



2014 Hunter Education Annual Report



Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
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PUBLE003



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*Treat every firearm as if it is loaded *Always point the muzzle in a safe direction * Be certain of your target and what's beyond *Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot

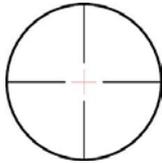


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mission Statement and Goals..... 2

Hunter Education Courses Offered..... 2-3

2014 Hunter Education Program Summary..... 4

2014 Map of Basic Hunter Education Classes by County..... 5

2014 Map of Internet Field Day Classes by County..... 6

2014 Map of Adult Test Outs by County..... 7

Program Updates: Evaluation Program..... 8

Program Updates: Course Length & Federal Grant Volunteer Hours Report..... 9

Program Updates: Archery & Crossbow Education..... 10

2014 All Hunting Incident Summary..... 11

Animals Hunted by Shooter..... 12

Firearms Involved in Incidents..... 12

TABK..... 13

Contributing Factors to Incident..... 13

Self-Inflicted vs. Same Party..... 14

Shooter/Victim Age..... 14

Incident Rate per 100,000 Hunters..... 15

Activity Shooter was Involved In-All Incidents..... 15

Shooter Hunter Education Graduate..... 16

Distance from Muzzle to Wound-All Incidents..... 16

2014 Deer Season Summary..... 17-18

Summary..... 19

Untracked Incidents & Treestand Safety..... 19

2014 Hunting Incidents by County-All Incidents..... 20

Recreational Safety Warden Map..... 21



Wisconsin Hunter Education Annual Report-2014

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Mission Statement and Goals:

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Hunter Education and Bowhunter Education Programs mission is to promote safety, conservation and Wisconsin's hunting heritage through a comprehensive educational program for the people of Wisconsin.

The goals of the Wisconsin DNR Hunter Education Program are as follows:

- To develop, deliver and maintain standardized curriculum that meets or exceeds the International Hunter Education Associations (IHEA) and the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) recommendations and standards for basic and advanced hunter education programs.
- To enhance and sustain a progressive, professional, effective and efficient WI DNR Hunter Education Program.
- To recruit, develop and retain safe, knowledgeable and responsible hunters.
- To increase public awareness and understanding of the value and role of hunting in sound wildlife management and conservation.
- To develop and maintain a comprehensive program with agency-wide support; with adequate and stable funding.



The Law Enforcement Bureau has many goals. One of the bureau's goals is to enhance opportunity, safety and enjoyment of outdoor recreational experiences in Wisconsin. This goal also includes a strategy;

Enhance outdoor recreational sporting opportunities by reducing the number of incidents, fatalities, user conflicts and property damage through education and collaborative efforts with internal and external partners.

Hunter Education Courses Offered:

WDNR's Hunter Education Program offers three convenient ways to become hunter safety certified:

Option 1: Basic Hunter Education Traditional + Range/Skills Test Day – Course is non-age specific: Instructors teach this course in a traditional classroom setting using Department lesson plans and agendas. Students prepare for the exams by completing the chapter reviews in the Department supplied student manual. The hunter education course instills in students the knowledge and skills to be a responsible and safe hunter. Students learn how hunting accidents are caused and how they can be prevented. Hunter responsibility and safety are stressed throughout the classes, which consist of lectures, demonstrations, group discussions, practical exercises and individual study and activity assignments. A \$10.00 DNR fee is required to obtain certification.

Option 2: Online Internet Hunter Education Course + Field Day – Course is non-age specific: Offered since 1996, this course combines the use of the internet and the completion of a specific agenda and lesson plans during a field day. Students register with an instructor and then complete the online training before attending the field day where they participate in multiple hands-on learning stations and complete the required



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exams. Cost will vary depending on which website the student chooses to complete the online portion.

The four DNR approved online courses are:

- hunteredcourse.com/state/online-hunter-safety-course-wisconsin (\$13.00)
- hunter-ed.com/wisconsin/ (\$24.50)
- huntercourse.com/usa/wisconsin (\$24.95)
- homestudy.ihea.com (free)

An additional \$10.00 DNR fee is required to obtain certification.

Option 3: Adult Hunter Education – In Person Test-Out (Internet Course Required) 18 years of age or older:

Offered since 2012, this alternate option allows adults 18 years of age or older to register for an adult test out scheduled bi-monthly at WI DNR service centers throughout WI. To search for adult test outs go to the DNR website and search for upcoming classes. Search class type HUNTER ADULT ONLY

https://jc.activeoutdoorsolutions.com/wise_student/app/classSearch.do

Adults are required to take an online course on their own time, these online courses can take 6-8 hours to complete. The test out that they enroll in can take up to 30 minutes and will include a 20 question practical (hands-on) exam. This option requires completion of an online course.

The three DNR-approved online courses are:

- hunteredcourse.com/state/online-hunter-safety-course-wisconsin (\$13.00)
- hunter-ed.com/wisconsin/ (\$24.50)
- huntercourse.com/usa/wisconsin (\$24.95)

An additional \$10.00 DNR fee is required to obtain certification.

Bowhunter Education Courses Offered:

WDNRs Bowhunter Education Program offers three convenient ways to become archery safety certified:

Option 1: Basic Bow Education Traditional Course

Non- age specific: Instructors teach this course in a traditional classroom setting using Department lesson plans and agendas. Students prepare for the exam by completing the chapter reviews in the Department supplied student manual.

Option 2: Add-on Bow Education Safety Course

Non- age specific: Much like the Hunter Education Course and Traditional Bow Safety Course this course is also taught in a traditional classroom setting using Department lesson plans and agendas. Students prepare for the exam by completing the chapter reviews in the Department supplied student manual.

The bowhunter education course instills in students the knowledge and skill to be a responsible and safe hunter. The students learn about the history of modern day bowhunting and our hunting heritage, responsibilities of bowhunters toward our environment, wildlife, landowners and others, preparing for the hunt - specific laws, clothing and other equipment, bowhunting equipment selection and care, treestand safety, marksmanship fundamentals, bowhunting methods, handling outdoor emergencies and field care of harvested game.

A \$10.00 DNR fee is required to obtain certification.



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Option 3: NEW! Adult Archery Education Course

The only fully certifiable online course offered start through finish, no practical (hands-on) exam required:

Adult (18+) Online Archery Course Bowhunter-ed.com [exit DNR] (\$30.00) is a Wisconsin-approved online course covering all the information you need to get started. If you are 18 years of age or older, passing the online Wisconsin Bowhunter's Ed Course will complete your bowhunter education. Those under the age of 18 must complete an archery course taught by a certified DNR archery instructor.

The online course features:

Education from the industry leading experts in bowhunting education

Fun and engaging content

Videos, interactive animations and illustrations

Designed for any device

Customer support 8:30am to Midnight

Free to start. Free to study. Pay only when you pass.

2014 Hunter Education Program Summary:

In 2014 there were;

- 890 traditional hunter education courses
- 91 online Internet field day courses
- 107 adult test-outs
- 137 archery courses

About 29,000 students were certified in 2014. 22,042 in basic hunter education, 1994 took internet field day, 2487 adults certified and 2,460 students certified in archery.

We currently have more than 4,100 active volunteer hunter education instructors.

665 Internet field day certified instructors, 20 DNR employees who support the adult test-out program and more than 570 archery instructors.

Due to the work of the volunteer hunter safety education instructor corps, conservation wardens and the WDNR's recreational education section, 2014 was Wisconsin's sixth fatality-free gun deer season -- including 4 out of the last 5 years, the first fatality free year for a gun deer season was 1973.



Fence Crossing



Shooting Positions



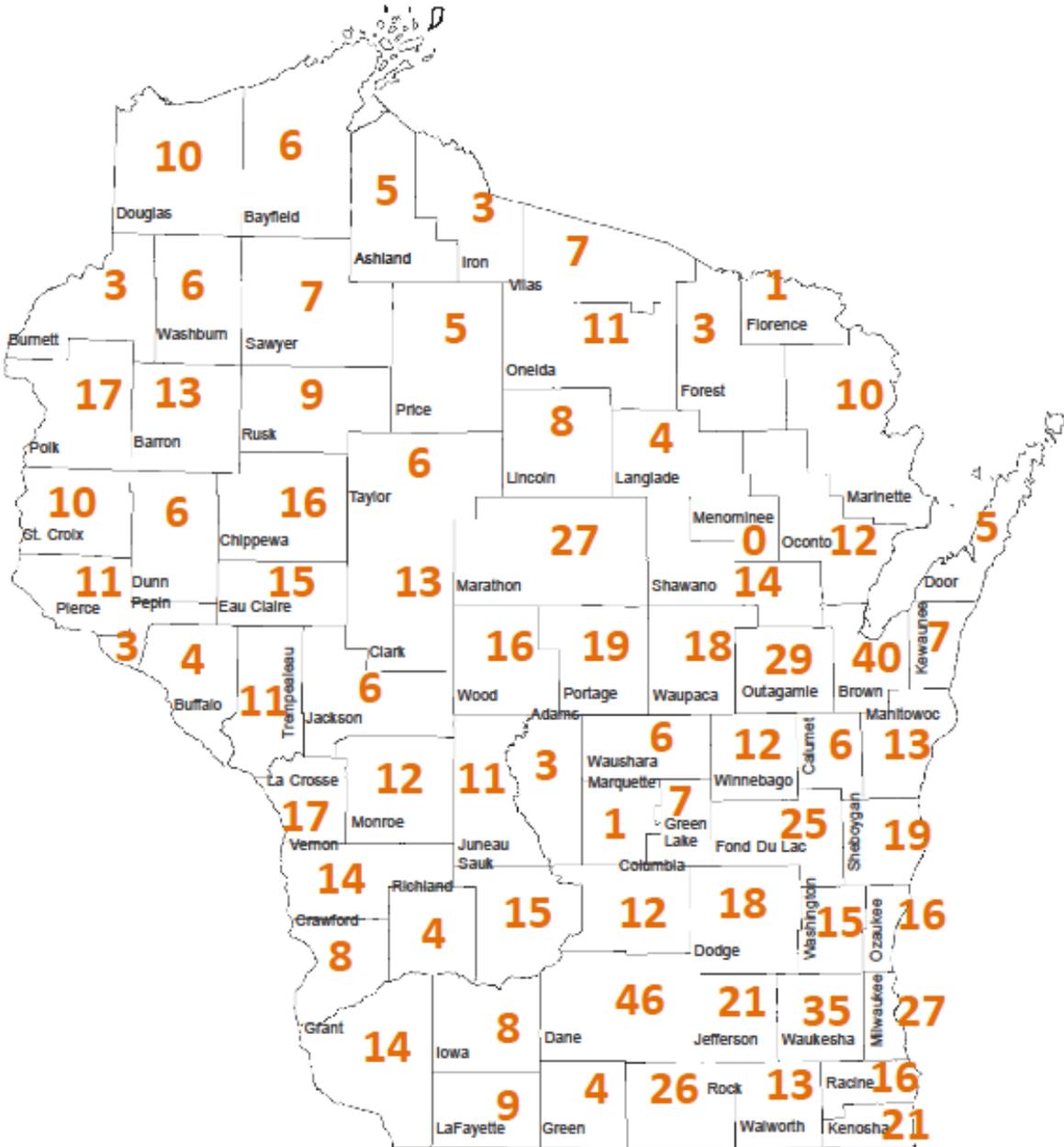
Action Sets



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2014 Basic Hunter Education Classes by County



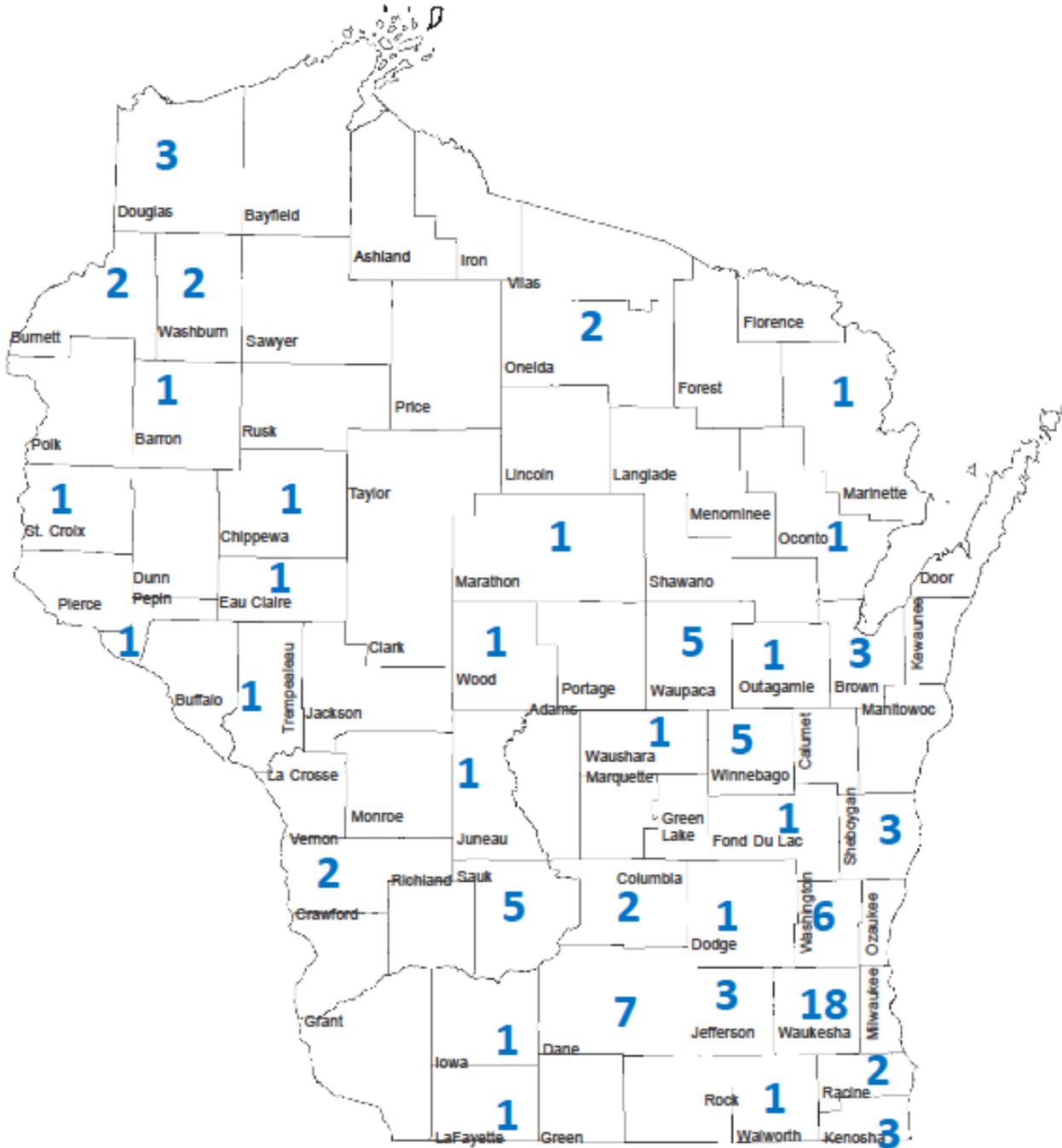
Note: 890 classes



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2014 Internet Field Day Courses by County



Note: 91 Field Days



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2014 Adult Test Outs by County



Note: 107 Adult Test Outs



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Program Updates:

NEW! Course evaluation program overview:

In 2014 the Wisconsin Hunter Education program implemented a process of evaluating hunter education courses from start to finish. This process is again moving forward in 2015 with a number of courses already scheduled for evaluation.

The goal of the program is to ensure that all program standards are being met as to the teaching and delivery of Wisconsin's program. In doing so we are looking to capture new, innovative teaching ideas that instructors may use, as well as those areas that are in need of improvement. These evaluations are also mandated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a condition of the funding/grant money we receive for operation of our program.

As of fall 2014 evaluations were concluded the following observations were made by the evaluators:

- Attitude of instructors toward the students was excellent.
- Vast knowledge of instructor corps evident.
- All truly enjoyed teaching/giving back to hunting community.
- All groups observed accepted evaluation/evaluators coming into their classroom.
- All lead instructors were open to suggestions on how to improve by local RSW's.

Categories of what the evaluator will be observing in the courses they attend are:

- Classroom organization/introduction of the course/paperwork completed properly.
- Instructor/s demeanor towards students/parents/other instructors.
- Is TAB-k (4-basic rules) a focal point of every class session.
- Course curriculum...content and delivery (what is being taught and how taught).
- Use of audio/visual materials.
- How do instructors handle any disciplinary issues or conflicts if they arise.
- Written and field exams being administered appropriately.

Timeline to accomplish the evaluation program:

- Initial course evaluations cover an 18 month period from July 1, 2014 through December 31, 2015.
- Once all reports are received, statewide Hunter Education Administrator will submit final report to DNR Secretary.
- Hunter recruitment and retention will be looked at as it relates to the overall needs of the Hunter Education program.
- Recommended changes will be made in the program.
- After adjustments are made evaluations will be continued on a statewide basis with the goal of all courses being evaluated.



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NEW! Policy: Course Length

In January of 2014 Hunter Education enacted a new policy regarding class length. The policy restricted the overall length of the class to 3-weeks with no more than 19 hours. This policy was created for the following reasons:

1. **Public Interest:** The public wants a shorter course to meet their needs. Attending a course for 6-10 weeks in length is no longer desired, in turn, forcing people to travel the state to accomplish the required hunter education program.
2. **National Influence:** Though many states are already working on going to an all online program, the State of Wisconsin does not wish to follow suit. As with our other online education programs, we have not seen a reduction in injury or fatal accidents. By creating a shorter program we can keep Wisconsin people here taking our courses, instead of going to Texas, Oklahoma, and so on.

When the policy was looked at in Dec of 2013, we had an initial compliance rate of 73%. In January of 2015 we jumped to a 78% compliance rate. By January of 2016 we are required to have a 100% compliance rate regarding course length.

NEW! Federal Grant Requirement: Instructor Volunteer Hours Report

This document is required to be completed to assist in accounting for volunteer instructors hours used to match the federal grant which helps pay for hunter education. Over reporting hours is not acceptable. Volunteer instructors are rewarded for *years* of service donated. Personal information collected will be used for administrative purposes and may be provided to requesters to the extent required by Wisconsin Open Records Law (ss. 19.31-19.39, Wis. Stats.).

The hours report is now required for hunter education classes starting January 1, 2015.

1. Each instructor will need to fill in the blanks and sign the hours report.
2. The lead instructor will need to sign and send the timesheet to the DNR.
3. If you have any Firearm Action Sets, or DNR Issued firearms, that information will need to be provided in the boxes at the bottom of the hours report, and/or on the back side of the report.
4. **Admin Hours - Definition:** Any time that is not in the classroom. Please add your total admin hours and put in the admin hours box. Examples of Admin hours include: Phone calls, emails, travel to store, group meetings, filling out DNR forms, etc.
5. **Classroom Hours - Definition:** The day(s) that you are teaching in the classroom. Total all hours and enter in by date. Example: Jan 20th class runs from 6pm- 8:30pm and I arrived 30 minutes early to help set up and check students in. Please place 3 hours in the box on Jan 20th.
6. **Until the 2016 Online System is complete, all groups will need to mail this form,** place it in the hunter education pre-paid self-addressed envelope and mail within 5-days after class is completed.

Please continue to add your Conservation Warden to the roster. Do not put the warden on the volunteer hours report. Conservation Wardens are paid state employees. They cannot claim volunteer hours. There is also no need for the instructors to be put on the bottom of the roster anymore, they will be listed on the instructor volunteer hours report.



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Archery and Crossbow Education:

Bowhunter Education is not required in Wisconsin, but is required if you wish to go Bowhunting in states or provinces where certification is mandatory. Elsewhere, Hunter education is currently required in all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, three Northwest Territories, and Mexico.

A certificate of accomplishment issued to a person for successfully completing the course under the bowhunter education program only authorizes the person to obtain the following licenses:

- a resident archer hunting license
- a nonresident archer hunting license
- a resident crossbow hunting license
- or a nonresident crossbow hunting license.

NEW! Adult Only Course: In June of 2012, the Legislature passed into law, an Adult online Hunter Education Course that the DNR is required to offer. To be consistent, the DNR will now be offering an adult only Online Archery Education Course. <http://www.bowhunter-ed.com/wisconsin>.

We always encourage people to attend a hands-on course; however, this online archery course will not require a field day for adults.

Here is a link to the course <http://www.bowhunter-ed.com/wisconsin>.

Add-on Archery Course: When conducting a 5-hr add-on course for archery education, the following rules must be met:

1. The Add-on course is a separate course and roster from the Hunter Education course.
2. The students cannot be required to attend both courses. If they only want Hunter Education they are done when the Hunter Education course is done.
3. We do not use the Add-on Archery course to extend the amount of hours for the Hunter Education course.
4. The Add-on Archery Course has a specific agenda and must be followed.

NEW! Rules for Archery Education:

If you offer an Archery Add-on class, the following rules apply to that course:

Who can attend an Add-on Archery Course?

- Anyone who has completed the Hunter Education course connected to the add-on archery course
- Anyone who has completed a Hunter Education course in Wisconsin
- Anyone that has completed an Online Wisconsin Archery Education course, this can be viewed at <http://www.bowhunter-ed.com/wisconsin>.



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2014 All Hunting Incident Summary:

29.341 Duties on accidental shooting

(1) Any person who, while hunting any wild animal or bird, discharges a firearm or arrow, and by that discharge injures or kills another person, shall immediately give his or her name and address to the injured person, render assistance to the injured person and obtain immediate medical or hospital care for the injured person, and immediately report the injury or death to the sheriff or police of the locality in which the shooting took place.



There were 18 total hunting incidents during the 2014 hunting season. 0 of the 18 incidents were fatal. Thanks to the efforts of our hunter education program, hunting is a safe activity in Wisconsin and getting safer all the time. Hunting incidents are continuing on a downward trend. In 2014, Wisconsin finished well below the 10-year average of 28 incidents per year.

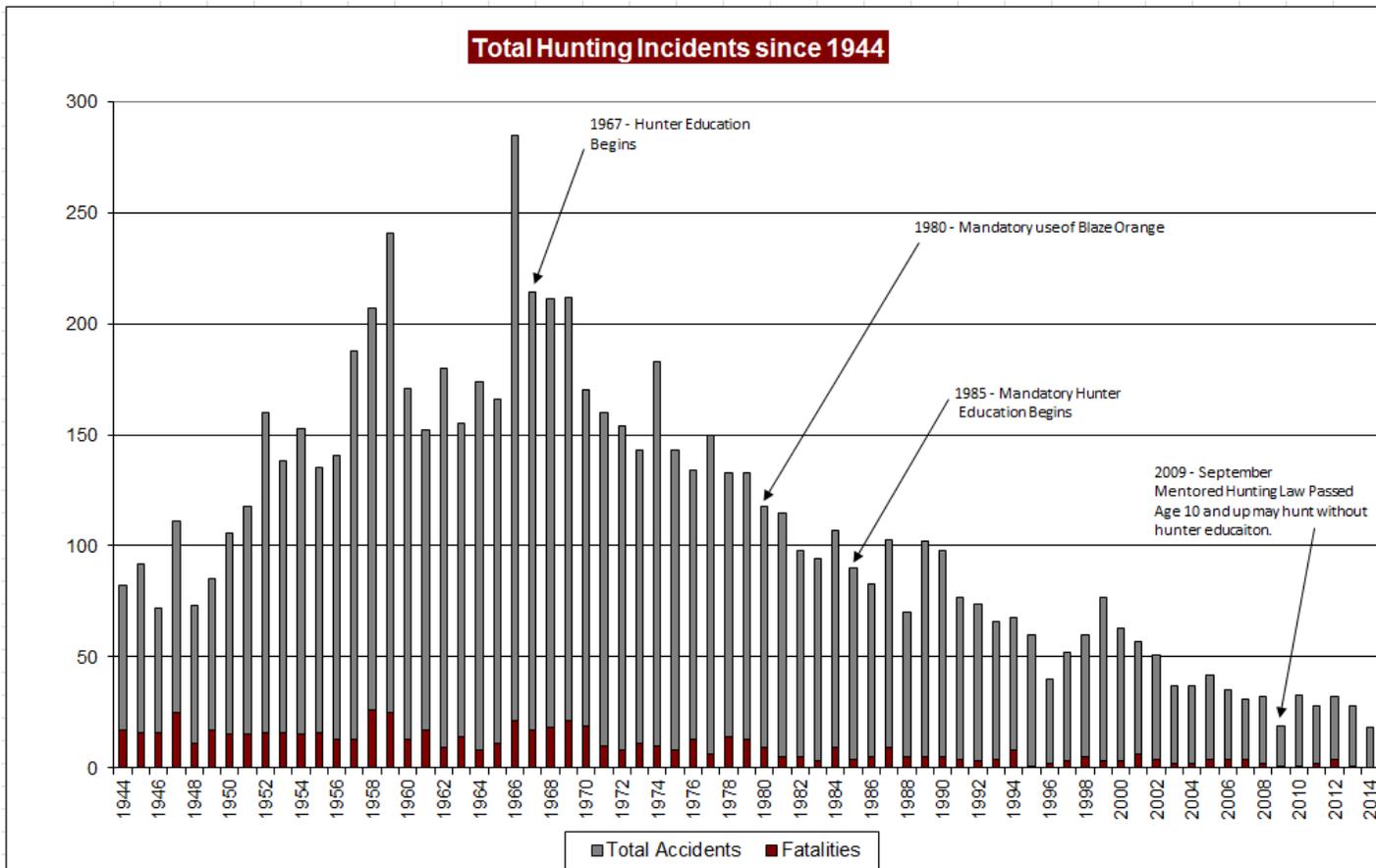


Figure 1

Figure 1: displays the history of total hunting incidents both fatal and non-fatal since 1944



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Figure 2: Gun deer hunting, and grouse hunting were the top two hunting activities with the highest number of incidents. Gun deer hunting having the most. No hunting incidents occurred on game farms in 2014.

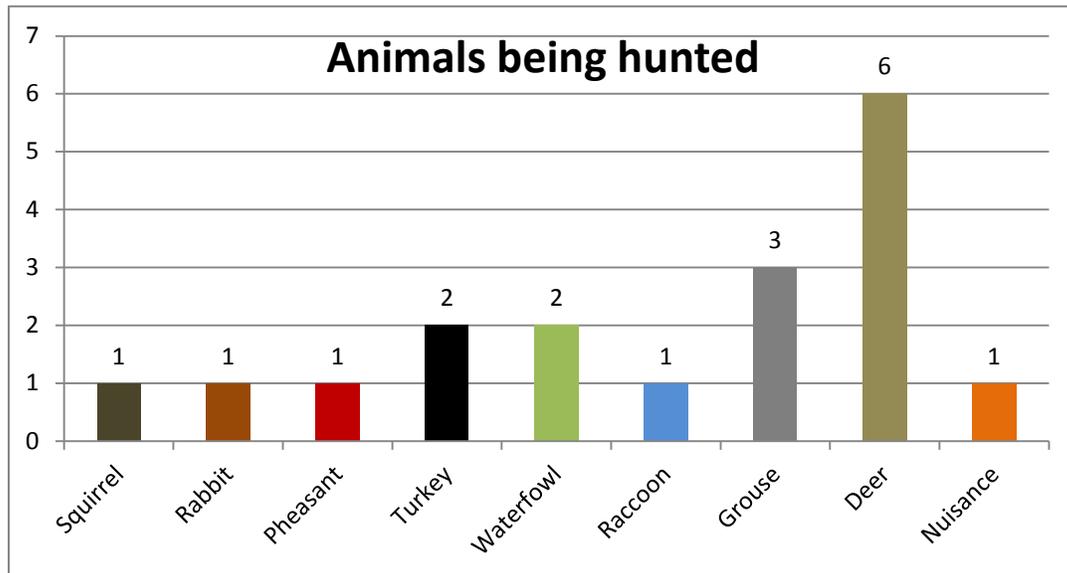


Figure 2

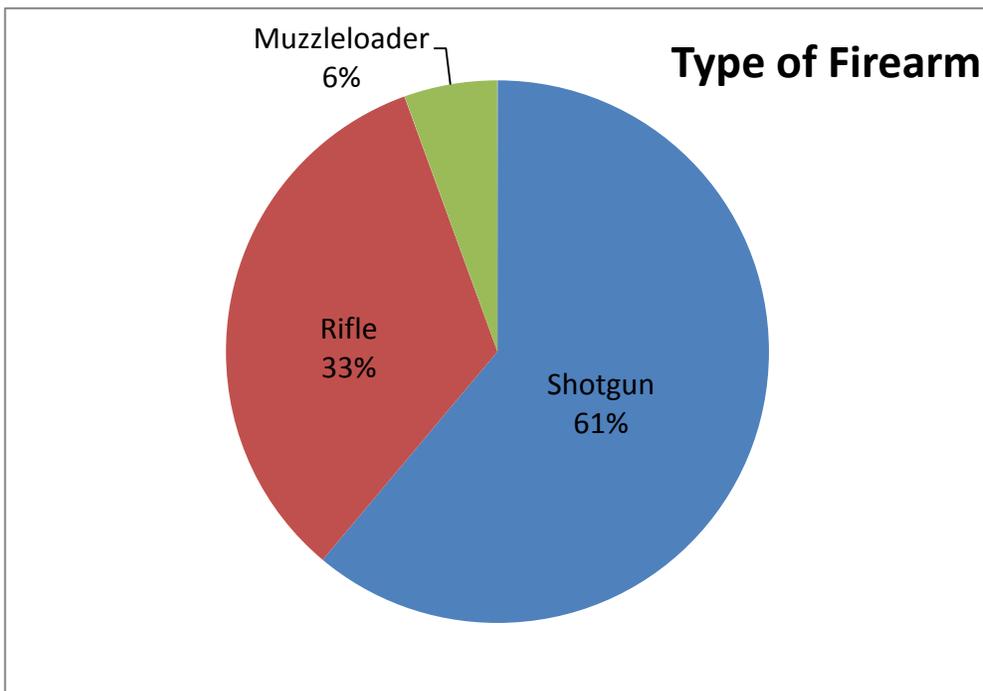


Figure 3

Figure 3: Rifles and shotguns remain the hunting implement involved most often in hunting incidents. Shotguns (61%) Rifles (33%) Muzzleloader (6%) No handgun incidents occurred.

NOTE: No incidents involved archery equipment, bows or crossbows in 2014.



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Every year in Wisconsin, one-third of all hunting incidents are caused by people shooting themselves. In every hunter education course, DNR Volunteer Hunter Education instructors strictly teach our students to fully understand and follow the four basic rules of firearm safety. Protect yourself and your fellow hunting partners by following these essential four rules. The four rules of firearm safety can be remembered by the acronym **TABK**.

- **Treat every firearm as if it was loaded** - Never assume a firearm is unloaded and never treat it that way, even if you watch as it is unloaded. Make it a habit to treat firearms like they are loaded at all times.
- **Always point the muzzle in a safe direction** - About one-third of all hunting incidents are self-inflicted injuries. That means the muzzle was pointed at some part of the hunter's body. A safe direction is a direction where the bullet will travel and harm no one in the event of an unwanted discharge. There are no accidental discharges with firearms, only unwanted discharges.
- **Be certain of your target and what is beyond it** - Positive target identification is a must. To shoot at something you only think is a legal target is gambling. In the case of human injury, that means gambling with human life. You must be absolutely certain and correct in judgment before deciding to shoot. Otherwise, it's reckless behavior. In addition to identifying the target, a hunter must know that a safe backstop for their bullet is present in every shooting situation. We don't always hit our target, and, in some cases, the bullet passes through the target. A safe backstop guarantees that no one will get hurt.
- **Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot** - If a hunter stumbles with a firearm in one hand and nothing in the other, whatever that person does with their free hand will automatically happen with the hand holding the gun. If a finger is inside the trigger guard, that hand is likely going to close around the pistol grip of the gun and on the trigger causing an unwanted discharge. The trigger fires the firearm. Your finger has no business being anywhere near the trigger until you intentionally want to shoot something.

Figure 4: There were two major causes for incidents in 2014: shooter's failure to positively identify the target and victim out of sight of the shooter. It's not a good enough reason to take a shot when a hunter only thinks they are seeing a legal target; they must know and be certain the target is legal and safe. Having a safe zone of fire and safe backstop is equally important as knowing your target. Planning your hunt and hunting your plan is essential; know where your hunting partners are at all times.

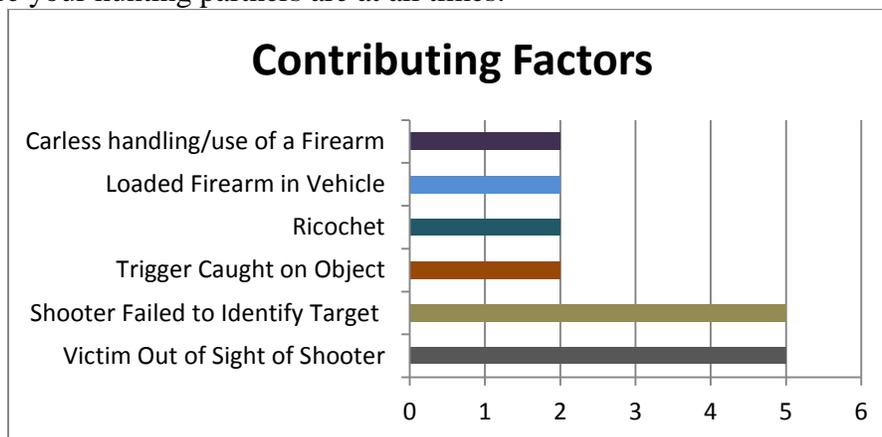


Figure 4



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Figure 5: Self-inflicted injuries accounted for 39% of the total number of incidents. This is a increase of 6% from 2013. The average age of self-inflicted injuries was 47. No self-inflicted incidents involved a juvenile (under age 18).

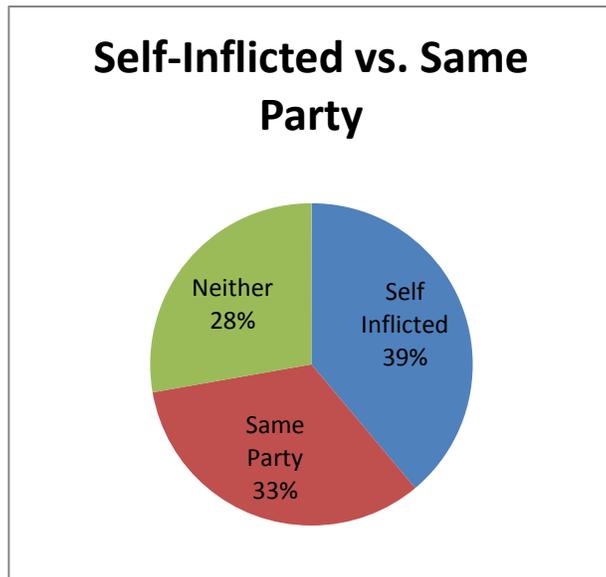


Figure 5

Figure 6 – 7: 16% of the shooters were juveniles (under age 18) and 18% were juvenile victims. 84% of the hunting incidents were caused by adult hunters. Historically, on a ten year average, juveniles have contributed to almost 20% of the total numbers of incidents.

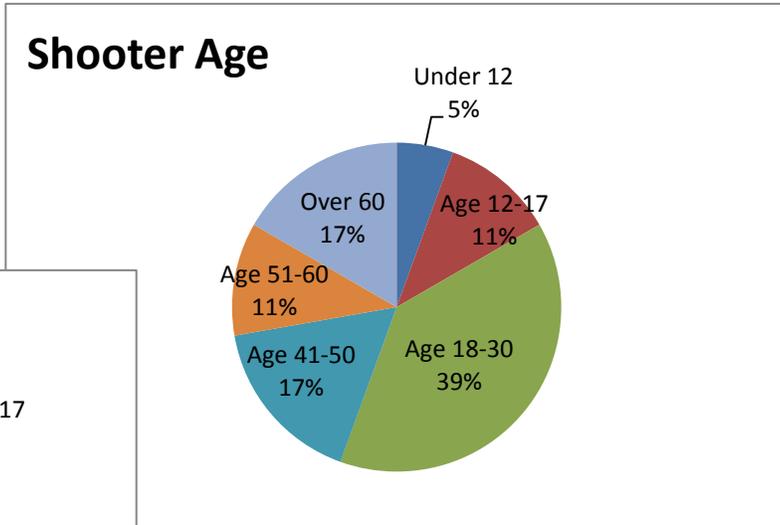


Figure 6

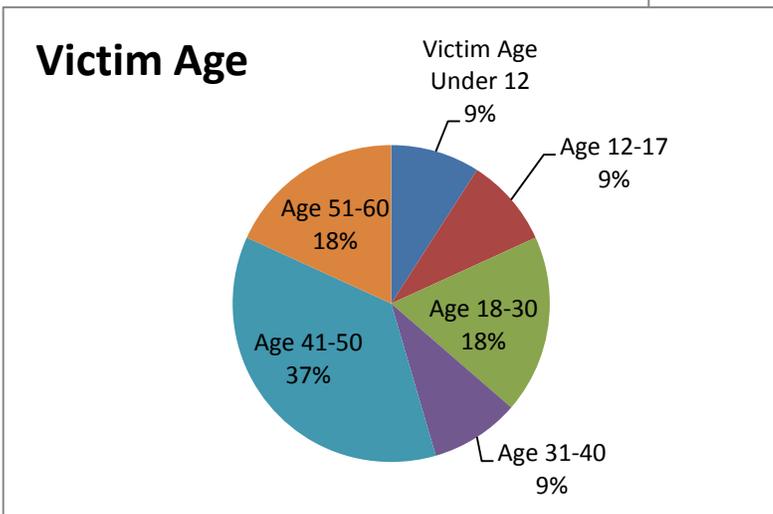


Figure 7



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Figure 8: Even though our number of licensed hunters has remained fairly steady over the past 50 years, our hunting incident rate has dropped substantially.

The figure displayed below represents the average annual hunting incident rate for the last 50 years broken into 10-year increments.

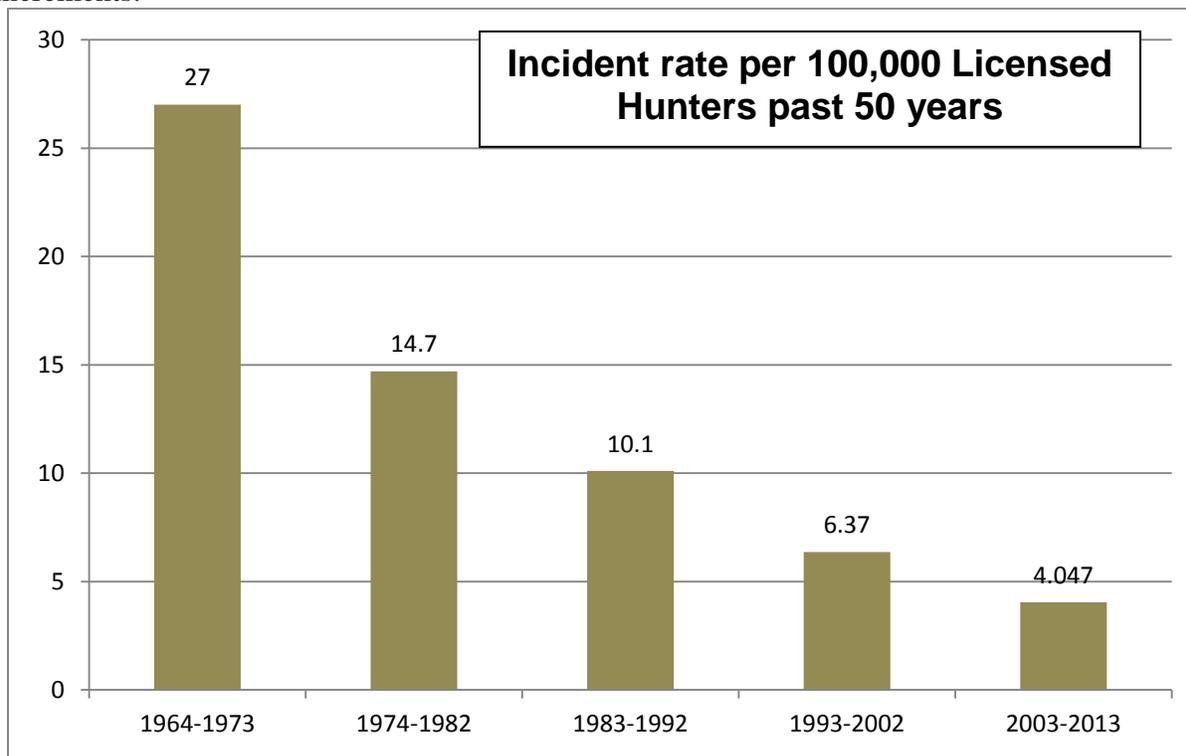


Figure 8

Figure 9: The activity the shooter was involved in at the time of the incident helps focus hunter education lessons to include hunting methods and how to safely engage in each. These include: still hunting, which involves stopping for long periods to scan and listen for game; and, stalking, which involves following tracks. Still hunting and stalking are among the most popular activities involved in most hunting incidents.

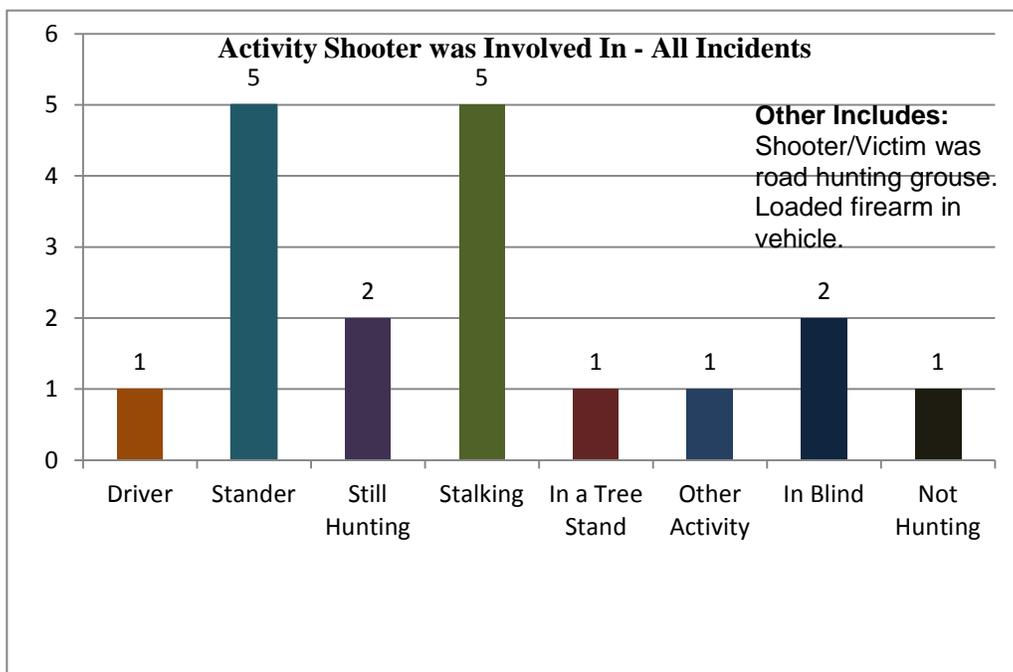


Figure 9



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Figure 10: The Hunter Education Program is committed to teaching, developing and retaining safe, knowledgeable and responsible hunters whether they are a novice or experienced hunter. 28% of the shooters were non graduates of the hunter education program and the average age of the shooter in 2014 was 37. Hunter education is mandatory for anyone born on or after January 1, 1973.

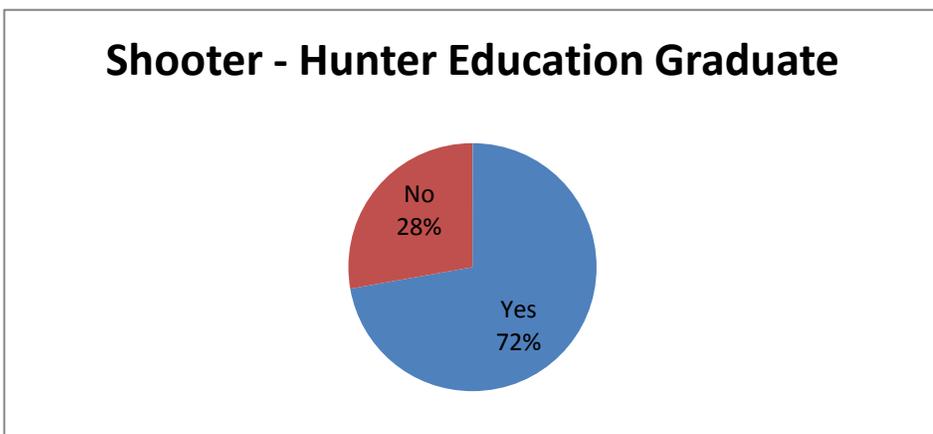


Figure 10

Figure 11: 50% of all incidents in 2014 happened within 20 yards of the firearm. 44% of all 2014 incidents occurred at a distance of 10 yards or less including the self-inflicted incidents.

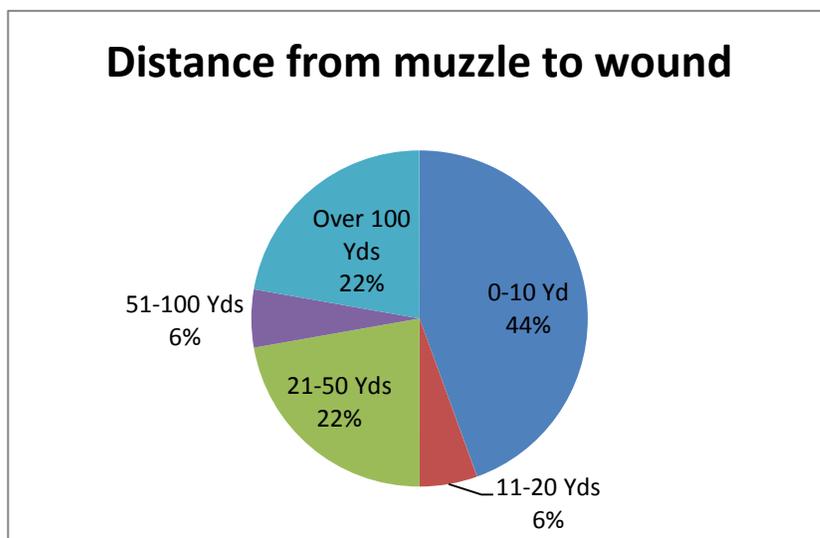


Figure 11



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2014 Deer Season Summary

Female participation in hunting continues to be a popular trend. Approximately 35% of the 27,000 hunter safety graduates in Wisconsin were female, not including archery. 10% of the licensed deer hunters were female and eighteen percent of first time gun deer buyers were female which held steady since 2013.

Figure 12: Wardens conduct thorough investigations to learn what happened in hunting-related shooting incidents in order to prevent such incidents. The program's lengthy historical data and inquiries into the circumstances of each incident is used to make effective modifications to the hunter education curriculum, target media outreach efforts and train volunteers as well as department staff.

Please note the downward trend in gun deer season incidents.

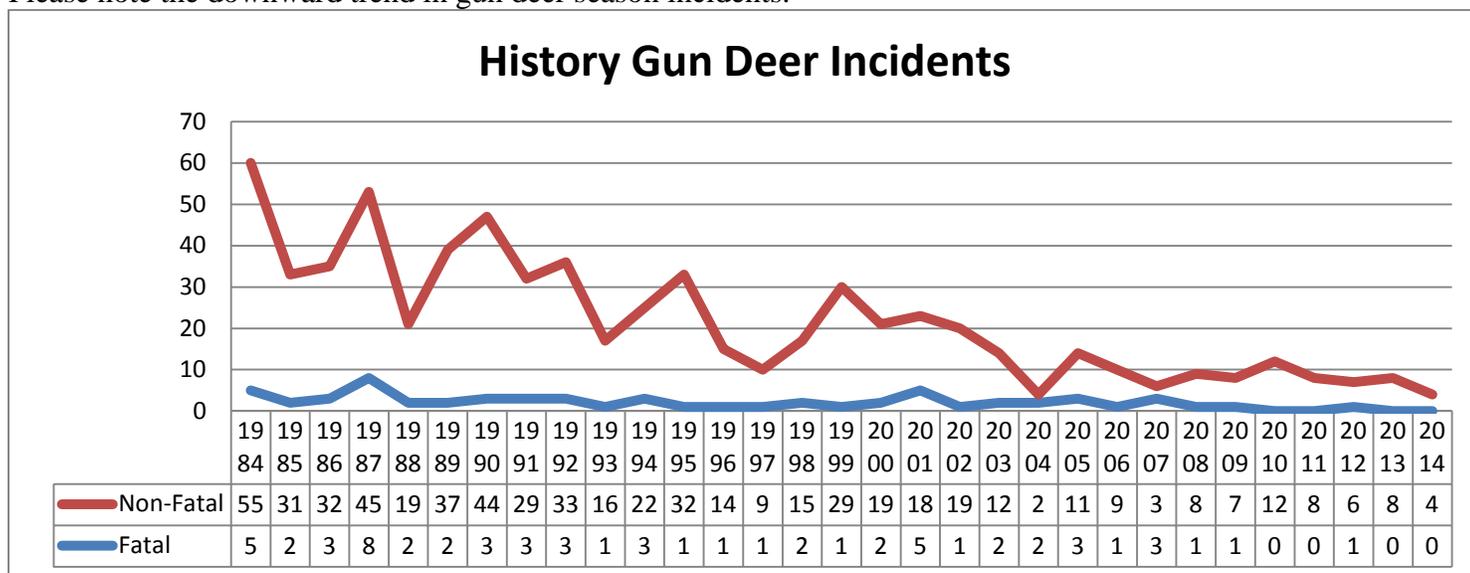


Figure 12

Summary of incidents during gun deer season:

- 4 total incidents
- 0 fatalities
- 2 of the 4 incidents involved a self-inflicted injury (50%), the other 2 incidents involved two individuals, shooter and victim (50 %)
- 1 incident involved members of the same hunting party
- 1 incident involved separate hunting parties on the same property
- 0 of the incidents involved deer drives in 2014
- The average age of the shooters involved was 49
- The 9-day gun deer incident rate was 0.66 incidents per 100,000 licensed hunters with zero fatalities



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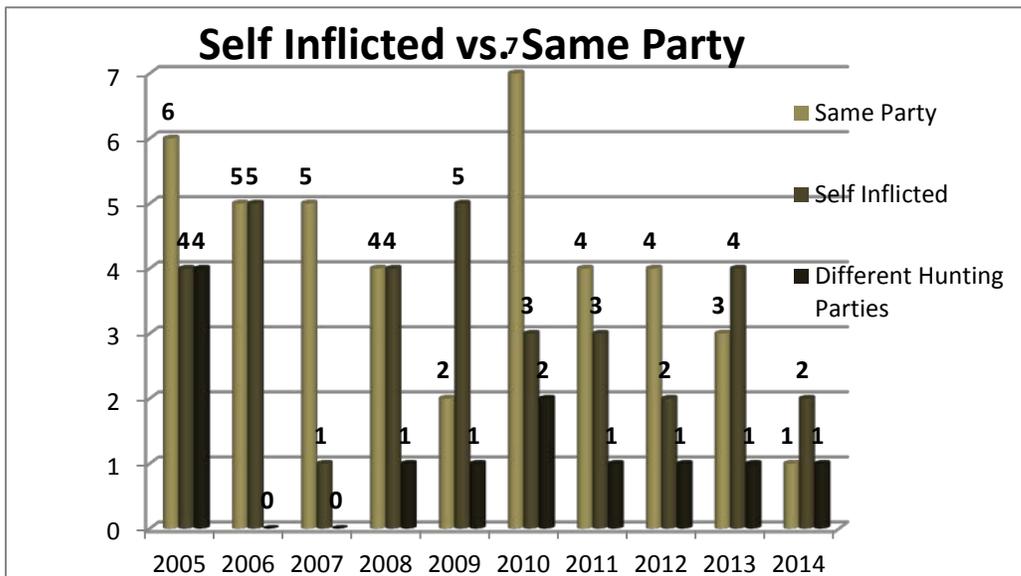


Figure 13

Figure 13: 2 of the 4 incidents involved a self-inflicted injury (50%), 1 involved hunters of the same party and the other incident involved two individuals in different hunting parties on same property.

Figure 14

Figure 14: 0 of the 4 incidents were not related to deer drives (100%)

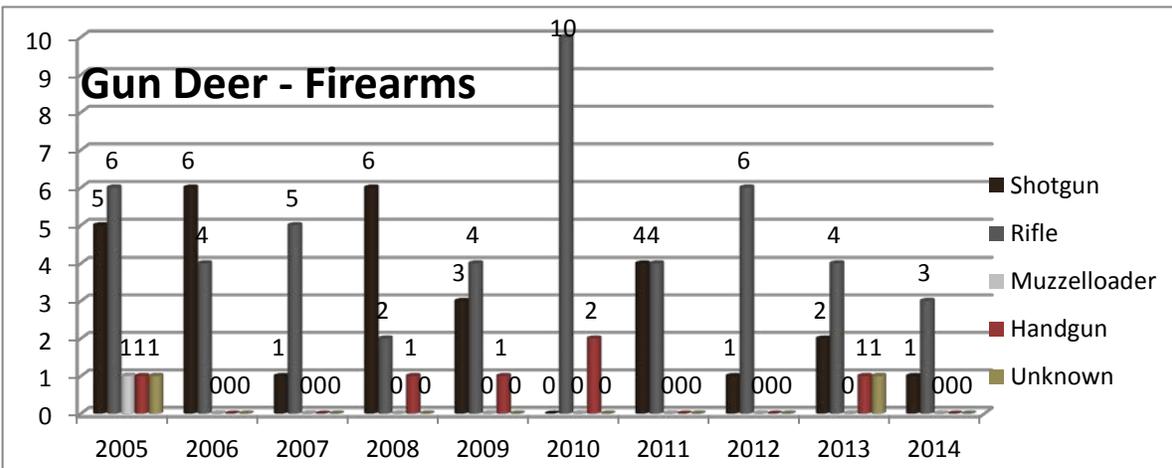
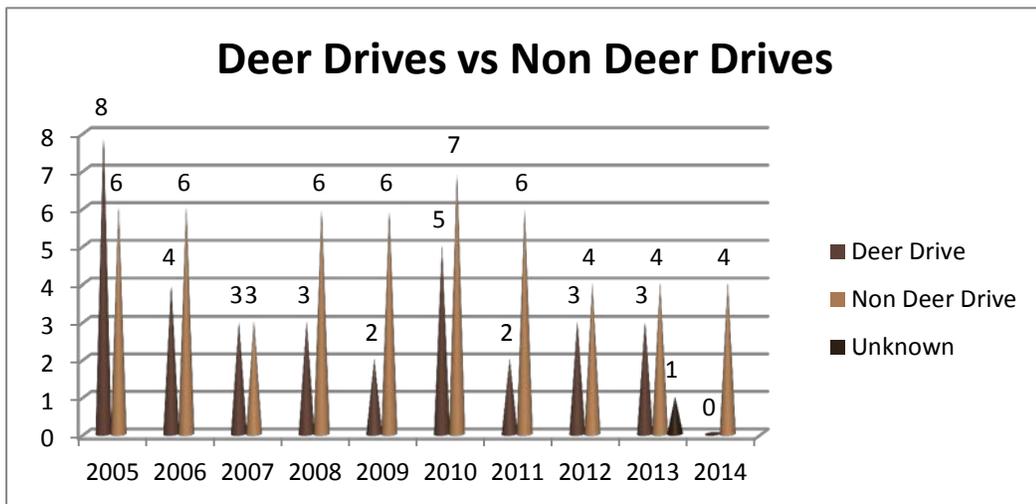


Figure 15

Figure 15: Type of firearms involved: (3) - Rifle, (1) - Shotgun



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Summary:

To summarize, there were 18 total hunting incidents in 2014. It was a successful year with no fatal injuries during the 2014 hunting seasons. Hunters, volunteer education instructors, sportsmen and women organizations and conservation wardens should be congratulated for making 2014 the safest year to hunt. Wisconsin was well below the 10-year average for hunting incidents. It is expected Wisconsin will continue that downward trend. Incidents caused while hunters were either moving or shooting at moving game increased the propensity for hunting incidents. This emphasizes the importance of knowing and practicing the 4 basic rules of firearm safety every time a hunter handles a firearm.

Remember the slogan: “**Safe Hunting is No Accident.**” 2014 is the safest season ever and we can continue this IF all hunters follow these 4 simple rules:

- Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.
- Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
- Be certain of your target and what's beyond.
- Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot.

Untracked Incidents and Treestand Safety:

Every year, media outlets have reported on hunter deaths or injuries throughout the season. These reports are often related to death by natural causes or injuries from treestand falls. The WDNR does not track or include these events in statistical reports.

Treestand safety is now a mandatory part of the Wisconsin Hunter Education program with emphasis on the use of:

- safety harnesses
- 3 points of contact
- use of a haul line (to raise and lower) unloaded firearms and bows
- life lines
- safety inspections of treestands



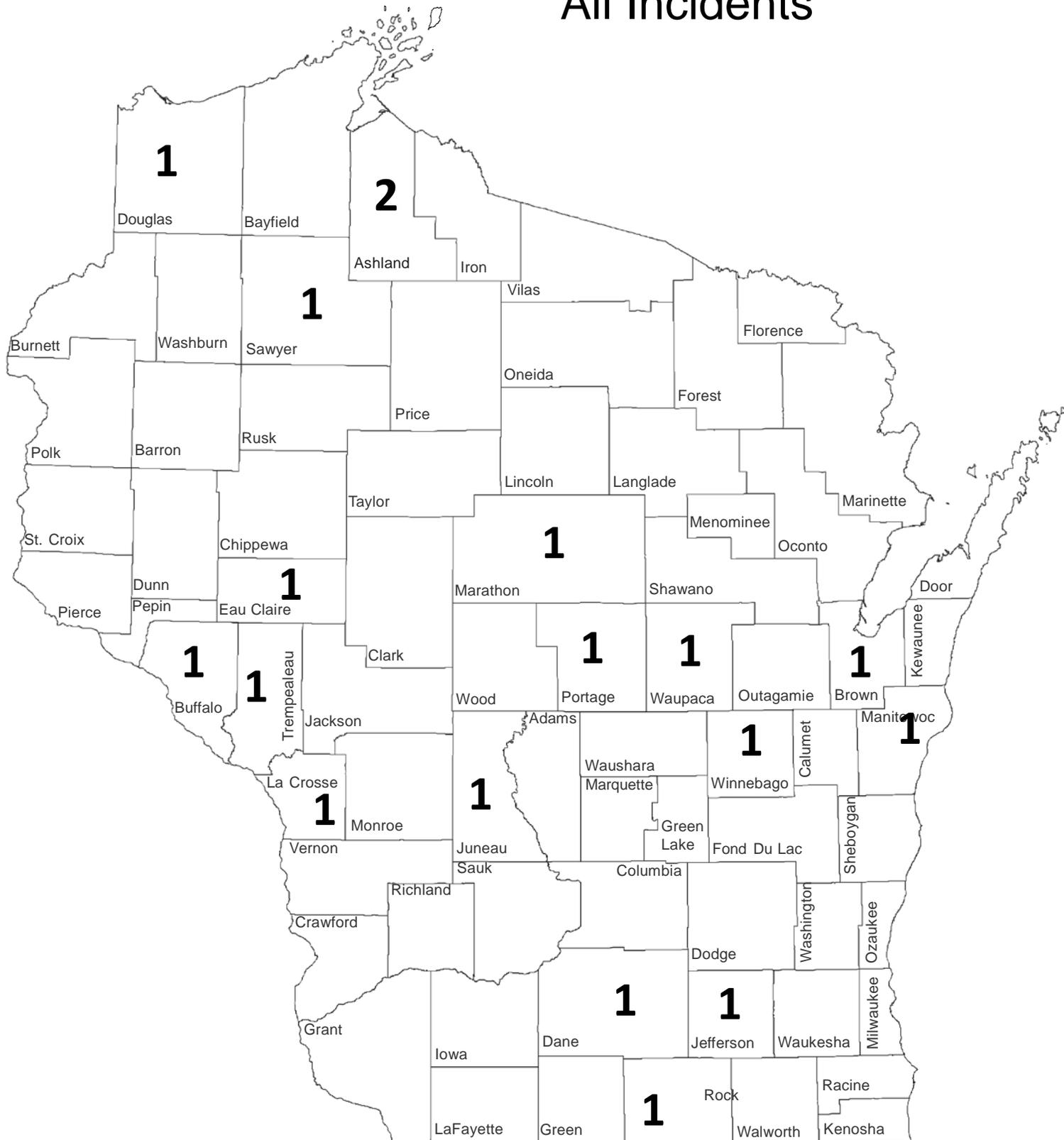
Our goal is to get all hunters to safely climb in and out of a treestands while staying connected from the ground all the way up. The program also maintains a web page specific to treestand safety and public service announcements and media releases. <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/hunt/treestand.html>



Wisconsin Hunter Education Annual Report-2014

*Treat every firearm as if it is loaded *Always point the muzzle in a safe direction * Be certain of your target and what's beyond *Keep your finger outside the trigger guard until ready to shoot

2014 Hunting Incidents by County All Incidents



Note: All incidents non fatal unless otherwise stated.

