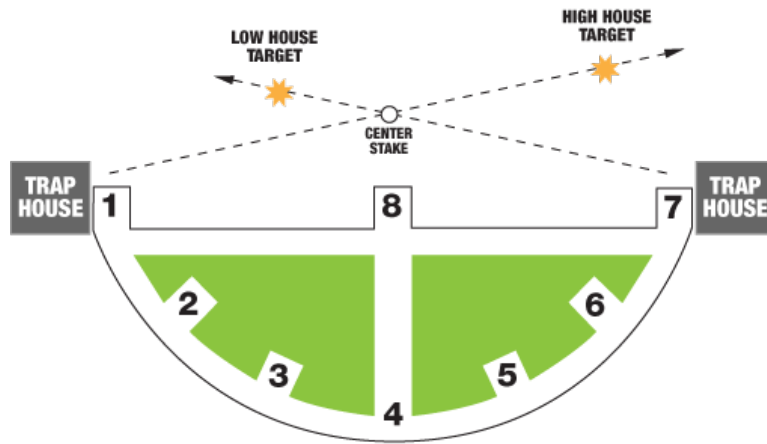


## CLAY TARGET SHOOTING

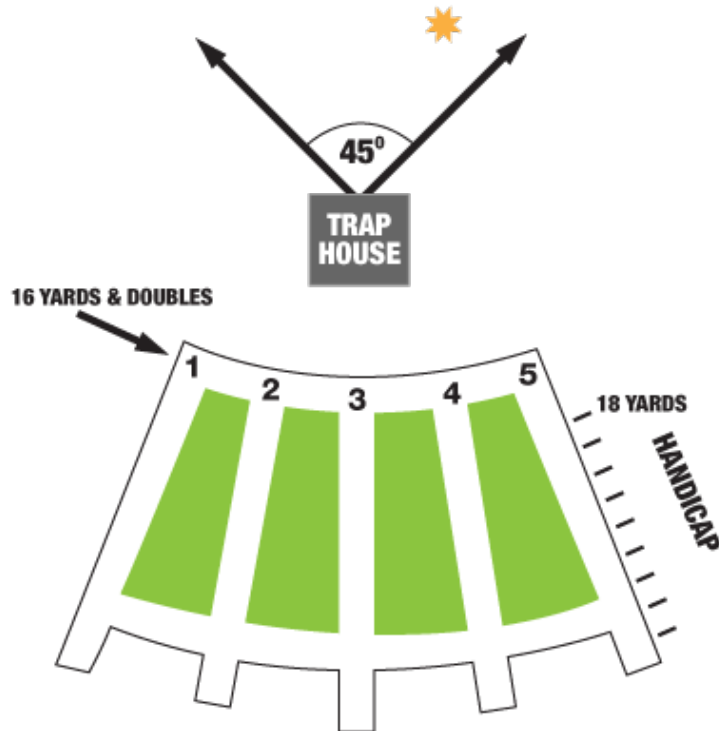
Clay target shooting is a fun and great way to practice for upcoming bird hunting seasons. There are several shotgun games that can be played to improve hunters' wing-shooting skills. Often, people call clay target shooting "skeet." You may also hear someone suggest, "Let's shoot some skeets."

Skeet is actually one of several clay target games. Trap is another game that is very popular.



### SKEET

- The game of skeet consists of 25 clay targets shot on a field with eight shooting stations. There are two clay target throwers – one each in a high trap house which launches targets 10 feet off the ground and a low trap house which launches three feet above the ground. The high house is to the left and the low house to the right of the shooting stations.
- The field is a  $\frac{1}{2}$  circle with seven stations around the perimeter. Station 8 is located in the center.
- All shooters shoot in a squad from the same station and move through the field together. A squad is up to five shooters.
- The targets are thrown as singles or doubles. A double is one target from each house, thrown at the same time.
- Stations 1, 2, 6 and 7 consist of a single high house, a single low house and one set of doubles. When in Stations 1 and 2, the shooter must attempt to shoot the high house target first for the doubles. When in Stations 6 and 7, the shooter must attempt to shoot the low house target first in the doubles.
- Stations 3, 4, 5 and 8 consist of a single high house and a single low house.
- That 25<sup>th</sup> target is shot as an option; it is a repeat of the first missed target. If the shooter does not miss a target, it is a low house at Station 8.
- Targets are thrown when the shooter calls for it, usually by saying "pull."
- Skeet competitions use the four most common gauges of shotguns: 12, 20, 28 and .410 bore. In competition, an event is 100 targets. Events are held for each of the gauges; some competitors will shoot all four for a total of 400 targets in one day.
- Skeet shooting is great practice for crossing birds such as doves, grouse and waterfowl.



## TRAP

- The game of trap is also 25 targets, but is shot on a field with only five shooting stations and a single clay target thrower in front of the shooters.
- The field is an arc located 16 yards from the trap house. The clay target thrower, more commonly called a trap machine, oscillates from left to right. This varies the target presentation.
- Five shooters stand at each of the five shooting stations. The shooter that starts at number 1 always shoots first, no matter which station they are on.
- Each shooter attempts one target, then a second, then a third, fourth and fifth. Once each shooter has shot five targets from their respective stations, then they move to the right, with the shooter in Station 5 moving to Station 1.
- Once each shooter has attempted each of the five stations, they are done. This is known as a round of trap.
- Trap competitions consist of 100 targets and four rounds. Competitions also have a handicap class in which shooters can move back as far as the 27<sup>th</sup> yard line. A competitor's handicap is based on their previous performance with the most skilled shooters standing further away from the trap house. A doubles class is also common in most competitions. Trap machines are designed to throw one or two targets at a time. In a doubles competition, the machine is set to throw two targets at once; the shooter attempts to break both targets. The rotation is the same as in singles, but the competitor shoots 50 targets in a round.
- If you are an upland game bird hunter this is a great game to shoot to prepare for the upcoming season.

Both disciplines have governing bodies for competitions, but shooters can just play the game for fun or hunting practice. To find a shooting range near you visit <http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/recreation/shooting-ranges/>.