bath!

### **Step 3: The Rig Setup**

I will show how I use my homemade trailer as a starting point for a true bug out trailer. Note: A trailer is great to have in an evacuation situation because it gives you more storage for gear, BUT it will slow your travel times and decrease mpg. The trailer that I started with was a "Let's go Aero" 7' utility trailer. I then

modified it by adding a wood top and lumber rack off of an old Toyota truck. The wood top was coated for \$70 with Herculiner, adding a non-skid surface and protecting the wood. The formula they use holds up great, I have had it on the trailer and in the bed of my truck for more than 2 years now with no issues. My trailer can be set up to haul many survival essentials inside the enclosed area along with our two dogs, a kayak on the lid and a roof top tent on the top rack.

When the trailer is not in use and is simply stored in our garage, the dogs love to get into it and sleep.

So here is a list of the items that I will have in and on the trailer when we are in an evacuation situation. In most situations, time is critical and everything must be packed and ready to go in a matter of hours with the goal of arriving at the destination in 24 hrs or less. It is essential to have these items already packed into easy to transport containers that simplify the loading process. You do not want to be running all over your house or property to find missing items.

Items to pack in or on the trailer:

Roof top tent

Kayak with fishing gear

Camp stove with propane tanks

Bottled water

Tool box (socket and wrench set, screwdrivers, allen wrenches, screws and nails)

Bows (mine and my wife's)

Food (canned and dry)

Pet Food if needed

Fuel ( approximately 45 gal)

Hand tools (ax, shovel, saw, machete, rope, hammer and chains)

Cooler with ice

Spare tire for trailer

Pots, pans and utensils

Knives (at least one for every member of the family)

First aid kits

Generator



**Image Notes**

1. 1 week long camping trip in the Mountains around Los Padres National



**Image Notes**

1. Useful custom trailer can carry just about anything!
2. Roof top tents rule!



**Image Notes**

1. A bike is a great tool to have!
2. A kayak is another great tool to have to provide food if in a water environment.



**Image Notes**

1. My wife's bow
2. My bow
3. A portable generator to provide power
4. Ample amounts of fuel but not in plain sight, keep it hidden inside the trailer.
5. Fuel for MSR stove and other equipment.



**Image Notes**

1. Not only is important to have ample amounts of fuel for the vehicles it is a good idea to have a transfer pump. Siphoning also works.





#### Step 4: Getting There

Knowing where you are now, where you want to be, and how to get there when it all goes down is critical. Depending on the severity of things, you may stay where you are at or you may make the decision to relocate to a predetermined location. In this plan, I will speak more towards the more difficult of the two, hitting the road.

Keep in mind that this is a very difficult decision to make and once it is made, it may be very difficult to return.

So in the event of a natural disaster, infectious diseases, nuclear fallout, or government takeover (I.E. Red Dawn situation) the interstates may not be your

best bet to go from point A to B. You should have in your "bag of tricks" multiple back road routes, and if possible try them out prior, noting geography and stopping points along the way. Note that your GPS will most likely not be working in these situations and that an old fashioned, but up to date, map will be your best resource.

Your bug out location needs to be within a reasonable distance, say within a 24 hour range. I say 24 hours because under normal conditions your drive may take 10 hrs or so, but taking into consideration traffic build up and the use of secondary and tertiary routes, times may be greatly exaggerated. Roads may be blocked due to fallen trees or car wrecks so be aware that you may have to back track a great deal as well.

Also you need to take into consideration that fuel stations may not be open. So the ability to store and transport fuel safely is another limiting factor when determining what your range is. If you own more than one car, remember fuel can be siphoned to help supplement your fuel requirements. All this being said, make sure your bug out location is within your theoretical reach.

For example, lets say that your bug out location is about 750-800 miles away and your vehicle, while towing, gets about 18-20mpg and has a 20 gallon tank. This means that your expected distance per tank of fuel is  $19\text{mpg} \times 20\text{mi} = 380$  miles. For you to make it all the way, you would need to have at least 42 gallons, which theoretically would get you 798 miles. But in adverse situations, you should always factor in a generous safety net. For simplicity of the numbers, I would bring at least 65 gallons of fuel, 20 in the tank of the vehicle and 45 as a reserve. This would theoretically get you 1235 miles or roughly 150% of your original distance.





## Step 5: Packing the Vehicle

Knowing what to bring and what NOT to bring is critical to survival. Too much baggage will weigh you down rather than aid you. The trailer is nice to have, but don't rely too heavily on it. Be able to confidently abandon it if needed to continue moving. Keep your most important survival items in the vehicle with you. You and your family will depend on what you pack, so make it count!

Items to pack in vehicle:

BUG out bags (covered in next step)

Weapons and ammo (discussed later)

Appropriate clothing (Layered clothing is best)

Bottled water

Currency, bullion and other tradeable items

Personal documents (Especially SSN, birth certificates, marriage license, registrations, deeds, medical records, and anything else vital)

Pictures of your family and pets (If you get separated, you can use the photos to help locate them and to prove pet ownership. Best if you are pictured in the photo with the pet.)

Knives (at least one for every member of the family)

Food (both for you and pets)

Wet wipes

First aid kit

**\*\*Special medical supplies\*\*** (I am not a medical doctor and I do not mean to sound morbid, but in the worst situation, persons requiring prescription medications or special treatments may not make it very long if not prepared. Make sure to keep your prescriptions filled and up to date and/or think of alternative treatments.)



**Image Notes**

1. Always carry a chain, tools and toilet paper!



**Image Notes**

1. I always keep a stash of emergency money hidden in my truck, just in case.



**Image Notes**

1. Also all ways keep a gym bag with a change of cloths and running shoes in the truck just in case!



## Step 6: The bug out bag, decoded

There are MANY publications both online and printed that detail exactly what should be in a bug out bag. It seems to be a growing trend. I suggest having books and actually reading them PRIOR to an event. The best knowledge is that already

within your mind. In the worst situations, the internet may be a thing of the past, so having a book to draw information from may literally be a life saver. Every member of the family should have their own bag and be familiar with its contents.

Basic bug out bag inventory:

Weapon (legal note: Obey State and Federal law, just keep in mind that in dire situations things can change.)

Knife

Water purification device

Fire starter

Mirror

First aid kit

Fishing line and tackle

Energy gel/high calorie energy bars

Paracord

Lighter

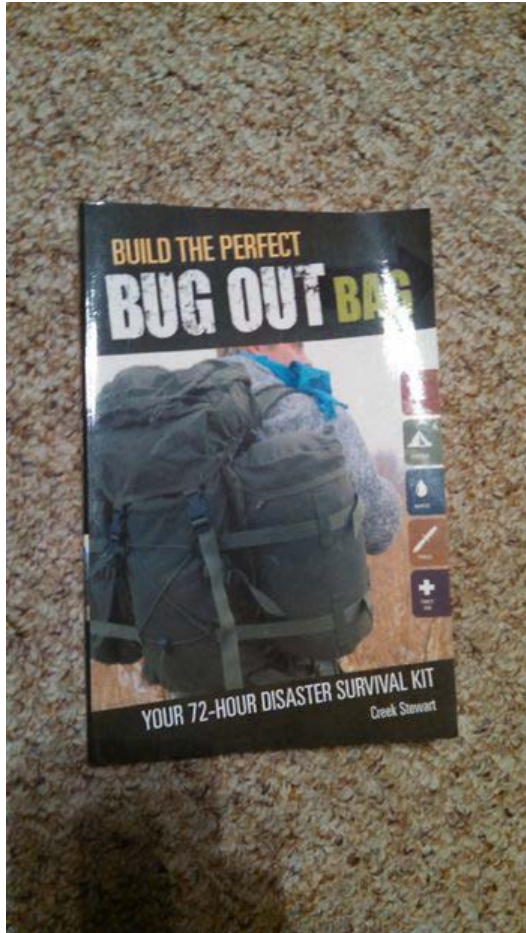
Stove

Pots and Pans (durable but lightweight!)

Utensils

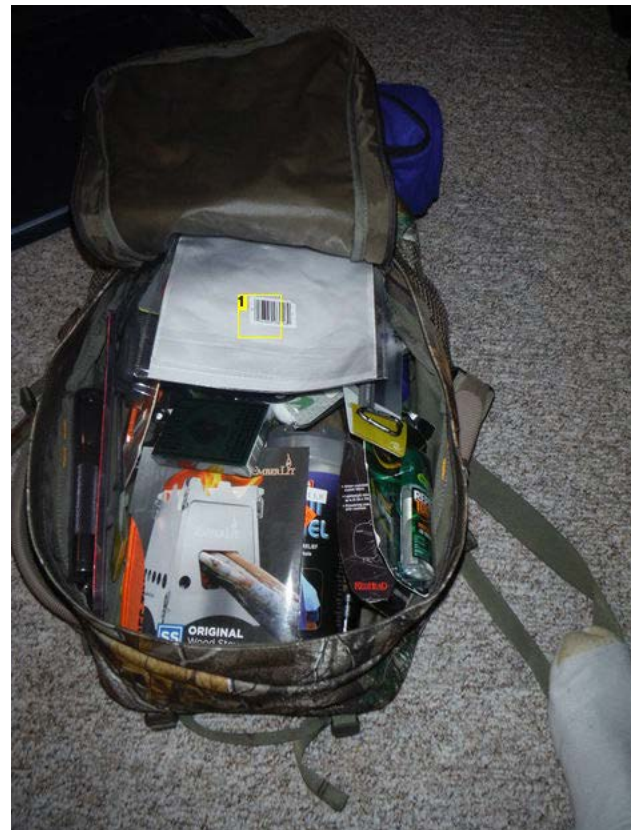
Emergency blanket

Literature (edible plants, herbal remedies, how to guides)



**Image Notes**

1. One of a few bags we have for a quick grab.



**Image Notes**

1. Just about everything including the wood burning stove!

## Step 7: Weapons

So I am not going to show my personal weapon collection, but I will give a very basic overview of the most common weapons people may be familiar with. Again, I stress OBEY State and Federal law!

Guns:

Pistol, effective range: 0-25yds

Rifle, effective range: 0-500+ yds (shooter and weapon dependent)

I am not trying to tell everyone to go out and buy a gun, but they are a great tool to have when used properly. Weapons such as pistols are great for close in personal and family protection as well as a possible tool for providing food. This protection can range from snakes to pigs to bears as well as from humans. Rifles are more suited for hunting than pistols and could be used for protection as well. If a pistol or rifle is in your "bag of tricks," be sure that all able bodied members of the family are aware of the safe handling and operation of the weapon. Along with guns, make sure you choose a common caliber where ample ammunition is readily available, and make sure you have plenty of it.

Pellet Guns:

Effective range: 0-150yds (shooter and weapon dependent)

Pellet guns may also be a great weapon to use. Modern day pellet guns are much more advanced and powerful than those of the past. Typical pellet calibers come in .177, .22 and even .25 cal. These weapons have ample energy to hunt for small to medium game and can be used as a defensive weapon. Pellet guns are also quite a bit quieter and do not require powder, just make sure to have plenty of pellets.

Bow and Arrow:

Effective range: 5-60+yds (shooter and weapon dependent)

Not to get too into the weeds in this area, but for the most part there are three main types of modern day bows: compound, recurve and cross bow. Long Bows are also out there, but few people still use them. Each type of bow has its pros and cons, and as any archer knows they all require different skills. I suppose a bow could be used for personal protection, but they are more suited for hunting. Compound bows are capable of mechanically storing up massive amounts of energy through the use of cams and composite limb materials. This in turn takes draw pressure off the user, and the user can hold on target longer. Compound bows are slow to draw, but the degree of accuracy and amount of energy released makes them very effective. Recurve bows do not mechanically store power, and the user bears the full weight of the draw for each shot. On the other hand, a recurve bow can take many more shots in the time it takes a compound to take one. Lastly there are cross bows. These require the least amount of skill to use, but they are extremely effective. Draw times are slow, but it can be left in the drawn position mechanically able to be released by the flick of a trigger. Arrows and bolts can be used nearly indefinitely, just remember to properly inspect each arrow after hitting something solid. Safety note: Make sure to properly match up your arrow or bolt to the weapon you are using. Example: Never shoot a wooden arrow from a compound bow, it may shatter upon release of the string sending wood splinters into your arm. Ouch!

Knives:

Effective range: 0-5yds

Knives have many uses from cleaning wild game to defending the family to carving out more tools. Every member should have a knife on them when in a survival situation, and I will just leave it at that!

Improvised weapons:

Effective range: ?

In extreme situations, nearly any object around you could be used as a weapon, but some are better than others. So choose wisely!

## **Step 8: Extreme situations (war, outbreak, riots, economic collapse, SHTF)**

Ok, this is where the hypothetical part of my brain starts cranking out thoughts and ideas. What if?? This simple question can spiral out of control and lead to some difficult scenarios of life and death.

Like most people, my family and I live near a large populated city. Jacksonville, Florida is a great area to live, but in an extreme survival situation, its massive population may be its undoing. In desperate times, people will do desperate things. Heavily populated cities are a ticking time bomb waiting to explode with mass panic when disaster strikes. Examples of this include the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the recent events in Ferguson, Missouri. In both of these situations, there was wide spread panic, riots, violence and looting. In these types of situations, there will always be people who will run wild and exploit the communities affected.

Always have a survivor mentality in everything you do.

When choosing to buy our home here in Florida, I took into account the makeup of our neighborhood. Number of entry/exit points, elevation of our lot relative to water, property features and neighbors. Our property has both city water and well water, including one hand pump. We are also on a septic system, have a fully fenced backyard and a fenced garden. There is only one entry point into the neighborhood and at the end of our street there is access to the water. From this I am comfortable saying that even if the power was off we could still get water to drink (after boiling) and operate the plumbing system. I keep an ample amount of split wood stored for heating and cooking, and if more is needed there are plenty of hardwoods on the property.





### **Step 9: Location and skills**

Whether you intend to stay at your current location or decide to move your family to a safer location, make sure you have ample amounts of resources available to hold out for as long as needed. For starters, ample dry and canned goods as well as plenty of fresh water can keep you in the game for awhile but as food supplies run short you must be resourceful and able to live off the land. Without getting into too much detail (there are many books on this subject alone), there are few skills every survivor should have in their bag of tricks. Just ask the boy scouts!

Basic understanding of:

- Hunting and trapping
- Fire making
- Leather working
- Gathering
- Farming
- Herbalism



- Canning
- Fishing
- Tracking
- Carpentry
- First aid Martial arts/hand to hand combat
- Negotiations (contact with others for trade is inevitable)

When determining if your location can support you and your family's needs for an extended period of time, there are a few things to take into consideration. Do you have access to a clean water source? Or are you able to purify water? Do you have a continuous source of protein or are you reliant on modern conveniences? Is the soil capable of being farmed? How extreme are the seasons? Are there ample trees or other fuels to burn for heat and cooking? Does your location provide natural protection from threats? Are there layers of defense that can be utilized? These are just some things you should ask yourself when determining if your stronghold is really a stronghold.

The listing below shows a few examples of modern amenities that may not be available in an actual survival event. These are just a few things to get you thinking about and in turn planning for. For each of these items just think, what would life be like without these?

- Electricity
- Plumbing, receiving and discharge
- Refrigeration
- Heating and cooling
- Computers
- Antibiotics

- Prescriptions
- Fuel
- Phones
- TV
- And many more



**Image Notes**

1. What a view off the back porch over looking my parents 110 acre lake. The lake can supply fish to our family all year round.



**Image Notes**

1. My parent's farm also provides enough venison for my family for an entire year (4-5 deer)



**Image Notes**

1. Not meant to scare anyone, but knowing how to properly clean and butcher an animal is critical for long term survival.



**Image Notes**

1. Again butchering skills are important to have!



**Image Notes**

1. Our freezer when we lived in California. Top shelf Tuna loins, next White Sea Bass steaks, next King Salmon and bottom Black Tail Deer. We don't buy a lot of meat!



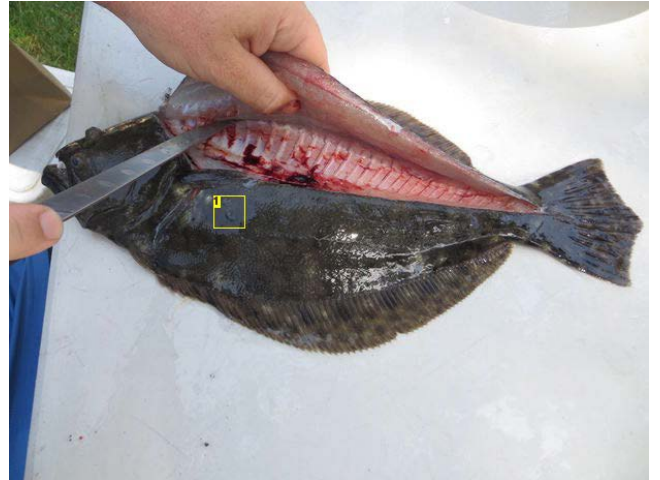
**Image Notes**

1. Along with hunting is the skill of leather making and working. Waste nothing!



**Image Notes**

1. Flounder, one of my favorites!



**Image Notes** 1. Check out my other Instructables for tips on how to properly fillet fish!



**Image Notes**

1. Potatoes are a great survival food that are easy to grow and can be left in the ground for long periods of time and dug up when needed. Here we have 60 plants and say 5-7 potatoes per plant means a lot of food!



**Image Notes**

1. Be careful about eating wild mushrooms! But if you know what you are doing they can be a real treat,



**Image Notes**

1. Guard dogs, lol. at any given time we have nearly 5-6 dogs on the property. Great early warning. Also we have Peacocks and Guineas, they are really the guards :)



**Image Notes**

1. In the process of canning fresh caught tuna! Canning is a great way to store meats and vegetables.



**Image Notes**

1. Another way to keep meats longer is to smoke them. Yum, smoked fresh caught King Salmon.



**Image Notes**

1. Smoked tuna collars!



#### Image Notes

1. Always keep your skills up, In college we had a MMA club.

### Step 10: Conclusion

As the old boy scout saying goes "Be prepared!" We do not know if and/or when we may be thrown into a survival situation, but if we prepare for it, our odds of survival increase. Try to incorporate survival skills into your life every day and always continue to learn.