

## Men were hunters, women were gatherers? New research challenges early assumed gender roles

Analysis of data from dozens of foraging societies around the world demonstrates that in at least 79 percent of these groups, women partake in hunting. This challenges the prevailing notion that hunting is solely a male activity while gathering is restricted to women. [The research](#), led by Abigail Anderson from Seattle Pacific University, US, was recently published in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

A common belief holds that, among foraging populations, men have typically hunted animals while women gathered plant products for food. However, mounting archaeological evidence from across human history and prehistory is challenging this paradigm; for instance, women in many societies have been found buried alongside big-game hunting tools.

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More than 70 percent of female hunting appears to be intentional—as opposed to opportunistic killing of animals encountered while performing other activities, and intentional hunting by women appears to target game of all sizes, most often large game.

The analysis also revealed that women are actively involved in teaching hunting practices and that they often employ a greater variety of weapon choices and hunting strategies than men.

These findings suggest that, in many foraging societies, women are skilled hunters and play an instrumental role in the practice, adding to the evidence opposing long-held perceptions about gender roles in foraging societies.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the full article here\*\*](#)