

Top 8 Big-Bore Myths and Truths - Separating Fact from Fiction



Big-bore rifles have earned a legendary reputation among hunters, survivalists, and shooting enthusiasts alike. With their powerful calibers, they command respect, but they're also shrouded in myths that can scare off newcomers or leave seasoned shooters second-guessing their potential. Today, we'll tackle the top myths surrounding big-bore rifles and shed light on the truths, so you can see these firearms for the powerful and practical tools they truly are. Let's separate fact from fiction.

Myth #1: Big-Bore Rounds Destroy Too Much Meat

Busted. Truth: It's a common belief that big-bore bullets destroy excessive amounts of meat on game animals. However, the truth is in the design and the type of bullet used. Big-bore bullets present a larger frontal area than most medium-bore rounds, especially if the bullet is an expanding type. This means they transfer energy quickly, often resulting in a clean, lethal shot with minimal meat loss. Proper shot placement and bullet selection are key, and when done right, big bores can be just as meat-friendly as any other rifle.

Myth #2: Big-Bores Have Unmanageable Recoil

Busted. Truth: Yes, big-bore rifles come with notable recoil, but it's far from unmanageable. Modern big bores, including those from [Big Horn Armory](#), are designed to mitigate recoil with features like ergonomic stocks, recoil pads, and muzzle brakes. Plus, the slower-moving big-bore bullets produce a different recoil sensation compared to faster calibers, making it a push rather than a sharp kick. For those accustomed to shooting, or with just a bit of training, handling big bore recoil becomes a matter of comfort rather than a pain point. [Watch how Rebecca](#) handles the recoil of the AR500 Rifle chambered in 500 Auto Max, determining it has less felt recoil than a .308 AR10.

Myth #3: Big-Bore Bullets Penetrate Less Than Smaller Calibers

Busted. Truth: Contrary to this belief, big-bore bullets generally provide exceptional penetration due to their weight and design. They also tend to follow the intended path within the animal even after hitting heavy bones. Heavy, slow-moving bullets—common in big bore calibers—can penetrate deeply and create long, wide wound channels, which is critical when hunting large or thick-skinned game. Even when fast-moving, big-bore bullets create a significant permanent wound channel. This combination of penetration and wide wound channels enhances their effectiveness on large, tough animals.

Myth #4: .44 Magnum is More than Most People Can Handle

Busted. Truth: While powerful, a well-designed .44 Magnum can be handled by most shooters with some practice. Big-bore rifles, even in calibers like the .44 Magnum, can be equipped with features to tame the recoil, such as high-quality stocks and recoil pads. It's also worth noting that big-bore rifles are heavier than revolvers, which helps distribute the recoil and make the shooting experience manageable—even enjoyable—for many people.

Myth #5: Big-Bore Bullets Won't Stop a Charging Grizzly or Cougar

Busted. Truth: Big bore rifles were built for this kind of work. With large-caliber bullets designed for maximum energy transfer, they can stop large predators effectively when seconds count. Big-bore bullets break bone, penetrate deeply, and maintain their path



toward vital organs, which is exactly what's needed in a defensive situation against dangerous animals. So, if you're in bear country, a big-bore rifle is precisely the tool you want by your side.

Myth #6: Big-Bore Rifles Have Poor Accuracy

Busted. Truth: There's a misconception that the sheer size and power of big-bore rifles make them inaccurate, but that's far from the truth. Modern big-bore rifles, especially those with precision manufacturing, can achieve impressive accuracy. Our Model 89 in 500 S&W Magnum comes with a guarantee of 1.5 MOA and usually shoots much better. With a half-inch diameter bullet that equates to a one-hole group. While they may have a more pronounced arc at longer distances, they perform exceptionally well within their intended ranges. Many big bore calibers are capable of placing tight groups, making them reliable for ethical shots.

Myth #7: Big-Bore Guns are Only for Dangerous Game

Busted. Truth: Although big-bores are excellent at stopping big game, they are also great for a range of applications, from hunting medium-sized game to personal defense in wilderness settings. The hunter rarely has to chase any game animal when hit by a big bore bullet. Big-bore rifles provide versatility, stopping power, and confidence, especially in areas where large predators are common. They're not just limited to dangerous game; they're a valuable tool for many hunters and outdoor enthusiasts.



Myth #8: Big-Bore Rifles are Outdated

Busted. Truth: Some people think big-bore rifles are relics of a bygone era, but they're very much alive and advancing. Today's big-bore rifles feature modern designs, improved materials, and manufacturing techniques that enhance reliability, reduce recoil, and maximize performance. Big Horn Armory and other makers are constantly innovating, proving that big-bore rifles are timeless tools with modern relevance.



The BHA Model 89 Black Thunder is an example of a modern, tactical lever-action rifle utilizing modern materials and techniques.

Big-bore rifles may seem like heavy-hitting beasts—and in many ways, they are. But with modern design, informed bullet choice, and knowledge of their true capabilities, they become versatile, reliable, and effective tools for a wide range of shooters. The next time you consider reaching for a big bore, remember the truths behind these myths and embrace the power and precision these rifles offer.