

2004 HUNTING INCIDENT REPORT

**“A moment of carelessness can mean a lifetime of
consequences...”**



Colorado Hunter Education Program
Mark Cousins, Coordinator

Colorado Division of Wildlife
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Bruce McCloskey, Director



2004 Colorado Hunting Incident Report

Colorado Division of Wildlife

Hunter Education Program

Mark A. Cousins, Hunter Education Coordinator

Hunting seasons and hunting continued to be among the safest outdoor activities in Colorado during 2004. In decades past, hunting related incidents numbered in the twenties and thirties. In 1970, the Colorado Legislature passed a statute requiring a minimum of 500 square inches of daylight fluorescent orange be worn above the waist, including a head covering visible from all directions while hunting big game during the rifle hunting seasons. The same year, 1970, another statute was passed that required all persons born on or after January 1, 1949 to have taken and passed a hunter safety class before they purchased any hunting license.

In the 1960's, prior to these statutes, Colorado experienced an average of 10.1 fatal hunting incidents and 24.2 non-fatal hunting incidents annually and it was obvious that some changes were necessary. After the new laws were in place, the number of both fatal and non-fatal decreased considerably. By the 1990's, the average number of fatal hunting incidents was down to 1.3 and the number of non-fatal incidents was 11.1. For the past decade, the numbers of hunting incidents has remained very low. 2004 continued this trend with a total of 15 hunting incidents - 2 fatal and 13 non-fatal, 6 big-game and 9 small-game.

While it is regrettable that we have to report a single hunting incident, there were over 560,000 hunting licenses sold in Colorado in 2004 which resulted in millions of hunter recreation days - and only 15 hunting incidents reported! Most of the hunting incidents are clearly examples of a split second of carelessness. As we teach in Hunter Education, **"a moment of carelessness can mean a lifetime of consequences."** A review of this report will support that statement.

The intent of this report is to promote hunting safety, hunter safety and hunter education by increasing the awareness of how quickly many of us could be involved in a hunting incident if we fail to apply what is taught in Hunter Education. It is hoped that we may all learn from the mistakes of others and avoid ever being involved in a hunting incident.

"Safe Hunting Is No Accident"

COLORADO
2004 HUNTING ACCIDENT SUMMARY

ESTIMATE NUMBER OF HUNTING LICENSES SOLD IN 2004: **Over 560,500**

Fatal Accidents

Big Game	2
Small Game	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	2

Non-Fatal Accidents

Big Game	4
Small Game	<u>9</u>
TOTAL	13

Hunter's Age (shooter is victim)

Unknown	0
14 or under	0
15 to 21	1
22 to 30	0
31 to 40	0
41 and up	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	1

Victim's Age (if not shooter)

Unknown	1
14 or under	0
15 to 21	2
22 to 30	2
31 to 40	4
41 and up	<u>5</u>
TOTAL	14

CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS

Dropped Firearm	0
Hunter Stumbled and Fell	0
Discharge Firearm In/On Vehicle/Horse	4
Victim Covered by Shooter/Swinging on Game	3
Victim Moved in Line of Fire	0

Loading/Unloading Firearm	5
Richochet	0
Careless Handling	1
Victim Mistaken for Game	4
Self-Inflicted	1

2004 BIG GAME FATAL HUNTING ACCIDENTS

<u>Shooter's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>Hunting Method</u>	<u>Victim's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>
15	Yes	Rifle	42	Unknown	La Plata	10/16/2004

Remarks

Shooter sitting next to victim (uncle), turned and discharged rifle when muzzle made contact. .270 round passed through chest of victim and did not exit. CARELESS HANDLING OF FIREARM.

23	Yes - MO	Rifle	55	Yes - CO	Gunnison	10/23/2004
----	----------	-------	----	----------	----------	------------

Remarks

Shooter carrying rifle slung across back, un-slung, then re-slung rifle. He again un-slung the rifle, swinging the butt forward with the muzzle pointing behind him when he discharged the rifle. Bullet struck victim (shooter's father) in the left thigh, traveled through the left thigh and into the right thigh, fracturing the right femur. Victim, on blood thinners for heart condition suffered severe hemorrhaging and died on the scene. CARELESS HANDLING OF A FIREARM.

2004 BIG GAME NON-FATAL HUNTING ACCIDENTS

<u>Shooter's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>Hunting Method</u>	<u>Victim's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>
58	No	Bow & Arrow	27	Yes - CO	Rio Grande	9/14/2004

Remarks

Shooter, hearing a cow elk and seeing movement, shot hunting companion (nephew) with an arrow at a distance of 31 yards. Victim was hit on outside of leg above knee, with arrow penetrating leg. Victim is expected to recover. HUNTING IN A CARELESS MANNER, FAILURE TO IDENTIFY TARGET, MISTAKEN FOR GAME.

25	Yes - CO	Rifle	23	Yes - CO	Rio Blanco	11/5/2004
----	----------	-------	----	----------	------------	-----------

Remarks

Shooter and victim were trailing a wounded elk and split up. Victim, not wearing orange, was trailing elk through cover. Shooter on adjacent hill saw elk, then more brown movement in the trees, fired, and hit victim in the leg at mid-thigh. Severe blood loss with permanent leg damage possible. HUNTING WITHOUT PROPER AND VALID LICENSE, HUNTING IN A CARELESS MANNER, MISTAKEN FOR GAME.

48	Yes - CO	Rifle	31	Yes - CO	Saguache	10/9/2004
----	----------	-------	----	----------	----------	-----------

Remarks

Shooter and victim were calling elk when shooter fired at victim from approximately 30 yards. Bullet hit knife on victim's belt then penetrated at the right hip and exited out of his right buttock. Sunrise was after 0700 and shooting occurred at 0550 hours. Victim expected to recover. HUNTING IN A CARELESS MANNER, HUNTING BEFORE LEGAL HOURS, FAILURE TO IDENTIFY TARGET, MISTAKEN FOR GAME.

18	Yes - CO	Bow & Arrow	N/A	N/A	Routt	9/25/2004
----	----------	-------------	-----	-----	-------	-----------

Remarks

Victim stepped on broadhead tipped arrow that had been used to prop the elk up for cleaning. Arrow passed between bone and Achilles tendon, severing artery. Victim expected to recover, but he suffered heavy blood loss requiring numerous transfusions. SELF-INFLICTED.

2004 SMALL GAME NON-FATAL HUNTING ACCIDENTS

<u>Shooter's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>Hunting Method</u>	<u>Victim's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>
32	Yes - CO	Rifle	41	Yes - CO	Weld	1/4/2004

Remarks

Shooter mistook hunting companion for a coyote while night hunting. Victim was hit in right leg from a distance of approximately 200 yards. Victim expected to recover. Shooter said victim wasn't supposed to be where he was or where he said he was going to be. Victim said he was "almost 100% sure that (shooter) wouldnt' shoot me on purpose." MISTAKEN FOR GAME, NOT IDENTIFYING TARGET, HUNTING AT NIGHT, HUNTING IN A CARELESS MANNER, USE OF NIGHT VISION EQUIPMENT.

28	Yes - CO	Shotgun	20	Yes - CO	Weld	1/4/2004
----	----------	---------	----	----------	------	----------

Remarks

Shooter swinging on a low flying goose hit victim on other side of river with three #3 steel shot. One pellet lodged in victim's finger, second grazed hand, and the third grazed victim's head. SWINGING ON GAME, ZONE OF FIRE VIOLATION, HUNTING IN A CARELESS MANNER.

22	No	Rifle	36	Yes - CO	Weld	3/2/2004
----	----	-------	----	----------	------	----------

Remarks

Shooter placing loaded .22 rifle back into truck when rifle discharged and struck victim in upper left arm, passing through the arm and entering the armpit. Bullet did not enter chest cavity. Shooter and victim had been shooting prairie dogs before placing guns back into the truck. LOADED FIREARM IN MOTOR VEHICLE.

50	Yes - CO	Shotgun	39	Yes - CO	Otero	3/6/2004
----	----------	---------	----	----------	-------	----------

Remarks

Shooter was removing shotgun from back of Suburban while hunting snow geese. Shotgun discharged, sending a full load of steel #BB shot through the back of passenger seat and into the right hip and upper thigh of victim. Pellets were lodged from upper hip to 2/3 of the way down thigh towards the knee, resulting in serious injury. LOADED FIREARM IN MOTOR VEHICLE.

2004 SMALL GAME NON-FATAL HUNTING ACCIDENTS

<u>Shooter's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>Hunting Method</u>	<u>Victim's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>
5	No	Shotgun	55	No	Montrose	9/11/2004

Remarks

After harvesting a fall turkey, hunter placed shotgun in bed of truck and was tagging the bird, leaving shotgun unattended. Children got out of truck to see the turkey, and the hunter's mother-in-law was sitting in the driver's seat after moving the truck. They heard the shotgun go off and saw 5 year old child in the bed of the truck. Mother-in-law was struck by 7 #BB steel pellets that penetrated the truck bed, truck cab and the seat. Victim expected to fully recover. Dad charged with LOADED FIREARM IN A MOTOR VEHICLE and facing multiple charges from Sheriff's Department. CARELESS HANDLING.

43	Yes	Shotgun	Unknown	Yes - CO	Weld	10/21/2004
----	-----	---------	---------	----------	------	------------

Remarks

Victim was hit in nose and face by shot fired by another waterfowl hunter at a distance of about 60 yards. One #1 steel shot hit victim and penetrated bridge of nose requiring surgery to remove. Victim was struck by several more pellets that did not penetrate. HUNTING IN A CARELESS MANNER, SWINGING ON GAME.

46	Yes - CO	Shotgun	45	Yes - CO	Arapahoe	11/18/2004
----	----------	---------	----	----------	----------	------------

Remarks

This incident occurred on a commercial hunting facility while hunting planted chukars. Shooter was swinging on a chukar and shot victim (husband). Shooter thought that victim was further behind her and didn't see him when she shot at bird. Victim was airlifted out with a partially collapsed lung along with multiple pellet penetrations. Victim made full recovery. HUNTING IN A CARELESS MANNER, SWINGING ON GAME.

30	Yes - CO	Shotgun	34	Yes - CO	Yuma	11/20/2004
----	----------	---------	----	----------	------	------------

Remarks

Shooter was removing loaded shotgun from case in truck, pulled trigger and discharged shotgun. Shot went through end of metal case and truck door, and hit victim (brother-in-law) on the other side of the truck. Two pellets penetrated into abdominal cavity. LOADED FIREARM IN A MOTOR VEHICLE.

2004 SMALL GAME NON-FATAL HUNTING ACCIDENTS

<u>Shooter's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>Hunting Method</u>	<u>Victim's Age</u>	<u>Hunter Ed Training</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Date</u>
20	Yes - CO	Pistol	20	Yes - CO	Moffat	12/11/2004

Remarks

Shooter/victim was in vehicle after hunting rabbits with .22 handgun when he shot himself through the right wrist with the bullet exiting near his little finger. Shooter said that revolver had misfired and he was putting it back in the vehicle when it just went off. LOADED FIREARM IN A MOTOR VEHICLE, CARELESS HANDLING OF FIREARM.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife Annual Hunting Accident reports indicated for the years 1961 through 1969 the Average Fatal: 10.1 Non-Fatal: 24.2

January 1, 1970 mandatory Hunter Education statute, florescent orange clothing statute, and loaded firearm in a motor vehicle statute all went into effect.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Fatal</u>	<u>Non-Fatal</u>	<u>Total Accidents</u>
1970	9	20	29
1971	5	15	20
1972	3	32	35
1973	4	24	28
1974	2	18	20
1975	4	21	25
1976	5	15	20
1977	8	6	14
1978	1	17	18
1979	4	18	22
<u>TOTAL:</u>	45	186	231
<u>AVERAGE:</u>	Fatal: 4.5	Non-Fatal: 18.6	

<u>Year</u>	<u>Fatal</u>	<u>Non-Fatal</u>	<u>Total Accidents</u>
-------------	--------------	------------------	------------------------

1980	6	23	29
1981	1	21	22
1982	4	19	23
1983	4	18	22
1984	4	18	22
1985	1	16	17
1986	1	13	14
1987	1	7	8
1988	3	14	17
1989	0	10	10

<u>TOTAL:</u>	25	159	184
---------------	----	-----	-----

AVERAGE: Fatal: 2.5 Non-Fatal: 15.9

<u>Year</u>	<u>Fatal</u>	<u>Non-Fatal</u>	<u>Total Accidents</u>
-------------	--------------	------------------	------------------------

1990	2	22	24
1991	1	14	15
1992	1	20	21
1993	3	10	13
1994	2	9	11
1995	0	16	16
1996	0	10	10
1997	2	3	5
1998	2	11	13
1999	0	8	8

<u>TOTAL:</u>	13	123	136
---------------	----	-----	-----

AVERAGE: Fatal: 1.3 Non-Fatal: 12.3

<u>Year</u>	<u>Fatal</u>	<u>Non-Fatal</u>	<u>Total Accidents</u>
2000	1	3	4
2001	3	9	12
2002	0	18	18
2003	2	5	7
2004	2	13	15
<u>TOTAL:</u>	8	48	56
<u>AVERAGE:</u>	Fatal: 1.6	Non-Fatal: 9.6	