



# 2013 Hunter Education Annual Report

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources  
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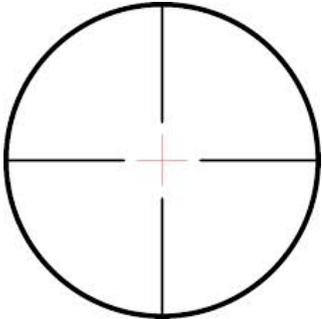


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# Wisconsin Hunter Education Annual Incident Report-2013

\*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



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## 2013 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 27 total hunting incidents during the 2013 hunting season. One of the 27 incidents was 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 2013, Wisconsin finished below the 10-year average of 29 incidents per year.

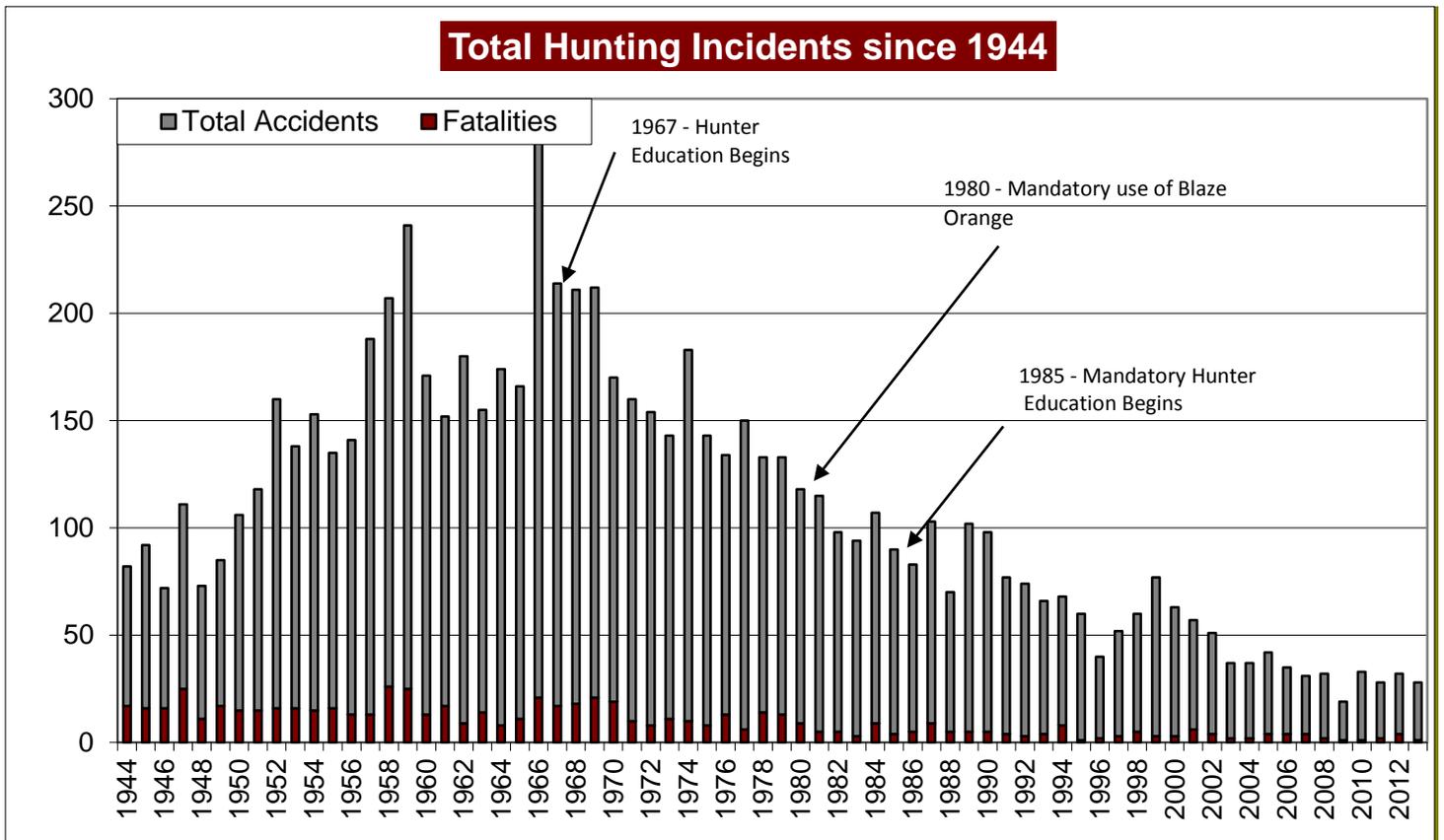


Figure 1

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, squirrel hunting and pheasant hunting were the three hunting activities with the highest number of incidents with gun deer hunting having the most. Hunting on game farms continues to be a location where several pheasant hunting incidents occur annually.

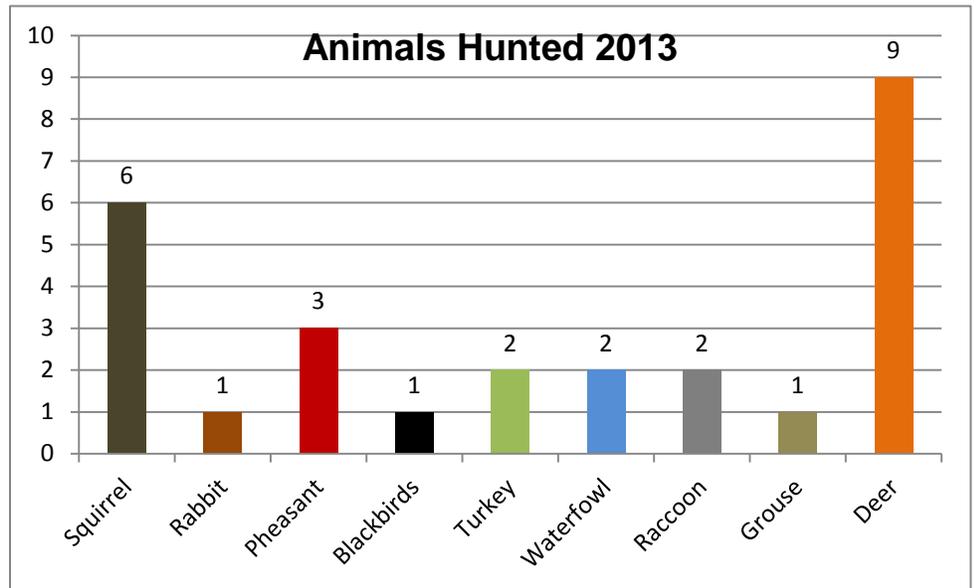


Figure 2

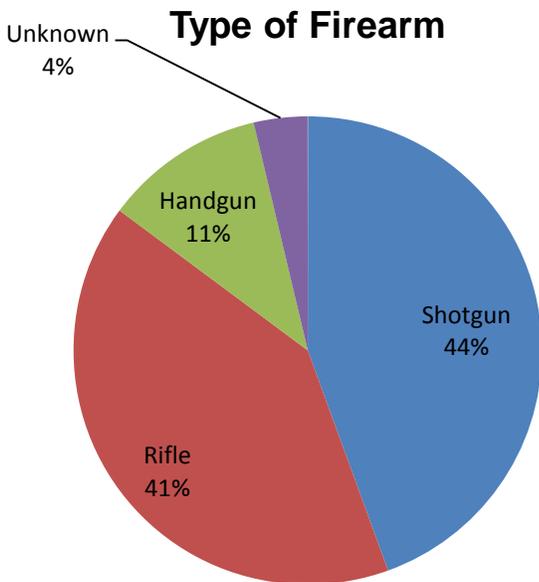


Figure 3

Figure 3: Rifles and shotguns remain the hunting implement involved most often in hunting incidents. Shotguns (44%) Rifles (41%) Handguns (11%). No muzzleloader incidents occurred and no incidents involved archery equipment in 2013.



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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 three major causes for incidents in 2013: shooter's failure to positively identify the target; victim out of sight of the shooter; and, the victim covered by shooter swinging on game. 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. 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.

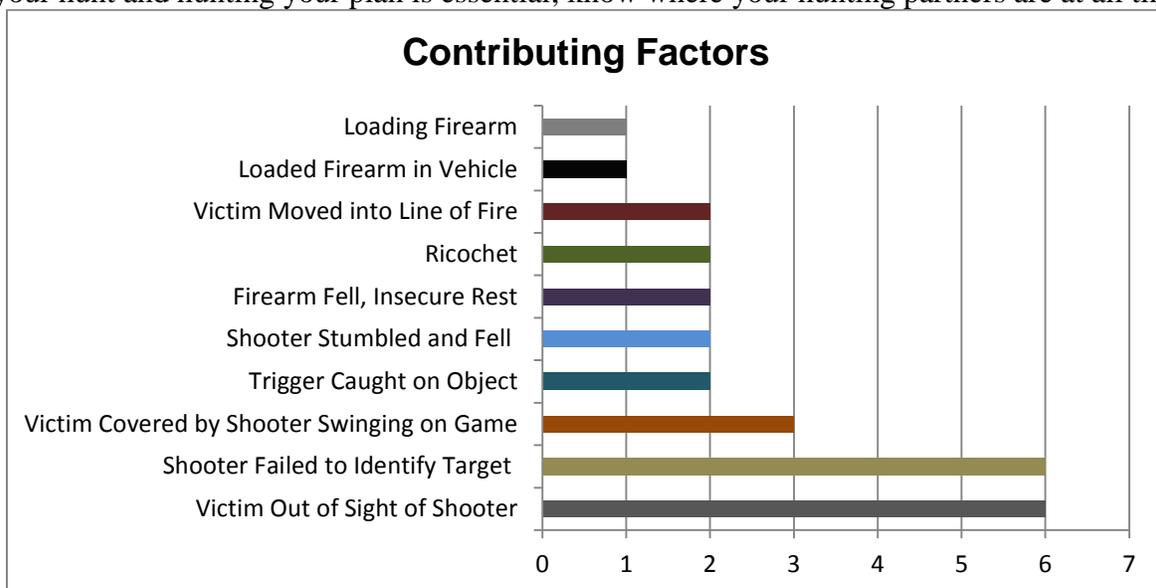


Figure 4



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Figure 5: Self-inflicted injuries accounted for 33% of the total number of incidents. This is a decrease of 13% from 2012. One self-inflicted incident involved a juvenile (under age 18).

### Self-Inflicted vs. Same Party

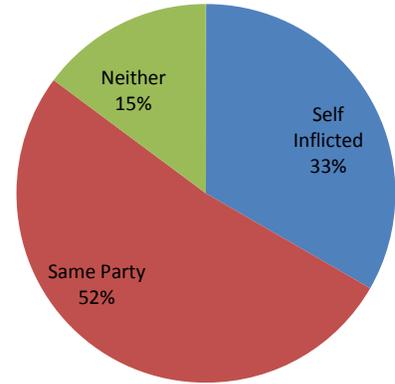


Figure 5

Figure 6 – 7: 7% of the shooters were juveniles (under age 18) and 15% were juvenile victims. 83% of the hunting incidents were caused by adult hunters. Historically, juveniles have contributed to nearly 30% of the total numbers of incidents.

### Shooter Age

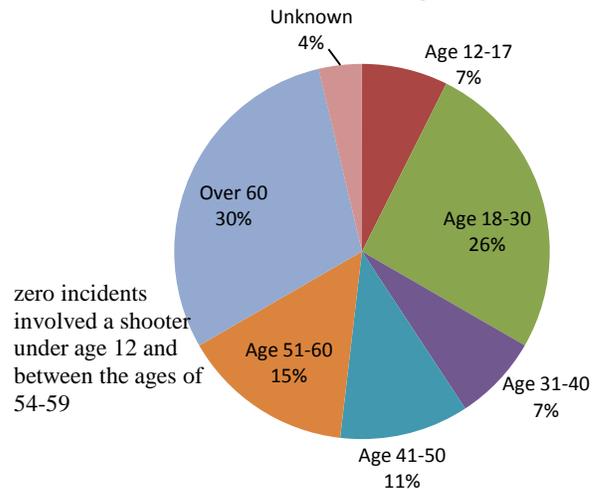


Figure 6

### Victim Age

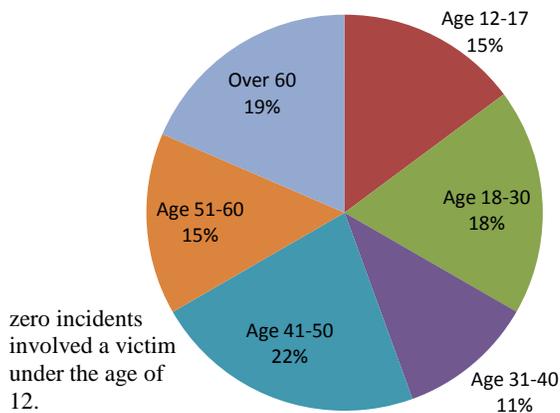


Figure 7



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## Incident Summary

To summarize, there were 27 hunting incidents in 2013. It was a successful year with no fatal injuries during the 9-day gun deer season. However, there was one fatality during the small game season. Hunters, volunteer education instructors, sportsmen and women organizations and conservation wardens should be congratulated for making 2013 a safe 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 can be the safest season ever 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.

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.

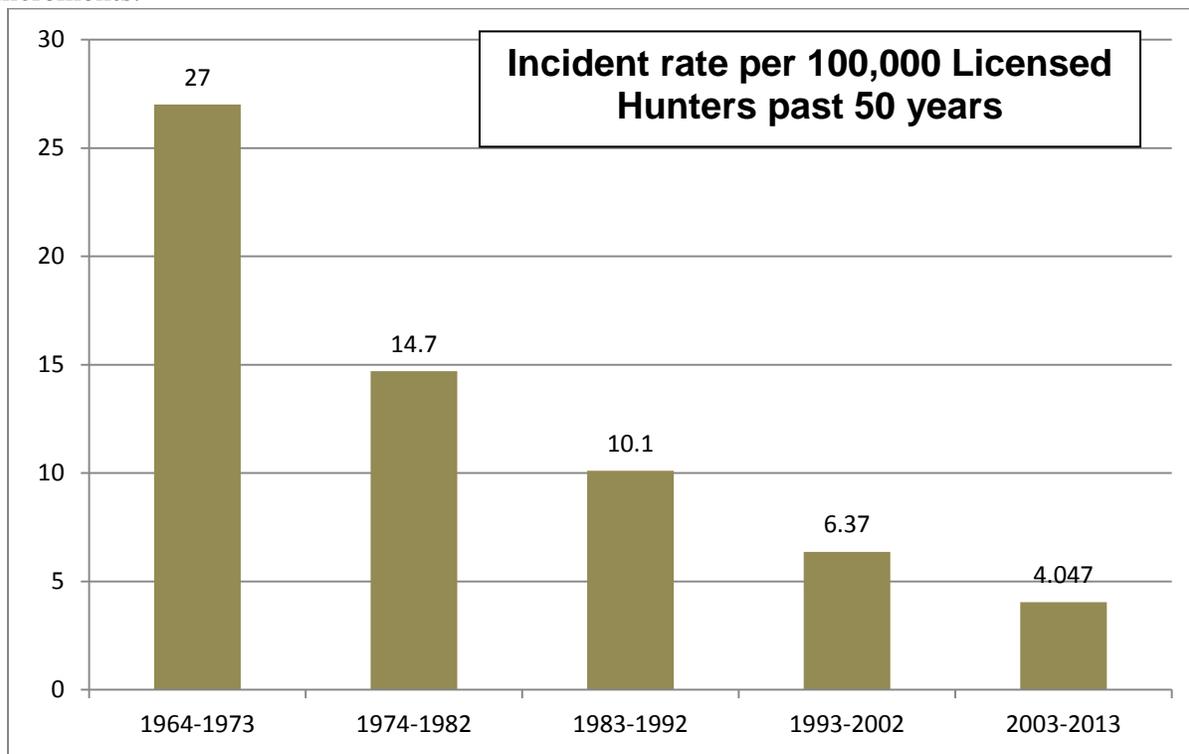


Figure 8



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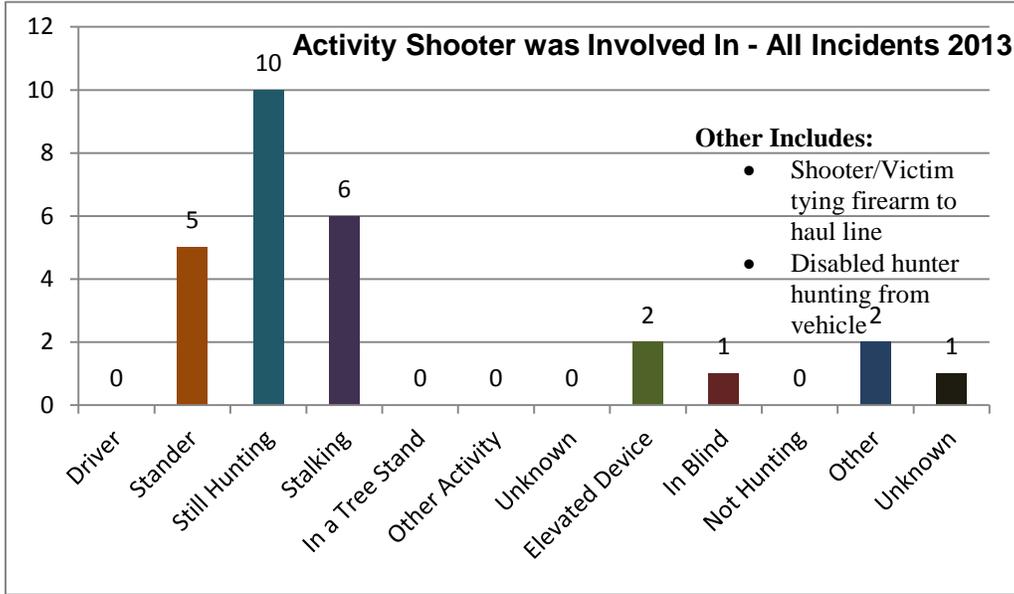


Figure 9: The activity the shooter was engaged at the time of the incident helps focus hunter education lessons to include hunting methods and how to safely engage in each. These include: still hunting, which involves stopping for long periods to scan and listen for game; and, stalking, which involves following tracks. Still hunting and stalking are among the most popular activities involved in all hunting incidents in 2013.

Figure 9

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. 33% of the shooters were non graduates of the hunter education program and the average age of the shooter was 43. Based on the median age these individuals would not have been required to be certified in hunter education as it is not mandatory for anyone born before January 1 1973.

### Shooter Hunter Education Graduate

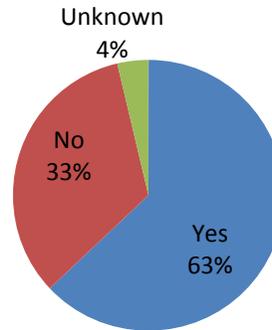


Figure 10

### Distance from Muzzle to Wound All Incidents 2013

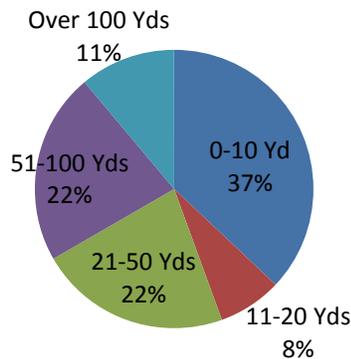


Figure 11

Figure 11: 45% of all incidents in 2013 happened within 20 yards of the firearm. 37% of all 2013 incidents occurred at a distance of 10 yards or less including the self-inflicted incidents.



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## 2013 Deer Season Summary

Figure 12 & 13: 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 hunter education curriculum, target media outreach efforts and train volunteers and department staff. Please note the downward trend in gun deer season incidents.

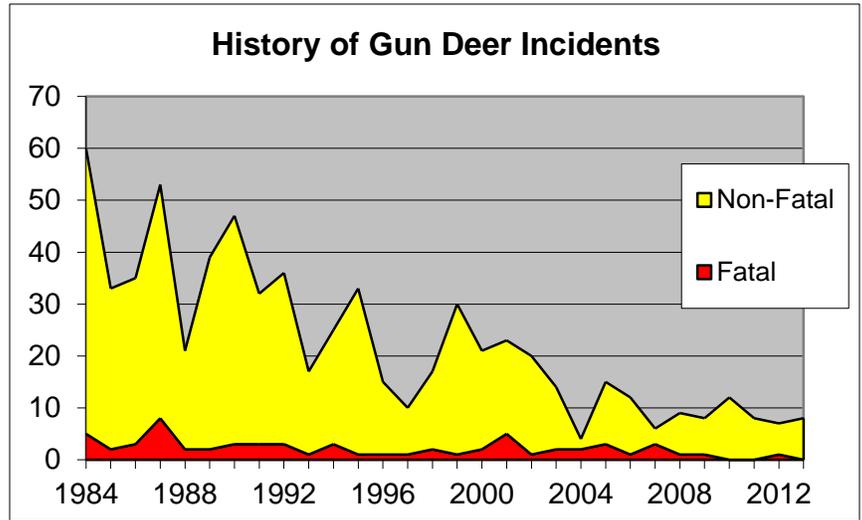


Figure 12

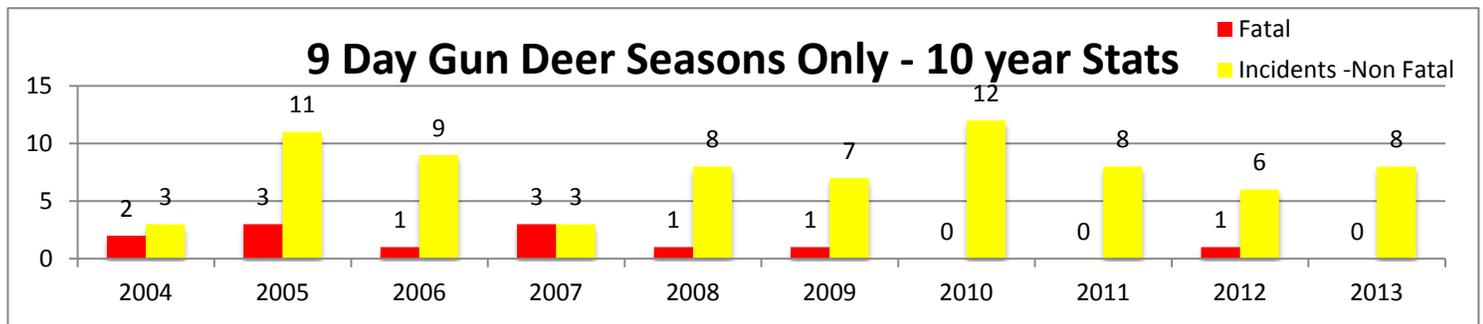


Figure 13

## Summary of incidents during gun deer season – 8 total incidents

Figure 14:

- 4 of the 8 incidents involved a self-inflicted injury (50%), the other 4 incidents involved two individuals, shooter and victim (50%)
- 3 incidents involved members of the same hunting party and 1 incident involved a non-hunter being hit by a stray bullet

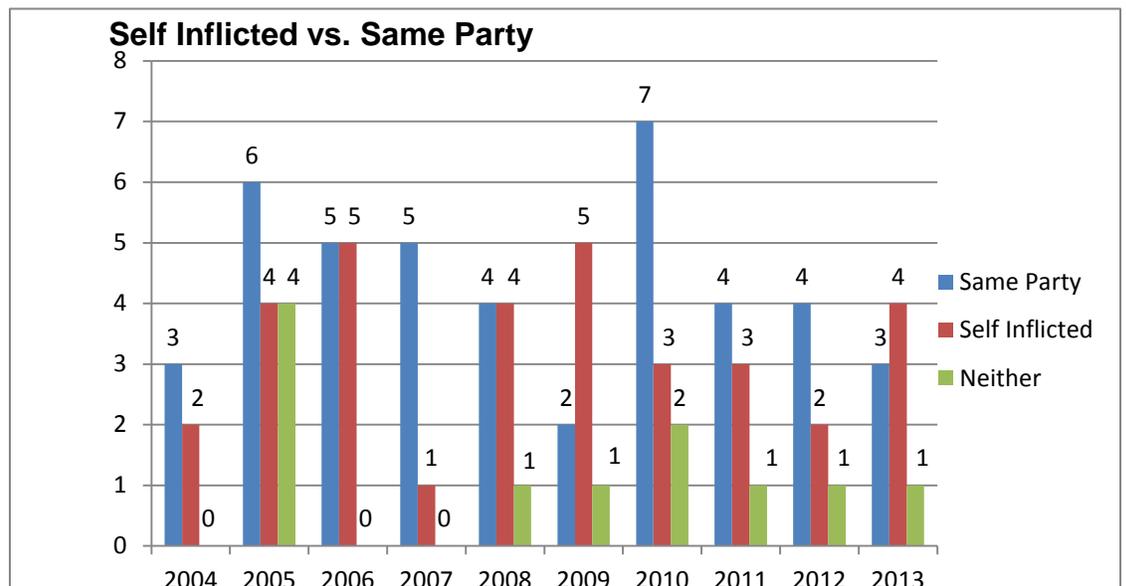


Figure 14



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- The average age of the shooters involved was 53.
- The 9-day gun deer incident rate was 1.3 incidents per 100,000 licensed hunters with zero fatalities.

Figure 15: 3 of the 8 incidents occurred during deer drives (38%)

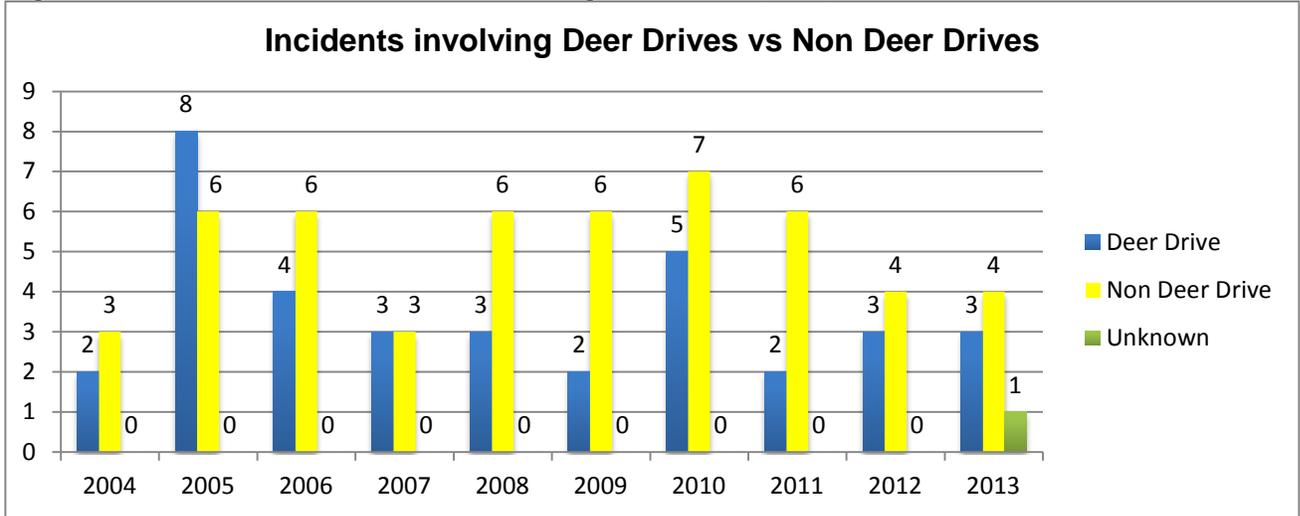


Figure 15

Figure 16: Type of firearms involved: (4) - Rifle, (2) - Shotgun, (1) - Handgun, and (1) – Unknown

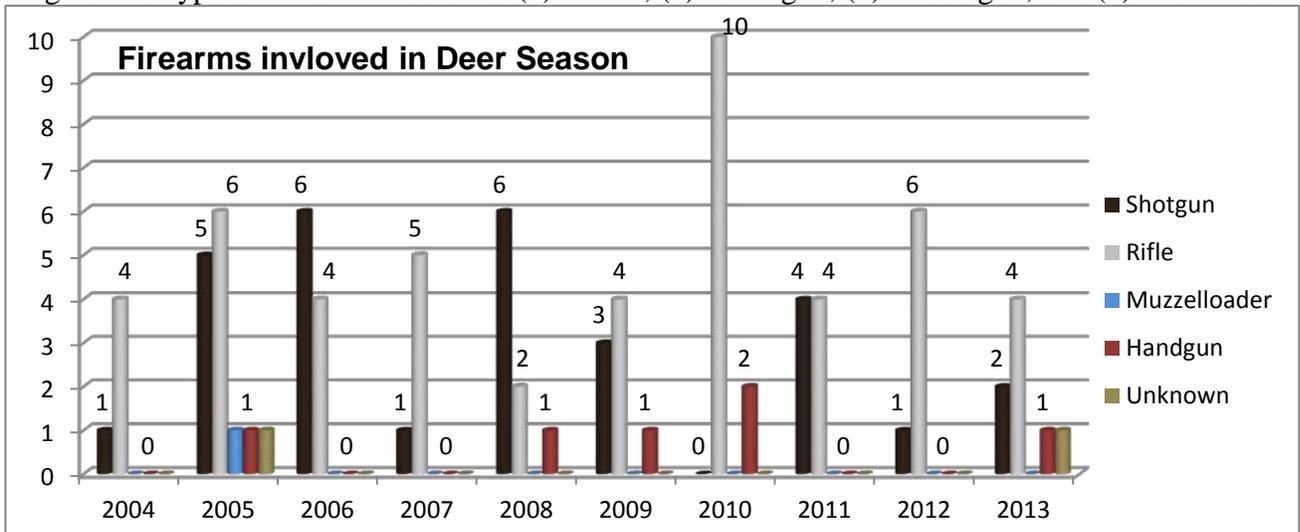


Figure 16



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### 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 tree stand falls. The Wisconsin DNR does not track or include these events in statistical reports.



Treestand safety continues to be 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 bring unloaded firearms up and down and safety inspections of treestands. The program also maintains a web page specific to treestand safety and includes treestand safety in media releases.

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/hunt/treestand.html>.

### Mission Statement and Goals

Our 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.



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## Hunter Education Courses Offered

Wisconsin offers three convenient ways to become hunter safety certified.

*Note: In Wisconsin, a Hunter Education Certificate allows customers to buy either a firearm or an archery license. An Archery Education certificate without a Hunter Education Certificate only allows the purchase of an archery license in Wisconsin. A hunter education course plus a bow hunter education course allows you to buy a firearm or archery license in any state.*

- Option 1: Traditional Hunter Education + Field Day** – A classroom setting consisting of a minimum of 10 hours (possibly up to 19 hours). Students learn how hunting accidents are caused and how they can be prevented. Hunter responsibility, ethics and safety are stressed throughout the classes, which consist of lectures, demonstrations, group discussions, practical exercises, and individual study and activity assignments. These courses commonly include a Saturday or Sunday field day at the range. Costs \$10.00 No minimum age requirement.

**Option 2: Online Internet Hunter Education Course + Field Day** – Register with a certified online hunter education instructor who will direct you to an online course approved by the WI DNR. After passing the course, you will spend a day in the field reinforcing what you learned online, basic firearm safety and handling skills. You will be tested on what you have learned at the end of the field day. The field day is mandatory. This option requires completion of one of these three acceptable online courses: <http://www.hunter-ed.com/wisconsin/> (\$24.50), <http://homestudy.ihea.com/> (free) or <http://www.huntercourse.com/usa/wisconsin/> (\$24.95) No other online courses are accepted. No minimum age requirement.

**Option 3: Adult (18 years of age or older) Online Internet Hunter Education Test Out** – Anyone 18 years of age or older can register for an adult test out scheduled bi-monthly at WI DNR service centers throughout WI. This option requires completion of the online course <http://www.huntercourse.com/usa/wisconsin/>, which will cost \$24.95 (to be paid to the website) plus a \$10.00 WI DNR fee (to be collected on the day of the exam). Student must be 18 years old on or before the date of exam to enroll.

**Archery Education** - Wisconsin's bowhunter education program is voluntary and a bowhunter education certificate is not required to bow hunt in Wisconsin if you have a hunter education certificate. However, numerous other states, certain federal properties, and other countries do require a Bow Hunter Education certificate from a course approved by the National Bowhunter Education Foundation (NBEF) in order to bowhunt. Wisconsin has adopted the NBEF program and the WI DNR courses are acknowledged and accepted worldwide.

### Option 1: Basic Bow Hunter Education Course

A bow hunter education course which lasts a minimum of 10 hours. Cost is \$10.00. No minimum age requirement

### Option 2: Add-On Bow Hunter Course

This course is taken in addition to a Hunter Education course. Add-on bow courses must be taken with the same instructor group as the Hunter Education course was taken. It must be taken within 1 year of the Hunter Education course. Cost is \$10.00. No minimum age requirement.



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### 2013 Hunter Education Program Summary – More classes and more students

In 2013;

962 traditional hunter education courses

90 online Internet field day courses

88 adult test-outs

135 archery courses

About 33,300 students certified

26,220 in basic hunter education, 2,007 through the Internet field day,

2,762 adults certified and 2,375 students certified in archery.

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

500 Internet field day certified instructors, 20 DNR employees who support the adult test-out program and more than 500 archery instructors.

Due to the work of the volunteer hunter safety education instructor corps, conservation wardens and the DNR's recreational education section, 2013 was Wisconsin's fourth fatality-free gun deer season -- including 3 out of the last 4 years.

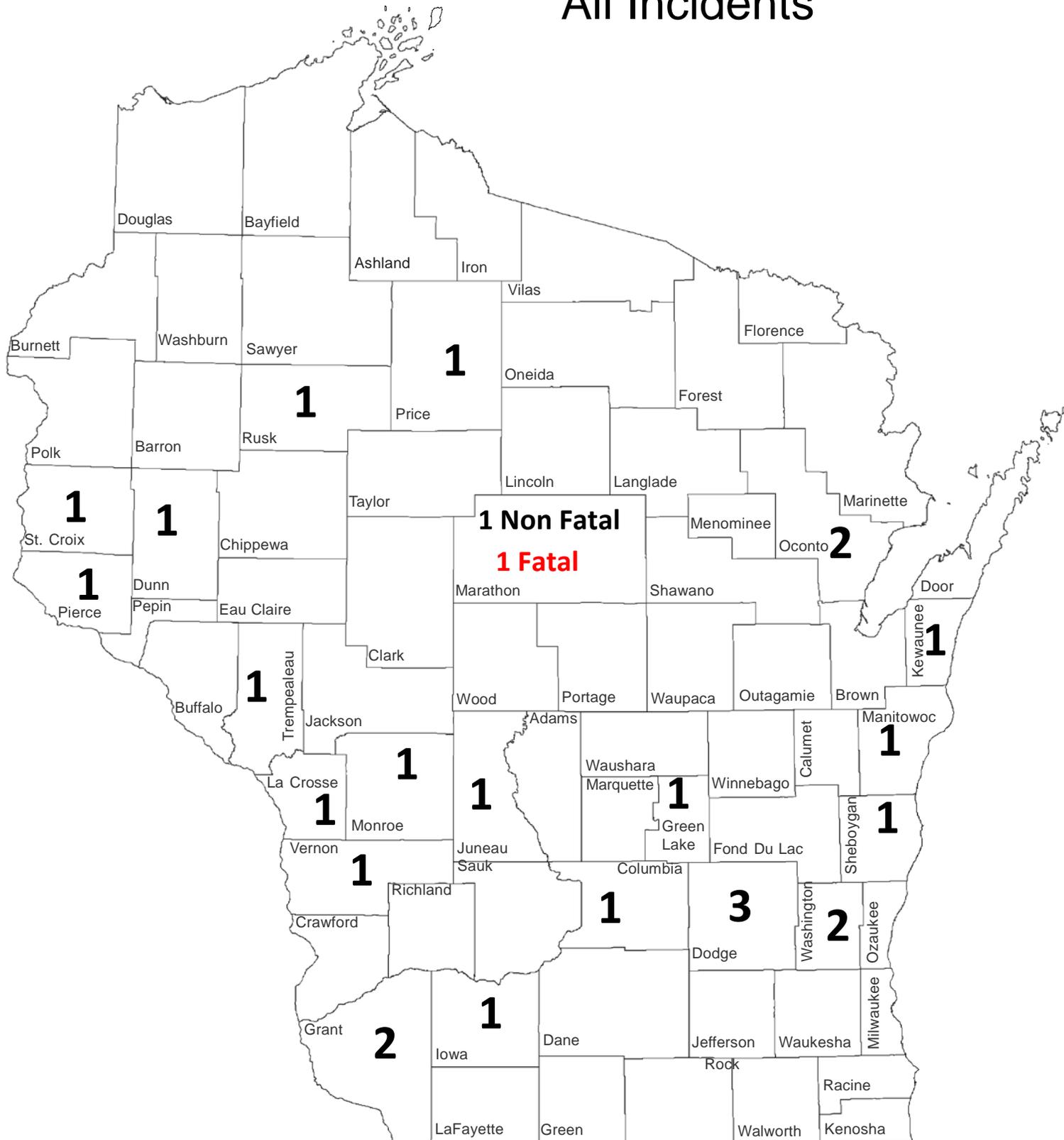




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## 2013 Hunting Incidents by County All Incidents



Note: All incidents non fatal unless otherwise stated.



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## Recreational Safety Warden Map

Hunter Education Administrator: Jon King: 608/575-2294  
 Hunter Education Administrative Assistant: Brenda VonRueden: 608/267-7509

