

SHOTGUN SHOT & CHOKE GUIDE

Birdshot Buckshot Slugs Choke Selection | KiloTangoUSA.com

BIRDSHOT

Shot sizes #9 through BB -- smaller numbers mean larger pellets. Match pellet size to target species and engagement range.

Shot Size	Pellet Dia.	Typical Use	Effective Range
#9	.08"	Skeet, sporting clays	15-25 yds
#8/#8.5	.09"	Trap, clay target, doves	20-30 yds
#7.5	.095"	Quail, pheasant, clay	25-35 yds
#6	.11"	Pheasant, squirrel, rabbit	30-40 yds
#5	.12"	Pheasant, turkey (sub-load)	35-45 yds
#4	.13"	Turkey, large game birds	40-50 yds
#2	.15"	Geese, large waterfowl	40-55 yds
BB	.18"	Canada geese, large ducks	45-60 yds

BUCKSHOT

Designed for deer-sized game and self-defense. More pellets = denser pattern; fewer, larger pellets = more individual energy.

Size	Pellet Dia.	Pellets (2-3/4")	Best Application
#4 Buck	.24"	21-27	Dense pattern, close range, home defense
#3 Buck	.25"	20-21	Coyote, mid-range defense
#1 Buck	.30"	16	Deer, general defense
00 Buck	.33"	8-9	Most common -- deer, home defense standard
000 Buck	.36"	6-8	Maximum energy, reduced pellet count

HOME DEFENSE NOTE

00 Buck is the law-enforcement and home-defense standard -- it balances pellet count with individual energy. #4 Buck is a viable alternative where over-penetration is a concern.

SLUGS

Single-projectile rounds. Foster slugs for smoothbore; sabot slugs require a rifled barrel for optimal accuracy.

Type	Barrel	Range	Notes
Foster (rifled slug)	Smoothbore or cylinder	75-100 yds	Soft lead, self-stabilizing via angled ribs
Sabot slug	Rifled barrel only	150-200 yds	Sub-caliber in plastic cup; rifle-like accuracy
Brenneke	Smoothbore	75-125 yds	Wad stays attached, adds stability

CHOKE SELECTION

Tighter chokes keep pellets together longer for greater effective range; more open chokes spread the pattern faster for close-range density.

Choke	Constriction	Pattern @ 40 yds	Best For
Cylinder (no choke)	0"	35-40"	Close-range defense, Foster slugs
Improved Cylinder	.010"	28-34"	Close birds, skeet, home defense (buckshot)

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Modified	.020"	23-28"	General purpose, pheasant, #2-#6 shot
Improved Modified	.025"	20-25"	Turkey sub-loads, mid-range waterfowl
Full	.035"	18-22"	Long-range birds, far waterfowl, trap
Extra Full / Turkey	.040-.060"	15-18"	Turkey at 30-50 yds, #4-#6 shot only

CHOKE + BUCKSHOT WARNING

NEVER use Full or Extra Full chokes with buckshot. Hard pellets can damage tight chokes and create dangerous pressure. Use Cylinder or Improved Cylinder for buckshot loads. Always check manufacturer recommendations.

QUICK REFERENCE: LOAD & CHOKE BY APPLICATION

Application	Recommended Load	Recommended Choke
Dove / Quail	#7.5 or #8	Modified or IC
Pheasant (close)	#6 or #5	IC or Modified
Pheasant (flushed, far)	#5 or #4	Modified or IM
Turkey	#4, #5, or #6 (turkey loads)	Extra Full / Turkey
Ducks (decoying)	#4, #5, or #6 (steel)	IC or Modified
Canada Geese	#2 or BB (steel)	Modified
Deer (brush)	00 Buck or Foster slug	Cylinder or IC
Deer (open field)	Sabot slug	Rifled barrel
Home Defense	00 Buck or #4 Buck	Cylinder or IC
Skeet	#8 or #9	Skeet / IC
Trap	#7.5 or #8	Modified or Full

STEEL VS. LEAD SHOT

Federal law requires non-toxic shot for waterfowl hunting. Steel is harder and less dense than lead:

- Go up 1-2 shot sizes when switching from lead to steel (e.g., #4 lead = #2 steel)
- Use IC or Modified chokes with steel -- never Full or Turkey chokes
- Steel maintains velocity well but loses energy faster at range due to lower density
- Bismuth and tungsten alternatives perform closer to lead and are safe with tighter chokes

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