

NEBRASKA
2024
HUNTING INCIDENT REPORT



Prepared by:
Kyle Gaston

Hunter Education Coordinator
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
March 2025

2024 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 50 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 more than 500 certified volunteer instructors continue to strive to reduce the number of hunting incidents to zero.

There were four hunting incidents reported in Nebraska in 2024 resulting in personal injury. Three incidents resulted in moderate to severe injuries and one incident was fatal. This compares to three hunting incidents in 2023, one of which was fatal. There were two falling-from-elevated-platform incidents in 2024, with one fatal and one moderate-to-severe injury. The other two moderate-to-severe injury incidents involved self-inflicted gunshot wounds to the shooter’s foot.

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

Contributing Factors to 2024 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	1
Trigger caught on object	1
Failure to check beyond target	
Loading firearm	1
Unloading firearm	
Discharge firearm in/on a vehicle	
Improper crossing of obstacle	
Clubbing game with firearm	
Careless or reckless handling of firearm	
Place/remove loaded firearm from vehicle	1
Drop firearm	
Horseplay while hunting	
Shooting across roadway	
Run with loaded firearm	
Obstruction of barrel	
Careless handling of archery equipment	
Other	1 (improper muzzle control) 2 (fall from elevated position)

2024 Individual Hunting Incident Summary

Oct. 2 – Nance County – Deer Scouting: (Class C) A 64-year-old male was setting up an elevated hunting blind without wearing a full-body fall arrest system. The victim fell and 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.**

Oct. 30 – Cedar County – Deer Hunting: (Class C) A 22-year-old male was hunting from an elevated position in a hunting saddle. The victim was wearing a full-body fall-arrest system but was not secured correctly to the tether. The victim fell and sustained moderate to severe 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.**

Nov. 19 – Sherman County – Deer Hunting: (Class B) A 59-year-old male was getting out of his vehicle when the firearm discharged wounding his own foot. The victim sustained moderate to severe injuries. **Always point the muzzle of your firearm in a safe direction.**

Nov. 26 – Boyd County – Waterfowl Hunting: (Class A) A 73-year-old male was loading a shotgun with the muzzle of the shotgun resting on his foot. The shotgun fired wounding the victim's foot. The victim sustained moderate to severe injuries. **Always point the muzzle of your firearm in a safe direction.**

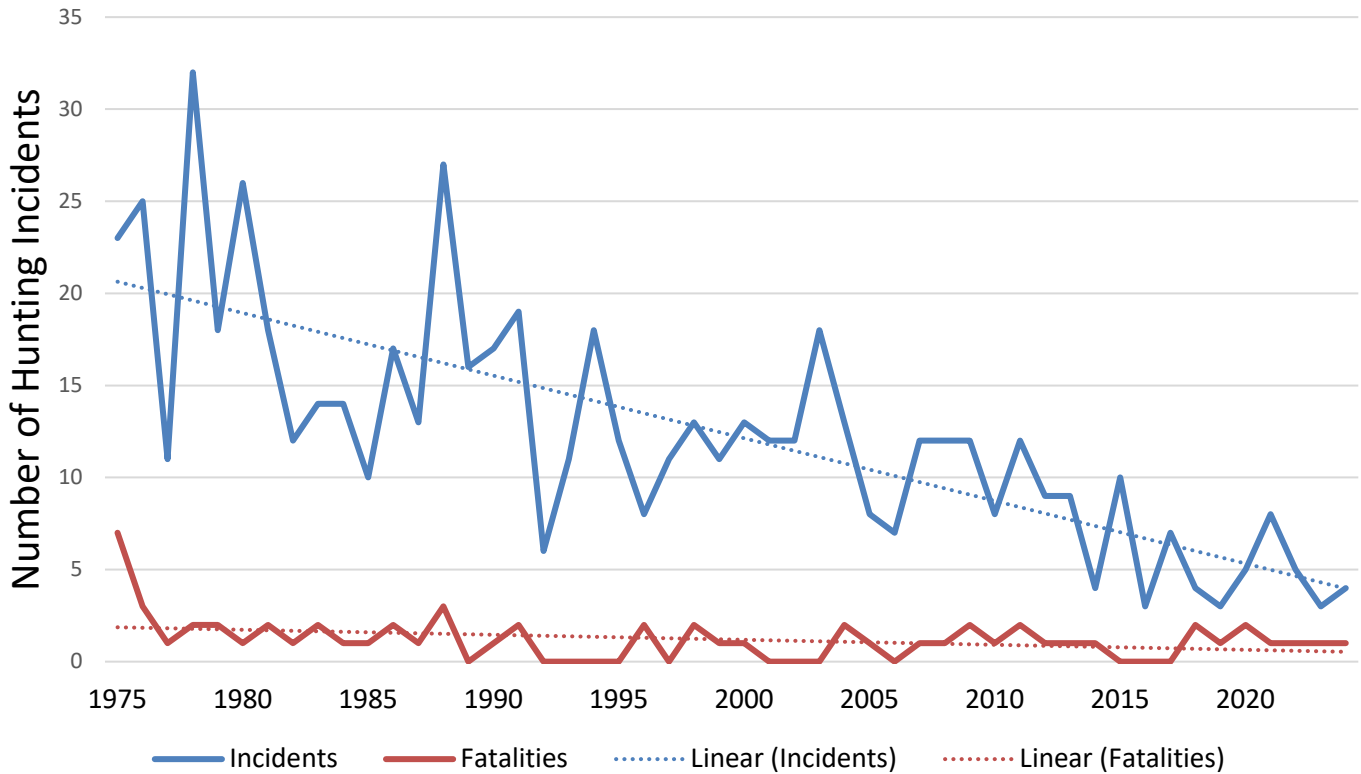
International Hunter Education Association USA (IHEA-USA) **Hunting Incident Report Guidelines:**

- **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 1975-2024

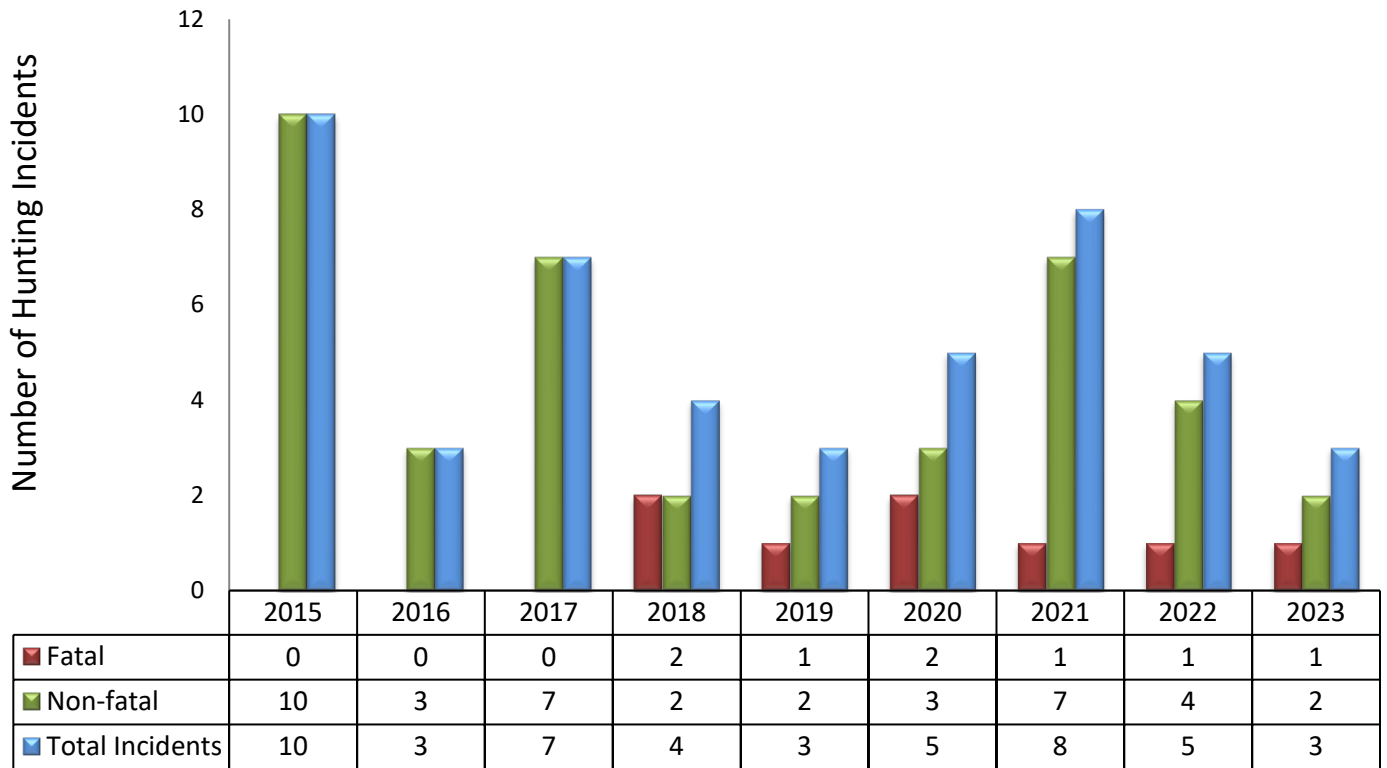


Nebraska Hunter Numbers vs. Hunting Incidents 1975-2024

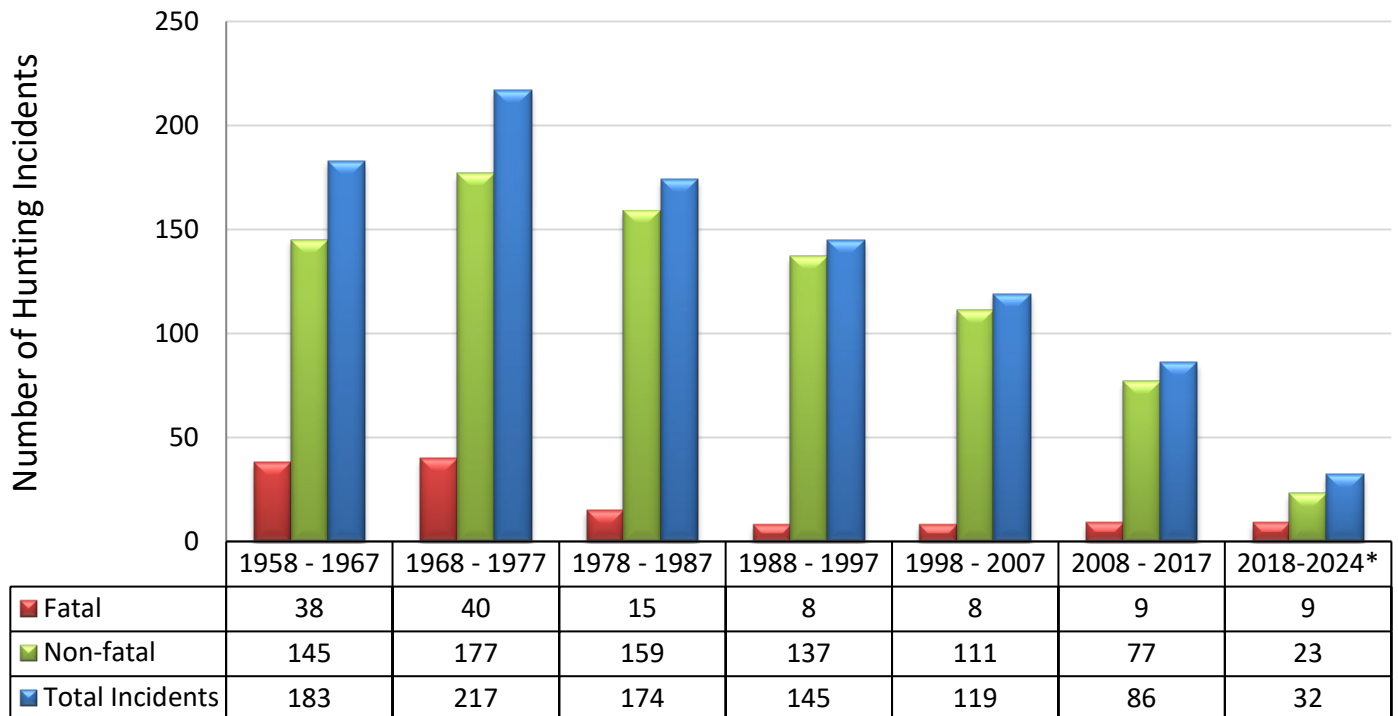
Timeframe	Average # of Certified Hunters Per Year	Average # of Hunting Incidents Per Year	Average # of Fatalities Per Year	Average # of Hunting Incidents Per 100,000 Hunters
1975-79	176,880	21.8	3.0	12.4
1980-84	178,864	16.8	1.4	9.5
1985-89	158,412	16.6	1.4	10.7
1990-94	169,683	14.2	0.6	8.3
1995-99	186,567	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
2020-24	193,976	5.0	1.2	2.6

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 2015-2024



Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Historical Summary 1958 – 2024

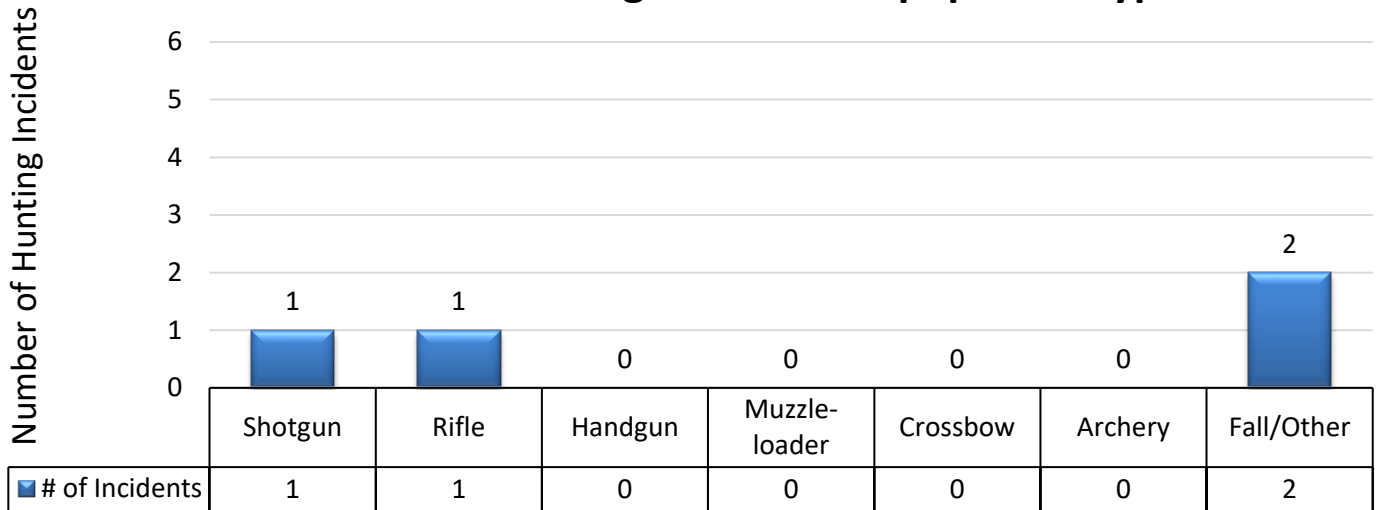


*only seven years of data for this column

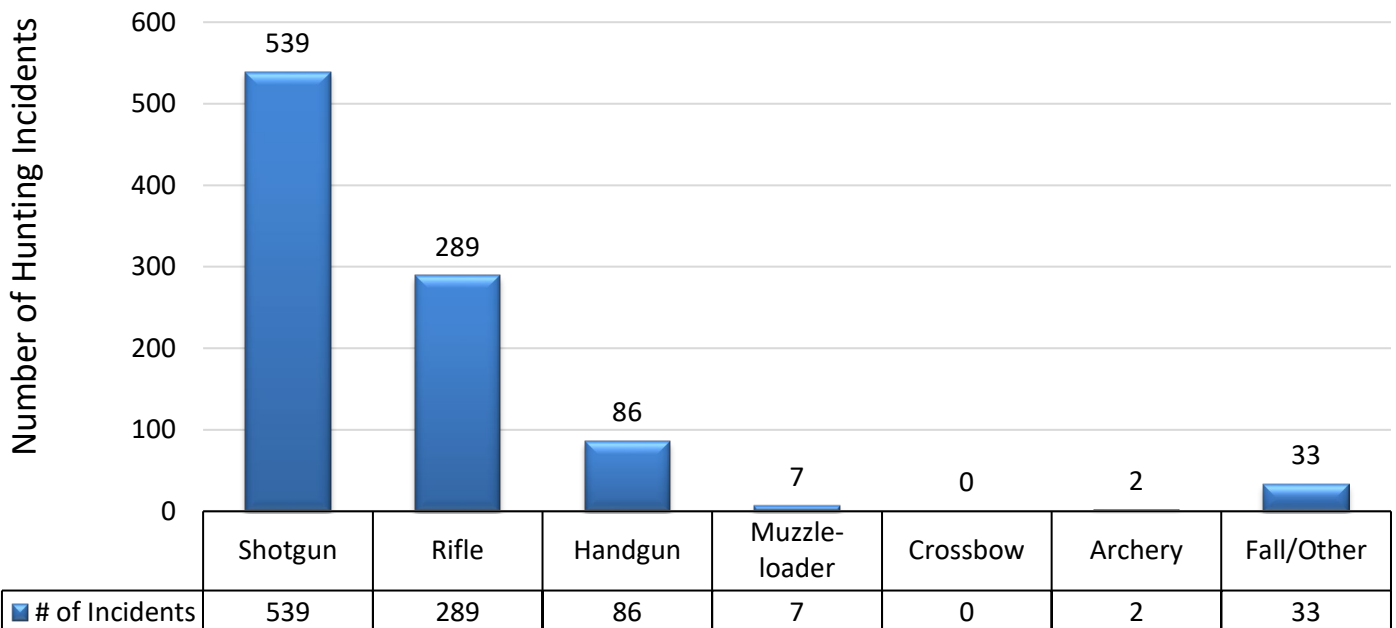
2024 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Equipment Type

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

2024 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Equipment Type



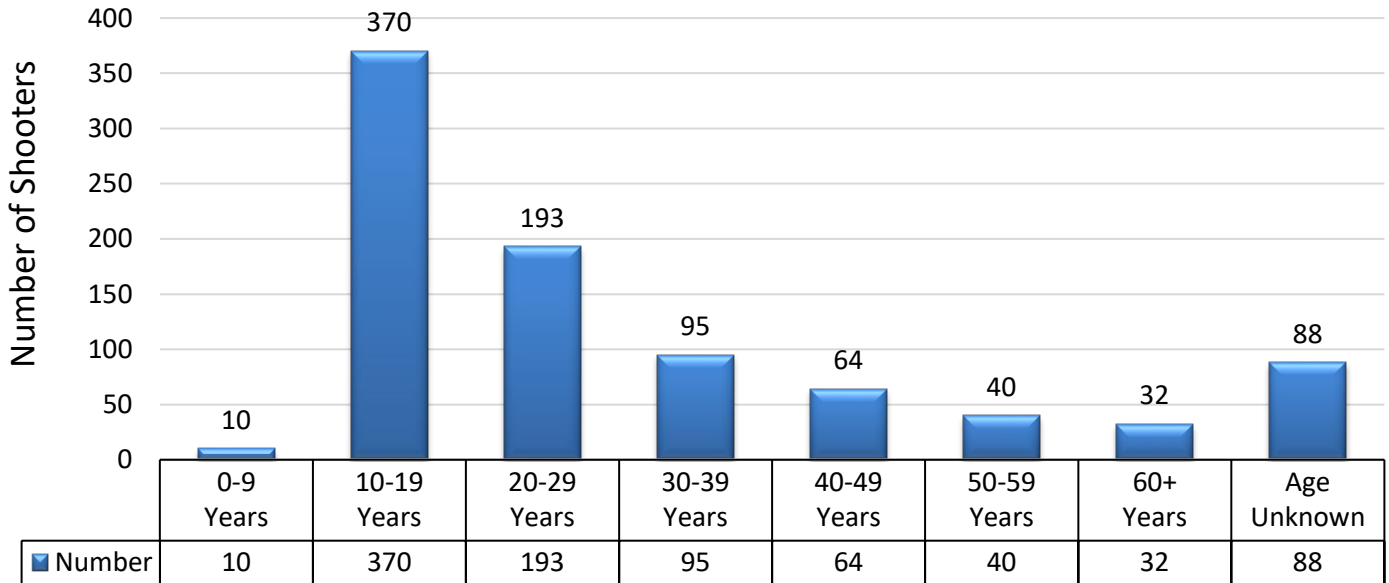
Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Equipment Type 1958 – 2024



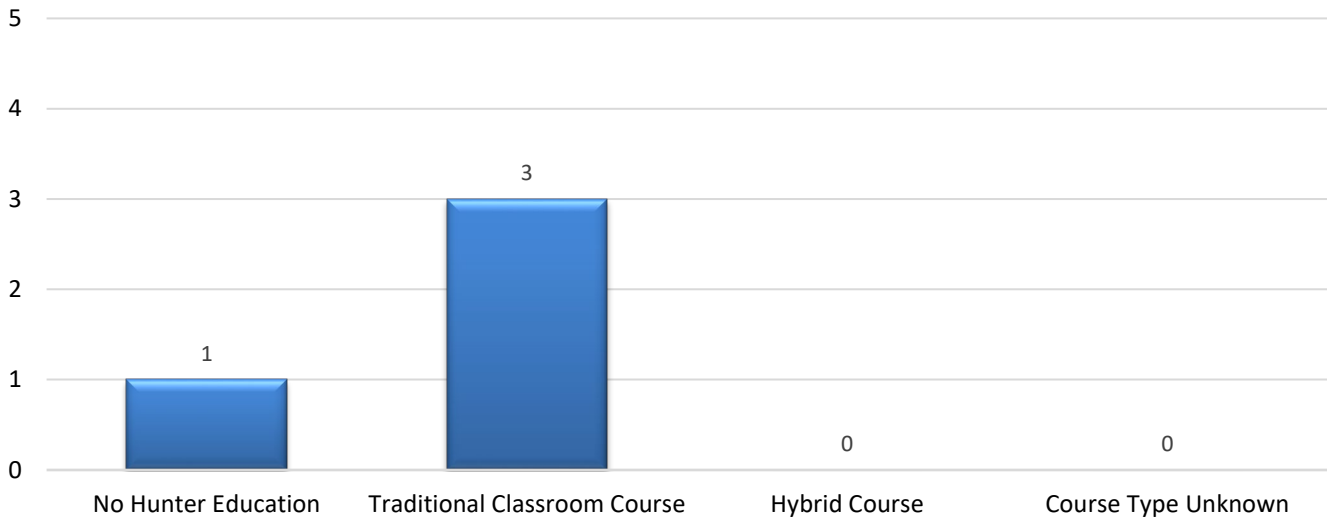
2024 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Age & Gender (M = male; F = female)

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

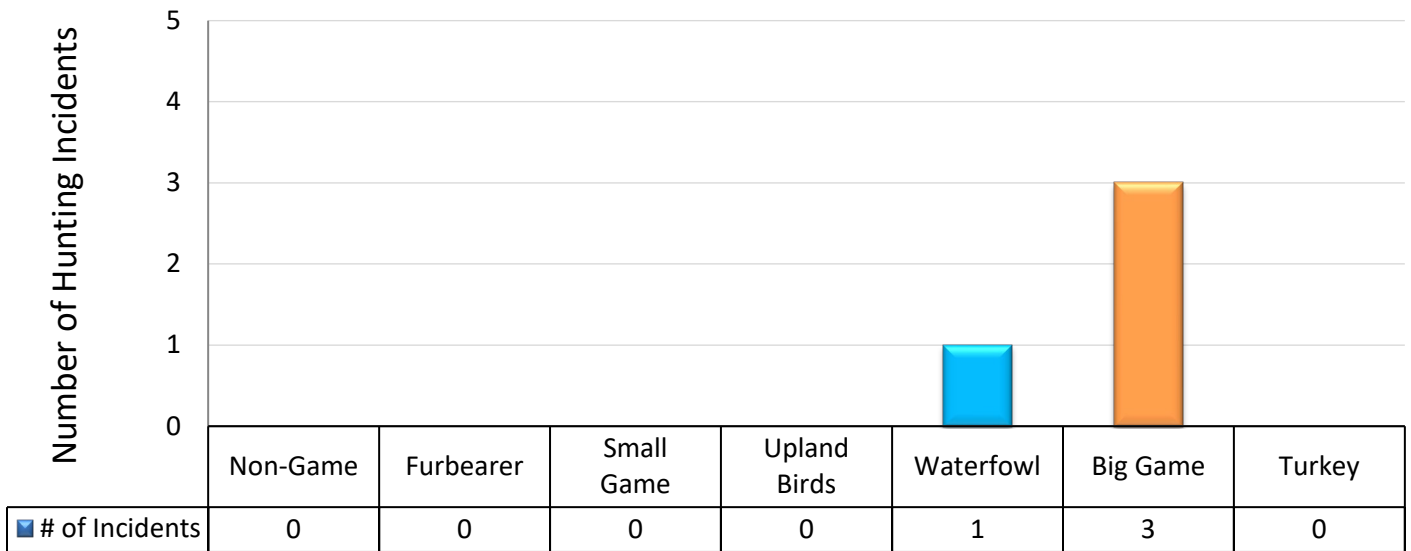
Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Shooter Age 1958 – 2024



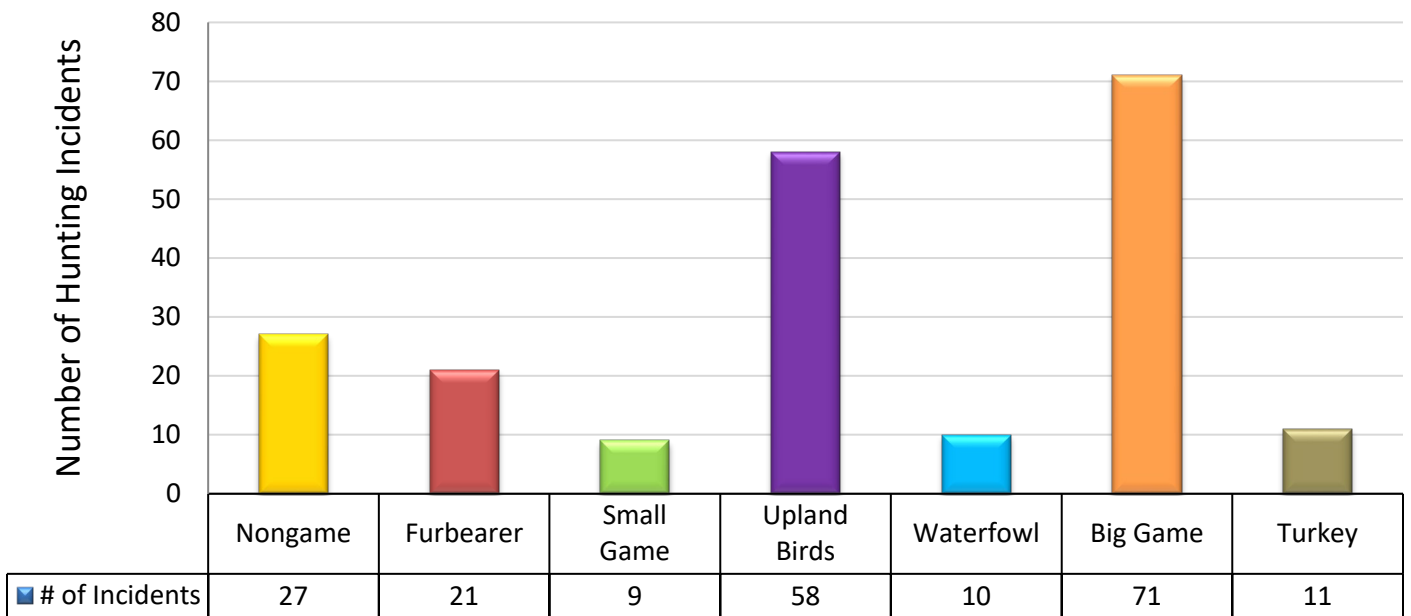
2024 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Hunter Education Course Type



2024 Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Type of Game Hunted



Nebraska Hunting Incidents: Type of Game Hunted 2000 – 2024



Nongame includes all mammals and birds not listed in the Small Game and Waterfowl Guide (coyote, prairie dog, porcupine, woodchuck, common pigeon, European starling, English sparrow, etc.)

Furbearer includes all animals listed as furbearers in the Small Game and Waterfowl 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

1958 – 2024

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

NEBRASKA HUNTING INCIDENTS	1958 - 2024	2024
Fatal injury	127	1
Non-fatal injury	829	3
TOTAL	956	4
Self-inflicted (includes fatal and non-fatal)	372	2
Caused by someone else (includes fatal and non-fatal)	577	0
Fall/Other (includes fatal and non-fatal)	7	2

PRIMARY CAUSES OF HUNTING INCIDENTS	1958 - 2024	2024
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	63	1
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	0
Careless or reckless handling of firearm	27	0
Improper crossing of fence	27	0
Loading firearm	25	1
Firearm fell from insecure rest	22	0
Horseplay with loaded firearm	22	0
Ricochet	17	0
Fall from tree stand	20	2
Using firearm as rest or brace	6	0
Other	7	0

	1958 – 2024		2024	
	Shooter	Victim	Shooter	Victim
0-9 years old	10	12	0	0
10-19 years old	370	362	0	0
20-29 years old	193	191	0	1
30-39 years old	95	135	0	0
40-49 years old	64	104	0	0
50-59 years old	41	65	1	1
Over 60 years old	33	44	1	2
Age unknown	88	21	0	0