



# 2008 HUNTING SAFETY STATISTICS<sup>^</sup> (Updated February 2, 2009)

Compared to the average of the previous five years. \* Note: Each "\*" represents one fatality in 2008

## 2008 SAFEST YEAR IN HISTORY

Reports of hunting related shooting incidents received to date by DEC indicate that 2008 was the safest year in the history of hunting in New York. There were 27 hunting related shooting incidents, including 4 which were fatal. This year's total of 27 compares to an average of 66 incidents per year from the 1990s, and 137 incidents per year during the 1960s.

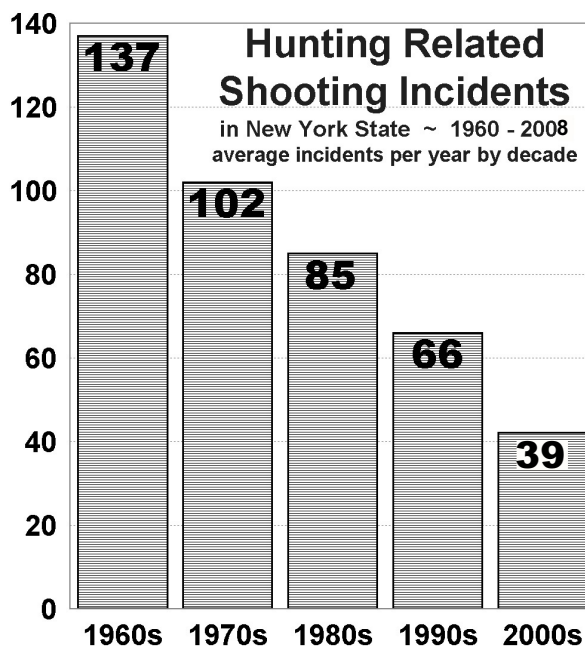
The number of 2-party shooting incidents in 2008 was just 13, compared to the five year average of 22. However, in 2008 the number of self-inflicted incidents was above average at 14, compared to 8 in 2007.

The 2008 deer season was also the safest ever, with only 12 hunting related shooting incidents. Big game hunting incidents continue to be very low compared to the previous decade, despite the increase in rifle zones and the passage of the youth mentoring law which now allows 14 & 15 year olds to hunt big game.

This year's total of 27 brings the average for the 2000s down to 39 incidents per year which indicates that the 2000 decade will be the safest ever, continuing a 40-year trend of increasing safety.

The number of hunters is declining, but the hunting incident RATE (incidents per 100,000 hunters) is falling MUCH faster than the number of hunters. During the 1960s, the incident rate was 19 incidents per 100,000 hunters. Since 2000, the incident rate is one-third of that, averaging 6.5 per 100,000.

Thanks largely to the efforts of over 3,000 dedicated volunteer Sportsman Education instructors for over 50 years, New York has an extremely safety-conscious generation of hunters.



Figures are 10-year averages, except for "2000s" which is a 9-year average.

	2008	5-yr. Avg
<b>TOTAL INCIDENTS</b>	27	32.4
Fatal	4	3.6
Non-fatal	23	28.8
Self-Inflicted	* 14	10.4
Two-Party	*** 13	21.4

<b>SPECIES HUNTED</b>		2008	5-yr. Avg
Big Game:	Bear	0	0.0
	Deer	*** 12	15.8
Turkey:	Spring	3	3.4
	Fall	0	1.4
Upland/Furbearer:	Rabbits	4	2.4
	Squirrels	1	1.6
	Upland Birds	* 1	1.8
	Raccoon	0	0.2
	Fox and Coyote	3	1.2
Waterfowl	2	2.2	
Other:	Woodchuck	0	0.8
	Other (nongame)	0	0.8
Unknown (general upland game)	1	0.8	

<b>TYPE OF IMPLEMENT</b>		2008	5-yr. Avg
Shotgun		* 13	19.4
Rifle		*** 9	10.0
Handgun		3	1.2
Muzzleloader		2	1.8
Bow & Arrow		0	0.0
Pellet Gun		0	0.0

<sup>^</sup> 2008 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 and/or unlawful act.

### Hunting Related Shooting Incidents, 1997 - 2008

including both big game and small game hunting as of 2/2/09

year	big game	other	= total
1997	29	26	55
1998	22	42	64
1999	26	28	54
2000	29	14	43
2001	30	27	57
2002	37	24	61
2003	20	12	32
2004	18	16	34
2005	15	14	29
2006	20	15	35
2007	14	23	37
2008	13	16	27

# The Stories Behind the Statistics: Hunting Related Shooting Incidents 2008

**DRAFT** Descriptions of incidents as of 2/2/09. Many of the incidents being 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 and/or unlawful act.** More details will appear in final reports after hearings are completed late in 2009.

**The most common story.** Remember that 99.994% 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 only the shooter and/or victim had followed the primary rules of Hunter Safety.

**Assume every gun is loaded**  
**Control the muzzle**  
**Finger off the trigger until ready to fire**  
**Be sure of the target and beyond**  
**Wear hunter orange**

FORMAT FOR 2008 DESCRIPTIONS:  
Date (mm/dd) - followed by County, and a brief description based on initial report. Thanks to our Environmental Conservation Officers for professional investigations of each incident.

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## SPRING TURKEY HUNTING

05/01 - Columbia. Shooter fired one shot at turkey and struck victim with birdshot. At time of incident, victim had a turkey strapped to his backpack and had backpack on his back. Victim hit with two pellets to left shoulder, 3 to groin.

05/24 - Tompkins. While going through thick brush, victim stumbled and his shotgun discharged while muzzle was covering his left hand and passed through below pinkie finger.

05/31 - Fulton. Hunting in same area, same turkey, Victim was hit with pellets to the head, abdomen, right arm and right back leg and butt.

## SMALL GAME & NONGAME

01/03 - Niagara. Victim in boat stern passed loaded gun to partner/firearm discharged while being held by shooter. Victim inches away, was struck in the back just above belt line.

01/13 - Oneida. Several members in hunting party shot at small game and victim hit in the head by three shot pellets.

02/05 - Jefferson. Victim was struck by one pellet fired from shooter.

02/08 - Cattaraugus. Victim missed intended shot and was putting firearm in his pocket when it discharged. Projectile went through fatty tissue of right leg.

09/17 - Chautauqua. Victim stated a branch got caught in his holster causing his gun to discharge a bullet into his left thigh area, no exit wound, surgery to be scheduled.

10/04 - Jefferson. Two hunting parties in same area; Victim struck in the face by pellet from other party. Pellet penetrated near his eye.

10/31 - Genesee. Two in hunting party; Witness standing 10 yards behind Victim had observed him standing still in mowed lane, w/butt of shotgun on the ground. Gun shot was heard and Witness looked up and observed Victim stagger and fall to the ground. Victim struck under the left arm from own shotgun-**Fatal**.

11/04 - Jefferson. Victim discharged one round into his foot while hunting small game.

11/23 - Franklin. Victim walking along trail that was blocked by a tree across it; crawled underneath. Rifle discharged striking her in the right side of her abdomen. No vital organ hit.

12/18 - Yates. Pair split up, victim moved from original location, shooter discharged striking victim in face, torso, arms and leg.

12/21 - Dutchess. Out hunting when tripped and fell with finger on trigger guard. Projectile went thru right shin leg.

12/30 - Rensselaer. While rabbit hunting with dogs, shooter shot a grouse and hit fellow hunter in the face with two pellets.

## DEER HUNTING

10/16 - Clinton. Victim suffered a gunshot wound to his left foot.

10/22 - Warren. Victim suffered wound to left foot/big toe area.

11/10 - Jefferson. Victim took rifle off his shoulder at end of hunt when it discharged into his toe.

11/15 - Oneida. Shooter shot deer, bullet hit victim in lower right leg. Bullet did not penetrate Victim's boot, just a bruise and an abrasion.

11/15 - Sullivan. Hunting in tree stand, end of hunt went to holster gun and strong gust of wind pushed him back against tree. Gun discharged, bullet entered his left top thigh and exited lower back of same thigh.

11/15 - Essex. Four in hunting party; Victim was shot during deer drive; shooter claimed he saw a deer, lost sight then saw movement, shot in direction of movement striking Victim in right eye, dying instantly-**Fatal**.

11/16 - Cattaraugus. Four in hunting party, deer driving via ATV, shooter shot struck victim's rifle stock and the round entered lower right abdomen, no exit wound-**Fatal**.

11/16 - Sullivan. Shooter shooting from tree stand and on ground, one round penetrated trailer home and stuck Victim in neck and shoulder, succumbed to injuries-**Fatal**.

11/23 - Wayne. Preparing to climb into his tree stand, tied rope thru trigger of shotgun and while pulling gun up into tree stand, discharged round striking him in left foot.

11/29 - Allegany. Victim leaned against tree and shot himself in right foot.

11/29 - Wyoming. While climbing down from tree stand, shot himself in right foot big toe.

12/23 - Otsego. Leaning against tree, firearm exploded in half. Victim suffered 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree burns on left forearm.

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