

***NEBRASKA***  
***2021***  
***HUNTING INCIDENT REPORT***



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## 2021 NEBRASKA HUNTING INCIDENTS

During 2021, there were eight reported hunting incidents in Nebraska resulting in personal injury. Seven of those incidents involved firearms. Four incidents resulted in minor-moderate injuries, two in severe injuries and one was fatal. This compares to five incidents in 2020, two of which were fatal.

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 40 years, with an average incident rate of approximately one accident for every 25,700 hunters in the field. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the nearly 750 volunteer instructors strive to reduce the number of hunting incidents.

The tables and charts within this report illustrate the historical data collected for hunting incidents in Nebraska.

**Contributing Factors to 2021 Incidents:** (Individual incidents may have more than one contributing factor, contributing factors can be counted multiple times.)

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS	Factors Reported by Law Enforcement
Victim out of sight of shooter	
Victim covered by shooter swinging on game	3
Failure to identify target	
Victim in line of fire	5
Ricochet	
Defective ammunition	
Firearm fell, insecure rest	
Shooter stumbled and fell	
Trigger caught on object	
Failure to check beyond target	
Loading firearm	1
Unloading firearm	
Discharge firearm in/on a vehicle	1
Improper crossing of obstacle	
Clubbing game with firearm	
Careless or reckless handling of firearm	2
Place/remove loaded firearm from vehicle	2
Drop firearm	
Horse-play while hunting	
Shooting across roadway	
Run with loaded firearm	
Obstruction of barrel	
Careless handling of archery equipment	
Other*	1*

\*X – Fall(s) from an elevated position

## 2021 Individual Incident Summary

**Jan. 14 – Lancaster County – Deer Hunting:** A 18-year-old male was shot in the leg by his 41-year-old male hunting partner as they were unloading their firearms at their vehicle at the end of their hunt. The victim sustained severe injuries. (Class B) **Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction and finger off the trigger.**

**Jan. 19 – Loup County – Raccoon Hunting:** A 11-year-old male shot his 44-year old father in the elbow, causing moderate injuries, when he attempted to shoot the racoon on the ground as his father stepped towards the racoon and into the line of fire. (Class A) **Always be sure of your target and keep your muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Always know where your hunting party is located and be in verbal communication.**

**Nov. 6 – Gage County – Coyote Hunting:** A 33-year-old male shot himself in the foot, causing moderate injuries, as he loaded his gun before a predator hunt. (Class A) **Always keep your muzzle pointed in a safe direction and treat every firearm as it is loaded.**

**Nov. 13 – Perkins County – Deer Hunting:** A 46-year-old male shot himself in the knee as he exited a vehicle with a loaded firearm and sustained severe injuries. (Class A) **Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction and unload firearms while in a vehicle.**

**Nov. 13 – Pawnee County – Deer Hunting:** A 23-year-old male was fatally shot by his 18-year-old hunting partner when he fired at a deer that ran between the two hunters. The scope rings on the rifle were also loose, allowing the scope to move, and the setting sun caused a glare in the scope. (Class A) **Always be sure of your target and what lies beyond it. Always know where your hunting party is located and be in verbal communication.**

**Nov. 16 – Loup County – Deer Hunting:** A 64-year-old male fell from his hang-on treestand when the webbing strap on the stand broke causing moderate injuries. He was not wearing a fall arrest system/safety harness. (Class C) **Always wear a fall arrest system when hunting from an elevated position and use a life-line when climbing and descending.**

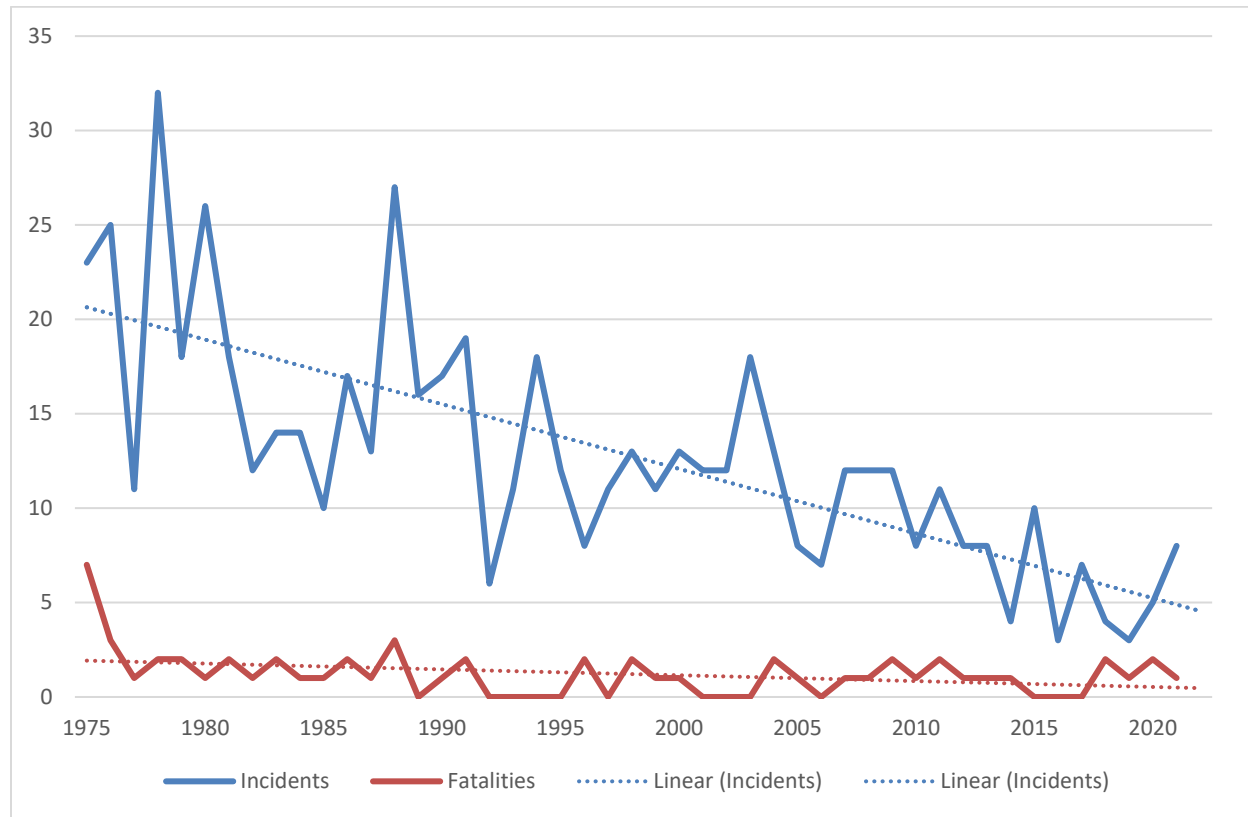
**Nov. 22 – Garden County – Pheasant Hunting:** An 11-year-old male shot his 11-year-old hunting partner in the back while pheasant hunting, causing moderate injuries. (Class A) **Always be sure of your target and what lies beyond it. Always know where your hunting party is located and be in verbal communication.**

**Nov. 27 – Red Willow County – Upland Bird Hunting:** A 13-year-old male shot a 41-year-old male while blocking during an upland bird hunt when a quail flushed and he shot in the direction, which led to moderate injuries. (Class A) **Always be sure of your target and what lies beyond it. Always know where your hunting party is located and be in verbal communication.**

### International Hunter Education Association Hunting Accident Report Guidelines:

- 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
- Non-classified – when a hunter sustains an injury by a means other than Class A, B or C

## Nebraska Hunter Numbers vs. Hunting Incidents 1975-2021

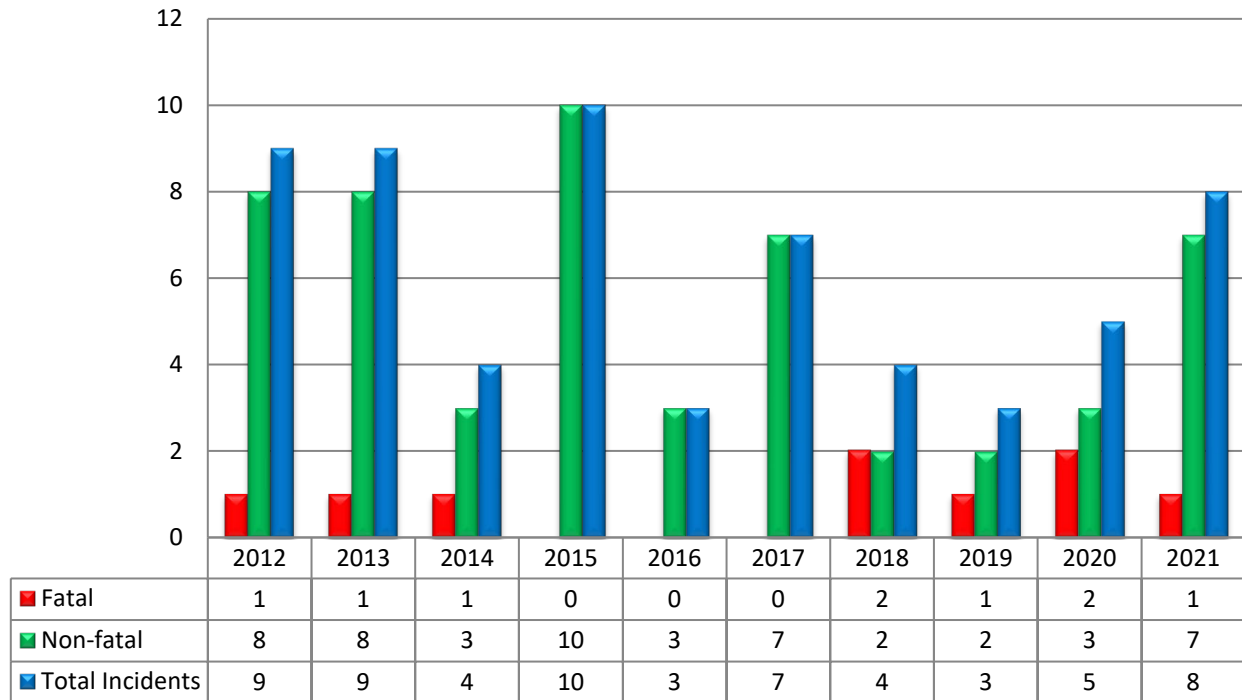


5-Year Interval	Average # of Hunters Per Year	Average # of Hunting Incidents Per Year	Average # of Fatalities Per Year
1975-79	176,880	22	3
1980-84	178,864	17	1.5
1985-89	158,412	17	1.5
1990-94	169,683	14	0.6
1995-99	186,567	11	1
2000-04	177,002	14	0.6
2005-09	173,859	10	1
2010-14	177,056	8.2	1.2
2015-19	175,530	5.4	.6
*2020-2021	182,224	6.5	1.5

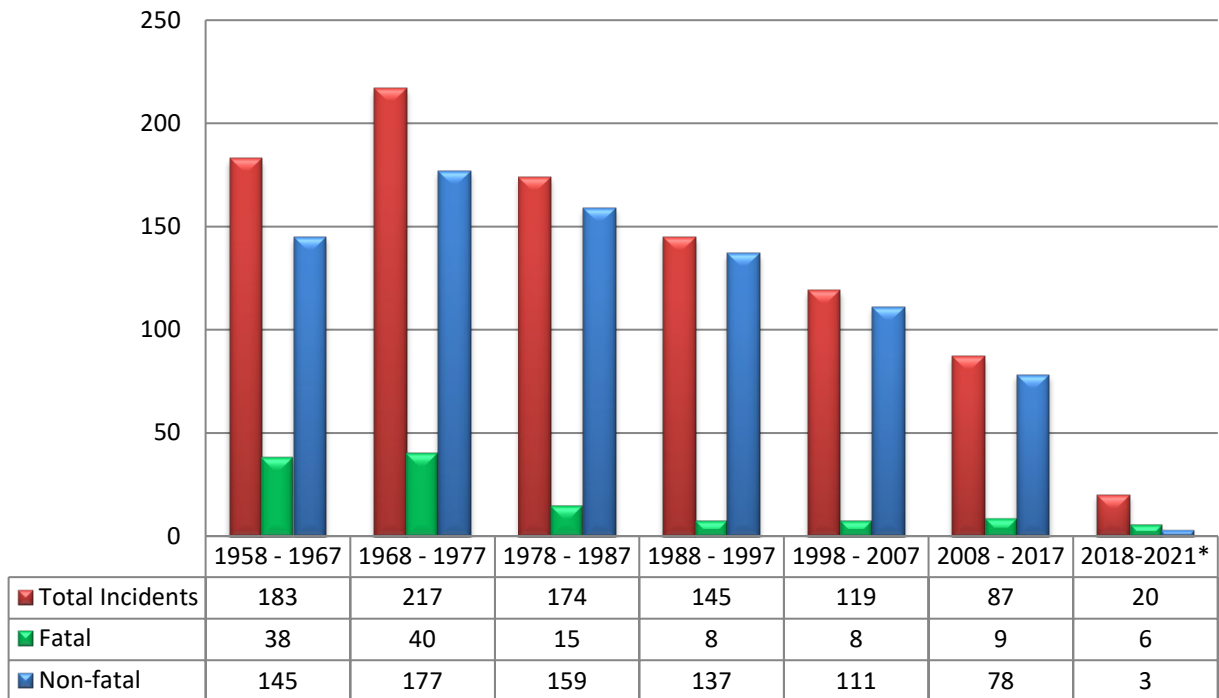
\*Only two years of data for this five-year period

Although the collected data indicates some fluctuation in annual hunter numbers, the average annual number of hunters has remained relatively stable for the past 18 years, while incident numbers have steadily declined during the same period, and dramatically declined since the inception of hunter education in the mid-1970s.

## 10-Year History of Nebraska Hunting Incidents



## Hunting Incidents in Nebraska Historical Summary 1958 through 2021

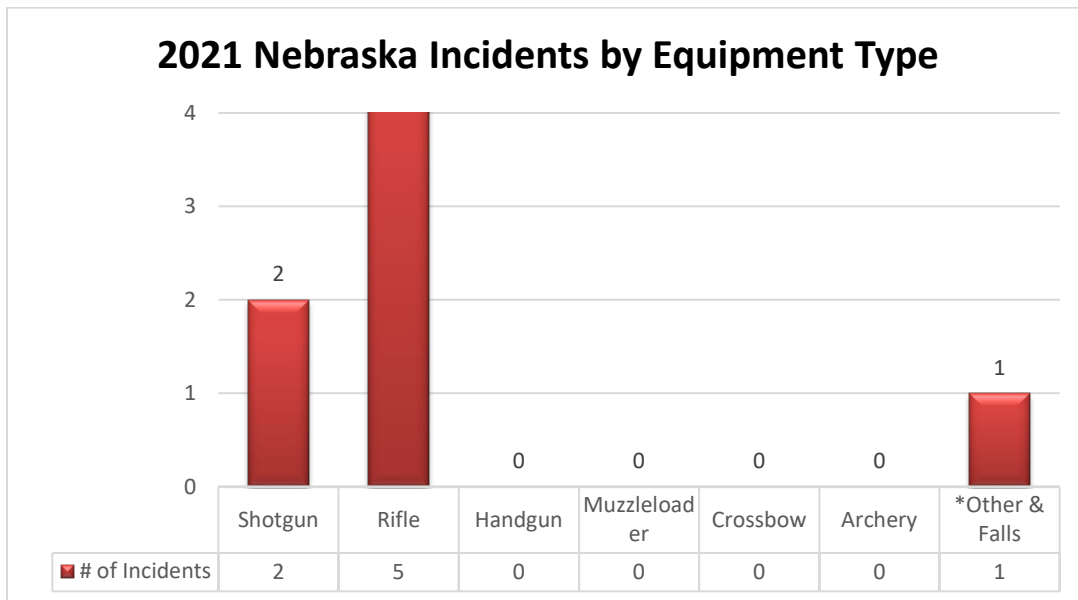


\*Only four years of data for this column

## 2021 Nebraska Hunting Incidents Categorized by Equipment Type

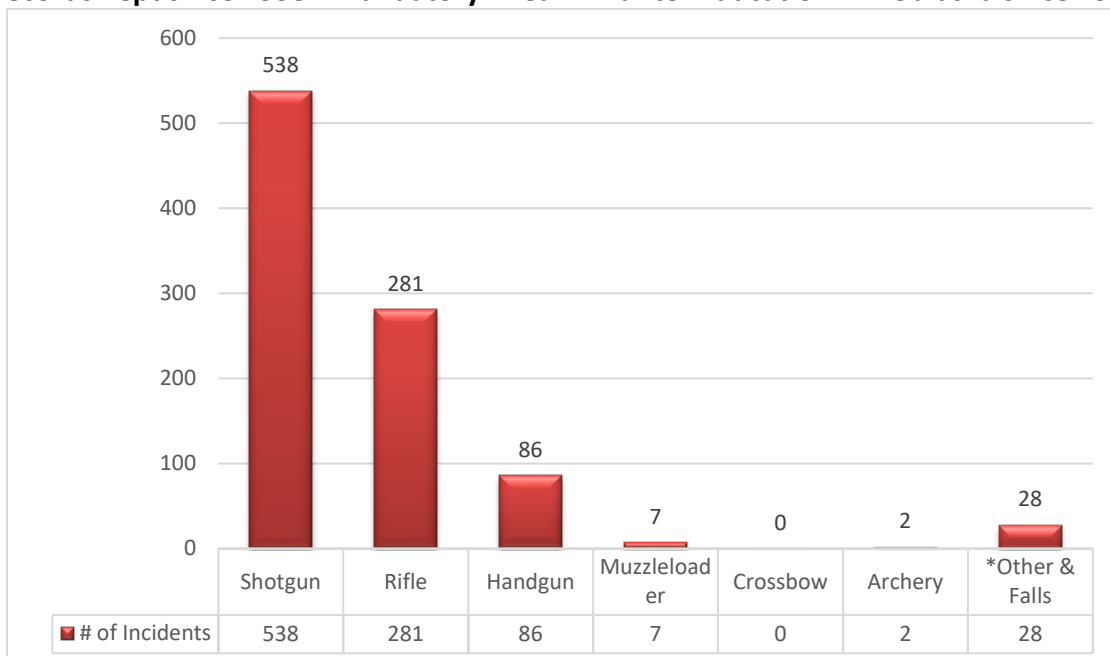
CATEGORY	# OF INCIDENTS
Discharge of a shotgun	2
Discharge of a rifle	5
Discharge of a handgun	0
Bow and arrow	0
Crossbow	0
Fall from elevated platform	1
Other	0

\*Injuries were self-inflicted in two incidents, not including falls



## Type of Equipment Involved in Nebraska Hunting Incidents 1958 through 2021

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



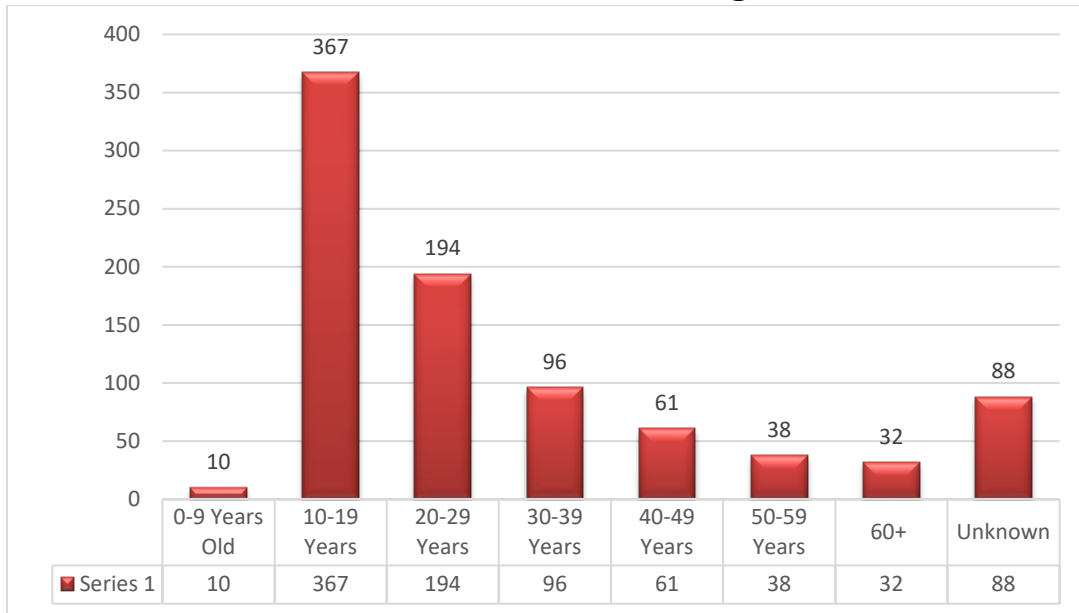
# Age and Gender of Individuals Involved in 2021 Nebraska Hunting Incidents

(♂ = male; ♀ = female)

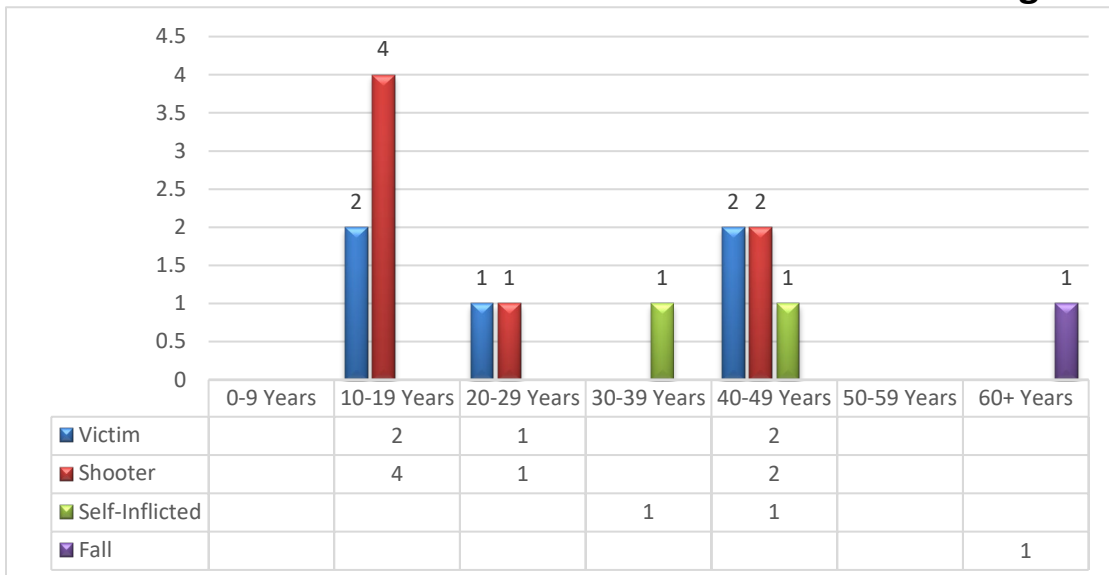
AGE	SHOOTER	VICTIM	SELF-INFLICTED	FALL/OTHER
0-9				
10-19	4♂	2♂		
20-29		1♂		
30-39			1♂	
40-49	1♂	2♂	1♂	
50-59				
60 and older				1♂
Unknown				

NOTE: Two self-inflicted gunshot

## Age of Shooter Involved in Nebraska Hunting Incidents 1958 – 2021

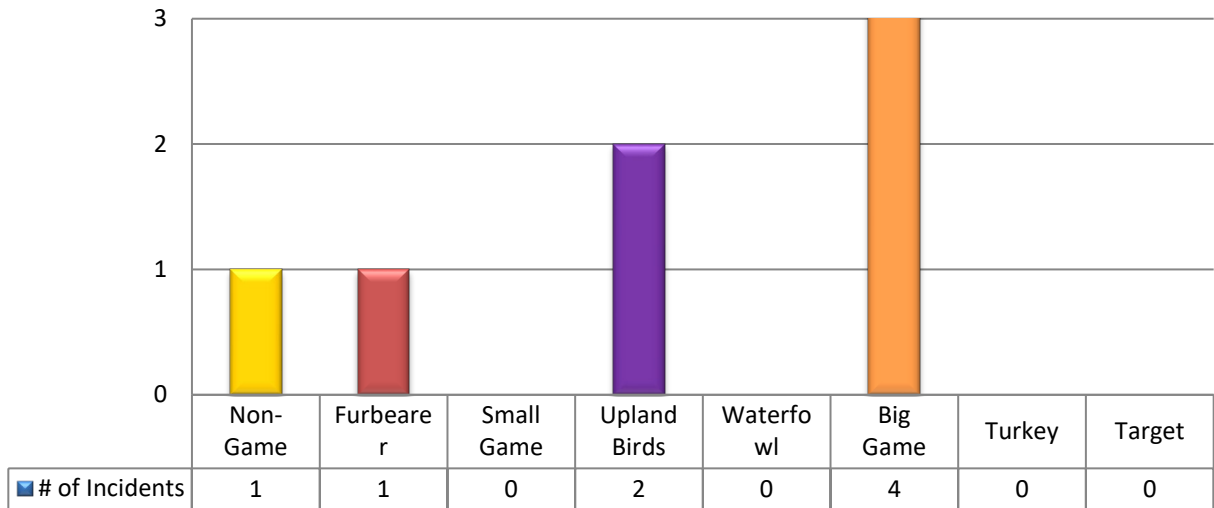


## Age of Shooters and Victims Involved in 2021 Nebraska Hunting Incidents

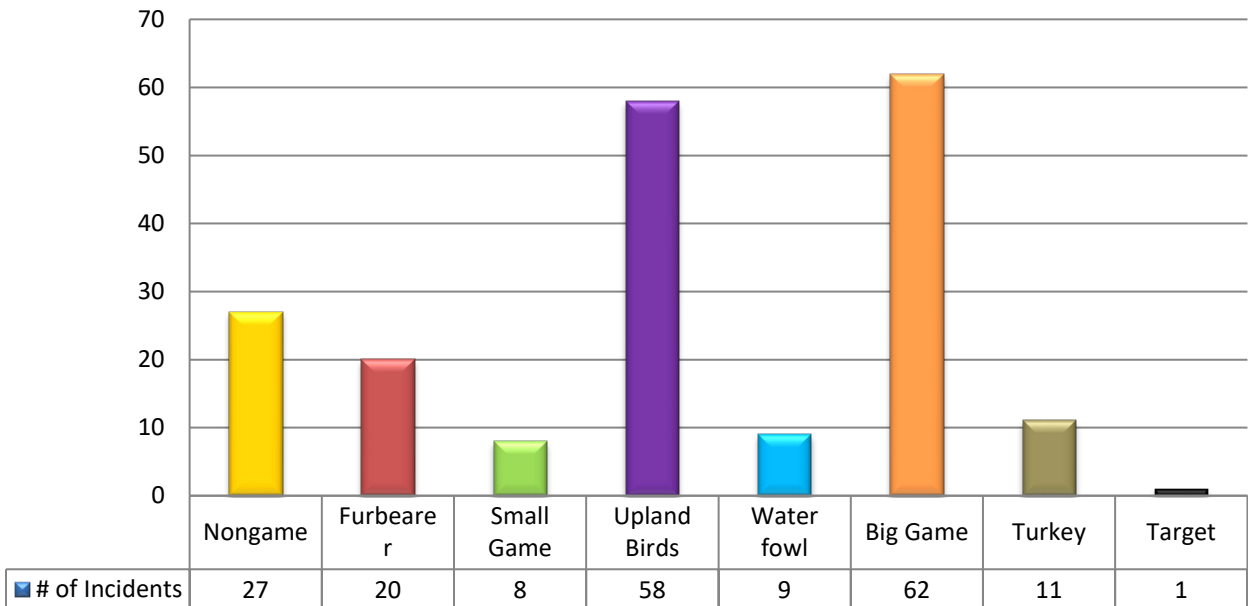




## Type of Game Hunted During 2021 Nebraska Hunting Incidents



## Type of Game Hunted During Incidents 2000 – 2021



**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

**Target** includes all types of target practice and sighting in equipment

# 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 2021

NEBRASKA HUNTING INCIDENTS	1958 - 2021	2021 Only
Fatal injury	124	1
Non-fatal injury	819	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>8</b>

Self-inflicted (includes fatal and non-fatal)	367	2
Caused by someone else (includes fatal and non-fatal)	568	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>2</b>

PRIMARY CAUSES OF INCIDENTS	1958 - 2021	2021 Only
Victim covered by shooter swinging on game	179	3
Victim out of sight of shooter	88	0
Shooter stumbled and fell	65	0
Removing or placing a firearm into vehicle	61	2
Riding in vehicle with loaded firearm	57	0
Victim in line of fire	60	5
Trigger caught on an object	41	0
Victim mistaken for game	36	0
Improper crossing of fence	27	0
Defective firearm	30	0
Unloading firearm	29	0
Firearm fell from insecure rest	22	0
Loading firearm	24	1
Careless or reckless handling of firearm	26	2
Horse play with loaded firearm	22	0
Ricochet	17	0
Fall from tree stand	17	1
Using firearm as rest or brace	6	0
Other	7	0

## TOTAL SHOOTING INCIDENTS BY AGE

	1958 – 2021 Combined		2021 Calendar Year Only	
	Shooter	Victim	Shooter	Victim
0-9 years old	10	12	0	0
10-19 years old	367	360	4	2
20-29 years old	193	188	0	1
30-39 years old	95	134	0	0
40-49 years old	62	103	1	2
50-59 years old	38	63	0	0
Over 60 years old	32	42	0	0
Age unknown	88	21	0	0