

**NEBRASKA**  
**2023**  
**HUNTING INCIDENT REPORT**



**Prepared by:**  
**Kyle Gaston**

**Hunter Education Coordinator**  
**Nebraska Game and Parks Commission**  
**June 2024**



## 2023 Nebraska Hunting Incidents

Hunting in Nebraska continues to be one of the safest recreational activities in which friends and families may participate. Hunting incident numbers have decreased significantly in the past 40 years, with an average incident rate of approximately three incidents per 100,000 hunters over the past four years. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and the nearly 600 certified volunteer instructors continue to strive to reduce the number of hunting incidents to zero.

During 2023, there were three hunting incidents reported in Nebraska resulting in personal injury. Two incidents resulted in moderate to severe injuries, and one incident was fatal. This compares to five hunting incidents in 2022, one of which was fatal. The moderate to severe injuries incident involved male shooters and the use of a rifle. The fatality incident involved a fall from an elevated stand.

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

### Contributing Factors to 2023 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	
Failure to identify target	
Victim in line of fire	
Ricochet	
Defective ammunition	
Firearm fell, insecure rest	
Shooter stumbled and fell	
Trigger caught on object	
Failure to check beyond target	
Loading firearm	
Unloading firearm	2
Discharge firearm in/on a vehicle	1
Improper crossing of obstacle	
Clubbing game with firearm	
Careless or reckless handling of firearm	1
Place/remove loaded firearm from vehicle	
Drop firearm	
Horseplay while hunting	
Shooting across roadway	
Run with loaded firearm	
Obstruction of barrel	
Careless handling of archery equipment	
Other	1

## 2023 Individual Hunting Incident Summary

**Nov. 11 – Cherry County – Deer Hunting:** (Class A) A 46-year-old male shot himself through his big toe on his left foot attempting to remove the magazine from his rifle. The victim sustained moderate to severe injuries. **Always point the muzzle of your firearm in a safe direction. Treat every firearm as if it is loaded.**

**Nov. 21 – Sarpy County – Deer Hunting:** (Class C) A 34-year-old male was bowhunting from an elevated stand and fell. The victim sustained fatal injuries. **Always wear and properly utilize a full body fall arrest system from the time you leave the ground until you return to the ground.**

**Dec. 12 – Hamilton County – Rabbit Hunting:** (Class B) A 17-year-old-male was unloading his rifle after rabbit hunting at night next to the passenger door of the vehicle. The muzzle was pointed at the 17-year-old victim in the driver seat when the rifle fired. The victim sustained moderate to severe injuries. **Always point the muzzle of your firearm in a safe direction.**

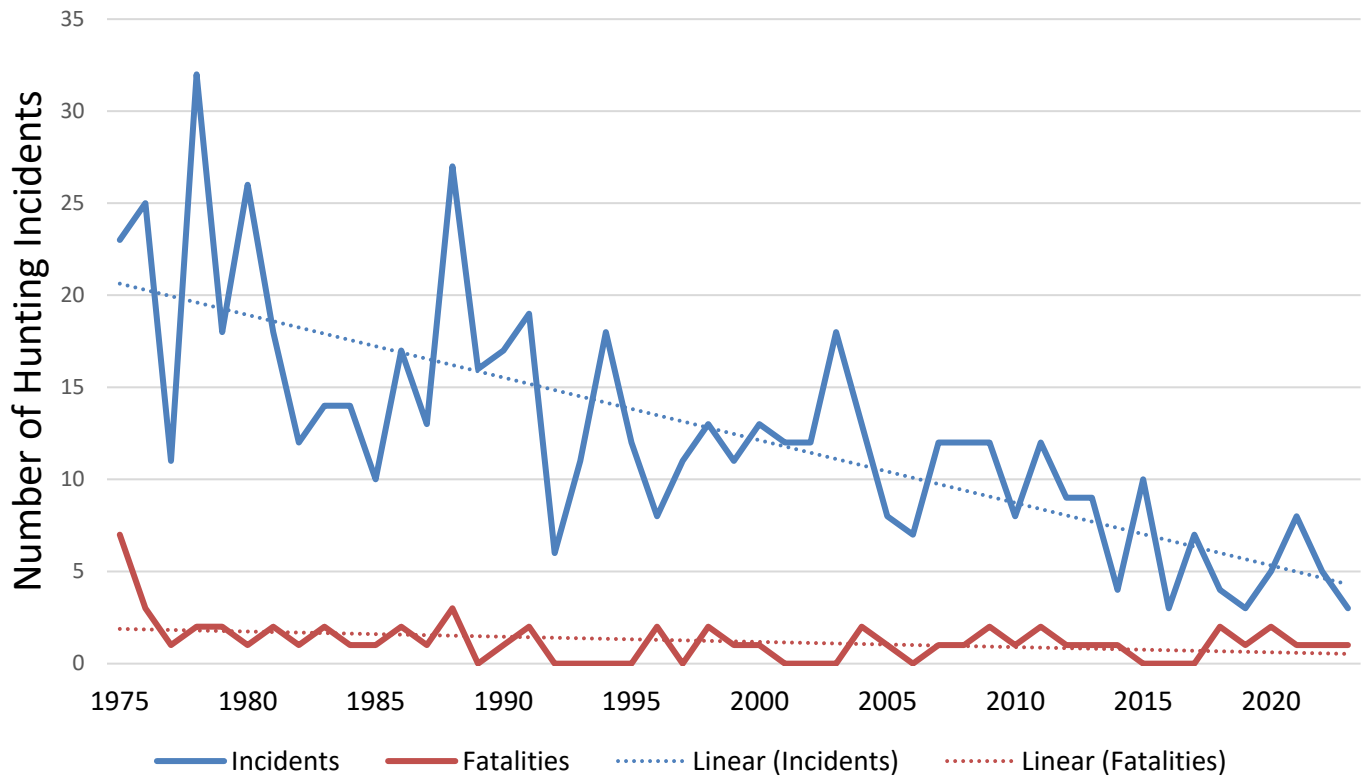
### **International Hunter Education Association USA (IHEA-USA)** **Hunting Incident Report Guidelines:**

- **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 Game and Parks Commission Hunting Incident Report Guidelines:**

- **Hunting Incident** is described as: “An occurrence or event that results in the physical injury or death of a person or persons which involves the discharge or use of a hunting implement while engaged in hunting activity” OR “An occurrence or an event that results in the physical injury or death of a person or persons involuntary while afield engaging in a hunting related activity from the time the person ascends to the time the person descends from the elevated position.”
- **Hunting** is described as: “To pursue, take, attempt to take, search for, stalk or lie in wait for any game, game bird or game animal.”

## Nebraska Hunting Incidents & Fatalities 1975-2023



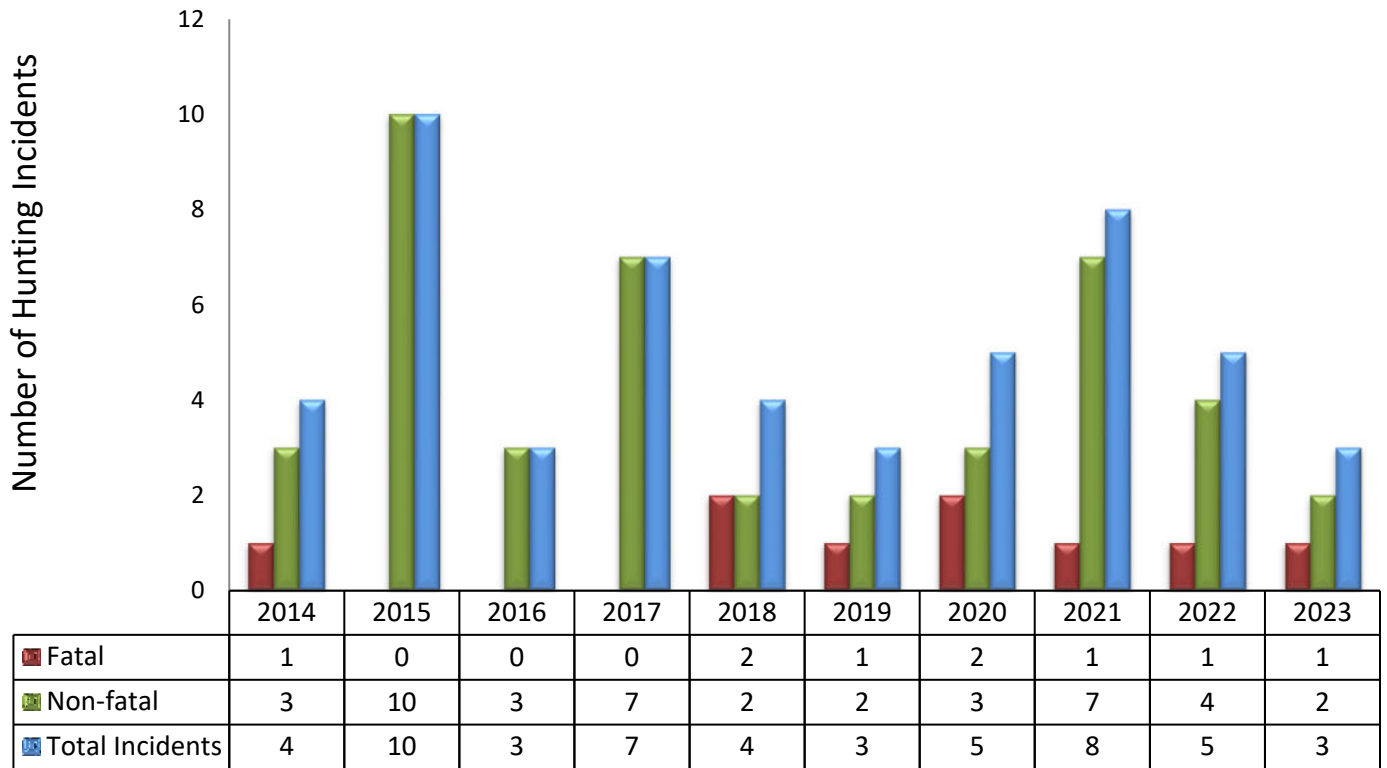
## Nebraska Hunter Numbers vs. Hunting Incidents 1975-2023

Timeframe	Average # of Certified Hunters Per Year	Average # of Hunting Incidents Per Year	Average # of Fatalities Per Year	Average # of Hunting Incidents Per 100,000 Hunters
1975-79	176,880	21.8	3.0	12.4
1980-84	178,864	16.8	1.4	9.5
1985-89	158,412	16.6	1.4	10.7
1990-94	169,683	14.2	0.6	8.3
1995-99	186,567	11.0	1.0	5.9
2000-04	177,803	13.6	0.6	7.9
2005-09	171,215	10.2	1.0	5.8
2010-14	177,579	8.4	1.2	4.6
2015-19	178,768	5.4	0.6	3.0
2020-2023*	182,152	5.3	1.3	2.9

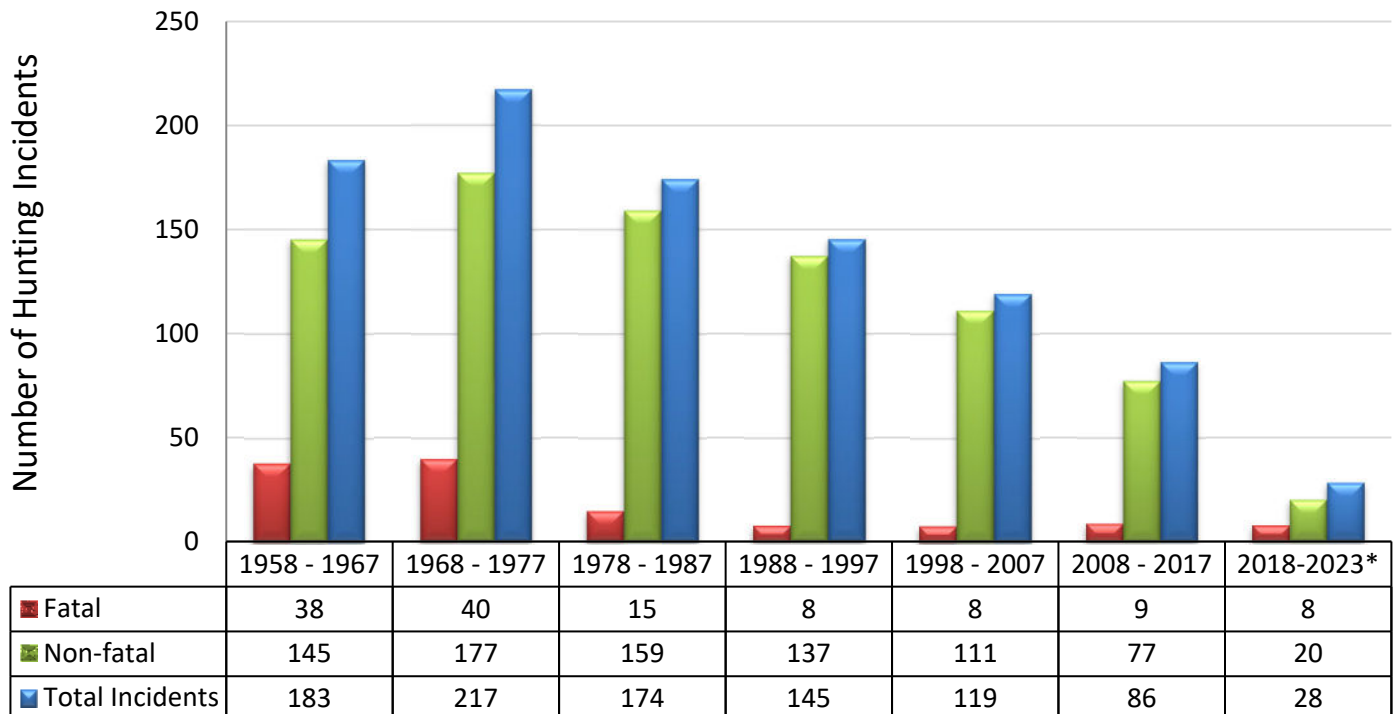
\*Only four years of data for this period

The average number of hunting incidents per 100,000 hunters has dramatically decreased from the 1970s to today. Adjusting the average number of incidents per 100,000 hunters allows a direct comparison of hunting incidents across periods of time and fluctuating hunter numbers.

## Nebraska Hunting Incidents: 10-Year Summary 2014-2023



## Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Historical Summary 1958 – 2023

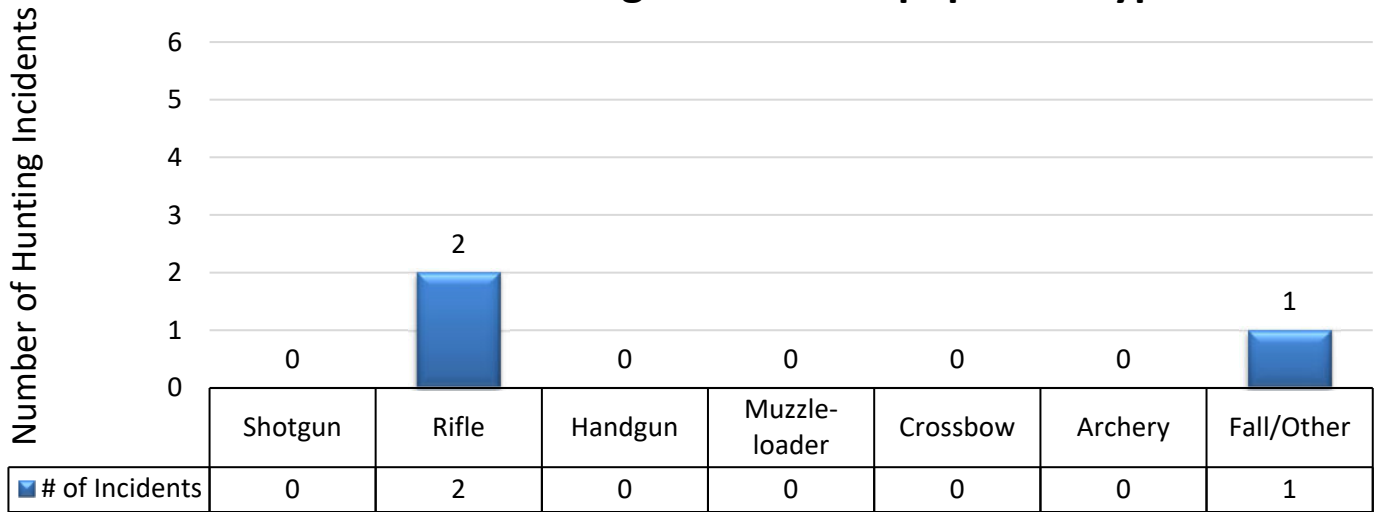


\*only six years of data for this column

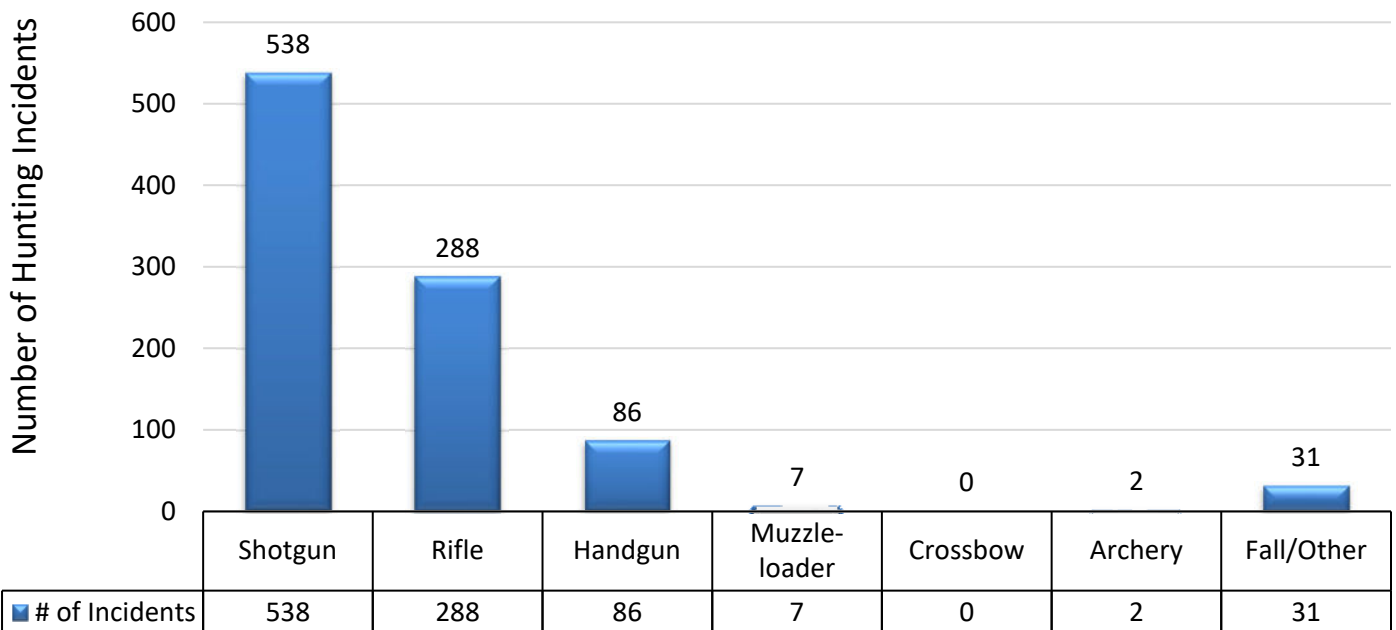
## 2023 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Equipment Type

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

## 2023 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Equipment Type



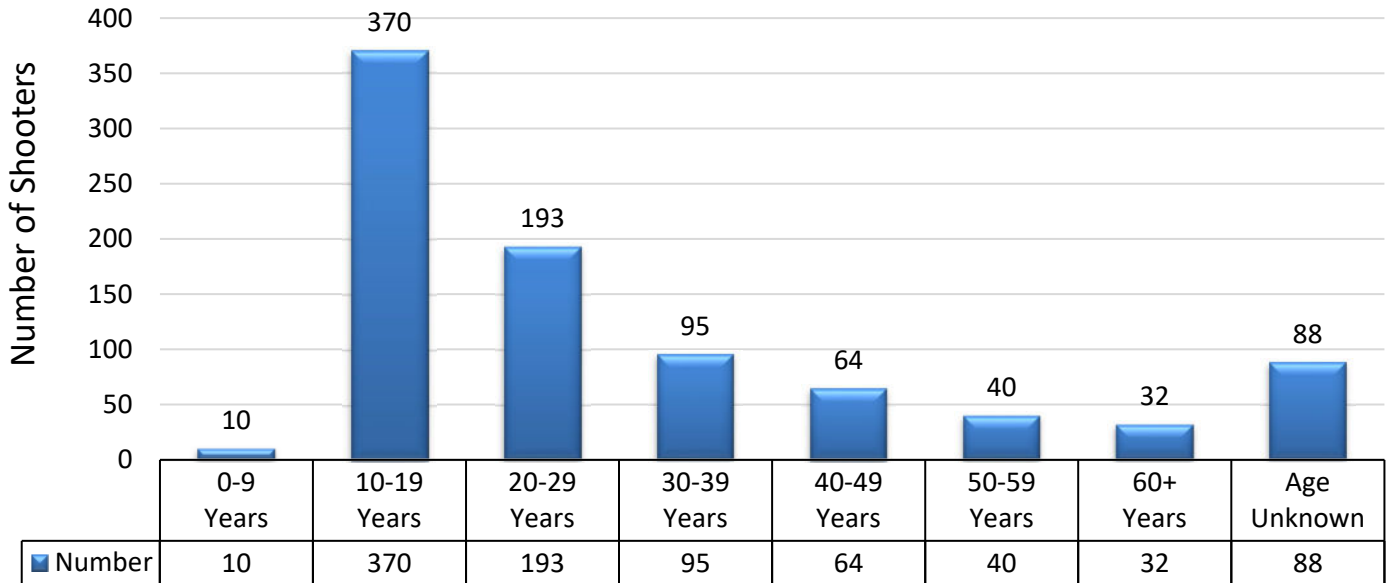
## Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Equipment Type 1958 – 2023



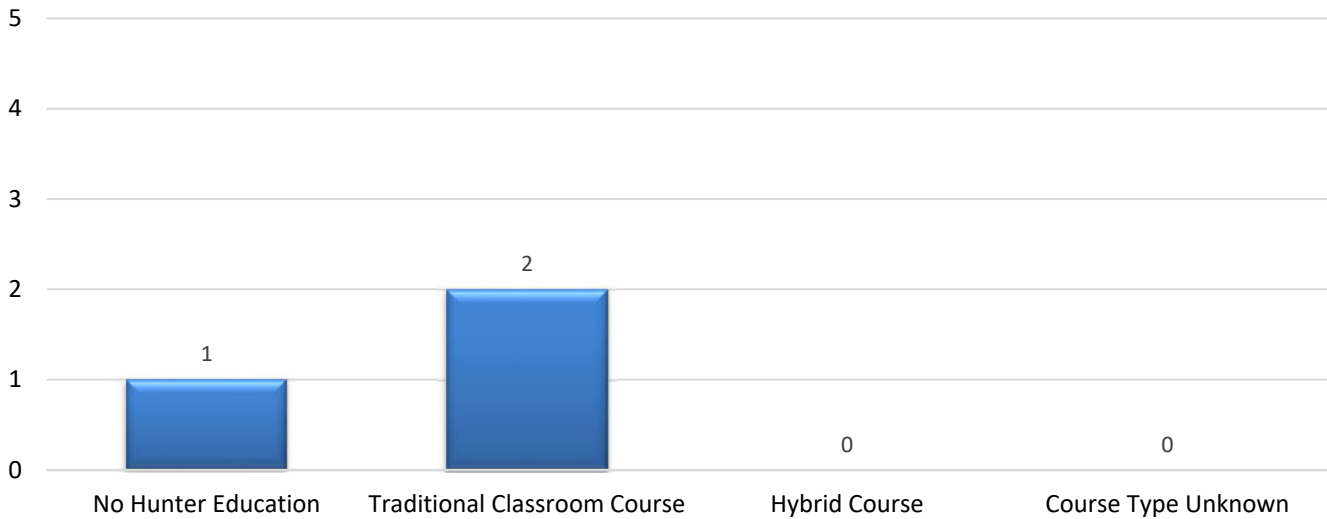
## 2023 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Age & Gender (M = male; F = female)

AGE	SHOOTER	VICTIM	SELF-INFLICTED	FALL
0-9				
10-19	1 M	1 M		
20-29				
30-39				1 M
40-49			1 M	
50-59				
60 and older				

## Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Shooter Age 1958 – 2023

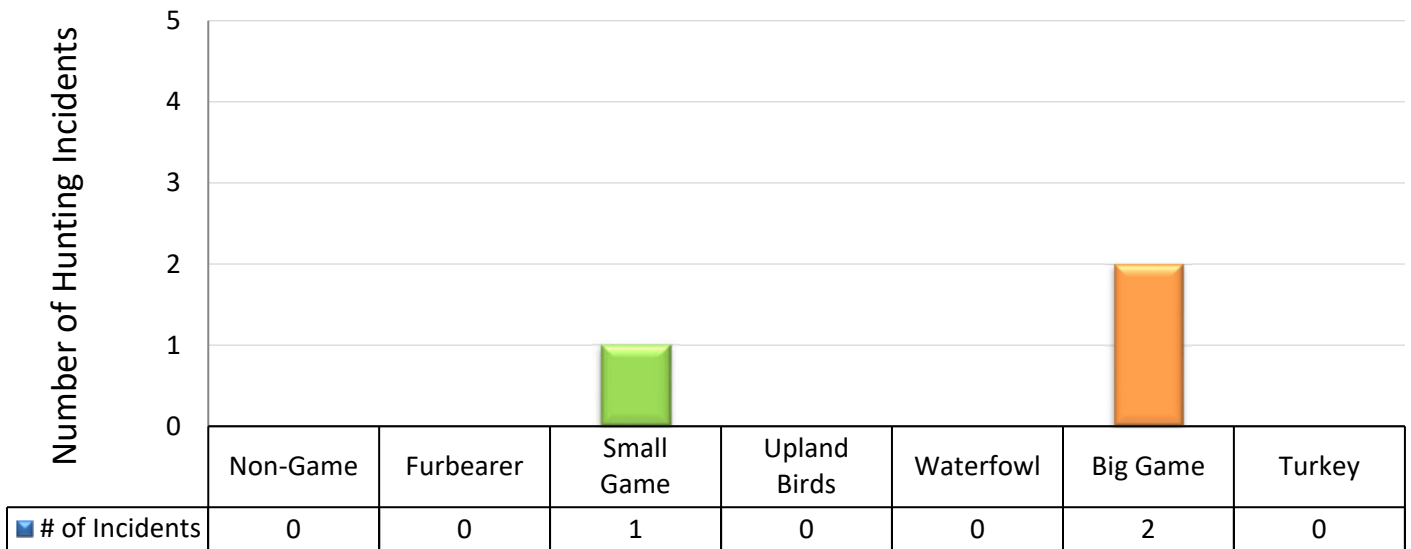


## 2023 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Hunter Education Course Type

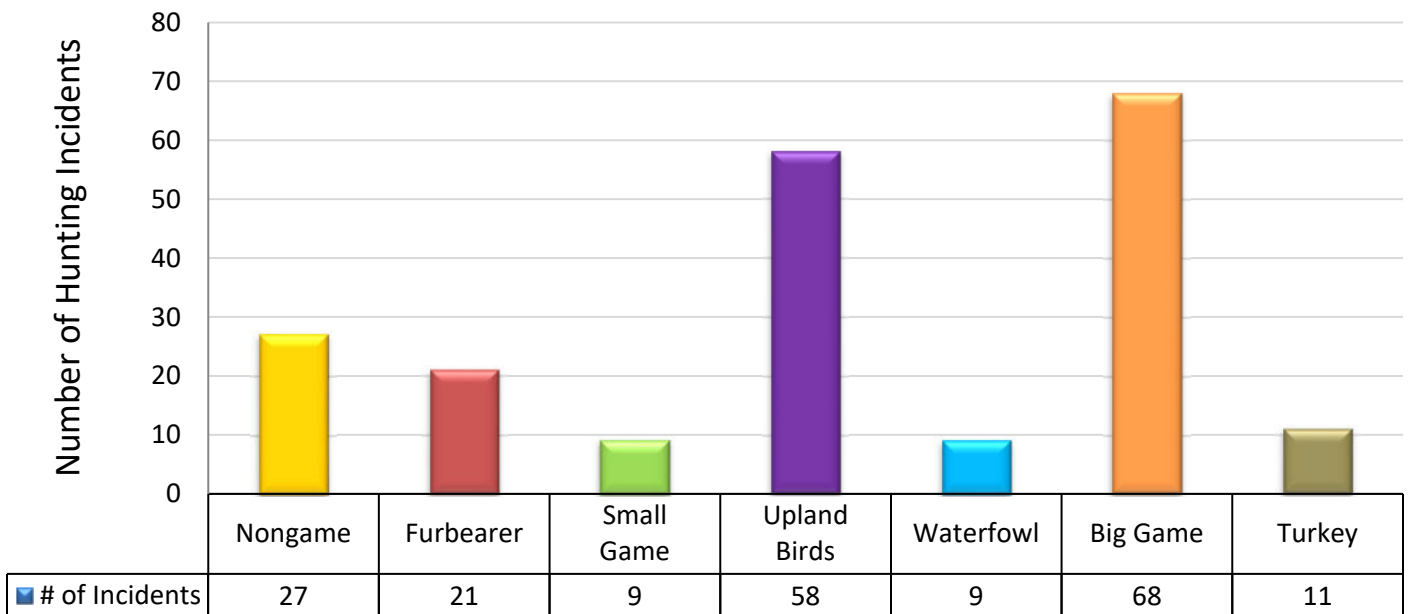




## 2023 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Type of Game Hunted



## Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Type of Game Hunted 2000 – 2023



- 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 furbearers 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 1958 – 2023

Includes all hunting incidents resulting in injury or death which meet IHEA-USA reporting criteria.  
Compiled by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission

<b>NEBRASKA HUNTING INCIDENTS</b>	<b>1958 - 2023</b>	<b>2023</b>
Fatal injury	126	1
Non-fatal injury	826	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>952</b>	<b>3</b>
Self-inflicted (includes fatal and non-fatal)	370	1
Caused by someone else (includes fatal and non-fatal)	577	1
Fall/Other (includes fatal and non-fatal)	5	1

<b>PRIMARY CAUSES OF HUNTING INCIDENTS</b>	<b>1958 - 2023</b>	<b>2023</b>
Victim covered by shooter swinging on game	181	0
Victim out of sight of shooter	88	0
Shooter stumbled and fell	65	0
Victim in line of fire	63	0
Removing or placing a firearm into vehicle	62	0
Riding in vehicle with loaded firearm	57	0
Trigger caught on an object	42	0
Victim mistaken for game	36	0
Defective firearm	30	0
Unloading firearm	32	2
Careless or reckless handling of firearm	27	0
Improper crossing of fence	27	0
Loading firearm	24	0
Firearm fell from insecure rest	22	0
Horseplay with loaded firearm	22	0
Ricochet	17	0
Fall from tree stand	18	1
Using firearm as rest or brace	6	0
Other	7	0

	<b>1958 – 2023</b>		<b>2023</b>	
	<b>Shooter</b>	<b>Victim</b>	<b>Shooter</b>	<b>Victim</b>
0-9 years old	10	12	0	0
10-19 years old	370	362	1	1
20-29 years old	193	190	0	0
30-39 years old	95	135	0	0
40-49 years old	64	104	1	1
50-59 years old	40	64	0	0
Over 60 years old	32	42	0	0
Age unknown	88	21	0	0