



2018 5 yr. Avg

TOTAL INCIDENTS		13	18
Fatal		3	1.8
Non-fatal		10	16.2
Self-Inflicted		6	7.2
Two-Party		7	10.8
SPECIES HUNTED			
Big Game:	Bear	0	0.2
	Deer	8	8.6
Turkey:	Spring	1	1.2
	Fall	0	0.2
Upland/Furbearer:	Rabbits	0	0.4
	Squirrels	1	2
	Upland Birds	0	0.6
	Raccoon	0	0.4
	Fox & Coyote	0	0.6
Waterfowl:		2	2.4
Other:	Woodchuck	1	0.2
	Other	0	0.8
Unknown (general upland game)		0	0.4
TYPE OF IMPLEMENT			
Shotgun		5	8.2
Rifle		7	7.8
Handgun		1	0.6
Muzzleloader		0	0.4
Crossbow		0	0.2
Bow		0	0.4
Air Gun		0	0.4

There were three fatalities in 2018

2018 figures are compiled from preliminary reports and are NOT final. Final investigation reports may take months in some cases. Please note that in some of the incidents reported the shooter was participating in an illegal act.

Past 10 Years of Hunting-Related Shooting Incidents

Including both big game and small game hunting

Year	Big Game	Small Game/Other	Total
2009	14	12	26
2010	19	21	40
2011	14	12	26
2012	14	10	24
2013	10	9	19
2014	9	13	22
2015	13	10	23
2016	8	5	13
2017	6	13	19
2018	8	5	13

Hunters Experience Another Safe Year

During 2018, hunters in New York tied the 2016 record for fewest incidents while participating in hunting activities. There were 13 personal injury incidents during 2018. Of those 13, three were fatal injuries caused by unsafe firearm carrying, unsafe firearm handling and the failure to identify beyond the target.

During 2018, 6 (46%) incidents were self inflicted and 7 (54%) were two-party firearm incidents. Further examination of the 7 two-party firearm incidents reveals that 6 (86%) of those victims were not wearing hunter orange. This indicates that not wearing hunter orange increases your risk of being involved in a two-party firearm incident. The one individual that was wearing orange and was injured when the shooter discharged a round at a deer without identifying what was beyond the target.

The number of hunters is declining, but the hunting incident rate (incidents per 100,000 hunters) is falling much faster. Since the 1960s, the number of hunters has declined about 20%, while the incident rate has declined almost 80%. The current 5-year average is 3.1 incidents per 100,000 hunters, compared to 19 per 100,000 hunters in the 1960s.

Thanks largely to the dedicated efforts of thousands of volunteer Hunter Education Program over more than 60 years, New York hunting is now safer than ever. We cannot become complacent however, as every hunting-related shooting incident is preventable. The DEC highly recommends that hunters participating in any firearm season follow standard firearm safety rules and wear hunter orange while afield.

This report includes only shooting related incidents involving firearms, bows or crossbows. It does not include all incidents and fatalities related to hunting (such as heart attacks that occur while hunting). Incidents involving tree stands are included in a separate report.



The Stories behind the Statistics: Hunting-Related Shooting Incidents 2018

Preliminary descriptions of incidents as of 1/9/19. Many of the incidents reported here are still under investigation by NYS DEC Division of Law Enforcement. **Please note that in some of the incidents reported the shooter was participating in an illegal act.** More details may appear in final reports after investigations are completed in 2019.

The most common story: Remember that 99.9% of the people who hunt have safe and enjoyable experiences. Over half a million-people hunted in New York this year, and for every incident listed, there are thousands of other hunting stories of people who safely and responsibly took game. Just as important, even more passed up shots for the sake of safety, conservation, and respect for wildlife.

Many, if not all of these incidents could have been prevented, if the parties involved had followed the primary rules of Hunter Safety:

Assume every gun to be loaded
Control the muzzle in a safe direction
Keep finger off the trigger until firing
Be sure of your target and beyond
Wear hunter orange

Thank you to our Environmental Conservation Officers for their thorough investigations of each incident.

FORMAT FOR 2018 DESCRIPTIONS:
Date (mm/dd) - followed by County and a brief description based on initial report. Summaries marked with an * were incidents in which violations were noted. Age of violator is noted at the end of the summary.

SMALL GAME & NONGAME

3/23 - Cortland. Self-inflicted. Shooter slipped on ice while carrying firearm with safety on but finger in the trigger guard. As he slipped, his hand slid forward disengaging the safety while pulling the trigger. Firearm discharged causing injury to the toes of his foot. Age 14.

8/31 - Otsego. Fatal. Self-inflicted. The victim was on top of a hay wagon when his rifle fell between the cracks in the floor and discharged. Rounds struck him in the head killing him. Age 16.

WATERFOWL HUNTING

10/21 - Oneida. The victim was struck by two pellets in the neck and knee. Two shooters were involved, and it could not be determined whose pellets had struck the victim. Ages 24 and 37. *

12/23 - Otsego. Self-inflicted. Shooter was resting the muzzle of his shotgun on his boot when he accidentally discharged the gun. Age 72.

TURKEY HUNTING

5/4 - Schuyler. The victim was shot by her uncle who was attempting to shoot a turkey. Victim was hit with approximately 7 pellets in her elbow, back, scalp and buttocks. Age 57. *

BIG GAME HUNTING

10/21 - Suffolk. Shooter exercising an Air Strike Hazard Permit on airport grounds fired at a deer. The slug passed through the deer and struck a car traveling on a nearby road. The slug penetrated the front passenger window and struck the passenger in the face. Age 38. *

10/28 - Oneida. Victim was shot in the left buttock by one of her hunting partners when he shot at a deer that ran between them. Victim not wearing hunter orange. Age 50. *

10/30 - Essex. Fatal. Self-inflicted. Victim was shot once in the chest with his own rifle when he used his rifle to stand. Age 75.

11/20 - Greene. Shooter discharged one round that stuck his cousin in the leg while they were tracking an injured deer. Victim was not wearing hunter orange. Age 38. *

11/23 - Otsego. Self-inflicted. Shooter attempted to put down an injured deer with a pistol and shot himself in the index finger of his right hand. Age 52.

11/24 - Sullivan. Shooter discharged one round at what he thought was a deer. Victim was shot in both legs from approximately 40 yards away. Victim was wearing hunter orange. Age 54. *

12/8 - Schoharie. Self-inflicted. Victim was exiting his vehicle when he discharged one round into his right foot. Age 26. *

12/9 - Tioga. Fatal. Victim was shot in the back while sitting in a chair hunting. Shooter was 79 feet away. Victim had an orange hat with him, but it is not known if he was wearing it. Age 54. *

Join New York's Instructor Team!

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