With hunting season just around the corner, hunters have never had a better chance to be successful. In the last 30 years, better equipment, game management and smarter hunters have improved the odds for a productive hunt. Here are some of the positive changes made through the years that can make your outdoor trip a success or a failure.

THE WEATHER CHANNEL: It simply gives you a chance to plan ahead for your hunt, regardless of the weather. It's like looking through a crystal ball.

GAME MANAGEMENT: Planting food plots and learning how to use them improves long-term hunting success, even on small acreages.

OUTDOOR STORES: The explosion of big name hunting, fishing and camping stores like Bass Pro Shops, Cabelas, Herters, Academy and Gander Mountain offer the finest outdoor equipment at affordable prices

TREE STANDS AND GROUND BLINDS: In the late '60s, I bought my first tree stand. Before then, most everyone hunted on the ground. Bow hunters are the ones responsible for the equipment that they and gun hunters regularly use. Scent for deer hunting, climbing and ladder stands, as well as safety harnesses while you're in the stand, make it a safe way to hunt. I have been wearing one for years.

OPTICS: Range finders, scopes and binoculars have never been more affordable. Armor-coated 10x and 8x power binoculars are favored by most hunters today.

HUNTING CLOTHES: Wearing camouflage and blaze orange will dress you for safety and stealth. RealTree AP and Mossy Oak Break-Up Infinity in hats, shirts, pants and jackets are perfect for southeastern Oklahoma hardwoods and forests.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES: Cell phones, GPS and walkie-talkies will allow the outdoorsman to constantly be in touch with home. Game cameras provide continual scouting in the woods, even when you’re not.

ATVs: The two- and four-wheel drive models allow outdoorsmen to hunt and fish wherever they want to. They opened up the woods for the entire family.

CAMPING EQUIPMENT: Tents, bedrolls, cook stoves and lanterns are better than ever. So is camp furniture that is stable and functional. If mosquitoes bother you, then try ThermaCell lanterns and portable carriers to scare them away.

BETTER WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT GAME MANAGEMENT: The entire wildlife conservation movement nationwide is the reason we have so much game to hunt. The stocking of striped bass, hybrids, trout and the Eastern turkey is a bonus for Oklahoma outdoorsmen during the last 45 years. The Hunter Safety courses offered by the O.D.W.C. provide a great safety net to the young people using firearms. But, license sales have remained flat for the last several years. Some younger people are not as interested in the outdoors like we were when we were young. Electronic games, computers and cell phones are keeping young hunters out of the woods.

Whatever your interest is—hunting, fishing or just enjoying Mother Nature—take advantage of all the positive improvements for the modern outdoorsman or outdoorswoman. Enjoy the woods.

– L. FRY