

NEBRASKA
2015
HUNTING INCIDENT REPORT



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2015 NEBRASKA HUNTING INCIDENTS

During 2015, there were ten (10) hunting incidents in Nebraska resulting in personal injury. None of the incidents resulted in death. One incident resulted from illegal hunting activity. This is an increase in incidents compared to the three (3) non-fatal and one (1) fatal incident recorded in 2014. **All incidents involved either the shooter and / or victim NOT following the rules of safety.** The tables and charts within this report illustrate the historical data collected for hunting incidents in Nebraska.

Hunting in Nebraska continues to be one of the safest recreational activities in which families may participate. Hunting incident numbers have decreased significantly in the past 30 years, with an incident rate of approximately one accident for every 17,500 hunters in the field. While the Commission, along with nearly 1,000 volunteer instructors, strives to continually reduce these incidents, hunting remains a safe and enjoyable pastime for thousands of Nebraskans each year.

Contributing Factors to 2015 Incidents: (Individual incidents may have more than one contributing factor. Factors are ranked by reporting law enforcement as follows: Primary = 1, Secondary = 2, Tertiary = 3)

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS	Factors Ranked by Reporting Law Enforcement
Victim out of sight of shooter	1, 3
Victim covered by shooter swinging on game	
Failure to identify target	
Victim in line of fire	1
Ricochet	
Defective ammunition	2
Firearm fell, insecure rest	1
Shooter stumbled and fell	
Trigger caught on object	
Failure to check beyond target	2, 2, 2
Loading firearm	
Unloading firearm	
Discharge firearm in/on a vehicle	1, 1
Improper crossing of obstacle	
Clubbing game with firearm	
Careless or reckless handling of firearm	1, 1, 2, 2
Place/remove loaded firearm from vehicle	
Drop firearm	
Horse-play while hunting	2
Shooting across roadway	2, 3
Run with loaded firearm	
Obstruction of barrel	
Careless handling of archery equipment	
Other*	1 ¹ , 1 ² , 1 ³ , 2 ¹

*1¹ – No backstop used while target shooting

1² – Standing in back of pickup while hunting; fell from moving vehicle

1³ – Defective firearm or firearm failure

2¹ – Carrying firearm with finger inside trigger guard

2015 Individual Incident Summary

March 25 – Pierce County - Rabbit hunting – 17 year old male shooter unintentionally discharged a .22 rifle while illegally hunting rabbits out of season, hitting the 21 year old male victim in the lower leg causing minor injuries. **Always control where the muzzle of your firearm is pointing and never allow it to be pointed at yourself or someone else. Always keep your finger off of the trigger and outside the trigger guard until ready to fire.**

October 31 – Dodge County – Pheasant hunting – An unlicensed 18 year old male shooter placed a loaded 12-gauge shotgun in the back of a UTV with the muzzle pointing toward the driver. The shooter then boarded the back of the UTV and reached for the firearm. It discharged at close range into the hip and thigh of the 58 year old victim causing severe injuries. **Always control where the muzzle of your firearm is pointing and never allow it to be pointed at yourself or someone else. Never ride in a vehicle in a vehicle with a loaded shotgun.**

October 31 – Hall County – Pheasant/quail hunting – An unknown shooter peppered a 46 year old female victim and a 55 year old male victim with shotgun pellets while they were walking on a trail near a Wildlife Management Area, causing minor to moderate injuries. **Be sure of your target and what is beyond before you pull the trigger. Never shoot at sound or movement. Never shoot across a roadway.**

October 31 – Saunders County – Pheasant hunting – A male shooter of unknown age peppered a 36 year old male victim in his hunting party with shotgun pellets causing moderate injuries. **Be sure of your target and what is beyond before you pull the trigger. Never shoot at sound or movement. Always observe safe zones of fire. Make yourself visible by wearing hunter orange.**

November 9 – Washington County – Target shooting/Archery hunting – A male shooter of unknown age was sighting in a rifle by shooting at paper targets with an improper backstop. A male victim of unknown age, who was archery hunting approximately ½ mile away, was hit in the leg by a rifle bullet, sustaining an injury of unknown severity. **Be sure of your target and what is beyond before you pull the trigger. Never target shoot without an appropriate backstop. Make yourself visible by wearing hunter orange.**

November 14 – Nemaha County – Deer hunting – A 15 year old male shooter placed a loaded 25-06 rifle against a straw bale. The rifle fell, discharging when it hit the ground, hitting the 49 year old male victim in the foot at close range, causing severe injuries. **Unload firearms when not in use. Always use a proper/secure rest for a firearm.**

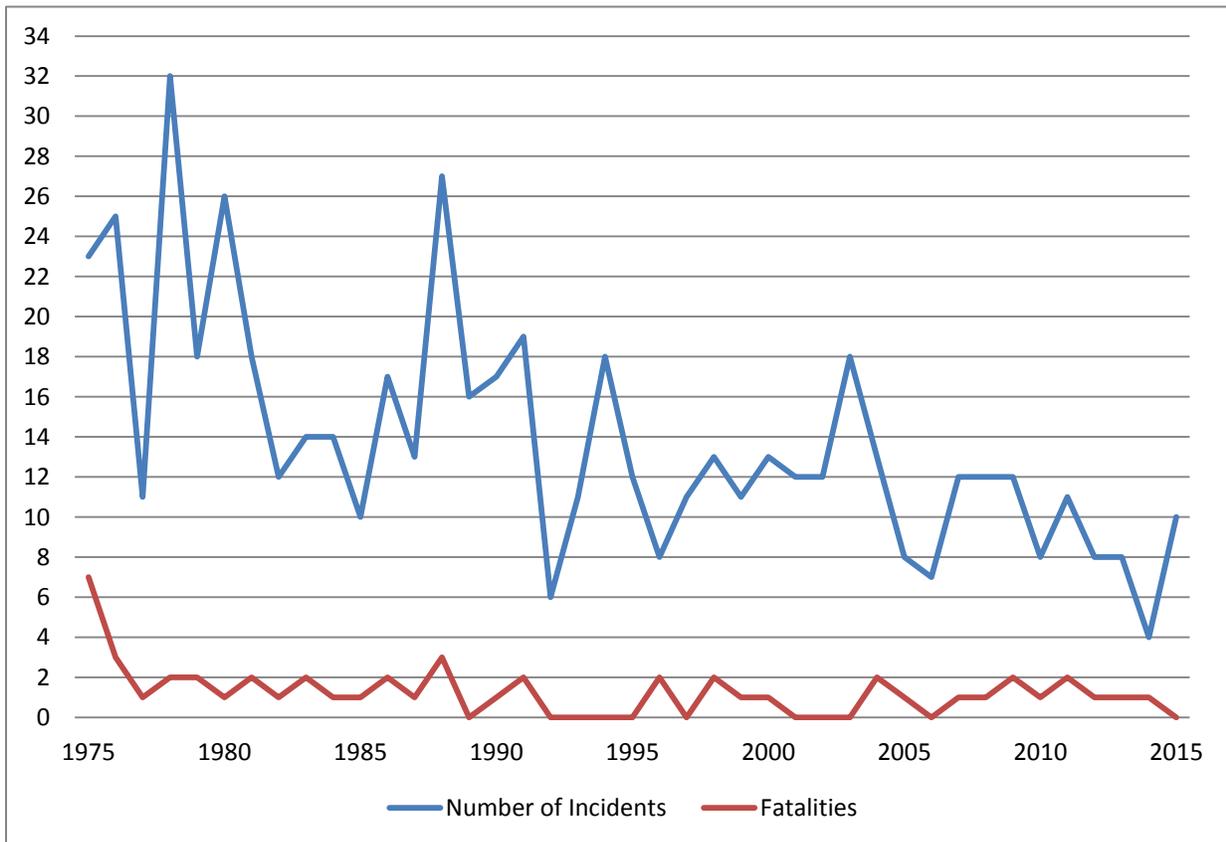
November 14 – Gosper County – Deer hunting – A 20 year old male shooter placed his .308 rifle across the cab of a pickup truck to take a shot at a deer. The rifle bullet hit the roof and windshield, causing minor shrapnel injuries to the 42 year old male victim sitting in the driver’s seat of the truck. **Do not use a vehicle as a rest. Be sure you have an unobstructed shot before firing. Never shot across a roadway.**

November 14 – Dundy County – Deer hunting – A 45 year old male shooter suffered cuts and burns to his face and thumb when his custom built .257 rifle and/or reloaded cartridge malfunctioned causing the action, stock and barrel to rupture. **Always inspect equipment prior to using. Always use the proper ammunition for your firearm.**

December 7 – Lincoln County – Coyote hunting – A 17 year old male victim was standing in the back of a pickup truck while coyote hunting. When the driver accelerated, he fell from the truck, sustaining severe injuries including broken vertebra and lacerations. **Never ride or stand in the back of a moving vehicle. Never participate in horse-play while hunting.**

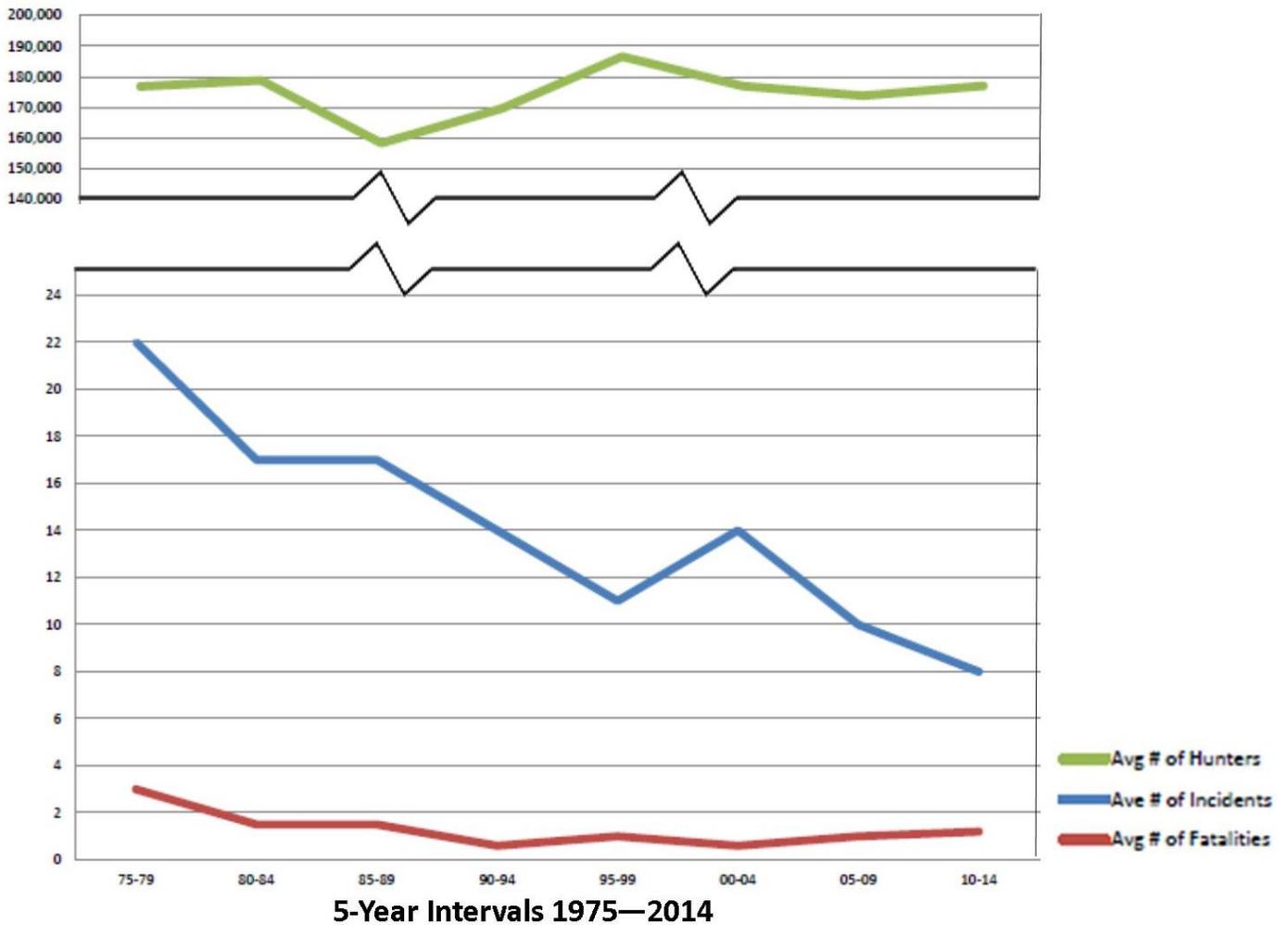
December 28 – Keith County – Duck hunting – A 10 year old male shooter was readying to shoot a 20 gauge shotgun with an exposed hammer and no other safety when his thumb slipped and the gun discharged hitting the 45 year old male victim in the foot, causing minor injuries. **Always keep the safety on until ready to shoot.**

Nebraska Hunter Incidents and Hunter Incident Fatalities 1975-2015



Data source: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission Hunter Education Records

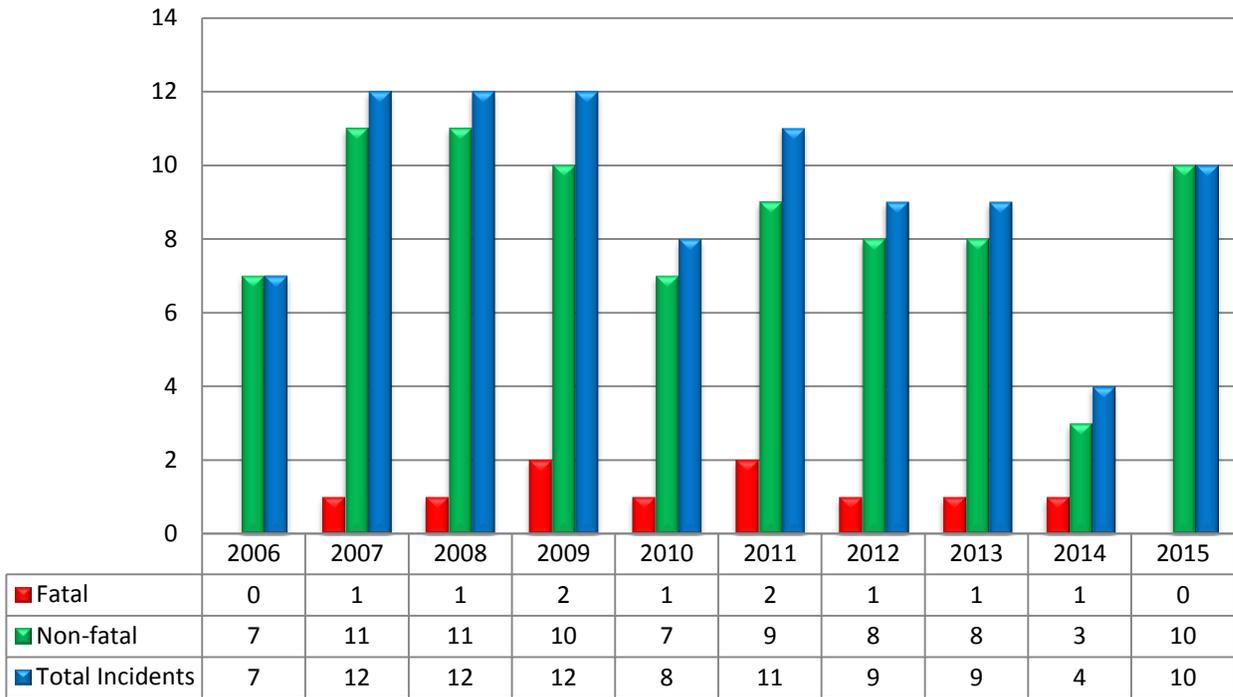
5-Year Averages for Nebraska Hunter Numbers Compared to Hunting Incidents 1975-2015



5-Year Interval	Average # of Hunters Per Year	Average # of Hunting Incidents Per Year	Average # of Fatalities Per Year
75-79	176,880	22	3
80-84	178,864	17	1.5
85-89	158,412	17	1.5
90-94	169,683	14	0.6
95-99	186,567	11	1
00-04	177,002	14	0.6
05-09	173,859	10	1
10-14	177,056	8	1.2

Although the collected data indicates some fluctuation in annual hunter numbers, the average annual number of hunters has remained relatively stable for the past 15 years while incident numbers have steadily declined during the same period, and dramatically declined since the inception of hunter education in the mid-1970's.

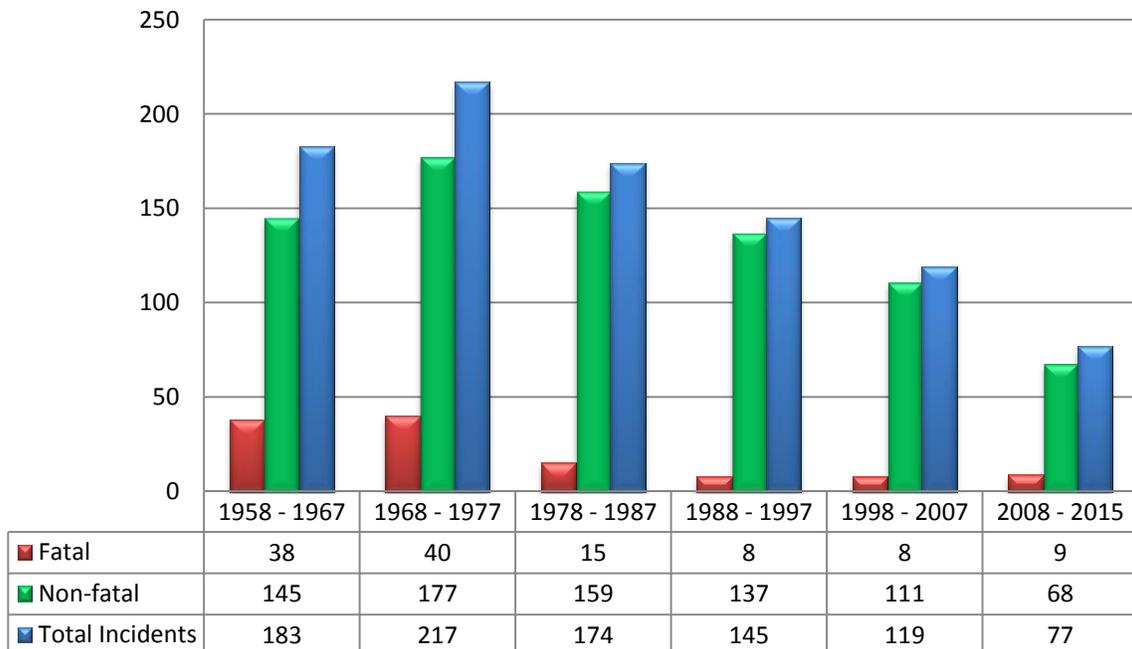
10-Year History of Nebraska Hunting Incidents



Numbers reflect incidents that meet the reporting guidelines of the International Hunter Education Association for the year reported

- Class A - when a hunter discharged a hunting implement while legally involved in hunting
- Class B - when a hunter discharged a hunting implement while illegally involved in hunting
- Class C - when a hunter fell from an elevated stand

Hunting Incidents in Nebraska Historical Summary 1958 through 2015



2015 Incidents Categorized by Equipment Type:

CATEGORY	# OF INCIDENTS
Discharge of a shotgun	4*
Discharge of a rifle	5~
Discharge of a handgun	0
Bow and arrow	1 ⁺
Crossbow	0
Fall from elevated platform	1~

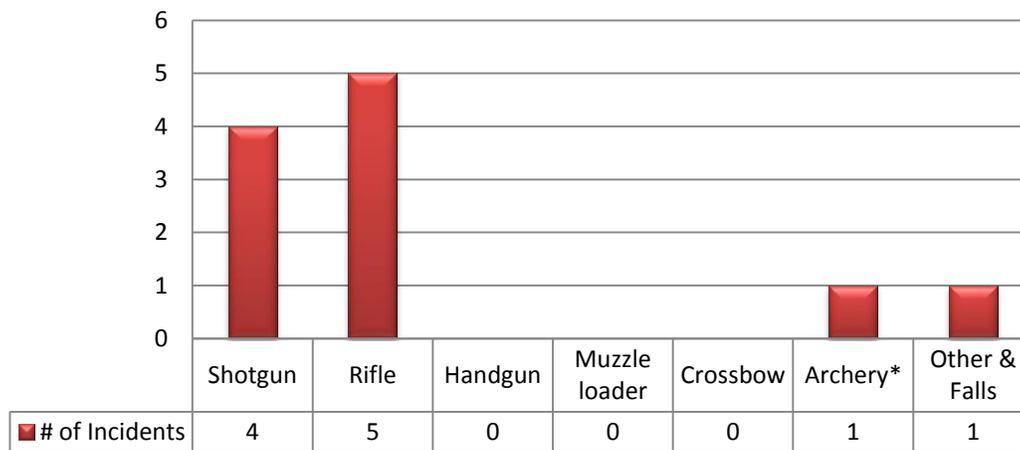
Injuries were caused by someone else in eight (8) of the incidents

*One incident resulted in two (2) victims

~Injuries were self-inflicted in two (2) incidents

⁺Archery hunter was struck by a stray bullet from a target shooter

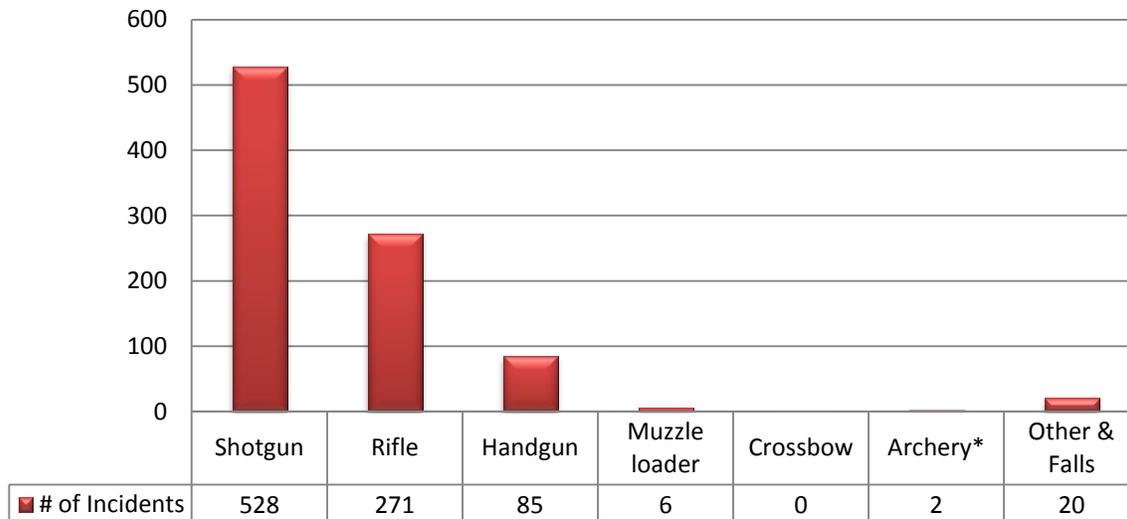
Type of Equipment Involved in Nebraska Hunting Incidents in 2015



***NOTE: Archery incidents include 1 incident in 2015 in which an archery hunter was struck by a stray rifle bullet from a target shooter**

Type of Equipment Involved in Nebraska Hunting Incidents 1958 through 2015

Records kept since 1958 - Mandatory Firearm Hunter Education in Nebraska since 1976

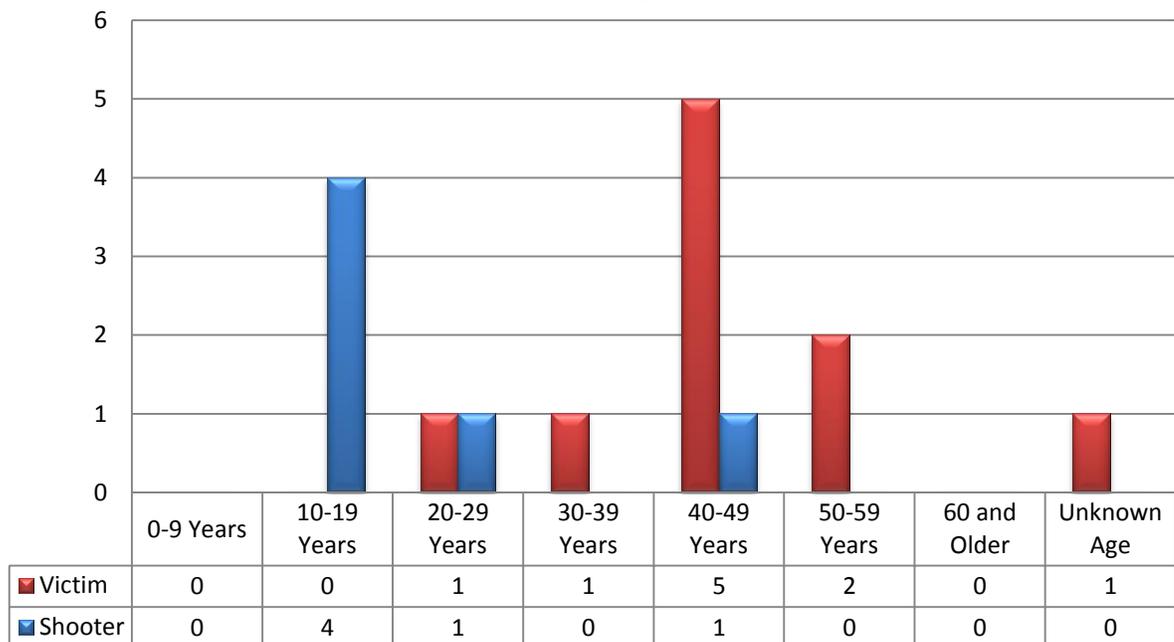


***NOTE: Archery incidents include 1 incident in 2015 in which an archery hunter was struck by a stray rifle bullet from a target shooter**

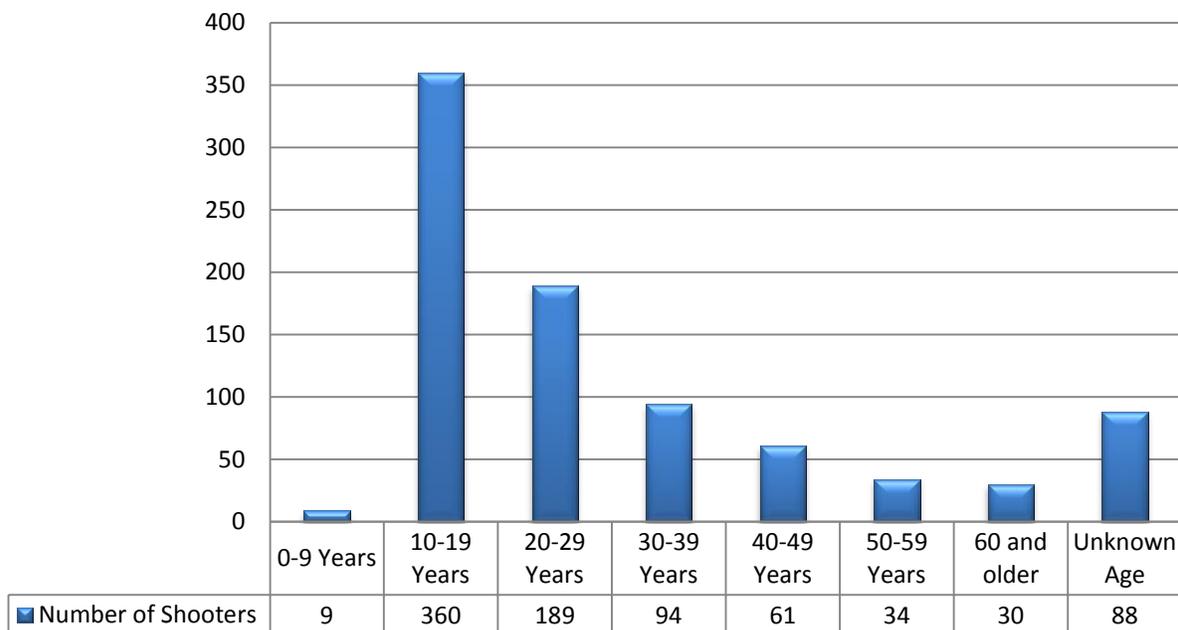
Age and Gender of Individuals Involved in 2015 Incidents (♂ = male; ♀ = female)

AGE	SHOOTER	VICTIM	SELF-INFLICTED	FALL
0-9	0	0	0	0
10-19	4♂	0	0	1♂
20-29	1♂	1♂	0	0
30-39	0	1♂	0	0
40-49	0	3♂ / 1♀	1♂	0
50-59	0	2♂	0	0
60 and older	0	0	0	0
Unknown	3♂	1♂	0	0

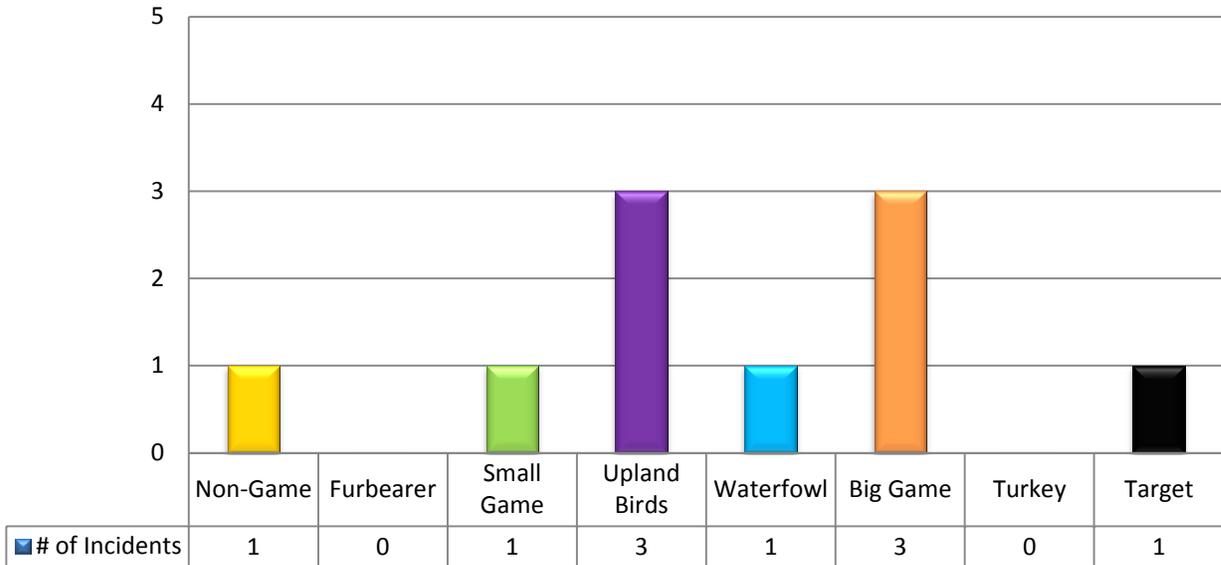
Age of Individuals (Shooters and Victims) Involved in 2015 Incidents



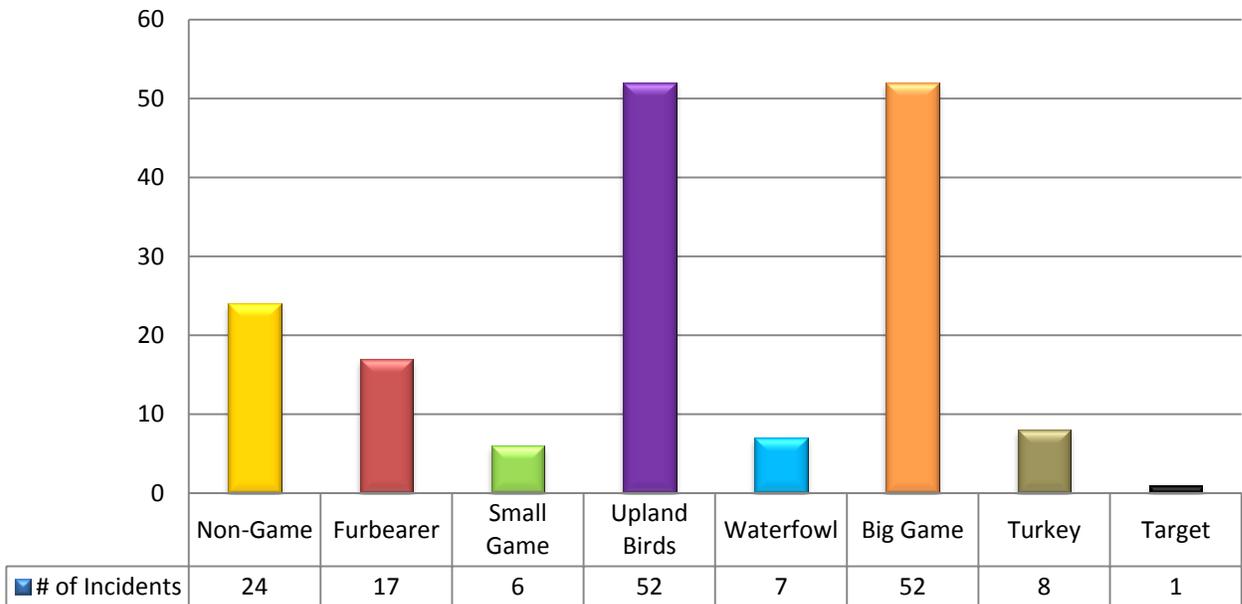
Age of Shooter Involved in Nebraska Hunting Incidents 1958 – 2015



Type of Game Hunted During 2015 Incidents



Type of Game Hunted During Incidents 2000 – 2015



Non-game includes all mammals and birds not listed in the hunting guide (coyote, prairie dog, porcupine, woodchuck, common pigeon, European starling, English sparrow, etc.)

Furbearer includes all animals listed as fur bearers in the hunting guide (bobcat, mink, raccoon, badger, red fox, gray fox, Virginia opossum, long-tailed weasel, striped skunk, etc.)

Small Game includes rabbits and squirrels

Upland Birds includes pheasant, quail, dove, snipe, woodcock, partridge, rail and grouse

Waterfowl includes ducks, geese and coot

Big Game includes deer, antelope, elk, mountain (bighorn) sheep and mountain lion

Turkey includes all species of wild turkey

Nebraska Hunting Incident Statistical Summary

Includes all hunting incidents resulting in injury or death which meet IHEA reporting criteria –
 Compiled by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
 1958 through 2015

NEBRASKA HUNTING INCIDENTS	1958 - 2015	2015 Only
Fatal injury	118	0
Non-fatal injury	798	11
Self-inflicted (includes fatal and non-fatal)	360	2
Caused by someone else (includes fatal and non-fatal)	555	9
TOTAL	915	11

PRIMARY CAUSES OF INCIDENTS	1958 - 2015	2015 Only
Victim covered by shooter swinging on game	175	0
Victim out of sight of shooter	87	1
Shooter stumbled and fell	65	0
Removing or placing a firearm in to vehicle	56	0
Riding in vehicle with loaded firearm	55	2
Victim moved into line of fire	54	1
Trigger caught on an object	40	0
Victim mistaken for game	33	0
Improper crossing of fence	27	0
Defective firearm	28	1
Unloading firearm	26	0
Firearm fell from insecure rest	22	1
Loading firearm	22	0
Careless or reckless handling of firearm	17	0
Horse play with loaded firearm	22	2
Ricochet	15	0
Fall from tree stand	12	0
Using firearm as rest or brace	6	0
Other	2	2

TOTAL INCIDENTS BY AGE

	1958 – 2015 Combined		2015 Calendar Year Only	
	Shooter	Victim	Shooter	Victim
0-9 years old	9	11	0	0
10-19 years old	360	355	4	1
20-29 years old	189	184	1	1
30-39 years old	94	132	0	1
40-49 years old	61	98	0	5
50-59 years old	34	60	0	2
Over 60 years old	30	39	0	0
Age unknown	88	21	3	1