

HUNTING SAFETY STATISTICS

2025



Department of Environmental Conservation

	2023	2024	2025	5yr avg
Total Incidents	12	11*	7*	9.6
Fatal	2	1	0	1
Non-fatal	10	10	7	12.0
Self-Inflicted	6	7	5	5
Two-Party	6	4	2	4.6
* At least one incident was not associated with legal hunting.				
Big Game				
Bear	0	1	0	
Deer	9	8	4	
Turkey				
Spring	0	0	1	
Fall	0	0	0	
Small Game				
Rabbit	2	0	1	
Squirrel	0	0	1	
Upland Bird	0	0	0	
Raccoon	0	0	0	
Fox/Coyote	1	0	0	
Waterfowl	0	1	0	
Other/Unk	0	1	0	
Implement				
Shotgun	3	4	3	
Rifle	6	5	1	
Handgun	0	1	2	
Muzzleloader	3	1	0	
Crossbow	0	0	1	
Bow	0	0	0	
Air Gun	0	0	0	

Incidents are preventable if safe and legal hunting practices are followed.

The number of hunting-related shooting incidents (HRSI) in 2025 was well below the 10-year average and did not include any fatalities.

One incident involved a hunter who was not legally hunting, as they did not have a valid NYS hunting license.

Of the seven HRSIs that occurred in 2025, five were self-inflicted and two were two-party firearm incidents. The average age of the shooters involved in an HRSI was 48 years old.

Many, if not all, of these incidents could have been prevented if the people involved had followed the primary rules of hunter safety:

- **Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.**
- **Control the muzzle, keep it pointed in a safe direction.**
- **Identify your target and what lies beyond.**
- **Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.**
- **Wear hunter orange.**

Despite these incidents, hunting is safe and getting safer. DEC and the volunteer Hunter Education Program instructors would like to remind all hunters to always be safe and prepared while afield.

Please note that the 2025 data are compiled from preliminary reports and are NOT final. Final law enforcement investigation reports may take several months to complete.

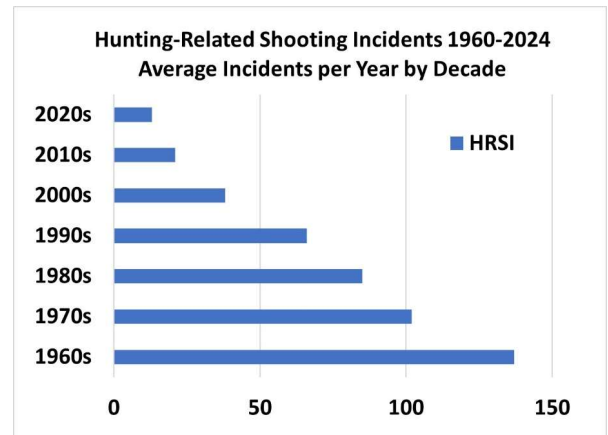
This report includes only HRSIs involving firearms, bows, or crossbows. It does not include all incidents and fatalities that occurred while hunting (such as heart attacks).

Hunting-Related Shooting Incidents 2015-2024			
Year	Big Game	Small Game/Other	Total
2016	8	5	13
2017	6	13	19
2018	8	5	13
2019	7	5	12
2020	10	12	22
2021	4	5	9
2022	5	4	9
2023	9	3	12
2024	9	2	11
2025	4	3	7
10-year Average	7	5.7	12.7

The Stories behind the Statistics:

Hunting-Related Shooting Incidents 2025

Preliminary descriptions of incidents as of 1/27/2026. Some incidents involve a shooter who was participating in an illegal act. **There were no fatal HRSI in 2025.**



SMALL GAME HUNTING

1/3 – Ulster County. While rabbit hunting, the hunter slipped and unintentionally discharged a round of birdshot into their left forearm. Hunter age 60. Hunting experience: 39+ years. Victim wearing orange: N/A. Violations noted: No.

5/13 – Orange County. While turkey hunting, the shooter fired one round, striking the victim approximately 40 yards away with multiple pellets. The victim sustained injuries to their right eye, left ring finger and left shoulder.

Hunter age 64. Hunting experience: Unknown. Victim wearing orange: Yes. Violations noted: Yes.
*The shooter was not legally hunting, as they had no hunting license, but injured a legal hunter during an open hunting season.

9/27 – Livingston County. During squirrel hunting, the hunter was shot with one round of pellets, causing superficial penetrative injuries on the front of their body from chin to abdomen.

Hunter age 28. Hunting experience: 5 years. Victim wearing orange: Yes. Violations noted: Yes.

BIG GAME HUNTING

10/30 – Erie County. Hunter sustained a self-inflicted crossbow injury to their left foot while afield hunting deer.

Hunter age 59. Hunting experience: 44 years. Victim wearing orange: Yes. Violations noted: No.

11/15 – Sullivan County. While exiting the woods after deer hunting, the hunter's holstered handgun discharged one round into their upper thigh.

Hunter age 46. Hunting experience: 30 years. Victim wearing orange: N/A. Violations noted: No.

11/19 – Chautauqua County. While pulling their loaded firearm from a vehicle, the hunter unintentionally discharged one round, which entered and exited their mid-torso.

Hunter age 14. Hunting experience: 1 year. Victim wearing orange: Yes. Violations noted: Yes.

11/21 – Delaware County. While tracking a deer, the hunter tried to remove their handgun from its holster and accidentally discharged a round into their left calf.

Hunter age 68. Hunting experience: 55 years. Victim wearing orange: Yes. Violations noted: No.

New York is thankful for the dedication of more than 1,500 Hunter Education Program volunteer instructors whose efforts continue to make hunting safer than ever.