

Responsive Management



NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION HUNTING PARTICIPATION AND ATTITUDE TRENDS SURVEY 2000

Presented to the National Shooting Sports Foundation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Presented in this report are the results of a nationwide survey of hunters who had been hunting or shooting with a shoulder arm for at least 2 years. This study was conducted for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in order to understand better the opinions of hunters regarding their participation in hunting and shooting activities. Data from previous studies of hunters conducted for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in 1986, 1991, and 1996 (by Responsive Management), are compared with data collected from those hunters surveyed in 2000. The National Shooting Sports Foundation and Responsive Management cooperatively developed the surveys used in the 1996 and 2000 studies.

Sampling Plan

It is important to note that the source of the 1999 sample differed from the sources used in 1995 and, as such, responses to some survey questions must be interpreted in light of sampling differences. Those questions potentially influenced by these differences are noted as they occur. Sampling procedures used in this study are directly comparable to procedures used in 1991.

In this study, names of hunters from 50 states were obtained from a National Shooting Sports Foundation database. This database consisted of individuals who had mailed in a warranty card for a recent purchase of a firearm or a firearms-related product and had indicated on the warranty form that they hunt.

In 1995, names of random samples of hunting license holders were obtained from a number of state's department of wildlife, with the exception of 16 states including Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New

Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. Names of hunters from these states were obtained through the North American Hunting Group's (NAHG) member database.

Hunting Participation

- Most respondents had been hunting or shooting with a shoulder arm for 21 to 40 years (49%), about one-third (34%) had done so for less than 21 years.
- Almost all respondents had hunted in each of the past 5 years (at least 94%). For those who did not, lack of time (24%), being too young (15%), health (13%), and work obligations (13%) were the reasons.
- Most respondents had hunted with a shoulder arm about the same number of days in 1999 as they did in previous years (59%). Those who had hunted more days in 1999 with a shoulder arm than in previous years did so because they had more time available to hunt (62%). Those who had hunted fewer days did so because they had less time available to hunt (29%), work obligations (19%), and health and age-related reasons (18%).
- Nearly half (47%) of respondents had shot about the same in 1999, in an individual outing, as in previous years. Those who had shot more did so because they had more time available to hunt (29%) and they did more target shooting (24%). Those who shot less did so because there was less game available to hunt (34%) and no time (26%).

Hunting Participation Trends

Similarities to previous years:

- Most hunters had hunted in the past 5 years. As in 1995, lack of time and being too

young were the main reasons respondents had not hunted in each of the past 5 years.

- Comparable to previous studies, respondents reported hunting more in 1999 because they had more time to do so.

Differences from previous years:

- Respondents in 1999 hunted or shot for more years with a shoulder arm than respondents in previous studies.
- A higher percentage of respondents in 1999 reported hunting more days with a shoulder arm.
- In comparison to 1995, fewer 1999 respondents reported hunting less because of lack of time; however, more respondents reported hunting less because of work obligations.
- A higher percentage of 1999 respondents shot more in an individual outing.
- More 1999 respondents reported target shooting, but fewer reported having more game to hunt as reasons for having shot more in an individual outing.
- From 1986 to 1999, the percentages citing less game available as a reason for shooting less in an individual outing steadily decreased. More respondents in 1999 cited lack of time as a reason for shooting less in an individual outing, an increase over 1995, but a decrease from 1991.

Hunting Difficulties

Respondents were asked 14 questions each of which addressed a potential difficulty that hunters might have encountered while hunting. They were then asked if each difficulty had become a greater problem for them over the past 5 years.

- Access to hunting (33%) was reported as a much greater problem than other potential difficulties. Other difficulties included concern over anti-hunting activities (23%), the anti-hunting attitude of the public (20%), crowded hunting areas (20%), less landowner cooperation (20%) and access to private hunting lands (19%).
- More respondents (57%) reported not having a problem in finding the time to hunt; however, 43% did. Work obligations (83%) were the main reason for not finding the time, and 32% of these respondents reported it had become a much greater problem in the past 5 years.

Hunting Difficulties Trends

Similarities to previous years:

- The percentages of respondents, who reported greater problems with access to hunting, crowded hunting areas, and private access to hunting were the same for 1995 and 1999, but were increases from 1991.

Differences from previous years:

- Anti-hunting attitudes and concern over anti-hunting activities have both become a greater problem since 1991.
- Availability of game, cost of ammunition, license costs, and safety in the field has become less of a problem.

Species Hunted

- Respondents (92%) hunted deer more than any other species over the past 5 years. Other species hunted in the past 5 years included rabbit, turkey and pheasant (each 57%), ducks

(55%), squirrel (52%), quail (48%), grouse (45%), dove, (44%), geese (43%), and coyote (37%).

- Respondents who hunted each species and hunted each species more in 1999 than in previous years included 52% of turkey hunters, 41% of geese and duck hunters, 40% of coyote hunters, 33% of deer hunters, 28% of elk hunters, 27% of crow, woodchuck, pheasant and bear hunters, and 26% of dove and grouse hunters.
- Respondents who hunted each species and hunted each species less included 39% of rabbit hunters, 36% of quail hunters, 35% of squirrel hunters, 32% of pheasant hunters, 30% of moose hunters, 28% of elk hunters, 27% of duck, woodchuck, and dove hunters, and 25% of grouse and bear hunters.

Species Hunted Trends

Differences from previous years:

- For two species - deer and turkey - there has been a consistent increase in the percentage of hunters who have hunted these species.
- For several species, trends prior to 1999 showed a steady decline in hunting participation; however, in 1999 many of these trends were reversed with hunters reporting increased participation. Respondents hunted more rabbit, pheasant, ducks, squirrel, quail, grouse, doves, and geese in 1999 than in previous years.
- From 1991 to 1999, the percentage of hunters who reported hunting turkey, geese, ducks, elk, woodchuck, pheasants, and dove more in each of the three timeframes increased. Since 1995, the percentage of deer hunters who reported hunting deer more also

increased.

Land Ownership

- Over one-third (36%) of respondents own land on which they can hunt.

Land Ownership Trends

- Land ownership has remained constant since 1986.

Firearm Ownership

In a series of questions, respondents were asked about ownership of shotguns, centerfire rifles, rimfire rifles, black powder rifles, and rifles in general.

Shotguns and Rifles

- The majority of respondents (88%) own at least one shotgun, 46% own two to four shotguns, 32% own at least five shotguns, and 10% own one shotgun.
- Seventy-five percent (75%) of respondents reported that they had purchased a shotgun within the past 5 years. Most had purchased a new shotgun (79%).
- Those who own more than one shotgun tend to use it for hunting all types of game (76%).

Centerfire rifles

- The majority of respondents (83%) own one at least one centerfire rifle, 39% own two to four centerfire rifles, 28% own at least five, and 16% own one centerfire rifle.
- Most respondents (80%) who own more than one centerfire rifle used different centerfire rifles for hunting different types of game.

Rimfire rifles

- The majority of respondents (72%) own one at least one rimfire rifle, 37% own two to

four rimfire rifles, 26% own one, and 9% own at least five rimfire rifles.

Blackpowder rifles

- Slightly more than half (52%) of respondents do not own a blackpowder rifle, while 39% own at least one. Of those own a blackpowder rifle, 24% own one, 13% own two to four, and 2% own at least five.

Rifles

- Seventy-two percent (72%) of respondents had purchased a rifle within the past 5 years. This percentage was a drastic increase from the 25% of respondents in 1991 or the 44% of respondents in 1995. The source of the 1999 sample - shoulder-arm owners - should be considered as a possible reason for such a large increase.
- Seventy-six percent (76%) of those who had purchased a rifle within the past 5 years purchased it new.

Handgun

- Over half of respondents (69%) own at least one handgun.
- Of those respondents who own a handgun, 24% own one centerfire handgun, 17% own two, 9% own three, 6% own four, and 18% own at least five.
- Of those who reported to own at least one handgun, 30% own one rimfire handgun, 13% own two, 5% own three, 1% owns four, and 4% own at least five.
- Of those who reported to own at least one handgun, 5% own one blackpowder handgun, 3% own two, 1% owns three, and 1% owns at least five.
- Half of all respondents (51%) had purchased a handgun within the past 5 years; for most, the handgun purchased was new (73%).

- Most handgun owners used their handguns for target shooting (78%) and personal protection (75%). Forty-one percent (41%) of handgun owners used their handguns for hunting.
- Slightly more than half (58%) of multiple handgun owners reported using different handguns for different activities, while 37% reported using one handgun for all types of activities.

Firearm Ownership Trends

Interpretation of trends in gun purchasing should be made in light of the sample. The 2000 study was based on a sample of hunters who had recently purchased a firearm or firearms-related product.

Shotgun and Rifles

- Since 1995, ownership of a single shotgun, centerfire rifle, or rimfire rifle has decreased. However, since 1986, ownership of five or more shotguns, centerfire rifles, or two or more rimfire rifles has increased.
- The overall trend since 1991 has been an increase in the number of respondents who own at least one blackpowder rifle.
- In comparison to 1991 and 1995, more respondents purchased a new shotgun or new rifle.
- More than ever, respondents are using different shotguns and different centerfire rifles for hunting different types of game.

Handguns

- In comparison to 1991 and 1995, more respondents own five or more handguns.
- Since 1991, ownership of a single centerfire handgun or a single rimfire handgun has increased.
- The percentage of all respondents who own blackpowder handguns has remained constant since 1991.
- In comparison to 1991 and 1995, more respondents purchased a new handgun.
- Purchases of new handguns have fluctuated over the years. In comparison to 1986 and 1995, more new handguns were purchased in 1999; however, 1999 purchases were lower than in 1991.
- In comparison to previous years, fewer handgun owners used their handguns for hunting, while equal numbers used their handguns for target shooting and personal protection.
- More than ever, respondents are using different handguns for different activities.

Reloading

- Forty-one percent (41%) of respondents reloaded their own ammunition. Most reloaded because it is more economical (57%), more accurate (33%), enjoyable (26%), and they are able to load to their own specifications (18%).

Shotshells

- Sixty-five percent (65%) of respondents who reloaded their own ammunition reloaded shotshells. Most reloaded over 800 shells annually (46%), while 22% reloaded fewer than

300 shells annually and 21% reloaded between 300 and 800 shotshells annually.

- Forty-one percent (41%) of respondents who reloaded shotshells reloaded more shotshells than when they started, 35% reloaded less, and 23% reloaded about the same amount. Those who reloaded more shotshells did so because they were hunting and therefore shooting more (38%) and shooting more in target practice (36%). Whereas, those who reloaded less did so because they were hunting less and therefore shooting less (56%), they had less time to do so (18%), and it was more economical to buy shotshells (18%).

Centerfire rifle cartridges

- Seventy-two percent (72%) of respondents' reloaded centerfire rifles cartridges. Most reloaded fewer than 300 shells annually (42%), while 25% reloaded over 800 cartridges annually and 22% reloaded between 300 and 800 cartridges annually.
- Thirty-nine percent (39%) of respondents who reloaded centerfire rifle cartridges reloaded more than when they started, 36% reloaded about the same amount, and 24% reloaded less. Those who reloaded more did so because they were hunting and therefore shooting more (36%), shooting more in target practice (30%), it was more economical (21%), and they own more guns (13%). Those who reloaded less did so because they had hunted less and therefore shot less (54%) and they had less time to do so (26%).

Reloaded ammunition

- Seventy-seven percent (77%) did not purchase reloaded ammunition, while 22% did. Most had purchased reloaded ammunition from a store (53%) or from a friend (28%). Those who had purchased reloaded ammunition from a friend most often purchased centerfire rifle cartridges (58%), shotshells (39%), and centerfire handgun cartridges

(23%).

Reloading Trends

- The percentage of respondents who reload ammunition has increased, although not steadily, since 1986.
- Since 1986, respondents are reloading less because of its economic value, but since 1995, more are reloading because it is more accurate and it is enjoyable.

Shotshells

- From 1986 to 1995, the percentage of respondents who reloaded shotshells decreased; however, this trend reversed in 1999 with an increase in participation.
- In comparison to previous studies, respondents are reloading more shotshells than when they started reloading.
- More respondents in 1999 reloaded 800 or more shotshells than respondents in any other year.
- In comparison to previous years, more respondents reported reloading more shotshells because they were hunting more, and more respondents reported reloading less because it was more economical to buy shotshells.

Centerfire rifle cartridges

- The percentage of respondents who reloaded centerfire rifle cartridges increased from 1986 to 1995, but leveled off in 1999.
- In comparison to previous studies, respondents are loading about the same or more

shotshells.

- More respondents in 1999 reloaded 800 or more centerfire rifle cartridges than in previous years.
- In comparison to previous years, more respondents reported reloading more shotshells because they are shooting more in target practice, while more respondents reported reloading less because they did not have time to reload and they bought more cartridges.

Reloaded ammunition

- The percentage of respondents who purchased reloaded ammunition was comparable to previous years.
- In comparison to previous years, slightly fewer respondents reported buying reloaded ammunition from a store or friend, while slightly more respondents reported buying reloaded ammunition from a gun show or from a friend or store equally.
- Respondents who reported buying reloaded ammunition from a friend most often purchased centerfire rifle cartridges (58%), shotshells (39%), and centerfire handgun cartridges (23%).
- Respondents who had purchased reloaded ammunition from a friend in 1999 had purchased fewer centerfire rifle cartridges than respondents in 1995, but had purchased more shotshells than respondents in 1991 or 1995.

Target Shooting

- Seventy-seven percent (77%) of respondents reported doing shotgun, rifle, or handgun

target shooting.

- Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents participated in target rifle shooting, 65% in target handgun shooting, 52% in trapshooting, 43% in sporting clays, and 41% participate in skeet.

Trapshooting

- Thirty-nine percent (39%) of trapshooters participated in trapshooting more than 10 times per year, 32% participated 2 to 5 times per year, 19% participated 6 to 10 times per year, and 10% participated once a year. Respondents who did not trapshoot did not do so because they had no interest (37%), had no time (29%), and did not have a club nearby (21%).

Skeet

- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of skeet shooters participated in skeet more than 10 times per year, 35% participated 2 to 5 times per year, 18% participated 6 to 10 times per year, and 9% participated once a year. Respondents who did not participate in skeet did not do so because they had no interest (32%), did not have a club nearby (27%), had no time (23%), and had never tried it (12%).

Sporting clays

- Thirty-eight percent (38%) of sporting clay shooters participated in sporting clays 2 to 5 times per year, 30% participated more than 10 times per year, 16% participated 6 to 10 times per year, and 16% participated once a year. Respondents who did not participate in sporting clays did not do so because they did not have a club nearby (29%), had no interest (25%), had no time (24%), and had never tried it (16%).

Target handgun

- Fifty-two percent (52%) of respondents who participated in target handgun shooting did so more than 10 times per year, 23% participated 2 to 5 times per year, 22% participated 6 to 10 times per year, and 3% participated once per year. Those who did not participate did not do so because they had no interest (39%), did not own a handgun (28%), and had no time (17%).

Target rifle

- Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents who participated in target rifle shooting did so more than 10 times per year, 27% participated 2 to 5 times per year, 19% participated 6 to 10 times per year, and 4% participated once per year. Those who did not participate in target rifle shooting did not do so because they had no interest (44%), had no time (21%), and 12% did not have a club nearby.

Target shooting participants

- Forty-seven percent (47%) of target shooters are participating more than they were 5 years ago, 36% are participating about the same, and 16% are participating less than 5 years ago. Those who participate in target shooting more do so because they have more time available (23%), they find it enjoyable (22%), they want to improve their shooting skills (17%), and they have a new gun (11%). Those who reported target shooting less do so because they have less time available (64%). Respondents would be persuaded to target shoot more if a shooting facility was nearby (60%), if family programs were offered at a nearby facility (57%), if competitions were offered at a nearby shooting facility (57%), and if instruction programs were offered at a nearby facility (48%).

Target Shooting Trends

Interpretation of trends in gun purchasing should be made in light of the sample. The 2000 study was based on a sample of hunters who had recently purchased a firearm or firearms-related product.

- More respondents in 1999 reported doing shotgun, rifle, or handgun target shooting than respondents in any other year.
- In comparison to previous years, more 1999 respondents participated in trapshooting, skeet, sporting clays, target handgun, or target rifle more than 10 times per year than did respondents in 1991 and 1995.
- In comparison to 1995 findings, more respondents who did not participate in trapshooting or skeet did not do so because they that they had no interest, no time, or club nearby.
- In comparison to 1991 and 1995 findings, more respondents who did not participate in sporting clays skeet did not do so because they that they had no time nor club nearby. However, fewer respondents reported that they had no interest or had never tried it.
- In comparison to 1995, more respondents who did not participate in target handgun shooting or target rifle shooting did not do so because they had no interest and did not have the time
- In comparison to 1995 findings, a higher percentage of 1999 respondents participated more in target handgun shooting.
- In comparison to previous years, more respondents in 1999 reported that they are

shooting more because it is enjoyable and they have a new gun. Fewer respondents reported that they want to improve their shooting.

- Similar to 1995, respondents are target shooting less because they have less time available.
- In comparison to 1995, more respondents in 1999 would be persuaded to target shoot more if competitions were offered as a nearby shooting facility.

Bowhunting

- Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents currently hunt with a bow. Results of this question should be considered in light of the sample. The 1999 sample would have excluded bowhunters who only own a bow and not a shoulder arm. The most frequent reason for bowhunting was related to the challenge of bowhunting and its skill requirements, as cited by 42% of bowhunters. About one-third (32%) of bowhunters reported because it was fun and enjoyable and 29% reported that it lengthens the hunting season and they can start hunting earlier (responses "lengthens hunting season" and "can start hunting earlier" were combined).
- Most bowhunters (78%) participated in bowhunting 5 years ago.

Bowhunting Trends

Results in this section should be considered in light of the sample. The 1999 sample would have excluded bowhunters who only own a bow and not a shoulder arm.

- Participation in bowhunting has remained consistent since 1995.
- In comparison to previous studies, fewer bowhunters in 1999 reported they bowhunt

because of the challenge and skill requirements, while more respondents reported that is fun and enjoyable and it lengthens the hunting season.

- Similar to 1995, most current bowhunters had participated in bowhunting 5 years ago.

Increasing Hunting and Shooting Activity

- Hunters would be persuaded to go hunting or shooting more often if they received an invitation from friend (89%), they were given an invitation for a free day's shooting at a nearby club (64%) and a chance to try a new shooting event (63%). Less than one-half of respondents reported watching a television program about hunting or shooting (47%) and having a chance to win money in a shooting event (46%) as motivators.

Increasing Hunting and Shooting Activity Trends

- Similar to previous years, respondents would be most persuaded to go hunting or shooting if they received an invitation from friend, an invitation for a free day's shooting at a nearby club, and a chance to try a new shooting event. Since 1991, the ideas of a chance to win money in a shooting event, reading an article in an outdoor magazine, and reading an article in the local newspaper have become less popular as motivators to persuade respondents to hunt or shoot more.