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Colorado Division of Wildlife



Hunting

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Hunter Education 2001 Hunting Incident Report

"Good examples of bad judgment."

Colorado Division of Wildlife, Hunter Education Program
Patt Dorsey, Administrator

January 24, 2002

Although Colorado had only nine hunting incidents during our 2001 hunting seasons, the Division regrets reporting a single hunting incident. With over 500,000 hunting licenses sold, hunting remains one of the safest outdoor activities.

Hunters are fortunate that most, if not all of the 2001 hunting incidents were preventable. The Colorado Division of Wildlife strongly advocates that all hunters treat every firearm as if it is loaded and observe these three basic firearm safety rules:

- o Always control the muzzle of your firearm.
- o Be sure of your target and what is in front of and beyond it.
- o Keep your finger off the trigger until you are sure of your target and are ready to shoot.

This incident report is a tool for the Division's volunteer hunter educators and staff to spot trends in hunter behavior and adjust the hunter education curriculum to prevent future incidents. Incident details are included in this report specifically so that we can learn from the lapses in concentration and judgment errors of others. Also included are a few non-hunting accidents that are relevant for our purposes of preventing firearm-related incidents in the home and in the field.

What is a hunting incident? We define a hunting incident as a firearm-related incident, causing injury or death to a person or persons that occurs while hunting. We use "incident" as opposed to "accident" because not all cases are determined "accidental" in nature. Accidents are "unforeseen" events. Some hunting incidents are determined

otherwise by law enforcement and the court system.

Hunting incidents do not include the variety of other incidents occurring each year while hunting such as cuts, falls, motor vehicle and horse injuries, etc. Likewise, we do not report non-hunting firearm-related injuries or livestock injuries as hunting incidents.

Hunting is safe and getting safer in Colorado. Colorado has conducted hunter education training since the 1950's. It was mandated by law on January 1, 1970 (33-6-107 (8), Colorado Revised Statutes 1973). The law reads:

"It is unlawful for any person born on or after January 1, 1949, to purchase any hunting or trapping license unless he produces a hunter education certificate issued by the division, attesting to his successful completion of a division certified hunter education course taught by a division certified instructor which totals not less than ten hours of instruction. Any person required to obtain such a certificate shall have the certificate on his person while hunting or trapping. For the purposes of this subsection (8), the division shall recognize, in addition to Colorado hunter education certificates issued on or after January 1, 1985, those Colorado hunter education certificates issued prior to January 1, 1985, and any valid temporary hunter education certificate issued by the division, and the division may recognize the hunter education programs of other states or countries as being sufficient for the purposes of purchasing a hunting or trapping license in Colorado."

The mission of the Division is to protect, preserve, enhance and manage wildlife and the environment for the use, benefit and enjoyment of the people of this state and its visitors. The Hunter Education Program assists the Division in fulfilling its mission by educating hunters to be safe, responsible, knowledgeable, and involved.

Before the legislative mandate, firearm-related hunting incident rates were extremely high. A primary goal of hunter education is to reduce incident rates, protecting human lives and preventing injuries. In the 1990's, Colorado averaged 1.3 fatal and 11.1 nonfatal hunting incidents per year. In the 1960's, we averaged 10.1 fatal and 24.2 nonfatal hunting incidents per year.

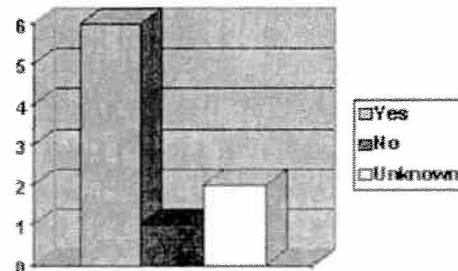
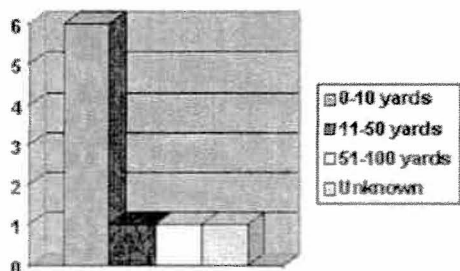
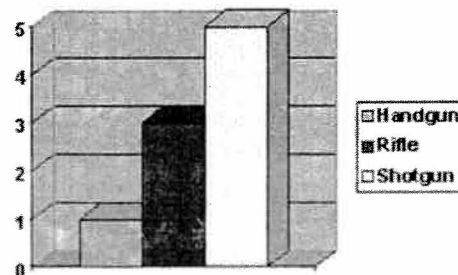
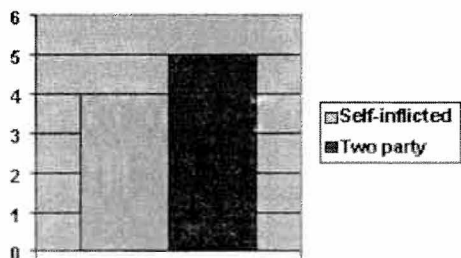
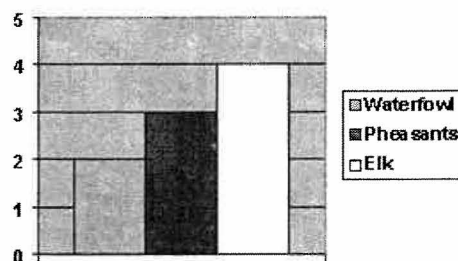
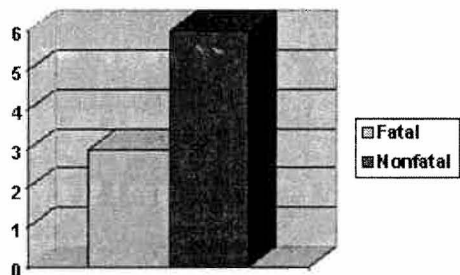
INCIDENT SUMMARY

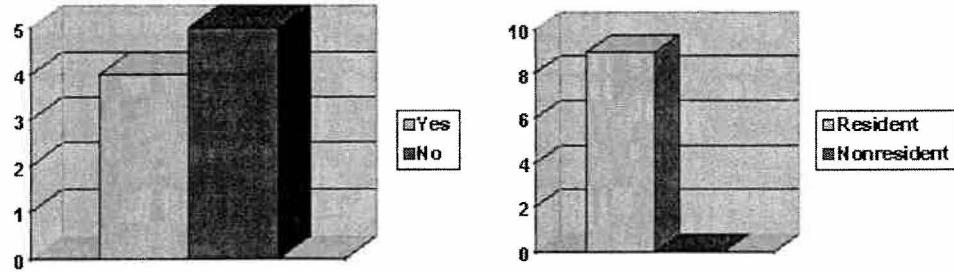
Big Game:	2 Fatal	2 Nonfatal

Small Game:	1 Fatal	4 Nonfatal
TOTAL:	3 Fatal	6 Nonfatal

CAUSES

Swinging on game	1 Fatal	3 Nonfatal	Total: 4
Stumbled and fell	1 Fatal	0 Nonfatal	Total: 1
Careless handing of firearm	1 Fatal	1 Nonfatal	Total: 2
Trigger caught on object	0 Fatal	1 Nonfatal	Total: 1
Unknown	0 Fatal	1 Nonfatal	Total: 1
TOTAL:	3 Fatal	6 Nonfatal	Total: 9





Hunting incidents by county		Age of Shooters	
Chaffee	1	1 to 9 years	0
Eagle	1	10 to 19 years	1
Grand	1	20 to 29 years	2
Logan	2	30 to 39 years	1
Saguache	2	40 to 49 years	0
Yuma	2	50 to 59 years	1
		60 + years	1
		Unknown	2

INDIVIDUAL INCIDENT DETAILS

INJURY TYPE: Nonfatal		SELF-INFLICTED: Yes	
DATE: 3/12/01		TIME: 8:00 AM	
COUNTY: Logan		LANDOWNERSHIP: Private	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Geese		DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: 0-10 yards	
SHOOTER SEX: M		AGE: 50	CITY: WESTMINSTER, CO
Was a game law violated? No		Which law?	
WEAPON: Shotgun		MAKE: Browning	CALIBER/GAUGE: 10
Was the victim hunter ed certified? Yes		In which state? CO	
SAFETY POSITION: Unknown		VICTIM: Self	
TOPOGRAPHY: Flat		VISIBILITY: Good	COVER TYPE: Open
LIGHTING: Overcast		WEATHER: Calm	
FACTORS: Careless handling of firearm			
SUMMARY: Shooter/victim was hunting snow geese from a blind covered with burlap. A flock of geese flew over and he attempted to shoot at them. The barrel caught in the burlap. He attempted to free it with his left hand. He accidentally pulled the trigger with his right hand. The gun discharged and the shot struck his middle and index fingers.			

INJURY TYPE: Fatal		SELF-INFLICTED: No	
DATE: 10/17/01		TIME: 8:50 AM	
COUNTY: Saguache		LANDOWNERSHIP: Public	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Elk		DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: 0-10 yards	
SHOOTER SEX: M	AGE: 22	CITY: Colorado Springs, CO	
Was a game law violated? Yes		Which law? 33-6-107 (7)	
WEAPON: Rifle		MAKE: Remington 722	CALIBER/GAUGE: 300 S
Was the victim hunter ed certified? Yes		In which state? CO	
SAFETY POSITION: Off			
VICTIM SEX: M	AGE: 46	CITY: Colorado Springs, CO	
TOPOGRAPHY: Hilly	VISIBILITY: Good	COVER TYPE: Medium	
LIGHTING: Sunny	WEATHER: Clear		
FACTORS: Horses			
SUMMARY: Hunters were kneeling side by side ready to fire at an elk. Victim shot just before shooter. Victim's shot spooked the horses. Shooter was holding the lead rope and his rifle was pulled toward victim. Gun fired in the struggle. Bullet completely penetrated the victim's body, exiting the left side, just below the ribs.			
INJURY TYPE: Fatal		SELF-INFLICTED: No	
DATE: 10/29/01		TIME: 6:30 AM	
COUNTY: Grand		LANDOWNERSHIP: Public	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Ducks		DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: 0-10 yards	
SHOOTER SEX: M	AGE: 29	CITY: Alma, CO	
Was a game law violated? No		Which law?	
WEAPON: Shotgun		MAKE: Browning Citori	CALIBER/GAUGE: 12
Was the victim hunter ed certified? Yes		In which state? CT	
SAFETY POSITION: Off			
VICTIM SEX: M	AGE: 34	CITY: Frisco, CO	
TOPOGRAPHY: Flat	VISIBILITY: Good	COVER TYPE: Light	
LIGHTING: Dawn	WEATHER: Clear		
FACTORS: Victim covered by shooter who was swinging on game.			
SUMMARY: Shooter & victim were hunting waterfowl from a blind along the Colorado River. Shooter was on the left. Victim was on the right. Victim fired first, then shooter fired when he thought ducks were in his zone of fire. Shooter asked victim if he got anything. That is when he noticed the victim slump to the ground. Shooter saw a large gunshot wound on the victim's head and called 911.			

INJURY TYPE: Nonfatal	SELF-INFLICTED: Yes	
DATE: 11/05/01	TIME: 1:45 PM	
COUNTY: Saguache	LANDOWNERSHIP: Public	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Elk	DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: 0-10 yards	
SHOOTER SEX: M	AGE: 39	CITY: Pueblo, CO
Was a game law violated? No		Which law?
WEAPON: Handgun MAKE: Arminius Revolver		
CALIBER/GAUGE: 44 mag		
Was the victim hunter ed certified? Yes		In which state? CO
SAFETY POSITION: Off VICTIM: Self		
TOPOGRAPHY: Hilly	VISIBILITY: Good	COVER TYPE: Open
LIGHTING: Sunny	WEATHER: Clear	
FACTORS: Trigger caught on object, slack in trigger		
SUMMARY: Victim was crossing thick willows in Perry Creek. He slipped and fell. When he did so, the revolver he had holstered discharged. Bullet entered back side of right calf muscle and exited opposite the entry wound.		
INJURY TYPE: Nonfatal	SELF-INFLICTED: Yes	
DATE: 11/07/01	TIME: 11:00 AM	
COUNTY: Eagle	LANDOWNERSHIP: Public	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Elk	DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: 0-10 yards	
SHOOTER SEX: M	AGE: 12	CITY: Greeley, CO
Was a game law violated? No		Which law?
WEAPON: Rifle		
Was the victim hunter ed certified? Yes		In which state? CO
SAFETY POSITION: Off VICTIM: Self		
TOPOGRAPHY: Unknown	VISIBILITY: Unknown	COVER TYPE: Unknown
LIGHTING: Unknown	WEATHER: Unknown	
SUMMARY: Victim/shooter had rifle slung on back with right hand resting on the muzzle. Due to an "unknown cause" the gun went off, nearly severing finger.		
INJURY TYPE: Nonfatal	SELF-INFLICTED: No	
DATE: 11/10/01	TIME: 10:30AM	

COUNTY: Yuma		LANDOWNERSHIP: Private	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Pheasant		DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: 51-100 yards	
SHOOTER DETAILS: Unknown			
Was a game law violated? Yes		Which law? 33-6-122	
WEAPON: Shotgun			
VICTIM SEX: M	AGE: 13	CITY: Thornton, CO	
TOPOGRAPHY: Flat		VISIBILITY: Fair	COVER TYPE: Medium
LIGHTING: Sunny		WEATHER: Clear	
FACTORS: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game.			
<p>SUMMARY: Five hunters hunted field. Victim and one other hunter were blocking. A rooster flushed and flew toward blockers - 2 people shot. Victim later complained about some pain in his legs. 6 pellets hit him in both thighs, abdomen & 1 ankle. All were superficial wounds. (Shooters claimed they were in a shallow depression when bird flushed and that they could not see the blockers.)</p>			
INJURY TYPE: Nonfatal		SELF-INFLICTED: No	
DATE: 11/11/01		TIME: 3:00 PM	
COUNTY: Yuma		LANDOWNERSHIP: Private	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Pheasant		DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: 11-50 yards	
SHOOTER DETAILS: Case pending			
Was a game law violated? Yes		Which law? 33-6-122	
WEAPON: Shotgun MAKE: S&W 1200 CALIBER/GAUGE: 12			
VICTIM SEX: M	AGE: 51	CITY: Loveland, CO	
SAFETY POSITION: Off			
TOPOGRAPHY: Flat		VISIBILITY: Good	COVER TYPE: Medium
LIGHTING: Sunny		WEATHER: Clear	
FACTORS: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game.			
<p>SUMMARY: Victim was one of three people blocking a corner pivot. Quail flew between walkers and blockers. Victim saw blast coming through grass from the direction of one of the walkers. The impact knocked victim backward. He could see his arm was bleeding and feel that a few pellets had entered his chest. Victim was transported to Holyoke Hospital in the ambulance and taken to Denver via "Flight for Life." He had 53 pellets removed from his body: head, neck, right arm, chest and left leg.</p>			
INJURY TYPE: Nonfatal		SELF-INFLICTED: No	
DATE: 11/11/01		TIME: 2:30 PM	

COUNTY: Logan		LANDOWNERSHIP: Private	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Pheasant		DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: Unknown	
SHOOTER DETAILS: Unknown			
Was a game law violated? Yes		Which law? 33-6-122	
VICTIM SEX: M		AGE: 52	CITY: Sterling, CO
FACTORS: Victim covered by shooter swinging on game.			
SUMMARY: Victim was hunting pheasants and kneeling in tall grass. Friend flushed a pheasant and fired. Victim was hit in chin with 1 pellet and in his tongue with one pellet. He was taken to Sterling Hospital to have the pellet in his tongue removed.			
INJURY TYPE: Fatal		SELF-INFLICTED: Yes	
DATE: 11/29/01		TIME: 7:30 AM	
COUNTY: Chaffee		LANDOWNERSHIP: Private	
ANIMAL HUNTED: Elk		DISTANCE FROM MUZZLE: 0-10 yards	
SHOOTER SEX: M		AGE: 75	CITY: Salida, CO
HUNTER ED CERTIFIED: No			
Was a game law violated? No		Which law?	
WEAPON: Rifle		MAKE: Remington 760	CALIBER/GAUGE: .270
SAFETY POSITION: Off VICTIM: Self			
TOPOGRAPHY: Hilly		VISIBILITY: Good	COVER TYPE: Medium
LIGHTING: Overcast		WEATHER: Windy	
FACTORS: Running/walking with a loaded firearm			
SUMMARY: Victim had shot/wounded a cow elk and was crossing irrigation ditch for second shot. It appears he may have been using his rifle as a cane, muzzle up. He slipped and fell. Bullet passed through neck from front to back, slightly upward, just to the right of throat and spine.			

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This page last updated 03/03/04